

Hospitality industry set to record 90% growth in 2022

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's hospitality industry is expected to record a year-on-year growth of 90.9 per cent, the fastest in the region, to reach US\$700mn in 2022.

The increase can be primarily attributed to an estimated 49.5 per cent growth in tourist arrivals during the year and lower base of 2021 as the sultanate continues to recover from the pandemic, according to Alpen Capital's GCC Hospitality Industry Report, published on August 3.

Consequently, average daily rate (ADR) is expected to wit-



ness a 6.3 per cent growth in 2022 to reach US\$146, while the revenue per available room (RevPAR) is expected to surge by 83.7 per cent to US\$68.

The Omani government's initiatives to improve the country's tourism landscape is expected to be a driving force behind the sector's development, stated the report.

Between 2022 and 2026, Oman's hospitality industry is forecast to grow at a compound annual growth rate

(CAGR) of 6.3 per cent to reach US\$900mn.

Oman aims to earn over US\$22.5bn a year from tourism by 2040 and has established plans to set up a cluster of tourism-related investments across the sultanate. These include setting up of theme parks, nature tourism, water parks and entertainment centres in different parts of the country to boost international as well as domestic travel.

The Oman Tourism Devel-

opment Authority (Omran) recently announced a US\$1bn partnership with a Dubai based developer for the first phase of the Yiti Tourism Master Plan, which will focus on developing a sustainable mixed-use project in the sultanate.

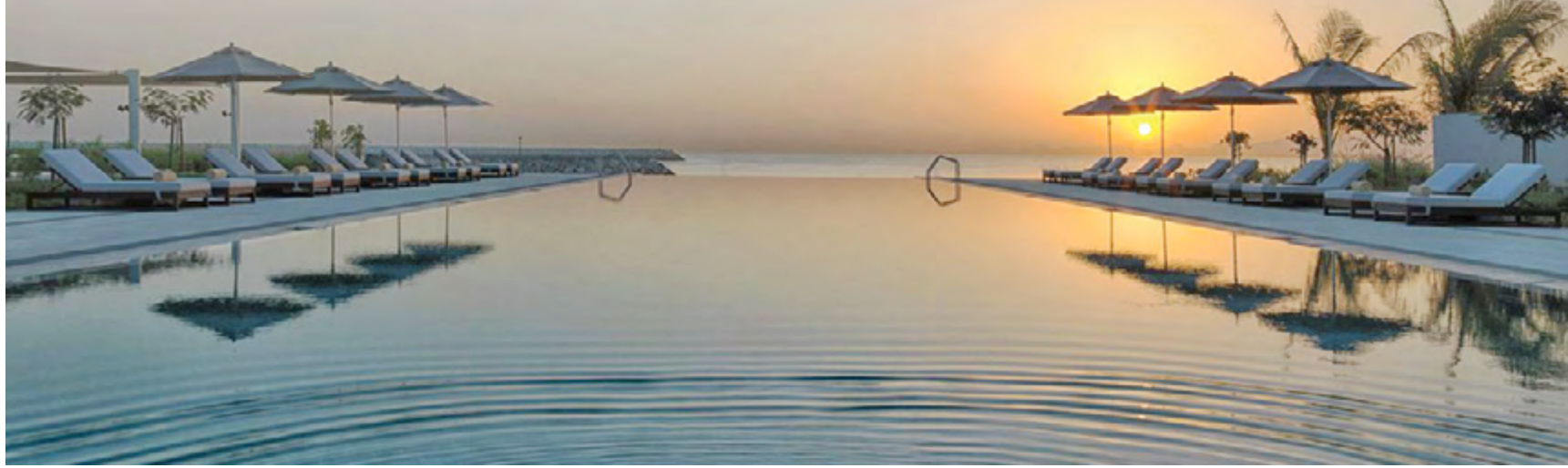
The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism also signed multiple agreements to construct tourism projects, including a four-star hotel, a restaurant, and a glass walkway.

'These projects together are

likely to increase international tourist arrivals in the country, which is estimated to grow at a CAGR of 36.9 per cent over the four-year period to reach 3.7mn in 2026,' the report said.

Consequently, occupancy rates are expected to grow from 47 per cent in 2022 to 54 per cent in 2026.

While ADR is expected to remain flat to reach US\$147 in 2026, RevPAR is forecast to grow at a CAGR of four per cent from US\$68 in 2022 to US\$80 in 2026. The sultanate is expected to increase its room capacity at an annualised growth rate of 2.2 per cent between 2022 and 2026.



Omani innovator vies for King Abdullah II award for creativity

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Innovator Ahmed bin Amer al Jabri has qualified for the final stage of the US\$50,000 King Abdullah II Award for Youth Achievement and Creativity.

Jabri's project - Qatra, which uses smart tech to rationalise water consumption for irrigation - is among four pioneering projects by Arab youth which will compete for the top honour in the award's sixth edition.

Qatra was founded as a student startup in 2015 and has since won many awards, including the 2020 Shell LiveWIRE Top Ten Innovators award.

Jabri said, "The smart irrigator has helped solve an environmental problem. Water is scarce and this device reduces water consumption. Studies have shown that 85 per cent of water used for irrigation is wasted."

Explaining how his device works, Jabri said that a sensor placed near crop measures soil moisture. These readings control activation and shutting down of an irrigation system, depending on soil type and crop variety.

The other finalists are Rasha Abu Shaddam (Jordan) for her project 'Martha Education', which creates technology-supported educational products and tools for deaf children; Haitham Ali



Water is scarce and this device reduces water consumption. Studies have shown that 85 per cent of water used for irrigation is wasted

AHMED AL JABRI

Khalifa (Egypt) for his project which seeks to economically empower marginalised groups through optimal exploitation of available resources and the use of recycling technology in agriculture; and Seif el Din el Aj (Morocco) for his project providing sustainable solutions for waste recycling by producing environmentally friendly building materials from plastic waste.

According to a statement by the awards committee, the finalists will undergo a training programme prior to the presentation stage before the jury. The winner will receive US\$50,000 to develop their project further.

NEWS BRIEF

CAA WARNS AGAINST PUBLISHING INACCURATE WEATHER FORECASTS

Muscat - The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has warned against publishing inaccurate weather forecasts, which can attract a jail sentence and a fine of up to RO50,000.

In a statement on Monday, CAA said that several media and personal accounts on social media platforms have recently published forecasts and warnings contrary to what was issued by the Directorate General of Meteorology of CAA.

'This leads to spreading rumours stoking panic. The authority will not hesitate to take legal action against violators.'



Mental illness in GCC results in losses of \$3.5bn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In the GCC, just as is the case across the globe, COVID-19 has exacerbated the burden of mental illness. Despite this, there are only 2.85 psychiatrists per 100,000 population across the six GCC countries.

With approximately 15 per cent of the GCC's population suffering from mental health and illness in any given year, the first PwC Middle East report in a series examining 'Why GCC Governments should invest more in Mental Health' lays bare the worrying effects of untreated mental illness, and its socio-economic impact.

'There is a strong case for investing in mental health across the GCC. Globally, studies have found that for every US\$1 invested in scaled-up treatment for depression and anxiety, there is a US\$4 return in improved health and productivity,' states the report.

Lina Shadid, Health Industries Leader, PwC Middle East, said, "One out of four people will suffer from some form of mental illness during their lifetime. Yet more

than 75 per cent of those who need mental health care do not seek it."

Lina added that in addition to the devastating impact on sufferers and those around them, poor mental health can have drastic negative economic consequences - both in terms of lost wages due to diminished productivity and increased medical costs.

The economic case for investing in mental health has never been clearer. "In our newly launched report, we estimate that in the GCC at least 37.5mn productive days are lost per year due to untreated mental illness. This is equivalent to a loss of US\$3.5bn. It is abundantly clear that if not properly addressed, mental disorders will continue to have an increasing toll across the GCC."

She added that the good news is there are numerous cost-effective interventions available to governments to help improve educational outcomes, reduce criminal justice costs, boost workplace productivity, and, most importantly, reduce mortality and improve the quality of life of their citizens.

Continued on Page 02

MoL announces over 1,600 contractual jobs

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Labour (MoL) announced the availability of over 1,600 jobs within the 'Sahim' initiative, on temporary contract basis, in the public sector, on Monday.

A total of 1,641 job opportunities will be available through the initiative, MoL stated.

By implementing Sahim, the ministry seeks to enhance the decentralisation process and enable national jobseekers to contribute to the development process in the governorates.

The job opportunities cover various educational qualifications - General Education Diploma (GED) to Bachelor's degree. A total of 1,190 vacancies will be announced for holders of

Bachelor's degree and post-GED qualifications and 451 jobs for those with GED and lower qualifications.

This announcement is the third in 2022 and the eighth in a series of vacancy notifications in the public sector issued by the ministry set to a well-studied plan and based on actual manpower requirements in government units.

A total of 10,017 employment opportunities were offered to citizens during the first quarter of this year, of which 4,126 were in the government sector and 5,891 in the private sector. 'With this, 29 per cent of the total jobs targeted in 2022 has been achieved,' MoL stated.

The ministry is aiming to generate 35,000 job opportunities in 2022.

HOPE AMIDST DESPAIR AND DESTRUCTION



A Palestinian man sits inside his damaged home in Gaza City on Monday, as people returned to their homes in the ravaged territory after a cease fire took effect between Israel and Palestinian fighters. A 'fragile' Egypt-brokered truce between Israel and Islamic Jihad fighters in Gaza appeared to be holding, raising hopes that the recent intense conflict that has left at least 44 Palestinians dead, including 15 children, has ended (AFP) See also Page 11

02

Will people make use of public transport?

04

Oman reduces debt by RO2.2bn this year

Will people make use of public transport?

Commuters cite cultural reasons being a major factor against uptake of public transportation

Shaddad al Musalmey
Muscat

With the population and daily traffic jams increasing, Oman is pressing ahead to improve its public transport system, including a plan for a metro network in Muscat. However, will commuters leave their cars at home and use public transport?

There has been much deliberation on the new public transport system to be built which is set to transform the way people commute in the city. Many say it is long overdue and that there is need to implement new ideas to avoid inconveniences and more cars on the road.

According to H E Saeed al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, a committee has been formed for the metro project in Muscat. "The ministry is also planning to organise the taxi and truck sectors this year," he said recently.

Mwasalat has been upgrading



its buses to international standards, besides adding more buses to its fleet, so that people rely on public transport and reduce the use of light vehicles. It has stated that a single bus can replace 40 private vehicles and save energy, reduce emissions, minimise noise pollution and cut road accidents.

Currently, public transit in Muscat consists of two bus lines and a loosely regulated network of minibuses and taxis that ply the main roads. The master plan includes creating a public transit authority, expanding bus services, park-and-ride facilities and an overhaul of taxi regulations in addition to the proposed metro

network.

While some welcome the idea of public transport, others say it will be difficult to convince themselves to leave their cars at home. "Public transport system in Oman is something new and I wonder how many of us will take up the idea of leaving our cars at home and go to work by public transport. I am not sure if it will be ideal to commute in public transport as long as we can afford our own vehicles," said Hassan al Numan, a private sector employee.

Once public transport takes the desired shape and is accepted by the public, there will be a significant drop in the number of cars on the road. Most

Omani households have one or more vehicles. However, cultural reasons could prevent citizens from using public transport, especially women. "The idea of public transportation is great but I don't think the culture will change because it's always better for women to use their own cars rather than mingle with other men. Besides, there are safety reasons. The introduction of women operated taxis, however, may solve that problem," said Sawsan al Ajma, a bank employee.

According to commuters, the main area that requires urgent attention is the provision of reliable and efficient public trans-

It's always better for women to use their own cars rather than mingle with other men. Besides, there are safety reasons

SAWSAN AL AJMA

port services as a real alternative to private cars. "It's always easy to reach anywhere you want to go with your own car, but I don't think a public transport system can take you any where at any time. If public transport is made

as convenient as our own cars, then I am sure every one would want to use it," said commuter Musallam al Habsi.

As Muscat becomes busier and crowded, a factor that could hold the city back is its lack of an efficient public transport system. Current options are limited to shared taxis, packed mini-buses and cabs charging fares which are hard to comprehend for many.

"I find Oman in general, and Muscat in particular, having no proper public transport system. The taxis that are available need to have a regulatory authority to monitor them. I have noticed that some taxi drivers do so for extra income, sometimes charging fares as they wish. Any citizen can drive a taxi and there are chances of being charged more than the services," said businessman Mohammed Soud.

According to Saleh al Mahrooqi, a private sector employee, the pertinent question is will commuters who have vehicles but are eager to cut fuel costs and the hassle of driving in ever increasing traffic jams actually opt to use public transport. "I think Oman needs to work on this issue of public transport. Authorities need to regulate taxis. Also, there is a need to revamp bus services to make these more accessible to every one. A metro system is another option to be considered. We must look at how other countries manage."

The available taxi system is

not friendly to women. "I am not comfortable travelling in taxis here. I feel unsafe, especially, when alone in the cab. Also, drivers charge what they want. There is no consistence in pricing. Some drivers try to engage lady passengers in nonsense talk and there is no way of reporting them to the authorities," said an expatriate woman on the condition of anonymity.

The Municipal Council recently hosted representatives of Spanish Inco Consultant Company, assigned by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for the public transport development project in the sultanate - Phase I - Muscat Governorate - to explore ways to deal with the situation.

"The company's representatives made a presentation on their study which aims to reduce traffic jams, minimise environmental impact of the current system and enhance economic benefits by improving the public transportation system," a Muscat Municipality official said.

"The study reviewed the scope of the work, which includes creating an integrated public transport system to serve all segments of society, the creation of a regulating mechanism, creating an integrated tariff system, and funding mechanism for the implementation of the plans proposed by the study," he added.

@shadadm

ROYAL CAVALRY'S KHALSA BAGS AL WATHBA CUP IN FRANCE

Royal Cavalry's mare 'Khalisa' snatched the top trophy of Al Wathba Stallions Cup at Gramat Racecourse for Arabian thoroughbreds in Paris on Monday. Khalisa was jockeyed to victory in the 2,200m run by Maxim Folon and coached by Charles Jordan. The second place went to 'Alicia', owned by Lakyore de Sierra, jockeyed by Marlin Mayer and coached by Thomas de Millo, and third place was won by 'Futoon', owned by Al Shaqab Races, jockeyed by Vincent and coached by Charles Jordan (ONA)



EA issues violation notices for flouting environmental laws

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Environment Authority (EA) in the Governorate of Dhofar has issued violation notices against a group of companies for flouting environmental requirements.

In a statement, EA said, 'Within the framework of supervision and field inspection of private sector companies to monitor their compliance with environmental requirements, the Directorate General of Environ-



ment in Dhofar has issued a number of seizure orders against a group of companies.'

It added that the companies in question were asked to amend their operations.



SULTANATE OF OMAN

MUSCAT, hereby give notice of tenders for the following projects

Tender No.	Project Category	Location	Grade In Tender Board Registration
Re-Tender 6/2022	Electromechanical and Telecommunications Contracting and Maintenance	Maintenance & Operation Of Electro-Mechanical Services, Civil, Cleaning And Pest Control Services Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex At Bausher From 1/1/2023 To 31/12/2024	Excellent Grade
Re-Tender 7/2022	Electromechanical and Telecommunications Contracting and Maintenance	Maintenance And Operating Services To Seeb Sports Stadium (Including Sports Hall At Seeb Sports Club) For The Period 1st January 2023 To 31st December 2024	Excellent Grade
Re-Tender 8/2022	Electromechanical and Telecommunications Contracting and Maintenance	Maintenance And Operating Services To Al Amal Sports Club For The Period 1st January 2023 To 31st December 2024	Excellent Grade
Re-Tender 9/2022	Electromechanical and Telecommunications Contracting and Maintenance	Maintenance And Operating Services To Ibra Sports Complex For The Period 1st January 2023 To 31st December 2024	Excellent Grade
Re-Tender 10/2022	Electromechanical and Telecommunications Contracting and Maintenance	Maintenance And Operating Services To Ibra Sports Complex For The Period 1st January 2023 To 31st December 2024	Excellent Grade
Re-Tender 11/2022	Electromechanical and Telecommunications Contracting and Maintenance	Maintenance And Operating Services To Khasab Sports Complex (Including Sports Centre At Lima) For The Period 1st January 2023 To 31st December 2024	Excellent Grade
Re-Tender 12/2022	Electromechanical and Telecommunications Contracting and Maintenance	Maintenance And Operating Services To Salalah Sports Complex For The Period 1st January 2021 To 31st December 2022	Excellent Grade

Companies, which are registered with the Tender Board and engaged in same category with experience in and same Grade as noted above, can obtain the Tender Documents at the Tender Board E-tendering digital portal link (<http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) until 14/08/2022.

The last date of tender submission on above E-tendering site at 09:00am 22/08/2022

A Tender Bond equivalent to 1% of the tender sum issued from a registered bank, in the prescribed form, in Sultanate of Oman and valid for 90 days should enclosed with the tender.

Any tender without the bond will be reject and the tender committee is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender received.

INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE OF MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

Any participants have doubt in adopting e-tendering can contact over the phone 24402200 or through email etenderhd@ita.gov.om

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Mental illness results in losses of \$3.5bn in GCC

Continued from Page 01

Under reported

The Global Burden of Disease study estimates that mental disorders are just as common in the GCC as they are worldwide. However, these tend to be underreported due to poor awareness, a shortage in mental health care professionals, and limitations in appropriate and equitable financing. An estimated 75 per cent of people who experience mental health difficulties do not seek professional help.

In Saudi Arabia, 80 per cent of those with severe mental disorders do not seek treatment. Furthermore, some 34 per cent of Saudis meet the criteria for a mental health condition at some point in their life, yet just four per cent of the Ministry of Health budget is allocated to mental health.

Stigma

Stigma towards mental illness is a major barrier to accessing mental health care in the GCC. This is often as a result of misconceptions and limited understanding of the diagnoses, social and cultural beliefs, and stereotypical media portrayals of people with mental illnesses. Indeed, a survey conducted with 1,000 participants in the UAE found approximately 30 per cent of participants were reluctant to seek help due to the fear of being judged by employers and harming their career progression.

Access to mental health care in the GCC is also made difficult by limited insurance coverage for mental health conditions and by unaffordable prices for services. In the UAE, for example, a psychotherapy session may cost up to AED1,000.

1,000kg of shrimp seized during ban period in Muscat

Muscat - Around 1,000kg of shrimp prepared for sale during the ongoing ban period was seized by the fisheries control team in Muscat.

In a statement, the Ministry of

Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources said, 'The shrimp fishing ban period is from December 1 to August 31. The ban on sale excludes farmed and imported shrimp.'

Send your comments to muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om

Salalah Grand Mall opens

Salalah - Salalah Grand Mall opened its doors to the public on Monday. The RO35mn commercial complex will support the retail sector and entertainment industry.

Salalah Grand Mall was developed through a partnership between the Ministry of Defence's Pension Fund, several other government investment funds and Al Madina Real Estate Company. It is spread over an



area of 103,000sqm and construction area of 55,000sqm. It comprises a hypermarket and outlets selling local, regional and

international brands.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of H H Sayyid Marwan Turki al Said,

Governor of Dhofar, and attended by Dr Mohammed Nasir Al Za'abi, Secretary General of the Ministry of Defence.

On the occasion, H H Sayyid Marwan said that the sultanate is witnessing concerted efforts to secure the success of the economic diversification policy and motivated growth across all sectors to achieve the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. ONA



H E Habsi inspects damage caused by rains in Musandam



Muscat - Several senior officials visited the Governorate of Musandam on Sunday to inspect the damage caused by the recent heavy rains.

During the visit, H E Sultan bin Salem al Habsi, Minister of Finance, and H E Sayyid Ibrahim bin Saeed al Busaidi, Governor of Musandam, urged the relevant authorities to restore basic services that have been affected at the earliest.

The delegation was updated by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT) about the extent of damages to certain roads and details of others that have been reopened to traffic following repairs.

lowing repairs.

Alternate routes have been opened for some roads where damage is extensive, with plans afoot to repair these as soon as possible. Work is on for restoration of roads in Madha, Lima, Khasab, Dibba and Kumzar.

During the visit, the delegates met a number of citizens whose properties were damaged and heard their demands. They were accompanied by H E Dr Ali bin Amer al Shaidani, Undersecretary for Communications and Information Technology in MTCIT, and H E Dr Muhammad bin Ali al Mutawa, Undersecretary for Urban Planning in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning.

Over 14,000 bags of chewing tobacco seized in Ibri: CPA



Our Correspondent Muscat

The Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) arrested an expatriate in possession of more than 14,000 bags of chewing tobacco in Ibri on Monday. Legal action has been taken on him.

This was part of the efforts of CPA, represented by its directorates and departments in various governorates, to combat the spread of prohibited substances, which have an impact on the health and safety of the user and society at large.

The department searched for and verified the information, and then coordinated with the Public

Prosecution Department in Dhahirah Governorate and the Dhahirah Police Command to raid the worker's site, where more than 14,000 bags of chewing tobacco were seized from his possession,' CPA stated.

These activities violate Resolution No 256/2015 amended by Resolution No 301/2016 banning the circulation of chewing tobacco.

According to the CPA, it will spare no effort to monitor markets and control products that may harm the health and safety of consumers, and take legal action on violators. It also called on consumers to report any abuses they may notice in markets.



الأنوار للاستثمارات ش.م.ع Al Anwar Investments SAOG

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Directors' Report

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the un-audited consolidated results of Al Anwar Investments SAOG (AAI) for the three-month period ended on 30 June 2022.

Financial Overview of Al Anwar Investments Group ("AAI")

The Company reported a consolidated net loss of OMR 644,000 for the three-month period ended on 30th June 2022 as against a profit of OMR 298,000 for the period ended on 30th June 2021, mainly due to fair value loss of OMR 730,000 in company's marked to market investments in Muscat Security Exchange (MSX) and other investments at fair value.

Net asset per share of the Group has decreased to 142 Baisas per share on 30 June 2022 as against 158 Baisas per share on 30 June 2021.

Investment update

1. Al Maha Ceramics SAOG

The Company has reported revenue of OMR 2,555,074 for the three-month period ended on 31 March 2022, as compared with OMR 2,383,542 during the previous period, a growth of 7%. Net profit after tax for the period is OMR 713,554 as compared to OMR 603,941 in the previous period, a growth of 18%, which is mainly due to increase in sales revenue and effective cost control measures taken at various levels.

2. Voltamp Energy SAOG

The Company has reported revenue of OMR 6,340,615 for the three-month period ended on 31 March 2022, as compared with OMR 6,241,320 during the previous period, a growth of 2%. Net loss after tax (attributable to shareholders of Parent Company) for the period is OMR 684,023 compared to net loss of OMR 5,195 in the previous period. The loss is mainly attributed to the increase in raw material prices which has impacted the company's profitability.

3. Arabia Falcon Insurance Company SAOG

The Company has reported Gross Written Premium of OMR 4,972,014 during the three-month period ended on 31 March 2022 as compared to OMR 4,481,588 for the previous period, a growth of 11%. The Net profit after tax for the period is OMR 163,501 compared to OMR 543,415 in previous period, a decline of 70% as a result of decrease in underwriting income and increase in operating cost.

4. Al Ruwad International for Education Services SAOC

The Company has reported a growth in revenue and a decline profitability for the three-month period ended on 30 April 2022. This is primarily due to higher number of students enrolled in the school during academic year. The combined impact of Covid 19 and the challenging economic conditions had a considerable impact on private schools in Oman.

The school is now approved to provide International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum at all levels. This should improve the school's competitive position and support it in attracting higher number of students in future years.

5. National Biscuits Industries Ltd. SAOG

The Company has reported revenue of OMR 3,385,014 for the three months period ended on 31 March 2022, compared with OMR 3,410,690 during the previous period. Net profit after tax for the period is OMR 194,587 as compared to OMR 361,810 in the previous year, a decline of 46%. This is largely due to increase in cost of raw materials, rising logistic costs and a loss of a contract from a major client.

6. The National Detergent Co. SAOG

The Company reported revenues of OMR 5,492,591 for the three-month period ended on 31 March 2022, as compared with OMR 4,858,061 for the previous period, a growth of 13%. Net profit for the period is OMR 9,194 as compared to OMR 246,138 in the previous period, a

decline of 96%. Decline in demand from consumers and increase in raw material prices are the main factors that affected financial performance of the company. To reduce this impact, NDC is focusing on controlling costs and introducing new products.

7. Oman Chlorine SAOG

The Oman Chlorine Group has reported revenue of OMR 6,997,000 for the three-month period ended on 31 March 2022 as compared with OMR 3,981,000 in the previous period, a growth of 76%. Net Profit (attributable to Parent Company Shareholders) for the period is OMR 936,000 as compared to loss of OMR 152,000 in the previous period.

The Oman operation reported a net profit of OMR 908,000 compared to previous period profit of OMR 405,000, an increase of 124%. The overall sales volume in the Oman plant increased during first three months of 2022 by 41.6% due to higher production volume resulting from expansion and improved sales prices for company products and reaching new areas in MENA, East Africa and some European regions.

Union Chlorine LLC, UAE, a subsidiary, has declared net profit of OMR 249,000 during the three-month period ended on 31 March 2022 compared to loss of OMR 359,000 in previous period. The parent company's share of profit is OMR 149,000.

Gulf Chlorine WLL, Qatar, a subsidiary, has declared a net loss of OMR 236,000 during the three-month period ended 31 March 2022 compared to a loss of OMR 670,000 in previous period. The parent company's share of loss is OMR 120,000. Revenue during the period has increased from OMR 633K to 1.52 million. The company since March 2022 is operating at 100% capacity and is expected to operate at 100% capacity for remaining period of 2022.

Future Outlook

Oman's economy is expected to continue to improve as restrictions related to Covid-19 ease and oil prices recovers from the lows witnessed in prior years. S&P Global Ratings has revised Oman's rating outlook to positive from stable, citing improving fiscal position, progress on reforms and rising oil prices.

AAI has maintained a prudent and active approach towards managing its investment portfolio. Our objective this year is to:

- continue to support and pro-actively manage our investment companies and,
- take advantage of investment opportunities available in the market

We are confident that AAI and its Group companies will continue to play a pivotal role in Oman's economic growth, create job opportunities for Omani nationals, and attract foreign investments in the Sultanate of Oman. The Board has reviewed the plan to raise capital through Right issue upto OMR 10mn which is being considered for 2022.

Thanks, and Appreciation

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to take this opportunity to express our greetings and good wishes to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, and pray to Allah to grant him and his government success to lead the country and the people to greater prosperity and progress.

The Board records its sincere appreciation to Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Investment Promotion, Capital Market Authority, Muscat Stock Exchange, Bankers, Auditors for their continued support to AAI and the group companies.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the Board of Directors of all Al Anwar Group companies for direction given to the managements of the respective companies. I place on record my sincere thanks and appreciation for the dedicated efforts of the management team and all employees of the group companies.

I would also like to convey my sincere thanks to the Shareholders of AAI for the confidence they have reposed in the company and its Board.

For & on behalf of the Board of Directors of
Al Anwar Investments SAOG

Masoud Humaid Malik Al Harthy
Chairman

August 7, 2022

Unaudited Consolidated Statements Of Financial Position			
	30 June 2022 OMR'000	Restated 30 June 2021 OMR'000	Audited 31 March 2022 OMR'000
Assets			
Investment in associates	31,771	31,380	31,460
Investments at fair value	11,116	15,438	11,073
Property and other assets	2,277	2,256	2,270
Receivables	143	141	1,158
Cash and bank balances	238	48	88
TOTAL ASSETS	45,545	49,263	46,049
Equity			
Share capital	20,000	20,000	20,000
Legal reserve	4,568	4,568	4,568
Fair value reserve	(834)	(153)	(463)
Retained earnings	4,588	7,172	6,032
Equity attributable to shareholders of Parent Company	28,322	31,587	30,137
Liabilities:			
Bank borrowings	16,763	17,472	15,513
Payables	460	204	399
TOTAL LIABILITIES	17,223	17,676	15,912
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	45,545	49,263	46,049
Net assets per share attributable to shareholders of the Parent Company (in Baisas)			
	142	158	151

Unaudited Consolidated Statements Of Comprehensive Income For The Three Month Period Ended			
	30 June 2022 OMR'000	Restated 30 June 2021 OMR'000	
Share of results of associates	298	369	
Interest income	148	296	
Realised (loss) profit on sale of investment	(2)	(1)	
Net Increase (decrease) in value of investment	(730)	12	
Other income	7	9	
Net income	(279)	685	
Administrative expenses	(86)	(65)	
Financing charges	(242)	(288)	
Corporate social responsibility	(8)	-	
Director fees	(29)	(34)	
Total expenses	(365)	(387)	
Profit (loss) for the period before tax	(644)	298	
Income tax expense	-	-	
Profit / (loss) after tax for the period	(644)	298	
Other comprehensive income (expense):			
Share of other comprehensive profit (loss) of associates	13	39	
Net Increase (decrease) in value of investment	(384)	283	
Other comprehensive loss for the period	(371)	322	
Total comprehensive Income (loss) for the period attributable to Equity holders of Parent Company	(1,015)	620	
Earnings profit (loss) per share attributable to shareholders of Parent Company (in Baisas)	(3)	1	
Note: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who requests them in Arabic or English as requested, within 7 days of receipt of the request.			

WEATHER WATCH

	Max	Min
Muscat	36	27
Abu Dhabi	43	30
Doha	42	31
Kuwait City	48	34
Manama	41	32
Riyadh	45	31

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr	4.19am
Sunrise	5.40am
Duhr	12:17pm
Asr	3.43pm
Maghrib	6.50pm
Isha	8.06pm

MARKET WATCH

MSX304,661.34

Sensex58,853.07

FOREX RATES

(RO1 equals)

Indian	206.68
Pakistan	582.25
Bangladesh	245.90
Philippines	144.03
Sri Lanka	935.78

Rates as on August 08

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Airbus scraps A350 contract with Qatar Airways in feud

Airbus has cancelled its contract to deliver 19 A350 planes to Qatar Airways, a source close to the matter said, amid a feud between the two aviation giants, AFP reported.

Airbus had already cancelled a multi-billion-dollar order of 50 planes from Qatar Airways, a major customer, earlier in the year, over the airline's grounding of A350 aircraft.

Qatar Airways has been locked in a dispute with Airbus over degradation of the exterior fuselage surfaces on some of its A350 wide-body planes.

The issue has led the airline, one of the Gulf region's 'big three' carriers, to ground 23 of the aircraft and not accept further deliveries from the European firm until the problem is resolved.

Qatar Airways claimed damages from Airbus amounting to US\$200,000 per day, per plane out of action.

The order for the 19 aircraft was worth seven billion euros at catalogue prices, though airlines are usually charged less for large purchases.

Oman reduces debt by RO2.2bn this year



Our Correspondent
Muscat

Helped by higher oil revenues and successful implementation of fiscal reforms, Oman's government managed to reduce total public debt by RO2.2bn by the end of July this year.

The sultanate's total public debt dropped to RO18.6bn as of the end of July 2022 from RO20.8bn in the end of 2021, according to the Fiscal Performance bulletin issued by the Ministry of Finance.

'Oman's liability management exercise reduced public debt by RO2.2bn as of end-July 2022. This was achieved through buy-back of some sovereign bonds for less than the nominal value, prepayment of high cost loans

and issuance of government sukuk in the Muscat Stock Exchange at preferable rate,' the ministry said.

Through its liability management exercise Oman achieved an RO127mn saving on debt servicing cost, enhanced investors confidence and improved the country's credit ratings, the Ministry of Finance noted.

Earlier in July, S&P Global Ratings said that Oman's recent liability management exercise will help reduce the government's debt levels, generate interest cost savings, and smoothen its maturity profile.

S&P expects Oman's gross government debt will fall to 48 per cent of GDP by year-end 2022, compared with 63 per

cent in 2021 and a peak of 70 per cent in 2020.

Following several years of deteriorating public finances and external accounts until 2020, Oman is now benefiting from higher oil prices and fiscal and governance reforms.

The sultanate recorded a budget surplus of RO784mn in the first half of this year, helped by higher oil and gas revenues and increased tax collection. Total public income rose 54.2 per cent to RO6.724bn in the first six months of 2022 compared to RO4.361bn in the same period last year.

Oman's government intends to largely allocate the fiscal surplus toward higher spending on development projects and reducing government debt.



Maha Energy finds strategic Omani partner for Block 70

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Swedish international upstream oil and gas company Maha Energy, through its wholly-owned subsidiary Maha Energy (Oman) Ltd, has entered into a farmout agreement with Omani firm Mafraq Energy LLC for Block 70 in Oman.

As per the agreement, Maha Energy will reduce its participating interest in the Block 70 exploration and production sharing agreement (EPSA) from 100 per cent to 65 per cent. Maha Energy, however, will continue to be the operator of the block, the company said in a statement on Monday.

The agreement is subject to the government approval in Oman, it added.

'Maha Energy has decided to reduce its working interest in the onshore oil-bearing Block 70 in

Oman by bringing in a strategic Omani partner. The agreement requires Mafraq Energy to reimburse Maha Energy for their prorated share of all past costs including the signature bonus. Mafraq Energy will also be required to pay their share of all future expenditures on Block 70,' Maha Energy said.

Maha Energy was successful in securing Block 70, which contains the Mafraq heavy oil discovery, in a 2019 - 2020 government bid round. The company last week announced the signing of an agreement with Gulf Drilling Company, a wholly-owned subsidiary of MB Petroleum Services Worldwide, for the drilling of a minimum of six wells in Block 70.

Jonas Lindvall, CEO of Maha Energy, said, "We are delighted to have Mafraq Energy join us on Block 70. Mafraq Energy brings extensive experience of the

Mafraq field and the surrounding areas in Oman. The fact that Mafraq Energy joins us is perhaps the best evidence yet of the future potential of the Mafraq field."

Talal al Subhi, director of Mafraq Energy said, "We are pleased and honoured to join Maha Energy to commercialise Oman's national resources. The farmout arrangement is also completely aligned with the realisation of the Oman 2040 Vision's 'Growing the Private Sector', and we are proud to be doing our part."

Immediate plans for the Mafraq oil field include drilling six wells to obtain important reservoir information to assist in developing a full field development plan. The Gulf Drilling rig 109 was recently contracted for this drilling. Anticipated mobilisation of the drilling rig is scheduled for October this year.

Mahas signs deal for feed factory

Muscat - Mahas Industrial City, which pertains to the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), has signed a contract with Hassan Al Qaishi Trading Establishment to set up a factory for packaging of feed products.

The factory will be established on an area of 6,000 sqm in the wilayat of Khasab in Musandam governorate, according to a press released issued by Mahas.

With three main lines for production and packaging of livestock and poultry feed, the project will adopt cutting-edge technology and machinery.

US Senate passes Joe Biden's \$430bn climate and health plan

Washington, US - After 18 months of arduous negotiations and a marathon night of debate, the US Senate on Sunday passed Joe Biden's ambitious climate, tax and health care plan - officially known as the "Inflation Reduction Act", a significant victory for the president ahead of crucial midterm elections.

Voting as a unified bloc and with the tie-breaking vote cast by Vice President Kamala Harris, Democrats approved the US\$430bn spending plan, which will go to the House of Representatives next week, where it is expected to pass before being signed into law by Biden.

The plan, crafted in sensitive talks with members on the right wing of his Democratic Party, would include the biggest US investment ever on climate - US\$370bn aimed at effecting a 40 per cent drop in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

That would give Biden a clear victory on one of his top agenda items and go some way toward restoring US leadership in meeting the global climate challenge.

The bill would provide US\$64bn for health care initiatives and ensure a lowering of some drug costs - which can be 10 times more expensive in the United States than in some other rich countries.

Biden hailed the passage of the bill, highlighting the work that went into it - and acknowledging that not everyone is happy with the final result.

"It required many compromises. Doing important things almost always does. The House should pass this as soon as possible and I look forward to signing it into law," the president said in a statement.

The bill - officially known as



US President Joe Biden speaks to reporters before boarding Air Force One at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, on August 8 (AFP)

the "Inflation Reduction Act" - passed the Senate with no Republicans voting in favor.

Conservative lawmakers have criticized the bill as wasteful spending, with top Republican Senator Mitch McConnell accusing Democrats of voting to "double down on their economic disaster."

'Change America for decades'

The bill would provide Americans with a tax credit of up to US\$7,500 when purchasing an electric car, plus a 30 per cent discount when they install solar panels on their roofs.

But the Alliance for Automotive Innovation, a group representing major automakers, on

Biden, who came to office with promises of sweeping reforms, has seen his hopes dashed, then revived, then dashed again.

Democrats' narrow edge in the Senate has given a virtual veto to moderates such as Joe Manchin of West Virginia, who earlier had used that power to block Biden's much more expansive Build Back Better plan.

But in late July, Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer managed to engineer a compromise with the West Virginian, whose state's economy depends heavily on coal mining.

"This bill is gonna change America for decades," Schumer said after its passage, while Manchin tweeted that it "will lower the inflation taxes that have been so hurtful for West Virginian and American families."

Senators finally opened debate on the text on Saturday, with final passage not until Sunday afternoon.

Late Saturday, they began working through a marathon procedure known as a "vote-a-rama," in which members can propose dozens of amendments and demand a vote on each one.

That allowed both Republicans, who view Biden's plan as too costly, and liberal Democrats, who say it does not reach far enough, to make their opposition clear.

Influential progressive Senator Bernie Sanders used that platform through the evening to propose several amendments aimed at strengthening social planks in the legislation, which were considerably weakened during the months of negotiation.

AFP

The Association of Early Intervention for Children with Disabilities, a non-profit charitable organization announces job vacancies for the following specialties:

First: Special Educators Specialist

Eligibility criteria for interviews:

- Bachelor's degree in Special Education
- Minimum 3 years' experience after graduation

Second: Special Education Teachers

Eligibility criteria for interviews:

- Diploma in Special Education
- Minimum two years' experience after graduation

Third: Assistant Special Education Teachers

Eligibility criteria for interviews:

- At least a high school diploma
- Minimum two years' experience in the field of disability

Fourth: Female Workers

Eligibility criteria for interviews:

- Experience in the field and the desire to work in centers for people with disabilities

Fifth: Human Resources Officer

Eligibility criteria for interviews:

- University graduate, with a degree in commerce, arts, or sciences.
- 5 years' experience

Six: Marketing Officer

Eligibility criteria for interviews:

- University graduate, degree in Business, Arts or Science.
- 5 years' experience

Please send your CV to the following email: info@earlyintervention.om

Or via WhatsApp on the following number: +96872727784

Interviews will be scheduled for those who meet the above conditions.

EU plan to cut gas use by 15% comes into effect

Brussels, Belgium – An EU plan to cut gas consumption across the bloc by 15 per cent to cope with an energy price crisis spurred by Russia's war in Ukraine comes into effect on Tuesday.

The EU regulation enshrining the plan agreed two weeks ago by the 27-nation bloc was published Monday in the European Union's official administrative gazette, with the stipulation it would take force from Tuesday.

"Considering the imminent

danger to the security of gas supply brought about by the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, this regulation should enter into force as a matter of urgency," it said.

The aim is for the EU to be able to bolster its reserves of gas in time for what is likely to be a very tough winter. European households and businesses are being squeezed by skyrocketing energy prices and reduced Russian gas that several member states are depend-

ent on.

The regulation said that EU countries "shall use their best efforts" to cut gas consumption by "at least 15 per cent" between August this year and March next year, based on how much they used on average over the previous five years.

Some EU countries, though, had carve-outs from strictly following the rule, which was in any case termed a "voluntary demand reduction".

These were countries not



fully connected to the European electricity grid or with gas pipelines to other parts of the EU or unable to free up enough pipeline gas to help other member states.

Hungary, which relies on gas piped in directly from Russia, had demanded the exception.

Germany, the EU's economic powerhouse, took a major share of the 40 per cent of EU gas imports that came from Russia last year.

Should the European Com-

mission see a "severe gas supply shortage" or exceptionally high gas demand emerging, it can ask EU countries to declare an alert for the bloc. That would make gas cuts binding and limit exceptions.

While the EU has not included Russian gas in its sanctions on Moscow for the war in Ukraine, the Kremlin has drastically cut supplies anyway in what Brussels seems as an attempt to strongarm Europe.

AFP

Japan's SoftBank reports \$23bn quarterly loss



SoftBank Group CEO Masayoshi Son

Tokyo, Japan - Japan's SoftBank Group on Monday reported a record quarterly net loss of US\$23.4bn, after interest rate hikes tanked tech shares.

The telecom firm-turned-investment behemoth posted a net loss of 3.16tn yen, nosediving from a net profit of 761.5bn yen in the same April-June period the previous year.

"Global stock declines and the rapid depreciation of the yen" contributed to the slump, CEO Masayoshi Son told reporters.

A company statement elaborated, blaming the "global downward trend in share prices due to growing concerns over economic recession driven by inflation and rising interest rates".

SoftBank's big stakes in global tech giants and volatile new ventures have made for unpredictable earnings, and it has lurched between record highs and lows in recent years.

The portfolio companies that suffered large losses for the quarter included South Korean e-commerce giant Coupang and US meal delivery platform Door-Dash, SoftBank Group said.

The outspoken Son said he wanted to reflect and learn from the huge losses suffered by Soft-

Bank's technology-focused Vision Fund, which suffered even worse declines than the tech-rich Nasdaq.

"All sorts of things can be used as excuses, such as the bad market environment, the war and the pandemic. But if we had been a bit more selective and made proper investments, we wouldn't have suffered so much pain," he said. "I don't know how long this winter will continue," he added, referring to the challenging global situation for business.

"It could be three months. It could be three years," Son said, joking that his "worries are reflected on his hair".

Japanese media outlets including Kyodo News said the Q1 result was the largest quarterly loss the country has ever seen.

In May, SoftBank reported its worst-ever full-year net loss – and a then-record quarterly loss for Q4 – after a bruising 2021-22 that saw its assets hit by a US tech stocks rout and a regulatory crackdown in China. That came after logging Japan's biggest-ever annual net profit in 2020-21, when people moved their lives online during the pandemic and sent tech stocks soaring.

AFP

UN chief slams 'excessive' profits of oil firms

New York, US – UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres accused oil and gas companies of making "excessive" profits from the energy crisis sparked by the war in Ukraine, calling it "immoral."

Guterres, releasing a UN report on the consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, urged governments to tax the companies' earnings.

"It is immoral for oil and gas companies to be making record profits from this energy crisis on the backs of the poorest people and communities and at a massive cost to the climate," the UN chief told reporters.

"I urge all governments to tax these excessive profits and use the funds to support the most vulnerable people through these difficult times," Guterres said.

Guterres said the combined profits of the largest energy companies in the first quarter of the



Antonio Guterres

year were nearly US\$100bn.

With the rise in oil and gas prices, BP, ExxonMobil, Chevron and Shell also reported enormous profits in the second quarter.

The UN chief said that between now and the end of the year, 345mn people will be "acutely food insecure" or at "a high risk of food insecurity" in 82 countries, an increase of 47mn due to the impact of the war in Ukraine.

AFP



A'Sharqiya Investments Holding Co. (SAOG)

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Tel: +968 24566160 / Fax: +968 24566162 / Email: admin@asharqiya.com

Chairman's Report for the six months ended June 30, 2022

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it gives me great pleasure to present the unaudited consolidated financial statements of A'Sharqiya Investment Holding Company (SAOG) and its subsidiary – Qalhat Real Estate Investments & Services LLC. (QREIS) - For the six months ended June 30, 2022.

Overview of Operations and Financial Performance

A summary of the company's operating performance for the six months ended June 30, 2022 in comparison to the corresponding period in 2021 and the full year ended 2021 is presented below:

Six Months ended June 30, 2022	(RO in '000)			
	June 30 2022	June 30 2021	% / Increase (Decrease)	Full Year ended 2021
Total Operating Income	677	664	1.9	1,150
Profit after Tax (PAT)	336	357	(5.9)	531
Other Comprehensive Income/ (loss)	141	2,234	(93.7)	1,383
Total comprehensive income/(loss)	477	2,591	(81.6)	1,913
Total Assets	18,626	19,104	(2.5)	18,659

It may be noted from above; the company's operations during the six month period ended June 30, 2022 generated an income of RO 677,052 as compared to RO 664,294 during the corresponding period in 2021. Profit before tax remained flat at RO 392,913 as against RO 395,724. The profit after tax arising from the company's operations during this period aggregated to RO 336,144 as compared to RO 357,051 generated during the comparable period in 2021 reflecting a decrease of 5.9%. The increase in operating income despite a lower recorded lease income is driven by higher investment income compared to the same period last year.

Other comprehensive income during the period stood at RO 140,924 as compared to RO 2,234,146 recorded during the comparable period in 2021. The total comprehensive income for the period accordingly stood at RO 477,068 as compared to RO 2,591,197 during the comparable period in 2021. This is attributable primarily to equity market movement.

The total assets of the company as at June 30, 2022 was RO 18,625,704 as compared to a RO 19,103,533 as at June 30, 2021, reflecting a decrease of 2.5%. The net asset value of the company's share is currently at Baizas 165 on June 30, 2022 as compared to Baizas 171 on June 30, 2021.

Investment and Future Outlook

The global economy is expected to grow 3.2% in 2022 following a growth of 6.1% in 2021, as per IMF Economic Outlook (July 2022) - this is 0.4% lower than projected in the April outlook. Global output contracted in the second quarter of this year, owing to downturns in China and Russia, while US consumer spending undershot expectations. While the outlook for some of our investee companies remains challenging, the Company is in the process of reviewing its investment strategy of its core holdings and initiate new opportunities to improve the investment portfolio to weather the challenges by focusing on investments that aim to maximize the risk adjusted returns with a focus on regional and global markets.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq for his able leadership of the country during such an unprecedented crisis. I thank the shareholders for their continued support and for the confidence reposed on the company. My appreciation also goes to the company's management and staff for their contributions and commitment to the company.

Mohammed Ali Mohammed Al Fannah
Chairman

Un-Audited Separate And Consolidated Condensed Statement Of Financial Position As On 30 June 2022

	Un-audited 30 June 2022		Un-audited 30 June 2021		Audited 31 December 2021	
	Parent RO	Group RO	Parent RO	Group RO	Parent RO	Group RO
ASSETS						
Non-current assets						
Furniture and equipment	7,202	7,267	8,143	8,296	6,564	6,673
Lease receivables	-	4,511,824	-	5,122,582	-	5,036,251
Investment in a subsidiary	250,000	-	250,000	-	250,000	-
Financial assets at FVOCI	9,405,693	9,405,693	10,385,580	10,385,580	9,364,698	9,364,698
Financial assets at FVTPL	107,490	107,490	140,170	140,170	119,019	119,019
Capital work-in-progress	-	283,139	-	111,318	-	282,569
Deferred tax assets	54,467	54,467	54,467	54,467	54,467	54,467
Total non-current assets	9,824,852	14,369,880	10,838,360	15,822,413	9,794,748	14,863,677
Current assets						
Due from a subsidiary	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lease receivables	-	701,031	-	603,170	-	558,064
Prepayments and other receivables	174,007	760,881	47,419	88,624	29,016	101,526
Cash and bank balances	1,664,997	2,793,912	1,382,916	2,589,326	1,644,140	3,135,671
Total current assets	1,839,004	4,255,824	1,430,335	3,281,120	1,673,156	3,795,261
Total assets	11,663,856	18,625,704	12,268,695	19,103,533	11,467,904	18,658,938
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES						
Equity:						
Share capital	9,000,000	9,000,000	9,000,000	9,000,000	9,000,000	9,000,000
Legal reserve	1,527,760	1,611,094	1,421,459	1,504,793	1,421,127	1,504,461
Fair value reserve	1,018,826	1,018,826	1,728,232	1,728,232	895,393	895,393
(Accumulated losses)/ Retained earnings	(65,152)	3,231,387	(703,324)	3,146,480	(648,349)	3,378,381
Total equity	11,481,434	14,861,307	11,446,367	15,379,505	10,668,171	14,778,235
LIABILITIES						
Non-current liabilities						
Finance lease payable	-	3,350,260	-	3,365,433	-	3,551,098
Staff terminal benefits	120,375	149,947	108,774	135,718	112,867	140,701
Total	120,375	3,500,207	108,774	3,501,151	112,867	3,691,799
Current liabilities						
Finance lease payable	-	105,945	-	105,443	-	15,073
Amount due to a subsidiary	-	-	666,698	-	636,484	-
Retention payable	-	20,058	-	7,416	-	-
Trade and other payables	34,010	80,184	33,457	64,987	44,411	105,006
Income tax payable	28,037	58,003	13,399	45,031	5,971	68,825
Total	62,047	264,190	713,554	222,877	686,866	188,904
Total liabilities	182,422	3,764,397	822,328	3,724,028	799,733	3,880,703
Total equity and liabilities	11,663,856	18,625,704	12,268,695	19,103,533	11,467,904	18,658,938
Net assets per share	0.128	0.165	0.127	0.171	0.119	0.164

Un-Audited Separate And Consolidated Condensed Statement Of Comprehensive Income For The Six Months Period Ended 30 June 2022

	30 June 2022		30 June 2021	
	Parent RO	Group RO	Parent RO	Group RO
INCOME				
Dividend income	329,156	329,156	315,632	315,632
Dividend from Subsidiary	899,993	-	-	-
Finance income on lease receivables	-	253,044	-	289,691
Maintenance services income (net)	-	29,820	-	35,157
(Decrease)/increase in financial assets as FVTPL	(11,529)	(11,529)	7,731	7,731
Gain on disposal of FVTPL assets	-	-	6,203	6,203
Interest income	14,651	29,954	2	2
Other income	49,537	46,607	30,000	9,878
Operating income	1,281,808	677,052	359,568	664,294
EXPENSES				
Interest & finance expenses	(647)	(666)	(530)	(567)
Staff costs	(120,391)	(120,391)	(112,129)	(112,889)
Finance cost on lease payable	-	(90,872)	-	(91,258)
Depreciation	(1,626)	(1,670)	(2,079)	(2,123)
General and administrative expenses	(66,013)	(70,540)	(59,990)	(61,733)
Operating expenses	(188,677)	(284,139)	(174,728)	(268,570)
Profit before taxation	1,093,131	392,913	184,840	395,724
Income tax expense	(26,803)	(56,769)	(7,041)	(38,673)
Profit for the period	1,066,328	336,144	177,799	357,051
Other comprehensive income:				
Net change in fair values of financial assets at FVOCI	140,924	140,924	2,234,146	2,234,146
Total comprehensive income for the period	1,207,252	477,068	2,411,945	2,591,197
Basic and diluted earnings per share	0.012	0.004	0.002	0.004
Note: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who requests them in Arabic or English as requested, within 7 days of receipt of the request.				

‘Women in Pink’ to raise awareness on breast cancer

Novartis, ranked among the world’s top pharmaceutical companies, on Monday announced the roll out of its new ‘Women in Pink’ campaign which aims to raise awareness on breast cancer for a better quality of life for women across the GCC.

The campaign forms part of Novartis’ ongoing commitment to raise awareness and create solutions across the continuum of breast cancer care, and it encourages women across the region to become change-makers in their own health.

It will also empower women by providing them with the right information to make the best choices for their treatment plan through partnerships with the Emirates Oncology Society and non-profit organisation, Friends of Cancer Patients, said a press statement.

According to the World Health Organization, breast cancer is the most common malignancy in all GCC Countries, with the incidence rate highest in Bahrain (46.4), followed by Kuwait (44.3), Qatar (35.5), the UAE (19.2), Oman (14.4) and Saudi Arabia (12.9).

“That’s why it is vital that we work together to improve public health education and awareness around prevention, early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of breast cancer through initiatives such as the Women in Pink campaign,” said Professor Humaid al



Shamsi, President of the Emirates Oncology Society.

“Breast cancer rates across the GCC are comparatively low when examined against other industrialised countries. However, the disease still affects a significant proportion of the population, particularly women,” adds Dr Sawsan al Madhi, Director-General for Friends of Cancer Patients.

“That’s why we believe that deep and broad change is needed in our approach to

breast cancer in the Gulf, beginning with early screening and continuing with an ongoing commitment to improve and extend the lives of cancer patients. Through this campaign, we are empowering patients, before they become patients, to take control of their health by becoming their own advocates and inspire others to do the same.”

Around one third of cancers are preventable through simple changes in lifestyle, genetic testing of high-risk groups, and vac-

cination. The Women in Pink campaign was created to encourage women to get early cancer screenings, regular check-ups and mammograms as patients who receive an early diagnosis, and whose cancer is still localised, have a significantly higher survival rate.

Additionally, the campaign aims to raise awareness of metastatic breast cancer symptoms so patients can identify them in themselves and others and to ensure that patients with

metastatic breast cancer can gain access to enhanced and innovative treatment solutions.

“We need to improve the outcome of patients being treated for cancer, and nothing impacts cancer survival rates more than screening and early detection,” Shamsi exhorted.

By engaging with stakeholders at all levels, from patients to healthcare practitioners, he asid, “we want to create a society in which early and frequent screening becomes accessible and simple and patients are able to receive treatment at the right time for the best outcome”.

As part of the new campaign, Novartis will collaborate with different stakeholders and thought leaders to drive discussions on prevention, early intervention, and care management to improve patient outcomes, enhance quality of life, and optimise longevity for patients.

Joy Khoury, Head of Communications and Patient Advocacy of Novartis Gulf, said that at Novartis, “we’re on a mission to transform the lives of patients and connect people and communities to better quality care”.

“As we continue to develop innovative therapies to fight cancer and address the unmet needs of cancer patients, we are also committed to ensuring that they have the knowledge, tools, and support needed to manage the disease and live healthier lives,” he added.



Bank Muscat extends strong support to Dhofar visitors

In line with its customer-centric vision to constantly better and enhance the quality of its services and products, Bank Muscat the leading financial services provider in the sultanate, has strengthened its electronic banking services to benefit visitors to the Khareef Dhofar 2022.

To enable customers to have easy access to banking services 24/7, the bank maintains more than 50 ATMs/CDMs in addition to 13 branches in the Governorate of Dhofar. It is also worthwhile to note that four Bank Muscat branches and ATMs/CDMs are located close to the main highway at Adam, Haima, Qarn al Alam and Thumrait. These four branches provide banking services in the sparsely populated area between Adam and Thumrait, the bank said.

Taya Eid Bait Sabeea, Deputy General Manager - Interior Regions, Bank Muscat, underlined the fact that the Khareef season in Dhofar ‘is one of the most important tourist seasons in the country’ during which the governorate sees huge inflows of tourists both from within the sultanate as well as from other countries. “As the leading financial institution in the country, Bank Muscat is committed to the success of Khareef Dhofar and



Taya Eid Bait Sabeea

has taken a lot of effort to ensure the prompt availability of banking facilities and services through branches, ATMs and CDMs in Dhofar as well as those situated on the highway between Adam and Thumrait so as to provide the best services possible for visitors during their journey,” Sabeea added.

Bank Muscat has invested heavily in cutting-edge technology to provide customers with banking services through multiple channels.

Also, the bank’s continuously upgraded Internet and mobile banking services and Call Centre offer customers a fast, comfortable and secure banking experience. Today, over 1.3mn retail banking customers are using various features like real-time bill payments for utilities in Oman.

Homes r Us celebrates special feeling

Homes r Us - the widely loved home decor and furnishing brand has launched a dedicated collection to help young couples set up their new homes together with ease.

For young couples, the group said, the first home is a significant shared milestone that can bring them closer. It marks the beginning of their lives together and is often one of their first big investments, it further said.

Over the years, as one of the leading home decor and furnishing brands, Homes r Us has been a go-to for those setting up their homes.

“The choices that young couples make while setting up their first homes are for the long term, as they build their lives as a unit. Each decision must be discussed, budgeted for, and tailored to their individual needs as a couple. This is usually a time that can bring couples closer as they overcome differences or discover similarities,” the statement added.

Recognising the choices and the time and effort undertaken by young couples, the brand has gone one step further to provide the ideal solution for New Homes - a dedicated range of furniture and furnishing designed specially for New Homes.

Homes r Us has interacted with a diverse pool of customers over the years - and especially understands the needs of those furnishing their first home together.

In order to help new couples bring their vision of an ideal home to life without compromising each other’s tastes or choices, the brand offers the perfect solution with a wide range of affordable yet high-quality home furniture and furnishings.

Why is breastfeeding important for babies

Breastfeeding is a key to sustainable development of baby as it improves nutrition and ensures food security. Mother’s milk is a soul food for baby. It is a gift that lasts lifetime. Dear mother’s it’s never too early to start thinking about how you are going to feed your baby. Here are some benefits of breastfeeding that will help you, motivate you to breastfeed your baby.

Some of the health benefits are:
Your breast milk is perfectly



Dr Nileshta Chitre
Specialist Gynecologist
Aster Al Raffah Hospital, Sohar

designed for your baby.
Breast milk protects your

baby from infections and diseases.

Breast milk is easily available to your baby, whenever baby needs it.

Breastfeeding can build a strong emotional bond between you and your baby.

Breastfeeding has many long-term benefits for your baby.

Longer you breastfeed, longer the protection and greater are the benefits.

Breastfeeding can reduce your baby’s risk of infection, allergies, diarrhoea, vomiting,

obesity in children, cardiovascular diseases in adulthood.

Breastfeeding also has heap of benefits to you mothers. More you breastfeed, greater are the benefits.

Breastfeeding lowers the risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, osteoporosis (weakening of bones), obesity in mothers, cardiovascular diseases in mothers.

All in all breastfeeding isn’t just a choice, it’s a responsibility. Let’s all be responsible mothers and give this beautiful gift to our babies.

Mazoon Dairy offers ‘Taste of Khareef’ to Salalah tourists



Oman’s flagship dairy company, Mazoon Dairy, recently launched a seasonal promotion campaign for a range of its refreshing products.

Coinciding with the khareef season during which Salalah sees a huge influx of both local and foreign tourists, Mazoon’s refreshing range of juice and ice cream products will be promoted as the ‘Taste of Khareef’.

In an effort to promote their products, Mazoon Dairy have collaborated with Salalah International Airport and presented khareef tourists with ice cream samples to enjoy on arrival.

Made from pure cow’s milk and devoid of additives like vegetable oils, Mazoon’s ice cream has been the perfect refreshment of choice for visitors looking to relax and enjoy Salalah’s



beautiful weather.

To meet the growing demand of clients across the Sultanate, Mazoon Dairy recently expanded its distribution operations to the Dhofar governorate

in the south of Oman.

Mazoon Dairy’s array of products, which includes fresh milk, fresh yoghurt, flavoured milk, long-life milk, long-life flavoured milk, flavoured yo-

ghurt, natural juices, cheese, fresh cream, labneh and ice cream, are the hallmark of quality, and are especially in high demand during the Khareef season across Oman.

Being one of the most technologically advanced dairy companies in the GCC, Mazoon Dairy’s aim is to deliver fresh and nutritious products to every home in Oman and the region.

Bank Nizwa records positive performance; reasserts leadership in Islamic banking

Bank Nizwa, the leading and the fastest-growing Islamic bank in the sultanate, has recorded growth as reflected in its financial results for the first half of 2022.

Growth this year has developed favourable views in the global economy following the re-opening surge in 2021.

Dedicated to bringing about a positive change in the economic landscape, Bank Nizwa said, it 'continues its strategic roadmap of shaping the future of Islamic finance in the country by continuously recording outstanding performance in its financial results'.

As a testament to its progress, Bank Nizwa has turned in a commendable financial performance by registering a six per cent growth in net profit. The bank's total assets also increased by 13 per cent over time, reaching RO1,493mn in June this year from RO1,322mn in June last year. The gross financing portfolio improved by 12 per cent to RO1,207mn, whilst the total customer deposit portfolio rose by 16 per cent to RO1,211mn. This increase in financing and deposit portfolio in retail and corporate businesses has supplied the bank with the impetus it needs to maintain its growth trajectory. This momentum will allow it to attain its long-term goals.

Commenting on the bank's extraordinary performance, Shaikh Khalid al Khalili, Chairman of Bank Nizwa said, "The start of the year 2022 was promising,



supported by rising international crude oil prices and global recovery as a consequence of stronger economic activities."

"Bank Nizwa delivered a positive financial performance throughout the first half, increasing net profit by six per cent. This is due to the bank's ability to conform to economic realities, such as the competitive market in which we operate, as well as a solid balance sheet."

Bank Nizwa witnessed sustained development in its core businesses, where it has been investing to create additional value for its clients and shareholders. The Islamic bank recorded a 45 per cent increase in shareholder equity, including the successful completion of an RO70mn right

issue exercise and a 12 per cent increase in operating income, driven by healthy activity across both its wholesale and retail businesses and cost control.

This is due to the successful implementation of their 2025 strategy, which calls for a continued focus on growing the balance sheet in a controlled manner, diversifying revenue streams, controlling expenses, improving margins, enhancing the bank's digital capabilities and expanding products and client base.

"At Bank Nizwa, we believe Islamic banking serves a higher purpose - and we continue to fulfil ours: enriching the lives of our customers and communities. From the depths of the difficult period last two years to the re-

covery that is now emerging, we have helped facilitate the government programmes that remain a lifeline for so many households and businesses; and we remain committed to providing ongoing support for our communities," Sheikh Khalid added.

The Islamic banking in the sultanate witnessed rapid growth and progress, becoming significant in a short span of time. The total assets of the Sultanate's Islamic banks and windows grew by 9.4 per cent year-on-year to hit the RO6bn mark in the first half of 2022, where Bank Nizwa is at the forefront of this remarkable growth of Islamic banking and continues its success journey by achieving positive financial results.



Forbes Middle East reveals region's top 25 Fintech companies for this year

Forbes Middle East has unveiled the 'Middle East's Top 25 Fintech Companies for 2022', highlighting the innovators in financial services that are helping businesses go digital and enabling consumers to embrace convenience in the way they make payments and move money.

The list was prepared based on the amount of money executed through the companies' digital channels in 2021, the number of downloads and active users each has, their geographical presence, annual growth, innovation, impact, and funding from venture capitalists, Forbes Middle East said.

The list is presented in a chronological order; it is not a ranking. Fintech operations owned by exchange houses, traditional banks, governments, and telecom firms were excluded.

Payment firms were the most represented on the list. Jordan's MadfoatCom is one of the top performers after processing over US\$13bn in transactions in 2021. Egypt's Fawry, Saudi's

The UAE, Saudi Arabia and Egypt comprise over 70% of the list

Country-wise breakdown

UAE	8
EGYPT	5
SAUDI ARABIA	5
KUWAIT	3
BAHRAIN	2
JORDAN	1
UAE/SAUDI	1

PayTabs, and Kuwait's MyFatoorah are also revolutionising the sector on their home turf. Four buy-now-pay-later make the list: Saudi's Tamara, Egypt's ValU, and the UAE's tabby and Postpay.

Several companies attracted milestone funding. Lending platform MNT-Halan raised US\$120mn, digital payments platform Paymob raised

US\$50mn and crypto-asset exchange BitOasis secured US\$30mn in a Series B funding round. Of the 25 entries, 13 companies were founded by a single entrepreneur and 12 were established by two or more founders.

The UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt comprise over 70% of the list. The UAE dominates with eight entries, followed by Saudi and Egypt with five entries each.

PSM conducts teachers' training session

Pakistan School Muscat recently conducted a 'Teachers' Training' session at the school library under senior principal Nasir Nawaz.

The session worked on the latest methodologies and techniques that cater to the needs of learners, weak areas and interests of teachers teaching various subjects at various levels.

'It will help them to use updated lesson plans according to the latest educational requirements based on the existing SLOs,' said a statement issued on behalf of the school principal.

'It will also address the kind of problems students face while learning which will ultimately enhance teachers' professional performance as well as students' learning,' the statement claimed.

'Teacher training is always required to achieve educational ex-



cellence and to apprise the faculty members with modern teaching methodologies as it is said that great teachers help create great students,' the school said.

Teachers are the nurturers of

our education system. They are responsible for providing an opportunity for holistic development and growth to the students.

The best way to ensure educational excellence is to provide

top-quality teacher training to the teachers. They should be trained so that the students' become comfortable and compatible in learning and the learning outcomes are aptly achieved, the statement added.

Wizz Air Abu Dhabi flights to Moscow resumes in October

Wizz Air Abu Dhabi, the ultra-low fare national airline of the UAE, on Monday announced resumption of its operation to the Russian capital of Moscow from October this year.

The flights will operate daily from October 3, the airline said in a press statement, adding that tickets 'are on sale on wizzair.com and the airline's mobile app, with fares starting as low as AED359'.

"Wizz Air Abu Dhabi is operating a network of 34 destinations within a five-hour flight time radius of Abu Dhabi, providing ultra-low fares to a variety of diverse destinations," said Michael BerLouis, Managing Director of Wizz Air Abu Dhabi.

"We support the UAE's travel and tourism industry by enhancing connectivity both regionally and globally, in line with national



regulations and policies."

Strategically located in the UAE, Wizz Air Abu Dhabi provides ultra-low fare, hassle-free and efficient travel options to a range of destinations. They include Alexandria (Egypt), Almaty (Kazakhstan), Amman (Jordan), Aqaba (Jordan), Athens (Greece), Baku (Azerbaijan), Belgrade (Serbia), Dammam (Saudi Arabia), Kuwait City (Kuwait), Kutaisi (Georgia), Manama (Bahrain), Male (Maldives), Muscat (Oman), Nur-Sultan

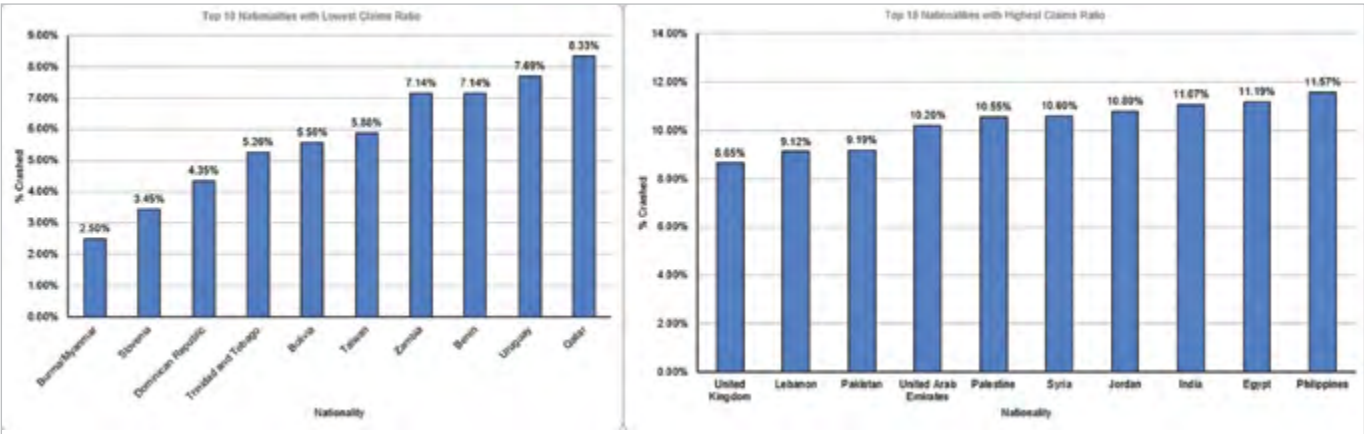
(Kazakhstan), Salalah (Oman), Santorini (Greece), Sarajevo (Bosnia), Sohag (Egypt), Tel-Aviv (Israel), Tirana (Albania) and Yerevan (Armenia) among others. For ultimate peace of mind during this uncertain time, passengers can book tickets with confidence, thanks to WIZZ Flex. With WIZZ Flex, passengers can cancel their flight up to three hours before departure without any fee and receive 100 per cent of the fare immediately reimbursed in airline credit.

yallacompare's Data Science Team shares driver performance by nationality

yallacompare, the number-one financial comparison site in the Middle East, has released an updated report on the UAE's 'best' drivers after last year's report declared Pakistani drivers as kings and queens of the road. Drivers from Burma/Myanmar were the best drivers in the UAE during 2021, with the lowest accident claim rate of 2.5 per cent.

Using data for the whole of 2021, yallacompare looked at the number of claims registered by each nationality, proportionate to the number of customers, establishing a claims ratio by nationality.

In recognition of the latest report, which usually triggers some lively widespread debate across social media, yallacompare has released a new online driving



game giving UAE residents the chance to show off their driving skills on a virtual racetrack and claim the title of 'The UAE's Best Virtual Driver'.

yallaturismo gives UAE residents the chance to win AED5,000 by submitting their

details and topping the leaderboard. Players can find the game by visiting <https://yallacompare.com/yallaturismo/>.

The report from 2020 found that Pakistani drivers were crowned the #1 drivers in the country, with only 2.5 per cent

having made a claim in the previous 12 months. However, in 2021 Pakistani drivers failed to make the top five with a claims ratio that rose to 9.2 per cent.

Another notable change to the rankings is that of Filipino drivers, with just over 3 per cent

declaring a claim in 2020, compared to 11 per cent declaring a claim in 2021.

Syrians and Jordanians have held their position steady with Syrians only rising to 10.6 per cent and Jordanians to 10.8 per cent in the last 12 months.

The top five nationalities with the least number of claims per insured customer were drivers from Myanmar (2.5 per cent), Slovenia (3.5 per cent), Dominican Republic (4.4 per cent), Trinidad and Tobago (5.3 per cent) and Bolivia (5.6 per cent).

The five that came out with the highest percentage of claims per insured customer were drivers from the Philippines (11.6 per cent), Egypt (11.2 per cent), India (11.1 per cent), Jordan (10.8 per cent) and Syria (10.6 per cent).

Charlotte Cuddihy, Marketing Manager at yallacompare said, "We have an incredibly rich database, full of fantastic insights into drivers and driving behaviour in the UAE. It's great to be able to release thought provoking statistics like this - it always

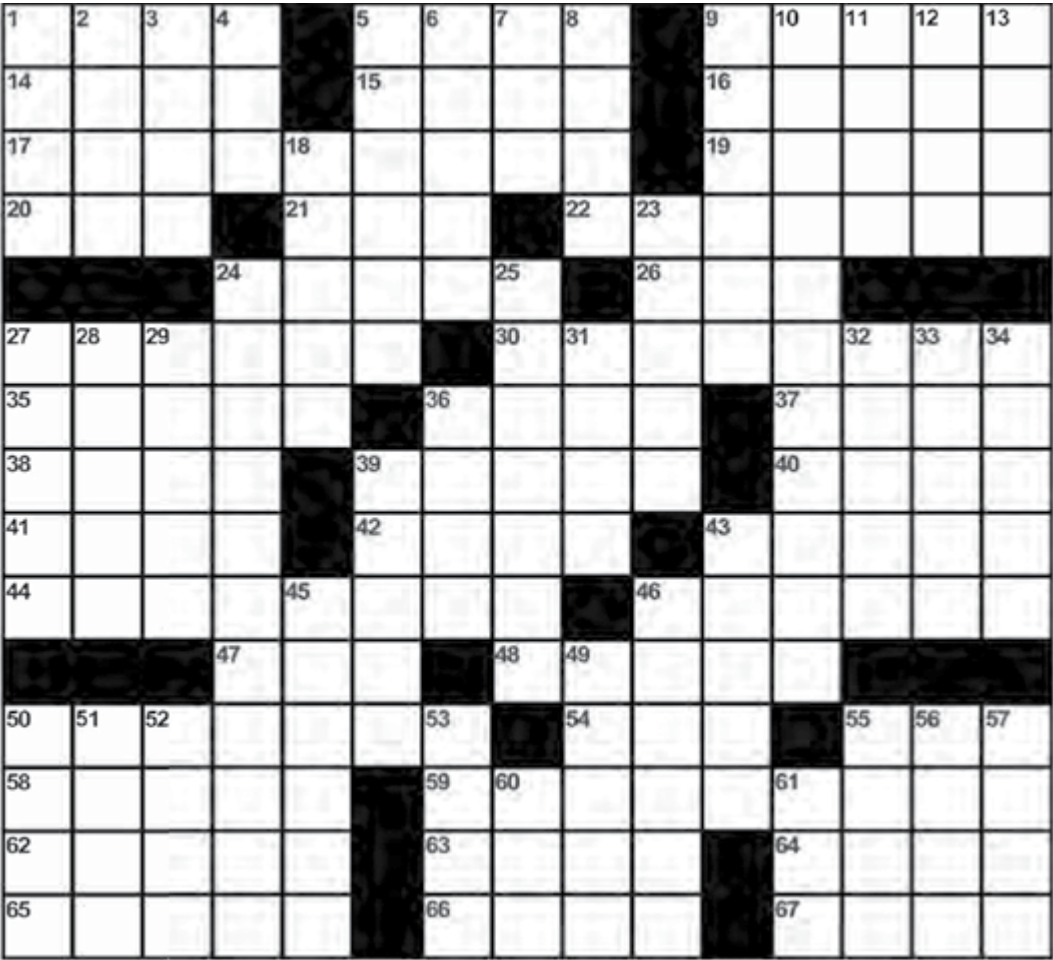
manages to get an interesting reaction.

"It's important to note that since life has returned to normal after the pandemic, and the number of cars on the road are back to full capacity, our data has shown that this has led to an increase in road accidents from the previous year.

As always we encourage drivers to be safe on the road, allow enough time to get to their destination and be mindful of other drivers," Cuddihy added.

Whilst the study implies 'best' drivers, it should be noted that the collected data is based on the information customers enter into the yallacompare system and therefore relies on customers providing honest accounts of their claims history.

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Baylor University's lo-cale
- 5) Smugly superior type
- 9) Samantha of the silver screen
- 14) Musical miscellany
- 15) Skedaddled
- 16) Carried, as by the wind
- 17) Parent of 39-Across
- 19) Sandy shade
- 20) Busy bug
- 21) Number on a grandfa-ther clock
- 22) Fuddy-duddies
- 24) Scottish clans
- 26) Regret
- 27) Philosopher Jean- Paul
- 30) Lack of slack
- 35) Brainless sort
- 36) Husky food?
- 37) Splashy party
- 38) Not "for here"
- 39) Offspring of 17- Across
- 40) Degree candidate's exam
- 41) Nutmeg cover
- 42) Considered individu- ally

- 43) Terra- (potting material)
- 44) Raccoonlike carni-vore, surprisingly
- 46) Adorned with a cummerbund
- 47) Personal connections
- 48) British quart
- 50) Melancholy poems
- 54) "All the Things You_"
- 55) Heavy drinker
- 58) Type of tape
- 59) Incumbents on their way out
- 62) Words before a high note?
- 63) Priestly garb
- 64) Introduction to psy- chology?
- 65) High times
- 66) Untidy state
- 67) Part of a galaxy

- DOWN
- 1) Infant's former home
- 2) Burn-soothing plant
- 3) Use as an example
- 4) " la la!"
- 5) American flag feature
- 6) "Good field, _"
- 7) Metal, pre-smelting
- 8) Kingsley and Stiller
- 9) Flow back from the shore
- 10) Awesome provider
- 11) Diluted rum
- 12) Diarist Frank
- 13) Some Major Leaguers
- 18) Rival ofNavratilova, once
- 23) Place to put bags
- 24) Police informer
- 25) Impassive (Var.)
- 27) Eastern lute
- 28) Be crazy about
- 29) Unbending
- 31) Foot span
- 32) Terra firma
- 33) Patio flooring, some- times
- 34) Caesar or chef
- 36) Nigeria neighbor
- 39) Bum a perfume stick
- 43) Had a conscience
- 45) Charged particles
- 46) Strain
- 49) Poetic feet
- 50) Caught up
- 51) Prefix with "type"
- 52) Edible corm
- 53) Harshly criticize
- 55) "Shoo!"
- 56) Stew vegetable
- 57) Pre-revolutionary

- ruler (Var.)
- 60) Andy Capp's brew

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
Some heavy feelings are probably weighing you down right now, but the sooner you address them, the better off you'll be. You don't have to solve them. In fact, just acknowledging that they exist might be enough to give you a little breathing room. Afterward, think about going for a long walk or finding some other physical way of gaining release. Once you've done that, you should feel like a burden's been lifted.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
Irresistibility is a state of mind that's quite familiar to you, but today's energy gives you even more depth and magnetism for the time being. All around you, people are falling under your spell as if you were a master hypnotist. Even you can't believe your spiking level of charm. While romantic and grandiose fantasies might crowd your head with delightful scenarios, don't let them distract you from real-life opportunities.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER21
If people have been disappointing you lately, have faith that things will turn around soon, because they will! Try to be more open about the fact that people are full of surprises. Sometimes when they make a kind gesture, offer a compliment, or just smile your way, it can make your day. There are so many fresh possibilities about to enter your life. What you need to do today is let yourself believe that your future holds more happiness than your past ever did.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
Even if high school was long ago for you, it's easy (maybe too easy) to slip back into that mentality. Who's got the newest, shiniest gear? Who's the teacher's pet? Who's the popular one who totally doesn't deserve it? Try to put the brakes on this kind of thinking. Remind yourself that one of the benefits of adulthood (besides the lack of a curfew) is rising above such petty superficialities.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
Toss aside any limiting or inhibiting worldviews by diving into deep conversations with those whose intellectual powers meet (or even exceed) yours. It's hard to understand where someone's coming from until you make a serious attempt to explore their point of view. Fortunately, your mental energy has given you an open, curious mind and the willingness to work on this aspect of yourself. Use these powers to improve your life.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
It might feel as though you have the whole world on your shoulders. You are pretty strong, but it's still time to do something about your burden. You could end up with a serious crick in your neck, and who could possibly take on your load if that happens? Not everyone can be quite so competent and on the ball as you, but someone could certainly help you shift your responsibilities somewhat so they don't drag you down.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
Your mental agility extends across a broad range of topics, but right now you've got the brainpower to go for depth in addition to breadth. You've got the ability to perceive layers of meaning and analyze subtleties in new ways that might surprise you and your colleagues. Is there a work stalemate you need to break? A relationship you want to shake up? Make sure you use this new skill in the areas that need it most.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
Find a way to take a break and soak up some fresh air today. You're about to plunge into some very deep and demanding situation at work or at school, so make sure you spend some time outside enjoying yourself to restore your sense of balance. The ambitious plans you're about to put into motion will benefit you all the more if you're not feeling burned out and exhausted before you even start working on them.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
You're moving up the career ladder, which is somewhat thrilling yet just a little bit terrifying at the same time. Don't beat yourself up over your seriously mixed feelings about success. After all, the price of getting what you want is having to deal with having gotten what you want. While in many ways it's a great thing to achieve so much, it can be hard to feel as if you have no goal in sight. That is sure to change soon.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
Mulling over past decisions and contemplating what might have been is guaranteed to drive you totally insane, so don't do it no matter what! Push aside all those could-have-beens and concentrate on the here and now. You might find that people sense the change in your energy and become much more receptive to your thoughts and ideas if you stick to the positive. Remember to keep that perspective as you go through your day.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
Leave the routine chores around the house for someone else today. Even if you live alone, you can leave them for a while. Some extraordinary meetings are taking place today, and you need to be ready for them. The mundane has no place in your day, especially when your charisma is this potent. Expect to meet all the right people and be in the thick of things all day. It's win/win wherever you end up. You know how to make the most of the opportunities coming your way.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
You need to spend time treading water before you plunge into uncharted depths, especially at a moment like this. Some of the work you've been doing has stirred up a few surprising emotions or pieces of ancient history that you don't feel quite up to dealing with right now. It's fine if you want to leave them be. You know they're there, and you can deal with them when the time is right.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Which of these is a landmark in Bogota?
A. El Señor Caido
B. Cap Softerlarry
C. Cleopatra's needle
D. Yukankan Canyon
Correct Answer: El Señor Caido

02. Fingerprint classification was refined sufficiently to be used as evidence to solve a crime in which decade?
A. 1890s
B. 1800s
C. 1930s
D. 1950s

03. Where can pieces move in the game of go?
A. Anywhere in a straight unob-structed line
B. Diagonally
C. Two squares sideways and one up or down
D. Once played, pieces cannot move at all

Answers: 1.A 2.A 3.D

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

A	P	O	R
H	L	R	S
E	O	A	D
R	E	Y	L

Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters. A three letter word is worth one point, a four letter word is worth two points, and so on. Valid words must be at least three letters long.
Solution 20-25 words: Excellent, 15-20 words: Very good, 10-15 words: Good, 5-10 words: Average

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

China holds fresh drills around Taiwan

Beijing, China - China carried out fresh military drills around Taiwan on Monday, Beijing said, defying calls to end its largest-ever exercises encircling the island in the wake of a visit by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Beijing has raged at the trip by Pelosi - the highest-ranking elected US official to visit Taiwan in decades - ripping up a series of talks and cooperation agreements with Washington, most notably on climate change and defence.

It has also deployed fighter jets, warships and ballistic missiles in what analysts have described as practice for a blockade and ultimate invasion of the self-ruled democratic island that China claims as its territory.

Those drills had been expected to draw to a close on Sunday, but China said on Monday they were still ongoing.

"The eastern theatre of the Chinese People's Liberation Army continued to carry out practical joint exercises and training in the sea and airspace around Taiwan island," the military said.

The exercises, the PLA's Eastern Command said, were 'focusing on organising joint anti-submarine and sea assault operations'.

Taipei condemned Beijing for extending the drills.

"China's provocation and aggression have harmed the status quo of the Taiwan Strait and



People read newspapers about China's military exercises encircling Taiwan, along a street in Beijing on Monday (AFP)

China's aggression has harmed the status quo of the Taiwan Strait and raised tensions in the region

TAIWAN FOREIGN MINISTRY

raised tensions in the region," the island's foreign ministry said in a statement.

Beijing was also set to carry out live-fire drills on Monday in parts of the South China Sea and the Yellow Sea.

Taipei defiant

Taiwan has remained defiant throughout the Chinese drills.

Its military said it would hold anti-landing exercises in Taiwan's south on Tuesday and Thursday.

"We will practise counter moves against simulated enemy attacks on Taiwan," Lou Woei-

jye, spokesman for the Eighth Army Corps, told AFP.

They will include the deployment of hundreds of troops and about 40 howitzer guns, the military said.

Taiwan has insisted that no Chinese planes or ships have entered Taiwan's territorial waters during the drills.

But to show how close it came to Taiwan's shores, the Chinese military released a video of an air force pilot filming the island's coastline and mountains from his

cockpit.

The Eastern Command also shared a photo it said was of a warship on patrol with Taiwan's shoreline visible in the background. Ballistic missiles were fired over Taiwan's capital during the exercises last week, according to Chinese state media.

The scale and intensity of China's drills - as well as its withdrawal from key talks on climate and defence - have triggered outrage in the United States and other democracies.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said Washington is 'determined to act responsibly' to avoid a major global crisis.

'Issuing a warning'

But Beijing on Monday defended its behaviour as 'firm, forceful and appropriate' to American provocation.

"(We) are only issuing a warning to the perpetrators," foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a regular briefing, promising China would 'firmly smash the Taiwan authorities' illusion of gaining independence through the US'.

"We urge the US to do some earnest reflection, and immediately correct its mistakes," Wenbin said. Experts say the drills have revealed an increasingly emboldened Chinese military capable of carrying out a gruelling blockade of the island and obstructing US forces from coming to Taiwan's aid.

"In some areas, the PLA might even surpass US capabilities," Grant Newsham, a researcher at the Japan Forum for Strategic Studies and a former US Navy officer, told AFP.

"If the battle is confined to the area right around Taiwan, today's Chinese navy is a dangerous opponent - and if the Americans and Japanese do not intervene for some reason, things would be difficult for Taiwan."

AFP

Biggest chocolate plant restarts

Brussels, Belgium - A factory in Belgium billed as the world's biggest chocolate-making plant said it restarted operations on Monday after closing for six weeks to clean up a salmonella contamination.

Three of the 24 production lines at the plant in the town of Wieze resumed and the first delivery took place, said Barry Callebaut, the Swiss company that runs the factory. The plant - which supplies industry giants such as Hershey, Nestle and Unilever but not to consumers directly - was shut down at the end of June after salmonella bacteria was found in one lot.

Zurich-based Barry Callebaut said it halted shipments and informed clients in time to prevent contaminated chocolate making its way to shops. It identified lecithin, added to smooth food textures, as the source of the contamination, prompting weeks of extensive cleaning.

"We remain cautious because this operation is unprecedented, the process of cleaning and disinfection takes a lot of time," a Barry Callebaut spokesman, Korneel Warlop, told AFP. He said that the factory was planning to reactivate more production lines in the coming weeks.

AFP

London police strip-searched hundreds of kids: New data

London, UK - London's under-fire police force strip-searched more than 600 children over a two-year period, most of them black boys, according to new data released on Monday.

England's commissioner for children, Rachel de Souza, said she was 'deeply shocked' by the figures after obtaining them from the Metropolitan police.

De Souza's request came after Britain's biggest police force was forced to apologise in March over the case of 'Child Q', which has sparked an investigation for gross misconduct into four officers.

The 15-year-old black schoolgirl was strip-searched by female officers in 2020 after being wrongly suspected of carrying cannabis, despite

them being aware she was menstruating.

She was searched without an 'appropriate adult' present, and neither was an adult in attendance in 23 per cent of the cases unearthed by de Souza.

In total, 650 minors aged 10-17 were strip-searched by Met officers between 2018 and 2020, she found. More than 95 per cent were boys, and 58 per cent of the 650 were described by the officer as being black.

De Souza said she was 'extremely concerned' at the ethnic imbalance, and said Child Q may be part of a bigger 'systemic problem around child protection' in the Met. The figures had gone up sharply year after year, she said, and showed that a significant num-

ber of children 'are being subjected to this intrusive and traumatising practice each year'.

The London force has been rocked in recent years by a succession of incidents involving officers, including last year, when a diplomatic protection squad member was jailed for the kidnap, rape and murder of Sarah Everard.

A crisis of public confidence in the police saw Cressida Dick resign as Met commissioner in February. In response to de Souza's findings, the Met said it had already instituted changes 'to ensure children subject to intrusive searches are dealt with appropriately and respectfully'.

AFP

Sri Lanka frees Stalin on bail after outcry

Colombo, Sri Lanka - A Sri Lankan court on Monday released on bail top leftist trade union leader Joseph Stalin, whose arrest had sparked international condemnation and widespread protests.

Police have arrested scores of people on charges of damage to public property during months of protests, which peaked with the flight and resignation of president Gotabaya Rajapaksa in July.

Stalin, 57, was arrested on Thursday for contempt after he participated in an anti-government demonstration that was banned by a court in May.

Stalin, named after the late Soviet leader by his staunch communist father, thanked UN Human Rights Council officials who had called for his release and fellow activists who demonstrated across Sri Lanka demanding his freedom.

"The government cannot intimidate us through arrests,



Demonstrators prepare to leave the anti-government protest camp near the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo, on Friday (AFP)

there are at least another 50 protesters who are held across the country," Stalin told AFP, vowing to continue agitating against the new president, Ranil Wickremesinghe.

Tens of thousands of people, incensed by the island nation's unprecedented economic crisis, stormed Rajapaksa's palace and his seafront office on July 9, blaming him for mismanaging Sri

Lanka's finances.

He fled the country and later resigned.

His successor has drawn a distinction between 'protesters' and 'rioters' and vowed tough action against 'any troublemaker'. Stalin, the secretary of the Sri Lanka Teachers' Union, became the senior-most activist to be arrested in the new government's crackdown.

Police have also arrested another protester who had raided the liquor cabinet of the deposed leader, downed a beer and took off with a presidential mug.

Another was arrested for removing two official flags from the palace and using them as a bedsheet and a sarong.

Soon after protesters overran the Presidential Palace, there were social media posts of them frolicking in the pool and bouncing on four-poster beds inside the sprawling compound.

But protesters also turned over to authorities around 17.5mn rupees (US\$46,000) in crisp banknotes that had been found in one of the rooms.

The military last month demolished a protest camp outside the president's office - a move that drew international condemnation over the alleged use of excessive force on unarmed demonstrators.

AFP

Millions hungry but drought overlooked as Kenya prepares to vote

Purapul, Kenya - In the dust bowl of Kenya's drought-stricken north, the people of Purapul are edging closer to starvation, surviving on nothing but wild berries as their children waste away from hunger.

Loka Metir knows the bitter fruits make her children sick, further weakening their frail condition. But it hasn't rained properly in three years, and there's simply nothing else to eat.

"This is the only way to survive," the mother of five told AFP in Purapul, a scattering of thatched huts a two-day walk from the nearest town in the bone-dry Marsabit county.

At least 18mn people across the Horn of Africa are facing severe hunger as the worst drought in 40 years devastates the region. Over four million are in Kenya's often-forgotten north, a number that has climbed steadily this year, as the crisis struggles to attract national attention in the midst of a hard-fought - and expensive - election campaign.

Nearly 950,000 children under five years and 134,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women in Kenya's remote arid regions are acutely malnourished and need aid, according to government figures from June.

Hunger in the three hardest-hit counties, including Marsabit, borders on famine.

'Under the carpet'

The World Bank forecast in June that the drought, coupled with economic disruption from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, would drag on Kenya's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

Yet it has barely featured on the election agenda as Kenya's political giants have crisscrossed the country drumming up votes.

In the hustings, the soaring cost of living in East Africa's biggest economy has overshadowed other concerns.

Protesters in major cities have threatened to boycott the much-anticipated August 9 poll if



Posters of presidential candidate William Ruto are seen in Eldoret town on Sunday (AFP)

prices aren't lowered, chanting 'no food, no election'.

The plight of northern Kenya has largely gone 'under the carpet', said economist Timothy Njagi from the Tegemeo Institute of Agricultural Policy and Development in Nairobi.

"I found it quite sad... Given

that this was going to be an election year, we would have imagined that it was going to be a key discussion point," he told AFP.

Four consecutive failed rainy seasons, made worse by a changing climate, have created the driest conditions since the early 1980s.

Rivers and wells have run dry, and grazing land has turned to dust, spurring the death of more than 1.5mn livestock in Kenya alone.

Animal carcasses litter the rocky plains around Purapul, where pastoral families have struggled without milk or meat in

their diets, or any means of trading for food.

Out of sight

Iripiyo Apothya watched her goats shrink and die. The skins she couldn't boil and eat line the floor of her hut.

"Now I eat what the monkeys eat," said the 73-year-old, clutching a handful of the berries she boils into a bitter paste.

"But even these are running out - what can we do?"

The village is isolated and like many across Kenya's chronically underfunded north, has no school, road, shop or dispensary.

The nearest town Loiyangalani is 60km away. Despite hosting Africa's biggest wind farm, this dusty settlement on Lake Turkana is itself without electricity.

Outside town, children dig for water along the desolate shoreline of Turkana, an enormous salt lake.

The two main presidential aspirants, William Ruto and Raila

Odinga, have helicoptered into drought-affected regions, promising infrastructure and development in brief campaign stops.

But this is not vote-rich country to canvas and droughts generally don't win elections, said Karuti Kanyinga from the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Nairobi.

"It is a lose-lose for anyone who raises it," said Kanyinga.

Claire Nasike, from Greenpeace Africa, told AFP that pledges by both candidates to invest in water and agriculture in drought-prone areas lacked important detail.

"The nitty-gritties of how they are going to address the climate crises have not been captured."

The drought, which could stretch into 2023 if the next rains fail as predicted, has also struggled for global attention in a crowded field. An appeal for Ukraine has raised US\$1.92bn - nearly 86 per cent of its goal, according to UN data.

AFP

Ex-guerrilla Petro sworn in as Colombia's first leftist president

Bogota, Colombia - Gustavo Petro on Sunday took the oath of office as Colombia's first-ever leftist president, before a crowd of hundreds of thousands at his inauguration in Bogota.

The 62-year-old former guer-rilla and one-time mayor takes over from the deeply unpopular Ivan Duque, with plans for pro-found reforms in a country beset by economic inequality and drug violence.

Petro's hard-fought victory in June elections brought Colom-bia, long ruled by a conservative elite, into an expanding left-wing fold in Latin America.

"I swear to God and promise the people that I will faithfully en-force the constitution and the laws of Colombia," said Petro be-fore the large crowd of support-ers gathered in Bogota's Bolivar Square.

Petro - whose government should enjoy support from a left-leaning majority in Congress - called in his inaugural address for Colombian armed groups to 'lay down their arms' and accept legal benefits 'in exchange for peace'.

He also took aim at decades of counter-narcotics efforts, say-ing: "It is time for a new interna-tional convention recognising that the war on drugs has failed."

And he called for the creation of an international fund to help the deforestation-plagued Colombian Amazon.

On the campaign trail, Petro had promised during his four-year term to raise taxes on the rich, invest in health care and education, and reform the police after a brutal crackdown on anti-inequality protests last year that was internationally condemned.

He has vowed to suspend oil exploration, to promote clean energy and to reactivate diplo-matic and commercial relations with the government of Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela, sus-pended since 2019.

Petro starts from an 'enviable position, with a large majority in Congress and, in terms of the street, with support that no government had in recent years', analyst Jorge Restrepo of the Resource Center for Conflict Analysis (Cerac), told AFP.

Maduro congratulated Petro



Colombian President Gustavo Petro (right) swearing in Vice-President Francia Marquez during their inauguration ceremony in Bogota, on Sunday (AFP)

on his inauguration, saying in a video: "I extend my hand to the people of Colombia, to President Gustavo Petro, to rebuild brotherhood on the basis of respect and love between peoples."

The Venezuelan leader had not been invited to the ceremony by outgoing president Duque,

as it had decades ago been stolen by the M-19 guerrilla group of which he was once a member, before being returned in 1991 after a negotiated peace deal.

‘Critical’ debt burden
Petro's presidency is historic in

Almost 40 per cent of Colom-bia's 50mn people live in poverty, while 11.7 per cent are unemployed. Inflation in July also reached 10.2 per cent year-on-year. On Monday, a preparatory commission set up by Petro said he was inheriting 'a level of in-debtedness and fiscal deficit that... is critical'.

Thousands of Colombians de-scended on Bogota's main square to celebrate Petro's inau-guration and his promise of change.

"We feel very grateful... to the millions of Colombians who be-lieved in change and today we are going to start working to-gether hand in hand to achieve it," said Alexandra Rojas, a sup-porter of the new president.

Others could not contain their excitement.

"I am happy to see the inau-guration of our president Gustavo Petro, what a happiness, I can't contain it, the happiness is great, the change has happened, the change has arrived," said Ruth Perez, wrapped in the colours of the national flag.

Peace talks

Petro has promised to imple-ment outstanding provisions of the 2016 peace agreement that saw the rebel FARC movement lay down arms after nearly six decades of civil conflict.

The former mayor of Bogota has also vowed to pursue nego-tiations with the National Lib-eration Army (ELN) armed group. Despite the FARC disbanding to become a political party, Colombia has seen a surge in vi-olence. Thousands of dissidents continue to battle the ELN and powerful cartels for control of drug fields, illegal gold mines and lucrative smuggling routes.

According to the Indepaz peace research institute, there are 90 armed groups with some 10,000 members active in Colombia, the world's largest producer of cocaine.

Petro has proposed allowing armed groups to hand them-selves over in exchange for some form of amnesty.

Colombian presidents serve only one term.
AFP



Security officials restraining a man (yellow shirt) who attacked a Japanese sailor in Honiara on the Solomon Islands on Monday (AFP)

Japanese sailor attacked at WWII ceremony in Solomons

Honiara, Solomon Islands - A Solomon Islands man described as 'mentally affected' attacked a Japanese sailor with scissors during a World War II memorial ceremony in the Solomon Islands Monday before bystanders, in-cluding military personnel, over-powered him.

Video of the incident showed half a dozen servicemen, includ-ing US forces, trying to control a bearded man in a yellow T-shirt struggling on the ground.

One of the servicemen loses his cap, falls over and rolls a short way down a hill as the assailant

scrambles away before being trapped in a headlock and carried away by local officials.

US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman was among those attending the ceremony at Bloody Ridge near Honiara to mark the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Guadalcanal. The in-jured man was a 27-year-old media spokesman on the Japane-se destroyer JS Karasame, which was visiting as part of a re-gional training exercise, said an official at the Japanese embassy who asked not to be named.
AFP

North Korea to convene parliament in September

Seoul, South Korea - North Korea's rubber-stamp parlia-ment will hold its next session in September where it is set to discuss new laws and other organisational issues, state media said on Monday.

The hermit state's legisla-tive body meets only once or twice a year, mostly for day-long sessions to approve budgets or other decisions deemed necessary by the rul-ing Workers' Party.

"The 7th Session of the 14th Supreme People's As-sembly (SPA) of the DPRK will be convened in Pyongyang on September 7," the official Ko-rean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported.

"The session will discuss the issue of adopting the law on the socialist rural develop-ment and the law on land-scaping and the organisational matter," it added. Such meet-ings are carefully monitored by observers for any changes to economic policy or a reshuffle of high-ranking offi-cials. It is unclear whether leader Kim Jong Un will attend the upcoming meeting. Kim did not attend the last session in February this year. Under Kim, the North has made rapid progress on its weapons pro-grammes and has carried out a record-breaking blitz of tests this year.
AFP

HK reduces COVID quarantine for arrivals

Hong Kong, China - Hong Kong will cut its hotel quarantine for international arrivals from one week to three days from Friday, leader John Lee announced, in an easing of COVID restrictions that have severely curbed travel.

Once a global logistics and transportation hub, Hong Kong has been largely cut off from the world for more than two years due to its adherence to China's strict zero-COVID policy.

Hong Kong had required over-seas arrivals to undergo seven days of quarantine and repeated testing while confined to a room in a designated hotel, a restric-tion that residents and the busi-ness community complained has deterred them from travelling.

Lee, Hong Kong's ex-security chief turned city leader, an-nounced on Monday that the quarantine period for arrivals would be shortened to three days in a hotel plus four days of health monitoring at home or in a hotel of their choice.
AFP

Drought forces rethink on water use in Spain

Madrid, Spain - Faced with a his-toric drought and threatened by desertification, Spain is rethink-ing how it spends its water re-sources, which are used mainly to irrigate crops.

"We must be extremely care-ful and responsible instead of looking the other way," Spain's Minister for the Ecologi-cal Transition Teresa Ribera said recently, about the impact of the lack of rain.

Like France and Italy, Spain has been gripped by several ex-treme heatwaves this summer after an unusually dry winter.

That has left the country's reservoirs at 40.4 per cent of their capacity in August, 20 per-centage points below the aver-age over the last decade for this time of the year.

Officials have responded by limiting water use, especially in the southern region of Andalusia, which grows much of Europe's fruits and vegetables.

Reservoir water levels in the region are particularly low, just 25 per cent at most of their ca-pacity. "The situation is dra-matic," said University of Jaen hydrology professor Rosario Jimenez, adding both under-ground aquifers and surface bod-



The La Fernandina dam near La Carolina, south-eastern Spain (AFP)

ies of water were running low. The situation is especially worrying since it is part of a long-term trend linked to climate change, she added.

Parts of Spain are the driest they have been in a thousand years due to an atmospheric high-pressure system driven by climate change, according to a study published last month in the journal, Nature Geoscience.

Greenpeace estimates that 75

per cent of the country is suscep-tible to desertification.

‘Overexploitation’

Spain has built a vast network of dams to provide water for its farms and towns.

During the 20th century, 1,200 large dams were built in the country, the highest number in Europe per capita.

This has allowed Spain to in-crease the amount of irrigated

land it has from 900,000 hectares to 3,400,000 hectares, according to the ecological tran-sition ministry's website, which calls the country's water man-agement system 'an example of success'.

But many experts say the sys-tem is now showing its limits.

The dams 'had their use' but they have also encouraged the 'overexploitation' of water and the decline in its quality by block-

ing the natural course of rivers, said Julio Barea, a water expert at Greenpeace Spain.

For the scientific council of the Rhone-Mediterranean Basin Committee, a French body which groups hydrology specialists, Spain is nearing the 'physical lim-its' of its water management model.

Spain's network of dams relies on sufficient rainfall to replenish its many reservoirs, it said.

But 'the climate changes al-ready under way, which will con-tinue in the decades to come, will increase the risk of failures', the body said in a recent report.

Experts say the way Spain uses water is also a major prob-lem. "Consumption has not stopped increasing while water is becoming increasingly scarce. It's an aberration," said Barea.

‘Europe’s vegetable garden’

Spain is the second most visited country in the world and signifi-cant amounts of water are used in tourism infrastructure like swimming pools and golf courses.

But agriculture absorbs the bulk - over 80 per cent - of the country's water resources.

It is sometimes used to grow crops that are not suitable for a dry climate - such as strawber-ries or avocados - for export to other European countries.

Spain's use of irrigation 'is ir-rational', said Julia Martinez, bi-ologist and director of the FNCA Water Conservation Foundation.

'We cannot be Europe's veg-etable garden' while 'there are water shortages for the inhabi-tants', she added.

Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's government adopted a strategic plan last month to adapt Spain's water man-agement system to 'the impacts of global warming'.

It includes measures to pro-mote water recycling and 'effi-cient and rational' uses of resources.

But specialists say that re-forms remain timid, with many regions continuing to increase the amount of irrigated land.

"We need more drastic meas-ures," said Barea, who called for a restructuring of the agriculture system.

Martinez shares this view, saying Spain is currently the Eu-ropean nation 'exerting the most pressure on its water resources'.
AFP

Gaza counts cost of conflict as truce holds

A ceasefire reached late on Sunday has raised hopes of ending the intense fighting that killed 44

Gaza City, Palestinian Territories - Shell-shocked Gazans on Monday sifted through the rubble of three days of deadly conflict between Israel and Islamic Jihad fighters as a truce held and life slowly returned to normal with power restored.

The sole power plant in the blockaded enclave 'started working to generate electricity' after a two-day shutdown, distributor spokesman Mohammed Thabet told AFP, hours after fuel trucks for the plant entered Gaza.

A ceasefire reached late on Sunday has raised hopes of ending the intense fighting that killed 44 people according to Gaza's health ministry, with 15 children among the dead.

The power shutdown on Saturday had sparked concern about the impact on hospitals treating casualties and on other vital services, amid the worst fighting in Gaza since an 11-day war last year.



A Palestinian youth salvages a toy from the rubble of his house which was destroyed during the conflict with Israel, in Rafah town in the southern Gaza Strip, on Monday (AFP)

The Israeli military said roads would slowly reopen in the border area.

'It was decided to gradually lift the restrictions,' which have seen Israelis living near Gaza remain close to their bomb shelters, the army said.

Across areas hit by air strikes in Gaza, Palestinians tried on

Monday to salvage belongings from the rubble of shattered homes and to start clearing the debris.

Mohammed Alai, who lives east of Gaza City, described the situation as 'tragic and tough'.

"We have a lot of martyrs and wounded, and devastation and destruction, but Gaza is tending

to its wounds," he said.

Hundreds wounded

US President Joe Biden welcomed the ceasefire and thanked Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi for his country's role in brokering it.

Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid's office late on Sunday

thanked 'Egypt for its efforts' as it agreed to the truce, but said that 'if the ceasefire is violated', Israel 'maintains the right to respond strongly'.

Islamic Jihad, an Iran-backed group designated as a terrorist organisation by several Western nations, also accepted the truce but said it too 'reserves the right

to respond' to any aggression.

Tehran said it will always 'defend the active resistance'.

"A ceasefire was established because the Zionists (Israel) only understand the language of power," Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian wrote on Instagram.

Starting on Friday, Israel had

launched a heavy aerial and artillery bombardment of Islamic Jihad positions in Gaza, leading the fighters to fire hundreds of rockets in retaliation.

In addition to those killed, Gazan health officials said 360 people were wounded in the Palestinian enclave, which is run by the Islamist group Hamas.

A senior Israeli diplomatic official said on Monday that 'most of the civilians that were killed in Gaza were killed by Islamic Jihad rockets' that fell short or misfired.

The Islamic Jihad group on Monday said 12 of its leaders and members had been killed.

Three people in Israel were wounded by shrapnel, while 31 others were lightly hurt while running for safety, emergency services said.

Islamic Jihad member Mohammad al-Hindi said the ceasefire deal 'contains Egypt's commitment to work towards the release of two prisoners'.

They were named as Bassem al-Saadi, a senior figure in the group's political wing who was recently arrested in the occupied West Bank, and Khalil Awawdeh, a fighter also in Israeli detention.

Islamic Jihad is aligned with Hamas but often acts independently. Hamas has fought four wars with Israel since seizing control of Gaza in 2007, including the conflict in May last year.

Israel has said it was necessary to launch a 'pre-emptive' operation against Islamic Jihad.

AFP



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson (AFP)

UK's Johnson to leave 'major' fiscal decisions to next PM

London, UK - Prime Minister Boris Johnson will not make 'major fiscal interventions' before leaving office next month, his spokesman said on Monday amid calls for immediate government action to tackle Britain's cost-of-living crisis.

Johnson, back at his desk after a five-day belated honeymoon with wife Carrie in Slovenia last week, has been criticised for being absent just as the Bank of England warned that a year-long recession is looming.

His trip coincided with finance minister Nadhim Zahawi also being away on holiday, as the central bank hiked interest rates by the biggest margin in nearly three decades in a bid to stem surging inflation.

Johnson, who announced last month that he would step down on September 6 following a slew of scandals, is set to hand power to either Liz Truss or Rishi Sunak after a summer-long leadership battle.

"By convention, it is not for this prime minister to make major fiscal interventions during this period," Johnson's spokesman told reporters. "It will be for a future prime minister."

Johnson's government had already unveiled several measures to help people with rising prices, he said, but acknowledged 'some

By convention, it is not for this prime minister to make major fiscal interventions during this period

JOHNSON'S SPOKESMAN

of the global pressures have increased since that was announced'. Both Truss, the frontrunner to replace him, and Sunak have vowed to tackle Britain's spiralling inflation rate and worsening economic landscape from their first day in office.

But figures from across the political spectrum have been demanding more urgent moves - including former Prime Minister Gordon Brown on Monday.

"When I say people have been asleep at the wheel, it's not true - they've not been at the wheel," Brown told LBC radio, as he toured various broadcast studios to highlight the worsening cost-of-living situation.

"That's the problem. And we've got to get them back to work to take the action that is necessary," he said, adding: "It's not good enough acting in September or October."

AFP

Ukraine positive after arrival of first grain shipment

Kyiv, Ukraine - The first cargo ship to reach its final destination after departing from Ukraine under a deal between Moscow and Kyiv docked in Turkey on Monday, Kyiv said, while a consignment due in Lebanon reported delays.

Ukraine, one of the world's largest grain exporters, was forced to halt almost all deliveries after Russia's invasion, but Black Sea exports recently restarted under a deal brokered by the UN and Turkey.

The Turkish cargo ship - the Polarnet - that reached its final destination left the Ukrainian port of Chornomorsk last week carrying 12,000 tonnes of corn.

It arrived in Turkey as scheduled after being inspected by the Joint Coordination Center (JCC) established in Istanbul under the international agreement signed last month, Kyiv said.



Turkish-flagged ship carrying grain from Ukraine sails along the Bosphorus Strait past Istanbul on Sunday (AFP)

"This first successful completion of the implementation of the 'grain deal' means it is possible to be optimistic about future transportation," Infrastructure Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov was

quoted as saying in a statement by the ministry.

The statement did not give the ship's destination, but the website vesselfinder.com gave its location as the port of Der-

ince, Turkey.

The deal brokered by Turkey and the UN lifted a Russian blockade of Ukraine's ports and set terms for millions of tonnes of wheat and other grain to start

flowing from silos and ports.

The Razoni was the first ship to leave Ukraine under the deal.

It left the port of Odessa on August 1 carrying 26,000 tonnes of corn and was expected in Tripoli in Lebanon this weekend but has yet to reach the destination. The Ukrainian embassy in Lebanon explained on social media that the consignment was delayed after the original buyer refused delivery, citing a five-month delay in shipment.

"The sender is therefore looking for another recipient. This may be in Lebanon or in another country," it added in a statement on Twitter.

Eight ships have left Ukrainian ports since the agreement was signed, Kyiv said on Monday, and it hoped that between three and five ships would be able to depart daily within two weeks.

AFP

US says new Africa strategy will engage leaders

Washington, US - The White House on Monday unveiled broad new policy goals for sub-Saharan Africa, with administration officials seeking to tie the region's democratic, economic and security progress to US national security.

Officials in President Joe Biden's administration told reporters that the new 'U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa' will actively engage the region's leaders on issues from climate change to pandemic recovery to food insecurity, while thinking 'more holistically' about military engagement on the continent.

Their comments in a background briefing on Sunday come at the end of an extended policy review by the Biden administration, and as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken undertakes a three-nation African trip.

The rethinking also comes as some critics say a US focus on fighting extremist groups in Africa militarily has borne little fruit, even while China and Russia have made continued inroads



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken (left) and South Africa's FM Naledi Pandor meet in Pretoria, on Monday (AFP)

on the huge continent by aggressively using diplomatic and economic tools.

In its policy paper outlining the new US strategy, the Biden administration argues that a push for greater openness and democracy in sub-Saharan Africa will help 'counter harmful activities by the People's Republic of China, Russia and other actors'.

The administration hopes its sharpened focus will culminate in

a US-African summit in Washington this December.

The new policy paper suggests that Beijing sees the region as an 'arena to challenge the rules-based international order, advance its own narrow commercial and geopolitical interests... and weaken US relations with African peoples and governments.' It says Russia 'views the region as a permissive environment for parastatals and private military companies, often fo-

menting instability for strategic and financial benefit'.

The administration officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, expressed considerable concern about the activities in Africa of the shadowy Russian mercenary organisation known as the Wagner Group. "We're incredibly concerned about the role of Russian mercenaries," said one official, adding that the group had committed abuses. "It's a disturbing trendline."

The policy paper said that while nearly 70 per cent of Africans express strong support for democracy, a string of military coups and the rise of autocrats has left the region with fewer countries classed as free - just eight - than any time in 30 years. The updated US strategy also intends to increase efforts at fighting terrorism through non-military approaches, though it says the United States will continue to use its 'unilateral capability' - read military - against terrorist targets.

AFP

EU submits a 'final text' at Iran nuclear talks: Official

Vienna, Austria - The European Union has submitted a 'final text' at talks to salvage a 2015 deal aimed at reining in Tehran's nuclear ambitions, a European official said on Monday.

"We worked for four days and today the text is on the table," the official told reporters.

"The negotiation is finished, it's the final text... and it will not be renegotiated."

"Now the ball is in the court of the capitals and we will see what happens," the European official added. "No one is staying in Vienna."

The official said he hoped to see the 'quality' text accepted 'within weeks'.

AFP

ANTI-AGING CREAMS

Between The lines

From fighting those pesky free radicals, to stimulating skin's natural collagen production, anti-aging products make some alluring promises. And consumers spend a fortune each year on such creams and lotions, according to the American Academy of Dermatology. For many creams, lotions and vitamin supplements that claim to reduce wrinkles or slow down premature aging, however, there isn't sufficient evidence to show they work. According to an article published on www.livescience.com, although certain active ingredients used in anti-aging products have been shown to be safe and effective, the trick is finding the right ingredients that work well with you.

There's definitely an overabundance of products and ingredients that promise to deliver, says Dr Elizabeth Hale, a dermatologist at New York University Medical Center. "It can be overwhelming for patients and doctors - it's hard to know which works, and which doesn't."

Here are five commonly listed active ingredients with the scientific evidence about whether they may play a role in decreasing signs of aging:

Peptides

As you age, your skin becomes thinner and loses fat, causing it to sag and develop fine lines. The body produces less collagen and elastin, substances that enables the skin to maintain its smooth, plump and youthful appearance.

Peptides are small proteins that help stimulate new cells to grow and help skin cells to heal.

Although peptides are found in a number of products, experts still aren't sure exactly which formulation may work. They work by stimulating the replacement of collagen, elastin, and other components that suffer during aging.

Alpha-hydroxy acids

Alpha-hydroxy acids, such as lactic, glycolic and citric acids, are natural ingredients that come from fruits and milk sugars. They are commonly used because they work as an exfoliant, getting rid of dead skin cells, allowing new cells to grow. Each acid has a slightly different effect. Lactic acid, which comes from sour milk, helps remove dead skin cells, which has a brightening effect on the skin. Glycolic acid, which comes from sugar cane, can help by reducing fine lines and wrinkles, making the skin appear smoother.

Retinol

Touted as a tried-and-true method for decreasing signs of aging, retinol, a natural form of vitamin A, works by reducing the appearance of wrinkles and boosts the thickness and elasticity of the skin. There is ample evidence that shows retinol improves the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. It is an ingredient found in a number of over-the-counter skin creams. A more potent form of retinol, called tretinoin (sometimes sold under the brand name Retin-A), is also available by prescription.

Resveratrol

Resveratrol is a plant compound — it is found in red wine, and is also available as a supplement. Some have claimed that the compound could prevent or reverse chronic health problems such as diabetes or heart disease. A 2008 study, published in the journal Cell Metabolism, found the ingredient slowed down age-related decline in mice. But in a later study, researchers found that women who took 75mg resveratrol supplements didn't gain metabolic benefits.

Antioxidants

Antioxidants are commonly claimed to help fight cell damage from free radicals, which are molecules that could injure cells and increase inflammation. Substances with antioxidant properties include beta-carotene, lycopene, selenium, and vitamins A, C and E, according to the National Institutes of Health. These and other antioxidants are found in many foods, including fruits, vegetables, nuts, and some meats.

Anti-aging products seem to adorn a prominent space these days, not just on shelves in beauty salons and pharmacies but also in supermarkets. Experts caution against falling for fakes – the trick lies in reading the fine print, they say

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Changing bridal tones

INDIA COUTURE WEEK REVEALS HOW BRIDALWEAR TRENDS ARE TAKING A NEW ROUTE TOWARDS LIGHTER TONES THAT EMIT ELEGANCE DURING DAYTIME CELEBRATIONS

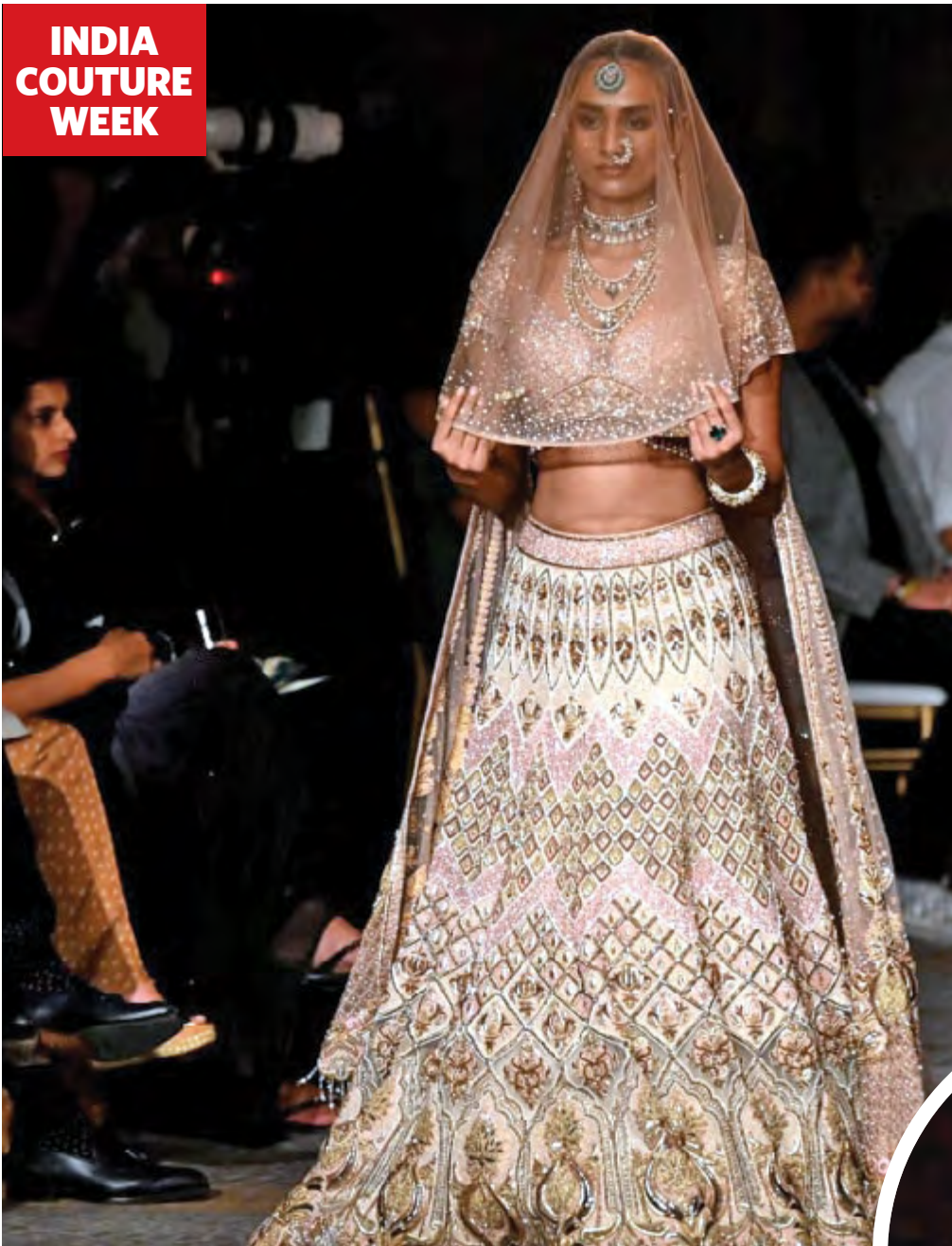
More than a dozen leading designers showcased their creations at India Couture Week (ICW), offering a glimpse - among much else - at the bridalwear trends shaping one of the world's largest wedding markets.

According to a report in *CNN Style*, the annual event's 15th edition, which concluded in the capital New Delhi last weekend, was the first staged on a physical runway since the start of the pandemic.

All 13 of the participating couturiers used the opportunity to celebrate the rich heritage of Indian crafts and hand-woven textiles in both Western and traditional South Asian silhouettes. As ever, bridalwear featured prominently.

Cues for consumers

"In India, wearing couture is part of bridal traditions, and many brides look to (India Couture Week) for cues as to



tional to experimental," he said. "And of course, they must be Instagram-friendly."

Muted tones replace red

Red may be the colour traditionally worn by Hindu brides, but many are now looking to more muted tones. Take Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt, who recently married actor Ranbir Kapoor wearing an ivory-coloured embroidered sari.

A move towards lighter shades was evident throughout ICW 2022. Almost half of designer Tarun Tahiliani's collection was in shades of beige, oyster, biscuit and the palest of mauves.

Anju Modi and Anamika Khanna both opted for ivory-coloured pieces, with the latter embellishing her designs with pearls and the former mixing and matching with burgundy and coral pink.

Rahul Mishra meanwhile used bright colours for surface ornamentations but, in many cases, kept base fabrics light. Mishra said the shift is down to changing preferences among Generation Z.

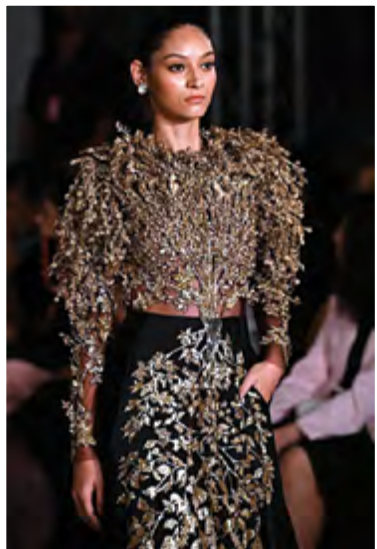
Traditionally, wedding ceremonies were held in the early evening, with brides quickly changing into their reception outfits straight afterwards. Now, as couples look to keep the ceremony more intimate and the reception as an evening to party the night away, the rules of bridal dressing have changed in turn.

"With the wedding being in the daytime, brides are preferring softer colours and no longer feel the need to stick to red," Mishra said.

East meets West

Ceremonies being treated as stand-alone events has had another knock-on effect on wedding wear, according to Nandini Bhalla, the editor of *Brides Today*.

"It has given brides a free pass to wear whatever they like at their reception," she said. "And I think this is the reason we are seeing so much cocktail wear - and gowns - at (India Couture) Week."



what to wear," said Sunil Sethi, president of the Fashion Design Council of India (FCDI).

While European couture sets the tone for the exclusive world of high fashion, in India, it has a noticeable impact on people's spending behaviour. This is particularly evident in the country's wedding industry, which before the pandemic was worth around US\$50bn a year, and second only to the United States, according to a 2017 report by consultancy KPMG.

"In Paris, couture drives editorials

and red-carpet dressing," said designer Rahul Mishra, an ICW regular who has presented three collections at the prestigious Paris Haute Couture Week. "In India, couture week drives real consumption."

Grandeur and craftsmanship

Crafts are the backbone of couture - and they play an important role in the days-long ceremonies often dubbed 'Big Fat Indian Weddings.'

"Weddings in India have always been about grandeur and showmanship," said wedding planner Devika Narain. "Post-pandemic there has been a shift, (whereby) weddings have become more intimate - and people want to create an experience. It is quality over quantity, and they are looking for something unique."

This extends to clothing. Narain said many Indian brides are happy to spend between Rs600,000 and Rs10mm (US\$7,600 to US\$126,000) on wedding attire alone. "Don't forget, Indian weddings involve more than one function," she said. "So multiple ensembles

are needed."

Speaking to CNN ahead of his ICW presentation Saturday, designer Amit Aggarwal, who is known for playing with upcycled materials and deconstructing traditional silhouettes, said that today's grooms and brides are no longer going to just one designer.

"Now they want to look different at every function, (ranging) from tradi-





Medvedev snapped a five-match losing streak in finals - a stretch that included his agonising five-set loss to Rafael Nadal in the Australian Open final in February.

He also came up short this year in 's-Hertogenbosch and Halle. He did not get a chance at Wimbledon, where Russian and Belarussian players were banned because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



Barcelona's Robert Lewandowski (C) in action on Sunday (AFP)

Lewandowski scores first Barcelona goal in Pumas rout

Barcelona, Spain - Robert Lewandowski scored his first Barcelona goal in a 6-0 rout of Mexican side Pumas in the Joan Gamper Trophy pre-season clash on Sunday.

On his Camp Nou bow, the Polish international, who switched from Bayern Munich in the summer, scored after three minutes from a particularly tight angle. Pedri added the second and fourth goals in the fifth and

19th minutes, sandwiching a strike from Ousmane Dembele.

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Frenkie de Jong completed the rout in the second half.

Lewandowski also played a key part in Pedri's second goal with an inspired pass to set up the midfielder.

Barcelona begin their La Liga season at home to Rayo Vallecano on Saturday.

AFP



Manchester City's Erling Haaland celebrates after scoring against West Ham United in London on Sunday (AFP)

Erling warning!

Man City striker Haaland warns Premier League much more to come after dream debut

London, United Kingdom - Erling Haaland said he is only getting started after scoring twice on his Premier League debut as Manchester City won 2-0 at West Ham on Sunday.

The Norwegian won and then coolly slotted home a penalty to open the scoring before latching onto Kevin De Bruyne's through ball to become the first City player to score twice on his league debut since Sergio Aguero.

"It's about the connections we do every day in training. This will come even more so I'm not worried," said Haaland. "It could have been more."

Haaland is seen as the successor to Aguero, who is the club's all-time leading goalscorer.

Pep Guardiola's men won the Premier League for the past two seasons largely playing without a central striker and the City boss was delighted with how quickly the move for Haaland paid off.

"Erling is a good finisher and he is adapting perfectly," said Guardiola. "He was good. I can't teach him to score goals and he just needs to be comfortable."

West Ham nearly derailed City's title chances when they led 2-0 at half-time in the penultimate game of last season before Pep Guardiola's men battled back for the point that ultimately edged out Liverpool at the top of the table.

But they were no match this

time as Haaland immediately proved the value of City adding a proven goalscorer to their arsenal.

Haaland had missed chances in City's 3-1 defeat to Liverpool in the Community Shield, but Guardiola's warning that the goals would soon flow proved to be correct.

City's patient possession game wore the Hammers down as temperatures soared above 30 degrees celsius on Sunday.

Haaland took responsibility from the penalty spot to open his Premier League account after he had been brought down by Alphonse Areola.

West Ham started the second half with more attacking intent but that simply played into the hands of City's new weapon as Kevin De Bruyne split open their defence with one pass on the counter-attack for Haaland to gallop clear on goal and slot low past Areola.

Marseille give coach Tudor rollicking start, Ramsey scores on Nice debut to salvage point

Paris, France - Marseille started their Ligue 1 campaign Sunday by defeating Reims 4-1 in Igor Tudor's first match as coach, while Aaron Ramsey struck on his Nice debut to salvage a point in Toulouse.

After a troubled summer during which Jorge Sampaoli walked out over his unhappiness at the club's transfer approach, it was a welcome win for Tudor following a turbulent pre-season.

"I'm clearly very happy, it's a clear and deserved victory," said Tudor.

The former Croatia international was jeered by home fans ahead of kick-off, but an own goal by Wout Faes and debut goals for Nuno Tavares and Luis Suarez lifted spirits at the Velodrome.

Folarin Balogun, like Tavares an Arsenal loanee, replied late on for Reims before Suarez grabbed his second of the evening.

"The whistles towards me? I was inside, I didn't hear them,"



Marseille's Luis Suarez (L) scores against Reims in their Ligue 1 match on Sunday (AFP)

said Tudor. "The supporters are always right. We play for them and they do what they want. Football doesn't exist without them."

Tudor dropped captain Dimitri Payet to the bench, handing debuts to five players including

Jonathan Clauss, and Tavares.

Clauss was soon involved as Reims defender Faes turned the right-back's cross into his own net under pressure from Arkadiusz Milik on 13 minutes.

Marseille were unlucky not to

add to their lead with Cengiz Under and Valentin Rongier hitting the woodwork, but Tavares made it 2-0 with a fine low strike just before half-time.

Colombian forward Suarez, signed from Granada in July,

needed just 13 minutes to open his Ligue 1 account, steering home after the ball bounced around the Reims penalty area.

England Under-21 international Balogun headed in to cut the deficit, but Suarez ensured it was Marseille's night by tapping home Cedric Bakambu's pass deep into stoppage time.

Ramsey to the rescue

Aaron Ramsey scored a minute into his Nice debut after coming on as a second-half substitute to rescue a 1-1 draw away to promoted Toulouse.

The Wales international curled in an equaliser on 78 minutes to cancel out a first-half goal by new Toulouse signing Thijs Dallinga, the top scorer last season in the Dutch second division.

Ramsey, 31, left Juventus when his contract was terminated at the end of July, and swiftly reappeared just across the border at Nice after penning a one-year deal.

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INDIAN SMASH HITS

PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen win gold as India sweep badminton singles at Commonwealth Games

Birmingham, United Kingdom - PV Sindhu and young gun Lakshya Sen lived up to expectations by grabbing gold medals as India swept the singles competitions in badminton at the Commonwealth Games for the first time, in Birmingham, on Monday.

Sindhu added a CWG gold to her already bulging collection with a convincing straight game win over Canada's Michelle Li.

The world number seven from India outplayed her 13th ranked opponent 21-15, 21-13 in front of a packed crowd at the NEC arena.

"I had been waiting for this gold for a long time and finally I have got it. I am super happy. Thanks to the crowd, they made me win today," said Sindhu after the final.

Later in the day, 10th-ranked Sen came from behind to end Ng Tze Yong's giant-killing run in the competition. The 20-year-old defeated the world number 42 from Malaysia 19-21, 21-9, 21-16.

"It was tense in the start, I had to work really hard. Yong also played a great tournament. Congratulations to him as well," said Sen after a hard-fought contest.

Super Sunday for Indian boxing

On Sunday, two of India's three boxing gold medals came at the expense of English opponents.

Amit Panghal went one better than his 2018 silver by beating Kieran MacDonald in the fly-weight final.

Nitu Ghanghas won the women's minimumweight title on a unanimous decision over Demie-Jade Resztan.

Ghangas's team-mate, world champion Zareen Nikhat, also won gold by beating Northern Ireland's Carly McNaul in the women's light flyweight final.



India's PV Sindhu (L), the women's singles champion in badminton, and Lakshya Sen, the men's champion, display their gold medals at the presentation ceremony in Birmingham on Sunday (AFP)



I had been waiting for this gold for a long time and finally I have got it. I am super happy. Thanks to the crowd, they made me win today

PV SINDHU

"It's a good day for Indian boxing," said Nikhat. "Women's boxing is growing in India since Mary Kom won a medal at the (2012) Olympics. She has been a great inspiration for every boxer in India."

In men's hockey, Australia de-

molished India 7-0 to maintain their perfect record at the Games and end their gold medal hunt in style.

The six-time defending champions showed their opponents no mercy in sweltering conditions on the final day of sporting action

in Birmingham.

Australia have won every gold medal in men's hockey since the sport joined the Commonwealth Games programme in 1998.

The dominant Australians were 2-0 up after the first quarter and two goals from Jacob Anderson helped put them 5-0 up after 30 minutes.

Nathan Ephraums scored his second to make it 6-0 and Flynn Ogilvie completed the rout early in the final quarter.

Host nation England beat South Africa 6-3 to take bronze.

Australia have topped the medals table with 67 golds - 10 ahead of England. Canada are third with 26 golds and India have 22.

The closing ceremony takes place at Alexander Stadium later on Monday, bringing to an end 11 days of sporting action at the 22nd Commonwealth Games.

Elsewhere on Monday, Scotland's James Healy and Grace Reid won the mixed synchronised 3m springboard final, with England pair Noah Williams and

Andrea Spendolini-Sirieix taking gold in the 10m event

India's Sharath Kamal Achara beat England's Liam Pitchford 4-1 in the men's singles table tennis gold-medal match.

"The best two weeks of my 40 years of life," said the winner, who won three golds and a silver in Birmingham. "It can't get better."

Birmingham on the map

Birmingham 2022 CEO Ian Reid said the Games had been a huge

boost for the city and the surrounding area.

He said more than 1.5 million tickets had been sold, with most venues above 90 percent capacity.

"One of the goals at the outset was to put the city on the world map and instil that huge pride across everyone that lives in the region and I think we've achieved that," he told a briefing on Monday.

"I think that can lead to much bigger and greater things." AFP

Pakistan's Nadeem wins javelin throw gold

Birmingham, United Kingdom - Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem created a new Commonwealth Games record in javelin throw as he breached the famed 90m mark on his way to gold in Birmingham on Sunday.

In the absence of Neeraj Chopra, Nadeem wearing strapping around his right arm, beat the likes of Anderson Peters, Julius Yego and Keshorn Walcott with a 90.18m throw on his fifth attempt, and gave Pakistan their first javelin gold with a Games record mark of 90.18 metres.

Scotland's Laura Muir ended her Commonwealth Games campaign with a flourish by winning gold in the 1500m.

The 29-year-old's team-mate, 10,000m champion Eilish McColgan, just failed make it a memorable double, finishing second behind Kenya's impressive world silver medallist Beatrice Chebet in the 5,000m.

The athletes were roared on by another sell-out crowd at



Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem is on his way to gold in the men's javelin throw in Birmingham on Sunday (AFP)

Alexander Stadium, who have been undaunted by the absence of some big names including sprint stars Shelly-Ann Fraser-

Pryce and Andre de Grasse.

Those that stayed to the end on Sunday watched in bitter disappointment as England's

women's 4x400m relay team were disqualified for a lane infringement, with Canada taking gold.

Muir, who won bronze in the 800m on Saturday, kicked for glory before the bell and ran a fairly moderate field - lacking two-time Olympic champion Faith Kipyegon - ragged, timing 4min 02.75sec.

The Olympic silver medallist was overjoyed, having failed to medal in 2014 and missing the 2018 Games due to veterinary exams.

"You learn from it and your time will come," said Muir, who will bid for more gold medals in the upcoming European Championships.

"It sounds cheesy but it's true. Eight years of Commonwealths and it's been bugging me so this means a lot."

The bold front-running McColgan had nothing left in her legs when Chebet made her move with 200m to go.

Chebet strode away to time 14:38.21 for Kenya's fifth successive win in the race.

AFP



Australia players celebrate winning the women's Twenty20 final against India at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham on Sunday (AFP)

Australia edge India to make Commonwealth Games cricket history

Birmingham, United Kingdom - Hot favourites Australia held their nerve to beat India by nine runs in a Twenty20 thriller at Edgbaston on Sunday as they won the first women's cricket gold medal in Commonwealth Games history.

Opener Beth Mooney top-scored with 61 as Australia made 161-8 in their 20 overs in the warm Birmingham sunshine.

India appeared on course for a shock win as they cruised to 118-2 in the 15th over, but a clatter of wickets slowed their charge.

They still found boundaries to stay in the hunt and reached the final over with 11 runs needed and two wickets in hand.

But Meghna Singh was run out off the second ball and Yastika Bhatia was trapped lbw the following ball by left-arm spinner Jess Jonassen.

"It's absolutely huge," said Jonassen. "We are blessed enough to be part of some winning World Cup teams but to win

the first gold medal for women's cricket in the Commonwealth Games, you're only ever going to do that once."

Victory underlined the dominance of Australia's women, who are also the reigning world champions in the 20-over and 50-over formats.

Meg Lanning's side had earlier looked set for a bigger total after they had rattled along to 83-1 off 10 overs.

But Lanning was dismissed for 36 courtesy of a brilliant piece of fielding by bowler Radha Yadav, who back-flicked the ball onto the stumps to run the Australia captain out at the non-striker's end.

In the bronze medal match earlier on Sunday, New Zealand coasted to an eight-wicket win over hosts England, who could only muster 110-9.

New Zealand skipper Sophie Devine top-scored with 51 not out as her side romped home with more than eight overs to spare.

AFP

Delicious offering: Rising England boxing star basks in glory of Commonwealth gold

Birmingham, United Kingdom - England's Delicious Orié was crowned the Commonwealth Games super-heavyweight champion on Sunday, as the Northern Ireland brother and sister duo of Aidan and Michaela Walsh also won boxing gold medals.

The 25-year-old Orié, born in

Russia to a Nigerian father and a Russian mother, defeated India's Sagar Ahlawat by a unanimous points decision despite losing the first round.

"I am so proud to be English and British," Orié, brought to England aged seven after his father suffered racist abuse, told the BBC.

"I knew I had two rounds to prove myself and I was not going to let anyone else win. I was determined. You were going to have to kill me in there for me to lose."

Now Orié wants to emulate compatriot and occasional training partner Anthony Joshua, who won the 2012 Olympic

super-heavyweight gold medal before becoming a professional world heavyweight champion.

"My inspiration has always been Anthony Joshua, and what he has achieved is the bare minimum," he said. "I am the next generation and we are going to excel."

AFP



Delicious Orié