

Oman marks Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

Palestinian flag hoisted at Oslo city hall in a show of solidarity with the people of Gaza to mark the day

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The sultanate, represented by the Foreign Ministry, has announced its full support for the Palestinian cause. A statement issued by the Foreign Ministry said, 'On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Sultanate of Oman affirms its firm support for the justice of the Palestinian cause.'

In 1977, the UN General Assembly called for the annual observance of November 29 as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (Resolution 32/40 B). On that day in 1947, the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution on the partition of Palestine.

'5,000 children have lost their lives in Gaza'
The Palestinian flag was hoisted at the city hall of the Norwegian capital on Wednesday morning



Eight-year-old Karam at a bakery in Khan Younis city, southern Gaza. He said he waits four hours a day to return with a loaf of bread for his family (Unicef)

in a show of solidarity with the people of Gaza to mark the day.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the event, Mayor of Oslo Anne Lindboe called for peace in the Middle East particularly at a time fraught with tension.

"When we know that more than 5,000 children have lost their lives (in Gaza), the equivalent of more than 275 school classes, it is only natural to remember them today," she said.

"It is very important to highlight that Oslo should be a city for everyone, where both our small Jewish minority and those with a Palestinian background should feel safe, seen and included," she added.

PDO announces project utilising CO₂ for EOR

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) has launched a pioneering pilot project for enhanced oil recovery (EOR) using CO₂ in northern Oman, marking a significant step towards sustainable oil and gas production in alignment with the sultanate's goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

PDO is committed to building a sustainable and low-carbon future, aiming to ensure the company's long term success by continuing to generate significant oil and gas revenue in a cost-effective and carbon-efficient manner, thereby maximising value for the sultanate, a press release stated.

"This project marks a key milestone in PDO's dedication to increasing oil and gas production sustainably, decarbonising its operations, and working towards achieving the net-zero carbon emissions goal by 2050 in alignment with Oman Vision 2040.'



H E Salim al Aufl

The goal of the pilot project is to de-risk and therefore expedite the full-field EOR development. Over the next three months, continuous injectivity of CO₂ into the reservoir will be proven, followed by long-term injection, lasting up to one year, PDO stated.

This strategic approach aims to unlock substantial oil volumes lodged in the subsurface, paving the way for a major sustainable CO₂ EOR project within the PDO concession area. Importantly, the project also plays a key role in enhancing a larger PDO EOR portfolio whilst mitigating PDO's own CO₂ emissions.

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GCC calls for immediate end to Israeli aggression

New York, USA - Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries presented a unified stand, demanding an immediate end to the Israeli occupation forces' aggression in the Gaza Strip at the United Nations General Assembly discussion on 'The Question of Palestine' on Tuesday.

The statement, delivered by First Secretary Khalid bin Saleh al Rabkhi, Deputy Permanent Representative of Oman to the United Nations, emphasised the

rejection of aggression as self-defence by Israel.

The GCC states commended Security Council Resolution 2712, issued on November 15, 2023, which calls for a mandatory ceasefire. They also supported the General Assembly's resolution from an emergency special session held on October 27, 2023, demanding an immediate ceasefire and access to aid. The GCC insists on unconditional implementation of these

decisions and vehemently opposes any actions aimed at forcibly displacing Palestinians from their land.

The humanitarian truce agreement, mediated jointly by Qatar, Egypt and the United States, and concluded between Israel and Hamas, was welcomed by the GCC countries.

They condemned in the strongest terms the ongoing Israeli crimes against Palestinians, including the use of internation-

ally prohibited weapons, urging the international community to hold Israel accountable for these violations of international humanitarian law.

The GCC also denounced any attempts to annex settlements in the West Bank to Israel. Additionally, the statement condemned the repeated incursions into Al Aqsa Mosque's courtyards by Israeli settlers under the protection of Israeli forces.



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Dubai-based luxury brand to launch eco-retreat in Sifah

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Dubai-based luxury ecolodge brand and management company ENVI Lodges is set to expand its footprint in Oman with its second property in the sultanate opening in Sifah.

The announcement comes weeks after ENVI confirmed its entry into the sultanate with mountain ecolodge ENVI Al Jabel Al Akhdar.

Anticipated to open its door in late 2025, ENVI Al Sifah promises an unparalleled beach experience, immersing guests in the beauty of the Omani coastline and its rich cultural heritage.

The Sifah eco-retreat property, nestled along the pristine shores, will feature 40 luxury sea-view tents crafted by Tent-house Structures, designed to withstand coastal climates while ensuring natural ventilation for comfort.



Owned by a consortium of Omani investors, the ecolodge will offer common facilities, including a seafood restaurant offering locally sourced cuisine, a wellness centre, a swimming pool, a kids' club, and an activities centre. Outdoor spaces will host fireside theme nights and feature an open-air beach cinema.

Guests can experience in dhow restoration and cooking workshops, meditation and yoga sessions, as well as kayaking, snorkelling, hiking, and also dis-

cover the nearby Bandar Khayran beach.

Committed to sustainable tourism, ENVI Lodges will implement eco-friendly practices, including the use of renewable energy sources, water conservation, recycling, and waste management programmes.

The company also plans to engage and support local communities, starting with the rehabilitation of a nearby children's playground.

Co-founder Noëlle Homsy

said that ENVI Al Sifah represents a harmonious blend of an adventure wadi experience and a serene beach retreat in a single ecolodge. "We are fortunate to have access to this unique site, where the raw, unspoiled beauty of the Omani coastline meets the rich biodiversity of the wadi, creating a space that offers both excitement and tranquility."

She expressed gratitude for getting the opportunity to "develop responsibly on this unparalleled beach stretch".

New US envoy 'to listen and work' to strengthen ties

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Embassy of the United States welcomed its new ambassador Ana Escrogima, who arrived in Muscat on Tuesday night.

"My family and I are delighted to arrive in Oman. Now more than ever Oman's values of tolerance, dialogue, and mutual respect make it a vital regional partner for the United States," the new US Ambassador to the sultanate commented soon after her arrival.

"I'm here to listen, and will work with our Omani partners to strengthen our deep and strategically important bilateral relationship and help bring peace to the region," the ambassador posted on social media.

US President Joe Biden nominated Ambassador Ana in January and the US Senate later confirmed her in late October.

"Honoured to be confirmed by



Ana Escrogima

the Senate as the next US Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman. I'm looking forward to joining the President's team on the ground and supporting Secretary (Antony) Blinken's diplomatic efforts at such a consequential time for the region," Ambassador Ana had stated then.

She was serving as the consul

general of the US Consulate General in Montreal, Canada.

She previously worked with the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and as the deputy chief of mission at the Riyadh-based Yemen Affairs Unit.

Former Rusk Fellow at the Georgetown's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Ambassador Ana has extensive experience abroad and in Washington, DC. She was the State Department's UAE-based Arabic language spokesperson and served as the Public Affairs Officer in Algeria, where she was responsible for all bilateral, cultural and press engagements.

Ambassador Ana served as a political officer at the US embassies in Iraq and Syria; she was the special assistant to former under secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman, with responsibility for the Middle East issues - most notably the Iran nuclear negotiations.



WHO team visits Sohar 'Healthy City'

Our Correspondent
Sohar

A delegation from the World Health Organization (WHO) has arrived in Sohar for a two-day long evaluation of its healthy city project in this port city.

WHO's 'Healthy Cities' is a global movement started in 1978 to put health high on the social, economic and political agendas of city governments. The WHO European Healthy Cities Network has brought together close to 100 flagship cities and 30 national networks under the programme.

During the visit, the WHO team held a meeting with Mohammed Sulaiman al Kindi, Governor of North Batinah, in which the Sohar city falls.

The two sides discussed several topics of relevance for the WHO team.

The meeting highlighted prominent achievements of Sohar's 'Healthy City' project, showcasing some significant community-based initiatives conducted in the city.

Earlier in March this year, Nizwa was declared a Healthy City as per the WHO's assessment.

Healthy Cities are working to accelerate the achievement of 'health for all' mission by promoting equitable access to high-quality healthcare services and creating an environment conducive to adapting a healthy lifestyle that ensures a healthier and more prosperous life for all age groups.

MoHERI to host 10th Annual Research Forum on Dec 4



Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI) is set to organise the 10th edition of its Annual Research Forum at the Sheraton Oman Hotel on December 4.

The event, under the patronage of H E Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health, will convene a distinguished gathering of officials, innovators, academics, and recipients of research awards.

The highlight of the forum will be the announcement of the National Research Award (NRA)

winners, recognising outstanding contributions in various research fields.

In tandem with the award ceremony, the forum will have an exhibition displaying posters of all winning NRA projects, showcasing success stories from the Upgrade Programme and the Block Funding Programme.

Additionally, the exhibition will provide insights into MoHERI's diverse research and innovation initiatives.

The forum will also host two vital discussion sessions, focusing on the role of research in advancing the industrial and

academic sectors. These sessions aim to explore the impact of research on these critical areas, shedding light on innovative approaches and collaborative efforts.

The NRA is structured into two main categories: One for research led by PhD holders or equivalent, including senior specialists in the medical field, and another for young researchers without a PhD. The award spans six research fields: Education and Human Resources, Information and Communication Technologies, Health and Social Services, Energy and Industry, Environ-

mental and Biological Resources, and Cultural, Social, and Basic Sciences.

This prestigious award is part of MoHERI's efforts to create a vibrant research culture in Oman. It is designed to motivate researchers to undertake high-quality studies that align with the nation's priorities and raise awareness about the ministry's various programmes supporting research and innovation.

The forum and the NRA play a crucial role in highlighting Oman's dedication to advancing knowledge and driving innovation for national development.

PDO announces project utilising CO₂ for EOR

Continued from Page 01

According to H E Salim al Afi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, Oman has committed to reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. "The national decarbonisation roadmap includes several technologies in which carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS) is a key technology enabler. The pilot undertaken by PDO exemplifies both the company's and the country's unwavering dedication to simultaneously boosting production and decarbonising operations."

He added, "This initiative serves as a tangible manifestation of Oman's commitment to pioneering sustainable solutions in the pursuit of a cleaner, more environmentally conscious future".

Steve Phimister, Managing Director of PDO, conveyed the company's pride in announcing the milestone in its journey towards a net-zero CO2 emissions future. "This project is not just a technological achievement but a demonstration of our unwavering commitment to both cost and carbon competitiveness. We are determined to safely, efficiently and sustainably grow our core oil and gas business."

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SQCCCRC obtains international licence for ALERT training course

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Centre (SQCCCRC) has obtained the international licence as an accredited centre to provide ALERT training programme specialised in monitoring and managing serious events that threaten the lives of patients in health institutions.

Twelve employees from the centre obtained the international licence as certified trainers for the ALERT programme after the Training and Academic Development Department organised a training programme, in cooperation with Portsmouth Hospital affiliated with the University Trust - United Kingdom.

ALERT (Acute Life-Threatening Events Recognition and Treatment) is a system that uses a structured and prioritised patient assessment and management to enable a pre-emptive approach to critical illness. ALERT instructs staff in the recognition of impending clinical deterioration, the management of disordered physiology and other aspects of acute care.

The newly certified trainers can now contribute with their expertise to further enhance the skills and knowledge within SQCCCRC, and healthcare provider in Oman and the region.

Due to this licence, SQCCCRC will now be able to organise ALERT training and certification periodically.

Jabal Akhdar caves: Subterranean wonders boost for ecotourism

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Renowned for its lush green mountains, Jabal Akhdar also has some of Oman's most captivating underground marvels.

The region, now documented to have 18 caves thanks to the efforts of Omani Caves Exploration Team (OCET), presents a new realm of subterranean beauty with Khaslat Safi Sahraa being the latest addition.

This easily accessible cave is poised to become a key tourist attraction, according to Nabil bin Salam bin Khalfan al Saqri, a member of OCET.

Formed by sedimentation of limestone dating back to the Cretaceous period, the 15m-deep cave boasts of remarkable stalagmite and stalactite formations.

Saqri noted that Jabal Akhdar's diverse tourism offerings are increasingly popular among visitors, both domestic and international. The caves, alongside mountain hiking trails and rappelling cliffs, have boosted the wilayat's appeal for adventure tourism.

Established in 2016, OCET is the first Omani volunteer group dedicated to cave exploration and documentation. It has mapped over a hundred caves in Oman, contributing significantly to the field of geological research.

Saqri informed that the team's publication - *A Guide to the Caves of Oman* - is a scientific resource for researchers and cave enthusiasts.



(Supplied photos)



Documentation and exploration of these caves not only open doors for adventure tourism but also connect the present with the historical and cultural past of Oman

NABIL AL SAQRI

siasts. The guide details location of caves, access routes and difficulty level of exploring each, promoting these as tourist destinations for both scientific and recreational purposes.

Jabal Akhdar has several stunning caves, including Hail al Diyar, Khasla al Saqf, Khasla al Ruwais and Amer Cave, each with unique historical and geological significance. "These caves

served different purposes for the mountain inhabitants, as dwellings and animal shelters to access points for groundwater and for mining," Saqri said.

Documentation and exploration of these caves not only open doors for adventure tourism but also connect the present with the historical and cultural past of Oman, Saqri noted.

SQU student shines at global Microbiome meet

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Fatema Khalifa al Mendhry, a post-graduate student specialising in soil and water management in the College of Agriculture and Marine Science at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), has earned accolades for the sultanate with her groundbreaking research.

Her presentation at the international conference Microbiome: Human, Plant and Environmental Health - Applications and Challenges, held in Abu Dhabi on November 21 and 22, won her the first place in the poster presentation category.

Fatema's research, titled *Abundance and Diversity of Oil-degrading Bacteria in Produced Water Wetland Treatment System, Rima - Oman*, was part of her master's degree thesis.

She informed *Muscat Daily* that her scholastic effort was mentored by consultant Dr Daniel Blackburn, leading to the prize-winning poster presentation at the conference that saw over 500 participants from 28 countries.

Started in October 2022, her project focuses on Rima Water Treatment Project, implemented in July 2022 and set to operate for 20 years.

The study aims to analyse the abundance and diversity of oil-degrading bacteria in the wetland ecosystem and evaluate water quality in the distribution network. Additionally, it



Fatema Khalifa al Mendhry

seeks to isolate microbes capable of degrading oil under various environmental conditions, contributing to the future enhancement of water treatment processes.

Despite challenges like the 700km distance between the study site and SQU and the need for quick and precise sample collection, Fatema persevered. She's grateful to Veolia company for supporting her research and to Blackburn for his guidance.

Fatema hopes her research contributes significantly to the field of environmental management. She anticipates isolating oil-degrading bacteria will enhance the treatment process, improve quality of produced water and aid in the improvement of the Rima Wetland system.

Furthermore, her findings could reduce costs associated with traditional water treatment methods, marking a significant advancement in sustainable environmental practices.

MAFWR restores 37 aflaj in Dhahirah

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) has completed maintenance and restoration work of 37 aflaj in Dhahirah.

A statement issued by MAFWR said the Directorate General of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in the governorate completed maintenance and restoration of aflaj in three wilayats till October 2023. "Work is currently underway to restore more aflaj."

An official at MAFWR said, "The ministry has formed a team to survey aflaj with an aim to enhance water resources and develop their sources to serve citizens and residential communities."

Of the 37 aflaj restored, 20 are in Ibri, ten in Dhanak and seven in Nakhl.



According to the official, the aflaj restoration project aims to support farmers and improve irrigation services. "Aflaj are a traditional water source on which Omanis have depended for irrigation for ages. The aflaj types vary according to the geological and hydrological characteristics of the area."

Oman has 4,112 aflaj spread over 11 governorates.

MHT announces international tender for restoration of Land of Frankincense sites

Our Correspondent
Salalah

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) has announced an international tender for the restoration of key archaeological monuments within the Land of Frankincense sites in Dhofar, including the Al Baleed Castle, Al Baleed Mosque and the Sumharam archaeological site.

This initiative is part of the sultanate's concerted efforts to preserve its rich heritage and enhance its appeal as a tourist destination.

The Land of Frankincense, located in Al Baleed in Salalah, is a Unesco World Heritage Site and a testament to Oman's central role in the ancient global frankincense trade.

MHT's latest tender aims to attract international expertise in archaeology and restoration



works with the objective of rejuvenating these historical sites and boosting economic activities in the region, it stated.

MHT data shows that this year, until the end of September,

heritage sites across Oman received 80,317 visitors, highlighting the country's growing prominence as a cultural tourism hub.

The tender calls for interna-

tional entities to submit proposals, along with a comprehensive action plan for the excavation and restoration of these sites.

The deadline for bid submissions is January 9, 2024.

The inclusion of Al Baleed Archaeological Park, Sumharam, the Shasir area and Wadi Dokka in the Unesco World Heritage List under the name 'Land of Frankincense' in 2000 underscores their global significance.

MHT's efforts align with the National Tourism Strategy (2016-2040), which envisions the development of 14 tourist projects across various governorates. These projects are designed to be sustainable, empower local communities, and ensure the preservation of Oman's cultural heritage and customs for posterity.

Through these restoration efforts, MHT aims not only to safeguard Oman's archaeological legacy but also enrich the tourism experience for visitors, showcasing the sultanate's rich history and culture.

Over 2,000 delegates at global ophthalmology meet today

Our Correspondent
Muscat

With over 2,000 delegates from around the world participating, the International Congress of Ophthalmology and Research will kick off on Thursday under the auspices of H H Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The four-day event, a collaboration between Ophthalmology Centre of Medical City for Military and Security Units, Oman Ophthalmic Society, Ministry of Health, and the Middle East Africa Council of Ophthalmology (MEACO), is a convergence of

the 19th Muscat International Ophthalmology Conference and the 17th International Congress of MEACO.

The event will open with keynote addresses by Col Dr Rashid al Saidi, Chairman of organising committee of the congress, Dr Abdulaziz Badla, President of MEACO, and Saudi Prince Abdulaziz Ahmed al Saud.

Highlights of the event will be the unveiling of the International Keratoconus Society's logo and presentation of prestigious awards - the Ibn Omairah Awards and the Golden Medal of Ibn al Dhahabi. An accompanying exhibition will showcase the latest medical technologies for eye disease treatment and educa-

Attendees will be eligible for 30 educational hours accredited by the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education

tional material.

With over 2,000 delegates, the congress is the largest ophthalmology gathering in the region, featuring more than 100 scientific sessions, 26 workshops and 377 papers by more than 500 speakers from 42 countries.

The event brings together world-renowned experts and emerging scientists in ophthalmology, offering an unparalleled educational platform. For the first time, the congress will introduce innovative developments like the hyperbaric chamber and the Visumax 800 Machine.

Pre-conference workshops began on Wednesday, covering a range of topics from retina and ocular oncology to refractive surgery and glaucoma. The scientific programme will cover a wide spectrum of subjects in the field of ophthalmology, including pediatric glaucoma, keratoconus diagnostics, women's roles in ophthalmology, and the latest in glaucoma research and treatment.

Additionally, the congress will explore advanced surgical techniques, new approaches to complex eye conditions and updates in various subspecialties - ophthalmology and optometry. The agenda includes sessions dedicated to ophthalmic ultrasound, nursing and updates in Arabic.

The congress aims to enable knowledge exchange and introduce participants to the latest developments in ophthalmology, surgical techniques and scientific research methodologies.

Attendees will be eligible for 30 educational hours accredited by the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education.



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BRIEFS

Italy plans joint investments with Saudi Arabia

Italy is discussing joint investments with Saudi Arabia in many strategic sectors, Italy's Industry Minister Adolfo Urso said during his visit.

Urso, who recently visied Saudi Arabia, said the two countries are looking at fostering ties in the automotive, mining, oil and gas, defense, hydrogen and space sectors.

"Italy and Saudi Arabia are committed to developing a regulatory and industrial framework which favours and accelerates the strategic autonomy in the critical raw material sector," he said.

"Italy and Saudi Arabia explored the possibility of joint partnerships and investments particularly in the mining sector, both in our respective countries and other regions, such as the African continent."

Profits of Oman's listed firms grow 24% to RO225mn in Q3

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Listed companies on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) recorded a 24% year-on-year growth in total net profits for the third quarter of 2023, backed by healthy growth in the banking and utilities sector.

Total net profits for the listed companies in Oman grew to \$584.6mn (approximately RO225mn) in the third quarter of this year, compared with \$471.4mn (approximately RO182mn) in the third quarter of 2022, according to the GCC Corporate Earnings report released by Kuwait-based Kamco Investment.

Robust growth of power generation companies and banks mainly contributed to the overall year-on-year growth in aggregate net profits for the firms listed on the MSX.

The third-quarter earnings of the banking sector, the biggest sector in the MSX by market capitalisation, jumped by 18.1% to \$303.5mn this year, compared to \$256.9mn in the third quarter of 2022.

Utilities sector companies recorded the biggest growth of 131.7% in quarterly net profits. The sector reported the second-



Third-quarter earnings of banking sector jumped by more than 18% to \$303.5mn this year, compared to \$256.9mn in same period of 2022

largest total net profits of \$95.4mn during the third quarter of 2023 at the MSX, compared to \$41.2mn in the corresponding period of 2022.

Net profit for Bank Muscat – the biggest financial institution in Oman – increased during the

third quarter, setting the tone for the overall growth of profits in the banking sector. Bank Muscat posted the biggest profit within the banking sector during the third quarter of 2023 at \$141.7mn, compared to \$127.4mn during the corresponding period of 2022.

The combination of an increase in customer deposits, including Islamic customer deposits, and growth in interest and non-interest income, were the main drivers of Bank Muscat's profits during the quarter, Kamco Investment said.

Sohar International Bank and National Bank of Oman followed with \$47.4mn and \$36.4mn in net profits during the third quarter of 2023.

The profit growth for the util-

ities sector came after two out of the seven companies in the sector reported a year-on-year increase in net earnings growth. Phoenix Power Company led the way in terms of total profits that reached \$39mn in the third quarter of this year, up 2% year-on-year, followed closely by Al Suwadi Power Company and Al Batinah Power Company, which posted net profits that reached \$23.2mn and \$21.2mn, respectively.

Total net profits for the energy sector increased by 6.1% to \$53.4mn during the third quarter of 2023, compared to \$50.3mn in 2022. Newly listed OQ Gas Network reported the biggest third-quarter net profit among the companies in the energy sector after it recorded \$30.5mn in net earnings during the quarter, compared to \$29mn in the third quarter of 2022.

Total quarterly net profits for the telecom sector remained nearly unchanged at \$51.2mn, compared to \$51.1mn in the third quarter of 2022, witnessing a marginal 0.1% year-on-year growth. Furthermore, total net earnings for the diversified financial sector witnessed nearly a 50% drop in quarterly net earnings to reach \$49.9mn this year, compared to \$99.1mn during the

third quarter of last year.

GCC earnings drop 14%

Quarterly profits reported by GCC-listed companies once again showed a year-on-year decline in profits during the third quarter of 2023, mainly led by a fall in energy and commodity prices, according to Kamco Investment.

Aggregate net profit for GCC-listed companies fell to \$62.3bn during the third quarter of 2023, compared to \$72.9bn during the same period of 2022, resulting in a double-digit year-on-year decline of 14.4%. Out of the 22 sectors in the region, profits for 12 sectors showed year-on-year declines, while 10 sectors showed higher profits.

At the country level, aggregate profits for Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi showed double-digit declines against last year while Bahraini companies showed a decline of 8.3%. On the other hand, Kuwait showed the biggest year-on-year earnings growth of more than 40% during the third quarter of 2023, while Dubai and Oman aggregates showed healthy growth of 35.8% and 24%, respectively. Aggregate net profits for Qatari companies were almost flat with a marginal year-on-year growth of 0.3%.

Omani food tech startup KitchenomiKs raises \$3.5mn to fuel regional expansion

Our Correspondent
Muscat

KitchenomiKs, one of Oman's fastest-growing food technology startups, has raised a total of \$3.5mn in Seed and Pre-Series A funding to drive its regional expansion plans. Saudi Arabia is the company's first target market, with plans to go live in early 2024.

The latest \$1.8mn Pre-Series A round from prominent Omani and regional investors brings KitchenomiKs' total funding to date to \$3.5mn, according to a press statement issued by the firm.

"This vote of confidence will enable the company to revolutionise the on-demand food ordering and delivery landscape using innovative technologies. Oman's food delivery market has shown a growth of 22% annually and is projected to hit \$1.8bn by 2025," KitchenomiKs said.

Launched in March 2022, KitchenomiKs works on the hybrid food ecosystem. The company is in the process of creating the largest chain of virtual multi-



brand restaurants and establishing delivery hubs in Oman, with plans to move into the rest of GCC by early 2024. Founded by Aankush Bhatia, Aju Samuel, and Shrikanth Shenoy, KitchenomiKs already operates the sultanate's largest cloud kitchen facility spanning 3,000 sqm at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

"KitchenomiKs has seen exponential growth since its inception in 2022. Our core business model focuses on three aspects

– create our own brands, promote other known brands, and empower home-grown brands. We are excited to take this strategy across the borders, starting with the Saudi market," said Aankush Bhatia, founder and CEO of KitchenomiKs.

KitchenomiKs has partnered with local restaurants and food entrepreneurs to help them scale while eliminating the overhead costs of running physical restaurants. The firm recently launched the culinary brand of celebrated

Omani Chef and cookbook author Dina Macki. KitchenomiKs has also tied up with renowned international brands to offer customers wider culinary choices.

Leveraging its strong growth and innovative model, KitchenomiKs now aims to partner and raise capital from institutional investors to fund the deployment of cutting-edge technologies and geographical expansion by enrolling the best in culinary and technology talent across the region.

Sohar Aluminium participates in ARABAL 2023 in Riyadh

Sohar – Sohar Aluminium concluded its participation in the recently held 25th edition of Arab International Aluminium Conference and Exhibition (ARABAL 2023), organised in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. ARABAL is the Middle East's premier trade event for the aluminium industry, and this year's edition was titled 'Aluminium: The Future, from Mine to Space' showcasing the limitless applications and possibilities for aluminium.

The three-day event, hosted by Saudi Arabian Mining Company (Ma'aden), marked a unique conference attended by primary aluminium manufacturers in the region as well as attracting those interested in the Middle East aluminium industry.

Sohar Aluminium's participation in ARABAL 2023 was across various activities during the three-day conference which includes its booth at the exhibition. Kicking off the first day, the CEO of Sohar Aluminium, Eng Said al Masoudi, shared his views on the current challenges and future opportunities of aluminium industry during the



Arab CEO Smelters Panel.

In a later session, Sohar Aluminium's Chief Operating Officer, Agnello Borim, touched on the various initiatives that are increasing the company's recycling efforts that serve in meeting decarbonisation targets. Furthermore, Lead Process Engineer at SA, Roa al Shizawi, shed light on the role of female talents in delivering the ambitious growth vision of the GCC aluminium industry during a session designated to highlight women's valuable contributions

in this industry.

It is worth noting that the first edition of ARABAL was held in 1983 in Kuwait with the aim of bringing together the leading players in the Middle East aluminium industry to strengthen ties and discuss issues and to provide an overview of the aluminium industry. Over the past 40 years, it has become an event of international repute, bringing together leaders from the aluminium industry across the world to network and conduct business.

Fintech set to propel Islamic banking assets to \$4tn by 2026

Dubai, UAE - Islamic banking is undergoing a historic transformation propelled by groundbreaking financial technologies (fintech) advancements. In the last four years, assets in Islamic banking have surged from \$1.8tn to \$2.8tn, with a projected leap to an astounding \$4tn by 2026, primarily driven by the GCC nations.

The new exclusive report by red_mad_robot, titled 'State of Fintech: The Islamic Banking Industry,' provided an in-depth exploration of this financial evolution.



Islamic finance is an integral part of the Islamic economic system, encompassing economic relations adhering to Islamic law regarding fund distribution and utilisation. Originally emerging in rural and agricultural economies, Islamic banking has evolved into a coherent system of financial

services, products, and principles.

The report delves into the variation in banking systems across countries, where some are entirely based on Sharia principles, while others incorporate Islamic financial services within conventional banks.

Digital transformation and fintech in Islamic banking present many opportunities. Islamic financial institutions seek to differentiate their business while ensuring competitive prices to capture new market space and generate economic demand.

Abu Dhabi fund plans three IPOs for 2024

Abu Dhabi, UAE – Bassel al Khawaja, advisory head at Abu Dhabi IPO Fund (ADIPOF), affirmed that the fund is working on three initial offerings in the technology, hospitality, restaurants, and financial sectors.

In his statements to the Emirates News Agency (WAM) on the sidelines of the second day of the Abu Dhabi Finance Week, Khawaja expected that these offerings to be "coming to the markets by the end of 2024."

He explained that one of these three offerings will be for a family business operating in the financial sector and foreign exchange and remittances, as part



of the Abu Dhabi IPO Fund's efforts to attract family businesses.

Khawaja noted that family businesses are of special importance to the Abu Dhabi IPO Fund, as they constitute an essential pillar in advancing economic development in the emirate of Abu Dhabi.

"The fund is looking forward to launching more initial public offerings for family businesses and private companies," he emphasised.

The Abu Dhabi IPO Fund is a

WAM

AED5bn fund, Khawaja stated, adding that "its purpose is to enable companies to transform from privately held companies to reach the ADX and be publicly listed."

Abu Dhabi IPO Fund seeks to invest in 5 to 10 private sector companies annually, with a focus on small and medium-sized companies (SMEs).

The fund is targeting between 10% and 40% of the total shares available for subscription, in addition to working closely with various local banks to benefit from their expertise in the company listing process.

'\$13.5tn needed to fast-track decarbonisation'

Geneva, Switzerland – Transitioning to a more sustainable and carbon-neutral future, \$13.5tn in investments will be needed by 2050, particularly in the production, energy and transport sectors, according to a new World Economic Forum report.

WEF's Net-Zero Industry Tracker 2023 report, published in collaboration with Accenture, takes stock of progress towards net-zero emissions for eight industries – steel, cement, aluminium, ammonia, excluding other chemicals, oil and gas, aviation, shipping and trucking – which depend on fossil fuels for 90% of their energy demand and pose some of the most technological and capital-intensive decarbonisation challenges.

The report, published the same week as the United Nations called at COP28 for “dramatic climate action” to close an “emissions canyon”, outlines

pathways to accelerate the decarbonisation of emission-intensive production, energy and transport industries.

While the pathway to net zero in these sectors will differ based on unique sectoral and regional factors, investments in clean power, clean hydrogen and infrastructure for carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) will be needed to accelerate industrial decarbonization across most sectors.

“Decarbonising these industrial and transport sectors, which emit 40% of global greenhouse gas emissions today, is essential to achieving net zero, especially as demand for industrial products and transport services will continue to be strong,” said Roberto Bocca, Head of Centre for Energy and Materials, World Economic Forum.

“Significant infrastructure investments are required, comple-



mented by policies and stronger incentives so industries can switch to low-emission technologies while ensuring access to affordable and reliable resources critical for economic growth.”

According to the report, the \$13.5tn in investments is derived from average clean power gen-

eration costs of solar, offshore and onshore wind, nuclear and geothermal, electrolyzer costs for clean hydrogen and carbon transport, as well as storage costs.

The Net-Zero Industry Tracker proposes a comprehensive framework of emissions drivers and enablers to measure

progress and identify gaps, scorecards for each industry, and opportunities for cross-sector collaboration. Building on the 2022 edition, the updated report includes transportation sectors and applies the framework to identify strategies for net-zero industrial transformation.

The report's findings under-

score the urgency for creating a robust enabling environment, including low-emissions technologies, infrastructure, demand for green products, policies and investments. In addition to increasing capital expenditures to decarbonise existing industrial and transport asset bases, further investment is needed to build a clean-energy infrastructure.

The majority of the technologies needed to deliver net-zero emissions are expected to reach commercial maturity after 2030, highlighting the need for collaborative approaches to research, develop and scale them. This includes substituting legacy technologies with low-emission alternatives, increasing efficiency of processes and machinery, electrification and driving circularity.

“It is imperative that action is taken soon to both decarbonise

and improve energy efficiency; otherwise, unabated fossil-fuel demand in the key industry sectors, which have grown 8% on average the past three years, will increase very significantly by 2050,” said Bocca.

According to the report, carbon pricing, tax subsidies, public procurement and development of strong business cases can support in mobilising necessary investments. However, raising capital for high-risk projects with unproven technologies could be challenging in the current macro-economic environment.

“Collaboration between the public and private sectors is critical to a successful energy transition, and technology can be a key enabler in both managing affordable and reliable access to clean energy and addressing the incremental cost of decarbonization,” said Muqsit Ashraf, who leads Accenture Strategy.

WTO says global trade to recover in second half

Geneva, Switzerland – Global merchandise trade volume will gradually recover in the second half of 2023 with the backing of automobile sales and production, and electronic components, amid high uncertainty, the World Trade Organization (WTO) said.

The WTO's Goods Trade Barometer, a real-time trend gauge for trade, exceeded the baseline value of 100, hitting 100.7 in September, up from 99.1 in August.

“This suggests that merchandise trade volume will gradually revert towards its medium-term trend in the second half of 2023, although uncertainty remains high due to mixed economic data and rising geopolitical tensions,” read the report from WTO on Monday.

World merchandise trade volume was increased 0.2% from the previous period in the second



quarter of 2023, but still down 0.5% year-on-year.

The figure for the third quarter is expected to come in slightly stronger thanks to accelerating GDP growth in the US and China, albeit the EU economy stagnated.

Annual trade growth is likely to be strong in the fourth quarter due to the base effect as high energy prices, rising interest rates and pandemic-related disruptions weighed on economic growth in leading economies in the same period last year.

Anadolu Agency

Oil prices mixed as investors bet on OPEC+ output cuts

Muscat – Oil prices were mixed in a volatile trading session on Wednesday over several upside pressures, including expected output cuts from the OPEC+ group, the decline in US crude stockpiles, storm-related supply disruptions in the Black Sea and a weaker US dollar.

Gobal benchmark crude Brent traded at \$81.38 per barrel in morning trade in London, a 0.11% decrease from the closing price of \$81.47 a barrel in the previous trading session on Tuesday.

The US benchmark, West Texas Intermediate (WTI), traded at the same time at \$76.42 per barrel, up 0.01% from Tuesday's close of \$76.41 per barrel. Prices fluctuated more than \$2 a barrel during Tuesday's trade over fears that the OPEC+

group will extend output cuts through next year to keep prices above \$80 a barrel.

The ministers of the 23-member group are expected to convene on Thursday to discuss the trajectory of their production levels from January onward.

Since October 2022, Saudi Arabia has been contributing to the group's joint cut of 2mn barrels per day (bpd), which will continue until the end of 2024, in addition to its output cut of approximately 1.5mn bpd planned to expire this December.

Among several upside price pressures was the draw in US crude oil inventories, which reflects healthy demand conditions in the world's largest oil-consuming country.

Agencies

ANNOUNCEMENT

FILCOSOC would like to invite all its bonafide members who have been active (paid) and in good standing for at least three (3) months to attend our General Assembly (GA) meeting (1st Call) and election on 08 March 2024 (Friday) from 9:00am-12:00pm. This event will be held at the FILCOSOC Office located in Al Jadeed St., Al Hail, Muscat.



OMANRe

Reinsurance Protection Beyond Expectations

OMAN REINSURANCE COMPANY S.A.O.C

Post Box 1968, Postal Code 114, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman, Telephone: 24397700 Fax: 2439 7777

OMAN REINSURANCE COMPANY S.A.O.G. DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR THE 6 MONTHS ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

Dear Shareholder,

After Compliments,

The Board of Directors is pleased to present the unaudited results of Oman Reinsurance Company S.A.O.G. ("Oman Re" or "the Company") for the nine months period ended 30 Sep 2023 prepared under IFRS 17.

The Financial Highlights for nine months ending 30 Sep 2023 are summarized below:

	30 September 2023 OMR	30 September 2022 OMR
Reinsurance revenue	31,825,722	23,914,273
Net reinsurance results	2,062,393	1,826,550
Investment and other income-net	1,977,251	1,532,933
Expenditure - General and Admin Expenses	(1,167,942)	(1,051,875)
Net Profit after tax	1,856,465	1,373,081

Reinsurance revenue and underwriting performance

The company continued to increase its reinsurance revenue for the period to OMR 31.8 million, around 33% higher than same period last year. However, reinsurance service expense also increased substantially during the period to OMR 33.5 million compared with OMR 16.7 million for the same period last year. Net reinsurance results, after taking retrocession results into account and impact of discounting, were OMR 2.1 million for the nine months ending 30 Sep 2023 compared to OMR 1.8 million for the same period of 2022.

General and Administrative Expenses

During the first nine months of 2023, the total expenditure amounted to OMR 1.2 million as against OMR 1.1 million for the same period in 2022. These expenses are classified as non-attributable expenses as per IFRS 17 methodology.

Investment Income

The investment and other income for the nine months ended amounted to OMR 2.0 million vs OMR 1.5 million for the same period last year. The investment income is better than last year is because of favorable interest rate environment and increase in invested assets of the Company.

Net Profitability

The Company's net profit after tax for the nine months of 2023 was OMR 1.8 million compared to OMR 1.3 million for the same period last year. The volatile currency environment resulted in a foreign exchange loss of OMR 688k for the period ending 30 Sep 2023 compared to OMR 692k for the period ending 30 Sep 2022.

Acknowledgements and Appreciation

The Directors of Oman Re wish to acknowledge the valuable guidance and assistance received from the Capital Market Authority, and the support received from clients and business partners. We look forward to receiving their continued support and encouragement.

The Directors also wish to extend their thanks and appreciation and express their gratitude for the continuing commitment and dedication of its shareholders, the Executive Management and employees at all levels. The Directors are thankful to the esteemed shareholders for their support and the confidence placed in the Company and the Board.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, the Executive Management and the Staff Members, we are honoured to express our sincere gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al Said for his visionary leadership during these difficult times and we pray to the Almighty God to grant him every strength to continue to lead the Sultanate on the path of sustainable development.

Dr. Juma Bin Ali Al Juma

Chairman of the Board

Condensed interim statement of financial position as at 30 September 2023 (Expressed in Omani Rial)

	30 September 2023 (Un-audited)	31 December 2022 (Un-audited) Restated	31 December 2021 (Un-audited) Restated
ASSETS			
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	68,736	92,568	137,643
Investment property	1,900,000	1,900,000	1,900,000
Investment property under development	184,592	184,592	184,592
Intangible assets	94,310	120,887	163,913
Investments at fair value through other comprehensive income	33,006,331	29,191,780	19,788,547
Non-current portion of bank deposits-net	8,378,474	6,524,155	12,282,723
Deferred tax asset	339,946	339,946	-
Total non-current assets	43,972,389	38,353,928	34,457,418
Current assets			
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	190,424	637,539	576,615
Other receivables	271,846	445,644	359,650
Accrued income	1,018,339	1,040,558	976,615
Retrocessionaire contract assets	16,341,179	15,107,674	20,589,251
Current portion of bank deposits	13,936,018	15,826,000	11,165,268
Cash and cash equivalents	3,079,037	2,755,277	5,556,548
Total current assets	34,836,843	35,812,692	39,223,947
Total assets	78,809,232	74,166,620	73,681,365
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES			
Capital and reserves			
Share capital	32,615,926	32,615,926	32,615,926
Legal reserve	539,997	539,997	478,729
Investment fair value reserve	(2,071,228)	(1,732,631)	(98,810)
Contingency reserve	4,825,532	4,825,532	4,216,914
Accumulated losses	(7,663,179)	(9,605,104)	(9,385,821)
Total capital and reserves	28,247,048	26,643,720	27,826,938
Non-current liabilities			
Employees' benefit liabilities	357,099	324,998	243,373
Deferred tax liability	-	-	68,358
Total non-current liabilities	357,099	324,998	311,731
Current liabilities			
Reinsurance contract liabilities	50,129,617	47,078,850	45,447,793
Other payables	75,468	119,052	94,903
Total current liabilities	50,205,085	47,197,902	45,542,696
Total liabilities	50,562,184	47,197,902	45,542,696
Total equity and liabilities	78,809,232	74,166,620	73,681,365
Net assets per share	0.0854	0.0805	0.0841

Condensed interim statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2023 (un-audited) (Expressed in Omani Rial)

	Period from 1 January 2023 to 30 September 2023 (Un-audited) Restated	Period from 1 January 2022 to 30 September 2022 (Un-audited) Restated
Income		
Reinsurance revenue	31,825,722	23,914,273
Reinsurance service expense	(33,499,392)	(16,712,643)
Net expense from retrocession	2,164,578	(6,454,448)
Reinsurance service results	490,908	747,182
Reinsurance finance income	2,465,215	1,138,337
Retrocession finance expense	(893,730)	(58,969)
Net reinsurance results	2,062,393	1,826,550
Investment and other income, net	1,977,251	1,532,933
	4,039,644	3,359,483
Expenses		
General and administrative expenses	(1,167,942)	(1,051,875)
Foreign exchange losses, net	(687,625)	(692,219)
	(1,855,567)	(1,744,094)
Net profit before tax for the period	2,184,077	1,615,389
Income tax expense	(327,612)	(242,308)
Net profit after tax for the period	1,856,465	1,373,081
Other comprehensive income:		
Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss:		
Valuation gains / (losses) on fair value through other comprehensive income on equity instruments, net of deferred tax	178,012	(785,221)
Items that will or may be reclassified to profit or loss:		
Valuation gains / (losses) on fair value through other comprehensive income on debt instruments, net of deferred tax	(431,149)	(2,072,164)
Other comprehensive income / (loss) for the period	(253,137)	(2,857,385)
Total comprehensive income / (loss) for the period	1,603,328	(1,484,304)
Earnings per share - basic and diluted	0.006	0.004

Bank Muscat, OTA organise VAT seminar

Aiming to enhance awareness of institutional and corporate customers on various business developments, Oman Tax authority (OTA) and Bank Muscat organised a seminar on Value Added Tax (VAT) for the bank’s corporate and SMEs customers in the wilayat of Sohar, North Batinah governorate.

The seminar comes as part of a series of introductory sessions organised by the two institutions in various governorates in order to enhance customers knowledge on the tax procedures in the sultanate, its application and taxable categories, raise awareness about VAT and encourage taxpayers to fulfill their tax obligations.

The seminar included extensive discussions, exchange of ideas and experiences and also presentations showing various experiences about the latest

practices in the sector in general and the banking sector in particular.

It discussed tax rates, tax fundamentals, related businesses, excluded commodities, included services and goods, tax returns and others. Besides, it touched upon input tax, the importance of the tax return, tax payment method and the importance of keeping tax records.

The seminar also included a session to raise awareness on the suite of Transaction Banking and Trade Corporate solutions available digitally for payments, collections, receivables, liquidity management, account management and much more.

Specialists from the Tax Authority confirmed that the Authority seeks to update its electronic services to keep pace with the digital development and accelerate electronic connect-



ivity with various institutions in the sultanate.

OTA works to implement an electronic billing system, aiming to reduce operational costs, improve financial flow, and minimize the risks of fraud and errors

such as tax evasion. On the occasion, Ibrahim bin Khamis al Balushi, Senior Assistant General Manager, SMEs, Bank Muscat, extended thanks to the Tax Authority for their partnership and interest in or-

ganising such important seminars which target customers from different governorates.

“Recently, we organised a seminar also on VAT at the head office of Bank Muscat in Airport Heights, which was at-

tended by the bank’s SMEs customers in Muscat governorate. This seminar witnessed a great turnout and encompassed discussions contributed to enhancing awareness among these companies on the importance of VAT and its requirements.”

Balushi explained that Bank Muscat attaches great importance to such activities to align with the continuous changes in the market and keep its customers well-informed about the banking sector updates at the local and international levels.

“These meets are very beneficial to exchange ideas and suggestions related to economic trends and business assumptions. We will continue to organise such momentous events targeting customers from various governorates, It is planned that we will have an-

other seminar on VAT for our customers in Salalah during the coming period,” he added.

In July 2021, the bank partnered with leading full-service audit, tax and business advisory firm, Morison Muscat Chartered Accountants, to help Bank Muscat and Meethaq SME customers comply with the Value Added Tax. In the same year, the bank dedicated a special desk in the head office to provide consultancy services on VAT for its corporate customers and entrepreneurs.

This comes as part of the bank’s endeavour to organise workshops and seminars with the aim to exchange knowledge and experiences in businesses in general and banking sector in particular. Over the past period, it organised many VAT related initiatives, provided consultations and technical support.

Indian Embassy lecture retraces Oman-India maritime trade



Embassy of India held the second lecture of the series ‘From Mandvi to Muscat: Indian Community and the shared history of India and Oman’.

Dr Chhaya Goswami, an expert in the maritime history of the west coast of India and the western Indian Ocean, delivered the lecture on the topic ‘Mandvi, Muscat, and Mumbai: Trajectories of Settlement and Nodes of Entrepreneurship’.

The lecture highlighted the historical connections between Muscat, Mandvi and Mumbai and underscored the importance

of trade networks. Dr Goswami’s focus on the maritime trade dynamics added depth to the understanding of the shared history between India and Oman.

The event saw participation from the Indian community, Omanis of Indian origin, scholars, and other guests.

Varum Pankaj Khimji from the Khimji Ramdas Family shared a narration of the Khimji Ramdas family’s history, highlighting their role as an example of the Indian community’s contribution to Oman.

Ooredoo supports charitable causes at Charity Bazaar

Committed to making a real difference by upgrading the lives of others in several ways, Ooredoo supported a Charity Bazaar held under the auspices of H E Khalid al Muslahi, Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The event served as a fundraiser for humanitarian relief, as well as providing vendors, including women from Ooredoo’s incubators, an opportunity to sell their crafts and other products to the public.

The Charity Bazaar was held in collaboration with various charitable organisations at the Diplomatic Club. Ooredoo’s women’s incubators sold silver jewellery, bukhoor, dates, fishery products, soap, traditional

clothes, handicrafts, makeup products, and Omani spices.

The support of the Charity Bazaar was part of the ‘Ooredoo Goodwill’ programme, which covers a wide range of CSR activities and initiatives, enabling Ooredoo to make a real difference in the communities it serves and beyond.

Thousands of Omani women have benefited from Ooredoo’s incubators so far.

These learning hubs support them in developing skills and setting up businesses in information technology, beauty, cooking, sewing, and handicrafts. Through such initiatives, Ooredoo is a catalyst for building a supportive ecosystem and empowering women with skills, visibility, and a network.

اس ام ان باور القابضة ش.م.ع.ع.
SMN POWER HOLDING SAOG

Unaudited Consolidated Financial Statements For The Period Ended 30 September 2023

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT

Dear Shareholders

On behalf of the Board of Directors ("the Board") of SMN Power Holding SAOG ("the Company"), I have the pleasure to present the Board of Directors' Report for the period ended 30 September 2023.

Corporate Governance

The Company has complied with the Code of Corporate Governance and applicable circulars issued from time to time by the Capital Market Authority (CMA).

Operations

Providing a safe working environment is a key priority and the Board is pleased to share that during quarter three of 2023, the Health, Safety, Security and Environment ("HSSE") performance was excellent with no Lost Time Accident ("LTA") in line with previous years. SMN Barka power plant completed 5,812 days and Al Rusail power plant 5,336 days without LTA.

The commercial performance of both plants, SMN Barka Power Company SAOC ("SMN Barka") and Al Rusail Power Company SAOC ("Al Rusail"), is measured by their reliability which is the ability to deliver the declared capacity as per the contract.

In quarter three of 2023, the reliability at SMN Barka Power and Desalination Plant was 98.23% (97.14% for the same period in 2022) for power and 97.07% (96.69% for the same period in 2022) for water. The reliability at Al Rusail Power Plant was 99.36% (98.47% for the same period in 2022).

The Company produced an aggregate net power volume of 3,051.48 GWh (1,941.58 GWh for the same period in 2022) and a total volume of 24,454,914 m3 of potable water was delivered (25,025,088 m3 for the same period in 2022).

All necessary maintenance activities of key equipment were performed in accordance with Original Equipment Manufacturers' recommendations, while applying the best industry standards and practices for health & safety and maintenance, during the period.

Financial Results

Total Revenues for the nine-month period amounted to RO 66.56 million (RO 53.43 for the same period in 2022), representing an increase of RO 13.13 million. Total Revenues include fixed revenues (Fixed Capacity Fees) and variable revenues (Fuel Charge and Variable Operating & Maintenance Charge).

The Company generated a consolidated net profit of RO 8.31 million during the nine-month period of 2023 compared to a net profit of RO 8.42 million for the same period of 2022. The decrease in net profit of RO 0.11 million is mainly due to the higher taxation charge for SMN Barka pertaining to 2009 tax assessment which was partially offset by higher other income generated from the sale of fuel oil at Al Rusail plant.

The reduction in Non-Current Assets is driven by the depreciation of the plant (fixed assets). The decrease in Current Assets is due to scheduled debt repayment to lenders.

Future Outlook

The Company will continue its focus on HSSE and maintain excellent reliability at both plants.

In terms of the latest development on the initiatives to prepare for the future of Al Rusail and SMN Barka power plants:

- As stated in the OPWP Seven Years Statement 2022-2027, OPWP has launched the Power-2024 and Water-2024 procurement tenders. SMN Barka and Al Rusail have communicated to OPWP about their interests to participate in Power 2024 and Water 2024 procurement projects, which are progressing according to the tender timelines.

- SMN Barka is participating in the spot market, however, such participation has no material impact on the Company's revenue until the expiry of the PWPA framework.

- As advised in the previous Directors report, Al Rusail has appointed a consultant to assist with the sale and decommissioning process of the retired plant's equipment pertaining to Gas Turbines 1 to 6 only. Gas Turbines 7 and 8 are operational and will continue to be operated under the terms of the existing PPA. The tender for the sale of Al Rusail plant equipment mentioned above was floated in April 2023, and the decommissioning process is expected to commence by quarter one of 2024 as soon as this tendering process is finalized.

- The sale of approximately 16 million liters of fuel oil at Al Rusail Plant commenced in March 2023. This is progressing well and is expected to be fully completed by quarter 1 of 2024.

- In terms of dividend distribution, as previously disclosed and in line with the financing arrangements during the IPO, the excess cash generated by SMN Barka is now paid to the lenders and will not flow to the Shareholders until the loans are fully settled or until the time the loans can be restructured. The P(W)PA extension for SMN Barka will be a key factor to potentially restructure the debt in the coming years, remove or defer the cash sweep and allow further dividend distribution. For Al Rusail, any future dividend will be subject to any end of term obligations and other commitments.

As Chairman of the Board, I would like to thank our Shareholders, not only for their confidence, but also for their continued support and for the expertise they bring into the Company. The Board of Directors expresses its gratitude to OPWP, APSR, CMA and other governmental and non-governmental bodies for their guidance and support.

Finally, on behalf of the Board, I would like to extend our deep appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and His Government for their continued support and encouragement to the private sector by creating an environment allowing us to contribute effectively to the growth of the Sultanate of Oman.

Dr. Abdullah Al Yahya'ey
Chairman of the Board

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2023 (UNAUDITED)

		Parent Company		Consolidated	
	Notes	2023 RO '000	2022 RO '000	2023 RO '000	2022 RO '000
ASSETS					
Property, plant and equipment	5	-	-	124,591	130,523
Right-of-use-assets	6(a)	-	-	258	297
Derivative financial instruments	13	-	-	127	-
Investment in subsidiaries	7	27,405	27,405	-	-
Goodwill	8	-	-	14,952	14,952
		27,405	27,405	139,928	145,772
Current assets					
Inventories	9	-	-	1,596	2,984
Trade and other receivables	10	52	50	10,026	8,367
Fixed term cash deposits	11 (a)	-	3,000	4,966	6,711
Cash and bank balances	11 (b)	48	60	5,620	8,950
		100	3,110	22,208	27,012
		27,505	30,515	162,136	172,784
TOTAL ASSETS					
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES					
Equity					
Share capital	12 (a)	19,964	19,964	19,964	19,964
Statutory reserve	12 (b)	6,655	6,655	6,691	6,691
Retained earnings		798	3,790	58,446	53,126
Hedging reserve	13	-	-	108	(178)
Net equity		27,417	30,409	85,209	79,603
Non-current liabilities					
Term loan	14	-	-	21,313	45,858
Lease liabilities	6(b)	-	-	357	365
Derivative financial instruments	13	-	-	-	15
Provision for end of service benefits		-	-	58	54
Provision for site restoration	15	-	-	3,166	2,965
Deferred operating income		-	-	808	808
Deferred tax liability	16	-	-	15,052	15,381
		-	-	40,754	65,446
Current liabilities					
Term loan	14	-	-	17,376	4,705
Lease liabilities	6(b)	-	-	41	52
Derivative financial instruments	13	-	-	-	195
Trade and other payables	17	88	106	16,463	9,856
Current tax payable	16	-	-	2,293	2,927
		88	106	36,173	27,735
		88	106	76,927	93,181
Total liabilities					
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		27,505	30,515	162,136	172,784
Net assets per share (RO)	27	0.137	0.152	0.426	0.400

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023 (UNAUDITED)

		Parent Company		Consolidated	
	Notes	2023 RO '000	2022 RO '000	2023 RO '000	2022 RO '000
Revenue	18	-	-	66,558	53,435
Operating costs	19	-	-	(53,362)	(40,399)
GROSS PROFIT		-	-	13,196	13,036
General and administrative expenses		(194)	(234)	(1,069)	(819)
Expected credit loss	10 & 11	-	-	(34)	19
(LOSS)/PROFIT FROM OPERATIONS		(194)	(234)	12,093	12,236
Finance charges	21	-	-	(2,827)	(2,770)
Other income	22	198	234	2,162	539
PROFIT BEFORE TAX		4	-	11,428	10,005
Income tax	16	(1)	-	(3,113)	(1,583)
NET PROFIT FOR THE YEAR		3	-	8,315	8,422
Other comprehensive income					
Items that may be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods:					
Change in fair value of cash flow hedge (Net)		-	-	286	2,576
Other Comprehensive Income/expense for the year, net of tax		-	-	286	2,576
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR		3	-	8,601	10,998
Basic and diluted earnings per share (RO)28		-	-	0.042	0.042

SMN POWER HOLDING SAOG, P.O. Box 121, Postal Code 134, Sultanate of Oman, Qurum Building, Building No.1022, 1st Floor, Office No.15, Way No. 1013, Al Qurum – Muscat.
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Malabar Gold expands to Canada, US

Malabar Gold & Diamonds has scripted history as the first Indian International jewellery retailer to open in Canada with their new showroom in Mississauga, at Heartland Town centre within the Greater Toronto Are.

Currently ranked as the world's 6th largest jewellery retailer, Canada has become the 12th country in Malabar Gold & Diamonds' global operational map and the second country in North America. The brand has an extensive retail presence of over 335 showrooms spread across the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Singapore, Malaysia, the US, the UK, Canada and India.

The showroom was inaugurated by Nina Tangri, the Associate Minister of Business for Ontario, in the presence of a battery of Malabar Gold & Diamonds officials, including Shamlal Ahamed, Managing Director - International Operations; Ameer C M C, Director of Finance & Administration; Joseph Eapen, Regional Head - North America; other management team members, customers and well-wishers.

"The opening of our first showroom in Canada brings me



immense pride and joy, marking a significant milestone for us as the first Indian International jewellery brand to begin operations in Canada," said Malabar Group Chairman, M P Ahamed.

"Located at Heartland Town Centre in Mississauga within the Greater Toronto Area, our new showroom stands as the largest jewellery showroom in the country. The expansion into Canada presents us with a unique opportunity to showcase our jewellery

to a diverse customer base who truly appreciate the artistry and craftsmanship of Indian jewellery," he added.

On behalf of Malabar Group, the chairman thanked his customers, management team members, shareholders and other stakeholders for being an integral part of helping us craft this historic moment and move one step closer towards our goal of being crowned as the world's no.1 jewellery retailer.

Spread across 7,800+ sqft, the new outlet is the largest jewellery showroom in Canada, housing over 30,000 designs across 25 exclusive brands and collections in gold, diamond & precious gem jewellery. The new store will also showcase an extensive collection of bridal jewellery, alongside a wide range of options for occasional wear, daily wear and office wear.

"We are extremely thrilled to extend our operations into the

12th country globally and the 2nd country within the continent. As Canada and the US stand out as highly appealing destinations for Indian sub-continental expatriates in the Western hemisphere, the North American market presents vast potential and we have ambitious expansion plans in the region, covering British Columbia and Alberta in Canada. Concurrently, in the US, we are set to expand into Naperville, Chicago; Artesia, Los Angeles;

and Atlanta, Georgia. As we continue to take significant steps in our international expansion journey, both the new showroom in Canada and our existing ones in the US will play a pivotal role in shaping our future initiatives in the North American region," commented Shamlal Ahamed, Managing Director - International Operations.

The showroom also offers a customised jewellery designing facility, presenting customers with the option to design their own jewellery with the assistance of Malabar Gold & Diamonds' expert designers and craftsmen. The showroom is also equipped with a luxurious customer lounge area, enabling comfortable and hassle-free jewellery shopping.

"This is indeed a historic moment for Malabar Gold & Diamonds. The new showroom with its enticing array of jewellery, transparent policies, and luxurious amenities, is strategically positioned to cater to the diverse tastes and preferences of jewellery enthusiasts in Canada. In addition to being a highlight of our international expansion plan, Malabar Gold & Diamonds' expansion into Canada will further

our aim of showcasing Indian-made jewellery to a global audience; upholding the motto of 'Make in India; Market to the World'. We have charted an ambitious and exciting plan for the future, which involves strengthening our retail presence in existing regions with more showroom openings and expansion into new territories," said Abdul Salam K P, Vice-Chairman of Malabar Group.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds is renowned globally for offering an unparalleled jewellery buying experience with convenience, and customer-friendly policies along with the 'Malabar Promise' of incomparable quality and service assurance. The brand strengthened its commitment by introducing a 100% exchange value on diamonds, positioning diamonds as an investment, as appealing as gold. Apart from this, transparent pricing, assured lifetime maintenance from any of the showrooms across 12 countries, guaranteed buyback, tested and certified diamonds, 100% value on gold exchange, 916 hall-marked jewellery, responsible sourcing, fair price policy, and fair labour practices are the Malabar Promises.

India honours Mumtaz Mahal restaurant owner Rishi Khimji



Mumtaz Mahal restaurant, one of the iconic landmarks in Muscat, has bagged the top honour from the Indian government for promoting authentic Indian cuisine away from home.

Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India has introduced the 'Annapurna Certificate' to recognise restaurants abroad that have contributed to promoting Indian cuisine and culinary traditions in foreign lands.

The competition for the top honour was fierce with many reputed restaurants from world over vying for the prestigious recognition.

Nearly 40 years old Mumtaz Mahal - serving authentic Indian cuisine to its delighted patrons -

was among the select group of six Indian restaurants worldwide to be honoured with the Annapurna Certificate this year.

In a ceremony conducted in the Embassy of India, H E Amit Narang, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman presented Rishi Khimji with a plaque with a citation.

The trophy for the Annapurna Award will be presented to Mumtaz Mahal management in an official ceremony scheduled to held in India later this month.

H E Narang congratulated Rishi Khimji for Mumtaz Mahal's dedication to showcasing the essence of Indian cuisine in Oman. Ambassador also commended Mumtaz Mahal's role in creating a culinary bridge between India and Oman.

Vodafone Oman set to open 6 new hubs

Vodafone Oman's nation-wide expansion plans are well under way with six new Vodafone Hubs set to be opened before the end of the year.

Bringing the company closer to communities from Muscat to Dhofar and offering the people-centric experiences for which Vodafone has become known, the new hubs are designed as creative spaces with access to experience the latest technologies. The first two hubs opened in November included Sohar in Batinah governorate and Sur in Sharqiya governorate. These hubs augment the inaugural Vodafone



Hub in Mall of Oman, Muscat, which has become a destination for creatives and youth to come together in addition to being an experiential platform for all things Vodafone since launch.

Unlike traditional bricks-and-

mortar stores, Vodafone's Hubs reflect the brand's ethos as a digital operator and its approach to evolving the retail experience in the Omani market, transitioning to completely digital experiences. Redefining the way that

people experience communication, the Hubs bring to life the entire brand experience, with the help of Vodafone's team.

Eng Bader al Zidi, Vodafone Oman CEO, Vodafone Oman, said, "We are constantly striving to find new ways to best serve our customers and listen to their needs, and this retail expansion of six additional Hubs is a significant step on this journey. Our first Hub in Mall of Oman was conceived as a space where dreamers and thinkers can share their ideas and create together. With these new Hubs, those ideals will be transferred across

the Sultanate of Oman.

"We want our customers to be able to truly live the latest technology first-hand, which is where this differentiated retail experience comes into its own. It will allow even more of Oman to see the ideas of tomorrow come to life today and I am excited for our expansion starting with the Hubs in Sohar and Sur, followed by the additional four Hubs before the end of 2023."

Today, Vodafone's retail network in Oman includes 75 Stores and eStores, in addition to more than 3,700 distributors across Oman.

Omantel appoints Saleem Abdullatiff as Business Unit VP

Omantel, the leading provider of integrated telecommunication services in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced the appointment of Saleem bin Ahmed Abdullatiff as Vice President of the Business Unit. Saleem has over 30 years' experience in marketing and ICT.

Saleem will lead the implementation of the Business Unit strategy, strengthen Omantel's market leadership as the leading operator in providing integrated telecommunications services, build and strengthen Omantel's

relationships with various corporate customers and enhance the customer experience, leveraging his extensive experience and understanding of the highly competitive local telecommunications industry.

He began his career at Muscat Municipality as an electrical engineer. In 2005, he joined Oman Mobile, Omantel's mobile business arm at that time. He served as general manager of marketing at the Consumer Unit before moving to the Business Unit as general manager, marketing.

Oman Olympic Committee organises 1st specialised symposium for coaches

Oman Olympic Committee (OOC), represented by Oman Olympic Academy (OOA), organised the first specialised symposium, 'Designing Training Plans - Periodisation', for three continuous days at Sultan Qaboos University and OOA, as part of the National Coach Certification Programme to develop and enhance the capabilities of sports coaches in Oman.

This programme constitutes an important step towards building a base of qualified trainers in the field of sports training, and gives the opportunity for coaches to participate in an educational program that gives them a valuable opportunity to gain

knowledge and experience, develop their skills and will have a positive impact in enhancing the performance of athletes in Oman and raising their technical levels.

The symposium concluded on Tuesday, and was presented by Dr Shihab al Din bin Ahmed al Riyami, Director of the National Coach Certification Programme and a certified international lecturer for sports training, with the participation of 16 coaches from sports federations and clubs, the military sports sector, and universities and educational colleges.

The symposium topics varied between the theoretical and practical aspects, with the aim of

providing participants with various sciences and studies as an essential part of the programme's strategy to ensure the provision of high-quality training. It included many diverse topics, including the goals, importance and design of sports training plans, time planning for training and its types, the main elements of its preparation, and annual plans and their sections.

In addition to the temporal planning of motor abilities and anatomical adaptations to physical abilities. The symposium also included training on using the (NCCP) programme to design seasonal training plans, and presenting visual presentations

from the participants on the last day of the programme to evaluate them and measure the level of understanding and knowledge of the learner during the symposium days, where the mechanism of work and evaluation of the symposium was applied according to international standards and programmes.

It is worth mentioning that NCCP is one of the important national projects and a summary of the sports sciences that keep pace with Omani society and the national training staff. It combines international training programs and coaches, such as the Canadian, American, and British Coaches Programme.

CONDOLENCES



The Chairman, Management and Staff of
Apex Press & Publishing express their heartfelt
condolences on the sad demise of

RAJENDRAN

We pray to God Almighty to rest his
departed soul in eternal peace and give
strength to the bereaved family members
to bear this irreparable loss.

INDIA

Rescued workers healthy, but still under observation

A team of 18 doctors has been monitoring the workers' health since last night

Chiniyalisaur, Uttarakhand - After screening and a health checkup at Chiniyalisaur Community Health Centre, 41 workers who were successfully rescued from the Silkyara Tunnel are healthy, said Dr Bimlesh Joshi, Nodal Officer Health of Rescue operation.

"All 41 workers are currently healthy; their health screening has been done twice after the rescue, first inside the tunnel last night and second this morning. A team of 18 doctors at the Community Health Centre of Chiniyalisaur has been monitoring their health since last night, out of which 10 are GDMOs and the remaining 8 are specialists, which include all types of specialists.

"Apart from this, there is a paramedical staff. There is a total staff of around 50. Since last night, all 41 labourers have been given a balanced diet, which includes paneer, boiled egg, kheer, roti, vegetables and rice," Dr Joshi said.

"Preparations are underway to send everyone to AIIMS Rishikesh; everyone will be sent by Chinook helicopter, and their family members can be sent by ambulance or any other vehicle. Although the workers do not need to be admitted to the hospital, they will be kept under safe-side observation," Dr Joshi added.

According to government sources, all the workers admitted to the health centre are being given food as per the doctors' advice.

Earlier, after the successful rescue of the workers from the Silkyara tunnel on Tuesday evening, Dr Pravin Kumar, Health Director of Garhwal Division, in charge of the rescue operation, highlighted that constant communication with the trapped workers helped in maintaining their mental health



The workers on board an IAF helicopter heading to Rishikesh for further medical examination, on Wednesday (ANI)

All 41 workers are currently healthy... Although the workers do not need to be admitted to the hospital, they will be kept under safe-side observation

DR BIMLESH JOSHI

stability.

Pravin Kumar mentioned that both Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami and the state health minister were consistently present at the site, and health teams kept boosting the morale of the trapped workers.

"Our state health minister and chief minister were constantly present here at the tunnel site. From the very first day, our teams were trying to boost their morale and were trying to establish contact with the trapped workers," he said.

"Whatever food items can be sent through the pipe were being sent, and our teams kept boosting their morale, and this is why the workers are in good mental state after being rescued," he added.

When asked about the health challenges workers faced while they were trapped, Dr Pravin Kumar said "The workers were not diagnosed with any major ailments. Some of the workers faced difficulty passing urine and allergies, and we treated them accordingly.

Water, juice, and food were constantly provided to the workers."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also spoke to the rescued men over the phone. The Mammoth rescue operation was launched after a portion under-construction tunnel from Silkyara end caved in on November 12 trapping 41 workers. The part of the tunnel they were helping to construct collapsed, blocking their only exit with more than 60 meters of broken rock, concrete, and twisted metal.

Of the 41 men, 15 are from Jharkhand, two are from Uttarakhand, five are from Bihar, three are from West Bengal, eight are from Uttar Pradesh, five are from Odisha, two are from Assam, and one is from Himachal Pradesh.

ANI

'Committed' rat-hole miners emerge heroes

Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand - When heavy machinery broke down in an effort to drill through the debris that had trapped 41 workers in the Silkyara tunnel, the rescuers resorted to rat-hole mining, a banned practice in the country.

Rat-hole mining involves digging of very small tunnels, through which skilled workers enter and extract coal or debris.

Rat-hole mining rescue team leader Vakeel Hasan while recounting his memories of the moment when the team of the miners saw the workers, said that it was like offering water to the person who is about to die with thirst.

"It was a very emotional feeling when we saw them and they saw us. It was like a person getting some water on a deserted land. It was like everyone accomplished their purposes. We fulfilled the commitment that we made... All the workers came out of the tunnel without a scratch..." Hasan said.

Rat-hole miners emerged as the heroes as they drilled with



Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami meets with members of rescue team inside the Silkyara tunnel, on Tuesday (ANI)

their hands to safely evacuate all workers on Tuesday.

Speaking about the process and technique of going into tight spaces to reach the trapped workers on Tuesday, Hasan said that the miners had installed a pipe to 18 metres.

"We installed a pipe till 18 metres... Munna and I are partners, and the other 10 are workers... actually, we had to dig for 15 metres, but when we couldn't reach the workers, we

dug three metres moreIn the pipe, we started the 'chuha boring' technique- this is the same way, a rat digs the soil. The way it pushes the soils behind it and then proceeds, this is the same technique," Hasan added.

Munna, the partner of Vakeel Hasan said that the trapped workers were hugely relieved and showered them with love when they saw them for the first time.

ANI



Students make paintings to create awareness about Pneumonia virus H9N2, in Mumbai (ANI)

Union health ministry wary of pneumonia outbreak in China

New Delhi - Amidst the emergence of a mysterious pneumonia outbreak in China, the Union health ministry has reviewed and strengthened preparedness measures against respiratory illness in the country.

As per sources, the ministry has strengthened the preparedness through the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and the Indian Council of Med-

ical Research (ICMR).

In view of recent reports of a surge in respiratory illnesses in children in northern China, health departments in States and Union territories across the country have been put on alert.

"Multipronged surveillance for respiratory infections has been reviewed and strengthened through NCDC and ICMR systems," a source told ANI.

Sources further said that the Central government is keeping a close watch on developments in other countries too and is constantly in touch with the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Recently, the ministry issued an advisory to states/UTs to review public health and hospital preparedness against respiratory illnesses.

ANI

Pope to miss COP28 due to health concerns

Doha, Qatar - Amidst health concerns, Pope Francis has cancelled his trip to the United Nations climate summit event being held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Vatican News reported.

A statement released on Tuesday evening by the Holy See Press Office said: "Even though the Holy Father's general health situation has improved in relation to the flu and respiratory tract inflammation he has been suffering from, his doctors have asked the Pope not to undertake his scheduled visit to Dubai in the coming days, on the occasion of the 28th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change."

The 86-year-old Pope was scheduled to leave on Friday,

December 1 to address the Conference of the Parties (COP28), in Expo city, Dubai on Saturday; his attendance would have made him the first pontiff to address a UN climate conference. On Sunday, the supreme pontiff was set to inaugurate a faith pavilion on the sidelines of the event. In order to facilitate the Pope's recovery, some important engagements scheduled for these days have been postponed, Vatican News reported.

Vatican spokesperson Matteo Bruni said Francis's health was improving after the flu and inflammation of his respiratory tract forced him to cancel his audiences.

According to the Vatican statement, the pope agreed not to travel 'with great regret'.

ANI

IUCN calls for 'bold efforts' ahead of COP28

Dubai, UAE - The window of opportunity to address climate change and biodiversity loss is closing rapidly, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) seven Commissions asserted in a clarion call ahead of the COP28 Summit in Dubai.

In an open letter, the chair of seven IUCN Commissions called for a 'bold and transformative effort' to solve the challenges linked to climate change and biodiversity loss.

As the seven elected Commission Chairs of the IUCN, they represent over 15,000 scientists, scholars, policymakers, economists, lawyers, and other experts who work on issues related to this mission. COP28 will take place from November 30 until December 12.

"For the first time, we are writing collectively because COP28 represents not just an opportunity to assess our progress, but to issue a profound call to action. We must adopt a holistic ap-



proach that recognises the interdependence of the climate and biodiversity crises," the letter mentioned.

The seven commissions are the IUCN Climate Crisis Commission, the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication, the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management, the IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic, and Social Policy, the IUCN Species Survival Commission, the IUCN World Commission on Environmental

Law and IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas.

The experts have suggested four key elements - integration, ecosystem integrity, transformation and urgency - that should guide debates at COP28 and beyond over how best to design and deploy innovative solutions to biodiversity loss and climate change.

Under Integration, The IUCN Commissions chair mentioned that the climate challenges require coherent, consistent, and

integrated efforts on the part of governments at all levels, sectors, and systems; multilateral and bilateral institutions; communities; businesses; scientists and others to limit global warming to maximum 1.5 degrees Celsius.

While talking about ecosystem integrity, the experts put forth that sustaining healthy ecosystems is essential to halting biodiversity decline and species extinctions and to maintaining ecosystem services that underpin human well-being.

"Addressing the biodiversity and climate crises will require systemic changes in the way we live, changes that can only be achieved through rapid and far-reaching actions across all sectors of a type, scale, and speed never before attempted," the experts said while emphasising on the need for transformation to address climate change.

While highlighting the urgency of the situation, the letter

mentioned: "The window of opportunity to address climate change and biodiversity loss is still open, but it is closing rapidly."

The letter also spoke about the limitations of previous policies tackling climate change.

"Previous policies have largely tackled the problems of climate change and biodiversity loss independently. Policies that address synergies between mitigating biodiversity loss and climate change, while also considering their societal impacts, offer the opportunity to maximise co-benefits and help meet development aspirations for all," the letter read.

UN Climate Change conferences (or COPs) take place every year and are the world's only multilateral decision-making forum on climate change with almost complete membership of every country in the world.

More than 70,000 delegates are expected to attend COP28.

ANI

Pause in Gaza may be extended: Media

The cease-fire and hostage swap deal between Hamas and Israel is set to expire on Thursday morning

Gaza/Istanbul - The humanitarian pause and hostage swap agreement between Hamas and Israel, which is set to expire on Thursday morning, may be extended for another day or two, Israeli media said on Wednesday.

A summit in Doha, attended by officials from Qatar, Egypt, Israel, and the US, discussed the possibility of extending the humanitarian pause, the Israeli Broadcasting Authority reported, citing a statement issued by Israeli authorities following the meeting on Tuesday.

However, the main obstacle is Hamas's demand for a complete cessation of hostilities, which Israel opposes, according to the broadcaster.

Participants in the Doha meeting discussed a new agreement between Israel and Hamas under which all the hostages in Gaza, including soldiers, would be released, the broadcaster said.

On the other hand, Israel will release a significant number of prisoners and commit to a long-term pause, it added.

Late on Monday, Qatar announced an agreement to extend a four-day humanitarian pause in fighting between Israel and Hamas for an additional two days, during which more prisoner exchanges will take place.

Israel launched a massive military campaign in the Gaza Strip following a cross-border attack by Hamas on October 7.

It has since killed over 15,000 people, including 6,150 children and 4,000 women, according to health authorities in the enclave.

The official Israeli death toll stands at 1,200.

Meanwhile, Turkish President



A view of the residential area known as Juhor ad-Dik, built by the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, which was heavily damaged due to Israeli attacks in the southeastern part of the enclave of Gaza Strip (Anadolu Agency)

I hope this (humanitarian pause) can open the way for a permanent end to the violence and support concrete efforts to achieve a lasting peace for Palestinians and Israelis

VOLKER TURK

Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Wednesday that Turkey will step up diplomatic efforts for the release of hostages and establishment of a permanent cease-fire in Gaza.

In an address to the parliamentary group of his Justice and

Development (AK) Party, Erdogan said Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu committed one of the 'greatest atrocities' of the century, and went down in history as the 'butcher of Gaza'.

He also said that recent statements made by Netanyahu's

government were diminishing hopes for the current humanitarian pause in the Gaza Strip turning into a lasting cease-fire, he added.

UN human rights chief Volker Turk also called 'on all those with influence (to push) for extended Gaza cease-fire on humanitarian and human rights grounds'.

"I hope this can open the way for a permanent end to the violence and support concrete efforts to achieve a lasting peace for Palestinians and Israelis," Turk said during an online session dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The current temporary ceasefire provides some relief for civilians and for some families long-awaited reunions with their loved ones. But access to humanitarian assistance must be ensured and sustained throughout Gaza and all hostages must be released," he said.

Destruction in Gaza Strip

Hamas, meanwhile, has called on media outlets to increase their presence in the Gaza Strip and

view the extent of destruction caused by Israel in the enclave since the war began.

"We call on journalists and international media agencies to intensify their presence in the Gaza Strip to see the extent of the destruction and signs of genocide committed by the (Israeli) occupation and its Nazi army against children, defenseless civilians and all infrastructure," it said.

The statement pointed to 'the discovery of dozens of bodies of Palestinian civilians under the rubble in the Sabra area and other areas of Gaza City and the

extent of the destruction that occurred to the Islamic University, which is one of the most important scientific institutions'.

The group said the destruction 'confirms the horror of what the people of Gaza were subjected to in a war of genocide, the goal of which was to push them to exile'.

Late on Tuesday, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group issued a statement confirming the release of Israeli women and children it had been holding in the Gaza Strip.

Anadolu Agency



Death toll increases to 120 in Kenya floods

Nairobi, Kenya - The devastating impact of widespread floods in Kenya has claimed the lives of 120 people, up sharply from an initial toll of 76, officials said late on Tuesday.

"Currently, four counties (in eastern Kenya) including Tana River, Garissa, Wajir and Mandera have been identified as the worst hit while 120 people have unfortunately lost their lives," said Kenya's Internal Security Principal Secretary Raymond Omollo.

"Today, the National Disaster Operation Committee met with involved ministries and relevant agencies to discuss immediate rescue and lasting mitigation measures for the flash floods already affecting different regions of the country," he added.

Omollo said more than 89,000 households have been displaced by the floods and are being hosted in 112 internally displaced camps scattered across the country.

The situation has escalated into an emergency with essential supplies such as food, medicines and fuel stuck as impassable roads and damaged infrastruc-

ture hinder transportation efforts.

Omollo emphasised that saving lives and minimising the impact of the El Nino rains through early warning and disaster monitoring remains the government's top priority.

The ongoing rains have unleashed a cascade of challenges including flooding, landslides and mudslides, intensifying the plight of the affected communities.

Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia are currently experiencing destructive El Nino rains which are exacerbating a humanitarian crisis.

The relentless downpours have led to loss of life, widespread displacement and the destruction of critical infrastructure in the three nations.

El Nino, a climatic phenomenon characterised by the periodic warming of sea surface temperatures, brings about significant shifts in rainfall patterns. This in turn increases the likelihood of extreme weather events such as floods disrupting ecosystems worldwide.

Anadolu Agency

Reaffirm solidarity with Palestine:UN

Geneva, Switzerland - Marking the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the UN on Wednesday underscored that reaffirming international solidarity with Palestine 'must start' with a humanitarian cease-fire.

Speaking at an event organised in the United Nations' Geneva office, UN Geneva Director-General Tatiana Valovaya read out a message from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

"This international day of solidarity comes during one of the darkest chapters in the history of the Palestinian people," Guterres said in the message, adding that he is horrified by the death and destruction that have engulfed the region, as well as by the 'humanitarian catastrophe' that people in Gaza are facing. "This is a day for reaffirming international solidarity with the



A march is being taken out in Ramallah on the occasion of International Day of Solidarity with Palestinian people (WAPA)

Palestinian people, who have the right to live in peace and dignity," he said. "That must start with a long-term humanitarian cease-fire, unrestricted access

for life-saving aid, the release of all hostages, the protection of civilians, and an end to violations of international humanitarian law."

He reiterated that Hamas' surprise attack cannot justify Israel's collective punishment of Palestinians across the region.

Anadolu Agency

Bangladeshi migrants held in Libya reach home

Dhaka, Bangladesh - About 143 Bangladeshi irregular migrants, who were kept in detention centres in Libya's capital Tripoli, returned home with the help of UN refugee agency.

Chartered flights of the International Organization for Migration carrying 143 migrants landed in Dhaka on Tuesday, and more migrants are set to reach Dhaka on December 5, according to Bangladesh's Foreign Ministry. Some 466,666 Bangladeshi expatriates returned permanently in the past two years, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

Anadolu Agency

Africa 'double victim' of injustice: UN chief Guterres

Washington, US - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed strong support for Africa on Tuesday, saying the United Nations is ready to work with the African Union to bolster cooperation.

"Africa has been the double victim of injustice. First of all, historic injustice linked to colonialism and to slavery. And second, the present injustice in relation to the way power relations are established in the world and namely in relation to financial and economic power," Guterres said at a news conference with Moussa Faki Mahamat, the chairperson of the African Union Commission.



UN chief Antonio Guterres

Mahamat was in New York to attend the 7th AU/UN High-Level Conference to evaluate progress on the implementation of existing cooperation framework agreements. He and Guterres

also signed a new joint framework agreement on human rights.

Guterres said the partnership between the African Union and the UN is 'essential' and Africa remains 'one of the key priorities' for the UN.

"What Africa needs above all is justice in international relations because Africa has been the victim of the structural injustices of our international relations. At the same time, I would like to say that we are totally committed to work with the African Union in all areas of our common activity," he added.

Mahamat said that Africa is

going through a difficult period in terms of peace and security.

"Unfortunately, it has become a haven for terrorism and extremism. Many of our regions are affected by these phenomena," he added.

Africa is facing economic challenges due to the COVID-19 crisis, climate change, and the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia.

Turning to last year's Black Sea grain deal brokered by Turkey and the UN to resume grain exports from three Ukrainian Black Sea ports that were paused after the Ukraine war, Mahamat said that what is hap-

pening in Ukraine is having a direct impact all over the world, particularly on the African continent. Increases in the prices of energy, food products and fertilizers negatively affected the productivity of African agriculture, he said.

"That's why we welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts together with Turkey to reach this grain agreement," he stressed.

The deal has played a key role in addressing the global food crisis. Turkey always stresses that it is ready to do what is necessary to send grain to poor African countries.

Anadolu Agency

'PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE'

Rahul Dravid gets extension as India coach despite World Cup heartbreak

New Delhi, India - Rahul Dravid will continue as India's head coach after accepting the BCCI's offer to extend his term. While the BCCI did not specify the duration of the extension, it will be at least until the 2024 T20 World Cup in June.

Dravid became the head coach in November 2021 for a two-year term that ended at the conclusion of the 2023 ODI World Cup earlier this month. While India has risen to the top of the Test, ODI and T20I rankings under Dravid as coach, they were unable to win any ICC trophies - finishing as semi-finalists in the 2022 T20 World Cup, and runners-up in the 2023 World Test Championship and the 2023 ODI World Cup. India's run in the ODI World Cup was particularly impressive: they won all nine league games and the semi-final, before losing the final to Australia. ESPNcricinfo learned that the BCCI wanted Dravid to stay on to ensure continuity to the structure he had put in place over the past two years, which might otherwise get disrupted under a new coach.

"The last two years with Team India have been thoroughly



Rahul Dravid (right) with Rohit Sharma

memorable," Dravid said in a statement announcing his contract extension. "Together, we have witnessed the highs and lows, and throughout this journey, the support and camaraderie within the group have been phenomenal. I am genuinely proud of the culture we

"I thank the BCCI and the Office Bearers for placing their trust in me"

RAHUL DRAVID

have set in the dressing room. It's a culture that stands resilient, whether in moments of triumph or adversity. The skills and talent that our team possesses are phenomenal, and what we've stressed is following the right process and sticking to our preparations, which has had a direct impact on the overall result.

"I thank the BCCI and the Office Bearers for placing their trust in me, endorsing my vision, and providing support during this pe-

riod. The demands of this role necessitate considerable time away from home, and I deeply appreciate my family's sacrifices and support. Their instrumental role behind the scenes has been invaluable. As we embrace new challenges post the World Cup, we remain committed to the pursuit of excellence."

Dravid's first assignment in his second stint as head coach is India's tour of South Africa, which starts with three T20Is and three ODIs from December 10 followed by two Tests, in Centurion (from December 26) and Cape Town (from January 3). India then play a five-Test series against England at home, before the T20 World Cup in June.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah said Dravid had the board's "full backing". "Team India is now a formidable unit across formats, and our top ranking in all three formats directly reflects his vision, guidance, and the roadmap he charted for the team," Shah said. "Having won 10 consecutive games before the final, our campaign was nothing short of extraordinary, and the head coach deserves appreciation."

ESPNcricinfo

Maxwell trumps Gaikwad to keep Australia alive

New Delhi, India - Ruturaj Gaikwad slammed an unbeaten 123 to lead India to an imposing 222 in Guwahati, but Glenn Maxwell's unbeaten 104 stunned the hosts as Australia pulled off a miraculous come-from-behind victory to keep the T20I series alive at 2-1.

Australia had kept pace with the asking rate for most of the innings courtesy a spunky cameo from Travis Head and Maxwell's aggression. When it came down to Axar Patel's 19th and Prasidh's 20th, Maxwell and Matthew

Wade feasted in dewy conditions, finding the boundary at will even when Australia needed 43 off 12 balls, 21 off six, and two off the last ball. Maxwell hit the last four balls for 6, 4, 4, 4, drilling Prasidh Krishna down the ground at the finish to silence the home crowd.

Maxwell entered at 66 for 2 in the sixth over, after Avesh Khan had ended Travis Head's boundary-laden 35 in 18 balls. He took an early liking to Prasidh, smacking two sixes and a four in the eighth over to race away to 25 in

10. But Ravi Bishnoi's dismissal of Josh Inglis and Axar's of Marcus Stoinis put a brake on Australia's run rate.

Still, 88 off 39 in tough bowling conditions was always game on. Maxwell would have known this himself, having conceded 30 in the final over of India's innings. He started the charge towards the target by thumping Avesh for six and four in the 16th and launching back-to-back sixes off Arshdeep in the 17th.

A tidy 18th from Prasidh put the pressure back on Australia,

but an expensive 19th from Axar, culminating in an error from Ishan Kishan behind the stumps brought the equation down to 21 off six balls. Wade and Maxwell got right on top of Prasidh, whose plans went awry with India's slow over rate necessitating that he bowl with an extra fielder in the 30-yard circle. Prasidh went short, full and wide, and short and wide across the over, and it didn't seem to matter, particularly to Maxwell.

After Australia chose to bowl, Jason Behrendroff impressed on

his return to the side with 17 dots in his four-over spell of 1 for 12. But Australia leaked 210 across their other 16 overs, including 64 in four from Aaron Hardie: the joint-most expensive spell in T20Is for Australia.

Gaikwad was on a run-a-ball 22 when Suryakumar Yadav fell for 39 in the 11th over, with India's score 81 for 3. Australia had an opening to plug the run flow but Hardie and Tanveer Sangha allowed Gaikwad to shift gears with some loose bowling. ESPNcricinfo



Glenn Maxwell

CLASSIFIEDS

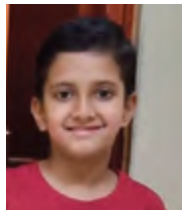
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Al Hilal's Salem Al Dawsari celebrates his goal

Mercurial Al Dawsari shows his class as Hilal beat Navbahor

Namangan: Salem Al Dawsari redeemed himself with a spectacular strike to seal a 2-0 win for Al Hilal SFC against Navbahor on Tuesday after a pair of penalty misses as the Saudi Pro League side secured top spot in Group D of the AFC Champions League™ 2023/24.

Brazilian winger Malcom scored with his first touch after being introduced from the bench to put Al Hilal in front when Al Dawsari's 68th-minute penalty was saved by Utkir Yusupov, with the former Barcelona man stroking the rebound home for the opener.

Al Dawsari then lobbed Yusupov from distance with five minutes remaining to redeem himself after his struggles from 12 yards earlier in the game.

The result moves Al Hilal onto 13 points from five matches and three clear of second-placed Navbahor, with the Saudi side guaranteed to finish in pole position due to their superior head-to-head record over Samvel Babayan's team.

Al Dawsari endured a disappointing evening until his redemption five minutes from time, with the recently named AFC Player of the Year missing from the penalty spot in the 11th minute after Al Hilal had been presented with the ideal opportunity to take an early lead.

AFC

Manchester City rally from two goals down to beat Leipzig and claim top spot

Manchester, England - Manchester City orchestrated a stunning comeback from a two-goal deficit to triumph 3-2 against RB Leipzig, securing the top spot in Champions League Group G with one match remaining.

The European champions faced a lacklustre first half, but Julian Alvarez's 87th-minute goal propelled them to victory. Erling Haaland and Phil Foden joined the scoring effort in the second half, elevating City to 15 points in five games. Leipzig, also progressing to the last 16, settled at nine points.

Midfielder Foden expressed dissatisfaction with City's initial performance, but hailed the team's courage and motivation in turning the game around.

"First half was the worst I've seen us," midfielder Foden told TNT. "Courage and motivation changed it around. This team has great mentality and it's so nice to see.

"We just needed that (first) goal to get going," Foden said. "Even the fans were a lot louder after the goal. Once the first went in the motivation was there. We've got a great record at the Etihad and it only takes one goal to change things."



Manchester City's Julian Alvarez (L) celebrates with Erling Haaland and Rico Lewis after scoring against RB Leipzig on Tuesday

Haaland marked another milestone, becoming the quickest player to reach 40 Champions League goals, having recently claimed the same feat in the Premier League.

Leipzig's Lois Openda capitalised on City's defensive lapses, exploiting errors to score both of his goals.

Guardiola acknowledged the team's response, lauding their resilience and fighting spirit.

"We had to be as relaxed as possible and we reacted really well," Guardiola told TNT. "We are first in the group and I am very satisfied for the reaction at the end. The team runs and fights and has spirit."

Haaland reignited City's hopes with a goal in the 54th minute, courtesy of an assist from Foden. Foden, showcasing his skill, levelled the score in the 70th minute before Alvarez secured victory after Foden's deflected pass fell into his path.

Leipzig's manager, Marco Rose was happy with their initial strategy of unsettling City but lamented the inability to maintain a clean sheet longer. Guardiola's squad narrowly escaped their first European defeat at the Etihad since 2018 and mounted their second comeback from a two-goal deficit in his Champions League managerial career.

The group stage concludes with City facing Red Star Belgrade on December 13. Young Boys secured a spot in the Europa League knockout round playoffs with a 2-0 victory over Red Star, while the Belgrade side languished at the bottom with one point.

'We love him, not just for the goals he scores'

Manchester, England - Erling Haaland set another goal record on Tuesday and coach Pep Guardiola said he was growing tired of answering questions about his prolific scorer.

The 23-year-old became the fastest to score 40 Champions League goals with his strike in the 54th minute that sparked City's 3-2 comeback victory over RB Leipzig that clinched them top spot in Group G with a round of group games remaining.

Three days earlier, Haaland had become the fastest to net 50 Premier League goals in a 1-1 draw with Liverpool.

"Again? I have to tell you again?" Guardiola laughed when

asked for comment. "A thousand million times, I'm really impressed. They won today. Another record. Congratulations.

I'm really impressed. They won today. Another record. Congratulations.

PEP GUARDIOLA

He's a fantastic player. I tell you many times, we're really, really pleased.

"We love him, not just for the



Pep Guardiola

goals he scores, but for many many other things."

It took Haaland just 35 matches to reach 40 goals, smashing Ruud van Nistelrooy's mark of 45 games.

But more importantly to Guardiola, it kick-started City's comeback after a woefully sluggish first half left them trailing by two goals for the first time in a Champions League game since 2018.

Guardiola said he hoped his players would learn from the roller-coaster game.

"To win in that game not comfortably, to realise, to put in front of the mirror and say 'We have to do better,'" he said.

Barcelona beat Porto to return to Champions League's last-16

Barcelona, Spain - Portuguese stars Joao Cancelo and Joao Felix were on target as

Barcelona orchestrated a remarkable comeback against Porto, securing a crucial 2-1 victory that propelled them into the Champions League knockout stages for the first time in three seasons.

Facing a resilient Porto side, Barcelona found themselves under severe pressure in the first half. But Porto's relentless attacks were met with an exceptional performance by Barca's stand-in goalkeeper Inaki Pena, who made several crucial saves, denying Galeno's strikes and frustrating the visitors' attempts.

Despite Porto taking the lead through Pepe after Pena's initial saves, Barcelona swiftly responded. Cancelo, with an impressive display of skill, levelled the score with a stunning curling shot into the top corner, showcasing Barca's determination.



Barcelona's Joao Felix celebrates after scoring against Porto on Tuesday

As the game progressed, the Portuguese duo of Cancelo and Felix took charge. Felix's thunderous strike rattled the crossbar early in the second half, signalling Barcelona's resurgence. The duo's synergy was evident, with Cancelo's impactful runs down the left wing culminating in a perfectly

set-up opportunity for Felix, who calmly finished to give Barcelona the lead.

"It was a final for us, we knew that and we won it, which is the most important thing," Cancelo told Movistar Plus. "When the results don't come, the confidence is not the same."

Own goals help Atletico reach knockout rounds

Rotterdam, Netherlands - Atletico Madrid secured a resounding 3-1 victory against Feyenoord to book their spot in the Champions League last 16 on Tuesday. Atletico's victory also ended their opponents' hopes in the competition.

The opening minutes set the tone as Feyenoord's Lutsharel Geertruida unwittingly diverted a speculative cross from Marcos Llorente into his own net. The bizarre own goal handed Atletico an early advantage, setting the stage for a crucial clash.

Atletico's second goal was an exhibition of sheer brilliance. Substitute Pablo Barrios swiftly found Mario Hermoso, who executed a remarkable hooked volley into the far corner, reminiscent of Marco van Basten's iconic goal in the 1988 European Championship final. Hermoso's goal not only showcased his skill but also shifted the momentum firmly in Atletico's favour.

Feyenoord briefly rekindled hope when Mats Wieffer capitalised on a corner, rising un-



Atletico Madrid's Mario Hermoso celebrates after scoring against Feyenoord on Tuesday

marked to head home. The goal injected a surge of energy into the Dutch side, suggesting a potential comeback.

However, any chances of a

Feyenoord revival were swiftly dashed. Santiago Gimenez, unfortunately, turned Nahuel Molina's driven free-kick into his own net, extending Atletico's lead once again.

The defeat for Feyenoord sealed their fate in the group stage, guaranteeing their third-place finish and a subsequent entry into the Europa League knockout stages. Atletico's win propelled them to the top of Group E with 11 points, securing their berth in the Champions League knockout phase alongside Lazio, who clinched their spot with a 2-0 win against Celtic.

Atletico's Hermoso, the architect behind the breathtaking second goal, expressed his intent to score, even though he wasn't entirely aware of his position.

"I was looking for it," said Hermoso. "I didn't really know where I was, but I more or less knew where the goal was and the ball went there."

With their place secured in the last 16, Atletico now sets their sights on securing the top spot in the group. Their upcoming clash against second-placed Lazio holds significance, offering the opportunity to solidify their position.

THE GREAT ESCAPE

Mbappe rescues PSG with last-gasp equaliser against Newcastle

Paris, France - Kylian Mbappe's late controversial penalty secured Paris St Germain a hard-earned 1-1 draw against a resilient Newcastle United in a contentious and tension-filled encounter at the Parc des Princes, keeping their Champions League fate in their control.

Newcastle had seized the lead midway through the first half courtesy of Alexander Isak's maiden Champions League goal and put up a staunch defensive display to withstand PSG's onslaught until the last moments.

However, the match took a dramatic turn when a contentious handball decision went against Newcastle in the final moments of stoppage time. PSG's appeals for a handball were answered after the ball ricocheted off Tino Livramento's chest onto his arm. Despite the initial reluctance of the referee to award a penalty, VAR intervention prompted a pitchside review, leading to a decision in favour of the Parisians.

Mbappe's successful spot-kick helped Luis Enrique's side salvage a crucial point.

The penalty decision left Newcastle in dismay, altering the outcome of what had been a



Paris St Germain's Kylian Mbappe celebrates after scoring against Newcastle United on Tuesday

spirited defensive effort against a relentless PSG. The draw averted PSG from dropping to a precarious third place in Group F, safeguarding their hopes of progression to the knockout stages.

PSG's prospects now hinge on their final group match against Borussia Dortmund in Germany where a win will ensure their progress into the last 16.

Meanwhile, Newcastle will face AC Milan in their last fixture, needing a victory while also relying on PSG's failure to win against Dortmund to secure their passage.

Despite dominating the game with over 30 goal attempts, PSG's profligacy in front of goal coupled with an inspired performance by Newcastle's keeper

It's hard when you see the game. What happened was we had so many chances. I think I could have done more. I had many chances and didn't score more goals.

KYLIAN MBAPPE

Nick Pope kept the Parisians at bay.

Mbappe lamented missed opportunities.

"It's hard when you see the game. What happened was we had so many chances to win," Mbappe told TNT Sport.

"I think I could have done more for my team. I had many chances and didn't score more goals."



Carlo Ancelotti

I am not talking about my future, says Ancelotti

Madrid, Spain - Carlo Ancelotti is refusing to be drawn into the raging battle between Real Madrid and the Brazilian FA (CBF) for the Italian's managerial services and might not reveal his plans until the end of the season.

"I'll give you the chance to ask another question," a visibly annoyed Ancelotti told a reporter at his press conference prior to Real's Champions League match against Napoli, when asked if he would be at the club for another season. "I say it again, I am not talking about my future."

With his contract due to expire at the end of the current European season and CBF president Ednaldo Rodrigues making confident noises about snagging the 64-year-old Italian, Real are scrambling to hang on to the only manager to have won the title in all of Europe's big five leagues.

A club official confirmed to Reuters that president Florentino Perez is contemplating offering a contract extension, while a CBF director told Reuters they expect to have him in place for next year's Copa America in the US. The CBF expects to formally sign Ancelotti by mid-January, voiding a clause to roll his Real contract over for another year and say they have "legal safeguards" in place to protect their interests in case the deal falls apart.

"The president (Ednaldo Rodrigues) would not have signed Fernando Diniz to a one-year contract in a caretaker position if he did not have a serious plan in place," the CBF official said.

"Nothing has changed in the president's position since he last spoke to the media. The plan is Carlo Ancelotti and we are very comfortable and confident with the commitment we have to make it happen."

Rodrigues had said in March that signing Ancelotti would be a "no brainer", and in July, at the unveiling of caretaker Diniz, he remained confident: "He (Ancelotti) will be here, you can be sure of that," he said.

Ancelotti has consistently refused to engage in the discussion. "I am proud that the Brazilian national team is talking about me but I'm not going to talk about my future until my contract is up."



PSG coach Luis Enrique

PSG, Newcastle and Milan all stay in hunt in 'Group of Death'

Paris, France - Paris St Germain were teetering on a precarious edge before steering their fate with a harrowing 1-1 draw against Newcastle United in a high-stakes Group F encounter in the Champions League on Tuesday.

With both teams locked in a thrilling battle, Luis Enrique's PSG managed to salvage a vital point in the dying moments. Kylian Mbappe's late penalty in the eighth minute of stoppage time rescued PSG from the jaws of defeat after Alexander Isak's earlier goal had put Newcastle in the lead during the first half.

The destiny of Group F re-

mains hanging in the balance. PSG, a mainstay in the last-16 stage for 11 consecutive seasons, faces a decisive clash against Dortmund. Their path to advancement hinges on securing a victory in that match. However, the group's complexities leave room for them to advance even with a loss.

Newcastle's aspirations hang by a thread as they must overcome AC Milan in their final fixture and rely on PSG's failure to win against Dortmund to snatch the second spot. Milan also eyes a shot at the last-16, needing a victory against Newcastle to bolster their chances.

Dortmund qualify for last 16 with win against Milan

Milan, Italy - Borussia Dortmund secured their spot in the Champions League last 16 with a commanding 3-1 victory over AC Milan in a thrilling Group F showdown at San Siro.

The game was off to a dramatic start as Milan were awarded a penalty in the sixth minute of the match but Dortmund keeper Gregor Kobel denied Olivier Giroud with an outstanding save. The momentum swiftly shifted in Dortmund's favour when Marco Reus converted a penalty, putting the visitors in the lead after a foul on Jamie Bynoe-Gittens by Davide Calabria.

Milan retaliated before half-time, as Samuel Chukwueze leveled the scoreline with his maiden goal for the seven-time European champions, stepping up impressively in place of the injured Rafael Leao.

However, Dortmund regained their edge in the second half. Young talent Bynoe-Gittens showcased his prowess, restoring Dortmund's lead with a precise strike following an exceptional assist from Marcel Sabitzer. The visitors extended their advantage further as substi-



Borussia Dortmund's Jamie Bynoe-Gittens celebrates after scoring against AC Milan

tute Karim Adeyemi found the net, despite Milan keeper Mike Maignan's efforts, solidifying Dortmund's dominance.

Despite Dortmund's commanding display, both sides had near-misses in the final minutes. Dortmund's Niclas Fuellkrug rattled the bar, while Milan's Luka Jovic's header struck the post, adding late drama to an action-packed encounter.

The victory propelled Dortmund to the top of Group F with 10 points, positioning them well for securing the group's top spot if they avoid defeat against PSG in the final game. Milan, languishing at the bottom with five points, clinging to hopes of advancement by defeating Newcastle and relying on a Dortmund win against PSG.

Dortmund's defender, Mats Hummels, praised his team's resilience and acknowledged the importance of maintaining their momentum in the upcoming crucial fixture against PSG to solidify their lead.

"If we avoid looking at our attacks in the first half, we did well," said Dortmund defender and player of the match Mats Hummels.

Muscat CT, VLCC and Bank Muscat register wins

Muscat - Samay Shrivastav took six wickets as Muscat CT defeated IAS Engineering by 58 runs in the Premier Division League 2023-24 powered by Muscat Pharmacy LLC.

Ayaan Khan and Shoaib Khan notched up half centuries as Muscat posted 239/7 in 50 overs. Mansoor Mazher picked two wickets for IAS Engg. In re-

sponse, IAS Engg managed to make only 181 with Abdul Rauf scoring 42. Afriedh KT gave Shrivastav good support with a three-wicket haul.

In another match, VLCC beat Zawawi Powertech.

VLCC bundled out Zawawi Powertech for 140 runs with Abdullah Adil and Parameswaran Shankar taking three

wickets each. Kalaivasan Natarajan top-scored for Zawawi with 49.

In response, Melvin Mathew and Sahil Dias sealed the victory for VLCC, reaching the target in 33 overs with seven wickets in hand.

Bank Muscat trumped OCT Ruwi in the A Division League powered by Khimji Ramdas LLC.

BRIEF SCORES:

Muscat CT 239/7 in 50 overs (Ayaan Khan 54(73), Shoaib Khan 53(76); Mansoor Mazher 2/34) beat IAS Engg 181/10 in 44.5 overs (Abdul Rauf 42(66); Samay Shrivastav 6/28, Afriedh KT 3/20) by 58 runs.

Zawawi Powertech 140/10 in 28.5 overs (Kalaivasan Natarajan 49(71); Abdullah Adil 3/26,

Parameswaran Shankar 3/28) lost to VLCC 141/3 in 33 overs (Melvin Mathew 47(79), Sahil Dias 40(63) by 7 wickets.

OCT Ruwi 84/10 in 24.2 overs (Shoaib Al Balushi 20(21); Deepak Kumar 5/30) lost to Bank Muscat 85/4 in 23.2 overs (Asghar Khan 31(59); Shoaib Al Balushi 2/28) by 6 wickets.



(From left) Shoaib Khan, Afriedh KT, Samay Shrivastav and Ayaan Khan of Muscat CT



14

BITTER BITES
Good stuff is not always sweet. It can be bitter, too, if it's fenugreek



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IN TOWN
Children's book launch and Shakespeare play staged in Muscat



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ENTERTAINMENT
A peek into tinsel town in Hollywood and Bollywood

FROM ITALY, WITH LOVE

FOOD

'A DISH IS ALWAYS GOOD WHEN IT COMBINES A STORY, A TRIP, OR A FUSION OF TRADITION,' SAYS MICHELIN-STARRED ITALIAN **CHEF PAOLO GRAMAGLIA**, WHO WAS ON A RECENT VISIT TO MUSCAT

CONNECTS

Anirban Ray

Music and food are the most unifying factors for peoples of different countries, irrespective of cultural, religious, racial differences. So it is, with pizza and pasta, which have over the years got diners around the globe in their sway.

Michelin-starred chef Paolo Gramaglia, founder of 'President' restaurant in Pompeii in Italy, who was in Muscat to share some of his insights and philosophy on food and life, is also of the strong belief that food connects. And while conjuring culinary fusion wonders during his visits to different countries, he believes in according utmost respect to local traditions.

Chef Gramaglia was on a visit to Oman to celebrate the eighth edition of Italian Cuisine Week (November 8-14) which was observed this year under the theme - At the table with Italian cuisine: well-being with taste.

The initiative, which is endorsed each year by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, aims at promoting the Italian gastro-nomic culture emphasising the regional specialties, the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and attention to the environ-





*I study,
I taste,
I forget.
I make the dishes
from my memory
and emotions*

PAOLO GRAMAGLIA

mental dimension of food consumption.

Some of the places to cherish Italian taste in Oman include Brezza at Jumeirah Muscat Bay, Come Prima at Crowne Plaza Muscat, Fresco at Al Mouj Muscat, Tomato at Intercontinental Hotel and Tuscany at Grand Hyatt Muscat.

During Italian Cuisine Week, Chef Gramaglia shared some of his secrets. Excerpts:

What are the food staples in Italy, besides pasta?

These are indeed the most popular food of Italy that have become popular all around the world. However, Italy has a diverse range of dishes, including bread, which varies as per region and traditions. There is also the popular aubergine which is a must for every home and every occasion. Everyone in Naples knows it, and of course, my mother is excellent in this dish. In my opinion, a dish is always good, when it conveys a combination of a story, a trip, or a fusion of tradition.

How has Oman inspired you?

Just like Italy, Oman is known for fresh food. I did try the food here and its Mamma Mia. I tried no fancy food but the normal restaurant ones. The meat here is cooked differently which is very unique. Inspired? I also cooked potatoes with fresh vegetables and locally sourced squids. I visited different areas and checked the food out, simply to enjoy.

I study, I taste, I forget. I make the dishes from my memory and emotions. I love to mix different types of food without damaging the authenticity. I respect the local flavours and do not change them. Oman also enjoys spices as we do in South Italy and so does both of us enjoy lamb. In Oman, lamb is cooked too much while in Italy, we do not cook it much. Here, I've tried to cook lamb in the Omani style but with Italian sauce. A fusion of both cultures.

How do you make a dish memorable?

Every dish is unique, every chef is excellent and every food is sumptuous. However, every food must have a story to tell. As a chef, I want to make the food memorable, creating a journey and a trip between the countries through food. There should be a good and a balanced mixture between the two; so that people do not forget the cuisine. Behind every



good food there has to be a tradition from the roots of each society. In foreign lands, I travel around and try the local food to understand the flavour. I do not try to change too much because the authenticity and respect must be there when creating a fusion.

What is so special about your restaurant in Naples?

In my restaurant, I have a menu with all top main courses which is entitled 'The Trip', reflecting the fusion between food and the experience I had when exploring a certain country several times. My menu includes 18 dishes and soon Muscat will be on it as well, for it has left me inspired and mesmerised after just two visits.

The menu includes not only meats (lamb, fish and chicken) but also vegetables, and they are prepared with respect to the origin of the dish, yet adding my own touch that has been inspired by my experience.

I have another menu called 'The Last-Minute Trip' which is inspired by many last minute travels I did to different countries. This includes dishes I refer to as 'little portions with big emotions'.



cook-up

FENUGREEK LEAVES

Bitter bites

Fenugreek leaves, rich in dietary fibre and minerals, and with a string of health benefits – including management of cholesterol, weight, diabetes and gastric disorders – can be relished in many different ways



Spicy potatoes and Fenugreek Leaves (Aloo Methi)

Ingredients

- 5 medium potatoes - cubed
- 2 cups fresh fenugreek - chopped
- 2tbsp oil
- ¼tsp fenugreek seeds
- 1tsp mustard seeds
- A pinch of asafoetida
- ½tsp julienned ginger
- 1 green chilli - slit
- 2tsp julienned garlic
- ¼tsp turmeric powder
- 1tsp garam masala
- ½tsp cumin seeds
- 1tsp salt

Method

Heat oil over medium heat in a pan. Add fenugreek and mustard seeds, followed by asafoetida and garlic. Saute for a few seconds, then add

turmeric powder and the cubed potatoes. Add salt, ginger, and chilli and mix well.

Cover the pan, lower the heat and simmer till potatoes are tender. Add cumin seed and chopped fenugreek leaves and mix well. Increase heat to medium and stir fry for a few minutes, tossing, without mashing the potatoes. Switch off heat and let it cook covered for a few minutes. Serve hot with rotis. (This works well also with baby potatoes)



Fenugreek Fritters (Methi Pakoras)

Ingredients

- 2½ cups chickpea flour
- 1tbsp whole wheat flour
- 3 cups chopped fenugreek leaves
- 4-5 green chillies - minced
- 1tsp chopped ginger
- 1tsp red chilli powder
- ¼tsp turmeric powder
- 1tsp cumin seeds powder
- 1tbsp lemon juice

- 1tsp toasted and crushed coriander seeds
- ½tsp crushed peppercorns
- 1tbsp yogurt
- Oil for deep-frying

Method

In a deep mixing bowl, bring together all the ingredients, except oil. Gradually, add little water to make a thick

batter. Allow the batter to rest for 10-15 minutes. Heat oil for deep frying in a wok. When the oil is smoking hot, reduce heat to medium and using a spoon, drop spoonfuls of the batter in the oil. Stir with a spatula and fry evenly until the fritters are golden brown. Remove on paper towels to drain excess oil. Serve hot with ketchup/chutney and tea.

WINNING RECIPE

Cauliflower with Ginger and Garlic

Karen Fernandes

(November 9 - Main ingredient Cauliflower)

Ingredients

- 1 small cauliflower – about 400g
- 1tbsp – minced ginger
- 9-10 cloves garlic - minced
- 2 green chillies – or as per taste
- 2-3 spring onions – chopped, green and white parts separately
- 2tsp soya sauce – or as per taste
- Salt and pepper powder - as per taste

Method

Cut the cauliflower into bite-sized florets and soak in water with little salt and turmeric powder for 15 minutes to free the cauliflower from any insects or germs. Strain the cauliflower in

a strainer and keep aside.

In the cooking pot, add a Tbsp of oil and when it becomes hot add the ginger and garlic. Fry till the raw smell disappears on medium flame and then add the white part of the spring onions. Fry for two minutes. Now add the cauliflower with slit green chillies and stir them

together. Make the flame on slow and cover the cooking pot and let the cauliflower cook.

Once it is almost cooked, add the soya sauce, salt and pepper (all as per taste) and stir it all well. Cover and keep on low flame till the cauliflower is cooked. In the end, garnish with the green part of the spring onions and freshly ground pepper.



My KITCHEN CREATIONS

Do you have a unique recipe? Here's your chance to share it with readers. The best recipe every week, using the given main ingredient, will be published here and receive food vouchers from:



NOTE: All recipes sent should be original and not sourced from the internet. All recipes must have a list of ingredients and method (No comments). All recipes must be accompanied by a photo taken in your own kitchen. Only recipes sent in by Monday, every week, will be considered. Unique recipes with limited ingredients stand a good chance

MAIN INGREDIENT THIS WEEK Paneer (cottage cheese)



Send in your recipes to: hubert.vaz@apexmedia.co.om with the title 'My Kitchen Creations', along with your name and mobile number.

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take a break

IN TOWN

BOOK LAUNCH



Let's Read recently celebrated the launch of a new children's book - Zavian and the Arabian Leopard Cub - by Jane Jaffer



Ithihasam – Shakespeare play



Ithihasam - a Malayalam play on the life of Shakespeare, hosted by IOCE and Bhavalaya, was staged under the patronage of Oman Theatre Society at Oman Film Society auditorium recently



BOGGLER

M	E	M	Y
W	O	A	R
O	A	P	E
N	A	B	R

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

LEVEL EASY:

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

7	1	9	3	2	6	5	4	8
3	8	4	1	9	5	6	7	2
2	6	5	7	8	4	9	3	1
5	3	7	9	1	2	8	6	4
4	2	8	5	6	3	1	9	7
1	9	6	8	4	7	2	5	3
9	5	3	2	7	8	4	1	6
8	4	0	6	3	9	7	2	5
6	7	2	4	5	1	3	8	9

TRIVIA QUIZ - FOR TEENS

1. What is the national bird of the United States?
A. Raven
B. Bald eagle
C. Cuckoo
D. Ostrich

2. Where was the game of checkers invented?
A. Egypt
B. Syria
C. India
D. China



3. In what country will you find the world's tallest building?
A. USA
B. UK
C. UAE
D. Ukraine

Answers
1. B
2. A
3. C

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

6	8	1	5	7	2	4	9
5	2	4	6	9	0	7	8
9	1	7	8	2	5	3	6
3	5	2	7	8	9	6	1
7	6	1	3	9	5	8	4
4	9	8	2	1	6	7	5
1	3	6	4	7	8	9	2
2	4	1	5	6	7	2	3
8	7	2	3	5	4	1	6

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

**ARIES** MARCH 21-APRIL 19
You've been all smiles with one of your foes lately, and this trend is likely to continue for some time. The two of you have much more to gain by getting along than you do by pushing against each other's interests. This isn't exactly going to be a lovefest, though. There is still a real issue, and it won't go away until they own responsibility.

**TAURUS** APRIL 20-MAY 20
You've been doing a lot of lovely things that are very appealing to the masses. You know your audience and how to act around them. This savvy energy gives you an edge over the competition, and it's going to continue to help you get some preferential treatment. Your popularity will skyrocket among those in power.

**GEMINI** MAY 21-JUNE 21
Someone you often rely on is getting impatient about their work situation, and you need to deal with their frustrations today whether you want to or not. Friends often rely on each other when seeking clarity, so it's no wonder this person is interested in hearing what you have to say about their situation.

**CANCER** JUNE 22-JULY 22
You're better prepared to come to the aid of people who are in need than anyone else is right now. That means you should be the first person to reach out and offer a helping hand when someone's in a tough spot. You have just the right amount of energy necessary to handle your own issues as well as the extra baggage that someone you care about has been lugging around.

**LEO** JULY 23-AUGUST 22
Someone you used to have strong feelings for (positive or negative) could reappear on the scene today by phone or message. Their allure is undeniable, though you don't know if you're ready to reconnect. Wait until you know more about how you feel. This isn't something you should act on impulsively. Getting back in touch with them could turn out to be much more complicated than you realise.

**VIRGO** AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
Share your latest ideas with your most trusted friend, but don't get hurt or defensive if they aren't as excited about what you're thinking as you are. Their job as your friend is to be honest to you, not just tell you whatever you want to hear. It's important to get feedback now, so focus more on how you can improve things.

**LIBRA** SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
Your daily routine could be disrupted quite a bit today, but it won't faze you at all. You have a solid focus on everything you need to take care of, so distractions won't be too much for you. You know how to keep your head down and stay cool, calm, and collected in the eye of the storm, so have confidence that you'll get things done.

**SCORPIO** OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
You might think you want to know all the answers, but today it might be in your best interests to be a little clueless and leave something to discover. Besides, knowing everything can keep you from having fun. And it can keep you from seeing things in a new light. Life's little mysteries give everyone something to speculate about.

**SAGITTARIUS** NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
Sure, there's a lot on your to-do list right now, but just because there are a lot of tasks that need completing doesn't mean you need to get stressed. If you think about it, being busy is a good thing. It means you're important, or at least necessary, in other people's lives. It might not feel rewarding to be a cog in the machine.

**CAPRICORN** DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
Your creativity is on fire right now, so try to use it to your advantage. It can help you see new uses for old tools, a quick solution to a nagging problem, and even a fun way to put a smile on someone's face. Your perspective is fresh and innovative, and while your vision might alienate a few folks, you're going to impress and entertain most of the people you'll be around today.

**AQUARIUS** JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
When someone comes to you and tries to make you solve one of their big problems, you can either decide to be compassionate about their situation and do your best to help them out, or you can wish them luck and just keep on moving. After all, something that isn't your problem isn't your responsibility to fix. There is no wrong answer here, but you should imagine what you would do.

**PISCES** FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
You have so much emotional strength, why not take advantage of it and tackle a touchy subject today? It's time to clear the air with someone you've got history with. Hearing hard truths is never fun, but getting rid of misconceptions and talking over differences is a great way to transform or rediscover yourself. Don't deprive yourself of the opportunity to have a profound growth experience just because you don't want to have an awkward conversation.

entertainment



BEYONCE SHOWS UP AT MACY'S 2023 'THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE'

We're definitely thankful for Beyonce during this Thanksgiving season. The *Crazy in Love* singer, 42, made a surprise appearance during the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade to share a new trailer for her Renaissance tour movie on November 23. Bey looked absolutely stunning in the short pre-recorded video message before the new trailer played.

In the clip, Beyonce had on a black top with some white polka dots on the short sleeves. She wore her hair in a flowing, slightly curled style, and she accessorised with some long, sparkling earrings. "Hey, it's Beyonce, wishing you and your family a very happy Thanksgiving," she said.



HOLLYWOOD CHRISTMAS PARADE HELD ON SUNDAY

A grand Hollywood tradition kicked off at 6pm on Sunday, as the 91st Hollywood Christmas Parade wound through the streets of the movie capital. Sunday's parade was co-hosted by actors Erik Estrada and Dean Cain, joined by Montel Williams, Laura McKenzie, and Elizabeth Stanton.

The pre-parade entertainment included performances by the Village People, pop-opera singer Anna Azerli, and The Grinch. Parade performers also included the Gay

Men's Chorus of Los Angeles and California Springs Rhythmic Gymnastics.

Joining them were Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, dancer-singer Paula Abdul, singer Dwight Yoakum, radio host Kerri Kasem, pop duo Aly and AJ, and actors Chris Kattan, Craig Robinson, Ernie Hudson, Brandon Routh, Ming-Na Wen, Denise Richards and Tatyana Ali.

Overall, the 3.2-mile route showcased 90 celebrities and VIPS, 14 pre-parade and parade performers, 10 bands, six four-story-high character balloons, three floats, 39 movie cars and eight novelty vehicles.



Rohit Bal critical

Rohit Bal continues to be 'critical' in the intensive care unit of a private hospital in Gurugram (India) where the fashion designer is undergoing treatment for cardiac issues, doctors treating him said on Wednesday. Bal, a trend-setter in Indian fashion, is under the supervision of a team led by cardiologist Dr Praveen Chandra at the Medanta Hospital. The 61-year-old designer was admitted to the hospital a few days ago with a heart condition.



Susan Sarandon, Melissa Barrera dropped by Hollywood companies

Hollywood companies have dropped Oscar-winning actor Susan Sarandon and *Scream* franchise actor Melissa Barrera after their comments about the Israel-Hamas war drew scrutiny and accusations of anti-semitism.

The United Talent Agency dropped Sarandon after she made remarks at a pro-Palestinian rally in New York last week. Sarandon, a prolific political activist known for her left-wing

views, received criticism after she said at a rally Friday that people who are 'afraid of being Jewish at this time are getting a taste of what it feels like to be Muslim in this country, so often subjected to violence.'

WHATS ON



Genre: Action
Starring: Aaron Eckhart, Stephen Lang, Diego Tinoco
Language: English

MUZZLE

LAPD K-9 officer Jake Rosser (Aaron Eckhart) and his K-9 partner Ace battle it out on the streets of LA when they get into a shootout with local drug dealers and Ace is shot dead. In a moment of crisis, Jake tries to get an EMT to look at Ace and assaults him when he refuses to co-operate.

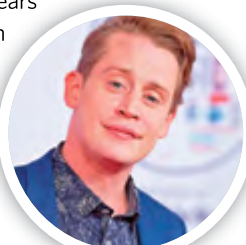
ORRY LIGHTS UP BIGG BOSS 17

You must be living under a rock if you haven't heard about Bollywood's BFF Orhan Awatramani aka Orry. Fans are obsessed with him and let's admit, he is everyone's favourite. Be it red carpet events or a Bollywood bash, the spotlight is always on one and only Orry. And how can we not talk about the question on everyone's mind — What does Orry do? The curiosity about his life has reached new heights ever since the Internet sensation declared, "I am living, I'm a liver." And if you've grown fond of Orry, like the inmates, be ready for a jolt, as his was just a surprise entry, and he will soon be out.



Macaulay Culkin on Hollywood Walk of Fame

Macaulay Culkin's star has come in. The 43-year-old actor, who first gained fame over 30 years ago as a child for his starring role as Kevin McCallister in the Home Alone films, is set to become the 2,765th recipient of a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. The group announced Culkin's honour in a press release, revealing that the ceremony would take place on Friday, with Natasha Lyonne and Culkin's Home Alone mom Catherine O'Hara.



'Little man' with a lot at stake



HOLLYWOOD MOVIE REVIEW:
NAPOLÉON
Genre: Historical drama Starring: Joaquin Phoenix, Vanessa Kirby, Tahar Rahim

Napoleon is a 2023 epic historical drama film directed and produced by Ridley Scott and written by David Scarpa. Based on the story of Napoleon Bonaparte, primarily depicting the French leader's rise to power as well as his relation-

ship with Empress Joséphine, the film stars Joaquin Phoenix as Napoleon and Vanessa Kirby as Josephine.

The film has grossed US\$80 million worldwide and received generally mixed reviews from critics which praise the battle sequences and performances,

though most noted its historical inaccuracies.

The plot is set in 1793, amid the French Revolution, when the young army officer Napoleon Bonaparte watches Queen Marie Antoinette being beheaded by the guillotine. Later that year, Revolutionary leader Paul Barras has Napoleon manage the Siege of Toulon - he successfully storms the city and repels the British ships with artillery.

The movie chronicles Napoleon's life from the time he

woos aristocratic widow Joséphine de Beauharnais and the two eventually marry, and his coronation as Emperor of the French, till the Battle of Waterloo and his exile to the island of Saint Helena. He's a little man, you are regularly reminded, and his relationship with Joséphine (who finds another lover) makes him smaller. Periodic bits of text function as de facto chapter headings, grounding the story's chronology and announcing the next conflagration.

The war scenes are extraordinary, vigorous, harrowing and rightly grotesque. The tremendous scale of some of these battles helps give them their visceral power, as does Scott's complex staging and use of masses of human actors and horses. With cannon blasts, bursts of smoke and the sights and sounds of armies of men thundering over fields toward their deaths, he conveys the frenzy of war.

This one's for those hooked onto historic epics. Get lost in the period but hold on to your popcorn for a reality check.

Rating ★★★★★





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