



Royal Directive to provide school items, nutrition for low income families

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq issued a Royal Directive on Sunday to provide school supplies for children of families dependent on social security and those with limited income.

'Within the context of the Royal Attention of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq to students from social insurance and low-income families enrolled in government schools, the Ministry of Finance has endorsed the disbursement of approved sums in coordination with the

Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Development,' the Government Communication Centre stated.

The aid aims to provide school supplies from the beginning of the new academic year, in addition to daily nutrition for students from social insurance and low-income families.

According to the Ministry of Education, 59,030 students will benefit from the Royal Directive.

ONA

CANCER THIRD LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH

Our Correspondent Muscat

Cancer is the third leading cause of death in hospitals in Oman, while breast cancer is the most common kind of cancer and thyroid cancer ranked second among all cancers.

The Ministry of Health, represented by the National Cancer Registry at the Department of Non-Communicable Diseases in the Directorate General of Primary Health Care, released the latest cancer statistics of the sultanate (2019) on Sunday. The total number of diagnosed cases was 2,307 (nationals and residents).

The number of Omani patients diagnosed with cancer in 2019 was 2,089; 218 residents were also diagnosed with cancer in this period.

'Cancer was the third leading cause of death in hospitals, after respiratory diseases and cardiovascular diseases being the first,' MoH report said. Cancer incidence rate among Omani women - 1,158 or 55.43 per cent - was higher than men - 931. Cancer was also reported in 124 children under 14 years of age.

'It is worth noting that the average age at diagnosis was 54

years - 60 years among men, compared to 50 years for women.'

The data also showed that crude incidence rate among Omanis was 69.6 per 100,000 males and 87.9 per 100,000 females.

Globally, 18,094,716 cases of cancer were diagnosed in 2020. The age-standardised rate for all cancers (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer) for men and women combined was 190 per 100,000 in 2020. The rate was higher for men (206.9 per 100,000) than women (178.1 per 100,000).

In Oman, breast cancer still ranked first among all cancers in general and among women in particular, as the number of cases reached 350; 31

MOST COMMON CANCERS AMONG OMANIS

Male		Female	
Colorectal	124	Breast	338
Prostate	113	Thyroid	185
Stomach	64	Colorectal	89
Trachea, bronchus and lung	61	Stomach	52
Bladder	61	Uterus	51
Leukemia	56	Ovary	45

per cent were diagnosed in the third and fourth stages.

The National Cancer Registry began recording

cancer cases first as a hospital-based registry in 1985 and then as a population-based registry since 1996. The registry collects and records data on cancer patients from various data sources throughout Oman.

The National Cancer Registry issues an annual report containing the most important data collected, in line with international standards, including those of the World Health Organization and the International Agency for Research on Cancer. It cooperates with local, regional and international associations and organisations concerned with cancer registration.

The National Cancer Registry is important owing to its database that is used as a reference for research and educational purposes by researchers and decision-makers.

Cancer incidence rate among Omani women - 1,158 or 55.43% - was higher than men - 931

NEWS BRIEF

WOMEN'S ARAB FORUM KICKS OFF IN DHOFAR

Salalah - The Working Women's Second Arab Forum, organised by the Ministry of Labour in cooperation with the Arab Labour Organization, kicked off in Salalah under the theme of 'Businesswomen's Future in Digital Economies' on Sunday.

The two-day forum opened under the auspices of H H Sayyid Marwan Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, and was attended by H E Dr Mahad Said Ba'owain, Minister of Labour, and H E Dr Laila Ahmed al Najjar, Minister of Social Development.

H E Sheikh Nasr al Hosni, Undersecretary for Labour, said that Oman has made good progress in labour affairs through a set of economic, educational and training strategies that placed human beings at the centre of development.

German, French to be taught in govt schools

Our Correspondent Muscat

The Ministry of Education recently announced the introduction of a curriculum that includes French and German for Grades 11 and 12 in government schools.

The ministry confirmed that French and German will be taught in limited schools in Muscat, North Batinah and South Batinah.

The two languages were chosen as these are global and living languages. 'There is a study to add other languages, too,' the ministry stated.

It has signed an agreement with Goethe Institut Muscat - German Language Centre and Omani-French Centre to prepare intensive training programmes to

train Omani teachers to teach the two languages.

Parents and teachers have welcomed the decision of the ministry. Speaking to Muscat Daily, Ali al Shayadi, a teacher, said, "This is a very important development; it will help students acquire new skills and learn about new cultures."

He added that learning different languages will encourage students to communicate with and respect people of other cultures, helping them benefit from what others have achieved in science and technology.

According to Shayadi, the ministry seeks to develop school curricula by diversifying the elective courses and expanding the teaching of different languages.

Nasser Salim, father of a

MoE launches film to raise safety in school buses

Muscat - With a week to go before thousands of children return to schools on September 4, the Ministry of Education has launched a short film to raise awareness among students on safety in school buses.

The two-minute film directly communicates with students drawing their attention to important aspects when taking a bus or any other means of transport to school.



It asks students to wait in a safe place, and make sure the bus has stopped completely. 'Do not rush to the door so that none of you will get hurt. Eventually you will get on the bus together,' the film exhorts.

Children are also advised to keep calm and avoid putting their hands out of the windows.

'When the bus reaches the school, get off in an organised way.'

school student, said, "It is a very good step because it will help students identify elements of French and German languages that are compatible with Islam and the customs and traditions in

Omani society."

He added that learning new languages will develop self-confidence, love of knowledge, and open new fields in higher education.

Education expert Abdul Hadi Mustafa added that the Ministry of Education is keen to add elements that will raise the level of education in the sultanate. "Including French and German lan-

guages in the curriculum of government schools is one such step. This is very important because it will raise the level of our students culturally and scientifically."

Khalid al Hosni, another education expert, said the development will lead to job opportunities for Omanis in foreign companies operating in the sultanate. "After graduation, these students can explore a new job market and continue their academic and professional growth through courses provided by these companies, or in any French or German speaking countries."

He added that learning different languages will also lead to job opportunities in the tourism sector, which is witnessing steady growth and needs a large number of qualified Omani professionals.



Deal inked to develop oil export pipeline in Duqm



Tranquil surprise in Alila Hinu Bay, Mirbat



BERBER CULTURE SHOWCASED IN MOROCCO FESTIVAL

Moroccan horsemen perform traditional horse riding during a Moussem culture and heritage festival in the capital Rabat, on Saturday. The Moussem culture and heritage festival is held every year in Morocco and has been going since 1963. More than 30 tribes from southern Morocco and other parts of Northwest Africa join the festival annually. According to traditional Berber culture, a Moussem is 'a type of annual fair with economic, cultural and social functions' (AFP)



It's back-to-school season

As shops selling school supplies do brisk business owing to demand just before schools reopen for a new academic year next week, Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) is continuing its efforts to monitor markets in all governorates to ensure the availability of items at the right prices.

Intensive inspection campaigns are being conducted by special teams, comprising judicial control officers, in shopping centres and stationary shops, as well as stores selling fabrics and shoes, to ensure supplies and monitor promotions and discounts that accompany the back-to-school season.

Though most parents feel prices of school items have not increased, some say they are looking for the best bargains. For the next one week, markets will be teeming with parents accompanied by their children excited about buying new school supplies.

Here is what Muscat Daily readers have to say on how expensive it is getting children back to school.



Osama al Balushi
Government employee

I do not see re-opening of schools an expensive affair. School fees are more or less affordable. It is often the school projects that happen from time to time that add to expenses. But I understand we cannot avoid these, as they are needed for children's growth.

Samuel K John
Businessman/restaurant owner

I have one child and he goes to an Indian school. I do not see any such increase or stress on my finances. However, there are some small increases and that may affect many who have more than two children, like transport and school uniforms can become expensive.

Khalid al Khaldi
Retired government employee

For Oman, health and education are priority. Unlike other countries where both of these are considered a lucrative business, prices in Oman are not very expensive for at least Indian schools. I do not see a challenge. It is not too expensive to prepare children to re-start a new academic session.

Mohammad Aslam
Private sector employee

It is not very expensive to send children back to school. I don't see much of a price hike in essentials. Prices in Oman, mainly for educational institutions, are much regulated and overseen as compared to other parts of the world.

Ravinder Pal
Salesman

I agree that it is indeed a challenge and expensive to send our children back to school. There are price hikes on many educational items, mainly books. I try my best to recycle books (from my colleagues' children) but my children often do not like reading from used books. So I need to spend on new books, which are at times quite expensive.

Hamid al Abri
Cashier

I have four children and they study in an international school. It is indeed very expensive - from the books to other school essentials. Additionally, the school has functions from time to time, which indeed add to the expenses.

Akthar Khan
Accountant

My children study in Pakistan School Muscat and it is not that expensive. Sometimes the price of books and other school items increase, but it is nominal. However, one of the expenses that often increases in private schools is transport.

NEXT ON YOUR SAY

With thousands of children going back to school next week, are you worried about the safety of school transportation?

The views stated here are those of the respondents and not endorsed by Muscat Daily. If you feel strongly about the issues discussed here, you can email your comments to muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om You can also log on to our Facebook page or tweet us your comments on the issue.

SEND YOUR COMMENTS

Share your comments in not more than 50 words along with your full name and profession before next Sunday, 10am, via WhatsApp, Facebook or Instagram

SEND US ON OUR NEW WHATSAPP NO 91953774

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No.(27 / 2022)

Companies specialized in the field and registered with Tender Board, may obtain tender documents for the website through the following link:
<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable fees as mentioned below starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Tender No.	No E-Tender	Description of Tender	Tender Fee	Last date to collect the tender	Tender return date	Grade
PRE/22/075	2022/MM/QS-39	RFP for Renewing IBM FILENET & CMS Licenses for Record and Document Management System (E-Tender)	Rail 25	22/09/2022	09/10/2022	Specialist
PRE/22/081	2022/MM/QS-40	Technical Support Services for Oracle SUN Solaris Servers (E-Tender)	Rail 25	22/09/2022	09/10/2022	Excellent & First
PRE/22/088	2022/MM/QS-41	Renewal of Licenses & Technical Support Services For Security Appliances (E-Tender)	Rail 25	22/09/2022	09/10/2022	Excellent & First
PRE/22/097	2022/MM/QS-42	RFP for Renewal Licenses of Network Management System (NMS) (E-Tender)	Rail 25	22/09/2022	09/10/2022	Excellent
PRE/22/069	2022/MM/QS-43	Site preparation for street vendors in Wilayat AL Amarat (Almahajj) (E-Tender)	Rail 25	22/09/2022	09/10/2022	First
PRE/22/093	2022/MM/QS-44	Site preparation for street vendors in Wilayat Muttrah (Wadi Alkibir) (E-Tender)	Rail 25	22/09/2022	09/10/2022	First
PRE/22/061	2022/MM/QS-31 Re-Call-01	Faced Clock System Replacement at Muscat Municipality Building, Darsait (Re-Tender-1)(E-Tender)	Rail 25	22/09/2022	09/10/2022	Specialist

Tender Conditions :-

1- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically accompanied with an electronic copy of bond issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to Muscat municipality. The bond shall be (1%) of the tender value valid for ninety (90) days starting from the date of bids submission. Any tenders which do not meet the required bond shall not be accepted.

- Tender Bonds shall be E-Bond and to be submitted through E-Tendering system, addressed to Muscat Municipality.
- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>).
- For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om) or call (+96824402200).
- For technical support of E-Bond through e-tendering system please send an email to (esnad@gstb.gov.om) or call (+96824402200/24402330).

MoE announces nuclear science, technology contest

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Education (MoE) has launched a competition in efforts to support nuclear science and technology awareness in secondary and higher education.

Called 2022/2023 Nuclear Science and Technology Education Competition for Students and Secondary Teachers, it is within the framework of the IAEA Technical Cooperation Project.

Nuclear science and technology (NST) plays a significant role in the achievement of several UN Sustainable Developmental Goals, especially in health and the environment, besides contributing directly to nine of the 17 UN SDGs.

The competition is open to students and secondary teachers from UN member states/territories in the Asia and the Pacific Region.

- Timeline and selection process
- October 21: Deadline for submissions (11:59pm CET)
 - December 5: IAEA notification to finalists
 - January 24 to February 10, 2023: Finalist submissions to be showcased at 2023 Virtual NST Education Exhibition. Live Q&A with finalists will take place during which winners will be selected.
 - Fall of 2023: Winners will be invited to the 2023 NST Education Study Tour.
- Terms and Conditions
- Only one submission permitted per applicant. Once an entry has been submitted, ap-

- applicant will not be allowed to revise it.
- Videos must be submitted by applicants acting in their own personal capacity, not on behalf of an organisation, company, or government agency.
- All submissions must be the original work of the applicant in their own words, except for quotations from published and unpublished source, which are clearly indicated and acknowledged as such. Citations must follow internationally recognised styles and applicants can at any time be requested to provide clarification of the source. Any content that can be identified as plagiarised will immediately be disqualified.

The competition aims to promote creative thinking in secondary-level students on how they see the role of NST in contributing to UN SDGs in tackling the global problem of plastic pollution in line with the IAEA's Nuclear TECHNOlogy for Controlling Plastic Pollution (NUTEC Plastics) initiative.

The competition also targets post-secondary students, showing them how forging new partnerships and tapping into diverse funding sources can ensure maximum reach, impact and sustainability of IAEA initiatives.

Post-secondary-level students will submit business proposals to potential partners or donors for partnership in one of the IAEA's strategic initiatives. Secondary-level teachers will be encouraged to creatively introduce NST to non-science students.

Submission link: <https://nst-educationcompetition.com/appl-y-now>

RNO, RAO BEGIN SCREENING FOR RECRUITMENT

Royal Army of Oman (RAO) and Royal Navy of Oman (RNO), in coordination with the Ministry of Labour, commenced screening of candidates on Sunday for a batch of citizens who met the recruitment criteria (ONA)



North Batinah invites bids for investments in several projects

Development projects include marine and waterfront parks

Our Correspondent
Muscat

North Batinah Municipality is inviting bids for investment in development projects in the wilayats of Liwa, Saham, Suwaiq and Khabourah in the governorate.

In Liwa, the municipality is inviting bids for investment and development of the entrance to the wilayat and establishing a marine park.



In Saham, bids are invited for establishment of a marine park in the Mukhalef area and another in the Umm al Jaharif area. The municipality is also invit-

ing bids to establish a waterfront park in Suwaiq and development of the Al Husn area in Khabourah. The last date for submission

of bids is September 13. The projects are in line with the Governorate Development Plan in which each governorate is allocated RO20mn during the 2021-2025 Five-Year Plan period serving as incentive for competitiveness and economic growth. According to the Ministry of Economy, the directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to increase the amount allocated to each governorate from RO10mn to RO20mn during the current Five-Year Plan will support implementation of strategic programmes, and help priority development of governorates and sustainable cities.



Office for Conservation of Environment personnel during a survey in Khor Salalah Nature Reserve in Dhofar

Local birds go missing, invasive crows take over reserve in Dhofar

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A study conducted by the Environment Authority (EA) in Khor Salalah Nature Reserve in Dhofar has revealed the conspicuous absence of local and migratory birds and the spread of the house crow, considered an invasive species. The ongoing study found that house crows have a wide nesting area. The species is spreading in the city of Salalah, posing an imminent threat to local and migratory species of birds. The study is being carried out by the Office for Conservation of Environment in Dhofar on the diversity of birds in the Khor Salalah Nature Reserve, one of the important wetland reserves of the

The ongoing study found that house crows have a wide nesting area. The species is spreading in the city of Salalah

sultanate. The study aims to identify bird species, their numbers and behaviour in the reserve. According to Ahmed bin Said, an environmental specialist of EA, the study began on August 1 and will continue until the end of the year. "Teams are making morning and evening visits to specific areas within the reserve and doc-

umenting their observations, creating a database on the environment of the governorate." Invasive alien species of birds have done great damage to ecological balance and agricultural crops, and are considered a major challenge facing many countries. Oman is exerting efforts to confront invasive species like house crows. A national team of competent authorities has been formed to develop an action plan to manage and combat such birds. An international expert has also been contracted to benefit from the management and control experiences that have been applied in other countries through the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Over 223% increase in transactions through MoCIIP's Invest Easy portal

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The number of electronic transactions completed during the first quarter of this year through the 'Invest Easy' portal witnessed a remarkable increase of 223.6 per cent to 244,744 transactions, compared to 75,630 in the same period in 2021. Electronic transactions submitted through Sanad offices accounted for 40.78 per cent of the total, while transactions completed through self-service were 27.2 per cent. Transactions completed through departments and directorates of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment



Promotion (MoCIIP) accounted for 22.79 per cent, and the remaining were done through other authorities. MoCIIP indicated that the transactions that were completed through the offices of the ministry during Q1 2022 reached

20,303, compared to 5,894 transactions during the same period in 2021. The number of transactions completed through the departments and directorates affiliated to the ministry rose to 55,787, compared to 27,663 transactions

completed during the same period in 2021. The number of transactions completed through self-service was 66,564, compared to 12,875 transactions completed in the same period in 2021. The number of transactions completed through free zones (Sohar, Duqm and Al Mazyona) was 1,666, compared to 905 transactions in the first quarter of 2021. The number of transactions completed through law firms was 608, compared to 207 transactions in the same period in 2021. The number of transactions completed through Sanad offices increased from 28,086 in Q1 2021 to 99,816 in Q1 2022.

Encroachers removed from 34 land plots in S Sharqiyah

Our Correspondent
Muscat

South Sharqiyah Municipality has removed 34 land encroachments as it continues efforts to preserve public property. A statement issued by South Sharqiyah Municipality on Sunday said that its specialists recorded a number of violations in Ras al Hadd, including encroachment on 34 land plots. The municipality removed the encroachments after verifying that there were no documents proving legal ownership of the land. 'Dealing with violations vary from case to case. Violators are initially made aware and guided to stop their encroachment. In the event that the violator fails to comply, immediate action is taken to remove them in accordance with regulations or referred to competent authorities to end these violations,' the statement added. A board is placed at the site urging the encroacher to appear before the municipality with his documents proving ownership of the land. In case the violator fails to appear, the sheikh of the area is contacted to identify and find the encroacher. If the encroacher is still not contactable, a violation is filed against the unknown person and the case is referred to the Public Prosecution.

SKYWORTH

Lead the future

Experience Every Moment Vividly

65"

55"

50"

4K

4K UHD

androidtv

HDR 10

جيتكو

Genetco

MUSCAT

97693496, 96742452

Available at Major Hypermarkets & Electronics Retailers

C.R. No. 1009680

SALALAH

79011363

www.genetco.net

@GenetcoOman

@GenetcoOman

Genetco Oman

Sultan Qaboos University

TENDER NOTICE

The investment & Revenue Department at Sultan Qaboos University Invites the companies to submit their quotations for this Tender as follows:

S/N	Type of Business	Site	Date of site visit	Class	Tender #
1	Provision of Photocopying Services	In various locations at Sultan Qaboos University Campus	5/9/2022 9:00 am	All classes	SQU.IRD.12/22

* The priority will be for the Small and Medium Establishments (SME), which fulfils the quality requirements.

* Tenderers who wish to participate in this Tender may collect Tender Documents from The Section of Revenue And Expenditures at the Investment & Revenue Department, Sultan Qaboos University, during the working hours for an amount of OR.25 for each tender document (non-refundable).The last date for Collecting the Document is 14 /9/2022.

* The Site Visit for the selected shop is necessary. It will be on the above mentioned date and the assembly point will be at the Investment & Revenue Department.

* The last date for submission of the quotations: 4/10/2022.The quotations should be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed to the Director of The Investment & Revenue Department, located on the first floor of the commercial building at Sultan Qaboos University and deposited in the Tender Box kept in the Department, before 10:00 a.m.

* The exterior of the envelope should be marked with the name and number of the Tender being presented and should bear no identification or mark of the Tenderer.

* The Tenderer should submit (enclose) with his tender a Bank Guarantee Document for sum of 1% of the total Duration of contract rental value quoted by the Tenderer and valid for 90 (ninety) days from the date specified for submission of Tender.Tenders submitted after the deadline or without a Bank Guarantee will be excluded.

* The Tenderer should prepare the Site in accordance with the health requirements of Muscat Municipality and the requirements of civil defense in cooperation with the concerned authorities.

* Sultan Qaboos University reserves the right to reject any quotation not fulfilling the requirements and does not bid itself to accept the highest rent or any other quotations.

* Graduation ceremony dates are subject to change.

The Investment & Revenue Department

P.O BOX 50, P.C. 123, ALKHOD, SULTANATE OF OMAN

Tel: 24142685 – 24142682

GSM: 93900477

Email: investmnet@squ.edu.om

MARKET WATCH

MSX30 4,600.72

FOREX RATES

(RO1 equals)	
Indian	207.77
Pakistan	575.42
Bangladesh	248.08
Philippines	145.96
Sri Lanka	926.91

*Rates as on August 28
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Egypt economy records 6.6% growth despite challenges

Egypt's economy grew by 6.6 per cent in the previous fiscal year 2021-2022 compared to a growth rate of 3.3 per cent in the year prior, Prime Minister Moustafa Madbouli said.

Madbouli made the remarks during a press conference at the Cabinet's headquarters in New Alamein City, according to the state news agency.

The last quarter of the past fiscal year was really difficult due to the Russia-Ukraine war and its effect on development rates, the premier said, noting that Egypt's projected growth rate for the end of the fiscal year had been estimated at 6.2 per cent.

Madbouli added that the unemployment rate in the country stabilised at 7.2 per cent, which he described as an "encouraging figure".

The real challenge for the State is the global phenomenon of high inflation rates, he said, revealing that inflation has hit 14.6 per cent in Egypt.

Oman signs deal to develop oil export pipeline in Duqm

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's Ministry of Energy and Minerals on Sunday signed a framework agreement with Oman Tank Terminal Company (OTTCO) to develop a new oil pipeline for the export of Oman blend crude from Ras Markaz Crude Oil Terminal in Duqm.

OTTCO is a wholly owned subsidiary of OQ Group, Oman's international integrated energy company. OTTCO's ambition is to create world-class oil storage infrastructure networks in and outside Oman.

The agreement between Ministry of Energy and Minerals and OTTCO has been signed for their joint cooperation to develop, build and operate the new oil pipeline, the ministry said in a press statement.

The pipeline will be connected with OTTCO infrastructure to transfer, store and export Oman blend crude from the Ras Markaz Crude Oil Terminal which is owned and operated by OTTCO in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

The agreement was signed by H E Eng. Salim Nasser al Auqi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, Talal bin Hamed al Awfi, CEO of OQ Group, and Hilal bin Ali al Kharusi, CEO - commercial and downstream at OQ Group and chairman of OTTCO. Ard Van Hoof, CEO of OTTCO and other senior officials from the ministry were also present at the signing



The agreement was signed at the Ministry of Energy and Minerals on Sunday

The new oil pipeline will be connected with OTTCO infrastructure to transfer, store and export Oman blend crude from the Ras Markaz Oil Terminal

ceremony which marks a significant milestone in this endeavor.

As per the ministry's statement, the new oil pipeline project will expand the energy sector by meeting the expected growth in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and energy industry in the sultanate. It will further support Oman crude as a benchmark and the Ras Markaz Crude Oil Terminal to become a regional hub in alignment with OQ Group and

tion of this important project, including facilities which may be required for customers, producers and traders of Oman export blend crude. In addition, OTTCO, as an experienced operator, also provides all services related to the operations and maintenance of the facilities and assets.

The Ras Markaz Crude Oil Terminal is OTTCO's landmark project which has been selected for its strategic location and suitability in receiving giant oil tankers, as well as its proximity to the world maritime routes. The company is currently completing the first phase of the terminal and expected to commission its trial operation later in the year.

OTTCO's growth strategy.

The Ras Markaz Crude Oil Terminal will provide oil handling, storage, import and export services for refineries and petrochemicals downstream projects in the SEZAD and to serve market needs of customers and other stakeholders.

As the project developer OTTCO will now conduct detailed studies and move forward with execution and implementa-



Oman's Islamic banking assets jump 9.6% to RO6.2bn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

With continuing robust growth of Oman's Islamic banking sector, total assets of Islamic banks and windows operating in the sultanate jumped by 9.6 per cent year-on-year to reach at RO6.2bn in June 2022.

Oman's Islamic banking assets now account for 15.9 per cent of the country's total banking system assets, according to latest data released by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO).

The sultanate's Islamic banking entities provided total financing of RO5.1bn till end-June 2022, recording a robust growth of 11.2 per cent over that a year ago, the CBO said in its monthly statistical bulletin.

Total deposits held with Islamic banks and windows also increased by 12.8 per cent to RO4.7bn in June this year compared to the same period a year ago.

Islamic banking sector in the sultanate - which comprises of two fully-fledged Islamic banks

and five Islamic banking windows - has continued its double-digit growth despite the adverse economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Oman's Islamic banking entities recorded about three-times higher profitability in 2021 from the plunge observed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to CBO's latest Financial Stability Report.

During 2021, the Islamic banking sector exhibited pre-tax profit of RO82mn against RO27.4mn a year ago, which improved return-on-assets and return-on-equity of the sector.

The asset quality of the Islamic banking financing portfolio also remained strong with a non-performance financing ratio of 1.9 per cent at the end of December 2021, which is among the lowest in the region, the CBO noted.

The Central Bank of Oman said it is working to introduce a range of Islamic money market instruments to meet the liquidity needs of Islamic banking sector.

Global energy crisis pushes nuclear comeback worldwide

Paris, France - As the costs of importing energy soars worldwide and climate crises wreak havoc, interest in nuclear power is on the rise with nations scrambling to find alternative sources.

Investment in nuclear power declined after Japan's 2011 Fukushima disaster, the world's worst nuclear accident since Chernobyl in 1986, as fears over its safety increased and governments ran scared.

But following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in February, the subsequent squeeze on energy supplies and Europe's push to wean itself off of Russian oil and gas, the tide is now turning back in favour of nuclear.

Governments face difficult decisions with rising gas and electricity bills and scarce resources threatening to cause widespread suffering this winter.

Some experts argue that nuclear power should not be considered an option. But others argue that, in the face of so many crises, it must remain part of the world's energy mix.

One of the countries reconsidering nuclear energy is Japan, where the 2011 accident led to the suspension of many nuclear reactors over safety fears.

This week Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida called for a push to revive the country's nuclear power industry, and build new atomic plants.

Other countries that were looking to move away from nuclear have discarded those plans - at least in the short term.

Less than a month after Russia's attack on Ukraine, Belgium delayed by a decade its plan to scrap nuclear energy in 2025.

While nuclear power, currently used in 32 countries, supplies 10 per cent of the world's electricity production, the Inter-



national Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) raised its projections in September for the first time since the 2011 disaster.

The IAEA now expects installed capacity to double by 2050 under the most favourable scenario.

Even in Germany, Europe's biggest economy, sticking with nuclear is no longer a taboo subject as the energy crisis rekindles debate on shutting down the country's last three nuclear power plants by the end of 2022.

Berlin said last month it would await the outcome of a "stress test" of the national electric grid before deciding whether to stick with the phaseout.

Greenpeace Germany's climate and energy expert, Gerald Neubauer, said turning to nuclear was "not a solution to the energy crisis".

He said nuclear energy would have "limited" efficacy in replacing Russian gas since it is mainly "used for heating" in Germany not for electricity production.

"The reactors would only save the gas used for electricity, it would save less than one per cent of the gas consumption," he added.

But according to Nicolas Berghmans, energy and climate expert at the IDDRI think tank, extending the use of nuclear "can help".

"Europe is in a very different energy situation, with several overlapping crises: the problem of Russian gas supply, the drought that has reduced the capacity of dams, the French nuclear plants' weak output... so all the levers matter," he said.

The pro-nuclear lobby says it is one of the world's best options to avoid climate change since it does not directly emit carbon dioxide.

In fact, nuclear energy accounts for a bigger share of the world power mix in most of the scenarios put forward by the IPCC, the UN's climate experts, to alleviate the global climate crisis.

Divided opinions

As the need for electricity booms, several countries have expressed a desire to develop nuclear infrastructure including China - which already has the largest number of reactors - as well as the Czech Republic, India and Poland since nuclear offers

an alternative to coal.

Likewise, Britain, France and the Netherlands have similar ambitions, and even the United States where President Joe Biden's investment plan encourages the sector's development.

The IPCC experts recognise that the deployment of nuclear energy "can be constrained by societal preferences" since the subject still divides opinion because of the risk of catastrophic accidents and the still unresolved issue of how to dispose of radioactive waste safely.

Some countries, like New Zealand, oppose nuclear, and the issue has also been hotly debated in the European Union over whether it should be listed as a "green" energy.

Last month, the European Parliament approved a contentious proposal giving a sustainable finance label to investments in gas and nuclear power.

Other issues remain over nuclear infrastructure including the ability to build new reactors with costs and delays tightly controlled.

Berghmans pointed to "long construction delays".

AFP

PAPER RECYCLING PROGRAMME

Attention all corporate offices!

DO YOU HAVE ANY PAPER TO RECYCLE?

Our team will collect it from your office

BIGGER, BETTER, BRANDED
RECYCLING BOXES ALSO AVAILABLE

For details contact us at recycle@apexmedia.co.om or call us on toll free no: **80076000**

MUSCAT DAILY

Grain prices ease back but fertiliser costs a growing risk

Paris, France – Grain prices have dropped sharply from the record highs they reached following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, but another menace to global food security remains: a shortage of fertiliser.

The conflict sparked fears of famine in poorer countries reliant on agricultural goods from Ukraine and Russia, two nations that were responsible for nearly a third of global wheat exports last year.

Wheat prices reached a peak of nearly 440 euros (US\$440) a tonne on the European market in mid-May, double the level of one year ago, as crucial Ukrainian shipments were stuck at port due to a Russian naval blockade in the Black Sea.

But prices have fallen to around 300 euros in August.

“The situation began to calm down at the end of May, beginning of June with the first re-assuring harvest forecasts for Europe and the resumption of Ukrainian exports, first by road and rail, then by sea,” said Gautier Le Molgat, analyst at consultancy Agritel.

Kyiv and Moscow reached an agreement in July, brokered by the United Nations and Turkey, that allowed Ukraine to resume grain shipments in the Black Sea.

The agreement opened a shipping corridor for 20mn tonnes of maize, wheat and sunflower seed oil stocked in Ukraine. According to the Joint



Coordination Centre which manages the sea corridor, more than 720,000 tonnes have already left Ukraine.

“Thanks to intensive international cooperation, Ukraine is on track to export as much as four million metric tonnes of agricultural products in August,” a senior US State Department official told AFP on Tuesday.

In addition to more supplies reaching markets and helping lower prices, the deal has led to a drop in insurance premiums, reducing transport costs.

But the reduction in tensions is, for the moment, benefitting Ukraine more than Russia, which is expecting a bumper harvest of 88mn tonnes of wheat.

Russian wheat exports in July

Higher oil prices impact transportation costs, while natural gas is a feedstock for manufacturing chemical fertilisers that most farmers now use

and August are running 27 per cent lower than last year, according to estimates by the Russian market research firm SovEcon.

That is due to fierce competition on the international grain market, as well as the strong value of the ruble and a high Russian export tax.

“As a result, farmers remain reluctant sellers,” said Andrei Sizov, SovEcon’s managing director.

The low volume of Russian exports is one of the main reasons why wheat prices have remained so high, said Sizov.

Fertiliser costs a growing problem

One of the reasons prices have not come down further is the surge in energy prices, due to the post-pandemic recovery and the war.

Higher oil prices impact trans-

portation costs, while natural gas is a feedstock for manufacturing the chemical fertilisers that most farmers now use.

“Fertiliser prices have tripled in the last 18 months and the hard part of my job is forecasting what they will do in the next 18 months,” Joel Jackson, a fertiliser analyst at BMO Capital Markets, said at an analyst conference in July in the United States.

With European gas prices soaring above 300 euros per megawatt hour, compared to an average of 20 euros over the past decades, “we’ve got a big problem as it’s untenable for ammonia manufacturers,” said Nicolas Broutin, head of the French subsidiary of Yara, the Norwegian firm which is Europe’s largest fertiliser producer.

Yara announced Thursday it was reducing once again its production in Europe of ammonia, which is made using hydrogen obtained from natural gas and which provides the nitrogen in synthetic fertilisers.

The firm will only be using 35 per cent of its production capacity in Europe. A number of other European manufacturers have either reduced or halted output.

Although fertilisers do not fall under international sanctions, farmers are also at risk of shortages of another major element of fertiliser – potassium or potash – as both Russia and Belarus are major producers.

AFP



Gas prices approach record peak on Russian supply fears

New York, US – European natural gas prices have climbed towards a record peak on heightened fears over Russian supplies.

Europe’s benchmark Dutch TTF gas contract advanced to 322 euros per megawatt hour, not far from the record high 345 euros struck in March shortly after key gas producer Russia invaded Ukraine.

Prices have spiked in recent days as a three-day halt in Russian deliveries to Germany via the Nord Stream 1 pipeline approaches amid fears that Moscow will not turn the taps back on afterwards.

At the same time, one-year forward contracts for electricity prices in both France and Germany surged on Thursday to record pinnacles on worries over a winter energy crunch.

“Gas is on a seemingly unstoppable march upwards again, a dramatic move which will intensify the energy crisis,” said Hargreaves Lansdown analyst Susannah Streeter.

“Already plans are being brought in to save energy which will darken streets across Germany and make public buildings colder, but much tougher measures may have to be enforced given dwindling gas reserves.”

As per the latest data, the German economy expanded by an anemic 0.1 per cent in the second quarter. That was upgraded from the prior projection of zero growth, but analysts remain downbeat.

“I’m trying to find a reason to be optimistic on the back of that, but in reality it just means the economy may take a little longer to fall into recession,” warned OANDA analyst Craig Erlam.

“With the energy crisis unlikely to improve, this likely means another quarter of flat growth at best before the economy falls into recession later this year.” The challenge has been compounded this year by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, which has sent energy and food prices skyrocketing.

AFP



Citigroup to close Russian operations

New York, US – Citigroup announced it will shutter its retail banking business in Russia after failing to find a local buyer.

The wind-down will begin in the current quarter and will affect around 2,300 employees in 15 branches across the country. The global banking giant had indicated as early as April 2021 that it intended to stop offering services to individuals in Russia as part of a global reorganization leading to the withdrawal of 14 markets in Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Mexico.

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the bank in March extended this early exit to services for medium-sized businesses.

“We have explored multi-

ple strategic options to sell these businesses over the past several months,” said Titi Cole, head of Citigroup’s legacy franchises.

“It’s clear that the wind-down path makes the most sense given the many complicating factors in the environment,” Cole said in a statement. The US financial firm said it was still considering the sale of certain portfolios of assets linked to Russia. Total exposure to the country stood at US\$8.4bn at the end of the second quarter, with retail activities accounting for US\$1bn of that amount.

Citigroup expects to register a charge of US\$170mn over the next 18 months as a result of this decision.

AFP

Japan pledges to invest \$30bn in Africa

Tunis, Tunisia – Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida Saturday pledged US\$30bn over three years for Africa in a virtual address to a development conference in Tunis aiming to counter China’s growing continental influence.

The eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD8) takes place amid a “complex” international environment caused by the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine, the Japanese foreign ministry said.

Host country Tunisia is among the countries bearing the brunt of global supply chain disruptions and price spikes unleashed by these two factors, since it is heavily import dependent and is not an energy player.

In his opening speech, Tunisian President Kais Saied urged delegates to “search together for ways for African peoples to achieve the hopes and dreams of the first generation after independence”.

Praising Japan’s strong track record of development and “preserving” its culture, he said that “the world cannot continue as it was. With all its wealth and assets, Africa cannot watch its



Japan’s Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi and United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed attend the opening session of TICAD conference in Tunis on Saturday (AFP)

people live through poverty.”

Kishida, speaking over live video from Tokyo after testing positive for Covid-19 days earlier, pledged that “Japan will invest both public and private funds worth US\$30bn over the next three years” across Africa.

“To improve the lives of Africans, we will provide up to US\$5bn in co-financing with the African Development Bank,” he said.

The pledge come as China cements its influence on the conti-

nent with its “Belt and Road” infrastructure initiative, and as experts express concern about the long-term sustainability of some African nations’ borrowing from Beijing.

Japan’s initiative “includes up to US\$1bn in a new special quota to be established by Japan to promote debt consolidation reforms” in Africa, the Japanese premier said.

He also pledged US\$300mn in co-financing with the African Development Bank to boost food

production, vowing to help African countries weather grain shortages caused by the war in Ukraine, a major wheat producer.

Senegalese President Macky Sall, the current chairman of the African Union, paid tribute to Africa’s “partnership” with Japan, praising “concrete results in the agriculture, health, education and water” sectors.

He also urged a suspension of interest on debt owed to G20 countries, calling for a seat for the continent at the next G20

summit.

On the eve of TICAD, Morocco withdrew from the event and recalled its ambassador from Tunisia for consultations, after Saied hosted the head of Western Sahara’s Polisario secessionist movement.

Tunis in turn said it would recall its own ambassador from Rabat, pointing to its “total neutrality” on Western Sahara, a territory Rabat sees as an integral part of Morocco.

Sall said he “regrets Morocco’s absence”, expressing hopes for a solution to the disagreement.

It is the first TICAD – held every three years either in Japan or an African country – since the coronavirus pandemic began. The Japanese delegation is led by Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi, with about 5,000 participants set to attend.

Among those are 48 representatives of African countries, including at least 20 heads of state or government, according to Tunisian diplomatic sources.

A slick promotional video said the conference aims to promote “African development led by African people”.

AFP

Europe tries to save energy ahead of winter

Paris, France – European Union nations are launching power saving drives as they seek to reign in soaring gas and electricity bills and conserve ever-more scarce resources following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

The 27-nation bloc, which has accused Moscow of waging an “energy war”, plans to cut gas consumption by 15 per cent between August 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023 to cope with the crisis.

A snapshot of national efforts so far:

Italy launched earlier this year what it called “Operation Thermostat” to try to lower heating and cut back on air conditioning in schools and public buildings.

France and Germany have also called on their public sectors to lead the way in saving power in the same way. In Germany, public buildings including the Bundestag, or parliament, will have to do without hot water.

In France shops that use air conditioning must keep their doors closed or face a fine.

And in Germany shops have

launched an advertising campaign to inform customers that they can go inside, even if the doors are closed.

In Spain, since August 10 air conditioning has to be turned down and be set at no lower than 27 degrees Celsius (80.6 degrees Fahrenheit) during the warmest months of the year, in rules affecting everything from public transport to shops, offices, theatres and cinemas.

The legislation also affects heating in winter, when temperatures can be set no higher than 19C.

By the end of September, any air-conditioned or heated premises in Spain must have an automatic door-closing mechanism installed to avoid energy waste.

19C.

In France, illuminated advertising screens will be banned between 1 am and 6 am, except in airports and railway stations. The ban which could soon be brought forward to 10 pm, mirroring Germany.

A two-square-metre digital LCD screen uses the equivalent of the average annual consumption of a household for lighting and household appliances, except heating.

Germany has banned heating private swimming pools from September.

Several cities have lowered the temperature in their swimming pools and made cuts in urban lighting.

A housing cooperative in the eastern city of Dresden made national headlines when it announced it would limit hot water to certain times of day.

AFP

EMBASSY OF PAKISTAN MUSCAT

NOTICE

Bids are invited for auction of Car Honda Accord (Petrol) 2.5 L, Model 2015, done 290,000 km (approx). Sealed bids may be posted to PO Box 1302, PC 112, Ruwi or submitted to Embassy of Pakistan before 15 September 2022. The vehicle may be seen at Embassy premises on any working day (Sunday to Thursday) from 1000 AM to 02:00 PM.

Contact Numbers:

Mobile Numbers: +968 79057035
Landline Number: 24502750

JAC invests close to \$1mn in research and development

JAC Motors - a Chinese automobile and commercial vehicle manufacturer based in Hefei, Anhui Province, in China has invested US\$1mn in research and development and this has been done 'for staying ahead of the curve and providing the best product for its customers', the group said.

JAC established its first overseas design center in Turin, Italy, in 2005, making it the first Chinese automaker to do so. On November 5 next year, JAC opened a second independent design centre in Tokyo, Japan. From 2006 to 2016, the design centre in Japan was gradually developed and improved. 'This design centre is in charge of developing vehicle interior and exterior styling'.



KR Eshraqa plans training for persons with special abilities



Khimji Ramdas (KR) Eshraqa's 'Tasees', has entered into an agreement with Qadiroon, an initiative of ASAAS Muscat in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Small Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) at the second edition of the Qadiroon Forum, organised at the Grand Millennium Muscat. The agreement was signed by Nailesh Khimji, Director, Khimji Ramdas Group, and Mohammed Mustafa al Shamali, CEO of ASAAS Muscat. Under the agreement, Tasees will conduct entrepreneurship training programmes for Omanis with special abilities from various wilayats. The workshops will enhance their business skills and help them understand the requisites of starting their own dream business ventures, thereby helping them become financially independent.

Mercedes-Benz Oman announces special offer

Mercedes-Benz Oman announces a limited-time special offer for brake pad changes, in line with the brand's commitment to accident-free driving. Between September 1 and September 30, customers can book appointments at the Mercedes-Benz Service Centers in Muscat, Sohar and Salalah and benefit from 55 per cent off selected parts and a complimentary inspection of the vehicle braking system.



The offer includes brake fluid condition testing, brake test and report as well as wash and vacuum.

Shaun Michael, Chief Executive Officer at Mercedes-Benz Oman, said, "Safety is and will continue to be a core brand value of Mercedes-Benz. And we believe such promotional offers will help increase public awareness of the importance of traffic safety through proper brakes maintenance and ensure a smoother and safer driving experience."

Ooredoo revamps Internet Professional plans



Keeping businesses connected with cutting-edge services, Ooredoo has revamped its popular Ooredoo Internet Professional (OIP) plans, offering all-new speeds, economical rates, and more choice! Available on all new and upgraded plans, B2B customers can enjoy all the benefits of unlimited fixed internet with speeds ranging from 5Mbps to 1Gbps, unlimited calling minutes to Ooredoo landlines, up to 1,000 local voice minutes to mobile, and international calling discounts of up to 35 per cent. Plus, with a dedicated helpdesk and after sales support available 24/7, it makes it easier than ever to stay ahead of the game. Saied al Lawati, Director of Business Marketing and ICT Solutions at Ooredoo said, "As a chosen digital partner for businesses, Ooredoo continues to offer smart solutions to keep them connected, working and engaged every day. We are supporting companies to achieve growth and contribute to Oman's economy."



QNB unveils 'exciting preparations' for FIFA World Cup this year

QNB Group has unveiled its preparations for the upcoming FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 highlighting its main exciting events, initiatives, products, and services planned to take place as the country approaches the long-awaited event hosted for the first time in the Middle East later this year.

Abdulla Mubarak al Khalifa, group Chief Executive Officer emphasised on the importance of the group's role as the official Middle East and Africa supporter of the FIFA World Cup 2022. "The Bank was an official supporter of the 2010 Qatari Bid Committee. Since then, QNB Group has been actively working on instilling sports as a culture locally, by highlighting its brand as a leading financial Qatari institution by supporting many local and international sports events. Today, we witness the outcome of our efforts over the years and consolidate our social responsibilities towards this distinguished football event."

Khalifa affirmed the efforts made by the group during this period to provide a new and unique experience that will enthrall visitors coming from all over the world. He emphasized on the strength and ability of our globally recognised national institutions to create change and development in the largest sporting event on a local and international level. This highlights such experience in a manner that benefits our institution and our beloved country Qatar, especially as this tournament will be a milestone for Qatar and the region.

FIFA Operations Committee

The QNB group has formed a special committee designated to organise all FIFA operations during the tournament period, to deliver an exceptional experience. The group's preparations for the tournament were tested during the FIFA Arab Cup 2021, and the committee is

national Airport and Heathrow International Airport.

"It will have a unique imprint this year and a strong presence through collaborating with various institutions and organisations to carry out intensive promotional campaigns across the country, as it is expected to witness an unprecedented large number of visitors

for the group with a different content direction focused on promoting the tournament and its events.

Supporting Qatar's efforts

The CEO emphasized that the group has focused on supporting the country's efforts towards hosting the tournament saying: "We have taken upon ourselves the responsibility of supporting the continuous efforts taken by the country and ensuring that its success in hosting this event is reached by all measures.

"We will dedicate all our efforts towards the success and legacy of this prestigious event, and ensure that history will remember it in a way that reflects the Qatari culture, institutions, and identity, all of which will be prominent to everyone."

The group has also collaborated with the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy to incorporate the Fan Card App 'Hayya' within QNB ATMs to provide an easier and more convenient experience for the users.

Khalifa also unveiled several details of the group's preparations and its participation and presence in the big event. As part of the group's activities, he said QNB would participate in the FIFA fan zones, where large numbers of spectators will be gathering during the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

The group will participate in several activities, services, and live match broadcasts for fans to watch in an atmosphere full of excitement.

We will dedicate all our efforts towards the success and legacy of this prestigious event, and ensure that history will remember it in a way that reflects the Qatari culture, institutions, and identity, all of which will be prominent to everyone

ABDULLA MUBARAK AL KHALIFA



currently working on several campaigns to further emphasize the tournament's uniqueness through its local and international branches.

"We launched several initiatives and activities in many of our branches and subsidiaries like Egypt, Tunisia and Sudan, where each of them will have a unique FIFA designed interior and exterior," Khalifa said.

Along its brand exposure within the region, QNB Group has also shared details of its international brand exposure, which included its screens and welcome banners in locations like Geneva Inter-

during the tournament.

"Areas such as Lusail City, which will host the final match, is likely to attract a significant number of spectators around fan zones. This has pushed us to intensify our efforts to highlight our brand in some of the liveliest locations such as QNB Lusail Metro Station, and Place Vendome Mall, the latest luxury shopping mall in Qatar that is expected to attract a large number of football fans."

He also revealed that a unique partnership with social media and international celebrities will be announced soon, which highlights a new approach

GHM basks in the 'Season of Fun in the Sun' across Chedi hotels

With its internationally-acclaimed portfolio of renowned hotels and resorts, General Hotel Management Ltd (GHM) is well-poised to offer bon vivres with the best sun-soaked getaways at The Chedi Hotels & Resorts.

The group has distilled the essence of Summer for discerning guests who are looking to luxuriate in style at The Chedi Al Bait, the UAE, The Chedi Muscat, Oman, The Chedi Andermatt, Switzerland and The Chedi Hotel & Residences Lustica Bay, Montenegro.

The ultimate escape extends at The Chedi Muscat, with daily breakfast and a three-course dinner at The Restaurant for two, 20 per cent off spa treatments and a complimentary yoga class to facilitate a healthy body and soul through robust rejuvenation

practices, said a press release.

The summer escape offer at The Chedi Muscat is available until September 30, the statement added.

The hotel also offers a Day Pass for those in search of an impressive daycation. At RO25 net for adults and RO12.5 for children between the ages of six and 12, soak in the free of spirit with the best of The Chedi Muscat's hotel facilities and amenities which includes three jaw-dropping pools along the 370m private beach.

"Enjoy a dip in the adults-only infinity Chedi Pool, 103m Long Pool and elegant family-friendly Serai Pool before relishing on a plethora of dining options ranging from Arabic, Asian, Indian and Mediterranean cuisine," the press statement added.



The Chedi Al Bait, Sharjah

Make the most of the warmer months with The Chedi Al Bait's Summer Escape offer, an exclusive stay experience that comes

with indulgent dining and restorative pampering with a minimum stay of two consecutive nights. The stay comes inclusive with daily breakfast and a three-course dinner for two at

The Restaurant, afternoon tea at The Café and 20 per cent off pampering treatments at The Spa per stay until September 30.

Available now through the end of September, the hotel

credit offer lets guests rollick in style while embarking on a traditional Emirate cultural journey.

The Chedi Andermatt

Golf, hike and mountain cruise with expertly curated adventures at The Chedi Andermatt, matched by stunning accommodation world-class amenities for unforgettable Alpine experiences.

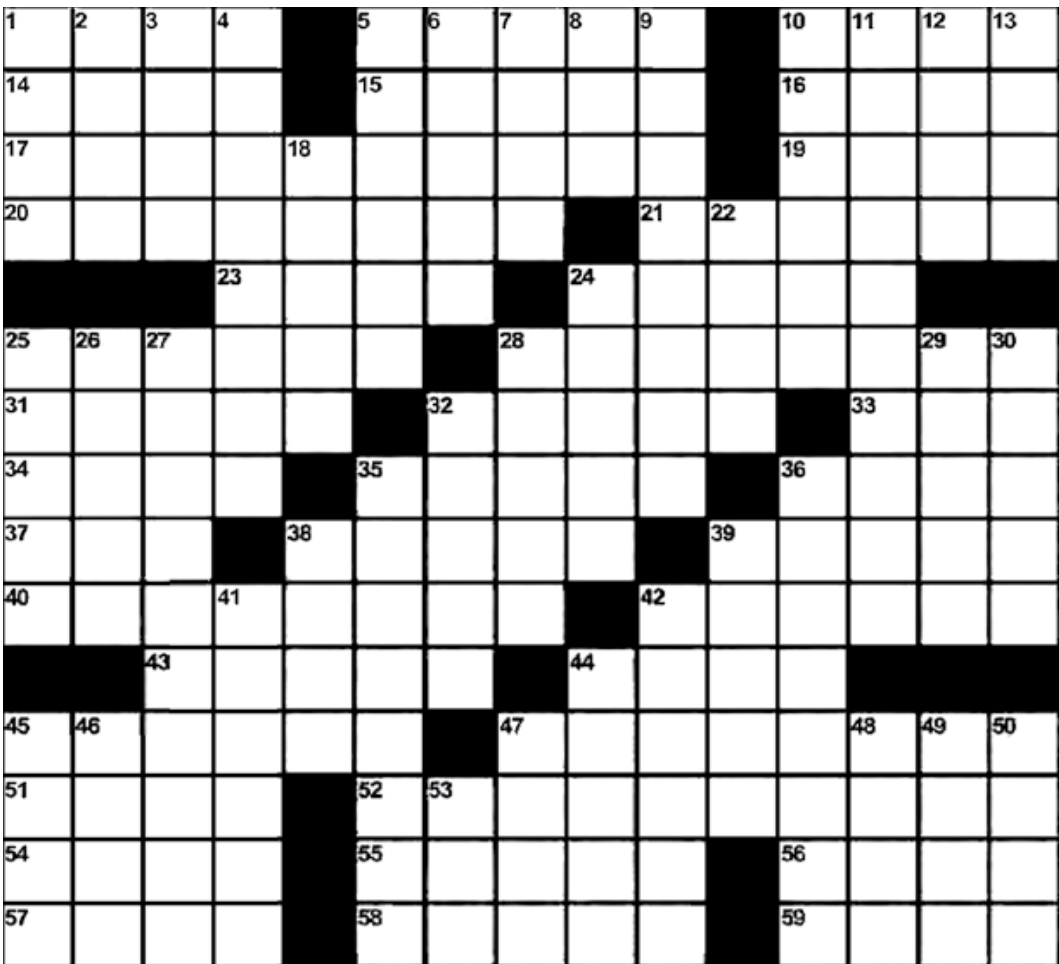
Take things slow and Tee Off in Style. Available until 22 October 2022 with a minimum three-night stay in The Chedi Andermatt's rooms and suites, the offer comes with green fees for 18-holes at the Andermatt Swiss Alps Golf Course, a four-course dinner at The Restaurant, morning indulgence at The Chedi Grand Breakfast Buffet as well as access to The Spa & Health Club.

The Chedi Hotel and Residences, Lustica Bay, Montenegro

Summer calls for a soothing stay along the exquisite Adriatic Coast at The Chedi Hotel and Residences, Lustica Bay in Montenegro. Until September, guests who book a stay via the official website in one of the property's five room types - Superior, Deluxe, Grand Superior, Grand Deluxe and Grand Poolside - for a minimum of three consecutive nights will enjoy the offer that unlocks a 25 per cent discount on the best available rates.

"Rooted in our ethos of curating unrivalled lifestyle experiences, guests in each of our properties will bask in a style to remember," said Clement Koh, executive vice president of sales and marketing of GHM.

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) The __ and short of it
5) Utterances that attract attention
10) Boat with an open hold
14) Trigger for a tracking dog
15) Scalawag
16) You can see right through it
17) Double dessert?
19) Andean civilization
20) Captures
21) Kowtow
23) June 6, 1944
24) Mets manager John-son
25) Vampire's bed?
28) On watch
31) Astronomer Hubble
32) Walked nervously
33) Golf standard score
34) Wasn't truthful
35) Pivots
36) Altar location
37) General Robert E. _
38) Boot in geography class?
39) Separate the strands

of, as

- 40) Currently leading
42) Collaborator with Marx
43) Point one's finger at
44) Catamaran canvas
45) Crownlike object
47) Most courageous (Var.)
51) Oil org.
52) Pin-up's favorite dessert?
54) Balloonist's worry
55) Caste member
56) Midvoyage on the Indian
57) Tacks on
58) Awfully expensive
59) Daily paper staple-
DOWN
1) Run with a long, easy stride
2) Valhalla VIP
3) Negative responses
4) Doted-on one, often
5) Noah's landfall
6) Like Mom's place
7) Bruised or inflated items
8) Pie you don't eat

- 9) Oozings
10) Mineral used as a gem
11) Halloween treat
12) Less than twice
13) Have on
18) Weighed down, as with packages
22) Zealous
24) Rather risky
25) It has four strings
26) French farewell
27) Gland meat, ironically
28) Bank's safe
29) Relating to the nose
30) Low cards
32) It takes flight
35) They may roar when empty
36) Like the Archbishop of York
38) Persia no more
39) Consolidate
41) Sheep collections
42) Devours heartily
44) Shoe material, some-times
45) Fast-food restaurant offering
46) Newspaper page

- 47) Trait carrier
48) "At_, soldier!"
49) Throw out of kilter
50) Hot or cold bever-ages
53) Successful at-bat

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You're still chatting away with just about anyone who comes within a few feet of you. The more unusual they are and the more unusual the topic the better. If you've been bored lately, this will definitely take care of that. If you haven't been in touch with a certain someone lately, don't let that continue. Make sure to contact them, and do it soon. Why would you want to sit there missing them when it's entirely unnecessary?



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

It's been far too long since you've spoken to a certain someone, and you're ready to put an end to this nonsense no matter how you left it with them last time. The funny part is that you might think you see them on the street or in the supermarket, and that's when you recognize your need to get back in contact. Once they answer the phone, you'll feel a familiar smile spread over your face. And that's just the beginning. Wheel!



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

It doesn't take much to talk you into a change of scenery. So if someone suggests a trip to you, you'll have your schedule out and your boss on the phone in record time. If there's a certain someone out there you'd like to spend some time with alone, the kind of time that doesn't involve a workplace, a movie theater, or a television set, this would be the perfect time to plan it.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

You pride yourself on your ability to say an awful lot in a very short amount of time. So when you wake up in the middle of an especially long diatribe and catch yourself wondering who that was who was going on for so very long, don't panic. This chattiness is only temporary thing. Besides, isn't it worth it to see the look on the faces of your dear ones? Sure it is.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

A higher-up you've admired and respected for some time is about to let you know that the feelings are mutual, and what could be better than having the respect of your mentor? Sure does make you feel good just to be you, right? Keep in mind, though, that if you hadn't earned this, it wouldn't be coming your way. Isn't a celebration in order once you get your feet back on the ground?



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Better get your chores done now, because in a couple of days a certain someone will make it their business to completely monopolize all your attention. If it happens to be your current partner, you can expect that the bond between you two will deepen and intensify. If it's someone new, don't be surprised if you feel like you've known them forever.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

This is the kind of astrological weather you can definitely live with. For once, everyone around you will be in the mood for spontaneity and impulse, to actually take a chance and see what happens instead of planning out every single move they make. Try not to be too smug or to say "I told you so" when you see what an obviously good time they're having. Some folks take longer to loosen up than others.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

When was the last time you actually went away on vacation? Traveling for a business trip doesn't count. It's been far too long, hasn't it? Okay, so what are you going to do about that? Look at some travel websites after you get home from work tonight, just to get inspired. Then you can spend some time looking at room rates and flights. One way or another, you really should treat yourself to a trek.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

If you're single, it's time to get out there and resume the hunt for the perfect partner. You'll be amazed by the number of prospective admirers who want to have a shot at that same title. All you have to do is get dressed and get out there. You'll be the center of attention no matter where you are and for only the loveliest of reasons. If you're attached, be sure your already perfect partner knows just how much you treasure their companionship.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

You've just got to tell someone, and you can't wait any longer. Is that it? Well, if you really must discuss a particular issue, be absolutely sure the person you choose as confidant is trustworthy. How about an older family member? Someone with a hefty dose of life experience who can help you to put the whole thing in perspective. You'll sleep better if you get it off your chest.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You're ready to travel, to take off for somewhere you've never been, possibly even with someone you've never traveled with before. Well, regardless of whether it's a different state, a different coast, or a different country, you'd better make up your mind quickly. Putting off travel plans only means they won't come to pass, and that simply won't do. Ready or not?



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Take a look around your house or apartment. If you're not happy with what you see, step up and make some changes. Whether you decide to take out a wall, put on an addition, or just put some fresh paint on the walls, the results will make you feel like you have a brand-new place. And if you're after a real brand-new place, contact a realtor. This would be a great time to do it.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Which pioneer of molecular gastronomy is also the founder and proprietor of 3-Michelin-star restaurant "The Fat Duck" in Berkshire, England?

- A. Jamie Oliver
B. Alain Ducasse
C. Anne-Sophie Pic
D. Heston Blumenthal

02. George Harrison was deported from which city where the early Beatles had long term engagements, because of his youth?

- A. Rotterdam
B. Hamburg
C. Berlin
D. Paris

03. Which of these Mexican cities is close to the Caribbean Sea?

- A. Chilapa
B. Punta Gorda
C. Monterrey
D. Acapulco
Correct Answer: Punta Gorda

Answers: 1.D 2.B 3.B

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

L	O	O	G
A	N	T	L
V	A	D	T
S	D	S	A

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

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

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

Tentative calm in Libya's capital after clashes kill at least 32 people

Tripoli, Libya - Flights resumed and shops re-opened in Libya's capital Tripoli on Sunday after clashes between backers of rival governments killed at least 32 people and sparked fears of major new conflict.

Armed groups had exchanged fire that damaged several hospitals and set buildings on fire starting Friday evening, the worst fighting in the Libyan capital since a landmark 2020 ceasefire.

A cautious calm had set in by Saturday evening, an AFP correspondent reported, and the health ministry said on Sunday morning that 32 people had been killed and 159 wounded during the clashes.

The fighting came after months of mounting tensions between backers of Abdulhamid Dbeibah and Fathi Bashagha, whose rival administrations are vying for control of the North African country which has seen more than a decade of violence since a 2011 uprising.

Dbeibah's administration, installed in the capital as part of a United Nations-led peace process last year, has so far prevented Bashagha from taking office there, arguing that the next administration should be the product of elections.

Bashagha was appointed by Libya's eastern-based parliament earlier this year and is backed by powerful eastern military chief



People inspect the damage following clashes between backers of rival governments in Libya's capital Tripoli, on Sunday (AFP)

Khalifa Haftar, whose 2019 attempt to seize the capital by force turned into a year-long civil war.

Bashagha, a former interior minister, had initially ruled out the use of violence to take power in Tripoli but subsequently hinted that he could resort to force.

Libya plunged into chaos fol-

lowing the 2011 overthrow and killing of dictator Muammar Gaddafi in a NATO-backed uprising, with myriad armed groups and foreign powers moving to fill the power vacuum.

Certain armed groups seen as neutral in the latest crisis moved to back Dbeibah this weekend to push back Bashagha's second at-

tempt to enter the capital.

Both sides exchanged blame on Saturday while world powers appealed for calm.

Shifting sands

The UN's Libya mission called for 'an immediate cessation of hostilities', deploring 'indiscriminate medium and heavy shelling in

civilian-populated neighbourhoods'. On Saturday evening, Dbeibah posted a video of himself surrounded by bodyguards and greeting fighters supporting his administration.

Wearing a blue shirt and accompanied by his personal guard, he shook hands and took selfies with supporters.

"We won't leave this country to the scoundrels," he said in the video posted on his Twitter account under the title 'end of the aggression'.

He said on Sunday he would create two committees to survey the damage from the fighting.

Dbeibah's Government of National Unity said fighting had bro-

ken out after negotiations to avoid bloodshed in the western city collapsed.

Bashagha denied such talks had taken place, and accused Dbeibah's 'illegitimate' administration of 'clinging to power'.

Local media reported late on Saturday that a group of pro-Bashagha militias that had been making their way to the capital from Misrata later turned back.

The fighting prompted several airlines to cancel flights in and out of the only working airport in the capital, and high school examinations set for the end of August were postponed.

But flights resumed and shops reopened on Sunday morning, while the University of Tripoli announced that exams set for Monday would go ahead as originally planned, annulling an earlier postponement.

On Saturday evening Dbeibah ordered the arrest of anyone involved in the 'attack on Tripoli', both civilian and military.

A pro-GNU force from Misrata - the hometown of both Dbeibah and Bashagha - said on Sunday it had arrested several involved in the attack. But analysts said the crisis was far from resolved, with the capital controlled by a multitude of armed groups with shifting alliances described by analyst Wolfram Lacher as 'a never-ending story'. AFP

Turkey accuses Greece of 'hostile action' against jets

Istanbul, Turkey - Turkey on Sunday said fellow NATO member Greece had used a Russian-made air defence system to harass Turkish jets on a reconnaissance mission in a 'hostile action'.

The incident took place on August 23 when Greece's S-300 missile system on the island of Crete put a lock on Turkish F-16 jets flying at 10,000 feet west of Rhodes, Turkish defence ministry sources said.

That was 'incompatible with the spirit of (NATO) alliance' and amounted to 'hostile acts' under the NATO rules of engagement, the sources added. "Despite this hostile action, (Turkish) jets completed their planned missions and returned to their base safely."

Greek defence ministry sources dismissed the allega-

tions. "Greece's S-300 missile system has never put a lock on Turkish F-16 jets", the sources said, according to state-run Ert television.

Turkey has in recent months complained of what it calls provocative actions by Greece, saying such moves undermine peace efforts.

The two uneasy NATO neighbours have long-standing sea and air boundary disputes which lead to near-daily air force patrols and interception missions mostly around Greek islands near Turkey's coastline.

Athens accuses Ankara of overflying Greek islands.

Turkey says Greece is stationing troops on islands in the Aegean Sea in violation of peace treaties signed after World Wars I and II.

AFP

Thousands rally in Argentina to support leader Kirchner on trial for 'corruption'

Buenos Aires, Argentina - Supporters of Argentine Vice President Cristina Kirchner - on trial for alleged corruption - gathered across the country on Saturday, with police using tear gas and water cannon in the capital Buenos Aires.

Kirchner, 69, is accused of fraudulently awarding public works contracts in her stronghold in Patagonia, and prosecutors have asked that she face 12 years in jail and a lifetime ban from politics.

Thousands responded to a social media campaign and gathered peacefully in town squares across Argentina, though in Buenos Aires some supporters breached police barricades to reach Kirchner's home.

"There has been too much blood in Argentina for them to continue threatening those who think differently with gunfire, bullets, tear gas and pepper spray," Kirchner told supporters.

The ex-president, who ruled from 2007 to 2015, called on her



Supporters of Argentina's Vice President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner holding a demonstration outside her house, clash with riot police, in Buenos Aires, on Saturday (AFP)

opponents 'to stop competing among themselves' about who hates Peronists more, referencing the political movement she subscribes to, based on the ideas of former ruler Juan Peron.

"It is incredible the degree of

cynicism and perversion of not assuming and taking charge of what they want: to exterminate Peronism," she said. Kirchner is the Senate president and enjoys parliamentary immunity.

Even if convicted - the verdict

is expected at the end of the year - she would not go to prison unless her sentence was ratified by the country's Supreme Court, or she loses her Senate seat at the next elections at the end of 2023. AFP

Tokyo to push for African seat on UN Security Council: PM

Tunis, Tunisia - Japan will use its place on the United Nations Security Council to push for an African seat on the top world body, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said on Sunday.

"Japan reiterates its determination to redress the historical injustice against Africa of not being represented through a permanent membership on the Security Council," Kishida told the Tokyo International Conference on African Development in Tunis. "In order for the UN to work effectively for peace and stability there is an urgent need to strengthen the UN as a whole through Security Council reform," he said.

The UN faces 'a moment of truth', he added.

Japan was among five countries elected in June to hold a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for 2023 and 2024.

Kishida, speaking over live video from Tokyo after testing positive for COVID-19 days earlier, reiterated a pledge announced on Saturday to invest some US\$30bn in Africa over the next three years.

He also announced that Japan would appoint a special envoy to the Horn of Africa, where a long drought has prompted the UN's weather agency to warn this week of an 'unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe'. Kishida said Japan would pump US\$8.3mn into the troubled but gold-rich Liptako-Gourma tri-borders area between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.

AFP

Pope creates new cardinals who may choose successor



Pope Francis (right) and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI meeting with new Cardinals following a consistory to create 20 new cardinals in The Vatican on Saturday (AFP)

Vatican City, Holy See - Pope Francis on Saturday created 20 new cardinals picked from the four corners of the world, most of whom could one day end up choosing his successor.

Francis has raised the possibility of retiring due to his declining health, a path taken by his predecessor Benedict XVI. If he were to do so, a conclave involving all cardinals aged under 80 would be called to pick a successor.

Sixteen of the 20 cardinals created on Saturday would be eligible for that conclave based on their ages.

The ceremony at St. Peter's Basilica was the 85-year-old pope's eighth since being elected in 2013 and included clergy known for their pastoral work

and, in some cases, progressive views.

All parts of the globe were represented in his selection, including new cardinals from Brazil and Nigeria, Singapore and East Timor, among others.

They each knelt before the pontiff, who presented them with the red square cap and ring typical of their new station.

"A cardinal loves the Church... by dealing with the big issues as well as the small ones, by meeting the great people of this world as well as the smallest, who are great before God," said the pope, who arrived in a wheelchair but seemed in good shape.

All new cardinals attended the ceremony, except for Ghana's Richard Kuua Baawobr who had

to be hospitalised over a cardiac issue.

After this weekend, Francis will have chosen 83 out of the 132 cardinals currently qualified to elect a new pope.

That is nearly two-thirds of the total and precisely the percentage needed for any proposed name to pass.

In recent months, the pope has been forced to rely on a wheelchair due to knee pain, which he has said is inoperable.

He also suffers from sciatica, a chronic nerve condition that causes pain in his hip. The new cardinals are always scrutinised by Vatican observers for clues as to the future direction of the Church and its 1.3bn faithful.

AFP

Six dead as truck hits Dutch village barbecue

The Hague, Netherlands - Dutch police on Sunday said six people were killed and seven other people hurt after a truck ran off the top of a dike road and ploughed into revellers at a neighbourhood barbecue.

The accident happened around 6pm (1600 GMT) on Saturday when the Spanish-registered lorry left the road in the village of Nieuw-Beijerland, 30km south of Rotterdam.

The victims were three women aged 28, 32 and 75, and three men aged 41, 50 and 62, all from the local area, police said. One of the injured was in a critical condition in hospital.

Police had first confirmed at least two dead after the vehicle drove into the crowded community barbecue, which Dutch news reports said was being hosted by an ice-skating club.

"We now have six people killed and seven injured, one seriously after yesterday's accident," police spokeswoman Mirjam Boers told AFP.

"We are still investigating what exactly happened," she said.

Photographs from the scene identified the truck as belonging to the El Mosca company, based in Spain.

Boers confirmed the 46-year-old driver from Spain had been arrested 'and was not under the influence of alcohol', at the time of the accident.

"He was arrested for causing



Local residents look at the scene in Nieuw-Beijerland on Sunday where a truck crashed into a group of people dining out near Rotterdam on Saturday (AFP)

a fatal accident and serious bodily injury. His role in the incident is under investigation. For the time being, we are keeping all scenarios about the facts open," police said in a statement.

'Unimaginable sadness'

Dutch King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima said they

were 'shocked' by the tragedy.

"We are shocked and moved by the terrible accident in Nieuw-Beijerland last night in which so many people were killed. An unimaginable sadness within this close-knit community," the king and queen said in an official message.

"The families affected are in our thoughts and we wish the in-

jured strength on their way to the best possible recovery."

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte also sent condolences.

"Terrible news... my thoughts are with the victims and relatives of this terrible drama. I wish them a lot of strength," Rutte said on Twitter.

Quoting witnesses, the Rijnmond regional broadcaster said

the truck stopped for a moment at a T-junction on the narrow Zuidzijdsedijk dike, before taking off and ploughing into the revellers. Three of the victims - a mother, son and daughter-in-law who was eight months pregnant - came from the same family, the broadcaster reported, quoting a local church announcement.

AFP

Kuwait calls September election amid political feud

Kuwait City, Kuwait - The Kuwaiti government on Sunday called a legislative election for September 29, the state news agency said, two months after parliament was dissolved amid simmering political tensions.

The only Gulf state with a fully elected legislature, the key oil producer has been hit by regular feuding between the ruling Al-Sabah family and the assembly.

The current government was formed at the start of August after the previous cabinet resigned in April, just three months after being sworn in.

That came amid growing disputes between that cabinet and opposition MPs, who had won nearly half the seats in the legislature during the previous election in December 2020.

AFP

Angola holds state funeral for ex-strongman Eduardo Santos

Luanda, Angola - Angolans and a dozen African leaders gathered on Sunday for the state funeral of former strongman president Jose Eduardo dos Santos, whose nearly four-decade rule of the oil-rich nation was marred by allegations of plunder and nepotism.

The ceremony is taking place in the capital Luanda on what would have been dos Santos's 80th birthday, and comes days after his party, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), saw its worst results at the polls in the most hotly contested elections since independence.

Dos Santos will be buried with military honours - there will be cannon fire and a minute's silence. Family and MPLA members are expected to speak at the ceremony led by President Joao



The cortege carrying the coffin of Jose Eduardo dos Santos arrives at his state funeral at the Praca da Republica in Luanda on Sunday (AFP)

Lourenco in Luanda's Praca da Republica.

Dos Santos died last month at a clinic in Barcelona following a cardiac arrest.

Some of his children were at loggerheads with the government and his estranged wife over

where and when he was to be buried. But a Spanish court last week ruled that the body be returned to his wife in Angola.

His eldest daughter Isabel dos Santos, who has faced a slew of investigations into her multinational business dealings, last

week wrote on Instagram that she would not be able to attend the funeral.

Dos Santos led the country from 1979 to 2017 under the MPLA banner. His party notched up its worst electoral performance in this week's polls.

After 97 per cent of the results were tallied, an initial count showed the MPLA had won 51.07 per cent of the vote, with 44.05 per cent for the party's main rival, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

UNITA - which fought a bitter 27-year civil war against the MPLA government - has rejected the results.

Five members of the election commission have threatened not to sign off the results.

AFP



Acting Defence Minister of Afghanistan Mohammad Yaqoob Mullah speaks during a press conference in Kabul on Sunday (AFP)

Pakistan providing airspace for US drones: Afghan defence minister

Kabul, Afghanistan - Afghan defence minister Mohammad Yaqoob Mullah accused Pakistan on Sunday of providing airspace for US drones to enter his country, characterising the incursions as a continuation of Washington's 'invasion'.

Mullah's comments came less than a month after US President Joe Biden announced the killing of Al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri in a drone strike in Kabul.

US drones continued to be seen flying over Kabul even now, Mullah said. "Our information shows that they (US drones) are entering into Afghanistan from Pakistan, using the airspace of Pakistan," Mullah told reporters when asked where the drones were coming from.

"We demand that Pakistan should not allow its airspace to be used against us."

There was no immediate response to Mullah's comments from the Pakistani military, but it has previously denied allowing the country's airspace to be used, most recently over the Zawahiri case.

Deploying these drones into Afghanistan is 'still a clear invasion of Afghanistan and its airspace by the Americans', Mullah said. "They are doing this shamelessly. We condemn this illegal act and demand that the Americans put an end to it."

The United States led an invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 that toppled the first Taliban government, after the hardline Islamist group re-

fused to hand over the late Al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden following the 9/11 attacks. The drone attack in July that killed Zawahiri, bin Laden's successor, was the first known strike by the US on a target in Afghanistan since Washington withdrew its forces from the country on August 31 last year.

Mullah said the authorities were investigating Biden's claims of killing Zawahiri.

The US drones are entering Afghanistan from Pakistan, using the airspace of Pakistan

MOHAMMAD MUJAHID

Pakistan's south braces for deluge from swollen northern rivers

Sukkur, Pakistan - Pakistan's flooded southern Sindh province braced on Sunday for a fresh deluge from swollen rivers in the north as the death toll from this year's monsoon topped 1,000.

The mighty Indus River that courses through Pakistan's second-most populous region is fed by dozens of mountain tributaries to the north, but many have burst their banks following record rains and glacier melt.

Officials warned torrents of water are expected to reach Sindh in the next few days, adding misery to millions already affected by the floods.

"Right now, Indus is in high flood," said Aziz Soomro, the supervisor of Sukkur Barrage - a massive colonial-era construction that regulates the river's flow

and redirects water to a vast system of canals.

The annual monsoon is essential for irrigating crops and replenishing lakes and dams across the Indian subcontinent, but it also brings destruction. Officials say this year's monsoon flooding has affected more than 33mn people - one in seven Pakistanis - destroying or badly damaging nearly a million homes.

On Sunday, the country's National Disaster Management Authority said the death toll from the monsoon rains had reached 1,033, with 119 killed in the previous 24 hours.

It said this year's floods were comparable to 2010 - the worst on record - when over 2,000 people died and nearly a fifth of the country was under water.



Flood affected men collect bamboos from a collapsed mud house after heavy monsoon rains in Jaffarabad district, Balochistan province, on Sunday (AFP)

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who cancelled a trip to Britain to oversee relief operations, said he had never seen anything like it before. "Village after village has been wiped out. Millions of houses have been destroyed. There has been immense destruction," he said after flying over Sindh by helicopter.

Thousands of people living near flood-swollen rivers in Pakistan's north were ordered to evacuate from danger zones, but army helicopters and rescuers are still plucking laggards to safety. "People were informed around three or four o'clock in the morning to evacuate their houses," rescue worker Umar Rafiq told AFP.

"When the flood water hit the area we had to rescue children

and women."

Many rivers in the area - a picturesque tourist destination of rugged mountains and valleys - have burst their banks, demolishing scores of buildings including a 150-room hotel that crumbled into a raging torrent.

Guest house owner Nasir Khan, whose business was badly hit by the 2010 flooding, said he had lost everything. "It has washed away the remaining part of the hotel," he told AFP.

The flood-swollen rivers were also yielding unlikely riches.

Locals scrambled to snag thousands of valuable cedar, pine and oak logs that had likely been illegally harvested in the mountains but were being washed downstream.

AFP

Two United States warships transit through Taiwan Strait

Washington, US - Two United States warships sailed through the Taiwan Strait on Sunday, the American navy said, the first such transit since China staged unprecedented military drills around the island.

In a statement, the US Navy said the transit 'demonstrates the United States' commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific'.

Tensions in the Taiwan Strait soared to their highest level in years this month after US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taipei. Beijing reacted furiously, staging days of air and sea exercises around Taiwan. Taipei condemned the drills and missile tests as preparation for an invasion.

Taiwan lives under constant threat of an invasion by China, which claims the self-ruled, democratic island as part of its territory to be seized one day - by force if necessary. Washington diplomatically recognises Beijing over Taipei, but maintains de facto relations with Taiwan and supports the island's right to decide its own future.

The US Seventh Fleet said the pair of Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruisers - the USS Antietam and the USS Chancellorsville - conducted the 'routine' transit on Sunday 'through waters where high seas freedoms of navigation and overflight apply in accordance with international



The Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Chancellorsville (CG 62) transits the East China Sea in the Taiwan Strait during routine underway operations on Sunday (AFP)

law'. "These ships transited through a corridor in the Strait that is beyond the territorial sea of any coastal State," a statement said.

"The United States military flies, sails, and operates anywhere international law allows."

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) said the US had 'openly hyped up' the ships' passage through the Strait. "The PLA Eastern Theatre Command is following and warning the US vessels throughout their entire journey, and is aware of all

The US Seventh Fleet said the pair of Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruisers conducted the routine transit through waters where high seas freedoms of navigation and overflight apply in accordance with international law

movements," spokesman Senior Colonel Shi Yi said. "Troops in the (eastern) theatre remain on high alert and are prepared at all times to foil any provocations."

Taiwan's defense ministry

confirmed a pair of warships sailed from north to south through the channel.

"During their southward journey through the Taiwan Strait, the military is fully monitoring

relevant movements in our surrounding sea and airspace, and the situation is normal."

'Freedom of navigation'

The Seventh Fleet is based in Japan and is a core part of Washington's navy presence in the Pacific. The US and Western allies have increased 'freedom of navigation' crossings by naval vessels of both the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea to reinforce the concept that those seas are international waterways, sparking anger from Beijing.

Washington has said its position on Taiwan remains unchanged and has accused China of threatening peace in the Taiwan Strait and using the visit by Pelosi as a pretext for military exercises. China's drills included firing multiple ballistic missiles into waters off Taiwan - some of the world's busiest shipping routes - which was the first time Beijing has taken such a step since the mid-1990s.

Taiwan staged its own drills, simulating a defense against invasion and displaying its most advanced fighter jet in a rare nighttime demonstration. Under President Xi Jinping, China's tone on Taiwan has grown more aggressive, with increased military activity and more combative messaging in recent years.

AFP



A supporter of Yenifer Paredes, the sister-in-law of Peru's President Pedro Castillo, rallies outside the courthouse in Lima, on Friday (AFP)

Peru's Castillo shakes up police leadership after 'illegal' raid

Lima, Peru - Leftist Peruvian President Pedro Castillo replaced the leadership of the country's national police on Saturday, two weeks after anticorruption officials searched government headquarters in search of the leader's wanted sister-in-law.

During the raid earlier this month, which Castillo has called 'illegal', investigators looked for Yenifer Paredes, who is accused of taking part in a corruption ring which prosecutors allege is run by the president and his wife, Lilia Paredes.

Among others, Castillo is now seeking to dismiss the head of that operation, Harvey Colchado, whom he says violated presidential immunity.

Deputy Internal Order Minister Abel Gamarra said on Saturday the turnover is a 'natural change' as part of regular personnel switch-ups at the Interior Ministry.

"Norms (on appointment re-

quirements) have not been violated," Gamarra told RPP radio, adding that the 'police command is not being crushed'.

Nevertheless, right-wing opposition lawmaker Jorge Montoya, who sits on the Internal Order parliamentary committee, on Twitter called the changes an 'indiscriminate abuse of authority' by Castillo.

According to human rights lawyer Carlos Rivera Paz, Castillo 'seems to want a police force that accommodates his interests', which could include obstructing any investigations of which he is a target.

The ordeal is the second scandal Castillo has faced in regards to personnel changes at the top of Peru's security forces.

In January, he was forced to name a new cabinet head after controversy over promotions in the Peruvian National Police (PNP) and the armed forces.

AFP

Chad rebels claim killing 10 soldiers, government denies

N'Djamena, Chad - A leading Chad rebel group said on Saturday it had killed ten soldiers in the north of the country, a claim the government rejected as 'fake news'.

The Military Command Council for the Salvation of the Republic (CCMSR) said troops had attacked its forces in the Wouri district in the northern Tibesti region bordering Niger and Libya. The group, which has refused to sign a peace deal with the government, said its fighters had killed ten soldiers and captured eight more.

Government spokesman-Abderaman Koulamallah told AFP that some 20 rebel vehicles had entered the country over the past week, but there had been 'no skirmish' with government forces. "We have been monitoring these columns with planes and they left Chadian territory some days back," he claimed, terming the CCMSR statement 'fake news'.

The Tibesti region has seen several major rebel movements emerge since independence from France in 1960.

Since the 2012 discovery of gold there, the region's mines have attracted panners by the thousand, as well as rebels from Chad and neighbouring Sudan looking to use the precious metal as a means of funding their armed operations. The CCMSR also on Saturday accused France of overflying its positions with planes from the French-led Barkhane anti-militant mission and warned it would regard any bombardment as a declaration of war.

The CCMSR was formed in 2016 from a split within the Front for Change and Concord (FACT) rebel group. FACT launched the offensive from Libya that led to the April 2021 death of former president Idriss Deby Itno, who had ruled Chad for 30 years.

AFP

Serbia, Kosovo reach free movement agreement: EU

Brussels, Belgium - Serbia and Kosovo have agreed on an arrangement for free movement between their countries, the European Union's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell announced on Saturday.

Serbia had agreed to abolish its entry-exit document for Kosovo ID holders, and Kosovo had agreed to not introduce them for Serbian ID holders, said Borrell, in a video statement posted online.

"Kosovo Serbs, as well as all other citizens, will be able to travel freely between Kosovo and Serbia using their ID cards," he added.

The agreement came after talks in Brussels earlier this week between Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti and Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, chaired by Borrell.

"I am very happy that we have found a European solution that facilitates travel between Kosovo and Serbia," said Borrell, thanking both leaders.

Petar Petkovic, the head of Serbia's office for Kosovo, wel-



Kosovo Albanians ride their bikes along the Ibar River bridge in the town of Mitrovica, on Friday (AFP)

comed the free movement deal.

'We have managed to ensure peace and stability on the territory of Kosovo and to preserve Serbian ID cards for Serbs' living in Kosovo 'and thus also the presence of the Serbian state on this territory', he said in a statement. In Pristina, Kurti said he was pleased with the 'reciprocity' of the deal.

"Solutions for normalisation must include reciprocity, because good neighbourly relations imply it," he said on Facebook.

'Problems pending'

Serbia deeply resents Kosovo's breakaway status and has never recognised its independence.

Serbs in northern Kosovo have long refused to acknowledge Pristina's authority and have largely remained loyal to the Serbian government in Belgrade.

The Brussels meeting was called to try to defuse antagonism between the Balkan neighbours that had led to violent incidents in northern Kosovo in recent weeks.

Kurti and Vucic also met visiting US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Gabriel Escobar in Brussels late on Wednesday, and Borrell thanked the United States for their support of the talks.

"But this work on freedom of movement is not over," he said. "There are some problems pending. I expect both leaders to continue showing pragmatism and constructiveness in order to solve the problem with their license plates," he added.

Another point of tension be-

Serbia has agreed to abolish its entry-exit document for Kosovo ID holders, and Kosovo has agreed to not introduce them for Serbian ID holders, said the EU foreign policy chief

tween the two countries has been over vehicle licence plates that Pristina has imposed across Kosovo, including on the Serbian minority living in the north.

Aleksandar Vucic on Saturday morning said the ID card issue was 'a tiny problem', but the license plate one was 'much more complicated'.

Kosovo's ethnic Albanian majority fought Serbian forces in 1999 with support from NATO warplanes.

AFP

Indonesian knights keep European medieval sword-fighting alive

Jakarta, Indonesia - Armed with blunt swords, a dozen would-be chevaliers are put through their paces in a gallant effort to keep alive European medieval martial arts taught hundreds of years ago.

But this is not a scene from Game of Thrones or the Adventures of Robin Hood - it's a breezy Sunday afternoon in the middle of Jakarta, one of the world's biggest megacities.

The fighters are practicing sword-fighting techniques that were honed across Europe from the 14th to 18th centuries - known as Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA).

After a quick warm-up, members of the Gwaith-i-Megyr group take turns to show off their

swordsmanship outside the massive Gelora Bung Karno stadium. "The training is beyond my expectation. As we spar using weapons, the adrenaline rush from attacking and defending is more keenly felt compared to hand-to-hand combat," said Gede Indra Krisega, a 23-year-old civil servant.

'Fellowship of Swordsmen'

The Gwaith-i-Megyr was established in 2016 after several members of a local fan club of English author JRR Tolkien - who wrote the Lord of the Rings trilogy - showed an interest in HEMA.

Nearly 50 people have recently joined the group in Jakarta and its sister branch in the Javan



Members of the Gwaith-i-Megyr group practicing sword-fighting techniques known as Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA) at a park in Jakarta on July 24 (AFP)

city of Bandung.

The group's name means 'Fellowship of Swordsmen' and comes from the Sindarin language, one of the fictional languages created by Tolkien in his novels, said Ahmad Rizal Souliisa, one of the founding members of the group.

HEMA enthusiasts usually pore over manuals left behind by past masters as they learn, train and revive the moves, Souliisa said. But it is not only the fighting and fandom of films that inspire the duellists - they also love studying the history of European sword-fighting.

'World tournaments'

Sekar Widya Putri did not have high hopes when she was invited

by her friend to join the Gwaith-i-Megyr in 2017, but she said she has come to appreciate the education associated with HEMA.

"I love learning about such details from the arts - why we need to parry this way, which body parts that are open (to attack)," she said.

After years of training, the 30-year-old copywriter wants to see her name on the international HEMA rankings, which track tournaments around the world.

There is currently just one Indonesian on that list of 9,000 competitors - a man who took part in a Taiwan tournament in 2019.

"I would like to add one more Indonesian to the list," said Putri.

AFP

INDIA

TWIN TOWERS TURN TO DUST

The Rise

Close to 100m in heights, the twin towers in Noida are taller than Qutub Minar in the national capital, which stands at 73m. The towers - Apex (32 storeys) and Ceyane (29 storeys) - are part of the Emerald Court, which were found to be in violation of multiple regulations regarding construction following which a long legal battle was fought in the Allahabad High Court in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh and then the Supreme Court of India which culminated in favour of the Residents Welfare Association.

The Inception:

The story began after a plot was allotted to Supertech Ltd in 2004 by the New Okhla Industrial Development Authority (NOIDA) for the development of a housing society which came to be known as Emerald Court.

In 2005, the building plan for the construction of 14 towers with ten floors each for a housing society was approved by the Authority according to the New Okhla Industrial Development Area Building Regulations and Directions 1986. Supertech was given permission to construct 14 towers with ten storeys in each.

However, the restriction on the maximum height was imposed to be 37 metres.

As per the original plan, 14 towers of ten storeys each and a shopping complex along with a garden area constituted the project.

In June 2006, the company received additional land for the construction with the terms being the same. The plan was revised. According to the new plan, two more towers had to come up, in which the garden was scrapped.

In 2009, the final plan was the construction of two towers Apex and Ceyane with 40 floors each while the plan was yet to be approved.

BUILDERS PAY THE PRICE



The Fall

In 2011, the Residents Welfare Association filed a petition in the Allahabad High Court. It was alleged that the Uttar Pradesh Apartment Owners Act, 2010 was breached during the construction of the towers. The homeowners claimed that the two towers had less than 16 metres of distance between them which was in violation of the law. The original space designated for the garden in the original plan was allegedly used to erect the twin towers.

Legal tussle

In 2012, the authorities approved the new plan proposed in 2009, ahead of the commencement of hearing in the Allahabad High Court.

In April 2014, the Allahabad High Court delivered the judgment in favour of the RWA while also passing an order to demolish the twin towers.

It asked Supertech to demolish the towers at its own expense and also refund the money of the homebuyers along with 14 per cent interest.

In May 2014, the Noida Authority and Supertech moved the Supreme Court stating that the construction of the twin towers were according to the regulations.

In August 2021, however, the Supreme Court affirmed the order of the Allahabad High Court and ordered to demolish the towers while also stating that the construction had been made in violation of the regulations.

The Supreme Court has said that the date of demolition may be confirmed as August 28, with a 'bandwidth of seven days' between August 29 to September 4, to take into account any marginal delay on account of technical reasons or weather conditions.

The twin towers were finally demolished on Sunday. ANI

NINE YEARS OF STRUGGLE NINE SECONDS TO ACCOMPLISH

Noida, India - India demolished two residential high-rise buildings outside New Delhi on Sunday, in a dramatic spectacle carried live on television channels after days of excited media build-up.

The destruction of the 100-metre-high 'Twin Towers' in Noida, home to a concrete forest of similar structures, was also a rare example of India getting tough on corrupt developers and officials.

The 32 floors of 'Apex' and the 29 of 'Ceyane', containing between them nearly 1,000 apartments that were never inhabited in nine years of legal disputes, were brought down in about nine seconds, creating an immense cloud of dust and debris.

The controlled implosions using 3,700kg of explosives were India's biggest demolition to date, local media reported.

Thousands of people, as well as stray dogs, had to be evacuated before the blast, including from neighbouring high-rises, one of which was reportedly just nine metres away.

There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage to nearby buildings but a local official told reporters that the operation had gone 'largely as planned'.

Indian media reported minute details of the demolition, including the number of holes drilled for the charges (9,642) and the volume of debris created (80,000 tonnes).

TV news channel Times Now, which like others ran a countdown timer and showed little else on Sunday morning, called it the 'mother of all demolitions' of the 'towers of shame'.

Police shut a busy adjacent expressway, where on Saturday motorists stopped to take final selfies with the towers in the backdrop.

The legal dispute over the towers went all the way to India's Supreme Court, which ruled last year that the buildings breached safety regulations and that the developers colluded with corrupt authorities.

The world's fastest-growing major economy has seen a construction boom in the last two decades, which has also given rise to a nexus of corruption involving politicians, bureaucrats and powerful builders. Developers often sidestep many construction, urban-planning and environmental regulations, usually with impunity.

In Delhi's suburbs of Noida and Greater Noida - where the towers were demolished on Sunday - it is estimated that more than 100 residential towers have been abandoned by builders, making these areas look like ghost cities.

Lawyer Jayant Bhushan, who represented the complainants in the case against Supertech, said builders must clean up their act to win back homebuyers' trust.

"Unless builders follow rules, it will be hapless buyers who will end up burning their fingers again and again," he told AFP.

AFP

IN NUMBERS

US\$8.75 MN
COST OF CONSTRUCTION

750,000 SQ.FT
BUILT-UP AREA

80,000 TONNES
DEBRIS

3,700 KG
EXPLOSIVES USED

US\$2.5 MN
COST OF DEMOLITION

US\$1.88 MN
TO BE REALISED BY SELLING
DEBRIS

US\$630,000
TO BE RECOVERED FROM
BUILDERS

(US\$1=INR80 APPROX)

INSURANCE SECURED BEFORE DEMOLITION: BASIC-US\$12.5MN FOR GAS PIPELINES-US\$31,260

People evacuate, NGOs save stray dogs, roads closed, police stand on alert

New Delhi, India - The morning visuals from the spot of demolition showed cranes arriving at the site in Noida's Sector 93A, while police were asking people to vacate the area around the Supertech Twin Towers as the clock ticks close to the scheduled explosion time.

Members of several NGOs were seen rescuing dogs at the last moment before the demolition at 2.30pm local time.

"We have saved almost 30-35 dogs. We're working on getting out each and every one of them," said an NGO member.

A family who lives in Emerald Court Society has vacated their flat and shifted to Parsa-vanath Village in a nearby area.

Himanshu, a resident, said that they have

been assured that they can return by the evening, but added that "all are prepared (to stay away) for one or two days".

The Noida Expressway - the main interstate connector - was closed just before the blast and was left opened half an hour after the demolition.

"Expressway only to be closed right before the blast at around 2.15pm. It will be opened half an hour after the blast, as soon as the dust settles down," said Noida deputy commissioner of police Rajesh S before the demolition.

"An instant command centre has been set up with seven CCTV cameras. Traffic experts along with us, are monitoring all congestion points," he added.

All together 560 police personnel, 100 from reserve forces apart from the members of four quick response teams and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) were deployed to tackle any untoward situation.

"Traffic diversion points have also been activated," said the official.

The health impact

The demolition of the towers said to have left behind approximately 35,000 cubic metres of debris that would take at least three months to be cleared.

The health impact of the resulting dust on residents will be minimal as experts overseeing the demolition will take steps to control

the impact.

"When you demolish a big structure like that there will be dust and there would be some smoke because you are using explosives. So, the direction of the air matters. The direction of the wind should also be taken into consideration. Demolishing like this or rather an explosion happening in the open air is much safer than say underground mines," said Dr Mrinal Sircar, Head Pulmonology and Critical Care, Fortis Noida.

"In case of underground demolition, where it won't get dissipated, in such scenarios they use various exhaust techniques so that it's sewn out in the ambient air," he explained.

"In today's demolition, the dust and gases

will get dissipated in the air. The experts who are involved in such big demolitions will take care of all these things," Dr Sircar confirmed.

The Environment Department of the Uttar Pradesh government installed six special dust machines at the demolition site to monitor pollution levels.

"Pollution levels were recorded before and during the explosion. Pollution levels will be monitored in the coming hours before the reports are finalised," said a technician, who goes by one name Umesh. "The amount of PM 10 and PM 2.5 will be checked through this machine. Its report will come in the next 24 hours," he added.

ANI

Advantage Al Harthy

Oman Racing's Ahmad al Harthy seals second pole position of ELMS season in Barcelona

Muscat - Oman's number one racing driver Ahmad al Harthy scorched to his second pole position of the European Le Mans Series campaign at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya on Saturday to put Oman Racing at the front of the LMGTE grid for the fourth race of the 2022 season.

Following a very challenging weekend at Monza in Italy at the beginning of July, where the squad was impacted by a very negative Balance of Performance grading, normal service has been resumed in Spain with Al Harthy seriously impressing in the short and sharp 10-minute qualifying period.

"What a beautiful session that was!", said an overjoyed Al Harthy,

"I'm really, really happy with our performance and I must say a big thank you to the team who have been working extremely hard since we arrived here in Barcelona.

"It's a very tricky circuit to maximise our one lap performance, but they gave me everything to make it possible."

The event started pretty much perfectly for the Omani and team-mates Sam De Haan and Marco Sorensen on Friday with the fastest LMGTE time in opening free practice and Al Harthy then went on to con-



Ahmad Al Harthy

clude the subsequent session for the Bronze graded drivers' fourth quickest.

In second free practice on Saturday morning the team was eighth, with plenty of good work having been done by the TF Sport squad - which looks after the Oman Racing entry - with the set-up of the No.69 Aston

I'm really, really happy with our performance and I must say a big thank you to the team

AHMAD AL HARTHY



Ahmad Al Harthy in action at the European Le Mans Series qualification at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya on Saturday

Martin Vantage GTE ahead of the afternoon's grid determining session.

Although some clouds gathered above the circuit, the temperatures remained very warm during qualifying and Al Harthy's performance was, likewise, red hot.

Posting a time of 1m46.407

seconds on his first flying lap to take provisional pole, he then improved to 1m45.720 seconds on lap two and secured pole with his third lap of the session - 1m45.692 seconds.

"I'm extremely delighted with where we are now compared to what we had at Monza, everything is much better here so far",

said the racer who is supported by the Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Sohar International Bank, OQ, Omantel and MHD-ITICS.

"We know it's going to be a very, very tough and long race, the tyre degradation here is the highest from all the circuits we visit in the ELMS so looking after

them is key.

"Starting from pole is the first part of the job, now we really hope to have a good race and to be able to challenge.

Of course, a big thank you as always to our amazing partners and to everyone at Oman Racing and TF Sport for the hard work so far this weekend."

Axelsen aims higher after claiming second badminton world title

Tokyo, Japan - Danish ace Viktor Axelsen said he could still "become a better player" after winning his second world title on Sunday, but brushed off comparisons with Chinese great Lin Dan.

Reigning Olympic champion Axelsen crushed Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn 21-5, 21-16 in Tokyo to add another world title to the one he claimed in 2017, cementing his place at the top of the sport.

The 28-year-old did not lose a single game at this week's world championships and he believes he has the potential to improve further with "a long road ahead" of him.

"I want to become as good as I possibly can," said the world number one, who has lost only one singles match this year.

"I try to take every day as it comes and try to get better and better every day. I still feel like I can become a better player and that's my main goal."

Axelsen will try to emulate Lin in winning back-to-back Olympic titles when the Paris Games get underway in 2024.

Lin won two Olympic golds and five world titles during his



Viktor Axelsen of Denmark proudly displays the trophy on the podium after his victory against Kunlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand (AFP)

storied career but Axelsen refused to be compared to a player he believes is badminton's greatest of all time.

"For me, Lin Dan is the best player who has ever been - he's the GOAT," said Axelsen.

Yamaguchi champ

In women's singles, Japan's Akane Yamaguchi retained her title in front of her home crowd with a 21-12, 10-21, 21-14 win over China's Chen Yufei.

Top seed Yamaguchi had not dropped a single game on her way to the final but she had to dig deep to beat Olympic champion Chen after the momentum shifted in the second game.

"With the fans being here in the arena, the support they gave me really gave me strength," said the 25-year-old. "Maybe that was the reason I was able to stay very positive throughout the tournament."

AFP

Nadal eyes 23rd major as arch-rival Djokovic gives up on US Open

New York, United States - Rafael Nadal targets a fifth US Open and 23rd Grand Slam title in New York from next week with his path to the title no longer blocked by Novak Djokovic, whose refusal to get vaccinated has ruled him out of a second major this year.

Nineteen years after making his debut, the 36-year-old Nadal drags his injury-prone body into a tournament he won in 2010, 2013, 2017 and 2019, the year of his last appearance.

The Spaniard has had to sit out the US Open four times in his career and there are once again fresh doubts over his physical ability to survive a gruelling two weeks at Flushing Meadows.

Since an abdomen injury forced him to hand Nick Kyrgios a walkover into the Wimbledon final, Nadal has played just once - a first-up loss to Borna Coric in Cincinnati.

Nadal admitted on Friday that he had been protecting his injury in Cincinnati but had been able to practice with intensity in the build-up to the US Open.

"I take it very easy in the Cincinnati, too, in the practices.



Rafael Nadal of Spain during practice session ahead of the US Open at USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center on Saturday (AFP)

The match, I try my best without putting all the effort there on the serve," Nadal said.

"I hope to be ready for the action. That's the only thing that I can say. Taking care with the serve, being honest. But in general terms, yes, I am practicing at high level of intensity."

Nadal has become accustomed to overcoming setbacks, winning a 14th French Open in June despite playing the whole tournament with pain-killing injections in his foot. An added incentive for Nadal is the opportunity to reclaim the world number one spot from defending champion Daniil Medvedev, the man he defeated in the 2019 final.

While Nadal trains in New York, career-long rival Djokovic will remain in Europe after finally giving up hope of a last-minute change of Covid policy by the US authorities.

The famously unvaccinated Djokovic, who won the last of his three US Open crowns in 2018, is barred from entering the United States for refusing to take the vaccine.

AFP

Serena Williams prepares for final curtain call at Flushing Meadows

New York, United States - After a glittering 27-year professional career in which she became one of the greatest players of all time, Serena Williams is preparing to bid farewell to tennis at the major where it all began.

The 40-year-old sporting icon ended the guessing game surrounding her future earlier this month by revealing that the "countdown" to her retirement had started, with her final Grand Slam appearance expected at the US Open in New York starting on Monday.

"There comes a time in life when we have to decide to move in a different direction," Williams

wrote. "That time is always hard when you love something so much."

The announcement sets the stage for what will be an emotional farewell for Williams, who faces unheralded world number 80 Danka Kovinic in Monday's first round at the Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Williams won the first of her 23 Grand Slam singles titles as a 17-year-old at the 1999 US Open, beating Martina Hingis in the final.

That breakthrough victory confirmed what had become apparent ever since her professional debut four years earlier:



Serena Williams of the United States during a practice session at USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center on Saturday (AFP)

There comes a time in life when we have to decide to move in a different direction

SERENA WILLIAMS

that Williams, alongside sister Venus, was a rising force in women's tennis.

While 1999 marked her first singles Slam, by then Williams had already won mixed doubles titles at Wimbledon and the US Open in 1998.

Her win in the 1999 singles final would light the touchpaper for the most dominant career of any female player in the Open era, her 23 Grand Slam titles second only to Margaret Court's 24.

While a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam singles title is likely to remain beyond her next week, Williams has nevertheless produced a collection of records that in all probability will never be broken.

With seven Australian Open singles titles, seven Wimbledon titles and six US Open titles, Williams is the only player, male or female to win three different Grand Slams six times or more.

In total, she has won 39 Grand Slam titles -- with 14 women's doubles crowns and two mixed doubles titles to go alongside her 23 singles victories.

Her longevity is also unmatched. She was first ranked world number one in 2002, and last held the position in 2017 -- an interval of just under 15 years.

Williams also holds the record for the longest gap between her first and last Grand Slam wins: 17 years and 139 days between her 1999 US Open win and the 2017 Australian Open in Melbourne, when she was pregnant with daughter Olympia.

AFP



Paul Pogba

Police investigates Paul Pogba’s claims of extortion

Rome, Italy - French police have opened an investigation into World Cup winner Paul Pogba’s claims he is being threatened and targeted for extortion by gangsters, a source close to the case told AFP on Sunday.

Pogba’s allegations came after his brother Mathias published a bizarre video online - in four languages (French, Italian, English and Spanish) - promising “great revelations” about the Juventus star.

A statement signed by his lawyers, his mother Yeo Moriba and current agent Rafaela Pimenta said that the videos published on Saturday night “are unfortunately no

surprise”.

“They are in addition to threats and extortion attempts by an organised gang against Paul Pogba,” read the statement.

“The competent bodies in Italy and France were informed a month ago and there will be no further comments in relation to the ongoing investigation.”

Mathias Pogba, 32, promised “great revelations about (his) brother Paul Pogba and his agent Rafaela Pimenta”, who took over as head of the company of former agent Mino Raiola who died in April.

AFP

ATONEMENT

Arsenal’s Gabriel makes up for his blunder with the winner against Fulham

London, United Kingdom - Gabriel made amends for a dreadful error by scoring the winner in a 2-1 victory at home to Fulham on Saturday as Arsenal won their fourth straight game to start the Premier League season.

Aleksandar Mitrovic punished a mistake by Gabriel to give Fulham a surprise lead on 56 minutes, but Martin Odegaard equalised with a deflected effort just past the hour.

Gabriel bundled in after a scramble at a corner with five minutes to play to keep Mikel Arteta’s side two points clear of reigning champions Manchester City at the top.

“Big boost, winning like this is really nice,” Arteta told Sky Sports.

“We made a mistake and they punished us but then how we reacted against adversity... the way we went about it, the team believed. They wanted to win the match, they went for it and we managed to do it.”

Asked if Arsenal were primed to make a title challenge, Arteta downplayed expectations.

“No, this is just the start of the season. We are in a long, long marathon,” he said.

Fulham suffered their first defeat in four outings on their top-flight return.

Having won their opening three games for the first time in 18 years, Arsenal made two changes to the team that beat Bournemouth with Thomas



Arsenal’s Gabriel celebrates after scoring against Fulham in their English Premier League match on Saturday (AFP)

Partey and Oleksandr Zinchenko out injured.

Kieran Tierney came in at left-back and Mohamed Elneny lined up alongside Granit Xhaka in central midfield.

Former Arsenal goalkeeper Bernd Leno faced his old club on just his second start for Fulham, and the Germany international spread himself well to deny Bukayo Saka in the first half.

Gabriel Martinelli clipped the crossbar direct from a corner as Fulham continued to defend well, Leno pushing away Odegaard’s

We made a mistake and they punished us but then how we reacted against adversity...

MIKEL ARTETA

curling attempt early in the second half.

Fulham struck first though as Mitrovic robbed Gabriel inside the Arsenal box and rolled expertly beyond Aaron Ramsdale for his fourth goal of the campaign.

Arsenal’s response was timely. Saka burst towards goal before nudging the ball to Odegaard, with the Norwegian’s shot striking Tosin Adarabioyo and wrong-footing Leno.

AFP

Milan brush aside Bologna, Roma hold Juventus

Milan, Italy - AC Milan continued their unbeaten start to their Serie A title defence with a 2-0 win over Bologna on Saturday as Tammy Abraham earned Roma a 1-1 draw at Juventus on Paulo Dybala’s return to his old stomping ground.

Champions Milan eased to a routine win at the San Siro with goals either side of half-time from Rafael Leao and Olivier Giroud to go top on goal difference.

Stefano Pioli’s side took full advantage of Inter Milan’s lose at Lazio on Friday night to move a point above their local rivals.

“We’re more concentrated and have more self-belief than in the past, we played with a real commitment to attacking and defending as a unit,” Pioli told Sky Sport Italia. “I’m happy with our performance but I know we can still get better.”

Milan are one of four teams locked on seven points, with Roma, Lazio and Torino -- 2-1 winners over promoted Cremonese.

Leao gave the hosts the lead in front of over 60,000 fans with his



AC Milan’s Olivier Giroud celebrates after scoring against Bologna in their Italian Serie A match at the San Siro stadium in Milan on Saturday (AFP)

first goal of the season, the Portugal winger fortunate to see his duffed shot squirm past Lukasz Skorupski in the 21st minute after good play by debutant Charles De Ketelaere.

The 23-year-old Leao, who has been linked with Chelsea,

should have added to Milan’s lead before the break, missing a one-on-one with Skorupski in first half stoppage time.

However, he set up Giroud’s opening strike of the campaign in the 58th minute with a perfectly clipped pass which the France in-

ternational guided home with a beautifully-placed volleyed finish.

Nicola Sansone smashed the upright 10 minutes later for Bologna who are hovering above the drop zone with a single point.

Andrea Pinamonti scored his first goal for Sassuolo after mov-

ing from Inter, rolling home following a defensive mix-up to give his new team a 2-2 draw at Spezia.

Jose Mourinho said he was “ashamed” of his Roma players’ performances before they fought back to draw through Abraham’s first goal of the season.

England international Abraham headed home from Dybala’s knock-down in the 69th minute at the Allianz Stadium to maintain Roma’s unbeaten record.

Mourinho used the vulgar Italian expression “culo” to describe their good fortune at being only a goal down at the break after being given a lesson by Juve.

Roma escaped Turin with a point despite being second best for long periods. Dusan Vlahovic put Juve ahead with a stunning free-kick after barely a minute.

“I told my players at half-time that I was ashamed of them... We can’t come here and play like this,” he said. “We did absolutely nothing, it was pure luck. It was a very different team in the second half.”

AFP



Yann Sommer makes a save to deny Sadio Mane on Saturday

Sommer helps Gladbach hold on for draw at Bayern

Berlin, Germany - Borussia Muenchengladbach maintained their strong recent record against Bayern Munich as a record-breaking performance from ‘keeper Yann Sommer helped secure a 1-1 away draw on Saturday.

After the game, Bayern coach Julian Nagelsmann quipped to Sommer: “you know, you could take a week off sometime” on Sky Germany’s post-match interview panel.

Sommer’s 19 saves in one game is the most in the Bundesliga since record-keeping started in 1993-94, easily eclips-

ing the previous record of 14.

Nagelsmann expressed his “annoyance” with the refereeing of Daniel Schlager, saying “he called every 50-50 situation for Gladbach.”

Nagelsmann picked up a yellow card late in the match for asking an assistant referee if his headset was working.

Gladbach coach Daniel Farke lauded Sommer’s “world-class performance” and his side’s “show of will”. “Normally you are disappointed when you get a late equaliser. It’s different today,” said Farke.

AFP

Verstappen spearheads Red Bull 1-2 to extend world championship lead

Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium - Red Bull’s Max Verstappen extended his lead in the Formula One world championship with a crushing victory in the Belgian Grand Prix on Sunday.

Verstappen started 14th on the grid but scorched through the field to cruise to victory ahead of team-mate Sergio Perez with Ferrari’s Carlos Sainz, who started on pole, in third.

Charles Leclerc, Verstappen’s nearest challenger in the title race, struggled in the other Ferrari to find his groove after starting 15th.

A late battle with Alpine’s Fernando Alonso saw Leclerc overtake the two-time world champion to snatch fifth, behind the Mercedes of George Russell.

Seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton retired on the opening lap after his Mercedes collided with Alonso’s car.

Verstappen has now won nine of this season’s 14 races and sits 92 points ahead of Perez who has taken over second spot from Leclerc, who is a further three points behind.

The Dutch flyer, who is al-

ready in sight of a second successive world title, was one of eight drivers to be relegated down the grid after implementing a power unit change.

In spite of being quickest in qualifying he started 14th but quickly carved his way through the field to install himself in the easy chair up front.

Perez proved a useful buffer in second place although he also had a comfortable afternoon as all the other cars struggled against the Red Bull pace.

Russell’s fourth was small compensation for Mercedes

after Hamilton’s first lap exit.

Alonso called Hamilton an “idiot” over the radio and the Briton later took full responsibility for the collision which occurred when he cut in front of the Spaniard, after both had slipped past Perez on the opening turn.

“Looking back he was in my blind spot, I didn’t give him enough space. It is my fault,” Hamilton told Sky.

“I could not see him. I am sorry to the team and I need to recuperate and get back on the treadmill.”

AFP



Red Bull’s Max Verstappen celebrates his Belgian Formula One Grand Prix victory on the podium (AFP)

Stokes hails ‘benchmark’ win as England level South Africa series

Manchester, United Kingdom - England captain Ben Stokes said his team had produced a “benchmark” win after overwhelming South Africa by an innings and 85 runs in the second Test at Old Trafford on Saturday.

Victory, with more than two days to spare, brought England level in this three-match series at 1-1 following South Africa almost as dominant innings and 12-run triumph at Lord’s last week.

England have won five of their six matches since Stokes succeeded Joe Root as skipper but this one was built on Test-match fundamentals rather than setting up a crowd-pleasing run-chase in the fourth innings.

Stokes’s men were on top from the start in Manchester, reducing South Africa to 77-5 before lunch on the first day after Proteas skipper Dean Elgar -- almost obliged to bat first having included a second

spinner, Simon Harmer, -- won the toss.

The Proteas were eventually dismissed for a meagre 151 in their first innings.

England then made 415-9 declared featuring all-rounder Stokes’s 103 - his first Test century as England captain - and wicketkeeper Ben Foakes’s Test-best 113 not out.

A stubborn 43-over stand of 87 between Keegan Petersen and Rassie van der Dussen kept England at bay on Saturday until Stokes, in one of the match-turning bowling displays that have been a hallmark of his career, removed both batsmen after tea.

That paved the way for another collapse. South Africa slumped to 179 all out after succumbing to the new-ball thrust of James Anderson and Ollie Robinson as their last five wickets fell for just seven runs in 31 balls.

AFP



England captain Ben Stokes led from the front, scoring a century and taking crucial wickets (AFP)

India beat Pakistan

Hardik Pandya sparkles with bat and ball as India open Asia Cup Twenty20 campaign with thrilling victory

Dubai, United Arab Emirates - Hardik Pandya hit an unbeaten 33 as India beat Pakistan by five wickets in a hard-fought Asia Cup Twenty20 international on Sunday.

Chasing 148 for victory, Ravindra Jadeja, who hit 35, and Pandya put on a key fifth-wicket stand of 52 as India reached their target with two balls to spare in Dubai.

Pace bowlers Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Pandya shared seven wickets to set up victory for India in their opening match of the six-nation tournament after they bowled out Pakistan for 147.

Mohammad Rizwan attempted to set the pace for Pakistan with his 43 after early wickets, but the Indian bowlers kept coming back at a packed Dubai International Stadium.

Kumar set the tone for India’s dominance as he dismissed skipper Babar Azam for 10 in the second over and returned figures of 4-26.

Pandya rattled Pakistan’s middle-order with his three wickets.

India elected to field first and Kumar nearly trapped Rizwan lbw with the second ball, but the wicketkeeper-batsman successfully reviewed the decision.

The in-form Azam began with a boundary in the first over but his stay was short-lived as Kumar had him caught at short



India's Hardik Pandya plays a shot during his unbeaten knock of 33 in their Group A match against Pakistan in the Twenty20 Asia Cup at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Sunday (AFP)

fine-leg off a short ball.

Rizwan attempted to rebuild the innings with the left-handed Fakhar Zaman as the two struck a few boundaries between them.

Pace bowler Avesh Khan responded after getting hit for a six and four by Rizwan, inducing a faint edge behind from Fakhar (10) to bring alive the Indian crowd.

Indian fielders did not appeal and only celebrated after Fakhar

walked off much to the surprise of his partner.

Rizwan then got going with Iftikhar Ahmed in a 45-run stand that was broken by Pandya with a bouncer that saw Iftikhar caught behind for 28.

Pandya struck again to deny Rizwan his fifty and soon got another to further restrict Pakistan.

Kumar took two wickets in two balls in the penultimate over but was denied a hat-trick by number 11 Shahnaaz Da-

hani. Dahani smashed two sixes in his six-ball 16 before being bowled by left-arm medium-pace bowler Arshdeep Singh, who took two wickets.

David joins team

Earlier on Sunday, India coach Rahul Dravid rejoined his team in Dubai, after testing negative for Covid, just hours before their blockbuster opening Asia Cup clash against Pakistan.

Dravid, a batting great and

former captain, tested positive for the virus just before the team’s departure to the United Arab Emirates for the tournament, which is a warm-up for the T20 World Cup later this year in Australia.

VVS Laxman, who had joined the team as coach in place of Dravid, will return to Bangalore to oversee an India A programme, a statement from the Board of Control for Cricket in India said.

Maxwell’s rapid 32 sees Australia to five-wicket win over Zimbabwe

Townsville, Australia - Glenn Maxwell smashed an unbeaten 32 off nine balls to take Australia to an easy five-wicket win over Zimbabwe in the first of three one-day internationals at Townsville’s Riverway Stadium on Sunday.

Chasing 201 for victory, the Australians reached their target with more than 16 overs to spare to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

All-rounder Cameron Green ripped out the Zimbabwe tail with 5-33 as the visitors collapsed from 185-4 to 200 all out.

Australia captain Aaron Finch and David Warner started the run chase positively, scoring at six runs an over until Finch played on to Richard Ngarava for 15, with the score on 43, continuing his recent run of poor form.

Warner was joined by Steve Smith and the pair cruised to 78-1 when Warner was dropped at backward point off Sikandar Raza.

The left-hander made 57.



Australia's Glenn Maxwell hits a six during his knock of 32 on Sunday (AFP)

Smith among PGA players set for LIV Golf jump: reports

Washington, United States - British Open champion Cameron Smith of Australia is among several US PGA Tour players who will defect to the Saudi-backed rival LIV Golf Series, according to multiple reports Saturday.

World number two Smith had been the subject of several reports about joining LIV Golf shortly after lifting the Claret Jug last month, but has avoided discussion of the subject while playing in this month’s PGA FedEx Cup playoffs.

Golf Channel, ESPN and Sports Illustrated cited unnamed sources in reporting that several big-name PGA players were waiting until after Sunday’s completion of the PGA’s Tour Championship in Atlanta to announce their plans to join LIV Golf.

Smith will play in next week’s LIV Golf event in Boston along with compatriot Marc Leishman, India’s Anirban Lahiri, Chile’s Joaquin Niemann and Americans Harold Varner and Cameron Tringale, according to Sports Illustrated and ESPN; while Golf



Cameron Smith

Channel named all but Lahiri.

Chilean Mito Pereira will also leave for LIV Golf but was uncertain for Boston, leaving his status up in the air for next month’s Presidents Cup in Charlotte, North Carolina. The team event, pitting a US squad against a non-European Internationals lineup, would not be open to any player banned by the PGA.

AFP

oman OASIS
BALANCED DRINKING WATER

Winter Offer

50% ONLY

HOT & COLD DISPENSER

PLUS 2 FULL BOTTLES

PLUS 30 REFILL COUPONS

20% ONLY

WHITE TAP DISPENSER OR TAP DISPENSER OR MANUAL WATER PUMP OR CRADLE WITH TAP

PLUS 2 FULL BOTTLES

PLUS 15 REFILL COUPONS

Offer valid from 14th August to 13th November 2022. Existing Oman Oasis 5 Gallon returnable bottle customers and Oasis Water Company employees are not eligible for the offer.

C.R. No.: 1365452 | MM No: 06/859/2022

CALL TOLL-FREE 800 71 222 or GSM: 9275 5522

mai alkaline

Alkaline Ionized Drinking Water

HYDRATE SMARTLY

- ✓ Ultra-hydrating
- ✓ Revitalizing
- ✓ Energizing

pH 9.1 to 9.5

Toll-free 800 71 222 or 9275 5522

C.R. No.: 1365452

PET WORKOUTS

A dog runs on a treadmill at the 'Posh Pets' boutique and spa in Abu Dhabi



Oscar beats the summer heat of the United Arab Emirates by working out in a gym, hitting the treadmill twice or three times a week. Nothing unusual in that - except that Oscar is a dog. As the Gulf's increasingly fierce temperatures become dangerous to health amid fears over the pace of climate change, those who can afford not to work outside in the blazing sun stay inside in air-conditioning. And for owners of pampered pets able to splash the cash, an air-conditioned gym for dogs has become an attractive option.

"During the winters I used to take him outside, but (in) summers he used to stay isolated," says Oscar's owner Mozalfa Khan, a Pakistani expat. "Because whenever I take him outside he's sick because of the heat."

The resource-rich Gulf is among the regions most at risk from global warming, with some cities facing the prospect of becoming uninhabitable by the end of the century.

Temperatures often soar above 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit) in the UAE, and can remain above 40C (104 Fahrenheit) even after midnight.

The UAE, like other Gulf countries, goes into partial hibernation during its long, hot summers, with those who can afford it staying cloistered in air-conditioned homes and workplaces.

Heat threat

Oscar, a Welsh Corgi, now works out at Posh Pets Boutique and Spa in Abu Dhabi, a shop and grooming salon that offers what's billed as the UAE's first gym for dogs.

Staff carefully secure him with a harness on one of two adapted running machines before he begins to run, with glass barriers on either side to stop him falling off. Rather than being set to specific speeds, the treadmills automatically adjust themselves to the pace of each dog.

Oscar's owner started bringing him to the gym in the Emirati capital after a vet advised against walking him outside in summer because of the risk of heat stroke.

"Last summer it was really difficult for me because there was no place like this," says Khan. "With the high heat and humidity, we walk for only two, three minutes and he's done."

Mansour al Hammadi, the dog-loving owner of Posh Pets, charges a dirham a minute for use of the treadmills, or US\$7.5 for a half-hour run.

Dogs should exercise at least 30 minutes a day, experts say. "So imagine how it is when you can only walk them one or two minutes a day," Hammadi tells AFP.

"We've closely studied the project to make it 100 percent safe. Everything was chosen with care and not at random, to avoid any future problems and so as not to harm the dogs," he adds.

Destiny, a seven-month-old German Shepherd, is another regular, bursting into the gym and playing with the other dogs.

"For the dog's health, it's better that she does some exercise and tires herself out," says Destiny's owner Fahed al Monjed. "Using an indoor running machine is the best solution."

Destiny may indeed take some tiring out. In a recent competition on the treadmills, she set the fastest speed.

AFP

PAWS AND PLAY

UAE's 'hot dogs' get really cool workouts when the heat is on

CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED

Indian male having 14+ years exp. as Civil/ QAQC Engineer/AutoCAD Draughtsman in Oman, looking for suitable jobs. Ready to join,NOC available Contact: 96945383

FOR RENT

A large apartment in Darsait , 5 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, a hall, and a balcony with sea view. Rent 260 O.R per month only T: 99315986

Send your request for Birthday/ Anniversary wishes to wish@apexmedia.co.om with your resident card copy (It's free of cost)

Job Vacancy for Maintenance Technician

Looking for experienced technician with Valid Driving license. Must be able to address electrical, plumbing and AC repairs and Maintenance. Must also be computer and reporting skilled.

Kindly contact: 92801940 / h.sayedfo@bahwanmge.com

SITUATION VACANT

BAHWAN METAL & GLASS ENGINEERING LLC

Required Sales Representative with minimum 2 years of work experience in sales. The candidate should have 1 year working experience in Oman. Having a driving license and a car is a must.

Please send your CV to mazzan@bahwanmge.com Tel: +96896666685

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

- Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
- Choose from a wide range of brands & models
- PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
- Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 | Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

أوربت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

AUDIT, ACCOUNTING, VAT, TAXATION

Contact:97239696/95355638

Gulf Center Consultancy & Audit
Muscat, Sohar, Salalah, Sur
Kumar@gccaoman.com

ALILA HINU BAY

Tranquil 'surprise'

ALILA HINU BAY, A 45-MINUTE DRIVE FROM SALALAH AIRPORT, IS A WELL-KEPT SECRET THAT OFFERS ITS GUESTS A TRUE 'ARABIAN NIGHTS' EXPERIENCE IN THE OLD COASTAL TOWN OF MIRBAT

Anirban Ray

The turquoise waters of the Arabian Sea with its sugar-white foam churns out a lilt-ing melody all day long and flocks of playful seagulls seem to indicate the time of the day as they flutter past the shore here... But that's not all. Are you ready for some surprises?

At Alila Hinu Bay, located in the coastal town of Mirbat, nature unfolds in all its glory, unwrapping surreal scenes and providing guests with surprises at every step and turn. So, if you love surprises, this is the right place to be in - Alila, itself means 'surprise' in Sanskrit.

Visitors to this new resort in Mirbat are spoilt for choice within but the surroundings, too, take on a new hue every hour. Tucked within the warm embrace of the serene green mountains and the vibrant sea, Alila Hinu Bay provides an experience that's akin to the settings of the legendary Arabian Nights.

A Moroccan guest Mehdi expressed his exquisite feelings about the hospital-ity and the ambience at the resort saying that he felt as if he was a royal guard in an Arab kingdom located by the seas about a hundred years ago. Other guests, too, admitted that it was an 'out of the world' experience where tranquil-ity is a way of life.

Alila Hinu Bay has been created to give its guests surprises all along, whether it concerns the comfort of the resort or the beauty of nature around, the marine ecosystem, the beautiful seascape, rock formations, silence, and timeless moments of relaxation.

This newest addition to Alila Hotels and Resorts started to welcome guests since June 2021. The boutique beach-front eco-resort, rests on an endless bay and private beach with stunning views of the Arabian Sea. It is just a 45-minute picturesque drive from Salalah airport.

Speaking about the property, Martin Persson, General Manager of Alila Hinu Bay, said, "Offering the best of both worlds, the resort flourishes in both marine life and nature reserves. Located between Jabal Samhan and the Arabian Sea, our eco-luxury resort is a nature lovers' paradise, boasting the richest historical and cultural settings in the coastal town of Mirbat, in Dhofar governorate. It is accessible by road from Muscat."

Alila Hinu Bay has 112 rooms, including a 60sqm terrace room with lagoon or sea view, and 16 pool villas with direct



Martin Persson
General manager, Alila Hinu Bay

We are located along a stretch of uninterrupted geological space

where we are surrounded by desert, seas and mountains. This gives guests an opportunity to enjoy diverse nature. This perfect blend is interesting as it appears different in every season. Now, during the khareef, the mountains are green and lush, later they turn rugged. Even the sea calms down by winter.

Our property is 100 per cent owned by OMRAN, just like the one in Alila Jabal Akhdar. The owners have always been supportive and have put a lot of efforts to have guests from all over the world.

beach access. The beach has an array of lounging beds for guests there is much activity on the shores during winter when a host of water sports and other activity, like scuba diving, sea trips for watching dolphins and whales, etc are conducted. Its that time of the year when international tourists visit, compared to domestic tourists during the khareef season.

The five-star resort organises romantic private dining as well as family diners at the recently opened 'Orchard'

and sea facing 'Sea Salt' restaurants which serve Asian, Arabic, Mediterranean, South Eastern and many other cuisines. Seafood has prominence in the offerings at these restaurants where menus have been designed to suit varied tastes of guests.

Cold mezzes, grilled items, including the traditional shuwa, desserts, and other gastronomical delights add to the guest experience.

Deepika Tomar, sous chef from Orchard said, "The Orchard takes you on

We are aiming at guests who aim to see the roads not travelled and who want to be constantly surprised. Mostly we have Europeans in the winters (October till March) and they include those from Germany, France, Italy and USA. During Khareef, traditionally, it is the domestic and GCC tourist who visits.

We expect a hike in number of tourists in Muscat in November - those who would visit Qatar during the World Cup and come here after the tournament.

an epicurean journey with the carefully selected and crafted dishes that draw inspiration from the travels of the frankincense traders from land and sea."

Traditional music adds to the mood, especially renditions from illustrious and legendary Arabian singers.

Hanadi Jawhari, marketing and communication manager, said, "With its sophisticated design, the property carries a

heavy influence of Omani architecture paired with its minimalist aesthetics that perfectly blend with the local climate and culture, including the spectacular Omani archway corridor creating a regal feel." She added that the property makes use of local ingredients and materials with efforts in place to safeguard the ecology of Mirbat.

There is emphasis on the human element at the resort which is evident from the sincere motivation that drives the chefs, waiters, drivers, and other staff who take good care of all guests. It also seems as if they are able to sense the needs of guests before they express it.

Spa Alila at Alila Hinu Bay also offers customised treatments and packages to suit every traveler, in addition to a range of yoga and meditation sessions.

As one checks out and drives away from the resort and enters the hustle and bustle of the airport, one wonders if a place full of surprises and resilience ever existed. It did. You need to visit this resort to figure that out.



Our gift to you

10%

Cashback
When you transfer
your salary



*Terms and conditions apply.

www.ahlibank.om

ahliconnect: 24577177

THE WAVE IS HERE



Costa Coffee Oman is now officially open at
Mall of Oman.

Make sure to stop by, grab your favorite drink
and **win exciting prizes.**

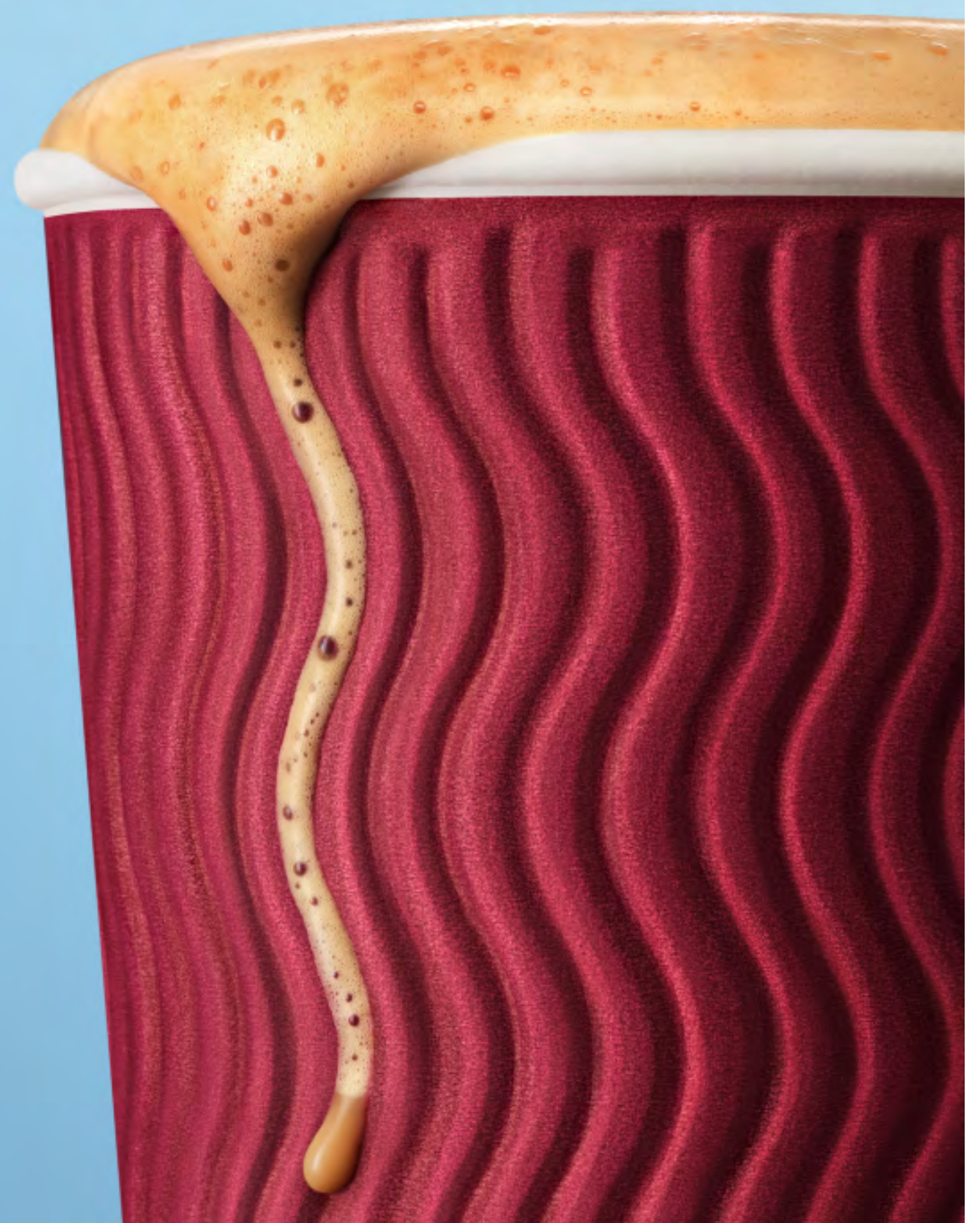
#COSTAOMAN



Mall of Oman

COSTA
COFFEE

 **COSTA.OMAN**



For the latest from Costa Coffee Oman, follow www.instagram.com/costa.oman