



Oman Sustainability Week from March 13 to 17

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Sustainability Week will be organised by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals starting March 13 to 17, 2022, at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. The event will witness participation of 100 companies from more than 20 countries and attended by 5,000 individuals.

Oman Sustainability Week (OSW) will be hosted under the patronage of H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, who will inaugurate the

week on March 14, according to an announcement made at a press conference in Crowne Plaza Muscat on Monday.

Announcing the event, Dr Mohab al Hinai, head of Centre for Sustainability and Circular Economy, be'ah, said, "We live in a planet that is ample for all of us. But in the coming years, the population will boom to almost 10bn and this means there will be tremendous strain on our resources. We will have limited resources for the human race and thus we must work seriously. And this is where OSW will help us develop better strategies for a

We live in a planet that is ample for all of us. But in the coming years, the population will boom to almost 10bn and this means there will be tremendous strain on our resources

DR MOHAB AL HINAI

better future."

He described the acknowledgement of the need for sustainable development to achieve economic growth, attain social inclusion and protect the country's environment as a good step. "Oman has always been committed to the principles of sus-

tainability and has spearheaded innovative programmes that advocate its quintessential role in the development of the country."

According to Abdul-Amir Ajmi al Ajmi, external affairs and value creation director at Petroleum Development Oman, sustainable development is not a

choice but a prerequisite for development. "It is essential that we strike the right balance between economic growth and conservation of our environment. Strategic national events like OSW will reinforce sustainable development as a key feature of governance and highlight its critical role in the diversification of the economy. With several projects already underway, Oman has been dedicated to achieving a green economy through green strategies and renewable energy production."

The press conference on Monday highlighted the role of

sustainable development and Oman's stance on the matter and was addressed by Chokri Ben Amor, committee chairperson of Gaia Summit, Muhanad al Kiyumi, business partner - CEO of alternative energy of OQ, Ghada al Yousef, executive manager of Nama Group, and Malak al Shaibani, external relations country general manager of Shell Development Oman.

OSW will witness active participation of industry stakeholders, policymakers, sustainability experts, and industry leaders from Oman, the wider GCC, and other parts of the world. OSW

will further encourage energy independence, generation of revenues from non-traditional natural resources, and innovation in infrastructure to produce affordable and clean energy for the protection of the climate and environment.

Mohammed al Harthy, executive vice president of strategic development at be'ah, said, "We and sustainability initiatives go hand-in-hand. It is an honour for be'ah to be part of OSW, which is a platform to learn, share and educate as Oman takes a bigger and more determined stride towards a sustainable future."

Empty foreign trucks allowed entry till March

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT) has extended the deadline to allow 'empty' trucks registered in other countries to enter Oman.

"The ministry will extend the deadline to allow empty foreign land transport vehicles to enter the territory of Oman to the end of March 2022. The ministry urges owners of these vehicles to correct their status," it said.

In October 2020, it announced that the number of permits issued to empty trucks will be reduced and ban from October 2021.

Teen's app available in App Store

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Following the outbreak of the pandemic, people all around the world struggled to live normal lives through lockdowns. As classes moved online, some student made time to pursue other interests.

Rehan Agrawal, a student of an Indian school in Oman, was in Grade 10 and used all of the extra time to learn coding to create an app which is now available on App Store.

Passionate about robotics, Rehan enrolled in his first robotics course when he was seven. He hasn't just found an interest but his calling in life.

In 2020, he created his first app - Height&Depth - and made it available on App Store. "It is a fun app to measure the height of a ball, height of a building or depth of a sinkhole or anything



Rehan Agrawal

else that comes to your mind," he informed.

The app gives a reasonably close measurement of the height of any point or depth - say of a drain. "It has another option to be used as an app for play among

Rehan has completed several courses on robotics. He also makes mechanical models and has developed an indigenous kit converting roller blinds into voice controlled electric curtains using 3D designs and Arduino boards

friends to throw a ball the highest into the air."

The app uses simple and reliable physics formulae to give an accurate answer.

The app has been downloaded numerous times since

being made available in App Store. It is available for free and requires no registration.

Rehan has completed several courses on robotics. He also makes mechanical models and has developed an indigenous kit converting roller blinds into voice controlled electric curtains using 3D designs and Arduino boards.

Rehan is proficient in C++, Dart and Python, and has completed a creative engineering class with Mark B Rober, the American YouTuber, engineer and inventor known for his popular science and do-it-yourself gadgets. A gold medalist in Science Olympiad, Rehan is very interested in physics and chemistry.

He also founded Oman Robotics Club (omanrobotics.com) to encourage children to pursue robotics and take the first steps towards this fast developing field of science.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Expat replacement no solution for citizens' employment

Oman Vision 2040 aims to ensure the sultanate ranks among the world's most developed nations assuring sustained prosperity and security for all. It sets out a vision for the transformation of Oman from an oil-based economy to a more diverse knowledge-based one.

Currently, Oman needs technical knowhow from developed nations to achieve the goals of Vision 2040. But if this is blocked in order to provide employment opportunities to the national workforce, then the country will be far behind other developed countries. This is the time when Oman needs the best professional global workforce the most. Considering there are many targets to achieve the goals of Oman Vision 2040, various sectors await development work, including power, water and wastewater technologies, green engineering and sustainability and eco waste.

Development of infrastructure and industry for employment to the national workforce will be a key factor in achieving Oman Vision 2040. If expatriates and their families continue to stay in Oman, they will spend their money here which will indirectly increase GDP. Presently, revenues from public transport, taxis and other modes of transport are almost nil due to lack of passengers. Additionally, so many housing units are vacant due to termination of services of expatriate staff.

Oman's commitment to sustainability can be highlighted through its innovative strategies aligned with the UN Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) and national development stakeholders' engagement to present Oman as a model for sustainable development. No country can develop on its own without the help of new technology, which is the backbone of all developed nations.

Oman has to revise the policy on expatriate employment. We have seen how neighbouring countries opened their doors and welcomed expatriate communities and now rank very high globally.

This is the best time for Oman to march ahead and show the world that it is far above the others.

Hiten Dutia
Ruwai

PRANCING PAWS ON THE BEACH



Breaking free from its owner, this playful dog chased a colony of seagulls at Shatti al Qurm scaring away the birds while delighting onlookers (Syed Fasiuddin/Muscat Daily)

WEATHER WATCH

	Max	Min
Abu Dhabi	27	17
Doha	24	14
Kuwait City	19	9
Manama	23	14
Muscat	27	19
Riyadh	21	7

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr	5.30am
Sunrise	6.48am
Duhr	12.25pm
Asr	3.35pm
Maghrib	5.58pm
Isha	7.11pm

Omani, Saudi interior ministers visit Empty Quarter border post

Our Correspondent
Muscat

H E Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal bin Said al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, and Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef al Saud, Minister of Interior of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, visited the Empty Quarter border post linking the two countries on Monday.

Lt Gen Hassan bin Mohsin al Shuraiqi, Inspector General of Police and Customs, H E Eng Said bin Hamoud bin Said al Ma'awali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, the ambassadors of the two countries, and a number of officials from the Omani and Saudi sides participated in the tour of the site.

The visit aims to deepen the bonds of brotherhood and cooperation between Oman and Saudi Arabia that has been established by the leaderships of the two countries.

The two ministers were briefed on the progress of work and services provided by the border post and the flow of traffic between the two sides.

The two ministers also reviewed the bilateral relations between Oman and Saudi Arabia, and exchanged views on a number of areas of cooperation, in addition to matters of common interest.



Oman and Saudi Arabia inaugurated the Rub al Khali (Empty Quarter) road and two border posts connecting the two countries on December 7, 2021

Oman and Saudi Arabia inaugurated the Rub al Khali (Empty Quarter) road and two border posts connecting the two countries on December 7, 2021.

The road passes through Rub al Khali and the eastern province of Ihsa in Saudi Arabia. The section of the road in Oman is around 160km long, while around 580km of it is in Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi section links the Khorais-Bathaa road to the Omani border, via Shayba and Umm Zamoul.



EA extends tender deadline for investment in two natural reserves

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Environment Authority (EA) has extended the tender submission deadline for investment in Khor al Dhariz and Khor al Qurm al Kabeer natural reserves.

An EA official informed that the new deadline for submission of bids is February 28, 2022.

In December 2021, EA floated a tender for investment in three reserves: Khor al Dhariz, Khor al Qurm al Kabeer Reserve and Khor Sawli Reserve in the wilayat of Salalah, Dhofar.

The authority has called on those interested in investing to submit an action plan for the development of the two reserves.

The EA official said, "As part of its efforts to support the national economy and benefit from nature reserves, the authority

has extended the tender for investment in two reserves."

Regarding EA's efforts to develop reserves, he said the authority is conducting studies on how best to provide tourism and entertainment facilities for guests inside nature reserves. "We have 25 nature reserves through which we aim to preserve biological diversity and promote the sultanate in the world of ecotourism."

Meanwhile, on January 31, EA stated that it has planted more than 2,000 seedlings to celebrate World Wetlands Day, which falls on February 2.

A statement issued by EA said, "To mark World Wetlands Day, the authority's specialist planted 2,022 mangrove seedlings in Khor Mahaden in the wilayat of Quriyat in the Governorate of Muscat."

OCCI, Finnish trade delegation explore investment opportunities

Muscat - Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) reviewed investment opportunities with a Finnish business delegation led by Ville Skinnari, Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade of Finland.

The meeting also highlighted aspects of enhancing cooperation between the private sectors of the two countries, particularly in the fields of industry, technology and services.

Eng Ridha Juma al Saleh, chairman of OCCI, said that trade exchange between the two countries is below aspirations; it reached US\$2.39bn in June 2021. Exports from Oman to Finland was worth US\$205.09mn whereas imports from Finland was US\$2.19bn.

Saleh added that practical steps are required to enhance trade relations and boost trade exchange. He hoped this meeting would contribute to exploring areas of partnership in new fields particularly in mining, real estate, industry and health sectors and



transfer of knowledge.

On his turn, the Finnish minister underscored his country's keenness in developing relations between the two countries in various fields. He affirmed the preparedness of Finnish compa-

nies to actively contribute to the efforts of economic diversification by setting up partnerships with Oman's private sector.

A presentation was made on the investment opportunities available in the sultanate, which

have been launched by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

B2B meetings were also held between businesspeople from the two countries. ONA

ID proof required to purchase, sell gold

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) has called on all businesses to ensure that customers show their ID card during any transaction related to purchase and sale



of gold, precious metals and stones.

MoCIIP said this step is being taken to regulate the implementation of the Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing Law, and ensure that all transactions are followed up in accordance with the relevant regulations.

40 expatriates arrested for violating Marine Fishing Law

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) has arrested 40 expatriates for violating provisions of the Marine Fishing Law and Protection of Living Aquatic Resources in Al Wusta.

A MAFWR statement said, "The fisheries control team in Al Wusta governorate arrested 40 expatriates who were working on fishing vessels without licences." MAFWR urged fishermen to abide by the Marine Fishing Law.

"Legal measures have been taken against the violators," the statement further said.



COVID-19 UPDATE

Muscat - The Ministry of Health (MoH) announced 2,420 new infections registered in a 24-hour period on Monday, taking the total number of COVID-19 cases registered in Oman to 338,880.

Three more deaths were also reported during this period. "The total number of COVID-19 related deaths reported in the country now stands at 4,146," an MoH statement said. The ministry added that 1,685 more cases have recovered.

2,420 NEW CASES

NO.1 IN THE WORLD
THE LARGEST AIR CONDITIONER MANUFACTURER IN THE WORLD.

BIG COMPRESSOR, BIGGER COOLING.

- Heavy duty reciprocating compressor
- High power saving
- Turbo cooling
- Auto restart
- 4-Way air outlet
- Gold Fin

MUSCAT 97693496, 96742452
SALALAH 79011363
 Available at Major Hypermarkets & Electronics Retailers

MARKET WATCH

MSX30	4,116.00
BSE Sensex	58,014.17

FOREX RATES

(RO1 equals)

Indian Rs	193.97
Pakistani Rs	459.63
Bangladeshi Taka	223.36
Philippine Peso	132.94
Sri Lankan Rs	527.38

*Rates as on January 31
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

US inflation slowed in December, spending fell

In the final month of 2021, Americans dialed back their spending even as incomes rose thanks to wage increases, while inflation showed signs of moderating, government data showed.

The Commerce Department's personal consumption expenditures (PCE) report for December was largely in line with analysts' expectations, but nonetheless closely watched as it contains the Federal Reserve's preferred gauge of price increases.

The central bank last week had strongly signalled they will raise interest rates in March - for the first time since COVID-19 broke out - to fight inflation, and separate PCE data released Thursday showed prices rising 3.9 per cent last year, above the Federal Reserves' two-per cent target.

Khimji Ramdas ICT, Motori join hands to transform insurance claims industry

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Khimji Ramdas ICT - the information, communications and technology division of the Khimji Ramdas Group - and Motori for Smart Services Limited have formed a strategic alliance to digitally transform the automotive insurance claims industry in Oman.

Motori was established in Masdar City of the UAE, as one of the leading providers of smart digital one-stop-shop services for the insurance industry.

Motori pioneered the creation of intelligent platforms for the automotive insurance claims industry, connecting stakeholders such as insurance companies, policyholders, vehicle licensing authority, agencies/workshops, loss adjusters and others under a single 'one-stop shop' digital umbrella.

This digitisation allows for a seamless and automated claims process resulting in a faster processing time, transparency, and cost enhancements for stakeholders.

Ahmed Eissa, chief executive officer of Motori for Smart Services Limited, said, "Oman is an important market for Motori's regional expansion plans. We believe we can add tremendous value for the stakeholders in the automotive insurance claims in-



Ahmed Eissa



Meenal Madavi

Oman is an important market for Motori's regional expansion plans and we look forward to introducing Motori to the Omani market with Khimji Ramdas ICT. We believe we can add tremendous value for the stakeholders in the automotive insurance claims industry

AHMED EISSA

dustry in Oman by providing customised solutions for the Omani market and the success in managing such platforms given our experience. We look forward to introducing Motori to the Omani market with Khimji Ramdas ICT as one of the leading business groups in Oman."

Commenting on the new partnership, Meenal Madavi, division head of ICT Infrastructure Cluster at Khimji Ramdas LLC, said, "Our strategic alliance with Motori allows us to offer innovative solutions to the Omani market and to be a lead partner to the stakeholders in the motor insurance industry in Oman. With decades of experience across a breadth of industries in Oman through its parent company Khimji Ramdas LLC, Khimji Ramdas ICT division is dedicated to offering technology solutions to the Omani market."

Clariant to supply catalyst for ammonia project in Duqm

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Clariant, a Swiss multinational speciality chemicals company, announced that that it will supply ammonia synthesis catalyst for ACME Group's ground-breaking green ammonia project in Oman.

In a statement on the company website, Clariant underlined its commitment to decarbonize the chemical industry and supports the prestigious overall US\$3.5bn project to produce green ammonia and green hydrogen in Duqm.

In October last year, India's leading clean energy company ACME Group selected the US-based technology firm KBR for its large-scale green hydrogen and ammonia project in Duqm.

Clariant will supply KBR with its next-generation AmoMax 10 Plus ammonia synthesis catalyst for the upcoming ACME green ammonia plant of the Oman Company for the Development of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. Once completed, the plant will be a fully integrated, carbon-neutral facility, using solar and wind energy to produce 300 tonnes of ammonia per day.

ACME Group is building this major green hydrogen and ammonia project in Duqm with an estimated investment of US\$3.5bn. The project, as announced earlier, would be developed in phases and the first phase is likely to be commis-



sioned by the end of 2022.

Stefan Heuser, senior vice president and general manager of catalysts business unit at Clariant, said, "We are convinced that green ammonia will play a crucial role in the global energy transition and with our novel ammonia synthesis catalyst AmoMax 10 Plus, we provide a state-of-the-art product to facilitate this change towards a more sustainable future. Together with our partner KBR we look forward to setting a new standard in a more sustainable and profitable green ammonia production."

Graham Hoar, vice president - ammonia, syngas and fertilizers at KBR, added, "Due to our history of successful collaborations with Clariant, we know that they are the right partners to support our outstanding technology with the optimal catalyst

to help pioneering companies, like ACME, lead the energy transition with highly efficient green ammonia production."

The AmoMax 10 Plus is particularly well suited to the requirements of green ammonia production. Based on Clariant's industry-proven ammonia synthesis catalyst AmoMax 10, this new catalyst is designed with an optimized promoter set, greatly increasing its activity and stability while reducing startup times.

The superior activity of AmoMax 10 Plus allows operation with a higher per pass conversion and lower loop pressure. Consequently, it can be used to increase ammonia production and/or to reduce energy consumption. Moreover, the catalyst's improved stability and excellent resistance to poisons like water and oxygen increase its robustness and lifetime.

OPEC+ to meet amid record oil prices

London, UK - The world's top oil-producing countries will meet on Wednesday to discuss a further increase in output, while crude prices have reached seven-year highs rattled by geopolitical tensions.

Part of their regular meetings since the COVID-19 pandemic shook markets, the 13 members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and their 10 allies (jointly known as OPEC+) convene by videoconference to set output.

Many analysts expect the grouping, including Saudi Arabia and Russia, to decide to continue to boost output by 400,000 barrels per day in March.

This will be in line with their strategy to slowly re-open the taps since May last year, after drastic cuts to curb slumping prices when the coronavirus first started spreading.

"With that said, we wouldn't completely rule out a larger increase, given high oil prices and recent OPEC+ underproduction," Capital Economics analysts said.

Brent oil on Wednesday surpassed US\$90 per barrel, attaining a level last seen in October 2014. The price of West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude hit its



Many analysts expect top producers, including Saudi Arabia and Russia, to decide to continue to boost output by 400,000 barrels per day in March

highest level in more than seven years earlier this month, fuelled by easing concerns about the Omicron COVID variant and geopolitical tensions.

Russia sanctions?

The United States and Britain on Sunday flagged new and "devastating" economic sanctions against Russia, as Washington and its NATO allies step up efforts to deter any invasion of Ukraine.

Fears of an imminent invasion

have grown in recent days, despite denials from Moscow and pleas from Ukraine's president to avoid stirring "panic" over the massive Russian military build-up on the border.

A Russian invasion of Ukraine would lead to "very hard sanctions" against Moscow, according to Bjarne Schieldrop, analyst at SEB. "It would halt exports of natural gas to Europe even more. Natural gas and power prices in Europe would be much higher than the current extremely high

prices we have now," he told AFP.

In the Middle East, Yemen's Iran-backed Huthi rebels - which have frequently targeted Saudi Arabia - launched two missile attacks on the United Arab Emirates this month.

The Emirates has had a major role in the Saudi-led military coalition backing Yemen's internationally recognised government against the Huthis.

Struggling to meet targets

Besides the geopolitical uncertainties, analysts have noted that OPEC nations and other key producers are struggling to meet targets to lift output by 400,000 barrels a month, adding to the upward pressure on prices.

"OPEC+ underperformance and inaction support elevated oil prices as the group has underdelivered against its stated production targets by hundreds of thousands of barrels," Rystad Energy analyst Louise Dickson said.

The grouping "has committed to a passive role in the conversation despite external pressure primarily from the US, to increase production and ease fuel prices," she added.

AFP

MSX falls 0.9% as declining trend continues

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The benchmark index of the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) dropped 0.86 per cent on Monday to close at 4,116.00 points. Trading activity at the Muscat bourse remained weak and the declining trend continued.

Financial stocks fell the most as financial index recorded 1.14 per cent drop for the day. Industrial index increased 0.12 per cent while Services index decreased by 0.14 per cent. MSX Sharia index inched up 0.08 per cent to close at 501.88 points.

Total trading volume decreased by 16.1 per cent to 21.4mn shares on Monday compared with 25.5mn shares traded on Sunday. Market turnover decreased 12.8 per cent to RO3.8mn against RO4.4mn recorded in the previous trading session.

Market breadth of the MSX remained negative with 10 advancing stocks to 14 de-



cliners. As many as 22 traded stocks closed flat for the day.

Top gainers of the day were United Finance (8.48 per cent), Global Investment Holding (7.46 per cent), Muscat Finance (7.02 per cent), Oman Fisheries (3.85 per cent) and Oman Investment and Finance Company (3.23 per cent).

Top losers were SMN Power Holding (-7.7 per cent), Ominvest (-4.4 per cent), Renaissance Services (-4.04 per cent), BankDhofar (-2.46 per cent) and Ahlibank (-1.65 per cent).

Distributed by

Please Contact
+968 22060236/237

Eurozone economy rebounded after COVID-19 recession

Brussels, Belgium - The eurozone economy posted robust growth last year, official data showed Monday, but fallout from the Omicron variant and an energy crunch have raised doubts about the bloc's ability to sustain the pace.

While historic, the 5.2 per cent expansion failed to regain all the ground lost to the crash suffered in 2020, when the first shock of the coronavirus pandemic saw the eurozone contract by a cataclysmic 6.4 per cent. The strength of the eurozone's recovery trailed the boom in the United States, which grew by 5.6 per cent in 2021. China's leapt by 8.1 per cent, according to government data.

The Eurostat data office said the full 27-country EU economy, which includes several large economies that do not use the euro such as Poland and Sweden, grew by 5.9 per cent.

Analysts said the rebound showed strong divergences especially late in the year, with export powerhouse Germany seeing negative growth in the final quarter, and France, Spain and Italy expanding healthily.

Jessica Hinds of Capital Economics warned that for the eurozone's core economies, where Germany is essential, "further gains will be much harder going, particularly against a backdrop of



still acute supply shortages".

The German government on Wednesday lowered its economic growth forecast for 2022 because of problems posed by Omicron and its effect on the global supply chain, a crucial concern for Europe's biggest economy.

'Soft start'

The crisis in Ukraine has also darkened the mood, as fears grow that Russia, a major source of fossil fuels, could curb the gas

supply to Europe when heating needs are at a peak.

This would add to challenges posed by the highly contagious Omicron coronavirus variant that has brought a new wave of health restrictions and disrupted supply chains.

"We expect a soft start to 2022 as high cases and the return of restrictions, especially on contact-intensive services, weigh on growth in the first quarter," Rory Fennessy of Oxford Economics said.

But a strong rebound is expected over the second and third quarters "as supply bottlenecks unwind and consumer demand recovers," he added.

Analysts are also keeping a close eye on inflation, which is gaining ground in the eurozone and could bring a hit to consumer demand if it is not tamed in the coming months.

Prices rose at an annual rate of 5 per cent in December, the highest value on record for the currency bloc, and governors for

the European Central Bank will meet on Thursday to discuss the next move. ECB chief Christine Lagarde holds strong to her position that the inflation is due to temporary factors such as supply bottlenecks and defends her existing policy of super low interest rates and major stimulus.

The IMF last week cut its world GDP forecast for 2022 to 4.4 per cent because of the surprise challenges posed by the Omicron variant.

AFP



UAE to introduce corporate tax from next year

Dubai, UAE - The United Arab Emirates will introduce a corporate tax from mid-2023, the finance ministry said Monday, in a major change of course as the country seeks to diversify its income. The Gulf financial centre, long known as a tax haven and the regional headquarters for a swathe of multinationals, will tax business profits over AED375,000 (US\$102,000) at 9.0 per cent from June next year, a statement said.

The announcement is the latest significant move by the UAE, which switched from Friday-Saturday weekends to Saturdays and Sundays this year to align closer with global markets.

"The UAE corporate tax regime will be amongst the most competitive in the world," said a statement carried by the official WAM news agency. Nine per cent is at the lower end of corporate taxes worldwide.

There are no plans to intro-

duce personal income tax or capital gains tax from real estate or other investments, the ministry said.

The UAE, a major oil exporter but also a big player in business, trade, transport and tourism, is diversifying to reduce its reliance on crude.

It is also facing rising competition from neighbouring Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, which is pursuing its own drive to diversify its economy and attract foreign businesses.

"With the introduction of corporate tax, the UAE reaffirms its commitment to meeting international standards for tax transparency and preventing harmful tax practices," Younis Haji al Khoori, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance, said in the statement.

Tax incentives in the UAE's free-trade zones will remain in place, it added.

AFP

Ukraine crisis adds to inflation jitters

Frankfurt, Germany - Soaring global inflation will be in focus when European Central Bank governors meet on Thursday, as the threat of war in Ukraine risked further fuelling already sky-high energy prices in the region.

Prices rose in the eurozone at an annual rate of 5 per cent in December, the highest value on record for the currency bloc, which began keeping track of inflation in 1997.

New figures for January are set to be published by Eurostat on Wednesday, ahead of the meeting, with policymakers looking for indications as to whether inflation will come off the boil in 2022, as the ECB has said it expects to happen.

The Frankfurt-based institution projected a gradual return to inflation under its target of two per cent when it published its most recent forecasts in December.

The forecast grounds the ECB's decision to initiate a "step-by-step" reduction in its asset-purchasing stimulus programme, a more cautious approach than its peers in the United States and the United Kingdom.

The massive bond-buying programme has been the ECB's main crisis-fighting tool, aimed at keeping borrowing costs low and



stoking economic growth in the 19-nation euro club.

The meeting on Thursday was "unlikely to bring any policy changes", said Carsten Brzeski, head of macro at ING.

The 25 members of the governing council were increasingly sensitive to the risk that inflation could be higher than expected, Brzeski said, but would seek to "steer market expectations cautiously".

Difficult balance

The debate over future monetary policy at the ECB is closely linked to the progress of inflation and its return to the bank's target.

As such, "the current spike in inflation seems to be challenging its commitment to leave interest rates unchanged throughout 2022", Elga Bartsch, head of macro research at Blackrock Investment, told AFP.

But the surge was driven by the persistence of supply bottlenecks and changes in consumer preferences, Bartsch said, "not by excessive demand or an overheating economy."

In other words, any monetary tightening "would do little to ship containers faster from Asia to Europe or reduce energy prices", said Brzeski.

Multi-year highs in the price for gas were one of the main forces behind record inflation at the end of last year.

Policymakers will be wary that a further escalation in Ukraine, through which Russia supplies Europe with much of its gas, could send the price for energy up even further.

Across the Atlantic, the US Federal Reserve has accelerated quickly towards rate hikes.

After the central bank's policy-making committee meeting

last week, Fed Chair Jerome Powell said it could "raise the federal funds rate at the March meeting", having told reporters in November it could afford to be "patient".

Persistently high inflation in the US, rising to seven percent in December, has focussed minds at the Fed.

"It is clear that the ECB is on a very different path to the Fed," said Jack Allen-Reynolds of Capital Economics, predicting that the ECB would consider its first hike in 2023.

Rates sit at historic lows, including a negative overnight deposit rate that charges banks to deposit their money with the ECB overnight.

Any change was "very unlikely" in 2022, ECB President Christine Lagarde recently reiterated, with the possibility delayed until the bank has ended asset purchases.

Lagarde has also rejected comparisons with the US, saying the two economies were in "different situations," with inflation "clearly weaker" in the euro area.

ECB policymakers expect inflation to decline as one-off factors mechanically pushing the rate up, such as a 2020 value-added tax holiday in Germany, are taken out of the calculation.

AFP

High gas prices to hit demand in 2022: IEA

Paris, France - Demand for natural gas is expected to fall sharply in Europe and slow in Asia this year as prices have rocketed to record heights, the International Energy Agency said Monday.

Gas demand rebounded last year as the world economy recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions were eased, while an unusually cold winter also drove up consumption, the Paris-based IEA said.

"Supply did not keep pace which, combined with unexpected outages, led to tight markets and steep price increases, putting the brakes on demand growth in the

second half of 2021," the agency said in a report.

Consumption grew by 4.6 per cent last year, more than double the decline experienced as the pandemic emerged in 2020, said the agency, which advises governments.

How demand will fare in the short-term will depend on the weather during the northern hemisphere's heating season, the report said.

"Assuming normal temperatures, growth of the natural gas market is expected to be slowed by higher gas prices and softer economic expansion, while supply tensions may ease as offline capacity gradually returns," the

IEA said.

Global demand is expected to grow by a more modest 0.9 per cent this year to stand at 4.1tn cubic meters after surging by 4.6 per cent in 2021.

Global production, meanwhile, is expected to increase by 1.6 per cent to 4.2tn cubic meters.

Demand is expected to fall by more than 4 per cent in Europe while it would slow in Asia, from a "robust" 7 per cent in 2021 to 5 per cent this year.

Fears of a potential Russian invasion of Ukraine could further fuel Europe's already sky-high energy prices.

AFP

US Fed could raise rates by half a point if needed: official

New York, US - The US Federal Reserve is not ruling out raising rates by half a percentage point if inflation remains high, Fed official Raphael Bostic said in an interview with the Financial Times.

The chair of the US central bank, Jerome Powell, signalled this week the Fed plans to hike interest rates in March, telling reporters the recovery in the world's largest economy is strong enough that it can handle

higher borrowing costs.

Powell declined to give details on the size of the planned increase, saying only that the Fed would be flexible. It typically raises rates by a quarter of a percentage point; a half-point increase would be uncommon.

In the interview published on Saturday night, Bostic, who heads the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, said that "every option is on the table for every meeting." He still expects three

quarter-percentage-point hikes by the end of the year.

But "if the data say that things have evolved in a way that a 50 basis point move is required or (would) be appropriate, then I'm going to lean into that." Fifty basis points equal half a percentage point.

Bostic stressed that he would be "comfortable" with the idea of making a decision "in successive meetings," suggesting there could be a rate hike at each of

the seven remaining meetings between now and the end of the year.

The Fed's key rates were lowered to a range of 0 per cent to 0.25 per cent in March 2020 in an attempt to mitigate the shock to the economy from the COVID-19 pandemic.

With growth back on track, the priority now for the Fed is to slow inflation, including by raising rates.

AFP



OMAN
CRICKET
CLUB (OCC)

Invitation To Attend AGM Meeting of the Oman Cricket Club to Elect New Board of Directors for the period 2022-2025

The Board of Directors of the Oman Cricket Club announces the holding of the AGM meeting with New Board of Directors Elections of the club on Monday, 21/3/2022 at 7:00 pm at Hotel Al Falaj. Members wishing to attend this meeting have to renew membership on or before Sunday at 13/3/2022 at 5:00 pm.

Members can renew their membership online through this link: <https://members.omancricket.org/>

All members wishing to contest the Elections for the Board of Directors must submit their nomination papers within 10 days of the date of this announcement i.e. between 1st-10th Feb 2022, to be submitted at the Oman Cricket Academy at Al Amirat, which meets the conditions specified in article (49) of the Sports Club Statute issued by ministerial decision No. 124/2008.

On the basis of article (18) of the Law on Special Bodies working in the field of sports issued by Decree No. 81/2007, the meeting is valid in the presence of the absolute majority of working members who are entitled to attend (half +1) if this majority is not available until 7:30 pm, the meeting is postponed to another meeting at 8:00 pm on the same day.

The second meeting is valid in the presence of (a quarter) of the working members who have the right to attend to discuss the agenda of the meeting.

Important observations:

- The club's doors are open to receive members two hours before the meeting.
- Each member must bring proof of his or her membership card & ID card to attend the meeting.
- The Club manager will be available at the Club from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm, from Sunday to Thursday.
- For further inquiries, please contact the club's manager, **Mr. Iqbal**, on mobile number **99817786**.

Board of Directors

Oman International Hospital joins hands with Siemens Healthineers

Integrated Global Healthcare Service (IGHS), the management company for Oman International Hospital, has formed a partnership with Siemens Healthineers to establish a leading private healthcare facility in the Sultanate of Oman's capital, Muscat. One of the main objectives of the Oman International Hospital's executive management team is to turn the hospital into a premier private healthcare facility and be the first choice in Muscat's competitive healthcare market.

Their ambition is to be the number one healthcare provider in areas such as general surgery, cardiology, and orthopedics.

In order to achieve these goals, it is necessary to create a highly innovative and digital environment with the greatest clinical staff to guarantee care delivery to meet and exceed expected quality standards, clinical requirements, and customer satisfaction in the region.

The space and environment



created needs to be conducive to developing the best clinical practices, which is why the hospital obtained an advanced imaging and laboratory centre with state-of-the-art technology from Siemens Healthineers.

Commenting on the partnership, Ole Per Maloy, managing director, Siemens Healthineers Middle East and Southern & Eastern Africa, said, "Siemens Healthineers is proud to support this aspirational and innovative

project as a strategic and trusted partner through the provision of state-of-the-art medical solutions and technology, including digital solutions, clinical and strategic consulting, and further supporting the staff with rele-

vant research and development."

This week, as part of this ten-year partnership, the opening of the Oman International Hospital Med Academy is being announced.

The academy will be a privileged space for the training of healthcare professionals who are dedicated to the research and development of new clinical practices and approaches.

In addition to this and through

strategic consulting support and results optimisation, Siemens Healthineers is supporting the hospital's board in making optimal management decisions, using data analysis and performance optimisation.

IGHS - Integrated Global Healthcare Service has been making several investments in major healthcare projects. In its expansion strategy, it has become a relevant player in projects and partnerships in Asia and the Middle East. Right now, Oman's project is the most ambitious to date.

IGHS's main distinguishing factors are the technical and training doctors' capacity and other health professionals and the investment in cutting-edge technology in their centers.

Thanks to the leadership and know-how shown in their projects, it was selected as the responsible entity for managing and directing the Oman International Hospital in Muscat.

Mall of Muscat wins prestigious Most Trusted Brand in Oman Award



Mall of Muscat, the sultanate's leading shopping destination, has won the 'Most Trusted Brand in Oman' Award in the Shopping Mall category of Oman's Most Trusted Brand Awards 2021.

This year's edition of Oman's Most Trusted Brands survey attracted over 700,000 votes across 45 categories. Mall of Muscat fought off stiff competition in the Shopping Mall category and was named the winner

at the prestigious award ceremony held in Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel on January 25, 2022.

Renowned brands across the Sultanate from various categories contest against each other in Oman's Most Trusted Brand Awards every year, where the consumer is the ultimate judge. The focus of the survey is to allow consumers to make their own, personal choices as to which brand they consider to be

the best, underlining the brand as the Best Brand of the year.

Featuring over 240+ brands, ranging from fashion and lifestyle to sports and electronics, Mall of Muscat provides unmatched luxury and has some of the world's most renowned brands, including the first-ever Debenhams store in Oman, and flagship stores of Victoria's Secret and Starbucks.

The Mall covers an area of around 200,000 sqm with over

3000 car parking spaces. Apart from shopping, the Mall of Muscat offers attractions that are fun for the whole family including a cinema, entertainment zone and more. Mall of Muscat is also the home of Oman Aquarium, the largest and only public aquarium in the sultanate, which recently bagged the Silver Award in Retail Excellence at the prestigious Retail Congress MENA organised by the Middle East Council of Shopping Centres and Retailers.

"We are proud for winning Oman's Most Trusted Brand Award in the Sultanate of Oman. From the beginning, providing a unique shopping experience was our first concern in the Mall of Muscat. We worked on attracting brands for the first time in Oman, supporting and promoting tourism development efforts as well as be in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and what citizens deserve in terms of services and entertainments for all visitors," said Mahmood Mohamed Ali al Jarwani, chairman of Tamani Global Development & Investment LLC, the operator of Mall of Muscat.



Shotokan Karate Center successfully concludes its internal competition

The indoor championship of the Shotokan Karate Center was concluded on Friday in the sports Hall of the National Private School in Al Khuwair, with the participation of 59 players representing the branches of the centre, spread in the Governorate of Muscat.

The championship was divided into kata and kumite com-

petitions. In the closing ceremony, the players who got the first three places from all categories participating in the kata and kumite competitions were honoured by the management of the Shotokan Karate Center.

The Shotokan Karate Center and all its members extend their thanks and appreciation to the parents and the management of

the National Private School for their cooperation and services to make this event a success.

It is worth mentioning that the Shotokan Karate Center is preparing to hold the seventh edition of the International Shotokan Karate Competition, which will be held at the beginning of next March at Al-Amal Sports Club.

Bank Nizwa offers first-of-its-kind instant auto finance service

Bank Nizwa, Oman's leadings and most trusted Islamic bank, has announced a tie-up with IFIN (Islamic Finance Initiation Network) - the first-of-its-kind Shari'a-compliant fintech solution - allowing customers to finance their desired items instantly.

The new liaison will commence with 'Instant Car Finance', making Bank Nizwa the first in the country to offer on-the-spot approval to finance cars. It will allow bank customers to complete their car financing procedures while visiting the showrooms of participating car dealers. This will eliminate the need to visit the bank's branches and provide customers a faster solution to obtaining their auto finance. This is expected to further fuel the auto industry and enhance customers' purchasing power.

Strategised as a '10-minute financing process', the instant approval service will translate as easy and simple application



process and time-saving instant financing. Requests for finance will be submitted through a

Web-based application, accessed only by the retailers; there will be complete trans-

parency, and customers will be aware of the cost involved before submitting their finance request.

Required built in controls are also in place to ensure that the transactions are completed in accor-

dance with Sharia'a requirements.

This tie-up will link Bank Nizwa with retailers, SMEs, regulators and the corporate sector and will also facilitate technological advancements that complement digitalisation of its existing products and workflows. Moreover, it will echo the bank's role as an institution of innovative Islamic finance, with a customer centric approach to business. It will testify its commitment to support the local economy by securing the interests of businesses with state-of-the-art digital products and services.

Commenting on the new tie-up, Arif al Zaabi, AGM retail of Bank Nizwa, said, "As the financial partner of choice for the people and enterprises in the country, it is our responsibility keep our fingers on the pulse of the market and adapt to the changing times. With this new initiative, we are providing a much needed breakthrough for

the auto industry and consumers who have car purchase on their wish list. We have consistently endeavoured to provide innovative digital finance solutions for our customers, and our partnership with IFIN is an extension of our ongoing work in that direction. It is the first of its kind Fin-Tech and our partnership will bring to reality several new services that will help consumers realise their dreams of owning coveted products."

Branded as a 'financing simplified' fintech company, IFIN is the world's first Sharia'a-compliant, multi-institutional, multi-product, multi-channel Islamic fintech solution. It will perfectly complement Bank Nizwa's robust growth in the Islamic banking sector with instant finance schemes that will further bolster its commitment to improve customers' lives by going that extra mile to create and implement products that exceed their expectations.

OIFC partners with Bank Muscat for Transaction Banking platform

Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the sultanate, and Oman Investment & Finance Co Khedmah (OIFC), the leading billing and collection services provider for utilities in Oman, have tied up to enable OIFC to use the bank's Transaction Banking platform, especially to manage its liquidity needs. The agreement was signed by Ilham Murtadha al Hamaid, general manager - Corporate Banking, Bank Muscat, and Saud Ahmed al Siyabi, chief operating officer, OIFC Khedmah. OIFC, which already uses Online Banking and Remote Deposit Capture (RDC), will now also use the bank's Liquidity Management Solution of automated 'Sweeps' for managing its various liquidity needs efficiently.

The bank's automated Sweep solution involves the rule-based physical movement of funds between different bank accounts for the purpose of efficient utilisation of funds. This allows the bank's corporate customers to optimise liquidity available across multiple bank accounts and currencies. Some of the main benefits of the Liquidity Management Solution include: Better visibility of funds position, increased control over the use and allocation of internal resources, increase in operational efficiency by automating cash concentration and better insights through various information reports.

Speaking on the occasion, Ilham, said: "Over the past few years, Bank Muscat has been spearheading the digitalisation trend in the sultanate, which is helping our Corporate customers transact quickly and efficiently, while minimising the data-entry related risks in the payment process and improving overall security. We are pleased to strengthen our existing partnership with OIFC and offer our state-of-the-art automated Sweep solution, which will optimise cash flows and offer real-time insights for greater



transparency and control, thereby enabling better-informed decisions."

Siyabi, said, "OIFC Khedmah is the leading company in Oman in the field of billing and collections for four decades, and today has outlets, branches and bill-payment machines located across the country. We are delighted to partner with Oman's leading financial services provider as part of the overall strategy of digitalisation of the economy. The new Liquidity Management solution provided by Bank Muscat will enable complete control and visibility of funds; superior cash flow management; improved predictability of cash flows and efficient conversion of cash balances lying in our different group accounts.

This will in turn lead to better operating efficiencies and customer satisfaction for OIFC."

Liquidity management is one of many features offered through Bank Muscat's Transaction Banking Platform, which is an intuitive platform providing end-to-end digital solutions for the transactional and operational needs of corporate and government clients. The platform offers a suite of products for payments, liquidity management, collections and receivables, and reconciliation needs of the institution, with the possibility of a full integration of the bank's transaction banking platform with the corporate's ERP system. Through the platform, the customer has a proper reconciliation mechanism in place and the ability to send

different MIS reports. The cutting edge innovative services under the platform enables our corporate customers to be ahead of the competition. The bank's clients can choose the extra features they require as per their specific corporate needs.

As the trusted banking partner in Oman for nearly four decades, Bank Muscat is committed to supporting both government entities and the private sector in their digitalisation drive to create a successful business environment. More details about different services and solutions are available on the bank's new Corporate Banking website, which is accessible at <https://www.bankmuscat.com/en/business/Pages/Business-Home-page.aspx>.

The platform offers a suite of products for payments, liquidity management, collections and receivables, and settlement needs of the enterprise, with the possibility of full integration of the bank's transaction banking platform with the corporate ERP system.

The platform offers a suite of products for payments, liquidity management, collections and receivables, and settlement needs of the enterprise, with the possibility of fully integrating the bank's transaction banking platform with the enterprise's enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

Bank customers can choose the additional features they need according to the specific needs of the company.



Snow and ice can't stop the Grecale's energy

Testing continues on the Grecale prototypes, this time in the cold of the Swedish glades where they have delivered their maximum power in extreme conditions and on very low grip surfaces.

Not even snow and ice can hinder the Grecale's energy: During the mission the prototypes were tested to fine-tune their start-up and driveability at extreme temperatures, to check the vehicle dynamics on mixed surfaces of tarmac, snow and ice, and to maintain in-car comfort in all weather conditions, varying from a few degrees above zero to as low as -30°C in Lapland.

Tests were also carried out to fine-tune the car's traction, understeer and oversteer in different drive modes and with varying sizes and types of wheels, to specifically characterise each of the driving modes on offer.

Even in extreme conditions, the Grecale extols its exceptional soul on low grip handling tracks, completing high-performance laps on various circuits, from steering pads to more demanding routes featuring corners, slopes, long straights and

drops, on snowy or icy surfaces.

Grecale is the everyday exceptional even in freezing temperatures on expanses of snow as far as the eye can see.

Maserati produces a complete range of unique cars, immediately recognisable by their extraordinary personality. Thanks to their style, technology and innately exclusive character, they delight the most discerning, demanding tastes and have always been a reference point for the global automotive industry.

A tradition of successful cars, each of them redefining what makes an Italian sports car in terms of design, performance, comfort, elegance and safety, currently available in more than seventy markets internationally. Ambassadors of this heritage are the Quattroporte flagship, the Ghibli sports sedan, and the Levante, the first SUV made by Maserati, all models characterised by the use of the highest quality materials and excellent technical solutions. Ghibli and Levante are now also available in hybrid version, the Trident Brand's first electrified cars.



Ooredoo named Oman's Most Trusted Brand

A testament of its efforts to foster lifelong relationships with its customers, Ooredoo has been named in the fifth edition of Oman's Most Trusted Brand Awards in the Telecoms category.

Nominated by members of the public, this year's awards attracted more than 700,000 votes across 45 categories.

The winners were announced

at a special ceremony held at Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel, held under the auspices of H E Dr Mohammed al Rumhy, Minister of Energy and Minerals.

Delivering on its brand promise to 'Enjoy the Internet', Ooredoo's strategy is about far more than creating innovative products and services, but leveraging the power of communications to

stimulate economic and social development and ultimately, enrich people's digital lives. By doing so, it continues to position itself as one of Oman's most recognised and admired companies and a cornerstone of the community. Meanwhile, it continues to stay ahead of the curve by introducing new ways to hone and improve communications and cater to the needs of an

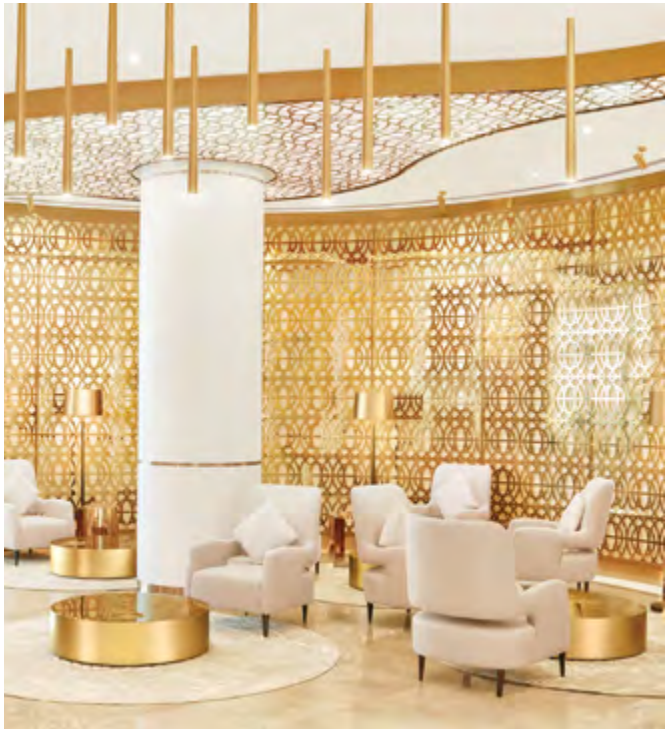
ever-evolving market.

As Oman's data experience leaders, Ooredoo provides individuals and businesses with cutting edge digital products and services, so that customers can enjoy the internet. Ooredoo generated revenues of RO264.9mn as of December 31, 2020 and is listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange under the 'ORDS' ticker.

Oman Air First and Business Class Lounge granted ISO 9001:2015 certification

Oman Air announced that its award-winning First and Business Class Lounge at Muscat International Airport has been awarded ISO 9001:2015 for Quality Management Systems Standards, which certifies that the Management System has been fully audited and found to be in accordance with the provision of First and Business Class Lounge services for Oman Air customers.

Delivering an exceptional customer experience remains a priority for Oman Air, and that priority extends to the airline's First and Business Class Lounge at its hub in Muscat. Luxuriously appointed and presenting a decisively Omani-themed ambience, the lounge offers Oman Air's First and Business class passengers welcome respite from airport crowds and features among others our attentive service and care, a diverse buffet offering, elevated à la carte dining, and an exclusive spa with a variety of treatments. Last year, the lounge was awarded Skytrax's Five-Star COVID-19 Safety Rating for implementing appropriate coronavirus protection measures, both in terms of product and service standards, while ensuring optimal passenger health



and safety at all times.

"We're delighted that our First and Business Class Lounge has been granted ISO 9001:2015 certification, said Saleem Amanulla Abdulhusain, senior vice president of service delivery at Oman Air. "Our guests travelling from Muscat deserve an exceptional lounge experience in terms of the quality of product and the high level of service they receive. Enhancing the customer

experience for our First and Business class passengers in Muscat is a promise we continue to uphold, and one that reflects the excellent management systems and standards throughout the lounge. The ISO certification is an attestation of the well-defined measures in place which guide our operational practices so that we consistently live up to our customers' expectations as a premium airline."

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17				18						19				
20							21							
			22		23	24		25						
26	27	28		29			30		31			32	33	34
35				36				37			38			
39			40						41	42				
43						44						45		
46				47	48		49					50		
			51			52		53			54			
	55	56					57			58		59	60	61
62								63	64					
65					66						67			
68					69						70			

- 1) Waste of a vote?
- 5) Assemble
- 10) Striker's Benedict Arnold
- 14) Word before "sapienti"
- 15) Draw_ in the sand
- 16) They run up in bars
- 17) What life is, in a tune
- 20) Rustlers' chasers
- 21) Standing out prominently
- 22) Penultimate word in fairy tales
- 25) "Guarding _" (MacLean movie)
- 26) It may be iced when it's warm outside
- 29) Middle of the month
- 31) Catch sight of from a distance
- 35) Cousin on "The Addams Family"
- 36) Goosebump-inducing
- 38) Miscellaneous collection
- 39) Difficult puzzle, e.g.
- 43) Cattle call handout
- 44) 1960s jacket eponym
- 45) Become aware of
- 46) Not on the level
- 49) Easter egg decorator

e.g.
13) Some four-year c^{le}gs.
18) Assessed
19) Get to one's feet
23) Home to 11-Down's
parents
24) Second or third TV
showing
26) Pageant winner's
headgear
27) Cultural value system
28) _ costs (by any
means)
30) Put on the spot?
32) Fail to match, as
colors
33) Kitchen gizmo
34) Coupling devices for
farm animals
37) Kind of alcohol
40) They're certainly not
dreamers
41) Cookie that can be
disassembled
42) Teenager's time limit
47) He worked with
couples
48) Forbidden things
52) Log-transport
channel
54) Devices to catch the
unsuspecting
55) At quite a distance
56) Small parasite

62) Org. for MDs
63) Measure of resistance
64) Org. governing air traffic

E	L	I		C	O	S	T	A		A	L	B
E	T	A		A	N	K	S			A	B	E
C	H	I	L	D	P	S	Y	C	H	O	L	O
K	I	D		A	P	E	E	K		N	A	V
S	C	A	R	L	E	T			T	A	M	E
		S	E	E	D			I	M	A	G	O
S	K	I	N		A	D	O	B	E		L	A
K	I	D	D	I	N	G	Y	O	U	R	S	E
A	T	E		R	E	E	L	S		H	A	L
		S	E	X	E	S		S	O	A	R	
A	L	O	F	T		P	A	R	D	N	E	R
S	N	A	F	U		B	L	A	S	E		A
T	O	T	A	L	L	Y	A	B	S	O	R	B
I	D	E	S		S	T	I	L	E		U	L
R	E	X		D	E	C	O	R		T	E	A

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

If you'd rather be by yourself today, be by yourself. And if you'd rather be smack in the middle of the action, then head out. You need to do whatever makes you feel most comfortable right now. Luckily, little if any pressure is on you to conform, so if you feel like breaking away from what everyone else is doing, that shouldn't cause any waves. Everyone just wants you to be happy. So enjoy your day doing what you love.

 LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

You need to let go of your ego today and just have fun! When you're overly concerned about how you come across to other people, you can rarely be who you truly are. If you want people to understand the real you, you have to be the real you. That means you can't hide your goofiness, geekiness, or silliness. You gotta show all the colours that make up your freak flag and not be afraid of others' reaction.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

You can expect a tonne of invitations, opportunities, and special requests to hit your inbox today. Sure, everything will sound tempting, but you can't do it all and you shouldn't. In fact, you should do none of it. Slow down the pace of your days. Take on fewer commitments in your life, and remember what it's like to have free time. Too much has been going on lately, and you're in danger of losing perspective on who you really are.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. The 1963 American comedy film **⑩⑪** **ଓ** **ୱାଟର** **ୱାଟର** **ୱାଟର** **ୱାଟର** **ୱାଟର** **ୱାଟର**, centring on pursuit of stolen cash, starred which actor well-known for drama but not necessarily for comedy?

A. Richard Burton
B. Humphrey Bogart
C. Cary Grant
D. Spencer Tracy

A. Foot and mouth disease
B. Mad cow disease
C. Prison fever
D. Dutch elm disease

3. Which western country was the first to extend the right to vote in national elections to women?

A. Switzerland
B. Australia
C. USA
D. New Zealand

Answers: 1. a 2. c 3. d

 TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

There's so much going on beneath the surface right now that you might not be able to understand. Give yourself plenty of time to determine your next move. Think things through rationally, and try not to let your desire to be liked limit your options. Sometimes you have to tell people things they don't want to hear. Resist making any judgment about the behaviours of others. If it's not your cup of tea, say so, but don't condemn the tea altogether!



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

It's the differences between you and your friends, not the similarities, that keep you all close, believe it or not. Embrace and respect the fact that they don't always agree with you! Sure, you may not believe those who hold different views, but you should always believe in your friends. Harmony doesn't happen when all notes are the same; it happens when different notes come together and create a beautiful sound.

 CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

People are always telling you to live in the moment, but today you shouldn't feel the need to follow that advice. If your day is an especially busy one, you'll never have enough energy to fulfill that directive. And if your day is a very quiet one, you might get inordinately preoccupied with the one or two small things that are going on. Instead, look further down the road of your life. You shouldn't feel pressure to create a specific plan.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

When was the last time you put yourself at someone else's service? True, it can be a humbling or even humiliating to do someone else's bidding, but it can also be very rewarding. Find a friend or relative who is overwhelmed by their life right now and let them know that you're there for them. Offer to run errands, help out with babysitting, or just listen to them vent their frustrations. You'll be surprised by how satisfied you feel.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

A relationship that began rooted in business is starting to show signs of being much more congenial than ever before. Could he be a new friendship or even a new romance? Slow down there! Take these new developments very, very slowly. A lot is riding on continued harmony, so you need to be very careful about where you take things. Think about when in the near future it would make sense to take the next step.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

A challenge could be handed down to you today, perhaps in the form of a dare. It's hard for you to pass up the opportunity to show other people how hard you rock, but you might want to abstain from the action. There are developing issues in one of your non-romantic relationships, and you need to focus your energies on that before you can go off and play. Show people that you know how to put things into the proper perspective.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Be on the lookout for some emotional intensity and upheaval to start happening with one of your friends today. Signs to watch for include a sudden change in their attitude, their flaking out on a commitment they made, or any other incident that involves acting out of character. As soon as you think something is going on with them, check in and find out if you can do something. A small assist on your part could make all the difference.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Why are you in such a hurry right now? The goal you're working towards isn't going anywhere, and reaching it early isn't going to earn you any extra brownie points. Have you ever considered the fact that you have more to learn from the process of reaching your goal than from actually reaching it? You'll have to find another place to channel all of your high energy today. Run around the block. Physical exercise will help you slow your roll.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You could be in a passive mode today, although you don't have to worry about being anyone's doormat. Your people are looking out for you, and they'll handle everything until you're ready to get back into the game. Let everything take its natural course. The more you interfere, the more you're going to worry. And there's no point in worrying about things you can't control, so don't. Let those in control worry about how things are going.

A black and white line drawing of a snowman sledding down a hill. The snowman is wearing a striped scarf, mittens, and a snowflake pendant. It has a bag of toys on its back and is holding a snowflake. The background features stars, a shooting star, and stylized trees.

Y	S	O	C
O	P	H	P
O	O	K	I
R	L	P	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

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

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

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

[illegible]

UAE intercepts missile fired by Yemen's Houthis, destroys launch site in Al-Jawf

Dubai, UAE - The United Arab Emirates shot down a ballistic missile fired by Yemen's Houthi rebels during a visit by Israel's president on Monday, the latest attack to rattle the Middle East financial hub.

Nobody was hurt in the early-hours attack, the third in consecutive weeks on the wealthy Gulf nation that is part of the Saudi-led coalition fighting Yemen's Iran-backed insurgents.

"Air defence forces... intercepted and destroyed a ballistic missile launched by the Houthi terrorist group at the UAE," the ministry said, according to the official WAM news agency.

It said fragments of debris fell 'outside of populated areas', without giving further details.

The ministry said it responded by destroying the missile launch site in Yemen's northern Al-Jawf region, releasing black-and-white footage of the explosion.

The latest rebel missile was fired as Isaac Herzog makes the first visit to the UAE by an Israeli president, after the countries established diplomatic ties under the 2020 Abraham Accords. Herzog, who met Abu Dhabi



This image grab shows the destruction of a missile launch site, operated by the Houthis in Al-Jawf in northern Yemen, on Monday (AFP)

Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan on Sunday, visited Dubai's Expo 2020 site on Monday. He was also due to hold talks with the UAE prime minister and ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum.

Herzog will 'continue his visit as planned', his office said, as the United States condemned the Houthi attack.

"While Israel's president is visiting the UAE to build bridges and promote stability across the region, the Houthis continue to

launch attacks that threaten civilians," State Department spokesman Ned Price tweeted.

Spate of attacks

Monday's attack was the latest in a series against the Emirates. Three oil workers were killed

in a drone-and-missile attack on Abu Dhabi on January 17 - the first deadly assault in the UAE claimed by the Houthis - and two ballistic missiles were intercepted over the capital a week later. The attacks, which follow a spike in hostilities in Yemen,

have raised Gulf tensions further at a time when international talks over Iran's nuclear programme are floundering and have helped push oil prices to seven-year highs.

The Iran-backed Houthis began attacking UAE interests after a series of defeats on the ground in Yemen, inflicted by the UAE-trained Giants Brigade militia. In early January, the rebels seized a UAE-flagged ship in the Red Sea, saying it was carrying weapons - a claim denied by the Emirates.

Warning of more assaults

Rebel military spokesman Yahya Saree said the rebels targeted Abu Dhabi with a number of ballistic missiles and Dubai with multiple drones.

He also warned 'citizens, residents and companies to stay away from... vital facilities as they are at risk of being targeted in the coming period'.

The UAE's defence ministry said it blew up the launch site at 12:50 am UAE time (2050 GMT), exactly 30 minutes after the missile was intercepted.

The Emirates affirms its 'full readiness to deal with any threats' and will 'take all necessary measures to protect the UAE from any attacks', it added.

The UAE authorities said that the incident had no impact on air traffic, with flight operations proceeding normally.

A senior Emirati official last week vowed that Houthi attacks will not become a 'new normal' for the Gulf country, a trade, business and tourism centre and a major oil exporter.

The UAE withdrew its troops from Yemen in 2019 but remains an influential player. It also hosts American troops and is one of the world's biggest arms buyers.

Yemen's civil war began in 2014 when the Houthis seized the capital Sanaa, prompting Saudi-led forces to intervene to prop up the government the following year.

The conflict has killed hundreds of thousands of people directly or indirectly and left millions on the brink of famine, according to the United Nations which calls it the world's worst humanitarian catastrophe. AFP



A young boy looks at a poster of Junta head Paul-Henri Damiba outside the Grand Mosque of Ouagadougou on Friday (AFP)

African Union suspends Burkina Faso after coup

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso - The African Union on Monday suspended Burkina Faso a week after the volatile country suffered its latest coup, as envoys from West Africa and the UN headed for talks with the new junta.

The AU's 15-member Peace and Security Council said on Twitter it had voted 'to suspend the participation of #BurkinaFaso in all AU activities until the effective restoration of constitutional order in the country'.

The move came three days after the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) suspended Burkina from its ranks and warned of possible sanctions pending the outcome of meetings with the junta.

An ECOWAS mission headed by Ghanaian Foreign Minister Shirley Ayorkor Botchway was expected in Ouagadougou, where it would be joined by the UN's special representative for West Africa and the Sahel (UN-OWAS), Mahamat Saleh Annadif. "The joint delegation will have meetings with the military leaders as well as with the various Burkinabe actors," UN-OWAS said in a statement.

On Saturday, ECOWAS sent military chiefs to confer with junta leader Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba.

The junta 'reaffirmed its commitment to sub-regional and international organisations', it said in a statement.

ECOWAS leaders will hold a summit in Accra on Thursday to assess the two missions to see

whether they should impose sanctions. They have previously suspended and enforced sanctions against two other members - Mali and Guinea - where coups have unfurled in the past 18 months.

Moussa Faki Mahamat, who chairs the AU's Commission, had already condemned the coup on the day it happened.

Troubled country

On January 24, rebel soldiers detained president Roch Marc Christian Kabore amid rising public anger at his failure to stem violence ravaging the impoverished nation.

They later released a handwritten letter in which he announced his resignation - a document that a member of his party said was authentic.

The junta has dissolved the government and parliament and suspended the constitution, vowing to re-establish 'constitutional order' within a 'reasonable time'.

The coup is the latest bout of turmoil to strike Burkina Faso, a landlocked state that has suffered chronic instability since gaining independence from France in 1960.

Kabore was elected in 2015 following a popular revolt that forced out strongman Blaise Compaore.

Compaore himself had seized power in 1987 during a coup in which the country's revolutionary leader, Thomas Sankara, was gunned down.

AFP

Myanmar's Suu Kyi 'to face new trial for electoral fraud'

Yangon, Myanmar - Myanmar's junta has charged Aung San Suu Kyi with influencing election officials during 2020 polls, a source said on Monday, a year after it staged a coup alleging massive voter fraud.

Suu Kyi, 76, has been detained since the February 1 coup last year that triggered mass protests and a bloody crackdown on dissent with nearly 1,500 civilians killed, according to a local monitoring group.

The Nobel laureate is facing a raft of charges - including violating the country's official secrets laws - and if convicted of all of them could face sentences tallying more than 100 years in



This file photo shows Aung San Suu Kyi attending the opening ceremony of the Yangon Innovation Centre in Yangon on July 17, 2019 (AFP)

prison.

She will face a further trial on charges of influencing the country's election commission during the 2020 polls that saw her

party defeat a military-aligned rival, a source with knowledge of the case said.

The case will be wrapped up within six months, the source

added.

Former president and stalwart of the National League for Democracy (NLD) party Win Myint will face the same charge, the source said.

Several senior members of the national electoral commission have also been arrested since the coup, accused of masterminding the NLD's landslide victory.

The junta cancelled the results of the 2020 election in July last year, saying it had found some 11.3mn instances of fraud.

Independent monitors said the polls were largely free and fair.

The junta has promised to hold another election by August 2023 if the country - currently riven by fighting between the military and anti-coup fighters - is restored.

Ahead of the Tuesday anniversary of the putsch, the junta has warned that noisy protests or sharing 'propaganda' against the military could be charged with high treason or under the anti-terrorism law.

Suu Kyi has already been sentenced to six years in jail for illegally importing and owning walkie talkies, incitement against the military and breaking COVID-19 rules.

AFP

Thai fishing crews fear 5 year-recovery after slick



A fisherman prepares his boat on Mae Ram Phueng beach in Rayong on Sunday (AFP)

want a healthy sea that I can work in for my livelihood," he told AFP.

"The sea can give us money every day. The sea was good in the past few years. I do not know how many years before it becomes good again."

Five-year recovery

Tuem usually makes around US\$30 a day from a 7-10kg haul but he says now he will struggle to cover the cost of petrol to retrieve his fishing nets.

"The impact is immediate and clear. I do not know what to do," he said.

AFP joined a group of fisher-

man on a boat trip Sunday - their fishing haul amounted to about 10 per cent of their usual catch and many fish were dead.

Burapha University marine scientist Thanomsak Boonphakdee, who was taking water samples at the beach over the weekend, says it will take a long time to fully assess environmental damage caused by the disaster.

The marine life took at least five years to recover from the 2013 incident, he said.

"Crabs, small fish and shrimp are the (creatures) that will be affected most," he told AFP.

A dozen ships are spraying

dispersant chemicals and so far more than 80,000 litres has been doused over the affected area.

Star Petroleum Refining Public Company Limited, the operator of the pipeline and whose major shareholder is US giant Chevron, said it was trying to minimise the slick's ecological impact using booms.

But satellite imagery shows the slick had already spread to an area of 51 sq km on Sunday, local media reported.

There are also fears a national park on the island of Ko Samet will be affected and Thai authorities on Sunday deployed ab-

sorbent material to Ao Prao beach as a precaution.

Transparency calls

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Varawut Silpaarcha urged oil companies in Thailand to ramp up prevention measures and boost inspections and maintenance programmes on land and sea.

"I do not want this kind of accident to happen again. The expense of spending money to solve a major disaster after it happened, cannot compare with companies increasing the inspections," he told reporters in Rayong.

Greenpeace, which has called on the Thai government to set up an independent investigation into the spill, said incidents are becoming far too common.

Between 1974 and present day there have been 240 oil spill incidents in Thailand, the environmental group said.

"The oil spill will affect marine life and could be fatal for fish, shrimps, shellfish," Greenpeace warned.

Another fisherwoman, Nid, 62, lamented it was heartbreaking to see another disaster after seeing the area's recovery in recent years.

"We are just small insects who have no voice to be heard," she told AFP.

AFP

N Korea confirms test of ballistic missile ‘most powerful’ since 2017

Seoul, South Korea - North Korea confirmed on Monday it had fired its most powerful missile since 2017, capping a month-long blitz of launches that has raised the spectre of leader Kim Jong Un restarting nuclear tests.

Pyongyang conducted a record seven weapons tests in January, the most ever in a calendar month, as it threatened to abandon a self-imposed moratorium on launching long-range and nuclear weapons, blaming US ‘hostile’ policy for forcing its hand.

North Korean state media said on Monday that the country had test-fired a Hwasong-12 intermediate-range ballistic missile, last launched in 2017, which is powerful enough to put the US territory of Guam in range.

South Korea and the United States responded to the launch with concerns that long-range missiles and nuclear tests could be next on Kim’s agenda.

Pyongyang has ‘come close to destroying the moratorium declaration’, South Korean President Moon Jae-In said after an emergency National Security Council meeting on Sunday.

He noted the North was showing a ‘similar pattern’ to 2017, when it raised regional tensions by launching intermediate-range missiles and following them up with intercontinental ballistic missile tests.

A senior Biden administration official said Washington shared the concern.

“It’s not just what they did



This combo picture shows what North Korea says is Sunday’s test-fire of Hwasong 12-type ballistic missile (AFP)

yesterday, it’s the fact that this is coming on the heels of quite a significant number of tests in this month,” he said.

“We obviously don’t want to see further testing and we’ve called upon to DPRK to refrain from further tests,” he added, referring to North Korea by the initials of its official name.

South Korea said the Sunday test was of an ‘intermediate range ballistic missile’ that flew around 800km and reached a maximum altitude of 2,000km.

The North’s official Korean Central News Agency said on Monday the test ‘confirmed the accuracy, security and effectiveness of the operation of the Hwasong 12-type weapon sys-

tem under production’.

The test was conducted in a manner that ensured the ‘security of neighbouring countries’, KCNA added.

State media released images purportedly taken by a warhead-mounted camera while it was in space, and others showing the missile blasting off from land. There was no mention of whether leader Kim attended the launch.

‘Addicted’ to weapons

In 2017, the launch of the Hwasong-12 was quickly followed by the test-firing of the Hwasong-15, an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) which is powerful enough to hit the US main-

land, said Hong Min of the Korea Institute for National Unification. With the Sunday launch of the Hwasong-12, North Korea is ‘signaling the possibility of an ICBM launch and an imminent destruction of the moratorium’, he said in a note.

With peace talks with Washington stalled, North Korea has doubled down on Kim’s vow to modernise the regime’s armed forces, flexing Pyongyang’s military muscles despite biting international sanctions.

Domestically, North Korea is preparing to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the birth of late leader Kim Jong Il in February, as well as the 110th birthday of founder Kim Il Sung in April.

With reports of soaring food prices and worsening hunger, an economically-reeling Pyongyang may be looking for a quick win, said Lim Eul-chul, a professor of North Korean studies at Kyungnam University in Seoul.

“He’s addicted to advanced weapons,” he said, referring to Kim Jong Un. “He sees success in the military sector as the best weapon to restore his pride and elevate his status as a leader and of the nation to the highest level.”

North Korea was trying to build up its advanced missiles and weaponry to the extent that the US would be forced to “surrender” to Pyongyang’s demands, Lim said.

“This is completely different from the past pattern of trying to create a favourable dialogue by attracting Washington’s attention,” he added.

But Joseph Dempsey of the International Institute for Strategic Studies said there was “nothing in the (KCNA) statement or the limited imagery to indicate any significant technical changes or improvements,” to North Korea’s weaponry.

“That does not mean that some changes have not been made, either refinement based upon the previous 2017 or subsequent advances,” he added.

The string of launches in 2022 comes at a delicate time in the region, with Kim’s sole major ally China set to host the Winter Olympics next month and South Korea gearing up for a presidential election in March.

AFP



Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani and Joe Biden (AFP)

Qatar emir meets Biden in shadow of Ukraine tensions

Washington, US - US President Joe Biden will build on attempts to ensure energy back-up for European allies when he hosts Qatar’s emir on Monday in a White House meeting overshadowed by fears that Russia could cut exports over the Ukraine crisis.

Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani will be the first Gulf state leader to visit Biden since he became president just over a year ago and the Oval Office talks will cement the tiny country’s status as a major international player.

In addition to meeting Biden, the sheikh will meet with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, members of Congress and other officials, the White House said.

The most urgent agenda item is a scramble by the United States and the EU to ensure that European nations, already hit by soaring energy prices, can weather disruption in Russian exports if Moscow decides to cut supplies.

Western capitals are threatening unprecedented economic sanctions if Russia attacks Ukraine, where it has placed more than 100,000 combat troops on the border.

However there are fears that

the oil- and gas-producing giant could retaliate against the European Union, which imports 40 per cent of its natural gas from Russia.

Announcing the visit, Press Secretary Jen Psaki said the emir and Biden would be discussing ‘the stability of global energy supplies’.

Qatar is one of the world’s biggest liquid natural gas exporters, along with the United States and Australia, and there are hopes in Washington and Europe that Doha can temporarily redirect exports destined for Asian markets.

However, Qatar has little to no extra capacity in its LNG and there are limitations to how much supply can be diverted from existing contracts.

Speaking just ahead of the visit, a senior US official seemed to downplay the focus on how much to expect from Qatar in the energy reshuffle, saying only “we’re consulting with all the leading gas suppliers around the world.”

“I’m not going to be able to give you anything further on LNG,” the official told reporters on Sunday, speaking on condition of anonymity. “It will figure in the mix, but I can’t give you any details.”

AFP

Portugal’s Socialists re-elected with majority

Lisbon, Portugal - Portugal’s ruling Socialists unexpectedly won an outright majority to govern solo after snap elections on Sunday that also saw the far right make huge gains.

The results pave the way for a stronger government under Prime Minister Antonio Costa as the country tries to boost its tourism-dependent economy, which has been badly hit by the pandemic.

A stable government is crucial for Portugal to make the most of a €16.6bn package of European Union recovery funds it is due to receive by 2026.

Costa, 60, had previously relied on two far-left parties to un-



Antonio Costa (AFP)

derpin his minority Socialist governments since 2015.

The Socialists received 41.7 per cent of the vote giving it 117 seats in the 230-seat parliament,

up from 108 in the outgoing assembly. Despite predictions of a tight race, the main opposition centre-right PSD party landed 27.8 per cent for 71 seats.

Four seats still need to be attributed in the coming days with the results of votes cast abroad, but in 2019 the Socialists obtained two.

“An absolute majority doesn’t mean absolute power. It doesn’t mean to govern alone. It’s an increased responsibility,” Costa said in his victory speech.

“The conditions have been created to carry out investments and reforms for Portugal to be more prosperous, fairer, more innovative.”

The results bucked the trend of declining fortunes for Socialist parties in other European nations, including in Greece and France where they have been virtually wiped off the map in recent years.

The vote also handed gains to far-right party Chega, which became the third-biggest contingent with 12 seats, up from just one, mirroring the rise of such formations elsewhere in Europe.

“Everything is going to be different in parliament,” Chega leader Andre Ventura, a tough-talking former TV sports commentator, told his supporters.

“From now on there won’t be

a soft opposition. We will assume the role of being the real opposition to the Socialists... and restore dignity to this country.”

Sunday’s snap polls were called after two far-left parties that had propped up Costa’s minority government sided with right-wing parties to reject his 2022 draft budget in October.

The two far-left parties - the Left Bloc and the Communist Party - both lost seats.

The Socialists had a comfortable lead when the election was called, but polls had suggested PSD managed to close the gap in recent days.

AFP

Blinken to speak with Russian counterpart Lavrov today

Moscow, Russia - Russia said on Monday that Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov would hold a telephone conversation with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken at a time of heightened tensions between their countries over Ukraine.

“Lavrov and Blinken will have a telephone conversation on Tuesday,” Russian foreign

ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told reporters, adding there were no plans for a face-to-face meeting.

The upcoming call is the latest in a flurry of diplomatic meetings between senior diplomats from Moscow, Brussels and Washington over the conflict in Ukraine

AFP

Ukrainians hone survival skills as Russia tensions mount

Kyiv, Ukraine - In a forest on the outskirts of Kyiv, a group of Ukrainian civilians build shelters from snow and tree branches as part of a crash course in survival techniques.

For the participants, the two days of learning how to make fires and get by in sub-zero temperatures has taken on a new urgency as fears swirl over a buildup of Russian troops on the border.

“If we will have an attack from Russia, it is very important to have these skills,” says computer programmer Artem Kuzmenko, 29.

Ukraine is used to war. Since 2014 it has been locked in a conflict with Moscow-backed separatists in the east of the country that has cost over 13,000 lives.

But of late an increasing number of people in cities like Kyiv have begun looking to prepare for the worst as the West sounds the alarm over a possible full-scale invasion by Russian forces.

“People in the big cities got used to the fact that the conflict was far away from them,” says instructor Sergiy Vyshnevsky, 40, kitted out in military camouflage.

“Now they realise that the war might come to them.”

Vyshnevsky fought on the front line as a volunteer before starting the survival courses for civilians. He details the chaos that could follow any attack - huge crowds fleeing for the borders, casualties and destroyed infrastructure.

In recent weeks he has seen a surge in interest as the talk of a potential incursion has grown louder. Around 4,000 people have signed up for an online webinar he is giving soon.

“Everyone should know how to build shelter for their family,” he says.

Student psychologist Yana Kaminska, 33, attends the course with her boyfriend as she tries to prepare both physically and mentally for what might be



An Ukrainian civilian learns how to build a shelter out of the deep snow as part of a crash course in survival techniques, in a forest on the outskirts of Kyiv, on Sunday (AFP)

ahead.

She has already packed an emergency bag in case she has to leave in a rush - and she knows what her priority would be.

“First of all it is to look after our families,” she says

“We would make sure they

had a safe place for them - and then we could go back to try to defend our home.”

Self-defence

More and more training sessions have started springing up around Kyiv as people try to bolster their knowledge.

Around 150 women watched on in a university lecture hall over the weekend as an instructor showed how to incapacitate an unarmed attacker by targeting the pressure points on their head and neck.

Olena Biletska, whose Ukrainian Women’s Guard organisation

put on the free self-defence and survival lessons, said that almost 1,000 women had applied, but COVID-19 restrictions meant numbers had to be limited.

“Everyone understands that their life and health and the health and lives their family are their own personal responsibility,” said the lawyer.

“You need to have at least some knowledge and basic skills.” Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky has desperately sought to calm nerves in the face of a growing clamour of worry from the US.

And in Kyiv life is carrying on as normal with shops open and restaurants full.

But human resources manager Oleksandra Kovalenko, 25, said she still wanted to be primed for any possibility.

“You think about and plan for the worst case scenario that could happen - a military operation - and an attack is a real possibility,” she said. Elsewhere in the city, around 300 people

turned up in the grounds of a former factory for basic military training organised by a nationalist party created from former volunteers who fought in the east.

The course was entitled ‘Do not panic, prepare yourself’.

“Panic comes when people do not know how to react, how to use a weapon, how to defend themselves, what to do in case of shooting,” trainer Maksym Zhorin, a former commander of the controversial Azov battalion, told participants.

They practised how to hold, aim and move with a gun - many of them using wooden models of Kalashnikov rifles.

The students - who included families with children - crept through a disused building supposedly occupied by ‘enemies’, learning how to enter a room and kneel down to shoot.

“Your left leg is still in the wrong place!” a trainer shouted at a young man as he tried to pivot.

AFP

Pandemic-hit London 'Tube' seeks sustainable funding

UK government has urged the mayor to find a funding model for state-owned Transport for London

London, UK - The pandemic, which left London's transport system deserted for months on end, has decimated revenues and sparked an ongoing feud between the city's mayor and the UK government over funding current shortfalls.

Transport for London (TfL), which runs the British capital's underground 'Tube' network and buses, has received billions of pounds from central government in the last two years to stay afloat.

That followed passenger numbers across the network slumping as people were repeatedly told to stay home to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Now, as numbers pick up again with the easing of all restrictions, the Conservative government has urged London's Labour mayor to find a sustainable funding model for state-owned TfL.

The issue has come into sharper focus as central government subsidies maintaining the current level of service are set to expire without renewal on February 4.

Mayor Sadiq Khan has raised

the spectre of service cuts or even the closure of a tube line without new funding support, arguing TfL is 'fundamental to the success of the capital'.

"It is so important that the government urgently comes forward with the long-term funding TfL desperately needs so we can keep services running and deliver much-needed improvements to our transport infrastructure," he warned earlier this month.

The Labour party mayor, re-elected last year for a second term, is reluctantly proposing to raise the compulsory housing tax in the next budget, which he has said would 'unfairly punish Londoners for the way the pandemic has hit our transport network'.

He wants the government to inject around £1.7bn to fund TfL until April 2023.

'Devastated'

However, the Department for Transport has said Khan is responsible for getting the system 'back onto a sustainable financial footing in a way that is fair to taxpayers, rather than continuing to push for bailouts'.

"We will continue to discuss



A commuter makes her way out of a Victoria Line underground tube train station in London on Monday (AFP)

further funding requirements with TfL and the Mayor," a spokesperson told AFP.

The standoff reflects the inevitable rivalry between Khan, touted as a potential future Labour leader, and the government of Prime Minister Boris Johnson, himself a former Lon-

don mayor.

Both have accused each other of mismanaging the capital's extensive transport system.

TfL notes the pandemic has 'devastated' its accounts, with fares revenue falling by 95 per cent at the height of the first coronavirus wave in 2020.

It has been forced to dip into its cash reserves to keep services running while going cap in hand to the government for support.

Johnson's administration has already pledged £4bn in subsidies to keep the system running, as well as £600mn in loans.

The financial crisis has also affected the capital's new east-west Crossrail route, formally known as the Elizabeth Line, with the stretched budget adding to delays and costs.

Other global cities have faced similar struggles, including Ile-de-France Mobilites (IDFM) in the Paris area, which needed government support in its 2020 and 2021 budgets.

Meanwhile in the United States, 'strong' financial support packages passed by Congress and the White House helped replace ticket revenues lost from lockdowns, according to Paul Skoutelas, head of the American public transportation association, an industry organisation.

'Delicate game'

But TfL, which gets nearly two-thirds of its operating income from fares - a much higher proportion compared to New York or Paris, where it is more like 40 per cent - has been left especially exposed.

"Pre-COVID, TfL was largely self-sustained," explained Taku Fujiyama, who leads University College London's railway re-

search group, noting it received no major central government grants. "Some cost-cutting measures are on the table now," he said, adding dramatic line closures were unlikely but minor service changes 'might happen'.

"TfL needs to play a delicate game," Fujiyama told AFP. "The central government would not give blank cheques, and the TfL would need to demonstrate their effort, whilst the mayor knows that dramatic service reduction would be politically costly."

With the threat from the Omicron variant now receding, passengers are returning to the system, aiding revenues but still leaving a large gap to plug.

Weekday passenger numbers were at 50 per cent of pre-pandemic levels on the Tube and 70 per cent on buses in mid-January, with TfL expecting them both to reach 80 per cent this year. The company has said it is exploring a number of ways to boost income, including through efficiency gains, commercial property projects and consultancy services.

AFP

Iran says differences persist on key issues at nuclear talks

Tehran, Iran - Iran said on Monday that differences with the United States remain over the issues of lifting sanctions and obtaining guarantees in Vienna talks aimed at reviving the 2015 nuclear deal.

"Important and significant issues remain regarding the removal of sanctions that have not made an agreement possible so far," foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said at a news conference.

He reiterated calls for guarantees that the US will not withdraw from the 2015 deal, which was derailed in 2018 when the administration of then-president Donald Trump unilaterally pulled out of the pact.

Khatibzadeh's remarks came as the eighth round of negotiations to restore the agreement - known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - has been on pause since Friday, with the negotiators returning to their capitals for consultations.

The European Union's coordi-



Saeed Khatibzadeh

nator for the talks, Enrique Mora, said at the time that 'political decisions' are required to break the deadlock, and that talks are expected to resume this week.

The drive to salvage the nuclear deal resumed in late November, after talks were suspended in June as Iran elected ultraconservative President Ebrahim Raisi.

The deal - agreed by Iran, the US, China, Russia, Britain, France and Germany - offered Tehran sanctions relief in exchange for

curbs on its nuclear programme.

But the US reimposed severe economic sanctions after the 2018 withdrawal, prompting Tehran to begin rolling back on its commitments under the deal.

Khatibzadeh nonetheless noted 'very significant progress' over the previous three weeks in negotiations over the lifting of sanctions and nuclear commitments, as well as obtaining guarantees. "We suggest that after returning from their capitals, (other parties) come with necessary decisions so that we can conclude quickly what has been prepared in drafts," he said.

"The other parties know the differences clearly. They need to make political decisions, especially in Washington," he added. "We await political decisions by Washington upon the return of the US delegation."

The US has participated only indirectly in the talks, which seek to bring Washington back to the accord.

AFP

Long-awaited 'partygate' report handed to UK PM

London, UK - British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has received a version of an eagerly-awaited report into claims of lockdown-breaking parties at his Downing Street office, the government said on Monday.

Senior civil servant Sue Gray has been investigating a series of revelations about boozy get-togethers held while the government told the public to remain socially distanced.

The public and political anger at the apparent double-standards has put Johnson's position in jeopardy, prompting speculation he could be ousted or have to resign.

But doubts about Johnson's immediate future have subsided after London's Metropolitan Police announced last week detectives had begun their own probe into the events.

The Met ordered Gray not to publish the report in full, so as not to prejudice their investigations, giving Johnson breathing space while detectives conduct enquiries.

The Cabinet Office issued a carefully-worded statement indi-



Britain's PM Boris Johnson attending Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) in the House of Commons in London last week (AFP)

cating Gray had submitted a redacted version of her report to Downing Street.

"We can confirm that Sue Gray has provided an update on her investigations to the prime minister," it read.

Johnson will make a statement to MPs in the House of Commons at 1530 GMT, according to parliament's updated daily schedule.

The prime minister's official spokesman confirmed Downing Street received the report on

Monday morning, adding: "We will publish it as received."

Johnson's opponents have accused him of misleading parliament by insisting the events at Downing Street were within the rules at the time and were work-related.

Ministers found to have done so are normally under pressure to resign but on a visit on Monday, Johnson told reporters: "I stick absolutely to what I've said in the past."

Weeks of revelations in the

British media since December have seen leaked photographs and emails indicating repeated breaches of social distancing rules the government set.

They include a drinks party in May 2020 in the Downing Street garden, as well as Christmas celebrations, and also a boozy get-together before Prince Philip's funeral in April.

Details of that event, at which staff reportedly brought a suitcase-full of alcohol and danced until the small hours, caused outrage given the socially distanced memorial.

An enduring image of the funeral was Queen Elizabeth II, sat alone in the chapel at Windsor Castle, mourning her husband of 73 years.

Downing Street later apologised to the monarch.

The revelations have posed the greatest threat to Johnson's position since he became prime minister in 2019 on a wave of support for his populist Brexit agenda.

But the report's delay has given him room for manoeuvre.

AFP

French left 'people's primary' fails to end feuding

Paris, France - France's leftist presidential hopefuls traded barbs on Monday after a prominent former minister won a grass roots 'people's primary' that failed to end the squabbling between left-wing forces ahead of the April vote.

The primary on Sunday picked former justice minister Christiane Taubira as the favourite to lead the left's efforts to unseat President Emmanuel Macron in the election.

A total of 392,000 people took part in the four-day online poll organised by political activists including environmentalists, feminists and anti-racism groups.

Taubira, a long-time champion of the activist left, entered the contest as the favourite and emerged with the highest score on a scale from 'very good' to 'inadequate'.

The French Guiana-born left-winger, 69, was a progressive voice in former Socialist president Francois Hollande's government. She resigned after disagreeing with Hollande over anti-terror legislation.



Christiane Taubira speaks in Paris on Sunday (AFP)

Next in the primary rankings came the Green party's Yannick Jadot, hard-left firebrand Jean-Luc Melenchon, and Euro MP Pierre Larrourou, followed by

Anne Hidalgo who is the mayor of Paris and the Socialist Party candidate.

"We want a united left, we want a strong left and we have a

great road in front of us," Taubira told activists after the result on Sunday.

But the primary was in trouble from the start after Melenchon, Hidalgo and Jadot refused to have anything to do with it, or abide by its result.

Communist candidate Fabien Roussel said on Monday that he had no intention of backing Taubira who 'has no election programme'.

'Extremely disrespectful'

Asked about her ambition to be a unity candidate, Roussel told the BFMTV broadcaster: "She said she didn't want to add just another candidacy, and now she's adding just another candidacy."

Others charged that the primary had always been designed to endorse Taubira, rather than provide a real vehicle for unity.

"This could have been a rallying moment for the entire left, but it turned out to be just another candidacy," said Hidalgo.

Melenchon said of Taubira that 'she is stepping into the

shoes that were made for her' by the primary, adding that 'none of this is my concern'.

Jadot simply stated that he had 'nothing' to say to the primary winner.

Taubira herself lashed out at the remarks by her rivals, saying they were 'extremely disrespectful towards the people who organised this primary and those who chose to take part'.

But, she charged, 'the fact is that nearly half a million people decided to play a role in the campaign', also deploring on france-info radio the other candidates' 'haughty way to distance themselves from a democratic process'.

Polls currently predict that all left-wing candidates will be eliminated in the first round of presidential voting in April.

Macron, who has yet to declare his candidacy for re-election, is favourite to win the first round, with the far-right's Marine Le Pen or right-wing contender Valerie Pécresse expected to make the run-off vote two weeks later.

AFP

HK Cabinet minister steps down over a birthday party

Hong Kong, China - A Hong Kong Cabinet minister resigned on Monday for attending a birthday party alongside dozens of officials and lawmakers just days after the city's government called on people to avoid large gatherings to fight a coronavirus outbreak. "I have today tendered my resignation to the Chief Executive and intend to leave the post today," Home Affairs Minister Caspar Tsui said in a statement.

"As one of the Principal Officials taking the lead in the anti-epidemic fight, I have not set the best example during the recent outbreak," he added.

Tsui's resignation is a blow to the administration of Chief Executive Carrie Lam whose time in office has been marked by huge pro-democracy protests and a subsequent crackdown on dissent that has transformed Hong Kong.

The January 3 birthday

bash at a tapas restaurant for Witman Hung, a member of China's top lawmaking body, became a source of embarrassment for Lam as her government pursues a strict 'zero-COVID' policy similar to Beijing's.

The guest list emerged after health authorities traced an infected person to the party.

Among the more than 200 people present were over a dozen top officials - including the city's police, immigration and anti-corruption chiefs - as well as 20 lawmakers.

While the party was not illegal at the time under Hong Kong's strict social distancing rules, the city's health chief had warned people three days earlier to avoid large groups.

Tsui's conduct 'brought the Hong Kong government to disrepute, and it has caused a negative perception' to the public, Lam said on Monday.

AFP

IN DANGER

OCEAN TREASURE

Australia unveiled a billion-dollar package to protect the climate-ravaged Great Barrier Reef on Friday, hoping to prevent the vast network of corals from being removed from UNESCO's World Heritage list.

Conservative prime minister Scott Morrison announced the Aus\$1bn (US\$700mn) nine-year plan, months after narrowly avoiding the reef being placed on UNESCO's 'in danger' list.

"We are backing the health of the reef and the economic future of tourism operators, hospitality providers and Queensland communities that are at the heart of the reef economy," Morrison said.

The move, welcomed by Paris-based UNESCO, comes ahead of a general election expected in May, when Morrison will have to win key Queensland seats near the reef to remain in power.

When the UN previously threatened to

downgrade the reef's World Heritage listing in 2015, Australia created a 'Reef 2050' plan and poured billions of dollars into protection.

The measures are believed to have arrested the pace of decline, but much of the world's largest reef system has already been damaged. A recent study found bleaching had affected 98 percent of the reef since 1998, leaving just a fraction untouched.

The Morrison government's support for coal and reluctance to tackle climate change has seen the party bleed support in major cities and prompted the emergence of a string of electoral challenges from climate-focused independents.

Australians are overwhelmingly in favour of action to limit climate change, having experienced a string of global warming-worsened disasters such as bushfires, droughts and floods.

A 2021 poll by Sydney's Lowy Institute found 60 per cent of Australians believed global warming is a serious and pressing problem. Eight in 10 Australians supported a

Australia pumps cash into Great Barrier Reef protection to avoid it being listed among endangered heritage sites

net-zero emissions target by 2050, which the government reluctantly adopted ahead of a landmark United Nations climate summit in Scotland last year.

One of the world's biggest exporters of coal and gas, Australia's economy is heavily reliant on fossil fuels. Its political parties also receive significant funds from coal and gas-linked donors.

Band-Aid on a broken leg

The Climate Council pressure group said this latest package of funding was like putting 'a Band-Aid on a broken leg'.

"Unless you are cutting emissions deeply this decade the situation on the reef will only get worse," said the Council's Lesley Hughes, a professor of biology at Macquarie University.

"Handing out cash for the Great Barrier Reef with one hand, while funding the very industry - fossil fuels - that's driving devastating climate impacts like marine heat waves and coral bleaching, means they are adding to the very problem they are claiming they want to fix."

Bleaching occurs when healthy corals become stressed by spikes in ocean temperatures, causing them to expel algae living in their tissues, draining them of their vibrant colours.

The Great Barrier Reef has suffered three mass bleaching events during heat waves in 2016, 2017, and 2020, leaving many affected

corals struggling to survive.

Much of the government's latest package will be spent on preventing damaging agricultural runoff from polluting the reef. About a quarter of the funds will be channelled to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to reduce threats from Crown of Thorns Starfish, which eat coral.

In Paris, UNESCO welcomed Australia stepping up financial investment aimed at improving the safeguarding of the Great Barrier Reef. But, it said, it was still planning to send an expert mission to the site for an updated and independent evaluation to be submitted by June.

"It is crucial to point out that this assessment will be based on scientific facts and that it should not be subject to political instrumentalisation," the cultural body said.

The assessment would inform a future decision on whether to add the Great Barrier Reef to list of endangered heritage sites, it added.

AFP

CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED

ACCA affiliate with two years of experience in Accounts/Finance seeking a suitable position. Currently in Oman on a visit and has NOC and driving licence.

Contact: 96595067
email: farleymartyres19@gmail.com

Staff nurse with three years of experience; PICU&NICU
Contact: 95959348

Looking for a job of a general fitter, maintenance and machine operator with 22 years of experience. Contact: 79501725
WhatsApp: +919747720359
email: dcinhaadrin@gmail.com

Indian male: Btech Civil Eng

looking for suitable job:
Contact:77273318

MATRIMONIAL ALLIANCES

Parents of a South Indian Sunni Muslim family, seeking suitable alliance for their son, an ACCA professional, 27years, 171cm . Early marriage. Send profile.WhatsApp 78595254

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684

Sohar 9731 6218 | Salalah 9429 9325

www.orbit-oman.com

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



أوربت
ORBIT

Car Rental & Lease

VAT

VAT Registrations, Quarterly Returns, Taxation Consultancy & Audit

Gulf Center Consultancy&Audit Chartered Accountants

Contact: 92469602/93949235

Offices at Muscat, Salalah, Sohar & Sur

BIRTHDAY WISHES

SUMI NAZEER
01 February

"No language can express the power and beauty and heroism of mother's love"
Happy Birthday Umma
With love Wafa, Achu and Vappy.

FREE CLASSIFIED LISTING

Muscat Daily now offers free classified listings for individuals in the following categories: Situations Wanted/ Accommodation Wanted or Available/Sale of Household Items/ Car for Sale or Wanted/ Matrimonial Alliances (Word limit is 35)
Please email your listing to dailyclassifieds@apexmedia.co.om or call 99104346

LOOKING GOOD

Tips for 2022

Make an attempt to step aside from the routine rut of your beauty regimen this year
Try something new, do things differently, and discover a new you

If you are comfortable caring for your hair and skin the same old way, year after year, you need not necessarily be doing it right. It just might be time for a new approach in 2022.

Beauty experts say one must go with the time and try out new routines, new remedies, that suit you best. Facepacks, mud masks were a rarity a few decades ago, today they are an inevitable part of beauty regimes. Moisturising products and techniques were quite different in the 80s and 90s, but there are a plethora of options these days to suit different skin types and age groups.

Consider a few tips that will make you feel refreshed and radiant in 2022, recommended by Stephi LaReine (www.stephiolareine.com), a young

fashion and lifestyle blogger from North England, who gives a thumbs up for those who'd dare to be different.

Keep stress under check

Managing stress may not seem like a top beauty tip, but it is one of the best things you can do to improve your appearance and a lot of other parts of your life. Stress can lead to serious consequences that affect beauty, like binge eating junk food. This can result in skin irritation or excess oil production which can easily leave you feeling more self-conscious and stressed. Poor sleep can leave behind telltale signs ranging from excess dryness to dark circles under your eyes, while irritability is also a key product of excess stress. The solution lies in taking up remedies, like mindful meditation, to tackle unavoidable stress.

Have realistic beauty standards

Take a moment to think about your idea of beauty. The chances that it is unrealistic are pretty good. After all, filters and selective photo sharing on the internet and social media show us only what others want to see. You may be wondering what you can do about that. A good place to start is to look at the people in your life that you think of as beautiful. Really think about what makes you feel that way. Those are the qualities you want to strive for in your 2022 beauty routine.

Keep your skin hydrated

Dry skin can become a real problem, especially as you age. That's why any skin-care routine should include plenty of hydration. There is a wide selection of

products available to help boost moisture, so you should be able to find one no matter what skin type you have. In general, lotions tend to be lighter and are great for normal or oily skin, while creams are a bit heavier and are good for those with serious dryness concerns.

Know your face shape

With very few exceptions, each face is as unique as the individual behind it. However, there are seven main categories of face shapes - round, long, oval square, triangle, heart, diamond. Knowing which one you have will make choosing beauty products and hairstyles much easier. Keep in mind that faces change over the course of your life. Thinning skin, loss of elasticity, and changes in weight can all impact this. So, even if you have always been told you have a 'round face', it's a

good idea to definitively determine what shape you are working with.

Use products that work better

There is no reason to settle for beauty products that only do one thing. Instead, look for things like tinted moisturisers that can serve to even out your complexion and boost hydration. Products that can be applied to cheeks, eyelids and lips can also help stretch your creativity and save a few bucks. And always remember to use proper hygiene practices when applying makeup.

In summary, it's good to reset your beauty routine, start with realistic expectations, leave your stress at the door, and use proper hydration and functional products that make the most of your face shape for a beautiful 2022.

Beauty post-COVID

The overall approach of consumers and manufacturers of beauty products has now changed in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. With public health protocols and customer apprehension creating new limitations and barriers to in-store interactive purchasing experiences, consumers and retailers are looking for alternative modes of engagement that deliver the same level of experience, reports say.

Since shoppers are reluctant to come to stores, brands are going to them. There has been a growth of mobile services who are offering on-demand, in-home beauty and wellness services, such as massage, makeup, hair and physiotherapy in the safety of customers' homes.

As more retail environments deploy safety measures to help stop the spread of COVID-19, traditional service relationships also continue to evolve. However, while some have chosen to go completely virtual, others are finding more success by shifting to hybrid retail experiences that are immersive, interactive, and digitally-enabled. These include live streaming tutorials, digital testing and try-ons, single use samples, and immersive shopping.

As people spend more time virtually connected with others, consumers are becoming more conscious of their digital appearance. While some go for the touch up options on screen, others are seeking out quick physical solutions which are true indicators of the future of retail beauty in the current era.

Since shoppers are reluctant to come to stores, brands are going to them



Jason Holder (L) of West Indies celebrates the dismissal of Tom Banton (R) of England during the 4th T20I between West Indies and England at Kensington Oval, Bridgetown, Barbados (AFP)

Holder finishes off England as West Indies win T20 series

Bridgetown, Barbados - Local hero Jason Holder took four wickets in successive balls during a dramatic last over as the West Indies beat England by 17 runs in the fifth and deciding Twenty20 international at the Kensington Oval on Sunday for a 3-2 series win.

Akeal Hosein had already slowed England's progress with a format-best four for 30.

James Vince, who holed out for an innings top-score of 55, was among those who fell to the left-arm spinner.

England, however, were still in the game, needing 20 runs to reach a target of 180 when all-rounder Holder began to bowl the final over of the match at his Barbados home ground.

Despite starting the over with a no-ball, the towering paceman removed Chris Jordan and Sam Billings with his second and third

legitimate deliveries via the aid of catches at deep midwicket by substitute fielder Hayden Walsh Jr.

Holder then had Adil Rashid taken at deep square leg before ending the match when he bowled Saqib Mahmood, with both batsmen out for golden ducks.

Sri Lanka's Lasith Malinga, Afghanistan's Rashid Khan and Ireland's Curtis Campher are the only other men to take four wickets in four balls during a T20 international.

Holder finished with a career-best return of five for 27 in 2.5 overs, having already removed England stand-in captain Moeen Ali.

"I pride myself on (not bowling) no-balls, pleased with how I came back, bowled a dot ball next up and then they had to come hard so I got the four wick-

BRIEF SCORES

West Indies 179-4, 20 overs (Kieron Pollard 41 no, Rovman Powell 35 no; Adil Rashid 2-17, Liam Livingstone 2-17)
England 162, 19.5 overs (James Vince 55, Sam Billings 41; Jason Holder 5-27, Akeal Hosein 4-30)

RESULT:

West Indies won by 17 runs

SERIES:

West Indies win five-match series 3-2

ets," said Holder.

The former West Indies captain was named both player of the match and series after taking 15 wickets across the five games -- all at the Kensington Oval.

"I'm pumped up for the moment, I love playing at Kensington Oval," he added. "It's the best place in the world to play cricket."

Holder's town

Billings kept England in the game

before falling for 41 off 28 balls as the tourists were dismissed for 162 in 19.5 overs.

West Indies captain Kieron Pollard led a late run-spree with a rapid 41 not out in a total of 179 for four.

His bowlers then finished the job as West Indies, beaten by 34 runs in the fourth T20 on Saturday, enjoyed a much-needed success after a one-day international series loss at home to Ireland earlier this month.

"This was a different game from last night and we capitalised with the bat in the last four overs," said Pollard, who shared an unbroken stand of 74 in five overs with midweek century-maker Rovman Powell (35 not out).

"This is Jason Holder's ground, his town, but it was total team effort from us."

Moeen was again leading an England side missing injured captain Eoin Morgan, with the tourists deprived all series of T20 regulars Jos Buttler and Ben Stokes following their Ashes exertions.

But Moeen was in no mood for excuses

"I thought West Indies were the better team," he said, adding: "They were smarter than us today with bat and ball."

AFP

LOCAL CRICKET

Prathiesh bowls MCCC Yellow to victory, Lakshmi, Vishwash tons help ISAS to big win

Muscat: Prathiesh Hema picked up 4 for 26 to power MCCC Yellow to a 65-run win over Oman Cricket Academy (OCA) in a Junior League 30-over Under-16 clash at OAC 3 ground in Seeb on Saturday.

MCCC posted 177 for 9 on the board with major contributions coming from Sumanasekera (29), Mustaqeem Asif (26) and Prathiesh (24). Rahildaniyal Habibulla and Kriv Rajesh took two wickets each.

OCA failed to mount a challenge, folding up for a disappointing 112 in 22.3 overs due to brilliant bowling by Prathiesh (4 for 26) and Harshil Dinesh (2 for 16). Matoo Aleem topscored for OCA with 35 whereas Aaryan Punja scored 20.

BRIEF SCORES

(Junior Division U16): MCCC Yellow 177 for 9 in 30 overs (Sumanasekera Thineth 29 - 1x4, Mustaqeem Asif 26 - 2x4, Prathiesh Hema 24 - 2x4. Rahildaniyal Habibulla 2-33, Kriv Rajesh 2-29) beat OCA 112 all out in 22.3 overs (Matto Aleem 35 - 3x4, Prathiesh Hema 4-26, Harshil Dinesh 2-16) by 65 runs.

ISAS too good for PSM

In another Under-16 encounter, magnificent centuries by Lakshmi Narayana (168 off 100) and Vishwash (106 not out off 65) steered Indian School Al Seeb (ISAS) to a massive 128-run victory against Pakistan School Muscat at Muscat Municipality ground 3 in Amerat on Satur-

day.

ISAS amassed 321 for 5 in 30 overs thanks to top knocks by the two centurions and then went on to restrict PSM to 193 for 5 for an emphatic victory.

BRIEF SCORES

(Junior Division U16): ISAS 321 for 5 in 30 overs (Lakshmi Narayana 168 - 20x4, 1x6, Vishwash 106 not out - 14x4) beat PSM 193 for 5 in 30 overs (Ahsan Hayat 76 - 12x4, Muhammad Asad 58 - 10x4) by 128 runs.

BRIEF SCORES

(Junior Division U16): BSC 107 all out in 27.1 overs (Suresh Kiran 40 - 3x4, Noronha Nihal 3-11, Shetty Ayush 3-12, Midhun Gautham 2-12) lost to ISWK B 108 for 3 in 8.2 overs (Nadendla Nitish 47 - 5x4, 1x6, Damni Jinansh 37 - 6x4, Rahman Abdul 2-10) by 7 wickets.

BRIEF SCORES

(Junior Division U16): ISWK A 238 for 5 in 30 overs (Krishhang Srivastava 64 - 7x4, Aum Nrupen 57 - 9x4, Saumyabhavin Sampat 38 - 4x4, Khasbage Toyash 2-35) beat MCCC Blue 159 all out in 26.4 overs (Khasbage Toyash 75 - 7x4, Saumyabhavin Sampat 3-31) by 79 runs.

BRIEF SCORES

(Junior Division U13): IS Al Seeb 153 for 5 in 20 overs (Sujay 60 - 4x4, Shezin 30 - 3x4) lost to BSC A 154 for 4 in 15.1 overs (Dhuri Nimish 55 - 8x4, Vignesh Karthikeyan 40 - 6x4) by 6 wickets

Poland appoint ex-Legia manager before WC play-off

Warsaw, Poland - Poland will be coached by former Legia Warsaw manager Czeslaw Michniewicz, the head of the country's football federation (PZPN) said on Monday, following the hasty departure of Paulo Sousa.

"I have made the decision to appoint Czeslaw Michniewicz as Poland's national team manager," PZPN chief Cezary Kulesza said on Twitter.

Kulesza said the contract was until the end of 2022 with an op-

tion to extend. Sousa, a former Portuguese international and Bordeaux coach, quit last month after less than a year in the job to become the coach of Brazilian giants Flamengo.

Sousa guided Poland to six wins, five draws and four defeats in 15 matches as they finished second behind England in their 2022 World Cup qualifying group. They face Russia in a play-off on March 24.

AFP

Suns, Hawks rally to keep NBA winning streaks alive

NBA

Los Angeles, United States - The Phoenix Suns erased a 12-point third-quarter deficit to beat San Antonio 115-110 and push their NBA winning streak to 10 games on a Sunday that saw Atlanta rally for a seventh straight win.

The lead changed hands nine times in the fourth quarter and the Suns trailed by two with 2:19 remaining when Devin Booker drained back-to-back three-pointers to put Phoenix ahead for good.

The Suns became the first team in the league to reach 40 wins, pushing their NBA-best record to 40-9.

Booker led the way with 28 points. Mikal Bridges added 26 and veteran point guard Chris Paul had 20 points and 19 assists.

Doug McDermott led the Spurs with 24 points and Lonnie Walker IV added 22 off the bench.

In Atlanta, Trae Young scored 36 points and handed out 12 assists as the high-flying Hawks won their seventh straight with a 129-121 come-from-behind win over the Los Angeles Lakers.

Young scored 13 points in the fourth quarter and reserve Onyeka Okongwu, the US son of Nigerian immigrants, added 12 of his 16 points in the fourth to spark a rally from a 101-91 deficit after three quarters.

The Lakers were without four-time NBA champion LeBron James, who missed a third consecutive game with a sore left knee.

Malik Monk, who led the Lakers with 33 points and 10 rebounds, noted that the superstar playmaker is "missed tremendously" but, he added: "It's our job to figure out how to play without him."

Anthony Davis had 27 points and Russell Westbrook chipped in 20 and 12 assists for Los An-



Devin Booker of the Phoenix Suns handles the ball during the game against the San Antonio Spurs on January 30 (AFP)

geles.

The Hawks opened the fourth with a 16-5 run to seize the lead.

The Lakers pulled level on a Monk three-pointer with 1:52 left, but Young answered with a 30-foot three-pointer and two free throws as the Hawks pulled

We have what it takes to win games. No matter if we're up or down, no matter how the game's going

ONYEKA OKONGWU

away.

"We have what it takes to win games," Okongwu said. "No matter if we're up or down, no matter how the game's going, as long as we lock in."

Detroit, the Pistons played a dismal first half but rallied to

beat the red-hot Cleveland Cavaliers 115-105.

Detroit rookie guard Cade Cunningham's game was emblematic of the Pistons' night. Scoreless in the first half, Cunningham finished with a triple-double of 19 points 10 rebounds and 10 assists as the hosts seized the lead for the first time in the fourth quarter and held on for the win.

Saddiq Bey scored 31 points for the Pistons, who snapped a four-game skid and ended Cleveland's four game winning streak.

The Chicago Bulls also shook off a slow start on the way to a 130-116 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers.

Portland made seven of their first nine three-point attempts, but Chicago clamped down on defense and clawed back for the win.

Coming off a big defeat in San Antonio, the Bulls rebounded

with at least 20 points from all three of their All-Stars.

Nikola Vucevic scored 24 points and grabbed 14 rebounds in his 26th double-double of the season. DeMar DeRozan added 23 points and 10 assists and Zach LaVine chipped in 20 points for the Bulls, who are a half-game behind the Miami Heat atop the Eastern Conference.

Magic stun Mavs

In Orlando, the Magic's Franz Wagner drove for a go-ahead layup with less than a minute to play in a 110-108 victory over the Dallas Mavericks.

Orlando, who own the worst record in the league, withstood a triple-double by Mavs guard Luka Doncic of 34 points, 12 rebounds and 11 assists -- the 43rd of the Slovenian star's career tying him for 10th on the all-time list.

AFP

Medvedev 'not that disappointed' after losing two-set lead to Nadal

Melbourne, Australia - Daniil Medvedev insisted Sunday he was not disappointed to give up a two-set lead and lose the Australian Open, while heaping praise on "unreal" Rafael Nadal.

The world number two looked destined to clinch a second Grand Slam title after his US Open breakthrough last year when he held three break points against Nadal's serve in the third set after winning the first two at Melbourne Park.

But the never-say-die Spaniard saved them all before

Grand Slam final.

"In the fifth set I was just like 'make him run'. But he was unreal, he was really strong the way he played.

"So talking about tennis, I don't have much regret. I'm going to try and continue my best, work even harder to try to be a champion of some of these great tournaments one day."

The second seed again polarised the packed Rod Laver Arena, which was firmly behind Nadal, with some sections booing him after he complained

For sure, some small points, small details that I could have done better if I wanted to win. But that's tennis, that's life. Rafa played unreal, he raised his level

DANIIL MEDVEDEV

battling back for a famous 2-6, 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 6-4, 7-5 victory in a gruelling 5hr 24min to deny Medvedev and win a historic 21st Grand Slam title.

"If we talk about tennis, I'm not that disappointed. It was a huge match," said the 25-year-old Russian. "For sure, some small points, small details that I could have done better if I wanted to win. But that's tennis, that's life. Rafa played unreal, he raised his level."

It was the second time Nadal had denied Medvedev in a Grand Slam decider, winning a five-set epic at the 2019 US Open.

"At two sets to love up I was just like, 'go for him,'" said Medvedev, who was in his fourth

about the ball boys.

Medvedev was also unhappy about shouts from spectators as he was about to serve.

"It's disappointing and it's disrespectful," he said, while bemoaning that fans often don't get behind him when he plays one of the sports' legends like Nadal.

"I remember there was a lot of talk like we want the young generation to go for it, to be better and I was really pumped up to really try and give them (top players) a hard time.

"Well, I guess these people were lying because every time I stepped on the court for these big matches I didn't see many people who wanted me to win."

AFP



Rafael Nadal and Ashleigh Barty pose with their AO trophies

Nadal, Barty give AO desperately needed happy ending

Melbourne, Australia - An Australian Open like no other began in controversy with the deportation of Novak Djokovic but culminated in one of the greatest comebacks in tennis history by Rafael Nadal on Sunday.

Throw in Ashleigh Barty becoming the first home winner for 44 years, and local heroes Nick Kyrgios and Thanasi Kokkinakis winning the men's doubles, this was a Grand Slam that will live long in the memory for myriad reasons.

After the chaos that preceded the tournament, Tennis Australia couldn't have dreamt of a happier ending -- and it was one they desperately needed, after a competition riddled with unforced errors on the organisers' parts.

It began with the spectacle of the nine-time Australian Open champion Djokovic being detained in a notorious immigration hotel, suffering multiple court cases and eventual deportation.

When the first serve at Melbourne Park was struck on January 17, he was in a Dubai airport transit lounge waiting for his connecting flight home to Belgrade.

It wasn't just the Djokovic saga that cast a shadow over the tournament. Tennis Australia had to make a hasty and embarrassing U-turn after instructing staff to prevent spectators wearing "Where is Peng Shuai?" T-shirts to highlight concern for the Chinese player.

They also had to justify a largely voluntary COVID-19 testing protocol that came in for criticism from some players, notably world number three Alexander Zverev.

Tennis Australia will no doubt bask in the glory of their two historic champions, Nadal and Barty.

Tournament director Craig Tiley was beaming through his mask during the presentation ceremonies.

But as a central figure in the pre-tournament chaos he, or his successor, must make sure the extraordinary scenes in the run-up to the tournament are never repeated.

Crowds were back in numbers after days of pandemic-enforced empty arenas the year before, but spectators came in for flak for their raucous behaviour.

AFP

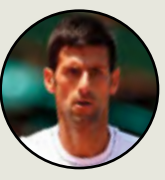
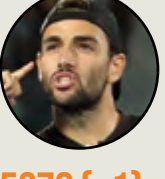
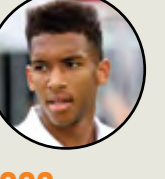
Djokovic remains number one player despite Australian Open absence

Paris, France - Rafael Nadal's record-breaking 21st Grand Slam singles title in winning an epic Australian Open final frustrated Novak Djokovic's hopes of being the first to do so, but the Serb remains world number one in the rankings released Monday.

The 34-year-old was unable to play in the first Grand Slam of the year after being deported from Australia over Covid-19 vaccination issues but he extended his record-breaking run as number one to 358 weeks.

Nadal's beaten opponent in the Melbourne final, Daniil Medvedev, stays second but the Russian moves to within 1,000 points of Djokovic.

Djokovic will keep the points he earned from winning his ninth Australian Open title last year till February 21 as last year's tournament was played at the later dates of February 8-21. Nadal remains fifth in the rankings despite his record-breaking title and the only movement in the top 10 sees Italy's Matteo Berret-

 11015 Novak Djokovic (SRB)	 10125 Daniil Medvedev (RUS)	 7780 Alexander Zverev (GER)	 7170 Stefanos Tsitsipas (GRE)	 6875 Rafael Nadal (ESP)
 5278 (+1) Matteo Berrettini (ITA)	 4830 (-1) Andrey Rublev (RUS)	 4065 Casper Ruud (NOR)	 3923 Felix Auger-Aliassime (CAN)	 3705 Jannik Sinner (ITA)

tini rise one place to sixth.

Barty extends lead in rankings

Ashleigh Barty's achievement in becoming the first Australian woman in 44 years to win the Australian Open title has seen

her consolidate her place atop the WTA rankings.

RANKINGS

8331
Ashleigh Barty (AUS)
5698
Aryna Sabalenka (BLR)

5533 (+1)
Barbora Krejickova (CZE)
4456 (+5)
Iga Swiatek (POL)
4452
Karolina Pliskova (CZE)
4429
Paula Badosa (ESP)

4195 (-4)
Garbine Muguruza (ESP)
4071
Maria Sakkari (GRE)
3871 (-2)
Anett Kontaveit (EST)
3071 (+20)
Danielle Collins (USA)

oman OASIS

SPECIAL DISCOUNT

RD 50 ONLY
31.50% reduction

RD 20 ONLY
28.57% reduction

- Hot & Cold Dispenser
- 2 Full Bottles
- 25 Refill Coupons

- White Tap Dispenser/ Tap Dispenser/ Manual Water Pump/ Cradle with Tap
- 2 Full Bottles
- 15 Refill Coupons

BUY & WIN 310 PRIZES

Get your raffle coupon on:
• Purchase of RD 20 or RD 50 offer or
• Coupon book worth RD 20

- Gold Coins
- Gift Vouchers
- Oman Oasis Water Coupons

Register your raffle coupon number at www.omanoasis.com/discount2022 to win.

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

Special discount valid from 1st January 2022 to 31st March 2022. Conditions apply.

Scan QR Code to Register
C.R.N.: 1855452 NPI 05/14/2022

oman OASIS

Sifr

SODIUM FREE DRINKING WATER

The healthy choice

Call Toll-Free 800 71 222 or GSM 9275 5522

f OmanOasis @ OmanOasisOfficial OmanOasisWater www.omanoasis.com

C.R. No.: 1365452





Frank Lampard

Everton appoint Frank Lampard as new manager

Liverpool, United Kingdom - Everton on Monday appointed Frank Lampard as their new manager on a two-and-a-half year deal with the task of keeping the Toffees in the Premier League.

Lampard has been out of the game since being sacked as Chelsea boss a little over a year ago.

The former England international will take charge for the first time on Saturday when Everton host Brentford in the fourth round of the FA Cup.

"It is a huge honour for me to represent and manage a club the size and tradition of Everton Football Club. I'm very hungry to get started," said Lampard.

"I think Everton is a unique club in that you can really understand what the fans want to see. The first thing they want is fight and desire and that must always be our baseline.

"My first message to the players will be that we have to do this together. We'll try to do our job and I know the fans will be there backing us."

Lampard takes charge with Everton just four points above the relegation zone.

Fans protested over the past week outside Goodison Park at the running of the club from British-Iranian businessman Farhad Moshiri.

AFP

Salah led Egypt tackle Cameroon in 'third final before final'

Yaoundé, Cameroon - Mohamed Salah-captained Egypt face a "third final before the final" this week when they confront hosts Cameroon in an Africa Cup of Nations semi-final in Yaounde.

"We overcame the Ivory Coast and Morocco in what amounted to finals before the final and now we face another one against Cameroon," said Mozambique-born Egypt coach Carlos Queiroz.

While Liverpool star Salah and his Pharaoh teammates have been battling fellow top-10 ranked teams in the knockout stages of the marquee African tournament, Cameroon had a gentler passage.

They defeated the Comoros, who had to use an outfield player between the posts after Covid-19 and injury sidelined their three goalkeepers, then Gambia, the lowest ranked of the 24 teams at the finals.

The clash on Thursday comes a day after Senegal, whose star-packed side includes another Liverpool star in Sadio Mane, face Burkina Faso in the first semi-final, also in Yaounde.

It will be an emotional occasion for the Burkinabe, whose coach Kamou Malo says they will be "playing for our people who are being tested by current events", referring to a recent military coup.

Here, AFP Sport looks ahead to the last-four clashes with Senegal favoured to qualify for a second successive final, while Cameroon and Egypt meet in a repeat of the 2017 title decider.

Cameroon v Egypt

Cameroon sharpshooters Vincent Aboubakar (six) and Karl



Egypt's forward Mohamed Salah (C) celebrates his second team goal during the Africa Cup of Nations 2021 quarter-final against Morocco January 30 (AFP)

We overcame the Ivory Coast and Morocco in what amounted to finals before the final and now we face another one against Cameroon

CARLOS QUEIROZ

Lyon forward Toko-Ekambi, one of many Cup of Nations stars with African roots born in Europe, came to the rescue by netting twice in seven minutes.

Now they face the Ahmed Hegazy-marshalled defence of record seven-time champions Egypt, a country renowned for

rearguard strength both at national team and club levels.

A major concern for Egypt, though, is that they may have to field third-choice goalkeeper Mohamed Sobhy as Mohamed Elshenawy and Mohamed Abougabal had to retire injured against the Ivorians and Moroc-

cans. At the other end of the pitch, there is the menace posed by two-time African Footballer of the Year Salah, who debuted for his country in 2011, a year after they last conquered Africa by beating Ghana.

After a slow start in Cameroon, Salah led by example against Morocco, equalising and then setting up the extra-time winner for fellow Premier League forward Mahmoud Trezeguet.

Burkina Faso v Senegal

Senegal share with west African

neighbours Mali the unwanted distinction of never having lifted the Cup of Nations -- the symbol of national team supremacy in the continent.

The Teranga Lions have come agonisingly close twice, losing on penalties to Cameroon in Bamako 20 years ago and narrowly to Algeria in Cairo in 2019.

Reigning African Footballer of the Year Mane says he would happily exchange "all the medals he has won (in England and Europe) for a Cup of Nations gold going".

AFP



File photo shows Julian Alvarez celebrates goal against Racing Club

Man City sign Argentina forward Julian Alvarez

London, United Kingdom - Manchester City on Monday announced the signing of Argentina forward Julian Alvarez from River Plate on a five-and-a-half-year deal for a reported fee of \$19mn.

The 22-year-old, who has won five senior international caps with Argentina, will remain with River on loan at least until July 2022.

Director of football Txiki Begiristain said Premier League leaders City had signed a player with significant potential.

"Julian is a player we have monitored for some time," he

said. "He is capable of operating in a number of attacking roles, and we firmly believe he's one of the best young attacking players in South America.

"I am so happy we have managed to bring him to Manchester City. I really believe we can provide him with the right conditions to fulfil his potential and become a top player."

Alvarez made his senior international debut in a World Cup qualifier against Chile in June last year and was part of the squad that won the Copa America in July.

AFP

Eriksen signs for Brentford months after cardiac arrest

London, United Kingdom - Christian Eriksen has completed a remarkable return to the Premier League, signing for Brentford just seven months after suffering a cardiac arrest at last year's European Championship.

The Denmark international left Inter Milan in December by mutual consent as the implantable cardioverter defibrillator, or ICD, he had fitted meant he was not allowed to play in Italian football.

But the Premier League does not have the same rule and Brentford issued a statement on Monday confirming they had signed the former Tottenham playmaker until the end of the season, subject to international clearance.

Eriksen, 29, who has been training with young players at another of his former clubs, Ajax, said he was raring to go in a short video on Brentford's Twitter feed. "I'm happy to announce that I've signed for Brentford Football Club and I can't wait to



File photo taken on September 26, 2020 of Christian Eriksen (AFP)

get started and hopefully I'll see you all very soon."

Brentford manager Thomas Frank, who worked with Eriksen while in charge of Denmark's Under-17s squad early in his coaching career, welcomed his compatriot, saying it was an "unbelievable opportunity" to bring a world-class player to the club.

"He is fit but we will need to get him match-fit and I am look-

ing forward to seeing him work with the players and staff to get back towards his highest level," he said.

"At his best, Christian has the ability to dictate games of football. He can find the right passes and is a goal threat.... I expect him to have an impact in the dressing room and at the training ground."

AFP



Jeep®



A LEGEND REDESIGNED

THE FIRST-EVER SEVEN-SEATER GRAND CHEROKEE L

Exceptional capability, stunning looks, the latest technology and complete comfort for all seven passengers. The all-new three-row Jeep Grand Cherokee L will turn every journey into a wildly civilized adventure.

**Visit our showrooms across Oman
to book a test-drive today.**

BOOK A TEST DRIVE