

OPENING NEW AVENUES

MoUs inked in energy, tourism, natural resources, higher education, training and cultural sectors

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and President Samia Suluhu Hassan of the United Republic of Tanzania held a bilateral meeting at Al Alam Palace on Monday. They discussed bilateral relations and ways to promote these in various spheres to serve the common interests of the two peoples. They reviewed several topics of interest to both sides. The meeting was attended from the Omani side by Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, and Dr Hamad Said al Aufi, Head of Private Office, while from the Tanzanian side, it was attended by Mbarouk Nassoro Mbarouk, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, and Sospeter Matwali, Private Secretary of the Tanzanian President.



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and President Samia Suluhu Hassan of the United Republic of Tanzania at a bilateral meeting in Al Alam Palace on Monday



Trade exchange set to grow after MoUs: Sayyid Badr

Muscat - The Sultanate of Oman and the United Republic of Tanzania signed several memoranda of understanding (MoUs) in the presence of President Samia Suluhu Hassan at Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel, on Monday.

The MoUs are in the fields of energy, tourism, natural resources, higher education, training and national museums.

A trilateral MoU was signed between Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Tanzanian Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, and Zanzibar National Chamber of Commerce.

Agreements were also signed between Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and Zanzibar Investment Promotion Authority, Oman Airports Management Company and Kilimanjaro Inter-



national Airport, Oman Society for Petroleum Services and Association of Tanzania Oil and Gas Service Providers, Al Bashayer Meat Company and the Tanzanian National Company for Live Animals, and between Oman Food Investment Holding Company and Tanzanian Horticultural Association.

H E Sayyid Badr Hamad al Bu-

saidi, Foreign Minister, told ONA that an agreement was signed to establish an investment fund between Oman and Tanzania. "The fund will invest in projects of value to the two countries in various fields, including agriculture, fishing and mining."

H E Sayyid Badr stated that trade exchange between the two countries will increase following

the MoUs inked on Monday, besides the existing agreements between OIA and its Tanzanian counterpart. He added that the two countries will sign MoUs in various other economic, investment, energy and tourism fields at a later date based on a work programme set for those agreements.

ONA

Oman Airports to develop Kilimanjaro airport

Muscat - Oman Airports signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Kilimanjaro Airports Development Company (KADCO) on Monday to develop a VIP passenger terminal in Kilimanjaro International Airport.

Following the agreement, Tanzania will benefit from Oman Airports' experience in airport management and VIP services.

The MoU was signed by Abdul Nasser Abdullah al Yamani, vice-president, Business Development, Oman Airports, and Christine Mwakatobe of KADCO.

The MoU stipulates that Oman Airports will undertake



the development of the General Terminal for VIPs and hangar facility at Kilimanjaro International Airport, development of a five-star hotel for passengers and a business complex/shopping mall in the airport. The MoU has scope for development of other facilities that may be agreed upon mutually be-

tween the parties.

"This partnership will serve in developing the facilities referred to in the text of the MoU to ensure the provision of high-standard services as part of efforts to raise revenues for both the Tanzanian government that owns the airport and Oman Airports," a press release said.

President Samia meets Omani businessmen



Muscat - President Samia Suluhu Hassan of the United Republic of Tanzania met businessmen from both countries on the sidelines of the Oman-Tanzania Business Forum held on Monday.

The forum, organised by Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), was held at Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel. It explored means of enhancing economic and investment cooperation, as well as boosting trade exchange.

In her statement to the forum, President Samia expressed her thanks to the Government of Oman for supporting Tanzania throughout the last decades. She reaffirmed the keenness of the two countries to enhance economic ties based on the historic and deep-rooted relations between Oman and Tanzania.

President Samia added that



social connections contributed to bolstering relations between the two countries, and described Oman as a “distinguished” country.

H E Qais Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, welcomed the Tanzanian President and described the forum as an opportunity to boost economic relations between the

two nations.

H E Yousef stated that he hopes Tanzania benefits from investment opportunities in Oman, particularly in the fields of industry, agriculture, fisheries, mining, tourism and renewable energy.

On his turn, Redha Juma al Saleh, chairman of OCCI, said that a competitive business environment stimulates growth and economic diversification. Oman

offers several investment incentives, namely legal transparency in the business environment and full ownership of investments, he noted.

Visual presentations were made during the forum highlighting the investment scenario, incentives and procedures pertaining to business and investments in the two countries.

ONA



Tanzanian President visits National Museum, OCA’s Dar al Hanan

Our Correspondent
Muscat

President Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, visited the National Museum of Oman and Dar al Hanan of Oman Cancer Association (OCA) on Monday.

She was briefed about the National Museum and the important aspects of Oman's history and civilisation.

The guest was shown items related to the history of Oman and East African countries, including a gift - a hand carving of Makonde craftsmen dating back to the 15th century - from the late President of Tanzania Dr John Pombe Joseph Magufuli to the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

At the conclusion of her visit to the museum, President Samia signed the visitor's book in which she expressed her admiration for the displays that reflected the historical relations between Oman and East Africa.

On her visit to Dar al Hanan, the Tanzanian President toured various sections of the facility. She was briefed on its objectives and services rendered to children with cancer undergoing treatment at The Royal Hospital, Sultan Qaboos University Hospital or Khoula Hospital.

Dr Waheed Ali al Kharousi, chairman of Dar al Hanan's Board of Directors, made a presentation to the Tanzanian President to introduce OCA and Dar al Hanan. He also

spoke about the association's objectives, work mechanisms and services rendered to patients.

Dar al Hanan provides accommodation and food for children with cancer and their families, besides transportation to the hospital during treatment, ensuring patients follow their treatment programme.

The centre also offers moral support and guidance to families, and helps patients and their families in administrative procedures related to health-care.

Upon her arrival at Dar al Hanan, the Tanzanian President was greeted by Yuthar Mohammed al Rawahi, founder of OCA and Dar al Hanan, and Kharousi.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Internal Tender Committee, Ministry of Labour, invites the following Tender:

Tender No.	Tender Description	Last date for electronic purchasing	Last date of tender submission
6 /2022	Provide a system to raise the efficiency of backup	Sunday 19/06/2022 at 02:00 pm	Monday 27/06/2022 at 10:00 am

- Specialized establishments can obtain electronic documents from this link below, starting from Monday 13/06/2022, 8:00 AM.
<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om/>
- Each bid is to be attached with a bank guarantee or a certified cheque from one of the banks operating in the Sultanate of (1%) of the value of the tender for the Ministry of Manpower, valid for a period of (90) days from the date of submission of the tender.
- Each electronic bid is to be attached with a copy of the bank guarantee.
- Tender envelopes will be opened at 11:00am on the same day on Monday 13/06/2022.

(The ministry is not bound to accept the lowest price of or any tender)

labour_OMAN

WEATHER WATCH		
	Max	Min
Abu Dhabi	42	29
Doha	35	27
Kuwait City	43	31
Manama	37	27
Muscat	33	27
Riyadh	43	27

PRAYER TIMINGS	
Fajr	3.52am
Sunrise	5.20am
Duhr	12.12pm
Asr	3.30pm
Maghrib	6.59pm
Isha	8.22pm

Gen Nu’amani discusses stronger ties with envoys

Our Correspondent
Muscat

H E Gen Sultan Mohammed al Nu’amani, Minister of Royal Office, received ambassadors of three countries separately on Monday.

In his meeting with H E Jota Yamamoto, Ambassador of Japan, the two sides reviewed the march of relations and fields of cooperation between the two countries and ways of enhancing these, touching on a range of matters of joint interest.

H E Kiejoo Kim, Ambassador of Korea, commended the bilateral relations between Seoul and



Muscat in his meeting with H E Gen Nu'amani. He also expressed his gratitude and appreciation for the sultanate's efforts in regional and international issues. The two sides touched on a

range of common issues and discussed ways of enhancing cooperation to serve the aspirations of the two countries.

H E Gen Nu'amani's meeting with H E Imelda Panolong, Am-

H E Jota Yamamoto and H E Gen Sultan al Nu’amani reviewed bilateral relations, cooperation

bassador of the Philippines, reviewed aspects of joint cooperation and ways of promoting relations between the two countries. H E Imelda conveyed the gratitude and appreciation of the Philippines for Oman's successful efforts in the release of detained Filipino citizen.

World Blood Donor Day

Donating blood is an act of solidarity. Join the effort and save lives.

June 14th, 2022
9am - 5pm
Royal Opera House of Musical Arts



Marine drone to help study what causes red tides

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI), in cooperation with iLab Marine, is conducting a study on red tides and what causes the phenomenon in Omani waters. The objective of the study is to help predict red tides and mitigate losses.

A red tide is an event that occurs on the coastline when algae grow out of control. Red tides can be hazardous to human health and marine life.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Walid al Maawali, CEO of iLab Marine, said the research study is being conducted in association with Sultan Qaboos University and the Swedish University of Gothenburg, besides MoHERI, using a marine drone created by the company. Called Misbar, the drone looks like a boat and was deployed in the sea near the wilayat of Suwaiq in October 2021. The deployment will continue for a year.

"The researchers supervising the study have identified several new factors that may be the cause of red tide on the coasts of Oman," Maawali said.

Causative factors could be rise of the seabed laden with nutrients to the surface as a result of the movement of vertical currents, or low oxygen concentra-



The study aims to collect data to help predict the phenomenon, warn fishermen and prevent losses

WALID AL MAAWALI

tion in the water, which can result in fewer fish, he noted.

Misbar was designed to collect vital information, including measuring speed of ocean currents, chlorophyll concentration and dissolved oxygen, in addition to temperature and salinity. It was deployed off the coast of Suwaiq, about 20 nautical miles from the shore.

"The study aims to collect data to help predict the phenomenon of red tide, warn fishermen, and protect desalination plants and aquaculture farms from losses. Currently, there is no ef-

fective way to treat red tides or control algal blooms other than by monitoring and early warning," Maawali said.

"Algae in red tides can be used to treat sewage and agricultural water laden with chemical elements, thus reducing sea pollution," he said, and added that some studies indicate that algae is 12 times more efficient in producing fuel compared to soy and corn.

Maawali is hopeful of expanding the use of the marine drone in environmental work, fisheries and the logistic sector in the sultanate. Misbar has cut cost of conducting surveys and collecting marine data by about 80 per cent compared to traditional methods.

The study team consists of Dr Gerd Bruss, director of the research project, a representative from Ejaad Centre of MoHERI, two researchers from the University of Gothenburg, and five members of iLab.

10-year-old bags silver at Tbilisi karate competition

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A ten-year-old boy has claimed a silver medal at the Tbilisi International Grandprix Karate Tournament held in Georgia from June 3 to June 5.

Himank Kaushik from Indian School Bousher participated in the earlier edition of the same competition held in Muscat in 2021 when he bagged gold and bronze medals.

About Himank, his mother Apeksha Sharma said, "My son has been taking karate lessons since he was six. He is exceptional and people have appreciated his talent. Proving his prowess, Himank has taken part in many competitions and won medals."

Himank is being trained by Dr Ali al Raisi, a popular karate coach and math professor at Sultan Qaboos University. He trains for an hour on regular days and two hours before and during competitions. This was Himank's second international tournament.

Apeksha added that Himank



is very health conscious and rarely has any fast food. "He knows how to balance his

school work with karate and never allows either to be affected," she said.

ASMED trains 20 in entrepreneurship under Jahiziah programme

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) received the third batch of entrepreneurs for the Jahiziah programme in Muscat on Monday to meet its strategic goal of supporting SMEs.



An official of ASMED informed that more than 20 trainees participated in the programme, which is aimed at imparting the basics of entrepreneurship and develop the capabilities of participants to launch their own projects.

"The programme targets Omanis who wish to establish SMEs and startups. To join the

programme, one must have financing and land to establish the proposed project," the official said.

"ASMED has set conditions for participation in the programme, including nationality (must be Omanis), have a project idea ready for implementation, and attend the full training course."

شركة النماء للدواجن ش.م.ع.م
A' Namaa Poultry Co. S.A.O.C

Tender Announcement

A' Namaa Poultry Company SAOC announces the following tender:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date of Document Purchase	Last Date of Clarification	Last Date of Bid Submission
ANP/CSSO/SER/001	Laundry Services	20 June 2022 03:00 PM	23 June 2022 03:00 PM	27 June 2022 03:00 PM

Specialized Companies in such business and with a valid commercial record can apply to purchase the tender as follows:

- Tender is eligible for Omani SME companies.
- The tender is for procurement of equipment and provision of laundry services at the company operations location (A'Safaa, Ibbri).
- Obtaining the documents of the tender from the Procurement Department at the company's headquarters address: Al Nahda Towers 2, Floor 7, Office No. 9, between 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., before 20th June 2022.
- Submission of bids in a sealed envelope addressed to the procurement department and written on it from the outside only the name and number of the tender.
- Attach the official and supporting documents of the applicant institution.

A' Namaa Poultry reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers without giving any reasons. Suppliers will be notified after the evaluation process according to the company's standards.

In case of any queries or further clarification on the process, please contact Procurement Department (Phone: +968 22504468, +968 22504 480; Email: naji@anamaa.com) during office hours.

Tender Announcement

Muscat Electricity Distribution Company S.A.O.C Invites Interested Companies To Participate In The Following Tenders

Tender No.	Description	Last Date of Buying	Date of Submission	Grade	Sit Visit	Attendee	Tender Price (R.O)
RFQ MEDC 2022-023	Consultancy Services for Study, Design and Tendering Services for Upgrading Al Hail North 2 Primary Substation (P028) from 2x20MVA to 3x20MVA	20/06/2022	06/07/2022	DCRP Approved Consultant Type 1 & 2	23/06/2022 at 9:00 AM in MEDC Head Office	One Electrical Engineer One Civil Engineer One Protection Engineer with full PPE	26.25
RFQ MEDC 2022-024	Consultancy Services for Study, Survey, Design and Tendering Services for Asset Replacement at Rusail Industrial 1 (P103) Primary Substation	20/06/2022	06/07/2022	DCRP Approved Consultant Type 1 & 2	23/06/2022 at 9:00 AM in MEDC Head Office	One Electrical Engineer One Civil Engineer One Protection Engineer with full PPE	26.25
RFQ MEDC 2022-016	Bousher Grid – Internal Load Shifting	20/06/2022	06/07/2022	DCRPA Grade Contractor	22/06/2022 at 9:00 AM in MEDC Head Office	One Electrical Engineer One Civil Engineer One Protection Engineer with full PPE	26.25

The table below shows the instructions for participation: -

Participation	- Companies registered with Tender Board and in I Supplier may obtain Tender documents. - The amount specified above is including 5% VAT. - For companies holding valid Riyada card, the tender fees will be 25% only from the tender price. - The amount specified above is Non-Refundable payment (Terms and Condition apply) - To obtain the tender document and payment procedure , please visit MEDC Website/Vendor/E-Tendering, www.medcoman.com or call 24588600 – Ext: 8685 - 8707
Enquiries	- Any inquiry can be sent to MEDC Website/Vendor/E-Tendering, www.medcoman.com , one week before bid submission date - Any request for clarification received after the above-mentioned period will not be considered.
Tender Submission	Please follow SUBMISSION OF TENDER mentioned in clause 20.0 in Prime Document and to the supplier guideline available MEDC Website/Vendor/E-Tendering, www.medcoman.com
Guarantee	- The Tender should enclose a bank guarantee or a certified cheque issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman Unconditional and irrevocable and shall be disbursement as soon as it is submitted for the value of (1%) of the tender value valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the last date of tender submission and addressed to the CHAIRMAN OF MINOR TENDER COMMITTEE, MUSCAT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANY S.A.O.C. - The bid bond should be included in the commercial proposal only. - Any tender not accompanied by a Tender Bond shall be rejected.
Terms and Conditions	- Tenders received after the deadline stated in the Invitation to Tender, including any extension thereof, for any reason whatsoever will not be considered - The Tender shall be valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the last date of tender submission including any extension thereof. - If the submission date extended, the bank guarantee or a certified cheque shall be extended in accordance with the bid extension date. - MEDC is not bound to accept the lowest (or highest) Tenderer. - Preference of awarding the tender will be given to those bidders who achieved a high percentage of purchasing from Local Products and have a High-level percentage of Omanization - Muscat Electricity Distribution Company gives priority to award the projects to SMEs companies. - For projects whose value is less than OMR 10K, the priority to award will be given to registered companies that hold a valid certificate Of Reyadah. - Failure to comply with the instructions in tender document may lead to disqualification.
Bid Placement	Follow the Supplier guideline available MEDC Website/Vendor/E-Tendering, www.medcoman.com

MARKET WATCH

MSX30

4,122.94

Sensex

52,846.70

FOREX RATES

(RO1 equals)

Indian Rs

203.02

Pakistani Rs

524.69

Bangladeshi taka

244.03

Philippines peso

138.45

Sri Lankan Rs

931.67

*Rates as on JUNE 13

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

UK economy shrinks for second month in a row

British economic output declined for a second month in a row in April, weighed down by decades-high inflation, official data showed Monday.

Gross domestic product fell 0.3 per cent in April after a drop of 0.1 per cent in March, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement.

Output in the services, production and construction sectors fell - "the first time that all main sectors have contributed negatively to a monthly GDP estimate since January 2021", the ONS said, as the data added to fears of recession.

The ONS noted that "businesses continued to report the impact of price increases and supply chain shortages".

The data comes as the Bank of England is set to raise its main interest rate at a fifth straight meeting Thursday in a bid to cool the pace of price rises.

Inflation is being fuelled by soaring food and energy prices as economies reopen from pandemic lockdowns and following the invasion of Ukraine by major oil and gas producer Russia.

UK annual inflation stands at nine percent, the highest level in 40 years, causing a cost-of-living crisis for millions of Britons.

In the United States meanwhile, Friday's forecast-beating inflation print has triggered expectations that the Federal Reserve will ramp up the pace of its interest-rate increases.

That has sent investors running for cover, with world stock markets tumbling since Friday.

"Despite weakening economic growth, the Bank of England this week is expected to raise rates further as it seeks to get inflation under control," said Paul Craig, portfolio manager at Quilter Investors.

Sohar Steel to build RO7mn plant at Sohar Freezone

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Sohar Port and Freezone on Monday signed an agreement with Sohar Steel Rolling Company to lease approximately 40,000 sqm of land for the construction of a steel rod manufacturing plant at the freezone.

With an estimated total investment of RO7mn, the project includes the construction of facilities for melting/smelting in the first phase and steel rolling in the second phase, according to a press statement.

The project, which is anticipated to be operational in the third quarter of 2023, is expected to create considerable opportunities for business collaborations, while adding to the growing number of leased areas in Sohar Freezone's flourishing metals cluster.

Omar bin Mahmood al Mahrizi, chief executive officer of Sohar Freezone and deputy CEO of Sohar Port said, "At Sohar Port and Freezone, we are always looking to expand the possibilities to grow our metals cluster, which is one of the most promising sectors. Sohar Steel Rolling's new facility is poised to meet the huge demand for stainless steel manufacturing.

This collaboration is a positive step towards enhancing in-



Omar bin Mahmood al Mahrizi (left) and Nimer Ibrahim Elsamna sign the land lease agreement

country value by boosting the competitiveness of Sohar Freezone in bringing in new investments linked to the downstream of these industries."

Nimer Ibrahim Nimer Elsamna, chief executive officer of Sohar Steel Rolling, said, "With access to raw materials and reliable, affordable energy, Sohar Freezone offers an ideal environment for us to enhance our competitive position and grow sustainably.

We look forward to supporting the development of Oman's metal manufacturers and production industries, while contributing to its wider economic

diversification objectives."

More and more local and international investors are taking advantage of the opportunities for investments at Sohar's thriving, multibillion-dollar metals cluster currently centred around iron and steel production, and ferrochrome and aluminium smelting.

Over 50 per cent of Sohar Port and Freezone's industrial tenants are primary and secondary metal projects and/or downstream activities, enticed by the mutual benefits that add value to their operations. Reliable and affordable energy including solar, access to raw

materials, on-site consumers of metals and mature port infrastructure are just a few of the offerings that Sohar Port and Freezone provides, in addition to the advantage of being optimally placed between the East and West and the benefit of the Oman-US free trade agreement for duty free access on qualifying products.

As one of the fastest-growing ports in the world, Sohar Port and Freezone continues to leverage on its strategic location and enhance its services, positioning itself as a key logistics hub within the region and across the world.



OETC signs deals with GCC Interconnection Authority

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) on Monday signed three agreements with the GCC Electricity Interconnection Authority at the authority's headquarters in Dammam, Saudi Arabia.

The agreements were signed in the presence of main stakeholders and representatives from OETC and GCC Interconnection Authority, OETC said in a series of tweets.

According to OETC, the first agreement stipulated the exclusive rights to use the electrical interconnection assets.

The agreement deals with the mechanisms of owning, operating and maintaining the 220kV electrical interconnection assets

in Oman on behalf of the GCC Interconnection Authority," the company said.

The second agreement provides the provision of operating and maintaining services for the electrical link whereby OETC will manage the link entirely. The GCC Interconnection Authority has the exclusive right to use the assets of the electrical link in case of emergency.

The third agreement was signed for the operation of the electrical link between the two parties, OETC said.

The GCC Interconnection Authority is a joint stock company subscribed by the six GCC states. Its mission is to maintain a resilient interconnection grid ensuring power security and economic benefits to the GCC states.

Indian rupee hits record low on Fed rate hike worries

Mumbai, India - The Indian rupee plunged to a record low against the dollar on Monday, ahead of an expected US interest rate hike this week aimed at fighting surging inflation.

The rupee hit 78.2825 per dollar for the first time as a forecast-beating US inflation report on Friday heightened prospects for a further tightening of monetary policy by the Federal Reserve.

The benchmark Sensex Index slid as much as 2.1 per cent as foreigners took out about US\$24bn from local stocks, Bloomberg News reported.

The Indian currency has been weighed down by rising oil prices, a more aggressive Fed and by capital outflows in emerging markets as foreign in-



vestors turn risk-averse.

Central banks have adopted more hawkish policies in recent months, including in India, with the Reserve Bank hiking borrowing costs by 50 basis points last week for the second time in as many months.

The RBI earlier announced an

out-of-cycle 0.4 per cent rate rise in May.

India's central bank has also been selling off foreign currency to stabilise the currency.

Inflation has also jumped in India owing the fallout from the Ukraine war, overshooting the central bank's two-to-six percent target range from January to April.

It hit an eight-year high of 7.79 per cent in April, fanned by a spike in food and fuel costs.

In May, the government banned exports of wheat, with yields already hit by a heatwave, to rein in prices.

Sugar exports were also capped to safeguard supplies, while the government cut duties on fuel and edible oils.

AFP

MSX inches down as services stocks drop

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The benchmark index of the Muscat Stock Exchange marginally decreased 0.07 per cent on Monday to close at 4,122.94 points.

The decline in the main index was mainly due to a drop in Services sector index which lost 0.14 per cent. Financial and Industrial indices rose 0.12 per cent and 0.42 per cent, respectively. MSX Sharia Index gained 0.55 per cent to close at 461.99 points.

Trading activity continued to remain weak on the bourse as volumes decreased by 17.6 per cent to 16.84mn shares against 20.43mn shares



traded on Sunday. Market turnover, however, increased by 15.9 per cent to RO3.44mn compared with RO2.97mn recorded in the previous trading session.

The market breadth of the

MSX remained neutral with 12 advancing stocks to 12 decliners.

As many as 23 traded stocks closed flat for the day.

Top losers were Oman Chlorine (9.66 per cent), Al Maha Ceramics (3.52 per cent), Sohar International Bank (2.0 per cent), Phoenix Power (2.0 per cent) and Galfar Engineering and Contracting (1.92 per cent).

Top losers were A'Saffa Foods (-9.7 per cent), Oman REIT Fund (-8.33 per cent), Dhofar Cattle Feed (-4.6 per cent), National Aluminium Products (-4.26 per cent) and Construction Materials Industry (-3.61 per cent).

Flood of net-zero vows suffer 'credibility gap': Report

Bonn, Germany - While countries, cities and companies have massively ramped up net-zero emissions promises in recent months there remain "major flaws" in many plans, according to an analysis published Monday that raises fears of potential large-scale greenwashing by businesses.

Faced with mounting urgency and public pressure as deadly and costly climate impacts increase, governments and corporations issued a proliferation of net zero pledges in the run up to the United Nation's key climate summit in Glasgow last year.

Most rich countries have announced they will be net zero by 2050, while China and India have vowed to reach that point by 2060 and 2070, respectively.

"The use of that concept has simply been booming," said Frederic Hans, climate policy analyst at NewClimate Institute

and the report's co-lead author. But the devil is in the details.

"If you set a net zero target and you do not communicate in any way what emission reductions are implied by the targets, then nobody knows, you cannot be held accountable," said Hans.

The report draws on a database of over 4,000 governments, cities, states and major companies and comes as climate negotiators are meeting in Germany to prepare for major UN talks later this year.

It does not drill into exactly how each net-zero plan will negate the amount of greenhouse gases it emits, instead focusing on monitoring how robust the targets are and whether they are followed up with a specific pathway to action.

It found that more than 90 per cent of the world's economy is now covered by promises by governments to reach net zero -



a near six-fold increase in three years.

One third of the world's largest publicly-traded companies also now have net zero goals - 702 firms, up from 417 in December 2020 - they said, while the number of major cities with these emissions reduction

targets has doubled to 235.

"We are now at a watershed moment where peer pressure to hastily set net zero pledges, especially in the business sector, could result in either a mass flow of greenwashing - or a fundamental shift towards decarbonisation," said co-author

Takeshi Kuramochi, senior climate policy researcher at NewClimate Institute.

'Greenwashing'?

The Net Zero Tracker analysis looked at a range of factors, like if detailed plans are published - or, for governments, enshrined

in law - and included key interim targets that would ensure early carbon-cutting action.

The report found that 65 per cent of national net zero targets had been set in domestic law or included in policy documents by May 2022, up from just 10 per cent in December 2020.

But even among the 702 firms that had net zero promises, the report found that only around half had some kind of interim target, which it deemed "unacceptably low".

Only 38 per cent of these companies include all emissions associated with their products and activities - from supply chains to consumer use and disposal - in their net zero plans.

The report found that big corporate emitters, particularly the fossil fuel industry, were among those most likely to have net zero goals.

"This likely reflects the societal pressure on these industries

to align with long-term emissions goals, and perhaps represents symbolic behaviour - or even flat-out greenwashing - rather than corporate climate leadership," it said.

UN experts have said carbon pollution must peak before 2025 and be cut in half by 2030 from 2010 levels to have a chance of reaching the Paris climate deal's more ambitious goal of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Greenhouse gas emissions last year regained the record levels of 2019 after Covid lockdowns lowered them in 2020.

Hans said it was possible that the flood of net zero promises could generate a virtuous cycle.

"It requires companies to step up, regulators to step up, civil society to be ready and researchers so that this really improves over time," he said.

AFP



Pedestrians are seen reflected on an electronic share price board, showing the numbers of the Tokyo Stock Exchange (left) and a foreign exchange board showing the yen's rate against the US dollar (right), in Tokyo on Monday (AFP)

Global markets, oil dive on heightened recession fears

London, UK – Global equities, oil prices and bitcoin plunged Monday on heightened recession fears triggered by runaway inflation.

The dollar, however, gained versus major rivals, benefiting from its status as a haven investment and expectations of aggressive interest-rate hiking from the US Federal Reserve.

The US currency struck a 24-year peak against the yen, while it broke above 78 Indian rupees for the first time. It jumped one per cent versus the pound.

"The hangover from a higher-than-expected US inflation reading is continuing to cause scissoring pain throughout the markets, as it extinguishes the hope the US Federal Reserve might be able to take its foot off the pedal on interest rate rises," noted AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould.

US and European stocks had already tumbled Friday following the inflation data, with Asia following suit Monday.

European stock markets extended pre-weekend losses with falls of around two per cent before Wall Street reopens.

percent as the high cost of living increases recession expectations.

Brent North Sea crude was down by 1.4 per cent at US\$120.27 per barrel in London on Monday, while US benchmark West Texas Intermediate fell 1.8

seen authorities reimpose containment measures.

Investors were left surprised Friday when data showed US inflation jumped to 8.6 per cent in May, the fastest pace in more than 40 years, as the Ukraine war further fuelled energy and food prices.

The reading has led to fervent speculation that the Fed will now be contemplating a single interest-rate lift of 75 basis points.

With the central bank forced to be more aggressive, there is a concern that the US economy could be sent into recession next year.

"The market is now thinking much more about the Fed driving rates sharply higher to get on top of inflation and then having to cut back as growth drops," said SPI Asset Management's Stephen Innes.

AFP

Brent North Sea crude was down by 1.4 per cent at US\$120.27 per barrel in London on Monday, while US benchmark West Texas Intermediate fell 1.8 per cent at US\$118.53 per barrel

London Stock Exchange took a 1.7 per cent hit also from data showing the UK economy contracted in April for a second month in a row.

World oil prices, whose surge has contributed massively to soaring inflation, slid about 1.5

per cent at US\$118.53 per barrel.

The possibility of more Covid restrictions in China's biggest cities also weighed on crude futures as the country is a major oil consumer.

Fresh coronavirus outbreaks in Shanghai and Beijing have

Bitcoin slumps under \$25,000, lowest in 18 months

London, UK – Bitcoin tumbled Monday to an 18-month low under US\$25,000 as investors shunned risky assets in the face of a vicious global markets sell-off, months after the cryptocurrency hit a record high.

The unit took a heavy knock also from news that cryptocurrency lending platform Celsius Network paused withdrawals, citing volatile conditions.

World stock markets have plunged since Friday when data showed US inflation at a fresh four-decade high, increasing recession fears and sending investors running for safer assets like the dollar.

"It is not very surprising to see such a strong downturn as we have noticed an increased correlation over the last few years between traditional stocks, which have also tanked recently, and the cryptocurrency market," noted XTB chief market analyst Walid Koudmani.

The world's most popular cryptocurrency dived about 10 per cent to hit US\$23,794 in morning London deals, striking a level last seen in December 2020.

The virtual unit has collapsed by 65 per cent in value since striking a record peak US\$68,991.85 in November.

Investors on Monday sought safety with the US central bank seen likely to aggressively ramp up borrowing costs further to



combat runaway inflation.

Bitcoin's decline accelerated after the news from Celsius Network.

"Today we are announcing that Celsius is pausing all withdrawals, swap, and transfers between accounts," the platform said in a statement.

Celsius made the move "due to extreme market conditions", it added.

The total value of customer deposits had already shrunk by more than half to under US\$12bn in May compared with the end of last year.

Koudmani said further falls for bitcoin "may trigger a cascading effect of liquidations of hedging positions" taken against the cryptocurrency.

The global crypto market, comprising other virtual currencies which are tanking such as Ethereum, is worth about US\$1tn, according to crypto data aggregator CoinGecko.

That is down from a level of more than US\$3tn at its peak seven months ago, when the market rode a wave of massive investor demand amid growing acceptance from large financial institutions.

In a sign of the growing importance of cryptocurrencies, two countries, El Salvador and the Central African Republic, have taken the gamble of adopting bitcoin as legal tender – despite strong criticism from international financial institutions.

AFP

Japanese yen slides to 24-year low against dollar

Tokyo, Japan – The yen plunged to its lowest level against the dollar since 1998 on Monday as sky-high US inflation fuels a widening monetary policy gap between Japan and the world's largest economy.

Japan's currency has been weakening for months, accelerated by the US Federal Reserve's

aggressive monetary tightening to tackle soaring inflation caused by the war in Ukraine and other factors.

But unlike the Fed, the Bank of Japan has said it will stick with its long-standing monetary easing programme which it hopes will lead to stable growth.

The increasingly polar policies

have strengthened the greenback, and on Monday one dollar bought 135.19 yen.

It's a level not seen since October 1998 during the Asian currency crisis, and marks a dramatic drop from January rates of around 115 yen per dollar.

AFP

Russia earns \$98bn from fuel exports in 100 days of war



Paris, France – Russia earned US\$98bn from fossil fuel exports during the first 100 days of its war in Ukraine, with most sent to the European Union, according to research published Monday.

The report from the independent, Finland-based Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) comes as Kyiv urges the West to sever all trade with Russia in the hopes of cutting off the Kremlin's financial lifeline.

Earlier this month, the EU agreed to halt most Russian oil imports, on which the continent is heavily dependent. Though the bloc aims to reduce gas shipments by two-thirds this year, an embargo is not in the cards at present.

According to the report, the

EU took 61 per cent of Russia's fossil fuel exports during the war's first 100 days, worth about US\$60bn.

The top importers were China at 12.6bn euros, Germany (12.1bn euros) and Italy (7.8bn euros).

Russia's fossil fuel revenues come first from the sale of crude oil (46bn euros), followed by pipeline gas, oil products, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and coal.

Even as Russia's exports plummeted in May, with countries and companies shunning its supplies over the Ukraine invasion, the global rise in fossil fuel prices continued to fill the Kremlin's coffers, with export revenues reaching record highs.

Russia's average export prices were about 60 per cent higher than last year, according

to CREA.

Some countries have upped their purchases from Moscow, including China, India, the United Arab Emirates and France, the report added.

"As the EU is considering stricter sanctions against Russia, France has increased its imports to become the largest buyer of LNG in the world," said CREA analyst Lauri Myllyvirta.

Since most of these are spot purchases rather than long-term contracts, France is consciously deciding to use Russian energy in the wake of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, Myllyvirta added.

He called for an embargo on Russian fossil fuels to "align actions with words".

AFP



SULTANATE OF OMAN
MINISTRY OF HEALTH



(Auction No. 1/2022)

The Ministry of Health would like to invite sealed bids for Remove of Sand at Head Quarter and Offers should be submitted in sealed envelopes.

Specialized Companies and establishments may collect auction documents and specifications from the Directorate of Purchase & Tender at Ministry's Headquarters between 8.30am and 12.30pm during official working hours on or before 20/6/ 2022.

A Bank Guarantee or a Certified Cheque valid for 90 days issued by a local bank for (1000) of the Auction Value addressed to Ministry of Health shall be enclosed with the bid as an auction bond that may be reimbursed to unsuccessful bidder. A bid unaccompanied by the auction bond will be rejected.

Offers enclosed in the sealed envelope duly signed and stamped in the original form shall be addressed to H.E. the Chairman of the Tender Committee providing the title of the auction viz:

" Auction No. 01/2022 – for the is clearly mentioned on it. Envelopes shall not bear any sign that refers to bidder's name or identity.

Offers shall be deposited in the tenders box kept at the Office of Purchase and Tender in Directorate of Financial Affairs by 9.00 noon on Wednesday the 6/7/ 2022. Offers submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

The Ministry is not bound to assign any reason for rejected bids.



Nissan Patrol Super Safari available on low EMI

Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), has announced a low EMI on Nissan Patrol Super Safari.

With its proud heritage, composed of power, determination and strength, the Nissan Patrol Super Safari transcends one's expectations of any vehicle. Customers can now avail an exceptionally low EMI rate of RO190 on Nissan Patrol Super Safari (terms and conditions apply).

EMIs are calculated based on 3% rate of Interest, 20% down payment, 10-year loan tenure, through Bank Muscat, a press release said.

A senior official from Nissan Oman, said, "We are delighted to offer low EMI on Nissan Patrol

Super Safari. Popular among adventure lovers in the region, Nissan Patrol Super Safari comes part and parcel of the culture in this region.

With its ability to conquer even the most difficult road conditions and the harshest of terrains without compromising on comfort and luxury, the Super Safari is a model that is highly in demand, especially due to the region being a hub for outdoor activity and adventure."

Nissan Patrol Super Safari astounds auto enthusiasts because of its legacy and reputation for versatility, capability and extreme performance. Its legendary capability and its deep-rooted heritage in the region makes it a popular vehicle.

This legacy of reliability and superior 4x4 capability remains true today, and it is why one can take the Nissan Patrol Safari where others don't dare to go. Nissan Patrol Super Safari boasts of all the elements that have elevated the vehicle to iconic status such as the rugged design and the off-road capability, while delivering a modern approach that is complimented by the special upgrades and enhancements that add to its usability and visual appeal

The Patrol Super Safari boasts all-new tan leather seats and door trim with 8-way power seats for the driver and 4-way for the front passenger.

New driver aids include a navigation system as well as front

and rear parking sensors with rear view camera, Bluetooth, USB, CD, auxiliary input socket and FM/AM radio to complete the in-car entertainment offering. The vehicle comes equipped with automatic climate control and a built-in, refrigerated cool box.

Building on the iconic Super Safari model, the new Nissan Patrol Super Safari enjoys the legendary exterior design which has distinguished it from other Patrol models and made it one of the most recognized icons of modern off-road vehicles. Distinctive machine cut 17" black alloy wheels, dual-tone body colours, flared fenders, a rear spoiler and a Super Safari body stripe all build on its iconic looks.

Alizz Islamic Bank honoured by MoSD for its CSR efforts

In recognition of its pioneering role in giving back to the community, Alizz Islamic Bank was honoured by the Ministry of Social Development at an event that was held by the Ministry to felicitate government and private organisations that offer support to social responsibility programmes.

The event was held under the patronage of H H Sayyid Kamil bin Fahad al Said in the presence of H E Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, CEOs, representatives of the private sector, and a number of distinguished guests.

The award was received by Murtadha Jawad al Lawati, AGM - head of Marketing and Corporate Communications Department of Alizz Islamic Bank.

Alizz Islamic Bank recently entered into voluntary partnerships to support various CSR initiatives, under direct supervision by the CEO, including contributing towards building the Centre of Excellence for Children with Disabilities and collecting donations for orphans of the Child



Care Center.

Additionally, it is seeking to engage employees in voluntary work, in collaboration with a number of associations.

The bank implemented various social responsibility programmes, such as a direct donation of RO150,000 to the Oman Charitable Organisation's cyclone Shaheen Aid Fund and a relief and food campaign launched to support those affected by the cyclone, with the participation of a large number of

volunteers from across the sultanate who distributed aids to those affected. Moreover, the bank also offered support to its customers that were directly affected by cyclone Shaheen.

Alizz Islamic Bank also continued its 'Iftar Sayem' initiative, for the eighth consecutive year, to distribute Ramadan boxes, filled with essential food items, to low-income families in the communities that the bank operates in. The Bank supported the Ministry of Social Developments efforts to provide students from low-income families with the advanced technologies they need in order to access the distance learning platforms that schools resorted to as a result of the pandemic. In this regard, the bank donated 50 laptops and 10 tablets to the ministry to ensure that these children can continue their education.

The social responsibility programmes implemented by the bank are in line with its mission of achieving exceptional and sustainable outcomes for its shareholders.

AmCham Regional Council welcomes AmCham Oman

The AmCham MENA Regional Council is proud to announce the joining of the Oman American Business Center (AmCham Oman) as a new member organisation, adding over 150 new member companies to the council's membership, representing different sectors in the region.

The Oman American Business Center (OABC), also known as AmCham Oman, was founded in 2003 to foster the development of commercial activity between Oman and the United States, and to support the Oman business community through programmes and events focused on professional development, thought leadership, and high-level networking, a press release said.

As the official affiliate of the

US Chamber of Commerce in Oman, OABC promotes understanding, partnerships, and other matters of mutual economic interest between business communities in Oman and the United States. AmCham Oman hosts about 30 events annually and is considered Oman's most active business networking group.

"Joining the regional Council of MENA American Chambers of Commerce is a natural step for AmCham Oman (OABC) to take as we continue serving our growing membership of companies in Oman," said Ali Daud, president and chairman emeritus of OABC. This opportunity to be part of the MENA Council will provide strong connections in the region and support OABC's mission of facilitating trade and commercial

relations between Oman and the United States."

In welcoming AmCham Oman to the AmCham MENA Council, AmCham MENA Council chairman, and president of AmCham Egypt, Tarek Tawfik said, "We are honoured to have AmCham Oman join the regional family of the MENA Council.

With the addition of AmCham Oman, AmCham MENA welcomes its 11th member country. Oman is an important country to the region and to the United States.

Trade between Oman and the United States reached more than four billion dollars in 2021. With AmCham Oman, the AmCham MENA regional council will continue working on advancing inter-regional cooperation.

Oman Air increases flights to destinations in India

Oman Air, the Sultanate of Oman's flag carrier, has amended its summer schedule to reflect increased frequency and flight resumptions.

The airline is boosting frequency to eight Indian destinations - Bangalore, Mumbai, Kozhikode, Kochi, Delhi, Goa, Hyderabad, and Chennai as demand increases.

Between Muscat and its operational India destinations, the airline introduced wide-body service, including the B787 Dreamliner and Airbus A330 in



addition to the Boeing 737. Guests should check omanair.com for the most up-to-date flight schedules and times, as they are subject to change.

As of May 22, all COVID-19 preventive safety precautions and procedures previously in place at airports across Oman have been lifted.

Guests departing Oman should ensure that they are aware of all pre-departure requirements and requirements during their flights, which are provided at omanair.com.

Ooredoo's More Internet provides unlimited connectivity

Never miss a message with unlimited WhatsApp on Ooredoo's More Internet recharges. Valid until September 7, it's the latest in a string of exciting bonus features that come with the popular internet recharges, starting from RO1.

Available alongside Ooredoo's Hala prepaid plans, which offer more freedom and flexibility than ever before, subscribers can enjoy a fantastic digital experience, their way.

As well as unlimited What-



sApp, customers opting for the RO1 recharge will get 0.4 GB

data valid for seven days, while customers going for the RO2 bundle will get 1.5 GB valid for one week.

Stepping it up a notch, the RO3 recharge comes with 2 GB data, the RO5 bundle comes with 4 GB, and the RO10 bundle comes with 12 GB all valid for 4 weeks.

With a variety of voice, internet and digital add-ons, Hala plans offer the perfect mix of flexibility, great value, simplicity and most of all, convenience.

Koreans, Omanis share cultural ties at embassy event

Young Omanis and Koreans gathered at the Korean Embassy in Muscat on June 9 to exchange warm chords of friendship and cultural ties.

At the gathering, Korean students wore Omani dishdashas and sirwals offered by members of the OK Nuri, a voluntary group of Omani fans of Korean culture. The Omani participants tried wearing the hanbok - the Korean traditional costume.

They appreciated the beauty and traditional elegance embodied in the design of both costumes of Oman and Korea, a press release said.

The Omani and Korean par-

ticipants further engaged in sessions where traditional handicraft items were introduced. What made the sessions even more enjoyable and lively was the activities involving making handicrafts on the spot.

H E KIM Kiejoo, Korean Ambassador to the sultanate, valued highly the voluntary cultural exchange activities at the grass-roots level, which contributes substantially to mutual understanding, exchanges, and support in other parts of the relations.

H E KIM said, "Promoting knowledge about respective traditions and cultures is a great

privilege for the Koreans and Omanis as the two countries are endowed with rich history and cultural heritage." He also assured that the Korean Embassy will continue to work together with the Omani and Korean friends to promote people-to-people exchanges."

Members of the OK Nuri Group expressed their willingness to continue their work as a 'cultural bridge' to link the Omani and Korean people. They also pledged that they will exert their best efforts to contribute to the already-strong bonds of friendship between the two peoples and countries.



PhazeRo to collaborate with Microsoft

Omani software company PhazeRo entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Microsoft during the third day of the recent COMEX 2022. Under the agreement, Microsoft and PhazeRo will collaborate to help identify growth opportunities and accelerate innovation for the software consulting firm in Oman and across the Middle East, a press release said.

Microsoft will provide cross-selling support for opportunities within PhazeRo's core competency, such as web development and AI-based applications. Microsoft will also provide access to online learning materials to upskill technical capabilities, free credits to Microsoft Online services such as Office 365 to facilitate rapid prototyping and scaling, and access to Microsoft pre-sales consultants to support PhazeRo in large-scale opportunities.

"At PhazeRo, we believe in investing heavily in the growth of our talent to ensure they adapt as markets change. This agree-



ment will enable us to access the tools and resources to do so by building on our technical capabilities," said Masoud al Rawahi, Founder and CEO at PhazeRo. "Most importantly, our partnership with Microsoft will support our efforts to significantly scale and grow our business as well as our capabilities, with a view to accelerate innovation, maximize

new opportunities and enhance our competitiveness." Through the new partnership, Microsoft will assist PhazeRo in developing and sourcing speakers for business ecosystem events such as bootcamps, hackathons and tech contests. Meanwhile, PhazeRo will consider Microsoft Azure its preferred cloud platform to develop,

build and host end customer solutions. The two will also collaborate on end-customer workshops to drive more pipeline for both parties around Azure. "Microsoft has long been committed to supporting enterprises in their contribution to establishing Oman as a modern, knowledge-based economy,"

said Sheikh Saif Hilal al Hosni, country manager at Microsoft Oman and Bahrain. "With innovation as a core foundation of a sustainable, competitive economy that is productive and diverse, it is important to empower people and organisations with the right tools and resources that will enhance their capability to innovate better and faster."



Gulf International Bank opens new Abu Dhabi offices

Gulf International Bank (GIB) has announced the official opening of its new larger offices in Nation Towers in Abu Dhabi. CEO of GIB B S C, Jamal al Kishi, along with Rajeev Kakar, director of GIB B S C and other senior members of GIB, officially inaugurated the Abu Dhabi offices in the presence of representatives from the Central Bank of the UAE and clients, a press release said.

The new premises will support the Bank's expansion. Operating as a wholesale branch of GIB B S C, the Abu Dhabi branch has established a strong franchise in the local market. It serves some of the country's largest and most prominent corporates across sectors, financial institutions as well as key government and other related entities.

Kishi said, "We're delighted to inaugurate our new offices in Abu Dhabi with our clients, reg-

ulator and employees at this exciting time of growth and ongoing regional diversification for the bank. With deep roots in the UAE, we continue to enhance our presence on the ground. We have strengthened our local capabilities in line with our clients' needs and continue to add new talent to better serve this important market."

Khaled Abbas, group head of Wholesale Banking & UAE country head at GIB, added, "Reflecting strong opportunities in the UAE market, we remain focused on delivering a comprehensive range of products and services including wholesale banking solutions across a wide array of credit solutions, global transaction banking and treasury services to support our clients and their growth. We look forward to further building our position in the market and the value we add to our clients and their businesses."

Strong International traffic propels air travel recovery

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced that air travel resumed its strong recovery trend in April, despite the war in Ukraine and travel restrictions in China. This was driven primarily by international demand.

"With the lifting of many border restrictions, we are seeing the long-expected surge in bookings as people seek to make up for two years of lost travel opportunities. April data is cause for optimism in almost all markets, except China, which

continues to severely restrict travel. The experience of the rest of the world is demonstrating that increased travel is manageable with high levels of population immunity and the normal systems for disease surveillance. We hope that China can recognize this success soon and take its own steps towards normality," said Willie Walsh, IATA's director general.

European carriers' April international traffic rose 480.0% versus April 2021, substantially up over the 434.3% increase in

March 2022 versus the same month in 2021. Capacity rose 233.5% and load factor climbed 33.7 percentage points to 79.4%. Asia-Pacific airlines saw their April international traffic climb 290.8% compared to April 2021, significantly improved on the 197.2% gain registered in March 2022 versus March 2021. Capacity rose 88.6% and the load factor was up 34.6 percentage points to 66.8%, still the lowest among regions.

Middle Eastern airlines had a

265.0% demand rise in April compared to April 2021, bettering the 252.7% increase in March 2022, versus the same month in 2021. April capacity rose 101.0% versus the year-ago period, and load factor climbed 32.2 percentage points to 71.7%.

Walsh added, "With the northern summer travel season now upon us, two things are clear: two-years of border restrictions have not weakened the desire for the freedom to travel. Where it is permitted,

demand rapidly is returning to pre-COVID levels. However, it is also evident that the failings in how governments managed the pandemic have continued into the recovery.

"With governments making U-turns and policy changes there was uncertainty until the last minute, leaving little time to restart an industry that was largely dormant for two years. It is no wonder that we are seeing operational delays in some locations and solutions need to be found there."



Khazaen Dry Port signs service agreement with DB Schenker

Khazaen Dry Port (KDP), a member of Asyad Group, signed a service agreement with DB Schenker - the global logistics giant - in Oman (formally known as Schenker Khimji's) to use facilities and services provided by KDP to enhance its customers' experience further.

The service agreement allows DB Schenker to access a range of KDP services and top-notch infrastructure to better serve its major clients, mainly oil and gas corporations and other heavy hitters in specialised industries. Services in the scope of the agreement include handling and temporary storage of sensitive cargo and other shipments that require special processing, a press release said.

Juma al Maskari, executive director at KDP, highlighted the significance of engaging such a household name in logistics, saying, "Sourcing new services to a

top logistics player like DB Schenker is proof of the trust that a major company with high operational standards has in the quality of our services and assets.

We are happy to conclude this agreement with DB Schenker and provide them with our differentiated client-centric storage solutions and support that attract big clients looking for a new logistics base."

Speaking on behalf of DB Schenker in Oman, Richard van Schie, managing director, said, "we believe this service agreement will help form synergies for our customers' trade and related activity in and out of Oman. We are delighted to have access to Khazaen Dry Port's successful setup of facilities and services while leveraging Oman's strategic location that provides a gateway to regional and global markets."

With more than 74,500 employees at over 2,100 locations in more than 130 countries, DB Schenker is one of the world's leading logistics providers.

The company operates land, air, and ocean transportation services, and it also offers comprehensive solutions for logistics and global supply chain management from a single source. In 2022, DB Schenker celebrates its 150th company anniversary.

Khazaen Dry Port continues to attract major corporations and global players to set up shop in Oman, in line with the plans drawn by Asyad Group, the leading national logistics developer of the sultanate.

The Group, acting through KDP and its multiple business units, is a key enabler of the Sultanate of Oman Logistics Strategy 2040 (SOLS 2040) and the logistics and supply chain themes of Oman Vision 2040.

Regional leaders to set the pace for sustainable future

SAS, the leader in analytics, hosted an exclusive executive event in one of the most emblematic venues of Dubai, the Museum of the Future.

'Executive Experience 2022 - Building the Future with Sustainable AI' brought together regional and business leaders across the Middle East, Turkey, and Africa to discuss how to continue accelerating economic progress and digitalisation of society while ensuring a sustainable future for generations to come, a press release said.

Tayfun Topkoc, managing director, META at SAS, said, "For executives across the region, sustainability, talent growth and Cloud adoption are on the top of their agendas.

Our goal is to empower companies to become truly data driven and make sustainable decisions based on analytical insights. SAS is committed to reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, in alignment with UAE's Sustainability Agenda.

Emphasising the importance of sound business practices and praising the UAE government's commitment to Net Zero carbon emissions, Meghan Gregonis, United States Consul General in Dubai, said, "Achieving net-zero carbon emissions and limiting the negative effects of climate change require partnership, innovation and action.

SAS has committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and aligned its business with the ambitious aim to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

"As the UAE prepares to host COP28 in November 2023, we



Meghan Gregonis

are delighted to see U.S. companies, such as SAS, aligned with the UAE's vision to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.



Shukri Dabaghi

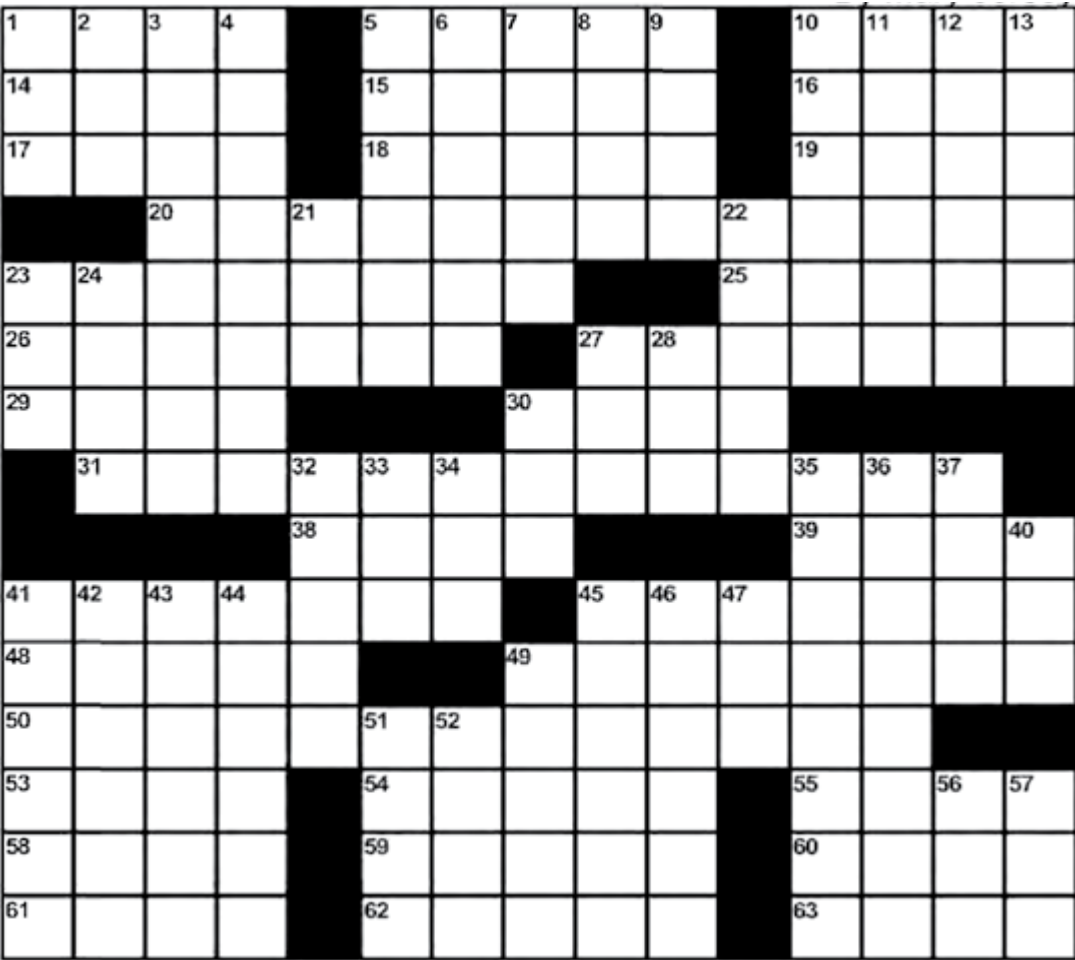
SAS plans to partner with entities in the UAE to educate the next generation of data scientists and explore innovative ways to lever-

age artificial intelligence to build a more sustainable future."

Shukri Dabaghi, SVP of Emerging EMEA & APAC at SAS, said, "Previous experience tells us that it is possible to maintain, or even increase growth during periods of turbulence.

Organisations that take bold and flexible approach by transforming their operations, adopting AI driven digital technologies and exploring new collaborations with customers, suppliers, and partners - will be in a stronger position to build momentum and power through volatility and to stay ahead of the market."

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1) Struggle for air
5) It goes through the roof
10) Pierce with a knife
14) Chip in a pot?
15) Holiday pie ingredient
16) Call to mind
17) Small biter
18) Absinthe flavoring
19) God of love
20) Brought up pickled fish?
23) Thaws a freezer
25) For this reason
26) Batters in Baltimore
27) Amount in grandma's recipe
29) Acknowledge the villain's entrance
30) It's guaranteed to remove wrinkles
31) Guevara grills Kaspárov's equipment?
38) Chew the fat
39) Swarm
41) Key West shows?
45) Collection of sacred songs
48) Bring together

49) Second Amendment words
50) James Bond's depressing drink?
53) _Van Dyke
54) Like many teenagers' rooms
55) Haitian's head
58) Dueling sword
59) One of classic TV's Hux tables
60) "Terrible" czar
61) Loch _ monster
62) First vertebra
63) Transmit, as a text

DOWN

1) Prevent from speaking
2) Massachusetts cape
3) Celebrities' favorite seafood?
4) He broke Ty Cobb's record
5) Thinly distributed
6) Dogmata
7) They turn litmus paper red
8) Charge alternative
9) Reflex-testing site
10) Like a Stephen King reader, often

11) Comic actor's asset
12) Immediately
13) He wasn't the dummy of the act
21) "You've got mail" co.
22) Thick-skinned jungle beast
23) Play_
24) Rocker Clapton
27) They're ahead of jrs.
28) Organized criminals
30) Make angry
32) Male bovine
33) Stuff one's face
34) Franken and Capone
35) Mythical island
36) What hunting dogs do
37) Have an opinion
40) Bride's title
41) Like a sneak attack
42) Needing more time on the vine
43) Sister's daughters
44) Vampires may take them to heart
45) Old Iran
46) Greek woodland deities
47) Former White House

spokesman
Fleischer
49) Metabolism type
51) Urban organization of

song
52) Leave a solid state?
56) Convert into leather
57) Author's last word?

NOTE PAD

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

For now, the top of your priority list belongs to the ones you love, but you'd never admit to it! They know how you feel, though, and that's really all that counts. If a situation presents itself that demands that you either take the side of the ones you care for most or be totally objective, you have no choice but to side with your people. They're pleased, grateful, and ready for more.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

You've never been short on charm, and you know exactly how to use that gift to the utmost. Today, when a loved one pops up and silently asks you to help them out in some new way, you do it without uttering word, and you do it so well they should win before the other side even knows they're sparring. Hope that they appreciate you, because with the depth of devotion you give to others, you really deserve it.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

When someone close needs a charismatic, well-spoken ally, they immediately think of you, as well they should! Your gift of gab is shining brightly right now, so it's likely you end up standing next to a friend, arms crossed, befuddling their antagonists by easily expressing what they'd be struggling to say. As usual, you do a fine job of it, but be careful when it's all over. Gloating isn't like you.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

You've been dealing with an awful lot lately, especially when it comes to secrets and those who keep them. You're done trying to keep anything inessential under wraps at this point. In fact, you're ready to blow the lid off of anything that's asked of you. Before you do, though, be sure you're not going to harm yourself or anyone close to you. Otherwise, have at it, because it's time to clear the air.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

For most of us, anything that even comes close to balancing the checkbook or getting our finances in order is so stressful or boring that we'd prefer to have a wisdom tooth pulled. When your accounts and bills need to be done, however, not only do you not whine, you perk right up and get into it, and you usually get it done in record time. Today, that quality is on display for the whole world to see, and there might be some envy.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

You're famous for your work ethic, so if you're under extra pressure right now to get a big job done quickly, not to worry. Nobody else is! The tricky part might be getting others to work with you, or at least it would be tricky for anyone else. For you, it's all in a day's work with energy like this. The best part is that the loyalty you inspire means that your colleagues will love and respect you even more when it's all over.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

You've recovered from an old or recent trauma, but it wasn't easy, and you don't want to go through anything like it ever again. Fortunately, events like those are quite rare in your world now, as is what you go through today, but for entirely different reasons. There's a very interesting person on the horizon, someone you might actually find fascinating enough to think about getting to know better. If you're game, go for it. There's no doubt that they will be too.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You might be trying not to let your feelings show at the moment, but there's only one way for you to pull it off: Try putting some serious distance between you and the person you want to avoid oversharing with. Otherwise, there's just no way you can hide them long enough for it to matter. You've never been good at disguising your emotions, and right about now one sympathetic glance from someone who cares is all it takes to get you going.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

If you have any doubts about a loved one right now, don't let anyone talk you into letting those doubts slide. You have remarkably good instincts, especially when it comes to those closest to you. So if your gut is alerting you to something amiss, trust it and run with the info. The best thing to do is likely to stay put for the time being. Sit tight and do some investigating. In the meantime, smile and say you need to think things over.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Your talent for making nice with everyone is legendary. You can keep the peace even when you're not sure whose side you're on. That trait comes in handy today, since at least two people you care about are playing tug-of-war and need someone to mediate. You're tired of the job, and you've probably worked it more times than you care to count. Still, you recognize the value of neutrality, and when it falls on you, you can play the part to the very best of your abilities.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You're famous for your love of discovering new (and old) secrets, it's you in most if not all circumstances. At the moment, your intensifying investigation is even more appealing to you, though the nature and seriousness of the issue don't matter at all. To you, the point is that your curiosity is running on high, and your insightful side emerges in a big way. Just be sure that no one who might be hurt hears about the info you discover.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You're one of the most sensitive people in your world, so when something seems to be a bit off today, you're the first to know. One tiny, inconvenient little fact that's out of place might be bothering you, and whether or not you know it, it affects everything you do for the entire day. Don't hesitate to follow up on it. The good news is that you should be quite relieved and happy about what you discover and closer to a loved one too.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Which of these National Parks was created last?

A. Yellowstone, USA
B. Kakadu, Australia
C. Peak District, UK
D. Pyrénées, France

02. Which of these is a tragic heroine in Irish mythology?

A. Ydun
B. Flora
C. Deirdre
D. Demeter

03. In the number 255 how many digits are there?

A. 4
B. 1
C. 2
D. 3

Answers: 1.B 2.C 3.D

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

E	Y	U	I
S	E	D	L
T	F	R	X
F	L	A	I

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

Ukraine forces pushed back from Severodonetsk centre

Kramatorsk, Ukraine - Ukraine said Monday its forces had been pushed back from the centre of key industrial city Severodonetsk, where President Volodymyr Zelensky described a fight for “literally every metre”.

The cities of Severodonetsk and Lysychansk, which are separated by a river, have been targeted for weeks as the last areas still under Ukrainian control in the eastern Lugansk region.

Regional governor Sergiy Gaiday said Monday Russian forces were “gathering more and more equipment” to “encircle” Severodonetsk, and that they had “pushed our troops from the centre and continue to destroy our city”.

The local Azot chemical plant, where hundreds of civilians have reportedly taken refuge, was being “heavily shelled”, Gaiday said.

In Lysychansk, bombardments killed three civilians, including a six-year-old boy, he said.

Severodonetsk had been “de facto” blocked off after Russian forces blew up the “last” bridge connecting it to Lysychansk Sunday, Eduard Basurin, a representative for pro-Russian separatists, said Monday.

“The Ukrainian units that are there, they are there forever. They have two options: to surrender or die,” Basurin said.

On Sunday, Zelensky said the latest fighting in Severodonetsk was “very fierce”, adding that Russia was deploying under-trained troops and using its young men as “cannon fodder”.

Russia’s massed artillery in that region gave it a tenfold advantage, the commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian military, Valeriy Zaluzhny, said Sunday.

“Every metre of Ukrainian land there is covered in blood -- but not only ours, but also the occupier’s.”

The capture of Severodonetsk would open the road for Moscow to another major city, Kramatorsk, in their steps toward conquering the whole of Donbas, a mainly Russian-speaking region partly held by pro-Russian separatists since 2014.

‘War crimes’

On Monday, Amnesty International accused Russia of war



A man rides his bicycle between two destroyed military trucks in the city of Lysychansk, eastern Ukrainian region of Donbas, on June 11, 2022. (AFP)



Civilians are evacuated from the city of Lysychansk, eastern Ukrainian region of Donbas, on June 11, 2022. (AFP)

crimes in Ukraine, saying that attacks on the northeastern city of Kharkiv -- many using banned cluster bombs -- had killed hundreds of civilians.

“The repeated bombardments of residential neighbourhoods in Kharkiv are indiscriminate attacks which killed and injured hundreds of civilians, and as such constitute war crimes,” the rights group said in a report on Ukraine’s second biggest city.

Away from the battlefield, World Trade Organization members gathered in Geneva Sunday, with the threat posed to global food security by Russia’s war in wheat-producing Ukraine top of the agenda.

Tensions ran high during a

closed-door session, where several delegates took the floor to condemn Russia’s war, including Kyiv’s envoy who was met with a standing ovation, WTO spokesman Dan Pruzin told journalists.

Just before Russian Minister of Economic Development Maxim Reshetnikov spoke, around three dozen delegates “walked out”, the spokesman said.

On a farm near the city of Mykolaiv in the south, the harvest has been delayed by the need to undo the damage done by Russian troops that passed through the area in March.

“We planted really late because we needed to clear everything beforehand,” including

bombshells, Nadiia Ivanova, 42, told AFP.

The farm’s warehouses currently hold 2,000 tonnes of last season’s grain but there are no takers.

The railways have been partially destroyed by the Russian army, while any ship that sails faces the threat of being sunk.

‘Out of it’

The war has prompted Finland and Sweden to give up decades of military non-alignment and seek to join the NATO alliance. But Turkey is blocking their bids and NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said Sunday the issue may not be resolved in time for an alliance summit later this month.

Speaking to AFP, Mikhail Kasyanov, Russia’s prime minister from 2000 to 2004, said he thought President Vladimir Putin was “out of it”, after seeing the Russian leader summon the country’s top brass for a theatrical meeting three days before the invasion on February 24.

“I knew a different Putin,” said Kasyanov, 64, who served under Putin but has become one of the Kremlin’s most vocal critics.

Kasyanov predicted the war could last for up to two years and said it is imperative that Ukraine win.

“If Ukraine falls, the Baltic states will be next,” he said.

Chortkiv strike

The United States and Europe have sent weapons and cash to help Ukraine blunt Russia’s advance, alongside punishing Moscow with unprecedented economic sanctions.

Russian forces said Sunday they had struck a site in the town of Chortkiv in western Ukraine storing US- and EU-supplied weapons.

Russia’s defence ministry said the strike destroyed a “large depot of anti-tank missile systems, portable air defence systems and shells provided to the Kyiv regime by the US and European countries”.

The strike - a rare attack by Russia in the relatively calm west of Ukraine - left 22 people injured, regional governor Volodymyr Trush said.

Concerns eased Sunday over Ukraine’s largest nuclear power plant in Zaporizhzhia. Captured months ago by Russian forces but still operated by Ukrainians, the station had ceased transmitting vital safeguards data two weeks ago.

But plant officials working with the International Atomic Energy Agency have succeeded in restoring transmission, the IAEA said.

Rafael Grossi, director general of the UN agency, said it still wanted to send inspectors to the plant “as soon as possible”.

AFP

25% of Ukraine's arable land lost to war: Kyiv

Kyiv, Ukraine - Ukraine has lost a quarter of its arable land since Russia’s invasion, notably in the south and east, the deputy agriculture minister said Monday while insisting that food security is not threatened.

“Despite the loss of 25 per cent of arable land, crop planting this year is more than sufficient” to ensure food for the population, Taras Vysotskiy told a news conference.

He said national consumption levels had fallen “due to mass displacement and external migration” as millions fled to escape the fighting.

More than seven million people are estimated to have been displaced within Ukraine by Russia’s war, figures from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) show.

But another 7.3 million have fled abroad, more than half of

them to Poland.

Despite the significant loss of land to the Russians, “the current situation of crop planting areas.. does not pose a threat to Ukraine’s food security,” he said.

“Ukrainian farmers managed to prepare relatively well for sowing before the war started,” he said.

“In February, Ukraine had already imported about 70 per cent of necessary fertilisers, 60 percent of disease control products and about a third of the required fuel” for sowing, he said.

However, the invasion of several regions by Russian troops and the ongoing blockade of Ukraine’s Black Sea ports, preventing the export of grain, forced Ukrainian farmers “to change what they were sowing and how much,” Vysotskiy said.

AFP



Kim Jong Un attending a meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea on June 13 (AFP)

N Korea fires suspected artillery shots: Seoul

Seoul, South Korea - North Korea fired a series of artillery shots over the weekend, Seoul’s military said, days after leader Kim Jong Un vowed to use “power for power” to defend the country’s sovereignty.

The South Korean military detected “several flight trajectories” that are understood to be shots from North Korean artillery, Seoul’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said late Sunday.

The suspected shots were fired between 8:07 am (2307 GMT) to 11:03 am Sunday morning, the JCS said, stressing Seoul maintains a firm military readiness in collaboration with treaty ally United States.

Pyongyang’s official Korean

Central News Agency, which typically reports on successful weapons tests 24 hours after the fact, has not released information on Sunday’s shots, nor on other missile launches.

The nuclear-armed North has carried out a blitz of sanctions-busting weapons tests this year, including firing an intercontinental ballistic missile at full range for the first time since 2017. Seoul’s presidential national security office held a meeting to discuss the artillery shots late Sunday, and reaffirmed the South’s position of “responding calmly and sternly” to Pyongyang’s provocations, the office said.

AFP

Suspected jihadists kill at least 50 in Burkina Faso

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso - At least 50 civilians died in an attack by suspected jihadists in northern Burkina Faso, government spokesman Lionel Bilgo said Monday, in one of the bloodiest clashes since a military coup in January.

“The army has so far found 50 bodies” after the village of Seytenga was attacked overnight Saturday, Bilgo said, adding that the toll “may rise.”

“Relatives (of the victims) have returned to Seytenga and may have taken bodies away,” he told a press conference.

Seytenga was the site of bloody fighting last week.

Eleven gendarmes were killed on Thursday, prompting a military operation that the army said led to the deaths of around 40 jihadists.

“The (weekend) bloodshed was caused by reprisals to the army’s actions,” said Bilgo.

“The country has been hit but the army is doing its job.”

Humanitarian organisations in the region said around 3,000 people were being housed in neighbouring towns after fleeing from the village.

The landlocked Sahel state is in the grip of a seven-year-old jihadist insurgency that has claimed more than 2,000 lives and forced some 1.9 million people to leave their homes.

Attacks have been concentrated in the country’s north and east, led by assailants suspected to have links with Al-Qaeda or the Islamic State group.

The latest raid is one of the bloodiest since a military putsch in January, when colonels angered at failures to roll back the insurgency ousted the elected president, Roch Marc Christian Kabore.

Struggling army

The new strongman, Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, immediately

vowed to make security his key priority. But after a relative lull, attacks resumed, inflicting a toll of nearly 300 civilian and military deaths over the past three months.

The military takeover was preceded by two attacks that stunned the country.

The first, in Solhan in the northeast, claimed 132 lives in June, while the second in Inata, in the north, killed 57 gendarmes in November.

The Inata attack - the biggest single-day loss among the security forces in the history of the insurgency - was particularly shocking.

It targeted gendarmes who had been due to be relieved and had appealed for help before the attack, saying they were running short of food and ammunition.

On Saturday, several hundred people demonstrated in the eastern town of Pama.

AFP

Fired over Ukraine posts, Russian lecturer fights to keep teaching

Volgograd, Russia - In the bedroom of his modest apartment in the southern Russian city of Volgograd, ex-university lecturer Roman Melnichenko has two bags packed: one if he goes to prison, the other if he has to flee.

“I have to be ready,” the 49-year-old says.

Melnichenko taught law in Volgograd, known as Stalingrad in Soviet times, for 25 years before he was fired in April for speaking out against Russia’s military action in Ukraine.

He is battling in court for the right to keep teaching, while facing other legal troubles after he was charged with spreading “false” information about the conflict.

Teachers have been under increasing pressure in Russia for years as authorities cracked down on free speech, with many dismissed for alleged “immoral conduct” after they criticised the government or challenged the country’s increasing conservatism.

This has intensified since



Professor Roman Melnichenko looks in his apartment in the southern city of Volgograd on June 6, 2022 (AFP)

President Vladimir Putin sent troops into Ukraine in late February, and Melnichenko said he understands why.

“The intellectual elite has the power to make the ruling elite lose the foundations of its power, that’s why there is such a harsh reaction against universities,” the mustachioed former senior lecturer at Volgograd State University told AFP.

Melnichenko was fired for “immoral conduct” after sharing social media posts denouncing Moscow’s intervention in

Ukraine, despite agreeing to a request from the university to delete the posts.

He was also detained by police at the university and accused of spreading “false” information -- one of the many Russians who have fallen foul of new restrictions against criticising the offensive.

‘In shock for three months’

At the police station, he made the symbolic move of demanding a Ukrainian translator - a right

under Russian law - but was refused.

Melnichenko may live in Russia, but he has a deep connection to Ukraine.

His parents live in Nikopol, a city in southern Ukraine close to the front line.

“I have been in shock for the past three months. These are my parents,” he said with tears in his eyes.

In June, a court found Melnichenko guilty of an administrative charge and ordered him to pay a fine of 30,000 rubles (about \$500) - roughly his monthly salary. Luckily, Melnichenko said, he is not the family’s main breadwinner. His wife Zoya is a manicurist and makes more money than him.

“If they ban manicures, Russia will fall,” he said, bursting out laughing.

It is not the first time the outspoken Melnichenko has been in trouble with the authorities. Two universities have previously declined to renew his contracts.

AFP

Israel urges nationals to leave Turkey

Yair Lapid asked citizens to leave over threats that Iranian operatives are planning attacks on Israelis

Jerusalem, Undefined- Israel's Foreign Minister Yair Lapid on Monday urged citizens in Turkey to leave "as soon as possible" over threats that Iranian operatives are actively planning attacks on Israelis in Istanbul.

The stark warning comes amid the latest surge in tensions between bitter rivals Iran and Israel, with Tehran blaming the Jewish state for a series of attacks on its nuclear and military infrastructure, inside Iran but also inside Syria.

Lapid made no mention of any alleged Israeli operations against Iranian targets.

But, he said, Israelis in Turkey faced "a real and immediate danger" from Iranian agents, citing "several Iranian attempts at carrying out terror attacks against Israelis on holiday in Istanbul".

"If you are already in Istanbul, return to Israel as soon as possible," Lapid said in a public warning. "If you have planned a flight to Istanbul - cancel. No vacation is worth your life," he added, during a meeting with lawmakers from his Yesh Atid party.

"Do not fly to Turkey at all," unless such travel is "essential",



Visitors stroll in Galataport in Istanbul, on June 03, 2022. Galataport, located in Istanbul's neighborhood of Karakoy, is set to enliven cruise tourism from the Mediterranean Sea to the Black Sea amidst Turkish economy tailspin over a weakening lira currency and soaring inflation. (AFP)

the foreign minister urged Israelis.

Iran and Israel have been engaged in a years-long shadow

war but tensions have ratcheted up following a string of high-profile incidents Tehran has blamed on Israel.

The Islamic republic claimed Israel was responsible for the killing of Revolutionary Guards Colonel Sayyad Khodai, who was

shot dead outside his Tehran home on May 22.

The Guards described him as a "defender of the sanctuary", a

If you have planned a flight to Istanbul - cancel. No vacation is worth your life

YAIR LAPID

term used for those who work on behalf of Iran in Syria or Iraq and vowed to avenge his assassination by "Zionists".

Israel was also blamed for air strikes last week on the Damascus International Airport, which caused major damage two runways. The airport is in a region south of Syria's capital where Iran-backed groups, including Lebanon's Hezbollah, regularly operate.

Plot thwarted

While Israel rarely comments on individual strikes, it has acknowledged carrying out hundreds in Syria, which the Jewish state's military says is necessary to prevent Iran from gaining a foothold on its doorstep.

Lapid said some Israelis who recently travelled to Turkey had

returned "without knowing their lives were saved".

The alleged attackers were targeting Israeli citizens "in order to kidnap them or kill them", Lapid said. Earlier Monday, Israel's public broadcaster Kan claimed that Iranian operatives had planned to kidnap Israelis in Turkey a month ago.

The plot was thwarted after Israel alerted Ankara about the threat. Lapid thanked the Turkish government "for the effort they're putting into protecting the lives of Israeli citizens", without providing details.

Turkey has consistently been a popular holiday destination for Israelis, including through more than a decade of diplomatic rupture between the two countries.

Ankara and Israel have mended ties in recent months, with senior Turkish leaders citing the importance of Israel to Turkey's tourism sector.

On Monday, Israel's Yediot Ahronot newspaper quoted an unnamed security official as saying that there are several Iranian "cells" planning operations against Israeli tourists in Turkey. AFP



View of the Boeing 747-300 of Venezuelan Emtrasur cargo airline at the international airport in Cordoba, Argentina, on June 6, 2022 (AFP)

Iran says plane held in Argentina 'propaganda' campaign

Tehran, Iran - Iran said Monday that a Venezuelan airplane grounded in Argentina is part of a "propaganda" campaign against Tehran, amid tensions with Western countries over negotiations to revive a 2015 nuclear deal.

The Venezuelan Boeing 747 cargo plane, reportedly carrying car parts and with 14 Venezuelan and five Iranian crew members, has been held in Argentina's Ezeiza airport after the authorities questioned its reasons for landing last week.

The grounding came days before Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro visited Tehran on Saturday, where Iran and Venezuela signed a 20-year deal on cooperation between the allies that are both subject to US sanctions.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told reporters on Monday that the incident was part of efforts aimed to "cause a feeling of insecurity".

The plane was sold by Iran's Mahan Air to a Venezuelan company last year, he said, noting that "its crew members are not Iranians only" but included others of different nationalities.

"These recent weeks are filled with propaganda, are full of psychological operations, these wars of words that want to infiltrate the minds and composure of the people... this news is one

of those," Khatibzadeh said.

On Sunday, Argentinian authorities said no personnel had been detained and that the crew had been accommodated in hotels with temporary residence permits.

The Iranians' passports were taken, but Argentinian authorities said they would be returned if they left the country on a scheduled flight while investigations are ongoing.

The incident came as a resolution was adopted by the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors censuring Iran for its lack of cooperation.

Talks in the Austrian capital, which began in April last year, aim to return the US to the nuclear deal, including through the lifting of sanctions on Iran, and to ensure Tehran's full compliance with its commitments under the agreement.

The deal known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) gave Iran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear programme to guarantee that it could not develop a nuclear weapon -- something Tehran has always denied wanting to do.

Iran said Monday that all measures it has taken to roll back on its commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers are "reversible".

AFP

EU chief, Italian PM head to Israel for energy talks

Jerusalem, Undefined - European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen and Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi were headed to Israel Monday as the EU seeks to wean itself off Russian fossil fuel imports.

Both leaders were due to hold energy talks in Israel, which has turned from a natural gas importer into an exporter in recent years because of major offshore finds.

Von der Leyen was to meet Foreign Minister Yair Lapid on Monday and Prime Minister Nafthali Bennett on Tuesday, with talks expected to focus "in particular on energy cooperation," a commission statement said.

Mario Draghi, on his first Middle East trip since taking office



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen makes a statement following talks with Ukrainian President in Kyiv on June 11 (AFP)

last year, will also discuss energy and food security during his two-day trip, Italian media reported.

Both leaders will on Tuesday meet Palestinian prime minister Mohammed Shtayyeh in the occupied West Bank.

The EU this month formally

adopted a ban on most Russian oil imports, its toughest sanctions yet over the war in Ukraine.

Von der Leyen has suggested the bloc end its dependence on Russian hydrocarbons, including gas, by 2027.

Draghi and other EU leaders

Clashes in Darfur between Arabs, non-Arabs kill over 100

Khartoum, Sudan - Clashes in Sudan's Darfur between Arab and non-Arab groups have killed more than 100 people, adding to a toll of hundreds in the region over recent months.

The latest fighting broke out last week between the Arab Rizeigat and non-Arab Gimir tribes in the district of Kolbus, about 160 kilometres (100 miles) from El Geneina, the capital of West Darfur state.

It started as a land dispute between two people, one from the Rizeigat and another from the Gimir, before morphing into broader violence involving other members from both tribes.

"The fighting has so far killed 117 people and left 17 villages burnt," including three on Monday, Ibrahim Hashem, a leader in the ethnic African Gimir tribe, told AFP by phone.

Hashem said the deaths counted so far were largely among the Gimir tribe. He added that "many people" from his tribe have gone missing since the violence broke out and which was continuing.

It was not immediately clear how many were killed among the Arab tribe.

The latest violence highlighted a broader security breakdown in Darfur which was exacerbated by last year's mili-



Mohamed Hamdan Daglo

tary coup led by army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan.

The October coup derailed a fragile transition put in place following the 2019 ouster of president Omar al-Bashir.

'Cycle of violence'

In April alone, more than 200 people were killed in clashes between an Arab community and the non-Arab Massalit minority in the Kring area of West Darfur.

The United Nations estimated 125,000 people were displaced in that unrest.

A month earlier, fighting in South Darfur between the ethnic Fallata and the Arab Rizeigat tribes killed at least 45 people.

On Monday, UN special representative Volker Perthes said he was "appalled" by the violence in Kolbus.

"The cycle of violence in Darfur is unacceptable & highlights

root causes that must be addressed," he said on Twitter.

Perthes called on the fighting sides to "de-escalate".

Sudan's western Darfur region was ravaged by a bitter civil war that erupted in 2003.

The conflict pitted ethnic minority rebels who complained of discrimination against the Arab-dominated government of then-president Bashir.

Khartoum responded by unleashing the Janjaweed, mainly recruited from Arab pastoralist tribes, who were blamed for atrocities including murder, rape, looting and burning villages.

The scorched-earth campaign left 300,000 people dead and displaced 2.5 million, according to the United Nations.

Many Janjaweed have since been integrated into the feared paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, commanded by General Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, de facto deputy leader of Sudan, according to rights groups.

In 2020, Sudan signed a peace deal with key rebel groups including from Darfur.

The main conflict has subsided over the years, but the region remains awash with weapons and deadly clashes often erupt over access to pasture or water.

AFP



Cars drive through a street flooded by heavy rain, in Ankara, on June 11, 2022. (AFP)

Turkey braces for more bad weather after floods kill four

Ankara, Turkey - Strong rain, winds and flash floods are expected in northern and central Turkey on Monday, after a weekend of flooding that reportedly killed at least four people.

Bad weather warnings were in place in 42 towns and cities in the north and centre, including the capital, Ankara.

Schools were closed in Ankara and the central town of Gemerek.

Last year, around 100 people died in violent weather events in Turkey, including flash floods, wildfires and droughts.

The disasters pushed climate change up the political agenda,

especially among younger voters.

Torrential rains and hailstorms swept through the north and centre at the weekend, causing floods that killed three people near Ankara and another in the central province of Karaman, local media reported.

Rescue services were still searching on Monday for a person missing in the Ankara region. Several towns were damaged by the floods.

Eight villages in the northern province of Kastamonu were still cut off on Monday after several roads collapsed. AFP

UN rights chief Bachelet won't seek second term

Makes a surprise announcement while opening the United Nations Human Rights Council's 50th session

Geneva, Switzerland - UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet said Monday she will not seek a second term, ending months of speculation, insisting she wanted to spend more time with her family in Chile.

The surprise announcement came as the 70-year-old former Chilean president opened the United Nations Human Rights Council's 50th session.

"As my term as High Commissioner draws to a close, this Council's milestone 50th session will be the last which I brief," Bachelet told the diplomats gathered in Geneva.

Speculation has been rife for month about her plans. But Bachelet told reporters she had realised months ago that it was time to leave, and had informed UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres of her decision when she was in New York back in April.

"This is not something new," she said, adding that Guterres had "told me he would love me to continue," but that she had declined "for personal reasons".

"I'm not a young woman anymore, and after a long and rich career, I want to go back to my country, to my family."

The post of High Commissioner for Human Rights typically



United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet addresses the press on the opening day of the 50th session of the UN Human Rights Council, in Geneva on June 13, 2022 (AFP)

faces heavy political pressure from countries around the world, and while it can be held for a maximum of two terms, nearly all of Bachelet's predecessors have avoided staying on for more than one term.

Discrete diplomacy

But there had been speculation that Bachelet, who has largely avoided harsh public criticism of countries, might be eyeing more time. When Guterres appointed her in 2018, it was clear she was meant to mark a break with the repeated declarations of outrage by her very outspoken predecessor Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein of Jordan.

Bachelet, who went from torture victim under Augusto Pinochet to become the first woman to serve as president of

Chile, has instead emphasised the importance of dialogue and discrete diplomacy in forwarding rights in various countries.

"Continue to seek dialogue" she told the council Monday as she presented an overview of human rights concerns around the world.

"Be willing to hear the other, to understand respective points of view and to actively work towards identifying common ground."

This approach has not sat well with some and she has faced significant pushback over her restraint, especially when it comes to China.

She has faced mounting criticism from countries and NGOs for not speaking out more forcefully against allegations of widespread rights abuses in the

country, including during her long-awaited trip there last month - the first in 17 years by a UN rights chief.

'Importance of dialogue'

The criticism "has no relationship" with the decision not to take on a second term, she told journalists.

"Having been president twice, I have received a lot of criticism in my life," she pointed out.

Bachelet meanwhile vowed that a long-awaited report on the rights situation in the Xinjiang region, where China is alleged to have detained over a million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities, will be published before she steps down on August 31.

AFP

Beijing tightens COVID restrictions over 'ferocious' bar cluster

Beijing, China - Beijing started a new round of mass testing in its most populous downtown district on Monday after a rapidly spreading outbreak linked to a bar saw COVID rules tightened again in the capital.

China is the last major economy still committed to a zero-COVID strategy, stamping out new cases with a combination of targeted lockdowns, mass testing and lengthy quarantines.

But that strategy is being stretched to the limit by the fast-spreading Omicron variant, as both Beijing and Shanghai have seen fresh clusters just days after lifting restrictions such as lockdowns, restaurant and office closures.

A night of partying by one Beijing resident last week threw the city's tentative reopening into chaos, leading authorities to shutter nightlife venues in the downtown district of Chaoyang days after they reopened last Monday. The resident, who did not get tested for 14 days, went to several bars and nightlife venues in Chaoyang in the days before and after developing a fever. The outbreak stemming from



A health worker takes a swab sample from a man to be tested for the COVID-19 at a swab collection site in Beijing on June 13, 2022 (AFP)

the Heaven Supermarket bar has infected at least 183 people in 15 districts so far.

The cluster "arrived with ferocious momentum and the difficulty of prevention and control is huge," Beijing government spokesman Xu Hejian told reporters Sunday.

Chaoyang district - home to high-end shops, multinational firms and embassies - started a three-day testing drive for all its 3.5 million residents and sealed off several downtown residential compounds and malls over the weekend. "I'm pretty worried

even though I don't drink at bars regularly," 22-year-old admin staffer Wang Yuqi told AFP.

"Even after restaurants reopened on June 6, I've been mostly staying at home and cooking my own meals outside of work."

Beijing disease control officials said Sunday that new cases linked to the bar cluster are still emerging. All sporting events have been cancelled, and a plan for most children to return to school Monday had already been scrapped.

AFP

Positive results for Sanofi-GSK COVID booster

Paris, France - French drug maker Sanofi said Monday a COVID booster shot it is developing with Britain's Glaxo-SmithKline has produced positive results against Omicron and other variants in clinical trials.

The "next-generation" vaccine delivered a "strong immune response" against

multiple variants of concern in two trials, Sanofi said in a statement. The results are a boost for Sanofi and GSK, which have lagged behind rivals in offering a COVID vaccine.

Their candidate vaccine produced a 40-fold increase in antibodies against the BA.1 Omicron variant in adults who were given mRNA shots, the

technology used by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, Sanofi said. It also generated a "higher immune response" than the Pfizer-BioNTech booster shot, the French company said.

The firms are combining a Sanofi-developed antigen, which stimulates the production of germ-killing antibodies.

AFP

Filmmaker among 8 prisoners released from jail in Egypt

Cairo, Egypt - Egypt's state prosecutor on Monday ordered the release of eight political prisoners, including a documentary filmmaker, a lawyer said, the latest group to walk free since April.

Tarek al-Awady, a lawyer and member of a committee formed in April to review the cases of prisoners eligible for presidential pardons, made the announcement in a tweet.

He said the prosecution ordered the release of eight prisoners being held in preventive detention, including filmmaker Moataz Abdelwahab.

Abdelwahab, 45, had been arrested in May 2020 on charges of "terrorism" and for allegedly "spreading false information".

In April, President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi called for a "political dialogue" and reactivated the previously dormant pardons committee.

Since then dozens of prisoners have been freed, most of them considered political prisoners and critics of Sisi's government.

Among those released so far are opposition figure Yahya Abdelhadi, who was set free on June after three years in jail.

Prominent journalist Hossam Moniss who was sentenced to four years in prison in November for "spreading false news" was among the first to be released in April. Rights groups estimate that more than 60,000 political prisoners are being held in Egypt.

AFP

Macron seeks bigger military budget in 'war economy'

Villepinte, France - French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday called for a boost to defence budgets following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, saying France was now on a "war economy" footing.

Speaking at Eurosatory, a weapons industry fair, Macron said Europe needed "a much larger defence industry" to avoid relying on suppliers elsewhere for its equipment needs.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, France "has entered into a war economy in which I believe we will find ourselves for a long time".

Macron said he had asked the defence ministry and armed forces chiefs of staff to adjust a six-year framework defence spending plan running to 2025 to the new geopolitical situation, to



French President Emmanuel Macron visits the booth of the French Ministry of Armed Forces at the Eurosatory international land and airland defence and security trade fair, in Villepinte, Paris, on June 13, 2022 (AFP)

Anybody doubting the urgency of these efforts only needs to look to Ukraine where soldiers are asking for quality weaponry

EMMANUEL MACRON

"match the means to the threats".

Even before Ukraine, French military spending had gradually increased since Macron came to power in 2017 to reach 41 billion euros (\$43 billion) this year, and is currently scheduled to hit 50 billion euros in 2025.

"We didn't wait for strategic changes to re-invest," Macron

said, but Russia's war had created "an additional need to move faster and become stronger at a lower cost".

Macron said that "anybody doubting the urgency of these efforts only needs to look to Ukraine, where soldiers are asking for quality weaponry and they are entitled to a response from us".

According to Le Monde newspaper, the government's armament agency DGA is considering a draft law that would allow the requisitioning of civilian equipment or civilian factories to make weapons.

As European governments bolster defence budgets, they need a larger EU-based defence industry to meet the new military needs, Macron said.

AFP

Def Leppard: No farewell tours, we'll still be rocking in 2035

Paris, France - Def Leppard have been rocking out for 45 years and have more than 100 million album sales under their belts, but they are adamant that no farewell tours are on the horizon.

The band from Sheffield, England were one of the biggest players in the big-hair, big-ribs heyday of 1980s stadium rock.

Their back-to-back albums "Pyromania" and "Hysteria" both sold more than 10 million copies in the United States alone - one of only five rock bands in history to do so.

Now in their sixties, they have certainly earned their stripes in rock lore: surviving the

loss of their guitarist Steve Clark to an overdose in the early 1990s, and drummer Rick Allen carrying on despite losing an arm in a car accident in 1984.

"We always joked that farewell tours are a way of saying that your ticket sales suck. We're very fortunate that we haven't had to do that," singer Joe Elliott told AFP.

"The Scorpions have been on a farewell tour for, like, 14 years, Cher's been on one for about 20... Sinatra did five of them," he said with a laugh.

"But we've never taken any time off -- if we were off the road, we were making an



Def Leppard performing a gig

album."

The jovial singer, still rocking the long hair and sporting a pair of blue-tinted sunglasses,

knows it can't last forever.

But he sees no reason the band's journey can't "stretch until 2035 when we're the same

age as The Rolling Stones are now."

Def Leppard are back on the road this summer with fellow

rock veterans Motley Crue, Poison and Joan Jett.

They have also just released 12th studio album "Diamond Star Halos" -- their first in seven years -- which they pieced together during the pandemic despite the five members being spread across England, Ireland and the US.

The new songs see the band try to step away from the "albatross" of Hysteria, said Elliott, experimenting with piano, flamenco guitar and glam rock.

"We're back to the roots of what got us into music, not back to ourselves," Elliott said.

AFP



PREMATURE AGING

Aging is a natural process but a range of factors can speed it up for you, if you are not careful. Premature aging can affect both, your appearance and your health

BETWEEN
The Lines

If you wake up one morning and get taken aback at what you see in the mirror, it could be the signs of premature aging. Common visible signs of premature aging include fine lines, wrinkles, hair loss, and age spots that appear before you enter your early 30s

Grey hair and fine lines usually show up first, wrinkles follow suit by and by. However, aging also includes the formation of sunspots, dry or itchy skin, sagging skin, sunken cheeks or temples, hair loss, and hyperpigmentation around the chest.

The first line of treatment, whether you're concerned about internal or external premature aging, is to limit behaviours that are known to accelerate the process. According to an article in everydayhealth.com, the following habits may contribute to premature skin aging:

Frequent rubbing of eyes
Frequent rubbing of eyes can cause dark cir-

cles as well as fine lines.

Under-eye bags are part of the natural aging process, and occur when muscles around the eyes weaken, according to Johns Hopkins Medicine. For most people, rubbing the eyes isn't a problem and won't cause any permanent side effects, but continuous eye rubbing can create an issue by increasing inflammation in the area. That's not all, pulling, tugging, and rubbing on delicate skin around the eyes can cause darkness, too. The most common cause of eye itching (and excessive eye rubbing) is allergies, so visit an allergist to diagnose and treat symptoms.

Lack of sleep
Sleep is essential for energy, concentration — and complexion. "At night, skin goes into a renewal state," says Jeannette Graf, MD, an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City. Skimping on sleep can show on your face over time. It is advisable to go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day so your body gets on a schedule.

Make your bedroom dark, cool, and quiet. Finish eating two to three hours before bed. Limit the amount of caffeine you consume.

Sipping out of a straw
Do you drink soft drinks, tea, and coffee through a straw? It may help prevent staining your teeth but it can cause fine lines around your mouth, which is a sign of skin aging. When sipping out of a straw, you're activating the muscles around the lips, and the more we activate those muscles, the more likely we are to get that crease in the skin. It's the same reason that smokers also develop wrinkles around the mouth - repetitive lip pursing.

Stress – It causes collagen breakdown
If you're chronically worried (or losing sleep over stress), your body is pumping out stress hormones nonstop, which can cause premature aging. Cortisol, the major stress hormone, breaks down collagen, which leads to sagging skin and wrinkles and

causes inflammation," says Amy Wechsler, MD, a New York City-based board-certified dermatologist and psychiatrist. And chronic stress can speed up the aging process because of that increased inflammation, research has shown.

Avoiding Sunscreen
To protect the skin from premature aging, SPF is king. One past study found that ultraviolet (UV) light exposure was responsible for 80 per cent of visible facial aging signs, including wrinkles and pigmentation changes. So, if you're relying on makeup containing SPF to block harmful UV rays, you may not be sufficiently protecting your skin. You must apply a sunscreen or moisturiser with broad-spectrum SPF before putting on your makeup.

Ultraviolet light is the single most preventable risk factor for aging and one must not neglect neck and hands while using Sunscreen. Research has found that women whose hands had visible veins and wrinkles were perceived to be older than peers with

plumper hands.

Forgetting sunglasses
According to Piedmont Healthcare, sunglasses protect the eyes from UV rays, which can harm the eyelid, cornea, lens, and retina (and, as previously noted, UV rays can damage the delicate skin around the eyes, too).

Even in winter, slip on sunglasses — the more coverage, the better.

Using drying soap
Bars of soap often contain harsh detergents that strip skin of natural oils. Though dry skin doesn't directly cause wrinkles, it makes them more noticeable. And dry skin can't protect itself from allergens and irritants like bacteria and viruses. Hence, use a hydrating cleanser. The American Academy of Dermatology says to look for the words 'gentle' and 'moisturising' on the label. Be sure to also avoid using deodorant soap or products that contain potentially skin-dehydrating ingredients.

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TURKISH HILLTOP 'WHERE CIVILISATION BEGAN' DRAWS ATTENTION



Pillars at the archaeological site of Gobekli Tepe in Sanliurfa, Turkey



On a sun-blasted hillside in southeast Turkey, the world's oldest known religious sanctuary is slowly giving up its secrets.

"When we open a new trench, we never know what to expect," said Lee Clare of the German Archaeology Institute, who has been excavating there since 2013. "It is always a big surprise."

'Gobekli Tepe', which means 'Potbelly Hill' in Turkish, is arguably the most important archaeological site on Earth.

Thousands of our prehistoric ancestors gathered around its highly-decorated T-shaped megalith pillars to worship more 7,000 years before Stonehenge or the earliest Egyptian pyramids.

"Its significance is hard to overstate," Sean Lawrence, assistant professor of history at West Virginia University, told AFP.

Academics believe the history of human settlement began in these hills close to the Syrian border some 12,000 years ago when groups of Stone Age hunter gatherers came together to construct these sites.

Gobekli Tepe - which some experts believe was never actually inhabited - may be part of a vast sacred landscape that encompasses other nearby hilltop sites that archaeologists believe may be even older.

Endless mystery

None of this anyone would have guessed before the German archaeologist and pre-historian Klaus Schmidt began to bring the first discoveries to the surface in 1995.

German and Turkish archaeologists have been labouring in the sun there since, with lengthening queues of tourists now joining them to ponder its many mysteries. When exactly it all

began is unclear.

"Exact years are nearly impossible to verify," Lawrence said. "However, the oldest Egyptian

monument, the Pyramid of Djoser at Saqqara, was built around 2700 BCE," more than seven millennia after Gobekli Tepe.

"This was the end of what is often thought of as Stone Age hunter gatherer societies and the beginning of settled societies," Lawrence said, adding, "There remain endless mysteries surrounding the site, including how labour was organised and how the sites were used," he said.

Gobekli Tepe has even inspired the Netflix sci-fi psychological thriller series 'The Gift', which turns on one of the ancient inscriptions on its pillars.

Schmidt - who often wore a white traditional turban on the dig - puzzled over the megaliths carved with the images of foxes, boars, ducks, lizards and a leopard for over two decades until his early death at the age of 61 in 2014.

Zero point in time

The site was initially believed to be purely ritual in nature. But according to Clare, there is now 'good evidence' for the beginning of settled life with some buildings similar to those of the same age found in northern Syria.

Turkey - which in the past has not been renowned for making

the best of its vast archaeological heritage - has wholeheartedly embraced the discoveries.

The items excavated from Gobekli Tepe are shown in the impressive archaeological museum in the nearest city, Sanliurfa, which is itself so ancient that Abraham is believed to have been born there.

Indeed, its new museum built in 2015 boasts 'the most extensive collection of the neolithic era in the world', according to its director Celal Uludag. "All of the portable artefacts from Gobekli Tepe are exhibited here. This is a journey to civilisation, (to the) zero point in time," said Aydin

Aslan, head of Sanliurfa Culture and Tourism Directorate.

"Gobekli Tepe sheds light on pre-history, that's why it's a common heritage of humanity," he said proudly.

Go deeper

Last year Turkey's culture ministry boosted funding for further excavations in the region as a part of its 'Stone Hills' project, including cash for the Karahan Tepe hilltop site - around 35km from Gobekli Tepe - which some suspect is even older.

"We will now go deeper because Gobekli Tepe is not the one and only," Culture Minister Nuri Ersoy said last year.

"The extra funding gives us a fantastic opportunity to compare our results from Gobekli Tepe with new sites in the Sanliurfa region of the same age," Clare said.

Gobekli Tepe has also breathed life back into a poor and long neglected region, which has been further hit by the civil war just across the border. Syrian refugees now make up a quarter of Sanliurfa's population.

Over one million tourists visited Sanliurfa in 2019 and the city expects to reach pre-pandemic levels this year.

"Today Gobekli Tepe has started directly touching the economy of the city," Aslan said, who hopes that its glorious past could be a key part of the city's future.

AFP



All of the portable artefacts from Gobekli Tepe are exhibited here. This is a journey to civilisation, (to the) zero point in time

AYDIN ASLAN

NEW WORLD ORDER?

Djokovic slips to third as Daniil Medvedev tops ATP rankings

Paris, France - Daniil Medvedev returned to the top of the ATP rankings on Monday, ahead of Alexander Zverev, with Novak Djokovic slipping out of the top two for the first time in nearly four years.

The 26-year-old Russian, who was surprisingly beaten by Tim van Rijthoven in the final at 's-Hertogenbosch on Sunday, briefly occupied the number one spot for two weeks at the end of February and the beginning of March.

But with Djokovic losing in the quarter-finals at the French Open, where he was defending champion, the door opened for Medvedev to rise again to top spot.

Medvedev is unable to compete at Wimbledon as Russian and Belarusian players have been barred following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Rankings points, however, will not be awarded.

Zverev climbs to number two for the first time having spent a total of 56 weeks since November 2017 at number three. The German, however, is facing a spell on the sidelines after tearing ligaments in his right ankle during his French Open semi-final with Nadal.

Djokovic's grip on the number one ranking had already been weakened by his exclusion earlier in the year, because of Covid regulations, from the Australian Open where he was also the defending champion. It is the first time since October 2018 that Djokovic is not in the top two.

Rafael Nadal, who beat the Serb at Roland Garros and went on to take the title for the 14th time, stays at number four.

AFP



Daniil Medvedev

ATP RANKINGS

1. **DANIIL MEDVEDEV**
7950 PTS (±1)
2. **ALEXANDER ZVEREV (GER)**
7075 (±1)
3. **NOVAK DJOKOVIC (SRB)**
6770 (-2)
4. **RAFAEL NADAL (ESP)**
6525
5. **CASPER RUUD (NOR)**
5050 (±1)
6. **STEFANOS TSITSIPAS (GRE)**
4945 (-1)
7. **CARLOS ALCARAZ (ESP)**
4893
8. **ANDREY RUBLEV**
4125
9. **FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME (CAN)**
3895
10. **MATTEO BERRETTINI (ITA)**
3570



Iga Swiatek

Iga Swiatek dominates WTA rankings

Paris, France- French Open champion Iga Swiatek remains firmly at the head of the new WTA rankings released on Monday, over 4000 points ahead of number two Anett Kontaveit.

The 21-year-old Pole has held the top spot since the surprise retirement of Australian Ashleigh Barty at the end of March. Swiatek has now won 35 consecutive matches - matching the longest unbeaten streak since Venus Williams in 2000.

The only change in the Top 20 sees Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka, beaten in Sunday's final at 's-Hertogenbosch by the Russian Ekaterina Alexandrova, take fifth place from Maria Sakkari.

Neither Sabalenka nor Alexandrova will be at Wimbledon, the third Grand Slam event of the year, as Russian and Be-

larusian players have been barred from competing following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. No WTA rankings points, however, will be awarded for the event.

WTA rankings as of June 13, 2022 (players representing Russia and Belarus are banned from competing under the name or flag of Russia or Belarus until further notice):

1. **Iga Swiatek (POL)** 8631 pts
2. **Anett Kontaveit (EST)** 4511
3. **Paula Badosa (ESP)** 4245
4. **Ons Jabeur (TUN)** 4150
5. **Aryna Sabalenka** 4145 (+1)
6. **Maria Sakkari (GRE)** 4075 (-1)
7. **Karolina Pliskova (CZE)** 3678
8. **Jessica Pegula (USA)** 3255
9. **Danielle Collins (USA)** 3255
10. **Garbine Muguruza (ESP)** 3060

Russia's Kasatkina to the rescue of cramp-hit Ukrainian Kalinina during Berlin WTA victory

Berlin, Germany- Russia's Daria Kasatkina raced to the rescue when her Ukrainian opponent Anhelina Kalinina suffered with cramp during their first-round match at Berlin's WTA grass-court tournament on Monday.

This was one of the first times a Russian player has faced a Ukrainian opponent on the WTA circuit since Russia's invasion began in February.

Russian and Belarusian players are allowed to compete on the WTA tour and the men's ATP, but are unable play under their national flag.

Kasatkina is ranked 12th in the world, 25 places above Kalinina, and bounced back from losing the first set for a 5-7, 6-3, 6-1 victory.

However, the Russian dashed over with some ice after Kalinina,



Russia's Daria Kasatkina lends a helping hand to her Ukrainian opponent Anhelina Kalinina

25, went down with cramp after winning the hard-fought opening set which lasted more than an hour.

"I didn't see what happened, I

just turned my head and saw Anhelina was lying on the ground," explained Kasatkina, a semi-finalist at this year's French Open.

"Her calf was cramping, so I

got her some ice and she got a bit of treatment - cramp comes and goes, but luckily she was able to finish the match."

AFP

Former tennis star Dokic says she came close to suicide

Sydney, Australia - Australian former tennis star Jelena Dokic revealed on Monday that she came close to taking her own life just a few weeks ago.

The 39-year-old, who rose to a career-high world ranking of four in 2002, wrote a lengthy and heartfelt message on Instagram along with a picture of herself in tears.

Dokic, who sprang to prominence at Wimbledon in 1999 when she stunned world number



Jelena Dokic

one Martina Hingis in the first round, said she has been suffering with mental illness and nearly resorted to suicide on April 28.

"I almost jumped off my 26th floor balcony and took my own life. Will never forget the day," she wrote on Instagram.

"Everything is blurry. Everything is dark. No tone, no picture, nothing makes sense... just tears, sadness, depression, anxiety and pain.

"The last six months have been tough. It's been constant crying everywhere."

"Will never forget the day, I just wanted the pain and the suffering to stop," she added.

"I pulled myself off the edge, don't even know how I managed to do it."

Dokic won six WTA singles titles during her career and reached the semi-finals of Wimbledon in 2000.

AFP



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Football rules body approves permanent use of five substitutes

Doha, Qatar - Football's rules body on Monday said that five substitutes would be permanently introduced for all top games and that a 3D offside detector is closer to being introduced for this year's World Cup.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino said the substitute change, which was started in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic, followed "strong support from the entire football community".

He said after the annual meeting of the International Football Associations Board that experts would decide on whether "semi-automatic offside" detection would be used for the World Cup that starts November 21.

FIFA's referees chief Pierluigi Collina said he was "confident"



FIFA's referees chief Pierluigi Collina with Gianni Infantino

We are very satisfied so far and our experts are looking into it ('semi-automatic offside' detection) before deciding whether it will be introduced for the World Cup

GIANNI INFANTINO

that the system would be introduced in time for the 32-nation tournament.

Tests were started to speed up decision making and reduce the scope for controversy in making offside calls at top games.

The system monitors 29 data points on the limbs of players to create a skeletal, three-dimensional model that is reviewed pitchside by the referee.

English Football Association chief executive Mark Bullingham said that more than eight million data position points are recorded each match.

The system has already been tried at the FIFA Arab Cup last year in Doha and the Club World Cup in February.

"We are very satisfied so far

and our experts are looking into it before deciding whether it will be introduced for the World Cup," Infantino told a press conference.

It is officially known as "semi-automatic" as it will still be the referee that makes a final decision on an offside ruling.

FIFA is also looking into introducing a Video Assistant Referee 'light' with fewer cameras to a wider number of competitions.

VAR is currently only used at international tournaments and major national championships.

Tests on the less-tech heavy, cheaper system have already been held at 100 matches in Europe and will now be extended.

As well as making the five substitutes permanent, IFAB said that teams can now name

15 substitutes on a team sheet instead of 12. IFAB said that trials with body cameras on referees may be started in a bid to counter a growing number of attacks on match officials.

"Lack of respect for referees and their safety were identified as global problems," said an IFAB statement.

"The members agreed to establish initiatives to tackle these issues including potential trials with body cameras worn by referees in adult grassroots football." The English FA has particularly pressed for experiments to start.

IFAB - made up of the game's founding national associations from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland with FIFA - also ordered more trials on the use of concussion substitutes.

Growing concern has been raised about the impact of head injuries on players - with many suffering from dementia and Parkinson's disease in later.

Some 140 national championships and competitions are taking part in current trials and the board said these would continue until August 2023.

"The members agreed that trials should continue to focus on permanently removing any player with actual or possible concussion to ensure this player does not continue taking part in the match," said the statement.

"It was agreed that further education is needed to ensure that trial protocols are applied correctly."

AFP

Spain celebrate as Portugal fall to 57-second sucker punch

Paris, France - Spain won a second successive UEFA Nations League match on Sunday with a 2-0 win over the Czech Republic while rivals Portugal conceded a goal after just 57 seconds to lose to Switzerland.

Spain went in front in Malaga after 24 minutes when a perfectly-weighted pass by Marco Asensio released Carlos Soler to score.

Pablo Sarabia added the second on 75 minutes as Spain got

the better of a Czech side against whom they had drawn 2-2 in Prague last week.

Despite the win, Spain were indebted to some fine saves by Athletic Bilbao goalkeeper Unai Simon. He thwarted an 18th-minute strike from Vaclav Cerny and, two minutes later, denied Jan Kuchta.

"I hope to return in the next international window and go to the World Cup," said Soler. "But now I only think of going on vacation.

It's been a very tough season, which started with the Tokyo Olympics. I have made many dreams come true, but I hope to make many more come true."

In Geneva, Switzerland took the lead after just 57 seconds against a Portugal side playing without Cristiano Ronaldo when Haris Seferovic scored from Silvan Widmer's pass.

Portugal's stand-in skipper Pepe made his 128th international appearance and they were

unlucky not to get something from the game with Swiss keeper Jonas Omlin saving from Danilo and Bernardo Silva.

"We can't concede a goal after 30 seconds of the game. It's our mistake," said Portugal coach Fernando Santos.

"We lacked aggression. We would have preferred to stay top of the group, but I have always said that the decisive match will be the one against Spain."

AFP



Switzerland's Haris Seferovic scores against Portugal in their Nations League match on Sunday (AFP)

New Zealand hit back after England's Anderson takes 650th Test wicket

Nottingham, United Kingdom - Devon Conway scored 52 as New Zealand reached 114-2 at tea after England's James Anderson claimed his 650th Test wicket on the fourth day of the second Test.

Anderson was gifted his landmark wicket as New Zealand opener Tom Latham left a straight ball that clattered into his stumps.

The 39-year-old fast bowler is

just third man ever to reach the landmark after spin legends Shane Warne and Muttiah Muralitharan.

Anderson's milestone came just months after he admitted he was "praying" his international career was not over following the decision to drop him for the West Indies tour. Restored to the team by new captain Ben Stokes, Anderson looks as good as ever.

AFP



England's James Anderson (2R) celebrates with teammates after taking the wicket of New Zealand's Tom Latham (AFP)

Bavuma hails Klaasen 'value' as South Africa go 2-0 up against India

Cuttack, India - Wicketkeeper-batsman Heinrich Klaasen smashed 81 off 46 balls to lead South Africa's tricky chase as they beat India by four wickets in the second Twenty20 international on Sunday.

Needing 149 for victory on a hot and humid day in Cuttack, South Africa rode Klaasen's fourth T20 half-century to achieve their target in 18.2 overs and lead the five-match series 2-0.

South Africa's bowlers, led by pace spearhead Kagiso Rabada, set up victory after they kept India to 148-6 after deciding to field first.

The tourists suffered a pre-match blow when wicketkeeper-batsman Quinton de Kock was ruled out with a hand injury but Temba Bavuma's side kept up the momentum from their opening win.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar put South Africa in trouble at 29-3 inside six overs on a seemingly tough batting pitch before Klaasen and Bavuma, who made



South Africa's Heinrich Klaasen plays a shot during his knock of 81 in the second T20 international against India in Cuttack on Sunday (AFP)

35, put on 64 runs to put the chase back on track.

"It was a tricky chase," said Bavuma. "They got the ball to talk with the new ball, it was tricky. I was just trying to hold in and allowed Klaasen to come and do what he does best."

Kumar, who returned figures of 4-13, took down Reeza Hen-

dricks and Dwaine Pretorius in his first two overs and then bowled previous match hero Rassie van der Dussen, who made 75 in his team's opening win.

Klaasen soaked up the pressure and the humidity with his clean hitting.

AFP

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Erling Haaland

Haaland satisfies Man City's need for a striker and status

Manchester, United Kingdom - Manchester City are still waiting for their moment of Champions League glory, but by winning the race to sign Erling Haaland they have established themselves as a go-to destination for Europe's top talent.

The 21-year-old goalscoring phenomenon had his choice of the continent's top clubs thanks to a reported buyout clause of 60 million euros (£51 million, \$63 million) that saw him leave Borussia Dortmund well below his market value.

By comparison, Liverpool are set to spend up to 100 million euros for the far less-hyped Uruguay forward Darwin Nunez from Benfica.

Real Madrid wanted Haaland at the Bernabeu next season, Barcelona sought him as a successor to Lionel Messi, while Bayern Munich again aimed to swoop on their Bundesliga rivals.

The Norwegian, however, will instead line up in City blue next season, just as his father Alfie-Inge did between 2000-2003 during a very different era for the

club.

"First of all my father a little bit," said Haaland when asked why he chose City. "I was born in England, I've been a City fan my whole life. I know a lot about the club.

"I feel at home here and also I think I can develop and get the best out of my game at City."

The arrival of petrodollars from Abu Dhabi has long since transformed City's fortunes, with Pep Guardiola's men having won four Premier League titles in five seasons.

But Haaland is the man City need to fill a void if they are to reach the next level -- a superstar striker.

City have played the best part of two seasons without a recognised number nine. An attempt to land Harry Kane as Sergio Aguerro's successor fell short last summer and it may have cost City another shot at Champions League glory.

Despite beating Real Madrid 4-2 in the first leg of their semi-final, Guardiola's men missed a series of sitters to put the tie to

bed.

That came back to haunt them last week as Real miraculously hauled themselves off the floor to score twice in the final seconds of the return leg on route to winning the competition for a 14th time.

Haaland, however has scored 23 goals in just 19 Champions League appearances for Salzburg and Dortmund.

What remains to be seen is how well he can be embedded into Guardiola's system.

AFP



Harry Kane

Kane welcomes challenge from Haaland, Nunez

Wolverhampton, United Kingdom - Tottenham striker Harry Kane is welcoming the challenge he faces to win the Golden Boot next season from the arrival of Erling Haaland and Darwin Nunez to the Premier League.

Norwegian superstar Haaland completed his move to Manchester City on Monday, while Uruguayan international Nunez is expected to finalise a move to Liverpool from Benfica in the coming days for a fee that could rise to 100 million euros (\$105 million, £85 million).

Kane was keen for a move to City himself last summer, but now looks committed to another season at Spurs after they secured a return to the Champions League.

"Every season I've been playing it's always been a tough battle to win that golden boot," said Kane, who has won the award for the Premier League's top goalscorer three times.

"You expect the top strikers to want to play in the Premier League. With those two new signings, that's going to be the case.

Last season, his Tottenham strike partner Son Heung-min shared the award with Liverpool's Mo Salah, with both scoring 23 goals.

"It helps me as a player to have good competition, it drives me to improve. I look forward to the challenge," said Kane.

Kane is just three goals off Wayne Rooney's goalscoring record of 53 for England and reaching his half century against Germany last week.

However, Kane's penalty in a 1-1 draw in Munich is the only goal the Three Lions have scored in a winless start to their Nations League campaign after three games.

Gareth Southgate has voiced his concern over his side's reliance on Kane and Raheem Sterling for goals with the World Cup in Qatar just five months away.

And Kane urged his teammates to show more hunger to get on the scoresheet.

"In any top team, you're going to probably have a main striker that gets the majority of the goals, a main attacking winger who is going to get some goals," he added.

"I'm sure every lad that puts on an England shirt wants to score and get assists and affect the game.

"The most important thing is the mentality of having that hunger to go and get those goals."

AFP

Liverpool agree 75mn-euro deal for Benfica striker Nunez

Lisbon, Portugal - Liverpool have reached a deal with Benfica to buy the Uruguay striker Darwin Nunez for an initial 75 million euros (£64 million), the Portuguese club said on Monday.

The transfer could eventually rise to 100 million euros, Benfica said in a statement, eclipsing Liverpool's club-record £75 million paid to Southampton for Dutch centre-back Virgil van Dijk in 2018. Nunez scored 26 goals in 28 league appearances last season in Portugal.

The 22-year-old, who was left out of Uruguay's squad for Saturday's 5-0 friendly victory over Panama, was expected to begin a medical on Monday which could take two days to complete.

Personal terms are not anticipated to be a problem, with the

player having expressed his desire to play for Reds manager Jurgen Klopp despite interest from Manchester United.

Nunez is set to sign a reported six-year contract with Premier League and Champions League runners-up Liverpool.

He netted in both legs of Benfica's Champions League quarter-final defeat against Liverpool in April, earning praise from Klopp. Nunez is likely to arrive at Anfield as a direct replacement for Sadio Mane after Bayern Munich stepped up their pursuit of the Senegal forward.

Liverpool have rejected two offers from the Bundesliga champions and are holding out for a fee in excess of £40 million for Mane.

AFP



Darwin Nunez

Tearful Marcelo wants to continue playing after leaving Real Madrid

Madrid, Spain - Marcelo said an emotional goodbye to Real Madrid on Monday as the most decorated player in the club's history but insisted he has no plans to retire.

The 34-year-old has spent 15 years at the Santiago Bernabeu and will be a free agent when his contract expires at the end of the month.

Marcelo won 25 trophies at Real Madrid, including five Champions League, six La Liga and two Copa del Rey titles.

Among those attending a farewell ceremony in Valdebebas were Marcelo's teammates,



Marcelo

Real Madrid president Florentino Perez, as well as Carlo Ancelotti and Raul, who is currently in charge of the club's B

team.

"When I signed for Madrid, in my head I thought I could reach the top, and here I am the player with the most titles in its history," said Marcelo who broke down in tears.

"It's not goodbye, I don't feel like I'm leaving Madrid. If you don't give me a ticket, there will be trouble," he joked.

Marcelo said he would have no problem playing against Real Madrid in the future, keeping open the possibility he will join another team in Europe.

"I haven't thought about retiring. I think I can still play," he

said. "I don't think playing against Madrid will be a problem, I couldn't have done any more. I'm very professional."

Marcelo collected his fifth Champions League title last month as Real Madrid defeated Liverpool in Paris to win a 14th European Cup.

But he did not play in the final, with Ancelotti favouring Ferland Mendy at left-back for Madrid's biggest games.

"This season I've hardly played but I have felt useful even without playing. I felt a responsibility," Marcelo said.

AFP

Chiellini announces move to Los Angeles FC after Juventus and Italy farewells

Milan, Italy - Giorgio Chiellini announced on Monday his move to Los Angeles FC after bidding farewell to both Juventus and the Italian national team this past season.

Former Azzurri captain Chiellini posted a video on his Twitter account in which he wore the Major League Soccer club's colours with the message "The Next Chapter". The move was widely expected as LAFC had already teased the move on their account with the message "arriving soon" in Italian on Sunday. On Monday the 37-year-old also said on Italian radio that he needed "an experience elsewhere in order to slowly end my career as a player". "I can move



Giorgio Chiellini

to a growing league where I can also grow myself," he told Radio Anch'io Sport.

Chiellini left Juve at the end of last season after 18 years at the

club, during which time he won nine league titles and four Italian Cups, and twice reached the Champions League final.

AFP