



TOURISM FEST BEGINS IN JABAL AKHDAR

Al Jabal al Akhdar Tourism Festival kicked off on Tuesday under the patronage of Ali Mohammed al Busaidi, Acting Wali of Jabal Akhdar. The five-day festival began with a ride on horseback starting from Alila Jabal Akhdar. The 50km ride was conducted in two stages with 17 horseriders from Oman and abroad. Busaidi said he hoped the event becomes an annual pageant peculiar to Jabal Akhdar (Supplied photo)

WHAT'S HOLDING WOMEN BACK?

NCSI data indicates the unemployment rate among women in Oman in June 2022 was 6.1 per cent compared to 0.9 among men

Shaddad al Musalmay
Muscat

Around the world, finding a job is much tougher for women than it is for men. When women are employed, they tend to work in low-quality jobs in vulnerable

conditions, and there is little improvement forecast in the near future.

According to International Labour Organization (ILO), the current global labour force participation rate for women is just under 47 per cent while for men, it's 72 per cent. That is a difference of 25 percentage points, with some regions facing a gap of more than 50 percentage points.

Data from the sultanate's National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicates the unemployment rate among women in Oman in June 2022 was 6.1 per cent compared to 0.9 among men. Musandam had the highest unemployment rate among women - 27.4 per cent - compared to 1.8 for men, followed by Dhahirah with 7.4 per

GENDER GAP IN EMPLOYMENT



cent for women compared to 1.1 for men.

The female unemployment rate in Muscat was 2.4 per cent compared to 0.3 for males.

ILO stated that women who

want to work have a harder time finding a job than men.

'This problem is particularly marked in Northern Africa and the Arab States, where unemployment rates for women ex-

ceed 20 per cent,' stated the ILO InfoStory that highlights data behind the trends about the different barriers holding women back from decent work.

Balqees al Hassani, educator and president of Knowledge Oman, said, "One of the things that I feel is holding women back is inflexible hours. This impacts a women's life, which must be balanced between work, career and parental care. I am not saying that men are not participating equally in childcare but women always play a dominant role in this area."

She pointed out another factor hindering women's growth - self-doubt, especially if she works in a male dominated field. "But there is also a positive side. A woman's self-doubt can be

turned into overall progress in her life and career. In Oman, we find women in senior positions, including the State Council, women CEOs and MDs," Balqees added.

Gender roles and pressures to conform to roles for women vary across regions, religions and households. 'One way the pressure to conform manifests itself is through marital status,' ILO stated.

'For instance, in developed and emerging economies, women who have a spouse or a partner are less likely to be employed in a paid job or be actively looking for one. This can often arise from the economic stability of a partner's income that can reinforce the 'male breadwinner' bias in some marital arrangements,' it added.

In developing countries the reverse is true - economic necessity gives women little choice but to work despite their marital status.

However, some women believe that there is no gender gap in employment and there is nothing holding them back. "I do not agree with the statistics because Omani women have gained their right to join the labour market. Woman in Oman are now doctors, teachers and ministers," government employee Wadha al Saeedi said.

"I also believe that Omani women are actively developing and training themselves, but I admit that they are less fortunate when it comes to political engagement such as Majlis A'Shura and municipal elections," she added.

NEWS BRIEF

OMAN, TURKEY HOLD ENERGY TALKS

Muscat - H E Salim Nasser al Afi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, received Fatih Donmez, Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, and his accompanying delegation on Tuesday.

Donmez is currently visiting Oman to hold talks on ways to enhance cooperation between the two countries.

The two sides discussed different aspects of cooperation in the fields of energy and joint investments, notably oil and gas, renewable energy and hydrogen.

Monkeypox, COVID-19 cases on the rise in region

Cairo, Egypt - As of August 20, seven countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region have officially reported 35 laboratory-confirmed cases of monkeypox to WHO, with no associated deaths, Dr Ahmed al Mandhari, WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Director, said in a press statement on Tuesday.

Globally, the number of weekly reported new cases was regularly increasing until last week when a decrease of 21 per cent was reported, he added.

Since January 1, 2022, 96 member states have reported more than 40,000 laboratory-confirmed cases to WHO, including 12 deaths.

"The monkeypox outbreak continues to spread to more



COVID-19 still poses a threat. People are still being infected and dying. In the past week alone, more than 80,000 people were infected and more than 600 died in our region

DR AHMED AL MANDHARI

countries in the six WHO regions. We have received reports of infection among children and women in our region and around the world," Dr Mandhari said.

WHO declared monkeypox a public health emergency of international concern on July 23. "This is to help everyone recognise the risk and take all possible preventative measures. Stigma and discrimination can only

delay the response and deflect our attention from what needs to be done. Our collective focus must be on an effective public health response that will stop transmission and contain the outbreak."

Moving on to updates about COVID-19, he said the region has reported over 23mn cases and almost 350,000 deaths since the start of the pandemic. "While

public health and social measures have been reduced, COVID-19 still poses a threat to us all. People are still being infected and dying. In the past week alone, more than 80,000 people were infected and more than 600 died of COVID-19 in our region, while over 5.4mn new cases and 15,000 deaths were reported globally."

The pandemic is not over and

COVID-19 is not going away, he added. "We are going to have to learn to live with this virus - but this does not mean ignoring those measures that can protect us and our loved ones."

Dr Mandhari urged everyone to continue following public health and social measures. "I am personally asking you to make sure that you get fully vaccinated and boosted when presented with a COVID-19 vaccine. This is particularly important if you are older than 60 years of age or vulnerable because of a pre-existing medical condition."

As of Tuesday, almost 46 per cent of people in the region are fully vaccinated, with over 790mn doses administered.

Over 1,500 applications received for on-the-job training

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As many as 1,511 applications have been received from small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to benefit from an initiative to employ jobseekers through on-the-job training.

The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED), which launched the initiative, has approved 627 applications and is currently studying 884 others.

ASMED urged interested SMEs to register for the initiative, which seeks to empower young Omani youth to get on-the-job specialist training and enable them for further employment opportunities.

The on-the-job training initiative is supported by the Ministry of Labour, which bears the cost of the training for a year. Under the initiative, a Bachelor's degree graduate receives RO500 per month, a university diploma holder RO400, and a General Education Diploma holder receives RO300. In the second year, the ministry will bear 50 per cent of the training grant.

Jobseekers registered with the Ministry of Labour are eligible for the training. Institutions can also nominate jobseekers they deem fit to meet their employment criteria and who they consider would improve their operations and activities.



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Inflation falls to 2.6% despite higher food prices



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Al Bustan Palace's 'Mexican Night' a big draw

The Last Call: 1,600km cycle ride to fight plastic waste

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Anas Malik al Abri from Al Hamra and his German friend Frederich Schatz set off on a 1,600km cycling adventure on Tuesday through several wilayats to address the menace of plastic waste and spread awareness on the environment.

Indicating the urgency of their message, they named their 25-day campaign 'The Last Call'.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Abri said, "The trip starts in the wilayat of Dhalkut and will go through Rakhyut, Salalah, Taqah, Mirbat, Sadah, Shalim, Al Jazir, Duqm, Mahout, Al Jaalin, Sur and Quriyat before ending in Muscat."

The route will take the cyclists along the eastern coast of the sultanate as they spread environmental awareness among members of local communities on the dangers posed by plastics to the marine environment.

"We will urge people to not throw plastic into the ocean. Every piece of plastic that is intentionally or unintentionally thrown into nature is harmful and destructive, causing many environmental and health problems. Plastic waste is fatal to all desert, mountainous or marine environments."

Abri and Schatz prepared well before setting off on their campaign. "We worked on our fitness level and cycled at different times



Anas Malik al Abri and his riding partner Frederich Schatz from Germany

in the day to acclimatise to different riding conditions during the trip," said Abri.

The two cyclists are carrying along safety equipment, a tent, water, beverages and canned food.

Abri informed that Schatz came to Oman on a motorbike, riding through 14 countries on the way. "He'll continue his bike ride after our campaign. He aims to reach Africa."

Abri believes such trips help promote domestic tourism, while helping convey important messages. "Activities like this are helpful for social causes. I urge Omani youngsters to take part in such voluntary campaigns for the betterment of society."

OMAN-UGANDA

Generations-old friendship



Shaddad al Musalmey Muscat

Retired telecom professional Mohamed Nasser al Sinawi al Harthi, 68, has authored a book titled *Understanding Uganda's historic relationship with Oman since 1844* that details the legacy of Omanis in Uganda.

Launched recently, the book traces the history of friendship between Oman and the people of Uganda beginning 178 years ago. "Uganda is a hospitable and beautiful country where the earlier generations of my family settled peacefully. I wrote the book to highlight my appreciation of the hospitality and warm friendship I felt," Harthi told *Muscat Daily*.

Though people-to-people relations between the people of the two countries were evident since

Uganda is a hospitable and beautiful country where the earlier generations of my family settled peacefully

MOHAMED AL HARTHI



the early years, there were no diplomatic ties until recently which started only after Oman opened a consulate office in Kampala.

"The Omanis in Uganda were well known to the locals and other foreigners. Uganda became the hub for foreigners travelling deep into Africa or the East African coast. The book highlights all these aspects," Harthi

informed. Currently available in English, an Arabic edition of the book is expected soon.

Harthi's grandparents, parents, uncles and aunts lived in a house called Beit al Fouqi in the district of Iganga in eastern Uganda, which locals continue to call the 'House of Arabs.'

"Beit al Fouqi is probably the oldest house in Iganga. It was once a landmark for all foreign

travellers, especially Arabs, to the eastern coast of the African continent. It is old fashioned with a tin roof, but it's still intact."

In the book, Harthi recalls how his forefathers endured immense hardship travelling to Mombasa or Zanzibar in the eastern coast of the continent using small boats - called dhows - from Oman via Aden in Yemen and Kismayo in Somali. "From Mombasa, Omanis then travelled by foot into Uganda, a distance of 1,200km," Harthi said.

He grew up in Iganga where his family was engaged in agriculture work and trade. After schooling in Uganda, he pursued further studies in Bahrain and UK and graduated as a telecom engineer.

The book also describes how Omanis' assimilation in Ugandan

society led to sultanate's culture being accepted by Ugandan people. The Omani dress code became common among indigenous Ugandans.

"The Omani dishdasha and bisht are very popular outfits among Ugandans. When the Ugandan king - known as Kabaka - accepted Islam, he became the first person to put on the Omani dishdasha and bisht. His senior officials and subordinates followed him. Acceptance of Islam into Uganda by the Kabaka marks the first official Uganda-Oman friendly ties tracing back to 1844 AD," Harthi said.

Dishdashas, known as 'kanzus' in Uganda, have a big market and many Ugandans are employed in tailoring the traditional robe, particularly in the capital Kampala. "Kanzus are also sold in Ugandan markets as souvenirs to tourists. The kanzu and bisht are the dress code for occasions like marriages and official events."

The exchange of culture was both ways. "We picked up the local ways, learning to eat Ugandan food; in fact, becoming experts in preparing Ugandan dishes," he said.

The book also highlights how Omanis participated in development and improving services in Uganda, particularly in the health and education sectors, and the construction of irrigation systems, while continuing to offer in relief efforts when needed.

"Omanis have supported Ugandan society in many ways, including construction of mosques, water networks and orphanages," Harthi said.

100,000 date palms to be planted in Al Najd Farm

Our Correspondent Muscat



Nakheel Oman Development Company (NODC) has started the first phase of a project to plant 100,000 date palms in Al Najd Farm in the wilayat of Muqshin, Dhofar governorate, in continuation of its efforts to plant 1mn date palms.

In an interview with Oman TV, Saeed Mohammed al Wahshi, manager of Al Najd Farm, said, "Spread over 33mn sqm, this is one of the largest farms in the One Million Date Palms Plantation Project."

According to Wahshi, the project aims to boost date varieties such as Fardh, Khalas, and Fahl. Farmers are sold date palm seedlings, while NODC purchases their crop of dates.

NODC also supplies dates to local markets and the industrial complex for dates in Nizwa, where the waste is converted into animal feed and fertilisers.

Oman has more than 250 indigenous varieties of dates. The most relished varieties among these known for their taste and succulence are the Khalas, Khu-

naizi and Fardh varieties.

NODC is the main recipient of the dates, as well as the palm waste, harvested in 11 farms distributed across six governorates of the One Million Date Palms Plantation Project.

Another company, Oman Dates Production and Packing Company, which was established in 2018, has invested in a project to set up an integrated factory in Barka and six collection centres in different governorates.

NODC purchases date products from farmers, and processes and packages these to sell in local markets and also for export.

In March 2021, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) announced the implementation of a project to create Model Fields for Date Palms.

Consumer Protection Authority seizes prohibited school supplies

Muscat - The Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) seized school items displaying prohibited colours in South Sharqiyah.

In a statement, CPA said, 'The Consumer Protection Department in South Sharqiyah Governorate seized school supplies having colours that have connotations which violate public

morals.'

It added that the department has taken necessary measures in this regard.

Additionally, a commercial establishment was raided by the authority in South Sharqiyah for selling used tyres and consequently compromising the safety of consumers.

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Four pacts signed to support disabled



Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) signed four agreements with private sector institutions to support persons with disabilities on Tuesday.

The first agreement will provide maintenance services in the building of Al Aman Rehabilitation Centre, and the second will implement training programmes for people with disabilities at the centre.

The third and fourth agreements will provide training pro-

The agreements aim to provide vocational training for economic empowerment to persons with disabilities

grammes for persons with disabilities who are enrolled in the Professional Evaluation and Rehabilitation Centre of the ministry.

Hamoud bin Mirdad al Shabibi, Director General of Persons with Disabilities Affairs, MoSD, said, "The agreements aim to provide vocational training for economic empowerment to persons with disabilities and to improve the accessibility of facilities for the severely disabled."

The agreements will provide job opportunities for persons with disabilities and on-the-job training opportunities for this category, leading to the development of their capabilities and employment in the labour market, Shabibi added.

Land offered to set up fuel stations in 6 governorates

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning (MoHUP) is offering land to set up integrated fuel stations in six governorates, as part of its efforts to revitalise the economy and attract investments.

A statement issued by MoHUP said that the ministry is offering seven plots of land in the governorates of Buraimi, North Batinah, South Batinah, Dhofar, Dhahirah and Al Wusta.

"The fuel stations will include all basic services and will stimulate economic movement," the statement added.

Auction for the plots of land to set up the fuel stations will start on August 31 via the Tatwir electronic platform.

In March, MoHUP launched the trial run of its real estate e-platform Tatwir. It provides all the digital services related to the real estate sector in the sultanate.

Dhofar Governor's Office to hold digital week for varsity students, jobseekers

Our Correspondent
Salalah

The Dhofar Governor's Office will launch Dhofar Digital Week to mark Muscat being named Arab Digital Capital for 2022.

In a statement, Dhofar Governor's Office said the initiative targets university students and jobseekers.

The digital week will include a number of activities, including promotion of artificial intelligence and Internet of Things for a two-day period starting August 28 at Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment.

The digital week will also include a 3D printing training programme from August 28 to September 1 at the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Administration Hall in Salalah.

Those interested in participating can register via www.dhofar.gov.om

Muscat was named Arab Digital Capital for the year 2022 during the 25th session of the Arab ICT Ministers Councils held on December 25, 2021.



The event has been planned to mark Muscat achieving the status of being the Arab Digital Capital for the year 2022

Oman has taken great strides to set up a digital society and create modern ICT facilities for all economic and social sectors in response to the requirements of sustainable development. Several promising national ICT initiatives and projects have been implemented based on the pillars and targets of Oman Vision 2020.

Owing to the importance of this vital sector, the sultanate - within the strategic directions of

Oman Vision 2040 - has placed communications and information technology among the priorities of its economic and social growth strategies. This is with the objective of creating a diversified and sustainable economy based on technology, knowledge and innovation, with integrated and competitive frameworks, accommodating industrial developments and achieving financial sustainability.

Driving school fined RO100 for failing to provide promised services

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A driving school was fined RO100 and the person in charge handed a two-month prison sentence for failing to provide the promised services to a consumer in North Batinah, according to the Consumer Protection Authority (CPA).

A statement issued by CPA said, "The Sohar Court of First Instance passed a judicial ruling convicting an accused of failing to provide services in a proper



manner. It sentenced him to two months imprisonment and im-

posed a fine of RO100."

According to the CPA, the Directorate General of Consumer Protection in Sohar received a complaint from a consumer stating she had contracted a driving school for driving instruction services. She started learning, but the trainer who was assigned the task passed away, following which the driving school did not provide an alternative nor return the advance paid by her, which is a violation of the Consumer Protection Law promulgated by Royal Decree No 66/2014.

Mumbai's Jaslok Hospital launches coordination office in Ghubra



Our Correspondent
Muscat

Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre, a leading hospital in Mumbai, opened a coordination centre in Muscat in Ghubra on Tuesday to make health treatment for Omani patients in India easily accessible and comfortable.

Services at the centre will include teleconsultations, appointment booking, treatment cost discussions, tickets-visa-hotel services and SIM card facilities.

The event was graced by Majlis A'Shura members Aziz al Azizi and Sheikh Malik bin Hamood al Yahmadi.

Dr Shailesh Raina, director of

We are thrilled to expand our services and offerings to patients beyond India. We would like to extend our heartiest gratitude to the Government of Oman

JITENDRA HARYAN

Urology and Renal Transplantation Department, and Dr Deepu Banerji, consultant neurosurgeon of Jaslok Hospital Mumbai, were also present.

At the opening, Jitendra Haryan, CEO of Jaslok Hospital, said, "We are thrilled to be expanding our services and offerings to patients beyond India. We would like to extend our heartiest gratitude to the Gov-

ernment of Oman for extending support in establishing this project.

"We would also like to thank the doctors in our team, who have come out of their comfort zone to make this successful. We believe this initiative is going to be impactful in the field of healthcare. With the success of this project, we look forward to collaborating with many more

countries."

It has been observed that a large number of Omani patients visit Jaslok Hospital for advanced treatment, and hence the launch of the coordination centre was considered the need of the hour. Jaslok Hospital has partnered with Al Miri Coordination Centre (Oman) and Magnus Medi (India) to open the centre in Muscat. This collaboration will aid the people of Oman in receiving end-to-end services.

Mihir Vora, founder and CEO of Magnus Medi, said, "We are glad to join hands with Jaslok Hospital to assist Omani citizens through our Oman office. Jaslok Hospital is well-known to Omanis and we believe this coordination centre will substantially enhance service delivery and help provide comfort to patients."

The Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre is one of the oldest tertiary care, multi-specialty trust hospitals in India. It is a 48-year-old ultra-modern facility, internationally acclaimed for its world class medical services with 356 inpatient beds, including 75 critical care beds, covering all specialties and diagnostics. Its inpatient services are complemented with outpatient facilities, an exclusive centre for health check of executives and state-of-the-art technology.

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Oman's inflation falls to 2.6% despite higher food prices

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Despite the increase in prices of many food items, Oman's annual inflation rate decreased in July, thanks to the stability in prices of fuel, rent, water, electricity and telecom services.

Inflation rate – as measured by the sultanate's consumer price index (CPI) – decreased to 2.6 per cent in July 2022 from 2.9 per cent in June 2022. Comparatively Oman's inflation rate stood at above four per cent at the beginning of this year.

However, consumer price inflation for food and non-alcoholic beverages group, which has nearly 24 per cent weight in Oman's CPI, rose to 6.0 per cent in July 2022 compared to the same month of the previous year.

Global food prices have been soaring fast since the beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Since Oman needs to import most of the food materials from international markets, rising global prices directly affect the prices in local market.

Among food items, prices of cooking oils and fats rose more than 19 per cent year-on-year in July, but bread and cereals prices grew at a lower rate of 3.9 per cent.

While meat prices recorded an 8.5 per cent increase, prices of fish and seafood products jumped 7.9 per cent in July on



Prices of cooking oil and fats rose more than 19 per cent year-on-year in July (Muscat Daily)

Consumer price inflation for food and non-alcoholic beverages group rose to 6% in July 2022 compared to the same month of the previous year

year-on-year basis. Consumer prices for vegetables remained 1.6 per cent higher in July compared with the same month a year ago, while prices for fruits jumped by 9.8 per cent.

On the other hand, prices in the housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels group – which has over 26 per cent weight in Oman's CPI – in-

creased only by 0.6 per cent in July this year compared to July 2021. Prices in the transport group – which has more than 19 per cent weight in CPI – increased by 2.6 per cent in July of this year compared to the same month a year ago.

International institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and global

credit ratings agencies expect Oman's inflation to remain above three per cent level in 2022.

Households in Oman and other GCC countries have been largely insulated from rising global inflation due to government measures that capped prices of fuel and essential commodities and diversified food import sources.

Most of advanced and emerging market economies are dealing with soaring fuel and food prices this year. Global inflation has sharply increased driven mainly by the Russia-Ukraine conflict and supply problems due

to COVID-19 related restrictions implemented in 2020 and 2021.

Oman's inflation continues to be significantly lower than most of advanced and emerging market countries.

'In contrast with the global inflationary trend, Oman's inflation has been decreasing thanks to the stability in prices of fuel, rent, water, and electricity. Oman introduced and implemented a set of measures such as social protection measures, economic stimulus, and support for small and medium sized businesses which greatly eased upward inflationary pressures from soaring,' Kuwait-based Kamco Investment recently said.

The IMF expects Oman's inflation to average 3.7 per cent this year, which is well below the global average.

Despite the growing global inflationary pressures, inflation outlook in Oman remains moderate and does not pose any imminent concern for financial stability in the sultanate, the Central Bank of Oman recently said in its Financial Stability Report 2022.

As per the CBO, inflation expectations for over half of the consumer basket in Oman remain low. Moreover, higher oil revenues have provided more fiscal space to the government for targeted intervention [such as subsidies] to offset any inflationary pressures to complement monetary actions taken by CBO.



Gulf states to see \$1.3tn oil windfall in next four years: IMF

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oil and gas producing countries in the Middle East, particularly Gulf states, will see additional oil revenues of up to US\$1.3tn over the next four years, thanks to higher energy prices due to Russia-Ukraine conflict, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

According to a *Financial Times* report, the IMF director for the Middle East and North Africa, Jihad Azour, said that relative to expectations before the war in Ukraine, the Middle East region's oil and gas exporters, particularly Gulf states, will see additional cumulative oil revenues of US\$1.3tn through 2026.

The IMF's projections underscore how high energy prices driven by Russia's war in Ukraine are buoying Gulf countries while much of the rest of the world grapples with soaring inflation and fears of recession, the *Financial Times*

report said. The IMF forecasts that economic growth in the GCC will accelerate from 2.7 per cent in 2021 to 6.4 per cent this year.

Azour said it was important that the Gulf states used the latest windfall to 'invest in the future', including preparations for the global energy transition.

"It is an important moment for them to...accelerate in sectors like technology [domestically] as this is something that will allow them to increase productivity," he told *Financial Times*. "In addition, their investment strategy could benefit from the fact that asset prices have improved for new investors, and the capacity to increase their market share in certain areas are also opportunities."

But Azour added that it was critical that they [Gulf states] maintained fiscal discipline and momentum on reforms designed to reduce their countries' dependence on oil.

GCC, UK launch free trade talks

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia – The Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Dr Nayef al Hajraf highlighted the importance of the friendly relations between the GCC states and the United Kingdom in serving the common interests of both sides.

Addressing the opening session of the first stage of the GCC-UK free trade talks on Monday, Dr Hajraf voiced hope that the talks would lead to an ambitious free trade agreement (FTA) between the GCC and the UK and open new horizons



Dr Nayef al Hajraf

for joint investment, according to a GCC Secretariat press re-

lease. The joint statement, signed

with British Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan on June 22, laid the groundwork for launching the negotiations on Monday, Kuwait News Agency quoted Dr Hajraf as saying.

Leaders of the GCC member states believe that these negotiations would deepen the strategic partnership with the UK in all economic, trade and investment fields, he added.

The first stage of the free trade talks between GCC and the UK, being held via video link, will continue until August 25. WAM

OPEC+ has 'means' to deal with oil price volatility: Saudi Arabia

"OPEC+ has the commitment, the flexibility, and the means within the existing mechanisms... to deal with such challenges including cutting production at any time", Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said in an interview with Bloomberg, according to Saudi state news agency SPA.

The Saudi-led Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) consists of 13 members.

OPEC and 10 allies led by Russia – a group known as OPEC+ – agreed last month to raise production by 100,000 barrels per day (bpd) in September following Western calls for more output after Russia's war in Ukraine and a post-pandemic surge in demand sent crude prices soaring.

They had agreed to increases of almost 650,000 bpd in July and August, but the cartel has struggled to meet its quotas.

Oil prices have dropped



OPEC+ has the commitment, the flexibility, and the means within the existing mechanisms... to deal with challenges including cutting production at any time

- PRINCE ABDULAZIZ BIN SALMAN

from a peak in June due to growing supplies as well as concerns over the deteriorating

economic outlook. "Volatility and thin liquidity send erroneous signals to mar-

kets at times when clarity is most needed," said Prince Abdulaziz.

He warned that a "vicious circle" was being "amplified by the flow of unsubstantiated stories about demand destruction, recurring news about the return of large volumes of supply, and ambiguity and uncertainty about the potential impacts of price caps, embargoes, and sanctions."

OPEC raised production by 162,000 barrels in July to a total of 28.8mn bpd, with most of the output coming from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, according to its monthly report.

"In OPEC+ we have experienced a much more challenging environment in the past and we have emerged stronger and more cohesive than ever," said Prince Abdulaziz.

"Soon we will start working on a new agreement beyond 2022", he added. AFP

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MUSCAT DAILY

Euro hits 20-year low as economy shrinks

London, UK – The euro dived Tuesday to a new two-decade dollar low and equities wavered, as data highlighted the shrinking eurozone economy and the worsening energy crunch.

The single currency, hit also by the US Federal Reserve's rate-hiking plans before this week's hotly-awaited comments from Chair Jerome Powell, tumbled to US\$0.9901.

The shared unit had already plunged below parity Monday on recession fears to plumb the lowest levels since 2002, when it came into physical circulation.

European economic activity fell for a second straight month in August, a keenly-watched survey revealed Tuesday, as high inflation fuelled by Russia's war in Ukraine darkens the outlook.

The S&P Global Flash Eurozone PMI index dropped to its lowest level in 18 months as rising prices hurt demand for services and supplies to manufacturing.

The PMI fell from 49.9 in July to 49.2 in August. A reading below 50 represents a contraction in business activity.

The index dropped under 50 in July after 16 months of growth, as inflation driven by soaring energy prices and supply chain crises batters the world economy.

Manufacturing was already down last month but the downturn has now spread to services, including tourism, which had helped some EU economies hobble through the summer.

"Cost of living pressures mean that the recovery in the service sector following the lifting of



pandemic restrictions has ebbed away," said Andrew Harker of S&P Global Market Intelligence.

"Declining output is now being seen across a range of sectors, from basic materials and auto firms through to tourism and real estate companies as economic weakness becomes more broad based in nature."

Harker said the survey showed that European manufacturers had built up record inventories of unsold finished goods, suggesting that production would not pick up "any time soon".

'Overarching threat'

"Eurozone PMIs ... confirm concerns of an impending recession in Europe on the back of high inflation and energy crunch, as they signal declining activity

for two months in a row," warned Citi analyst Luis Costa.

He added: "The energy crunch remains an overarching threat to economic stability in Europe."

Equities in the region wavered amid stubborn worries that the US Federal Reserve will carry on ramping up interest rates to fight inflation.

Rising US interest rates also push the dollar higher against other currencies.

On Tuesday, natural gas prices remain elevated on fears over a temporary halt to Russia's gas deliveries to Europe.

The Dutch TTF Gas Futures contract stood at 274.50 euros per megawatt hour, although this was down slightly from Monday.

Gas had spiked to record peaks in March after key pro-

ducer Russia launched its invasion of neighbouring Ukraine.

That has sparked surging domestic energy bills, fuelling decades-high inflation that has prompted tighter monetary policy around the world.

"As it has become painfully obvious, natural gas is a much more effective weapon in the hands of Russian politicians than the Kalashnikov in the hands of their soldiers," noted PVM analyst Tamas Varga.

This has hit the single currency hard because the bloc relies heavily on imported Russian gas, indicated Societe Generale analyst Kit Juckes.

Fears increased after Russia's Gazprom said Friday that the Nord Stream pipeline would be closed for maintenance at the

end of the month, cutting Europe's crucial gas deliveries.

"The euro's problem is ... the threat from continued squeezing of gas supplies and the cost of replacing Russian gas," Juckes said.

Asian markets fell again Tuesday as traders grew increasingly jittery over rising US rates.

Wall Street fell deep into the red on Monday with the S&P 500 and Nasdaq both off more than two percent.

With the Jackson Hole symposium of central bankers and finance chiefs taking place this week, the focus is on what Fed chief Jerome Powell says about its plans to tackle prices, with many fearing officials could send the economy into recession.

AFF

What are the consequences?

Paris, France - The euro has hit a fresh two-decade low against the dollar, sinking to US\$0.9901 on Tuesday. Why has the value of the single European currency fallen and what are the consequences?

Strong dollar

As much as the euro is weakening, the dollar is strengthening. That is due to the monetary policy of the US Federal Reserve, which is raising interest rates much more aggressively.

This makes dollar-denominated debt more attractive for investors, strengthening demand for dollars.

Meanwhile, the European Central Bank has only just started raising interest rates, and not as aggressively as the Fed.

"The ECB is walking on egg shells," said Eric Dor, head of economic research at the IESEG School of Management in Paris. "It can't let rip on raising interest rates because it is worried about creating a sovereign debt crisis for the most heavily indebted eurozone nations," he added.

Investors are also worried about eurozone nations falling into recession due to high energy prices caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Western sanctions. That makes eurozone assets less attractive to investors, and hence demand for the euro as

well.

Costlier imports

Nearly half of all goods imported into the eurozone are invoiced in dollars, compared to less than 40 per cent in euros, according to the European statistics authority, Eurostat.

Oil and gas, for example, are traditionally paid for in dollars, and the price of these two commodities has soared in recent months as a result of Russia's war against Ukraine.

That means more euros are needed to pay for an equivalent amount of goods in dollars.

Europeans travelling to United States will feel the weakness of the euro, but US tourists visiting the eurozone will feel relatively rich.

On growth and debt

Since a weak euro can make eurozone goods and services more competitive abroad, it can soften the blow that rising costs of raw materials have on growth. The effect on debt repayment is less clear cut.

The higher the pace of economic growth, the faster a country can repay its debt, if financial markets consider European debt to be safe enough and interest rates stay low, said Isabelle Mejean of Sciences Po university Paris.

AFF

Cyprus says its offshore gas discovery could boost European supplies

Nicosia, Cyprus – A new gas discovery off Cyprus could speed up exploitation of untapped resources and help secure supplies to Europe, Cypriot Energy Minister Natasa Pilides said Tuesday.

Italian giant Eni and France's TotalEnergies announced on Monday a "significant gas discovery at the Cronos-1 well, in Block 6, offshore Cyprus".

Cyprus's energy ministry said preliminary estimates indicated the reservoir holds about 2.5tn cubic feet (70bn cubic metres) of natural gas.

With Russia threatening to cut off gas supplies to the European Union, Nicosia was in talks with Brussels to become part of the bloc's energy plan to reduce reliance on Moscow, Pilides told state radio.

The minister said she had contacted Eni and TotalEnergies to "find ways to optimally exploit this discovery".

The gas find was located 165



kilometres (about 100 miles) off the southwest coast of Cyprus.

In 2018, Eni discovered the large Calypso-1 gas field in the same block, containing an estimated 4.5tn cubic feet of gas.

The Cypriot energy ministry said Monday more drilling had begun in a new well called Zeus-1 in Block 6, where additional quantities of gas could be discovered.

Nicosia has granted drilling licences for seven blocks to the Eni-Total consortium.

The latest discovery adds to three other major gas finds, including at the Aphrodite well in

Block 12 of 4.5tn cubic feet, licensed to US firm Chevron, Britain's Shell, as well as Israeli partners.

Pilides estimated it would take about three years to commercially exploit Aphrodite, with the gas likely to be exported to nearby Egypt.

In December, US giant ExxonMobil and Qatar Energy signed a contract for oil and gas exploration and production-sharing off Cyprus, angering Turkey.

Gas exploration in the eastern Mediterranean has been a sore spot for the two nations due to competing claims over rights to maritime zones.

In February 2019, ExxonMobil and Qatar Energy discovered a huge natural gas reserve off Cyprus in Block 10, the island's largest find to date with an estimated five to eight trillion cubic feet.

AFF



UK economy shrinks by 11% in 2020

London, UK – The British economy shrank by 11 per cent in 2020, its sharpest contraction in more than 300 years, as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, revised data by the official statistics body showed on Monday.

The Office for National Statistics had originally estimated that Britain's gross domestic product shrank by 9.3 per cent in 2020, but the latest revision came about due to changes to the way the data are calculated, it said. The contraction represents the sharpest since the "Great Frost" of 1709, according to

data held by the Bank of England.

The UK economy has therefore shrunk by more than all other Group of Seven economies, but the ONS pointed out that only the United States had so far undertaken the same type of in-depth revisions.

"Our more up-to-date data show that the health service faced higher costs than we initially estimated, meaning its overall contribution to the economy was lower," said the ONS statistician Craig McClaren.

AFF

Europe huddles down for winter without Russian gas

Paris, France - Woolly socks and thermostats turned down a notch: Europeans are preparing for a difficult winter without gas supplies from Russia, part of the fallout from the war in Ukraine.

Latvians have been adjusting since the end of July, when Russia stopped supplying gas to the Baltic former Soviet state.

They know what to expect in the coming months.

"Energy prices are so exorbitant that we already cut off the hot water from the city pipeline and installed our own hot water boiler," said Juons Ratiniks, who lives in the city of Rezekne, near the Russian border.

"It is cheaper to use it when

we actually need it than pay for constantly heated hot water," supplied centrally, the retired border guard explained.

Politicians need to understand that people expected help when their energy bill started shooting up, said Ratiniks.

With elections due in October, he warned, "they better support heating for us -- otherwise we'll give heat to them!"

Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Poland have also already had their gas cut, while other countries have seen their supply reduced drastically.

Deliveries of Russian gas to Germany via the Nord Stream pipeline will be halted for several

days at the end of this month, the second stoppage this summer. While ostensibly for maintenance, Berlin has accused Moscow of halting supplies over Western sanctions imposed over Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Overall, supply was down in July by around 70 per cent, year on year, according to several experts consulted by AFP.

'Global energy crisis'

Governments around Europe are not relishing the prospect of cold radiators and factories forced to stop operating.

Many believe Russian President Vladimir Putin is using energy supplies as a strategic



weapon to put pressure on nations that have applied sanctions against Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine.

The cut in supply has pushed the price of gas – and electricity

– through the roof given that is what many power stations run on.

A surge in oil prices has further complicated matters, even if its value has fallen back some-

what recently.

"The world is experiencing the first truly global energy crisis in history," Fatih Birol, executive director of the International Energy Agency, wrote last month.

"The situation is especially perilous in Europe, which is at the epicentre of the energy market turmoil."

Natural gas is so important to so many countries – particularly Germany, which needs it for its heavy industries – that it was exempted from European sanctions against Russia.

Coal, in contrast, is subject to a total embargo, while for oil, a progressive embargo applies.

The gas supply from Russia to

Germany from the Nord Stream 1 pipeline has already been drastically cut back.

"We now assume that Russian gas flows to Europe via Nord Stream 1 will fluctuate between zero and 20 per cent capacity in the coming months," said Matt Oxenford of the Economist Intelligence Unit. And that, he added, would lead to a recession in Europe in the winter of 2022-2023.

"Given current gas infrastructure, Germany cannot compensate for an 80 per cent cut in Russian gas without a drastic reduction in demand, leading to a recession over the winter," he added.

AFF

Automobili Lamborghini unveils new Urus Performante

Automobili Lamborghini unveiled the all-new Urus Performante, a new benchmark for Super SUV 'fun to drive' performance, at The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering.

The Urus Performante is the newest and most technologically advanced version of the Super SUV model to date, which is now the fastest production SUV to climb to the Pikes Peak summit (10:32.064), beating the previous hill climb record set in 2018 by the Bentley Bentayga (10:49.902). The Urus Performante raises the bar in sportiness and performance with design emphasis that reflects the new Urus' prowess on street, track and loose surfaces.

"The Urus Performante brings to life the true performance capabilities of our Super SUV, the best-selling model by Lamborghini," said Stephan Winkelmann, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Automobili Lamborghini.

Ooredoo offers free Snapchat to 'share khareef moments'

Happiness is better shared and this khareef season, Ooredoo is making sure customers can share their best moments with friends and followers with Unlimited Snapchat on Shahry postpaid.

Customers that subscribe to or upgrade their Shahry plans any time up until 29 September will be able to snap round the clock absolutely free. With all the latest filters and lenses, Snapchat is a super fun way to express your creativity and stay connected.

Ooredoo's Shahry Endless and Omanuna plans offer a variety of options to suit all needs and budgets. From never-ending Internet, unlimited local voice, generous international minutes and so much more, it all comes with no contract which means plenty of freedom to upgrade or downgrade, swap and repeat. Plus, with Omanuna plans coming with a free subscription to STARZPLAY, there's entertainment on tap! To get free Unlimited Snapchat, one needs to simply subscribe to or upgrade any Shahry postpaid plan by visiting the nearest Ooredoo store or dealer, logging into the Ooredoo App or visiting the eShop at shop.ooredoo.om.

Travelport, Oman Air renew pact to maintain easy travel

Travelport, a global technology company that powers travel bookings for hundreds of thousands of travel suppliers worldwide, and Oman Air, the national airline of Oman announced that they have reached a multi-year renewal of content agreement that will enable modern travel retailing by bringing Oman Air content to Travelport-connected travel agencies all over the globe via Travelport+, Travelport's next-generation travel retailing platform.

Umesh Chhiber, Senior Vice President - Revenue, Retail & Cargo, Oman Air said, "Throughout our decades-long partnership, Travelport has demonstrated its values and commitment by providing the best service, collaborating strategically with us to implement milestone initiatives, and meeting our business development needs. We are confident that Travelport+, Travelport's next-generation travel retailing platform, will continue to assist us in further strengthening our airline travel retailing products' global position and, as a result, creating more value for agencies and travellers."

WFS to focus on reshaping airline resilience post-COVID

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced that the 2022 World Financial Symposium (WFS) will focus on reshaping airline resilience. The event will take place from September 19 to 22 in Doha, Qatar, with Qatar Airways as the host airline.

Following the greatest shock to aviation in history, the industry is emerging rapidly from the pandemic and government-mandated travel restrictions of the past two years. Industry losses are expected to reduce to US\$9.7bn this year from nearly US\$180bn in red ink in 2020-21. As travel barriers fall in most regions, very strong demand is supporting expectations for a recovery to pre-COVID-19 traffic levels by 2024, with profitability a possibility in 2023. At the same time airline debt levels have soared as carriers borrowed to stay aloft during the crisis. And finance departments across the industry will face challenges as the industry achieves its 2050 fly net zero commitment. "Airlines are resilient. Now is the time to build on the hard work and difficult restructurings of the past two years to seize opportunities coming out of the crisis. Finance will play a vital role in supporting the ongoing recovery while creating a sustainable capital structure to support our ambitious environment agenda," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General.



Alghanim Industries brings Costa Coffee back to Oman

Costa Coffee returns to Oman under the new banner of Kuwaiti powerhouse Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately owned companies in the region. The first Costa Coffee Oman store is now officially open in the Mall of Oman, with four more slated to open before the end of the year across the Sultanate of Oman.

"Coffee poses a longstanding culture across the region and the Gulf with special traditions rooted in centuries of rich history. We are thrilled to be bringing back our world-class, hand-crafted coffee to customers in Oman," expressed Phil Broad, Vice President of Food and Beverages at Alghanim Industries.

H E Bill Murray, British Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, distinguished guests, Costa Coffee executives, and Alghanim Industries representatives all attended the opening of Costa Coffee at the Mall of Oman.

With a successful track record in success in creatively localizing Costa Coffee across the region, Alghanim Industries' entry and expansion in the Sultanate of Oman comes with a focus on empowering local communities.

"Alghanim Industries is excited to be



Alghanim Industries is excited to be embarking on a brand-new chapter with the homegrown Omani talent it aims to nurture through Costa Coffee

PHIL BROAD

embarking on a brand-new chapter with the homegrown Omani talent it aims to nurture through Costa Coffee," said Broad.

"The shared commitment between our companies comes with a larger focus on the community, and we can't wait to celebrate all the creativity that will materialise from our upcoming partnerships and collaborations with Omani chefs, coffee experts and the many talent Oman is known for."

Dubai tech startup Educatly appoints LinkedIn executive Ali Matar to Board of Advisors

Dubai-based tech start-up Educatly has appointed Ali Matar, Head of LinkedIn MENA and EMEA growth markets, to its Board of Advisors.

Founded in 2020, Educatly has launched a digital software platform that helps students study at international universities abroad, as well as helping universities recruit transnational students from over 90 countries.

The United Arab Emirates has recently introduced strategies that aim to position the country as a technical hub of excellence. With innovative new initiatives such as the National Program for Coders, One Million Arab Coders, and the introduction of Golden Visas for gifted students and tech entrepreneurs, Dubai is rapidly expanding towards be-



coming a hub for start ups and tech companies.

Educatly Founder & CEO Mohammed el Sonbaty said, "We are thrilled to welcome Ali Matar to our Board of Advisors. As Educatly enters its expansion and growth phase, having the leader-

ship and experience of such an accomplished professional will help our organisation towards our goal of building the world's premier higher education network." He pointed out that their vision 'is to build for education what LinkedIn built for jobs, with a LinkedIn leader like Ali Matar joining our Board of Advisors, we are providing the perfect foundation to accomplish this'.

With his decades of experience in regional sales, business development, and general management, along with his in-depth understanding of Educatly's target markets, Sonbaty strongly believed that Matar would play a significant role in 'our growth in the near future'.

Commenting on his appointment to Educatly's Board of Ad-

visors, Matar said, "Connecting individuals to opportunity is at the core of our mission at LinkedIn, and I am proud to help Educatly realise its vision to empower young people and help students take their early steps into finding their professional passion and building a successful career."

With international travel and educational tourism starting to increase post pandemic, there has recently been an increase in international appetites for students to study abroad once again. Educatly is providing students with the ability to search, book and apply for universities around the world, as well as providing universities in the region to increase their international student numbers.

Talent Space International to hold mega show on Onam eve

Talent Space International is bringing talented Indian performance for a mega entertainment show slated for September 9 (Friday) to be held at Al Falaj Hotel at 6.30 pm.

The three hour show, coinciding with the Onam Celebrations, titled 'Guinness Mega Show' is directed by Kalabhavan K S Prasad. He will be accompanied by actress Swasika, singer Arun Gopan and other known mini screen artists, said a press release.

Swasika, besides being an actress, is a regular face in stage shows mainly as a dancer and also anchors several television shows. Arun Gopan shot to fame by entering the popular reality show, *Star Singer*.

After the show, he was seen



L-R: Actress Swasika, show organiser K S Prasad and singer Arun Gopan

grabbing some playback opportunities and became a popular singer. Kalabhavan K S Prasad has directed several shows around the world.

The Guinness Mega Show will be a visual feast for the Keralite community in Oman as it is being held on the eve of Onam

which is celebrated by all Keralite community in India and abroad with great fervor and zeal.

The presenters of the event are Coimbatore Ayurvedic Center and Purshottam Kanji Exchange. The Cocktail Family Team is also supporting the show.

MG Motor to begin production of fully-electric Cyberster car



MG Motor has confirmed that the British-born brand will manufacture a production version of its cutting-edge, fully-electric Cyberster concept car by issuing teaser images of the new model.

Developed as a co-creation between both customers and MG, and first showcased in 2021, the Cyberster is a two-door, two-seater sports car that blends MG's brand heritage with its future plans. The Cyberster was developed by the renowned SAIC Design Centre, and takes inspiration from the classic MGB Roadster. The Cyberster has a futuristic exterior look, with its characteristics of youthfulness, sharpness and boldness emphasised in several ways.

At the front the design highlight is the headlights, which are complemented by the slim grille and scissor doors. The taillight design, taking cues from modern art and the Union Flag, gives the rear of the car a distinct look and feel, while the upturned duck tail maximises the car's aerodynamic capabilities.

Spearheaded by the Global Executive Director of SAIC Design Centre, Shao Jingfeng, the objective of the project was to introduce a new roadster sports car and a personalised lifestyle car experience. This was enabled through MG's founding of a first-of-its-kind co-creation organisation. Taking into the design's account the opinion of users and expert designers, 25 major elements and 97 sub-elements within the car were co-created, taking customer engagement and personalisation to a new level.

'Excel at School' with Huawei MateBook D16, MatePad Pro

Huawei Consumer Business Group (BG) launched a series of devices to fit students in different learning stages to boost their education. The new Huawei MateBook D 16, a high-performance lightweight laptop with a 16-inch vast display.

This large screen, high performance new member not only carries MateBook series' signature elements in aesthetics, innovation, and smart experiences, but also brings numerous advancements, including a brand-new eye-comfort Huawei FullView Display, the high-performance 12th Gen Intel Core H-Series Processor, a light metallic body, as well as cross-device collaborative experience. The new Huawei MateBook D 16 has transformed into a reliable companion for the hybrid education era as it unleashes students' creative power.

Led by extensive consumer research, Huawei has found that the desire for 16-inch lightweight laptops is on the rise. The Huawei MateBook D 16 is powered by the 12th Gen Intel Core H-Series Processor that runs on up to -i7-12700H, a TDP of up to 40W, dual channel RAM and a high-speed solid-state drive, which handles multi-tasking and complex usage scenarios flawlessly and efficiently, such as data analysis, code compilation, opening multiple webpages, charts, or PowerPoints.

Volante Technologies reports on 'Payments Modernisation'

Volante Technologies, the global leader in cloud payments and financial messaging, announced that, according to new original research, banks and fintech firms in the Middle East and Africa (MEA) are planning more investment in payments modernisation over the next two years than any other region in the world.

Data from the report Payments Modernisation: The Big Survey 2022, published by Finextra in collaboration with Volante, indicates that the beginning of 2022 has been an incredibly busy period for payments modernisation, propelled by mandates at the national and cross-border infrastructure level, and the drive towards instant / real-time payments. The survey elicited the highest proportion of responses confirming modernization plans in the 1-2 year time-frame from MEA compared with the rest of the world. Although COVID put a number of projects on hold at the start of 2021, planning for payments modernisation was well underway at that stage and led to this flurry of activity in 2022, the report said. The conversation at two recent round table events hosted by Volante in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, in partnership with MEA Finance Magazine confirmed this finding. Anand Sampath, Executive Director and Head, Global Payables and Receivables, First Abu Dhabi Bank said, "Banks need to...ride the wave, from the perspective of making sure that we work with this modernisation of payments."



Zubair Corporation organises blood donation drive for staff

The Zubair Corporation recently organised a blood donation drive next to Mitsubishi showroom in coordination with the Department of Blood Banks Service in the Ministry of Health, said a press release.

The event was attended by Al Zubair Mohammad al Zubair, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors. The event also hosted Ahmed Hamad al Kharusi, who donated more than 170 times so far, setting an example in this field.

Commenting on the event, Hilal Omar al Siyabi, Chief Corporate Services Officer at The Zubair Corporation said, "The Zubair Corporation has always believed in the necessity of aligning the economic and social activities of the business." In this context, he said, "we celebrate again

It is one of the constant activities that we are keen to have because of its important impact on the health level

HILAL OMAR AL SIYABI

by having a blood donation drive for the Corporation's employees".

"It is one of the constant activities that we are keen to have because of its important impact on the health level, and we encourage everyone capable of do-

nating to donate as much as possible. I take this opportunity to thank Ahmed al Kharusi for his participation in this event, as this participation had a positive impact in inspiring the employees to follow his example in the future," Siyabi added.

Ahmed al Kharusi expressed happiness for being able "to participate with The Zubair Corporation in the blood donation event, which is one of the noble practices that we strive to spread in the sultanate".

"As blood donation is directly related to saving the lives of people who need this donation, and it also enhances the stock levels of blood banks in the Sultanate. Therefore, I encourage everyone to make such act a good habit that accompanies them for life, because of its

importance in saving the lives of others."

Blood donation is generally considered one of the activities beneficial to humans, as the World Health Organization confirms its positive role in increasing the activity of the bone marrow to produce new blood cells, and increase the activity of blood circulation, in addition to its role in controlling the iron level in the blood, where the imbalance of this ratio is one of the causes of heart disease and arterial blockage.

Studies have also proven that those who donate their blood at least once a year are less likely to develop circulatory diseases and leukemia.

The Zubair Corporation is one of the leading companies having a positive role in community development.

Thawani celebrates World FinTech Day

Thawani, the leading provider of financial technology services in Oman and licensed by the Central Bank of Oman as a provider of non-banking financial services, celebrated World FinTech Day, which falls on August 20 each year.

During the celebration, Thawani highlighted the development of financial technologies in Oman, its own history as a leader in the sector, and the contributions it has made to the development of mobile payments for individual consumers, merchants and institutions.

A series of specialised workshops were held for employees in the sector, raising awareness on the most prominent global practices used in developing financial technology services, and acquiring and retaining customers.



Khalfan al Amri, Application Developer at Thawani, said, "I am happy to experience working in this new and promising sector in Oman. Being part of such a rapidly growing sector inspires me to keep learning and stay ahead of the curve when it comes to

the deployment of new innovations and technologies."

Lina al Harthy, User Experience Designer at Thawani, added: "Working in such a dynamic sector has challenged me to improve my skills. I continue to gain important knowledge every single

day and use it to support my work customising the app's design to cater to the distinct needs of users in Oman."

Founded in 2016, Thawani Technologies is an Omani company that specializes in providing smart payment solutions, while holding a global certificate in card security. Licensed by the Central Bank of Oman, the company has been providing innovative payment solutions in financial technology, in order to expedite payments' processes, improve user experiences, and make payments safer, faster, and easier. In addition to the basic payments' system, Thawani Technologies provides smart payment solutions through payment solutions that are built to meet the needs and challenges faced by institutions.

OSN+ starts streaming House of the Dragon, The Game of Thrones

The highly anticipated drama series, *House of the Dragon*, the prequel to HBO's *Game of Thrones*, is now exclusively streaming on OSN+, the region's leading streaming service for premium entertainment, simultaneously with the US.

In the lead-up to the premiere of the series, OSN+ activated *House of the Dragon* in several destinations across the Middle East to entertain and excite fans in the region, a press release stated.

Celebrations began with an exclusive screening of the first episode on August 16 at the Theatre of Digital Art in Dubai, fol-

lowed by an immersive 1,000 drone show that lit up the sky over the Boulevard Riyadh City during Gamers8, the world's biggest gaming and esports festival, on August 18.

Later, a massive five-metre long, three-metre tall Dragon skull was unveiled on the shores of the coastal city of El Alamein in one of Egypt's popular locations, Marassi Beach Clubhouse, on August 18 for three days, giving fans and visitors the opportunity to connect and engage with the global must-watch series ahead of its premiere date.

The celebrations continued on Monday in AlUla, located in

North-West Saudi Arabia, an area of untouched wilderness, outstanding natural beauty, and cultural significance featuring some of the world's most spectacular locations.

AlUla's iconic natural rock formation, Elephant Rock, was emblazoned with the House of the Dragon's sigil (symbol).

The stunning projection was accompanied by a gigantic Balearic dragon skull seen in the Diwan at Jabal Ithlib, one of Hegra's most fascinating sites, and within the stunning landscape of Wadi Al Fann.

"OSN+ is on a constant mission to deliver the world's best



content from all over the world to the screens of our customers in the Middle East," said Joe Kawkabani, CEO of OSN Group.

"Alongside creating engaging and immersive experiences, OSN+ has once again delivered on this promise with the launch of HBO's prequel of one of the most successful fantasy series of all time, *Game of Thrones*."

The ten-episode HBO Original drama series, based on George R R Martin's *Fire & Blood*, is set 200 years before the events of *Game of Thrones* and tells the story of *House Targaryen*. The series will debut exclusively on OSN+ on August 22.

DAILY CROSSWORD

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ACROSS

1) Jason's ship

5) Scarecrow's stuffing

10) Sound of a hoofbeat

14) Saturday service site

15) English Channel harbor town

16) Fury

17) Fish measurement

19) Cay

20) Talked, talked and talked

21) Scrabble unit

23) Attention-attracting sound

24) Twisted lock?

25) Fastens anew

28) Half-moon

31) A void capture by

32) Skirt fold

33) Bluejacket

34) Gentlemen

35) Turned sharply

36) Birthday party centerpiece

37) 2,000 pounds

38) Acted the farrier

39) Minds your own business?

40) Goulash containers

42) Answers skillfully

43) Sweeties

44) No longer working (Abbr.)

45) Eighth of a circle

47) They play by themselves

51) Sheep calls

52) Hare ball?

54) Lake near Niagara Falls

55) Teamsters, for one

56) Sandwich cookie

57) Bellow

58) Absorbent cloth

59) Go by bus

DOWN

1) Like a post-volcanic landscape

2) Ostrich cousin

3) Island discovered by Magellan

4) Unmarried ladies, once

5) Germ cells

6) Carved pole

7) Highway or street alternative

8) "Aladdin" prince

9) Knowledgeable, via books

10) Film reviewer

11) Perfectionist's concern

12) Look up and down

13) Jury member

18) Slightly amused reaction

22) " _ of Eden"

24) Raise Labradors, e.g.

25) Bandstand breaks

26) "Adam Bede" novelist

27) Was a coward

28) Parts of a crossword puzzle

29) In one's birthday suit

30) Highlight holder?

32) Conspires

35) Timesaver

36) IOU holder

38) Bridge measurement

39) Scaler's spike

41) Animal that goes "pop"

42) Arson or robbery, e.g.

44) Helicopter blade

45) Follow, as orders

46) Be concerned

4 7) Cookbook direction

48) Delhi dress

49) Drew even with

50) _ gin fizz

53) Best-selling number?

NOTE PAD

MAAM ISLAM PELF

ANNE SCUBA ALOE

WATERMELONSLICE

BITE NUDGE JAB

DOH AHA EYEBALL

ALE MART TEHEE

MIRO RIO SHE

CORN SONTHE COB

AAH ERA HARK

CLINT SIRS TOE

HANGUPS CPA CAN

ITS REPAY READ

PIECES OF CHICKEN

INTO TRALA RENO

NOSY STREW USSR

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Thinking about how great it would be if you could suddenly, magically take a vacation? Well, you do have certain options: You can arrange for a mini break in the action, and if you have someone who's game to play hooky with you, that might not be such a bad idea. Aren't you due for a day off anyway? Your mental health is just as important as your physical health, so it's just as important to tend to it carefully. Go ahead and call in.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Even if your dealings with a certain higher-up have been less than amicable lately, you'll be able to smooth things over nicely now. So stop worrying about your job and about what might happen "if" (because "if" isn't going to happen). All you have to do is show up a couple of minutes early, ask them for a bit of their time, and have a nice heart-to-heart chat. Bet you'll end up even better off, professionally and personally speaking, than you were before.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

You've been working extremely hard lately, so much so that you're thinking you're actually too tired to go out tonight, no matter how lovely that offer is that you've just received. Before you refuse, though, think it over. Can't you grab yourself a power nap after work and rally? Sure you can. Besides, you have your reputation to think of as a nonstop partier who's always game for "just one more" of pretty much anything.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

You woke up this morning, looked in the mirror, and decided there was something you'd like to change. Well, good for you. You can do it and you know it. If it's a cosmetic change, start picking up brochures and asking for references from friends. If it's a diet or exercise you're thinking of, remember that it's always easier to keep to a set regimen if you have company. Isn't there someone you'd like to get to know better anyway?



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Even if things have been a bit on the rocky side between you and a dear one lately, you won't have to worry about that continuing any longer. You'll get out of bed in the mood to make things better. Well, with a couple of conditions. For example, there will be no more pouting (on their part) when you simply offer a suggestion about how to make things better. For your own part, you might want to promise to present those suggestions with just a touch more tact. Deal?



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

It won't take much arm twisting to talk you into a little recreation now. Yes, even though you might need to get up tomorrow, and even though you're ordinarily the very soul of responsibility. It will take even less strong-arming if you happen to be at the mercy of someone you find absolutely delightful, however, and if they're someone who's made it clear that they're just dying for a few quality hours alone with you. Oh, go ahead. And don't feel guilty. You're due.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

You're not in the mood for loud noises, bright lights, or music that's any more raucous than Hayden. So be sure you've got the ambience you're after, and don't settle for less. You're perfectly entitled to silence when you want it, and you need it now. Besides, you might need to get away for a couple of days to feed this mood of yours. Not a bad excuse for a trip to a place where there won't be any tourists to deal with. You'll think of something.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

The heavenly energies on duty at the moment are all in very nice positions, most especially for your sign. It all boils down to another wonderful day and another wonderful evening too. Better stock up on all the things you'll need to create the ambience you're after: candles, bubble bath, massage oil. Oh, and don't forget the music and the "Do Not Disturb" sign.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

You've been looking around your place lately and wondering if it's really where you want to be and how you want it to look. If you're not sure, you have options. You can seek out a realtor, start flipping through listings to find something that's a bit more suited to your tastes, or, on the less radical side, set yourself a budget, grab some color chips, hit the flea markets, and create a new home right where you are now. Take your time deciding, though.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

The heavens are conspiring to bring you even closer to your family, friends, lovers, and favorite playmates than you already are, and that's really saying something. In fact, you could end up in a long heart-to-heart chat with someone you've been dying to make peace with. And whether you're delivering or accepting the apology, you can rest assured that it will hold. Then for the fun part: catching up on old times. See? It's time to start talking.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You've been dropping hints lately about a certain someone you've been spending all that time with, about how wonderful they are, how nicely they were gifted by the gods in the physical, emotional, and intellectual senses, etc. You've been going on and on. Now it's time to take your new companion out to meet the gang and prove that you really do have impeccable taste. Bet you just can't contain yourself, you're so darned happy about it.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

The heavens have arranged for a particularly solid energy to turn each and every word you say into a firm, grounded statement, and that goes double for emotional subjects. Needless to say, there's no time like the present for you to call that "state of the relationship" meeting you've been mulling over. You want to clear the air, and you're ready to do just that. Make the call. You'll feel much better afterward. Both of you will.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Where is the Temple of Confucius?

A. Angkor Wat

B. Machu Picchu

C. Qufu

D. Giza

02. If somewhere or something is noisome it ...?

A. Is full of noise

B. Smells very unpleasant

C. Is sickening

D. Can be smelled

03. In 1936, whose paper "On Computable Numbers, with an Application to the Entscheidungsproblem" proved that a machine could perform any conceivable mathematical computation if it were able to be represented as an algorithm?

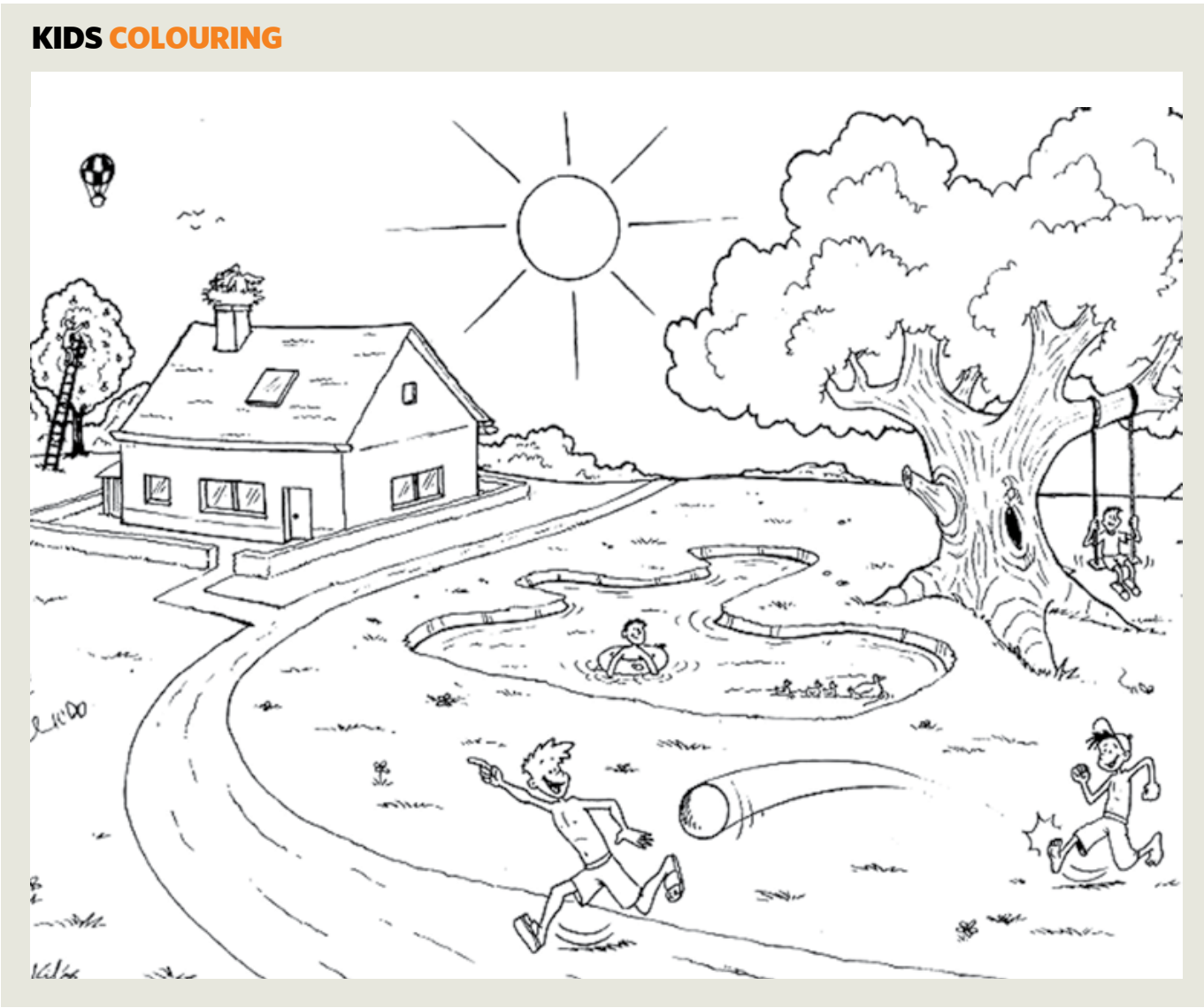
A. Albert Einstein

B. Alan Turing

C. Charles Babbage

D. Ada Lovelace

Answers: 1. C 2. B 3. B



BOGGLER

A	U	K	T
A	C	C	M
O	R	B	A
E	M	A	R

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

WORD BUILDER

I

N

E

C

A

K

M

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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

Sadr supporters launch sit-in outside top Iraq judicial body

Baghdad, Iraq - Several hundred supporters of Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr launched a sit-in outside Iraq's top judicial body on Tuesday, ratcheting up tensions in a showdown with a rival Shiite alliance.

Caretaker Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi cut short a visit to Egypt, where he had been due to take part in a five-nation summit, to return home to monitor developments.

Kadhemi 'called on all political parties to calm down and to take advantage of the opportunity for national dialogue to get the country out of its current crisis', a statement from his office said.

The standoff between rival Shiite factions has triggered an intensifying war of words, but so far no violence.

The Sadrist, who have already been camped outside parliament for the past three weeks, pitched tents outside the gates of the judicial body's Baghdad headquarters, AFP correspondents reported.

They carried placards demanding the dissolution of parliament and new elections, 10 months after an inconclusive poll failed to deliver a majority government. Even though his political bloc has taken part in previous administrations, securing top jobs in government ministries, Sadr himself has managed to keep above the political fray and is lionised by his supporters as an outsider dedicated to the fight against a corrupt elite.



A supporter of Muslim Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr raises his portrait during a protest outside Supreme Judicial Council HQ in Baghdad on Tuesday (AFP)

"We want to stamp out corruption," said Abu Karar al-Alyawi, a Sadr supporter among those demonstrating on Tuesday. "The judicial system is being blackmailed or maybe it's corrupt too."

On August 10, Sadr gave the Supreme Judicial Council one week to dissolve parliament to end the political deadlock but the council ruled that it lacked the authority to do so.

In the face of Tuesday's

protest, the council announced it was suspending work until further notice.

Talks boycotted by Sadrists

Police deployed in numbers around the headquarters, which unlike parliament, lies outside Baghdad's high-security Green Zone government and diplomatic compound.

Sadr's opponents in the so-called Coordination Framework,

who have been holding a sit-in of their own just outside the Green Zone, want a transitional government before new polls are held.

They include former paramilitaries of the Tehran-backed Hashed al-Shaabi network, and the party of ex-prime minister Nuri al-Maliki, a longtime Sadr foe. Last week, the prime minister convened crisis talks with party leaders, but they were boycotted by the Sadrists.

Since the aftermath of the

US-led invasion of 2003, Iraq has been governed under a sectarian power-sharing system that reserves the premiership for the country's Shiite majority community.

The Sadrists insist that after emerging from 2021 elections as the largest bloc in parliament, the constitution be amended to give it the right to nominate the prime minister, something their opponents strongly oppose.

AFP



A smoke plume rising after collapse of northern section of the grain silos at port of Lebanon's capital Beirut, on Tuesday (AFP)

New silo collapse in blast-ravaged port in Lebanon

Beirut, Lebanon - Eight more grain silos at Beirut port toppled on Tuesday, succumbing to damage from a devastating 2020 explosion in the third such collapse in a month, AFP correspondents reported.

A cloud of dust rose over the port after the collapse, which brought down the last of the northern block of silos that was more heavily damaged in the blast and where a fire had been burning since last month.

The remaining southern block is more stable and not at imminent risk of collapse, said French civil engineer Emmanuel Durand, who has installed sensors on the silos.

The silos had absorbed much of the impact of the massive explosion of haphazardly stored ammonium nitrate fertiliser that killed more than 200 people on August 4, 2020.

Only 12 of the original 48 silos are still standing, all of them in the southern block, Durand said.

A fire has been burning in the

silos for more than a month as remaining grain stocks ferment in the summer heat.

The complex has come to symbolise the tragic blast, but also state negligence and corruption, which many Lebanese blame for the explosion.

"We hold authorities responsible for what happened with the silos," said Mariana Fodoulain, who lost her sister in the explosion. "We must preserve the southern block of silos" as a memorial, Fodoulain said, echoing the demands of many blast victim relatives.

In April, the government ordered the silos' demolition but the operation was put on hold, partly because of the objections of victims' relatives.

Relatives had called for a sit-in near the port at 1400 GMT. Public Works Minister Ali Hamieh announced last week that the government had agreed to reserve 25,000sqm of the port to build new grain silos.

AFP

Iran asked for 'adjustments' to proposed EU nuclear deal: Borrell

Madrid, Spain - Iran requested 'some adjustments' to a draft agreement on reviving a 2015 nuclear accord with major powers proposed by the European Union, the bloc's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said on Tuesday.

During an interview with Spanish public television TVE, Borrell said 'most' countries involved in nuclear talks with Iran agreed with the proposal, but that the US had not yet responded. The 2015 agreement between Iran and six world powers - Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and US gave the Islamic republic sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear programme.

The deal was designed to

Iran responded by saying 'yes but', that is to say they want some adjustments

JOSEP BORRELL

prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon - something it has always denied wanting to do. But in 2018, then US president Donald Trump, a strong critic of the deal, unilaterally pulled out and slapped heavier sanctions on Iran.

Earlier this month, after more than a year of talks coordinated by Borrell and his team,

the EU submitted a 'final' proposed text - which has not been made public - to revive the accord. "Iran responded by saying 'yes but', that is to say they want some adjustments," Borrell told TVE, without providing further details.

During a press conference on Monday in Santander in northern Spain, he said Iran's response had seemed 'reasonable' to him and it was therefore submitted to the six world powers involved in the nuclear talks. "We are waiting for their response, most of them agree, but there is still no answer from the United States... we expect to receive a reply during this week," he added.

AFP

UN split over ban on Taliban officials' travel

United Nations, US - Members of the United Nations Security Council remained divided on Monday over whether to exempt some of Afghanistan's Taliban officials from a travel ban, diplomatic sources said.

Under a 2011 Security Council resolution, 135 Taliban leaders are subject to a sanctions regime that includes asset freezes and travel bans. Thirteen of them benefitted from an exemption from the travel ban, renewed regularly, to allow them to meet officials from other countries abroad. But this exemption ended last Friday, after Ireland objected to its automatic renewal for another month.

In June, the Sanctions Committee in charge of Afghanistan, comprised of the Security Council's 15 members, had already removed from the exemptions list two Taliban ministers responsible



Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, who is into diplomatic discussions, was among the 13 exemptions (AFP)

for education, in retaliation for the drastic reduction in the rights of women and girls that was imposed by the hardline Islamist regime. Several Western countries would like to further reduce the list, diplomatic sources said.

They highlight the failure to respect the commitments to uphold human rights or fight terrorism that were made by the

Taliban when they returned to power a year ago.

Early this month the United States announced the killing of Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in a drone strike in Kabul, calling into question the Taliban's promise not to harbour militant groups. China and Russia, however, supported a regular extension of exemptions list. "These

exemptions are still just as necessary," the Chinese presidency of the Security Council said last week, deeming it 'counterproductive' to link human rights to travel issues for Taliban officials.

Since last week, and again on Monday, several compromise proposals that would more or less shrink the list of officials concerned, or the number of authorised destinations, have been rejected on both sides, according to diplomatic sources. Discussions are expected to continue.

Pending a possible decision, none of the Taliban officials on the sanctions list can travel.

That was of particular concern to the Taliban's foreign minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi, who has visited Qatar several times in recent months for diplomatic discussions and who was among the 13 exemptions.

AFP

Russian tourists' luxury cars fill up Helsinki airport

Helsinki, Finland - Porsches, Bentleys and other luxury cars with Russian licence plates are filling up the parking garage at Helsinki's airport as Finland becomes an important transit country for Russian tourists flying to Europe.

The European Union shut its airspace to Russian planes after Moscow invaded Ukraine, forcing anyone who wants to travel to Europe to drive across the border or take a circuitous route using non-Western airlines.

Since Russia's COVID-19 restrictions expired in July, there has been a boom in Russian travellers and a rising backlash in Europe against allowing in Russian tourists while the war continues.

A quick stroll through the carpark at the Helsinki airport revealed dozens if not hundreds of high-end cars with Russian li-

cence plates, including a new Mercedes-Benz S-class sedan and Porsche 911 Turbo S.

"It boggles me," Finnish traveller Jussi Hirvonen said after leaving the garage. "I wish they weren't here before Ukraine's situation is solved."

Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto told AFP that the Nordic nation has become a 'transit country' for Russian tourists. "Helsinki airport is seeing a lot of Russian tourism at the moment."

Finland wants EU decision

Finland said last week it would limit Russian tourist visas to 10 per cent of current volumes as of September 1 due to rising discontent over Russian tourism amid the war in Ukraine.

But Russians continue to enter



Expensive cars with Russian plate numbers are seen in the premium parking area of the Helsinki airport last week in Vantaa, Finland (AFP)

Finland with visas issued by other EU countries in the Schengen borderless travel area for their journeys. "They come here

on Schengen visas issued by various different countries and then continue further via Helsinki airport," Haavisto said.

According to a survey conducted by the Finnish border guard in August, around two-thirds of Russians crossing Fin-

They come here on Schengen visas issued by different countries and continue via Helsinki airport

PEKKA HAAVISTO

land's eastern border do so with a Schengen visa issued by a country other than Finland.

"Hungary, Spain, Italy, Austria, Greece and Spain normally issue visas to Russians, and are generally among the top issuing countries each year," border guard official Mert Sasioglu told AFP.

Schengen rules do not allow Finland to close the border to specific nationalities, Haavisto

said. Such sanctions can only be decided jointly by the EU.

"As Finland and the Baltic countries are planning to restrict these visas, it would be good if all EU countries took similar decisions," Haavisto said. This sentiment was shared by many Finns at the airport. "There should be an EU decision to close the border," said traveller Jussi Hirvonen.

Finland intends to raise the issue at the next meeting of EU foreign affairs ministers in the Czech Republic on August 30.

After Russia lifted its COVID travel restrictions on July 15, the number of Russian tourists heading to Finland has surged.

While the numbers are still well below pre-COVID levels, there were more than 230,000 border crossings in July - up from 125,000 in June.

AFP

Malaysia top court sends former PM Najib to jail in 1MDB scandal

Putrajaya, Malaysia - Malaysia's highest court on Tuesday upheld former prime minister Najib Razak's 12-year jail sentence for corruption in the 1MDB financial scandal, a decision analysts said could slam the door to a political comeback.

Najib's daughter-in-law Nur Sharmila Shaheen said the family was told he was sent to Kajang Prison, located south of the capital Kuala Lumpur.

"My father-in-law asked us to take care of the family. He remained strong and calm," she said.

Federal Court chief justice Maimun Tuan Mat, speaking on behalf of a five-judge panel, said the tribunal found Najib's 'complaints as contained in the petition of appeal devoid of any merit'.

"On the totality of the evidence, we find the conviction of the appellant on all seven charges safe. We also find that the sentence imposed is not manifestly excessive," she added.

The appeals are 'unanimously dismissed and the conviction and sentence are affirmed', Maimun said.

The 69-year-old former prime minister looked somber and dejected, seated by his wife Rosmah and two children as the verdict was read.



Supporters of Najib Razak react outside the country's highest court in Putrajaya on Tuesday (AFP)

Journalists who were in an adjacent room watching the proceedings through video link saw Najib surrounded by family members, friends and party mates before the connection was cut off.

Outside the court, teary-eyed family members and supporters hugged each other.

Earlier in the day when Najib arrived in court, around 300 supporters mobbed his car chanting

'bossku' - 'my boss' in Malay - a rallying cry among his defenders.

Just before the verdict was read, Najib, who had said he received an unfair trial, made an impassioned plea asking for a two-month adjournment so he can adequately prepare for a defence.

During a break in the proceedings, he spoke to supporters, telling them 'if I am guilty, please forgive me'.

Barred from elections

Najib is the UK-educated son of one of Malaysia's founding fathers who had been groomed for the prime minister's post from a young age.

The final ruling on the jail sentence also came four years after his long-ruling party's shock election defeat in 2018, during which allegations he and his friends embezzled billions of dollars from state fund 1MDB were key cam-

On the totality of the evidence, we find the conviction of the appellant on all 7 charges safe. We also find that sentence imposed is not manifestly excessive

MAIMUN TUAN MAT

paign issues.

A lower court in July 2020 found Najib guilty of abuse of power, money laundering and criminal breach of trust over the transfer of 42mn ringgit (US\$10mn) from SRC International, a former unit of state fund 1MDB, to his personal bank account.

An appellate court in December denied his appeal, prompting him to go to the Federal Court for a final recourse.

Some analysts said the decision will likely derail any plans by Najib for a political comeback.

"Under Malaysian law, Najib cannot stand for this election and the next election," James Chin, a professor of Asian studies at the University of Tasmania, told AFP. AFP

Australian news site vows to fight Murdoch 'threats'

Sydney, Australia - A small Australian news website has made an unusual request to be sued by Fox News boss Lachlan Murdoch, taking on one of the world's most influential media figures.

Crikey, an often pugilistic Australian news site, published on Monday a series of legal threats it said it received from Murdoch's lawyers over commentary it published about Fox News' role in the US Capitol attacks.

Murdoch is the eldest son of billionaire media tycoon Rupert Murdoch, owner of scores of outlets including Fox News, *The Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Post*.

His lawyers claimed a June article - headlined 'Trump is a confirmed unhinged traitor. And Murdoch is his unindicted co-conspirator' - had defamed the media scion 22 times.

The article was mostly focused on former US president Donald Trump's role in the January 6, 2021 insurrection attempt.

It did not name Lachlan Murdoch specifically but it referred to the 'Murdochs and their slew of poisonous Fox News commentators'.

Crikey said it had decided to



Lachlan Murdoch

'fight' the threats from Murdoch's lawyers and rebuffed their demands to permanently remove the article from its website and publish an apology. "We want to defend those allegations in court," Crikey's editor and chairman said in a joint open letter, published on Monday as an advertisement in *The New York Times*.

The pair framed the issue as a battle for press freedom, and said they welcomed the opportunity 'to test this important issue of freedom of public interest journalism in a courtroom'.

The legal tussle pits an upstart website, with subscriber numbers in the low tens of thousands, against one of the world's largest media empires.

AFP

Mexican journalist killed hours after posting about disappeared students

Mexico City, Mexico - A journalist was shot dead on Monday afternoon in southern Mexico, authorities said, shortly after posting online about the disappearance eight years ago of 43 students from a nearby area.

Fredid Roman, who published his work on various social media pages and contributed to a local newspaper, was found dead in his car in the city of Chilpancingo, the capital of Guerrero state, the local prosecutor's office said on Monday evening.

The case of the 43 students from Guerrero, who went missing in 2014 after commandeering a bus to head to a protest, is considered one of the worst human rights disasters in Mexican history. The case was forced back into the spotlight last week when a truth commission branded the atrocity a 'state crime' that involved agents of various institutions.



Members of the Mexican Police inspect the vehicle in which journalist Fredid Roman was shot dead in Chilpancingo, Mexico, on Monday (AFP)

A few hours before his death, Roman published a long Facebook post titled 'State Crime

Without Charging the Boss,' in which he mentioned an alleged meeting between four officials at

the time of the students' disappearance, including former attorney general Jesus Murillo Karam.

Murillo Karam was arrested after the publication of the truth commission report last week, while dozens of warrants were issued for suspects including military personnel, police officers and cartel members.

It was not immediately clear if Roman's recent post on the missing students or his other journalistic work played a role in his death. Twelve journalists have been killed in Mexico so far this year, according to the government, while the NGO Reporters Without Borders (RSF) lists nine. Some media outlets have put the figure at 15 or 16.

With about 150 journalists murdered since 2000, according to RSF, Mexico is considered one of the most dangerous countries in the world for the press.

AFP

No threat could shake Taiwanese resolve to defend island: Tsai

Taipei, Taiwan - President Tsai Ing-wen said on Tuesday that Taiwanese people remained resolved to defend the island following China's huge military drills.

Tensions in the Taiwan Strait have risen to their highest in years since Beijing staged unprecedented drills in retaliation for US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taipei earlier this month.

Tsai made the remarks when meeting a visiting delegation of US scholars on the 64th anniversary of a Chinese artillery attack known as the '823 bombardment'. "That battle to protect our homeland showed the world that no threat of any kind could shake the Taiwanese people's resolve to defend their nation - not in the past, not now, and not in the future," Tsai said.

China's army fired 470,000 shells at Kinmen Islands and nearby islets in 1958, killing 618



Taiwanese soldiers demonstrate operation of locally-developed surface-to-air missile system at Hualien Air Force Base last week (AFP)

people in an attack that lasted 44 days. Taiwan lives under constant threat of an invasion by China, which claims the self-ruled democracy as part of its territory to be seized one day - by force if necessary.

Beijing lashes out at any diplomatic action that might lend Taiwan legitimacy and has responded with growing anger to

visits by Western officials and politicians.

For a week after Pelosi's visit, it sent warships, ballistic missiles and fighter jets into the waters and skies around Taiwan.

Taiwan has accused China of using the visit as an excuse to kickstart drills that could serve as rehearsal for an invasion.

AFP

Ivory Coast's 'Pearl of Lagoons' turns into a 'poto-poto'

Abidjan, Ivory Coast - It was once a jewel of West Africa - the 'Pearl of Lagoons', people liked to call it.

Today, the vast Ebrie lagoon which abuts Ivory Coast's economic capital Abidjan is a sick and sorry sight, choked by plastic pollution and ravaged by sand extraction and unbridled development. Named after an ethnic group that lives on its banks, the lagoon covers 120,000 hectares, mostly separated from the Atlantic Ocean by a strip of land.

Old-timers wax nostalgic about the days when its waters were a pristine aquamarine and mangroves teemed with fish and wildlife.

Today, the shoreside village of Beago exemplifies a nightmarish problem with plastic. Discarded bottles, wrappers and other plastic rubbish smother the banks for at least a kilometre.

"The situation is alarming.

There are no more fish because of the pollution - fishing has been abandoned," said the village chief Paul Abe Blessoue, 73.

Urban and industrial waste from Yopougon, Abidjan's biggest district, has transformed his village of 3,000 inhabitants into an open dump, he said.

"If we are not careful, Beago could disappear in a few years, abandoned by its inhabitants," he said.

Minimal recycling

Discarded plastic typically enters the marine environment from rivers or drains or by the wind. Once there, it becomes a notorious problem. Larger pieces can choke seabirds and mammals, and after biodegradation that can take years, tiny fragments may enter the food chain at the smallest level.

Many rich economies are trying to crack down through such



A man collects plastic and other waste on mounds of sand dumped into the lagoon by the runoff of wastewater and rain, on the shores of the Ebrie lagoon in the village of Beago in Yopougon, Abidjan on July 20 this year (AFP)

measures as banning single-use plastic bags, launching awareness programmes and sorting rubbish to encourage recycling.

But in Ivory Coast, as in many developing countries, little such headway has been made.

The country of 26mn pro-

duces 460,000 tonnes of plastic waste each year, said Yaya Kone, CEO of recycling company Coliba Africa.

Of this, 290,000 tonnes come from Abidjan, where some six million people live.

"Only three per cent is recycled and used again," he said.

The rest 'ends up in nature, especially the lagoon and the sea'.

'Dead bay'

One of the biggest expanses of brackish water in Africa, the lagoon stretches far through countryside west of Abidjan to the Azagny National Park.

Its eastern point lies at Grand Bassam - Ivory Coast's first French colonial capital, renowned today for its ocean beach.

"Plastic is the (lagoon's) biggest pollution source," said Ayenon Seka, from the Institute of Tropical Geography at the University of Cocody in Abidjan.

But plastic is not the only ill.

Around Bietry Bay, pollution has been compounded by indus-

trial extraction of sand and anarchic development. "Bietry Bay is a dead bay - it is extremely polluted, a real environmental disaster," said businessman Bernard Derrien, 76, who has lived in the area since 1998.

He said 1.6mn square metres of the bay had been filled in to build factories there.

'Poto-poto'

Gerard Frere, a Frenchman who has lived in Abidjan for 67 years and owns a hotel in the bay, remembered the old days with nostalgia. "Bietry used to be a corner of paradise - now it is poto-poto," said Frere, using a term for muddy terrain infested with mosquitoes and exposed to flooding.

A specialist in sports fishing, Frere said pollution had halved his turnover. "The floor of the lagoon is carpeted with plastic waste 30cm thick," he said.

AFP



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh being welcomed upon his arrival, in Tashkent on Tuesday (ANI)

India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to attend SCO meeting in Tashkent

New Delhi, India - India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' Meeting, which is set to take place on Wednesday in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

"Rajnath Singh is visiting Tashkent, Uzbekistan from August 23 to 25 to attend the Annual Meeting of the Defence Ministers' of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Member States," a government press release read.

During the Annual Meeting, Defence Cooperation issues among the SCO Member States will be discussed and it is expected that a joint communique will be issued after the deliberations. Rajnath Singh's address at the meeting is slated to be held on August 24, 2022.

Raksha Mantri, during the visit to Tashkent, will meet his Uzbekistan counterpart Lieutenant General Bakhodir Kurbanov, Minister of Defence of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which is

also the host country.

In addition, meetings are also scheduled with Defence Ministers' of some other Member countries of SCO on the sidelines of this meeting, where bilateral issues and issues of mutual interest will be discussed. During the

called for stern action against terrorism and drug trafficking.

The minister also presented an account of India's robust COVID response globally. In a Tweet, India Embassy in Tashkent wrote, "At SCO interior ministers meet in Tashkent, MoS

and issues of mutual interest were emphasised.

Rai also called on Uzbek Interior Minister Pulat Bobojonov in Tashkent where both the leaders discussed strengthening security cooperation including tackling challenges of terrorism and drug trafficking in the region.

Deputy Secretary General, International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO) commonly known as Interpol, James Stephen also called on MoS Rai in Tashkent. "Preparations for upcoming Interpol General Assembly in Oct in India were discussed. Expansion of India's cooperation with Interpol to include new and emerging areas was emphasised," the Embassy said.

Uzbekistan, the current chair of the organisation, will host the annual summit in the city of Samarkand on September 15-16. Earlier, a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the SCO member states was also held in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent. ANI

Preparations for upcoming Interpol General Assembly in October in India were discussed. Expansion of India's cooperation with Interpol to include new and emerging areas was emphasised

INDIA EMBASSY IN TASHKENT

stay in Tashkent, Rajnath Singh shall pay homage at the monument of Late Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and meet the Indian Diaspora in Uzbekistan, it added.

Earlier, during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) interior minister meeting in Uzbekistan, the Minister of State for Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai

Nityanand Rai called for stringent action against terrorism & drug trafficking and cooperation in cyber security. Presented India's robust covid response globally."

MoS Rai and Tajik Interior Minister Ramazon Rahimzoda met in Tashkent to discuss bilateral security cooperation, training and capacity building. Furthermore, regional situations

Mumbai 5-star hotel gets hoax bomb threat, police registers FIR

Mumbai, India - A prominent hotel in Mumbai received a hoax bomb threat from an unknown person, the Mumbai Police said on Tuesday.

On Monday evening the caller also demanded Rs 5 crore to defuse the bombs and claimed there were bombs kept in the hotel at 4 different places. "An unidentified person called the hotel and said that bombs have been kept at four places in the hotel and demanded Rs 5 crore

to defuse them," said Mumbai Police.

Lalit Hotel in Mumbai received the threatening phone call on Monday around 6 pm. Following the threat call, the hotel administration informed the police about it.

The police searched everywhere but they did not find anything suspicious.

The Sahar police station registered a case against unknown persons under sections 385, 336

and 507 of the IPC and started an investigation, added police.

Last month, two persons were arrested for making hoax calls about a person carrying bombs at Ambarnath railway station in Mumbai. The Kalyan Government Railway Police (GRP) made the arrests.

In March, a man was arrested for allegedly making a false bomb blast threat on the campus of Mumbai University. ANI

Indian Army foils infiltration bid in Jammu LoC

Rajouri, India - Indian Army on Monday night thwarted an infiltration attempt at the Line of Control (LoC) in the Rajouri district of Jammu.

The Indian Army stopped an attempt of infiltration at the LoC border in the Naushera Sector of Rajouri. Further details are awaited. Earlier on August 21, Indian Army in Sehar Makri area of town Nowshera apprehended an intruder who was allegedly coming for a suicide attack. ANI

India ruling party lawmaker arrested for Prophet comments

New Delhi, India - Indian police arrested a ruling party lawmaker on Tuesday for allegedly making derogatory comments against Prophet Mohammed, weeks after similar remarks from a top official embroiled the country in a diplomatic storm.

Raja Singh's words sparked outrage in the southern city of Hyderabad, where hundreds of people gathered on Monday night to demand the state politician be taken into custody.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) member, who has cultivated a reputation for inflammatory speeches, had the same day published a video that local media reports said had made insulting remarks about the Islamic prophet. A senior Telangana state police officer confirmed Singh's early on Tuesday arrest to AFP.

Singh's remarks were part of a broader tirade against Munawar Faruqui, a popular Muslim comedian harassed and threatened by

Hindu nationalists for his religious subject matter. Faruqui performed in Hyderabad last week. Singh had earlier threatened to burn down the venue, the news website India Today reported.

His arrest comes weeks after a prominent BJP spokesperson ignited protests across India and its neighbours by commenting on the relationship between Prophet Mohammed and his youngest wife on a TV debate programme. AFP

UK spies accused over arrest of Sikh blogger in India

London, UK - Human rights groups on Tuesday said UK intelligence agencies may have shared information with India that led to the arrest and torture of a Sikh blogger from Scotland.

Jagtar Singh Johal, 35, has been held in detention in India for more than four years.

He is accused of being part of a terror plot against right-wing Hindu leaders and has been charged with conspiracy to murder.

"Our investigators have uncovered critical information that in 2017, the UK government may have authorised M15 and M16 to share information about UK citizen Jagtar Singh Johal," two organisations, Reprieve and Redress, said in a joint state-

ment. They claimed this tip-off 'led to his unlawful arrest and torture in India'.

Current prime minister Boris Johnson was foreign minister at the time.

Britain is bound by international treaties such as the European Convention on Human Rights not to hand over citizens where they are at risk of torture.

But family members of Johal and other British citizens detained abroad or recently released have called for a law obliging the UK government to actively protect people caught up in such cases.

Johal, from Dumbarton in west Scotland, has filed a legal claim against the UK government and is being represented



by British law firm Leigh Day.

He has filed a petition with the High Court in London and is asking for a public apology and redress from the government.

"It would be totally unacceptable for the UK government's

Our investigators have uncovered critical information that in 2017, UK government authorised M15 and M16 to share information about Jagtar Singh Johal

REPRIEVE AND REDRESS

actions to have placed an individual, let alone a British citizen, at risk of torture or the death penalty," said Leigh Day partner Waleed Sheikh.

Electric shocks

Reprieve and Redress said Johal was abducted in 2017 with a sack over his head while in India for his wedding.

He was held incommunicado for 10 days and tortured with

electric shocks to his ear lobes, nipples and genitals until he signed a 'false confession'.

"Evidence has now been uncovered that the British intelligence agencies, M15 and M16, may have contributed to Jagtar's detention and torture by sharing intelligence with the Indian authorities," the NGOs said.

They accused the UK of having acted while 'there was a real

risk that Jagtar could be tortured, mistreated or face the death penalty'.

Rupert Skilbeck, director of Redress, called for a 'full review of the way that the UK government responds when UK citizens are tortured abroad' and 'the role of the intelligence community in this case'.

Leigh Day is arguing that an anonymised case study in a 2018 report by a British interior ministry body, the Investigatory Powers Commission, appears to discuss Johal's case.

The commission oversees the use of covert investigatory powers by UK authorities, including the police and intelligence services.

It said domestic spy agency

M15 and M16 passed information on a British national to foreign authorities resulting in their detention and torture.

'Excessive' arrest

"Britain is fortunate that its civil service doggedly documents wrongdoing," wrote *The Times* newspaper.

"It was only because of the investigatory powers commissioner's annual report that Johal's treatment and the hand of the British state in it was revealed."

The UN working group on arbitrary detention reported this year that Johal's arrest was 'excessive' and 'arbitrary' and on 'discriminatory grounds'.

AFP



Iraqi rescue workers search for survivors trapped under the rubble of the Qattarat al-Imam Ali shrine (AFP)

Eighth body pulled from Iraq shrine landslide

Karbala, Iraq - The body of an eighth pilgrim was pulled from an Iraqi shrine on Monday, two days after its partial collapse in a landslide, with rescuers announcing an end to the search for more victims.

The Iraqi civil defence authorities said that the body of a woman had been pulled from the rubble and debris from the shrine known as Qattarat al-Imam Ali near the Shiite holy city of Karbala, bringing the total number of victims to eight. In all, the bodies

of five women, two men and a child had been recovered during 60 hours of rescue operations, which had now been terminated, the authorities said.

The shrine remains closed to the public, they added.

Earlier, Jawdat Abdelrahman, director of the civil defence media department, had told AFP that three children had been rescued and rushed to hospital.

Civil defence spokesman Nawas Sabah Shaker had said on Sunday that between six and

eight pilgrims had been reported trapped under the debris of the shrine. The three children rescued earlier were in 'good condition' and being monitored in a hospital, emergency services had said on Sunday.

Search and rescue operations have been carried out since the shrine, which sits at the base of high, bare rock walls, became partially buried when earthen embankments collapsed on Saturday due to saturation from humidity, according to the civil

defence. It is the latest tragedy to befall oil-rich but poverty-stricken Iraq, which is trying to move past decades of war but is hobbled by political paralysis, endemic corruption and other challenges.

Anger has erupted at officials as grieving locals demanded an explanation.

"We want to know what happened, why it happened," said Bassem Khazali, whose nephew was among the victims.

AFP

EVERYDAY BATTLES

England captain Ben Stokes reveals he needs daily medication to treat anxiety

London, United Kingdom - England Test captain Ben Stokes has revealed he takes anxiety medication every day to help his battle with mental health issues. Stokes stepped away from cricket last year to focus on his mental health after enduring a series of panic attacks.

documentary, which will be released on Friday. "But it's not done just because I'm back playing. I still speak to the doc, not as regularly, and I'm still taking medication every day. It's an ongoing process." Since being appointed England's red-ball captain earlier this

I never thought I would be on medication to help me for that kind of stuff. I am not embarrassed or ashamed to say it because I needed the help at the time

BEN STOKES

The 31-year-old's father, Ged, died of brain cancer two years ago and Stokes opted out of his sport for six months as he struggled to come to terms with the loss. "I never thought I would be on medication to help me for that kind of stuff. I am not embarrassed or ashamed to say it because I needed the help at the time," Stokes said in an Amazon

year, Stokes and new Test coach Brendon McCullum have overseen their team's impressive revival. But Stokes still finds it hard to cope with international cricket's relentless schedule. In July, the World Cup winner announced he would retire from one-day internationals due to the "unsustainable" demands of playing all three formats.



Ben Stokes had to step away from cricket last year to focus on his mental health after enduring a series of panic attacks

Keen to further open the debate about mental health, Stokes allowed himself to be filmed for the documentary even when he was at his lowest ebb. "I find sometimes people are a bit nervous to go into the detail about that kind of stuff with me. It's perceived you can't feel a certain way, that's a sign of weakness to show that you are not mentally feeling great," he told The Telegraph. "People think they can't ask people who have struggled. No. It's fine. I'll happily tell you as much as I possibly can." Stokes said at the time of his father's death he resented the England cricket hierarchy and pondered if he was "playing for the wrong people" because he had been unable to visit him as much as he wanted during the cancer battle. "So I had a real thing with cricket at the time I took a break. I was really angry at the sport because it was dictating when I could see my dad," Stokes said. Stokes will be in action for England in the second Test against South Africa at Old Trafford on Thursday, with the hosts trailing 1-0 in the three-match series. AFP

India cricket coach Dravid has COVID ahead of Asia Cup



Rahul Dravid

New Delhi, India - India coach Rahul Dravid tested positive for COVID-19 ahead of the team's departure for the Asia Cup in the United Arab Emirates, the country's cricket board said Tuesday. The Twenty20 tournament begins on Saturday, with India's first match a blockbuster clash against Pakistan on Sunday in Dubai.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India said Dravid returned a positive result after a routine test. "Team India Head Coach Rahul Dravid has tested positive for COVID-19 in a routine test conducted ahead of the team's departure to the UAE for Asia Cup 2022," a BCCI release said. "Mr. Dravid is under the supervision of the BCCI Medical

team and has mild symptoms. He will join the team once he returns with a negative COVID-19 report. "The rest of the team will assemble in UAE on 23rd August, 2022." Rohit Sharma will lead the team for the six-nation tournament which also serves as a warm-up for the T20 World Cup in October.

Bangladesh recall batsman Naim for Asia Cup, Nurul out

Dhaka, Bangladesh - Bangladesh recalled batsman Mohammad Naim for the Asia Cup starting this week after wicketkeeper-batsman Nurul Hasan and pace bowler Hasan Mahmud were ruled out with injury. Naim, who has featured 34 times in Twenty20 internationals, will join the squad in the UAE from the West Indies where he was playing for Bangladesh "A". Nurul was kept in the squad

despite undergoing finger surgery in Singapore last week, in the hope that he would be ready for the tournament when it starts on Saturday. But Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) said that Nurul needs more time to recover. Mahmud suffered ligament damage to his right ankle during training and is sidelined for at least three weeks, the BCB said. AFP



Karthik Meiyappan took three wickets for just 13 runs from his four overs

Meiyappan, Waseem star as UAE beat Singapore to keep Asia Cup hopes alive

Muscat - The UAE defeated Singapore by 47 runs in the Men's T20 Asia Cup qualifier in Al Amerat, Oman, to keep their hopes alive of playing in the tournament proper which they host from Saturday. UAE had lost to Kuwait in their first match on Sunday which came as a big blow and they were determined to leave that defeat behind them. Put in to bat, UAE made 160 for 8 thanks mainly to Muhammad Waseem's power-packed 58 (34 balls). Basil Hameed

made 38 from 28 balls. For Singapore, Janak Prakash took 3 for 35 while Vinoth Baskaran claimed two wickets for 23 from four overs. Though the total was a bit disappointing considering Waseem's start, UAE more than made up for it with the ball and sent Singapore packing for just 113 runs. Karthik Meiyappan was the pick of UAE bowlers with three wickets for just 13 runs off his four overs and was adjudged the man of the match.

"It is good to be on the winning side and bounce back after yesterday," said Meiyappan. This means we are still in with a chance to go through to the Asia Cup, which is the most important factor. It was good to contribute to the team's win." Junaid Siddique also took three wickets, for 14 runs in three overs. UAE captain CP Rizwan was happy with the team's performance. "I am happy for the boys and the team and this was a much-

needed win," said Rizwan. "On paper we are one of the stronger teams and we needed to show that on the field as well. That is what we did today. The boys were hungry and keen to perform. When they got the opportunity, they grabbed it with both hands," he added. UAE play Hong Kong in their next match on Wednesday while Kuwait will take on Singapore. Only one out of the four teams will qualify for the Asia Cup, which will be played in the UAE from August 27 to September 11.

Wimbledon spectator threatens to sue Nick Kyrgios for 'reckless allegation'

London, United Kingdom - Nick Kyrgios is facing potential legal action for defamation from a woman he accused of being drunk and disruptive at this year's Wimbledon final. During his four-set defeat to Novak Djokovic on July 10, the controversial Australian called on the umpire to eject the spectator. The woman was briefly removed from Centre Court but later returned. Anna Palus accused Kyrgios of making a "reckless and entirely baseless allegation" against her that was broadcast around the world. The player's claim that she



Nick Kyrgios

"looks like she's had about 700 drinks" caused her and her family "very substantial damage and

distress", she said. After reflecting, she said had "no alternative" but to instruct

her lawyers to bring defamation proceedings to clear her name. "The need to obtain vindication, and to prevent repetition of the allegation, are the only reasons for taking legal action," she added in a statement. "Any damages recovered will be donated to charity." She added: "I hope that Mr Kyrgios will reflect on the harm he has caused me and my family and offer a prompt resolution to this matter. However, if he is unwilling to do this, I am committed to obtaining vindication in the High Court." AFP

Oman Cricket season 2022: Team registration confirmation till August 28

Muscat, Oman: Oman Cricket announced that its 2022 season will start with division leagues in October. The team registrations for the season opened on August 9. Oman Cricket Chief Development Officer Duleep Mendis had earlier invited teams to register for the new season. "We are delighted to begin the preparations for the domestic tournaments for all starting in October. On behalf of the Board of Directors of Oman Cricket, we invite teams willing to play quality cricket to register for the new season. We extend our sincere regards to all corporates, institu-



tions and sponsors who form the backbone of all teams participating in the domestic season." Registrations for the Premier Division and Senior Division

leagues are open now while for Junior Leagues and Women's League the registrations will start in September. The final groupings for the Divisional Leagues will be confirmed once the registrations are closed. The last date of team registration confirmation (registering along with fee payment) for all divisions is August 28. The last date for player registrations is September 4 upon team confirmation. Teams can register at www.omancricket.org > registrations. Oman Cricket can also be reached on +968 92204745 (Zeeshan Siddique) for queries regarding registrations.

'FORZA GINI'

Roma's Smalling dedicates winner against Cremonese to team-mate Wijnaldum who fractured his shin on Sunday

Rome, Italy - Chris Smalling headed Roma to a 1-0 win over Cremonese on Monday to make it two wins from two in the Italian Serie A while Juventus were held to an uneventful goalless draw by Sampdoria.

England defender Smalling met Lorenzo Pellegrini's corner in the 65th minute with a perfect header to send a wave of relief around a packed Stadio Olimpico and secure a hard-fought win.

The 32-year-old dedicated his winner to Georginio Wijnaldum, who signed from Paris Saint-Germain earlier this month but fractured his shin in training on Sunday.

Roma players wore shirts bearing 'Forza Gini' as they warmed up and Smalling also held up a Roma jersey with Wijnaldum's name and number after scoring.

"We're gutted for him and we hope he's back as soon as possible because he's such a quality addition for us," Smalling told DAZN.

Roma, who travel to Juve on Saturday, have a maximum six points from their first two games after a summer full of optimism

following their Europa Conference League triumph last season and an impressive transfer window which also brought in Paulo Dybala.

Already reeling from Wijnaldum's injury, more of that positive feeling was drained when starlet Nicolo Zaniolo had to be taken from the field just before half-time with a left shoulder injury following a thumping tackle from Luka Lochoshvili.

Fans were anxious after the exit of the 23-year-old Italy international, who has already suffered serious injuries to both his knees in his short career, but he later said on Instagram he would be back "in three weeks".

Without him, Roma had one less threat against Massimiliano Alvini's stubborn Cremonese, who might be on zero points but will trouble a lot of teams in Serie A if they put in more bold displays like Monday's.

Twice Cyriel Dessers went close with bicycle kicks and just after the break smashed a superb half-volley against the crossbar.

Charles Pickel then nearly snatched a point for Cremonese in stoppage time when his rocket shot fizzed millimetres wide.



AS Roma's Chris Smalling (R) celebrates with Paulo Dybala after scoring the winner against Cremonese in their Italian Serie A match in Rome on Monday (AFP)

We're gutted for him and we hope he's back as soon as possible because he's such a quality addition for us

CHRIS SMALLING

But Smalling's header across Ionut Radu was just enough to gain the three points and join Inter Milan and Napoli at the top of the table.

Uninspired Juve

Massimiliano Allegri's side were uninspired and failed to create much against a solid Samp at the Stadio Luigi Ferraris in Genoa.

The closest they came to taking the points was when Adrien Rabiot's low strike was correctly ruled out for offside, the France midfielder a starter after his move to Manchester United collapsed in the week.

Filip Kostic also forced a save from Emil Audero in stoppage time but that was about it from a team aiming to make a league title charge after finishing way

behind champions AC Milan last term.

"The positive thing is that we haven't conceded in two games," Allegri told DAZN.

"In the second half we did some good things, we scored a goal and created a great chance at the end... but we've left two points behind here."

Juve were missing the injured Angel Di Maria and they lacked

the stardust which the Argentina winger brought to the team in their season-opener win over Sassuolo last week.

Their sole decent opportunity in the first half was created by a bursting run in the 15th minute from Juan Cuadrado, who however after robbing Tommaso Augello could only shoot straight at Emil Audero in Samp goal with Dusan Vlahovic to his right.

Life in exile 'really hard' for Ukraine badminton player Ulitina



Maria Ulitina hits a return against Martina Repiska during their women's singles match at the World Championships in Tokyo on Tuesday (AFP)

Tokyo, Japan - Ukrainian badminton player Maria Ulitina has been living in Hungary since Russia invaded her country and says focusing on matches is "really hard when you don't have a home".

The world number 58 drove for four straight days to reach the Hungarian border when Russian missiles started firing over her home in the eastern Ukrainian city of Dnipro in February.

Six months later she is still living in exile and said the situation is now taking a serious toll on her mental health.

"I don't want to complain about it but mentally it's really hard when you don't have a home and you don't know where you will live tomorrow," the 30-year-old said at badminton's world championships in Tokyo on Tuesday.

"It's hard mentally, financially. It's difficult."

Ulitina had previously lived in Hungary so she had residence permission for herself and her dog when she fled the war in her homeland with the bare minimum of possessions. She said her training conditions and standard of living were good but "it's hard to manage" her mental

state as the war drags on.

She said her family in Ukraine were safe and they speak regularly, but she also worries that the front line of war is moving closer to them.

Ulitina has been active on the world tour this season and she made a surprise appearance at the All England Open in March,

I don't want to complain about it but mentally it's really hard when you don't have a home

MARIA ULITINA

barely a week after fleeing Ukraine for Hungary.

"It happened just two or three days before the start and I had no visa or anything," she said.

"It's big thanks to Badminton England that they asked the government to help so I could go."

Ulitina said she had Russian friends in the past but she has not heard from them since the war began.

AFP

Ukraine begins football season in spite of war

Kyiv, Ukraine - Ukraine on Tuesday launched its new football season despite Russia's ongoing invasion, in an apparent attempt to give a morale boost to the war-ravaged nation.

In the first match of the Ukrainian Premier League, Shakhtar Donetsk drew 0-0 with Metalist 1925 from Kharkiv at the Olympiysky stadium in Kyiv.

In an emotional pre-match ceremony, the players of both teams and the referees entered the pitch wrapped in Ukrainian flags and unfurled a banner that read "We are of the same courage."

The Shakhtar players wore T-shirts with the inscription "Donetsk. Ukraine will win" over their playing jerseys, while the players of the Kharkiv club wore



Action from the Ukrainian Premier League match between Shakhtar Donetsk and Metalist 1925

similar T-shirts with the inscription "Kharkiv. Ukraine will win."

In addition, Metalist 1925 played the match wearing T-shirts with the emblem of the

Ukraine's Armed Forces instead of the traditional sponsor logo.

After a minute of silence in memory of the Ukrainians who died as a result of the Russian in-

vasion, the first symbolic kick of the ball was made by a Ukrainian soldier.

Matches will be held without spectators due to security rea-

sons.

But passers-by outside the stadium in Kyiv voiced their support.

Maksym Scherbyna, a fan of Dynamo Kyiv, said the resumption of football was "very important".

"We show that war can't stop us," the 35-year-old said.

Fellow fan Denys Lazarenko, 41, said: "Our country needs football very much. It unites people very much."

The war has had a devastating effect on football clubs, particularly smaller and less financially secure ones. Two Premier League teams, FC Mariupol and Desna Chernigiv, have been allowed to skip the season with a right to return in the next one.

AFP

Champion Yamaguchi cruises in badminton worlds opener

Tokyo, Japan - Reigning women's champion and top seed Akane Yamaguchi cruised through her opening game at the world badminton championships on Tuesday, while men's number one Viktor Axelsen continued his smooth progress.

Japan's Yamaguchi beat Indonesia's Gregoria Mariska Tunjung 21-12, 21-15 in front of an appreciative home crowd in Tokyo to kick off her hunt for a second straight world title.

"I wasn't really nervous but you do get players who lose in the first round and go straight out, so I was really focused on getting the result," said 25-year-old Yamaguchi.

"I never felt that I had any breathing space until towards the end of the second game. It was more about dealing with my opponent than me going on the attack."

Spain's Carolina Marin, who is aiming to win a record fourth world title in Tokyo, got her campaign off to a steady start with a



Akane Yamaguchi of Japan in action against Gregoria Mariska Tunjung of Indonesia on Tuesday (AFP)

21-16, 21-14 win over Canada's Wen Yu Zhang.

Former world number one Marin endured a horror 2021, missing both the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Olympics and the world championships in her hometown of Huelva after suf-

fering an ACL injury.

Marin returned to action in April this year but she said Tuesday that she was "not 100 per cent yet".

"This is the condition that I have right now and I have to play in this condition," said Marin,

seeded number five for the competition.

"Let's see how far I can go in this tournament. Of course I want to get a medal here and I want to win, but this is not something I have in my mind."

There were also first-round

wins for South Korean number three seed An Se-young - 21-18, 21-10 over Vietnam's Thuy Linh Nguyen - and India's Saina Nehwal, who beat Hong Kong's Cheung Ngan Yi 21-19, 21-9.

On the men's side, Denmark's Axelsen was pushed hard in the first game of his second-round match against Mark Caljouw of the Netherlands before hitting his stride in a 21-19, 21-10 win.

Axelsen has lost only one match on tour this season and he was again ruthless in putting away Caljouw.

"Mark played really well in the first game and made it really hard for me, especially on that far side where the drift is a little bit hard to deal with," said Axelsen.

"I'm really happy that I managed to turn it around, it's good to be in the third round and I'm really looking forward to it."

Men's number two seed Kento Momota will play India's HS Prannoy on Wednesday.

AFP

REDEMPTION

Manchester United bounce back from Brentford humiliation with a stunning victory against Liverpool to give manager Ten Hag lift off



Manchester United's Jadon Sancho (C) celebrates with team-mates after scoring against Liverpool in their English Premier League match at Old Trafford on Monday (AFP)

Manchester, United Kingdom - Erik ten Hag secured his first win as Manchester United manager as goals from Jadon Sancho and Marcus Rashford beat Liverpool 2-1 at Old Trafford on Monday.

United had started the weekend bottom of the Premier League, but moved above Liverpool on a massive night for their new Dutch manager.

Liverpool's expected title challenge is fading fast with Jurgen Klopp's men yet to win three games into the new season.

United fans began the evening by marching on Old Trafford in protest at the decade of decline

The start of the game was exactly what everyone expected, what United fans expected, they were after us. They started slightly more aggressive than us

JURGEN KLOPP

overseen by the club's owners, the Glazer family.

A social media movement encouraging supporters to boycott the game in the wake of an embarrassing 4-0 defeat at Brentford last weekend failed to materialise.

But even amid the jubilation of a first league win over Liverpool

since 2018, chants of "we want Glazers out" persisted throughout the 90 minutes.

Ten Hag responded to the debacle at Brentford by dropping Cristiano Ronaldo and captain Harry Maguire among four changes.

After becoming the first United manager in more than a

century to lose his first two games, the former Ajax man got the response he desired in an explosive opening half hour that rocked Liverpool back on their heels.

"We can talk about tactics but it is all about attitude," said Ten Hag.

Anthony Elanga should have opened the scoring when he curled off the base of the post after two passes from Scott McTominay and Bruno Fernandes carved Liverpool wide open.

Defensive disorganisation has been a repeated failing of Liverpool's winless start to the season and they failed to learn their les-

son for the opening goal on 16 minutes.

A neat one-two between Elanga and Christian Eriksen opened up the Liverpool defence once more and when the ball was cut back to Sancho, he left James Milner on the floor before coolly slotting home. Milner bounced back up to confront Virgil Van Dijk for his role in the goal as the Dutch defender sat off Sancho.

"The start of the game was exactly what everyone expected, what United fans expected, they were after us," said Klopp. "They started slightly more aggressive than us."

AFP

Ronaldo has Man Utd future despite the axe, insists Ten Hag

London, United Kingdom - Erik ten Hag insists Cristiano Ronaldo still has a future at Manchester United after the Portugal star suffered the embarrassment of being dropped for his side's rousing 2-1 win against Liverpool.

United looked far more dynamic without Ronaldo as they stunned Liverpool to end a dismal run of two successive defeats at the start of the Premier League season.

With the ageing Ronaldo reduced to a substitute appearance in the closing minutes at Old Trafford on Monday, United were finally able to successfully deploy Ten Hag's aggressive game plan.

Marcus Rashford, Jadon Sancho and Anthony Elanga formed an attacking triumvirate that gave United the pace and energy they lacked in the 2-1 defeat against Brighton and the subsequent 4-0 humiliation at Brentford. Vindicating Ten Hag's decision to axe Ronaldo and igniting fresh debate about his future, it was

Sancho who scored United's opener and Rashford who doubled their lead.

After missing United's pre-season tour due to "family reasons" amid reports he had told the club he wanted to leave, Ronaldo was already unsettled heading into the new season.

United's failure to qualify for this season's Champions League convinced Ronaldo he should quit a club without a major trophy since 2017, giving Ten Hag a major headache just weeks after his arrival from Ajax.

But, with United insisting Ronaldo is not for sale, the former Real Madrid and Juventus striker has found himself in limbo.

The 37-year-old, who finished as United's top scorer last term, hardly appeared committed to the Ten Hag regime when he walked out of Old Trafford before full-time after being substituted during a pre-season friendly against Rayo Vallecano.

AFP



Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag (L) looks on as Cristiano Ronaldo (C) comes on to replace Marcus Rashford on Monday (AFP)

Lille punish striker Bayo for clubbing ahead of PSG drubbing

4Lille have booted striker Mohamed Bayo off their first-team squad and fined him 75,000 euros (\$74,400) after he was seen clubbing the night before the weekend's heavy loss to Paris Saint-Germain, a source close to the club told AFP on Monday.

Lille bought the Guinea international from Clermont for more than 12 million euros in July.

He started the club's first two league games, a win and a draw, without scoring.

Ahead of Sunday's showdown with Ligue 1 leaders PSG, photos appeared on social media of the 24-year-old in a nightclub in Lille on the eve of the defeat.

Coach Paulo Fonseca did not even pick Bayo on the bench as Lille were humiliated 7-1 and he will now train with their second team, who play in France's fifth tier.

AFP

Liverpool's worst start for a decade gives Jurgen Klopp cause for concern

Manchester, United Kingdom - Three months ago Liverpool stood on the brink of an unprecedented quadruple of trophies. Three games into the new season, they are yet to win a game.

A 2-1 defeat at Old Trafford on Monday saw Jurgen Klopp's men leapfrogged in the fledgling English Premier League table by a Manchester United side that had spent the past week being ridiculed for losing 4-0 at Brentford. Liverpool's worst start for a decade leaves the Reds already trailing defending champions Manchester City by five points and early leaders Arsenal by seven.

"It's not the nicest thing to look at, that's clear," said Klopp on his side slipping to 16th after three games.

Of even more concern for the German is that there does not appear a quick fix for the issues that have caused such a slow start.

An early season injury crisis meant Thiago Alcantara, Naby



Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp applauds supporters after the match against Manchester United at Old Trafford on Monday (AFP)

Keita, Ibrahima Konate, Joel Matip and Diogo Jota were among those unavailable for the trip to Old Trafford.

Darwin Nunez was also missing after Liverpool's new 75 million euro (£64 million, \$77 million) striker served the first of

his three-game ban for the red card he received for headbutting Crystal Palace defender Joachim Andersen last week.

Nunez's arrival from Benfica accounts for most of Liverpool's spend in the transfer window and the decision not to refresh

Klopp's midfield options is a growing source of frustration among the Reds' support.

Without Thiago and Keita, the 36-year-old James Milner and Harvey Elliott, 19, lined up either side of captain Jordan Henderson in midfield on Monday.

That is not the only area of concern for Klopp.

Trent Alexander-Arnold's defensive positioning is being increasingly targeted by the opposition.

Following on from Real Madrid's winner in last season's Champions League final and Fulham's joy on the opening weekend of the season, an attack down Liverpool's right was the source for United's first goal.

Virgil van Dijk has also looked far from the world's best centre-back and was on the receiving end of a telling off from Milner for his role in giving Jadon Sancho the space to slot home the opening goal.

AFP

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MEXICANO LOCO

'COME HOME' TO MEXICO

THE 'MEXICAN NIGHT' INTRODUCED BY AL BUSTAN PALACE, EVERY THURSDAY AT THE BEACH PAVILION, HAS BECOME A BIG DRAW AMONG THOSE SEEKING INTERESTING EXPERIENCES WITH NEW CUISINES IN MUSCAT

Hubert Vaz

When you walk into the Beach Pavilion, in Al Bustan Palace – A Ritz Carlton Hotel on a Thursday evening, you could actually be walking through time several centuries ago to encounter a cultural tradition that has been in vogue for as long as the masters of Latino cuisine have been churning out culinary wonders. Mexicano Loco is a unique offering on Thursdays for those who want to stroll into Mexico through its food.

For a purely authentic experience with Mexican cuisine, which is very closely linked with its cultural fanfare and festive traditions, this is quite the right place, and the vibrant ambience has been set from the entrance itself. Amid the warm, colourful interiors of this popular restaurant, you soon discover that your table comes alive not just with traditional symbols of Mexican culture but also with the friendly smiles of the stewards who are dressed in colourful Mexican attire.

What's more, you have a live band – Latin Sands – playing all the popular Spanish numbers, from the Ritchie Valens' La Bamba to Ricky Martin's Livin' la Vida Loca. You can sing along, keep time with rumba shakers (rattles) or even shake a leg if you simply can't resist the lure of the peppy numbers.

Mexican cuisine, they say is never complete without warm socialising, while song and dance on the sidelines makes every meal a time to relax and rejuvenate, throwing the cares of the world aside for a short while. Due to this close association of binding dining traditions with symbolic cultural fanfare, Mexican cuisine

has found mention in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.

At the Beach Pavilion, Mexicano Loco is one of the new offerings for diners in the capital and all effort has been taken to make it a memorable as well as authentic experience. While culinary traditions in Mexico are usually connected with informal get-togethers and traditional food preparation at home, this is an offering for diners of varied nationalities as well as for Latinos in Oman to literally 'come home' to good food.

The menu is quite varied every Thursday and includes a wide choice of traditional beverages, starters, main course and desserts. Though vegetables, especially corn, beans, tomatoes, avocados, and chilli peppers dominate Mexican food, one can savour a range of tacos, tortillas, chilaquiles, quesadillas, enchiladas, machacas, etc with fillings of chicken, beef and seafood, and traditional mole (sauce)

Nabil al Zadjali, General manager of Al Bustan Palace, looks upon this new offering as part of the hotel's eternal

We like to tell people that there's always something new happening at Al Bustan Palace

NABIL AL ZADJALI

quest to enhance the guest experience. The Mexican Night during the current fleeting summer is intended to create something exciting for the guests as well as for the team working on it, he asserts.

"A lot of effort has gone into creating this and it definitely adds value to what we have to offer. It is, in fact, a message to people of all nationalities who come to Oman, to come to Al Bustan Palace... we have a lot of variety to offer you," he said, adding, "The Mexican Night is targeted at not just our guests but also those residing in the capital. We are also looking at some staycations, that's why we've kept it on a Thursday, so that people who come from out of Muscat can spend the night here and enjoy their weekend.

He also indicated that the Mexican Night, which will continue for a few more weeks, is the first of a series of new offerings that the hotel proposes to offer to add to the excitement on a regular basis. "We like to tell people that there's always something new happening at Al Bustan Palace," he added.

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Beef Mince Tacos

Ingredients

- 1tbsp olive oil
- 400g ground beef
- 2tsp chilli powder
- 2tsp cumin
- ½tsp dried oregano
- ½tsp garlic powder
- ½tsp salt
- ½tsp black pepper
- 2tbsp tomato paste
- ½ cup water

For the dressing

- 8 corn or flour tortillas
- Lettuce finely chopped

- Shredded Mexican cheese
- 1cup chopped tomatoes
- 1 cup chopped red onions

Method

Heat the olive oil in skillet over medium high heat. Add the ground beef and cook until browned - about 5-7 minutes. Add the chilli powder, cumin, dried oregano, garlic powder, salt, pepper, tomato paste and water. Stir to combine and continue cooking over medium-low heat until the sauce has thickened, about 3-5 minutes. Serve warm over tortillas topped with lettuce, tomatoes, cheese and red onions, or any other desired toppings.

MEXICAN CUISINE

WRAP UP

Mexican home cuisine is quite elaborate and can involve long hours of cooking. However, Mexican dishes available in most Mexican restaurants can be churned out in minutes, provided you prep well in advance.

Try these all-time favourites:

Chicken Quesadillas

Ingredients

- 3tbsp olive oil
- 1 large red onion - chopped
- 4 garlic cloves - minced
- 1 cup minced chipotle peppers in adobo sauce
- 4 vine-ripened tomatoes - seeded and diced
- 3 scallions - thinly sliced
- 2tbsp honey
- 2½ cups cooked shredded chicken
- 1tsp salt
- ½ cup chopped cilantro
- 6 large flour tortillas
- 4 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- Sour cream, lime wedges for serving

Method

In a large saute pan, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion and saute until soft. Add garlic and cook 1 minute more. Stir in the chipotle peppers and tomatoes. Cook until most of the liquid from the tomatoes has evaporated and the mixture is thickened, stirring often. Stir in the scallions, honey, chicken, salt and cilantro. Keep warm.

Heat a saute pan over medium heat and spray lightly with non-stick cooking spray. Lay a tortilla in the pan and heat until hot to the touch but not crisp (air pockets may form). Flip the tortilla over, then sprinkle 2tbsp of the cheese evenly overtop, being careful to keep it off the pan. Spread a generous ½ cup of the chicken mixture over half of the tortilla. When the cheese is mostly melted, fold the tortilla over to cover the filling and form a half-moon shape. Cook until the tortilla is crisp and golden and the cheese is melted, adjusting the heat as necessary, a few minutes per side. Repeat with the remaining tortillas. Let the quesadillas rest a few minutes to allow the filling to set, then cut into wedges. Serve with sour cream and lime wedges.



Chicken Chilaquiles

Ingredients

- Corn tortillas, cut into 3cm strips
- 1tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 cloves garlic - minced
- 1tsp dried oregano
- 2 cans diced tomatoes - undrained
- 2 canned chipotle chilli peppers - finely chopped, plus 1tsp adobo sauce
- 500ml reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 2 cup shredded cooked chicken
- ¼tsp cracked black pepper
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- Fresh cilantro sprigs
- ¼ cup sour cream
- 1tbsp milk

Method

Preheat oven to 200° C. Spread tortilla strips in an even layer on two large baking sheets. Bake for

15 minutes. Cool on a wire rack. In an extra-large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion, garlic, and oregano, and cook about 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add tomatoes and chilli peppers, plus the reserved 1tsp adobo sauce. Bring to a boil and cook for 1 minute, stirring occasionally. Add broth and return to boiling. Simmer, uncovered, for 5 minutes. Add chicken and black pepper.

Set aside a few baked tortilla strips. Gradually stir the remaining tortilla strips into chicken mixture and heat through. Remove from heat, sprinkle with cheese.

Garnish with cilantro sprigs and the reserved tortilla strips. In a small bowl, combine sour cream and milk, and serve with the chilaquiles.

Bean Salad

Ingredients

- For the dressing
 - ½ cup white vinegar
 - ¼ cup vegetable oil
 - 1tbsp sugar
 - 2tsp ground cumin
 - ½tsp salt
 - ¼tsp ground black pepper

For the salad

- 2 cans pinto or kidney beans - drained and rinsed
- 1 can black beans - drained and rinsed
- 1 can corn - drained

- 1 red bell pepper - diced
- ½ medium red onion - diced
- 2 jalapenos - seeded and minced
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro

Method

For the dressing, whisk together all the dressing ingredients and set aside. For the salad, toss together all the salad ingredients. Now, mix the dressing into the salad mixture. Cover and refrigerate for an hour to allow flavours to blend. Serve chilled.



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