

England beat Iran 6-2 in strong start

England hammered Iran 6-2 on Monday in an emphatic World Cup opener thanks to two goals from Bukayo Saka and strikes by Jude Bellingham and Raheem Sterling, before substitutes Marcus Rashford and Jack Grealish rounded off the rout. England had come close to taking the lead in the Group B opener, with Harry Maguire heading against the crossbar, before Bellingham, 19, steered in a header from a Luke Shaw cross in the 35th minute. **DETAILS ON P14**



P7

NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION EXTENDS TO SMALL VILLAGES



P12

MSX SIGNS MOU WITH MEIRA



P18

DJOKOVIC FINISHES TROUBLED YEAR WITH ATP FINALS TITLE



MUSCAT

KHAZAEN PORT JOINS ‘PORTS OF CALL’ LINK

Khazaen Dry Port, which was established in partnership between Asyad and the private sector, announced that it joined A P Moller — Maersk’s (Maersk) extensive ‘Ports of Call’ network. Joining global shipping lines, Khazaen Dry Port will further bolster its global position as an import, re-export and trans-shipment centre as the country presses ahead to become one of the leading logistics hubs in the region. Underlining Asyad’s role as a market growth leader, this integration is yet another step in the group’s plan to improve efficiency and adopt higher standards across the logistics sector.

DETAILS ON P2

CRUDE PRICE AT \$81.46 A BARREL

Oman oil price for January delivery on Monday reached \$81.46, comprising a drop by \$2.71 from the price of last Friday which stood at \$84.17. The average price of Oman oil for November delivery has stabilised at \$90.80 per barrel, thus \$6.20 per barrel lower than October delivery. World oil futures failed to find a floor after last week’s drubbing that saw Brent crude tumble almost 9 per cent. Brent was last down 0.5 per cent to \$87.16, while US crude futures slipped 0.6 per cent to \$79.59 per barrel.

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INSIDE



ART OF DEALING WITH CAMELS AND HORSES

P4



‘CLOSE CALL’ IN SHELLING NEAR NUCLEAR REACTOR

P5

Majlis to hold closed-door session with finance minister

MUSCAT: The Majlis Ashshura will hold a closed-door session with Sultan bin Salim al Habsi, Minister of Finance, on Wednesday to discuss the draft of State Budget 2023.

Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammed al Nadabi, Secretary General of the Majlis Ashshura, said that the council’s second ordinary session on Wednesday will be a closed-door round of discussion to be dedicated to terms, financial and economic indices of next year’s State Budget draft.

According to the provisions of Article (52) of the Council of Oman’s Law, the session will be a

secret elaboration on various topics of the budget, including estimates of general revenues, public spending, developmental allocations, the public debt standing, the state’s fiscal position, subsidy policies, government investments, economic diversification programmes, direct foreign investment and privatisation programmes, said Al Nadabi.

He added that the council’s third ordinary session on Thursday will be dedicated for discussion of the Economic and Financial Committee’s report on State Budget 2023, as well as two draft laws forwarded to the government

— one on higher education and the other on basic education. The session will cover a variety of draft projects on biometric fingerprints, Oman-EU comprehensive air transport agreement, Oman-South Africa air services agreement and Oman-Rwanda air services agreement. — ONA



PRIORITY FOR DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS

Citizens valued the officials’ inspection of development and services projects in the islands of Al Hallaniyah and Al Soda in the Niyabat of Al Hallaniyat Islands in the Wilayat of Shaleem and Al Hallaniyah Islands. They voiced hope that the visit would realise their aspirations regarding the completion of services and facilities of the fishing harbour, provision of social housing for eligible citizens and development of land transportation services. **DETAILS ON P2**

New species of wetland fish found in Oman

MUSCAT: A joint research team comprising members from Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) and Shiraz University in Iran has registered a new species of wetland fish found in wetlands of the Sultanate of Oman.

The organism, given the name *Oxyurichthys omanensis*, was discovered as part of a project funded by the SQU’s Research Deanship.

Oxyurichthys omanensis was part of samples of different fish collected from the shallow, muddy waters of Khor Yetti creek in the Wilayat of Muscat.



By studying the qualities, external traits and DNA of the fish, the team concluded that it was a new find. The Omani side at the team was headed by Dr Saud bin Musallam al Jufaili, while Dr Humaid Ismaili led the Iranian side.

The experts plan to launch the first book of its kind on Omani fresh water fish. The project will be financed by Oman Environment Authority. — ONA

14,977 voters to cast ballots in OCCI elections

KABEER YOUSUF
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As many as 21 members from 125 contestants will be elected to the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry Board of Directors (OCCI) for 2022-2026 by about 14,977 voters who will cast their ballots on Tuesday.

The Election Commission governing the elections to the Board of Directors of the OCCI, chaired by Dr Saleh bin Said Masan, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry, said that final preparations for the election procedure were over and it was all set to welcome the voters from 8 am to 6 pm.

“The Election Commission visited the polling centre in Muscat Governorate at the OCEC to see the preparations for the electoral process, which will begin at 8 am on Tuesday,”

said Dr Saleh bin Said Masan, who is also the head of the commission.

Elaborate arrangements are in place to make the electoral process smooth and foolproof. Accordingly, all voters are advised to carry their identity cards, whether citizenship cards or resident cards, as the case may be, and be present at the voting centres on time.

No mobile phone will be allowed inside the halls where elections are held, and no photography is encouraged in the premises, according to Dr Masan.

The board of directors will consist of five members from Muscat Governorate, 10 chairmen of the board of directors of the branches, 5 members representing the companies listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange, and one member who will represent foreign investors.

Oman expresses sympathy as Indonesia quake kills 162

MUSCAT/CIANJUR: The Sultanate of Oman has expressed its sympathy with the Republic of Indonesia over the earthquake that hit the city of Cianjur in West Java.

In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on Monday, Oman also expressed sincere condolences to the Indonesian government and people, as well as families of the victims, wishing the injured a speedy recovery.

A shallow 5.6-magnitude earthquake killed at least 162 people, with hundreds injured and



A local stands near houses damaged after earthquake hit in Cianjur, West Java province, Indonesia, on Monday. — Reuters

others missing, when it toppled buildings and triggered landslides on Indonesia’s main island of Java on Monday, officials said.

Doctors treated patients outdoors after the quake, which was felt as far away as the capital Jakarta, left hospitals in the West Java town of Cianjur without power for several hours.

“I regret to inform that 162 are dead. 326 are injured with most of them sustained fractures from being crushed in ruins,” Ridwan Kamil, governor of worst-hit province West Java, told a press conference in a video seen by AFP. He said most of the victims were children.

Adam, spokesman for the local administration in Cianjur town, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, confirmed the toll.

Indonesia’s national disaster mitigation agency, BNPB, still lists the toll at 62. Due to miscounting, officials offered wildly fluctuating death tolls after an Indonesian stadium disaster last month.

— Agencies



Royal Office Minister receives ambassadors of Brazil, Yemen

MUSCAT: Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office, received on Monday Ligia Maria Scherer, Ambassador of the Federative Republic of Brazil to the Sultanate of Oman, to bid her farewell at the end of her tour of duty.

The Brazilian ambassador expressed her appreciation for the cooperation extended to her in the Sultanate of Oman. She also lauded the bilateral relations between Oman and Brazil. On his turn, Al Numani thanked the ambassador for the efforts she exerted in boosting

the relations between the two countries during her tour of duty, wishing her success. Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani also received on Monday Dr Khaled Saleh Shoteif, Ambassador of the Republic of Yemen to the Sultanate of Oman.

During this meeting, the two sides reviewed areas of bilateral cooperation and discussed several matters of mutual interest. The Yemeni ambassador lauded Oman's sincere efforts in resolving the Yemeni crisis and establishing peace in coordination with relevant international parties. — ONA

Citizens of Al Hallaniyat Islands value Royal directives to inspect projects

BAKHEET KIRDAS AL SHEHRI
MUSCAT, NOV. 21

Citizens of the Niyabat of Al Hallaniyat Islands valued the officials' inspection of development and services projects in the islands of Al Hallaniyah and Al Soda in the Niyabat of Al Hallaniyat Islands in the Wilayat of Shaleem and Al Hallaniyat Islands.

They voiced hope that the visit would realise their aspirations regarding the completion of services and facilities of the fishing harbour, the provision of social housing for entitled citizens and developing land transportation services.

Dr Masoud bin Salim al Kathiri, Wali of Shaleem and Al Hallaniyat Islands, said: "The citizens were so delighted with this visit hoping that it would fulfil their aspirations of completing the development and services projects. They praised the Royal directives to the officials to visit the Niyabat of Al Hallaniyat Islands and inspect the projects under implementation as well as



identify the citizens' needs." Said bin Ahmed al Bathari, Deputy Wali of Shaleem and Al Hallaniyat Islands, said: "In conjunction with the National Day celebrations, the Royal directives issued by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik were a source of delight for the citizens. This is a strong testament to His Majesty's keenness and follow-up to citizens' needs. We hope to see the implementation of Al Soda tourism project and the completion of services and facilities at the fishing port and the construction of more social houses for entitled citizens. Besides, the citizens are looking

forward to developing maritime transport services through a fixed schedule of the ferry and developing tourism by building a hotel in the island to cater to tourist's needs. Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak al Shehri, expressed his happiness over His Majesty's directives to the officials to visit the Niyabat of Al Hallaniyat Islands to identify the citizens' needs. He added that the citizens are eyeing more services and projects that cater to the needs of the citizens. Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdullah al Shehri said: "We extend our sincere greetings to

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on the 52nd anniversary of the National Day. We are so thankful and appreciative to His Majesty for directing the officials to inspect projects in Al Hallaniya island. We were so delighted upon their arrival in the island and we aspire for more projects and services." Mohammed bin Nasser al Arai said: "The citizens of the Niyabat of Al Hallaniyat Islands are pinning great hope on developing tourism, completing the passenger terminal and the runway. They hope to see more facilities at the fishing harbour and the provision of social housing.

Khazaen Dry Port joins A P Moller – Maersk's 'Ports of Call' network



MUSCAT: Khazaen Dry Port, which was established in partnership between Asyad and the private sector, announced that it joined A P Moller - Maersk's (Maersk) extensive 'Ports of Call' network.

Joining global shipping lines, Khazaen Dry Port will further bolster its global position as an import, re-export and transshipment centre as the country presses ahead to become one of the leading logistics hubs in the region.

Underlining Asyad's role as a market growth leader, this integration is yet another step in the Group's plan to improve efficiency and adopt higher standards across the logistics sector. Asyad complements these efforts by providing and facilitating services that will enable local traders to effectively expand their reach to global markets and attract higher volumes of trade to and through Oman.

Juma al Maskari, Executive Director of Khazaen Dry Port said, "By integrating Khazaen Dry Port within global shipping lines, including Maersk's network, we are able to improve international market accessibility, facilitate trade and increase the flow of products and services to and from Oman at the touch of a button.

"We are home to more than 80 local and global companies with an annual capacity of 50,000 TEU. This integration with a powerful global network facilitates business and

trade for the private sector, providing them with operational efficiencies and cost optimisation by simply leveraging Maersk's global routes to best suit their supply chains," he added.

Mads Skov-Hansen, Head of Ocean Customer Logistics at Maersk West and Central Asia, said, "At Maersk, our ambition is to connect and simplify our customers' supply chains by providing them integrated logistics services across land, sea and air network.

"Our customers can swiftly move their goods worldwide through our network that spans over 130 countries, on more than 730 of our vessels." He added, "Oman has been a key logistics destination for Maersk, especially when it comes to the accessibility to global markets. We have worked closely with Asyad Group over the years to foster our relationship to offer best-in-class integrated logistics solutions supporting Oman Vision 2040."

Khazaen Dry Port is strategically located within easy reach of booming economies in the region, with close proximity to the Saudi-Omani border, UAE-Oman border and Oman's main ports. It is purposely designed and built over an area of 100,000 square metres. Khazaen Dry Port is a one-stop shop for custom clearance, inspection and handling and storage of containers, and cargo movement near Muscat. — ONA

600 Omani youth volunteers engaged at Qatar World Cup

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
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Omani volunteers are part of the Sultanate of Oman's initiative to ensure the success of the Qatar World Cup 2022. For this, 600 Omani youths have taken up the task of voluntary service and are engaged in different assignments. Azzan bin Qasim bin Mohammed al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for Tourism, affirmed the interest of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman to support the efforts of Qatar to make the hosting of the tournament a success. Many areas of cooperation point towards the Sultanate of Oman's cooperation relating to programmes accompanying the World Cup. Also, there is a move to

celebrate the historic hosting of the 2022 World Cup in the region and promote Muscat as a major city approved to receive World Cup fans. The programme is managed by a joint working team headed by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism. It includes several government agencies, including the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the Royal Oman Police and the Oman Investment Authority, represented by the Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group), Oman Air and Oman Airports, and several institutions supporting the programme. Among the most important initiatives came the participation of women's security forces in securing activities and places for women's gatherings. From the hospitality sector, about 20,000 hotel rooms along



with 200 tourism products, 35 local operators, ten land transport companies, and 52 airlines are engaged for the World Cup. Facilities were provided to Haya cardholders who are fans of the World Cup at Muscat International Airport. In addition, Haya cardholders enjoy a visa with special benefits. "For Haya cardholders, the visa

is a free multi-trip visa, enhanced with the feature of extraction at access and a validity period of up to 60 days. The Haya cardholder is also allowed to accompany their family of the first class to enjoy residency in the Sultanate of Oman, adding that the Haya cardholder is allowed to change to a visa of another category while staying in the Sultanate of

Oman, according to the applicable requirements. The representative of the Royal Oman Police touched upon the detailed procedures for obtaining the visa easily and smoothly," Said Lieutenant-Colonel Ahmed bin Saeed al Ghafri, Director of Administrative and Financial Affairs at the General Directorate of Passports and Civil Status. Dr Khalid bin Abdul Wahab al Balushi, Senior Director of Government Affairs at Oman Air, mentioned that the national transport will operate several flights between Muscat and Doha during the World Cup matches from November 20 until December 3. He added that fans would be able to book one-day flights directly through the Oman Air website. Prices start from RO 99 for Economy Class and RO 305 for Business Class.

Also, to encourage citizens, special prices have been provided for them, starting from RO 49 for economy class and RO 155 for business class. The General Directorate of Scouts and Guides also revealed its preparations to participate in the 2022 World Cup Qatar through its accompanying programme, which includes general supervision of the file of Omani volunteers in this global event. Dr Yaqoub bin Khalfan al Nadabi, General Director of the Directorate of Scouts and Guides, said, "The directorate's participation in the 2022 Qatar World Cup comes within the framework of the general supervision of the Omani volunteers' to participate, and the volunteer programme aims to create a smooth experience for fans from all over the world.



Musandam Naval Base shares citizens' joy



KHASAB: Musandam Naval Base, represented by one of the Royal Navy of Oman's ships, held a celebration to mark the 52nd anniversary of the National Day on Monday,

The ship opened her doors to school students, and crew members explained about

the ship and the capabilities and competencies attained by the RNO and the level of

development and progress it is witnessing during the era of the renewed Renaissance

led by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander. — ONA

Omani students in UK mark National Day



MUSCAT: Omani students at ETC International College in Bournemouth, England marked the 52nd anniversary of the National Day amid a crowd of international students, on Friday.

The attendees watched the military parade held on the occasion of the National Day. This was interspersed by patriotic songs and other interesting shows while Omani students acquainted their colleagues of the natural, economic and

tourism potentials of the Sultanate of Oman.

Speaking at the event, Kambiz Parandian, Director, ETC International College, said: "We congratulate the leadership, the people of Sultanate of Oman, and the Omani students at ETC on their National Day anniversary. We confirm our keenness to employ the college's entire capacity of 32 years to improve the students' level in English."

MUSANDAM MULTI-SPORT FESTIVAL



KHASAB: Musandam's multi-sport festival concluded on Monday. The festival included off-road multi-sport events in Musandam Governorate's magnificent sea and mountainous terrain. The festival village served as a family entertainment arena and central hub to highlight many adventure sports and adventure tourism opportunities. The village also included an exhibition for local SMEs and traditional craftsmen to display and promote their products to festival attendees, in cooperation with the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED). Along with its off-road triathlon, duathlon, trail runs, and the highly popular kids' fun run and aquathon, the Musandam Multi-sport Festival provided a prime opportunity for competing athletes and their families to immerse themselves in the breathtaking beauty of Musandam. — ONA

National Museum organises exhibitions highlighting Oman's civilisational role

MUSCAT: The National Museum seeks to highlight the heritage and the civilisational, historical, cultural and scientific role of the Sultanate of Oman regionally and internationally.

It has launched initiatives and held exhibitions on Oman's unique heritage through the ages in a bid to introduce Oman to audiences in the country and abroad. These activities are held in cooperation with a selected group of international leading and prestigious museums. The National Museum signed a number of memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and agreements with these museums in the cultural and museum fields.

Since the opening of the National Museum on 15 November 2022, it has organised many external exhibitions and hosted a number of museum exhibitions for cultural exchange, enriching cultures, developing mutual understanding and cooperation with regional and international cultural institutions.

Jamal bin Hassan al Moosawi, Secretary-General of the National Museum, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that many events will be held in the upcoming months within the framework of the museum's annual programme to introduce Oman's history and civilisation. The programme also aims to open channels of dialogue between cultures and generations to enhance knowledge transfer.

He pointed out that as part of the agreement signed with the Museum of Fine Arts of Lyon, an exhibition will be held



Jamal bin Hassan al Moosawi, Secretary-General of the National Museum

in April 2023. This exhibition will highlight the civilisation of frankincense and the culture of perfumery in Oman, which is a historical experience that extends to nearly five thousand years.

Al Moosawi added that the National Museum pursues cultural diplomacy with the aim of strengthening the bonds of friendship and kinship with Arab and friendly countries.



The museum also seeks to introduce visitors to the culture of "Al Teeb" or "Perfumery" with a focus on the ancient history of frankincense, said the National Museum's Secretary-General.

Moreover, twenty-three loan pieces of art selected from the masterpieces of the Museum of Fine Arts of Lyon are currently being displayed in Bayt Greiza until 7 May 2023, he further

noted.

Al Moosawi pointed out that the National Museum is set to unveil a number of important events that will be launched in January 2023 within the framework of the Sultanate of Oman's celebrations of the golden jubilee of establishing diplomatic relations with the Swiss Confederation and with the Republic of Austria. — ONA



Colourful activities mark National Day celebrations in Al Dakhiliyah



AMAL AL RIYAMI
NIZWA, NOV 21

The Directorate General of Education in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate organised a diverse artistic activities in celebration of the 52 Glorious National Day. The ceremony was held under the auspices of Saif bin Mubarak bin Saleh al Julandani, Director General of the Directorate General of Education in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, and the presence of the directorate's employees.

The ceremony began with a welcome speech by Saif bin Mubarak al Julandani, Director General. During the ceremony, the famous art troupe of Omar Ibn Al Khattab School for Basic Education presented Al Razha and Al Azi art. A direct dialogue session was held with the title (in the love of the homeland). It was presented by the Director General, Ahmed bin Rashid bin Mohammad al Jabri, director of Mazen bin Ghaduba School for Basic Education (10-12), and Ibtisam bint Salim bin Mohammad al Rahbi, director of Al Ithar School for Basic



Education Grades (1-4). The student Moayad bin Walid al Shukaili from Abu Al Hassan Al Basawi School (5-12) provided a chant entitled (My National Oman).

The audience enjoyed the poetry session (Our pulse is for you, homeland). It was presented by Ali bin Hamad bin Saif al Toubi, a teacher at Al Azhar bin Mohammed Al Azkoy School for Basic Education (5-9), and Noura bint Hamad bin Mohammad al Hadiwiyah, assistant director of Sarh Al Marefa School for Basic

Education (1-4), and Ibtisam bint Suleiman bin Mohammed al Busaidiyah, from Al Qalla School for Basic Education (5-12).

After that, the student performance (You are the love, my homeland) was presented by the students of Seih Al Shamikhat School for Basic Education (1-4).

Poetry on this occasion with a poem entitled "The Legend of Glory" was performed by Said bin Ahmed bin Said al Rahbi, and the words were by the poet Ahmed al Saqri, from Bilal Bin Rabah School for Basic Education (5-12).

The ceremony concluded with the epic (I am the homeland), presented by Shaikh Ahmed bin Abdullah Al Kindi School for Basic Education students, written and directed by Marhoon bin Ali bin Marhoon al Shuraiqi, supervised and followed by Ahmed bin Ali bin Marhoon al Shuraiqi.

The art exhibition "Draw the Homeland" was also held on the occasion, in which school students painted paintings that show feelings of love and belonging to the homeland.

UTAS Salalah students participate in Forum for Women in KSA

STAFF REPORTER
SALALAH, NOV 21

The University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) Salalah students participated in the 3rd Cultural and Scientific Forum for female students in the GCC countries, organised by Princess Nourah bint Abdulrahman University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The event, held for three days between November 5 to 8 featured literature, calligraphy, women's empowerment, digital transformation and sustainable development competitions. This event was a platform for talented female students from all over GCC to share their creative ideas through writing poems, presenting scientific research, and in various arts and artificial intelligence fields.

As part of the delegation representing female students of universities and institutions of higher education in the Sultanate of Oman, Tafoul bint Ali Bait Saeed and Rouya bint Omran al Abriyah from UTAS- Salalah participated in competitions. Tafoul from the BA department participated and presented a research paper in the scientific competition with research titled 'Environmental awareness and its impact on combating pollution and in promoting



sustainable development trends'.

It was a joint research paper with Noura al Kathiri from the Mass Communication department. Rouya bint Omran al Abriyah participated in the literary competition by giving a speech on the determination and enthusiasm of young people and their role in the advancement of societies.

Speaking about her experiences regarding her participation, Rouya bint Omran al Abriyah said, "It was a good experience for me to participate in an international event for the first time. The interaction with students from other GCC countries was very inspiring and enriching."

It is worth mentioning that students of the Salalah campus have won accolades and prizes by participating in seminars, research conferences and student forums held across campuses of UTAS and other national universities.

AL ARDAH: The art of dealing with camels and horses

TEXT& PHOTOS BY YAHYA AL SALMANI

In celebration of Sultanate of Oman's 52nd glorious National Day, the celebration committees have organised programmes of 'Al Ardah' shows for camels and horses in various wilayats of the country.

The art, which the Omanis inherited from their forefathers, is considered one of the traditional arts that Omanis are keen to practice on national, social and religious occasions. This art still enjoys a great public turnout from various segments of society.

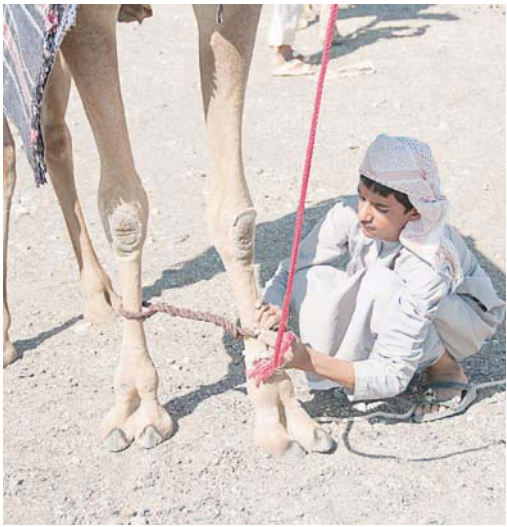
Traditionally, performances of this art begin with a show of camels or horses participating in the event. The show begins with chants composed in Bedouin folk form, as they have the accent of the people of the desert. These chants welcome the masses who flock to watch the direct performances of the art of the performance.

They have different names -- for horses, 'Ardah' is called 'Al Tahoreeb, while for camels, it is 'Al Himbal'.

More than 100 camels or horses participate in such events. They participate enthusiastically, indicating the close contact between the people and animals in the olden days and highlight their skills and experience in taming camels.

All performances related to the art of 'Ardah' reflect the interaction of the Omani man with nature and with the elements of his environment, all of which are evidence of the richness of the Omani civilisation and the diversity of its fields.

The Sultanate of Oman has successfully included this traditional art in the list of Unesco's intangible cultural heritage of humanity. This achievement is the culmination of the Sultanate of Oman's consistent efforts to strengthen and preserve its cultural heritage.





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In brief

■ ASTANA



KAZAKH PRESIDENT TOKAYEV WINS RE-ELECTION

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev secured a second term in Sunday's snap election, winning 81.31 per cent of the vote, the central Asian nation's Central Election Commission said on Monday, citing preliminary data.

He had been widely expected to extend his rule over the oil-rich nation by seven more years, with a strong mandate to continue his increasingly independent foreign policy, as the former Soviet republic navigates the Russia-Ukraine crisis. "We can say that the people have expressed convincing confidence in me as president and all of you," Tokayev, 69, had told.

■ SAO PAULO



BRAZIL'S LULA DISCHARGED FROM HOSPITAL

Brazilian President-elect Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva left hospital on Monday after a procedure to remove potentially pre-cancerous patches from his vocal cord, doctors said, adding that they had found no abnormal tissue mass in the process. Doctors at Sao Paulo's Sirio Libanes Hospital, where the 77-year-old Lula was treated for throat cancer 11 years ago, said the procedure had removed small white patches called 'leukoplakia' from his vocal cords.

Leukoplakia, also called 'smokers keratosis', can be caused by repeated injury and irritation or exposure to smoking and alcohol.

■ LONDON



NO BACKSLIDING ON BREXIT, SAYS BRITISH PM

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Monday denied that his government was seeking to row back on the UK's EU withdrawal deal, despite an apparent growing backlash against Brexit. Sunak told business leaders that life outside the European Union was "already delivering enormous benefits and opportunities".

He touted greater curbs on immigration and closer trade ties with Asia. But he added: "Let me be unequivocal about this: under my leadership, the UK will not pursue any relationship with Europe that relies on alignment with EU laws."

'Close call' in shelling near nuke reactor on Ukraine's frontline

KYIV: Ukraine narrowly escaped disaster during fighting at the weekend that rocked Europe's largest atomic power plant with a barrage of shells, some falling near reactors and damaging a radioactive waste storage building, the UN nuclear watchdog said.

It was not clear which side was responsible for at least a dozen explosions at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station, which has been under Russian control since soon after the war started on February 24 but is across the Dnipro river from areas controlled by Kyiv.

The shelling comes as battles raged further east following troop movements from around Ukraine's recently recaptured Kherson, further south along the Dnipro.

Whoever fired on the plant was taking "huge risks and gambling with many people's lives," said Rafael Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). "We are talking metres, not kilometres.

"We were fortunate a potentially serious nuclear incident did not happen. Next time, we may not be so lucky," Grossi said late on Sunday in a statement, describing the situation as a "close call".

Repeated shelling of the plant during the war has raised concern about a grave disaster in the country that suffered the world's worst nuclear accident, the 1986 Chernobyl meltdown. Radiation levels remained normal and there were no reports of casualties, the IAEA said. While there was no direct impact on nuclear safety and security systems, "the shelling came dangerously close to them", Grossi said. Russia's response to its military setbacks has included a barrage of missile strikes, many



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his wife Olena Zelenska attend a commemoration ceremony at a monument to the so-called "Heavenly Hundred" for the people killed during the Ukrainian pro-EU demonstrations in 2014. — Reuters

on power facilities that have left much of the country without electricity as winter sets in and temperatures drop below freezing.

Grossi spoke to world leaders and reiterated the need for a nuclear safety and security protection zone around Zaporizhzhia, the IAEA said.

The head of Russia's state-run nuclear energy agency, Rosatom, said on Monday it had discussed Sunday's shelling with the IAEA, and said there was a risk of a nuclear accident.

"The plant is at risk of a nuclear accident. We were in negotiations with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) all night," Interfax quoted Rosatom CEO Alexei Likhachev as saying.

Rosatom has controlled the facility through a subsidiary



Whoever fired on the plant was taking huge risks and gambling with many people's lives. We are talking metres, not kilometers

RAFAEL GROSSI

Director-General, IAEA

since President Vladimir Putin in October ordered Russia to formally seize the plant and transfer Ukrainian staff to a Russian entity. Kyiv controls territory across the river from

the power station, including the regional capital. The Zaporizhzhia plant itself and territory south of it fell to Russia in March.

Both sides traded blame for the latest shelling, as they have done repeatedly in recent months after attacks on the plant or near it.

Citing information provided by plant management, an IAEA team on the ground said damaged infrastructure included a radioactive waste and storage building, cooling pond systems, a cable to one of the reactors, and a bridge to another reactor and auxiliary buildings.

The team plans to conduct an assessment on Monday, Grossi said, but Russian nuclear power operator Rosenergoatom said there would be curbs on what the team could inspect. — AFP

T-shirts from India's Tirupur to Qatar World Cup

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The cheer of the World Cup in Qatar is reverberating far away in India where a section of villagers were engaged in making T-shirts, tracksuits and caps and exporting them to Qatar for the Fifa World Cup which kick-started on Sunday.

Tirupur in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu has emerged as a knitwear cluster and has today emerged as a wholly transformed global apparel manufacturing hub in the country.

It is not only Tirupur, which is benefitting from the export of sportswear to the 2022 World Cup venue, but the ports in the neighbouring states, used for the export of the consignment, hugely benefitted.

According to media reports, some 17 garment consignments were sent to Doha from Kerala's Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) from October 1 to November 12.

According to a senior officer of CIAL, the export of consignments helped the local garment exporters.

"Even though temporary, as the supply would stop after the game is over, there is cheer among the garment companies

in Tamil Nadu's Tirupur and exporters in Cochin," the official said.

Tirupur has set a precedent by emerging as a truly sustainable global apparel-making hub. The knitwear cluster in southern India has today emerged as a completely transformed global apparel-manufacturing hub in the country, an ANI report said.

The Tirupur project has set an environmental benchmark for other operators by adopting a policy of Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD).

"For the last 10 years, we have been strictly pursuing our ZLD model, and along the way, we have also taken up multiple projects aimed at reducing our carbon footprint significantly. As a green cluster, we have gone much ahead," said the report quoting A Sakthivel, President, Federation of Indian Export Organisations; chairman, Apparel Export Promotion Council and founding president of TEA.

The export of sportswear to Doha for the World Cup has generated hope among the garment workers in Tirupur as they are looking for government support for other such opportunities globally.

Erdogan says mulling ground operation in Syria

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday he was mulling going beyond air strikes and launching a ground operation in Syria following a deadly rocket strike on a Turkish border town.

Erdogan also renewed warnings that those attacking Turkey will pay dearly, a day after Ankara's forces launched air raids on bases of outlawed Kurdish groups in northern Syria and Iraq.

"There is no question that this operation be limited to only an aerial operation," Erdogan told reporters on returning to Turkey from Qatar where he attended the Fifa World Cup opening.

"Competent authorities, our defence ministry and chief of staff will together decide the level of force that should be used by our ground forces," Erdogan said. "We have already warned that we will make those who violate our territory pay," he added.

Erdogan spoke after a rocket strike from Syrian territory killed at least three people, including a child, in a border Turkish town. That strike came a day after Turkey carried out air raids against the bases of Kurdish militant groups in northern Syria and Iraq which it said were being used to launch "terrorist" attacks on Turkish soil.

The overnight raids mainly targeting positions held by Syrian Kurdish forces in northern and northeastern Syria killed at least 31 people, according to the British-based monitoring group the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR). — Reuters

جامعة صحر
SOHAR UNIVERSITY

TENDER NOTICE

Sohar University invites sealed tenders from specialized, experienced and authorized suppliers for the Supply of Personal Computers and Laptops who have sufficient experience in providing similar services to Government/Private Organizations.

The tender details are as follows:

Tender Number	Description	Fee OR	Submission Date
002/2022	Supply of Personal Computers and Laptops	150/-	22/12/2022
003/2022	Supply, Delivery, Installation and Commissioning of High Specification Computing Server with Virtual Desktop/ Application Infrastructure (VDI) Solution and Backup De-Duplication and Compression Appliance	200/-	22/12/2022

The tender document can be obtained from the Procurement and Contracts Department from 23/11/2022 to 01/12/2022 from 8:00 to 15:00 hrs at Sohar University Main campus in Sohar after payment of tender fees in cash (Non-refundable) at the cash counter located in the Al Khauboora Building. The receipt of payment has to be taken to the Procurement and Contracts Department to collect the Tender Document.

Tender offers must be submitted in closed envelopes sealed, delivered at the Sohar University premises, tender number shall be written only on the envelope, no indication shall be made, and deadline for submission of offers is **22/12/2022 12:00 hours**.

Tender should be addressed to Vice Chancellor and deposited in the tender Box as given below during office hours 08:00 to 15:00 Sunday to Thursday

**Resources Office
Sohar University
P.O Box 44, P.C. 311, Sohar. Sultanate of Oman.
Telephone: 26850100 Ext.: 421 & 289 (Procurement and Contracts Department)**

Knowledge is power and action leads to transformation

Humans are highly dynamic and diverse creatures. Our moods and states of being are hugely influenced and dependent on so many varying factors, often many of which are out of our control.

Within the multitude of nationalities, differing ethnic backgrounds and contrasting standards of upbringing which are factors that sway the way we behave, there are nonetheless several common elements which we can say are widespread foundations to all cultures and people.

Among the universal language that we all share in common which are loving smiles, warm embraces or a helping hand, there are six needs that are unequivocally pervasive to all humans. They are certainty, variety, significance, connection, contribution and growth.

Awareness is the first step to change. However, transformation cannot happen without action. Knowledge is power, conversely, it's what we do with the information that makes the difference.

Tony Robbins, one of the main pillars in the personal development world has stipulated that when humans receive their quota of the six human needs, our fulfilment magnifies. I also believe that in order to fill up the necessary cups of each need, there requires an even keel balance to ensure one doesn't take precedence over the rest.

In order to feel in control which is a necessity for humans, the need of certainty is a prerequisite. We want to know that things will pan out the way we plan. We like knowing what to expect; being in the familiarity of the known is reassuring.

However, where there is too



Hyesha Barrett
@coach_hyesha

Hyesha is a certified Master Life Coach and NLP Practitioner based in Muscat. She is affiliated with the Whispers of Serenity Clinic

AMONG THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE THAT WE ALL SHARE IN COMMON WHICH ARE LOVING SMILES, WARM EMBRACES OR A HELPING HAND, THERE ARE SIX NEEDS THAT ARE UNEQUIVOCALLY PERVASIVE TO ALL HUMANS

much certainty, often ensues complacency. Boredom can easily set in if things roll the same way each and everyday. Having a good amount of uncertainty is key to keeping things exciting. Not too much to cause overwhelm nor stress, just the right amount to add some flavour into the mix. New stimuli is crucial to adding excitement and hence it's deemed necessary to inject variety to your daily routine so as to keep that pep in your step.

Significance is the third point of gaining fulfilment. When we know our importance, value and worth, this decidedly enhances our desire to give more, be more, accomplish and contribute more. Social creatures that we are, a sense of belonging is essential – with our families, friends, colleagues, communities and societies. When we possess servitude towards others focusing on supporting the less fortunate, our overall contentment exemplifies.

Through giving, we create connection. The union is a beautiful symbiotic relationship of something bigger than us, that eternal quest to discovering the meaning of life.

Within this whole realm supersedes the sixth human need of growth. Through learning and prospering naturally occurs an expansion of capacity, capability and understanding of others.

When we aspire to continually up-level the quotient distributed to these fundamental needs, our overall happiness becomes embellished with the wonderful benefits they undoubtedly yield. Through understanding your needs, you can implement positive behaviours that will allow you to achieve yours goals and create new patterns leading you to long lasting fulfilment and happiness.

SURROUNDED BY WATER!



Flood waters surround The Lead Mosque following heavy rains in Shkodra, Albania, on Monday. – Reuters

Why do we need a holiday?

Holidays are extremely important for many reasons and that itself is an objective to plan few breaks in a year. There are at least two reasons why each individual needs a break and the type of breaks could vary.

Went on a trip to explore holiday plans of Oman's national carrier, Oman Air. The destination was Phuket, Thailand.

The trip was pure example of widening the mind's horizon. There was an element of excitement of being in a new country wondering about its cultural features, practices, rules and regulations and of course the people. Whichever part of the world, one of the most important attractions of a country is of course the people of the land. The people leave the strongest and lasting impression on the mind along with the sights and sounds.

As the flight landed the first impression was of the people. We are in different countries but we are in one planet sharing the same sun



Lakshmi Kothaneth
@lakshmioman

The writer is a senior journalist and a radio anchor

WHICHEVER PART OF THE WORLD, ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ATTRactions OF A COUNTRY IS OF COURSE THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND

and moon. The first experience of the land was with the people, especially a person who was dealing with baggage, which probably meant he had to deal with hundreds of passengers from different cultures on a daily basis. He still had the patience to explain maybe for the hundredth time where to find the luggage and the location of the exit gates. He assisted some on how to get connected to the free Wi-Fi, while guiding others with the airport procedures. Would it not be amazing to meet hundreds of new faces and accents everyday.

Used to think a journalist has no two days similar because one has to interview different persons for news stories. And now here was a person dealing with people who are often overwhelmed and tensed on the other hand there were the well versed travellers who were calm and patient. Each profession has importance but in every way being human makes all the

difference.

An interesting group of people in this world are tourists. They should be studied further because their outlook towards the world must be different compared to the combined global population. Tourists have a purpose in life and they on their own support a vast number of sectors that also create job security for the members of the host country. So there they were - tourists who walked straight from the beach to the streets, a tourist who walked barefoot in the rain allowing her toes painted in different colours reflect the raindrops. Vendors meanwhile are ready with the raincoats and the shopkeepers are helpful with their advice.

Walking on the streets in Patong is a beautiful experience because you can hear conversations in so many languages and the accents themselves are a treat to listen to. After all, languages

are expressions of emotions.

Walking on the beach meant becoming a photographer to newly weds. There is only so much a selfie can do when the sky is splashed with hues of colours at sunset wanting one to a picture of silhouette one definitely needs a helping hand. And so here was this tourist volunteering and accepting requests. It feels amazing to be the reason to make someone wear a smile. This is definitely a reason for holiday.

Climbing up the steps to Big Buddha in Phuket and taking in all the cultural and spiritual elements was a treat of a different kind because there was a mixture of nationalities sitting together under a huge tree ready to experiment with meditation. Another reason for a holiday - we are ready to relax and try something new and even go through the process of learning.

There is of course one major reason why we are ready to learn and that is time in your

hand and being away from daily routine. This gives the holiday maker an opportunity to reflect and invest in 'me time' when one is far away from deadlines and meetings.

Now these are just few of the reasons why we need a holiday in addition to the breath of fresh air, new fragrances and aromatic flavours found in each country that is unique in its own way as well as not to forget the bargaining techniques that is to experimented with and the overall shopping experience. No wonder health experts say holidays are great for physical and mental health, great way to reduce stress so one can sleep better, with holidays known to reduce blood pressure it is considered to be great for heart and because of all this a holiday is what everyone should be prescribed.

And with the long weekend declared and is just around the corner this is the perfect time to fulfil this prescription.



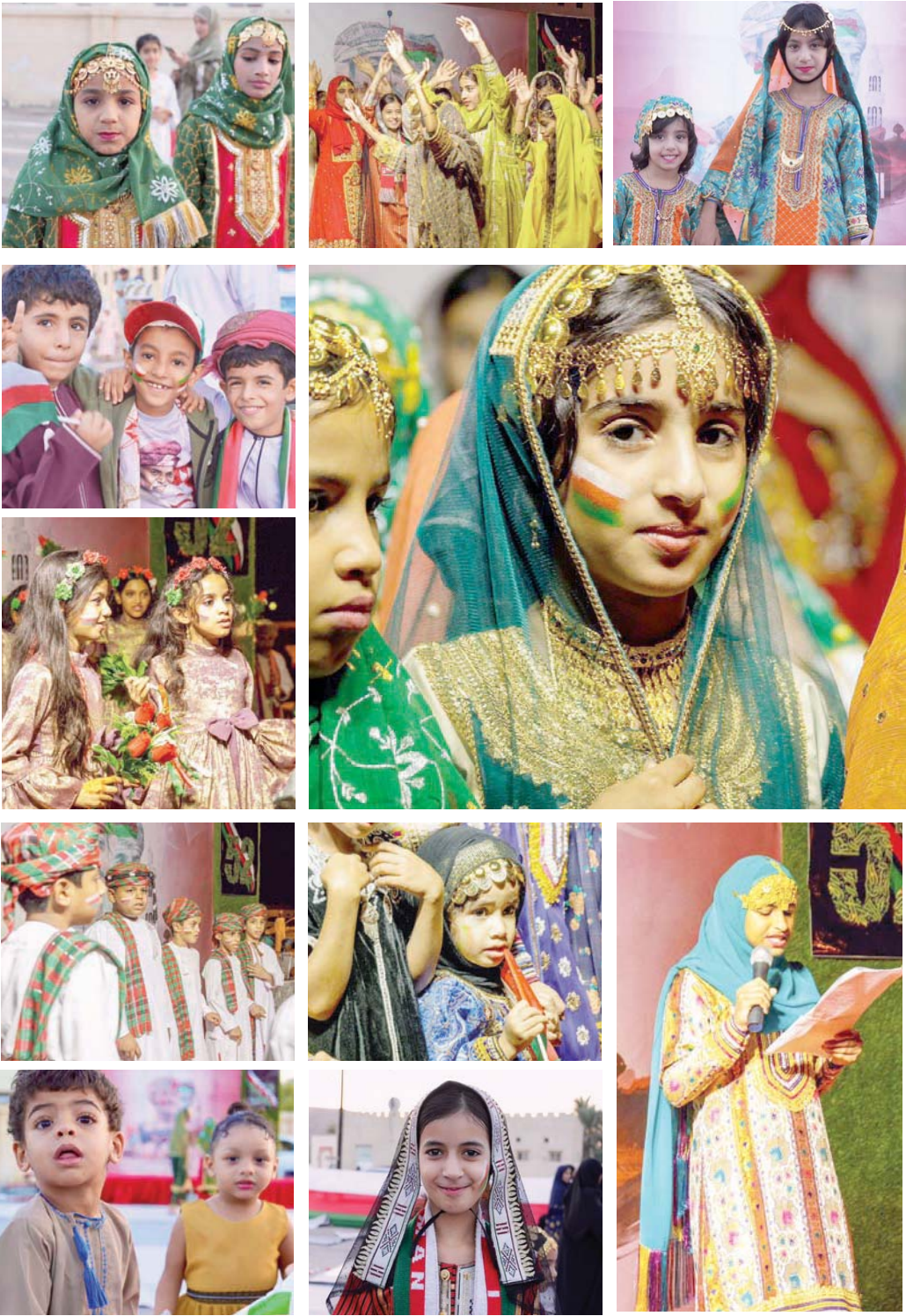
National day celebration extends to small villages

By Yeru Ebuon
Instagram: @yru_here

Villages across Oman have their different ways of celebrating the 52nd Oman National Day. On November 18, thousands of citizens took to the streets to express their pride and joy as the country marked another milestone. Celebrations in Oman usually do not end after November 18 is over. In the coastal village of Yiti, the villagers in the surrounding area gathered for a celebration passing on to the children the important message of taking pride in the country's accomplishments. Attended by hundreds of kids accompanied by their parents, and in cases of others, the whole clan, the event was a demonstration that despite the fast developments happening within their locality, the villagers of Yiti still treasure their culture and traditions. Starting at 4pm and organised by key members of the community, a

public space was converted into an event place right at the heart of one of Yiti's villages. The celebration would see the villagers putting up temporary stalls to sell toys, food, and other household items while the walls and stage were decorated with flags, Oman colours as well as massive photos of the two Sultans – the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos and His Majesty Sultan Haitham. The event officially kicked off with the men of the villages, accompanied by drums, did a parade through the streets heading towards the venue while chanting their poem of pride. The rest of the evening will see a cultural show where the kids from different villages performed different songs and dances. For the said event, a local shared that by organising such an event on a special occasion they will be able to bring the whole community together and pass on the spirit of community and cooperation to the next generation. "The kids are an important part of

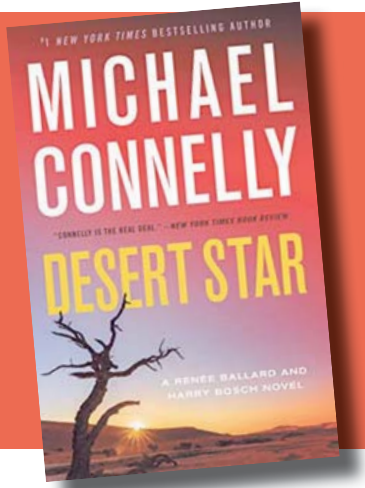
our country. By passing to them our culture and tradition, we can make sure that these practises survive through the years," a local from the Al Jaabri clan shared. For the said occasion, both adults and children were in their full traditional Omani attires the men donning the finest dishdasha with their ceremonial khanjars and musar while the ladies were donning their traditional dishdasha and sharwal accompanied by colourful waqaya on top of gold and silver adornments. Traditional food was also sold in some of the stalls at the souq area while kahwa and halwa were shared among different villagers – a big part of the Omani tradition and hospitality. Seeing the success of the event, the organisers said that they will try to create more cultural events to also allow other residents to visit and see their traditions. The villagers said that they are looking forward to having another event in December creating something that everyone can look forward to.



READ

DESERT STAR
BY MICHAEL CONNELLY

Ballard and Bosch bury old resentments as they go after two killers.



GOLDEN CANARY DIAMOND

A representative from Sotheby's Hong Kong holds up the Golden Canary diamond in Hong Kong. The Golden Canary diamond (303.10 Carats) is expected to fetch at least US\$ 15 Million at Sotheby's New York this December. — AFP



CULTURE

A woman of the Miao ethnic minority, dressed in a traditional costume, preparing to take part in the celebration of the Kuzang Festival in Leishan county, in China's southwestern Guizhou province. The Kuzang Festival is an ancestor worship ceremony for the Miao ethnic minority, which is celebrated every 13 years and then held for four consecutive years. — AFP





INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS

sachinorthodoc16
Salalah, Omanrickyrozario1
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We select three photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. The rules are simple. Follow us on Instagram. Upload your photos. Tag us and use **#OmanObserver** and **#BeAnObserver**.



AROUND THE WORLD

ART

Warhol piece sells for \$85 mn at New York auction



ANDY WARHOL'S iconic 1960s painting "White Disaster" sold for \$85 million at auction on Wednesday evening last week at Sotheby's in New York.

The 1963 piece of art was sold after two minutes and a brief duel between two bidders, for a total of \$74 million, or \$85.4 million with all related costs and fees.

The last time a piece of art from Warhol's "Death and Disaster" series was sold in 2013, it set a record for the artist at \$105 million.

In May, Warhol's 1964 portrait of Marilyn Monroe, "Shot Sage Blue Marilyn," was auctioned for \$195 million, becoming the most expensive 20th-century work ever sold at auction.

"White Disaster [White Car Crash 19 Times]," as it is formally known, is a work of silkscreen ink and graphite, which depicts the same black-and-white image of a macabre car accident 19 times on a canvas 12 feet (3.6 meters) tall.

"At the end of 1962, Warhol paints Marilyn Monroe, beginning his fascination with celebrity imagery, but it was really her demise at the end of '62 and the spectacle around her death that captured Warhol's fascination," said David Galperin, head of contemporary art Americas at Sotheby's.

The piece of art sold on Wednesday came from a private collection and Sotheby's gave no information on the buyer. — **AFP**

Banksy says fashion retailer Guess 'helped themselves' to his work

RENOWNED GRAFFITI artist Banksy on Friday criticised fashion retailer Guess, saying it had used his work without permission, and invited shoplifters to pay the London shop a visit.

Banksy, whose true identity is a closely guarded secret, posted a photo of Guess' Regent Street store in central London on Instagram, suggesting shoplifters should pay it a visit.

"Attention all shoplifters. Please go to GUESS on Regent Street. They've helped themselves to my artwork without asking, how can it be wrong for you to do the same to their clothes?" the post told Banksy's 11.6 million followers.

The store window display featured Banksy's Flower Thrower graffiti, and showcased a new capsule collection from Guess, which its website says was "created in partnership with Brandalised, an urban graffiti license whose mission is to offer Banksy fans affordable graffiti collectibles."

After the Banksy post, store staff covered the window display.

Guess could not be immediately reached for comment. Last week Banksy unveiled a work in the Ukrainian town of Borodyanka, which had been occupied by Russia until April and heavily damaged by fighting in the early days of Moscow's invasion. — **Reuters**

ENTERTAINMENT

Adele offers heartbreak, wisdom and banter at delayed Vegas residency



THIS WAS WORTH the wait - and not only for the reasons Adele might've foreseen.

Finally launching her long-delayed five-month residency at the Colosseum at Caesars Palace on Friday night, the superstar British singer made no attempt to slide by the memory of her shocking cancellation in January, when she announced just hours before its planned premiere that she was putting off the show indefinitely because it wasn't ready.

"I should be giving you a standing ovation," she told the audience through tears on Friday after fans rose to their feet to applaud the one-two punch of heavy-duty balladry - "Hello" followed by "Easy on Me" - that opened her set.

"Thank you so much for coming back to me." Later she described bailing as "the worst feeling I've ever had but the best decision I've ever made" and said, "I do stand by it."

If that's because the abandoned version of the residency lacked the sense of intimacy she's said she was after, she's right to feel vindicated: Weekends with Adele, as this run of 32 gigs through late March is called, strikes an exquisite balance of personal storytelling and Las Vegas glitz, with stirring expressions of pure emotion amid just the right amount of stagecraft to remind you where you are.

In offering the chance to savour one of the world's biggest voices in a mid-sized theatre, the show also comes at an unexpectedly opportune moment, as pop fans are pondering the drawbacks of a

gigantic stadium concert thanks to Ticketmaster's botched roll out of passes for Taylor Swift's 2023 tour.

(To be clear, snagging a ticket to see Adele from one of the Colosseum's 4,100 seats presented its own challenges, not least resellers' prices that ran more than \$800 for a perch in the balcony.)

"The whole reason I wanted to play a small room was so I could be so close to you," Adele said after she sang "When We Were Young" - sang the stuff out of it, that is - while literally strolling through the crowd, grip-and-grinning like a politician on a rope line.

The concentration required to use her voice with such control and to identify which audience members were the ones to hug - it was a thing to behold, which you felt fortunate to be able to do without binoculars.

Though it's tied career-wise to last year's "30" LP - nominated this week for Grammy Awards including album, record and song of the year - "Weekends With Adele" draws from throughout the 34-year-old's catalogue, showcasing the sturdy, hand-played love songs that have made her a commercial powerhouse even as pop has moved away from her proudly old-fashioned style.

The show starts with just Adele, dressed on Friday in a simple if glamorous black gown, and a pianist on a small slice of stage; eventually, several scrims slide away and they're joined by a full band with three backing vocalists.

"I wanted to make it feel like for you what it's like in the studio for me," Adele told the multigenerational audience,

describing a creative process she said begins with her on piano - "We just around until something feels good or feels sad" - before she and her collaborators build out her songs with additional sounds and textures.

There are flashy set pieces in keeping with Vegas tradition. During "Hold On," twinkling paper lanterns descended from the ceiling; "Set Fire to the Rain" had a curtain of water and a grand piano that slowly burst into flame. Enormous screens on either side of the wide stage showed extreme close-ups of Adele for anyone not on her walking path.

And for "Skyfall," her lushly dramatic James Bond theme, a couple of dozen string players materialised in a "Hollywood Squares"-like grid behind her (though it wasn't clear if the players were there in person or on video).

Yet the relatively straightforward presentation put the emphasis on Adele's music - on the unashamedly detailed explorations of heartbreak in songs like "Don't You Remember" and "Someone Like You" and on her singing, of course, which is its own high-grade special effect.

Inspired by her divorce and the instability she fears it brought into the life of her young son, "30" captures Adele in a raw, apprehensive state; it was moving to see her revisit that turmoil with a bit of wisdom.

Indeed, what makes an Adele show such an emotional experience is the feeling that she's processing in real time, and as always that pertained as much to her rambling and foul-mouthed banter between songs as to the songs themselves.

(At just over two hours, "Weekends With Adele" is longer than the typical Vegas gig.)

On Friday she was hilarious talking about her anticipation for this weekend's finale of "The Walking Dead" and about how she convinced her set designer to build a chair into the stage because what she thought was a slipped disc in her back has moved down to her left knee. At one point she used a T-shirt gun to blast merch into the audience, all the while making fun of her crummy aim; at another point she invited a woman with an obstructed view in the balcony - one of "the worst seats in this house," Adele called it - to come take a new seat near the stage, where the singer proceeded to chat up the woman about where she was from.

Adele even made a thank you to the suits at Caesars corporate sound sincere: "There has been a lot of written about me since I cancelled those shows, and I tell you, 90 per cent of it is absolutely completely made up," she said. "There's been rumours that I've moved hotels and that I'm moving theatres and all this, and never once did they ask any questions."

Adele said this as her band was preparing to rev up "Rolling in the Deep," which with its stomping beat and its chorus that everyone knows had the feel of a closing number. But Adele tacked on one more tune to finish Friday's show: the lush and romantic "Love Is a Game," which also ends "30" on a note of happily foolish optimism.

"I will remember this night for the rest of my life," she said as her band played her out. "Better late than never." — **tca/dpa**

A WINDOW INTO
CONTEMPORARY OMANI
LITERATUREDr Khalid Mohammed al Balushi
khalidalbalushi@hotmail.com

"Real" Gazelle and "Fancied" Grasshoppers (Part 1)

THE FOLLOWING IS my English translation of excerpts from "A Soldier from Oman, Memory's Nectar" by (ret.) Inspector-General Said bin Rashid Al Kalbani.

After my leave ended, I came to Muscat, to the office of Brig Gen Maxwell. He told me that my regiment was due to arrive, and ordered me to go to Bidbid to catch up with them. I readied myself to return to military after a rather difficult period in my life, a serious injury, and a long excruciating process of treatment.

I set out towards Bidbid to see the Deputy Commander, John Cooper, who suggested to me to leave the company and work in his office. I had a feeling that this was a step before they transferred me to the stores or made me retire altogether. He also added that for the time being he would find me a vehicle to use to look for new recruits. Upon getting the vehicle with a driver, I went to the offices of walis in many wilayat*, starting from Samayil to Dhank. Luckily, we were able to recruit a large number in 1968.

During the same period an expert from the Towel Company came in a research mission on the migration of desert grasshoppers. As he asked for a companion from the army, I was given that role. Our mission continued for fifteen days. Equipped with guns and ammunition, accompanied by soldiers and provided with food and oil, we reached Maqshan in Dhofar in our Bedford van.

Though my leg pain didn't quite leave me, especially when sitting down, I had to continue the journey. We then returned to Hema, where we saw a flock of deer. As hunting at that time wasn't prohibited, we chased the deer and hunted one. It happened to be a female deer, a pregnant one, indeed. I recall when I fired, the bullet hit her belly, from which twin baby deer could be seen, and then she immediately died. At that moment, at that particular moment something hit me in my eye, I recall vividly.

We took the deer to Hema. It was such a rich meal for the others. I couldn't take part though because of the pain I had in my eye at that night. Upon asking some of the Bedouin, we were told that if a hunter hit a female deer with a bullet his eye would automatically get injured. It was only when I applied salt and water to my eye that I felt the pain began to subside gradually.

*The plural form of "wilaya", the Arabic word equivalent to "province" or "district" (the translator).

business

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New multipurpose port to come up at Masirah

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources stated that the establishment of a multipurpose port in the Wilayat of Masirah in the Al Sharqiyah South Governorate, which is one of the development projects included in the tenth five-year plan (2021-2025), comes within the framework of work to develop ports.

The aim is to make fishing in Oman an attractive environment for investments, and to keep pace with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources’ plan to benefit from fish resources by increasing and developing the fishing fleet, and to be a possible and attractive work environment for Omani fishermen, with the provision of many public and private services within the port’s sanctuaries, which will raise the contribution of the fisheries sector



to the GDP.

The Masirah Port project includes several basic components, including serving the fisheries sector, facilities for the tourism

sector, and transportation, in addition to government and private service facilities on a land area of about 240,000 square metres.

The project will include the

construction of a main breakwater with a length of 3,052 metres and a secondary breakwater with a length of 1,120 metres, with a fixed berth with a length of 590 metres,

floating berths for fishing boats, trawlers and pleasure boats. The port basin, covering one million square metres, will be dredged to a depth of 5-6 metres. — ONA

Omantel subsidiary not to proceed with stake sale

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, NOV 21

Omantel has announced its subsidiary Zain Telecom has dropped plans to proceed with the sale of its stake in Zain Sudan.

In a filing to the CMA, the telecom company referenced its disclosure on December 9, 2021 concerning the non-binding offer to sell Zain Group’s stake in Zain Sudan Company and the Kuwaiti Sudanese Holding Company.

It noted that the proposed “sale would not have achieved the desired outcome of maximising shareholder value”.

Consumer Price Index climbs 2.4pc

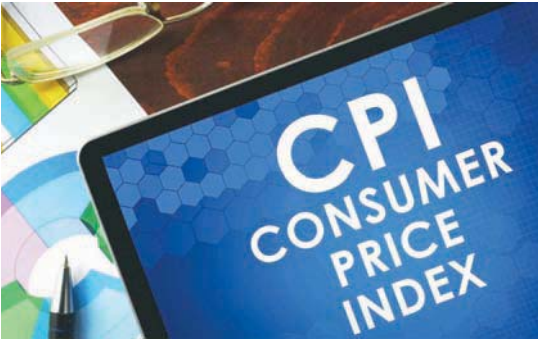
QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, NOV 21

Inflationary pressures lifted the Consumer Price Index in the Sultanate of Oman 2.4 per cent in August 2022, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

The data indicated an increase in the prices of major groups in August 2022 compared to August 2021, such as education by 5.1 per cent, food and non-alcoholic beverages by 4.9 per cent, health by 3.5 per cent, and transportation by 3.1 per cent, restaurants and hotels by 2.1 per cent, miscellaneous goods and services by 1.5 per cent, entertainment and culture by 1.4 per cent, furniture, household equipment and routine home maintenance by 1.2 per cent, clothing and footwear by 0.9 per cent, housing and water, electricity, gas and other fuels by 0.6 per cent.

Meanwhile, the prices of some major groups, such as tobacco and communications, remained unchanged.

Prices of oils and fats also increased by 19.2 per cent, meat by 8.8 per cent, fruits by 7.5 per cent,



non-alcoholic beverages by 4.4 per cent, bread and cereals by 4.1 per cent, and milk, cheese and eggs by 3.2 per cent, sugar, jam, honey and sweets by 2.3 per cent, other food by 1.9 per cent and fish and seafood by 1.7 per cent.

Vegetable prices fell by 2.9 per cent.

In the governorates, Al Buraimi recorded the highest inflation rate of 4.3 per cent, followed by Al Dakhiliyah with 2.9 per cent, followed by Dhofar with 2.7 per cent, Al Dhahirah with 2.6 per cent, North Al Batinah with 2.4 per cent, then North and South Sharqiyah by 2.3 per cent, while Muscat Governorate recorded the lowest inflation rate of 2.1 per cent.

OETC completes construction work of Mirbat power station

JOMAR MENDOZA
@JmObserver

Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC), a member of Nama Group, announced the successful completion of the construction works of the Mirbat power station with a voltage of 132/33 kV and the associated transmission lines from the Ashur station to the Mirbat station at a cost of more than RO 11 million.

The project consists of six bays of 132 kV GIS, two transformers of 132 kV to 33 kV and each of them has a capacity of 63 MVA.

The project includes protection devices, communication and fire protection systems.

Meanwhile, work is under way to upgrade the efficiency of Thamrait



station with a voltage of 33/132 kV from two transformers with a capacity of 2x30 MVA to 2x63 MVA.

The project included new building 33 KV GIS with dismantling two transformers of 30 MVA and replaced by two transformers with capacity of 63 MVA. The project is already 96.26 per cent complete with a cost of RO

3.4 million.

Last month, OETC completed the construction of a solar energy transmission station in the Wilayat of Ibri. The solar energy transmission station, a 220kv grid station with a construction cost of about RO 7.5 million, is the first grid station connected to solar power plant in Ibri.

Oman Fisheries renews usufruct pacts for another 30 years

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, NOV 21

Oman Fisheries Company (OFC), which is partly owned by the Omani government through wholly state-owned Fisheries Development Oman (FDO), says it has secured extensions for long-running usufruct agreements spanning another 30 years.

These new agreements confer usufruct rights over government lands currently hosting the sizable holdings of Oman Fisheries in the form of processing plants, warehousing and storage facilities, refrigeration plants, and collection and retail outlets, among other

support infrastructure.

“Oman Fisheries Company renewed the usufruct agreements with government authorities for the next thirty years,” the Chairman of the publicly-listed company said in the Director’s report of its third quarter performance.

The renewals come amid a strong uptick in Oman Fisheries’ operations in the wake of a number of recent initiatives by the company to boost fishery production. Q3 022 marked the start of commercial fishing operations in partnership with Irish fisheries firm Atlantic Dawn.

Around 1,215 metric tonnes (MT) of small pelagics were



procured under the arrangement with Atlantic Dawn — part of a quota of 30,000 MT per year allocated by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources under an agreement

signed earlier this year.

Atlantic Dawn Group, one of Europe’s largest producers of frozen pelagic fish, operates a vertically integrated business.

Accordingly, it is engaged in

every link in the chain from first catch to final customer.

The company operates across multiple territories and seas to supply a global market, utilising a modern fleet of fishing vessels.

In other developments during the quarter, Oman Fisheries procured 1,200 MT of fish from Al Wusta Fisheries Industries — a subsidiary of FDO — under an agreement signed by the two sides recently.

Separately, Oman Fisheries also procured a total of 18,548 MT of fresh fish from artisanal fishermen, among other sources, as part of its commitment to augmenting the incomes of small Omani

fishermen. This compares with a procurement of 15,070 MT during the corresponding period of 2021.

Significantly, exports accounted for 83 per cent of total revenue generated during Q2 2022, while the rest came from domestic sales, the Chairman stated.

Oman Fisheries achieved a consolidated turnover of RO 11.161 million from operations during the first nine months of 2022, compared to a turnover of RO 7.890 million for the same period last year.

The Group earned a net loss of RO 76K during this period, down from RO 1.539 million for the corresponding period of 2021.

National Finance and Tasdeed sign pact on digital payments

MUSCAT: Oman's largest finance company, National Finance, has collaborated with Tasdeed for Electronic Services LLC to digitalise its payments and enhance the entire customer experience with seamless transaction flow.

Expanding its technological capabilities to reach customers all across the Sultanate of Oman, the signing of the agreement is also a testament of National Finance's commitment to its digitalisation goals.

The new initiative will make it even easier for customers to carry out their transactions through a reliable, secure, and convenient channel.

"We are delighted to bring on board one of the top payment platforms, Tasdeed. In our experience, integrating digital payment options for customers increases the overall consistency and efficiency of the collection process and drives customer self-service," said Tariq al Farsi – Chief Executive Officer.

"An ongoing relationship also means regular collaboration to address mutual business and market requirements. This will



not only help us keep pace with continuous developments in the industry but will also go a long way in promoting digital payments across different sectors.

Through our ongoing initiatives, National Finance has proven that it is strongly aligned with Oman Vision 2040 and the national digital transformation agenda."

On his part, Abdullatif al Shaqsi, Chief Executive Officer of Tasdeed for Electronic Services, expressed his pleasure on the collaboration with National Finance, stating it to be a pioneer financing company in the Sultanate of Oman.

He also said that Tasdeed

is a simple, effective and user-friendly electronic platform for determining due payments and settling them instantly. Individuals can use Tasdeed to pay at ease from the comfort of their homes or offices through several electronic payment channels, including those offered by banks, mobile wallets, mobile payment applications, payment service providers, their online portal, and ONEIC branches located throughout the Sultanate of Oman, where one can pay via bank accounts, debit cards or credit cards. Mirroring National Finance's values of providing transparency and security to

customers, the system provided by Tasdeed also ensures optimum built-in security and stringent authentication features.

With the country placing increased emphasis on fostering a cashless economy, National Finance has been at the forefront of integrating the latest technological advancements into all its operations.

This has been instrumental in creating a sustainable ecosystem that is robust, dynamic and capable of handling market complexities. At the same time, it has remained unwavering in its commitment to its clients, ensuring that customer convenience takes priority.

Bank Nizwa holds town hall gathering for employees

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman's first and most trusted Islamic bank, Bank Nizwa, hosted a National Day celebration gathering for its employees. The event witnessed the presence of senior management and bank employees.

During the event, employees who completed 10 years and consistently demonstrated quality work ethics and dedication in accomplishing their assigned tasks were honoured with accolades. The morning of celebrations commenced with an inspirational video followed by a keynote speech delivered by the Khalid al Kayed, Chief Executive Officer of Bank Nizwa. Later a question and answer session was held for the employees.



It also featured several engaging activities, including a presentation by Haifa al Lawati, Assistant General Manager, Human Resources, on the contribution of employees to the success and excellence of Bank Nizwa.

Additionally, several competitions were held in which employees participated

enthusiastically. To add to the enthusiasm. On this national occasion, Al Kayed, Chief Executive Officer of Bank Nizwa commented, "I and all Bank Nizwa employees extend our warmest congratulations and blessings to Sultan Haitham bin Tariq — may Allah Almighty protect him — and to all the people of Oman. It

is our prayer that Oman and its people continue to prosper with pride and dignity."

"The National Day provides a unique opportunity to celebrate our achievements and mobilise energies to continue giving back to our community. By providing innovative and sustainable products and services in accordance with Islamic Shariah, Bank Nizwa has always contributed to the comprehensive growth witnessed by the Sultanate of Oman. Additionally, we continue to invest in our efforts to plan, employ, train and qualify Omani youth. We are committed to providing the community with the highest quality products and services compatible with Islamic Shariah," he added.

Sohar International unveils Qurum branch new design



MUSCAT: Advancing its commitment towards enhancing the banking experience for its customers through world-class products and an extensive network of branches, Sohar International inaugurated its full-fledged newly revamped branch in Al Qurum commercial area.

The inauguration ceremony, which was held on November 16, 2022, witnessed the presence of Sayyid Ahmed bin Hilal al Busaidy, Wali of Muttrah as the Guest of Honour. Representing the bank was Khalil Salim al Hedaifi, Chief Retail Banking Officer of Sohar International along with a number of the bank's executive management.

Located in a vibrant commercial area, the state-of-the-art Al Qurum branch has been concentrating on convenience, ease of accessibility, and quick service while embodying every element of excellence that Sohar International has been revered for.

The innovatively designed branch reflects Sohar International's brand elements, and is fully-equipped to provide a comprehensive suite of products and services, a 24-hour digital lobby with ATM and CDM facilities, and

a dedicated area for Wealth Management services.

Operational from 8.00 am to 2:00 pm from Sunday to Thursday, it upholds the level of customer service and operational effectiveness that the bank's customers have grown increasingly familiar with. Focusing on providing opportunities to the local workforce, the branch is also staffed by a team of experienced professionals who reserve the knowledge, competency, and zeal to cater to the diverse demands of the bank's elite clientele.

Commenting on the official opening of the branch, Khalil bin Salim al Hedaifi, Chief Retail Banking Officer at Sohar International, said, "Al Qurum branch marks another milestone in our shared journey with customers who seek world-class banking services and aspire to make better gains.

Owing to its strategic location, Al Qurum branch has successfully been servicing customers in and around the Qurum commercial area with a host of modern banking and financial services. At Sohar International, we place increased emphasis on convenient branch locations, seamless procedures, and personalised services."

Saud Bahwan Group and Okura Hotels & Resorts Sign Agreement for Okura's First 5-Star Luxury Hotel in the Middle East



Mr. Abdullah Mohamed Bahwan and Okura's Senior Officials Signing the Agreement



Exterior Design of the Okura Resort Muscat



View of the Lobby



Specialty Japanese Teppanyaki Restaurant

Saud Bahwan Group recently signed an agreement with Okura Hotels & Resorts for the world-renowned hotel chain's first 5-star luxury hotel in Oman and the Middle East. The world-class luxury hotel will be designed by a leading Japanese Architect using a Neo-Omani theme. Sharing his thoughts on this special occasion, Mohammed Saud Bahwan, Chairman, Saud Bahwan Group said, "It gives me immense joy to be partnering the globally-renowned

Japanese Hospitality Group – Okura Hotels & Resorts. Saud Bahwan Group has been closely associated with Japanese brands for decades. Through The Okura Resort Muscat luxury hotel, we aim to offer customers in Oman and from around the world, some of the finest experiences in line with inspiring Japanese hospitality." Highlighting the potential of the growing hospitality sector in Oman he said, "Oman, under the leadership and guidance of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq Al Said is making

rapid progress on all fronts. Oman Vision 2040 launched by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, is set to transform Oman into one of the most rapidly growing and diversified economies in the region. The hospitality sector in Oman is witnessing impressive growth. Oman is blessed with rich history and diverse landscapes, making it a major tourist attraction for tourists to enjoy ultimate experiences and adventure. The Okura Resort Muscat will significantly contribute

to making Oman one of the most traveller-friendly and leading tourism destinations in the region." Mr. Toshihiro Ogita, President, Representative Director - Hotel Okura Co. Ltd., Japan, said, "We are thrilled to be partnering Saud Bahwan Group to bring the Okura brand to the Middle East and especially in the Sultanate of Oman. This significant partnership further highlights our priority and focus on offering customers exceptionally inspiring experiences in the hospitality industry.

We are confident that this partnership will encourage us to better cater to our customers by introducing them to the Japanese art of hospitality right here in Oman." Located at the Al Mouj Muscat in Seeb and in close vicinity to the Muscat International Airport, The Okura Resort Muscat luxury hotel is set on 30,000 sq. mts. area. It will have 150 well-appointed rooms and suites, each of which will offer breath-taking views of world-class Al Mouj golf course and of the vast blue seas. The hotel will

offer exceptional dining options with the availability of an all-day dining restaurant, a specialty Japanese restaurant, a Teppanyaki restaurant and fine-dining restaurant. A vast and well-laid out ballroom and banquet hall will offer numerous opportunities to host important events, meeting and milestone celebrations. A host of recreational amenities focused on offering customers relaxing moments, will include an indoor and outdoor swimming pool, spa and a fully-equipped gymnasium.

Classifieds

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MSX signs MoU with MEIRA

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The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA) and appointed a representative for the country.

Haitham al Salmi, CEO of MSX and John Gollifer, General Manager, MEIRA signed the MoU representing the parties respectively in the presence of a number of officials as representatives of various shareholding companies listed on the stock exchange.

Speaking to the *Observer*, Haitham al Salmi, CEO of MSX said the association will ultimately benefit the shareholders who deal with the bourse.

"We have been a member of MEIRA for a very long time and we want to take it to the next level to work with us, primarily to develop our IR practices and to have the right certifications for our IR officers from the listed companies increasing the awareness between the issuers," Haitham al Salmi said.



Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) will also aim to revive the Oman IR Chapter while taking a leading role in the chapter by the appointment of Syeda Tabinda Bukhari an MSX Investor Relations Officer (IRO) as the head of the chapter.

"With the signing, we will put our plan and upgrade our best practices. Secondly, it is very critical to have the right, authenticated skills to perform the right IR skills to deal with investors and analysts whoever wants to have the right information," added Al Salmi.

He further said that by signing this MoU, the Muscat Stock Exchange will seek to

exchange the latest views on best practices in relation to investor relations activities.

"This is vital because enhancing transparency in the financial markets is of paramount importance and has become a matter for listed companies after the investor community has become more sophisticated and demanding for periodic information and updates from listed companies to enable it to take appropriate investment decisions."

It is equally important that all investment decisions need to come from the statistics and information and the key to such decision making is to

comprehend the past history of the companies that they are dealing with and it is the right of the shareholders to get the information.

According to the MSX, the collaboration with MEIRA is a strategic partnership, where it brings international benchmarks and a best practice toolkit to support the listed companies and develop the quality of companies' performance in the market.

"With the signing of the MoU, we take a better role in supporting the market participants and continuing MSX's journey towards creating a culture of sustainable investments that aligns with Oman Vision 2040," Syeda Tabinda Bukhari said.

MEIRA's approach is to initiate and accelerate local IR Chapters in regional capital markets and develop expertise by providing access to a wide variety of programmes, training and Certification, the most prominent of which being CIRO certification which is an internationally recognised qualification for IROs in the world, in partnership with UK IR Society.

ESG to enter centre-stage as Oman charts path to Net Zero future

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 21

The Sultanate of Oman, which has the longest Indian Ocean coastline within the GCC with many opportunities for wind energy, will invest more than \$190 billion by 2050 into the country's energy transition and decarbonisation projects to alleviate the negative effects of climate change, the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to Egypt told the COP27 conference last week.

Oman's roadmap to achieve Net Zero by its mid-century target date and the role of ESG — Environmental, Social and Governance — in achieving sustainable economic diversification in the country will be the central theme of the workshops tackled at the 9th Oman Energy ESG Forum in Muscat on November 22.

The Sultanate of Oman is finalising a national policy for energy transition that focuses on setting a general framework, policies, and regulations to accelerate the transformation process in sectors of hydrogen, renewable energy, energy efficiency and the capture, transfer, use and storage of carbon, and an update of the country's strategic plan will be presented at the industry event this week.

"There is no doubt that environmental, social, and governance (ESG) will be increasingly embedded in nearly all business conversations in Oman going forward," said Sean Evers, Chairman of the Forum, which is returning to Muscat after a 3-year hiatus due to the Covid pandemic.

"What used to be a 'nice to have' is now certainly a 'must have' — and the clock to gain competitive footing in this fast-growing market is ticking," he said.



ESG is a framework that helps stakeholders understand how an organisation is managing risks and opportunities related to environmental, social, and governance criteria.

It is increasingly playing a prominent role in creditworthiness, as ESG can — and does — influence credit quality, specifically, the capacity and willingness of borrowers to meet financial commitments.

The Capital Market Authority (CMA) of Oman said in March that it was committed to introducing ESG reporting guidelines for companies listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange, but initially for voluntary implementation only before it becomes mandatory sometime later.

The 9th Oman Energy Forum, which will be held only a few days after the conclusion of the UN climate conference in Egypt (COP27), will convene 250 executives and officials, from a diverse range of sectors, including energy, aviation, automobile, agriculture, academia, freezones and logistics, and through 18 sessions with over 40 speakers they will strive to answer the workshop's critical question: "How to Power Sustainable Economic Diversification in Oman?"

The forum is being produced with OPAL as the Knowledge Partner, and supported by PDO, CCED, OXY, bp, OQ and Oman LNG.

OPAZ enhances environmental compliance standards

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 21

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), represented by the Environmental Regulation Department of the Regulation and Compliance Sector, made several visits to the companies operating in the zones affiliated to the Authority, in order to review the procedures followed by the operating companies in the field of environmental control and the extent to which projects comply with the legislation, laws and regulations issued by OPAZ and to review



their compliance with the requirements of activity licenses and environmental permits followed in environmental management systems.

Among the expected results of these visits, are preparing and updating general policies

of inspection, control and compliance, as well as setting up unified models for collecting information and data on environmental compliance and control in all fields, opening channels for communication, facilitating procedures and creating an attractive environment for investment.

The visit programme included briefing the companies on the role of the compliance and legislation sector to clarify compliance standards and environmental affairs and to strengthen partnership with companies operating in the economic and free zones in order to achieve the foremost objectives of the Authority.



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— OMAN OBSERVER —

FIFA WORLD CUP Qatar 2022

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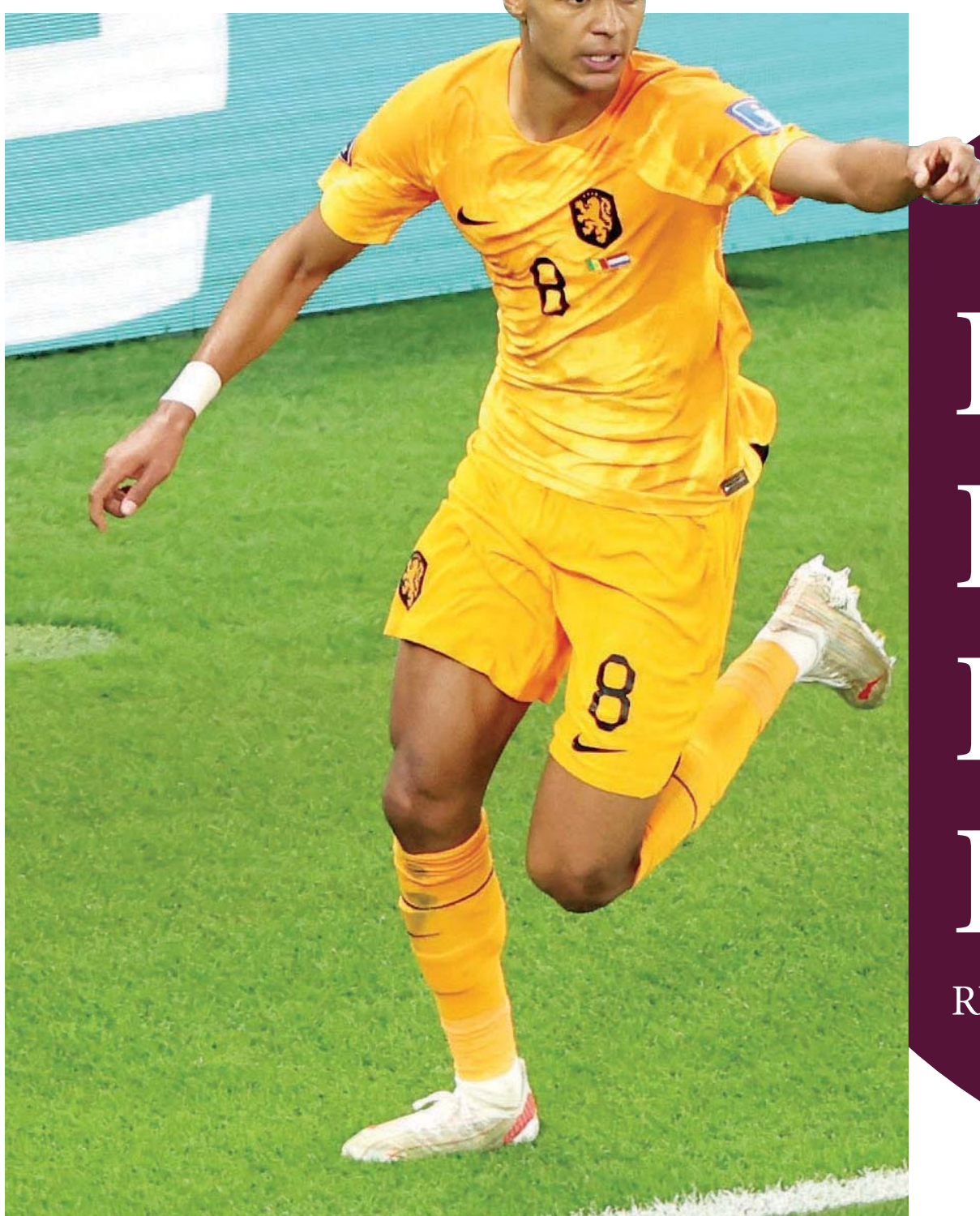
ENGLAND TURN ON THE STYLE

REPORT & PICTURES **P14**



England's Raheem Sterling celebrates scoring their third goal with Harry Kane, Jude Bellingham and Bukayo Saka. — Reuters

Netherlands' Cody Gakpo celebrates scoring their first goal. — Reuters



LATE FLOURISH FOR THE DUTCH

REPORT & PICTURES **P15**

DOHA: England made a scintillating start to their World Cup campaign as Bukayo Saka and Jude Bellingham inspired a 6-2 rout of outclassed Iran in Monday's Group B opener in Doha.

Saka and Bellingham were England's driving forces with dynamic displays that underlined their emergence as two of the game's brightest young stars.

Bellingham, 19, shattered Iran's hopes of frustrating England when he rose to head his maiden senior international goal in the first half.

Gareth Southgate's side were in sparkling form at the Khalifa International Stadium and goals from Saka and Raheem Sterling put them in complete control before half-time.

Saka, 21, netted again after the interval and, although Mehdi Taremi struck twice for Iran, Marcus Rashford and Jack Grealish completed the demolition.

There will be far sterner tests to come for England as they bid to win their first major trophy since the 1966 World Cup.

But this was a welcome step in the right direction for Southgate, whose team arrived in Qatar on a six-match winless run that triggered scathing criticism of the Three Lions boss and his perceived negative tactics.

The only concern for Southgate was the sight of Harry Maguire being replaced in the second half after being checked for a potential head injury.

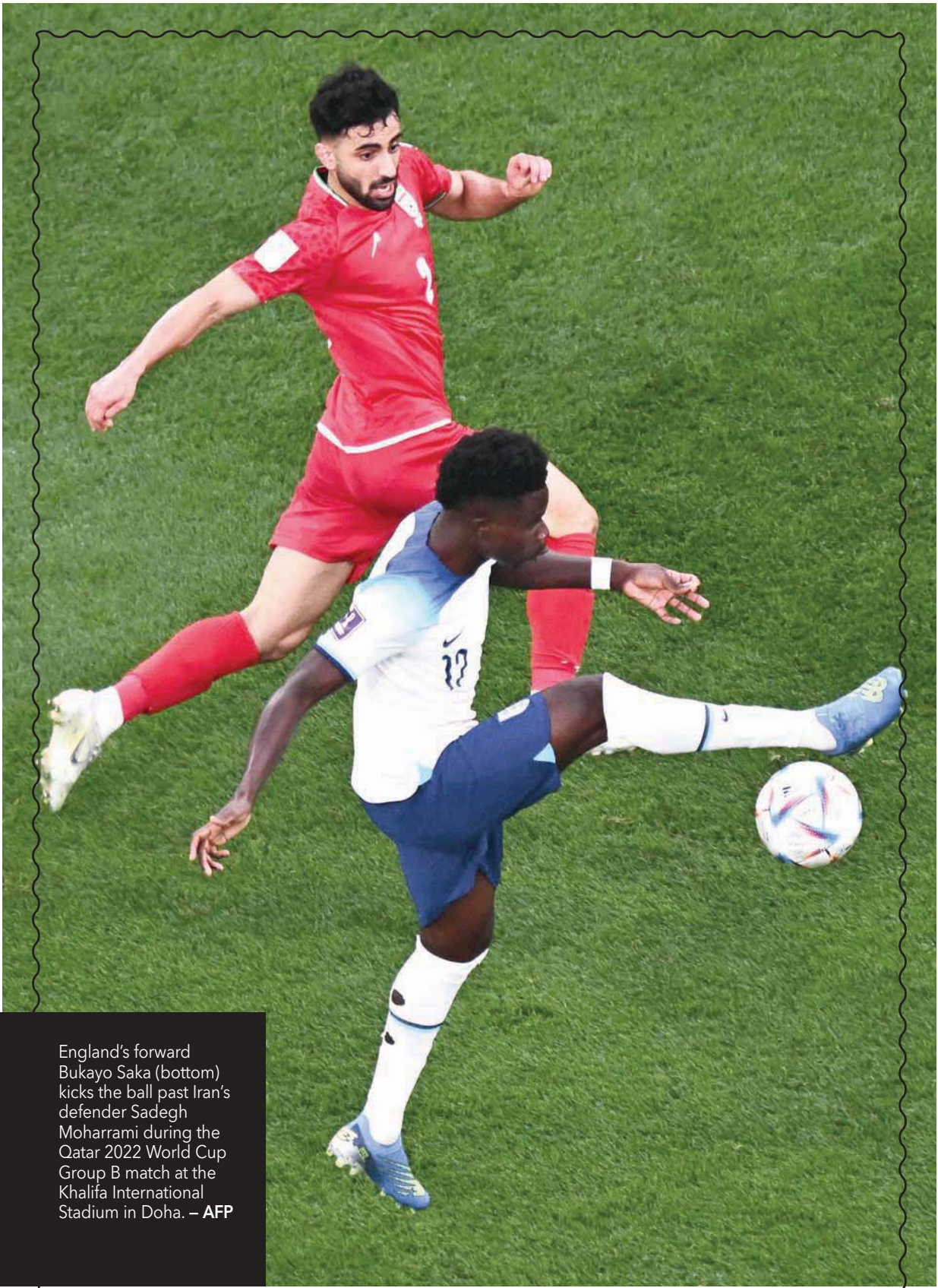
England play their second match against the United States on Friday and conclude their Group B fixtures against Wales on November 29.

Just hours before kick-off, England revealed captain Harry Kane would not wear a rainbow-themed 'One Love' armband after the Football Association and several other European countries dropped their campaign in support of LGBTQ rights.

Because the armband was not a Fifa-approved piece of kit, it was reported any player wearing it would be booked — a risk England were apparently unwilling to take.

SUBLIME SAKA

Having reached the World



England's forward Bukayo Saka (bottom) kicks the ball past Iran's defender Sadeh Moharrami during the Qatar 2022 World Cup Group B match at the Khalifa International Stadium in Doha. — AFP

Saka, Bellingham
sparkle as England
crush Iran

Cup semifinals in 2018 before losing to Italy in the Euro 2020 final, England are desperate to take the last step to silverware in Doha.

Southgate had urged his team "play on the front foot" and they responded in style, after initially finding their rhythm disrupted by a long delay when Iran goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand smashed into team-mate Majid Hosseini.

Despite being in no state to continue amid fears of a concussion, the bloodied Beiranvand played on before finally being substituted.

England eventually penned Iran deep inside their own half and Bellingham delivered in the 35th minute.

Sterling found Luke Shaw on the left flank and his cross was perfectly weighted for Bellingham, who looped a fine header into the far corner.

Playing for Birmingham in the Championship just two years ago, the Borussia Dortmund star's goal made him England's second youngest scorer at a World Cup behind Michael Owen.

Eight minutes later another of England's gifted prodigies doubled the lead.

Maguire headed down a corner and Arsenal forward Saka swivelled to lash a superb left-foot finish into the top corner.

Sterling put the result beyond doubt with his first goal at a World Cup in first-half stoppage time.

Bellingham fed Kane, whose pin-point cross was volleyed home by Sterling with the outside of his boot.

Saka made it four in the 62nd minute when he shuffled across the Iran area before stroking his shot past Hossein Hosseini.

Taremi fired into the roof of the net to reduce the deficit three minutes later.

Rashford's cool finish in the 71st minute, 49 seconds after he came on, was followed by Grealish's 90th-minute tap-in.

Taremi struck from the penalty spot with the last kick of the game after a shirt pull by John Stones, but the margin of victory reflected England's total dominance. — AFP



England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford runs for the ball. — AFP



Iran goalkeeper Hossein Hosseini dives as England forward Bukayo Saka scores his team's second goal. — AFP



England's Bukayo Saka (C) scores past Iran's goalkeeper Hossein Hosseini at the Khalifa International Stadium in Doha. — AFP

NETHERLANDS STRIKE LATE TO BEAT SENEGAL ON WC RETURN



Netherlands' midfielder Davy Klaassen (L) scores past Senegal's goalkeeper Edouard Mendy during the Qatar 2022 World Cup Group A match between Senegal and the Netherlands at the Al Thumama Stadium in Doha. — AFP



Netherlands' midfielder Davy Klaassen (C) celebrates with team-mates after he scored during the Qatar 2022 World Cup Group A match against Senegal at the Al Thumama Stadium in Doha. — AFP

DOHA: Late goals by Cody Gakpo and Davy Klaassen gave the Netherlands a 2-0 victory over African champions Senegal on Monday on their return to the World Cup stage.

With Senegal missing injured star man Sadio Mane and the Dutch without their main attacking threat Memphis Depay at kick-off, the Group A encounter in Doha looked set to end in a goalless draw.

But with just six minutes remaining PSV Eindhoven forward Gakpo got up in front of Senegal goalkeeper Edouard Mendy to head in a floated Frenkie de Jong cross from the left.

Substitute Klaassen then secured the victory deep in injury time, following up to score after Mendy had saved from Depay, who had also come off the bench.

The result leaves the Netherlands level at the top of the group with Ecuador, who beat hosts Qatar 2-0 in the tournament's opening match on Sunday.

Louis van Gaal's side play

Ecuador on Friday, while Senegal now face a must-win contest against Qatar.

Senegal saw Bayern Munich superstar Mane — who came second in this year's Ballon d'Or — pull out of the squad with a leg injury on the eve of the tournament.

His absence was clearly felt as the contest at Al Thumama Stadium — played out to the backdrop of the non-stop drumming and dancing of the Senegal support, but also in front of a considerable number of empty seats — never lived up to its billing.

Everton midfielder Idrissa Gana Gueye came closest to scoring for Senegal with a strike on the half-volley from the edge of the box that was beaten away by Netherlands goalkeeper Andries Noppert in the 73rd minute.

Noppert, the giant Heerenveen goalkeeper who was making his international debut, also excelled with saves from Boulaye Dia and Pape Gueye in the second half as the Netherlands played their first World Cup game in eight years.

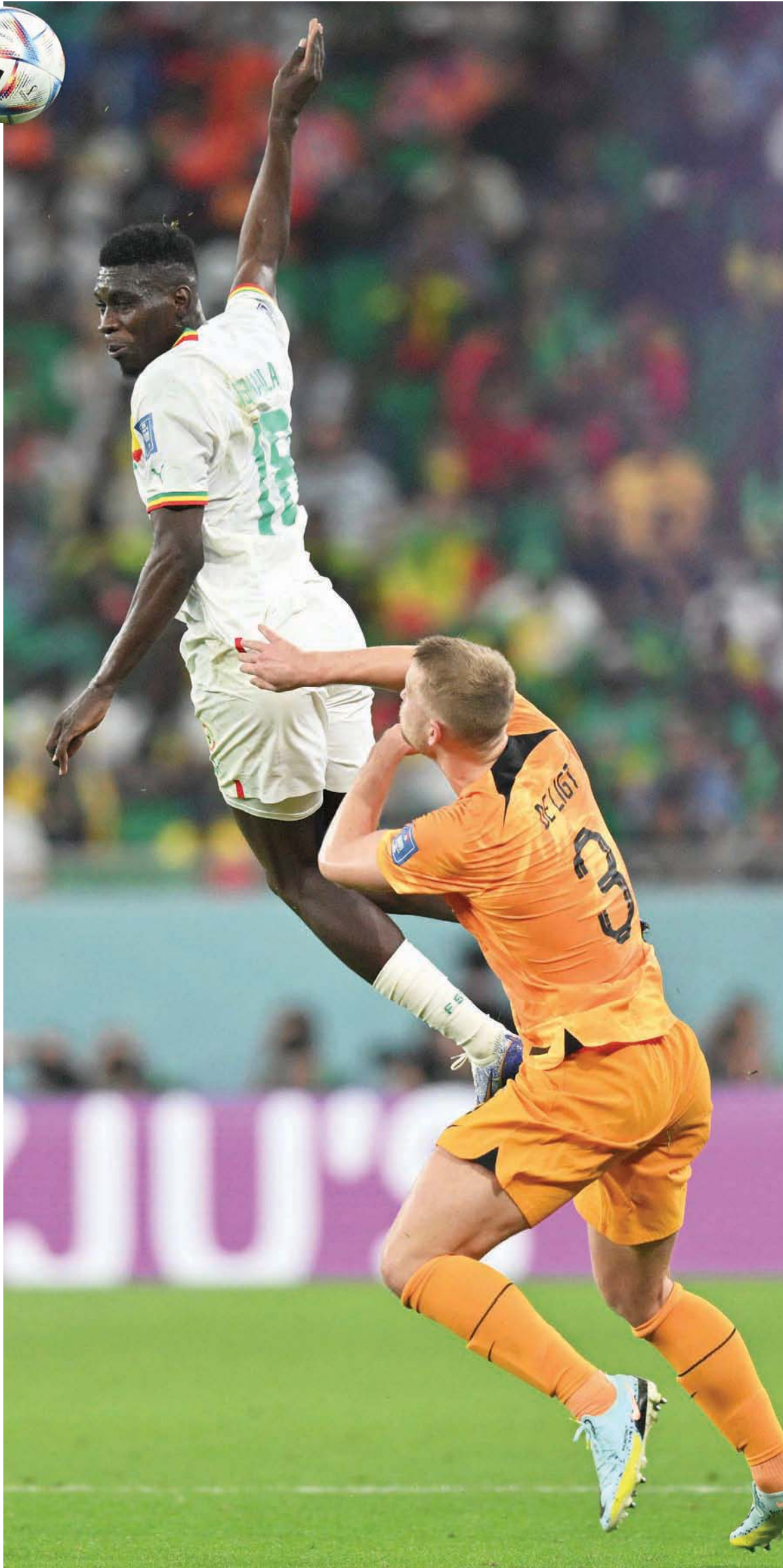
The three-time runners-up were semifinalists under Van Gaal in Brazil in 2014 before failing to qualify for the last World Cup in Russia in 2018.

The Dutch team was captained by Virgil van Dijk, who was making his debut at a major international tournament on the occasion of his 50th cap.

With Matthijs de Ligt and Nathan Ake alongside him, they were mostly comfortable at the back but had created little going forward before Barcelona forward Depay — who scored 12 times in qualifying — came on for the final half-hour.

With Depay not able to start after spending two months on the sidelines, it fell to former Tottenham Hotspur striker Vincent Janssen to spearhead the Netherlands attack but he failed to make a major impact.

Yet Gakpo finally broke the deadlock and, as Senegal pushed for an equaliser, Depay played his part in Ajax midfielder Klaassen's goal that clinched the points in the ninth added minute. — AFP



Senegal forward Ismaila Sarr (L) fights for the ball with Netherlands' defender Matthijs De Ligt during the Qatar 2022 World Cup Group A match at the Al Thumama Stadium in Doha. — AFP

FRANCE PLACE WORLD CUP HOPES IN MBAPPE AFTER BENZEMA INJURY

GROUP STAGE

FRANCE

2022

AUSTRALIA

Tuesday Nov 22 - 1900 GMT
Al Janoub stadium

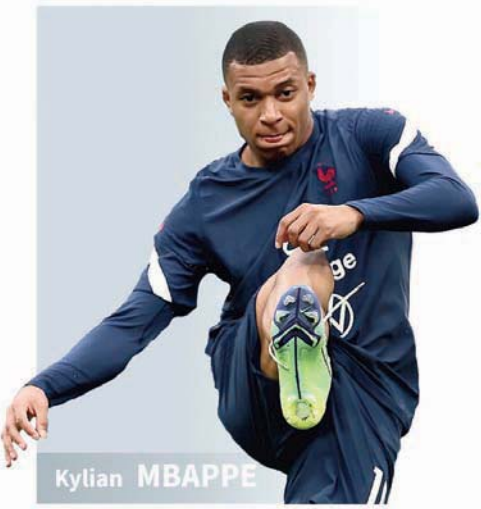
FFF

Didier Deschamps

COACH

Graham Arnold

FOOTBALL AUSTRALIA



Kilian MBAPPE



Martin BOYLE

FIFA RANKING

10 - FRANCE 4

30 - AUSTRALIA 38

TEAM'S AVERAGE AGE

25

26

27

28

29

BEST WORLD CUP PERFORMANCE

Winner

1/2

1/4

Last 16

Group stage

1st participation

Source: FIFA Photos AFP

AFP



Match program

2022

GROUP STAGE

Tuesday November 22

C

Lusail Stadium, 02:00 pm

Argentina

S. Arabia

D

Education City Stadium, 05:00 pm

Denmark

Tunisia

C

974 Stadium, 08:00 pm

Mexico

Poland

D

Al Janoub Stadium, 11:00 pm

France

Australia

Source: FIFA

AFP

DOHA: World Cup holders France will need Kylian Mbappe at his best in Qatar following the loss of Ballon d'Or winner Karim Benzema to injury, coach Didier Deschamps said on Monday.

France begin their defence against Australia on Tuesday as they look to move on from a troubled build-up which saw several key players pull out injured. Benzema was then forced to withdraw over the weekend.

The Real Madrid striker succumbed to a left thigh injury, although he played no part in France's 2018 triumph in Russia when Mbappe burst onto the world stage.

The Paris Saint-Germain striker was just 19 but scored four goals during that World Cup, including one in the 4-2 final win over Croatia.

"He is still a young player, just a bit less than four years ago, but he already did very important things four years ago," Deschamps told reporters in Doha.

"Since then he has become more mature and there is now even more recognition for him around the world.

"He doesn't have any more responsibility within the squad than he did before, but he has always had the ability to make the difference and we will need that.

"He has the ability to be decisive at any moment, unlike many other players."

Mbappe, who turns 24 next month, will lead a French attack in which Olivier Giroud is now expected to start in the absence of Benzema.

If four years ago in Russia Mbappe was still a teenager, he is now an established world-class talent and one of the best-paid athletes on the planet after turning down Real Madrid and agreeing a highly lucrative new contract to stay in Paris earlier this year.

Yet his last major tournament was disappointing, with Mbappe failing to score at Euro 2020 and missing the crucial penalty as France lost to Switzerland in a shoot-out in the last 16.

However, France captain Hugo Lloris insisted: "It is hard to say just how good he can be. He seems focused but also relaxed and he is eager to play well and help the team."

France also began their 2018 campaign against Australia and needed a late own goal to secure a 2-1 win.

The Socceroos come into this tournament among the rank outsiders after needing a penalty shoot-out to beat Peru in a play-off to qualify.

Graham Arnold's team is lacking players who are established at leading European clubs and Tuesday's game looks a mismatch, on paper at least.

"Above all else I think they are a competitive team and they will have grown in confidence since beating Peru on penalties. In general that is the kind of thing that brings a team together," said Lloris.

Deschamps confirmed that Manchester United centre-back Raphael Varane is fit to feature after recovering a leg injury.

— AFP

Poland's Robert Lewandowski during training. — Reuters



POLAND'S SZCZESNY BACKS LEWANDOWSKI TO FIRE



Mexico's forward Raul Jimenez takes part in a training session at Khor SC Training Site. — AFP



Denmark's coach Kasper Hjulmand leads a training session of his team at Al Sailiya SC in Doha. — AFP

Denmark strong enough to beat any team: Hjulmand

DOHA: Denmark coach Kasper Hjulmand said on Monday that his team have come to Qatar to win the World Cup as they prepare for their Group D opener against Tunisia.

The Danes reached the semifinals of the European Championship last year despite losing their opening game after talisman Christian Eriksen collapsed on the pitch with a cardiac arrest.

They come into the tournament on the back of a strong qualifying campaign and two Nations League wins over group rivals France.

"Our dream is to win something. So when you go into a tournament this group of players has the quality to win, and I mean to win everything," said Hjulmand ahead of Tuesday's clash at Education City Stadium.

The Danes will likely be tussling for first place with world champions France, as the runners-up will almost certainly be playing Argentina in the second round.

And Hjulmand, whose team also face Australia in the group stage, was bullish about his team's chances with Eriksen firmly back in the fold and in top form.

"Are we favourites? No... but we can beat everyone on the day and we have a very strong self-confidence," added Hjulmand.

"We have a very good group of players working together and the best way of winning everything is to dream big." — AFP

DOHA: Poland goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny believes Robert Lewandowski will break his World Cup duck in Qatar as his country aims to reach the knockout phase for the first time since 1986.

Lewandowski is Poland's record scorer with 76 goals in 134 games but the Barcelona star failed to find the net four years ago in Russia as the Poles exited in the group stage.

The 34-year-old has struck 25 times across the last two World Cup qualifying campaigns but has yet to open his account at the finals.

"I think it's definitely important for him (to score)," Szczesny told reporters on Monday on the eve of Poland's opening game against Mexico.

"He's very motivated before the World Cup. No one doubts that Robert is one of the best players in the world right now."

After eight record-breaking seasons at Bayern Munich,

Lewandowski has been just as prolific in his first season with Barcelona — hitting 18 goals in 19 appearances.

"He would definitely like to see his ambitions come true, not only at club level but for his national team. This is a very important tournament.

"I do believe we'll add Robert Lewandowski to the great names of Polish football with what he does in Qatar."

Mexico goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa is at his fifth World Cup and will be tasked with stopping not only Lewandowski but also Lionel Messi and a fancied Argentina in Group C.

He underlined the importance of a good start for Mexico, who have fallen at the last 16 at the past seven World Cups.

"No opponent will be easy, we're not thinking about Argentina or Saudi Arabia. We know it's a short tournament and starting with three points is

“**He's very motivated before the World Cup. No one doubts that Robert is one of the best players in the world right now**

WOJCIECH SZCZESNY
Poland goalkeeper

essential," said the 37-year-old Ochoa.

"We know what we're going up against (in Lewandowski). We need to focus on not giving him any chances. He has the ability to turn the game on its head.

"It will be a big challenge to face a player like him. We'll also make sure they have concerns about our very dangerous players, and I'm sure we'll hurt them when

we attack them."

Poland have failed to get past the group phase in their past three World Cup appearances, the last of which saw Szczesny punished for a mistake in the first match against Senegal.

The Juventus goalkeeper has suffered a series of mishaps at past major tournaments, including being sent off in the Euro 2012 opener when Poland were co-hosts.

Szczesny played no further part at Euro 2016 after an injury in the first group game. He also conceded an own goal as Poland kicked off their Euro 2020 campaign with a loss to Slovakia.

"I think each tournament has its own history," said the 32-year-old Szczesny, who confirmed this will be his last World Cup.

"I'm not thinking about tomorrow's game going back to the previous tournaments. I'm very enthusiastic and looking forward to the first game." — AFP

Tunisia take aim at Danes to achieve knockout ambition

AL RAYYAN: Tunisia's last five World Cup finals appearances have all ended in first round exits but there is a real belief they can end that disappointing run in Qatar as they prepare to face Denmark in their Group D opener at Education City Stadium on Tuesday.

Coach Jalel Kadri concedes the weight of past failures hangs heavy over his side, but there is hope will can get off to a positive start against the Danes and build momentum in a difficult pool that also contains France and Australia. "Our group will not be easy, the draw has not been kind," he told reporters on Monday. "Denmark is among the best squads in Europe. We know they have high quality in every department.

"But we will give our all. We have our strengths, but we also know our weaknesses. We are



Tunisia's players take part in a training session at Al Eglal facility in Doha.

aware we will be compared to past Tunisia squads."

Former national team assistant Kadri took over as head coach after a quarterfinal exit for the team at the Africa Cup of Nations in Cameroon

in February, and immediately led the side to World Cup qualification, losing one of his eight games in charge, a 5-1 reversal at the hands of Brazil.

"In terms of performance, we feel good, we are calm and



Denmark's midfielder Christian Eriksen (C) and team-mate take part in a training session at the Al Sailiya SC Training Site in Doha. — AFP

happy with the results we have achieved. We are representing all Arab nations and we deserve to be here," he said.

Tunisia have two players in the Danish league, Anis Ben Slimane at Brondby and Issam

Jebali with Odense.

The latter says he has not been able to provide any special insight into Tuesday's opponents as the Tunisian technical team have been meticulous in their planning.

"We have a great technical staff and they have prepared well for the game," Jebali says. "We know the Danish set-up, how they play and even how they think. We have a very good chance, we are a good squad. We are strong, we trust each other and have a good team spirit."

Neither Kadri nor Jebali would be drawn on the issue of captains at the World Cup wearing a 'OneLove' armband in support of the LGBTQ community, which Fifa said on Monday will result in a booking. "I think everyone has spoken about of this, we are in an Arab country and we have to respect the culture," Kadri says. "For us as athletes, this is not something that concerns us, we are here to play."

Jebali added he was, "focusing only on football". —Reuters

Ko wins LPGA Player of the Year, final title as a single lady



FLORIDA: Former world number one Lydia Ko showered herself in early wedding presents as she secured the LPGA's season-ending title, the tour's Player of the Year award and a big winner's cheque in her last tournament before tying the knot.

Ko's two-stroke win at the CME Group Tour Championship in Florida on Sunday left her with three titles for the season, her best haul since 2016, when the New Zealander dominated the women's game as a teenage colossus.

After barren years in 2019 and 2020, and a procession of

caddies and swing coaches, the South Korea-born 25-year-old has gradually returned to her best golf.

Happiness off the course has undoubtedly helped, with Ko soon to wed fiancé Chung Jun, the son of a prominent Korean businessman, in her birth-place, Seoul.

"I couldn't have drawn it up any better," the world number three said after winning the LPGA's biggest cheque of \$2 million at the Tiburon Golf Club in Naples.

"There's been so many exciting things going on in my life. It will my last win as a single lady."

Ko said she felt her identity had been all wrapped up in golf during

the lean period of her career but she had since found balance away from the course.

"After meeting (Chung Jun), I've actually wanted to work harder during the times that I am working and then also enjoy time off," she said.

"That's ... helped me to be more focused and be more on when I'm actually doing my work"

Ko wiped away tears as she tapped in for par on the final hole at Tiburon, having outlasted Ireland's third-round co-leader, Leona Maguire.

The win, her second in the season-ending event, ensured her

a second LPGA Player of the Year award, seven years after her first.

She also claimed the Vare Trophy for a second year in succession after finishing with the season's lowest scoring average of 68.988.

Only Annika Sorenstam, the Swedish great, has a better average (68.70 in 2002) among Vare Trophy winners.

"This has been of the most consistent and solid years I've had," said Ko.

"As much as I'm excited that I have won, I'm also excited for some time off and (to) get ready to become a bride soon." — **Reuters**

Sargeant ready for F1 after securing Williams seat for 2023

LONDON: Logan Sargeant said he was ready for Formula One and had high expectations after Williams confirmed he will race for them next season as the championship's first US driver since Alexander Rossi in 2015.

The announcement on Monday came after the 21-year-old Williams academy driver secured a Formula One super-licence in Sunday's season-ending Formula Two race in Abu Dhabi.

Florida-born Sargeant, who has been living in London for the past five years, finished fourth overall in the feeder series and was rookie of the year.

He replaces Canadian Nicholas Latifi alongside British-born Thai Alex Albon at Williams, former champions who finished the season last in the constructors' standings, and completes the 2023 starting grid.

"I feel like I've put in as much work as anyone else to reach this point and I just have to prepare the best I possibly can to be the best driver I can possibly be next year," Sargeant told reporters on a video call from Abu Dhabi.



"Hopefully, that's good enough to stay in F1 for a long time."

"I don't think it's any extra pressure," he said of being an American in a sport with three U.S. races and a fast-growing fanbase in his homeland thanks to the Netflix 'Drive to Survive' docu-series. "I have high expectations for myself as it is."

Williams had said at the U.S. Grand Prix in Austin last October, where Sargeant took part in first practice, that he would be racing for them next year providing he secured the licence.

"We believe he is absolutely ready to get into Formula One," team boss Jost Capito said then.

Formula One has for years been eager to have a U.S. driver, with Red Bull recently thwarted in a bid to sign Colton Herta for their AlphaTauri team because the IndyCar racer lacked a super-licence. Sargeant, who moved to Europe as a youngster and has progressed through the various junior series, said he liked to think his nationality was just a "happy coincidence" in his getting to Formula One.

He said waking up on Monday as a Formula One driver felt very natural and he was at home in the team. "I feel like I've had a very good junior formula career and I'm just looking forward to closing that chapter and moving on to the next," he said, adding that he had yet to decide his driver number. Sargeant finished third in the 2020 Formula Three championship, four points behind Australian winner Oscar Piastri who will be making his race debut with McLaren next season. — **Reuters**

Pakistan's injured Shaheen to sit out England Tests next month

LAHORE: Strike bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi will definitely miss the much-awaited three-match Test series against England starting next month after being left out of the 18-man squad announced by Pakistan on Monday.

Also missing is out-of-form leg-spinner Yasir Shah, who has taken 45 England wickets in nine Tests since his debut in 2014.

England have not played a Test match in Pakistan since 2005 — having declined to tour since because of the country's precarious security situation — but played a successful Twenty20 series earlier this year.

They are due to arrive in Islamabad on November 26, with the first Test in Rawalpindi from December 1-5.

Announcing Pakistan's squad for the series, chief selector Mohammad Wasim said Shaheen's long-term recovery was a priority.

The 22-year-old hurt his knee during the final of the T20 World Cup against England in Melbourne this month, but also had his appendix removed Sunday -- a surgery that usually needs at least three weeks of recovery.



"Shaheen has been doing rehab so he was not available for selection," Wasim said.

"His injury is not bowling related, but... we do not want to risk aggravating that injury."

Selectors still have concerns over the form of Shah, however.

Pakistan's main Test spinner until last year was also dropped for the home series against Australia this year, but stormed back in July, taking nine wickets in two Tests in Sri Lanka.

"Yasir has been not in the form we wanted in this series so we have gone for Zahid Mahmood," said Wasim.

Mahmood, 34, has played just

four one-day internationals and one T20 for Pakistan, but is yet to play a Test.

Another uncapped spinner, the mesmerising Abrar Ahmed, is also part of the squad following his 43 wickets in domestic first class matches.

Former Pakistan skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed also makes it back into the squad based on his domestic form. — **AFP**

SQUAD: Babar Azam (captain), Mohammad Rizwan, Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Azhar Ali, Faheem Ashraf, Haris Rauf, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Wasim Junior, Naseem Shah, Nauman Ali, Salman Ali Agha, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Saud Shakil, Shan Masood, Zahid Mahmood.

LOCAL FLAVOUR

Oman veterans claim Egypt title



SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 21

Oman veteran football team, which belong to Oman Club, emerged AFC International friendly tournament champions in Egypt after beating Cairo Aviation team 4-2 in the final clash. Oman's team player Sameeh al Harrasi bagged the

top-scorer award as he netted nine goals for the team in the tournament.

The veteran team managed to register three victories and suffered one loss. They topped the group and in semifinal they managed to beat Greece team 5-2 before defeating Cairo Aviation team 4-2 in the concluding game.

Fourth TelyBoyz' Thalassery box cricket tournament on December 1, 2



SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 21

The fourth season of the Telyboyz box cricket tournament is all set to be organised at the Muscat Club, Wadi Kabir on December 1 and 2. This edition of the box cricket tournament is special as the tournament is coming back after a gap of two years due to the pandemic. The organisers therefore promise to make this event all the more exciting.

The following are the teams that will be participating in the tournament.

1. St. Fort Thalassery, 2. Tellicherry Cricketers (Dubai), 3. Thalassery Still Bats (Dubai), 4. Stadium Warriors, 5. Saidarpalli Wills, 6. Chetamkundu Eagles, 7. Mahi Super Kings, 8. Pilakool Smashers, 9. Kayathu Strikers, 10. Chirakkara Giants, 11. Palissery Riders, 12. OV Road Lions

Telyboyz is a group of sports loving friends hailing from Thalassery, an old town in Kerala. They have been organising different sporting events including inter schools football and different type of cricket tournaments for over two decades in Oman. As all their signature events the tournament will also include some fun activities for family and kids as well as some Thalassery food counters.

The tournament is sponsored by Nada Hapiness in association with Sea pearls Gold and Diamond Jewellery. The tournament is also supported by JBC Express Freight, Wellness Medical Centre, Zay detergents, Kairali gardens, FAP and Sidab Sea tours.



DJOKOVIC FINISHES TROUBLED YEAR WITH ATP FINALS TITLE

TURIN, Italy: Novak Djokovic said winning a record-equalling sixth ATP Tour Finals title on Sunday was a “deeply satisfying” ending to his troubled and truncated year.

The Serb beat Norwegian Casper Ruud 7-5, 6-3 in Turin to match Roger Federer’s record of six titles in the year-ending tournament for the top-ranked players. The 35-year-old Serb, the oldest player to win the Finals, ended in style after a season in which he missed two majors

because of his vaccine status.

“It feels deeply satisfying and, at the same time, a huge relief because of the circumstances that I have been through this year, situations earlier this year, of course, with Australia,” he said.

“We don’t need to go back. We know what happened.”

“I don’t know what the future holds but I know that what I hold in my mind is a huge hunger still to win trophies,” said Djokovic.

The win in Turin, which also brings a cheque for \$4.7 million,

came seven years after his last ATP Finals victory and will lift him from eighth to fifth in Monday’s new rankings at the end of a season in which he also won Wimbledon. Carlos Alcaraz, who missed the finals injured, is number one. “In my mind I always see myself as the best player in the world, of course,” he said.

“I’m not. I’m fifth. This week I probably am. Overall the rankings are showing who had the best year, and Alcaraz is the No. 1 in the world.”

Djokovic and his wife brought his eight-year-old son and five-year-old daughter to Turin. “Extremely special for me,” he said. “I don’t get to have these moments on the tour with them so much.”

The American Rajeev Ram and Britain’s Joe Salisbury took the doubles title with a 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 win over the Croatian pair of Nikola Mektić and Mate Pavić. Ram and Salisbury lost in last year’s final to French pair Nicolas Mahut and Pierre-Hugues Herbert.

— AFP

Saudi Arabia upset Bahrain to help Oman set up title clash with Canada

MUSCAT: Unfancied Saudi Arabia caused the biggest upset of the Desert Cup T20I Series on Sunday night when they shocked Bahrain by nine wickets in the concluding game of the double round-robin format at the Oman Cricket Academy (OCA) grounds.

Saudi Arabia’s massive victory paved the way for hosts Oman to squeeze into the final despite their narrow defeat to Canada.

Canada’s three-wicket win ensured their spot in the final as they garnered a total of ten points to finish on top of the table.

Oman’s defeat left them with six points and Bahrain’s loss meant both the teams finished with six points each. However, the hosts had a better net run-rate of +2.135 as compared to -1.044 of Bahrain to scrape through and set up a title clash with Canada.

Saudi Arabia had lost all their previous matches and, Bahrain, which was the only team to defeat table-toppers Canada, was expected to have it easy.

However, Bahrain, after winning the toss elected to bat, a decision that they would regret later. Saudi Arabia restricted the much-experienced rivals to just 112/9 with half the team out back in pavilion inside the powerplay at 32/5. Haider Ali’s 41 was the only notable score as Saudi Arabia’s bowlers wreaked havoc.

Atif-Ur-Rehman with 3/19 was the most successful bowler while Ishtiaq Ahmed, Usman Najeeb and Zain Ul Abidin picked two wickets each.

In reply, Saudi opening batter Faisal Khan smashed an unbeaten 81 off just 32 balls, which included nine boundaries and six maximums to power them to a memorable win. Abdul Waheed Ghaffar’s unbeaten 20 saw the Saudis race to win in just 10.5 overs finishing at 115/1.

Earlier, Oman lost to Canada in another exciting game with the leaders recording a three-wicket win with a ball to spare.

The two teams will face-off in the final on Monday night.

Canada put Oman to bat first and last match centurion and skipper Zeeshan Maqsood continued his rich vein of form by hitting a half-century. His 54 came of 34 balls and along with opener Jatinder Singh shared a crucial stand of 93 runs for



Faisal Khan of Saudi Arabia



Aaron Johnson of Canada

the third wicket in nine overs. Jatinder missed his half-century with his 47 coming off 37 deliveries.

Sandeep Goud’s late charge fetched 26 off 14 that included three sixes helped Oman end their innings with 169/7.

Canada’s chase revolved around Aaron Johnson as the opener hammered 81 off 41 balls, an innings that included 11 boundaries and five maximums.

Oman fought back with Rafiullah and Kaleemullah picking three wickets each and Canada needed 31 in 18 balls after the fall of Harsh Thaker (24).

Oman bowlers kept it tight to leave Canada to score 8 runs to win off the last over of Kaleemullah. Dillon Heyliger and Nikhil Dutta forged an unbeaten stand to take their side to win with a ball to spare. Heyliger was unbeaten on 22 and Dutta on 17.

Red Warriors blank Belarus to conclude Al Ain camp

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 21

Oman national football team concluded their second part of the preparatory camp in Al Ain by blanking Belarus 2-0 in an international friendly match on Sunday.

At Hazza bin Zayed Stadium in Al Ain city, Salah al Yahyaie (78th minute) and Issam al Subhi (81st minute) scored the winning goals for the Red Warriors.

Al Yahyaie’s goal came after a perfect cross from Jameel al Yahmadi to Issam who assisted to Salah. Then, Salah hit the ball to the net. Next goal came after Al Subhi faced the rivals goalkeeper individually and looped the ball over him to score in style.

It was the first triumph for the Red Warriors in this camp as they performed valiantly to go down by 1-0 against four-time world champions Germany in Muscat last week.

Oman had put up a brilliant show against Germany and missed several scoring attempts.

After the warm-up gathering in Muscat, the technical staff assessed the level of players in Al Ain.

During the camp, Musab al Mamari was one of the new faces who made debut in the international friendly game against Germany. Both matches gave a clear picture for the coaching staff on the team’s current technical status and determine the weakness areas to be focused during forthcoming period ahead



of the future assignments.

The main upcoming participation of the Red Warriors will be the Arabian Gulf Cup in Iraq’s Basra and the 2023 AFC

Asian Cup in Qatar.

OMAN SQUAD: Ahmed al Rawahi, Mohammed al Musallami, Mohammed al Amri, Mohsin al Ghassani, Salah al



Yahyaie, Harib al Saadi, Ahmed al Khamisi, Amjad al Harthi, Essam al Subhi, Ibrahim al Mukhaini, Ahmed al Kaabi, Al Mundher al Alawi, Ali al Hinai, Ahmed al

Matroushi, Moutaz Saleh, Mousab al Mamari, Ahmed al Adawi, Fahmi Said, Jameel al Yahmadi, Zaher al Aghbari, Omar al Malki and Arshad al Alawi.

■ LIONEL MESSI SEEKS ELUSIVE WORLD CUP ON FIFTH ATTEMPT

■ SAUDIS SEEK TO IMPROVE ON PAST OPENING GAME THRASHINGS

■ ARGENTINA FAVOURITES TO WIN GROUP C GAME AT LUSAIL STADIUM

MESSI'S ARGENTINA EXPECTED TO ROLL OVER SAUDIS



Argentina

> 3rd FIFA ranking

> 18th World Cup

"Albiceleste"



COACH

Lionel Scaloni

Desde 2018



26




BEST PERFORMANCE

Winner

1978 1986

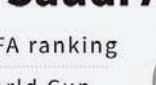
● ●

PLAYERS

GROUP Mexico Poland Saudi Arabia		opponents
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Goalkeepers Emiliano Martínez Franco Armani Geronimo Rulli	Defenders Gonzalo Montiel Nahuel Molina German Pezella Cristian Romero Nicolas Otamendi Lisandro Martínez Nicolas Tagliafico Marcos Acuna Juan Foyth
Midfielders Leandro Paredes Guido Rodriguez Enzo Fernandez Rodrigo De Paul Exequiel Palacios Alejandro Gomez Alexis Mac Allister	Forwards Paulo Dybala Lionel Messi Angel Di Maria Angel Correa Thiago Almada Lautaro Martínez Julian Alvarez

Source: FIFA, UEFA, federation



51st FIFA ranking
6th World Cup

Saudi Arabia

"Greens"

26



GOALKEEPERS

Mohammed Al-Owais
Nawaf Al-Aqidi
Mohammed Al Rubaie Al-Yami

DEFENDERS

Yasser Al-Shahrani
Hassan Tambakti
Abdulah Al-Amri
Abdullah Mado
Ali Al-Bulaihi
Saoud Abdulhamid
Sultan Al-Ghanam
Mohammed Al-Breik

MIDFIELDERS

Salman Al-Faraj
Riyadh Sharahili
Ali Al-Hassan
Mohamed Kanno
Abdulah Al-Malki
Sami Al-Najei
Abdullah Otayf
Nasser Al-Dawsari
Abdulrahman Al-Aboud
Salem Al-Dawsari
Hattan Bahebr

FORWARDS

Nawaf Al-Abed
Haitham Asiri
Saleh Al-Shehri
Firas Al-Buraikan



COACH

Herve Renard (FRA)
Since 2019

BEST PERFORMANCE

Last 16
In 1994

GROUP C

Argentina

Mexico

Poland

opponents





PLAYERS

Sources: FIFA, UEFA, federation

DOHA: Lionel Messi's Argentina have an easy-looking start to the World Cup on Tuesday based on blistering recent form and opponents Saudi Arabia's history of drubbings in tournament openers.

The South Americans are on a 36-match unbeaten run with top scorer and captain Messi playing his fifth and last World Cup in search of the elusive honour that would grant him immortality at home alongside Diego Maradona.



Argentina's coach Lionel Scaloni attends a training session at the Qatar University Training Site in Doha. – AFP

"I see him as always ... eager to enjoy the World Cup," said head coach Lionel Scaloni, trying to ease some of the pressure on his main man. "He's enjoying his team mates, training sessions, the stay and the whole process."

Saudi Arabia are ranked 48 places lower than Argentina, lost to Venezuela, Colombia and Croatia in a mixed bag of friendlies, and have a dismal record at opening



Argentina's forward Lionel Messi (3rd L) and midfielder Alejandro Gomez (2nd R) take part with teammates in a training session at the Qatar University Training Site in Doha, on the eve of the Qatar 2022 World Cup match between Argentina and Saudi Arabia. – AFP



Saudi Arabia's midfielder Abdullah Otaif (C) and teammates take part in a training session at the Sealine Training Site in Sealine, south of Doha. – **AFP**

games including losing 5-0 to Russia in 2018 and 8-0 to Germany in 2002.

Yet they have pedigree too: this is their sixth World Cup, they reached the last 16 in 1994, and they made it to Qatar by topping their group ahead of Japan.

"I saw a country full of young, talented players. We achieved our first target, let's work together for the rest," said coach Herve Renard.

Both teams will be noisily and massively supported when they kick off at 10:00 GMT for the first game in the Lusail Stadium, the tournament's largest venue which will also host the final.

Thousands of Saudis will flock over the border while Argentina's traditionally large following will be swelled by a burgeoning fan base in Qatar and around the Middle East.

Scaloni was pained to lose “irreplaceable” midfielder Giovanni Lo Celso to injury. But he still has an enviable range of talent, from the likes of Cristian Romero and Lisandro Martinez at the back to Leandro Paredes in the middle and the evergreen Angel Di Maria up front with Messi.

Renard's far lesser-known team is entirely home-based, with the financial clout of the Saudi Pro League ensuring few leading players aspire to venture overseas.

Argentina will pay particular attention to their captain and veteran midfielder Salman Al Faraj, whose elegant play has helped Al Hilal dominate Asian club football in recent years.

Argentina will fully expect to beat Mexico and Poland in their other Group C games, whereas the Saudis may have to accept damage limitation in their opening match before a more realistic quest for points in their next two.

— Reuters