

P9

MSX BUOYED BY UPGRADE OF OMAN'S SOVEREIGN RATING



P20

SCALONI CALLS FOR CALM AFTER ARGENTINA BLANK MEXICO



P7

DESERT ADVENTURES TO TRY THIS WINTER



■ MUSCAT

HM GREETINGS TO ALBANIA PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Bayram Begay of the Republic of Albania, on his country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to President Begay. His Majesty the Sultan also wished the people of Albania further progress and prosperity. — ONA

HM GREETINGS TO MAURITANIA

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, on his country's Independence Day. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to President El Ghazouani. — ONA



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■ MOROCCO UPSET BELGIUM 2-0 AT WORLD CUP



Fans celebrate as Morocco jeopardised Belgium's World Cup hopes as Abdelhamid Sabiri and Zakaria Aboukhhal's late goals secured a surprise 2-0 triumph in Doha on Sunday. **DETAILS ON P15**

Breakthrough on star formation

WASHINGTON: An important new hint regarding how galaxies halt intense episodes of star formation has been found by astronomers using the Karl G Jansky Very Large Array (VLA) of the National Science Foundation in the United States (US).

The research on the nearby galaxy M33 suggests that fast

cosmic ray electrons can generate winds that blow away the gas required for the formation of new stars. As galaxies evolve over time, these winds are what cause the star formation rate to slow down. However, the primary sources of such winds have been attributed to material jets powered by black holes and shock waves from

supernova explosions.

Cosmic rays were assumed to be small contributors, especially in galaxies with prolific star formation, such as M33. M33 is a spiral galaxy that is almost 3 million light-years distant and is a member of the Local Group of galaxies, which also contains the Milky Way.

Tourism sector eyes RO 3 bn investments

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, Nov 27

A number of laws, regulations and legislations governing the tourism sector are currently under review, most importantly the Tourism Law which is expected to be passed at the beginning of next year. Besides, usufruct agreements are being revised to encourage investors to commit to executing the projects.

This was stated by Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, in an interview with Oman Arabic, sister newspaper of the Observer.

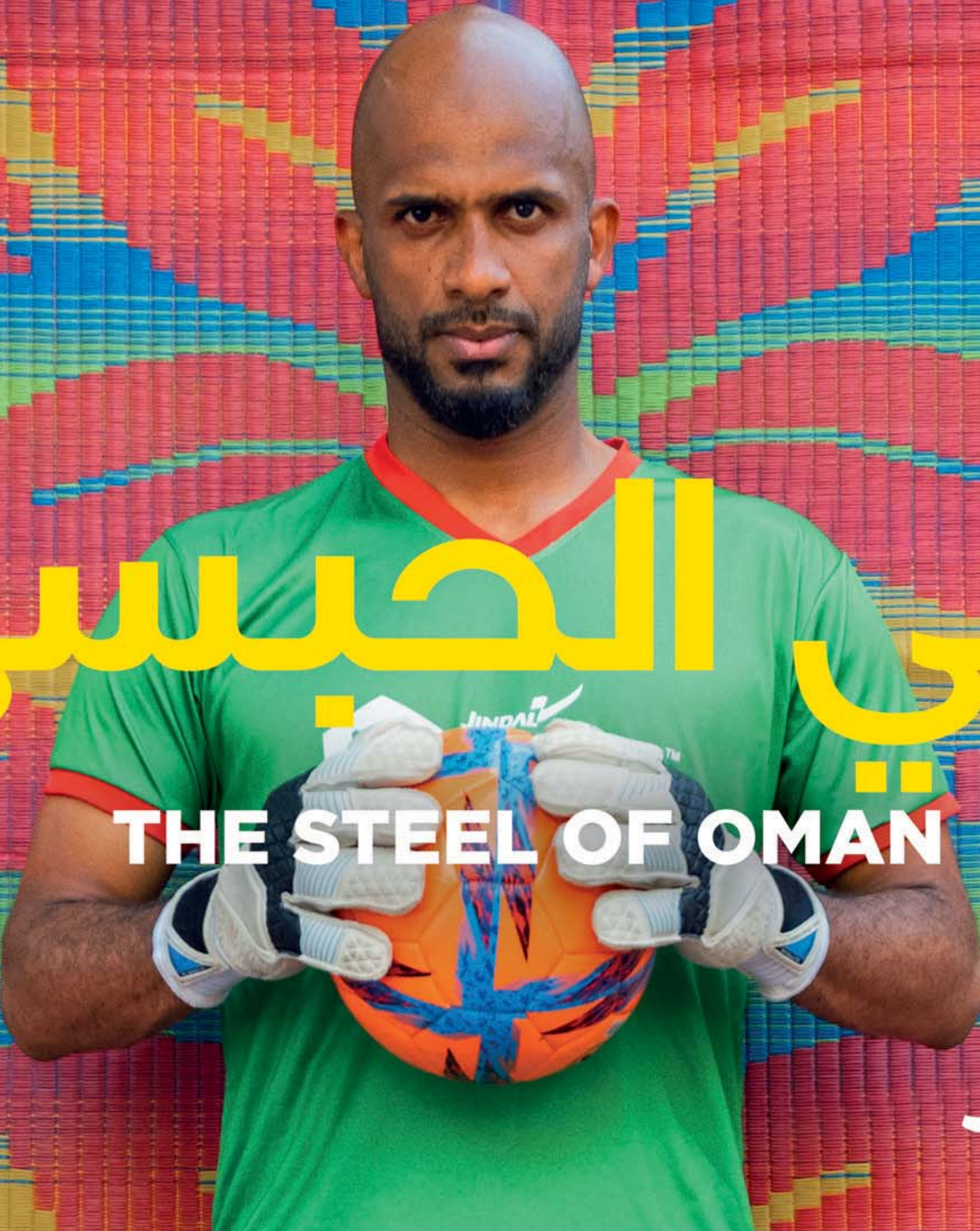
The minister said that there are more than 80 tourism projects under implementation across the Sultanate of Oman. Those projects, including Oman Plant and Trees Garden whose implementation rate reached 65 per cent, would boost domestic tourism.

The minister said that the

tourism sector is recovering quickly from the impact of Covid-19 pandemic, hoping that the promotional plan undertaken by the ministry would achieve the desired goals by pulling international tourists. However, he warned that the energy crisis and high inflation in Europe would limit tourist inflow during the winter tourism season.

The minister affirmed that the ministry is targeting investments worth RO 3 billion between 2021 and 2023. The value of the tourism projects which are currently under implementation stand at RO 1.7 billion.

The tourism sector is expected to contribute an estimated 3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), the minister said, adding that funding is the biggest challenge facing the sector. To address this challenge, the ministry is weighing several options including establishing a tourism development fund.



علي الحسني

THE STEEL OF OMAN

JINDAL





Sayyid Shihab receives Algerian ambassador



MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, received in his office at Muaskar Al Murtafaa on Sunday Filali Ghouini, Ambassador of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to the Sultanate of Oman. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed bilateral relations and means of promoting them. They also discussed various topics of common interest. — ONA

Four agreements for projects in Al Dhahirah

IBRI: Within the context of Al Dhahirah Governorate's Annual Plan, four agreements were signed on Sunday to set up development and service projects in the governorate.

The first agreement provides for the renovation of Wilayat of Yanqul Market and setting up sunshades in car parking areas.

The second deals with the development of the Municipality Park in the Wilayat of Dhank and includes the installation of sunshades and public utilities.

The third agreement provides for the construction of a 2-km road in Wadi Al Hareem as part of the first phase of a municipal project.

The fourth agreement mandates the development of the Municipality Market in the Wilayat of Ibri. The project includes greening open areas, installing lights around the marketplace and renovating the shopping area's façade.

The agreements were signed by Najeeb bin Ali al Rowas, Governor of Al Dhahirah.

— ONA

Oman launches postage stamps at Venice Biennale 2022



VENICE: With the inauguration of a spectacular set of postage stamps, the Sultanate of Oman concluded its first participation in Venice Biennale 2022, held from April 21 to November 27, 2022.

The closing ceremony was attended by Sayyid Said bin Sultan al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture, Commissioner-General of Oman's pavilion. Also present was HH Sayyid Nizar bin Al Julanda al Said, Oman's Ambassador to the Italian Republic, Dr Aisha Stoby, Curator of Oman's pavilion, representatives of the companies supporting the pavilion and a large gathering of art enthusiasts.

During the ceremony, four postage stamps were issued by Oman Post featuring artworks presented in the pavilion by Anwar Sonia, the late Raya al Rawahi, Hassan Mir, Bodour al Riyami and Radhika Khimji.

Besides highlighting the historic debut, the pavilion documents Oman's contemporary arts march by showcasing creative content and philosophical concepts linked to nature and the benefits it offers to mankind, notably under the theme of this edition of Venice biennial — "The Milk of Dreams". The theme was inspired by a children's novel from the 1950s by the surrealist artist Leonora Carrington. The stamps will be made available for fans and other members of the public later.

Oman's participation in the gala event, distinguished for its superior value and large volume of art lovers, is considered a unique opportunity to celebrate the common "language of creativity" and rally Omani nascent voices in the global domain.

The biennial received massive international media coverage. Its venue saw a large turnout, exceeding 6 million visitors from all parts of the globe, with approximately 10 million views of its electronic website. As many as 8,100 media establishments and 5,540 international media agencies covered the event. — ONA

Municipal Council of Dhofar Governorate holds meeting



SALALAH: The Municipal Council of the Governorate of Dhofar held a meeting on Sunday under the chairmanship of HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, Chairman of the council.

The council valued the Royal directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik in approving the implementation of several developmental projects in the governorate, in addition to approved projects within the 10th Five-year Development Plan.

The meeting discussed a spectrum of topics and reviewed several recommendations. — ONA



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SEASON 2022-2023

Liwa Model Residential City to accommodate 30,000 residents



LIWA: As part of celebrations marking Oman's 52nd National Day, HH Sayyid Belarab bin Haitham al Said will patronise over a ceremony marking the opening of Liwa Model Residential City, which covers an area of 12 million sqm, on Monday.

The city, set up in the vicinity of Al Batinah Expressway, has been designed to accommodate 30,000 residents. It boasts a broad range of services and facilities, including 1,300 housing units and around 3,400 single

and double residential units. The city is also designed to cater to 50,000 residents and visitors in the future.

Carried out by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, the city constitutes a comprehensive model for sustainable cities. Its configuration is based on interactive participation among government departments concerned, firms and public service providers. It witnessed direct participation from society in all its stages of planning and design. — ONA

Mohammed Riyaz sponsored National Day Golf tournament to celebrate Oman's 52nd National day

National Day Celebration Golf Tournament was held on was held at the Ghala Golf Club coinciding with the celebration of Oman's 52nd National Day. The stable ford competition had prizes for Junior, senior and ladies' winners. Over 100 players fought for the prizes in an exciting game of golf. National Day Celebration Champion was H.H Azzan Al Said with 42 Points by C/B and he won a 500 OMR Voucher. Junior's Winner winning 100 OMR Voucher was Dineth Jayasinghe with 35 points. Ladies Winner winning 100 OMR Voucher was Jameela Daud with 38 points. At 3rd Place winning 100 OMR Voucher was Faisal Al Adawi with 39 points and at 2nd Place winning 200 OMR Voucher was Andrew Moore with 42 points

In his opening remarks, Faiz Mohammed Riaz, Managing Director of Mohammed Riaz and Partners, welcomed His Highness Sayyad Azzan Bin kais al said, the Vice Chairman of the Oman Olympic Committee, and thank him for accepting the invitation to grace the occasion.

Faiz also welcomed his father Mohammed Riaz Mohammed Ibrahim Haji and his brothers Fahad & Zain, and other dignitaries.

Faiz Riyaz, Managing Director of Mohammed Riyaz & Partners and Home Mart International, outlined his vision for the group by announcing 4 major projects namely, First - the expansion of their water plant from 15,000,000 bottles currently to 75,000,000 bottles of SAROOJ drinking water in the NEXT 90 days and making clean water affordable to people of Oman.

Second - Establishing First Omani Ice Cream Plant with complete range of impulse range and family packs at affordable prices. It will also be exported to the neighboring countries.

Third - Establishing a manufacturing plant for PP-R Pipes used in Hot and cold potable water piping networks in residential and commercial buildings, Heating systems, Chilled water networks



in air conditioning systems and other applications.

And lastly - promised to open 10 more branches of "Salam Fresh" chain of stores in the next one year all over Oman to give benefit of quality Frozen and Dry Food products to people of Oman. "Salam Fresh" chain of stores has 4 Branches and are in to supplying Quality Foods at affordable prices and Contributing to Food security program by carrying 3000 metric tons of food stocks at any given point of time.

Reflecting on the Golf, Faiz Riaz said, "The golf played was of very high standards and we witnessed some amazing scores," and congratulated all the winners and thank them and other fellow golfers for showing a sporting sprit, which is so much part of the game of golf. He promised that Mohammed Riaz and Partners will be continuing their support for the game and will celebrate Oman's National day in this unique way for years to come.

He also thanked H H Sayyid Muhana bin Asaad al Said, the President of Ghala Golf Club, under whose leadership, the club has grown and become the best Golf Club in Oman.

"Under the Wise and visionary leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, Oman remains at the forefront of transformation. Oman Vision 2040 initiative will play an important role in the development journey of Oman. Increased investments in infrastructure, a firm focus on diversification and significantly contribute towards achieving this vision. We at Mohammed Riaz and Partners are proud to play our role towards fulfilling His Majesty's vision by shifting our focus from ONLY TRADING to MANUFACTURING," Faiz said.

2023 will be a special year as we embark on a journey which is in line with the government's push for In Country Value (ICV) creation. Our State-of-art Aluminum Profile Systems is a step forward to fulfill the vision of His Majesty the Sultan.

It is with humbleness and gratitude, we are proud to say that we have acquired one of the top German company, Sykon, and the State-of-art Aluminum Profile Systems will be made in Oman and will not only be used in Oman alone but will be exported all around the world. Keeping the 'Made in Oman' flag flying high.

Oman to participate in 6th Gulf Theatre Festival for people with disabilities



MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Social Development, will take part in the 6th Gulf Theatre Festival for People with Disabilities, scheduled to be hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from December 3-9.

Oman will stage a drama titled

"Rihla" (voyage) at the festival, coinciding with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPO), which falls on December 3.

The festival whose performances will be held at Princess Nourah University's theatre seeks to augment the

proportion of disabled people's participation in cultural activities and support their talents. It also aims to raise public awareness about the potential of people with disabilities, besides increasing their incorporation in society and their cultural integration within GCC states. — ONA

OCCI members to elect chairman

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

The newly elected members of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) will elect the Chairman of the Board of Directors (BoD) and two Deputy Chairmen on Monday.

The elected members were advised to submit biodata and proposed projects and nominate the most suitable candidate for the said post by Sunday.

They were also asked to present for the introductory meetings for the Chairman candidacy of the BoD and his two deputies for the 2022-2026 tenure at the OCCI

headquarters last Thursday.

Twenty-one members were elected from 125 contestants at the elections held on Tuesday. As many as 15,000 voters cast votes. For the first time, an expatriate got entry into the OCCI Board of Directors.

All the members presented their future plans and visions for managing the Chamber's business for the said period at the Chamber's headquarters to the Main Committee for the elections of the OCCI.

"We are to select the Chairman and Deputy Chairman to the BoD, and the meetings to this effect are new electoral practice

in the history of the Chamber that allows candidates to present their electoral programmes and future visions to develop the work of the Chamber," said Dr Saleh bin Said Masan, Under-Secretary for Commerce and Industry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), and Chairman of the Main Committee for the elections of the OCCI.

Nine expatriates had contested along with 116 Omani candidates in the elections to the Board of Directors of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) and to the BoD of OCCI branches.



Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)

Design, Construction, Finance, Operation and Maintenance of Salalah- Thumrait Truck Road under Public Private Partnership Agreements

As part of Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects and in order to encourage private sector to invest in infrastructure projects and public services, the Ministry of Finance (MOF), in coordination with the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT), seeks to engage the private sector in Salalah - Thumrait Truck Road (STTR) development project under PPP agreement. The STTR is a 67-km road, the first of its kind in Oman, specifically designed for heavy vehicles.

Interested local and international companies may obtain the EOI document by sending an email to ppp.roads.sttr@mof.gov.om.

EOI No.	Project Description	Last date for submitting EOI documents
PPP 4/2022	Design, finance, construction, operation and maintenance of Salalah-Thumrait Truck Road under Public Private Partnership (PPP) agreement	December 19th 2022



For more information, please contact us via an email ppp.roads.sttr@mof.gov.om or phone number: 0096824470503 (Sunday to Thursday from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm).



SMEs find Football Fans Festival right platform to promote products

MAI AL GHADANI
@MaiMohammed881

The Football Fans Festival has become a promotion point for many small and medium enterprises (SMEs). As of now, 90 SMEs participated in the Football Fan Festival's SME corner.

Participants from SMEs confirmed that their products were very popular with visitors, explaining the importance of holding festivals and entertainment events and their role in promoting their products and empowering their projects.

The festival is a marketing window and an opportunity to reach a broad segment of visitors. Interactive games enhanced by modern technologies, competitions and live entertainment shows, along with a wide range of options and experiences, made for the Football Fan Festival, which is held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center, an ideal destination for all family members, along with more than 90 small and medium enterprises participating in the festival.

Jamal bin Muhammad al Masrouri, Director of the Department of Identity and Corporate Communication at Omran Group, said: "The festival site can accommodate more than 4,000 people, stressing that the festival has witnessed a great turnout by citizens, residents and tourists, and the numbers have been increasing since the beginning of the festival's announcement. The festival targets all segments and not only to watch the matches, but it is also a tourist entertainment destination to enjoy many events and activities. Sites have been allocated for restaurants, games and shopping, and health and safety aspects have been taken into account.

Al Masrouri added: "The area designated for 12 local restaurants is rotated weekly to give small and medium enterprises a greater opportunity to participate and promote their products and projects. In addition, to a place designated for the Omani Tayseer platform, which brings together



the products of productive families and Omani projects under one roof and takes care of the packaging, promotion, marketing and sale process.

In the course of interactions, the participating SME representatives admitted that direct marketing played an important role for MSEs in the festival. Hamdan bin Ali al Saqri, partner and founder of Fawah Aromatics Company, said: "The festival has a major and essential role in attracting tourists and visitors to his institution."

Al Saqri explained that he started marketing his products through social media and direct marketing by meeting with representatives of factories and companies, presenting the products in scientific ways, and participating in international forums.

He pointed out that his products are distinguished by the fact that they are extracted from aromatic trees and plants that are unique to the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar and are distinguished by their quality, as he produces white and red rose water, olive oil, basil water, yassa, frankincense oil and other natural essential oils in addition to natural cosmetic products.

Abdul Malik bin Khalfan al Masoudi, the owner of the Orto Café project, indicated that the festival contributes to highlighting and focusing on local projects and gives them the opportunity to appear and promote.

Also, the festival provides an



opportunity for small and medium enterprises to reach a wide segment of consumers, introduce visitors to their commercial identity, and meet customers. And meet with them and take their notes and meet their needs and desires.

Al Masoudi markets his project by producing videos and being present in lively and active places where festivals, events and entertainment activities are held. In addition, to participate in consumer exhibitions and digital marketing through social media such as Instagram.

Mohammed bin Rashid al Qaidi, the representative of the Al Bdour Scents Project for incense and perfume products, confirmed that his products are very popular, given that the festival receives visitors from inside and outside the Sultanate of Oman, explaining that social media has contributed to marketing and promoting local

products. Also, he plans to open a factory for its products, as the current products are made by local hands at home, and he seeks to open branches of his project in the countries of the region due to the good sales in the neighbouring countries.

Raya bint Juma al Mughairyah, the owner of the project, said, "Visitors well received Ummi's kitchen and cafe to the festival to taste traditional and popular Omani dishes, noting that she participated in the festival to introduce visitors and tourists to the traditional Omani meals that characterise the Sultanate of Oman and to promote and market her project."

The consumer exhibitions and local events are a marketing window for Omani projects. They seek to promote their products and projects as an Omani brand, even inside or outside the Sultanate of Oman.



'Our Musannah Art' celebrates National Day

MUSANNAH: In conjunction with the commemorations of the 52nd glorious national day, "our Musannah" Art team implemented an artistic piece of work in the field of colour photography at Al Musannah port. The art piece, measuring 7.2 metres long and 2.4 metres wide, includes a mural of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik along with another picture of the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said in addition to some other symbols

in the style of graffiti art and Arabic calligraphy.

A number of talented artists and drawing enthusiasts took part in preparing the art masterpiece. The artwork was drawn on a wooden material, and acrylic colours were used to colour the spaces in addition to the decoration in some spaces, and to define some areas coloured in black to highlight and connect the beautifully implemented artwork.

Excitement runs high as World Cup progresses

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

The Qatar World Cup 2022 started with many upsets raising levels of excitement among football fans. Many who resisted the temptation of going to Doha to witness the real actions are excited now to grab an opportunity to witness the action on the field.

For Caila Amman McHugh (pictured), a young American researcher at the SQU, it's like her dream come true, as she's flying on November 29 on Oman Air to get glimpses of her nation facing the Iranian team.

"I'm truly excited and can't wait to see my team facing the named and famed Iranian team. Thanks to the holidays, I've secured air tickets and passes to the match," Caila, who joined the university just two months ago, said with a big smile.

"If Saudi has beaten Argentina, we have better chances, and hopefully, the US team will win over Iran," she quipped.



Caila has watched most of the matches at different outdoor locations, and she's all praises for the larger-than-life screens placed at different corners of the city.

"The Sultanate of Oman's proximity with the host nation is helping me to be connected with all the happenings, cheers and tears and keeping myself in the mood."

She thanked Oman Air as the shuttle flight changed the period from 24 hours to 48 hours.

"And that's a great boon that I can spend more time in Doha watching other matches and cheer for other favourite teams," she said.



Recall Campaign



Date of Campaign : 28/11/2022
Campaign Type : Recall Campaign
Product Description : ACU UPGRADE: KY ACU DTC JUDGMENT LOGIC IMPROVEMENT

Division	Vehicle Model	Affected Vehicle production range	VIN Range	No. of affected Vehicles
KIA	Carens	30th Apr'2022 - 08th Sep '2022	MZBGC8149PN011851- MZBGC8117PN048161	20

Description of defect:

On some affected vehicles in the specified production date range, there may be a potential memory error in Airbag Control Module software. It could result in Airbag MIL On in cluster due to relevant DTCs generated in system (C128381, C164308).

Procedure:

Verify affected vehicles as per the VIN list, Airbag MIL turns ON while driving/intermittent of or when engine start is at idle condition, there is a possibility that the airbags would not display during accident in such state. Hence, this may increase the risk of injury during accident.

For more information:

Customers, who own Carens models as per the above VIN range, may please contact M/s. Reliable International Automotive LLC for details & booking appointment from 28/11/2022 onwards for inspection & installations.

Contact Details:

Toll free No. 80073222 on all working days (Sunday to Thursday) between 08.30 to 17.30hrs.



Recall Campaign



Date of Campaign : 28/11/2022
Campaign Type : Recall Campaign
Product Description : Automatic Transaxle Shifting lever Inspect & replacement

Division	Vehicle Model	Affected Vehicle production range	VIN Range	No. of affected Vehicles
KIA	Sorento (UM)	27th Apr'2015 - 23rd Jun '2015	KNAPH8146G5084553- KNAPH8147G5108665	127
	Carnival (YP)	27th Apr'2015 - 23rd Jun '2015	KNAMB8129G6096287- KNAMB812XG6115736	16

Description of defect:

The shift lock lever may not return to the locked position and the shift lever can be moved out of Park and into any gear position without pressing the brake pedal, regardless of whether the ignition is on or off.

Procedure:

Verify affected vehicles as per the VIN list, Automatic transaxle lever Inspect and if necessary replace the Shift lock lever & holder kit. All affected vehicles will be inspected and repaired at no expense to the vehicle owner.

For more information:

Customers, who own Sorento & Carnival models as per the above VIN range, may please contact M/s. Reliable International Automotive LLC for details & booking appointment from 28/11/2022 onwards for inspection & installations.

Contact Details:

Toll free No. 80073222 on all working days (Sunday to Thursday) between 08.30 to 17.30hrs.



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MONDAY | NOVEMBER 28 | 2022

5



Ukrainian servicemen repair a captured Russian tank in a forest near the front line in the Kharkiv region on Sunday. – AFP

Snowy Kyiv grapples with power outages

KYIV: Snow fell in Kyiv and temperatures hovered around freezing on Sunday as millions in and around the Ukrainian capital struggled with disruptions to electricity supply and central heating caused by waves of Russian air strikes.

The cold weather is gradually pushing up the energy needs of consumers even as repair workers race to fix wrecked power facilities, grid operator Ukrenergo said.

Electricity producers are still unable to resume full power supply after Russia's missile attacks on Wednesday and have no choice but conserve energy by imposing blackouts, it said.

"The consumption restriction regime is still in place due to a capacity deficit, which currently stands at around 20 per cent," Ukrenergo said on Telegram.

Moscow has targeted vital infrastructure in recent weeks

Ukraine races to repair infrastructure hit by Russia

through waves of air strikes that have sparked widespread power outages and killed civilians. Fresh strikes last Wednesday caused the worst damage so far in the nine-month conflict, leaving millions of people with no light, water or heat even as temperatures fell below 0 Celsius.

David Arakhamiya, the head of President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's party, predicted Russia would carry out new infrastructure attacks this coming week and said the week could be "really difficult".

Zelenskiy said on Saturday evening that there were restrictions on the use of electricity in 14 out of Ukraine's 27 regions.

The restrictions affect more than 100,000 customers in each of the regions, he said. Affected regions included the capital Kyiv and the surrounding region.

"If consumption increases in the evening, the number of outages may increase," Zelenskiy said in his nightly video address, reiterating an appeal to citizens to save power.

"This once again shows how important it is now to save power and consume it rationally."

Weather forecasters expected continued snowfall in Kyiv, a city that had 2.8 million residents before the war, until midweek while temperatures are forecast to stay below freezing.

Sergey Kovalenko, chief operating officer of YASNO, which provides energy to Kyiv, said on Saturday evening the situation in the city has improved but still remained "quite difficult." — Reuters

Italy declares state of emergency after deadly landslide

ISCHIA: Italy's government declared a state of emergency on Sunday after a landslide on the southern island of Ischia killed at least one person and left a dozen missing.

A wave of mud and debris hit the small town of Casamicciola Terme early on Saturday morning, engulfing at least one house and sweeping cars down to the sea, local media and emergency services said.

A first tranche of two million euros relief funds was released at the end of an emergency cabinet meeting which declared the state of emergency, said Minister for Civil Protection Nello Musumeci.

More than 200 rescuers are still searching for a dozen missing people, while hundreds of volunteers, and others, up to their knees in mud, are busy cleaning the streets of the town.

Wreckage of cars and buses crushed by the mudslide could be seen and boulders were scattered around as excavators sought to free up access to homes, cars and shops.

Rescuers had recovered the body of a 31-year-old woman,



A man carries baggage as he walks through a street covered in mud, following a landslide on the Italian holiday island of Ischia, Italy, on Sunday. – Reuters

according to Italian news agency AGI. "It's a situation that hurts us, if only for the people who disappeared under the mountain. Here it's an island and even if we don't really know everyone, it's almost that," Salvatore Lorini, 45, said.

"The mountain came down, there was devastation of shops,

cars, hotels and that was already happening nine years ago. Now I am cleaning my mother-in-law's shop," he said.

The landslide was caused by a lack of maintenance and prevention "because nature is nature, there was an earthquake, but a bit of prevention" could have saved lives, said Lorini. — AFP

\$1 billion deal to support Yemen

CAIRO: The Arab Monetary Fund has signed a \$1 billion agreement to support Yemen's economic reform programme to its government, Saudi state media said on Sunday.

The new package by the Abu Dhabi-based fund, which includes countries from the Middle East and North Africa, will provide support for the Yemeni government's efforts to stabilise the economy from 2022

to 2025, Saudi Ekhbaria TV reported. The war has brought Yemen's economy to its knees and caused the world's largest humanitarian crisis. Inflation and foreign currency shortages have made food, water and fuel unaffordable for many in Yemen, which imports most of its needs.

While the Yemeni riyal has been kept relatively steady at around 560 to the dollar in the Ansar Allah-controlled areas,

it has reached all-time lows in provinces controlled by the government. These include Aden, where on Sunday one dollar was being exchanged for more than 1,000 rials.

Saudi Arabia said in April it would arrange \$3 billion of support to the war-torn country's economy after a new presidential council was formed. It was not clear if the whole sum has been disbursed. — Reuters



MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY
Advertisement No. (46/2022)

Companies specialized in the field and registered with **Tender Board**, may obtain tender documents for the website through the following link: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) against non-refundable fees as mentioned below starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Tender No.	E- Tender No.	Description of Tender	Tender Fee	Last Date to Collect the Tender	Tender Return Date	Grade
PRE/21/029	2021/MM/HQ-27 (Re-Call-02)	Supply and Laying of Asphalt for Muscat Governorate (Re-Tender 2) (E- Tender)	50	08/12/2022	18/12/2022	Excellent
PRE/22/125	2022/MM/QS-82	Construction of Proposed Solutions to Resolve Water Stagnation at Al Amerat Phase7 (E- Tender)	25	20/12/2022	08/01/2023	First
PRE/22/158	2022/MM/QS-83	Manufacture and Supply of Safety Barrier 2023 (E- Tender)	25	20/12/2022	08/01/2023	Specialist
PRE/22/161	2022/MM/HQ-19	Supply of Road Marking Materials for Road Maintenance 2023 2024 (E- Tender)	25	20/12/2022	08/01/2023	Specialist
PRE/22/027	2022/MM/QS-66 (Re-Call-01)	Graveyard Refurbishment Works at Muscat (Re-Tender) (E- Tender)	25	08/12/2022	15/12/2022	Second
PRE/22/118	2022/MM/QS-61 (Re-Call-01)	Design and Construction of Pedestrian Bridge and Embankment Protection Works in Airport Heights (Re-Tender) (E- Tender)	25	20/12/2022	08/01/2023	First
PRE/22/121	2022/MM/HQ-14 (Re-Call-01)	Design & Construction of Storm Water Drainage in Wilayat Boshier (Re-Tender) (E- Tender)	47	20/12/2022	08/01/2023	Excellent
PRE/22/124	2022/MM/QS-63 (Re-Call-01)	Treatment of Water Stagnation for Masar Project at Al Amerat (Re-Tender) (E- Tender)	25	20/12/2022	08/01/2023	Second
PRE/22/138	2022/MM/QS-72 (Re-Call-01)	AMC for Muscat Municipality Applications (Re-Tender) (E- Tender)	25	08/12/2022	15/12/2022	Specialist

Tender Conditions :-

- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically accompanied with an electronic copy of abond issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to Muscat municipality. The bond shall be (1%) of the tender value valid for ninety (90) days starting from the date of bids submission. Any tenders which do not meet the required bond shall not be accepted.
- Tender Bonds shall be E-Bond and to be submitted through E-Tendering system, addressed to Muscat Municipality.
- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>).
- For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200).
- For technical support of E-Bond through e-tendering system please send an email to (esnad@gstb.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200/24402330).

Death toll from Indonesia quake rises to 321

CIANJUR, Indonesia: The death toll from an earthquake that hit Indonesia's island of Java this week has risen to 321 as rescuers found more bodies on Sunday, the national disaster mitigation agency said.

The shallow 5.6-magnitude earthquake hit the West Java town of Cianjur last Monday, where most of the victims were killed as buildings collapsed or landslides were triggered.

Disaster mitigation agency chief Suharyanto, who like many Indonesians uses only one name, told a news briefing on Sunday that rescuers found three more bodies.

Eight were found on Saturday.

"With the discovery of these three (bodies), as of today, the death toll becomes 321 people," said Suharyanto. Eleven people remain missing. Rescuers will resume their search on Monday, focusing on areas where the missing are believed to have been buried, said West Java search and rescue agency head Jumaril, who also uses one name.

The quake damaged more than 62,000 houses and forced more than 73,000 people to evacuate to at least 325 shelters, Suharyanto said.

Disaster agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari said authorities were set to discuss next week whether to extend an emergency response period beyond its initial 14 days.

Indonesia experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity due to its position on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide.

Monday's tremor was the deadliest in the archipelago nation since a 2018 quake and resulting tsunami killed more than 4,000 people on the island of Sulawesi. — AFP

TENDER NOTICE



Minerals Development Oman SAOC (MDO) would like to invite qualified local companies to participate in the following tender:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Closing Date of Selling	Submission Date	Eligibility	Tender Fee
(MDO-TD-2022-10)	Framework Agreement for Exploration Drilling Works (On A Call-Off Basis)	05-12-2022	21-12-2022	International & Local Registered Companies are experienced and certified in this kind of service.	OMR 100/- (One Hundred Omani Rials Only) Non-refundable

- All participating Companies shall submit a Bid Bond of OMR 5,000/- and the offer validity shall be not less than (90) days. Bid Bond must be obtained from a Bank registered in the Sultanate of Oman, and it should be addressed to the Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee of Minerals Development Oman.
- SMEs with Riyada cards are exempted from payment of Bid Fee.
- Bid fee shall only be accepted through bank deposit in the following bank account:
Account Name : Minerals Development Oman SAOC
Bank : Sohar International Bank
Branch : Al Gurum
Account : 005020046853
Swift Code : BSHROMRUXXX

* Note: The original copy of the bank deposit receipt shall be handed over to Minerals Development Oman before collecting the tender documents or completing the payment electronically by submitting a clear deposit receipt via tenders email: tenders@mdo.om along with company registration documents providing company name, tender number, and contact details. Any payment received after the last date of tender document distribution will not be refunded.

** Tender documents can be obtained from the main office of Minerals Development Oman, Contracts & Procurement Department, located at the Airport Heights, Building No.53, Fourth Floor, Al Seeb, Sultanate of Oman starting from the date of publication of this announcement. (Office Hours: 09:00 AM to 04:00 PM, Sunday to Thursday).

For more information or clarification, please email: tenders@mdo.om

Experience the future first-hand in Duqm

Thinking about the future is a concern for all, nations, organisations, societies and individuals alike. None of them is ignoring the future, but striving not to miss it and its surprises. Having this in mind, one should ask what exactly is the future? In fact, it remains a mystery for the future is unpredictable and often unknowable. The future could mark a simple envision from the present. Many efforts worldwide have been made to anticipate, visualise and elaborate the future in a way or another.

This includes examining the methods used to model and imagine the future world in philosophy, literature, art, film, TV and computer games, to name a few. These platforms differently show that the future is mostly associated with different interests and aspirations, especially those of future generations. Youth, in particular, could visualise the future in various forms of their dreams, which they believe to come true someday. To many, the future is always labelled as the would-be better tomorrow.

Talking about the future might take in the things that could be unclearly beyond imagination. This could reflect vague anticipations, furious activities or abnormal ideas; all inspired by innovation and creativity! Generally, the future signifies different aspects to people based on their imaginations, aspirations and dreams perhaps. Events, as well, could showcase the future to some extent via different thought-provoking and creative-themed activities that reflect the digital world.

Likewise, such events highlight culture, sports, community, commerce, innovation and most importantly youth talents and potentials. Events, especially sports and cultural ones, are playing a significant role to secure many elements that a nation and society requires for its development.

They remarkably serve empowering youth, attracting tourists and promoting national treasures and landmarks. It is attributed that events are assisting the improvement of the quality of lifestyle, offering economic and social benefits, creating new business networks and



Abdulaziz Al Jahdhami
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An author, columnist, creative writer, translator and a communications professional

opportunities and supporting other public needs.

In this regard, if one is looking currently for an event that is innovative, visually striking and which truly pushes the boundaries, then look no further than the futuristic-themed Amad Duqm 22 Event. The 9-day event kicked off, last Friday, at the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) and lasts until December 3. Such an event in the Sultanate of Oman is brought as a partnership between the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth.

The event’s message “From youth to youth” indicates that all activities have been proposed, designed and delivered by Omani youth and attracting youth. Amad Duqm 22 marks a small laboratory of youth aspirations for the future of Oman. Thus, the package of diverse activities is brought to youth and inspired by youth aspirations for the future. Simply designed and attractively conducted at Amad Duqm 22 Village, the activities seek simultaneously amusing and inspiring the youth and visitors, overall, to think of the future. As Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, said: “The best way to predict the future is to create it.” Amad Duqm 22 event is paving the future for youth. It presents their future thoughts and aspiration and experiencing them first-hand in Duqm via the range of interesting gaming, new technology activities in Duqm, the city of the future. Drone racing, drag race, astronomy camp, scooter arena, video games, stand up comedy and theatrical shows, music concerts are just to name a few of many other activities awaiting to be experienced and enjoyed.

If you need a lift to the future, all you need is just a visit to Amad Duqm 22 to experience the future first-hand. Rather, you get inspired with the different thoughts and ideas, which Omani youth of different ages brought up there. Reflecting their aspirations and anticipations of the future, they built up a village presenting exemplary concepts as well as entertaining and thought-provoking activities.

AMAD DUQM 22 MARKS A SMALL LABORATORY OF YOUTH ASPIRATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF OMAN

A TAMED GOLDEN EAGLE



A hunter releases his tamed golden eagle during a traditional competition in the Almaty region, Kazakhstan, on Sunday. – Reuters

Global health the best investment we can make

No one could have predicted the extent to which Covid-19 would erode decades of progress in global public health. And the world is still reeling from the shock. But we have the opportunity – and the duty – to learn the right lessons to mitigate the ongoing pandemic, while minimising the risk of similar events in the future.

Though there are new threats on the horizon, we must not allow our focus to move away from Covid-19. The pandemic highlighted significant gaps in our global health systems. To leave them unaddressed would be bad public policy and bad economics, because there can never be a trade-off between health and economic development. Covid-19 has demonstrated that health is central to development, prosperity, and national security.

The pandemic’s disruption of health services has resulted in spikes in HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, and many non-communicable diseases – both unreported cases and deaths.



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus



Werner Hoyer

These are diseases that the world had previously made great gains towards controlling. Making matters worse, the pandemic has led to decreased life expectancy, lower basic immunisation coverage, and increased psychosocial and mental-health challenges.

Compounding the pandemic’s painful legacy, the war in Ukraine has triggered an extensive humanitarian crisis, endangered global food supplies, increased food and energy prices, and threatens to cause recession and economic hardship around the world. In September, the International Monetary Fund warned that “the impact of higher import costs for food and fertiliser for those highly exposed to food insecurity will add \$9 billion to their balance of payments pressures – in 2022 and 2023. This will erode countries’ international reserves, and their ability to pay for food and fertiliser imports.”

Moreover, higher interest

rates and tightening financial conditions have raised the specter of widespread debt distress in low- and middle-income countries. By subjecting public finances to great strain, recent global shocks have put vital, long-term health investment at risk.

Global solidarity and equity are the underpinnings of any effective response to the challenges we face. We must advance on three fronts to preserve the central role that health systems – and more precisely primary healthcare – play at all times, and especially when economic crises hit.

First, investment in primary healthcare must increase, because investment gaps in health widen during difficult times such as we are experiencing now. These gaps, in turn, increase the risks people face from global threats, manmade or otherwise. It is in everybody’s interest to help all countries that lack resources to invest sufficiently in health-system resilience and pandemic preparation and response.

Second, innovation in life sciences needs more financing, especially to scale it up in a sustainable manner. This means supporting local production or mental-health service delivery innovations that reach millions of people and are incorporated into the primary healthcare system.

Third, multilateral organisations should collaborate to prepare us all to confront future health threats more effectively. Here, initiatives such as a legally binding pandemic accord, developed and ratified by countries and rooted in the World Health Organization constitution, can provide the desperately needed playbook for preventing and responding to pandemics. Unfortunately, even before

Covid-19, the world was lagging in the race to meet globally agreed health targets, including many of those enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. The pandemic has set us back further.

In times of rising debt

and increasing risks to debt sustainability, governments, international organisations, and financial institutions must cooperate closely to get us back on track. While illustrating the many shortcomings in global cooperation, Covid-19 has also demonstrated the importance of working together.

That is why our two organisations have committed to combining our strengths to promote and increase investments in health.

For example, with support from the European Investment Bank, the WHO, the Wellcome Trust, and others, the AMR Action Fund is investing in innovative solutions to tackle antimicrobial resistance and ensure that there is a pipeline of new drugs to address key needs.

The scientific community already identifies antimicrobial resistance as “the silent pandemic” and a serious threat to global health and development.

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By Yeru Ebuon
Instagram: @yru_here

Winter in Oman also signals desert adventures and if there's something that people in Oman have gotten good at, it's actually making the best out of the desert experience.

Usually unforgiving in the summer, the desert becomes an ideal destination for different activities during the colder season. Here are a few things you can try out in the desert this year.



SANDBOARDING AND DUNES BASHING

You don't need a fancy gadget for this one. You just need a board that can be secured to your feet, a good dune wall and the pull of gravity off you. It's an exhilarating adventure that gives you a different thrill. There's nothing like speeding down a tall dune incline relying heavily on the kindness of the sand to help you get down safely. If you want to opt for a breath-taking thrill, you can always go dune-bashing. Just make sure that you have a reliable four-wheel drive because trust us, it's tiring to climb down or up on a dune.



CAMEL RIDES AND ATVS

The Bedouins of Oman have always had a good relationship with camels aka the ships of the deserts. They are a trusty companion that can handle not just the heat but also the challenges of the shifting sands. Many of the desert camps, luxury or not, are now offering camel rides so it's easy to book one by simply going to a resort and booking a 30-minute or an hour's worth camel ride.

If the camels are too slow for you, then ATVs or buggies can be a good alternative allowing you more freedom and convenience to climb the inclines of the desert.



POOL LOUNGING IN THE DESERT

If you'd been in Rimal Al Sharqiyah, you would have gotten to know by now that several of the camps now offer pool access. Some of them already come with specific tents while others are shared pools. If you want to enjoy a bit of swimming and a touch of sophistication to your desert stay, then booking rooms with pool access is a great thing to experience.

If you can't afford a pool villa, a great alternative is going to places like Ras Al Rowais, Al Ashkharah or Khaluf where the sand ends right at a beach or the sea.



ANIMAL SANCTUARIES AND SUNSET WATCHING

Camps in Oman have fully utilized the best things that the desert can offer. Some camps allow you a view of the beautiful night sky while inside your dome rooms while others own animal sanctuaries like oryx within the property itself. This is a good way of interacting and learning about nature, animals and their habitat as well as what animals thrive in the desert.

Not to be missed during the winter months are the gorgeous sunsets. Climbing the highest dune and waiting for the sun to set — now there's nothing more romantic than that.



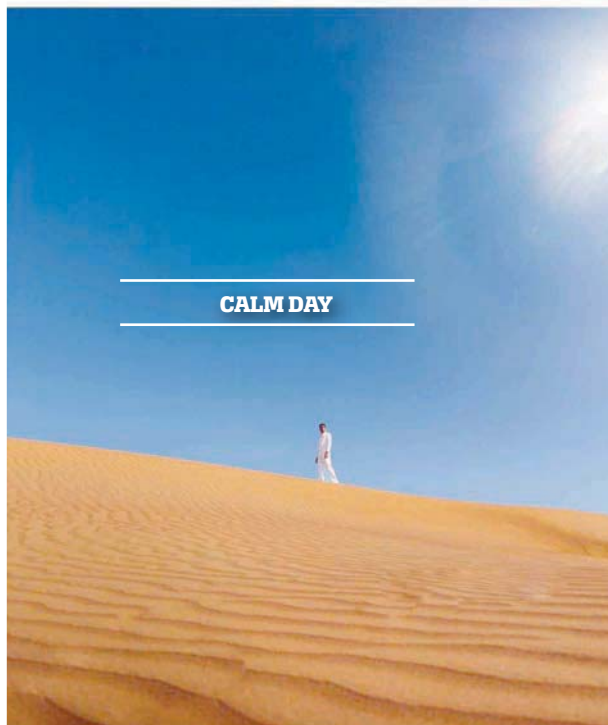
VISITING A BEDU'S HOME

Till today, the Bedus of Oman remain to be a mystery to a lot of people and rightfully so as they are often very private about their affairs. There are times though that the Bedus are very welcoming and allow you access to their temporary homes. From checking out hand-weave mats and clothes to a dizzying array of mementoes and decors which is museum-like almost, a visit to a Bedu's home is an experience unlike any other.





INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS

thewhitesindubai
Bimmah Sinkhole, Omantherameees
Omankumkum_nature_capture_sll
As Salalah, Zūfār, Oman

SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

We select three photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. The rules are simple. Follow us on Instagram. Upload your photos. Tag us and use **#OmanObserver** and **#BeAnObserver**.



AROUND THE WORLD

TRAVEL TALES

Gaza beekeepers who survived blockade struggle with unstable climate



THIS TIME, IT WASN'T the bulldozers or the bullets, but the rain and the wind. Weather kept the bees confined to their hives in the spring, when they should have been out foraging for nectar.

More than 15 years of Israeli blockade has not quite killed off beekeeping in Gaza. But beekeepers say climate change just might.

"This year was the worst for beekeepers in Gaza," said Waleed Abu Daqqa, who tends hives in the eastern section of the Palestinian coastal enclave. "Lots of bees have died."



Temperatures have been rising for half a century in the territory, where 2 million Palestinians live under an economically devastating blockade imposed by Israel and Egypt since Hamas took control in 2007.

Over recent years, the number of hives has almost been halved and the production of honey went down to 180 tonnes from 400 a few years ago, said Adham Al Basyouni, an official from the agriculture ministry.

Beekeepers and their bees have lost access to prime agricultural land, bulldozed near the borders of the strip. The blockade and six wars between militants and Israel have made it difficult and expensive to import supplies.

And now, the "prime factor" causing a bee crisis is climate change caused by global warming, Basyouni said. This year, in Gaza, that unpredictable climate brought an unseasonable cold spell. Few Gazans had the right sort of hives to withstand it.

"We witnessed repeated rain storms, that forced the bees to stay inside the hives and they fed on what was inside and that led to poor production," he said.

Bees and other pollinators are vital to agriculture and wildlife around the world, and the impact of climate change is a global problem.

"Radical shifts in temperature, droughts, and floods are disrupting native ranges for pollinators, making ecosystems unsuitable for the processes needed to sustain populations, such as overwinter hibernation, spring nest establishment, and reproduction," wrote bee researchers Diana Cox-Foster and Gloria DeGrandi-Hoffman of the US Department of Agriculture.

Ratib Sammour, a Gazan agricultural engineer and beekeeper, has built a successful business selling health products from bees and treating patients with bee stings, known as apitherapy. Now it is at risk. Not only has honey production fallen, but with it the quantity of other products such as royal jelly, bee pollen, bee venom and bee glue known as propolis.

"When the quantity of bees started to decline it reflected on us," he said. — Reuters

ART

The art world's female revolution



IT WAS A RELATIVELY promising start for gender equality when London's Royal Academy of Arts was set up in 1768, with two women artists included among its 40 founding members.

But that was a false dawn — it would not be until the 1930s that another woman was elected a full member of the Academy.

While a few big names — Frida Kahlo, Georgia O'Keeffe, Alice Neel, Tracey Emin — give the impression that the art world has opened up since then, the Western canon remains dominated by men.

Among the 18 leading museums in the United States, 87 per cent of works are by men, according to the Public Library of Science.

The Prado in Madrid has 335 works by women out of 35,572 — less than one per cent — and only 84 are on public display.

'HISTORICAL MISOGYNY'

Attitudes are changing.

The Prado held a women-only exhibition in 2020 which highlighted its "historical misogyny", in the words of curator Carlos Navarro.

Serbian performance artist Marina Abramovic will be the first woman to get a solo show that takes over all the main galleries of the Royal Academy next year.

Increasing the share of over-all works is tougher for museums that focus on the distant past — at least, that is the excuse of the Louvre in Paris, whose paintings stop at 1848, and include just 25 women among 3,600 artists.

But at Britain's Tate, there has been scope for improvement.

Only five per cent of its pre-1900 collection is by women, but this rises to 20 per cent for artists working after 1900, and 38 per cent for those born after 1965.

"With each rehang at each of Tate's four galleries, the gender balance improves," said Polly Staple, head of Tate's British Art

collection.

"When Tate Modern opened its new displays in 2016, half of all the solo displays were dedicated to women artists, and this balance has been maintained ever since."

As for private buyers, change has also been slow.

"Today, all museums pay attention to equality, the number of solo exhibitions for women artists is increasing... but in reality they remain largely under-repre-

Artemisia Gentileschi (1593-1656) or Flemish painter Clara Peeters, were "known during their lifetime but have been erased over the centuries", she told AFP.

Unearthing these forgotten names has been hugely popular. Her podcast, The Great Women Artists, has more than 300,000 subscribers.

"Imagining that a woman could invent something remained an anthropological taboo for a very long time," said Camille



sented in auction houses," an art market insider told AFP, requesting anonymity.

But with women increasingly welcomed into art courses from the late 20th century onwards, the tide is turning here, too.

The 2022 report by market-tracker Artprice found that women accounted for eight of the 10 best-selling artists under the age of 40.

'THE WHOLE STORY'

It is not enough to blame the past, argues Katy Hessel, author of the recent "The Story of Art Without Men".

Women artists, such as Italy's

CHANGING WORLD

Prickly pear producers predict cacti cosmetics cash-in



ROWS OF SPRAWLING cacti fill a valley in central Tunisia, where producers are hoping the spiky fruit can fuel a cosmetics cash-in.

"This is the capital of the Barbary fig," said Mohamed Rochdi Bannani, one of the North African country's first producers of cosmetic oil from the seeds of the fruit — better known as the prickly pear.

He is hoping the oil, with its rich antioxidant properties and a price tag of some 350 euros (around \$360) a litre, can bring wealth to the marginalised province of Kasserine.

"This fruit has changed my life and the life of the region. It's created wealth in the district, even though the fruit used to be a symbol of poverty," the 52-year-old said.

He was standing on his 420-hectare (about 1,000-acre) organic-certified farm in the parched Zelfen district.

Every year, Bannani produces 2,000 litres of oil from the plant, which is native to Mexico but has been cultivated in North Africa for generations.

Used in moisturising and anti-ageing products, it is a much-needed cash cow in a region where one third of people live in poverty and unemployment runs at 20 per cent.

The cactus plant's ability to weather extreme drought is another advantage.

Some 30,000 hectares of land are dedicated to the crop in Zelfen, close to the border with Algeria.

Around a tenth of that is organic-certified.

The industry employs some 5,000 people, says Boubaker Raddaoui of the United Nations-backed Market Access Project for Agrifood and Local Products (PAMPAT).

"This oil has become a catalyst for an inclusive local economy," he said, praising the cactus for its "ability to adapt and produce in difficult conditions, as well as its industrial potential".

"It's really a miracle plant," he said.

RAPID GROWTH

Tunisia ranks fifth in the world in terms of land devoted

to prickly pear production, behind Brazil, Mexico, Ethiopia and Morocco.

While some of the 550,000 tonnes of fruit it produces every year are sold in markets and from street carts known as "hindi", most goes to oil.

Some 8,000 litres were exported in 2021, bringing in five million euros (dollars) in revenue, according to PAMPAT.

The organisation has been helping farmers with training and business advice since 2013, and has seen rapid growth in the sector, Raddaoui said.

"Exports jumped by 50 per cent between 2019 and 2021," he told AFP.

"This shows the attractiveness of the sector and the increase in demand from one year to the next."

Since the start of the millennium, the country has gone from having five processing plants to 55.

Zelfen alone has 11, run by cooperatives.

"Before, everyone just wanted to emigrate, but today that's ancient history — thanks to the oil," said Hamza Rochdi, a young farmer with 40 hectares of land.

Hanane Messaoudi, who harvests the fruit for the minimum wage of just \$125 a month, says demand for the fruit has improved her working conditions. Yet the high price of its oil is not the prickly pear's only asset.

In a dry country where access to water is already far below the 1,700 cubic metres per resident per year the United Nations defines as "water stressed", the drought-tolerant cactus is a safer bet compared with thirstier crops.

"The prickly pear is undemanding, adapts to lots of soil types and doesn't use much water," Raddaoui said.

The success of the crop in Zelfen has prompted farmers in other regions such as Nabeul and Kairouan to take an interest.

But there is only so much demand for the product, and Bannani says "marketing problems" mean he only processes around a fifth of his harvest — some 20,000 tonnes of fruit — for oil.

— AFP



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MSX buoyed by upgrade of Oman’s sovereign rating

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 27

The MSX Index gained 52 points to close at 4,607.250 on Sunday, November 27, 2022 – an increase of 1.140 per cent – in response to the latest upgrade in the Sultanate of Oman’s credit rating announced by leading international rating agency S&P over the weekend.

A total of 408 trades were recorded, generating a turnover of RO 4.273 million with more than 17.367 million shares changing hands during the day. The rally was led by the Financial Sector and higher index weighted shares, said an Omani securities analyst.

“We expect the positive sentiment of the upgrade of the sovereign rating to have its positive effects on the market for few days on better volume and positive performance on the overall market sectors,” said Amor Ahmad, Ahli



Bank.

On Saturday, S&P announced an upgrade of Oman’s sovereign credit rating from “BB-” to “BB” with a stable outlook. It was the second such upgrade by New York City headquartered institution of

Oman’s economic outlook. S&P credited improvements in Oman’s balance of payments, crediting various financial measures adopted by the government within the framework of the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP), coupled with

the rise in international oil prices.

According to S&P, Oman’s financial performance further improved during the current year. It cited the significant efforts made by the government to reduce public debt which is projected to decline

We expect the positive sentiment of the upgrade of the sovereign rating to have its positive effects on the market for few days on better volume and positive performance on the overall market sectors

AMOR AHMAD

to 44 per cent of GDP in 2022, down from 61 per cent in 2021.

Meanwhile, the total market value of the MSX increased by the end of last week to RO 23.405 billion, recording weekly gains of about RO 410 million. Contributing to this growth were

new listings and an increase in the prices of many shares listed on the stock exchange.

Last week, the MSX listed Bank Muscat’s perpetual bonds Tier 1 at a value of RO 375.3 million, as well as the subordinated, unsecured, non-convertible bonds issued by Taageer Finance, valued at RO 14.6 million.

The total value of the bonds and sukuk rose with the new listings to RO 4.837 billion, recording weekly gains of RO 298.3 million. Closed joint stock companies also supported the total market value after recording weekly gains of RO 63.6 million, effectively lifting the total value of the segment to RO 10.378 billion.

Last week, public joint-stock companies recorded gains in their market value of about 47.5 million Omani riyals, after rising at the end of last week is trading to RO 8.188 billion.

CMA suspends trading in Raysut Cement shares

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 27

The Capital Market Authority (CMA) has suspended the trading of shares of Raysut Cement SAOG following the uncovering of material misrepresentations in the unaudited financial reports for Q2 2022 published on November 10, 2022.

An audit detected these material misrepresentations that were inconsistent with international accounting standards and do not reflect the real financial position of the company, said the Authority in a press statement.

It ordered the suspension of trading of the company shares until “remedial action” is taken in accordance with the CMA’s requirements and instructions, it noted.

“Due to the material nature of the misrepresentations and the huge impact on the equity and profit and loss accounts the CMA calls on the shareholders, investors, stakeholders and those interested in the financial statements of Raysut Cement SAOG to take care and exercise due diligence when making investment decisions and shall not rely on the financial statements disclosed earlier by the company and rely on the corrected financial statement which will be filed on the website of the Muscat Stock Exchange today November 27, 2022 after being corrected,” the Authority said.

It also sent an official letter to the board of directors of the company on November 21, 2022



seeking an urgent adjustment of the situation.

“CMA would like to point out that unearthing such misrepresentation in the financial reports would not have been possible without the efforts of the investigative audit team that comprises professional and competent Omanis,” it said.

The Authority urged all issuers of equity or other securities to observe fairness and integrity when preparing the financial reports presented to the stakeholders for the integrity and efficiency of the capital market to enhance consumers’ confidence and to add high standards of credibility, which is the cornerstone for the success of the securities markets.

“CMA emphasises that failure to exercise due diligence in providing timely and accurate financial statements to the investors in fair manner is breach of the law and cause the violating entities legally responsible and the CMA announces zero tolerance in this regard,” it added.

Salalah Port launches new corridor to transport Chinese goods to Yemen via Al Mazyuna Free Zone

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 27

Port of Salalah, a major Arab Gulf regional gateway port and transshipment hub on the Arabian Sea, has partnered with Maersk to launch a new multimodal transport solution to Al Mazyunah Free Zone as part of their regional strategy.

Designed to facilitate inland services, the new offering extends beyond the Port and includes securing customs clearances and bonded trucking services to Salalah and Al Mazyunah free zones hubs under carrier haulage. The new service reduces lead time and allows access to multiple markets. It also aims to support the growth of SMEs in Oman and Yemen and attract new investors which is also aligned with the Oman Vision 2040.

The Port of Salalah and Maersk have just completed the first trial shipment from China delivered to Mazyouna FZ. The subject shipment was loaded in the Chinese port of Ningbo and arrived in Mazyouna with a total transit time of 25 days.

This makes Salalah the best choice for Yemen gateway, a major share of which otherwise was discharged in neighbouring ports and routed across the border through Oman. This new corridor will help Yemeni importers to save costs and transit



time. Maersk has confirmed its commitment to creating the required capacity, connectivity, and contracts to scale this up, thereby also benefitting the local companies in Oman.

“We are excited to be expanding our inland service capabilities to help support customers beyond the Port as a part of our commercial efforts focused on growing our gateway volume, of which Yemen plays an important role. We are thankful to the Ministry of Transport, Communication and Information Technology, ROP customs and Asyad for their support in making this happen,” said Keld M Christensen,

CEO of Port of Salalah.

Port of Salalah acts as a facilitator in anchoring Salalah as a gateway to Yemen and the current initiative, in partnership with Maersk, ensures seamless cargo movement where the customer gets single window service till the final delivery location. This will not only ensure increased efficiency to the customer but also has the potential to eliminate unexpected costs, including line demurrage and port storage as an example.

Christopher Cook, Managing Director at Maersk UAE, Oman and Qatar, commented, “Our ambition is to serve our customers with end-to-end,

integrated solutions which will simplify their supply chains. Our joint efforts with Port of Salalah aim to achieve this, and we look forward to unlocking new value for our customers across the MENA region.”

As one of the world’s most efficient transshipment ports, the new offering is well-positioned to offer a range of customers a consolidated, digital, streamlined service. Salalah delivers world-class terminal capabilities, including containers and liquid and dry bulk handling. The Port of Salalah currently serves large volumes of multiple commodities through Al-Mazyunah free zone.

Madayn inaugurates integrated vehicle service station in Al Buraimi Industrial City



BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 27

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) inaugurated an integrated vehicle service station in Al Buraimi Industrial City. The inauguration was held under the auspices of Sayyid Dr Hamad bin Ahmed al Busaidy, Governor of Al Buraimi.

The service station, set up with an investment of around RO 500,000, is located on the main road to Al Buraimi Industrial City. It aims at offering a wide range of facilities and services to the investors, business owner and workforce in Al Buraimi Industrial City in particular, and the population in Al Buraimi Governorate in general.

This value-added project in the industrial city will play a big role in generating job opportunities and attracting

service projects.

The signing of the contract for the establishment of an integrated service station for vehicles was done in June this year between Madayn and Murtafat Mahdha Trading with Said bin Abdullah al Balushi, Director General of Al Buraimi Industrial City and Rashid bin Salim al Kaabi, Project Manager, as signatories.

Madayn is currently implementing a number of projects in Al Buraimi Industrial City, which include the infrastructure development project in phases 1 and 2 at a total cost of more than RO 5 million.

These projects include the implementation of sewage treatment plant with a capacity of 400 square metres, road rehabilitation works, water supply distribution networks, electrical works and street lighting for phase 2.

Oman strongly positioned in growth of new green energy economy: BP

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, NOV 27

Recent pledges by the Sultanate of Oman to decarbonise its economy by 2050, alongside the development of a green hydrogen-based industry, bode well for its positioning as a leading player in the emerging global green energy industry, says a top official of energy major bp.

According to Spencer Dale (pictured), bp Chief Economist, Oman also has the requisite wherewithal — in terms of its renewable resources and advantageous geographical location — to not only meet its domestic green hydrogen requirements, but potentially support the needs of the global market as well.

“I think Oman has positioned itself in the forefront of this growth of the new green energy economy; its own commitments to achieve Net Zero by 2050 are exactly in line with best-in-class countries in terms of how quickly they’re trying to reach Net Zero,” said Dale.

The energy giant’s Chief Economist was in Muscat recently — his first in the post-pandemic phase — as part of his regular engagements with countries which bp has “key strategic relationships” with — Oman being a notable example.

bp operates the Block 61 gas field in central Oman, which currently produces 1.5 billion cubic feet of gas per day, which equates to roughly a third of the country’s total gas output. bp has also signed a pair of initial agreements with the Omani government to support the potential development of a multiple gigawatt, world-class renewable energy and green hydrogen development by 2030.



“bp has been actively operating in Oman for about 15 years from 2007; It’s been an incredibly successful relationship for both sides,” said Dale. “bp has the capacity to deliver a third of Oman’s natural gas, which is an incredible achievement. And I think we could develop this further in terms of helping Oman develop its hydrogen economy. That would be very exciting!”

According to the industry executive, government demand for low carbon hydrogen — either blue or green — is likely to increase very substantially over the next 10 – 15 years. This bodes well for Oman, which is blessed with “incredible” solar and wind resources, he noted. Speaking to the *Observer*, Dale also shared bp’s perspective on the global energy outlook.

“We see a significant demand for oil and gas for a long time to come, and in terms of helping the energy transition, I don’t think

we expect demand for oil and gas to fall away very sharply,” he said. In the near-term however, the world is expected to see a strong uptick in demand for LNG, particularly as countries with coal-based power plants transition away from coal, he said.

“So I think we will see significant roles still for oil and gas — for Oman as well as for the world generally. Oman is in a good position to help out. It has plenty of supplies of natural gas at very competitive prices.”

Importantly, green hydrogen is set to play a significant role in the global energy outlook, he said. “I think hydrogen is a necessary part of the world decarbonising to 2050.

When you look around the world looking for the most advantageous parts of the world in terms of green hydrogen, Oman starts in a good position in terms of the resources it has. It’s now for Oman to think about how best to develop its

green hydrogen industry and to attract investors. Hydrogen should also be used in a way which is most beneficial for the economy as a whole, generating jobs and prosperity for the economy for the next 10, 20, 30 years.”

Commenting on the global energy situation, Dale warned that world energy markets are currently going through a “huge period of volatility and uncertainty”.

“There are significant shortages, particularly in natural gas in Europe, and as result, we’re seeing very tight gas markets. There’s also a near term issue in terms of how long that will last. Besides, there are significant uncertainties about the impact energy crisis on Europe’s winter.

But as a result of the Russian War — I think there’s an increased focus around the world on energy security with countries wanting to ensure that they are resilient and have security of energy supplies.”

Omani banks report strongest growth in lending in GCC for Q3

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 27

The lending activities of the banks in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) remained robust during Q3 2022 resulting in record high loan books at the end of the quarter, Kamco Invest said in a report. Aggregate gross loans reached \$1.93 trillion, up 1.2% quarter on quarter (q-o-q) and 6.5% y-o-y, mainly led by strong growth across the GCC, except for marginal decline for Qatari banks.

Omani banks reported the strongest q-o-q growth in lending at 4.6% to reach \$65.4 billion at the end of Q3 2022. Saudi Arabian banks were next with a growth of 2.7% in gross loans that reached \$594 billion after eight out of ten listed banks in the Kingdom reported higher q-o-q gross loans. Aggregate gross loans for Saudi-listed banks ranked second in the GCC after UAE.

Meanwhile, the 0.7% decline in gross loans for listed Qatari banks came after four out of seven banks reported a decline in gross loans during the quarter.

The trend in net loans was similar with listed banks in all



GCC countries reporting higher q-o-q net loans at the end of Q3 2022, except Qatari banks that reported a 1.4% decline. Aggregate net loans at the end of the quarter reached \$1.73 trillion registering a growth of 1.1% or \$19.4 billion.

Meanwhile, credit growth in the GCC remained strong during Q3 2022 despite higher interest rates, indicating strong economic activity and business confidence in the region.

Manufacturing activity data from Bloomberg (Markit Whole Economy Surveys) showed PMI figures well above the growth mark of 50 for UAE and Saudi Arabia, whereas data for Qatar showed a smaller growth during

September-2022 at 50.7 points. The marginal growth in credit offtake in Qatar mainly reflected completion of Fifa World Cup related projects, and new project growth is expected to resume in 2023.

An S&P report also showed that the event is expected to boost economy of the broader GCC region because of higher tourism and logistics related businesses.

Another report on Dubai’s real estate sector from ZāZEN Properties showed that the volume and value of the sale of off-plan and secondary properties in Dubai has reached a 12-year high during Q3-2022.

The report added that

Dubai is expected to see higher demand for real estate in the current quarter as a result of the World Cup in Qatar. Data showed strong lending activity across the region, barring a marginal decline in Qatar.

In Kuwait, outstanding credit facilities increased by 2.2% during Q3-2022 after seeing healthy lending growth in almost all sectors that more than offset a decline in credit to Trade and Industry during the quarter.

Data from Saudi Central Bank also showed a 3.3% growth in lending during the quarter while credit facilities reported by Bahraini and Omani central banks increased by 1.8% and 0.9%, respectively.

Lincoln unveils exciting campaign across the luxury range

MUSCAT: Lincoln is offering enthusiasts of Lincoln luxury an exclusive opportunity to own a Lincoln and benefit with service 5 years / 100,000 kms and 1 year registration. The campaign will end on December 31, 2022. (Conditions apply. For details visit a Lincoln showroom Wattayah.) Lincoln has always promoted exceptional journeys through luxury detailing that focuses on all occupants. Lincoln’s range of vehicles in Oman includes the Aviator and the Navigator.

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Customers wishing to own their dream Lincoln with exclusive benefits are encouraged to visit their nearest Lincoln showroom. In Oman, Lincoln vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co. LLC. Please log on to www.lincolnoman.com, or www.facebook.com/lincolnoman or www.instagram.com/lincoln_oman for the latest news, test drive requests and the latest press releases.



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HIS MAJESTY ADMINISTERS OATH TO NEW MINISTER

UN HAILS OMAN'S SUPPORT FOR PEACE IN YEMEN

MUSCAT: Before His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries Dr. Saad bin Humoud bin Ahmed al Haili, Chairman of the Supreme Court Sayyid Khulifa bin Said bin Khulifa al Busaidi, and Chairman of Administrative Judiciary Court Shu'ayb Al Mukhtar bin Abdullah bin Haili, took the oath of office at Al Berakhat Palace on Thursday. SEE ALSO P2

NEW RO 50 BANKNOTE FROM THIS MONTH

MUSCAT: To mark the 50th anniversary of the Omani Renaissance and in commemoration of the memory of its founder late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) issued a sixth series of new RO 50 banknote, which will begin circulation this month. CBO will also issue new banknotes for all other denominations during the last quarter of 2020. TURN TO P4

STAY APART AND BREAK THE CHAIN

SAMUEL KUTTY
MUSCAT: The frequent orders and fervent appeals by the authorities to follow social distancing guidelines are filling on deaf ears. "A drive around the downtown Ruwi and its adjoining areas reveals how recklessly people crowd at different corners and walk shoulder-to-shoulder. While most people across the country are following the guidelines that health authorities say are necessary to keep the coronavirus from spreading, many are not. "In these critical moments of uncertainty with both physical and mental stress, we should discipline ourselves. While expressing his ire, Hamed said, "The attitude of some people is not acceptable that they pave the way for the spread of COVID-19. Even if we do not have the authority to lay charges on the offenders, at least we can assure them away." he told the Observer. TURN TO P4



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Croatia's Andrej Kramaric celebrates scoring their third goal against Canada. – Reuters

KRAMARIC LIFTS CROATIA AS CANADA CRASH OUT

DOHA: Croatia got their World Cup campaign back on track as Andrej Kramaric's double inspired a 4-1 win that eliminated Canada in Sunday's Group F grudge match in Doha.

Zlatko Dalic's side were stunned by Alphonso Davies's second-minute opener at the Khalifa International Stadium.

But Hoffenheim forward Kramaric equalised and Marko Livaja put the 2018 World Cup runners-up ahead just before half-time.

Second-half goals from Kramaric and Lovro Majer ensured Croatia could celebrate their first win of the tournament after a goalless draw with Morocco in their first match.

Croatia sit top of Group F, above Morocco on goal difference,

and a draw in their final game against Belgium on Thursday would guarantee they reach the last 16. It was an especially sweet success for Croatia after Canada boss John Herdman irked Dalic's men with his profane attempt to inspire his players after a 1-0 defeat against Belgium in their group opener.

In a television interview, Herdman told his players: "They belong here. And we're going to go and eff Croatia."

Dalic had taken exception to Herdman's rant, insisting on Saturday that his team deserved "respect" from their opponents.

The Croatians let their football do the talking on Sunday, allowing them to seize control of a group blown wide open by Morocco's shock 2-0 win against Belgium

earlier in the afternoon.

Canada competed gamely but have now lost all five matches in their World Cup history, with their only previous appearance in 1986 also ending in group-stage elimination.

LETHAL KRAMARIC

Herdman's team took just 68 seconds to rock Croatia when Tajon Buchanan crossed into the Croatia area and Davies timed his run perfectly to power a header past Dominik Livakovic from 10 yards.

Canada's first ever World Cup goal was welcome redemption for Davies after the Bayern Munich star's penalty was saved by Thibaut Courtois in the Belgium defeat.

But the fastest goal so far in this World Cup served as a wake-up

Chances kept coming at both ends and Borjan plunged to his right to keep out Kramaric's close-range shot before Jonathan David's strike was 20 yards was tipped over by Livakovic. The predatory Kramaric delivered the knockout blow in the 70th minute.

call for Croatia. With Chelsea midfielder Mateo Kovacic pulling the strings, Croatia's clever passing and movement gradually took a toll on Canada and they drew level in the 36th minute.

Kramaric was picked out by Ivan Perisic's deft reverse pass into the Canada area and he took a touch before drilling a fine finish into the far corner from an acute angle.

Croatia were hitting their stride and Hajduk Split forward Livaja, selected in place of Nikola Vlasic, repaid Dalic's faith in the 44th minute.

Josip Juranovic's run was halted just outside the Canada area, but Livaja pounced on the loose ball, nimbly shifting it out of his feet before sending a superb low strike past Milan Borjan.

Canada substitute Jonathan Osorio was inches away from equalising with a long-range blast that flashed just wide early in the second half.

Chances kept coming at both ends and Borjan plunged to his right to keep out Kramaric's close-range shot before Jonathan David's strike was 20 yards was tipped over by Livakovic.

The predatory Kramaric delivered the knockout blow in the 70th minute.

Perisic's cross reached Kramaric in the Canada area and he worked space for a left-foot finish that arrowed through Atiba Hutchinson's legs into the bottom corner.

Majer's tap-in completed the rout from Mislav Orsic's pass in stoppage time. — AFP

FAN ZONE



Morocco's fans celebrate after the Qatar 2022 World Cup Group F match between Belgium and Morocco at the Al Thumama Stadium in Doha. – AFP



Germany and Spain fans pose for a picture on the Doha Corniche ahead of the Spain v Germany match. – Reuters



Morocco fans during the World Cup Group F match against Belgium at the Al Thumama Stadium. – AFP



Fans of Croatia look at a mobile phone on the stands ahead of the match against Canada. – AFP



Canada fans inside the stadium before the match against Croatia. – Reuters



Morocco fans outside the stadium before the Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022 Group F match against Belgium at the Al Thumama Stadium, Doha. – Reuters



Morocco fans pose for a picture outside the stadium before the match against Belgium at the Al Thumama Stadium. – Reuters



Japan fans look dejected outside the stadium after the World Cup Qatar 2022 Group E match against Costa Rica at the Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium, Al Rayyan. – Reuters



MOROCCO
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DOHA: Substitutes Abdelhamid Sabiri and Zakaria Aboukhlal earned Morocco their first World Cup victory in 24 years as they upset a hugely disappointing Belgium side 2-0 in World Cup Group F on Sunday.

The Morocco fans gave the match a vintage World Cup feel in a boiling atmosphere at the Al Thumama Stadium and Sabiri curled a wide free kick past Thibaut Courtois before Aboukhlal netted in stoppage time to put Morocco top of Group F with four points, one ahead of Belgium.

It was Morocco's first win at a World Cup since they beat Scotland in 1998. They left the 2018 tournament with a single point.

"We scored at the right moment. We deserved to win. After 70 minutes some of our players were tired, but the way the crowd got behind us, they really helped us. They gave us a big boost," said man of the match Hakim Ziyech.

Belgium, who had scraped a 1-0 win over Canada in their opening game, again looked a pale shadow of the team who finished third in 2018 and climbed to second in the world rankings. They must now battle for a last-16 spot against Croatia.

"It's a difficult result. We couldn't get our game going. It's a game we need to understand; we need to be together and react. That's what happens at the World Cup," said Belgium coach Roberto Martinez.

The Red Devils' poor display even forced Martinez to send Romelu Lukaku on for the last 10 minutes in a desperate attempt to salvage a point, even though the burly striker had been struggling with a hamstring problem.

Croatia, who have a point from their draw with Morocco, play Canada in the other Group F game later on Sunday.

In a lively start, Morocco looked happy to sit and wait amid the deafening whistles of their fans, although bouts of intense pressing led to a couple of dangerous counter-attacks with Ziyech the main threat.

As Belgium's Kevin De Bruyne struggled to find his range and Eden Hazard remained largely ineffective, Morocco looked safe.

Courtois was beaten for the first time in the tournament when Ziyech fired a free kick into the pack and it bounced past the keeper at the near post on the stroke of halftime.

Romain Saiss, however, was marginally offside and referee Carlos Ramos ruled the goal out after a VAR review as the Besiktas defender was obstructing Courtois' view.

Morocco started to fancy their chances and were more on the attack with Sofiane Boufal's shot from just inside the box going just wide after the break.

Belgium were out of sorts and Martinez sent Youri Tielemans and Dries Mertens on to replace Amadou Onana and Eden Hazard. Mertens had an immediate impact, forcing El Kajoui, who stood in minutes before kickoff for Yassine Bounou, into a superb save with a fierce shot.

Morocco substitute Sabiri broke the deadlock in the 73rd with an angled free kick similar to the one that led to the ruled-out goal in the first half, as Courtois could only fumble the ball into the net. Saiss was also in the way, but onside this time, and Morocco defended tooth and nail until they found another opening, with Aboukhlal clipping Ziyech's cross into the roof of the net as the stadium boiled over.

— Reuters

Morocco's midfielder
#11 ABDELHAMID SABIRI
celebrates after he scored his team's first goal during the Qatar 2022 World Cup Group F match between Belgium and Morocco.
— AFP



Costa Rica's
#4 KEYSHER FULLER
celebrates scoring
their first goal with
#20 BRANDON AGUILERA

COSTA RICA REBOUND FROM DRUBBING TO STUN JAPAN

AL RAYYAN: Costa Rica put a huge dent in Japan's hopes of reaching the World Cup last 16 when they rebounded from their 7-0 hammering by Spain to claim a surprise 1-0 victory in Group E on Sunday.

The door was ajar for Japan to seal their place in the knockout round after their historic opening win over Germany on the same day as Costa Rica's collapse.

But Keysher Fuller's curling 81st-minute effort, Costa Rica's first shot on target in the tournament, rocked Japan and put their hopes of progression in peril.

When Fuller's left-footer crept into the top of the net despite Japan keeper Shuichi Gonda's

doomed attempt to keep it out, Costa Rica's players and fans erupted in delirium.

There may also have been cheers of relief in the Germany camp because a Japan win would have put them under intense pressure to beat Spain in Sunday's later game.

Japan oddly made five changes to their starting line-up and despite beefing up their attack with substitutions in the second half they were punished for a meek approach against shell-shocked opponents.

They remain second in the group on three points but with their last game being against Spain the odds on them reaching the

knockout stage for a fourth time have lengthened considerably.

Costa Rica, written off as whipping boys before kickoff, snapped a seven-match winless run at the World Cup to move to three points and now have a possible route to the last 16.

"The less they believe in us the more they bring it out of us," Fuller said. "We were in pain after the defeat to Spain and now we have weight off our shoulders."

When their manager Luis Fernando Suarez said beforehand that his side were "not dead" he was right, although it was a game that will not live long in the memories of neutral fans.

A first-half of mind-numbing

tedium even tested the patience of the drum-banging Japanese fans massed in their blue shirts at one end of the Ahmad bin Ali Stadium.

SNAIL'S PACE

Apart from a burst at the start of the game by Japan, the half was played at snail's pace, although for Costa Rica the lack of goalmouth action was probably welcome seeing as they conceded three times in the opening half-hour against Spain.

Both goalkeepers were redundant and the only incidents that could pass as goalmouth action were a cross by Japan's Ritsu Doan that flashed across the goal

and a scooped shot high over the crossbar by Costa Rica forward Joel Campbell.

Japan's coach Hajime Moriyasu took off defender Yuto Nagatomo at halftime and replaced him with attacker Takuma Asano who had been left on the bench despite his winner against Germany.

Immediately after the break Japan looked more lively and Hidemasa Morita finally tested Keylor Navas with a stinging left-foot drive which the Costa Rica keeper turned away.

Kicking towards their fans, Japan seized control and Moriyasu made another attacking change with midfielder Kaoru Mitoma coming on for right back Miki

Yamane. Japan's fans kept up a constant din as their side camped in Costa Rica's half and it seemed a matter of time before their pressure would pay off. Then the game was turned upside down.

A rare Costa Rica raid ended with Fuller gathering the ball on the right of the area and curling a shot with his left foot towards the top corner.

Time froze as Gonda reached up to his right to try to claw the ball out, but he could only help it into the net.

"The next match against Spain will be a very intense game," Moriyasu said. "We need to increase the odds for Japan."

— Reuters

Uruguay wary of Portugal, hope to repeat 2018 feat



Portuguese media reported that Pereira would miss the group stage and his involvement would be in doubt if Portugal - led by captain Cristiano Ronaldo - make it to the knockout rounds. Asked about 39 year-old defender Pepe, who was on the bench when Portugal beat Ghana 3-2 in their opening match in the World Cup in Qatar last Thursday, Santos said he was "a monster" and would be in the team on Monday.

AL RAYYAN: Uruguay want an improved performance against Portugal in their second game of the World Cup and would love to repeat their win over the Europeans at the 2018 tournament, coach Diego Alonso said on Sunday. "About what happened four years ago, it's a different match, we have different players, it will be a completely different match," Alonso said.

Uruguay knocked Portugal out of the World Cup in Russia with a 2-1 win, and face the same opponents in Qatar on Monday in their second Group H game.

"Portugal have a very good squad, they have excellent players, they have a wonderful coach with wide experience," added Alonso.

"That makes them a dangerous team. On the other hand, we also have our own weapons. We will try to win, we will bring our A game."

The South Americans drew their first game 0-0 against South Korea in a subdued performance, while Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal beat Ghana 3-2.

"We analysed the game, we know it wasn't good enough, we weren't pressing enough ... We need to change our play. We were a bit slow," said Uruguay midfielder Rodrigo Betancur.

"We know it is a crucial game tomorrow. We know that we need to win and that is what we will try to do. We will break our backs as we always do"

Betancur said football had



Uruguay players take part in a training session at Al Erssal in Doha, on the eve of the Qatar 2022 World Cup Group H match against Portugal. — AFP

moved on since the 2018 match.

"It will be a different game. It's been four years since that game and football has evolved. Now we play with more intensity and players are in a better physical condition," he said. "They (Portugal) play very well with the ball, they play the spaces, they beat the back line of the defence, but we've been working on that and we will try to use our own weapons so that we cannot be defeated."

INJURY CONCERNS FOR PORTUGAL

Portugal coach Fernando Santos said he hoped central defender Danilo Pereira would not be sidelined with injury for long and there were also fitness concerns about midfielder Otavio ahead of Monday's World Cup match against Uruguay.

Pereira, who plays his club football at Paris St Germain, suffered three broken ribs in training on Saturday, ruling him

out of the rematch of the 2018 World Cup round of 16 clash, which Uruguay won 2-1.

"As far as I know he is improving and we expect to have him back on the pitch very soon," Santos - who has been in charge of the national team since 2014 and led them to victory at the Euros 2016 - told reporters on Sunday.

"But if we don't, we have three other centre halves who can replace him. We don't need to make a drama of it."

Portuguese media reported that Pereira would miss the group stage and his involvement would be in doubt if Portugal - led by captain Cristiano Ronaldo - make it to the knockout rounds.

Asked about 39 year-old defender Pepe, who was on the bench when Portugal beat Ghana 3-2 in their opening match in the World Cup in Qatar last Thursday, Santos said he was "a monster" and would be in the team on Monday.

— Reuters

Brazil confident Neymar will be back to lead campaign

Match program

GROUP STAGE

Monday, November 28

G

Al Janoub Stadium, 02:00 pm

Cameroon   Serbia

H

Education City Stadium, 05:00 pm

S. Korea   Ghana

G

Stadium 974, 08:00 pm

Brazil   Switzerland

H

Lusail Stadium, 11:00 pm

Portugal   Uruguay

Source: FIFA





DOHA: Brazil are confident that Neymar will return to lead their bid to win a sixth World Cup despite the world's most expensive player suffering an ankle injury in their opening match in Qatar.

The Brazil captain came off late on in Thursday's 2-0 win over Serbia with what was later diagnosed as a sprained ankle and has since been ruled out of their second Group G outing against Switzerland on Monday. Doubts have even been raised in some quarters that he might struggle to feature again at the tournament, which finishes with the final in Doha on December 18. But defender Marquinhos, who is also a teammate of the forward at Paris Saint-Germain, said Neymar has since been spending his days undergoing intensive physiotherapy in an

attempt to recover full fitness as soon possible.

"At the time it was difficult for him and after the game he was sad which I think is normal given how much he has dreamt of this," centre-back Marquinhos said at a press conference in the Qatari capital on Sunday. "Now, after the tests and the treatment, he is doing physiotherapy 24 hours a day which shows how much he wants to be back with us. "We don't know when, but we hope it's as soon as possible."

Brazil coach Tite insisted in the immediate aftermath of the win over Serbia that the 30-year-old Neymar would definitely play again at the tournament, but this time he was rather more measured when pressed on the subject of the superstar's fitness, as well as that of right-back

Danilo. "I believe that Neymar and Danilo are going to play again at this World Cup. I do. But medically, clinically, I am in no position to say anything," he admitted. "I will keep doing so, not just for Neymar but also Danilo. I believe we are going to be able to use them again."

A Brazil win against Switzerland at Doha's Stadium 974 could be enough for them to secure a place in the last 16 with one group game to spare, depending on the result of the earlier Group G match between Cameroon and Serbia. Danilo, the 31-year-old Juventus full-back, also suffered an ankle injury against Serbia and is expected to be replaced against the Swiss by either Real Madrid's Eder Militao or the 39-year-old Dani Alves. — AFP

James shines as Lakers beat Spurs again, Suns edge Jazz

LOS ANGELES: LeBron James scored a season-high 39 points to lead six Los Angeles players in double figures on Saturday as the Lakers beat the San Antonio Spurs for the second time in two days on Saturday, 143-138.

James, who scored 21 points but showed some rust in his return from a groin injury in Friday's win in San Antonio, effortlessly picked up the slack with star team-mate Anthony Davis sidelined with a calf injury on the second night of the NBA back-to-back.

James, who pulled down 11 rebounds, was a perfect 10-for-10 from the free-throw line and drained seven of the Lakers' 17 three-pointers.

James, who was struggling from three-point range before injury sidelined him for five games, said he never doubted the shots would start to fall. He was just as pleased with the overall team effort.

The chemistry was on display late in the second quarter when James came up with a steal and lobbed a pass to Russell Westbrook in the corner only for Westbrook to toss up the ball for the onrushing James to slam home.

"I feel like we're getting better and better," James said of a Lakers team that has struggled in the early going this season.

"Early in the season we'd have lost a game like this," he said.

"I feel like we're definitely buying in to the extra pass. Guys are trusting their shots and not thinking about it — (we're) shooting from the perimeter with confidence and we're also still attacking the rim."

Dennis Schroder added 21 points and Lonnie Walker added 19. Westbrook added 11 points with seven rebounds and six assists in what proved a bruising encounter.

Westbrook was incensed when he took an elbow to the face from Zach Collins under the basket with two minutes left in the third quarter. Westbrook jumped up, bleeding profusely, and charged



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (6) dribbles in against San Antonio Spurs guard Devin Vassell (24) in the second half at the AT&T Center. — USA Today Sports

towards Collins before James got his arms around Westbrook and, as they headed towards the bench, held a towel to his forehead.

Collins was ejected for a flagrant foul and Westbrook — who went briefly to the locker room but returned to the game after it was determined he didn't need stitches — was assessed a technical foul.

At 7-11, the Lakers are third from bottom in the Western Conference.

SUNS HOLD OFF JAZZ

West leaders Phoenix improved to 13-6 with a 113-112 home victory over the Utah Jazz.

Deandre Ayton led the Suns

with 29 points and 29 rebounds. Devin Booker connected on just eight of 27 shots on the way to 26 points for the Suns, who were without star point guard Chris Paul for a ninth straight game as he continues to battle a right heel injury.

Utah held a three-point lead going into the fourth quarter, but Phoenix forged a 99-93 lead with 6:23 to play and would not trail again.

The Jazz got within one point half a dozen times from there, but could get no closer.

In Toronto, the short-handed Raptors shook off a sluggish start to beat NBA scoring leader Luka

Doncic and the Dallas Mavericks 105-100.

O.G. Anunoby scored 12 of his 26 points in the fourth quarter as the Raptors emerged with the win in a battle that came down to the wire.

Anunoby also put in a solid defensive effort on Doncic, who scored 24 points and nine assists but matched his season low with just 15 shot attempts.

"He's an amazing player," Doncic said of Anunoby. "I would say on both ends. I think He is the steals leader in the NBA, but offensively he got so much better. I'm impressed with his game he's an amazing player." — AFP



Mohammed clinches National Day title for 100 km endurance race

WALEED AL JAHWARI

MUSCAT, NOV 27

Mohammed bin Ahmed al Balushi was crowned with the title of the 52nd National Day Endurance Race for 100 km at the Al Mohammed Endurance Village in Barka.

As many as 58 horses participated in the Oman Equestrian Federation-organised endurance race for the season 2022-23 on the occasion of 52nd Oman National Day.

The race witnessed the ability to successfully pass the first stage, as 58 horses entered the competition and were able to pass the first stage successfully.

Twenty six horses qualified for the third and final stage as four horses reached the finishing line.

Mohammed bin Ahmed al Balushi claimed the top honours with the car prize on 'Arby Majlek Man' owned by Mahmoud bin Ahmed bin Abdul-Montazah and trained by Abdullah bin Khalifa al Azizi.

In second place was 'Berkane' rode by Nasser bin Khaled al

Fawry, and owned by Badr bin Khalaf al Maamari, under the coaching of Saud bin Badr al Maamari. Salah bin Khamis al Hammadi claimed the third place on 'Mona Lisa' owned by Ahmed bin Ali al Balushi, and coached by Muhammad bin Ali al Balushi.

'Trelli Paya' finished fourth rode by Abdullah bin Mohammed al Dhahali, and trained by Muhammad bin Badr al Maamari.

The federation had set general conditions to participate in the 100 km race. It included that the horse must be less than six years old and registered with the Oman Equestrian Federation, green colour was allotted for a distance of 35 km, red colour for a distance of 25 km, the heart rate was 64 beats per minute and the minimum speed was 14 km per hour.

The OEF also allocated valuable prizes for this race, which bears the name of the Oman National Day where the first and second place winners got cars while cash prizes were given for the top ten riders.



Jindal Shadeed launches 'Steel of Oman' campaign

MUSCAT: Inspired by the inherent passion for football exhibited by the local community and in celebration of the authentic culture of Oman, Jindal Shadeed Iron & Steel (JIS) - the largest producer of steel in the country and among the largest in the GCC - has adopted a renewed focus on promoting football in Oman, through its 'The Steel of Oman' campaign.

With the ongoing Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022 providing the perfect backdrop and adding to the excitement, Jindal Shadeed at an exclusive event held under the auspices of Abdulsalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, President of Oman Investment Authority, at the Kempinski Muscat Hotel on Sunday.

The campaign film was unveiled and Oman's legendary footballer Ali al Habsi was announced as their brand ambassador. The film, shot with local aesthetics, highlights not just how football unites the nation, but also the beautiful culture of the country and its people. The red-carpet event witnessed the presence of several public figures, celebrities, and top-level and media delegates.



Commenting on the campaign, Harsha Shetty, CEO of Jindal Shadeed Iron and Steel, said: "Football has been a much-loved sport that has brought the country together. While our new campaign has football at its heart, our film is also a journey through the authentic traditions of the country, its rich culture, and its strong values. Most importantly, it celebrates the people of Oman. Through this campaign, Jindal Shadeed seeks to further weave itself into the social fabric of Oman. At Jindal Shadeed, we will continue

to deepen our relationship with the Sultanate of Oman through initiatives that drive meaningful impact in society."

The film's creative concept was done by Weiden+Kennedy India in collaboration with renowned visual artist Hassan Hajjaj, and is a tribute to Oman and its love for football. As the official ambassador of the campaign, Ali al Habsi is also featured in the film alongside well-known figures in the field of sports that include Imad al Hosni, Abdul Aziz al Muqbali, Hassan Rabia, Khalifa Ayil,



Tharaa al Ismaili, Malak al Zadjali, paralympic superstar Mohammed al Mashaikhi, Olympian runner Barakat al Harthy, racing sensation Shihab al Habsi and Nadhira al Harthy, first Omani woman to scale Mount Everest.

Al Habsi said: "I am proud to be endorsing the 'The Steel of Oman' as it reflects the strength and vibrancy of our beloved country. Jindal Shadeed has brought the many facets of Oman to life in this film, and I hope that everyone enjoys watching this film as much as I enjoyed shooting for it. I am

also thankful to Jindal for their continued support to nurturing football in the country."

Cementing its commitment to promoting football, Jindal Shadeed has also signed an MoU with Oman Football Association and launched a collaboration with Ali al Habsi's Academy for Football via the Jindal Shadeed-HFA campaign, therefore, taking a more holistic approach to developing football in Oman. Apart from sponsoring football teams, the company will also sponsor training centres for the youth. With a keen focus on promoting inclusivity

in the field and making football accessible to all, the campaign is designed keeping in mind both male and female football enthusiasts of all age groups.

While Jindal Shadeed has achieved stellar growth in its contribution to Oman's economy, the company has also been mindful of giving back to the local community. Through its various endeavours, it will remain committed to contributing to the socio-economic progress of the country aligned to the Oman Vision 2040.





Day 4 race action at RS Venture Connect World Championships in Musannah.

STAGE SET FOR GRAND FINAL RACES AT 2022 RS VENTURE CONNECT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Oman’s Sultan, Ahmed finish overall first

MUSCAT: Places in the 2022 RS Venture Connect World Championships Grand Final are now set after an exciting last day of fleet racing. Organised by Oman Sail, 39 teams from 19 nations – the largest of all para sailing events worldwide in 2022 – have raced over four days at the Barcelo Musannah Resort with the last teams qualifying for the final in the last race of the day.

Oman’s Sultan al Wahaibi and Ahmed al Balushi finished top of the Open category, and first place overall, with four first places and two second places from the

seven races and earning a three-point lead at the top. Jens Kroker and Sabine Kroker-Hohmann finished second, two points ahead of Christopher Symonds and Manuela Klinger of Australia.

Piotr Cichcoki and Olga Gornas-Grudzien of Poland ended the fleet racing on top of the Para category, three points ahead of Sweden’s Fia Fjeldahl and Patric Rosenberg. Ange Margaron and Olivier Ducruix of France are in third, level on points with second and just one point ahead of fourth.

Malik al Qartobi and Ghalya al Jabri ended the day in 13th with

Zaher al Atbi and Ali al Ghasaini close behind in 18th. Team-mates Rayyan al Mujaini and Hamed al Subhi, and Hassan al Lawati and Sami al Sulaimi ended the racing in 20th and 21st respectively, level on points after seven races. Adil al Siyabi and Nasser al Rahbi finished in 25th.

After the end of racing, Sultan al Wahaibi expressed his happiness at finishing first overall. He said, “we have been able to maintain our position at the top of the Open category since the first day of the championship, and we are very hopeful of doing even

better in the remaining races in order to win the gold medal. The races have been challenging with strong competition between the participating teams. I am aiming to achieve first place in the two Grand Final races and maintaining our position.”

Al Wahaibi also affirmed that nothing is impossible in life with good planning and teamwork.

The top six para teams and top four in the open category will compete in the Grand Final to decide the winners and medallists.

The 2022 RS Venture Connect World Championships have been

the first exclusively para sailing event to be held in Oman and helps position the nation as a regional hub for growing the sport across the Middle East, Asia and beyond.

The RS Venture Connect World Championships is supported by title sponsor bp Oman, along with the Oman Paralympic Committee, Oman Maritime Sports Committee, Oman Air, the Barcelo Musannah Resort, Tanuf, the International Maritime College Oman (IMCO), RS Sailing, and environmental partners Clean Seas and Environment Society of Oman (ESO).

Canada claim bilateral ODI series honours

MUSCAT: Canada wrapped up a successful tour of the Sultanate of Oman with another dominating win against the hosts to clinch the three-match bilateral 50-over series 2-1 at the Oman Cricket Academy ground on Saturday.

The series victory was an icing on the cake after Canada emerged champions of the four-nation Desert Cup T20I series at the same venue last week.

In the final match of the 50-over series, Canada put Oman to bat first and bowled them out to a sub-par score of 166 in 49 overs. Batting display of the hosts has been a matter of concern in the series and the woes continued with Ayaan Khan the top-scorer with 29. Jeremy Gordan and Saad Zafar combined well to wreck the Oman batting line-up with four wickets each. Zafar was exceptional with figures of 10-3-28-4.

Openers Aaron Johnson and Srimantha Wijeyeratne along with Pargat Singh proved their calibre during the T20I series and were in good nick during the bilateral series. Pargat Singh’s unbeaten 87 off 69 and Wijeyeratne’s unbeaten 58 off 49 helped Canada canter to a huge



Pinsters emerge champions in ISC bowling tournament

MUSCAT: Pinsters of ISC Gujarati Wing clinched the title in the Indian Social Club Oman bowling tournament. ISC Goan Wing secured second position.

After the gap of two years due to the pandemic, Indian Social Club Oman organised the bowling tournament with 16 teams from linguistic wings of ISC with more than 90 players in action.

Teams consisted of six players with two female players mandatory in each team.

The tournament took place at Al Noor Bowling Centre Al Khuwair on November 25.

The winning team members of Team Pinsters were Yash Asher, Sasha Saldanha, Kuldeep Asher, Siddharth Vaz, Divya Toprani and Miten Toprani. The runners-up team members of Team Goan were Allwyn Noronha, Jerome Vaz, Tony Fernandes, Cletus Mathias, Maria Mathias and Dhelria Fernandes.

The winner’s trophies and

cash prize were handed over by ISC Vice-Chairman Karanjeet Singh Matharoo and runners up trophies and cash prize were handed over by ISC Sports Secretary Saji Abraham.

The highlight of the event were best player male and female. Sasha, lady player of Gujarati Wing, scored 159 and received best player award from Suhail Khan, ISC Entertainment Secretary, and best male player was Faizi of Urdu Wing with score of 161 and received trophy from Sanjit Kanojia, ISC Joint Sports Secretary.

The best players gift vouchers were sponsored by Taste of India Restaurant.

“It was amazing to see full family taking part in the tournament with youngsters, male, female, children and aged people all actively taking part in the event. The best part was everyone enjoying the event as it was full of entertainment,” Sanjit Kanojia said.

Oman win gold, bronze medals in West Asian karate

MUSCAT: The Oman Karate Committee participated in the West Asian Championship, which was held in the Emirate of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, from November 25 to 26.

The event was held under the patronage of Shaikh Sultan bin Muhammad al Qasimi, Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler of Sharjah, in the Sharjah Sports Club Hall, with the participation of 450 players.

The karatekas represented 11 countries, namely the Sultanate of Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, Yemen, Iraq, Palestine, Syria and Lebanon for the titles of 10 competitions in ‘kata’ and ‘kumite’.

Omani Karate Committee Chairman Salem bin Hamad al Mahrouqi, participated in the meeting that was held before the start of the championship headed by Dr Ibrahim al Qannas, President of the International Karate Federation (IKF), in the presence of Major General Nasser al Razouki, IKF Vice-President, President of the Asian and the UAE Karate Federations, and in the presence of members of the West Asian Federation.

They reviewed the arrangements for the tournament held for juniors, youth and adults as well as the



arrangements of the Referees Committee and hosting the next West Asian Championship 2023-2024.

The Sultanate of Oman karate team participated under the leadership of international coach Ali bin Saeed al Shabibi and the following players: Hawra al Lawati in kata, and in kumite: Saeed al Shabibi, Hazza al Jahouri, Khaled al Jabri, Idris al Batrani, Mukhtar al Omari, Mudather al Batrani and Laith al Barwani.

For Oman, Saeed bin Ali al Shabibi clinched a gold medal in adults category (67 kg) after beating the Saudi player in the final.

Other Omani winners included Hazaa al Jahuri, who won a bronze medal in youth category (weight 61 kg).

Bronze medals were also won by Mukhtar al Omari under-14 category (40 kg), Laith al Barwani — youth category (55 kg), Mudather al Batrani — junior category (57 kg) and Hawra al Lawati (kata).

nine-wicket win as the visitors reached 167/1 in just 23 overs.

Earlier, Oman bounced back from the opening match loss to level the series 1-1 with an eight-wicket victory on Friday.

Put to bat first, Canada were bowled out for a paltry 97 in 37 overs with the hosts’ bowling attack superb on the day.

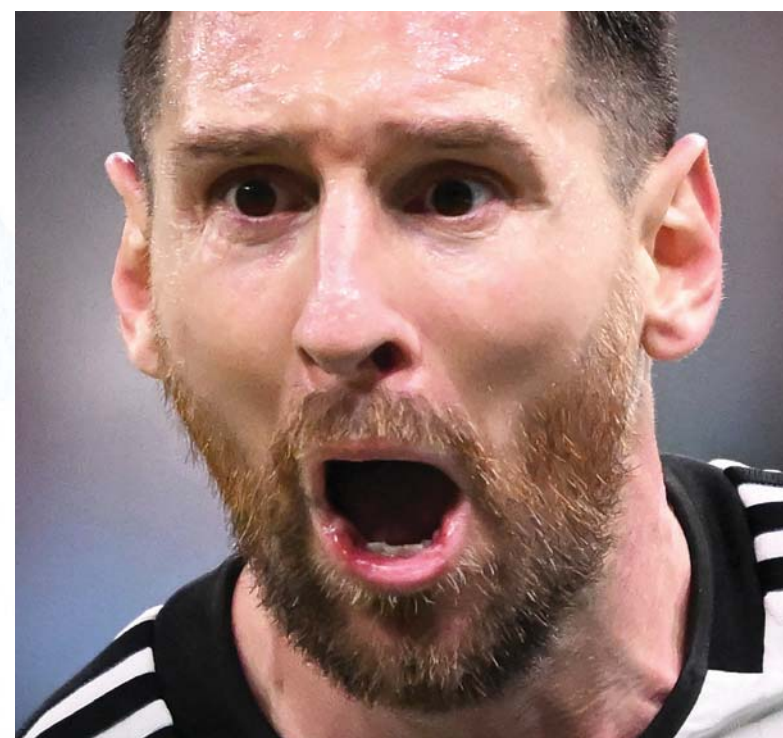
Kaleemullah, Mohammed Nadeem, Ayaan Khan and Nester Dhamba picked up two wickets each while Fayyaz Butt and Wasim Ali bagged a wicket apiece.

Oman achieved win with Jatinder Singh (46) and Adeel Shafique (36) sharing an opening stand of 75 in 19.2 overs to put them on course for an easy win as they reached 98/2 in 23.2 overs.

Canada began the bilateral series on a rousing note last Wednesday as they scored 229/9 in the opener and then bowled out Oman for 145 to record a huge 84-run win.

Harsh Thaker smashing a solid 75 and Nikhil Dutta playing a 50-ball 47 to guide the team past 200-mark. Bilal Khan was the most successful bowler with three wickets..

At the end of the series, Thaker was the top run-getter with 97 with Pargat Singh scoring 96. Oman’s Jatinder Singh was the third best with 69. In bowling, Gordan and Dutta had to their credit the maximum six wickets each while Ayaan Khan was the most successful bowler for Oman with four wickets.



ANOTHER MESSI MOMENT

SCALONI CALLS FOR CALM AFTER ARGENTINA BLANK MEXICO

"You have to have some common sense, it's just a football match," he

"We never doubted ourselves, but these days were hard for us. But today we showed that we can be more." — **AFP**