



AL MOUJ ROUNDABOUT

City traffic congestion needs urgent attention

(Syed Fasiuddin/Muscat Daily)

An efficient public transport network and obeying traffic rules seen as key to solving Muscat’s traffic woes

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Despite the government’s efforts over the years to build world-class road infrastructure in Muscat and beyond, the city is witnessing traffic jams every day. Development of an efficient public transport network and adhering to traffic rules can provide a permanent solution for Muscat’s traffic troubles, experts believe.

According to Nasser al Hosni, director of Happy Line Transport, traffic congestion is a “daily affair” in Muscat. “The peak traffic congestion starts at 6.30am because many citizens who work in government and private sectors live outside the capital. The number of cars on the roads in central Muscat, including the Muscat Expressway, has witnessed a sharp increase.”

Hosni informed that traffic builds up on Sultan Qaboos Street from Bait al Baraka Roundabout leading to the old Seeb Airport. There are traffic jams also at Al Mouj Roundabout and Northern and Southern al Hail.

“The government has built many bridges over the past years to reduce traffic congestion, and also set up signals at important junctions to ensure smooth flow of traffic. I hope a mass rapid transit system, like metro trains, is started soon in order to help ease traffic. An accurate survey of the number of cars in Muscat is needed to plan an efficient road network in the city,” Hosni said.

Sultan al Rawahi, a resident of Seeb, noted that the main entrance to Seeb witnesses traffic jams

every day despite Muscat Municipality installing traffic lights, which have not been activated yet, at several roundabouts in the area. “I hope they find a solution to the traffic congestion at the main entrance to Seeb. The traffic lights that were installed more than a year ago should be activated soon to regulate traffic.”

Salam al Salmi, a taxi driver, attributed Muscat’s traffic problems to some motorists who do not abide by the rules. “Muscat Municipality should plan one-way systems to ease the flow of traffic on some roads,” he said.

According to Marhoon al Saeed, a private sector employee, traffic jams are seen in the early morning and at the end of office hours. He hopes a metro system is built in Muscat soon connecting the capital’s far-flung areas.

“A mass transit system can provide a permanent solution to the increasing number of traffic jams in Muscat. An efficient public transport system, like Mwasalat, can also cut down the number of accidents



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MARHOON AL SAEED

Seeb and are making sure that these roads are expanded, specially those which are close to shops and shopping centres. In due course, we will announce an expansion plan to connect the internal roads to Sultan Qaboos Street and Muscat Expressway,” H E Isam Saud Harib al Zadjali, chairman of Muscat Municipality, said recently.



AL SALAM ROUNDABOUT - AL KHOUD



SEEB SOUQ



AL MOUJ ROUNDABOUT



NADI ROUNDABOUT - AL HAIL



KNOW THE LAW

NINE ARTICLES STIPULATED BY MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY FOR ALL RENT AGREEMENTS

- The First Party (landlord) is bound to register the agreement with Muscat Municipality and pay the fixed tax (three per cent of monthly rent).
- The second party (tenant) agrees to pay electricity and water bills, sewerage service charges and any other fees/charges that should be borne by the tenant. This clause should be adhered to with effect from the date of handing over of the leased property to the tenant till the date of returning the leased property back by the landlord, unless otherwise is mutually agreed in writing.
- Non-registration or renewal of the

- agreement and/or failure to pay the fixed tax within one month of its signing or expiry will result in it being considered legally null and void before any government authority in the sultanate, in addition to imposition of a fine equal to three times the fixed tax.
- The municipality tax, which has been mentioned in the provisions of Royal Decree No 6/89 and its amendments, is a government debt that has to be paid by landlords or tenants as per the agreement and can be collected by administrative confiscation.
- The second party is bound to hand over the leased property to the first party on

- the date when the agreement ends. He is bound to repair damages resulting from misuse of the property. The first party is bound to undertake any maintenance/overhauling/restoration works required for maintaining the leased property in a manner consistent with the purpose it is rented for.
- Other terms and conditions may be added to the agreement as mutually agreed by both parties provided these don’t contradict with Royal Decree No 6/89.
- In the event that one party fails to comply with his commitments hereto prescribed, the other party has the right to

- rescind the provisions of the agreement.
- The agreement can be renewed for a further period or more unless one of the parties advises the other of his wish to vacate the property before the expiry of the validity period at least three months in advance or half of the period if it is less. The landlord cannot ask for the property to be vacated except in the cases and according to the provisions and procedures of the Royal Decree No 6/89.
- The second party cannot sublet the leased property to a third party unless the first party issues prior written approval.

1 arrested for jewellery theft

Muscat - Royal Oman Police (ROP) has arrested a person for stealing jewellery in Musandam. In a statement, ROP said, ‘Musandam Governorate Police Command arrested a person for stealing jewellery valued at thousands of Omani rials. Legal action has been taken against him.’ Meanwhile, three foreigners were arrested for attempting to smuggle a cache of khat into the sultanate. ‘Coast Guard Police in Dhofar governorate seized a boat carrying three Arab infiltrators while they were trying to smuggle 1,500 packs of khat. Legal procedures are being completed against them,’ ROP stated. Additionally, Dhofar Governorate Police Command has arrested three people on charges of theft from eight shops.

MAFWR offers five plots of land for agri investment in Buraimi and North Batinah

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In efforts to achieve food self-sufficiency, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) has offered five investment opportunities in Buraimi and North Batinah governorates.

An official at MAFWR said, "The ministry has issued a tender for those wishing to invest in agriculture. It is offering five investment opportunities to grow agricultural crops on 610 acres of land."

The two sites in Buraimi are 324 acres and 50 acres, while three sites in the wilayat of Suwaiq in North Batinah governorate include two plots of land of 100 acres each and a 36 acre plot.

The deadline for submitting bids is March 17, 2022.

He added, "The initiative aims to create job opportunities for



(Supplied photo)

Omanis, increase production of various agricultural crops, and enhance food security. It also aims to increase the contribution of agriculture to the GDP and transfer modern technology in agriculture and irrigation to develop agricultural investment in the sultanate."

Developing Najd region

The ministry announced the establishment of an office for the development of the Najd agricultural region in Dhofar on Tuesday.

"The office will develop programmes aimed at promoting

agricultural wealth and water resources through strategic planning and application of the best integrated packages for new investment projects, trial of global experiences, and modernisation of existing projects," said the official.

The office will also prepare an

The initiative aims to create job opportunities for Omanis, increase the production of various agricultural crops, and support food security

MAFWR OFFICIAL



tural products and to supervise all work related to investment, production and marketing in direct coordination with various authorities.

"The office will supervise the distribution of land allocated for strategic agricultural investment for the Omani private sector and foreign investment, and activate partnerships between the public and private sectors to establish investment projects to enhance food security," he said.

The office will work to encourage research and innovative projects to highlight the best successful agricultural experiences with the aim of facilitating the transfer of those experiences to farmers to improve the level of quality and production.

"The office will enable small and medium enterprises and agricultural associations to take advantage of the available investment opportunities," the official said.

Ten qualify for Bilarab Award

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ten contestants have qualified for the final stage of the Bilarab bin Haitham Award for Architectural Design.

A statement issued in the official Twitter handle of the award announced the shortlist from 356 entries received. 'The entries were subjected to screening and evaluation by a jury,' the statement said.

'The jury has communicated with the finalists to prepare for the final qualifiers, which will be held on February 27 and 28.'

Winners will take home cash prizes - RO20,000 for the first place winner, RO15,000 for the second and RO10,000 for the third. Seven finalists will win in-kind prizes.

The award is in line with the future vision and aspirations of the sultanate - Oman Vision 2040 - in developing its various regions architecturally according to their geography and cultural identity.

H H Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham bin Tarik al Said launched the award in January.

The award was established as an annual local competition with a global vision for design and innovation in architectural projects in different regions of the sultanate that combine originality and modernity.

This year, participants were asked to propose a design for the seafront site of Muttrah. It is spread over an area of 7,500sqm, comprising Port Sultan Qaboos and boasting a wide captivating view of what has for ages been a tourist hotspot.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Muscat - The Ministry of Health (MoH) on Tuesday announced 1,511 new COVID-19 infections registered within the past 24 hours, taking the total number of COVID-19 cases registered in Oman to 369,190. Five more deaths were reported in this period.

'The total number of COVID-19 related deaths reported in the country now stands at 4,216,' an MoH statement said. The ministry added that the total number of recoveries is 345,129 and the recovery rate is 93.5 per cent.

'There were 82 new hospitalisations in the past 24 hours. The total number of COVID-19 patients currently in health institutions is 396, including 78 in intensive care units,' MoH stated.



Omifco Prize for Municipal Work launched

Sur - Oman India Fertiliser Company's Omifco Prize for Municipal Work in South Sharqiyah was launched on Tuesday in the Governor's Office.

Abdullah bin Salem al Hajri, director general of the Directorate General of the Municipality of South Sharqiyah, informed that the focus of the Omifco Prize for Municipal Work for this year is on the formation of a society committed to public health and environmental cleanliness. "This can be



done by involving the community and the private sector in municipal work programmes and achieving the principle of community partnership," he said.

The prize targets several segments, including families, schools and people living in residential areas in the wilayats of South Sharqiyah. The logo of the prize was unveiled on Tuesday and a presentation was given on its goals.

ONA



(Supplied photo)

41 expatriates arrested for violating fishing law

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Forty one expatriates were arrested for violating the Marine Fishing Law in Dhofar and Al Wusta governorates, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR).

A statement issued by MAFWR said, 'The fisheries control team in the Directorate General of Agricultural, Fisheries and Water Resources in Dhofar governorate, in cooperation with the Coast Guard Police, arrested 23 expatriate workers for violating the Marine Fishing Law and the Labour Law in the Arabian Sea

near Al Halaniyat Islands and seized six fishing boats on February 13.

'On February 12, the fisheries control team, in cooperation with the Duqm Police Station arrested 18 expatriate workers for violating the Marine Fishing Law in the village of Sarab in the wilayat of Mahout.'

WEATHER WATCH

	Max	Min
Abu Dhabi	25	16
Doha	24	13
Kuwait City	23	13
Manama	22	14
Muscat	26	17
Riyadh	26	11

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr	5.23am
Sunrise	6.39am
Duhr	12.26pm
Asr	3.42pm
Maghrib	6.08pm
Isha	7.19pm

OWWSC to distribute free water to people far away from water sources

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As part of its corporate social responsibility, Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (OWWSC) will provide free drinking water tankers to deserving categories of people.

A statement issued by OWWSC said, 'The company will provide a free drinking water tanker service to the de-

serving categories of people, subject to conditions.'

The conditions are as follows: The area in which the person lives must be about 10km away from any water source, with no alternative source of water there nor any commercial water transportation.

OWWSC urged people wishing to benefit from the service to update their database by the end of March.



SULTANATE OF OMAN
MINISTRY OF HEALTH



ANNOUNCEMENT

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

Tender Ref.	Description	Last date for Collection of tender Document	Bid Submission Closing Date on/ Before 08:00 am Wednesday	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non-Refundable)
MOH/HQ-21/2022	Relocation, Mounting and Configuring of Data Center Components and Devices for Directorate General of Information Technology	24/February/2022	16/March/2022	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	R.O 25/= Per set
MOH/HQ-22/2022	Renting of Rack Space for Co-Location Data Center from Accredited Cloud Services				
MOH/HQ-23/2022	Provision of Loading and Unloading Services at Al Nahdha Hospital				
MOH/HQ-25/2022	Construction of Remaining Works for ICU and CCU Wards at Jalan Bani Bu Ali Hospital in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate		23/March/2022	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the Excellent Grade	R.O 27,400 Per set

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

MARKET WATCH

MSX30	4,081.98
Sensex	58,142.05

FOREX RATES

(RO1 equals)

Indian Rs	195.59
Pakistani Rs	458.12
Bangladesh taka	223.28
Philippines peso	133.12
Sri Lankan Rs	525.90

*Rates as on February 15
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Emaar records AED34bn in property sales in 2021

The UAE's Emaar Properties announced a 209 per cent jump in property sales for the year 2021. The group's total sales reached to AED33.762bn in 2021 compared to AED10.902bn in 2020, demonstrating continued investor confidence in the Emaar brand.

This is the highest ever property sales recorded by Emaar since its incorporation in 1997. Emaar reported a net profit of AED3.8bn for 2021 compared to the net profit of AED2.1bn in 2020, a growth of 80 per cent, the company said in a statement.

Emaar has handed over more than 81,600 residential units in Dubai and international markets since 2002.

Omani food companies sign deals at Gulfood in Dubai

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Omani companies, which are participating in the Gulf region's annual food and hospitality event in Dubai, have signed several export, import and distribution related contracts and deals this week, according to the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn).

The sultanate, represented by Madayn, continues its participation at Gulfood 2022 at the Dubai World Trade Centre in the UAE amid great response from the visitors flocking to the Omani pavilion.

'The participating Omani companies, under the umbrella of Madayn, have signed contracts and deals this week, and have attracted a large crowd of business owners, investors, commercial agents and suppliers,' Madayn said in a press statement.

Representatives of the participating companies highlighted the great role played by Gulfood for the food and beverage industry and its remarkable contribution to spreading awareness about the Omani products at the global level.



"This is our third participation at Gulfood," said Khamis al Yarubi, chairman of Overseas Food Industries, adding, "Although the previous participations were successful; we have received greater impact at this year's version compared to the previous ones despite the conditions imposed by COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, we have signed initial import and export related contracts and MoUs with Jordanian, Syrian, Iraqi and Emirati companies this week."

May al Harthy, marketing specialist at Nakheel Oman Development Company, said that

the company is present for the first time at Gulfood, and is focusing through its participation on promoting Omani dates and introducing the visitors to the 'Million Date Palm Plantation Project', which is one of the leading agricultural projects in the sultanate.

Nakheel is also promoting its three brands at the event: Tamrah - luxury brand of fine Omani dates and sweets, Nizwa - high quality natural dates targeting local and international retail markets, and Zaad - targeting export and wholesale in local and international markets.

Harthy said, "We have received a great turnout from suppliers and international retailers and wholesalers at this year's exhibition."

Maryam al Ghazali of Al Joudah Food Tech Laboratory, said, "Through Gulfood 2022, we aim at highlighting our company's vision in becoming the most reliable laboratory in the region that is capable of analysing a range of products under local and international specifications and halal assurance system requirements. These products include farm to fork food products, beverages, water, cosmetics including sanitisers, feed and feed raw material, and veterinary drugs finished products and raw material."

Osaïd al Houqani, director of operations at Nizwa Food Industries, said, "We aim at achieving the greatest possible benefit at Gulfood by meeting representatives of food and beverage industries and promoting our products to a large segment of local, regional and international visitors."

Through Gulfood 2022 platform, which will conclude on Thursday, Madayn aims at introducing the Omani products to visitors from across the globe.



Ministry of Finance issues treasury bills worth RO247mn

Muscat - The sultanate's Ministry of Finance has issued treasury bills worth RO247.5mn this week. Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds.

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the issue manager for treasury bills issuance and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (repo).

Total value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO247.5mn, for a maturity period of 28 days, from today until March 16. Average accepted price reached RO99.951 for

every RO100 bill, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO99.950.

Average discount rate and the average yield reached 0.6386 per cent and 0.6389 per cent, respectively.

The interest rate on the repo operations with the CBO is 0.5 per cent while the discount rate on the treasury bills discounting facility with the centra bank is 0.75 per cent.

Treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. ONA

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OAC to launch arbitration training, courses

Muscat - The Oman Commercial Arbitration Centre (OAC) and the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIArb) have announced their partnership to offer CIArb's 'gold standard' arbitrator training and accreditation courses in Oman.

The partnership comes in response to the marked preference by Omani and international parties doing business in and through Oman to resolve their disputes through arbitration, and the resultant growing demand for alternative dispute resolution (ADR) training.

Under this strategic partnership OAC and CIArb will jointly offer, for the first time in Oman,

CIArb's world-renowned 'Pathways in International Arbitration' programme which also includes accelerated route courses to CIArb membership and fellowship. All individuals who acquire CIArb fellowship through any of these courses will be deemed to have satisfied the important first step - the education and training requirement - for admission onto OAC's Panel of Arbitrators.

The courses, offered in Arabic and English, will be delivered in accordance with CIArb's regulations, standards, and would make use of CIArb tutors, syllabi, and course content, and also the CIArb's centralised assessment system. These courses will be

conducted in the conventional face-to-face mode as well as in a virtual environment.

The partnership would also strive to generally increase awareness of the advantages of arbitration and other forms of ADR to members of the business and legal communities in Oman and the wider MENA region.

The partnership agreement was signed recently by Dr Moosa al Azri, CEO of the OAC and Catherine Dixon, director general of CIArb.

On the occasion of the signing of this strategic partnership, Azri in a press release said, "This historic partnership is part of the greater vision of the OAC to

build capacity in arbitration in the sultanate and generally enhance the attractiveness of Oman as a seat and venue for arbitrations."

Catherine said, "CIArb is delighted to be working with the OAC to deliver international arbitration training in Oman to establish Oman as an attractive and sustainable seat for international arbitration. This exciting collaboration will enable arbitration practitioners and those aspiring to be arbitrators, to access world-class internationally recognised training and to join CIArb's global and diverse membership of over 17,000 ADR practitioners operating in over 150 jurisdictions."

MSX closes flat on weak trading

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The benchmark index of the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) remained almost flat on Tuesday to close at 4,081.98 points. Trading activity at the Muscat bourse also remained weak after sharp declines in the previous two sessions.

Financial and Industrial indices decreased by 0.12 per cent and 0.13 per cent, respectively. Services index, however, increased by 0.17 per cent. MSX Sharia index dropped 0.42 per cent to close at 500.42 points.

Total trading volume decreased by 37.4 per cent to 8.38mn shares on Tuesday compared with 13.4mn shares traded on



Monday. Market turnover decreased by more than 10 per cent to RO2.78mn against

RO2.53mn recorded in the previous trading session.

Market breadth of the MSX remained neutral with 11 advancing stocks to 11 decliners. As many as 21 traded stocks closed flat for the day.

Top gainers of the day were Muscat Desalination (9.9 per cent), Al Jazeera Services (1.91 per cent), Oman National Engineering and Investment (1.72 per cent), Oman Cement (1.72 per cent) and Muscat Finance (1.72 per cent).

Top losers were Dhofar Generating (-8.93 per cent), SMN Power Holding (-8.33 per cent), A'Saffa Foods (8.16 per cent), National Aluminium Products (-5.26 per cent) and Al Maha Petroleum Products (-1.71 per cent).

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Former Turkish Airlines boss to lead Air India

Mumbai, India – A former Turkish Airlines boss who oversaw extensive cost-cutting, Ilker Ayçi, was on Monday named as the new head of loss-making and newly-privatised Air India, owners Tata group said.

Ayçi's appointment makes him the airline's first foreign CEO and Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran said in a statement he "would lead Air India into the new era".

Tea-to-steel conglomerate Tata bought back the flag carrier – which it originally set up – in a ₹180bn (US\$2.4bn) deal in January after 69 years under state ownership.

Once similarly state-owned, Turkish Airlines was privatised in the mid-2000s and subsequently transformed into a major international player, one of few global airlines to reliably make profits.

Ayçi – who is close to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan – was appointed chairman in 2015 and the following year described his firm as "one of the



Ilker Ayçi

most profitable airlines in the world" over the previous decade.

Loss-making Air India is the direct opposite: A monumental burden on the public purse for decades, consuming ₹1.1tn (US\$14.7bn) in public money since 2009.

Ayçi, 51, stepped down from his Turkish Airlines post last month.

The coronavirus pandemic plunged his firm into losses of US\$836mn in 2020, but it returned to profit in the first nine

months of 2021, with analysts crediting a focus on freight cargo and cutting employee costs.

In a CEO World Magazine column last year, Ayçi himself said his airline had achieved "what most other airlines could not" by cutting costs and capital expenditure during the pandemic.

Whether he will be able to turn around the notoriously challenged Air India remains to be seen.

"We will utilise the strong heritage of Air India to make it one of the best airlines in the world with a uniquely superior flying experience that reflects Indian warmth and hospitality," Ayçi said in a statement.

He was an advisor to Erdogan in 1994 and the Turkish president acted as a witness at Ayçi's wedding in 2018.

The Tata group now operates four separate airlines in India and is imposing wholesale change at the top of Air India as it seeks to revive the ailing airline.

AFP

Japan's GDP rebounded before Omicron hit

Tokyo, Japan – Japan's economy rebounded in the last part of 2021, as virus cases slowed and restrictions were eased, spurring demand before the Omicron wave hit the country, data showed Tuesday.

The world's third-largest economy grew 1.3 per cent in the three months to December, rebounding from a revised contraction of 0.7 per cent in the previous three months, as virus cases surged.

The quarter-on-quarter figure released by Japan's Cabinet office Tuesday was slightly lower than market expectations of 1.5 per cent, and was driven by a sharp recovery in spending after the lifting of emergency virus restrictions in October.

The data also showed the economy grew 1.7 per cent in real terms in 2021, the first annual expansion for the economy in three years. After a spike in virus cases



Pedestrians walk past an electronic quotation board displaying the closing share prices of the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo (AFP)

in the summer of 2021, when Japan hosted the Olympics with virtually no spectators, the government lifted restrictions in October, prompting private consumption to grow 2.7 per cent quarter-on-quarter.

That growth is unlikely to have lasted however, with a wave of Omicron cases spurring new restrictions in January.

The restrictions, which mainly

target nightlife and are far less strict than a blanket lockdown, will be in place until early March.

Japan is facing "more damage than expected from the Omicron variant," said Masamichi Adachi, UBS Securities Chief Economist for Japan.

"Self-restraint by consumers has been greater than expected and the pace of booster vaccinations is very slow," he said ahead

of the release of the latest data.

"While the damage from Omicron appears to be less severe than feared for global economy, Japan may be an exception," Adachi told AFP.

"Still, we are expecting that the Japanese economy will resume a solid recovery this year after disappointing stagnation in 2021," he said, adding "the timing of the rebound is just delayed."

Tom Learmouth, Japan economist at Capital Economics, also said the road bump created by the Omicron variant would likely only temporarily derail growth.

For 2021, the 1.7 per cent expansion reversed the trend seen in both 2020 and 2019, with private consumption including household spending up for the year, despite the summer virus spike and emergency restrictions.

AFP

Annual Financial Report of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2021

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Muscat City Desalination Company SAOG (the Company), I am pleased to present to you the Annual Report of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2021.

The Company was incorporated on 19 January 2013 as a Closed Joint Stock company. In 2017, the Company underwent an Initial Public Offering pursuant to a obligation under the Project Founder's Agreement and was subsequently listed on the Muscat Securities Market (MSM) on 2 January 2018.

Operational Highlights

The Company owns and operates the 42 Million Imperial Gallons per Day (161,600 m³/day) Al Gharbiya Independent Water Plant (the Plant). The Plant is located in North Qubaila, Muscat Governorate, Sultanate of Oman and was developed under a Build, Own, Operate (BOO) scheme. The Plant achieved its commercial operation date (COD) on 19 February 2016.

The Company currently generates a revenue through the sale of potable water pursuant to a Water Purchase Agreement (WPA) with Oman Power and Water Procurement Company (OPWC). The potable water from the Plant is fully contracted to OPWC. Electricity, which is the main energy source, is procured from Muscat Electricity Distribution Company (MEDCO) pursuant to the Electricity Supply Agreement with MEDCO. The operations and maintenance of the plant is contracted to Muscat City Desalination Operator and Maintenance Company LLC (MCDOMC) or the Operator pursuant to a 20 year Operators and Maintenance Contract.

During the financial year 2021, the Company achieved a Plant availability of 94.88%, compared to 93.02% during the same period in 2020. This was mainly due to the higher scheduled outage rate at 4.6% for the financial year in 2021, compared to 5.64% for the same period in 2020. Further, the total forced outage rate for the financial year in 2021 was 0.46%, compared to 1.36% for the same period in 2020. This was mainly due to the reduction of forced outage during the annual maintenance in the financial year 2021 and lower daily information forced by the Plant during the year.

This year, the Company achieved a potable water production of 66,188,780 m³, an increase of 2.82% compared with the total water production of 64,645,338 m³ in 2020. This was mainly due to the higher water output determined by the dispatch instruction issued by Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company.

Financial Results

In 2021, operating revenue increased by 2.9% to RO 13,066 million as compared to RO 12,730 million in 2020, as a result of lower unscheduled outage rate in 2021. Operating costs in 2021 increased to RO 11,813 million compared to RO 10,595 million in 2020. Accordingly, the Company recorded profit before tax of RO 2,657 million, which is 17.3% higher compared to RO 2,560 million in 2020.

At the Ordinary General Meeting of the Company held on 7 December 2021, the Shareholders approved the declaration of cash dividends of 9,544 Bases per share amounting to OMR 1.3 million out of the retained earnings of the Company as at 31 December 2021. The Company audited financial statements for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2021. The dividend was paid in December 2021.

The Board of Directors, at its meeting held on 14 February 2022, have resolved distribution of cash dividends as below, subject to Shareholders' approval at the Annual General Meeting to be held on 29 March 2022 and in compliance with the Commercial Companies Law (RO 16/2019) and other applicable Omani legislation:

- cash dividend of 7.715 Bases per share, out of the retained earnings as per the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2021 for the shareholders of the Company who are registered in the Company's shareholders register with the Muscat Clearing & Depository Company SAOG as at a date to be determined by the Board; and
- cash dividend not exceeding 11,250 Bases per share, out of the retained earnings as per the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 30 September 2022 to the shareholders of the Company who are registered in the Company's shareholders register with the Muscat Clearing & Depository Company SAOG as at a date to be determined by the Board.

Health, Safety and Environment

Ensuring full compliance with Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) standards continues to be a high priority for the Company as it is its Operation. This is evidenced by the fact that there have been no Lost Time Incidents (LTI) or environmental incidents for 2021. As at 31 December 2021, the Company achieved 2133 days without LTI since its COD. In April 2017, the Operator was awarded an ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management System and OHSAS 18001:2017 Occupational Health and Safety Management System. In September 2018, the Operator successfully registered its ISO 45001:2018 and ISO 14001:2015.

Furthermore, holding against the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, the Company has developed and implemented the following procedures to prevent its employees, subcontractors on site and visitors from the infection of COVID-19, providing a safe and healthy work environment, and ensuring the total availability of the Plant and its drinking water production:

- Staff and visitors must be fully vaccinated in order to enter the office and plant;
- Temperature screening at all plant entrances;
- Replacing face-to-face meetings with conference calls;
- Enforcement of social mask usage in the Plant;
- Isolation of symptomatic visitors;
- Regular disinfection of meeting rooms and workstations;
- Installation of informative posters in the buildings;
- Scheduling of teams in maintenance, operation and administration to work in shifts to minimize interactions between employees.

Corporate Governance

The Company has a comprehensive system of internal controls in place. The Company engaged Axi Tinsam Grant Thornton, to undertake the Company's internal audit function for the financial year 2021. An internal audit plan was developed for 2021 and approved by the Audit Committee, which was fully implemented during the year.

There were no significant findings identified for the year ended 31 December 2021. The Management is fully committed to implementing the recommendations arising from the findings of the internal audit.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Since the outset of our operation, we have been committed to contribute towards the wellbeing of the Omani community at the forefront of our business. Our CSR activities has taken root throughout our day-to-day operations. Our CSR activities in the year 2021 are sought to build and strengthen our outreach to key areas of the local community, and were focused on the area of human development and health and safety. The Company undertakes the following CSR initiatives despite the Covid-19 related restrictions:

- Donation of Covid-19 preventive tools to 3 public schools**
The outbreak of Covid-19 has continued throughout 2021 which seriously threatened the health and the educational opportunities for young children. Some Covid-19 related preventive goods, such as touchless thermometers, hand sanitizers, and air disinfectors were donated to 3 public schools nearby our plant, i.e. Thuqayyeh St. Mohammed Al-Basheeriyah School, As-Sala Saaleh School, and Al-Hudaybiyah Basic School.
- Donation to Oman Charitable Organization's fund for those affected by cyclone Shaheen**
In October 2021, Tropical Cyclone Shaheen slammed into Oman with strong winds and heavy rain, flooding streets and houses, which caused enormous damage to people in Oman. With deep sympathy for those affected by the cyclone, the Company made a financial contribution to the Oman Charitable Organization's fund to provide relief to those in need.
- On-the-job technical training for students**
In line with our commitment to supporting the human development of young Omanis especially who are aiming at working for technical sectors, we accepted some young students to provide on-the-job training for the operation and maintenance of water desalination facilities at our plant. During the year, we accepted, in total, 4 internships from MCDOMC (Middle East Desalination Research Center) and from OMSAD program sponsored by PDO (Petroleum Development Oman). In addition, we accepted 3 fresh-graduates to provide one-year training program for sufficient technical skill and good working experience with our Operator.

Employment

By the end of 2021, the Omanisation level in both the Company and its Operator was 76%. This is higher than last year's aggregate of 74%. The Company with its Operator has long-term plans to further improve the Omanisation level.

Note: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who requests them either in Arabic or English to the company's address at PO Box 1935, PO: 114, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman or go to our website www.mcdcoman.com

US Fed's credibility 'on the line' amid inflation spike

Washington, US – The Federal Reserve needs to accelerate the pace of interest rate increases to fight inflation, but can do so in a way that doesn't roil financial markets, St. Louis Fed President James Bullard said Monday.

"Our credibility is on the line here," Bullard said on CNBC. After consumer prices saw their biggest jump in 40 years in January, he said the Fed should "front load" its actions and raise the benchmark borrowing rate to one percent by July.

Bullard, a voting member of the Fed's policy-setting committee, caused a sharp reaction in markets last week with similar comments on the need to remove stimulus provided to the US economy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The consumer price index

in January jumped 7.5 per cent compared to a year earlier, its largest increase since 1982.

Bullard said the data capped four months of worrisome reports indicating that "inflation is broadening and possibly accelerating in the US economy."

"We've been surprised to the upside on inflation. This is a lot of inflation in the US economy," he said.

However, the New York Fed released a survey Monday showing consumer inflation expectations dropped for the first time since October 2020.

The data showed median expectations for inflation a year ahead fell to 5.8 per cent in January from 6.0 per cent in December, the New York Fed said.

That remains well above the central bank's two-per

cent target and far higher than officials had hoped to achieve as the supply chain snarls caused by the pandemic recede.

Bullard said he would try to convince his colleagues at the central bank of the need to move quickly on interest rates, but defer to Fed Chair Jerome Powell.

"I do think we need to front load more of our planned removal of accommodation than we would have previously," he said. "However, I think we can do it in a way that's organized and not disruptive to markets."

The Fed's next policy meeting is set for March 15-16, and some economists say the central bank could even make an aggressive, half-point increase to signal its determination to contain rising prices.

AFP

صناعة قرطاسية الكمبيوتر (ش.م.ع.ع.)

Computer Stationery Industry S.A.O.G.

HSE Cup 2006

ANNUAL ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

The Board of Directors of Computer Stationery Industries SAOG ("Company") is pleased to invite the shareholders to attend the company's annual ordinary general meeting to be held at 3:00 pm on Thursday , 03/03/2022 , at Al Falaj Hotel - Ruwi - Jebel Qamar Hall, and via the electronic platform to hold general meetings which can be accessed through the website of the Muscat Clearing and Depository Company (www.mcd.gov.om), if the quorum of the meeting is not completed, a second annual ordinary general meeting will be held at 3:00 pm on Wednesday 09/03/2022, at Al Falaj Hotel - Ruwi - Jebel Qamar Hall, and via electronic platform, to discuss the following agenda:

- To consider and approve the Board of Directors' report for the financial year ended December 31, 2021.
- To consider and approve the corporate governance report for the financial year ended December 31, 2021.
- To consider the Auditors' Report and to approve the Financial Statements Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss Account, for the financial year ended on December 31, 2021.
- To approve sitting fees to the Board of Directors meetings and its Sub-committees for the last financial year and determine the fees for the forthcoming financial year (as per Annexure).
- To consider the amounts allocated and spent for the company's social responsibilities for the year ended on December 31, 2021. (as per Annexure)
- To discuss and approve the proposed allocation of OR 1,500 to fulfill the company's social responsibilities for the year ending on December 31, 2022 (as per Annexure)
- To Approve the criteria for measuring the performance of the Board of Directors for the financial year ending December 31, 2022 (as per Attachment)
- To appoint an independent entity to evaluate the performance of the Board of directors for the fiscal year ending on December 31, 2022, and determine their fee. (as per Attachment).
- To elect two board of directors members for to fill two vacant seats in the company's board of directors form among the shareholders and non-shareholders, anyone who wishes to be nominated for a membership in the Board of Directors must fill in the nomination form which can be obtained from the company, and submit the form after filling it to the company at least Five (5) days before the meeting of date, (no later than the end of the business day of Thursday 24/02/2022) the company will not accept any application form after that. The candidate must comply with the requirements set for membership in the company's board of directors.
- The appointment of the Auditors for the Company for the financial year ending December 31, 2022, and determine their fee.

According to the Company's Articles of Association and the controls for holding General Meetings using modern technology issued by the capital market authority , we would like to draw your attention to the following:

- A legal person, exclusively, has the right to delegate a natural person to attend the General Meeting and vote on its behalf through technical means, provided that this natural person has an investor number in MCDCC.
- Voting on any of the agenda items begins no more than three days before the date of the General Meeting until the voting process ends on the day of the General Meeting. If the shareholder's shares are increased or decreased, the voting process will be canceled, and the shareholder will have to vote again on the day of the General Meeting.

For further information please contact Mr. Mohammed Al Nabhani on 94306245

Chairman
Auditors
Legal Advisor

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for year ended 31 December 2021

	2021 RO'000s	2020 RO'000s
Revenue	18,068	16,750
Operating costs	(11,813)	(10,595)
Gross profit	6,255	6,155
Administrative and general expenses	(839)	(838)
Finance costs (net)	(2,789)	(2,957)
Other income	10	-
Profit for the year before tax	2,637	2,360
Income tax	(286)	(520)
Profit for the year	2,351	1,840
Other comprehensive income/(loss) for the year		
Items that may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss		
Changes in fair values of derivative financial instruments	2,919	(3,125)
Deferred tax on changes in fair values of derivative financial instruments	(438)	469
Other comprehensive income / (loss) for the year net of income tax	2,481	(2,656)
Total comprehensive income / (loss) for the year	4,832	(816)
Earnings per share – basic and diluted	0.015	0.012

Source: Company's financial statements

Badr Al Samaa wins Most Trusted Brand Award

Badr Al Samaa is the proud recipient of the highly important recognition - 'Oman's Most Trusted Brand' in Private Hospital Category. This is the fifth year in a row; Badr Al Samaa, the largest private healthcare group claimed the immense trust of the patients and society at large. The award was received by managing directors of Badr Al Samaa Abdul Latheef and Dr P A Mohammed in a glittering event attended by hundreds of industry leaders and winners from other industries.

Speaking to the media at the venue, Latheef said that this year Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals entered its 20th year of operations in Oman and the theme of this occasion is 20 years of Trust and Care. He said we are celebrating the whole year as the year of our patient's trust in the services of Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals.

He added "In healthcare delivery, trust is the most important factor. Our commitment to the people of Oman by delivering best quality healthcare at most affordable in the length and breadth of the nation has helped us to gain and maintain the trust of the people. We will continue touching lives and bring smiles."



Dr Mohammed added that their exceptional healthcare services are recognised by the world's best accreditation organisation, Joint Commission Inter-

national (JCI), USA and Patient Friendly Safety Hospital Initiative (PFSHI) by the Ministry of Health and World Health Organisation. He said that uncompro-

mised quality healthcare has helped them to gain the trust of the people at large.

He further added that to enhance the standards of quality

this year four centres of Badr Al Samaa; Barka, Salalah, Sohar and Nizwa underwent The Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS). This will

make Badr Al Samaa the only private healthcare group having the highest number of accreditations.

They further said, "This mo-

ment is special and different. Unlike other awards, this time we are not chosen by a jury but by the people themselves who have developed immense faith and trust in us since we started in 2002. We express our gratitude to our patients, who have entrusted their health in our hands. And we thank our doctors, nurses, paramedics, and all our staff for contributing to this feat which we achieved today".

It is the trust of the people that helped Badr Al Samaa to grow from a humble beginning as Polyclinic in 2002 to become the largest private healthcare group of Oman.

The group has become multi-national, having presence in the UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Growing with the trust and confidence of its patients, the group is on an aggressive expansion mode with advanced facilities.

Apart from geographical expansions, they are technologically upgrading with new diagnostic and therapeutic modalities being introduced from time to time. The group is adding more medical programmes and highly acclaimed doctors to help people save time and cost which otherwise they incur in travelling abroad for treatment.


Sembcorp Salalah
 سيمبكورب صلالة

Chairman's Report

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors (the Board) of Sembcorp Salalah Power & Water Company ("SPWC" or "the Company"), I am pleased to present the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2021.

Financial Results

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact the global economic recovery in 2021. Despite pandemic-related challenges, I am delighted to report that the Company delivered a net profit of RO 18.3 million for the year 2021. Operating profit was RO 32.1 million in 2021 compared to RO 33.8 million the year before. Reduction in operating profit was mainly due to one-off Cyclone Mekunu insurance claim settlements recognised in 2020. Similar to year 2020, Basic Earnings Per Share was Baizas 19.0 for the year 2021. The Company continued to report a strong balance sheet, ending the year with net assets of RO 127.1 million.

I invite you to refer to the Management Discussion and Analysis Report section of the Annual Report for more information on the Company's financial results.

Dividends

Based on availability of the cashflows, the Board of Directors has decided to consolidate dividends for the year 2022 and will propose to the shareholders to approve total dividend of up to Baizas 6.0 per share, which will be paid on 1 November 2022. During the year 2021, the Company has paid a total dividend of Baizas 6.1 per share.

The Company follows a reasonable dividend payout policy, subject to debt repayments, working capital and operational expenditure requirements. The amount of annual dividends and the determination whether to pay dividends in any year may be affected by a number of other factors, including the Company's business prospects, financial performance, free cash availability, covenants under the Financing Documents and the outlook for the power and water sector.

Operations

The Company is a key power and water producer in the Dhofar region. We expect to remain as one of the key power and water producers to meet the demands of the region. We continue to strive for the highest level of plant availability and reliability, which is critical to the ongoing success of the Company. In 2021, the reliability of the power and water plant was 99.80% and 99.36% respectively, comparable to 99.87% and 99.73% in 2020. The power plant load factor remained relatively stable year-on-year at 38.51%. Water plant load factor reduced from 99.97% to 73.41%, mainly due to the commissioning of a new Salalah III Independent Water Plant in the region. However, due to the take-or-pay commercial arrangement that we have with Oman Power & Water Procurement Company (OPWP), the plant load factor does not have a significant impact on the profitability of the Company.

The Company was able to continue with normal operations and planned maintenance of the plant while implementing various plant improvement initiatives.

Going forward

The commitment to safe and reliable operations will remain the Company's top priority. At the same time, we will remain focused on maximising shareholder returns through a continued watch on the financial and operational performance of the Company.

Health, Safety & the Environment (HSE)

The health and safety of our people as well as protecting the environment we live in remain critical to our business. We aim to achieve world-class health and safety performance in our daily operations and our management team is committed to continuous improvement on this front.

The Company continues to mitigate the impact of the global pandemic on our people and operations through various measures. Due to the measures taken to effectively contain the spread of the virus, there was no significant impact on our operations.

I am also pleased to report that there were no lost time incidents (LTI) and zero incidents of environmental non-compliance in 2021. The Company achieved the milestone of five million safe man-hours without any LTI in August 2021, representing nine consecutive years of safe and efficient operations. This is a strong testament of the commitment that our staff and contractors have in maintaining, implementing and abiding by HSE rules and standards.

Caring for the Environment and Communities

The Company recognises the importance of being a good corporate citizen in the conduct of our business activities, and is committed to caring for the environment and making a positive impact in the communities that we operate in. We continuously improve our waste management system and reduce carbon emissions by managing our auxiliary power consumption. The Company follows a consistent approach for charitable contributions and community investments that bring positive benefits to the local communities. In 2021, the Company contributed RO 59,931 for corporate social responsibility activities to improve the public infrastructure and to promote education, health and environmental awareness in the Mirbat municipality and nearby communities.

Corporate Governance

The Board believes that a business built on the principles of good governance is key to our long-term success. Our Company complies with the Code of Corporate Governance issued by the Oman Capital Market Authority. More details can be found in the Corporate Governance Section of this report.

On Record

Mr Ng Meng Poh and Ms Diane Chen Dan have resigned as directors of the Company during the year 2021. On behalf of the Board, I would like to take this opportunity to record our deep appreciation for their invaluable contributions towards the Company.

As the Chairman of the Board, I would like to thank my fellow directors, our shareholders, our client (OPWP), regulators (the Authority for Public Services Regulation and Capital Market Authority), and our partners (the Environment Authority, the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, the Oman Electricity Transmission Company, Dhofar Integrated Services Company, OQ Company and other governmental and non-governmental bodies) for their guidance and support. I also thank all our employees and contractors for their dedication and commitment to the Company.

Finally, on behalf of the Board of Directors and our people, I would like to extend our deep appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq Al Said's wise leadership and his continued support and encouragement to the private sector. We look forward to continue supporting His Majesty's government and remain committed to our mission to supply quality and reliable power and water of the highest standards to the Dhofar region.

Tan Cheng Guan

Chairman of the Board

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER

	2021	2020
	RO	RO
Revenue from contracts with customers	72,226,284	71,881,527
Cost of sales	(40,402,593)	(39,111,913)
Gross profit	31,823,691	32,769,614
Administrative and general expenses	(656,122)	(715,216)
Other income	895,092	1,735,529
Profit before interest and tax	32,062,661	33,789,927
Finance income	97,236	254,292
Finance costs	(10,616,661)	(12,569,185)
Profit before income tax	21,543,236	21,475,034
Income tax expense	(3,242,580)	(3,152,759)
Profit after tax for the year	18,300,656	18,322,275
Other comprehensive income		
Items that may be reclassified to profit or loss		
Fair value of cash flow hedge adjustments - gross	1,787,901	(6,247,674)
Reclassification to profit or loss - gross	4,554,546	4,124,176
Deferred tax asset on change in fair value of cash flow hedge	(951,366)	318,524
Other comprehensive income for the year	5,391,081	(1,804,974)
Total comprehensive income for the year	23,691,737	16,517,301
Earnings per share:		
Basic and diluted earnings per share	0.0192	0.0192

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER

	2021	2020
	RO	RO
Assets		
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	259,434,928	270,072,326
Right of use assets	674,532	701,515
Intangible assets	2,965	26,584
Total non-current assets	260,112,425	270,800,425
Current assets		
Inventory	5,461,052	5,667,627
Trade and other receivables	19,577,001	24,565,231
Bank deposits	21,209,320	20,676,336
Cash and cash equivalents	1,002,770	521,251
Total current assets	47,250,143	51,430,445
Total assets	307,362,568	322,230,870
Equity and Liabilities		
Equity		
Share capital	95,457,195	95,457,195
Legal reserve	12,860,507	11,030,441
Retained earnings	25,222,303	14,574,602
Shareholders' funds	133,540,005	121,062,238
Hedging reserve	(6,419,750)	(11,810,831)
Net equity	127,120,255	109,251,407
Liabilities		
Non-current liabilities		
Long term loans	100,589,975	126,719,435
Long term lease liability	523,572	491,616
Asset retirement obligation	732,664	688,084
Deferred tax liability	23,417,106	21,801,198
Derivative financial instruments	4,803,570	10,392,475
Total non-current liabilities	130,066,887	160,092,808
Current liabilities		
Current portion of long term loans	26,735,713	25,154,721
Current portion of derivative financial instruments	2,749,077	3,502,619
Trade and other payables	18,113,440	22,832,519
Current tax payable	2,577,196	1,396,796
Total current liabilities	50,175,426	52,886,655
Total liabilities	180,242,313	212,979,463
Total equity and liabilities	307,362,568	322,230,870
Net assets per share	0.140	0.127

Sembcorp Salalah Power & Water Company SAOG P.O.Box 1466, Postal Code 211, Salalah, Sultanate of Oman,
Tel: +968 2323 8510 (467); Fax: +968 2323 8512, www.sembcorpssalah.com.om

OCLB: CERN-1077037

Nissan Oman's pick up and drop off facility for service enjoys popularity



Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA)'s pick-up and drop-off service for customers with prior service appointments has found many takers.

The facility which is available in the capital area needs to be pre-booked at a nominal fee via Nissan Oman Toll free 80050011, Nissan Oman website www.nissanoman.com, sending SMS <BOOK> to 9982 5454, writing email on appointment@sigh.com or by WhatsApp on 9769 2689.

A senior official of Nissan Oman, from the house of SBA, said, "We are continuously engaging with customers on enhancing their experience. This offering is aligned with customer feedback and our own efforts to make a difference to the ownership experience. This service provides our service customers the comfort that they can get necessary vehicle work completed without stepping out. It helps customers follow the COVID-19 safety protocols. As you all know Nissan Oman's Qurum showroom has received the 'Nissan Safe & Clean' certification from Nissan Middle East FZE (NMEF) for complying with the sales and service protocols established as per the programme. We will follow all related protocols while servicing a customer's vehicle."

He added, "When they opt for this service, customers do not have to take time off work or adjust their plans. Their car will be picked up from their home or place of work, removing the inconvenience of delivering it to a service centre. Nissan Oman will

take care of everything related to the car including servicing, repairs, tyres, wheel alignments and all services under manufacturer's warranty."

Every customer purchasing a Nissan vehicle can be assured of Nissan's top class after sales service, which guarantees the advantage of well-trained experts. The customers can be assured that Nissan always uses only genuine replacement parts. Customers can expect consistency and support during after sales service, which ascertains Nissan's performance and resale value in the years to come.

Awards for Nissan

In 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019, Nissan was conferred with 'Oman's Most Trusted Brand' award across categories including SUV, crossover, 4WD and mid-size Nissan, considered a premium and trusted name in the market, was the only brand to have won the recognition for four times in a row in the automobile category. The award is instituted by Apex Press and Publishing.

SBA commitment

SBA is largely committed to supporting Nissan's growth in the sultanate through major emphasis on customer satisfaction and by providing world-class after-sales services in Oman. With a national network of 12 showrooms, 17 service centres and 24 spare parts outlets, SBA has further built upon its legacy of excellent customer service and providing value for money to each of its customers.

Knowledge Oman all set to resume operations

Knowledge Oman is all set to resume its public events following the Supreme Committee decisions issued on February 9, 2022 that allow organisers to hold conferences, exhibitions and mass gatherings with 70 per cent capacity.

"After two years of only doing online webinars, we are now excited to get in action to deliver public sessions to the academia" announced Knowledge Oman Founder, Tariq Hilal

al Barwani.

Engaging the academia on employment skills needed, entrepreneurship opportunities available and sharing insights on industry future developments is Knowledge Oman's 2022 goals.

Speaking about the new plans, Barwani said, "We have been working behind the scene to learn about what skills employers need, what business opportunities are there in the

market, and how would industries behave especially post COVID-19."

"We are now working closely with academia institutions to deliver sessions specifically aimed at empowering students and the faculty members".

A series of sessions delivered by local and international experts in the form of physical interviews and online via webinars will be arranged for the institutions.



Tariq Hilal al Barwani

Furthermore, practical presentations by specialist on industry developments in addition to two public events aimed at motivating students will be hosted by Knowledge Oman for the college and universities within the year.

"Empowering the youth with the necessary knowledge to prosper in life is our chief goal, and this will be undertaken along with our knowledge partners via the academic institution and on-

line through webinars" said Barwani

Knowledge Oman has managed to deliver 74 initiatives in the form of projects, workshops, and seminars that has impacted thousands of students from colleges and universities since 2008. Projects were supported by over 35 partners locally and internationally that attracted over 80,000 registrations and 700 volunteers across the

past 14 years.

Knowledge Oman received four awards that includes the Outstanding Contribution to the Cause of Education from the World Human Resource Development (HRD) congress. Members of the platform consist of multinational group of both local and expatriates living in the country with passion of creating, sharing and exchanging practical knowledge.

Ooredoo scoops World Economic Magazine Awards

In recognition of its leading technological services, products and offerings, Ooredoo has been named 'Best Telecom Provider' and 'Best Digital Transformation' at the US-based World Economic Magazine Awards.

This prestigious global accolade is recognition of Ooredoo's amazing network and continuous value-added to customers digital experience to enjoy the Internet even more.

Ooredoo has also recently won the Global Business Magazine Award for Best Telecommunications Company Oman 2022. This is a testament to its continued efforts to transform Oman's communications



landscape, while providing its customers with the latest technologies to enrich their digital lives.

As Oman's data experience leaders, Ooredoo provides individuals and businesses with cutting edge digital products and services, so that customers can enjoy the Internet.



OPPO to introduce new products at MWC Barcelona

OPPO announced its participation at the Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2022 in Barcelona from February 28 to March 3 with the theme of 'Shape the Future'. OPPO will showcase its new connectivity product, record-breaking mobile technologies, R&D achievements in AR and 5G, and several high-end flagship products.

Strong presence on the global market

In 2021, OPPO continued to grow steadily on the global market. Holding the fourth position globally with a year-on-year growth of 22 per cent, OPPO also witnessed rapid growth in new markets in Western Europe and Latin America. Following the launch of Europe's first commercial 5G mobile phone in 2019, OPPO also launched the first mobile phone to support commercial 5G SA (standalone) network in Europe last year.

New blockbuster products and technologies

As a tech company that excels in 5G technology, OPPO will introduce a brand-new connectivity product and bring its latest flagship products to MWC. Moreover, OPPO will showcase several industry-leading mobile phone technologies that will set new industry records.

In order to bring the audience a rich, diverse, and interactive ex-

perience, OPPO will set up five major exhibition areas at its booth, including 'Brand', 'Flagship', 'Smartphone Technology', '5G' and 'AR Ecosystem' during the exhibition.

In addition, OPPO will once again create a virtual playground for tech enthusiasts around the world. So that users who cannot join in person can still have a taste of what OPPO has to offer at MWC 2022 through their smart devices anytime and anywhere.

Taking actions for sustainability

Aside from constantly researching and investing in technology, OPPO is equally passionate in making a difference for humanity and for society. In 2021, OPPO has started promoting plastic reduction and lightweight packaging in the European market, reducing 95 per cent of plastic usage for its mobile phone packaging material. During MWC, OPPO will share its efforts in sustainability as a corporate citizen.

For in-person visiting, visitors can find OPPO's Booth at #3M10, Hall 3, Fira Gran Via, Barcelona from February 28 to March 3. OPPO will host a keynote presentation at Central European Time 15:00pm on February 28. Everyone is welcome to visit OPPO's MWC booth or join through the live stream on OPPO's official YouTube channel.



الأنوار للاستثمارات ش.م.ع

Al Anwar Investments SAOG

Post Box: 468, Postal Code: 131, Al Hamriya, Sultanate of Oman, Tel : +968 24692503/24692504, Fax: +968 24692507, E-mail: info@alanwar.om, Website: www.alanwar.om

Directors' Report

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the unaudited consolidated results of Al Anwar Investments SAOG (AAI) for the nine-month period ended on 31 December 2021.

Financial Overview of Al Anwar Investments Group ("AAI")

Net Income during the nine month has increased to OMR 1,473,000 from OMR 1,215,000 during the same period last year. In addition, AAI has achieved a consolidated net profit after tax of OMR 336,000 compared to a net profit after tax of OMR 67,000 during the same period last year.

Net asset per share of the Group has decreased to 156 Baisas per share on 31 December 2021 as against 157 Baisas per share on 31 December 2020.

Investment update

1. Al Maha Ceramics SAOG

The Company has reported revenue of OMR 7,355,051 for the nine-month period ended on 30 September 2021, as compared with OMR 6,499,909 during the previous period, a growth of 13%. Net profit after tax for the period is OMR 1,840,840 as compared to OMR 1,025,822 in the previous period, a growth of 79%, which is mainly due to increase in sales revenue and effective cost control measures taken at various levels.

2. Voltamp Energy SAOG

The Company has reported revenue of OMR 19,760,603 for the nine-month period ended on 30 September 2021, as compared with OMR 25,971,688 during the previous period, a decline of 24%. Net loss after tax (attributable to shareholders of Parent Company) for the period is OMR 490,600 compared to net loss of OMR 19,078 in the previous period. One of the subsidiaries of the Company, Voltamp Power SAOG has achieved a major milestone in manufacturing its first 500MVA / 220 kV class transformer which is one of its kind and the largest to be manufactured the GCC region. The Company has also received an order for a transformer to be used in a solar power project and a number of orders from Oil & Gas sector in both domestic and export market. The substantial increase in raw material prices has however impacted the company's profitability.

3. Arabia Falcon Insurance Company SAOG

The Company has reported Gross Written Premium of OMR 14,495,060 during the nine-month period ended on 30 September 2021 as compared to OMR 12,232,125 for the previous period, a growth of 18%. The Net profit after tax for the period is OMR 1,053,787 compared to OMR 977,080 in previous period, an increase of 8%. This is contributed by better underwriting income combined with lower operating expenses.

4. Al Ruwad International for Education Services SAOC

The Company has reported decline in revenue and profitability for the nine-month period ended on 31 October 2021. This is primarily due to lower number of students enrolled in the school during the last academic year. The combined impact of Covid 19 and the challenging economic conditions had a considerable impact on private schools in Oman. Official statistics indicate that student enrollment in private schools in Oman has reduced from 116,483 in 2019/20 school year to 78,529 in the 2020/21 school year (a decrease of over 33%).

The school is now approved to provide International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum at all levels. This should improve the school's competitive position and support it in attracting higher number of students in future years.

5. National Biscuits Industries Ltd. SAOG

The Company has reported revenue of OMR 7,505,348 for the nine months period ended on 30 September 2021, compared with OMR 9,388,999 during the previous period. Net profit after tax for the period is OMR 275,139 as compared to OMR 600,150 in the previous year, a decline of 54%. This is largely due to increase in cost of raw materials, rising logistic costs and a loss of a contract from a major client. The company is about to launch a new line of premium biscuit & cookies which should mitigate its reliance on the shrinking market of traditional biscuits.

6. The National Detergent Co. SAOG

The Company reported revenues of OMR 13,958,396 for the nine-month period ended on 30 September 2021, as compared with OMR 16,571,741 for the previous period, a reduction of 16%. Net profit for the period is OMR 114,192 as compared to OMR 971,387 in the previous period, a decline of 88%. Decline in demand from consumers and increase in raw material prices are the main factors that affected financial performance of the company. To reduce this impact, NDC is focusing on controlling costs and introducing new products.

7. Oman Chlorine SAOG

The Oman Chlorine Group has reported revenue of OMR 13,165,000 for the nine-month period ended on 30 September 2021 as compared with OMR 11,925,000 in the previous period, a growth of 10%. Net loss (attributable to Parent Company Shareholders) for the period is OMR 459,000 as compared to profit of OMR 14,000 in the previous period. This significant decline in profitability is mainly on account of losses reported by the subsidiaries located in UAE and Qatar. The Oman operation reported a net profit of OMR 1,215,000 compared to previous period profit of OMR 1,022,000, an increase of 19%. The overall sales volume in the Oman plant increased during first Nine months of 2021 by 34.2% owing to improved demand mainly for Caustic Iye, Hydrochloric Acid and Calcium Chloride

Union Chlorine LLC, UAE, a subsidiary, has declared net loss of OMR 1,048,000 during the nine-month period ended on 30 September 2021 compared to loss of OMR 570,000 in previous period. The parent company's share of loss is OMR 628,000. The decrease in revenue was because of lower volume in our caustic soda Iye, Hypo and calcium chloride prills. Recently a major contract for supply of Hydrochloric Acid was awarded by the major Oil and gas producer in UAE for five years, this should improve revenue, EBITDA and Net profit of the company upon the commencement of the deliveries expected in Q4 2021.

Gulf Chlorine WLL, Qatar, a subsidiary, has declared a net loss of OMR 2,044,000 during the nine-month period ended 30 September 2021 compared to a loss of OMR 1,302,000 in previous period. The parent company's share of loss is OMR 1,042,000. The company has reported higher plant capacity utilization during third quarter of 2021 and management expect more improvement in plant capacity utilization in the short term with the increase production of Calcium Chloride plant through the Joint Venture. The Company entered a non-breakable sole supply contract with major MNC in oil & Gas sector for supply of company's products for 18 months starting from September 2021. It has already started exports to Spain, Sudan, Ethiopia, Peru and also signed a new contract for supply of 3,000MT of HCL per month to Saudi, execution of which will start once the land border with Saudi opens.

8. Almondz Global Securities Ltd, India

Al Anwar currently holds 11.94% (3,091,500 shares) in AGSL and previously classified this investment as fair value through profit or loss account (FVTPL) since year 2007 and carried at market value. Based on the appointment of Al Anwar representative in the three sub-committees on 24th June 2021, Board reclassified investment in AGSL as Associate and carried at its share of the identifiable net assets of AGSL as at 30 June 2021. However, the Company is not able to exercise significant influence solely by appointment of its Directors in sub-committees. Hence, Board has resolved to revise the reclassification of investment to FVTPL.

The Company has reported revenue from operation of OMR 1,804,000 for the half year ended on 30 September 2021, as compared with OMR 1,507,000 during the previous period, a growth of 20%. Net profit after tax for the period is OMR 695,000 as compared to OMR 389,000 in the previous period, a growth of 79%.

9. Dhofar International Development and Investment Holding SAOG (DIDIC),

In the previous years, investment in DIDIC was classified partly as FVTPL and partly as FVOCI. At 31 March 2021, Al Anwar held total investment in DIDIC of OMR 5.8 million, out of which, OMR 4 million was classified as FVTPL and remaining OMR 1.8 million was classified as FVOCI. According to the Board's decision, the entire investment in DIDIC was strategic, and accordingly should have been classified as investment at FVOCI effective from 1 April 2018, upon adoption of IFRS 9 Financial Instruments. Consequently, with effect from 1 April 2018, the portion which was classified as FVTPL was reclassified as FVOCI as correction of error in interim financial statements. However, the reclassification from FVTPL to FVOCI cannot be considered as prior year error under IAS 8 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors. Hence, Board resolved to reverse the classification.

DIDIC has reported net profit for the period is OMR 5,006,532 as compared to OMR 46,652,743. The nine-month comparative of last year included a one-time deemed acquisition gain of subsidiaries and associates of OMR 45,717,782.

The Company also successfully completed its Rights Issue of RO 28.60 million comprising of 150,526,316 shares resulting in an increase in its paid-up capital to RO 54,472 million. Also, the Company settled all the outstanding Subordinated Bonds including accrued interest partly by issue of additional equity shares through the Rights Issue and partly by cash.

Future Outlook

Oman's economy is expected to continue to improve as restrictions related to Covid-19 ease and oil prices recovers from the lows witnessed in prior years. S&P Global Ratings has revised Oman's rating outlook to positive from stable, citing its improving fiscal position, progress on reforms and rising oil prices.

AAI has maintained a prudent and active approach towards managing its investment portfolio. Our objective this year is to:

- continue to support and pro-actively manage our investment companies and,
- take advantage of investment opportunities available in the market

We are confident that AAI and its Group companies will continue to play a pivotal role in Oman's economic growth, create job opportunities for Omani nationals, and attract foreign investments in the Sultanate of Oman.

Thanks, and Appreciation

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to take this opportunity to express our greetings and good wishes to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, and pray to Allah to grant him and his government success to lead the country and the people to greater prosperity and progress.

The Board records its sincere appreciation to Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Investment Promotion, Capital Market Authority, Muscat Stock Exchange, Bankers, Auditors for their continued support to AAI and the group companies.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the Board of Directors of all Al Anwar Group companies for direction given to the managements of the respective companies. I place on record my sincere thanks and appreciation for the dedicated efforts of the management team and all employees of the group companies.

I would also like to convey my sincere thanks to the Shareholders of AAI for the confidence they have reposed in the company and its Board.

For & on behalf of the Board of Directors of
Al Anwar Investments SAOG

Masoud Humaid Malik Al Harthy
Chairman
February 13, 2022

UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

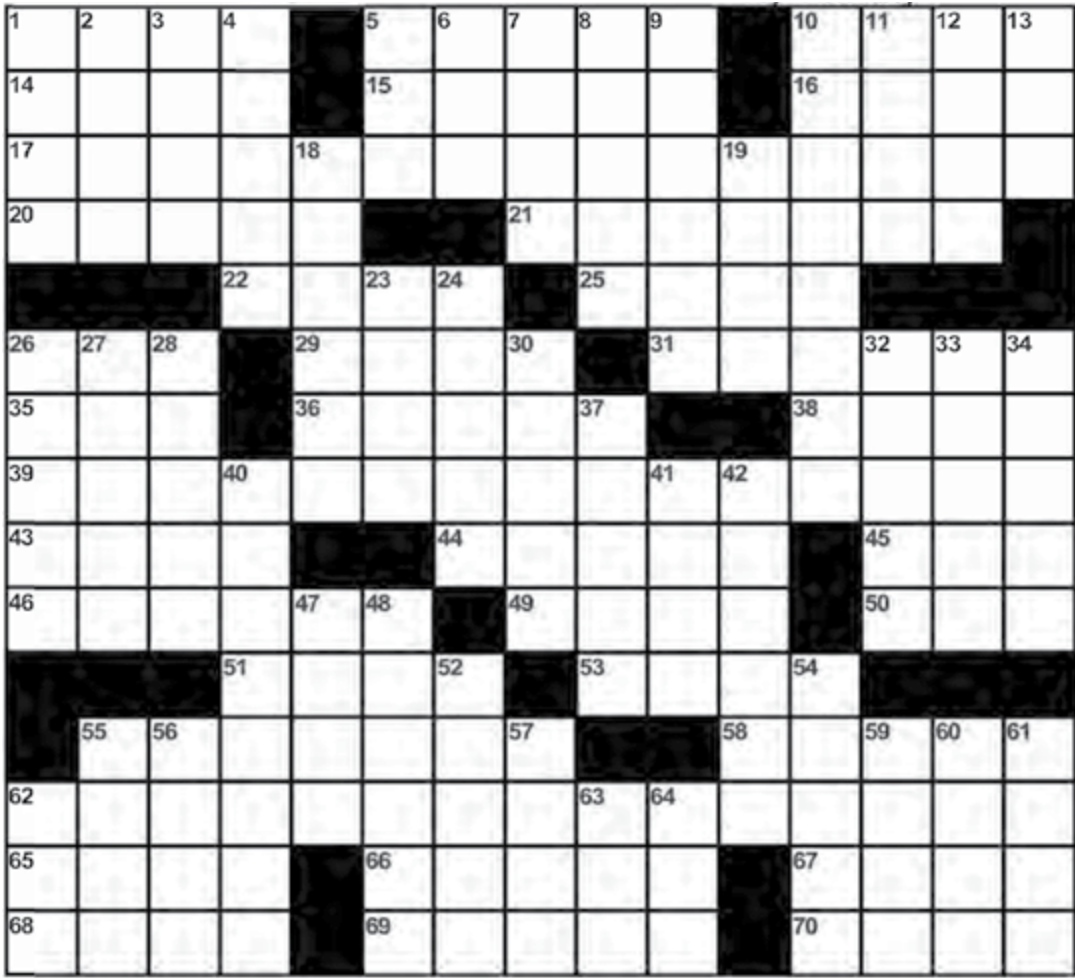
	31 December 2021 OMR'000	31 December 2020 OMR'000	Audited 31 March 2021 OMR'000
Assets			
Investment in associates	31,438	31,686	30,972
Investments at fair value	13,529	15,599	15,353
Property and other assets	2,270	2,246	2,254
Receivables	153	248	1,344
Cash and bank balances	307	95	63
Total Assets	47,697	49,874	49,986
Equity			
Share capital	20,000	20,000	20,000
Legal reserve	4,568	4,568	4,568
Fair value reserve	(671)	(467)	(476)
Retained earnings	7,210	7,216	6,874
Equity attributable to shareholders of Parent Company	31,107	31,317	30,966
Liabilities:			
Bank borrowings	16,263	18,363	18,725
Payables	327	194	295
Total Liabilities	16,590	18,557	19,020
Total Equity And Liabilities	47,697	49,874	49,986
Net assets per share attributable to shareholders of the Parent Company (in Baisas)	156	157	155

UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE NINE MONTH PERIOD ENDED

	31 December 2021 OMR'000	31 December 2020 OMR'000
Share of results of associates	480	815
Interest income	531	614
Realised (loss) profit on sale of investment	-	(139)
Net decrease in value of investment	453	(95)
Other income	9	20
Net income	1,473	1,215
Administrative expenses	(210)	(257)
Financing charges	(864)	(828)
Corporate social responsibility	-	(23)
Director fees	(63)	(40)
Total expenses	(1,137)	(1,148)
Profit (loss) for the period before tax	336	67
Income tax expense	-	-
Profit / (loss) after tax for the period	336	67
Other comprehensive income (expense):		
Share of other comprehensive profit (loss) of associates	30	(194)
Net increase (decrease) in value of investment	(225)	20
Other comprehensive loss for the period	(195)	(174)
Total comprehensive Income (loss) for the period attributable to Equity holders of Parent Company	141	(107)
Earnings profit (loss) per share attributable to shareholders of Parent Company (in Baisas)	2	-

Note: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who requests them in Arabic or English as requested, within 7 days of receipt of the request.

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**

 - 1) What you're filling in
 - 5) Site of a Muslim pilgrimage
 - 10) Had a sensation
 - 14) One way to serve a steak
 - 15) Hope for a nominee
 - 16) "I had no..."
 - 17) Like a neat, perfect arrangement
 - 20) It's spotted in Westerns
 - 21) Fish-eating birds
 - 22) Rosemary or thyme
 - 25) Use a bayonet
 - 26) Hardly a gentleman
 - 29) Was a blabbermouth
 - 31) Quenches
 - 35) Biochemistry abbr.
 - 36) "Sacro" follower
 - 38) "Damn Yankees" femme fatale
 - 39) Extremely naive
 - 43) Flexible mineral
 - 44) Satan (with "the")
 - 45) Astrological carnivore
 - 46) Cheated at hide and seek
 - 49) Scarf material
- 50) Auction merchandise, sometimes
 - 51) Bird of old Rome
 - 53) Soil type
 - 55) Current measures
 - 58) Baggy
 - 62) Between a rock and a hard place
 - 65) Relax on a couch
 - 66) It gives one a leg up
 - 67) Proceeds from a heist
 - 68) "Trick" joint
 - 69) Heavy British weight
 - 70) Certain voiced votes

DOWN

 - 1) Get a handle on
 - 2) Member of Indian royalty
 - 3) Modern Persia
 - 4) Swimming pool measurement
 - 5) Content starter
 - 6) Yeanling's mother
 - 7) Crime boss
 - 8) Prefix with "cross"
 - 9) Human aces
 - 10) Bright meteor
 - 11) Duane or Nelson
 - 12) Directors Spike and
- Ang
 - 13) Sailor, in slang
 - 18) Kind of license
 - 19) Face-to-face exam
 - 23) Lady Macbeth or Hamlet
 - 24) Hunter's hiding place
 - 26) Finish a pie crust
 - 27) "Tomorrow" musical
 - 28) Do the running man
 - 30) Oasis fruit
 - 32) Bearlike marsupial
 - 33) "... Gantry"
 - 34) Wooden shoe
 - 37) Raise trivial objections
 - 40) Spongy tree gall
 - 41) Tall fodder holder
 - 42) Acid-neutralizing compound
 - 47) "... happily_ after"
 - 48) Most desperate
 - 52) Brief quarrel
 - 54) Coffee order, sometimes
 - 55) Soon, to a bard
 - 56) Having X and Y chromosomes
 - 57) He's "the Man" of baseball
 - 59) "Works for me"
- 60) Pivot
 - 61) Congers
 - 62) Breed
 - 63) Half of the tai chi symbol
 - 64) "Adolescent" start
- NOTE PAD**
-

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You don't like to hold back when you have something to say. In fact, it's so completely out of character that when you do your friends start asking what the heck is wrong with you! They're due to start asking that question soon, because every time a certain subject comes up you refuse to discuss it openly. Why put them through this? Give up the goods. You have a set of friends who is ready to listen and enjoy the open discussion.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

New orders are coming down from above, and while you're not exactly happy about them, you still have to live with them, temporarily, at least! If you've been thinking about finding some new way to earn your living, this could be just the excuse you're looking for. On the other hand, if you like your current spot, don't just resign yourself to all this. You can work things out eventually with just a little extra effort and charm!

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

You've spent lots of time lately thinking about one particular person. Now you finally have the chance to actually spend some quality time with them. You might have a lot to say and you're certainly ready to say it, but the problem is that they do too. Let them go on as long as they like. It's an investment in your future together, if there is to be one. Just go with the flow and see where the destiny takes you two.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

It's long past time for you to stop worrying about everyone else's feelings but your own. It's officially time for you to renew your interest in yourself. Schedule a nice, long talk with a loved one, someone you know you can trust absolutely. There's probably quite a long list of people who fit that description, but you shouldn't have a problem finding someone to pour your heart out to. Anyone who knows you should consider it an honor!

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Deep friendships and long-distance travel are on your agenda, and you can combine the two if you get creative. Whether you end up traveling to see a friend, road-tripping with a friend, or receiving a visit from a long-lost loved one, it should be a time to remember. Keep your eyes and your mind wide open. Far-off places and people offer the perfect opportunity to stretch, grow, and expand those horizons.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

You're all set for a sweetly romantic evening, and if you're lucky that energy could last for the next 48 hours. You'll likely find that your companion needs a serious heart-to-heart conversation, but it can't ruin the mood. Once you've decided where you are and where you're going, you could end up being a lot closer than you were to start with. After all, you guys were meant to be together.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

You're sharp and funny, and you learned a long time ago to listen to your instincts to build on those qualities. At the moment, your built-in radar is telling you that something big is coming up, but not to worry. It isn't going to be at all unpleasant. In fact, you'll probably end up being delighted with the surprises the universe has in store for you. In the meantime, grant an audience to someone who's asked to speak with you in private.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Are you still in the mood to stay home and forget all about the rest of the world? If you can afford to take some time off, talk your sweetie or best friend into hunkering down with you. Even one day away from it all, especially when it's on your schedule to start with, can bring back memories of carefree times when taking a risk felt bold and exciting, like when you stayed home from school when you were perfectly healthy.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Things have been pretty crazy for you lately, and your loved ones haven't been quite sure what to do with you. Your phone should be ringing off the hook, actually. You've been offering sensible, rational advice, which is really all you can do right now anyway. When you're asked for your counsel once again, you might wonder what's really going on. People might not really be looking for instructions as much as they're looking for comfort.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

You've heard all about this thing called "love at first sight" in which people are said to meet the love of their life through blind dates or odd coincidences. Despite your scepticism, it's all true. Anything is possible, especially now. When a friend offers to introduce you to someone who's just perfect for you, don't freak out or make excuses. Make room in your schedule. You are going to have a wonderful time with this special someone.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You insist on depth, intensity, and passion in all your encounters, and anyone who wastes your time with meaningless chitchat doesn't rate a second conversation. At the moment, though, you amaze even yourself with how much you enjoy chatting with almost anyone on pretty much any topic. You're feeling lighthearted and easy with your emotions for good reason!

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You've got another nice, quiet day, the stuff that lovely memories are made of. Your heart is primed for romance, tenderness, and the exchange of truly meaningful words with the right person. Spend as much of your time as you possibly can with someone who shares your affectionate feelings, even if you're just friends. You know exactly who to invite along for the ride, so get on the phone.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. The Haast's eagle is the largest eagle known; where does it live?

A. Nowhere, it is extinct
B. New Zealand
C. Western Canada
D. Kazakhstan

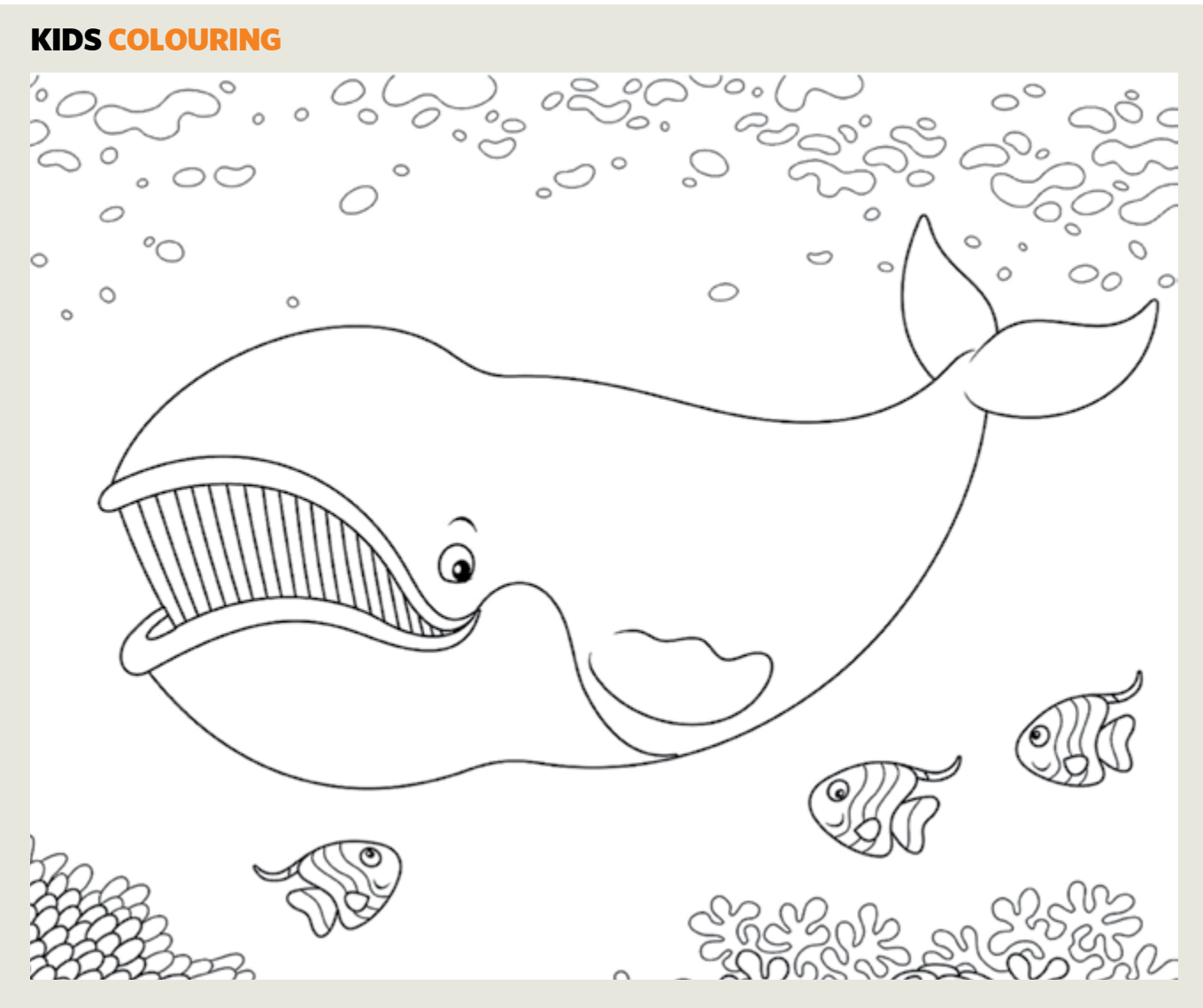
2. Which of these, a land-locked principality, is the smallest German-speaking country in the world?

A. Luxembourg
B. San Marino
C. Andorra
D. Liechtenstein

3. Inspired by lucid dreaming and corporate espionage, it won Academy Awards for Best Visual Effects, Best Sound Editing, Best Sound Mixing, and Best Cinematography. Which film is it?

A. Inception
B. The Matrix
C. In Dreams
D. Electric Dreams

Answers: 1. a 2. d 3. a



BOGGLER

A	C	D	B
R	S	I	O
D	R	A	N
A	N	I	E

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

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

WORD BUILDER

TEADIM

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

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

Israel PM meets Bahrain's Jewish community

Naftali Bennett's visit is the latest such initiative following the US-brokered 2020 Abraham Accords

Manama, Bahrain -Israel's Prime Minister Naftali Bennett met with Bahrain's Jewish community on Tuesday after arriving for the first visit by an Israeli head of government to the Gulf country, 17 months after they defied decades of tensions to normalise ties.

Bennett was welcomed by Bahrain's Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Rashid al Zayani at Manama airport, which was decorated with the flags of both countries, late on Monday. He will meet King Hamad and Crown Prince Salman, who is also prime minister, on Tuesday.

Bennett's visit is the latest such initiative following the US-brokered 2020 Abraham Accords, which ran counter to the longstanding Arab consensus that ruled out ties with Israel in the absence of a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"I'm very delighted to be here in Bahrain, and I could think of no better way to kick off this visit than seeing my family here," he said during a meeting with members of the Jewish community, according to his office.

Israel's ambassador to Bahrain, Eitan Naeh, Jewish community president Ebrahim Nonoo, Jewish community member and former Bahraini ambassador to the US Houda Nonoo were also present.

In September, Ebrahim Nonoo led prayer services in Manama's renovated synagogue, bringing Jewish traditions into plain view after



Naftali Bennett (left) giving Jewish community president David Nonoo a shofar for the synagogue in the Bahraini capital Manama on Tuesday (AFP)

decades of worship in private.

"We're very happy to be out in the open," Nonoo told AFP at the time.

Bahrain's tiny Jewish community, about 50 people, have practised their faith behind closed doors since 1947, when the Gulf country's only synagogue was destroyed in disturbances at the start of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

But when Bahrain normalised ties with Israel, it opened every-

thing up, with the small synagogue in the heart of the capital renovated at a cost of US\$159,000.

Bahrain and its close ally the United Arab Emirates became only the third and fourth Arab states - following Egypt and Jordan - to establish ties with Israel when they signed on to the pacts negotiated under US president Donald Trump. Bennett visited the UAE in December.

"In these tumultuous times it's important that from this region we send a message of goodwill, of cooperation of standing together against common challenges," Bennett said before his departure. The trip follows a visit to Manama by Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz earlier this month that saw the two countries sign a defence agreement.

That deal covered intelligence, procurement and joint

training, with Gantz boasting that it further consolidated the fledgling diplomatic relationship.

'Absolutely' about Iran

The visit also comes at a time of regional tensions over Iran's nuclear programme.

Iran is engaged in negotiations with Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia directly and with the United States indirectly

Israel President Herzog plans rare Turkey visit

Jerusalem - Israeli President Isaac Herzog is preparing to visit Turkey, his office said on Tuesday, in a rare trip following years of frayed ties between the two countries.

A presidency statement said that a senior Turkish delegation, including a top aide to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was due in Israel this week 'as part of preparations for the planned visit'.

In a television interview last month, Erdogan said he expected Herzog to visit in February, hailing the trip as an opportunity to 'open a new chapter in relations between Turkey and Israel'.

Herzog's office had declined to comment on the prospective visit until Tuesday's statement, which gave

no indication of a possible date. Turkey's state-run TRT television, reported the trip would take place on March 9 and 10.

Relations between majority-Muslim Turkey and Israel froze over after the death of 10 civilians in an Israeli raid on a Turkish flotilla carrying aid for the Gaza Strip in 2010.

In recent months, however, the two countries have been working on a rapprochement, with Erdogan, a vocal supporter of the Palestinian cause, holding telephone talks with Herzog and other Israeli leaders.

Some analysts have linked the warming ties to former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's ouster from office in June.

AFP



Indonesian teacher Herry Wirawan (centre) is escorted prior to his trial at a court in Bandung, West Java on Tuesday (AFP)

Indonesian teacher gets life in prison for rape of 13 students

Bandung, Indonesia - An Indonesian court on Tuesday sentenced a teacher to life in prison for the rape of 13 students, in a case that has drawn national attention to sexual abuse in some of the country's religious boarding schools.

Herry Wirawan, 36, was found guilty of raping 13 female students - all minors - and impregnating at least eight of them by Bandung district court in West Java. The revelations sparked national outrage, with a senior government official saying President Joko Widodo has paid special attention to the case.

The pattern of abuse came to light when the family of a female student reported Wirawan to the police for raping and impregnating their teenage daughter last year. During the trial, it was revealed he had raped the children - many from poor families attending the school on scholarships - over five years.

Prosecutors requested chemical castration and the death penalty for the accused, who asked the judge for leniency to allow him to raise his children.

Wirawan arrived in court in handcuffs and kept his head down as judge Yohannes Purnomo Suryo Adi sentenced

him to life in prison.

The court said restitution for the victims will be paid by the government. The chairman of Indonesia's Child Protection Commission said Tuesday's verdict meant 'justice for the victims has been served'.

'There will be more'

But a family member of one of the victims told AFP he was 'very disappointed' that Wirawan did not receive a harsher sentence and warned that leniency would embolden other abusers.

"This wound will never be healed as long as we live, maybe until we die. The pain we are feeling is indescribable. We don't feel heard," said Hidmat Dijaya, an uncle of one of the 13 victims.

"If the sentence is lenient like this, there will be more teachers who will abuse children," he added. "We will let God as the highest judge punish him. We can only pray because those judges failed to represent our hurt and pain."

More than 25,000 Islamic boarding schools - known as 'pesantren' - are dotted across Indonesia, with nearly five million students living and studying in the dorms.

AFP

Ethiopia lifts wartime state of emergency

Nairobi, Kenya - Ethiopia's parliament on Tuesday lifted a state of emergency imposed last November when Tigrayan rebels threatened to advance on the capital, the foreign ministry said, easing restrictions earlier than expected.

"The House of Peoples' Representatives of #Ethiopia has approved today the lifting of the six-month state of emergency," the foreign ministry said on Twitter.

The vote by lawmakers followed a proposal by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's cabinet last month to ease the state of emergency, which was initially supposed to last until May.

The state of emergency was declared on November 2 after fighters from the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) seized



A general view of the city of Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital on Sunday (AFP)

two crucial towns about 400km from Addis Ababa.

The measure triggered mass detentions of ethnic Tigrayans in Addis Ababa and elsewhere, sparking condemnation from rights groups including Amnesty

International.

The state of emergency coincided with a mass mobilisation campaign credited - along with drone strikes - with pushing the TPLF back into Tigray, with the rebels' withdrawal in December

raising hopes of an end to the 15-month war.

Addis Ababa announced it would not pursue the rebels into Tigray, but in recent weeks, residents and aid workers have reported a string of deadly air

strikes - including drone strikes - targeting the region.

The TPLF last month announced a military operation in the neighbouring Afar region, saying the move was in response to attacks by pro-government forces, dampening hopes of a ceasefire.

The grinding conflict has left thousands dead and forced many others to flee their homes with hundreds of thousands driven to the brink of starvation, according to the United Nations.

Tigray itself has for months been subject to what the United Nations says is a de-facto blockade, and the United States has accused the Ethiopian government of blocking aid, which in turn has blamed the rebels for the obstructions.

AFP

Thousands of Malians building 'future' in Niger

Ouallam, Niger - The day breaks, and many of the thousands of Malian refugees in Ouallam are already up and about.

Some have left for the market to sell animals and handicrafts, while others are getting to work in a local brickyard. Barefoot and bare-chested children line up in front of a couscous vendor while school children, bags on their backs, head off to class.

Their refugee camp, located about a hundred kilometres north of Niamey in southwestern Niger, is a haven for around 6,000 people.

They are just a small number of the tens of thousands of Malians who have fled militant attacks to take shelter in their deeply impoverished neighbour.

But as time passes, many refugees see little or no hope of returning to their homes and want to integrate into local communities. "We have wandered enough and suffered enough - we are finally going to settle



A Malian refugee waters her tomato garden in Ouallam at a UN site, where thousands of Malian refugees live, early this month (AFP)

down here and give our children a future," said Hama Dawa.

Agachatou, a baby on her back, paused for a moment from pounding millet for the evening meal. "Go back to Mali?" asked the young mother from Menala

in Mali's northeast.

"I've almost nothing there now - my children were born in Niger, one of them goes to school here. Their future is here."

"Returning to Mali is not on the agenda," Mahamadou

Seguid, a spokesperson for the refugees at Ouallam, told AFP.

"For the moment we are building our future here. We are well assisted and it is safe."

More than 61,000 Malians are in Niger after fleeing northern Mali a decade ago when the region fell under the control of militant groups.

The UN and the Nigerien authorities are postponing their return indefinitely because of persistent attacks by militant groups, including the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). "We are following the developments in Mali with some concern," UN refugee chief Filippo Grandi, who visited Ouallam last week, told AFP.

"We hope they will become more positive, because without peace there will be no return of refugees." Laouan Magagi, Niger's minister for humanitarian work, agreed. "With the worsening of security in the three-border area (where the frontiers of

Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso converge), the conditions for their return are obviously not there," he said.

'Positive coexistence'

With a shrug of the shoulders, the refugees recognise the reality of the situation.

Many provide the economic lifeblood of Ouallam, a small town of 15,000 inhabitants, through 'common spaces' set up by the UNHCR: shops, health centres, schools.

Some refugees received sheep and goats to get milk and develop a livelihood, said Ouseini Hassane, another refugee.

In the space of three years, the site has been transformed from a chaos of shelters into a real neighbourhood: small ochre brick houses are gradually taking the place of shelters and makeshift tarpaulins that were regularly destroyed by sandstorms and floods.

AFP

Russia ‘pulls back’ some forces from Ukraine border

Moscow, Russia - Russia said on Tuesday it was pulling back some of its forces near the Ukrainian border to their bases, in what would be the first major step towards de-escalation in weeks of crisis with the West.

The move came amid an intense diplomatic effort to avert a feared Russian invasion of its pro-Western neighbour and after Moscow amassed more than 100,000 troops near Ukraine’s borders.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz was set to be the latest European leader to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday, with talks due later in Moscow.

The crisis - the worst between Russia and the West since the end of the Cold War - reached a peak this week, with US officials warning that a full-scale invasion, including an assault on the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, was possible within days.

On Tuesday morning, the Russian defence ministry spokesman said some forces deployed near Ukraine had completed their exercises and were packing up to leave.

“Units of the southern and western military districts, having completed their tasks, have already begun loading onto rail and road transport and today they will begin moving to their military garrisons,” the ministry’s chief spokesman, Igor Konashenkov, said in a statement.

‘Large-scale’ exercises continue

It was not immediately clear how many units were involved and



Russian lawmakers attending a session of the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, in Moscow on Tuesday (AFP)

what impact the withdrawals would have on the overall number of troops surrounding Ukraine, but it was the first announcement of a Russian draw-down in weeks.

Konashenkov said ‘large-scale’ Russian military drills were continuing in many areas, including joint exercises in Belarus and naval exercises in the Black Sea and elsewhere.

If Western officials confirm that Moscow is taking steps to reduce its forces, it would help

ease fears of a major war in Europe that have been rising for weeks.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova suggested Tuesday’s news would show it was the West that had been raising tensions with its accusations of an invasion plan.

“February 15, 2022, will go down in history as the day Western war propaganda failed. Humiliated and destroyed without a single shot being fired,” she wrote on social media.

Comments from Putin’s foreign and defence ministers on Monday had already offered some hope of a de-escalation.

During a carefully choreographed meeting on Monday with Putin, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said ‘there is always a chance’ of reaching an agreement with the West over Ukraine.

He told Putin that exchanges with leaders in European capitals and Washington showed enough of an opening for progress on

Russia’s goals to be worth pursuing. Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu meanwhile told Putin that some Russian military drills launched in December were ‘ending’ and more would end ‘in the near future’.

Ukraine said on Tuesday that it appeared that Kyiv and the West had been able to deter an invasion.

“We and our allies have managed to prevent Russia from any further escalation,” Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba told re-

porters on Tuesday, though he added a note of caution.

“We have a rule: don’t believe what you hear, believe what you see. When we see a withdrawal, we will believe in a de-escalation,” he said.

‘Crucial window’ still open

Scholz was to meet Putin a day after talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv, where the German leader urged Moscow ‘to take up the

existing offers of dialogue’.

Support from Germany, a major economic partner for Moscow and importer of Russian gas, is crucial for the package of crippling sanctions that Western leaders say would be imposed in response to an invasion.

Ahead of Tuesday’s talks, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock warned that ‘the situation is particularly dangerous and can escalate at any moment’. “The responsibility for de-escalation is clearly with Russia, and it is for Moscow to withdraw its troops,” she said in a statement. Moscow has repeatedly blamed the crisis on the West, saying the United States and western Europe are ignoring Moscow’s legitimate security concerns.

The Kremlin insists NATO must give assurances Ukraine will never be admitted as a member and roll back its presence in eastern European countries.

Russia already controls the Crimean Peninsula that it seized from Ukraine in 2014 and supports separatist forces who have taken control of parts of eastern Ukraine, in a conflict that has claimed more than 14,000 lives.

US President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson agreed in a call late on Monday that ‘a crucial window for diplomacy’ remained.

“The leaders emphasised that any further incursion into Ukraine would result in a protracted crisis for Russia, with far-reaching damage for both Russia and the world,” a Downing Street spokesman said.

AFP

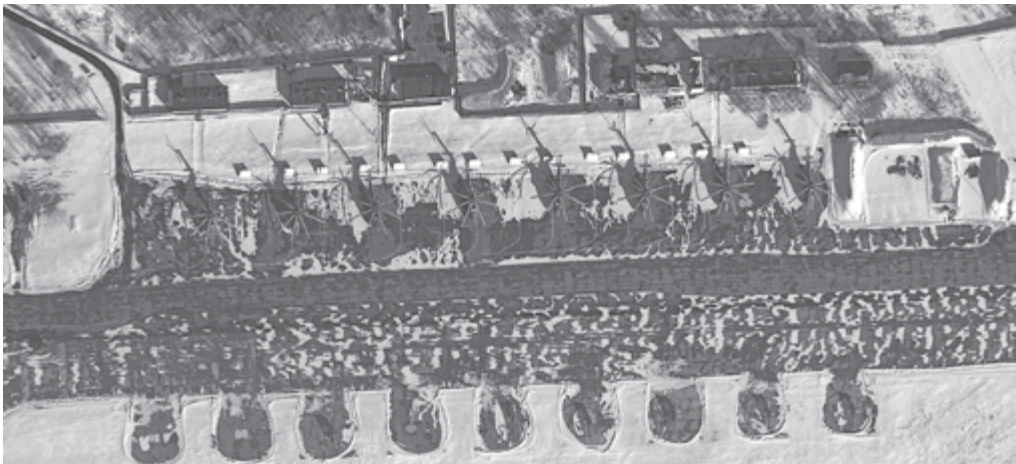
Russian threat: US citizens to leave Belarus

Washington, US - The United States has urged its citizens to immediately leave Belarus, citing a buildup of Russian troops along the border with neighbouring Ukraine.

The travel advisory, issued on Monday, came the same day that Washington announced it was closing its Kyiv embassy and relocating staff to the Ukrainian city of Lviv 540km away due to a ‘dramatic acceleration’ in the buildup of Russian forces.

Last week, Washington warned that Russia could attack ‘any day now’.

“Due to an increase in unusual and concerning Russian military activity near the border with Ukraine, US citizens located in or considering travel to Belarus should be aware that the situation is unpredictable and there is heightened tension in the re-



This satellite image shows an overview of MI 26 heavy lift helicopters in Machulishchy, Belarus on Saturday (AFP)

gion,” the advisory said.

It also noted that last month, the State Department ordered all family members of the Minsk embassy to leave.

American citizens have already been urged to leave Ukraine, with the West accusing Russia of sending more than

100,000 soldiers to encircle the former Soviet state.

In addition to fears of a possible military conflict on the border, Washington’s ‘do not travel’ advisory for Belarus flagged the risk of detention, arbitrary enforcement of laws and COVID-19 entry restrictions as reasons

for Americans to get out.

“The US government’s ability to provide routine or emergency services to US citizens in Belarus is already severely limited due to Belarusian government limitations on US Embassy staffing,” it said.

AFP

US offers \$1bn in credit guarantees for Ukraine

Washington, US - The United States is offering up to US\$1bn in credit guarantees to help Ukraine weather the threat of war against Russia, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Monday.

Blinken said the offer would bolster ‘Ukraine’s ability to ensure economic stability, growth, and prosperity for its people in the face of Russia’s destabilising behaviour.’

The guarantees would make it far easier and likely cheaper for Ukraine’s government to borrow money.

Ukraine is one of the poorest countries in Europe and its corruption-plagued economy has suffered from heightened



Antony Blinken (AFP)

tensions over the possibility of an invasion by Russia, which has sent over 100,000 troops.

US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan briefed congressional leaders on Monday on the plan, according to a source familiar with the matter. On Sunday, Sullivan re-

peated the Biden administration’s view that Russia could attack Ukraine ‘any day now’.

In addition to economic and humanitarian aid, the United States has provided Ukraine with US\$650mn in military assistance over the past year.

On Monday, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on a visit to Kyiv that he was ‘determined’ to maintain aid to the country. G7 countries have also warned Moscow they are ready to impose sanctions that would have a huge and immediate impact on Russia’s economy, should it pursue any further military aggression against Ukraine.

AFP

Hunger crisis threatens half of Somalia’s young children: UN

Geneva, Switzerland - Severe drought risks pushing nearly half of Somali children under five into acute malnutrition this year, with hundreds of thousands needing life-saving treatment, the UN warned on Tuesday, calling for urgent action.

“Malnutrition has reached crisis levels,” said Victor Chinyama, head of communications for the UN children’s agency UNICEF’s Somalia operations.

“The time to act is now,” he told reporters in Geneva via video-link, cautioning that “if you wait until things get worse, or until famine is declared, it may be too late.”

Somalia has been hardest hit as the Horn of Africa region grapples with its worst drought in decades, with the UN warning that 4.1mn people - a quarter of the Somali population - need ur-

gent food aid.

Chinyama said children were paying the highest price in the hunger crisis, with 1.4mn of them, or nearly half of all those under the age of five, expected to suffer from acute malnutrition by the end of the year.

“Of these, 330,000 will need treatment for severe acute malnutrition,” which can lead to death, he said.

UNICEF, he said, urgently needs US\$7mn by March this year to purchase the therapeutic foods needed to treat those children. Without the additional supplies, ‘100,000 children with severe acute malnutrition will miss out on life-saving treatment’, he warned.

Recruited

Severe acute malnutrition can cause stunting and wasting and leaves children so weak that



This file photo shows internally displaced Somalis waiting for food aid rations near a distribution centre in war-torn capital, Mogadishu on February 14, 2012 (AFP)

they become far more vulnerable to diseases. For ‘a severely acutely malnourished child, or severely wasted child...The risk of them dying from diseases such as measles or diarrhoea is 11 times higher than for a well-nourished child’, UNICEF spokeswoman Marixie Mercado said. That is a particularly concerning statistic, since the drought has also sparked a severe water crisis in Somalia, which also led to more disease outbreaks.

Some 7,500 measles cases were registered in the country in 2021 - double the caseload for 2019 and 2020 combined, while around 60,000 people are at risk of contracting diarrhoeal diseases, including cholera, UN figures show.

The drought is also spurring a migration crisis, Chinyama said. Around 500,000 people

have left their homes in search of food, water and pasture since November, adding to the 2.9mn who were already displaced inside the country.

Drought and displacement also increase other risks for children, including from armed groups in Somalia, where the Al-Shabaab militant group controls swathes of countryside.

In 2021, 1,200 children - 45 of them girls - were recruited and used by armed groups, while another 1,000 children were abducted, according to UNICEF.

“In many instances, these children were victims of multiple violations,” Chinyama said.

In all, UNICEF has said it needs US\$48mn to respond to the crisis in Somalia this year. So far, it has received only US\$10mn.

AFP

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Need to increase vaccination rates in Eastern Europe: WHO



Protesters hold banners as they demonstrate against the COVID-19 vaccination, in front of the Ukrainian parliament in Kiev, on Tuesday (AFP)

Copenhagen, Denmark - The World Health Organization's (WHO) European office on Tuesday called for increased vaccination efforts in Eastern Europe, warning that the Omicron 'tidal wave' was heading eastwards.

The WHO's regional director, Hans Kluge, noted that in the last two weeks, COVID-19 cases had more than doubled in six countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Russia and Ukraine. "As anticipated, the Omicron wave is moving east. Ten eastern member states have now detected this variant," Kluge said.

The WHO's European region comprises 53 countries, including several in central Asia. Kluge lamented that vaccine uptake was still relatively slow in parts of the region.

Less than 40 per cent of over-60s have complete their COVID-19 vaccine series in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

In the last two weeks COVID-19 cases had more than doubled in six countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Russia and Ukraine

HANS KLUGE

He added that in Bulgaria, Georgia and North Macedonia under 40 per cent of health care workers had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. "I call on governments, health authorities and relevant partners to closely examine the local reasons influencing lower vaccine demand and acceptance, and devise tailored interventions to increase vaccination rates urgently, based on the context-specific evidence," Kluge said.

He stressed that in the face of an 'Omicron tidal wave', and 'with Delta still circulating widely in the east', now was 'not the moment to lift measures that we know work in reducing the spread of

COVID-19'. These measures include avoiding crowded locations, wearing masks indoors, improving ventilation and using rapid tests to identify cases early, Kluge added.

Mongolia reopens Meanwhile, Mongolia has reopened its borders to fully vaccinated international travellers, state media reported, rolling back coronavirus curbs that had kept the country isolated for two years.

The nation has implemented some of the world's toughest anti-COVID measures since the start of the pandemic, largely sealing off its borders and imposing several lockdowns. The restrictions have

battered its economy as business establishments closed, exports plunged and hundreds of thousands of people faced precarious employment.

Mongolia's Cabinet approved a resolution downgrading the pandemic 'state of readiness' from orange to yellow, effectively lifting all restrictions on business operations, state news agency Montsame reported on Monday. The move means the country of three million 'fully opens its borders to international travel', Prime Minister Luvsannamsrai Oyun-Erdene said, according to Montsame.

Declaring Mongolia open to fully jabbed tourists and investors, he reportedly said the government would 'put efforts into creating the necessary conditions to ensure safety... for all those arriving in the country for business and tourism purposes'.

Oyun-Erdene's predecessor resigned last year during

protests and public anger over the treatment of a coronavirus-positive woman and her newborn baby.

She had been transferred to a disease control centre in hospital pyjamas and plastic slippers despite temperatures of minus 25 degrees Celsius.

An aggressive COVID vaccination campaign has since helped turn the tide, with 92 per cent of Mongolian adults now fully inoculated and more than half in targeted groups having received a booster, according to Montsame.

Mongolia has recorded 885,000 coronavirus cases and more than 2,000 deaths during the pandemic, according to WHO data.

The border reopening follows the easing of restrictions last month under the orange and yellow readiness levels.

Official advisories on wearing face masks, social distancing and hand sanitising remain in place.

AFP



People buy flowers in a street in Manila on Monday (AFP)

Philippines now at 'low risk' from coronavirus: Govt

Manila, Philippines - The Philippines is now at 'low risk' from the coronavirus pandemic as more people get vaccinated and hospital admissions drop, President Rodrigo Duterte's spokesman said on Tuesday.

The country last week reopened to foreign tourists for the first time in two years, though some health restrictions remain as campaigning for the May 9 elections starts, with political rallies seen as potential superspreader events.

'The National Capital Region and the entire Philippines now have a low-risk classification' in terms of case growth, prevalence and health system capacity, Duterte spokesman Karlo Nograles told reporters.

After surges of the Omicron and Delta strains that led to government-enforced restrictions on mobility, hospital bed occupancy rates have eased to about 30 per cent.

Cases have averaged about 3,600 daily in the past week as the number of fully vaccinated people climbed to around 56 per cent of the population, health officials said.

After lengthy lockdowns the government is now planning for a lifting of all restrictions, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire told reporters. AFP

Papua New Guinea to reopen to vaccinated

Port Moresby - Papua New Guinea will reopen to vaccinated travellers from today, ending two years of strict border closures that virtually sealed the Melanesian nation off from neighbours.

The country's pandemic controller David Manning said on Tuesday that he had revoked rules requiring approval to enter the country and mandatory quarantine.

The rules had hampered production at some of the country's largest copper and gold mines and caused diplomatic spats - most notably with India and China, who were accused of bypassing rules to bring citizens into the country.

Some domestic restrictions will remain - including compulsory mask-wearing in markets, shops, on public transport and places of worship, as well as a 100-person limit on gatherings.

The moves mark a new phase in the pandemic for a



James Marape receiving vaccine in Port Moresby last year (AFP)

country that has struggled to cope with high case numbers.

Papua New Guinea has officially recorded 37,390 COVID-19 cases in a country of nine million people. About four per cent of the population has been vaccinated.

Prime Minister James Marape recently returned home from Beijing after a positive COVID-19 diagnosis scuppered plans for face-to-face meetings with Chinese leaders. AFP

Interpol issues warrants for Canadians over murder

Bangkok, Thailand - Interpol has issued two 'red notice' arrest warrants for a pair of Canadians over the suspected murder of an Indian gangster outside a luxury villa on Thailand's Phuket island.

Jimi 'Slice' Sandhu - whose nickname comes from a distinctive scar on his face - was gunned down on February 5 after having flown in on a private jet from Malaysia last month, according to Thai police and local media reports.

Following a Thai police investigation, Interpol issued non-binding arrest warrants or 'red notices' for Canadian citizens Matthew Leandre Ovide Dupre and Gene Karl Lahrkamp, both 36, in connection with Sandhu's murder.

"I think this case is unique," said Khemmarin Hassiri, commander of the foreign affairs division of the Royal Thai Po-

lice, confirming the Interpol notices issued late on Monday. "This is not just a hit and run, they have masterminded it, they would have someone who supported them in Canada and Thailand," he told AFP, adding the investigation into the death of the 32-year-old was ongoing.

He said police were gathering biological and ballistic evidence, in addition to investigating how the gunmen obtained weapons.

The two suspects - described by Interpol as armed and dangerous - left Thailand on February 6, according to the international agency's notice. Police obtained CCTV footage showing two unidentified men jumping from bushes near the beachside villa to open fire on Sandhu before fleeing into the night.

AFP

Human rights worsening in Sri Lanka: Cardinal

Colombo, Sri Lanka - The leader of Sri Lanka's Roman Catholic church launched a scathing attack on President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's government on Tuesday over what he called increasing threats to human rights on the troubled island.

Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith condemned Monday's attack on a high profile TV journalist and the 'abduction' of a campaigner for justice for the 279 people killed in the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings.

"Police have demonstrated uncivilised barbaric behaviour in arresting a young man - Shehan Malaka - who is seeking justice for the Easter attack victims," the Cardinal told reporters in Colombo.

He said police in civilian clothing and travelling in a white van grabbed Malaka from the streets on Monday and his life was saved only because he broadcast his abduction live on social media.

"If he didn't have the presence



Sri Lankan television journalist Chamuditha Samarawickrama gestures during an interview in Colombo on Monday (AFP)

of mind to use his phone for a live (broadcast), we wouldn't ever get to know what happened to him," the head of Sri Lanka's minority Catholic community said. "He would have disappeared."

"The police behaviour is uncivilised and they acted like barbarians," Ranjith said.

White vans were commonly used by unidentified attackers to kidnap people during a previous Rajapaksa administration when thousands disappeared.

Malaka was taken before a magistrate and released on bail on Tuesday after a social media outcry. Police said they arrested

Police in civilian clothing and in a white van grabbed Malaka from the streets and his life was saved because he broadcast his abduction live on social media.

Police behaviour is uncivilised... they acted like barbarians

MALCOLM RANJITH

him on a 'hate speech' charge for allegedly bringing the government into disrepute.

Malaka had also spearheaded a Catholic church protest campaign to fly black flags last year to condemn slow progress in police investigations into the Easter bombings, which targeted three

churches and three deluxe hotels. The Cardinal said Sri Lanka's overall human rights record was deteriorating, urging his followers to remain vigilant and resort to legal action.

Sri Lanka is on the agenda later this month at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva - which has repeatedly censured Colombo for failing to implement pledges to ensure accountability for rights abuses, particularly towards the end of the island's ethnic war in 2009.

"Why would they behave like this at a time when they are preparing to defend their record in Geneva?" Ranjith asked.

"I think they don't have any brains."

Sri Lankan rights groups have also condemned Monday's attack on the home of TV presenter Chamuditha Samarawickrama, who had criticised the powerful ruling Rajapaksa family and their allies in recent broadcasts. AFP

HOW GREEN IS YOUR DIET?

Green leafy vegetables (GLVs) are considered an essential part of diet for a safe and healthier life for centuries as they meet the daily nutrient requirements. GLVs can be used fresh as a salad or can be cooked/processed in many different ways. And with the craze for organic food picking up, Oman, too, has been showcasing greens on its vegetable counters in a big way these days.

Markets in Oman, especially wholesale markets, are full of GLVs, a part of which have been labelled as 'organic' in nature and sold for a premium. In effect, storekeepers say, the local produce is as good as those called organic which seem to give buyers a sense of conscientiousness.

The low caloric value of leafy vegetables are said to be ideal for weight management. A rich source of nutrients, dietary fibre, folate, ascorbic acid, vitamin K and Mg. GLVs also carry plenty of phytochemicals, such as beta carotene flavonoids, making them beneficial in lowering the risk of cardiovascular diseases and cancer.

Some greens, such as collards, spinach, and chard, however, contain large amounts of vitamin K that may interact with blood thinners and lessen their effect. According to studies, people who take blood thinners should not try to avoid vitamin K. Instead, they should keep their vitamin K intake stable. When you bring home your stock of fresh greens, it is important to bear in mind their nutritional value and efficacy towards promoting

Touch of green

Salads:
Enjoy raw greens, such as spinach and beet greens, by dressing them up and adding to a salad bowl. Also, add greens to a bowl full of proteins, fruits, and whole grains.

Wraps:
Combine romaine, cabbage, or other favourite leaves with other ingredients - seasoned chicken/shrimp/beef as a filling for a wrap.

Soups:
Some greens, such as bok choy and Swiss chard, are soup staples. Stir chopped greens into soups or stews during the last few minutes of cooking.

Pizzas:
Replace meats and processed toppings with

greens to make a healthier pizza. Also, add greens to your sandwiches to make them more wholesome and nutritionally rich.

Stir-fries:
Toss greens together with noodles, vegetables, nuts, and seafood. Also, use leafy greens in place of basil as the staple green in pesto.

Juice:
Add some greens, such as kale and parsley, when making juices/smoothies for extra nutrients and a pungent kick without the fullness that smoothies can cause.

Sauces:
Chop or puree leafy greens and add them to sauces with other ingredients to get a special flavour.

be bitter and tough to chew, which is why many people may braise or steam them. Collards are rich in vitamin A, vitamin C, folate, vitamin K, and calcium.

Spinach
Spinach is another leafy green that contains many vitamins and nutrients, including iron, magnesium, phosphorus, folic acid, and calcium. A 2016 review suggests that spinach may help delay the progression of Alzheimer's disease. It also contains carotenoids, which may help prevent eye diseases and maintain eye health.

Cabbage
Cabbage leaves vary from green to purple to white. People often saute, stir-fry, or boil cabbage. People also ferment cabbage to make kimchi and sauerkraut. Cruciferous vegetables such as cabbages contain sulforaphane, a compound that may lower a person's risk for cancer. A recent study suggests that this compound can reduce a person's risk for breast cancer, besides protecting cells from oxidative damage during cancer radiation therapy.

Romaine lettuce
Romaine lettuce, or cos lettuce, is a salad favourite for its crispy, mild-flavoured leaves. It is high in antioxidants, which can help eliminate free radicals, boost immunity, and protect against cancer. Romaine lettuce also contains potassium, an important mineral for heart health.

good health:

Kale
Kale is a vegetable belonging to the cabbage family. It has characteristic tough centre stems and long leaves that curl at the ends. It is rich in nutrients, including fibre and antioxidants. A 2018

study suggests that consuming high amounts of dietary fibre is helpful to prevent type 2 diabetes.

Collard greens
Like kale, collards, come from the cabbage family, too. They have large, fanlike leaves and tough stems. While people can eat them raw, they can



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PROTEINS

DINNER WINNERS

Don't hold back proteins during winter when every meal should be a robust celebration to behold. Here are a few sure-fire recipes that come up trumps every single time you get down to business in your kitchen:

Meatballs in Tomato Sauce

Ingredients

500g readymade meatballs (chicken/beef/lamb)

1 cup chopped tomatoes

3tbsp tomato paste

1 red onion

1tsp minced garlic

1tsp minced ginger

2 green chillies – slit

½tsp red chilli powder

½tsp cracked black pepper

2tsp lemon juice

2tbsp oil

Salt, to taste

1tbsp Parmesan cheese powder - for garnish

Method
In a fry pan, drizzle a little oil and sear the meatballs on all sides for 2-3 minutes. Set aside. To make the sauce, in a sauce pan, heat 2tbsp oil and saute the onions for 2 minutes on medium flame. Add the ginger, garlic, green chillies and fry for a minute. Then add the chilli powder, chopped tomatoes, tomato paste, lemon juice and salt. Mix well and cook on medium-low flame for 2-3 minutes, till tomatoes become soft. Add 1 cup water, mix, and continue to cook, covered, on medium-low flame for 4-5 minutes. Now, add the meatballs and black pepper, cover, and cook on low flame for 5-6 minutes. Turn off heat, and serve in a bowl garnished with Parmesan cheese powder.



Fish Tahiri

Ingredients

For marination:

500g any firm white fish – kingfish, hamour, sherry

4-5tbsp lemon juice

½tsp carom seeds

1tsp red chilli powder

½tsp turmeric powder

1tsp salt, 1tsp coriander powder

1tsp ginger-garlic paste

Oil for frying or grilling

¾tsp turmeric

½tsp red chilli powder

1tbsp coriander powder

2 medium onions - sliced

2 medium tomatoes - chopped

1tbsp ginger-garlic paste

3tbsp oil

3-4 green chillies

Chopped coriander - for garnish

Method
Marinate fish with all the marinating spices and set aside for 30 minutes to one hour.
To prepare rice, in a large pot, heat oil. Add whole spices and sliced onions and saute on medium flame till the onions turn light golden. Add chopped tomatoes, ginger-garlic paste, salt, turmeric, coriander powder and red chilli powder. Saute for 2-3 minutes. Add a cup of water and

cover the pot. Allow the tomatoes and onion to soften up for about 10 minutes. Add ½ cup water if needed.
In another pan, add oil and shallow fry marinated fish on high flame, flipping once when one side turns brown. When done, remove and set aside. Add the used oil from the pan to the curry base.
Turn on the flame for the curry pot and cook for another 2 minutes. Add soaked rice and water to the pot. Make sure the water level is about an inch over the rice. Add green chillies, cover, and cook on medium flame for 10-12 minutes, till rice is tender and liquid has evaporated.
Remove the lid and fluff up the rice with a flat spatula or a fork. Serve the rice onto plates topped with pieces of the fried fish, garnished with coriander.



Pot Roast

Ingredients

2tsp kosher salt

2tsp fresh cracked pepper

2tsp garlic powder

1 kg beef chuck arm or rump roast

1tbsp canola oil

5 sprigs fresh thyme

1 large onion - quartered

1 bay leaf

3/4 cup maple syrup or beetroot juice

3tbsp Worcestershire sauce

2 cups beef stock

3 large cloves garlic - crushed

2 cups cremini mushrooms - halved

6 small carrots - peeled and halved

500g baby potatoes - halved

2tbsp cornstarch

Method
Combine salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Rub onto all sides of the beef and sear on all sides on a skillet drizzled with oil. Transfer the roast to a slow cooker, and add the thyme, quartered onion, and bay leaf around the roast. Reduce heat for the skillet and add maple syrup, Worcestershire sauce, and garlic cloves to the pan. Cook for about 1 to 2 minutes and scrape the brown bits off the bottom of the pan.
Now add the vegetables (mushrooms, carrots, and potatoes) around the roast and pour the liquid from the skillet and the beef stock over everything. Cover and slow cook till beef is tender. (This could take 2-4 hours as slow cooking is crucial to the taste).
Once cooked, cool and set aside. To make the gravy, ladle 2 cups of the slow cooker liquid into a medium saucepan and boil on high heat. Add a slurry made with of 2tbsp cornstarch with 3tbsp water and whisk it into the boiling liquid. Once the gravy thickens, remove it from heat. Serve the pot roast and veggies, topped with gravy. Add more salt/pepper to taste.



Spaghetti and Shrimp

Ingredients

300g medium shrimps – peeled and deveined

1tbsp olive oil, 2tbsp butter

4 cloves garlic - minced

250g cherry tomatoes - halved

¼ cup chicken broth

1 dash Italian seasoning

2 cups fresh baby spinach

Salt & pepper, to taste

250g spaghetti, 1tbsp grated Parmesan

Method
Boil the spaghetti in salted water as per instruc-

tions on pack. Cook it al dente.
Meanwhile, add the oil and butter to a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and cook for about 30 seconds. Add the tomatoes, chicken broth, and Italian seasoning. Cook the tomatoes, stirring occasionally, until they start to lose their shape - 5 minutes. Add the shrimp to the pan, followed by the spinach. Reduce the heat to medium. Let it cook for about 5 minutes, stirring or tossing until they're cooked and spinach has wilted. Season with salt and pepper, as needed. Toss in the drained spaghetti. Serve with a sprinkle of Parmesan on top.



Suter confirms Swiss dominance with Olympic downhill gold

Yanqing, China - Corinne Suter confirmed Switzerland's alpine skiing dominance at the Beijing Olympics on Tuesday when she streaked to victory in the women's downhill for the country's fourth gold and fifth of the Games.

The 27-year-old clocked 1min 31.87sec down the 2.7km-long "Rock" course in Yanqing, finishing 0.16sec ahead of defending champion Sofia Goggia of Italy, whose silver capped a remarkable return to form after she injured her knee in a crash last month.

A second Italian, Nadia Delago, claimed bronze, 0.57sec adrift of Suter.

"I'm super happy with my run," said Suter. "In the finish I wasn't sure if it was good or not because sometimes I had the feeling that there was wind against me, and then with me, and also from the side.

"It's the biggest dream of my life."

Suter, who became only the second skier since now-retired American Lindsey Vonn to win Olympic gold after the world title, added: "At the moment we have a very good team spirit.

"In our group everyone's super fast and we can push each other to our limits."

After her surprise silver medal, Goggia said: "I gave

everything I could.

"From zero to 10, my physical condition is about a five. I can barely bend my knee.

"This has been really tough on me mentally. I took painkillers before the race."

Swiss downhill double

Suter's win followed Swiss gold-medal showings by Lara Gut-Behrami in the women's super-G, while Beat Feuz won

I'm super happy with my run. It's the biggest dream of my life

CORINNE SUTER

the men's downhill at the start of the Games and Marco Odermatt took the men's giant slalom.

It is the first time Switzerland have won the two downhill events at the same Olympics since Bernhard Russi and Marie-Theres Nadig achieved the feat at the 1972 Sapporo Games.

Gut-Behrami, who has also won giant slalom bronze in these Games, had complained of fatigue coming into the downhill and it showed as she finished 2.16sec off the pace.



Switzerland's Corinne Suter competes in the women's downhill final during the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games on February 15 (AFP)

"That's sport," said Gut-Behrami, adding that she was "happy" with her Olympics. "It doesn't take much to be slow. I was a little bit too hard on my skis.

"I tried to improve my speed, but it didn't happen."

She said Suter "has always been consistent and has worked so hard.

"Since the world championships in Are in 2019 she has found the right way: great speed and aggressivity, and great feelings. And she is getting medals at big events."

After failing to finish in her favoured events of the slalom and giant slalom, American Mikaela Shiffrin enjoyed a rare outing in the ultimate speed event, with one eye on Thursday's alpine combined, which incorporates a downhill followed by a slalom.

Shiffrin attacked but ultimately finished well off the pace as the out-and-out downhillers came out top.

"I feel like I have a lot to learn in downhill and I'm trying to take a crash course in the last few days," Shiffrin admitted.

"It's an amazing track to ski and I'm so glad I had the opportunity to race it today and get another run under my belt for the coming days."

AFP

Russia's Valieva tops in figure skating short event

Pékin, China - Russia's Kamila Valieva placed top in the Olympic figure skating short programme Tuesday, after being allowed to compete despite testing positive for a banned substance before the Games.

The 15-year-old scored 82.16, and goes into Thursday's decisive free programme with a narrow lead over her compatriot Anna Shcherbakova, who came second with 80.20.

Kaori Sakamoto of Japan is just behind in third place with 79.84, with Russia's Alexandra Trusova, who fell attempting a triple axel, in fourth.

Despite placing first, Valieva's score was eight marks below what she was awarded when she performed the same routine at the Olympic team event.

She had looked determined as she began her performance, but her skate was not quite as polished as last week and at the end, she broke into tears, breathing heavily.

She collected herself to skate off the ice, but was still visibly distressed.

The teenager did not stop to speak to journalists, but walked straight past them flanked by members of her team, clutching her fluffy tissue box and sobbing.

Valieva had been favourite for gold going into the Olympics, but a week into the Games it emerged she had tested positive in December for trimetazidine, a drug usually used to treat angina but which also boosts endurance.



MEDALS TABLE				
	G	S	B	T
Norway	12	7	7	26
Germany	9	6	3	18
United States	7	6	4	17
Austria	6	6	4	16
Netherlands	6	4	3	13
China	6	4	2	12
Sweden	5	3	3	11
Switzerland	5	0	5	10
Russian OC	4	7	9	20
France	3	7	2	12
Italy	2	6	5	13
Japan	2	5	7	14
Canada	2	4	11	17
Slovenia	2	3	2	7
South Korea	1	3	1	5
Australia	1	2	1	4
Finland	1	1	2	4
New Zealand	1	1	0	2
Hungary	1	0	2	3
Czech Republic	1	0	1	2
Slovakia	1	0	0	1
Belarus	0	2	0	2
Spain	0	1	0	1
Belgium	0	0	1	1
Estonia	0	0	1	1
Latvia	0	0	1	1
Poland	0	0	1	1
G Gold S Silver B Bronze T Total				

Friedrich retains Olympic title, Germany sweep two-man bob

Yanqing, China - Francesco Friedrich retained his Olympic title with a storming display of piloting on Tuesday as Germany swept the medals in the two-man bobsleigh in Beijing.

Friedrich only held a slender overnight lead over German team-mate Johannes Lochner, but stamped his authority in Tuesday's first heat with a new track record.

The 31-year-old and his brakeman Thorsten Margis then built up their lead, clocking a winning combined time of 3:56.89 as Lochner took silver at 0.49 back.

It was a sign of how much Friedrich dominated the field that German pilot Christoph Hafer took bronze at 1.69 seconds back, a huge margin in the high-speed sport.

Great Britain pilot Brad Hall was left shaken by a crash in the



Germany's Francesco Friedrich and Thorsten Margis compete in the 2-man bobsleigh event (AFP)

third heat yet still managed to finish, dusting himself off to eventually finish 3.03 behind in 11th.

This was the third Olympic gold of Friedrich's career after he won both the two and four-man Olympic titles in 2018.

As the reigning world champion, he had already dominated the World Cup this winter by winning 14 of the 16 races.

He can repeat the Olympic bobsleigh double when the four-man heats start Saturday with the medals to be decided Sunday

in the last sliding event of the Beijing Games.

German racers have now won seven of the eight gold medals for the sliding events at these Olympics after sweeping the luge and skeleton events.

AFP



Gold medalist China's Su Yiming poses on the podium during the snowboard men's big air victory ceremony on Feb 15 (AFP)

Move aside Gu, here comes Su: Teenager wins 'insane' gold

Pékin, China - Step aside Eileen Gu. Hosts China have a new teenage hero at the Beijing Olympics after 17-year-old Su Yiming on Tuesday added an emphatic snowboard Big Air gold to his controversial silver.

Su scorched to the Big Air title with a runaway score of 182.50 to win his second medal at the Games, having been unlucky to only come away with silver in last week's slopestyle.

The former child actor was so

good that he had the title firmly in the bag even before his third and final run.

Su's latest remarkable success went viral on China's Twitter-like Weibo, where a hashtag about it clocked up about 750 million views in just a few hours.

He took a dominant gold ahead of Norway's Mons Røisland, on 171.75, with Canada's Max Parrot - the slopestyle winner - taking bronze with 170.25.

Su has competed in just six

World Cup events and last week already became the first men's snowboarding Olympic medallist in China's history.

"This feels insane, it's something I've never experienced before... I can't believe I got this gold," said Su, for whom this was an early birthday present - he turns 18 on Friday.

"I trained every day for the past four years. Every night I was dreaming about this moment."

When he was eight, Su ap-

peared in the epic action movie "The Taking of Tiger Mountain", before deciding to fully dedicate himself to snowboarding.

With hair that tumbles down below his ears, he still has something of the film star about him.

'All about love'

Su's silver in the slopestyle had been contentious, with many experts saying that he should have been awarded gold ahead of Parrot. Iztok Sumatic, the head judge

in Beijing, subsequently told the snowboarding magazine White-lines that they made a mistake in the scoring of Parrot.

Su put all that behind him on Tuesday and said he had been motivated by competing on home snow and by his passion for the sport. "I wanted to try my best for this. The most important thing though is all about love. Snowboarding is not just about competition," he said.

AFP

Maxwell magic sees Australia beat Sri Lanka, seal T20 series



Australia's Glenn Maxwell (R) plays a shot as Sri Lanka's wicketkeeper Dinesh Chandimal looks on, during the third T20 international cricket match (AFP)

Canberra, Australia - Glenn Maxwell slammed 39 off 25 balls as a dominant Australia thumped Sri Lanka by six wickets to win their third straight Twenty20 clash and seal the series in Canberra on Tuesday.

The world champions have an unassailable 3-0 lead with two games to play after taking the opening match by 20 runs then clinching the second in a thrilling super over finish after it ended in

a tie. They made a slow start chasing 122 to win at Manuka Oval, losing two early wickets before skipper Aaron Finch (35) and the big-hitting Maxwell steadied the ship.

They achieved the target with 19 balls to spare and the loss of four wickets.

Australia made three changes for the game, with Mitchell Starc returning and Ashton Agar and Daniel Sams given an opportu-

nity, with Finch hailing the depth of the squad.

"That's one thing we've been trying to expose a little bit more, shuffling guys around to get more information on the depth of the squad," he said. "And it's looking really good at the moment."

With Sri Lanka needing victory to keep the series alive, they struck 17 off the first two overs after being sent into bat.

But they got bogged down by Australia's economical bowling, crawling to 121 for six with skipper Dasun Shanaka making 39 and Kane Richardson bagging 3-21.

Their prospect of pulling off a victory was hampered by star leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga testing positive for COVID-19 before the match and speedster Nuwan Thushara pulling up injured after bowling only seven

balls.

"No positives today, yet again a poor start from our boys," said Shanaka. "Throughout the series it's been a major concern. If we had that momentum from the start we could get those runs on the board. We were 20 to 30 runs short in this game."

Anchor role

They got a boost when the dangerous Ben McDermott was out

SCOREBOARD			
SRI LANKA			
P Nissanka	c Sams b Maxwell	16	(21)
D Gunathilaka	c Hazlewood		
	b Richardson	9	(15)
C Asalanka	c Wade b Richardson	6	(14)
K Mendis	c & b Agar	4	(11)
D Chandimal	b Richardson	25	(29)
D Shanaka	not out	39	(38)
C Karunaratne	c Inglis b Hazlewood	8	(11)
D Chameera	not out	5	(2)
Extras:	(b 4, nb 1, w 4)	9	
TOTAL	(20 Ov, RR: 6.05)	121/6	
Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-23, 3-38, 4-40, 5-87, 6-115			
Bowling: M Starc 4-0-30-0, J Hazlewood 4-0-31-1, K Richardson 4-0-21-3, D Sams 3-0-18-0, A Agar 4-0-14-1, G Maxwell 1-0-3-1			
AUSTRALIA			
Ben McDermott	c Asalanka		
	b Theekshana	0	(10)
Ashton Agar	lbw b Theekshana	13	(13)
Aaron Finch	c Asalanka		
	b Vandersay	35	(36)
G Maxwell	c Mendis b Theekshana	39	(26)
Josh Inglis	not out	21	(18)
M Stoinis	not out	12	(8)
Extras:	(lb 3, nb 1)	4	
TOTAL:	(16.5 Ov, RR: 7.36)	124/4	
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-26, 3-76, 4-102			
Bowling: M Theekshana 4-0-24-3, N Thushara 1.1-0-10-0, C Karunaratne 2.5-0-22-0, D Chameera 4-0-22-0, J Vandersay 4-0-32-1, D Shanaka 0.5-0-11-0			



Pink-ball Test on menu for India series against Sri Lanka

New Delhi-India on Tuesday revised the schedule for the upcoming home series against Sri Lanka, bringing the Twenty20 internationals forward to precede the two Tests, the country's cricket board said.

The change in itinerary was reportedly at the visitors' request to simplify their transfer from their current short-format series in Australia, which ends on Sunday.

White-ball skipper Rohit Sharma is expected to lead India in the T20 matches, while a Test skipper is yet to be announced after Virat Kohli's resignation last month.

The first of three T20 matches will be played in Lucknow on February 24 followed by two games at Dharamsala on February 26 and 27.

The venues for the two Tests were also reversed, with the first - Kohli's 100th match - to be held in the north Indian city of Mohali, starting March 4.

The second Test will be a day-night affair to be played in Bangalore from March 12, the Board of Control for Cricket in India said.

AFP



Inter coach Simone Inzaghi during the Italian Serie A match between Inter Milan and AC Milan on Feb 5 (AFP)

Inzaghi has faith in Inter ahead of visit of 'favourites' Liverpool

Milan, Italy - Simone Inzaghi said Tuesday that Inter Milan's recent displays give him faith his team can cause an upset against Liverpool.

Inter ceded the Serie A summit to local rivals AC Milan at the weekend after a painful derby defeat was followed by Saturday's 1-1 draw at fellow title rivals Napoli. However Inzaghi saw enough in those two matches to give him the belief Inter can trouble the Reds when they come to the San Siro for Wednesday's first leg of their Champions League last 16 tie.

"On paper Liverpool are favourites... We know, and I've told the boys, that we need to go out there and play our game free from worry," Inzaghi said.

"In this type of match the level of determination will make the difference, and the boys have shown throughout the season

that they have plenty of it.

"In the second half (at Napoli) we went out there with a great spirit and huge desire to not lose. That second half gives me faith for the match tomorrow..."

He says he is undecided as to who he will play up front between Edin Dzeko, Lautaro Martinez and Alexis Sanchez as apart from Nicolo Barella he has an almost full squad to pick from.

AFP

Global players' survey gives thumbs-down to two-year World Cup

Paris, France - Footballers around the world have given a resounding red card to FIFA's proposal to hold the World Cup every two years, according to a survey by players' global union Fifpro. The findings, released on Tuesday, showed 75% of more than 1,000 male players questioned over the global governing body's plans to shake-up the international calendar were in favour of retaining the tournament's current four-year cycle.

In Europe and Asia 77% of players supported maintaining

the status quo, against 63% from the Americas.

In Africa the figure dropped to 49%, with the remainder split between holding the competition every two or three years.

"While a clear majority of players support the current frequency of the World Cup, a demand exists, particularly in smaller and medium-sized markets, to further develop and strengthen national team competitions," Fifpro said.

When asked to pick their preferred competition 81% singled out their domestic league or the World Cup "in its current four-year cycle".

Fifpro general secretary Jonas Baer-Hoffmann said the survey showed "most footballers around the world have a clear preference to play the World Cup every four years".

He said the results also underlined the importance of domestic league competitions to players.

AFP

Most footballers around the world have a clear preference to play the World Cup every four years

JONAS BAER-HOFFMANN



TOUR OF OMAN 2022

Czech rider ends six years of hurt with Tour of Oman victory



Fernando Gaviria claims final race of the tour at Muttrah Corniche



BEST TEAM - Team Arkea - Samsic

Muscat - Fernando Gaviria, of the UAE Team Emirates, powered to victory on the Muttrah Corniche in the sixth and final race of the Tour of Oman on Tuesday. Czech rider Jan Hirt took the overall honours.

Already a winner of Stage 1, the Colombian 'Misil' capped off a thrilling week of racing with a fast and furious sprint to take the win ahead of Kaden Groves (BikeExchange-Jayco) and Amaury Capiot (Arkea-Samsic).

Jan Hirt (Intermarché-Wanty-Gobert Matériaux) resisted his rivals' attacks on a rolling terrain to secure the overall victory on the day after his dominant performance up Jabal Akhdhar.

Hirt's victory ends a six year hiatus for him - he won the 2016 Tour of Austria - with the 31-year-old taking control after Monday's challenging stage which climaxed on the summit of Jabal Akhdhar.

The Intermarché team rider had a winning margin of a minute over Italy's Fausto Masnada with experienced Portuguese cyclist Rui Costa in third.

Gaviria prevailed in the stage after being given a superb lead by UAE team-mate Maximiliano Richeze - the 27-year-old Colombian edging out Kaden Groves of Australia and Belgian Amaury Capiot.

British cycling great Mark Cavendish finished seventh in the stage.

Relentless action in the final 50km

The 89-man peloton set off from Al Mouj Muscat in sunny and hot conditions. Seven attackers jumped ahead of the peloton in the first kilometres raced on the coastline: Johan Meens (Bingoal Pauwels Sauces WB), Antonio



UAE Team Emirates' rider Fernando Gaviria (C) sprints to win the sixth stage of the Oman Tour on February 15 (AFP)



RED JERSEY - INDIVIDUAL TIME

Jan Hirt of Intermarché - Wanty - Gobert Matériaux

GREEN JERSEY - POINTS

Fernando Gaviria of UAE Team Emirates

WHITE JERSEY - BEST YOUNG RIDER

Anthon Charmig of Uno-X Pro Cycling Team

GOLD JERSEY - MOST AGGRESSIVE RIDER

Peio Goikoetxea Goigogana of Euskaltel-Euskadi

The peloton split due to the hard chase on a rolling terrain. But most of the riders came back together inside the last 30km, just ahead of the final circuit, a 7.5km loop around the shimmering Muttrah Corniche.

Quick-Step controls, UAE concludes

Attacks kept flying, with Denis Strakhov (Gazprom-RusVelo) setting off at the front with 25km to go. Joan Bou (Euskaltel-Euskadi) went after him, but Cavendish's Quick-Step Team drove the bunch to reel in the attackers with 12km to go.

Soren Kragh Andersen (Team DSM) kicked on the final uphill, inside the last 3km to go, but the Wolfpack caught up with him again. In the final kilometre, UAE Team Emirates launched Fernando Gaviria to his second victory of the season.

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