

► NEWS BRIEF

GCC AFFIRMS SUPPORT TO YEMEN'S PEACE AND SECURITY

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - Dr Nayef Falah al Hajraf, Secretary General of Gulf Cooperation Council, has reiterated the GCC's support for United Nations' efforts aimed to enhance security and peace in Yemen.

This was conveyed to Tim Lenderking, United States' Special Envoy to Yemen, by Hajraf when he received the US envoy at the GCC Secretariat General in Riyadh on Monday.

The meeting explored efforts undertaken to end the conflict in Yemen, including the current truce that is holding. It also laid emphasis on consolidating the international community's initiatives to support the peaceful mission and enhance development efforts.

04

Financing deal signed for Al Nakheel ITC Project

Oman achieves 60% of UNSDGs

Six countries, including Oman, lead the regional score, with a total index score of 66 or more

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman is among six countries in the Arab world to have achieved 60 per cent of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A report released by the World Government Summit Organization, in partnership with the Mohammed bin Rashid School of Government, titled *Arab Region Sustainable Development Goals Index 2022* has revealed big differences in the progress that Arab countries are making towards achieving the UNSDGs.

Six countries lead the regional score, with a total index score of 66 or more achieved by Jordan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Morocco and Oman, in the descending order. As a whole, the Arab region score in terms of achieving the sustainable development goals averages 58.2 out of 100, 'and it is clear that we have a challenge in making much greater effort and cooperation across the region to achieve the sustainable

development goals during the next eight years,' the report stated.

The 22 Arab countries have a red score for nearly half of the 17 SDGs. Poor and conflict-affected countries face the greatest risk in achieving the goals. Five countries have been reordered as the least developed, including two countries that suffer from internal conflicts - Syria and Libya.

'These countries will need enormous efforts in both domestically and by their regional and international partners to ensure their growth and development with the other Arab countries.'

The variation between the 22 Arab countries reflects big differences in performance in many social and economic indicators. The report identified key weaknesses in Arab countries' SDG results so far, most notably in SDG 5 (gender equality), which is described as the most important challenge across the region, followed by the goals of SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth).



Sultanate reviews progress made on SDGs

Muscat - Oman has made significant progress in achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and objectives since the sultanate submitted its first voluntary report to the UN in 2019, H E Dr Nasser bin Rashid al Mawali, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy, told a gathering on Monday.

"Oman is keen to translate its international commitment to achieving these goals by 2030 by integrating sustainable development goals into various national policies, initiatives and programmes," he said, adding that the goals and objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have become a major component of successive Five-Year Plans and a pivotal component of the Oman Vision 2040.

H E Mawali informed that Oman, represented by the Min-



Workshop was held to strengthen cooperation between the Ministry of Economy and its partners to achieve the SDGs

H E DR SAEED AL SAQRI

istry of Economy, is currently preparing the second voluntary report on the progress made in

achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, to be presented at a forum of the United

Nations Economic and Social Council in New York during the next session in July 2023.

H E Mawali was speaking at a workshop to prepare the second voluntary report on Monday.

In his opening speech of the workshop, H E Dr Saeed bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy, explained that it was held within the framework of strengthening cooperation and integration between the Ministry of Economy and partners from the public and private sectors to monitor progress in achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Representatives of the State and Shura councils, government agencies, private sector and civil society institutions, as well as academic institutions and relevant regional and international organisations participated in the workshop.

Challenges also remain in SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), SDG 14 (life below water) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions). Other SDGs show more variation, which in turn requires country-specific

policy recommendations and solutions to bring fast solutions to overcome the challenges.

The region has recorded positive trends in three important areas related to education, clean energy and climate change. Many countries are on the right track to achieve SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 7 (clean and af-

fordable energy) and 13 (climate action).

The report states that the main challenges include large gaps in data needed to measure sustainable development performance in the region, particularly with regard to the distribution of income and wealth.

The most important gaps in data currently appear in SDG 1 (No poverty) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities). In both areas, the gaps are due to a lack of data on the distribution of income and wealth. There is also a gap in data about SDG 7 (clean and affordable energy) in least developed countries.

GUARD OF HONOUR FOR THE NEW KING



Britain's King Charles III inspects an honour guard as he arrives at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, in Edinburgh, on Monday. Mourners paid respects before the coffin of Queen Elizabeth II, as it lay in the 12-century St Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh where King Charles III presided over a family vigil in the evening. Earlier in the day, King Charles III made his first address to the British parliament (AFP)

Private partnership sought to manage drug rehab centre

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Ministry of Finance (MoF) are calling on the private sector to provide services to treat and rehabilitate drug and psychotropic substance addicts.

MoF has issued an Expression of Interest (EOI) in this regard for operating Suhar Recovery Centre under a public-private partnership model. Under the agreement, the prospective company will operate, manage and expand the centre. It will also finance, design, maintain and provide treatment services.

A statement from MoH said, 'To encourage the private sector to invest in infrastructure and public services projects, the Ministry of Finance has been entrusted with supervising public-private partnership projects.



'In this context, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance have sought to involve the private sector in a partnership to create and provide innovative and sustainable services in treating and rehabilitating drug and psychotropic substance addicts.'

The last date for submission of the EOI document is September 29.

Companies wishing to operate the centre can contact the Ministry of Finance for further information via e-mail - drc.ppp@mof.gov.om

Pact signed to enhance operations at Muscat International Airport

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Airports signed an agreement with To70, a leading Dutch aviation consultancy providing research and advisory services to the global aviation community, on Monday to improve its operations.

The company develops mechanisms to improve airport operations through a programme that enables all teams working at airports to operate under common frameworks.



(Supplied photo)

Through this agreement, Oman Airports aims to improve operations within Muscat International Airport by implementing the specialised Airport Collaborative Decision Making (ACDM) project, which enables partners and customers to work together to ensure seamless operations within the airport.

To improve decision-making processes, reduce flight delays, and increase operational efficiency, the project aims to strengthen relationships between Oman Airports and the airlines

operating at Muscat International Airport, ground handling teams, air traffic controllers, and all strategic airport partners, a press release stated.

'The project will give all partners a clear understanding of how things work, which will enable them to produce quick, efficient solutions for any future modifications to schedules and itineraries.'

Aimen bin Ahmed al Hosni, CEO of Oman Airports, and Ruud Ummels, CEO of To70, signed the agreement.

Commenting on the agreement, Saud bin Nasser al Hubaishi, vice-president of Muscat International Airport and acting chief of operations at Oman Airports, said, "This agreement is a component of the International Civil Aviation Organization's aim to enhance airport services globally, and to give airlines easier access to services.

"To provide the best experience for passengers and everyone making use of Muscat International Airport - and all other airports in Oman - Oman

Airports constantly strives to improve its services."

Through the agreement, Oman Airports will ensure that the sultanate stays ahead of developments in the aviation sector "through an integrated system that enables us to collaborate more closely with our partners", added Hubaishi.

He added that the search for international operational best practices is necessary given the presence of more than 30 airlines currently operating at Muscat International Airport.

Robots, VR rule Future Tech Event

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A two-day Future Tech Event showcasing latest technologies from around the world began at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) in Muscat on Monday.

With over 50 speakers and 77 exhibitors from 10 countries, the event is showcasing an array of latest developments in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, cloud, digital transformation, virtual reality and 3D printing among others.

Oman's foremost B2B and B2G technology event was inaugurated by H H Fahr bin Fatik bin Fahr al Said, and will continue until Tuesday 4.00pm.

Nao and Pepper, the two humanoids drew maximum attention, as the two were placed at the entrance to greet the guests. Created by MHD ITICS specifically for schools, the two humanoids were launched in June with fed data to teach students.

Aditya Amberkar, the solutions architect at MHD, said, "Nao and Pepper were programmed with Python and Python+Android respectively and are being used for educational purposes."



"But soon Nao and Pepper, standing at 1ft and 2ft respectively, can be used in business set-ups as receptionists, retail-

ers, store assistants, waiters etc," Amberkar said, explaining: "All we need to do is include the data base of a company and the

Nao and Pepper - two humanoids - were programmed with Python and Python+Android respectively and are being used for educational purposes

ADITYA AMBERKAR

robots will be of your assistance at a superior level."

A huge Batman stands just a few steps ahead of the hu-



manoids that stands out in the exhibition arena.

Innotech, which specialises in 3D printing, offers one an

idea that anything which is unimaginable would be possible to create in the future.

Halima al Shezawi, head of Operation and Maintenance at the Innotech said, "3D is the future of Oman and of the world." She pointed out that one of the big challenges lie in creating a 3D model for print. "At times this takes some extra time."

Elaborating on the process of 3D printing, she said, "We use white powder and filaments to print. A few months back we made a house at Ras al Hadd with materials made by 3D printing from the Innotech."

At the OIFC's Khedmah stall, visitors are being introduced to new additions in its services, besides the regular payment of bills. One can now pay for Netflix, PUBG as well as for telecom services offered by the UAE-based companies Etisalat and du.

Basim Basheer, a customer service executive at Khedmah said that the new payment services are being offered through scan-and-pay option. "This is the future as the world is going cashless. We have launched it just a month back and it is slowly picking up," he added.

Crowd funding company EthisX has been another attraction at the event. The company

hosts SMEs on their platform and crowd funds through investors. They also help market and raise the fund of the client.

Mohammad al Ruqaishi, an associate of EthisX said, "We are the first ever crowd funding P2P operator in Oman; and today we kick-start our first campaign for a dishdasha company named Nammani dishdasha. This will be of real help for those SMEs, which want to raise funds."

"We undertake every necessary work to attract funds and raise the amount needed for the business," he added.

Virtual Reality, until now has been limited to drawing rooms, games and fun. However HTC with its latest range of releases aims to target medical and industrial fields among others.

Siddharth Keshwani, Business Development Director of DESSCo said, "The new devices help to analyse the scenarios of several industries in real life. A firefighter can have his muscle memories very strong with such VR and even doctors can see and analyse problems of organs before operation."

"Video can never help create the same mental preparation or planning as VR does."

EA with ESO holds workshop on protection of eagles in Oman

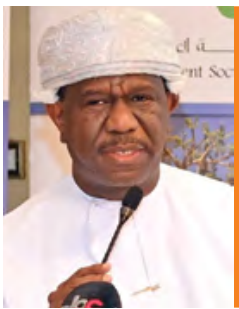
Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Environment Authority (EA), in coordination with the Environment Society of Oman (ESO) and the Disney Conservation Fund, organised a workshop on Monday seeking proper conservation of eagles and other wild birds in the sultanate.

The one-day workshop, titled 'Conservation and Protection of Eagles in the Sultanate of Oman', was organised to initiate a process for studying and surveying eagles and wild birds, which may lay the foundation for future action for their conservation.

The workshop sought to form a team with the cooperation of concerned authorities and volunteers for conservation and protection of those birds in Oman.

"Oman seeks to enhance cooperation and unify efforts at the



Oman seeks to enhance cooperation and unify efforts at the international level to preserve biodiversity and protect birds of prey

SALEH AL SAADI

international level to preserve biodiversity and protect birds of prey from the threat of extinction," said Saleh bin Nagmoosh al Saadi, head of Biodiversity Development at EA.

This can be achieved through common agreements and memoranda of understanding; and exchange of experiences in the field of environment protection and conservation of natural resources, he added.

"Oman is rich in biodiversity, and its unique geographical loca-

tion has made it an attractive destination and habitat for many birds - of which 530 species have been recorded so far," Saadi informed, adding that the authority has prepared the Oman Environment Strategy with the aim of achieving the environmental targets set in Oman Vision 2040 and in the Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

EA has also strengthened its partnership at the national level with government agencies, private players and civil society as-

sociations for the protection of wild birds, besides preparing a national policy for the integrated management of waste, which may become a source of food for some birds.

"Over the past few decades, human activities have led to a sharp and significant decline in the number of predatory birds in the world," said Omar bin Salim al Riyami, a member of the Executive Office at the ESO.

He said that the reasons are many and they include damage to their natural habitats, electrocution due to high voltage power supply lines falling in their flight paths, hunting and a decline in their fertility due to the use of pesticides."

However on a positive side, Riyami pointed out that preliminary studies showed that the number of Egyptian vultures endemic to Oman has increased.

Divers remove 3t of marine debris

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Environment Authority organised campaigns to clean coral reefs in the wilayats of Sohar and Shinas in North Batinah on September 9 and 10 in efforts to keep the marine environment clean.

The campaigns were organised in cooperation with the Omani Association of Fishermen, Sohar Diving Team and Al Salam Diving Team.

The clean-up campaigns were held with the participation of 35 divers. Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Hamed Mohammed al Amri, head of Al Salam Diving Team, said, "Three tonnes of marine debris, including electricity poles and palm tree trunks, were removed. Divers worked from 9am to 11am at depths ranging from 5m to 12m."

According to Amri, the two-day drive in Sohar and Shinas aimed at spreading awareness on preserving coral reefs from



pollutants and remnants of fishing tools and equipment, preventing the dumping of waste, and encouraging volunteerism among communities in the wilayats.

"These campaigns are ideal opportunities to make a positive change that serves the marine environment by removing marine debris that spoil the beauty of nature."

"Continuous activities of cleaning the marine environment from fishing waste contribute to increasing fish production, preserving endangered species and

maintaining a clean marine environment," Amri said.

He added that the biggest challenge that the divers faced while carrying out cleaning activities came from discarded fishing nets, which are also responsible for the deaths of many marine creatures.

"We, in cooperation with the Environment Authority, will continue to conduct campaigns on an ongoing basis at various coral reef sites in Musandam, Dhofar, South Sharqiyah and Al Wusta to remove marine debris," Amri said.



SULTANATE OF OMAN
MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH, Muscat, hereby give notice of tenders for the following projects

Tender No.	Project Category	Location	Fees R.O	Grade In Tender Board Registration
Re- tender 14/2020	Services	Renovation Of Grassed Football Pitch With New Automatic Irrigation For Itifaq Sports Club - Ibra Br	25/- OMR	First & Third
20/2022	Construction and Maintenance	Maintenance Works At Saham Sport Club	25/- OMR	Third

Companies, which are registered with the Tender Board and engaged in same category with experience in and same Grade as noted above, can obtain the Tender Documents at the Tender Board E-tendering digital portal link (<http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) until 17/09/ 2022.

The last date of tender submission on above E-tendering site at 09:00am 03/10/ 2022

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

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

INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE OF MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

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



INVITATION TO TENDER

Sohar Aluminium LLC (SA), PO Box 80, PC- 327, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman hereby invites qualified Suppliers/Contractors for the following tender:

Tender No.	: 2022-ENG-SOW-0025
Tender Title	: Automatic C clamps for 54-ton Crane
Scope	: Supplier shall survey, design, supply, install, test and commission the Automatic C Clamps for lifting superstructure with 54-ton crane.
Tender No.	: PR 10214071
Tender Title	: Construction of Breast cancer unit at Ibri Hospital
Scope	: The work comprises Construction of Breast Cancer unit at Ibri Hospital and shall be constructed completely to serve the community well.
Tender No.	: RFP 22-020
Tender Title	: Provision of Car Rental Services
Scope	: Provide car rental and transportation service for SA employees, contractors and visitors
Document Issue Date	: 20 September 2022
Last Date For Applying	: 19 September 2022

Kindly send your email and company profile to: tender@sohar-aluminium.com

For list of active tenders visit: <https://www.sohar-aluminium.com/en/content/tender-listing>



CPA raids shop for selling used tires

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) on Monday raided a commercial establishment in South Sharqiyah for selling used tires.

In a statement, CPA said, 'The Consumer Protection Department in South Sharqiyah raided a commercial establishment in the wilayat of Sur for selling used tires, which is in violation of Resolution No. 257/2015 regarding the ban on trading used tires.'

The seized tires will be destroyed, it added.

Muscat Municipality to widen Al Mouj, 18 November streets

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Muscat Municipality is expanding Al Mouj and 18 November streets in its efforts to solve traffic congestion problems in the city.

In a statement, it said that to enhance the flow of traffic in the area, it will implement a project to widen Al Mouj and 18 November streets with an additional lane in each direction, besides transforming the roundabouts at Al Mouj, Bahja and Ishraq in North Al Hail into high-capacity signal intersections.

'The project attempts to enhance access to and mobility in the area in different climatic conditions, and stimulate economic growth and prosperity of surrounding establishments,' it stated.

The development evoked strong reaction from citizens.

Expansion of roads will reflect on the development of life in all social and economic aspects

AHMED AL SHANFARI

Hamed al Wahaibi, a driver by profession, said, "The project is a good step to solve the problem of congestion in the city. I wish part of the cost of the project could be borne by businesses in Muscat as part of their social responsibility."

Another citizen, Adnan al Saadi said, "The project will facilitate traffic movement not only in the area but also to Bausher and Amerat, as well as add to the aesthetics of Muscat governorate."

However, Dr Harith Abdullah,



a medical practitioner, believes that "the area needs a flyover and not an additional lane or any traffic lights".

Resident Anand Mohan tweeted, "Thank you so much. Good news for everyone living in

North Al Hail. Hope the speed limit is set at 120kmph. Driving on November 18 to Al Mouj Roundabout and Bahja Roundabout is a major concern during peak hours. If Al Mazoon Street is also made three lanes, congestion may ease

significantly."

Ahmed bin Abdullah al Shanfari, a lawyer, said, "The project is an excellent step, because the expansion of roads will reflect on the development of life in all social and economic aspects, attract tourists and investors, and develop trade."

Hamed al Araimi tweeted that Muscat needs a "second renaissance because all roundabouts require flyovers and the expansion of all roads to three lanes".

According to Araimi, the road connecting Rusayl to Mabelah, passing through Al Khoud also needs to be developed, with the addition of a flyover, and widened to four lanes due to high population density on either sides of the road.

Yahya al Habsi also felt that building a flyover on the Al Mouj Roundabout is the solution to reduce congestion. "A signal junction

will not help in the long run. The street also needs a walkway, a bike path and bus stops. This is how modern roads should be."

Muscat Municipality had initially planned a flyover over Al Mouj Roundabout in 2017 and had got a budget allocated to prioritise the development of the flyover in 2018, according to the Implementation Support and Follow-up Unit (ISFU) of the National Programme for Enhancing Economic Diversification (Tanfeedh) 2017 annual report.

'The ISFU team also solved an issue faced by Al Mouj Muscat that could have potentially become an impediment to road traffic due to the growing tourism developments in the area. ISFU studied the issue and obtained a high-level decision on building a flyover that will help uplift the area as a whole,' the report stated.

NCSI begins Consumer Confidence Survey

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A survey to assess the financial situation of Omani families and its effect on the economy started on Sunday, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

In statement NCSI said, 'The centre has started implementing the work of the 25th session of the Consumer Confidence Survey on Sunday.'

It further added that the survey aims to measure the development of the financial situation of Omani families and the factors that positively or negatively affect the Omani economy and Omani families' purchasing power of various commodities.

The survey will continue till September 28.



Firm given repair work of Yanqul to Dhank road

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT) has awarded a tender for repair of the Yanqul-Dhank road damaged during Cyclone Shaheen.

In a statement, MTCIT said, 'In implementation of the Royal Directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq to speed up repair of infrastructure damaged as a result of the tropical situation that the sultanate was subjected to in October 2021, the ministry has assigned a tender to a specialised company to design and repair the Yanqul-Dhank road in the Dawt area.'

On September 7, MTCIT also floated several tenders to repair infrastructure damaged by the recent torrential rains and overflowing wadis in some governorates.

MTCIT confirmed that the tenders were floated in coordination with the committee tasked with accelerating the repair of damages caused by torrential rains and flooded wadis in some governorates in August 2022.

The tenders will be awarded to specialised companies for road repair projects in North Batinah, South Batinah, North Sharqiyah, Musandam and Dakhliyah by the end of September.

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

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No.(32 / 2022)

Muscat Municipality invites interested companies to the following tenders:

Tender No.	Description of Tender	Document Fee	Last date for inquiries submission	Last date for obtaining Tender Docs.	Last date for Submission
9/2022/MM/PA-1	RE-Supply of Spare Parts for Chain Saw Machines	Rail 25	3/10/2022	18/10/2022	23/10/2022
34/2022/MM/PA-8	RE-Supply of Irrigation Materials	Rail 25	3/10/2022	18/10/2022	23/10/2022
54/2022/MM/PA-16	RE-Supply of Sign Faces for Street Name, Way Number, House Number, Block Number and Flat Number with Accessories within Muscat Governorate	Rail 25	3/10/2022	18/10/2022	23/10/2022
62/2022/MM/PA-18	RE-Supply of Printer Inks	Rail 25	19/09/2022	25/09/2022	27/10/2022
63/2022/MM/PA-19	RE-Supply of Cleaning Materials	Rail 25	3/10/2022	18/10/2022	23/10/2022
64/2022/MM/PA-20	RE-Supply of Carpenter Material	Rail 25	3/10/2022	18/10/2022	23/10/2022

- Specialized Companies with a valid registration certificate from Tender Board can obtain tender documents from the website through the following link: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>. Starting from the date of this announcement until the end of deadline mentioned above.
- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically through link mentioned above.
- Tender Bonds shall be E-Bond as per details mentioned in E-Tendering and to be submitted through E-Tendering system, addressed to Muscat Municipality and valid for (90) days starting from the deadline for submission.
- Tender not accompanied by a tender bond will be rejected.
- Clarifications and support:**
 - For any inquiries regarding tenders, please contact us through e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
 - For technical support of e-tendering system, please send an email to (etenderhd@mtc.gov.om) or call (+96824402200).
 - For technical support of E-Bond through e-tendering system please send an email to (esnad@gstb.gov.om) or call (+96824402200/24402330).

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Philippines	147.56
Sri Lanka	940.33

*Rates as on September 12
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

India's retail inflation rises to 7% in August

India's retail inflation rose to 7 per cent in August from 6.71 per cent in the previous month due to a sharp rise in food prices, as per the government data released on Monday, ANI reported.

Retail inflation has been above the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) tolerance band for the eighth consecutive month. With the headline inflation coming above 6 per cent for the eighth month in a row, the RBI is on a brink of failing to meet its inflation mandate.

The RBI is mandated to keep inflation in a range of 2-6 per cent. The central bank is deemed to have failed in its mandate if the average inflation remains outside the 2-6 per cent band for three consecutive quarters.

Retail food inflation surged to 7.62 per cent in August as against 6.75 per cent recorded in the previous month. There was a sharp jump in vegetable prices. Inflation in vegetables soared to 13.23 per cent in August.

In August, the price rise was sharper in rural areas than the urban areas.

Financing deal signed for Al Nakheel ITC Project

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Bank Nizwa on Monday announced the signing of a financing agreement to develop the RO250mn Al Nakheel Integrated Tourism Complex (ITC) Project.

According to a press statement, Bank Nizwa signed the agreement with Palm Beach LLC for Al Nakheel Project that will be developed by Alargan Towell Investment Company.

Al Nakheel Project is an Integrated Tourism Complex under the auspices of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism. With a total value of RO250mn, the mixed-use community real-estate development is idyllically located on the seafront between Al Seeb and Barka, in close proximity to the Daymaniyat Islands Nature Reserve.

Slated to be constructed on a land area of 500,000 sqm, Al Nakheel Project will have a total built-up area of 369,000 sqm, envisaged to be developed in three phases.

Bank Nizwa financing will be extended for the development of Phase 1 (A) of the project, development of which will commence this year, the bank said in its statement.

Phase 1 (A) of Al Nakheel Project was launched in May 2022 at an event held under the patronage of H E Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism. Con-



Bank Nizwa financing will be extended for the development of Phase 1 (A) of Al Nakheel Project

struction of Phase 1 (A) of the project - which includes internal roads and other infrastructure, Crystal Lagoon with recreational facilities, a four-star hotel with 188 keys, a traditional souk, apartments and residential villas - will start in 2022.

Khaled al Kayed, CEO of Bank Nizwa said, "The real-estate sector is a critical component of the national economy, and the upcoming Al Nakheel Project, which is set to be an iconic destination, will certainly attract significant investments. We are indeed delighted to join hands with a reputable com-

pany as Palm Beach LLC and be a part of this prestigious development. While this project will significantly boost the real-estate sector in the country, it also reaffirms our commitment to support national initiatives that offer sustainable, long-term benefits while strengthening Oman's position as a lucrative investment destination."

He further said, "Targeting the middle-income strata of the local and expatriate population, Al Nakheel Project has various offerings for the residential, tourism, and retail market. Positioned as an attractive and affordable tourism destination, it

also closely resonates with the bank's values of promoting inclusivity while also ensuring that an exciting lifestyle experience is more accessible to all."

The development is centred on a Crystal Lagoon of 51,000 sqm, which will be the first in Oman and will act as a major anchor for the development, thus differentiating Al Nakheel from other ITC developments.

Once completed, the project is expected to include three hotels, villas, apartments, serviced apartments, mixed-use souks, an aqua park, a mall, and a school, all of which are carefully spread over different phases.



National Gas sells its entire 51% stake in Unigaz joint venture

Our Correspondent
Muscat

National Gas Company on Monday announced that it has divested its entire 51 per cent stake in the joint venture company Unigaz LLC.

"The company would like to inform its shareholders that Unigaz LLC has purchased our entire 51 per cent share in the joint venture at a transfer price of RO407,000," National Gas said in a disclosure submitted to the Muscat Stock Exchange.

All necessary formalities and transaction documents have been completed and the contract related to the sale of shares at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion has been signed, National Gas said.

The company assured its shareholders that this decision will enhance shareholder value in the longer term.

Unigaz LLC is engaged in the distribution of gas and maintenance of cooking gas pipes in Oman.

Unigaz has purchased National Gas Company's entire 51 per cent share in the joint venture at a transfer price of RO407,000

Since February this year National Gas was in discussions with its joint venture partner Unigaz International to buy out its share in Unigaz LLC. Unigaz had agreed to buy out National Gas' entire 51 per cent share in the joint venture at a transfer price of RO407,000.

National Gas earlier had said that the exit from Unigaz LLC is aligned to its strategy roadmap and will enhance the shareholder value in the longer term.



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MUSCAT DAILY

Madayn, EthisX join hands to provide financial services

Muscat - The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) and EthisX signed a cooperation programme to provide financial services and solutions to the companies and projects based at Madayn's industrial cities in Oman.

The cooperation programme was signed by Hamad bin Hamoud al Qasabi, acting CEO of Madayn, and Mohamed Shehzad bin Mohamed Islam, CEO of Ethis Investment Platform.

The cooperation programme aims at providing financing options for the SMEs based at Ma-



The agreement was signed by Hamad bin Hamoud al Qasabi (left) and Mohamed Shehzad bin Mohamed Islam

dayn's industrial cities, attracting and localising national and foreign companies in the industrial cities, in addition to organising interactive seminars and workshops with the SMEs and investors. This agreement reflects Madayn's commitment to support the investment climate in its various industrial cities and its constant efforts to support small and medium enterprises to ensure their sustainability and success, as well as embodies its responsibility towards investors, industrialists and entrepreneurs in the sultanate.

Cargo volumes at Omani ports rise to 43mn tonnes in H1

Muscat - Oman's ports reported a five per cent year-on-year increase in the volume of bulk, general and liquid cargo during the first half of 2022.

Total cargo volumes at Omani ports reached 42.76mn tonnes in the first half of this year compared to 40.61mn tonnes in 2021, according to the data issued by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

The number of containers also grew by 2 per cent to reach 2.58mn TEUs, compared to 2.53mn TEUs during the same period in 2021.

This rise is attributed to an increase in the number of containers at Port of Salalah by 2 per cent.

Meanwhile, the number of ships declined by 0.02 per cent



to reach 4,700 ships, and the total number of shipped vehicles reached 36,170 comprising a fall by 34 per cent.

The decrease is attributed to the global economic recession

due to the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic and the rise in freight prices globally.

During the first half of 2022, Oman's ports received 38,500 passengers, constituting a

surge by 100 per cent.

The number of imported livestock reached 1.96mn heads, comprising a rise by 5 per cent.

ONA

UN urges EU against fossil fuels amid energy crisis

Geneva, Switzerland - The UN urged EU countries on Monday to continue battling climate change and not resort to more fossil fuels in their response to soaring energy prices and fears of winter shortages.

Russia has reduced supplies of gas to Europe since its invasion of Ukraine, sending prices for the fuel soaring.

"There is no room for backtracking in the face of the ongoing climate crisis," deputy UN rights chief Nada al Nashif told the United Nations Human Rights Council.

She pointed to the devastating floods affecting more than 33mn people in Pakistan as an example of what happens when the world fails to act on climate change.

"How many more tragedies of this sort do we need before the urgency of the moment jolts us into action?" she asked.

Speaking at the opening of the council's 51st session in Geneva, Nashif acknowledged that the soaring energy prices in Europe "threaten to impact the most vulnerable as winter approaches".

Moscow's invasion of Ukraine has seen the price of natural gas hit record levels, throwing the



Nada al Nashif delivers a speech during the 51st session of the UN Human Rights Council at the UN offices in Geneva on Monday (AFP)

European Union economy into deep uncertainty.

All eyes are now on whether Russian President Vladimir Putin will cut off the energy flow entirely.

Last week Russia caused a major scare when it halted gas deliveries to Germany via the key Nord Stream pipeline for an indefinite period, a move the Kremlin blamed on Western sanctions.

Before the war, 40 per cent of the EU's gas imports came from Russia. Now Germany and others are scrambling to come up with new ways to heat homes and power factories.

Nashif, who is currently serving as acting High Commissioner for Human Rights until new chief Volker Turk replaces Michelle Bachelet, pointed out that "some EU member states are turning to investments in fossil fuels infra-

structure and supplies".

"While that impulse is understandable, I urge the EU and its member states to consider the long-term consequences of locking in more fossil fuel infrastructure," she said.

"It is essential to accelerate the development of energy efficiency projects and renewables."

Nashif urged all countries "to seek an ambitious outcome" at the next UN climate conference in Egypt in November.

They should seek to "address loss and damage and meet and increase climate finance commitments", she said.

On August 30, leading Earth systems scientist Johan Rockstrom said the cost-of-living crisis pushing millions of Europeans towards poverty was driven by fossil fuels.

"This is fossil fuel-driven, supply-driven inflation," the director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research told AFP.

"We've been saying since 1990 that we need to phase out the fossil fuel-driven economy towards a renewable-driven economy. And now here we are - we're now hitting the wall."

AFP

US faces 'a risk' of recession amid record inflation: Yellen

Washington, US - The United States faces "a risk" of recession as its battle against inflation could slow the nation's economy, but a serious downturn can still be avoided, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said.

An American recession "is a risk when the Fed is tightening monetary policy to address inflation," President Joe Biden's leader on financial, economic and tax policy told CNN, referring to the US Federal Reserve.

"So it's certainly a risk that we're monitoring," Yellen added, but "we've got a good strong labour market, and I believe it's possible to maintain that."

Faced with soaring inflation - it reached its highest level in 40 years in June at 9.1 per cent, before dipping slightly in July - the central bank is gradually raising its key rates in order to ease the pressure on consumer prices, while hoping the move does not derail the world's largest economy.

Commercial banks use the Fed's key rates to set the terms of the interest rates that they in turn offer their individual and corporate clients. Higher rates reduce consumption and investment.

The challenge for policymakers is to quell inflation before it



Janet Yellen

The challenge for policymakers is to quell inflation before it becomes dangerously entrenched, but without sending the US economy into a recession that would reverberate around the globe

becomes dangerously entrenched, but without sending the US economy into a recession that would reverberate around

the globe.

"Inflation is way too high, and it's essential that we bring it down," Yellen said.

The Fed is aiming for a "soft landing" - bringing inflation back toward its goal of two per cent - without forcing a recession, a move which could cause unemployment to spike.

"I believe there is a path to accomplishing that," Yellen said. "Over the longer run, we can't have a strong labour market without inflation under control."

While American GDP contracted in the first two quarters of 2022 - fitting the classic definition of a recession - Yellen again stressed that this was not the case.

"We're not in a recession. The labor market is exceptionally strong.... There are almost two job vacancies for every worker who's looking for a job," she stressed.

Jobs indeed remain tight, with a significant labor shortage.

Unemployment did tick up slightly in August, to 3.7 per cent, in part due to more people participating in the work force - a sign that many workers left on the sidelines due to the Covid-19 pandemic are returning to the labor market.

AFP

Azerbaijan says gas exports to Europe up by 30%

Baku, Azerbaijan - Energy-rich Azerbaijan on Monday said its gas exports to Europe will increase by 30 per cent this year, as the European Union tries to decrease its dependence on Russian gas amid Moscow's offensive in Ukraine.

Europe, which is heavily dependent on Russian supplies, has accused Moscow of using energy as a geopolitical weapon.

On Monday, Azerbaijan's Energy Minister Parviz Shahbazov said that over the eight months of this year Baku "supplied to Europe 7.3bn cubic metres of natural gas."

"The overall volume of (gas) supplies to Europe in 2022 will amount to 12bn cubic metres" - a 31-per cent increase compared to 2021, he said on Twitter.

He also reported a nearly 10-per cent increase in natural gas production, which reached 30.6bn cubic metres in January-August 2022.

On Wednesday, EU chief Ursula von der Leyen proposed that member states agree a



price cap on gas imported from Russia.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has vowed to cut off any countries imposing price caps on oil and gas exports.

In July, the EU and Baku agreed to double gas imports from Azerbaijan over the next few years. The agreement also provides for the expansion of the Southern Gas Corridor running through Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, and Greece - "to 20bn cubic metres per year in a few years."

In May, EU leaders agreed to stop most Russian oil imports by

the end of the year, as part of unprecedented sanctions they slapped on Moscow over the invasion of Ukraine.

But the bloc put off an outright ban on Russian gas, which in 2021 amounted to 155bn cubic metres - nearly 40 per cent of EU's needs.

Russia has already begun reducing its gas deliveries to prevent EU countries from replenishing reserves, prompting the European Commission to prepare "a gas demand reduction plan" to get through the next winter.

AFP

Biden order to bolster US biotech industry

Washington, US - US President Joe Biden was to sign an executive order Monday seeking to bolster the trailblazing US biotech sector's efforts to take on growing commercial rivals in China, officials said.

The order will bring federal support for "areas that will define US biotechnology leadership and our economic competitiveness in the coming decades," a senior Biden administration official told reporters.

The official said that while US biotech research leads the world, the industrial applications are increasingly in the hands of other countries.

"Unless we translate biotechnology innovation into economic and societal benefits for all Americans, other countries, including and especially China, are aggressively investing in this sector," posing a "risk," the official said.

Biden will discuss the executive order during a Monday speech in Boston on administration plans to ramp up the US scientific and health care-based fight against cancer.

The official said the global economy is set to be revolutionised by biotechnology.



US President Joe Biden

tionised by biotechnology.

He cited studies suggesting that "before the end of the decade, engineering biology holds the potential to be used in manufacturing industry that accounts for more than one third of global output. That's equivalent to almost US\$30tn in terms of value."

The White House will host a

bio-economy gathering on Wednesday and is expected to announce new investments and programs to advance research and strengthening of manufacturing and supply chains, officials told reporters.

The senior official said biotech made its mark during the Covid-19 pandemic with the rapid development of tests, vaccines and

therapeutics.

"But the power of biotechnology goes far beyond healthcare," the official said. "It will enable us to reinvent American supply chains, transitioning away from chemicals that rely on oil, towards cleaner, safer, more reliable alternatives that we make right here at home."

Growing areas for biotech innovation include new plastics and rubbers, jet fuel, and natural fertilizers "extracted from pig manure... with zero wastewater discharge or air emissions."

"I think the United States really has the best biotechnology innovators in the world. We really do lead in this area. But we've just fallen behind" in manufacturing, the official said.

Biden's effort to support the sector dovetails with his other message ahead of midterm congressional elections that he wants to bring offshore industry back to the United States, while focusing especially on high-tech businesses.

On Wednesday, Biden is due to tout his administration's support for the electric vehicle industry during a trip to Detroit.

AFP

Norway 'sceptical' about gas price cap

Oslo, Norway - Norway, which has replaced Russia as Europe's leading supplier of natural gas, on Monday dashed the hopes of EU member states who wanted a cap on gas prices.

Following his second phone call with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in the space of a few days, Norway's Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store said he was "sceptical" about the idea of a gas price cap.

"We agree to have an even closer dialogue with the EU in the future on the various proposals on the table", he said.

"We approach discussions in an open spirit, but we are sceptical of a maximum gas price".

European energy ministers who met Friday in Brussels said they were in favour of a series of measures aimed at combatting soaring gas and electricity prices, with some calling for a cap on the



price of gas imports in the EU.

While the Commission has proposed a price ceiling on gas imported from Russia, several member states, including Italy, called for a price ceiling on all gas bought by EU states, noting that Russian gas imports accounted for only nine percent of EU imports.

The Commission, itself opposed to that idea amid fears it would push liquid natural gas (LNG) suppliers to look elsewhere, is expected to present a

draft of its emergency energy measures this week.

Non-EU member Norway, which has benefited from soaring prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, has until now kept a low profile on the issue.

Underlining the importance of price movements to calibrate supply and demand, Norway has argued that it was up to oil and gas companies to negotiate their own contracts.

It has also said that European clients insisted in the past on

spot contracts rather than long-term fixed contracts.

"A maximum price does not change the fundamental issue that there is a gas shortage in Europe", Store said.

The Scandinavian country recently replaced Russia as Europe's leading gas supplier, due to plunging Russian deliveries following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine and an eight percent increase of Norway's own deliveries.

The soaring prices and rising

Euro surges as ECB seen hiking rates further

London, UK - The euro soared against big rivals Monday, a day after Bundesbank president Joachim Nagel signalled more interest rates hikes from the European Central Bank to fight sky-high inflation.

The European single currency rocketed 1.6 per cent versus the yen and by more than 1.4 per cent against the dollar.

The ECB last week hiked eurozone interest rates by a record 0.75 percentage points, and warned inflation would remain elevated for an extended period.

On Sunday, German central bank president Nagel signalled the ECB would probably continue raising rates with eurozone inflation set to keep on climbing.

Market watchers now expect another big ECB rate hike in October.

"The ECB is expected to raise



rates more after the comments," said analyst Craig Erlam at trading firm OANDA.

He added that the euro had also been due a rebound following recent heavy losses, including a 20-year low against the dollar last week.

The ECB's tightening of borrowing costs follows the US Federal Reserve's lead with aggressive monetary policy to tackle sky-high consumer prices.

AFP

ahlibank offering cash rewards to customers on salary transfers



ahlibank is offering its customers with one-time cash reward of ten per cent of their monthly salary transfers.

In a press statement, ahlibank said through special salary transfer rewards, customers are receiving immediate one-time reward with a maximum amount capped at RO500.

Under the current offer, which runs until the end of September, the bank is offering both Omani and expatriate new salary transfer customers the opportunity to enjoy the lucrative benefit.

Committed to providing exclusive offers and benefits to meet its customers' expectations, bank said that those customers who transfer their monthly salary to the bank with an amount of RO1,000 and above are eligible for this reward offer.

Muneer al Balushi, AGM - Head of Retail Distribution, said, "Through this offer we seek to strengthen and establish our relationship with our existing and new customers. The promotion reflects ahlibank's leadership in being innovative when it comes to enhancing customer experience, and providing solutions that meet various customer requirements through tangible benefits. These could be in the form of cash rewards, cashback, lifestyle promotions, and more."

AstraZeneca to boost cancer biomarker testing in MENA

Anglo-Swedish pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca and Switzerland's Roche have announced a partnership to redefine the diagnosis and treatment of cancer care in the Middle East and North Africa.

The partnership seeks to remove barriers to biomarker testing and expand access to precision medicines to improve patient outcomes in a region where cancer is expected to double by 2030.

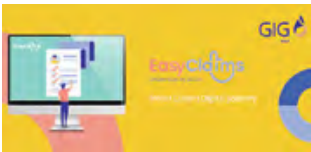
Cancer occurs due to genetic mutations that affect the way cells work and grow. Each person's cancer is unique because mutations differ in type and number and between cancer types. Even people with the same type of cancer may require different treatment.

Biomarker testing is a type of molecular or genetic testing that tracks changes in genes, proteins and other substances that provide critical information about tumors. This helps to track the evolution of tumors in cancer patients, enabling more targeted therapies and better chances of survival.

Cancer patients can be tested at the time of diagnosis, recurrence, or progression. It allows healthcare practitioners to develop personalised treatment plans for patients; including targeted therapies and immunotherapies that are most appropriate for their specific cancer.

GIG Gulf starts motor claims platform for Oman, 3 others

GIG Gulf, one of the largest insurance providers in the MENA region has launched EasyClaims - a purely-digital real-time end-to-end motor claims platform, and the first such service to be made available across four major GCC markets - the UAE, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain.



EasyClaims is a new online journey that allows GIG Gulf customers to immediately register their motor insurance claims by entering only minimal mandatory information without the need for paperwork, and with absolutely no waiting time.

The service is available 24/7 and allows customers to track every stage of the claims process in real-time. Using geolocation technology, the platform curates a personalised selection of garages that the customer can choose from.

The garage itself is also plugged into the EasyClaims platform, allowing the car mechanic to give mechanical updates to GIG Gulf that are visible to the customer instantly.

GIG Gulf head of Claims, Paolo Ogno, said: "The launch of EasyClaims across four major GCC markets enables customers to track every stage of the claims process digitally."

Khedmah showcases digital technology offerings at Future Tech Event in OCEC



Recognised as one of the leading investment and services companies in the sultanate, Oman Investment & Finance Co (Khedmah) is participating in the Future Tech Event, which is underway at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre from 9.00am to 4.00pm.

The inauguration of the event was held under the patronage of H H Sayyid Fahr bin Fatik bin Fahr al Said, in the presence of several officials and CEOs of local and international information technology companies and related businesses.

Placed at booth number 7 at the exhibition centre, Khedmah is engaging with visitors to present its wide array of digital services and electronic payment solutions. By harnessing the latest developments in the digital realm and seamlessly integrating them into every aspect of its operation, Khedmah has been successful in delivering a feature-packed mobile app that has seen increased usage and popularity amongst customers. The event provides an excellent platform to further familiarise and demonstrate the features of the app to visitors while simultaneously driving meaningful engagement with customers.

Through the app, customers can easily receive and pay their water, electricity, and telephone bills, and also recharge their phones, electricity prepaid meter bills, and entertainment subscriptions. One of its popular offerings is the home broadband services from Awasr and Omantel.

Customers can also subscribe to Awasr Internet directly through the Khedmah app. With a keen focus on convenience, the app also allows Dhofar Insurance Company customers to renew their vehicle insurance via the app and website. In addition, the app enables quick, easy, and hassle-free payments toward the Public Authority for Social Insurance (PASI).

Commenting on Khedmah's digitalisation strategy, Said Ahmed Safrar, Chief executive Officer at OIFC said, "Khedmah has always been at the forefront of spearheading technological innovation in the country."

By providing reliable, efficient, and secure digital solutions, Safrar underlined that "we have not only been able to strengthen our leadership position in the market but have also acted as advocates of digitalisation and encouraged the community to shift to digital modes of transactions."

"Adopting a holistic approach to business and in line with the needs of the citizens and residents of Oman, Khedmah also places keen emphasis on collaborating with SMEs to integrate digital payment options into their operations, thus helping them achieve enhanced business productivity. Our preliminary focus will remain on innovating, personalising, and deploying solutions that add value to the lives of our customers."

He added saying, "Through the Future Tech Event, we aim to raise awareness of our various digital offerings in the community and gain key insights of prevalent demands in the market. This will help us to further engineer products and services to better serve our customers."

Khedmah has been able to strike the right balance between achieving its digital objectives and maintaining strong interpersonal relations with its customers. This has been achieved through OIFC's strong network of 68 branches spread throughout the country that are staffed with professionals who reserve the knowledge to tackle complex issues while providing the same excellence in customer service that the company is revered for.

Through the Future Tech Event, we aim to raise awareness of our various digital offerings in the community and gain key insights of prevalent demands in the market. This will help us to further engineer products and services to better serve our customers

SAID AHMED SAFRAR

Indian schools winds up India@75 Celebrations

Indian schools across Oman came together to celebrate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (India@75 Celebrations) at an event held at Indian School Muscat on September 3 from 9.00am to 7.30pm.

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (India@75 Celebrations) is an initiative of the Government of India to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of Independence and the glorious history of its people, culture and achievements.

"This is a festival of awakening of the nation; festival of fulfilling the dream of good governance; and the festival of global peace and development."

While inaugurating the mega event, Dr Sivakumar Manickam, Chairman, Board of Directors said, "The Mahotsav is dedicated to the people of India who have not only been instrumental in bringing India thus far in its evolutionary journey. It is an embodiment of all that is progressive about India's socio-cultural, political and economic identity."



Sachin Toprani, School Management Committee president welcomed the august gathering and congratulated the participating schools for their efforts to make the event a memorable.

The participation of seventeen Indian schools in the various competitive events was quite overwhelming.

India's Ambassador to Oman, H E Amit Narang attended the programme as its chief guest. The programme was graced by Nepal's Ambassador to Oman,

H E Dornath Aryal; Bangladesh Embassy's Second Secretary Asadul Haque; Sudan Embassy's Consular Tianny Zubair; besides the Indian Embassy officials.

H E Narang appreciated the students for their dedication and love towards the nation. He explicated the meaning of freedom

by quoting Mahatma Gandhi, "Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test - Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him."

Tariq al Barwani steps down as KO chairman, Dr Yasmin takes over

Knowledge Oman, the award-winning community knowledge sharing platform in the sultanate, has named Dr Yasmin al Bulushi as its new chairperson, while platform's founder Tariq Hilal al Barwani will step down as chairman to assume a new role as a 'community advisor' effective from September.

Under Tariq's leadership, Knowledge Oman managed to create 74 projects since 2008 that attracted 700 volunteers, working closely with 35 local and international partners, that have impacted 45 institutions, and over 1.3mn people positively in Oman. Tariq's leave is part of the on-going community leadership development opportunities Knowledge Oman has been following since inception.



"There is no better person to lead Knowledge Oman's next wave of impact and especially in the area of bridging the gap between education, knowledge, professional life and the community than Dr Yasmin al Bulushi whom I had personally worked with when I served on the board of advisors at one of the leading private colleges in the country," said Barwani.

Museum of the Future displays Audi e-tron concept car



Audi Middle East has collaborated with the Museum of the Future to present its fourth concept model, the Audi e-tron Vision Gran Turismo, which is seen for the first time in the region at the museum's 'Tomorrow, Today' exhibition.

Originally developed exclusively for virtual races on PlayStation 4, Audi has made the car a reality, taking elements from the brand's rich racing heritage. Inspired by the legendary Audi 90 quattro IMSA GTO, which thrilled motorsport fans in the late 80s, the Audi e-tron Vision Gran Turismo boasts two electric motors on the rear axle and a third one on the front, giving an incredible output of 600 kW (815 hp).

The Audi e-tron Vision Gran Turismo marks the fourth of many concepts set to be revealed at the museum. Earlier this year, the brand revealed its first show car, the Audi AI:ME, a concept vehicle with a vision of automated driving for megacities of tomorrow, as well as the skysphere concept, a car set to redefine luxury of the future, changing what we know about mobility. A third car, the Audi A6 Avant e-tron Concept, was also on display at the museum, serving as an icon of innovation.

34 KR employees honoured for 20 years of dedicated service

Promoting a people-centered approach has been the hallmark of the Khimji Ramdas (KR) Group. In a function held at its corporate office, 34 of its employees were recognized for their 20 years of service to the organisation.

Of these, 16 are Omani employees from various business functions. The tradition of recognizing its employees started in 2010. KR directors and senior management team attended the function.

A healthy organisation is a reflection of its employee well-being, said Anil Khimji, Director, Khimji Ramdas Group.

"We will continue to uphold the tradition recognising our employees, who are the greatest asset to any organisation," he said, asserting that "we appreciate their dedication to the company goals, as we strive to establish a secure workplace, that engages them in their personal and professional development.

"Empowered employees create real change, and we strongly believe in our culture of empowering our staff at all levels, for their overall development. We are committed to being an equitable and inclusive organisation," he added.

The Khimji Ramdas employee recognition initiative is part of the group's strategy to be an extended family wherein everyone carries common values and works in an environment that constitutes an inclusive framework.

Oxy Oman awards 100 top general diploma graduates



In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Oxy Oman representatives recently held an award ceremony to celebrate the achievements of the top 100 outstanding graduates from across the sultanate who excelled in their 12th grade

General Diploma results. The event was held at the Sheraton Hotel under the auspices of H E Dr Layla bint Ahmed al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, and the attendance of H E Dr Madiha bint Ahmed al Shibaniyah, Minister of Education.

Steven Lauver, President and General Manager at Oxy Oman, attended along with other senior executives representing the company. The event recognised exceptional student academic performances on the General Diploma for Education in the academic year 2021-22. Oxy Oman awarded each of the graduates with Apple MacBook Air laptops. The event included musical and dance performances by school students, as well as a speech by one of the honoured graduates. The event hall also hosted poster sessions by school students, who presented notable student projects in the sciences, art and literature fields.

Zubair EDC announces design competition for interface of Brandz+ app



We are confident that this initiative will contribute to the development of the students' skills and provide them with outstanding abilities in the field of design, through which we seek to attract and discover talents

RAWAN AL KIYUMI

As part of its efforts to support national institutions and enterprises, the Zubair Enterprises Development Centre (Zubair EDC) in cooperation with Al Zahra College for Women launched a competition for college students to design an interface for the Brandz+ App, which falls within the platforms supported by the centre.

This initiative comes within the framework of the cooperation agreement signed by the Zubair EDC with Al Zahra College for Women with the aim of empowering and motivating college's students and highlighting their skills.

The college held a workshop conducted by Dr Salah bin Said al Mahthori, CEO of Brandz+, an affiliated member of the centre. The workshop touched on a number of themes, most notably the role of the Zubair EDC in supporting small and medium enterprises, and the guidance and planning

that Brandz+ had had.

Mahthori also talked about the basis of the idea of the Brandz+ app and the advantages that it can add as a marketer for the brands that benefits from the app's services. Then the workshop shed light on the details of the competition and the criteria for selecting designs for the interface. The workshop concluded with a question and answer with the students.

Commenting on this initiative, Rawan al Kiyumi, Business Administration Specialist at Zubair EDC said, "We are pleased with the interaction we saw from the participants in the competition. We are confident that this initia-

tive will contribute to the development of the students' skills and provide them with outstanding abilities in the field of design, through which we seek to attract and discover talents and provide them with an effective platform to showcase their innovative ideas and achieve the desired growth."

"This initiative embodies the continuous efforts of the Zubair EDC in terms of social responsibility and support for the people of the society. Over the past years, the Center has been implementing and supporting a number of targeted community initiatives that target all segments of society in an effort to create benefits for the whole nation,"

she added.

The Brandz+ application is an integrated digital platform specialising in trademarks. Through this means, the company aims to empower entrepreneurs and businessmen to monitor the performance of their brand from their smartphones from any location. Also, the company enables the marketing and promotion of brands to maximise its revenues and sales alongside increasing its market value as well as enhancing its presence among well-known international brands.

Zubair Enterprise Development Centre (Zubair EDC) works to support small and medium-sized companies in the Sultanate of Oman by exploring business development, including opportunities to penetrate the market, enabling them to progress and growth, providing acquisition opportunities and attracting investments.



The Lion King breaks box office records

Tickets for the Middle East debut of The Lion King are selling fast, with the global phenomenon confirmed as the fastest selling musical title in Abu Dhabi's history. With an overwhelming response from local audiences, the four-week run in Abu Dhabi is shaping up to be the theatrical

event of the year, with thousands of tickets having sold within days of going on sale, a press statement said.

The record-breaking, internationally acclaimed musical will run from November 16 to December 10 at Etihad Arena on Yas Island.

Proactiv Entertainment, local organisers of the worldwide hit, confirmed the overwhelming demand for tickets and record-breaking sales to match. Theatre fans hoping to catch the musical's Middle East debut are advised to act now to reserve their tickets before the Abu Dhabi leg

of the global tour sells out.

The Lion King International Tour began in 2018, prompting sell-out engagements and record-breaking ticket sales across the globe. The Manila season broke box office records within its first day of priority booking.

Investcorp leads \$100mn Pre-IPO round in TruKKer

Investcorp, a leading global alternative investment firm, last week announced that Investcorp Saudi Pre-IPO Growth Fund LP led the Pre-IPO round in privately-held TruKKer Holding Limited, which is MENA's largest digital freight network with a leading position across Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and other neighbouring countries.

Investcorp led the initial close of this round with US\$51mn investment alongside new and existing investors.

Hazem Ben-Gacem, Co-Chief Executive Officer of Investcorp said, "Saudi Arabia is increasingly rich in highly investible companies, from fast-growth technology businesses like TruKKer to long-established family businesses that have grown consistently and are now looking for capital to implement more ambitious expansion plans.

"We are seeing a lot of interest



in pre-IPO rounds as scale-ups secure greater market share and more Saudi businesses prove themselves successful on a national and regional basis. TruKKer is just one example of the kind of company that we believe will prove attractive to institutional investors as the Saudi ecosystem matures, and our Pre-IPO fund will focus on exactly these kind of high growth businesses."

Walid Majdalani, head of Private Equity MENA and Southeast Asia at Investcorp said, "We are excited to add TruKKer to our

portfolio and are keen to work with the founders of this regional champion to explore a possible market listing, as a continuation of our strategy and in line with our track record."

"Thanks to its proprietary technology, TruKKer is ideally positioned to continue its strong growth while reducing carbon emissions across its markets. We look forward to our partnership with TruKKer and contributing our strategic and capital markets resources as well as our insights to accelerate growth."

DAILY CROSSWORD

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ACROSS

1) Luxurious health re-treats
5) Rubber tube
9) City near Great Salt Lake
14) Walesa of Poland
15) Great Lake
16) 66, for one
17) Geometry calculation
18) 100 dinars
19) Athletic shoe attachment
20) Stuffed things
23) Head out to sea
24) Line up the crosshairs
25) Abscam investigator
28) Well-chilled
31) Banned bug-killer
34) Permitted by law
36) "... for the money ..."
37) Callas number
38) Stuffed things
42) Insect feeler
43) "Are we there...?"
44) Brown shade
45) Crafty, like a fox
46) Become extinct
49) How-... (instructional books)

50) Cafeteria dispenser
51) "If all_ fails ..."
53) Stuffed things
61) Lacking human warmth
62) Early bird's breakfast
63) Pesky insect
64) European ermine
65) Garden with a snake
66) Volcanic discharge
67) Wrongful acts, in law
68) Hindu outfit
69) Picture pitcher

DOWN

1) Noisy closing
2) Andean land
3) "Bullets," to a poker player
4) Persian pooh-bahs
5) Medal-worthy
6) Baltimore pro
7) "The King and I" kingdom
8) Sea wrigglers
9) Prom dress ornament, often
10) Robot of Jewish folklore
11) Hamilton vs. Burr, for one

12) And others, for short
13) Shows a profit of
21) Indian yogurt dish
22) City of witch hunts
25) Pilots let them down
26) Twofold
27) Without compassion
29) Terra-... (fired clay)
30) Lennon's wife
31) French right
32) San_, Calif.
33) Uses a stun gun on
35) Sitter's handful
37) Donned the feedbag
39) Flunking a polygraph
40) "Amazing Grace" verse ender
41) Deep gulf
46) Pub servings
47) One donning something
48) Homecoming game attendee
50) Subsurface war vessel
52) Apollo 11 moon lander
53) It protects a break
54) Choir voice
55) Ill-mannered lout

56) Mother sheep
57) Bar mixer
58) Work on a bone, dog-style
59) Roofer's repair site
60) Five-pointed figure

NOTE PAD

RILEY SKIFF OBI
AGAPE INDIA VIN
CUTONESEYE TEETH
HAHS TALL TORTE
ENE MALL MENDER
LASSO DIN ORE
NOSTRIL KEN
FISHEYELENS
SOP ONETIME
COO COD MEDAL
AMTRAK ASEA EVE
SABOTERIN APES
BLACKEYEDSUSANS
AIL IDEAL SARGE
HAL NORSE APTER

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Consistency is an important part of your life right now, and it has enabled you to decrease your stress level quite a bit. Today, the placid surface of your life gets stirred up a bit, but this is something you've been waiting for and looking forward to. It's not an upheaval; it's an invigoration. This change is a darn good one, full of lots of positive opportunities and some possible financial benefits as well. Never before has an earthquake yielded such a beautiful landscape!



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

When you work really long and hard for something, you run the risk of being too exhausted to enjoy it once you finish! You need to work on balancing your energy today. Don't jump at every opportunity that arrives on your doorstep. You need to accept things you can handle, and avoid anything that puts too much pressure on you. Only take on what you can manage. That way, when you've reached the top of the mountain, you'll have tons of time and energy to enjoy the view.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

You've had things pretty easy for a long while now. You have all the power and resources in your corner, and people recognize you for the formidable opponent you are. But there are things you want more of in your life, and the only way that's going to happen is if you go out there and make it happen. Even if you don't feel like rolling up your sleeves and putting sweat equity into your life today, you should. Your efforts will create amazing results.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

After a few days of surprises, flash fires, or confusing conversations, get ready for things to get quiet and slow down (way down). In fact, the abrupt halt to the hectic pace of your life might be so startling that you find yourself longing for a little more chaos. To stem the feeling, give yourself a few hours to get used to having less to do. You'll soon find that it's easy to enjoy! You can't run on full speed all the time. Embrace this pleasant break in your week.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Deep down inside of you, there's a skilled motivational speaker just itching to get out. You have ideas and inspiring advice to hand out to anyone who wants to listen even if you don't realize it. Today, tackle that topic of conversation you've been avoiding because you're afraid someone might misread what you really mean. All the right words will simply fall out of you, and any awkwardness you fear will come across as refreshing (and respectful) honesty.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Someone you're close to, either a friend, family member, or romantic partner, is having a hard time getting started on a new (and very ambitious) project. You can see exactly what they need to do, so find a diplomatic way to deliver the news without bruising their currently fragile ego. They might be skeptical at first, but they trust you, and their gratitude will be a solidifying element in your relationship. This is the start of a happier phase between you two.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Your broad period of soaring confidence is still going strong, and you don't have to make any excuses for knowing for sure that you're one hot rock star. You have every right to brag about your accomplishments, although your warmth prevents you from rubbing anyone's face in it. Join in with your most fun-loving friends and create a celebration. Go ahead, splurge a little. Schedule something that will be suitably over the top to match how spectacular you feel.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You need to fully realize the effect you have on people. Too often you toss off a witty remark or insightful comment and simply walk away, unaware of the fact that you've just blown someone's mind. You carry a lot more weight than you realize, and people you've been trying to impress have already taken notice. Next time you hold court, stick around past the punch line and enjoy the accolades. Your ideas are spreading around and taking on a life of their own.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

After a long period of uncertainty, a few things start to finalize today. Wait a while before you celebrate, however. Nothing is written in stone just yet. But don't let the tentative nature of the situation push you into overanalyzing. You should feel like you're standing on solid ground, because you are. Things are definitely coming together, and you should sense a building momentum that will take you the rest of the way. Just don't make assumptions.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

There's nothing like a problem-free day to clear your mind, and today is just that day. Congratulations, because this is one of those rare, quiet days that offers effortless enjoyment. Strangers are easy friends for you, and nobody pushes your buttons. Even if someone cuts in front of you in line or steals your parking space, you're able to take it in stride and keep smiling. This bright outlook will cheer others and open your mind to a fun, new idea.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Your heart and body are in the 21st century, but some of your emotions are stuck way back in the past. Get out your feather duster and rid your mind of those pesky cobwebs as soon as you can! These memories or preoccupations are keeping you from feeling as relaxed and confident as you could. Why are you holding on to ideas, philosophies, or viewpoints that just aren't relevant any more? Let them go. Expose yourself to cutting-edge thinking.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Look ahead a few weeks into your future. What do you see? If you can't answer that question, look harder. The insecure part of you might notice a few obstacles in your path, but these are simply mirages. Don't let any unfocused visions keep you from charging ahead. In your love life, look for a new milestone to arrive today, and be sure celebrate it in your own special way. The future may still be a bit of a mystery right now, but you're definitely headed in the right direction!

Answers: 1.B 2.A 3.A

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

H	A	N	I
T	G	W	N
B	R	W	L
A	S	A	O

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

King Charles III addresses parliament as mourners gather to see queen's coffin

London, UK - King Charles III made his first address to the British parliament on Monday before heading to Scotland, where crowds of mourners massed for a chance to pay their respects before Queen Elizabeth II's coffin.

"I cannot help but feel the weight of history which surrounds us," the 73-year-old king told lawmakers at Westminster Hall in London, where he received parliament's formal condolences. He vowed to follow the 'example of selfless duty' set by his 'darling late mother', who died last Thursday aged 96 after a record-breaking 70 years on the throne.

Charles then headed to Edinburgh, where he will walk in procession with other senior royals behind his mother's coffin from the Palace of Holyroodhouse, where it rested overnight, to St Giles' Cathedral.

On Monday evening, the monarch will lead a family vigil at the 12-century cathedral. The public will also be able to pay their respects there before the coffin is flown to London ahead of the funeral on September 19.

Prince Harry - Charles' younger son, who renounced royal duties in 2020 and moved to the United States - paid tribute to his grandmother, his 'guiding compass'.

"You are already sorely missed," the 37-year-old Harry said in his first public statement since the queen's death. He added that he and his American wife Meghan 'now honour my father in his new role'.

Thousands of people, many in tears, had packed the streets of the Scottish capital on Sunday to see the hearse carrying the queen's oak coffin arrive from the Balmoral estate in the Scottish Highlands where she died.

It was a taste of the crowds expected in London when the late monarch lies in state at Westminster Hall. Her coffin will be there for four days from Wednesday, with reports sug-



Britain's King Charles III speaks during the presentation of Addresses by both Houses of Parliament in Westminster Hall, inside the Palace of Westminster, central London on Monday (AFP)

gesting there could be queues of up to 20 hours for people wishing to pay their respects.

All our lives

"I just felt I had to do something. I just wanted to come today," said Steve Crofts, 47, outside St

Giles' on Monday.

Many were up early to queue for wristbands that will allow them to file past the closed coffin, guarded by the Royal Company of Archers, from 5:30pm (1630 GMT).

Sue Stevens, 79, recalled

being at school when king George VI died in 1952, resulting in his daughter, Elizabeth, becoming queen aged just 25.

"It's the end of an era," Stevens said. "But having listened to him (Charles) over the last few days, I think he's well



A picture of Queen Elizabeth II is seen amongst floral tributes left in Green Park in London on Monday (AFP)

prepared for the task."

Britain has been plunged into mourning by the death of its longest-serving monarch, who has been part of the backdrop of national life almost since World War II.

While the government said organisations need not cancel events, everything from strikes to football matches have been cancelled or postponed in honour of the only monarch most British people have ever known.

A National Moment of Reflection involving a minute's silence will be held at 8pm (1900 GMT) on the eve of the funeral, Prime Minister Liz Truss's spokesman told reporters.

Flowers, cards and candles have been left at royal residences across the country, where crowds have massed to pay tribute to the late queen and hail their new king.

Many were left by tourists and well-wishers from abroad.

"We've known her face all of our lives," said Aurelie Mortet, a 46-year-old Frenchwoman at London's Columbia Road flower market, which has seen a huge rise in demand.

The queen's funeral is expected to draw unprecedented numbers to London, as well as some 500 world leaders and heads of state, including US

After receiving the parliament's condolences, the 73-year-old king vowed to follow the 'example of selfless duty' set by his 'darling late mother', who died last Thursday aged 96 after 70 years on throne

President Joe Biden.

Millions more are expected to watch it live on television.

Decades in the planning, the aftermath of the queen's death has been full of the pomp and ceremony that Britain does so well. Charles and his Queen Consort, Camilla, sat on gold thrones in the 900-year-old Westminster Hall on Monday while the speakers of the two Houses of Parliament offered their condolences.

Constitutional role

The monarch is a largely ceremonial figurehead in Britain but retains constitutional powers,

from officially appointing governments to approving legislation and meeting weekly with prime ministers.

"Parliament is the living and breathing instrument of our democracy," Charles said on Monday in his brief address.

As he takes on what he has called the 'heavy responsibilities' of kingship, he will also make his first visits as monarch to Northern Ireland and Wales this week in a show of national unity.

While the emotional scenes in Scotland showed the deep affection for the queen there, her death has also reignited a debate over Scottish independence from the United Kingdom.

Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon - who was to have her first audience with the new king on Monday - said it was a 'sad and poignant moment' to see the coffin leaving Balmoral.

But the pro-independence leader has been pushing nonetheless for a new referendum on the divisive issue.

"I'm not for independence. We've been together for hundreds of years. Why stop now?" said mourner Anne Johnston, 68, from Edinburgh.

She added, however: "No offence to Charles but I don't think he'll ever live up to the queen."

AFP

NZ to mark the queen's death with public holiday

Wellington, New Zealand - New Zealand will have a one-off public holiday on September 26 to mark the death of Queen Elizabeth II, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said on Monday.

"This, I hope, will be a chance to acknowledge a lifetime of service to New Zealand by Queen Elizabeth II," Ardern told reporters in Wellington.

"We need to acknowledge here (that) this is a one-in-70-year event. The queen was our sovereign, our head of state."

"She made an enormous contribution to New Zealand through her public service," Ardern added. "This marks a significant end to a chapter."

A state memorial service will be held in the capital's Cathedral of St Paul on the same day.

Ardern confirmed she will leave New Zealand on September 14 to attend the queen's funeral in London, immediately after which she will fly to the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

New Zealand follows in



New Zealand's PM Jacinda Ardern announces a public holiday on September 26 in Wellington on Monday (AFP)

This I hope will be a chance to acknowledge a lifetime service to New Zealand by Queen Elizabeth II, our sovereign

JACINDA ARDERN

the footsteps of Australia, where a public holiday has

been announced for September 22.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese is also flying to London to attend the funeral.

On Sunday, Australia and New Zealand officially named King Charles III as monarch.

Both former British colonies have been independent for decades but retain the monarch as their head of state.

AFP

Russia rules out opening talks with Ukraine

Moscow, Russia - Russia said on Monday its forces were striking parts of the eastern Kharkiv region retaken by Ukraine, vowing to continue its military action in the country.

Russia also said it saw no opening for talks with Kyiv, ruling out negotiations.

The defence ministry in its daily briefing said Russian air, rocket and artillery forces were 'delivering precision strikes on units and reserves of the Ukrainian armed forces', including in the urban hubs of Kupiansk and Izyum.

Over the weekend, Ukraine claimed sweeping successes against Russian forces in the south and the east, including the cities of Izyum, Kupiansk and Balakliya.

Ukrainian armed forces said on Monday they had recaptured more than 20 settlements in the past 24 hours amid a large counter-offensive.

Russia said on Saturday it was pulling back troops from the Kharkiv region as part of a decision to 'regroup' its forces.

The Kremlin said its military action in Ukraine would continue despite any setbacks.

AFP

Iran says 'ready to cooperate' with UN nuclear watchdog

Tehran, Iran - Iran reaffirmed on Monday its 'readiness' to cooperate with the UN nuclear watchdog, after the agency said in a report it 'cannot assure' the peaceful nature of Tehran's nuclear programme.

The finding last week by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) further complicated diplomatic efforts to revive a landmark 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and major powers, including the United States.

Iran is 'ready to cooperate with the agency to clear up the false and unrealistic perceptions regarding its peaceful nuclear activities', foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani said in a press conference.

Tehran declares its 'readiness to continue constructive cooperation with the IAEA', Kanani added, also pointing to the agency's 'obligations'.

IAEA director general Rafael Grossi said he hoped Iran would start cooperating 'as soon as possible'. "We are ready, we want this to happen, we are not in the business of aggravating or creating situations, we just want this issue to be clarified," Grossi told reporters after opening IAEA's board of governors meeting.

"This is very straightforward. We found traces of uranium in places that were never declared,



IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi opens the agency's Board of Governors meeting in Vienna, Austria on Monday (AFP)

that were never supposed to have any nuclear activity, and we are asking questions."

In its report last Wednesday, the IAEA said it was 'not in a position to provide assurance that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful'. The IAEA has been pressing Iran for answers on the previous presence of traces of nuclear material at three undeclared sites. The issue led to a resolution criticising Iran being passed at the June meeting of the IAEA's board of governors.

Tehran, which has consistently denied seeking nuclear weapons, responded to the resolution by disconnecting 27 cameras allowing the agency to monitor some of its nuclear ac-

tivities. Kanani said no resolution was expected during this week's meeting, but warned that any further 'unconstructive action' by the agency 'will again have unconstructive results'.

Tehran has demanded that the IAEA's probe be concluded as part of any deal - one of the sticking points in the talks to restore the 2015 agreement that gave Iran relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear programme. The United States unilaterally withdrew from the deal in 2018 under then-president Donald Trump, reimposing biting economic sanctions that prompted Iran to begin rolling back on its own commitments.

AFP

China's Xi to visit Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan

The visit this week is his first trip abroad since the early days of COVID-19 pandemic

Beijing, China - China's President Xi Jinping will make state visits to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan this week, Beijing said on Monday - his first trip abroad since the early days of the coronavirus pandemic.

Xi will attend a leaders' summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in the Uzbek city of Samarkand and 'pay state visits to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan' at the invitation of Presidents Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Shavkat Mirziyoyev from Wednesday to Friday, the foreign ministry said in a statement.

The SCO is made up of China, Russia, India, Pakistan, as well as four central Asian countries - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

It will be holding its next summit on September 15 and 16 in the Uzbek city of Samarkand, a stop on the ancient Silk Road.

Russia had already announced last week that Xi will meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the summit, as Moscow seeks to bolster ties with Beijing after being slapped with unprecedented Western



People walk past a screen showing Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Museum of the Communist Party of China in Beijing on September 4 (AFP)

sanctions over its invasion of Ukraine.

Beijing has not condemned Moscow's interventions in Ukraine and provided diplomatic cover by blasting Western sanctions and arms sales to Kyiv.

Putin and Xi last met in early

February in Beijing ahead of the Winter Olympic Games, days before the Russian president sent troops into Ukraine.

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi will also take part in the summit in Samarkand, the Indian government said on Sun-

day, without saying whether Modi would hold bilateral talks with Putin or Xi.

India's relations with China have been frosty since fighting in 2020 on their disputed Himalayan border left at least 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers

dead. Modi and Xi have not held bilateral talks since 2019.

Pivotal period

The trip will be Xi's first outside China's borders since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

China's president last went overseas in January 2020 for a state visit to Myanmar.

A few days after his return, the entire city of Wuhan was locked down over a spiralling COVID outbreak.

Since then, Xi has largely conducted his diplomacy virtually, but received several foreign leaders during the Beijing Winter Olympics in February - his first in-person meetings with foreign leaders since the pandemic.

Xi is readying for a pivotal twice-a-decade Congress of the ruling Communist Party in October, where he is widely expected to secure an unprecedented third term as president.

The event, which opens on October 16 in Beijing, will also unveil a new top leadership lineup and likely consolidate Xi's hold on the party.

Previous Chinese leaders generally refrained from making overseas trips in the weeks before the Party Congress, when behind-the-scenes power struggles frequently intensified.

AFP

Taliban training: 3 killed as Black Hawk crashes

Kabul, Afghanistan - A Black Hawk helicopter commandeered by the Taliban after the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan crashed during a training session at the weekend, killing two pilots and a crew member, the defence ministry said.

The incident occurred on Saturday on the campus of the country's defence university in the capital Kabul.

The Black Hawk crashed due to 'a technical problem during a training exercise', the ministry said, adding five crew members were also injured.

When exiting the country last year, the US military left behind billions of dollars worth of aircraft, vehicles, weapons and other hardware - much of which it said had been rendered inoperable.

AFP

50 million people stuck in 'modern slavery', says UN

Geneva, Switzerland - Fifty million people around the world are trapped in forced labour or forced marriage, the UN said on Monday, warning that their ranks had swelled dramatically in recent years.

The United Nations had set a goal to eradicate all forms of modern slavery by 2030, but instead the number of people caught up in forced labour or forced marriage ballooned by 10mn between 2016 and 2021, according to a new report. The study, by the UN's agencies for labour and migration along with the Walk Free Foundation, found that at the end of last year, 28mn people were in forced labour, while 22mn were living in a marriage they had been forced into.

That means nearly one out of every 150 people in the world are caught up in modern forms of slavery, the report

said. "It is shocking that the situation of modern slavery is not improving," Guy Ryder, head of the International Labour Organization (ILO), said in a statement.

"Nothing can justify the persistence of this fundamental abuse of human rights."

The COVID-19 pandemic, which worsened conditions and swelled debt levels for many workers, has heightened the risk, the report found.

Coupled with the effects of climate change and armed conflicts, it has contributed to 'unprecedented disruption to employment and education, increases in extreme poverty and forced and unsafe migration', compounding the threat, it said. It is a long-term problem, the report cautioned. Women and children are by far the most vulnerable.

AFP

Papua New Guinea quake toll rises to seven

Port Moresby, PNG - The death toll from a massive earthquake in Papua New Guinea rose to seven on Monday and is expected to grow as rescuers begin to reach remote landslide-hit communities.

Police Commissioner David Manning said the victims of Sunday's 7.6-magnitude quake had been found across the central north of the country, where there is widespread damage to homes and infrastructure.

"The tremors caused damage to buildings and public roads," he said, adding 'a number of landslides were triggered'.

Three alluvial miners were buried alive near the settlement of Wau and four others died in locations across Morobe and Madang provinces, Manning said. University of Goroka buildings were badly damaged and 'there are reports of injuries to students on the campus and they have been admitted to hospital', said Manning.

Missionary groups and private aviation firms have been trying to reach isolated communities and airlift the injured to safety.



Injured villagers are seen at a hospital in Lae after being evacuated by helicopter from Wauko Village following a 7.6-magnitude quake which struck off Papua New Guinea's coast, on Sunday (AFP)

Aerial reconnaissance by the Mission Aviation Fellowship indicated 'visible slides in the Nankina area and that some are still actively slipping', according to the UN's Papua New Guinea Disaster Management Team. Many people are feared to

have been displaced but early on-the-ground assessments have been sketchy. Papua New Guinea Red Cross secretary-general Valachie Quagliata said the area's rough mountainous terrain made access difficult, with the worst affected areas not

accessible by car.

According to a UN assessment, the earthquake damaged the Ramu hydropower plant 'resulting in a total system outage across the Highlands provinces, Madang, and Morobe'.

"There will be major interrup-

tions to power going forward," Quagliata said.

An undersea cable linking the regional capital Madang to Port Moresby was also affected by the quake, as was a link between Madang and Sydney.

Parts of the vital Highlands Highway, which connects several of Papua New Guinea's main cities, have been damaged.

However, regional airports in Goroka and Lae-Nadzab remained open with no damage reported, according to the United Nations. Prime Minister James Marape has warned Papua New Guineans to be cautious after the 'massive' earthquake, but said its impact was expected to be less than a 2018 quake which killed 150 people.

The country's national coronavirus hotline has been redirected to take calls from people affected by the earthquake.

The quake struck at a depth of 61km, about 67km from the town of Kainantu, according to the US Geological Survey. Papua New Guinea sits on the Pacific 'Ring of Fire', causing it to experience frequent earthquakes.

AFP

Ethiopia warring sides urged to seize moment for peace

Nairobi, Kenya - The international community on Monday urged warring sides in Ethiopia to seize the moment for peace after Tigrayan rebels said they were ready for talks led by the African Union to end almost two years of brutal warfare.

There has been a flurry of diplomatic efforts to push for negotiations after fighting flared in northern Ethiopia in late August for the first time in several months, torpedoing a humanitarian truce and cutting off aid deliveries to war-stricken Tigray.

Tigrayan authorities said on Sunday they were 'prepared to participate in a robust peace process under the auspices of the African Union', after previously rejecting AU mediation and saying they wanted Kenya to lead any talks.

"We are ready to abide by an immediate and mutually agreed cessation of hostilities," Tigray's regional government said in a statement coinciding with



This file photo shows local farmers walking next to a tank of Eritrean army that is abandoned along the road in Dansa, southwest of Mekele in Tigray region, Ethiopia on June 20, 2021 (AFP)

Ethiopia's new year.

The government has not formally commented on the Tigrayan stance but has previously said it was ready for unconditional talks 'anytime,

anywhere', brokered by the AU, which is headquartered in Addis Ababa.

The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) had until now vehemently opposed the role of the

AU's Horn of Africa envoy Olusegun Obasanjo, protesting his 'proximity' to Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

Untold numbers of civilians have been killed since the war

erupted in Africa's second most populous country in November 2020, and the fighting has left millions of people across northern Ethiopia in need of emergency aid. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged 'the parties to seize this opportunity for peace and to take steps to end the violence definitively and opt for dialogue'.

'Unique opportunity'

AU Commission chief Moussa Faki Mahamat also welcomed the development as a 'unique opportunity towards the restoration of peace' and urged 'both parties to urgently work towards an immediate ceasefire, engage in direct talks'.

Similar messages were issued by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell.

"We call on the country's leaders to put Ethiopia on a path that ends the suffering and achieves a lasting peace,"

Blinken said in a statement.

Ethiopia's international partners were ready to support the peace process, he said, but added: "Eritrea and others should cease fuelling the conflict."

We call on the country's leaders to put Ethiopia on a path that ends the suffering and achieves a lasting peace

ANTHONY BLINKEN

Fighting has raged on several fronts in northern Ethiopia since hostilities resumed on August 24, with both sides accusing the other of firing first and breaking a March truce.

The TPLF also accused Ethiopia and neighbouring Eritrea

- whose forces were involved in the early phase of the war - of having launched a massive joint offensive on Tigray on September 1. Access to northern Ethiopia is severely restricted and it is not possible to verify what is happening on the ground.

'Unfettered humanitarian access'

The Tigray statement made no mention of preconditions for talks, although it said the Tigrayans expected a 'credible' peace process with 'mutually acceptable' mediators as well as international observers.

TPLF leader Debretsion Gebremichael last week proposed a conditional truce calling for 'unfettered humanitarian access' and the restoration of essential services in Tigray, whose six million people are suffering food shortages and a lack of electricity, communications and banking services.

AFP

INDIA

Gyanvapi case: Varanasi court upholds maintainability of Hindu side's petition

Varanasi, India - A Varanasi Court on Monday dismissed a plea of Anjuman Islamia Masjid committee challenging the maintainability of the suit filed by five Hindu women seeking worshipping rights in the Gyanvapi mosque compound.

District Judge AK Vishvesh delivered the verdict in the Gyanvapi Shrinagar Gauri dispute case and posted the matter to further hearing on September 22. "The court rejected the Muslim side's petition and said the suit is maintainable. The next hearing of the case is on September 22," said Advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain, representing the Hindu side in the Gyanvapi mosque case.

"It's a win for the Hindu community. The next hearing is on Sep 22. It's a foundation stone for the Gyanvapi temple. Appeal to people to maintain peace," said Sohan Lal Arya, petitioner in the Gyanvapi case.

Earlier, the Hindu side had said that they will seek for Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) survey and carbon dating of 'Shivling' if the judgment comes in their favour.

Speaking to ANI, Advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain, representing the Hindu side said, "Today



This file photo shows devotees leaving after offering Friday prayers at Gyanvapi Mosque Complex in Varanasi on July 22, this year (ANI)

It's a win for Hindu community. The next hearing is on September 22. It's a foundation stone for the Gyanvapi temple. Appeal to people to maintain peace

SOHAN LAL ARYA

the court will deliver its judgment on the maintainability of the suit. 1991 Worship Act applies in our favour. If judgment comes in our favour, then we will seek for ASI survey, carbon

dating of Shivling."

Another lawyer, representing the Hindu side, Sohan Lal Arya said that the verdict will prove to be the first day of planting the foundation stone of Kashi Vishwanath. "Moreover, this day is going to be a very happy day for the Hindu community of the world. Court will give its verdict from 2pm and we have offered prayers for the

whose idols are said to be located on an outer wall of the Gyanvapi mosque, which is located close to Kashi Vishwanath temple.

Following this, a Varanasi court ordered the survey of the mosque complex. Following this, a local Varanasi court ordered a videography survey of the complex in May. The survey work was completed on May 16 and the report was presented in the court on May 19.

After the videography survey claims were made by the Hindu side that a structure, resembling a Shivling was found in the mosque complex but the Masjid committee contested that it was a fountain and not a Shivling.

"Several sculptures of gods and goddesses alongwith other structures related to Hindu belief were seen in the Gyanvapi Mosque in Varanasi," said advocate Ajay Kumar Mishra, who was appointed commissioner by Varanasi court to survey the Gyanvapi-Gauri Shringar complex but was later removed for leaking the information.

The report by Mishra also mentioned that the three-four sculptures with Sindoor marks and 'Choukhat' like stone slab

are believed to be 'Sringar Gouri'. However, the Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee has said the Gyanvapi mosque is a Waqf property and has questioned the maintainability of the plea.

Madan Mohan Yadav, a lawyer of the Hindu side, had claimed that the mosque was constructed after demolishing the temple. According to the petitioners, a self-styled Jyotirling of Lord Vishwanath in Kashi is in the mosque complex.

The petitioner also claimed that in 1669, Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb had destroyed a portion of the Kashi Vishwanath temple and had built the Gyanvapi Mosque.

The petitioner wants the court to declare that Muslims have no right to occupy the Gyanvapi mosque and their entry to be banned.

Meanwhile, the defence lawyer said that there was no temple in the Gyanvapi complex and the mosque is standing on the site from the beginning.

Notably, the Supreme Court on July 21 said that it will await the Varanasi district judge's decision on the Gyanvapi mosque committee's application.

ANI

Withdraw power reforms: KCR

Hyderabad, India - Expressing concerns over the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2022, that was introduced in the monsoon session in Parliament this year, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao on Monday said that if the Centre is planning to bring power reforms then it will be forced to withdraw the legislation just like farm laws that were withdrawn after a nationwide protest.

He further requested to take back the power reforms the government has introduced for the sake of the poor, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) people. "Please, for the sake of God, withdraw the power reforms that have been introduced by you. You're a tradesman of introducing and taking back laws. You made three wrong laws, against farmers, you took them back and apologised. So before the people raise their voices again, I re-



K Chandrashekar Rao (ANI)

quest you to take back the power reforms you have introduced for the sake of our poor, SC/ST people," said KCR.

The contentious Electricity Amendment Bill, 2022 aimed at giving multiple players open access to distribution networks of power suppliers and also allowing consumers to choose any service provider was introduced in the monsoon session of the Parliament, despite reservations raised by the states.

KCR had earlier also criticised the Centre alleging that

the BJP-led central government intends to impose electricity bills on farmers who are being given free electricity in the state. The Chief Minister said that he would 'die but not do so'. "Before Telangana became a state, a lot of farmer issues persisted. Farmers were dying by suicide. We are improving, giving farmers free electricity. The centre is asking us to impose electricity bills, put meters," he said.

Meanwhile, Union Power Minister RK Singh said defending the legislation said that once the Bill becomes a law, consumers will have an option to choose the power supply service providers 'just like they have in the telecom sector'.

"License Raj has to go so that investors can enter this sector. If no investment comes, then we are in darkness," he added.

ANI

Top court seeks Centre's response on fresh pleas challenging CAA

New Delhi, India - The Supreme Court on Monday posted for hearing on October 31 a batch of petitions challenging the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019 and sought the Centre's response on some fresh pleas.

A bench of Chief Justice of India UU Lalit and Justice S Ravindra Bhat observed it would refer the CAA case for hearing to a three-judge bench. The bench asked the Solicitor General's office to identify and segregate the petitions so that submissions can easily be advanced and confined.

"The office of Solicitor General shall prepare a complete list of the matters pertaining to these challenges. The matters shall be put in different compartments depending upon



North-East Students Organisation leaders and supporters stage a protest demanding scrapping of CAA in Guwahati on August 17 (ANI)

challenge raised in individual petitions," the apex court stated in its order. At least 220 petitions against the CAA were filed before the top court.

The plea first came up for hearing in the Supreme Court on 18 December 2019. It was

last heard on June 15, 2021. CAA was passed by Parliament on December 11, 2019 and it was met with protests all across the country. The CAA came into effect on 10 January 2020. Kerala-based Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), Tri-

namool Congress MP Mahua Moitra, Congress leader and former Union minister Jairam Ramesh, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) leader Asaduddin Owaisi, Congress leader Debabrata Saikia, various NGOs and law students, among others, had filed a plea before the top court challenging the Act. In 2020 Kerala government had also filed a suit in the apex court becoming the first state to challenge the CAA.

The law fast-tracks the process of granting citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians who fled religious persecution in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan and took refuge in India on or before December 31, 2014.

ANI

Sri Lankan 'white elephant' Chinese tower to open

Colombo, Sri Lanka - A huge green and purple communications tower in Sri Lanka financed with Chinese debt that has become a symbol of the ousted Rajapaksa clan's closeness to Beijing will finally open this week, its operator said on Monday.

The 350-metre Lotus Tower - visible from all over Colombo and built for an estimated US\$113mn - has been plagued by corruption claims since construction began in 2012 under former president Mahinda Rajapaksa.

It is one of several 'white elephant' projects built with Chinese loans under Rajapaksa, elder brother of Gotabaya Rajapaksa who was ousted from the presidency in July after months of protests over Sri Lanka's dire economic crisis.

The state-owned Colombo Lotus Tower Management Company said they had decided to open its observation deck to visitors from Thursday and earn



An exterior view of the Chinese-built Lotus Tower in Colombo (AFP)

ticket sales to minimise losses.

"We can't keep this closed. The maintenance costs are huge," chief executive Prasad Samarasinghe told reporters. "We want to earn the upkeep of the building and turn this into an entertainment centre." The company hopes to rent out office and

shop space, including a revolving restaurant just below the observation deck offering views of the congested capital as well as the Indian Ocean. Broadcasters say the structure, which cannot cover the island nor improve current transmissions from a mountain in the centre of Sri Lanka, is

japaksa borrowed heavily from China for infrastructure projects which failed including a deep-sea port handed to Beijing in 2017 on a 99-year lease. Sri Lanka's current economic crisis is partly blamed on Chinese debt which accounts for over 10 per cent of Colombo's US\$51bn in external borrowings.

Sri Lanka defaulted on its debt in April and earlier this month agreed to a conditional bailout of US\$2.9bn from the International Monetary Fund.

It depends on the Sri Lankan government striking a deal with creditors including China to restructure its borrowings.

Beijing has so far only offered additional loans instead of taking a cut on outstanding borrowings.

China has loaned billions for infrastructure projects in Asia, Africa and Europe under its gargantuan Belt and Road Initiative, which critics say is saddling nations with debt.

During his decade in power from 2005-15, Mahinda Ra-

Turkey releases pop star from house arrest

Istanbul, Turkey - A Turkish court on Monday lifted a decision to keep one of the country's biggest pop stars under house arrest over a joke she made on stage about religious schools.

The case has pitted the star's legion of younger, liberal fans against Turkish President Recep Tayyip's core of Islamic conservative supporters.

Gulsen Bayraktar Colakoglu, a 46-year-old singer who only uses her first name, was jailed last month on charges of 'inciting hatred' by her comments.

A court moved her from jail to house arrest four days later.

The Turkish President, who has been in power since 2003, studied in an Imam Hatip school, which spe-

cialises in Islamic education.

In April, Gulsen quipped that her guitarist's 'perversion' was linked to his upbringing in such a school.

Her quip was captured on a mobile phone and republished by a pro-government daily last month, causing an uproar in Erdogan's ruling party in the run-up to next year's general election.

Gulsen issued a statement on social media, saying she was sorry her comments were being used to stoke further divisions in the sharply polarised country.

Turkey is officially secular but the majority of the population is Muslim.

The first hearing of the trial is set for October 21. If convicted, Gulsen faces up to three years in jail.

AFP

Be hungry for success, says former India Test cricketer Kulkarni

Muscat — Young Oman cricketers are training hard these days as they gear up for the ICC U19 Men's CWC Division 2 - Asia Qualifier. The boys will be looking to impress at home and advance to the final round of the Asian Qualifier.

Wishing them the very best for the forthcoming tournament, former Indian Test cricketer Nilesh Kulkarni had some valuable lessons for them during his recent visit to Oman.

In a chat with Oman Cricket's media consultant, Ashok Purohit, Kulkarni said, "It is a crucial

tournament for the youngsters. The very important thing for the teenagers is to enjoy the game.

"They should be hungry for success and never be contented. In one match a cricketer may get a century or pick five wickets. But that shouldn't make him contented. He should try to do better in the next. That approach will give them success.

"For these youngsters, it is important for them to learn. They should have the ability to learn from the failures. Failure is part and parcel of a cricketer. What defines and determines a



Nilesh Kulkarni (C) receives Oman jersey from Oman Cricket chairman HE Pankaj Khimji and a national team cap from Duleep Mendis

top-class cricketer is how to bounce back from failures."

Kulkarni met Oman Cricket (OC) chairman H E Pankaj Khimji and also visited the Oman Cricket Academy. "The facilities at the Oman Cricket Academy ground are world-class. The infrastructure development and ground is excellent. The vision of Oman Cricket that H E Pankaj Khimji shared with me makes me believe that Oman is on a good wicket. It has certainly all the ingredients to be the best among Associate Nations," said the former Indian cricketer.

Having retired from cricket in 2007 after a long innings with Mumbai, Kulkarni said that the failure to bag a contract in the inaugural year of Indian Premier League in 2008 forced him to think out of box.

"I think the trigger was IPL launch when I felt that there was scope to do something else than coaching or commentary. IPL saw the growth of sports sector and I decided to set up International Institute of Sports Management (IISM) in 2010.

IISM has been in the forefront of producing professionals over

the past decade or more and according to Kulkarni a 'total of 2,000 students have graduated from IISM' so far.

Kulkarni said that 'there has been interest shown by few organisations in Oman' and he is keen to explore the possibility of cooperation to bring in sports management and sports science courses in the Sultanate.

On the chances of India at the T20 World Cup, Kulkarni said: "India are strong contenders despite the lacklustre showing at the Asia Cup."

FAIRY TALE FINISH

Captain Dasun Shanaka dedicates Asia Cup win to crisis-hit Sri Lanka

Dubai, United Arab Emirates - Skipper Dasun Shanaka on Sunday called the Asia Cup triumph a "real turnaround" for Sri Lankan cricket ahead of the T20 World Cup and dedicated the win to the crisis-hit nation.

Sri Lanka defeated Pakistan by 23 runs in the final with Bhanuka Rajapaksa hitting an unbeaten 71 and Wanindu Hasaranga starring with bat and ball in Dubai.

The win was nothing short of a fairytale ending for a team which started the tournament, a precursor to the World Cup starting next month in Australia, with an embarrassing loss against Afghanistan.

But Shanaka's men bounced back with five successive wins, taking down tournament favourites India in a Super Four contest and then twice getting past Pakistan with ease.

"The players have been playing good cricket for two, three years but the winning factor was not there," Shanaka said after Sri Lanka's sixth Asia Cup title.

"This will be a real good turnaround in our cricket. This lot (of



Sri Lanka's players celebrate with the trophy after their victory against Pakistan in the final of Asia Cup in Dubai on Sunday (AFP)

players) will continue for another five, six years, so that will be a very good sign for us."

The island nation has suffered months of economic crisis and political unrest with blackouts, fuel shortages and protests becoming part of their lives.

The Sri Lankan fans present at the Dubai International Stadium celebrated the win with drums and songs as the team took a victory lap of the ground with the trophy.

"They were waiting for it for so long, especially the final," Shanaka told reporters. "We should dedicate this win to the whole nation."

The Asian champions though will have to go through the qualifying stage for a chance of meeting the heavyweights in the main draw of the T20 World Cup which starts October 22.

But Shanaka believes the qualifiers will help them acclimatise to Australia and the momentum is already with them.

"We played the qualifiers last year as well. We have the same set-up for the last three, four years and last two years have been good for us," said Shanaka.

"The momentum is there and winning the Asia Cup really helps going ahead to the World Cup. Qualifiers will really help because we will play in the conditions before the main tournament happens, so it will be good for us."

Coach Chris Silverwood, appointed in April to lead Sri Lanka having overseen England's Ashes humiliation in Australia, has been credited for the team's newfound confidence.

The Englishman was seen having a chat with Rajapaksa and Hasaranga, who made 36 and then took 3-27 with his leg-spin, during a key 58-run stand between the two batsmen that lifted Sri Lanka from a precarious 58-5 to 170-6.

AFP



Pakistan coach Saqlain Mushtaq (L) talks with his Indian counterpart Rahul Dravid before their Asia Cup Super Four match in Dubai (AFP)

Saqlain defends Pakistan T20 style after Asia Cup final defeat to Sri Lanka

Dubai, United Arab Emirates - Pakistan coach Saqlain Mushtaq defended his team's Twenty20 playing style after losing Sunday's Asia Cup final, saying they were on the right track for next month's T20 World Cup.

Babar Azam's side failed to chase 171 to beat Sri Lanka, their 23-run defeat bucking the trend of teams winning while batting second in Dubai.

Mohammad Rizwan made 55 in 49 balls for Pakistan and finished as the tournament's leading scorer with 281 runs in six innings.

But Saqlain was not worried about Rizwan's sluggish strike rate of 117.57 runs per hundred balls in the high-octane format.

By comparison, Virat Kohli scored 276 runs for India at a more rapid 147.59 across his five innings.

"Everyone has their own style of playing cricket," Saqlain said.

"We made the semi-finals of the T20 World Cup (last year) and now the final of the Asia Cup, so evidence suggests we are doing something right.

"We did so with our style of play, and the things that are left to be done will be worked upon, rather than following the style of the rest of the cricket-playing nations."

Babar, a prolific scorer for the team before the tournament, managed just 68 runs in six matches with a highest of 30, but Saqlain played down the opener's loss of form.

"As I said before, anybody with a deep eye of cricket will realise that he is unlucky with the way he is getting out," said Saqlain. "The way he plays and his work ethic needs no further discussion. He is a world-class player and God save him from the evil eye."

AFP

Pace spearhead Bumrah returns for India at T20 World Cup

New Delhi, India - Indian selectors Monday named pacemen Jasprit Bumrah and Harshal Patel in the squad for the T20 World Cup starting next month in Australia.

Injuries had ruled both men out of the squad for the just-concluded Asia Cup T20 tournament.

Fast bowler Mohammed Shami was named as standby while Avesh Khan was dropped from India's pace arsenal for the marquee event, to be held from October 16 to November 13 Down Under.

The selectors also named squads for the upcoming home T20 series against Australia (September 20, 23 and 25) and South Africa (September 28, October 2, October 4).

INDIA SQUAD FOR T20 WORLD CUP:

Rohit Sharma (captain), K.L. Rahul (vice-captain), Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Deepak Hooda, Rishabh Pant, Dinesh Karthik, Hardik Pandya, R. Ashwin, Yuzvendra Chahal, Axar Patel, Jasprit Bumrah, Bhuvnesh-



Jasprit Bumrah

war Kumar, Harshal Patel, Arshdeep Singh
Standby players - Mohammed Shami, Shreyas Iyer, Ravi Bishnoi, Deepak Chahar

INDIA SQUAD FOR AUSTRALIA T20IS:

Rohit Sharma (captain), K.L. Rahul (vice-captain), Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Deepak Hooda, Rishabh Pant, Dinesh Karthik, Hardik Pandya, R. Ashwin, Yuzvendra Chahal, Axar Patel, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mo-

ammed Shami, Harshal Patel, Deepak Chahar, Jasprit Bumrah

INDIA SQUAD FOR SOUTH AFRICA T20IS:

Rohit Sharma (captain), K.L. Rahul (vice-captain), Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Deepak Hooda, Rishabh Pant, Dinesh Karthik, R. Ashwin, Yuzvendra Chahal, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh, Mohammed Shami, Harshal Patel, Deepak Chahar, Jasprit Bumrah

AFP

Broad proud to be in company of McGrath

London, United Kingdom - Stuart Broad said he was proud to have surpassed the Test-wicket tally of boyhood hero Glenn McGrath as England secured a series win over South Africa at The Oval.

Broad captured the prize scalp of South Africa captain Dean Elgar for 36 on Sunday for his 564th Test wicket, topping long-retired Australia great McGrath's haul of 563.

Elgar surprisingly decided against a review, even though replays showed the ball would have missed leg stump.

Broad is now among the top five in the all-time list of Test wicket-takers, with only England colleague and close friend James Anderson ahead of him among fast bowlers with 667 dismissals.

"I saw Jimmy got his 564th on September 11 four years ago so that was quite funny," Broad said.

"Glenn McGrath's a hero of mine and the reason I wanted to become a bowler, I used to imitate him in the garden. Obviously he's a much finer bowler than I've ever been but it's incredible to be up there in that sort of company."

AFP



England's Zak Crawley (L) and Ollie Pope celebrate after their victory in the third Test against South Africa (AFP)

England seal memorable season with South Africa series win

London, United Kingdom - England hammered South Africa by nine wickets in the third and deciding Test at the Oval on Monday, completing a remarkable 2-1 series win in just over two days of action.

The home side, who resumed on 97-0, needed just 5.3 more overs to reach a victory target of 130, with Zak Crawley hitting the winning runs to finish 69 not out.

England have now won six of their seven Tests under their dynamic new leadership pairing of captain Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum.

It is a dramatic turnaround in fortunes for the side that had managed just one victory in their previous 17 matches.

"It has been very pleasing to be able to captain this side," Stokes said. "The lads' mindset and attitude towards the whole summer has been fantastic.

"The fact that different people have put their hand up and done something at different times in the Test matches has been great."

McCullum, who became England red-ball coach in May just two weeks after Stokes replaced

Joe Root as skipper, praised his players for buying into the new attacking approach.

"The way the guys have brought into the style that the captain has asked for, a style that is authentic to him, and the way he leads," he said.

"And while the results have been fantastic, the mentality shift has been quite amazing. It has been something quite special to be a part of to be honest."

Defeat means South Africa have suffered their first Test series loss since Dean Elgar took over as captain last year.

NEW COURT ORDER

Carlos Alcaraz wins US Open and becomes youngest world number one, runner-up Casper Ruud is ranked second.

New York, United States - Spanish teenager Carlos Alcaraz claimed his maiden Grand Slam title at the US Open on Sunday, becoming the youngest man to ascend to the world number one ranking and cementing his status as the poster boy of tennis' new wave.

The 19-year-old dragged his weary body to a 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (7/1), 6-3 victory over Norway's Casper Ruud, the new world number two, in the final.

Alcaraz, the first teenager to claim the top ranking, is the youngest Grand Slam men's champion since his idol Rafael Nadal at the 2005 French Open.

On a day of landmarks, he is also the youngest champion in New York since Pete Sampras in 1990.

"I want to be in the top for many, many weeks and hopefully many years. I'm going to work hard again after this week, this amazing two weeks. I'm going to fight for more of this," said Alcaraz.

Despite being at the vanguard



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz (L) celebrates with the trophy after defeating Norway's Casper Ruud in the US Open final at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York on Sunday (AFP)

of tennis's modern era, his performance on Sunday also contained elements of a bygone age - he won 15 points off 21 serve-and-volley attempts.

It was a gruelling tournament for Alcaraz.

On Sunday, he claimed the record for most time spent on court at a single Grand Slam, passing the 23 hours and 21 minutes it took Kevin Anderson to finish runner-up at Wimbledon in 2018.

Most of his 23 hours and 40 minutes were taken up by the more than 13 hours it took him to play three successive five-setters to reach the final.

He saved a match point in his five-hour 15-minute quarter-final

win over Jannik Sinner.

Nadal was quick to congratulate the player widely seen as his successor.

"Congratulations @carlosalcaraz for your first Grand Slam and for number 1, which is the

culmination of your great season. I am sure there will be many more," tweeted the 22-time Slam title winner.

The US Open is Alcaraz's fifth trophy of 2022 following Masters triumphs in Miami and

Madrid as well as Rio and Barcelona.

It was in Madrid that he announced himself as a serious threat to the sport's heavyweights when he became the first man to defeat Nadal and Novak Djokovic at the same claycourt event.

Still in his teens, his career earnings are already close to \$10 million.

"Carlos was born to play these tournaments," said his coach Juan Carlos Ferrero, a former number one and French Open champion.

Defeat for Ruud, who was also vying for the world number one ranking, was his second in a Slam final this year after he was routed by Nadal in the French Open.

With the roof closed, the Arthur Ashe Stadium crowd observed a moving moment's silence on the 21st anniversary of the September 11 attacks before the final got off to a tentative start.

Ruud sportsmanship

Both men saved break points in their opening service games before Alcaraz gained the only break of the first set for a key 3-1 lead.

Ruud dropped the set but triumphed in terms of sportsmanship when he called a double bounce on himself in the eighth game, conceding the point to the Spaniard. Alcaraz served it out to love and a one set lead courtesy of his 13 winners to six for the Norwegian.

AFP



Carlos Alcaraz celebrates winning a point against Casper Ruud

‘Spaghetti’ man Alcaraz ‘hungry for more’ after landmark US Open triumph

New York, United States - Carlos Alcaraz said Sunday he was "hungry for more" after claiming a maiden Grand Slam triumph at the US Open and a place in the record books as the youngest world number one in the history of men's tennis.

The 19-year-old Spaniard defeated Norway's Casper Ruud 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (7/1), 6-3 in the final to become the youngest Grand Slam men's champion since Rafael Nadal at the 2005 French Open.

"Right now I'm enjoying the moment. I'm enjoying having the trophy in my hands but of course, I'm hungry for more," said Alcaraz, the first teenager to be number one in the rankings.

Sunday's victory comes in a breakthrough year for Alcaraz.

His US Open title followed Masters wins in Miami and Madrid. "Since I won Miami, I thought I was able to have a Grand Slam in my hands. But before Miami, I was thinking that I have to still grow up," he

said.

However, that optimism faded with a last-16 exit at Wimbledon, a first-up loss at the Montreal Masters and a quarter-final defeat in Cincinnati.

"In Montreal and in Cincinnati I lost the joy a little bit. I felt the pressure. I couldn't smile on court which I'm doing in every match, every tournament," he explained. "I came here just to enjoy, to smile on court, to enjoy playing tennis. If I have fun, I saw my best level, my best tennis."

Alcaraz's coach Juan Carlos Ferrero said the champion was "born to play these tournaments".

"I think he's on 60% of his game. He can improve a lot of things. He knows and I know that we have to keep working," said Ferrero.

"Once to get to the No. 1, it's not done and you go. You have to keep working, keep playing at a huge level on that tournaments to keep winning."

AFP

Jabeur to play on home soil in Tunisia WTA

Tunis, Tunisia - Tunisian tennis heroine and US Open finalist Ons Jabeur is to play in a WTA 250 tournament on home soil for the first time in October, the North African country's tennis association said Monday.

The news came after Jabeur on Saturday for a second time missed becoming the first Arab or African woman to win a Grand Slam title, defeated by Polish world number one Iga Swiatek in straight sets.

Tunisian Tennis Federation (FTT) chief Salma Mouelhi told AFP that world number two Jabeur would take part in the Jasmín Open in the coastal city of Monastir on October 3-9.

Jabeur, 28, has become a national heroine in recent years but this will be her first WTA tournament back on home soil.

She also became the first Arab woman to reach the final of Wimbledon in July, but has yet to win a Grand Slam.

After her defeat on Saturday she said she had "nothing to regret". "I'm not someone that's going to give up. I am sure I'm going to be in the final again and I will try my best to win it."

AFP

Casper Ruud salutes 'hard nut' Alcaraz

New York, United States - Casper Ruud saluted Carlos Alcaraz as a deserving world number one after the Spanish teenager swept to the top of the global rankings with his US Open victory on Sunday.

Ruud, who leapt up to second in the rankings following his 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (7/1), 6-3 defeat, had no complaints following the loss against a player he described as a "hard nut to crack."

"He's riding that wave," the 23-year-old Norwegian said Alcaraz.

"At the moment he's the best player in the world in my eyes. He deserves that spot.

"He's one of these few rare talents that comes up every now and then in sports. That's what it seems like."

Ruud said Alcaraz's formidable combination of speed around the court and flexibility in making shots from improbable positions were reminiscent of Rafael Nadal, Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic.

"He's very fast. He's very quick. He's a great mover. He can get to balls that we've probably never seen before," Ruud said.

"Carlos has sort of a mixture ... He's fast, flexible. He can slide



Norway's Casper Ruud celebrates with the US Open runner-up trophy on Sunday (AFP)

around. It's impressive. He's a hard nut to crack."

Alcaraz's achievements were all the more impressive given he was still only 19-years-old, Ruud added.

"It's sometimes hard to believe he's only a teenager," he said. "But, yeah, he is. He's more than four years younger than

myself. It's incredible."

Alcaraz's speed and tenacity came to the fore in the third set of Sunday's win, when he saved two set points that would have given Ruud a 2-1 lead in the match.

"Carlos stepped up when he really needed to," Alcaraz said. "Especially in the third set, it was

close to go in my favour.

"I had some set points and couldn't take care of them. He just played too good on those points. We've seen it many times before, he steps up when he needs to.

"When it's close, he pulls out great shots."

AFP

US Open champion Swiatek out on her own in rankings

Paris, France - Iga Swiatek's victory in the US Open saw her extend her lead at the top of the WTA rankings Monday while beaten finalist Ons Jabeur moved up to second.

Swiatek, 21, is so dominant she has more than twice as many points as the Tunisian, 10,365 to 5,090.

Jabeur returns to the number two spot which the 28-year-old also occupied at the end of June after reaching the Wimbledon final.

Caroline Garcia lost to Jabeur



Iga Swiatek of Poland poses with the US Open trophy at Top of the Rock observation deck in New York City on Monday (AFP)

in the US Open semi-finals, but thanks to her best ever showing in a Grand Slam the French player surges seven places to 10th.

Coco Gauff also benefits from a good outing at Flushing Meadows, moving into the top 10 in rising four places to eighth.

Serena Williams is more than likely to retire from the sport which saw her win 23 Grand Slams after losing to Ajla Tomljanovic in the third round of the US Open.

Her performance in New York

saw the 40-year-old rise to 321, well shy of the number one ranking she ended the year on five occasions.

RANKINGS:

1. Iga Swiatek (POL) 10,365 pts
2. Ons Jabeur (TUN) 5090
3. Anett Kontaveit (EST) 4300
4. Paula Badosa (ESP) 3980
5. Jessica Pegula (USA) 3501
6. Maria Sakkari (GRE) 3480
7. Aryna Sabalenka 3470
8. Coco Gauff (USA) 3047
9. Simona Halep (ROM) 3025
10. Caroline Garcia (FRA) 2930

Flop show leaves Klopp searching for answers

Liverpool, United Kingdom - Jurgen Klopp said Monday he has spent days trawling over Liverpool's "horror show" of a 4-1 defeat to Napoli that leaves last season's Champions League finalists with little margin for error in Europe.

A buoyant Ajax visit Anfield on Tuesday, fresh from their 4-0 mauling of Rangers on matchday one, looking to twist the knife into a Liverpool side that appears to be running on empty.

Klopp's men came within two matches of winning an unprecedented quadruple last season, only to lose out to Manchester City on the final day of the Premier League season and suffer defeat against Real Madrid in the Champions League final.

Liverpool are feeling the hangover, after their relentless 63-game season, in the early weeks of the new campaign.

Their success in seven years under Klopp has been built on running the extra mile to gain the upper hand. In all seven of their games so far this season, the opposition has covered more distance.

They have recorded just two wins in those seven games, one courtesy of a winner against Newcastle deep into stoppage time. But even Klopp was shocked at the depths his side sank to in Naples last week as the Italians missed a penalty and a host of other glorious chances to make the scoreline even more embarrassing.

"I watched the game back plenty of times and it was a real horror show," Klopp said at his pre-match press conference for the visit of Ajax.



Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp attends a press conference at Anfield on Monday (AFP)

I watched the game back plenty of times and it was a real horror show. It was the worst game we played since I am here

JURGEN KLOPP

"It was the worst game we played since I am here. We had a few bad ones, everyone remembers (a 7-2 defeat to) Aston Villa and others but there were always glimpses of us even in these games. In this particular game, nothing."

Nunez's slow start

In the immediate aftermath of the

demolition at the Diego Maradona Stadium, Klopp said Liverpool needed to reinvent themselves. They are already finding it difficult to make the transition forced by the departure of forward Sadio Mane to Bayern Munich.

A colossal presence during Klopp's time in charge, the Senegalese offered both the energy to

press without the ball and quality to make the difference in the final third.

Darwin Nunez is yet to deliver on his 80 million euro transfer fee, not helped by a three-match suspension as punishment for a sending-off on his home debut.

At the back, Virgil van Dijk and Trent Alexander-Arnold have suffered alarming dips in form.

But it is in midfield where Liverpool have really toiled, with the decision not to reinforce that area in the transfer market, until a deadline day move for out-of-favour Juventus midfielder Arthur, heavily questioned.

Liverpool are reportedly saving

their money for a move for Borussia Dortmund's England international Jude Bellingham.

The German giants were understood to be unwilling to let the teenager leave in the same window in which Erling Haaland departed for Manchester City

That is a transfer strategy that has worked for Liverpool before as they held off on signing a centre-back for half a season in 2017 in order to bring in Van Dijk.

But it could easily backfire, with competition fierce for a place in the Premier League's top four this season and the threat of an early exit from the Champions League. One thing Klopp can count on is job stability thanks to so much credit in the bank.

"Class is permanent. The same is true of the manager," said former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher in his column in The Daily Telegraph.

"Some say Liverpool are paying the price for the last five years. If so, it is a price every fan would willingly pay again."

A weekend off caused by the postponement of all Premier League games due to the death of Queen Elizabeth II gave Klopp and his players plenty of time for soul-searching.

But he is aware of the need for a response to avoid a slump becoming a full-blown crisis when Ajax come to town.

"They were four or five days of absolute truth - we didn't hold back anything," said Klopp.

"Not to knock the players down, just to make sure we know after this (Napoli) game this is the starting point to sort the problems together on the pitch."

AFP



Barcelona's Robert Lewandowski (C) is in great scoring touch in La Liga as well as in the Champions League (AFP)

Bayern Munich wary ahead of meeting with Lewandowski

Berlin, Germany - Bayern Munich will welcome Robert Lewandowski's Barcelona to the Allianz Arena on Tuesday, hoping to jolt themselves out of a poor run of Bundesliga form.

Despite Wednesday's impressive 2-0 win at Inter Milan, Bayern have drawn three games in a row and sit in the unfamiliar position of third place after six matches.

While Bayern have not struggled to find the back of the net this season with 31 goals in nine games, they have missed Lewandowski's penetration at crucial moments in recent weeks.

Lewandowski has had a dominant start to life in Spain, scoring six times in five La Liga matches for Barcelona to sit in his usual spot atop the goalscoring charts.

With four wins and a draw, Bayern are unbeaten in the league and sit second behind Real Madrid.

In the Champions League,

Lewandowski opened his account with a hat-trick in Barcelona's 5-1 home win against Viktoria Plzen.

Speaking directly after their 2-2 home draw with Stuttgart on Saturday, Bayern sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic said his team knew better than most the kind of damage Lewandowski could inflict.

"We have been warned," Salihamidzic said about his former striker's form for his new club.

Bayern have a strong recent Champions League record against Barcelona, but the six-time European champions are however fully aware that this Barcelona side is stronger than some of the recent incarnations.

"Worried? I don't know (about that)," Salihamidzic said on Saturday when asked if his side were fearful ahead of Barca's visit. "We have to shift up two gears, even three against Barcelona."

AFP

An advertisement for Oman Oasis water featuring a winter theme. It shows a snow-covered landscape with a sign that says "Winter Offer". Below the sign, there are two options for a water dispenser: a "HOT & COLD DISPENSER" for 50 Omani Rials and a "WHITE TAP DISPENSER OR TAP DISPENSER OR MANUAL WATER PUMP OR CRADLE WITH TAP" for 20 Omani Rials. Both options include 2 full bottles and 30 refill coupons. The advertisement also includes a QR code and contact information for Oman Oasis.

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

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Juve held by Salernitana after VAR check and four red cards

Turin, Italy - Juventus came back from two goals down at half-time to draw an incident-packed match with Salernitana 2-2 on Sunday as Atalanta gave up the Serie A lead after a 1-1 draw with Cremonese.

Massimiliano Allegri's Juve drew for the fourth time this season but the point shared doesn't tell the story of a match which ended with four red cards being shown after Arkadiusz Milik's last-gasp winner was ruled out following a VAR check.

The Poland striker sent the Allianz Stadium into raptures with a glancing header five minutes into stoppage time, but the goal was chalked off for Leonardo Bonucci being offside and interfering with play.

Bonucci had levelled on the rebound from his own missed penalty just two minutes previously to set up a grandstand finish which ended in farce.

Milik was given a second yellow card for removing his shirt



Juventus forward Dusan Vlahovic (R) fights for the ball with Salernitana defender Flavius Daniliuc during their Serie A match on Sunday (AFP)

after scoring what he thought was the decisive goal and then Juan Cuadrado, Salernitana defender Federico Fazio and Allegri were all sent off as tensions flared on the sidelines.

Allegri later asked to see footage which featured Antonio

Candrea, who was near the corner flag and appeared to be playing everyone inside.

"We haven't seen that video, what if he keeps everyone on-side? We don't have that video, nobody has it, so I don't know," he said on DAZN.

Arsenal's Europa League clash with PSV postponed

London, United Kingdom - Arsenal's Europa League clash with PSV Eindhoven on Thursday has been postponed due to a lack of police resources in the wake of Queen Elizabeth II's death last week.

A huge police operation is required in London this week with the queen to lie in state between Wednesday and her funeral on Monday, September 19.

"The Europa League tie between Arsenal and PSV Eindhoven, originally to be played on Thursday 15 September, has been postponed, UEFA said. "This is due to the limitations on police resources and organisational issues related to the ongoing events surrounding the national mourning for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II."

AFP

An advertisement for mai alkaline water. It features a climber on the left, the mai alkaline logo in the center, and a bottle of mai alkaline water on the right. The text "HYDRATE SMARTLY" is at the top right, followed by three bullet points: "Ultra-hydrating", "Revitalizing", and "Energizing". Below these is "pH 9.1 to 9.5". At the bottom right is a QR code and contact information: "Toll-free 800 71 222 or 9275 5522".

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OLIVE HARVEST FESTIVAL



Fruitful trip

THE FIRST ‘OLIVE HARVEST FESTIVAL’ IS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY AT JABAL AKHDAR AND ANANTARA AL JABAL AL AKHDAR RESORT IS PROMOTING IT IN A BIG WAY, OFFERING GUESTS AN EXPERIENCE TO CHERISH

Shaddad al Musalmey

Are you a festival buff, a tradition lover, or someone who loves to stay abreast of what’s happening in the country?

If you are any of these, you might be delighted to know that Jabal Akhdar is now the place to be, not just for its pleasing high altitude and cool climes, but because the olive harvest season is currently underway there.

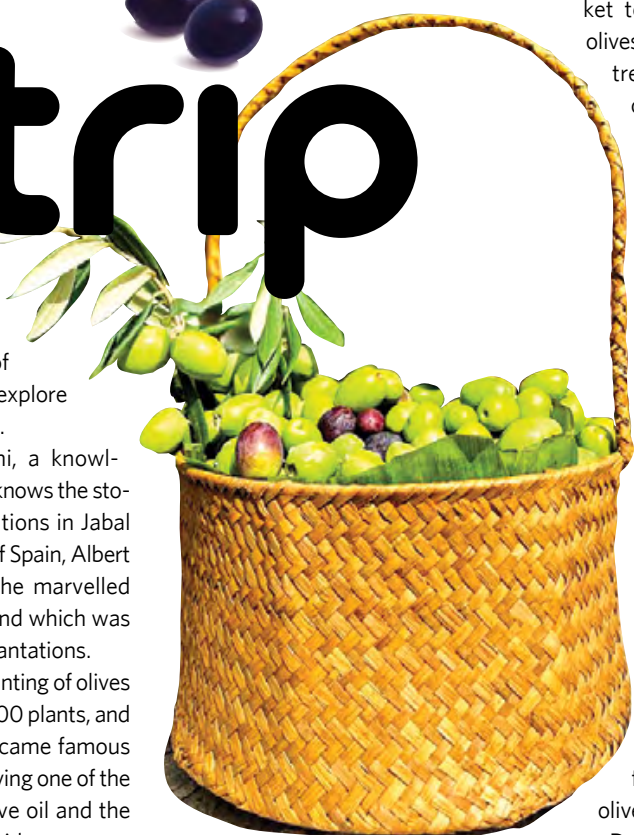
A decade ago, farmers around the most fertile land of Jabal Akhdar thought of planting olives which turned out to be a successful harvest every year. And now, Anantara is here to make it exciting and explicit with traditional activity, partnering with the local community in a fabulous wrap up

where you can experience the wonders of home grown olives and explore different ways of its uses.

Saleh Issa Auladthani, a knowledgeable olive guru who knows the storyline of the olive plantations in Jabal Akhdar, said when King of Spain, Albert I, visited Jabal Akhdar, he marvelled over the fertility of the land which was most suitable for olive plantations.

“He recommended planting of olives and donated almost 10,000 plants, and this is how the olives became famous in Jabal Akhdar – now having one of the best quality for both, olive oil and the fruit itself,” Auladthani said.

“Even though the olives need between 14 to 18 degrees Celsius climate, in Jabal Akhdar, they have adapted to the warm climate which sometimes



goes beyond 18° C,” he added.

For hundreds of years, the mountains of Jabal Akhdar bloomed with roses, pomegranates and apricots. One

of Oman’s most fertile areas, with its distinctive terraced farms and falaj irrigation system, it is for this reason that it is colloquially known as the Green Mountain.

To make the harvest more exciting, Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort celebrates the rich harvest with its inaugural olive festival (September 11-17) where guests of the resort enjoy a full daily schedule of olive-inspired activities such as fun harvesting competitions and an olive souk.

Welcoming all guests from around the world, Anantara provides an experience of the fascinating history and unique culture while connecting visitors with the ‘must be’ places in Oman.

The first annual olive harvest festival is a unique experience at Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar resort. Participating guests are each given a beautiful local basket to fill up with olives plucked from



Jabal Al Akhdar has such a fascinating history, as well as a unique culture, and we are proud to showcase this to guests from around the world

MAREN KUEHL

strations and hands-on cooking classes.

Chef Gabriele Kurz, from Bavaria, a celebrated author of wellness cookbooks and the force behind the Middle East’s first healthy fine dining restaurant, shows how easy it is to create nutritious, vegetarian and vegan dishes.

Evenings are dedicated to tasting and feasting, with olive-inspired menus by sister brand NH Hotels’ leading executive chefs, Jesualdo Bermejo and Martin Aris-tondo. Chef Jesu-aldo is the executive chef at NH Nacional Hotel in Madrid and all the award-winning Tablafina restaurants in Spain, while Chef Martin works as executive chef of the NH Collection Aranzazu hotel in San Sebastian. (Tablafina is a gastronomic initiative that seeks to connect with the world of traditional bars and local cuisine).

The harvest season lasts through September, and the resort offers a special four-course tasting menu at its restaurant Bella Vista. Guests can enjoy delicacies such as ricotta-stuffed olives, seared cod with an olive tapenade, and a rich olive oil cheesecake.

A special spa journey is also on offer at Anantara Spa with a full-body olive scrub high in antioxidants and Vitamin E followed by a massage. Guests staying during this period can book the festival package of accommodation, tasting menu and spa treatment, with the room or villa of their choice.

Cooking demonstration conducted during the olive harvest festival by chefs show how one can use olives and olive oil in different ways. You will be surprised by how many dishes and desserts one can make with olive oil, including a healthy cheesecake.

“At Anantara, we believe in immersing guests in the real destination while partnering with the communities we operate in”, says Maren Kuehl, general manager of the resort. “Jabal Al Akhdar has such a fascinating history, as well as a unique culture, and we are proud to showcase this to guests from around the world,” she said.

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FREE CLASSIFIED LISTING

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

FITNESS FOR TODDLERS

BUNDLES OF Joy



Being physically active every day is important for the healthy growth and development of babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers. However, some parents may not think it important to consciously nurture their toddler with a focus on fitness as they prefer to have their 'bundles of joy'

If you want to avoid health disorders, including juvenile obesity and other disorders, into adolescence, it is good to start early. For this age group, activity of any intensity should be encouraged based on their individual responses to physical movement.

Babies (under 1 year)
Babies should be encouraged to be

active throughout the day, every day, in a variety of ways, including crawling. If they're not yet crawling, encourage them to be physically active by reaching and grasping, pulling and pushing, moving their head, body and limbs, during daily routines, and during supervised floor play.

Try to include at least 30 minutes of tummy time spread throughout the day when they're awake. Once babies can move around, encourage them to be as active as possible in a safe and supervised play environment.

Toddlers (aged 1 to 2)
Toddlers should be physically active every day for at least three hours. The more the better. This should be spread throughout the day, including playing outdoors. The play time can include light activity such as standing up, moving around, rolling and playing, as well as more energetic activity like hopping, running and jumping.

Active play, such as using a climbing frame, riding a tricycle, playing in water, ball games, etc is the best way for this age group to get moving.

Pre-schoolers (aged 3 to 4)
Pre-schoolers should spend at least three hours a day doing a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day, including active and

outdoor play. The play time should include at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity. Children under 5 should not be inactive for long periods, except when they're asleep. Watching TV, travelling by car, bus or train, or being strapped into a buggy for long periods are not good for a child's health and development.

- Activities**
To maintain a healthy weight, consider:
- Tummy time, exercises with Mom
 - Playing with blocks/toys
 - Messy play (colours/clay/water)
 - Jumping/walking/dancing
 - Swimming/climbing
 - Playground rides/swings
 - Active play, like hide-n-seek

TRENDING TREATMENTS

How to rejuvenate your skin



DR SHIBU MOHAMMED
Specialist dermatologist and cosmetologist
Badr Al Samaa Hospital, Al Khoud

For varied skin conditions newer modalities have been introduced in the recent times with the aim of providing exceptional results, in fewer sittings, and with negligible side effects.

Dr Shibu Mohammed, specialist dermatologist and cosmetologist, Badr Al Samaa Hospital, Al Khoud, says, "I have been practising all these modalities since many years and thousands of patients have already benefitted. Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals has all these modalities and we have been treating all types of patients with effective results."

Micro-needling radio frequency (RF) lasers
Micro-needles are penetrated into skin to deliver radiofrequency pulse at the targeted skin location. As a result the body on its own produces elastin and collagen fibres which help making skin firmer and healthier. It helps in skin tightening/rejuvenation, brightening,

reduction in scars due to burns and accident, stretch marks due to pregnancy and aggressive weight-loss, and improving fine line and wrinkles. It is a very safe, easy and effective procedure with minimal side effects. Usually 10-12 sessions of 20 to 30 minutes are required in an interval of 4 to 6 weeks. The target area and the result to be achieved will precisely decide on the exact number of sessions.

Mesotherapy for face whitening
With this therapy, lightening agents like glutathione and vitamin C are directly delivered into skin layers to treat increased pigmentation like Melasma, blemishes, freckles and post-inflammatory hyper-pigmentation. Usually differentiating results can be seen in 4 to 5 sessions. The therapy is also used to treat hair-loss, skin rejuvenation, and acne scar/scars.

Glutathione Injections
Glutathione, the mother of all antioxi-

dants, is produced naturally in the liver by combining three amino acids- cysteine, glutamic, and glycine. Glutathione injections involves injecting glutathione directly in the blood stream and it immediately starts repairing the damage and inflammation that toxins cause, and deactivates tyrosinase, an enzyme that promotes melanin production, which causes darker spots and pigmentation. Once melanin production is reduced the skin starts to get spot free and brighter.

Pink Glow injections
The main essence of this injection is to enhance collagen synthesis, elastin, fibronectin, and hyaluronic acid. The increase in collagen and elastin helps restoring skins original dermal structure, prevent new wrinkles to be formed and reduce the appearance of fine lines. The hyaluronic acid in pink injection also facilitates retaining moisture thus ensures skin hydration and prevents cracking. This injection works on reducing melanin production

to achieve a depigmenting, lightening, and balancing effect on the skin.

Derma threads
Derma thread procedures use sutures which are dissolvable in the skins and is made of biodegradable polyester. These threads are used to lift sagging skin, and hence, an aesthetically tightened skin is revealed. This procedure is simple, non-invasive, and takes around 45 minutes to finish. Using a cannula the threads are gently placed under the skin in sub-dermal level and the threads are gently pulled back to tighten sagging areas. Threads activate collagen synthesis which results in skin tightening, thickening and creating a rejuvenation effect.

Botox therapy
Small quantities of botulinum toxin are injected with a small needle in overactive muscles that help muscles to relax and smoothen overlying skin, besides reducing wrinkles. For this procedure, one doesn't need anaesthesia, and it

takes only a few minutes. It generally takes 7 to 14 days to get a full effect which lasts for 3 to 6 months.

Hydra Facial
The Hydra Facial machine uses an exfoliating tip paired with a suction to remove dead skin cells from the surface of your face. After skin is exfoliated, serums are infused into the skin. The machine combines various effects like cleansing, exfoliation, extraction, hydration and antioxidant protection that removes dead skin cells and impurities, while simultaneously delivering moisturising serums into the skin. Before deciding on the technique to be adopted for achieving results for different skin conditions the patient is required to undergo physical examination and other screenings. We employ the most proven modalities for each condition. Each procedures may have some side effects which are explained to patients before procedures and all the side effects are well-managed, Dr Shibu assured.





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