

Oman-Yemen twinning project enhances critical care, saves lives

Omani Medical Specialty Board provided training to 24 Yemeni physicians virtually in critical care skills

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A first-of-its kind twinning project between medical bodies in Oman and Yemen has ensured the deployment of critical care in the worn-torn country and saving thousands of lives.

As part of a fruitful inter-regional collaboration, the World Health Organization (WHO) country offices in Yemen and Oman linked the Omani Medical Specialty Board (OMSB) to the University of Aden's Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences in a project that delivered the fundamentals of a critical care support course for 24 intensive care unit doctors working in public hospitals in Yemen.

'Through the project, the professional experiences of OMSB - a leading medical body in the region - were shared with experts



File picture of a medical worker in the village of An Nassiri, located about 60km from Al Hudaydah, Yemen (Supplied photo)



It is our duty as a leading health agency to sustain post-conflict countries in rebuilding and strengthening their health systems

DR JEAN JABBOUR

in Yemen to expand educational offerings and best practices,' WHO stated. OMSB provided training virtually to 24 physicians, who had recently completed a nine-week preparatory pro-

gramme in critical care skills.

Yemen faces increasing demands for critical care and ICU services amid a brain drain to the private sector and abroad among specialised health workers. WHO

has been providing short courses in Yemen in case management targeting more than 2,000 health workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, with support from the World Bank and other partners.

Dr Jean Jabbour, WHO Representative to Oman, highlighted the value of such endeavours in the region stating, "It is our duty as a leading health agency to sustain post-conflict countries in rebuilding and strengthening their health systems while following WHO's six health systems building blocks framework, one of which is workforce capacity-building."

Dr Adham Moneim, WHO Representative to Yemen, further

explained, "Activities like this twinning project provide practical examples of how we can bridge the humanitarian-development nexus, leveraging South-South Cooperation, to build health system resilience and be better prepared for emergencies."

Additional training is in the pipeline to reinforce the project's outcomes towards lowering rates of medical errors and improving the quality of care in hospitals in Yemen.

Royal Decree endorses organisational structure of State Audit Institution

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued Royal Decree No 73/2022 endorsing the organisational structure of the State Audit Institution on Monday.

Article 1 endorses the organisational structure of the State Audit Institution as per the annex attached to this decree.

Article 2 cancels Royal Decree No 6/2012 on the endorsement of the organisational structure of the State Audit Institution, as well as all that contradict this decree or contravene its provisions.

Article 3 states that this decree will be published in the *Official Gazette* and enforced from its date of issue.

ONA

Oman, Hungary review relations

Muscat - H E Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, received Dr Laszlo Kover, Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary, on Monday.

Their meeting reviewed relations between Oman and Hungary and the two sides exchanged views on regional and international issues of common interest.

The meeting was attended by Khalid Hashil al Musalhi, Head of the Minister's Office Department, H E Barnabas Fodor, Ambassador of Hungary to Oman, and a number of officials from both sides.

Kover arrived in Muscat on Sunday and met H H Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers.

ONA

► NEWS BRIEF

OMAN EXPRESSES SYMPATHY WITH TURKEY

Muscat - Oman has expressed its sympathy with Turkey for the bomb blast in the Taksim area of Istanbul on Sunday, which killed six people.

A statement issued by the Foreign Ministry said, 'The Sultanate of Oman expresses its sincere condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims and to the government and people of the friendly Republic of Turkey for the bomb blast that targeted the Taksim area in Istanbul, and wishes a speedy recovery for the injured.'

AFP reported that Turkish police on Monday said they had arrested a Syrian woman, working for Kurdish militants, for planting the bomb.



Trump set to launch another White House bid



International paragliding licence for Intisar al Jafri

122 candidates in fray for OCCI elections on Nov 22

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) announced the final list of 122 candidates for election to its Board of Directors on Monday. Polling will be held on November 22.

A statement issued by OCCI said the list of 122 includes can-

didates from public shareholding companies, foreign investors and private sector companies.

Announcing details of the vote, OCCI stated that Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre in Muscat and Sultan Qaboos Complex for Culture and Entertainment in Dhofar will serve as polling centres.

OCCI's headquarters in the

wilayats of Khasab and Dibba in Musandam and its administrative branches will serve as polling centres in the remaining governorates.

On Monday, the chamber began introductory meetings for candidates, allowing them to present their election agenda and future plans.

The inaugural ceremony for

the meetings was held under the auspices of Dr Saleh bin Saeed bin Salem Masn, Undersecretary for Commerce and Industry in Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

Earlier this year, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued Royal Decree 56/2022, which promulgated the bylaw of OCCI.

Under the new bylaw,

OCCI's Board of Directors will consist of five members from Muscat governorate, heads from the remaining ten governorates, five representatives of public share holding companies listed on Muscat Stock Exchange or their chief executives, and one expat investor benefiting from the Investors Residency Programme.

Oman to achieve 96% self-sufficiency in table eggs in 2023

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman is set to achieve 96 per cent self-sufficiency in table eggs production in the fourth quarter of 2023, according to a senior official of Oman Flour Mills Company.

In an interview with Oman Radio, Faisal al Ma'ashani, Acting Manager in CEO's Office, Oman Flour Mills Company, said the Gulf International Poultry Farm in Ibri, Dhahirah, one of the largest egg farms in the GCC, will be completed in the last quarter of next year.

The farm, worth over RO26mn spread over 18mn sqm will have production capacity of up to 360mn eggs annually. "The project will contribute to achieving food security in the sultanate. Upon completion, the project will help achieve 96 per cent self-sufficiency in table eggs requirements."

The farm is being developed in partnership with Gulf Japan Food Fund, Japanese Ice Foods Company and UAE-based IFFCO.

Ma'ashani informed that on November 7, the company received the first shipment of feed



Faisal al Ma'ashani

and chicks.

"Oman currently produces 3,650 cartons of table eggs per day, while the local consumption is 6,400 cartons. The sultanate met 65 per cent of the local consumption of table eggs in 2021, compared to 58 per cent in 2020."

In an interview with Oman TV on Monday, H E Dr Saud Hamoud Ahmed al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, said the ministry is working towards achieving self-sufficiency in many basic commodities.

He added that Oman saw a growth in agricultural, livestock and fish production in 2021.

He informed that a recent Food Security Lab recommended more than 100 projects with an investment volume of about RO1.3bn in different sectors and projects.

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Books on traditional Omani weapons, archaeological heritage released

Books also showcase excavations in Qurum and a collection of Early Iron Age metal objects from Khoudh

Our Correspondent
Muscat

To highlight the archaeological heritage of Oman, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism recently released four books that showcase traditional weapons, excavations at a prehistoric site in Qurum in Muscat, archaeological remains of the very first inhabitants of Dhofar, and a collection of Early Iron Age metal objects from Khoudh.

Prehistoric Fisherfolk of Oman: The Neolithic Village of Ras Al-Hamra RH-5

This book describes the excavations at the prehistoric site of Ras Al-Hamra RH-5 in the Qurum area of Muscat. The Neolithic necropolis of RH-5 (4th millennium BC) was explored by the late Prof Maurizio Tosi starting 1977, becoming one of the first archaeological sites ever excavated in Oman.



The book is written by Lapo Gianni Marcucci, Emilie Badel (both from University of Paris, France), and Francesco Genchi (Rome University, Italy). In 12 chapters spread over 200 pages, that include 200 images, the book describes in detail the research activities and their important historical outcome.

Ancient Weapons of Oman: Edged Weapons & Firearms

The two-volume collection presents traditional types of weapons - Volume 1 on edged weapons and Volume 2 on firearms - made, used and traded in Oman during the Islamic period, written by Vincenzo Clarizia, an Italian

expert on pre-modern weapons used and produced in Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

Clarizia is a restorer and collector of ancient weapons and a skilled practitioner of traditional combat techniques.

The first of the two volumes describes the traditional edged weapons used in Oman, includ-

ing swords, daggers, axes and spears, while the second volume is on traditional firearms - pistols, rifles and cannons.

For each weapon featured, the author describes in great detail its invention, technical specifications, production history, and major international trade routes. He explains how these were

used, in terms of combat techniques and the role the weapons eventually played in shaping the history of the whole humankind and Oman in particular.

An important part of the books reveals the history of how such weapons became symbols of social status in modern and peaceful Oman, and how and why these are part of the dress for traditional ceremonies and dances at public events.

The First Peoples of Oman: Palaeolithic Archaeology of the Nejd Plateau

The book, written by Jeffrey I Rose, Yamandú H Hilbert, Anthony E Marks Vitaly I Usik - foremost experts in prehistoric archaeology and stone tools - describe the archaeological remains of the very first people that inhabited Dhofar (and Oman in general) when, almost 1mn years ago, a different global climate made Arabia very green.

At that time, perennial rivers flowed in Dhofar, feeding wetlands and forests. This verdant environment attracted hunters and gatherers, who flourished along Dhofar's waterways, drawn to the freshwater springs and abundant preys.

The presence of many chert outcrops from which inhabitants fashioned their stone tools was also important. This book first describes how archaeologists define the use and antiquity of the stone tools they discover, which are the only archaeologi-

cal remains for these periods. It later narrates the characteristics of the different cultures that lived in the region for over a million years of successive human occupation.

The Early Iron Age Metal Hoard from the Al Khawd Area

The book describes in detail a collection of numerous metal artefacts discovered during construction works in the Al Khoudh area near Sultan Qaboos University. Mostly fashioned from copper, these arrowheads, axes, daggers, knives, spearheads, metal vessels, razors, rings, swords, and tweezers are dated to the Early Iron Age (1200-300 BC).

The Early Iron Age is therefore not to be considered a "dark age", but an innovative, successful period characterised by evident population growth.

The objects were studied by a team of experts headed by Prof Nasser al Jahwari (Sultan Qaboos University) and Prof Paul A Yule (Heidelberg University in Germany), with technical collaboration with Prof Bernhard Pracejus (Sultan Qaboos University) for metal identification and provenance. Prof Khaled Douglas, Prof Mohammed al Belushi and Prof Ali T el Mahi were also involved in excavating and documenting the objects.

The books can be purchased worldwide in print and digital formats through Archaeopress Publishing (Oxford, UK), and will be available at bookshops in Oman.

Loyalty march held in Muqshin to mark 52nd National Day



The march renewed the people's loyalty to His Majesty the Sultan. The gains in all sectors in the country are a source of pride

SHEIKH AHMED BIN JADAD

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The people of the wilayat of Muqshin organised a march to express their loyalty and gratitude for His Majesty Sultan

Haitham bin Tarik on the occasion of the 52nd National Day on Saturday.

Sheikh Ahmed bin Muslim Jadad, Wali of Muqshin, and a number of officials, participated in the march alongside a group of

people carrying pictures of His Majesty the Sultan, the Omani flag and banners expressing their sincere thanks to His Majesty for the achievements during his reign.

Sheikh Jadad said the march

renewed the people's loyalty to His Majesty the Sultan, adding that the gains in all sectors in the country are a source of pride.

He informed that the projects expected to be implemented next year include a 168km road

linking the centre of the wilayat to other wilayats. "This road project will enhance tourism activities."

Other important upcoming projects include a health centre to be built at a cost of RO1.2mn.

"It will provide health services to citizens, residents, visitors and users of the Adam-Thumrait road. It will be completed by the end of 2023."

Sheikh Jadad added that Dhofar Municipality is also im-

plementing the Muqshin Oasis project at a cost of RO350,000. "This project aims to provide multiple services to travellers on the Muscat-Salalah highway, especially during khareef season."

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MOH No: 658/2022

World Cup Fan Village to be set up in Dhahirah

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, in cooperation with the Governor's Office in Dhahirah, will set up a Fan Village at the Sports Complex in the wilayat of Ibri to promote FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

An official in the Governor's Office said that various entertainment activities and a consumer exhibition will be held in the Fan Village from November 20 to December 18.

The village will include an open-air theatre to livestream matches, a site for food carts, a corner dedicated to electronic games and another for motor-sport games for adults. The village will also host a consumer exhibition to promote goods of productive families.

"The village is set to bring fans and their families closer as they enjoy the World Cup in Qatar with a variety of exciting activities, competitions, food stalls and more, for everyone to enjoy," the official said. "Every World Cup match will be broadcast live at the village. It is expected to host thousands of visitors daily."

The village will be open from 4pm to midnight, while the open-air theatre will be open at



The village is set to bring fans and their families closer as they enjoy the World Cup with a variety of exciting activities... Every World Cup match will be broadcast live at the village

AN OFFICIAL

the time of the live broadcast of the matches.

FIFA has released the Qatar World Cup 2022 schedule with the tournament opener to be played in the 60,000-seater Al

Bayt Stadium on November 21 and the final in the 80,000-capacity Lusail Stadium on December 18. Four matches will be played every day during the group stage of the tournament.

Omani students occupy two first places in Kuwait competition

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman won first place in the secondary and middle stage categories in the 23rd Shikha Fadia al Saad al Subah scientific competition, held at Jaber Cultural Center in Kuwait City recently.

The winning project in the secondary category was 'Studying the Effectiveness of Using Rice Water as Liquid Fertiliser on the Growth of Omani Lemons' developed by Maria al Jabri and Qabas al Ghafri, from Sawda Um Al Mumineen School for Basic Education in Dhahira governorate. Their project was supervised by Fakhriya al Belushi.

In the middle stage category, 'Strengthening the Greenhouse System' project developed by Amna al Jahafi and Shahad al Jahafi, from the AlJaza' School for Basic Education in North Shar-



qiya, won the first prize. The project was supervised by Maheera al Jahafi.

Expressing her joy on winning the first place, Qabas al Ghafri said, "It is a great honour for me to represent Oman in this competition and win the first place in the Arab world. Through my participation in this competition, I gained self-confidence and learned how to write scientific

research paper accurately."

Maria al Jabri said, "I am happy and proud that we were able to achieve this, especially with the increase in competition this year due to the participation of more Arab countries. I became well acquainted with the methodology of scientific research and how to conduct scientific experiments."

Participation in the competi-

tion added 'a lot to experience' of Shahd al Jahafi as "we were ambassadors of our country competing among the best students from Arab countries."

For Amna al Jahafi, "This competition gave me a lot of experience and information about how to work under a steam method, in addition to finding solutions to problems, while working in a team."



SULTANATE OF OMAN
MINISTRY OF HEALTH



ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders: -

Tender Ref.	Description	Last date for Collection of tender Document	Bid Submission Closing Date on/ Before 08:00 am Wednesday	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non-Refundable)
MOH/HQ-257/2022	Supply of Medical Equipment for Ministry of Health	24/November/2022	30/November/2022	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	R.O 25.000 Per set
MOH/HQ-259/2022	Supply of Surgical Items (Orthopedic)		14/December/2022		R.O 65.000 Per set
MOH/HQ-260/2022	Supply of Laboratory Item		07/December/2022		R.O 25.000 Per set
MOH/HQ-261/2022	Supply & Installation of Medical Equipment at the Royal Hospital		14/December/2022		
MOH/HQ-262/2022	Design and Build for the Expansion and Modification of Sohar Hospital in North Al Batinah Governorate		07/December/2022	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in The Excellent	R.O 230.000 Per set
MOH/HQ-263/2022	Supply of Ambulance for Al Mazyunah Health Center at Dhofar Governorate		07/December/2022	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	R.O 25.000 Per set
MOH/HQ-264/2022	Supply of Dental Items		14/December/2022		
MOH/HQ-265/2022	Supply of Laboratory Items				
MOH/HQ-266/2022	Supply & Installation of Medical Equipment for Renal Dialysis Unit at Mahawt Health Center in Al Wusta Governorate	20/November/2022	30/November/2022	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	
MOH/HQ-267/2022	Provision of Publication Services and Digital Media for MOH			Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in Third, Fourth Grades	

- Tenders should be submitted on line on <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> enclose Electronic Bank Guarantee issued by a Local bank for not less than One percent (1%) for the Tender value validity for (90) days from the Tender Submission date, addressed to The Chairman of the Tender Committee.
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.
- For any Clarification, you may contact via Telephone: 24402200 , Email id etenderhd@ita.gov.om

WORLD DIABETES DAY

MoH focuses on prediabetes, issues guidelines to mitigate risk factors

Our Correspondent
Muscat

To mark World Diabetes Day, the Ministry of Health (MoH) has turned the attention on pre-diabetes, with an announcement on the guidelines to mitigate the risk factors.

World Diabetes Day on November 14 provides an opportunity to raise awareness on diabetes as a global public health issue and what needs to be done, collectively and individually, for better prevention, diagnosis and management of the condition.

According to MoH, prediabetes is a condition that precedes the development of diabetes, where, the level of blood glucose is higher than normal but not meeting the diagnostic levels of diabetes.

'Risk factors for developing it include family history of diabetes and other chronic diseases, overweight and obesity, gestational diabetes, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), limited mobility and lack of exercise and smoking. Early diagnosis and management help restore the normal blood glucose level and prevent the development of type 2 diabetes," MoH stated.



betes," MoH stated.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), this year's theme, 'access to diabetes education', underpins the larger multi-year theme of 'access to care'.

WHO's World Diabetes Day activities covered issues ranging from championing the priorities of people living with diabetes in advocacy to the Global Diabetes Compact, which drives efforts globally to reduce the risk of diabetes and ensure access to treatment and care.

World Diabetes Day became an official United Nations Day in 2006 with the passage of United Nations Resolution 61/225.

It is marked every year on November 14, the birthday of Sir Frederick Banting, who co-discovered insulin along with Charles Best in 1922.

World Diabetes Day is a global occasion on which people with diabetes, health professionals, diabetes advocates, media, the general public, and government organisations unite to raise awareness of diabetes.

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OQ's stake in Oman's total oil production reaches 12.6%

OQ Group exports its products to more than 80 countries

Our Correspondent
Muscat

OQ Group, Oman's global integrated energy group, marked its 40th anniversary on Monday. The group was founded on November 14 back in 1982 when the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said inaugurated Oman Oil Refinery Company (ORPIC) at Mina Al Fahl to serve as the first refinery in Oman.

This ushered in the journey of the sultanate towards maximising the added value of its natural wealth of oil and gas by refining oil derivatives and establishing a giant industry in the petrochemical sector. This sector has become one of the most important downstream industries that made its way to reach its current state of development and growth spanned over four decades, with many large investment projects in various governorates.

OQ Group undertakes exploration and production services as part of its investments. Total production of oil from its operating assets and investment partnerships reached 219,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day during the first half of 2022. This represents 12.6 per cent of Oman's total oil production, according to a press statement.

Block 60 is considered one of the most significant concession areas owned by the group which include Bisat field where OQ managed to increase the production from 14,000 to 57,000 barrels of oil equivalent in three years. The group has partnerships with many international companies for managing and operating many concession areas, both locally and internationally.



OQ Group has assets of about US\$31.631bn, making it one of the largest energy companies in the sultanate. The operations and activities of OQ cover the entire value chain; starting from exploration and production, operations of refineries and petrochemicals sector, to the added value of oil and gas products, as well as trading and marketing.

Over the past 40 years, OQ Group has supported and promoted the government's plans for economic diversification by providing production inputs to many industries related to oil, gas and petrochemical derivatives, as well as producing fuel derivatives in Oman through its refineries.

Furthermore, the group has attracted foreign investments and entered into partnerships with international companies inside the sultanate and abroad. OQ's exports to various countries around the world have enhanced the brand of Omani industries and strengthened na-

tional capabilities in engineering.

Additionally, OQ has achieved significant successes in expanding into global markets. The group operates in 17 countries across five continents and sells its products to more than 3,000 clients in over 80 countries.

This international expansion has enabled it to be one of the most prominent players in the petrochemical industries markets and to contribute to the access of Omani products to various countries of the world.

OQ Group owns many development projects that mark a milestone in upstream industries inside Oman. This enhanced the group's contribution to developing the industrial sector and promoted the petrochemical industries. The Liwa Plastics Industries Complex is one of the largest investments in Oman.

'Energy transition enabler'

OQ group with strong asset base is well positioned to maximise

value from Oman's energy sources and power transition towards a sustainable future, with OQ Alternative Energy playing an integral role for OQ as an 'Energy Transition Enabler'.

At the centre of OQ Alternate Energy's efforts is decarbonisation of OQ's assets and securing future growth, and to achieve that number of initiatives have been progressed in the areas of energy excellence, clean energy and low carbon molecules.

Further for low carbon molecules production OQ has made great strides by signing joint development agreements and memoranda of understanding to develop four mega green hydrogen projects for the production of green ammonia with prominent international partners in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and Dhofar. These mega projects include Hyport Duqm Project, Green Energy Oman Project (GEO), Hydrogen Oman Project (H2Oman), and Salalah 2 Project.

The Pearl REIF listed on MSX

Our Correspondent
Muscat

After the remarkable success of its initial public offering (IPO), The Pearl Real Estate Investment Fund (The Pearl REIF) was successfully listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) on Monday under the ticker 'PRFD'.

The Pearl REIF IPO - the largest initial public offering in Oman market in last seven years - attracted strong participation from all segments of investors, receiving an overwhelming subscription demand of over RO35mn against the issue size of RO23.3mn.

Speaking at the listing ceremony at the MSX, The Pearl REIF chairman Wahbi al Riyami, said, "The Pearl REIF offered a compelling and rare opportunity which was well appreciated by the investor community and members of the public."

We are extremely pleased with the overwhelming response. I would like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to the



promoters, IPO partners, collecting agents, brokerages, analysts and all those who subscribed to the IPO."

Aown Abbas al Bahrani, deputy chairman of The Pearl REIF and director of public markets at Oman Investment Authority (OIA), said, "This is a proud moment for the promoters OIA and its subsidiary Omantel as it marks an important milestone in the successful journey of

The Pearl REIF. We welcome all new shareholders into The Pearl REIF family."

After listing, the Pearl REIF units opened at 115bz at the MSX on Monday and closed 4.46 per cent above its offer price.

OIA and its subsidiary Omantel are the promoters of The Pearl REIF. Sohar International is the investment manager of the fund and also the issue manager for the IPO.

Renaissance appoints head of government services

Muscat - Renaissance Services has appointed Khamis Juma al Balushi as its head of government services. A goal-oriented professional with in-depth knowledge of policy, legislation, key strategic frameworks, and the pivotal role of public-private partnerships in Oman's economic diversification goals, Balushi brings a wealth of experience and expertise.

Balushi has made significant contributions to the government initiatives in higher education, social affairs, labour market, free and industrial zone development and governance



Khamis Juma al Balushi

in various capacities in key ministries. He has represented Oman in regional summits, gained extensive experience at the State Council and is a former board member of the Oman Drydock Company. In a press release, Stephen R

Thomas, CEO of Renaissance Services, said, "Balushi brings immense value to the company through his knowledge of government affairs and regulations. Renaissance will greatly benefit from his ethics, his attitude of seeing potential in challenges and the shared belief of working hand in hand with communities."

Balushi said, "It gives me immense pride to be part of this company, which is committed to its values, proud of its diverse mix of employees and is a model for other players in the field to emulate."

Local sales of refineries rise 18% in Oman

Muscat - Total local sales of oil refineries in Oman increased by 18.2 per cent in the first nine months of 2022 compared to the corresponding period in 2021, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Oman's production of M-95 petrol rose by 8.8 per cent to 11.41mn barrels compared to the same period in 2021. Sales of M-95 petrol slightly decreased by 0.1 per cent to 9.49mn barrels.

The production of M-91 petrol declined by 0.6 per cent at

9.87mn barrels compared to the same period in 2021. Sales of M-91 petrol jumped by more than 50 per cent to 9.62mn barrels in the first nine month of this year, while exports declined by 71.2 per cent to reach 1.1mn barrels. ONA



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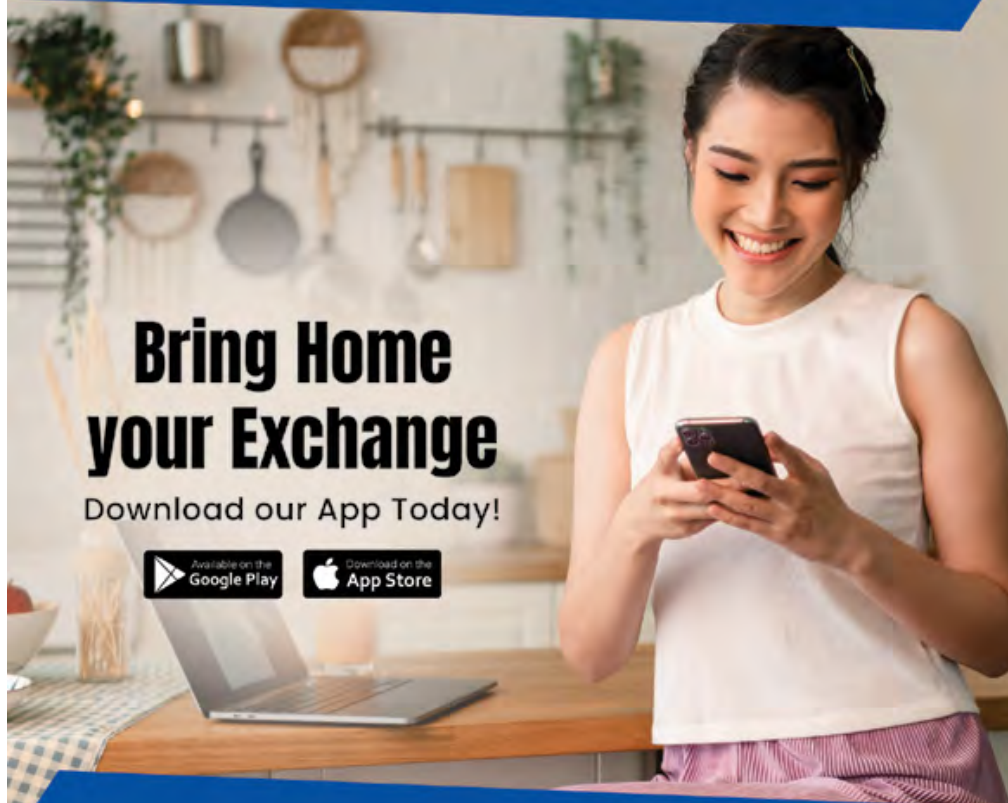
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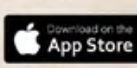
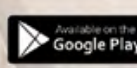
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UN climate talks enter home stretch split over money

Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt - COP27 entered its final week Monday with rich carbon polluters and developing nations at loggerheads over how to speed up and fund reductions in emissions.

The stand-off comes as advanced economies are pressed into acknowledging the need to compensate their developing peers for accelerating climate damage, and as total funding needs appear poised to run into trillions, rather than billions, of dollars.

Somewhere in the middle, China - accounting for 30 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, by far the largest share - is feeling pressure from both sides, not only to enhance its carbon cutting goals but to step up as a donor nation, negotiators and analysts say.

At last year's UN climate summit in Glasgow, nearly 200 countries vowed to "keep alive" the Paris Agreement's aspirational goal of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Nearly 1.2C of warming so far has seen a cascade of increasingly severe climate disasters, such as the flooding that left a third of Pakistan under water this summer, claiming at least 1,700 lives and inflicting US\$30bn to US\$40bn in damage.

The Glasgow Pact urged nations to ramp up their emissions reduction commitments ahead of this year's summit in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, but with little immediate uptake



Climate activists demonstrate at the Sharm el Sheikh International Convention Centre during the COP27 climate conference, on Monday (AFP)

by nations.

This leaves the world on track to hot up by about 2.5C - enough, scientists say, to trigger dangerous climate tipping points.

'Make our lives easier'

Meanwhile, China and India have called the 1.5C goal into question, with Beijing pointing out that the binding target agreed in Paris was "well below" 2C. The 1.5C is a non-binding ambition, but has since been confirmed by science as a far safer global threshold.

"Egypt doesn't intend to be the country that hosts a retreat from what was achieved in Glasgow," US special climate envoy John Kerry said at the weekend, adding that "most countries here

have no intention of going backwards".

At COP27's midpoint, countries are at an impasse, awaiting the arrival of ministers to cut through political knots above the pay grade of negotiators.

"All the big political crunch issues are unresolved," said Alden Meyer, a senior analyst at climate think tank E3G.

A reality-check report released at COP27 last week showed CO2 emissions from coal, gas and oil are on track to hit record levels in 2022.

To accelerate decarbonisation, many developing nations - including small island states whose very existence is threatened by rising seas - favour a

deepened commitment to the 1.5C target.

Negotiators in Sharm el-Sheikh will look to a bilateral meeting Monday in Bali between China's Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden, along with the communique from a G20 meeting both will subsequently attend, for signals that could break the deadlock in Egypt.

"Confirming the 1.5C goal in Bali would make our lives easier," a senior negotiator at the climate talks said.

'Polluters must pay'

When it comes to money, the spotlight in Egypt is on so-called loss and damage, UN-speak for the life, property and cultural

heritage lost in natural disasters.

Rich nations fearful of creating an open-ended liability regime agreed only this year to include this thorny topic on the formal agenda. Developing nations are calling for the creation of a separate facility, but the US and the European Union - while not precluding such an outcome - have said they favour using existing financial channels.

"This is the highest profile, most political issue at the COP," said Meyer.

On Monday, G7 countries and nearly 60 nations most vulnerable to climate change formally launched a scheme aimed at providing financial support for communities battered by climate disasters, with around US\$211mn of initial funding.

Kenneth Ofori-Atta, Ghana's finance minister and chair of the 'V20' group of nations most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, said the scheme "is long overdue".

Another track of the talks, meanwhile, has opened on how much money the Global South will get - after current pledges of US\$100bn a year expire in 2024 - to help green their economies and prepare for future warming.

Options range from expanding access to IMF and World Bank funds, to a windfall tax on fossil fuel companies, to broadening the base of donor nations to include China, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and other nations.

AFP

Sri Lanka govt takes over \$1.7bn in debt owed to China

Colombo, Sri Lanka - Crisis-hit Sri Lanka said Monday it would take responsibility for US\$1.7bn owed to China by state enterprises as it seeks to sell them off and restructure its foreign debt to secure an IMF bailout.

The government of President Ranil Wickremesinghe is in talks with the Washington-based lender as it seeks funding to enable the island to recover from its worst-ever financial crisis.

Sri Lanka defaulted on its foreign debt in April and the IMF has said its borrowings must be "sustainable" to unlock any new external funding.

That will require its creditors to take a haircut on their loans, but China is its biggest lender and Beijing has given no indication it is willing to do so.

Wickremesinghe said US\$1.7bn in loans taken from China's Export-Import Bank by three key loss-making state-owned enterprises (SOE) - the electricity utility, Port Authority, and Airport and Aviation Services - would be considered government debt.

Taking the loans off their books will strengthen their balance sheets, which could make them more attractive to buyers or outside investors.

The IMF has said the country should also restructure its loss-making state enterprises.

Wickremesinghe, who is also the finance minister, signalled the selling-off of five state-owned companies, including the national carrier SriLankan Airlines - which has debts of more than US\$1bn - to reduce the



Ranil Wickremesinghe

strain on the national budget.

Proceeds from the "restructure" of the companies will be used to boost the country's depleted foreign reserves, he said, without giving estimates.

"A glimmer of hope on emerging from the economic abyss is currently visible," Wickremesinghe told parliament as he presented his first full budget in the legislature.

"After the era of waiting in queues for days and protesting in various occupied places, our sufferings have been eased to some extent and we have reached an era where our peace of mind is much settled."

He said bailout talks with the International Monetary Fund were on track and hoped for a deal with lenders.

"We are confident that these discussions will lead to positive outcomes," he added.

The government revised its external debt figure down from US\$51bn to US\$46bn.

Just over US\$14bn of that is bilateral debt owed to foreign governments, of which China holds 52 per cent.

AFP

China unveils sweeping measures to rescue property sector

Beijing, China - Chinese authorities have unveiled sweeping measures to rescue the country's struggling property sector, as regulators seek to offset years of harsh pandemic curbs and a real estate crackdown that have stalled the world's number-two economy.

The banking regulator and central bank on Friday issued a 16-point set of internal directives to promote the "stable and healthy development" of the industry, which were reported by Chinese state media on Monday.

The measures include credit support for debt-laden housing developers, financial support to ensure the completion and handover of projects to homeowners, and assistance for deferred-payment loans for homebuyers.

That came on the same day the National Health Commission issued 20 rules for "optimising" China's zero-Covid policy, where certain restrictions were relaxed to limit its social and economic impact.

"We view this as the most crucial pivot since Beijing significantly tightened financing of the property sector," Ting Lu, chief China economist at Nomura, said in a note.

"We believe these measures demonstrate that Beijing is willing to reverse most of its financial tightening measures."

Hong Kong stocks surged more than three percent Monday after the measures were unveiled, extending Friday's more than seven per cent rally before paring gains to 1.7 per cent at the close.

The Hong Kong-listed shares of China's biggest developer by sales, Country Garden, closed up 45 per cent while the shares of major competitor Greenland gained more than 35 per cent.



'Not a bailout'

Beijing imposed widespread lending curbs on property developers in 2020, which exacerbated their liquidity issues and caused several of the largest to default on bond payments.

The knock-on effects on the massive real estate sector were severe, with cash-strapped developer Evergrande - China's largest - and others failing to complete projects, sparking mortgage boycotts and protests from homebuyers.

The measures emphasised "guaranteeing the handover of buildings", and ordered development banks to provide "special loans" for the purpose, according to a copy circulating online.

The document ordered financial institutions to treat state-owned and private real estate enterprises equally, as well as "actively cooperating with distressed real estate enterprises in risk management".

The measures also included "extending the transition period arrangements... of real estate loans" for distressed developers, and support for "high-quality real estate enterprises to issue bond financing".

"The plan includes financial

stability measures that aim to prevent massive defaults and hence provide a "soft landing," ANZ analysts wrote in a note.

But analysts cautioned that these changes - alongside the limited loosening of zero-Covid measures - would not cause an immediate recovery for the ailing sector.

"While not many are expecting a financial crisis caused by the current property downturn, the mainstream view is that the property sector would stay weaker for longer. Therefore, the worst is far from over for developers," Macquarie economist Larry Hu said in a note.

"The package is not a bailout of property developers," wrote Andrew Batson, an analyst at Gavekal Dragonomics.

"With the new policies, the government is trying harder to make its current approach to Covid containment and the property market work, rather than shifting to a different approach."

New home prices have been falling for more than a year, while demand is struggling to pick up owing to ongoing strict pandemic controls that have dampened consumer confidence.

AFP

Will robots replace humans at Amazon?

Westborough, US - At Amazon's robotics laboratory on the outskirts of Boston, Massachusetts, the company's newest automaton "Sparrow" picks out items to be shipped to customers, displaying human hand-like dexterity.

It is the e-commerce giant's most advanced robot yet and could soon do the job of the hundreds of thousands of Amazon employees who sort and send five billion packages annually.

The development of "Sparrow," and other robots like "Robin" and "Cardinal," are fueling fears that Amazon's warehouses will one day be run by machines, leading to huge layoffs.

Amazon's robotics chief Tye Brady plays down such concerns, which have been expressed by labor unions.

"It's not machines replacing people," he tells journalists during a tour of the laboratory, which opened in Westborough in October last year.

"It's actually machines and people working together in order to collaborate to do a job."

Equipped with cameras and cylindrical tubes, Sparrow can successfully detect and select an individual item from millions of



Hercules robots are tested at Amazon's BOS27 Robotics Innovation Hub in Westborough, Massachusetts on November 10 (AFP)

products of different shapes and sizes.

It gently sucks up items that arrive on a conveyor belt and distributes them into the appropriate basket in front of it using its robotic arm.

Robin and Cardinal can only redirect entire packages, making Sparrow Amazon's first robot to be able to handle individual products.

"Given the variety of materials we have in our warehouses, Sparrow is a significant accomplishment," says Brady.

Working with the robotic trio is a small army of machines, including "Proteus," which can

carry hundreds of kilograms of items around warehouses.

The creations will free employees from repetitive tasks to focus on "more rewarding and interesting" activities while "improving safety," Brady insists.

Amazon's focus is ensuring that as little time as possible passes between the moment a customer orders an item and the moment it arrives at his or her door.

Drones

That goal has led some workers to accuse the company of treating them like "slaves" and of depriving them of food and toilet

breaks.

In statements, Amazon has insisted it provides "a safe and positive workplace" for employees and, apart from one warehouse in New York, has resisted unionization.

Amazon's desire to deliver items quicker is driving its investment in automation.

By the end of this year it will begin delivering packages weighing up to two kgs in less than an hour from warehouses in Lockeford, California and College Station, Texas.

The company aims to deliver 500mn packages by drone by the end of the decade, including in major US cities such as Boston, Atlanta and Seattle.

Around 75 per cent of Amazon's five billion annual orders is handled at some point by a robot, according to Joe Quinlivan, vice president of Amazon Robotics.

For decades the conventional wisdom was that increased automation destroys workplaces.

Studies now suggest that moving towards robots in e-commerce will not lead to massive job losses in the short to medium term due to the huge growth in demand.

AFP

Germany pulls out of fossil fuel treaty

Berlin, Germany - Germany joined France and the Netherlands in pulling out of a 1994 energy treaty which critics say protects investments in fossil fuels.

"We are consistently aligning our trade policy with climate protection and are withdrawing accordingly from the Energy Charter Treaty," said Franziska Brantner, parliamentary state secretary at the Economy Min-

istry.

"This is also an important signal to the UN Climate Change Conference," she added.

France and the Netherlands have withdrawn from the treaty in recent weeks as they deem it to be incompatible with the Paris climate accord to combat global warming.

The Energy Charter Treaty started out as a way to protect energy investment, especially in

Central Asia and eastern Europe, in volatile ex-Soviet countries.

A key element of the treaty was allowing energy companies to sue governments over energy policy changes that could hurt their investments -- exposing states to multi-billion-dollar compensation claims.

But as Europe transitions towards a carbon-neutral future, that treaty has become something of an albatross.

In June, the European Union struck a compromise deal -- to come into force next month if no signatories object -- to revise the treaty to limit legal actions where they jeopardise climate goals.

But climate groups have criticised loopholes left in the update and say the treaty continues to put efforts to curb global warming at risk.

AFP

Oman Sailing Festival 2022 leaves mark in Salalah

The Oman Sailing Festival concluded in Salalah after five days of introducing visitors of all ages to try sailing, try windsurfing and try kitesurfing under the expert supervision of an Oman Sail instructor.

In total, 288 of people visited the festival to enjoy a free session on the water, food, and entertainment, as well as an impressive array of local SMEs and local craftspeople showcasing their handmade souvenirs and pieces of art.

Ali al Sheheimi, Oman Sailing Festival manager, said, "Oman Sail began with the mission to rekindle the Sultanate of Oman's maritime heritage, and in Salalah where this heritage is so prominent it was wonderful to see so many people taking this opportunity to learn the basics of sailing, windsurfing and kitesurfing. "At every stop along the



Ali al Sheheimi

coastline we have highlighted the importance of caring for the environment.

"As sailors we rely on clean seas, and so much of our lives is spent in the water, it is therefore essential that we all commit to doing everything we can to keeping our beautiful country clean."



The Oman Sailing Festival returns on November 24-26 at the Barceló Mussanah Resort, during the RS Venture Connect World Championships, Oman's first exclusively-para sailing event. On offer will be free Try Sailing, Try Windsurfing and Try Kitesurfing sessions, an exhibition of local SMEs and a beach clean, and the chance to learn how to sail using the versatile RS Venture boat designed for people with disabilities.

The Oman Sailing Festival is proudly supported by Office of the Minister of State and Governor of Dhofar Directorate General of Heritage and Tourism in Dhofar, Beach Front, Oman Air, National Mineral Water Company (Tanuf), Environment society of Oman (ESO), and National University Science and Technology (International Maritime College).

ISG celebrates education day

Indian School al Ghubra celebrated the National Education Day on Sunday in the school auditorium with much gusto. A special assembly was conducted by the students of Class VIII during which homage was paid to the stalwart, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. The significance of the National Education Day was highlighted.

November 11 is observed in all educational institutions as the National Education Day to commemorate the birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first Education Minister of the country to raise awareness about the importance of literacy. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad played a vital role in shaping the education system of India. The Ministry of Human Resource Development sets a different theme for National Education Day every year. This year's theme is 'Changing Course, Transforming Education'.

The special assembly held at Indian School al Ghubra, to commemorate the distinguished leader's contribution, began with students sharing an informative presentation on the exemplary life and facts of the prominent leader. Light was thrown on the significance of the National Education Day and inspiring quotes by Azad too, were shared.

A melodious rendition as a tribute to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad by the school

choir was the perfect picture of rhythm and synchronisation. A self-composed poem by Anika Govil titled 'A Journey of Life' was a befitting tribute to the educationist. A well-orchestrated skit titled 'Vortex' depicted an interview with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and his immense contribution in the field of education in India.

A group recitation of a Hindi poem saluted the great personality. A quiz based on the life and contribution of Azad enlightened the students who were enamoured by the entire presentation. An address by vice principal G Sreekumar mark the end of the solemn celebrations. The vice principal appreciated the students on the fabulous presentation. He exhorted the efforts of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and opined that during his tenure as the first Education Minister of independent India, significant efforts were made to promote education in all spheres.

Sreekumar motivated the staff and students to fondly recollect the contributions made by Azad to the country, thus, paying homage to the eminent leader.

The National Education Day celebrations at Indian School Al Ghubra to commemorate the birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was the most suitable felicitation to mark his colossal contribution to the field of education.

Al Ahlia CEO Hanaa al Hinai named 'Woman of the Year' at Al Mar'a Excellence Awards

Hanaa al Hinai, CEO of Al Ahlia Insurance, has been awarded the prestigious 'Woman of the Year' title at the Al Mar'a Excellence Awards (AMEA) that was held on November 9 at Sheraton Oman.

The Al Mar'a Excellence Awards, now in its 11th year, is the first-of-its-kind platform that was introduced in Oman to honour and celebrate Omani women achievers and recognise their achievements across diverse fields, including banking, insurance, business, and other sectors.

Hanaa was felicitated at a special gala event held under the patronage of Honourable Lujaina bint Mohsin Darwish, Member of Majlis A'Dawla, Sultanate of Oman.

Hanaa, who has been in the field of banking and finance for over 20 years now, has set the benchmark for exceptional leadership in her various roles.



Having begun as a senior financial advisor in one of Australia's leading banks, she returned to Oman to work for leading financial names such as HSBC, NBO, OAB, and Ahlibank.

A graduate of the highly recognised National CEO Programme, Hanaa was the Deputy CEO, UAE & Bahrain - RSA ME, before taking over as CEO of Al Ahlia Insurance in Oman. She is also the founder and CEO of Smart Money Education.

"I am humbled and honoured to receive the 'Woman of the Year' award this year," Hanaa

said. "I would not be here without the support that I have received from everyone across the years, and I hope I can continue to pay that forward by encouraging more Omani women to embrace leadership roles and empower themselves to be the best version of themselves."

Hanaa is also one of the 52 iconic women achievers, who have been featured in a debut special Collector's edition book titled *Al Nukhba*.

The book was unveiled, earlier in the day, as part of Al Mar'a Magazine's first annual Women's Forum 'Muntada' under the patronage of H H Dr Mona bint Fahd al Said, Assistant Vice Chancellor for External Cooperation at Sultan Qaboos University. Established in 1985, Al Ahlia Insurance Co. SAOG is one of Oman's longest-serving non-life insurance companies. Al Ahlia offers a wide range of products and services in the retail sector including Motor, Travel, Personal Accident, and home products. With over 20 broker & affinity partners, 17 own branches, 11 border offices, 37 agent offices, a dedicated call center, an inbound toll-free number, and a convenient online platform; the company provides its customers with unmatched sales and service support.

It also offers a wide range of commercial insurance products including property, casualty, motor, construction, marine, speciality lines, and SME solutions.

As one of the oldest and leading non-life Insurance providers in Oman, Al Ahlia has received consistent recognition and awards such as 'Oman Insurer of the Year' and AIWA Award for Best Performing mid-cap company' for many years at regional and local award platforms.

Hormuz Grand Muscat unveils newly revamped meeting venue

Hormuz Grand Muscat, A Radisson Collection Hotel, celebrated as the epitome of luxury in Oman's history-rich capital, welcomes a new season of business and social gatherings with its new meeting and events venue. The 520sqm (hall size only) of the dedicated meetings and events floor has been revitalised with modern textiles and soothing colour palettes to blend with the hotel's elegant classic architecture.

"Keeping with our RHG commitment to create memorable moments that will stay with our guests for a lifetime, we are delighted to introduce the recently created Oryx, inspired after the National animal of Oman- Arabian Oryx," said Panos Panagis, general manager of Hormuz Grand Muscat.



"Our new event space for those seeking a unique setting for their special moments & productive business meetings or events, complete with warm Omani hospitality."

A vibrant and versatile venue to host any event, Hormuz Grand Muscat offers six spectacular spaces, including two ballrooms which can be combined to accommodate up to 1450 people.

The hotel is centrally located in Muscat and provides ample space for attendees to relax or catch up on work between meetings, with 231 elegantly appointed spacious rooms and suites, each with 5-star amenities like free high-speed Wi-Fi and 24-hour room service.

National Finance reaffirms ties with Injaz Oman after success

National Finance - the leading finance company in the Sultanate of Oman - through the company's independent wing for sustainable initiatives - 'Imtidad', renewed its ongoing partnership with Injaz Oman after its impressive success of empowering 1,000 participants from the 'Company Programme'.

This initiative aims to provide participants with entrepreneurial skills and prepare them to enter the labour market with their own business concepts, said a press statement.

The agreement was signed by National Finance CEO Tariq Sulaiman al Farsi and Injaz Oman CEO Khaula Hamoud al Harthi, in a ceremony held at National Finance's head office

in the presence of a number of officials from both companies.

Commenting on the partnership, Farsi said, "We are delighted to renew our partnership with Injaz Oman.

The tangible benefits they bring to society and the nation encourages us to support such sustainable ventures. In this collaboration, we aim to continue supporting the young people and developing their entrepreneurial skills."

Khaula said, "Injaz Oman believes that these strategic alliances play a pivotal role in achieving the desired goals of the country, as the Foundation always seeks to support the national agenda aimed at knowledge-sharing, continuous development and employment."

National Finance remains committed to its corporate social responsibility by delivering various initiatives.

Therefore, the company launched 'Imtidad', an expression of the company's dedication to positively impact crucial sectors, including education, community, health and environment. National Finance, established in 1987, has built a reputation as the market leader trusted by thousands of customers across the Sultanate.

National Finance offers a wide range of products targeting both individual customers, corporates and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through its 21 branches across the country.



Alizz Islamic Bank, OPAL organise knowledge sharing session for SMEs

Alizz Islamic Bank, in cooperation with the Omani Society for Petroleum Services (OPAL), organised a knowledge awareness on financial inclusion and literacy for small and medium enterprises in the energy sector. They were educated on the provisions and principles of sharia'a and the correct methods and sequence of procedures starting from opening a corporate account to how to obtain financing.

The objective of the knowledge sharing session was to enhance the knowledge of the small and medium enterprises in this critical sector and raise awareness about the services provided by banks to this sector and the companies operating in it, and teach them skills that enable small and medium enterprises to grow, raise their competitive capabilities through innovative and sustainable programmes with the aim of developing the individual and society,



diversifying their sources of income and raising their contribution to the GDP. The presentations also included how to prepare financial budgets and plan ahead, improve the cash cycle and cashflow, issuing invoices to customers on time, active follow-up, maintaining the appropriate credit limit,

as well as the importance of developing emergency plans in the event of any defaults and how to avoid them. They were taught how to enter new markets, access resources, innovation, and provide permanent job opportunities in line with Oman's 2040 vision on the importance of supporting

small and medium enterprises to be the main engine of the national economy. Alizz Islamic Bank provides SME banking solutions that help local entrepreneurs and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) achieve their business goals through an array of innovative sharia'a-compliant solutions. As

a local bank it believes in the importance of building the economy from the bottom up and SMEs play a significant role in shaping the future of Oman.

The banks team of SME banking experts have developed a comprehensive suite of sharia'a compliant products and services that are designed to cater to the needs of every SME and SMEs are provided with a state of the art e-banking platform that enable them to conduct their various business transactions from the comfort of their offices.

Alizz Islamic Bank offers banking solutions that are compatible with the provisions of sharia'a using Islamic contracts such as Ijarah, Forward Ijarah, Murabaha, Diminishing musharaka, Wakalah and Qard Hassan to provide working capital financing, asset financing, raw material financing, equipment financing and commercial financing.



Divers complete PADI instructor examination successfully

A group of scuba divers in Oman has successfully completed the PADI Instructor Development Course (IDC) allowing them to participate in the PADI Instructor Exam.

IDC is the course one needs to take to become a PADI Open Water Scuba Instructor (OWSI). IDCs are taught by PADI course directors, the highest level and most respected professional rating in recreational scuba diving.

Oman is known to have one of the most pristine and beautiful scuba diving spots from north to south. Moreover, the diversity of marine life intrigued many neighbouring countries to come and enjoy snorkeling activities in the sultanate, said that organisers.

In the last few years, Oman witnessed a big drop in the scuba diving industry despite the huge market potential. According to the passionate divers in Oman, proper training of scuba instructors would not only help Oman take maximum benefits out of its huge marine resources, but would also help in environment protection while undertaking scuba diving activities.

In September this year, with the persistence of a PADI Course Director who is the only one authorised to conduct the IDC programme in affiliation with Gulf Divers (Euro divers) Oman was finally able to revive this programme.

The instructor exams, an evaluation programme following the IDC is conducted by a PADI examiner only, witnessed a 100 per cent success rate with all the participants clearing the certification this weekend in Muscat.

While sharing her thoughts, one of the candidates said, "There are moments when your capacity is tested despite having adequate knowledge and skills. The effort that I have put in for the course was extremely rewarding and worth it. I have grown as a diver and I can't wait too long to continue my professional education."

Another candidate said, "I

never thought that I would be able to become a scuba instructor. The experience and learning we had during our IDC has allowed me to pass the IE very comfortably. I can't wait to start having my own students and teach them how to love our ocean."

PADI course director Bechir Chehab said, "The PADI IDC is an intense but very rewarding programme, the aim is to make sure that we work towards developing knowledge and skills so that the new instructors can also do the same.

"The candidates worked very hard. Passing this specific programme didn't come to me as a surprise but came out of passion and commitment of my students towards our ocean and in particular Oman which has many beautiful protected marine reserve area, there is a massive potential. I am very pleased to see that we were able to conduct this programme again after such a long time. Worth mentioning that anyone that meet the requirements and after passing a successful IE, one can have a full time or part time job with extra income as well."

In conclusion, Bechir said, "Another role that we all must embrace even as non-divers is how we can protect our marine environment. With more instructors we will be able to offer additional tips, support and initiative and have more awareness towards the ocean."

The Instructor Development Course (IDC) is made up of two parts - the Assistant Instructor (AI) course and the Open Water Scuba Instructor (OWSI) programme. Most diving professionals complete the entire IDC and go on to attend an Instructor Examination (IE), which is the final step to earn a PADI Instructor certification. The programme can only be conducted at five star IDC diving centres and currently Gulf divers/Euro divers Oman is the only dive operator hosting it in Bandar Marina Bandar al Rowda, Sidab.

Arab Open University launches its new brand

Arab Open University celebrated the 20th anniversary of its establishment and the inauguration of its new branded identity on Sunday. The celebration included a virtual exhibition of the late Prince Talal bin Abdulaziz under the title 'A History Read by Generations'.

The ceremony concluded with a presentation of the new identity reveal and most important details of the new identity.

Prof Dr Mohammed bin Hamdan al Badi, the university rector said, "We at the Arab Open University do not aim to provide a high-quality education at a



world-class level only, but we also seek to provide a curriculum

that nurtures the aspirations of our students, keeps pace with

the developments taking place, and provides a sound educa-

tional model." "It transcends geographical and socio-economic borders and obstacles, raises our students towards the horizons of creativity and enables them to shape their future and the future of their societies."

He added that the Arab Open University provides the opportunity for its students to unleash their ambitions in horizons that know no borders. "The launch of new brand comes in preparation for the next phase of the expansion of the Arab Open University and the reallocation to the university's new building in the Sultanate of Oman."

3 NBO women employees recognised at Al Mar'a Excellence Awards recently

Honoured for their contribution to the nation and their leadership roles, three of NBO's women team members have been recognised at the recent Muntada Al Mar'a Magazine and Al Mar'a Excellence Awards. Both are key women empowerment platforms focusing on Omani women who managed to successfully pursue and assume leadership and management roles.

Ghadeer al Lawati, assistant general manager - Project Finance and Syndication at NBO, featured in the Top 52 Most Iconic Omani Women by



Muntada Al Mar'a Magazine. Two more inspiring women included Salima al Marzouqi, assisting general manager, Chief Islamic Banking Officer, at NBO Muzn Islamic Banking who won the award 'Corporate Leadership in Banking' and Sharifa al Maskari, head of Brand at NBO, who won the award 'Strategic Leadership and Corporate Communications'.

NBO continues to acknowledge the paramount role women play in the socio-economic development of the nation.

The bank strategy of growth is

built around people being its most valuable asset.

NBO supports its team members by providing them with an empowering environment that enables them to excel as active and engaged members of society. The bank believes in unlocking opportunities of not only its team, but the communities as one.

With that in mind, NBO prides itself for being an advocate of women's empowerment, and has a top-down commitment to building a pipeline for women to rise to leadership roles.

Oman Air welcomes 'Future Leaders' with commercial graduate programme

Oman Air, the national airline of Oman, has officially inaugurated its highly anticipated Future Leaders Commercial Graduate Programme.

A special induction ceremony was held for the 11 Omani graduates at the Crowne Plaza Muscat OCEC, under the auspices of His Excellency Sheikh Nasr Amer al Hosni, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour. During the event, the candidates were addressed by Oman Air's Chief Executive Officer, Abdulaziz al Raisi, and members of senior management.

Sumaiya al Siyabi, who recently became the first Arab woman to win the 'Stars of Science' programme, was also there to offer a few words of encouragement.

After a rigorous selection process which began in July, the



candidates; Bashair al Busaidi, Firas al Zadjali, Atheer al Mahrouqi, Ibrahim al Hina, Saqar al Arai, Mohammed al Sarmi, Fatima al Zahra Shabeer, Usama al Balushi, Fatma al Marhubi, Maryah al Harthi, and Muzdalifa al Husaini, are now gearing up to begin their exciting two-year journey.

H E Sheikh Nasr Amer al Hosni commented, "Oman Air has done a wonderful job designing the Future Leaders Programme, which clearly demonstrates the extent of its interest in empowering more Omani cadres and nurturing them for various leadership and highly specialised positions in the

field. Without a doubt, the 11 new graduates will constitute a new building block in the commercial aviation sector. The programme represents an integrated strategy for human resources management and an example of the constructive partnership between the Ministry of Labour and the private sector. Through such ef-

orts, we aim to create a stimulating work environment that follows world-class standards, and ensures the achievement of the aspirations and goals of Oman's 2040 Vision."

Abdulaziz al Raisi, added, "Oman Air is a huge advocate of developing the next generation, in line with our commitment to

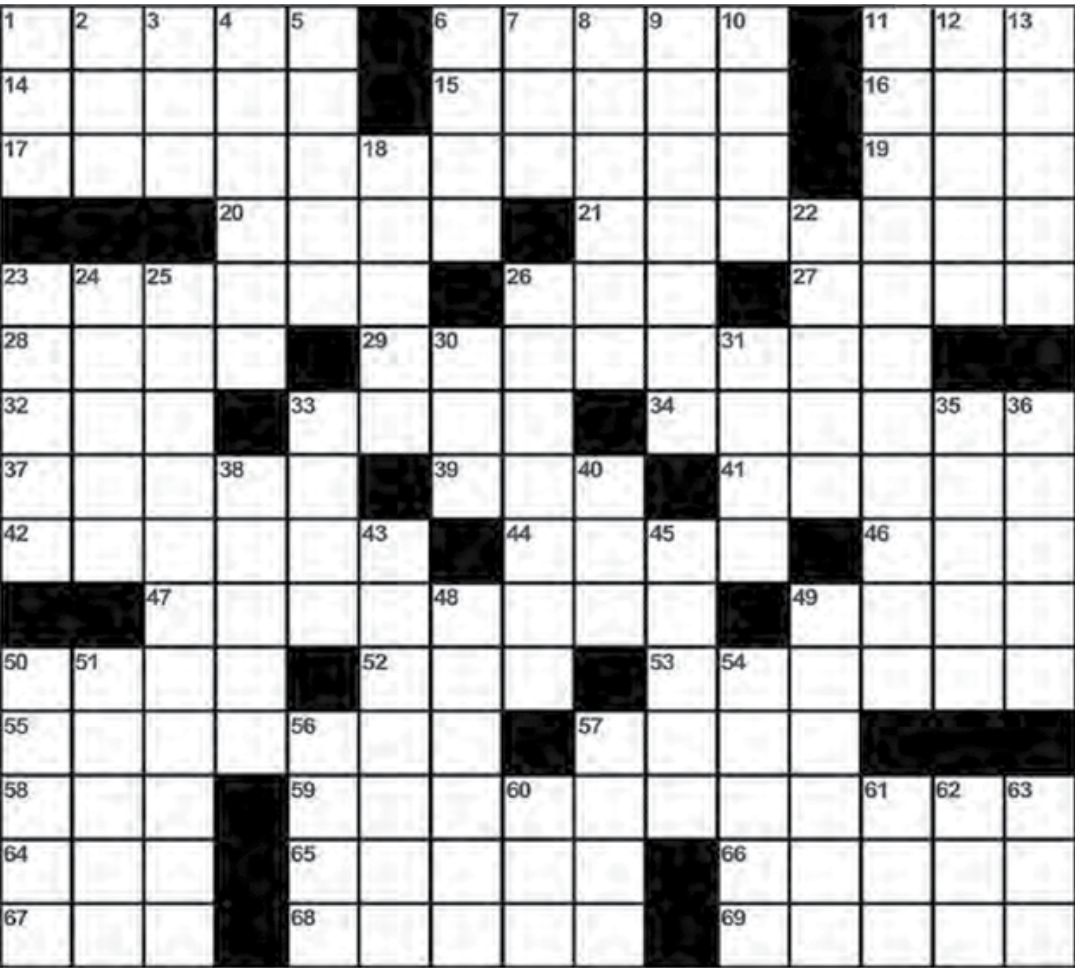
Oman's 2040 Vision and its economic development. The 11 graduates have been carefully selected for their huge potential and talent. Over the next two years we will nurture that talent and feed it with tangible, practical skills that they can take into their professional, and even their personal, lives. The ceremony marks an exciting milestone for them as the first step in building a promising career in aviation."

Over two years, the candidates will spend time at Oman Air's hub in Muscat and some of its outstations, gaining experience in all the commercial functions of the airline. They will begin by receiving a formal induction and training for two weeks before starting their employment. Later, they will fly to IATA's European headquarters in Geneva to undergo world-

class formal training and sit an exam for the prestigious IATA Air Transport Management Certificate. The rest of the two-year programme will see them spend three to four months rotating around each commercial function. Throughout this time, they'll continue to receive training with a dedicated senior leadership mentor and, at the end, they will come away with internationally recognised qualifications.

In order to meet the demands of a constantly evolving industry, Oman Air continues to invest heavily in training and capacity building. As well as internships and graduate training programmes, Oman Air provides rich and varied career development opportunities that expand horizons for young Omanis and boost its contribution to the national economy.

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1) "Drinks_ the house!"
6) Sheik's bevy
11) Infomercials, e.g.
14) Corkwood
15) Make reparations
16) Ashes receptacle
17) 9-5, typically
19) Cloak-and-dagger org.
20) Birds that sound de-serving
21) Best man, often
23) Made a basket
26) Winter mo.
27) Emerald Isle
28) Some email attach-ments
29) Little cupid
32) '80s prime-time alien
33) Telephone button
34) Occasion for a spir-ited conversation?
37) Exxon competitor
39) Taking a vacation day
41) Further shorten, as a piece of wood
42) Let out some air
44) Homophone of 16-
Across
46) Vein contents
47) Dusk, poetically

49) Whence to admire?
50) French clergyman
52) Gangster's pistol
53) Indentations, as in chins
55) Picnic take-alongs
57) One way to go to a party
58) Pigeon's sound
59) Enjoy a sabbatical
64) "Shame on you!" sound
65) Animation legend
Tex
66) Hindu gentleman (Var.)
67) Some cross rds.
68) Potted plant's place
69) Make malicious remarks
DOWN
1) Blood system, for short
2) The "so few" Churchill referred to
3) Keebler baker, in ads
4) Wickerwork twigs
5) Abalone product
6) Cries of triumph
7) "Z" preceder?
8) Carpenter's tool
9) Covers up
10) Southwestern butte

11) Uses Sotheby's
12) Less wet
13) Tom-tom neighbor
18) "This foolishness must_ once!"
22) Stiff hairs or bristles
23) "The final frontier"
24) 459, in old Rome
25) Not reported, as in-come
26) Surrender
30) Former Chinese chainnan
31) Relative of 20-Across
33) Seafood entree
35) Diamond size meas-ure
36) Decorative jugs
38) "Case dismissed" punctuation mark
40) Fleeting obsession
43) Personalize, in a way
45) Prefix with "linear" that means "straight"
48) Assigned work to
49) Crete's sea
50) S&L holdings
51) Shove up from below
54) Some yearlings
56) And others, for short
57) Eye-opening prob-lem?
60) Work bit

61)_Wan Kenobi
62) Affected dandy

NOTE PAD

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Making a sacrifice doesn't have to feel like a loss. Keep that fact in mind when someone asks you to give up something for their sake. This small gesture on your part could make a huge difference to this other person and earn you immense (and long-lasting) brownie points. You might even be grateful for the opportunity to do this. It's up to you whether or not you let this fact be known, though. Even if it isn't ideal, you should do it.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Your vision is clear as a bell today in every sense. If you've been struggling to make a decision or confused about which strategy to adopt, today is the perfect day to look at the situation again. It's time to reassess. The way might be embarrassingly obvious now. Unfortunately, your omnipotent vision could also reveal a few problems you have to deal with. But wouldn't you rather know about them? Ignorance is not always bliss.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER21

You're entering a new phase in which you don't have to work as hard as you've been working. Right now, you can start to let go of the power you've been holding on to. Just let go and let other people do the driving while you sit back, relax, and enjoy the ride. It might take you a while to get used to not being in total control, but you'll soon be intrigued by the interesting and exciting directions that only other people can take you in.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

It's all nice and dandy to mull things over and get all into your own thoughts. After all, that's how you develop them into brilliant ideas! But today it's much more important to put your new ideas to work. Take them out of the abstract and bring them into the real world. It's time for a trial run. That new approach you wanted to try with your latest crush? Give it a whirl today. It just might work! If not, you'll get valuable clues you can use to tweak it.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

What you expected to be a major turning point might actually be something of a minor blip on your radar today. Apparently, your expectations were growing too big. Don't get too disappointed about it, though. Everything is happening the way it needs to happen. You should get comfortable with having less control over where your life is going right now. Open your heart and relinquish some control over your future, for the moment, at least.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Networking applies to many more areas of your life than your profession. In romance, sports, leisure, and even your extended family, you'll be much more fulfilled and stimulated if you're connected to more people. It's up to you to make the connections you need, though, so reach out and don't be shy. People are much more receptive to your overtures than you realize. You'll be surprised and encouraged by the associations you're starting to develop.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

New ideas can be funny things. Sometimes they inspire you and sometimes they confuse you, but often they merely keep you going down the path you've already been on. But that's a good thing! Keeping a steady course has its value in life, so try to stay in the direction you're currently going. Avoid anything too stimulating or alluring. Now is not the time to veer off and start adventures. Stick to the path you're on (for now).

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

From dawn to dusk today you will have all the energy you need to stay focused and in control. This is a day when any collaborations you make will have the greatest chance of being successful. Working with others will involve a real, respectful exchange of ideas. You won't have to worry about any big power grabs. You're gaining a growing understanding of your situation, and that is giving you more confidence and a better strategy for figuring out what to do next.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Creating new things brings you an exceptional level of satisfaction right now, so get busy! You don't have to literally build a structure, but you do need to use your mind and your hands together to create something uniquely you. Cooking, painting, knitting, writing, even car maintenance, these are all legitimately positive ways to spend your time today. By tonight, you'll find a new level of joy in seeing what you can accomplish all on your own.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

If you can put your biggest ideas in a nutshell, you can get all the support and perhaps even the financial backing you've been seeking. Being concise is important because it helps you get to the heart of the matter without wasting anyone's time (including your own). Instead of going on and on about what you hope to get out of something, just ask for what you want. You don't have to oversell yourself. If you deserve something, you'll get it.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

If people are looking to you for inspiration right now, that's fine. Inspire away! But if they're looking for you to dig in and do some of the work that they should be doing, find a polite, convenient excuse to say no and move on. You're not meant to do work that someone else could take credit for. Plus, this isn't the time for you to take big action. You can do more later, but right now is a time to relax and let things take their course

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Just like that little engine chugging up that big mountain, you're chock-full of persistence today. Nothing can stop you once you have your heart set on something (or someone), and today you know exactly what you need to do. The momentum you've created is going to take you very far toward your goal. But if you need any encouragement, you'll find it from the usual sources: the friends and family members you cherish most. They're ready to be your cheerleaders.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Which of these is a martial art developed in the Ryukyu Islands in what is now Okinawa, Japan?
A. Sushi
B. Bonsai
C. Karate
D. Origami

02. Atlantic equatorial currents pushed westward by the Trade Winds unite in the Gulf of Mexico and then flow northward. What is the north-flowing current called?
A. Gulf Stream
B. Humboldt current
C. Force of Greenland
D. Sirocco

03. What does "savoir faire" mean?
A. Ability to act appropriately in social situations
B. A magnificent effort
C. Newly rich
D. Taking over a government

Answers: 1.A 2.D 3.C

KIDS COLOURING

BOGGLER

G	S	E	Y
L	E	O	K
N	H	E	O
N	O	L	R

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

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

Turkey accuses PKK over Istanbul attack

Police arrested a Syrian woman accusing her of planting a bomb that killed six people

Istanbul, Turkey - Turkey on Monday accused a Syrian woman of planting a bomb that killed six people in Istanbul, blaming the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) of carrying out the attack.

Two girls, aged nine and 15, were among those killed when the bomb exploded shortly after 4pm (1300 GMT) on Sunday in Istiklal Avenue, home to smart boutiques and European consulates. More than 80 other people were wounded.

"The person who planted the bomb has been arrested," Interior Minister Suleyman Soyly said in a statement broadcast by the official Anadolu news agency early on Monday.

"According to our findings, the PKK terrorist organisation is responsible," Soyly said.

The PKK, blacklisted as a terrorist group by Ankara and its Western allies, has waged a deadly insurgency for Kurdish self-rule in southeastern Turkey since the 1980s.

It denied any role in the latest attack.

"Our people and the democratic public know closely that we are not related to this incident, that we will not directly target civilians and that we do not accept actions targeting civilians," the group said in a state-



People lay flowers at a makeshift memorial for the victims of Sunday's explosion at the busy shopping street of Istiklal in Istanbul on Monday (AFP)

ment published by the Firat news agency, close to the PKK.

Police, quoted by private NTV television, said the chief suspect is a Syrian woman working for Kurdish militants. Forty-six people were detained in total, police said.

Police footage shared with Turkish media showed a young woman in a purple sweatshirt being apprehended in an Istanbul

flat. Police, cited by NTV, named her as Alham Albashir and said she was arrested at 02:50am in an Istanbul suburb. Local media said she was a trained PKK intelligence operative.

'Order from Kobane'

So far, there has been no claim of responsibility.

"We believe that the order for the attack was given from

Kobane," Soyly said, referring to a city in Syria near the Turkish border.

PKK-affiliated Kurdish militants control most of northeastern Syria and in 2015, Kurdish fighters drove Islamic State militants out of the city.

Turkey's NTV channel also shared surveillance footage of a young woman dressed in trousers and wearing a loose

black scarf who ran away into the crowd on Sunday afternoon.

Justice minister Bekir Bozdog told A Haber television that a woman had been sitting on a bench for more than 40 minutes, 'then she got up', leaving a bag.

"One or two minutes later, an explosion occurred," he said.

On Monday, all the benches had been removed from Istiklal Avenue, where residents laid red

carnations at the scene of the blast, some wiping away tears and others speaking of their fear of further attacks in the run-up to elections next June.

"We need more security!" said Idris Cetinkaya, who works at a nearby hotel and who came to pay his respects.

'Live with fear'

"The police just searched my bag when I got here, but that's the first time in a year. Millions of people come here, anything could happen at any second!"

Istiklal Avenue was previously targeted during a campaign of nationwide bombings in 2015-16 that were blamed mostly on the Islamic State group and outlawed Kurdish militants, killing nearly 500 people and wounding more than 2,000.

On Sunday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan denounced the 'vile attack' that had the 'smell of terror' shortly leaving for the G20 summit in the Indonesian resort island of Bali.

Kemal Ozturk, a shopkeeper, is among those who fear another explosion ahead of presidential and legislative elections in seven months' time.

"In election period it can happen," the 42-year-old told AFP. "We live with fear."

AFP

Iran strikes Iraq-based Kurdish groups

Arbil, Iraq - Iran launched new cross-border missile and drone strikes on Monday against Iraq-based Kurdish opposition groups it accuses of stoking unrest at home, killing at least one person according to local authorities.

Iran has been rocked by almost two months of protests sparked by the death of Kurdish Iranian woman Mahsa Amini, 22, after she was arrested by the feared morality police for allegedly breaching the strict dress code for women. Tehran, which accuses Kurdish-Iranian opposition groups based in northern Iraq of stoking the 'riots', already launched attacks in late September that killed more than a dozen people in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region.

In Monday's barrage, 'five Iranian missiles targeted a building used by the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran', the mayor of Koysanjaq in Iraqi Kurdistan, Tariq al-Haidari, told AFP. The region's health ministry said 'one person is dead and eight were wounded. They are Iranian Kurds'. Plumes of black smoke billowed into the sky after the strikes, in videos shared on social media from Kurdistan region.

AFP

Israeli forces kill Palestinian woman in West Bank: Palestinian ministry

Jerusalem - Israeli forces shot dead a Palestinian woman in the occupied West Bank on Monday, the Palestinian health ministry said, while the army confirmed raids and a shooting incident in the area.

The Israeli Defense Forces reported that its soldiers had fired at a car that was speeding toward them and that 'hits were identified', but without confirming the fatality.

The Palestinian ministry announced 'the death of a citizen after being shot in the head by occupation (Israeli) soldiers', at sunrise in Beitunia, near Ramallah in the West Bank.

She was later identified as 19-year-old Sana al-Tal.

The Israeli army statement said that its forces had 'conducted counterterrorism activities' in several West Bank locations early on Monday, including Beitunia.

"During the activity in the town of Beitunia, the soldiers



A Palestinian stands next to the place where 19-year-old Sana al-Tal was shot by Israeli forces in the town of Beitunia, in West Bank, on Monday (AFP)

identified a suspicious vehicle approaching them," the statement added.

"The soldiers signalled the driver of the vehicle to stop, but he accelerated toward them.

"In response, the soldiers shot at the vehicle. Hits were identified. The incident is under review," the army added, without

commenting specifically on the reported fatality.

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

Violence in the territory has soared since March as Israel has launched near daily raids in response to series of deadly attacks on Israelis.

Man killed

Meanwhile, an Israel soldier shot dead a man in a city north of Tel Aviv on Monday, reportedly having mistaken him for a Palestinian attacker.

Police confirmed the soldier opened fire after feeling 'unsafe as a citizen approached in a suspicious manner' at a bus station in Ra'anana, also leaving two others injured.

The army did not immediately comment on the incident and police gave no details on the identity of the victim, saying only that his mental health was being investigated.

Multiple Israeli media outlets reported that the soldier feared being targeted by a Palestinian assailant.

National service is mandatory for Israeli men and women over 18, and soldiers are commonly seen carrying their firearms in public, including while off duty.

AFP

UN council to hold session on Iran

Geneva, Switzerland - The UN Human Rights Council said Monday it would hold an urgent session on Iran, with backers pushing for an international investigation into the deadly crackdown on mass protests rocking the country.

The United Nations' highest rights body said a special session on 'the deteriorating human rights situation' in Iran would be held on November 24. The decision comes after the German and Icelandic ambassadors to the UN in Geneva submitted a request for such a meeting late on Friday.

The support of 16 of the Human Rights Council's 47 members - more than a third - is required to convene a special session outside the three regular ones held each year.

So far, 44 countries, including 17 Council members, have backed the call, the body said.

The request follows eight weeks of protests in Iran, sparked by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, after

she was arrested for an alleged breach of the country's strict dress rules for women based on Islamic sharia law.

At least 326 people have been killed in the crackdown on the protests, according to the Oslo-based group Iran Human Rights (IHR), as the demonstrations have grown into a broad movement against the theocracy that has ruled Iran since the 1979 fall of the shah.

Thousands of peaceful protesters have also been arrested, according to UN rights experts, including many women, children, lawyers, activists and journalists.

Request for international probe

In an early draft of the resolution that Germany and Iceland are due to present prior to the special session, they call on the council to create a high-level international investigation to probe all alleged violations connected with the protests in Iran.

The so-called independent

international fact-finding mission should include 'the gender dimensions of such violations' in its investigations, according to the text, seen by AFP.

The draft resolution, which could still change, calls for the investigators to 'collect, consolidate and analyse evidence of such violations, and to preserve evidence'. This should be done 'in view of cooperation with any future legal proceedings in national, regional or international courts or tribunals that have, or may in the future have, jurisdiction', it said.

The draft text called on Tehran to 'cooperate fully' with the investigators, who it said should present an oral update to the council during its regular June session next year, and a full report in March 2024.

The meeting on November 24 will be the 35th special session held by the UN Human Rights Council since it was founded in 2006, and the first called on Iran.

AFP

Afghan supreme leader orders full enforcement of Islamic law

Kabul, Afghanistan - Afghanistan's supreme leader has ordered judges to fully enforce aspects of Islamic law that include public executions, stonings and floggings, and the amputation of limbs for thieves, the Taliban's chief spokesman said. Zabihullah Mujahid tweeted late on Sunday that the 'obligatory' command by Hibatullah Akhundzada came after the secretive leader met with a group of judges.

Akhundzada, who has not been filmed or photographed in public since the Taliban returned to power in August last year, rules by decree from Kandahar, the movement's birthplace and spiritual heartland.

The Taliban promised a softer version of the harsh rule that characterised their first stint in power, from 1996-2001, but have gradually clamped down on rights and freedoms.

"Carefully examine the files of thieves, kidnappers and seditionists," Mujahid quoted Akhundzada as saying.

"Those files in which all the sharia (Islamic law) conditions of hudud and qisas have been fulfilled, you are obliged to implement," Mujahid quoted.

"This is the ruling of sharia, and my command, which is obligatory."

Mujahid was not available on Monday to expand on his tweet.

Hudud refers to offences which, under Islamic law, certain types of punishment are mandated, while qisas translates as 'retaliation in kind' - effectively an eye for an eye.

Hudud crimes include adultery - and falsely accusing someone of it - drinking alcohol, theft, kidnapping and highway robbery, apostasy and rebellion.

Qisas covers murder and deliberate injury, among other



Afghan women are seen carrying firewood in Dara-i Noor district of Nangarhar province on Sunday (AFP)

things, but the law also allows for the families of victims to accept compensation in lieu of punishment.

Islamic scholars say crimes

leading to hudud punishment require a very high degree of proof, including - in the case of adultery - confession, or being witnessed by four adult male

Muslims.

Summary floggings

Social media has been awash for over a year - and even recently -

with videos and pictures of Taliban fighters meting out summary floggings to people accused of various offences.

The Taliban have also several times displayed in public the bodies of kidnappers they said were killed in shootouts.

There have also been reports of adulterers being flogged in rural areas after Friday prayers, but independent verification is difficult to obtain.

Rahima Popalzai, a legal and political analyst, said the edict could be an attempt by the Taliban to harden a reputation they may feel has softened since they returned to power.

"If they really start to implement hudud and qisas, they will be aiming to create the fear society has gradually lost," she told AFP.

She added the Taliban also wanted to burnish their Islamic credentials.

"As a theocratic setup, the Taliban want to strengthen their religious identity among Muslim countries."

Women in particular have seen hard-won rights evaporate in the past 15 months, and they are increasingly being squeezed out of public life.

Most female government workers have lost their jobs - or are being paid a pittance to stay at home - while women are also barred from travelling without a male relative and must cover up with a burqa or hijab when out of the home.

In the past week, the Taliban also banned women from entering parks, funfairs, gyms and public baths.

During their first rule, the Taliban regularly carried out punishments in public - including floggings and executions at the national stadium.

AFP

France, UK sign new deal to thwart migrant boat Channel crossings

Paris, France - Britain agreed to pay France another €72.2mn (US\$74.5mn) to prevent migrant boat crossings under a new deal signed on Monday that underlines improving ties between the neighbours.

Around 40,000 people - most of them Albanians, Iranians and Afghans - have crossed the Channel to England from France this year.

The figure is well over last year's 28,561, which was a thousand-fold increase from 2018 when migrants and asylum seekers first began sailing inflatables across one of the world's busiest shipping channels.

"There are no quick fixes, but this new arrangement will mean we can significantly increase the number of French gendarmes patrolling the beaches in northern France," Britain's Home Secretary Suella Braverman said in a statement after signing the accord with French counterpart Gerald Darmanin.

The extra money will fund a 40-per cent rise in the number of security forces patrolling France's northern beaches, meaning an additional 350 people, the French interior ministry said. For the first time, teams of observers will be deployed on both sides of the Channel to 'strengthen common understanding'.

"The arrangement means, for the first time, specialist UK officers will also be embedded with their French counterparts," the British interior ministry said.

Tensions

Successive British governments have paid France hundreds of



French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin (right) and Britain's Home Secretary Suella Braverman sign a joint declaration signature at the Hotel Beauvau Interior Ministry in Paris, on Monday (AFP)

millions of euros over the past decade to improve border security on the Channel coast, particularly around the port of Calais.

Recent French purchases with

The agreement reflects warmer ties between the France and the UK since British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak took the helm, after years of acrimony

the sidelines of the UN climate summit in Egypt and will meet again this week at the G20 in Indonesia. The issue of how to manage the flow of asylum seekers and economic migrants from Africa and the Middle East has strained diplomatic ties all over Europe for much of the last decade.

France and Italy, which has elected a new far-right government, clashed last week after Rome refused to let a rescue ship carrying migrants dock at its ports. Macron and his Italian counterpart Sergio Mattarella urged a return to 'full cooperation' on Monday after last week's standoff which ended when France allowed the boat to disembark its passengers.

On the Channel coast, doubts remain about whether incremen-

Around 40,000 people - most of them Albanians, Iranians and Afghans - have crossed the Channel to England from France this year

UK money include thermal-imaging binoculars, mountain bikes, motorbikes, drones and vehicles which are used during beach patrols.

But suspicions have persisted in Britain, fanned by the right-wing media and members of the ruling Conservative party, that Paris is not doing enough.

under his predecessors Boris Johnson and Liz Truss.

One of the worst public rows between Johnson and French President Emmanuel Macron came in November last year when 27 migrants drowned in the Channel.

Sunak and Macron held a cordial first meeting last week on

tal changes in the number of French officers patrolling the rugged dunes and wide beaches can reverse the rising tide of crossings.

Observers say the migrants' boats are getting bigger, the tactics of people smugglers more sophisticated, and departures are being recorded along a widening stretch of coastline.

On Saturday, some 972 people were detected making the crossing in 22 boats, according to UK figures.

The French coastguard is adamant that it cannot intercept boats once they are in the water because attempting to do so could cause them to capsize.

The surge in arrivals in the UK has caused a logjam in asylum claims and increased accommodation costs estimated by the UK government at £6.8mn (US\$7.8mn) a day.

The ruling Conservative party has grappled with the issue for years and under Johnson devised a scheme to send asylum seekers to Rwanda in a bid to deter new claimants.

"I've watched so many British ministers over the years coming new to the problem and deciding that they are going to get a grip and somehow solve it," former British ambassador to France, Peter Ricketts, told AFP.

"But they all end up falling back on the realisation that the only way to bring this under control is by working with the French. "To their credit, the Sunak government has reached that conclusion quickly and today's agreement is good news," he added.

AFP



Kenyan soldiers land in the city of Goma, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo on Saturday, as part of a regional military operation (AFP)

East Africa bloc announces peace talks for eastern DR Congo

Goma, DR Congo - East African leaders on Sunday announced peace talks in a bid to stabilise eastern DR Congo, where M23 rebels clashed with troops just north of the key city of Goma over the weekend.

The seven-nation East African Community (EAC) stated that it would hold a 'peace dialogue' on eastern Democratic Republic of Congo on November 21, in the Kenyan capital Nairobi.

The announcement came as Congolese troops clashed anew with the M23 north of the volatile region's main city Goma, officials said. Army sources said the military had engaged the M23 in Mwaro, a village about 20km (12 miles) north of the important commercial hub of one million people.

"We woke up to fighting this morning," one army official told AFP. Another said the situation was complex, with M23 fighters killed 'en masse' but with dead on the Congolese army's side

too. Deadly clashes lasted until Sunday night at Kibumba, another settlement about 20km from Goma, according to local residents and security officials.

M23 rebels have recently surged across the DRC's North Kivu province, winning a string of victories against the army and capturing swathes of territory.

On Saturday, the group accused the Congolese army of retaliating with 'barbarian bombings' - killing 15 civilians, including two children.

AFP was unable to independently confirm the death toll.

The latest violence comes one day after Kenyan troops were deployed to eastern DRC, as part of a peacekeeping operation from the EAC bloc.

A mostly Congolese Tutsi group, the M23 first leapt to prominence in 2012 when it briefly captured Goma before being driven out and going to ground.

AFP

Police hunt suspect in US university campus shooting

Washington, US - Police were hunting on Monday the suspect in a shooting that left three people dead and two others wounded on a university campus in the US state of Virginia, authorities said.

The main campus of the University of Virginia (UVA) in Charlottesville was locked down while helicopters and police searched for a man considered to be 'armed and dangerous', the UVA Office of Emergency Management tweeted.

Christopher Darnell Jones Jr, a student at the university, was suspected to have carried out the shooting on cam-

pus, UVA president Jim Ryan said in a statement.

"This is a traumatic incident for everyone in our community, and we have cancelled classes for today," Ryan said.

Counseling and psychological support would be made available to students and faculty, he said.

Meanwhile, police in the state of Idaho were investigating a separate incident on Monday in which four students were found dead in a home near another university campus, believed to be 'the victims of homicide.'

AFP

Lula headed to COP27 with vow to save Amazon

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - Brazilian president-elect Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is expected this week at the UN climate summit in Egypt to pledge to reverse the environmental policies of his right-wing predecessor and protect the Amazon rainforest.

Lula's trip on Monday to the COP27 talks in Sharm el-Sheikh will be his first international visit since beating Brazil's far-right incumbent Jair Bolsonaro in the October 30 runoff election.

The 77-year-old, who promised on the campaign trail to work towards zero deforestation, will address the conference on Wednesday, his press team said.

In a nod to Lula's victory speech, in which he pledged to end Brazil's 'pariah' status, his team said he had wanted to hold

'more talks with world leaders in a single day than Bolsonaro had in four years'.

But according to Brazilian newspaper O Globo, the incoming president has not been able to line up most of the dozen or so high-level meetings he had requested. Lula might, however, meet with US climate czar John Kerry and announce that Brazil is willing to host the COP30 summit in 2025, the newspaper said.

Latin America's most populous country grew more isolated under Bolsonaro, analysts say, in part due to his permissive policies towards deforestation and exploitation of the Amazon, the preservation of which is seen as critical to fighting global warming. If Lula - who served as president from 2003 to 2010 -



Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (AFP)

manages to curb deforestation and illegal mining, he would make a major contribution to the global fight against climate change, said Francisco Eliseu Aquino, a climate expert at Rio Grande do Sul University.

"Lula knows the COP talks well. He was always proactive in

international discussions and kept a high international profile' during his first two terms, said Aquino.

Deeper cooperation

To meet the environmental challenge, the former steelworker who begins his third term on January 1, hopes to get help from the international community.

Lula's former and likely future environment minister, Marina Silva, has already been holding meetings at the UN summit, and has said that Brazil will lead 'by example' on combatting climate change. She said Lula plans to fight the destruction of the Amazon and pursue a reforestation target of 12mn hectares, with or without international aid.

But she welcomed announce-

ments from Norway and Germany that they would resume financial support to the Amazon Fund. Both countries withdrew aid in 2019 shortly after Bolsonaro came to power.

"With Lula's weight and influence, and due to worries all over the world for the Amazon, it is possible that some bilateral agreements might be reached," said Daniela Costa, a spokesperson for Greenpeace Brazil.

Silva said the US government was 'prepared to deepen cooperation' with Brazil after she met with Kerry last week.

She also said in an interview with Brazilian broadcaster Globonews that she had invited the United States to contribute to the Amazon Fund.

AFP

Donald Trump set to officially launch another White House bid

Washington, US - Former US president Donald Trump is expected to officially launch another White House bid on Tuesday, refusing calls from within his own Republican party to fade away after his loyalists underperformed in this year's midterm elections.

The 76-year-old billionaire, whose 2016 win shocked America and the world, has summoned the press to his Florida mansion for a 'very big announcement' at 9pm Tuesday (0200 GMT Wednesday).

"President Trump is going to announce on Tuesday that he's running for president," said one of his advisors, Jason Miller, who predicts the speech will be 'very professional, very buttoned up'.

Known for his unpredictability, Trump could still change his mind at the last minute, but for

months he has barely hidden his desire to vie for the presidency again in 2024. Delaying the announcement now, as some of his advisors have reportedly suggested to him, would be highly awkward for Trump because he has billed it as 'perhaps be the most important speech given in the history of the USA'.

'Red wave' crashes

A 2024 White House bid would be Trump's third presidential campaign and - if he wins his party's nomination - the fifth national election with him as the Republican Party standard-bearer. In 2016, Trump and the Republicans swept into power, taking control of the White House and maintaining their majorities in both chambers of Congress.

But Democrats won back the



This file photo shows Donald Trump speaking to the media after voting in the US midterm elections in Florida on November 8 (AFP)

House of Representatives in a 2018 landslide after campaigning largely against Trump's caustic style.

Trump then lost reelection in

2020 to Democrat Joe Biden - Trump still refuses to accept defeat - while Democrats won control of the 100-seat Senate with a de-facto majority due to Vice

President Kamala Harris's tie-breaking vote in the chamber split 50-50.

After leaving Washington in chaos shortly after his partisans stormed the US Capitol, Trump chose to remain in the political arena, continuing to fund-raise and hold rallies around the coun-

The 76-year-old billionaire has summoned the press to his Florida mansion

try. Leading up to the 2022 midterm vote, in which Biden's Democrats had been expected to lose handily, Trump made denial of the 2020 election results

a key litmus test for candidates to win his influential political endorsement. But the predicted Republican 'red wave' failed to materialise, and Democrats will maintain their control of the Senate. In the still-undecided House, Republicans seem likely to eke out only a razor-thin majority.

The results have emboldened Trump's Republican detractors and sapped most of his political momentum heading into the Tuesday campaign launch.

'Three strikes'

"It's basically the third election in a row that Donald Trump has cost us the race, and it's like, three strikes and you're out," said Maryland Governor Larry Hogan, a vocal Trump critic, on Sunday on CNN.

Trump's response has been to double down on unfounded

claims of ballot rigging in the midterms, posting on his Truth Social platform that the results were a 'scam' - and pointing a finger of blame at Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell.

"It's Mitch McConnell's fault," he posted, saying the Kentuckian had badly allocated campaign funds and pursued a flawed legislative agenda.

"He blew the Midterms, and everyone despises him," said Trump, who has long been at loggerheads with McConnell.

Tuesday's announcement is widely seen as a way to take the wind out of the sails of potential Republican rivals, namely Ron DeSantis, the freshly-reelected Florida governor and rising star who has also won the backing of Rupert Murdoch's conservative media empire.

AFP

Biden, Xi seek to avoid conflict in hours-long summit talks

The 3-hour talk was aimed at avoiding conflict between the rival superpowers

Nusa Dua, Indonesia - Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping ended a landmark summit in Bali, Indonesia on Monday after three hours of talks aimed at avoiding conflict between the rival superpowers.

Xi and Biden shook hands in front of the US and Chinese flags before starting the long-awaited meeting on the resort island ahead of a Group of 20 summit, following months of tension over Taiwan and other issues.

Xi, China's most powerful leader in decades who is fresh from securing a norm-breaking third term, told Biden that the world has 'come to a crossroads'.

"The world expects that China and the United States will properly handle the relationship," Xi told him. Despite the upbeat public statements, both nations are increasingly suspicious of each other, with the United States fearing that China has stepped up a timeline for seizing Taiwan.

US officials said ahead of the meeting that Biden hoped to set up 'guardrails' in the relationship with China and to assess how to avoid 'red lines' that could push the world's two largest economies into conflict.

The most sensitive issue is Taiwan, the self-governing democracy claimed by China.

The United States has been stepping up support for Taiwan, while China has ramped up its



US President Joe Biden (right) and China's President Xi Jinping shake hands as they meet in Nusa Dua on the island of Bali on Monday (AFP)

Biden, Xi 'agreed' never to use nuclear weapons

Nusa Dua, Indonesia - US President Joe Biden and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping agreed in talks on Monday that nuclear weapons should never be used, including in Ukraine, the White House said.

"President Biden and President Xi reiterated their agreement that a nuclear war should never be fought and can never be won and underscored their

opposition to the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine," it said in a statement.

The pair held their first face-to-face talks since Biden took office on the sidelines of a G20 meeting expected to be dominated by the war in Ukraine. The pair shook hands at the start of the meeting, with Biden saying the superpowers

shared the responsibility to show the world that they can 'manage our differences, prevent competition from becoming conflict'.

The White House said he had told Xi that Washington would 'continue to compete vigorously' with China, but 'this competition should not veer into conflict'.

AFP

Xi's last in-person meeting with a US president was in 2019 with Donald Trump, who along with Biden identified China as a top international concern and the only potential challenger to US primacy on the world stage.

And though the meeting is the first time Xi and Biden have met as presidents, the pair have an unusually long history together.

By Biden's estimation, he spent 67 hours as vice president in person with Xi including on a 2011 trip to China aimed at better understanding China's then-leader-in-waiting, and a 2017 meeting in the final days of Barack Obama's administration.

Since entering the White House, Biden has spoken virtually five times with Xi but told him Monday there was 'no substitute' for face-to-face discussions.

AFP

'UAE won't take sides in great power standoff'

Abu Dhabi, UAE - The United Arab Emirates has no interest in 'choosing sides' between global powers despite its strategic partnership with the United States, a senior Emirati diplomat said on Monday.

The comments by Anwar Gargash, a senior advisor to the UAE's president, come as Washington is at odds with Russia over the invasion of Ukraine and with Saudi Arabia over OPEC+ cuts in oil production.

"The UAE has no interest in choosing sides between great powers," Gargash told experts and analysts at the Abu Dhabi Strategic Debate conference, without naming any countries.

"We will not under any circumstances sacrifice our sovereignty." The UAE is a key player in the 13-nation OPEC oil cartel which, with its 10 allies headed by Russia, angered Washington by cutting production by two million barrels a day from November, adding renewed upward pressure on crude prices.

The decision sparked a swift rebuke from the administration of President Joe Biden, which had hoped for lower prices ahead of midterm elections in the US and accused Riyadh of knowingly boosting Russian revenues during its war with Ukraine.

The UAE, which has improved economic and political ties with the Kremlin despite attempts by the US and Europe to suffocate Russia's economy, insisted the output cut was not a political jab at the US.

Gargash said his country, a rising regional powerhouse, welcomes 'constructive and collaborative engagement' with world powers other than the US to promote security and

stability in the region.

The UAE, is not 'dependent on just one or two countries for both our economic prosperity and our security', said Gargash, who formerly served as the minister of state for foreign affairs. "Trade relations increasingly look to the East while our primary security and investment relations (are) in the West," he added, explaining

The comments by Anwar Gargash, senior advisor to the UAE's president, come as Washington is at odds with Russia over the invasion of Ukraine

that the 'situation may evolve over time'.

The US has long been seen as a key protector of the rich Gulf monarchies in the conflict-wracked Middle East.

The UAE currently hosts some 5,000 US military personnel at Al Dhafra Air Base and US warships at the Jebel Ali port in Dubai.

On Saturday, the *Washington Post* said that US intelligence officials have compiled a classified report detailing 'extensive efforts' by the UAE to manipulate the American political system. The UAE's ambassador to Washington, Yousef al-Otaiba, said he is 'proud of the UAE's influence and good standing in the US', according to the newspaper.

AFP



Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese arrives at Ngurah Rai International airport in Denpasar on the Indonesian resort island of Bali on Monday (AFP)

China, Australia to hold first leaders meeting in years

Denpasar, Indonesia - Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said he will hold talks with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in Bali, Indonesia on Tuesday, the first leaders meeting between the two countries after years of soured relations.

"We enter this discussion with goodwill. There are no pre-conditions on this discussion. I am looking forward to having constructive dialogue," Albanese told media as he touched down on the resort island for the G20 summit.

Australian and Chinese leaders had a brief exchange at the 2019 G20 summit in Japan, but have not had a formal sitdown in five years.

China remains Australia's

Australia will put forward our own position. I look forward to having a constructive discussion with Xi

ANTHONY ALBANESE

largest trading partner, but relations atrophied over disputes about Chinese influence and behaviour in the Asia-Pacific region - and all but collapsed after Canberra called for an investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recently, Beijing's ambitions in the Pacific have riled Canberra,

as have China's arrests of Australians, including journalist Cheng Lei.

But centre-left Albanese's election appeared to provide an opportunity to break the impasse. Ministerial-level contacts between Australia and China resumed in June after a two-year hiatus.

"Australia will put forward our own position. I look forward to having a constructive discussion with Xi tomorrow," Albanese said.

"I have said since I have become prime minister but before then as well that dialogue is always a good thing. We need to talk in order to develop mutual understanding."

AFP

Climate disaster aid scheme 'Global Shield' launched at COP27 summit

Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt - A scheme to give speedy financial support to communities battered by climate disasters was launched on Monday by a group of rich and developing nations at the UN COP27 summit in Egypt.

The 'Global Shield against Climate Risks' comes as many of the most vulnerable nations are also demanding wider compensation for the 'loss and damage' they have already suffered from a heating planet.

The initiative, backed by the G7 and launched with initial funding of more than US\$200mn, aims to provide 'pre-arranged financial support designed to be quickly deployed in times of climate disasters'.

The Global Shield project 'is long overdue', said Ken Ofori-Atta, Ghana's finance minister and chair of the V20 group of nations most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

"It has never been a question of who pays for loss and damage, because we are paying for it," he said in recorded remarks at the summit in the Egyptian resort of Sharm El-Sheikh.

"Our economies pay for it in lost growth prospects, our enterprises pay for it in business disruption, and our communities pay for it in lives and livelihoods lost."

He said he hoped the project would help the most vulnerable communities but also aid wider understanding of the challenges emerging economies face as



People sit at a table at the Sharm el-Sheikh International Convention Centre, in Egypt's Red Sea resort city of the same name, during the COP27 climate conference, on Monday (AFP)

they are being hammered by climate-induced floods, heatwaves or droughts.

A first group of nations that will benefit from the scheme includes Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Fiji, Ghana, Pakistan, the Philippines and Senegal.

'Need protection'

Nations at the COP27 agreed this year for the first time to include the thorny topic of loss and damage on the formal agenda, after years of reluctance from richer polluters wary of creating open-ended liability.

Germany said the Global Shield scheme, largely in the form of insurance that pays out

immediately after - or even before - a climate disaster, would be part of a broader effort to respond to loss and damage.

Svenja Schulze, Germany's minister of economic cooperation and development, stressed that the scheme was not 'a tactic' to sidestep calls for a specific loss and damage funding mechanism. "The Global Shield isn't the one and only solution for loss and damage, certainly not," she said, adding that more funding will be needed to cover more countries.

"Those most affected by climate impacts need practical action now."

The Global Shield is designed

to provide a range of financial, social and credit protection and insurance for loss of crops, livestock, property and other goods.

It also promises to support the swift delivery of funds for humanitarian agencies responding to disasters.

A formal loss and damage funding stream would likely go further, also covering longer-onset climate impacts such as sea level rise and threats to cultural heritage. Besides US\$170mn from Germany, funding includes US\$20mn from France, US\$10mn from Ireland, US\$7mn from Canada and US\$4.7mn from Denmark.

AFP

'I FELT BETRAYED'

Cristiano Ronaldo lashes out at Man Utd manager Erik ten Hag, claims he is being forced out of club

Manchester, United Kingdom - Cristiano Ronaldo said he felt “betrayed” by Manchester United as he claimed manager Erik ten Hag and other senior executives are trying to force him out of the club in an explosive interview on Sunday.

The five-time Ballon d’Or winner has been a peripheral figure on the field for United since Ten Hag took charge in May.

Ronaldo was disciplined after refusing to come on as a substitute in a 2-0 win over Tottenham last month, but had returned to the side in recent weeks and even captained the Red Devils in a 3-1 loss at Aston Villa last weekend.

However, the 37-year-old was absent from the squad in Sunday’s 2-1 victory over Fulham in United’s last match before a six-week break for the World Cup.

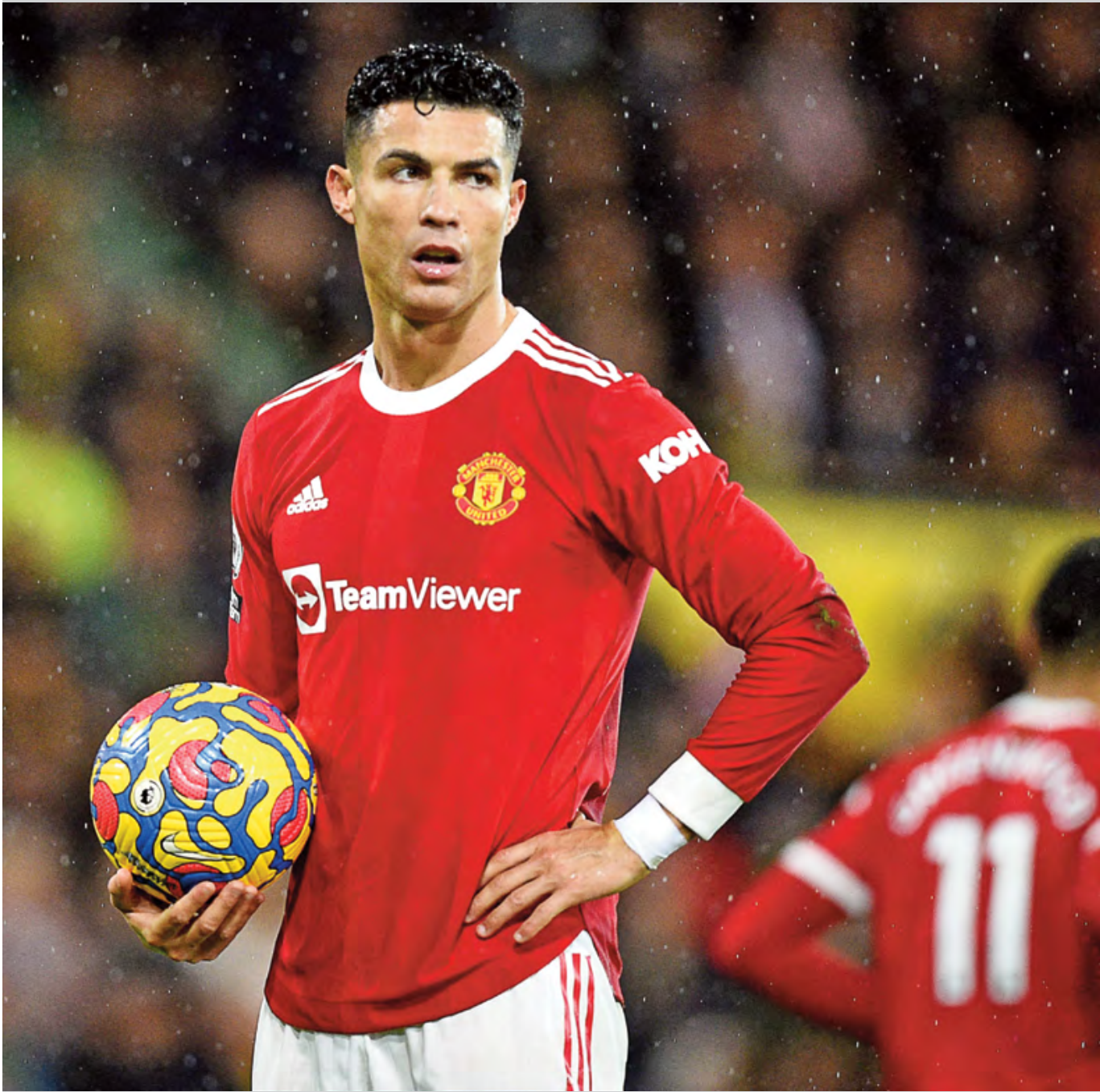
“I don’t have respect for him because he doesn’t show respect for me,” Ronaldo said of Ten Hag in an interview with the Piers Morgan Uncensored TV show.

“Not only the coach, but another two or three guys around the club. I felt betrayed.”

When quizzed again if senior club executives were trying to oust him, Ronaldo replied: “Yes, I felt betrayed and I felt like some people don’t want me here, not only this year but last year too.”

Ronaldo returned to Old Trafford in August 2021 from Juventus.

His first spell at United had been a glorious one under the tutelage of Alex Ferguson, win-



Cristiano Ronaldo came down heavily on manager Erik Ten Hag and some senior executives in an explosive interview on Sunday

ning three Premier League titles, the Champions League and the first of his Ballon d’Or crowns as the best player in the world.

Despite his 24 goals in all competitions last season, United endured a terrible campaign as they finished sixth in the Premier League and failed to qualify for the Champions League.

Ronaldo then reportedly tried to engineer an exit before the start of this season, but no agreement could be found with another club.

“Since Sir Alex left, I saw no evolution in the club. Nothing had changed,” said Ronaldo on what he found on his return to United.

score in stoppage time as Manchester United won 2-1 away to Fulham on Sunday.

It seemed the Cottagers had done enough to earn a point in the final Premier League match before the World Cup break.

But Garnacho’s expert onetwo with Christian Eriksen, in the last of three minutes of added-on time, finished with the 18-year-old racing into the box before producing a cool finish across Bernd Leno.

Eriksen had put the visitors in front in the 14th minute at Craven Cottage with his first goal for United as he finished off a counter-attack.

I don’t have respect for him (Erik Ten Hag) because he doesn’t show respect for me. Not only the coach, but another two or three guys around the club.

CRISTIANO RONALDO

“I want the best for the club. This is why I come to Manchester United.

“But you have some things inside that don’t help (us) reach the top level as (Manchester) City, Liverpool and even now Arsenal...a club with this dimension should be top of the tree in my opinion and they are not unfortunately.”

Man Utd edge Fulham

Argentina teenager Alejandro Garnacho came off the bench to

Former United striker Daniel James equalised for Fulham just after the hour, having only come on as a substitute for Harry Wilson minutes earlier.

“About time!,” said Eriksen of his goal. “I owed a few so I’m happy to be on the scoresheet in the last game before the World Cup.”

United remained fifth but this win meant they moved to within three points of fourth-placed Tottenham as Fulham stayed ninth.

AFP

AC Milan stay on Napoli’s tail as Kean fires Juve to third

Milan, Italy - AC Milan’s Serie A title defence is still on track after Sunday’s last-gasp 2-1 win over Fiorentina ensured they ended 2022 eight points behind leaders Napoli, while Moise Kean’s brace against Lazio shot revived Juventus into third place.

Stefano Pioli’s Milan looked to be falling further behind unbeaten Napoli heading into the World Cup break after Antonin Barak levelled Rafael Leao’s early opener midway through the first half.

But with the clock ticking down and chances going begging, Fiorentina defender Milenkovic bundled the ball into his own goal just after goalkeeper Pietro Terracciano clashed with Ante Rebic while trying to punch out a cross.

The away side - who also had at least one solid penalty shout for a Fikayo Tomori challenge on Jonathan Ikone - were livid at the goal while a packed San Siro roared in delight at a win which keeps

Milan just about in sight of rampant Napoli.

“It was a hard match for us, the important thing was to win before the break,” said Fikayo Tomori to DAZN.

Milan are second, two points ahead of Lazio who lost 3-0 in Turin.

Italy forward Kean gave Juventus their sixth straight league win with strikes in each half at the Allianz Stadium which took him to five goals in as many matches in all competitions. With Dusan Vlahovic unavailable for Juve as he tries recover from a groin injury to play for Serbia at the World Cup, Kean has become a reliable performer for coach Massimiliano Allegri.

He showed his worth on Sunday night in a win which allowed Juventus to leapfrog Lazio into third, although they are 10 points back from Napoli.

Six clean sheets have accompanied Juve’s winning run.

AFP



AC Milan’s Rafael Leao (R) celebrates with team-mates after opening the scoring against Fiorentina on Sunday (AFP)

Thumping win fo Oman in Desert Cup

Muscat - Oman cruised past Saudi Arabia by nine wickets in their opening match at the Desert Cup T20 Series at Al Amerat Cricket Ground in Muscat on Monday.

Opting to bat first after winning the toss, Saudi Arabia were all at sea right from the very beginning. Bilal Khan was the wrecker-in-chief for Oman taking three wickets for just 20 runs from his four overs. Kaleemullah took three for 14 as Saudi Arabian batters struggled to tackle them and finished at 86 for 8. Haseeb Ghafoor was their lone saving grace, with an unbeaten 34.

In reply, Oman were off to an emphatic start as openers Kashyap Kumar Harishbhai and Jatinder Singh found their range in no time. Though Kashyap was out on 32, Jatinder was unbeaten on 50 off 28 balls to take Oman home in the 11th over. Oman take on Bahrain in their next match on Tuesday.

The four-team series, also involving Canada and Bahrain will be played in a double round-robin



Oman's Bilal Khan took three wickets for just 20 runs from his four overs

format followed by a 3rd place play off and a final. Entry is free for the matches which will broadcast across the globe on Fan-Code, Atrangi, Ullu, Ultra, VI, Jio TV, Geo Super, Willow TV, sport-

seye and Cric-Tracker.

Oman Squad for the Desert Cup T20I Series: Zeeshan Maqsood (captain), Jatinder Singh (vice-captain), Kashyap Prajapati, Shoaib Khan, Mohammad Nadeem, Mohammad Naseem (wk), Ayaan Khan, Samay Shrivastav, Rafiullah, Fayyaz Butt, Kaleemullah, Sufyan Mahmood, Bilal Khan, Sandeep Goud; Support Staff: Duleep Mendis (head coach), Evert Laubscher (assistant coach), Mazher Khan (assistant coach), Zeeshan Siddiqui (analyst), Sean Nowak (physio).

OMAN'S NEXT MATCHES	
Oman vs Bahrain	15th Nov (8pm)
Oman vs Canada	16th Nov (8pm)
Oman vs Saudi Arabia	17th Nov (4pm)
Oman vs Bahrain	19th Nov (8pm)
Oman vs Canada	20th Nov (4pm).

Buttler’s world champions England can go from ‘strength to strength’

Melbourne, Australia - Jos Buttler is reticent to call England one of the best white-ball teams ever, but the captain is confident there is more to come to cement their status as all-time greats.

England’s five-wicket win over Pakistan at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Sunday made them the first team in history to hold both one-day and T20 World Cups at the same time, following their 50-over triumph in 2019.

Their efforts were all the more impressive given they were without five first-choice players due to injury - Jofra Archer, Jonny Bairstow, Dawid Malan, Reece Topley and Mark Wood.

“It’s not for us to judge, but we

certainly enjoy that,” Buttler said when asked if England could be now considered one of the greatest teams in limited-overs cricket.

“To have won in 2019 and now win this T20 World Cup as well, it just shows the vision at the start that people had where we could get to as an England white-ball team. There’s no reason why we shouldn’t go on from strength to strength.”

Buttler, who was part of both the 2019 and 2022 winning teams, as was Sunday’s hero Ben Stokes, was only appointed skipper in July after Eoin Morgan announced his retirement from international cricket.

Morgan oversaw England’s white-ball revival following their



England captain Jos Buttler holds the trophy and his daughter as he celebrates the victory with team-mates (AFP)

embarrassing first-round exit at the 2015 World Cup, a resurgence capped when he steered them to the 2019 title.

He believes they can now be regarded as one of the great limited-overs sides.

“It is such an incredible feeling - pure joy, relief, happiness,” Morgan told Sky Sports.

“This team deserves it. Jos Buttler said, ‘We don’t want to be known as a team just for our style of play’. We were known like that in 50 overs then won the 50-over World Cup in 2019.

“In T20 they’ve now won something tangible to be regarded as one of the great sides. They were excellent.”

AFP

CHANGE OF GUARD

Rafael Leao emerges as Portuguese trump card as sun sets on icon Cristiano Ronaldo

Milan, Italy - Rafael Leao heads to Qatar with the world at his feet and a World Cup in his sights, one of Europe's rising stars ready to take up the mantle of fading Portuguese legend Cristiano Ronaldo.

The undoubted star at AC Milan, where his flamboyant wing play brought last season's Serie A title, the 23-year-old Portugal attacker has developed from a talented but inconsistent youngster to a proven match-winner.

His six goals and nine assists in all club competitions this season have helped put Milan back in the mix for the Scudetto in Italy and in the last 16 of the Champions League for the first time in nine years.

Fleet of foot and blessed with superb balance, Leao also has accurate distribution and an eye for goal, and under coach Stefano Pioli he has become the one to watch every time he turns out for Milan.

In some ways his career has mirrored the early years of veteran Ronaldo, who has been out of favour at Manchester United and going through a rapid decline in both performances and status in the twilight of his career.

Ronaldo was also considered a show pony when he came through at United nearly two decades ago, a raw teenager who was yet to turn into the goal machine who came up with the goods when it mattered.

"I made the leap thanks to the arrival of Pioli (in 2019)... He gave me the right mentality and always encouraged me to believe



Rafael Leao has been in great form for AC Milan since last season and will be key to Portugal's chances in Qatar (AFP)

in myself," Leao said to DAZN in March, before claiming the Italian title.

"He always told me that I was talented but that I didn't have the winning mentality, that if I wanted to get to the same level as (Kylian) Mbappe or Ronaldo I needed to make an impact in every single match."

Like Ronaldo, Leao came through at Sporting Lisbon and he has been compared to Mbappe - and those two are the players he aspires to be like.

Ronaldo aspirations

Former Sporting youth coach Tiago Fernandes said in 2019 that he believed Leao was the best player in the history of the club's academy - even better than Ronaldo as a youth player.

"I wanted to show everyone who I really was, even if I'm not yet a true goalscorer like Mbappe or Ronaldo," Leao said earlier this year.

"Those two are the two attackers I study on YouTube and who in-spire me. I want to get to

their level."

Leao's career exploded into life in France at Lille after he unilaterally ended his contract with Sporting in 2018 when fans invaded the club's training ground.

The legal wrangles which resulted from that move - Leao has to pay Sporting 20 million euros (\$20.2m) - have bubbled in the background as he approaches a tournament which could see him take the step up to the next level.

Milan are trying to get Leao to

extend his current deal which runs to 2024, and Italian media report that they are offering 6-7 million euros a year in an attempt to stave off interest from the Premier League.

Chelsea made an informal bid for Leao in the last close season, and Milan director Paolo Maldini said in September that "no one is unsellable" for a club which can no longer wave around a bulging wallet as during the salad days of Silvio Berlusconi.

AFP



Marseille's Moroccan midfielder Amine Harit grimaces in pain after suffering an injury during their Ligue 1 match against AS Monaco (AFP)

Morocco's Harit hurts knee putting World Cup in doubt

Monaco, Principality of Monaco - Morocco striker Amine Harit was carried off on a stretcher against Monaco on Sunday, in the last club match before joining his country's World Cup squad.

Harit injured a knee in the 58th minute and lay on the pitch for several minutes. He was examined by Marseille medical staff and then carried off holding his head with both hands.

"From what we know, it's a very big injury," said Marseille coach, Igor Tudor, on Prime Video, without offering a detailed prognosis.

Harit, a former France youth international, has played 16 times for Morocco who kick off their World Cup against Croatia on November 23 in Group F.

Thuram in France squad

Marcus Thuram, the son of 1998 World Cup winner Lilian, has

been added to Didier Deschamps' France squad for the Qatar tournament, a French Football Federation source confirmed.

The 25-year-old Borussia Mönchengladbach striker, who is the 26th and final pick for the defending champions, has played four internationals, winning his most recent cap at last year's Euro 2020 tournament.

Thuram has scored 10 goals in the Bundesliga this season and is second in the goalscoring charts in Germany. Lilian Thuram was one of the star players in a France team captained by Deschamps that won the 1998 World Cup.

Deschamps last week selected 25 of a possible 26 players for the tournament in Qatar, where France will attempt to become the first team to defend their World Cup title since Brazil in 1962.

AFP

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In accordance with the provisions of Article 150 of the commercial Companies Law.
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وفقاً لأحكام المادة 150 من قانون الشركات التجارية
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THE PERENNIAL FAVOURITES

As Brazil eye sixth World Cup title, Serbia and Swiss set to fight it out for second spot in Group G

Paris, France - Brazil's quest to win a record-extending sixth World Cup crown in Qatar will begin against familiar opposition, with Serbia and Switzerland having also come up against the Selecao four years ago in Russia.

What has the look of a relatively kind draw for Brazil will also see them face Cameroon, who have a proud World Cup history but may struggle to make a big impact this time.

Tite's Brazil, in contrast, are the favourites going into the tournament and will be expected to negotiate Group G without too many problems before facing possibly Portugal or old rivals Uruguay in the last 16.

Brazil kicked off their 2018 campaign with a 1-1 draw against Switzerland before 2-0 wins against Costa Rica and Serbia, but they never really hit the heights expected of them before being eliminated by Belgium in the quarter-finals.

They come into this World Cup fresh from an unbeaten qualifying campaign, with a squad led by Neymar and with fearsome quality in all positions.

However, the big question surrounds their lack of recent experience against leading European sides.

Since winning their fifth title in

Japan in 2002, they have been knocked out at subsequent World Cups by France, the Netherlands, Germany and then Belgium.

However, they have played just one match against European opposition since their 2018 elimination, winning a friendly against the Czech Republic.

"I'm expectant but focused. We reached the World Cup: now it's time to reach the final and be champions. This is the truth," Tite said in an interview with The Guardian earlier this year.

Brazil's opening match this time will be against Serbia, who failed to qualify for Euro 2020 but under new coach Dragan Stojkovic topped their qualifying group ahead of Portugal.

Serbia have not gone beyond the group stage at the World Cup in their last three attempts but have a real chance this time with a squad bristling with talent in forward areas.

The big star is Juventus forward Dusan Vlahovic, but Aleksandar Mitrovic is enjoying a fine season in the Premier League with Fulham, while they also boast Luka Jovic and Ajax's Dusan Tadic.

Behind them, Sergej Milinkovic-Savic of Lazio also offers a goal threat from midfield.

Cameroon to cause a surprise?

The final group game between Serbia and Switzerland has the makings of a decider to see who will advance with Brazil, as the Swiss attempt to at least match their runs to the last 16 in 2014 and 2018. They knocked France out of Euro 2020 on penalties before only losing in the quarter-finals to Spain in a shoot-out.

Murat Yakin has since taken over as coach from Vladimir Petkovic and Switzerland caused another upset in qualifying as they topped their group ahead of European champions Italy, who then failed to come through a play-off.

Then there is Cameroon, who were beaten 4-1 by a Neymar-inspired Brazil in a miserable 2014 campaign as they went home having lost all three group games.

The Indomitable Lions, whose run to the quarter-finals in 1990 has not been bettered by an African representative at a World Cup, failed to qualify in 2018.

This year has seen them lose in the semi-finals of their own Africa Cup of Nations before Rigobert Song took charge of the team and led them to a dramatic play-off win over Algeria to return to the World Cup.

AFP



Brazil, led by their flamboyant forward Neymar, are in the mood to make up for their disappointments in 2014 and 2018

FACTFILE (GROUP G)



BRAZIL

Best World Cup performance: **WINNERS 1958, 1962, 1970, 1994, 2002**

Other honours:

Copa America winners 1919, 1922, 1949, 1989, 1997, 1999, 2004, 2007, 2019

Main clubs: **Flamengo, Palmeiras, Sao Paulo, Santos**
How they qualified: Unbeaten winners of the single South American qualifying group

COACH

Tite, 61, was appointed in 2016 and took over a national team still shocked by their 7-1 defeat against Germany in the semi-finals of the 2014 World Cup. He built a well-balanced team around Neymar. While he has come in for some criticism for supposedly emphasising defence over attack, Tite survived a quarter-final exit at the 2018 World Cup and led them to victory at the 2019 Copa America.

KEY PLAYER



Having reached the age of 30, **Neymar** knows this could be his last chance to win a World Cup after the agony of 2014 - when his tournament was ended by injury before he saw his team-mates collapse against Germany - and the disappointment of 2018. The former Santos prodigy left Barcelona for Paris Saint-Germain in a world record deal in 2017 but his move to France has not brought him the collective or individual honours he craves.



CAMEROON

Best World Cup performance: **QUARTER-FINALISTS IN 1990**

Other honours:

African champions in 1984, 1988, 2000, 2002, 2017

Main clubs: **Coton Sport, Canon Yaounde**
How they qualified: Cameroon defeated Algeria in a play-off

COACH

Rigobert Song, 46, is a Cameroon football legend having performed at four World Cups and helped the Indomitable Lions win the Africa Cup of Nations twice. Called the 'Big Chief', he suffered a stroke in 2016 and was in a coma for several days. After Cameroon sacked Portuguese Toni Conceicao coaching rookie Song masterminded a shock World Cup play-off victory over Algeria.

KEY PLAYER



Bayern Munich's **Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting**, 33, goes to Qatar in outstanding form having scored in seven consecutive matches for the German giants Born in Hamburg to a Cameroonian father and German mother, he has a point to prove at the World Cup after being largely ignored during the Cup of Nations this year. Choupo-Moting was furious at being left out of the quarter-final and semi-final starting line-ups.



SERBIA

Best World Cup performance: **GROUP STAGE IN 2010, 2018**

Other honours:

Yugoslavia were European runners-up in 1960, 1968

Main clubs: **Red Star Belgrade, Partizan Belgrade**
How they qualified: Winners of European qualifying Group A ahead of Portugal

COACH

Dragan Stojkovic, 57, was appointed in February last year to succeed Ljubisa Tumbakovic, who was sacked after Serbia failed to qualify for Euro 2020. He then led Serbia through an unbeaten qualifying campaign, with a last-gasp win in Portugal in their final game seeing them top their group. Stojkovic's Serbia also topped their Nations League group to win promotion to the top tier.

KEY PLAYER



Serbia have formidable attacking options and the best of them in **Dusan Vlahovic**. The 22-year-old forward is a robust presence up front but does not lack for pace or skill. After starting out at Partizan Belgrade, he joined Fiorentina and quickly became a prolific goal-scorer in Serie A. That earned him a 70 million-euro move to Juventus last January. In Turin he has so far averaged almost a goal every second game despite his club's recent struggles.



SWITZERLAND

Best World Cup performance: **QUARTER-FINALS IN 1934, 1938 AND 1954**

Other honours:

Euro 2020 quarter-finalists

Main clubs: **FC Basel, Young Boys, FC Zurich, Grasshopper**
How they qualified: Winners of European qualifying Group C

COACH

Murat Yakin, 48, was appointed in August last year to succeed Vladimir Petkovic, who had taken the team to the quarter-finals of Euro 2020 with a penalty shoot-out win over France along the way. Yakin, who has Turkish roots, was a defender who won 49 caps for Switzerland and notably played for Grasshopper and Basel. His brother Hakan also played for the 'Nati'.

KEY PLAYER



Forward **Breel Embolo**, 25, has pace and power in abundance and is hoping to take his early-season form with him to Qatar after leaving Borussia Monchengladbach for Monaco in the summer. Born in Cameroon, he will get the chance to face the country of his birth in Switzerland's opening group game. Embolo moved to Europe with his mother as a boy and went on to start his footballing career at Basel, where he was given his debut by Yakin.

FITNESS FIXATION

The way you create your fitness goals is so important - if you don't set yourself the right kind of goals at the beginning of your fitness journey, you could actually be limiting your success before you even get started.

Your goals should be realistic and achievable within a certain time frame, and specific to your lifestyle and training habits. Use a 'SMART' framework with five main focus areas when setting your goals. Let them be:

**SPECIFIC • MEASURABLE • ACHIEVABLE
• RELEVANT • TIME-BOUND**



SET SMART GOALS



BE SPECIFIC

Effective goal setting involves more than just having a vague idea of what you want to achieve. You need to get specific. When you have a specific goal, it's easier to identify when you have reached it, and to plan what you need to do to get there.

For example, the goal 'I want to get fit' is not specific enough. Define your target of 'fit' (losing/gaining weight, stepping up endurance, all round fitness, getting ready for an event, etc). Your goal can be: I want to be able to do 10 push-ups at a stretch or on my toes. Now, you know your target and can work towards it.

MAKE GOALS MEASURABLE

When you can track your progress against a benchmark, you know if you are getting closer to achieving your goals. This can help to keep you motivated.

For instance, running a personal best time over a set distance - This way, not only will you see your progress, you'll know when you have achieved it! Similarly, say 'I want to be able to do 20 push-ups on my toes', so you can measure your progress and know when you achieve it.

SET RELEVANT GOALS

You don't need to achieve all the fitness criteria for entering a beauty pageant, if you don't intend entering one. You also don't need to lose weight drastically or intend to run a marathon without first taking up morning jogs. You need to set goals you can realistically do, considering your own lifestyle, resources, current fitness level and available time.

The goals you set should be relevant to your life, and appropriate for your health and lifestyle. If doing 20 push-ups on your toes makes you feel fit and healthy, it is a relevant goal and you might be more committed to working toward it. If you decide to hit the gym every morning, you will be tempted to miss days, but if you keep it for alternate days, it might be doable.

MAKE GOALS ACHIEVABLE

While your goals should challenge you, it is important that they are also realistic. Setting a goal of doing 20 push-ups on your toes within a week might be impossible if you are a beginner. If the target is tough and the deadline very near, most surely you will not achieve it. So dream big, but be realistic with your own abilities.

So, give yourself three or six months to do 20 push ups on your toes – and start with 5, 10, 15, until you get there.

GOALS SHOULD BE TIME-BOUND

Setting a start time and deadline is important. This allows you to work out a plan to achieve the goal by breaking it into daily actions and marking your progress by acknowledging smaller milestones.

Hence, decide the timeframe needed to be able to do 20 push-ups on your toes, considering your current ability. If you can do 10 now, 20 can be a closer goal, but if you can barely do 5, you need more time to touch 20. But set the time limit...of course, you can push it ahead if you need more time. After all, it's you who decides your goals and plans.

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PARAGLIDING

High flyer

Intisar al Jafri becomes the *first Omani woman* to get an international paragliding license

Mohammed Taha

The sky may not be the limit for Intisar Said Hamad al Jafri, a passionate paraglider hailing from the wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali, in South Sharqiyah, who soared to the skies to follow her passion... She now wants to motivate more young ladies in Oman to let their dreams take wings.

Intisar is the very first woman in Oman to get an international paragliding license – an achievement that came following much hard work and determination. She strived hard over the past two years to excel against all odds and carve a niche, not just for herself, but also for Oman.

“If you do not have the passion you cannot excel in anything,” Intisar told Muscat Daily, explaining how she pursued her interest for paragliding with unflinch-

ing conviction. She took up paragliding in 2020 and practised frequently, for two hours a day, flying in Khubat Al Jadan area and Al Musannah, in South Batinah.

Explaining the basic details about practising paragliding outdoors, Intisar said it is a recreational sport activity done with a device called ‘glider’ to fly in the open air for long distances, guided by the wind.

“Flying a paraglider is a satisfying experience, but it also is great for your body, mind, and soul. You have the chance to breathe fresh air as well as take your mind off stress. Apart from being an extremely fun and unforgettable experience, it also gives you a bird’s eye view of the world around you.

“While you practice paragliding, your core focus is always on what is presently going on, making your concentration abilities very high.”

About hurdles in her path, Intisar said, “I faced challenges in organising my time between my work, training, and procuring paragliding equipment, but with the help of Rustaq and Ibri Club’s Dhahirah Amateur Paragliding teams, I was able to overcome it. This sport needs more awareness about its importance as an interesting physical activity for girls.”

Formal training

Intisar obtained an International Paragliding License from the International Association of Paragliding Pilots and Instructors (APPI), in August 2022. APPI is a non profit association based in Switzerland that was founded in 2009.

She said, “I’m proud to get the licence as the first Omani to do so.” Talking about paragliding rules, she said, “The first thing

to watch out for, when paragliding, is the wind. If you do paragliding without paying attention to the wind, your parachute may shut down or you may have difficulty controlling yourself.”

On her plans for the future, she said paragliding has been receiving great interest in Oman over the past few years. “I am seeking to be a paragliding instructor, establish a girls national team for paragliding, and participate in international competitions to raise the sultanate’s flag

abroad.”

About safety, she said, helmets must be worn on all flights. In addition, the selected flight areas should be suitable as well as approved for paragliding. Also, a first aid kit must be available with each paraglider.

“It is also good idea to carry a pair of sunglasses to protect your eyes from the sun while paragliding,” she said, adding, “I thank my family and friends for supporting me. I urge girls to take up this sport.”



Flying a paraglider is a satisfying experience, but it also is great for your body, mind, and soul. You have the chance to breathe fresh air as well as take your mind off stress

INTISAR SAID HAMAD AL JAFRI



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Keep an eye on ‘Diabetic eyes’

Diabetic retinopathy continues to be an important cause of vision deterioration. Approximately 1 in 3 people living with diabetes have some degree of diabetic retinopathy and 1 in 10 will develop a vision threatening form of the disease.

The wreckage caused by diabetes in the eyes are many. When it affects the light sensitive layer retina inside the eye it is called diabetic retinopathy. In diabetes the blood flow to the retina can get blocked and can cause retinal ischemia.

The blood vessels in the retina also bulge, leak fluid and fat causing oedema or swelling especially in the area called macula which is the highly sensitive area of the retina and has the highest acuity of vision. The macula is needed for reading, driving, recognising faces and executing other activities that require finer sharper vision.

Diabetic retinopathy is asymptomatic in early stages. We can control and treat it if detected early and vision can be preserved. Hence early detection with periodic dilated fundus examination is absolutely necessary.

Risk factors

Risk factors for developing diabetic retinopathy are duration of diabetes, older age, poor blood sugar control, high blood pressure, high cholesterol level, pregnancy and smoking.

Recommended schedule of eye examination is 5 years after onset of diabetes for Type 1 diabetes mellitus and at the time of diagnosis for Type 2 diabetes. There after annual dilated pupillary examination is a must for all persons with diabetes. In progressing or life threatening diabetes dilated examinations should be repeated more frequently.

There are mainly 2 stages of diabetic retinopathy. Non proliferative and proliferative. Non proliferative diabetic retinopathy affects the background of retina. This can be arrested by proper control of diabetes and surveillance. Progression of diabetic retinopathy over time can cause proliferative diabetic retinopathy in which new blood vessels are formed in the retina which are of no use and instead are prone to bleeding and leakage.

In order to save eyes, following tests are carried out:

Dilated fundus examination

Eye drops are administered in the eyes to dilate the pupil and the retina is examined with a magnifying lens to pick up any diabetic changes in the retina.

Colour fundus photography

A special camera is fitted to the

microscope and photos of the retina are taken.

Fluorescein angiography

Here a dye is injected to a vein in the arm and photos of the retina are taken once the dye reaches the retina to assess leakage of blood vessels. OCT or optical coherence tomography can scan the different layers of the retina and helps to detect the presence and extent of fluid collection in the macula which helps to treat the affected areas.

Treatment options

In the early stages no treatment is necessary. Proper control of diabetes, blood pressure, cholesterol, diet and proper exercise can arrest the progress of diabetic retinopathy.

Laser treatment High energy laser treatment can seal the leaking blood vessels and also destroy the unhealthy blood vessels causing bleeding

Intravitreal injection of anti VEGF is given for fluid collection in the macula and for preventing growth of new blood vessels.

Once vitreous haemorrhage and tractional detachment set in, the only treatment is surgery. The blood and scar tissues are cleaned by vitrectomy surgery and if there is detachment of the retina the retina is reattached by surgery.

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