

# Plan to diversify economy with integrated clusters

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

Oman is planning to set up integrated economic clusters across various sectors as part of its drive to diversify the national economy and reduce reliance on traditional industries. This plan, outlined in the recently released third annual report of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, reflects the government's ongoing efforts to transform the economic landscape and position Oman as a leading economy by 2040.

A global model for economic growth, integrated economic clusters are built around interconnected industries that share value chains, services and resources within a defined zone. Oman's adaptation of this model seeks to stimulate growth, enhance competitiveness and expand international market reach. The government's role in this initiative is to provide regulatory support and foster a business environment conducive to investment. After thorough analysis, it has identified five key clusters - in Shaleem, Dakhliyah, Duqm, Najd and Suhar - each focusing on different industries crucial to national growth.

The Shaleem Integrated Economic Cluster in Dhofar is set to become a hub for industrial mineral production, leveraging its lo-



cation on regional sea routes and its rich deposits of gypsum, limestone and dolomite. Developed in collaboration with Oman Investment Authority and Madayn, this cluster will focus on mining, industry, fisheries, tourism and logistics. By hosting diverse activities, Shaleem aims to expand Oman's production and export base, boosting the area's GDP contribution.

The Najd region also in Dhofar, known for its favourable cli-

mate for year-round farming, will host an agricultural cluster to expand production, support food security and boost exports. This initiative will connect agriculture with industry and logistics, allowing Oman to meet both domestic and international market demands while reducing dependence on imports. Key goals include improved irrigation, storage and logistics networks to increase productivity, and encourage investment in agro-

processing.

Dakhliyah will host a cluster focused on tourism, agriculture, industry and logistics under the Tanweer programme. The goal is to link sectors for greater integration and resource use, positioning tourism as a major contributor to Oman's GDP. The programme also seeks to boost rural development using a model that can be replicated in other regions to stimulate sustainable growth.

In Special Economic Zone at

Duqm, a cold chain cluster will support Oman's food and agriculture sectors by enhancing production and export capabilities. The cold chain infrastructure will ensure quality control for fish, agricultural and other food products, helping Duqm evolve into a regional hub for food preservation and distribution. The project will see introduction of legislation and incentives to attract investment, with planned training programmes to develop expertise in cold chain management.

The integrated economic cluster for aluminium industries in Suhar will link upstream and downstream industries, focusing on expanding primary aluminium production and fostering high-value product manufacturing. This cluster will provide facilities for quality control, training and market development to increase competitiveness of Oman's aluminium sector, supporting wider access to international markets.

These integrated economic clusters are expected to drive Oman's GDP growth, create jobs, attract foreign and local investments, while enhancing efficiency through economies of scale. By establishing these clusters, the sultanate aims to set a benchmark for diversified economic development in the region, positioning itself as a leading industrial and trade hub.

## ‘Moral obligation of Western powers to rein in Israel’

Muscat - H E Sayyid Badr al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, has called on Western powers to take a firm stand on Israel's actions in the Middle East, arguing that they have a "moral obligation" to stop its ongoing offensives.

In an interview with the *Financial Times*, H E Sayyid Badr highlighted the escalating humanitarian crisis and regional instability caused by wars. "It's a moral obligation on these countries to do much more than just their policy of persuasion," he stated, urging Western nations to impose constraints on Israel.

The foreign minister acknowledged efforts by the US and other Western nations to encourage a ceasefire and renew political dialogue but expressed frustration at their limited impact. "Unfortunately, we have not seen any effect of that," he said.

H E Sayyid Badr criticised Western countries' long-standing support for Israel, describing it as an "outdated, cold war habit". He suggested that France and the UK's decisions to limit weapons sales to Israel could be



H E Sayyid Badr al Busaidi

examples of "peaceful means of leverage".

When asked about Iran's influence in the region and its support for groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas, H E Sayyid Badr said these groups were not the root cause of regional tensions.

"We would not have had Hamas in the first place had we addressed the root cause of the crisis - the occupation (by) Israel of Palestinian land.

"The only country I see now that wants to continue the war is Israel," he said, adding that the international community has so far failed to halt what he called "this madness".

  
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# RO74mn projects to boost tourism in Dakhliyah

Our Correspondent  
Nizwa

Dakhliyah is advancing a major development programme worth over RO74mn aimed at enhancing infrastructure, promoting tourism and improving the standard of living across the governorate.

The investments cover projects in roads, parks, markets, public squares, and health walkways, reflecting the governorate's focus on sustainable growth.

According to Sheikh Hilal bin Saeed al Hajri, Governor of Dakhliyah, the governorate has completed 79 projects worth RO10.997mn, improving critical infrastructure. Meanwhile, 68 more projects, valued at RO30.593mn, are currently un-



*Seventy-nine projects worth RO10.997mn that improve critical infrastructure have been completed*

SHEIKH HILAL AL HAJRI

derway, aimed at improving roads, public spaces and health facilities. In addition, 36 projects valued at RO19.867mn are in contracting phase, which will further elevate the quality of com-



(Supplied photo)

munity services.

Sheikh Hajri stated that the range of projects reflects "the government's ongoing commitment to meet the needs of citizens and accelerate project

implementation where possible". He informed that the governorate is also planning 14 new projects valued at over RO13.4mn, anticipated to stimulate economic growth, create jobs and improve

essential services.

The governorate's development strategy, according to Sheikh Hajri, is based on leveraging Dakhliyah's natural resources and cultural heritage. This ap-

proach includes fostering public-private partnerships to create investment opportunities with economic returns, supporting local administration involvement in joint planning and execution.

Among the prominent projects recently completed is the Nizwa entrance development, while Nizwa Public Park is ongoing. Other initiatives include the Jabal Akhdar Public Park, Dakhliyah Boulevard and the Jebel Shams Grand Canyon project.

In addition, an agreement has been signed to build Oman's first integrated public transport station in Nizwa, a venture with a real estate developer. The Asalah project in Bahla is also expected to provide investment opportunities while boosting infrastructure for heritage tourism.

Efforts to elevate tourism focus on preserving historical sites, with projects such as restoring the wall of Harat al Aqar and paving paths in its vicinity. Tenders have been announced to develop Misfat al Abriyeen and Bahla Oasis. The governorate's plans include seasonal tourism events, such as the Jabal Akhdar summer and winter festivals, and sports activities like the Hamam mountain running race and Samail Festival.

The governor noted that collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning is vital, with its support helping drive numerous projects, including the Greater Nizwa Master Plan. Key housing projects in the works include the mountain destination in Jabal Akhdar and Al Zain Fort in Bidbid.



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P.O. Box 2900, PC 112 - Sultanate of Oman, CR No. 1288920, Tel: 24509500 Fax: 24597804, Email: info@omanfisheries.net, Web: www.omanfisheries.com

### DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR THE NINE MONTHS PERIOD ENDED 30th SEPTEMBER 2024

Dear Esteemed Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the unaudited financial results for the nine-month period ending 30th September 2024.

#### Key Financial Results:

| Results as of 30 th Sep 2024 (RO) | Jan-Sep 2024 | Jan-Sep 2023 | Change % |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| Revenue                           | 4,104,601    | 5,789,576    | -29.10%  |
| Total Expenses                    | 6,142,760    | 8,261,599    | -25.65%  |
| Net Loss                          | -2,038,159   | -2,472,023   | -17.55%  |
| Total Assets                      | 8,531,792    | 11,591,837   | -26.40%  |
| Total Liabilities                 | 7,427,805    | 7,396,327    | 0.40%    |
| Net Equity                        | 1,103,987    | 4,183,510    | -73.61%  |

As of 30th September 2024, the Company achieved a Total Revenue of RO 4,104,601, reflecting a 29.10% decrease as compared to RO 5,789,576 for the corresponding period in the previous year. This decrease in revenue is mainly due to the company's cautious approach to making sales on positive margins and to those customers where the company could secure the deal with healthy payment terms. This is evident from the improvement in Gross Profit Margin which has increased to 8% this year compared to 1% in the corresponding period of last year. The company has continued to drive to reduce its fixed costs, yielding a decrease of 22% in General & Admin expenses in nine months of this year compared to the corresponding period of last year. The company incurred a net loss of RO 2,038,159 in the first nine months of this year compared to a loss of RO 2,472,023 in the corresponding period of last year, showing a decrease of 17.55%. The net equity of the company has eroded further due to continuous losses; however, it still stands positive at RO 1,103,987.

#### Operational and Financial Highlights:

- Reduction of Aged Inventory:** The Company successfully decreased its inventory levels from 3,184 MT on 31st December 2023 to 1,324 MT on 30th September 2024, marking 58% reduction.
- Recovery of Overdue Receivables:** The Company recovered RO 154,000 from a long-standing overdue account.
- Reduction in General & Administrative Expenses:** a 23% reduction was achieved from RO 1,558,743 in the first nine months of previous year to RO 1,198,565 in the same period this year.

#### Strategic Achievements:

Significant progress has been achieved in the following areas:

- Transformation Committee:** Formation of transformation committee consisting of three members of the board and a newly hired Transformation Office having an extensive experience of fisheries sector to steer the company to set its new strategy and re-alignment of core operation with the new strategy
- Production Services to External Parties:** Engage with external parties to provide them processing & packaging services along with storage facility to cover our fixed cost of branches
- Negotiating the Agreement to operate Al Khair Vessel:** The agreement is under negotiations with an external party to carry out the operations of Al Khair vessel, utilizing our fishing license and providing us a quota of fish which would result in substantial increase in revenues and profitability of the company
- Reestablishing the agreement with Saudi Fisheries:** a sample order was received, and product standardization was agreed in accordance with SFDA requirements and approvals.
- QFC Structural Rehabilitation:** Work is progressing, and all gaps are logged, this will contribute to further cost saving and the efficiency of operation
- Cost Optimization:** Including substantial improvements in controlling the cost in our branches and head office
- Commercial Team Restructuring:** Enhancing the alignment of supply and demand
- Market Expansion:** Extending the Company's reach to new regions, including the United States and China.
- Quality Management System Upgrades:** Leading to attaining HACCP international certification for all company branches.
- Streamlining of Operations:** Continuous efforts being put up to streamline the internal processes in the company to achieve optimum efficiency and effective coordination in various functions

#### Key Challenges:

- Working Capital Requirements and Liquidity Issues:** The Company continues to face challenges in managing working capital requirements and addressing liquidity issues. The company has recently liquidated a fixed deposit of RO 500,000 to utilize these funds in working capital.
- Developing Elite High-Margin Customers:** Efforts are ongoing to develop and sustain a customer base with high margins, focusing on elite segments to enhance profitability.

#### Outlook and Future Plans:

The Company is under a transformation journey led by the transformation committee. The new strategy of the company, being designed and implemented by the transformation committee, would steer the company to a sustainable business model.

#### Acknowledgments:

In conclusion, I, as my esteemed honor, on behalf of the Board of Directors, to extend the highest expressions of gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq – may Allah protect and preserve him – and to his wise government for their profound efforts in supporting the stability of the national economy and for the significant encouragement they extend to the private sector.

Furthermore, I would like to take this occasion to convey the sincere thanks and appreciation of the Board of Directors to our esteemed shareholders for their unwavering commitment to supporting the company and their dedication to its growth and prosperity.

Dr. Shahid Mahmood Haider Albulushi  
Chairman board of director

### Condensed interim statement of financial position as at 30 September 2024

|                                                       | 30 September 2024 (unaudited) | 31 December 2023 (audited) |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>ASSETS</b>                                         |                               |                            |
| <b>Non-current assets</b>                             |                               |                            |
| Property, plant and equipment                         | 1,754,460                     | 1,986,452                  |
| Right-of-use assets                                   | 924,830                       | 1,095,680                  |
| Deferred tax asset                                    | 433,894                       | 433,894                    |
| <b>Total non-current assets</b>                       | <b>3,113,184</b>              | <b>3,516,026</b>           |
| <b>Current assets</b>                                 |                               |                            |
| Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss | -                             | 104,026                    |
| Inventories                                           | 1,461,962                     | 2,059,731                  |
| Trade and other receivables                           | 2,169,783                     | 3,286,512                  |
| Other financial assets at amortised cost              | 1,600,000                     | 2,100,000                  |
| Cash and bank balances                                | 186,863                       | 74,654                     |
| <b>Total current assets</b>                           | <b>5,418,608</b>              | <b>7,624,923</b>           |
| <b>Total assets</b>                                   | <b>8,531,792</b>              | <b>11,140,949</b>          |
| <b>EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>                         |                               |                            |
| <b>Capital and reserves</b>                           |                               |                            |
| Share capital                                         | 16,307,700                    | 16,307,700                 |
| Legal reserve                                         | 3,314,319                     | 3,314,319                  |
| Capital reserve                                       | 29,269                        | 29,269                     |
| Accumulated losses                                    | (18,547,301)                  | (16,509,142)               |
| <b>Total capital and reserves</b>                     | <b>1,103,987</b>              | <b>3,142,146</b>           |
| <b>Non-current liabilities</b>                        |                               |                            |
| Employees' benefit liabilities                        | 44,863                        | 47,289                     |
| Term loan                                             | 429,200                       | 532,693                    |
| Lease liabilities                                     | 480,963                       | 679,704                    |
| <b>Total non-current liabilities</b>                  | <b>955,026</b>                | <b>1,259,686</b>           |
| <b>Current liabilities</b>                            |                               |                            |
| Trade and other payables                              | 2,375,043                     | 2,792,151                  |
| Term loan                                             | 154,435                       | 108,396                    |
| Bank borrowings                                       | 3,631,932                     | 3,475,521                  |
| Due to a related party                                | -                             | 51,680                     |
| Lease liabilities                                     | 311,369                       | 311,369                    |
| <b>Total current liabilities</b>                      | <b>6,472,779</b>              | <b>6,739,117</b>           |
| <b>Total liabilities</b>                              | <b>7,427,805</b>              | <b>7,998,803</b>           |
| <b>Total equity and liabilities</b>                   | <b>8,531,792</b>              | <b>11,140,949</b>          |
| <b>Net assets per share</b>                           | <b>0.006</b>                  | <b>0.017</b>               |

### Condensed interim statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2024

|                                                                                | Nine-month period ended 30 September 2024 (unaudited) | Three month period from 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024 (unaudited) | Nine-month period ended 30 September 2023 (unaudited) | Three month period from 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2023 (unaudited) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Revenue                                                                        | 4,104,601                                             | 236,155                                                              | 5,789,576                                             | 2,041,758                                                            |
| Direct costs                                                                   | (3,767,467)                                           | (328,719)                                                            | (5,716,797)                                           | (1,836,882)                                                          |
| <b>Gross profit / (loss)</b>                                                   | <b>337,134</b>                                        | <b>(92,564)</b>                                                      | <b>72,779</b>                                         | <b>204,876</b>                                                       |
| Other income                                                                   | 106,908                                               | 362                                                                  | 10,824                                                | 1,316                                                                |
| (Charge)/reversal of allowance for expected credit losses on trade receivables | (75,223)                                              | (75,223)                                                             | 33,234                                                | 33,234                                                               |
| Selling and distribution expenses                                              | (1,010,284)                                           | (290,121)                                                            | (910,129)                                             | (336,016)                                                            |
| General and administrative expenses                                            | (1,198,565)                                           | (887,415)                                                            | (1,558,743)                                           | (506,780)                                                            |
| <b>Operating loss for the period</b>                                           | <b>(1,840,030)</b>                                    | <b>(844,961)</b>                                                     | <b>(2,352,035)</b>                                    | <b>(603,370)</b>                                                     |
| Change in fair value of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss  | -                                                     | -                                                                    | 1,527                                                 | 1,527                                                                |
| Finance costs                                                                  | (283,902)                                             | (106,443)                                                            | (188,564)                                             | (55,791)                                                             |
| Finance income                                                                 | 85,773                                                | 28,519                                                               | 67,046                                                | 22,501                                                               |
| Net loss before tax for the period                                             | (2,038,159)                                           | (922,885)                                                            | (2,472,023)                                           | (635,133)                                                            |
| Income tax expense                                                             | -                                                     | -                                                                    | -                                                     | -                                                                    |
| <b>Net loss after tax and total comprehensive loss for the period</b>          | <b>(2,038,159)</b>                                    | <b>(922,885)</b>                                                     | <b>(2,472,023)</b>                                    | <b>(635,133)</b>                                                     |
| <b>Loss per share - basic and diluted</b>                                      | <b>(0.0112)</b>                                       | <b>(0.0051)</b>                                                      | <b>(0.0136)</b>                                       | <b>(0.0035)</b>                                                      |

## Film society workshop to create films with Muscat as inspiration

Our Correspondent  
Muscat

In an effort to bolster the Omani film industry and find local talent, Oman Film Society (OFS) - through its Training and Development Committee - is holding a workshop titled 'Muscat Inspires Us' running till November 5.

Dr Janan bint Mahdi al Issa, Deputy Director of the committee, stated that the workshop aims to promote the Governorate of Muscat by encouraging creative ideas inspired by its rich history and culture. "It seeks to highlight the tourism and development aspects of the governorate, discover new talent and convey inspiring stories from Oman to the big screen, while also supporting members of the association and professionals in the Omani film industry."

Janan added that it is important to present creative content in the form of short films that reflect the achievements of Muscat. The workshop will focus on ensuring high-quality photography, sound, editing and overall professionalism in the filmmaking process.

OFS is committed to providing specialised programmes and



(Supplied photo)

*The workshop will focus on ensuring high-quality photography, sound, editing and overall professionalism in the filmmaking process*

workshops that guide participants from concept development to final production, she informed.

The workshop is designed to enhance the skills of members

and support the creation of short films for participation in local and international festivals and competitions, thereby enriching the cinema industry in Oman.

Additionally, the workshop will feature a dialogue session with artist and director Mahmoud bin Obaid al Hosni titled 'A Muscat Story'. The session will explore the beauty and vibrancy of Muscat governorate, discussing its historical significance, cultural identity, and the interplay of past and present. Filmmakers are expected to engage actively, drawing inspiration for new cinematic stories from the dialogue.

## N Batinah announces online applications for permits for winter camps in Suhar

Our Correspondent  
Suhar

North Batinah Municipality has announced the opening of an application system for commercial activities in temporary winter camps located in the Al Rifah neighbourhood of Suhar.

In a statement, the municipality said that the online application portal will be accessible starting 9am on Monday, November 4. Applications will be accepted until all allocated sites are filled.

The initiative allows registration of various commercial

activities, including food trucks, cafes, and public services such as games and entertainment within the winter camps. The municipality aims to streamline the permit process and ensure efficient allocation of spaces for businesses operating in these camps.

# RAO celebrates centenary of Sultan of Oman’s Artillery

Muscat - Royal Army of Oman (RAO) celebrated the centenary of the establishment of Sultan of Oman’s Artillery on Thursday in a ceremony held under the patronage of H H Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs.

Upon arrival at the headquarters of Sultan of Oman’s Artillery, H H Sayyid Shihab was received by Maj Gen Mattar bin Salim al Balushi, RAO Commander, Brig Saif bin Said al Rashidi, Commander of Sultan of Oman’s Artillery, and senior officers.

The ceremony started with the Royal Anthem, followed by a Guard of Honour salute. Sultan of Oman’s Artillery personnel presented a military infantry parade, while the RAO band performed various musical pieces in



celebration of the milestone. A visual presentation highlighted the inception and history of Sultan of Oman’s Artillery since 1924, detailing its development, modernisation plans and training of its personnel to fulfill

Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander.’ Following the ceremony, H H Sayyid Shihab and attendees toured a permanent exhibition showcasing the historical journey, achievements and advance-

*The ceremony included a visual presentation highlighting the inception and history of Sultan of Oman’s Artillery since 1924*

national duties. The celebration included a field and air show featuring historical and modern weapons, showcasing the artillery’s advancements in military technology.

The event concluded with a tableau symbolising the centenary, with attendees chanting, ‘Long live His Majesty Sultan

ments of Sultan of Oman’s Artillery.

The ceremony was attended by high-ranking officials, including Secretary-General of Ministry of Defence, Chief of Staff of Sultan’s Armed Forces, military and security service commanders, and personnel from various sectors.



## Oman, Türkiye ink MoU to enhance cooperation in higher education

Our Correspondent Muscat

The Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Türkiye signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in Ankara on Thursday aimed at strengthening the fields of higher education.

The agreement encompasses the exchange of scholarships and academic staff, mutual recognition of higher education institutions, transfer of knowledge and technology, and organisation of training courses, seminars, conferences and scientific research initiatives.

The memorandum was signed by H E Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, and Dr Erol Ozvar, Chairman of Turkish Higher Education Council.

Key components of the memorandum include collaboration in establishing research and innovation programmes that enhance research capabilities and practical skills for the future labour

market. It also aims to promote the development of higher education systems in both countries and investments for innovation and technological advancements.

During the signing ceremony, a discussion was held attended by representatives of various higher education institutions in both countries. This session resulted in several recommendations to activate the MoU, including increasing the number of scholarships, enhancing student exchange programmes, and promoting the teaching of Arabic and Turkish languages.

Additionally, there were recommendations suggesting twinning higher education institutions and organisation of Omani-Turkish Knowledge Dialogue Forum in Muscat involving participation of educational institutions in both countries.

The visit also included bilateral meetings between participating higher education institutions aimed at fostering scientific and academic cooperation.

# Musandam prepares for surge in cruise tourists this winter

Our Correspondent Muscat

As winter approaches, Oman is gearing up for a surge in international visitors, with Musandam poised to be a major draw. Known for its stunning landscapes and cultural richness, the governorate will welcome its first cruise ship from Singapore on Monday, marking the start of its winter cruise tourism season.

Over 50 cruise ships are expected to arrive throughout the season, promising a boost for the local tourism sector as travellers explore a unique mix of natural beauty and cultural experiences.

An official from Ministry of Heritage and Tourism noted that arrival of these large cruise ships enhance Oman’s tourism appeal. “These ‘floating cities’ carry thousands of passengers who are keen on both entertainment and exploration,” the official said. “With growing interest in Oman’s cultural and natural attractions, arrival of these ships revitalise the tourism sector and boost commercial activity. This influx of visitors will likely drive demand for tourism services and encourage further investment in infrastructure and amenities.”

Inclusion of Musandam in the itinerary of the cruise ship arriving from Singapore highlights Oman’s efforts to diversify its tourism market, strengthen ties with Asian countries and boost economic and tourism relations between Oman and Singapore.

According to Musandam Municipality, in anticipation of the visitor surge, the governorate has several key development projects underway, including development of Kumzar village, and construction of a floating pier in Khor Najd, Khorsham mountain pass project and a waterfront in Dibba.

In Kumzar village, new ameni-



*These ‘floating cities’ carry thousands of passengers who are keen on both entertainment and exploration. With growing interest in Oman’s cultural and natural attractions, arrival of these ships revitalise the tourism sector*

MINISTRY OFFICIAL

ties such as a waterfront, children’s park and a sea wall are being added to enhance the area’s appeal. The Khorsham mountain pass is being built to international standards and will be equipped with solar-powered streetlights. The Dibba water-



front project will cover 1,285sqm, featuring a wave barrier, a walkway, sports facilities, children’s play areas, display space for local entrepreneurs, a beachside car park, green spaces, sitting areas, and an open-air theatre.

Adding to the excitement,

Musandam inaugurated Oman Adventure Centre last year with a new zip line that offers a thrilling experience for tourists. The zip line allows riders to travel 1,800m from Jebel Fitt to a platform at Atana Khasab Hotel at speeds of up to 80kmph. Offer-

ing panoramic views of Khor Qadi and the Mokhi area, the zip line has been certified by Guinness World Records as the longest zip wire over water, adding another unique attraction to Musandam’s growing list of tourist offerings.

## MTCIT, UTAS Muscat launch Hadatha Centre to boost cybersecurity industry

Our Correspondent Muscat

Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT), in collaboration with University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) Muscat, inaugurated the Hadatha Centre on Thursday to support the cybersecurity industry in Oman.

The centre was officially opened under the patronage of Halima bint Rashid al Zaria, Chairperson of Authority for

Small and Medium Enterprises Development, in the presence of H E Dr Ali bin Amer al Shidhani, Undersecretary for Communications and Information Technology in MTCIT.

The centre aims to enhance the outcomes of the National Cybersecurity Industry Programme through knowledge management, research, and the design of cybersecurity products and services via simulation modelling and testing.

The initiative seeks to promote a culture of innovation and



entrepreneurship in modern technologies. The centre will play a crucial role in linking government agencies, the private sector and academic institutions, reinforcing the national framework for innovation in cybersecurity developed by the National Centre for Information Security.

Key objectives of Hadatha Centre include fostering research, innovation and development in cybersecurity; creating an environment conducive to education and innovation; and promoting a culture of creativity

among Omani youth. The centre aspires to position Oman as a leader in cybersecurity innovation in the Arab region by activating cybersecurity industry programmes and initiatives.

Additionally, the centre aims to stimulate investment in economic and social development, localise advancements in technologies, and enhance the skills of Omani youth. It will encourage the development of local technical products in cybersecurity that can compete on regional and international stages.

# Chinese firm signs deal to set up 5GW solar panel production unit in Suhar



Drinda signed the land lease agreement with Sohar Freezone on Thursday

**Our Correspondent**  
Muscat

Chinese photovoltaic-cell maker Hainan Drinda New Energy Technology (JTPV) has signed an agreement to set up a 5GW solar photovoltaic (PV) cells manufacturing unit in Oman. The Haikou-based firm plans to build the plant in Suhar in two phases, each with a scheduled annual capacity of 5GW of N-type TOPCon cells. The announcement was made by Jietai New Energy Technology (JTPV), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Drinda, in a social media post on Friday. ‘Drinda, JTPV’s parent company, has taken a monumental step in

our global expansion. On October 31, we formalised our commitment to a 5GW high-efficiency N-type cell manufacturing base in Oman with ‘Sohar Free Zone Land Lease Agreement’ signed at the Invest Oman building in Muscat,’ the company stated. Scheduled for completion by 2025, ‘this initiative is more than just a project – it is a strategic leap forward in our global operations and a testament to the growing partnership between China and Oman in the renewable energy landscape,’ the company added. Last year, Drinda became the world’s first specialised solar cell manufacturer to mass produce

N-type TOPCon cells, considered one of the top cell technologies with high bifaciality. This novel feature allows for additional energy to be generated from the reverse side of the module. Drinda ranked fourth worldwide in solar cell shipments with 29.96GW capacity last year and first in N-type high-efficiency cell shipments with 20.58GW, according to its annual earnings report. Oman has committed to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and the government is looking to expand its electricity-generation capacity through renewable power projects, with plans to derive at least 30% of

electricity from renewables by 2030, mainly through onshore wind and solar projects. The net zero target depends on the use of renewable energy as a primary energy source, the use of carbon capture for decarbonisation, and production of large quantities of low-carbon hydrogen to drive exports and growth in the low-carbon industry. Oman seeks to install 40mn solar panels and import close to 6,000 wind turbines over the next few years to more than double the country’s existing power capacity as part of plans to produce more than 1mn metric tonnes per year of green hydrogen by 2030.



# GCC, New Zealand sign free trade agreement

**Our Correspondent**  
Muscat

In a major breakthrough, GCC countries have struck a free trade deal with New Zealand after many years of efforts and negotiations. In a press statement, Mohamed Albudaiwi, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), announced the conclusion of negotiations for the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the GCC and New Zealand. He said that this agreement confirms the GCC countries’ commitment to enhancing their economic and trade relations with countries and global blocs. This announcement came during the signing of the joint statement concluding the negotiations for the FTA, which took place on the sidelines of the 67th meeting of the GCC Trade Cooperation Committee on Thursday in Doha, Qatar. The meeting was chaired by Shaikh Mohammed bin Hamad al Thani, Minister of Commerce and Industry of Qatar and current session president, and attended by the ministers of commerce from all GCC countries.

The FTA aims to facilitate the entry of goods and services between the GCC countries and New Zealand by eliminating and reducing customs duties on goods, opening the market for the provision of services, and encouraging and protecting investments, according to a report published by Saudi Press Agency. *FTA aims to facilitate the entry of goods and services between the GCC countries and New Zealand by eliminating and reducing customs duties*

The agreement consists of 19 chapters, including goods, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, rules of origin, customs procedures, services, investment, and e-commerce. Other chapters cover transparency, dispute settlement, competition, intellectual property, technical and economic cooperation, general provisions, institutional provisions, general cooperation, general exceptions, and final provisions. The GCC Secretary General pointed out that this agreement reflects a shared desire by both sides to develop and deepen their distinguished relations. He noted, “The volume of trade exchange between the GCC countries and New Zealand reached approximately \$2.9bn in 2023, with GCC exports valued at \$1.75bn and imports at \$1.19bn.” “From 2020 to 2024, both sides worked on a joint work plan covering several vital areas, including political dialogue, trade, industry and investment, economic, financial and monetary cooperation, agriculture and food security, transport and communications, tourism, as well as training and development,” he added. Albudaiwi expressed his hope that this agreement, upon its entry into force, will enhance trade exchange and economic cooperation between the countries, increase investments, and expand collaboration in areas of mutual interest for the benefit and well-being of their peoples, serving the common interests of both sides.



# Saudi PIF signs \$51bn MoUs with Japanese financial institutions

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia – Saudi Arabia’s sovereign wealth fund, known as Public Investment Fund (PIF), Thursday announced the signing of five memorandums of understanding (MoUs) worth up to \$51bn with leading Japanese financial institutions. These MoUs were signed with Mizuho Bank, Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group, MUFG Bank, Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), and Nippon Export and Investment Insurance (NEXI). The MoUs are a key part of PIF’s strategy to boost financial collaboration globally, enhancing cooperation in finance, investment and sustainable development. They cover a variety of areas, including encouraging two-way capital flows through both debt and equity. Rasees AlSaud, Head of Financial Institutions and Investor Relations, said, “The MoUs demonstrate PIF’s robust and ever deepening relationships with leading international financial institutions. This collaboration underscores PIF’s commitment to foster partnerships.” The MoUs cover both PIF and portfolio companies, as well as Japanese companies and financial institutions.

PIF on Thursday concluded the second edition of the PIF Asset Management Forum, which took place on the sidelines of the Future Investment Initiative 8th Edition (FII8) in Riyadh. The forum hosted over 300 high-level representatives of asset management entities, business leaders, government figures and representatives of sovereign wealth funds. The 2024 forum explored the future of Saudi capital markets, the role of AI and digital transformation in the asset management industry, unlocking and navigating MENA private markets, and developing strategies for emerging asset managers in the Saudi capital markets. PIF and FII signed a non-binding memorandum of understanding (MoU) during the forum, under which the PIF’s Asset Management Forum will be introduced as one of the main pillars of the FII agenda both locally and internationally. The MoU also envisages the promotion of the “Crowdsourced Innovation”, whereby the PIF’s Asset Management Forum aims to actively participate in FII events and initiatives to access diverse perspectives and innovative ideas.

# Steel industry contributes 2% to Oman’s GDP

**Our Correspondent**  
Muscat

The number of major factories producing iron ore in Oman has reached seven, and their contribution to the sultanate’s GDP has increased to more than 2%, according to Dr Salah bin Said Masan, Undersecretary of Commerce and Industry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion. In a statement to the Oman News Agency, H E Masan noted that the steel industry is a key pillar of Oman’s manufacturing and infrastructure sectors. Data from the 2022 industrial survey showed that the exports of these seven iron and steel factories amounted to RO687mn, with 1,681 employees directly employed, in addition to thousands of indirect jobs, reflecting an Omanization rate of 45%. H E Masan emphasised that the iron industries and their downstream products represent one of the main directions of Oman’s industrial strategy, driven by high local and interna-



*Data from the 2022 industrial survey showed that the exports of these seven iron and steel factories amounted to RO687mn* GDP generation, job creation, and support for related sectors such as heavy industry, machinery, equipment, and transportation. “Many industries rely on iron as a fundamental material for manufacturing a variety of products,” H E Masan noted. He pointed to the increasing capability of the industrial sector in Oman to attract qualitative investments, enhancing the sector’s contribution to the national economy. H E Masan also reported that this industry has recently attracted partnerships with foreign investors from Brazil and China. This culminated in an agreement between Vale Oman and China’s Jinaan Iron and Steel Group to establish the first iron ore concentration plant in Oman, located in Sohar Port and Free Zone. This project involves investments of \$624mn and aims to produce 12.6mn tonnes of high-quality iron concentrate products. It will create both direct and indirect job opportunities, strengthen supply chains in the global iron and steel market, and provide inputs for local industries. H E Masan further said that this partnership between Vale and Jinaan relies on integrating industrial and logistical capabilities, contributing to sustainable growth and enhancing Oman’s position as a leading player in the global iron and steel industry.

# S&P affirms Qatar’s rating at AA/A-1+ with stable outlook

Muscat – S&P Global Ratings on Friday affirmed its ‘AA/A-1+’ long- and short-term foreign and local currency sovereign credit ratings on Qatar. The outlook is stable. S&P said that the stable outlook reflects its view that Qatar’s fiscal and external buffers should continue to benefit from the country’s position as one of the world’s largest exporters of LNG over the next two years, further boosted by production increases through the NFE project over 2026-2030.



‘Our ratings on Qatar remain supported by its sizable external and fiscal net asset positions, underpinned by funds accumulated within the sovereign wealth fund, the Qatar Investment Authority

(QIA), from past exports of hydrocarbons, in particular LNG. We forecast the government’s liquid assets will average 165% of GDP over 2024-2027,’ S&P said. The agency expects Qatar to remain one of the largest exporters of LNG globally. ‘The government plans to increase Qatar’s LNG production capacity to 126mn tonnes per year by 2027 from 77mn tonnes per year currently and further to 142mn tonnes before 2030, an almost 85% increase above the current

capacity.’ S&P assumes that Qatar’s actual LNG production will be largely flat until 2025 but increase by about 35% from current levels by 2027. The strategic pivot away from Russian gas, particularly by European economies, suggests there will be demand for additional exports from Qatar. Despite heightened geopolitical risks in the Middle East, S&P anticipates macroeconomic conditions in Qatar will remain broadly stable.

# Inflation rises across EU economies

Brussels, Belgium – Inflation in the eurozone accelerated in October, with the consumer price index reaching 2% year-over-year, surpassing economist predictions of 1.9% and marking an uptick from 1.7% in September, according to flash estimates by Eurostat.

The inflationary pressure was evident across the European Union's major economies, including Germany, France, Spain, and Italy.

Despite hovering at the ECB targets, the recent uptick in prices is rekindling questions about how inflation might impact the European Central Bank's monetary policies in the coming months.

In a separate release, the Eurostat also revealed the unemployment rate within the euro area held at a record-low level of 6.3% in October.

The main contributors to the



*Inflationary pressure in October was evident across Europe's major economies, including Germany, France, Spain, and Italy*

inflation increase in October were services and food, with energy remaining in deflationary territory. Services registered the highest annual rate within the eurozone, at 3.9%, matching September's level. Food, alcohol, and tobacco prices also saw a notable increase, rising by 2.9% from 2.4% in the prior month. Non-energy industrial goods

prices grew modestly by 0.5%, while energy prices declined by 4.6%, though this marked a slightly less severe drop than September's -6.1%.

Core inflation, which excludes the volatile food and energy sectors, held at 2.7% year-over-year, marginally above economists' expectations of 2.6%. The monthly consumer basket inflation rate for October accelerated by 0.3%, marking the fastest increase since April.

In Germany, the annual inflation rate reached 2% in October, up from September's three-and-a-half-year low of 1.6% and surpassing forecasts of 1.8%. This increase was primarily driven by a rise in service prices, which accelerated to 4% from 3.8%, and food prices, which rose to 2.3% from 1.6%.

Goods prices in Germany saw a recovery, moving from -0.3% to

0.4%, while energy prices declined by 5.5%, a milder drop than the 7.6% decrease recorded in September. France also saw a modest inflation increase, with the annual rate edging up to 1.2% from September's 1.1%, which had been the lowest since March 2021.

In Italy, the harmonised inflation rate accelerated by 0.3% month-over-month, reaching an annual rate of 1% in October, up from the previous 0.7%.

Elsewhere in the eurozone, the most significant monthly inflation gains were recorded in Croatia, Finland, and Estonia, each up 0.8%, followed closely by Belgium (+0.7%), Slovakia (+0.7%), and the Netherlands (+0.6%). Annually, high inflation rates were observed in Belgium (+4.7%), Estonia (+4.5%), Croatia (+3.5%), and Slovakia (+3.5%).

(Source: Euronews.com)

## Russia fines Google more than world's total GDP

Doloresz Katanich

Google has been fined in Russia for removing Russian TV channels from YouTube. The size of the penalty, however, swelled to an unprecedented level over the past 4 years, since the court case started in Russia against the tech giant.

The violations cost the tech giant 2 undecillion rubles or \$20 decillion (a 33-digit figure), according to lawyer Ivan Morozov, cited by Russian state news agency TASS.

To put that into perspective, global GDP reaches an estimated \$110 thousand billion (12-digit figure), according to the IMF.

Another expert cited by the Russian news agency, Roman Yankovsky, from the HSE Institute of Education, told TASS

that Google "clearly will not pay this penalty, and the Russian Federation will not be able to recover this money from the company."

Google's holding company, Alphabet, has a market capitalisation of slightly more than \$2tn. Even with earnings of \$80.54bn from the last quarter, the tech giant doesn't seem to be able to afford to pay the fine.

British tech newspaper The Register reported that the amount has been calculated after a four-year court case which was triggered by YouTube having banned the ultra-nationalist Russian channel Tsargrad in 2020 in response to the US sanctions imposed on its parent company.

(Source: Euronews.com)

# Japan signals more interest rate hikes

Tokyo, Japan – Bank of Japan Governor Kazuo Ueda said the country faces smaller risks from the US and other overseas economies, signaling that the central bank is closer to an additional interest rate hike, possibly in the coming months.

The BOJ kept its policy rate unchanged at around 0.25%, as widely expected at the end of a two-day meeting earlier in the day, amid political uncertainty following the loss by the Japanese ruling parties of their majority in the recent general election and ahead of the US presidential election next week.

However, Ueda suggested at a post-meeting press conference that the BOJ is gradually getting ready for further rate hikes, saying he is less concerned about the US economy, citing its robust employment and other economic indicators.

"The degree of risk (from overseas economies) is shrinking little by little," Ueda said. "The fog is being cleared."

Ueda, who last month underscored the bank had "more time" to assess if another rate increase was necessary, told the news conference that he will no longer use that expression, adding the BOJ will raise rates further if the Japanese economy and prices move in line with its expectations.

Following his remarks, the yen strengthened by about 1 yen to the 151 range against the US dollar. Still, some analysts pointed out that Ueda's comments do not necessarily mean the BOJ will raise borrowing costs right away.

"Financial markets remain unstable, and there is uncertainty



Bank of Japan Governor Kazuo Ueda

over wage talks next year," said Shinichiro Kobayashi, an economist at Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting, who expects the next rate increase in March when the results of the spring wage negotiations become clear.

"I think Mr. Ueda's hawkish comments reflected the BOJ trying to prevent further depreciation of the yen," he said.

The yen's continued weakness, due largely to interest rate differentials between Japan and the United States, has been pushing up import costs, dealing a financial blow to Japanese households. Kyohei Morita, chief economist at Nomura Securities Co., said, "We should just take Mr. Ueda's remarks as meaning the bank will make policy decisions based on economic fundamentals in Japan going forward rather than on overseas factors."

Morita expects the BOJ to raise interest rates in December.

Ueda said the bank has no fixed schedule for rate increases, noting it will make decisions based on data available when it holds a policy meeting.

Kyodo News

## US agency warns consumers about dangers of messaging apps

Washington, US – The US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) warned users of messaging apps to be aware of schemes that aim to defraud them of assets, specifically crypto assets.

"Fraudsters are exploiting the default settings of commonly used messaging apps, telephone networks, and mobile devices to lure users into crypto pump-and-dump schemes and other scams," it said Thursday in a statement.

The CFTC also informed users of the default settings of WhatsApp, Telegram, and other pop-

ular messaging apps, which allow scammers to add random or targeted phone numbers to group chats that are used for fraudulent activity.

"People who use these apps may not be familiar with the risks and frauds commonly associated with crypto assets," said Melanie Devoe, director of the CFTC's Office of Customer Education and Outreach. "Receiving a group message promising 300% or 1,000% returns with zero risk or getting in on a supposed crypto opportunity, can be enticing, but it is best to not engage."

Anadolu Agency

OMANRe

Reinsurance Protection Beyond Expectations

OMAN REINSURANCE COMPANY S.A.O.C

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

Directors' Report

For the 9 months ended 30 Sep 2024

Dear Shareholder,

After Compliments,

The Board of Directors is pleased to present the unaudited results of Oman Reinsurance Company S.A.O.G. ("Oman Re" or "the Company") for the nine months period ended 30 Sep 2024.

The Financial Highlights for nine months ending 30 Sep 2024 are summarized below:

|                                          | 30 Sep 2024<br>OMR | 30 Sep 2023<br>OMR |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Reinsurance revenue                      | 37,375,580         | 31,825,722         |
| Net reinsurance results                  | 548,503            | 2,062,403          |
| Investment and other income-net          | 2,413,873          | 1,977,251          |
| Expenditure – General and Admin Expenses | (1,170,378)        | (1,167,942)        |
| Net Profit after tax                     | 1,416,266          | 1,856,475          |

Reinsurance revenue and underwriting performance

The company's reinsurance revenue for the nine months of 2024 is OMR 37.4 million which is 17% higher than the same period last year. During the period, the Company suffered multiple Nat Cat losses which resulted in a higher loss ratio. The decrease in discount rate also resulted in finance expense during the period amounting to OMR 1.3 million compared to a finance income of OMR 1.6 million in same period of last year. Net reinsurance results, after taking retrocession results into account and impact of discounting, were OMR 548k for the nine months ending 30 Sep 2024 compared to OMR 2.1 million for the same period of 2023.

General and Administrative Expenses

During the nine months of 2024, the total expenditure amounted to OMR 1.2 million, similar to last year figures.

Investment Income

The investment and other income for the nine months ended increased by 22% to OMR 2.4 million vs OMR 2.0 million for the same period last year. The investment income is better than last year because of the continued reinvestment at higher interest rates of maturing bonds and deposits.

Net Profitability

The Company's net profit after tax for the nine months of 2024 was OMR 1.4m compared to OMR 1.9m for the same period last year.

Acknowledgements and Appreciation

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

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

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

Dr. Juma Bin Ali Al Juma

Chairman of the Board

Condensed interim statement of financial position as at 30 September 2024

|                                                              | '30 September<br>2024<br>RO<br>(Un-audited) | '31 December<br>2023<br>RO<br>(Audited) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| ASSETS                                                       |                                             |                                         |
| Cash and cash equivalents                                    | 3,772,143                                   | 1,757,970                               |
| Bank deposits                                                | 22,863,008                                  | 22,164,526                              |
| Investments at fair value through profit or loss             | 195,406                                     | 645,734                                 |
| Investments at fair value through other comprehensive income | 43,063,086                                  | 38,213,128                              |
| Reinsurance contract assets                                  | 32,871,202                                  | 22,525,002                              |
| Retrocession contract assets                                 | 40,008,444                                  | 30,253,688                              |
| Accrued income                                               | 1,201,323                                   | 1,013,431                               |
| Deferred tax asset                                           | 82,502                                      | 82,502                                  |
| Other receivables                                            | 343,835                                     | 271,991                                 |
| Investment property                                          | 2,100,000                                   | 2,100,000                               |
| Intangible assets                                            | 42,496                                      | 80,756                                  |
| Fixtures, furniture and equipment                            | 49,635                                      | 63,875                                  |
| Current tax asset                                            | 13,416                                      | -                                       |
| TOTAL ASSETS                                                 | 147,056,824                                 | 118,722,275                             |
| LIABILITIES                                                  |                                             |                                         |
| Retrocession contract liabilities                            | 21,070,259                                  | 16,384,247                              |
| Reinsurance contract liabilities                             | 90,050,618                                  | 69,771,731                              |
| Current tax liability                                        | -                                           | 312,911                                 |
| Other payables                                               | 888,186                                     | 44,473                                  |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES                                            | 112,009,063                                 | 86,513,362                              |
| EQUITY                                                       |                                             |                                         |
| Share capital                                                | 32,615,926                                  | 32,615,926                              |
| Legal reserve                                                | 946,652                                     | 946,652                                 |
| Investment fair value reserve                                | 1,118,412                                   | (492,801)                               |
| Contingency reserve                                          | 8,428,213                                   | 8,428,213                               |
| Accumulated losses                                           | (8,061,442)                                 | (9,289,077)                             |
| TOTAL EQUITY                                                 | 35,047,761                                  | 32,208,913                              |
| TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES                                 | 147,056,824                                 | 118,722,275                             |
| NET ASSETS PER SHARE                                         | 0.1060                                      | 0.0974                                  |

Condensed interim statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2024 (un-audited)

|                                                                                                                      | Period from<br>1 January 2024<br>to 30 September<br>2024<br>(Un-audited) | Period from<br>1 January 2023<br>to 30 September<br>2023<br>(Un-audited) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Income                                                                                                               |                                                                          |                                                                          |
| Reinsurance revenue                                                                                                  | 37,375,580                                                               | 31,825,722                                                               |
| Reinsurance service expense                                                                                          | (37,477,240)                                                             | (33,499,382)                                                             |
| Net expense from retrocession                                                                                        | 1,924,638                                                                | 2,164,578                                                                |
| Net reinsurance service results                                                                                      | 1,822,978                                                                | 490,918                                                                  |
| Reinsurance finance (expense)/income                                                                                 | (2,202,890)                                                              | 2,465,215                                                                |
| Retrocession finance income/(expense)                                                                                | 928,415                                                                  | (893,730)                                                                |
| Net reinsurance results                                                                                              | 548,503                                                                  | 2,062,403                                                                |
| Investment and other income, net                                                                                     | 2,413,873                                                                | 1,977,251                                                                |
|                                                                                                                      | 2,962,376                                                                | 4,039,654                                                                |
| Expenses                                                                                                             |                                                                          |                                                                          |
| General and administrative expenses                                                                                  | (1,170,378)                                                              | (1,167,942)                                                              |
| Foreign exchange losses, net                                                                                         | (125,803)                                                                | (687,625)                                                                |
|                                                                                                                      | (1,296,181)                                                              | (1,855,567)                                                              |
| Net profit before tax for the period                                                                                 | 1,666,195                                                                | 2,184,087                                                                |
| Income tax expense                                                                                                   | (249,929)                                                                | (327,612)                                                                |
| Net profit after tax for the period                                                                                  | 1,416,266                                                                | 1,856,475                                                                |
| Other comprehensive income:                                                                                          |                                                                          |                                                                          |
| Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss:                                                               |                                                                          |                                                                          |
| Valuation gains on fair value through other comprehensive income on equity instruments, net of deferred tax          | 857,330                                                                  | 178,012                                                                  |
| Items that will or may be reclassified to profit or loss:                                                            |                                                                          |                                                                          |
| Valuation gains / (losses) on fair value through other comprehensive income on debt instruments, net of deferred tax | 565,252                                                                  | (431,149)                                                                |
| Other comprehensive income for the period                                                                            | 1,422,582                                                                | (253,137)                                                                |
| Total comprehensive income for the period                                                                            | 2,838,848                                                                | 1,603,338                                                                |
| Earnings per share - basic and diluted                                                                               | 0.004                                                                    | 0.006                                                                    |

# All-new Lexus UX Hybrid combines style and safety

Introducing the all-new Lexus UX 300h with hybrid capabilities - Level up the bespoke experience with its 2ltr four-cylinder gas engine and the high-torque electric motor.

Meticulously engineered to deliver an exhilarating response, the hybrid dual motor powertrain creates an immersive driving experience, a press release said.

The UX300h is perfect for those seeking comfort without compromising on quality, style and comfort. Stand out among the crowd and make a statement in the bold and daring UXh suited to match your corporate lifestyle. The UXh is a crossover made to live the perfect city life. Designed with Lexus' vision of sustainability, it provides excellent fuel efficiency, increased mileage and reduced carbon emissions in the environment.

The new UXH is an absolute delight to look at, the ravishing daunting exterior speaks volumes about Lexus' brand philosophy of providing a premium experience. Stepping inside - the luxurious and spacious interiors are a take on contemporary luxury, merging traditional Japanese aesthetics.

The spacious driver's cockpit is augmented with high-tech features and safety features that spell sophistication. Carefully crafted into the interiors, the



Lexus Interface lets you personalize your multimedia experience; featuring a 12.3-inch high-resolution touchscreen display, hands-free access to advanced features, including wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility provide seamless connectivity throughout your drive.

Lexus leaves no page unturned for passenger safety, fitted with the best-in-class Lexus Safety System+ 3.0, a suite of standard advanced safety equipment and convenience features, it brings countless benefits. The built-in Pre-Collision System with Bicycle and Pedestrian Detection alerts about potential

collisions and automatically brakes whereas the Full-Speed Range Dynamic Radar Cruise Control helps maintain distance from the vehicle ahead. The Lane Departure Alert with Steering Assist issues warnings on risky lane changes and makes minor steering adjustments to help keep the car in the lane.

Moreover, the Lane Tracing Assist centres the vehicle within its lane while Dynamic Radar Cruise Control is active. Another noteworthy feature includes Road Sign Assist, which recognizes certain road signs and displays such as speed bumps or pedestrian crossings to alert the driver of potential dangers.



## Omantel offers new enhanced Internet packages

Omantel has announced enhanced Internet packages with faster speeds for all non-governmental organisations (NGOs), non-profit organisations, and recognised voluntary institutions in the Sultanate of Oman.

The most outstanding feature of the new plan for NGOs is faster download speeds of 100 Mbps, a press release said.

Omantel emphasises the company's commitment to community support through a variety of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities. Recognising the crucial role that NGOs play in community activities, Omantel offers them significantly faster speeds. The company acknowledges their exceptional work and is dedicated to facilitating their efforts with improved connectivity and higher speeds.

The 100 Mbps unlimited in-

ternet package offers NGOs a suite of value-added benefits, including domain name registration, web hosting, marketing SMS, and Mobile PBX, all for just RO30 per month.

Omantel's innovative approach has contributed to providing state-of-the-art solutions that meet the needs of individuals, institutions, and government entities alike. Omantel also supports the goals of Oman Vision 2040 by investing in emerging technologies and providing the latest solutions in the fields of ICT, such as cloud, ICT solutions, artificial intelligence, smart solutions, cybersecurity, and much more. Omantel is also leveraging all its technical capabilities and partnerships to foster innovation and leadership in new and advanced technologies in the Sultanate of Oman.

### ahli islamic launches new youth account

In line with its endeavours to promote a sound savings culture among the youth whilst adhering to Islamic Sharia principles, Ahli Islamic, Ahlibank's Islamic banking window, announced the launch of its new youth segment 'Al Masar' which targets customers in the age group of 18 to 25 years.

Al Masar is designed to bring a host of benefits to its young clientele, thus enhancing their experiences, while also meeting their daily needs and requirements, a press release said.

Al Masar account will aid young customers in managing their budgets, as customers are provided with a uniquely designed debit card. Customers should be pleased to note there are no minimum balance charges, and ATM withdrawal fees have been waived. Moreover, the Al Masar Savings account earns a profit rate of up to 1% (based on the tier). Additionally, youth who are employed can attain credit cards, with preferential financing rates made available.

Upon opening the Al Masar account, youth customers are provided RO5 worth of Pearl Points. Furthermore, should customers transfer their salary to Ahli Islamic, they will gain an additional RO10 worth of Pearl Points. Complementing the youth lifestyles, certain discounts and offers can be exclusively arranged with merchants for youth account holders. These benefits have been designed to meet young customers' expectations and support them on their journey.

## Al Injaz School holds breast cancer awareness event

Al Injaz International Private School proudly hosted a significant breast cancer awareness event aimed at educating students from grade 7 onwards, parents, and staff about the importance of health screenings and health.

The event featured esteemed speakers from Sultan Qaboos University, Dr Adil al Ajmi, Dr Zaid al Ishaq, Dr Amal al Fahdi and Dr Ilse Crous who shared their expertise and insights on these critical health topics.

The informative session emphasised the vital role of early detection of breast cancer and the importance of regular health screenings.

Additionally, the doctors high-



lighted the connection between heart health and overall well-being, encouraging students to adopt healthy lifestyle choices. This initiative reflects Al Injaz International Private School's commitment to fostering health awareness and empowering the next generation with knowledge that can lead to healthier futures.



## The Zubair Corporation hosts 3rd Human Resources Forum

The Zubair Corporation announced the successful conclusion of the 3rd HR Forum of 2024, a dynamic event that highlighted key aspects of human resources management, continuous learning and team collaboration.

The forum gathered HR professionals and leaders from across the Corporation to en-

gage in insightful discussions, share best practices, and celebrate achievements in the HR field, a press release said.

Sharifa al Balushi, Group Head of the Human Capital Centre of Excellence, inaugurated the forum with an inspiring speech, emphasising the Corporation's commitment to fostering a culture of continuous learning and

development. This commitment is part of the broader goal of cultivating a thriving workplace culture that encourages growth, innovation, and collaboration.

One of the key highlights of the forum was the introduction of the Continuous Learning Policy, designed to ensure that employees are provided with opportunities for ongoing profes-

sional development. This policy underscores The Zubair Corporation's belief in equipping its workforce with the skills and knowledge necessary to remain agile and competitive in today's evolving business landscape.

The event also incorporated team-building activities amongst 37 participants, fostering stronger collaboration be-

tween HR teams across the Corporation. These activities were designed to ensure that HR leaders feel fully supported in their operations, with a focus on understanding challenges, offering guidance, and simplifying HR processes to enhance efficiency.

Sharifa al Balushi expressed her excitement for the future, stating,

"We are committed to nurturing a culture of excellence and innovation within The Zubair Corporation. This forum provides an invaluable platform for our HR professionals to share knowledge, explore new strategies, and strengthen our collective capabilities. Through continuous learning, and other collaborative efforts, we are shaping the future of work."

# Oman Air awarded by APEX World Class

Oman Air has earned two of the industry's most coveted awards, becoming one of only 10 airlines in the world to be awarded the prestigious APEX World Class by Yates+ award, and the first to gain the APEX World Class by Yates+ status for its Business Class Lounge at Muscat International Airport. The awards were announced yesterday at the APEX/IFSA Awards Ceremony in Long Beach, California, USA.

APEX World Class by Yates+, a collaboration between Yates+, a guest experience transformation consultancy, and the Airline Passenger Experience Association (APEX), represents the highest level of achievement for an airline today and the most extensive industry validation of an airline's comprehensive guest experience. To be awarded APEX World Class by YATES+, airlines must qualify through an audit across seventeen dimensions important to travellers today, a press release said.

Audits are conducted by industry professionals from Yates+ and each audit is peer reviewed and validated by Associate Professor Dr Maxwell Winchester of Victoria University and Copenhagen Business School, an expert in qualitative and quantitative customer research methodology, then further scrutinised by the governing board.

Con Korfiatis, CEO of Oman Air, said, "These awards are a



testament to Oman Air's unwavering commitment to delivering an exceptional guest experience and we are deeply honoured to receive them. Attaining World Class status reaffirms Oman Air's position as a global leader, embodying the very best of Omani culture and hospitality and proudly sharing it with guests around the world. I would

*These awards are a testament to Oman Air's unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional guest experiences*

CON KORFIATIS

like to thank our dedicated staff both in the air and on the ground, who work so hard to provide every single guest with an outstanding travel experience from check-in to arrival and beyond."

Dr Joe Leader, CEO of APEX Group, said, "Oman Air, a rising star in Middle Eastern aviation, has ascended to APEX World Class status, positioning itself

among the industry's elite. Rated highly by passengers on TripIt, Oman Air impresses with its award-winning seat comfort, remarkable service, and the seamless fusion of luxury and authentic Omani heritage. With its focus on punctuality and innovation, Oman Air continues to elevate the passenger experience to new heights. Oman Air fully

exudes the highest standards of APEX World Class by Yates+."

Constantly looking for ways to enhance customer engagement, loyalty and satisfaction, Oman Air has recently undertaken a number of service upgrades both on-board and in its lounge. Guests can enjoy expertly curated menus, including the new 'Roqaa Omania', which show-

cases ingredients and flavours that represent traditional Omani cuisine and is available in Business Studio and Business Class on selected routes. With a style of hospitality that is distinctly Omani and a crew renowned for their exceptional service, the airline offers a truly unique World Class experience on ground and in the cabin.



## Mercedes-Benz launches National Day service offer

In celebration of Oman's 54th National Day, Mercedes-Benz Oman launches a limited-time service package to provide premium care for Mercedes-Benz vehicles. From November 10 to 23, customers can visit Mercedes-Benz Service Centres in Muscat, Sohar, or Salalah to take advantage of this limited-time package at a fixed price of RO54.

Available for all Mercedes-Benz models registered before January 1, 2021, this package provides comprehensive services to keep cars in top condition. It includes a diagnostic computer test, an engine oil and filter change, brake fluid replace-

ment, windscreen washer concentrate renewal and top-up, coolant fluid level check and top-up, and a vehicle wash, vacuum, and tire dressing—all designed to ensure a seamless driving experience for Mercedes-Benz owners, a press release said.

"At Mercedes-Benz Oman, our commitment is to deliver unparalleled standards of service and care," said Shaun Michael, CEO. "With this exclusive package, we aim to ensure our valued customers experience unmatched vehicle performance and safety, celebrating National Day with peace of mind that their Mercedes is in best condition."

## Bank Muscat takes part in Oman Science

Affirming its pivotal contributions to events that target various fields such as creativity, innovation, and community service, Bank Muscat announced its participation in the 4th edition of the Oman Science Festival 2024, which will take place at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre from 4-11 November.

This edition is themed 'Our Sustainable Resources' and it aims to illuminate diverse areas of creativity, science, and knowledge, serving as a foundation for building a sustainable knowledge society. Bank Muscat's participation in this festival reflects the importance of the fields of science which will be focused on throughout the event period and reaffirms the Bank's pioneering role in sustainability, corporate social responsibility, and community service, a press release



said.

During the festival, the bank will have a dedicated booth where a variety of educational activities and competitions will be organised around the subject of financial literacy and its importance for different segments of

society. These knowledge-focused activities will play a pivotal role in enhancing public financial awareness and financial management skills of the target segments, thus, contributing to the sustainable development of the sultanate.

The dedicated booth is designed as a small educating city named 'Maliyat Academy' and it comprises engaging activities targeting different age groups. All visitors may take part in the variety the learning and engaging competitions and activities, aim-

ing to provide them with a useful experience and encourage them to enhance their awareness about financial literacy.

Financial awareness is very important among individuals in the society, as it allows them to gain the confidence, skills, and knowledge needed to take proper financial decisions in multiple areas in life. Considering the present economic changes, gaining financial awareness constitutes an important practice as it helps individuals and families enjoy financially stable and decent lives and represents a crucial pillar for futuristic economic growth both for Omanis and non-Omanis.

Hence, it critical that all individuals be financially aware and knowledgeable in order for them to be able to set proper financial plans for their future.

## Indian School Talent Fest at ISWK celebrates cultural pride

The Indian School Talent Fest (ISTF) 2024, hosted by the Indian School Al Wadi Al Kabir (ISWK) under the aegis of the Board of Directors, Indian Schools in Oman, concluded triumphantly, showcasing the artistic and intellectual prowess

of students from 22 Indian schools across Oman.

This prestigious event unfolded across multiple venues, including the Primary School, Senior School, Cambridge School, and Majan Heights, creating an inclusive platform for

participants from the Foundation, Preparatory, Middle and Secondary Stages. In total, 39 competitive and 2 non-competitive events were organised, celebrating a rich tapestry of talent, a press release said.

The ISTF 2024 commenced

on October 28 at the Multipurpose Hall of ISWK Senior School, highlighting the theme Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — One World, One Family. The ceremony was graced by Dr Kabaly P Subramanian, acting dean of the Faculty of Business

Studies at Arab Open University, Oman, as chief guest, alongside Pardeep Kumar, First Secretary of Education and Head of Chancery at the Embassy of India in Muscat and Syed Salman, VC- Board of Directors as guests of honour.

## Oman Olympic Committee participates in ANOC assembly in Portugal

Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) participated in the 27th General Assembly of the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC) held in Portugal from October 29 to November 1.

The meeting was attended by representatives of more than 200 National Olympic Committees in the Portuguese city of Cascais, as well as Dr Thomas Bach, President of International Olympic Committee, and representatives of International Olympic Committee, international and continental federations, and organizing committees

for the upcoming Olympic sports tournaments. Khalid Mohammed Al Zubair, OOC Chairman, headed OOC delegation, accompanied by Taha Suleiman Al Kashri, OOC Secretary General, a press release said.

During the meeting, a number of deceased sports leaders who influenced the Olympic movement were honoured, and Dr Thomas Bach, president of the International Olympic Committee, delivered an opening speech to representatives of the various National Olympic Committees.

The meeting witnessed a re-



view of a number of priority topics during the next stage, including the approval of the minutes of the 26th meeting of ANOC, which was held in South Korea in 2022. Several reports were also reviewed, represented by the report of the President ANOC and the Secretary-General, who reviewed the latest developments related to ANOC, the report of ANOC Beach Games of for 2023 and the report submitted by the Indonesian Olympic Committee, the decisions of the Executive Office of ANOC General Assembly, in addition to a visual report

from the continental sports federations, the final report of the Organising Committee for the Paris 2024 Summer Olympic Games, and the report of the Organising Committee for the XXXIV Olympic Games (Los Angeles 2028).

The report of the World Anti-Doping Agency, the report of the International Arbitration Agency, the report of the ANOC TV Digital Acceleration Program, ANOC strategic plan, the report of the International Federation of World Games, and reports from the organising committees.

# Early voting surge by new voters could sway key US swing states

Washington, D.C., US - New voter turnout is surging in early voting for the 2024 US presidential election, with trends among Democratic women in Pennsylvania and Republican men in Arizona suggesting these fresh participants could play a critical role in key swing states, according to press reports on Friday.

With nearly 60mn ballots already cast, early voting data provides insight into the dynamics of this year's presidential race.

An NBC News Decision Desk analysis shows a substantial influx of new voters - those who

did not participate in the 2020 election - turning out in significant numbers in crucial battleground states.

Pennsylvania and Arizona

The impact of new voters is particularly evident in Pennsylvania, where over 100,000 ballots have already been cast. This number surpasses Biden's 2020 margin over Trump in the state, highlighting the potential influence of these new participants.

Most strikingly, Democratic women are leading the way among Pennsylvania's new voters, nearly doubling the number



of new female Republicans. This strong presence could shift the balance in a state widely seen as essential for both campaigns.

In Arizona, however, the pattern reverses. Male Republican new voters dominate the early voting landscape, indicat-

ing robust Republican engagement in the state. Additionally, new Republican female voters slightly outnumber new Democratic female voters, which suggests an early turnout advantage for Republicans.

Arizona's 2020 election margin was notably slim - just over 10,000 votes - meaning this rise in Republican-leaning new voters could have a significant impact.

Adding complexity, a sizable portion of new voters in both Pennsylvania and Arizona have chosen not to affiliate with any

party. These unaffiliated voters could either strengthen or undermine the apparent party advantages in early turnout, making their leanings a crucial unknown in the race.

In other swing states like Michigan and Wisconsin, varying trends are emerging.

While these states do not record party affiliation, early estimates suggest that new Democratic female voters may outnumber their Republican counterparts, while new Republican men outpace Democratic men.

However, without hard data on party affiliation, these projections remain less certain, allowing room for variability in the final outcomes.

North Carolina and Nevada present a different scenario, with independent voters making up the largest portion of new voters.

This widespread independence adds further uncertainty, as the choices of these unaffiliated voters could ultimately tip the scales in these and other swing states.

Anadolu Agency

# US election: Muslim vote split between Jill Stein and Harris

Stein leads with 42% of the vote versus Harris at 41% and Trump at 10%

Houston, US - The US Muslim vote could play a major factor in the 2024 presidential election, according to a poll released by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organisation.

Topping the list of candidates in the new CAIR poll is not Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee, or former President Donald Trump, the Republican contender. Rather, Green Party nominee Jill Stein has garnered a majority of the Muslim vote.

Stein leads with 42% of the Muslim vote versus Harris at 41% and Trump at 10%. With a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, however, that puts Stein in a dead heat with Harris, just as the two were in CAIR's August survey when Harris had a slight lead with 29.4% of the Muslim vote to Stein's 29.1%. Support for Trump dropped slightly from August, where the former president totalled 11.2%.

The increase in numbers for Harris and Stein in the October poll could be that 16.5% of Muslim voters were undecided during the August poll versus just 0.9% in the current one, which was taken October 30-31, with results tallied from 1,449 verified Muslim voters.

"Since CAIR's last poll in late August, both Dr Jill Stein and Vice President Harris have consolidated support among American Muslim voters and remain nearly tied at 42 per cent and 41 per cent while former president Donald Trump's support remains static (at) 10 per cent," CAIR Government Affairs Director Robert S McCaw said in a statement.

"The significant drop in support for major presidential candidates compared to 2020 and



Vice President Kamala Harris and Green Party nominee Jill Stein

*Stein has voiced her position on the war in the Gaza Strip very clearly to the Muslim community by opposing the genocide of Palestinians by Israeli strikes which have killed more than 43,000 since October 7, 2023*

2016 is almost certainly a result of community concerns regarding the genocide in Gaza," he said. "We encourage all presidential candidates to address the concerns of Muslim voters in these final days of the campaign, and we encourage all American Muslim voters to turn out regardless of who they support."

Stein has voiced her position on the war in the Gaza Strip very clearly to the Muslim community by opposing the genocide of Palestinians by Israeli strikes which have killed more than 43,000 since the onslaught

erupted October 7, 2023.

In an October interview with Anadolu, the CEO of CAIR's chapter in the US state of California, Hussam Ayloush, said Trump is seen as being 'pro-Israel' with clear 'anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim policies', whereas Harris is looked at as the candidate sitting on the fence by 'sympathising with Palestinians' yet 'remaining silent' on condemning Israel for its attacks against Gaza.

There are between 2.5mn to 3.5mn Muslims in the US and many of those registered voters live in the key swing states of Ari-



zona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Those voters could determine the outcome of the election. "We do believe that those Muslim voters who reside in the swing states will have a major role in determining the election," said Ayloush.

Michigan is arguably the most important swing state for the candidates when it comes to Muslim voters, as it has one of the largest Muslim populations in the US with the majority, nearly 200,000, concentrated in the Detroit suburb of Livonia. So, it is no surprise that the candidates, especially Trump and Harris, are stumping hard in Michigan in the days leading up to the November 5 election.

On Friday, Trump made campaign stops in two other Detroit suburbs, Warren and Dearborn, which is the largest Arab-majority city in the US with nearly half

of the 110,000 residents there being Arab American. He urged all of his supporters to head to the polls.

"In-person voting in Michigan ends on Sunday, and if you're not gonna make that, you gotta get there on Tuesday," said Trump, who plans to hold his final rally in Grand Rapids, about 150 miles (241km) west of Detroit. Trump held his final rally in that city when he won the White House in 2016, beating Hillary Clinton by just under 11,000 votes. He then lost to President Joe Biden in Michigan during the 2020 election by nearly 155,000 votes.

Harris also has campaign rallies in Michigan on Sunday in Detroit, Pontiac and East Lansing to try and shore up a victory in that state to mirror Biden's in 2020.

It will be the 16th time the vice president has visited the state this year.

Anadolu Agency



Cost-of-living crisis fuelled major protests in Africa's most populous country

# Nigeria: Anger as minors appear in court over protest

Abuja, Nigeria - At least 76 people in Nigeria, many of them minors, were brought before a court for an initial hearing on charges related to their alleged participation in protests in August, court documents showed on Friday.

The charge sheet showed at least 29 children, aged between 14 to 17, were among those brought to a court in the capital Abuja.

The arraignment sparked an outcry in the country, with politicians like Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso slamming the government. "These children, who are obviously malnourished and need medical attention have been subjected to a cruel experience when they should be in school," Kwankwaso, the former defence minister and former governor of the country's northern Kano state, wrote on X.

"The arraignment of such (a) number of minors in their states is highly unusual and negates every tenet of the protection of human rights and dignity," he added.

Four of the arraigned minors collapsed in court due to exhaustion before they could enter a plea in the courtroom.

The defendants were charged with offenses including treason, destruction of property, public disturbance and mutiny, according to the charge sheet.

The charge sheet said the suspects had been investigated between July and August.

A rights group told the Reuters news agency that the minors have been held since August by the Nigerian police.

The minors were eventually granted bail and a trial date has been set in January, their lawyers Reuters. If found guilty, they could face the death sentence.

Akintayo Balogun, a private lawyer based in Abuja, said the Child Rights Act does not allow any child to be subject to criminal proceedings and sentenced to death. Security forces accused of using excessive force during protests

Nigerian police said at least seven people died after protests against hunger and soaring prices turned violent in some places.

Amnesty International's Nigeria office said at least 20 people were killed in clashes with the police.

Nigerian security forces have been accused of using excessive force during the protests.

Thousands of people poured onto the streets of major cities like Lagos and other big hubs in northern states to protest against the West African nation's worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation.

DW

# Victims of former East Germany's dictatorship hope for compensation

Berlin, Germany - Ikea and Germany's Bundestag parliament announced on Tuesday that the Swedish furniture colossus would contribute 6mn (roughly US\$6.5mn) to a new German government fund designed to compensate victims of the former East German dictatorship.

Thousands of people were subjected to forced labour for Western companies while imprisoned in the former communist East Germany under a system that operated almost right up to reunification in 1990. Many had been waiting for the German division of Ikea to make good on its 2012 promise to donate compensation for former prisoners.

Ikea's initial promise came after a report on the exploitation of prisoners in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), published in 2012. According to the report, West German companies were also involved in the GDR's system of compulsory labour, including the mail-order companies Otto and Quelle, and low-cost supermarket chain Aldi.

Evelyn Zupke, federal commissioner for victims of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) dictatorship - which founded and ruled the former communist East Germany - said Ikea's commitment to compensation is groundbreaking. Ikea's decision to face up to its responsibility for its role deserves respect, Zupke told DW.



East German labourers, such as the women seen here in this 1990 photo taken at the prison in Hoheneck, produced items for major companies, including some in the West

"This path also very impressively shows how we can still help those who suffered under the dictatorship, even today," she said.

Ikea's payment would go into Germany's federal 'hardship

fund', which the Bundestag, the lower house of parliament, is expected to approve by the end of the year. Until recently, compensation funds for victims of the GDR have only existed in the states that make up the former GDR, and pay out several hundred euros per month to resident victims. Those who moved to Germany's western states have not been eligible for compensation. But that's now set to change.

The 'SED victim's pension', currently 330 (about US\$360) per month, is paid out to people who were deprived of their liberty for at least 90 days between 1945 and 1990 in the GDR in violation of the rule of law, and whose economic situation is particularly impaired today.

Zupke calculated that Ikea's pledge of millions of euros could provide financial support to around 2,000 victims, and she hopes German companies will now also step up and participate in the fund.

"In concrete terms, I would like companies like Aldi and Otto to finally look into this issue in more depth," she said.

These companies have so far refused to compensate former forced labourers. In April, Berlin's Humboldt University published a study documenting numerous incriminating cases - though the report has so far resulted in no consequences.

DW

# US to deploy military assets to Mideast

The forces will begin to arrive in the coming months as the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group prepares to depart

Washington, D.C., US - US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin ordered the deployment of additional military assets to the Middle East, the Pentagon said on Friday.

"In keeping with our commitments to the protection of US citizens and forces in the Middle East, the defence of Israel, and de-escalation through deterrence and diplomacy, the Secretary of Defence ordered the deployment of additional ballistic missile defence destroyers, fighter squadron and tanker aircraft, and several US Air Force B-52 long-range strike bombers to the region," spokesman Pat Ryder said in a statement.

The forces will begin to arrive in the coming months as the USS Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group prepares to depart, he



*Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Saturday issued a stern warning to both the US and Israel, pledging a 'crushing response'*

added.

The statement came amid media reports that claim Iran is preparing to strike Israel from Iraqi territory in the coming days, possibly before the US presidential election on November 5.

"These deployments build on

the recent decision to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) missile defence system to Israel as well as DoD's sustained Amphibious Ready Group Marine Expeditionary Unit (ARG/MEU) posture in the Eastern Mediterranean," said Ryder.

The US will take 'every measure necessary' to defend its people if 'Iran, its partners, or its

proxies use this moment to target American personnel or interests in the region', he said.

Israeli carried out a strike last week against Iranian assets, reportedly targeting missile production facilities and air defence systems, in response to Tehran's missile attacks on October 1.

Regional tensions have escalated due to Israel's brutal offen-

since last year, according to Lebanese authorities.

**Khamenei warns US, Israel**

Meanwhile, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Saturday issued a stern warning to both the US and Israel, pledging a 'crushing response' for actions against his country.

"The enemies - whether the Zionist entity or the United States - should know that they will certainly face a crushing response for their actions against Iran, its people, and the resistance front," Khamenei said in a speech in the capital Tehran.

"We will take all necessary actions - whether military, arms, or political measures - to confront arrogance," Khamenei added.

On October 26, the Israeli army reported a four-hour-long attack on Iran. Iran claimed it successfully repelled the 'Zionist entity's attempts to strike certain points in Tehran and other regions', though the assault resulted in the deaths of four Iranian soldiers, according to the Iranian military.

This Israeli attack followed an earlier Iranian retaliation on October 1, when Iran launched over 180 rockets at Israel, as 'revenge' for the assassinations of Hamas political bureau head Ismail Haniyeh and Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah.

Anadolu Agency



## SCA reaffirms commitment to free passage for all vessels

Cairo, Egypt - The Suez Canal Authority (SCA) has reiterated its commitment to upholding international agreements that ensure free navigation for all vessels passing through the canal, whether commercial or military, regardless of nationality.

In a statement issued late on Friday, the SCA addressed questions circulating on social media regarding the passage of warships from various countries.

The authority confirmed that it adheres to international conventions that protect the right to free

passage for all types of vessels without discrimination based on nationality, emphasising that this practice is in line with the Constantinople Convention of 1888.

The SCA highlighted that the 1888 agreement laid the foundation for the canal's international role by preserving the right of all nations to access this global facility.

The convention explicitly states that the Suez Canal must remain 'free and open at all times, both in peace and war, to every vessel of commerce or of war,

without distinction of flag'.

This came amid speculation on social media regarding the movement of military ships, which could not be independently verified.

Meanwhile, the Egyptian military and the Ministry of Transport issued separate statements on Thursday and Friday, denying any cooperation with Israel.

The Suez Canal remains one of the world's most important maritime passages and a key source of foreign currency for Egypt.

Anadolu Agency

## Israeli military offensive hinders polio vaccination campaign in Gaza

Gaza City, Palestine - The emergency polio vaccination campaign in Gaza entered its second phase on Saturday, though areas in northern Gaza, experiencing ongoing Israeli military offensives and a humanitarian crisis, were excluded from the campaign.

A Gaza-based doctor involved in the vaccination campaign told Anadolu that the initial phase began two months ago, with plans to launch the second phase four weeks later in both northern Gaza and Gaza City. However, offensives in the north delayed the rollout, leading to a partial implementation.

In a statement, Palestinian Health Minister Majed Abu Ramadan confirmed on Thursday that northern Gaza could not proceed with the second phase due to the ongoing hostilities, and plans for the next round of vaccinations in the north remain postponed.

On October 27, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that deferring the campaign in northern Gaza endan-



*According to WHO, children in Gaza require two oral doses of the polio vaccine. The initial phase concluded in mid-September, successfully vaccinating over 560,000 children*

gered the lives of thousands of children.

According to WHO, children in Gaza require two oral doses of the polio vaccine. The initial phase concluded in mid-September, successfully vaccinating over 560,000 children.

Meanwhile, at least 25 Pales-

tinians were killed and several others injured in Israeli attacks targeting northern and central Gaza Strip early on Saturday.

A medical source at the Al-Shifa Hospital told Anadolu that the hospital received the bodies of 10 Palestinians and several injured individuals after Israeli

forces targeted homes in Nu-seirat Camp.

At least 12 Palestinians were killed and several others injured due to Israeli shelling that struck the Tal al-Dhahab area in Beit Lahia, northern Gaza, according to medical sources.

Three Palestinians were killed and several others were injured when Israeli forces shelled the Saftawi neighbourhood in northern Gaza City, medical sources told Anadolu.

At least 55 more Palestinians were killed in Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip, bringing the overall death toll since last year to 43,314, the Health Ministry in the enclave said on Saturday.

A ministry statement added that some 102,019 others were injured in the ongoing assault.

"Israeli forces killed 55 people and injured 192 others in seven massacres of families in the last 24 hours," the ministry said.

"Many people are still trapped under the rubble and on the roads as rescuers are unable to reach them," it added.

Anadolu Agency

## End of ground offensive in southern Lebanon?

Jerusalem - The Israeli army is approaching the end of its intensive ground offensive in southern Lebanon, Israel's Public Broadcasting Corporation reported late on Friday, citing military sources.

"After a month of ground manoeuvres, the army is nearing the conclusion of the intense phase in southern Lebanon, as planned by Israeli and Northern Command leadership," the report stated. Thousands of active-duty and reserve soldiers have reportedly been granted leave for recovery.

The broadcaster also indicated that Israel is preparing to re-deploy forces along the Lebanese border amid ongoing ceasefire discussions aimed at a potential US-brokered political settlement with the Lebanese government.



Military sources claim the operation has achieved key objectives, including the discovery of Hezbollah infrastructure near the border and the capture of Hezbollah members who have provided valuable intelligence.

Meanwhile, Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati, during a

meeting with UNIFIL's commander, criticised Israel's approach, asserting that diplomatic signals from Israel show 'stubbornness' and a continued commitment to aggression.

In related developments, Israel's Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper reported that 37 Israeli

soldiers have been killed in clashes with Hezbollah fighters in October along the southern Lebanon border.

Israel escalated its air campaign in Lebanon since September against what it claims are Hezbollah targets in an escalation from year-long cross-border warfare between Israel and Hezbollah since the start of Israel's brutal offensive on the Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army announced on Saturday that it had intercepted three drones over the Red Sea, stating they were launched from the east.

In a statement, the Israeli army said 'three unmanned aerial vehicles were intercepted in the Red Sea, launched from the east'.

Anadolu Agency

### TRADITIONAL WRESTLING IN KARACHI



Wrestlers compete in a traditional wrestling match in southern Pakistani port city of Karachi on Friday (Xinhua)

INDIA

MEA condemns allegations against Shah

New Delhi - The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Saturday strongly protested against recent allegations made by the Canadian government against Union Home Minister Amit Shah's purported involvement in the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

The MEA described these allegations as 'absurd and baseless' and lodged a formal protest against Canada.

During a press briefing on Saturday, MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that a 'diplomatic note' was handed to a representative of the Canadian High Commission on Friday, conveying India's strong objections.

"Regarding the latest Canadian target, we summoned the representative of the Canadian High Commission yesterday... It was conveyed in the note that the Government of India protests in the strongest terms the absurd and baseless references made to the Union Home Minister of India before the Committee by Deputy Minister David Morrison," he said.

Jaiswal further said that high-ranking Canadian officials have orchestrated a deliberate strategy to leak unfounded claims to international media,

aimed at discrediting India on the global stage. He noted that this pattern aligns with India's longstanding concerns about the current Canadian administration's political agenda and behaviour. He reiterated that such 'irresponsible actions' could have serious consequences for bilateral relations.

"In fact, the revelation that high Canadian officials deliberately leak unfounded insinuations to the international media as part of a conscious strategy to discredit India and influence other nations only confirms the view that the government of India has long held about the current Canadian government's political agenda and behavioural pattern. Such irresponsible actions will have serious consequences for bilateral ties," Jaiswal added.

Earlier in the week, reports emerged indicating that top Canadian officials had admitted to leaking details about India's alleged foreign interference to *The Washington Post*.

According to these reports, Canada's national security and intelligence adviser, Nathalie Drouin, confirmed she had leaked sensitive information regarding India's purported involvement in murder, extortion,



Union Home Minister Amit Shah

and coercion - details that had not been shared with the Canadian public.

Tensions between India and

Canada escalated after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau alleged in Parliament last year that there were 'credible allegations'

of India's involvement in the killing of Nijjar.

India has firmly denied all such allegations, labelling them

as 'absurd' and 'motivated,' while accusing Canada of providing a haven for extremist and anti-India elements.

The MEA also reacted to the recent US sanctions imposed on several Indian firms and nationals, stating that Indian companies have not violated any national laws.

The sanctions announced by the US State Department targets 19 Indian companies and two individuals accused of al-

Technology Control Regime, and have been effectively implementing relevant UNSC sanctions and UNSC resolution 1540 on non-proliferation."

"Our understanding is that the sanctioned transactions and companies are not in violation of Indian laws. Nevertheless, in keeping with India's established non-proliferation credentials, we are working with all the relevant Indian departments and agencies to sensitise Indian

MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that a 'diplomatic note' was handed to a representative of the Canadian High Commission on Friday

legedly supplying materials and technology to Russia to support its military amid the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Randhir Jaiswal stated: "We have seen reports on US sanctions. India has a robust legal and regulatory framework on strategic trade and non-proliferation controls. We are also a member of three key multilateral non-proliferation export control regimes - the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Australia Group and the Missile

companies on applicable export control provisions, as also inform them on new measures being implemented that could impact Indian companies in certain circumstances," he added.

"Regular strategic trade/export control outreach events for Indian industries and stakeholders are being carried out by agencies of the Government of India. We are also in touch with the US authorities to clarify issues," Jaiswal further said. ANI

LeT commander killed in Srinagar

Srinagar, J&K - Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir Zone, Vidhi Kumar Birdi said that a Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) commander was killed in an encounter in Khanyar area of Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir.

IGP Birdi said that the killed terrorist was involved in the murder of Inspector Masroor in 2023. He also said that four security forces were also injured in the fierce gunbattle that started on Saturday early morning.

"Now this operation has been completed. Security forces have killed a terrorist, who has been identified as Usman..., he was the commander of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and 4 security personnel have been injured. He is a foreign terrorist and his role and involvement in the murder of Inspector Masroor has come to light and further investigation is being done in this regard..." IGP Birdi told ANI.

On encounter in Anantnag, IGP VK Birdi said: "...Two terrorists have been killed in this operation and now this operation is coming to conclusion. We keep getting inputs and only after developing these inputs the security forces take such action, so this is a good initiative from our



Security personnel stand guard following an encounter with terrorists in Khanyar area, in Srinagar on Saturday (ANI)

The killed terrorist was involved in the murder of Inspector Masroor in 2023. Four security forces were also injured in the gunbattle

side and also a significant achievement..."

The encounter broke out after security forces initiated an

anti-terrorist operation in the Halkan Gali area.

"Based on specific input, a Joint Operation was launched by Indian Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police and Srinagar Sector CRPF in gen area Halkan Gali, Anantnag. On 02 Nov 2024, suspicious movement near Halkan Gali was observed and challenged by vigilant troops, as a result, terrorists opened indiscriminate fire on own column. Own troops effectively retaliated, resulting in elimination of two terrorists. Operation is in progress," Chinar

Corps, Indian Army posted on X.

Further details are awaited. This came hours after a similar encounter broke out in Srinagar's Khanyar area. Earlier in the morning, an encounter broke out in Srinagar's Khaynar area during a cordon and search operation by a joint team of police and security forces.

Search Operations also continue in the Panar area of Bandipora. On Friday late evening suspicious movement was spotted in the general area of Panar in Bandipora, by alert troops. ANI

Jaishankar to visit Australia and Singapore from today

New Delhi - External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar set to visit Australia and Singapore from November 3 to 8.

The Australian leg of Jaishankar's visit will last from November 3 to November 7. During his visit, Jaishankar will travel to Brisbane and inaugurate India's 4th consulate in Australia.

The India-Australia relationship has seen transformational growth in recent times. Bilateral cooperation has seen exponential growth in existing frameworks of cooperation and further expanded across a wide spectrum of new areas opening up new possibilities, both at bilateral as well as global level.

Jaishankar will also co-chair the 15th Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue (FMFD) with Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong in Canberra.

Jaishankar will deliver the keynote address at the inaugural session of the 2nd Raisina Down Under to be held in the Australian Parliament House. He is also scheduled to have interactions with Australian lead-



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar (ANI)

ership, parliamentarians, members of the Indian diaspora, business community, media and think tanks.

The Indian community in Australia continues to grow and importance, with the population more than 9 lacs as per the census of 2021. Indians make up the second largest migrant group in Australia.

For the second leg of the visit, the External Affairs Minister will travel to Singapore for an official visit on November 8, during which he will address the 8th Roundtable of ASEAN - India Network of Think Tanks.

The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) comprises of Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

India has a strengthened and multi-faceted relationship with ASEAN which is expressed through the Act East Policy.

Jaishankar will also meet the leadership of Singapore to review the close partnership between the two countries and explore avenues to further enhance the bilateral relationship.

India and Singapore have a close bilateral relationship. Singapore has played an important role in reconnecting India to the countries of Southeast Asia since the inception of the Look East Policy in the early 1990s. The Indian community has a significant presence in Singapore and constitutes about 9.2 per cent of the total population of the country. Jaishankar's visit to the two countries is set boost the already existing warm and friendly ties India has with Australia and Singapore. ANI

North Korea 'rejects' UN chief's response to IBM launch

Ankara, Turkey - North Korea on Saturday 'rejected' UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' criticism of Pyongyang's recent intercontinental ballistic missile launch.

"I express my strong dissatisfaction and categorically reject the unfair and prejudiced attitude of the UN secretary-general taking issue with the DPRK's (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) just exercise of its right to self-defence," Kim Yo Jong, a senior official and sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, said in a statement published by state-run Korean Central News Agency.

On Thursday, Guterres 'strongly' condemned North Korea's launch of a long-range ballistic missile, saying Py-



ongyang's repeated missile activities are 'clear violations' of Security Council resolutions.

"He (Guterres) has consistently called for de-escalation, the full implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions, an environment that is conducive to dialogue, and the resumption of talks," a UN

spokesperson said.

Responding to the condemnation, Kim said the UN chief 'should not lose impartiality in fulfilling his important duty'.

"The DPRK will never tolerate any attempt to threaten the security environment of the state," she added.

The North Korean Foreign

Ministry also criticised the US and other states for calling a UN Security Council meeting next week to discuss Pyongyang's launch of the ballistic missile. "We will further augment practical efforts to contain the military threat of hostile forces and keep up the balance of force in the region," it said.

On Friday, North Korea said it fired an 'ultimate version' of the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), the Hwasongpho-19.

In response, Seoul imposed sanctions on four North Korean entities and 11 individuals, including a China-based diplomat Choe Chol-min, for his role in procuring ballistic missile components and other dual-use items.

On Friday, South Korea and

the US also held a joint drone strike drill for the first time.

Meanwhile, South Korea and Canada called on North Korea to withdraw its troops from Russia and stop helping Moscow in its war against Ukraine, local media reported on Saturday.

A joint statement, following a meeting of the two countries' foreign and defence ministers in Ottawa on Friday, labelled the deployment of troops 'a significant escalation with dangerous implications for security and stability in Europe and the Indo-Pacific region'.

The two sides also condemned North Korea's missile launches, including the new intercontinental ballistic missile launch on Thursday.

Anadolu Agency

US: Black man convicted by all-white jury executed

Washington, D.C., US - A Black man, convicted by an all-white jury, was executed in the US state of South Carolina for the fatal shooting of a convenience store clerk, despite a broad appeal for mercy.

59-year-old Richard Moore received a lethal injection on Friday and was pronounced dead at 6:24pm (11:24 pm CET) at a prison in state capital Columbia, US media reports said.

Moore was sentenced to death in 2001 after being convicted of killing James Mahoney, a clerk from Spartanburg.

Moore entered the store

unarmed, his lawyers said. He got into an argument with Mahoney because he was short of money while making his purchase.

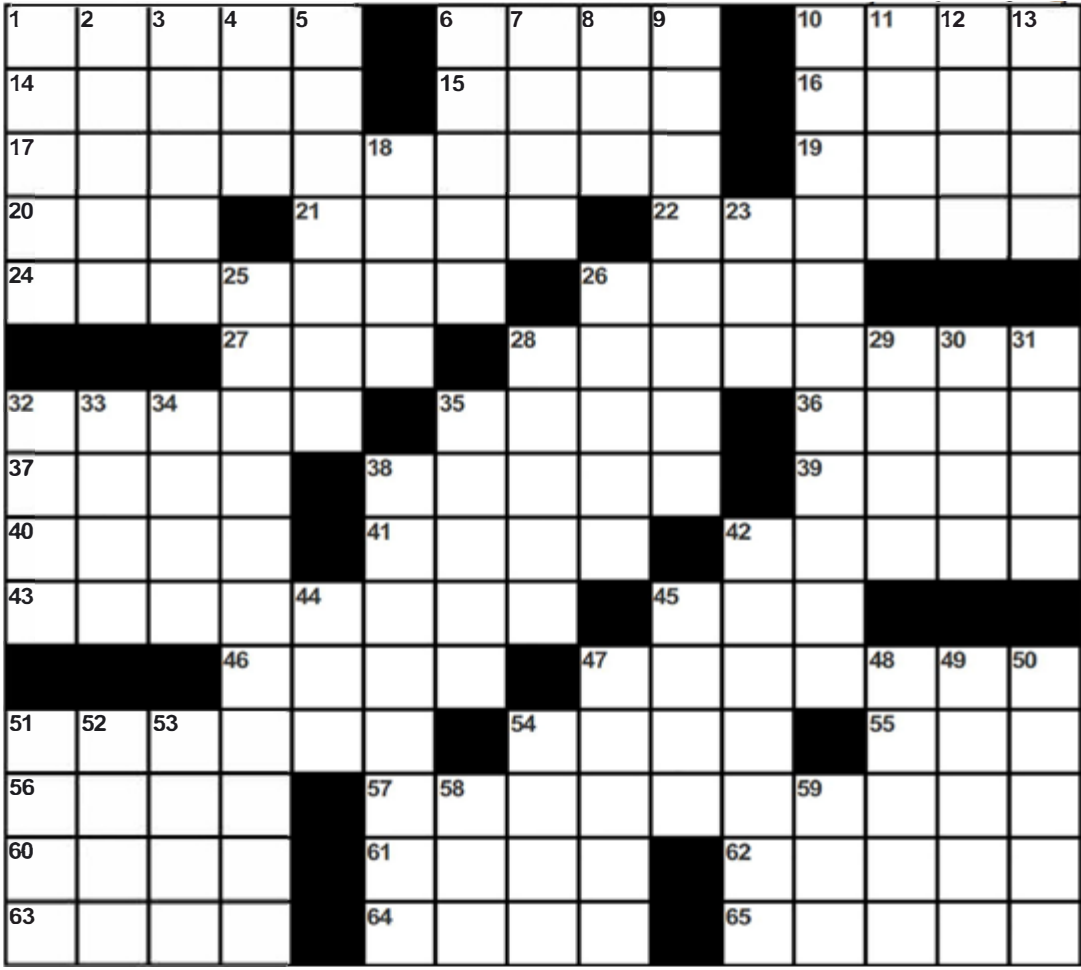
Mahoney allegedly pulled out two guns when Moore took one away, shooting the store clerk in the chest as he was shot in the arm with the second gun.

The lawyers say Moore's shooting was an act of self-defence. He was also shot in the arm by the victim.

On Thursday, the US Supreme Court declined Moore's request for a stay of execution.

DW

DAILY CROSSWORD



**ACROSS**  
1) Feints, of sorts  
6) Steward's domain  
10) Congressional figure  
14) A-list  
15) Currency in Cologne  
16) Red Skelton persona  
17) 1937 Laurel and Hardy movie  
19) Peacock markings  
20) Hit the buffet  
21) Food chain victim  
22) Tongue-lash  
24) Massive tree  
26) Tunney of the ring  
27) Mobiles, e.g.  
28) Raptor trainer  
32) Spreadsheet units  
35) Pepper dispenser  
36) Go from pillar to post  
37) In a frenzy  
38) Pirate's pal  
39) Small songbird  
40) Stitch's movie pal  
41) Tennessee's state flower  
42) Title for Macbeth  
43) Kind of stove  
45) Haggard novel  
46) Like many unsuccessful field goal attempts

47) Calls it a day  
51) Dojo teaching  
54) Wound at Pamplona  
55) 108-card game  
56) Oodles  
57) Prolonged argument  
60) Iditarod city  
61) Stairwell sign  
62) \_ Doggie ( old cartoon pooch)  
63) Go like the dickens  
64) Man caves, often  
65) Radial pattern

**DOWN**  
1) Thermos inventor  
James  
2) Make euphoric  
3) Nervous, with "up"  
4) Prefix with "friendly"  
5) Dazed states  
6) Did some mending  
7) A nephew of Donald Duck  
8) Where scrubs are worn, for short  
9) Another kind of stove  
10) 1960 Dion and the Belmonts hit  
11) Georgetown athlete  
12) "Yeah, right!"  
13) Prepare for a selfie  
18) Homer hitter's gait

23) Bottom-of-letter letters  
25) Do the impossible, figuratively  
26) Beaufort scale listings  
28) Be one of the crowd  
29) Mrs. Charles in "The Thin Man"  
30) Not varying  
31) Lacoste of court fame  
32) Herd baby  
33) Qatari VIP  
34) Kinks classic  
35) One of the Curies  
38) Like the walls in a damp basement, maybe  
42) Tried to bean, perhaps  
44) Hobby shop buy  
45) The Ventures' music genre  
47) Tugboat warnings  
48) Troop escalation  
49) Chennai's land  
50) Was a buttinsky  
51) Philosopher Immanuel  
52) Bath gel ingredient  
53) Ovoid tomato  
54) Silly expression  
58) Guitar, slangily (var.)  
59) Start of many church names

**NOTE PAD**



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

**ARIES** MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You may be on quite a roll right now, but you still need to conserve your energy for the bigger and better things coming down the pike. Don't get too tied to the idea that progress can only be defined by how much you can get done in a specific amount of time. Life is not a race, so slow down. Today, don't take on any new projects. Avoid making any big commitments with your time. You need to stay flexible and deal with what's on your plate.

**LEO** JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Could circumstances beyond your control be turning you into a more jaded person? Today, before you lose sight of the wonders of the world, unearth some of your old idealistic tendencies. They aren't gone. They're still deep down inside of you. They've been sleeping, just waiting for a time when they'll be necessary and relevant in your life again. Let yourself be impressed by the magic that surrounds you every day. Smile at a stranger when they smile at you.

**SAGITTARIUS** NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

The devil is not in the details today. It's in the nuance. Getting close to the finish line is not the same thing as crossing the finish line, so make sure you focus on follow-through right now. You don't work in a vacuum, and the influence other people are having over you might not be a productive thing. Be by yourself to get stuff done. A quiet room and a couple of hours are probably all you need to ensure that everything is just the way it should be.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. In golf, what is the term for "three strokes under par"?

- A. Albatross
- B. Condor
- C. Bogey
- D. Eagle

02. What are SMS messages sent by?

- A. Carrier pigeon
- B. Air mail
- C. Mobile phone
- D. Parcel post

03. Who wrote the novel "Wives and Daughters"?

- A. Anne Bronte
- B. Jane Austen
- C. Elizabeth Gaskell
- D. George Eliot

Answers: 1.A 2.C 3.C

**TAURUS** APRIL 20-MAY 20

When a change is necessary, it's necessary. Today, the truth will become too obvious to ignore, and you might see that it's calling you to make a big change in your life. If you really want someone just to go away today, you will have to stop ignoring them. It might sound counterintuitive, but it's not. The silent treatment doesn't work, and avoidance is just impractical. Until you face things head-on and are totally honest, you will never achieve the closure you need

**VIRGO** AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

If your social life isn't quite up to par right now, don't spend too much time dwelling on what's wrong with it. You have to be the one to get the ball rolling. Stop with the pity party and get started planning a real party. If the world isn't sending you the invitations you want, it's up to you to create the social situations you crave. Show people you want to get social. They might not realize it.

**CAPRICORN** DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

It's wise not to expect too much of people today. You'll finally be forced to acknowledge that not everyone has the common good on their agendas. Too much laziness, jealousy, and scheming is going on and you don't feel comfortable trusting anyone, especially if they're new. Stick with the people you know and love the most, and stay close to home if you can. It's not an ideal time for adventuring.

**GEMINI** MAY 21-JUNE 21

Luck is shining on you today, and if you review your budget carefully enough, you will find serendipitous extra funds at your disposal. Think long term with this windfall. Before you head out to spend it, consider that big-ticket item you've been saving up for. This money could go a long way toward getting it in your hands. Hold off spending it until it can really be used in a powerful way. Skip the baubles and go for the gems!

**LIBRA** SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Back away slowly! You need to let cooler heads work things out. A showdown is completely unnecessary right now. Your emotions are pushing you toward a fiery rebellion, but your mind understands that today is not the day to fight this battle. Let this scenario play out on its own. As you watch it unfold, you will soon be grateful you chose the peaceful path. Remember that those who live by the sword die by the sword.

**AQUARIUS** JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Your emotional intelligence is extremely sharp right now, and you should consult it a bit more as you meet your next challenge. It's not such a bad idea to stop thinking so much and just start doing more. Action doesn't always have to be preceded by days of research and deliberation. Your gut won't usually let you down, and if it does, it's only to teach you something you need to learn.

**CANCER** JUNE 22-JULY 22

The truth is a funny and powerful thing because no one can deny it. Therefore, if you have been meaning to confess something to someone, do it today. Open up and admit what you're doing or what you're feeling. No grudges will be held. As a matter of fact, your gracious gesture will create a new beginning for yourself and this relationship. It doesn't take bravery to make it happen. You just need to be ready, and you are ready now.

**SCORPIO** OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Today, if you are aching for a slower pace in your life, you have to create it yourself. Instead of sending instant messages to make your point, seek out a slower way of making things happen. Try for more face-to-face communications and say something very important to someone special. Let all your casual conversations meander down tangential paths. You could make a breakthrough connection with someone who intrigues you if you listen hard enough.

**PISCES** FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

"Hope" is your word for today. Hope for what you can't anticipate and can't control. As the saying goes, when one window closes, another one opens. In other words, just because something is ending doesn't mean something new isn't getting started. It may be right around the corner or it may be quite a spell down the road. Regardless, something is coming in your future and it will make you glad you took the journey to get there.

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| G | O | N | O |
| R | I | I | O |
| M | I | D | T |
| A | R | S | M |

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

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

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

# SALAH STUNNER

## Liverpool go top with win, Bournemouth stun Man City

Liverpool, England - A sensational trademark strike from Mohamed Salah earned Liverpool a 2-1 comeback victory over Brighton & Hove Albion on Saturday, a win that moved Arne Slot's team two points clear at the top of the Premier League.

Brighton started brightly on an Anfield ground where they have a good recent record, taking a deserved lead in the 14th minute after Turkey international Ferdi Kadioglu rifled a stunning effort into the far corner.

Liverpool struggled to create any openings of note in the first half but came flying out the traps after the break, dragging themselves level in the 69th minute through Cody Gakpo, before Salah completed the turnaround three minutes later.

With their two main title rivals, Arsenal and Manchester City, both losing, Liverpool overtook the champions to climb to the summit, six clear of Nottingham Forest in third and seven ahead of Arsenal.

**Man City beaten**

Antoine Semenyo and Evanilson got on the scoresheet as Bournemouth held on for a shock 2-1 victory over champions Manchester City on Saturday,



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah celebrates after scoring against Brighton & Hove Albion

ending mighty City's unbeaten streak in the Premier League at 32 games.

The loss dropped Pep Guardiola's City to second in the table with 23 points after 10 matches, two points behind Liverpool, while the Cherries, who had lost

to City in their 14 previous league meetings by a combined score of 45-7, climbed to eighth spot.

Bournemouth were rewarded for their strong start with Semenyo's ninth-minute goal. Milos Kerkez superbly worked the ball up the left side to the by-

line before sending a low cross to Semenyo, who turned on the ball and beat keeper Ederson.

Evanilson doubled the home side's lead in the 64th minute when he latched on to Kerkez's cross and slotted it home. But City created a nervy finish after

pulling a goal back in the 82nd minute, when Josko Gvardiol leapt to meet Ilkay Gundogan's cross, his looping header pushed in off the bar by Mark Travers.

City's start striker Erling Haaland hit the post from close range deep in injury time.

Earlier, Alexander Isak's early headed goal lifted Newcastle to a 1-0 victory over Arsenal on Saturday at St. James' Park, as Eddie Howe's men delivered a blow to Arsenal's title chase with their first win in six Premier League outings.



Matt Hobbs

## Wolves director Hobbs handed two-match ban for misconduct

London, England - The Football Association has given Wolverhampton Wanderers' sporting director, Matt Hobbs, a two-match ground ban and a 7,000 pounds (\$9,062.90) fine on Friday citing misconduct.

The incident that led to the charge occurred after Wolves' 2-1 loss to Manchester City on Oct. 20, when Hobbs reportedly confronted match officials near the tunnel, objecting to the decision to allow John Stones' injury-time header to stand.

The goal was initially disallowed due to Bernardo Silva's off-side position but ultimately awarded by referee Chris Kavanagh, leading to Wolves' frustration.

"Hobbs acted in an improper manner and/or used abusive words towards the match official/s around the tunnel area after the final whistle. He admitted to this charge, and his sanctions were imposed by an independent Regulatory Commission," the FA said in a statement.

This marks Hobbs' second misconduct incident in under a year.

# New manager Amorim faces Herculean task at Manchester United

Manchester, England - Manchester United's new head coach Ruben Amorim will be welcomed as a breath of fresh air for a much-needed reset when he arrives at Old Trafford later this month to sort out a team mired in mediocrity and struggling in the Premier and Europa League.

Amorim must hit the ground running in one of the most scrutinised jobs in football that saw Erik ten Hag fired on Monday - the latest of five permanent managers who have wilted in the shadow of United's most successful boss Alex Ferguson.

But those who know the 39-year-old Sporting coach, considered one of Europe's brightest young managers, insist he will be a big improvement as he has the charisma and ability to connect with players that is a pre-requisite for success.

"I spoke to (former United and Sporting player) Nani a few days ago and he said to me: 'Rio, the



Ruben Amorim

players play for him, they love him and respect him,'" former United and England defender turned pundit Rio Ferdinand said.

"United need someone with the character and charisma to go

"You know what? I don't care what has happened here, I see a player in you.' You need someone who is going to be like that."

Amorim, whose appointment was announced on Friday, will

*Amorim is considered a hero at Sporting, pulling the club out of the doldrums by winning two Primeira Liga titles, the first of which, at 36, was the club's first title in 19 years*

join United on Nov. 11, with his first match slated for Nov. 24 at promoted Ipswich Town in the Premier League.

The two fixtures that follow are Norwegian team Bodo/Glimt in the Europa League and a home Premier League game against Everton, which should provide a positive start. But then he faces two big away tests, at Arsenal on Dec. 4 and champions Manchester City in a Dec. 15 derby.

All five permanent managers

**Amorim wanted to stay at Sporting this season**

Lisbon, Portugal - Ruben Amorim had already decided this would be his last season at Sporting, and wanted to remain at the club until the end of the campaign before joining Manchester United, but said that was not possible.

Amorim was announced as United's manager to replace the sacked Erik ten Hag on Friday, and will join the Premier League club on Nov. 11, earlier than he had wanted.

"At the beginning of the season, and the president is there

to confirm, I had a conversation with him, and I said that, whatever happened, it was my last season at Sporting," Amorim told reporters after his side's 5-1 win over Estrela da Amadora.

"The season started and we started to have a very good season. United showed up, paid the clause, above the clause and the president defended their interests. I never discussed anything with the president.

"The only request I made was that it be at the end of the season and they told me that it

was not possible, that it was now or never."

Sporting had confirmed on Tuesday that United had expressed interest in Amorim and were willing to pay his release clause, and the coach had little time to make his decision.

"I had three days to decide on something that completely changes my life," Amorim said.

"It's not the first time I've had my clause paid by another club. It is very difficult for me to leave. More to me than to any Sporting fan."

at United since Ferguson retired in 2013 arrived to plenty of optimism before fortunes turned in a cycle of rinse and repeat, Old Trafford's Theatre of Dreams becoming the stuff of nightmares.

Amorim is considered a hero

club captain Bruno Fernandes.

"He is a fantastic coach and knows what he wants. Very demanding is what I can expect. It's a perfect match for a club like this," full back Dalot told Sky Sports.

# Chelsea's Maresca relishes reunion with ex-teammate Van Nistelrooy

London, England - Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca is relishing a reunion this weekend at Manchester United with former teammate Ruud van Nistelrooy, who is in interim charge of the Old Trafford side until Ruben Amorim takes over later this month, the Italian said on Friday.

Chelsea visit United on Sunday where they have not had a Premier League win since May 2013. Maresca, a former midfielder, played with striker Van Nistelrooy during their time at Malaga in the 2011-2012 season near the end of the Dutchman's career.

It will be Van Nistelrooy's second game in temporary charge at United after a 5-2 League Cup home win over Leicester City in midweek. Portuguese Amorim will join United on Nov. 11.

"I will give Van Nistelrooy a big hug before the game," Maresca told reporters. "We expect a tough game. He's a fantastic guy, humble, and very professional."

"We had a very good group of human beings at that time at Malaga. It's nice to remember those moments."

Chelsea lost 2-1 at Old Trafford in December and were thrashed 4-1 in May last year. They are without a win in their last 11 league visits, with six draws and five losses.

"Hopefully, it's a good time to play them. It's a really tough place to win and our recent record shows that," added Maresca.

Chelsea are fifth on 17 points, six behind leaders Manchester City, after four wins in their last



Enzo Maresca

six games, while United languish 14th on 11 after three wins from nine matches.

Maresca has a fully fit squad to choose from apart from on-loan forward Jadon Sancho who has been ill but is in any case ineligible to feature against his parent club United.

The Italian also heaped praise on Chelsea's in-form Cole Palmer, who has scored seven goals and registered five assists from 11 games across all competitions, but said he will not place undue pressure on the 22-year-old midfielder.

"As I said at the start of the season, if we expect 20 goals and 20 assists from him again then that's wrong. We shouldn't put that pressure on him," Maresca added.

## It makes no sense to play after floods, says Simeone

Madrid, Spain - Atletico Madrid manager Diego Simeone said on Saturday it made no sense to play this weekend after catastrophic floods swept the eastern region of Spain.

The deadliest flash floods in Spain's modern history have killed at least 211 people and dozens were still unaccounted for. The tragedy is already Europe's worst flood-related disaster since 1967 when at least 500 people died in Portugal.

Saturday's clash between Valencia and Real Madrid, as well as Villarreal versus Rayo Vallecano are among several games postponed over the weekend.

# Neymar still out of Brazil squad for World Cup qualifiers



Neymar

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - Real Madrid forward Vinicius Jr and Barcelona winger Raphinha lead Brazil's squad for this month's World Cup qualifiers, while Neymar was left out of the team named by coach Dorival Junior on Friday. Brazil's top scorer Neymar will remain on the sidelines for his country after returning from a long-term knee injury in Al-Hilal's 5-4 win over Al-

*I think we are in a process of evolution, but it's not ideal yet. We're going to fluctuate a bit more until we find consistency.*

DORIVAL JUNIOR

Ain in the Asian Champions League last week. Raphinha has been one of Barca's standout performers in the first half of the season and is coming off the back of a goal in a 4-0 win over Real Madrid and a hat-trick against Bayern Munich in the Champions League. Vinicius Jr will return to international action after missing last month's qualifiers with a neck injury, while Real Madrid team mate Endrick was left out. Brazil, who are fourth in the South American standings with 16 points, six behind lead-

ers Argentina, play at Venezuela on Nov. 14 before hosting Uruguay five days later. "I think we are in a process of evolution, but it's not ideal yet," Dorival told reporters. "We're going to fluctuate a bit more until we find consistency. "But we are finding a way and I hope that happens in the next few games so we can be in a better position next year," said Dorival. "I don't pay too much attention to the first results. God willing, we will get results to get closer to the leaders.

**SQUAD** Goalkeepers: Bento (Al Nassr), Ederson (Manchester City), Weverton (Palmeiras) Defenders: Danilo (Juventus), Vanderson (Monaco), Guilherme Arana (Atletico Mineiro), Abner (Olympique Lyonnais), Eder Militao (Real Madrid), Gabriel Magalhaes (Arsenal), Marquinhos (Paris St Germain), Murilo (Nottingham Forest) Midfielders: Andre (Wolverhampton Wanderers), Andreas Pereira (Fulham), Bruno Guimaraes (Newcastle United), Gerson (Flamengo), Lucas Paqueta (West Ham United), Raphinha (Barcelona) Strikers: Estevao (Palmeiras), Rodrygo and Vinicius Jr (Real Madrid), Luiz Henrique and Igor Jesus (Botafogo), Savinho (Manchester City)

# Tale of missed chances



Stuttgart goalkeeper Alexander Nuebel makes a save to deny Bayer Leverkusen's Victor Boniface

## Wasteful Leverkusen held to goalless draw by Stuttgart

Leverkusen, Germany - Champions Bayer Leverkusen twice hit the woodwork and missed a bagful of chances but could not score in a goalless draw against visitors VfB Stuttgart in the Bundesliga on Friday. Leverkusen, who travel to Liv-

erpool for the Champions League on Tuesday, have now won just one of their last five league games, and are in third place on 16 points. Bayern Munich, top on 20, host Union Berlin on Saturday. RB Leipzig are second on goal difference. Xabi Alonso's team had Stuttgart on the backfoot from the start and in a one-sided first half the hosts missed more than half a dozen golden scoring chances and hit the crossbar with Edmond Tapsoba's header. Stuttgart keeper Alexander Nuebel was in stunning form, stopping efforts from Jeremie Frimpong and Alejandro Grimaldo in the first half to keep them in the game. With the visitors, who host Atalanta in the Champions League on Wednesday, not managing a single shot on or towards goal for an hour, Leverkusen kept pouring forward. Victor Boniface rattled the post with a powerful shot eight minutes after the restart as Leverkusen picked up where they had left off. Nuebel then had to come to the rescue again, first denying Nigeria international Boniface in a one-on-one in the 73rd before blocking a Florian Wirtz effort a

*We are unhappy. We thought we had done enough to win it. We pressed well. Our players showed a lot of energy to press a lot. We created a lot of chances in the first half.*

XABI ALONSO

little later to make sure Stuttgart got their point. Stuttgart, last season's runners-up, move up to seventh place on 13 points. Alonso said it was one of Leverkusen's most complete performances this season. "We are unhappy. We thought we had done enough to win it," Alonso said. "We pressed well. Our players showed a lot of energy to press a lot. We created a lot of chances in the first half. But we also had chances in the second half. Maybe the most complete performance from us even though we did not score. It was a top game. From Monday we focus on Liverpool. A big game, to play in Anfield," said the former Liverpool player. Leverkusen have now won just one of their last five league games and drawn the other four. They are in third place on 16 points, four points off the pace with Bayern Munich taking on Union Berlin on Saturday.

# Napoli must work hard 'to create something beautiful', says Conte

Naples, Italy - Napoli are the surprise early pacesetters in Serie A but if they are to remain on top and achieve what had seemed an unlikely Scudetto triumph then work is required more than prayers, manager Antonio Conte said on Friday. Last season Napoli finished 10th in a dismal title defence, which cost two managers their jobs. Conte's reign began with a 3-0 loss at Hellas Verona on this campaign's opening day, with the new coach calling his side a work in progress. Since then, Napoli are undefeated in nine games, winning eight and conceding just two goals to open up a four-point gap at the top over defending champions Inter Milan, and Conte was asked if winning the title this season would be a miracle. "I am a man of faith, even prac-



Antonio Conte

tically, and I know only one person who performs them," Conte said. "I always pray, even for the team, that they are well, in addition to my family there is also a prayer for the players. "We must work, all of us, from the cook and the kit man to create something beautiful that can give extra points in a championship. "We cannot make any mis-

takes in this, we are not in a position to make mistakes. Then, football miracles have always happened, but you have to work to hope it happens, it's not enough to pray." On Sunday, Napoli host Atalanta, who lost three of their opening five games but are now up to third place in the table after four successive wins.



Goran Ivanisevic

## Rybakina hires Ivanisevic as coach

Paris, France - World Number five Elena Rybakina has hired Novak Djokovic's former coach Goran Ivanisevic for the 2025 season, the Kazakhstan player said on Friday. Djokovic ended a five-year partnership in March with Croat Ivanisevic, who helped the Serbian claim nine of his 24 Grand Slam titles. Ivanisevic also won Wimbledon in 2001 when he became the first wild card to win a major tournament. Rybakina, 25, will start working with Ivanisevic during the pre-season. The 2022 Wimbledon champion split from her long-time coach Stefano Vukov just days before the U.S. Open. "I'm really looking forward to this partnership," Rybakina told reporters ahead of the WTA Finals which begin on Saturday in Riyadh. "I think he's a great champion and he has so much experience and I'm looking forward to starting. "For me, it was important to get better and with the help of the agents we connected and we just decided to start working ... Of course, it's a big change but I think it's going to be a good change." Ivanisevic wrote on Instagram: "Excited about coming back on Tour. This time, it's time for some WTA action. Happy to join your team Elena Rybakina." The Russian-born Rybakina enjoyed plenty of success in the first half of 2024, winning titles in Brisbane, Abu Dhabi and Stuttgart, but missed several tournaments due to illness and injury thereafter. After reaching the Wimbledon semi-finals she withdrew from the Paris Olympics due to bronchitis and pulled out of the U.S. Open in August due to a lower back injury after winning her opening match. Rybakina begins her WTA Finals campaign on Saturday against Italian world number four Jasmine Paolini.

# Tsitsipas' ATP Finals hopes dashed after defeat to Zverev

Paris, France - German third seed Alexander Zverev knocked Stefanos Tsitsipas out of the Paris Masters with a 7-5 6-4 win in the quarterfinals on Friday, ending the Greek's hopes of qualifying for the season-ending ATP Finals in Turin, Italy. While the opening set was a tight affair, the second was one-way traffic as world number three Zverev built a 5-3 lead before wrapping up the victory in one hour and 40 minutes. Zverev served well against the 10th seed, especially in the second set, firing down nine aces and winning 71% of his first serves in the contest. "I thought the whole match was a very good level from him," Zverev said. "I got into the match and I found my rhythm and felt more and more comfortable and am happy with the win." The 27-year-old, who improved his head-to-head record with Tsitsipas to 6-10, joins Novak Djokovic and Rafa Nadal as the only active players to reach 20 or more Masters semi-finals. However, the defeat means former world number three Tsitsipas' run of five straight ATP Finals appearances is over. Zverev will face 2022 cham-



Alexander Zverev celebrates a point against Stefanos Tsitsipas

pion Holger Rune in the semi-finals after the Dane overcame Alex de Minaur 6-4 4-6 7-5. With the win, 13th seed Rune kept alive his slim hopes of qualifying for the ATP finals. Local favourite Ugo Humbert continued his fine form after knocking out Carlos Alcaraz in the previous round, securing a 6-2 7-6(4) win over Jordan Thompson. Humbert will face Russia's Karen Khachanov for a place in the final after the 2018 champion made light work of eighth seed Grigor Dimitrov, winning 6-2 6-3 in just over an hour.

# INDIA BOUNCE BACK

New Zealand 171-9 in second innings after Gill's 90 rescues hosts

Mumbai, India - Shubman Gill missed out on a century while Rishabh Pant scored a quick-fire 60 as India made 263 in response to New Zealand's 235 before their spinners reduced the tourists to 171-9 at stumps on day two of the low-scoring third test in Mumbai on Saturday.

Ajaz Patel was unbeaten on seven after Will Young's battling 51 in testing conditions, as New Zealand wiped out a slender 28-run deficit and built up a valuable lead of 143 at the end of another sweltering day at the Wankhede Stadium.

Ravichandran Ashwin, who took 3-63 and shared seven wickets with spin partner Ravindra Jadeja, hoped the hosts would not be staring at a big target when they eventually bat on Sunday.

"We should wrap it up with one or two runs here and there. Every run saved in this innings is going to be critical for us when we chase it down," Ashwin said.

"It's not going to be easy and we have to bat really well.

"I expected a lot more bounce and speed from this Mumbai pitch. It has been quite slow, which is surprise for me... It's not a typical Mumbai pitch."

Akash Deep put New Zealand under some early pressure in their second stanza when he castled skipper Tom Latham for one



India's Ravichandran Ashwin (C) celebrates with Shubman Gill after taking a New Zealand wicket on Saturday

*We should wrap it up with one or two runs here and there. Every run saved in this innings is going to be critical for us when we chase it*

RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN

and Washington Sundar snared opener Devon Conway for 22 at the start of an absorbing final session.

Ashwin had Rachin Ravindra stumped for four to leave New Zealand in trouble at 44-3, before pulling off a fine catch that got rid of the dangerous Daryl Mitchell for 21 after the batsman had put on a 50-run stand with Young.

Jadeja, who ended the day

with 4-52, dismissed Tom Blundell for four, while Ashwin snared the aggressive Glenn Phillips for 26 before the momentum swung India's way after Ish Sodhi fell for eight.

Young looked to take the game away from India with a patient effort but spooned one back to Ashwin and Matt Henry was castled by Jadeja for 10 on the last ball of the day.

Gill, having ridden his luck, looked well set to score a ton earlier as India inched towards New Zealand's total after lunch, but the batsman edged spinner Ajaz Patel to slip and departed for a fluent 90.

Patel removed Ashwin for six and finished with superb figures of 5-103 as Deep was run out, leaving Washington unbeaten on 38.

# Leclerc fined for swearing at press conference

Sao Paulo, Brazil - Formula One stewards fined Ferrari's Charles Leclerc 10,000 euros (\$10,834.00), with half the sum suspended, for swearing in a post-race press conference at the Mexico City Grand Prix last Sunday.

The punishment comes after Red Bull's triple world champion Max Verstappen was ordered in September to carry out "work of public interest" for swearing during a Singapore Grand Prix press conference.

Stewards said in a statement at the Sao Paulo Grand Prix on Friday that the Monegasque's breach was not as bad as Verstappen's.

Verstappen had alluded, somewhat sorely, to Leclerc's language when he appeared in an FIA Prix press conference on Thursday.

"Apparently it only counts for me anyway because, you know, after the race in Mexico someone was swearing," the Dutch driver told reporters then, without naming names.

Stewards at the Brazilian race summoned Leclerc on Friday, acting on a report from the governing FIA's media delegate and after reviewing a written transcript.

They said the Ferrari driver had answered "a somewhat leading question" about what he said to himself when he momentarily lost control towards the end of the race and was passed by McLaren's Lando Norris.

"In response Leclerc used coarse language being the accu-



Charles Leclerc

rate recollection of what he thought to himself at the time. Leclerc immediately realized his error and apologised," the stewards said in a statement.

"The Stewards noted that the language was not directed at anyone or any group and that Leclerc immediately apologised."

They said Leclerc had expressed his regret at the hearing for "a momentary lack of judgment" and understood his responsibility as a role model.

"The Stewards do not consider that this breach reached the same level as the most recent case and as such chose to levy a fine of 10,000 euros with 5,000 suspended pending no repeat within 12 months."

Verstappen's punishment, in which he used a profanity to describe the state of his car, came after FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem had urged drivers to watch their language, comparing them to rappers.

# Al Harthy positive about Bahrain FIA WEC finale after qualifying on seventh row

Manama, Bahrain - Omani racing driver Ahmad al Harthy will begin the Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain on Saturday - the final race of the FIA World Endurance Championship season - from the seventh row of the LMGT3 grid, after qualifying 13th fastest during the grid-determining session on Friday.

Placing the lion's share of focus on race set-up and race performance during the trio of practice sessions at Bahrain International Circuit, Team WRT driver Al Harthy was fairly satisfied with the qualifying run as a result - especially with the Sakhir track being one of the least favourable for his BMW M4.

"It was the best we could do, P13, and we usually race better



Oman's Ahmad Al Harthy in action

*Bahrain is one of the toughest tracks for us this season in WEC, we have an eight hour race and the weather is likely to change a lot, so we're looking forward to it.*

AHMAD AL HARTHY

than we qualify," said Al Harthy.

We've worked a lot more for the race set-up so we're all feeling positive for the race. I would say Bahrain is one of the toughest tracks for us this season in WEC, we have an eight hour race ahead and the weather is likely to change a lot during the eight hours, so we're looking forward to it. We will keep pushing and hope for a good conclusion to the FIA WEC season."

Al Harthy and team-mates Valentino Rossi and Maxime Martin ended the opening practice on Thursday a creditable eighth quickest in LMGT3 and the trio went on to finish session two later in the day a consistent ninth on the timing screens.

After the third and final practice on Friday morning, Bronze graded driver Al Harthy took qualifying duty in the No.46 BMW M4 - as usual - and he

hovered around the top eight during the opening minutes of the session, having been as high as second at one point.

Slipping outside the top 10 later on, and therefore missing out on the cut-off for the Hyperpole shoot-out session, the Omani ultimately had to settle for 13th on the timesheets with a best lap of 2m03.797 seconds, less than 0.2 seconds shy of 10th place.

Going into today's eight-hour race, the OQ, Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Omantel, Experience Oman and BMW Oman supported racer is eyeing a big finish to his first year with Team WRT and BMW and determined to try and challenge for more silverware.

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GUSTAVE CAILLEBOTTE



Portrait de M. G. [Portrait de Richard Gallo], 1881



Rue de Paris, temps de pluie, 1877

# PAINTING MEN

A MASSIVE GUSTAVE CAILLEBOTTE RETROSPECTIVE OFFERS A COMPREHENSIVE AND TOUCHING PORTRAIT OF THE FRENCH IMPRESSIONIST

For around a century, Gustave Caillebotte was the most discreet of the Impressionists, only coming back into the spotlight in 1994, when the Grand Palais in Paris celebrated the centenary of his death in 1894 through a memorable retrospective. Ever since, the French painter has been the subject of several exhibitions from London to Washington, DC to Switzerland.

Now, the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, the J Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and the Art Institute of Chicago have joined forces to examine Caillebotte anew, with a sweeping retrospective 'Painting Men', which runs through January in Paris, before heading to LA next spring and then Chicago next summer.

Despite the acclaim the artist has received over the past three decades, he still remains a bit of a mystery, a major focus of the exhibition which also coincides with the 130th anniversary of the artist's passing.

"When facing this attractive, modern, yet enigmatic man - we still don't know who he is - I realised we had a good starting point," Orsay curator Paul Perrin, who organised the exhibition with Scott Allan of the Getty and Gloria Groom of the Art Institute, disclosed. That starting point is Caillebotte's singular focus on the male figure, the only of the Impressionists to consistently turn his gaze to masculine musculatures and the all-male spaces of the bourgeoisie - awe-inspiring soldiers that he spotted while in the military, family members, smartly clad passers-by, bare-chested workers, oarsmen, and more fill his tableaux. (Out of the 76 works shown by the artist between 1876 and 1888, 33 depict men versus 16 women.)

In the early 1870s, Caillebotte, who came from an aristocratic family who maintained themselves as rentiers (landlords), quit law school to train with Léon Bonnat, a leading artist and professor who trained a generation of artists in the French academic traditions, and later entered the École des Beaux-Arts.

Turned down by the jury of the 1875 Salon, Caillebotte joined the Impressionist group, eager to turn his back on academic painting and to explore the day-to-day life of his contemporaries and Parisian living. Caillebotte's relationship with his two brothers (Martial, who enjoyed music and sailing, and René, who died at only 25 years old) inspired him to always

look for a sense of fraternity around him, namely among his fellow impressionists, and within the communities he planned to depict.

Caillebotte's relatives and friends and others in his orbit feature in a majority of his paintings, but some of his sitters still remain unknown, like the sitter for *Partie de bateau* (1878).

"That was the question that guided some of our research," said Perrin. "In light of new documents, we managed to identify 15 of them, or rectify assumptions that had been made about [who they were]."

Among these positive identifications is Richard Gallo, who features in *Interieur, femme lisant* (1880), showing him reclining as he reads, and *Portrait de M Gallo* (1881), in which he sits, arms crossed, on a boldly patterned, orange and green striped sofa.

For decades, Gallo was thought to be a journalist, but there is no record of him publishing anything. New research for this exhibition revealed Gallo to be, in fact, the son of a banker, who also studied law and lived as a rentier like Caillebotte.

### Unknown subjects

Then there's *Monsieur R*, who, because of his initials and friendship with Caillebotte has historically been suspected to be businessman Antoine Patrice Reyre, who is believed to have met the artist either at the 1876 Impressionist exhibition or socially at the Hôtel Drouot.

He is the model for *Portrait de Monsieur R* (1877), a painting which also features in the background of *Portrait de Madame X* (1878), or Reyre's mother. The blue-and-white couch on which Reyre sits is listed in Mrs Martial Caillebotte's posthumous inventory, which means Caillebotte likely painted his friend in the family home.

Some of Caillebotte's subjects, however, will likely never have their identities uncovered, though they still were important parts of the artist's life. "He does not paint just anyone, but people who work for him, or enjoy sailing like him," added Perrin. The muscly labourers in *Floor Scrapers*, the Caillebotte painting that was likely rejected from the 1875 Salon but drew attention at the 1876 Impressionist exhibition, were actually employees of the Caillebotte family, preparing the ground for the artist's future studio in the fashionable 8th arrondissement, home to luxury boutiques, as well as cultural and political institutions. The masterpiece hangs alongside a rarely seen version with two workers (versus three) painted from the side.

Elsewhere are Caillebotte's scenes of gardeners watering his vegetable garden or a house painter dangling from a ladder. Several canvases show a bird's-eye view of Paris's crowded Haussmann-era boulevards, composed from his balcony. The human figure in his hands seems a gateway to the artist's privacy. (Courtesy: artnews.com)



Raboteurs de parquets (Floor Scrapers), 1875



When facing this attractive, modern, yet enigmatic man - we still don't know who he is - I realised we had a good starting point

Paul Perrin



Gustave Caillebotte



Couple on a Walk, 1881

# A Letter Amid Others

CALLIGRAPHY EXHIBITION

A solo calligraphy exhibition by Mohamed Mehdi Jawad Al Lawati, to be opened at Stal Gallery tomorrow, reveals a skill mastered by only a few

Hubert Vaz

A unique solo calligraphy exhibition by artist Mohamed Mehdi Jawad al Lawati – A Letter Amid Others – will be inaugurated under the auspices of H E Salim bin Nasser al Afi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, at Stal Gallery tomorrow (November 4).

Across a collection of 15 artworks, the artist displays his talent of combining calligraphy with an element of abstract art, thereby according an unparalleled mastery over this unique fusion.

"In essence, this exhibition is a summary of my diverse artistic experiences over the years, driven by ongoing research, practice, and engagement with various art exhibitions. Learning from fellow artists and calligraphers across all fields has significantly refined my talent, as there are no boundaries to this art form," asserts Lawati.

Born and raised in Muscat, Lawati, who studied business and is currently running his family business, admits that he is a self-taught calligrapher, digital artist and photographer, though he learnt Classical Arabic Calligraphy in his childhood in

Oman as well as in Jordan, UAE and Istanbul.

In the last few years he has converted to more contemporary calligraphy mixed with abstract art and uses various media, including inks and acrylic paint, on canvas and paper.

Lawati has commissioned several private works in Oman and the UAE, and has also designed for private projects. A member of Omani Society of Fine Arts, he calligraphic skills were acquired under the tutelage of several renowned calligraphers, such as Mahmoud Taha, Taj Al Sir Hassan and Hassan Chalabi.

Having held several solo exhibitions in Jordan and Oman, Lawati can be considered the first to introduce digital calligraphy in Oman and at the Sharjah Calligraphy Biennial where he received much acclaim.

He has many artistic achievements including the design of books, commercial products, and logos. He published his book 'The Skies of Karbala' which includes 59 paintings about Imam Hussein bin Ali, and has won many artistic awards, the most recent being Best Visual Artistic Award for Gulf Participation, in the World Art Dubai 2024 exhibition.



**What does the theme 'A letter amid others' convey?**

'A Letter Amid Others' is an artistic exploration of the interplay between letters and words, celebrating the beauty of Arabic calligraphy. Each letter, whether standing alone or interacting with others, embodies elegance and movement.

**How many artworks are on display and what is the medium used?**

This exhibition features 55 paintings and artworks, including various letter formations and calligraphic pieces that incorporate Quranic verses, hadiths, wisdom, authentic Arabic poetry, as well as abstract lettering. The artworks are created on wood-stretched canvas and paper, utilising a diverse range of acrylic paints and inks.

**Is this your first solo exhibition in Oman?**

This marks my second solo exhibition - the first was held in 2002 at the Omani Society for Fine Arts, showcasing square Kufic script in digital format. It was one of its kind in the sultanate and the region.

**What is the message of this exhibition?**

This exhibition represents the culmination of my four-decade-long journey in Arabic calligraphy. Throughout these years, I have honed my skills in both traditional and contemporary styles, exploring abstract art through workshops in the sultanate and abroad, gaining insights from various artistic traditions. The exhibition will run until November 28.

**Why were you drawn to calligraphy - does it have an element of spirituality?**

I began learning Arabic calligraphy in the 1980s as a student of several esteemed calligraphers and instructors outside the sultanate. Arabic Calligraphy was established from the day the Holy Quran was taken up to be written. Calligraphers in the Arab world started to develop various styles of calligraphy to copy the Holy Quran in the best possible manner. In this journey calligraphy was always attached to spirituality and a high level of virtues due to its direct connection with the faith.

**Have you picked up any skills from your calligraphy teachers?**

To learn any skills, you need to be attentive to your master and be patient to learn - nothing comes easily. That's exactly what I did.

**How different is digital calligraphy?**

Calligraphy, as an art, was always done by hand. However, in the early 1990s when technology offered the ability to transform it into a digital format, artists started to utilise it to form new ways to explore this art in a digital way. I was one of the early calligraphers who explored this art in the digital format.





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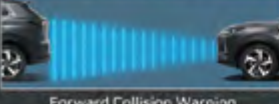
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PO Box 2616, Ruwi 112, Muscat,  
Sultanate of Oman  
Tel: +968 24799388.  
Toll Free No. 80076000

EDITORIAL  
Mohammad Najmuz Zafar  
Tel: +968 24799388  
Email: [muscatedaily@apexmedia.co.om](mailto:muscatedaily@apexmedia.co.om)

ADVERTISING  
Sajir CP  
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