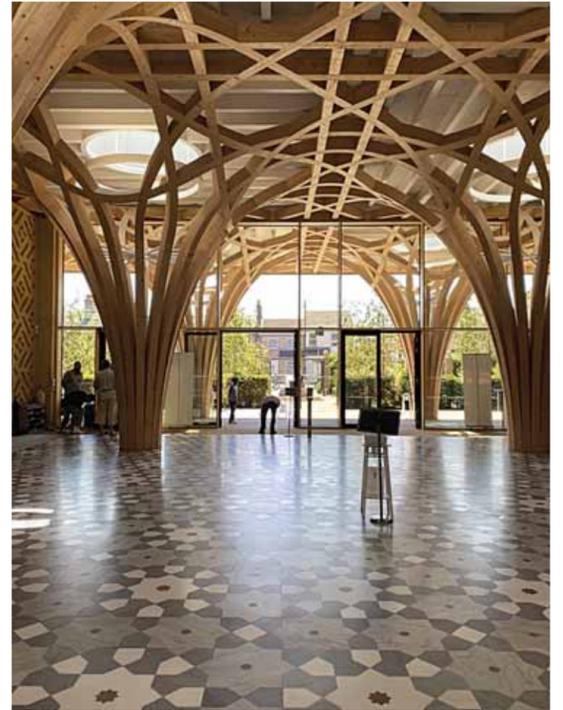
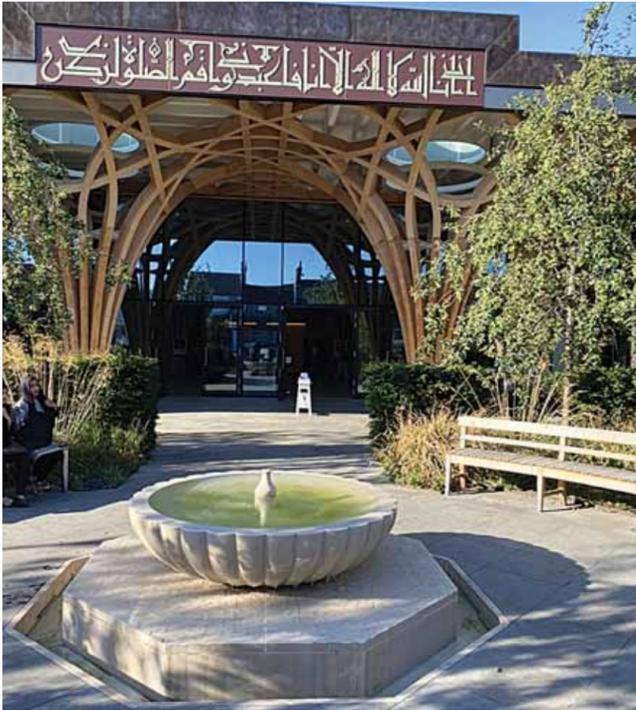


Cambridge Central Mosque: Most environmental friendly religious facility in Europe



Since finishing construction in 2019, the Cambridge Central Mosque had become one of the most environmental-friendly religious facilities in Europe. The architectural design of the mosque focuses on lowering carbon emissions via decreasing dependence on lighting through its well thought windows designs and also using innovative methods to produce heat, air conditioning and water. Vegetation is visible and at the forefront of the mosque design, making it one of the most, if not the premier, religious facilities in the European continent. —KUNA

Prince Harry to defend scandalous memoirs in TV interviews

Prince Harry will discuss his memoirs in television interviews Sunday after the book's explosive revelations about royal rifts, sex and drugs cast doubt on his future in the British royal family. The 38-year-old prince's ghost-written book "Spare" was widely leaked after it mistakenly went on sale in Spain ahead of the official publication date Tuesday.

Details include an allegation his brother Prince William, the heir to the throne, attacked him during a row about his wife Meghan: an account of how he lost his virginity; an admission of drug use; and a claim he killed 25 people while serving in Afghanistan. British media reported Sunday that the book had deeply hurt William and the boys' father, King Charles III, but the monarch wants to reconcile with his son. The palace has not reacted officially.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak declined any comment on the scandal in a BBC interview while stressing his "enormous regard for the royal family". The TV channels have already released clips where Harry speaks about his fractious relationship with William and accuses his family of planting negative stories about him and Meghan in the media. Britain's ITV television will be the first to air its show "Harry:

The Interview" at 9:00 pm (2100 GMT) Sunday.

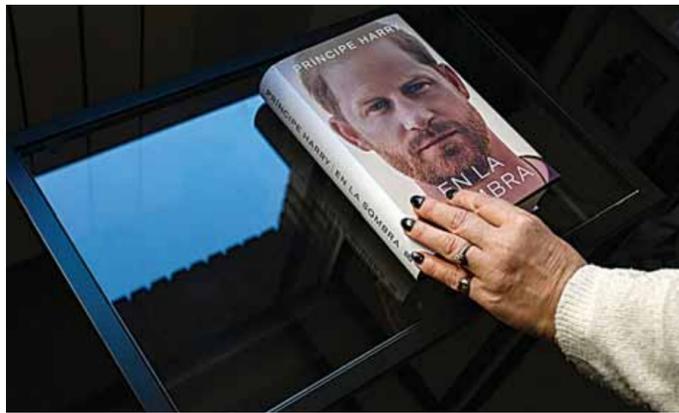
William 'burning inside'

In the latest clip released by ITV, Harry revealed he "cried once" after his mother Diana was killed and said he felt guilty at being unable to express grief while greeting crowds of mourners whose hands were wet with tears.

In previous clips, he focused on his combative relationship with William, saying his elder brother physically attacked him as they argued over Harry's wife Meghan, and "I saw this red mist in him". "I want reconciliation, but first there has to be accountability," Harry said.

Sources close to William and Charles commented to broadsheets Sunday. The Sunday Times quoted an unnamed friend of both brothers as saying William "won't retaliate, he never would," but "he's anxious and he's sad".

"He's handling it so well on the outside - inside he's burning," the source said. Another unnamed friend told the newspaper that William "is staunchly protective of his own family, and he's not just going to roll over." The Sunday Telegraph broadsheet quoted sources close to Charles as saying the king saw a reconciliation with



A woman leafs through the "En la sombra" (In the shadow) Spanish version of the book "Spare" an autobiography by Britain's Prince Harry after buying it in Madrid. —AFP

Harry as the "only way out of this mess", however.

While Harry's book is more critical of William, Charles "is no less hurt because he personally hasn't been the focus of the majority of the anger and frustration of the book," The Sunday Times reported, citing

a friend of the king. Harry told ITV he still believes in the monarchy, although he does not know if he will play any part in its future.

No coronation role
Unlike William, Harry will not have a

formal role in Charles' coronation this year which he is expected to attend, The Sunday Times reported. In "a major break with tradition, Charles has scrapped the act of the royal dukes kneeling to 'pay homage'", it wrote, and "William will be the only royal to perform the tradition".

US channel CBS was later to broadcast its interview with Harry on its "60 Minutes" evening show. Another US network, ABC, was to air its interview Monday, Harry referred to William as his "beloved brother and arch-nemesis", ABC presenter Michael Strahan said in an interview excerpt.

"There has always been this competition between us, weirdly," Harry told the US channel. "I think it really plays into or is played by the 'heir/spare'." The interviews were recorded before Harry's book was widely leaked Thursday-prompting a backlash from media, royal commentators, military veterans and even the Taliban.

British papers slammed Harry's claim to have killed 25 people while serving in the military in Afghanistan, after veterans criticised such statements as risky and inappropriate. A Taliban official condemned Harry for saying the killings felt like removing chess pieces from a board. —AFP

'More the merrier': Asia tourist hubs ready for China influx

In Tokyo's Asakusa tourist district, caricaturist Masashi Higashitani is dusting off his Chinese as he prepares for an influx of travellers after Beijing ends inbound quarantine rules. "We used to say 'ni hao' all the time," he said with a laugh as he whipped up a portrait in minutes.

Nearly 9.6 million Chinese visited Japan in 2019, the biggest group of foreign tourists by far and a massive leap from the 450,000 who came in 2003. Higashitani estimates around 20 percent of his customers were from China before the pandemic, and he and his employees picked up Chinese phrases from those visitors and each other.

He had to downsize and let staff go during the pandemic, so he is thrilled about the expected wave of arrivals, even though he admits some apprehension too. "I wonder if an influx of too many of them might overwhelm our capacity. I'm also worried that we need to be more careful about anti-virus measures," he told AFP.

Travellers arriving back in China will no longer need to quarantine from Sunday, removing one of the main barriers to travel for the country's population. The move, announced in late December, sparked a frenzy of trip planning, with searches spiking for Macau, Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand and South Korea.

Chinese tourists also made up about a third of all pre-pandemic foreign visitors to South Korea and were among the top

three groups visiting Thailand and Indonesia.

'Not the time'

At a crepe stand in Seoul, Son Kyung-rak said he was already making plans to deal with a flood of tourists from China. "We're looking to hire and preparing to stock up," the 24-year-old told AFP in Seoul's popular downtown Myeongdong district.

"Chinese tourists are our main customers, so the more the merrier." But authorities in Seoul are more cautious. The slump in Chinese visitors "has been a blow to our tourism industry", said Yun Ji-suk, an official from South Korea's culture ministry. "But now is not the time to be active in tourism marketing, due to the ongoing COVID situation."

China's sudden lifting of pandemic restrictions has led to a massive wave of infections, but Beijing's refusal to share information means the scale of the surge is unclear. It has been enough to spook governments around the world, with some countries even banning arrivals from China.

'Full house'

Seoul is capping flights from China, and travellers from the mainland, Hong Kong and Macau will have to test negative before travel. Mainland visitors will also be tested on arrival. Japan has announced similar rules for China, although Hong Kong and Macau travellers are exempt.

Other Asian tourist hubs such as Indonesia have decided not to impose any restrictions. Two million Chinese tourists visited annually before the pandemic, and restaurant owners on the resort island of Bali are hoping for a rebound.

"Before the pandemic, we had a lot of Chinese customers... At least 100 to 200 customers came daily," Kadek Sucana, who runs a seafood restaurant in the Jimbaran area, told AFP. He is hoping for a "full house again... because Chinese tourists come in large groups".

While Beijing has loosened many of its COVID restrictions, overseas travel by tour groups remains banned. And there is little sign that the availability of flights will quickly catch up to renewed demand. As a result, travel destinations throughout Asia are expecting any rebound in Chinese tourists to be slow.

Indonesia is aiming for just over 250,000 Chinese tourists in 2023, a fraction of pre-pandemic figures. Thailand, which is also not imposing new rules, is hoping for around five million Chinese tourists this year, less than half the number who came in 2019.

Tourism accounted for nearly 20 percent of Thailand's national income before the pandemic, with China its largest source of foreign tourists. "This is an opportunity to restore our economic situation and recover from losses we suffered for nearly three years," Thai Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul Anutin said Thursday. —AFP



People walk down a street in the Chinatown section of Yokohama, Kanagawa prefecture, south of Tokyo. —AFP photos



A general view shows a street in the Chinatown section of Yokohama, Kanagawa prefecture, south of Tokyo on January 7, 2023.



People walk down a street in the Chinatown section of Yokohama.