

TRA forms team to combat e-fraud

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has set up a dedicated team to address electronic fraud and launched a national campaign to reduce children's addiction to the Internet.

The announcement was made during a meeting held on Sunday attended by various stakeholders to discuss issues related to the telecommunications sector. The meeting aimed to enhance communication with beneficiaries and facilitate exchange of views on service quality, billing and promotional offers.

TRA highlighted its ongoing efforts to upgrade telecommunications services, including transition from third-generation to 4G and 5G networks.

Nasser al Jabri, Director of

National campaign to curb children's Internet addiction

86% of children in Oman use the Internet

398 complaints for broadband services in H1 2024

5G network deployed across 4,412 stations



TRA has included provisions in the Beneficiaries' Rights Regulations specifically aimed at protecting children who use communications services

NASSER AL JABRI



Service Quality and Comprehensive Service Department at TRA, reported that in the first half of 2024, the authority received nearly 398 complaints related to broadband services. Of these, 70% were related to internal connections within buildings.

Jabri also reported that 86% of children in Oman use the Internet and that there is addictive behaviour in some. In response, TRA has initiated several programmes to educate families on safe technology use, including a national awareness campaign. Additionally, the authority has included provisions in the Beneficiaries' Rights Regulations specifically aimed at protecting children who use communications services.

Jabri outlined several initiatives to improve services, including deployment of 5G networks across 4,412 stations, with verification of 3,046 sta-

tions already complete. He also noted a significant migration of subscribers from low-speed to high-speed ADSL and fibre optic connections.

Regarding electronic fraud, TRA is working with licencees to form a joint group focused on tracking fraudulent cases and developing effective solutions. The authority has directed licencees to implement technical measures and is launching awareness campaigns to educate the community about the risks of electronic fraud.

Identifying challenges affecting home Internet quality, Jabri cited issues like low-quality copper cables and improper distribution of wireless network boosters. He proposed guidelines for enhancing home connectivity, including use of approved materials and setting designated paths for communication cables.



António Guterres

UN Secy-Gen hails Oman's efforts to promote peace

New York, US - António Guterres, Secretary-General of United Nations, received Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, during the 79th session of the UN General Assembly in New York on Saturday.

In their meeting, Guterres praised Oman, under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, for its efforts to promote global peace and security, as well as to enhance dialogue and multilateral cooperation regionally and beyond.

Sayyid Badr expressed his gratitude to Guterres for his astute leadership of the UN and his support for the principles of justice, international law and humanitarian law.

The two officials also discussed key regional and international developments, particularly the situation in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, and ongoing efforts to secure an immediate ceasefire and contain military escalation in the region.

'Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories must end'

New York, US - Oman reaffirmed its commitment to dialogue, peaceful conflict resolution and promotion of international cooperation at the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Saturday.

In his speech, H E Sayyid Badr al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, emphasised Oman's unwavering support for the United Nations and its efforts to uphold international law, peace and security, while calling for urgent action on several pressing global issues, particularly in the Middle East.

Highlighting Oman's foreign policy, H E Sayyid Badr stated that it is rooted in a "steadfast vision, which embraces dialogue and tolerance as a means to address all challenges".

He stressed the fact that Oman's leadership, government and people firmly believe in using peaceful and legitimate means to resolve conflicts.

The key issues he raised during the address were ongoing conflict in Gaza, Lebanon and the Red Sea region. H E Sayyid Badr called for an immediate ceasefire in these places, urging world leaders to address the "root causes" of the conflicts. He stated that the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories must end to achieve peace.

He reiterated Oman's support for a two-state solution and called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state - along the 1967 borders - with East Jerusalem as its capital. The



(Supplied photo)

Foreign Minister also urged the UN to grant Palestine full membership and condemned what he described as the "genocidal policies" carried out against Palestinians by the Israeli occupation forces.

"Oman calls for an immediate ceasefire and cessation of hostilities," H E Sayyid Badr declared. He further urged the international community to intensify efforts to reduce tensions, prevent bloodshed and adhere to international law. Respecting sovereignty and non-

interference in internal affairs, he said, are essential to ensure that all nations and peoples live in peace, security and dignity.

The Foreign Minister also spoke about Oman's domestic achievements, emphasising the country's progress in social protection programmes. These include initiatives aimed at supporting women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities, as well as social insurance and job security schemes.

He highlighted Oman's commitment to empowering the youth, describing them as the "cornerstone of the future" and key drivers of sustainable development.

Oman's environmental efforts were also highlighted in the address, with H E Sayyid Badr outlining the country's commitment to tackling climate change.

In closing, H E Sayyid Badr welcomed adoption of the Pact for the Future, praising international efforts to enhance global cooperation and tackle shared challenges. He urged member states to commit to implementation of the pact and to work together for a better, safer and more prosperous future.

Throughout the address, he emphasised Oman's role as a peaceful mediator on the world stage, promoting dialogue, respect for sovereignty and sustainable development. "We express our sincere hope that this session will be successful and fruitful," he concluded.

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RECORD-BREAKING SUCCESS: GOLF LINKS AT AL MOUJ MUSCAT SELL OUT IN JUST A WEEK

With 28 residences and 261 luxury apartments, Golf Links becomes the most sought-after neighborhood

Al Mouj Muscat has proudly announced the unprecedented sell out of the Golf Links within a week of the launch. With all 28 residences and 261 apartments claimed in record time, this achievement underscores the growing demand for premium homes in Oman, as well as the trust and confidence buyers place in Al Mouj Muscat.

Nestled within the lush surroundings of the Al Mouj Golf Course, Golf Links offers a seamless blend of nature and modernity. The neighborhood combines breathtaking views of the golf course and nearby coastline with the convenience of Oman's premier lifestyle destination. This unique location, paired with world-class amenities and proximity to prestigious hotels like The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort and the upcoming Okura Resort Muscat, has made Golf Links one of the most sought-after addresses in the country.



CEO, Nasser Al Shaibani: "The success of Golf Links showcases Al Mouj Muscat's strategic vision of creating integrated lifestyle communities in harmony with Oman's natural beauty. This achievement underscores our commitment to shaping the future of community living"

Beyond the stunning views, the Golf Links feature elegantly designed four-bedroom residences and spacious one to three-bedroom apartments that cater to a range of lifestyles. Whether for growing families or individuals seeking a peaceful retreat, the development offers thoughtfully crafted living

spaces with exclusive access to premium facilities.



Vice President of Sales, Saleh Al Siyabi: "The swift sell-out of Golf Links reflects our strategic understanding of the market's evolving needs and our ability to design homes that resonate with discerning buyers."

The sell-out of the Golf Links is a testament not only to the appeal of Al Mouj Muscat's signature developments but also to the broader shift toward high-quality, integrated lifestyle communities in Oman. The residences provide easy access to walking and cycling paths, recreational facilities, and a host of dining and leisure options at the Al



Mouj marina and retail precincts, making it an ideal choice for residents who value both convenience and tranquility.



Vice President of Marketing, Salma Al Hashmi: "Our strategic campaign approach not only captured attention but also delivered measurable outcomes. A testament to the seamless blend of creativity, market understanding and data-driven insights, translating into significant returns on investment and reinforcing our position as a market leader in real estate."

For those seeking to be part of future developments at Al Mouj Muscat, stay tuned for upcoming opportunities that promise to redefine luxury living in the Sultanate.

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BEACH VIBES AND GOOD TIMES

Oman stands out as a tourist destination due to its diverse cultural offerings and unique landscape. Besides a range of mountains, big deserts and secret islands, Oman is also blessed with a vast coastline that stretches over 3,000km, of which 1,700km are sun-kissed beaches. What can be done to boost cruise and marine tourism and leverage this vast coastline? Here's what *Muscat Daily* readers said -

Mohammad al Busaidi
Government sector employee

Oman has a vast and beautiful coastline, which can be a huge asset for marine tourism. One of the ways to boost it is by developing world-class marinas and ports along popular tourist spots like Musandam, Sur and Salalah. More luxurious cruise terminals would attract high-end tourists. Additionally, offering ma-

rine activities like snorkeling, diving and dolphin watching in more locations will encourage cruise operators to include Oman in their itineraries.

Salim al Farsi
Businessman

Oman's natural beauty is unmatched in the



GCC. Its islands and coastline should be promoted more aggressively internationally. Introducing eco-friendly cruises and yacht services that explore lesser-known areas like the Daymaniyat Islands and other secret islands would attract adventure seekers. Collaborating with global travel agencies and offering incentives to cruise companies to operate in Oman could also increase tourist numbers. Also, I suggest making these accessible to all, not just a select few.

Manish Verma
Engineer

To boost marine tourism, Oman needs to focus on improving infrastructure around coastal areas. We should establish better facilities for tourists, such as waterfront hotels, seafood restaurants and guided boat tours.

Promoting Oman's marine heritage, traditional fishing culture and hosting international sailing competitions can also bring more attention to the country as a prime destination for cruise ships.

Nandini Nandakumar
Psychologist

I believe that one of the best ways to boost marine tourism is to have frequent trips for students to the sea. This will encourage not only love for nature but also awareness on the seas. Also, there can be competitions on marine life held by the government.

Ahmed al Lawati
Blogger

Oman's coastline is perfect for cruise tourism. Developing themed cruises like cul-

tural heritage tours or nature reserve visits will also make Oman a unique destination in the region. By creating exclusive shore excursions that include visits to traditional souqs, forts and deserts, tourists would get a more immersive experience. Also, prices must be reduced.

Kader Khan
Salesman

Oman should focus on highlighting its pristine beaches and rich marine life. A good idea would be to partner with luxury cruise lines and offer bespoke experiences, such as private island tours and water sports at economical prices. Additionally, building awareness through marketing campaigns that focus on Oman's rich culture, beautiful coastline and traditional hospitality would attract a new wave of tourists to our shores.

**NEXT ON YOUR SAY**

Despite ongoing safety campaigns, some motorists continue to allow children to stick their heads out of car sunroofs while driving. What action should be taken to prevent this risky behaviour?

The views stated here are those of the respondents and not endorsed by *Muscat Daily*. If you feel strongly about the issues discussed here, you can email your comments to muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om You can also log on to our Facebook page or tweet us your comments on the issue.

SEND YOUR COMMENTS

Share your comments in not more than 50 words along with your full name and profession before next Sunday, 10am, via WhatsApp, Facebook or Instagram

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National Ferries reports 22% growth in Masirah Island services in H1 2024

Muscat - National Ferries Company (NFC) has announced a significant increase in ferry services to and from Masirah Island. A total of 122,699 passengers and 34,000 vehicles were transported in the first half of this year - up 22% from 100,591 passengers in the same period last year.

Zaher bin Hamad al Rashdi, Deputy CEO of NFC, informed that the ferries also facilitated transportation of 4,035 tonnes of

goods in a total of 1,504 trips. This growth is attributed to rising tourism activities, as Masirah Island gains popularity for its stunning natural attractions.

Events like Masirah Tourism Forum, held in January, have further stimulated interest in the island and encouraged investment in marine tourism. Rashdi highlighted the island's unique location, diverse terrain and favourable weather as key attrac-

tions for visitors.

Additionally, ferry services between Masirah Island and Shanna Port have become vital for both tourists and residents, enhancing economic activity in the area. Increasing demand for these services highlight the effectiveness of NFC's fleet in providing safe, secure and enjoyable travel options while promoting social and economic development.



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Oman-Tanzania forum strengthens business ties

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Omani and Tanzanian companies signed seven memorandum of understandings (MoUs) in various sectors at the Oman-Tanzania Business Forum in Muscat on Sunday.

The forum was organised by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) to bolster trade and economic partnerships between the private players of Oman and Tanzania across various sectors, including construction, real estate, food security, mining, energy, and logistics.

H E Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, said that the forum serves as a platform to bolster historical relations between Oman and Tanzania by promoting trade and investment. There has been a



23.8% increase in Tanzanian companies registered in Oman and a 13.5% rise in investments over the past two years, he noted. Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, chairman of OCCI spoke on the forum's focus on introducing the economic and commercial landscapes of both countries, as well as the incentives and facilities available for investors. He noted that increased trade exchange encourages further collaboration.

During the forum, seven MoUs were signed in various sectors, including construction, real estate, agriculture, ICT, renewable energy, and consulting services. The event featured presentations on investment opportunities in Oman, as well as an exhibition showcasing the activities of Tanzanian companies. Bilateral meetings facilitated discussions between the Omani

and Tanzanian business owners to explore potential trade and investment partnerships. The forum also featured several working papers focused on enhancing investment attraction, incentives, and opportunities in both Oman and Tanzania. These discussions were held to provide investors with insights into new economic environments and expand trade and investment cooperation.



Ibri date farm becomes largest certified organic farm in Oman

Our Correspondent
Ibri

The organic date farm in the wilayat of Ibri, Dhahirah, has achieved a significant milestone by obtaining a prestigious international organic agriculture certificate, 'Ecocert', making it the largest certified organic palm farm in Oman.

Affiliated with Nakheel Oman Development Company, the farm is a leading project that contributes to food security and economic returns while enhancing the date palm sector through

advanced agricultural technologies. Eng Masoud bin Saeed al Hina'i, Senior Specialist for Agricultural Operations at Nakheel, highlighted that the farm's Ecocert certification allows its products to be sold in American and European markets, reaffirming the company's commitment to organic practices. The organic farm spread over 4.8mn sqm has 35,000 date palm trees, including the fardh, khalas, fahol and majdool varieties. The company aims to expand its cultivation to 50,000

trees to meet the global market demand. Utilising cutting-edge irrigation technologies, the farm ensures efficient water use while maintaining sustainability by avoiding chemical fertilisers and pesticides. This commitment results in higher quality products that appeal to consumers. Oman is dedicated to nurturing palm cultivation by establishing modern farms across various governorates to enhance agricultural development, food security, and investment opportunities in this vital sector.

'Governorate ambassadors' to push digital transformation, improve efficiency and service

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology (MTCIT) has launched a special initiative with dedicated officials at the helm of respective governorates to advance digital initiatives.

The Governorate Ambassadors Initiative for Digital Transformation aims to improve efficiency and service delivery across all governorates.

By appointing ambassadors in each governorate, the ministry seeks to harness national talent, including technicians, professionals, and activists passionate about digital transformation, an official said.

The initiative will enhance community awareness and usage of smart digital services, promoting a shift towards digital solutions as a preferred method for accessing government services. This effort is designed to increase citizens' satisfaction and acceptance of these services.

Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Rahman al Kharousi, Director General of



It [new initiative] aims to highlight the latest technologies that improve quality of life and simplify government processes

ABDUL AZIZ AL KHAROUSI

Digital Transformation and Sector Empowerment at MTCIT, said the initiative focuses on raising awareness about digital transformation and familiarising the public with available digital services. "It aims to highlight the

latest technologies that improve quality of life and simplify government processes." Participants will develop practical skills to get conversant with modern digital tools, including authentication, electronic signatures, electronic payments, smart applications and artificial intelligence technologies. The new ambassadors will be categorised into three levels: Initiator, advanced and specialist, with a selection process based on specific criteria so to ensure that only qualified candidates are chosen to meet the goal. The transformation programme focuses on institutional and community participation.

Agritourism event Rummana in Jabal Akhdar concludes

Muscat - The second edition of 'Rummana', an innovative agritourism event in Jabal Akhdar, Dakhliyah, ended on Saturday with 51,078 people visiting the venue.

This is a significant rise from the 22,482 attendees in the inaugural edition last year, an official said. The event is a collaboration between Teepee Oman and Agritourism Development Company (Janaen), which is a joint venture of the Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group) and Oman Food Investment Holding Company (Nitaj).

This annual event has been designed to promote environmentally friendly agricultural tourism, while providing unique experiences to tourists and enhancing local economic value. Khaled bin Hamad al Aghbari, head of the Field Work Team at Janaen, noted that the event featured 45 small and medium enterprises. They generated over 5,000kg of fruit sales, valued at approximately RO10,000.

The Rummana project saw cultivation of 667 pomegranate trees, yielding about 85 tonnes of produce this year.



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BRIEFS

Egypt says Suez Canal revenue falls by \$6bn

Egypt has lost \$6bn in Suez Canal revenue due to escalating geopolitical tensions in the region, President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said on Sunday.

Speaking during a police graduation ceremony, Sisi said revenue of the international waterway had plummeted by 50% to 60% over the past eight months.

"We are keen on managing our affairs in a way that preserves our country and maintains stability in the region as much as possible, without getting involved in events that could affect security," Sisi stressed.

The Egyptian leader warned that the current regional tensions could lead to an expansion of the conflict. The Suez Canal, a vital artery for global trade, is the shortest shipping route between Europe and Asia.

Business Today CXO Awards to honour top corporate executives in the GCC

Muscat – Business Today has launched the inaugural CXO Awards, positioning the event as one of the most prestigious corporate honours in the GCC region. The Business Today CXO Awards will recognise top-performing executives from across the Gulf, including Oman, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain.

The gala awards ceremony is scheduled for November 26, 2024 at the Sheraton Oman Hotel in Muscat.

More than 25 awards will be presented during the event, celebrating excellence in leadership roles such as Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Chief Operating Officer (COO), Chief Strategy Officer (CSO), Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO), Chief Technology Officer (CTO), Chief Information Officer (CIO), Chief Digital Officer (CDO), Chief Marketing Officer (CMO), Chief Risk Officer (CRO), Chief Investment Officer (CIO), Chief Audit Officer (CAO), Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO), Chief Information Security Officer (CISO), Chief Legal Officer (CLO), and Chief Commercial Officer (CCO).

Additionally, a special recognition will be given to the Overall CXO in Oman, alongside top



The Business Today CXO Awards will recognise top-performing C-level executives from across the Gulf. The event will be attended by over 250 senior corporate executives from sectors including oil and gas, banking and finance, insurance, investments, energy, FMCG, manufacturing, logistics, tourism, automotive, retail and more

CXOs from the other five participating GCC countries.

The awards are open to C-level senior executives responsible for overseeing key functions within their organisations across various sectors. Recipients will be evaluated on both qualitative and quantitative factors, including leadership excellence, demonstrated by their ability to lead teams and drive organisational success. They will also be judged on their contributions to setting and achieving strategic objectives, initiatives that have

significantly impacted their businesses or industries, exceptional financial performance, and significant achievements in industry growth, thought leadership and community development.

The event will be attended by over 250 senior corporate executives from sectors including oil and gas, banking and finance, insurance, investments, energy, FMCG, manufacturing, logistics, tourism, automotive, retail and more.

Beyond recognising the best in corporate leadership, the evening will offer ample networking opportunities and entertainment. A keynote address will be delivered by an internationally renowned thought leader, adding depth and insight to the distinguished gathering. The event is set to bring together some of the region's most prominent business figures, making it a key occasion for corporate executives and industry leaders to share knowledge and build valuable connections.

The Business Today CXO Awards 2024, organised by Interactive Apex and Muscat Daily, promises to be a must-attend event for the corporate community. For more information on awards, table reservations or partnerships, contact: sajir@apexmedia.co.om or call +968 9947 4314.

S&P rating upgrade expected to enhance FDI in Oman: MoCIIP

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's rating upgrade by S&P Global is an endorsement of the sultanate's investment landscape and economic environment, which is expected to enhance foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country, according to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP).

S&P on Friday upgraded Oman's long-term foreign and local currency sovereign credit ratings to 'BBB-' from 'BB+' with a stable outlook. This is the second upgrade made by S&P to Oman's credit rating in 2024. The rating upgrade reflects the continued strengthening of the Omani government's public finances and marks a significant development in its economic history, with the sultanate regaining its investment-grade rating after a gap of seven years.

Commenting on this positive development, H E Ibtisam al Farooji, Undersecretary for Investment Promotion at MoCIIP, said, "S&P's upgrade is a strong endorsement of Oman's dynamic



investment landscape and economic environment. It sends a clear message to the international business community that Oman is a better place than ever to invest, set up a business, and grow, taking advantage of our regional connectivity and integration across the GCC."

She said, "The strength of Oman's competitive offer was also amplified by the IMF which predicts that Oman will have the highest economic growth rate in the Arab world in 2024 and last year's rating of Oman as the fourth most attractive country for foreign direct investment in the FDI Standouts Watchlist 2023."

S&P forecasts that Oman's real GDP will expand by about

2% per year on average over 2024-2027, and the government will post fiscal surpluses of 1.9% of GDP over the same period. The rating agency also highlighted the government's plans to continue reducing its role in the economy by transitioning from an owner to a regulator, a move expected to further develop the private sector and attract foreign investment.

In the first quarter of 2024, Oman saw a notable rise in foreign investment across key sectors compared to Q1 2023. Investment in manufacturing surged by 37.3%, while construction rose by 12.3%, transport by 5.1%, and hospitality by 3.1%. Additionally, Oman attracted increased investment from several key international markets, with the US up by 41.4%, the UK up by 24.3%, Kuwait by 39.6%, and the Netherlands by 26.7%.

"This positive data clearly reflects growing global confidence in Oman's economic reforms and investment opportunities, further solidifying our position as an exciting business destination," Ibtisam added.

ARA Petroleum wins 25-year Ntorya gas field development licence in Tanzania

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman-based ARA Petroleum announced that it has been awarded a 25-year development license for the Ntorya gas discovery at a handover ceremony held recently in Tanzania.

The ceremony, attended by over 1,000 people, took place in Mtwara, the capital of the Mtwara region where Ntorya is located. ARA Petroleum Tanzania (APT) and development partner Aminex were presented with the license by Dr Doto Mashaka Biteko, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Energy of Tanzania.

"We were honored to receive this license from Deputy Prime Minister Doto Biteko at such a prestigious event. This ceremony marks a significant milestone in our commitment to harnessing Tanzania's gas resources for the benefit of its people. Our ambition for this endeavor is to boost economic development, alleviate energy poverty, and support the country's energy transition," said Erhan Saygi, General Manager of



APT expects to produce between 40mn and 60mn standard cubic feet per day in the first year of production

ARA Petroleum Tanzania, in a press statement.

The Deputy Prime Minister outlined the government's vision for the future. ARA Petroleum was encouraged to hear that the Deputy Prime Minister anticipates the completion of the pipeline from Ntorya to Madimba within the next six months, which will enable the

delivery of gas for electricity production.

APT has begun work at the Ntorya site, acquiring land for upstream processing facilities and the Chikumbi-1 appraisal well location, while expanding another nearby site to accommodate the construction of a camp and storage yard. The company is also establishing the logistics necessary to conduct subsurface work that will lead to the first gas production.

According to a gas sales agreement signed with the Tanzanian Petroleum Development Corporation (TPDC) earlier this year, APT expects to produce between 40mn and 60mn standard cubic feet per day in the first year of production, increasing that to

140mn standard cubic feet per day within a few years. Such volumes will increase Tanzanian gas production by 20% to 80%.

Beyond initial production, APT believes there is potential to produce significantly greater volumes of gas from Ntorya, having conducted an extensive 3D seismic survey over the wider license area.

This potential will require investment in a phased development of the Ntorya gas field and the maturation of domestic industries as gas offtakers, including fertiliser, cement, and plastics production plants, vehicle CNG stations, domestic LPG suppliers, and additional gas-fired power stations for industrial and residential use.

Subscription period for OQ Exploration & Production IPO kicks off today

Muscat - Subscription to the two billion shares offered by OQ Exploration and Production (OQEP) in its initial public offering (IPO) begins today, September 30. The IPO is open to subscribers from both Oman and abroad.

Subscription period for individual investors will continue until October 9, while institutional subscriptions will last until October 10.

OQEP's share offering has emerged as the largest IPO in the history of Oman and marks the first IPO in the exploration and production sector, following

the successful IPOs for Abraj Energy Services Company and OQ Gas Networks last year.

The offered shares represent 25% of OQ Exploration and Production's total shares, divided into three main categories. The first category is the institutions category, which includes 800mn shares, equivalent to 40% of the shares offered for subscription, at a price between 370bz and 390bz per share.

The second category is the individuals category, also totaling 800mn shares, equivalent to 40% of the shares offered in this category. This category is



divided equally into two segments: the large individual investors category and the small individual investors category, each comprising 400mn shares.

Small individual investors can subscribe to a minimum of 500 shares and a maximum of 28,500 shares. The large individual investors category allows subscriptions starting from a minimum of 28,500 shares, with no specified maximum limit.

The third category, for major investors, allows subscriptions of up to 400mn shares, which is equivalent to 20% of the shares

offered for subscription.

The maximum share price for Omani individuals will be 351bz, reflecting a discount of 10% to encourage Omanis to participate in this offering and take advantage of available investment opportunities. For non-Omanis, the maximum share price will be 390bz.

The IPO aligns with the government's economic diversification policies, embodying the goals of Oman Vision 2040 by engaging citizens and residents in government enterprises, thus expanding the ownership base.

ONA

Oman's economic outlook remains favourable: CBO

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The macroeconomic outlook for the Omani economy remains favourable, supported by sustained reforms under the strategic direction of Oman Vision 2040 and favorable energy prices, according to the Central Bank of Oman (CBO).

The CBO issued its annual report for 2023 on Sunday, providing a comprehensive analysis of Oman's macroeconomic outlook over the past year.

'The oil prices are expected to remain at a higher level, providing crucial support to hydrocarbon activities. Non-hydrocarbon growth is expected to gradually increase to 3.0% over the medium term, supported by global demand recovery, continued reforms, and robust private investment amid a shift in composition towards investments in non-hydrocarbon sectors,' the CBO said in the report.

It noted that Oman's fiscal outlook for 2024 is projected to witness further improvement, buoyed by favorable oil prices and fiscal consolidation measures, which have positively influenced both fiscal and external positions.

'The Omani economy currently has a favourable outlook notwithstanding some downside risks stemming from global factors. In 2024, economic growth is projected to be higher, while inflation remains low. The year



In 2024, economic growth is projected to be higher, while inflation remains low. The year ahead provides Oman with a window of opportunity to accelerate the implementation of structural reforms

ahead provides Oman with a window of opportunity to accelerate the implementation of structural reforms. These reforms are critical to strengthening the economy's resilience while enhancing its prospects, which are essential for Oman to effectively address future challenges,' the CBO stated.

The report indicated that economic activity achieved decent growth levels despite global challenges in 2023, driven by significant improvement in the performance of the non-hydrocarbon sector. Prices also remained stable due to government measures aimed at containing global inflationary pressures. Moreover, the CBO suggested that the macroeconomic outlook indicates the Omani economy can achieve good growth rates in 2024.

The global economic environment remained challenging in 2023, marked by a series of events that led to a slowdown in economic activity amid rising interest rates. The ongoing threat of inflationary pressures, geopolitical tensions, disruptions in global trade, and extreme climate events were among the factors that continued to test the re-

silience of the global economy, the central bank reported.

'Despite a challenging global environment, the Omani government's policy measures and reforms have achieved notable success. Economic activity continued to expand and sustain its positive growth trajectory, driven by the recovery of non-hydrocarbon sectors. Inflation has remained low, largely reflecting lower energy prices and subdued global and domestic demand conditions,' the report said.

It noted that fiscal and external balances remained in comfortable surpluses in 2023, and public debt was significantly reduced from 2022. Additionally, the government's commitment to continued fiscal consolidation measures has created sufficient fiscal space to support economy.

After a strong rebound from the pandemic, economic activity

in Oman moderated in 2023. Real GDP expanded by 1.3% in 2023, compared with 9.6% in 2022. The moderation was mainly due to OPEC+ production cuts, which led to hydrocarbon GDP growth of only 0.4% during the year. Additionally, non-hydrocarbon GDP moderated to 2.4% in real terms, down from the high growth rate of 9.1% seen in 2022.

According to the report, Oman experienced a notable decline in inflation in 2023, benefiting from the monetary policy framework, fixed exchange rate regime, and fiscal policy measures. The average consumer price inflation in Oman was 0.9% in 2023, a decrease from the 2.5% observed in 2022. This decline can be primarily attributed to lower energy prices and subdued global and domestic demand conditions.

ECB rate cut hopes rise as French, Spanish inflation dips below 2%

rankfurter, Germany - Inflation in two of the three strongest economies of the eurozone hit a three-year low in September, under 2%, raising hopes that the European Central Bank (ECB) is going to continue cutting rates in October.

The EU-harmonised annual inflation rate in France fell to 1.5% in September, the lowest rate since July 2021 and down from 2.2%, according to the flash estimate from the French statistics office INSEE.

In a monthly comparison, prices declined by 1.2% which is the biggest drop since at least 1990.

The Spanish EU-harmonised annual inflation rate was also lower than expected in September, 1.7%, dropping from 2.4% in August, to its lowest level since March 2021, according to preliminary data from the Spanish statistics office INE.

Compared to the previous month, Spanish prices edged down by 0.1%.

The surprise decline in the annual inflation was mainly

driven by falling energy prices in both countries. French food prices stood steady but the Spanish ones declined compared to September 2023.

Core inflation (price increase without counting food and energy prices) in both countries lowered to 2.4% in September.

Lower inflation could give more room to the European Central Bank to further cut the benchmark interest rates, after two such moves this year. In September, the ECB lowered the deposit facility rate - the rate through which it steers the monetary policy stance - by 25 basis points to 3.50%, following a similar move in June.

The ECB is focused on the 2% inflation target, however, decisions are based on the core inflation rates, among others.

The better-than-expected data on Friday boosted market bets on another 0.25% cut on 17 October, based on pricing, investors give it a 70% chance, according to Bloomberg's data.

(Source: Euronews.com)



DRIVEWISE



JEREMY FOX IS A BRITISH DRIVING AND ROAD SAFETY EXPERT. SINCE 2009, HE HAS MANAGED THE DRIVER-TRAINING OPERATIONS OF TECHNICAL & ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING INSTITUTE. HE CONSIDERS IT HIS PRIVILEGE TO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO OMAN'S IMPROVED ROAD SAFETY.

Seatbelts save lives and reduce or eliminate injury. FACT!

The Oman Traffic Law makes it mandatory for drivers and front-seat passengers to wear their seatbelts. However, many people simply ignore this. Apart from the legal situation, however, by the simple act of buckling up we can halve the chance of being killed or seriously injured.

In a crash, many unrestrained people die due to being ejected from the vehicle. As indicated, a person who is not wearing a seatbelt is twice as likely to die or suffer injury as a person wearing one.

Babies and small children

Babies and children are the most vulnerable and stand little chance of survival if they are not properly restrained. Children who are too big for baby seats should be suitably raised on a booster seat so that a normal adult seatbelt fits them safely and comfortably without creating the risk of injury by the belt itself.

Seatbelts have saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of people around the world in the past 30 years, especially in countries which have enacted and enforced laws on universal seatbelt and child restraint use.

Why wear seatbelts?

In a crash, or even just a sudden stop, our seatbelt protects us by: preventing us from being ejected from the vehicle; reducing the risk or speed of a 'secondary crash': that of our head and body with the hard interior of the vehicle or the bodies of other occupants; slowing our forward momentum gradually and distributing the crash forces evenly over the stronger parts of our body (pelvis and ribcage).

At impact, if we are not wearing a seatbelt, we will continue to travel forwards at the speed

the vehicle was travelling prior to the crash until we are stopped by a solid object, such as the windscreen, dashboard or steering wheel.

An unbelted passenger in the rear seat is a serious danger to a belted passenger in front of him. In a head-on collision he will be thrown forward into the person seated in front with a force of 30-60 times his body weight. The odds of death in such cases are almost three times higher for the unbelted passenger, and twice as high for the person seated in front. Any passenger, even a child, not wearing a seatbelt can kill or seriously injure other occupants of the vehicle.

The most dangerous place for a baby or small child to travel is in the arms of his mother.

In a crash at only 50 km/h an infant is likely to be violently catapulted out of the mother's arms, hitting the dashboard or windscreen; if seated in the back, hitting the seat in front with a force, as mentioned, of many times their body weight.

People think they can keep hold of and protect a baby or small child in such an impact. They cannot!

Do not place a rear-facing child safety seat in the front of a vehicle. The back of the baby seat would be very close to the dashboard and as the airbag deployed in a crash it would strike it and possibly cause serious injury to the child.

Thoroughly read the vehicle and child seat manufacturer's instructions regarding how it may be permissible to place a baby seat on the front passenger seat.

A final thought

If you sat in a fast fairground ride or rollercoaster and there was nothing to restrain you, would you still take the ride?

I hope your answer is that you would not. So why take the risk in a vehicle? Always use seatbelts and child restraints. The lives of you and your loved ones depend on it. Safe driving!

SEATBELTS AND CHILD RESTRAINTS

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

US inflation falls to lowest level since 2021, boosting hopes for more interest rate cuts

Diccon Hyatt

The cost of living in the US barely edged up in August, making for the lowest annual inflation rate in more than three years.

Consumer prices as measured by Personal Consumption Expenditures rose 0.1% in August from July, making for a 2.2% increase since August 2023, the Bureau of Economic Analysis said. Forecasters had expected inflation to be slightly hotter at 2.3%, down from 2.5% in July, according to a survey of economists by Dow Jones Newswires and The Wall Street Journal.

It was the lowest annual inflation since February 2021, and marked significant progress in the Federal Reserve's attempts to bring inflation down to a 2% yearly rate, from a high of 7.1% in 2022.3 The PCE is the Fed's preferred measure of inflation.

Cooling inflation could pave the way for the central bank to follow up its reduction of interest rates earlier this month with further rate cuts, to prevent the unemployment rate from jumping. The Fed's high interest rates since 2022 have put downward pressure on inflation by discouraging borrowing and spending, but have been a drag on the economy to the point where employers have pulled back on job openings.

A lower fed funds rate could help household budgets by lowering interest rates on credit cards and auto loans, and put downward pressure on mortgage rates too.

"To the extent that inflation remains under control - and we continue to trend in that direction—the Fed can focus almost entirely on the labor market, which means a rate cutting bias," Chris Zaccarelli, chief investment



Cooling inflation could pave the way for the Fed to follow up its reduction of interest rates earlier this month with further rate cuts, to prevent the unemployment rate from jumping

officer for Independent Advisor Alliance, said in a commentary. "As the Fed cuts rates—especially in the absence of recessionary growth—it is a great tailwind for both stock and bond markets and should eventually provide some relief for those consumers that are more interest-rate sensitive."

Although the report showed inflation generally cooling, some important prices are still rising too fast for comfort. Core inflation, which excludes the volatile prices of food and energy, rose 2.7%

over the year in August, up from 2.6% in July and in line with expectations. Core inflation is heavily influenced by rent and other housing costs, which have continued to rise quickly in official government measures, although more up-to-date sources show that rent inflation has slowed dramatically since the pandemic.

Still, if inflation continues to fall in future months, as forecasters expect, the Fed is likely to remain focused on the labor market, since its mandate from congress

requires it to both keep a lid on inflation and keep unemployment low. That means how much the Fed cuts rates in the coming months will likely be heavily influenced by reports on job growth an unemployment, especially a report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics next Friday

"Inflation remains on a path back to target, giving the Fed space to continue to cut rates," David Alcala, lead macroeconomic strategist at Lazard Asset Management, wrote in a commentary.

"The key question looking ahead is whether relief from rate cuts will arrive quickly enough to stabilize a cooling labor market. Next Friday's jobs report will be closely watched for clues."

(Source: Investopedia.com)

Research evaluates significance of pharmaceutical interventions

'Levels of agreement among clinical pharmacists on the impact of pharmaceutical interventions in Oman: A retrospective analysis' by the principal investigator Juhaina al Maqbali, senior pharmacist specialist at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, is one of the research projects that evaluates clinical pharmacists' consensus on pharmaceutical interventions in the Sultanate of Oman.

Due to disagreements between healthcare providers on medication-related interventions, Juhaina and her team aimed to investigate the outcomes and significance of clinical pharmacists' interventions in a tertiary care hospital in Oman.

Specifically, it sought to evaluate the levels of agreement among clinical pharmacists regarding the clinical significance and grading of these pharmaceutical interventions. The focus was on understanding how these interventions impact patient safety, treatment efficacy, and toxicity reduction.

Juhaina stated that a retrospective study was conducted at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital (SQUH) over nine months, from January 1, 2021, to September 30, 2021. The study included all documented interventions by clinical pharmacists for all categories of admitted patients that met the inclusion criteria, she report.



A retrospective study was conducted at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital over 9 months... The study included all documented interventions by clinical pharmacists for all categories of admitted patients

JUHAINA AL MAQBALI

Data were collected on the types and outcomes of interventions, clinical significance, grading of clinical significance, and associated cost reductions. The interventions were peer-reviewed by clinical pharmacists to validate their clinical significance and grading.

As for the research results,

Juhaina mentioned that out of 4,760 documented interventions, 3,006 were included in the final analysis after excluding those with missing information.

The study found that clinical pharmacists primarily intervened to improve treatment efficacy (58%) and reduce toxicity (24%). Cardiovascular medica-

tions and antibiotics were the most frequently involved drug classes, each accounting for 23% of interventions. The majority of interventions were accepted by treating physicians, with 76% accepted as suggested and 19% accepted with changes.

Through this study, Juhaina suggested that there was a sub-

stantial agreement among clinical pharmacists on the clinical significance of the interventions, indicating substantial agreement between originators, reviewers, and supervisors.

Juhaina and her team highlighted the crucial role of clinical pharmacists in enhancing patient safety, improving treatment outcomes and contributing significantly to the quality of healthcare through their interventions. The team also recommend the involvement of clinical pharmacists as an essential part of the multidisciplinary team in the management of patients.

Juhaina's research paper was published in the *Journal of Pharmacy Practice*. Her team con-

sisted Dr Aqila Taqi, Buthaina al Hamadani, Sara Gamal, Esra al Lawati, Najwa al Himali, Fatima Bahram, Suad al Jabri, Nashwa al Sharji, Saud Homood, Bushra al Siyabi, Ekram al Siyabi, Samyia al Ajmi, Kifah al Balushi, and Prof Ibrahim al Zakwani.

The research project was supported by the Publication Support Programme of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

This programme of the ministry helps a researcher or a research team publish their research papers in the best classified journals, the most prestigious peer-reviewed periodicals and the highest-rated specialised databases.

Training on leadership skills begins in Muscat

A special training programme on leadership skills began for the Muscat governorate employees on Sunday, a release stated.

The 'Leadership Skill Development for Second-Level Leaders' programme aims to improve the administrative proficiencies of government employees and thereby improve the government's institutional performance.

This training programme will have two segments: The first one from Sunday (September 29) to October 3, and the second from October 6 to October 10).

The programme focuses on participants' various essential skills such as strategic planning, effective communication and decision-making; as it works on them to enhance productivity and achieve institutional targets efficiently.

It pursues to establish positive leadership values and behaviours that contribute to administrative success, and to enable participants to deal with the change's stages effectively.

The training programme will cover several areas such as administrative leadership and institutional change, strategic and



It focuses on participants' various essential skills such as strategic planning, effective communication and decision-making

administrative planning, work organisation and leaders' rotation, effective communication skills, artificial intelligence, and decision-making methodologies.

Combining applied lectures and individual and group practical activities, this programme seeks to help participants develop "new behaviours and knowledge" that can contribute to improve thinking and interaction with various situations.

This programme comes within the strategic instructions of Oman Vision 2040.

Muscat governorate is keen to help the employees imbibe leadership abilities to face future challenges efficiently and effectively.

Al Mazunah organises forum on investments, entrepreneurship

Al Mazunah Free Zone, managed and operated by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates 'Madayn', organised the 'Investment and Entrepreneurship Forum' in collaboration with the SMEs Development Authority, under the auspices of Sheikh Saif bin Hamoud al Busaidi, wali of Al Mazyunah.

The forum aimed to spotlight diverse investment opportunities in the free zone while highlighting the incentives and support programmes offered to investors and business owners through relevant bodies. Key participants included representatives of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), Development Bank, and Entrepreneurship and Incubation Centre.

The forum also featured handicrafts exhibition and included the signing of an agreement between Al Mazunah Free Zone and United Projects Group for the management and operation of the water station in the free zone.

In his opening remarks,



Ahmed al Kasbi, Director General of Al Mazunah Free Zone, emphasised on Madayn's strategic role in enhancing economic growth and attracting investments to the free zone, aligning with Oman Vision 2040 and thereby supporting economic diversification and entrepreneurship.

Moreover, Abubaker al Harizi shared the vision of Al Mazunah Free Zone, which aims to position the free zone as a competitive economic hub

that attracts and nurtures both local and international investments. Harizi also outlined the targeted sectors within the free zone, including logistics, land port, automotive related services, and both light and heavy industries, emphasising that the zone offers a range of attractive incentives for investors.

Salim al Shehri, Director of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in the wilayat of Al Mazyunah, stressed the ministry's commit-

ment to enhancing the business environment in the sultanate, while highlighting recent initiatives aimed at simplifying procedures for business owners and supporting trade, investment and exports.

Additionally, Mohamed al Shehri from the SMEs Development Authority in Dhofar, elaborated on the authority's Al Azm lending portfolio, explaining that the programme is designed to contribute to the In-Country Value and support a diverse array of projects including industrial and service projects, incubated businesses, business accelerators, among others.

Mohammed al Hatmi, Salalah Branch Manager at Development Bank, delivered an informative presentation on the bank's financing services, including those designed to support the establishment of new projects or the development of existing ones in sectors that offer significant value and contribute to the national economy's growth.



WMF launches poster for 'Maanaviyam' event

The World Malayalee Federation (WMF) Oman Council unveiled the poster for the grand cultural event 'Maanaviyam - 2024', which is scheduled to take place on Kerala Piravi Day, at the Al Falaj Auditorium in Muscat on November 1.

The poster launch ceremony was held at Golden Tulip Hotel, Ruwi, in the presence of media representatives and WMF members, a release stated.

The poster was officially handed over by Ullas Cheriyan, WMF Middle East Regional Coordinator, to Dr J Ratnakumar, the Global Chairman of WMF, marking

the formal announcement of the highly anticipated event.

The highlight of 'Maanaviyam - 2024' will be the participation of Santosh George Kulangara, renowned world traveller, founder of Safari TV, and Managing Director of Labour India Publications. Kulangara is widely known for his solo travelogue series, 'Sancharam', which he filmed across more than 140 countries.

Additionally, the event will feature a musical concert by playback singers Nadeem Arshad, Bhagyaraj, and their band, along with a comedy show by

renowned mimicry artist Rajesh Adimali and his team, promising a captivating and unforgettable evening for the Malayalee community in Oman.

Founded in 2016 with its headquarters in Vienna, Austria, under the leadership of Dr Prince Pallikunnel, WMF now operates in 166 countries across six continents, with 229 representatives. WMF is committed to uniting the global Malayalee diaspora beyond caste, creed, or politics, working towards common benefits for expatriates around the world.

At the event, Dr J Ratnakumar expressed WMF's dedication to serving the global Malayalee community and highlighted the organisation's continued efforts to make a positive impact on society.

The poster launch ceremony was attended by WMF leaders, including National Coordinator Sunil Kumar, National President George P Rajan, National Secretary Sheikh Rafiq, Global IT Coordinator Sudheer Chandroth, Program Convener Anoop Divakaran, and Media Coordinator Muhammed Yaseen.

'Maanaviyam - 2024' will be managed by Red Cube Events.

Sinotruk signs deal with New World Autos for distribution

In a landmark move set to reshape the heavy vehicle industry in Oman, Sinotruk - from China National Heavy Duty Truck Group - has signed a distribution agreement with New World Autos LLC, a press release informed.

This strategic partnership combines the robust engineering prowess of Sinotruk with the unparalleled market expertise of New World Autos, creating a formidable alliance that promises to deliver exceptional value to consumers across Oman.

The partnership aims to address the growing demand for robust, efficient and high-performance heavy-duty trucks capable of handling Oman's diverse and challenging terrains, its transportation needs and also important safety compliance formalities for the Oil & Gas sector.

By combining Sinotruk's cutting-edge technology with New World Autos deep-rooted experience, commitment to customer satisfaction, extensive local expertise and infrastructure, this collaboration is poised to deliver substantial benefits to busi-



nesses through the introduction of a new standard of heavy vehicle solutions in Oman.

As one of Oman's largest and most respected business houses, New World Autos boasts an impressive portfolio of globally renowned automotive brands. With a strong sales and after-sales service network across Oman, it has established a reputation for delivering exceptional customer experiences.

This partnership will further enhance the position as a leader in the automotive sector, providing Omani consumers with access to Sinotruk's world-class heavy vehicles.

Sinotruk, a pioneer in China's heavy-duty truck manufacturing industry, has a rich history dating back to 1956. With a legacy of in-

novation, Sinotruk introduced China's first heavy-duty truck, the HUANGHE branded JN150 8-ton truck, and has continuously advanced its technology. By collaborating with New World Autos, Sinotruk aims to expand its global footprint and promote localised operations in Oman, ensuring that customers receive tailored solutions and outstanding service.

As part of this strategic initiative, New World Autos will soon establish dedicated Sinotruk showrooms and after-sales service centers in major cities across Oman. These facilities will be instrumental in delivering an enriching customer experience, ensuring that Sinotruk's products are supported by the highest standards of service and support.



Mazoon Dairy gets global food safety certification

Mazoon Dairy, has received the esteemed FSSC 22000 V6 certification, a globally recognised food safety standard.

This achievement marks a significant step in ensuring that Mazoon Dairy's products meet the highest food safety, quality, and consumer trust levels.

The FSSC 22000 V6 certification is a globally recognised food safety management system issued by the Foundation for Food Safety Certification. It integrates ISO 22000 standards with additional food safety requirements, focusing on enhancing food safety culture, risk management, and continuous improvement throughout the supply chain.

This certification is widely accepted by regulators and companies worldwide, making it a benchmark for excellence in food safety. By achieving FSSC 22000 V6, companies demonstrate their commitment to maintaining the highest safety and quality standards, gaining trust from consumers, and securing a competitive edge in the global marketplace.

For Mazoon Dairy, this certification is a testament to its commitment to excellence and also positions the company as a leader in food safety within the global dairy and food industry.

For Mazoon Dairy's customers, this certification ensures that every product, from fresh milk to yogurt, meets rigorous international food safety standards. This translates into greater confidence and assurance in the quality, nutrition, and safety of every item that reaches their tables.

The company's local production approach also provides another significant benefit: Fresher dairy products. By producing lo-

cally, Mazoon Dairy minimises transportation times, ensuring consumers in Oman and the GCC region receive dairy products that are fresher and healthier, with fewer preservatives and a smaller carbon footprint.

Abdulhamid al Sarmi, Quality Assurance & Quality Control Manager at Mazoon Dairy highlighted the significance of its recent FSSC 22000 certification, a globally recognised food safety standard under the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI).

"While the company was already ISO 22000 certified, FSSC 22000 is more stringent, featuring unannounced audits and a stronger emphasis on practical food safety measures," Sarmi mentioned. "This certification

initiates, underscores their holistic approach to both safety and environmental responsibility.

With this certification, Mazoon Dairy has further embarked on this noble mission to provide safe and healthy food products to its discerning customers by eliminating biological, chemical, and physical hazards at every step of the process

On a global scale, receiving the FSSC 22000 V6 certification will strengthen Mazoon Dairy's competitiveness in the international market. The certification, recognised by regulators and customers worldwide, enhances Mazoon Dairy's brand reputation and opens doors to new global markets where stringent food safety standards are essential.

A commitment to food safety, quality

Mazoon Dairy's FSSC 22000 V6 certification solidifies its role as a leader in food safety and quality, in Oman and the region, delivering unparalleled benefits to consumers while paving the way for local and international growth. By combining cutting-edge technology, sustainability efforts, and a commitment to Oman's socio-economic development, Mazoon Dairy is well-positioned to remain a key player in the dairy industry for years to come.

Mazoon Dairy Company was established on January 1, 2015, in Buraimi governorate, the company spans 15sqkm and aims to boost self-sufficiency in dairy production, enhance the nutrition of the community of Oman through increased milk consumption, and stimulate high-quality food manufacturing.

As part of Oman Vision 2040, Mazoon Dairy combines traditional values with cutting-edge technology to deliver high-quality, fresh, and nutritious dairy products, setting new standards in the industry locally and regionally. The production site includes a state-of-the-art dairy farm. The facility also features a Waste Water Treatment plant. Mazoon Dairy's diverse product range includes fresh milk, long-life milk, flavoured milk, yogurt, laban, ice cream, cheese, and juices, distributed across the GCC region.

Committed to high-quality standards, Mazoon Dairy holds ISO 9001:2015, ISO 22000:2018, ISO 14001:2015, and ISO 45001:2017 certifications. The 50,000sqm Central Processing Plant is automated to 85% of processes to ensure product excellence from raw milk reception to market dispatch.

This certification ensures comprehensive food safety across the entire supply chain, from raw materials to final distribution, with continuous monitoring at each stage of production

ABDULHAMID AL SARMI

ensures comprehensive food safety across the entire supply chain, from raw materials to final distribution, with continuous monitoring at each stage of production."

Sarmi emphasised the impact of the certification, noting how it enhances customer trust, strengthens regulatory relationships, and solidifies Mazoon Dairy's commitment to the highest food safety standards. Furthermore, Mazoon Dairy's adoption of sustainability practices, including food waste management and circular economy

Locally, Mazoon Dairy's focus on innovation, sustainability, and quality strengthens its position as a trusted Omani brand.

Receiving the certification on behalf of Mazoon Dairy, Ahmed Mohammed al Ghafri, Chief Communication Officer stated, "Achieving this milestone reflects Mazoon Dairy's unwavering dedication to quality and food safety. This certification reinforces our standing not just in Oman, but also on the international stage, allowing us to expand our footprint and bring Omani excellence to a global audience."

Mall of Oman reimagines interactive experiences

Mall of Oman is transforming the season with its interactive pop-ups, an immersive three-part experience showcasing the latest in fashion, cutting-edge electronics and elegant home furniture.

Running until November 9, guests are invited to discover the latest collections from new market entrants and leading brands including Hilia, Anfasic Dukhoon, Emax, Sharaf DG, Home Centre and Zebrano.

Established brands such as Oman Luxury and Lush also participated in the activation, enriching the overall experience for guests.

Complementing the pop-ups are a range of engaging workshops designed to inspire creativity and provide a dynamic platform for learning and exploration. Visitors can also look forward to capturing great moments and enjoying virtual reality games, available at each pop-up.

Located on the second floor opposite Snow Oman, this activation allows guests to effortlessly browse a variety of brands in one convenient space, underscoring the mall's commitment to customer-centric events and immersive digital experiences. With these interactive pop-ups, Mall of Oman continues to solidify its reputation as the mall of endless possibilities, where every guest who walks through its doors encounters something truly unforgettable.

Founded in 1992, Majid Al



Futtaim is an Emirati-owned, diversified lifestyle conglomerate operating across the Middle East, Africa and Asia. The Group started from one man's vision to transform the face of shopping, entertainment, and leisure to 'create great moments for everyone, every day'.

It has since grown into one of the region's most respected businesses, employing more than 43,000 people, with owned assets valued at US\$19bn and has the highest credit rating (BBB) among privately held corporations in the region. Majid Al Futtaim owns and operates 29 shopping malls, seven hotels and five mixed-use communities, welcoming more than 600mn customers through its doors every year.

Majid Al Futtaim operates more than 600 VOX Cinemas screens as well as a portfolio of world-class leisure and entertainment experiences across the region including four indoor ski locations in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Cairo and Oman as well as family

entertainment centres Magic Planet and Little Explorers.

It is the proud owner of the flagship Mall of the Emirates, Mall of Egypt, and Mall of Oman with the iconic City Centre shopping malls rounding out its portfolio across the region.

The Group partners with world-class fashion, home, and beauty retail brands with over 70 stores across the GCC, including lululemon, LEGO, Crate and Barrel, Shiseido and THAT, a Majid Al Futtaim multi-brand concept store and app. It is also the exclusive franchisee for Carrefour across markets in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, serving 770,000 customers daily.

These offerings are powered by the UAE's fastest growing loyalty programme SHARE, which offers customers a more personalised and data driven experience. The developer of choice for the region, Majid Al Futtaim is the creator of mixed-use communities including Ghaf Woods and Lilal Al Ghaf in Dubai and Al Mouj in Muscat.

Global Money Exchange opens kiosk-lounge at Muscat airport

Global Money Exchange Company (GMEC), the leading Money Exchange House in Oman, has opened a new open lounge cum kiosk at the Muscat International Airport.

The kiosk is a very spacious setup of the group built between Gates B and C in the arrival area of the airport, a release stated.

The kiosk-cum-open lounge was dedicated to the passengers and visiting general public at a grand function held at the airport.

Sheikh Samer Ahmed Mohammed al Nabhani, Chief Commercial Officer, Oman Airports, dedicated the kiosk, in the presence of other top officials of Oman Airports, Global Money Exchange, staff of other establishments in the airport, and well-wishers.

The kiosk will operate 24x7, offering a wide range of currency exchange services to travellers and visitors coming to receive them. The travellers and those coming to receive them can freely access the spacious lounge functioning throughout



the day.

Flight information display of the airport is available close to the lounge and GMEC's staffs will also be available round the clock, should they need any information on emergencies.

The company has a total five outlets in the Muscat Airports in addition to the Visa Services in the Arrival area.

Global Money Exchange operates at all the international airports in the Sultanate of Oman. It has the largest network in the country with remittance arrangements across the world.

The company also deals in all major currencies of the world at very competitive rates. This service is offered 24x7 at our Muscat and Salalah International Airports.

For the convenience of the travellers, an 'online order facility' for foreign currency is available for quick and faster delivery.

The new kiosk is yet another milestone in the company's mission to provide world-class remittance and currency exchange services, emerging as a leader in the sultanate's financial services Industry.

Ras Al Hamra to host golf tournament to raise funds for OHBDA



Ras Al Hamra Golf Club is organising a golf tournament on October 11 (Friday) for raising funds for the Oman Hereditary Blood Disorders Association (OHBDA).

The upcoming Charity Golf Tournament is a fundraising event aimed at supporting efforts of OHBDA, which works to raise awareness, research, and provide care for individuals and families affected by hereditary blood disorders in Oman.

This tournament invites golfers of all skill levels to enjoy a day of friendly competition on the greens while contributing to a noble cause. Proceeds from the event will go directly toward supporting OHBDA's mission to im-

prove the quality of life for patients suffering from genetic blood disorders, including sickle cell anaemia, thalassemia, and haemophilia.

Players can register as individuals or teams. Early registration is encouraged as spots are limited. The tournament will commence with 2 shot gun starts at 12.30pm and 3.30pm with an option for morning tee times. This will be a 9 hole Texas scramble format. After the tournament, there will be a charity auction and dinner, offering participants the opportunity to further support OHBDA's life-changing programmes.

OHBDA is dedicated to raising awareness and providing

support for individuals and families affected by hereditary blood disorders in Oman. Through education, advocacy, and community engagement, the association strives to improve the lives of those impacted by these conditions and ensure access to better healthcare and resources.

Hereditary blood disorders affect thousands of people in Oman, making the work of OHBDA critical in raising awareness, providing medical support, and advocating for better healthcare options. This tournament provides a platform for the golfing community to unite and make a tangible difference in the lives of those impacted.

"We are thrilled to host our

annual charity golf tournament, bringing together golfers and supporters for a day of fun, awareness, and philanthropy," said Adel al Foory, President of Ras Al Hamra Recreational Centre.

"Every participant and sponsor is playing a vital role in helping us improve the lives of those living with hereditary blood disorders. Together, we can make a lasting impact."

Businesses and individuals are invited to sponsor this event, with various sponsorship packages available. This is an excellent opportunity for organisations to align their brand with a meaningful cause while reaching a diverse audience.

China demands independent Palestinian state at UN

New York, US - China reiterated its demand on Saturday for an independent state of Palestine as it told the UN that powerful nations cannot replace justice through their strength.

Palestine is the 'biggest wound' to human conscience; Foreign Minister Wang Yi told the 79th session of the General Assembly in New York.

"But might cannot replace justice," he said, while noting the conflict in the Gaza Strip was causing more casualties each day and fighting has started again in Lebanon.

"Palestine's long-held aspira-

tion to establish an independent state should not be shunned anymore, and the historical injustice suffered by the Palestinian people should not be ignored anymore," said the Chinese foreign minister.

Wang's address to General Assembly came amid an Israeli onslaught against the besieged coastal enclave of Gaza since October 7, which has resulted in the deaths of more than 41,500 Palestinians.

Israeli has intensified its aerial bombardment on Lebanon in recent weeks, targeting residential areas and market places, and as-



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi was addressing the 79th session of the General Assembly in New York

sassinating, among others, Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah. The continued arms and diplomatic support from the US and its allies has sustained the Israeli onslaught on Gaza and Lebanon for nearly a year.

For peace in Ukraine

Wang said China is 'committed to dialogue' and 'not throwing gas on the fire', when he referred to the Russia-Ukraine war.

He said Beijing was playing a 'constructive role and engaging in mediation for peace and not exploiting volatile situations for 'selfish gains'.

He also introduced to the UN what he called the 'Group of Friends for Peace' in Ukraine.

Its 'very purpose ... is to uphold the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, build consensus for a political settlement of the crisis and contribute to a prospect of peace', said Wang.

The group, promoted by China and Brazil, held its first meeting on Friday in New York with the participation of top diplomats and representatives from 17 countries, including Egypt, Indonesia, South Africa, Mexico and Zambia.

Anadolu Agency

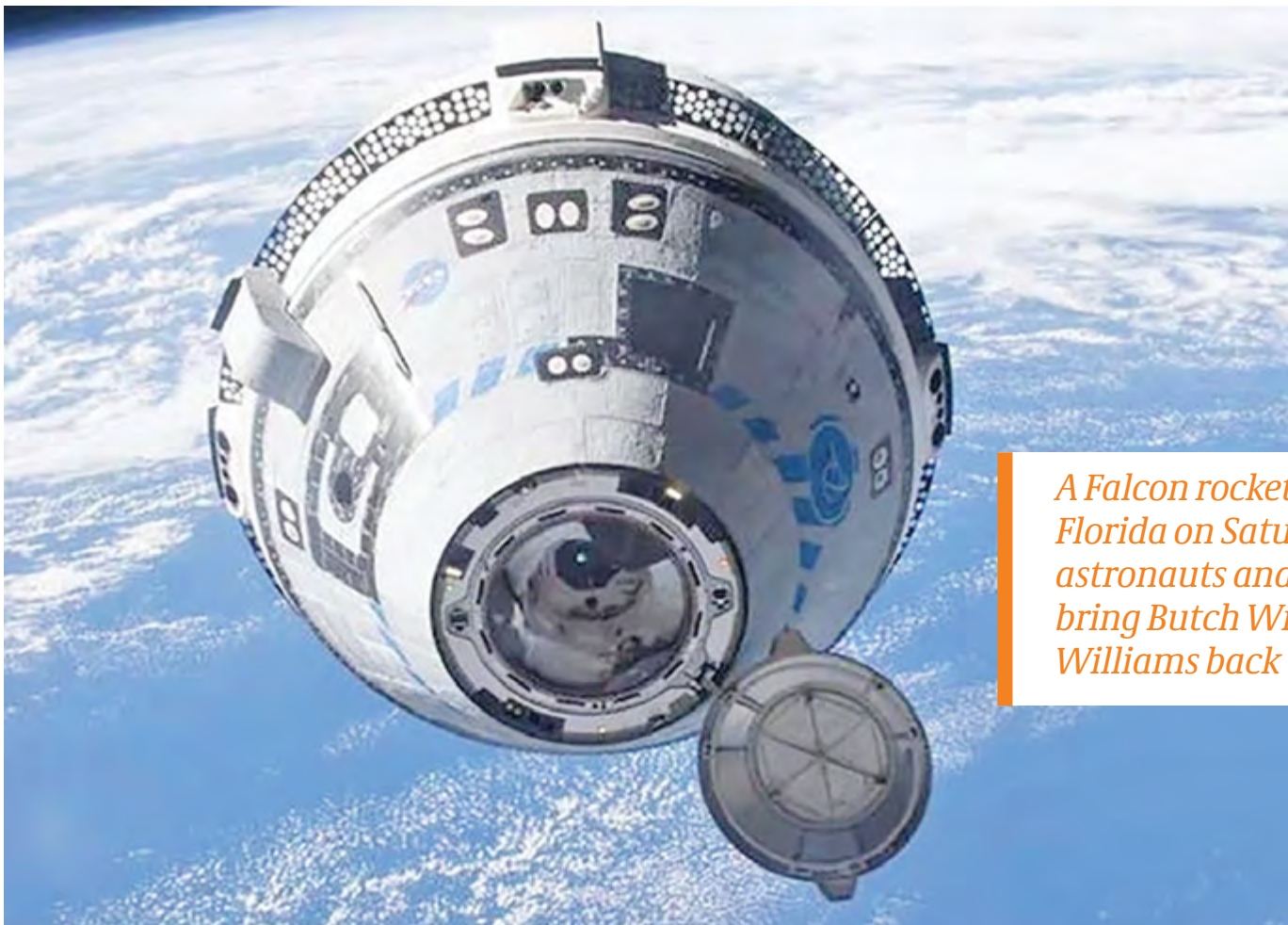
SpaceX launches rescue mission to ISS to retrieve stranded astronauts

Wilmore and Williams have been stranded in space since June due to issues with Boeing Starliner

Florida, US - SpaceX launched a reduced two-man crew to the International Space Station (ISS) on Saturday, carrying supplies and two empty seats for Starliner astronauts awaiting a return home in February after an unplanned eight-and-a-half-month stay in orbit, CBS News reported.

"A Falcon rocket took off from Florida on Saturday, carrying two astronauts and two empty seats to bring Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams back to Earth. Wilmore and Williams have been stranded in space since June due to issues with the Boeing Starliner," CBS News stated in a post on X.

As per the CBS News, the launch was delayed by two days due to high winds, rain, and clouds associated with Hurricane Helene. Finally, the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket ignited and lifted off from pad 40 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station



NASA opted to launch the Crew 9 Dragon with only two of its original crew members, allowing the ship to return Wilmore and Williams to Earth

at 1:17pm EDT, following a northeasterly trajectory directly aligned with the ISS's orbital plane.

Inside the Crew Dragon Freedom, commander Nick Hague, a seasoned NASA astronaut, monitored the automated as-

cent alongside Russian cosmonaut Alexander Gorbunov, who was on his maiden flight.

Typically, Crew Dragons launch with four crew members; however, two Crew 9 astronauts - Stephanie Wilson and Zena Cardman - were removed from

the mission in August to accommodate seats for Starliner commander Barry 'Butch' Wilmore and pilot Sunita Williams when Crew Dragon returns to Earth in February.

This mission marked the first piloted space flight from pad 40

and SpaceX's inaugural launch from the Space Force station, having previously conducted 14 Crew Dragon missions from the historic pad 39A at the nearby Kennedy Space Centre.

After propelling the Falcon 9 through the dense lower atmo-

sphere, the first stage, which was on its second flight, successfully returned to land at the Space Force station 7 minutes and 40 seconds post-launch, CBS reported.

Four-and-a-half minutes later, the Crew Dragon was released to autonomously proceed toward the ISS, initiating a 28-hour rendezvous. If all goes according to plan, the spacecraft will dock at the station's forward port at 5:30pm on Sunday.

A Falcon rocket took off from Florida on Saturday, carrying two astronauts and two empty seats to bring Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams back to Earth

Awaiting Hague and Gorbunov's arrival are Wilmore and Williams, who are currently serving as the ISS commander, along with Soyuz MS-26/72S commander Aleksey Ovchinin, Ivan Vagner, and NASA astronaut Don Pettit, who launched on September 11, the CBS News reported.

Hague, Gorbunov, Wilmore, and Williams will replace Crew 8 commander Matthew Dominick, Mike Barratt, Jeanette Epps, and cosmonaut Alexander Grebenkin, who were launched on March 3 and are scheduled to

return to Earth around October 7, concluding a 217-day stay in space.

In addition to transporting Hague and Gorbunov to the station, the Crew Dragon was filled with clothing and supplies for Wilmore and Williams, who were launched on June 5 during the Starliner's first crewed test flight, reported CBS.

Initially, the mission was expected to last eight to ten days. However, various helium leaks in the Starliner's propulsion system, coupled with reduced thrust in five manoeuvring jets, led NASA to decide to bring the spacecraft down earlier this month without its crew.

As per the CBS News, consequently, NASA opted to launch the Crew 9 Dragon with only two of its original crew members, allowing the ship to return Wilmore and Williams to Earth at the end of its mission in February. By the time they land aboard the Crew 9 capsule around February 22, they will have spent over 262 days in space.

Some have described the Crew Dragon flight as a 'rescue' mission. However, Wilmore and Williams have always had a path home, first via their spacecraft, then aboard Crew 8 Dragon, and after Sunday's docking, via Crew 9 Dragon.

ANI

Austria votes in tight election as far-right party eyes historic win

Vienna, Austria - Polling was underway in Austria on Sunday in a general election that could see the far-right gain a narrow but historic victory over the governing conservatives.

Voting began at 7am local time (0500 GMT), with over 6.3mn people of Austria's nine million residents eligible to vote.

Immigration concerns and an economic downturn have dominated the electoral landscape in the Alpine EU nation.

Growing popularity of FPÖ

The far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) has been in government several times but it has never topped a national vote.

That could change this time, though, with pre-election polls showing the anti-immigrant party could win the biggest share of votes with 27% support.

Herbert Kickl, a former interior minister, has been in charge of the FPÖ since 2021.

Under his abrasive leadership,



the party - which was hit by a massive graft scandal in 2019 - has seen its popularity rebound on voter anger and anxieties over COVID restrictions, migration, inflation and the Ukraine war.

How other parties fared in polls?

Polls put the conservative Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), led by

Chancellor Karl Nehammer, in second place on 25%.

The centre-left Social Democrats (SPÖ), meanwhile, were polling on around 21%.

The Greens - who are currently in a ruling coalition with the conservatives - are predicted to gain 9%. However, analysts say even if the FPÖ wins the most votes, it will likely not have

enough seats or partners to form a government.

The far-right party and the conservatives have not ruled out working together, but Nehammer has reiterated his refusal to work under Kickl. A three-way coalition between the conservatives, Social Democrats and the liberal NEOS could also be a possibility.

DW

Hurricane Helene devastates US Southeast as deaths hit 56

Florida, US - Massive rains from Hurricane Helene caused widespread destruction to the US Southeast. The storm claimed at least 56 lives, displaced several residents, and plunged millions into darkness without electricity, according to a report by Voice of America.

Rescue efforts were underway on Saturday to reach those stranded by the floods.

In North Carolina, at least 10 lives were lost, according to Governor Roy Cooper. South Carolina reported 19 fatalities, including two firefighters in Saluda County. Georgia witnessed at least 17 deaths, with two victims claimed by a tornado in Alamo. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis on Saturday raised the number of confirmed dead in Georgia to 11, including several people who drowned in Pinellas County.

Meanwhile, in Virginia's Craig County, one person succumbed to injuries sustained during a storm-related tree fall and building collapse, as reported by Governor Glenn Youngkin, CNN



reported. Also, US President Joe Biden expressed concern over the devastating hurricane.

Sharing a post on X on Saturday, Biden said: "The devastation we're witnessing in Hurricane Helene's wake has been overwhelming. Jill and I continue to pray for all of those who have lost loved ones and for everyone impacted by this storm." He added: "Our focus is on life-saving and life-sustaining response efforts in the Southeast - and I continue to be briefed by my team, which is coordinating recovery efforts

with state and local officials."

Biden also said that since before the storm made landfall, the administration has been engaged in providing assistance to people in the affected areas.

"My Administration has been with the people of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Tennessee since before Helene made landfall. And we'll be on the ground with them, helping them recover long after this storm has passed," he said.

ANI

Saudi warns of 'dangerous consequences' from Israeli military escalation in Lebanon

Israeli army has pounded Lebanon since September 23, killing at least 816 and injuring over 2,500

New York, US - Saudi Arabia warned of 'dangerous consequences' from Israel's ongoing military escalation in Lebanon and called for an immediate ceasefire.

Addressing the 79th session of the UN General Assembly in New York, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan called for preserving Lebanon's stability and sovereignty per international law and UN Security Council resolutions.

"The absence of accountability and punishment despite Israel's ongoing violations of international law and humanitarian law encourages further escalation," he added.

Bin Farhan warned that escalation will not bring security or stability to any party.

"It signals dangerous consequences instead and increases the scale of violence and war and further threatens security and stability of the region," he said.

The top Saudi diplomat said his country has 'joined international efforts aimed at establishing an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon to pave the way for a sustainable diplomatic resolution,'" he added.

The US, EU, and several other countries called on Wednesday for a temporary ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah to facilitate diplomatic efforts.

The Israeli army has pounded Lebanon since September 23, killing at least 816 people and injuring over 2,500, the Lebanese Health Ministry said.



Hezbollah and Israel have been engaged in cross-border warfare since the start of Israel's war on Gaza

Hezbollah and Israel have been engaged in cross-border warfare since the start of Israel's war on Gaza.

Another Hezbollah commander killed?

The Israeli army claimed on Sunday to have killed another

Hezbollah commander in an airstrike in the southern suburb of Beirut.

A military statement said Nabil Qaouk was killed in a strike on Saturday, describing him as the head of Hezbollah's preventive security unit.

The Israeli army accused

Qaouk of involvement in attacks against Israelis in recent days.

There was no immediate response from Hezbollah on the Israeli claim, which came two days after the assassination of Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah in an Israeli strike in the

Lebanese capital on Friday.

Meanwhile, at least 11 people were killed on Sunday in an Israeli airstrike targeting a house in the town of Ain in the Bekaa Valley in northeastern Lebanon.

The Lebanese National News Agency reported that six bodies were recovered from the rubble

following the airstrike, while rescue operations are ongoing to retrieve five more victims.

The airstrike targeted a residential home in Ain, a town near Hermel, a region that has seen increased military activity amid heightened tensions between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah.

One million displaced

Lebanon's caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati said on Sunday that around one million people have been displaced due to Israeli attacks, marking the largest wave of displacement in the country's history.

"Lebanon is experiencing the largest wave of displacement in its history," he told a press conference following a meeting of the government's emergency committee in Beirut.

"Our priority is to stop the ongoing Israeli aggression through continued diplomatic efforts. We have no other choice," he noted.

Mikati also reaffirmed Lebanon's commitment to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, which calls for a cessation of hostilities between Israel and Hezbollah.

"The Lebanese army is ready to implement the resolution," he said, stressing the importance of preventing further escalation.

Separately, Mikati had a phone call with his Iraqi counterpart Mohammed Shia al-Sudani during which he thanked Baghdad for its support and assistance to Lebanon.

Sudani reaffirmed Iraq's commitment to supporting Lebanon, Mikati's office said in a statement. The Iraqi premier also offered his condolences for the killing of Hezbollah Secretary-General, Hassan Nasrallah in an Israeli airstrike in Beirut on Friday.

Anadolu Agency



US issues highest travel warning for Lebanon

Istanbul, Turkey - The US Department of State announced on Saturday that the highest Level 4 travel warning for Lebanon remains in effect due to a 'volatile and unpredictable security situation', directing family members of embassy staff and non-essential personnel to leave the country.

"Do not travel to Lebanon due to crime, terrorism, civil unrest, kidnapping, unexploded landmines, and the risk of armed conflict," the statement said.

Due to the 'unpredictable security situation', the statement instructed family members of employees at the Beirut Embassy and non-essential personnel to leave the country, warning those who choose to remain in Lebanon to be 'prepared for shelters in case the situation worsens'.

The announcement called on US citizens in southern Lebanon, particularly near the Syrian border and refugee settlements, to 'immediately leave' those areas. It warned that the Beirut Embassy may not be able to evacuate citizens who choose to remain if the situation worsens.

The announcement called on US citizens in southern Lebanon, particularly near the Syrian border and refugee settlements, to 'immediately leave' those areas

The highest Level 4 travel warning for Lebanon, advising against travel to the country, continues to be in effect.

Maintaining civil peace

In the wake of the assassination of Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah in an Israeli airstrike, the Lebanese army urged citizens on Sunday to uphold national unity and refrain from actions that could disrupt civil peace.

A statement by the Army Command called on the

Lebanese 'not to fall prey to actions that could harm civil peace', calling the current phase 'dangerous and critical' for the country.

"The Israeli enemy is executing its destructive plans and sowing division among the Lebanese people," it said, vowing to enforce necessary security measures to maintain civil peace.

Meanwhile, five rockets launched from Lebanon landed in open areas near Lake Tiberias (the Sea of Galilee) in northern Israel on Sunday, with no reports of casualties or damage, according to a report by daily *Yedioth Ahronoth*.

The Israeli newspaper stated that rocket alert sirens were activated in the city of Tiberias and the southern Golan Heights, prompting residents to take cover.

The rockets ultimately fell in open, uninhabited areas, it added.

The Israeli army has not confirmed this latest rocket attack so far.

Anadolu Agency

Gaza: Nine more Palestinians killed

Gaza City, Palestine - The Israeli army killed nine more Palestinians in attacks in the Gaza Strip, taking the overall death toll to 41,595 since last October 7, the Health Ministry in the enclave said on Sunday.

A ministry statement added that some 96,251 other people have been injured in the assault.

"Israeli forces killed nine people and injured 41 others in the last 24 hours," the ministry said.

"Many people are still trapped under the rubble and on the roads as rescuers are unable to reach them," it added.

On Sunday, six Palestinians were killed and several others injured as Israeli airstrikes hit residential homes in multiple areas across the Gaza Strip, according to medical sources.

Medical personnel confirmed to Anadolu that an Israeli reconnaissance missile struck a house near the Al-Qassam cemetery in



the Nuseirat refugee camp, killing one person.

Eyewitnesses reported to Anadolu that 'several civilians were injured in an Israeli airstrike that hit the Qashlan family home in the New Camp area, north of Nuseirat'. Additional injuries were reported as Israeli forces targeted a house near the Al-

Ghafari intersection on Al-Jalaa Street in Gaza City.

In central Gaza, Israeli warplanes also struck a home in the Al-Mashala area of Deir al-Balah.

Meanwhile, Gaza's civil defence authorities said in a statement that 'two martyrs were recovered from the Abu Nasr family home after Israeli strikes

hit an area near Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza.'

Medical sources at the Baptist Hospital in Gaza City further confirmed that 'three Palestinians were killed and others wounded after an Israeli airstrike hit an apartment near the Al-Sha'abia intersection in central Gaza'.

Anadolu Agency

Ukraine: Zaporizhzhia hit by aerial strikes

Kyiv, Ukraine - At least 11 people were wounded in a series of Russian strikes on Zaporizhzhia in southern Ukraine, officials said.

Ukrainian emergency services said in a statement that the regional capital was hit by several 'massive aerial strikes' at dawn.

"A building and six houses in different city neighbourhoods suffered a lot of destruction," said the statement, adding that 42 members of the emergency services were helping those potentially trapped under the rubble.

"According to preliminary information, the number of wounded has risen to 11," the emergency services said, adding that rescue operations had

ended. One woman who was pulled from the rubble was taken to hospital. The regional governor, Ivan Fedorov, said earlier that Zaporizhzhia had been hit by 10 Russian strikes that destroyed 'a multi-story building and some houses'.

Russia illegally annexed the Zaporizhzhia region in 2022, but the main city of the same name remains under Kyiv's control.

Russia 'shoots down' 125 Ukrainian drones

Russian air defences, meanwhile, have shot down 125 Ukrainian drones, according to the country's Defence Ministry.

Authorities in the southwest-

ern city of Voronezh reported damage from falling debris. Fires also reportedly broke out.

Several cars, two apartments and a children's playground were damaged, said Governor Alexander Gusev. No one was hurt, he added.

In addition to Voronezh, the border regions of Belgorod and Rostov were particularly targeted, while the Bryansk, Kursk and Krasnodar regions were also attacked in isolated cases, according to the Defence Ministry.

Ukraine, defending itself against a full-scale Russian invasion, often attacks targets on Russian territory to hit military supplies.

Russia to formalise nuclear doctrine

The Kremlin said changes to Russia's nuclear doctrine have been prepared and are about to be formalised, meaning that the relevant documents outlining the circumstances under which Moscow can use nuclear weapons will be updated.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told state TV reporter Pavel Zarubin: "The amendments have been prepared, and will now be formalised." Peskov cited the international situation as backdrop for the doctrine changes. He also pointed to escalating tensions near Russia's borders.

DW

INDIA

Delhi: Police constable killed in road rage incident

New Delhi - A Delhi police constable was allegedly killed in a road rage incident after being hit by a car while he was going to the police station on his bike on Saturday night in Delhi's Nagloi area, an official said.

The deceased had been identified as 30-year-old Sandeep who is survived by his mother, wife and a five-year-old son.

According to the police, the incident occurred when Sandeep spotted a car being driven recklessly on his way to Railway Road from Nangloi Police Station during duty hours and asked the driver to not drive harshly.

Following this, the car suddenly hit Sandeep from behind and dragged him for about 10 metres before colliding with another car, said Delhi police.

At the time of the accident, the constable was reportedly dressed in civilian clothes in view of increased burglary in the area.

After the incident, Sandeep was immediately taken to Sonia Hospital and later shifted to Balaji Hospital in Paschim Vihar but declared dead.

As per CCTV footage, Sandeep took a left turn in a 'gali' in Nagloi area and indicated the car to slow down. On this, the car suddenly accelerated and hit the bike. The driver of the car abandoned the car and fled from the spot following the incident.

ANI

PM dedicates Rs 11,200 crore worth projects in poll-bound Maharashtra

New Delhi - Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone, inaugurated and dedicated various projects in the poll-bound Maharashtra worth about Rs 11,200 crore, through video conferencing on Sunday.

Of those projects, the Prime Minister inaugurated the Pune Metro section of District Court to Swargate which will also marked the completion of Pune Metro Rail Project (Phase-1). The cost of the underground section between the District Court to Swargate was around Rs 1,810 crore.

Further, the PM laid the foundation stone for Swargate-Katraj Extension of Pune Metro Phase-1 to be developed at the cost of around Rs 2,955 crore. This southern extension of around 5.46km is completely underground with three stations - Market Yard, Padmavati, and Katraj.

Modi also dedicated to the nation Bidkin Industrial Area, a transformative project covering an expansive 7,855 acres under the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme of central government, situated 20km south of Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar in Maharashtra.

The project developed under Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor holds immense potential as a vibrant economic hub in the Marathwada region. The central Government has approved this project with an overall project cost of over Rs 6,400 crore for



PM Narendra Modi lays foundation stone, inaugurates and dedicates to nation various projects in Maharashtra through video conferencing, on Sunday (ANI)

development in three phases.

"India should be modern, India should be modernised, but it should be based on our fundamental values. India should develop, grow and move forward carrying its heritage with pride," he said in his brief address.

The Prime Minister inaugurated the Solapur Airport which would significantly improve connectivity, making Solapur

India should be modern, India should be modernised, but it should be based on our fundamental values. India should develop, grow and move forward carrying its heritage with pride

NARENDRA MODI

more accessible to tourists, business travellers and investors. The existing terminal Building of Solapur has been revamped to serve around 4.1 lakh passengers annually.

"The work of upgrading the airport has been completed to provide direct air connectivity to Solapur. The capacity of the terminal building here has been increased; new facilities have been created for the passengers. This will be very convenient for the devotees of Vithoba. Now people will be able to reach Solapur directly to have the darshan of Lord Vitthal," the PM said.

Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone for the Memorial for Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule's First Girls' School at Bhidewada.

ANI

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin felicitates DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin as he congratulates him on being appointed as State Deputy Chief Minister, in Chennai on Sunday (ANI)

Jamaican PM Andrew Holness to pay first-ever visit to India

New Delhi - At the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of Jamaica Andrew Holness will pay an official visit to India from September 30 to October 3, a statement by the Ministry of External Affairs said.

This will be his first visit to India, and also the first ever bilateral visit of a Prime Minister of Jamaica to India. Earlier, Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Holness have met several times on the sidelines of multi-lateral meetings.

During the visit, Holness will hold delegation-level talks with Prime Minister Modi and call on President Droupadi Murmu and Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankar. The visit will also provide an opportunity to Holness to meet with other dignitaries and interact with trade and industry leaders. A number of



MoUs are expected to be signed during the visit giving a fillip to bilateral cooperation.

India and Jamaica share strong historical and cultural linkages, reflected in their shared colonial past, values of democracy and freedom, and passion for cricket, the statement said.

This visit is expected to bolster bilateral relations, enhance economic cooperation, and solidify the longstanding bonds between Jamaica and India, the

During the visit, Holness will hold delegation-level talks with Prime Minister Modi and call on President Droupadi Murmu and Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankar. The visit will also provide an opportunity to Holness to meet with trade and industry leaders

statement added.

Earlier on June 5, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar thanked his Jamaica's counterpart Kamina Johnson Smith after the latter wished Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his third consecutive victory in the Lok Sabha elections and said that she looks forward to continuing strengthening bilateral cooperation and working together on issues important to the Global South.

Jamaican PM Andrew Hol-

ness congratulated PM Modi as he prepared to begin his third term. In a post on X, Holness stated: "Congratulations to Prime Minister @narendramodi as he prepares to embark on a historic third term as India's head of government."

In response, Modi thanked Holness and said he looks forward to working together for the welfare of the people of the two countries.

ANI

Nepal: Series of floods, landslides leave at least 126 people dead

Kathmandu, Nepal - The devastating series of floods, landslides and inundations has pushed the death toll to at least 126 in Nepal so far in the last 24 hours, as per data received from the Armed Police Force (APF) and the Nepal Police on Sunday.

In addition to that, dozens of people still remain missing, with 100 more sustaining injuries in the disaster.

As per APF and Nepal Police, till Sunday morning, a total of 34 people were found dead in Kavrepalanchowk, with 20 in Lalitpur, 15 in Dhading, 12 in Kathmandu, seven in Makwanpur, four in Sindhupalchowk, three in Dolakha and five each in

Panchthar and Bhaktapur districts. Additionally, two people each have been found dead in Dhankuta and Solukhumbu, one each in the Ramchhap, Mahottari and Sunsari districts.

According to Nepal Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak, the recent rainfall had caused severe damage to the Kathmandu Valley and the Nepal Army, Armed Police Force and Nepal Police have been conducting search and rescue operations all across the Himalayan nation.

"Due to the heavy rainfall all across the nation, we are collecting information about induced damages; a meeting of the (disaster) command post also has



Whole neighbourhoods in Kathmandu were inundated as rivers in the capital broke their banks

been conveyed. A huge amount of damage to life and properties has been recorded all across the nation. The recent rainfall has also affected the Kathmandu Valley severely. The Nepal Army, Armed Police Force and Nepal Police are conducting the search and rescue operations all across the nation," Lekhak told reporters on Saturday.

On Saturday, Kathmandu recorded a record-breaking rainfall in its 54 years with 323mm of rainfall, recorded within 24 hours on that day. Nepal since Thursday evening had been experiencing heavy rains influenced by water vapour from the Bay of Bengal and a low-pressure sys-

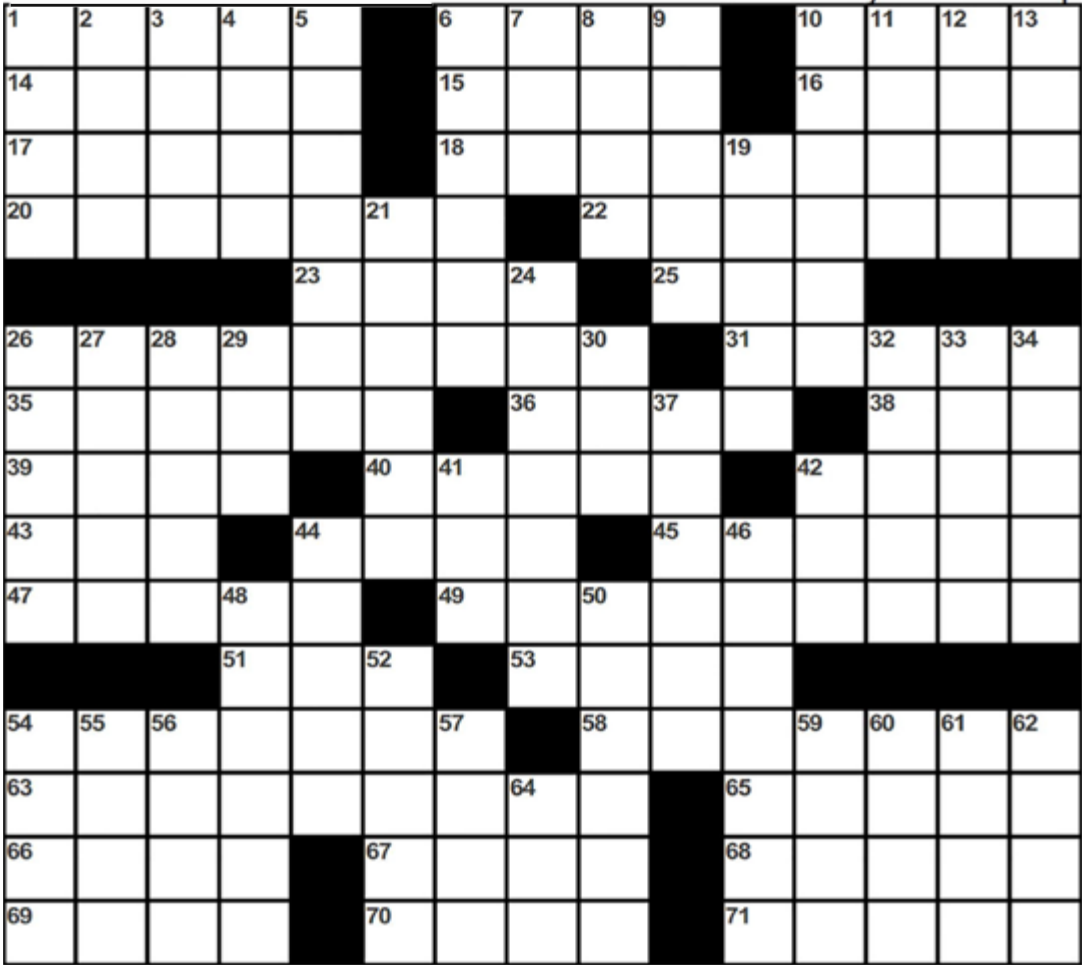
tem in the region, which eventually sparked a humanitarian crisis all across the nation.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Authority (NDRRMA) also issued a warning for 56 out of 77 districts about possible disasters due to the rains, advising people to adopt caution. Home to nine of the ten highest peaks in the world, Nepal has already estimated more rain than average this year, with a total of 1.8mm people getting affected by it.

The NDRRMA had also estimated that 412 thousand households would be affected by monsoon-related disasters.

Agencies

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) England's _ Downs
- 6) "Terrible" phase
- 10) Revered figure
- 14) Appraiser's figure
- 15) Loser of fable
- 16) _-Tex (water-repellent fabric)
- 17) Mass-mailing tool
- 18) Nukes in the Garden of Eden?
- 20) "... I'm complaining"
- 22) Polygraph's purpose
- 23) Crescent lines
- 25) Math grouping
- 26) Nautical command in the Garden of Eden?
- 31) Moisten, in a way
- 35) Snapple alternative
- 36) French resort city
- 38) Vikki Carr's "It Must Be"
- 39) Pay to play
- 40) Soap opera, for one
- 42) Snap up
- 43) Nod, perhaps
- 44) Keep a tryst
- 45) Professor's privilege
- 47) Not very chatty
- 49) Sweetener in the Garden of Eden?
- 51) "... Gratia Artis"
- 53) Irritable mood

- 54) Flopsy and Mopsy, for two
 - 58) Hardly luxurious
 - 63) Financially solvent, in the Garden of Eden?
 - 65) Main body part
 - 66) Word with "mob" or "slide"
 - 67) Give a heads-up to
 - 68) Sewing machine pioneer Howe
 - 69) LAX guesstimates
 - 70) Monty Python's Idle
 - 71) Schusser's spot
- DOWN**
- 1) Headed for overtime
 - 2) _ Alto, Calif.
 - 3) Buttonhole, essentially
 - 4) Give the heave-ho to
 - 5) A greenhouse gas
 - 6) Rustic roofing
 - 7) Glob of gum
 - 8) Like the Sabin vaccine
 - 9) Weigh station visitors
 - 10) "No choice"
 - 11) Make the scene
 - 12) Eyes, in poetry
 - 13) Chinese soup ingredient
 - 19) Bathysphere developer William
 - 21) Place to play
 - 24) Many Beethoven

- pieces
- 26) Make into law
- 27) Trial location
- 28) Fragrant compound in beer
- 29) Broke a fast
- 30) Wine glass part
- 32) "Dunno" gesture
- 33) Miss America accessory
- 34) Campfire bit
- 37) Tabby's teaser
- 41) Letters on a DVR remote
- 42) Creature with a beard
- 44) Deserve
- 46) Ritzy spreads
- 48) Martens' cousins
- 50) Working well together
- 52) Creator of Topsy
- 54) Hard to come across
- 55) Sit alongside
- 56) Composer Bartok
- 57) Trade verbal jabs
- 59) Piano player, perhaps
- 60) Rock's ZZ Top, for one
- 61) "Yesterday!" on memos
- 62) ENT part
- 64) Meyers of "Kate & Allie"

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Sometimes it feels like patience isn't a virtue as much as it's a method of torture! If you want to retain any sense of balance in your life, you are going to have to find a way to take your internal clock and slow it down. A great way to slow your roll would be to laugh a lot. So get together with people who always have a funny take on things. Their quips and witty comments will help take your mind off your urge to rush around and help you stay hopeful for the future.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

People will be projecting their own issues on to you today, so don't listen to those who are pointing out your faults. They're either jealous of you or worried that they themselves are failing. It seems like everyone has issues right now, and their insecurities could start to get on your nerves. Before you lose your temper and tell them off, it's best to go off by yourself and be alone. You can't get caught up in feeding the egos of other people.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

The smallest details of this day will be like blinking neon signs. That's how powerful your observational skills will be. This means it's a great day for negotiations. You'll be able to read the other person's body language like an open book. And you'll be able to sense how close their offer is to what they are really capable of giving you. You will have the upper hand today, there is no denying that. You may have to explain what is going on to the confused folks around you.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Hōkūleʻa, Star of Gladness, a double-hulled sailing canoe launched in 1975 in Hawai'i, has completed multiple voyages using exclusively Polynesian navigation techniques. What was its 2014 voyage?

- A. To circumnavigate the Earth
- B. To Japan and back
- C. Round all the islands of Polynesia
- D. To Antarctica and back

02. Corsica is surrounded by which sea?

- A. Dead Sea
- B. Tasman Sea
- C. Coral Sea
- D. Mediterranean Sea

03. What is referred to as earth's sister planet due to its similar size and mass?

- A. Venus
- B. Mars
- C. Mercury
- D. Jupiter

Answers: 1. A 2. D 3. A



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Slowing down might not feel comfortable right now, but it is the right thing to do. The intense energy you put out today shouldn't be directed at solving problems or putting out fires. Instead, direct it solely at reducing the level of commitment in your life! Hit the brakes on a new business project, cool off an overwhelming new flirtation, or tell that pushy friend that you need some time to yourself, whatever it takes to get yourself to a brand-new level of boredom.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

As exciting or tantalizing as it may seem, other people's drama is going to do nothing but add trouble to your life right now, so steer clear! There is no need to get involved in anyone else's problems even if you think you have a solution for them. They are different from you, so what worked for you might only make things worse for them. You can express your ideas, but do not offer advice and do not take anyone's side. Stay neutral right now.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

The new people you meet hold a lot of opportunities for you, but keep in mind that there is more to them than meets the eye. People are very different on the inside than their appearance may lead you to believe, especially now when they're on their best behavior. If you make any assumptions about their beliefs, you should keep them to yourself or risk offending someone. For safety's sake, wait until you know them better before sharing your opinions.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

It is a good thing to share your ideas and goals with all the people in your life who can encourage you, but you need to do more than that right now. After all, is talking about what you want going to get it? The only way you can get what you want is by working for it. While your desire is still great, you have to start focusing all of your energy on reaching your goals. You can make things happen in your life. Huge opportunities are right in front of you.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

A new person could come into your life today, and their powerful magnetic charisma will be quite captivating. But be careful it doesn't distract you from what you need to get done. Prioritize your responsibilities ahead of building a new connection with this person. Resisting their pull will be easy once you get engrossed in what you have to do. You are ready to share your time and your ideas with others, but first you have to fulfill your commitments.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Better than anyone else right now, you understand the energy that a connection between two people can create. It's all about pairs. Group situations can be fun, but right now they're going to feel more strange than stimulating. What you really crave (and what you really need) is to spend time with just one other person. It can be your sweetie, sibling, friend, or even a stranger. But living your life as part of a pair today will be very rewarding and revealing.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Your friends and family have been a valuable source of support and inspiration over the years, and it is time that you thanked them all for their devotion. So why not mix your gratitude and your hospitality skills and throw a dinner party for everyone? Bring your two worlds together and watch all the people you love most make each other laugh and smile. You don't have to make it a big affair. A potluck, picnic, or pizza party would serve the same wonderful purpose.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

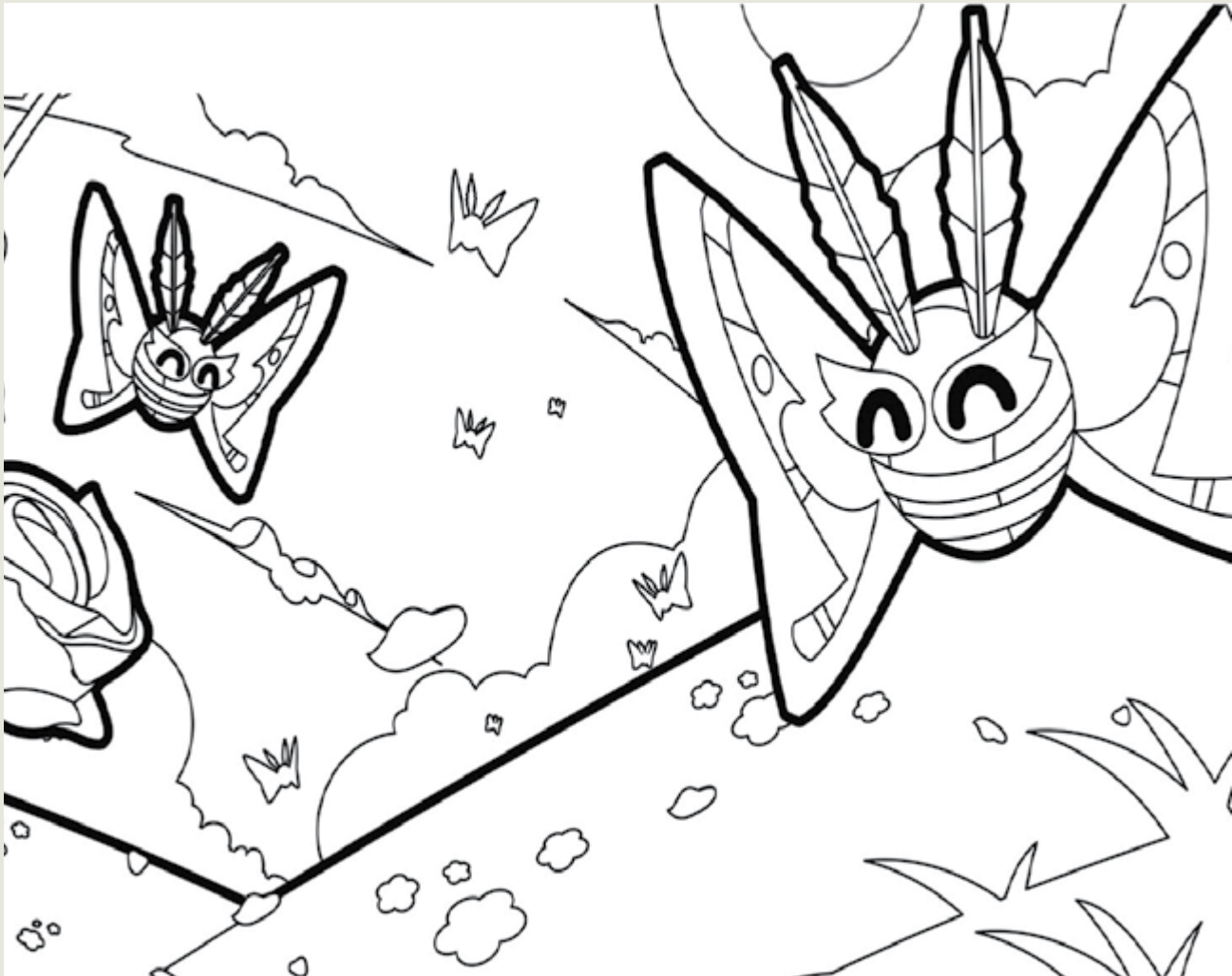
You could encounter someone today who seems like a textbook example of a jerk, but try to be open-minded about them. Judging a book by its cover has never been your style, so why start now? Extenuating circumstances are at work here. Maybe they're intimidated by you. Maybe they're acting out because they're nervous or have a headache. You don't know enough to know who they are. Give them a chance and give them time.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You'll be getting a lot of positive reinforcement in the form of beautiful words about how wonderful you are, how smart you are, how desirable you are. Naturally, this will leave you feeling pretty good about yourself. Build on that good feeling by taking a few more bold risks and challenges in your life. You need to start believing that you can excel in the most demanding situations. After all, everyone else believes you can. It's perfectly fine to prove them right.

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

Y	U	L	S
S	S	T	O
S	W	H	A
U	B	P	N

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

REDS ON TOP

Salah, Konate on target as Liverpool beat Wolves to lead Premier League standings

Wolverhampton, England - Ibrahima Konate headed home his first ever Premier League goal and Mohamed Salah converted a penalty as Liverpool climbed to the top of the Premier League table with a 2-1 victory over struggling Wolverhampton Wanderers on Saturday.

Arne Slot's men have 15 points after six games, one more than both Manchester City and Arsenal, while Wolves are bottom with a single point.

Konate scored in first-half injury time after Diogo Jota beat his man down the left then served up a pinpoint cross that the 25-year-old centre back leapt to head home.

Wolves capitalised on some sloppy defending by Konate, however, to level in the 56th minute. The French centre back appeared to be leaving the ball to run out for a goal kick but Jorgen Strand Larsen kept it in, and Rayan Ait-Nouri scored from close range.

Yet Salah silenced the celebratory home crowd at Molineux five minutes later when Liverpool were awarded a penalty for Nelson Semedo's foul on Jota, Salah sending keeper Sam Johnstone the wrong way.

"I think a team like Liverpool has to be in the top four for sure; we keep pushing, we keep pushing, but it's really early," Liverpool midfielder Ryan Gravenberch told Sky Sports after another im-

pressive display from the Dutch midfielder.

"This season I wanted to show myself again and I am really happy. He (Slot) put me in the starting 11 and gave me a lot of confidence."

Dominik Szoboszlai had squandered a brilliant chance to get Liverpool on the scoreboard when he connected with a cross from Andy Robertson, but Johnstone stopped the Hungarian's point-blank shot.

The Reds had a few more

without a clean sheet, since a 1-0 win last February at Sheffield United.

"They went toe-to-toe with one of the biggest clubs in the country," O'Neil said. "I am gutted for the lads with what they have given in the last six games, they deserve more points for what they have given."

Wolves captain Mario Lemina looked distraught after the final whistle, pulling his shirt over his face before a couple of teammates arrived to console him.

"I think a team like Liverpool has to be in the top four for sure; we keep pushing, we keep pushing, but it's really early. This season I wanted to show myself and I am really happy."

RYAN GRAVENBERCH

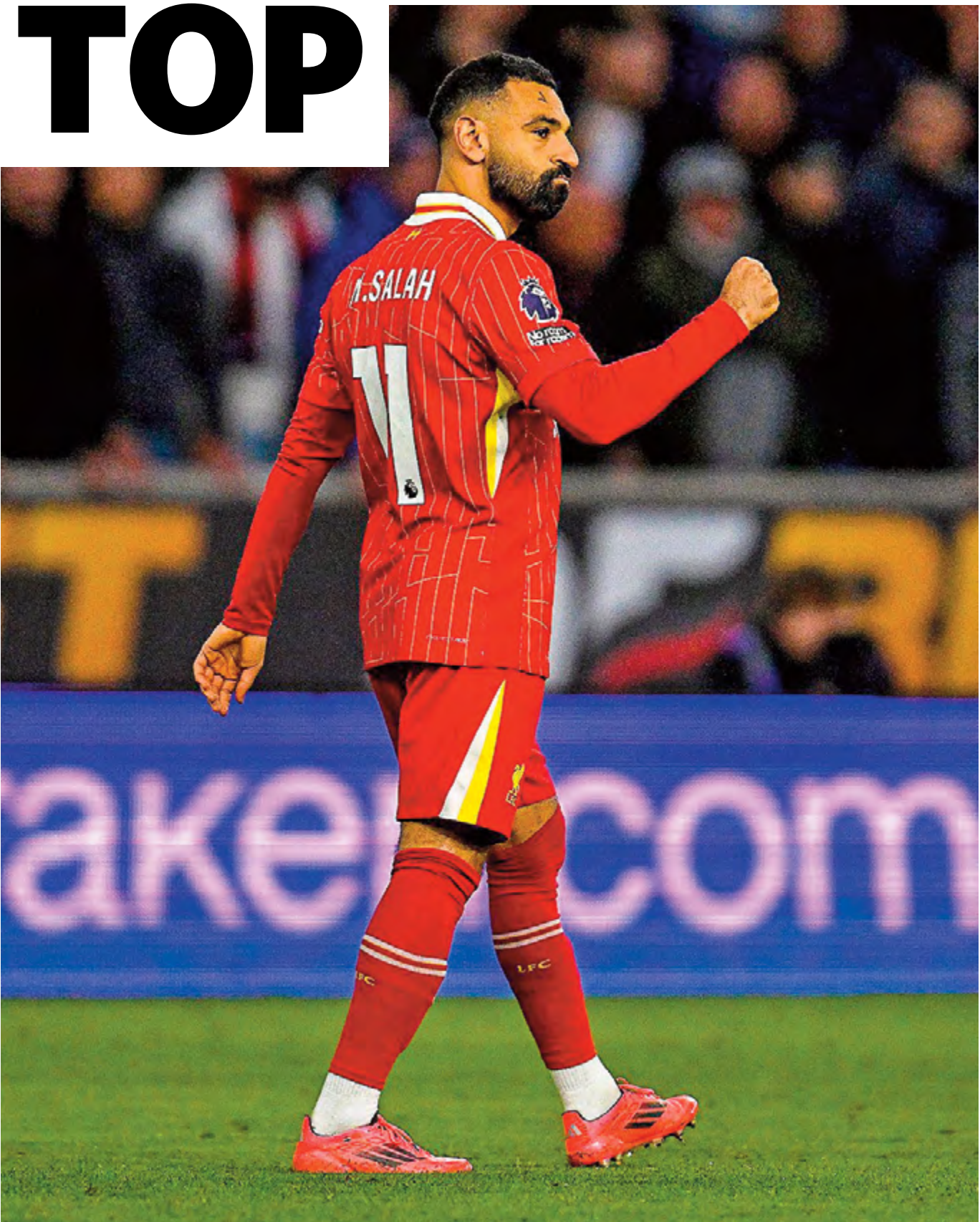
chances in the dying minutes including a corner that Konate headed over the bar and a shot to the bottom corner by Curtis Jones after a one-two with Salah that Johnstone saved.

Liverpool's victory comes amid a busy schedule, with Slot's side crushing West Ham United 5-1 in a League Cup third-round tie on Wednesday, while they host Bologna in a Champions League match in four days' time.

Gary O'Neil's struggling Wolves side have gone 18 games

On Sunday, Ipswich Town played out a fourth straight league draw after they held Aston Villa 2-2 at Portman Road where Liam Delap opened the scoring for the home side before grabbing the equaliser in the second half.

Morgan Rogers and Ollie Watkins scored for Villa in the first half before Delap grabbed his second but neither side could find a winner as promoted Ipswich continue to wait for a first win on their return to the Premier League.



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah celebrates his goal against Wolverhampton Wanderers on Saturday

Ice-cool Palmer continues red-hot form

London, England - Cole Palmer confirmed his ice-cool status on Saturday with four nerveless goals in Chelsea's 4-2 victory over Brighton and Hove Albion but complained he should have scored more.

"I should have had five or six," he told the BBC after becoming the first player to score four in the first half of a Premier League game.

"When I missed the first chance I was upset but with the way they played and their high line I felt we'd get more chances," he said.

Palmer hit the post and had a goal ruled out for offside in a frantic first half where he shone. He also missed an open goal in the second half and hid his face in frustration.

"The manager set up a good game plan, we knew how to attack them with first-time passes in behind," said Palmer, as self-effacing off the pitch as he is dominant on it.

"Three points is what we needed and that is what we got," he said.

Palmer has proved Chelsea's star signing since he joined for 42.5 million pounds (\$56.8 mil-



Chelsea's Cole Palmer celebrates his goal against Brighton and Hove Albion

lion) from Manchester City as the transfer window closed at the start of last season.

Champions City could not promise him he would play every week.

Chelsea's American owners led by Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital, who have spent more than a billion pounds on players, but failed to get results since tak-

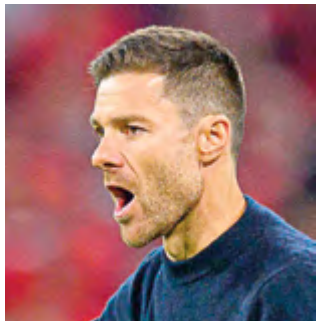
ing over in 2022, must now believe he is worth every penny and Pep Guardiola may be regretting the decision to let him go.

He scored his 10th penalty on Saturday from 10 attempts since moving south, earning the "ice-Cole" sobriquet.

Palmer, 22, has also earned an England place since joining Chelsea and has scored six goals

so far this season for his club after doubters suggested he would run out of steam after his impressive start last season.

Coach Enzo Maresca who worked at City under Pep Guardiola, has been treating him carefully, keeping him fresh for the Premier League by leaving him out of the squad for the Europa Conference League.



Xabi Alonso

Alonso happy with point at Bayern

Munich, Germany - Bayer Leverkusen boss Xabi Alonso said he was proud of his players after a tenacious defensive display in Saturday's 1-1 Bundesliga draw at leaders Bayern Munich where his defence was breached only because of an extraordinary goal.

Bayern had 18 shots to Leverkusen's three but despite the home side having nearly 70% of the possession, Alonso's team managed to take home a point as he extended his unbeaten record against the German giants to four games. "The energy and belief at Bayern is different than last season, they are going full throttle with and against the ball. That was very tough today. We can be happy with the point," Alonso said.



Liverpool's Arne Slot celebrates after the match

First place after six games doesn't count for much, says Slot

Wolverhampton, England - Liverpool manager Arne Slot is not getting carried away with his side topping the Premier League standings after their victory over Wolverhampton Wanderers on Saturday, their fourth win in all competitions in less than two weeks.

Slot's side have 15 points from six league games, one point more than reigning champions Manchester City and last season's runners-up Arsenal.

Saturday's victory was the latest in a string of solid results for Liverpool, who defeated AC Milan 3-1 in the Champions League, Bournemouth 3-0 in the league and then crushed West Ham United 5-1 in a League Cup third-round tie.

However, Dutch coach Slot insisted it did not mean Liverpool were definitely title challengers. "I always try to be realistic and Juergen's work has been incredible, everybody knows this," Slot said of former

manager Juergen Klopp, who stepped down after last season. "Two years ago was the last time they played in the Champions League and they finished fifth. Now we have to prove that we can compete in the Champions League and the Premier League.

"After 19 games, it'll tell me something but not after six."

Ibrahima Konate scored his first ever Premier League goal at Molineux while Mohamed Salah converted a penalty. Wolves had equalised after some sloppy defending from Konate.

The French centre back teased midfielder Ryan Gravenberch during their post-game interviews that he deserved to be named man of the match and not the Dutchman, who was presented with the award. However, Slot was not laughing. "Konate? Then maybe he forgot the moment we conceded a goal," the Dutchman said.

Bayern held to 1-1 draw at home by Bayer Leverkusen

Munich, Germany - Bayern Munich and Bayer Leverkusen played out a 1-1 draw in a heavyweight Bundesliga clash on Saturday at the Allianz Arena where a long-range strike from Robert Andrich for the visitors was cancelled out by another from Aleksandar Pavlovic.

The result leaves Bayern with 13 points after five games -- two points clear of RB Leipzig at the top of the standings -- while Leverkusen are third with 10 points.



Bayer Leverkusen's Granit Xhaka tries to stop Bayern Munich's Jamal Musiala during their Bundesliga match on Saturday

Bayern finished the game with 18 shots compared to three for Leverkusen but in the end Xabi Alonso's determined side saw out the game to take home a point.

Such was their staunch defence that Bundesliga top scorer Harry Kane failed to have a single shot as a starter in a league game for the first time in three years, but Vincent Kompany will be more worried about the striker's injury after a knock.

Bayern dominated posses-

sion in the opening stages, with Jamal Musiala regularly finding gaps in the defence to create opportunities while Leverkusen did not get a single chance to test Manuel Neuer in the first half-hour.

But with their first chance in the 31st minute, Granit Xhaka controlled a corner kick with his chest and set up Andrich outside the box, with the German's sweeping low shot drilled through a crowd of players into the bottom corner.

OSASUNA STUN BARCA

Budimir, Zaragoza shine to hand Flick's men their first defeat of LaLiga

Pamplona, Spain - Croatian forward Ante Budimir scored twice to help Osasuna earn a shock 4-2 home win over leaders Barcelona and hand the visitors their first defeat of the LaLiga season on Saturday.

Barca manager Hansi Flick dropped regular starters Lamine Yamal, Raphinha and Inigo Martinez to the bench with an eye on Tuesday's Champions League match against Young Boys and Osasuna, roared on by a sold-out El Sadar Stadium, started aggressively.

They pressed high relentlessly and threatened with quick counter attacks that hurt their much changed rivals.

Bryan Zaragoza, on-loan from Bayern Munich, crossed to Budimir to open the scoring with a close-range header in the 18th minute and the 23-year-old winger extended Osasuna's lead with a strike from a quick counter-attack 10 minutes later.

Barca reduced the deficit thanks to a massive blunder by Osasuna goalkeeper Sergio Herrera who failed to keep out a weak strike by Pau Victor in the 53rd minute, but Budimir extended the hosts' lead from the penalty spot in the 72nd minute,



Osasuna players celebrate a goal against Barcelona on Saturday

after he was fouled inside the box.

Substitute Abel Bretones scored the fourth with a brilliant strike from long range in the 83rd minute, before substitute Yamal scored Barca's second with a shot from the edge of the box in the 89th.

Barca top the standings on 21 points, four ahead second-

placed Real Madrid who have a game in hand and face local rivals Atletico Madrid on Sunday. Osasuna are sixth on 14 points.

"We knew that Barcelona were a tough team, that they had won everything and that we had to go out and bite, and that's how we went out," Zaragoza told Movistar Plus.

"It is a special and beautiful

game to play against Barca and I could stay all night here celebrating with the fans."

The pacey Zaragoza was a constant menace running up and down the left channel.

He dribbled past Jules Kounde before crossing for Budimir to score the opener and showed exquisite technique to run past the goalkeeper and tap the ball

We knew that Barca were a tough team, that they had won everything and that we had to go out and bite, and that's how we went out. It is a special game to play against Barca

BRYAN ZARAGOZA

into the empty net for the second goal.

Barcelona dominated possession but looked out of ideas up-front until Flick brought Yamal and Raphinha off the bench late in the second half, after a double error from Herrera helped them

reduce the deficit.

First the Osasuna keeper rolled the ball out to a Barca player then could not get back to keep out Victor's tame strike from the edge of the box that slipped through his hands and into the net.



Diego Martinez

Boca coach Martinez quits

Buenos Aires, Argentina Boca Juniors head coach Diego Martinez stepped down after the club's 2-0 loss at Belgrano on Saturday, their third straight loss in Argentina's top-flight league.

The 35-time champions are 12th in the table with five wins in 16 matches. Boca have also crashed out of Cope de la Liga and Copa Sudamericana in penalty losses.

Martinez, who took over in January, told reporters that he had informed club president Juan Roman Riquelme about the resignation, thanking him for the opportunity.

"I simply want to inform you that I have handed in my resignation. I first spoke with the council, then with the president, and later with the players. We will not continue in our roles as a coaching staff. I am grateful to the institution and the president for trusting me to carry out an idea," he said.

Flick takes responsibility after Barcelona rotation backfires

Pamplona, Spain - Barcelona manager Hansi Flick took the blame for his team's 4-2 LaLiga defeat at Osasuna on Saturday, saying that his decision to rest key starters had an impact in their first loss of the domestic season.

Leaders Barcelona went into Saturday's game on the back of seven consecutive wins to start the LaLiga season but were stunned by an Osasuna side that were lethal on the counter attack with Ante Budimir scoring a brace and Bryan Zaragoza a constant menace.

"You have to accept these defeats. We didn't play very well. I think it's my responsibility," Flick told Movistar Plus.



Hansi Flick

"(With the rotations) I tried to protect the players, because they have been playing a lot of minutes. But I didn't expect us to play like this.

"We made a lot of mistakes

and Osasuna did well. Although in the second goal I think there was a foul at the start of the action, I'm not entirely sure because I haven't been able to see it yet, but that's what I've heard.

"To score four goals against us is too much, but I've told the team that we have to keep going. It's a busy schedule and we are on the right track."

Flick was referring to a challenge by Osasuna midfielder Lucas Torro, who stood on Pau Victor's foot, in the buildup to Zaragoza scoring their second goal in the 28th minute.

The goal was given as neither the referee nor the VAR saw an infringement.

"For me it is a clear foul," a visibly frustrated Pedri told Movistar Plus. "It's normal to make (team) rotations, there are a lot of matches. It's no excuse. We had to go out with 11 players and the score at halftime penalised us."

Vlahovic a positive leader, says Juve coach Motta

Genoa, Italy - There has been too much scrutiny of Juventus striker Dusan Vlahovic's recent form, coach Thiago Motta said on Saturday after his side beat Genoa in Serie A helped by the Serbian's brace.

Juventus returned to the top of the standings following their 3-0 win, maintaining their perfect record of six league games without conceding, the first such run in the club's history.

"(No goals conceded is) a team effort. Scoring goals starts well with (goalkeeper Mattia) Perin and not conceding goals starts with Vlahovic," Motta told



Vinicius Junior

LaLiga calls for arrests after hate campaign against Vinicius Junior

Madrid, Spain - LaLiga is calling for the immediate arrest of fans involved in a hate campaign targeting Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior ahead of Sunday's derby at Atletico Madrid.

The campaign launched on social media under the hashtag "#MetropolitanoConMascarilla" ('Metropolitano with a mask') aims to encourage Atletico fans to don masks at the Metropolitano Stadium on Sunday in order to racially abuse the Brazilian winger without revealing their identities. Multiple arrests have been made in Spain since last year for racist abuse directed at Vinicius, who is Black.

"LaLiga wishes to announce that it will proceed to formally report and request the immediate arrest of the instigators behind a hate campaign seeking to promote racist and derogatory acts," LaLiga said in a statement. "The campaign constitutes the crime of incitement to hatred, as clearly defined in the Penal Code. LaLiga vigorously condemns these ac-

tions that - directly or indirectly - encourage, promote and incite hatred against an individual, in this case, the player Vinicius Jr, because of his race. "These acts not only harm the image of the sport and our country, but also pose a direct threat to the integrity and well-being of all fans."

Last year, four Atletico fans were charged for hanging an effigy of Vinicius from a bridge in Madrid and three Valencia fans were sentenced to eight months in prison in June for hate crimes against the Brazilian.

Real Madrid also filed a complaint in March with the state prosecutor's office after a social media video showed alleged racist chanting by Atletico fans ahead of their team's Champions League match against Inter Milan. Atletico were also ordered to partially close their south stand for two matches by the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) after Athletic Bilbao player Nico Williams suffered racist abuse in April.

Vlahovic brace at Genoa takes Juventus to top

Genoa, Italy - Juventus returned to top of the Serie A standings after a 3-0 win at Genoa on Saturday as striker Dusan Vlahovic found the net twice to help Thiago Motta's side recover their scoring touch.

Juventus, who started their campaign with consecutive 3-0 wins but drew each of their last three league games 0-0, top the table with 12 points from six games.

They are one point ahead of second-placed Torino, who host Lazio on Sunday, as well as rivals AC Milan and Inter Milan, in third and fourth.

The teams - who drew both Serie A encounters last season - started cautiously and a dull first half ended with no shots on target, with Vlahovic sending a free kick just over the bar.

But the game came alive when Juventus were awarded a penalty



Dusan Vlahovic of Juventus celebrates after scoring against Genoa

for Koni De Winter's handball after the break and the Serbia striker made no mistake when he converted from the spot.

He then scored again in the 55th minute, sending a Teun

Koopmeiners pass into the far bottom corner from a tight angle, before the Dutch midfielder hit the bar from close range shortly after.

Vlahovic had a chance to seal

the win with a hat-trick late in the game but his header missed the target from point-blank range.

Substitute Francisco Conceicao sealed the win with a low, one-touch finish from near the penalty spot one minute from fulltime.

Juve have a perfect record so far of six games with a clean sheet, the first such run in the club's history.

The last side to have managed a similar feat were AC Milan in 1993 under Fabio Capello.

The game in Genoa was played behind closed doors after crowd violence during their Coppa Italia fixture against Serie B side Sampdoria left more than 50 people injured.

Juventus travel to RB Leipzig in the Champions League on Wednesday before they host bottom side Cagliari in Serie A on October 6.

I am happy because he scored but I was also happy when he didn't.

THIAGO MOTTA

a press conference.

Vlahovic found the net twice as he converted from the spot after the break before he doubled Juve's lead in the 55th minute to recover both the team's and his own scoring touch.

"Honestly I think you pay too much attention to a single player," Motta added.

"He has always been very good. I understand the expectations and needs of a striker at this level. But as I said from the beginning, he is a positive leader who helps a lot. I am happy because he scored but I was also happy when he didn't. He must improve and be more connected with the team because he is an important player in many aspects of our game."

SRI LANKA CRUSH KIWIS TO SWEEP TEST SERIES

Islanders move to third in World Test Championship standings

Galle, Sri Lanka - Sri Lanka crushed New Zealand by an innings and 154 runs to complete a 2-0 series sweep on Sunday, quelling some late fightback from the tourists in the second Test in Galle.

Bundled out for 88 in their meek reply to the home side's mammoth 602-5 declared, New Zealand mustered an improved display - 360 all out - in the second innings before succumbing to their heaviest defeat by Sri Lanka.

Glenn Phillips (78), Mitchell Santner (67), Devon Conway (61) and Tom Blundell (60) made half-centuries but New Zealand, who were made to follow on, could not make Sri Lanka bat again.

Sri Lanka moved to third place - behind India and Australia - in the World Test Championship (WTC) standings, while 2021 champions New Zealand slipped to seventh.

New Zealand lost Blundell early after resuming day four on 119-5, when the batter fluffed his reverse sweep against spinner Nishan Peiris (6-170).



Sri Lanka's debutant off-spinner Nishan Peiris took six wickets in the second innings

Their lower order, however, put up a spirited fight despite the overall hopelessness surrounding their innings.

Phillip raised 64 with Santner before holing out, giving Peiris his maiden five-wicket haul.

Santner raised 53 runs with Ajaz Patel (22) and was the last New Zealand batter to fall,

stumped off the bowling of Peiris, who finished with a match haul of nine wickets in his memorable debut test.

Kamindu Mendis, whose unbeaten 182 powered Sri Lanka to a massive total in the first innings, was adjudged player of the match.

Left-arm spinner Jayasuriya bagged the player of the series award for finishing the series with 18 wickets.

"Nishan was brilliant," Sri Lanka captain Dhananjaya de Silva said of the debutant off-spinner.

"He was doing well in the domestic area. He showed that he has the control and that he can

game at number six," he said.

New Zealand captain Tim Southee had no hesitation admitting they had been thoroughly outplayed in Sri Lanka.

"It's very tough to be on the wrong side this week," Southee said.

"But it's a tough place to come for a foreign team, and Sri Lanka played some great cricket."

No play in Kanpur

The third day of the rain-hit second Test between India and Bangladesh was called off without a ball being bowled on Sunday.

Following Saturday's washout, a wet outfield at the Green Park Stadium cost another day's play with Bangladesh stuck on 107-3 off 35 overs.

Nishan was brilliant. He was doing well in the domestic area. He showed that he has the control and that he can bowl long spells and get the wickets.

DHANANJAYA DE SILVA

bowl long spells and get the wickets."

De Silva also felt rejigging the batting order, getting Dinesh Chandimal at number three and Kamindu at number five, worked well for them.

"Kamindu at five can play the long innings and I can finish the

Mominul Haque (40), who turned 33 on Sunday, and Mushfiqur Rahim (six) will be at the crease when the game resumes.

India won the opening Test in Chennai by 280 runs and a draw in Kanpur would secure a record-extending 18th successive Test series victory on home soil.

Countdown to Emerging Teams Asia Cup begins as tickets go on sale

Muscat - There is a sense of excitement in the air for the Oman-based fans as the best emerging talents from Asian cricket powerhouses - India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan - will be joined by stars from Hong Kong, China and UAE as they head to Oman for the Men's T20 Emerging Teams Asia Cup 2024 from October 18-27.

Hosts Oman will join the remaining seven teams, which include A teams from the five Test-playing nations of Asia, as the countdown for the coveted tournament began on Saturday.

Organised by Oman Cricket (OC) under the auspices of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC), cricket fans in the Sultanate of

Oman are eager to watch thrilling action from the teams with India A vs Pakistan A blockbuster evening match on October 19 already evoking massive interest. The match begins at 5.30pm.

Oman Cricket on Saturday announced that match tickets have gone on sale with fans urged to buy it online to avoid any disappointment.

The price of each ticket for the much-awaited India-Pakistan match along with the semi-finals and the final will be OMR10 for one full day while for the remaining games, the ticket has been kept at OMR 5 each for a day. Each day, there are two matches scheduled with the eight teams divided into two groups. The stadium has a seating capacity of



The Men's T20 Emerging Teams Asia Cup will be held at the Oman Cricket Academy Ground

4,500 in general stands.

OC confirmed that there will be only online sale of tickets and they will be available on platformist.net.

OC also said that a ticket counter will be set up at the

venue for the last-minute purchase of tickets for fans on all matchdays.

OC announced that corporate hospitality boxes are also on sale and they have to be purchased from the OC office in Al Amerat.

Oman Cricket on Saturday announced that match tickets have gone on sale with fans urged to buy it online to avoid any disappointment

the Men's T20 Emerging Teams Asia Cup to Oman. This tournament not only highlights our commitment to developing cricket in the region but also offers a unique opportunity for our local talent to compete against some of the best emerging players from Asia. We invite cricket

fans from all over to join us in celebrating this historic event."

While the Test-playing nations - Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan - will field their A squads while UAE, Hong Kong, China, and the hosts playing with their main national teams.

Group A comprises Sri Lanka A, Bangladesh A, Afghanistan A and Hong Kong while Group B includes India A, Pakistan A, UAE and Oman.

There will be daily double-headers with the first match beginning at 1.00pm while the second match will start at 5.30pm till the semi-final, which is scheduled on October 25.

The final will be played on October 27.

CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED

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Communauté urbaine

Perpignan Méditerranée, the only Franco-Catalan Creative Tourism destination in the world, enjoys a unique double identity - a smooth blend of French and Catalan cultures

PERPIGNAN MEDITERRANEE

There's so much more to Perpignan Méditerranée than the lovely mediaeval city for which this tranche of urban and natural delights perched between the Pyrenees and the Med is named.

Perpignan-Méditerranée borders the Mediterranean and is located less than 2 hours from Toulouse and Barcelona. Imagine a place where the art of living, gastronomy and French craftsmanship would mix with Catalan culture, its traditions and its values of generosity, sharing, and conviviality.

Like that better-known and vastly more crowded South of France hundreds of miles to the east, this far southwestern region boasts a 15-mile long string of beach resorts and a ravishing mountain backdrop to its central city, but feels far closer to Spain, to which it belonged until 1659, culturally and gastronomically than the Italy-bordering Cote d'Azur.

Perpignan City

Perched between ocean and mountains, this lively capital of French Catalonia has a mediaeval heart, its main monument - the 13th century palace of the Kings of Mallorca.

Ascend the 142 steps of Castillet, the fortified city gate which has become its emblem, for a panoramic view over the Basque River, or wander the narrow

streets to reach the Hyacinthe Rigaud Museum.

Despite its ancient bones, this impressive gallery offers a comprehensive collection of art relevant to or inspired by the region from mediaeval religious paintings to ultra-modern collages. There's a whole room devoted to the post-Impressionist Raoul Dufy, one of many famous painters who lost their hearts to Perpignan.

Perhaps the finest local example of 21st century applied art is the beautifully-woven stripy textiles synonymous with the town. Seek them out at Les Toiles du Soleil in a lovely square overlooking the palace; this emporium with branches in New York and Tokyo not only sells fabrics by the yard, but beautiful, brightly-coloured pottery and other homewares, too.

Elsewhere in the centre, beach bags embellished with silver or gold ribbon offer another local form of retail therapy, while Kartell and other high-end furniture emporia have made their home at Aux Dames de France, a beautiful former art nouveau department store on Place de Catalogne.

This huge square is also worth visiting for the iconic statue of a tiny man on a gigantic red chair - it celebrates the surrealist Salvador Dali, who dubbed



Perpignan station, directly facing the statue, the centre of the universe.

Where to stay

Surprisingly, stylish for a budget hotel, the Ibis Style Perpignan Centre is awash in colourful fabrics and fields an all-day bar with a charming little garden in which to sip a beer or a coffee. It's just a 10-minute stroll from here to the heart of the old city via the Place de Catalogne.

Where to eat

Locals turn out en masse to eat in a communal outdoor area adjoining the Halles Vauban, a food hall where diners can collect their favourite eats as diverse as fresh oysters to cheese and charcuterie tapas platters to sliders and quite fabulous artisanal pizzas baked in wood-fired ovens.

Almost opposite, across lively, eatery-lined Place Arago, Cafe Vienne is a proper ice-cream parlour where you can still get that increasingly all-too-rare dessert treat, a chocolate or cafe Liegeois. When it comes to a serious sit-down lunch, enjoy sophisticated regional fare like roast guinea-fowl at Restaurant L'Osmose on place Jean Payrat.

Small but sprawling, this laid-back lit-

tle beach town with some charming narrow lanes has a market square overlooked by a gigantic crocheted octopus hovering protectively in the trees.

However, its principal claim to fame is a vast, wild, protected beach awash in dunes and sea grass. There are live music gigs all summer long, including a July jazz festival that takes place beside the jewel in Torreilles' crown, the exquisite little 15th century Chapelle Notre Dame de Juhegues. Don't miss the delightful cloister and garden next door which acts as Torreilles' community centre.

Torreilles cuisine

Unexpected but interesting is the brand-new Gaia Hotel, in Torreilles, its ultra-modern raw concrete room decor softened by a charming courtyard complete with ornamental pool where an exceptionally good breakfast featuring excellent croissants, fresh-squeezed orange juice and eggs cooked to order - can be taken.

Beach restaurants are the only infrastructure allowed on the wild sands, and a great place from which to appreciate the breaking waves and wealth of sea-grass. But on market day - Tuesday and



Friday mornings year-round - there's nothing to beat a plate of freshly-made fideua, the unique Catalan take on paella substituting vermicelli for the rice. It's dispensed to hungry diners from a huge frying-pan set up in the square until, inevitably, it sells out.

Sainte Marie La Mer

Like Torreilles, this is a proper town with urban delights which also happens to have a great beach down the road. From the old town hall square, wander beneath alleys of decorative umbrellas leading to an arty quarter whose walls are splashed with delightful trompe l'oeil, the work of superlative mural artist Bernard Gout.



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1

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