

RO210mn surplus in Feb, revenues up 76%

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's total revenues stood at RO1.918bn by the end of February 2022, up by 75.6 per cent compared to the corresponding period of 2021.

The state's budget continued to achieve a financial surplus at the end of February 2022, amounting to about RO210mn, a far cry from RO457mn financial deficit reported in the same period a year ago.

The figures were unveiled in the Financial Economic Bulletin (FEB) issued by the Ministry of Finance (MoF), which attributed the surplus to a surge in oil price averaging US\$81 per barrel, as well as an increase in oil and gas production and revenues.

This is in addition to the fact that current revenues rose by 29.6 per cent by the end of February 2022 over the corresponding period of 2021 due to the revenues generated from the value-added tax (VAT) and other fees, according to FEB.

Public spending until the end of February 2022 was around RO1.707bn. This was driven



Oman oil climbs up to \$105.24

The price of Oman oil for June delivery at the Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME) went up by US\$3.21 to reach US\$105.24 per barrel on Tuesday.

It is worth noting that the monthly average price of Oman crude for April delivery was US\$91.96 per barrel, an increase of US\$8.34 compared to the price of March delivery.

The surplus was a result of the surge in oil price averaging US\$81 per barrel and an increase in oil and gas output

by a rise in the repayment of loan interests, total investment expenditures (development and capital) of civil ministries, and expenses of gas transport and procurement.

The government embarked on a public debt reduction programme targeting a RO19.46bn mark by the end of April 2022.

At the end of March 2022, MoF had repaid debt worth

RO1.49bn, including the repayment of RO850mn loan prior to its maturity. In addition, the ministry will be prepaying the RO1.365bn loan in April 2022. 'This comes in line with MoF's efforts to reduce public debt which is estimated to total RO19.46bn by the end of April 2022,' it stated.

As part of its liability management efforts, the ministry recently

settled a RO1.55bn loan facility agreement. The loan was obtained through a group of 26 local, regional and international financial institutions. 'The loan was oversubscribed by more than 150 per cent with a significantly tightened-pricing inside the Oman curve, reflecting the market's validation of Oman's fiscal reform initiatives and active liability management.'

Preparations for rail project begin

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As part of its efforts to revitalise the economic movement and achieve Oman Vision 2040, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning (MoHUP) announced its plan to begin compensating the citizens affected by the railway project construction in Buraimi governorate.

The ministry issued a notice for property owners affected by the railway project in the wilayats of Buraimi governorate on Tuesday. 'The citizens whose properties are affected, should

review it and bring the original passport and title deed of the property to the ministry during the official working days.'

Sohar-Buraimi railway line project was among the first to be announced in 2014, when Oman Railway Company launched a pre-qualification tender for the implementation of 207km-long Sohar-Buraimi project, which is the first segment of Oman's national rail network.

The project is set to establish new industries and services that contribute in the growth of the country's gross domestic product and create job opportunities.

Over 17,000 apply for 2,216 jobs in two days

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As many as 17,604 jobseekers have registered for the Sahim initiative launched by the Ministry of Labour (MoL) on Sunday, offering 2,216 jobs.

A statement issued by the ministry said that 17,604 jobseekers (7,043 male and 10,561 females) registered for the Sahim initiative in less than 48 hours.

The highest numbers of jobseekers had registered from North Batinah governorate

(3,326), followed by Muscat (2,695), Dakhiliyah (2,438), Dhofar (1,675), North Sharqiyah (1,552), South Sharqiyah (1,431), Dhahirah (1,200), Buraimi (748), Al Wusta (391) and 391 from Musandam.

MoL confirmed that 96 people with disabilities had also registered in the initiative.

On Sunday, the Ministry had launched Sahim with an aim to provide 2,216 job opportunities under the temporary contract work system in government agencies in various governorates.

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Precautions necessary for Taraweeh prayers

Despite the ban, children under 12 are still attending Taraweeh prayers

Shaddad al Musalmey
Muscat

Following the resumption of special night prayers (Taraweeh) during Ramadan in mosques after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the Ministry of Awaqaf and Religious Affairs (MARA) issued a circular stating it had noticed that some worshippers did not adhere to the COVID-19 precautionary measures established by the Supreme Committee.

Also, despite the ban on children under 12 from entering mosques, there are still young kids attending Taraweeh prayers – the act which does not only put children in danger but also cause lack of tranquility during prayers, leaving worshippers concerned.

The ministry calls upon the worshippers in mosques to adhere to the decisions of the Supreme



(Muscat Daily)

Committee in order to achieve the public interest and to preserve the safety of citizens and residents on this blessed land,' MARA said in a statement.

According to the safety procedures announced, only those who have been vaccinated with

two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine and above the age of 12 are allowed to attend congregational prayers, including Taraweeh prayers. 'Worshippers must take preventive measures, such as wearing face masks, and observe physical distancing in closed

places, including mosques,' the statement said.

"The decision to ban kids in mosques was great but I have noticed they are still coming. Imagine you are in the middle of a prayer, and all of the sudden you hear kids laughing, crying or

making noise. One can't stop thinking about how irritating that is and makes it difficult to focus on the prayers," Hamoud al Dhohli, one of many worshippers in Amerat, said.

Like Dhohli, Mohammed al Badi, a Seeb resident, said that

many mosques do not offer tranquility as children who accompany their parents for prayers end up talking, laughing and sometimes teasing each other.

"I would rather drive to another locality daily to look for tranquility during Taraweeh,

leaving behind the mosque near my home. I do not blame the children but the parents. Moreover, we are still in the pandemic and lack of adhering to COVID-19 precautionary measures during Taraweeh prayers is a cause of concern for all including children," Badi said.

In Muscat, most mosques have no security staff to keep guard. "There is a need of strict enforcement of the rules to ensure that worshippers are safe and also not disturbed by noises and unwanted behaviour of children. Authorities need to keep a tab on how mosques are managed, otherwise things will run without keeping in mind the pandemic and its consequences," Hassan al Naamani, a worshiper from Muscat, said.

In Ramadan, Muslims enter into a period of discipline and worship by fasting during the day, and praying throughout the day and night. Taraweeh prayer can be as long as over an hour, during which one stands upright to read from the Q'uran and perform many cycles of movement (standing, bowing, prostrating, sitting). And in order to get the most out of it, tranquility is much needed.

Draw to fund setting up of Middle East's largest green park in Oman

Muscat - An Omani enterprise has come up with a unique green initiative that will see setting up of the Middle East's largest green park. The project will be funded by a scheme where people can purchase a green certificate for RO2.5. The certificate will entitle them to a free entry for a draw which can win them prizes up to RO5mn.

Launched by Millionaire Investment on March 30, the O! Millionaire initiative 'aims to transform lives, plant trees and make Oman a happier place'.

To promote Oman as a natural sanctuary, the initiative will see the creation of an Oasis Park on an area of 18 sqkm at the start and will host hundreds of thousands of trees and dozens of species. 'It will use 'air to water' technology which is the process of converting water vapour in the air to water. Air to water system can be powered by a variety of energy sources including solar with varying output capacities. The first phase of the park will reach maturity within seven years of launch,' the company stated.

'The full planned Oasis Park (1,200 sqkm) will contribute to CO₂ reduction by 1,440,000



The 1,200 sqkm Oasis Park, which will host hundreds of thousands of different species of trees, will contribute to CO₂ reduction by 1,440,000 tonnes

tonnes approximately and will see a reduction of the total annual emission by around 2.4 per cent.'

O! Millionaire will conduct a nation-wide draw offering a lucrative opportunity for locals, ex-

pats and participants from other countries.

A spokesperson for Millionaire Investment said, "Oasis Park is Oman's answer to the global call for a sustainable future. This is the right project at the right time. Following the launch of O! Millionaire, project Oasis Park will take off earnestly. Food security has been at the heart of Oman's agricultural policy since a long time and the country has developed strategic planning to maintain its place as one of the most food secure nations."

"Once the tree planting programme goes live, the Oasis Park will be declared open."

Speaking of the weekly draw

he said, "O! Millionaire has weekly prizes to motivate the green certificates buyers and owners. There will be a raffle draw held every Thursday where one person can win RO10,000 every week. The winner is picked by an RNG system that will randomly select one green certificate number. In addition, in O! Millionaire's big draw, the draw machine will select seven numbers from 1 to 44. This will have five winning categories: If the participant matches seven out of the seven numbers they will win the grand prize of RO5mn, if they match six out of the seven numbers they will win RO50,000, five out of the seven numbers wins them RO500, four out of the seven will win RO50 and if they match three out of the seven numbers they will win RO10."

While being a sustainable space for people to connect with nature and their community, the park will be a hub for health conscious visitors, with running and cycling paths, mechanical gym, and play parks for children. It will have an innovation centre for food security solutions creating job opportunities and providing hope for the future of Oman.

Real estate brokers urged to obtain e-licences

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning (MoHUP) issued a statement on Tuesday requesting real estate brokers to activate e-licences in order to carryout brokerage work online without facing legal hurdles.

A statement issued by

MoHUP, said, "Through this circular, we call upon all real estate brokerage companies in the Governorate of Muscat to adjust their legal conditions by registering and getting the required e-licence to practice business."

'The ministry will stop all transactions of real estate brokerage companies that have not received the e-licence,' it stated.

MoHUP confirmed that it monitored several violations where people were working in real estate brokerage via social media without an e-licence.

The ministry urges workers in the real estate sector to obtain the e-licences to avoid any legal action being taken against them.

For more information contact MoHUP on 24693529.

3 expats arrested for smuggling drugs

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Royal Oman Police (ROP) arrested three expats on Tuesday for smuggling large quantities of drugs into Oman

A statement issued by the ROP, said, 'Musandam Governorate Police Command has arrested three people of Asian nationality after they entered the country illegally by sea, in possession of more than 5,700 tablets of psychotropic substances, in addition to a quantity of hashish and heroin.'

'Legal procedures have been taken against them,' it stated.

ROP exempts private companies from expat visa renewal fines

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As part of its efforts to support the private sector, the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) on Tuesday appealed to the Royal Oman Police (ROP) to exempt the private sector institutions from fines imposed for the late renewal of expat workers' residence cards.

ROP took note of the call by OCCI and announced that exemption will be granted from Wednesday April 6.

In a statement ROP, said, 'In implementation of His Majesty's Royal directives, establishments and individuals will be exempted from paying fines for delayed renewal of residence cards effective from April 6, provided that



the current situation is rectified before September 1.'

On Tuesday morning, the board of directors of OCCI branch in Dhahirah governorate held its second meeting for the year headed by Saif bin Said al Badi, member of OCCI board of directors and head of OCCI branch in Dhahirah governorate, and in the presence of members of the branch's board.

Badi, said, "The board of directors values the Royal directives to reduce visa fee for

expatriate employees. It will improve the business environment and the growth of its institutions and will reflect positively on the national economy."

"The board members also appeal ROP to exempt private sector establishments from fines imposed for late renewal of residence cards of expatriate workers in order to facilitate business owners and support economic activity," said Badi.

The meeting also discussed holding a workshop on value-added tax (VAT). The workshop aims to familiarise business owners with the technical, organisational and legal aspects of VAT.

The meeting also approved to hold a seminar to support the quality of private education in Dhahirah governorate.



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*Rates as on April 05

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

76% Dubai firms record growth during Expo 2020

Around 76.5 per cent of companies in Dubai registered growth in their businesses during Expo 2020, while 73.5 per cent managed to build new business relations, according to a report commissioned by Dubai Chamber of Commerce.

In terms of services provided by Dubai Chamber during the event, 70.6 per cent of respondents to the survey conducted as part of the report said they benefited from networking, 47 per cent benefited from the Global Business Forum series and 47 per cent benefited from B2B meetings. In total, Dubai Chamber of Commerce organised 98 events during Expo 2020 Dubai, which were attended by more than 25,000 participants.

Hydrogen Rise to build green hydrogen project in Sohar

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Hydrogen Rise, a Germany-based company specialising in clean hydrogen technologies, will develop, build and operate a green hydrogen facility at Sohar to supply green hydrogen to Jindal Shadeed Iron & Steel's steel manufacturing facility.

Jindal Shadeed, Hydrogen Rise and Sohar Port and Freezone (SOHAR) have signed an agreement to evaluate the development of this first green hydrogen plant at Sohar, which will decarbonize the steel production process at Jindal Shadeed's steel manufacturing plant, according to a press statement issued by SOHAR on Tuesday.

Together, the partners will assess the potential to produce steel in a completely sustainable manner to reduce emissions, lower the Jindal Shadeed complex's carbon footprint and preserve gas reserves for other applications across the country.

After conducting techno-economic feasibility studies, the first phase of the project will include the operation of a 35MW electrolyser capacity by mid-2024, paired with a solar renewable energy plant. Following this first phase, an upscaling path to a po-



tential 350MW electrolysis capacity will be evaluated, the statement said.

The production of green steel has the potential to provide a huge boost to Oman's industries and economy as the global demand for decarbonized steel products is expected to increase significantly in coming years.

Jindal Shadeed's expertise in steel production can see the company become an early pioneer in utilising innovative decarbonisation technologies and in substituting natural gas with green hydrogen in the steel man-

ufacturing process to become a major producer in the fast-developing global market for green steel.

Olav Carlsen, CEO of Hydrogen Rise, Oman, said, "We are excited to work with Jindal Shadeed and SOHAR to evaluate the development of a step-wise scalable and bankable project for a very innovative decarbonization process - from a starting electrolysis size of 35MW to a step-by-step ten-fold scaling of 350MW. This approach, plus the very cost competitive renewable energy production in Oman and

the commitment to decarbonisation processes here in the country will give all partners a significant competitive edge in the developing global market for green steel."

"It is no doubt a step in the right direction as we look at ways to decarbonise industries in Oman and their dependency on gas. If successful, this mechanism can be rolled out to industrial zones across the country and around the world," he added.

Sanjay Anand, chief operating officer and head of Jindal Shadeed Iron & Steel in Oman,

said, "The range of products that are possible to be produced using this method has the potential to transform the steel industry in Oman. At Jindal Shadeed, we are very proud to adopt an environment-friendly approach to steel making and have some of the world's lowest carbon intensity footprints. With this, we open new markets to us and reassure all customers that our products are not only of the highest quality but also made sustainably with the health of the community in mind."

Sohar Port and Freezone CEO Mark Geilenkirchen said, "SOHAR is ideally-positioned to become a major exporter of green steel across the world and lead the way in facilitating the production, transportation and utilisation of clean hydrogen. This agreement is the first major step towards developing a viable alternative to gas, which will promote sustainable practices for all industries operating within SOHAR and attract new businesses to our clusters. We look forward to working with Jindal Shadeed and Hydrogen Rise on this project and to break new ground in the transition towards renewable sources of energy."

CBO issues RO88mn treasury bills

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A tender of the government treasury bills (issue number 557) was issued by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) this week.

Total value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO88mn, for a maturity period of 91 days, from April 6, 2022 until July 6, 2022.

The average accepted price reached RO99.827 for every RO100 bill, while the minimum accepted price arrived at RO99.820. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 0.6955 per cent and 0.6967 per cent, respectively.

The interest rate on the repo operations with the CBO is 0.75 per cent while the discount rate on the treasury bills discounting facility with the central bank is 1.25 per cent.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman acts as the issue manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (repo).

Iran's oil output back to 2018 level

Tehran, Iran - Iran's oil production capacity has returned to the same level as prior to the reimposition of sanctions in 2018, when the US unilaterally withdrew from a nuclear deal, a top official said.

"Oil production has reached pre-sanctions figures, despite economic pressures," said Mohsen Khojastehmehr, CEO of the National Iranian Oil Company

(NIOC), quoted by state news agency IRNA on Sunday. Iran is currently engaged in negotiations to restore the 2015 nuclear deal that would grant it much-needed sanctions relief, restoring Iranian oil exports, in return for major curbs on its nuclear programme.

The US, under then president Donald Trump, unilaterally withdrew from the deal in 2018 and

reimposed stringent sanctions, prompting Iran to begin rolling back on its commitments under the deal the following year.

Output has been restored to the pre-sanctions level of 3.8mn barrels per day (bpd), Khojastehmehr said, after it had sharply declined following the reimposition of sanctions.

AFP

Green Energy Oman selects Worley to support 25GW mega project

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Worley - a global provider of professional project and asset services in the energy, chemicals, and resources sectors - has been contracted by Green Energy Oman (GEO), an international consortium, to support its proposed 25GW green fuels mega project in Oman.

According to a press statement issued by the company, Worley is providing concept feasibility study services to develop and challenge GEO's defined green hydrogen energy project. The project includes optimizing around 25GW of wind and solar generation, transforming this renewable energy through electrolysis into green hydrogen, as well as the production, storage, and export of green ammonia.

The GEO project consortium



comprises OQ - Oman's global integrated energy company, InterContinental Energy (ICE) - the leading dedicated green fuels developer, and EnerTech - a Kuwait government-backed clean energy investor and developer. The international consortium on Monday announced further progress on the development of the GEO integrated green fuels

mega project.

In addition to defining the project components, the study by Worley will identify opportunities to enhance in-country value (ICV) delivered from the expected 10-year project implementation period. This includes employment and development for Omani nationals and value adds through local manufacturing and supply by Omani companies across the supply chain.

The GEO project sets out to produce over 1.8mn tonnes of low-carbon green hydrogen, which can produce up to 10mn tonnes of green ammonia per annum, supporting the local economy and global market by exporting green ammonia to help other countries decarbonise.

Worley will lead work from its Muscat office with support from its Centers of Excellence in Europe, the company said in its

statement.

"Hydrogen has the potential to decarbonize hard-to-abate sectors. This project means Oman can use its renewable energy potential to produce green hydrogen and green ammonia for itself and for export. It also supports our purpose of delivering a more sustainable world," said Hans Dieter Hermes, vice president of clean hydrogen at Worley.

Najla Zuhair al Jamali, CEO Alternative Energy at OQ, said, "The GEO team, together with our technical specialists, are at the vanguard of mega-scale green fuels project development. The work being undertaken will place Oman at the forefront of such projects, maximising the utilisation of Oman's natural resources of wind and solar to produce green fuels, and build the country's associated industry."

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Oil prices extend rally as Europe considers more Russia sanctions

London, UK - Oil prices jumped further Tuesday as the European Union considered further sanctions against major crude producer Russia in response to killings in the Ukrainian town of Bucha that have prompted international condemnation.

Elsewhere, European and Asian stock markets diverged and the dollar dipped versus major rivals.

Oil rising again "is bad news for corporates looking to manage cost pressures, and for consumers already struggling to stomach higher energy bills", noted Russ Mould, investment director at AJ Bell.

While countries in Europe - particularly Germany - rely heavily on energy from Russia, the possibility of an oil embargo sent

both main crude contracts sharply higher Monday.

Brent North Sea crude rose more than 1.5 per cent to hit US\$109.15 per barrel on Tuesday, while Western Texas Intermediate (WTI) gained 1.7 per cent at US\$104.98 per barrel.

That pared some of the sharp losses seen Friday in reaction to a pledge by Washington and other major economies to unleash millions of barrels from their stockpiles to keep a lid on prices, which are fanning already high inflation.

The EU is considering hitting Russia with sanctions on oil or coal, a top official said Tuesday, after dozens of bodies were found on the streets in Bucha, northwest of Kyiv, though some countries remain worried of the potential economic fallout.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky blames Russian troops for the killings, but the Kremlin has denied responsibility. White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan signalled more US sanctions were on the way this week.

The continued uncertainty caused by the war in Ukraine, and blow to the global economy it is expected to deal, was unable to prevent another healthy performance Monday on Wall Street.

AFP

EU considering coal, oil sanctions against Russia

Luxembourg, Luxembourg – The European Union is considering to hit Russia with sanctions on oil or coal over the war in Ukraine, a top official said on Tuesday, though some countries remain worried of the potential economic fallout.

The European Union and US are currently preparing more sanctions against Russia after allegations that Russian forces carried out war crimes when dozens of bodies were discovered near Kiev.

The Europeans are under pressure to hit Moscow in the crucial energy sector and stop paying out the huge proceeds from gas, oil and coal that are helping Russia pay for the war.

"I don't want to preview but indeed there are discussions on what can be done in an area of energy like coal and oil," said EU executive vice president Valdis Dombrovskis as he arrived for EU minister talks in Luxembourg.

"Discussions about this are ongoing. As far as the European Commission is concerned, it's



This Handout photo made available by Greenpeace shows one of their activists holding an anti-war placard as they float in the water in front of the supertanker Pertamina Prime off the coast of Denmark on March 31, blocking the transshipment of a Russian oil shipment between two ships (AFP)

definitely an option, he added.

The European Commission in Brussels draws up sanction decisions but adoption requires unanimity across the 27 member states.

So far countries deeply dependent on Russia for energy – such as Germany, Austria and Italy – have resisted expanding

the measures to gas or oil and have fought off pleas to do so from Poland and the Baltic states, as well as the United States.

Germany on Monday said gas was still off limits for now, given its continued importance to the European economy, while on Tuesday Austria indicated

that coal imports could be an option.

"We will discuss (the question of coal) today," said Austrian Finance Minister Magnus Brunner. "We must always be careful with the sanctions and calmly consider what effects it has for ourselves," he added.

AFP

Amazon signs on launch partners for space Internet

Colorado Springs, US – Amazon on Tuesday announced deals for scores of launches to deploy a "constellation" of satellites in low orbit around the Earth to provide internet service to people below.

Amazon said that its contracts with Arianespace, Blue Origin and United Launch Alliance (ULA) are the largest commercial procurement of launch vehicles in history.

The overall cost and timing of launches booked to make Amazon's Project Kuiper a reality were not disclosed.

"Project Kuiper will provide fast, affordable broadband to tens of millions of customers in unserved and underserved communities around the world."

US billionaire Elon Musk, head of the space company SpaceX, has already put more than 1,500 satellites into orbit to create a Starlink internet service network. Late last year Boeing entered the space internet race, getting US authorization for satellites that will provide internet services from above.

Project Kuiper aims to provide high-speed broadband internet service to households, schools, hospitals, businesses, disaster relief operations and others in places without reliable connectivity, according to Amazon. Amazon is developing Kuiper



in-house, and planned to take advantage of capabilities already present in its other divisions, such as logistics operations and AWS cloud computing arm.

Musk formed an alliance with Microsoft, which is Amazon's biggest rival in the cloud computing market, to use its Azure platform to provide his version of satellite-powered internet service.

With some of Amazon's launch contracts awarded to Blue Origin, one Bezos operation will be feeding business to another. Bezos has used some of his Amazon wealth to create and fund private space exploration enterprise Blue Origin.

"We're honored to support Amazon's ambitious mission to provide reliable, affordable broadband to unserved and underserved communities around the world," Blue Origin senior vice president Jarrett Jones said in a joint release.

It was Amazon's plan from the outset to enlist multiple rocket launch companies, according to Project Kuiper vice

president of technology Rajeev Badyal.

The approach reduces risk of launch delays slowing the project, and saves Amazon money with competitive pricing, according to Badyal.

"These large, heavy-lift rockets also mean we can deploy more of our constellation with fewer launches, helping simplify our launch and deployment schedule," Badyal said.

The massive number of launch bookings was also expected to boost that industry in the US and Europe.

Badyal gave the example of Arianespace relying on suppliers from 13 European countries to produce its Ariane 6 rockets. Eighteen of the contracted launches will employ Ariane 6 rockets.

"This contract, the largest we've ever signed, is a great moment in Arianespace's history," Arianespace chief executive Stephane Israel said in the release. "It is a major win for the European launcher industry."

AFP

'Ukraine war to cause slowdown, not recession'

Luxembourg, Luxembourg – The European economy is set to suffer a sharp slowdown due to the war in Ukraine, but should avoid stumbling into recession, top EU officials said on Monday.

"Our current assessment is that the implications of the war in Ukraine will (bring)... a substantial slowdown of economic

growth in the EU but not a recession," EU executive vice president Valdis Dombrovskis told reporters as he arrived for talks with eurozone ministers.

In February, just before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the EU executive had forecast that the 19-nation eurozone would grow by a strong four per cent as a dy-

namic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic took hold.

The war in Ukraine – which has seen the cost of living skyrocket – will no doubt downgrade that forecast when new projections are released on May 16, officials said. "Of course there are risks, but there is also plenty of energy in our economies to keep

a reduced, very much reduced level of growth," said EU commissioner Paolo Gentiloni, who handles economic affairs.

The former Italian prime minister said that isolating Russia economically would have a cost for the EU, but that "we're ready to do this".

AFP

TENDERS ADVERTISEMENT

Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) Announce the following Tenders:

Sr.No	Tender No.	Tender Name	Last Date for Obtaining Tender Documents	Closing Date	Grade	Tender Document's Fees (Including VAT) (RO)
1	07/2022 (Extended)	Provision of printing services for 5 years	14/04/2022	17/05/2022	Local companies with experience in same field, Have a valid tender board registration certificate.	105.000
2	10/2022	Maintenance of On Load Tap Changer and supply of OLTC'S accessories for 3 years	21/04/2022	17/05/2022	Local companies with experience in same field, Have a valid tender board registration certificate.	315.000

Participation:	Interested Companies May Obtain Tender Document with the Necessity Apply on E-tendering
Buying the Tender:	By using E-Tendering System.
Fees:	Against non-refundable payment as mentioned above against each set of document. (Payment Through Bank Transfer)
The deadline for clarification:	Before (21) Days from closing date.
Submission:	The submission of hard copy will be only for Bid Bond & other documents by E-Tendering
Terms and conditions:	- No other writing or any reference thereto should be mentioned on the envelope. - The bid should be valid for not less than (90) days from closing date. - The Tenderer should enclose a bank guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of 1% of the bid value and should be valid for (90) days from closing date, addressed to Oman Electricity Transmission Company (SAOC). - Any bid not comply with the required guarantee, will not be accepted. - OETC is not bound to accept the lowest or any other offers.
Offer:	The bid bond should be submitted in Tender Box No. (1) at the company's building before 11:00 am on the assigned date for submission of the Tenders.
Company Address:	Muscat - Al Mawaleh Road No: 2153 - Building No. 423 O Block No: 321 - Contact Details: 93201558-99105413
Email Website:	tenders@omangrid.com www.omangrid.com / link of E-Tendering System https://www.omangrid.com/en/Pages/Services.aspx



Oman Electricity Transmission Company S.A.O.C.
P.O. Box 1389, Al Khoudh, PC 132, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: +968 2428 3000 | Fax: +968 2230 9046
www.omangrid.com



إعلان طرح مناقصات

تعلن الشركة العُمانية لنقل الكهرباء عن طرح المناقصات التالية :

م	رقم المناقصة	عنوان المناقصة	آخر موعد للحصول على مستندات المناقصة	آخر موعد لتقديم العطاءات	الدرجة	لمن الوثيقة (شامل ضريبة القيمة المضافة) (دع)
١	٢٠٢٢/٠٧ (تمديد)	توفير خدمة طباعة لمدة 5 سنوات	٢٠٢٢/٠٤/١٤	٢٠٢٢/٠٥/١٧	الشركات المحلية العاملة في هذا المجال والمسجلة لدى مجلس المناقصات وتسجيلها ساري المفعول .	١٠٥.٠٠٠
٢	٢٠٢٢/١٠	صيانة مغير مستويات الجهد الألي وتوريد ملحقاته لمدة 3 سنوات	٢٠٢٢/٠٤/٢١	٢٠٢٢/٠٥/١٧	الشركات المحلية العاملة في هذا المجال والمسجلة لدى مجلس المناقصات وتسجيلها ساري المفعول .	٣١٥.٠٠٠

الاشتراك	يمكن للشركات والمؤسسات المتخصصة الحصول على مستندات المناقصة بعد تقديم الطلب عن طريق نظام المناقص الإلكتروني
طريقة الشراء	من خلال استخدام نظام المناقص الإلكتروني
الرسم	مقابل دفع المبلغ المحدد أعلاه للنسخة الواحدة . لا ترد . (الدفع عن طريق التحويل البنكي)
آخر موعد للإستفسارات	قبل (٢١) يوم من تاريخ آخر موعد لتقديم العطاءات
تقديم العروض	يتم تسليم النسخة الأصلية فقط من الضمان البنكي للعطاء في الصندوق . أما العرض فيتم تسليمه من خلال نظام المناقص الإلكتروني
الشروط و الضمانات	• عدم تحديد اسم صاحب العطاء أو ما يشير إليه على المظروف. • أن تكون العروض سارية المفعول لمدة لا تقل عن (٩٠) يوماً من تاريخ تقديم العطاء . • إرفاق تأميناً في صورة ضمان مصرفي من أحد البنوك العاملة في البلاد قدره (٪١) من قيمة العطاء ساري لمدة (٩٠) يوماً من تاريخ تقديم العطاء . ومعنوناً بإسم الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء . • كل عطاء لا يستوفي التأمين المطلوب لن ينظر فيه . • الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء غير مقيدة بقبول أقل العروض أو أي عطاء آخر.
العرض المقدم	يجب وضع الضمان البنكي للعطاء فقط في صندوق المناقصات رقم (١) بمبنى الشركة قبل الساعة ١١ صباحاً من التاريخ المحدد لتقديم العطاءات
عنوان الشركة	عنوان الشركة: محافظة مسقط - الموالج رقم السكينة ٢١٥٣ ، مبنى رقم ٤٢٣ - تفاصيل التواصل: ٩٩١٠٥٤١٣٩٣٢٠١٥٥٨
البريد الإلكتروني	tenders@omangrid.com
الموقع الإلكتروني	www.omangrid.com https://www.omangrid.com/en/Pages/Services.aspx



الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء ش . م . ع . م
ص . ب : ١٣٨٩ ، القوس الرمز البريدي : ١٣٢ ، سلطنة عمان
الهاتف : +٩٦٨٢٤٢٨٣٠٠٠ / الفاكس : +٩٦٨٢٢٣٠٩٠٤٦
الموقع الإلكتروني : www.omangrid.com



Dhofar Automotive launches Ramadan offers

Dhofar Automotive Company, the official distributor of Jeep, Dodge, Chrysler, RAM, Fiat and Alfa Romeo vehicles in the Sultanate of Oman, announced the launch of its Ramadan offers. These include incredible benefits on a range of distinctive models from Jeep, Dodge and RAM brands.

The offers, which last until May 30, comprise up to 5 years /120,000km free service on select models, a 5-year warranty, 5-year roadside assistance, free registration and several value additions, a press release said.

The Ramadan offer is available on a distinguished range of Jeep models that include the all-new Jeep Grand Cherokee with three rows of seats, which is available with a monthly instalment starting from RO292, in addition to a free service of 5 years/10,000km, free registration and insurance for the first year, and 5-year roadside assistance.

The Jeep Wrangler (4-door) is available with a monthly instalment starting from RO225



with 3 years/60,000km service, five years of warranty and roadside assistance, in addition to free registration for the first year. The offer also includes the

Jeep Wrangler (2-door) with a monthly instalment starting from RO196, free service of 3 years/60,000km, 5 years roadside assistance and warranty, in

addition to free registration for the first year. Starting from RO243, the Jeep Gladiator can be availed with free service for 3 years/60,000km, warranty and

roadside assistance for 5 years, and free registration for the first year. The Ramadan offer also includes the renowned Dodge

Challenger with a monthly instalment of RO188 per month and the Dodge Charger with a monthly instalment starting from RO156 per month.

Any customer who purchases the select Dodge models during the offer period will receive a free service with 3 years/60,000km, free registration for the first year, 5 years warranty and 5 years roadside assistance. The Ramadan offers presented by Dhofar Automotive include the RAM 1500 double-cab models, available starting from RO265, alongside 5 years/100,000km of free service and warranty, free registration for the first year, and 5 years roadside assistance.

During the offer period, the Italian Brand Fiat DolceVita models are available with a monthly instalment starting from RO99 with 5 years/120,000km warranty, 5 years roadside assistance, and free registration.

The Alfa Romeo Stelvio is offered at very attractive prices starting from RO25,980, with 5

years/120,000km warranty and free service, in addition to, 5 years roadside assistance, and free registration.

Commenting on the launch of these attractive offers, Hatem el Naggar, general manager at Dhofar Automotive, said, "As part of the Ramadan offer, we have a wide range of models available to the public. Each of the included vehicles hosts distinctive and unmatched capabilities that make it a leader in its class.

These vehicles have also gained the popularity and trust of car enthusiasts due to the brand's strong performance and renowned capabilities.

Through this offer, our fans and customers can benefit from this opportunity to own one of the Jeep, Dodge, Chrysler, RAM, Fiat and Alfa Romeo vehicles in easy and affordable instalments, together with an exciting package of benefits and guaranteed cash gifts. In addition, it will also provide them with a pleasant driving experience and peace of mind for years to come."

Xodus project identifies US\$10mn cost saving in ME

Global energy consultancy Xodus has completed a major benchmarking emissions review for a leading Middle East oil operator's full asset portfolio, demonstrating significant emissions and cost savings.

The team identified more than 100 emissions reduction opportunities as a result of the site studies, representing a minimum 20% reduction in total CO2 equivalent. A third of the improvements can be easily implemented with low or no capital expenditure required. The complete reduction potential would deliver overall savings of US\$10 - US\$15mn per year, a press release said.

The six-month project reviewed scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, establishing the foundations for a sustainable reduction action plan. Scope 1 covers direct emissions at the production stage, Scope 2 covers indirect emissions from generation and scope 3 covers all other indirect emissions.

The Xodus team also reviewed national and international guidance, legislation and policy with existing internal processes, identifying best practices, peer benchmarking and recommen-



Natasha Howlett

dations for the development of an internal emissions and energy efficiency framework.

Natasha Howlett, emissions lead at Xodus, said, "The comprehensive review of greenhouse gas emissions gives our client a clear understanding of their emissions baseline along with a robust hopper of improvement opportunities and how best to prioritise these for implementation in order to decarbonise a portfolio of assets.

"This exercise has demonstrated this client's ambitions as a decarbonisation leader for the region. Oil and gas operators are looking to reduce emissions and ultimately achieve net zero. Benchmarking and opportunity identification are vital first steps."

'Matsyagandhi' tops Bhavalaya play contest

The drama 'Matsyagandhi' received the first prize in the Online Stage Play Contest organised in memory of late Girija Baquer by Bhavalaya Art & Culture Foundation, a prominent nonprofit, global platform for the promotion of art and culture.

The prizes were announced in a meeting held at the Oman Women's Association Hall in Qurum on March 31. The dramas 'Matsyagandhi', 'Chairs' and 'Pathimoonnam Manikoor' received the first, second and third prizes respectively, a press release said.

The Best Director Award went to Rajesh Kayamkulam (Matsyagandhi) while the Best Playwright Award went to Sreekumar Marath (Pathimoon-



nam Manikoor). Ranjith Damodaran (Chairs) and Sajitha Vijayakumar (Matsyagandhi) bagged the Best Actor and Best Actress prizes respectively.

Five versatile artist awards and two Nataka Pratibha awards were also announced on the occasion. Eminent expatriates from the cultural sphere in Oman,

such as Kabir Yousef, Anirban Ray, Azra Aleem, Sudha Raghunath were felicitated while Omani theatre artist Aliya al Balushi was also awarded on the

occasion. Padmanabhan Thalora and Keralan K P A C were honoured as 'Nataka Prathibha' for their comprehensive contribution to the field of theatre.

H E Amit Narang, Ambassador of India, was the chief guest of the function while Dr Humaid bin Saeed bin Rashid al Ameri, a renowned writer, film director, and president of Omani Society for Cinema and Theatre, and Maryam al Zadjali Omani Women's Association vice-chairperson, were the guest of honours.

Lakshmi Kothaneth, journalist and daughter of late Girija Baker participated as a special guest in the programme presided by Dr J Retnakumar, Bhavalaya founder and chairman.

NBO's Muzn offers discounts rates to cardholders

Continuing to make banking even more rewarding, Muzn, National Bank of Oman's (NBO) pioneering Islamic banking window, has added to its growing list of partnerships to offer cardholders discount rates at their favourite stores and retailers.

Simply by using their Muzn debit card to pay, customers can enjoy discounts with various brands and more than 50 mer-



Salima al Marzouqi

chants, including Oman Air Holidays, Advanced Dental Center,

One More Fitness, The Crepe Café, Salaam Space Yoga, Obaidani, Burjeel, and many more.

A full list of promotions and offers is available on the mobile app, making it easy for customers to stay informed and manage their finances wherever they are, a press release said.

Salima al Marzouqi, Chief Islamic Banking Officer, said, "At Muzn we aim to provide tailored

financial solutions with Shari'a at their core, both benefiting their lifestyles and giving them unparalleled peace of mind. By partnering with major brands, we are thanking our customers for being with us and making their banking experience all the more rewarding."

Muzn offers a range of fully Shari'a-compliant accounts including current, savings and privilege. With personalised service

that matches their values, account-holders can enjoy a range of perks including special offers at a variety of merchants from healthcare, skincare and dermatology, to gyms and wellness centres, airlines, beauty salons and spas, fashion outlets, restaurants and cafes, car accessories and repair outlets. Privilege banking customers also have access to over 90 airport lounges across the world.

Oman Forum 2022 focuses on innovation and sustainability

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, the 10th edition of Alam Al-Iktisaad Oman Forum facilitated a discussion and knowledge sharing on the sultanate's progress on promoting innovation, sustainable development and inclusive growth.

This was in line with building a diversified and competitive economy, and encouraging ESG adoption and creation of an empowered knowledge-based society, as per Oman Vision 2040 under the dynamic leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, a press release said.

In Oman Forum 2022, organised recently by United Media Services (UMS), H E Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, was the chief guest and keynote speaker. The Forum was also addressed



by Sayyid Hamed bin Sultan al Busaidy, CEO of Oman Center for Governance and Sustainability and Eng Abdul-Amir al Ajmi, External Affairs and Value Creation director, Petroleum Development Oman.

In a panel discussion, noted industry leaders, including Abdullah bin Saeed al Hakmani, general supervisor of the Techni-

cal Office for Programme Management, Follow-up Unit for the Implementation of Oman Vision 2040, Eng Khalil al Maawali, National Programme for Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Technologies, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, Dawood al Qassabi, New Business Development Manager, Petroleum De-

velopment Oman, Said al Rashdi, CEO, Oman Manufacturers Association; Ali Hassan Moosa, CEO, Oman Banks Association, and Othman al Mandhari, Founder and CEO, InnoTech, discussed Oman's progress on the path of transitioning to an innovation, technology and knowledge based society and economy. The panel discussion

was moderated by Khalfan al Rahbi, Editor-in-chief of Alam Al-Iktisaad.

In a fireside chat, Sayyid Hamed bin Sultan al Busaidy and Majeda al Mamari, senior head of ESG and Diversity and Inclusion, Muscat Stock Exchange, discussed on Corporate ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) adoption to build future

resilience. Saif al Rawahi, AGM - Investment and Government Banking, Bank Nizwa, Maha bint Mohammed al Balushi, executive director - Al Wadi Accelerator, Oman Technology Fund, Abdulrahman al Hejji, CEO, Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Development, and Moosa al Lawati, People and Culture lead, eMushrif, also presented case

studies at the Forum.

Sustainability Leadership Awards, co-located at Oman Forum, honoured the private sector companies, public sector organisations and non-profit organisations with extraordinary accomplishments in areas of social, economic and environmental sustainability.

The Public Service Sustainability Institution of the Year Award went to Oman Centre for Governance and Sustainability. Petroleum Development Oman got two awards including the Overall Sustainability Leadership Award and the Leadership in Job Creation.

The Sustainability Leadership in Clean Energy Award was won by Shams Ad-Dhahira Generating Company. Ahlibank got the Leadership in Youth Development Award. The Sustainability Leadership in ICT went to Omantel.



Nissan X-Terra presents season's unique offers

Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), is offering a wide range of deals for the patrons of Nissan X-Terra, the vehicle especially designed for adventure and the outdoors.

A spokesperson for Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), said, "The X-Terra is a catalyst for new experiences, allowing owners to connect with the people in their lives. The vehicle delivers a robust four-wheel drive system, including a four-wheel lock, brake limited slip differential and electronic locking rear differential - while leading the class in interior room and comfort. This is a good time for po-

tential buyers to check out the Nissan X-Terra which is available with valuable benefits."

The offer, which is available on models purchased for personal use, will go on till May 19, a press release said.

As part of the special scheme, Nissan Oman is offering free periodic vehicle service package, free insurance, assured gift voucher, free registration for Nissan X-Terra buyers. Vehicles purchased with commercial registration will not be eligible for the scheme. Vehicles bought for taxi, driving school, ministries, fleet and rent-a-car usage will also not be eligible for this scheme.

Customers can avail low EMI

rate as part of the offer. Starting EMI for Nissan X-Terra is RO209. EMIs are calculated on the price of the base model with 20% down payment, 3.5 % rate of interest for 6 years loan tenure. Subject to credit approvals.

All customers purchasing Nissan X-Terra during this scheme period will be eligible for free periodic maintenance service package for three years /60,000km (whichever is earlier), limited to six services only. This offer includes only the service intervals of 10,000km.

All customers buying Nissan X-Terra during this scheme will be eligible for Value Added Service (VAS) gift vouchers up to

RO100. Vouchers can be redeemed for purchase of any consumables, value-added service products, services contracts and parts at SBA service centres.

Built on 70 years of unmatched Nissan SUV expertise, the Nissan X-Terra reflects the evolution of four-wheel adventure travel and a growing consumer desire for connection. It effortlessly combines impressive strength with bold new design and built-for-comfort roominess. Underlining this is breakthrough engineering and a suite of cutting-edge Nissan Intelligent Mobility (NIM) technologies to offer a superior driving experience and adventure-ready confidence for drivers to explore new places.

Milipol Qatar 2022 attracts major international players

Homeland security is rising up national agendas and is reflected in the global line-up for Milipol Qatar 2022, the Middle East's leading international event for homeland security and civil defence, which returns to the Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC) from May 24-26.

The show organisers - Qatar's Ministry of Interior, in partnership with Paris-based international event organiser Comexposium, acting on behalf of the GIE Milipol headed by Civipol - have reported that 63% of this year's exhibitor line up hail from 11 nations across Europe, the Middle East, and North America with over a third of the exhibitors - 39% - being event newcomers.

The event will host six international industry national pavilions representing France which is expected to be the largest housing over 20 companies, North



America, Germany, Italy, the UK and for the first time Austria, a press release said.

Some of the industry's biggest names feature in the line-up, including French military and armed vehicles manufacturer Arquus, and the French identity related security technology provider IDEMIA, the UK's communications technology provider Motorola Solutions, from Turkey

the armoured combat vehicle supplier Nurol Makina and Ares Shipyard, which manufactures naval craft, patrol boats and utility support vessels, and Belgian threat management and anti-terror leader Pitagone.

Qatar heavyweights will also be out in force including the leading global defense and security investment group Barzan Holdings.

ISWK opens Sports Academy

Indian School Wadi Kabir inaugurated a Sports Academy on the primary school ground on March 29.

The inaugurations took place in the presence of Manoj Srikant Ranade, the chief guest for the inaugural function. Those present included Anil Khimji, Kiran Asher, members of the Education Cell and well-wishers of the school, besides Alkesh Joshi, honorary president of the School Managing Committee of ISWK, Gargi Chugh, honorary president of the SMC, ISWK International, D N Rao, principal of ISWK, Sanjay Tiwari, principal of ISWK In-



ternational and other distinguished members of the SMC.

Under the supervision of its highly experienced and trained PE Department teachers, the specialised Sports Academy will

offer 17 types of games and sports at a very nominal charge for all sports enthusiasts. ISWK believes sports is an integral part of an individual, with a prominent role in overall development.

Bank Muscat's Al Jawhar offers cash earnings for referrals

Bank Muscat has launched the Al Jawhar referral scheme, which will be open to Privilege Banking customers till December 31. The scheme gives Al Jawhar customers a chance to earn up to RO5,000 by referring their friends and family members to join the Privilege Banking services.

Speaking on the occasion Amjad Iqbal al Lawati, deputy general manager - Customer Segments, said, "Bank Muscat is delighted to once again launch the Al Jawhar referral scheme with guaranteed rewards for the benefit of all existing Al Jawhar customers who can now earn an incentive of RO50 for every successful referral, up to a maximum of 100 referrals. All new referrals who successfully open and maintain their Al Jawhar account will also win RO50 each. This makes the scheme a win-win proposition for existing cus-



tomers as well as their family and friends and we welcome all eligible customers to try it out."

All that needs to be done is to download and fill the form given in the link below with both the customer's and referee's details and then email it to AlJawhar-Campaign@bankmuscat.com. The scheme is open to all existing customers of Bank Muscat Al Jawhar Privilege Banking who successfully refer new Al Jawhar

salary accounts for their friends and family. The incentives will be credited on a quarterly basis into the accounts of both referrer and the referee on successful completion of a three-month eligibility period, a press release said.

Designed to elevate Privilege Banking, Al Jawhar opens a world of opportunities with a number of services and facilities that makes the banking experience truly rewarding.

Better World Fund hosts series of events

The Better World Fund, a Paris-based Endowment Fund using arts and cinema to raise awareness about pressing global issues, conducted a successful series of events across Dubai from March 25-26, highlighting ocean conservation and the blue economy.

As part of the Oceans Fortnight that took place at Expo 2020 Dubai, the Better World Fund hosted a Mastermind and Academia on March 25. Boasting a strong line up of speakers the event brought together activists, academics and industry experts to discuss the pressing issue of conserving the planet's oceans and bringing to the fore innovation and solutions, a press release said.

One of the key highlights within the diverse programme of events, included the screening of the powerful film Bigger Than Us by director Flore Vasseur at Infinity des Lumieres at Dubai Mall on March 26. The film was fol-



lowed by an insightful Q&A session with the film's director.

The film, which was also in the official selection of Cannes Film Festival 2021, has received global

acclaim and encapsulates the fight of Melati Wijsen, the 18-year-old protagonist of the movie who decides to go around the globe to meet her peers,

young activists just like her, who already have managed to have a huge impact in their fields, thanks to their conviction and determination.

BESTUNE brand launches special Ramadan offers

Gulf Great Sands (GGS) has recently launched BESTUNE, a popular automotive global brand, in Oman, a press release said.

Bestune is owned by the Chinese automaker FAW Group which is ranked 66 among global fortune 500 companies. Bestune is positioned as a mid-to-high-end brand in the mainstream automobile market.

GGS is part of the Bahwan International Group Company (BIG), which is a reputed distributor of many international automotive brands in Oman.

FAW Group produces and distributes passenger cars, commercial trucks and buses, Estab-



lished in 1953, the company is China's oldest and largest automotive company.

A spokesperson for GGS said, "We are pleased to launch our first time Ramadan offer for

Bestune vehicles produced by FAW Group, a respected name in the automobile industry. Cus-

tomers will be able to experience the dynamic design, sporty character mixed with absolute ele-

gance, high quality, high performance from Bestune vehicles which will be at par with some

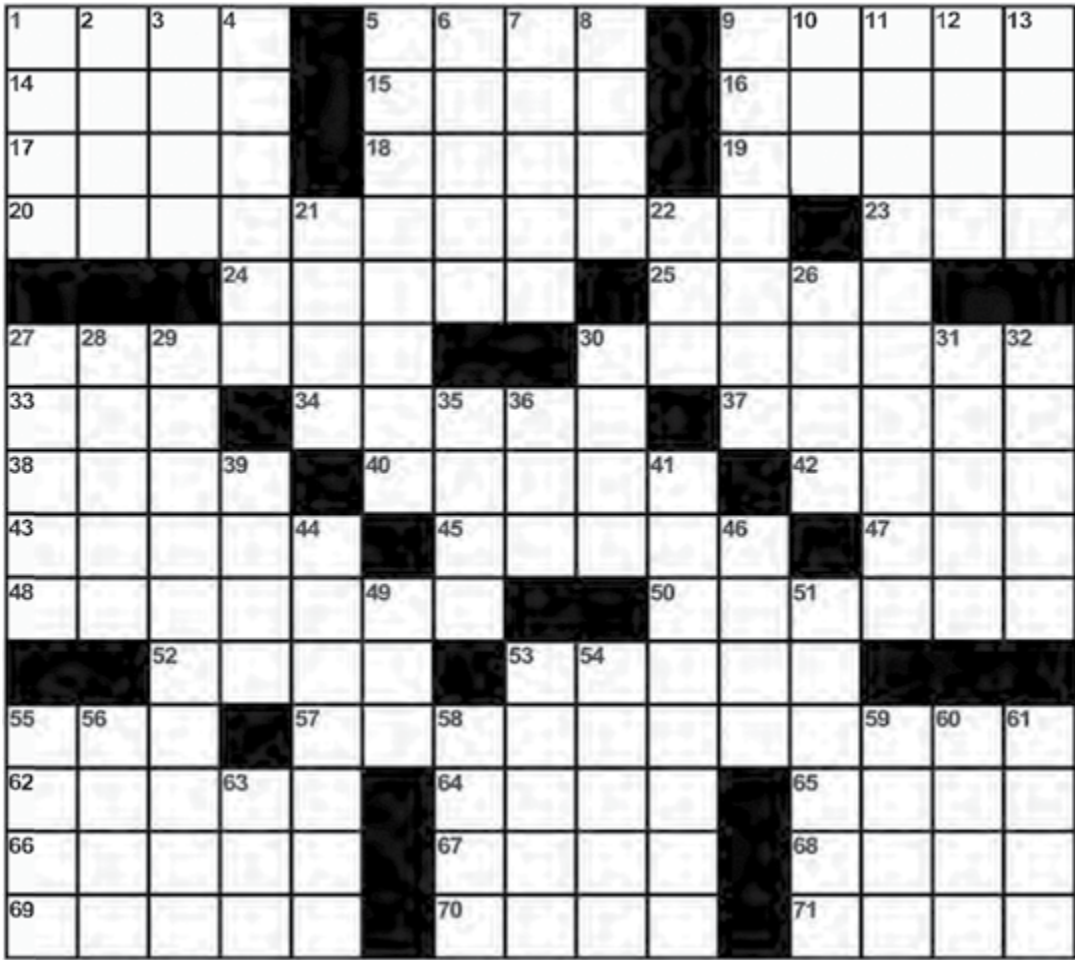
luxury end cars which has cutting edge technologies and radar-based features.

We are certain that auto enthusiasts in Oman will find the premium models very impressive.

To begin, models, including compact crossover Bestune T77, mid-size crossover Bestune T99, and mid-size sedan Bestune B70 will be available in Oman."

All retail customers purchasing Bestune vehicles from GGS between March 20 and May 19 will be eligible for free registration, free insurance (Oman and UAE), assured free service package, and free gifts.

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1) Word with “-A-Rama”

5) Parting words

9) Errand runner

14) Common cosmetics ingredient

15) Prefix for “dynamic”

16) Caterpillar, initially

17) Turkish currency

18) Car wash supply

19) Had a home-cooked meal

20) Wild fights

23) Forest denizen

24) Breakfast staple

25) “_ I care!”

27) Do more origami work

30) Visible blight

33) Geller with the spoons

34) Bear that’s not really a bear

37) Indication of police action

38) Fail to see

40) Flounder in water

42) Easy dupes

43) Group of eight

45) Place for a barbecue

4 7) Romanian currency

48) Parents and some poker players

50) Car front

52) “Big Brother” host

53) Very pale

55) Brain of a PC

57) Feature of a disorderly fight

62) Certain shooting iron

64) Aquarium growth

65) Doing nothing

66) Like Santa’s workers

67) Department store section

68) Exciting star

69) Some bridge seats

70) Young winged god of the Greeks

71) Happy and appreciative

8) “Eh”

9) Spectacles

10) Horse’s nibble

11) Wild melee

12) There is no good in it

13) Captain or general, e.g.

21) Egg part

22) Mary_ cosmetics

26) Egyptian goddess

27) Bit of gossip

28) Longtime “All My Children” character

29) Brawl ingredients

30) Point to the right?

31) Drive away

32) Follow, as a consequence

35) High mountains

36) Hawaii’s Mauna_

39) Window frame

41) Elaborate Catholic ritual

44) Intensifies

46) Black-and-white cookie

49) Biochemistry abbr.

51) What six outs constitute

53) Freud contemporary

54) Music-score sign

55) Ship workers

56) Carpet feature

58) Everyone has one

59) Heroic person, to

some

60) Edible seaweed

61) Honey-based drink

63) On, as a candle

NOTE PAD

MOLDS SCOPE DAM
IDEAL AARON ALE
LETYOURSELF NOT
GAINAT OCCUR
REFRAIN TORPEDO
ERRANT TOMCAT
TROYTS AERIE HUM
ROME TRACT BETA
ORT PARCH MATIN
HOOKAH PALACE
CREATES RETINAS
HAWKS VENT
ADO HAVEANOTHER
SIR VOID CHOKE
MOD TELLS KEYED

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

 **ARIES** MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You woke up this morning feeling like your old self again: impetuous, impulsive, and assertive. How should you celebrate? How about reconnecting with your friends? Expect to be tortured just a bit for your absence, but not for long. They’ve missed you, and they’ll be delighted to have you back as long as you’re prepared to make up for lost time by staying up late tonight.

 **LEO** JULY 23-AUGUST 22

After working and tending to the needs of others, you’re in the mood to let loose and have some serious fun. Of course, your reputation for knowing exactly how to do that precedes you no matter where you go, so you definitely won’t be short of company. Deciding which charming offer to accept and which charming companion to take for the ride could be a problem, but pardon us if we don’t shed too many tears for you.

 **SAGITTARIUS** NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER21

Synergy is extremely important today, and synergy requires more than one element or idea. So you’d be wise to get involved in groups and mix it up. Make an effort to consult other people about the decisions you’re facing. Toss some ideas back and forth. The more opinions you get, the better the outcome will be. You are already more powerful than ever, but by being part of a group you can be even more powerful.

 **TAURUS** APRIL 20-MAY 20

Some problems aren’t really problems at all. It depends on how you look at them. For instance, you could get yourself into a bit of trouble if you’re not careful now if you’re attracted to someone who’s not quite available. Of course, this is the kind of trouble that could be fun. The flirting, the glances, the not so subtle comments. Just don’t act on that attraction until you’re both free.

 **VIRGO** AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Something that you thought was vital to your happiness is leaving your life, but that doesn’t mean you’re in for some blue times. All it means is that you’re in for a transition, and it will be a lot more pleasant than you fear, especially since you have a very friendly person in your life who will be happy to help you through it! Why not make it fun to learn how to get along without something (or someone) you thought was so important.

 **CAPRICORN** DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Don’t underestimate the amount of time you need to spend on preparation today. In the coming days, being too prepared will be much better than being insufficiently prepared. So practice a bit more, do a bit more research, and get yourself so ready for upcoming responsibilities that they become second nature. The less separation you have between your mind, your words, and your actions the better.

 **GEMINI** MAY 21-JUNE 21

You know how you’ve had the weird feeling that something big is coming? You might be right. Your current gang is about to ask, no, beg, that you become more involved in a project that’s near and dear to all your hearts. Does this mean it won’t be fun or that you’ll be bogged down with things like organization and paperwork? Nope. You’ve always been the idea person. That’s why they asked you on board. Take charge and delegate a lot.

 **LIBRA** SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

If you’ve been itching to buy something that’s a bit out of your price range, consider going in on it with someone else. Together, you two will have more buying power, and you’ll be able to get what you really want. Of course, this financial collaboration will also require some negotiation and cooperation. Don’t just pick someone who has the money. Pick someone who knows how to share.

 **AQUARIUS** JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

One of the groups you keep company with, the one that happens to be the most assertive and unafraid of taking risks, is about to invite you to spend some time with them. Rest assured that it will involve doing something you’ve never done before. How can you refuse? Kindred spirits, a new adventure, and refusing to worry about staying up too late. It just doesn’t get any better than that. Think of the stories you’ll be able to tell!

 **CANCER** JUNE 22-JULY 22

Your mental health depends on your physical health right now, so make sure you’re active today. When your blood is pumping and you’re releasing endorphins, your mind starts to see things in a much more positive light. Diet is also an important consideration. Avoid foods that make you feel bogged down, and try not to eat on the go. Eating junk food in your car could lead to a grouchy mood this afternoon.

 **SCORPIO** OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Romance might have to start taking a back seat in your life for a while, and not because you won’t have anyone interested in getting romantic with you (and vice versa). Rather, it’s just that you have some more important things to deal with. Taking care of business will help you clear your mind and give you the necessary energy to open up your heart to someone else. Taking a break from wooing or being wooed will refresh you.

 **PISCES** FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

It is now officially time to get over yourself. Stop dwelling on the past. It’s gone and won’t be back. Put some distance between you and whatever makes you even the slightest bit unhappy. Let go and let the universe take the wheel. Who knows where you’ll end up? Regardless of where that happens to be, it’s got to be better than sitting in front of the television all day.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. In the printing industry what is a proofreader asked to do?

A. Correct a text’s errors in typography, grammar, spelling, punctuation, syntax and formatting

B. Check a text for errors in grammar etc, consistency, continuity and fact, and for legal issues

C. Canvass a text with focus groups

D. Ensure that what is stated in a text is proven within the text

2. In the various Conventions for SOLAS, in 1914, 1929, 1948, 1960 and 1974, what does the second “S” stand for?

A. Sports

B. Sea

C. Societies

D. Science

3. What was the first event to be competed in the modern Olympic Games?

A. Weightlifting

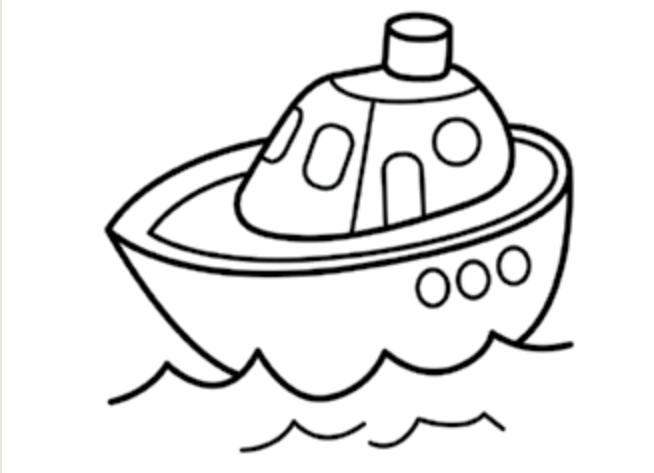
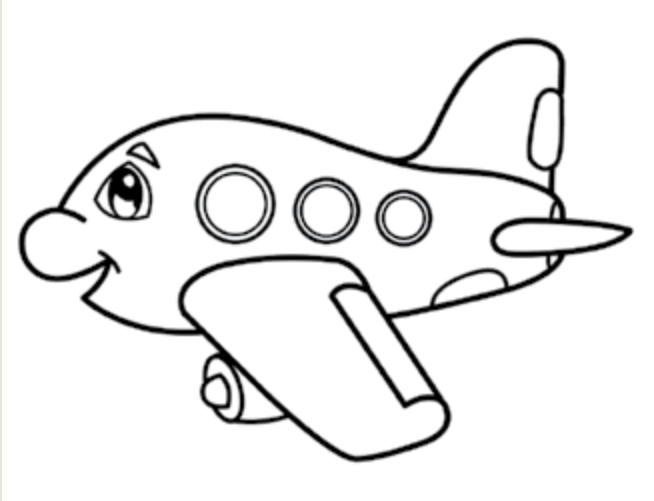
B. Discus

C. 100m qualifying heat

D. Fencing

Answers: 1.A 2.B 3.C

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

D	O	N	K
D	E	U	I
S	D	E	C
C	E	L	A

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

Zelensky seeks response to ‘war crimes’

Kyiv, Ukraine - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky will on Tuesday address the UN Security Council, seeking tougher measures against Moscow over alleged killings of civilians, as his country braces for further Russian bombardments in the east and south.

The speech, Zelensky’s first to the body since Russia’s invasion, comes after he made an emotional trip to Bucha, where dozens of bodies were discovered after the withdrawal of Russian troops.

US President Joe Biden has called for a ‘war crimes trial’ over the alleged atrocities and Western officials have vowed new economic sanctions this week in response to the harrowing discoveries in Bucha and other towns near Kyiv.

Zelensky has denounced ‘war crimes’ and attempted ‘genocide’ while appealing for new sanctions, and more Western defence aid, saying they could have helped save innocent lives.

It was not clear if his speech to the UN Security Council, to be delivered on the 41st day of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, would be pre-recorded or live.

Europe’s worst conflict in decades has killed as many as

20,000 people, according to Ukrainian estimates. It has seen more than 4.2mn flee the country and displaced another 6.5mn internally.

“The sanctions response to Russia’s massacre of civilians must finally be powerful,” Zelensky said in a Telegram video late on Monday after touring the devastated streets of Bucha.

“Did hundreds of our people have to die in agony for some European leaders to finally understand that the Russian state deserves the most severe pressure?” he asked.

‘In front of my eyes’

Moscow has denied responsibility and suggested that the images are fake or that the deaths occurred after Russian forces pulled out of the area.

One resident in Bucha, Olena, told AFP she saw Russian soldiers shoot a man in cold blood as units of ‘brutal’ older troops sowed fear in the town.

“Right in front of my eyes, they fired on a man who was going to get food at the supermarket,” said the 43-year-old, who did not wish to give her family name.

Denmark, Italy and Spain on Tuesday became the latest European nations to expel



President Volodymyr Zelensky (centre) walks in the town of Bucha, northwest of Kyiv on Monday (AFP)

dozens of Russian ‘intelligence officers’ registered as diplomats, with more than 150 sent home in 48 hours.

The Kremlin called the mass expulsions a ‘short-sighted move’ that would complicate negotiations aimed at finding a solution to the conflict.

EU Commission president Ur-

sula von der Leyen will travel to Kyiv this week alongside EU foreign policy chief Joseph Borrell, her spokesman said, after the bloc offered assistance in documenting potential atrocities against unarmed residents.

French prosecutors in Paris said they had opened three more probes into suspected war

crimes committed against French citizens in Ukraine.

NATO warns of Donbas push

Many in Ukraine are bracing for further Russian bombardments especially in the east and south, and air raid sirens rang out overnight across much of the

country.

“In the coming weeks, we expect a further Russian push in the eastern and southern Ukraine to try to take the entire Donbas and to create a land bridge to occupied Crimea,” NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said.

Biden told reporters on Monday that there should be ‘a war crimes trial’ for Russian President Vladimir Putin, vowing that Washington would join the EU in announcing new sanctions this week. The US Treasury announced on Tuesday that Russia will no longer be able to pay its foreign debt with dollars held in American banks, further squeezing its financial system.

European sanctions will ‘include oil and coal’, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said after talks with his German counterpart in Berlin.

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan has warned that the ‘next phase’ of Russia’s invasion, focusing on expanding territories it holds in the east and south, ‘could be measured in months or longer’.

The full nature of the killings in Bucha and other areas from which Russian troops have withdrawn is still being pieced together.

Ukrainian officials say over 400 civilian bodies have been recovered from the wider Kyiv region, many of whom have been buried in mass graves.

‘I buried six people’

But Zelensky has warned that the deaths in Bucha could be only the tip of the iceberg, saying he had information that even more people had been killed in places like nearby Borodianska.

AFP reporters who briefly visited the area saw no bodies in the streets, but locals reported many deaths. The scale of devastation in the town saw buildings flayed open.

“I know five civilians were killed,” said 58-year-old Rafik Azimov. “But we don’t know how many more are left in the basements of the ruined buildings after the bombardments. I buried six people,” another resident, Volodymyr Nahornyi, said. “More people are under the ruins.”

Ukraine has warned that Moscow is preparing a ‘full-scale’ attack in the country’s east and regional officials urged civilians to evacuate Lugansk fearing a major Russian attack.

AFP

Missing Darwin notebooks back in Cambridge library

London, UK - Two of Charles Darwin’s notebooks containing his pioneering ideas on evolution and his famous ‘Tree of Life’ sketch have been returned anonymously after going missing for 21 years, Cambridge University Library said on Tuesday.

The prized documents were left on the floor in a public area of the British university’s library in a pink gift bag, with a typed note wishing a Happy Easter to the librarian.

The manuscripts are in good condition and with no obvious signs of damage, the university said in a statement. The British scientist filled the leather notebooks in 1837 after returning from a voyage on the ship HMS Beagle. The library said they were worth millions of pounds.

In one book, Darwin drew a diagram showing several possibilities for the evolution of a species and later published a

more developed illustration in his 1859 book *On the Origin of Species*. “My sense of relief at the notebooks’ safe return is profound and almost impossible to adequately express,” said university librarian Jessica Gardner, who raised the alarm in 2020 that the notebooks were feared stolen.

“The sole aim of our public appeal was to have the manuscripts returned to our safe-keeping and I am delighted to have had such a successful outcome in such a relatively short space of time.”

Cambridge University Library first listed the notebooks as missing in 2001, after they were moved out of a strong room for special collections to be photographed. They were believed to have been incorrectly refilled elsewhere in the vast building, which contains around 10mn books, maps and manuscripts.

AFP

Tolstoy descendant hosts fleeing Ukrainians

Lens, Switzerland - Under the intense gaze of Russian literary giant Leo Tolstoy, his great-granddaughter listens with concern as Anastasia Sheludko describes the horrors she experienced before fleeing Ukraine.

The invasion of Ukraine by her ancestral homeland Russia nearly six weeks ago had come as a massive shock, Marta Albertini told AFP, adding that she immediately realised she needed to help refugees.

“It was instinctive,” said the 84-year-old, who is lending Sheludko and her mother an apartment in the small village of Lens, near the plush Swiss Alps ski resort of Crans-Montana.

Before they arrived, Albertini removed most of the family pictures that covered the wooden walls of the apartment, but a large painting of her great-grandfather hangs in the living room.

The author of celebrated novels *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* would have viewed the conflict raging in Ukraine with ‘horror’, she said.

Albertini, who last year pub-



Leo Tolstoy’s great-granddaughter Marta Albertini (right) speaks with Ukrainian refugee Anastasia Sheludko in Lens on March 31 (AFP)

lished a book about three generations of Tolstoy women - her great-grandmother, who gave the author 13 children, her grandmother and her mother - pointed out that he was a renowned pacifist. Tolstoy, who experienced the Crimean War and the siege of Sevastopol in the 1850s, would likely have been ‘completely devastated’ by what is happening, she said.

‘Against the horrors’

Albertini, who grew up in Italy

and France before making Switzerland her permanent home a few years ago, says she is among many Tolstoy descendants who signed a letter to Russian President Vladimir Putin saying the family opposed the war.

“We are against the horrors that are being perpetrated now, the invasion of an innocent country,” she said, acknowledging that Putin had quite possibly looked at all the signatures ‘and thrown them in the trash’.

But it was important to speak up, she said.

“Europe, the world, will not be the same after this war.”

For Sheludko, the world she knew just a few weeks ago has already evaporated.

“Sometimes I think I am dreaming,” she told AFP. “It is surreal.”

The 24-year-old arrived in the spectacular mountain landscape of Lens with her mother on March 13, more than a week after they fled their home in the southern Ukrainian city of Mykolaiv.

They are among more than 23,000 Ukrainians who have arrived in Switzerland, out of more than 4.2mn who have left the war-ravaged country since the February 24 invasion.

Albertini, who lives in a traditional chalet outside Lens, had purchased the apartment in the village a few years ago for family visits, and with an eye to moving there herself once she no longer feels safe driving.

Through word-of-mouth, a local man working to bring in several Ukrainian families got

in touch, and all was soon arranged.

Everything changed

Albertini was there when Sheludko and her mother arrived, along with another family that has since moved on.

That first meeting was ‘very, very emotional’, she said.

Now, more than two weeks later, Sheludko, wearing a grey sweatshirt and large-rimmed glasses, seems to have settled in, and is already attending university classes in the nearby town of Siere.

She had been studying to be a translator in Mykolaiv, but here, she has reverted back to a study path she left a few years ago.

“So now I am an aspiring IT specialist again,” she said with a laugh. But her smile fades as she recalls the moment when her ‘peaceful and normal life’ changed.

“Just one morning you wake up because your airport got bombed at 5am... and your life is never the same anymore.”

AFP

‘Now or never’ to avoid climate catastrophe, warns UN

Paris, France - Humanity has less than three years to halt the rise of planet-warming carbon emissions and less than a decade to slash them by nearly half, UN climate experts said on Monday, warning the world faced a last-gasp race to ensure a ‘liveable future’.

That daunting task is still - only just - possible, but current policies are leading the planet towards catastrophic temperature rises, the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) made clear.

The world’s nations, they said, are taking our future right to the wire.

The 2,800-page report - by far the most comprehensive assessment of how to halt global heating ever produced - documents ‘a litany of broken climate promises’, said UN chief Antonio Guterres in a blistering judgement of governments and industry.

“Some government and business leaders are saying one thing

- but doing another. Simply put, they are lying. And the results will be catastrophic,” Guterres said.

In recent months, the IPCC has published the first two instalments in a trilogy of mammoth scientific assessments covering how greenhouse gas emissions are heating the planet and what that means for life on Earth.

This third report outlines what we can do about it.

“We are at a crossroads,” said IPCC chief Hoesung Lee. “The decisions we make now can secure a liveable future. We have the tools and know-how required to limit warming.”

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said these tools ‘are firmly within our grasp’. “Nations of the world must be brave enough to use them.”

The solutions touch on virtually all aspects of modern life, require significant investment and need ‘immediate action’, the IPCC said.

The very first item on the



An aerial view of vehicles driving near downtown in Los Angeles, California on Monday (AFP)

global to-do list is to stop greenhouse gas emissions from rising any further.

That must be done before 2025 to have a hope of keeping within even the Paris Agreement’s less ambitious warming target of two degrees Celsius

above preindustrial levels.

Barely 1.1C of warming so far has ushered in a surge of deadly extreme weather across the globe.

The report makes clear that investments to cut emissions will be far less expensive than the

cost of failing to limit warming.

Scientists warn that any rise above 1.5C risks the collapse of ecosystems and the triggering of irreversible shifts in the climate system.

To achieve that target, the report said carbon emissions need

to drop 43 per cent by 2030 and 84 per cent by mid-century.

“It’s now or never, if we want to limit global warming to 1.5C,” said Jim Skea, a professor at Imperial College London and co-chair of the working group behind the report.

“Without immediate and deep emissions reductions across all sectors, it will be impossible,” he said.

Slashing coal, oil, gas

To do that the world must radically reduce the fossil fuels behind the lion’s share of emissions.

Nations should stop burning coal completely and cut oil and gas use by 60 and 70 per cent respectively to keep within the Paris goals, the IPCC said, noting that both solar and wind were now cheaper than fossil fuels in many places.

But cutting emissions is no longer enough, the IPCC said. Technologies to suck CO2 out of the atmosphere - not yet operating to scale - will need to be

ramped up enormously.

While government policies, investments and regulations will propel emissions cuts, the IPCC made clear that individuals can also make a big difference.

Cutting back on long-haul flights, switching to plant-based diets, climate-proofing buildings and other ways of cutting the consumption that drives energy demand could reduce greenhouse gas emissions 40 to 70 per cent by 2050.

Those with the most, also pollute the most, the report said.

Households whose income is in the top 10 per cent globally - two thirds of whom are in developed countries - emit up to 45 per cent of carbon pollution.

“Individuals with high socioeconomic status contribute disproportionately to emissions and have the highest potential for emissions reductions - as citizens, investors, consumers, role models and professionals,” the IPCC said.

AFP

Sri Lanka president loses parliament majority as street protests mount

Colombo, Sri Lanka - Sri Lanka's president lost his parliamentary majority on Tuesday as former allies urged his resignation, following days of street protests over the island nation's crippling economic crisis.

Severe shortages of food, fuel and other essentials - along with record inflation and crippling power cuts - have inflicted widespread misery in the country's most painful downturn since independence from Britain in 1948.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's once-powerful ruling coalition is in turmoil after a string of defections, capped on Tuesday by the new finance minister's resignation just one day after taking office.

Public anger is at a fever pitch, with crowds attempting to storm the homes of several government figures since the weekend and large demonstrations elsewhere.

"If we don't act now, there will be a river of blood in the country," said Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe, a newly independent lawmaker who broke ranks with the president's party and joined calls for the leader to step down. "We have to forget party politics and ensure an interim government."

Tuesday's parliamentary session was the first since dozens of MPs withdrew their support for Rajapaksa's government, including 16 lawmakers from the president's own Sri Lanka Podujana



Army prepare to patrol the streets to contain protests over a worsening economic crisis in Colombo on Tuesday (AFP)

Party (SLPP).

The government is now five short of a majority in the 225-member house, but there has been no clear signal that legislators will attempt a no-confidence motion that would compel it to resign.

Opposition parties have already rebuffed Rajapaksa's call to join a unity administration helmed by him and his elder brother, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Their government imposed a state of emergency last week in

an effort to quell rising street protests, but the ordinance is set to expire next week unless ratified by parliament.

Rejecting calls for a vote on the emergency decree, the government cut short Tuesday's parliamentary session more than two hours before its scheduled finish.

Nimal Lanza, a former minister who has also abandoned Rajapaksa's administration, conceded that the ruling party no longer had a mandate to govern and threw his support behind the

crowds calling for the president's resignation.

"I beg and appeal to you to take the side of the protesters," he told parliament, addressing the prime minister, who attended the session but remained silent.

Every member of Sri Lanka's cabinet except the president and prime minister resigned late on Sunday.

Former justice minister Ali Sabry was appointed to helm the finance ministry on Monday, replacing the president's brother Basil Rajapaksa, but abruptly re-

signed after just one day in office.

"Whilst I regret the inconvenience caused, I believe I have always acted in the best interests of the country," Sabry said in a statement.

The ministry's top civil servant also resigned on Tuesday, a day after the central bank governor quit.

'Cry of the people'

Boisterous demonstrations have spread across the country of 22mn despite the emergency laws allowing troops to detain

participants and a weekend curfew that lapsed on Monday morning.

Crowds have attempted to storm the homes of more than a dozen government figures, including the president's house in Colombo.

Protesters there torched the vehicles of security forces, who responded by firing rubber bullets and tear gas.

Most demonstrations have been peaceful, with Catholic clergy and nuns led by Sri Lanka's Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith leading a procession in the capital.

"This is a valuable country with intelligent people. But our intelligence, the people's intelligence, has been insulted by corruption," Ranjith said.

"Therefore now we call out... please now listen to the cry of the people and step down."

A critical lack of foreign currency has left Sri Lanka struggling to service its ballooning US\$51bn foreign debt, with the pandemic torpedoing vital revenue from tourism sector and remittances.

The result has seen unprecedented shortages with no sign of an end to the economic woes.

Economists say Sri Lanka's crisis has been exacerbated by government mismanagement, years of accumulated borrowing and ill-advised tax cuts.

AFP

Kuwait's Cabinet resigns

Kuwait City, Kuwait - Kuwait's government resigned on Tuesday, three months after it was sworn in, state media reported, amid escalating disputes with parliament.

The Gulf emirate's prime minister, Sabah Khaled Al-Sabah, submitted the Cabinet's resignation to Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, the official KUNA news agency said.

The move comes a day ahead of a parliamentary vote on a letter of non-cooperation, which 10 lawmakers submitted against the premier after he had been accused of committing 'unconstitutional' practices, including corruption.

Oil-rich Kuwait has been shaken by disputes between lawmakers and successive governments dominated by the ruling Al-Sabah family for more than a decade, with parliaments and Cabinets dissolved several times. Kuwait is the only Gulf Arab state with a fully elected parliament, which enjoys wide legislative powers and can vote ministers out of office.

In February, the country's interior and defence ministers resigned in protest over the manner of parliamentary questioning of other ministers. Parliament had questioned Foreign Minister Sheikh Ahmed Nasser al-Mohammed al-Sabah - also part of the royal family - over corruption claims and alleged misuse of public funds. Sheikh Ahmed survived a no-confidence vote on February 16, but Defence Minister Sheikh Hamad Jaber al-Ali al-Sabah said the lengthy grilling was an 'abuse' of power. "Interrogations are a constitutional right... but parliamentary practices are hindering us from fulfilling the aspirations of the Kuwaiti people," he was quoted as saying at the time by Kuwaiti media.

The country's last government was sworn in December, the fourth in two years, after the previous one resigned in November amid political deadlock.

AFP

Pak court adjourns again on PM's no-confidence saga

Islamabad, Pakistan - Pakistan's supreme court adjourned on Tuesday without ruling on the legality of political manoeuvres that led Prime Minister Imran Khan to dissolve the national assembly and call fresh elections.

The court, which will resume on Wednesday, must decide if the deputy speaker of the assembly violated the constitution by refusing to allow a no-confidence vote against Khan at the weekend.

Had the vote taken place Khan was certain to have been booted from office, but the move allowed him to get the presidency - a largely ceremonial role held by a loyalist - to dissolve parliament and order an election, which must be held within 90 days.



Pakistan's opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif addresses the media outside the Supreme Court building in Islamabad on Tuesday (AFP)

President Arif Alvi upped the ante on Tuesday by issuing a letter to the opposition saying if they didn't nominate a candidate for interim prime minister, the

process would continue without them.

Shehbaz Sharif, who would have replaced Khan had Sunday's vote taken place, said he

wouldn't participate.

"The main issue is that the constitution has been abrogated," he told reporters outside the court.

"If we don't get a remedy then Pakistan will, God forbid, become a banana republic."

Khan has already nominated former chief justice Gulzar Ahmad for the role.

Pakistan has been wracked by political crises for much of its 75-year existence, and no prime minister has ever seen out a full term.

There had been high hopes for Khan when he was elected in 2018 on a promise of sweeping away decades of entrenched corruption and cronyism, but he has struggled to maintain support with soaring inflation, a feeble

rupee and crippling debt.

'Foreign interference'

The opposition had expected to take power on Sunday after mustering enough support to oust him, but the deputy speaker refused to allow the vote to proceed because of alleged 'foreign interference'.

Khan said the opposition had gone too far by colluding with the United States for 'regime change'. The cricket star-turned-politician says Western powers want him removed because he won't stand with them against Russia and China, and the issue is sure to ignite any forthcoming election. Washington has denied any interference.

It is unclear when the court

will rule on the issue - or if Khan would even accept its decision - but there is precedent.

In 1988, Muhammad Khan Junejo appealed to the court after the assembly was dissolved by then-president General Zia-ul-Haq, who had taken power in a military coup years earlier.

It agreed his government had been dissolved unconstitutionally, but ruled that since elections had been announced anyway it was best to move on. In 1993, the court ruled president Ghulam Ishaq Khan had also illegally dissolved the assembly - then with Nawaz Sharif as prime minister.

Although the government resumed business, it lasted less than two months before being dissolved again.

AFP

Detained Palestinian lawyer sues NSO group

Jerusalem - Palestinian lawyer Salah Hamouri, who is in Israeli detention, filed a complaint in France on Tuesday against surveillance firm NSO Group for having 'illegally infiltrated' his mobile phone with the spyware Pegasus.

Salah Hamouri, who also holds French citizenship, is serving a four-month term of administrative detention ordered by an Israeli military court in March on the claim he is a 'threat to security'.

He is one of several Palestinian activists whose phones were hacked using the Pegasus malware made by the Israeli company NSO, according to a report in November by human rights groups.

AFP

Peru president imposes curfew in Lima, Callao after protests

Lima, Peru - Peruvian President Pedro Castillo announced a curfew for Tuesday in the capital Lima and neighbouring port city Callao, after demonstrations across the country over fuel prices caused roadblocks and 'acts of violence'.

Protests had erupted across Peru in recent days due to a hike in fuel prices and tolls, during a time of rising food prices.

In an attempt to appease protesters, the government eliminated the fuel tax over the weekend.

But truckers and other transport workers took to the streets again on Monday in Lima, as well as several regions in the north - from the coastal city Piura to the densely forested Amazonas.

Castillo announced late on Monday that Peru's Council of Ministers had approved a curfew for the following day.

"In view of the acts of violence that some groups have wanted to create... and in order to



Riot police confront demonstrators during clashes in Ate, a district east of Lima, on Monday (AFP)

reestablish peace... the Council of Ministers has approved the declaration of citizen immobility (curfew) from 2am to 11:59pm on Tuesday, April 5," he said in a televised message.

There have been several vio-

lent incidents during recent protests, including the burning of toll booths on highways, looting and clashes with police.

Protesters had also set fire to tires and blocked the Pan-American highway, the country's most

important transport and traffic artery snaking north to south, and school was suspended.

"I call for calm and serenity," the leftist president said during his brief appearance on television. "Social protest is a constitu-

tional right, but it must be done within the law."

'Lack of direction'

The 52-year-old former teacher announced the curfew a week after he was saved from being impeached by Congress, where opponents accused his administration of having a 'lack of direction' and for allegedly allowing corruption in his entourage.

The impeachment attempt last week was the second during Castillo's eight-month administration in a country with a recent history of ousting presidents.

Castillo's action to impose movement restrictions - which will cover more than 10mn residents in Lima and Callao - was met with immediate repudiation.

"A curfew to reestablish order - (this is) an authoritarian measure of Pedro Castillo's government that shows ineptitude, incapacity to govern," political analyst Luis Benavente told AFP.

"It is like putting an end to

traffic accidents by taking vehicles off the roads."

Tuesday's curfew measures coincide with the 30th anniversary of a coup staged by ex-president Alberto Fujimori, a controversial figure now jailed after a regime marked by a bloody campaign against insurgents. "The measure dictated by President Pedro Castillo is openly unconstitutional, disproportionate and violates people's right to individual freedom," tweeted lawyer Carlos Rivera, one of the defenders of the victims of Fujimori's government.

Like much of the rest of the world, Peru's economy is still recovering from the damages wrought by the coronavirus pandemic.

The country's Consumer Price Index in March saw its highest monthly increase in 26 years, driven by soaring food, transport and education prices, according to the national statistics institute.

AFP

Yemen warring parties trade charges of ceasefire agreement violations

Dubai, UAE - Yemen's warring parties on Tuesday traded accusations of violating a ceasefire agreement, three days after it went into effect at the start of Ramadan.

The internationally recognised government, supported by a Saudi-led military coalition, and the Iran-backed Houthi rebels have been locked in a violent power struggle since 2014, when the insurgents seized the capital Sanaa.

But a two-month truce that started on Saturday - the first day of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan - has offered a glimmer of hope in the conflict considered the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Yemen's foreign minister, Ahmed bin Mubarak, in a Twitter post accused the Houthis of ceasefire violations.

"The truce has been greatly welcomed, but it is threatened by Houthi's breaches including military deployments, mobilisation of troops & vehicles, artillery and drone strikes," he wrote in English, without providing details.

While the insurgents did not directly respond to the claims, their media channels also reported alleged 'breaches', but by pro-government troops, on Sunday and Monday.

Since 2016, the coalition back-



Forces loyal to Yemen's Houthi rebels take part in a military parade marking the seventh anniversary of the Saudi-led coalition's intervention in their country, in the capital Sanaa, on March 31 (AFP)

ing the government has enforced an air and sea blockade on Yemen, with exemptions for aid flights, accusing Tehran of smuggling weapons to the rebels. Iran denies the charge.

'Pivotal' moment

The US special envoy for

Yemen, Tim Lenderking, told Bloomberg TV on Monday all sides to the conflict had compromised and showed flexibility, with nobody getting 'entirely what they want'.

"I think this is a really pivotal moment for Yemen, and I think what it does is it gives the Yeme-

nis a break from seven years of conflict," he added.

Under the latest ceasefire agreement brokered by the UN, all ground, air and naval military operations, including cross-border attacks, are meant to cease.

In addition, 18 fuel ships are to be allowed into Hodeida port, a

lifeline for Yemen, and two commercial flights a week are allowed into and out of the rebel-held Sanaa airport.

The truce announcement came as discussions on Yemen's devastating conflict were being held in Saudi Arabia - in the absence of the insurgents, who re-

fused to hold talks on 'enemy' territory.

The civil war has killed hundreds of thousands, directly or indirectly, according to UN figures, and pushed the country to the brink of famine.

Yemeni President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi, in remarks on Monday in the Saudi capital Riyadh, called on the Houthis to return to the negotiating table in order to 'let us heal our torn homeland's wounds'.

But Yemenis remained cautiously optimistic, as a number of previous ceasefires had failed.

"If it does in fact hold, and there is good will from everyone, I think things may get better and safety and security will return to the country," Houssam Fathi, 24, a resident of Sanaa, told AFP.

A national truce ahead of peace talks in April 2016 was violated almost immediately, as were other ceasefires that year.

A 2018 agreement to cease hostilities around rebel-held Hodeida port was also largely ignored. In the western city of Hodeida, 45-year-old Abdulaziz, said he was still struggling to make a living as a delivery person amid inflation.

"I buy fuel from the black market at very high prices," he said, adding: "This truce seems impossible."

AFP

Australia landslide kills two tourists

Sydney, Australia - Australian police on Tuesday recovered the bodies of a British man and his nine-year-old son, killed when a rockslide hit their family while walking in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney.

The landslide struck the holidaying family of five on Monday, killing the 49-year-old father and his son and critically injuring the 50-year-old mother and another 14-year-old son, police said.

The injured mother and son, who were winched out of the scene at Wentworth Falls by helicopter, underwent surgery and remain in 'critical conditions', a police spokeswoman said.

Rescuers treated the couple's 15-year-old daughter for shock and transferred her to a Sydney children's hospital, where she remained under observation on Tuesday. She was being assisted by the British consulate and welfare services.

Blue Mountains police were investigating the landslide and a report would be prepared for the coroner on the two deaths, police said. The identity of the family has not been released.

Sydney has experienced heavy rains in recent weeks, with many suburbs in the city's west devastated by flash flooding and heavy storms.

AFP



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspecting the construction of a residential area in Qionglou-dong, Pyongyang City on Sunday (AFP)

North Korea nukes could 'eliminate' South: Kim's sister

Seoul, South Korea - North Korea will use its nuclear weapons to 'eliminate' South Korea's army in the event they launch a pre-emptive strike, the powerful sister of leader Kim Jong Un said on Tuesday.

Kim Yo Jong's warning, carried in state media, was her second angry retort in three days to comments made by South Korea's defence chief Suh Wook last week.

They come as North Korea has resumed its sanctions-breaking weapons tests with an unprecedented blitz this year, last month firing its first intercontinental ballistic missile at full range since 2017. Suh had said on Friday that South Korea's military had missiles with 'the ability to accurately and quickly hit any target in North Korea when there are clear signs of North's missile launch'.

In response, Kim Yo Jong said it was a 'very big mistake' for 'lunatic' Suh to have discussed a pre-emptive strike against a nuclear power, according to the report in KCNA.

"In case South Korea opts for military confrontation with us, our nuclear combat force will have to inevitably carry out its duty," said Kim Yo Jong, who is a key policy advisor in Pyongyang.

She said the 'primary mission' for her country's nuclear forces was to act as a deterrent, but if

an armed conflict were to break out, such weapons will be used for 'eliminating the enemy's armed forces at a strike'.

As a result of this 'dreadful attack', South Korean forces will face a 'miserable fate little short of total destruction and ruin', she said. "We do not regard (them) as (a) match for our armed forces," she said, referring to South Korea's military.

President-elect

Her latest comments follow an initial attack on Suh's 'reckless remarks' on Sunday, in which she warned the South should 'discipline itself if it wants to stave off disaster'.

But president-elect Yoon Suk-yeol's transition team said on Tuesday it was not ruling out a preemptive strike as a possible military option if necessary, a position earlier supported by Yoon himself during campaigning.

"Preemptive strikes are one of the actions that are accepted globally, including at the UN, as a viable option... when a preemptive threat persists," spokesperson Kim Eun-hye told reporters on Tuesday. North Korea had paused its long-range and nuclear tests when Kim Jong Un and then US president Donald Trump engaged in a high-profile bout of diplomacy that subsequently collapsed in 2019.

AFP

United States, Iran spar over stalled nuke talks

Washington, US - The United States and Iran blamed each other on Monday for a weeks-long impasse that has held up a return to the 2015 deal that sought to prevent Tehran from developing nuclear weapons.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said that the country's negotiators would not return to Vienna, the site of the year-long talks to restore the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), until Washington settles outstanding issues.

"We will not be going to Vienna for new negotiations but to finalise the nuclear agreement," Khatibzadeh told reporters in Tehran.

"If Washington answers the outstanding questions, we can go to Vienna as soon as possible," Khatibzadeh said, without explaining the specific questions that remained.

"At the moment, we do not yet have a definitive answer from Washington," he said.



US State Department spokesman Ned Price said it was Tehran that was not giving way to make a deal possible (AFP)

Push back

But in Washington, Khatibzadeh's State Department counterpart Ned Price pushed back, suggesting it was Tehran that was not giving way to make a deal possible.

And Price warned that time was running out, as Iran gets closer and closer to the nuclear 'breakout' point when it has achieved the capacity to con-

struct a nuclear weapon.

"Anyone involved in the talks knows precisely who has made constructive proposals, who has introduced demands that are unrelated to the JCPOA, and how we reached this current moment," Price said.

"We still believe there is an opportunity to overcome our remaining differences," Price said.

He said Iran's continuing nu-

clear development has put it within 'weeks' of breakout, which would nullify the benefits of a new agreement.

"Iran has been able to shrink that breakout time from where it started to a point where we can measure it in weeks rather than months. To us that is unacceptable as a long-term proposition," Price said.

Tehran has been engaged in long-running negotiations in the Austrian capital to revive the JCPOA, with Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia directly, and the United States indirectly. The JCPOA gave Iran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear programme to guarantee that Tehran could not develop or acquire an atomic bomb - something it has always denied wanting to do.

But the United States unilaterally withdrew from the accord in 2018 under then-president Donald Trump, who reimposed biting economic sanctions that prompted Iran to begin rolling

back its own commitments.

'Ill will'

Last year, newly elected President Joe Biden pledged to revive the JCPOA, blaming Trump for allowing Iran to drop its commitments to the agreement.

In the past month, the negotiations - in which US communicated with Iran indirectly through other participants and the European Union - have brought the parties close to an agreement.

But the talks halted last month. Among the key sticking points is Tehran's demand that Washington remove from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the ideological arm of Iran's military, from the official US list of terror groups.

US officials privately say that dropping the 'Foreign Terrorist Organisation' designation would have little real effect on the IRGC, because the group is under a long list of other sanctions that will not be lifted in any deal.

AFP

US apex court nominee closer to confirmation

Washington, US - US Supreme Court candidate Ketanji Brown Jackson stands on the threshold of making history this week as the first Black woman appointed to the nation's highest judicial bench after senators voted Monday to move her one step closer to confirmation.

Barring any unforeseen hiccups, President Joe Biden's pick to replace retiring Justice Stephen Breyer will break a 12-year drought for Democratic nominees being placed on the court.

Ketanji Jackson, 51, will also be only the third Black justice in its history, and Democrats - worried about Biden's low approval ratings - are keen for a headline-grabbing achievement to take into November's midterm elections.

"I've often thought that if you had to choose one place to stand



Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson looking on during a meeting with US Senator Tammy Baldwin on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC on March 28 (AFP)

and witness the march of America - the noble and ignoble struggles of our democracy - I would seek out a chair in this room," Senate Judiciary Committee chairman Dick Durbin said.

"Today's vote is such a mo-

ment. This committee's action today is nothing less than historic," he said.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell had pressed privately for his members to oppose Jackson, and at least 47 of

the 50 Republicans in the upper chamber look almost certain to reject her. The Kentucky senator appeared to be getting his way on Monday when the panel was split evenly with all 11 Democrats backing Jackson and all 11 Republicans opposed.

The deadlock made a further vote of the full Senate necessary to press ahead with the confirmation, and Jackson won that comfortably - setting her on an easy glide path to a definitive 'yes' from the full Senate on Thursday or Friday.

It was originally expected to be among the closest confirmation battles in history but one moderate Republican had already come out in support of Jackson and two more threw their lot in with the Florida native on Monday, all but guaranteeing her confirmation.

White House Chief of Staff

Ron Klain voiced frustration to ABC on Sunday that there was not more Republican support for the milestone appointment.

"What I know is she will get enough votes to get confirmed," he said. "In the end, I suppose, that's the only thing that matters," he added.

Republicans in Monday's committee hearing again attacked Jackson as too lenient in child pornography cases, despite her sentencing record being in the mainstream among federal judges.

Senator John Cornyn criticized Jackson's 'unwillingness to disclose her judicial philosophy', while his fellow Texas Republican Ted Cruz said she would prove 'the most extreme and the furthest-left justice ever to serve on the United States Supreme Court'.

AFP



MONO

HONG KONG-BASED VENEZUELAN CHEF, KNOWN FOR FRENCH CUISINE, GETS FIRST MICHELIN STAR FOR VENEZUELA



Venezuelan chef Ricardo Chaneton at his Michelin Star restaurant 'Mono' in Hong Kong

STAR VALUE



Arepas, tacos, and an old family recipe of chimichurri - Ricardo Chaneton's symphony of flavours familiar to Latin Americans has earned his Hong Kong restaurant a coveted Michelin star - the first awarded to a Venezuelan chef.

For Chaneton, who for so long was known for French cuisine, getting the star two years after his restaurant Mono's opening is a source of great pride - as well as a 'very nice weight' of responsibility.

"On that side of the world, everyone is watching us. The fact of being the first Venezuelan to have a Michelin star makes people put their eyes on you," the 34-year-old chef told AFP. "But I tell them not to worry because we are representing our continent and our countries in the best way we can."

Located in Hong Kong's upscale Central district, Mono has already received region-wide approval - in 2021, it was among Asia's 50 Best Restaurants, the

first such appearance for a Latin American joint.

It was initially billed as 'contemporary French' because of Chaneton's experience in Mirazur, the famed French Riviera restaurant, voted the world's best in 2019. But a month into Mono's opening, diners were already calling his restaurant Latin American, he said.

"That is what we wanted. That French element will always be there, but I was born in Venezuela - Colombian grandmother, Argentine grandfather - and that's how I put in my own flavour," the Caracas native said.

Different accents of spoken Spanish can be heard from Chaneton's open kitchen - his staff hail from Venezuela, Mexico, Guatemala and Brazil - and their dishes are a testament to the region's diverse tastes.

Hong Kong's dining woes

On Chaneton's menu is a French Racan pi-



I think the most beautiful thing about Mono is that it is a window in Asia to the refined Latin American gastronomy

RICARDO CHANETON

geon fused with chimichurri and jicama (a root vegetable common in South American cuisine) and a wild Brittany turbot fillet that gets its vivid yellow colour, thanks to annatto oil, popular in Latin and Asian dishes.

The sides are also reminiscent of street food familiar to Venezuelans or Mexicans - like fresh corn hallaquitas, which are like Venezuelan tamales, or arepas filled with lobster and slow-cooked beef.

"We do not want to make a 100 percent traditional cuisine, but it is based on our perception and our interpretation of nostalgia and taste memories," the chef said.

Despite getting the star, Mono's experience has been anti-climatic, given Hong Kong's coronavirus restrictions on indoor dining during an Omicron-fuelled wave.

Chaneton said he received news of the award on a January morning - the same day Hong Kong's government told restaurants to stop indoor dining after 6 pm.

"We had that bittersweet experience all in the same day," Chaneton told AFP. "I can't wait to provide Michelin star service at night."

With cases ebbing, the government has announced that nighttime dining will resume April 21.

He has no regrets over his circuitous path to his Michelin star, beginning in a Caracas pizza joint to mastering French cuisine under the leadership of legend Mauro Colagreco.

After working as the executive chef in Hong Kong's Petrus at the Shangri-La Hotel, before striking out on his own, Chaneton said he is grateful for how 'fate has played' with his culinary journey.

"I think the most beautiful thing about Mono is that it is a window in Asia to the refined Latin American gastronomy," he said. "If I had won that star doing French cuisine, it would not have had the same weight."

AFP

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HEALTHY RAMADAN SNACKS

Steaming hot

If the sight of oily, fried Ramadan snacks puts you off, try these oil-free recipes for a very healthy iftar meal

Air Fried Samosas

Ingredients
For the dough
1 cup all purpose flour, salt, to taste
2tsp butter, 1tsp carom seeds

For the filling
100g boiled potatoes - mashed
½ cup boiled peas
½ cup grated cheese
1tsp garam masala – slightly roasted
1tbsp mayonnaise

Method
To make the samosa wrappers, combine the flour, salt to taste, carom seeds, and butter. Mix them well and make a stiff dough by adding cold water. Rest the dough for 30 minutes.
For the filling, in a bowl mix together the mashed potatoes, peas, cheese, salt to taste, roasted garam masala, salt, and mayonnaise. Combine them to make samosa stuffing and keep aside.
Now, divide the dough into four equal parts and roll out one portion in a small circle. Cut this in the middle into two parts and make a cone with one part. Hold the cone in your left hand and fill the stuffing with your right hand in the cone. Fold and seal the edges tight. Make all samosas in the same manner.
Now heat the air-fryer at 180° C for 5 minutes. Then place the samosas in the basket and air-fry for 15-16 minutes, till brown and corners becomes crisp enough. Remove and serve hot with ketchup.
(Optional, brush the samosas with oil before air-frying)



Steamed Chicken Dumplings

Ingredients
For the dough
300g flour
1tsp baking powder
10g salt
Warm water to mix

For filling
150g steamed, shredded chicken
1 seasoning cube
1 onion - minced
1tsp minced garlic
1tsp minced ginger
1 carrot - minced
½ cup copped celery
½ cup chopped spring onion leaves
1tsp butter

Method
Mix flour, baking powder and salt together. Add water gradually and knead to form soft smooth and non-sticky dough. To make the filling, in a pan, heat the butter, then add chopped garlic and onion and cook till fragrant. Add shredded chicken, crushed seasoning cube, and fry for 2-3 minutes. Add carrot and celery followed by spring onion leaves. Cook on high flame for 2 minutes, then remove.
Take a small portion from the dough and flatten it to form a circular shape. Place a spoonful of the meat mixture in the middle and fold the sides of the dough upwards, forming pleats, and press it together in the centre to form a neat pouch. Place the dumplings in batches in a steamer and steam for 8-10 minutes, until cooked well.
Serve piping hot with ketchup or any favourite dip.



Baked Feta Pasta

Ingredients
250g pasta of choice, 2 cups cherry tomatoes
250g block feta cheese, ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
¼tsp sea salt, ¼tsp black pepper
2 garlic cloves – minced
¼ cup chopped fresh basil, plus more for serving

Method
Preheat oven to 200° C. Place the cherry tomatoes in an oven-safe baking dish. Pour the olive oil on top, and season with salt and pepper. Toss until well combined. Place the feta block in the middle of the baking dish surrounded by the cherry tomatoes, and flip a couple times to coat it with the olive oil and seasoning. Bake in the preheated oven for 35 minutes, until the cherry tomatoes burst, and the feta cheese melts. While the tomatoes and feta are baking, cook the pasta in a pot of salted water according to package instructions until al dente. Drain, reserving ½ cup of the cooking liquid. Add the garlic and basil leaves to the cooked tomatoes and feta and toss everything to combine. Transfer the cooked pasta to the baking dish and toss. Garnish with basil.

Chicken Tikka Wraps

Ingredients
250g chicken breast – cubed, 1tsp red chilli paste
1tsp ginger-garlic paste, 2tsp lemon juice, 2tbsp thick curds
Salt, to taste, 2tsp olive oil (optional), 2 lettuce leaves
½ cup pickled jalapenos, 1 tomato – sliced, 1 onion – sliced
4 ready to use pita wraps (6 inches diameter), ½ cup mayonnaise

Method
First marinate the chicken with a mixture of the chilli paste, ginger-garlic pate, curds, lemon juice, and salt to taste. Mount them on skewers, drizzle with olive oil and grill or toast on a hot plate till cooked well and slightly charred. Remove and set aside. When cool, chop up the grilled chicken. Now, slightly warm the wraps on a hot plate. Take each wrap, spread 1tsp of mayonnaise, then add shreds of lettuce, grilled chicken, and slices of tomato, onion, and jalapenos. Fold the wrap around the filling and secure with a toothpick or wrap up in sandwich paper. Enjoy.



Serie A title race heads towards thrilling climax

Stefano Pioli's Milan hold a slender lead over second-placed Napoli after goalless draw at Bologna

Milan, Italy - AC Milan lead Serie A by a single point after failing to get past mid-table Bologna on Monday, a goalless draw the latest twist in a thrilling title race which looks to be heading to the wire.

After dropping two precious points Stefano Pioli's side hold a slender lead over second-placed Napoli, who ran out impressive 3-1 winners at Atalanta on Sunday afternoon and are now snapping at Milan's heels.

Defending champions Inter Milan are four points back in third with a game in hand following their 1-0 triumph at fourth-placed Juventus, who are eight points off the pace with seven matches left.

The draw was another disappointing result against one of the league's lesser lights, their displays against teams they should beat a consistent problem as the season inches towards its climax.

Milan took 33 shots over the course of the match but only seven were on target in an imprecise performance in front of goal which could yet cost them a first league title since 2011.

"The only thing that we were missing was the goal because we fought, played with intensity and created a lot of opportunities," said Pioli to DAZN.

"We were neither nervous nor cocky... as the minutes ticked away we lost a bit of lucidity and we got a bit rushed, but absolutely not because we were feeling the pressure."

Bologna, who sit 12th, were without their coach Sinisa Mihajlovic who is being treated for leukaemia but spoke to his play-



AC Milan's Zlatan Ibrahimovic (left) and Bologna's Gary Medel collide as they go for a header during their Serie A match on Monday (AFP)

ers in the days leading up to the match on a video call from Sant'Orsola hospital in the northern Italian city.

Wasteful Milan

The away side fought throughout in front of over 68,000 fans at the San Siro and could even have taken the lead midway through the first half when Mike Maignan pulled off a fingertip save to keep out Musa Barrow's long-range rocket.

However Milan dominated the play as they pushed to maintain their three-point lead on

Napoli, with Olivier Giroud being denied twice just before half-time by Lukasz Skorupski.

The hosts came out aggressively after the break but again struggled to find a way past Skorupski, who kept out Rafael Leao's low drive before watching Davide Calabria's 61st-minute drive fly just wide after being set up by his Portuguese teammate.

Leao scuffed wide a curling effort 11 minutes later and Fikayo Tomori hit over the bar before Skorupski saved a point for Bologna in the fifth minute of stoppage time by tipping over

Ante Rebic's powerful header, which fortunately for the Pole was hit straight down the middle of his goal.

Earlier Giovanni Simeone struck his 16th league goal of the season in Verona's 1-0 win over relegation-threatened Genoa who fell to their first defeat under coach Alexander Blessin.

Simeone became only the second player in Verona's history after Luca Toni to net more than 15 times in a single Serie A campaign after his decisive fifth-minute strike which moved Verona up to ninth and left

Genoa second from bottom, three points from safety. Blessin had not lost in his previous eight matches in charge since arriving at Genoa a virtual unknown in January, running out seven consecutive draws before beating Torino

Verona were playing without the support of their hardcore fans after the Curva Sud section of the Stadio Bentegodi was closed following racist abuse directed at Napoli's Kalidou Koulibaly and Victor Osimhen in their previous home fixture last month.

AFP



Crystal Palace's Jean-Philippe Mateta celebrates after scoring the opening goal against Arsenal at Selhurst Park on Monday (AFP)

Arsenal's top four bid rocked in 'unacceptable' Palace defeat

London, United Kingdom - Mikel Arteta apologised for Arsenal's "unacceptable" performance in a 3-0 defeat at Crystal Palace that dealt a significant blow to their bid to finish in the Premier League's top four.

Arteta's side were destroyed by first half goals from Jean-Philippe Mateta and Jordan Ayew at Selhurst Park on Monday. Unable to muster a revival after the break, Arsenal's second defeat in their last three league games was sealed by Wilfried Zaha's late penalty.

Arsenal had gone into the weekend in fourth place, but Tottenham's 5-1 win against Newcastle on Sunday piled pressure on the Gunners and their response could not have been any less convincing.

The battle to qualify for next season's Champions League via a top four finish is heating up and Arsenal are in danger of wilting.

They sit in fifth place, behind Tottenham on goal difference having played a game less than their north London rivals.

West Ham and Manchester United, both three points behind Arsenal, will also fancy their chances after a result that blew the top four battle wide open.

"We made it impossible for ourselves with the way we com-

peted. You have to be physical and run and then you earn the right to play. We were really inconsistent on the ball and that is unacceptable," Arteta said.

"We were poor, especially in the first half. I apologise to our supporters. We didn't have the presence or the composure to dominate the situation. That's what I'm most annoyed with."

It was an especially painful result for Arsenal fans given the presence in the Palace dug-out of Eagles boss Patrick Vieira, a Gunners legend after his trophy-filled playing career with the club.

How they could have done with the kind of tenacious performance that was Vieira's hallmark in midfield during Arsenal's glory days.

Vieira comfortably out-witted Arteta, who was voted the Premier League's manager of the month for March after masterminding his side's climb into contention for a top four berth.

Those Champions League ambitions don't look so believable now.

"We need to put our hands up and get the criticism we deserve. Then we accept it, look ourselves in the mirror and look to the next game. This performance was not good enough," Arteta said.

AFP

Nagelsmann slams Freiburg for appeal over Bayern's subs mix up



Bayern Munich's German head coach Julian Nagelsmann says he would not have appealed in such a situation

Berlin, Germany - Julian Nagelsmann has slammed Freiburg for appealing to the German Football Association (DFB) after a substitution mix up saw Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich briefly field 12 players last Saturday.

Bayern won 4-1 at Freiburg, but the host club has appealed after Bayern had an extra player on the pitch for 18 seconds of the second half after two players came on, but only one had come off.

"From a personal point of view, I can't understand why Freiburg is doing it," Bayern coach Nagelsmann said Tuesday, the day after Freiburg ap-

pealed to the DFB.

"Because I don't think they would have scored two goals in 18 seconds.

"I personally wouldn't have

From a personal point of view, I can't understand why Freiburg is doing it... Because I don't think they would have scored two goals in 18 seconds

JULIAN NAGELSMANN

done it because I think that you take advantage of a mistake made by a third party to maybe score points yourself."

Bayern CEO Oliver Kahn has said the club's senior figures "fully trust" the German FA, implying the result should stand.

Bayern hold a nine point lead

The German FA could reverse Saturday's result, awarding the three points to Freiburg and Nagelsmann is agitated by their appeal.

"I'm not quite as relaxed as the CEO, to be honest," Nagelsmann fumed.

The 34-year-old Bayern coach is adamant the DFB's judgement "can only go in one direction" and let the result stand.

In a long statement issued Monday, Freiburg stressed that the club "played no part in and had no influence over the events surrounding the substitution process".

AFP

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IPL 2022



RR V RCB

Steely Karthik wins it for Royal Challengers after early hiccup



BRIEF SCORES:
Rajasthan Royals 169 for 3 in 20 overs (Jos Buttler 70 (47) 6x6, Shimron Hetmyer 42 (31) 4x4,2x6; Harshal Patel 1 for 18) lost to Royal Challengers Bangalore 173 for 6 in 19.1 overs (Dinesh Karthik 44 (23) n.o. 7x4, 1x6; Shahbaz Ahmed 45 (26) 4x4, 3x6; Yuzvendra Chahal 2 for 15) by 4 wickets (5 balls left)

TODAY'S MATCH (6PM)



KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERSMUMBAI INDIANS

Lopsided Mumbai-KKR rivalry in focus today

Mumbai, India - Over time, Mumbai Indians have made it a habit. Starting slowly, before revving up as mid-season approaches and then pouncing on teams at the back end. They have started poorly this time as well, but the margin for error could be smaller in a 10-team pool. Therefore, they need to get up and running quickly. There's just one problem. They're going up against IPL 2021's runners-up Kolkata Knight Riders, whose firebrand approach to batting, has lent a dazzling touch to the season so far.

In both their losses so far, Mumbai have failed to capitalise on their batters putting them in strong positions. Against Delhi Capitals, both Rohit Sharma and Ishan Kishan struck half-centuries in a robust opening stand to set up the game, but the middle order came a cropper. Against Rajasthan Royals, they couldn't close the game out despite going into the final six overs needing just 65 runs.

Mumbai also have concerns over one bowling spot, currently



Suryakumar Yadav has only just recovered from a wrist injury

occupied by Basil Thampi. In the opening game, Lalit Yadav and Axar Patel took him to the cleaners. In the second, he was carted for 26 in his only over.

It might be time for a change. There's plenty of experience in the form of Jaydev Unadkat, but the only hitch is he's nearly like-for-like to Tymal Mills, in terms of his slower variations and left-

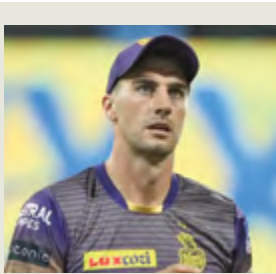
arm variety.

Knight Riders have unlocked magic from Umesh Yadav. Throw Pat Cummins into the mix and their pace attack looks mean. Their spinners are always bound to ask interesting questions, provided there isn't too much dew around.

So far with the bat, the Knight Riders have expressed their de-

sire to play an aggressive brand of T20 cricket. It can look spectacular, like when Andre Russell went after Punjab Kings in a small chase, or fall flat, like when they got bundled out by Royal Challengers Bangalore. Going forward, they will expect a lot more from the likes of Venkatesh Iyer and Ajinkya Rahane.

ESPNcricinfo.com



Pat Cummins

Cummins all set to take his place in team

Pat Cummins has completed his mandatory three-day quarantine upon arrival and even trained with the team on match eve, which means he is all set to take Sam Billings' place in the Knight Riders XI.

This means the wicket-keeper's slot will be taken up once again by Sheldon Jackson, whose glove work has been impressive. Sunil Narine, Russell, and Tim Southee are likely to take up the other overseas slots.



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Davies set to return after COVID-related problem

Berlin, Germany - Canada international Alphonso Davies is set to make his return for Bayern Munich in their Champions League quarter-final first leg at Villarreal on Wednesday after a COVID-related heart problem.

The 21-year-old last played in December having been diagnosed with myocarditis, an inflammation of the heart, after he tested positive for coronavirus in January.

“Phonzie’ (Davies) will be back, the medical examinations have been so positive that he



Alphonso Davies was diagnosed with myocarditis, an inflammation of the heart, after he tested positive for coronavirus in January

could play from the start,” Bayern coach Julian Nagelsmann said Tuesday.

If he plays, Davies will return ahead of schedule.

Nagelsmann had originally earmarked the versatile wing-back for a return in the second leg against Villarreal in Munich on April 12. Davies, 21, already had a good start to the week after being voted the CONCACAF player of the year.

Bayern are definitely without midfielder Corentin Tolisso who tore a leg muscle after coming

on in Saturday’s 4-1 win at Freiburg in the Bundesliga.

The winner of the two-legged Champions League quarter-final will play Benfica or Liverpool in the last four.

However, Bayern are wary of Villarreal, who knocked out Juventus in the last 16.

Gerard Moreno, Pau Torres and Arnaut Danjuma scored for Villarreal in a 3-0 away win in the second leg to stun the Italians following a 1-1 draw in Spain.

AFP

Spotlight on Ancelotti as Real take on Chelsea in Champions League

Madrid, Spain - Carlo Ancelotti knows better than anyone how quickly things can change at Real Madrid.

After the sensational comeback against Paris Saint-Germain, Madrid were euphoric. They had defeated one of Europe’s elite, humiliated an economic rival, neutralised Lionel Messi and, many believed, convinced Kylian Mbappe.

They were about to win La Liga and suddenly looked contenders in the Champions League too.

Three weeks later, the advantage in the league is still intact thanks to a scruffy, albeit morale-boosting, win over Celta Vigo on Saturday. But Ancelotti’s credit has all-but evaporated.

Real Madrid were waiting until Tuesday to decide if their coach will be able to travel to the first leg of their Champions League quarter-final against Chelsea on Wednesday, after he tested positive for Covid last week.

The outcome of the tie could decide if he continues as coach next season.

It says something about the weight of the Clasico fixture that eight months of largely impressive work can be almost entirely erased by one, disastrous, 90



The outcome of the tie against Chelsea could decide if Ancelotti continues as Real Madrid coach next season

minutes.

There has been criticism of Ancelotti -- of Madrid’s counter-attacking style, his lack of rotation and, in particular, the manner of the passive first-leg defeat by PSG -- but a dominant position in La Liga had mostly kept the sceptics in check.

For Ancelotti, the Clasico defeat means winning La Liga may no longer be enough. How they win the title and how they fare against Chelsea will now frame how the first year of his second tenure is viewed

Losing 4-0 to Barcelona, though, when Madrid could easily have shipped six or seven, has brought doubts to the fore, not least because that result served as a warning for what may be to come.

Barca are 11 points behind Real Madrid in the table but it is Xavi

Hernandez’s resurgent young side who are finishing the season as the strongest team in Spain.

For Ancelotti, the Clasico defeat means winning La Liga may no longer be enough. How they win the title, with eight games to go, and how they fare against Chelsea will now frame how the first year of Ancelotti’s second tenure is viewed.

Real Madrid’s president Florentino Perez met Ancelotti over the international break and while Perez reassured Ancelotti his future was secure, the need for talks was significant.

When Ancelotti was sacked by Real Madrid in 2015, a year after winning the Champions League, he later admitted the moment he was told to meet Perez was when he first knew his days were numbered.

Ancelotti’s arrival last summer was a surprise, for everyone, including Ancelotti and Perez.

It was only a chance conversation between them that saw the idea floated and then quickly take shape. “It’s happened fast,” Ancelotti said at his unveiling.

That contributed to the sense that this was a short-term appointment, one that could be curtailed without much fuss or financial penalty.

If there is a parting this summer, it is unlikely to be bitter.

With the league title is won, both parties would consider it a success. But Ancelotti’s appointment was also perhaps a reflection of the market last summer, when there was a dearth of top coaches available.

Barcelona looked to replace Ronald Koeman but stuck with the Dutchman after finding nobody else was suitable. Manchester United continued with Ole Gunnar Solskjaer. Juventus turned back to Max Allegri.

This summer, there could be more persuasive options, with Mauricio Pochettino expected to part ways with PSG. Erik Ten Hag may be prepared to leave Ajax and Raul Gonzalez, Madrid’s legendary former striker, will have completed three years with the B team and could be ready follow the path of Zinedine Zidane.

Depending on the ownership situation at Chelsea, perhaps even Thomas Tuchel could be lured.

Even if Chelsea’s future is resolved and Tuchel reassured, his presence in this tie is awkward for Ancelotti, the German representing the type of younger, more progressive coach that Madrid might need if they are to stay ahead of Xavi’s Barcelona.

AFP

Vanderlande, Israr Ghala emerge Senior and Junior Knockout T20 champions

Muscat: Vanderlande defeated Design Group Engineering Consultants by eight wickets in the final of the Senior Knockout T20 2021/22 season at the Oman Cricket Academy on Friday.

Electing to bat first, Design Group scored 148/8 in 20 overs. Opener Jibin Kunnumpurath top-scored with a well-made 39. Muhammed Althaf and Karthik also pitched in with valuable contributions, making 33 and 30 runs respectively.

With figures of three for 20, Aravindh Ramesh was the pick of the Vanderlande bowling unit.

Vanderlande reached the target in 16.4 overs. Asfak Ahmed departed in the third over, but his opening partner Prasanth Reddy Thonduru occupied the crease until the 14th over, and scored 73 (46 balls) to take Vanderlande to the brink of victory.

Prasanth was ably supported by Barathwaj Vinayagam, who was unbeaten on 46.

Prasanth was adjudged the player of the match and received the award from Varun Khimji, Director of Khimji Ramdas, at the post-game presentation ceremony.

Prasanth also finished as the



Vanderlande players all smiles after winning the Senior Knockout T20 season 2021/22

competition’s leading run-getter with 150 runs in four outings.

Hussain Satham of Design Group led the wicket taking charts, with eight scalps from four matches.

Meanwhile, Israr Ghala emerged champions in the Junior Knockout T20 season. In the final held at the same venue on Friday, they beat Earn Trust CT by four wickets.

Put in to bat, Earn Trust CT had a disastrous start, losing four wickets in five balls to find themselves reeling at 20 for four.

However, a 59-run stand between Khurram Chaudhary and Ramesh Viswanathan stabilized their innings in the middle overs.



Israr Ghala won the Junior Knockout T20 season

Khurram top scored for his side with a brilliant 33-ball 47. Ramesh remained unbeaten on 33 as Earn Trust CT posted a respectable score of 145 for 7 in their 20 overs.

Asim Shaheen Muhammed was Israr Ghala’s most effective weapon with the ball, picking up

three wickets from his four overs. Muhammed Saqib and Masih Arif claimed two apiece.

In response, Israr Ghala’s top order was as ineffective as Earn Trust CT’s had been, earlier in the day. However, coming in at number five, player-of-the-match Ali Gul Agha scored a

masterful 75 to set his side up for victory. Sagheer Muhammad also sparked with an unbeaten 23. Mozzam Shah and Zaheer Abbas took two wickets each for Earn Trust CT.

Nadeer Kunninu Thaye Kunninu of Mazoon UP finished as the tournament’s leading run-getter. He amassed 249 runs from four matches. With nine scalps from three outings, Aravinthan Raja of Al Muthla Golden CT ended the competition as its highest wicket-taker.

BRIEF SCORES:

Earn Trust CT 145/7 in 20 overs (Khurram Chaudhary 47(33) 7x4 Ramesh Viswanathan 33(39) 3x4; Asim Shaheen Muhammed 3(23) lost to Israr Ghala 149/6 in 19.1 overs (Ali Gul Agha 75(48) 9x4; Mozzam Shah 2/6) by 4 wickets

Design Group Engineering Consultants 148/8 in 20 overs (Jibin Kunnumpurath 39(32) 7x4 Muhammed Althaf 33(24) 2x4, 1x6; Aravindh Ramesh 3(20) lost to Vanderlande 151/2 in 16.4 overs (Prasanth Reddy Thonduru 73(46) 9x4, 1x6 Barathwaj Vinayagam 46(37) 6x4; by 8 wickets.

OCT Ruwi and OCT Al Hail ‘B’ clinch opening day wins

Muscat: OCT Ruwi and OCT Al Hail ‘B’ emerged victorious on the first day of the All-Omani cricket tournament held at the Oman Cricket Academy on Monday. While OCT Ruwi beat OCT Muscat by six wickets, OCT Al Hail ‘B’ eased past OCT Al Mabela by seven wickets.

On Turf 1, OCT Muscat elected to bat first after winning the toss but were all out for 82 in 18.3 overs. OCT Ruwi’s Zubair Ali Akbar al Balushi picked up five wickets for just six runs in 3.3 overs.

In reply a superb 70-run

stand between Abdul Aziz Qader Baksh Al Balushi and Naved Abdulmajeed Al Balushi ensured their victory.

On the other ground, OCT Al Mabela, put to bat first, made 127/7 after 20 overs.

For OCT Al Hail ‘B’, Qais Khalid, Asim Abdul Qadeer and Khalid Rahim Bakhsh al Balushi picked up two wickets apiece.

In response OCT Al Hail ‘B’ took control of the match thanks to a 93-run stand between Hassan Mohamed Hussain and Ahmed Mohammed.



Zubair Ali Akbar and Abdul Aziz Qader Baksh al Balushi

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