

NEWS BRIEF

SAUDI ANNOUNCES INSTANT E-VISA FOR VISITORS

Riyad, Saudi Arabia - Saudi Arabia has announced new instant e-visa options for people holding UK, US, and Schengen visas, as well as permanent residents of the UK, the US, and any EU country.

The entry procedure can be organised through the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The move is part of the tourism ministry's efforts to facilitate entry to the country to those wishing to visit, allowing them to enjoy its tourist attractions as well as its heritage and history.

Holders of a valid tourism or business visa from the US, the UK, or a Schengen state that has been used at least once to enter the issuing country are granted instant e-visa. The exception grants the same entry rights to the visa holder's first-degree relatives, as well as those of permanent residents in the US, EU, or the UK.

Since opening to tourism in 2019, Saudi has become one of the fastest-growing tourism markets globally, recording 93.5mn visits in 2022. This achievement is a result of the tremendous efforts of destinations across Saudi in providing visitors with unparalleled experiences.



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik receives Ras Al Khaimah ruler Sheikh Saud bin Saqr al Qasimi

H M meets Ras Al Khaimah ruler

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik met Sheikh Saud bin Saqr al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Ruler of the Emirate of Ras Al Khaimah, at Al Baraka Palace on Tuesday, along with his accompanying delegation.

During the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan and Sheikh Saud bin Saqr al Qasimi discussed relations binding the two countries. They explored various aspects of cooperation aimed at serving the mutual interests of Omani and UAE peoples.

They also touched on a number of issues of concern for both the sides.

From the Omani side, the meeting was attended by Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth; Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court; Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Nu'amani, Minister

of the Royal Office; Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al Busaidi, Minister of Interior and Dr Hamad bin Said al Aufi, Head of the Private Office.

From the UAE side, the meeting was attended by Sheikh Khalid bin Saud al Qasimi; Sheikh Saqr bin Saud al Qasimi; Mohammed Hassan al Shamsi, Ad-

visor to the Ruler; Mohammed Sultan al Qadhi, Advisor to the Ruler; Abdulaziz Abdullah al Zabi, Chairman of Ras Al Khaimah Real Estate; Ahmed Mohammed al Khatri, Chairman of Ras Al Khaimah Courts Department and Mohammed Ali al Nu'aimi,

Chairman of Ras Al Khaimah Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Later, His Majesty the Sultan and the Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah held a private meeting in the presence of Sayyid Theyazin, Sheikh Khalid and Sheikh Saqr.

Later in the day, His Majesty the Sultan hosted a luncheon in honour of Sheikh Saud. After that, His Majesty bid farewell to Sheikh Saud and his accompanying delegation, wishing them a safe return back home. His Majesty the Sultan also wished the UAE further progress and prosperity.

On his part, Sheikh Saud expressed his deep thanks to His Majesty the Sultan for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to him. He wished His Majesty the Sultan good health, happiness and a long life. He also wished the Omani people more progress under the wise leadership of His Majesty the Sultan.

Tourists spent over RO86mn during 2022 khareef, visitors increase by 6%

Our Correspondent Muscat

With the 2023 khareef season just around the corner, the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) released data on last year's khareef tourism, revealing that tourists spent over RO86mn during the three-month period.

Omani visitors constituted 69% of the total number of tourists in 2022, with a recorded 562,995 individuals.

In 2022, the number of visitors to Dhofar reached 813,000, marking a 6% increase compared to the pre-pandemic levels of 2019 when the governorate welcomed 767,000 visitors. The NCSI statistics showed a



rise of 6% in the number of visitors arriving by road in 2022, reaching 647,301 compared to 610,491 during the same period in 2019.

Air travel saw significant growth, with a total of 165,704 visitors arriving in Salalah by air in 2022, representing a 20.4% increase from 2019, which recorded 156,281 visitors.

The number of domestic flights during the khareef season of 2022 was 16,114, compared to 15,198 flights in 2019.

After Omani tourists, visitors from the GCC countries formed the majority, reaching 161,260 in 2022, an increase of 24.5% compared to 129,519 visitors of 2019.

Visitors of varied Asian nationalities were over 57,000;

while 26,000 more were from the Arab countries. European countries contributed 3,000 visitors, while 1,600 visitors came from other countries.

Expenditure by visitors during the khareef season was over RO86mn, demonstrating growth compared to 2019 when it amounted to approximately RO76mn.

Mazda logo

So generous, IT'S INSPIRING

MAZDA 6

MAZDA CX-9

MAZDA CX-30

MAZDA CX-5

#Cash Gift STARTING FROM RO 1,050 UPTO RO 3,900

**FREE AAA ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE 3 YEARS

##IINJAZ Service Package 5 YEARS OR 100,000 KM (WHICHEVER COME FIRST) STARTING FROM RO 200 ONLY

*STARTING FROM RO 8,450

*STARTING FROM RO 11,900

*STARTING FROM RO 8,650

*STARTING FROM RO 9,350



EID AL ADHA TRAVEL TRENDS

Thailand, Turkey, India favourite Eid getaways

Our Correspondent
Muscat

With Eid al Adha approaching, many in Oman are planning for trips during the holidays expected during the end of this month.

While Thailand and Turkey remain popular choices, an increasing number of people are opting to explore Salalah within the country due to its mesmerising monsoons.

Others are drawn to the allure of hill resorts in Jabal Shams and Jabal Akhdar.

According to the global flight comparison marketplace Skyscanner, majority of the Omani travellers (66%) are planning trips lasting 1-2 weeks, with June 25 being the most preferred outbound date, followed closely by June 24.

Discussing the travel options, Sunil D'Souza, CEO of Travel Point, stated, "Due to the geopolitical situation in Russia and Ukraine, many people from Oman are choosing to travel to the Indian subcontinent or the Far East."

Travel trends vary each year, he added. While middle-category travellers consider several factors, high-end travellers have different priorities.

"Popular destinations include India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Turkey. This year, we have noticed increased interest in Nepal, particularly for trekking and honeymoons. The perennial favourites in Europe remain Geneva (Switzerland), Paris



Popular destinations include India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Turkey... The perennial favourites in Europe remain Geneva, Paris and Rome, which have been consistent in demand in recent years

SUNIL D'SOUZA

(France), and Rome (Italy), which have been consistent in demand during the recent years."

High preference for Salalah - among those staying in Oman - is due to the enchanting khareef season, D'Souza pointed out. "We have locals, expatriates, and GCC residents eagerly anticipating trips to Salalah," he added.

Acknowledging the prevalence of this preference, an official from the Global Holidays said, "In Oman, we have seen a growing demand for the Khareef

season in Salalah, which is a normal occurrence, but this year the holidays will coincide with the season."

Additionally, he said his agency witnessed a rise in inquiries for Far East destinations, primarily Thailand and Malaysia. "Some individuals are also opting for the Philippines and India."

According to statistics from Skyscanner, the top five countries being searched from Oman for Eid al Adha holidays are Thailand, Turkey, the UK, Bosnia and

Herzegovina, and India.

The top five searched cities include Bangkok, London, Istanbul, Trabzon, and Sarajevo.

Ayoub el Mamoun, Skyscanner Travel Expert, said, "During the peak season of Eid or summer vacations, typically known for higher travel costs, prices are not rising uniformly across all routes. This means that flexible travellers who are open to new destinations and know how to compare fares using platforms like Skyscanner can still find competitive deals."



OCCI, MHUP explore investment opportunities in Sorouh projects

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning (MHUP) jointly organised a seminar in Barka on Tuesday looking at the investment opportunities in the real estate sector.

The seminar titled 'Investment Opportunities in the National Initiative for Integrated Residential Neighbourhoods (Sorouh)' opened discussions on having modern integrated resi-

dential neighbourhoods meeting the highest standards.

The seminar - presided over by Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of OCCI - specifically targeted real estate developers, providing them with an introduction to the initiative and its investment potential.

Various topics, including the current state of the real estate sector in Oman and the significance of public-private partnerships in its promotion, came up for discussion during the seminar.

Additionally, MHUP presented in detail the available real

estate development services, while highlighting its efforts to organise and enhance the real estate market for creating a favourable investment environment.

The seminar shed light on Sorouh projects, focusing on the coordination between the ministry, real estate developers, and the beneficiaries of residential and commercial units and lands.

Earlier this year, MHUP announced the development of two Sorouh projects in Muscat and South Batinah governorates at a cost of over RO160mn.

CBO to introduce e-programme for banks to analyse money laundering risks

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) is all set to launch an advanced electronic programme for analysing money laundering and terrorism financing (ML/TF) risks in the financial sector.

The e-programme, which will be launched this week, will be made available to all banks and other licensed financial institutions for analysing ML/TF risks in collaboration with the Capital Market Authority (CMA).

According to officials, the central bank, which has been unwavering in its commitment to

enhance and update efforts against money laundering and terrorism financing, is launching the first phase of the programme keeping pace with the global advancements in this area.

The newly introduced programme is expected to server as a powerful tool for gathering and analysing high-quality data. It will enable comprehensive analysis of risks and relevant factors, while functioning as a risk-based classification system.

This innovative initiative, in alignment with the digital solutions recommended by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), represents a significant

milestone. CBO remains dedicated to continually enhancing its systems based on national and sectoral assessments, as well as through offsite analysis and onsite inspections conducted within the financial sector. These efforts prioritise addressing emerging risks both domestically and internationally.

To ensure a smooth implementation, CBO has conducted a series of introductory workshops for all licensed institutions. The aim of these workshops is to equip employees with the necessary knowledge and skills to efficiently and effectively utilise the programme.

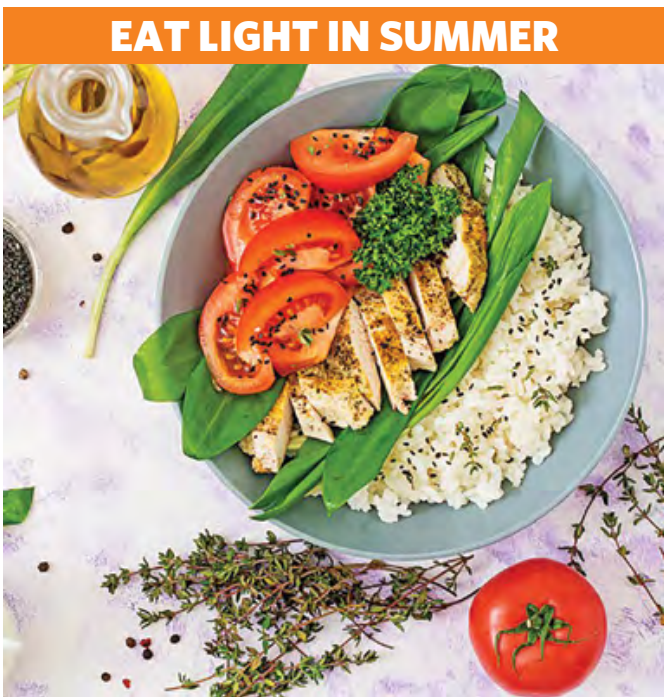
oman OASIS
Grand Eid OFFER
50 ONLY
HOT & COLD DISPENSER
PLUS 2 FULL BOTTLES
PLUS 30 REFILL COUPONS
20 ONLY
WHITE TAP DISPENSER OR TAP DISPENSER OR MANUAL WATER PUMP OR CRADLE WITH TAP
PLUS 2 FULL BOTTLES
PLUS 15 REFILL COUPONS
Offer valid from 1st April to 30th June 2023.
CALL TOLL-FREE 800 71 222 or GSM: 9275 5522

Make most of abundant summer fruits, vegetables

Muscat - Scorching summer temperatures can sap your energy. But fear not; as the hot months also bring abundant fruits and vegetables that can keep one refreshed and energised. By incorporating fresh and seasonal ingredients, opting for lighter cooking methods, and being mindful of portion sizes, one can create a summer diet that supports well-being, according to expert nutritionists.

Dr Monika Seth, a freelance nutrition consultant in Oman, advises plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables, yogurt, and healthy cooling beverages like coconut water, low-fat laban, and lemon-ginger water in summer diet. "Avoid calorie-dense, fat-laden junk and processed food high in sodium, as they act as diuretics."

Dr Parvathy B Nair, dietician at Badr Al Samaa Hospital, considers summer the season of abundance, with fresh and hydrating fruits that provide essential minerals and fluids throughout the hotter months. "As we enter the hotter months, our daily diet plans should shift accordingly," she said.



To beat the summer heat and stay hydrated, Dr Monika shared some valuable tips. "Start your day with 1-2 glasses of plain water, keep a bottle on your desk while working, and set an alarm as a reminder to drink water regularly. Opt for plain water instead of aerated beverages, as they can lead to dehydration due to their

added sugar, calories, and sodium content. Additionally, for every cup of tea or coffee you consume during the day, drink an extra cup of plain water."

When it comes to fruit selection, Dr Monika recommends choosing fruits with high water content such as watermelon, cantaloupe, grapes, oranges,

Start your day with 1-2 glasses of plain water, keep a bottle on your desk while working... Choose fruits with high water content

DR MONIKA SETH

mangoes, blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, apples, apricots, peaches, plums, papaya, guava, pineapple, and kiwi. "Vegetables such as cucumber, tomato, lime, lettuce, onion, green leafy vegetables, bell pepper, carrot, bottle gourd, pumpkin, green beans, eggplant, and bitter gourd are ideal choices for the summer season."

Dr Parvathy suggests incorporation of five essential nutrients into one's summer diet: Vitamin C (citrus fruits, tomatoes, potatoes, strawberries, broccoli, papaya), magnesium (chia seeds, almonds, spinach, cashews, peanuts, dark chocolate), potassium (bananas, beans, lentils,

broccoli, avocados, raisins, apricots), zinc (cornflakes, yogurt, cashews, pumpkin seeds), and protein (seafood, eggs, dairy products). She emphasises the importance of staying hydrated along with these nutrients "to nourish your body, cell by cell, for a healthy body and mind".

To prevent indigestion, Dr Monika advises focusing on gut-friendly probiotics like yogurt, kombucha, and sauerkraut, as well as consuming probiotics found in fibre-rich grains, fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats. She recommends eating a well-balanced diet in small portions, avoiding overloading one's stomach, and taking regular exercise. "Optimal food combinations for the summer season include curd rice, fruit salads, green salads with a bit of protein, and steamed rice with stir-fried veggies."

For those seeking meat substitutes, Dr Parvathy suggests options like tofu, soy protein, seitan, eggplant, cauliflower, mushrooms, and tempeh to avoid indigestion during the summer season.

(Contributed by Deeba Parween)

CRACK EAT REPEAT
GOLDEN GIFT
Distributed by CATERING SOLUTIONS TRADING LLC
Please contact +968 22060236/237

WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY

Give blood, share life

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As the world celebrates World Blood Donor Day on Wednesday, volunteers are urging citizens and residents to donate blood or plasma - the best gift one can give to save lives.

With the 'Give blood, give plasma, share life, share often' slogan, this year's campaign focuses on the crucial role each individual can play in supporting patients who require lifelong transfusion support.

To commemorate the occasion, the Ministry of Health, through the Department of Blood Banks Services (DBBS), joined forces with the Youth Initiatives Team to organise a blood donation campaign at the DBBS in Bausher on Tuesday.

"On this Day, we encourage young people to donate blood. Our objective is to promote the culture of blood donation within the community and urge all volunteer teams to organise blood donation campaigns throughout the year, ensuring an adequate blood supply across all governorates in the sultanate," Mona al Nasser, head of the Youth Initiatives Team, told *Muscat Daily*.

"On World Blood Donor Day, I urge everyone to step forward and donate blood, as there are numerous patients in need of regular blood transfusions. Any healthy individual aged between 18 and 65 can participate in the campaign to give blood," she further appealed.

Ahmed bin Hamad al Kharusi, a dedicated blood donor who has donated 191 times, placed emphasis on the critical role of blood donations in saving lives,



We hope that the Almighty will inspire and motivate more individuals to engage in this noble humanitarian work because society needs your support and your continuous donation

SAIF AL SHUKAILY

while sharing the blood donation culture that he and his family members inculcated.

"My wife, my four daughters, and I have donated blood over 240 times, and we will continue to do so to save people's lives."

Kharusi stressed that each

donation is a precious lifesaving gift, and repeat donations are essential for establishing a safe and sustainable blood supply.

"It is crucial for everyone to donate blood, especially during this time when many individuals are in regular need of blood."

Regarding blood donation campaigns, Kharusi highlighted their significance in supporting blood banks. He participated in more than 20 such campaigns across the sultanate this year alone, either for donating blood or for encouraging others to con-

tribute to this noble cause.

Kharusi is participating in a blood donation campaign to be held at the Royal Opera House Muscat on Wednesday from 9am to 6pm.

"We need to spread awareness of the importance of blood donations through various social media platforms," Kharusi said, while giving his opinion.

Highlighting the positive impact of several campaigns, the star donor said, "We, the campaigners, managed to continue our work with persistence and determination. I would like everyone to know that donating blood doesn't just save lives of the recipients only. There are health benefits for donors too."

Saif al Shukaily, another dedicated blood donor who has generously donated 200 times, reminded people that blood donations support a range of treatments, from helping accident victims or patients with blood cancers to aiding mothers and newborn babies during childbirth.

Shukaily expressed his gratitude to all individuals who donate and assist during any campaign for blood and platelet donations. He urged everyone to participate in those campaigns.

"As everyone knows, the only source of blood is human beings. We hope that the Almighty will inspire and motivate more individuals to engage in this noble humanitarian work because society needs your support and your continuous donation."

To schedule an appointment for blood donation, interested individuals can either WhatsApp at 94555648 or dial 24591255.



Fine up to RO1,000 to curb cultivation of Parthenium

Our Correspondent
Muscat

H E Dr Saud bin Hammoud bin Ahmed al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, has issued a ministerial decision (No 144/2023) classifying Parthenium plant as a destructive pest that requires immediate eradication.

The decision also establishes an agricultural quarantine zone in the affected areas.

Regarded as one of the most invasive weeds, Parthenium has infested certain regions of Dhofar's plains and farmlands. This noxious plant releases chemicals that inhibit the growth of crops and pasture plants, while its allergenic properties pose a risk to both humans and livestock, often triggering pollen allergies.

According to the decision, Dhofar governorate will be designated as an agricultural quarantine area until the issue is resolved, with a specific directive issued to enforce this measure.

The decision explicitly prohibits the import, sale, cultivation, propagation, and transportation of Parthenium and its seeds, as well as any products or substances containing this destructive pest, including fertilisers used for its control.

Violations of the decision will result in administrative fines ranging from RO500 to RO1,000.

The decision, which was issued on June 7, took effect the following day after its publication in the Official Gazette.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Salim Mohammed Salim al Maashani, head of the Madinat al Haq team, lauded the move, considering it a positive step towards curbing the spread of this plant. The team has already initiated various awareness campaigns aimed at eliminating this plant from Dhofar, specifically targeting areas like Mirbat, Taqa, Rakhyut, Dalkhout, and Salalah.

Maashani mentioned that the team's efforts will continue throughout Dhofar from August to October to foster volunteerism and promote social and cultural initiatives within the community. The team's primary objective is to provide relief and support to the agricultural sector in the governorate.

He urged all concerned parties to collaborate in preserving and protecting the environment.

Additionally, he called upon the authorities to conduct rigorous inspections of fodder and livestock before their entry into Oman.



MoL, ASYAD launch initiative to help jobseekers develop skills

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of labour (MoL), in cooperation with ASYAD Group, has opened 40 opportunities for jobseekers to grab and hone their skills during the next two years.

A statement issued by MoL on Tuesday said that the ASYAD Group launched this initiative for jobseekers to enable them to develop capabilities in different fields in an actual work environment for two years.

This initiative offers young Omanis to enhance their employability during those two years in selected professions such as business administration, artificial intelligence, engineering, logistics, health and safety, computer technology and supply chain.

'An applicant for this two-year job must be an Omani not over the age of 30. He/she must speak and write in English and must be registered as a job seeker with the ministry', the statement added.

The ministry is aiming to generate 35,000 job opportunities in 2023.

'The statistics reflect the ministry's continuous efforts to create jobs; and encourage Omanis to achieve qualifications and training associated with employment,' the ministry noted.

MoL is working for Omanisation of the job sector - a priority of the government.

Interested candidates can apply for the aforesaid jobs through www.asyadcareers.om by June 22.

Rear Admiral Rahbi receives AGENOR task force official

Muscat - Rear Admiral Saif Nasser al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) received Rear Admiral Mauro Panebianco, Commander of Task Force of AGENOR, at Al Murtafa'a Garrison on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed a range of issues related to naval fields, as well as promoting joint cooperation.

The meeting was attended by the Military Attaché at the Italian Embassy in Muscat.

Rear Admiral Panebianco and his military accompanying delegation later visited the Maritime Security Centre (MSC). Upon their arrival at the centre, the delegation was received by Commodore Adil Hamoud al Busaidi, Head of MSC.

ONA

SMARTER WAY TO SEND MONEY

SWIFTLY — SECURELY — SMARTLY

FOR JUST OMR 1 ONLY

Download our app today!

GET IT ON Google Play | Download on the App Store

PURSHOTTAM KANJI EXCHANGE | شركة برشوتم كنجي للصرافة

Download it NOW! | +968 91787829 | 99849289 | 91787829 | www.pkexchange.com

Terms & Conditions Applied

الشمس لطب الاسنان Sun Dental Centre Al-Khuwair

SCAN TO FIND LOCATION

95961234

www.sundentalmuscat.com
/sundentalcentre
sundentaloman
sundentalghubra@hotmail.com

- Affordable
- Experienced doctors
- Al khuwair

Our Services

- Bleeding gums
- Teeth Cleaning
- Fixed Teeth
- Bad Breath
- Whitening Teeth
- OPG X-Ray
- Braces
- Root Canal

Approved Insurance:
National Life, Mednet, Metlife, AXA, NAS, OQIC
Saico, NextCare, Vipul Better Care, Greenline & More

MOH No: 558/2023

MARKET WATCH	
MSX30	4,696.64
Sensex	63,143.16
FOREX RATES	
(RO1 equals)	
Indian	214.03
Pakistan	737.42
Bangladesh	281.95
Philippines	145.12
Sri Lanka	800.23
*Rates as on June 13 Source: xe.com	

BRIEFS

US urges Tunisia to accept IMF reforms

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called Monday on Tunisia to agree to IMF reforms and avoid falling off an "economic cliff" after the European Union dangled a major aid package.

Tunisian President Kais Saied has repeatedly refused "diktats" from the International Monetary Fund and the United States has led accusations that the birthplace of the Arab Spring is falling to authoritarianism after the dissolution of parliament and arrest of opposition leaders.

But led by Italy, which fears a surge of migrants if Tunisia's economy further falters, the European Union on Sunday offered a 900mn euro aid package - contingent on Tunisia reaching an IMF deal.

Blinken, meeting his Italian counterpart, voiced support for the "important step" by the European Union.

But he said "something more comprehensive - that in our judgment the IMF can best provide - would be important to actually helping Tunisia get on a sustainable and positive path."

Suhar Industrial City gets RO44mn new investments

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Suhar Industrial City, which is affiliated with the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), received new investments worth RO44mn during the first quarter of 2023, according to Madayn.

"In the first quarter of 2023, Suhar Industrial City received 24 investment applications, of which 16 contracts were signed for industrial, service, and commercial activities, with a total investment of RO44mn," Madayn said in a tweet.

Suhar Industrial City currently hosts 375 projects with a total investment value of RO2.2bn. The number of workers in the city stands at 13,828, with an Omanisation rate of 41.7%, according to Madayn.

Eng Abdullah al Mayasi, director general of Suhar Industrial City, stated that Madayn has made significant progress in completing the Phase 7 development of the city, with a completion rate of 95%.

"The project (Phase 7 development) includes a 32km road network equipped with lighting poles, a drinking water network, sewage, a wastewater treatment plant, a rainwater drainage network, a flood protection wall, an irrigation network, and two water supply tanks," he said.



Additionally, Madayn has issued a tender for a project to study and assess the existing in-

Suhar Industrial City currently hosts 375 projects with total investment value of RO2.2bn. Number of workers in the city stands at 13,828, with an Omanisation rate of 41.7%

ENG ABDULLAH AL MAYASI

frastructure in Phases 1-6.

Mayasi also mentioned, "The plastic complex project has attracted an investment of RO2mn for manufacturing polyethylene and plastic bags on a 12,000 sqm area. Suhar Industrial City and OQ are currently working on external marketing efforts for the project."

The director general of Suhar Industrial City further revealed that the city plans to establish a solar power plant with a capacity of 86 megawatts in the next phase. The project is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2025.



CBO raises RO12mn via treasury bills

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) issued two tenders of treasury bills this week to raise RO12mn on behalf of the Ministry of Finance.

The value of allotted treasury bills in the first tender amounted to RO10mn, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached RO99.660 for every RO100 bill, while the minimum accepted price also arrived at RO99.660.

The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.4321% and 4.44726%, respectively.

The value of allotted treasury bills in the second tender amounted to RO2mn, for a maturity period of 91 days.

The average accepted price reached RO98.765 for every RO100 bill, while the minimum accepted price arrived at RO98.765.

The average discount rate and

the average yield reached 4.9535% and 5.0155%, respectively.

The interest rate on the repo operations with the CBO is 5.75% while the discount rate on the treasury bills discounting facility with the central bank is 6.25%.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds.

The Central Bank of Oman acts as the issue manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities.

Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures.

Global oil supply declines in May

Ankara, Turkey - Global oil liquids production fell by 1.02mn barrels per day (bpd) in May, averaging 100.20mn bpd, according to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) most recent monthly oil market report on Tuesday.

The month-on-month supply decreased by 1% in May, down from 101.22mn bpd in April.

Secondary sources showed that total crude oil production from the 13 member countries of the OPEC group, or OPEC-13, averaged 28.06mn bpd in May, 464,000 bpd lower than the previous month.

Crude oil output increased mainly in Nigeria, Iran and Angola, while production in Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait declined.

Production in Saudi Arabia fell by 519,000 bpd, followed by the UAE with 140,000 bpd. Output last month rose by 171,000 bpd in Nigeria, 61,000 bpd in Iran and 54,000 bpd in Angola.

The share of OPEC crude oil in total global production decreased by 0.2 percentage points



to stand at 28% in May.

Meanwhile, the global rig count totalled 1,857 in May, a reduction of 32 from April, while OPEC countries accounted for 424 rigs.

OPEC kept its forecast for global oil demand growth unchanged for 2023.

The group predicts that oil demand will increase by 2.3mn bpd in 2023 to reach 101.9mn bpd.

Demand for OPEC crude in 2023 also remained unchanged from the previous assessment to stand at 29.3mn bpd, around 0.9mn bpd higher than in 2022.

Anadolu Agency

Profits of GCC banks hit record high in Q1

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Total net profits for listed banks in the GCC countries reached a new record high during Q1 2023, mainly led by a steep quarterly increase in non-interest income that more than offset a decline in interest income in Qatar and Kuwait.

In addition, lower provisions booked by banks in the region also supported banks' bottom-line performance during the first quarter, according to a new report released by Kuwait-based Kamco Investment.

'Aggregate net profits of the listed GCC banks saw the biggest quarter-on-quarter growth since the pandemic at 17% to reach \$13.4bn during Q1 2023 from \$11.5bn recorded in Q4 2022. The sequential increase in net profit was broad-based and was seen across the GCC,' Kamco Investment said.

However, total quarterly net interest income of GCC banks declined for the first time in five quarters during Q1 2023, mainly led by a decline reported by banks in Qatar and Kuwait.

Non-interest income, mean-



while, increased by a strong 17.2% during the first quarter with growth seen across the GCC, barring in Bahrain. Kuwait, Saudi and Qatari banks reported strong double-digit growth in non-interest income during the quarter.

The trend in provisions was mixed during the first quarter of this year, although aggregate provisions declined by 6.2% quarter-on-quarter to reach \$3.1bn in Q1 2023 as compared to \$3.3bn in Q4 2022.

'The decline mainly came as a result of a steep drop in provisions booked by banks in the UAE, Qatar and Oman that more

than offset higher provisions booked by banks in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain,' Kamco Investment said.

Lending grows

Central bank data, as per Kamco Investment, showed that the GCC credit growth continued to remain strong during Q1 2023 despite higher interest rates, indicating strong economic activity and business confidence in the region.

'Aggregate lending in the GCC continued to see growth during the first quarter although the trend remained mixed at the country level with growth in

three out of six countries in the GCC offsetting declines in the remaining countries,' Kamco Investment noted.

Moreover, the quarter-on-quarter growth in gross loans fell to a five-quarter low level of 1.2% to reach \$1.9tn at the end of Q1 2023. The growth in net loans was slightly better at 1.7% to reach \$1.8tn.

On the other hand, growth in customer deposit was at a three-quarter high of 2.9% to reach \$2.3tn at the end of Q1 2023. The trend once again remained mixed across the GCC countries. The net impact of a stronger growth in customer deposits verses lending resulted in a decline in loan-to-deposit ratio for the GCC banking sector that reached 78.5%, one of the lowest levels in several quarters.

Margins improved

The improvement in net interest margin (NIM) reported by GCC banks continued during Q1 2023 as net interest income remained elevated against Q1 2022 coupled with a relatively smaller increase in earning assets.

'NIM reached a multi-quarter high level of 3.1%, also benefiting

from the recent rate hikes. This was also reflected at the country-level with banks in all the GCC countries showing improving margins during the quarter,' Kamco Investment said.

The UAE-listed banks showed the biggest improvement in NIMs during the first quarter with an increase of 26 basis points to reach 3.28% followed by marginal single basis point increase in the rest of the GCC countries.

With the improvement, the UAE now ranked first in the GCC in terms of NIMs followed by Saudi Arabian banks at 3.22% and 3.05% in the case of Qatari banks during Q1 2023.

Meanwhile, the aggressive rate hikes by the US Fed that is largely replicated by banks in the GCC, NIMs for GCC banks are expected to see growth in the near term with a lag of three to four quarters, Kamco Investment noted.

'However, elevated cost of funding is also expected to partially dent the overall growth in margins, and we can expect to see only a marginal impact if lending sees a slowdown,' it added.

Oil transfer from abandoned Yemen ship to start soon: UN

Dubai, UAE - Salvage teams are close to starting the transfer of more than one million barrels of oil from a decaying tanker anchored off Yemen after two weeks of preparatory inspections, the United Nations said.

The FSO Safer, long used as a floating storage platform and now abandoned off the rebel-held Yemeni port of Hodeida, has not been serviced since the Arabian Peninsula country plunged into civil war more than eight years ago.

A team of experts last month started inspecting conditions aboard the vessel and kick-

started preparations for the operation intended to avert a major oil spill.

"I think we are getting very close to the point where we can start the ship-to-ship transfer which will be the next and perhaps most important phase," David Gressly, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen, told a news conference in The Hague on Monday.

"We have a few steps to take care of in terms of insurance and other issues that we need to resolve before bringing in" a replacement vessel, he said.

The operation will see private



The 47-year-old oil ship has not been serviced since Yemen's civil war broke out in 2015 (AFP)

company SMIT Salvage pump the oil from the Safer to the Nautica, a super-tanker the

United Nations purchased for the operation, then tow away the empty tanker.

"After two weeks of inspection, our crew are convinced that the Safer is strong enough for such an operation," said Peter Berdowski, CEO of Boskalis, the parent company of SMIT Salvage.

"I think we are almost there. As far as we are concerned, we are ready to start the ship-to-ship transfer any day in the coming days."

Environmental threat

Berdowski was speaking on the same panel as Gressly ahead of the opening of the Yemen Inter-

national Forum in The Hague on Monday.

Berdowski said the removal of the oil could take between one week and one month, depending on how easily it can be pumped.

"The most important next step obviously is the arrival of the Nautica" replacement vessel, he said.

Berdowski said some issues still needed to be resolved, including inspections to determine whether there is any oxygen inside the oil tanks which could result in an explosion if exposed to a spark.

His team would also need to embark on an underwater inspection of the Safer's hull to make sure it is strong enough for a ship-to-ship transfer.

The Safer is carrying four times as much oil as that which spilled in the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster off Alaska, one of the world's worst ecological catastrophes.

A spill could cost up to \$20bn to clean up, to say nothing of the environmental and human toll, and the UN is negotiating with an insurance consortium to insure the operation.

AFP

US consumer inflation eases for 11th straight month

Washington, US – Consumer inflation in the United States cooled for an 11th straight month on an annual basis in May, the Labor Department said Tuesday, in an encouraging sign for policymakers.

The data comes as Federal Reserve officials are set to begin a two-day policy meeting on Tuesday, with the figures expected to have a bearing on their interest rate decision at the end of the gathering.

While the US central bank has embarked on an aggressive campaign of rate hikes, lifting the benchmark lending rate 10 times in a row since early last year, it is widely anticipated to pause this week.

Government figures released Tuesday show that the consumer price index (CPI), a key gauge of inflation, jumped 4.0% from a year ago in May, in line with analyst expectations and down from a 4.9% rise in April.

This brings it to the lowest level in around two years, and less than half the peak rate of 9.1% in mid-2022.

But analysts caution that Fed policymakers are likely looking for a more sustained trend of



A file photo shows people shopping at a store in Rosemead, California (AFP)

cooling growth before they end their cycle of rate hikes.

On a monthly basis, CPI rose 0.1% in May, decelerating from 0.4% in April, the Labor Department said.

Excluding the volatile food and energy components, consumer inflation was up 5.3% over the last 12 months.

"The index for shelter was the

largest contributor to the monthly all items increase, followed by an increase in the index for used cars and trucks," said the Labor Department in a statement.

Lingering worries

Oren Klachkin, lead US economist at Oxford Economics, told AFP: "A month's worth of data

won't ease policymakers' worries.

They want to see clear trends that inflation is cooling and that the economy is slowing."

"We haven't had that so far, so there's a risk of more rate hikes in the second half of 2023," he added.

For now, halting further rate hikes will allow policymakers more time to assess the economic impact of existing increases, which come on top of recent pressures in the banking sector.

Rubeela Farooqi, chief US economist at High Frequency Economics, added in a note that the figures reflect that underlying inflation "remained elevated but showed improvement," and would unlikely change expectations of the Fed's rate decision.

"As for the future path of policy, incoming information on inflation, the labor market as well as considerations about credit conditions will determine whether the (Federal Open Market Committee) is done raising rates or if more tightening is needed," she said.

AFP



China cuts short-term interest rate to kickstart economy

Beijing, China – China's central bank on Tuesday cut a key policy interest rate, in a surprise move to boost the country's flagging economy.

The People's Bank of China said it was lowering the seven-day reverse repo rate to 1.9% from 2.0%, the first such move since August last year.

The seven-day reverse repo is the short-term interest paid by the central bank on loans from commercial lenders, and a decrease in the rate is expected to increase domestic money supply and stimulate spending.

Analysts had predicted monetary easing measures in the coming weeks, but in the form of a cut to the required reserve ratio – the

amount of cash banks are required to hold – rather than a rate cut, Capital Economics economist Julian Evans-Pritchard wrote in a note on Tuesday.

The cut reveals "growing concerns among policymakers about the health of China's recovery", Evans-Pritchard wrote.

Chinese authorities have announced a series of lacklustre economic indicators in recent months, pointing to a slowdown in the country's post-Covid recovery.

Consumer prices rose only 0.2% on-year in May, while factory activity shrank last month for the second consecutive month.

Beijing has kept interest rates

low compared with other major economies, but the near-zero inflation highlights challenges faced by policymakers as they try to stimulate growth.

China's six largest state-owned commercial banks cut interest rates for savers on Thursday to boost spending, according to announcements on their websites, after being asked by the central bank.

Ting Lu, Chief China Economist at Nomura, said Tuesday's cut means the central bank will "almost surely deliver" cuts to other key interest rates, the one-year medium-term lending facility rate and the loan prime rate, later this month.

AFP

TENDERS ADVERTISEMENT

Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) Announce the following Tenders:

Sr.No	Tender No.	Tender Name	Last date for obtaining the documents	Bid Submission Date	Requirements from participants	Tender Document's Fees (Including VAT) (RO)
1	50/2023	Replacement Of Condenser Coil Of HVAC at Sur 2 & Sur 3 Grid Stations.	03/07/2023	01/08/2023	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration	52/500
2	51/2023	Supply Of Energy Meters And Ethernet Switches.	03/07/2023	01/08/2023	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration	52/500
3	52/2023	Enhance Of Sound System At OETC Head Office.	03/07/2023	01/08/2023	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration	26/250
4	53/2023	Construction of 132/33 kV Mudhai Grid Station And Extension Of Thumrait Grid Station Along With Associated 132 kV OHL From Thumrait Grid Station To Mudhai Grid Station.	03/07/2023	01/08/2023	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration and OETC Registration Category (A + B) Certificate.	2,625/-
5	54/2023	Construction of 132/33 kV Al Mazayunah Grid Station Along With Associated 132 kV OHL From Mudhai Grid Station To Al Mazayunah Grid Station	03/07/2023	01/08/2023	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration and OETC Registration Category (A + B) Certificate.	2,625/-
6	55/2023	Construction of 132/33 kV Shaba Asaib Grid Station Along With Associated 132 kV OHL's From Mudhai Grid Station To Shaba Asaib Grid Station.	03/07/2023	01/08/2023	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration and OETC Registration Category (A + B) Certificate.	2,625/-

Participation:	Interested Companies may obtain Tender Document with the necessity Apply on E-tendering
Buying the Tender:	By E-Tendering System.
Fees:	Against non-refundable payment as mentioned above against each set of document. (Payment Through Bank Transfer) , SMEs are exempted from tender's fees.
The deadline for clarification:	Before (21) Days from bid submission date.
Submission:	The submission of hard copy will be only for Bid Bond & other documents by E-Tendering
Terms and conditions:	- No other writing or any reference thereto should be mentioned on the envelope. - The bid should be valid for not less than (90) days from bid submission date. - The Tenderer should enclose a bank guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of 1% of the bid value and should be valid for (90) days from bid submission date, addressed to Oman Electricity Transmission Company (SAOC). Small & Medium Enterprises are exempted from the submission of 1% of the bid bond. - A bid not comply with the required guarantee, will not be accepted. - OETC is not bound to accept the lowest or any other offers.
Offer:	The bid bond should be submitted in Tender Box No. (1) at the company's building before 11:00 am on the assigned date for submission of the Tenders.
Company Address:	Muscat - Al Mawaleh Road No: 2153 - Building No. 423 O Block No: 321 - Contact Details: 92217856, 91777378, 99105413, 93515198
Email:	tenders@omangrid.com
Website:	www.omangrid.com / Link of E-Tendering System https://www.omangrid.com/en/Pages/Services.aspx



Oman Electricity Transmission Company S.A.O.C.
P.O. Box 1389, Al Khoudh, PC 132, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: +968 2428 3000 | Fax: +968 2230 9046
www.omangrid.com



إعلان طرح مناقصات

تعلن الشركة العُمانية لنقل الكهرباء عن طرح المناقصات التالية :

م	رقم المناقصة	عنوان المناقصة	آخر موعد للحصول على مستندات المناقصة	آخر موعد لتقديم العطاءات	الدرجة	ثمن الوثيقة الشامل ضريبة القيمة المضافة (د.ع)
١	٢٠٢٣/٥٠	إستبدال لفائف المكثف لوحدة التكييف المركزي في محطتي صور 2 وصور 3.	٢٠٢٣/٠٧/٠٣	٢٠٢٣/٠٨/٠١	الشركات المحلية العاملة في هذا المجال ولديها سجل تجاري ساري المفعول	٥٢/٥٠٠
٢	٢٠٢٣/٥١	توريد عدادات الطاقة الكهربائية ومقسمات شبكة الاتصالات.	٢٠٢٣/٠٧/٠٣	٢٠٢٣/٠٨/٠١	الشركات المحلية العاملة في هذا المجال ولديها سجل تجاري ساري المفعول	٥٢/٥٠٠
٣	٢٠٢٣/٥٢	تحسين نظام الصوت في مبنى الرئيسي للشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء.	٢٠٢٣/٠٧/٠٣	٢٠٢٣/٠٨/٠١	الشركات المحلية العاملة في هذا المجال ولديها سجل تجاري ساري المفعول	٢٦/٢٥٠
٤	٢٠٢٣/٥٣	إنشاء محطة كهرباء محضي جهد 132/33 ك.ف. و توسعة محطة كهرباء ثمرت وخط الكهرباء جهد 132 ك.ف. المصاحب لها بين محطتي كهرباء محضي و محضي.	٢٠٢٣/٠٧/٠٣	٢٠٢٣/٠٨/٠١	الشركات المحلية العاملة في هذا المجال ولديها سجل تجاري ساري المفعول. ومسجلة لدى الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء (الفئة أ + ب .)	٢,٦٢٥/-
٥	٢٠٢٣/٥٤	إنشاء محطة كهرباء المزبونة جهد 132/33 ك.ف. وخط الكهرباء جهد 132 ك.ف. المصاحب لها بين محطتي كهرباء محضي والمزبونة.	٢٠٢٣/٠٧/٠٣	٢٠٢٣/٠٨/٠١	الشركات المحلية العاملة في هذا المجال ولديها سجل تجاري ساري المفعول. ومسجلة لدى الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء (الفئة أ + ب .)	٢,٦٢٥/-
٦	٢٠٢٣/٥٥	إنشاء محطة كهرباء شهب أصعب جهد 132 ك.ف. المصاحب لها بين محطتي كهرباء محضي و شهب أصعب.	٢٠٢٣/٠٧/٠٣	٢٠٢٣/٠٨/٠١	الشركات المحلية العاملة في هذا المجال ولديها سجل تجاري ساري المفعول. ومسجلة لدى الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء (الفئة أ + ب .)	٢,٦٢٥/-

الاشتراك	يمكن للشركات والمؤسسات المتخصصة الحصول على مستندات المناقصة بعد تقديم الطلب عن طريق نظام المناقص الإلكتروني.
طريقة الشراء	من خلال نظام المناقص الإلكتروني.
الرسوم	مقابل دفع المبلغ المحدد أعلاه للنسخة الواحدة - لا ترد - الدفع عن طريق التحويل البنكي . تعفى المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة من دفع ثمن الوثيقة.
آخر موعد للإستفسارات	قبل (٢١) يوم من تاريخ آخر موعد لتقديم العطاءات
تقديم العروض	يتم تسليم النسخة الأصلية فقط من الضمان البنكي للعطاء في الصندوق . أما العرض فيتم تسليمه من خلال نظام المناقص الإلكتروني.
الشروط و الضمانات	- عدم خمد اسم صاحب العطاء أو ما يشير إليه على الظروف. - أن تكون العروض سارية المفعول لمدة لا تقل عن (٩٠) يوما من تاريخ تقديم العطاء. - إرفاق تأمينا في صورة ضمان مصرفي من أحد البنوك العاملة في البلاد قدره (٢١) من قيمة العطاء ساري لمدة (٩٠) يوما من تاريخ تقديم العطاء. ومعنونا بإسم الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء . تعفى المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة من تسليم الضمان المصرفي. - كل عطاء لا يستوفي التأمين المطلوب لن ينظر فيه. - الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء غير مقيدة بقبول أقل العروض أو أي عطاء آخر.
العرض المقدم	يجب وضع الضمان البنكي للعطاء فقط في صندوق المناقصات رقم (١) بمبنى الشركة قبل الساعة ١١ صباحا من التاريخ المحدد لتقديم العطاءات
عنوان الشركة	عنوان الشركة: محافظة مسقط - الموالج - رقم السكينة ٢١٥٣ - مبنى رقم ٤٢٣٠ تفاصيل التواصل: ٩٢٢١٧٨٥٦, ٩١٧٧٣٧٨, ٩٩١٠٥٤١٣, ٩٣٥١٥١٩٨
البريد الإلكتروني	tenders@omangrid.com
الموقع الإلكتروني	www.omangrid.com link of E-Tendering System https://www.omangrid.com/en/Pages/Services.aspx



الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء ش. م. ع. م.
ص. ب. : ١٣٨٩، الخوض الرمز البريدي : ١٣٢، سلطنة عمان
الهاتف : +٩١٨٢٤٢٨٣٠٠ / الفاكس : +٩١٨٢٢٣٠٩٠٤٦
الموقع الإلكتروني : www.omangrid.com



الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء ش. م. ع. م.
ص. ب. : ١٣٨٩، الخوض الرمز البريدي : ١٣٢، سلطنة عمان
الهاتف : +٩١٨٢٤٢٨٣٠٠ / الفاكس : +٩١٨٢٢٣٠٩٠٤٦
الموقع الإلكتروني : www.omangrid.com



GCET opens solar power station

In contribution to the sultanate's goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2050, reducing carbon emissions, and promoting clean and renewable energy sources, the Global College of Engineering and Technology (GCET) has launched a solar power station.

The station was implemented and delivered to SunShine Trading and Investment Company for development, ensuring its operations align with the established plans and objectives. This station marks the first step of a recent initiative launched by the college titled 'GCET Go Green' under the supervision of the Research and Innovation Office (RIO). The initiative aims to contribute to the clean and renewable energy sector, providing a platform to enhance scientific research and studies in various fields, including wind turbines and green hydrogen, a press release said.

The project aims to support students and faculty members in conducting scientific research within the college through hands-on experiments. This significant and vital step contributes to the achievement of Oman Vision 2040 in sustainability and the transformation of traditional energy into sustainable energy, aligning with Oman's energy plan.

The project was designed using the latest technologies and equipment in the field of solar energy, with the supervision of specialized engineers. It also offers students an opportunity to enhance their scientific and practical skills in the field of engineering and technology, thus improving their future professional prospects.

Engineer Abdullah al Nadabi, a research assistant in Solar Energy at the RIO, emphasised that this project aims to achieve several objectives. These include integrating sustainable and clean energy within the college, improving its efficiency and effectiveness, raising awareness about the importance of sustainable energy, conducting live experiments to enhance the solar energy sector, and contributing to the achievement of Oman Vision 2040 in sustainability and the transformation of traditional energy into sustainable energy. Additionally, it aims to strengthen collaboration between government and private companies and institutions.

Nadabi stated, "Undoubtedly, this project represents an achievement in the field of sustainable energy and is an important step in achieving the strategic goals of the college. Our focus is on providing all necessary resources to support scientific research and contribute to Oman Vision 2040. We are confident that this project will serve as a model for future sustainable energy endeavors. We extend our gratitude to all those who participated and contributed to the success of this project and look forward to achieving and accomplishing more successful projects in the field of clean and sustainable energy".

ValueFirst lauds launch of unified chatbot platform

ValueFirst, a global leader in enterprise communication services, commended the UAE government for its ground-breaking initiative in delivering efficient and accessible services to its citizens with the launch of a unified chatbot platform for government services.

"The UAE government's launch of the unified chatbot platform demonstrates their commitment to delivering exceptional services to citizens," stated Arvind Kalla, Chief Regional Officer, ValueFirst. "This initiative is a testament to their dedication to innovation and efficiency, ensuring that government services are accessible and personalized for the benefit of all citizens."

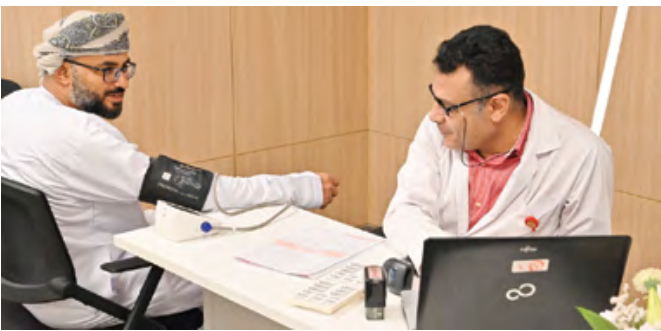
Recognising the immense value of chatbots, the government's initiative aims to streamline and centralize services, enhancing the user experience and revolutionising interactions with various government departments, a press release said.

"This ground-breaking development holds significant potential benefits for both citizens and the government. First and foremost, it promises to improve the efficiency of government services by automating routine tasks and providing instant responses to common queries. With the ability to access information and complete transactions at any time, citizens will experience a remarkable reduction in the need for physical visits or waiting in long queues. This forward-thinking approach will undoubtedly enhance convenience and save valuable time for citizens," Kalla added.

He further said the standardisation of the user experience across different government departments is a praiseworthy aspect of the unified chatbot platform. By implementing consistent design principles, navigation, and information architecture, users will encounter a remarkably user-friendly and seamless interaction with the chatbots, regardless of the specific service they require. This unified experience will minimise discrepancies, ensuring that citizens can easily access the services they need.



Arvind Kalla



National Finance organises blood drive

National Finance has successfully concluded its blood donation initiative, held in commemoration of World Blood Donor Day.

The event, hosted at the company's headquarters, witnessed an overwhelming response from employees, who wholeheartedly embraced the opportunity to make a difference. Their selfless act of donating blood exemplified a remarkable sense of unity, a press release said.

Impressively, a significant count of individuals registered forward as blood donors, totaling 150. This notable participation contributed to the cause of saving lives and addressing the ongoing challenges related to the blood supply. A commendable number of units of blood were collected during the drive. These notable statistics stand as a testament to the generosity of the National Finance team, actively supporting the well-being of the community.

Tariq al Farsi, CEO of National Finance, expressed his gratitude and pride for the enthusiastic participation of employees and the successful outcome of the blood donation drive. He remarked, "We are thrilled to have made a significant impact in the lives of others through our blood donation Initiative. Our employees' overwhelming response and active involvement showcase their compassion and dedication to making a difference. We believe in the power of collective action and this event exemplifies the spirit of giving back to the community that lies at the core of National Finance's values."

National Finance continues demonstrating its strong commitment to community service and belief in the spirit of volunteerism. The successful organisation of the blood donation drive reaffirms the company's position at the forefront of initiatives that positively impact society.

Camp held for Keralite children in Ruwi

Kairali Ruwi organised a one-day summer camp for Keralite children with many goals to awaken the creative abilities of the children after the stress of exams, to acquire knowledge beyond the classrooms, and to get to know the great culture of Kerala.

Nidheesh Kumar, member of the Board of Directors of Indian Schools in Oman, inaugurated the camp on June 9 at Star of Cochin Hall, Ruwi MBD. Ruwi Unit president Varun presided over the event.

Kairali Oman president Shaji Sebastian, Reji Shahul, Anuchandran and Subin extended their greetings. Ruwi secretary Abhilash Shivan welcomed the guests as Surendran, owner of Falcon Printers, distributed gifts to the children. The organisers had prepared food and snacks for all the fifty children who participated in the camp which emphasised knowledge and entertainment for the children, conducted by Sunil Guruvayoorappan and Venugopal, drama activists in Oman.



Winner claims life-changing prize from Ooredoo

Do you want to win a MINI Cooper? That dream recently came true for a lucky winner and subscriber of Ooredoo.

Selected at random from thousands of entries to the epic Recharge and Win Draw from Ooredoo, the second lucky MINI Cooper winner enjoys his truly life-changing prize, alongside winners of an iPhone 14, free data, and local minutes, a press release said.

Abdullah al Mubihasi, a young Omani from Barka, won the brand-new car after being automatically entered into Ooredoo's Recharge and Win draw by paying just RO3 to recharge.

He said, "I am so excited about winning such a fantastic car, and I have not even been able to sleep since Ooredoo contacted me to tell me I had scooped this grand prize. I feel so blessed with this opportunity and needed this boost. It also tells me that patience is a virtue. I am very grateful to Ooredoo."

Running until 7 July, one can still enter Ooredoo's Recharge and Win draw, including during the upcoming Eid al Adha holiday. Everyone who tops up their prepaid credit by RO3 or more will be in with a chance of winning a MINI Cooper, an iPhone 14, 500 free local minutes, 25 GB local data, 1,000 local minutes, or 100 GB local data.



Sharjah Summer Promotions 2023 to commence on July 1

The Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) has ramped up its preparations to deliver an extraordinary experience for residents and tourists alike at the upcoming 'Sharjah Summer Promotions 2023', set to commence on July 1.

The organising committee, chaired by Ibrahim Rashid al Jarwan, director of the Economic Relations Department and General Coordinator of the event, has conducted a meeting with the new management of City Centre Al Zahia to discuss the centre's latest preparations for the Sharjah Summer Promotions and got a glimpse of the key events and the scale of the rewards to be unveiled at the event's launch, a press release said.

Jarwan stressed that the meeting with City Centre Al Zahia aimed to enhance the chamber's communication and cooperation with shopping centre representatives across the emirate to review the overall work progress and understand their planned visual elements. He highlighted that shopping centres and retail outlets throughout the emirate are in the process of preparing to showcase their most compelling promotional deals during Sharjah Summer Promotions 2023. This event is expected to offer residents and visitors an exceptional shopping experience.

The residents and visitors can also benefit from a wide range of appealing offers tailored to suit different budgets. Additionally, a selection of distinctive leisure activities will be available, designed to attract families, shoppers, and tourists, thus stimulating the economy overall, especially the retail sector.

The Sharjah Summer Promotions 2023 event will be filled with a host of activities, pleasant surprises, promotional and entertainment offers, as well as valuable prizes provided by shopping centres and shops.



OQ hosts reception for Ahmad al Harthy

OQ, the Global Integrated Energy Group, celebrated the achievement of Ahmad al Harthy, the champion racer who finished second in the 100th anniversary edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans, World Endurance Championship held in France.

The Oman Racing Team made history by achieving such a high placement in a global championship for the first time ever, a press release said.

During the event, Ashraf bin Hamad al Maamari, CEO of People, Technology and Culture at OQ, stated, "OQ's sponsorship of the OQ Champion Ahmad al Harthy epitomises His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's profound interest in sports, as mentioned during his meeting with Sheikhs and dignitaries of the Al Sharqiyah South governorate on January 9, 2022. His Majesty emphasised that sports have become an industry and an integral part of the country's development process.

Additionally, it reflects our belief in the importance of nurturing Omani champions across various sports on a global stage".



Maamari expressed pride in the accomplishments of the Omani team led by Harthy as they elevate the reputation of the Sultanate of Oman in international sports arenas.

He highlighted that OQ's sponsorship of Harthy's participation in international races aligns with the growing significance of sports today. Furthermore, he mentioned OQ's past contributions to sponsoring accomplished athletes such as Mohammed al Mashaikhi and Omar Al Ghailani, who achieved commendable results in several international tournaments. He highlighted Harthy's role as a community role model and the ambassador of Omani brands abroad. Not only does he have an impressive track record of achieving top positions, but he also imparts his experiences to the next generation of aspiring motor racing enthusiasts.

He further affirmed OQ's commitment to supporting Omani athletes, who proudly represent Oman in various international sports competitions. This dedication stems from the company's national and social responsibility to empower talented Omanis in their pursuit of excellence.

As for Ahmad Al Harthy, he expressed his joy over his second-place finish and acknowledged the event's significance on an international level.

He contributed to the promotion of Omani sports around the world while proudly carrying the flag of the sultanate to podiums.

Meethaq offers exclusive card privileges

In line with its commitment towards serving customers better every day, Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat offers several credit cards with a number of exclusive benefits to customers.

Meethaq's Credit Cards are Sharia compliant as they are based on the concept of Ujrah with no interest-based fees and the benefits consider the needs of different customer segments. Meethaq customers will particularly enjoy the large number of travel and shopping benefits which are available to its customers, a press release said.

Sami Arfah Bait Rashid, assistant general manager - Meethaq Personal Banking, said, "Meethaq is keen to develop and offer the latest features and services through its credit cards to its customers so that they can enjoy the best possible experience when shopping and while traveling. I would like to express my happiness and delight at the excellent feedback we have received from customers since the



launch of Meethaq's Credit Cards. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all customers for their strong confi-

dence in Meethaq Islamic banking and its cutting-edge products and services."

Meethaq Credit cardholders can enjoy 52 days of credit period, 24-hour cash advance facility from ATMs worldwide and a secure Internet shopping via online OTP service. Travel benefits on the cards include free travel takaful for tickets bought with the card, offers at some of the most iconic and distinctive hotels worldwide as well as discounts at a number of merchants worldwide.

The cards feature both contactless and Chip and PIN payments at PoS terminals for highly secure transactions, and are accepted worldwide at more than 30 million locations. Customers also benefit from Meethaq's Easy Payment Plan facility wherein they can pay for their high-value purchases at selected merchants in Oman over a period of 12 months, without needing to pay any extra amount for the extended credit facility.

Mercedes offers summer service

Experience true luxury, exclusivity and high-class craftsmanship this summer in Oman as selected Mercedes-Benz models currently come with a complimentary five-year/105,000km service package.

Customers can expect nothing less than the best from the exclusive summer offer that is still valid until June 30. Whenever their new Mercedes-Benz needs a repair or maintenance, only carefully crafted Mercedes-



Benz Genuine Parts will be used to protect the performance, comfort, longevity and safety of the vehicle, a press release said. The Mercedes-Benz Oman

summer exclusive offer applies to vehicles in the CLA, C-Class, GLE, and Mercedes-AMG GLE Coupé range, while the Service Package covers the cost of parts, labour and operational fluids needed for the scheduled maintenance operations. This way there are no financial surprises as customers will be able to benefit from transparent maintenance costs, which remain unaffected any future increase of the service package's prices.

Nikon launches Nikon Z8 camera

Nikon Middle East FZE, a world-renowned leader in imaging technology announced the highly anticipated launch of the new Nikon Z 8 in the region.

This revolutionary mirrorless camera redefines the visual universe and is designed to empower creators with its advanced capabilities and bring their artistic visions to life, a press release said.

Combining the unparalleled performance of the flagship Nikon Z 9 with a compact and portable body, the Z 8 allows you to capture videos or stills with extra stability and comfort. Light weight and featuring a deep grip design, it enables you to climb up, lay low, or go the distance to follow through the actions with minimal fatigue.

Its compatibility with an array

of videography accessories provides the flexibility to film in different genres effortlessly. With the Nikon Z 8, you can now move around on this small and lightweight system with agility and effortlessly record cinematic masterpieces.

One of the standout features of the Nikon Z 8 is its ability to record videos in breathtaking 8K UHD at 30P resolution.

Airport charges stay constant, airfares surge

Airport charges have remained steady since the pandemic, while airfares have soared above pre-pandemic levels as major airlines reap record profits hampering the aviation industry recovery, reveals ACI Asia-Pacific's study on airfare trends in the region.

The comprehensive study, undertaken in collaboration with Flare Aviation Consulting, examined around 36,000 routes in the top 10 aviation markets in Asia-Pacific and the Middle East, reveals an alarming increase in international airfares by up to 50%, while domestic routes went up by less than 10%, a press release said.

The markets that saw the highest airfare increase are India (41%), United Arab Emirates (34%), Singapore (30%) and Australia (23%).

Unexpectedly, in the first quarter of 2023, despite a progressive increase in traffic, domestic airfares have continued to increase in several of these markets, including India, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and

Japan, only decreasing marginally on international routes.

Airlines are capitalising on low competition and pent-up demand to increase profits and recover losses incurred during the pandemic, while airports continue to provide enhanced services to passengers despite incurring heavy operational and capital expenditures.

Expressing concerns about the high-pricing practice, Stefano Baronci, director general of ACI Asia-Pacific said, "These excessive airfares threaten the industry's long-term recovery and may have a far-reaching influence on the associated industry by reducing demand for air travel and increasing the financial burden on the already stressed sector. Airlines should exercise fair pricing that supports recovery and safeguards consumers' interests. A supply-demand imbalance should not be exploited by airlines at the cost of customers by restricting capacity, especially international, a key driver of social and economic growth."



ICAI Muscat elects new managing committee

The Muscat Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), under the sponsorship of the College of Banking and Financial Studies (CBFS) elected a new managing committee for the year 2023-24, at its 15th Annual General Meeting (AGM) recently.

The new managing committee comprises of CA Jim Joseph Itty, chairperson, CA Gaurav Kapoor, vice-chairperson, CA Unmesh Bhome, secretary, CA

Sangeetha Suresh Kumar, treasurer and WYMEC lead, CA Ashish Subhedar, CPE sub-committee lead, CA Badri N Subudhi, compliance and support sub-committee lead, CA Abhishek R Vaishya, IT-PR-media and students' affairs lead, and CA Sajeev Surendran, past chairperson.

Outgoing chairperson, CA Sajeev Surendran said, "We have achieved yet another milestone in our ongoing journey of

excellence as we received the best overseas chapter award for the year 2022. With the invaluable vision and guidance from the ICAI leadership and our sponsors CBFS, together with our committed members, our chapter continued its endeavours by organising a spate of constructive and productive events last year.

I wish a fruitful year to the new managing committee in its knowledge sharing voyage."

CA Jim Joseph Itty, the newly elected chairperson said, "The concerted efforts of the Chapter have been aimed at achieving our mission of quality knowledge sharing in accounting, and actively participating in enhancing the competitiveness and development of human capital in accounting.

We will continue our endeavours in Oman in association with the public and private sectors.

The Muscat Chapter will solemnly dedicate ourselves to effectively participate in creating awareness on the growing importance of professional accounting in sustainable development," Itty added.

The Annual General Meeting was followed by a comprehensive presentation on ChatGPT (an Artificial Intelligence chatbot) by Dr Zahra Al Rawahi, CEO of Oman's Artificial Intelligence Academy.

Trump faces biggest legal threat as documents case opens in court

Miami, US - Donald Trump is due in court on Tuesday to face dozens of felony counts of mis-handling US government secrets, in the most serious yet of a firestorm of criminal probes threatening to derail his bid to win back the White House.

The former president plans to travel by motorcade for the 25-minute journey from his golf course in Miami to the federal courthouse, where he is expected to deny 37 counts of unlawfully retaining classified documents and obstructing efforts to get them back.

The Republican leader is running for reelection, and devoted supporters had already begun hitting the streets on the eve of the hearing - with Miami police bracing for protests of up to 50,000 and prepared for the possibility of violence.

"There's never been anything like it. A witch hunt like this has never taken place," Trump told a local conservative Hispanic radio station after arriving in Miami from his summer home in New Jersey on Monday.

"When you look at what they've done, and when you look at the criminal acts and the horrible acts that they've committed, and then they come after me."

The pugnacious billionaire, who turns 77 on Wednesday, is accused of willfully hoarding dozens of clearly-marked government secrets he took unlawfully to his beachfront mansion in Florida when he left office in 2021, refusing to return them and conspiring to obstruct investigators seeking to recover them.

He is also charged with sharing sensitive US secrets with people who had no security



Former US President Donald Trump disembarks 'Trump Force One' at Miami International Airport in Miami, Florida, on Monday (AFP)

clearance, in a much more serious case than any he has previously faced, with charges that can carry decades-long prison

in the National Archives stacked at Mar-a-Lago, his Palm Beach residence, in a ballroom and in a bathroom and shower.

innocence in a speech before supporters.

The Republican former president's legal woes are only just beginning, as he faces multiple felony counts in a financial fraud case in New York set to go to trial next March.

Jack Smith, the special counsel leading the documents probe, is also looking into Trump's involvement in the 2021 US Capitol riot, and state and federal investigators are scrutinising his efforts to subvert the 2020 election.

'Eye for an eye'

Trump's allies in Congress and rivals for the presidential nomination have largely circled the wagons following his latest indictment, decrying the 'weaponisation' of the government against conservatives.

Some Republican lawmakers have been criticised for rhetoric that could inspire violence, including Louisiana's Clay Higgins,

who told supporters to 'buckle up' and Arizona's Andy Biggs, who tweeted: "We have now reached a war phase. An eye for an eye."

The Southern District of Florida is known as a 'rocket docket' court, legal slang for locations that push for swift justice, and authorities have not ruled out completing a trial before the 2024 election.

Much of the focus in the preliminary proceedings will be on District Court Judge Aileen Cannon, a Trump appointee who was allocated the case at random and will have enormous sway over how fast things move. Cannon issued a series of rulings favourable to Trump earlier in the case that effectively jammed up the investigation for weeks until a conservative appeals court ruled she had acted beyond her authority.

Another judge will oversee the arraignment hearing itself.

AFP



The site of a bus crash, where 10 people from a wedding party were killed, in Cessnock, north of Sydney on Monday (AFP)

Driver appears in court after bus crash in Australia

Sydney, Australia - A 58-year-old wedding bus driver appeared in an Australian court on Tuesday, charged with dangerous driving that caused the deaths of 10 guests.

Brett Andrew Button faces years in prison after police alleged he drove 'too quick' in what were believed to be foggy conditions just before midnight on Sunday, causing Australia's deadliest road accident in 16 years.

Button's bus was carrying 35 passengers when it lost control at a roundabout and careened onto its side, killing nine people almost instantly.

Moments earlier, the passengers had been celebrating the wedding of a young couple at the nearby Wandin Estate Winery in Australia's picturesque Hunter Valley wine region.

Another passenger later died in hospital.

Fourteen guests are still hospitalised, including one in intensive care.

A local man, Button appeared in Cessnock court, head bowed throughout the proceedings, prompting magistrate Robyn Richardson to express concern.

"I see here before me a man

suffering," she said, granting bail on the condition that Button does not approach prosecution witnesses or get behind the wheel of a vehicle.

"I do have concerns for Mr Button's wellbeing," she said.

His alleged victims are said to be aged between 20 and 60 years. Besides those killed, passengers suffered injuries ranging from lacerations to breaks and fractures.

Police say they are still piecing together their investigation.

Officers have said that initial alcohol testing came back negative, but they pointed blame at 'erratic' speeding that some passengers had reportedly complained about before the crash.

"We've obviously now charged that 58-year-old bus driver, we've charged him with 11 charges," said Acting assistant police commissioner David Waddell. "He entered that roundabout in a manner that was inconsistent with the conditions," he added.

"Obviously, the speed was too quick for him to negotiate that roundabout, causing the vehicle to fall on its left side, and causing those injuries."

AFP

CIAO SILVIO



A portrait of Silvio Berlusconi reading 'Good bye President' is seen placed outside the Villa San Martino, the residence of Italian businessman and former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, following his death, in Arcore, northern Italy, on Tuesday (AFP)

Petition found in package that stopped Abe murder hearing, says Japanese media

Tokyo, Japan - A suspicious package that prompted the cancellation of a hearing for the man accused of murdering former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe contained only a petition, and no explosives, local media said on Tuesday.

Tetsuya Yamagami had been due to make his first appearance before a court in western Japan's Nara on Monday, accused of shooting the former leader last July.

But the session was 'cancelled as staff were evacuated from the building after a suspicious item was delivered to the court', a court spokesman told AFP.

Police were called after the



Staff members stand outside the Nara District Court after getting temporarily evacuated from the building, in Nara on Monday (AFP)

object set off a metal detector, local police said.

It was then moved to an open area, where bomb specialists in protective gear investigated.

"But no explosives or hazardous substances were found,"

a police spokesman told AFP, without giving further details.

Public broadcaster NHK said the box contained a printout of a Change.org petition seeking a lenient sentence for Yamagami.

The petition has amassed

13,000 signatures since last year, and its organiser admitted to NHK that they had sent the document to the court.

"I sent the signatures in the hope that they would be seen by as many interested parties as possible," the broadcaster quoted the person as saying, without identifying them.

"As they were thick and it was raining, I put them in cardboard boxes... There was never any intention to obstruct justice."

The sender contacted the police themselves after learning that the box had triggered a security alert, the Kyodo news agency said.

AFP

Rescued Colombian kids in 'high spirits', draw missing search dog

Bogotá, Colombia - The four Indigenous children rescued after wandering the Colombian Amazon for 40 days are recovering and in 'high spirits', welfare officials said on Monday, even drawing a picture thought to depict a missing army search dog.

Siblings Lesly, Soleiny, Tien Noriel and Cristin - aged 13, nine, five and one, respectively - were receiving treatment at a military hospital in Bogota after they were found hungry and dehydrated last Friday, having survived a plane crash more than five weeks earlier.

Their mother had died in the aftermath of the crash, which killed the two other adults they were traveling with.

By Monday, the rescued children were 'in high spirits', Adri-

ana Velasquez of the Colombian Family Welfare Institute said in a video sent to media.

"They have been colouring, drawing. They love to talk," she added.

The army released a drawing attributed to the children that depicts Wilson, a rescue dog that went missing during the search.

"The dog was with them, he would leave and come back again... but then he disappeared," said Narciso Mucutuy, the children's grandfather, in a video released by the Ministry of Defense.

The army said on Saturday it would keep looking for Wilson, a six-year-old Belgian shepherd who was key to finding some of the items left behind by the children in the jungle.



The Colombian army is still looking for the six-year-old Belgian shepherd Wilson who played a crucial role in the finding of the four children, but who disappeared within the dense Colombian jungle (AFP)

"No one is left behind," the army said in a tweet including a video of the dog.

While alone, the children sur-

vived in part by eating a three-pound package of cassava flour found in the plane wreckage, as well as fruit from the jungle.

Custody dispute

The older siblings had been fighting fevers, a colleague of Velasquez, Astrid Caceres, told W

Radio, while Tien Noriel was being monitored for a possible reaction to something he ate.

Tien Noriel was too weak to walk by the time rescuers found the four after covering more than 2,600km (1,615 miles) of jungle, only to discover them about five kilometers from the wreck of the small plane.

The youngest of the siblings remains in intensive care, 'not due to any serious condition but for closer monitoring due to her age', said Caceres, adding that all four had been catching up on lost sleep.

The children are expected to remain in hospital for another two to three weeks.

The family welfare agency will keep the siblings under its guardianship until a custody dis-

pute between their relatives is resolved. Family members of Magdalena Mucutuy, the deceased mother, have said the father of the two younger siblings, Manuel Miller Ranoque, mistreated the children, which he denies.

Ranoque, speaking to the press on Sunday outside the hospital, said his wife had been severely injured in the May 1 crash, but did not die until four days later, her children beside her.

During the search, rescuers broadcast a message recorded by the children's grandmother, urging them not to move.

Their maternal grandmother, Fatima Valencia, told AFP that she hoped to gain custody of the four children.

AFP

Russian strikes kill 11 in Zelensky's hometown

The strikes overnight hit multiple sites and smashed into a five-storey apartment building in Kryvyi Rig

Kyiv, Ukraine - Russian strikes early on Tuesday on the hometown of Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky killed 11 people, as Moscow said it had captured Western armoured vehicles from Kyiv's forces.

The strikes overnight hit multiple sites and smashed into a five-storey apartment building in the central city of Kryvyi Rig, leaving smoke billowing from the housing block strewn with debris.

"During this terrible night, the enemy killed 11 civilians in the city," said Dnipropetrovsk regional governor Sergiy Lysak. Officials earlier put the death toll at 10, but Lysak said that another person had been pulled dead from under the rubble.

"The search and rescue operation has been completed," he added.

Zelensky said after the strikes that Russian forces were waging a war against 'residential buildings, ordinary cities and people'.

He promised Ukrainians that those responsible would be held to account. "Terrorists will never be forgiven, and they will be held accountable for every missile they launch," he said in a statement on social media.



Firefighters extinguishing a fire on a five-storey residential building, the site of a night Russian strike, in the city of Kryvyi Rig, on Tuesday (AFP)

Air raid sirens earlier had sounded across Ukraine as the capital Kyiv and the northeast city of Kharkiv also came under missile and drone attacks. Ukraine's air force said Russia launched 14 cruise missiles and four Iranian-made drones overnight, with 10 missiles and one drone intercepted.

'Trophies'
In the morning, another missile was fired by Russian forces before being shot down by the Ukrainian air defences. The fresh wave of attacks came shortly before Moscow claimed to have captured several German Leopard tanks and US Bradley infantry fighting vehicles.

The defence ministry released footage showing Russian troops surveying the equipment supplied to Ukraine by Western countries. "Leopard tanks and Bradley infantry fighting vehicles. These are our trophies. Equipment of the Ukrainian armed forces in the Zaporizhzhia region," the Russian defence ministry said in a statement.

"Servicemen of the Vostok group inspect enemy tanks and infantry fighting vehicles captured in battle." Kyiv has appealed to its allies in the West to deliver a broad range of modern military equipment to help Ukrainian forces recapture large swathes of territory

controlled by Russia. The defence ministry said several of the captured vehicles had working engines, suggesting that battles they were involved in had been short and that Ukrainian troops had 'fled' their offensive positions. Meanwhile, Ukraine has asked Australia about the condition of dozens of retired F-18 fighter jets, the country's ambassador told AFP on Tuesday, eyeing a potential weapons

and southern regions amounted to 'more than 100sqkm'. The commander of Ukrainian ground forces, Colonel Oleksandr Syrskyi, said troops were continuing 'the defence operation in the Bakhmut sector', scene of the longest battle of the offensive. "Our soldiers are advancing, and the enemy is losing ground on the flanks," he said. On Monday, Zelensky said Ukraine was making small gains in a 'tough' counter-offensive.

Terrorists will never be forgiven, and they will be held accountable for every missile they launch

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY

transfer that could significantly bolster Kyiv's airpower. The strikes across Ukraine came shortly after Kyiv claimed to have retaken seven villages and made advances in its counter-offensive against Russian forces. Military spokesman Andriy Kovalyov said the area of the recaptured land in the eastern



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro wave during Raisi's welcoming ceremony in Caracas, on Monday (AFP)

Iran, Venezuela have common visions, enemies: Raisi in Caracas

Caracas, Venezuela - Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi began a rare diplomatic tour of Latin America on Monday with a first stop in Caracas, where he said his country and Venezuela are 'friends' with 'common enemies'. Raisi's schedule is also set to include visits to Cuba and Nicaragua, who, like Iran and Venezuela, are all the target of US sanctions. "We have common interests, common visions, and common enemies," the president said, without specifying, in remarks to the press alongside Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro. "The relationship between Iran and Venezuela is not a normal diplomatic relationship, but a strategic relationship."

Tehran is one of the principal international allies of Maduro's government, which, like those in Cuba and Nicaragua, are also allies of Russia, a pariah since its invasion of Ukraine last year. "Iran is playing a starring role as one of the most important emerging powers in the new world," said Maduro, claiming that 'together we will be invincible'.

Part of the reason for Raisi's trip was to increase trade between the two countries, Raisi said, up from the current US\$3bn a year to eventually US\$20bn. The two leaders announced that they signed 25 accords, across sectors ranging from education and health to mining.

Also on the agenda is developing technological cooperation between the two countries, part of

Raisi's goal of improving 'economic, political and scientific co-operation' between Iran, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Cuba. "Over the last two years, our cooperation with these countries has developed," Raisi told the Irna news agency before he set off from Tehran. Iran and Venezuela are also members of the OPEC oil cartel, which has become central to international discussions on the energy crisis sparked by Russia's war on Ukraine. The war has renewed global efforts to solve Venezuela's ongoing political and economic crisis.

Last year, the US sent delegates to Caracas to meet Maduro, and after talks resumed between his government and the opposition in November, Washington granted a six-month license to US energy giant Chevron to operate in Venezuela. The South American country, facing a deep economic crisis, has the world's largest oil reserves. Raisi's trip follows a previous diplomatic visit by Maduro, who visited Iran in June 2022 and signed a 20-year pact to open 'major fronts' for cooperation in the oil, petrochemicals and defence sectors.

In February, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian visited Caracas and discussed with Maduro the 'defence of their national interests faced with external pressures', according to Tehran. AFP

Palestinian president Abbas in China on his fifth official visit

Beijing, China - Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas arrived in Beijing on Tuesday, state media reported, with China expressing readiness to help facilitate Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. Abbas will stay until Friday, Beijing has said, on his fifth official visit to the world's second-largest economy. Official Palestinian news agency Wafa reported that Abbas will meet with President Xi Jinping during the trip.

The two are expected to 'exchange opinions... on the latest developments on the Palestinian arena as well as on regional and international issues of mutual concern', Wafa reported. Abbas will also meet with Premier Li Qiang, the news agency added.

The longtime Palestinian leader is an 'old and good friend of the Chinese people', foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said last week. "China has always firmly supported the just cause of the Palestinian people to restore their legitimate national rights," he added.



Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas will meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping during his stay in China until Friday (AFP)

Beijing has sought to boost its ties to the Middle East, challenging long-standing US influence there - efforts that have sparked unease in Washington. President Xi last December visited Saudi Arabia on an Arab outreach trip that also saw him meet with Abbas and pledge to 'work for an early, just and durable solution to the Palestinian issue'. And during a trip to Riyadh last week, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Saudi Arabia was not being forced to choose

between Washington and Beijing, striking a conciliatory tone following tensions with the long-time ally. In an interview with Chinese state news agency Xinhua published this week, Palestinian official Abbas Zaki said China and the Palestinians were 'friends closer than brothers'. "I am very pleased to see that China has been more involved in Middle East affairs after the China-Arab States Summit last year," he added. AFP

New trial shows +ve results for Chikungunya vaccine

Paris, France - French-Austrian drugmaker Valneva's vaccine candidate against chikungunya, a mosquito-borne virus that causes occasional outbreaks across the world, showed promising results in a large new trial, a study said on Tuesday. While the results were hailed as good news in the fight against chikungunya, the trial was carried out on people in the United States, where the virus is extremely rare, with experts saying more research was needed. There are currently no vaccines or treatments available for the virus, which causes fever and sometimes debilitating joint pain, though it is rarely fatal. Valneva says that its vaccine candidate, called VLA1553, is the first to be reviewed by health authorities after applying for approval in the US and Canada. The new randomised, placebo-controlled phase three trial aimed to find out how often the live-attenuated

vaccine, which uses a weakened form of the virus, produced an immune response. Out of a subgroup of 266 people who received the vaccine, 263 - 99 per cent - developed antibodies that could neutralise the chikungunya virus, according to the study published in *The Lancet* journal. In a broader trial of 4,100 healthy adults, the single-shot vaccine was deemed 'generally safe', with side effects similar to other vaccines. Only two people developed serious side effects linked to the vaccine, the study said, and both fully recovered. Martina Schneider, Valneva's clinical strategy manager and the lead author of the study, called the results 'promising'. "This could be the first chikungunya vaccine available for people living in endemic regions, as well as for travellers to endemic areas or areas at risk for an upcoming outbreak," she said. AFP

Ukraine flood: Farmers mourn lost animals, crops

Afanasiyivka, Ukraine - Yuriy, a 56-year-old Ukrainian farmer, stands chest-deep in water in his village of Afanasiyivka, gazing around in bewilderment. A week ago, he was growing vegetables and fruit and grazing his cows. Now his land in the Mykolaiv region is deep under murky green water. The destruction of the Kakhovka hydroelectric dam has caused massive flooding in the regions of Kherson and Mykolaiv.

The flooding was yet another crippling blow to farmers in the regions, who were already struggling to plant crops due to heavy shelling and the need to de-mine their land. "What's underwater here could have fed several large families for a year," says Yuriy, watching drowned ducklings float past.



Yuriy, a 56-year-old Ukrainian farmer stands chest-deep in water in his village of Afanasiyivka, Mykolaiv region, on June 10 (AFP)

He places the blame squarely on Russian President Vladimir Putin.

'Putin took everything'
"Putin took everything away from us," he says. According to Ukraine's ministry of agricultural policy, several

million tonnes of crops could be lost due to the flooding. On the right bank of the Dnipro River in Kherson region, 10,000 hectares of agricultural land were flooded, while the flooded area on the Russian-controlled left bank is several times larger, the ministry estimated. The small village of

Afanasiyivka is still partially underwater due to flooding from the local Ingulets River. Locals say the disaster caused the worst damage to potato crops and fields for grazing, as well as drowning smaller animals. The water cut off the village, and soldiers have been ferrying people across. There is no electricity, phone connection or drinking water. Olena Gulyuk, a 59-year-old farmer, comes to the crossing point to get bottled water from volunteers. Her hands and dress are covered in mud from trying to salvage her belongings.

'Our rabbits died'
"Our hay got soaked. We had grain for animal feed. That's spoiled too. Our hutches floated away with the animals inside. Our rabbits died, which is really painful," says Olena, who has farmed her

whole life. "We'd planted potatoes, beetroot, carrots, everything you need for the household," she adds. "We're villagers, so we plant everything to eat for a year. There's nothing now." Afanasiyivka was occupied by Russian forces for seven months. Shelling damage is visible on the roofs of houses that now stand in water. The fields still have red signs warning of mines. Some 470,000 hectares of agricultural land in Ukraine are still contaminated with unexploded ordnance and mines, the agriculture ministry said in April. "The Russians just want to destroy Ukraine. But we're Ukrainians, we'll survive," Olena vows. "They beat us and set our homes on fire, rockets flew over our heads here, but we survived... Now we will not allow ourselves to be drowned." AFP

Japanese officials call for crowd control measures on Mount Fuji

Tokyo, Japan - A surge in demand for rest cabins on Mount Fuji has led Japanese officials to call for crowd control measures including potential entry restrictions during this summer's climbing season.

Local authorities and tourism associations near the famous volcano warned that an 'unprecedented' number of people were expected to tackle its steep symmetrical slopes this year.

They raised safety concerns in a petition submitted on Monday to the governor of Yamanashi region, where the sacred mountain's most popular hiking trail is located.

Crowds could be larger than usual due to the relaxation of COVID restrictions, including the return of foreign tourists, and the 10th anniversary of the peak's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

"Judging from the current status of reservations for nearby cabins, we estimate there will be an unprecedented number of hikers on Mount Fuji this summer," the petition said.



This file phot shows people watching the sunrise from the summit of Mount Fuji early on August 15, 2022 (AFP)

Japan's highest mountain is capped with snow for most of the year and is open to climbers from July to September - drawing hundreds of thousands who often trek through the night to see the sunrise.

Those unable to book a mountain cabin may climb straight to the summit without stopping to rest, which 'could increase the risk of altitude sickness and hypothermia', warned the group of officials.

If numbers exceed a certain limit, entry restrictions should be considered 'even for just a short amount of time', they said, without specifying what the maximum should be.

Busy trails also raise the risk of rockfalls, an official from the city of Fujiyoshida, one of the six municipalities behind the petition, said on Tuesday. "We're all worried that this year's Mount Fuji hiking season will create a terrible situation," said the official, who declined to be named.

She said she was especially worried that tourists from overseas, who are not necessarily aware of the treacherous nature of Mount Fuji, may ascend the peak unprepared. "We really want them to be careful. There are deaths every year," she said.

"It's not that easy, hiking Mount Fuji."

The 3,776-metre (12,388-foot) active volcano is about two hours from central Tokyo by train. But it can be seen for miles around, and has been immortalised in countless Japanese artworks, including Hokusai's world-famous 'Great Wave'.

AFP

India denies it had threatened to shut down Twitter

New Delhi, India - India on Tuesday denied claims it had threatened to shut down Twitter inside the country if it did not block accounts critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government.

The world's biggest democracy petitions Twitter for content removals more than almost any other country, and the platform regularly takes down or blocks content at the request of Indian authorities. Former chief executive Jack Dorsey said on Monday that the platform he founded had come under sustained pressure from Indian officials during his tenure.

Dorsey told YouTube chat show Breaking Points that authorities had threatened to 'shut down Twitter in India' as well as raid the homes of its employees, unless his company yielded to their demands.

Indian information technology minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar responded on Tuesday that Dorsey's claim was an 'outright lie', while also accusing Twitter of repeated violations of local laws.

"It behaved as if the laws of India did not apply to it," Chandrasekhar said in a lengthy statement posted on Twitter.

"They had a problem removing misinformation from the platform in India," Twitter said last year that India ranked fourth globally in the number of requests made by a government to remove content - behind Japan, Russia and Turkey.

In March, the platform blocked the accounts of several journalists during the manhunt for a radical Sikh preacher in the northern state of Punjab.

At the peak of the coronavirus pandemic in 2021, the government ordered Twitter and Facebook to remove dozens of posts critical of the government's handling of the outbreak.

Global media watchdog Reporters Without Borders described social media suspensions during mass farmer protests in India the same year as a 'shocking case of blatant censorship'. Rights groups say freedom of expression is under broad threat in India, which has fallen 21 spots to 161 out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index since Modi took office in 2014.

Indian authorities have regularly imposed blanket internet shutdowns during periods of unrest, including a four-month outage in Kashmir during a major security operation in the disputed territory in 2019.

AFP



Twitter behaved as if the laws of India did not apply to it. They had a problem removing misinformation from the platform in India

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR

'Biparjoy' menaces Pakistan, India, as thousands evacuated

Ahmedabad, India - More than 40,000 people have been evacuated across India and Pakistan as a cyclone approaches their coast, officials said on Tuesday, with gales of up to 150km per hour predicted.

The cyclone - named Biparjoy, meaning 'disaster' in Bengali - is making its way across the Arabian Sea and is forecast to make landfall as a 'very severe cyclonic storm', government weather monitors warned.

In Pakistan's southeastern Sindh province, officials said at least 20,000 people had been evacuated from the storm's path, while across the border in India's Gujarat state, authorities said they had also helped a similar number to move.

India's Meteorological Department said the storm would hit near the Indian port of Jakhau on Thursday evening with winds surging up to 150km per hour (93 miles per hour).

"Over 20,000 people have been evacuated," said C.C. Patel, the official in charge of relief operations in Gujarat state, adding that more people would be moved throughout on Tuesday. Fishing has been suspended along the Gujarat coast where there could be waves of up to three metres (over nine feet), and the Indian Coast Guard on Monday evacuated 50 personnel from an oil drilling ship due to rough conditions.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday chaired meetings to review the impending cyclone, calling for officials to 'take every possible measure to ensure that people living in vulnerable locations are safely evacuated'.



A boy moves away from the seafront as high tidal waves hit the coast in Mumbai on Tuesday, as cyclone Biparjoy makes its way across the Arabian Sea towards the coastlines of India and Pakistan (AFP)

The cyclone - named Biparjoy, meaning 'disaster' in Bengali - is making its way across the Arabian Sea and is forecast to make landfall as a 'very severe cyclonic storm', weather monitors warned

Authorities in Gujarat have warned as many as 1.6mn people are likely to be affected in their state, and heavy winds and rains ahead of its arrival have already killed three people.

Two children were killed when a wall collapsed, and a woman was hit by a falling tree while riding a motorbike.

Shelters in schools

In Pakistan, the deputy commissioner of Badin district said between 22,000 and 23,000 people had been moved from

seafront villages.

Agha Shahnawaz told AFP that up to 10,000 were now living in 13 camps set up in government schools and colleges across the district.

"Initially people were reluctant to leave their places, but we kept pursuing them," Shahnawaz said.

Sindh's provincial information minister Sharjeel Memon put the number of evacuees there at 22,400 around midday on Tuesday. The Pakistan Meteorological Department said winds gusting up to 120 km/h were forecast along the coast, with storm surges of up to 3.5 metres predicted.

In 2021, the same coast was hit by Cyclone Tauktae, which killed more than 150 people and caused large-scale destruction.

Cyclones - the equivalent of hurricanes in the North Atlantic or typhoons in the Northwest Pacific - are a regular and deadly menace on the coast of the northern Indian Ocean where tens of millions of people live.

Scientists have warned that storms are becoming more powerful as the world gets warmer because of climate change.

AFP

'Brexit hit UK's COVID-19 pandemic preparations'

London, UK - The UK government's focus on Brexit seriously hampered pandemic planning, an inquiry examining the country's handling of the COVID-19 health emergency was told on Tuesday.

Hugo Keith, lead lawyer to the COVID-19 inquiry which is holding its first public session, said the country's departure from the European Union had 'required an enormous amount of planning and preparation'.

"It is clear that such planning, from 2018 onwards, crowded out and prevented some or perhaps a majority of the improvements that central government itself understood were required to be made to resilience planning and preparedness."

The UK suffered one of the worst COVID-19 death tolls in Europe with more than 128,500 fatalities recorded by mid-July 2021. The current toll of deaths with COVID-19 on the death



Members of the COVID-19 Bereaved Families for Justice demonstrate outside the venue for the COVID-19 Inquiry, in west London on Tuesday (AFP)

certificate stands at just over 227,000, according to the latest government figures. Chaired by retired senior judge Heather Hallett, the first phase of the inquiry is focusing on the UK's resilience and preparedness.

But relatives of people who died have already condemned the inquiry for failing to include them and say it will be a 'farce' if they are not able to testify.

Members of the COVID-19 Bereaved Families for Justice campaign lined up outside the inquiry in central London holding pictures of their loved ones.

"Without learning from the experiences of our members, how can the inquiry properly evaluate the decisions made by those in charge?" group member Barbara Herbert, who lost her husband Paul to COVID, said earlier this week.

"We are people that will be able to put reality to the theory that Hallett is testing, that has got to happen, otherwise it's just a farce," added Saleyha Ahsan, a doctor whose father Ahsan-ul-Haq Chaudry also died.

'Dignified vigil'

Launching proceedings, Hallett pledged that those who suffered during the pandemic would 'always be at the heart of the inquiry'.

She paid tribute to the relatives' 'dignified vigil', adding that she hoped they would 'understand when they see the results of the work we are doing that I am listening to them'.

"Their loss will be recognised," added Hallett, who previously oversaw the coroner's inquests into the 52 people

killed in the July 7, 2005 London bombings.

The inquiry is also facing controversy over its request for the unredacted WhatsApp messages and notebooks of pandemic era prime minister Boris Johnson who established the probe in 2021.

The request for the material has prompted a legal challenge from the government of his successor Rishi Sunak.

Sunak, who was finance minister during the pandemic, has denied trying to block the material, while Johnson is said to be in favour of it being shared.

Hallett, however, has refused to back down over her request for the unredacted communications, likely to include exchanges at the heart of government relating to the ordering of lockdowns in 2020, when Sunak was in charge of the country's purse strings.

AFP

Man held after 3 people killed in UK's Nottingham

Nottingham, UK - Police arrested a man on Tuesday after three people were found dead and a van tried to mow down three others in the central English city of Nottingham in incidents authorities believe are linked.

Nottingham's centre was cordoned off, with a heavy police presence, including some armed officers following the events that left residents shaken. A 31-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of murder, police said.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak thanked emergency services who had dealt with the 'shocking incident' in the city, which is home to more than 320,000 people.

"My thoughts are with those injured, and the family and loved ones of those who have lost their lives," he added.

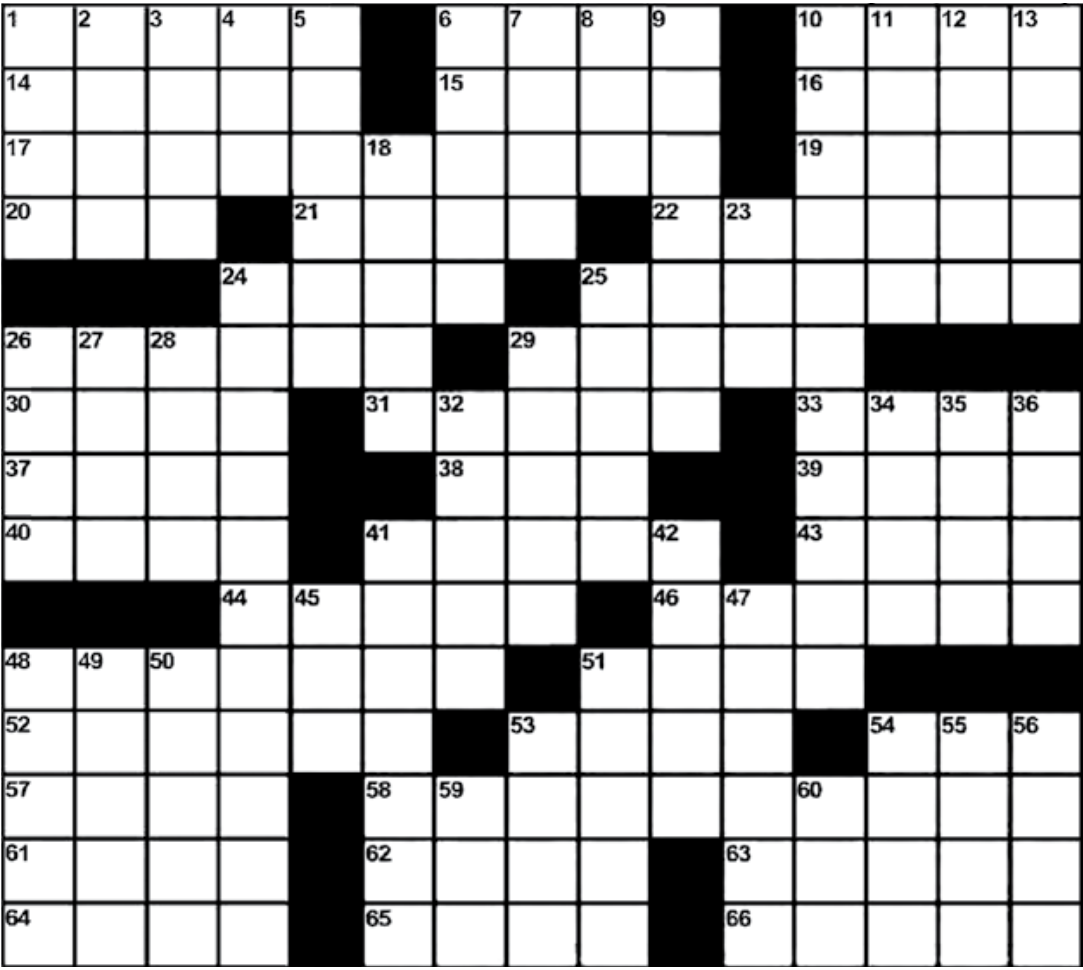
Police were called just after 4am (0300 GMT) after two people were found dead in Ilkeston Road, which runs west out of the city centre between the city's two university campuses.

Residents reported hearing screams and seeing a young man and woman being stabbed, before the attacker - said by one witness to be a 'black guy dressed all in black with a hood and rucksack' - walked off calmly. The body of a man was also found on Magdala Road, about two miles (3.2km) away, police said.

The three people hit by the van, in Milton Street, in the city centre, were being treated in hospital, the force added in a statement.

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) In need of mental stimulation
 - 6) Pack overhead
 - 10) Highlands miss
 - 14) Be mad for
 - 15) Hatcher of "Desperate Housewives"
 - 16) "Yeah, sure"
 - 17) Oscar and Tony winner for his role as Cyrano de Bergerac
 - 19) Kilauea outflow
 - 20) "longa, vita brevis"
 - 21) 1980s war country
 - 22) One end of a No. 2
 - 24) Tear to shreds
 - 25) BBQ equipment
 - 26) Light touch
 - 29) Singer MacGowan of the Pogues
 - 30) One of the Van Halens
 - 31) Creator of Sawyer
 - 33) Place for a spy's message
 - 37) Dance recklessly
 - 38) Tribute in rhyme
 - DOUBLE CROWN
 - 39) Talk-show host Kelly
 - 40) Anti-fur org.
 - 41) Out of kilter
 - 43) Anita, "the Jezebel of Jazz"
 - 44) Zellweger of "Cinderella Man"
 - 46) Is honest
 - 48) Hardly luxurious
 - 51) Fey of "30 Rock"
 - 52) "Rabbit ears"
 - 53) Canal dividing Africa and Asia
 - 54) Excite, with "up"
 - 57) "Get Smart" baddies
 - 58) Oscar and Tony winner for his role as King Mongkut
 - 61) Flying A competitor, once
 - 62) Hoskins role in "Hook"
 - 63) Suffix with "Beatie"
 - 64) In the public eye
 - 65) Little shavers
 - 66) Manicurist's material
- DOWN**
- 1) Tijuana's locale, for short
 - 2) Febreze target
 - 3) Antarctica's _ Sea
 - 4) Bard's "before"
 - 5) Flies in the face of
 - 6) Cremona collectible, for short
 - 7) Gull-like bird
 - 8) Vein yield
 - 9) Utility company worker
 - 10) Tony and Oscar winner for her role as Madame Hortense
 - 11) Lower in rank
 - 12) Break off
 - 13) Milky Way units
 - 18) Consulting firm _ & Young
 - 23) Rand's politico father
 - 24) Oscar and Tony winner for his role as Henry Higgins
 - 25) Draws back, with "away"
 - 26) Like the style of TV's "Batman"
 - 27) Lip balm additive
 - 28) Chill, so to speak
 - 29) Sexy lady in a Beatles tune
 - 32) All of the Bangles' members
 - 34) Something to "thumb"
 - 35) Australian mine yield
 - 36) Is worth it
 - 41) Sports show figure
 - 42) More foxy
 - 45) Seventh Greek letter
 - 47) Biological catalyst
 - 48) "alive!"
 - 49) Porridge type, in rhyme
 - 50) Sprang up
 - 51) Subway tunnel parts
 - 53) Hill toy
 - 54) Heche of "Wag the Dog"
 - 55) "The Iron Lady" of Israel

56) Recite the rosary

59) Thurman of "Gattaca"

60) Swift boat setting, for short

NOTE PAD

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

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You might like to think that you don't have any opportunistic tendencies, but you do, and you should embrace them! After all, they've served you well in the past. It's time to recognize your entire set of skills, not just the ones that make people feel all warm and fuzzy inside. You're a complicated person, which means you're an interesting person! Don't feel like you don't deserve an opportunity that comes along. If it's there, you should take it!

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

There's no reason for you to tolerate someone whose arrogance verges on rudeness today, no matter who they are. If you feel you're being taken advantage of or talked down to, don't hesitate to stand up for yourself and set this person right! Compromising your dignity is never acceptable. And if you're dealing with someone you think might be unreasonable or even dangerous, then defend yourself by walking away. Don't dignify a bully by dealing with a bully.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

One of the more generous people in your life is suddenly a lot more conservative with their time and money, but don't worry. It's nothing to take personally. Right now, they're just feeling anxious about their financial situation, and they're too embarrassed to talk about it. You may not be able to rely on them for extra money (or social fun) right now, but you can rely on them to always be there for you, emotionally speaking. Give them some space for a few more days.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. In July 2021, UNESCO designated four South Korean what as a world natural heritage site?

A. Oranges
B. Tidal mudflats
C. Prehistoric settlement sites
D. Lakes

02. What is the name of a calculating machine that originally consisted of beans or stones moved in grooves in sand or on tablets of wood, stone, or metal?

A. Abacus
B. Slide rule
C. Chisanbop
D. Difference engine

03. What award is the equivalent of the Oscars for British industries involved in film, television, video games and forms of animation?

A. Emmys
B. BAFTAs
C. Tonys
D. Grammys

Answers: 1. B 2. A 3. B

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Today, you could a taste of power when you're thrust into a leadership position unexpectedly. While at first it might feel a little challenging, you'll soon get the hang of it. Have no doubts about yourself! But if at any point you do feel a little nervous that you might be in over your head, you always have your friends standing right behind you and ready to help. They'll keep you grounded, and confident when things get tricky.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Even if your dealings with a certain higher-up have been less than amicable lately, you'll be able to smooth things over nicely now. Stop worrying about your job and what might happen "if" (because "if" isn't going to happen). All you have to do is show up a couple of minutes early, ask them for a bit of their time, and have a nice heart-to-heart chat. Bet you'll end up even better off, professionally and personally speaking, than you were before.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Planning will be a lot of fun for you today, especially if this event you're putting together has lots of tiny little details you need to wrangle into place. Your eye for the small stuff is extremely sharp, and it will bring you a huge amount of satisfaction to nail down the dates that have been floating around for so long. If you're ready to sign contracts and finalize a commitment, this is a great day for it. Things are in order and everything will go well.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

You need to get a bit more aggressive today, especially where business is concerned. You've been held back by other people for far too long, either by their negative comments or their power plays. This drama has to stop! Separate yourself from the bad energy people are giving off by moving away from them. You aren't where you need to be and you know it. The good news is that if you simply speak up louder for yourself, you can get there.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You're becoming aware of many new possibilities for your life, and you should try to explore as many of them as possible. Spend time searching for the next great goal to pursue and see what you can find out. There's no reason to put limits on your options either. The nuttier the notion, the more thoroughly you should research it! Show the Universe that you're confident and ready to handle whatever it has in store for you, because you are.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

The hardest part of making changes in your life isn't thinking up ways to change. It's putting that change into action! You need a lot of self-discipline to get started, especially today, when your energy is going to be challenged by the demands people are putting on you. They're draining you, and it might be time to get some alone time to recharge. A helpful friend is ready to step in to lend a hand or just be your cheerleader, so don't be too proud to accept their aid.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

You're going to experience a lot more of one of your favorite things today: balance. Things are about to equalize in all aspects of your life, so get ready to enjoy a healthier period that will give you a stronger sense of security and confidence. You're feeling totally in control, and it looks like someone you care about is finally ready to take another step in the right direction in their life. You should use this as inspiration for you own long-delayed changes.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Your day could start off on the wrong foot, but you shouldn't let that discourage you! Summon up some of that inner strength of yours and remind yourself that every new hour could bring new good things. Positive thinking can create real results, especially right now. The Universe is looking for cues from you. If you're waiting for that certain someone to call, just keep believing that they will. If you don't know something for certain, why choose to think the worst?

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Handing control over to someone else might not be an easy thing for you to do, but it will be an awful lot easier than trying to hold on to that control. Right now, if you want to reduce the amount of stress in your life, you have to step away from the power position, at least for a while. Hand things over to someone you trust. Have confidence in this person's ability to take care of things and look out for your interests. Give them a chance to shine while you give yourself a break.

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

I	U	T	A
D	R	R	O
I	E	G	Y
I	V	E	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.

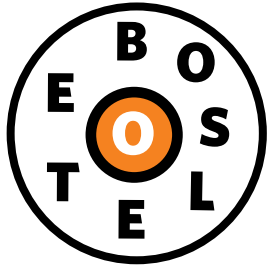
Solution 20-25 words: Excellent, 15-20 words: Very good, 10-15 words: Good, 5-10 words: Average

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

DENVER CHAMPIONS



Denver Nuggets players celebrate with the trophy after beating Miami Heat in the NBA Finals on Monday (AFP)

Denver Nuggets beat Miami Heat to win NBA Finals for their first title

Denver, United States - Denver Nuggets sealed their first title in franchise history on Monday, defeating Miami Heat 94-89 to end a 47-season wait for a maiden NBA championship.

Nikola Jokic scored 28 points with 16 rebounds as the Nuggets won the best-of-seven NBA Finals 4-1 to bring the Mile High City an NBA crown as a sellout crowd roared in delight and pondered what more the young squad could achieve.

"I've got news for everybody out there. We're not satisfied with one," Nuggets coach Michael Malone said afterwards. "We want more."

It was amazing effort by the team. It was an ugly game. We couldn't make shots. But at the end we figured it out, how to defend and we scored 90 points. That's why we won

NIKOLA JOKIC

The championship filled the final gap in the impressive resume of Serbian star Jokic, a two-time NBA Most Valuable Player and five-time All-Star center in his eighth NBA campaign.

Two days after countryman Novak Djokovic won the French Open for his record 23rd Grand Slam tennis crown, Jokic was

named the NBA Finals MVP.

"For us he's the best ever of course," Jokic said of Djokovic. "Now we have our NBA championship. It's a really good moment to be a Serbian."

Jokic delivered on a night when the team struggled with early shooting futility but blanked Miami for more than five minutes

of the fourth quarter.

"It was amazing effort by the team," Jokic said. "It was an ugly game. We couldn't make shots. But at the end we figured it out, how to defend and we scored 90 points. That's why we won. I'm just happy we won the game."

"It's good. The job is done and we can go home now."

Michael Porter Jr. added 16 points and 13 rebounds and Jamal Murray added 14 points, eight rebounds and eight assists for the Nuggets.

Jimmy Butler led Miami with 21 points while Bam Adebayo added 20 and 12 rebounds.

Denver was the playoff top

seed in the Western Conference while the eighth-seeded Heat, who had to win a play-in game just to reach the playoffs, lost in the finals for the third time in 10 seasons.

"One hell of a basketball team that we couldn't really find enough solutions to be able to get us over the top," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said.

With their seasons on the line, players brought intensity and physical defending over the final minutes to create an electric atmosphere inside Ball Arena.

The Nuggets, down by as many as 10 points in first half, pulled within 51-44 at half-time.



Michael Malone of the Denver Nuggets celebrates with the Larry O'Brien Trophy

Malone eyes Denver dynasty for golden Nuggets

Denver, United States - Denver Nuggets coach Michael Malone is targeting a dynasty after leading the franchise to a first-ever NBA championship on Monday.

The Colorado franchise ended a 47-season wait for glory in the Mile High City on Monday, downing the Miami Heat 94-89 to complete an emphatic 4-1 victory in the best-of-seven NBA Finals.

And with confetti still falling at the Ball Arena, Malone wasted no time in declaring that he wants the Nuggets' breakthrough first title to be the first of many.

"I've got news for everybody out there. We're not satisfied with one," Malone said. "We want more."

Malone said he had taken inspiration from words by

Miami and Los Angeles Lakers coaching legend Pat Riley, a five-time champion as head coach. "Pat Riley said something many years ago," Malone said. "I used to have it up on my board when I was a head coach in Sacramento, and it talked about the evolution in this game and how you go from a nobody to an upstart, and you go from an upstart to a winner and a winner to a contender and a contender to a champion."

"The last step after a champion is to be a dynasty," Malone said he believes the Nuggets have all the pieces in place to follow through on their goal, with a young core of players led by Nikola Jokic all expected to remain with the franchise for several seasons.

AFP

Australia's Lyon primed to rattle England and join exclusive club

Sydney, Australia - Australian spinner Nathan Lyon heads into another Ashes campaign on the cusp of joining an elite group of players with 500 Test wickets - and warning he can still get better.

The veteran of 120 Tests will do battle once more with England this week and is primed to torment a country that has accounted for 101 of his 487 scalps.

The 35-year-old Lyon declared last month he believed "100 percent" that a whitewash of their hosts and arch-rivals was doable.

Affectionately known as "Garry" after former Aussie Rules player Garry Lyon, he is one of the most prolific off-spinners to grace Test cricket.

He took four wickets in India's second innings to help Australia

win the World Test Championship final at The Oval on Sunday and is poised to join spin greats Shane Warne, Anil Kumble and Muttiah Muralitharan in the exclusive 500-club.

Two of his England rivals, Jimmy Anderson and Stuart Broad, are also among the seven players to have taken 500 or more Test wickets.

Lyon's fellow Australian Glenn McGrath and Courtney Walsh of the West Indies are the other two. A classical spinner who flights the ball, the durable right-arter could feasibly catch Walsh (519) during the five-Test Ashes series starting at Edgbaston on Friday.

While his seemingly anointed off-spinning successor Todd Murphy was also included in



Nathan Lyon

I still feel like I can get better. I feel like I'm still learning about the art of off-break bowling

NATHAN LYON

Australia's squad, Lyon is not ready to slow down or give selectors any reason to consider his 22-year-old teammate as an alternative.

"There's no end in sight for me," Lyon, whose longevity is partly due to having not played international white-ball cricket since 2019, told reporters ahead of his departure from Australia.

"I still feel like I can get better. I feel like I'm still learning about the art of off-break bowling. I'm trying to get a lot more consistent and trying to get my stock ball even better with a few variations as well."

He will face an added challenge in England with short boundaries designed to aid the home side's aggressive batsmen set to be deployed, which risks him being routinely pummelled to the ropes. But the opportunistic Lyon, who made his Test debut in 2011, only sees this as another chance to boost his wicket haul.

"I've been hit for six... it must be getting close to 300 (times) now for me," he said.

AFP

Fitzpatrick sets aside PGA-LIV worries to defend US Open title

Los Angeles, United States - Matt Fitzpatrick is putting any questions and concerns about the future of global golf on the back burner as he prepares to defend his US Open title at Los Angeles Country Club this week.

England's Fitzpatrick was among the golfers, fans and sponsors stunned at last week's announcement of an agreement between the US PGA Tour, Europe's DP World Tour and break-away LIV Golf's Saudi backers.

The yet-to-be-finalised deal between the tours and the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF) is

drawing scrutiny from US legislators as players - from both the established tours and LIV Golf - say they are awaiting details of what it means for them in what Fitzpatrick called a "confusing" time.

"I don't think anyone knows what's going on," Fitzpatrick said. "Are we signing with the PIF? Are we not signing with the PIF? I have no idea."

"Even though I guess it is confusing, it's pretty clear that nobody knows what's going on apart from about four people in the world."

On Thursday, however, he'll

be focused on solving the questions posed by the LACC North Course, hosting a US Open for the first time as the championship returns to Los Angeles after a 75-year absence.

"I think it's overrated," Fitzpatrick said of the effect the upheaval could have on performances this week.

"I think you're not going to be stood on the first tee thinking, 'Oh what's going on in the golf world.'"

"You're thinking, it's a par-four, where do I need to hit it, where is the wind. That's all you're thinking about."



Matt Fitzpatrick speaks to the media during a press conference prior to the US Open Championship on Monday (AFP)

Reigning British Open champion Cameron Smith was one of the highest-profile PGA Tour players to make the jump to LIV Golf, which launched in October 2021 and lured top talent with record \$25 million purses as well as money guarantees.

Smith said he, too, had been completely in the dark about the deal until he received a call from PIF governor Yasir al Rumayyan shortly after the news broke in the media.

"I guess the first reaction was I thought it was kind of a joke that had come out," Smith said. "And

then (Al Rumayyan) gave me a call and kind of explained what was going on."

"He didn't really explain too much. I think there's still a lot of stuff to be worked out, and as time goes on, we'll get to know more and more. But there's definitely a lot of curious players, I think, on both sides as to what the future is going to look like."

Smith refused to speculate on suggestions that LIV could, in fact, be shut down and like Fitzpatrick said he is more worried this week about what happens on the North Course.



Harry Kane

5 Premier League transfer moves to watch

Manchester, United Kingdom - The English transfer window opens on Wednesday ahead of what is expected to be another heavy summer of spending by Premier League clubs.

Business has already been done by some teams as Liverpool moved on quickly from missing out on Real Madrid-bound Jude Bellingham to land Alexis Mac Allister from Brighton.

Harry Kane's future at Tottenham looks set to be the major transfer saga as the England captain enters the final year of his contract.

Several of Kane's international teammates could also be on the move with Declan Rice, Mason Mount and James Maddison attracting interest, while Brighton are expected to cash in once more by selling Moises Caicedo.

Here is a look at five of the transfer moves to watch in the coming months.

Harry Kane

Despite leading the line for a struggling Spurs side that finished eighth, Kane was still prolific with 30 Premier League goals.

Kane is now within 47 goals of Alan Shearer's record as the Premier League's all-time top scorer, but he may have to decide whether to pursue more individual milestones or the first trophy of his career.

Real Madrid are reportedly keen to make Kane their replacement for Karim Benzema and Tottenham chairman Daniel Levy will likely be more willing to listen to offers from the Spanish giants than a Premier League rival.

Declan Rice

Hammers chairman David Sullivan admitted Rice's last game for the club likely came in lifting the Europa Conference League trophy after last week's win against Fiorentina.

The 24-year-old is not short of suitors after developing into one of the Premier

League's finest all-round midfielders.

Arsenal are leading the race to land the England international's signature as the Gunners look to go one better than finishing second to Manchester City this season.

Mason Mount

A darling of the Chelsea support, Mount was a peripheral figure this season due to injury and a stand-off over his contract.

The midfielder only has 12 months to run on his deal and is expected to become a makeweight as Chelsea rush to sell to balance the books for financial fair play rules.

Manchester United and Liverpool are reportedly interested but are refusing to meet Chelsea's £70 million (\$88 million) valuation.

Moises Caicedo

Brighton stood firm as Arsenal tried to land Caicedo in January even though the Ecuadorian issued a public transfer request.

Caicedo then went onto sign a new contract until 2027, but with the understanding he would be allowed to leave this summer.

"They deserve to change level of team and competition," said Brighton boss Roberto De Zerbi on both Caicedo and Mac Allister. "We have to be happy for them."

With Arsenal in the race for Rice and Liverpool looking at other midfield targets, Chelsea appear to be the frontrunners for the 21-year-old.

James Maddison

Leicester's surprise relegation is set to spark an exodus from the King Power Stadium.

Maddison is the Foxes' prize asset after scoring 10 goals and providing nine assists in just 30 Premier League appearances this season.

The playmaker could swap the Championship for the Champions League next season, with Maddison leading Newcastle's wish-list.

REAL CONCERN FOR PSG

Mbappe future in major doubt after refusal to extend contract

Paris, France - Kylian Mbappe's future at Paris Saint-Germain was in serious doubt on Tuesday after the France superstar told AFP he had never discussed extending his contract with the club beyond next year.

Mbappe and his entourage spoke out the day after he sent a letter to the club confirming he would not take up an option to remain at the French champions until 2025.

That immediately raised the spectre of the 24-year-old forward, one of the most coveted players in world football, following Lionel Messi out of Parc des Princes this summer because if Qatar-owned PSG do not cash in

"No potential contract extension has been mentioned," it continued. "After maintaining publicly in recent weeks that he would be a PSG player next season, Kylian Mbappe has not asked to leave this summer and has just confirmed to the club that he would not be activating the extra year," Mbappe and his entourage explained. Mbappe's letter to PSG comes a year after the player signed a new deal to stay at the French champions, turning down an approach from Real Madrid in the process.

According to sources with knowledge of the discussions, PSG do not intend to let Mbappe leave for nothing and were sur-

In a statement to AFP, Mbappe said he had informed PSG "on July 15, 2022" of his decision not to activate an option to extend his contract, which ends after next season

by selling him now, he could leave for nothing at the end of next season.

In a statement to AFP, Mbappe said he had informed PSG "on July 15, 2022" of his decision not to activate an option to extend his contract, which ends after next season, for an extra year "and the only aim of the letter was to confirm what had already been spoken about previously".

"Kylian Mbappe and his entourage confirm that this matter has not been discussed since over the course of the year, except a fortnight ago to announce the sending of the letter.

prised that the letter was leaked.

With the player confirming he will leave when his contract expires in 2024, PSG risk losing a huge asset for nothing in a year's time, meaning they could now opt to sell him in the current transfer window, which is open until September 1.

Real Madrid on alert?

Having missed out on him a year ago, Real would again lead the suitors.

They are in the market for a new striker after reigning Ballon d'Or Karim Benzema ended his 14-year stay in the Spanish capital by moving to Saudi Arabia.



Kylian Mbappe

Points to prove for all of Nations League final four

Enschede, Netherlands - Aiming to follow in the footsteps of Portugal and France, four of Europe's strongest sides this week battle to win the third edition of the UEFA Nations League.

Hosts the Netherlands face Croatia in Rotterdam on Wednesday in the first semi-final, while Spain and Italy clash in Enschede on Thursday, ahead of Sunday's final.

None of the "final four" have won a trophy in over a decade, except for Italy - although the Euro 2020 champions have plenty to prove themselves after



Ronald Koeman

failing to qualify for the 2022 World Cup. The two-yearly tournament began in 2018, giving European nations more competitive fixtures instead of international friendlies, with the four group winners of the strongest "A" tier reaching the final four.

Quarter-finalists in Qatar, the Netherlands' last success came in the 1988 European Championship. "We can write history," coach Ronald Koeman told reporters Saturday.

Koeman was at the helm when the Netherlands finished runners-up to Portugal in the first

Nations League finals, in 2019.

In their way lies a Croatia side which proved their mettle in the World Cup by knocking out favourites Brazil and ultimately finishing third.

For some players, including Real Madrid midfield maestro Luka Modric, the tournament represents one of the last chances to win silverware at international level - something Croatia have never managed.

Spain finished runners-up to France in the 2021 finals, beating Italy in the first game.

AFP

Late Kimmich penalty salvages Germany draw with Ukraine

Bremen, Germany - An injury time penalty from Germany captain Joshua Kimmich salvaged a 3-3 draw with Ukraine in a friendly in Bremen on Monday.

Germany trailed 3-1 with less than 10 minutes remaining but a goal from Kai Havertz gave the home side hope, before the Chelsea forward won a penalty in injury time, bringing Kimmich to the spot.

Despite the comeback, an impressive Ukraine led for much of the match and will take significant momentum into this month's crucial Euro 2024 qual-

ifiers against North Macedonia and Malta.

Asked if his side had given away victory, Ukraine manager Serhiy Rebrov, in his first match in charge, said "are you asking me whether it's a success if we draw 3-3 with Germany?"

"I think we created enough chances and we could have scored even more."

The manager thanked Germany for hosting the friendly, telling the post-match press conference "this is an important match for Ukraine".

"We are grateful to Germany

for supporting us in the war".

Germany coach Hansi Flick lamented the "individual mistakes" and said his side needed to "keep working and showing that we've improved the things we're training".

"We know it's a long process, but it's the process that's important" Flick told Germany's ZDF network.

"We started well," Kimmich said after the game, "but then conceded two stupid goals. That's exactly what we need to stop".

AFP



Germany's Joshua Kimmich scores from the penalty spot in their match against Ukraine in Bremen, Germany, on Monday (AFP)

Spain, Brazil to play anti-racism friendly

Madrid, Spain - The Spanish and Brazilian football federations presented their plan on Tuesday for a friendly match at the Santiago Bernabeu in March 2024 to combat racism, after global outrage at the abuse of Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior.

The Brazil winger, 22, suffered racial abuse by Valencia supporters in May, provoking worldwide outrage after he squared off with fans in one stand.

Spanish federation president Luis Rubiales and his Brazilian counterpart Ednaldo Rodrigues revealed their plans for the game

at Madrid's stadium, alongside Spain internationals Ansu Fati and Rodrigo Moreno.

"I want to announce that the match against racism between Spain and Brazil will be at the Santiago Bernabeu," Rubiales told a news conference.

"It's the ideal stage for an encounter between two of the best teams in the world."

Rubiales also said the match taking place in March depended on Spain qualifying directly for Euro 2024, as those dates would be potentially needed for play-offs if not.

Weather fails to rain on Man City's treble parade

Manchester, United Kingdom - Manchester was bathed in blue on Monday as even a thunder storm and torrential rain could not stop thousands of Manchester City fans celebrating a treble with their heroes.

City became just the second side to win the Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup in the same season after beating Inter Milan 1-0 in Istanbul on Saturday to become European champions for the first time.

Despite a delay to the festivities caused by the stormy weather, the streets of the city centre were still crammed to pay tribute to manager Pep Guardiola and his players.

"What a parade," said Guardiola. "It has to be like that, no sunshine. We want rain. The perfect way."

Erling Haaland was just one of City's stars who appeared on stage topless, while England duo Jack Grealish and Calvin Phillips appeared to be suffering the effects of 48 hours of celebration.

"I've had the best 24 hours,

For City supporters there was the extra glee in ensuring Manchester United's 1998/99 treble is no longer a unique achievement.

The blue half of Manchester lived in the shadow of their

five Premier League titles in six seasons to become the dominant force of English football.

"How times have changed," said office worker Sarah Morris, 27. "This is like the dream. I could never have imagined this."

Even those not old enough to remember United's treble think it may never get any better for City having finally ended their wait for Champions League glory.

"I'm 21, but it can't get any better than this. It's all downhill from here", said student Tom Kennedy, bedecked in a City bucket hat and shirt.

For the older generation, there is still a sense of disbelief at how City have gone on to conquer Europe.

In the season United did their treble 24 years ago, City were in the third tier of English football.

AFP



Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola and his players celebrate in the rain

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR RENT

Flat for rent in Darsait: 3 bedrooms, one hall, 4 bathrooms, one kitchen, with small sea view, near the Indian School. Rent: RO220 monthly
Contact: +968-99315986

URGENTLY REQUIRED FOR THE BELOW LISTED POSITIONS FOR A REPUTED WATER COMPANY 5 GALLON BUSINESS IN OMAN .

- 1) Store Keeper
- 2) Assistant Store Keeper

Persons with transferable visa, relevant experience of 5 Gallon Water, can send their CV's to : Email: ahmed.khalfan@agthia.com.

PROFILE

Our Services:

Profile Dental & Orthodontist Clinic

+968 96646605
Azaiba Near Scientific Pharmacy
+968 72188999
Mawalath South Near Bhala Pharmacy
Timings : 9am - 1pm
4 : 30pm - 9pm

neenashik@gmail.com



ARCHITECTURE HOUSE

Consulting Engineers
& Architects

+968 99433380

PO Box : 1451 Muttrah
Postal Code : 114
Sultanate of Oman

hussainalsidi@hotmail.com

BARIQ

Services:

Kitchen - Supermarket - Bakery - Equipments Supply

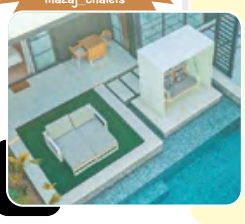
+968 24831661

Showroom: Ruwi High Street
Near Bank Muscat
Factory: Wadi Kabir Industrial Area Muscat

info@gitter-gulf.com



+968 99565653
+968 91220018
mazaj chalets



We Offer you a combination of luxury and ultimate comfort to create an unique experience with high level of excellent services to ensure your comfort and joy by giving you a unique and unforgettable vacation.
• R.O 50 (Weekdays) • R.O 75 (Weekends)
Check in 13:00 & Check out next day 11:00



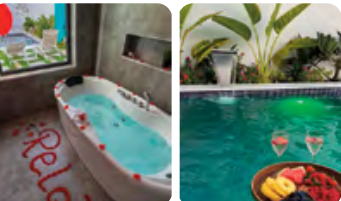
+968 92286598



Luxurious, light and fragile, pistachio cake is kneaded with crunchy and fresh pistachios. Prepared by hand, directly from the oven, garnish with cream of pistachio sauce, crunchy pistachios and roses. With every bite, the delicious taste blends with these flavors...
Price: RO.10/-
Delivery to all the states of the Sultanate



ROVE



Our Offers:
Looking for a perfect get away, come visit us at Barka with private pool, totally air conditioned chalet, relax at your comfort.
• R.O 45 (Weekdays)
• R.O 65 (Weekends)
+968 71111571
rove_chalet

TADMUR TRAVEL & TOURISM



Book your tickets at the best rates with us to your travel destinations.
+968 24830685
Ruwi high street, near Bank Muscat Opp. Al Baraka Hypermarket
tadmurtravelsllc@gmail.com

FOR RENT



AL MAH INTERNATIONAL L.L.C

- State of the Art warehouse and office in Misfah
- Centrally located with ease of access to Muscat-Nizwa-Sohar
- 13 loading/unloading bays, with state of the art racking and centrally air conditioning @21 degree

Cold room and Chiller room

- 600 pallets space available on monthly/per pallet rental bases.
- 02 loading/unloading bays, with 10 mts high state of racking.
- Temp zone 05 Degree, -25 Degree Frozen.

Office

650 sq mts of office space, centralized air conditioning ready to use.

Warehouse

- 6000++ pallets space available on monthly/per pallet rental bases.



WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

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



أوربت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

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

VENTURE & TRAVEL FOR TOURISM



EXPLORE THE WORLD WITH US !!
+968 91378813
PO. Box :62,
Postal Code : 117,
Wadi Al Kabir, Muscat - Sultanate of Oman
manger@vttoman.com

SEND YOUR REQUEST FOR Birthday/Anniversary wishes to

wish@apexmedia.co.om
with your resident card copy (It's free of cost)

CLASSIFIED LISTINGS

Muscat Daily offers a variety of classified listings for individuals and establishments: **Situations Vacant/ Wanted, Accommodation Wanted or Available, Sale of Household Items, Cars for Sale or Wanted, Matrimonial Alliances, etc** Please email your listing to dailyclassifieds@apexmedia.co.om or call: 99104346



mai alkaline
pH 9.1 to 9.5
Alkaline Ionized Drinking Water

HYDRATE SMARTLY

- Ultra-hydrating
- Revitalizing
- Energizing
- Electrolytes



oman OASIS
800 71 222
9275 5522

TONY AWARDS 2023

The Tony Awards, which honour the best of Broadway, were presented on Sunday with Oscar-winner and Tony Award nominee Ariana DeBose taking center-stage as the ceremony's host.

DeBose, who also hosted last year's Tony Awards, acknowledged that due to the ongoing strike by the Writers Guild of America (WGA), the event was taking place without any scripts.

"Award shows are traditionally written by members of the WGA, so in order for this show to go on a whole host of people had to come together in order find a compromise," DeBose remarked near the top of the show. "I'm live and unscripted. You're welcome! So, to anyone that felt like last year was a bit unhinged, to them I say, darlings buckle up!"

Among the night's top winners were Kimberly Akimbo for best new musical, Leopoldstadt was named best new play, Parade won best revival of a musical and Topdog/Underdog won best revival of a play.

The Tony Awards, named after its founder, the actress Antoinette Perry, celebrates the best of Broadway. It is to theatre what the Oscars are to film, the Grammys are to music and Emmys are to television.

In fact, recipients of the big four are granted the highly prestigious 'EGOT' status, one that so far only 18 people have achieved, including Barbra Streisand, Viola Davis and John Legend.

To celebrate its 76th ceremony, which



Phillipa Soo performs with the cast of 'Camelot'

took place at the United Palace in New York City on Sunday night, the A list attendees leaned into the ultra-black tie dress code with dramatic flair.

Jessica Chastain, who was nominated for the best performance by an actress in a leading role for A Doll's House, wowed in a striking canary yellow custom Gucci dress with a pleated skirt and a matching cape. To top off the show-stopping look, she accessorised with a Gucci pendant necklace featuring 35.9 carats of emeralds and diamonds.

While Lupita Nyong'o took inspiration from high fashion's obsession with breast-plates (think: Rihanna's red Super Bowl Loewe ensemble or Zendaya's pink Tom Ford moulded bodice) by tapping Pakistani artist and fashion designer Misha Japanwala for a fabulous, surrealist creation.

"Honoured, humbled, strengthened and energised to don this breastplate created by @mishajapanwala, which she cast and moulded of my body," the actress wrote in an Instagram caption. "In her artistic process, she creates a realistic and true record of a person's body as an act of resistance and celebration, and an insistence on being allowed to exist freely in our bodies."

She paired the armoured bodice with a black suit, De Beers diamonds and an intricate henna head tattoo by Sonya Belakhlief.

There were also many sleek, understated looks, especially from Stephanie Hsu who chose a black off-shoulder gown with puffy sleeves and a voluminous skirt that was cinched at the waist. As well as Jodie Comer who turned heads in a gorgeous black encrusted Thom Browne gown that shimmered under the flashing cameras of the photographers.

Prints also had a moment, with The Sign In Sidney Brustein's Window lead Rachel Brosnahan donning a polka-dot dress with butterflies cascading around the bust. Taken from Dua Lipa's newly launched co-designed collection with Versace, the actress, whose aunt was the late designer Kate Spade, completed the ensemble with a high bun and diamond earrings.

Funny Girl star Lea Michele sported a floral Emilia Wickstead number that featured a square neckline and a faintly cinched bodice while Julianne Hough kept it seasonal in a gorgeous summery Carolina Herrera floral dress.

(source: Evening Standard)

Grace & GLAMOUR

THE TONY AWARDS 2023, HELD ON JUNE 11, WERE, AS USUAL, A MIXED BAG OF GRACE, GLAMOUR AND THEATRICS



Jessica Chastain



Betsy Wolfe



J Harrison Ghee



Jodie Comer



Adrianna Hicks and the cast of 'Some Like It Hot'



Micaela Diamond



An artist spray paints a mural of K-pop megastars BTS in Seoul

with Jimmy Fallon. Fans said it was worth travelling so far to honour their favourite band.

BTS 'really saved my life', Claudia Agustin, 23, a fan from Indonesia who works in accounting, told AFP in Seoul, adding that their lyrics had spoken to her during difficult periods of her life. She said she was 'really, really proud' of the group's 10-year anniversary.

"I know how they've been struggling from back in their debut days and then they really make it big. Now, everyone really knows them," she added.

Starting Monday, important tourist spots across Seoul, including the Namsan Seoul Tower and Dongdaemun Design Plaza, will be lit up in purple - ARMY's colour - in celebration of the anniversary.

BTS members who are not doing their military service yet have been busy with their solo careers - with

Fans of K-pop megastars BTS flocked to hotspots around Seoul on Monday to mark the supergroup's 10-year anniversary, with South Korea unveiling a special commemorative stamp series to celebrate.

The group's fans - known collectively as ARMY - gathered outside the offices of its agency HYBE to take selfies and record TikTok videos in front of a huge mural of the stars being painted on a wall.

Korea Post unveiled a special edition series of stamps in BTS' honour set to go on sale at post offices Tuesday - the official anniversary of the septet's debut - having already sold out almost instantly online.

"Obviously BTS are global superstars, but we didn't expect the stamps to be sold out on the day of the online release," a Korea Post official told AFP.

After debuting on June 13, 2013, the septet went on to become the first all-South Korean act to dominate the US and UK charts, raking in billions of dollars and building a global fandom, known as ARMY, in the process.

Their embrace of social media meant they barely missed a beat during the pandemic, using direct engagement with fans online to cement their position as the world's biggest and most-influential boy band.

Despite earlier breakthrough Korean hits like Psy's 'Gangnam Style', BTS are widely credited

with bringing K-pop into the mainstream in the US.

"Many ARMY BTS fans have asked for the release of BTS stamps, and we also wanted to issue stamps for these global artists for their 10th anniversary," Kim Mihwa, Korea Post stamp designer, disclosed.

The band - currently on a hiatus, with two members performing their mandatory South Korean military service - released a new digital single last week to celebrate the anniversary.

The single, 'Take Two', is purportedly a nod to the band's second chapter after a decade as musicians.

Fans from around the world travelled to South Korea to celebrate the anniversary, with the Seoul city government running a special programme for the visitors.

"It's thrilling to be here. It's thrilling to be surrounded by other ARMY," scientist Anne Micic, 55, a BTS fan from Australia, told AFP. "I think that's the other thing, that as an ARMY when you meet other ARMY it's almost like you have another family, which is really awesome."

A handwritten letter by J-o-pe,

10 YEARS OF BTS

SOUTH KOREA CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF K-POP MEGASTARS BTS WITH THE RELEASE OF SPECIAL EDITION OF STAMPS, CITY FLOATS, AND OTHER FANFARE

It's thrilling to be here. It's thrilling to be surrounded by other ARMY. I think, an ARMY when you meet other ARMY it's almost like you have another family, which is really awesome

ANNE MICIC, BTS fan from Australia



A special stamp series of K-pop megastars BTS was released to mark their 10th year of success

who began his military duty in April, was uploaded Monday on Weverse, the worldwide fandom network. The letter appeared to have been prepared in advance for the anniversary before he joined the military.

"I assume I'd be very military-disciplined" by the time the letter is revealed, he wrote. "No matter what day it is, I sincerely thank you and love you," he told fans.

BTS saved my life

A special map released by the city government for fans visiting from abroad features 13 locations across the South Korean capital.

It includes agency HYBE's office in Yongsan and the historic Gyeongbok Palace, where BTS filmed a special edition of the Tonight Show

Jimin releasing his six-track solo album 'Face' in March. It is likely part of a carefully planned strategy, experts said.

"The most significant part of BTS' 10th anniversary is that they're still here and together as BTS," Jeff Benjamin, Billboard's K-pop columnist, told AFP.

"Every male K-pop group will need to pause or transition due to South Korea's mandatory military service but not every group is adequately prepared as BTS has with preplanned music and content that holds significant meaning.

"Even the new song itself 'Take Two' speaks specifically to this new chapter of BTS with their fans," Benjamin added.

AFP



Japanese fans of K-pop megastars BTS queue up outside post offices to buy the special commemorative stamp series



People take selfies in front of the floating Islands of Banpo Hangang Park, illuminated in purple to mark 10 years of BTS in Seoul