

Mercury crossed 49°C on last three days in Oman

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The sultanate is experiencing an intense heatwave with the mercury soaring to over 49°C for the past three days in places like Hamra ad Duru in Dhakliyah, Fahud in Dhahirah

and Liwa in North Batinah. Hamra ad Duru witnessed the temperature rise to 49.3°C on Friday, Fahud 49.1°C on Thursday and Liwa 49.2°C on Wednesday. In Muscat, Bausher was the hottest on Saturday with the temperature exceeding 44°C.

The lowest temperature - 23.2°C - was recorded in Saiq over a 24 hour period on Saturday, followed by Dhal-kut 23.7°C and Qairoon Haiti 24°C. The Met Office stated that it is monitoring southwesterly wind activity over large areas of



South Sharqiyah, Al Wusta and Dhofar governorates; weather monitoring stations in Thumrait, Duqm and Al Jazir recorded wind speeds of up to 31 knots. Sweeping winds led the Met Office to issue an advisory of dust and thunderstorms in

many areas across the sultanate, including Adam, Bidiyah, Fahud, Zamaim, Haima, Jaaloni, Muqshin, Mar-mul and Thumrait. In its forecast for Sunday, the Met Office stated that it expects clear skies over most governorates with chances of

convective clouds forming and isolated rain over parts of Al Hajar mountains during the afternoon. 'Partly cloudy skies are expected along the coastal areas and mountains of Dhofar governorate with chance of intermittent drizzle late night and early morning.'

Muscat 3rd most affordable in ME for international schools

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Muscat is the third most affordable city among nine in the Middle East for international schools. Dubai-Sharjah-Ajman has retained its title as the most expensive location in the region for international schooling, with a median cost of US\$10,959 per year.

According to a research by the International Schools Database for 2023, Doha is ranked the second most expensive city with a median cost of US\$10,134, while Abu Dhabi is third with a median cost of US\$8,855 per year, 19% cheaper than Dubai-Sharjah-Ajman.

Muscat is seventh on the most expensive school list and consequently third cheapest with a median cost of US\$7,793



and a range extending from US\$1,195 to US\$22,081. In 2022, Muscat was the third most expensive city with a median cost of US\$8,726.

In terms of median cost, the

range found in all Middle Eastern cities included in the research was relatively narrow. Manama has the lowest median cost at US\$6,367 per year, while Dubai-Sharjah-Ajman has the highest

at US\$10,959. 'While this may seem like a big difference, in the context of the rest of the world it is not. In Europe or Asia, for example, median prices in the most expen-

sive cities can be ten times higher than those in the cheapest cities. In that respect, the Middle East is one of the most consistent world regions in our research,' stated the Prague-based organisation.

Manama (US\$6,367) has the lowest median cost in the continent, but also the widest range of costs - US\$1,109 to US\$24,912.

Riyadh is placed fourth with a median cost of US\$8,800 and a range extending from US\$1,852 to US\$28,000, while Kuwait City is ranked fifth with a median cost of US\$8,639 and a range extending from US\$1,227 to US\$17,897.

The remaining cities included in the research for the Middle East are Istanbul at sixth, and Amman at eighth with the median cost of US\$7,800 and US\$6,815 respectively.

'Oman assures Bangladesh to legalise 96,000 illegal workers'



Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman has assured Bangladesh of legalising 96,000 illegal workers from the country, Shofiqur Rahman Choudhury, State Minister for Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment, told journalist in Dhaka before Eid al Adha.

"Around 96,000 workers are living illegally in Oman. The Omani government has promised to legalise them. A penalty is charged for this legalisation, but we have requested the Omani government to waive this fine," Choudhury was quoted by Bangladesh media.

Addressing the suspension of all types of new visas for citizens of Bangladesh by Oman, imposed effective October 31, 2023, the minister said the sultanate has taken a decision to issue visas.

"Oman has assured us of taking new workers under 12 categories from Bangladesh. They want to hire skilled workers, and we have discussed this matter. If skilled workers start heading for Oman, unskilled workers will too. These arrangements will be made gradually," Choudhury said.

In a statement on June 12, the Embassy of Oman in Dhaka said it 'would like to officially confirm that a decision was taken lately by the relevant authorities in Oman to exempt certain categories of Bangladeshi nationals from the visa ban issued in October of last year'.

A penalty is charged for this legalisation, but we have requested the Omani government to waive this fine

SHOFIQR R CHOUDHURY

The exempted categories are: family visas, visit visas for citizens of Bangladesh residing in GCC countries, visas for physicians, engineers, nurses, teachers, accountants, investors, and all types of official visas and high-income tourists.

The statement added that the embassy will receive and process all applications belonging to these categories and that it will coordinate with Royal Oman Police to issue visas.

'Furthermore, the Embassy would like to reassure all concerned with the ban on work visas that many steps have been taken by authorities and officials in Oman and Bangladesh to pave the way towards lifting the ban on work visas as soon as practicable.'

Following the visa suspension notice, the embassy stated that one of the reasons for the temporary suspension was to resolve the issue of an increasing number of laid-off workers in the market who resort to work illegally without having legal protection and rights. 'The review will ensure that workers and employers' rights are fully protected.'

5 ROYAL CAVALRY RIDERS QUALIFY FOR WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP



Five riders of Royal Cavalry have qualified for Endurance World Championship 2024 to be held in France in September. Dr Sarhan bin Salem al Zaidi, Director General of Royal Cavalry, informed that jockey Hussain bin Ali al Farsi cleared various stages of the 140km French Compiègne race - organised by International Equestrian Federation - to become the fifth rider to qualify for the championship. Mahmoud bin Marhoon al Foori, Hisham bin Saleh al Farsi, Ahmed bin Salim al Hamdani and Saleh bin Salim al Balushi qualified earlier. Zaidi described the qualification of five riders for the world championship as a significant achievement for Royal Cavalry on the international stage and attributed the success to the unwavering support and keen interest of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik in promoting Oman's reputation globally (Supplied photo)

Oman welcomes Armenia's recognition of Palestine

Muscat - Oman has welcomed Armenia's recognition of the State of Palestine.

In a statement, the Foreign Ministry said it appreciated this positive decision and urged the rest of the international community to follow suit. 'This will preserve the right of the Palestinian people to establish their independent state in a way that strengthens all efforts towards a two-state solution that achieves lasting and sustainable peace in the region.'

The Armenian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Friday that Armenia officially recognised the State of Palestine. The

Caucasus country also stated its support for the two-state solution, stressing it is 'the only way to ensure that Palestinians and Israelis can realise their legitimate aspirations'.

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) too welcomed Armenia's recognition of the statehood of Palestine, emphasising that the step aligns with international law and relevant UN conventions.

In a statement, the OIC said this decision will help international efforts and positions to end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, and support the legitimate rights of Palestinian



people, including the right to establish an independent Palestinian state within the borders of June 4, 1967.

The organisation renewed its call on all world nations to join in recognising Palestine's statehood and support its right to become a

full member of the UN, in line with global efforts to achieve peace and maintain stability in the region through the two-state solution.

The Palestinian presidency expressed its gratitude to Armenia for the step that reflects the friendship between the two peoples and the two friendly countries, and Armenia's keenness to support the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, WAFA said.

The statement called on other countries, especially the European countries that have not yet recognised the State of Palestine, to do so based on legitimate in-

ternational resolutions.

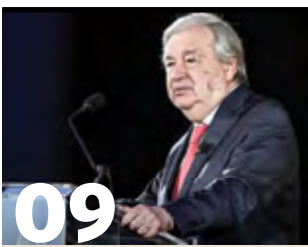
Hamas said in a statement that it welcomes Armenia's decision, calling it an 'additional and important' step on the path to establishing international recognition of the rights of Palestinian people.

Norway, Ireland and Spain made a coordinated announcement on May 22, declaring their recognition of Palestine as a state effective as of May 28. Their decision was condemned by Israel.

So far, over 140 countries have already recognised a Palestinian state, representing more than two-thirds of United Nations' membership.



03 Residents demand tougher steps to protect beaches



09 World 'cannot afford Lebanon to become another Gaza'



EMBRACING TRADITION AND TOGETHERNESS

Citizens and residents celebrated Eid al Adha with family and friends, as the faithful offered Eid prayers. The festive spirit was palpable as people greeted each other warmly, embodying the essence of Eid. With the mercury hovering above 45°C, beachgoers found respite from the summer heat by swimming in the clear waters of Muscat beaches



SalamAir launches Chennai flights to widen its India network

Muscat - Low-cost carrier SalamAir has announced the addition of Chennai, India, to its growing network of destinations. Starting July 11, SalamAir will operate two weekly flights to Chennai every Thursday and Saturday. With the Chennai connection, SalamAir has achieved another significant step in its mission to increase connectivity not only between India and Muscat but throughout the region. It now joins other recently launched destinations including Delhi, Cairo, Islamabad and Lahore. “We are thrilled to introduce our new service to Chennai, a significant milestone that enhances the connectivity of the South Indian community in Oman and the wider Gulf region,” said Harish Kutty, Director of Revenue and Network Planning for SalamAir.

WE NEED TO TALK



NAJMA AL ZIDJALY

(Najma is concerned about topics on self, national and cultural development. She is a researcher and associate professor of social media and Arab Omani identity in the Department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts & Social Sciences, at Sultan Qaboos University)

The past few weeks have been filled with joy among the academic and administrative staff at Sultan Qaboos University as we celebrated a remarkable leap in global university rankings, moving up 92 places, inching ever so close to the coveted top 300. This achievement reflects SQU's commitment to academic excellence and its vital role in fostering research and community service. This leap did not manifest out of a vacuum. Since H H Sayyid Dr Fahad bin al Julanda al Said took the helm as vice-chancellor in 2020, the vision for SQU - rooted in the aspirations of our founder, the Late Sultan Qaboos bin Said - has been clear: to become a leading global university. I had the honour of serving on two university committees in 2020-2021 dedicated to increasing SQU's entrepreneurial and research activities. The swift progress SQU has made is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our collaborative teams. At the core of SQU's mission is a dedication to research and innovation. SQU's state-of-the-art facilities and supportive environment have established us as a leading research institution in the region. SQU's research grants address critical areas such as renewable energy, water resources, health, and sustainable development. Partnerships with international institutions have resulted in high-impact publications, positioning SQU as a hub for cutting-edge research in the Arab region, and hopefully soon in the world.

Moreover, the university's professional development programmes for researchers ensure we are well-equipped to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and the betterment of society. Beyond academics and research, SQU is deeply committed to serving the community. This commitment has grown under the leadership of Prof Salim bin Hamoud al Harthi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Community Services. SQU's engagement with local communities through outreach programmes and partnerships addresses societal needs and promotes sustainable development. Its continuing education programmes, vocational training, and workshops empower individuals with the skills needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Additionally, the university's healthcare and environmental initiatives improve community health and promote sustainable practices. SQU further instils a strong sense of social responsibility in its students, encouraging volunteerism and community service. Our student organisations play an active role in organising community activities, which benefit both the community and students' leadership and civic engagement skills.

SQU'S RISE TO EXCELLENCE

The impressive rise of Sultan Qaboos University in the global rankings reflects the national university's unwavering commitment to academic excellence, research innovation, and community service. By prioritising these areas, SQU not only enhances its reputation but also contributes significantly to the development of Oman and the broader region. As we continue to advance, SQU remains a beacon of knowledge, innovation, and social responsibility, exemplifying the transformative power of higher education. In conclusion, SQU's achievements underscore the importance of a holistic approach to education, integrating academic rigour, research excellence, and community engagement. Our progress serves as an inspiring model for other institutions, demonstrating that with vision, dedication, and strategic investment, remarkable progress is attainable. This achievement reminds me of a personal story: In a recruitment meeting, a potential candidate asked the then Dean of College of Arts and Social Sciences what he liked and disliked about SQU. The Hon Prof Abdullah bin Khamis al Kindi replied, “I love it all.” Today, I can proudly say I share Prof Abdullah's sentiment. I love everything about Sultan Qaboos University and look forward to further contributing to our goal of becoming one of the top 300 universities in the world.

The views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Muscat Daily or Apex Press & Publishing. Mail to: najmaz@gmail.com



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Auction Announcement

Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company SAOG announce the below auction:

Auction No.	Auction Items	Auction Fee (Nonrefundable)	Auction Guarantee (refundable)	Auction Purchase deadline	Auction Submission Date	
AUCTION /2024/06/A ST/001	Vehicles	LEXUS LX 570 - 2017	OMR 25/-	OMR 500/-	30.06.2024	04.07.2024
		MAZDA CROSS-OVER CX-9 -2009	OMR 15/-	OMR 100/-		
		MITSUBISHI CANTER & MAN LIFT 2015 (Scrap)	OMR 10/-	OMR 200/-		
AUCTION /2024/06/A ST/002	Electronics	IP Phones, A/C's, Dispensers, Lights, Cameras & more	OMR 20/-	OMR 100/-	14.07.2024	17.07.2024
	General Scrap	Porta cabins, Metal shelves, furniture & loose scrap				

Bank Name & Account Number

Bank Muscat (0423005687760617)

• The inspection date and time as per location:

Location	Items	Date	time
AL Maha Head office	Vehicles & Electronics	25.06.2024 & 26.06.2024	10:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Muscat international airport	General scrap & Electronics	09.07.2024	10:00 AM
Al Maha Sohar store	General scrap & Electronics	30.06.2024	10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Note:
Please contact the Procurement Department via email (procurement@almaha.com.om) to obtain more information regarding the inspection of electronics and scrap located at Muscat International Airport before 30.06.2024.

The Conditions:

- Collection of auction form:** Interested Bidders can receive the auction documents from the procurement department by sending a copy of the payment slip to **procurement@almaha.com.om**, the auction form will be sent by email after receiving the payment slip.
- Offer Submission:** auction bid should be submitted in a sealed envelope and addressed to the **Chairman of Tender Committee, Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing SAOG** marked with the auction number and subject. Other marks or any reference must not be printed outside the envelope. The exterior of the envelope containing the auction document must not reveal the identity of the bidder.
- Auction Guarantee:** The guarantee must be transferred along with the auction fee, or before submitting the bid. If the guarantee is not transferred, the bid will be rejected; additional details can be found in the auction form.
- Submission Location:** The bid should be deposited in the tender box at Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing SAOG head office located in Ghala before 02:00 PM on the submission date.
- Any bid received after the specified date or if it does not meet the conditions will not be considered.
- Each bid shall be signed and stamped with the signature of the authorized person.
- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG reserves the right to accept, reject or cancel the auction without giving any reasons.
- For any enquiry email us at (**procurement@almaha.com.om**) or by calling **24610355/24610289**

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Al Rifaa

Residents demand tougher steps to protect beaches

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Despite repeated warnings from authorities against barbecuing, driving and littering on beaches, some individuals continue to do so.

Muscat Daily interviewed several beachgoers during the Eid al Adha holiday, who expressed concern over these violations and called for stricter enforcement measures.

Recounting his experience, Muscat resident Saif al Rawahi said, "My family and I visited Ghubra Beach on the third day of Eid, only to find charcoal scattered on the sand, leading to an injury in my foot. I urge relevant authorities to instal surveillance cameras to monitor violations and prevent such incidents from recurring on beaches."

Motorists continuing to drive with impunity on beaches, despite awareness efforts to stop such activities, irks Khalid al Balushi from Seeb. "There are signs and awareness campaigns by the municipality, but motorists continue to drive on beaches. I propose the installation of barriers to restrict vehicle access to beaches in Seeb and Ghubra," he urged.

Expressing disappointment over littering, Salim al Hosani from Bausher, spoke of how some people leave waste on beaches even though there are ample garbage bins provided by



I urge relevant authorities to instal surveillance cameras to monitor violations and prevent such incidents from recurring on beaches

SAIF AL RAWAHI

the municipality. "I urge authorities to implement strict measures and increase fines to deter those who defile the natural beauty of our beaches."

The call for enhanced enforcement and stricter measures

underscores the community's desire to preserve Oman's coastal environments during festive seasons and beyond.

On June 19, Muscat Municipality issued a statement emphasising the importance of

ensuring an enjoyable Eid al Adha holiday for the public. It highlighted the fact that grilling or lighting fires in non-designated areas will result in a fine of RO100. 'Offenders will also be held accountable for rectifying any damage caused.'

The statement outlined the harmful effects of grilling in non-designated areas, including damage to public facilities, disturbance to visitors and residents, and emission of fumes and unpleasant odors. 'Muscat Municipality strictly prohibits barbecuing in beaches, gardens, parks and other green spaces, urging the public to use designated sites for such activities.'

In May, the civic body issued guidelines aimed at preventing vehicles from accessing beaches. It underscored the negative impacts of vehicular traffic on marine life and the environment, emphasising the fact that beaches are public places meant for relaxation and enjoyment of the natural environment.

The statement listed several problems associated with vehicles driving on beaches, including reckless driving posing risks to beachgoers, smoke emissions damaging marine life, and loud engine noises causing inconvenience and anxiety.

Muscat Municipality encouraged community members to report violations on beaches through its dedicated call centre - 1111.

Strategic initiatives to attract investments in Musandam

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Musandam is currently witnessing significant development with construction, expansion and enhancement of multiple infrastructure projects. These efforts complement implementation of several high-quality tourism initiatives aimed at attracting tourists from around the world and fostering increased local and foreign investments.

Highlighting the recent urban development activities across residential areas and city centres in the governorate, Sayyid Ibrahim bin Saeed al Busaidi, Governor of Musandam, noted that several projects are underway, with some nearing completion and others in the consulting and planning stages.

Busaidi highlighted the fact that the governorate is committed to the RO20mn allocated budget within the Governorates Development Programme in the current Five-Year Plan.

He informed that development of the fishing port in Dibba is progressing well, with approximately 75% of the project complete. The port is expected to be fully operational - under the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources - by the first half of 2025, contributing significantly to the economic growth of the governorate.

Regarding the Dibba-Lima-Khasab road project, Busaidi confirmed that construction commenced earlier this year and has advanced significantly. The



initial phase of the road - spanning over 55km - aims to improve connectivity between the governorate's wilayats and boost tourism in the region.

In reference to the Khasab Airport project, Busaidi informed that Civil Aviation Authority has awarded several tenders, including three for soil testing, wind-related studies and design consultancy. The airport is projected to service approximately 500,000 passengers, with expectations of completion during the 11th Five-Year Plan.

The company appointed for Khasab Port is currently investing in and managing port facilities. "It is also conducting feasibility studies which are scheduled to conclude by October 2024 to assess economic viability and develop a comprehensive development plan. Pending agreement, a long-term management contract for the port will be signed with the company."

In the tourism sector, Busaidi highlighted the allocation of land to numerous investors in Bukha, Madha and Dibba. Additionally, plans are underway for Omran Group to redevelop a resort in Dibba.

Emphasising satisfactory advancement, he noted the progress of construction at the Ras al Amud Resort project in Khasab. Additionally, a resort by Club Med Group in Khasab is slated for completion by 2028.

The governor also elaborated on details of commencement of waterfront developments in coastal areas. The waterfront at Bassa Beach in Khasab is 95% complete and expected to be fully operational by August 2025. In Dibba, the waterfront facade is 50% complete, while in Bukha the project is 40% complete. The waterfront project in Lima is currently in the contractor assignment phase and proceeding to the design stage.

31 initiatives to boost health sector in 2024

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Under the Ministry of Health, Oman Medical Specialty Board is actively advancing the health sector through 31 ongoing projects and initiatives in 2024, according to Dr Fatma Mohammed al Ajmi, President of OMSB.

Highlighting the board's efforts in enhancing medical education and training to elevate healthcare professionals' competence in the sultanate, Dr Fatma said these initiatives aim to strengthen partnerships with the private sector for medical education, develop training content utilising modern technology, and empower doctors with public health concepts and skills.

According to Dr Fatma, these strategic projects align with Oman Vision 2040's health priorities, private sector engagement and governance enhancement objectives. OMSB is currently executing these initiatives alongside the Human Resources for Health Laboratory

and other relevant authorities.

She noted that key projects include the Medical Training Development and Health Innovation, which is introducing innovative tools and programmes in medical education, and the National Centre for Examinations, which is providing professional classification exams as well as exams for specialty/fellowship programmes. The initiatives include the Digital Transformation Project, which is automating procedures to enhance service efficiency.

Currently, OMSB offers 20 specialised training programmes covering various disciplines from histopathology to pediatrics. A total of 705 doctors, selected based on international standards and ACGME-I requirements, are enrolled in these programmes.

Till date, the board has certified 1,364 doctors, including 1,351 in specialty programmes and 13 who graduated through local fellowship programmes. Trainees benefit from accredited training centres across the sultanate.

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Investors from 135 countries contribute 19% of investments in Muscat market

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As per the latest reports from the Muscat Stock Exchange, global investors from over 135 countries have invested in the country, constituting 19% of the total investments in Oman.

The Muscat Stock Exchange is actively enhancing its appeal to investors through initiatives such as establishing a comprehensive database of listed companies, promoting investment opportunities, and diversifying investment instruments.

It also encourages listed public joint stock companies to adopt transparency and disclosure standards, while urging government and family businesses to consider transitioning to private companies for broader public participation.

Oman's capital market offers several advantages for foreign investors, including low tax rates, unrestricted capital and profit transfer, flexible exchange operations, and a fixed exchange rate regime pegged to the US dollar.

Foreign investors can freely invest in shares of companies and investment funds listed on



Foreign investments are predominantly allocated to the industrial sector at 15.8% and the services sector at 15.7%. Trading value surged to RO517mn by May, from RO373.5mn during the same period last year

the Muscat Stock Exchange without prior authorisation. Moreover, an independent

regulatory body ensures market fairness, investor protection, and upholds high standards of trans-

parency, disclosure, and integrity.

Foreign investors are permitted to hold up to 100% of shares in most public joint stock companies listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange. Statistics reveal that foreign investments are predominantly allocated to the industrial sector at 15.8% and the services sector at 15.7%. Gulf investors show a preference for the ser-

vices sector at 15.4% and the financial sector at 8.5%.

Non-Gulf Arab investments are primarily focused on the financial sector, constituting 3%.

Meanwhile, local investments are heavily concentrated in the financial sector at 87.6%, followed by the industrial sector at 75.6%, and the services sector at 67.7%.

The statistics also revealed

that the first half of this year witnessed a notable increase in trading volume and value.

Trading value surged to RO517mn by May, up from RO373.5mn during the same period last year, marking a robust increase of 38.4%.

Additionally, the number of securities in circulation expanded to over 3.1bn securities, compared to approximately 1.4bn securities in the corresponding period last year. Moreover, the number of executed transactions rose from 96,000 to more than 106,000 transactions.

This growth coincides with the improved performance of the national economy and heightened confidence among local and foreign institutions in government initiatives aimed at reducing public debt, boosting government expenditures on essential services, and launching various infrastructure projects that bolster investments from the local and foreign private sectors.

The market value of public joint-stock companies listed on the stock exchange has shown substantial gains this year, increasing by approximately RO448.5mn by the end of May,

it reached RO9bn and RO416mn, compared to RO8bn and RO967mn at the end of last year.

These public joint-stock companies now constitute about 38.5% of the total market value of securities listed on the stock exchange, which rose to RO24.478bn by the end of May. This reflects an increase of more than RO676mn compared to the level at the end of last year.

The market value is distributed across various segments, including closed companies with a market value of RO10.7bn, the bond and sukuk market with RO4.362bn, and public joint-stock companies with RO9.4bn.

These increases coincided with the rise of the stock exchange's main index, which reached 4,845 points by the end of May. This marked an increase of 331 points, bolstering investors' optimism in the stock exchange's potential for further growth.

Particularly noteworthy is the Oman Investment Authority's plan to introduce several companies for public subscription throughout the current year and upcoming years.



Pact signed for RO13mn pharmaceutical project in Samail Industrial City

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Samail Industrial City, pertaining to the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), has signed an investment agreement with Global Health Ambassadors Company to establish a pharmaceutical project for human use.

The project will come up in the medical investment zone of the industrial city, on a plot of land exceeding 10,000sqm. The total investment volume is estimated to surpass RO13mn.

Madayn has recently announced an investment opportunity for equipping, managing and operating the Medical Fitness Examination Centre in Samail Industrial City.

The Medical Fitness Examination Centre will be equipped to offer top-tier healthcare services to the workforce within the industrial city and the surrounding population.

Madayn has meticulously designed Samail Industrial City in accordance with the latest international standards. The city is structured into various industrial sectors including food processing, iron, aluminium and furniture manufacturing, plastics and petrochemicals production, marble processing, warehousing, support services and building materials.

Following the success of this model, Madayn is actively planning to replicate it across all its upcoming industrial cities.

Private deposits surged by 9.7% in banking sector till March: Central Bank of Oman

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The total value of private deposits with commercial banks in Oman increased by 9.7% till the end of March this year, reaching RO16.0491bn, reports Central Bank of Oman (CBO).

This marks a notable rise from RO14.6294bn recorded during the same period in 2023.

According to the monthly statistical bulletin of the Central Bank, these deposits are: Term deposits - RO5.4308bn, savings deposits - RO5.4429bn and demand deposits - RO4.8463bn.

The CBO bulletin reported that the total value of deposits amounted to RO14.0427bn in Omani riyals and RO2.0064bn in foreign currencies.



Regarding the banking indicators of Omani commercial banks till the end of March, the bulletin indicated that the ratio of total cash and clearing to deposits in Omani riyals reached 6.7%, while

the ratio of total cash and clearing to total deposits reached 5.5%.

The ratio of total loans to deposits stood at 100.2%.

The statistics showed that the deposits in foreign currency was

17.2% of the total deposits, while the foreign assets constituted 11.6% of the total loans.

The ratio of foreign assets to total assets reached 13.2%, and the ratio of foreign liabilities to

The total value of deposits amounted to RO14.0427bn in Omani riyals and RO2.0064bn in foreign currencies

total liabilities reached 10.3%. In terms of private deposits, the percentage of private demand deposits to total private deposits increased to 30.7%.

Moreover, the percentage of capital and reserves to total deposits reached 22.3%, while the percentage of provisions and retained earnings to total loans reached about 5.9%.

New energy projects in North America at risk: Fitch

Istanbul, Türkiye - New energy projects in North America are at risk as they may not be enough to encourage investments if interest rates and inflation remain elevated, Fitch Ratings said on Friday.

'Increased federal support against a higher interest rate environment remains pivotal for shaping the direction of North American energy infrastructure in 2024,' the rating agency said in its mid-year outlook report for the energy sector.



Elevated interest rates and stubbornly high inflation would limit the development of new energy projects and could place more pressure on the perfor-

mance of existing projects, it said.

'Operating and construction costs for energy projects have increased due to the high inflation-

ary environment over the past two years,' said the report. 'This has created global and regional supply chain bottlenecks and higher competition for key components and equipment.'

The rising demand for artificial intelligence and the development of data centres also lead to higher energy demand, according to Fitch. This may cause a slower transition to clean energy in some regions and increase dependence on existing fossil fuels.

Anadolu News

US agencies find weakness in bankruptcy plans at 4 major banks

Istanbul, Türkiye - The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) and Federal Reserve Board said on Friday they found weakness in bankruptcy plans at four major American banks.

The joint review by the agencies examined submissions from eight of the largest and most complex banks in the US and found weaknesses in plans for Bank of America, Citigroup, Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan Chase.

Each weakness identified in the 2023 plans from the four banks is a 'shortcoming', which is a weakness that raises questions about the feasibility of the plan, the agencies said in a statement.

The FDIC and the Fed said they provided feedback to each of the eight banks that identify areas for continued development of their resolution strategies and capabilities.

Anadolu News

Dow posts best weekly performance since May, but S&P 500 closes lower

Istanbul, Türkiye - The Dow posted its best weekly performance since May, but US stocks ended Friday on a mixed note.

The blue-chip index rose 15.57 points, or 0.04%, to close at 39,150 as it posted a weekly gain of 1.45%.

The S&P 500, on the other hand, fell 8.55 points, or 0.16%,



to finish the session at 5,464.62. The index climbed briefly above a record high of 5,500 points Thursday for the first time. It increased 0.6% for the week.

The Nasdaq, meanwhile, lost 32.23 points, or 0.18%, to end the day at 17,689.36. While the tech-heavy index closed lower Thursday to end a seven-day

winning streak, it was flat for the week.

The VIX volatility index, also known as the fear index, lost 0.6% to 13.20. The 10-year US Treasury yield rose 0.14% to 4.258%.

The dollar index added 0.23% to 105.83, while the euro lost 0.08% to US\$1.0691

against the greenback.

Precious metals were in the red, with gold losing 1.6% to US\$2,321 per ounce and silver diving 3.9% to US\$29.55.

Oil prices were down around 0.8%, with global benchmark Brent crude at US\$85.10 and US benchmark West Texas Intermediate at US\$80.59.

Kuwait's Al-Zour refinery in full swing with 615,000 bpd of crude

Kuwait City, Kuwait - Kuwait's Al-Zour refinery stands as among the region's most impactful oil projects, besides being the cornerstone of state-run Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's (KPC) future plans and strategies that aim to ratchet up oil refining capacity, while the fully-operational facility's output has reached 615,000 barrels per day (bpd).

The refinery, some 90km south of Kuwait City, has long been one of Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Mishal al Ahmad al Jaber al Sabah's core concerns, as evidenced by his attendance at a lavish ceremony last month to mark the facility's operation at full capacity.

Ranked seventh in the world's list of the biggest oil refineries based on daily capacity, a statistic that shows the sheer magnitude of the facility, Al-Zour looks poised to propel KPC to regional prominence given its contributions towards bringing the company's major goals to fruition, which subsequently triggers a positive ripple effect on the national economy

On the intricacies of Al-Zour's daily output, the refinery churns out some 86,000 bpd of premium Naphtha, in addition to 99,000 bpd of jet fuel and 147,000 bpd of low-sulphur diesel, respectively, all the while keeping carbon emissions in check in line with Kuwait's commitment towards environmental



sustainability goals.

With its operation at full-fledged capacity, Al-Zour refinery will now be able to boost Kuwait's competitiveness in the global market through its pro-

duction of oil-based products of sublime quality, with KPC chief executive Sheikh Nawaf al Sabah saying the nation will now 'reap the benefits' of the facility, chief among them being a sharp rise in

Kuwait's crude oil exports.

He went on to say that he was 'proud' of the dedication and commitment of KPC's national workforce, saying their experiences in handling such a critical

project would serve them well over the course of their professional careers, enabling them to better deal with future endeavors.

Echoing his sentiments, Wadhah al Khatib, acting chief executive of KPC affiliate Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company, said the opening of Al-Zour refinery would 'usher in a new era' in Kuwait's oil industry, in addition to a 'launchpad'

Some 30 countries have become the beneficiaries of the rise in Kuwaiti oil exports, while Al-Zour boosted total refining capacity to 1.415mn bpd

for greater output capacity in line with environment safety standards.

Some 30 countries from across the world have become the beneficiaries of the rise in Kuwaiti oil exports, while Al-Zour has boosted total refining capacity from 800,000 bpd to a million and 415 thousand bpd, the official underlined, giving due credit to the national workforce for coping with the arduous journey that culminated in the facility's full-fledged operations.

SPA



No major trading partner manipulated dollar in 2023: US

Istanbul, Türkiye - No major trading partner of the US manipulated the rate of exchange between its currency and the American dollar during the year of 2023, according to the US Treasury Department.

The agency said Thursday in a statement that none of the major trading countries, comprising about 78% of US foreign trade in goods and services, undertook any manipulation for "purposes of preventing effective balance of payments adjustments or gaining unfair competitive advantage in international trade during the four quarters through December 2023".

However, seven countries are on the Treasury Department's 'Monitoring List' that require close attention to their currency practices and macroeconomic policies - China, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, Vietnam and Germany, according to the agency's semiannual report to the US Congress on Macroeconomic and Foreign Exchange

Policies of Major Trading Partners of the United States.

'The report also reiterated Treasury's call for increased transparency from China', said the statement. 'China's failure to publish foreign exchange intervention and broader lack of transparency around key features of its exchange rate policy make China an outlier among major economies and warrant Treasury's close monitoring.'

During this year, however, Japanese authorities intervened in April and May for the first time since October 2022, purchasing yen and selling dollars, which strengthens the value of the yen, said the report, adding Brazil has also intervened in 2024, also in the direction to strengthen the real.

'Global foreign currency reserves reached US\$12.3tn over the four quarters through end-December 2023, an increase of roughly US\$415bn relative to end-2022,' the report noted.

Anadolu News



Saudi Minister heads delegation to 4th Saudi-Swiss Financial Dialogue in Zurich

Zurich, Germany - Minister of Finance Mohammed Aljadaan led the Saudi delegation at the 4th Saudi-Swiss Financial Dialogue held in Zurich.

Senior officials from the Ministry of Finance, Saudi Central Bank, Insurance Authority, Financial Sector Development Program, and Fintech Saudi were

part of the delegation.

Aljadaan, alongside Swiss counterpart Karin Keller-Sutter, inaugurated the event, highlighting its importance in strengthening economic and financial ties. He noted Switzerland's role as a trading partner with over 100 companies in the Kingdom.

Seeking deeper collaboration,

Aljadaan emphasised exploring new areas like insurance, while leveraging expertise in Fintech, a sector with significant investment from both countries.

Keller-Sutter stressed the importance of international cooperation in preventing financial crises, citing Switzerland's expertise and collaboration with Saudi

Arabia in multilateral bodies.

The dialogue covered new avenues for collaboration, the macroeconomic outlook, international cooperation, financial sector developments, and updates on banking, digital finance, insurance, and sustainable finance.

SPA

Apple may not roll out key features to EU users this year

Istanbul, Türkiye - Apple may not roll out some of its new key features to users in the EU this year due to the bloc's Digital Markets Act (DMA) regulations, according to media reports on Friday.

The features are iPhone Mirroring, SharePlay Screen Sharing enhancements and Apple Intelligence.

The DMA, which took effect in November 2022 to ensure higher and fairer competition in Europe, aims to prevent large firms from abusing market power and allowing new companies to enter the digital industry.

Apple announced in January it will allow third-party app stores in Europe for the first time in the company's history. The move will open up the company's iPhone and iPad App Store in Europe to competitors, a major shift from the firm's longstanding policy of controlling application distribution on its devices.



The company last week announced Apple Intelligence generative models and unveiled a partnership with Ope-

nAI, the maker of ChatGPT, as the race for artificial intelligence heats up among major tech companies.

Canada's raw materials prices jumped 7.6% in May: Statistics Canada

Istanbul, Türkiye - Prices of raw materials purchased by manufacturers operating in Canada, measured by the Raw Materials Price Index (RMPI), jumped 7.6% in May, compared to the same month of last year, according to official figures released Friday.

'Prices for metal ores, concentrates and scrap led the increase of the RMPI excluding energy, rising 4.5% from April to May,' Statistics Canada said in a statement.

While prices of crop products increased 3% in May, rising for the third straight month, higher

prices for wheat and grains, which rose 10.7% and 3.1% respectively, strongly contributed to the increase in RMPI, said the agency.

'Cold weather in Russia and strong rainstorms in Northern Europe have reduced the expected global production of wheat for this crop year,' the statement said.

However, RMPI declined 1% in May, compared to the previous month, according to the agency. This marked the first decline in the index after posting four consecutive monthly increases.



'Prices for crude energy products declined 6.4% in May, the first monthly decrease since December 2023,' said the statement.

The annual Raw Materials Price Index figure for April, meanwhile, was revised down to a gain of 2.9%, from an increase of 3.1%.

The monthly figure for April, in addition, also saw a downward revision to a rise of 5.3%, from a gain of 5.5% when it marked the largest month-on-month increase since March 2022.

Anadolu News



Oman Air wins prestigious 2024 Apex Award

In recognition of its commitment to elevating the air travel experience, Oman Air has been awarded the title of Best Seat Comfort in the Middle East at the 2024 Airline Passenger Experience Association (APEX) Awards.

The award was accepted by the airline's UK Country Manager, Kelpesh Patel, at a ceremony held during the Future Travel Experience EMEA, Ancillary & Retailing event 2024 in Dublin, Ireland on June 12.

"We are deeply honoured to receive this prestigious recognition, which reflects our relentless pursuit of passenger satisfaction. Oman Air's on-board experience has delighted travellers for many

years and is why we continue to be the airline of choice for our valued guests. We remain committed to providing not only a world-class product but unparalleled service excellence, ensuring our passengers enjoy the best possible journey with us every time they fly," said Con Korfiatis, Chief Executive Officer.

Seamlessly blending contemporary luxury with authentic Omani heritage, Oman Air provides unparalleled comfort in every class. With spacious cabin layouts boasting generous legroom, modern, plush upholstery, and innovative design elements, guests can enjoy a range of world-class amenities and dining options, enhanced by the airline.

Indian embassy hosts 10th International Day of Yoga



The Embassy of India in Muscat, in association with the Indian School Muscat, hosted the mega celebration of the 10th International Day of Yoga. The event saw the participation of 2000 people from all walks of life, including Indian nationals, resident ambassadors in Oman, members of the diplomatic corps, Omani citizens, and students from Indian Schools, a press release said.

As part of the celebrations, a common Yoga Protocol was conducted. This year's theme,

"Yoga for Self and Society", reflects the impact yoga has on both, individual well-being and societal harmony. Yoga promotes the oneness of mind, body, and soul for individuals, while fostering a sense of unity and togetherness within society.

H E Amit Narang, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, delivered the keynote address, highlighting the essence of yoga in today's context. He said, "Yoga not only enhances personal health and well-being but also strengthens the social fabric

by promoting unity and harmony." Ambassador also expressed his gratitude to all participants, yoga organisations, sponsors, and volunteers who contributed to the success of the event.

In the lead-up to the 10th International Day of Yoga, the embassy had launched the 'Marhaban Yoga: Health, Harmony, and Healing' initiative in April 2024. Under this initiative, more than 30 yoga events were conducted by the Embassy in association with various yoga or-

ganisations in Oman over two months. These events took place across the country, catering to people of all ages, from children to the elderly. The sessions focused on diverse themes such as health, harmony, healing, peace, mindfulness, and well-being, promoting the benefits of yoga for everyone.

A flagship curtain-raiser event was conducted in Salalah, which stood out among the series of events organised under Marhaban Yoga. It drew over 300 participants, including several

Omani dignitaries, with H E Jamal al Moosawi, secretary general of the National Museum of Oman, participating as the guest of honour.

This series of events, built on the success of previous initiatives such as the Oman Yoga Yatra in 2022 and the Muscat Yog Mahotsav in 2023, all aimed at popularising yoga throughout Oman. The popularity of yoga as a health discipline continues to grow in Oman, attracting a wide range of practitioners who embrace its benefits.

LuLu Financial 350th centre opens

LuLu Financial Holdings, a leading global financial services provider, opened its 350th global customer engagement center in Dubai on Tuesday.

This milestone highlights the company's rapid growth and the success of its omnichannel strategy, which seamlessly integrates physical and digital platforms to offer an exceptional cross-border payment experience. The new customer engagement center was also the 135th under LuLu Exchange, the company's UAE division, a press release said.

The 350th global customer engagement centre at SATWA, Dubai was inaugurated by Alfonso Ferdinand A Ver, the Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines to the UAE. The inauguration taking place on the eve of the Philippines Independence Day lent added significance to



the occasion, with the company dedicating the milestone ceremony to the Filipino community.

"It is a pleasure to be part of the inauguration of LuLu Financial Exchange's 350th global customer engagement center here in Dubai, particularly as it coincides with the eve of the Philippines Independence Day," said Ver. "This event not only marks a significant milestone for LuLu Financial Holdings but also underscores the enduring and growing bond between the company and the Filipino community."

"The inauguration of our 350th branch in Dubai represents a significant milestone in our journey of growth and innovation," said Adeeb Ahamed, Managing Director of LuLu Financial Holdings.

The inauguration of our 350th branch in Dubai represents a significant milestone in our journey of growth and innovation," said Adeeb Ahamed, Managing Director of LuLu Financial Holdings.

Kalyan Jewellers kickstarts new season's celebrations with Eid

Kalyan Jewellers, one of the most trusted and leading jewellery brands, has announced the launch of its Super Golden-Saver Offer, ushering in a season of celebrations with Eid Al-Adha.

This offer has been designed to make special occasions more memorable with exceptional deals on jewellery purchases from Kalyan Jewellers, a press release said.

The jewellery brand has announced flat 50% off on making of gold jewellery, whereas upto 20% off on making charges for diamond, precious stone and uncut jewellery, which is applicable starting June 14 to June 30. Patrons making purchases worth RO400 can leverage these exciting offers.

Furthermore, the jewellery



brand has introduced the 'Multiplier Benefit' wherein extra discount can be gained on every additional purchase of RO200. With substantial offers on a wide range of jewellery, from everyday wear to stunning heavyweight pieces, Kalyan Jewellers aims to ensure that every celebration sparkles with delight. The one-of-its-kind offer is valid across all Kalyan Jewellers' showroom in Oman.

Ramesh Kalyanaraman, executive director, Kalyan Jewellers said, "Our dedication to customer-centric initiatives and innovation has consistently transformed our bond with our patrons, guaranteeing unmatched satisfaction for our esteemed customers. With this new offer, we are certain that our patrons, especially those who enjoy shopping during the festive season will be thrilled and will find exceptional value on their purchases."

With their purchases, patrons will also receive the Kalyan Jewellers 4-Level Assurance Certificate, guaranteeing purity, free lifetime maintenance of ornaments, detailed product information, and transparent exchange and buy-back policies.

ISWK hosts 108 Surya Namaskar Marathon



Indian School Al Wadi Al Kabir marked the 10th International Yoga Day with a marathon of 108 Surya Namaskars, drawing over 500 participants including

students, teachers, and parents. This annual event at the primary school's ground highlights a decade-long tradition of promoting yoga and wellness, a

press release said. The evening began with a welcome speech by the principal D N Rao, emphasising the importance of yoga for physical and

mental health. Participants were guided by their experienced yoga instructor Resham Kundnani, and moved through the sequence of Surya Namaskars,

creating a serene, joyful, and focused atmosphere. The event concluded with a relaxation and meditation session.

Deepak Mehta Shangri La's new director of finance

Shangri-La Muscat announced the appointment of Deepak Mehta as the resort's new Director of Finance.

Deepak joins the team from the St Regis Maldives, having previously served as director of finance at Shangri-La New Delhi, and brings a wealth of experience to the role, with almost two decades' work in financial management in the hospitality industry.

A Chartered Accountant by training, Deepak Mehta's financial acumen, leadership skills and in-depth industry knowledge have opened doors to executive roles at some of the world's most prestigious hotel brands, with a particular focus on the APEC region.

"I am delighted to be returning to the Shangri-La Group, and in particular, to be joining the team in Muscat, which is at an exciting



point in its growth," said Deepak Mehta. "I look forward to working with the executive and finance teams to optimise the property's systems and strategies and support the development of Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah and Shangri-La Al Husn."

Alfa Romeo floats special offers

MHD Automobiles, distributors of the iconic Italian marque Alfa Romeo, announces exclusive offers across the Alfa Romeo lineup, which includes an array of distinguished models. These include the dynamic sedan - Giulia, the smart and spirited compact SUV - Tonale, and the versatile and spacious full SUV - Stelvio.

Each model seamlessly blends heritage with innovation, embodying Italian flair, performance, and style. For enthusiasts seeking exhilarating performance, the lineup also features the high-performance Quadrifoglio variants of the Giulia and Stelvio, delivering the ultimate expression of Alfa Romeo's engineering prowess, a press release said.

For a limited time only, customers can enjoy unparalleled benefits on the entire Alfa Romeo range, presenting a golden opportunity to own a premium Italian masterpiece.

Owning a new Alfa Romeo is now more accessible with their flexible payment plan. Customers can pay 50% upfront and



the remaining 50% after 12 months with 0% interest, subject to credit approval from selected banks and finance companies.

The Alfa Romeo models are backed by an industry-leading manufacturer's warranty of up to 7 years or 200,000km ensuring long-term assurance for vehicle owners. All Alfa Romeo models also come with a service package covering up to 5 years or 120,000km, providing added peace of mind to buyers.

With 5 years of roadside assistance, customers can drive worry-free, knowing help is just a call away. Customers will also receive complimentary first-year insurance covering Oman and the UAE, along with first-year registration.

"We are thrilled to offer these exclusive benefits to our esteemed Alfa Romeo customers," said Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani, CEO of MHD Automobiles. "This campaign underscores our commitment to delivering exceptional value and superior customer satisfaction."

The offer is valid until July 7.

Process team holds first meet

The Processes and Procedures Documentation Project team held its first meeting, headed by Salim bin Hamad al Hasani, assistant director general for Administrative and Financial Affairs and vice chairman of the Sub-committee on the Digital Transformation Programme in Muscat Governorate, to implement the recent speech of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq for simplifying procedures and performance governance to guarantee arrangement with the requirements of Oman Vision 2040 and its purposes.

Khadja bint Masoud al Tubi, assistant director general for Development and Quality Assurance at the Ministry of Labour, presented a visual presentation in which she explained the Ministry of Labour's role in support to the units of the state's administrative body. This would enhance efforts and directions that aimed to develop and improve institutional proficiency systems, and increase the satisfaction's level of customers and beneficiaries with administrative processes and procedures.

The meeting also included an open discussion between team members and specialists at the Ministry of Labour about the



importance of the process's preparation of inventorying administrative procedures and processes in Muscat Governorate within appropriate determinants and indicators, discussion of the relationship between various administrative processes and procedures, and implementing best administrative practices.

Salim bin Hamad al Hasani -

Amouage adds Guidance 46 Exceptional Extrait to set

In 2023, Amouage released what instantly became one of its most admired and feted creations - Guidance Eau de Parfum.

Composed by acclaimed perfumer Quentin Bisch, under the direction of Chief Creative Officer Renaud Salmon, the scent reinterpreted the Amouage triad of Rose, Frankincense and Ambergris, while remaining faithful to the House's identity and breaking new ground in terms of what connoisseurs could expect from an Amouage creation. With its distinctive blend of Pear, Hazelnut and Sandalwood, Guidance brought a truly contemporary sense of grandeur to what was already an extraordinary range of compositions.

A year on, Salmon and Bisch have returned to the unique landscape they created in Guidance Eau de Parfum and cast it in an even more mesmerising light. The result of their efforts is a new addition to The Guidance Collection - Guidance 46, an Exceptional Extrait that heightens the contrasts and reveals more of the mysteries at the heart of the Guidance story, a press release said.

When creating Guidance 46, Salmon and Bisch chose to take their cue from one of the Eau de Parfum's most memorable characteristics - the striking distinction between its quieter facets and its more assertive elements. Their intention was that in Guidance 46, these contrasts would be even more singular, more ar-



resting and more alluring.

"We thought it would be fascinating," says Salmon, "Quentin didn't remove anything from the original formula, but instead added certain ingredients to make all the parts of the structure stand out against each other with greater power and complexity."

Amongst their key conceptual touchstones were the notion of a 'loud whisper', an image of a jellyfish, as well as Irving Penn's photographs of flowers. Although they're vastly different from each other, all three convey a sense of delicacy and translucency while also evoking power, a certain magnetic allure and a suggestion of danger. These are the precise qualities Salmon and Bisch wanted to showcase in Guidance 46 - characteristics that would act as an even more irresistible pull into the world of Guidance.

What they ultimately created is a remarkable study in light and shade, fragility and strength, subtlety, and ostentatiousness.

At its opening, Guidance 46 - containing 46% perfume oils - is almost surprisingly weightless and luminous. The familiar Pear note floats into view as though carried by the gentlest of floral-tinted breezes.

With the addition of Bitter Almond and Pink Pepper facets, the connection between the fruit and the Hazelnut is even more haunting and nuanced than in Guidance Eau de Parfum.

ABTL launches first NXTPaper smartphone

TCL along ABT GROUP has launched the first NXTPAPER smartphone series. The TCL 40 NXTPAPER becomes the world's first and only smartphone devices to offer a revolutionary full colour paper-like visual experience.

The launch of NXTPAPER phones is another major step in TCL's commitment to bring elevated screen experiences with eye comfort, which cater to the diversified needs of consumers, said Faris al Juma, CEO, a press

release said.

TCL NXTPAPER full colour electronic paper-like display technology is developed in-house and has earned accolades from consumers and media alike. Until now, available on selected TCL tablets and laptops, users will soon have the option of slipping a NXTPAPER screen into their pocket as part of a great Android smartphone.

"2023 has seen TCL's significant milestone in our mission to bring the NXTPAPER display

proposition across smart screens at competitive price points globally," said Aaron Zhang, CEO at TCL Communication. "It reinforces our vision of 'Display Greatness' by combining eye comfort and a paper-like feel with the convenience of modern technology in a single, seamless product. At TCL, we continue to listen to our consumers and address their needs with ongoing innovation and an evolving product portfolio."

The latest NXTPAPER smart-

phones offer industry leading eye comfort and are hardware certified by TÜV for low harmful blue light. Users can enjoy daily binge-watching while have a more comfortable full colour paper-like viewing experience. Additionally, an integrated sensor automatically adjusts display brightness and colour temperature based on time and environment to provide suitable visual experiences and soft light at night, further elevating overall eye comfort.

MoH workshop highlights reformulation of food products

The Ministry of Health (MoH), represented by the Directorate General of Health Services and Programmes (Nutrition Department), in collaboration with the World Health Organisation office in the Sultanate of Oman, held a fortnight ago, a workshop on Reformulating Food Products to be Low in Sugar, Salt, and Saturated Fats at InterCity Hotel.

The opening of the workshop was patronised by H H Sayyida Dr Mona Fahad al Said, assistant vice chancellor for International Cooperation at Sultan Qaboos University, in the presence of H E Dr Saeed Harib al Lamki, MoH's Undersecretary for Health Affairs.

H E Dr Jean Jabbour, WHO Repre-



sentative in Oman, highlighted aims of the National Nutrition Strategy 2020-2030 including reduction of sugar and salt consumption and elimination of industrially produced trans fats from local markets, noting the importance of engaging the manufacturing sector towards implementing this strategy.

The workshop included a lecture presented by Dr Ayoub al Jawaldeh, regional nutrition expert from WHO-Eastern Mediterranean Region. Results of nutritional data study for specific food products most commonly used in Oman was presented besides other lectures on the global status of salt reduction in foods, and a review of global experiences.

US: Death toll rises to three in Arkansas grocery store shooting

Fordyce, US - The death toll in a tragic shooting at a grocery store in Fordyce, Arkansas, has climbed to three and ten people have been wounded, including two police officers, authorities confirmed in a news conference on Friday, CNN reported.

The Arkansas State Police reported that the incident unfolded at the Mad Butcher grocery store around 11:30am local time.

Mike Hagar, Secretary of Public Safety and Director of Arkansas State Police, said that law enforcement swiftly responded to the scene and engaged in a confrontation with the 'lone suspect', exchanging gunfire. Both officers and the suspect sustained injuries, but none are believed to be life-threatening.

The injuries to the officers and the suspect are not considered life-threatening, according to Hagar. He noted the 'situation is secured ...contained. There are no active threats to the community', as reported by CNN.

"The remaining civilian injuries range from non-life threatening to extremely criti-



cal," he said.

The tragic incident adds to the grim statistics of gun violence in the United States, with at least 234 mass shootings reported in 2024, according to data from the Gun Violence Archive. The definition used by the archive, and confirmed by CNN, categorises mass shootings as incidents where four or more people, excluding the shooter, are shot.

Arkansas Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders expressed deep concern over the incident, stating she has been briefed on the situation and remains in constant communication with state police. Eyewitnesses recalled harrowing scenes as gunfire erupted. David Rodriguez, who witnessed the chaos unfold, described initially mistaking the gunshots for fireworks.

"Then the shots started coming faster, and I saw people running," he told CNN. He observed emergency responders arriving swiftly at the scene, with shattered windows at the grocery store indicating the intensity of the gunfire.

ANI

US warship arrives in S Korea after North Korea-Russia pact



Seoul, South Korea - A nuclear-powered US aircraft carrier anchored in South Korea on Saturday amid heightened tensions in the wake of a new security treaty between North Korea and Russia.

The *USS Theodore Roosevelt* entered the naval base in Busan, 320km (198.83 miles) southeast of the capital Seoul, early on Saturday, joined by the Aegis-equipped destroyer *USS Halsey* and the *USS Daniel Inouye*, Seoul-based Yonhap News reported, citing the South Korean Navy.

It marked the first arrival of a US aircraft carrier in South Korea in seven months, since the November visit of the *USS Carl Vinson*.

Saturday's arrival came as the three countries are expected to hold their first-ever trilateral multidomain exercise, called Freedom Edge, later this month amid joint efforts to bolster security cooperation against North Korean threats.

The three allies decided to launch the exercise during three-way talks held on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue security conference earlier this month in Singapore.

On Wednesday, North Korea and Russia inked a new partnership agreement after a summit in Pyongyang between the two countries' leaders, vowing to provide each other military assistance 'without delay' if either is attacked by a third country.

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken condemned 'deepening military cooperation' between Russia and North Korea, State Department said on Friday.

In a phone call with South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul, Blinken reaffirmed the importance of the 'ironclad' US-South Korea alliance in promot-

The USS Theodore Roosevelt entered the naval base in Busan, 320km southeast of the capital Seoul, early on Saturday

ing peace, security, and prosperity around the world, Spokesperson Matthew Miller said in a statement.

"The Secretary condemned deepening military cooperation between the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) and Russia, including ongoing arms transfers that violate multiple UN Security Council resolutions," said the statement.

"Secretary Blinken and Foreign Minister Cho also agreed to continue working together to ad-

dress the complex and evolving security challenges posed by the DPRK, as well to support peace and stability in the South China Sea," it added. Blinken also thanked Cho for South Korea's continued support of Ukraine.

'Intense and productive'

However, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Friday that Russian President Vladimir Putin's state visits to North Korea and Vietnam were 'very intense and productive'.

Speaking at a press briefing in Moscow, Peskov called the Western reaction to Putin's visits to the Asian countries 'puzzling', noting that Moscow's partnerships with other states have never been directed against third countries.

"Any foreign policy activity of Russia, even in regions directly adjacent to our country, is perceived with hostility and viewed through the lens of Western aspirations to suppress Russia," he said.

Peskov said Russia's interactions with its partners aim solely at enhancing the well-being of the peoples involved. He acknowledged that Moscow understands Washington will continue to exert pressure on all its partners, including Vietnam.

"We have no doubt that the US will pressure all our partners. But the cooperation we offer is devoid of any confrontational attitude towards third countries. It is mutually beneficial and absolutely aligns with the interests of our partners, including Vietnam," he stressed.

Peskov explained that the bilateral talks in Vietnam aimed to give a new impetus to the development of Russian-Vietnamese cooperation.

Anadolu Agency



Ecuador begins construction of prison to house most dangerous

Bogota, Colombia - Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa announced the start of construction on Friday of a maximum-security prison in the coastal province of Santa Elena, which will house the most dangerous inmates in the country's prison system.

"Today we mark one of the most important milestones in our fight against terrorism and the mafias that entrenched themselves with impunity in our country for decades," Noboa said at a ceremony to lay the first stone for the prison. "In (this prison) you will find corrupt people, murderers and drug traffickers," he added.

The government said the prison will follow international standards such as those of the ADX Florence Supermax in the US state of Colorado which is designed to hold inmates that pose extreme security threats for that country.

The facility, which will be the 37 in Ecuador, will cost US\$52mn and will be used to house 880 prisoners just 130km (81 miles) from the port city of Guayaquil. It will occupy almost 40 acres (16.2 hectares), and will be built in the 'record time' of 300 days, said General Luis Zaldumbide, director of the prison agency.

The new prison will include six surveillance towers, a nine-metre (30-foot) wall, maximum security modules, biometric systems for roll call and real-time access and monitoring, a 24/7 operational control centre, signal jammers, advanced CCTV, vehicle locks and perimeter and fire detection, according to the government.

"Just seven months ago, the prison system was kidnapped and humiliated by criminal organisations that had turned the prisons into their centres of operations," Noboa said while surrounded by construction machinery and members of the Armed Forces and police.

Residents in the surrounding area protested the construction.

The Permanent Committee for the Defence of Human Rights reported that police evicted demonstrators.

Anadolu Agency

Humanitarian needs in Afghanistan remain alarmingly high, says UN

Hamilton, Canada - The UN highlighted the alarming humanitarian need in Afghanistan, saying that more than 50 per cent of the population require humanitarian assistance in the war-torn country.

"Humanitarian needs in Afghanistan remain alarmingly high. More than 50 per cent of the population - some 23.7mn people - require humanitarian assistance this year, the third highest number of people in need in the world," Lisa Doughten, head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Humanitarian Financing and Resource Mobilisation Division, said at a Security Council meeting on Afghanistan.

She emphasised the impacts of poverty, food insecurity, and climate change, saying: "One in four Afghans are uncertain where their next meal will come from. Nearly three million chil-



dren are experiencing acute levels of hunger."

Doughten also noted the devastating effects of climate change, with more frequent extreme weather events and annual droughts predicted to become the norm by 2030.

"Efforts are already underway to establish anticipatory action programmes... but these will need to be sufficiently staffed and funded to bear fruit," she said.

She said that women and girls are 'profoundly' impacted by the Taliban government, particularly the ban on girls' education, which is 'fuelling an increase in child marriage and early child-bearing'.

"Reports of attempted suicides among women and girls are also increasing," she added.

TRIAL RUN IN MADAGASCAR



Cable cars carrying the first batch of passengers are seen on a trial run in Antananarivo, Madagascar on Friday (Xinhua)

World ‘cannot afford Lebanon to be another Gaza’: UN chief Guterres

Hamilton, Canada - The UN chief on Friday expressed ‘profound’ concern over the growing tensions between Israel and the Lebanese Hezbollah group, saying the world ‘cannot afford Lebanon to become another Gaza’.

“I felt compelled today to voice my profound concerns about escalation between Israel and Hezbollah along the Blue Line,” Antonio Guterres told reporters in New York, hinting at ‘escalation in bellicose rhetoric from both sides as if an all-out war was imminent’. Warning against a wider regional conflict in the Middle East, Guterres said: “One rash move - one miscalculation - could trigger a catastrophe that goes far beyond the border, and frankly, beyond imagination.”

“Let’s be clear: The people of the region and the people of the world cannot afford Lebanon to become another Gaza,” he said.

Highlighting the loss of lives and many people being displaced with their homes and livelihoods destroyed, the UN chief drew attention to Israeli forces targeting several towns in southern Lebanon by explosions, causing forest fires that spread and threatened residential areas.

“Unexploded ordnance and remnants of war litter the land-

scape,” he said, adding that such incidents ‘pose additional threats to people in both Israel and Lebanon and to United Nations and humanitarian personnel’.

He urged full implementation of Security Council resolution 1701, and immediate cessation of hostilities while protecting civilians. “Children, journalists and medical workers should never be targeted,” he said.

Guterres ruled out ‘military solution’, saying that it ‘will only guarantee more suffering, more devastation to communities in

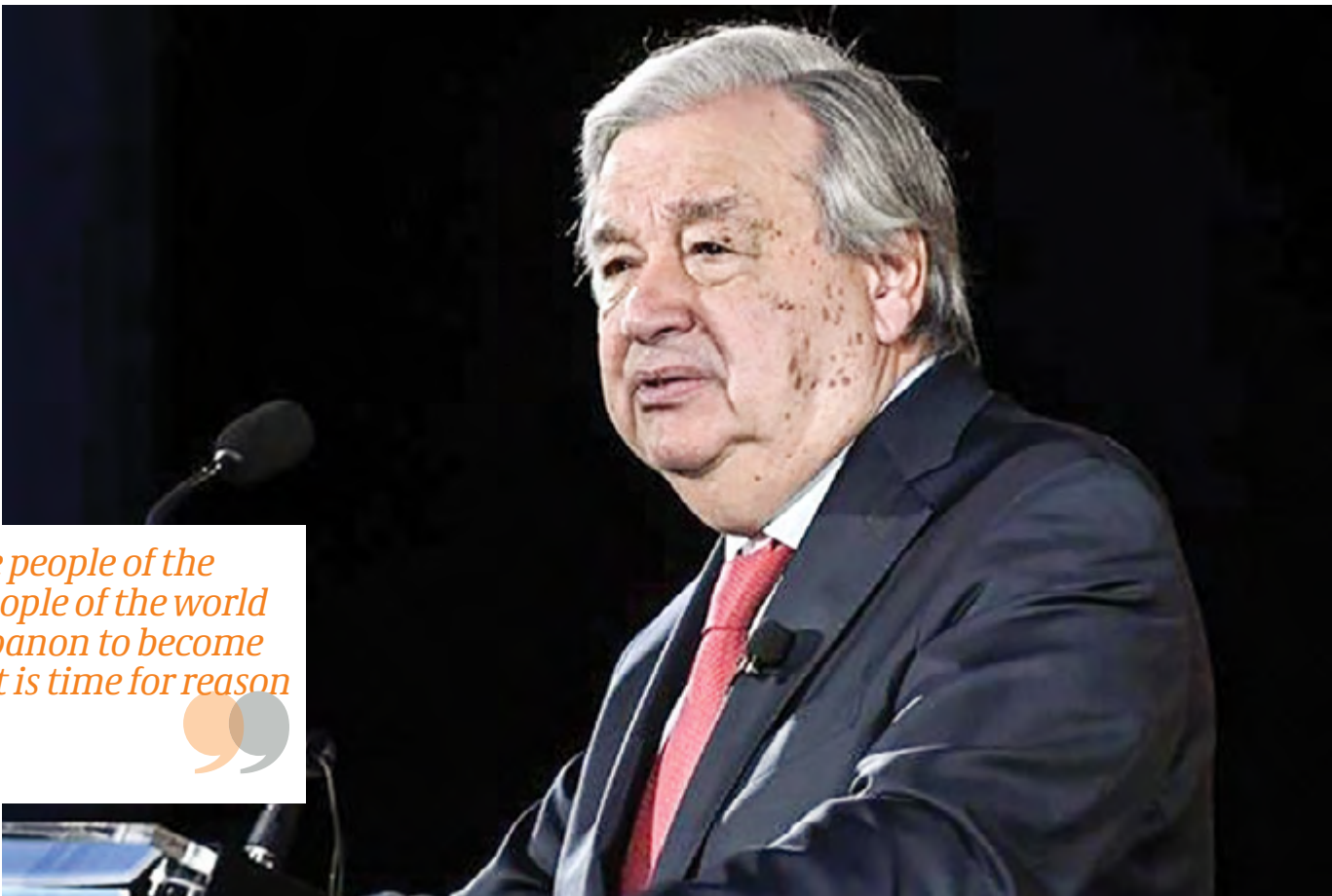
Let’s be clear: The people of the region and the people of the world cannot afford Lebanon to become another Gaza... It is time for reason and rationality

ANTONIO GUTERRES

Lebanon and Israel, and more potentially catastrophic consequences for the region’.

“It is time for reason and rationality,” he said, recalling that UN peacekeepers on the ground are working towards de-escalation and helping to prevent miscalculation.

Guterres stressed: “The cessation of hostilities and progress toward a permanent



United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has warned against a wider conflict in the Middle East

ceasefire is the only durable solution.” He affirmed UN’s full support to diplomacy for ending violence, restoration of stability and preventing further humanitarian suffering.

“And we do so as we continue

to press for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, the immediate and unconditional release of the hostages and a real pathway to a two-State solution,” he added.

Meanwhile, Iran’s mission to

UN on X warned Israel over ‘imprudent decision’ leading the region into a new war.

“Undoubtedly, this war will have one ultimate loser, which is the Zionist regime,” the mission wrote, adding that Hezbollah ‘has

the capability to defend itself and Lebanon - perhaps the time for the self-annihilation of this illegitimate (Israeli) regime has come’.

Tensions have soared along Lebanon’s border with Israel amid cross-border attacks between the

Lebanese Hezbollah group and Israeli forces as Tel Aviv pressed ahead with its deadly offensive on the Gaza Strip, which has killed more than 37,400 people since October 7 last year following an attack by the Palestinian resistance group Hamas.

Meanwhile, Kuwait urged its nationals in Lebanon on Friday to leave as soon as possible amid growing fears of a war between Israel and the Lebanese group, Hezbollah.

The Foreign Ministry also asked nationals not to go to Lebanon ‘at the present time in view of the security situation taking place in the region.’

Israeli media, including the news portal, Walla, reported earlier that Hezbollah may launch a pre-emptive surprise attack against Israel.

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz said on Friday that Israel will soon make ‘necessary decisions’ to halt attacks from the resistance group.

The Israeli military approved operational plans on Tuesday for a wide-scale attack on Lebanon amid rising border tensions with Hezbollah. Hezbollah, for its part, links the cessation of its attacks on Israel to the end of Israel’s onslaught on Gaza.

Anadolu Agency

41 Palestinians killed in two Israeli attacks on Gaza City

Gaza City, Palestine - As Israel’s months-long Gaza offensive continued, at least 41 Palestinians were killed and several others injured on Saturday in two separate Israeli attacks targeting Gaza City.

Medical sources told Anadolu that the Israeli army targeted a house in the neighbourhood of Al-Tuffah in eastern Gaza City, killing 17 Palestinians and injuring several others.

They also said that 24 more Palestinians were killed and dozens injured in an additional Israeli bombing of the Al-Shati refugee camp in western Gaza City.

The Israeli army bombed three residential buildings in the camp, Anadolu reported from the ground.

Eyewitnesses told Anadolu that more than 20 houses in the targeted area were completely or partially destroyed as a result of the Israeli bombing.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army claimed to have bombed buildings used by Hamas as military headquarters in Gaza City with-



out providing any evidence or further details.

Besides, a Palestinian child succumbed on Saturday to injuries inflicted by Israeli army gunfire near the city of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank.

In a statement, the Palestinian Health Ministry said ‘the child, Muhammad Murad Ahmad Hoshiya, 12, succumbed to critical injuries he sustained about a week ago in Ramallah’.

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said on June 14 that an ambulance crew had transported to the hospital ‘a 12-year-old child injured by live bullets in the abdomen during the occupation army’s storming of Al-Amari camp in Ramallah’, describing his condition as ‘critical’.

Eyewitnesses told Anadolu that an Israeli force stormed the city of Al-Bireh, raided the Al-Amari camp, and the Umm Al-

Sharayet neighbourhood south of the city, resulting in seven people being wounded by gunfire, the Health Ministry had said.

The Israeli military has been regularly conducting raids in the occupied West Bank over the past few years, which escalated with the start of the war on Gaza last October. Palestinians have also faced violent attacks from illegal settlers.

Anadolu Agency

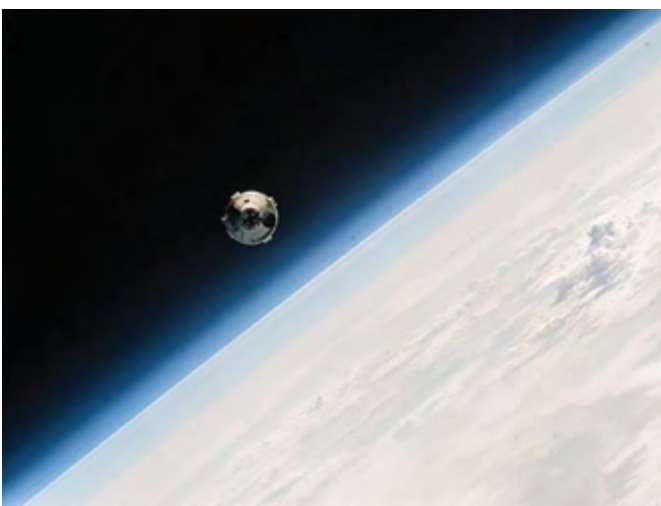
Boeing’s Starliner mission delays return once again

Washington, D.C., US - Boeing’s first astronaut mission using its Starliner capsule has been extended once again, with the spacecraft now set to remain docked at the International Space Station (ISS) until at least July 2, a week later than the previous target date of June 26.

This extension allows Boeing and NASA additional time to address several issues that have emerged with the capsule.

“We are taking our time and following our standard mission management team process,” said Steve Stich, manager of NASA’s Commercial Crew Programme, in an update on Friday evening (June 21). “We are letting the data drive our decision-making relative to managing the small helium system leaks and thruster performance we observed during rendezvous and docking,” he added.

Starliner’s current mission, known as Crew Flight Test, launched on June 5 and sent NASA astronauts Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams to the ISS, where it arrived a day



Starliner’s current mission, known as Crew Flight Test sent astronauts Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams to the ISS

later.

However, the journey was not entirely smooth. During its ap-

proach to the station, Starliner experienced problems with five of its 28 reaction control system RCS thrusters, though four were eventually restored.

The mission team also identified five small helium leaks in Starliner’s propulsion system. One was detected before launch but was not considered a serious issue, while the other four appeared after the capsule deployed from its United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket.

Anadolu Agency

450 Palestinian schoolchildren killed ahead of high school exams

Ramallah, Palestine - Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip and occupied West Bank since October 7 have killed a total of 450 schoolchildren who would have enrolled in high school this year, the Palestinian Education Ministry said on Saturday.

Ministry spokesman Sadiq al-Khadour told Anadolu that Palestinian high school exams that began on Saturday in the occupied West Bank under challenging circumstances were not being held in the Gaza Strip.

He highlighted that 450 students ‘who were preparing to enrol in high school were killed by the Israeli army, including

430 students in the Gaza Strip and 20 in the West Bank’.

While 50,000 students in the West Bank took the high school exams, 39,000 in the Gaza Strip were unable to do so due to the ongoing Israeli offensive, said al-Khadour.

During a visit to the southern Hebron region to inspect the high school exams being held there, Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Mustafa highlighted the significance of this year’s exams.

He said the exams send ‘a message that education is our primary weapon in confronting the occupation and achieving



independence. Our commitment to education is a lifeline through which we can overcome all challenges’.

“The occupation has prevented 39,000 students from taking their high school exams due to ongoing aggression against the Gaza Strip,” added Mustafa.

As of June 17, the Israeli war has resulted in the complete destruction of 110 schools and universities and partial damage to 321 others.

According to the government media office in Gaza, the war has also claimed the lives of over 10,000 students.

Meanwhile, Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the Palestinian group, Hamas, reiterated on Friday his group’s openness toward any initiative that ends the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip that meets the demands of the Palestinian resistance.

Haniyeh made the statement in a seminar in Beirut that discussed scenarios of the Israeli onslaught against Gaza.

The Hamas leader said the group is open to deal with ‘any document or initiative that ensures the foundations of the resistance’s position in the ceasefire negotiations’.

Anadolu Agency

INDIA

E-medical visa for Bangladesh nationals

India and Bangladesh have also decided to start further talks for renewal of the Ganga River treaty

New Delhi, India - India will start an e-medical visa facility for Bangladesh nationals coming to India for medical treatment, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday after the meeting between the two delegations here in the national capital on Saturday.

India will also open a new consulate in Rangpur, Bangladesh to facilitate services for people in the north-west region of the country. The two prime ministers addressed the media after meeting at Hyderabad House on Saturday.

Modi emphasised the two leaders have met several times in last one year, adding that this visit is special because PM Sheikh Hasina is India's first state guest in the third tenure of the NDA government.

"In the last one year, we have met 10 times, but today's meeting is special because PM Hasina is the first state guest of our third government. Bangladesh is crucial for our Neighbourhood First policy, Act East Policy, Vision SAGAR, and Indo-Pacific vision. We have completed several developmental programmes together in the last year," Modi said at the press



Prime Minister Narendra Modi holds a bilateral meeting with Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina, at Hyderabad House, in New Delhi on Saturday (ANI)

statement.

"India will start e-medical visas for Bangladesh nationals coming to India for medical treatment. India has decided to

open a new Assistant High Commission in Rangpur to benefit the people in the northwest part of Bangladesh," he further said.

Modi further said that India and Bangladesh have started trading in Indian Rupees. He also highlighted the electricity export from Nepal to Bangladesh using

the Indian grid.

He added the two countries have decided to start talks at the technical level for the renewal of the Ganga River treaty. A tech-

nical team will also travel to Bangladesh to review the protection and management of the Teesta River in Bangladesh.

"The sixth rail link between India and Bangladesh has started between Jakhoda and Agartala has started. Cargo services have been started for our north-eastern states with the

in new sectors, adding that the agreements on green partnership, digital partnership, blue economy, and space will benefit the youths of both countries.

Emphasising the focus on 'Connectivity, Commerce, Collaboration', he said the two sides are ready to initiate talks on CEPA to bolster economic ties

India will also open a new consulate in Rangpur, Bangladesh to facilitate services for people in north-west region of the country

Khulna-Mongla Port... Trade in Indian Rupees has started between the two countries. The world's longest river cruise on the Ganges River between India and Bangladesh has been successfully completed," Modi said. He added: "The first cross-border friendship pipeline between India and Bangladesh has been completed. The electricity export from Nepal to Bangladesh using the Indian grid has become an example of regional cooperation."

Modi further said that the two nations have developed a futuristic vision for cooperation

between the two countries.

He said the Bharat-Bangladesh Maitri Satellite will give new heights to India-Bangladesh relationship.

"Bharat-Bangladesh Maitri Satellite will give new heights to our relationship. Connectivity, Commerce, and Collaboration have been our focus. In the last 10 years, we have restored the connectivity that existed before 1965. We will now focus on digital and energy connectivity even more. This will speed up the economies of both countries," the PM said.

ANI

Delhi water crisis: Long queues await tankers across capital city

New Delhi, India - Long lines of people were seen queuing up on Saturday to fetch water from tankers across parts of the national capital, as the city continued to sizzle in the summer heat.

Morning visuals showed people from Chilla Gaon of Mayur Vihar area, Sanjay Colony, Okhla area, and Geeta Colony area standing in queues, holding onto cans and buckets and crowding around water tankers amid water shortage in the national capital this summer. Amid soaring temperatures, these scenes have become a daily occurrence in the national capital in many areas since the start of the summer season this year.

Meanwhile, amid the political tug-of-war on the water crisis, Delhi's Water Minister Atishi sat on an indefinite hunger strike on Friday, alleging that the Haryana government is not releasing Delhi's share of



People gather near a water tanker in the national capital, at Sanjay Colony, Okhla, in New Delhi on Saturday (ANI)

water. She was accompanied by Aam Aadmi Party leader Sanjay Singh and other members of the party at Bhogal, near Jangpura where she sat on the hunger strike.

She paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat before heading to Bhogal.

Meanwhile, Delhi CM Arvind

Kejriwal's wife Sunita Kejriwal read a message from the chief minister, who is under judicial custody and said Kejriwal is hurt to see Delhi's public suffering from water scarcity.

Sunita Kejriwal stated: "Kejriwal says that when I see on TV, the way Delhi people are suffering due to water scarcity, it

hurts me. I hope Atishi's 'tapasya' will succeed and residents of Delhi will get relief. I wish all the best to Atishi, may God protect her."

However, the Bharatiya Janata Party has continued to attack the Delhi government over the water crisis.

ANI

Kallakurichi hooch tragedy toll rises to 53, seven arrested

Kallakurichi, India - The death toll in the Kallakurichi hooch tragedy has risen from 50 to 53, officials said on Saturday.

Kallakurichi District Collector M S Prasanth said that out of the total 193 patients, who consumed illicit liquor, 140 are currently safe.

"193 people who have consumed illicit liquor have come to the hospital. A few of them are on ventilators. Right now, 53 people have passed away," he said.

"So far, seven people have been arrested in the case. The case has been given to the CBI CID branch of Tamil Nadu Police. The patients are being given best treatment. Special doctors were mobilised in the initial stage. About 56 doctors were brought in from different medical colleges. Many patients who had respiratory problems, have recovered too," the Kallakurichi District Collector said.

Meanwhile, in the wake of



the deaths in Kallakurichi in Tamil Nadu, 250 litres of illicit liquor were seized and disposed off in the state's Tiruchirappalli district.

The action was taken by Tiruchirappalli District Collector Pradeep Kumar and Superintendent of Police Varun Kumar, based on intelligence input on Friday night, police said.

The district Collector Pradeep Kumar spoke with locals and made them aware of

the harmful effects of illicit liquor. He also made them take an oath that they would not consume illicit liquor.

Addressing a session in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, Chief Minister M K Stalin said the state government will take care of the entire education and hostel expenses of children who have lost either one or both of their parents in the Kallakurichi tragedy.

ANI

Telecom at Centre's control at emergencies

New Delhi, India - The central government will be able to take control of any telecommunications services or networks in times of emergency after the implementation of the Telecommunications Act 2023, which will be effective on June 26.

The Centre, though partially, notified the Telecommunications Act on Friday to be effective from June 26, and provisions including sections 1, 2, 10, and 30 will be in place.

"The Central government hereby appoints the 26th day of June 2024, as the date on which the provisions of sections 1, 2, 10 to

30, 42 to 44, 46, 47, 50 to 58, 61 and 62 of the said Act shall come into force," the Gazette notification said.

According to the notification, the government may take control of the telecom services on the grounds of security, public order, or prevention of offences. Section 20, which will be effective on June 26 states: "On the occurrence of any public emergency, including disaster management, or in the interest of public safety, the Central Government can take temporary possession of any telecommunication service."

ANI

Paper leak row: 7-member committee to inquire

New Delhi, India - Amid the ongoing crisis around paper leak allegations, the Ministry of Education on Saturday said it has constituted a high-level committee of experts to make recommendations on reform in the mechanism of the examination process, improvement in data security protocols and functioning of National Testing Agency (NTA).

The 7-member committee, led by ISRO Former Chairman Dr K Radhakrishnan, will submit its report to the ministry in the next two months. The NTA is facing criticism over alleged irregularities in this year's National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate) exams and NET exam. This resulted in several protests across the country with protestors and political parties demanding to disband the



Cops detain Congress workers during a protest over NEET-UG and UGC-NET issue in Ahmedabad on Friday (ANI)

NTA.

"In order to ensure transparent, smooth and fair conduct of examinations through National Testing Agency (NTA), Depart-

ment of Higher Education, Ministry of Education constituted a High-Level Committee of Experts to make recommendations on reform in mechanism of ex-

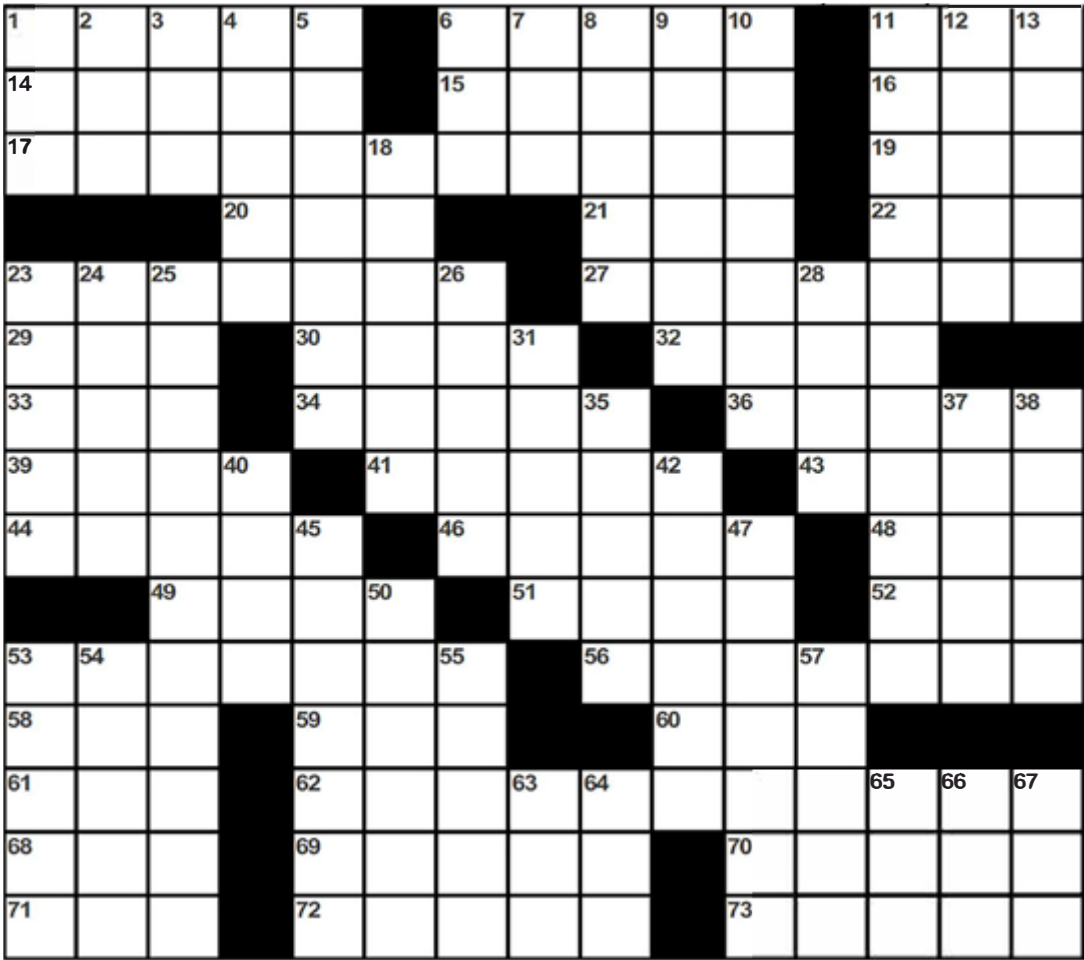
amination process improvement in data security protocols and structure and functioning of National Testing Agency," the ministry said.

The statement from the ministry comes days after Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan announced on Thursday that the government will set up a high-level committee to look into the functioning of the National Testing Agency and recommend reforms.

Dr Randeep Guleria, Former Director of AIIMS Delhi; Prof. B J Rao, Vice Chancellor, Central University of Hyderabad; Prof. Ramamurthy K, Professor Emeritus, Department of Civil Engineering, IIT Madras; Pankaj Bansal, Co-Founder, People Strong and Board Member - Karmayogi Bharat; Prof. Aditya Mittal, Dean Student Affairs, IIT Delhi; Govind Jaiswal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education (Member Secretary) are also members of this committee.

ANI

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Montezuma, e.g.
- 6) Persian language
- 11) "Blue-eyed" one in "The Tempest"
- 14) Nocturnal pest
- 15) Crosswise, nautically
- 16) Eggs, to Nero
- 17) Quietly serene
- 19) OPEN_9 (store sign)
- 20) Ors.' group
- 21) Sound like a dove
- 22) TV message from MADD, e.g.
- 23) Cause for a team celebration
- 27) Bullfight participants
- 29) Kind of maniac
- 30) It's pumped at a gym
- 32) Defense group founded in 1949
- 33) Sick
- 34) Orange and grape
- 36) Northern Scandinavians
- 39) Silent acceptances
- 41) Big name in grills
- 43) Frog "step"
- 44) They cover a couple of feet
- 46) Opera house boxes
- 48) Bread for a ham sandwich
- 49) Is 33-Across

DOWN

- 1) Circle segment
- 2) Facility with wild animals
- 3) Way ofLao-Tze
- 4) Conspicuous recognition
- 5) Car-polishing cloth
- 6) Current "in" thing
- 7) Major broadcaster
- 8) Respond to a provocation
- 9) Oater brawl site
- 10) Unethical
- 11) In-demand real estate listing
- 12) Dispatch boat
- 13) Splashy parties
- 18) Not wide at all
- 23) Bonanza sources
- 24) Dome-shaped dwelling
- 25) Certain sales activity
- 26) Alpine falsetto
- 28) And others, for short
- 31) Wealthy or prominent person
- 35) American lilies
- 37) Name on a check
- 38) Not be frugal
- 40) Hop-jump bridge
- 42) Alternative to a purchase
- 45) Boatyard feature
- 47) Not fooling
- 50) Attack by plane
- 53) Historic harbor
- 54) Arm-stiffening bones
- 55) Assad's country
- 57) Ascended
- 63) Robinson or Doubtfire in films
- 64) Wager
- 65) Failure of a firecracker
- 66) Tiny fraction of a joule
- 67) Textile colorer

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You can certainly use your charm to get what you want, but what about what the other person wants? If you have to work some kind of magic to get them where you want them, perhaps you should also take into account where they truly want to be. Putting your self-interest aside will allow you to get a clearer idea of the bigger picture, and it'll help you to do the right thing, which feels best in the end.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Your goals and your abilities might not match up today, but you shouldn't let that frustrate you. It's good enough that you want to help lots of different people, and you will definitely get points for at least trying. However, a mixture of poor scheduling, absentminded key players, and plain old bad luck will be formidable obstacles that you won't be able to overcome. It's wisest just to wait a while until you have the tools you need or your schedule is less insane.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

It's all about using your imagination today. Take the time to imagine something you aren't happy with in a new and improved form, and you'll take the first step toward making it better. You need to visualize before you can take action, and your creativity will help you draw a road map to your destination. Share your plan with others who are already there. They will have some important feedback that can help you create a more successful strategy.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. In July 2021, UNESCO designated four South Korean what as a world natural heritage site?
A. Mediaeval temples
B. Tidal mudflats
C. Prehistoric settlement sites
D. Lakes

02. What is the name of a calculating machine that originally consisted of beans or stones moved in grooves in sand or on tablets of wood, stone, or metal?
A. Abacus
B. Slide rule
C. Chisanbop
D. Difference engine

03.What award is the equivalent of the Oscars for British industries involved in film, television, video games and forms of animation?
A. Emmys
B. BAFTAs
C. Tonys
D. Grammys

Answers: 1.B 2.A 3.B



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

To make money, you have to spend money. If you want to get in the game, you must come up with the admission fee. At least this money will be helping you toward a greater goal. Buy the things you need to get what you want or send you where you want to go. Your purchases will be noted, and your investments will have far-reaching effects on those around you. Be optimistic, but don't throw common sense out the window.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

A lot of people are clamoring for the spotlight now, and you have a real opportunity to stand center stage. Don't assume that a quiet, conservative approach will get less attention than a loud, outrageous approach. Sometimes, it's the quietest music that moves us the most. Just go with the strategy that feels right for you. Don't let other people intimidate you into trying something you aren't totally comfortable with.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Why does it seem so much easier for you to believe that something bad can happen and so much more difficult to trust in your good fortune? That's the big question you're facing right now. You've got great potential, but in order to really see it through, you need to believe not only that you have it, but that the Universe needs to see you shine. Don't just question your surroundings, question yourself!



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Fun is definitely in the stars, and while others may be in a mellower mode, you're raring to go. Find a friend or two who can keep up with you, and choose something great to do. A daytime adventure might be about your speed, or the hustle and bustle of shopping for a new outfit, or a special lunch at an interesting restaurant. Start a new tradition and enjoy every minute. These are the days that memories are made of.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Working with others will be very interesting and stimulating for you today, mostly because there will be a lot of friendly conflict throughout the day. The minds of the people in your group are working in very different ways. And while you might be a bit more emotional, other people will provide more impersonal, objective points of view. And both mindsets are necessary, just as a body needs both a heart and a brain.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Leave it to you to bring something brainy to the same old equation. At a family gathering, you'll be the one to uncover that one of your relatives had a storied career as a rocket scientist, and you'll while away the hours learning all about a new field. Or you'll be the one to inaugurate a fresh tradition of playing a word game with a big group of friends. And, naturally, you'll be hailed as a genius for living things up.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

If you have too many ambitions, you run the risk of having too many disappointments! Pare down your long list of things to do before a milestone in your life, so you aren't setting yourself up for feelings of inadequacy. Just take each day as it comes. Work on your important goals when you can, but let go of outlandish predictions and unrealistic retirement fantasies. Instead of dreaming about the future, enjoy all the wonderful things that the present has to offer.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

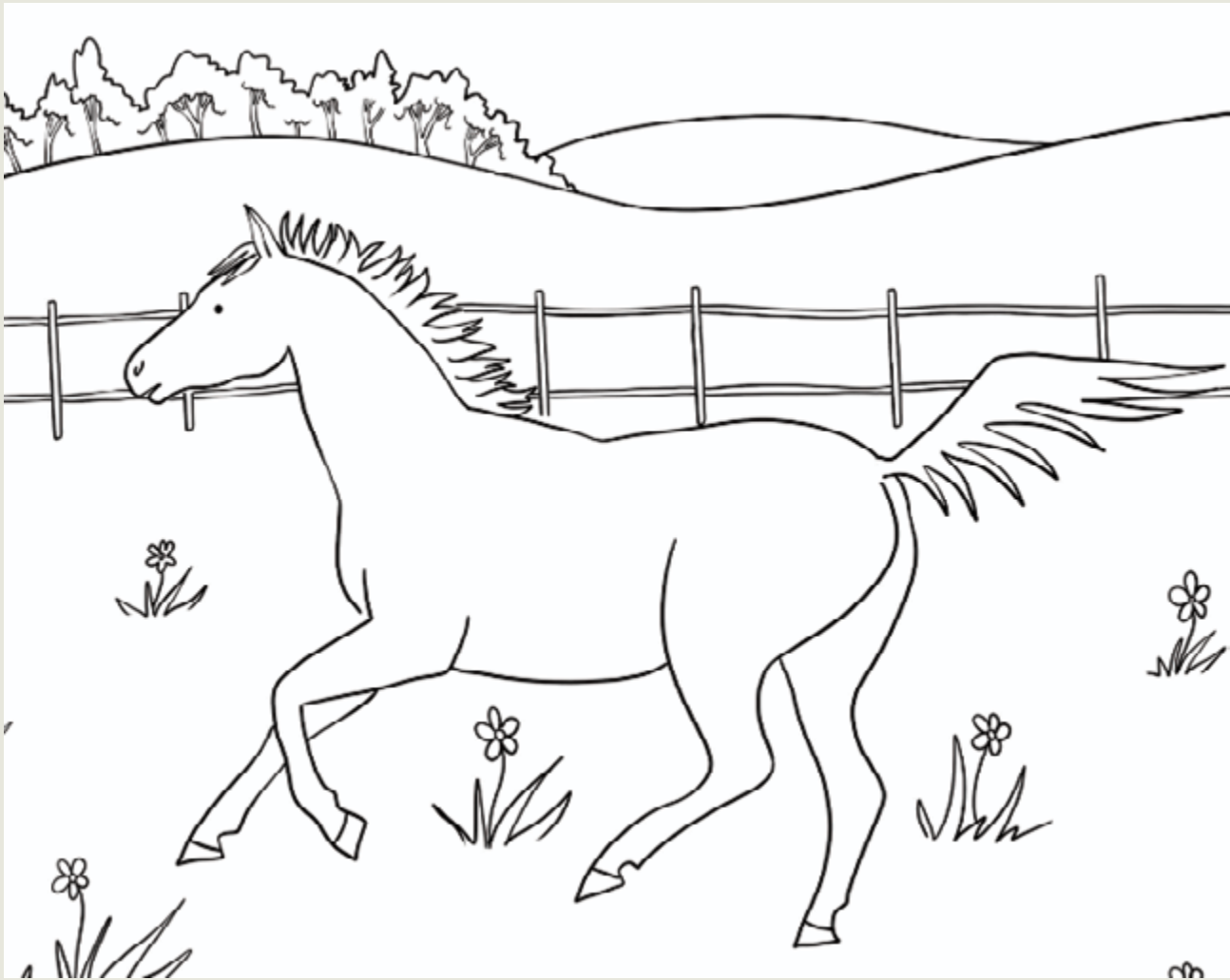
Don't be surprised if an unexpected veil of bashfulness overcomes you today, and don't confuse it with insecurity. You still understand what an amazing person you are, but you just might not be full of the energy required to make your own introductions. Let other people draw you out of your shell today. There is one particular person you'll encounter with a naturally warm personality that will intrigue you. Enjoy their curiosity and let them steer the conversation.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

A partnership could be a little rocky now, and it's coming at a most inconvenient time. Instead of demanding an apology or dwelling on what they owe you, get into the spirit of forgiveness and let it go, if possible. The path that you choose now can definitely be a new, improved one, and you can invite the partner in question to join you so that you both can stop worrying about the current bumps. Move on down the road!

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

O	E	P	D
N	I	Y	G
G	S	I	N
A	Y	L	I

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

Opener's blazing knock helps West Indies thrash US

Bridgetown, Barbados - Shai Hope hit a six-studded 82 not out from 39 deliveries as West Indies revived their Super Eight campaign with a thumping nine-wicket win over co-hosts the United States at the Twenty20 World Cup on Friday.

Needing a win and a big bump in their net run rate after a loss to England in their opening Super Eight clash, West Indies achieved both at Kensington Oval to move into second place in Group 2 behind unbeaten South Africa, their next opponents.

After a brief spell of rain delayed the toss but not the start at a packed stadium, Barbadian off-spinner Roston Chase took 3-19 and pace bowler Andre Russell grabbed 3-31 as the Americans were bowled out for 128.

West Indies overhauled the meagre total in 10.5 overs after Hope smashed eight sixes and four boundaries, ably assisted by Nicholas Pooran who stroked 27 from 12 balls.

"Credit has to be given to the boys, we set out to achieve a goal and we did," said West Indies skipper Rovman Powell, who was already looking forward to the possibility of returning to Bridgetown for the final.

"Kensington brings special memory for us. It's a mecca of cricket in the Caribbean ... hopefully we can be here back on the 29th in a special place to play cricket."



Shai Hope smashed eight sixes and four boundaries in his unbeaten 82 off 39 deliveries

To do it at home is a great feeling, with my parents and my friends watching. This is my favourite place to play cricket. It's our destiny and our goal to win the World Cup.

SHAI HOPE

Andries Gous helped get the Americans off to a lively start with pace bowlers Obed McCoy and Alzarri Joseph conceding 12 and 15 respectively off their opening

overs. Gous was caught by Hope off the same bowler for 29. Left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein exerted more control at the other end with the new ball, conceding only

13 from his first three overs. Chase struck an important blow for his team by bowling the dangerous U.S. skipper Aaron Jones for 11, and at the halfway stage, the Americans were struggling at 69-4.

Hope went instantly on to the attack for West Indies, stroking the ball to all parts of the field to reach his half-century in 28 balls with four sixes and four boundaries as the U.S. fielders chased the ball in vain across the ground.

The Barbadian crowd gave him

a rapturous reception as the teams left the field and Hope was understandably delighted.

"To do it at home is a great feeling, with my parents and my friends watching," he said.

"This is my favourite place to play cricket. It's our destiny and our goal to win the World Cup."

The Americans felt they were 50 runs short in their innings after being put into bat, but Jones was not prepared to concede that their fairytale run at the tournament was over.



Quinton de Kock scored 65 runs off 38 balls for South Africa

South Africa beat England to close in on semifinal spot

Gros Islet, St Lucia - South Africa's Quinton de Kock got a second straight fifty while Anrich Nortje bowled a tight final over to help their side edge England by seven runs on Friday and move closer to a semi-final berth with back-to-back wins in the Super Eight stage.

The victory in Gros Islet moved South Africa to the top of the group with four points from two matches. England, second with two points, can still make it to the semis.

Put in to bat first, openers De Kock (65 off 38) and Reeza Hendricks (19) got South Africa off to a good start, scoring 63 runs in the powerplay as an in-form De Kock reached a half-century in just 22 balls, his second fifty in row.

"I've played a few (Caribbean Premier League) games here," player of the match De Kock said, crediting his league experience for his knowledge of the conditions at

the Daren Sammy Cricket Ground. But South Africa added only 29 runs in the next six overs with both openers falling to Moeen Ali (1-25) and Jofra Archer (3-40), while Adil Rashid (1-20) kept a tight lid on the scoreboard.

However, David Miller (43 off 28) stepped up under pressure to help South Africa get to a competitive 163-6.

As England began their chase, Kagiso Rabada (2-32) dismissed Phil Salt (11) early on before Keshav Maharaj (2-25) got the better of Jonny Bairstow (16) and Jos Buttler (17), leaving the champions looking shaky at 61-4 in the 11th over. But Harry Brook (53 off 37) and Liam Livingstone (33 off 17) stabilised their innings, and with 77 needed from the last six overs, they went for the big hits, scoring 54 runs from the next three overs until Livingstone fell to Rabada.

Chile, Peru play out goalless draw in Copa America opener

Arlington, US - Chile and Peru missed the chance to take a big step toward Copa America quarter-final qualification on Friday night, playing out a dour 0-0 draw in their Group A opener in Arlington, Texas.

The teams, who have each won two Copa America titles, were striving to join Argentina on three points after the defending champions' 2-0 victory over Canada, whose qualification hopes have also been boosted by the draw. The stalemate reflected the struggles of Chile and Peru in the CONMEBOL World Cup Qualifying, where they have jointly managed just four goals

across 12 matches.

Chile's Alexis Sanchez squandered the game's best opportunity in the 16th minute.

The former Inter Milan and Arsenal forward missed a golden opportunity when he received Victor Davila's low cross in the six-yard box, only to send his effort soaring over the crossbar.

"They started aggressively. I had two chances and this is the Copa America and you have to make them," Sanchez said.

"We were imprecise in our passes, we played only one game before coming here."

Chile showed more attacking flair but failed to execute the cru-



Peru's Piero Quispe (L) and Chile's Victor Dávila battle for the ball during their Copa America match on Friday

They started aggressively. I had two chances and this is the Copa America and you have to make them.

ALEXIS SANCHEZ

cial final pass in a first half marred by injuries, with Peru's Luis Advincola subbed off in the 35th minute and Chilean midfielder Diego Valdes being replaced at half-time.

Peru's Miguel Araujo nearly

broke the deadlock in the 43rd minute, forcing Chile's goalkeeper Claudio Bravo into an acrobatic save with a well-connected header from Sergio Pena's free kick.

Despite Peru's striker Gianluca Lapadula creating the most dangerous moments of the second half, he failed to seriously challenge Bravo.

His most promising chance came in the 57th minute, when a deflection fell to him, but his slip resulted in a weak shot easily saved by Bravo.

In the 79th minute, his volley from Pena's corner forced Bravo into another save.

Brazil prodigy Endrick ready to make waves at Copa America

Los Angeles, United States - Brazil's teenage prodigy Endrick will be hoping to make his first appearance for the national team at a major tournament when his country take on Costa Rica in their Copa America opener on Monday.

The 17-year-old striker, who joined Real Madrid from Palmeiras, knows he has a long way to go to break into the Brazilian starting line-up in a squad that includes Raphinha, Vinicius Jr and Rodrygo in attack.

"Only God knows (when I will start). I am very grateful to have Abel (Ferreira) as a coach, he knew when to play me. Everything is up to God and Professor Dorival Jr. He is a spectacular coach. He is doing what is best for the Brazilian team," Endrick told a press conference on Friday.

Endrick, who in March became the youngest player to score in an international match at Wembley when he gave Brazil



Endrick

a 1-0 win over England, made his mark in the other warm-up fixtures ahead of Copa America with a goal in a 3-2 victory over Mexico, having also scored against Spain.

The ruthless competitor added that, despite his youth, there was no pressure on him on

the pitch because of his confidence against the opponents.

"I have always been very precocious in my life and since I became a professional I have played against opponents who have always teased me, insulted me, talked about my family, my girlfriend," he said.

Sinner edges Struff to reach Halle Open semis

Halle, Germany - World number one Jannik Sinner reached the Halle Open semi-finals on Friday after a battling to a 6-2 6-7(1) 7-6(3) win over German Jan-Lennard Struff.

The 34-year-old Struff, who upset sixth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas in the last 16, challenged the Italian as he hit 18 aces and saved 16 of 18 break points in the two-and-a-half-hour contest.

"It was a very tough match," Sinner said after his third consecutive three-set win. "I had chances in the second set and chances in the third, but I couldn't take them."

"I just tried to accept these kind of challenges. It was very tough mentally. I played a lot yesterday and today. Two hours on grass is a long time. I'll try to recover for tomorrow. Hopefully I'll show some good tennis."

Sinner, playing his first tournament atop the ATP world rankings, will face China's 42nd-ranked Zhang Zhizhen who edged Christopher Eubanks



Jannik Sinner

of the United States 6-4 4-6 7-5.

German Alexander Zverev also reached the semis as he rallied after dropping a first-set tiebreak to Frenchman Arthur Fils to prevail 6-7(5) 6-3 6-4.

The world number four will face Polish fifth seed Hubert Hurkacz, who defeated American Marcos Giron 7-6(5) 6-4.

Paul to meet Korda

No. 5 seed Tommy Paul and Sebastian Korda set up an all-American semifinal at the cinch Championships by winning their respective matches Friday in London. Paul got past Great Britain's Jack Draper 6-3, 5-7, 6-4 at the Queen's Club. Draper upset top seed Carlos Alcaraz of Spain in the Round of 16, but Paul did him in Friday by amassing 30 winners to 13 unforced errors.

Korda rallied past Australian qualifier Rinky Hijikata 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-4. Korda fired six aces, saved 4 of 6 break points he faced and capitalized on 4 of 7 break-point opportunities.

SAFETY FIRST



Antoine Griezmann of France misses an opportunity to score against the Netherlands

Bigwigs Netherlands and France settle for stalemate

Leipzig, Germany - France and the Netherlands played it safe in a 0-0 draw that failed to explode into life in Group D at Euro 2024 on Friday, leaving both sides within sight of a place in the last 16 and eliminating Poland.

With France captain Kylian Mbappe remaining on the bench

after suffering a broken nose in their opener, the game sparked only in fits and starts, without ever threatening to turn into a classic.

Both sides squandered chances and had periods of control, but neither could find a breakthrough and eased off the

throttle in the second half, seemingly content to claim a point.

The one moment of drama after the break came when Dutchman Xavi Simons had the ball in the net but it was disallowed because Denzel Dumfries, standing offside next to keeper Mike Maignan, was penalised with the decision confirmed by VAR after a lengthy review.

The decision infuriated the Dutch fans crammed behind that goal and a stream of objects

Both sides squandered chances and had periods of control, but neither could find a breakthrough and eased off the throttle in the second half, seemingly content to claim a point

were hurled onto the pitch.

The result leaves the group open, although with four points in the bag both France and the Netherlands will think they have most likely done enough to reach the last 16.

France next face Poland, who have no points and are the first

tricolore mask seen as a sure sign he was set for inclusion.

It would have come as some relief therefore to Koeman when the team sheets dropped and Mbappe, who had four goals in his previous two games against the Dutch, was left on the bench.

France manager Didier Deschamps decided not to risk his prized asset but his side, who have scored one goal in their opening two games, clearly missed their captain.



Xavi Simons of the Netherlands is disappointed after his goal against France was ruled out for offside

Koeman: Referee made mistake with disallowed goal

Leipzig, Germany - Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman said the referee made a mistake in ruling out a goal for his side against France at the European Championship on Friday but added that both sides were happy with a point in their 0-0 Group D draw.

A second half strike from Xavi Simons was chalked off because Denzel Dumfries, standing offside next to goalkeeper Mike Maignan, was penalised with the decision eventually confirmed by VAR after a lengthy delay.

But Koeman said he has looked at images of the incident afterwards and strongly disagreed with English referee Anthony Taylor.

"The position of Dumfries is offside, that's true. But he isn't disturbing the goalkeeper. And when that does not happen then it's a legal goal in my opinion,"

the Dutch coach told a post-match press conference.

"Did they need five minutes to check it because it's so difficult? I don't understand this. He's not disturbing the goalkeeper," added Koeman.

But the goalless stalemate was a satisfactory outcome for both sides, he said.

The game fizzled out into a tepid ending, ensuring the two sides reached four points and will almost surely go through to the knockout stage.

"Although I think that the goal should have stood, my takeaway from this is it is a fair result.

"I can accept this, although there were times during the game where we weren't up to scratch and that's probably due to the fact that we were up against a great opponent in France."

'We weren't as efficient as I would have liked'

Leipzig, Germany - France could not score against the Netherlands and gain the win on Friday which would have secured top spot in Group D of Euro 2024 and while manager Didier Deschamps would have preferred goals, he was glad his side had opportunities to score.

A 0-0 draw leaves the group wide open, as neither side progressed to the last 16, but the France manager was still happy with his side's performance.

"They (the Dutch) were a little more conservative than I imagined, but my only regret is that we didn't have enough efficiency," Deschamps told reporters. "We did a lot of things but unfortunately we didn't manage to find the back of the net.



France manager Didier Deschamps (L) with his Netherlands counterpart Ronald Koeman

We did a lot of things but unfortunately we didn't manage to find the back of the net.

DIDIER DESCHAMPS

And if we hadn't found the back of the net, we weren't going to leave with the three points.

"Again, a high-intensity game, and we wanted to try to repeat the last performance (a 1-0 win over Austria), despite the fact that we didn't have a lot of recovery (time). So I'm happy with what my guys did this time despite the fact that we weren't as efficient as I would have liked."

Yaremchuk winner gives Ukraine lifeline

Duesseldorf, Germany - Ukraine roused themselves in the nick of time to salvage their Euro 2024 hopes as substitute Roman Yaremchuk's late strike saw them hit back after falling a goal behind to beat Slovakia 2-1 in a lively Group E clash on Friday.

Trailing at halftime to an early header by Ivan Schranz, Ukraine's hopes of reaching the knockout stage were in peril, but they stormed back in front of their joyous fans.

Slovakia, who produced the shock of the tournament so far to beat Belgium in their opener, would have sealed a last-16 berth with a win but sat back after a dream start and were punished.

Man of the match Mykola Shaparenko equalised in the 54th minute with a close-range finish before his pass sent Yaremchuk clear to prod the winner and spark ecstatic celebrations from the ranks of yellow and blue inside the Duesseldorf



Ukraine's Roman Yaremchuk scores against Slovakia

Stadium.

The win was celebrated in Kyiv too, not least by Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelenskiy, who praised the team in his

nightly video address in the war-torn country.

"Today we are grateful to our national team. Every time our boys press, keep trying and strive



Robert Lewandowski

Disappointing return to Germany for Lewandowski

Hamburg, Germany - Given Germany is where Robert Lewandowski forged his fearsome reputation, Euro 2024 would have been a fitting arena for the Polish poacher to add significant gloss to an illustrious career.

The 35-year-old striker, however, has been left with only one more match at the tournament after Poland were eliminated on Friday.

It has been a horror return to previously happy hunting grounds for Lewandowski, who spent most of his career in Germany, rattling in goals and breaking records.

A thigh injury sustained Poland's last warm-up match meant he was forced to sit out their opening Group D clash against the Netherlands and he came on as a second-half substitute against Austria on Friday - too late to make any impact. Successive defeats condemned Poland to last place in the group, with no chance of moving into contention for one of the four best third-placed finishers in the last-16.

Dortmund was one of Lewandowski's favourite places during his spectacular Bundesliga career, which included finishing as the German league's top scorer five times. His overall tally of 312 goals in 384 Bundesliga outings is bettered only by Gerd Mueller.

Four seasons at Borussia Dortmund, who signed him from Lech Poznan in 2010, were followed by eight years of brilliance at Bayern Munich, including breaking Mueller's 49-year-old best single-season record of 40 league goals by hitting 41 across a remarkable 2020-21 campaign.

Shevchenko, and with the boys. I was truly hoping for a good outcome for Ukraine, for our people, to lift everyone up.

"On our road to victory, every victory is needed. And we got just such a result from our national team today."

The result moved Ukraine level on three points with Slovakia and Romania, who face Belgium on Saturday.

"Today we conceded a goal and reacted very well," former Ukraine striker Rebrov, who made five changes to the side that started the 3-0 drubbing by Romania, said.

"I can't say this was a different team but it was a different spirit. The spirit of Ukraine. Today this was a very important win for Ukraine, for our country."

Slovakia will be kicking themselves at failing to take at least a point which would have at least guaranteed them matching their journey to the last-16 in 2016.

'WE KNOW HOW TO COME BACK'

Al Harthy's hopeful of a positive response after Le Mans 24hrs challenge ends with retirement

Muscat - Sensational driving, an excellent strategy and great pace in both dry and wet conditions weren't enough for Ahmad al Harthy, Maxime Martin and Valentino Rossi to realise their dream of LMGT3 victory at the 24 Hours of Le Mans – a luckless excursion in the wet leading to retirement on Sunday.

As the twice-round-the-clock race at the Circuit de la Sarthe in France neared the end of its ninth hour, at around 00.45hrs on Sunday morning, Omani racer Al Harthy – producing an impressive performance on slick Goodyear tyres on a wet track – unfortunately came to grief at the Dunlop Chicane.

Losing grip on a tricky wet patch, the No.46 BMW M4 pitched off the circuit and into the gravel, the front-left of the car making contact with the barriers on the outside. With the car beached in the gravel trap, retirement was all-but instantaneous as a dejected Al Harthy radioed to the team.

"Unfortunately, after so many amazing hours of racing, into the



Ahmad al Harthy (L) with Valentino Rossi (2L) and Maxime Martin

night we were in a fantastic position and looked like we were really in the hunt for a strong finish and even in the fight for the top podium place in LMGT3.

"The decision we made was to continue on slicks when the

rain was there, thinking the weather would get better, but it was very tough at that point and there was a wet patch which caused the car to turn around. That ended our race, we couldn't continue from there," said Al

Harthy. "The support, during and after the incident, from the team and my teammates was amazing. Everyone was really happy with our pace, all three drivers, and this is what makes our achievements

even more special when we get them – this is racing.

"There have to be highs and lows, and we know how to come back from the lows to get the highs. I'm looking forward to the next event and I'm so thankful for

all the support I have had from Oman and here in France.

"Hopefully we can continue in a positive manner."

The disappointment for Al Harthy and team-mates Martin and Rossi was heightened as the

LMGT3 order. At the end of the opening hour he held eighth place and as the race entered hour three the squad held fifth, with Al Harthy at the wheel for his first race miles of the event.

The Omani, supported by key partners QQ, Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Omantel and BMW Oman, soon broke into the LMGT3 podium placings and at the end of hour three Al Harthy was second in class and driving faultlessly. Midway through the fourth hour he took the lead of LMGT3 and following a Full Course yellow period the Omani continued to head the way.

Next it was the turn of MotoGP legend Rossi to get behind the wheel of the BMW for the first time in the race and he maintained the class lead as evening became night with a superb drive, much to the delight of the hundreds of thousands of spectators.

Al Harthy was back in the car in hour eight and under Safety Car conditions he held second position.

Everyone was really happy with our pace, all three drivers, and this is what makes our achievements even more special when we get them – this is racing

AHMAD AL HARTHY

performance of all three Team WRT drivers had been exceptional from the moment the lights went out at 16.00 local time on Saturday, 15th June, in round four of the FIA World Endurance Championship.

Martin, who had to settle for 12th fastest in qualifying after being baulked on his best lap by one the Hypercar class entries, began the race in the No.46 and maintained position initially before starting to move up the

Lobjanidze misses late chance as Georgia split points with Czech

Hamburg, Germany - European Championship newcomers Georgia took their first point of the tournament in a 1-1 draw with the Czech Republic on Saturday that left both teams probably needing to win their final Group F game to stand any chance of advancing.

Georges Mikautadze converted a stoppage-time penalty at the end of the first half to put Georgia ahead but Patrik Schick



Czech Republic's Patrik Schick (L) celebrates his goal with teammates

equalised in the 59th minute when the ball rebounded off the far post and on to his chest from Ondrej Lingr's glancing header from a corner. Substitute Saba Lobjanidze wasted a golden chance for Georgia with the final kick of the game

Both the Czechs and Georgia lost their opening games and, with one point each, will be under immense pressure to get a result in their last group games.

McLaren's Norris snatches pole in Spanish GP

Barcelona, Spain - Lando Norris put McLaren on pole position for the Spanish Grand Prix on Saturday with Red Bull's triple Formula One world champion Max Verstappen alongside on the front row.

Verstappen had secured provisional pole with a lap that looked hard to beat but Norris, whose team had a difficult start to the day when their hospitality unit caught fire, seized the top slot with his final effort.

Mercedes's Lewis Hamilton was third fastest and team mate George Russell fourth. The Fer-



Lando Norris

rari pair of Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz filled the third row.

Fire in paddock

A McLaren employee was taken

to hospital after a fire forced the Formula One team to evacuate their paddock headquarters before final practice and qualifying at the Spanish Grand Prix on Saturday.

The team said the Circuit de Catalunya emergency services and local fire brigade were on the scene within minutes of the alarm and the fire in the hospital-ity hub was quickly extinguished.

"One McLaren team member has been taken to hospital as a precaution, and all McLaren personnel and guests are accounted for," McLaren added.

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FUTURISTIC DESIGN

Mysterious monoliths

ANOTHER ‘MYSTERIOUS’ MONOLITH HAS BEEN SPOTTED, THIS TIME AT A LAS VEGAS HIKING TRAIL IN NEVADA, ACCORDING TO THE LAS VEGAS METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT (LVMPD)

“We see a lot of weird things when people go hiking like not being prepared for the weather, not bringing enough water ... but check this out,” the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD) wrote in a Facebook post on Tuesday showing images of a mirrored structure. “How did it get up there!”

The monolith was found over the weekend near Gass Peak north of Las Vegas, it added. The LVMPD did not immediately respond to CNN’s request for comment.

The pillar is reminiscent to ones popping up all over the world shortly after a 10-foot silver monolith was discovered in late 2020 by a helicopter crew flying over an Utah desert. Similar structures appeared on a California mountaintop, a forest in Romania, and the Isle of Wight off England’s south coast, to name a few.

Sightings have largely slowed down since 2021, but this March, local builder Craig Muir in Powys County, Wales stumbled on one during a walk up a hill. He told the BBC that it seemed to be carefully planted.

“There were no obvious tracks around it and one would think that something like that would cause a lot of mess,” he said. As for the one found on the Las Vegas hiking trail, social media users claimed the monolith isn’t actually new.

“Anyone who lives on the west side sees this weekly,” read one comment under the LVMPD’s Facebook post. “Yes! Been seeing this for years,” wrote another in a reply, amid posts joking about aliens, pranks and that it could be a portal to other dimensions.

“Obelisks have unknown power and purpose. I think it’s man-made but aliens are still among us. Keep your eyes open and cameras ready,” wrote one user.

Others assumed it was a work of art, something that’s been speculated about previous monoliths.

Gallerist David Zwirner in 2020 made the argument that the monolith in Utah was the work of the late minimalist sculptor John McCracken, and that it was somehow installed after his death in 2011. He later retracted the theory saying, “When you look closely at the photos ... you will see rivets and screws that are not consistent with how John wanted his work to be constructed. He was a perfectionist.”

Meanwhile, designer Tom Dunford claimed to the BBC in December 2020 that he erected the monolith on the Isle of Wight, “purely for fun.”

“When I saw the first one pop up (in Utah) I thought it was brilliant, the second one popped up and I had a text from a friend which said ‘you’re the man that can do this on the island,’” he told the BBC.

“I’m absolutely fascinated in futuristic design, science and space. The actual idea sparked when I was walking back to the office and we had an old sheet of mirrored perspex.”

In Nevada, Las Vegas police used the opportunity to remind hikers heading out on the trails to be safe out there — bring plenty of food and water, a first aid kit, a light source, check the weather and tell people where you intend to go and when you expect to return.

The LVMPD said it would leave internet sleuths to get “to work on this mystery.” (Courtesy: cnn.com)



UTAH MYSTERY DISAPPEARS

A tall, silver, shining metal monolith discovered in the desert in southeastern Utah — which prompted theories of alien placement and drew determined hikers to its secret location — has now disappeared, the state’s Bureau of Land Management said Saturday.

The monolith was removed by an ‘unknown party’ sometime Friday night, the agency said in a Facebook post.

“We have received credible reports that the illegally installed structure, referred to as the ‘monolith,’ has been removed from BLM public lands,” he post said.

“The BLM did not remove the structure, which is considered private property. We’ve got to go look at it!”

The monolith was first discovered on November 18, 2020, by officers from the Utah Department of Public Safety’s Aero Bureau.

They were flying by helicopter, helping the Division of Wildlife Resources count bighorn sheep in southeastern Utah, when they spotted something that seemed right out of ‘2001: A Space Odyssey.’

“One of the biologists ... spotted it, and we just happened to fly directly over the top of it,” pilot Bret Hutchings told CNN affiliate KSL. “He was like, ‘Whoa, whoa, whoa, turn around, turn around!’ And I was like, ‘What?’ And he’s like, ‘There’s this thing back there — we’ve got to go look at it!’”

And there it was — in the middle of the red rock was a shiny, silver metal monolith sticking out of the ground. Hutchings guessed it was “between 10 and 12 feet high.” It didn’t look like it was randomly dropped to the ground, he told KSL, but rather it looked like it had been planted.

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Folding Time I (2024)

New York-based artist, Maria Kreyn's works are now on view in the exhibition 'Chronos' at St George's Anglican Church in Venice.

Artist Maria Kreyn dwells in the eye of the storm. For the past year, she's spent her days painting monumental seascapes in her Williamsburg, Brooklyn, studio. The subject matter is an unlikely choice for a contemporary artist, but Kreyn's aqueous scenes are mesmerising.

"This series of work is new for me. I've been developing the works over the last couple of years somewhat in secret," said Kreyn during a visit to her studio. Crashing waves, prismatic skies, and crepuscular rays of light all build into visual crescendos, creating scenes reminiscent of the works of the great Romantic painters J M W Turner and Caspar David Friedrich.

But these swirling tempests are also unequivocally contemporary. Geometric, almost spiritualist forms, refract throughout the compositions, as if, for a moment, the divine order of the universe were revealed.

Right now, 10 of these paintings are on view in 'Chronos' at an exhibition at the St George's Anglican Church in Venice, coinciding with the 60th Venice Biennale (through June 22). The exhibition is organised by the Ministry of Nomads Art Foundation led by dealer Maria Vega, with whom Kreyn has previously collaborated.

It's a lush show and follows up to two solo exhibitions last fall - 'Untune a String' at the Hole in New York, her first showing with the gallery, as well as 'Lensing a Storm' with the Ministry of Nomads in London.

Kreyn made these works with Venice in mind. "Maria Vega asked me 'What's your next dream?' And I looked at her honestly and said 'Venice.' I love the interface of the city with the water and the dialogue with the weather, the climate, and the way the world is changing. There's no other place like it," she said.

Personal path

'Chronos' is a significant moment for the New York painter, whose career has followed an unorthodox and highly personal path. Born in Russia in 1987, Kreyn came to the U S with her parents and sister as a child. A bit of a polymath, Kreyn studied mathematics and philosophy at the University of Chicago, and ultimately taught herself to paint, learning from studying the works of artists like El Greco and Diego Velazquez. Throughout her twenties, Kreyn, slowly but surely, began building her painting career through word-of-mouth commissions, outside of the gallery model.

"I spent 10 years painting the figure in a way that may have appeared more academic than it was. The underpinnings of the work may seem classical because I've been looking at Old Master paintings since



Past is Prologue (2024)

I was a child. I became obsessed with figuring out how to create deep atmospheric space," she explained.

Kreyn has often skirted the institutional art world, rarely showing with galleries. Instead, she has found opportunity and inspiration at unlikely intersections. This series of storms emerged after the artist was commissioned by none other than Andrew Lloyd Webber to complete an eight-painting series based on William Shakespeare's works, called the Shakespeare Cycle.

Shakespeare Cycle

"The painting for 'The Tempest' was the last and became the most abstract. With my figurative work, I'd been trying to touch the complexity of emotion and human experience and the range of light and darkness," she explained. "After making this work I thought: what happens if I just zoom out from the figure to the point where you don't even see the figure? Where maybe a human presence is implied, but I can play around with paint in a way that opens up a new realm of freedom stylistically."

Kreyn's Shakespeare Cycle works are now on permanent display in the lobby of London's historic Theater Royal Drury Lane. These paintings also appeared in The Crown. That's not the first television cameo, either; a painting of Kreyn's also drives the plot of Shonda Rhimes' ABC television show The Catch.

All to say, her paintings have thrived in third spaces and St George's Anglican church is no exception. The austere space of the church adds new resonances to these ominous and ethereal paintings.

"These are meant to be emotional landscapes that are complex, ambiguous, and open-ended," Kreyn explained. "These storms are like the gaze of a portrait, a vortex, and portal into something that feels eternal, and almost like an icon, without it being religious at all."

Here, Kreyn's colour palette leans towards the Mannerist, with acidic, impossible hues that hint at global pollution. For example, in the painting Folding Time I, tones of reddish browns and purple blues can be read either as the uncanny hues of a dystopian future or the antiqued effects of age on colour. The spaces of creation and destruction merge. In this way, the exhibition, and the church, become a place of reverence for the sublime power of the seas and skies while acknowledging the anxiety of our precarious ecological moment.

For the artist, those moments of connection are the ultimate reward for exhibiting. She's still not so sure her works belong in traditional galleries, however.

"A lot of things have taught me that paintings aren't exclusively for galleries," she said. "Paintings are for human beings. I mean that in the deepest possible way."

(Courtesy: artnet.com)

Aqueous artworks

ARTIST MARIA KREYN'S TEMPESTUOUS SEASCAPES ILLUMINATE A VENICE CHURCH



Installation view 'Maria Kreyn: Chronos' at St George's Anglican Church in Venice

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