

Astral leap with Duqm's Space Habitat Centre

OPAZ inks agreement to set up Oman's first space centre on an area of 20,000sqm

Our Correspondent
Muscat

An agreement was signed on Tuesday to set up Oman's first Space Habitat Centre at the Artificial Intelligence Zone in Duqm.

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) signed a land usufruct agreement with Global Space and Technology Company to establish the Space Habitat Centre on an area of 20,000sqm.

The centre will be a site for research and experiments that will simulate the space environment using advanced technologies and artificial intelligence.

The agreement was signed by Ahmed bin Ali bin Issa Akaak, in charge of managing operations of Special Economic Zone at Duqm, and Bahiya al Shuaibi, founder and CEO of Global Space and Technology Com-



(Supplied image)



The project will serve scientists, researchers and those interested in conducting experiments in the space sector

BAHIYA AL SHUAIBI

pany. Company will develop the centre and provide several services, including satellites for communications, remote sensing and space imaging. "In addition, the project aims to establish training programmes to transfer knowledge in cooperation with specialised international institutions," Bahiya added.

The company designs programmes related to virtual reality and 3D programmes for educational purposes and simulation, in line with the needs of educational institutions.

It won the Business Excellence Award 2021 from the World Business Federation in the USA.

pany.

"We are pleased to announce the signing of the usufruct agreement to develop this project. It will help simulate living in space, such as staying on the Moon or Mars," Bahiya said.

She added that the project aims to create a space-like environment on earth so that would-

be astronauts experience outer space life before embarking on actual astronaut flights. "The project will serve scientists, researchers and those interested in conducting experiments in the space sector, artificial intelligence and advanced technologies."

Global Space and Technology

Passengers at airports up 161%

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The total number of international flights (inbound and outbound) at airports in the sultanate - Muscat, Salalah and Sohar - surged 131.2 per cent to reach 26,382 flights till the end of June 2022 compared to the corresponding period in 2021, according to the latest data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCIS).

The total number of passengers travelling through Oman's airports increased 161 per cent. Inbound, outbound and transit passengers in the airports of Muscat, Salalah, Sohar and Duqm reached 3,888,323 at the end of June 2022. The number of outbound passengers rose 114 per cent compared to the same period in 2021.

Breaking down the figures, the number of international and domestic flights went up 104.8 per cent to 27,880 flights (carrying 3,382,855 passengers) at Mus-



cat International Airport at the end of June 2022, compared to 13,612 flights (carrying 1,416,975 passengers) during the same period in 2021.

Salalah Airport recorded a 78.8 per cent increase in the number of flights to 3,483 at the end of June 2022; international flights surged 184.8 per cent to 1,595, while domestic flights increased 36 per cent to 1,888 flights compared to 1,388 flights during the same period in 2021.

The number of passengers in

domestic (inbound and outbound) flights at Salalah Airport increased 57.3 per cent.

The number of international flights (inbound and outbound) at Sohar Airport was 356 at the end of June 2022 and the number of passengers in these flights was 32,071.

Duqm Airport recorded an increase of 6.4 per cent domestic flights (outbound and inbound) to 334 by the end of June 2022 compared to 314 flights during the same period in 2021.



SAYYID BADR RECEIVES US SPECIAL ENVOY TO YEMEN

H E Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, received US Special Envoy for Yemen Tim Lenderking on Tuesday. They discussed the latest developments relating to the sustainability of the ongoing truce in Yemen. They stressed the importance of collaborative work to build confidence and enhance dialogue among all parties, and expressed their keenness to support the international efforts to end the war (ONA)

Omani cycles 1,700km to support hearing impaired

Our Correspondent
Muscat

To support people with hearing disabilities, cyclist Nooh Salim al Kalbani, 26, from the wilayat of Ibri in Dakhliyah set off on a 1,700km cycling adventure through several wilayats across the country.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Kalbani informed that his trip started on September 3 covering the wilayats of Musandam, Shinas, Liwa, Buraimi, Dhank, Ibri, Nizwa, Manah, Adam and Haima and will end in Salalah on Wednesday.

"My effort aims to shed light on the needs of people with hearing impairment. Currently more than 700 individuals need hearing aids. I also wanted to promote tourism in these wilayats, particularly the little known Al Serb season of Dhofar which follows khareef," Kalbani said.

The tourist sites on his route included Falaj al Saara, forts in Khasab, Shinas, Bahla, Ibri, Liwa, Bukha, Saham and Nizwa, besides the harat in the wilayat of Adam.

He is keen to continue embarking on such cycling adventures to spread the culture of cycling in Omani community. "Such activities are helpful for social causes. I urge Omani youngsters to initiate such voluntary efforts for the betterment of society."

He described the strong winds he encountered during his cycling trip as the biggest challenge, requiring steely determination and patience to overcome.



(Supplied photo)

Such activities are helpful for social causes. I urge Omani youngsters to initiate such voluntary efforts for the betterment of society

NOOH SALIM AL KALBANI

"I prepared for two months before setting off on the trip. I worked on my fitness level and cycled at different times of the day, five hours daily, during the preparations." For the trip, he carried along safety equipment, a tent, water, beverages and canned food.

Kalbani started long-distance

cycling in 2018 and has been on a 900km adventure covering various governorates to promote khareef, starting in Nizwa and ending in Dhofar. "However, my latest ride ending on Wednesday is the longest. I cycle from 9am to 6pm every day, covering distances of over 100km daily. I visited popular tourist sites, forts, castles, old markets, aflaj and wadis en route.

"I hope the community extends financial support to people with hearing impairment."

His plans for the near future include a two-day trip in Jebel Shams in December to promote Omani professions like honey collection, sheep herding and weaving.



Oman, Qatar to benefit most from oil price boost



Late Queen Elizabeth II's style statement

OHRC investigates reports of human rights violations

Muscat - Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has investigated news reports in international media about domestic workers' abuse and human trafficking in the sultanate.

OHRC noted reports published by *The Sunday Mail* of Zimbabwe on Zimbabwean women and others by a Dutch organisation called Do Bold on Sierra Leonean women working as domestic workers in the sultanate.

"These reports stated that workers were subjected to difficult working and living conditions, and could be considered victims of human trafficking as defined by the United Nations,

and that they were subjected to fraud, physical and sexual violence, as well as forced labour conditions," it stated.

OHRC investigated the cases in coordination with Ministry of Labour and Royal Oman Police. 'As a result, it came to light that some Zimbabwean women are deceived by recruitment agencies in their countries. They are misinformed about the nature of job, salary and accommodation. Some of them tried to flee their employers after they realised that the recruitment agencies in their countries had deceived them, as published by the newspaper.'

To secure their rights, OHRC stated, the maids ought to have



filed their complaints with the relevant authorities in Oman as per the laws and regulations, reporting violations to airport officers and submitting documents or evidences that prove that they have been subjected to

abuse. 'This is their right as per Omani laws and regulations,' it stated.

As for their physical health, OHRC stated that Royal Oman Police, the judiciary and other relevant organisations handle

cases of physical and sexual abuse as per the provisions of the Omani Penal Code. 'As per the law, everyone should receive decent treatment to maintain his/her dignity and preserve his/her rights.'

With regard to cases of low salary mentioned in the reports of *The Sunday Mail* and Do Bold, OHRC noted that minimum salaries are decided by the embassies of these maids. 'An agreement is signed between the employer and the employee voluntarily.'

As for allegations that the maids were forced to endure their two-year employment contracts despite poor working

conditions, deprived of adequate food and healthcare, OHRC stated that the Ministry of Labour's Decision No 189/2014 on conditions for employment of maids mandates the agreement between the employer and the maid should be in writing. 'It should specify the rights and obligations of both parties, including the salary, vacation time and food. If the employer failed to honour his obligation, the maid can report such violations to the competent authorities.'

Article 3 of the Omani Labour Law 35/2003 bans all forms of forced labour.

Continued on Page 02

Summit projects fintech as 'future of banking'

Muscat - Bankers of the region who gathered at the Future Tech Event for a summit on banking and fintech projected fintech as the future of banking expecting maximum payment transactions in the near future to be initiated by non-bank players.

The summit held on the second day of the Future Tech Event on Tuesday dwelt on the evolution of fintech companies as well as the new trends in the banking sector.

It opened with the presentation of Ahmed al Qutaiti, technical and innovation specialist at the Central Bank of Oman, who spoke on the 'impact of big data analytics in Oman's banking sector'.

Qutaiti highlighted some fintech initiatives in Oman.

"We are working now with FinTech Innovation Hub and FinTech Regulatory Sandbox, that is where we receive fintech startups and give them life."

Qutaiti underscored the importance of having big data saying that 'data information is new oil'. In the same breath, he also spoke about the challenges of maintaining big data in the banking sector.



We are working now with organisations from where we receive fintech startups and give them life

AHMED AL QUTAITI



The Central Bank of Kuwait's Regulatory Sandbox allows experimentation with innovative products

GHADIR AL ANSARI



In less than a decade, the big tech or fintech firms will be in the list of top ten financial institutions

ABDULLAH AL JUFAILI

banking, use of digital currencies, while mobile banking is most used channel nowadays."

Jufaili presented some trends and predictions based on recent research done by financial experts. The research he presented was divided into four categories: Competition and consolidation; modern technologies; payments and digital transformation.

"In less than a decade, the big tech or fintech firms will be in the list of top ten financial institutions. By 2030, more than half of all payment transactions will be initiated by non-bank players."

The organiser of the event, Melwin D'cunha, the Chief Executive Officer at White Paper Summits, claimed that this is for the first time in Oman that different companies from the region and global markets catering specifically to banking and fintech sector showcased their products.

"We tried bringing the banking community together to experience new products and discuss new trends like crowdfunding and virtual assets."

(Photos and text by Syed Fasiuddin)

Future of banking

While beginning his talk on banking and its future, Abdullah al Jufaili, AGM, Digital Banking at Bank Muscat, said, "Banking started long back probably even before the term banking was there."

In his presentation Jufaili explained, "We are now in an era where we are using and talking about new terminologies - Internet of things, Internet of everything, Internet of object, artificial intelligence, open



9 teams qualify for Entrepreneurship World Cup 2022

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) on Tuesday named nine projects that have qualified for the Entrepreneurship World Cup (EWC) 2022.

The EWC is one of the most diverse startup pitch competitions and supports programmes of its kind, featuring more than 370,000 entrepreneurs from over 200 countries contesting for 'life-changing' prizes.

In a statement, ASMED said three out of the nine projects have stood out for their innovation and creativity. The 'Nashid project won the Idea segment, while the 'I lab marine' project won the Early segment and 'Rahal' won the Growth category.

The nine qualified projects will undergo a virtual one-month training camp to empower them

with skills so as to enhance their communication with investors worldwide. The virtual training camp also gives a participant a chance to exchange expertise with participants from other countries.

ASMED organises the competition at the national level, where the qualified projects represent the sultanate in the international qualifiers for the cup.

The international competition attracts more than 200 entrepreneurs from all over the world as they compete on the basis of their projects' innovation, sustainability and creativity. The projects are categorised into three segments (Idea, Early and Growth).

The total value of the EWC prizes is US\$1mn.

Since its launch in 2019, the EWC has awarded US\$3mn in cash prizes, besides the in-kind prizes valued at US\$150mn.

MoE issues statement on shortage of school buses

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Education has issued a statement on school transport in Oman after a video circulating on social media showed a bus transporting students more than its specified capacity.

The ministry said that it followed up on what is being circulated on social media and sought 'to clarify some points related to the subject of school transportation' for the cause of 'transparency and partnership in aspects related to society'.

'During the current academic year 2022-23, MoE, in coordination with the Ministry of Finance,

was able to provide additional funds for school transport amounting to RO3.9mn. The amount was allocated to provide 650 additional buses, to improve the condition of some buses and renting buses with larger capacity in a number of governorates.'

The ministry added that due to the shortage of buses - with required specification - available in the market, many companies have not been able to provide the buses despite the tenders awarded to them.

'The ministry is doing its best to improve the condition of school transport and to enhance the safety specifications according to the available financial resources.'



(Supplied photo)

5.8KM ROAD TO LINK BATINAH EXPRESSWAY TO SHINAS

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology has issued an order for the construction of a road to link Shinas with Batinah Expressway. 'The ministry has issued a direct order to a specialised firm to design and construct the Shinas Link Road. The project includes a 5.8km road connecting Batinah carriageway with Batinah Expressway. It will start 1.8km after Shinas Roundabout,' it said.



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Child from Musandam airlifted to North Batinah hospital

Muscat - Royal Air Force of Oman airlifted an Omani child from Musandam to North Batinah on Tuesday for some immediate medical attention.

'A helicopter of Royal Air Force of Oman carried out med-

ical evacuation of a critically ill child,' the Ministry of Defence said. 'He was transferred from Khasab Hospital in Musandam governorate to Sohar Hospital in North Batinah to receive urgent specialised treatment.'

OHRC investigates reports of violations

Continued from Page 01

Oman has also ratified Convention No 29 on Forced Labour and Convention No 105 on Elimination of Forced Labour. OHRC has not received any complaint about forced labour, it stated.

'The commission cannot be certain of any abuses of legal or human rights of these workers or others in Oman. This is the case in most countries of the world due to daily interaction between people. This can sometimes result in the infringement of rights of both the employee and the

employer.'

However, this can be addressed by resorting to the competent authorities, and through the available means of reporting, filing complaints, and requesting legal protection, which OHRC believes is available and guaranteed in Oman.

OHRC stated that anyone who may need to report any inhumane treatment can do so through the toll-free number 1970, WhatsApp number 72221966, Twitter account @ohrc_oman or through the website www.ohrc.com

Campaigns launched in UK, Germany to boost tourism

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) is organising promotional campaigns in the United Kingdom and Germany from September 12 to 16 to promote tourism and heritage sites in Oman.

In a statement, MHT said the campaigns are being held in London, Manchester, Munich and Frankfurt.

The ministry started the roadshow in London on Monday by holding workshops and bilateral and group meetings between companies, hotels and airlines from the sultanate with representatives of tourism companies, tour operators and travel agents in UK.

'The ministry organised workshops in Manchester on September 13, and will go to Munich on September 15 and Frankfurt on September 16. Promotional campaigns aim to stimulate tourism activities in Oman by showcasing the diverse tourism experiences in the sultanate, and sign contracts between tourism companies in Oman, UK and Germany,' it stated.

Asmaa Salem al Hajri, assis-



The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism started the roadshow in London on Monday (Supplied photo)

tant director general of tourism in the Department of Culture and Tourism, MHT, said that Oman's tourism basket has diverse avenues, including cultural and heritage tourism. "Adventure tourism offers experiences like hiking in the mountains, discovering caves, diving to see the colourful coral reefs of Daymaniyat islands, and camping under the stars in the sands of Sharqiyah."

Asmaa informed that the UK and Germany are important source markets for tourism in Oman. "The ministry chose

The ministry chose Britain and Germany to launch promotional campaigns in Europe after the success of our campaign in India where there was great interest in Oman

ASMAA SALEM AL HAJRI

Britain and Germany to launch promotional campaigns in Europe after the success of our campaign in India. The tourism industry stakeholders in India showed great interest in Oman. To attract FIFA World Cup

Qatar 2022 fans to Oman and boost tourism, the ministry is offering free multiple-entry 60-day visas to fans having Hayya Card - the personalised fan ID required to attend any World Cup Qatar match.

Besides the football fan visa, there will be fast lanes at Muscat International Airport, a 9,000sqm World Cup festival village at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre and a host of other activities held across Oman.

The ministry is also making tourism offerings through 20,000 hotels rooms and more than 200 tourism products in co-operation with more than 35 local operators and ten land transporters. Additionally, 52 airlines from around the world will operate flights to the sultanate.



First international film festival in Batinah from Nov 12

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The first Batinah International Film Festival will open on November 12, according to a North Batinah official.

The four-day festival will include training workshops, specialist discussion sessions on various aspects of cinema, and competitions for Omani and international short documentaries. Film stars and filmmakers are expected to arrive from the other Gulf states and the Arab world to participate in the festival.

"The Batinah International Film Festival aims to revitalise and develop the film movement in the sultanate, besides boosting tourism," said Mohammed bin Sulaiman al Kindi, Governor of North Batinah.

Dr Humaid al Ameri, chair-

man of the Board of Directors of Omani Society for Films and Theatre (OSFT), informed that the society strives to encourage the growth of cinema throughout the sultanate by starting film festivals in various governorates.

According to Ameri, Batinah International Film Festival is an opportunity to introduce the cultural, civilisational, artistic, heritage and historical diversity of the governorates of North Batinah and South Batinah, besides discovering new talent in the fields of filmmaking such as writing, directing and acting.

Mohammed bin Abdullah al Ajmi, director of the festival, said, "It will include workshops on screenwriting, direction, cinematography and presentations on how the film industry can be transformed into a source of income."

Rare sighting of Arabian leopard mother and cub in Dhofar

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Camera traps of Environment Authority (EA) have captured an image of an Arabian leopard with her cub in Jabal Samhan Nature Reserve in Dhofar.

Field studies carried out by the Office for Conservation of Environment (OCE) in the last 23 years have confirmed the presence of the Arabian leopard in the mountains of Dhofar, ranging from Hasik in the east to the wilayat of Dhalkut in the west, in addition to sightings in Najd, north of the Dhofar mountains.

In a statement, EA said, 'Preliminary results of environmental surveys of large mammals, carried out by OCE in Jabal Samhan Reserve in Dhofar, showed rare images of an Arabian leopard and her cub, not older than a few weeks.'

Specialists of OCE also monitored other species of wild animals such as the Nubian ibex and the Arabian wolf in the reserve. 'This is a positive indicator for the survival and reproduction of these species in their natural environment. The camera traps project aims to provide data on the type and number of predators living in the area,' it stated.

Ministerial Decree 101/02 and Royal Decrees 111/96, 75/98, 114/2001 and 6/2003 protect the Arabian leopard with



(Supplied photos)



a ban on hunting or capturing these animals.

Under Royal Decree 6/2003, the penalty for hunting or cap-

turing Arabian leopards is imprisonment for no less than six months and no more than five years, and a fine of no less than

RO1,000 and no more than RO5,000.

In November 2020, OCE detected the first scientific evidence of the presence of the Arabian leopard in two different locations west of Dhalkut.

The OCE confirmed the breakthrough study - conducted by its specialists using several modern techniques, including camera traps - indicates the rich biological diversity of the area.

There are less than 200 Arabian leopards in the wild, and according to studies conducted in Oman, 44 to 58 of these are in the sultanate. The Arabian leopard has been classified by IUCN as critically endangered.

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*Rates as on September 13

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

VW's truck subsidiary dumps Russian units

Volkswagen's truck subsidiary Traton said Tuesday it would take a 550mn euro financial hit as its brands MAN and Scania parted ways with their sales units in Russia.

The two subsidiaries would dispose of "their sales companies in the Russian Federation to local sales partners", with Scania also dumping its "financing business" in the market, Traton said in a statement, according to AFP report.

The truck-maker expected "to realise an additional loss of up to 550mn euros" for the sale, depending on changing exchange rates.

The transaction would need to be approved by the supervisory boards of Traton and its parent, the Volkswagen group, and was set to be completed "by the first quarter of 2023", the group said.

The financial hit came on top of 113mn euros in costs "due to the direct impact of the war in Ukraine", which had already been accounted for, it said. Traton's production site in St Petersburg has lain dormant since March, following the Russian invasion.

Oman, Qatar to benefit most from oil price boost in near-term: Moody's

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman and Qatar are two GCC countries that are likely to see the most significant improvements in their fiscal and economic strength due the current oil price boost, according to Moody's Investors Service.

In a new report released on Tuesday, Moody's said elevated oil prices during the next two years will lead to a significant improvement in the fiscal and external positions of GCC sovereigns, partly reversing their sharp deterioration in their balance sheets since 2015.

However, only a few GCC sovereigns will likely see a material credit impact of higher oil prices in the near-term, the rating agency noted.

It said, 'Sovereigns most sensitive to oil price fluctuations and with elevated debt burdens could see the most significant improvements in their fiscal and economic strength from the current oil price boost, exerting upward pressure on their credit profiles. Among those, Oman and Qatar stand to benefit the most.'

In contrast, material improvements in credit metrics will be more modest for most higher-rated GCC sovereigns (Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi) that have already very strong balance sheets, Moody's added.

'Based on our baseline projections for revenues, fiscal bal-



ances and debt burdens, only Oman and Qatar will potentially see upward pressure on their fiscal strength during the next couple of years,' the rating agency

boom this time around.

'In Oman, we assume that the government will not implement additional revenue measures (such as a mooted increase in

inal terms this year and the next,' Moody's said.

Twin surpluses

The rating agency said that elevated oil prices and output in 2022-2023 will significantly improve GCC states' fiscal and current-account positions. It expects Brent oil prices to average around US\$105 per barrel in 2022 and US\$95 per barrel in 2023 as geopolitical risks stemming from Russia's military invasion of Ukraine outweigh risks to global oil demand.

'Consequently, most hydrocarbon-exporting sovereigns will run twin fiscal and current-account surpluses, allowing the governments to pay down debts, rebuild fiscal reserves and accu-

mulate foreign-currency buffers, thereby reducing government liquidity and external vulnerability risks,' Moody's said.

'In some cases, especially in Oman and Bahrain, supportive oil prices will also help to sustain the easing of external financing and government liquidity pressures that these sovereigns have witnessed since early 2021,' the rating agency added.

Elevated oil prices, Moody's said, offer a window of opportunity to accelerate economic diversification and implement further fiscal reforms amid supportive macroeconomic conditions.

'A key risk is that the absence of fiscal and liquidity pressures may prompt some GCC govern-

ments to delay or reverse reforms,' it said.

Moody's expects the combination of higher oil prices and production volumes to lead to a significant improvement in GCC external and government finances, which is likely to be largely sustained through 2023 and, for some, also into 2024.

'In contrast to 2015-2021 period, when many GCC sovereigns ran large fiscal deficits, we expect nearly all GCC governments to post robust surpluses in during 2022-2024. The only exception will likely be Bahrain, where large unexplained off-budget spending will continue to weigh on the overall fiscal performance,' the rating agency said.

Moody's believes that GCC sovereigns could pay down some of their outstanding debts with the expected fiscal surpluses, or at least keep their debt levels steady in nominal terms.

'Oman, for instance, already bought back some, albeit relatively small, amount of international bonds earlier this year and intends to prepay some of its outstanding commercial loans, while Saudi Arabia aims to refinance some of its future debt maturities at more favourable terms, while keeping the debt level unchanged. We expect the GCC governments' debt and debt affordability metrics to improve, underpinning an improvement in their overall fiscal strength,' Moody's added.

Moody's expects Brent oil prices to average around \$105 per barrel in 2022 and \$95 in 2023 as geopolitical risks stemming from Russia's military invasion of Ukraine outweigh risks to global oil demand

Moody's assumes that, unlike during some past episodes of elevated or rising oil prices (e.g. 2011-2014 and 2018), GCC governments will largely avoid another pro-cyclical fiscal spending

the VAT tax rate or an introduction of a personal income tax) before 2024, which now seems most likely. Furthermore, in both Oman and Qatar we assume that non-interest spending will grow less than 2 per cent in nom-

Asyad signs partnership with GUtech

Muscat - Driven by its goal to be among the leading companies in the global green hydrogen value chain, Asyad Group has signed a memorandum of understanding with Oman Hydrogen Centre at the German University of Technology in Oman (GUtech) to study the potential of Oman's ports and logistics services in shaping the nation's green hydrogen economy.

According to international consultancy firm McKinsey's Global Energy Perspective, green hydrogen demand is anticipated to grow sixfold by 2050 driven by the road transport, maritime and aviation sectors. Against this backdrop, Asyad's agreement with GUtech includes conducting in-depth research and analysis against global best practices to enhance the efficiency of Asyad's ports and logistics oper-



ations as well the competencies and human resources required to cater for this clean energy sector.

In a press release, Essam bin Nasser al Shaibani, vice president of sustainability at Asyad Group said, "Asyad's holistic approach revolves around achieving sustainability at various levels

including economic, environmental and society particularly in its operations and development plans. Partnering with Oman Hydrogen Centre will help us identify, capture, and assess our strengths and areas of improvement. It will also allow us to gather the necessary data we

need to set the competitive standards for our logistics services to contribute to the sultanate's efforts in building a green hydrogen economy and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050."

Shaibani emphasised that Asyad is working to position Oman as a global hub for the clean energy sector, adopting the latest logistics technologies to handle and export green hydrogen and its derivatives to markets all around the world.

Furthermore, Asyad is working closely with the private and public sectors to contribute in achieving net-zero by 2050.

Dr Sausan Said al Riyami, director of Oman Hydrogen Centre at GUtech, explained that the partnership with Asyad is multifaceted and includes energy efficiency, renewable energy, green hydrogen, and capacity building.

CBO, Omantel sign MoU to offer Fintech accelerator programme

Muscat - The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) on Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Omantel to conduct an accelerator programme in order to enable Fintech start-ups in the sultanate.

The MoU was signed by H E Tahir bin Salim al Amri, CBO's executive president, and Talal bin Said al Mamari, Omantel's CEO at Omantel headquarters.

This MoU comes in light of CBO's Oman Fintech Framework and Roadmap that aims at establishing a comprehensive and nurturing Fintech ecosystem in Oman that supports and promotes Fintech start-ups, SMEs, banks and technology firms.

The partnership brings together the expertise and shared



H E Tahir bin Salim al Amri (left) and Talal al Mamari signed MoU at Omantel headquarters on Tuesday

vision of the CBO and Omantel to support local Fintech start-ups. Starting on November 14, the six-month accelerator programme will support innovative Fintech start-ups through the challenges of the highly compet-

itive Fintech industry utilising mentorship, training, networking and fundraising support.

H E Amri said, "Fintech is vital to the future of Oman's financial sector and we are committed to supporting Fintech start-ups in

the country.

This programme is one of the manifestations of that mission. We are delighted to be working with Omantel to provide strategic direction and regulatory advice to local Fintech start-ups."

Omantel's Mamari said, "We are excited for this partnership with the CBO which leverages our shared vision and strengths to contribute to the growth of Fintech start-ups in the country. We are committed to leading digital transformation in Oman and to create meaningful opportunities for local start-ups to develop and thrive.

We strongly believe that our collaboration with the CBO in this area will be a game changer for the country's Fintech sector."

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MUSCAT DAILY

US annual inflation eased in August but not enough

Washington, US – US annual inflation slowed in slightly in August, largely thanks to falling gasoline prices – but likely not enough to satisfy the Federal Reserve and President Joe Biden, as high prices continue inflicting pain on Americans.

The consumer price index (CPI), a key measure of inflation, actually rose 0.1 per cent in August compared to July, when prices were flat, the Labor Department said Tuesday, a disappointing result amid widespread expectations that inflation would fall in the month.

The annual inflation pace improved to 8.3 per cent, higher than expected but slightly below the prior months and confirming a slowdown from the blistering 9.1 per cent rate in June – the highest in 40 years.

Prices have been soaring for months, exacerbated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which has impacted energy and food prices, as well as ongoing supply chain snarls amid Covid lockdowns in China.

While Americans will welcome relief at the pump – there has been a steady drop in gasoline prices, which fell 10.6 per cent last month – costs for food and housing continue to rise, straining family budgets.

The food index increased 11.4 per cent over the last year, the largest 12-month increase since the period ending May 1979, the



report said.

Medical care also has been a key contributor, and auto prices have accelerated, rising 0.8 per cent in the month, according to the report.

More worryingly, the report showed that – excluding volatile food and energy prices – “core” CPI rose 6.3 per cent over the past 12 months, faster than the 5.9 per cent pace seen in July and June.

Core CPI jumped 0.6 per cent in August, double the pace in July, the data showed.

Inflation has become a hot political issue just weeks away from

key midterm congressional elections, and Biden has made fighting high prices his top domestic priority, so any relief will be welcomed at the White House.

“Inflation is way too high, and it’s essential that we bring it down,” Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Sunday, echoing a comment she and other administration officials have made repeatedly to show their sympathy with the plight faced by consumers and firms.

Recession risk

Jason Furman, a former White House economist said the data

was “not pretty.”

The “ugly” core data show “Broad-based relief not coming,” he said on Twitter.

The Federal Reserve views inflation as the biggest risk to the world’s largest economy, and has moved aggressively to cool demand, increasing the benchmark lending rate four times this year – with a third consecutive three-quarter point hike widely expected next week.

The Fed actions increase the cost of borrowing for homebuyers and businesses, which tends to cool investment and spending. Fed Chair Jerome Powell has

said the central bank will do whatever it takes to ensure high prices do not become entrenched, even at the risk of tipping the economy into a recession.

“The clock is ticking,” Powell warned Friday, pledging to “keep at it until the job is done.”

Yellen acknowledged that there is “certainly a risk” of an economic downturn amid the rising lending costs, but she noted the US job market is “exceptionally strong” with nearly two vacancies for every worker looking for a job.

She cautioned that “we can’t have a strong labour market without inflation under control.”

The strong job market – the unemployment rate was 3.7 per cent in August – provides some comfort to the Fed, giving policymakers room to maneuver, and potentially quell inflation without a steep increase in joblessness.

But the worker shortage remains a concern since it could fuel a dangerous wage-spiral.

Rubeela Farooqi of High Frequency Economics said the latest data confirm “inflation readings remain unacceptably high for policymakers.”

“Coupled with a labour market that is still strong, the data seal the deal for another aggressive, 75-basis point, rate hike next week,” she said in an analysis.

AFP



Stocks slump, dollar jumps as US inflation runs hot

London, UK – Stock markets hit reverse while the dollar shot higher Tuesday after data showed that US inflation slowed less than expected.

Annual consumer price inflation slowed slightly in August to 8.3 per cent from 8.5 per cent in July, the Labor Department said in an anxiously-anticipated report that the Federal Reserve is watching closely.

The dollar, which had fallen against its major rivals in anticipation of a significant slowdown in US inflation would lessen pressure on the Fed to continue aggressively raising interest rates, shot higher.

“Both headline and core US CPI were substantially hotter than expected in August, leading currency and fixed income markets to embark on a swift and dramatic reversal from recent price action, where traders and investors had largely positioned themselves for a softer inflation print,” said market analyst Jay Zhao-Murray at Monex.

He pointed to core inflation that excludes volatile energy and food prices, which is what Fed policymakers pay particular attention to.

This rose by 0.6 percentage points month-on-month, compared to a 0.3-point gain in July.

While markets were already largely pricing in another 75-basis-point interest rate hike by the Fed at its next gathering, there had been hopes that having past the peak of inflation would allow the Fed to let up thereafter.

However, the inflation figures were “hotter than expected in August and put a chill on some of the peak inflation/peak hawkishness/soft landing chatter,” said analyst Patrick O’Hare at Briefing.com.

Stocks, which had rebounded in recent days on hopes that a peak in inflation would allow a rapid end to hawkish rate hikes and thus avoid a recession and attain a “soft” landing of the economy, abruptly turned lower.

Midday gains in Europe swiftly turned to losses and US futures shifted from green to red.

Wall Street opened sharply lower, with the Dow slumping 1.6 per cent at the open. The S&P 500 fell more than two per cent while the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite shed more than three per cent.

London’s FTSE was down 0.8 per cent for the day.

Fed boss Jerome Powell has indicated the rate increases would continue until inflation is tamed.

Zhao-Murray said that following the inflation data that market expectations regarding the Fed’s next rate hike had hardened. While previously there were some who were forecasting the possibility the Fed would drop to a half-percentage-point hike, now a 0.75-point hike is seen as the floor and some are forecasting a one-point increase.

Inflation has soared around the globe this year owing to sky-high energy and food bills.

AFP

EU presidency calls new round of energy crisis talks

Prague, Czech Republic – The European Union presidency said Tuesday it would convene another round of talks for the bloc’s energy ministers to discuss the energy crisis linked to the Ukraine war.

“I am calling another extraor-

dinary meeting of the energy ministers’ council for September 30,” Czech Industry and Trade Minister Jozef Sikela, whose country now holds the rotating presidency, said in a tweet.

At the meeting, EU ministers

pledged “unprecedented measures” to tackle the current energy crisis.

The 27-nation bloc is contemplating a price cap on gas that could further anger the Kremlin, following sanctions against Russia adopted after it

invaded Ukraine on February 24.

The invasion sent gas prices to record levels, sparking unprecedented growth in prices across the energy sector.

The market price of electricity in Europe is closely linked to

the gas price, meaning non-gas utilities are enjoying huge revenues despite far lower costs.

Moscow has threatened to stop the flow of gas into Europe completely if the cap is imposed.

AFP

Oil prices decline as China demand concerns mount amid COVID curbs

Singapore – Oil prices fell in volatile trade on Tuesday as investor concerns about lower demand in China, the world’s biggest crude importer, and further increases in US and European interest rates offset worries about tight fuel supplies ahead of winter. Brent crude slid 34 cents, or 0.4 per cent, to US\$93.66 a barrel by 04:45 GMT, while WTI crude declined by 20 cents, or 0.2 per cent, to US\$87.58 a barrel. Both contracts fell by more than US\$1 earlier in the session, snapping a three-day rally.

COVID-19 curbs in China, the world’s second-largest oil consumer, renewed concerns about lower global fuel demand, according to Reuters.

The number of journeys taken during the country’s three-day mid-Autumn festival dropped by



more than a third compared with last year, a state media report said on Monday, as the country’s zero-COVID policy discouraged people from travelling.

“The extensive COVID lockdowns and mass testing in China weigh on oil markets due to demand concerns,” said Tina Teng, an analyst at CMC Markets. “Plus the odds for the Fed to keep

aggressive rate hikes will be strengthened if US inflation comes out hotter than expected.”

Worries over tighter inventories also buoyed oil prices.

In the United States, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) fell 8.4mn barrels to 434.1mn barrels in the week ended September 9, the lowest

since October 1984, according to data released on Monday by the Department of Energy.

US President Joe Biden in March set a plan to release 1mn barrels per day over six months from the SPR to tackle high US fuel prices, which have contributed to inflation.

US commercial oil stockpiles are expected to have fallen for five weeks in a row, dropping by around 200,000 barrels in the week to September 9, a preliminary Reuters poll showed on Monday.

Prospects for a revival of the West’s nuclear deal with Iran remained dim. Germany expressed regret on Monday that Tehran had not responded positively to European proposals to revive the 2015 agreement.

BNA

German investor confidence declines

Frankfurt, Germany - German investor confidence fell in September for a third straight month, a closely watched survey showed on Tuesday, fuelling fears of a looming recession in Europe’s biggest economy.

The ZEW institute’s economic expectations index dropped 6.6 points from the previous month to minus 61.9 points, as soaring inflation and a shutdown of

Russian gas supplies ring alarm bells.

For its survey, ZEW quizzes experts about the current economic situation and the outlook for the coming six months. A negative reading means that most experts are pessimistic.

“The outlook for the next six months has deteriorated further,” said the group’s president Achim Wambach.

“The prospect of energy shortages in winter has made expectations even more negative for large parts of the German industry.”

Investors’ assessment of the current economic situation in Germany also fell by 12.9 points in September from the previous month, to minus 60.5 points, according to the survey.

LBBW bank analyst Jens-

Oliver Niklasch said a recession in Germany was “almost a foregone conclusion.”

“The question is now how much the economy will shrink – and how high inflation will rise.”

The bleak picture from ZEW came a day after think-tank the Ifo institute forecast that the German economy would shrink by 0.3 per cent in 2023.

AFP

Tender Advertisement for Sale of Tools/Machinery/Equipment TDR#0002

Item Details	Unit of Measurement	Quantity for Sale
Scrap of Tools Material (Hand Tools/ Pneumatic Tool/Power Tool/Lifting Tool)	ITEMS	138
Used Machinery & Equipment Working and Under Repair Condition(50T Crane/ Compressor/Welding Generator/ Power Generator)	ITEMS	6
Repairable Window AC & Printer	ITEMS	3

Time of Tender Form collection	For Enquiries & General Conditions
Tender forms can be collected from Falaj Office from 15 September 2022 (Thursday) till 25 September 2022(Sunday)Working Hours: 8:00 AM till 05.00 PM, Working Days: Sunday to Thursday. Tender Closing Date: 26 September 2022 (Monday) Note: All Material available for inspection at our warehouse , Phase 07 Sohar Industrial Area,(Near to Misco).	Descon Engineering Oman LLC Supply Chain Department PO Box: 2741,Postal Code 111, Falaj Al Qubail, Building# 18, Block# 03, Near Muscat Bakery, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman. Contact persons: Syed Bagh Ali Shah, Lead Supply Chain: +968 91451464/ bagh.shah@descon.com

OUR TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. Tender Fee is OMR 50 (Non-Refundable).
2. Letter of Authorization required from company for tender form issuance.
3. Sealed Tender should be submitted to our Falaj Office within bid closing dates.
4. Quote required for serial number wise & Lumpsum quote will not be accepted.
5. All Materials & Equipment listed are as is where is condition.

APT acquires Scirocco’s 25% in Ruvuma Concession



ARA Petroleum Tanzania Limited (APT), a subsidiary of The Zubair Corporation, entered into an agreement with Scirocco Energy PLC (Scirocco) to acquire Scirocco’s 25 per cent interest in the Ruvuma oil & gas concession (Ruvuma Concession).

APT is a 50 per cent interest holder and operator of the Ruvuma Concession. Upon completion,

APT’s interest in the Ruvuma Concession will increase from 50 per cent to 75 per cent. The parties will endeavour to complete the disposal by December 31.

Sultan al Ghaithi, ARA Petroleum’s Chief Executive Officer said, “The acquisition of Scirocco’s interests underlines our strategy to reinforce our portfolio with greater stake in high-quality assets and strengthen our long-term presence in Tanzania. It also reaffirms our confidence in the asset and commitment to continue supporting the region’s oil and gas industry.” The Ruvuma Production Sharing Agreement (Ruvuma PSA) was granted in 2005. The Ruvuma PSA comprises the Mtwara Licence which contains the Ntorya Appraisal Area over the Ntorya gas condensate discovery. APT was established in 2018 to accelerate the development of the Ntorya area. The exploration activities picked up momentum in 2021 with APT acquiring working interest from Ndovu Resources Ltd. and becoming the operator of the project.

Ooredoo’s B2B eShop makes business easier than ever

Running a business is easier than ever with the all-new Ooredoo Business eShop. Available through the Ooredoo website, the eShop features a host of B2B products and plans, including the recently upgraded Business Shahry Digital. With frequent updates, business owners can enhance their communications through a variety of innovative solutions supported by Ooredoo’s seamless connection.

Saied Sadiq al Lawati, Director of Business Marketing & ICT Solutions at Ooredoo, said, “Ooredoo’s B2B eShop is designed to provide maximum convenience to our corporate customers by offering a great range of plans and deals suited to suit every digital need. Customers can select from the comfort of their homes, offices or anywhere, without the need to visit a store. This is one of many ways we ensure businesses are equipped with everything digital they need to grow and succeed.”

Ooredoo continues to upgrade and enhance its offerings with innovative solutions that support businesses of all sizes and sectors’ needs, while providing them with simplicity, flexibility and affordability.

ICAI Muscat Chapter celebrates Onam in pomp and splendor

The Muscat Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), under the sponsorship of the College of Banking and Financial Studies, celebrated the festival of Onam at Oman Avenues Mall on September 3.

The event was attended by Indian Ambassador to Oman H E Amit Narang. Others who attended the programme included past chairpersons ICAI Muscat and over 300 members with their families, besides other invitees.

A cultural programme was organised to mark the day. Special stage performances by the ICAI members and their families included ‘Chendamelam’, visit of ‘Mahabali’ and ‘Thiruvathira Kali’ before a traditional ‘Onam Sadhya’ lunch.

Addressing the gathering H E Narang conveyed Onam wishes to all and highlighted the spirit of the nation in celebrating diverse festivals irrespective of geography and religion.

CA Sajeev Surendran, ICAI Muscat Chapter chairman extended Onam greetings to all the members and observed that the event was being held after a break of three years.



Oman Cables kick-starts ‘SHE STEMS’ programme for women development

Oman Cables Industry (OCI) welcomed on board 20 Omani women students for the SHE STEMS social development programme that aims to prepare more Omani women for the nation’s Manufacturing and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) sectors.

The start of the programme follows Oman Cables Industry’s signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) and the Ministry of Labour (MoL) in early August to develop and implement the SHE STEMS initiative.

In line with Oman Vision 2040 strategic objectives, SHE STEMS will create more opportunities for Omani women to enter careers in the industrial sector, and contribute to building a productive and diversified economy, founded on innovation, integration of roles, and equal opportunities.

The twenty female Omani students were selected from a list of over three

We are delighted to be part of this first-of-its-kind initiative in Oman. The programme will prepare more Omani women for the nation’s critically important manufacturing sector and empower them to take great strides towards achieving their career goals

CINZIA FARISÈ

hundred candidates. As of this week, they have begun a six-month-long ‘Machine Operations’ course that will emphasize hands-on skills development and practical on-the-job training in machine operations, with a focus on the manufacturing sector. The training will be supervised by highly proficient and qualified instructors.

The Machine Operations course forms the first out of three SHE STEMS programmes scheduled for deployment, all of which will be officially cer-

tified by MoHERI. On completion of the training, each graduate will receive a SHE STEMS certificate recognised by the ministry.

“We are delighted to be part of this first-of-its-kind initiative in Oman. The programme will prepare more Omani women for the nation’s critically important manufacturing sector and empower them to take great strides towards achieving their career goals,” said OCI’s Chief Executive Officer Cinzia Farisè. “Oman Cables is proud

to support local women and local communities in Oman. Through this initiative we hope to be able to change these 20 women’s lives for the better.”

“The SHE STEMS project is a long-term project and forms part of our sustainability plan, in line with our global social ambition. Similar initiatives can be seen in some other countries now, but we are very proud to be the first and to start in Oman and for Oman. The local initiative received the endorsement of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation and the Ministry of Labour, that we thank for their continuous support.”

As part of the Prysmian Group, OCI launched SHE STEMS initiative as a joint amalgamation with Prysmian’s sustainability development strategy and goals, and within the framework of the Prysmian Social Ambition 2030 objectives of Diversity, Equality and Inclusion, Digital Inclusion, Community Empowerment, and Employee Engagement and Upskilling.

MEDRC, bp Oman conclude fifth cycle of TAHLYA programme

In partnership with bp Oman, MEDRC held a graduation ceremony marking the closing of the TAHLYA V programme, under the patronage of H E Ali Mohammed al Abri, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources for Water Resources.

TAHLYA V is the latest cycle of the vocational training programme which aims at building the capacity of young Omanis and equipping them with the necessary skills to advance in the desalination sector in Oman. This year, a total of 68 Omanis graduated with 31 supervisors and 37 operators graduating from the programme.

Shamsa al Rawahi, bp Oman Social Investment Manager, commented: “Our partnership with MEDRC started in 2017 with the first cycle of the TAHLYA programme. The aim of which is to fill a gap in the local labour market specifically in the desalination sector. Over the years it successfully trained 330 young



Omani jobseekers of which 56 per cent are currently employed. We are proud of the programme achievements so far and are delighted to continue helping strengthen local capabilities.”

MEDRC Centre Director Cia-

rán Ó Cuinn said, “We are honoured to work with bp Oman to deliver this great programme that has transformed the desalination and water sector in Oman. The programme worked on developing the local potential, al-

lowing them to take up new opportunities to support Oman’s economy. We are excited to announce that the sixth cycle of the TAHLYA program start this month and train an additional 76 trainees.”

Dr Kavitha Ramakrishna’s ‘yoga art therapy’ promotes wellbeing

Noted yoga expert and Tanjore artist Dr Kavitha Ramakrishna has embarked on a special journey to promote a unique therapy by combining the benefits of yoga and painting.

Using a dynamic approach, she blends her proficiency in yoga and expertise in Tanjore painting to teach and help the participants in her class enhance their overall wellbeing by practicing the two forms together.

At her sessions, Tanjore painting is practiced after a yoga class that allows the student to enter the creative process after performing savasana, the final resting yoga pose. The aim is to stay connected with yoga session while starting the painting process. At times she also encourages the students to place the canvas on the yoga mat and create the Tanjore artwork as they practice the asanas using art materials such as gold foils, precious stones, and others.

Dr Kavitha started art yoga therapy classes after having understood the advantages of inte-



grating yoga practice with an art form such as Tanjore painting. She discovered this positively influences the creative process and increases overall well-being in practitioners.

“When we mix yoga with art, we make room for artistic expression and create space for acceptance, creativity, and wellness. When in the artistic state, one enters a state of meditation which, according to yogic principles, helps one attain wellbeing of the body, spirit and mind,” She expounds.

“The process of infusing creativity into the yoga art therapy classes I teach has been eye opening. While yoga has been

used to find ease, calm the mind, and build awareness in the body, Tanjore painting is a powerful tool for self-realisation and for exploring an alternative path to healing. I have received a positive response to the yoga art therapy classes and several participants have extolled its benefits.”

“My connection to yoga and art is a powerful personal one, and I want to share its benefits with others,” she says.

For the last many years Dr Kavitha has been sharing her unique yoga knowledge, free of charge, for those interested in learning the practice that involves the combination of asanas (postures and poses), pranayama (regulated breathing), and samyana (meditation and relaxation). It was recently that she incorporated the element of Tanjore paintings too. She is popularising the ancient art form Tanjore by offering free training and teaching on offline and e-learning platform. Tanjore, a popular art style emerged during the 16th century in South India.

Bank Nizwa spearheads digitalisation, innovation



As a progressive Islamic bank, Bank Nizwa has been committed to spearheading innovation, digitalisation and sustainable practices whilst advocating the values of Islamic finance in society.

In line with the same, the bank participated as the Islamic Banking Partner at the Future Tech Event, which comprised an expo and a summit. To support the efforts of digital transformation, Bank Nizwa signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with EthisX to launch a crowdfunding platform that aims to empower Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

Commenting on Bank Nizwa's participation at the conference, Khaled al Kayed, the CEO said, "Bank Nizwa has always been at the forefront of supporting events that have the potential to benefit the Islamic finance industry in the long run. We believe that sharing knowledge is critical to driving socio-economic progress. The Future Tech Summit not only brings together leading industry experts for a meaningful, thought-provoking session on the Islamic finance industry but it also provides an excellent networking opportunity for like-minded peers."

Meethaq's new financing offer comes with special profit rates

Meethaq Islamic banking from Bank Muscat has launched a number of exclusive financing offers with highly competitive profit rates as part of its customer-centric strategy of offering maximum financial benefit to its customers.



The special profit rate is applicable on a number of financing products including Home Finance, Auto Finance, Personal Finance, Education Finance, Marriage Finance, Travel Finance, and Takeover Finance. Meethaq customers are eligible for up to 80 per cent financing for home or auto financing, while 100 per cent financing is available for Travel, Marriage, Education and Personal Goods Finance. Applications may be submitted at any of Meethaq's 24 state-of-the-art branches across the sultanate.

Meethaq Personal Banking AGM Sami Bait Rashid said, "Meethaq is well known for its keen efforts to offer various services and customer value propositions aligned to the needs of its large and growing family of customers in the sultanate as well as the latest global financial trends. We would like to extend our sincere appreciation and support to all our valued customers."

OPPO to introduce flagship Reno8 Series, IoT products

Global technology brand, OPPO is thrilled to announce the upcoming all-new Reno8 series along with an extensive range of IoT devices. Bursting with industry-leading highlights, these launches will continue to raise the bar on technology allowing consumers to get the best out of their devices with every use.

The latest series will feature three models - Reno8 Pro 5G, Reno8 5G, and the Reno8 Z 5G, catering to all types of smartphone users, from fashionistas and professional photographers to gaming enthusiasts and design aficionados.

With the support of OPPO's self-designed NPU, MariSilicon X's powerful image processing capabilities, the Reno8 Pro 5G showcases ground-breaking camera features to help users shoot ultra-clear, stunning visual content both during the day and at night.

OPPO MEA president Ethan Xue said, "At OPPO, our customers are always top of mind when we develop new products. With the launch of the Reno8 Series, we strive once again to elevate and exceed our customers' needs by delivering an immaculate smartphone user experience, powered by leading technological innovations at the core. Each Reno series we release to the market is enhanced in every aspect to ensure we constantly push boundaries and set the industry standard." The Reno8 series will take OPPO's 'customer-centric' approach one step further.

Takaful Oman's board of directors, Sharia'a board restructured



Takaful Oman SAOG restructured its board of directors with board members having long and prudent professional experience in managing companies and institutions. These members are Ubar Capital CEO Abdulaziz al Saadi, Alizz Islamic Bank CEO Suleiman al Harthi and OMINVEST's Chief Operating Officer Bader al Shanfari.

"After restructuring the board of directors, we also restructured the committees affiliated with the board, and the executive management was provided with the professional expertise capable of keeping pace with developments in the insurance sector, especially in light of the current economic challenges that have occurred globally," said Mohammed bin Abdullah al Khonji, Chairman of the Board of Directors and Acting CEO of Takaful Oman SAOG.

"The restructuring of the Sharia'a Board followed this to adhere to the highest standards and ensure that we comply with the provisions and principles of sharia'a in accordance with prudent directives in this regard, where the company strictly adheres to all laws, regulations and rules issued by the

Capital Market Authority," Khonji said, adding that the Chairman of the Sharia'a Board Dr Majid al Kindi is a renowned scholar and is a well-known figure across the Middle East.

"Since we took over the responsibility in Takaful Oman," Khonji said, "the capital has been raised to clear previous accumulated losses."

"Since the establishment of the company, OMINVEST Group has strengthened the capital and injected the necessary funds in continuous coordination with the Capital Market Authority to increase the capital and take the necessary approvals in this regard."

Khonji acknowledged that the company had learned and benefited from some of the stumbling blocks it faced by turning challenges into favourable opportunities and ways to enhance the customer experience.

With reference to the restructuring, Takaful Oman's Acting CEO stressed that these changes were reflected in the improved performance. The company was able to compensate all the insured affected by Cyclone Shaheen, which hit the Sultanate in October last year, with a total value of RO7mn, and more than 4000 people receiving com-

penation for the damages incurred.

"This is part of the company's overall strategy to improve the insurance industry sector and be an essential support pillar to the community," Khonji said.

The majority of the compensation was done in a record time of only four months, achieving customer satisfaction and enhancing their confidence in the services and products offered by the company.

Takaful Oman SAOG offers a variety of insurance products, including Takaful insurance on real estate, cars, machinery, equipment, personal accidents, travel, construction, family and health takaful. All insurance services provided by the company are in line with the provisions and principles of sharia'a and have been approved by The Fatwa and Sharia'a Supervisory Board of the company.

It is worth noting that the company's mission is to promote Takaful Oman's awareness by offering innovative sharia'a-compliant products and services that deliver exceptional value and are tailored to customers' specific needs through a highly dedicated professional team.



After the restructuring, the executive management was provided with the professional expertise capable of keeping pace with developments in the insurance sector

MOHAMMED AL KHONJI

ISWK felicitates staff on 'Teachers' Day'



In recognition of the outstanding contribution that the teachers are making to create the future citizens of the world, the management committees of Indian School Al Wadi Al Kabir and Indian School Wadi Kabir, Cambridge International, felicitated their teachers on the occasion of India's Teachers' Day that falls on September 5 each year.

The event for its staff was held amidst grandeur and pomp in the school's multipurpose hall followed by dinner.

The special evening commenced with a heartfelt welcome on behalf of the members of the management committee

followed by lighting of the lamp by teachers who offered long, dedicated service to ISWK.

As the evening began on an auspicious note, as the elated and cheery staff looked forward to a fun-filled evening, away from the regular classroom scenes.

Before the ball was set rolling to a series of gripping activities for teachers, Kiran Asher, a distinguished member of the Education Cell and the honorary president of the school management committee of ISWKi, Gargi Chugh addressed the gathering and commended all staff for their diligence, commitment towards their responsibilities and ex-

pressed gratitude for their bounteous contribution towards moulding the young minds in school and keeping the flag of ISWK flying high.

She conveyed the best wishes and compliments to the entire staff fraternity, on behalf of the school management committees.

The genuine appreciation filled the hearts of the staff with warmth and motivated them further to contribute their best.

That set the tone to an evening which then witnessed the faculty making the most of the mirthful ambience.

The engrossing fun games, the spot prizes, bags of goodies

stage presentations of songs and dances captivated the interest of the teachers as they uninhibitedly partook in the fun and frolic organised specially for them.

As the tantalising aroma of the scrumptious and inviting cuisines dispersed through the air, the gathering made the best of it by doing justice to their taste buds and relishing every bit of the voluminous spread of eats.

The game of Tambola kept everyone on the edge of their seats and before the evening drew to an end, there were many who proved lucky to walk away with precious prizes.

UTAS-Nizwa gets research funds

The University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Nizwa (UTAS-Nizwa), formerly known as Nizwa College of Technology, has been approved RO64,831 by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation for 12 research projects for 2021-22.

"This funding will cover nine research projects for academics with an amount of RO62,581, and three research projects for undergraduate students at an amount of RO2,250," said Dr Hafed al Rahbi, Dean of UTAS-Nizwa. "No doubt, this indicates the high levels of research awareness amongst staff and students."

The UTAS-Nizwa is well-known for its encouraging environment for conducting scientific research for faculty and students. The research culture at UTAS-Nizwa stimulates innovation, creativity and critical thinking, the university said.

The research activities and consulting programmes at UTAS-Nizwa are managed by the Research and Consultancy

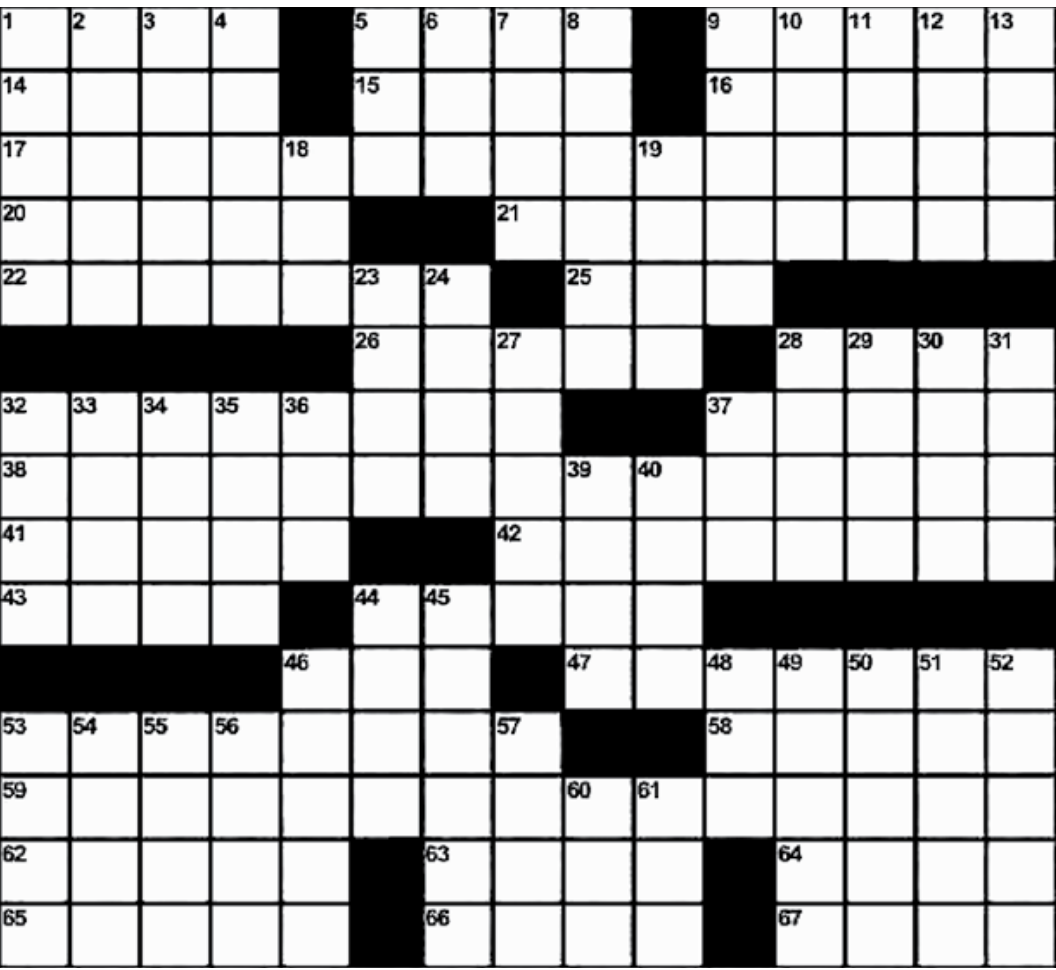


Committee (RCC). Throughout each academic year, RCC organises several research training programs and workshops for staff and students. Exclusive MoHERI Block Funding Programme (MoHERI-BFP) orientation sessions are annually organised for Omani staff and students to ensure increased participation in MoHERI-BFP calls. RCC chairman Dr Abdullah bin Humaid al Abri said, "Participating in these funded research projects contributes to developing academ-

ics' research skills by working with experienced researchers. As for students, these research projects have a long-term impact by enhancing students' competitive abilities to obtain study opportunities in graduate studies, as well as enhancing future employment opportunities."

The committee also encourages staff and students to seek collaboration with researchers from other higher education institutions to achieve more creative research outcomes.

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1) "Cinderella" event
5) Beat one's_ (jabber)
9) Jack Homer's fruits
14) Opera tenor's tune
15) Cast-of-thousands film
16) Like Halloween sounds
17) The IT department manages it
20) Registers register them
21) Foot-activated devices
22) Stagnation
25) Grig, when grown
26) Eyeball-bending drawings
28) Till contents
32) One in agreement
37) Steak condiment
38) Question upon meeting a stranger
41) "... with in sight"
42) Gross out
43) Installs a ready-made lawn
44) Sounds the bells
46) "As to"
47) Seemingly without

end
53) Extremely delicate, as beauty
58) Like many marsh plants
59) Not what it once was
62) Sheds tears
63) Fiendish or wicked
64) Do a lawn job
65) "Faster!"
66) Melon protector
67) Changes color, in a way

DOWN

1) Low guys at the opera
2) Indo-European
3) Cotton thread used for hosiery
4) Procrastinator's promise
5) Valuable stone
6) _ and downs
7) Atomizer output
8) Basket maker?
9) "She loves me" decider
10) Didn't stay divorced
50) Poverty-stricken
51) "Time is money," e.g.
52) Harps' older relatives
53) Make impressions?
54) Drive-__

23) Minute amount
24) Impersonator
27) Building used for sports
28) Upscale eatery
29) Luminous surrounding
30) Dundee native
31) Deep red blood pigment
32) Grain beards
33) "Vamoose!"
34) Watermelon discard
35) "East" or "west" endings
40) Topples from power
44) Jury member, essentially
45) Pencil attachment
46) Commonplace, as writing
48) Bungle up
49) Didn't stay divorced
50) Poverty-stricken
51) "Time is money," e.g.
52) Harps' older relatives
53) Make impressions?
54) Drive-__

55) Elder son, often
56) Still-life pitcher
57) Name on many jeans'

labels
60) "Jaws" sighting
61) Like a centenarian

NOTE PAD

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

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Remember that you have some of the best instincts around. So this recent bout of self-doubt is completely unwarranted and unnecessary. Today, you need to trust yourself! This day offers you a big opportunity to try out your new optimistic self-assurance, and the best part of it is that it will be fun and completely risk-free. Consider it training wheels for a healthier ego. Your ability to see the future will grow stronger once you start listening to yourself again.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Despite several warnings not to overextend yourself, it seems like you still have a few too many things on your plate right now. You're to be congratulated for your ambition, but you need to be smart about how you prioritize things. Sort through all your stuff and see if you can ask other people to take some of the load off you. It's time to take advantage of the enduring partnerships you've built. Don't let your ego keep you from reaching out.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Today, you start to sense that a healthy feeling of fulfillment has been missing from your life. You've been admirably shifting your energies around to many different people, career prospects, or self-improvement options, and this fluidity has kept you busy enough to distract you from what you're missing. But today, you see something you want and wonder what you have to do to get it. The answer will arrive soon in a very obvious (and attractive) package.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Far too many people think the only thing you need to pay attention to is the bottom line. As you know, there are more factors involved in creating a happy life than profit. Today, it's your heart that should motivate your choices and actions, not your wallet. Whether you add an extra dollar to your server's tip or write a big check for your favorite charity, give a little bit more than you usually do. Generosity is a way of thanking the Universe for what you have.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Nobody is an island. It's an obvious statement to say that you need relationships to get you through life. Other people provide the acid to your base and can often be a perfect sounding board for your ideas. But in order to make the deep connections you need for total honesty, you must develop trust. The only way to do that is to take a risk and let someone in. So reach out today. Lower your drawbridge and invite someone to cross the moat.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Today, you're entering a period of tremendous personal strength and self-discipline, and all the bad forces in your life are running for cover! It's the perfect time to tackle any trouble spots you may have, so the time for procrastination is over. Better health, a bigger bank account, a more active social life, these are all possible with a few nips and tucks in your life. You know exactly what to do. Not only is failure not an option today, it's not even a possibility!

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Generosity is major part of who you are, and it's something you should always value and cultivate. But today resist your normal urge to lend a friend a few bucks, run some errands for a busy family member, or extend a deadline for a stressed-out coworker. If you extend yourself too much, you may encounter some endurance problems. Your energy isn't as endless as you think, and if you run out of steam you're no good to anyone. Keep to yourself today.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

No matter how you start your day, you end it on a very high note today. You have an unpredictable amount of energy right now, but you can build on your accomplishments and keep things going at a good pace. Little by little, you'll come to recognize a sense of momentum growing, and it just may carry you to your destination. Try to stay positive. Don't let little annoyances affect how you view other people. Go by the motto of "live and let live."

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

What you really need today is stimulation, which you will quickly find if you seek out new experiences, cultures, music, food, or film. Confusion will shake loose old ideas in your mind and get you thinking in a new, inspiring way, so seek things that don't quite make sense to you. This includes the people in your life whose motivations are mysterious to you. Find out what makes them tick by asking open-ended questions. They could start you on a new path.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

There's a strong sense of pride coming through in your life today, and this is not a temporary phase. It's a sign that you're gaining more self-assurance and shaping yourself into a capable, self-actualized person. Someone you respect deeply has been listening to you more closely than ever, and today they may ask for your input on an important dilemma. This is a test of your confidence, and you won't fail. Speak firmly and make sure they realize how flattered you are by their trust.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You might get a sense that someone has eyes for something you have today. This is more than just a "grass is greener" phenomenon. Guard your possessions closely, and guard your ideas even more closely. Someone's been noticing your ways and observing how you work the room, and they want to do it your way. They're slowly creeping into your territory, and you've worked too hard to make your own space to let any latecomers ruin it. Defend your claim to fame.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You're continuing down a path of self-discovery. The trouble is that what you're searching for is still a bit unclear to you. It might seem like everyone but you has a passion in life or a direction to follow. If you're feeling lost or a bit overwhelmed by your options, plan some alone time to figure it all out. It doesn't have to be a weekend getaway. A simple hour or two alone, perhaps on a long drive or wandering through the park, will give you some distance from the stress.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

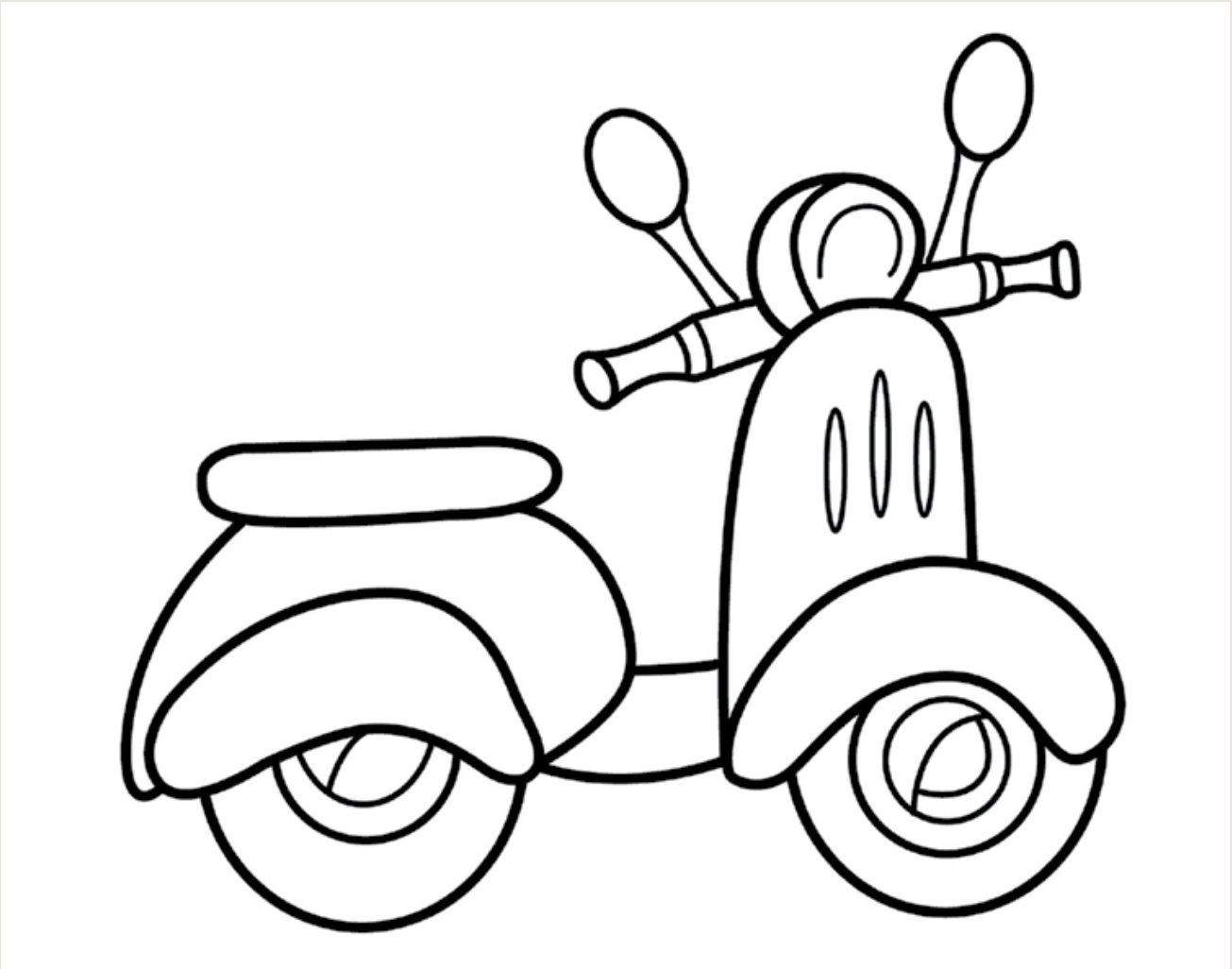
01. What was the name of the British Royal Yacht that entered service in 1953 and decommissioned on 11 December 1997?
A. Britannia
B. Alexandra
C. Victoria and Albert
D. Queen Elizabeth

02. What is the name of the Spanish island group in the Mediterranean Sea that includes Majorca, Minorca, Ibiza, Formentera and Cabrera?
A. Bermuda
B. Balearic Islands
C. The Channel Islands
D. Samoa

03. Whose adopted children are David Banha and Chifundo "Mercy" James?
A. Courtney Cox-Arquette
B. Jennifer Aniston
C. Madonna
D. Beyonce

Answers: 1. A 2. B 3. C

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

N	T	E	U
R	E	R	O
P	A	E	R
S	E	K	S

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

Uncrewed Blue Origin rocket crashes marking setback for space tourism

Washington, US - An uncrewed Blue Origin rocket carrying re-search payloads crashed shortly after liftoff from Texas on Monday, but the capsule carrying experiments escaped and floated safely back to Earth.

The incident marked a setback for Amazon founder and executive chair Jeff Bezos' company as well as the space tourism sector, though observers were encouraged by the fact that had people been aboard, they would have likely survived.

Blue Origin tweeted a short video clip showing the moment when the capsule fired emergency thrusters to separate itself from its booster rocket early, around a minute after launching from the company's base in west Texas.

"Booster failure on today's uncrewed flight. Escape system performed as designed," Blue said on its website, noting the rocket 'impacted the ground' instead of landing upright as it normally does.

The New Shepard suborbital rockets have been grounded pending an investigation, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said, which is standard procedure.

"The capsule landed safely and the booster impacted within the designated hazard area. No injuries or public property damage have been reported," the FAA added.

It was the 23rd mission for



This screen grab shows the moment when the capsule fired emergency thrusters to separate from its booster during an emergency manoeuvre after a booster failure on Monday's uncrewed flight of Blue Origin rocket (AFP)

The New Sheprad suborbital rockets have been grounded pending an investigation. The capsule landed safely and the booster impacted within the designated hazard area

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

the New Shepard rocket programme, named after the first American in space, and the first to end in failure.

NS-23, which had 36 experi-

ments on board, was first set to launch in late August, but was delayed due to inclement weather.

The anomaly occurred as the

rocket was climbing at 700 miles (1,126km) per hour at an altitude of about 28,000 feet (8,500 metres). The rocket appeared to stall as it experienced the technical issue.

The capsule then initiated its escape sequence and outsped the booster, which it engulfed in bright yellow flames.

The incident marks a setback for both the Blue Origin and the nascent space tourism industry.

'Escape system worked well'

But billionaire entrepreneur Jared Isaacman, who chartered a private space mission with SpaceX last year, tweeted 'looks like the launch escape system worked well'.

"With so many launches, so many vehicles, engines and boosters in development across the industry, it should not be that surprising to see events like this," Isaacman added.

Blue Origin began flying humans to space on 10-minute there and back rides last year for an unspecified ticket price.

In all it has flown 32 people - some as paying customers and others as guests. Notable passengers include founder Bezos and Star Trek icon William Shatner.

Passengers experience a few minutes' weightlessness and observe the curve of the Earth before the capsule re-enters the atmosphere and floats down for a gentle desert landing.

Other companies offering tourism experiences include Virgin Galactic, which hasn't flown since carrying its founder Richard Branson to the edge of space in July 2021.

While Virgin Galactic and Blue Origin offer short jaunts to the cosmos, Elon Musk's SpaceX works with another company called Axiom Space to offer longer missions to the International Space Station.

AFP



Artemis I unmanned lunar rocket sitting on its launch pad 39B at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida (AFP)

NASA's Moon mission pushed back, again

Washington, US - NASA is now targeting September 27 as the earliest possible launch date for its uncrewed Artemis 1 mission to the Moon, the agency said in a blog post on Monday.

The date would depend on engineering teams successfully carrying out a test to fuel up the Space Launch System rocket, and receive a waiver to avoid retesting batteries on an emergency flight system that is used to destroy the rocket if it strays from its designated range.

If it does not receive the waiver, the rocket will have to be wheeled back to its assembly building, pushing the timeline back several weeks.

For the September 27 date, a '70-minute launch window opens at 11:37am EDT', while the mission would end with an ocean splashdown of the Orion capsule on November 5. A potential next

date comes on October 2.

The Artemis 1 space mission hopes to test the SLS as well as the unmanned Orion capsule that sits atop it, in preparation for future Moon-bound journeys with humans aboard.

Once launched, it will take several days for the spacecraft to reach the Moon, flying around 60 miles (100km) at its closest approach.

One of the trip's main objectives is to test the capsule's heat shield - which at 16 feet (five metres) in diameter is the largest ever built - when the ship re-enters the atmosphere.

The next mission, Artemis 2, will take astronauts to the Moon without landing on its surface, while the third - set for the mid-2020s - would see the first woman and person of colour on lunar soil.

AFP

Syria cholera outbreak at risk of spreading: WHO

Beirut, Lebanon - The World Health Organization warned on Tuesday of a 'very high' risk of cholera spreading across Syria after the country recorded its first cases since 2009.

"The risk of cholera spreading to other governorates is very high," the WHO said, after cases were recorded in at least five of the country's 14 provinces.

'The source of infection could be linked to people drinking water from untreated sources', or 'food contamination due to irrigating plants with contaminated water', the WHO said in a statement.

On Monday, the Syrian

health ministry reported two cholera deaths in government-held areas.

On Saturday, Kurdish authorities reported three deaths in areas of northern and eastern Syria under their control.

The WHO said the cases were the first reported in Syria since 2009, when 342 cases were confirmed in the eastern province of Deir Ezzor and the northern province of Raqa.

The disease is generally contracted from contaminated food or water, and causes diarrhoea and vomiting. It can spread in residential areas that lack proper sewerage networks or mains drink-

ing water. A decade of civil war has damaged two thirds of Syria's water treatment plants, half of its pumping stations and one third of its water towers, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has said.

Nearly half the population relies on alternative and often unsafe sources of water while at least 70 per cent of sewage goes untreated, it added.

The UN issued an urgent appeal to donor countries on Monday for additional funding to battle the outbreak.

"The outbreak presents a serious threat to people in Syria and the region," the UN Resident and Humanitarian

Coordinator in Syria, Imran Riza said. "Swift and urgent action is needed to prevent further illness and death."

The UN said the source of the outbreak 'is believed to be linked to people drinking unsafe water from the Euphrates River and using contaminated water to irrigate crops, resulting in food contamination'.

An outbreak of cholera hit neighbouring Iraq this summer for the first time since 2015.

Worldwide, the disease affects between 1.3mn and four million people each year, killing between 21,000 and 143,000 people.

AFP

Man arrested after claiming Mecca pilgrimage for queen

Riyadh, KSA - Saudi authorities have arrested a man who claimed to have travelled to the Muslim holy city of Mecca to perform an umrah pilgrimage on behalf of the late Queen Elizabeth II.

The man, a Yemeni national, on Monday published a video clip of himself on social media at the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Islam's holiest site, where non-Muslims are forbidden.

In the clip, he held up a banner saying: "Umrah for the soul of Queen Elizabeth II, we ask God to accept her in heaven and among the righteous."

The footage was widely circulated on Saudi social media, with

Twitter users calling for the man's arrest.

Saudi Arabia forbids pilgrims to Mecca from carrying banners or chanting slogans.

And while it is acceptable to perform umrah on behalf of deceased Muslims, this does not apply to non-Muslims like the queen, who was supreme governor of the Church of England, the mother church of the worldwide Anglican communion.

Security forces at the Grand Mosque 'arrested a resident of Yemeni nationality who appeared in a video clip carrying a banner inside the Grand Mosque, violating the regulations and instructions for umrah',

said a statement carried by state media late on Monday.

"He was arrested, legal measures were taken against him and he was referred to the public prosecution."

State television broadcast segments about the incident that included the controversial video clip, but with the banner blurred.

The umrah is a pilgrimage that can be undertaken at any time - distinct from the hajj, which takes place once annually and usually draws millions from around the globe.

The queen died on Thursday and her funeral is planned for September 19.

AFP

The 'majestic' Singapore orchid named in honour of Queen Elizabeth

Singapore, Singapore - Elizabeth is majestic, hardy and 'very fashionable', said a top Singapore flower curator - referring not to the late monarch, but to an orchid named after the queen when she visited the former British colony.

After Queen Elizabeth II's death last week, the city-state's Botanic Gardens loaned a towering sprig of Dendrobium Elizabeth to the British high commissioner's residence, to be displayed alongside pictures of the monarch.

The orchid hybrid, with twisted Dresden-yellow petals and a uranium-green lip, was named in honour of the queen when she visited Singapore in 1972, said Whang Lay Keng, curator at Singapore's National Orchid Garden.

"Dendrobium Elizabeth is a majestic, robust and resilient plant," she told AFP.

"It's kind of like how Queen Elizabeth carried herself."

Flowering just twice a year, the Dendrobium Elizabeth

was bred from orchids originating from Singapore and Papua New Guinea, and carries just about 40 blooms per plant.

Orchid-mad Singapore boasts the delicate, colourful blooms as their national flower, and the city-state often christens new hybrids after visiting dignitaries

It's a sun-loving plant that thrives in a moist and humid climate, where sunlight, warmth are important for its growth

WHANG LAY KENG

as part of its diplomatic charm offensive.

The tradition took root in 1957 during British colonial rule - which spanned more than 140 years - when an orchid variety was named after the wife of Lon-

don's high commissioner to Singapore at the time.

Queen Elizabeth first made a state visit to Singapore in 1972, followed by two more trips in 1989 and 2006. "During the 1970s, the colour yellow-green was very popular, so naturally we wanted to select something that was fashionable and very interesting," Whang said, adding that 'yellow is a colour of royalty'.

But the tropical lowland orchid also has very distinct South-east Asian traits.

It is a 'sun-loving plant that thrives in a moist and humid climate, where sunlight and warmth are important for its growth', the orchid curator said.

Among the more than 200 orchid hybrids named after visiting leaders and celebrities - displayed in the VIP section of the city's sprawling Botanic Gardens - there is also the Dendrobium Memoria Princess Diana. The pastel-white bloom was so dubbed after the death of the princess of Wales.

AFP



Whang Lay Keng, curator at Singapore's National Orchid Garden, looks at the Dendrobium orchid at the National Orchid Garden in Singapore (AFP)

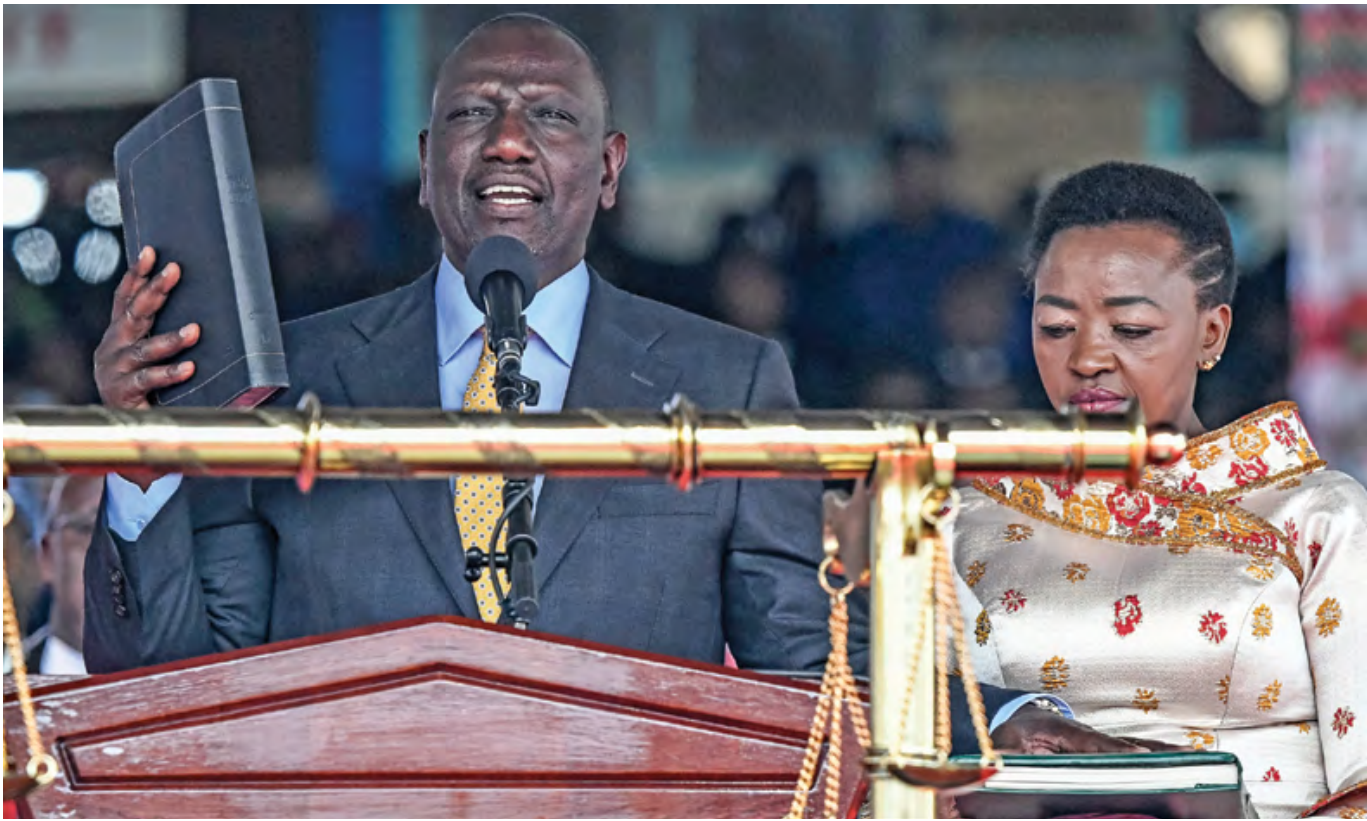
William Ruto sworn in as Kenya president

Ruto, Kenya’s 5th president, had a narrow victory in a bitterly-fought but peaceful election

Nairobi, Kenya - William Ruto was sworn in as Kenya’s fifth post-independence president at a pomp-filled ceremony on Tuesday, after his narrow victory in a bitterly-fought but largely peaceful election.

Tens of thousands of people joined regional heads of state at a packed stadium in Nairobi to watch him take the oath of office, with many spectators clad in the bright yellow of Ruto’s party, cheering and waving Kenyan flags. “I William Samoei Ruto, in full realisation of the high calling I assume as president of Kenya, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the public of Kenya, that I will obey, preserve and protect this constitution of Kenya,” he said.

Several people were injured earlier as crowds tried to force their way into the site. Television footage showed dozens of people falling on top of each other in a crush at one entrance gate.



Incoming Kenyan President William Ruto, flanked by his wife Rachel, takes the oath of office at the Moi International Sports Center Kasarani in Nairobi, Kenya, on Tuesday during the inauguration ceremony (AFP)

Police urged Kenyans to watch proceedings from home after the 60,000-seat stadium was filled before sunrise. “Dawn of Ruto era,” trumpeted the frontpage headline in *The Standard* newspaper, while the *Star* said: “Time for Ruto.” A notoriously ambitious politician who has been deputy president since 2013, Ruto beat his rival Raila Odinga - who had

been backed by outgoing president Uhuru Kenyatta - by less than two percentage points in the August 9 poll. The 55-year-old rags-to-riches businessman, who once sold chickens on the roadside, now faces a daunting task to steer a polarised country gripped by a cost-of-living crisis and punishing drought. His rise to State House has been closely watched

by the international community, which looks to Kenya as a reliable and stable democracy in a turbulent region. **‘Hand of brotherhood’** Foreign allies and independent observers praised the conduct of the vote, which was largely peaceful and free of the violence that has marred past elections in

the country of 50mn people. Ruto won by only around 200,000 votes out of 14mn but the Supreme Court on September 5 upheld his victory, dismissing his opponents’ claims of fraud and mismanagement. Outgoing head of state Kenyatta, who in a stunning turn of events had backed his longtime arch-rival Odinga in the election race, has promised a smooth

transfer of power. Kenyatta finally shook hands with Ruto at a meeting at the presidential residence on Monday after pointedly failing to publicly congratulate his deputy for several weeks. Ruto has struck a conciliatory tone, extending a ‘hand of brotherhood’ to his rivals and their supporters. “We are not enemies. We are Kenyans,” Ruto said after the court’s decision. But Odinga

I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the public of Kenya... I will obey, preserve, protect this constitution of Kenya

WILLIAM RUTO

turned down an invitation to attend Tuesday’s ceremony and instead travelled outside the country, charging in a statement that the election body did not conduct a ‘free and fair’ poll. Observers say Ruto faces a tough assignment building goodwill after a divisive and expensive political campaign that lasted well over a year and was peppered with acrimony and per-

sonal slander. “This is the time to close ranks, embrace opponents and help forge a united front devoid of cheap political competition,” *The Standard* wrote in an editorial. Many ordinary Kenyans had stayed away from the ballot box, with disillusionment and economic hardship blamed for the low turnout. The East African political and economic powerhouse is reeling from a once-in-a-generation drought, inflation is at five-year highs and unemployment is a major problem particularly among the youth. Ruto said on Sunday that Kenya was ‘in a deep economic hole’ and repeated his pledge to lower the cost of living as a priority. From humble beginnings, the multi-millionaire cast himself as ‘hustler in chief’, a champion for the downtrodden during his campaign. Among his ambitious promises was the creation of a 50bn shilling (US\$415mn) ‘hustler fund’ to provide loans to small businesses, and a commitment to bring down prices for fuel, grain and fertiliser. “Given sky-high popular expectations and an economy in dire straits, governing may well prove tougher than campaigning,” the International Crisis Group (ICG) think tank warned. AFP

Nearly 50 Armenian soldiers killed in fierce fighting with Azerbaijan

Yerevan, Armenia - Armenia said on Tuesday that nearly 50 of its soldiers had been killed in the worst clashes with Azerbaijan since their war two years ago, but Russia said it had convinced the historic rivals to agree to a rapid ceasefire.

After several hours of fierce border fighting overnight, Armenia appealed to world leaders for help, saying Azerbaijani forces were trying to advance on its territory. The fighting was the worst since the end of a 2020 war between the ex-Soviet republics over the contested Nagorno-Karabakh region that left more than 6,500 killed on both sides. It came with Yerevan’s closest ally Moscow - which deployed thousands of peacekeepers in the region after the war - distracted by its six-month invasion of Ukraine.

But Russia said it had succeeded in bringing the clashes to a halt, with the foreign ministry in Moscow saying a ceasefire had been agreed from 9am Moscow time (0600 GMT).

“We expect that an agreement reached as a result of Russian mediation on a ceasefire... will be carried out in full,” the ministry said in a statement, adding that it was ‘extremely concerned’ by the uptick in fighting. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan addressed parliament on Tuesday morning, after he called French President Emmanuel Macron, Russian President Vladimir Putin and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to demand ‘an adequate reaction’ to ‘Azerbaijan’s aggressive acts’.

“For the moment, we have 49 (troops) killed and unfortunately it’s not the final figure,” Pashinyan told lawmakers.

Azerbaijan said it had also suffered casualties in the fighting, but did not specify the number of dead.

The defence ministry in Yerevan said the clashes started early on Tuesday, with Armenian ter-



Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan (AFP)

After several hours of fierce border fighting overnight, Armenia appealed to world leaders for help, saying Azerbaijani forces were trying to advance on its territory

ritory coming under fire from artillery, mortars and drones in the direction of the cities of Goris, Sotk, and Jermuk.

“The enemy is trying to advance (into Armenian territory),” it said in a statement.

But Azerbaijan accused Armenia of ‘large-scale subversive acts’ near the districts of Dashkesan, Kelbajar and Lachin and said its armed forces were responding with ‘limited and targeted steps, neutralising Armenian firing positions’.

Turkey, a long-standing political and military sponsor of Azerbaijan, accused Armenia of being responsible for the outbreak in fighting and urged Yerevan to negotiate.

“Armenia should cease its provocations and focus on peace negotiations and cooperation with Azerbaijan,” Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu tweeted after a phone call with Azerbaijani counterpart Jeyhun Bayramov. AFP

PNG earthquake: Volunteers run non-stop airlifts

Port Moresby, PNG - Volunteer rescuers ran non-stop airlifts to remote areas of Papua New Guinea on Tuesday, seeking to reach victims still stranded two days after a massive 7.6-magnitude earthquake.

The quake rattled a broad area of the country’s north, killing at least seven people, but the scale of the disaster is only slowly coming into focus. At least 389 houses collapsed in the town of Madang alone, according to United Nations assessors now on the ground. It is expected the damage toll will rise as ground staff reach other communities. Maki Igarashi from the International Federation of the Red



A six year-old boy being evacuated by helicopter after been injured in a landslide (caused by earthquake) near Mala Village on Monday (AFP)

Cross told AFP it was ‘very difficult access to most of the locations’ because of the affected area’s remoteness. The earthquake’s epicentre was in ‘the middle of the jungle’,

she said. With government resources limited, much of the rescue effort has been carried out by small private companies and volunteers. Pilot Jurgen Ruh, the owner of Manolos Aviation Limited, told AFP he had ‘lost count’ of the number of medical evacuations he had carried out since the earthquake hit on Sunday morning. “It hasn’t stopped yet,” he said, as he readied to head out for two further medevac flights in the country’s remote highlands. Of those rescued, ‘the youngest person was two years old’, Ruh said, adding that the girl, who had a broken skull, had survived after emergency surgery.

Ruh said his company had been fielding calls directly from people in need of evacuation, adding that in Papua New Guinea, ‘if you don’t help yourself, no one will help you’. The earthquake was the largest in the Pacific nation since 2002 but has so far claimed far fewer lives than the last major quake, which killed 145 people in 2018. Papua New Guinean authorities have confirmed all seven fatalities were caused by landslides that occurred near the Rai Coast, Kambum and Wau, where three miners were killed after being trapped underground. AFP

James Webb telescope captures incredible images of Orion Nebula

Washington, US - The wall of dense gas and dust resembles a massive winged creature, its glowing maw lit by a bright star as it soars through cosmic filaments. An international research team on Monday revealed the first images of the Orion Nebula captured with the James Webb Space Telescope, leaving astronomers ‘blown away’. The stellar nursery is situated in the constellation Orion, 1,350 light-years away from Earth, in a similar setting in which our own solar system was birthed more than 4.5bn years ago. Astronomers are interested in the region to better understand what happened during the first million years of our planetary evolution.

The images were obtained as part of the Early Release Science programme and involved more than 100 scientists in 18 countries, with institutions including the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), Western University in Canada, and the University of Michigan. ‘We are blown away by the breathtaking images of the Orion Nebula,’ Western University astrophysicist Els Peeters said in a



The inner region of the Orion Nebula as seen by the James Webb Space Telescope’s NIRCам instrument (AFP)

statement. “These new observations allow us to better understand how massive stars transform the gas and dust cloud in which they are born,” she added. Nebulas are obscured by large

amounts of dust that made it impossible to observe with visible light telescopes, such as the Hubble Space Telescope, Webb’s predecessor. Webb however operates primarily in the infrared spectrum,

penetrating the dust. This revealed numerous spectacular structures, down to the scale of 40 astronomical units, or the size of our solar system. These include dense filaments of matter, which could birth new generations of stars, as well as forming stellar systems that consist of a central proto-star surrounded by a disc of dust and gas, in which planets form. “We hope to gain understanding about the entire cycle of star birth,” said Edwin Bergin, University of Michigan chair of astronomy and a member of the international research team. “In this image we are looking at this cycle where the first generation of stars is essentially irradiating the material for the next generation. The incredible structures we observe will detail how the feedback cycle of stellar birth occurs in our galaxy and beyond.” Webb is the most powerful space telescope ever built, boasting a primary mirror measuring 6.5 metres that is made up of 18 hexagonal, gold-coated segments, as well as a five-layer sunshield the size of a tennis court. AFP

China ready to partner with Russia to build just world order

Beijing, China - China is willing to shape the international order together with Russia in a ‘more just and rational direction’, a senior Chinese diplomat said as the two countries’ leaders prepare to meet this week. Former Cold War allies with a tempestuous relationship, China and Russia have drawn closer in recent years as part of what they call a ‘no limits’ relationship acting as a counterweight to the global dominance of the United States. “Under the strategic guidance of President Xi Jinping and President Putin, the relationship between the two countries has always moved forward on the right track,” the Communist Party’s foreign affairs chief Yang Jiechi told Russia’s ambassador to China Andrey Denisov on Monday, according to a foreign ministry readout. AFP

INDIA

Eight Cheetahs to arrive for Narendra Modi's birthday

New Delhi, India - Eight cheetahs will be sent to India where they will be personally welcomed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his birthday, officials said on Tuesday, in an ambitious project to reintroduce the speedy big cats to the country.

India in the past was home to Asiatic cheetahs but the species was declared extinct domestically by 1952. A prince is believed to have killed the last three specimens.

However, New Delhi has since 2020 been working to reintroduce the animals after the Supreme Court announced that African cheetahs, a different subspecies, could be settled in a 'carefully chosen location' on an experimental basis.

The five males and three females will arrive from Namibia on Saturday and will initially be kept in a quarantine enclosure at the Kuno National Park in the central state of Madhya Pradesh. India is also planning to ship in more cheetahs from South Africa at a later date.

"The prime minister himself will be releasing the animals into the quarantine enclosures," an environment ministry official told AFP. The cats will then be moved to larger spaces and once they acclimatise will be released into open forest in the park. Local media reports said the cheetahs will touch down in



This file photo shows an African Cheetah going through health examination by an international team of experts at Cheetah Conservation Fund, in presence of Indian High Commissioner in Namibia Prashant Agrawal, in Windhoek on August 15 (ANI)

The five males and three females will arrive from Namibia on Saturday and will initially be kept in a quarantine enclosure at the Kuno National Park in the central state of Madhya Pradesh

the western city of Jaipur after a 10-hour journey and will then travel by helicopter to the Kuno park.

Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav said the project was part of global efforts to con-

serve the animal. Modi's presence for the launch 'will give enthusiasm and energy to all of us', he added.

Leopard conflict
The Kuno park was selected as

a home because of its abundant prey and grasslands. But critics have warned that the cheetahs may struggle to adapt to the habitat and may clash with the significant number of leopards already present.

Adrian Tordiffe, a veterinary wildlife professor at the University of Pretoria who is involved in the project, said South Africa had pressed India to use additional parks to help separate the two species.

"I don't think it's going to be a big problem for the adults... they

are very familiar with coexisting with other predators," Tordiffe told AFP. "But we might have a situation where we have a problem with cubs' survival."

Cheetahs became extinct in India primarily because of habitat loss and hunting for their distinctive spotted pelts.

An Indian prince, the Maharaja Ramanuj Pratap Singh Deo, is widely believed to have killed the last three recorded cheetahs in India in the late 1940s.

AFP



BJP supporters pelt stones on Kolkata police during their protest march to state secretariat 'Nabanna', in Kolkata on Tuesday (ANI)

Detained Suwendu says 'Mamata turned Bengal into North Korea'

Kolkata, India - Kolkata Police has detained Leader of Opposition in West Bengal Assembly Suwendu Adhikari and MP Locket Chatterjee ahead of Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) protest march to state secretariat 'Nabanna' on Tuesday.

The BJP leaders were detained from Hastings in Kolkata when they were leading the Nabanna Chalo Abhiyan. Adhikari, Chatterjee and BJP leader Rahul Sinha were taken to Kolkata Police headquarters in Lalbazar.

Before the detention, Adhikari said Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee lost the support of people and turned West Bengal into North Korea.

"Chief Minister Mamata does not have the support of her people and so she is enforcing dictatorship, similar to North Korea in Bengal. Police will have to pay for what it is

doing since Monday. BJP is coming," Adhikari told ANI.

Kolkata Police has put up heavy barricading at Hastings near the state government's new Secretariat in Kolkata ahead of BJP's Nabanna Chalo march.

Buses carrying BJP workers, on their way to Kolkata to participate in the Nabanna Chalo march, were stopped by the police in North 24 Parganas.

Earlier today, a clash broke out between BJP workers and Police outside the Raniganj railway station as workers were leaving for Kolkata to take part in Nabanna Abhiyan.

Police took many workers into preventive custody in Raniganj.

Further, a clash broke out between BJP workers and police inside the Bolpur railway station.

ANI

Army, PLA resolve last friction point

New Delhi, India - India and China on Tuesday resolved the last remaining friction point on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) created post-May 2020 as troops from both countries pulled back from their respective positions in the Gogra Heights-Hot Springs area. "Armies of India and China today completed the disengagement process in Gogra Heights-Hot Springs area near Patrolling Point-15 in eastern Ladakh sector. The two sides have also completed verification of each other's positions after pulling back troops from friction point," government sources said. The friction point near Patrolling Point 15 of the Indian

Army near the LAC in eastern Ladakh was the final one to be resolved by both sides. The two sides had resolved the friction points in Galwan valley and on both the north and south banks of the Pangong lake. The friction points were created in May 2020 when Chinese army showed aggression and tried to unilaterally change the status quo on the LAC but Indian security establishment retaliated strongly and thwarted the Chinese attempts. Senior government sources said the Chinese side wanted de-escalation too, along with disengagement from the PP-15 area.

ANI

Bengaluru to follow 'Noida-model' demolition

Bengaluru, India - Karnataka Revenue Minister R Ashok on Tuesday said that all apartments built illegally on Rajakaluve in Bengaluru city will be demolished.

"By next monsoon, we've to clear all pending demolitions... all apartments will be removed, as you saw in Noida. Action to be against officials and builders," said Ashok on Rajakaluve encroachment. "Around 30-40 IT companies have encroached the Rajakaluve in Bengaluru city, and these apartments will be demolished without any partiality," he added.

The list of IT Parks and developers who have done SWD (stormwater drain) encroachments includes- Bagmane Tech Park and Purva Paradise in Mahadevapura, RBD in 3 locations, Wipro in Doddakannelli, Eco-



Commuters waded through a waterlogged road following incessant rains, in Bengaluru last week (ANI)

Space in Bellandur, Gopalan school in multiple locations and Diya school in Hoodi, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) said in a statement.

"Nalapad in Challaghatta is also a part of the list of IT Parks and developers indulging in SWD encroachments," it added.

He also added that the state assembly discussed the Bengaluru floods and further course of action. The BBMP informed the high court on Monday that 980 illegal buildings had been discovered throughout the city in a recent survey.

The survey was carried out in

response to a high court injunction issued in conjunction with a suo motu PIL. Meanwhile, BBMP is conducting a demolition drive in the illegal commercial and residential buildings of the Mahadevapura area, after rains-triggered floods in the city.

BJP MLA Arvind Limbavali blamed the illegal encroachment in Bengaluru for the floods.

"Therefore we started clearing encroachments which will take at least three months. We will also address the demolition issues," added Limbavali.

Member of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly, CT Ravi said that the encroachment needs to be cleared at top most priority.

The encroachment clearance operation started in the Mahadevapura zone by identifying the encroached areas of the Rajakanals (large drains) on Mon-

day. Accordingly, 15 encroachments were cleared in this zone on Monday, which comes under the jurisdiction of the BBMP.

The encroachment will also be carried out in Chellaghatta, Chinnappana Halli, Basavananagar, Spicy Garden, and S R of Basavanapura ward which comes under the Mahadevapura zone. The encroachment area has been identified by the land surveyor in the Cambridge College premises and is being cleared by JCB machines with the help of the corporation officials, a team of marshals, and police personnel, the BBMP said.

Three encroached buildings, four compound walls including the compound wall of Sai Eye Hospital, several roads, and the internal flow canal in front of Raghavva Super Market have been cleared.

ANI

Iconoclastic French filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard dies aged 91

Rolle, Switzerland - Jean-Luc Godard, one of the most influential filmmakers of the 20th century and the father of the French New Wave, died 'peacefully at home' on Tuesday aged 91, his family said.

The legendary maverick blew up the conventions of cinema in the 1960s, shooting his gangster romance *Breathless* on the streets of Paris with a hand-held camera, using a shopping trolley for panning shots.

He continued to thumb his nose at Hollywood and an older generation of French filmmakers by breaking all the rules again in *Contempt* (1963) with Brigitte Bardot and *Pierrot le Fou* in 1965.

"No official (funeral) ceremony will take place," his family said. "He will be cremated... And it really must happen in private."

The secrecy - and choosing to disappear in a puff of smoke - is typical of Godard, who loved to surprise the world from his lair in the Swiss village of Rolle where he lived as a virtual recluse for decades.

It was there that he died 'peacefully at home', his wife Anne-Marie Mieville at his side, his producers said.

Godard's influence is hard to underestimate, with directors from Martin Scorsese, Quentin Tarantino and Paul Thomas Anderson to Robert Altman, the maker of *M*A*S*H* and *The Player*, often speaking of their debt to him.

Film's 'John Lennon and Che Guevara'
French President Emmanuel Macron hailed the director's tal-



This file photo shows Jean-Luc Godard attending a debate at the Cinema des cineastes in Paris on June 19, 2010 (AFP)

ent and mourned the loss of a 'national treasure'.

"Jean-Luc Godard, the most iconoclastic filmmaker of the New Wave, invented a resolutely modern, intensely free art. We

have lost a national treasure, a genius," Macron tweeted.

Godard's house, with green shutters and a green bench out front, looked empty on Tuesday, its shades drawn, with an abandon-

ed ashtray and teapot on the windowsill, an AFP reporter said.

Despite the filmmaker's often difficult relationship with critics, *The Guardian's* Peter Bradshaw heaped praise on Godard, saying, "The last great 20th-century modernist is dead."

He compared him to other 1960s rebels like John Lennon and Che Guevara.

"Or maybe Godard was the medium's Socrates, believing that an unexamined cinema was not worth having," he added.

Guy Lodge, of the screen bible *Variety*, tweeted that it was 'glib to say 'he changed everything', but he sure changed a hell of a lot of things'.

Indeed, Godard became a 'god' to many 1960s political and artistic radicals who would hang on every word of his often con-

tradictory - and tongue-in-cheek - declarations on the state of cinema and the world.

'Every edit is a lie'
"All you need for a movie is a gun and a girl," he once proclaimed, in a nod to US actress Jean Seberg, the star of *Breathless*. The movie was a fashion as well as a film landmark, her pixie haircut copied by millions bowled over by her effortless Parisian cool.

"A story should have a beginning, a middle and an end - but not necessarily in that order," Godard later famously declared, and 'every edit is a lie'.

As he grew older, Godard would occasionally emerge from his Swiss bolthole to make low-budget films well into his 80s.

He never, however, regained the capacity to shock or move more mainstream audiences as he had in the 1960s, though a small band of disciples remained doggedly loyal to the master. His periodic appearances at the Cannes film festival - often via FaceTime - still drew crowds, however, though he no longer held the sway he did when he had managed to shut down the festival entirely in 1968 in solidarity with the student protests in Paris.

Cannes also saw the premiere in 2017 of *Redoubtable*, a tragi-comic film about Godard's doomed romance with the French actress Anne Wiazemsky, directed by the Oscar-winning director of *The Artist*, Michel Hazanavicius.

AFP

England's Joe ride

Joe Root excited with England's progress after the team coached by Brendon McCullum notched up sixth Test victory in seven matches



England's Joe Root (2L) joins wicket taker Stuart Broad (C) and team-mates in celebration after the dismissal of South Africa's Ryan Rickelton in the third Test at The Oval on Sunday (AFP)

London, United Kingdom - Joe Root has warned England's rivals they are no "one-trick pony" after the team wrapped up a sixth Test victory in seven matches with their new hyper-aggressive brand of cricket.

England's fortunes in the red-ball game have been transformed under their new leadership team of head coach Brendon McCullum and captain Ben Stokes. The home side sealed a 2-1 series victory against South Africa at the Oval on Monday to add to a 3-0 success against New Zealand and a victory in the single postponed match against India.

It is in sharp contrast to their dismal record in the latter stages of Root's captaincy, which ended in April with one win in 17 games.

The success under Stokes and McCullum has been attributed to unwavering positivity and has led to some rash dismissals, but Root



We've not got it right every time this summer but we've got it right more often than not and that's why we're sat here with six (wins) out of seven (Tests)

JOE ROOT

feels England's performances were more nuanced as the season progressed.

"We're not just a one-trick

pony," he said. "There's always going to be periods in Test cricket that you have to manage well and smartly.

"We've not got it right every time this summer but we've got it right more often than not and that's why we're sat here with six (wins) out of seven (Tests). "We're definitely not the finished article but to see the strides we've made in such a short space of time has been really a breath of fresh air."

England chased down 275-plus totals in the fourth innings of all three Tests against New

Zealand and then set a new record against India, reaching their target of 378 with ease.

Former skipper Root, who averaged 68 at an impressive strike rate across the seven matches, believes the team's progress under Stokes is similar to the transformation of England's white-ball cricket under captain skipper Eoin Morgan.

That culminated in their 50-over World Cup triumph in 2019.

"I've never had more fun playing professional cricket," said Root. "Honestly, it is hard to put into words. You turn up every day and you're very excited about what's going to happen. It's the unknown.

"It's quite a strange feeling to have played 120-odd games still to have that feeling when you turn up every day. It's a really good place to be."

AFP



Umpires certified as Level 1 Educators (L-R) Harikrishna Pillai, Rahul Asher, Azad KR, Sarika Prasad, Navaneetha K, Vinod Babu

Oman Cricket conducts ACC Level 1 Umpires Educator Course

Muscat - Oman Cricket recently conducted an Asian Cricket Council Level 1 Umpires Educator Course for the domestic senior Level 2 umpires.

The course was organised as part of OC's development programme. Following the conclusion of the five-day course at the Oman Cricket Academy, the senior umpires will now be able to share their knowledge and experience with the junior level umpires.

Sarika Prasad, an ACC Senior Umpire and Match Referee, conducted the course for

umpires who completed their Level 2 certification before 2020.

Oman Cricket's Chief Development Officer Duleep Mendis said: "We congratulate all the participants who have successfully completed the Level 1 Educators course.

"The course will develop our panel of umpires and raise the level of umpiring to a higher level. We encourage new participants to participate in Oman Cricket's courses for coaches, educators, umpires, scorers etc," said Mendis.

Serie A strugglers Monza sack coach Stroppa

Milan, Italy - Monza have sacked coach Giovanni Stroppa, the Serie A club announced on Tuesday after a poor start to their first Serie A season left them bottom of the table.

In a statement, Monza said the club's former youth team coach Raffaele Palladino would take charge of the team.

Stroppa took Monza up to Serie A for the first time in their history but just one point from their opening six games in the top flight wasn't enough for owner, former Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi.

Monza bought an almost entire new team after being promoted via the play-offs, signing players with extensive experience in the top division like Andrea Ranocchia, Stefano Sensi, Matteo Pessina and Alessio Cragno.

Monza were still in the third



Giovanni Stroppa

tier when media tycoon Berlusconi bought the club in 2018 for a reported three millions euros (\$3.4 million).

Under his ownership AC Milan became one of the titans of European football, winning five European Cups and eight Serie A titles over more than three decades.

AFP

South Africa coach Boucher to quit after T20 World Cup

Johannesburg, South Africa - South African head coach Mark Boucher will quit his job after the T20 World Cup in October and November, Cricket South Africa announced on Monday.

Boucher, appointed in controversial circumstances in 2019, was due to be in charge until the end of the 2023 Cricket World Cup in India.

His shock decision means that South Africa have to appoint a new head coach before a challenging Test tour of Australia in December, which could be crucial to the country's chances of qualifying for the World Test Championship final at Lord's in June 2023.

According to CSA's statement, Boucher has decided to resign "in order to pursue other opportunities in line with his future career and personal objectives.

"While Cricket SA greatly regrets that Mr Boucher is unable to see out the term of his contract, it respects his decision and wishes him all the best in his future endeavours."

Boucher survived criticism of



Boucher was due to be in charge until the end of the 2023 Cricket World Cup in India

his appointment in December 2019 by former captain Graeme Smith without a formal recruitment process, and charges of racism levelled by CSA after what were termed Social Justice and Nation Building hearings into alleged racism in South African

cricket. The charges were later dropped and CSA issued a statement giving its full support to Boucher.

The former Test wicketkeeper was in charge while South Africa racked up 11 Test wins and briefly headed the World Test Championship table. They are currently second after losing the third Test and the series against England earlier on Monday.

Boucher will take the team on a white-ball tour of India later this month, followed by the T20 World Cup.

CSA chief executive Pholetsi Moseki said Boucher "has helped navigate us through some rough waters following the departures of so many senior players through retirement and has helped lay some strong foundations for the next generation of Proteas".

Enoch Nkwe, who was bypassed for the head coach job and was briefly Boucher's assistant before resigning and later being appointed CSA director of cricket, said he was "deeply saddened" by Boucher's decision.

AFP

Vinicius and Rodrygo 'making Real Madrid dream' says manager Ancelotti

Madrid, Spain - Carlo Ancelotti praised Brazilian pair Rodrygo and Vinicius for "making Real Madrid dream" in the absence of injured centre forward Karim Benzema.

Eden Hazard has also "done his part of the job", Ancelotti said on the eve of holders Real's Champions League home game against Leipzig on Wednesday, their second Group F match after a 3-0 win over Celtic.

"We are enthusiastic about our attack, about our young people. Karim makes us dream, but you end up getting used to what he does. So, when a young player comes on, it makes you dream even more," said Ancelotti.

"What Vini and Rodrygo do is make us dream."

Ancelotti said Benzema, carrying a right thigh injury, "has a chance of playing" in the La Liga derby against Atletico on Sunday.

But against Leipzig, the 34-year-old French player will have to give way to the Brazilians or 31-year-old Belgian Hazard.

"During the two matches without Karim, Hazard did what we asked of him," said Ancelotti,



Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior (C) celebrates with Rodrygo and Eduardo Camavinga after scoring a goal (AFP)

who has won the Champions League trophy a record four times as a coach. "But above all, the team reacted well, because we scored seven goals," he added of the three against Celtic and four against Mallorca.

In Benzema's absence, the player who shone the most was

22-year-old Vinicius, who was the scorer of the winning goal in last year's Champions League final against Liverpool.

"I don't even need to talk about his qualities," said Real's German rookie Antonio Rudiger of the Brazilian.

"He's a huge player, everyone

knows that. He's a calm boy in the dressing room, who likes to have fun on the pitch.

"He dribbles a lot, and it's normal that the opponents want to hurt him when they have the chance. I too have tried... We all try to stop him."

AFP

THE GOAL MACHINE

Man City’s Erling Haaland set to show his former team Borussia Dortmund what they are missing

Manchester, United Kingdom - Borussia Dortmund know only too well of Erling Haaland’s ability to destroy defences in the Champions League, but the German giants may die by the sword they previously lived by when they visit Manchester City on Wednesday.

Haaland blossomed into one of the world’s most feared strikers during two-and-a-half years in Germany, scoring 86 goals in 89 games for Dortmund.

Eight games into his City career, the giant Norway striker with a devastating turn of speed has already scored 12 times for the English champions.

“His numbers in all his career, not just here but when he was in previous teams, is quite similar,” said City boss Pep Guardiola after Haaland struck twice in a 4-0 win at Sevilla to kick off City’s latest quest to break their Champions League duck.

“He has an incredible sense of goal.”

Haaland’s bargain 60-million-euro buyout clause meant he had his choice of clubs after he had outgrown his surroundings in the Bundesliga.

Dortmund may provide the perfect breeding ground for Europe’s top talents to develop in the early years of their career, but they cannot compete financially with the continent’s wealthiest clubs, nor satisfy the ambitions of the world’s best players in the long term.

Haaland followed in the foot-



Manchester City’s Erling Haaland celebrates after scoring against Sevilla in their Champions League Group G match in Seville last Tuesday (AFP)

steps of Jadon Sancho, Christian Pulisic, Ousmane Dembele, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, Robert Lewandowski and Mario Goetze as stars of the future to fly the nest after briefly leaving their mark in western Germany.

However, losing Haaland may prove the biggest loss of all with the 22-year-old threatening to rewrite records set by Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi that many believed would remain intact for generations.

Haaland’s double against Sevilla took his tally in the Champions League to 25 goals in 20 games. At the same stage of their careers, Ronaldo, the competition’s all-time top goalscorer with 140,

was yet to score, while Messi struck eight times in his first 20 matches in Europe’s elite club competition. “I love the Champions League. I have to say this, it’s a big dream for me,” Haaland told Telemundo

Deportes this week as he revealed the competition’s anthem is the ringtone on his phone. “When I wake up every morning, I listen to this song. It’s my favourite competition.” Haaland’s haul in the Champi-

ons League was also why City were so desperate to sign him as the successor to the club’s all-time top goalscorer Sergio Agüero. Under Guardiola, City have won four Premier League titles in the past five years and six in total stretching back over the past decade. Yet, the billions invested in the club from Abu Dhabi since 2008 have so far fallen short when it

I love the Champions League. I have to say this, it’s a big dream for me. When I wake up every morning, I listen to this song (the competition’s anthem)

ERLING HAALAND

comes to winning the Champions League. The past two seasons they have come agonisingly close, losing their first ever final to Chelsea in 2021 before blowing a two-goal lead in stoppage time of their semi-final against eventual winners Real Madrid in May. Any doubts that the recruitment of a superstar could destabilise the collective effort that has characterised City’s success under Guardiola have been blown away within weeks. “This fella is going to break virtually every goalscoring record there is,” tweeted former England striker Michael Owen. AFP

Chelsea’s new manager Graham Potter braced for Champions League challenge

London, United Kingdom - Graham Potter said on Tuesday he expects a baptism of fire as Chelsea manager as he takes charge of a Champions League game for the first time when RB Salzburg visit Stamford Bridge this week.

The Blues sacked Thomas Tuchel after an embarrassing 1-0 loss to Dinamo Zagreb in their opening group game last week, leaving Potter with little room for error if the two-time European champions are to progress to the last 16.

Potter’s arrival at one of England’s biggest clubs caps a fairy-tale rise from coaching Ostersunds in Sweden before spells at Swansea and Brighton.

But his only previous experience of European football came in leading Ostersunds into the Europa League, where they enjoyed some notable victories, beating Galatasaray and winning away at Arsenal.



Chelsea manager Graham Potter (R) leads a team training session in London on Tuesday (AFP)

“My experiences in the Champions League are just at supporter level,” Potter said at his pre-match press conference

as he revealed he has never even attended a Champions League game before. “Wherever we would start it

would be a heck of an introduction, wherever we start it’s going to be brilliant, so why not start here?” AFP

My experiences in the Champions League are just at supporter level

GRAHAM POTTER

Potter has proved himself at Premier League level in just over three seasons at Brighton.

He leaves with the Seagulls fourth in the table, having achieved a club-record high finish of ninth last season.

But he is aware of the leap in expectations after taking over at a club that splashed out around £250 million (\$288 million) in the summer transfer window.

“You have to look at the tradition, the quality, size and ambition of the club here. It’s a completely different challenge from the one I had at Brighton,” he said. AFP

LAFC’s Bale has MLS’s top-selling jersey

Los Angeles, United States - Less than three months into his Major League Soccer tenure Wales captain Gareth Bale’s Los Angeles FC jersey is the top-seller on MLSstore.com, the league said Monday.

MLS didn’t release figures in announcing the top 25 best sellers of the official Adidas-manufactured kit, but said they were compiled from the start of the campaign through September 1.

Bale, a five-time UEFA Champions League winner, signed with LAFC in late June after his departure from Real Madrid and played his first MLS match on July 17.

But the 33-year-old star, who helped Wales earn their first World Cup berth since 1958, has captured the imagination of MLS fans, sales of his jersey topping those of Charlotte FC defender Christian Fuchs and LAFC teammate Carlos Vela on the list. LAFC, who also signed vet-



Gareth Bale’s shirt at Los Angeles FC dressing room

eran Italy and Juventus defender Giorgio Chiellini during the league’s secondary transfer window, have already clinched an MLS Cup playoff berth. With 60 points they lead the Western Conference and are three behind the Philadelphia Union in the race for the Supporters’ Shield awarded to the club with the best regular-season record.

LAFC can secure the Western Conference top seed with a victory at Minnesota on Tuesday. AFP

Abraham fires Roma to win at Empoli

Empoli, Italy - Tammy Abraham struck the decisive goal in Roma’s 2-1 win at Empoli on Monday which put them a point behind a trio of sides leading the way in Serie A.

Roma are fifth but just behind Napoli, Atalanta and AC Milan after Abraham forced home Paulo Dybala’s cross from close range in the 71st minute.

The impressive Dybala had opened the scoring for the away side, who came into Monday’s match off the back of two bad defeats at the hands of fourth-placed Udinese and Ludogorets, in the 17th minute with a beautifully guided shot after having already hit the post.

“We know it was going to be tough, coming into this we lost



AS Roma’s Tammy Abraham celebrates after scoring against Empoli in their Italian Serie A match at Carlo Castellani stadium on Monday (AFP)

two games before so we needed this for our confidence. But we’re happy to win,” Abraham said. “I need to keep learning and

improving. I’m coming off the back of an injury so I’m still getting my fitness back a little bit but I’m happy to score and help the

team as much as possible.” Jose Mourinho’s side were looking at another poor result two minutes before the break when Filippo Bandinelli reacted brilliantly to bad Roma defending by guiding home a header from Petar Stojanovic’s cross. A draw would not have flattered Empoli who struck the woodwork through Martin Satriano and Jean-Daniel Akpa Akpro and created opportunities after Akpa Akpro was sent off in the final few minutes. But Abraham’s second goal of the season was just enough to seal the three points, with Lorenzo Pellegrini also smacking a penalty off the bar with 10 minutes remaining. AFP

France and PSG defender Kimpembe sidelined for six weeks with injury

Paris, France - Paris Saint-Germain’s French international defender Presnel Kimpembe will be out for around six weeks with a hamstring injury, leaving him little time to be fit for the World Cup, the club said on Tuesday. Kimpembe, 27, suffered the injury in PSG’s 1-0 victory against Brest on Saturday. France begin the defence of their World Cup title against Australia in Qatar on November 22. “Presnel Kimpembe will not be available for about six weeks. A new assessment will be made in eight days,” PSG said in a statement. The injury also rules the 28-



Brest players help PSG’s Presnel Kimpembe to his feet (AFP)

times capped Kimpembe out of PSG’s Champions League group stage matches. The French side face Maccabi Haifa in Israel on

Wednesday after making a winning start against Juventus in their first game. AFP



‘No words’ to describe Carlos Alcaraz’s achievements, says Sergi Bruguera

Paris, France - Spain’s Davis Cup captain Sergi Bruguera has said there are “no words” that can sufficiently describe the scale of Carlos Alcaraz’s achievements, as the teenage sensation prepares for this week’s group phase.

Bruguera’s side will face Serbia, South Korea and Canada in Group B in Valencia, with the top two to progress to the quarter-finals in November.

Rafael Nadal is skipping the event, but Alcaraz will be the star attraction on home soil after becoming the youngest men’s world number one in history with his US Open triumph last week-

end.

The 19-year-old came through three successive five-set matches, saving a match point against Jannik Sinner in the quarter-finals, before downing Casper Ruud in four sets in a dramatic final.

“We all knew it was going to happen sooner or later,” Bruguera said of Alcaraz’s maiden Grand Slam title.

“But the way he won three matches in five sets is an incredible effort mentally as well as physically.

“Being the youngest number one in the world - there aren’t any words.”

We all knew it was going to happen sooner or later. But the way he won three matches in five sets is an incredible effort mentally as well as physically

SERGI BRUGUERA

Spain will play their first tie against Serbia, without 21-time major champion Novak Djokovic, on Wednesday.

“He (Alcaraz) is going to come here on Tuesday and hopefully he can recover in time to play,” added Bruguera.

Alcaraz only made his Davis Cup debut in a qualifying tie

against Romania in March, having been forced to sit out last year’s finals after testing positive for Covid.

“What you experience playing Davis Cup is completely different,” said Bruguera.

“You play for your country and that’s always special. Tennis is a very individual sport.

Alcaraz will team up with Roberto Bautista Agut, Albert Ramos-Vinolas, Pedro Martinez and Marcel Granollers for Spain.

Zverev out

Former world number two Alexander Zverev had been hoping to make his return to the court for Germany in Hamburg this week.

But Zverev said he was unlikely to play again this year, as he is still experiencing “extreme pain” after a setback in his recovery from tearing ankle ligaments during his French Open semi-final against Nadal in June.

AFP



Casper Ruud in action against Carlos Alcaraz during the US Open final at USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center on Sunday (AFP)

US Open finalist Casper Ruud to begin 2023 campaign in Auckland

Wellington, New Zealand - New world number two Casper Ruud announced Tuesday he will start his 2023 season at the Auckland Classic when the ATP Tour event returns in January after a three-year hiatus because of Covid.

The 23-year-old Norwegian rose to a career-high second in the world despite losing Sunday’s US Open final to Spain’s Carlos Alcaraz.

It was Ruud’s second Grand Slam final defeat of 2022 after falling to Rafael Nadal at the French Open in June.

Ruud, a winner at ATP tournaments in Gstaad, Geneva and Buenos Aires this year, will headline the Auckland men’s tournament beginning January 9 as he warms up for the first Grand Slam of the year at the Australian Open in Melbourne starting a week later.

“New Zealand is a very beautiful country. The conditions are

very similar to Melbourne so it is a nice tournament to play,” he said. “I am a big fan of the Hobbit and the Lord of the Rings movies, I know the nature and scenery are incredible so it’ll be nice to explore,” he added.

Ruud went out in the round of 32 when the Auckland Classic was last played in 2020, but has since become the first Norwegian to break into the top 10 and would have become world number one had he beaten Alcaraz in Sunday’s US Open final.

Tournament director Nicolas Lamperin said it was a “coup” to sign up Ruud, who is “one of the most improved players on the circuit over the last 18 months”.

American world number eight Coco Gauff last month announced she will feature in the women’s Auckland Classic when the WTA Tour event begins on January 2.

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Former world number one Simona Halep to rest after nose surgery

Bucharest, Romania - Former world number one Simona Halep said Monday she would need a few weeks of rest after undergoing nose surgery.

The Romanian, who currently ranks ninth in the world, said she had been struggling “for a while” with nose problems, and they got worse during the summer, making it hard to breathe especially at night.

“The only way to solve the problem was to undergo surgery,” the 30-year-old said in an Instagram post, adding that the surgeon took “this opportunity to also make a plastic surgery intervention”.

“Everything went well. I will need a few weeks of rest before I can start again any physical activity,” she said, posting a picture of her smiling from what looked like a hospital bed, her nose bandaged.

“See you soon on the tennis court.”



Simona Halep at the hospital

Halep, a two-time Grand Slam champion, was knocked out of the US Open in the first round last month, losing to Daria Snigur.

The Ukrainian qualifier brought her best game to the court, winning the match 6-2, 0-6, 6-4.

Six-time MotoGP champion Marquez to return after long absence: Honda

Paris, France - Six-time world champion Marc Marquez will return to action after a three-and-a-half month hiatus at this weekend’s Aragon MotoGP, his Honda team announced on Tuesday.

The 29-year-old Spaniard has been on the sidelines since June when he underwent an operation in the United States on his right arm, fractured in a crash in July 2020, the fourth time he has gone under the knife for the injury.

“Having completed a fruitful



Marc Marquez

two-day test in Misano and continued intensive training at home, Marquez and the Honda Team

have set a date for his return: the Aragon Grand Prix,” read a team statement on their website.

“110 days after he last raced a MotoGP machine at the Italian Grand Prix on May 29, Marc Marquez will return to competition at the Aragon Grand Prix.

“Since undergoing a successful fourth operation on his right humerus, the eight-time world champion has followed the strict guidance of his medical team in order to facilitate a full recovery.”

AFP

Nakagami extends contract with Honda-LCR

Paris, France - Japanese MotoGP rider Takaaki Nakagami has extended his contract with Honda-LCR for a year until the end of 2023, the Japanese team announced on Tuesday.

The 30-year-old has raced for the team firstly in Moto2 from 2012 and then moved up to the premier class in 2018 recording

six top-five placings.

“We are very pleased with this announcement,” said Honda team manager Lucio Cecchinello.

“Since 2020 Taka has proved to be a very fast rider able to fight for podium positions and this year he has consistently fought to finish as the top Honda rider.

“I trust in his potential and

thanks to his six years of experience he will definitely help the LCR Honda Team to improve our bike package and to close the gap with our competitors.”

Nakagami - who lies a lowly 16th in the championship with just 46 points - will be paired with Spaniard Alex Rins.

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HATS OFF

Sovereign style

QUEEN ELIZABETH II'S STYLE WAS SHAPED TO SUIT A SOVEREIGN. FROM HER PLEASANT OUTFITS WITH MATCHING HATS TO HER SHOES AND ACCESSORIES, THE LATE QUEEN ALWAYS MADE A STYLE STATEMENT WHEREVER SHE WENT

Brightly coloured outfits, a matching hat and a pristine pair of gloves: Queen Elizabeth II's look was instantly recognisable and a self-created uniform styled to suit her role.

During her reign, the monarch tried out every shade in the colour chart, from canary yellow to lime green, fuchsia and navy blue. And it all went well with her own style and stature.

Her inimitable style was developed over the decades by aides and designers, starting with Norman Hartnell, who created her wedding dress when she married Prince Philip in 1947. Made from duchesse satin and decorated with crystals and 10,000 seed pearls, it was a dazzling sight for a Britain emerging from the wreckage of World War II.

Hartnell also made the silk dress she wore for her coronation in 1953. It was embroidered in gold, silver, green and pink, complete with emblems of countries over which she ruled.

The designer later said that he took inspiration from 'the sky, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars and everything that might be embroidered on a dress destined to be historic.'

Later, Hardy Amies was the monarch's official dressmaker from 1955 to 1990. "The task of making clothes for the Queen is not an easy



one," he said.

Amies initially created crisp outfits for her foreign tours, before taking over domestic duties from Hartnell, and was behind the striking pink ensemble she wore on her silver jubilee in 1977.

Her look and style in recent decades has been down to Angela Kelly. The daughter of a Liverpool dock worker, Kelly joined the monarch's team of dressers in 1993 and became her personal assistant and senior dresser in 2002, as well as a close confidante.

"We are two typical women," she once said. "We discuss clothes, make-up, jewellery."



The Queen is well-known for block-colour dressing, using vivid and bold colours to ensure she is easily visible on important occasions

CAROLINE DE GUITAUT

During the 2020 coronavirus lockdown, Kelly even had to cut and style the queen's hair, she recalled in an officially approved biography 'The Other Side of the Coin: The Queen, the Dresser and the Wardrobe'.

Dress code

Designing Queen Elizabeth's outfits meant conforming to the royal dress code.

"There are not written-down laws but there are kind of traditional old etiquette-plus-protocol rules," former royal butler Grant Harrold, an etiquette expert, disclosed.

She always wore tights, which was flesh-coloured, while her nail varnish was pale pink, he said, adding, "You never saw her wearing a skirt - especially at her age - above the knee." As for jewellery, she wore a brooch or a pearl necklace.

There was a practical side to the Queen's dress code, even if it seemed as if she was keeping old traditions going, by wearing a hat and gloves in public.

At 1.63m (five foot four inches) tall, the brightly-coloured hat allowed her to be picked out in a crowd, likewise her see-through umbrellas and block heels.

Harrold also pointed out the gloves served another purpose - not catching any bugs - given the dozens of hands she had to shake. Also, Kelly sewed extra layers of lining into the queen's evening gowns to cushion the impact of beading and crystals on her back.

For her day-wear, tiny weights were sewn into the hemlines in case of windy weather. Kelly would also wear in the monarch's new shoes to ensure they were comfortable. However, the hallmark of her style was her bold colours, worn from head to toe.

"The Queen is well-known for block-colour dressing, using vivid and bold colours to ensure she is easily visible on important occasions," said Caroline de Guitaut, who curated a 2016 Buckingham Palace exhibition entitled 'Fashioning a Reign'.

For Michele Clapton, costume designer on the hit Netflix television series 'The Crown', her outfits formed an armour, a uniform. On weekends at one of her country residences, Elizabeth switched style and was often seen wearing a headscarf, raincoat and pair of boots.

"People remarked they were amazed at the speed at which she could be with her corgis in the garden at one minute, and then changed, and appearing with her suit, hat, and gloves the next," said Clapton.

Her outfits spoke

Though the sovereign has to remain politically impartial, she used her clothes to convey a message.

For example, an Irish clover or a Canadian maple leaf brooch might have been worn on an official visit as a way of honouring her hosts. The palette would often contain subtle nods to national colours, as on her landmark 2011 visit to Ireland, when she arrived in emerald green.

Rumour had it that she also used her Launer handbag - square with a short strap which she apparently had 200 of - to send secret signals to her staff, depending on what she did with it. Discretion was preferred on some sartorial details, however.

Elizabeth attended her first London Fashion Week in 2018, to present the inaugural 'Elizabeth II Fashion Award' - she wore a duck-egg blue dress and jacket.

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US actress Ariana DeBose (R) and US actress Angela Bassett



US director and writer Mike White and the cast pose with the Emmy for Outstanding Limited or Anthology Series or Movie for *The White Lotus*



US drag queen RuPaul and US actress Juliette Lewis

EMMYS 2022

GOLD CARPET

TELEVISION'S A-LISTERS OOZE GLAMOUR ON EMMYS 'RED CARPET'

GLITTERATI

Television's biggest stars on Monday hit the red carpet - well, the gold carpet - for the Emmys, for the first full-fledged gala honouring the best of the small screen since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

Dysfunctional family saga *Succession* took top honours for 'best drama' as *Squid Game* made history when Lee Jung-jae was named best actor - a first for a non-English-language performer.

The South Korean social satire about misfits and criminals competing for cash in twisted versions of schoolyard games had also been in the running for the top prize, but the Netflix hit was bested by HBO's latest awards darling.

Other big winners on the night were fellow HBO stablemate *The White Lotus*, which won a total of 10 Emmys including best limited series, and Apple TV+ comedy favourite *Ted Lasso*, again a winner for best comedy and best actor Jason Sudeikis.

Lotus, a stylish satire on wealth and hypocrisy set in a luxury Hawaiian resort, scooped up two acting prizes as well as directing and writing honours, plus other technical awards.

After a virtual ceremony in 2020 and a scaled-back show last year, gowns and tuxedos were de rigueur at the Microsoft Theater in downtown Los Angeles, where the glitterati arrived in bright sunshine.

Here are some takeaways about who wore what at the Emmys - strapless dresses were big, as were metallics.

Pretty in pink

For the first major Tinseltown awards show since the Oscars earlier this year, some of Hollywood's A-list fashionistas opted for classic pretty in pink vibes.

Fashion house darling Elle Fanning, who was nominated for her work as *Catherine the Great*, wowed onlookers in a black strapless Sharon Long gown with a pink ruffled neckline and dramatic sweeping train with a pink lining.

Hannah Waddingham, a winner last year and nominee this year for comedy smash hit *Ted Lasso*, also embraced baby pink in a structured strapless Dolce & Gabbana corset dress that exploded in a puff

British director M J Delaney

ing blouse open to the navel.

"I want to channel my inner rock star, and I love Prince, and I love the colour purple," she told *Variety* on the red carpet.

Not to be left out, *Euphoria* star Colman Domingo - who won an Emmy for best guest actor in a drama - was on trend in a patterned D&G gold suit with a black see-through shirt.

Go big or go home

Zendaya, who repeated as best actress in a drama for raw teen series *Euphoria*, went for basic black - a strapless Valentino gown with a sweeping full skirt and pockets. Accessories? Diamonds, a black headband and a trophy.

Hitmaker Lizzo, whose series *Lizzo's Watch Out For The Big Grrrls* won in the competition program category, made a serious fashion statement in a billowing red tulle dress. Andrew Garfield, Seth Rogen, *Succession* star Nicholas Braun and singer John Legend all looked quite dapper in white - a bold look for a big return

to Emmys 'red carpet' style.

AFP

US comedian Jerrod Carmichael



US actress Jean Smart



US singer-songwriter Lizzo



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