



His Majesty to visit Bahrain on Monday

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq will embark on a two-day visit to the Kingdom of Bahrain on Monday, according to a statement issued by the Diwan of Royal Court.

The statement read as follows: 'In affirmation of the deep-rooted relations binding the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Bahrain and, based on the keenness of the two countries' leaderships to enhance joint ties, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq will go on an official two-day visit to Bahrain starting on Monday, October 24, in response to an invitation from King Hamad bin

Issa al Khalifa of Bahrain.

'The visit will explore areas of existing cooperation between the two countries in various spheres and ways of promoting these to serve the interests of the Omani and Bahraini peoples and meet their aspirations for further progress and prosperity.'

Bilateral relations between Oman and Bahrain are based on solid foundations, framed by warm, stable and constantly enduring ties that are deeply rooted in history.

These relations, which extend to different political, economic, social and cultural domains, are

accorded great attention by His Majesty the Sultan and King Hamad.

During the two leaders' upcoming talks in Manama, the two countries aspire to take their relations towards broader horizons of cooperation in different fields, notably economic areas, to generate more benefits for their respective peoples.

In view of the exceptional bilateral relations, the Omani-Bahraini Committee has worked on a number of memoranda of understanding and executive programmes in the fields of culture and tourism.

Continued on [Page 03](#)

SEEB CLUB CREATES HISTORY, LIFTS 2022 AFC CUP



Seeb Club wrote history by thrashing Kuala Lumpur City 3-0 and winning the final of the 2022 AFC Cup on Saturday in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This is the first time that an Omani club has won a continental tournament. Seeb Club scored the opening goal with Ali al Busaidi's curling corner kick straight into Kevin Mendoza's net in the 22nd minute, followed by Abdulaziz al Muqbali's header in the 37th minute. Muhsen al Ghassani all but closed the door for Kuala Lumpur City with the third goal in the 69th minute of the game (Supplied photo)

See more on [Page 14](#)

Royal Decrees amend Penal and Criminal laws

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq issued two Royal Decrees on Thursday reading as follows:

Royal Decree No 68/2022 introduces amendments to certain provisions of the Penal Law.

Article 1 stipulates that the amendments attached to this decree will be applied to the Penal Law promulgated under Royal Decree No 7/2018.

Article 2 states that this decree

will be published in the *Official Gazette* and enforced on the day following its date of publication.

Royal Decree No 69/2022 amends some provisions of the Criminal Procedures Law.

Article 1 states that the text of Article 4-bis and Article 164 of the Criminal Procedures Law promulgated under Royal Decree No 97/1997 will be replaced with the following text:

'Article 4-bis: A person who

incurs harm from the crime stated in Article 230 of the Penal Law may file a case directly with the competent court. The secretariat of the court will notify the Public Prosecution Department through a copy of the lawsuit file to initiate a public lawsuit. No lawsuit will be brought against the heads of units of the State's Administrative Apparatus and other public legal persons/entities, except

after obtaining permission from the competent authority. Permission is issued by the Council of Ministers for the heads of units of the State's Administrative Apparatus.

'Application for the permission will be submitted by the Attorney General at the request of the party incurring harm. The application will be corroborated by supporting documents.'

Continued on [Page 03](#)



pearlreif.com

Invest in Progress

The Pearl REIF

Initial Public Offering of 208,137,400 Offer Units at a price of 112 Baizas per Offer Unit (including Offer Expenses of 2 Baiza per Offer Unit)

Offer Closes: 30 October 2022



المؤسسة للاستثمار العقاري

صندوق المؤسسة للاستثمار العقاري
Real Estate Investment Fund

Pearl Real Estate Investment Fund (REIF) is a closed ended Shariah compliant fund in Oman providing you access to invest in income generating real estate assets within the country.

- Attractive Dividend Yield of 9.2%*
- Strong Promoters: OIA and Omantel
- Reputed Tenants: Omantel and Lulu Group
- Long term lease agreement
- Open to Omani and non-Omani investors, including non-residents
- To be listed and traded on Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX)
- Minimum investment as low as OMR 112

Promoters



Investment Manager and Issue Manager



How to Apply

Applications only through E-IPO

Subscribe easily through the mobile banking app / online banking channels of Collecting Banks or through Brokers. Investors can also apply by completing the application form on the Muscat Clearing & Depository website (www.mcd.gov.om) and submitting it to the Collecting Bank/ Broker.



Adventure activities launched in Wadi Dayqah

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group) has announced the launch of water sports and adventure activities at Wadi Dayqah.

A range of facilities, including kayak and paddleboard rentals, donut boat hire, pedal boats and a mountain bike trail are being offered at the popular tourist site.

Located in Quriyat, 75km from Muscat, Wadi Dayqah is home to one of the largest dams in the Arabian Peninsula.

Dayqah Dam was built in 2012 to collect rainwater from the surrounding mountains and control the water flowing through the villages below. The result is a stunning fresh water lake and a stream flowing 7km from the main body of the dam.

A statement issued by Omran said, 'The water sports activities recently launched at Wadi Dayqah are part of a broader development plan we are implementing at the wadi in collaboration with the Ministry of Heritage in Tourism and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Recourses. This first phase of the project offers a wide range of exciting experiences for visitors to enjoy.'

With this development plan, Omran is leveraging Wadi Dayqah's popularity and unlock-



(Supplied photo)

The centre aims to turn Wadi Dayqah into Oman's biggest and best adventure hub

SALIM AL GHADANI

ing its potential as a water sports and adventure tourism destination. 'By doing this, we'll be able to diversify our range of tourism products,' it stated.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Salim Abdullah al Ghadani, an official at the Wadi Dayqah Dam Adventure Centre, said, "This fa-

cility aims to turn the site into Oman's biggest and best adventure hub. The goal is to utilise the vast blue lake and surrounding mountains to create unique outdoor experiences for local and global visitors."

He informed that the activities at the site were launched on Oc-

tober 13. The centre is open from 12pm to 6pm every day of the week, except for Mondays.

"All safety equipment, including life jackets for those enjoying water sports, are provided. Detailed instructions are given to visitors before they engage in any activities," Ghadani said.



(Muscat Daily)

Ironman 70.3 Muscat on Feb 2-4

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Following the success of Ironman 70.3 Salalah, an ambitious plan to host a bigger version in Muscat is taking shape. The event, from February 2 to 4, will be held in the heart of the city starting from Qurum Beach.

The 90km bike course will pass by Muttrah Corniche, Al Alam Palace and Al Bustan Palace Hotel. Participants while run two laps (21.1km) in Qurum and finish next to Qurum Beach.

Speaking about the event, Mohamed Obaidani, CEO of Triathlon Middle East, said, "The Salalah event was a grand success and we have some massive response from sportsmen, sponsors and the audience. People from over 50 countries attended and we expect a bigger number and response in Muscat."

The Muscat edition will be on a similar concept as that of Salalah, and expected to attract over 1,000 athletes compared to

700 in Salalah. This will be the fourth edition of Ironman in Oman.

According to Ali Nadir al Tamimi, Managing Director of Triathlon Middle East, the sultanate benefits from Ironman events because 95 per cent of the athletes come from outside the sultanate. "They bring their families as well, and pay themselves for everything - airline tickets, transportation, accommodation, food and other things they require. They stay from three to seven days, so if 1,000 athletes participate, that means 4,000 people will come for at least three days. There will be huge demand in all hotels in the area, besides demand for restaurants and transportation."

He added that Ironman 70.3 Salalah provided a significant boost for Salalah and Oman's tourism economy and related sectors, besides giving competing athletes a chance to experience the phenomenal beauty of Salalah and Dhofar.



OFA celebrates Omani women

Muscat - The Omani French Friendship Association (OFA) held the fourth edition of the 'Inspirational Women of Oman' series in celebration of Omani Women's Day on Wednesday at Hormuz Grand Muscat.

The event included an awards ceremony in which two Omani women received awards from H E Veronique Aulagnon, French Ambassador to Oman, and Sulaiman al Harthy, Chairperson of OFA and CEO of Alizz Islamic Bank.

"We have to recognise the efforts and leadership of these women. It is not always an easy journey for them or their families who support them... and so I think it is important to encourage them and to hear from them," said H E Veronique.

"It is a fantastic day to recognise our mothers, our sisters, our colleagues... for their wonderful contributions. A woman always is half, if not the base of society,"

Harchy said on the occasion.

The first recipient of the award, Noora al Zidjali, is a clinical instructor and senior mental health nurse at Al Masarra Hospital. She was awarded for her work in drug addiction rehabilitation. Originally an ICU nurse, Noora decided to shift her career focus to addiction recovery after losing four relatives to drugs in 2007. She dedicated her award to her patients. "Today, I am standing here to convey the message that these people need a chance to recover."

The second award recipient was Nadia al Maashari, founder of Sadqat al Yateem, a local volunteer group that was formed in Sidab with the aim of promoting solidarity and mutual support in the local community. With over 50 members, the team supports various social causes and hosts community bonding events.

"I am proud to receive this award, but this is not my win

alone. It is the entire team's win," said Nadia.

In addition, the event included a panel discussion with four remarkable Omani women - Yuthar Mohammed Msellem al Rawahy, Founder and Honourary Life President of Oman Cancer Association, Hon Sabah bint Mohammed al Bahlani, CEO at Association of Early Intervention for Children with Disability and Member of State Council, Dr Lamya Adnan al Haj, Associate Professor at Sultan Qaboos University, and Sayyida Dr Shariffa Khalid Qais al Said, Educational Expert at Ministry of Education.

"This annual event is important for OFA's family because it is a precious moment to recognise outstanding women who are working hard in attaining their goals, in helping others and in contributing to the development of their community," shared Marie Eliçagaray, Coordinator at OFA.

(Contributed by Hibba al Kindi)

BEYOND WORDS



VAISHALI HAMLAI

The columnist is a certified MBTI coach and author, and writer who delves into the complexities of the mind and soul to guide and interpret social behaviour

Have you ever heard a comment, 'How will she know?' or 'How will she do it?' and the woman turns silent?

Well, that doesn't sound fully right at all times, but true sometimes. But being a woman, I can't say this - I'll sound biased. They say it's not modest to praise oneself. However, seeing the danger in this statement and willing to keep it aside, I'd still like to stick my neck out and sing praise of womankind openly and honestly.

So, in an alternate universe, let's assume I'm willing to be at the dangerous borderline of being bashful and abrasive - for the sake of the rights of womankind, I would like to say that woman can be smarter than men. Woman can have a better emotional quotient than men. And a woman could be more organised than men.

There isn't any gender-defined role; each one is unique in their own way, and that isn't written in the books of gender roles. We are in the generation that doesn't even want to chain itself into being called a particular

gender. But somewhere deep in the woods, we are still defining roles for men and woman. We are still saying that woman will or will not be able to do something.

But again, I'm biased. I'm a woman so I decided to take this cringe in my head to a different level, so I started researching.

And I come across this - new research published in the journal American Psychologist confirms something many women may have sadly suspected for a long time: Women get passed over when employers

FOR OUR SAKE!

want "brainy" workers, or need help with intellectually demanding tasks.

Does this sound like new age equal rights? But, let's give credit to some thinkers and believers who have made the job easier for woman, even if a lot of work is still in progress. The UN says it's going to take another 250 years for equal rights between genders to become a reality. Are we willing

to wait that long?

But I think the difference doesn't start at gender bias; it happens when we start comparing. When we say that a woman can also do this job, we are in turn saying that earlier we had our doubts about woman being able to do it, but according to our new understanding they can also do it. Which means this is a newly acquired skill that the woman has gained recently. Is that true?

If a company announces their new CEO as the first woman in the role, and makes it news, in turn they are saying that we are doing the unprecedented. We are giving a chance to a woman, which by itself is a statement that is against the laws of equality.

So, what is it that woman want? Do they want to be called smart? No! Do they want to be called better? No! Do they want to be respected? Yes!

It is about giving the due respect - equality in the true sense; not just name sake. Or should I say for gender sake!

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

مركز
الشمس لطب الاسنان
Sun Dental Centre
Al-Khuwair

SCAN TO FIND LOCATION

95961234

www.sundentalmuscat.com
/sundentalcentre
sundentaloman
sundentalghubra@hotmail.com

• Affordable
• Experienced doctors
• Al khuwair

Dr. Karthik
BDS, MDS, MOrth (UK)
Specialist Orthodontist.
91105912

Our Services

- ✓ Bleeding gums
- ✓ Fixed Teeth
- ✓ Whitening Teeth
- ✓ Braces
- ✓ Teeth Cleaning
- ✓ Bad Breath
- ✓ OPG X-Ray
- ✓ Root Canal

Approved Insurance:
National Life, Mednet, Metlife, AXA, NAS, OQIC
Saico, NextCare, Vipul Better Care, Greenline & More

MOH No: 558/2022

Sayyid Theyazin to preside over Aga Khan Award event

Muscat - H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, will preside over the distribution of Aga Khan Award for Architecture at the Royal Opera House Muscat on October 31.

On the previous day, H H Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said will preside over the distribution of the Aga Khan Music Awards.

For the first time in the history of Aga Khan awards, both the architecture and music award ceremonies are being hosted by one country - Oman.

The winners of last year's architecture award were two from Bangladesh - Urban River Spaces, Jhenaidah; and Community Spaces in Rohingya Refugee Response, Cox's Bazar; and one each from Indonesia - Banyuwangi International Airport, Blimbingsari, East Java; Iran - Argo Contemporary Art Mu-



seum and Cultural Centre, Tehran; Lebanon - Renovation of Niemeyer Guest House, Tripoli; and Senegal - Kamanar Secondary School, Thionck Essyl.

The music awards were won

by Zakir Hussain of India, Afel Bocoum of Mali, Asin Khan Langa of India, Coumbane Mint Ely Warakane of Mauritania, Dawood Khan Sadozai of Indonesia, Benny Kandra Reni of Indonesia,

The events offer opportunities to researchers, musicians and architects in Oman to learn from the winners

H E SAID AL BUSAIDI

Soumic Datta of the United Kingdom, Yahya Hussein Abdullah of Tanzania, Yasmin Shah Hosseini of Iran, and Zarsanga of Pakistan.

"The distribution of the Aga Khan Awards for Architecture and Music 2022 in the Sultanate of Oman offers a variety of opportunities to academic researchers, musicians and architects," said H E Said bin Sultan al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture, adding

that the awards would enable them to learn about new and outstanding areas highlighted by the awards.

"It will allow them to be in touch with winners from different countries of the world and the protocols associated with the awards. It will also expand the Omani cultural scene integration with various countries of the world and consolidate social awareness about participation in these international awards," he further added.

"The hosting of the events provides a true manifestation of Oman's vision to become a destination for art, literature and culture."

Highlighting Oman's uniqueness, H E Busaidi asserted that Oman's deep-rooted history and civilisation make it a destination for awards and an ideal venue for international organisations and international cultural events.

4,500 jobseekers employed as part of Sahem initiative

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Labour (MoL) has appointed 4,500 jobseekers on a temporary contract basis in the public sector, as part of the Sahem initiative launched in April this year.

"The ministry launched the Sahem initiative to provide job opportunities under the temporary contract work system in government agencies in various governorates. The ministry has succeeded in providing 5,000 jobs, of them, 4,500 have been appointed under this initiative," Dr Saif Mohammed al Busaidi, Director at the Directorate General of Labour in Muscat, said during an interview with Oman Radio recently.

Five-hundred more jobseekers will be employed soon, Dr Busaidi informed, adding that "by rolling out the initiative, the ministry seeks to enhance the decentralisation process and enable national jobseekers to contribute to the development process in the governorates."

The opportunities are open for jobseekers with minimum education that may be below general education diploma (GED), or GED, bachelor's degree and post GED qualifications.

"The Ministry of Labour



strives to recruit jobseekers in various fields to achieve sustainable economy and to create a balance in the labour market.

"We urge jobseekers to take advantage of this initiative to gain the necessary expertise to be able to get better jobs in the future. The government is also seeking to appoint qualified Omani cadres in various specialties and to constantly review the appointment policies," Dr Busaidi added.

According to the latest figures released by MoL, 31,354 jobseekers have been employed in public and private sectors till the end of the third quarter, helping it to achieve 90 per cent of the target set for this year.

Earlier this year, H E Dr Mahad bin Said bin Ali Ba'owain, Minister of Labour, stated that the ministry had been working towards providing 35,000 jobs through recruitment, replacement and training of citizens during 2022.

OAA reveals calendar of motorsport events, races

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Oman Automobile Association (OAA) on Tuesday revealed its calendar of events for November to March season.

A host of motorsport events, including the 5th edition of the Oman International Drift Championship (January-February), Oman Rally Championship (December-March), Oman International Rally (January), are lined up for the new season.

The events will take place at the OAA venue in Seeb with an aim to encourage people join motorsports. "The calendar has a mixture of challenges in drift, rally, gymkhana, karting, digital motorsports and more, that cater to the interests of our customers and the public," Sulaiman al Rawahi, general manager of OAA



said. The details were announced at a press conference at OAA, during which Rawahi said, "Our drift events have become very popular, with an increasing number of contestants competing in

'freestyle drift' and 'Oman drift' rounds as well as the crowd-pleasing Red Bull Car Park Drift."

The Oman International Rally will welcome drivers from all over the Middle East and North Africa.

"Our karting department organises and manages a number of challenges throughout the season including sprint and endurance races, Rotax Max challenges. We will be holding the MENA Karting Championship Nations Cup (December 13-17) for the third time in a row in the country."

In addition to all local and international events, OAA will also organise an all-ladies gymkhana competition this season to showcase their talents and encourage them to be more involved in motorsport.

People can also take part in remote-control racing tournament at OAA's Muscat Racing Circuit. There will also be bike and car shows with and special arrangements will be made for screening of the FIFA Football World Cup to be played in Qatar.

SEND YOUR
COMMENTS TO

**muscatdaily@
apexmedia.co.om**

His Majesty to visit Bahrain on Monday

Continued from Page 01

Oman and Bahrain enjoy significant economic and tourism potential that encourage more partnerships. The two countries' visions - Oman Vision 2040 and Bahrain Vision 2030 - provide wide scope for economic diversification, which open up opportunities for investment in many sectors.

Statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information indicate that the volume of trade exchange between the two countries is witnessing a remarkable growth, reaching RO320.7mn by the end of 2021. Meanwhile, the volume of trade exchange between the two countries during the first half of 2022 amounted to RO241.4mn.

There are 876 Bahraini companies investing in the sultanate with a total invested capital of RO566.2mn.

Owing to the existing cooperation of the private sectors between the two countries over the past years, Bahrain has become one of the most important investment partners of Oman, which indicates the growth of economic and trade relations between the two countries.

The most important commodities exported from Oman to Bahrain include electrical, plastic, aluminium, medicines and other commodities, whereas the iron ores, gold ingots and electric wires top the list of imported commodities from Bahrain.

ONA

Royal Decrees amend Penal and Criminal laws

Continued from Page 01

"The heads of units of the State's Administrative Apparatus and other legal persons/entities may delegate one of the occupants of legal positions in the unit to which they belong, vide which action the delegated persons attend, plead and file appeals before courts of different levels.

'Article 164: The summons (subpoena) will be announced to the accused person in accordance with the provisions of Articles (70) and (71) of this law. The announcement of the heads of the units of the State's Administrative Apparatus and other public legal persons/entities is done through the competent administrative division in the unit to which they belong. The notification of prisoners will be done

through the head of the prison administration or whoever occupies the position. Announcement of military persons will be done through their respective commands. Whoever receives a copy of the announcement must sign. If he/she refuses, the Court of Misdemeanour will impose on him/her to a fine not exceeding RO50. If he/she insists on abstention, the accused will be notified in accordance with the provisions of Articles (70) and (71) of this law. As soon as they are notified of the summons, the litigants may view and peruse the case documents.'

Article 2 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on the day following its date of publication.

ONA



Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

TENDER NOTICE

The Tenders committee of Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tenders: -

Tender No.	Description	Tender documents price (R.O)	Class	Last date for collection of documents	Last date for Submission of documents
251/2022/MAF WR/HQ-30 - Recall - 1	Dredging And Groynes Works At Dalkut Fishery Harbour	25/-	Specialized	Wednesday 2/11/2022	Tuesday 22/11/2022
350/2022/MAF WR/HQ-45 - Recall - 1	Supply Of Field Needs For The Integrated Management Program Of Red Palm Weevil For The Year 2022	25/-	Specialized	Sunday 23/10/2022	Thursday 3/11/2022
611/2022/MAF WR/HQ-69	Supply of materials and tools required for routine analysis in Microbiology Laboratory of Fish Quality Control Center	25/-	Specialized	Sunday 6/11/2022	Monday 28/11/2022
619/2022/MAF WR/HQ-70	Consultancy Services For Design Works For Development Sheltered Fish Landing Center At Daghmar In Qurayat	37.500/-	First	Monday 7/11/2022	Monday 28/11/2022
620/2022/MAF WR/HQ-71	Consultancy Services For Design Works For Development Sheltered Fish Landing Center At Dhabab In Qurayat	37.500/-	First	Monday 7/11/2022	Monday 28/11/2022

- Interested Companies registered with Tender Board (in the above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.
- The Tenderer should attach Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman (as required in the tender), and addressed to the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources. And the bidders can contact the Esnad technical support team at the number listed below to find out how to request electronic guarantees from local banks.
- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.
- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phonenumber: **+96824402200** or **etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om**.

TENDERS COMMITTEE
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

Bring Home your Exchange

Download our App Today!






PURSHOTTAM KANJI EXCHANGE

شركة برشوتم كانجي للصرافة



99101314, 99849289 customersupport@pkexchange.net
 www.pkexchange.com pkexch @pkexchange1



Omani banks' profits rise 13% to RO308mn in first nine months

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The combined net profits of Omani banks listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) grew by 13.5 per cent to RO308mn in the first nine months of 2022 as compared to RO271.2mn recorded in the same period of last year.

The preliminary financial results of eight banks listed on MSX indicated an improvement in their various financial indicators with the banks focusing on financing productive sectors of the economy, according to a report published by Oman News Agency on Saturday.

Omani banks focused on increasing their revenues from interest income, Islamic banking, various financing activities and investments, bringing their total revenues to RO930.8mn for the first nine months of 2022 compared to RO863.1mn in the same period of 2021.

The preliminary financial results showed that the total banking sector assets increased to RO36.2bn at the end of September 2022 from RO35.4bn recorded a year ago.

As per the report, most of the listed banks recorded growth in their net profits this year with the exception of BankDhofar and Oman Arab Bank (OAB). BankDhofar's net profit decreased to RO26.1mn in the first



nine months of 2022 from RO28.2mn in the same period of 2021, while OAB's net profit fell to RO10.6mn this year from RO11.3mn in the same period of

RO28.1mn and RO25mn for the first nine months of 2022, respectively. HSBC Bank Oman posted a net profit of RO23.6mn and Bank Nizwa reported RO10.7mn.

Total market capitalisation of the listed banks at MSX grew by RO795mn to reach at RO4.484bn as of the end of September 2022 compared with RO3.688bn a year ago. These gains mainly came as a result of increase in the shares of Bank Muscat, National Bank of Oman, HSBC Bank Oman, BankDhofar and Ahlibank.

Banks' market capitalisation also benefited from the increase in the capital of Sohar International Bank and Bank Muscat. Sohar International increased its capital from RO295.3mn to RO455.3mn through the rights issue, while Bank Muscat raised its capital from RO357.4mn to RO375.3mn through distributing bonus shares to the shareholders.

last year.

Bank Muscat recorded the highest net profit of RO148.3mn for the nine months period, followed by National Bank of Oman with RO35.5mn net profit.

Sohar International Bank and Ahlibank reported net profits of

Total assets of Omani banks increased to RO36.2bn at the end of September 2022 compared to RO35.4bn a year ago

Investor interest gathers momentum in Pearl REIF IPO

Muscat - Investor interest is gathering momentum with the commencement of subscription to the initial public offering (IPO) of The Pearl Real Estate Investment Fund (REIF).

The fund's investment manager and issue manager Sohar International Bank has been holding several meetings with key investors to highlight the unique investment opportunity of investing in Oman's largest Shariah-compliant fund.

The meetings were well attended by a wide cross-section of investor groups including institutional investors, high-net worth individuals and established family offices, according to a press release. Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and its subsidiary Omantel are the promoters of The Pearl REIF.

Highlighting the positive response, Wahbi al Riyami, chairman of The Pearl REIF (representing Omantel), said, "The promoters of The Pearl REIF have made every effort to make the investment opportunity available to more investors, particularly attracting a wider participation from the retail segment.

The pricing of the IPO has been structured to offer the common investor the opportunity to invest in a well-structured instrument, with strong underlying assets and robust long-term contractual agreements.

I am pleased to note significant investor interest and confidence of their subscription to the issue." Further elaborating on the strength of the offer, Aown Abbas al Bahrani, deputy chairman of The Pearl REIF and director of public markets at OIA, said, "The keen interest of the investor community reflects the key highlights of the offering, which are being the largest fund of its kind in Oman, marquee



tenants, stable cash flow visibility and the backing of promoters who will continue to be shareholders of the fund."

The Pearl REIF is offering 208,137,400 offer units at a price of 112bz per offer unit (including offer expenses of 2bz per offer unit) for subscription.

The Pearl REIF has projected an average distributable profit yield of 9.2 per cent, which compares favourably to other yield instruments in Oman such as term deposits, perpetual bonds or sukuk.

Investors can submit their subscription application for the IPO before October 30, 2022, through the electronic channels of any of the collection agents: Sohar International Bank, Ahlibank, Bank Muscat, NBO, U-Capital and United Securities.

All applicants must have an account and investor number with Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (MCD). Any applicant may apply to obtain an investor number and open an account by completing the MCD application forms.

U Capital sees 27% upside in Pearl REIF IPO

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Leading Omani brokerage firm U Capital has projected a potential 27 per cent upside to the price of The Pearl REIF initial public offering and recommended to 'subscribe' to the IPO of the fund.

"In our view, the fair value of the fund is 142bz per unit, implying an upside of 27 per cent to the IPO price of 112bz per unit. The Pearl REIF's offer price implies a dividend yield of 8.4 per cent, higher than the sector median of 6.5 per cent. We recommend subscribe to the IPO," U Capital said in a research note.

The brokerage firm noted that The Pearl REIF's long-term agreements with marquee tenants provide a steady income visibility.

"The long-term rental

agreement with both the properties namely Omantel with 15 years duration and Lulu property with 20 years duration (remaining 12 years) provides steady income visibility with passing rent per annum of RO2.2-2.8mn for Lulu property and RO5mn for Omantel.

Further, the rental agreements do not have any break clause," U Capital said.

It further said that the fund is financed through Shariah-compliant borrowing, through Bank Muscat's Meethaq window, which makes it an attractive investment opportunity for Shariah-compliant investors.

U Capital noted that the structure of The Pearl REIF places it apart from other listed REIFs on the Muscat Stock Exchange.

EU agrees 'roadmap' to contain energy prices

Brussels, Belgium - EU leaders on Friday reached agreement on a "roadmap" aimed at putting in place measures within weeks to shield European consumers from soaring energy prices.

The accord came after 11 hours of wrangling over broad proposals to lower energy bills as gas prices pushed skywards by the war in Ukraine.

The bloc's 27 member states have been squabbling for months over which joint initiatives to adopt, riven by the fact that energy mixes in the countries vary greatly.

While the announcement of the summit text made a public show of unity, it was clear that the coming negotiations would remain difficult. One step in that would come next week with a meeting of EU energy ministers in Luxembourg.

The summit agreement set out a "solid roadmap to keep on working on the topic of energy prices", European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen told a media conference.

The published text calls on the European Commission and EU countries in coming weeks to find ways to shield consumers from the high prices "while preserving Europe's global competitiveness... and the integrity of the Single Market".

European Council President Michel said, "The energy crisis represents a threat to the internal market" of the EU and stressed "maximal coordination" was needed to protect it.

At least 15 EU countries -- more than half the bloc -- are pushing for an ambitious cap on



Ursula von der Leyen (left) and Charles Michel hold a press conference on the second day of a EU leaders Summit in Brussels on Friday (AFP)

prices and are increasingly unsettled by strikes and protests over the cost of living spreading across France, Belgium and other member states.

But the price-cap idea has met resistance from Germany, the EU's biggest economy, fearing that gas supplies could end up shifting to more lucrative markets in Asia.

Several smaller economies are also furious that the German government will not back a gas cap and for going it alone in helping its citizens pay for high prices with a 200bn-euro (US\$196bn) spending bonanza.

In the end, the agreed text said a "cost and benefit analysis" of a price cap for electricity generation should be carried out, and that the impact beyond Europe would be assessed.

French President Emmanuel Macron, who had gone into the summit saying Germany was isolating itself, expressed satisfaction with the result.

"The next two or three weeks will allow the commission to come up with these mechanisms" to be implemented.

He said it sent a "very clear signal to the markets of our determination and our unity".

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said "good progress" had been made.

"We wanted, together, to limit fluctuations that could be caused by speculation."

There was no hiding, however, a general Franco-German discord that is simmering. That became more evident on Wednesday when the two countries delayed a regular meeting between cabinet ministers.

But France's Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire sought to downplay fears of a rift at the heart of Europe, telling the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung newspaper that "no one can split up the Franco-German couple".

How he said there was a need for a "strategic redefinition" of bilateral relations to create "a new alliance".

In another sign the two were not in concert, France did not consult Germany before agreeing with Spain and Portugal to scrap a planned gas pipeline that Berlin has been pushing for years.

Leaders of the three countries met just before the summit and "decided to abandon the MidCat project and instead create, as a matter of priority, a Green Energy Corridor connecting Portugal, Spain and France with the EU's energy network."

The MidCat, a project that emerged a decade ago, called for an overland gas pipeline to be built to connect gas terminals in Spain and Portugal, across France, to European networks supplying Germany, among others.

AFP

PAPER RECYCLING PROGRAMME

Attention all corporate offices!

DO YOU HAVE ANY PAPER TO RECYCLE?

Our team will collect it from your office

BIGGER, BETTER, BRANDED
RECYCLING BOXES ALSO AVAILABLE

For details contact us at recycle@apexmedia.co.om or call us on toll free no: **80076000**

MUSCAT DAILY

MARKET ANALYSIS - OMAN

MSX posts 2% weekly drop amid fears of global recession

Taking cues from regional and global markets, the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) last week recorded nearly two per cent decline as investor sentiments remained weak due to geopolitical uncertainties and fears of a global recession.

While MSX30 Index ended the week lower by 1.95 per cent, all sectoral indices closed down for the week. Financial Index ended the week lower by 1.57 per cent. Services Index and Industrial Index fell by 3.19 per cent and 3.71 per cent for the week, respectively. MSX Shariah Index declined by 1.86 per cent.

Local news

►The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) and Galfar Engineering and Contracting Company signed last week an agreement for roads and infrastructure construction at Mahas Industrial City in the Wilayat of Khasab in Musandam Governorate. The project at a total cost of approximately RO5mn incorporates an internal road network of 7km, installation of 100 lighting poles, construction of a 75-meter bridge linking the entrance of the industrial city to the main road, and water and sewage networks of 5km and 4.5km, respectively.

►Dhofar Cattle Feed has announced that it has changed company's name from Dhofar Cattle Feed Company SOAG to Dhofar Food & Investment SAOG. The company's logo changes are in process with the

concern authorities and will be announced after approval.

►Salalah Mills Company, which owns and operates Oman's biggest flour milling complex in Dhofar Governorate, has disclosed to shareholders that it has signed a financing agreement with Alizz Islamic Bank covering a sum of RO12mn for the financing of a new industrial bakery project at Khazaen Economic City in Barka. The announcement came in a filing to the Capital Market Authority last week. Salalah Mills said the tenure of the loan is about ten years.

►Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company has won the Fuel Farm Management to Muscat International Airport project. Al Maha disclosed to the shareholders and investors that it has been selected for the project of 'Fuel Farm Management to Muscat International Airport', and that was through the obtained letter of award on October 16, 2022.

►Oman-UK Investment Forum was held last week to review investment opportunities in Oman and means of promoting the country as an international destination with promising investment prospects in various fields, especially renewable energy and green hydrogen. The event was organized by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in cooperation with the British Embassy at Muscat. H E Qais Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion said that



the British market is Oman's biggest investment partner. This partnership has expanded in the last few years to include several sectors, namely oil and gas, technology, infrastructure and education. The forum comes in culmination of the role played by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in promoting Oman internationally in a bid to attract investments and boost exports.

►The Tender Board awarded tenders worth RO111.3mn for new development projects and additional works at existing projects, at its fifth meeting held under the chairmanship of H E Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy and chairman of the Tender Board, on Wednesday. The project includes supply of medicines and vaccines for the Ministry of Health at an amount of RO52.1mn, establishment of the

Central Public Health Laboratory at an amount of RO18.21mn, and construction of Harweeb-Mateen road in Dhofar Governorate (RO17.39mn). The Tender Board also approved tenders for the construction of Mihlah-Ghbrat Al Tam-Ismailiyah road in the Wilayat of Dima Wal Tayeen in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate (RO7.9mn), replacement of old air conditioners at public schools (RO5.87mn) and the remaining work of the seventh package of Al Batinah Expressway (RO3.66mn).

GCC markets

Foreign investments in Saudi Arabia grew by 7 per cent year-on-year to SAR2.434tn in Q2 2022, based on the latest official data issued by the Saudi Central Bank (SAMA). When compared to the first quarter of 2022, foreign investments

ebbed 1 per cent, or SAR25.8bn in Q2 2022. Foreign direct investments (FDI) accounted for 41 per cent of total foreign investments in the kingdom, equivalent to SAR994.2bn. Portfolio investments hit SAR812.2bn, while other investments stood at SAR627.8bn.

The Saudi economy is expected to grow by 9.9 per cent in 2022, the highest growth rate among G20, Saudi Press Agency reported, citing a recent report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Saudi Arabia is planning to issue new USD-denominated bonds and sukuk and has made an offer to holders of existing bonds to buy them for cash, Reuters reported, citing a bank document. The initial price guidance for the new notes is about 135 basis points over US Treasuries for six-year sukuk

and about 180 basis points above US Treasuries for 10-year bonds, the document added. It said that October 24 is the deadline for bondholders to participate in the tender offer and indicative results are expected October 25.

Global news

US Treasury yields rose were relatively calm on Thursday after surging to highs not seen in more than a decade in the previous session. The yield on the policy-sensitive 2-year US Treasury was last at 4.569 per cent after rising by less than two basis points. The benchmark 10-year Treasury yield was little changed near 4.125 per cent. It climbed as high as 4.18 per cent overnight, reaching level last seen over 14 years ago in mid-2008.

The Japanese yen weakened past 150 against the US dollar, a key psychological level, reaching levels not seen since August 1990. Policymakers have ruled out a rate hike in order to defend against further weakening of the currency. The Bank of Japan also announced emergency bond-buying operations Thursday. It offered to buy 100bn yen (US\$666.98mn) worth of Japanese government bonds with maturities of 10-20 years and another tranche worth 100bn yen with maturities of 5-10 years. The central bank has repeatedly vowed to buy an unlimited amount of bonds at a fixed rate in order to cap 10-year government debt yields at 0.25 per cent as part of

its stimulus measures for the economy.

China, the world's largest crude importer, has stuck to strict COVID-19 curbs this year, which weighed heavily on business and economic activity, lowering demand for fuel. Bloomberg news reported on Thursday that Beijing is considering cutting the quarantine period for inbound visitors to seven days from 10 days, citing people familiar with the matter.

Looming European Union ban on Russian crude and oil products, as well as the output cut from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and other producers including Russia, known as OPEC+, have supported oil prices.

Recommendation

Global stock markets climbed on Friday as Wall Street closed a volatile week on a high note despite some disappointing earnings reports. The rise came despite mixed corporate earnings reports as 10-year Treasury yields climbed to their highest level since 2008. Oil prices settled up on Friday as hopes of stronger Chinese demand and a weakening US dollar outweighed concern about a global economic downturn and the impact of interest rate rises on fuel use.

Regionally, market performance was mixed while earnings season continued.

Locally, investors are advised to invest in companies with strong fundamentals and dividend visibility.

By special arrangement with U Capital

US should boost domestic oil production: Biden

Washington, US - President Joe Biden called on US energy companies to increase oil production and to lower retail gasoline prices as he announced a new release from strategic US reserves in a bid to dampen fuel prices.

"Families are hurting," Biden said in remarks from the White House. High fuel prices are threatening the US economy and also feeding voter anger at the administration three weeks before midterm elections to decide control of Congress.

Biden has struggled to find solutions to a problem rooted in Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the recent decision by the Saudi-led OPEC+ cartel to cut its own oil production.

Biden said his order to release the final 15mn barrels of a 180mn barrel pledge from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve would "continue to stabilise markets and decrease the prices at a time when the actions of other countries have caused such volatility."

However, he also urged the US oil industry to get more oil out of the ground, insisting this did not counter his presidency's priority of pushing the United States into a clean energy future.

"We need to responsibly increase American oil production without delaying or deferring our transition to clean energy," he said.

In addition to urging a boost in production, Biden repeated his frequent call for fuel companies to lower prices paid by motorists, arguing that prices at the pump are not declining in step with overall drops in the price of



US President Joe Biden

crude oil.

"My message to the American energy companies is this: you should not be using your profits to buy back stock or for dividends, not now - not while a war's raging," he said.

"You should be using these record-breaking profits to increase production and refining. Invest in America for the American people - bring down the price."

15mn barrels to market

Biden on Wednesday confirmed he was putting the final 15mn barrels on the market from a record release of US strategic oil reserves, with more releases possible if energy prices spike.

"We're going to continue to responsibly use that national asset," he said.

The decision to make the biggest ever dip into the emergency oil reserves - usually kept for responding to situations such as hurricane-related shutdowns

at oil refineries - was one of the few tools Biden has to make a direct impact on oil supplies.

About 400mn barrels remain in the strategic reserves, officials say, and this will be topped up when prices dip far enough.

Major energy exporter Russia was hit with US and European sanctions soon after it invaded Ukraine in February, causing turmoil on markets. In addition, the Kremlin has threatened to use its leverage over energy supplies as an economic weapon against the West, which supports Ukraine's fight to repel the invasion.

For Biden there are serious domestic concerns, with gasoline prices at one point averaging more than US\$5 a gallon, causing nationwide anger. While prices have since moderated, inflation remains the biggest factor driving Republican hopes of defeating the Democrats in November's midterm legislative elections.

AFF

UK reports further bleak economic data

London, UK - UK government borrowing surged and retail sales slumped in September, official data showed Friday, dealing a further economic blow to a country in political crisis.

Public sector net borrowing stood at £20bn (US\$22bn), the second-largest September level on record, as decades-high inflation sees interest on debt repayments balloon.

Retail sales volumes tumbled 1.4 per cent as sky-high prices curbed consumer purchasing. The figure was better, however, than the 1.7-per cent slide in August. The data comes one day after Prime Minister Liz Truss resigned in the wake of markets turmoil triggered by her budget of tax cuts funded by debt.

The public borrowing figure exceeded analysts' consensus of £17.2bn, which was already far



UK Prime Minister Liz Truss

above the government's own prediction.

"The weakness in retail sales and further overshoot of the... (government) public borrowing forecast won't make the next prime minister's task any easier in navigating the economy

through" various crises, concluded Ruth Gregory, senior UK economist at Capital Economics.

Interest payments on government debt surged to £7.7bn in September, "largely reflecting the broader economic environment of soaring inflation", noted CEBR economist Pushpin Singh.

Government borrowing is linked to the wider RPI measure of inflation, which stands at a huge 12.6 per cent in Britain.

Contenders bidding to succeed Truss on Friday opened a hectic weekend of campaigning, but opposition parties demanded that UK voters get their own say to end months of political chaos via a general election.

Truss succeeded Boris Johnson on September 6 after a weeks-long campaign against Tory rival Rishi Sunak, who is now a favourite to take over in

the coming days.

Former finance minister Sunak had warned in the battle to succeed Johnson that tax cuts promised by Truss when government debt had already soared on Covid interventions was the wrong policy to pursue.

He was proved right as the budget sent the pound crashing to a record-low close to parity with the dollar and triggered yields on government bonds to soar.

That caused Truss to U-turn on most of her planned tax cuts, ultimately costing her the job of prime minister.

On Friday, sterling slid one percent against the dollar, before recovering slightly, while the yield on the British government's 30-year bond climbed back above four per cent.

AFF

Pakistan welcomes being dropped from money watch list

Islamabad, Pakistan - Pakistan was taken off a global money laundering watchlist on Friday, officials said, a move Islamabad hopes will ease foreign investment and boost the country's beleaguered economy.

The Financial Action Task Force, an international money-laundering watchdog, put Pakistan on its so-called grey list in June 2018, after Islamabad failed to implement policies aimed at stamping out money laundering and the financing of international terror groups.

The move severely curtailed exchange flows and discouraged foreign direct investment by putting reams of red tape around even the simplest projects.

In a statement Friday, the Paris-based FATF said it "welcomes Pakistan's significant progress" in its anti-money laundering efforts.

"Pakistan is therefore no longer subject to the FATF's increased monitoring process," it added. Pakistan's foreign ministry said in a statement the decision was "much-awaited good news".

"Congratulations to the people of Pakistan," Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari tweeted.

While the move is a boost for the country's image, it is not expected to have an immediate effect on the economy.

AFF

Announcement of Capital Reduction

In accordance with the provisions of Article 150 of the commercial Companies Law.

The company (الشركة للمصاعد ش.م.م), Which is registered with the commercial Registration No. 1152503, hereby announces that it is going to reduce its capital from Omani Rials 250,000.000 to 25,000.000.

Whoever has any objections to the foregoing shall present the reasons for such objection to the Secretariat of Commercial Registry at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry within 30 days from the date hereof.

إعلان تخفيض رأس المال

وفقا لأحكام المادة 150 من قانون الشركات التجارية

تعلن شركة التقنية للمصاعد (ش.م.م) المقيدة بالسجل التجاري رقم 1152503 بأنها بصدد تخفيض رأس المال 250.000.000 إلى 25.000.000 ريال عماني .

وكل من له اعتراض على ذلك عليه إن يتقدم بأسباب اعتراضه لأمانة السجل التجاري بوزارة التجارة والصناعة خلال 30 يوماً من تاريخه .

Bank Muscat’s FIFA special visa card sparks interest

Bank Muscat has been receiving excellent feedback from customers regarding the exclusive Visa Prepaid Card launched earlier this year, courtesy of Visa. These Limited-Edition cards are specifically designed as a collector’s item and reflects the spirit and overall experience of the FIFA World Cup, which is one of the world’s largest sporting events, the bank said.

Customers can easily apply for up to five cards as well as activate and load funds on them via mobile or Internet banking. The bank has also announced that each card can be loaded with an amount as low as RO5 and be used for both POS and online transactions. The Visa Prepaid Card features contactless payment technology, and can be managed easily through the bank’s mobile banking app or Internet banking. Customers can easily review transactions to manage their expenses. In addition, the cards can be used for secure online payments apart from PoS payments and ATM withdrawals. The unique design and features has led to positive responses from a number of the bank’s customers. Given the limited stocks and good demand for these cards, the bank has advised all those who would like to apply for the card to do so at the earliest.

Bank Muscat’s contactless Visa Prepaid cards are a popular option for customers to complete their low-value point-of-sale (POS) transactions at groceries and supermarkets with a simple tap of the POS terminal without the need to enter their personal identification number (PIN) for transactions up to RO40.

Muzn Islamic banking supports IFN Oman forum



National Bank of Oman’s (NBO) Islamic banking window, Muzn, recently supported the seventh annual Islamic Finance News (IFN) Forum 2022, partnering with leading institutions, Islamic finance practitioners and regulators from across the region to explore the latest industry trends and opportunities for growth.

Suleman Muhammad, Head of Islamic Products and Segments, Muzn Islamic Banking, moderated a lively panel discussion entitled ‘Funding the Future: Islamic Sustainable Finance and Investment’ which brought together experienced industry analysts to offer insight into emerging markets such as green infrastructure and how existing sectors can transition to sustainable financing.

Salima al Marzoqi, chief Islamic banking officer at Muzn, said, “Oman has become a leading nation in the local and regional Islamic finance industry, and the sector is in a position to make further advances into new growth sectors. As NBO’s Islamic banking window, Muzn is committed to unlock new opportunities and support our customers to flourish. We drive growth and discover unexplored value, particularly through products that have positive impact on the society and also help to fund national and social development through Islamic finance to deliver long-term benefits.”

Pakistan schools celebrate Omani Women’s Day



Pakistan schools in Oman celebrated ‘Omani Women’s Day’ with fervour and zest on October 17 to recognise and appreciate the tremendous contribution of Omani women in the nation’s development. The Omani women as well as the women of other nationalities employed in Pakistan schools participated in the celebration and shed light on women’s role and empowerment in the progress of the country said a press release. While welcoming the guests, the central coordinator of Junior Section of Pakistan School Muscat, Sanya Mirza highlighted women’s role in various domains to achieve the development goals for a sustainable society. She also applauded the women working in Pakistan schools.



Nissan Patrol Super Safari enjoys reputation for versatility, capability: SBA

Nissan’s Patrol Super Safari longstanding heritage in Oman has lasted with every passing generation, achieving iconic status among nationals and expats alike, said a press statement from the dealer Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA).

‘This sustained love and demand for the Nissan Patrol Super Safari doesn’t come as a surprise,’ the company said.

A senior official from SBA said, “A compelling combination of power and elegant sophistication, Nissan Patrol Super Safari has evolved over the years to placate the new-age SUV customers, who demand eye-catching design, lush interiors, unmatched versatility, spectacular performance, and super technology for a multifaceted lifestyle.

“With its ability to conquer even the most difficult road conditions and the harshest of terrains without compromising on comfort and luxury, the Super Safari is a model that is highly in demand, especially due to the region being a hub for outdoor activity and adventure.”

Nissan Patrol Super Safari astounds auto enthusiasts because of its legacy and reputation for versatility, capability, and extreme performance. Its legendary capability and its deep-rooted heritage in the region makes it a popular vehicle.

Legacy of reliability

This legacy of reliability and superior 4x4 capability remains true today, and it is why one can take the Nissan Patrol Safari where others don’t dare to go. Nissan Patrol Super Safari boasts of all the elements that have elevated the vehicle to iconic status such as the rugged design and the off-road capability, while delivering a modern approach that is complimented by the special upgrades and enhancements that add to its usability and visual appeal

Head-turning presence

The Patrol Super Safari boasts all-new tan leather seats and door trim with 8-way power seats for the driver and 4-way for the front passenger. New driver aids include a navigation system as well as front and rear parking sensors with rear view camera, Bluetooth, USB, CD, auxiliary input socket and FM/AM radio to complete the in-car entertainment offering. The vehicle comes equipped with automatic climate control and a built-in, refrigerated cool box.

Building on the iconic Super Safari model, the new Nissan Patrol Super Safari enjoys the legendary exterior design which has distinguished it from other Patrol models and made it one of the most recognized icons of modern off-road vehicles. Distinctive machine cut 17” black alloy wheels, dual-tone

body colours, flared fenders, a rear spoiler and a Super Safari body stripe all build on its iconic looks.

The Patrol Super Safari boasts a 4.8L DOHC in-line 6-cylinder engine producing 280hp and a mighty 46kg or 451Nm of torque which allows it to power up dunes or tow heavy objects with ease. The engine is mated to a 5-speed automatic transmission with manual mode. Dual front airbags, ABS, an immobilizer and cruise control are among the other features contributing to both safety and driver convenience, while the vehicle boasts rear locking differentials, an electric front winch, as well as front and rear tow hooks as standard equipment for desert use.

Nissan Patrol Super Safari marries legendary off-road capability with modern day comfort and innovation that truly excites. Designed to be a remarkable off-road vehicle while maintaining all the comforts of a road going full size SUV, the Patrol Super Safari incorporates some of the latest innovation and features that Nissan customers have come to expect.

Book a Home Test Drive

SBA is extending a ‘book a home test drive’ service for its prospective customers. The service enables potential customers to schedule their test drive online as per their convenience. A

home test drive can be booked simply by logging on to the official SBA Nissan Oman website <https://en.nissanoman.com/services/book-home-test-drive.html> or through customer service toll free number 80050011.

Awards for Nissan

Nissan has been conferred with Oman’s Most Trusted Brand 2021 in the crossover category at a recently held ceremony at held at Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel. Continuously winning the trust of Oman residents, Nissan is now among the top brands to be conferred with ‘Oman’s Most Trusted Brand’ honour for five times in a row in the automobile category. Nissan, considered a premium and trusted name in the market has won the award across categories including SUV, crossover, 4WD and mid-size since 2016. The award is instituted by Apex Press and Publishing.

SBA commitment

SBA is largely committed to supporting Nissan’s growth in Oman through major emphasis on customer satisfaction and by providing world-class after-sales services in Oman. With a national network of 14 showrooms, 17 service centres and 24 spare parts outlets, SBA has further built upon its legacy of excellent customer service.

OQ signs MoU with OWA to support women, children

OQ, a global integrated energy company with roots in Oman, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Omani Women’s Association (OWA) in Muscat to support and empower women and children in the Al Wusta governorate. The MoU was signed during an event in Duqm held in celebration of Omani Women’s Day.

The MoU was signed by H H Sayyida Aliya bint Thuwaini al Said, Chairperson of the Omani Women’s Association in Muscat and the chief guest of OQ’s celebration of Omani Women’s Day, and Sabrina Fadhel al Bakri, OQ’s chief financial officer. The MoU seeks to create a framework through which the OQ Group and the OWA in Muscat can work together to achieve their shared goals and vision that support nation building.

As part of the MoU, OQ will sponsor activities and initiatives aimed at empowering women in



the economic, social and entrepreneurial fields. The company will also support programmes aimed at developing communication skills, enhancing creative thinking, and supporting children in education.

As per the terms of the MoU, the OWA in Muscat will present its proposals and the OQ Group will provide funding for the implementation of each project after conducting a comprehensive

and detailed review of the proposed projects and the areas of implementation.

This MoU allows companies affiliated with the OQ Group operating in Duqm, such as Central Utilities Company (Marafiq) and Oman Tank Terminal Company (OTTCO), to benefit from these proposals, studies and future projects that will be presented by the OWA in Muscat to support women and children in the Al

Wusta governorate.

Sabrina Fadhel al Bakri, OQ’s chief financial officer, emphasised that OQ Group, as part of its social investment programme, spares no effort to enhance the role of non-government organisations especially those that support and work with women and children.

“We remain committed at OQ Group to work with women and children’s issues in the Al Wusta governorate. The signing of the MoU reflects our interest in many areas that would empower women and children, especially in the wilayats of Al Wusta governorate, be it through education, vocational and business skills or entrepreneurship, she added.

During the event, the chief guest also took the opportunity to honour a number of women at OQ companies in recognition of their contributions and their role in the work sites in Al Wusta governorate.



MoE marks International Day of Statistics

The Ministry of Education (MoE) last Wednesday organised an event on the occasion of the International Day of Statistics, which is celebrated on October 20 every year.

The event was held in the presence of Rahma al Mahrouqi, Director of the Department of Statistics and Information, heads of Departments and their staff from the ministry, at Suhar Hall in the MoE’s General Diwan.

The event included the presentation of five papers, the first was titled ‘Phone Application:

Our Locations’ presented by Ahmed al Amri, head of Department of Geographic Systems at the Department of Statistics and Information.

The second paper was titled ‘Role of Statistics in Geographic Information Systems’ presented by Suleiman al Hashmi, Geographic Information Systems specialist at the Department of Geographical Systems. The third paper came on ArcGIS Enterprise program and was presented by Hamad al Subhi, second specialist of Geographic Information

Systems at the Department of Geographic Systems.

The fourth paper was titled ‘Phone Applications: Statistics and Indicators’ presented by Hasan al Lawati, senior statistician at the Statistics and Information Department at the Department of Statistics and Information.

The fifth and final paper covered the topic of ‘Power BI Program’ and was presented by Fatima al Mukhaini, a second statistician at the Department of Educational Indicators.

OPAZ delegation visits Port of Rotterdam in Netherlands



H E Dr Ali bin Masoud al Sunaidy, chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), visited the International Port of Rotterdam in the Kingdom of the Netherlands and met with Allard Castelein, CEO at the Port of Rotterdam and a number of officials. During the meeting, both parties discussed mechanisms to activate the joint cooperation between Port of Sohar, Port of Rotterdam and the free zones in Oman.

They also touched on ways to maximise the benefits of renewable energy for the production and export of green hydrogen. On the other hand, the delegation visited a number of facilities operating in the areas adjacent to Port of Rotterdam, including facilities of green fuel production and emission of the associated carbon dioxide resulting from industrial production operations. The chairman and accompanying delegation also met with a number of port officials and companies operating in the fields of logistics, information technology and energy. On the sidelines of this visit, H E Sunaidy met with a group of trainees who are on a scholarship programme from the Sohar Free Zone and Sohar Port.

flydubai adds Osh as 2nd destination in Kyrgyzstan

Dubai-based airline flydubai becomes the first UAE national carrier to operate direct flights to Osh in Kyrgyzstan with a twice-weekly service to begin from November 3.

The addition of flights to Osh makes it the second point in Kyrgyzstan including the capital, Bishkek, flydubai said.

With the launch of operations to Osh, flydubai expands its network in Central Asia to eight points, providing passengers from the UAE with more options for travel to the region. This includes Almaty and Astana in Kazakhstan, Bishkek and Osh in Kyrgyzstan, Dushanbe in Tajikistan as well as Namangan, Samarkand and Tashkent in Uzbekistan.

flydubai CEO Ghaith al Ghaith said, “Central Asia continues to be a fast-growing market and we are excited to see our network grow in Kyrgyzstan with the start of operations to Osh, a cultural melting pot with one of the most important and oldest bazaars in the region. flydubai is committed to enhancing connectivity between different cultures and with a combined frequency of nine weekly flights to the market, we are confident that our new service will reinforce trade and tourism relations between the UAE and Kyrgyzstan.”

Osh is the second-largest city in Kyrgyzstan after Bishkek and has a history spanning more than 3,000 years.

OPPO’s Reno8 illuminates path to memorable Diwali



‘Bask in the festive spirit and capture joyful moments with your loved ones this Diwali with OPPO’s newly launched Reno8 Pro 5G, preserving vibrant colours and details in each frame that look true to life ensuring those special memories last a lifetime’, said OPPO, while promoting Reno8 Pro 5G on the occasion of Diwali, an Indian festival of lights.

‘Made so memories can be captured seamlessly ensuring more time enjoying festive celebrations, OPPO’s Reno8 Pro 5G brings ultra-clear portrait photos and videos to all-new heights, powered by OPPO’s first self-developed imaging NPU, MariSilicon X, and the Dual Sony Flagship Sensors,’ it said. With most Diwali celebrations beginning after the sun goes down surrounded by twinkling lights, OPPO’s Reno8 Pro 5G makes capturing moments so much easier through revolutionary night imaging capabilities. With 4K Ultra Night Video, users can capture ultra-clear portrait videos at night, while 4K Ultra HDR Video optimises portrait videos taken in the presence of strong backlight.



ATM launches sustainable stand award for next year

Arabian Travel Market introduces ‘Best Stand Build Incorporating Sustainability Initiatives’ for the 2023 annual exhibitor awards to recognise exhibitors that have made exceptional efforts to reduce their environmental impact and support the UAE’s net zero commitment.

The Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2023, the leading travel and tourism showcase in the Middle East to be held at the Dubai World Trade Centre from May 1 to 4 next year, will feature a sustainability category at its annual exhibitor awards next year for the first time.

The decision was taken to recognise exhibiting organisations that have considered the impact that their stand will have on the environment and the efforts they have made to reduce and or offset their carbon footprint, ATM said in a press statement.

ATM’s exhibition director-ME Danielle Curtis said, “We are aware of the incredible amount of effort and investment that goes into designing, building and manning exhibition stands at Arabian Travel Market.”

Since its inception, she said, the ATM exhibitor award programme has not only recognised those efforts, but has also encouraged exciting, fresh and creative ideas.

“For our 2023 event, we wanted to include a category that provided synergy with our official theme, ‘Working



The sustainability award will be open to all exhibitors who can nominate themselves with a justification against certain criteria that will be laid out in the ATM manual

DANIELLE CURTIS

Towards Net Zero’ and furthermore one that supports the UAE’s broader net zero commitment as well as RX’s net zero commitment to deliver Net Zero Carbon events by 2040.”

“The sustainability award will be open to all exhibitors who can nominate themselves with a justification

against certain criteria that will be clearly laid out in the ATM operations manual,” Curtis added.

The criteria will include the use of bio-degradable, reusable and recyclable materials for the stand build and features, digital marketing materials, limited single use plastics, reduced freight and logistics emissions, waste management, as well as recycling and or reusing the stand for multiple events, plus carbon offsetting initiatives.

The award will be judged in advance of the show by the ATM operations team, with advice and support from an independent sustainability expert and the winner will be announced onsite along with the other award category winners. These will include Best Stand Design, Best Stand for Doing Business, Best Stand Feature and Best Stand at ATM Travel Tech.

The Best Stand Design award has also been revamped and is now more inclusive with two awards, one for stands above and one for those less than 150sqm. For stands over 150sqm ATM has added additional criteria that will consider pre-show and onsite promotions to attract visitors.

The judging for these awards will take place as usual on day two of the show (Tuesday, May 2), with all winners to be announced on day three (Wednesday, May 3), with a panel comprising of trade journalists and industry commentators.

“The judges panel will have an ex-

ceptionally difficult job, comparing creative design, people skills and business-friendly appeal. So, for the 2023 awards along with the winners, we will publish up to five shortlisted stands in each category to recognise their considerable efforts,” added Curtis.

The Arabian Travel Market 2023 will offer global travel trade professionals a vision of how the travel and tourism industry will look in the coming years by sharing new and insightful commentary from experts from around the world, creating significant business opportunities over the course of the four-day event.

Each year, ATM highlights specific aspects of travel that will be pivotal in determining the direction the industry will take moving forward. The show will explore how innovative sustainable travel trends will evolve and identify strategies for growth within specific key vertical sectors.

The ATM 2023 conference programme is being specifically developed to address sustainability issues across the travel and tourism industry, with commentary from leadership figures representing a variety of sectors such as Destinations, Travel Technology, Airlines, Cruise, Hospitality, Car Rental and Hotels.

ATM 2022 attracted over 24,000 visitors and hosted over 31,000 participants, including 1,600 exhibitors and attendees from 151 countries, across ten halls at Dubai World Trade Centre.

Qatar Airways offers chance to ‘gift’ FIFA package

With one month to go until the world’s greatest show, fans can now gift their family and friends an all-inclusive FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 travel package.

The all-inclusive packages will set fans on a seamless journey to experience the first ever FIFA World Cup in the Middle East this holiday season, said a press statement.

Fans must head to qatarairways.com/FIFA2022 and select one of the travel packages options available, all of which include guaranteed official match tickets, round-trip flights with Qatar Airways and various accommodation options.

The fan travel packages are customisable based on budget, with the flexibility to stay at different accommodation options.

Qatar Airways Group chief executive H E Akbar al Baker said, “We are excited to welcome fans from all across the globe to Qatar. With one month to go until the FIFA World Cup



The opening match of the FIFA World Cup 2022 will be played between Qatar and Ecuador, at Al Bayt Stadium

2022, and as the world’s best airline, we want to offer football fans the gift of being here in Qatar to witness the greatest show on earth later this year. The fan travel packages give a whole new meaning to the act of giving. This extraordinary gift will open doors to experience memories that will last a lifetime with your loved ones.”

The tournament will be held

across eight world-class stadiums designed to invoke the symbols of Arabian culture. The Al Bayt Stadium will host the opening match with a capacity of 60,000 seats, while Lusail Stadium is set to host the final match of the tournament, with a capacity of 80,000 seats.

The remaining stadiums, which include Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium, Al Janoub Stadium,

Khalifa International Stadium, Education City Stadium, Stadium 974 and Al Thumama Stadium, will house 40,000 spectators.

In its goal to bring communities together through sport, the world’s best airline has an extensive global sports partnership portfolio. As a FIFA sponsor and Official Airline Partner since 2017, Qatar Airways also has football partnerships around the

globe, including Concacaf, Conmebol, Paris Saint-Germain and FC Bayern München.

Qatar Airways is also the official airline of The Ironman and Ironman 70.3 Triathlon Series, GKA Kite World Tour and has sponsorships across equestrianism, padel, rugby, squash, and tennis.

A multiple award-winning airline, Qatar Airways was recently announced as the ‘Airline of the Year’ at the 2022 World Airline Awards, managed by the international air transport rating organisation, Skytrax.

The airline continues to be synonymous with excellence having won the main prize for an unprecedented seventh time (2011, 2012, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2022), while also being named ‘World’s Best Business Class’, ‘World’s Best Business Class Lounge Dining’ and ‘Best Airline in the Middle East’.

Qatar Airways currently flies to more than 150 destinations.



Ooredoo explores next generation technology

Ooredoo took part in TechEx Europe 2022, the leading enterprise technology exhibition and conference on the continent, alongside technology partners in the ICT sector.

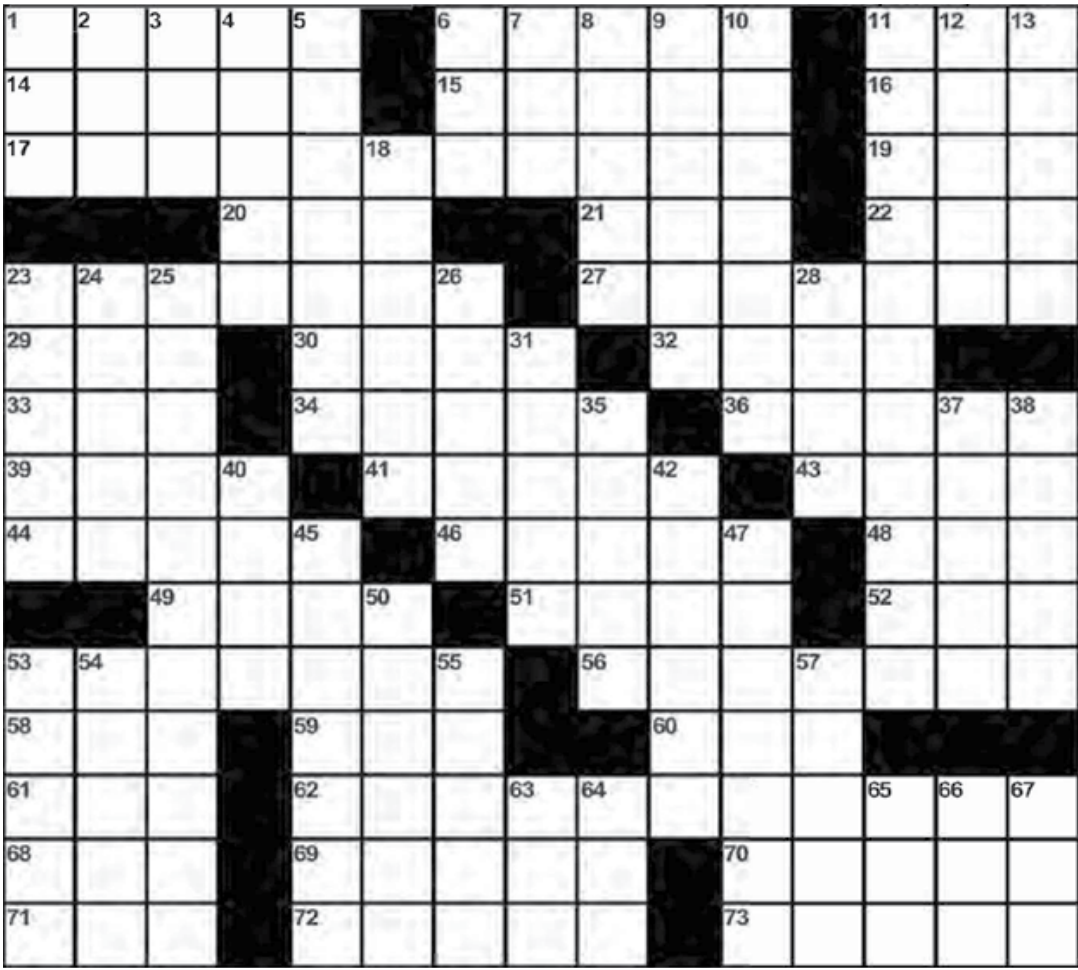
Building on its digital products portfolio, Ooredoo met with providers of Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Big Data, Cyber Security, Cloud and Blockchain technologies, diversifying Ooredoo’s ICT and digital product portfolio and also to build strategic partnerships with leading and innovative digital companies from around the

world.

Saied al Lawati, Director of Business Marketing and ICT Solutions at Ooredoo, said, “This is a really exciting time for technology where the advancement of Web 3.0 applications is creating new opportunities for consumers and providers. TechEx Europe brings together the decision-makers from many industries to discuss the future of technology in business and set the path forward in this space.”

Ooredoo looks to bring new innovations in technology to advance the market in Oman.

DAILY CROSSWORD

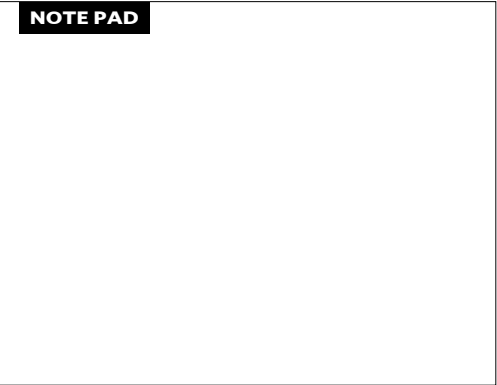


ACROSS
1) Hairdos
6) Led off
11) Gridlock component
14) Alternative to bottled
15) Arctic dwelling
16) Feel regret over
17) Sellers of illegal alcohol
19) Hard to explain
20) Emulate a bunny
21) Snacked
22) "Dear" mister
23) Living in water
27) Grandeur
29) It's certainly not a show dog
30) "Happy" mollusk
32) Kind of food or mate
33) Vicksburg combatant, briefly
34) Old rail riders, stereotypically
36) Animal variety
39) It was Persia
41) Black-clad teens, often
43) Folklore monstrosity
44) 100,000 make a newton
46) Back-up sounds
48) Shoot the breeze

49) "Able to _ tall buildings ..."
51) Edible tuber of Polynesia
52) Superlative suffix
53) Christmas tree sheddings
56) False fronts
58) Special-interest grp.
59) Crater creator, perhaps
60) Barely defeat
61) Compass reading, sometimes
62) In a disgraceful way?
68) A, in Berlin
69) Not just "no!"
70) Auto contract, sometimes
71) Knight or Nugent
72) Garbo of "Ninotchka"
73) "... oflwo Jima"
DOWN
1) Picnic discard, sometimes
2) Lady associated with the Beatles
3) "Am_, believe ...?"
4) Jazzy Earl Hines' nickname
5) Large irregular spot
6) Above average in size

7) Coop ovoid
8) Faint flicker
9) Main arteries
10) Rhinoplasty
11) How Buddha sits
12) Attend a class for no credits
13) Remove more moisture from
18) Concluding speech (var.)
23) Bitter-tasting
24) Ask
25) Bit of modern folklore
26) One spelling for a meal on a skewer
28) 1 00 cents, somewhere
31) Short choral composition
35) Bundle of grain
37) Delete, as messages
38) Mortgages, e.g.
40) "No _ to apologize"
42) Pounced
45) Preserving, as pork
47) Tea parties, e.g.
50) Author
53) Group of nine
54) A Muppet
55) Martin of comedies
57) Breathing problem for

heavy sleepers
63) Allow
64) The-lower-the-better
pitching stat
65) Thing acquired on a beach
66) "Acid" drug
67) "All right!"



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
You're not usually prone to daydreaming. Like your equally action-oriented predecessors (warriors of all kinds), you're much more inclined to sit down with someone rational and make a battle plan, more so than letting anything as sentimental as intuition guide your actions. Right now, however, you're feeling remarkably soft and totally willing to let your gut feelings direct your actions. If you need to take a day or so away from the world to let all this settle, stay home with family and friends and indulge in lots of snuggling.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
At the moment, you still can't bear the thought of leaving your home unless it's absolutely necessary, and fortunately, right now, it isn't. If you don't want to spend any time out there in the great big world, don't try to force yourself. You have the right to hibernate every now and then, and for the next day or so you should lay claim to it proudly. Anyone who doesn't seem to understand really doesn't know you as well as they like to say they do.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
You've never been shy about voicing your opinions about politics and religion, but at this particular moment it's going to come even more easily to you. Once you warn those who know and love you, they'll know what to do. They'll just avoid bringing up any touchy subjects. Easy. For others, though, this might come as a bit of a shock. Let's just say you should let them know and then hope they're on your team. Good luck.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
What vision do you have for your future? If you haven't given any thought to where you want your life to be in the next few years or decades, today is a good day to put your mind to the task. It's more important than ever to understand what you want for yourself, and it won't take long to come up with some ideas about what you'd like to have. And ideas can be the blueprint for your reality if you're ready to put in the necessary effort.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
You've always been practical, and you're a big fan of routine, comfortable habits, and regularity. You may not be able to count on that, or anything else, for that matter, at least not right now. The Universe has arranged quite the amazing pair of impulsive energies to wreak havoc on anything even remotely resembling plans. It's okay. Your first glance at a certain person will help you appreciate the finer points of spontaneity right away.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
You know you're smart, and your confidence and intellectual strengths will be very useful today. They'll help you get noticed and connect with people who can offer you the opportunity you've been waiting for. Don't shy away from innovative ideas that make you feel confused. You're at your best when you're forced to figure stuff out, and it will be your puzzle-solving ability that will show important people that you're a force to be reckoned with.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
At this particular moment in time, you have one heck of a decision to make, and until you make it you won't be able to give yourself a moment's peace. Mind you, the issue is probably something along the lines of which guilty pleasure to give in to for the next 24 hours. Please excuse the rest of us if we're not quite as sympathetic to your plight as we might usually be.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
A loved one who's been a bit worried about you recently is about to say or do something that will let you know it's finally time to give in and allow them the honor of your presence. You may have stayed away because you were worried that they might be growing a bit too possessive, even though you've held them at arm's length for some time now. Let it go.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
A new adventure could come to mind today, but you'll have to wait to go exploring. Travel is a wonderful idea even if it's just a few hours' drive away. Go online and start planning. Which sights do you want to see? Even if your finances are a bit tight, a little bit of research could reveal that there are lots of fun, free things going on right in your own neck of the woods that you can enjoy.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
For as long as you can remember, the light of the moon has affected you positively, for the most part. Look for it tonight when you're feeling especially determined to stick to your guns at this point in time and take more than the usual amount of pride in saying and doing the right thing even if it's not necessarily the easiest or most popular thing. Don't waste time anguishing over it. You know what to do.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
We're all entitled to our place in the spotlight every now and then. It's now officially your turn. If you really must have some privacy, possibly due to the attention of a certain someone (attention you'd rather not share with the masses), isn't there some kind of excuse you can make up to explain your untimely exit? Sure there is. Don't you have to feed the cat?

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
For the next few weeks you're going to shock and amaze the masses, not to mention the folks you see on a regular basis. You might also end up looking in the mirror and wondering who that is. Don't fight it. Everybody gets to try on a different personality for a while every now and then. It's your turn. You're going to be struck with a heady dose of fire. Put it to good use.

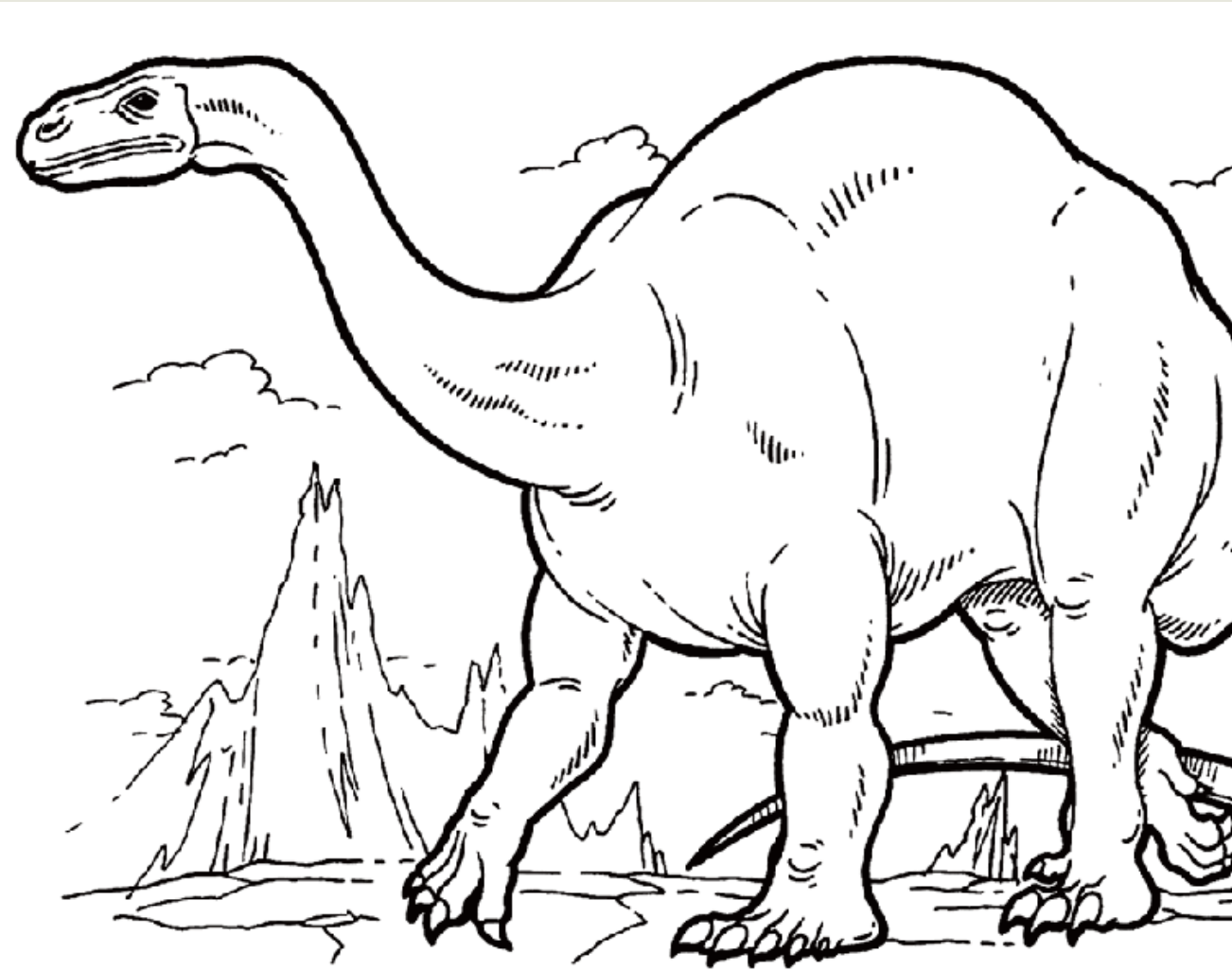


TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- 01. There are 259 steps from where to where?**
A. Ground level to the top of the Empire State Building, New York, USA
B. The floor of St Paul's Cathedral, London, UK, to the Whispering Gallery inside the dome
C. The pedestal of the Statue of Liberty, New York, USA, to the crown
D. To the top of the Leaning Tower, Pisa, Italy from ground level
- 02. What is the official residence of the Vice President of the USA?**
A. 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
B. The White House
C. Number One Observatory Circle
D. The Capitol
- 03. Marengo and Copenhagen became well-known names at the beginning of the 19th century. What were they?**
A. Places where the first Geneva Convention was formulated
B. Sites of World Expositions
C. Horses
D. Styles of pottery

Answers: 1. B 2. C 3. C

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

G	O	N	O
R	I	I	O
M	I	D	T
A	R	S	M

Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters. A three letter word is worth one point, a four letter word is worth two points, and so on. Valid words must be at least three letters long.
Solution 20-25 words: Excellent, 15-20 words: Very good, 10-15 words: Good, 5-10 words: Average

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

Xi in full control of China's Communist Party

The Chinese president is now all but certain to be unveiled as party general secretary on Sunday

Beijing, China - Chinese President Xi Jinping locked in full control of the Communist Party as its Congress ended on Saturday, all but assuring he will secure a historic third term in power.

At the end of the week-long gathering in Beijing, China's ruling party approved a sweeping reshuffle that saw a number of top officials - including Premier Li Keqiang - step down, allowing Xi to appoint new allies.

The meeting of among 2,300 party delegates was meticulously choreographed, with Xi determined to avoid any surprises as he enshrined his leadership for the next five years.

Delegates approved a call obliging all party members to 'uphold Comrade Xi Jinping's core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole', according to a unanimously passed resolution on changes to the party charter.

Xi is now all but certain to be unveiled as general secretary on Sunday, shortly after the first meeting of the new Central Committee.

This will allow Xi to sail through to a third term as



China's President Xi Jinping gestures during the closing ceremony of the Party Congress at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Saturday (AFP)

China's president, due to be announced during the government's annual legislative sessions in March. A new Central Committee of around 200

senior Party officials was elected shortly before the closing ceremony. A list of officials of the newly elected group revealed that four out of seven members

of the Party's Standing Committee - the apex of power - would retire. Among them was current Premier Li Keqiang, as well as fellow Politburo Standing Commit-

tee members Wang Yang - who was touted as a possible successor to Li - Han Zheng, and Li Zhanshu. Han and Li Zhanshu were widely expected to step

Delegates approved a call obliging all party members to 'uphold Comrade Xi Jinping's core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole', according to a unanimously passed resolution on changes to the party charter

down, having surpassed the informal age limit of 68 for Politburo-level officials - a requirement not extended to 69-year-old Xi. Wang and Li Keqiang, both 67, could still have continued in the Standing Committee or 25-member Politburo for another five-year term.

Other high-profile Communist Party top brass absent from the new Central Committee include high-ranking diplomat

Yang Jiechi and economic tsar Liu He.

Most powerful since Mao

Analysts were closely watching for whether the charter would be amended to enshrine 'Xi Jinping Thought' as a guiding philosophy, a move that would put Xi on a par with Mao Zedong.

That did not take place, though the resolution did call the creed 'the Marxism of contemporary China and of the 21st century', adding that it 'embodies the best Chinese culture and ethos of this era'.

Xi previously abolished the presidential two-term limit in 2018. The Congress effectively cemented Xi's position as China's most powerful leader since Mao. One of the key questions outstanding is if Xi will appoint a potential successor to the Politburo Standing Committee.

This could be answered on Sunday when the Standing Committee is unveiled. Delegates also on Saturday enshrined in the party's constitution opposition to Taiwanese independence.

AFP

Japan, Australia ink security pact



Japan's PM Fumio Kishida and Australian PM Anthony Albanese shake hands during their visit to Kings Park in Perth on Saturday (AFP)

Perth, Australia - Australia and Japan agreed to share sensitive intelligence and deepen defence cooperation on Saturday, signing a security pact.

Prime ministers Fumio Kishida and Anthony Albanese inked the accord in the Western Australian city of Perth, revamping a dusty 15-year-old statement drafted when terrorism and weapons proliferation were the overriding concerns.

The text declares the two democracies 'natural partners' who face growing risks to their shared interests, and vows greater cooperation on 'intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance'. "This landmark declaration sends a strong signal to the region of our strategic alignment," Albanese said.

Kishida said the agreement was a response to an 'increasingly harsh strategic environment'. Neither Australia nor Japan has the ranks of overseas intelligence operatives and foreign informants needed to play in the major leagues of global espionage.

Japan does not have a foreign spy agency equivalent to America's CIA, Britain's MI6 or Russia's FSB. Australia's ASIO is a fraction of the size of those organisations. But according to expert Bryce Wakefield, Australia and Japan have formidable signals and geospatial capabilities - electronic eavesdropping tools and high-tech satellites that provide invaluable intelligence on adversaries.

Wakefield, director of the Australian Institute of International Affairs, said the agreement is another signal that Japan is becoming more active in the security arena.

"It is a significant agreement

in that Japan hasn't overtly worked with partners outside the United States on security," he said. "It may actually end up being a template for cooperation with other countries, for example, the United Kingdom."

Some even see the accord as another step toward Japan joining the powerful Five Eyes intelligence-sharing alliance between Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and the United States.

It is 'an epoch-making event that Japan can share SIGINT with a foreign nation except for the United States', Ken Kotani, an expert in the history of Japanese intelligence at Nihon University, told AFP.

"This will strengthen the framework of the Quad (Australia, India, Japan and the United States) and is the first step for Japan to join the Five Eyes," he added.

Such a suggestion would have been unthinkable a few decades ago, but events in Japan's neighbourhood have forced a rethink of the country's pacifist policies established in the wake of World War II.

In recent years North Korea has repeatedly lobbed missiles over and around Japan, while China has built the world's largest navy, revamped the globe's biggest standing army, and amassed a nuclear and ballistic arsenal right on Japan's doorstep.

But hurdles remain for Tokyo's closer security cooperation with allies.

Japan's intelligence sharing with allies has been hampered by longstanding concerns about Tokyo's ability to handle sensitive confidential material and transmit it securely.

AFP

Bolsonaro says will accept defeat if 'nothing abnormal' in Brazil vote

Sao Paulo, Brazil - Brazil's far-right President Jair Bolsonaro said on Friday he would accept possible defeat in the second round of the presidential election on October 30 provided 'nothing abnormal' occurs during the vote.

"Today, everyone says that my acceptance (among the people) is much greater than that of my opponent (ex-president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva). But let's leave it to the polls ... let's leave this question with the electoral transparency commission," Bolsonaro said in an interview on SBT when asked if he would accept the result in the event of a defeat.

"If the transparency commission, in which the armed forces also participate, shows nothing abnormal, there is no reason to doubt the outcome of the elections," said the former army captain who has on several occasions and without proof raised the possibility of 'fraud' at the electronic ballot box.

He had gone so far as to threaten not to recognise the results if he lost to his leftwing rival.



Brazilian President and presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro speaks to the press in Osasco, Sao Paulo, Brazil, on Friday (AFP)

Lula was for months the big

favourite in opinion polls, with a 21-point lead over Bolsonaro in May, according to the Datafolha institute. But Bolsonaro surprised in the first round on October 2, winning 43 per cent of the vote, only five points behind Lula, a much smaller gap than polls had predicted.

AFP

Biden says 'intention' to run again in 2024

Washington, US - Joe Biden, the oldest person ever in the US presidency, said on Friday it's his 'intention' to run again in 2024 and that his wife Jill thinks he should not 'walk away'.

Biden's comments in an interview with MSNBC addressed a question fascinating Washington watchers as Biden approaches his 80th birthday next month.

"I have not made that formal decision but it's my intention, my intention to run again, and we have time to make that decision," Biden told MSNBC.

Asked what the first lady, who is widely judged to be a powerful voice behind the scenes in the White House, thinks of him seeking a second term, Biden indicated

she was in favour. "Dr Biden, my wife, thinks that we're doing something very important and that I shouldn't walk away from it," he said.

Biden has previously said he wants to run, but at times has also sown doubts. In an interview in September with CBS, he said it was 'much too early' and his decision 'remains to be seen'.

He also called himself in that interview 'a great respecter of fate'.

In Friday's comments, Biden went further than before in explaining his reasoning about what would be a mold-breaking candidacy. If re-elected, he would be 86 by the time he finished his second term.

AFP

Trump ordered to testify in Capitol assault probe

Washington, US - Lawmakers probing the 2021 attack on the US Capitol subpoenaed former president Donald Trump on Friday to testify on his involvement in the violence, in a major escalation of their sprawling inquiry.

The summons came after the House panel of seven Democrats and two Republicans voted unanimously last week to compel Trump's appearance before investigators.

It requires the 76-year-old Republican to produce documents by November 4 and to appear for a deposition beginning on or around November 14 - the Monday after the crucial November 8 midterm elections.

"As demonstrated in our hearings, we have assembled overwhelming evidence, including from dozens of your former appointees and staff, that you personally orchestrated and oversaw a multi-part effort to overturn the 2020 presidential election and to obstruct the peaceful transition of power," the committee told Trump in a letter.

Trump, who urged his supporters to 'fight like hell' in a fiery speech near the White House on January 6, 2021, was impeached for inciting the mob to storm Congress later that day to halt



This file photo shows Donald Trump arriving to speak to supporters from The Ellipse in Washington, DC on January 6, 2021 (AFP)

the peaceful transfer of power to Joe Biden.

The letter accuses Trump of bidding to overturn the election despite knowing claims of fraud had been overwhelmingly rejected by more than 60 courts and refuted by his campaign staff and senior advisers.

"In short, you were at the center of the first and only effort by any US president to overturn an election and obstruct the peaceful transition of power, ultimately

culminating in a bloody attack on our own Capitol and on the Congress itself," it added.

Without confirming Trump had received the subpoena, his lawyer David Warrington said his team would 'review and analyze' the document and 'respond as appropriate to this unprecedented action'.

Biden weighed in on the matter later on Friday during an interview with MSNBC, saying it 'would make sense' for Trump to

comply with the subpoena.

Aggressive escalation

Subpoenas from the panel have proved difficult to enforce, with former White House aide Steve Bannon the only target convicted of contempt of Congress for refusing to comply.

The summons came after the House panel voted unanimously to compel Trump's appearance before investigators

Bannon was sentenced to four months in prison on Friday, although he remains out on bail pending an appeal.

Trump is notorious for his ability to run down the clock on congressional investigations and legal action, and it remains highly unlikely that he would agree to give evidence.

The subpoena expires in any case with the new congressional term in January. Republicans are expected to win back the House

of Representatives in November's elections, and plan to immediately end the investigation.

But the move marks an aggressive escalation of the probe, which has issued more than 100 subpoenas and interviewed more than 1,000 people since its launch in 2021.

While no sitting president has ever been forced to testify before Congress, lawmakers have summoned several former presidents to discuss their conduct in office.

Trump's compliance would mean testifying under oath and could result in being charged with perjury were he to lie.

If he refuses to comply, the full House can hold him in criminal contempt in a vote recommending him for prosecution, as it did with Bannon.

The panel unveiled reams of evidence across eight summer hearings on the former president's involvement in a complex series of connected schemes to overturn the 2020 election.

Witness testimony provided stunning examples of Trump and his allies pressuring election officials and trying to get lawfully cast votes nullified in swing states, and of Trump's inertia amid the mob uprising.

AFP

Far-right Meloni sworn in as Italy's first woman PM

Rome, Italy - Far-right leader Giorgia Meloni was sworn in as Italian prime minister on Saturday, to become the first woman to head a government in Italy.

Meloni took the oath before President Sergio Mattarella at the Quirinal Palace in Rome, once home to popes and kings of Italy.

Her post-fascist Brothers of Italy party - Eurosceptic and anti-immigration - won the September 25 legislative polls but needed outside support to form a government. Meloni's appointment is an historic event for the eurozone's third largest economy and for Brothers of Italy, which has never been in government.

It won 26 per cent of the vote last month, compared to eight and nine per cent respectively for her allies Forza Italia and the far-right League.

Meloni's list of 24 ministers, including six women, revealed a desire to reassure Italy's partners. She named Giancarlo Giorgetti as economy minister, who served under the previous government of Mario Draghi.

Giorgetti, a former minister of economic development, is considered one of the more moderate, pro-Europe members of Matteo Salvini's League.

Meloni also named ex-European Parliament president Antonio Tajani, of Forza Italia, as foreign minister and deputy prime minister.

Salvini will serve as deputy prime minister and minister of infrastructure and transport.

That appointment is likely to disappoint Salvini, who wanted Meloni to give him the role of in-



Italian designated Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni addresses the media after a meeting with Italian President Sergio Mattarella at the Quirinale Palace in Rome on Friday (AFP)

terior minister again after he previously held the post between 2018 and 2019.

The position went instead to a technocrat, Rome prefect Matteo Piantadosi.

A formal ceremony for the handover of power from Draghi to Meloni will take place on Sunday before the premier leads the first cabinet meeting.

European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen congratulated Meloni on her appointment. "I count on and look forward to constructive cooperation with the new government on the challenges we face together," she tweeted on Saturday, while European Parliament speaker Roberta Metsola

tweeted in Italian that 'Europe needs Italy'. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban meanwhile tweeted: "Congratulations @GiorgiaMeloni on the formation of your government! Big day for the European Right!"

Unity concerns

The consultations to cobble together a government had been overshadowed by disagreements with her two would-be coalition partners over Meloni's ardent support for Ukraine since the Russian invasion, whereas the leaders of Forza Italia and the League are both considered close to Moscow.

A recording was leaked in which Italy's former prime min-

ister Silvio Berlusconi - who heads Forza Italia - talks about his warm ties with Moscow and appeared to blame the war in Ukraine on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Berlusconi says the comments were taken out of context. Salvini, meanwhile, is a long-time fan of Russian President Vladimir Putin and has criticised Western sanctions on Russia. Despite her Eurosceptic stance, Meloni has been firm about her support for Ukraine, in line with the rest of the European Union and the United States.

But the tensions add to concerns that Meloni's coalition, held together by the need for a

Meloni's list of 24 ministers, including six women, revealed a desire to reassure Italy's partners. She named Giancarlo Giorgetti as economy minister, who served under the previous government of Mario Draghi and one of the more moderate

parliamentary majority, will struggle to maintain unity.

Challenges ahead

Meloni's coalition wants to renegotiate Italy's portion of the EU's post-COVID recovery fund.

It argues the almost €200bn (US\$197bn) it expects to receive should take into account the current energy crisis, exacerbated by Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, which has hit supplies of Russian gas to Europe.

But the funds are tied to a series of reforms only just begun by Draghi's government, and analysts say Meloni has limited room for manoeuvre.

Meloni had campaigned on a platform of 'God, country and family', sparking fears of a regression on rights in the Catholic-majority country.

AFP



Taliban fighters stand guard as female students arrive for entrance exams at Kabul University in Kabul on October 13 (AFP)

IS fighters involved in Afghanistan classroom attack killed, says Taliban

Kabul, Afghanistan - Taliban forces have killed six fighters from the militant Islamic State group who were involved in a suicide bombing on an Afghan educational centre that killed dozens of female students, an official said on Saturday.

On September 30, a suicide bomber blew himself up next to women at a gender-segregated study hall in Kabul packed with hundreds of students sitting a practice test for university admissions. At least 53 people, including 46 girls and young women, were killed in the attack, according to the United Nations.

No group has claimed responsibility for the bombing, but on Saturday the Taliban authorities blamed the IS for several recent attacks on civilians, including the one at Kaaj Educational Centre.

Government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said Taliban forces conducted an operation in

Kabul on Friday night in which six IS fighters were killed and two others were captured. "All the killed IS members were criminals who were involved in recent explosions in Wazir Akbar Khan mosque, Kaaj Educational Centre and some other crimes against civilians," Mujahid said in a statement on Twitter.

On September 23, at least seven people were killed when a car bomb exploded in front of Wazir Akbar Khan mosque near Kabul's fortified former Green Zone, which housed several embassies before the Taliban seized power last August. That attack has also not yet been claimed by any group. While overall violence has significantly dropped across Afghanistan since the war ended with the Taliban's return to power, there have been regular bomb attacks in Kabul and other cities.

AFP

S Korean ex-officials held over border killing

Seoul, South Korea - Authorities in South Korea arrested an ex-defence minister and a former coast guard chief Saturday on suspicion of covering up events surrounding the 2020 murder of a fisheries official by Pyongyang.

President Yoon Suk-yeol is expanding an inquiry into the highly politicised case following accusations that his predecessor mishandled the probe to curry favour with North Korea.

Ex-minister Suh Wook and former coast guard chief Kim Hong-hee face charges including abuse of power, forging official documents and dereliction of duty, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency. An inquiry by Seoul's Board of Audit and Inspection last week found Suh followed orders from former president Moon Jae-in's office to remove around 60 military intel-

ligence reports related to the case, among other alleged offences. But the country's opposition claims the investigation is 'political revenge' against Moon's administration. On Saturday they called the arrests a 'manipulation of the truth'. Fisheries official Lee Dae-jun was shot dead and set on fire by North Korean soldiers near the rivals' sensitive sea border.

The report last week said South Korean officials took no meaningful steps to rescue Lee when he was drifting in waters near the boundary.

It recommended prosecutors probe a total of 20 people including Suh and Kim. President Yoon has been sharply critical of his predecessor's dovish approach towards North Korea, accusing Moon of appeasing Pyongyang.

AFP

Burkina coup leader takes office, says country in 'danger'

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso - Ibrahim Traore, the young army captain who led the latest coup in Burkina Faso, became interim president on Friday, vowing to win back territory from militants.

Traore pledged support for a transition leading to elections in July 2024 as he took the oath of office in the capital Ouagadougou under tight security.

Traore, 34, led disgruntled junior officers last month in the second coup in eight months to hit the west African country.

Junta members had already announced that he would take over the role of transitional president, but on Friday was the official investiture.

After taking the oath of office,



Capitaine Ibrahim Traore, attends the ceremony for the 35th anniversary of Thomas Sankara's assassination, in Ouagadougou, on October 15 (AFP)

Traore, dressed in military fatigues and a scarf with the country's national colours, said: "We are confronted with a security and humanitarian crisis without

precedent. "Our aims are none other than the reconquest of territory occupied by these hordes of terrorists," he added. "Burkina's existence is in danger."

The swearing in was outlined in the transition charter adopted last week.

The charter's article four stipulates 'that the term of the transition president ends with the investiture of the president resulting from the presidential election' planned for July 2024.

"I swear on my honour before the Burkina people that I will preserve, respect, ensure respect for and defend the constitution, the transition charter and (Burkina's) laws," Traore said, reading his oath of office. Last month Traore toppled Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba.

Damiba himself had seized power only in January, forcing out Burkina's last elected presi-

dent, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré. The motive for both coups was anger at failures to stem a seven-year militant insurgency that has claimed thousands of lives and driven nearly two million people from their homes.

Fresh evidence of that threat emerged on Friday when the army's command said it had killed 15 militants, including the leader of a group active in the southwest of the country, and freed a hostage earlier in the week.

Foreign dignitaries were absent from the inauguration, which took place in a well-guarded room of the constitutional council in Ouagadougou.

AFP

Guinea junta agrees return to civilian rule in two years

Conakry, Guinea - Guinea's ruling junta has agreed to restore civilian rule in two years, after facing sanctions over its original plan for a three-year transfer of power, the West African bloc ECOWAS said on Friday.

West African leaders had last month suspended Guinea from the bloc and imposed sanctions on a number of individuals following a military coup.

"In a dynamic compromise, experts from ECOWAS and Guinea have jointly developed a consolidated chronogram (timetable) for a transition spread over 24 months," ECOWAS said in a report following a technical mission to the country published on social media by the junta.

The country's military leader, Colonel Mamady Doumbouya, said in an address broadcast on



Protestors throw rocks and block roads after the outlawed opposition group, The National Front for the Defence of the Constitution (FNDC), called for protests against the ruling Junta in Conakry on Thursday (AFP)

state television that the timetable would take effect from January 1, 2023.

Leaders from the Economic Community of West African States must approve the timetable before it is officially im-

plemented, with the bloc due to hold a summit before the end of the year.

The bloc had given the junta one month to present a 'reasonable and acceptable' timetable for the return to civilian rule, an

ultimatum that theoretically expires this weekend.

Diplomatic links between the two sides have remained and Guinean authorities have reiterated their readiness to cooperate with ECOWAS, which had dis-

patched its mission to Conakry to work out a compromise schedule.

Acceptable

The poor but mineral-rich West African state has been under a military government since a September 2021 coup that ousted president Alpha Conde after more than 10 years in power.

Colonel Doumbouya has since appointed himself president and vowed to restore civilian rule within three years.

Several West African officials have indicated that a two-year transition period would be acceptable. A similar timeframe was agreed between ECOWAS and the junta in neighbouring Mali after months of wrangling.

Under the terms of that agreement, reached in July, the Malian military was to hand over

power in March 2024.

By that time, they would have been in power for more than three-and-a-half years since overthrowing the elected civilian

In a dynamic compromise, we have developed a consolidated chronogram for a transition spread over 24 months

ECOWAS

president in August 2020.

In recent years, ECOWAS has witnessed a succession of military coups in West Africa, in 2020 and 2021 in Mali, in 2021 in Guinea and twice this year in

Burkina Faso.

In the face of military authorities, the bloc has duly increased its summits and country missions while ramping up pressure to shorten the transitional periods back to civilian rule.

Four dead in clashes

The transition compromise was reached after demonstrations broke out on Thursday in the capital Conakry, with young protesters clashing with security forces and opposition group the National Front for the Defence of the Constitution claiming four civilians had been killed.

The FNDC - outlawed by the junta - had called for the protests to demand a quick return to a civilian-led government and the release of all prisoners detained for political reasons.

AFP

Johnson returns to UK as Sunak qualifies for PM race

London, UK - Former prime minister Boris Johnson on Saturday returned to Britain from a holiday to launch an audacious political comeback, as Conservative leadership rival Rishi Sunak reached the minimum threshold to contest the UK's top job.

Johnson cut short a Caribbean trip to join the seemingly three-person race to replace outgoing leader Liz Truss, with allies telling British media he was 'up for it'.

The divisive 58-year-old Brexit architect only relinquished power in early September, two months after announcing his resignation following a Tory revolt over a slew of scandals.

His apparent bid to return to office just weeks later has already been decried by opposition politicians, and even some in his own fractured ruling party who argue that both it and the country need stability and unity.

"We've got to go forward, not go back," Dominic Raab - Johnson's deputy prime minister - told Sky News, adding an imminent parliamentary inquiry into the 'Partygate' scandal that dogged his former boss could

prove too distracting.

Raab said former finance minister Sunak's economic experience meant he was the 'standout candidate'.

The Tories were forced into a second, this time expedited, leadership contest since the summer after Truss dramatically announced on Thursday she would stand down - just 44 tempestuous days into her tenure.

It followed a disastrous tax-slashing mini-budget that sparked economic and political turmoil which had been predicted by Sunak.

In a sign of the toll from the tumult, ratings agency Moody's said on Friday it had downgraded Britain's outlook, blaming in part 'heightened unpredictability in policy making'.

Meanwhile, the pound - which hit a record low against the dollar in the mini-budget's immediate aftermath, but had since rallied - slumped.

'Fresh start'

Late on Friday, Sunak's allies in parliament revealed he had garnered the nominations of 100 Conservative MPs, the threshold set by the party to stand.



Rishi Sunak and Boris Johnson are seen in this combination of file pictures created in London on Friday (AFP)

However, both Sunak and Johnson are yet to announce they are running, with reports that a declaration by the former finance minister was imminent on Saturday. Cabinet member Penny Mordaunt, who just missed out on making the final runoff after Johnson quit, was the first to formally unveil her candidacy, on Friday.

The 49-year-old said she was running for 'a fresh start, a united party and leadership in

the national interest'. But she is already trailing her rivals by dozens of nominations.

The accelerated contest will see the Conservatives' 357 MPs hold a vote on Monday on any candidates with the 100 nominations, before a possible online ballot of party members later in the week if two remain.

The Sunak and Johnson camps are reportedly seeking talks to see if there is scope for a unity deal - although there is

plenty of bad blood since the former prime minister's defenestration. Sunak's July resignation as chancellor of the exchequer helped trigger the government mutiny that ultimately led to Johnson's ousting.

James Duddridge, one of Johnson's closest allies in parliament, said late on Friday he had been in contact with his old boss via WhatsApp.

"He said... I'm up for it," the MP told Sky News, hours before

cameras captured Johnson disembarking a flight home from the Dominican Republic.

'Wielded the knife'

The ever-ebullient former leader has won the backing of several

Boris Johnson cut short a Caribbean trip to join the seemingly three-person race to replace outgoing Liz Truss

Tory heavyweights, including on Saturday ex-interior minister Priti Patel.

But in a sign of the party's divisions, some senior Tories, such as Johnson's former chief of staff Steve Barclay and his Brexit sherpa David Frost, warned against turning to him.

Ex-leader William Hague, Sunak's mentor, told Times Radio his return as prime minister would lead to a 'death spiral' for the party.

Meanwhile veteran backbencher Roger Gale has warned that Johnson could face a wave of resignations from MPs refusing to serve under him again.

Although he remains popular with party members who could decide the contest, polling shows he remains broadly disliked by the electorate, with a YouGov survey finding 52 per cent of voters opposed his comeback.

Another poll also found that three in five voters now want an early general election, in line with demands from opposition parties, as Britons struggle with a worsening cost-of-living crisis.

In Sunak's constituency in Yorkshire, northern England, 58-year-old farmer Elaine Stones said the party had made a mistake in electing Truss instead of him last month.

"He's honest, reliable and he should have been voted in last time," she told AFP.

However, retiree Maureen Ward called him a 'backstabber' who helped to topple Johnson.

"He wielded the knife and once you do that, you can't be trusted," she said.

AFP

Iran says US using protests to gain nuclear concessions

Tehran, Iran - Iran on Saturday accused the United States of seeking to gain concessions in nuclear talks aimed at restoring the 2015 agreement, by supporting protests over Mahsa Amini's death.

The Islamic republic has been rocked by demonstrations that flared over the death of the 22-year-old Amini on September 16 after her arrest for allegedly violating the country's strict dress code for women.

The street violence has led to dozens of deaths, mostly among protesters but also among the security forces, and hundreds of demonstrators have been arrested. "The Americans continue to exchange messages with us, but they are trying to fan the flames of what has been going on inside Iran in recent days," Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said during a visit to Armenia, in a video posted by the ministry.



People chant slogans during the 'Freedom rally for Iran' event following the death of Mahsa Amini in Shibuya district of Tokyo on Saturday (AFP)

"I think they are looking to exert political and psychological pressure on Iran to obtain concessions in the negotiations," he added, referring to the indirect talks between Tehran and Washington mediated by the European Union. "We will not make any concessions to the American side; we will move within the framework of logic and within the framework of an

agreement that respects the red lines of the Islamic republic of Iran," Amir-Abdollahian said.

The 2015 agreement, known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), gave Iran sanctions relief in return for restricting its nuclear programme.

It has been on life support since then-president Donald Trump withdrew the United

States from it in 2018, but on-off talks have taken place since April 2021 in an effort to revive it.

The US and other Western parties to the deal have imposed fresh sanctions on Iran over its reaction to the Amini protests.

Washington said earlier this month that a return to the deal was unlikely in the near future.

"It's not that we don't want to see the JCPOA reimplemented, we of course do. We're just not in a position where... that's a likely outcome anytime in the near future," White House spokesman John Kirby told reporters on October 13.

The US is currently 'focused' on authorities in Iran being 'accountable for what they are doing' to the protesters. Amir-Abdollahian, however, argued that Washington's 'words contradict its behaviour', adding that 'Americans not only prioritise negotiations, but are also in a hurry'.

AFP

Power cuts across Ukraine after fresh Russian strikes

Kyiv, Ukraine - Fresh Russian strikes on Saturday targeted energy infrastructure in Ukraine's west, national energy operator Ukrenergo said, with officials in several regions reporting outages. Russians 'carried out another missile attack on energy facilities of the main networks of Ukraine's western regions. The scale of the damage is comparable or may exceed the consequences of the attack on October 10-12', Ukrenergo said on social media.

Russian forces rained more than 80 missiles on cities across Ukraine on October 10, according to Kyiv, in apparent retaliation for an explosion that damaged a key bridge linking the Crimean peninsula to Russia.

Energy restrictions were 'forcibly applied' in several regions, including the capital Kyiv and its surrounding region, Ukrenergo said.

"Ukrenergo specialists are taking all measures to restore electricity supply as soon as possible," the operator added.

In western Ukraine, electricity and water supplies were disrupted in parts of the Volyn region, according to its governor. The city of Khmelnytskyi was without power and the city council called on residents to brace for water shortages.

In Rivne, also in the west, governor Vitaliy Koval said attacks damaged electrical substations. Power outages were also reported in the southwestern Odessa region following 'two missile strikes at the region's energy infrastructure', governor Maksym Marchenko said.

The governor of Kirovograd in central Ukraine called on local businesses and residents to reduce electricity use following attacks on 'important' energy facilities in the Kropyvnytskyi and Golovanivskyi districts.

AFP



Ukraine soldiers walk along a trench towards their positions on the northern occupied territories of Kharkiv region on Friday (AFP)

Chopper crash kills five Indian soldiers

New Delhi, India - Five Indian army soldiers were killed when their helicopter crashed near the country's disputed border with China, the defence ministry said on Saturday - the second such fatal accident in the region this month.

The Advance Light Helicopter came down on Friday south of Tuting, a remote town near the Line of Actual Control which divides India's northeastern Arunachal Pradesh state from Chinese territory. Air traffic controllers had received a mayday call before the crash that suggested technical or mechanical failure, a ministry statement said.

Four bodies had been recovered and rescuers were working to retrieve the fifth and final occupant of the helicopter, the statement said. "The Indian Army offers deepest condolences (and) stands firmly with the bereaved families," it added.

AFP

S Africa's Zuma accuses successor Ramaphosa of graft, treason

Johannesburg, South Africa - South Africa's graft-accused former president Jacob Zuma on Saturday accused his successor, Cyril Ramaphosa, of corruption and treason following a cash heist scandal at the latter's farm.

The divisive politician's accusations came just months before the ruling ANC party's year-end crunch conference where Ramaphosa is expected to seek a second term.

"Your president is corrupt. Your president has committed treason," Zuma told a news conference in Johannesburg - his first since he ended his 15-month jail term earlier this month for contempt of court.

He was reacting to allegations earlier this year that Ramaphosa concealed a multi-million-dollar cash heist at his luxury farmhouse.

"No president should conduct private business while in office. It is inconsistent with the oath of office taken by (the) president," he said.

"Our country's problems are



Jacob Zuma looks on during a press conference at The Maslow Hotel in Sandton, Johannesburg commercial hub on Saturday (AFP)

too big for a president who is busy hustling on the side."

The scandal erupted in June after ex-national spy boss Arthur Fraser filed a police complaint, alleging that robbers broke into Ramaphosa's Phala Phala farm in northeastern South Africa, where they found and stole US\$4mn in cash hidden in furniture.

'President has failed'

Zuma said he wondered what would have happened had he

been the one accused of hiding 'millions of dollars hidden under my mattress'.

Fraser, seen as an ally of Zuma, alleged that Ramaphosa concealed the robbery from police and the tax authorities, and instead organised the kidnapping and questioning of the robbers, and then bribed them into silence.

The president has acknowledged a burglary but denies the accusations of kidnapping and bribery, saying he reported the break-in to the police.

He has also disputed the amount of money involved, and said the cash came from legitimate sales of game from his animal-breeding farm.

South Africa's parliament

No president should conduct private business while in office. Our country's problems are too big for a president who is busy hustling on the side

JACOB ZUMA

this week opened a probe on whether the farm saga renders Ramaphosa impeachable or not. The police is also investigating the case, but Zuma said there was 'silence of the many criminalities against the current president'.

The case has piled unprecedented pressure on Ramaphosa, who came into office on the promise of busting graft.

It also comes amid heightened heavy infighting within the ANC, ahead of a national

elective conference in December. The party is to hold internal polls to pick a new leader, who would then become the candidate for the next presidential election in 2024.

Zuma said the December conference 'is going to deal with (Ramaphosa)' and decide whether the party wants him to stay. "Many people (are saying) that this president has failed."

Another former president who succeeded anti-apartheid icon Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, also bemoaned the state of the ANC ahead of the December meeting.

"Our president is under a lot of pressure... around the matter of Phala Phala farm,"

he told a separate meeting in Johannesburg.

Zuma became president in 2009 but was forced to leave office after nine years in favour of then vice-president Ramaphosa - last month he said he was ready to make a political comeback at the ANC party's internal conference.

On Saturday he said if the party asked him to run for one of the top party positions, 'who am I to say no?'

Support for the party of Mandela dropped below 50 per cent for the first time in local elections last year, and the government is facing growing discontent over widespread poverty, unemployment and a prolonged power crisis.

Zuma is a divisive figure whose name resonates with graft for most South Africans but he remains a hero to many grassroots ANC members.

He is still facing separate corruption charges over an arms deal dating back more than two decades.

AFP

LIVERPOOL NOT OUT OF WOODS, ENSURE FOREST

Liverpool’s revival cut short as Taiwo Awoniyi’s goal gives Nottingham Forest a narrow win

Nottingham, United Kingdom - Liverpool’s mini-revival came to a crashing halt with a 1-0 defeat at Nottingham Forest, who secured just their second Premier League win for 23 years thanks to Taiwo Awoniyi’s goal.

Awoniyi spent six years as a Liverpool player without ever making an appearance as he was farmed out on a series of loan spells, but came back to haunt his former club and move his current employers off the bottom of the table.

“To score against Liverpool is a day I will never forget,” said Awoniyi.

“I will always to be grateful to Liverpool for scouting me from Nigeria and scoring against them is amazing.”

Liverpool were without the firepower of the injured Darwin Nunez, Diogo Jota and Luis Diaz and it showed as they lacked the spark needed to unlock a deep-lying Forest defence.

“The performance I can kind of explain, the result not to be honest,” said Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp.

“We arrived with consistency but we had six games with a limited squad playing three high intense games. That’s how it is, we cannot change that and we have to fight through.

“For us today we have to win here and we didn’t, so credit to Nottingham.”

A third league defeat of the



Liverpool’s Fabinho (L), Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain (C) and Jordan Henderson look dejected after their defeat to Nottingham Forest on Saturday (AFP)

season leaves Liverpool still in seventh, 11 points adrift of leaders Arsenal having played a game more.

Victory over Manchester City last weekend, followed by an-

other 1-0 win against West Ham in midweek had seemingly given Klopp’s men lift-off after a slow start to the campaign.

But with Thiago Alcantara also missing due to illness, they did

not have enough in reserve.

Haaland back in business

Normal service was resumed at the Etihad as Manchester City

moved to within a point of the top with Erling Haaland taking his tally for the season to 22.

The Norwegian failed to score for the first time in 10 games at club level at Anfield last weekend,

but quickly made amends by showing his immense pace and power to latch onto Ederson’s long ball, round Robert Sanchez and barrel Adam Webster off the ball to tap into an empty net.

Haaland then smashed home his 17th Premier League goal of the campaign from the penalty spot.

Brighton are still to win under new boss Roberto De Zerbi but did push the champions back after the break when Leandro Trossard fired in at the near post.

But another piece of City brilliance, this time from Kevin De Bruyne, killed the game off as the Belgian curled in from outside the box.

Everton ended a run of three straight defeats by beating Crystal Palace 3-0 at Goodison Park.

Dominic Calvert-Lewin’s return from injury is a huge boost for Frank Lampard’s men and the England international showed quick feet to fire home his first goal of the season early on.

Anthony Gordon then tapped in the second just after the hour mark before Dwight McNeil rounded off the scoring six minutes from time. Victory lifts the Toffees above Palace on goal difference into 11th.

Manchester United have the chance to leapfrog Chelsea into the top four when the sides face off later in Saturday’s late marquee game.

AFP



Masato Kudo

Japan former international striker Masato Kudo dead at 32

Tokyo, Japan - Former Japan international Masato Kudo, a J-League champion who also had stints in Major League Soccer and Australia, has died aged 32 after a short illness.

The striker, who was now with Tegevajaro Miyazaki in Japan’s third tier, died on Friday having been in intensive care following brain surgery. Kudo won the J-League with Kashiwa Reysol in 2011 and earned four caps for his country, scoring twice.

He also played for Vancouver Whitecaps in the MLS and Brisbane Roar in the A-League.

Tegevajaro called him “a very successful player” who had “no arrogance and a great attitude of cherishing his teammates, club and supporters”.

Brisbane coach Warren Moon said: “He had such a wonderful personality and always turned up to training every morning with a beaming smile on his face.

“He will be greatly missed and our hearts go out to his wife and young daughter at this sad time.”

AFP

Struggling Juventus cruise past Empoli

Milan, Italy - Juventus comfortably beat Empoli 4-0 in Friday’s Serie A match ahead of their Champions League clash at Benfica which could seal their elimination from Europe’s top club competition.

Goals in each half from Moise Kean and Weston McKennie and a late Adrien Rabiot brace gave struggling Juve their second straight win in Italy’s top flight, the first time this league season that they have managed to win two matches in a row.

Massimiliano Allegri’s side moved up to seventh, seven points behind Serie A leaders Napoli and three away from Roma who sit in fourth and host the pacesetters at the Stadio Olimpico on Sunday night.

Kean’s eighth minute opener, tapped in from Filip Kostic’s cross, was his first league goal of the season and rewarded Allegri’s decision to start the Italy international ahead of in-form forward Arkadiusz Milik. The 22-year-old thought he had another shortly after McKennie headed in



Weston McKennie (L) and Moise Kean of Juventus celebrate a goal

Juve’s second in the 56th minute, a header of his own from another Kostic ruled out for offside.

It was Rabiot who rounded off the scoring, first forcing another header just across the line from Juan Cuadrado’s corner with eight minutes remaining before tapping home the fourth in stoppage time.

Empoli sit 11th on 11 points after their fourth defeat of the season.

AFP

Bayern one point from top spot after Hoffenheim win

Berlin, Germany - Bayern Munich climbed to within one point of Bundesliga leaders Union Berlin after a comfortable 2-0 win away at Hoffenheim on Saturday.

Bayern took the lead in the 17th minute when 19-year-old Jamal Musiala sidefooted in a corner from Joshua Kimmich while unmarked at the far post.

Bayern striker Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting then doubled the visitors’ lead after 38 minutes, racking up his fourth goal in three games.

The win marked the first time Bayern have won two Bundesliga games in a row since August.

Elsewhere, Borussia Dortmund thrashed a dishevelled Stuttgart 5-0, with English teenager Jude Bellingham netting a brace.

Dortmund, who had only scored 13 goals in 10 Bundesliga games this season, grabbed the lead after just two minutes when Bellingham guided in a cross from Niklas Sule. Former Bayern centre-back Sule got on the score-sheet just 10 minutes later, cracking in a cross from Julian Brandt.

American teenager Gio Reyna added another late in the first half, before Bellingham scored a superb solo goal in the 53rd minute to put the result beyond doubt.

Seventeen-year-old Youssouf Moukoko scored his fourth of the season, tapping in a skidding cross from Raphael Guerreiro in the 72nd minute.

Bayer Leverkusen’s luckless start under Xabi Alonso continued at home against Wolfsburg, with the side fighting out a 2-2 draw.

Leverkusen’s Moussa Diaby missed a penalty after just 11 minutes when he pushed a limp shot just wide of goal. Remarkably, Leverkusen have now failed to score from the spot this season despite being awarded six penalties in 11 games.

Diaby then put Leverkusen in the lead just two minutes later, before conceding a looping own goal from German midfielder Robert Andrich.

Leverkusen then conceded a highly contentious penalty for what looked like a foul committed by Wolfsburg attacker Lukas



Bayern Munich’s Jamal Musiala (2L) celebrates with team-mates after scoring against Hoffenheim (AFP)

Nmecha, with captain Max Arnold converting from the spot.

The home side equalised late through Jeremie Frimpong, but sit in 14th place with just two wins from 11 games.

In Augsburg, Leipzig fought

back from 3-0 down to draw 3-3, after the home side was reduced to 10 men.

Goals from Mergim Berisha, Ermedin Demirovic and Ruben Vargas put the home side in a dominant position, before a red

card to Iago in the 65th minute brought Leipzig back into the game. Leipzig scored three goals in 18 minutes through Andre Silva, Christopher Nkunku and Hugo Novoa to equalise.

AFP

US face Netherlands at women’s World Cup in repeat of 2019 final

Auckland, New Zealand - Holders and four-time champions the United States will face the Netherlands in the group phase of next year’s FIFA Women’s World Cup in a repeat of the 2019 final.

Megan Rapinoe’s United States will also meet debutants Vietnam and a play-off winner at the finals in Australia and New Zealand, following the draw in Auckland on Saturday.

European champions England, the pre-tournament favourites together with the Americans, will play China, Denmark and one of

Senegal, Haiti or Chile.

Led by veteran forward Rapinoe, the US are top of the FIFA rankings and going for a third crown in a row, having beaten the Dutch 2-0 in the 2019 final.

Germany, Sweden, France and Spain will also be sides to watch out for when the World Cup is staged at 10 stadiums in New Zealand and Australia from July 20 to August 20, 2023.

The opening match will be co-hosts New Zealand against former champions Norway in Auckland.

With 32 teams -- divided into



Coaches of the competing teams pose during the draw ceremony for the FIFA Women’s World Cup on Saturday

eight groups of four - it will be the largest FIFA Women’s World Cup since the tournament began in 1991.

The US will meet minnows Vietnam to start their campaign, then up next will be the Dutch. Their other game will be against Portugal, Cameroon or Thailand.

“We’re excited about the match-ups. It’s a pretty tough group, but at the same time it’s going to be good games, especially against Holland,” said United States coach Vlatko Andonovski. “The Dutch are very good, they have always been one

of the top teams, they won the previous Euro and got into the final of the last World Cup.

“I expect a huge challenge for us.”

Andries Jonker, the Netherlands coach, called the clash with the Americans “huge for them and us, it’s a really big challenge”.

American two-time World Cup winner Carli Lloyd led the draw with former England striker Ian Wright among those helping out at a ceremony attended by about 800 people at Auckland’s Aotea Centre.

AFP



ICC T20 WORLD CUP

AUSTRALIA 2020



New Zealand players celebrate the fall of an Australian wicket during their opening match at the Twenty20 World Cup in Sydney on Saturday (AFP)

New zeal Down Under

Devon Conway, Mitchell Santner, Tim Southee star as New Zealand thump holders Aussies at T20 World Cup for their first victory in the island nation since 2011

Sydney, Australia - New Zealand thrashed hosts and defending champions Australia by 89 runs on Saturday to start the Twenty20 World Cup Super 12 in style and avenge defeat in last year's final.

Devon Conway carried his bat with a majestic unbeaten 92 to help New Zealand blast 200-3 before Australia were skittled for 111 in the 18th over to make a nightmare start to their title defence.

Conway's knock came from just 58 balls with seven fours and

two sixes, joining a select group to make 90 or more at a World Cup. Mitchell Santner and Tim Southee both took three wickets each.

It was New Zealand's first win against Australia in Australia in any format since 2011.

"It was one of those days, an outstanding day," captain Kane Williamson purred.

"The openers set the tone, lots of contributions right through the batting and that was a very good score on this pitch," said Williamson.

We weren't good enough, with the net run-rate taking a bad hit.

AARON FINCH

"The bowlers then did well and were well supported in the field. Everyone knows their roles in this team, we knew about the quality of their bowling, took the game deep and we were very clinical in what we needed to do."

The match at a sold-out Sydney Cricket Ground was a repeat of the 2021 final in Dubai when Australia powered to an eight-wicket win and maiden crown.

Aaron Finch's men now have their work cut out to match that feat in a tough Group 1 with Afghanistan, England and qualifiers Ireland and Sri Lanka awaiting them. Only the top two make the semi-finals.

"They (New Zealand openers) set the tone in the first four overs and we didn't recover," said skipper Finch.

"We needed early wickets, which didn't happen, and when we chased, we lost too many wickets.

"We weren't good enough, with the net run-rate taking a bad hit. We play Sri Lanka next, four games left, need to win everything and have some luck on our side."

New Zealand got off to a sensational start after Finch sent them in to bat, with Finn Allen cracking two fours and a six off Mitchell Starc's opening over.

AFF

Curran's five-for helps England beat Afghanistan

Perth, Australia - Sam Curran's breathtaking five-wicket haul and some spectacular fielding led England to a five-wicket win over Afghanistan in their opening match at the Twenty20 World Cup on Saturday in Perth.

England skipper Jos Buttler won the toss and elected to field, and his seam bowlers did the trick for the team billed as one of the tournament favourites.

Left-arm quick Curran returned figures of 5-10 - the first England bowler to take five wickets in a T20 - to send Afghanistan packing for 112 in 19.4 overs.

England, who crashed out in the semi-finals at the World Cup last year in the United Arab Emirates, achieved their target in 18.1 overs - but only after the Afghanistan bowlers proved a point by picking five wickets.

"Fantastic win for us, great way to start," man-of-the-match Curran told reporters.

"Obviously we knew that Afghanistan were going to be that type of a side that we are going to have to scrap really hard for those runs in that

chase."

The 24-year-old added: "As a bowling group we bowled really well. We used the surface to our advantage. Most importantly we got the win."

The bowlers stood out in a low-scoring affair. Mark Wood struck with his first ball in the third over of the innings to get Rahmanullah Gurbaz, who had cracked a six in the previous over, caught behind for 10.

Ibrahim Zadran hit back with a six and two fours but the England fast bowlers largely kept a lid on the scoring for the first six overs of power-play, when only two fielders are allowed outside the inner circle.

England's star all-rounder Ben Stokes, who bowled the opening over and returned figures of 2-19, came back to get opener Hazratullah Zazai out, with Liam Livingstone taking a splendid running catch at full stretch in the deep.

Zadran attempted to up the tempo in his run-a-ball knock, which ended with a check shot to backward point off Curran. He made 32.



England's Sam Curran celebrates the wicket of Fazalhaq Farooqi of Afghanistan in their Twenty20 World Cup in Perth on Saturday (AFP)



India captain Rohit Sharma during a practice session on Saturday, on the eve of their match against Pakistan (AFP)

Rohit says India relishing Pakistan 'challenge' in World Cup opener

Melbourne, Australia - Skipper Rohit Sharma said on Saturday that his India team are relishing the "challenge" of facing arch-rivals Pakistan in their opening match of the Twenty20 World Cup.

The neighbours meet on Sunday at a packed Melbourne Cricket Ground and with cricket administrators of the countries bickering behind the scenes.

"I don't want to use the word 'pressure' because pressure is constant, I would like to take this

as a challenge," Rohit told reporters on the eve of the blockbuster clash.

"This Pakistani team is a very challenging team."

India have usually dominated Pakistan on the cricket field since the late 1990s but have lost two of their three previous matches including last year's T20 World Cup group game in the United Arab Emirates.

India, ranked number one in the T20 format, have also not lifted a world title since the 2013

Champions Trophy and missed the final of the recent Asia Cup despite being favourites.

"Pakistan were good on the day of the T20 World Cup match (in 2021). They were also good at the Asia Cup. Luckily for us we got to play them twice at the Asia Cup, we don't get to play them a lot," said Rohit. "We got to gauge them, their strengths, weaknesses."

"It's there at the back of our players' mind (not winning an international event for nine years),

but it's important to just keep that away and just focus on the job at hand," Rohit added. "It's my personal belief that if you think too much of the past, I think you won't be able to focus on the present."

India and Pakistan are in Group 2 with Bangladesh, South Africa, Zimbabwe and the Netherlands. The top two progress into the semi-finals.

Forecast rain looms large over Sunday's big match.

AFF

Resurgent Zimbabwe plan to 'do damage' in Super 12

Hobart, Australia - A fired-up Zimbabwe plan to cause "as much damage" as possible in the Twenty20 World Cup Super 12 after making the grade for the first time, led by a coach who knows what success tastes like.

The African nation booked its berth at the expense of Scotland on Friday evening, winning by six wickets to continue their resurgence under Dave Houghton, Zimbabwe's first Test captain back in 1992.

Houghton was appointed for his second stint as national coach in July, a week before the World Cup qualifying tournament in Bulawayo.

Zimbabwe swept through that challenge and Houghton, considered one of Zimbabwe's best batsmen alongside Andy Flower, said he was "over the moon" that they carried the form to Australia.

"When I took over for the qualifiers in Bulawayo, the

biggest and main objective was to get here. We got ahead and won five of those games, and they were as pressurised as any game because each game was like a cup final," he said late Friday.

"So we had some sort of experience of playing a game with as much on it as this one (against Scotland)."

"I did say to the guys when we left home, 'it's nice we qualified to get here, but that's not our

main objective'.

"Our main objective is to get through and then cause as much damage in the next trials as we can."

Zimbabwe are in Group 2 alongside fellow qualifiers the Netherlands, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and South Africa, facing a massive clash against the Proteas in Hobart on Monday.

Houghton said his message to the team since taking over was "you have the freedom to

play", a mantra that won't change against South Africa.

"There will be no repercussions if you make mistakes, because I don't believe you can grow as a cricketer if you're in fear of your own shadow and in fear of playing a bad shot or bowling a bad ball or something," he said.

Changing the attitude within the group has also been key to their turnaround.

AFF



Dave Houghton

WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS

Oman’s Al Seeb Club power past Kuala Lumpur City to lift historic AFC Cup

Kuala Lumpur: Al Seeb Club became the first side from Oman to win the AFC Cup on Saturday as Rasheed Al Yafai’s outfit handed Kuala Lumpur City FC a 3-0 defeat at Bukit Jalil Stadium in the Malaysian capital to claim the 2022 edition of the continental competition.

First half goals from Ali Al Busaidi and Abdulaziz Al Maqbali put Al Seeb in control at the interval and a third from Muhsen Al Ghassani ensured the trophy would be going back to West Asia for the 16th time in the competition’s 18 editions.

The win secures Al Seeb a place in the preliminary rounds of the 2023/24 AFC Champions League while breaking the hearts of the majority of the almost 28,000 fans within the cavernous stadium on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur.

The home side almost made the perfect start after less than a minute when Paulo Josue found space behind the Al Seeb defence and with strike partner Romel Morales in space in the area. But, rather than roll the ball to the Colombian, Josue scuffed a shot across goal.

Kuala Lumpur were frustrated again in the 18th minute as another opening was squandered. Declan Lambert’s pass



Al Seeb players are in celebratory mood at the Bukit Jalil Stadium in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday

into the left-hand channel was centred invitingly by Partiban Janasekaran and, after Josue and Morales failed to make significant contact, Zhafri Yahya thumped a low shot back across goal that Ahmed Al Rawahi

managed to keep out. Kevin Mendoza’s poor attempt to reach Al Busaidi’s (pictured above, No 17) corner from the Al Seeb right saw the ball sail over the Philippines international goalkeeper and cross the

line after bouncing inside the six-yard box, giving the Omanis the lead. With 12 minutes left in the first half, however, Mendoza redeemed himself when he tipped Daniel Ajibola’s long-range at-

tempt over the bar while at the other end, Al Rahawi kept out another effort from Zhafri. In the 37th minute, though, Al Seeb doubled their advantage when the ball was shuffled out to Salaah Al Yahyai, who

swung his right foot cross towards goal for Al Maqbali to apply the finishing touch with his head. With their two-goal cushion Al Seeb were in control and with 21 minutes left, they ended any

doubts over the outcome when Al Ghassani thumped home the third, making the most of a bounce off the shins of Giancarlo Gallifuoco to beat Mendoza with a drive onto the roof of the net. AFC

oman
OASIS

MAI
alkaline

THIS SEASON

BUY MORE
WIN MORE

Get a chance to win amazing prizes when you shop from your nearest hypermarket.

Find the raffle coupon inside the carton/pack and register the unique number at www.omanoasis.com/winmore

OFFER VALID FOR

Oman Oasis : 1.5 Ltr, 500 ml, 330 ml carton & pack, 200 ml pack.
SIFR : 200 ml carton, 1.5 Ltr & 500 ml pack.
Mai Alkaline : 1.5 Ltr & 500 ml pack.

400 PRIZES ON RAFFLE DRAWS

100% CASH PRIZES

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

MM/05/1028/2022
C.R. No.: 1365452

SCAN & REGISTER

CALL TOLL-FREE
800 71 222
or GSM: 9275 5522

Al Seeb captain Eid Al Farsi scoops Most Valuable Player

Eid Al Farsi receives the MVP award from Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday

Kuala Lumpur: Al Seeb Club’s Eid Al Farsi was named the AFC Cup 2022 Most Valuable Player on Saturday.

The 35-year-old skipper played a crucial role in Al Seeb’s campaign, leading his side to their maiden AFC Cup title after beating Kuala Lumpur City FC 3-0 in the final.

The Oman international was the man responsible for ensuring a superb start to Al Seeb’s AFC

Cup debut, scoring the only goal of the match to beat Jableh of Syria, before finding the back of the net against Lebanon’s Al Ansar to ensure a top spot finish in Group A.

Al Farsi, who made his first AFC Cup appearance in 2009 with Al Orouba, was an integral part of Al Seeb’s attacks, as he recorded the most passes in the opposition half with an 80 per cent success rate.

Oman U19 cricketers honoured, to get training throughout the year

Muscat – Putting your best foot forward is a key ingredient to achieve success. However, at times, even that doesn’t assure a victory. Youngsters should take defeat in their strides and what is most important is to learn the lessons from the setbacks, according to Oman Cricket’s chief development officer and former Sri Lankan captain, Duleep Mendis.

In a departure from tradition when only winners are honoured, Oman Cricket board unanimously decided to honour their U19 national team lads despite the team failing to qualify for the ICC U19 Men’s Cricket World Cup Division 1- Asia Qualifier.

Oman went down to Hong Kong in the semifinals at home. Mendis thanked the parents and the boys for fighting hard and said, “The boys represented Oman well and played very hard. They put everything in training and during the match. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t. That’s how the game of cricket it. It is a learning curve for

The U19 team of Oman put up a spirited show at the recent ICC U19 Men’s Cricket World Cup Division 1- Asia Qualifier

the boys. Participation at this level will go a long way in their development.

“The more you fail at this level, or for that matter at any level, the more determined one should be to achieve goals. This is the main reason why the Oman Cricket board decided to felicitate the boys and thank the parents and coaches for their efforts.”

He said: “The way forward is that we are forming a permanent U19 squad, which will be provided training under qualified

coaches throughout the year. It will help the boys make better cricketers.”

Pankaj Khimji, Oman Cricket Chairman, said: “The boys made Oman proud by representing the country.

“The performance and the way the team has played has made Oman Cricket reach a decision that we need to focus more on the U19 cricket. We have decided to have the U19 team train and prepare themselves throughout the year.”

Winter
Offers

Offer valid from 14th August to 13th November 2022. Existing Oman Oasis 5 Gallon returnable bottle customers and Oasis Water Company employees are not eligible for the offer.

50 ONLY

HOT & COLD DISPENSER

PLUS 2 FULL BOTTLES

PLUS 30 REFILL COUPONS

20 ONLY

WHITE TAP DISPENSER OR TAP DISPENSER OR MANUAL WATER PUMP OR CRADLE WITH TAP

PLUS 2 FULL BOTTLES

PLUS 15 REFILL COUPONS

oman
OASIS

CALL TOLL-FREE
800 71 222
or GSM: 9275 5522

C.R. No.: 1365452 | MM No.: 06/059/2022

ART BASEL



Visitors look at art pieces during the Paris Art Basel event, ahead of the official opening of Europe's biggest contemporary art market in Paris

Art renaissance

Art Basel confirms rise of Paris in the art world

Art Basel launched its inaugural fair in Paris on Thursday, seen as capping the re-emergence of the French capital as a major arts hub following the impact of Brexit on its main rival - London.

The event, however, also raised eyebrows for controversially replacing a longstanding local art event. With 'Paris + Art Basel', the world's biggest fair organiser has added another major city to its roster. Art Basel already runs events in Basel, Miami and Hong Kong.

It profited from the surprise decision by the Grand Palais venue at the end of last year to suddenly replace the long-running Foire Internationale d'Art Contemporain (FIAC). Since then, Art Basel has sought to allay fears among French galleries that they might lose their privileged status under the new ownership.

The Swiss giant appointed a largely local team to oversee the new fair. At this week's event, which runs until Sunday, 61 of the 156 galleries on display are French.

There was a shot of youth, too: 16 of the artists exhibiting are aged under 40, twice the number at FIAC last year. Among them was Sophie Dunkel-



berg, 34, from Berlin, with a series of sculptures of miniature horses, lying down with their eyes closed.

"In cities around the world, sculptures of horses stand on their two hind legs to symbolise power and majesty. I wanted to deconstruct this absurd image," she said.

Paris on the rise

Paris is on the rise, said Thaddaeus Ropac, an Austrian gallery owner with outlets in London, Paris, Salzburg and Seoul.

"The French capital is experiencing a renaissance of contemporary art, collectors from around the

world are returning, international galleries are establishing themselves here."

Though partly linked to Brexit, he said Paris was also benefiting from major new museums including the Louis Vuitton Foundation and Bourse de Commerce, created by rival luxury goods billionaires.

Patrick Goddard, a 38-year-old British artist at the fair, agreed. "Paris is once again becoming a centre for contemporary and modern art in Europe," he said.

He said his models of snails invading train stations and houses - a comment on the treatment of migrants - had sold quickly to a big American family



The French capital is experiencing a renaissance of contemporary art, collectors from around the world are returning, international galleries are establishing themselves here

THADDAEUS ROPAC

at the show.

Haunting some of the more traditional gallery owners is a digital future exemplified by NFTs still a huge draw despite wild fluctuations in the market. NFTs or Non-Fungible Tokens are digital works that cannot be replaced with anything else and are therefore unique.

"The quality of the works we've seen (in NFTs) up to now is not of the sort that interests me," said Ropac. "But artists will have more and more recourse to using them, so we have to take them seriously."

British artist Damien Hirst tackled that issue head on at his show that opened in London last week. He made NFTs of thousands of colourful spot paintings, then made buyers choose between the original and its online avatar. Then, he burned the original works of those who chose the NFT version.

AFP

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR RENT

Flat for rent in Darsait, 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, kitchen, with a small sea view. Rent RO230 only per month. Contact: +968-99315986

SITUATION WANTED

Innovative products and IT network securities portfolio ready to work as BDM for any international/local products with a good knowledge of oman market

Contact: +968-98027887

Indian female, MCom, good experience in VAT, Book Keeping until finalisation, seeking a suitable position and available for immediate joining. Contact: +968-96974655

Indian male with 16 years of managerial experience in Airline

Catering Stores, with F&B Cost

Controls and hospitality experience, is looking for a suitable position. On a Visit Visa, can join immediately.

Contact: +968-97662123 email: Moviferns@gmail.com

Head of project, construction

management, BE; MBA; PPM with 21 years of comprehensive

achievements. Seeking an appropriate position in a growth

oriented EPC/turnkey company. Contact: +968-91411095

WJ Towell Group Company



Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 | Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com



FOR RENT

Available 2100 sq meter best in class Warehouse cum office Space, fully furnished ready to use, Located at Prime area of Ghala in the heart of the city having easy access to airport & express Way.

Contact: Girish Sewani - 93893596

USED PLANT & VEHICLES FOR SALE

Used Plant & Commercial Vehicles (Prime Movers, Flat bed Trailers, Coaster Bus, JCB Loadalls, Crane, Backhoes, etc) for sale. Sale is "As is where is" condition.

For further details please contact GSM : 99241286 / 24616162 / 99899182
Interested party to submit their quote on or before 30th October 2022.

AUDIT, ACCOUNTING, VAT, TAXATION

Contact: 97239696/95355638

Gulf Center Consultancy & Audit
Muscat, Sohar, Salalah, Sur
Kumar@gccaoman.com

Job Vacancy

requirements and responsibilities - Marketing Executive

- 3+ years of marketing experience
- Degree or similar level qualification in marketing
- Digital marketing certification/experience
- Google / FB/ Yext - knowledge / certifications
- Proficient in Excel & PowerPoint
- Experienced in running marketing campaigns
- Good negotiation & PR skills
- Having a middle east driving license will be an advantage

Email ID: resumeoman2021@gmail.com

GROUP EXHIBITION

CREATIVITY imagination

A collection of 42 artworks created by a group of ten international artists in Oman – the culmination of an art workshop conducted by Dr Nasser Palangi – is currently on at Cure8 Art Gallery



H H Sayyida Aliya bint Thuwaini al Said (extreme left) inaugurates the exhibition



(From left) Farideh Zariv, Dr Nasser Palangi and Sarah al Aulaqi



Hubert Vaz

Cure8 Art Gallery, in the Grand Hyatt hotel lobby, has come alive with a powerful infusion of creativity expressed in diverse forms by ten international artists in Oman who have demonstrated their skill with new methods of creative imagination and deconstruction.

The exhibition, curated by Farideh Zariv, senior Iranian resident artist in Oman, and facilitated by Sarah Ahmed Farid al Aulaqi, director of Cure8 Art Gallery, was inaugurated under the patronage of H H Sayyida Aliya bint Thuwaini al Said on October 19.

This is the second group exhibition based on the theme – Methods of Creative Imagination – following a creative workshop conducted by Dr Nasser Palangi, senior Iranian artist and art teacher, who taught and nurtured a batch of ten hand-picked artists from different countries in Oman. The first workshop was conducted in 2019 and an exhibition was held a year later since regular classes were disrupted due to the pandemic in 2020.

The artworks showcased in this exhibition were created by the participating artists during 2021 when they received instruction for exploring their own creative imagination and creating contemporary works using new techniques and media. Most of the instruction was developed by Dr Palangi over the past three decades when he has taught artists from different countries in Iran as well as the middle east.

Dr Palangi, who is currently associate professor at Scientific College of Design, says, "Teaching Art for more than 40 years around the world, gave me the opportunity to deal with a huge number of students from different cultural backgrounds, and every time I witness the birth of a new artwork. I see their talents flourishing and their artistic abilities upgrading, for me this is a glorious moment that I celebrate."

He further states, "I believe, that the relationship between the artist and his artwork is an interactive live relation where the artist creates the artwork and the artwork creates the artist at the same time. During my life as an artist I always have aspirations, dreams, ambitions and goals to reach and I can say that I achieved many of them and am looking forward for more."

About his workshop, Dr Palangi said, "I teach methods of creative imagination and methods of

deconstruction. Participants of the workshop experiment with these methods, including a variety of techniques to express their own creativity with a contemporary vision. At the end, they are able to develop and create unique art forms."

"To be contemporary artists, we need to learn these methods and experiment with different media and styles. At present, we see 'cross media' as a main technique in all important art biennales around the world," Dr Palangi said, adding, "Hopefully, we will continue this programme every year in Muscat while also planning to organise a 'touring exhibition' in other countries in the gulf, as well."

Since 2000, Dr Palangi started to teach his Methods of Creative Imagination Programme in Australia, United States, United Arab Emirates and Iran. In Oman, he started the programme with a pilot workshop at the National Museum of Oman in 2019.

The courses include rules and methods that help functioning and activating the powers of imagination and illusion by teaching art students techniques, rules, and principles, and giving them tools that help them to create, relying on their own power of imagination, so as to be able to present their creative ideas innovatively.

Farideh Zariv, who curated the exhibition, has an illustrious career in art spanning three decades. She has held numerous solo exhibitions in different museums such as Canberra Art Museum in Australia, Iziko Museum in South Africa and Bait Al Zubair Museum in Oman. Her works can be found in private and public collections around the world.

Farideh believes, "Art is the greatest and most effective way to influence deep human emotions because it is a tangible language. And in today's world, the most challenging thing is to find a platform that hosts and gives opportunity to highly creative artists who can show their culture to the world in a contemporary way."

Through her collaboration with Cure8 Art Gallery, Farideh aims to offer a creative space for local and international professional artists, as well as host workshops and events. "This Space will turn on the spotlight on outstanding works of contemporary Omani artists from all creative fields, like painting, printing, sculpture, ceramics and unique handicrafts," she said.

The participant artists include Afra Talal al Said, Aneesh Basheer Shailza, Aisha Muammar Mohamed, Iman al Maskari, Masha'el Ritchie, Janab Sayyida Mithal al Said, Nusaiba Shukry al Sulaimani, Soni Budhia, Pragma Bhatnagar, and Zohreh Sadegh.



كاندريل

مُحلي منخفض السعرات

Low Calorie Sweetener



منخفض
السعرات



منصوبة من
ستيفيا





طعمه
كالكسكر



أساس
النبات



Distributed by

Please contact +968 22060236/237