



Royal Decree restructures ODB

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued **Royal Decree No 84/2023** on Monday for the restructuring of Oman Development Bank.

The decree reads as follows:

Article 1 stipulates that the name of 'Oman Development Bank' shall be amended to 'Development Bank' and that the provisions of the bylaw attached to this decree shall be applied in this regard.

Article 2 states that the Development Bank shall draft its articles of association in accordance with the Commercial Companies Law promulgated under Royal Decree No. 18/2019.

Article 3 states that the provisions of this decree and the bylaw attached to it shall not prejudice the rights or obligations arising prior to its date of enforcement.

Article 4 says that the Minister of Finance shall issue the Executive Regulation of the bylaw attached to this decree, along with the decisions necessary for its enforcement. Till such time, the existing regulations and decisions shall continue to be applied without prejudice to the provisions of this decree or the bylaw attached to it.

Article 5 cancels all that contradicts this decree and the attached bylaw or contravenes their provisions.

Article 6 says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from the day following its date of publishing.

Due to the National Day holiday there will be no edition of Muscat Daily on Wednesday and Thursday

OMANI-IRANIAN PROJECTS ON ANVIL AT FREE ZONES

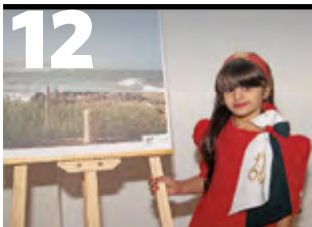
Muscat - Oman and Iran discussed developing projects in the economic and free zones in the sultanate.

Dr Ali Masoud al Sunaidi, Chairman, Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), received Hojjatullah Abdul Maliki, advisor to the President of Iran and Secretary of the Supreme Council of Iranian Commercial, Industrial and Special Economic Free Zones, and his accompanying delegation currently visiting Oman.

The two sides discussed ways of activating the provisions of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) that the two countries signed earlier.



Oman's annual inflation falls to lowest since March 2021



A children's photography exhibition opens in Muscat

MUSCAT JUMPS 8 PLACES IN GCI

Global Cities Index measures the performance of 156 cities around the world across five dimensions

Our Correspondent Muscat

The capital city of Muscat has jumped eight places in the 2023 Global Cities Index (GCI), which seeks to quantify the extent to which a city can attract, retain, and generate global flows of capital, people, and ideas.

GCI - developed by Kearney, a leading global management consulting firm - measures the performance of 156 cities around the world across five dimensions: Business activity, human capital, information exchange, cultural



experience, and political engagement.

Ranked 118th in the world, Muscat performs best in the human capital dimension (96th), followed by political engagement (87th), business activity (122nd), cultural experience (131st), and

information exchange (146th). Dubai, ranked 23rd globally, has retained its leading position in the MENA region.

Doha is ranked second in MENA and 50th globally, while Tel Aviv stood third regionally and 57th worldwide. Other re-

gional cities featured in the index include Riyadh (61st) and Abu Dhabi (66th).

In the global rankings, New York tops the list followed by London, Paris, Tokyo, and Beijing making the top five. The other five in the top include Brussels,

Singapore, Los Angeles, Melbourne and Hong Kong.

'These global cities are microcosms of the world, each with its own unique flavour. They serve as centres of social, political, and economic vibrancy that reflect the dynamic global environment,' stated the Index report.

Average GCI scores have remained steady following several years of decline, with cities in the Middle East and Africa improving markedly. In particular, the capitals of the Gulf nations made major improvements in their overall scores, with Riyadh, Muscat, and Doha improving their overall rankings by nine, eight, and seven places respectively.

'This growth was primarily driven by strong performance in the Human Capital dimension, as they capitalised on the return to pre-pandemic levels of freedom of international travel to attract large volumes of migrant talent and tourism.'

Global Cities Outlook

The index also gives Global Cities Outlook where it ranks cities, which are best poised for global leadership in the future.

Muscat is ranked 44th - up 10 places from 2022 in the Global Cities Outlook, while Abu Dhabi is ranked 27th, Dubai 38th, Doha 68 and Riyadh 99th. The outlook is based on four broad indicators of urban potential: Personal well-being, economics, innovation, and governance.

"As global trade returns to normalised levels, key cities in the Gulf have emerged as beacons of prosperity, resilience, and opportunity," said Rudolph Lohmeyer, Kearney Partner, National Transformation Institute. "Their (Gulf cities') resilient economic performance amid challenging global conditions, has succeeded in drawing ever-greater numbers of expats making them a remarkable success story in the post-pandemic world."

Haitham City takes shape as MHUP rolls out tenders

Our Correspondent Muscat

In a significant step towards urban transformation, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning (MHUP) has commenced the initial phase of the Sultan Haitham City project, by floating two key tenders. These include enabling preliminary works and construction of housing units.

Speaking at an event focused on future housing projects held in Sultan Qaboos University recently, H E Dr Khalfan bin Saeed al Shuaili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, elaborated on the upcoming developments in Sultan Haitham City.

He highlighted the city's future prospects, including establishment of a new university. He emphasised the role of Omani youth in this development, stating, "in two months, we will engage six Omani youth to include their innovative ideas in the university's construction."

Phase 1 of the Sultan Haitham City will coincide with development of an extensive road network to serve both the initial and subsequent phases. H E Shuaili confirmed the allocation of 10% of the city's housing units for families unable to own property, including those with limited income, social security beneficiaries and widows.

"This initiative aims to provide enhanced educational opportunities for their children."

A key highlight of the meeting

was a visual presentation of the structural plan for Greater Muscat. This ambitious plan includes the construction of a metro line, originating from the Sultan Haitham City and extending to Ruwi, which is expected to alleviate traffic congestion in the city. "The metro will play a vital role in this project for Greater Muscat," H E Shuaili noted.

The meeting also shed light on a downtown project in Muscat, located in the Ministries District, Al Khuwayr. Spanning an area of 3mn sqm, the project features a marina and a waterfront integrated with breakwaters and a water canal.

Cable car to connect Jabal Akhdar

Additionally, development of a Jabal Akhdar project was discussed, which includes 2,500 residential units, a 5-star hotel, 6km of walkways along the mountain edge, and a variety of shops and cafés.

A significant feature of this project will be a cable car connecting Jabal Akhdar to Wadi Bani Kharous in Rustaq. The project also includes development of Jabal Akhdar Museum, an arena for activities and festivals accommodating 30,000 visitors, and a camping site.

The minister stressed the meeting's purpose was to acquaint Omani youth with the new housing projects and engaging them in realising the government's urban development goals.



A boy sits on a mattress in the courtyard where displaced persons have taken shelter in the Palestinian Territories (Unicef)

Gaza graveyard for children

Amman, Jordan - On the occasion of the World Children's Day, observed on November 20, the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) has warned that the war in Gaza is having a 'catastrophic impact' on children.

An estimated 1.5mn people in the Gaza Strip have been displaced - more than half of them children, says Unicef.

At least 13,000 Palestinians, including at least 5,500 children, have been killed since the current conflict between Israel and Hamas began, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip.

Unicef has raised an alarm over the rising number of child

WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY

deaths in the Gaza Strip since October 7.

"Our gravest fears about the reported numbers of children killed going from dozens into hundreds into thousands have been realised in just a fortnight," Unicef spokesperson James Elder told a UN press briefing in Geneva a fortnight ago.

"Staggeringly, this number rises significantly every single day," Elder warned, saying that Gaza "has become a graveyard

of children. It is a living hell for everyone else."

SOS Children's Villages, the world's largest non-governmental organisation focused on supporting children, called for an end to the war in Gaza.

"The destruction in Gaza exposes the failings of world governments in safeguarding children and ensuring their rights," said Dr Dereje Wordofa, President of SOS Children's Villages International. "Children have a fundamental right to be protected from violence, abduction, and the trauma of war."

Elder of Unicef warned that more than 1mn children of Gaza faced a critical water crisis as

Gaza's daily water output was at 5% of its production capacity.

"So, child deaths to dehydration, particularly infant deaths to dehydration, are a growing threat," he said.

On trauma, the Unicef spokesperson said, "When finally the fighting stops the cost to children and their communities are going to be borne out for generations to come."

Elder stressed that before the current conflict began, more than 800,000 children in Gaza - three quarters of its entire child population - were identified as in need of mental health and psychological support.

See also [Page 07](#)

SQCCRC performs sultanate's first Laparoscopic Radical Prostatectomy

Muscat - In a significant step towards providing cutting-edge medical care, the urology team at the Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Centre (SQCCRC) performed the country's first Laparoscopic Radical Prostatectomy (LRP) recently.

This is a minimally invasive surgical procedure to remove the prostate gland in patients with prostate cancer.

Dr Hilal Ali al Rashdi, consultant urologist at SQCCRC said, "Traditionally, open radical prostatectomy involves a more



invasive approach, resulting in longer hospital stay and extended recovery period. However, with the advent of laparoscopic procedures, patients can now benefit from surgery with smaller inci-

sions, less pain, a reduced chance of requiring blood transfusion and much quicker recovery with better outcome."

LRP involves the use of specialised instruments including 3D

camera to remove the prostate gland. "This innovative approach not only minimises trauma to surrounding tissues but also provides surgeons with improved precision and vision during the procedure," the doctor added.

Dr Mohammed Marzouk - another consultant urologist from the hospital - explained, "The key advantage of LRP is its potential to speed the postoperative recovery process. Patients usually experience less pain and scarring, resulting in a faster return to their daily activities. Additionally, the reduced risk of

complications associated with this minimally invasive technique adds an extra benefit for those undergoing prostate surgery."

Dr Motaz stressed that the SQCCRC - committed to staying at the forefront of medical advancements - underpins the importance of providing the best possible care for the community.

"The introduction of LRP reflects our dedication to offering state-of-the-art treatments that prioritise patient comfort with improved outcomes."

With Laparoscopic Radical Prostatectomy now available,

the SQCCRC doctor stressed that the institute is proud to have contributed to the advancement of healthcare in Oman, ensuring that "our community receives world-class treatment for prostate cancer".

Patients in Oman can now access this cutting-edge treatment, bringing the benefits of advanced surgical techniques closer to home. As SQCCRC continues to embrace technological innovations in the field of medicine, the centre remains steadfast in its commitment to improving patient experiences and outcomes.

Uniting for fitness and patriotism, group hikes 100km to celebrate National Day

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In a unique celebration of Oman's 53rd National Day, a group of hikers embarked on a remarkable 100km journey from Nizwa to Samail.

Comprising 100 members, the 'Al Burj Hiking' group is dedicated to enhancing domestic tourism through hiking and camping. On Friday (November 17), they began a free hike at 6am and concluded at 9am on Saturday in Samail.

Hiker Yaqoub al Musalami of the group said that the 100km hike started from the wilayat of Nizwa and ended at Samail castle, passing through various villages of Dakhliyah. "The hike began with the slogan 'Beautiful days in the history of Oman.'"



He emphasised the group's intent to "promote the culture of physical fitness among people".

Musalami, a hiking enthusiast who guides groups every week-end in different trails, noted that the participants were simply normal and ordinary people from different backgrounds, who "gathered here for the love of nature".

The hike was also a patriotic act, with participants singing songs expressing their love for the sultanate. "We wanted to celebrate Oman's National Day in our own way as hikers. Dakhliyah is an incredible place for hiking," Musalami added.

The hikers carried Omani flags and portraits of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, enjoying pleasant weather and scenic views. The group, which varies in size but definitely includes at least ten regular hikers, chose this particular hike to make November 18 a special day of celebration with nature.

Musalami described the group's careful planning process, including advance scouting of locations and weather conditions, to determine the feasibility of each trip. "We are also careful when deciding how many people can be taken for a particular trip," he said.

Looking ahead, Musalami revealed plans for a Gulf-wide trip from December 1 to 14, aiming to spread the culture of hiking and attract more adventurers to Oman. "We organise about 40 hikes every year," Musalami concluded, inviting citizens and residents to join the group's future activities.

Asyad Group signs four agreements with SMEs

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Asyad Group, Oman's global integrated logistics provider, inked sponsorship agreements with four small and medium enterprises (SMEs) under its Vendor Development Programme - part of the group's roadmap to empower SMEs and promote their role in Oman's economy.

Aiming to unlock growth opportunities for its SME partners, Asyad's Vendor Development Programme provides existing and new vendors with support systems and capacity-building pathways to enable their role in the logistics sector and maximise ICV in various industries and innovation sectors. The programme offers a set of support services to promote SME-focused culture in logistics, and encourage entrepreneurs and start-ups to develop their innovations.

The agreements signed between Asyad Group and four SMEs enable the companies to develop their products and services according to a logistic provider's needs.

Under the first agreement,



Onsor Technologies will design a new, tailored monitoring system to be installed on Asyad Shipping vessels, which will integrate the existing digital operating systems into a single platform, enhancing data collection and enabling real-time analysis.

Through the second agreement, Serag Electrode will supply Asyad Drydock with domestically produced welding electrodes to be used in the Drydock's technical operations.

The third agreement, signed with Capital Development, stipulates providing maintenance and repair services for mobile equipment deployed at Asyad Ports.

The fourth agreement with Golden Depth Marine Services, includes supplying Asyad Drydock with buoy inspection and

maintenance to ensure the readiness and optimal operational conditions of the shipyard's buoy systems.

Highlighting the value of these collaborations, Sameh Batook, VP Contracts and Procurement at Asyad Group, stated that through these agreements, the group underlines its commitment to develop a strong, local supply chain that fulfills its needs and incorporates SMEs and private companies into the integrated logistics ecosystem.

"This will ultimately allow the group to localise its procurements, increase its ICV contribution, and develop Oman's capacities and human capital to promote sustainability and innovative solutions across the domestic logistics supply chain."

Al Mouj Muscat celebrates double win at Arabian Property Awards

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Reaffirming its position as a 'developer of distinction', Al Mouj Muscat brought home two accolades from the Arabian Property Awards 2023-24.

Competing against over 200 properties, it claimed best 'Office Development in Oman' and best 'Residential Developments with 20+ Units' for its recently launched Business Park and Jinan Island respectively.

Nasser al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat, said such prestigious recognition from the Arabian Property Awards stands as a "testament to our vision for Jinan Island and our innovative Business Park".

"It takes commitment to deliver on our promise of ultimate quality and luxury and ours has never wavered from day one. Today, Al Mouj Muscat is amongst the leading in the industry, offering unparalleled life, work and leisure experiences."

Launched in early 2023, the Business Park is situated within Al Mouj Golf and features eight mid-rise buildings divided between two distinct districts: Busi-



ness Park East and Business Park West. The park provides occupiers with an oceanfront setting complemented by a picturesque view across the golf course.

The occupiers benefit from excellent connectivity, transport links, and access to world-class leisure, commercial, and tourism amenities.

Spanning 39,000sqm and adhering to stringent Grade A standards, the buildings are tied together by landscaped gardens and communal spaces, fostering a conducive environment for business networking.

Following the Business Park, early 2023 also witnessed the

launch of Jinan Island at the heart of Al Mouj Muscat. It comprises of a private collection of 43 five and six-bedroom luxury villas on a serene private island.

A masterpiece of luxury living and exceptional design, the exclusive island enclave of unique and elegant homes offers a blissful verdant environment for every moment of modern family life through three distinct styles of villas.

The residents-only neighbourhood is an oasis of calm, linked to the vibrant Ghadeer District. The island is in a central location between Al Mouj Marina with its neighbouring water-

side cafés and restaurants, and Al Mouj Golf, the region's leading championship course, and the five-star St Regis and Al Mouj Kempinski hotels.

Recognised as the largest, most prestigious, and widely acknowledged awards in the region, the Arabian Property Awards have become synonymous with excellence in the real estate sector.

Every year, they are judged by an independent panel of more than 90 industry experts. Its 2023-24 panel was chaired by Lord Best and Lord Waverley, members of the House of Lords in the UK parliament.

Imam Jabir bin Zaid Waqf Foundation unveils Gheras endowment fund

Muscat - The Imam Jabir bin Zaid Waqf Foundation on Monday launched an endowment investment fund, with the aim of creating a conducive investment environment for endowments.

Held under the patronage of Abdullah bin Salim al Salmi, Executive President of the Capital Market Authority, the ceremony witnessed the attendance of dignitaries, senior officials, members of the board of directors and

individuals with a keen interest in endowments.

The establishment of Gheras Endowment Investment Fund aims to simplify investment operations by creating a platform that consolidates all endowments. It is based on the principles of sharia'a governance, and complete transparency.

"The creation of the fund reflects the foundation's mission to promote the principle of endow-



ment and community partnership by creating investment products aimed at diversifying income sources and achieving financial sustainability," said Younis al Suli, acting CEO of Imam Jabir bin Zaid Waqf Foundation.

"This fund aligns with the general aspirations of endowments and the specific goals of those under endowment beneficiaries."

The fund "is in line with Oman Vision 2040 and contributes to

meeting societal needs and supporting the non-profit sector in the national economy," he added.

The Gheras Endowment Investment Fund, structured as an open-ended endowment fund offered through a special subscription, aims to distribute a permanent income from the net returns of the fund for the benefit of investors.

The fund allows for efficient

portfolio diversification, serving the interests of the endowment, the endower, and the benefiting entity through investments in various assets.

It reflects the principle of endowment partnership, providing an opportunity for other endowments to invest. The fund will allow for income diversification and contribute to achieving financial sustainability for endowment assets.

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Wahiba Sands becomes the rage for tourism

Our Correspondent
Muscat

With the National Day holiday getting clubbed with this weekend, the citizens and residents alike are all set to make the best of this rare opportunity of having a long break from Wednesday.

And in all this, Wahiba Sands has become the main talking point as a perfect getaway for the four-day break.

The governorate of North Sharqiyah - one of the most sought-after tourist destinations - is gearing up to receive the influx of visitors not only during the National Day holiday but also throughout the winter season.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) announced that the Department of Heritage and Tourism in North Sharqiyah has completed its preparations for the winter tourist season, which draws hordes of tourists - both domestic and international - from October to April every year.

The governorate is dotted with many tourist attractions such as Wahiba Sands, wadis, oases, sulphur water springs, castles, forts, popular markets and ancient archaeological lanes, in addition to having many distin-



We have 35 air-conditioned rooms that are full, especially during the weekends

BADR AMER AL HAJRI

guished recreational activities that bear the character of challenge, fun and adventure.

Muscat Daily spoke to a few camp owners in North Sharqiyah, who are all ready to welcome guests.

According to Ali al Hajari, owner of Safari Desert Camp,

tourists have already started booking for the weekend "as the winter season makes North Sharqiyah the perfect destination for outdoor activities".

"What makes winters in Oman the best time to visit is the pleasant weather, which is neither too cold to force you stay in-

doors, nor too hot to make you feel uncomfortable when out in the sun," Hajari said, while giving a background of this annual surge. He further elaborated saying that tourists enjoy watching the sunset, sandboarding, riding

quad bikes, and visiting heritage villages that display traditional crafts, including pottery making. "We are expecting a huge increase in tourists in the coming days for camping in North Sharqiyah."

Badr Amer al Hajri, the owner of the Bidiyah Camp, said, "We are already witnessing a large turnout of foreign tourists, residents and citizens. We have 35 air-conditioned rooms that are full, especially during the weekends." North Sharqiyah has mesmerising deserts and beautiful mountains. The best option to attract visitors during the winter season is to create a special economical fare structure for tourists which is otherwise quite high during the winter season, said Hajri.

According to him, all camps are keen to present artistic programmes such as folk art and Omani handicrafts, in addition to Omani food, drinks, distinctive Omani clothes and handcrafted ornaments. "We organise trips and outdoor activities in the sands of Sharqiyah."

Giving details about the activ-

ities that are regularly held in the sands, Hajri counted walking in the sand dunes, riding sand bikes, paragliding, sand skiing, and sand sports car races (locally known as 'runs') as the most notable ones.

Additionally, tour operators also organise camel and hot air balloon rides, apart from trips to water ponds in the wilayat of Wadi Bani Khalid, which is popular among tourists for rest and relaxation.

Winters in Oman allow visitors to experience the highly diverse terrain and topography of the country, which cannot be otherwise enjoyed completely during the rest of the year.

'Winters here mean to put on your adventure shoes and get in the wilderness to explore the real beauty of Oman', the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism stressed, adding that the upcoming holiday will be an opportunity for all to relax and reconnect with loved ones in nice locales.

It pointed out that the last tourist season in North Sharqiyah offered positive indicators in terms of profits, revenues, and hotel room occupancies, which at times reached somewhere between 60-90%.

'Airport Innovate' conference on future of aviation from today

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman is hosting the inaugural 'Airport Innovate' event, a global aviation conference under the theme 'Unveiling the Future', from Tuesday.

Oman Airports is organising this event in collaboration with various branches of the Airports Council International (ACI), including ACI Asia-Pacific, ACI Middle East and ACI Europe.

The opening ceremony will be graced by H E Eng Said bin Said al Ma'awali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

The two-day conference will see participation of over 400 attendees, including airport leaders, CEOs, delegates, more than 30 exhibitors and sponsors, and over 60 speakers. The event is set to draw an influential crowd comprising aviation technology developers, airline company



H E Eng Said bin Said al Ma'awali

leaders, civil aviation authorities, industry suppliers, and transportation experts.

The conference will delve into a broad array of topics for the airport industry, encompassing airport design, artificial intelligence, big data engineering, customer experience, digital transformation, e-commerce, the future of vertical electric takeoff and landing, airport operations, workforce development, sustainability, cy-

bersecurity, smart cities, and brand strategy.

Innovation and research stand as critical pillars for advancement in the airport sector, driving progress in operations, technology, and sustainable infrastructure.

The 'Airport Innovate' is poised to be a groundbreaking event, spotlighting transformational ideas and solutions from innovators, startups, and technology experts. The event aims to present innovative approaches that could shape the future of airport operations and infrastructure.

Over the two days, the conference will have 23 sessions, including visual presentations and panel discussions, covering the latest trends and technological advancements in the airport sector. More than 45 CEOs from leading global airports will discuss the sector's readiness for innovation, artificial intelligence applications, and technologies

enhancing travel experiences and operational efficiency.

The accompanying exhibition will feature 14 global institutions showcasing their latest airport-centric products, alongside local and international tech companies presenting their innovations in aviation.

The first day of the conference will include 12 sessions, with topics ranging from the readiness of innovation leaders to the importance of innovation in the future of airports. Notable participants include CEOs from major airports in Turkey, Milan, and Vinci company, and representatives from tech giants like Google, Amazon, Cisco, and Edimia.

A session highlighting the use of artificial intelligence to enhance airport travel experiences will be a key feature, with a presentation by renowned Italian designer Focaccia, known for his contributions to Neom projects in Saudi Arabia and several international airports.

MHT invites bids for management of three significant heritage sites

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) has floated a tender for the management and operation of three major historical sites in the sultanate, notifying December 11 as the deadline for its submission.

'We have reopened the tender for the management and development of Quriyat Castle in Muscat governorate, Bait al Nuaman Fort and Barka Castle both in South Batinah. This move is aimed at attracting tourists and boosting economic activities in the governorates,' the ministry stated.

This initiative is part of the ministry's strategy to enhance the economic impact of the heritage sector and to diversify its tourism sector.

According to MHT's data, heritage sites in Oman have attracted 80,317 visitors until the end of September this year.

With the latest tender invita-



tion, the ministry requested interested entities to submit an expression of interest along with an action plan detailing their approach to managing and operating these sites.

'Applicants are also required to provide comprehensive information about their organisational structure, including shareholder and partner details, and past experience in the field,' the ministry added.

The ministry's criteria for the tender include plans for the commercial and cultural marketing of the castles and forts, organising

cultural workshops, artistic events, and activities to rejuvenate the heritage sites.

'Competitors must emphasise the unique architecture of the castle, fort, and walls and involve the local community in cultural and social events,' the ministry stated, underlining the importance of these sites for both domestic and international tourists.

Barka Castle, a prominent tourist attraction in South Batinah, was constructed in the mid-17th century during the reigns of Saif bin Sultan al Yaraibi and Hamad bin Saeed al Busaidi.

New road to Jabal Shams to boost tourism in Dakhliyah



Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Transport, Communication and Information Technology on Monday floated a new tender for the 'consultancy services for the construction of Section 1 (26.2km) and Section 2 (6.1km) and review the design and supervise the construction of Section 3 (17km) and Wadi Dam Road (10km)'.

The new road will help tourists move between tourist sites easily and enjoy the picturesque natural places, making it a

faster option to connect to the wilayats of Dakhliyah.

In a statement, MTCIT said, 'The ministry, in coordination with the Secretariat-General of the Tender Board, floated a tender for supervision services for the construction of Section 1 (26.2km) and Section 2 (6.1km) and review the design and supervise the construction of Section 3 (17km) and Wadi Dam Road (10km)'.

The deadline for submission of bids is December 25.

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*Rates as on November 20

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Euro area inflation at 2-year low in October

Eurozone's annual consumer inflation was confirmed at an over two-year low in October as energy prices fell. The consumer prices in the single currency zone increased 2.9% year-on-year in October, slowing from a 4.3% hike in September, Eurostat data showed.

The cost of energy plunged 11.2% from a year ago in October, accelerating from a 4.6% decline in the prior month.

Food prices gained 7.4% in October compared with the same month last year, easing from September's 8.8% rise.

The EU annual inflation cooled to 3.6% in October 2023, down from 4.9% in September.

On a monthly basis, Eurozone's consumer price index went up by 0.1% in October.

Oman's annual inflation falls to lowest level since March 2021

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's inflation rate experienced a significant decline in October, which can be attributed to a marked decrease in transportation costs and stability in fuel, utilities, and housing prices.

The annual inflation rate, measured by the sultanate's Consumer Price Index (CPI), dropped to 0.30% in October 2023, marking its lowest point since March 2021. This is in contrast to the 1.27% inflation rate recorded in September 2023, according to data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

Oman's inflation has consistently decreased this year due to global inflation easing and government measures that capped fuel prices and exempted essential commodities from value added tax.

Consumer price inflation for food items, representing nearly 24% of Oman's CPI, rose at a slower pace of 1.69% in October, compared to a 3.41% rise in September. The lower food inflation is mainly attributed to reduced prices of fish, meat, fruits, and vegetables in October compared to the previous month.



Sultanate's consumer price inflation fell to 0.3% in October from 1.27% recorded in September as transportation cost eased significantly

However, prices for the milk, cheese, and eggs group rose by 6.1% year-on-year in October, while cooking oils and fats became 2.6% more expensive last month than a year ago. Prices of sugar and confectionery items increased by 3.2% in October this year compared to the same month in 2022.

Prices for the transportation group, with over 19% weightage in Oman's CPI, fell by 1.41% in October this year compared to the same month in 2022. Other groups that recorded drops in consumer prices were communication and education, which saw a 0.17% and 2.31% decline in October prices, respectively.

Prices for housing, utilities, gas, and other fuels have remained stable for the past year, thanks to the government's price cap for fuel products and fiscal measures.



Global oil output increases 19% in October, IEA says

Paris, France - World oil production rose by more than 19%, or around 320,000 barrels per day (bpd), to nearly 102mn bpd in October, with US and Brazilian production outperforming forecasts, according to the International Energy Agency's (IEA) latest report.

The production level in October was also 140,000 bpd above a year ago and is expected to continue its upward trajectory in 2024 to reach an unprecedented 103.4mn bpd.

OPEC output stood at 33.79mn bpd in October, down by about 100,000 bpd from September as increases from Angola, Iraq and Russia offset slight declines elsewhere.

Non-OPEC oil production, however, increased month over month by 320,000 bpd to 68.23mn bpd in October.

According to the report, the war between Israel and Hamas that began on October 7 has not had any material impact on oil supply flows.

Iran's call for an oil embargo on Israel has failed to gain traction, and Saudi Arabia's Minister of Investment Khalid al Falih ruled out using economic tools such as oil prices to achieve a cease-fire in early November.

With the OPEC+ producer bloc due to convene for a full ministerial conference on November 26 in Vienna to review policy for the year ahead, the re-

port said it is unclear when and how Riyadh and Moscow will roll back their voluntary reductions that are in addition to a 2 million bpd cut to the OPEC+ output ceiling.

"For the remainder of this year, the Kingdom's self-imposed supply cuts look set to keep the oil market in a significant deficit that could see the OPEC+ group pump 900,000 bpd below the call on its crude. If Saudi Arabia were to stick with its cut through the first quarter of 2024, our balances suggest the market could still be in a slight surplus," the report said.

Demand growth to slow in 2024

Global oil demand is set to climb by 2.4mn bpd to 102mn bpd this year, 110,000 bpd more than projected in last month's report.

China leads the growth with a contribution of around 1.8mn bpd. Global oil demand growth is expected to decelerate sharply to 930,000 bpd in 2024, to reach 102.9 million bpd.

The report, which reflected the dovish shift in central bank messaging and stoked expectations of a soft landing, noted that the impact would be minimal. Additionally, it said that investors have factored in the conclusion of monetary tightening, with interest rate reductions predicted to resume by the middle of 2024.

Anadolu Agency

H E Hadhrami reviews OQ projects in Musandam

Musandam - H E Mohsen bin Hamad al Hadhrami, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals (MEM), toured the oil and gas projects managed by OQ, the sultanate's global integrated energy group, in the energy sector in Musandam Governorate.

H E Hadhrami visited oil facilities and plants in the governorate and was briefed about their importance, production rates, future investment prospects in these projects, and their development stages during the upcoming years.

OQ officials briefed H E Hadhrami about the role played by the group in raising the efficiency of operations to increase production and reduce operational costs. They also briefed him on the feasibility studies conducted for a number of new projects aiming at maximising the economic value of governmental assets.

H E Hadhrami also reviewed the social investment projects carried out by OQ in the wilayats of Musandam. He listened to an explanation about their impor-



OQ officials briefed H E Mohsen bin Hamad al Hadhrami about the role played by the group's projects in Musandam

tance and the progress of their implementation, in cooperation with governmental authorities in the governorate. OQ officials also explained about the group's corporate social responsibility to serve local communities and create job opportunities.

OQ projects also enrich the service and tourism businesses at the wilayats of Musandam and reflect its cultural, environmental and tourism aspects. They are considered one of the most important pillars of OQ's social investment programme.

On this occasion, Dr Ibrahim al Saleh, Executive Director of Musandam Oil and Gas Company, said, "Since January 2019, OQ has commenced oil and gas production operations at Block 8 located in Musandam Governorate. This area contains two

offshore fields including Bukha and West Bukha, which produce oil and gas and supply gas to Musandam Power Plant. We achieved a smooth transition of production operations from the previous operator, and maintained production levels above the expected rate by implementing precise well and reservoir management plans."

"Since the beginning of our operations, we were able to set a development plan for offshore fields in order to raise the production level. We are currently working on implementing this plan and we hope that we will complete it by the third quarter of 2024," he said.

Saleh further said that there are other production and development programmes for Block 8 that are under preparation now. "We will set its details during the next year.

"It is hoped that these plans will increase the production and ensure the continued delivery of gas to the Musandam Power Station in order to continue supplying the governorate with electricity."

Oil prices rise over expectations for fresh OPEC+ output cuts

Muscat - Oil prices increased on Monday ahead of the much-expected OPEC+ meeting over expectations that the group will continue its current output cuts through January.

Both benchmarks have been on a downtrend last week over diminishing concerns that the conflict between Israel and Palestine will disrupt oil trading routes.

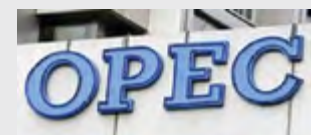
Global benchmark crude Brent traded at \$81.28 per barrel in morning trade in London, a 0.83% rise from the closing price of \$80.61 a barrel in the previous trading session on Friday.

However, prices rebounded on the first day of the week as investors priced in the scenario that OPEC's swing producer Saudi Arabia will extend its 1mn barrels per day (bpd) of productions cut for at least another month.

Producers of the 23-member OPEC+ group had been reducing output "to ensure market stability" amid weak demand signs in China, but recent data showed that the economy of the world's largest oil importer, China, recovered from the wounds of the COVID pandemic.

OPEC also forecast in its monthly oil report that demand in 2024 will increase as solid global economic growth amid continued improvements in China is expected to support oil consumption.

Agencies



Global interest rates may remain high until 2025, says IMF chief

Washington, US - Interest rates around the world may remain high until 2025, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said.

"Inflation is decelerating. We expect headline inflation to fall from more than 9 percent last year to 4.8 percent in 2024," she said at a leaders' meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) inter-governmental forum held in San Francisco.

"Core inflation is still dragging behind, and the conclusion is that unfortunately, we have to brace for interest rates remaining higher for longer. Likely through 2024 and maybe up to 2025," she added.

Georgieva said that the IMF



projects global economic growth to come in at 3% for both the current year and 2024, and added that medium-term growth prospects remain weak.

"Global growth is slightly better than the projections we had when we met last year, but we are below the 3.8% annual growth trajectory of the previous three decades," she said.

Anadolu Agency



MARH unveils Suzuki's latest trio

Moosa Abdul Rahman Hassan and Co (MARH) a renowned name in the automotive industry, announced the much-anticipated unveiling of the latest Suzuki models – the all new Suzuki Fronx, all new Grand Vitara, and Baleno.

The cutting-edge technology of Suzuki vehicles is set to redefine the driving experience and elevate automotive innovation to new heights, a press release said. "We are excited to introduce the Suzuki Fronx, Grand Vitara, and Baleno, representing a new era of automotive excellence. These models reflect our commitment to pushing the boundaries of technology, design, and performance. The line-up will undoubtedly provide our customers with an unmatched driving experience," said Said Darwish al Balushi, CEO of Moosa Abdul Rahman Hassan & Co. The all new Suzuki Fronx is the future of SUV, with a blend of



contemporary coupe design, advanced technology, and exceptional fuel efficiency, it is a perfect choice for those seeking a sporty up-class hatchback with sophisticated style and strength, offering an unparalleled driving

experience like never before. It comes in seven monotone shades – Arctic White, Splendid Silver, Grandeur Grey, Bluish Black, Celestial Blue, and Opulent Red. It also comes in dual-tone colour combinations of

Splendid Silver with Bluish Black Roof, Opulent Red with Bluish Black Roof. The Suzuki Grand Vitara combines performance with refined elegance. Its bold styling, advanced safety features, and im-

pressive performance ensure a comfortable and secure journey, whether you're on city streets or conquering challenging terrains. With powerful SUV exterior styling, flushed hood & crafted chrome grill, long shoulders em-

phasise the overall length while the shoulder line and the front/rear fenders, give it a muscular and assertive SUV exterior. The all-New Grand Vitara is equipped with a panoramic sunroof, head-up display, 9" Display Audio System, 360 view camera etc. Moreover, wireless charging and rear AC vents contribute to great comfort and accessibility. The Suzuki Baleno is a versatile hatchback that seamlessly blends modern design with practicality. Featuring a spacious interior, advanced infotainment systems, and a capable engine. The Baleno transforms everyday driving into a delightful experience. For the first time, the Baleno has undergone a full-model change while maintaining the much-favoured upgradation. The Baleno features a dynamic exterior with a distinctive roofline design, chrome-finished front grille, and eye-catching 3-

point LEDs for DRLs and tail lamps. The interior offers a premium feel with a dual-tone black and navy blue theme, soft-touch materials, and satin silver accents on the instrument panel and steering wheel. It is equipped with a 9-inch touchscreen display audio, a 360-degree view camera, and a coloured head-up display, providing connectivity and critical information to the driver. "With a legacy spanning over decades, Moosa Abdul Rahman Hassan and Co has been a trusted name in the automotive industry. We are proud to represent the Suzuki brand and remain committed to providing top-quality vehicles and services to our valued customers. Our passion for innovation and customer satisfaction drives us to unveil outstanding vehicles like the Suzuki Fronx, Grand Vitara, and Baleno," the CEO further added.

Meethaq Islamic Banking leads the way

Since its inception in 2012, Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat has played a pivotal role in shaping Oman's Islamic banking landscape. Over more than a decade, it has significantly elevated the quality of Sharia-compliant banking services, tailoring a diverse range of products to meet the varied needs of individuals, institutions, and SMEs. With the celebration of the 53rd Glorious National Day of Oman, Meethaq takes immense pride in the track record of achievements solidifying its position as a leader in the industry. Its success lies in a customer-focused strategy, underpinned by rigorous Sharia compliance certified by the Sharia Supervisory Board and adherence to the Central Bank of Oman's guidelines, a press release said. Year after year, Meethaq Islamic Banking continues to emphasise its leadership stance, strengthened and enhanced through the fulfillment of ongoing consecutive successes such as expanding the network of branches distributed across the sultanate, which now currently stands at a total of 28 branches. Within the network of Meethaq branches, 13 are located in Muscat Governorate and the remaining 15 branches are in the other



Governorates. In addition to this, Meethaq is currently offering its customers access to a dedicated network of over 50 ATMs/CDMs while also providing them with free access to over 800 ATMs and CDMs of Bank Muscat, which suggests that the diverse suite of Meethaq's banking services and facilities are obtainable and accessible for a wide base of customers. These services are designed to align with Oman's vision for digital transformation by 2040, offering innovative and Sharia-compliant solutions. Meethaq is also committed to providing great performance-driven support to its customers

from SMEs and Institutional clients by offering a comprehensive suite of banking services and facilities such as current accounts, short-term and long-term financing solutions conducive to capital growth. These financing solutions include trade solutions, 'Ijarah' financing, working capital financing, financing solutions for large-scale projects using sharia-compliant structures. Likewise, Meethaq's Islamic banking services offered to SMEs and institutional customers comprise facilities which not only foster the growth of Islamic Banking but also contribute significantly to the progress of SMEs.

Oxy Oman awarded on Youth Day

During the recent Omani Youth Day celebrations organised by the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth, Oxy Oman was recognised for its continued contributions to youth programmes in the sultanate. The celebration was held at Al Mouj Muscat, under the auspices of H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports, and Youth, and the attendance of H E Basil bin Ahmed al Rawas, undersecretary for Sports and Youth at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth. Steven Lauver, President and general manager of Oxy Oman, attended the event along with senior executives at the company, a press release said. Oxy Oman has sponsored a variety of high-impact youth-



centered initiatives in Oman, including its strategic sponsorship of the Omani Youth Center. The Youth Centre is an initiative by

governorates of the sultanate. Over the last year, the Youth Centre conducted virtual workshops to reach more than 20,000 youth beneficiaries, including young Omani entrepreneurs, throughout Oman. "We're excited to celebrate Omani Youth Day and humbled to receive this award as recognition for our years of support for youth development, from sports to entrepreneurship as well as cultural and arts appreciation. As a company, Oxy Oman believes it is important for the sultanate to enhance the development of Omani youth programmes. Through our Corporate Social Responsibility programme, we remain committed to supporting initiatives that promote youth development," Lauver said.

ahlibank celebrates women initiatives

In acknowledgment of the invaluable contributions made by its female staff, Ahlibank hosted a series of activities throughout October to spotlight the achievements of women within the organisation. As a resolute supporter of its workforce, with a particular focus on women, Ahlibank is

committed to fostering a positive and motivating work environment that upholds principles of fairness and equity, a press release said. In October, the bank organised a workshop addressing the significance of work-life balance for its female employees. Additionally, on Omani Women's

Day, female staff members shared their success stories and achievements with colleagues. A dedicated cancer awareness session was also conducted to educate female employees about the dangers of cancer. Jumana al Hashmi, head of Marketing and Corporate Communications at Ahlibank, com-

mended the female workforce for their outstanding accomplishments, stating, "Ahlibank consistently supports its team in their pursuit of success. Our female employees, integral contributors to Ahlibank's standing in the competitive Omani market, have displayed remarkable achievements."

Utico signs MoU with Yellow Door Energy for solar plant in UAE

The UAE's only private utility provider, Utico, today announced taking one more significant step in its strategic green initiatives by partnering with leading sustainable energy developer, Yellow Door Energy (YDE), to develop a first-of-its-kind solar plant in Umm Al Quwain in the Northern Emirates. In a joint statement at an MoU signing ceremony at the recently concluded 25th

Water, Energy, Technology, and Environment (WETEX) and Dubai Solar Show (DSS) exhibition, Utico and YDE said the solar plant and battery energy storage system (BESS) will generate 4,700 megawatt-hours of clean energy annually. "For Utico, this is a significant step in our journey towards being carbon neutral and support the UAE's strategic goals of sustainability and Net Zero by 2050 target. The proj-



ect, a first in the Umm Al Quwain, will help Utico enhance diversification of its energy mix for utilization in our operations," said Hussain Al Lawati, Group CEO, Utico. Significantly, the Utico-YDE solar plant will remove 82,000 metric tonnes of CO2e from the environment during the system lifetime, complementing the carbon-neutral strategy of the UAE and global climate change mitigation endeavours.

Rory McCarthy, CEO of Yellow Door Energy, said, "As the leading sustainable energy partner for businesses in the region, Yellow Door Energy is honoured to support Utico on its sustainability journey. The solar and battery energy storage system (BESS) project showcases our company's commitment to helping businesses decarbonize their operations, save money and become more resilient."

Far-right Javier Milei wins Argentina presidential polls

His rival Sergio Massa conceded the run-off vote before official results were announced

Buenos Aires, Argentina - Pulling off a major upset, Javier Milei - considered a far-right conservative leader - won the Argentina presidential elections in provincial results, CNN reported on Sunday.

Provisional results so far show Milei with over 55 per cent of votes (13,781,154) with more than 94 per cent of votes counted, CNN reported, citing the data from the country's National Electoral Chamber, which has not yet declared an official winner.

His rival Sergio Massa conceded the run-off vote even before official results were announced with a brief speech. "Milei is the president elected for the next four years," said Massa, adding that he had already called Milei to congratulate him.

Milei's victory marks an extraordinary rise for the former TV pundit, who entered the race as a political outsider on a promise to 'break up with the status quo' - exemplified by Sergio Massa.

According to CNN, his campaign promises to dollarise Argentina, if enacted, and is also expected to thrust the country into new territory: no country of Argentina's size has previously turned over the reins of its own monetary policy to Washington



This file photo shows Javier Milei giving a thumbs up during the presidential debate at the Faculty of Law of the University of Buenos Aires (UBA) in Buenos Aires on November 12 (AFP)

decision-makers.

Milei, a social conservative with ties to the American right, opposes abortion rights and has called climate change a 'lie of socialism'. He has promised to slash government spending by

closing Argentina's ministries of culture, education, and diversity, and by eliminating public subsidies.

"Make Argentina great again!" Trump posted on his platform Truth Social on Sunday reacting

over Milei's win. "I am very proud of you," he added.

Outside of his controversial plan for dollarisation, Milei's political programme includes slashing regulations on gun control and transferring authority over

the penitentiary system from civilians to the military; both measures are part of a tough-on-crime approach.

He also proposes using public funds to support families who choose to educate their children privately and even privatising the health sector, which in Argentina has always been in public hands.

Earlier, several outspoken comments landed Milei in hot water, without deterring his most ardent supporters. He triggered

world as a potential sign of a resurgence of far-right populism in the region.

While former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro endorsed Milei's candidacy, the leftist leaders in the region - including current Brazilian leader Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Colombia's Gustavo Petro - abandoned a tradition of non-intervention to back Massa in the election run-up.

The candidacy of Massa, a lifelong politician, came to repre-

Milei's win marks an extraordinary rise for the former TV pundit, who entered the race as a political outsider on a promise to 'break up with the status quo' - exemplified by Sergio Massa

an uproar when it appeared Milei was in favour of opening a market for organ transplants, although he later retracted his declarations. He was similarly forced to apologise after calling Pope Francis, who is from Argentina and is seen as an icon of progressive politics in South America, 'an envoy of Satan' in 2017.

According to CNN, Milei's unexpected political ascent will be closely scrutinised around the

sent Argentina's political establishment over the course of the race against Milei.

Inflation reached painful heights during his tenure as economy minister, at 142 per cent year on year, but Massa argued that the current government's actions were working to temper the pain - an argument that failed to convince voters exhausted by a cost-of-living crisis, CNN reported.

ANI

Napoleon Bonaparte hat fetches \$2.1mn

Paris, France - A bicorne hat belonging to French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte was sold for a record two million euros at an auction in Paris on Sunday, Al Jazeera reported.

The black beaver felt hat went for €1.932mn euros (US\$ 2.1mn) on Sunday at the Drouot auction house, breaking the previous record for a Napoleonic hat held by the same auction house: €1.884mn in 2014.

The hat, known as a bicorne, is in Napoleon's trademark colours - black, with the French flag's colours blue-white-red as insignia - and attracted collectors 'from the world over'. The auctioneer Jeane-Pierre Osenat, however, declined to reveal the identity or nationality of the eventual buyer.

The hat was last owned by businessman Jean-Louis Noisiez, who died last year, Al Jazeera reported.

The final price was more than double the estimate of €6,00,000 to €8,00,000 (US\$6,55,000 to US\$8,73,000), and nearly four times the reserve price, said the auction house based in Fontainebleau, south of Paris.

AFP

A PRAYER BRAVING POLLUTION



A devotee offers prayers to the rising sun on the banks of polluted Yamuna river on the last day of Chhath Puja festival, at Kalindi Kunj, in New Delhi, India on Monday (ANI)

India, US to safeguard 'open, inclusive' Indo-Pacific: Envoy

New Delhi, India - Stating that India and the United States have made important steps towards strengthening their defence partnership, US Ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti said the two countries are committed to promoting resilient and rules-based international order to safeguard 'free open and inclusive' Indo-Pacific.

He further said that during the India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, the ministers of both countries discussed the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Speaking at an event in the national capital, Garcetti said: "I think the joint statement (2+2 Dialogue) reflects both countries' resolve to promote resilient rules-based international order to safeguard free open and inclusive Indo-Pacific through the Quad and other metrics, global issues." The ministers discussed



This file photo shows US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti meeting Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane, in New Delhi on November 3 (ANI)

the tragic humanitarian consequences to the conflict in Ukraine and the Middle East, reiterating their stance with Israel, but also seeking to alleviate civilian suffering and adherence to international humanitarian law.

The US envoy further said that the US is looking forward to welcoming more visitors in December, and January and many major

investments in Indian technology by US private sector companies as well. As government-to-government conversations, expanding round space, defence, and production well.

"We made important steps toward strengthening our major defence partnership which continues to grow, increasing the acceleration that we have seen

through initiatives like the roadmap US-India in industrial cooperation and defence."

He further stressed that New Delhi and Washington should deepen their Artificial Intelligence (AI) conversation.

"India-US collaboration and cooperation in emerging domains, and also more importantly, because we sometimes just focus on weapons and what's being sold, or potentially co-developed. But the operational level of our militaries, which I think is as critical as any equipment, and our countries discuss ways to deepen our science and our technology partnerships to harness technology with the global good instead of technology that harms us than divides us, technology that can connect us and protect us," he said.

ANI

Tunnelling expert Arnold Dix inspects site at collapsed Indian tunnel

Uttarkashi, India - As part of the efforts to rescue the 41 workers trapped at the Silkyara tunnel collapse site, International Tunnelling Expert Arnold Dix conducted an inspection at the tunnel site on Monday.

The International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association president, Arnold Dix, arrived at the location site in Silkyara, Uttarkashi, to aid in the rescue efforts and expressed optimism on the prospects of rescue and relief operations that are underway.

After inspecting the tunnel as well as the area above it from where the vertical drilling operation will commence, Professor Dix seemed optimistic about the rescue operation.

"It is looking good but we have to decide whether it's good or a

trap, because it's looking very positive. I have got the best experts for this Himalayan geology here, I'm just one," Professor Dix said.

"We are going back to the office to talk about what we've seen and we need to compare about what we have seen here above the tunnel with what we know about what is happening in the tunnel. This actually helps us make the proper decision because we are rescuing those 41 men and we are not letting anyone get hurt while we're doing that, but to that, we need to be very careful," he added.

Arnold Dix is working alongside multiple agencies that have mounted a four pronged approach to the rescue operation. One of the options that is being worked on is drilling vertically



Arnold Dix speaks to the media as he arrives at the Silkyara Tunnel site, in Uttarkashi on Monday (ANI)

from above the tunnel face.

"I need to see what's going on underneath, I need to go look down at the bottom, it's like any

complex job you need to check all around it, and discuss it, but at the moment it's looking very positive," Professor Dix said.

"What I know is that something is going to happen. Things are happening, the team here is so focused on the rescue and so

After inspecting the tunnel as well as the area above it from where the vertical drilling operation will commence, Dix seemed optimistic about the rescue operation

focused that no one is hurt that we are taking our time to make the very best decisions we can with the information we got, knowing that time is peaking," he added.

Dix specialises in underground and transportation infra-

structure - from construction risk to more technical issues associated with the actual safety performance from an operational safety perspective. He also provides advice on risks associated with underground construction and is widely recognised as the World's leading expert on underground tunnelling.

Meanwhile, efforts to rescue the 41 trapped workers at the Silkyara tunnel collapse site continued for the ninth day. The Uttarakhand Government and the centre is keeping constant communication and making all efforts to keep up the morale of the labourers trapped in the 2km built tunnel portion. Electricity and water are available in this portion of the tunnel and labourers are provided food items.

ANI

Gaza: Hospitals, schools sheltering people bombed

GAZA - On the 45th day of the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip, dozens of Palestinians were killed and injured as the bombing of hospitals and schools sheltering displaced people, as well as homes and buildings, continues unabated since October 7.

After destroying Al-Shifa Hospital in the south of Gaza City and putting it totally out of service, the occupation forces surrounded at dawn the Indonesian Hospital in the north of the Gaza Strip, targeting it with artillery shelling, which led to the death of 12 wounded people receiving treatment in it, while two medical personnel were wounded.

Medical sources said that the occupation artillery targeted the second floor of the hospital, which is the only one that receives those wounded from the aggression in the northern Gaza Strip.

They pointed out that thousands of displaced people inside the hospital, and about 150 wounded, in addition to the medical staff and workers in the hospital, whose number does not exceed 100, fear a massacre that the occupation forces may commit in the hospital by tightening the siege and continuous bombing. The Israeli forces are besieging the hospital with dozens of armored military vehicles in an area of less than one square kilo-



Palestinians inspect the effects of the destruction left by an Israeli raid on Rafah, Gaza on Monday (WAFA)

metre, in addition to deployment of snipers on roofs of buildings near hospital, which prevents ambulances from reaching it to transport the wounded since it is the only hospital that is partially operational in the north of the re-occupied Gaza Strip.

Also, 15 people were killed, in-

cluding children and women, and dozens were injured after warplanes bombed homes near Abu Youssef Al-Naijar Hospital, in Rafah, south of the Gaza Strip.

On Sunday night, the occupation warplanes launched a series of intense raids in the northwest of the city of Khan Yunis in the

southern Gaza Strip, leading to the death and injury of dozens.

Local sources reported that the occupation warplanes bombed with dozens of missiles the vicinity of the residential city of Hamad, northwest of Khan Yunis, which led to the death of dozens of people, most of them

children and women, in addition to a raid on the town of Bani Suhaila, east of Khan Yunis.

In Gaza City, a number of people were killed and others were injured as a result of an Israeli artillery shelling of al-Zaytoon neighbourhood.

WAFA

Yemen's Houthis claim seizure of 'Israeli cargo ship' in Red Sea

Sanaa - Yemen's Houthis on Sunday confirmed that they have hijacked an 'Israeli cargo ship' in the Red Sea.

"The Houthis announce the implementation of a military operation in the Red Sea, the results of which included the seizure of an Israeli ship," Houthi military spokesman Yehya Sarea said in a statement aired by the group's al-Masirah TV.

Renewing the group's threat to target all ships belonging to or dealing with Israel, Sarea called on 'all countries whose citizens work in the Red Sea to stop any activity with Israeli ships or ships rented by Israelis'.

The spokesman reiterated that the group would continue to carry out military operations against Israel until 'its aggression against the Gaza Strip' stops.

Hours earlier, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said in a statement that the Houthis took control of the cargo ship near Yemen in the southern Red Sea, adding that the vessel was heading from Turkey to India. IDF warned that the hijacking was 'a very grave incident of global consequence'.

The ship was identified as the Galaxy Leader, a cargo ship that transports cars, ac-

cording to a report by the Saudi-based Al Arabiya TV news.

Israel's state-owned Kan TV news reported that the ship was operated by a Japanese company, which leased it from a British company co-owned by Rami Ungar, an Israeli shipping mogul and importer of vehicles.

The Houthi spokesman said the group would carry out military operations against Israel until its aggression against the Gaza Strip stops

Marine Traffic, an online vessel tracking platform, published its last update about the hijacked Galaxy Leader at 13:04 local time (1004 GMT) on Saturday.

The Houthi militia controls much of Yemen's north, including the strategic Red Sea port city of Hodeidah since the Yemeni civil war erupted in late 2014.

Xinhua

31 infants evacuated from Al-Shifa

Tel Aviv, Israel - In a high-stakes operation, thirty-one babies were evacuated from Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza on Sunday that involved multiple international agencies rushing the newborns in ambulances through active fighting, CNN reported on Monday.

The 31 evacuated babies are now in the southern Gazan city of Rafah, which lies on the strip's border with Egypt, near the Rafah crossing that has been used to bring in limited aid and evacuate foreign nationals.

It reported quoting the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PCRS) said it worked with several other organisations to transport the babies to the Al-Helal Al-Emirati Maternity Hospital in southern Gaza. It also added quoting an Egyptian government source that the babies would be transported to Egypt on Monday.

It was hoped that the parents of the newborns would be able to travel to safety with their children, but the WHO said very few of the infants were accompanied by family members, CNN reported. Gazan officials had 'lim-



ited information' and were not able to find close family members, the WHO said.

One father, Ali Sbeiti, was reunited with his young son Anas, who was born three days before the war began. "Thank God. We now feel that our son is safe after not seeing him for more than two weeks. We didn't know whether he was dead or alive, especially

when communications were disconnected with the doctors," Sbeiti said, CNN reported.

The intense fighting between Israel and Hamas, and a communications blackout across the enclave due to a lack of fuel, has complicated aid delivery efforts and made it more difficult for Palestinians to reach relief services. The 31 evacuated babies are

all fighting serious infections, said the WHO, citing doctors at the Rafah hospital where they are being treated.

Eleven of the babies are in 'critical condition', said the WHO, adding that the babies had fallen ill due to the lack of medical supplies at Al-Shifa Hospital, CNN reported.

ANI

Israeli forces detain around 50 Palestinians in West Bank

Ramallah - The Israeli occupation forces on Monday detained 48 Palestinians in raids at their homes in the occupied West Bank, most of them from the city of Hebron, and including Gazan workers who were in the West Bank, according to various sources.

Soldiers detained 21 people in Hebron in the south of the West Bank, many of them siblings, in addition to 13 workers rounded up in the town of Deir al-Ghusoun, north of Tulkarm in the north of the West Bank, and one person a resident of Shweikeh neighbourhood. Arrests were also made in Ramallah of a student at Birzeit University in a raid at her home in Ramallah's old town, as well as another person detained in the village of Deir Ibzi, west of Ramallah.

In the south of the West Bank, six people were detained from different areas in the Bethlehem governorate, including fathers and sons.



Israeli soldiers detain a Palestinian man in the West Bank on Monday (WAFA)

Four others were detained from the village of Qaryout, south of the northern West Bank city of Nablus, and another per-

son, a former prisoner, was detained in occupied East Jerusalem.

WAFA

Arab Islamic ministerial committee discusses Gaza situation with Chinese FM

Beijing, China - The ministerial committee charged by the Arab Islamic Summit with international action to stop the war on Gaza, headed by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah, met on Monday in Beijing with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

The ministerial committee includes Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Riyadh Malki, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan Ayman Safadi, Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sameh Shoukry, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Retno Marsudi, and Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Hussein Ibrahim Taha.

During the meeting, the Chi-



The Arab Islamic ministerial committee meets with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing, China on Monday (WAFA)

nese FM affirmed Beijing's support for the call issued by the summit held last week in Riyadh for a two-state solution in accordance with relevant international

resolutions. He also called on the international community to take action to end the humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip.

For his part, the Saudi Foreign

Minister stressed the necessity of stopping Israel's war on Gaza, an immediate ceasefire, and the importance of the immediate entry of relief personnel.

He stressed the importance of avoiding further killing of civilians, expressing his agony at the continued murder of large numbers of civilians and the continu-

ation of the catastrophic humanitarian crisis. He called for effective international action to deal with the crisis and address all the ongoing violations by the Israeli occupation forces and their repeated violations of international law and international humanitarian law.

The Saudi minister expressed the Arab Islamic Committee's appreciation for the Security Council resolution issued during the Chinese presidency regarding the crisis in Gaza, and said: "Despite this, we are still waiting for more efforts and more cooperation, and we aspire to cooperate with our friends in China and all countries that show responsibility and understand the seriousness of the situation to work to end the crisis in Gaza as

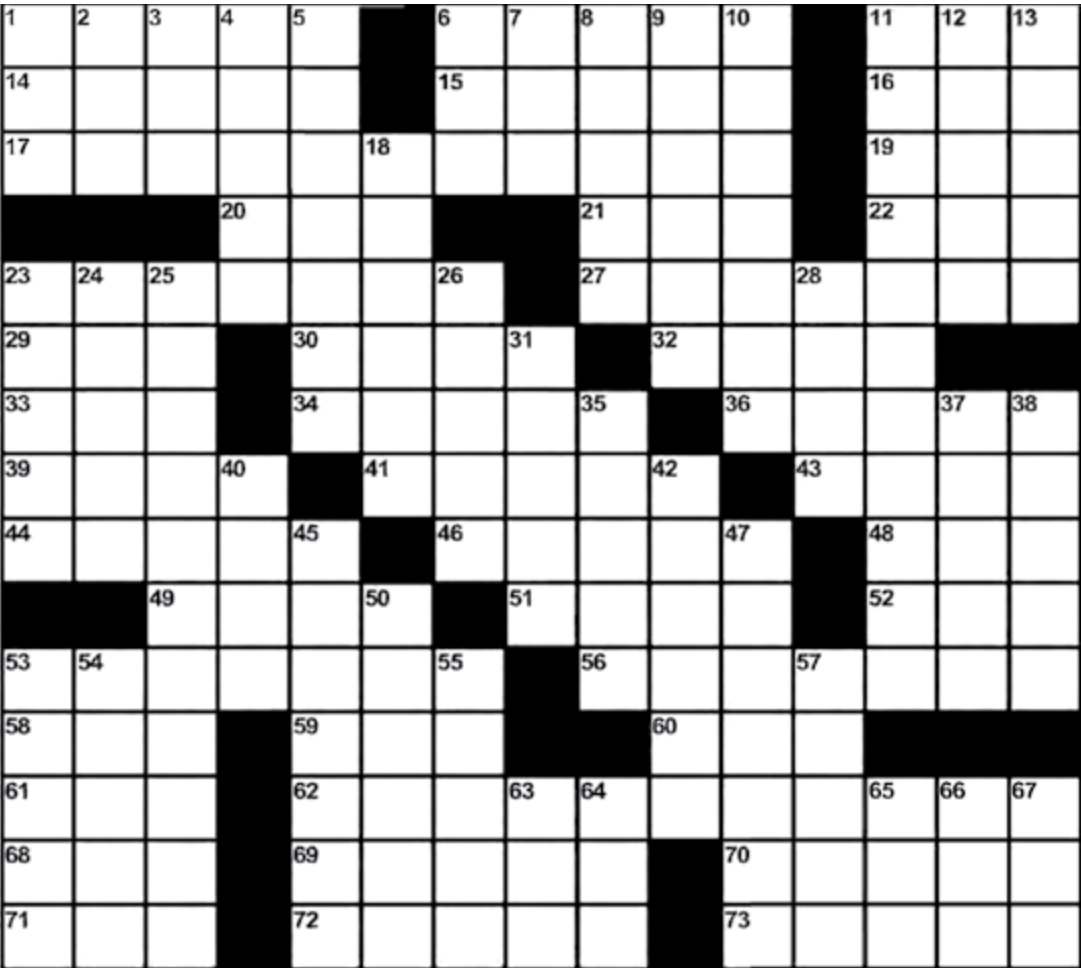
quickly as possible."

Malki said that the Ministerial Committee is talking on Monday with China and with all the countries about the horrible crime committed by the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian people, referring to the crimes of genocide committed by the occupation forces against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

He said Israel is leading a war against the concept of the two-state solution, self-determination, freedom and independence, and the Palestinian presence on the land of the State of Palestine, and is committing all forms and types of crimes against the Palestinian people.

WAFA

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1) No longer original
6) Good-will agreements
11) Sun, moon or sphere
14) Bird with a curved neck
15) Cancel, as a rocket launch
16) Positive sign?
17) It starts after 40 hours, for many
19) Mendes of Hollywood
20) Get what you bask for
21) Coke's alcoholic partner
22) Bleed in the wash
23) Crossword constructor's activity
27) States of friendliness
29) Did 22-Across
30) Catchy tune
32) One billion years (var.)
33) Make sense (with "up")
34) Snobbish expression
36) Original sin city
39) Slope slider
41) Rubbernecked
43) Correct the pitch of
44) Calligrapher's stroke
46) More friendly

48) Order's counterpart
49) Difficult expedition
51) Spreadsheet contents
52) Gerard of "Buck Rogers"
53) Tries anew
56) Some children at kid-friendly zoos
58) Pub order, often
59) One little piggy
60)_Lanka
61) Eggy Christmas libation
62) They have grave responsibilities
68) Brains of a PC
69) "The Canterbury Tales" character
70) Virtual certainty
71) Barnyard figure
72) Committed a faux pas
73) Student's composition

DOWN

1) However, in short
2) Gun, as an engine
3) More than vexation
4) Bakery sweet
5) Involves
6) Mindy portrayed of TV
7) Bart's animated granddad

8) Dried coconut meat
9) Emergency room concern
10) Hinders the progress of
11) Not stop when one should
12) Musical show
13) They may be refried
18) Unit of six outs
23) Boorish
24) Big dipper
25) Feeling great pressure
26) Gather little by little
28) Harbor sound
31) Not too hot
35) Closing news segment
37) How the euphoric walk
38) Cries weakly
40) Desperate, as circumstances
42) Can't stand
45) Highlight
47) Stressful corporate routine
50) Danish coins
53) Dressing option
54) Run away to wed
55) Exodus commemoration
57) Hawaiian lights
63) First mate

64) One side in checkers
65) Printer's widths
66) Zenith competitor of old
67) A verse to first moves

NOTE PAD

R	A	B	A	T	M	A	R	T	S	P	S	I
O	M	E	G	A	A	L	E	R	T	L	A	C
C	A	L	L	T	H	E	P	L	A	I	A	M
E	T	A	I	S	M	Y	O	N				
C	A	P	T	O	R	S	C	H	I	N	W	A
U	R	L	O	L	A	V	Y	E	A	R		
S	E	A	S	O	W	E	D	S	T	I	F	F
P	A	Y	S	T	E	N	E	T	O	G	R	E
S	L	E	W	S	D	O	N	O	R	H	U	N
E	S	P	I	N	G	M	E	M	O	T	I	C
L	E	I	P	H	I	T	U	M				
E	R	A	P	A	S	S	I	O	N	P	L	A
C	O	N	E	L	T	O	N	D	E	I	C	E
T	W	O	T	E	S	T	S	A	L	D	E	N

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You need to strike while the iron is hot. You have a golden opportunity right in front of you, but it's going to head for the hills unless you take advantage of it. Why worry about the consequences when there is no possible way of knowing what they'll be? Wherever your sense of adventure went, you have got to get it back. Putting so much effort into minimizing your risk doesn't always pay off, so just relax and let the chips fall where they may.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Someone in your life who's starting on a new journey is looking for support, and they're looking at you. If this level of pressure is getting to you, take the imitative and set some boundaries. Let them know how much you're willing to be involved and where you draw the line. The sooner you make it clear to them how much they can depend on you, the sooner you'll get rid of the tension that has been festering in you for days. Break it to them gently.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

You have many friends who share your dreams. After all, that's probably one of the big reasons they're your friends! Why not use today to see how far you can all go toward making one of them come true? Find out what they think is the best way to make things happen. Get a group consensus going about an action plan, and you'll be amazed by how powerful that energy can be! Before you know it, you and your circle could be sailing toward a shared dream. All you have to do is start.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Your passionate love for a certain hobby, gadget, or fashion trend is powerful. It feeds your brain and keeps you energized. But not everyone shares your interest so avidly, as you may come to realize when your enthusiasm is greeted by disappointing yawns or rolling eyes. Try to stick with the people you know will appreciate your zeal and maybe even share in it a little. It's much more fun to celebrate something than to try to convert people to liking it.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

In a group setting, it's important for you to talk less so you can hear more. Listen to what others have to say about their situation. They might sound like they're just complaining, but they're also giving you valuable insight. Turn off your critical thinking and just soak up the stories they're telling. Not only are they going to be fascinating for you, but they're going to show you how to approach an upcoming situation that's making you nervous.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Just because you want something to be true doesn't mean that it is. You can't let your emotions convince your mind of things that aren't real. Take a detached perspective right now. Be brutally honest with yourself about what's going on. What's your role in the day's drama? When you see things clearly, you have the upper hand. Let other people kid themselves about the reality of the situation while you rise to a leadership role by knowing what the real deal is.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

It's perfectly acceptable to rely on your network of friends and associates to connect you with the career opportunities you seek, but you can't rely on having friends in high places everywhere and all the time. Be ready to go out on your own and forge new paths. Don't hesitate to go down a road that's unknown to you. Your network is great, but today strike out solo. You'll be surprised and enlightened by just how quickly you grow comfortable in a new environment.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You're very sensitive to the problems of other people right now, which could cause you to get distracted by things that aren't your responsibility. This level of compassion for others isn't healthy for you, so you need to find a way to extricate yourself from a few of the projects you've taken on. You might think this is selfish, but it isn't. You've been putting the needs and wishes of other people over your own for too long. Work on your own problems for a while.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

If you want things to be different, make them so. It's never too late to move down a different path in your life. You can't let your age, income, or romantic status hold you back from doing something that you think will make you happy. Every day offers a new opportunity, a new set of choices to make, and this day is no different. You're working awfully hard at coming up with excuses. It's wasting your time and energy. You know you can do it, so do it!

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

The feelings you've been trying to hide refuse to be hidden. Today, they're going to start seeping out whether you want them to or not. So do yourself a favor and just open up already! You're no longer indecisive about what you really think, so why not let people know what it is? It's not like you're going to change your mind. And they really do want to know what you think. Stop being evasive and start being more forthright.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

When was the last time you worked on polishing up your vision for your future? If you haven't given any thought to your five-year plan lately, today is a great day to do it. You've got the clarity, the time, and, most importantly, a few ideas. It's more important than ever to understand what you want for yourself, because you're at a crossroads whether you realize it or not. Take a moment to figure out which way you really want to go.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Your emotions are unpredictable right now, but not in a volatile way. You're just not certain of anything, and this wishy-washy frame of mind might be with you for a few days. So any big decisions should probably be put off for a while. Make the phone calls you need to make to let people know that you're still not sure which way to go. Taking a long time to make a decision is one thing, but leaving people hanging is another. Seeing both sides can be paralyzing sometimes.

01. When was the period of English history known as "The Anarchy" or "The Nineteen-Year Winter"?

A. 14th century
B. 20th century
C. 12th century
D. 18th century

02. Pilgrims visit the city of Santiago de Compostela because it is supposedly the site of the bones of which saint?

A. St James
B. St Christopher
C. St Anne
D. St Anthony

03. What is Teeline?

A. A system to remove trapped air bubbles from water in a cooling system
B. A railway in San Francisco
C. A form of shorthand
D. A tabard

Answers: 1. C 2. A 3. C

KIDS COLOURING

BOGGLER

E	E	D	I
G	A	D	I
B	N	M	N
O	Y	O	D

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

WORD BUILDER

O

T **C** **R**

R **P** **U**

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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

TRAVIS HEADLINER

Flamboyant opener's century and spectacular catch help Australia win title

Ahmedabad, India - Australia's Travis Head scored a superb century on the biggest stage to steer his nation to victory in the final of the World Cup, earning him the player of the match award in Sunday's final.

The pressure was on Head when Australia slipped to 47/3 in search of a target of 241 to beat India at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

But Head produced one of the best knocks of his career, scoring 137 from 120 balls to guide his team to the brink of victory.

Head didn't play a part in the first half of Australia's campaign, remaining back home to help his recovery from a broken hand before joining the squad midway through the tournament.

And he more than justified Australia's faith in him - becoming Player of the Match in the Cricket World Cup final in the same year that he was also named Player of the Match in the World Test Championship Final.

The 29-year-old's outstanding century in the final was ably supported by the resolute Marnus Labuschagne, who held firm at



Travis Head celebrates his century against India on Sunday

the other end with 58* from 110 balls.

Yet it was Head who defied an Indian bowling attack who threw everything at him on a difficult surface.

The opener was caught in the boundary with just one run required, departing to standing ovation from his team-mates.

And it wasn't just with the bat that Head excelled, with his wonderful catch to remove Rohit Sharma turning the tide in the first innings.

"Rohit Sharma was probably the unluckiest man in the world," said Head. "I do work hard on my catching but I couldn't imagine

Rohit Sharma was probably the unluckiest man in the world. I do work hard on my catching but I couldn't imagine holding onto that. It is a nice thing I'll be able to look back on later in my life

TRAVIS HEAD

holding onto that. It is a nice thing I'll be able to look back on later in my life."

Despite not scoring the winning runs, it was never in doubt that Head would be named Player of the Match after a stand-out display that earned Australia's men their sixth World Cup title. "What an amazing day, I'm just thrilled to be a part of it," Head said after his match-winning display.

"It's a lot better than sitting on the couch at home, I'm very lucky that everything went well and I was able to get back here.



Mohammed Shami

India dominate team of the tournament

Ahmedabad, India - The International Cricket Council (ICC) World Cup team of the tournament was dominated by finalists India and champions Australia.

The lineup comprised six Indian players, including the tournament's leading run-scorer, Virat Kohli, who earned the prestigious title of player of the tournament. Captain Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul, Ravindra Jadeja, Jasprit Bumrah, and Mohammed Shami rounded out India's representation in the team.

Rohit, setting a formidable tone at the top of the order, amassed 597 runs, second only to his teammate Kohli. His impact extended beyond sheer

- 594 RUNS**
QUINTON DE KOCK (wk) (South Africa)
- 597 RUNS**
ROHIT SHARMA (c) (India)
- 765 RUNS**
VIRAT KOHLI (India)
- 552 RUNS**
DARYL MITCHELL (New Zealand)
- 452 RUNS**
KL RAHUL (India)
- 400 RUNS AND 6 WICKETS**
GLENN MAXWELL (Australia)
- 120 RUNS AND 16 WICKETS**
RAVINDRA JADEJA (India)
- 20 WICKETS**
JASPRIT BUMRAH (India)
- 21 WICKETS**
DILSHAN MADUSHANKA (Sri Lanka)
- 23 WICKETS**
ADAM ZAMPA (Australia)
- 24 WICKETS**
MOHAMMED SHAMI (India)

Australian greats reach 'the pinnacle' in a year for the ages

Ahmedabad, India - This Australian team are a phenomenal group of cricketers, excelling across formats and conditions, with this latest triumph underlining their status as one of the great teams of any era.

Victory in the World Cup comes six months after their World Test Championship triumph, with the small matter of retaining the Ashes in between. Add in the 2021 T20 World Cup win that many of the same group of players featured in, and this crop of Australian cricketers have pulled themselves up to the level of all-time greats of the game.

This is a team that has it all -

power at the top of the order, quality with the bat through the middle, all-rounder options, a brilliant seam attack, a hugely effective spinner. And let's not forget the strength of the fielding unit, which delivered in some style in Sunday's World Cup final to keep the pressure up on India.

It really says something when Pat Cummins describes this latest glory as the best and biggest yet.

"I think it's the pinnacle of international cricket, winning a one-day World Cup. Especially over here in India, in front of a crowd like this," a beaming Australian captain said after his team's wonderful win in Ahmedabad.



Australia captain Pat Cummins celebrates with the trophy

"It's been a big year for everyone, but our cricket team has been here in India, the Ashes, World Test Championship and to top it off with this is just huge and these are the moments that you'll remember for the rest of your life.

"You only get a shot at it every four years. Even if you have a 10-year career, you might only get two chances at it. Just the whole cricket world stops with this World Cup. So, it doesn't get any better."

Strength and conditioning played a big role too, not least in the occasionally sweltering conditions that Australia were met with during the course of their

campaign.

The wider staff did a superb job to ensure that the squad (one that was far from the youngest in the tournament and was carrying a few knocks) managed to peak at just the right moment.

There are few finer examples of that than Travis Head, who was backed to recover from a broken hand during the first half of the tournament before taking his place in the squad for the back end.

The physios worked their magic, Head buckled down, and the result was that Australia benefitted from a player hitting top form at just the right moment.

ICC

numbers, boasting a striking strike rate of 125.94, the highest among top-four batters in the competition.

The standout performer, Shami, emerged as the leading wicket-taker despite sitting out the initial four matches. His exceptional performance yielded an incredible 24 wickets at a remarkable average of 10.70 and an economy rate of 5.26.

Champions Australia had two representatives in the team: the versatile all-rounder Glenn Maxwell and the skillful spinner Adam Zampa. Maxwell showcased his prowess with a double century against Afghanistan and a blistering 40-ball hundred against the Netherlands, contributing significantly to Australia's historic sixth title win.

The selection committee, featuring cricket luminaries like Ian Bishop, Shane Watson, and ICC General Manager Wasim Khan, among others, curated the stellar team.

Kohli named player of the tournament

Ahmedabad, India - India's run-scoring machine Virat Kohli has been named the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 Player of the Tournament.

Kohli's brilliance with the bat was a defining feature of the tournament, with India's number three scoring at least a half-century in nine of his 11 innings.

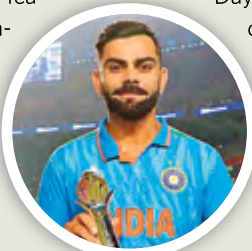
His 765 runs in the tournament is the most ever scored by an individual batter at a men's Cricket World Cup, surpassing the previous record set by Sachin Tendulkar, who hit 673 in the 2003 tournament. Kohli finished with an average of 95.62 and a strike rate of 90.31 in the tournament, hitting three cen-

turies along the way - against Bangladesh and South Africa in the league stage and then once more against New Zealand in the semi-finals.

That third century took Kohli's career tally to 50 One Day International hundreds, making him the leading century-maker in the history of the format.

Kohli broke Tendulkar's long-standing record at the 'Little Master's' home ground, the Wankhede Stadium, and said that it was the perfect moment.

"This all feels like a dream," Kohli said after his 117 steered India to the final. "If I could paint the perfect picture, I would want this to be the picture."



Virat Kohli

India retain pride in defeat after having a tournament worth remembering

Ahmedabad, India - India coach Rahul Dravid says he is exceptionally proud of all of his players, singling out captain Rohit Sharma for particular praise, after the team's run to the final of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023.

India won 10 straight matches to reach the final on home soil, but were beaten on the day by an Australian side who delivered in all facets of the game to run out winners by six wickets.

But India's head coach was still full of pride in his team's efforts across the whole campaign.

"We ran a really good campaign," Dravid said. "I'm really proud of the boys, the way we played right through this tournament, the kind of cricket we played, just the quality of cricket that we played right through this tournament, I thought was quite exceptional. So really proud of the efforts, proud of everything that we gave.



India enjoyed a remarkable run towards the final only to falter when it mattered the most

"Just at the last step in the final we probably didn't have our best game and credit to Australia. My congratulations to them. They played really well on the day and they were better than us."

Captain Rohit finished the campaign as the second-highest scorer, setting the tone at the top of the innings.

And out on the field his cap-

taincy was notably excellent, with Dravid saying that he couldn't have asked for any more from his skipper.

"I think he's been an exceptional leader," the coach said. "You know, Rohit's really led this team fantastically well, I think he's certainly got the dressing room. I just think he's given so much of his time and energy in the dressing room to the boys.

"He's always been available for any of our conversations, any of our meetings. Sometimes there's been a lot of planning, a lot of strategy that goes in. He's always committed to those things. He's given a lot of his personal time, energy into this campaign.

"And his batting as well, I thought it was fantastic, the way he set the tone for us. We knew that we wanted to play a certain way. We wanted to play a positive attacking brand of cricket. And he was very committed to doing that. And he wanted to lead by example. And I thought right through the tournament, he was quite superb in doing that. I just can't speak more highly of him as a person and as a leader."

A disappointing slide with the bat saw India go from 80/2 after the Powerplay in the final to 240 all out, struggling to unleash the shackles against the Australian bowling attack.

Di Giannantonio champion

Bagnaia finishes second at Qatar Grand Prix to extend championship lead

Lusail, Qatar - Fabio Di Giannantonio of Gresini Racing clinched his maiden MotoGP triumph, narrowly edging out championship leader Francesco Bagnaia in an enthralling finale at the electrifying Qatar Grand Prix on Sunday.

Meanwhile, title contender Jorge Martin faced a disappointing 10th-place finish.

Di Giannantonio, who had previously secured an impressive second-place finish in Saturday's sprint, exuded pure joy following the sensational win. "Man, what do I say? It's been an incredible weekend, and the race was unbelievable," beamed Di Giannantonio in a post-race interview. "This was revenge, first for myself and others with me. Now we did it, now I'm a MotoGP winner."

While Di Giannantonio, who does not have a MotoGP ride next season, revelled in his victory, Bagnaia's second-place finish further cemented his position at the top of the championship standings. His lead over Martin extended to 21 points, positioning him favorably to potentially clinch back-to-back world titles in the upcoming Valencia Grand Prix.

During the race, Bagnaia and Martin, starting fourth and fifth on the grid respectively, experi-



Fabio Di Giannantonio of Gresini Racing celebrates his victory on Sunday

enced differing fortunes. Bagnaia swiftly seized the lead from pole-sitter Luca Marini, whereas Martin grappled with wheel-spin, plummeting to eighth and struggling to regain pace.

Despite Bagnaia initially fending off Di Giannantonio, the latter executed a daring maneuver in the final laps, ultimately seizing victory. Bagnaia almost jeopardized his chance to reclaim the lead, opting for a risky move that saw him concede the top spot but secure a second-place finish.

Reflecting on the race, Bagnaia acknowledged Di Giannantonio's remarkable performance and the missed opportunity at turn one. "We managed to do a perfect start, I tried to create a gap, but Diggia (Di Giannantonio) was incredible," conceded Bagnaia. "I got sucked into his slipstream at the first braking (zone), and I went wide."

However, Bagnaia remained focused on maintaining a significant gap ahead of Martin, emphasising their position in the championship race.

As the race concluded, Bagnaia and fellow riders exhibited sportsmanship by halting their bikes to congratulate an emotional Di Giannantonio trackside, acknowledging his remarkable victory.



Novak Djokovic (left) was in a different league in the final against Jannik Sinner on Sunday

Djokovic wins ATP Finals title

Turin, Italy - Novak Djokovic delivered a masterclass to defeat home favourite Jannik Sinner on Sunday in the Nitto ATP Finals title match. After a peerless performance, the 36-year-old now stands alone with a record seven crowns at the season finale.

The Serbian was at his very best in a 6-3, 6-3 win against the Italian, losing just two

points in his first seven service games to surge ahead and then expertly navigating a tense close to the one-hour, 43-minute match.

"It's one of the best seasons I've had in my life, no doubt," Djokovic said at the close of a 55-6 campaign. "To crown it with a win against a hometown hero in Jannik, who has played amazing tennis this

week, is phenomenal. I'm very proud of the performances these past two days against Alcaraz and Sinner, probably the best two players in the world next to me and Medvedev at the moment - and the way they have been playing, I had to step it up.

"I had to win the matches and not wait for them to hand me the victory and that's what I've done. I think I played different tactically than I did in the group stage against Jannik, and just overall it was a phenomenal week."

Djokovic was beaten by home favourite Sinner in the group stage but emphatically turned that result around in the final - a feat he also accomplished against Roger Federer at the 2015 season finale. Eight years later, the World No. 1 has broken a tie with the Swiss for most titles at the Nitto ATP Finals.

By handing Sinner his first defeat this year in Turin, Djokovic improved to 4-1 in the pair's Lexus ATP Head2Head. The 22-year-old is was the first Italian to reach the Nitto ATP Finals title match.

ATP

I think I played different tactically than I did in the group stage against Jannik

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

Winter World Cup in Qatar led to increased injury severity, says study

London, United Kingdom - The winter World Cup held in Qatar last year has left a lasting imprint on the players of Europe's top five leagues, significantly impacting their injury durations post-tournament.

A detailed analysis by insurance group Howden, presented in the European Football Injury Index for the 2022-23 season, unveils compelling insights into the aftermath of the prestigious event.



Arsenal's Bukayo Saka grimaces in pain after suffering an injury

The study showcased an alarming surge in the time players spent off the field due to injuries. Prior to the tournament in October 2022, recorded injuries led to an average player sidelining of 11.35 days. However, this figure dramatically spiked to 19.41 days in January 2023, post-World Cup. Specific injuries to the ankle, calf/shin, and hamstring exhibited substantial increments in severity, with percentages soaring to 170 per

cent, 200 per cent, and 130 per cent, respectively.

James Burrows, Howden's head of sport, underscored the evident consequences of staging a men's World Cup during the European winter. "We've seen clearly that the staging of a men's World Cup in a European winter led to players facing an extra eight days on the sidelines in the second half of the season, compared to the first," said Burrows.

The repercussions reverber-

ated consistently across major domestic leagues, particularly in the English Premier League and the German Bundesliga.

The study's revelations extended beyond the realm of player welfare, shedding light on the financial toll incurred by the heightened injury severity. It illuminated a staggering 30 per cent increase in financial impact, soaring from 553.62 million euros to 704.89 million euros across Europe's elite leagues.

CLASSIFIEDS

JOB VACANCY

Inviting applications for the post of production and factory in charge - steel fabrication from those specialised in steel pipes fabrication, structural steel, tanks, vessels, skid packages; with 5 years of experience and having a driving licence email: najma@alrouba.com

Required urgently a sales and marketing manager with a minimum of ten years of work experience in the field of waterproofing, valid driving licence and ready to start work for a reputed waterproofing company in Oman. Kindly send CV with expected salary to email: sbmoman2011@gmail.com

BIRTHDAY WISHES

SIJO JOSE
NOVEMBER 21



Dear Sijo, Happy Birthday!!! Wishing that you may experience the warmth of God's richest blessings in the coming year. We hope and pray that God fills your year with His grace, mercy, peace, and abounding love. Many Happy Returns of this day! God bless. Have a great day. With much love and prayers, Grace Home Family

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MARCHING GLUTE BRIDGE WITH LEG EXTENSION

- Lie face up on the floor or a mat with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. With your hands at your sides, your fingertips should come close to touching your heels, or be able to graze your heels.
- Engage your core to press your low back to the floor.
- Lift your hips, squeezing your glutes at the top. Hold here and lift your right foot off the floor, extending your right leg straight.
- Place your right foot back on the floor and without lowering your hips, immediately lift your left foot and repeat on the other side. Continue to march, alternating sides.



SINGLE-LEG GLUTE BRIDGE

- Lie on the floor face up with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. With your hands at your sides, your fingertips should come close to grazing your heels.
- Engage your core to press your low back against the floor.
- From this position, lift your right foot off the floor and extend your leg.
- Push off your left foot, engage your core and squeeze your glutes as you lift your hips and do a glute bridge.
- Slowly lower your hips back to the floor.
- Do all of the reps on one side, then repeat on the other.

DONKEY KICK

- Start in an all-fours position, with your wrists under your shoulders, knees under your hips, and core engaged.
- Kick your right foot up and toward the ceiling, engaging your glutes and using your hamstrings to pull your foot upward.
- Keep your core engaged, so you stay stable and don't tip to the left; and stop lifting before you arch your low back. Remember: This is a strength move, not a flexibility exercise.
- Do all of the reps on one side, then repeat on the other.

FIRE HYDRANT

- Start in an all-fours position, with your wrists under your shoulders, knees under your hips, and core engaged.
- Keeping your leg bent, lift your right knee up to your side, toward the ceiling as if it were being pulled by a string.
- Keep your core engaged, and be mindful to not allow your body to tip to the left as you lift.

- Lower your knee to the starting position and repeat. Do all the reps on one side, then repeat on the other.

KNEELING OBLIQUES CRUNCH

- Start in an all-fours position, with your wrists under your shoulders, knees under your hips, and core engaged.
- Similar to the fire hydrant move, keep your right knee bent and lift your right knee toward the ceiling, as if it were being pulled by a string.
- When your hip reaches a 90-degree angle, push your right foot back, straightening your leg, but keeping your hip open.
- Bring your foot back, and pull your knee forward aiming to tap your right upper arm. Depending on your flexibility, you may not be able to bring it all the way in, and that's OK.
- Do all the reps on one side, then repeat on the other side.

STANDING HAMSTRING STRETCH

- Stand in a relaxed position with your hands at your sides, core engaged, and feet hip-width apart.
- Step forward with your right foot, keeping your leg perfectly straight and flexing your foot so that only your heel rests on the floor.
- Hinge, bending at the hip, and swoop down with straight arms tracing the length of your leg. Stand, keeping your arms straight and bringing your hands overhead, before lowering them to your side. You should feel a stretch in your hamstrings, as well as lengthening in your spine as you stand and stretch.
- Now step forward with the other foot and repeat on the other side. Continue to alternate sides, flowing through the movement at your own pace.



Shoulder problems



Dr Shafeeq Mohammed A
Specialist
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Badr Al Samaa
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Shoulder problems create major morbidities in day-to-day life. Shoulder injuries are usually neglected and it creates issues in the long run.

As you know, the shoulder is a most unstable joint in the body. The incidence of shoulder injuries are more because of this instability. We come across numerous shoulder problems in day to day life, ranging from trauma to the shoulder to muscle tear.

Before going to the injuries we should know the shoulder joint is like a ball and socket joint formed by two bones - one is called the scapula (shoulder blade bone) and

the other is humerus (the arm bone). The stability of the shoulder joint is by group of ligaments and muscles, and the shape of the joint which is formed by these bones is so mismatched that it makes the shoulder joint more unstable.

The presentation of the shoulder injuries varies according to age. The most common shoulder injury after a trauma at a young age is 'shoulder dislocation' and cartilage injuries. In old age, it ranges from fractures to muscle tears.

Shoulder dislocation is one among the most morbid issues in younger persons. If a person gets a shoulder dislocation at a young age, the chances of re-dislocation is near 100% in the near future, unless a patient goes for definitive treatment. Hence, shoulder dislocation patients should be properly evaluated.

Shoulder injuries called as 'labral injuries' are more common in persons who are physically active - those going for gym workouts who often present longstanding pain and instability that can lead to altered shoulder movements which ultimately results in poor functions of the shoulder.

Muscle tears are other most neglected issues in the shoulder in aged people. The shoulder muscle gets degenerated as the human being gets aged and it can lead to dysfunction and long standing pain which

incapacitates the individual to do activities of daily living. So evaluating them clinically and radiologically can find out the problem and can initiate the proper treatment.

Different modalities of treatment are available for shoulder problems and should be individualised, ranging from non-surgical to surgical. The most advanced treatment nowadays available in shoulder pathologies is arthroscopic surgical procedures for ligament injuries to muscle tears. The advantage of these procedures are smaller wounds, reduced hospital stay, and faster recovery.

The other issues from which geriatric (old-age) patients face, apart from muscle tears, is osteoarthritis of the shoulders. This could be due to undiagnosed tears of muscles which help in shoulder elevations and the patient pushes through this to do daily activities and ends up with osteoarthritis. Such patients should be evaluated in time and can avoid osteoarthritis of the shoulder by intervening at the right time.

For those patients who already have osteoarthritis, physiotherapy or surgical correction, called shoulder replacement surgery, are some options.

Physiotherapy after surgery plays a vital role in speeding up the recovery. Increasing the core strength is also important in avoiding shoulder injuries in certain sports.



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Photos: V K Shafeer

Hubert Vaz

There is a unique splash of colour and creativity, as well as thought-provoking insights attached to every frame installed in the lobby of The National Museum this week... And hidden behind the seemingly 'professional prowess' on display are innocent intuitions which made them come to life.

In observance of World Children's Day, The National Museum is hosting a special exhibition of photographs taken by children (aged 6-17) across the sultanate. Around 20 photographs, selected from dozens received by UNICEF Oman, in partnership with SABCO Media, which ran a photography competition in October under the theme 'Our Oman, Our Priority', are open for public viewing.

The competition called on children to submit photos of what matters the most to them, giving them the space to showcase the environment around them from their lens. Photos were submitted by children residing in Oman from different locations, from Salalah to Muscat, featuring a variety of natural landscapes, animals, and children, all through the lens of children.

The four most popular photos, selected by fans visiting UNICEF Oman's Instagram page, received prizes granted by Khimji Ramdas. A fifth entry, which was favourite of the hosts, also

received a special prize.

The exhibition marks World Children's Day, the anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The day presents an opportunity to highlight critical issues affecting children's lives and supports the engagement of children and young people as advocates for their own rights.

The opening was attended by Sayyid Khalid al Busaidi, chairman of SABCO and Sumaira Chowdhury, representative of UNICEF Oman, in the presence of the children whose photos were on display, and their families, in a small celebration to appreciate the creativity of the participating children and to promote the rights of children everywhere.

'Our Oman, Our Priority' is a testament to the innate talent and boundless imagination of young minds. Through the art of photography, these budding artists have seized the opportunity to express their thoughts, emotions, and ex-



The chief guests greet and encourage the participants of the exhibition

periences, offering a glimpse into their world. Speaking on the occasion to special invitees, Sumaira said, "I came to Oman just a year ago and even before coming to Oman people told me how beautiful a country Oman is. And I heard about how talented the children of Oman are. So for me to be able to bring together that natural beauty, the talent of the children of Oman in this amazing setting on World Children's Day is a very special moment for me and my team in Unicef.

"It's 34 years since the convention of the Rights of the Child was signed. And it speaks about the importance of the children's rights. And we can all agree that, at the time, some of those rights are attacked around the world at a level never seen before. It's really important that we come together as a community to affirm our belief in the fundamental human rights of the children."

The exhibition features an array of captivating photographs, each telling a different story. From vibrant landscapes to intimate moments of their surroundings, every image encapsulates the essence of childhood, offering a fresh perspective to viewers of all ages.

The exhibition is open to the public in the lobby of the National Museum in Muscat, inviting visitors to witness the world through the lens of these young photographers. It will be on till November 28 and then move across different locations within Muscat.



Haneen, 15
Bahla - Dakhliyah

I love animals and cats are my favourites — they are really so cool creatures. They spread peace and serenity wherever they go.



Muhammed, 15
Nakhal - Al Batinah South

This was a random click taken while exploring Oman's natural beauty. This spot is my favourite and I take friends and guests there frequently.



Rashid, 11
Al Khad Village - Al Batinah

This is the village where I stay and I simply love everything about it. I love clicking photos of nature and this is one of my favourite shots.



Lujaina, 8
Ashkhara - Sharqiyah

The beauty of the sea waves is something I love very much. It makes me very happy, so I clicked a photo and everyone loved it.



Musab, 6
Muscat Hills Park - Muscat

I love the beautiful sunset and colours of nature which you see in this park. I visit this park often with my friends and love capturing what I see.