



NEWS BRIEF

NIZWA UNIVERSITY DEVELOPS ANTIFUNGAL FORMULA

Nizwa - The University of Nizwa has developed a new antifungal formula that has proved efficient in eliminating *Candida Auris* infection in a two-year study.

It was developed in cooperation with several international universities and medical research centres in the United States, Europe and Brazil.

Dr Abdullah Mohammed al Hatmi, assistant professor in the Natural and Medical Sciences Research Centre, Nizwa University, informed that the study is the first of its kind in tackling *Candida Auris* infection.

The study was prompted by an increase in cases of *Candida Auris* infection in the last ten years in many countries, including Oman.

04

Fitch assigns 'BB' rating to Energy Development Oman

Tackling short-lived climate pollutants a challenge for Oman

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A new research has painted a grim picture of Oman's capacity to significantly reduce highly potent short-lived climate forcers (SLCFs) or pollutants over the course of a decade.

SLCFs are substances, with a relatively short lifetime in the atmosphere compared to carbon dioxide, including ozone, black carbon, methane and aerosols.

The Omani study published in *Nature Public Health Emergency Collection* in August states that accomplishing a rapid, significant reduction in highly potent SLCFs from three challenging sectors over a five- to ten-year time period does not appear feasible or realistic in the context of international market mechanisms, socioeconomic factors and mitigation targets.

The three sectors that the study focuses on are the oil and gas industry, heavy road transportation, and refrigeration and air conditioning and industrial refrigeration.



The study, conducted by Yasmine Charabi, professor of applied climatology and meteorology and head of Department of Geography, Sultan Qaboos University, found that a total of 38,268 Gg of SLCFs were released into the atmosphere in Oman in 2015, accounting for 38.8 per cent of the country's total green house gas

emissions, and is expected to rise significantly over the next decade to reach 67,777 Gg by 2030.

"The analysis reveals that the source of Oman's highly potent SLCF emissions is associated with the three key and critical economic sectors. These vital economic sectors impose a 'grand challenge' on the immedi-

ate reduction of SLCFs in Oman and the GCC," Charabi wrote.

The first aspect of the grand challenge is the oil and gas industry's efforts to reduce methane emissions, which have been hampered by price volatility and new international politics associated with the era of abundant oil.

Continued on Page 02



MDO starts aerial surveys for mineral exploration

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Minerals Development Oman (MDO), the government-backed mining and mineral processing firm, has announced the commencement of airborne geophysical surveys for exploration and prospecting for minerals.

The surveys are being carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Energy and Minerals and several government agencies.

Nasser bin Saif al Maqbali, CEO of MDO, said, "The aerial surveys carried out by the company on its concession areas come with the aim of obtaining geophysical and geological data that will contribute to supporting exploration and prospecting for metallic ores."

Maqbali added that during the first phase of the project, the company targets survey of an area of 658sqkm in Masirah Is-

land, while the following phases of the project will include aerial surveys on large parts of the governorates of North Batinah, South Batinah, Dhahirah, Buraimi, Dakhliyah and North Sharqiyah.

He informed that MDO successfully implemented a 14-day pilot programme for aerial surveys in Sohar in July.

Aerial survey is the first step in the exploration work for metallic ores resulting in identification of potential sites. Excavation operations are then undertaken at these sites following geochemical studies and other exploration activities.

In March, MDO signed an agreement with the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, granting the company 12 exploration-to-mining concession areas, in a step that is in line with the government's plans aimed at stimulating and supporting the mining sector.

Tayseer – easy direct financing from Al Mouj Muscat

Al Mouj Muscat's direct financing plan provides buyers with an easy way to own a dream property, within the leading lifestyle community

An exciting gateway to home ownership in Al Mouj Muscat, Tayseer is simple, straightforward, open to everyone and requires no bank approvals. For ready apartments a 20% down payment is all that is needed to move in to the leading lifestyle destination.

For the under construction property such as Juman Two, which offers a luxurious lifestyle at the heart of the prestigious Al Mouj Muscat Marina, Tayseer allows investors access to finance directly from Al Mouj Muscat. Through the payment of a 10% deposit, followed by 20% at handover, and settling the remaining 70% over five years. This inspiring scheme is available on a special selection of premium Al Mouj Muscat properties and is available for a limited time.

Why was Tayseer introduced?

Al Mouj Muscat has long held a reputation as an ideal lifestyle destination as people value its vibrant sense of community as well as its beautifully designed properties. Financing, however, is often not straightforward with many investors not able to fulfil the strict lending criterion set out by banks.

It can be the case that buyers or investors cannot secure a loan because of their age and or health insurance requirements. Business owners can also face obstacles because they do not have proof of monthly salary. Plus, those looking to invest can find that if they have an existing loan, a new housing loan will not be approved.

With a clear understanding of the issues faced by buyers, as well as the aspiration of homeowners and in-



vestors, Al Mouj designed Tayseer not only to provide a simple way to access finance but also ensured that the process is straightforward and well-managed.

How does Tayseer work?

Tayseer is a flexible payment plan that simplifies the buying process as it is available directly from Al Mouj Muscat. Buyers or investors need a valid ID, passport and an attested proof of relationship if two joint purchasers plan to buy the property.

There are two ways to initiate the payment plan, depending on whether a property is ready to move in to or if it is under construction.

For both ready to move in and under construction properties, the Title Deed is issued and transferred to the purchasers' name at the 100% payment completion and the 5% VAT

Ready to move in

20%

Down payment and move in today

80%

Over 5 years

Properties available: Juman One, The Gardens and Marsa Gardens

Under construction properties

10%

Down payment

20%

Payment at handover

70%

Over 5 years

Properties available: Juman Two (handover end of 2022)

charge on all property purchases is settled.

What do buyers say about Tayseer?

Tayseer is designed for people looking to live or invest in a selection of premium homes available for sale at Al Mouj. It set out to smooth the buying process and has been a huge success, with over 85 homes having been purchased through Tayseer since it was launched in June 2020. So how have buyers found the process and what attracted them to the scheme?

One investor explains how Tayseer helped make homeownership a reality: "I looked at a home in the Juman One and saw that it offers the ideal lifestyle I was looking for because of its location. It is close to shops, a stunning Marina, restaurants, plus it is easy for me to reach my parents'



home. I knew I wanted to live here, and this is where Tayseer was so helpful.

"With Tayseer, the process was clear and easy as financing is directly with Al Mouj. The staff welcomed us and truly took the time to go through all the details we required. The process was smooth and easy to pay by just provide cheques. I would certainly recommend Tayseer."

Al Mouj Muscat is renowned for the quality of life it offers, promising residents 'great moments, every day'. The apartments at Juman Two, set at the edge of the award-winning Gold Anchor Al Mouj Marina: "This is the ideal lifestyle community," confirms another resident, "there is an array of amenities, the community is easy to get around, it is safe and secure, I only wish I could spend more time here but I am a doctor and I work long hours."

A resident of Ghadeer Villas echoes why the direct payment plan helped them achieve their goal of life in an ideal home in the ideal location: "The location is perfect for my family. It is just what we hoped for as our children enjoy open space and they get to play with other kids during events. There is privacy within the community, and we feel it is safe for the children to play outdoors. And we enjoy visiting the marina and taking boat trips."

"Tayseer made a difference as it meant no hassle going to a bank and we found it very straightforward. The payments are easy, and the staff are very well versed and willing to help us any way we need."

The overwhelming impression that Tayseer had on investors was made apparent through the addition of Ghadeer Villas to the portfolio. This financing scheme paved way for all Ghadeer Villas to be sold in within 6 months of their addition to this scheme.

An exceptional investment opportunity

Tayseer has attracted a significant number of local expats and Omani investors as it offers clear and unique advantages. As a direct payment plan, investors, who may own other properties, do not need to apply for a bank home loan. Ease of financing is only the start of the benefits that property ownership at Al Mouj Muscat offers.

With its reputation as the leading lifestyle destination, from enviably positioned homes to a vibrant community and world-class amenities, there is a high demand for rental properties at Al Mouj. Its oceanside location also benefits from connections to all major road networks and its proximity to Oman's International Airport, adding to its appeal for tenants.

Beyond the potential to achieve consistent returns, Al Mouj Muscat appeals to many investors because it offers a dedicated Leasing team, there to take care of every detail. A single point of contact stays on hand to manage an investment property, from advertising to finding and selecting tenants and handling all details of their residency.

Tayseer is part of a complete package for investors, as residents enjoy a host of retail, leisure and dining experiences and property owners enjoy competitive returns, a seamless service and consistent demand.

How can I benefit from Tayseer?

The scheme is open to anyone who can provide post-dated cheques from a local bank in Oman. This easy method of financing will also provide its investor with residency visas for immediate family members upon completion of payments and transfer of title deed, making it the ideal way to become part of a vibrant community in the heart of Muscat.

The leading lifestyle destination

Oman's first integrated tourism complex, Al Mouj Muscat, offers an array of homes, world-class amenities and oceanside community living attracting 8,000 residents from 85 nationalities. Always seeking to innovate and respond to buyers' expectations, Al Mouj introduced its Tayseer payment plan in 2020, a direct finance scheme that has proven to be a game changer for both buyers and investors.

How do I find out more about properties I can purchase?

Tayseer is the ideal way to make your dreams of ownership at Oman's finest lifestyle destination come true. To find out more, visit www.almouj.com or call 8007 7776.



ROHM announces new season

Muscat - Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) has announced the season for 2022-2023.

The season will see more than 50 events, a total of 90 performances and cultural programmes including six operas, nine Arab concerts, three ballets, nine concerts, two jazz stars, four world music celebrations, three spectacular shows, one permanent and two temporary exhibitions, and a busy schedule of educational and outreach initiatives.

Tickets go on sale starting August 22.

The 2022-2023 season begins in spectacular fashion on September 23 with ROHM's critically acclaimed production of *La Traviata* returning to the opera house following its premiere in 2019, with direction from the doyenne of grand opera staging Marta Domingo.

'ROHM is delighted to announce the return to the opera house of one of our most honoured patrons and one of the



greatest artists of our time, Plácido Domingo. As with the premiere, Domingo will perform the role of Germont on the opening night of the opera and will conduct for the following two evenings,' a press statement said.

Operas
From the opera buffa of Mozart

to the continuation of ROHM's collaboration with the Rossini Opera Festival (ROF), the season has an appealing range of operas to choose from. Engelbert Humperdinck's full original opera *Hansel und Gretel*, one of the most performed operas in the world, reaches out to family audiences performed by the Deutsche Oper Berlin conducted



by Donald Runnicles. (October 28 and 29).

The fourth in the series of farce presented by ROF, ROHM and the respected Rossini artists will stage *La Cimbale di Matrimonio* on November 24 and 26. In January, ROHM will present Donizetti's opera *L'Elisir d'Amore*, performed by Teatro Lirico di Cagliari and conducted by Jordi



Bernacer.

The final two operas, in February and May, are of Mozart - the popular *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Così fan Tutte*.

Arabic music
Kadim al Sahir is enduringly and unfailingly popular with audiences for his charismatic and engaging style. With this in mind,

he is scheduled to appear early in the season (October 13, 14 and 15).

'The Arabic programme is designed to encapsulate the season's core emphasis on tradition, innovation and talent: the Omani Women's Day concert, featuring a surprise guest artist, an incredibly talented young star from Kuwait, carries on an ROHM tra-

dition (October 17), while we celebrate a different perspective with *Oman Traditional Music* to explore the rich heritage in Omani cultural expression in music (November 14).'

Ballet
The ballet genre is represented this season by three landmark presentations. The first sees Roberto Bolle, étoile at La Scala and ballet superstar, bringing *Roberto Bolle and Friends* (December 15 and 16). Second, Cairo Opera brings a vibrant and colourful production of two stories, *El Leila el Kebira* and *Zorba the Greek* (February 24 and 25).

To round off the genre, Opera di Roma Ballet and the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sergey Smbatyan present the world acclaimed classic tale of *Giselle*, a much-loved ballet presented with choreography paying homage to Carla Fracci, the late director of Opera di Roma.

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MUSCAT DAILY

Tackling short-lived climate pollutants a challenge for Oman

Continued from Page 01

"Leaving the reduction of methane emissions from the oil and gas industry to national policies that are driven by market dynamics would not result in near-term demonstrable reduction plans," Charabi wrote.

The second major challenge is connected with black carbon emissions from heavy road vehicles, necessitating the phase-out of conventional diesel engines and significant investment in soot-free diesel engines that meet international requirements. "This challenge requires a government policy, because diesel engines can survive up to 20 to 30 years or longer. It will be several years before most existing diesel engines are retired and replaced with more rigorous pollution requirements."

The third dimension, aimed at phase-out of high-global warming potential (GWP) hydrofluorocarbons refrigeration equipment, is contingent on global progress in developing energy-efficient and cost-effective products and the government's approach to incentivising the deployment of equipment using low-GWP hydrofluorolefin refrigerants, the study stated.

"Creating an effective long-term vision for a post-oil economy over the next two decades provides a sound foundation for implementing economic and societal transformation policies incorporating near-zero-emission measures for the potent SLCFs."

University of Technology and Applied Sciences
Electronic Local Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender Committee at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences announces the offering of the practices shown in the following table:

M	Tender number	Subject	Companies that are eligible to participate	Document's Price	Last date for electronic purchasing	Last date bid submission
1	22/2022 (Re-tender)	Providing cleaning services for the buildings of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (Higher College of Technology in Muscat)	Companies and institutions specialized in this field and registered with the Tender Board excellent degree, first, second and third	(25) Twenty five Riyal Omani	03/09/2022 14:30 pm	11/09/2022 at 10:00 am

You can purchase the tender documents electronically from Tuesday 23/08/2022, starting from (7:30 am) through the link below:

<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>

All bidding companies must attach with their bids electronic temporary tender bond in the form of a bank guarantee or a cheque certified by one of the banks operating in the Sultanate, not less than (1%) of the bid value, addressed to the name of the Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee, and valid for a period of (90) days from the date of bid submission. The bid must be submitted sealed by the authorized person, and submitted with the electronic bidding system of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in the name and number of the tender only.

Preference in awarding will be given to small and medium enterprises registered with the Authority for SME development and whose bid includes the biggest percentage of Omanisation and a biggest purchase percentage of national products.

The University shall not be bound to accept the highest or any other bid.

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Committee to oversee audit, control at civil institutions

Muscat - The Ministry of Finance has formed a joint committee with the State Audit Institution to enhance the role of internal auditing and monitoring at units of the state's administrative apparatus.

The new panel will also activate a human resources development plan and set up a comprehensive monitoring system.

The joint committee will take steps to enhance the capabilities of employees of internal audit units by organising training programmes, and raise level of control over public spending and revenue collection.

It will also propose recommendations to grant internal audit departments complete autonomy, so that they can better exercise powers related to functional aspects.

The committee aims to train 900 employees in internal audit units and other civil departments. The overall objective is to regulate financial control measures, carry out projects in accordance with approved plans and legal procedures and raise Oman's status in global indices on governance and institutional performance.

Sayyida Tania wins Mother Teresa Memorial Award

Our Correspondent
Muscat

H H Sayyida Tania bint Shabib al Said, president of Environment Society of Oman (ESO), is among the winners of the Mother Teresa Memorial Awards for Social Justice 2021. She was felicitated for her work on Environmental Sustainability.

Instituted by India-based NGO Harmony Foundation that works in the realm of social justice, the Mother Teresa Memorial Awards honour warriors of social change each year from across the world.

"H H Sayyida Tania was awarded for her astounding and remarkable efforts to protect and conserve Oman's natural heritage through the phenomenal environmental work of ESO," stated Dr Abraham Mathai, founder chairman of Harmony Foundation.

The felicitation ceremony took place at the ESO office in Muscat on Monday.

Each year, Harmony Foundation identifies a theme for the Mother Teresa Memorial Awards and the Harmony Inter-



(Supplied photo)

We are truly proud of H H Sayyida Tania and her dedication to addressing the issues of Oman's environment

DR ABRAHAM MATHAI

national Conference that aligns with the need of the hour affecting humanity worldwide.

In its 17th year in 2022, Harmony Foundation honoured self-

less individuals, organisations and leaders who work relentlessly in the realm of augmenting environmental sustainability.

"A sustainable environment is

vital for the survival of humanity and other species on our planet. While humanity marches ahead in all spheres of what it terms 'progress', we forget our responsibility to our own future. After all, we do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children," Mathai said.

"We are truly proud of H H Sayyida Tania and her dedication to addressing the issues of Oman's environment. She is a

true changemaker who founded ESO in 2004 with the aim of conserving marine life, protecting land ecology and educating the public about the environment. Her academic expertise in marine and freshwater biology has immensely contributed to the organisation which continues to flourish in Oman with excellent ventures working to protect Oman's environment and its wildlife."

In addition to representing ESO in the media, H H Sayyida Tania also leads its advocacy efforts with the government as well as the organisation's fundraising initiatives, including an annual fundraising ball and other corporate fundraising events. Her environmental endeavours include ESO's Say No to Plastic Bags campaign to reduce single use of plastics in Oman, which continues to play a pivotal role in ESO's Say No to Plastic agenda.

"Harmony Foundation wishes H H Sayyida Tania the very best in all of her environmental endeavours, where she and ESO continue to leave a lasting legacy," Mathai added.

MHT compiling single-source tourism directory



H E Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi (centre), Minister of Heritage and Tourism, launching the ministry's Services Guide 2022 (Supplied photo)

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) is compiling a directory that will make it easy for tourists to access the best of what Oman has to offer.

The ministry has urged all tourist establishments in the sultanate to register in the directory.

"The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism is pleased to invite all partners in the tourism sector in Oman to register in the tourism establishments directory," a ministry statement said.

The directory will include data and contact details of all tourist establishments operating in the

various governorates of Oman. "For further clarification regarding registration, please contact us directly on 99414492," the statement added.

According to the agency compiling the directory, the objective of the project is to provide correct information to tourists. It will be available online and in print.

H E Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, launched the ministry's Services Guide 2022 on Monday. The guide seeks to develop the services provided by the ministry and improve the digital user experience within the framework of digital transformation.

MoH with CDC launches Public Health Empowerment Programme

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Health (MoH), represented by the Directorate General of Disease Control and Surveillance, in collaboration with US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET), launched the Public Health Empowerment Programme - Basic Field Epidemiology on Sunday.

The Public Health Empowerment Programme aims to em-

power participants and build capacities in public health epidemiological surveillance and investigation, in addition to equipping them with the necessary skills to collect, analyse and present health data effectively and efficiently.

The launch ceremony was held under the auspices of H E Dr Fatima Mohammed al Ajmi, MoH's Undersecretary for Administrative, Financial and Planning Affairs, in the presence of Dr Jean Jabbour, WHO Representative in Oman, Dr Saif al Abri, Di-



(Supplied photo)

rector General of Directorate General of Disease Control and Surveillance, and senior MoH officials at City Seasons Hotel.

H E Dr Fatima affirmed that the ministry is continuing its efforts to control communicable diseases, which are an increas-

ingly pressing concern for any community, and launched several programmes.

According to Dr Abri, a well-qualified health workforce is a must to ensure the sustainability of such programmes. "Public Health Empowerment Programme - Basic Field Epidemiology is a programme that is set to increase capacity among public health workers in this field."

Dr Abri informed that a week-long training workshop to train and qualify local mentors of the programme at the governorate

level will be held soon. He further pointed out that the Public Health Empowerment Programme - Basic Field Epidemiology is a three-level programme - Basic, Medium and Advanced.

"Preparation for the Basic level is initiated today, while it is hoped that the Medium level will start before the end of the year. Introduction of the Advanced level will be coordinated and planned within the next two years."

Dr Faris al Lami, representative of EMPHNET, informed that over the next three months, par-

ticipants of the programme will have the opportunity to strengthen their technical capacity to run and manage local public health surveillance systems, conduct outbreak investigation, and respond to common diseases in the sultanate.

Twenty-three governorate level health workers, responsible for surveillance and monitoring, are participating in the programme, in addition to 12 mentors who work in the area of public health surveillance and disease outbreak in the governorates.



500 blood donors needed this week

Muscat - The Department of Blood Bank Services (DBBS) has announced that there is an urgent need of blood due to low stocks of most blood types.

In a statement, DBBS said, "The Central Blood Bank in Bausher needs more than 500 blood donors this week to meet the needs of health institutions for blood units because of low stocks of most blood types. We invite everyone to take the initiative to donate blood."

2 arrested for smuggling oil derivatives

Muscat - Royal Oman Police (ROP) arrested two expatriates on Monday for attempting to smuggle oil derivatives.

In a statement, ROP said, "The Musandam Coast Guard Police managed to seize a boat with two persons of Asian nationality onboard while they were trying to smuggle quantities of oil derivatives near the Khasab port."

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Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Iran stock exchange suspends largest steel-maker after fraud claims

Tehran's stock exchange has suspended Iran's largest steel-maker from trading following a parliamentary report alleging corruption to the tune of US\$3bn, local media reported.

Trading of the Mobarakeh Steel Company's stocks has been suspended "due to uncertainties about the transparency of information", said the Tehran bourse's chief executive Mahmoud Goudarzi, quoted by the Fars news agency. The report accuses the company of 90 counts of wrongdoings including fraud and influence-peddling, amounting to a total of around US\$3bn, Fars said.

Trading in the company will not resume "until the necessary information is clearly obtained", he said, according to the news report late Saturday.

Located in central Isfahan province, Mobarakeh plays a major role in Iran's economy and is the owner of local football team Sepahan.

Fitch assigns 'BB' rating to EDO

Energy Development Oman's rating is constrained by sovereign rating of Oman, Fitch says

Our Correspondent

Muscat

Global credit ratings agency Fitch Ratings has assigned Energy Development Oman (EDO) a long-term issuer default rating of 'BB' with a stable outlook.

Fitch's decision came after S&P Global Ratings earlier this month assigned EDO a 'BB-' long-term issuer rating with a stable outlook.

EDO's rating is constrained by the rating of its sole shareholder, the government of Oman (BB/stable), given their close links, Fitch said in a statement on Monday.

"This reflects the influence the state exerts on the company through strategic direction, taxation and dividends," the ratings agency said.

Fitch assesses EDO's stand-alone credit profile at 'bbb', supported by large-scale oil and gas operations and low leverage. The stand-alone credit profile, Fitch said, is constrained by EDO's fairly complex operating structure and short proven reserves life, albeit with a strong record of successful reserves replacement.

"Given EDO's robust financial and operational profile, the company has not required government support thus far but we expect support to be forthcoming given the pivotal role EDO plays within Oman's infrastructure and economy. This leads to



A file photo of PDO's Yibal Khuff Project

strong support track record,' Fitch noted.

S&P on August 3 said its business risk profile assessment for EDO is supported by company's access to sizeable reserves, leading domestic share of Omani hydrocarbon production, and low operating cost structure, all of which support cash flow visibility. S&P views positively EDO's access to sizable reserves via concession agreements until 2044.

EDO owns a 60 per cent interest in the Block 6 oil concession and a 100 per cent interest

in the Block 6 gas concession. Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) operates the onshore Block 6 oil and gas concessions.

"We therefore expect an output of around 865,000 barrels of oil equivalent (BOE) per day until 2026. Contracts for sales of oil at market prices are signed by the government, but EDO receives payments directly from customers. Non-associated gas is sold to the government, which pays EDO a fixed transfer price, subject to annual indexation,' Fitch said.

Highlighting EDO's

favourable unit economics, Fitch said in 2021 EDO's total production costs before royalties amounted to around US\$3 per BOE of direct production costs and around US\$10 per BOE of capital expenditure, which puts EDO at the lower end of the global cost curve.

As noted by Fitch, EDO had cash and cash equivalents of US\$341mn at end-2021 against no short-term debt.

"We expect EDO to maintain a robust liquidity profile as negative post-dividend free cash flows will be offset by no debt

service outflows until 2024, and a flexible dividend policy allowing for liquidity preservation during periods of restricted capital-market access and/or lower prices,' Fitch added.

Improving ESG footprint

Two global credit ratings agencies have recognised EDO's improving ESG (environmental, social and governance) footprint. Fitch said EDO continues to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from operations and flaring as well as improving energy efficiency.

The ratings agency said PDO also plans to expand its green generation portfolio to 30 per cent of energy capacity by 2025, with the commissioning of Amin and Miraah solar projects in recent years.

"We view EDO's and PDO's environmental targets as broadly in line with Middle Eastern peers', but lagging that of their large European peers such as TotalEnergies, BP or Eni,' Fitch said.

According to S&P, EDO's strategy explicitly targets emissions reduction through a cumulative 6mn tonnes greenhouse gas emission reduction by 2030, and through its aim to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

"We note that the company's strategy is aligned with the Oman Energy Master Plan 2040. EDO is working on developing renewable energy sources and projects to meet Oman's target of a 39 per cent renewable contribution to its total power mix by 2040, up from 5 per cent in 2020,' S&P said.

EDO is Oman's national energy company and owns participating interests in two concessions, accounting for approximately 65 per cent of Oman's oil and gas production. EDO's liquids production totalled 381,000 barrels per day in 2021 while gas production totalled 60mn cubic meters per day.

AMF says GCC economic growth will accelerate to 6.3% in 2022

Our Correspondent

Muscat

Economic growth in the GCC countries is expected to accelerate to 6.3 per cent this year, thanks to recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and higher oil and gas production in the region, the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) said.

"The GCC countries are expected to record a relatively high growth rate of 6.3 per cent in 2022, compared to 3.1 per cent in 2021, thanks to a combination of factors, including the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, economic reforms, and continued adoption of stimulus packages," the AMF said in a report.

The regional fund, however, expects GCC economic growth to decline to 3.7 per cent in 2023.

The AMF said oil-exporting countries in the Arab world will benefit throughout 2022 from the increased oil production



quantities within the OPEC+ agreement and relatively higher oil and gas prices in international markets.

"This will support public spending to enhance growth. Overall, Arab oil producers are expected to grow by 6 per cent in 2022, compared to 3.2 per cent in 2021, while oil prices are

expected to decline in 2023,' the AMF said.

The AMF recently released its seventeenth edition of the Arab Economic Outlook report, including growth and inflation forecasts for Arab economies for 2022 and 2023.

The report indicated that the global economy is experiencing

challenges related to the global supply chains and high commodity prices, which raise concerns about global food security. As a result, international institutions have reduced their forecasts for global economic growth issued in January 2022.

The growth of Arab economies as a group is projected by the AMF to rise to about 5.4 per cent in 2022, a significant increase from about 3.5 per cent in 2021.

"Many factors have contributed to this rise, including the relative improvement in global demand and high sectoral growth rates. There is also a positive impact of implementing economic reform programs and adopting future visions and strategies aimed at enhancing economic diversification, improving business environments, encouraging private investment, and improving economic resilience," the fund said.

China cements influence in Iraq through oil and infrastructure deals

Baghdad, Iraq – China has gained a major foothold in oil-rich Iraq, shaking up Western domination in fields from energy to construction, even as some warn that infrastructure projects could leave Baghdad in debt.

After decades of conflict, Iraq is "badly in need of foreign investment, and specifically investment in energy sector infrastructure", said John Calabrese of the Middle East Institute in Washington.

China, with its soaring energy needs, has stepped in to fill that gap, and is expanding its presence in Iraq under a 2019 "oil for construction" deal.

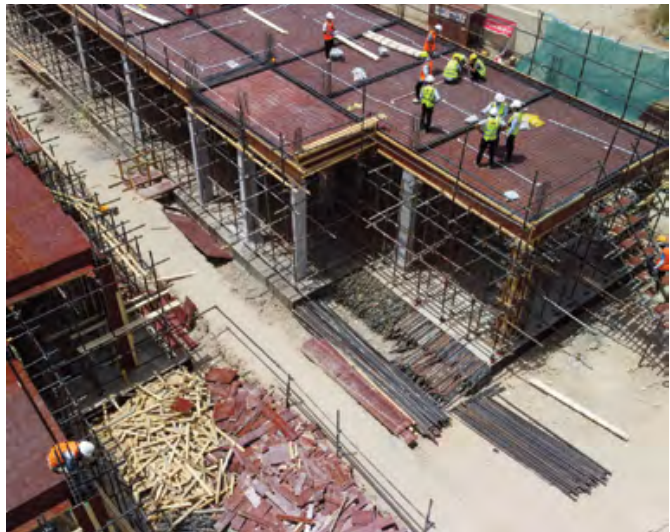
Beijing has become one of the largest importers of Iraqi crude, and in 2021 accounted for 44 per cent of Iraq's oil exports, according to prime ministerial adviser Muzhar Saleh.

And state firm PetroChina has partnered with France's TotalEnergies and Malaysia's Petronas to exploit the Halfaya oilfield in southern Iraq.

"China is just getting started," ambassador Cui Wei told journalists in a recent videoconference.

But Beijing is interested in more than just Iraq's trade potential, Calabrese said.

Beyond the "obvious commercial incentives" are China's ambitions to "deeply entrench itself in a country and a region that the West, and especially the United States, has dominated," he said.



Labourers work on construction site for a school in the Sumer neighbourhood of Nasiriyah city in Iraq, on July 20 (AFP)

China has become one of the largest importers of Iraqi crude, and in 2021 accounted for 44 per cent of Iraq's oil exports

inked while former Iraqi premier Adel Abdel Mahdi visited Beijing, was a deal to build Iraqi schools.

Two Chinese partners were tapped to carry out the construction – PowerChina and Sinotech – with 8,000 education facilities to eventually be built.

Work has also begun on an airport in the southern city of Nasiriyah, built by the China State Construction Engineering Corp. Under such projects, Chinese firms must work with local contractors that "provide manpower and raw materials", said Haider Majid, an Iraqi government spokesman.

But Yesar al-Maleki, an analyst for the Middle East Economic Survey, said there was "a big question mark" over how the Iraqi contractors are selected.

"Many of these companies are rumoured to be politically connected, and this is how they got the contracts," he told AFP.

Iraqi contractors could abuse the initiative for "useless projects", he said, warning that Iraq could end up in a "death trap" of debt.

One aspect of the agreement,

Euro drops back under dollar parity

London, UK - The euro fell back under dollar parity on Monday, hit by expectations the US Federal Reserve will stick to its interest rate-hiking plans.

In morning trade, the European single currency slid as low as US\$0.9990, dented also by growing fears of winter energy shortages in Europe.

The unit had previously sunk below parity last month for the first time in nearly 20 years.

The British pound meanwhile dipped Monday to US\$1.1782, also touching its lowest point since mid-July.

All eyes are on this week's symposium in Jackson Hole,



Wyoming, where Fed boss Jerome Powell will deliver a speech that traders will follow for an idea about the US central bank's next moves.

The euro is under additional pressure 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 daily gas deliveries.

"The move in the euro is probably being driven by a couple of things. The dollar is on a very strong run over the last week or so and looks to be continuing it into Jackson Hole," OANDA analyst Craig Erlam told AFP.

"It's also a euro story too as Europe prepares for another shutdown of Nord Stream later this month.

"With stocks already below where the bloc wants going into the winter, this is a considerable risk," he added.

AFP

Ukraine war pulls rug out from under world economy rebound

Paris, France - This year was supposed to confirm the world economy's comeback from the Covid pandemic crisis. Instead, the six-month-old war in Ukraine has sparked fears of recession.

"Six short months ago the macro landscape was markedly different from today," the financial data firm S&P Global said in a recent report.

Both the United States and eurozone economies were expected to see strong growth, and elevated inflation levels were seen by policymakers and markets as transitory.

"Things have changed, and not for the better," added S&P Global.

Global growth forecasts have been repeatedly cut, with the International Monetary Fund now expecting a 3.2 per cent expansion compared to nearly five per cent earlier.

Russia and Ukraine together account for just two per cent of global output and trade, according to the OECD.

But Russia is a major exporter of oil, gas and agricultural goods, while many developing countries rely heavily on grain from Ukraine, one of the breadbaskets of the world.

The war has disrupted those shipments, causing energy and food prices to surge worldwide.

Inflation has soared every-



In this file photo taken on April 4, 2022 a man pushes a cart past destroyed buildings in the town of Borodianka, northwest of Kyiv, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine (AFP)

Global growth forecasts have been repeatedly cut, with the International Monetary Fund now expecting a 3.2 per cent expansion compared to nearly 5 per cent earlier

where, prompting central banks to aggressively hike rates - a move that usually tames prices but slows economic activity.

Prices soar everywhere
In Tunis, "low-income people are living a nightmare", said Naima Degaoui, a 70-year-old former

nurse.
"Prices on almost everything are rising: peaches, apricots, peppers for which the prices have quadrupled, red meat," she

added.
Some 11,000km away in the Chilean city of Valparaiso, 33-year-old social worker Nayib Pineira said "everything is much more expensive".

He said local gasoline prices have risen to 1,300 pesos per litre (US\$5.50 per US gallon) - "nearly what Europeans pay, but with a European salary".

In Europe, natural gas prices have soared as Russia has slashed deliveries to countries that oppose the war.

Oil prices have jumped, too. The rise in energy prices has increased the costs of making and shipping an array of goods.

Energy-intensive sectors such as the chemicals and metals industries have been particularly hard hit, especially in Germany which had become extremely dependent upon cheap Russian natural gas.

Faced with surging inflation, developed nations have reverted to supporting their economies just when they were hoping to wean them off aid provided to help with Covid lockdowns.

With support for heating costs, cuts to gasoline taxes, price caps and windfall taxes on oil companies, European nations have pulled out the stops to cushion the blow to consumers from higher energy costs.

In the United States, Congress

passed a US\$370bn investment package called the Inflation Reduction Act that aims to contain health care costs and promote alternative energies.

Central banks, meanwhile, are expected to continue their aggressive interest rate hikes. Stock markets have been spooked by the monetary tightening, with the S&P 500 index suffering its worst half-year performance in 14 years.

Global slowdown... then recession?

There is precious little optimism right now: US consumer confidence is nearly at a record low, while that for German investors is at a two-year low point.

The Chinese property market is in a severe crisis, adding to problems caused by strict Covid lockdowns.

In Europe, there are worries that if Russia reduces gas deliveries even further there could be shortages and rationing during the coming winter.

Coupled with the tightening of monetary policy underway by central banks, fears have been rising of a global recession, although the main forecasters have so far discounted this possibility. That is because there are also signs of resilience in the global economy.

AFP

Vodafone to sell Hungary unit

London, UK - British telecoms group Vodafone agreed Monday to sell its Hungarian division to local peer 4iG and state-owned holding company Corvinus Zrt for 1.8bn euros (US\$1.8bn).

The London-listed giant added in a statement that the proposed sale would create Hungary's second largest fixed-line and mobile telecoms operator.

"This combination with 4iG will allow Vodafone Hungary ... to play a major role in the future growth and development of the sector as a much stronger scaled and fully converged operator," added chief executive Nick Read in the statement.

"The combined entity will increase competition and have greater access to investment to further the digitalisation of Hungary."

The sale "also supports the Hungarian state's goal of creating a national ... champion" in information and communications technology.

A Vodafone spokesman said proceeds will be used to deleverage its balance sheet, or cut debt, as it looks to build scale in other markets.

European heavyweight Vodafone, which has been restructuring for several years, expects the sale to complete at the end of 2022.

AFP

Global markets looking for clarity but tuning out Fed message

Washington, US - US central bankers have been hammering home a single message: Interest rates will rise until inflation begins to come down. But financial markets keep hoping to hear a different tune, one indicating the pace of rate hikes will slow.

All eyes will be on this week's annual gathering of policymakers in Jackson Hole, Wyoming to hear Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell explain his stance - again - with market watchers hoping to get something more to their liking.

The Fed could be a victim of its own success.

After keeping the benchmark borrowing rate at zero throughout the pandemic, the steep spike in prices, which surged to a 40-year high following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, prompted the central bank to take aggressive action.

In the battle to contain red-hot inflation, which topped nine percent in June, the Fed has hiked rates four times, including massive, three-quarter point increases in June and July - steep moves unheard of since the early 1980s.

But in recent weeks signs of easing price pressures and a



Jerome Powell

slowly economy, along with falling energy costs and indications global supply chain snarls have lessened, caused financial markets to become optimistic the Fed will dial back or even pause rate increases - and even begin to cut next year.

Stocks on Wall Street have risen for four straight weeks, despite a string of officials repeating the message that rates will continue to rise, even though annual inflation slowed in July as oil prices fell.

While the annual gathering often becomes a place for global central bankers to signal shifting policy, Powell is expected to repeat that message Friday -

though he may acknowledge that a slowdown will come later in the year.

"It does seem like what we've heard from Powell so far suggests there's quite a high bar for them to transition from aggressive hikes" to a slower pace of 25 basis point steps, said Jonathan Millar of Barclays.

Millar, who served as a Fed economist and forecaster under four central bank chiefs, told AFP that markets are looking further ahead, anticipating the rate hikes will be successful in slowing inflation.

But for policymakers "One thing they definitely want to communicate is that they remain

very much focused on issues with price stability and that they will react very cautiously to any signs of improvements in the inflation data."

That means indications prices are coming down more broadly, not just because of falling oil.

Managing the market's expectations "is really job one," Millar said. "They have to enforce that credibility."

But like other economists he believes the Fed's policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) at its September meeting will step down to a 0.5 percentage point increase, taking the range of the key lending rate up to 2.75 to 3.0 per cent, to be followed up with quarter-point hikes in November and December Kathy Bostjancic of Oxford Economics said the dilemma for Powell is to recognize the progress towards achieving a soft landing - bringing inflation back down towards the two per cent target, without derailing economic growth - while confirming the Fed's resolve.

He "continues to have to walk kind of a narrow line," she told AFP. "You don't want to be too pessimistic."

AFP

China reduces lending rates

Beijing, China - China's central bank on Monday cut benchmark loan rates in an attempt to boost an economy battered by the government's strict zero-Covid policy and a slump in the property market.

The world's second-biggest economy saw an improvement after some coronavirus restrictions eased in June, but consumer and business sentiment remains weaker than usual.

The one-year loan prime rate (LPR), which serves as a benchmark for corporate loans, was reduced from 3.7 per cent to 3.65 per cent, the People's Bank of China (PBOC) said in a statement.

The five-year LPR, which is



used to price mortgages, was cut from 4.45 per cent to 4.3 per cent, it added.

The PBOC slashed key interest rates last week, bringing its seven-day reverse repurchase rate - a key rate at which it provides short-term liquidity to banks - to a new low.

Analysts had expected cuts to the LPR rates, but said they may not be enough to rescue the

property sector - which is estimated to account for as much as a quarter of China's GDP.

"The much larger cut to the five-year rate suggests the PBOC is particularly concerned about problems in the housing market," Capital Economics said in a note on Monday.

"However, homebuyers with existing mortgages will have to wait until the start of next year for the change to affect them."

China's housing market was shaken by frustrated homebuyers in dozens of cities who boycotted mortgage payments as cash-strapped developers struggled to complete the units they had sold in advance.

AFP

Over 721,000 tonnes of grain exported from Ukraine

Ankara, Turkey - Since the first ship left Ukraine under the Istanbul grain export deal, more than 721,000 tonnes of Ukrainian grain have been delivered to world markets, Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar said on Monday.

"As of this morning, the amount of grain leaving the Ukrainian ports was 721,449 tonnes. This continues. Hopefully, the amount will increase in the coming days," Akar told

military commanders during a video conference in the capital Ankara.

Akar added the efforts continue to ensure that shipments reach their final destinations as quickly and safely as possible.

Türkiye, the UN, Russia, and Ukraine signed an agreement in Istanbul on July 22 to resume grain exports from the Ukrainian Black Sea ports of Yuzhny, Chornomorsk and Odesa, which were halted due to the

Russia-Ukraine war, now in its sixth month.

A Joint Coordination Center (JCC) with officials from the three countries and the UN has been set up in Istanbul to oversee the shipments.

On Saturday, Akar and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres held a meeting with the officials at the JCC in Istanbul on the grain shipment process. Akar said Türkiye resolutely continues its fight

against terrorism to protect its borders and citizens.

As of January 1, he said, anti-terror operations have continued "intensively," adding: "During this period, a total of 2,517 terrorists were neutralized in northern Iraq and in northern Syria."

The minister said that a total of 333 terrorists were "neutralized" during the Operation Claw-Lock.

Anadolu Agency

Notice for Redemption of Perpetual Tier I Capital Securities (BNK SOHAR PER.BND (BSPB)) issued by Sohar International Bank SAOG (Bank) on 25 September 2017

The Bank issued OMR 100 million Perpetual Tier 1 Capital Securities (the **Securities**) on 25 September 2017 at a fixed annual interest rate of 7.75%. The Securities are listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange (**MSX**) bond market as BNK SOHAR PER.BND(BSPB).

Pursuant to clause 8.1(b) of the terms and conditions of the issuance in the Prospectus, the Bank hereby issues an irrevocable notice to the holders of the Securities that the Bank will exercise its call option to redeem all the Securities on 25th September 2022 (the **Redemption Date**) at their principal amount together with the interest accrued up to but not including the redemption date.

Following the redemption, the securities will be delisted from the MSX. Muscat Clearing and Depository (**MCD**) will process payments to holders of the Securities as per the records with MCD on 25 September 2022.

For further information, please contact:
Advisory@soharinternational.com

soharinternational.com

Bank Nizwa sends senior staff for Cambridge programme



Bank Nizwa, the leading and most trusted Islamic bank in the sultanate enrolled five management committee members to attend the Cambridge Islamic Finance Leadership Programme (Cambridge – IFLP), said a statement from the bank.

As part of their talent management and employee training strategy. Held at Clare College, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom, this programme aims to nurture the right type of talent for the industry that is facing a shortage of quality human resources, especially at the leadership level.

The five employees, holding senior positions in the bank, are Mujahid al Zadjali, General Manager IT & Operations, Arif al Zaabi, Assistant General Manager for Retail Banking, Khalid al Barwani, Deputy General Manager of Wholesale Banking Group, Saif al Rawahi, Assistant General manager Investment treasury, Government relations and project finance, and H H Sayyida Wisam Jaifer al Said, Head of Marketing and Corporate Communications.

HUAWEI Ads celebrates ‘Back to School’, ‘Summer’ seasons

HUAWEI Ads, a leading global advertising marketplace by Huawei, celebrates the ‘Back to School’ and ‘Summer’ seasons with great rewards of up to 50 per cent during August and September.

Marketers across the GCC region have the opportunity to experience next-generation premium features, that reaches over 730mn monthly active Huawei device users.

With the worldwide ‘Back to School’ market estimated at US\$171.8bn in 2021 and predicted to reach new heights of US\$181.2bn in 2022, the time is ideal for businesses to embrace the opportunity and boost their revenues. At the same time, Zenith’s latest Advertising Expenditure Forecasts report predicts that advertising spending will increase by seven per cent in the MENA region in 2022, and will grow to US\$781bn globally.

Oman Air’s global sale offers up to 20% savings



Oman Air, the national carrier of the Sultanate of Oman, announced the launch of its new global sale campaign offering discounts of up to 20 per cent off Business and Economy Class fares on selected international destinations.

The global sale is Oman Air’s latest commitment to its loyal customers offering irresistible choices to a wide selection of international destinations.

Guests can enjoy savings on a wide range of selected international flights via the airline’s Muscat hub. The sale will run from August 22 to 31 for travel valid from September 15 this year to March 31 next year for both one-way and return flights.

ISWK celebrates India’s 76th Independence Day

Indian School Wadi Kabir celebrated their country’s 76th Independence Day, claiming this year’s event ‘exceptional’ after a hiatus of two years of virtual celebrations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

‘The jubilations were enhanced by today’s (August 15th’s) celebrations, both in grandeur and magnificence due to its hosting on-site. It was a day of festivity as it marked the completion of 75 glorious years of India’s independence and the distinguished audience and participants immersed themselves in the spirit of ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’,’ the school said.

V V Raghavan, the Country Manager, Oman Operations for The New India Assurance Co Ltd attended the event as the chief guest. He was accompanied by ISWK’s honorary president Alkesh Joshi and ISWK International honorary president Gargi Chugh; Rajendra Ved: Executive Director of ISWK and ISWK International; Kiran Asher, a distinguished member of the Education Cell; besides the distinguished members of the business community, members of the Hindu Mahajan Association, members of the Education Cell, other dignitaries, Principal D N Rao and the Vice Principals.



Jaguar Land Rover begins its aftersales summer campaign with discounts

MHD ACERE, the official Jaguar Land Rover dealership in Oman, is pleased to announce the launch of the Jaguar and Land Rover Summer Campaign for Aftersales till the end of August 2022. This exceptional offer includes a complimentary brake and AC check, as well as up to 20% reduction on labour costs.

A glimpse of Jaguar

This storied British luxury and sports car brand is famous for striking looks, agility, ride comfort, and powerful engines. In fact, Jaguar has a recognisable lineup of vehicles that includes the F-PACE, F-PACE SVR, and F-PACE RDYNAMIC that are available in Oman and you always have the chance to take a closer look at them in our showroom in Muscat and Salalah or configure your car at your

While in Oman, MHD ACERE is proud to be the exclusive dealership for Jaguar Land Rover for decades. The aftersales offer includes all Jaguar Land Rover models and the entire range

convenience.

All these vehicles deliver nimble handling. For that reason, if you are a Jaguar rider, explore now the Summer Aftersales offer to benefit from, which comprises complimentary brakes check and AC check as well as a discount up to 20% on labour costs.

A glimpse of Land Rover

Land Rover, the British bespoke brand of predominantly four-wheel drive and off-road capable vehicles. Land Rover recently launched its all-new Range Rover and Range Rover Sport that is characterized by the sporty looks and stunning performance, in addition to the seven-seater Land Rover Defender 130 and strong off-road performance. Each model of Land Rover has different trims

that guarantee a peerless refinement, practicality, and durability while every variant of the Rover family, whether sport, electric, electric hybrid, or classic, is known for its exterior design, muscular stance, and contemporary materials. It’s worth mentioning that, Land Rover history spans for decades and embraces the most innovative technologies that keeps it a niche in the market.

Nonetheless, Jaguar Land Rover is a unique brand in the global automotive industry. It is a result of peerless designers, unique awareness of clients’ future needs, emotionally rich brand equity.

While in Oman, MHD ACERE is proud to be the exclusive dealership for Jaguar Land Rover for decades. The aftersales offer includes all Jaguar Land Rover models and the entire range.



Bank Muscat, Savills Oman sign pact for banking solutions

Bank Muscat and Savills Oman have signed an agreement to extend the bank’s cutting-edge digital solutions of Corporate Online Banking and Remote Deposit Capture (RDC) solution to the company, said a press statement.

Through this agreement, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the sultanate leverages its digital capabilities in providing industry proven digital solutions for payments and collections of receivables through an efficient, seamless and secure channel.

The agreement was signed by Wafa Ibrahim al Ajmi, the assistant general manager - Transaction and Government Banking at Bank Muscat and Ihsan Kharouf, the Head of Savills Oman, the

leading global real estate advisor.

“At Bank Muscat, we have always been at the forefront of providing innovative digital solutions to our customers,” Ajmi said, while speaking at the event.

“Our corporate and institutional customers are on a digital transformation journey and are looking for digital solutions to improve their transactions and processes. We are delighted to tie up with Savills Oman by offering our state-of-the-art digital solutions of corporate online banking and remote data capture, which will bring increased efficiencies in Savills Oman’s business,” the AGM added.

Ihsan Kharouf of Savills Oman said that their organisation and Bank Muscat ‘have a strong



Wafa Ibrahim al Ajmi



Ihsan Kharouf

banking relationship and this latest partnership strengthens it further’. The implementation of digital solutions for payments and collection of receivables is a ‘hugely significant step in our strategy’ for streamlining operations for our property management clients, Savills Oman head

pointed out.

“The Corporate Online Banking and Remote Deposit Capture solutions will provide us with enhanced control and efficiency, faster payment clearance as well as prompt identification of bounced cheques.

“We are delighted to tie up

with Bank Muscat for our digitalisation efforts to increase business efficiencies, and are proud to offer this enhanced service to our clients.”

With business connectivity and digitalisation now more important than ever, Bank Muscat’s corporate banking solutions are providing its clients with seamless access to a number of corporate services that is crucial to their success in today’s world.

Bank Muscat’s RDC solution offers a host of benefits and features to corporates including faster clearing of cheques; elimination of financial losses related to missed or delayed presentation of cheques; faster reconciliation of cheques using the reports available to the company

from the RDC system and better management of post-dated cheques.

Corporates have the facility to scan cheques from any bank from the convenience of their offices without the need to manually sort the cheques or visit a Bank Muscat branch daily. The RDC solution also facilitates electronic endorsement on scanned cheques eliminating the need for manual stamping.

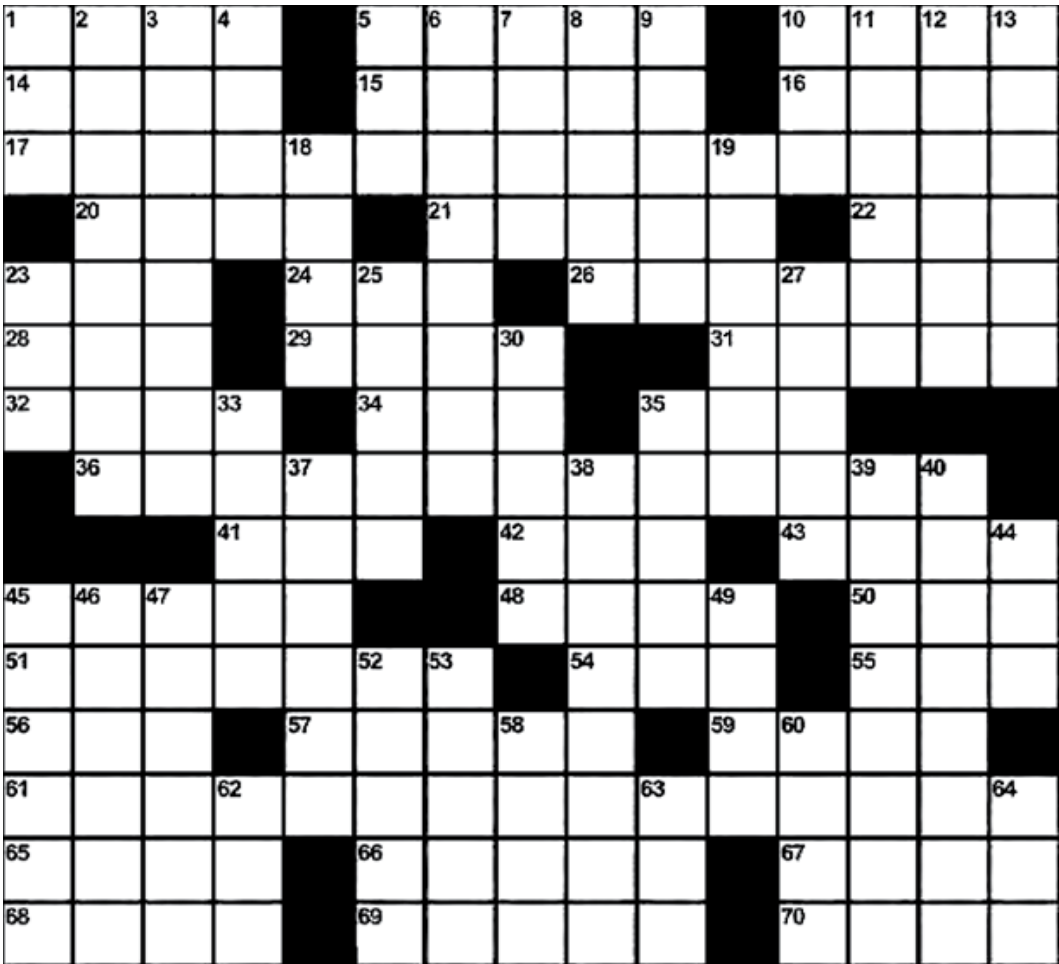
Bank Muscat’s Transaction Banking solutions enable achievement of automation in the activities of the treasury/finance team through cutting-edge technology and processes aligned with corporates’ needs. The Account Services solution provides enhanced visualisation

of the overall banking relationship across all banks which includes accounts with Bank Muscat as well as other local/international banks.

Direct Debit and Virtual Accounts are collection solutions, which facilitate automation in the reconciliation of receivables in addition to providing corporates with complete control and visibility of collections. ‘Sweeps’ is an advanced liquidity management solution for account balance management, which allows automation in fund movements between accounts as per pre-defined rules.

‘Trade Portal’ is the online solution which allows processing of trade finance requests efficiently and with complete transparency.

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Certain term of respect
5) Caliph's faith
10) Dishonestly acquired booty
14) "The Princess Diaries" star Hathaway
15) Diving gear
16) Succulent plant
17) Picnic item, sometimes
20) Wound from a boxer?
21) Elbow conspiratorially
22) Short, straight punch
23) Homer's "Heck!"
24) "Caught in the act!"
26) Ophthalmologist's concern
28) Schooner's cargo, often
29) Shopping outlet
31) Little laugh
32) "Dog Barking at the Moon" painter Joan
34) "Christ the Redeemer" city
35) That lass
36) Picnic items, sometimes
41) Sound of pleasure

- 42) Big Band or Victorian
43) "Listen!" old-style
45) Hollywood's East-wood
48) Lancelot and others
50) Wing-tip tip
51) Stumbling blocks
54) Busy pro in Apr.
55) Give a pink slip to
56) Possessive pronoun
57) Satisfy, as a debt
59) Enjoy a mystery
61) Picnic items, sometimes
65) Look_ (explore)
66) Syllables sung while skipping
67) City near Lake Tahoe
68) Too inquisitive
69) Sprinkle all about
70) Former Soviet inits.

DOWN

- 1) "Gaping" gullet
2) Like some steroids
3) Unlikely protagonist
4) High school sports event
5) Suffix for "Marx" or "capital"
6) Screenwriter's creation
7) Humdinger

- 8) Home
9) Rundown and filthy
10) Close friend
11) Wood of Hollywood
12) Vicinity
13) Debilitated
18) Photocopier tray filler, perhaps
19) Be hot under the collar
23) Hoover construction
25) Draconian
27) Tree with edible nuts
30) Firms up, as muscles
33) Ape of Borneo
35) Mentally acute
37) Word with "second" or "laws of"
38) First wheels, for many
39) Scones
40) Widens
44) Baseball's Griffey
45) Pay one's share
46) Spanglish speaker, often
4 7) Map parts
49) Kolkata dress
52) Creatures with six or more legs,
typically
53) Baseball or tennis

- 58) At some distance
60) Stocking shade
62) Flirtatious

- 63) Bit of hesitation?
64) Word in the Postal Service creed

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Even someone who is agreeable and charming may have some devious intentions. Don't let yourself trust people just because they seem trustworthy. Wait for proof! Watch for people who are smiling broadly today. They might have something to hide. Try not to commit to anything legally binding or financially risky right now. You might not have all the necessary facts.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Are you growing unhappy with your career options? It's time to use some of your fabulous creativity to either brighten up your daily routine or find some new options. You might be missing an obvious solution. In the romance arena, the ball is in your court. Don't sit on the sidelines just because you hate to lose. Give it your best shot. Even if the other person doesn't want to play, you'll still come out a winner.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Like a pointillist painting by Seurat, your life is made up of many small details that add up to something lovely. But as with that painting, what you see when you focus closely is a bunch of unrelated pieces. Take a step back, and things will fall into place. You'll see that the complete picture is distinctively beautiful. Try not to be too caught up in your life's details today, and congratulate yourself on the wonderful masterpiece that you're in the process of creating.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Your insight and energy can lay the groundwork for an especially productive day today. Whether it's finishing paperwork, cleaning out your garage, or pulling together a last-minute celebration, you're totally on the ball and kicking butt today! Don't be surprised if powerful people take notice and offer you the chance to display your abilities on a much larger stage. Let your ambition take over and lead you to the success you've deserved for a long time.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Someone with whom you often disagree will see things your way today. In fact, this person is going to jump to your defense and help you win a heated, fun debate. You two are more compatible than you ever realized, and maybe it's time you discovered just how much. Make an effort to learn more about this new ally. Express your gratitude and demonstrate that you aren't a person who holds grudges. The two of you have the possibility of a very bright future.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Your life is moving from a time of extreme highs and lows to a time of middle-of-the-road smoothness. There will be no dramatic shifts right now, and what happens today will be mostly positive. Having a good life might not be as exciting as having a fabulous, dramatic life, but you must admit that a good life is better than a bad one, right? Enjoy your life's simple pleasures. After all, if everything were one big drama, you'd never be able to truly relax.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

The dictionary might define an obstacle as a person or thing that obstructs progress, but today any obstacles you face will have quite the opposite effect. When someone tells you no today, all you'll hear is a challenge to change this person's mind. You're up to the task, and you're eager to make all obstacles disappear. This applies doubly in your personal life, so if someone you've been pursuing has been a tough nut to crack, this is a sure sign to keep going.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You will be graced with a huge dose of beautiful, magnetic energy today. In a crowd, you'll be able to draw people around you in a supportive way. People will feel especially safe and confident around you and be ready to divulge some critical information. But this is not the day to use your charms to get something out of someone. Rather, it's a day to just be yourself. Let people open up to you when and how they want.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Family history can help you deal with your family's future, so get in touch with some older relatives to get the answers and insight you need right now. A lot of ideas and experiences from your past are going to be coming back into your life today, and they could cause you to question the choices you've been making lately. This questioning is a good sign, because it shows that you want to improve yourself.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Past family disagreements are evolving into comfortable understanding now, and you might want to consider integrating some family members into your social circle a bit more. If you socialize with the people you're related to, you might find that you relate to them in a whole new way. A casual dinner party might be just the ticket when you're ready to bring friends and family together. Expect a lot of harmony when many people who love you are in one room together.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

In a group dynamic today, watch out for some abrasive personalities who are trying to stir up a great big pot of mayhem. They understand that when chaos reigns, people get distracted and power can be grabbed. The best strategy for dealing with these malefactors is to ignore their schemes. Help your group focus on the big goals it has in front of it and ignore the bubbling stew of chaos that others are trying to prepare. This pot won't boil over if you just ignore it.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

As you're well aware, communication involves more than just talking and listening. Thinking is a big part of it too. And right now, you need to work on your thinking skills. When someone conveys personal information to you today, they don't necessarily want you to respond, but they do want you to integrate what you're hearing into your life. This advice might be uncomfortable to hear, but it will be helpful. Other people have your best interests at heart.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Which of these became an independent country in 1948?

- A. Vietnam
B. Mexico
C. Sri Lanka
D. France

02. What is unusual about the flag of Nepal?

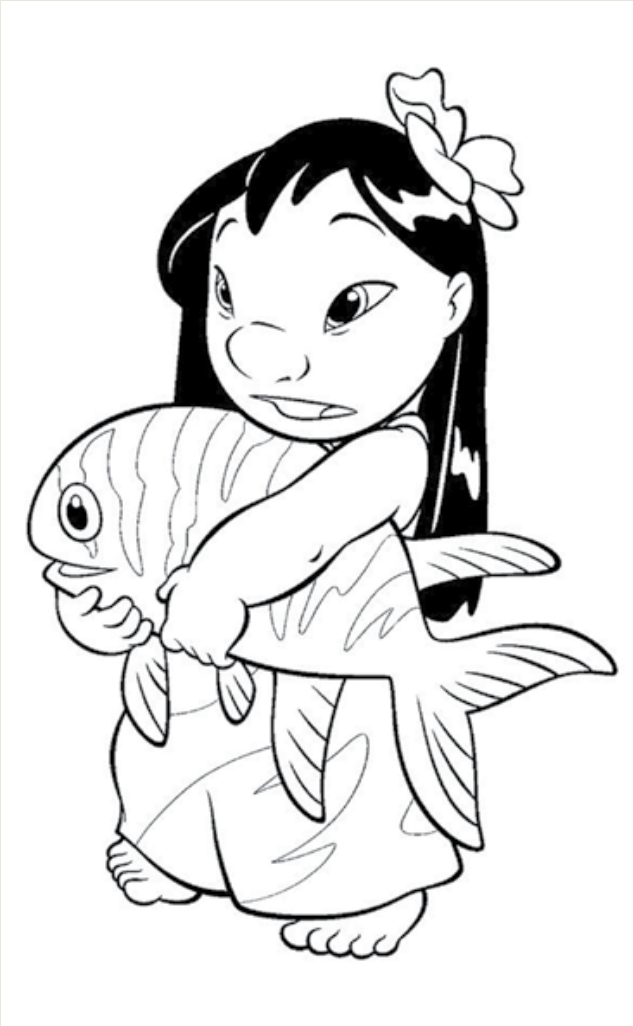
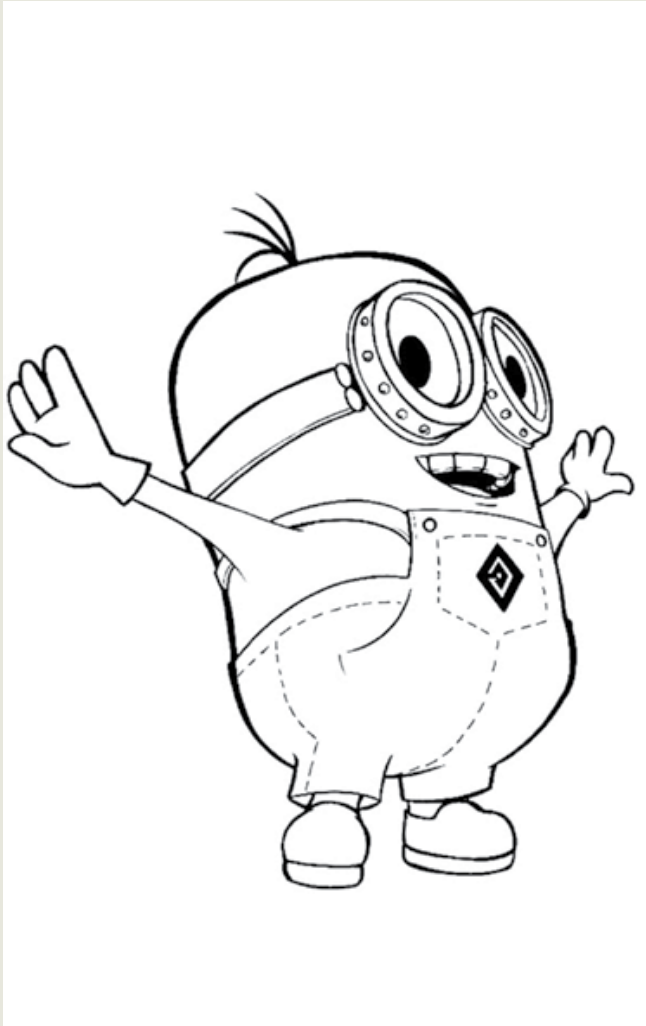
- A. It is not quadrilateral in shape.
B. It has only one colour
C. It uses over 16 colours
D. It is the same as the flag of Japan

03. The groundhog that famously appears at Gobbler's Knob, Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, on 2 February annually is said to be able to predict what?

- A. The number of tourists next 2 February
B. The quantity of tigers that will be in town in the next year
C. The quality of the harvest
D. The length of the winter

Answers: 1. C 2. A 3. D

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

O	R	E	R
D	Y	S	E
A	M	E	O
P	I	L	E

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

First Palestinians to fly from Israel’s Negev desert airport arrive in Cyprus

Cyprus – A group of Palestinians from the occupied West Bank flew abroad from an airport in Israel’s Negev desert for the first time on Monday, arriving in Cyprus under a newly launched pilot scheme.

“This is the first trip for us from Ramon” airport, said Sofiane, a Palestinian pharmacist who declined to provide his surname.

“We got this opportunity for the first time as Palestinians,” he said, adding that the group was made up of pharmacists from around the West Bank.

An AFP correspondent said around 25 Palestinians arrived

on Israel’s Arkia airlines flight from Ramon airport, near the southern Israeli resort city of Eilat, into Larnaca airport on Monday afternoon.

A spokeswoman for the Israel Airports Authority had earlier told AFP that around 40 Palestinians were expected to be on board.

While residents of Israeli settlements in the West Bank can travel abroad from Israel’s main international airport near Tel Aviv, the vast majority of Palestinians from the territory are banned from doing so.

Palestinians must instead make an overland crossing from



Palestinians leave Larnaca International Airport after arriving aboard the first flight from Israel’s Ramon airport, in Cyprus on Monday (AFP)

the West Bank to Jordan, before boarding a flight in the country’s capital Amman.

“We were supposed to fly

from Jordan but they managed to arrange a flight from the airport in Ramon,” Sofiane said, referring to the travel agency that organised

the trip. “The security check was tricky, especially for the women,” he added, but ‘things moved smoothly and here we are’.

The King Hussein (Allenby) crossing between Jordan and the West Bank last month saw ‘an unprecedented rise in the number of travellers’, a Jordanian official said.

“Hopefully everything goes well here,” said fellow Palestinian pharmacist Rani, also declining to provide his surname, after arriving in Larnaca.

“We’re on an adventure since we are not used to travelling,” Sofiane added.

Rather than permit Palestinians to fly from Ramon, some 180km south of the West Bank, Palestinian prime minister Mohammad Shtayyeh called on Israel to instead reopen Jerusalem airport.

“He demanded these authorities open Jerusalem airport in the Qalandia area, and remove obstacles to the movement of individuals and goods to and from Palestine,” a cabinet meeting statement said last month.

The airport in east Jerusalem was used by Palestinians until the 1967 Six-Day War, when Israel captured the area and other Palestinian territories.

Israelis operated the Jerusalem airport until 2001 and it has since been deserted, though there are plans to build a settlement on the site.

The first flights in the Ramon airport pilot programme were expected to be operated by Turkish airlines, but the Israel Airports Authority said on Sunday that the involvement of foreign firms in the scheme had been postponed.

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas was due to travel on Monday to the Turkish capital Ankara, days after Turkey and Israel restored full diplomatic relations.

AFP

Somalia PM vows accountability over deadly hotel siege in capital



The damaged structure of the Hayat Hotel in Mogadishu (AFP)

Mogadishu, Somalia - Somalia’s prime minister pledged that the government will be held accountable over the deadly Mogadishu hotel siege by Al-Shabaab militants whom he branded ‘children of hell’.

Hamza Abdi Barre also called on Somalis to unite in the fight against the Al-Qaeda-linked group which has been waging a bloody insurgency in the impoverished Horn of Africa nation for more than 15 years.

“There will be accountability in the government... anyone who neglected the responsibility he was entrusted with will be held accountable,” Barre told reporters late on Sunday.

He was speaking after visiting a hospital treating wounded victims of the bomb and gun attack on the Hayat Hotel that the health ministry says claimed the lives of 21 people and wounded 117.

The 30-hour siege was the deadliest attack in Mogadishu since the new President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was elected in May after a protracted political crisis.

Police said more than 100 people, including women and

children, had been rescued during the siege, which began on Friday evening and finally ended around midnight on Saturday after security forces bombarded the hotel.

“There is only one of two choices here, we either allow Al-Shabaab - the children of hell - to live, or we live. We cannot live together,” said Barre, who was appointed prime minister in June.

“I call on the Somali people to unite to fight against the enemy... so that what they did now will never happen again.

“The fight against them has already started taking place around several locations,” he said, without elaborating.

The Hayat was a favoured meeting spot for government officials and scores of people were inside when a suicide bomber triggered a massive blast, forcing his way onto the premises along with heavily-armed gunmen.

Minutes later, a second explosion struck as rescuers, security forces and civilians rushed to help the injured, witnesses said.

AFP

Two more bodies pulled from Iraq shrine landslide

Karbala, Iraq - The bodies of two pilgrims were pulled from an Iraqi shrine on Monday, two days after its partial collapse in a landslide, taking the overall toll to seven dead, rescuers said.

Emergency workers were trying to remove the rubble and debris from the shrine known as Qattarat al-Imam Ali near the Shiite holy city of Karbala in central Iraq.

‘Unfortunately, we found this morning two bodies, a man and a woman’, under the rubble, Jawdat Abdelrahman, director of the civil defence media department, told AFP.



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

So far, the bodies retrieved from the site were a child, four women and two men, while three children had been rescued and rushed to hospital.

“We are continuing the search for other victims,” Abdelrahman said, adding eyewitnesses had reported that there was another body, of a woman, still under the rubble.

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, near the Shiite holy city of Karbala.

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.

So far the bodies retrieved from the site were a child, four women and two men, while three children had been rescued and rushed to hospital

Anger over tragedy
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.

Firebrand Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr meanwhile railed against ‘suspected corruption that caused civilian deaths’, in a tweet on Sunday evening.

But Iraq’s Shiite waqf, which is responsible for administering Shiite properties in the country, said in a statement that it did not manage the shrine nor the land on which it was built.

“The shrine does not belong to a known party, but to individuals who have been summoned’ for questioning. Karbala governor Nassif al-Khatibi wrote on Facebook, without providing further detail.

Rescuers on Sunday drove a bulldozer through the shrine’s entrance, which resembles half a dome ornately decorated with blue tiles covered in Arabic script.

Iraqi President Barham Saleh had called on rescue workers to ‘mobilise all efforts to save the trapped people’, while Caretaker Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi urged his interior minister to directly supervise operations.

The stricken shrine is dedicated to Imam Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammed, who according to Shiite tradition stopped there with his army on his way to a battle in AD 657.

It is located in a natural depression about 25km west of Karbala, which is the burial place of Imam Hussein, grandson of the Prophet Mohammed.

Shiites view Hussein, who died in battle in AD 680, as the rightful successor to the Prophet Mohammed, the issue at the heart of a schism with Sunni Islam.

AFP

Nearly 9,000 Ukrainian troops killed so far, says Kyiv

Kyiv, Ukraine - Nearly 9,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed since Russia invaded, the country’s top military officer said on Monday, as Moscow accused Kyiv over the assassination of the daughter of a leading hardliner.

The European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell meanwhile told reporters in Spain that the bloc was considering military training for Ukraine’s forces.

General Valeriy Zaluzhny, Ukraine’s commander-in-chief, said Ukraine’s children needed particular attention ‘because their fathers have gone to the front and are maybe among the nearly 9,000 heroes who have been killed’.

Zaluzhny’s comments on the Ukrainian death toll, reported by Interfax-Ukraine news agency, was the first indication of Kyiv’s

military losses since April.

On Wednesday, Ukraine will mark its Independence Day - and six months since Russian troops invaded.

After Ukrainian resistance thwarted an early Russian push on the capital Kyiv, Moscow’s forces have focussed on gaining ground in the east of the country.

The shockwaves of the war are being felt around the world with soaring energy prices and food shortages.

Putin denounces ‘vile crime’
Russia’s FSB security services on Monday accused Ukraine of being behind Saturday’s car bombing in the outskirts of Moscow that killed Daria Dugina, the daughter of hard-line Russian ideologue Alexander Dugin.



People look at destroyed Russian military equipment at Khreshchatyk street in Kyiv on Sunday, ahead of Ukraine’s Independence Day (AFP)

“The crime was prepared and committed by Ukrainian special services,” the FSB said in a statement on Monday carried by Russian news agencies.

Russian President Vladimir Putin denounced the ‘vile crime’

in a message of condolence to her family.

The FSB statement said the person responsible was a Ukrainian woman born in 1979 who had rented an apartment in the same building where Dugina lived.

After the car bombing, she had fled to EU member Estonia, it added.

Dugin, 60, is an outspoken Russian ultranationalist intellectual who enthusiastically backs Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, as did his daughter. Russian media reports suggest Dugin had borrowed her father’s car at the last minute.

Over the weekend, Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhaylo Podolyak denied that Kyiv had had anything to do with the bombing.

Tense Independence Day
In Spain Borrell told reporters that EU defence ministers would next week discuss launching a major training operation for Ukrainian forces in nearby coun-

tries. “It seems reasonable that a war that is lasting and looks set to last requires an effort not only in terms of supplies of material,” Borrell said.

EU defence ministers have a two-day meeting in Prague from next Monday.

“I hope it will be approved,” said Borrell, adding that the details would have to be agreed by all EU member states.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky warned over the weekend that Russia might mark Ukraine’s Independence Day by launching a trial of Ukrainian soldiers captured during the siege of Mariupol.

“This will be the line beyond which no negotiations are possible,” he warned in Sunday’s nightly address.

AFP

Bull races through Israeli bank

Tel Aviv, Israel - Employees of an Israeli bank were sent fleeing down the corridors on Monday, as a bull charged through the financial institution.

The incident at a Bank Leumi branch in an industrial zone in Lod, south-east of Tel Aviv, got underway in the carpark.

The bull with a rope trailing from its neck hurtled past parked cars before entering the bank, provoking panic among employees. A video published by the newspaper *Israel Hayom* showed people running away.

Half an hour passed before the bull’s owner arrived and a vet was called, the newspaper reported. A Bank Leumi spokeswoman said the case was reported to the local authorities and a veterinary service.

AFP



Supporters of Kenya's presidential candidate Raila Odinga sing outside the Milimani High Court in Nairobi on Monday (AFP)

Kenya's Odinga challenges presidential poll result in top court

Nairobi, Kenya - Kenya's defeated presidential candidate Raila Odinga filed a petition to the country's top court on Monday challenging the result of the August 9 election that handed victory to his rival William Ruto.

Odinga, a veteran opposition leader who ran with the backing of President Uhuru Kenyatta and the ruling party, has rejected the outcome of

week ago sparked angry protests in some Odinga strongholds and there are fears that a drawn-out dispute may lead to violence in a country with a history of post-poll unrest.

Since 2002, every presidential election in Kenya has triggered a dispute, with this year's outcome also causing a rift within the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) which oversaw the poll.

Odinga, who was making his fifth bid for the top job, said last week that the figures announced by the IEBC were 'null and void and must be quashed by a court of law'.

According to a copy of the 72-page petition seen by AFP, Odinga's team alleges that IEBC chairman Wafula Chebukati failed to tally around 140,000 votes.

As a result, Ruto 'did not meet the constitutional threshold of 50 per cent plus 1 of the valid votes cast' -- a requirement for him to be declared the winner.

Judges now have 14 days to issue a ruling. If they order an annulment, a new vote must be held within 60 days.

Odinga supporters began gathering outside the court hours before his arrival, blowing whistles and waving placards reading 'Electoral Justice Now!' and 'We want justice now'.

"Odinga must win so that we get the 6,000 shillings (US\$50) promised in his manifesto," said one man referring to a monthly cash handout for vulnerable households.

AFP

We have hopes that we have made a good case and will win

DANIEL MAANZO

the poll, branding it a 'travesty'. He narrowly lost to Ruto by around 230,000 votes -- less than two percentage points.

The 77-year-old politician filed a physical copy of the petition with barely an hour to go before the court's 2.00pm (1100 GMT) deadline for accepting the case. An online copy was filed earlier in the day, according to a member of his legal team.

Hundreds of supporters cheered as dozens of boxes of evidence were unloaded from a truck outside the court.

"We have hopes that we have made a good case and will win," Daniel Maanzo, a member of Odinga's legal team, told AFP.

Although polling day passed off peacefully, the announcement of the results a

Khan's arrest would be red line: Pakistan opposition

Islamabad, Pakistan - Pakistan opposition leaders warned Monday that authorities would cross a 'red line' if they arrested former prime minister Imran Khan after he was reported under the anti-terrorism act for comments he made about the judiciary.

Since being ousted by a vote of no confidence in April, Khan has held mass rallies across the country, warning state institutions including the military not to back the coalition government led by his long-time political rival Shehbaz Sharif.

Hundreds of people gathered outside Khan's house Monday - ostensibly to prevent police from reaching him - but the former leader has been fighting a raft of charges for months and has so far not been arrested.

'Wherever you are, reach Bani Gala today and show solidarity with Imran Khan,' tweeted former information minister Fawad Chaudhry, referring to Khan's home.

'Imran Khan is our red line.'

A First Information Report was filed with police on Sunday - the first step of a process that could lead to formal charges and arrest.

Lawyers for Khan preemptively applied for pre-arrest bail at the Islamabad High Court Monday, which was granted until at least Thursday.

There was a low-key police presence outside Khan's resi-



Supporters of Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan shout slogans as they gather outside his residence, in Islamabad on Monday (AFP)

dence on Monday, with around 500 party supporters gathered in the affluent suburb of Bani Gala.

Muhammad Ayub said he had travelled overnight from Peshawar in the northwest to show support for Khan.

"We will protest and will block roads if Khan is arrested," he told AFP.

In a statement, Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party (PTI)

said the latest accusations against him were 'frivolous'. 'We have serious reservations on this politically motivated move which leads towards further instability in the country,' it said.

On Saturday he criticised a magistrate responsible for keeping a PTI official in police custody, after party leaders say he was tortured in detention.

Khan's main goal is an early

general election - the next one must be held before October next year - but the government has shown no sign of wanting to go to the polls as it grapples with major economic problems.

Khan swept into power in 2018 thanks to an electorate weary of the dynastic politics of the country's two major parties, with the former cricket star promising to sweep away

decades of entrenched corruption and cronyism.

But under his rule the country's economy went into free fall, and the International Monetary Fund suspended a US\$6bn loan programme that the new government has only just gotten back on track.

Khan also lost the support of the military.

AFP

Sri Lanka faces international censure over arrests

Colombo, Sri Lanka - Sri Lanka's new government came under international censure on Monday over the use of tough anti-terror laws to detain protesters who forced Gotabaya Rajapaksa to step down from the presidency last month.

Three student activists arrested last week during the first anti-government rally after the end of a state of emergency were being held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), authorities said late on Sunday, including student leader Wasantha Mudalige.

The PTA allows suspects to be detained for 90 days without judicial review.

"Using laws that don't conform with international human



This file photo shows a Sri Lankan university student during clashes with police at a demonstration in Colombo on August 18 (AFP)

rights standards - like the PTA - erodes democracy in Sri Lanka," said US Ambassador to Sri Lanka Julie Chung. 'We encourage the government to uphold the rights

of the people to express their views,' she tweeted.

The European Union said it was 'concerned' by the development, with the EU office in

Colombo tweeting that there had been a 'de-facto moratorium of the use of #PTA'.

Another 13 demonstrators arrested at Thursday's protest have either been released on bail or are being held under normal procedures.

UK-based rights group Amnesty International said the use of anti-terror laws against peaceful protesters was a sign authorities were 'unwilling to withstand any form of criticism and are systematically stifling dissenting voices'.

"Charges of terrorism do not commensurate with any offences the protesters are alleged to have committed," said its South Asia Director Yamini Mishra. "Time and time again,

the Act has been used as a tool to silence government critics, journalists and minorities."

An unprecedented economic collapse sparked often huge anti-government rallies in Sri Lanka this year, after the country ran out of foreign currency to finance imports, leaving its 22mn people enduring chronic shortages of essential goods, rolling blackouts and spiralling inflation.

The government imposed a state of emergency that gave security forces sweeping detention powers, but the ordinance lapsed last week. Sri Lanka defaulted on its US\$51bn foreign debt in mid-April and is in talks with the International Monetary Fund for a possible bailout.

AFP

Crises threaten UK Royal's image 25 years after Diana's death

London, UK - The royal family's perceived botched response to Diana's death sparked a gradual and largely successful shift in its image management, but recent crises have renewed questions about that modernisation effort.

The death of the princess of Wales on August 31, 1997, prompted an outpouring of national grief that senior royals, including Queen Elizabeth II and her son Prince Charles, initially seemed out of step with.

There was eventually an acknowledgement missteps were made and that the family needed to turn the page on a damaging decade of divorces, family infighting and scandals that had dented their public standing.

A quarter-century on, the monarchy now has a far more nimble PR operation, adept at social media and rapid-response while still able to stage grand events like June's Platinum Jubilee celebrations with aplomb.

However, recent controversies - notably Prince Andrew's



This file photo of August 19, 1995 shows Princess Diana (left) and Prince Charles (right) with their children William (second from right) and Harry (AFP)

links to billionaire paedophile Jeffrey Epstein, and Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle quitting frontline royal duties -- have cast doubts on the monarchy's remoulding.

"Diana's death is this whirl-

wind moment, which requires the monarchy to reorientate its public image, to embrace a more modern, expressive kind of celebrity image as a way of appealing to audiences," royal historian Ed Owens told AFP.

Noting 'that story lives on through her sons', he sees particular peril in Harry's apparent estrangement, the Queen's recent handling of scandal-tarred Andrew and heir Charles' looming reign.

"I think there are troubled times ahead," Owens predicted.

In the immediate aftermath of Diana's death, the Queen and Charles, whose divorce from Diana had been finalised the previous year, remained for days at

Balmoral Castle, their remote Scottish residence, making no public statements. Fuelled by other missteps, a media-driven narrative took hold that the family were out of touch at a moment of national significance.

Royal commentators disagree on how fair this criticism was, noting the family's priorities were supporting William and Harry over the sudden loss of their mother as well as organising an elaborate funeral service.

Nonetheless, Buckingham Palace's press operation was gradually revamped, with more PR-savvy people brought in.

Robert Hardman, author of this year's *Queen of Our Times: The Life of Elizabeth II*, argued it was a measured 'evolution' as the 24-hour news cycle ramped up and then social media arrived.

"Monarchy is not like a brand of cereal, it doesn't relaunch," he cautioned.

"It changes slowly, imperceptibly, but firmly for a reason."

AFP

Chinese ship leaves Sri Lanka after riling India, US

Colombo, Sri Lanka - A Chinese research vessel accused by India and the United States of spying activities left Sri Lanka's Chinese-run port of Hambantota on Monday after a week-long stay.

Colombo allowed the Yuan Wang 5 to visit the deep-sea port on the condition that it would not engage in research in Sri Lankan waters.

Both India and the US had raised security concerns over the ship's visit to Sri Lanka, with New Delhi lodging a complaint - a move that delayed the visit by a week before Colombo announced a U-turn.

"Our pilot is onboard and the ship is leaving port," a harbour official told AFP as the vessel was being guided out by tug boats.

"They have given the port of Jiangyin as their next destination," the official added.

AFP

US governor visits Taiwan after China drills

Taipei, Taiwan - A US state governor met Taiwan's president on Monday, days after Washington announced trade talks with Taipei in a show of support following China's military threats towards the self-ruled island.

Eric Holcomb, the Republican governor of Indiana, landed in Taiwan on Sunday for an 'economic development trip'.

US-China tensions have risen since Beijing staged huge military drills in retaliation for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan earlier this month.

Taiwan lives under constant threat of an invasion by China, which claims the democratic island 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 fury to visits by Western officials and politicians.

In her meeting with Holcomb on Monday, President Tsai Ing-wen directly referenced Beijing's drills and called for like-minded countries to continue supporting Taiwan.



Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen (right) speaking with US governor Eric Holcomb (left) at the Presidential Office in Taipei on Monday (AFP)

"Presently we are facing the continued expansion of global authoritarianism," she told the

US state governor.

"Taiwan has been confronted by military threats from China in

and around the Taiwan Strait. At this moment democratic allies must stand together and boost

cooperation across all areas," she said.

Holcomb said the United

We are facing continued expansion of global authoritarianism. Taiwan has been confronted by military threats from China in and around Taiwan Strait. Democratic allies must stand together and boost cooperation across all areas

TSAI ING-WEN

States and Taiwan 'share so many common values and interests and goals'. "We will continue to seek to build a strategic partnership with you," he said.

Holcomb is also expected to meet representatives of Taiwan's world-leading semiconductor industry before leaving on Wednesday for South Korea.

Alongside South Korea, Taiwan makes some of the world's smallest and most advanced computer chips - a commodity that is vital for electronics but in short supply worldwide.

The United States is keen to encourage Taiwanese companies to build chip foundries on American soil to diversify supply chains, something Tsai also ref-

erenced on Monday.

"Taiwan is willing and able to strengthen cooperation with democratic partners in building sustainable supply chain for democracy chips," she said.

Holcomb's visit comes on the heels of the announcement of trade talks between Washington and Taipei in the coming months as a senior US diplomat warned Beijing would continue to put pressure on Taiwan.

China has lashed out at the plans for business talks with Washington - though it also has multiple trade deals of its own with Taiwan, signed during years when their relations were warmer.

AFP



A South Korean protester holds a placard reading 'Stop the war exercise!' during a rally in front of the War Memorial in Seoul on Monday (AFP)

US, South Korea begin biggest joint military drills since 2018

Seoul, South Korea - The United States and South Korea began their biggest combined military drills since 2018 on Monday, Seoul said - a move likely to enrage North Korea, which has been ramping up its nuclear threats.

Washington is Seoul's key security ally and stations about 28,500 troops in South Korea to protect it from its nuclear-armed neighbour. The two countries have long carried out joint exercises, which they insist are purely defensive but North Korea sees them as a rehearsal for invasion.

The Ulchi Freedom Shield exercise marks the resumption of large-scale training sessions after they were scaled back due to COVID-19 and a bout of failed diplomacy with Pyongyang.

"The significance of this joint exercise is rebuilding the South Korea-US alliance and solidifying the combined defence posture by normalising... combined exercises and field training," the defence ministry said.

Details of the drills that run from August 22 to September 1 have not been released, but they usually include field exercises involving aircraft, warships and tanks - with tens of thousands of troops. During a meeting last week, the allies agreed to 'expanding the scope and scale of combined military exercises and

training', noting the increased volume of North Korean missile tests. This will start 'with Ulchi Freedom Shield... to bolster combined readiness', they said in a joint statement.

Analysts say North Korea may use the drills as a reason to

The significance of this joint exercise is rebuilding South Korea-US alliance and solidifying the combined defence posture

DEFENCE MINISTRY

conduct more weapons tests.

Earlier this month, Pyongyang warned it would 'wipe out' Seoul authorities, who it blamed for a recent COVID-19 outbreak in the isolated country.

That threat came less than a month after Kim Jong Un said his country was 'ready to mobilise' its nuclear capability in any war with the United States and South Korea. North Korea has conducted a blitz of tests this year, including firing an intercontinental ballistic missile at full range for the first time since 2017.

AFP

South Korean police locate relative of children whose remains found in suitcases in New Zealand

Seoul, South Korea - A woman who is believed to be related to two children whose remains were found in suitcases in New Zealand is in South Korea, Seoul police told AFP on Monday.

Last week, New Zealand police said they had discovered the remains of two children, who are thought to have been between five and 10 years old when they died, in suitcases.

The bodies were discovered after an unsuspecting family bought a trailer-load of items - including the suitcases - at an auction for abandoned goods.

New Zealand police have said



Safe Store facility in Papatoetoe where suitcases containing human remains were stored and later sold at an auction in Auckland (AFP)

the bodies were likely to have been in storage for several years, which has complicated the inves-

tigation into the crime.

Police said on Monday that a woman of Korean descent, who

is believed to be related to the children, is currently in South Korea.

"We confirm that she is in South Korea, and that she is a New Zealand national of Korean descent," an official at the Korean National Police Agency told AFP.

She arrived in the South in 2018 and had no record of leaving the country since that year, he added.

"New Zealand police are leading this investigation and we intend to cooperate at their request," the official added.

Police have been checking hours of CCTV footage, but key

moments could have already been erased due to the delay between when the victims died and the discovery of the bodies.

Both the storage unit and property where the suitcases were taken have been thoroughly examined by forensic experts.

Authorities in New Zealand reiterated last week that the family who found the bodies were not connected to the homicide.

They are receiving support to help deal with the trauma, the country's Detective Inspector Tofilau Faamanuia Vaealua said at the time.

AFP

Philippine classrooms reopen after more than two years

Manila, Philippines - Millions of children in the Philippines returned to school as the academic year started on Monday, with many taking their seats in classrooms for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

The Philippines is one of the last countries in the world to resume full-time, in-person lessons - sparking warnings that the prolonged closure of classrooms had worsened an education crisis in the country.

Children in masks and uniforms lined up for a temperature check and squirt of hand sanitiser at Pedro Guevara Elementary School in Manila, which had shut classrooms since March 2020.

The school has adopted a hybrid system of in-person and remote learning as it transitions its nearly 6,000 students back to face-to-face classes by November - a deadline set by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr soon after he took office two months ago.

Grade six student Sophia Macahilig said she was 'excited' to meet her classmates and teachers after two years of Zoom lessons. "We used to have fun and now I can have fun again," 11-year-old Macahilig told AFP.

But many students have a lot of catching up to do.

Even before the pandemic, nine out of 10 Filipino children could 'not read a simple text with comprehension' by age 10, the World Bank and other agencies



Students attend the first day of in-person classes after years-long COVID-19 lockdowns at Pedro Guevara Elementary School in Manila on Monday (AFP)

said in a recent report.

Only 10 countries were worse off, including Afghanistan, Laos, Chad and Yemen.

Lagging behind

After Philippine schools closed, a 'blended learning' programme involving online classes, printed materials and lessons broadcast on television and social media was introduced.

As face-to-face classes resume, old problems persist: large class sizes, outdated teaching

methods, poverty, and lack of basic infrastructure - such as toilets - have been blamed for contributing to the education crisis.

Pedro Guevara science teacher Ethel Tumanan, 32, said she was worried that students had missed out on valuable learning over the past two years.

"As a teacher, we really prefer face-to-face, at least we are the ones who can gauge and assess where our pupils are at."

In the lead-up to the reopening of classrooms, the govern-

ment has been ramping up a vaccination drive and will provide students with free public transport until the end of the calendar year. On Saturday, the government began handing out cash aid to students and parents struggling to cover expenses, leading to chaotic scenes outside distribution centres.

In the city of Zamboanga, 29 people were injured when several thousand tried to push through the gate of a high school.

AFP

Gunmen kidnap Catholic nuns in Nigeria

Lagos, Nigeria - Gunmen have abducted four Catholic nuns in southeast Nigeria's Imo state, police said on Monday, in the latest violence in a region where separatist tensions are on the rise.

Kidnappings by criminal gangs are frequent in Africa's most populous country, but in recent weeks members of Christian churches have increasingly been targeted.

Most hostages are released after a ransom payment, but some have been killed.

"Four reverend sisters of the Catholic church were abducted," Imo state police spokesman Michael Abattam told AFP.

He said the nuns were seized near Okigwe city on Sunday on their way to mass. "We are on the trail of the kidnappers with a view to freeing the victims."

Abattam could not immediately say what the motive was for the abduction as no group has claimed responsibility.

Southeast Nigeria has seen a surge in violence blamed on the outlawed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) group or its armed wing ESN. IPOB which seeks a separate state for ethnic Igbo people has repeatedly denied responsibility for violence.

More than 100 police officers and other security personnel have been killed since the beginning of last year in targeted attacks in the region, according to local media tallies.

AFP

India tightens security as farmers protest in Delhi

New Delhi, India - The police in India's capital beefed up security after farmers called for a protest at the city's protest site on Monday.

Ahead of the call by farmers to protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar, Delhi Police on Monday beefed up the security forces at the Singhu border and Ghazipur border on the Delhi-Meerut expressway, according to the local administration.

Farmers have on Monday called for protests at Jantar Mantar against unemployment.

Earlier, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) - an umbrella body of farmers - had announced the beginning of its 75-hour sit-in in Lakhimpur Kheri of the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh from Thursday to press for their pending demands.

The SKM is an umbrella group comprising around 40 farm organisations, primarily demanding the proper implementation of minimum support price (MSP) for crops.

In April, Bharatiya Kisan Union



Farmers from various organisations gather as they participate in a protest against the central government policies, in New Delhi on Monday (AFP)

(BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait joined the protest held by the Telangana leaders in New Delhi against the federal government's paddy procurement policy and said that there is a need for another protest in the country.

Tikait also added that the farmer umbrella body Samyukt Kisan Morcha will back every Chief Minister who fights for the farmers' issues.

Indian farmers under the leadership of Tikait had held a year-long protest last year against three farm laws passed by parliament in September 2020, that sought to deregulate Indian agriculture, lifting government supervision of crop sales and allowing corporations to negotiate directly with farmers.

In response, farmers waged one of the largest civil disobedience campaigns since India won its independence from Britain. and forced Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced and pushed through parliament the repeal of three contentious laws.

ANI+Agencies

Indian police arrest 'Robin Hood' thief

New Delhi, India - Police in the Indian capital Delhi said on Monday that they had arrested a 'Robin Hood' gang leader of 25 merry men who robbed the rich and gave some of the proceeds - but not all - to the poor.

Wasim Akram, 27, alias Lambu ('Lofty') and his outfit robbed 'big houses in posh areas in Delhi', stealing cash and jewellery and giving some of the loot to the financially deprived, police said. "Due to this trait, he has got many followers in the area. These sources give him immediate information about the movement of police," Delhi police said in a statement on Sunday.

The 'notorious absconding history sheeted' - an Indian English term meaning a habitual criminal - would frequently change his hideouts across several Indian states, the statement said. With 160 crimes allegedly to his name, including robberies, attempted murder and rape, a special cell on Akram's tail for the past four months finally caught him on Friday. "A team led by (Inspector) Shiv Kumar was formed and a trap was laid near Anand Vihar railway station from where Wasim was nabbed," the police statement said.

AFP

Indian Minister Jaishankar unveils bust of Mahatma Gandhi in Paraguay

Asuncion, Paraguay - India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar unveiled a bust of Mahatma Gandhi in Paraguay on Sunday. He appreciated the Asuncion Municipality's decision to locate it at the prominent waterfront of the city.

"Appreciate Asuncion Municipality's decision to locate it at the prominent waterfront of the city. This is a statement of solidarity that was so strongly expressed during the COVID pandemic," Jaishankar tweeted on Twitter.

The Indian Minister is on his first ever official visit to South America covering Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina from August 22 to August 27.

During his visit, in addition to bilateral engagements with his counterparts, External Affairs Minister is also calling on the top leadership in all three countries.

In Paraguay, Jaishankar also visited the historic Casa de la Independencia from where Paraguay's Independence movement started more than two centuries ago.

"Visited the historic Casa de la Independencia, from where Paraguay's Independence movement started more than two centuries ago. A fitting testament to



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar addresses the Indian community, in Sao Paulo on Sunday (ANI)

our common struggle and our growing relationship," he said on Twitter, hailing the ties between the two countries.

In Paraguay, EAM will inaugurate the premises of the newly opened Indian Embassy which started functioning in January 2022.

Jaishankar on Friday met with the Ambassadors from Latin American and Caribbean countries in New Delhi ahead of his

visit to the region.

The Minister expressed gratitude to host the Ambassadors of LAC countries and was positive about the potential for growing cooperation between India and the South American and Caribbean countries and thanked the Ambassadors for their perspectives and insights into strengthening mutual relations and cooperation.

ANI

Swiss glaciers shrink in half since 1931: Study

Geneva, Switzerland - Swiss glaciers have shed half their volume since 1931, Swiss researchers said on Monday, following the first reconstruction of the country's ice loss in the 20th century.

Rapid glacier melt in the Alps and elsewhere, which scientists say is driven by climate change, has been increasingly closely monitored since the early 2000s. However, until now there has been little insight into how glaciers changed prior to that during the 20th century, with only a handful of individual glaciers tracked over time, and with different models for estimating their volume.

But Swiss researchers from the ETH Zurich technical university and the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and



LEFT: The Rhone Glacier, near Gletsch, with a part covered with insulating foam to prevent it from melting due to global warming on July 14, 2015. RIGHT: The same location on July 8, this year (AFP)

Landscape Research WSL say they had now reconstructed the topography of all Swiss glaciers in 1931, making it possible to show how they have evolved.

"Based on these reconstructions and comparisons with data from the 2000s, the researchers conclude that the glacier volume

halved between 1931 and 2016," they said in a statement.

Their study, published in the scientific journal The Cryosphere, used material from the TerrA image archive, which covers about 86 per cent of Switzerland's glacierised area, analysing around 21,700 photographs

taken between 1916 and 1947.

For their reconstruction, the glaciologists used so-called stereophotogrammetry - a technique used to determine the nature, shape and position of any object on the basis of image pairs.

AFP

Russia detains IS terrorist plotting attack in India

Moscow, Russia - The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) on Monday said that its officers had detained a suicide bomber, a member of the Islamic State terrorist group, who was plotting a terrorist attack against one of India's leadership elite, Russia news agency Sputnik reported.

"Russia's FSB identified and

detained a member of the Islamic State international terrorist organisation banned in Russia, a native of a country in the Central Asian region, who planned to commit a terrorist act by blowing himself up against one of the representatives of the ruling circles of India," the authority said in a statement. The detained was re-

cruited by one of the IS leaders as a suicide bomber in Turkey, the statement added. This story is still developing and more information is awaited in this regard.

Islamic State and all its manifestations have been notified as Terrorist Organisation and included in the First Schedule to the Unlawful Activities (Preven-

tion) Act, 1967 by the Central Government.

According to Home Ministry, IS is using various internet-based social media platforms to propagate its ideology. Cyberspace is being closely watched in this regard by the agencies concerned and action is taken as per law.

ANI

Sutapa Sikdar remembers husband Irrfan Khan on son's birthday

Mumbai, India - Sutapa Sikdar, the wife of the Late Indian actor Irrfan Khan, penned down a sweet note for her younger son, Ayaan Khan on his birthday that left Instagram buzzing.

Taking to her Instagram handle, Sutapa on Sunday took a stroll down memory lane and recalled how Irrfan was busy shooting for his film *Maqbool* during the birth of his younger son Ayaan Khan.

Sharing a reel clubbed with pictures, Sutapa wrote, "Wishing you a great birthday Ayaan reminds me of the time when you were still inside me and baba was shooting for 'MAQBOOL'. You came down and the doctor told me to get admitted it could be a premature baby,

baba flew down from Bhopal and don't know what you guys communicated I am sure baba had said 'rook jao jaldi kya hai zindagi ko aaram se lena chahiye' or he had said 'abbe yaar main yahan ruk jaunga toh bahut gadbad ho jayegi bahut important scene hai'..."

She added, "The doctor gave me complete bed rest which I didn't listen to but you listened and came out to grace the world when baba finished the shoot of *Maqbool*! such a mature decision for being a premature baby and you have been like that always, the balance, the peace, the keeper of even the unsaid promise. May you always remain like this completely unaffected by the ever changing



A graffiti of Bollywood actor Irrfan Khan is seen on a wall in Mumbai (ANI)



Sutapa took a stroll down memory lane and recalled how Irrfan was busy shooting during birth of younger son

social media..may you pursue whatever you want, don't take pressure like you didn't when you were about to be born. blessings from me and baba!! I am blessed to have you! #gifttolove #MAQBOOL #nostalgia #irrfanandayaan."

Ever since Irrfan Khan passed away, it is his wife Sutapa Sikdar

and son Babil, who have been sharing memories and anecdotes of the late star.

It's been almost two years since iconic star Irrfan Khan passed away after a battle with cancer. But, he is still loved and remembered by his family and friends.

ANI

Silva, Aslam star as Kuwait stun UAE in Asia Cup qualifier



Edson Silva

Muscat - Late fireworks from Edson Silva and captain Mohamed Aslam helped Kuwait stun UAE in their opening match at the Men's T20 Asia Cup Qualifier at Al Amerat, Oman, on Sunday.

Put in to bat first, UAE made 173 for 5 with opener Chirag Suri top-scoring with 88 off just 61 balls. Muhammad Waseem (35) and Vriitya Aravind (33) gave him good support.

In reply, Kuwait started off well, with openers Ravija Sandaruwan (34) and Meet Bhavsar (27) making substantial contributions.

But from being 53 for no loss in the seventh over, they were 110 for 6 in the 14th before Silva and Aslam took the attack to their more established opponents.

Silva, who won the man of the match award, made 25 from 14 balls including two

sixes and as many fours while Aslam hit a six and two fours in his 11 ball 19.

Though they failed to steer Kuwait home, the tail held on, with Yaseen Patel staying unbeaten on 9.

"I was given very clear instructions about my role before the game by my coach and captain, and I kept cool and calm through the game," said Silva. "The team remained op-

timistic through the game. We will focus on our next two games, and we believe we can qualify for the Asia Cup."

Aslam also expressed belief that they would qualify for the Asia Cup.

"I have no words; this is a historic moment for Kuwait cricket. At this moment, the boys, the team management, and everyone on our team is incredibly happy," said Aslam.

"We have been attempting to win against UAE since 2020. We played against them previously on two occasions but were unable to win.

"This time we had planned our approach, and prepared by analysing all their players, and as a team we did well today.

"Our aim is to win our next two games and have the chance to play against teams like India and Pakistan."

WHITEWASH

Gill scores career-best 130 as India survive Raza scare to sweep Zimbabwe ODI series

Harare, Zimbabwe - Shubman Gill made his first international hundred as India beat Zimbabwe by 13 runs after a tense finish in Harare on Monday to complete a 3-0 ODI whitewash.

Gill not only wreaked havoc with the bat, he also caught Zimbabwe centurion Sikandar Raza, who was threatening to give the home side a shock victory.

Gill won the player of the match and player of the series awards, having contributed 245 runs in the three matches.

"I was just trying to minimise my dot-ball percentage. I just tried to time the ball and not hit it hard," he said.

"The bat was pretty good and that is why I changed it after my fifty as I wanted to save it. Always special to get a hundred. I had made three nineties but wanted to get a century.

"I have been playing with a great bunch of players for some time. This one is for my dad as he has been my primary coach.

"I got a bit of a schooling the

day before yesterday when I was out on 33. So this century is for him."

After India captain KL Rahul won the toss and batted, the tourists posted 289-8 in 50 overs. Zimbabwe were all out for

The bat was pretty good and that is why I changed it after my fifty as I wanted to save it

SHUBMAN GILL

276 in reply with three balls remaining.

The tourists looked set for victory when they reduced the home side to 122-5 with all the regular scorers bar Raza back in the pavilion.

But Raza shrugged off poor form in the first two matches to smash 115 and leave Zimbabwe

needing 17 runs off 12 balls for victory.

The tail could not deliver, and a gallant run chase by Zimbabwe came up short.

Gill smacked 130 off 97 balls, hitting 15 fours and a six. Ishan Kishan (50), Shikhar Dhawan (40) and Rahul (30) also contributed with the bat.

The breakthrough century for 22-year-old Gill came less than a month after he came agonisingly close, scoring an unbeaten 98 against the West Indies in Port of Spain.

Gill shared a 140-run third-wicket partnership with Kishan, who reached his half-century before being run out.

Luck was twice on Gill's side as he survived a close leg-before appeal on 97 and was dropped by Victor Nyauchi on 110. Kishan struck six fours and Dhawan five fours while Rahul put behind him being out for one in the second ODI with a knock that included one six and one four.

AFP



India's Shubman Gill celebrates after scoring a century against Zimbabwe in the third ODI in Harare on Monday (AFP)



Tom Latham of New Zealand hits a six in the final ODI against West Indies in Bridgetown on Sunday (AFP)

Latham leads Kiwis to maiden ODI series win in West Indies

Bridgetown, Barbados - Stand-in captain Tom Latham top-scored with 69 to lead New Zealand to a series-clinching five-wicket victory over the West Indies in the third and final one-day international series in Barbados on Sunday.

Kyle Mayers' second one-day century and a blistering 91 by captain Nicholas Pooran took the hosts to 301 for eight in their 50 overs.

But the Black Caps made light of an imposing target as four of the first five in their batting order scored half-centuries to reach 307 for five off 47.1 overs and underline their status as the top-ranked nation in the 50-over format.

New Zealand's come-from-

behind 2-1 win over the three matches was their first ODI series success in the Caribbean. It followed their 2-1 Twenty20 series triumph the previous week in Jamaica.

In the absence of injured regular captain Kane Williamson, Latham led the New Zealand effort and enjoyed a 120-run fourth-wicket partnership with Daryl Mitchell, who made 63, which tilted the contest in favour of the touring side.

"It's nice to come here, where other teams have struggled in the past, and get the series win," said player-of-the-match Latham.

"It was a better wicket today and we knew the target. I am just happy to be able to make a con-

tribution." Opener Martin Gupthill with 57 and Devon Conway, who plundered 56, also played key roles in the chase.

The West Indies cause was not helped by heavy dew on the outfield after dusk which required the ball to be changed four times during New Zealand's innings and made it difficult for the home bowlers.

For the West Indies, Mayers' 105 off 110 balls with 12 fours and three sixes dominated an opening stand of 173 with Shai Hope, who made 51.

But it was Pooran's explosive 55-ball contribution, with nine sixes and four fours, that enabled the hosts to get beyond the 300-run mark.

AFP

Bangladesh strip head coach of T20 role days before Asia Cup

Dhaka, Bangladesh - Bangladesh stripped head coach Russell Domingo of his role overseeing the Twenty20 side and told him to focus on Test and one-day international cricket, just days before the Asia Cup, which starts on Saturday.

Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan said that former Indian cricketer Sridharan Sriram, named last week as the technical consultant, will look after the T20 side.

"Russell Domingo won't be part of the T20 set-up. He will be with ODIs and Tests," Nazmul told a press briefing in Dhaka.

"There's no head coach" for the T20 side, he added.

"We have a batting coach, a spin coach, fast bowling coach and fielding coach. We also have the captain. We also have a technical consultant for T20s. He will give the game plan," he said.

Domingo, a 47-year-old South

African, was appointed Bangladesh's head coach in August 2019, initially on a two-year contract. The BCB last year extended it until November 2023.

But Bangladesh have struggled in T20s under Domingo, failing to win a game in the Super 12 stage of the World Cup in the UAE last year. They have won just two of their last 15 T20s and suffered their maiden series loss to Zimbabwe earlier this month.

Domingo said the BCB's decision to separate the roles was a "great" idea.

"It gives me nice focus on the Test match and 50-overs stuff," he said. "We have had some great results and bad results in T20s," he said. "I don't think it is a bad idea to make a fresh approach in T20s.

It is not about me," he added. "I am all for making the team better."

AFP



Russell Domingo was told to focus on Test and one-day international cricket, just days before the Asia Cup



Home favourite Kento Momota looked in sparkling form against Mexico's Lino Munoz at the world championships in Tokyo on Monday (AFP)

Showboating Momota thrills home fans at badminton worlds

Tokyo, Japan - Showboating Japanese badminton star Kento Momota promised to cool down after being fired up by an adoring home crowd in his first-round win at the world championships in Tokyo on Monday.

Second-seeded Momota's career has been in free fall since a car crash more than two years ago which left him badly hurt, but he looked back on top form during a 21-16, 21-14 win over Mexico's Lino Munoz.

Momota rushed out to an early lead and seemed to be enjoying the adulation of the Tokyo crowd, until world number 82 Munoz started to come back into the match.

"I scored a point and I heard a little girl behind me shout out 'brilliant'," said a sheepish Mo-

mota after the match. "I heard that and thought I wanted to do it again, but then I ended up giving away the next point. Next time I'll try and keep my cool."

Momota advanced to the next round along with top-ranked Dane Viktor Axelsen, but third-seeded Anders Antonsen crashed out at the first hurdle.

The 2019 world silver medalist fell behind early and never managed to get a foothold in a 21-15, 21-19 loss to Japan's Kenta Nishimoto.

Axelsen lived up to his billing as the world's number one with a straightforward 21-16, 21-12 win over Malaysia's Daren Liew.

Axelsen was pleased to safely negotiate his way past the world number 29.

AFP

GOAL RUSH

Kylian Mbappe scores after eight seconds in PSG’s thumping win against Lille as Ligue 1 hits red cards high

Paris, France - Hat-trick star Kylian Mbappe matched one Ligue 1 record by scoring after just eight seconds in Lille to set Paris Saint-Germain on their way to a 7-1 victory on Sunday, while the division hit a modern high with 11 red cards in one weekend.

Mbappe equalled a 30-year-old record when he burst into space, collected a pass from Lionel Messi and surprised Lille goalkeeper Leo Jardim with a lob to score his second league goal of the season.

The goal matched Michel Rio’s strike for Caen against Cannes on February 15, 1992, although statisticians MisterChip calculated that Rio was slightly faster, scoring after 7.9sec to Mbappe’s 8.3.

Mbappe then hit a post when facing an open goal, but Messi, Achraf Hakimi and Neymar all scored before half-time as PSG tore apart the only other club to win the French title in the last five seasons.

Stories of tensions between two of PSG’s superstars, Mbappe

and Neymar, had swirled around the club this week but the Brazilian scored twice and Mbappe three times.

“It’s a real satisfaction to see them happy on the field, playing for each other,” PSG coach Christophe Galtier said.

“Obviously there is talent, and when this talent comes together, it makes for a very enjoyable match.”

Neymar added a fifth early in the second half. After Jonathan Bamba replaced for Lille, Mbappe struck twice, set up both times by Neymar.

The match ended a weekend when French football saw red, as referees applied a new “firmness order”.

After Vanderson of Monaco and Samuel Gigot of Marseille were sent off on Saturday, there were nine more reds on Sunday, setting a single-round high in Ligue 1 for the last 30 years, according to statistics company Opta.

The last two reds on Sunday



Paris Saint-Germain's Kylian Mbappe (2ndR) celebrates with Neymar and Lionel Messi after scoring against Lille in their Ligue 1 match on Sunday (AFP)

It's a real satisfaction to see them (Kylian Mbappe and Neymar) happy on the field, playing for each other. Obviously, there is talent, and when this talent comes together, it makes for a very enjoyable match

CHRISTOPHE GALTIER

came in Rennes, where, despite a warning from their coach, Ajaccio finished with 10 men as Lesley Ugochukwu, who had only come

on for Ajaccio five minutes earlier, was shown red in added time. Hosts Rennes, who won 2-1, lost back-up goalkeeper Romain

Salin to two yellow cards in quick succession for arguing from the touchline.

“The spectacle was perhaps more the red cards than the play this afternoon,” complained Rennes coach Bruno Genesio.

In Clermont, Saif-Eddine Khaoui scored the only goal against struggling Nice in the fifth minute.

The visitors, who have not won this season, lost Mario Lemina in the 80th minute and Jean-

Clair Todibo two minutes later.

There were four red cards in Montpellier as Auxerre gained their first victory in Ligue 1 since May 2012.

Montpellier midfielder Khalil Fayad was sent off in the 46th minute and Auxerre striker M'Baye Niang in the 51st.

After Mathias Autret scored a penalty winner, Nuno Da Costa and then Montpellier midfielder Teji Savanier were sent off.

“There were four expulsions.

That’s heavy in a game without extreme violence,” said Auxerre coach Jean-Marc Furlan.

“In our time, when we played, we killed each other. There was never a yellow or a red. UEFA changed all that because there were serious injuries like (Diego) Maradona or (Marco) Van Basten,” said the former defender, who played for a series of French clubs from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s.

AFP

Mane ‘not surprised’ by Bayern’s ‘unbelievable’ start

Berlin, Germany - Bayern Munich forward Sadio Mane said he is unsurprised by his side's record-breaking start to the season, crediting manager Julian Nagelsmann's intense training sessions and tactical nous.

Bayern have won all three games and their +14 goal difference means they have made the best ever start in Bundesliga history. After three rounds they sit alone atop the table.

Speaking after scoring two goals in his side's 7-0 demolition



Bayern Munich's Sadio Mane (C) celebrates with team-mate Benjamin Pavard and coach Julian Nagelsmann after scoring against Bochum (AFP)

of Bochum on Sunday, Mane said Bayern's preparation showed on the pitch.

“It's unbelievable, but it's not a surprise for me, (given) the way we train” Mane told the Bundesliga website. “It's high level, high intensity... everything we do, it pays off because we work very hard in training.”

The Senegalese, 30, who spent six years under Liverpool's Jurgen Klopp, credited Nagelsmann for the side's dominance.

“We have a very, very good

coach. The ideas he has are just incredible. It's very difficult for the other teams to cope with us.”

Mane, who moved to Bayern from Liverpool in summer for a reported 32 million euro fee (£27.4m), has scored four goals in four competitive appearances for Munich.

Mane scored with a first half strike against Bochum and from the penalty spot in the second half.

AFP

Lewandowski's first Barcelona goals see off Real Sociedad



Barcelona's Robert Lewandowski celebrates after scoring against Real Sociedad in their Spanish League match in San Sebastian on Sunday (AFP)

Madrid, Spain - Robert Lewandowski got off the mark for Barcelona with a double as Ansu Fati starred as a substitute in a 4-1 victory over Real Sociedad on Sunday, while Villarreal won at Atletico Madrid.

Poland striker Lewandowski, celebrating his 34th birthday, put Barca ahead inside 50 seconds before Alexander Isak levelled for La Real in San Sebastian.

But Fati came off the bench to create goals for Ousmane Dembele and Lewandowski, before completing the scoring himself.

Barca's first win of the season followed a disappointing goalless draw at home to Rayo Vallecano on the opening weekend.

Coach Xavi had called for “patience” from supporters after a summer spending spree which saw Lewandowski, Raphinha, Andreas Christensen and Franck Kessie all move to the Camp

Nou.

That quartet all made their debuts against Rayo, but France defender Jules Kounde is still to be registered by the club after his transfer from Sevilla as they look to overcome financial problems.

The visitors made a dream start on Sunday, though, as 18-year-old full-back Alejandro Balde raced clear and sent in a low cross which was tapped home by Lewandowski.

He scored 344 goals during a trophy-laden eight-year spell at Bayern Munich before leaving for 45 million euros in July.

But the home side hit back in the sixth minute, as Frenkie de Jong lost the ball in midfield and Isak raced clear before lofting the ball into the net.

Sociedad were proving a tough nut to crack for Barca, but the game changed when Fati was sent on in the 64th minute.

AFP

Bennacer saves point for Milan as Kvaratskhelia shines in Napoli win

Milan, Italy - AC Milan came away from a tough Serie A encounter at Atalanta with a hard-earned 1-1 draw on Sunday, while Napoli's new boy Khvicha Kvaratskhelia starred in a 4-0 thumping of promoted Monza.

Ismael Bennacer made sure that champions Milan came away from the Gewiss Stadium with a deserved point with a well-placed curling effort midway through the second half.

“I think we could have done more. We tried to win this match,” said Bennacer to DAZN.

“They were well drilled and it was hard for us to find spaces. But when you can't win it's important that you don't lose.”

Stefano Pioli's side had been trailing to Ruslan Malinovskyi's deflected opener in a typically feisty encounter between local Lombardy rivals which left both on four points from their first two games of the season.

Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini had criticised Malinovskyi in the lead up to the match, saying the club should



AC Milan's Ismael Bennacer (C) celebrates with team-mates after scoring against Atalanta on Sunday (AFP)

look for a player “who scores more than six goals a season”.

The Ukraine midfielder responded in trademark fashion in the 29th minute.

Known for his powerful shot, Malinovskyi lined up one of his rockets and unleashed an effort which deflected off Pierre

Kalulu's knee and left Mike Maignan with no chance.

Milan should have been level before Bennacer struck, with Kalulu somehow sending a free header over the bar from six yards and Rafael Leao's powerful drive just swerving wide. Sandro Tonali also missed a golden op-

portunity.

However eight minutes later Bennacer equalised for Milan, capitalising on a dozing home defence who didn't react quickly enough to the ball bouncing back in off the corner flag to cut inside and whip home an angled drive.

AFP

Netherlands's Wijnaldum breaks leg in training

Milan, Italy - Georginio Wijnaldum suffered a broken leg in training, his new team Roma announced on Sunday.

“Following an injury sustained during training this afternoon, Georginio Wijnaldum subsequently underwent medical tests that confirmed the presence of a fracture to the tibia in his right leg,” the Serie A club said in a statement.

Roma did not say for how long the Netherlands midfielder would be out, adding that he will “undergo further assessments in the coming days”.

The injury casts doubt over his chances of playing at the coming World Cup in Qatar, which starts in mid-November.

Wijnaldum has won 86 caps for his country, scoring 26 times.

He moved to Roma on loan from Paris Saint-Germain earlier this month and his injury deprives coach Jose Mourinho of a player who had made Roma a potential dark horse for the Serie A title.

AFP

NEW THREAT OF NEWCASTLE

Pep Guardiola warns of Newcastle United’s capabilities after Manchester City held in six-goal thriller

Newcastle, United Kingdom - Pep Guardiola said Newcastle are now one of the Premier League’s toughest tests after Manchester City were forced to come from 3-1 down to salvage a 3-3 draw from an enthralling encounter on Sunday.

The Magpies have not splashed the cash of the Saudi sovereign wealth fund to the extent expected in the transfer window, but had the champions on the ropes through goals from Miguel Almiron, Callum Wilson and Kieran Trippier.

Erling Haaland sparked City’s fightback before Bernardo Silva secured a point.

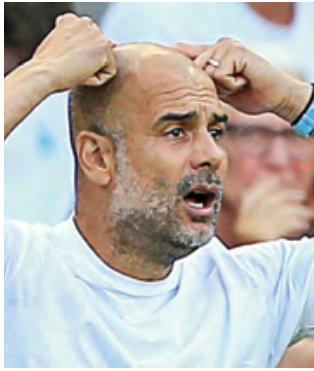
City move up to second, two points adrift of Arsenal, but missed the chance to open up a seven-point advantage on Liverpool ahead of their trip to Manchester United on Monday.

Guardiola, though, was happy to salvage a point from St. James’ Park.

“Newcastle are becoming one of the toughest opponents for sure,” said Guardiola.



Newcastle United's Kieran Trippier (C) celebrates after scoring against Manchester City in their Premier League match at St James' Park on Sunday (AFP)



Newcastle are becoming one of the toughest opponents for sure... The Premier League is so difficult for everyone

PEP GUARDIOLA

“Leeds beat Chelsea today. The Premier League is so difficult for everyone. You have to live this experience to know how amazing we’ve done for five years and how difficult it will be. To see the team fight to the end is enough.”

Newcastle had taken four points from their opening two games without conceding a goal.

That record was wiped out within five minutes as City quickly took control.

Silva was recalled to Guardiola’s starting line-up for the first time in the Premier League this season with the midfielder linked with a move to Barcelona and

Paris Saint-Germain. The Portuguese international made an immediate impact as his cross was controlled and finished by Ilkay Gundogan.

But Newcastle’s intensity and energy soon swarmed over City with the pace of Allan Saint-Maximin causing havoc.

“It was an incredible game and a rollercoaster of emotions,” said Newcastle boss Eddie Howe.

“We went 1-0 down which is the worst possible start against this team because then you have to chase the game but I think the players responded brilliantly.”

AFP



Gina Lueckenkemper celebrates after the women's 4x100m relay final

Lueckenkemper strikes as Germany top medals table

Munich, Germany - Newly-crowned European 100m champion Gina Lueckenkemper won a second gold as she spearheaded Germany to a decisive victory in the women’s 4x100m relay in Munich on Sunday.

The end of seven breathtaking days of top-quality track and field could not have been better scripted as the German quartet motored to victory in 42.34 seconds in the final event.

The host country topped the overall athletics medals table with seven golds, seven silvers and two bronzes.

Britain finished second with six golds, six silvers and eight bronzes.

The men’s 4x100m relay was missing Italy’s Olympic and European 100m champion Marcell Jacobs.

The Italian quartet, whom Jacobs led to Olympic gold in last

year’s Tokyo Games, was deprived of a place after Turkey were reinstated after being impeded in the heats.

It was left to a strong British foursome to claim gold in a championship record of 37.67sec, smashing the previous best of 37.94 set by France in Split in 1990.

In another night of top-notch performances, reigning world indoor champion Mariano Garcia

of Spain held off Britain’s Jake Wightman to win the men’s 800m.

Garcia clocked a personal best of 1min 44.85sec for gold, world 1500m champion Wightman taking silver in 1:44.91.

There was a second title for war-torn Ukraine as world indoor champion Yaroslava Mahuchikh triumphed in the women’s high jump.

Mahuchikh, who fled her na-

tive country on a three-day odyssey by car to get to the world indoors in Belgrade in March, managed a best of 1.95 metres.

She won on countback from Montenegro’s Marija Vukovic, with Serbian teenager Angelina Topic claiming bronze (1.93).

“I would like to dedicate this medal to the Ukrainian people,” Mahuchikh said.

AFP

Garcia downs Kvitova to claim Cincinnati crown

Cincinnati, United States - Qualifier Caroline Garcia completed a dream week on Sunday at the ATP and WTA Cincinnati Masters with a 6-2, 6-4 title defeat of Petra Kvitova.

The French winner claimed her third Masters-level title - her 10th overall - after winning Wuhan and Beijing in a Chinese double five years ago.

Garcia followed the extraordinary template of Emma Raducanu, who won the US Open 11 months ago as a qualifier.

Number 35 Garcia, who fell on her back after clinching victory, maintained her lead on the Tour with a 27th match victory since June.

“Pure joy, just happiness,” she said. “Every single win is very important. It’s always very hard to describe

“It doesn’t happen so often and you have to really enjoy it. I’m grateful for this great week of tennis, and to win another title, it’s very special.”

She said expectations were low when she arrived for the



Caroline Garcia celebrates with the Cincinnati Masters trophy (AFP)

qualification rounds.

“I was not that confident when I arrived, qualies were tough matches. I was really happy to be through and play in the main draw,” she said.

“Every match was a new challenge. I had to be focused on myself, on my game, what can I do, how I can be more aggressive, how can I improve.”

AFP

Coric upsets Tsitsipas to win Cincinnati Masters title

Cincinnati, United States - Borna Coric, who only returned in March after missing a year with a shoulder injury, dominated fourth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas on Sunday to win the ATP Cincinnati Masters.

The world number 152 from Croatia dispatched the Greek star 7-6 (7/0), 6-2 to become the lowest-ranked player to ever lift a Masters trophy.

“I have no words, to be honest. It’s just an unbelievable feeling,” the winner said. “I’m just gonna enjoy this.

“I thought I could play well. I was training hard, and I knew I could play good tennis, but to play this level of tennis - I was just not aware. I’m just super happy, obviously.”

Coric lost his only previous final at this level, going down to Novak Djokovic in Shanghai four years ago.

On Sunday, Coric replaced 143rd-ranked Spaniard Roberto Carretero, the 1996 Hamburg champion, as the lowest-rated



Borna Coric of Croatia celebrates his win over Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece in the men's final of Cincinnati Masters on Sunday (AFP)

Masters trophy lifter.

“It’s been very stressful for my body this whole week,” the Croat said. “I came into the tournament with many, many (training) sessions

“I played five matches now in a row. So I need to rest for a couple of days. I need to recover and just get ready for the US Open.”

Coric came back from an early deficit, trailing Tsitsipas 4-1 be-

fore turning the corner and sweeping the tiebreaker to love.

Coric fired seven aces and saved three of four break points in a two-hour victory.

Coric improved to 2-1 all-time against Tsitsipas, having retired from their first meeting in Rome in 2018 and won in the third round of the 2020 US Open in a fifth-set tiebreaker.

AFP



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Hissss story



I can't sleep at night and having someone to go out at 12 o'clock, two o'clock in the morning, and catch pythons is something productive and good

RAHM LEVINSON



Enrique Galan is seldom happier than when he disappears deep into the Everglades to hunt down Burmese pythons, an invasive species that has been damaging Florida's wetland ecosystem for decades. When not working at his job staging cultural events in Miami, the 34-year-old spends his time tracking down the nocturnal reptiles from Southeast Asia. He does so as a professional hunter, hired by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to help control the python population, estimated to be in tens of thousands. At night, Galan drives slowly for miles on paved roads and gravel tracks, his flashlight playing on grassy verges and tree roots, and the banks of waterways where alligator eyes occasionally glint. He charges US\$13 an hour and an additional fee per python found - US\$50 if it's up to four feet (1.2m), and US\$25 more for each additional foot. But

on this August night, he has an extra motivation. The FWC has been holding a 10-day python-hunting contest, with 800 people participating. The prize is US\$2,500 for whoever finds and kills the most pythons in each of the categories - professional and amateur hunter. And Galan would love to win that money to celebrate the arrival of his newborn baby. Pets released into wild Burmese pythons, originally brought to the United States as pets, have become a threat to the Everglades since humans released them into the wild in the late 1970s. The snake has no natural predators, and feeds on other reptiles, birds, and mammals such as raccoons and white-tailed deer. "They're an amazing predator," says Galan in admiration. Specimens in the Everglades average between six and nine feet long, but finding them at

night in the wetland of more than 1.5 million acres (607,000 hectares) takes skill and patience. Galan has a trained eye, as well as the courage and determination needed for the job. After two unsuccessful nights, he spots a shadow on the shoulder of Highway 41; he jumps out of his truck and lunges at the animal, a baby Burmese python. Grabbing it behind the head to avoid being bitten, he puts it in a cloth bag and ties it with a knot. He will kill it hours later with a BB gun. A few miles further on, a huge python slithers across the tarmac. Galan again bolts from his truck, but this time the snake escapes into the grass, leaving behind a strong musky scent, a defense mechanism. Therapy for some Galan took an online training course before hunting pythons, but says he learned everything he knows

from Tom Rahill, a 65-year-old who founded the Swamp Apes association 15 years ago to help war veterans deal with traumatic memories through python hunting. For a few hours, Rahm Levinson, an Iraq war veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, hunts with Rahill and Galan. "It really helped me through a lot of stuff struggling at home," he said. "I can't sleep at night and having someone to go out at 12 o'clock, two o'clock in the morning, and catch pythons is something productive and good." Galan is proud to participate in a project that has eliminated more than 17,000 pythons since 2000. "One of the best things that I get out of it is the amount of beauty that I'm just surrounded by. If you just look closely, open your eyes and observe, you'll see a lot of magic here."

AFP

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HANAE MORI



This file picture taken on March 23, 2017 shows Japanese designer Yu Amatsu (centre L) and Hanae Mori (centre R) with their models after their 2017 Autumn/Winter Collection show at Tokyo Fashion Week

Hanae Mori, the grande dame of Japanese fashion who created luxurious outfits for a string of celebrities, leaves behind a legacy Japanese women will treasure forever

Japanese designer Hanae Mori, who cracked the Parisian haute couture world and was dubbed 'Madame Butterfly' for her signature motif, was also a pioneer for Japanese women, one of a tiny number to head an international corporation.

Over the decades Mori's luxurious creations were worn by Nancy Reagan, Grace Kelly and countless members of high society. Her passing away in Tokyo at the age of 96, earlier this week, leaves behind an indelible mark on the fashion scene in Japan.

The designer's trailblazing career had taken her from Tokyo, where she started out making costumes for cinema, to New York and Paris. It was in 1977 her label became the first Asian fashion house to join the rarefied ranks of haute couture.

The exclusive French club sets exacting standards for their hand-crafted, and extremely expensive, garments.

"When humans work with their hands, their creativity expands," Mori told AFP during a 2006 retrospective in Tokyo, where a robot modelled a replica of her classic 'Chrysanthemum Pyjamas' - a kimono-like robe made from hot-pink chiffon and silk.

In January, the designer summed

up her feelings toward the industry in a special column for Japan's Yomiuri Shimbun daily.

"Fashion is something that pushes you, gives you courage to spread your wings and allows you to have adventures," she said.

Encounter with Chanel

Born in 1926 in a rural corner of western Japan, Mori studied literature at Tokyo Women's Christian University before turning her hand to design.

She opened her first atelier above a noodle shop in Tokyo, and came to specialise in dressing the stars of the silver screen.

As Japan's postwar economy grew, so did her business, which she ran with her husband - a textile executive who encouraged her to visit Paris and New York when the arrival of television made the film industry less profitable.

"This was a kind of turning point for me," she once said of the trips in the early 1960s, during which she met Coco Chanel in Paris. It turned out to be an inspirational encounter.

When she stepped into Chanel's studio the iconic designer

suggested she wear something in bright orange to contrast with her black hair. Taken aback, it got Mori thinking.

"The whole Japanese concept of beauty is based on concealment... I suddenly realised that I should change my approach and make my dresses help a woman stand out," she said, according to a Washington Post report.

East Meets West

In 1965, Mori unveiled her first collection abroad, in New York, under the theme 'East Meets West'.

Her designs combined traditional patterns like cranes and cherry blossoms - and her trademark butterflies - with Western styles, from woollen suits to sharp satin tailoring.

Mori moved her brand from Tokyo to Paris in the late 1970s and was quickly embraced by fashion insiders. She saw a distinction between herself and her Japanese peers who later made a global name for themselves - such as Issey Miyake, Yohji Yamamoto and Rei Kawakubo of Comme des Garçons fame.

"The young Japanese designers who live in Paris are passionately avant-garde," she told the Washington Post. "I am not. I love to follow the traditional way."

Mori built her brand into a business empire which in its heyday occupied a whole building in Tokyo designed by the architect Kenzo Tange - later torn down and replaced with another structure at typical Japanese speed.

From the loss of the building to the retirement of her fashion house from haute



The young Japanese designers who live in Paris are passionately avant-garde, I am not. I love to follow the traditional way"

HANAE MORI

couture, "not everything was positive", she reflected in her Yomiuri column.

"It was like my butterfly wings were torn off. But this butterfly was able to fly all over the world for 70 years, because I loved making clothes."

Wanted to be different

Mori designed the gown worn by princess Masako - now empress - at her 1993 wedding, as well as uniforms for Japan Airlines flight attendants. In 1985, she created stage costumes for, appropriately, 'Madame Butterfly' performed at La Scala in Milan.

With growing losses in the early 2000s, however, her empire was largely sold off and she shuttered her Paris atelier in 2004 after her last couture show there.

Hanae Mori boutiques remain open in Tokyo and her fragrances are still sold worldwide. As a powerful businesswoman, Mori was a rarity in Japan where boardrooms are still heavily male-dominated.

Speaking of her early married life, she once remarked that she was never invited out with her husband's friends.

At that time "Japan was a gentlemen's country", she said, but "I wanted to be different".

AFP

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