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MEET THE WINNERS... WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2021
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Council of Ministers, State Council meet

Muscat - Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmood al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, received members of the State Council, along with Sheikh Abdulmalik Abdullah al Khalili, Chairman of State Council.

The meeting was held within the context of cooperation between the Cabinet and State Council of Oman. The meeting, held at the Council of Ministers, is one in a series of meetings that come within the framework of coordination stated in the Basic Law of the State and in pursuance of the continuous interaction between all institutions of the state. It is an opportunity to exchange views on matters of significance for sustainable development in the sultanate.

At the outset of the meeting, Sayyid Fahd commended the leading role of the State Council's Office in fostering fruitful cooperation.

The meeting affirmed the need to rally efforts to promote

the supreme interests of the state and safeguard the achievements of the country's comprehensive renaissance.

The government hopes that the State Council will utilise its expertise in conducting more intensive studies to upgrade the level of public service programmes, said Sayyid Fahd, who laid emphasis on cooperation between the two sides in sup-

porting plans that sustain the country's progress and prosperity.

Sheikh Khalili and members of the State Council valued the meeting and underscored the importance of the coordination in the next stage of development.

Topics on the agenda were reviewed, among them ways of cementing partnership between the government and the State Council. The two sides agreed that the State Council would pursue social awareness and collaboration in serving the nation under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

ONA



The meeting affirmed the need to rally efforts to promote the supreme interests of the state and safeguard the achievements of the country's comprehensive renaissance

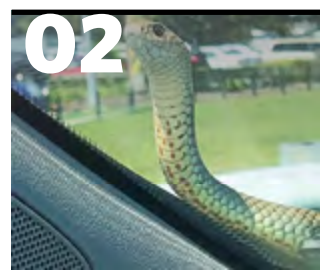
► NEWS BRIEFS

WEATHER DISTURBANCE DETECTED IN ARABIAN SEA

Muscat - The National Multi-Hazard Early Warning Centre of the Civil Aviation Authority on Sunday announced that a tropical weather disturbance in the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal has been detected.

In a statement, the centre said, 'A tropical condition may originate in the Bay of Bengal, cross the Indian peninsula and reach the Arabian Sea, with chances that it might dissipate there over the next few days.'

An official at the centre pointed out that this is the season of tropical depressions in the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal. He added that the season lasts for three months from September to November.



Double trouble for Amerat homemaker



Oman, Belgium sign MoU for cooperation in green energy

COVID-19 numbers show steady decline; immunisation rate up

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The sultanate is witnessing a marked progress in controlling the spread of COVID-19 cases while increasing the number of vaccinated individuals of the target population.

The Royal Hospital announced that it has discharged the last of its COVID-19 patients, even as the nationwide vaccination campaign continues.

'For the first time in 18 months, the COVID-19 unit at Royal Hospital has zero patients. The last COVID-19 patient left the hospital on September 22,' it said.

The Directorate General of Health in North Sharqiyah stated it has started vaccinating school students older than 12 years with the second dose. 'Immunisation of students with the second dose has commenced. The first dose of vaccine started being administered from August 8, 2021.'

The number of students eligible for vaccination between the ages of 12 and 18 years is 24,385



spread across 86 schools in the governorate.

According to figures released by the Ministry of Health, 88 new cases of COVID-19 and two related deaths were registered in the last three days. This takes the total number of cases to 303,639 in the sultanate. The total number of COVID-19 related deaths has reached 4,095.

The ministry stated that 1,359 patients have recovered, taking the total to 296,527 recoveries.

The ministry also stated that two COVID-19 patients were hospitalised in the past 24 hours, accounting for a total of 41 in health institutions, including 24 in intensive care units.

Non-oil exports jump 72% as global demand recovers from pandemic

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In a sharp bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic that had hit global trade hard last year, Oman's non-oil exports shot up by more than 72 per cent in the first half of this year, after economies reopened and global demand started to recover from the crisis.

Total non-oil exports surged by 72.4 per cent to RO2.428bn in the first half of 2021 from RO1.408bn in the same period of last year, driven by improved demand from key markets in the region and around the world, according to data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

As Oman's economy returns to normalcy after last year's twin-shock of oil price collapse and the coronavirus outbreak, the burgeoning demand for Omani exports suggests that the sultanate's economy is well on a recovery path.

Exports to the UAE, the biggest destination for the sul-



The sultanate's strong trade performance shows that Omani exporters are making good recovery in attracting overseas orders

tanate's non-oil shipments, grew by 29 per cent to RO388.9mn during the January-June period of this year against RO302.1mn in the corresponding period of 2020. Exports to Saudi Arabia also grew more than 18 per cent

to RO267.4mn during the first six months of 2021.

As more trading partners of the sultanate lifted coronavirus restrictions this year, the robust growth in Omani exports was led by strong demand from

China, India and other countries.

The NCSI data, however, suggests that the brisk recovery in non-oil exports is broad based for almost all of Oman's trading partners. The sultanate's strong trade performance shows that Omani exporters are making good recovery in attracting overseas orders.

Non-oil exports to China more than doubled to RO156.1mn in the first half of 2021 against RO71mn worth of shipments in the same period of 2020. Exports to India surged by more than 49 per cent to RO176.6mn this year compared to RO118.3mn recorded in the corresponding period of last year.

The United States accounted for RO153.2mn worth of Omani exports this year, up 38 per cent compared to the same period of 2020.

In what appears to be a strengthening external trade recovery, Omani exports to other countries jumped 122 per cent to RO1.286bn in the first half of 2021 from RO580mn in 2020.

Unesco World Heritage Sites of Qalhat, Bat to get visitor centres

Our Correspondent
Muscat

To provide better services at tourist and heritage sites, specially World Heritage Sites, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) has invited bids for a design and supervisory consultancy service for construction of a visitor centre and ancillary building at the Qalhat archeological site in the wilayat of Sur.

The ministry has also invited bids for a design and supervisory consultancy service for construc-



tion of a visitor centre at Bat in the wilayat of Ibri. Qalhat and Bat, both are designated as Unesco World Heritage Sites.

The last date for submitting bids is November 9, 2021.

The ministry started an ar-

chaeological renovation programme for Qalhat city in 2008. In June 2021, the ministry signed an agreement with Oman LNG to finance a project to restore Qalhat archaeological city (Phase I).

The ancient city of Qalhat was

an important port on the Sea of Oman along the East Arabian Coast, which allowed for trade with the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean and hence functioned as a trade centre between India and through it East and

South East Asia and the Arabian Peninsula.

The pre-historic archaeological complex of Bat is one of the most complete and well preserved assemblies of settlements and necropolises in the world from the third millennium BCE. The core site is a part of the modern village of Bat, in Wadi Sharsah, approximately 24km east of the city of Ibri in Dhahira governorate.

The ministry also continues to restore and maintain castles and forts that are distinguished by

their architecture.

The National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) stated that as many as 426,500 people visited forts and castles in Oman in 2019, registering an increase of 16.4 per cent on the previous year's figures. Of the total visitors, 251,080 were tourists from different countries, according to MHT statistics.

According to NCSI, 366,360 people visited forts and castles in 2018, compared to 319,163 in 2017 - an increase of 14.8 per cent.



TOURISM AND LIVELIHOOD

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Muna Basheer al Zadjali
Private sector employee

Oman is a popular attraction for tourists and this sector is considered one of the most vital for the economy. Considering the sultanate has many and varied tourism potentials, it can draw local, regional and international investments for projects that will also generate jobs.



Vinod Raghavan
Multi media strategist

Introduce Mwasalat bus services from Ruwi to Wadi Kabir, Al Bustan, Sidab, Old Muscat, Muscat Palace, Muttrah Corniche and back to Ruwi. Also on weekends, there should be a bus service to Qantab beach which attracts many tourists and locals. Developing these areas will generate opportunities for citizens.



B Jeyakumar
Manager

Oman can be a leading tourist destination due to its cultural heritage. It attracts millions of tourists every year. Tourism generates jobs directly through hotels, restaurants, taxis and souvenir shops, and indirectly through supply of goods and services. These job opportunities can be exploited by implementing strategic plans.



Jay Prakash
Private sector employee

Oman has an edge over other Gulf countries owing to its diverse flora and fauna. Youngsters have to engage in the hospitality sector and every person living in villages must promote sustainable tourism. Subsidies must be given to citizens working in the tourism sector. Effective policies will make Oman a tourist hub.



Jayatee Choudhury
Student

There should be local tours to attractions like Salalah, Barka, Quriyat, Ibri, etc. The youth should be encouraged to take up jobs of tourist guides to help visitors explore Oman's rich cultural heritage. Social media can be an integral tool to raise awareness of the sultanate's cultural attractions.



Sarayu Raghavan
Sales and marketing professional

Tourism is thought to be a growth engine if it is skillfully utilised and is closely related to other areas of the economy. As Oman's tourism industry grows scope, more job opportunities will arise, as well as opportunities to demonstrate creativity in the workplace. Tourism needs more skill and creativity and Oman certainly has potential to attract more talent.



Mohan Anandan
Banking sector employee

More SMEs should be created with government support to promote and sell the unique selling points of Oman such as its rich heritage, culture and historical landmarks, and as a nation known to be an oasis of peace. Its spectacular beaches, islands and long coastline are other aspects of Oman that need to be promoted.



Ruskeen S
Sales manager

Add more countries in Oman's visa on-arrival system and improve connectivity to tourist spots. Also, training more Omanis to speak other languages and allowing citizens to freelance or work part-time in activities directly related to tourism will help. SMEs and startups engaged in the sector must be given incentives.



K M Gurnani
Businessman

Oman has a lot of potential for tourism but unfortunately it has not been explored enough. We have to think from a tourist's point of view who travels with his family. We have to consider the requirements of children and ladies and provide facilities and services accordingly.



? NEXT ON YOUR SAY

Is everybody in your family vaccinated? If not, why?

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

Manafa'a Ideathon sparks biodiversity interest in Oman

Muscat - With the goal of spreading the culture of innovation in relation to biodiversity, Mawarid (Oman Animal and Plant Genetic Resources Centre) of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, with the Environment Authority, virtually organised a 48-hour Manafa'a Ideathon event on September 24 and 25.

'The 48-hour Manafa'a Ideathon is an important stage of the Manafa'a 2021 programme that comes before the evaluation stage in which the 15 qualified teams will be able to present their ideas for commercial products. During the two-day event, the teams were given a chance to build their genetic resources-based business ideas under the guidance of expert mentors and business professionals from leading institutions and organisations across Oman,' said a press statement.

During the first day of the ideathon, the participating teams were given free time to start brainstorming their product and collecting all the required data. By the end of the day, each team had identified the initial scope of the product. As for the second day, the teams took the product idea onto the next level such as designing a prototype of the product (if possible) and devel-

The 48-hour ideathon is an important stage of the Manafa'a programme in which 15 teams present their ideas for commercial products

oping a preliminary financial study, along with a marketing plan, in addition to building product identity. The event ended with presentations by the participating teams on the product, in addition to a short video about the product's idea with a duration that does not exceed one minute.

'The Manafa'a Ideathon also included some presentations that aim to guide the participating teams in the right direction. Dr Amaal al Abrawi, CEO of Falha Investment Company, gave a presentation on Lean Canvas, which is a one-page business plan template that helps users deconstruct their ideas into its key assumptions. Coach Said al Balushi gave a presentation titled 'How to prepare a successful presentation' that focused on key elements and important pointers

while giving a presentation. Following the ideathon event, the participating teams will then present and be evaluated for their ideas on September 27 in front of a judging panel online, and five teams will be announced as winners at a later date during the closing ceremony.'

The theme for Manafa'a 2021 programme is the 'National Initiative for Plantation of 10 Million Trees'. Manafa'a 2021 is implemented within a strategic partnership with the Innovation and Technology Transfer Centre at Sultan Qaboos University and Falha Investment Company, and is sponsored by Petroleum Development Oman, SGS company and Oman India Fertiliser Company.

'The Manafa'a programme aims to provide a platform for Omanis and residents of Oman who are innovators and entrepreneurs to present, discuss and refine ideas for new products or services based on the biodiversity of the sultanate, encourage the establishment of national small and medium enterprises based on benefiting from applied research in the field of biological resources, and build public awareness about the investment opportunities available in the field of biodiversity,' added the statement.

INDIAN NAVY CHIEF ARRIVES IN OMAN



Admiral Karambir Singh, Chief of Naval Staff in the Republic of India, arrived on Sunday on an official visit to the sultanate. The Indian guest and his accompanying delegation were received at Seeb Air Base by Rear Admiral Saif Nasser al Rahbi, Commander of Royal Navy of Oman, and a number of senior officers. They were also received by H E Munu Mahawar, Indian Ambassador to the sultanate, and the defence attaché at the Indian Embassy in Muscat (ONA)

Double trouble for Amerat homemaker as snake appears in overheated car

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Amerat resident Fatmah al Naamani encountered double trouble on Sunday morning on her way to Ghala. Just as the homemaker was pulling her overheated SUV to the side of the road, a snake appeared on her windscreen giving her the fright of her life.

Fatmah had only recently got her driving licence and was excited about her new achievement. She was driving her children to Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre when her

Ford Escape's engine starting overheating.

As the engine started smoking, she panicked and tried to start the engine again to drive to the closest fuel station. The car refused to budge and Fatmah's teenaged son did his best to calm her down.

But that was not to be as the snake wriggled onto the windshield. The sight of the snake made Fatmah hysterical. Her hands froze and a chill ran down her spine. "I've been scared of snakes all my life," Fatmah later told *Muscat Daily*.

"As if the car breaking down

wasn't enough, a snake had to appear. I forgot my car problem the moment I saw the snake. It's the worst day of my life. Snakes and lizards are my biggest fear. In fact, this is the first time I came face-to-face with a snake."

As it slithered away, Fatmah - almost hysterical now - opened the door and fled. But being under the scorching sun didn't help. "My throat was parched, my blood chilled and I could hear my heart pounding."

Her son, however, managed to keep his composure. He hugged her in his arms and comforted her.

A passer-by offered help. Fatmah sat in his car as she slowly calmed down.

"Eventually, the smoke from the engine stopped and it started again. I was able to drive it back home without any problem," she said narrating the incident as she sipped tea in her balcony in the evening.

She and her family are perplexed about the snake. How did it manage to hide in the engine as Fatmah drove from Amerat to Ghala?

They have no answer but Fatmah has vowed never to drive the Ford Escape again.

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr	4.40am	Duhr	11.58am	Maghrib	5.58pm
Sunrise	5.57am	Asr	3.22pm	Isha	7.28pm

Ministry committee to grant licences for ITC projects

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A high-level governmental committee will be formed to give licences to integrated tourism complexes (ITCs). The Minister of Heritage and Tourism issued Ministerial Decision No 136/2021 in this regard on September 12.

The committee will consist of six members, including the Undersecretary for Tourism in the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, the Undersecretary for Urban Planning in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, the Undersecretary for Investment Promotion in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the Director General of Inquiries and Criminal Investigations in Royal Oman Police, the Director General of Planning in the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, and the Assistant Director General for Environmental Affairs in the Environmental Authority.

The committee will study the request and decide on it within a period not exceeding 30 days from the date of submission. It



The committee will study the request and decide on it within 30 days from the date of submission

will study licensing applications for the construction of integrated tourism complexes as well as propose amendments to the licensing rules,' a statement said.

The ministerial decision outlines some conditions that real estate developers must meet to

obtain licences.

'An application for an ITC will be submitted to the secretariat of the committee using the form prepared for this purpose. Documents that need to be attached with the application include initial development plan and a

statement from a consultant about the expected percentage of the land area for construction, distributed according to the type of use, title deed or real estate property right, and commercial register or passport or ID of the developer.

Omani wins first place in Arab Water Council Award

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Dr Mohammed bin Zaher al Abri from Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) has won first place in the Arab Water Council Award for Creativity and Innovation for his research, 'Enhanced Nanofiber Membranes for Safe Water Management'.

He won the award at the fifth Arab Water Forum held last week in Dubai, UAE.

Dr Abri, who is director of the Nanotechnology Research Centre at SQU, said, "Modern nanotechnology came to open up other directions for improving membrane efficacy. This research gave a futuristic view of the design of an advanced filamentous membrane capable of dealing with various water



Dr Mohammed bin Zaher al Abri

pollutants with its exceptional properties."

The number of researches submitted in the field of unconventional water resources was 58, of which four were excluded because they did not meet the conditions of the award, organisers said.

ODB finances over 1,400 projects in Buraimi

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Development Bank (ODB) said it financed 1,456 projects in Buraimi governorate in the past five years.

Financing included various developmental sectors and projects in education, fisheries, tourism, professional and public services, agriculture and animal husbandry, industry, mining and health.

Musab bin Ali al Yazidi, director of ODB in Buraimi, said loans granted amounted to over RO11mn.

"The bank seeks to achieve various development plans in economic sectors according to government objectives to diversify sources of national income."

The bank also provided 230 emergency loans to mitigate the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. It has also extended the grace period for emergency loans in the logistics and tourism sector to the end of the year, Yazidi informed.

"Oman Development Bank is a leading financing institution, focusing on national development and projects that provide opportunities for self-employment."

2,000 mangrove seedlings cultivated in Dhofar

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As part of its efforts to increase green coverage by planting 10mn wild trees, the Environment Authority (EA) last week conducted a campaign to cultivate 2,000 mangrove seedlings in khor Hino in the wilayat of Mirbat in Dhofar governorate.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, an official at EA in Dhofar said that the authority launched the initiative to plant 10mn trees in January 2020 and at its nurseries produced wild seedlings of ghaf, al samar sidr and al alan, which can withstand difficult climatic conditions.

"The Environment Department in Dhofar conducts several awareness campaigns with members of the community on the importance of mangrove trees and their benefits to humans. It also discusses the main factors for the growth of these types of trees and some of the threats and dangers faced by them," the official said.

"The mangrove plantation campaign started in 2001 and



aims to cultivate 1mn seedlings of mangrove trees on sultanate's coasts within 20 years. The authority has already planted over 700,000 saplings in over 30 khors in various coastal areas."

He added that mangroves purify the atmosphere from harmful gases and store them in the soil. Harmful gases, including carbon dioxide, are threatening many countries of the world as they are a basic element in the

direct impact of the phenomenon of climate change.

The continuity of work in preserving environmental systems in accordance with internationally approved standards and measures will have a significant positive impact in creating a sound environmental balance, he said, while emphasising the importance of community participation and solidarity in preserving these ecosystems.

In January 2020, EA in cooperation with Petroleum Development Oman, launched an initiative to plant 10mn wild tree saplings in ten years.

The authority said that the wild tree species will include ghaf, al samar and sidr, for which nurseries are being set up. It also cooperated with many volunteer teams and individuals interested in planting wild trees and honoured them.

REGIONAL WEATHER		
	Max	Min
Abu Dhabi	37	27
Doha	35	24
Kuwait City	37	25
Manama	34	25
Riyadh	35	19

SAYYID BADR RECEIVES BELGIUM MINISTER



H E Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, received Tinne Van der Straeten, Minister of Energy in Belgium, on Sunday. The meeting reviewed aspects of joint cooperation and means of enhancing them. It also explored further fields of cooperation, particularly in green energy. The two sides discussed means of completing the agreements that boost partnership between Oman and Belgium. The meeting was attended by H E Eng Salim Nasser al Oufi, Undersecretary in the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, Reggy Vermeulen, Honorary Consul of Belgium to the sultanate, and a number of officials from both sides (ONA)

College promotes Arabic language

Muscat - The Sultan Qaboos College for Teaching Arabic Language to Non-Native Speakers received 1,048 students from 2012 to 2019 from 55 countries.

The United States topped the list with 209 students, followed by 136 students from the United Kingdom and 113 students from Turkey. The college continues to promote Arabic language worldwide and introducing the Omani and Arab culture, as well as deepening the connections between different peoples. The college strives to turn the Arabic language into a bridge of human communication.

Othman Musa al Sa'adi, assistant director general of Educational Programmes, said that the college has started offering its first training courses for the academic year 2021/2022. The online courses target 12 Arabic language teachers from various colleges and universities of Uzbekistan.

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OCCI meeting discusses issues of private sector

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) held its ordinary general assembly meeting on Sunday. The meeting, which was held at the OCCI headquarters, discussed the means of examining the directions and demands of the private sector during the next period.

The meeting was chaired by Eng Redha bin Juma al Saleh, board chairman of the OCCI, and was attended by members of the general assembly, according to a press statement.

At the beginning of the meeting, Saleh commended the support and guidance of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq. He explained that such support reflects His Majesty's attention paid to ensuring the sustainability of the private sector as a partner in the development process.

Saleh elaborated that this support drives the private sector to contribute effectively to the journey of building the national economy and achieving the objectives of Oman's Vision 2040.

He also reviewed the role of the private sector organisations in the current exceptional conditions and amid the negative im-



pacts of COVID-19 outbreak on the economy and the business sector.

Saleh said, "The OCCI strives during this extraordinary period to reflect the directions, demands and conditions of the private sector by adopting some initiatives that sought to reduce the severity of COVID-19 implications and manage its impacts at various sectors."

He touched upon the decisions issued by the Supreme Committee entrusted with dealing with the impacts resulting from the coronavirus outbreak during the last week. These deci-

sions included the cancellation of fines for expired licenses, renewing the labor cards of non-Omanis and the cancellation of fines accrued on all organisations and companies for not renewing their commercial registration certificates.

The Supreme Committee's decisions also included exempting the SMEs from paying the fees of Riyada card, as well as urging the banks and finance companies to cooperate with the affected borrowers, particularly SMEs.

Saleh also reviewed some facilities provided during the past

year after the OCCI exerted great efforts to prove the sufferings of private sector organisations.

"The OCCI has also taken part in many studies in collaboration with the respective entities to contribute to the recovery of private sector organisations and to reduce the adverse impacts that afflicted them as a result of the economic and health crises," he added.

The meeting also discussed the OCCI's endeavors to develop the economies of the Wilayats through its branches across all the Omani governorates. The contributions made by the OCCI to national companies that are being established at the Wilayats were highlighted.

The meeting also reviewed some of the OCCI's contributions including launching the OCCI fund and its social corporate responsibility program to support the private sector with an amount of RO1mn. Through this fund, the OCCI supported the efforts exerted by the Ministry of Health to combat the coronavirus spread with an amount of RO500,000. It has also contributed to the Career Security Fund with an amount of RO1mn.

Oman, Belgium sign MoU for cooperation in green energy

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman and Belgium have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to cooperate in the green energy sector, particularly in the field of green hydrogen. The MoU has been signed between the sultanate's Ministry of Energy and Minerals and Belgium's Ministry of Energy. Both parties desire to promote and develop initiatives and projects in the field of green energy for mutual benefits, according to a press statement.

As per the MoU, Oman and Belgium will collaborate on the sultanate's anchor green hydrogen project 'Hypot Duqm'. The agreement will support the cooperation between companies of



two countries to build an international consortium for the production of green hydrogen.

The MOU also called for the implementation of standards for green certification, and interaction between universities, scientific research institutions and private sector of both countries.

A number of international companies have expressed their interest and announced plans to

invest in green hydrogen and green ammonia projects in Oman's special economic zones and free zones, particularly in Duqm.

Hypot Duqm, the sultanate's strategic green hydrogen project in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, is a joint venture between Belgium-based DEMA Concessions and Oman's OQ Alternative Energy.

OPAZ board meets with CEOs in Salalah

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The board of directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) held a meeting with a number of CEOs of factories at the Salalah Free Zone.

OPAZ board members also visited a number of factories specialised in the field of food,

chemical and pharmaceutical industries in the Salalah Free Zone.

The board also held its third meeting for 2021 in Salalah, chaired by HE Dr Ali bin Masoud bin Ali al Sunaidi, chairman of the OPAZ board, according to a press statement.

The meeting discussed the current situation of investments at Salalah Free Zone and gave

the direction to localise the projects of producing medicines and medical supplies in the zone, where special locations have been already allocated for such projects.

The board of directors of OPAZ was briefed on the plan developed by Asyad Group to enhance the integration of Salalah Free Zone with the logistics system in the sultanate.

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Saudi Arabia's non-oil exports rise 18% in July



Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - Saudi Arabia's overall merchandise exports increased by 79.6 per cent in July 2021 compared to July 2020, according to data released by the General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT).

The value of exports amounted to SAR91.8bn in July 2021, up from SAR51.1bn in July 2020. This increase originated mainly from oil exports, which rose by 112.1 per cent in the same period. According to the report, the share of oil exports in total exports increased from 65.5 per cent (in July 2020) to 77.4 per cent (in July 2021).

Non-oil exports increased by 17.9 per cent year-on-year in July 2021, rising to SAR20.8bn from SAR17.6bn in July 2020.

The GASTAT report said that merchandise imports increased by 13.2 per cent to SAR45.6bn in July 2021 compared to

SAR40.3bn in July 2020.

The ratio of non-oil exports to imports increased to 45.5 per cent in July 2021 from 43.7 per cent in July 2020, as a result of a higher increase in non-oil exports (17.9 per cent) than in imports (13.2 per cent) over that period.

In July 2021, Saudi exports to China amounted to SAR18bn (19.6 per cent of total exports), making this country the main destination for exports of Saudi Arabia.

Imports from China amounted to SAR9.9bn (21.8 per cent of total imports) in July 2021, making this country the main origin for imports of Saudi Arabia. The US and UAE followed next with imports of SAR4.8bn (10.6 per cent of total imports) and SAR3.1bn (6.7 per cent of total imports), respectively.

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UN redoubles green energy push to boost electricity

United Nations, US – The United Nations chief called for the world to redouble its renewable energy efforts to avert a climate emergency and address global energy poverty.

"Today, we face a moment of truth," said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who described the mandate as a "double imperative – to end energy poverty and to limit climate change."

"And we have an answer that will fulfil both imperatives," Guterres said. "Affordable, renewable and sustainable energy for all." The comments came as governments and the private sector pledged to spend more than US\$400bn at a high-level summit that called for an acceleration of efforts to avert catastrophic climate change and simultaneously bring electricity to more of the 760mn people around the world who currently lack it.

The 'energy compact' lists commitments from more than 35 governments and several large companies, including TotalEnergies, Schneider Electric and Google.

The aim is to revamp the global energy system, which accounts for about 75 per cent of total greenhouse gases, according to the United Nations.

Jennifer Layke, global energy director at the World Resources Institute, said the pledges serve "transparency purposes" and enable NGOs to hold companies and governments accountable.

But "to deliver on climate, we



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres speaks during the General Debate of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on September 22 in New York (AFP)

still have a long way to go to get to the level of transformation on the energy transition that is required," she said.

Ending fossil fuel subsidies

The spending pledges, many of which have been announced previously, include projects to expand electricity access in developing countries, boost clean cooking technologies and improve energy efficiency as part of a drive to decarbonize the energy system.

Guterres noted there has been some progress, with renewable energy now comprising 29 per cent of global electricity generation.

"But it's not nearly fast enough," Guterres said. "We are still a long way from being able to provide affordable and clean energy for all."

He said the world must reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45 per cent in 2030 from 2010 levels to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees.

He called for a quadrupling of solar and wind capacity by that time, part of a push to triple investments on renewable energy and energy efficiency to US\$5tn per-year.

And Guterres called on authorities to phase out subsidies on fossil fuel production and "put a price on carbon."

An IMF study published Fri-

day estimated that direct and indirect subsidies of fossil fuels added up to US\$5.9tn, about 6.8 per cent of global GDP in 2020.

"Underpricing fossil fuel undermines domestic and global environmental objectives, hurting people and hurting the planet," said IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva.

"It is also a badly targeted policy that predominantly benefits higher-income households and deprives governments of precious fiscal resources."

"Raising fuel prices is, of course, very challenging," Georgieva said, adding, "but doing nothing will pose far greater challenges."

AFP

UK minister blames industry rep for petrol-buying frenzy

London, UK – Britain's transport secretary on Sunday accused lorry industry representatives of helping to spark petrol panic-buying, as he defended a U-turn on post-Brexit immigration policy to ease an escalating supply crisis.

Grant Shapps's comments came hours after the government said it will issue up to 10,500 short-term work visas to lorry drivers and poultry workers to ease chronic staff shortages that have hit supplies to various sectors.

Disruption spread to fuel retailers this week after a number run by BP and ExxonMobil-owned Esso were forced to close to customers due to a lack of deliveries – immediately prompting long queues forming at numerous petrol stations.

But in broadcast interviews Sunday Shapps claimed a road haulage association leak to the media about potential fuel delivery shortages had contributed to the panic-buying, and blamed the industry for being "counter-productive".

"There has been some pretty irresponsible briefing out by one of the road haulage associations which has helped to spark a crisis and that's very, very unhelpful," he told Sky News.

Shapps, who insisted there was no actual fuel shortfall at UK refineries and storage facilities, accused the haulage industry of being "desperate" to employ more European drivers and "undercutting British salaries".



A security guard assists drivers queuing to fill up at a Tesco petrol station in Camberley, west of London on Sunday (AFP)

"I know that's been their ask all along," he added.

But Rod McKenzie, of the Road Haulage Association – reportedly alleged to have made the leak – called the claim "nonsense".

He said the government needed to encourage a "holistic" approach to the numerous problems the industry faces.

The decision to expand temporarily the critical worker visa scheme is a reversal by Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government, which has tightened post-Brexit immigration rules insisting that Britain's reliance on foreign labour must end.

It had resisted offering more visas for months, despite an estimated shortage of around 100,000 heavy goods vehicle (HGV) drivers and warnings from various sectors that the pandemic and Brexit had com-

bined to worsen the situation.

As well as threatening timely fuel supplies, the lack of lorry drivers has hit British factories, restaurants and supermarkets in recent weeks and months.

In response, Shapps unveiled a package of measures late Saturday which he insisted would tackle short and long-term problems.

The new temporary visas – 5,000 earmarked for HGV drivers, 5,500 for poultry workers, to run from next month until December 24 – are aimed at easing backlogs in the run-up to Christmas.

Other measures will focus on rapidly expanding the number of new domestic drivers, and include deploying Ministry of Defence driving examiners to help provide thousands of extra tests over the next 12 weeks.

AFP

Firms urge British government to quicken shift from fossil fuels

London, UK – Major UK-based companies on have urged the government to accelerate the nation's shift away from fossil fuels for electricity generation, amid turmoil over surging gas prices.

The 14 firms – including energy supplier Octopus, telecoms operator BT and supermarket chain Co-op – wrote a joint letter to Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng calling for a rethink.

"We are writing to urge the government to (commit) to the full decarbonisation of UK electricity generation by 2035," read the letter, which was organised by environmental think-tank Green Alliance.

The new target would require annual investments of up to US\$19.2bn per year in renewable energy, they added.

Britain, which hosts the

COP26 United Nations climate summit in Glasgow in November, aims to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2050.

"As COP26 approaches, we believe the time is right for the UK to signal an end to the use of

In response to the letter, the government insisted it had a successful track record on the matter.

"The UK has been very successful in decarbonising electricity generation – emissions from

stable and we are actively taking steps to bring forward low carbon technologies that are capable of replicating this role."

However, UK electricity generation group Drax had revealed Thursday that Britain has been forced to run coal-fired power stations in order to secure energy supplies in recent weeks amid the chronic gas crisis.

Wholesale natural gas prices in Britain soared to record peaks last week, sparking fears of rocketing domestic energy bills as demand peaks during the cold northern hemisphere winter.

Britain is particularly exposed to Europe's ongoing energy crisis due to its reliance on natural gas to generate electricity. The price of European gas futures has more than doubled since May.

AFP

Britain, which hosts the COP26 United Nations climate summit in Glasgow in November, aims to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2050

unabated fossil fuels in the power sector, claiming another historic first," the letter added.

"There is now a clear pathway to delivering emissions-free electricity."

Unabated refers to fossil fuels whose emissions have not gone through any filtering process.

the sector have halved since 2015, and solar and wind are now cheaper than existing coal and gas power plants in much of the world," read a government statement.

"Gas generation currently plays a key role in keeping the electricity system secure and



SULTANATE OF OMAN
MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH
 MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH, Muscat, hereby give notice
 of tenders for the following projects

TENDER NO.	PROJECT CATEGORY	LOCATION	GRADE IN TENDER BOARD REGISTRATION
20/2021	CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE	CONSTRUCTION OF SPORT HALL AT OMAN CLUB (MUSCAT GOVERNORATE)	FIRST GRADE

Companies, which are registered with the Tender Board and engaged in same category with experience in and same Grade as noted above, can obtain the Tender Documents at the Tender Board E-tendering digital portal link (<http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) until 09/10/2021.

The last date of tender submission on above E-tendering site at 09:00am 08/11/2021

A Tender Bond equivalent to 1% of the tender sum issued from a registered bank, in the prescribed form, in Sultanate of Oman and valid for 90 days should enclosed with the tender.

Any tender without the bond will be reject and the tender committee is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender received.

INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE OF MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

Any participants have doubt in adopting e-tendering can contact over the phone **24402200** or through email etenderhd@ita.gov.om



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Ahli Islamic opens children's account



A bank that has invested in the growth and prosperity of its clients, Ahli Islamic has initiated various schemes to encourage its customers to save wisely and plan for the future. Advocating this habit even amongst the younger generation, the bank has expanded its product offering by launching a special account dedicated to children.

Offering a wide range of benefits, the Ahli Islamic Children's Account will help parents effi-

ciently manage their child's accounts while inculcating a savings habit amongst them from a young age. The new Children's Account which is targeted at children up to 18 years of age is tailor-made to suit the varying requirements of the younger population. "Whether for adults or children, all our banking solutions follow Islamic guidelines and are Sharia'a-compliant. Addressing the changing needs of our di-

verse client portfolio, we continue to come up with innovative ways to serve our customers," said Yousuf al Rawahi, DGM and head of Ahli Islamic. "The minors along with the youth, make up a significant portion of the Omani population, and are the future of the nation. It is imperative that we instill the right values, ethics and culture in them when they are young so they are able to con-

tribute positively to the economy when they're older. "The Ahli Islamic Children's Account is a step in that direction. By giving parents of young children the opportunity to open bank accounts for their greater good and long-term security through effective fund management, we introduce a sense of responsibility amongst this young customer segment. In addition to this, our generous draws under Qitaf will further

serve the objective of inculcating a savings culture amongst them which will help them achieve their future goals and aspirations." To safeguard the interests of the account holders and in line with the bank's policies for minors, the Ahli Islamic Children's Account can only be opened under the supervision of a parent. This ensures that while the account is still under the name of the minor, the parents reserve the liberty to handle the transactions. Once the account is active, the account holder will be eligible to enter Qitaf prize, and participate in weekly, monthly and quarterly draws, along with the draws dedicated for children. The Children's Savings account includes many benefits which are allocated to help meet the requirements of this category, including opportunities to win cash prizes, exclusive offers and discounts on purchases, reduced profit rates on education funding, and permanent fee-free payment orders. The Children's Savings account allows parents to manage their children's accounts until the child reaches the age of 18. Demonstrating its keenness to provide best-in-class services for its customers, Ahli Islamic continues to come up with innovative plans offering customers meaningful avenues to grow their funds in accordance with Sharia'a-compliant banking.



Alizz Islamic Bank brings joy to three winners in Bushra draw

Three lucky winners of Alizz Islamic Bank won a total of RO25,000 each in the monthly draw of the popular Bushra Prize Savings Account. The draw was held at the bank's Ma'abela branch. The bank has given away RO91,000 as prize money, including the monthly prize of RO75,000 split among three winners, with RO25,000 each. The rest of the prize money - RO16,000 - was distributed equally among 32 winners (16 men and 16 women); with one winner from every branch of Alizz Islamic Bank throughout the sultanate. The Bushra Prize Savings Account has proven to be a best-seller, as it continues to bring hope and happiness to a host of customers, many of who have won in the bank's regular draws, which have changed their fortunes and relieved their stress. But what makes these wins all the more attractive is the fact that the draws are not dictated by the amounts saved, and this has translated into good tidings for several account holders, some of who have been able to build their dream home, while others have realised set goals. As was announced by Alizz Islamic Bank earlier in the year, the prize money, incorporated within Bushra Prize Savings Account - with its daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and annual prizes - has been increased from RO1.8mn in 2020 to RO2mn this year.

In addition, the annual grand prize will amount to RO150,000, and RO100,000 was designated as the half-yearly prize. Besides, three winners will be picked in the quarterly draws, with each winner getting a whopping RO50,000. These prizes and measures are in tune with the bank's plans to implement different initiatives that cater to customers, more so during the pandemic, with provision of a bouquet of prizes. Interestingly, customers can double their chances of winning by doubling their balance. Alongside the prize scheme, customers of the popular Bushra Prize Savings Account also benefit from the services that are pegged on to the opening of the account at the bank, including instant debit card, online and mobile banking, and SMS alerts for any transaction. As for the Bushra Account, it is based on the principle of Mudaraba, wherein the funds are placed in an investment pool in a manner that is in accordance with the provisions and principles of Islamic Sharia'a. This, in turn, helps customers to achieve best possible returns; besides, customers can avail opportunities to win cash prizes as gifts from the shareholders' funds in the daily, weekly, monthly draws, including the quarterly, annual grand prizes and special prizes. To enter the draw, a Bushra account must be opened with a minimum balance of RO100 only.

MEC holds teaching and learning symposium

Middle East College (MEC) is organising the fifth Teaching and Learning, Research and Community Engagement Symposium from September 27 to 29. This is a major annual event at MEC that brings together all academic staff under one umbrella to share and celebrate the best practices. Agile learning in higher education has gained popularity in recent years because the most sought-after attribute in today's graduates is the mindset and ability to learn new skills in accordance with the emerging needs of society and the workplace. Henceforth the fifth MEC symposium will be conducted under the theme of 'Nurturing Agile Learners'.



The event will have keynote speeches and panel discussions on various topics. It will also include award ceremonies at the department and programme levels, and at the faculty level to acknowledge and appreciate the use of appropriate pedagogies and technologies, channelling industry engagement, and enhancing student research opportunities for developing agile learning communities.

UN welcomes new firm working to reduce global digital divide

The Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO), a global multilateral body working to strengthen collaboration towards the sustainable and inclusive growth of the global digital economy, held a high-level side event as part of the ongoing 76th UN General Assembly. Speakers at the virtual event included the UN assistant secretary general and officer-in-charge of the Office of the UN secretary general's envoy on technology, Maria-Francesca Spatolisano, DCO chairperson Eng Abdullah Alswaha, ministers from the DCO's member states and the DCO's secretary general, Deemah AlYahya. The event, titled 'Shaping an Inclusive Digital Age', held by the



DCO - which comprises seven member states - highlighted how this recently-established organisation is bringing together private and public sector actors, academia and civil society to spur digital economic growth across member states, advance DCO members' digital transfor-

mation, and address challenges related to a growing digital divide within and between countries. The UN secretary general's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation recognises the importance of the digital economy to humanity's future, particularly access for everyone to communicate, work and learn using the Internet and online technologies. People who lack access to these technologies will be further marginalised as the digital economy grows, particularly women, the elderly, those with disabilities, indigenous groups, or those who live in poor, remote or rural areas. The roadmap's first action is that every adult should have affordable access to digital networks by 2030.

Renault Dokker combines best features of space, comfort, dynamic performance

Designed to be extremely functional Renault Dokker is a harmonious and dynamic utility vehicle with great design. Offering easy loading, quick access to objects, side door, on-board multimedia system, and more Renault Dokker combines the best features of space, comfort, and dynamic performance. Practical and spacious, functional utility vehicle Renault Dokker has found many takers in Oman. Saeed al Hinai says that Renault Dokker Van competently rises to the challenge of meeting his day-to-day needs. "Its 750kg payload is invaluable for a businessman like me," he says. Hinai is impressed with its easy loading feature. "The Dokker Van comes with one or two sliding side doors and the loading width stands at 703mm! The asymmetrical rear doors, meanwhile, open to a width of 1.08m which is especially useful. Its lashing rings on the floor holds fragile items perfectly in place," he says.

Sulieman al Jabri from Ibra welcomed the robust performance of the vehicle's engine. "The 1.6lt 85hp Euro 4 engine that powers Dokker shows consumption levels among the lowest in its class, without having to resort to expensive and complex technologies or sacrificing performance," he says. He added, "The Dokker Van will exceed your expectations. Its loading area is equipped with eight lashing rings on the floor, ensuring that your most fragile items are firmly held in place. For added security, you can choose between three types of partition: tubular, full glazed or pivoting wire-mesh (associated with Easy Seat). The side and rear doors can be either panelled or glazed. And for even greater efficacy, the Dokker Van is available with side panels and a robust, stylish boot carpet." Zaid al Balushi from Muscat appreciates that Renault Dokker is sturdy and reliable. "The best part of Renault Dokker is that it acclimates to all circumstances. Its features in-



cluding ABS & BA, ESP, TPMS, dual airbags make it a top range car," he says. A spokesperson for Renault Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles said, "Renault Dokker Van has everything to make its owner's work easier. To enhance efficiency, it provides owners with audio streaming and Bluetooth hands-free calling. Renault Dokker is a very

efficient and dynamic vehicle. That is why it has found so many fans. Its 1.6 MPI 85 hp engine is efficient both in consumption and cost of usage. The engine allows for a very dynamic driving at a cost that is amongst the most frugal." **Driving comfort** Renault offers you a vehicle up to 3.9m³, equipped as a saloon car,

as robust as a utility vehicle and as practical as a Dokker van. Accessibility, loading volume and driving comfort - the Renault Dokker Van is packed with benefits and nice surprises. **Practical storage** Renault Dokker Van has everything to make owner's work easier: 4x20W radio, audio streaming and Bluetooth hands-

free calling. **Practicality and versatility** Available, open and spacious, the Renault Dokker aims to please, with an innate sense of practicality and versatility. It can take all kinds of loads, assisted by XL sliding side doors (more than 70cm wide) and two asymmetrical rear doors. Meeting the

challenges of transport and delivery with ingenuity and panache, the Renault Dokker Van moves with the times: its economical engine, low CO₂ emissions and respect for both the environment and budget make it a truly model employee. **Lashing rings** Exceed expectations, Dokker's loading area is equipped with eight lashing rings on the floor, ensuring that your most fragile items are firmly held in place. For added security, owners can choose between three types of partition: tubular, full glazed or pivoting wire-mesh (associated with Easy Seat). The side and rear doors can be either panelled or glazed. And for even greater efficiency, the Dokker Van is available with side panels and a robust, stylish boot carpet. SBA is largely committed to supporting Renault Oman's growth in the sultanate through major emphasis on customer satisfaction and by providing world-class after-sales services in Oman.

Rediscover Opportunities

Invest in Oman's first and only reinsurance investment opportunity.

Oman Reinsurance Company SAOG
(Under Transformation)

Initial Public Offering of 117,647,059 Ordinary Shares
at a offer price of Bzs 86 per Offer Share

(Comprising offer price of Baizas 85 and offer expenses of Baizas 1 per offer share)

Offers opens 3rd October 2021 | Offers closes 17th October 2021



This summary has been extracted from the unofficial translation of the original Prospectus prepared in Arabic and approved by the CMA in accordance with Administrative Decision no. KH/127/2021 dated September 23, 2021. This does not constitute an offer to sell or an invitation by or on behalf of the Company to subscribe to any of the Shares in any jurisdiction outside of Oman where such distribution is, or may be, unlawful.

Offer Summary

Name of the company	Oman Reinsurance Company SAOG (under transformation)
Commercial registration no.	1052000
Date of registration	4th August, 2008
Address	PO Box: 1968, Postal Code: 114, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: +968 24307700, Fax: +968 24307777
Duration	Unlimited
Authorized share capital of the Company	RO 40,000,000
Issued Share capital of the Company (after the Offer, assuming the entire Offer is subscribed)	RO 30,000,000 divided into 300,000,000 Shares
Number of Shares offered for subscription	117,647,059 new Shares, representing 28.17 per cent of the post-IPO issued Shares of the Company.
Issued Share capital of the Company (after the Offer, assuming the entire Offer is subscribed)	The issue of 117,647,059 new shares amounting to RO 10,000,000 will increase the issued capital of the Company to RO 40,000,000 divided into 417,647,059 Shares
Offer Price	Baizas 86 per Share, including offer price of Baizas 85 per Share and offer expenses of Baizas 1 per Share
Purpose of Offer (Use of Offer Proceeds)	The Company is undertaking the IPO in order to comply with the requirements of Royal Decree 38/2014 which amended the Insurance Law, requiring existing licensed insurance and reinsurance companies to be established as SAOGs by 17th August 2017 and as per 2019 EGM, and to increase the issued capital to RO 40 million. The proceeds of the Offer (including Offer expenses) will accrue entirely to the Company to fund its operations and growth plans.
Persons eligible to subscribe for the Offer	The Offer will be open to Omani and non-Omani individuals and juristic persons, who have their accounts with the MCD, as on the date of /or during the Subscription Period.
Subscription Opening Date	3rd October 2021
Subscription Closing Date	17th October 2021
Expected listing date on MSX (Parallel Market)	28th October 2021
Prohibitions on subscription	The following prohibitions apply to the Offer: 1. Sole proprietorship establishments cannot apply for the Offer Shares. However, the owners of sole proprietorship establishments may submit Applications in their personal names. 2. Multiple Applications are not permitted. An Applicant may not submit more than one Application. 3. Joint Applications are not permitted (i.e., Applications made in the name of more than one person, including Applications made on behalf of legal heirs). These Applications should only be made in their personal names. 4. Trust accounts can apply for the Offer Shares. The collecting banks may accept trust requests after making sure that the owners of these accounts have not submitted other requests in their personal names or personal sole proprietorship establishments. All Applications falling in any of above categories will be rejected without notifying the Applicant.
Minimum limit for the subscription under one (1) Application	For Category I investors: 1,000 Shares and in multiples of 100 Shares thereafter. For Category II investors: 500,100 Shares and in multiples of 100 Shares thereafter.
Maximum limit for the subscription under one (1) Application	For Category I investors: 500,000 shares For Category II investors: 11,764,705 Shares which is 10 per cent of the total Offer shares.
Proposed allotment	In case of over-subscription of the Offer, the eligible Applicants shall be segregated into two categories and the Offer Shares will be allotted among the eligible Applicants, as follows: Category I: 76,470,589 Shares, being 65 per cent of the Offer Shares, will be allocated on a pro-rata basis to investors applying for 500,000 Shares or less. Category II: 41,176,470 Shares being 35 per cent of the Offer Shares, will be allocated on a pro-rata basis to investors applying for 500,100 Shares or more. The CMA, in co-ordination with the Issue Manager, will finalise the actual basis of allocation. The CMA may decide to allocate a minimum number of Offer Shares equally to all Applicants, taking into consideration small subscribers, and the remaining Offer Shares shall be distributed on a pro-rata basis. In case of under-subscription the shares, all shares will be allocated to subscribers and the company will list on the MSX based on the actual subscription of the IPO along with the pre-IPO shares. The company will in consultation with the CMA to agree on a suitable course of action regarding the unsubscribed shares. Any under-subscription in any category shall be carried over to the other category as described in more detail in the Chapter 21 "Subscription Conditions and Procedures" of the Prospectus. It should be noted that pursuant to Ministerial Decision 205/2007 issued by the former Ministry of National Economy, all GCC individuals and juristic persons are treated as Omani nationals and juristic persons in respect of ownership of shares of companies in Oman.
Issue Manager	Uthman Capital SAOG
Legal Advisor	Al Busaidy, Mansoor Jamal & Co.
Collecting Banks	Oman Arab Bank S.A.O.G. National Bank of Oman S.A.O.G. Sohar International S.A.O.G.
Media Consultant	OHI Leo Burnett
Statutory Auditors (for the year ended 2016-17)	Ernst & Young LLC
Statutory Auditors (for the year ended 2018)	PricewaterhouseCoopers LLC
Statutory Auditors (2019-current)	BDO Oman
Reporting Accountants	Crowe Mak Ghazali LLC
Registration and Transfer Agent	Muscat Clearing and Depository Co. SAOG

Purpose of the Offer

The Offer will enable the Company to comply with the requirements of Royal Decree 38/2014 which amended the Insurance Law, requiring existing licensed insurance companies to be established as SAOGs within three years from the date of the publication of the said Royal Decree in the official gazette.
The purpose of the IPO is to convert the Company from an SAOG to an SAOG, list the Shares on the Parallel Market of the MSX, and raise RO 10 million in new capital. The conversion of the Company has been approved by the Shareholders at an EGM held on 26th March 2019 ("2019 EGM"). Following the 2019 EGM the Company also convened 2021 EGM (for details please see section 5.4 of the Prospectus).
The IPO will increase the issued and paid-up capital from RO 30 million to RO 40 million, assuming full subscription.

Use of Proceeds of the Offer

The Offer Proceeds (including the amount collected towards Offer expenses) will be remitted in full to the Company on listing of the Offer Shares in MSX. The Company will use the proceeds to fund its operations and growth plans. If the Offer Proceeds increase after covering the expenses, the surplus shall be transferred to the legal reserve or to any other reserve established by the Company in accordance with the provisions of the CCL.

The Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association

A copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Company is available for perusal at the Company's office located in Coral Building, 6th Floor, Al Khuwair South, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman during business hours.

Continuing Obligations

In accordance with the CCL, all existing obligations of the Company, prior to its transformation to a public joint stock company, shall continue in the SAOG.

Shareholding Details

Current Shareholders of the Company (before transformation to SAOG) as on date of the Prospectus is as under:

S. No.	Name	Nationality	Number of Shares held before the transformation (*share value Baizas 100 per Share)	% of total
1	Zawawi Trading Co. LLC***	Omani	28,500,000	9.50
2	Muscat Insurance Co. SAOG***	Omani	3,000,000	1.00
3	Omar Al Zawawi Establishment LLC***	Omani	46,500,000	15.50
4	Murhadha Mohamed Jawad A. Ibrahim Al Lawati	Omani	500,000	0.16
5	Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance Co. SAQ	Qatari	73,750,200	24.58
6	Aslan Trading Co.**	Qatari	16,100,000	5.36
7	Zerethia Holdings Limited**	Cypriot	11,733,100	3.91
8	Zilano Investments Limited**	Cypriot	30,000,000	10.00
9	Trust International Insurance & Reinsurance Co. BSC**	Bahraini	89,916,700	29.97
	Total		300,000,000	100.00%

* - The Shareholders approved reducing par value of its shares to Baizas 100 from RO 1 in the 2019 EGM.

** - As per the letter dated 16 November 2020, "Trust Re has mentioned to the CMA that they are the beneficial owners of these shares."

*** Related Parties

New Shares being sold through the Offer

The Company is issuing new shares through IPO, and existing shareholders are not selling any shareholding through the IPO.

Post Offer Equity Structure

After the IPO, assuming the entire Offer is fully subscribed, the shareholding structure will be as under:

S. No.	Name of the shareholder	Nationality	Number of Shares held	Aggregate value (RO)	% of post-IPO capital
1	Zawawi Trading Co. LLC	Omani	28,500,000	2,850,000	6.71%
2	Muscat Insurance Co. SAOG	Omani	3,000,000	300,000	0.71%
3	Omar Al Zawawi Establishment LLC	Omani	46,500,000	4,650,000	10.94%
4	Murhadha Mohamed Jawad A. Ibrahim Al Lawati	Omani	500,000	50,000	0.11%
5	Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance Co. SAQ	Qatari	73,750,200	7,375,020	17.26%
6	Aslan Trading Co.**	Qatari	16,100,000	1,610,000	3.79%
7	ZERETHIA HOLDINGS LIMITED	Cypriot	11,733,100	1,173,310	2.78%
8	ZILANO INVESTMENTS LIMITED	Cypriot	30,000,000	3,000,000	7.06%
9	Trust International Insurance & Reinsurance Co. BSC	Bahraini	89,916,700	8,991,670	21.16%
	Sub-total		300,000,000	30,000,000	71.83%
10	Public		117,647,059	10,000,000	26.17%
	Total		417,647,059	40,000,000	100.00%

Shareholders' Voting Rights

Following the IPO, the issued Share Capital will be RO 40,000,000 divided into 417,647,059 Shares. Each Share will carry the right to one vote at a general meeting of the Company.
The pre-IPO Shareholders will collectively have 71.83 per cent of the voting rights following the IPO (assuming full subscription to the Offer by Public).

About the Company and its Operations

Oman Re is the first reinsurance company to be established in Oman with the purpose of writing Facultative and Treaty business from local and international markets.
Oman Re's current operational scope includes all Afro-Asian countries, CEE & CIS market and it writes marine and non-marine lines of business. The Company is licensed as a composite reinsurance.
Oman Re was incorporated in July 2008 in the Sultanate of Oman with a paid-up capital of OMR 5,000,000. Capital was gradually increased to OMR 30,000,000 (Thirty million Omani Rial), equivalent to circa USD 78,000,000. The capital of Oman Re is proposed to be increased to RO 40 million (Forty million Omani Rial) post IPO.
The official business started in 2009 and company wrote a premium of OMR 1.2M, since then company has grown significantly and have closed 2020 with OMR 24.8 million gross premium.
Oman Re is a specialized reinsurance company and from the beginning it wrote facultative and treaty business for all conventional lines of business such as Fire, Engineering, Marine and Motor.
Previously the company had slightly larger treaty book than facultative book. However, by the end of 2018 it is balanced between treaty and facultative (almost 50/50). The Company increased its Facultative book compared to Treaty in 2019 and 2020.
In 2015, the shareholding of the Company changed significantly. To better manage the business and to rationalize the commitment by the shareholders, in late 2016, new management took over the day-to-day operations of the company. Since then, a new vision, new strategy is being implemented resulting in the overall structure and portfolio of the company, the recruitment of skilled personnel and the embedding the ERM across the organization.

Risk Factors

Prospective investors should carefully consider the risks described in the Prospectus in addition to all other information presented in the Prospectus, including the financial statements set out in the Prospectus, before deciding to purchase any of the Shares offered for subscription.

Dividend Policy

The Company proposes to follow a reasonable dividend payout policy, subject to debt repayments, working capital, investment portfolio and operational expenditures requirements. The amount of annual dividends and the determination of whether to pay dividends in any year may be affected by a number of other factors including the Company's business prospects, financial performance, free cash availability, facilities agreements/ covenants, regulations, and the outlook for the sector.

The Company has not paid any dividends since inception and is not projecting to pay any dividends in the near future. The Company is legally required to pay dividends to the extent of the profits which is outstanding from previous years. A suitable dividend policy will be put in place once appropriate performance level is achieved by the Company.

Board

The directors' term of office shall expire in three years from the date of election pursuant to Article 181 of the CCL. The current Board has seven members, and the details are provided below:

S. No.	Name	Title/ Designation	Representing	Executive/ Non-Executive	Independent/ Non-Independent
1	Dr. Juma Bin Ali Al-Juma	Chairman	Zerethia Holdings, Cyprus	Non-Executive	Independent
2	Sheikh Nasser Bin Ali Bin Saud Al Thani	Deputy Chairman	Al-San Commercial Company, Qatar	Non-Executive	Independent
3	Al Sayyid Mohamed Said Hail Al Busaid	Member	Not representing a shareholder	Non-Executive	Independent
4	Kamal Tabaja	Member	Trust Insurance and Reinsurance Company BSC Bahrain	Non-Executive	Non-independent
5	Sanjeev Badyal	Member	Qatar General Insurance and Reinsurance Company	Non-Executive	Non-independent
6	Gemal Mohamed Mohamed Ahmed Abdalla	Member	Zawawi Trading Co. LLC	Non-Executive	Independent
7	Pramod Kumar Hran	Member	Omar Zawawi Establishment, Oman	Non-Executive	Non-independent

The term of the Board is expiring on 07 July 2023.

Subscription Conditions and Procedures

Eligibility for the Subscription to the Offer Shares

The subscription to the Offer Shares will be open to Omani and non-Omani individuals and juristic persons, who have their accounts with the MCD. All GCC individuals and juristic persons are treated as Omani individuals and juristic persons for the purpose of owning shares in Omani companies.
The Company, the Issue Manager and the Legal Advisors are not liable for any changes in the Applicable Law or regulations that occur after the date of the Prospectus.

Applicants are advised to make their own independent investigations to ensure that their Applications comply with the Applicable Law.

Prohibitions regarding the Applications for Subscription:

- The following are prohibited from subscribing to the Offer:
- Sole proprietorship establishments. However, the owners of sole proprietorship establishments may submit Applications in their personal names.
 - Trust accounts. It is allowed to apply for subscription by trust accounts – the Collecting Banks may accept Application from Trust accounts after making sure that the owners of these accounts have not submitted other requests in their personal names or personal sole proprietorship establishments.
 - Multiple Applications. An Applicant may not submit more than one Application.
 - Joint Applications (i.e., Applications made in the name of more than one individual, including Applications made on behalf of legal heirs. These Applications should only be made in their personal names).
- All Applications falling in one of the above categories will be rejected without contacting the Applicant.

Applications on behalf of Minor Children:

- For the purpose of this Offer, any person under 18 years of age on the date of submission of an Application will be defined as a minor.
- Only a father may subscribe on behalf of his minor children.
- If an Application is made on behalf of a minor by any person other than the minor's father, the person submitting the Application will be required to attach a valid, Shariah (Legal) Power of Attorney issued by the competent authorities authorizing him or her to deal in the funds of the minor through sale, purchase and investment.

Shareholder's (Applicant's) Number with the MCD:

- Any Applicant who subscribes for the Offer Shares must have an account and shareholder number with the MCD. Any Applicant may apply to obtain an investor number and open an account by completing the MCD application form. This may be obtained from the MCD's Head Office or its website at <http://www.mcd.gov.om>, or from brokerage companies licensed by the MSX. The completed form may be submitted by an Applicant through any of the following channels:
 - At the head office of the MCD based in the Commercial Business District, Muscat, Oman.
 - At the branch of the MSX based in Sohar, Oman. Tel: +968 23299822, Fax: +968 23299833
 - At the office of any brokerage company licensed by the MSX.
 - By sending a facsimile to the MCD at +968 24817491.
 - By opening an account through the MCD website at <http://www.mcd.gov.om>
- In order to receive an investor number with MCD, a juristic person will be required to furnish a copy of its constitutional documents, in the form prescribed by the MCD, along with a completed MCD application form.
- Applicants who already hold accounts with the MCD are advised, before the Offer, to re-confirm their MCD account particulars such as full name, postal address, civil ID number or passport number and particulars of bank account. Applicants may update their particulars through any of the channels mentioned above.
- All correspondence including allocation notices and dividend cheques will be sent to Applicant's address as recorded at the MCD. Applicants should ensure that their address as provided to the MCD is correct.
- Applicants after opening their accounts and updating their particulars must obtain from MCD the correct investor number to be recorded in the Application Form. Verification of the number is the responsibility of the Applicant. Applications not bearing the correct investor number will be rejected without contacting the Applicant.

For more information on these procedures, Applicants should contact the MCD:
Muscat Clearing & Depository Co. SAOG
Tel: 24822222 Fax: 24817491
<http://www.mcd.gov.om>

Applicants may please note that MCD has updated the account number (investor number) to a new format. All Applicants are required to reference the new number in the Application Form and forms bearing the old number may be rejected.

Subscription Period:

The Subscription shall commence on the 3rd October 2021 and end on the 17th October 2021 with the end of the official working hours of the Collecting Banks.

Minimum Limit of Public Subscription

The minimum number of Offer Shares is as set out below:
For Category I investors: 1,000 Shares and in multiples of 100 thereafter
For Category II investors: 500,100 Shares and in multiples of 100 thereafter.

Maximum Limit of Public Subscription

For Category I investors: 500,000 offer shares.
For Category II investors: 10 per cent of the total Offer size which equates to 11,764,705 Offer Shares. Taking into consideration the requirements of Article 6 of CMA Decision No. E/43/2021.

Particulars of the Bank Account

- In accordance with the instructions of the CMA, the details of the bank account will be listed in the records of the MCD for transferring any refund as well as for crediting any dividends paid by the Company in future. For Applicants who already have bank accounts registered with the MCD the account mentioned in the Application will be used for the transfer of refunds only.
The Application containing the bank account number of a person other than the Applicant will be rejected, with the exception of the Applications made on behalf of minors that contain bank accounts particulars of their legal guardian.

Documentation Required

- A copy of a valid power of attorney duly endorsed by the competent legal authorities in the event the Application is on behalf of another person (with the exception of the Application made by a father on behalf of his minor children).
- In case of Applications by juristic persons (non-individuals) which are signed by a person in his or her capacity as an authorized signatory, a copy of adequate and valid document (such as company registration certificate and authorized signatory form) should be attached.

Mode of Application

The IPO will be conducted only through the E-IPO Mechanism. The Applicants will be able to submit Applications through the Collecting Banks:

- E-IPO channel by the Collecting Banks:

The Applicant will need to get in touch with their respective bank which has been appointed as a Collecting Bank for OmanRe IPO for further guidance on the E-IPO channel provided by the respective Bank.
The Application Money will be paid by the Applicant as per the terms of the E-IPO collection process utilized by each Collecting Bank. The Applicant will be required, before completing the Application through E-IPO, to carefully read the Prospectus, including the conditions and procedures governing the E-IPO Application.

- E-IPO Platform:

The Applicants can furnish at particulars in the E-IPO platform at the following website: www.mcd.gov.om.
After verifying all the particulars, the Applicant will need to print the E-IPO Application. The Applicant needs to submit the E-IPO Application along with supporting documents and Application Money to one of the Collecting Banks. The Collecting Bank in turn after verifying the supporting documents and confirming the receipt of the Application Money will validate the E-IPO Application in the E-IPO platform and share a copy of the acknowledgment of the E-IPO Application with each Applicant. The Applicant needs to ensure that they receive a copy of the acknowledgement from the Collecting Bank as a valid proof of their Application. Each Applicant can make payments through the following routes: a) by cash, b) by cheque or demand draft in favour of "OmanRe IPO"; or c) instruct their bank to debit their bank account provided the bank has been appointed as a Collecting Bank for OmanRe IPO for the Application Money at the time of submission of the Application.

Bank Receiving the Subscription (Collecting Banks)

The Applications shall be accepted by one of the following commercial banks during the official working hours only:

Oman Arab Bank

National Bank of Oman

Sohar International

The Collecting Bank receiving the Application is required to accept the Application after confirmation of the Applicant to submit the E-IPO Application along with supporting documents and Application Money to one of the Collecting Banks. The Collecting Bank must instruct the Applicants to comply and fulfil any requirements set out in the Application.

The Applicant must submit an Application to one of the Collecting Banks on or before the Subscription Closing Date. The Collecting Bank shall refuse any Application received after the official working hours on the Subscription Closing Date.

Rejection of Applications

The Collecting Banks shall reject Applications in the following circumstances:

- If the Application is not signed by the Applicant.
- If the Application Money is not paid by the Applicant in accordance with the conditions set out in the Prospectus.
- If the Application Money is paid by cheque and the cheque is dishonoured for whatever reason.
- If the Application is submitted in joint names.
- If the Applicant is a sole proprietorship or trust account.
- If the Application does not include the Applicant's investor number registered with the MCD.
- If the investor number furnished in the Application is incorrect i.e., it does not match with the Applicant's name.
- If the Applicant submits more than one Application in the same names, all of them will be rejected.
- If the supporting documents are not enclosed with the Application.
- If the Application does not contain all the particulars of the bank account of the Applicant.
- If the particulars of the bank account provided for in the Application are found to be incorrect.
- If the bank account in the Application does not belong to the Applicant, with the exception of Applications submitted in the names of minor children, who are allowed to make use of the particulars of the bank accounts held by their father or their legal representatives holding valid power of attorney.
- If the power of attorney is not attached to the Application in respect of an Applicant who subscribes on behalf of another person (with the exception of the fathers who subscribe on behalf of their minor children).
- If the Application does not comply with the legal requirements or other requirements as provided for in the Prospectus.

If the Collecting Bank observes, after receipt of an Application and before the expiry of the time schedule prescribed for handing over of the Applications to the Issue Manager, that the Application has not been complied with the procedures set out in the Prospectus, due effort will be taken to contact the Applicant so that the mistake may be corrected. If the Applicant does not rectify the Application within the period referred to, the Collecting Bank will return the Application together with the Application money to the Applicant and it will not be considered for allotment.

The Issue Manager may reject any Application under any of the conditions referred to above, subject to securing the approval of the CMA and submission of a comprehensive report furnishing the details of the Applications that are rejected and the reasons behind the rejections.

If it appears from the final subscriber register made by all the Collecting Banks that there are Applications with the same investor number or civil number or the same bank account (except for minor children) all the Applications shall be rejected for belonging to the same subscriber.

Enquiry & Complaints:

Applicants who intend to seek clarification or file complaints with regard to the issues related to the allotment or refund of Applications or refund of the Application money in excess of the subscription, may contact the branch of the bank where the Application was made. In case of the absence of any response from the branch, the Applicant may contact the Collecting Banks as under:

Bank	Contact Name	Postal Address	Contact Details
National Bank of Oman SAOG	Salim Masoud Salim Al Musallami	P.O. Box 751, Postal Code 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman	Tel: +968 2477 8075; Email: Salim.A.Musallami@nbo.om
Oman Arab Bank SAOG	Sagor Saeed Al-Harazi	P.O. Box 2010, Postal Code 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman	Tel: +968 2475 4526; Fax: +968 2475 7738 Email: Sagor.A.Harazi@oman-arabbank.com
Sohar International Bank SAOG	Hussain Ali Abdulrah Al Lawati	P.O. Box 44, Postal Code 114, Hail Mina, Sultanate of Oman	Tel: +968 2473 0125; Fax: +968 2473 0344 Email: assetmanagement@soharinternational.com

If the Collecting Bank fails to resolve the complaint with the Applicant, it will refer the subject matter to the Issue Manager and keep the Applicant informed of the progress and development in respect of the subject matter of the dispute. The Applicant may contact the Issue Manager on the following address:

Uthman Capital SAOG

Person(s) in charge:

	Mr. Muhammad Khashif Sabih Tel: +968 24549009	Ms. Sahar K. Al Zagha Tel: +968 24549007
	Fax: +968 24549099 P.O. Box 1137, P.C. 111, CPD, Oman Email: uthman-corporatefinance@u-capital.net	

Overall Offer Split and Allotment Procedures:

Palestinians killed in Israeli raids on W Bank

Palestinian Health Ministry confirmed a total of four deaths from Israeli gunfire, including one in Burqin

Biddu, Palestinian Territories - An Israeli operation to dismantle a Hamas cell in the West Bank sparked fierce gunbattles at multiple locations on Sunday, killing four Palestinians and seriously wounding two Israeli soldiers, official sources said.

The Palestinian Health Ministry confirmed a total of four deaths from Israeli gunfire, including one in Burqin near Jenin and three more in the Biddu area comprising several villages between Ramallah and Jerusalem.

An AFP photographer saw heavy blood stains in the village of Beit Annan, in the Biddu area.

Israeli army spokesman Amnon Shefler gave the same death toll to AFP, adding that the fatalities were Hamas fighters killed during a joint Israeli operation to apprehend Hamas members.

An army statement said two of its soldiers were 'seriously injured' from Palestinian gunfire in Burqin and that the pair remained in hospital, without giving details on their wounds.

"The security forces took action overnight in Judea and



Relatives mourn during the funeral of Osama Sobh, a Palestinian man killed by Israeli soldiers during clashes near Jenin, in the village of Burqin in the Israeli occupied West Bank on Sunday (AFP)

Samaria against Hamas members who were about to carry out attacks in real-time," said Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, referencing the biblical names used widely in Israel for the occupied West Bank. Hamas confirmed its fighters

The operation targeting the Hamas cell -began before midnight on Saturday with an arrest near Jenin. Gunfire erupted when forces descended on Burqin early on Sunday to make an additional arrest

AMNON SHEFLER

had clashed with Israeli forces near Jerusalem and Jenin and said that at least one its members, Ahmad Zahran, was among those killed.

Hamas has controlled the Israeli-blockaded Gaza strip since 2007, but also has a strong presence in the West Bank, which is formally controlled by rival group Fatah.

Islamic Jihad, another Islamist group and the second strongest

in Gaza, issued a statement identifying Osama Soboh as one of its 'martyrs' who died in Burqin, praising his 'heroism'.

Hamas has responded to previous Israeli raids by launching air strikes at the Jewish state's territory.

Shefler said the operation targeting the Hamas cell - involving the army and the Shin Bet domestic security agency - began before midnight on Saturday with an arrest near Jenin that did not result in clashes.

But he said 'gunfire erupted' when Israeli forces descended on Burqin early on Sunday to make an additional arrest, with a further exchange of fire in Biddu later on Sunday.

Shefler described the operation as 'ongoing' and that several arrests had been made.

Jenin has been a flashpoint through the long-running Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Four Palestinians were killed in the Jenin refugee camp during clashes last month.

Israel occupied the West Bank in the Six-Day War of 1967. AFP

Russia raids kill pro-Turkish fighters in Syria: Monitor

Beirut, Lebanon - At least seven fighters from a pro-Turkish rebel group were killed on Sunday in Russian air raids in northern Syria, a war monitor said on Sunday.

The strikes hit a 'military base' for the Al-Hamza Division outside the north Syria town of Afrin which has been under the control of Turkey and its Syrian rebel proxies since 2018, said the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

"Seven fighters were killed and another 13 were wounded in the Russian strikes," said the monitor, which relies on a network of sources inside Syria.

It said the death toll could climb further amid ongoing efforts to pull victims from the rubble.

Observatory head Rami Abdul Rahman said such Russian raids are rare in this region of Syria, which has been

The strikes hit a 'military base' for the Al-Hamza Division outside the northern town of Afrin which has been under the control of Turkey and its Syrian rebel proxies since 2018

SYRIAN OBSERVATORY

controlled by Turkey and its Syrian rebel allies for three years.

A Russian raid outside Afrin last month targeted a position for Faylaq al-Sham, another Turkey-backed rebel group, he said.

A spokesperson for the National Army, a coalition of

Turkey-backed rebel groups, called Sunday's attack a 'clear message from Russia' to Turkey, showing that there are no 'red lines'.

Turkey supports Syrian rebel forces battling President Bashar Assad's government and it has also launched multiple operations across Syria's northern border against Kurdish forces and against the Islamic State group.

Russia, on the other hand, is a staunch supporter of the Syrian regime and has intervened militarily in support of Assad since 2015.

Although they back opposite sides, Ankara and Moscow have worked together to broker several ceasefire deals in Syria's northwest, including a 2020 ceasefire agreement in the Idlib region, the country's last major opposition bastion. AFP

At least 50 troops killed as fighting intensifies for Yemen's Marib city

Dubai, UAE - At least 50 Huthi rebels and Yemeni pro-government troops have been killed as fighting intensifies for the city of Marib, a key battleground of the seven-year conflict, military sources said on Sunday.

Hundreds of fighters have died this month alone after the Iran-backed rebels renewed their campaign for Marib, the government's last stronghold in the oil-rich north.

"In the past 48 hours, 43 Huthi fighters were killed, mostly in coalition airstrikes [west of Marib]," a military source told AFP, while another source said at least seven loyalists died in fighting. The rebels rarely announce their casualties.

About 400 people have been reported dead in clashes in September for the northern city, following a lull in fighting in the region.

The Huthis initially escalated their efforts to seize Marib in February, hoping to gain control of the strategically vital city and the region's oil resources.



Governor Sultan al Arada (right) and Yemen's Army Chief of Staff Gen Sagheer bin Aziz light a torch at an event, in Marib on Saturday (AFP)

Marib, about 120km east of the rebel-held capital Sanaa, sits at a crossroads between the southern and northern regions and is key to controlling Yemen's north.

The war between the Saudi-led military coalition, which backs the government, and the Huthis has killed tens of thousands and forced millions from their homes.

About 80 per cent of Yemen's 30mn people are dependent on aid, in what the United Nations calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Yemen's conflict flared in 2014 when the Huthis seized the capital Sanaa, prompting Saudi-led intervention to prop up the internationally recognised government the following year.

This month marks seven years since the rebels took control of Sanaa, with some analysts saying the balance has tilted in favour of the insurgents against the coalition.

While the UN and Washington are pushing for an end to the war, the Huthis have demanded the re-opening of Sanaa airport, closed under a Saudi blockade since 2016, before any ceasefire or negotiations.

The last talks took place in Sweden in 2018, when the opposing sides agreed to a mass prisoner swap and to spare the city of Hodeida, where the port serves as the country's lifeline. AFP

Saudi masters 'live art' of python crossbreeding in palace home

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia - Saudi Faisal Malaikah's love for non-venomous snakes has evolved from having just one when he was five to ultimately crossbreeding dozens to produce 'live art' in unique colours and patterns.

In the garden of his palace in the Red Sea city of Jeddah, the 35 year old businessman has a sign on the wall in green block letters that reads: 'THE SNAKE ROOM'.

"There are people who collect precious stones or classical cars or paintings; as for me, I like to collect live art," the father of three told AFP, referring to his collection of more than 100 reticulated pythons - the world's longest snake - from southeast Asia.

"They are popular in the fashion industry, where their skin is used to make bags, shoes and belts, but one out of every 1,000 snakes hunted is one with a rare colour.

"The hunters sell the unique-coloured snakes to collectors like myself... and I crossbreed to produce rare genetic mutations with



This file photo shows Faisal Malikah displaying reticulated pythons at his house in Jeddah on September 16 (AFP)

patterns and colours unseen before," he said, pointing at a gold and grey-dotted white snake wrapped around his left arm.

Malaikah said he had no interest in selling to fashion brands,

criticised by animal rights group for their unethical use of animal skins.

"I value life, so I love (the snakes) alive and not as bags or shoes," the breeder said.

In the well-airconditioned room, the creatures slither around in large glass-encased boxes, with holes just big enough for them to flick their tongues out.

Sawdust lines the floor of the boxes, absorbing odours from the snakes' droppings.

Crossbreeding the pythons takes time and patience, said Malaikah.

It takes 'three or four generations... and about 10 to 12 years' to produce a tri-coloured snake, he added.

In the wild, pythons are constrictors - meaning they coil their bodies around their prey and squeeze until it dies, swallowing it whole. They are not venomous.

At the palace, Malaikah feeds them chicken or rabbit once a week.

'Some worth \$100,000'

Working alongside Malaikah is his friend, 32 year old Ibrahim al Sharif.

Sharif said Malaikah, the CEO of a finance company, had spared no expense, bringing in specialists from the United States to learn more about crossbreeding and mutations.

"Malaikah has spent lots of time, effort and money on this

hobby," he said.

In one of the enclosures is a six-metre long white python with golden markings. The eight year old snake weighs 100kg and moves with great effort.

"The snakes I have are unlike any in the world or very rare, some worth US\$100,000," said Malaikah. But most of his snakes are worth between US\$200 and US\$20,000 each, he added.

For Malaikah, living among the widely feared creatures is a dream come true.

"Since I was a boy, I would go to libraries looking for books about snakes and reptiles," he said. "You can say that I have always lived in an atmosphere of a biology class," he added, laughing.

While collecting snakes may have been an unusual hobby for a child, Malaikah said his family never had a problem with it.

"These are mysterious creatures, and it is natural for people to be afraid of them... but I love them, especially that they are my creations."

AFP

2 inmates died in jail south of capital: Iran

Tehran, Iran - Iranian prison authorities confirmed the deaths of two inmates within a week at a jail south of the capital and opened investigations into the circumstances.

"A committee has been set up to probe the death of Amir-Hossein Hatami in Grand Tehran prison," penitentiary authorities in the capital announced in a brief statement issued late on Saturday.

The *Ghanoun* newspaper said Hatami was a 22 year who worked in Tehran bazaar and had been arrested after getting into a fight.

The chief of Iran's prisons, Mohammad-Mehdi Hadji-Mohammadi, on Thursday ordered an investigation into the death of Chahine Nasser, another inmate of Grand Tehran, located some 30km from the capital. AFP

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Austria's curbs fuel rise in homeschooling

Over 7,500 children have been withdrawn from school for this academic year: Education ministry

Vienna, Austria - Father-of-two Shkelqim Kameni took his children out of school because of Austria's strict COVID-19 testing for pupils and his opposition to the vaccine.

The 28 year old shop manager from the western city of Salzburg is among a sharp rise in parents opting to home-school instead.

Even weeks before the new school year started this month, the divisive issue garnered media coverage and has provoked heated exchanges online between parents.

Speaking to AFP at an anti-vaccine demonstration, Kameni said he was afraid that rigorous COVID-19 testing created too much pressure in the classroom.

"Probably a child (who tests positive) will be mobbed... it's psychological abuse of children; it's child abuse," he said at the rally in downtown Vienna this month, attended by thousands.

More than 7,500 children have been withdrawn from school for this academic year, the education ministry says.

Although that's a small percentage of the 700,000 school-aged children in Austria, it is three times more than in previous years, according to ministry statistics.

"I'm getting contacted by at least ten people or so per day" who want to take their children out of school, a mother of three who runs a Facebook group for homeschoolers told AFP.

Many of those who get in touch are upset about the latest anti-virus measures in schools, the mum said.



This file photo shows demonstrators holding a banner reading 'Give the children their laughter back' during a protest against the pandemic measures, in Vienna on September 11 (AFP)

The rise in homeschooling worries me... especially the impact on youngsters no longer learning with others of their own age in a classroom

HEINZ FASSMANN

Rigorous testing

Since going back to school this month, children of all ages must now take a COVID-19 test three times a week - at least one must be a PCR test - and tests will continue to be needed for those not vaccinated.

Masks are not required in the classroom but must be worn in the corridors this month while authorities monitor the situation. Students from the age of 12 are also urged to get vaccinated - mobile teams visit schools to offer jabs and the prospect of no

longer needing to test.

Actress Eva Herzig, known for her past role in the TV crime series 'Steirerkrimi', has spoken publicly about her decision to teach her children at home with the help of other parents and teachers who have left the school system.

"I hear from so many mothers that teachers pressure children, saying they expect them to be vaccinated," she said last week. "As a mother, I have to decide on the limits... This is my child and I protect my child," she added.

Isolated from peers

Unlike other European countries such as Germany where at-home schooling has been illegal since 1919 and presence in school is mandatory, Austrian parents only need to inform authorities in writing to deregister their children.

Education Minister Heinz Fassmann admits that the rise in homeschooling worries him, especially the impact on youngsters no longer learning with others of their own age in a classroom.

"I hope it is just a wave that

comes and goes," he told AFP.

His ministry plans to require parents considering homeschooling to attend a meeting to ensure they are fully aware of what it entails.

It also wants homeschoolers to sit standard exams twice yearly, rather than just the current end-of-year ones.

But Evelyn Kometter, of the National Parents' Association, says more support should be available for homeschoolers and their parents who 'don't feel their arguments are taken seriously'.

"The increasing number of parents taking their kids out of school should alert society," she said in a statement to AFP.

Not for everyone

The Facebook group mum acknowledged that homeschooling was not for everyone and could be challenging without the backup and resources of the education system.

"People (who take their children out of school) have no idea what to expect... It is a lot of work," she said.

But she stressed the benefits of one-to-one teaching and the flexibility it offered especially for some children, such as those who are highly talented and whose needs may be neglected in the school system.

At a vocational school in a Vienna neighbourhood, several students told AFP they were glad to be back after remote learning for much of the last year due to COVID-19.

"Distance learning has been exhausting," Felix Deimler (19) studying electrical engineering, told AFP.

Marko Guculj, a 16 year old who studies plumbing, said he'd decided to get his first job when a mobile vaccination team came to school so he could go to restaurants and travel more easily under the current measures that require people to show proof of being COVID-19 vaccinated, cured or tested.

"I feel pressured (to get vaccinated) because some freedoms have been taken away from me," he said.

AFP

Iceland elects Europe's first women-majority parliament

Reykjavik, Iceland - Iceland on Sunday became the first country in Europe to have more women than men in parliament, a day after a general election that saw the left-right coalition win a clear majority.

Of the 63 seats in the Althing parliament, 33 were won by women, or 52 per cent, projections based on the final results showed on Sunday.

No other European country has had more than 50 per cent women lawmakers, with Sweden coming closest at 47 per cent,

according to data compiled by the World Bank.

Around the world, five other countries currently have parliaments where women hold at least half the seats, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union: Rwanda (61 per cent), Cuba (53 per cent), Nicaragua (51 per cent) and Mexico and the United Arab Emirates (50 per cent).

Unlike some other countries, Iceland does not have legal quotas on female representation in parliament, though some parties do require a minimum number of

candidates be women.

The Nordic country has long been a pioneer in gender equality and women's rights, and has topped the World Economic Forum's ranking of most egalitarian countries for the past 12 years.

Iceland was the first country to elect a woman as president in 1980.

"I am 85, I've waited all my life for women to be in a majority... I am really happy," Erdna, a Reykjavik resident, told AFP.

AFP

Three people killed, several injured after US train derailment

Washington, US - At least three people were killed and dozens more got injured when a US train derailed on Saturday afternoon in northern Montana, with rescuers rushing to safely evacuate everyone on board.

Around 141 passengers and 16 crew members were travelling from Chicago towards the Pacific coast when eight of the ten cars came off the tracks at around 4.00pm.

"We are deeply saddened to learn local authorities are now confirming that three people have lost their lives as a result of this accident," rail operator Amtrak said, adding that there were also 'reported injuries'.

It was not immediately clear what caused the incident.

Footage posted on social media showed people waiting by the tracks, luggage strewn next to them, with train carriages seen listing off the rails and at least one toppled onto its side.

The National Transportation and Safety Board said it was launching a 'go-team' to investigate the derailment.

Amtrak said it had sent emergency personnel to the scene to assist local authorities in the evacuation effort.

Montana's Disaster and Emergency Services coordinator Amanda Frickel told *The New York Times* that 'well over 50 people had been injured'.

She said teams of rescuers were at the scene and multiple hospitals - as well as medical helicopters - were on standby.

Authorities were not releasing further details for the time being, she said, adding: "Everybody who is alive has been extricated

from the wreck."

The Empire Builder train derailed in a remote area near Joplin, Montana, a town of

"My thoughts are with all the passengers, crew, and first responders on the scene," he added.

We are deeply saddened to learn local authorities are now confirming that three people have lost their lives as a result of this accident

RAIL OPERATOR AMTRAK

around 200 people near the border with Canada.

Montana Senator Jon Tester said he was monitoring the derailment.

Amtrak said it was cancelling some trains on Saturday between the states of North Dakota and Montana, and abridging two Empire Builder train services on

Sunday, with no substitute transit available.

The US rail network suffers from chronic underfunding and fatal accidents sometimes occur.

In 2018, two people died in South Carolina when an Amtrak train travelling on the wrong tracks collided with a stationary freight train, in a crash later blamed on safety oversights.

A year earlier, an Amtrak passenger train travelling on a new route for the first time derailed in Washington state, killing at least three people as cars plunged off a bridge onto a busy highway at the height of morning rush hour.

AFP

Evacuations as Cyclone Gulab bears down on India

Kolkata, India - Tens of thousands of people have been evacuated in three Indian states ahead of a cyclone expected to smash into the east coast later on Sunday, authorities said.

Cyclones are a regular menace in the northern Indian Ocean but many scientists say they are becoming more frequent and severe as climate change warms sea temperatures.

Cyclone Gulab is expected to make landfall between the coastal states of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, bearing gusts of up to 95km per hour, the state-run India Meteorological Department said.

The storm system from the Bay of Bengal would bring 'strong winds and very heavy (and) extremely heavy rainfall', the weather bureau added in an advisory on Sunday.

Odisha and Andhra Pradesh officials ordered tens of thousands of people living along the coast to move to shelters, as hundreds of emergency workers were sent to the region.

Authorities in West Bengal - to the north of Odisha - said on Sunday that, while Gulab appeared unlikely to hit the state directly, they were still taking precautions.

"We have so far evacuated more than 20,000 people to schools (and) government offices, which have been turned to cyclone shelters," Bankim Hazra, a state minister responsible for the low-lying areas, told AFP.

Odisha Special Relief Commissioner P K Jena said seven districts in the state were on high alert and evacuation efforts were under way.

Ganjam, a coastal district, was expected to be badly hit by the cyclone, Jena added in a statement.

In Andhra Pradesh, some 85,000 families were expected to be moved from low-lying areas to temporary relief shelters.

In May, more than a million people were evacuated from their homes along India's east coast before it was battered by Cyclone Yaas with winds gusting up to 155km an hour - equivalent to a category two hurricane.

At least 20 people were killed and tens of thousands were displaced in the storm, which caused widespread damage worth more than US\$2bn in Odisha and West Bengal states and in neighbouring Bangladesh.

AFP



Footage posted on social media showed people waiting by the tracks, luggage strewn next to them, with train carriages seen listing off the rails and at least one toppled onto its side

ETERNAL CHANCELLOR

Merkel prepares to leave the stage

Berlin, Germany - She was called 'the leader of the free world' as authoritarian populists were on the march in Europe and the United States, but Angela Merkel is wrapping up a historic 16 years in power with an uncertain legacy at home and abroad.

In office so long she was dubbed Germany's 'eternal chancellor', Merkel (67) leaves with her popularity so resilient she would likely have won a record fifth term had she sought it.

Instead, Merkel will pass the baton as the first German chancellor to step down entirely by choice, with a whole generation of voters never knowing another person at the top.

Her supporters say she provided steady, pragmatic leadership through countless global crises as a moderate and unifying figure.

Yet critics argue a muddle-through style of leadership, pegged to the broadest possible consensus, lacked the bold vision to prepare Europe and its top economy for the coming decades.

What is certain is that she leaves behind a fractured political landscape. It is also because of the long shadow she casts that her party's candidate, Armin Laschet, has struggled to sharpen his own profile.

His Social Democratic opponent, Finance Minister Olaf Scholz, has actively - and perhaps successfully - sold himself as the real continuity candidate.

Assuming she stays on to hand over power, Merkel will tie or exceed Helmut Kohl's longevity record for a post-war leader, depending on how long

the upcoming coalition negotiations drag on.

'Do the right thing'

The unflappable Merkel has served for many in recent years as a welcome counterbalance to the big, brash men of global politics, from Donald Trump to Vladimir Putin.

A Pew Research Center poll this week showed large majorities in most democracies around the globe having 'confidence in Merkel to do the right thing in world affairs'.

However, the last days of her tenure have also been marred by what Merkel called the 'bitter, dramatic and terrible' return to power of the Taliban in Afghanistan - a debacle in which she shares the blame as Germany completed its evacuation.

A trained quantum chemist raised behind the Iron Curtain, Merkel has long been in sync with her change-averse electorate as a guarantor of stability.

Her major policy shifts reflected the wishes of large German majorities - among them phasing out nuclear power after the 2011 Fukushima disaster - and attracted a broad new coalition of women and urban voters to the once arch-conservative CDU.

'Austerity queen'

Before the coronavirus pandemic, her boldest move - keeping open German borders in 2015 to more than one million asylum seekers - seemed set to determine her legacy.

But while many Germans rallied to Merkel's 'We can do it' cry, the move also emboldened

an anti-migrant party, Alternative for Germany (AfD), ushering a far-right bloc into parliament for the first time since World War II.

At the same time, hardline leaders such as Hungary's Viktor Orban accused her of 'moral imperialism' with her welcoming stance.

Six years on, she lamented this month, the European Union appears no closer to a unified policy on migration.

The woman once known as the 'climate chancellor' for pushing renewables also faces a mass movement of young activists arguing she has failed to face up to the climate emergency, with Germany not even meeting its own emissions reduction commitments.

Merkel became Europe's go-to leader during the eurozone crisis when Berlin championed swinging spending cuts in return for international bailout loans for debt-mired countries.

Angry protesters dubbed her Europe's 'austerity queen' and caricatured her in Nazi garb, while defenders credit her with holding the currency union together.

More recently, despite admitted missteps in the coronavirus pandemic including a sluggish vaccine roll-out, Germany's death toll has remained lower than those of many European partners relative to population.

Kohl's 'girl' to 'Mummy'

Merkel, the EU's and G7's most senior leader, started as a contemporary of George W Bush, Tony Blair and Jacques Chirac when she became Germany's

youngest and first woman chancellor in 2005.

She was born Angela Dorothea Kasner on July 17, 1954 in the port city of Hamburg, the daughter of a Lutheran clergyman and a schoolteacher.

Her father moved the family to a small-town parish in the communist East at a time when tens of thousands were headed the other way.

She excelled in mathematics and Russian, which has helped her maintain the dialogue with the other veteran on the world stage, Russia's Putin, who was a KGB officer in Dresden when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989.

Merkel kept the name of her first husband, whom she married in 1977 and divorced five years later.

After the fall of the wall, Merkel, who was working in a chemistry lab, joined a pro-democracy group that would merge with Kohl's Christian Democrats.

The Protestant from the East whom Kohl nicknamed his 'girl' would later be elected leader of a party until then dominated by western Catholic patriarchs.

As she rose to power, party rivals sneeringly called her 'Mutti' (Mummy) behind her back but she deftly - some said ruthlessly - eliminated potential challengers.

Although her name has come up on wish lists for key EU or United Nations posts, Merkel has said she will leave politics altogether.

Asked on her final trip to Washington in June what she looked forward to most, she replied 'not having to constantly make decisions'.

AFP



This file photo shows German Chancellor Angela Merkel prior to the start of the first working session of the G20 meeting in Hamburg, Germany (AFP)

China's Xi warns of 'grim' situation with Taiwan

Taipei, Taiwan - Chinese President Xi Jinping warned that relations between Beijing and Taipei were 'grim' on Sunday, urging the island's main opposition party to help seek 'unification of the country'.

China views self-ruled democratic Taiwan as part of its territory and vows to retake it one day, by force if necessary.

Xi has become the most bellicose leader since Mao Zedong, describing the seizure of the island as 'inevitable'.

In a congratulatory letter to Eric Chu - the newly elected leader of the Beijing-friendly Kuomintang (KMT) party - Xi said the Chinese Communist Party and the KMT should collaborate under a 'shared political basis'.

"In the past our two parties insisted on '1992 consensus' and opposing 'Taiwan independence' ... to promote peaceful developments in cross-strait relations," Xi said in the letter released by the KMT.

"At present the situation in the Taiwan Strait is complex and grim," he said, urging the parties to jointly seek peace and 'the unification of the country'.

Ties between Taiwan and China improved markedly under former president Ma Ying-jeou of the KMT between 2008 and 2016, culminating with a landmark meeting between Xi and him in Singapore



Eric Chu, newly-elected chairman of Taiwan's Kuomintang (KMT), after his victory at the KMT headquarters in Taipei on Saturday (AFP)

The Chinese Communist Party and the KMT should collaborate under a shared political basis

XI JINPING

in 2015.

The KMT has side-stepped frictions with China by accepting the so-called 1992 consensus - a tacit agreement that there is only 'one China' without specifying whether Beijing or Taipei is its rightful representative.

In response, Chu said in a letter to Xi that the two sides should 'seek common ground and respect their differences' to

promote peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.

Beijing has stepped up military, diplomatic and economic pressure on Taiwan since the 2016 election of President Tsai Ing-wen, who views the island as a sovereign nation and not part of 'one China'.

Last year, Chinese military jets made a record 380 incursions into Taiwan's defence zone, with some analysts warning that tensions between the two sides were at their highest since the mid-1990s.

On Thursday, China flew 24 warplanes including two nuclear-capable bombers into Taiwan's air defence zone, the biggest incursion in weeks, after voicing its opposition to Taipei joining a major trans-Pacific trade deal.

AFP

Social media campaign highlights colourful clothing to protest Taliban dress code

Glenwood, US - After seeing photos of black-clad Afghan women in full face veils at a pro-Taliban rally in Kabul, Bahar Jalali, an Afghan-American historian, launched a campaign highlighting the vibrant colours of traditional Afghan dresses.

"I was very concerned that the world would think that those clothing worn by those women in Kabul was traditional Afghan clothing, and I don't want our heritage and culture to be misrepresented," said Jalali, who lives in Glenwood, Maryland, about an hour's drive from Washington.

Jalali (56) created the social media hashtags #DoNotTouchMyClothes and #AfghanistanCulture, which quickly became popular, with women posting photos of themselves wearing colourful, embroidered Afghan clothing and smiling for the camera.

"Afghan women don't wear hijab," Jalali told AFP.

"We wear a loose chiffon headscarf that reveals the hair. And anybody who's familiar with Afghanistan history, culture, knows that the clothing worn by those women have never been seen before in Afghanistan," she said, referring to demonstrators at the pro-Taliban protest at a university lecture in Kabul earlier this month.

About 300 women - cov-



Bahar Jalali, an Afghan academic, shows an Afghan traditional dress at her home in Glenwood, Maryland, on Friday (AFP)

ered head-to-toe in all black in accordance with strict new dress policies for women in education under the Taliban - waved Taliban flags, as speakers railed against the West and expressed support for the hard-line Islamists.

"Afghan women don't dress that way. Afghan women wear the colourful dresses that we showed the world."

Women's rights in Afghanistan were sharply curtailed under the Taliban's 1996-2001 stint in control, but since

returning to power last month, they have claimed they will implement a less extreme rule.

Women will be allowed to attend university, as long as classes are segregated by sex or at least divided by a curtain, and women must wear an abaya and niqab, which cover the whole body and face, save for a slit for the eyes.

Jalali moved to the United States when she was seven.

She remembers Afghanistan under secular rule, with some women wearing short skirts and sleeveless dresses on the streets of Kabul, while others choosing to wear headscarves.

In 2009, Jalali returned to Afghanistan to teach history and gender studies at the American University in Kabul, in what was the country's first gender studies programme.

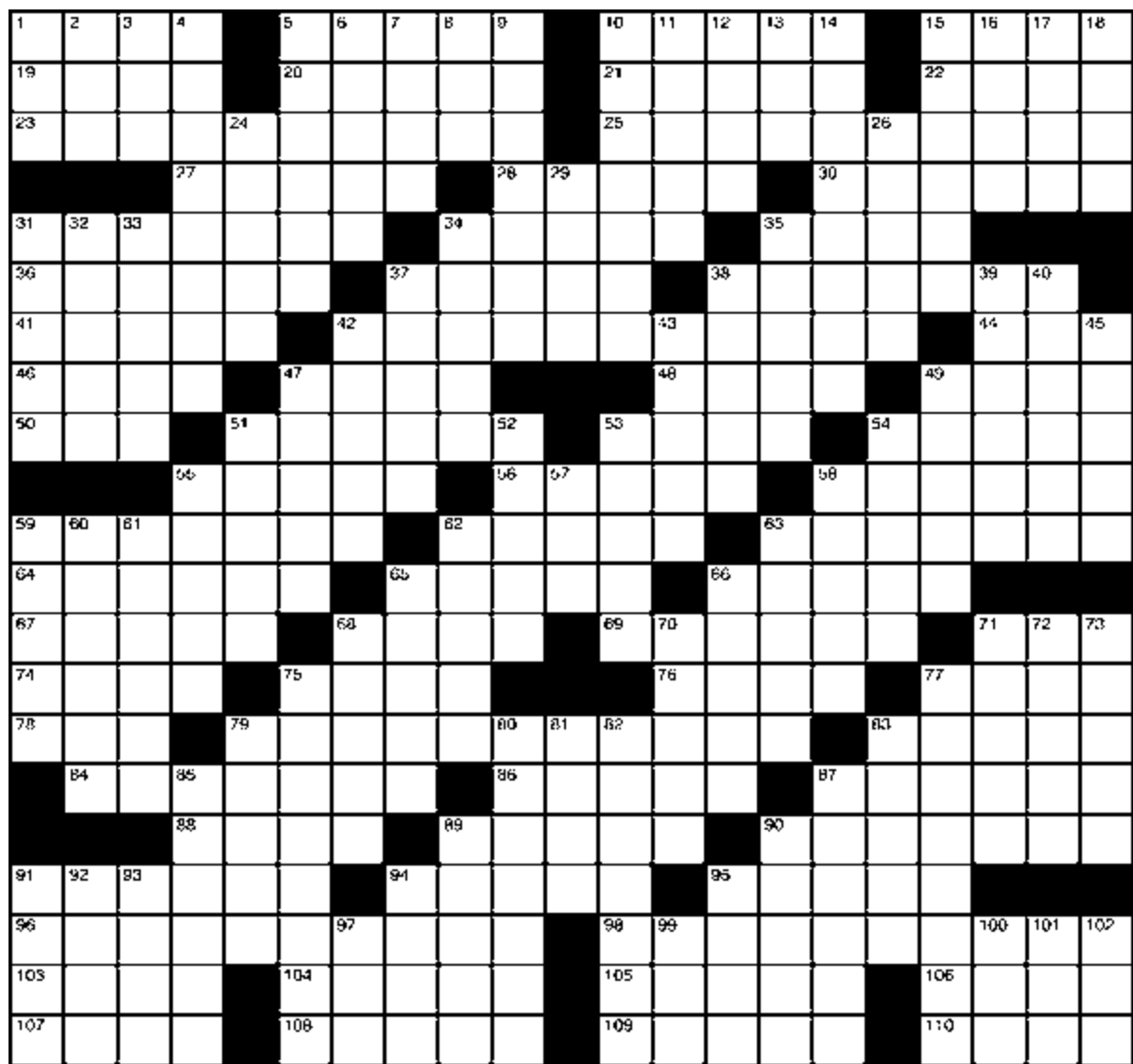
After 8.5 years there, she returned to the United States and now teaches Middle Eastern history at Loyola University Maryland.

"My students were very passionate about gender equality, male and female students," she recalled.

"So I really can't imagine how this new generation of Afghanistan that has never witnessed Taliban rule, that has grown up in a free and open society, is going to be able to adjust to this dark period that Afghanistan has now entered."

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



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- ACROSS**

1 Grate

5 Reproves severely

10 Hereditary class

15 Car launched in 1918

19 Famous nom de plume

20 Store

21 Russian workers' cooperative

22 Sea eagle

23 See 1 Down

25 Vintage car made by former wagon manufacturer

27 Moses' older brother

28 Caesar's language

30 Stanzas

31 Less sunny

34 Stan's partner

35 Tom cat

36 Vintage Ford automobile

37 Basket for carrying fish

38 Coached

41 Great and Terrible

42 Vintage luxury automobile

44 Pasture

46 Topic: Sp.

47 Outrigger

48 Admiral or guard

49 Boo

50 Hosp. sections
- 51 Tones

53 Equal, to Pierre

54 City in central Georgia

55 Satellites

56 River in Kashmir

58 Genteel

59 Vintage car named for an explorer

62 Silly one

63 Examiner

64 Handsome young man

65 Legislature

66 "The Lady ____": 1935 film

67 Tested

68 Chico or Karl

69 Ridges

71 Male swan

74 Vintage cabriolet

75 Sailing ship

76 Oracle

77 Meditate

78 Hurry

79 Luxury car

83 ____ Shriver

84 Hybrid flower

86 Bay window

87 More delicate

88 Placid or Success

89 Orgs.

90 Vintage luxury car; Detroit

91 Zealous

94 Mediterranean island

95 Mountain range in Outer Mongolia
- 96 Classic car of the 1920s

98 Daughter of Powhatan

103 Aleutian island

104 Mrs. Ralston in "The Old Maid": by Wharton

105 A Castle

106 Assistant

107 Frog genus

108 Pert

109 Snouts

110 Grant

DOWN

1 Car named from pioneer initials

2 Everyone

3 Caesar

4 Home of the Rose Bowl

5 Small flower

6 Travail

7 16th letter of the Hebrew alphabet

8 ____ Brynner

9 Bee participant

10 Early Spanish kingdom

11 Bandleader ____ Shaw

12 Daze

13 Spread

14 Grain storage building

15 Closer

16 Boats like Noah's

17 Snicker ____

18 Belonging to a girl
- 24 Posts

26 Under

29 Actor Guinness

31 Hit

32 Flutter

33 Kind of apple?

34 Mountain nymph

35 "The Last Supper," e.g.

37 Twigs

38 Corporate officer: abbr.

39 Evoke

40 Vintage car named for an explorer

42 Trim

43 Debate

45 Lou Grant

47 Combinations

49 Chemical compound containing binary salt

51 Three-dimensional

52 Dakota native

53 Bee participant

54 Ways

55 Like a lion

57 Figures: abbr.

58 More chaste

59 Hasp

60 Deft

61 Party

62 Moscow park: var.

63 Seraph

65 Author Bret
- 66 Perfect

68 Minister's home

70 ____ Park, CO

71 Papal court

72 Willow

73 Goatee

75 Library paraphernalia

77 Island between upper and lower Michigan

79 Mania

80 Posy

81 Formerly

82 One of ten in an alley

83 Portuguese island near Hong Kong

85 Largest state

87 Woodworking machines

89 Mrs. ____ Goes to Paris

90 European tree

91 Month of the Jewish calendar

92 Pest's twin city

93 Trim

94 Fahrenheit's alternate: abbr.

95 Experts

97 Arthur or Lillie

99 Gold: Sp.

100 Ligature

101 Append

102 To perceive

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You can cut to the chase in a way that few other people can match, and that sincere desire to speak (and hear) the truth helps you out in all sorts of ways right now. A flash of insight can lead to you clearing the way for a new path. You and a few close friends might not have thought it was possible, but go ahead and lead the way anyway.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Spontaneity is your business, and today's energy is pushing you to be a tycoon. You're feeling frisky when it comes to social business, and even more talkative than usual. You're inclined to let bygones be bygones -- and to ignore incidents that otherwise would have caused you needless hours of apologies. Accept any invitations that come to celebrate your new energy.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Some people may try to stereotype you as overly concerned with fun and games, but they don't realise that all your clowning serves a much higher purpose. For you, especially right now, it's not about just having a good time -- you're seeking ways to a higher sense of joy, one that includes both pleasing yourself and working for others.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Someone is telling you to push, push, push, but your innately stubborn nature comes to your rescue and balks. You just go at your own pace, and you get where you're going in your own sweet time. You know you're absolutely right this time, so stick to your guns, no matter how frantic everyone else seems. Just because they're in a panic, that's no reason to join them.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Give yourself props for a job well done, but make sure that you keep moving! There are always more goals to meet and even more to accomplish. Your recent flirtation with success should give you enough momentum to plough through everything you've got in front of you, as well as the confidence to be more assertive. It's time to deal with all those situations you try to avoid.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Try a fresh approach with an old problem. It's important for you to apply wild, untried methods to solving this current conundrum -- after all, if it's back in your life, the old techniques must not have worked too well the first time! Talk to strangers, go online or try randomly picking strategies to get you out of your current mindset and pick up a fresh outlook.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

It's hard to imagine how anything ever gets done without you to get things going. The universe has appointed you muckraker-in-chief right now. Your talent for instigating movements, starting discussions and bringing up important but ignored issues makes life much more interesting. Even if others balk initially, they are sure to thank you for your initiative by the end of the day.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You've got sass to spare, so if anyone feels the need to challenge your positions, especially if they're just interested in grandstanding, they are in big trouble! With your energy levels running this high, you're not about to hand over the reins to someone you know is less committed or capable than yourself. You should let them know in no uncertain terms.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

You've never been all that afraid to be different, and it's just that quality that helps you ensure that your radical ideas are implemented. Others are afraid to change, but you're a visionary who can see which way the tide is turning before almost anyone else. It's time for you to stand apart from the pack and rely on your ability to think ahead and consider what can make things better.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

If someone close asks you how they look, they want to hear the truth. That means you need to really listen to what they're asking -- and how they're asking it. Something more is sure to be going on with their feelings, so treat even the most innocuous questions with care to avoid causing a ruckus by accident. Your delicate handling of all situations is rewarded.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Some bossy types might be in the mood to teach you a few so-called valuable lessons, but remind yourself that they mean well. You know how to confidently hold your ground without turning it into trench warfare. Normally, you have no fear in staking your claim and speaking truth to power, but things could get quite heated, so try instead to agree to disagree.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Your usual selflessness is nudged aside by some very inward-directed instincts. Why not just go with it? When you get tired of being there for everyone else and feeling a little neglected, you need to say so. Your honesty can really cut through any residual feelings of resentment or frustration. Believe it or not, people are much happier to hear what you really feel.

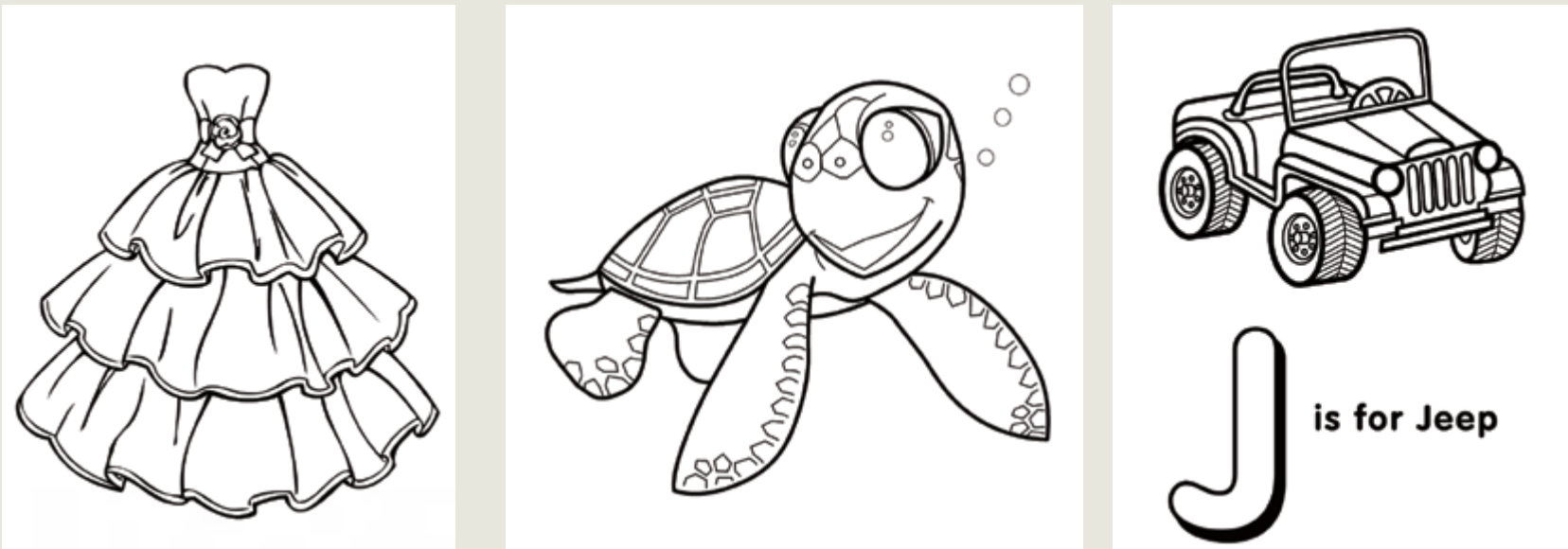


TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Which of the following English films was the first one to be dubbed in Hindi?
- a. Aladdin
 - b. Universal Soldier
 - c. Speed
 - d. Iron Man
2. Who wrote the book 'Reminiscences of the Nehru Age'?
- a. C D Deshmukh
 - b. Dr P C Alexander
 - c. M O Mathai
 - d. S C Rajagopalachari
3. Aurobindo was the author of
- a. Discovery of India
 - b. Hindu view of life
 - c. Yogashastra
 - d. Savitri

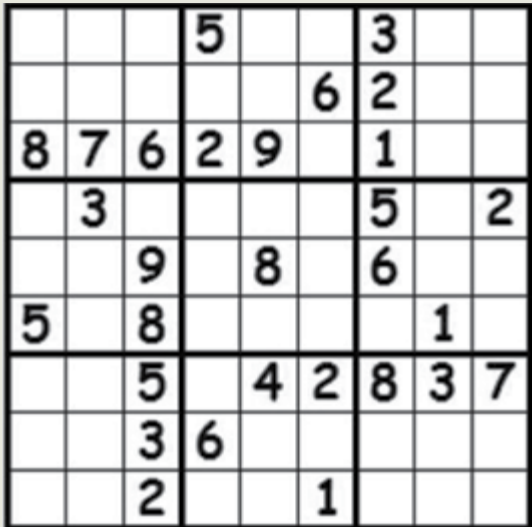
Answers: 1.a 2.c 3.d

KIDS COLOURING



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



BOGGLER



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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER



DAILY CROSSWORD ANSWERS (SEPTEMBER 26)



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



GENTLE GIANTS

WHALE OF A TIME

September to November is the annual whale shark season in Oman when these ‘gentle giants’ and their pups begin to migrate to warmer waters. There is a high chance of spotting them around Damaniyat Island during this season

Anirban Ray

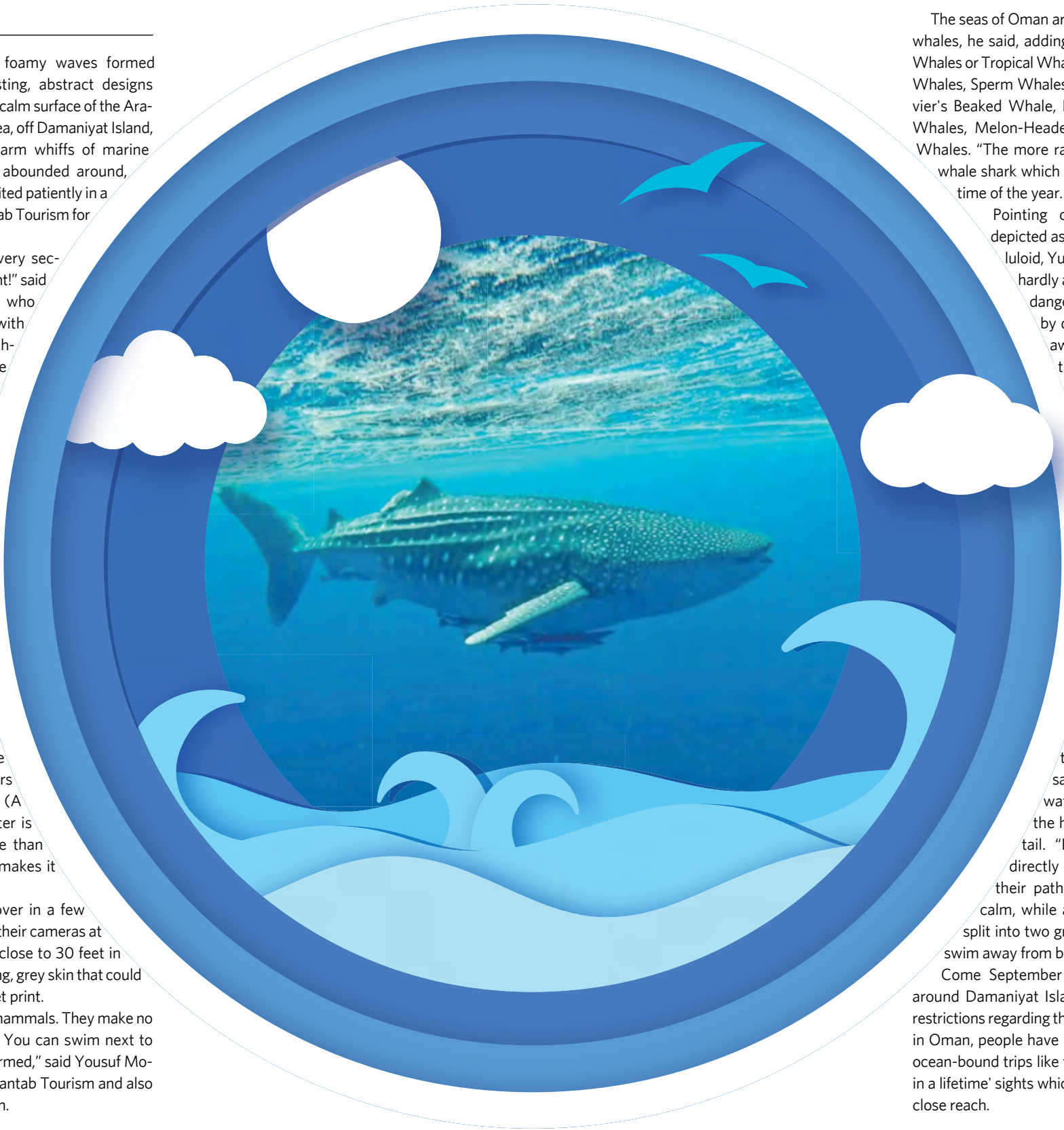
As the foamy waves formed interesting, abstract designs on the calm surface of the Arabian Sea, off Damaniyat Island, and warm whiffs of marine odour abounded around, we waited patiently in a speedboat provided by Qantab Tourism for the sight of our lifetime...

“You have to be alert every second...it can happen any instant!” said the skipper of the boat who seemed to be saturated with sights of whale sharks breaching over the surface of the ocean amid a majestic shower of water. And though he has seen it umpteen times in the past, the excitement on his face seemed as real as our own racing pulse.

The sudden pop-up of a dolphin or the sight of a turtle hurrying by startled us every now and then. But we waited patiently until it happened much to our delight...once, twice, thrice - a huge whale shark breaching over the water, leaving behind a trail of awe and disbelief among revellers seated in boats around. (A whale’s leap out of the water is called a breach when more than 40% of the animal’s body makes it above the water’s surface.)

The magical sight was over in a few minutes as everyone aimed their cameras at the awesome whale shark, close to 30 feet in length, and with a shimmering, grey skin that could pass off as an intricate carpet print.

“Whale sharks are calm mammals. They make no noise and swim peacefully. You can swim next to them safely and never be harmed,” said Yousuf Mohammed al Hasni, CEO of Qantab Tourism and also an expert on whales in Oman.



The seas of Oman are home to various species of whales, he said, adding that these include Bryde’s Whales or Tropical Whales, Blue Whales, Humpback Whales, Sperm Whales, Dwarf Sperm Whales, Cuvier’s Beaked Whale, Pygmy Killer Whales, Killer Whales, Melon-Headed Whales and False Killer Whales. “The more rare sight, however, is of the whale shark which can be seen only during this time of the year.

Pointing out that they have been depicted as cruel and dangerous on celluloid, Yusuf said, “These gigantic fish hardly attack humans. Even when in danger, in the face of provocation by divers, they choose to swim away. It is mostly environmental issues (pollutants) and human attacks on their habitat that often leave them vulnerable and under threat for extinction.”

Asaad K al Hassni, Founder of Mobula Dive Centre and a PADI Diving and Emergency First Aid Instructor, added, “Most species of whales are friendly and generally curious. In some cases, they also approach boats, curious to understand the real nature of intrusion.”

He, however, cautioned that one needs to maintain a safe distance from them under water - at least 3 metres from the head and 4 metres from the tail. “If the whale shark comes directly towards you, do not block their path. One must simply remain calm, while a group of individuals must split into two groups, so that the whale can swim away from between.”

Come September and whale watching trips around Damaniyat Island are common. And with restrictions regarding the pandemic slowly subsiding in Oman, people have now started heading out for ocean-bound trips like these to witness a few ‘once in a lifetime’ sights which the sultanate offers within close reach.



Whale sharks are calm mammals. They make no noise and swim peacefully. You can swim next to them safely and never be harmed

YOUSUF MOHAMMED AL HASNI



WHALE WATCHING GUIDELINES

Guidelines for whale and dolphin watching in Oman were developed in 2014 as part of an IWC-supported project that also included awareness-raising and initial training of tour operators and vessel captains in Muscat and Dhofar.

The draft guidelines include speed restrictions (maximum 4knots) in the presence of whales or dolphins, approach

guidelines (depicted in the diagram here); minimum approach distances (50m for dolphins and 100m for whales), and a maximum time limit of 30 minutes for interactions.

These guidelines are of the utmost importance for any emerging or future operations focusing on Arabian Sea humpback whales, as the population along the coast of Oman has

been determined to number fewer than 100 and is designated as Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 1. It is, therefore, important that whale watching activities do not contribute to the threats facing this population.

The best way to watch a breaching whale is from the outer decks of boats. One also needs to be patient to catch the action.

WHALE ENCOUNTERS IN OMAN

According to the Whale Watching Handbook designed by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to support managers, regulators, operators and anyone interested in whale watching, in the Muscat area, spinner dolphins are targeted year-round. These are often found in mixed groups with common dolphins that form a secondary target in Muscat and

Ras al Hadd.

Several other species are encountered opportunistically, including common bottlenose dolphins, Risso’s dolphins, Bryde’s whales, false killer whales, sperm whales, and more rarely, killer whales, blue whales, and Arabian Sea humpback whales.

Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins and Indo-Pacific bot-

tenose dolphins are year-round targets in shallow water inlets of the Musandam peninsula in northern Oman and either or both species are a seasonal (September to May) target along the shores of mainland Dhofar, especially Ras Nuss, Taqa, Salalah and Mughsayl. Arabian Sea humpback whales are encountered almost exclusively in Dhofar.

RAWAHI ON PODIUM

Oman's driver claims third spot in Cyprus Rally; Hamed al Wahaibi fights back on Sunday to finish overall 16th

Ashok Purohit
Muscat

2021 CYPRUS RALLY FIA MERC: ROUND FOUR

A mechanical problem in his Ford Fiesta during the final special stage deprived Oman's Abdullah al Rawahi and his co-driver Ata al Hmoud of Jordan an overall runner-up spot in the 2021 Cyprus Rally, the fourth round of the FIA-Middle East Rally Championship (MERC), in Nicosia on Sunday.

Despite the late trouble, Rawahi managed to grab a creditable third place.

Cypriot pair of Alexandros Tsouloftas and his navigator Stelios Elia in their Volkswagen Polo GTi R5 won the top honours and were followed by another Cypriot duo of Petros Panteli and Pamos Laos in their Citroen DS3.

Tsouloftas was dominant in all the stages and benefitted from the pull out of two of the leading challengers - overnight leader Simos Galatariotis and his co-driver Antonis Ioannou and last year's champions Nasser al Attiyah and his navigator Matthieu Baume.

In fact, Rawahi and Hmoud were running second throughout the five stages and led Panteli-Laos by 10.1 seconds ahead of the final and 12th Super Special stage of 10.96km at Agia Marina. But a broken crankshaft in the final stage meant that the Omani-Jordanian duo had to ensure a finish in the final stage but were pushed to third spot among



Oman's Abdullah al Rawahi (R) and his navigator Ata al Hmoud celebrate their third-place finish in the 2021 Cyprus Rally in Nicosia on Sunday

the 22 cars that finished the rally.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Rawahi said, "I am happy with the third-place though we could have finished higher but for the last-stage crankshaft trouble.

"This is a very competitive rally and we had a large field with some of the top drivers from the region. My aim was to finish the

rally. A podium finish is an icing on the cake. For me, it is important to gain experience and such challenging rallies help me in my quest to become a competitive rally driver."

The Al Manar Financial Investments-backed driver said 'it was a nice feeling to proudly hold the Oman flag on the podium'.

Wahaibi fights back

Oman's other entry in the rally, veteran Hamed al Wahaibi and his co-driver Tony Sircombe of New Zealand, returned to action after retiring early on Saturday and competed the second leg under Rally2 regulations.

The veteran displayed his experience and skills in ample

measure as he clocked top-three fastest times in four stages on Sunday to finish overall 16th.

And had it not been for a power steering issue on stage nine and a clogged radiator delay on the penultimate timed test on Sunday, he would have climbed back within sight of the top-ten.

The 51 year old's return to



Oman's Hamed al Wahaibi in action during the Cyprus Rally on Sunday



Abdullah al Rawahi negotiates a turn during the final day of Cyprus Rally

competitive rallying after nearly ten years was impressive to say the least in his Skoda Fabia 1.6.

"It was a really enjoyable rally," said Wahaibi. "I came here to get the experience and regain the knowledge. My notes were a bit off and we struggled with it a little but Tony [Sircombe] and I now under-

stand more and more. The speed this weekend was so high. Congratulations also to Abdullah [al Rawahi] on his excellent result."

The penultimate round of the 2021 FIA Middle East Rally Championship takes place in Kuwait on November 11-13.

[@ashokmuscat](#)

P5 for Al Faisal and Soucek at Monza

Our Correspondent
Muscat

2021 INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN

Oman's Al Faisal al Zubair and his Spanish teammate Andy Soucek came up with a strong show to finish fifth in the first race of round six of the 2021 International GT Open Series at Italy's Monza circuit on Saturday.

After starting the dry 70-minute race from sixth on the grid, the Lechner Racing Team's Porsche 911 GT3 R crew were never able to make in-roads into the top-three places in a race where Martin Kodri and Ethan Simioni reached the chequered flag 2.713 seconds clear of Michele Beretta and Frederick Schandorff in their Vincenzo Sospiri Racing Lamborghinis.

Reno Racing's Marco Bonanomi and Jacopo Guidetti were third in a Honda NSX.

Speaking after the race, Al Faisal said, "I am actually quite happy with P5. I think we did a



Al Faisal al Zubair in his Porsche 911 GT3 R car during race one at the Italian circuit of Monza on Saturday

strong job. Three out of the four ahead of us were guest drivers and that is pretty good for my championship to get back into second place. It was not the easiest of races. Hopefully we will have a better second race.

"Unfortunately, we lost around 4.5 seconds in the pits

and that didn't help and trying to undercut with the Porsche Cup traffic didn't pay off well. Despite that, P5 is a good result and we hope to do better in race two."

The Lechner Racing crew qualified in sixth for the first of the weekend's races with a best lap of 1min 47.278sec. Pole

position fell to their main series rivals, Beretta and Schandorff. Bonanomi-Guidetti were second.

Soucek took the wheel of the Porsche for the first stint and lined up in sixth.

He managed to squeeze into fifth on the opening lap and held position through the first ten



Al Faisal al Zubair

minutes of the race, with Beretta continuing to lead from Bonanomi.

Soucek moved up to fourth soon afterwards and was closing in on the top three when the yellow flag was raised and the safety car was briefly deployed. Kodri managed to overtake

Bonanomi to snatch second place behind Beretta.

Al Faisal replaced Soucek after 15 laps and 41 minutes of the race to run and was the first of the leaders to make a drive change with the exception of Guidetti replacing Bonanomi.

The Omani slipped to 13th position but climbed back to tenth when some of the front-runners also pitted and rose to fifth when the remainder made their driver changes.

The Omani crew had to settle for fifth place a mere 0.987 seconds behind the Italian at the end.

The Lechner Racing crew made a subdued start to their Monza weekend during the practice sessions

OVERALL STANDINGS AFTER 11 RACES:

- 1 Frederick Schandorff/ Michele Beretta (128 points),
- 2 Andy Soucek (96),
- 3 Baptiste Moulin /Yuki Nemoto (81),
- 4 Al Faisal al Zubair (78).

QUICK RUN

Usyk ends Joshua's reign as world heavyweight champion

London, UK - Oleksandr Usyk ended Anthony Joshua's reign as world heavyweight champion in front of the Londoner's home crowd with a stunning unanimous points decision victory on Saturday, scuppering hopes of a 'Battle of Britain' unification bout with fellow world title-holder Tyson Fury.

Joshua ended the 12th and final round of the contest backed up on the ropes, with the cheers of a crowd of more than 66,000 at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium no match for the skills of his challenger. The impressive Ukrainian triumphed 117-112, 116-112 and 115-113 on the scorecards of the three judges in just the former undisputed cruiserweight world champion's third bout as a heavyweight.

AFP

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Lewis Hamilton celebrates on the podium in Sochi on Sunday (AFP)

Hamilton claims 100th victory amid high drama

FORMULA ONE RUSSIAN GRAND PRIX

Sochi, Russia - Lewis Hamilton finally claimed his 100th Formula One success on Sunday, the peerless Mercedes driver emerging triumphant amid high drama at the rain-hit Russian Grand Prix to retake the championship lead. With a late downpour causing havoc Hamilton reached the unprecedented century after being stuck on 99 since the British Grand Prix in July.

The 36-year-old Briton moved back to the top of the drivers standings by two points from Max Verstappen, who finished second. After taking his 100th chequered flag 14 years after his first in Canada Hamilton told his team on the car radio: "Pheev. That was hard work man!"

The seven-time champion had looked destined to come away for the fifth race in a row stuck on the 99 mark with McLaren's Lando Norris firmly in command up front.

But with five laps to go, the rain that had been threatening the 15th round of the championship for so long arrived, causing mayhem. With cars fitted with slicks starting to lose grip and coming in for intermediates Hamilton joined them, leaving Norris leading.

But with three laps left and Norris a sitting duck and sliding all over the circuit Hamilton eventually hit the front to finally nail the magic number of victories.

After jumping out of his car he said: "The rain came, it was very opportunistic, the team did a great job, I'm grateful for the points". "It's taken a long time to get to 100 wins. I wasn't even sure it would come. The team made such a good call at the end. I didn't want to let Lando go. I'm incredibly grateful to all these men and women here and back in the factory. Wow, 100."

He had set off from the second row after a rare mistake in qualifying 24 hours earlier.

AFP

Maqsood, Kumar star as Oman trounce PNG

Ashok Purohit
Muscat

WORLD CRICKET LEAGUE 2

The dominance of Oman in the ICC World Cricket League (WCL) 2 may be growing with each match but, what would be heartening for the chief coach, Duleep Mendis, would be to see the growing confidence of his boys. As Oman took to the ground for their first match of the second WCL tri-series at the Oman Cricket Academy Ground on Sunday, it was yet another confident allround display by the hosts that saw them pulverise Papua New Guinea (PNG) by 110 runs to begin their campaign in the tri-series on a winning note.

Scotland, which won the opening match of the tri-series against PNG on Saturday, are the other team in fray.

Such has been the dominance of Oman since the start of the WCL 2 action in Muscat on September 14, that the hosts have suffered just one defeat in the five matches they have played so far. The winning momentum will be to the liking of Mendis, the Sri Lankan great and Oman coach, as he prepares his team for the bigger challenge next month - T20 World Cup.

Sunday's triumph strengthened Oman's lead at the top of the seven-nation WCL 2 table as they now have collected 24 points from 15 matches with 12 victories. The USA are second with 14 from 16 matches and Scotland are third with 11 from nine games. PNG are at bottom



A file photo of Oman's Suraj Kumar in action. On Sunday he hit his career-best ODI score with an unbeaten 62



Oman skipper Zeeshan Maqsood (L) hands over the Oman ODI cap to Kashyap Prajapati as chief coach Duleep Mendis (R) looks on

with no points from ten matches.

Oman skipper Zeeshan Maqsood spun his spin magic around PNG batsman as he recorded one of his best one-day international (ODI) spells with figures of four for 28 to be named

the player of the match. He had earlier contributed to Oman's innings with bat by scoring 26 runs.

Chasing a stiff target of 251 to win, PNG were never in reckoning as they lost wickets at regular

prized scalp of his counterpart, Assad Vala, as PNG slid to 75 for six. A bit of resistance from Jason Kila (36) was snuffed out by Ayaan Khan who along with Aqib Ilyas ran through the tailenders to bowl them out for 140.

Ayaan took three for 12 to wrap up things while Ilyas picked two for 34. Both of them had earlier come good with the bat to help Oman reach 250 for seven.

Earlier, Oman handed ODI debut to opener Kashyap Prajapati (22) and he along with Ilyas (34) shared a 43-run second-wicket stand after the early exit of Jatinder Singh. Maqsood (26) and Ayaan (44) then took the team to 140 in 33 overs.

But it was Suraj Kumar, who played as a batsman, with Naseem Khushi taking over the wicketkeeping duties from him, who sparkled with his career-best ODI knock of an unbeaten 62 off 70 balls, surpassing his previous best of 58. The diminutive batter hit two sixes and two fours to guide the team to a strong total, aided by late cameos from Khushi (27) and Kaleemulah (19 n.o.).

Oman next meet Scotland on Tuesday in a day game before playing the last-two matches under the newly-installed floodlights on October 1 and 2 against PNG and Scotland respectively.

Brief scores: Oman 250-7 in 50 overs (Ilyas 34, Ayaan 44, Kumar 62 n.o.; Kabua Morea 2-50) **beat PNG 140 in 42.2 overs** (Vala 27, Kila 36; Maqsood 4-28, Ayaan 3-12).

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Americans grab 11-5 lead over Europe

RYDER CUP

Kohler, US - The United States seized a commanding 11-5 lead over Europe at the Ryder Cup on Saturday, with the visitors needing a record comeback on Sunday to deny the Americans the trophy.

The US squad, boasting nine of the world's 11 top-ranked players, need only 3.5 points in Sunday's 12 final singles matches at Whistling Straits to reclaim the Ryder Cup while Europe need nine points to keep it. "You know, it's not over," said US star Dustin Johnson, the only 4-0 player at this year's Ryder Cup. "We've still got to go out and everybody needs to play well. We've still got to get four points or 3¹/₂."

There was a sense Sunday could be a 'Wake by the Lake' for Europe on the Lake Michigan shoreline as no team has rallied from more than a 6-10 last-day deficit to capture the Ryder Cup, that coming for Europe in the 2012 'Miracle at Medinah'.

"Let's see if we can make history," Spain's Sergio Garcia said after two wins with Jon Rahm on Saturday. The Americans won a

third consecutive session 3-1 in Saturday foursomes and split four four-ball matches to grab their largest two-day lead in the team golf showdown since 1975.

Second-ranked Johnson rose to 4-0 with US wins in foursomes and four-balls alongside fellow two-time major winner Collin Morikawa.

Shane Lowry sank an 11-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole to give the Irishman and Tyrell Hatton a one-up four-balls win over Americans Tony Finau and Harris English, producing Europe's only pairs win not taken by Rahm and Garcia.

DeChambeau and Scott Scheffler won the last four holes in a knife's edge four-ball match to beat Europe's Viktor Hovland and Tommy Fleetwood 3&1.

Rahm combined with Garcia for a 3&1 foursomes win over Brooks Koepka and Daniel Berger and a 2&1 four-balls win over Koepka and Jordan Spieth.

Rory McIlroy, who joined Poulter in a 4&3 four-balls loss to Dustin Johnson and Collin Morikawa, fell to 0-3 this week.

AFP

Every day, all day!



IPL 2021



QUOTE OF THE DAY

The second half of the tournament has been a lot of positives for our side. We just have to give ourselves the best chance

Eoin Morgan
Kolkata skipper, after his team's defeat to Chennai, on Sunday



OUTSIDE IPL

FOOTBALL ROUND-UP

Fati helps Barca ease pressure on Koeman

SPANISH LEAGUE

Madrid, Spain - Barcelona's Ansu Fati made the perfect return after ten months out through injury by scoring in a 3-0 victory over Levante on Sunday, a result that eases the pressure on coach Ronald Koeman.

Fati, 18, wearing the No 10 shirt previously belonging to Lionel Messi, came on to a raucous reception at Camp Nou, 323 days after his last appearance in November last year. Barcelona's first win in four games moves them up to fifth in La Liga, five points behind Real Madrid with a game in hand.

Memphis Depay had given them an early lead with a penalty and Luuk de Jong made it two. Earlier on Saturday, Real Madrid were held to a goalless draw by Villarreal while Sevilla beat Espanyol 2-0.

OTHER RESULT

Sunday: Real Mallorca 2 Osasuna 3.

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Arsenal post big win over Spurs

London, UK - Arsenal struck three times inside 35 minutes to beat Tottenham 3-1 on Sunday and move above their north London rivals in the Premier League table. Also Raul Jimenez scored an emotional first goal since his horrific head injury in November as Wolves earned a 1-0 win over Southampton.

Earlier on Saturday, Liverpool twice let the lead slip to draw 3-3 at Brentford to edge just one point clear at the top of the English Premier League.

OTHER RESULTS

FRENCH LEAGUE

Sunday: Bordeaux 1 Rennes 1, Brest 1 Metz 2, Reims 3 Nantes 1, Troyes 1 Angers 1, Clermont 1 Monaco 3.
Saturday: Saint-Etienne 0 Nice 3, Strasbourg 1 Lille 2, Lyon 1 Lorient 1, Paris Saint-Germain 2 Montpellier 0.

ITALIAN LEAGUE

Sunday: Juventus 3 Sampdoria 2, Empoli 4 Bologna 2, Sassuolo 1 Salernitana 0, Udinese 0 Fiorentina 1, Lazio 3 Roma 2.
Saturday: Genoa 3 Verona 3, Inter Milan 2 Atalanta 2.

GERMAN LEAGUE

Sunday: Bochum 0 Stuttgart 0, Freiburg 3 Augsburg 0.
Saturday: Borussia Moenchengladbach 1 Borussia Dortmund 0.

SCOTTISH PREMIERSHIP

Sunday: Celtic 1 Dundee United 1, Hibernian 1 St Johnstone 0, St Mirren 3 Aberdeen 2.
AFP

JADEJA'S MAGIC IN LAST-BALL THRILLER



Ravindra Jadeja
22
8 BALLS

CHENNAI VS KOLKATA

Abu Dhabi, UAE - Needing 34 from 21 balls with seven wickets in hand, Chennai Super Kings (CSK) looked like they may have thrown away a simple chase as Moeen Ali, Suresh Raina and MS Dhoni all fell within the space of six balls against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR).

But Chennai still had one more ace up their sleeve in Ravindra Jadeja, who crushed Kolkata's victory hopes in the space of a devastating four-ball sequence in the 19th over as Chennai eventually got over the line on the final ball in a dramatic two-wicket win on Sunday.

With the equation down to 24 from ten balls, Jadeja left Prasidh Krishna shellshocked after clocking a pair of sixes over the leg side followed by two fours over point to swing the pendulum Chennai way.

With four required from the final over, Sunil Narine stretched the match to the limit with a valiant effort, dismissing Sam Curran at the start of the over and Jadeja off the penultimate ball before Deepak Chahar secured the win with a single over midwicket to put Chennai back on top of the IPL table.

Thakur's sharp spell

Super Kings' bowling performance was topsy-turvy. Curran had a poor day conceding 56 for no wicket. But that was made a footnote in the end thanks to the efforts of Jadeja and Shardul Thakur. The latter took two for 20 and began the day in style

with a wicket- maiden after entering in the sixth over as he Venkatesh Iyer was caught behind.

Thakur struck an even bigger blow in the 17th over.

Andre Russell had just clattered Curran for a pair of fours and a six but Thakur managed to wrest back momentum by inducing a drag on to dismiss Russell for 20 off 15 balls, denying Kolkata Knight Riders their best weapon for a late launch.

Dinesh Karthik still managed a superb cameo with 26 off 11 balls before he fell in the final over to Josh Hazlewood.

The forty duo

Chasing a target of 172 may have looked steep. But Faf du Plessis and Rituraj Gaikwad got the Super Kings off to a phenomenal start with a 74-run opening partnership.

Gaikwad's knock finally came to an end in ninth over for 40, flicking a leading edge to cover.

A see-saw finish

Moeen came to the crease like a house on fire, bashing Lockie Ferguson for four and six over the leg side to end the tenth over before he and du Plessis rocked Russell for a boundary each in the 11th to leave 71 needed from the final 54 balls.

But Prasidh induced a catch at deep cover to remove du Plessis for 43 before Narine came back to defeat Ambati Rayudu's slog in the 15th. Still, it should have been a canter with 40 needed off

SCOREBOARD	
KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS	
S Gill	run out 9 (5)
V Iyer	c Dhoni b Thakur 18 (15)
R Tripathi	b Jadeja 45 (33)
E Morgan	c du Plessis 8 (14)
N Rana	not out 37 (27)
A Russell	b Thakur 20 (15)
D Karthik	c Dhoni b Hazlewood 26 (11)
S Narine	not out 0 (1)
Extras	(b 1, lb 1, nb 1, w 5) 8
TOTAL	171 for six in 20 overs
Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-50, 3-70, 4-89, 5-125, 6-166	
Bowling: D Chahar 4-0-32-0, S Curran 4-0-56-0, J Hazlewood 4-0-40-2, S Thakur 4-1-20-2, R Jadeja 4-0-21-1	
CHENNAI SUPER KINGS	
R Gaikwad	c Morgan b Russell 40 (28)
F du Plessis	c Ferguson b Krishna 43 (30)
Moeen Ali	c Iyer b Ferguson 32 (28)
A Rayudu	b Narine 10 (9)
S Raina	run out 11 (7)
MS Dhoni	b Chakravarthy 1 (4)
R Jadeja	lbw b Narine 22 (8)
S Curran	c sub (KL Nagarkoti) b Narine 4 (4)
S Thakur	not out 3 (2)
D Chahar	not out 1 (1)
Extras	(lb 2, nb 1, w 2) 5
TOTAL	172 for eight in 20 overs
Fall of wickets: 1-74, 2-102, 3-119, 4-138, 5-142, 6-142, 7-168, 8-171	
Bowling: P Krishna 4-0-40-1, L Ferguson 4-0-33-1, V Chakravarthy 4-0-22-1, S Narine 4-0-41-3, A Russell 3-0-28-1, V Iyer 1-0-5-0	

The final four for Chennai but Eoin Morgan's captaincy made them sweat until the final ball.

Moeen holed out to long-on off Ferguson in the 17th for 32 before Raina was run out coming back for a non-existent second to start the 18th. Two balls later, Varun Chakravarthy beat Dhoni with a googly to cap a six-ball slide of three wickets for four runs, leaving the score at 142 for six.

Krishna was handed the ball for the 19th and conceded just singles off the first two balls. But

TODAY'S MATCH



SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

VS



RAJASTHAN ROYALS

DUBAI, 6PM

POINTS TABLE

TEAMS	P	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
CSK	10	8	2	0	16	+1.069
DC	10	8	2	0	16	+0.711
RCB	10	6	4	0	12	-0.359
KKR	10	4	6	0	8	+0.322
PBKS	10	4	6	0	8	-0.271
RR	9	4	5	0	8	-0.319
MI	10	4	6	0	8	-0.551
SRH	9	1	8	0	2	-0.637

P: Played, **W:** Won, **L:** Lost, **NR:** No Result, **PTS:** Points, **NRR:** Net Run-Rate

CSK: Chennai Super Kings

RCB: Royal Challengers Bangalore

DC: Delhi Capitals

KKR: Kolkata Knight Riders

PBKS: Kings XI Punjab

MI: Mumbai Indians

RR: Rajasthan Royals

SRH: Sunrisers Hyderabad

with Jadeja back on strike, he hit two successive sixes. Attempting wide yorkers off the last two balls of the over, neither one landed as Jadeja slapped a pair of full tosses over point to the rope.

With four from six needed, Narine did not give up. He took two key wickets including Sam Curran, for four, and Jadeja to take the match to the final ball with the scores level. New man Chahar kept his calm to hit the winning run for Chennai.

Cricinfo

Harshal's hat-trick caps RCB's triumph

BANGALORE VS MUMBAI

Dubai, UAE - In their first two games since the resumption of IPL 2021, Royal Challengers Bangalore managed all of five wickets combined in two massive losses. On Sunday, they ran into the defending champions, dearly needing a win to turn around a mid-season slump. And they got it in style.

Virat Kohli struck another half-century, Glenn Maxwell provided middle-overs firepower and key wickets before Yuzvendra Chahal and Harshal Patel topped off a memorable night with emphatic bowling spells. Chahal picked up three for 11, while Harshal bagged a hat-trick (inclusive of the key wickets of Hardik Pandya and Kieron Pollard).

Kohli's milestone

Dropped on zero by Rahul Chahar, Kohli looked in ominous



Harshal Patel (C) celebrates after picking a hat-trick against Mumbai

touch upfront despite the early loss of Devdutt Padikkal.

He kept finding boundaries off the pacers, some streaky, others imperious. Jasprit Bumrah was among those who bore the brunt, at one stage being deposited for six towards the short square-leg boundary that made Kohli the first Indian - and just the fifth

overall, after Chris Gayle, Kieron Pollard, Shoaib Malik and David Warner - to get to 10,000 T20 runs. The shot of the evening, however, was Kohli's shovelled-six over long-on off Adam Milne's fourth-stump half-volley.

KS Bharat shredded pressure with some slog sweeps, dispatching Chahar twice over deep

square leg. Bharat fell soon after the second of those hits, lofting to cover for a 24-ball 32.

Maxwell executed his switch-hits against the spinners, twice peppering the shorter boundary. Before that, Hardik Pandya had let off Kohli on 37, dropping him at point, and then Mumbai burnt a review on Maxwell.

Kohli would bring up his fifty off 40 balls - his scoring rate slowed significantly in the second half of his innings - before falling two balls later.

AB de Villiers tried to offset that loss, swatting Bumrah for six off his second ball even as Maxwell reverse-scooped and reverse-ramped his way to a 33-ball half-century. Bumrah then came back to remove both dangerous batters off successive deliveries, with eight balls left in the innings but he along with Trent Boult restricted to 165.

Just like Kohli, Rohit Sharma too was quick off the blocks in the chase, smacking Kyle Jamieson for a hat-trick of fours in the third over. Quinton de Kock punished Dan Christian as the MI openers piled on 56 off six overs. But just like spin pegged back Bangalore, it derailed Mumbai. Chahal struck after the powerplay, de Kock holing out at deep midwicket before Ishan Kishan struck Rohit.

Kishan's powerful hit off Maxwell crashed into his captain's left wrist at the non-striker's end. The next ball after being attended to, Rohit was caught at long-on off Maxwell.

Rohit's 28-ball 43 ended at the halfway stage, and what followed was Mumbai's Achilles' heel this season: a middle-order implosion as they were bowled out for 111.

Agencies

SCOREBOARD

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE	
V Kohli	c sub (AS Roy) 51 (42)
b Milne	
D Padikkal	c de Kock b Bumrah 0 (4)
S Bharat	c Yadav b Chahal 32 (24)
G Maxwell	c Boult b Bumrah 56 (37)
AB de Villiers	c de Kock b Bumrah 11 (6)
D Christian	not out 1 (3)
S Ahmed	b Boult 1 (1)
K Jamieson	not out 2 (2)
Extras	(lb 4, nb 1, w 6) 11
TOTAL	165 for six in 20 overs
Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-75, 3-126, 4-161, 5-161, 6-162	
Bowling: T Boult 4-0-17-1, J Bumrah 4-0-36-3, A Milne 4-0-48-1, K Pandya 4-0-27-0, R Chahal 4-0-33-1	
MUMBAI INDIANS	
Rohit Sharma	c Padikkal b Maxwell 43 (28)
Q de Kock	c Maxwell b Chahal 24 (24)
I Kishan	c Patel b Chahal 9 (12)
S Yadav	c Chahal b Siraj 8 (9)
K Pandya	b Maxwell 5 (11)
K Pollard	b Harshal Patel 7 (10)
H Pandya	c Kohli b Harshal 3 (6)
A Milne	b Harshal 0 (1)
R Chahal	lbw b Harshal 0 (1)
J Bumrah	b Chahal 5 (6)
T Boult	not out 0 (3)
Extras	(lb 2, nb 1, w 4) 7
TOTAL:	111 in 18.1 overs
Fall of wickets: 1-57, 2-79, 3-81, 4-93, 5-97, 6-106, 7-106, 8-106, 9-111, 10-111	
Bowling: K Jamieson 2-0-22-0, M Siraj 3-0-15-1, D Christian 2-0-21-0, Harshal Patel 3-1-0-17-4, Y Chahal 4-1-11-3, G Maxwell 4-0-23-2	



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The winners...

CATEGORY: CHARITY WORK



Jokha Mohamed al Farsi

Jokha Mohammed Khamis al Farsi, who graduated from the Institute of Health Sciences in Wattayah in 1984 and was appointed in the same year at Khoula Hospital, grew to the position of Head of Health Education in the Directorate General of Health Services of Muscat Governorate in 1996 and has remain in command until now.

In 2013, she created a team to spread awareness about caring for the elderly and succeeded in officially establishing the Ihasan Association in 2018. Runner up of the Sultan Qaboos Award for Voluntary Work 2019, in the category of Institutions and Associations, Ihasan Association was credited for providing care for the elderly and continuing to spread awareness in society on the need for strengthening bonds between members of the society.

A charity caring for the elderly, Ihasan Association has started providing the homeless with foster families. It also provides an ambulance service to help the elderly and the disabled reach hospitals for their healthcare needs.

"We provide medical aid for the elderly at low prices, including prosthetic limbs for individuals with limited income. We will continue with our awareness campaign to cover all the wilayats. So far, we have provided around 2,000 elderly persons access to hospitals in Oman, besides training some citizens to drive ambulances to transport their sick parents to hospitals," Jokha said.

The association also launched another initiative this year to transfer the dead from their homes to hospital centres and then to cemeteries to relieve the pressure on families. It aims to strengthen the bonds between members of the society and teaching people to care for the elderly. Awareness seminars are also conducted by this association to educate and empower people to rise up during the time of need.



Ziyoun R al Jabri

Ziyoun al Jabri, Country Manager, BTC Fashion /Matalan, believes that having a strategic plan is a key component of planning for growth which also helps in preparing a realistic vision for the future for any business.

"Sound leadership serves as a link between the soul and the body of an organisation," says Ziyoun who attributes good leadership as a key component in any organisation's success, as leaders give directions for the course of performance as well as ways to accomplish it.

Excelling in corporate development strategies aimed at moving the business ahead in the face of a challenging environment, Ziyoun is a person of commitment who sets goals and walks her business plans.

"I learn through mistakes and always think positively. I don't believe in failures, which keep me awake, instead I work hard to achieve my goals. Nothing is impossible if you devote your time and efforts towards the subject," she asserts, adding that a strong faith in the Almighty combined with sincere efforts is what always bears fruit, besides giving her peace of mind throughout each day.

With a firm desire to be consistent and never give up, Ziyoun is fully aware that nothing is built in a day. Hence she believes in being patient and paying great attention to detail in everything she does in order to come forth with quality outputs.

Aiming to be someday counted among the most successful women in Oman, Zioun knows there is no short cut to the top and so has been putting in painstaking efforts to forge a successful career for herself in corporate development.

"Nothing comes easy. I have gone through many challenges in life and business, especially as a woman in this part of the world. And gender inequality has been one of the key factors in defining my personality," she observes.

Othaila al Saifi

As Assistant Marketing and Communications Manager of Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Othaila al Saifi enjoys the distinction of maintaining the reputation of one of the world's most luxurious resorts. Always ready to take on challenges, in 2019, she was one of the few staff members selected for Marriot International's Global Leadership Development Program - Voyage - and has been integral to the hotel's drive to tap into new markets and modernise its online communications.

Always fascinated to learn about different cultures, she recalls that her journey in communications actually began when her family moved to London when she was just ten years old and had to figure out how to adapt to an alien culture. Having competed her higher education in Florida and developed a clear understanding of different cultures at an early age, Othaila humbly states that one of her biggest achievements was not a career jump, rather her attempt at successfully 'breaking out of her shell' and daring to do things differently.

As a communication whizkid, well-versed in the use of all modern tools, Othaila believes that the future of the industry relies heavily on building an online presence and she is geared up to work in that direction against all odds.

"When faced with any challenge I like to think of all possible outcomes and how to avoid issues that may arise. I tend to apply 110% of my energy into anything I may face, whether that is in my work life or personal life.

Armed with a positive attitude, a great love for technology, and the will to never give up, Othaila acknowledges the support she has received from family and friends, the greatest motivating factor being the support from her parents. In applying her skills successfully, she believes that she has been realising that blessing, and looks forward to achieving much more.



CATEGORY: COMMUNICATIONS

CATEGORY: CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT



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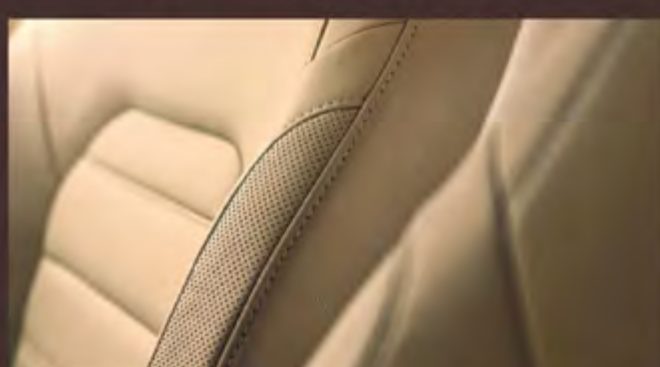
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