

OIA investments in Brazil, Singapore firms pay off

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Investment Authority (OIA) has reported success in its investments in the Singaporean company Rotary and Brazil's Entrevias during 2023. These investments are part of OIA's Future Generations Fund, through which the authority aims to expand its global market investments and strengthen strategic partnerships that yield substantial profits and returns. Additionally, these investments serve to transfer advanced expertise and technologies to local sectors in the sultanate and contribute to attracting foreign investors and capital.

In the tenth quarterly issue of its newsletter *Enjaz and Eejaz* released on Saturday, OIA high-



(Supplied photo)

lighted the significant revenue growth achieved by Rotary. The company's revenues increased 19% in 2023 compared to 2022, driven by execution of large-scale projects in multiple countries and its focus on promising investment opportunities in renewable

energy and petrochemicals.

OIA's investment in Rotary dates back to 2008, when it acquired a 21.4% stake in the company. In 2018, OIA increased its stake to 35% following an agreement with the company's largest shareholder. Rotary is recognised

as a leading provider of integrated engineering and construction services for oil and petrochemical industries in the Asia-Pacific region. Its services include engineering design, procurement, construction, project management and maintenance. It has

major projects in countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, India, China and the Gulf states.

OIA is currently collaborating with Rotary to leverage its global expertise for projects involving OIA companies.

The issue also reported the performance of Entrevias, a company operating the infrastructure sector through investments in toll roads in São Paulo, Brazil. The company experienced notable growth in traffic on the roads it invests in, leading to a 17% increase in revenues in 2023 compared to 2022. This growth facilitated OIA's successful partial divestment from the company, which has yielded substantial returns that will be reinvested in other ventures, following global best practices in such matters.

Royal decree assigns specialities to finance, economy ministries

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued Royal Decree No 36/2024 on Thursday assigning some specialities to the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economy.

Article (1) stipulates that the texts of clauses No 6 and 7 of Annex 1 attached to Royal Decree No 94/2020 on establishing the Ministry of Economy and defining its specialisations and endorsing its organisational structure will be replaced with the following texts:
6 - Studying the proposals submitted by units of the State's Administrative Apparatus and other public legal persons regarding development projects in terms of importance and priority of their implementation.
7 - Endorsing five-year plans

and submitting these, after coordinating with the Ministry of Finance, to the Council of Ministers for approval.

Article (2) states that a new clause numbered '4-bis' will be attached to Annex No 1 of Royal Decree No 91/2022 defining the specialisations of the Ministry of Finance and approving its organisational structure. The new clause reads as follows:
'4-bis: Endorsing the annual developmental budget after the approval of the Council of Ministers.'

Article (3) cancels all that contradicts this decree or contravenes its provisions.

Article (4) states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

ONA

Muscat airport welcomes six new international airlines in 2024

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In a major boost to its global connectivity, Muscat International Airport has announced the addition of six new international airlines in 2024. This strategic expansion by Oman Airports

marks a significant milestone in enhancing passenger traffic and reinforcing Oman's position as a pivotal regional hub.

Sheikh Aiman bin Ahmed al Hosni, CEO of Oman Airports, confirmed that the airport has successfully attracted six new international airlines this year. Four

of these airlines have already commenced operations, while two more are expected to start flights later in the year. He emphasised ongoing efforts to explore new markets and evaluate opportunities for launching direct flights through both the national carrier and other airlines.

In 2023, Oman Airports attracted five new airlines, including two from Europe and three from other regions. This year, the focus is on expanding direct flights from European markets to Oman and enhancing the 'transit' market, which facilitates travel between Europe and Asia. This

growing market is increasingly competitive; it is anticipated that the number of European tourists arriving in Oman will exceed 500,000 by the end of 2024.

Muscat airport is currently served by 36 airlines, connecting Oman to over 80 regional and international destinations.



02
4-day Dhofar International Film Festival kicks off today



16
R Madhavan on the re-release of *Rehna Hain Tere Dil Mein*

WHERE FINANCE LEADERS CONVERGE.

BUSINESS TODAY OMAN CFO FORUM

17 Sept 2024 Sheraton Oman Hotel Muscat

Support Partners

College of Banking and Financial Studies
CA INDIA
Muscat Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India
ACCA Think Ahead
Oman Banks Association
OMAN AMERICAN BUSINESS COUNCIL
Strategic Partners
Driving Innovation Partner
Associate Partner
Insurance Partner
Digital Advertising Partner
Integrated Communications Partner
Organised By
INTERACTIVE apex
MUSCAT DAILY

The Business Today CFO Forum 2024 brings together top finance executives, industry experts, and thought leaders for insightful discussions and knowledge exchange. The forum aims to empower CFOs to drive innovation, navigate complexities, unlock sustainable growth opportunities in today's dynamic business environment, and honor outstanding achievers.

FOCUS AREAS

- Enhancing strategic planning & decision-making for competitive advantage
- Building resilience & adaptability in finance operations and strategies
- Fostering innovation & leadership in finance for long-term success
- Embracing data analytics, AI & automation to drive operational efficiency & performance
- Integrating ESG factors & advancing sustainable finance initiatives
- Navigating regulatory compliance challenges & evolving market trends
- Strengthening risk management practices in a dynamic business landscape
- Inspiring talent development & enhancing In Country Value (ICV)

BUSINESS TODAY CFO AWARDS 2024

The Awards will honour CFOs who have demonstrated exceptional performance, finance teams that have achieved remarkable results, and initiatives that have made significant contributions to their organizations and the broader financial community besides the exceptional financial technology solutions.

The winners will be prominently featured in a special, dedicated **Top 50 CFOs** edition of BT, showcasing their exceptional achievements and contributions to the world of finance.

روية عمان 2024

#OmanCFO2024

www.bt-cfoforum.com Follow us on

AI drives improvement in education: Experts

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Experts across academia are affirming that artificial intelligence (AI) significantly enhances the quality and advancement of university-level education. To fully leverage these benefits for students and faculty, it is crucial to review and establish quality standards ensuring the effectiveness and appropriateness of AI applications in higher education.

Dr Fatma Abdullah Amer al Maqbali, Dean of Postgraduate Studies, Scientific Research and Innovation at University of Technology and Applied Sciences, highlighted AI's benefits in education. She noted that AI can improve students' study skills, facilitate knowledge acquisition and enhance self-learning, emphasising its applications could support students in analysing research, provide immediate feedback on performance and help correct errors. Most significantly, she informed, AI helps save time.

However, Fatma raised ethical concerns about AI, including po-



Application of AI could support students in analysing research, provide immediate feedback on performance and help correct errors

DR FATMA AL MAQBALI

tential privacy breaches and diminished human interaction, which could impact students' social and emotional development.

Fatma also warned that AI might stifle creativity by promoting standardised learning methods, potentially causing learners to lose their individual



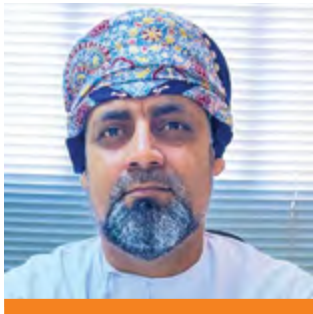
identity and interest in exploration. Moreover, disparities in technology access could widen the gap between students with resources and those without, exacerbating educational inequalities.

Fatma stressed that AI applications in education should be

interactive and user-friendly, with intuitive interfaces and tools that foster engagement. Continuous evaluation within AI systems is essential to track and improve student performance, and transparency and accountability in AI decisions are crucial. Additionally, AI sys-

tems should integrate seamlessly with existing learning management systems and curricula, accommodating diverse student needs, including those with disabilities.

According to Dr Muammar bin Ali al Toobi, an expert in AI, the digital age has introduced



Excessive reliance on AI could undermine students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and introduce algorithmic biases

DR ALI SAID AL MATARI

new challenges, particularly with 'generative AI' systems. These challenges include ethical issues related to content creation and intellectual property rights.

Toobi emphasised the importance of developing ethical guidelines for AI use to ensure educational quality and to ad-

dress these challenges effectively.

Dr Ali Said al Matari, a mathematics teacher at A'Sharqiyah University, highlighted the challenge of academic cheating in the context of AI. The technology's ability to generate ready-made content complicates verifying academic originality. He warned that excessive reliance on AI could undermine students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills, introduce algorithmic biases, and raise concerns about privacy and data confidentiality.

Matari observed the need for new assessment methods aligned with AI use and strategies that educate students on responsible technology use. He suggested leveraging AI to enhance linguistic and technical skills while adhering to ethical standards and academic integrity. He also stressed the importance of training programmes for students and faculty to effectively utilise AI tools and adapt to technological changes, maximising AI's educational benefits.



'Marhaba Dhofar' event unveiled

Our Correspondent
Salalah

In an effort to woo visitors, Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) will soon host a series of events called 'Marhaba Dhofar' - or 'Welcome to Dhofar'. These events are designed to attract tourists from both regional and international markets.

Announcing 'Marhaba Dhofar', Haitham bin Mohammed al Ghassani, Director General of Tourism Promotion in the ministry, said the events will see wide participation from tourism sector partners within Oman and



The events aim to strengthen cooperation in tourism between Oman and Saudi Arabia and highlight the unique offerings of Dhofar

HAITHAM AL GHASSANI

their counterparts from Saudi Arabia.

The series aims to strengthen cooperation in tourism between Oman and Saudi Arabia and highlight the unique offerings of Dhofar, including the sarb season and winter tourism.

'Marhaba Dhofar' is expected to attract 50 tourism companies and 15 prominent media professionals from Saudi Arabia. The programme will feature discussions, bilateral business meetings between Omani and Saudi tourism companies, and visits to key tourist sites and landmarks in the governorate.

4-day Dhofar film fest kicks off today

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Dhofar International Film Festival will kick off on Sunday at Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment under the patronage of H H Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar.

The festival will screen 195 films from 18 countries, including 31 entries from Oman.

Organised by Oman Film Society, the four-day festival aims to promote film culture in Oman, especially among the youth, and support the growth of the film industry in the sultanate. "It is part of our broader plan to enhance the cinematic movement in Oman through festivals in seven governorates, with Dhofar now being included," an official from the festival's media committee stated.

Held under the slogan 'Be Part of the Show', the festival seeks to foster youth initiatives that encourage creativity and provide job opportunities. It also aims to develop the talent of aspiring filmmakers and promote the Governorate of Dhofar.



A still from Salah al Hadhrami's 'Sand Girl'



The festival will honour eminent guests who have made significant contributions to cinema

over the years.

Several films from Oman, including the documentary *Sand Girl* directed by Salah al Hadhrami, *Ramad* by Salman al Khalili and *Al Shajara al Maamra* by Abdullah al Battashi, will be screened.

In addition to film screenings, the festival will feature training sessions in cinematic arts conducted by experts. Participants will have the opportunity to engage with artists and learn about their creative journeys. The fes-

tival will also include visits and tours to showcase the beauty and natural splendour of Dhofar, highlighting its potential as a location for film production.

The festival will present six awards - Best Omani Feature Film, Best International Feature Film, Best Omani Documentary, Best International Documentary, and jury awards for both feature and documentary films. The jury will include experts, artists and film professionals from Oman and abroad.

ESTABLISHED SINCE 1920

OMAN'S 1st EXCHANGE

WE EXCHANGE TRUST

WE BUY & SELL GOLD & SILVER

1 gm to 1kg 24ct gold bars available at best international rate.

WORLD WIDE REMITTANCE

Download & NOW!

PURSHOTTAM KANJI EXCHANGE

شركة برشوتم كنجي للمصارفة

+968 91787829 | 99549289

www.pkexchange.com

مستشفى الحياة الدولي

AL HAYAT INTERNATIONAL HOSPITAL

Quality Care Without Compromise

NEW VISA MEDICAL SYSTEM "IGRA"

NOW AVAILABLE SAT - THU 8:00 AM-10:30 PM

SCAN FOR LOCATION

SCAN TO WHATSAPP

MOH NO.- 1640238/24

2200 4040

9551 0632

9241 3639

Send your comments to muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om

Oman to observe International Literacy Day today

Muscat - The sultanate will join the global celebration of International Literacy Day on Sunday focusing this year on 'Promoting Multilingual Education: Literacy for Mutual Understanding and Peace'. The theme underscores the power of multilingual education in bridging cultural divides and fostering harmony.

Ministry of Education is at the forefront of this initiative, launching several programmes aimed at enhancing literacy across the nation. These efforts include developing specialised curricula for literacy classes, training Omani educators and providing certificates that help students transition into the adult education system. Literacy classrooms are monitored by specialised supervisors, and student registration is facilitated through an online portal.

Among the ministry's notable projects is the Learning Villages Programme, which tackles illiteracy in villages by creating educational hubs. Since 2004, the programme has reached 30 villages and 2,438 students.



Get more returns on High Yield Savings Account

With Al Rifaa Privilege Account

Visit your nearest branch today



الأعمال المصرفية الحصرية
PRIVILEGE BANKING

24/7 973 | www.bankdhofar.com

bankdhofar

Scan to learn more



30% of factories to be made smart facilities by 2026

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In a significant step towards modernisation of its industrial sector, Oman's Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) has launched a special project to advance the adoption of cutting-edge technologies and Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) techniques in the country.

Christened as 'Smart Production Factories', the project has been taken up for execution in collaboration with the Gulf Organization for Industrial Consulting (GOIC), an official from MoCIIP stated, adding that the project's goal "is to facilitate the integration of advanced technologies and 4IR innovations into Omani factories".

The first phase of this involves a comprehensive field evaluation of participating factories based on a specific set of criteria derived from the Smart Industry Readiness Index (SIRI). This evaluation matrix is structured around three core pillars, encompassing 16 dimensions that assess each factory's readiness for 4IR technology adoption and provide tailored recommendations for improvement, the official elaborated.

The initial phase of the project will focus on enabling five out of 20 selected factories to adopt 4IR applications and undergo digital transformation throughout 2024. By 2026, the target is to transform 30% of Omani factories into smart factories.

A specialised team from



The project's goal is to facilitate the integration of advanced technologies and 4IR innovations into Omani factories

GOIC, including a certified evaluator from the International Centre for Industrial Transformation, will collaborate with the MoCIIP's team to conduct site visits and evaluate the factories based on the SIRI criteria.

This initiative is a key component of the Industrial Strategy 2040, designed to enhance the competitiveness of Oman's industrial sector by facilitating the transition to smart production facilities. The project aims to modernise technology, introduce new production lines, reduce costs, increase efficiency, and

create specialised job opportunities aligned with educational outcomes.

The ministry, the official said, encourages all factories interested in digital transformation to participate, so as to improve their operational processes, competitiveness and overall efficiency.

MoCIIP identified five critical challenges currently hindering the industrial sector's growth, the ministry official informed. These include low adoption of advanced technologies, absence of clear standards for foundational transformation, limited availability of development solutions for factories, shortage of specialists to assess factory status, and a workforce that is largely unskilled in modern technologies.

To tackle these issues, MoCIIP has outlined a series of planned actions, he said, adding that these include evaluation of both new and existing factories.

Oman calls for global cooperation to boost Africa's development

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Sultanate of Oman has underscored the critical need for strengthening international partnerships to support Africa's development agenda, during the second annual session of the Unicef Executive Board for 2024 held in New York, US.

In a joint statement delivered by Shununa Salim al Habshi, the Sultanate of Oman's representative on the Unicef Executive Board, Oman - on behalf of several countries - praised Unicef's strategy for supporting 'Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want' and its implementation plan for the second decade from 2024 to 2033.

She highlighted the significance of 'Africa's Agenda for



Children 2040' and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

Shununa emphasised that these initiatives represent a crucial step towards enhancing partnerships between governments, civil society, and the private sector, aiming for a

sustainable impact on the lives of children across Africa. She called on the international community to fulfill its responsibility in supporting the African continent, pointing out the importance of international cooperation to address decades of neglect.

Acknowledging Africa's young population as a valuable partner for Unicef, Shununa commended the achievements of African countries in improving healthcare, empowering women, and protecting children from violence. She concluded by stressing the importance of continuing support for Africa's children, asserting "We must not fail to realise their aspirations."

Unicef Executive Director Catherine Russell affirmed "We can do it", acknowledging that "it is a long road ahead of us".

4th edition of Tour of Salalah to kick off today

Salalah - The fourth edition of the Salalah International Cycling Tour will kick off on Sunday, and will run through September 11.

This year's event - organised by the Dhofar Municipality in collaboration with the Oman Cycling Association and the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth - has drawn 15 international teams from Asia, Africa and Europe.

The tour includes four stages of varying distances, with the first stage scheduled for Sunday and the final stage for Wednesday.

The race is now part of the International Cycling Union calendar.

Oman to instal its tallest flagpole to mark 54th National Day celebration

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman is all set to have the country's tallest flagpole on November 18. In celebration of the 54th Oman National Day, the flagpole is set to be unveiled near the Ministries District in Al Khuwair.

The flagpole, currently under construction, has already reached 50 metres in height, with an additional 76 metres to go, bringing its total height to 126 metres upon completion. This towering structure is scheduled to be dedicated just in time for National Day celebrations.

Unveiled in early 2024 by the Muscat Municipality, the flagpole project is being financed by Jindal Shadeed Iron and Steel, one of the region's largest iron



and steel producers. The flagpole will be Oman's tallest man-made structure, surpassing a 40-storey building with 135 tonnes of steel going into its installation.

The national flag of Oman will measure 18 metres in width and 31.5 metres in length and will feature a warning light for aircraft.

Surrounding the Al Khuwair Square, spanning 18,000sqm, will have a variety of recreational facilities such as green areas, palm trees, walking and cycling tracks, a skate park, outdoor art exhibition zone, and designated sports areas.

Public amenities will include restrooms and a parking lot for 107 vehicles.

Earlier Harssha Shetty, CEO of Jindal Shadeed had commented on the project, saying that Jindal Shadeed has been a proud contributor to Oman's green industrialisation for 15 years, and "this flagpole is a symbol of our dedication to the nation's growth".

إعلان مناقصة

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

SOHAR Port and Freezone invites Tenderers to the following tender

تدعو شركة ميناء صحر والمنطقة الحرة الموردين للمشاركة في المناقصة أدناه

No. / رقم	Tender Ref. / الرقم المناقصة	Tender Title / عنوان المناقصة	Tender Fee OMR / الرسوم
1	SI/PC 2024 - 034	Mangrove and Port Environmental Baseline Survey for SOHAR Port	105

• لنشمل رسوم المناقصة المذكورة أعلاه ضريبة القيمة المضافة وفهرتها 20.

• بإمكان مقدمي العطاءات طلب استلام وثائق المناقصة إلكترونياً ابتداء من يوم الخميس الموافق ٢٠٢٤/٩/٥ (الساعة ٩:٠٠ صباحاً) وحتى يوم الخميس الموافق ٢٠٢٤/٩/١٩ (الساعة ٤:٠٠ مساءً).

• على مقدمي العطاءات اتباع الإجراءات والخطوات التالية للحصول على مستندات المناقصة إلكترونياً.

الخطوة الأولى: يجب على مقدمي العطاءات سداد رسوم المناقصة وفقاً للتفاصيل الملصقة أدناه مع ذكر رقم المناقصة في اتصال التحويل.

Account Name / اسم الحساب	SOHAR Industrial Port Co شركة ميناء صحر الصناعي
Account Number / رقم الحساب	٤١٠١-٠٠٢٩٧٠-٥٠٠
Bank Name / اسم البنك	Oman Arab Bank SAOC - Main Br بنك عمان العربي، شارع عجم - الفرع الرئيسي
SWIFT / رمز التحويل	OMARIOMRUXXX

Note: Bank transfers is the only mode of payment accepted
ملاحظة: التحويل البنكي، في الطريقة الوحيدة المقبولة للدفع

Step 2:
Tenderers to send the following documents:

- A request for the electronic tender documents Scanned bank transfer
- The firm's commercial registration documents
- All shall be communicated to the following e-mail address:
spc.procurement@soharportandfreezone.com

الخطوة الثانية:
يأتين على مقدمي العطاءات تقديم المستندات التالية:

- طلب الحصول على نسخة إلكترونية من مستندات المناقصة
- نسخة من إصاال التحويل البنكي
- أوراق التسجيل التجاري للشركة على أن يتم إرسالها إلى:
spc.procurement@soharportandfreezone.com

Step 3:
Tenderers will receive the electronic Tender Document by e-mail.

- SOHAR reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reasons.
- All SMEs are requested to provide their RYADAH Card along with the required documents.
- For any clarification regarding the tenders please send an e-mail to:
spc.procurement@soharportandfreezone.com

الخطوة الثالثة:
سوف يتسلم مقدمي العطاءات نسخة إلكترونية من مستندات المناقصة عبر البريد الإلكتروني.

- يحظر لشركة ميناء صحر والمنطقة الحرة قبول أو رفض أي مورد بدون التمسح عن الأساس.
- يطلب على جميع المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة تقديم بطاقة ريادة إلى جانب مستندات المناقصة.
- في حال وجود أي أسئلة أو استفسارات تتعلق بالمناقصة الرجاء التواصل مع: عبر البريد الإلكتروني:
spc.procurement@soharportandfreezone.com

It all starts here

+968 2685 2700 | soharportandfreezone.om

Moody's affirms ratings of 5 government-related companies in Oman

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Global credit rating agency Moody's Ratings affirmed the corporate family ratings (CFR) of five Omani government-related issuers (GRIs) on Friday. The outlook for four GRIs was maintained as stable, while the outlook for one government-related entity was upgraded from stable to positive.

Moody's affirmed the ratings of the following five government-related entities: Dhofar Integrated Services Company (DISC), Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC), Oman Power and Water Procurement Company (OPWP), Nama Electricity Distribution Company (NEDC), and Nama Electricity Supply Company (NESC).

This rating action by Moody's is a direct consequence of the recent rating action on the Government of Oman, where its long-term issuer and long-term senior unsecured ratings were affirmed at Ba1, with the outlook upgraded to positive from stable.

The affirmation of the ratings reflects the close interlinkage of DISC, NEDC, NESC, OETC, and OPWP with the sovereign as providers of essential electricity services and their significant exposure to the Omani government in the form of subsidies (OETC, NEDC, and OPWP being



Moody's has affirmed the ratings of Dhofar Integrated Services Company, Oman Electricity Transmission Company, Oman Power and Water Procurement Company, Nama Electricity Distribution Company, and Nama Electricity Supply Company

indirectly exposed),' Moody's said in a statement.

OPWP's outlook was upgraded to positive from stable, while the outlooks for DISC, OETC, NEDC, and NESC were maintained as stable, according to Moody's.

'The positive outlook for OPWP is aligned with the positive outlook on the government rating. OPWP is the monopoly buyer of electricity and water from licensed production facilities in Oman and also performs government agency-like functions in certain activities, such as

future electricity planning,' the rating agency noted.

'The stable outlook on DISC, NEDC, NESC, and OETC reflects our view that, absent sustained improvements in their respective liquidity profiles, we do not foresee further upward pressure on their ratings. The liquidity of DISC, NEDC, and NESC remains weak due to their continued reliance on short-term debt funding,' Moody's added.

According to Moody's, the ratings of DISC, NEDC, NESC, OETC, and OPWP are supported by (1) the stable and transparent

regulatory frameworks for the electricity and water sectors and the independence of the regulator; (2) the cost recovery mechanisms of the regulatory frameworks; (3) the low business risk profile of their activities; and (4) their respective monopoly positions in Oman.

Moody's pointed out that OPWP's rating could be upgraded if Oman's sovereign rating were upgraded, provided there is no material deterioration in the company's operating and financial performance or its liquidity profile.



Total investment in Salalah Free Zone reaches RO4.6bn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The total cumulative investment in Salalah Free Zone has surpassed RO4.6bn as of June 2024, with the zone attracting over RO68mn in new investments during the first half of the year, according to the CEO of Salalah Free Zone.

In a statement to Oman News Agency, Dr Ali bin Mohammed Tabuk, CEO of Salalah Free Zone, noted that 143 companies are currently operating in the zone, with 64 projects already in operation. Industrial projects account for 57% of the total, logistics projects make up 15%, and commercial projects comprise 28%.

Dr Tabuk highlighted that 13 new projects were launched in the first six months of 2024. These include initiatives in frankincense derivative production, packaging, air conditioning manufacturing, textile production, and the import-export and repackaging of potassium fertilisers, among other activities.

As a subsidiary of the Asyad Group, Salalah Free Zone plays

a crucial role in supporting the local and national economy, attracting investments across various vital sectors. Dr Tabuk emphasised that the zone's appeal to investors is driven by its numerous incentives, strategic location, and competitive advantages. Its proximity to key markets in the Middle East, the

143 companies are currently operating in the Salalah Free Zone, with 64 projects already in operation

Indian subcontinent, and East Africa reduces both time and costs for businesses operating in the zone.

Dr Tabuk explained that the zone hosts a diverse range of projects, from petrochemical and mineral processing, including limestone and gypsum, to the growing food and pharmaceutical sectors.

Additionally, the logistics,

warehousing, and import-export activities benefit from the zone's location near the Port of Salalah, a key regional hub. Manufacturing and assembly operations, ranging from auto spare parts to consumer goods, also thrive within the zone.

To support investors and businesses, the Salalah Free Zone offers a range of services, including land, warehouse, and office leasing. The zone also provides 'one-stop' services to simplify procedures such as permit issuance, visas, investor registration, and license applications. These services, available through the Invest Easy system, include the issuance of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) cards, enhancing the overall business environment in the Dhofar region.

In collaboration with other free and economic zones under Asyad Group, Salalah Free Zone plays a pivotal role in attracting foreign direct investment. The zone offers an ideal platform for businesses to expand into international markets, supported by Asyad's comprehensive logistics solutions.

Madayn records 30% growth in investment requests

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The industrial cities affiliated with the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) have seen significant growth in their digital indicators, including requests and the investment volume of existing projects, by the end of the first half of 2024.

Eng Dawood bin Salim al Hadabi, CEO of Madayn, confirmed that the number of investment applications submitted to Madayn increased by 30% during the first six months of 2024, reaching 184 applications compared to 141 applications during the same period in 2023.

In a statement to the Oman News Agency, he noted that the total volume of investments in all industrial cities affiliated with Madayn amounted to RO7.6bn as of the end of June 2024, up from approximately RO7.4bn at the end of 2023. This represents a growth rate of 2.3% and an absolute increase of RO177mn in



total investment.

Hadabi said that the volume of added industrial investments amounted to about RO151mn, while the volume of added non-industrial investments totaled approximately RO62mn. Sohar Industrial City saw the highest increase in the total volume of investments compared to other industrial cities, with an increase of RO53mn during the same period this year.

Regarding the investment projects in the industrial cities affiliated with Madayn, Haddabi explained that the number of in-

vestment contracts until the end of the first half of 2024 was 2,310 contracts, reflecting a 0.65% increase compared to the end of 2023. Of these contracts, 70% are industrial investments, 12.6% are commercial investments, 7.3% are service investments, 4.8% are technical investments, and 5.3% are in other fields.

Hadabi also noted that the number of workers in localised investments is about 55,000, compared to nearly 50,000 workers at the end of 2022, representing a 10% increase.

OPEC+ members extend additional voluntary output cuts for two months

Vienna, Austria – The OPEC+ countries have agreed to extend their additional voluntary oil production cuts of 2.2mn barrels per day for two months until the end of November 2024.

This came as these countries that previously announced additional voluntary cuts in April and November 2023, including the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria, and Oman, held a virtual meeting on Thursday, during which the eight member countries emphasised their collective resolve to ensure full compliance with the voluntary production adjustments.

In recognition of this strengthened resolve and renewed firm commitment, the eight participating countries have agreed to extend their additional voluntary production cuts of 2.2mn barrels per day for two months until the end of November 2024, after which these cuts will be gradually phased out on a monthly basis



starting December 1, 2024, with the flexibility to pause or reverse the adjustments as necessary.

The overproducing countries also reconfirmed their commitment that the entire overproduced volume will be fully compensated for by September 2025.

In August 2024, Saudi Arabia, Russia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Algeria, and Oman, conducted two ministerial discussions with Iraq and

Kazakhstan. Both countries were urged to achieve full conformity and compensate for the overproduced volumes since January 2024.

Iraq and Kazakhstan committed to engage with secondary sources to outline their plans for production adjustments to achieve compliance and meet the compensation schedules they submitted to the OPEC Secretariat on 22nd August.

The group includes Iraq and

Kazakhstan, who have overproduced since January 2024, but have strongly reaffirmed their commitment to the agreement and to their compensation schedules submitted to the OPEC Secretariat as agreed under the 53rd meeting of the JMMC on April 3, 2024.

Iraq and Kazakhstan reinforced their commitment during the OPEC Secretary General's visits in late August, conducted in coordination with Saudi Arabia's Minister of Energy and the Chairman of the OPEC and non-OPEC Ministerial Meetings. During those visits, the OPEC Secretariat organised workshops with the secondary sources where both countries provided extensive details on the immediate and concrete measures they are implementing to achieve full conformity with the required production levels and to meet their compensation schedules for August and for September.

WAM

Muzn Islamic Banking reinforces commitment to sharia'a compliance

Muscat – Muzn Islamic Banking, the Islamic banking window of National Bank of Oman (NBO), conducted its second Shari'a Supervisory Board (SSB) meeting of 2024. This event gathered sharia'a board members, reaffirming Muzn's unwavering commitment to sharia'a compliance in its financial solutions.

Present at the meeting were the esteemed members of the Shari'a Supervisory Board,



chaired by Mufti Dr Muhammad Zubair Usmani, accompanied by H H Al-Sayyid Dr

Adham al Said, Sheikh Dr AbdulRahman al-Saadi, and Sheikh Dr Saleh Nasser al Kharusi.

Amal Bahwan, Chairperson of the NBO Board of Directors, and Padmanabhan Ananthan, a

member of the NBO Board of Directors also attended the meeting.

Salima I Marzooqi, Chief Islamic Banking Officer at NBO, said, "Cultivating the principles of sharia'a in our financial solutions is at the core of Muzn's mission. Our second Shari'a Supervisory Board meeting of the year 2024 signifies our enduring dedication to fostering the Islamic finance sector's growth in Oman. By collaborating with our esteemed Shari'a Supervisory Board members, we are actively

shaping the future of Islamic banking, ensuring our products and services align with the highest standards of sharia'a compliance. We remain dedicated to delivering seamless solutions whilst always putting our customers' values first."

Muzn stands at the forefront of the Islamic banking sector, offering competitive and qualitative financial solutions that align with sharia'a values.

US unemployment falls to 4.2%, labour market cools in August

Josh Schafer

The US economy added fewer jobs than expected in August while the unemployment rate ticked lower.

Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics released Friday showed the labor market added 142,000 non-farm payroll jobs in August, fewer additions than the 165,000 expected by economists.

Meanwhile, the unemployment rate fell to 4.2% from 4.3% in July. August job additions came in higher than the revised 89,000 added in July. Overall, revisions to the June and July labour reports showed the US economy added 86,000 fewer jobs than initially reported in those months. Wage growth, an important measure for gauging inflation pressures, rose to 3.8% year over year, up from a 3.6% annual gain in July. On a monthly basis, wages increased 0.4%, higher than the 0.2% seen the month prior.

Capital Economics chief North America economist Paul Ashworth wrote in a note to clients that the August jobs report is "still consistent with an economy experiencing a soft landing rather than plummeting into recession."

Friday's report comes amid an ongoing debate over how severely the Fed should cut interest rates at its meeting later this



US labour market added 142,000 non-farm payroll jobs in August

US wage growth, an important measure for gauging inflation pressures, rose to 3.8% year over year in August, up from a 3.6% annual gain in July. On a monthly basis, wages increased 0.4%, higher than the 0.2% seen the month prior

month. During a late August speech, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said the cooling in the labor market has been "unmistakeable" and added that the

central bank does not "seek or welcome further cooling in labor market conditions."

Data released earlier this week indicated further signs of slowing

in the job market. ADP's National Employment Report for August showed private payrolls in the US added 99,000 jobs during the month, well below economists'

estimates for 145,000 and fewer than the 122,000 jobs added in July. The August data marked the fifth straight month payroll additions had slowed from the month prior. Meanwhile, data out Wednesday showed July ended with the lowest amount of job openings in the US labour market since January 2021. Still, some economists argue

that signs of strength within Friday's jobs report are enough to prompt the Fed to cut interest rates by 25 basis points at its upcoming September meeting rather than making a larger 50 basis point cut.

"The overall solid gain in August payrolls, the retreat in the unemployment rate, and pop in average hourly earnings are not likely enough for Fed officials to start the rate cutting cycle with 50bps reduction on September 18," Nationwide chief economist Kathy Bostjancic wrote in a note to clients on Friday.

But Bostjancic added that the downward revisions to payroll additions in prior months, as well as current job gains coming from a narrow group of sectors, "underscore that the labor market is losing steam rather quickly." This, Bostjancic argues, could open the door for the Fed to cut rates by 50 basis points at one of its meetings this year.

The market agrees, with traders pricing in more than 100 basis points of cuts from the Fed this year, per Bloomberg data. As of Friday morning, markets were pricing in a 45% chance the Fed cuts rates by 50 basis points by the end of its September meeting, up from a 30% chance seen a week prior per the CME Fed-Watch Tool. (Source: Yahoo Finance)



Eurozone Q2 GDP growth revised lower

Brussels, Belgium - Gross domestic product (GDP) in both the eurozone and the European Union (EU) grew 0.2% quarter-on-quarter in April-June, slightly lower than initial estimates of a 0.3% rise, according to final reading released on Friday.

The figure eased from 0.3% growth in the first quarter, Eurostat data showed.

Poland (up 1.5%) recorded the largest GDP growth in the second quarter compared to the previous period, followed by Greece (up 1.1%) and the Netherlands (up 1.0%). GDP contracted in Ireland (by 1.0%), Latvia (by 0.9%) and Austria (by 0.4%).

Government spending rose 0.6% while household consumption ticked down 0.1% and investment dropped 2.2% in the same period.

On an annual basis, GDP growth was confirmed at 0.6% in the euro area and 0.8% in the EU in second quarter of this year.

The eurozone represents member states that use the single currency - the euro - while the EU includes all member countries of the bloc.

Agencies

India's foreign exchange reserves reach \$684bn

New Delhi, India - India's foreign exchange reserves increased by \$2.299bn, reaching a fresh record high of \$683.987bn, during the week that ended on August 30, according to data released by the Reserve Bank of India on Friday. The previous record high was \$681.688bn.

India's reserves have been on an upward trend for some time. In 2024 alone, they have risen by over \$60bn cumulatively. This buffer of foreign exchange reserves helps insulate domestic economic activity from global shocks.

According to the latest data from the RBI, India's foreign currency assets (FCA), the largest component of forex reserves, rose by \$1.485bn to \$599.037bn.

Gold reserves during the week increased by \$862mn, bringing the total to \$61.859bn. As per estimates, India's foreign exchange reserves are now sufficient to cover about a year of projected imports.

In the calendar year 2023, India added about \$58bn to its foreign exchange reserves. In



contrast, India's forex reserves saw a cumulative decline of \$71bn in 2022.

Forex reserves are assets held by a nation's central bank or monetary authority. These are generally held in reserve currencies, typically the US dollar and, to a lesser extent, the Euro, Japanese yen, and pound sterling. The RBI closely monitors the foreign exchange markets and intervenes only to maintain orderly market conditions, aiming to contain excessive volatility in the exchange rate without reference to any pre-determined target level or band.

The RBI frequently intervenes in the market through liquidity management, including the sale of dollars, to prevent a steep depreciation of the rupee.

ANI

China-Africa cooperation gains momentum

Beijing, China - China-Africa economic and trade cooperation continues to gather momentum driven by a slew of concrete plans unveiled at the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing.

During the summit, China said that, in the next three years, the country will work with Africa to implement 10 partnership actions for modernisation to deepen China-Africa cooperation and spearhead the Global South modernisation.

The 10 partnership actions cover areas of mutual learning among civilizations, trade prosperity, industrial chain cooperation, connectivity, development cooperation, health, agriculture and livelihoods, people-to-people and cultural exchanges, green development and common security.

Mwangi Wachira, former World Bank economist and advisor to the Kenyan government, said in an interview with Xinhua that he has long taken note of the China-Africa industrial chain cooperation.

Wachira expected Africa to expand its supply chains to feed factories across the continent.

He envisaged a future in which many of these factories would feature collaboration between Chinese and African en-



Chinese President Xi Jinping (front) delivers a speech during the opening ceremony of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation summit in Beijing

In the next three years, China will work with Africa to implement 10 partnership actions for modernisation to deepen China-Africa cooperation and spearhead the Global South modernisation

trepreneurs, as well as governments, producing consumer goods for the up-and-coming African middle class.

Zhang Shaogang, deputy di-

rector of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, attended the eighth Conference of Chinese and African Entrepreneurs held in Beijing on

Friday. He said that China and Africa's industrial and supply chains complement each other strongly, offering vast opportunities for cooperation.

"The potential for China-Africa cooperation in emerging fields such as the digital economy, green development and artificial intelligence is immense," he said.

Janson Huang, chairman of the Sino-Tanzania Industrial

Park, who also attended the conference, said that promoting the integration of industrial and supply chains between China and Africa will bring significant economic benefits to both sides.

"African countries can learn from China's experience in manufacturing and technology, and enhance their own industrialisation and production capacity," Huang said, adding that "deeper integration of supply chains will help reduce logistics costs, increase trade efficiency, and promote African products in the global market."

He also expected China-Africa cooperation to drive infrastructure development in Africa, attract more investment, and create more jobs locally.

"Modernisation is a vision to be achieved, but we need to put in place a whole synergy of players and stakeholders from different countries with a wealth of experience," said Tchicaya Nebert Gilmart Bienvenu, director of cooperation under the Ministry of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and Crafts of the Republic of Congo.

"China has a wealth of experience, and putting it together with that of Africa could produce something interesting, even very interesting," said the director. Xinhua

Oil prices sink to nine-month low amid global economic uncertainty

London, UK - Crude oil prices fell for the second consecutive trading day on Friday amid weak economic data from both China and the US this week.

The WTI futures price dropped below \$70 per barrel for the first time since December 2023, while Brent futures slumped to under \$74 per barrel, a level not seen in nine months.

Both benchmark oil futures have plunged by more than 10%

since their recent highs on 27 August.

Risk-aversion sentiment has also contributed to the downward pressure on the oil market, as the Nvidia-led tech selloff caused global markets to tumble on Tuesday.

Investors fled risky assets amid rising recession fears, with the CBOE Volatility Index, known as the market's fear gauge, spiking above 20 - the

highest level in a month.

In late August, oil prices surged due to escalating military conflict between Iran and Israel, alongside production disruptions in Libya, which also fuelled the upsurge.

However, concerns of a wider regional war have eased as recession fears overshadowed geopolitical tensions, and a potential resolution to Libya's dispute is expected to restore its oil

output.

Several disappointing data releases from the US have sparked concerns about deteriorating economic conditions and a weakening oil demand outlook.

The world's largest economy reported a weaker-than-expected Manufacturing Purchasing Manager Index (PMI), indicating that factory activity contracted for the fourth consecutive month in August.

On Wednesday, the JOLTS job openings data also revealed that the number of available jobs fell to its lowest level since January 2021.

The worsening economic data has significantly increased the likelihood of a deeper rate cut by the Federal Reserve next month, causing the yield on 2-year and 10-year US government bonds to briefly reverse their inversion for the second

time since 2022.

Shorter-term government bond yields are more sensitive to imminent interest rate movements.

Historically, an economic recession tends to occur when the spread between the two benchmark US government bond yields returns to positive territory after an inversion.

Furthermore, China, the world's largest oil importer, re-

ported softer-than-expected Manufacturing PMI over the weekend, indicating that factory production remained in contraction for the third straight month in August.

China's Caixin Services PMI, released on Wednesday, also came in lower than expected, suggesting the country's economic recovery continues to falter.

(Source: Eurozone.com)

Abraj Energy, OPAL to launch HSE programme

Abraj Energy Services, Oman's leading oil and gas services provider, has announced its partnership with the Oman Energy Association (OPAL) to launch the HSE Practitioner Programme.

The groundbreaking initiative aimed at advancing health, safety, and environmental standards in the energy sector.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been inked by Saif al Hamhami, CEO of Abraj Energy Services, and Mohammed al Naabi, CEO of OPAL.

The collaborative partnership marks a significant step toward enhancing industry standards and aligns with Abraj Energy Services' commitment to fostering in-country value.

By advancing Oman's strategic development priorities, Abraj is dedicated to enhancing local capabilities and contributing to the sustainable growth of Oman's social and economic development, a release stated.

Commenting on the MoU, Abraj CEO Hamhami said, "Our partnership with OPAL reflects our shared commitment to building a safer and more sustainable future for the energy sector. The HSE Practitioner Programme will not only develop skilled professionals but also align with Oman



Vision 2040 by fostering operational excellence and sustainable growth."

OPAL CEO Naabi said that the Oman Energy Association is thrilled to collaborate with Abraj Energy Services on this important initiative. "The MoU signed today highlights our dedication to empowering the next generation of energy professionals with the knowledge and best practices essential for advancing safety and efficiency in our industry."

Over the next 18 months, 32 candidates will receive practical training at Infitech, Abraj's training centre. The programme will focus on providing these future

professionals with the essential skills and knowledge to excel in the energy sector.

The HSE Practitioner Programme aligns with Oman Vision 2040 by preparing future Omani professionals to contribute to the country's economic development, drive innovation, and support sustainability in the energy sector.

Abraj Energy Services is proud to contribute to Oman's strategic objectives and looks forward to

and gas companies in the industry.

These efforts demonstrate our ongoing commitment to developing national talent and enhancing the capabilities of Oman's workforce.

Founded in 2006, Abraj Energy Services is Oman's foremost integrated energy company, offering a comprehensive range of onshore oil and gas field services. With a commitment to excellence, innovation,

Abraj Training Centre has a track record of holding successful training programmes contributing to a well-trained workforce in Oman

the positive impact this program will have on the energy industry and the broader community.

Abraj Training Centre - Infitech - has a proven track record of holding successful training programmes that contribute to a well-trained workforce in Oman. To date, Infitech has completed similar programs for 18 candidates under the OPAL HSE Apprenticeships program and 109 candidates in Electrical and Mechanical Engineering disciplines in collaboration with major oil

and sustainability, Abraj aims to enhance Oman's energy security and contribute to its economic growth.

The Oman Energy Association (OPAL) is a prominent business society in the Sultanate of Oman. An NGO and a non-profit organization focusing on the Energy & Minerals sector, committed to advancing the development of the energy sector in Oman through strategic partnerships, training programs, and knowledge sharing.

OTE announces 'Win big with Chevrolet'



Chevrolet Oman has launched its highly anticipated 'Win Big with Chevrolet' campaign, offering customers a golden opportunity to drive home not just a brand-new Chevrolet but also a chance to win up to RO15,000 in cash prizes.

This campaign is centred on providing outstanding deals across a diverse range of Chevrolet vehicles, each carefully crafted to suit the distinct needs and lifestyles of our customers.

"Whether you're seeking the perfect blend of practicality and style with the Groove, the spacious luxury of the Tahoe for family trips, or the rugged power of the Silverado for off-road excursions, Chevrolet has something extraordinary for every discerning driver," an OTE statement said. Alongside the thrilling raffle, Chevrolet Oman is offering special prices on select models, making now the ideal time to purchase a new vehicle.

For those who prioritise space and luxury, the Chevrolet Tahoe - starting from RO21,699 - delivers a refined and powerful driving experience. It offers engine options of 5.3L/355HP and 6.2L/420HP, a 10-speed automatic transmission, Magnetic

Ride Control, and the class's coolest fridge, capable of cooling down to -5 degrees

For families seeking the ultimate XXXL SUV, the Chevrolet Suburban is designed to accommodate with its expansive 8-seater layout, robust 5.3L/355HP engine, and a suite of premium features, including a 15" Head-Up Display and 12.6" rear-seat entertainment screens.

Starting from RO8,888, the Chevrolet Captiva is a versatile 7-seater offering ample space at an affordable price. It is equipped with modern features like a 10.2" touchscreen with Apple CarPlay

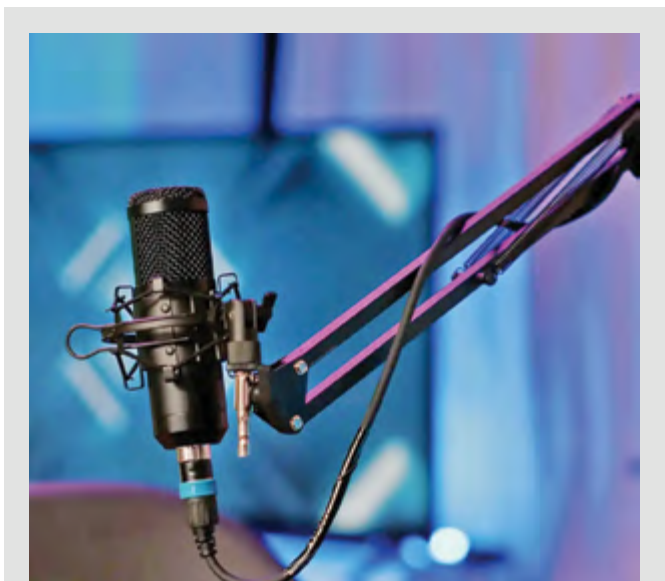
and Android Auto.

The Chevrolet Groove, a sub-compact SUV starting from RO7,559, perfectly balances economy and comfort. It comes with features such as a panoramic sunroof, 6 airbags, and advanced safety technologies like Hill Start Assist and Electronic Stability Control.

Priced from RO17,599*, the Chevrolet Silverado is a true powerhouse, offering engine options up to 6.2L/420HP, a 10-speed automatic transmission, and best-in-class towing capabilities. Redefining urban performance, the Chevrolet Blazer

combines sleek design with strong performance, featuring a 3.6L/310HP engine, 9-speed automatic transmission, and a range of premium amenities, including ventilated leather seats and a panoramic sunroof.

Chevrolet Oman invites all customers to visit their nearest showroom and take advantage of this limited-time offer. Whether you are looking for luxury, power, or practicality, Chevrolet has a vehicle to suit every need. In addition, with the chance to win big, there's never been a better time to purchase a Chevrolet.



BankDhofar begins podcast to promote financial literacy

BankDhofar is proud to announce the launch of a new podcast series in collaboration with Hala FM, marking a significant step toward enhancing financial literacy and raising community awareness about the growing threat of financial fraud.

This initiative aligns with the bank's commitment to empowering customers and fostering a financially informed society.

As the world becomes increasingly digital, financial fraud has emerged as a pressing concern. Recent reports indicate that financial fraud incidents in the Middle East have surged by over 20% in the past two years, with online scams, phishing attacks, and advance fee schemes being the most common. The consequences extend beyond financial loss, eroding trust and disrupting the lives of victims.

Raising awareness is one of the most effective strategies to combat fraud. When individuals are educated about the tactics used by fraudsters, they are better prepared to recognise and prevent potential scams.

The podcast series will debut on Sunday, at 7pm on Hala FM (102.7 FM) with its first episode focused on fraud prevention. Featuring Salim Marzooq al Mushaifri, Unit Head of the Anti-Fraud Department at BankDhofar, the

episode will cover several topics, including 'Understanding Fraud' and 'Common Fraud Tactics.'

'Understanding Fraud' topic will give an overview of what constitutes fraud and why it is a growing threat; while the section on 'Common Fraud Tactics' will give insights into fraudsters' methods, such as phishing, fake websites, and fraudulent calls.

'Practical Tips' will offer advice on protecting personal information, avoiding clicking on suspicious links, and safeguarding against transferring money to unknown entities.

This podcast series exemplifies the power of public-private partnerships in promoting financial literacy. Through collaboration with Hala FM, BankDhofar is reaching a wider audience and making critical fraud prevention information accessible to all.

Awareness campaigns like this are essential in educating the public about financial risks and providing practical guidance on protecting personal information and finances.

BankDhofar urged people to take proactive steps to safeguard their financial well-being. By tuning in to this podcast series, listeners can gain valuable insights and learn how to avoid falling victim to fraud, helping build a more secure and financially savvy community.

Oman International Hospital gets TECNIS PureSee

Oman International Hospital has launched the TECNIS PureSee Intraocular Lens (IOL) implant, marking the first time this cutting-edge technology available in the sultanate.

"As one of the first centres in the Middle East to offer this advanced lens, we are setting new standards in cataract surgery and vision correction, providing patients with unparalleled visual clarity and quality," it stated.

The TECNIS PureSee IOL is designed to enhance patient outcomes by delivering several key benefits such as uninterrupted high-quality vision, low visual symptoms, enhanced contrast and low-light performance, high tolerance to refractive error, beside others.

With this lens, patients can enjoy exceptional distance and intermediate vision, along with



functional near vision, greatly reducing their dependence on spectacles.

The TECNIS PureSee IOL offers minimal visual disturbances, such as halos, glares, and starbursts, making it comparable to

a monofocal IOL in terms of comfort.

The lens provides superior contrast sensitivity and excellent vision even in low-light conditions, improving overall visual satisfaction.

Surgeons benefit from the lens's ease of use, while patients experience consistent and reliable visual outcomes.

Dr Ahmed al Maskari, Senior Consultant Ophthalmologist and Head of the Ophthalmology De-

partment at Oman International Hospital, stated, "The introduction of the TECNIS PureSee IOL is a testament to our commitment to providing world-class eye care to our patients. This advanced lens technology will significantly improve the quality of life for our cataract patients, offering them clearer vision and greater independence."

Marcelo Pereira, CEO of Oman International Hospital, added, "We are thrilled to be at the forefront of bringing such innovative technology to Oman. The launch of the TECNIS PureSee IOL is part of our ongoing mission to deliver the highest standards of healthcare in the region. We believe that by adopting the latest advancements in medical technology, we can continue to set new benchmarks in patient care and outcomes."

Bank Muscat celebrates branch relocation

Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, officially celebrated the relocation of its branch in Falaj Daris, known as Marfa Daris previously, in the wilayat of Nizwa.

With the aim of providing the best banking services and facilities that meet the needs of valued customers and provide a unique banking experience, the bank chose the new location, the bank stated.

This development was celebrated in a ceremony under the auspices of Sheikh Saleh bin Dhiyab al Rubaie, wali of Nizwa, and in the presence of senior officials and customers from the bank, it added.

It is noteworthy that Bank Muscat has 4 branches in Nizwa catering to the needs of its wide base of customers in the wilayat.

The relocated branch is characterized by its modern design and its large space that gives customers a distinctive banking experience. It is equipped with cutting-edge devices that allow customers to complete their banking transactions in a comfortable atmosphere.

Falaj Daris branch is located in a well-serviced and unique area. It has a centre for Asalah Priority Banking customers manned by relationship managers to process transactions efficiently in no time.



The branch also offers dedicated services, including Baituna for Home loans and Najahi Business Banking center, and safe deposit lockers. The branch is also designed to facilitate access of people with disabilities to all branch services, including ATMs and CDMs, as part of Bank Muscat's strategy to provide a unique banking experience to all segments of society.

The services provided by the branch can be availed during weekdays from Sunday to Thursday starting from eight in the morning until two noon.

Speaking on the occasion Taya Eid Bait Sabeea, Deputy General Manager Interior Regions, Bank Muscat, said: "We are pleased about the relocation of this branch which comes as a complement to the series of relocations and inaugurations of branches across different governorates. Bank Muscat's strategy regarding developing branches indicates the tireless efforts of the Bank to bring banking services closer to customers while providing a comfortable environment for completing banking transactions.

"The bank will continue to open more modern, spacious, technologically-equipped branches to meet the needs of the bank's growing customer base and go in line with the banking trends."

Over the past period, Bank Muscat inaugurated a new branch in Sahalnoot in the wilayat of Salalah and relocated its Jalaan Bani Bu Ali branch in South Sharqiya governorate. Multiple inaugurations of new branched also occurred in different locations across Oman such as Suhar, Seeb, Sinaw, and Amarat.

The bank's branch network constitutes a significant channel to communicate with customers and provide them with the various banking services.

As the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, Bank Muscat has an extensive branch network of 185 branches and more than 860 devices, including ATMs and CDMs, distributed throughout the country. Thanks to this strong and extensive network, Bank Muscat is the first choice for a large number of customers.

The bank also plays a key role in promoting financial inclusion through its innovative products. It is constantly updating its digital channels to enhance customers' banking experience.

As of now, a large number of customers benefit from a wide range of services offered through digital channels.

Lexus LX SUV: Engineered for a perfect driving experience

Lexus' powerful LX SUV is the epitome of prowess and finesse, said a press statement, calling upon people to 'embark on an exhilarating journey with fine Japanese craftsmanship complementing the taste of true luxury enthusiasts; the LX enables deeper and more intuitive control'.

It said that one can enjoy perfect experiences while off-roading or cruising through highways, while discovering endless possibilities with LX's two powertrain options. The first LX600 variant boasts a 3.5-litre petrol engine producing 409 hp and up to 66.28kg of torque.

Whereas, the V6 twin-turbo engine 3.5-litre diesel variant is capable of 302hp and up to 71.38 kg of torque paired with a standard 10-speed automatic transmission. With its incredible power and remarkable style the LX is built to tackle tricky terrains.

The pinnacle in luxury can be experienced with Lexus' stunning cabin, which is enhanced by innovative technology features. Based on the Japanese concept



of Tazuna, the cockpit design emphasises keeping the driver's attention on the road while drawing important information on the screen.

High-tech features of the 4WD include a 12.3-inch multi-media touchscreen display compatible with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto and a lower 7-inch display for navigation, audio, climate controls, and other driver support functions.

Its head-up display is an 8" colour Multi-information Display (MID), while a wireless smart-

advanced speed control systems such as the Full-Speed Dynamic Radar Cruise Control with Curve Speed Reduction that maintains speed and vehicle balance during tricky curves.

Additionally, the drivers also benefit from Lane Tracing Alert, Lane Departure Alert, and Adaptive High-Beam System.

Moving up a notch, the LX Grandeur model boasts exclusive interior features, including two large heated rear seats with ventilation, massage and recline option, a Rear Seat Entertainment (RSE) system with an 11.6-inch anti-reflective screen, and built-in ottoman leg support.

One will command attention on the road with LX Sport Edition, specially curated for sports luxury enthusiasts, so feel many.

The high-end Lexus cars have options such as 4, 5 and 7-seater with the premium range of SUVs, HEVs, sedans, and coupes up for people to grab and become a Lexus owner to experience special privileges and support from our professional sales staff, the statement added.



Kerala Engineers Family holds Techno Fest 2024 in city hotel

The Kerala Engineers Family (KEF) hosted Techno Fest 2024 at the Sheraton Hotel Oman on August 24, a release stated.

This premier event brought together industry leaders, engineers, and technology enthusiasts to showcase the latest advancements and innovations in the field.

KEF is a vibrant organisation comprising engineers of Kerala origin residing in Oman. KEF is dedicated to fostering professional growth, knowledge sharing, and camaraderie among its members, while also contributing to the broader community through various initiatives. Techno Fest 2024 is one such initiative aimed at promoting technological innovation and collaboration.

The event was inaugurated by H E Amit Narang, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, whose presence, along with other distinguished guests, highlighted the event's significance.

The dignitaries included Dr P Mohammed Ali, Founder of Galfar Engineering and Contracting; Mohiyudeen, Vice Chairman of Galfar Engineering and Contracting; Hammoud Salem al Saadi, Vice Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce; and Ananth, Director of Lulu Group.

Techno Fest 2024 featured an impressive array of technical exhibition stalls, where cutting-edge technologies and innovations were on display.

This platform allowed companies to present their latest products and services, offering attendees a glimpse into the future of technology.

The event also included insightful presentations from leading companies, including the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, where industry leaders shared their expertise and vision for the future.

Topics ranged from emerging technologies to industry trends, providing valuable knowledge to all participants.

Marafiq wins Energy Efficiency Excellence Award in Dubai ceremony

Marafiq won the Energy Efficiency Excellence Award at the Sustainability Innovation Awards, where Abdullah al Hashimi, Managing Director of Marafiq, was named 'Sustainability Leader of the Year 2024'.

These awards were given at a ceremony organised by BNC Publishing in Dubai, UAE, a release stated.

This accolade highlights the company's exceptional efforts in advancing energy efficiency within its operations, reinforcing its unwavering commitment to sustainability and Oman Vision 2040. Rooted in its comprehensive ESG (environmental, social, and governance) roadmap, Marafiq has positioned itself as a leader in environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and governance excellence.



A key aspect of their strategy includes pioneering green energy initiatives, such as the phasing out of diesel-powered plants. These efforts are integral to Oman's transition towards a low-carbon economy, in line with the Net Zero 2050 initiative and promoting sustainable development.

ciency measures like utilizing brine/reject water pressure energy, which reduces power consumption and emissions. The installation of efficient equipment and solar panels further supports sustainable development and enhances overall energy efficiency.

The sustainability efforts showcase a commitment to energy efficiency through innovative practices and comprehensive frameworks. At the Marafiq RO Plant in Duqm, we harness brine/reject water pressure energy to reduce power consumption by nearly 57.75 per cent, lowering emissions and operational costs significantly.

This approach minimises the specific power needed to produce water from 7.1 kWh to 3 kWh per cubic metre, resulting in substantial cost savings and reduced environmental impact.

Concurrently, Marafiq has advanced its ESG framework by establishing a dedicated Sustainability and Value Creation function, enhancing local awareness, and supporting community initiatives.

At the DPC Plant, energy efficiency is further advanced through the adoption of efficient electrical equipment, solar panel installations.

These efforts collectively highlight a dedication to reducing energy consumption, minimizing emissions, and fostering sustainable development.

In addition to the company's achievements, Abdullah al Hashimi, MD of Marafiq, was honoured with the Sustainability Leader of the Year award.

Typhoon Yagi hits Vietnam after killing two people in China

Hanoi, Vietnam - The powerful Typhoon Yagi reached Vietnam on Saturday, after killing two people and injuring 92 others in China.

In Vietnam, the super typhoon brought wind speeds exceeding 149kph (92mph), state media reported, uprooting thousands of trees and sweeping ships and boats out to sea.

Yagi made landfall in the southern Chinese island of Hainan the day before.

The storm lashed 'Hainan with heavy rain and gusty winds, leaving at least two dead and 92 injured', Chinese state-run news agency Xinhua said, citing local authorities.

How has Yagi affected Hainan?

Yagi packed maximum sustained winds of some 234kph (145mph) near its centre when it made landfall, plucking trees and flooding roads. It caused power outages in over 800,000 households. Some 420,000 Hainan residents were relocated before the storm reached the Chinese coast.

Yagi paralysed the island of



Over 800,000 households suffered power outages due to Typhoon Yagi

over 10mn people on Saturday, as all public transportation links remained broken. The tourist island's main airport in Haikou was closed until 3pm (0700 GMT) on Saturday, state broadcaster CCTV reported.

In the neighbouring Guangdong province, over 574,000 residents were evacuated before the storm made a second landfall in the province's Xuwen County on Friday night.

Over 270 people sought refuge at Hong Kong's temporary government shelters on Friday. Yagi also caused the cancellation of over 100 flights in the city.

On Saturday, as the typhoon moved further away from Haikou, the city's meteorological observatory downgraded its typhoon signal from red to orange.

Chinese meteorological authorities said the storm has slightly eased to Category 3 typhoon from Category 4, coming in at 187kph (116mph).

On Saturday afternoon (local time) it reached Vietnam making landfall in Hai Phong and Quang Ninh provinces.

DW

Fugitive ex-mayor returns to Philippines

Manila, The Philippines - Alice Guo, a former mayor who went on the run after she was accused of links to Chinese organised crime, has returned to the Philippines, where she is expected to face the Senate in connection of the case, Al Jazeera reported.

Guo, dressed in an orange T-shirt with 'detainee' marked on it and wearing a black face mask, touched down in Manila in the early hours of Friday morning.

Philippine media reported that Guo travelled on a chartered jet from Jakarta, where she was arrested for immigration offences earlier this week. She was also accompanied by Interior Secretary Benhur Abalos and Philippine National Police chief, General Rommel Francisco Marbil.

Speaking to media after her arrival, she said she had been the target of death threats. She spent most of the time with her back to the media and looking at the wall.

Abalos promised to provide security for the former mayor but urged her to speak out.

"Disclose all the names in order to serve justice, and so all this ends. That is the only way we can help her," he said.

ANI

Rohingya Muslims risk losing homeland, says rights activist

Intervention by international organisations is being cited as a crucial step for Rohingyas

Istanbul, Turkey - Rohingyas Muslims face the risk of losing their homeland if the international community fails to address the issue, according to one observer.

Rohingya rights activist and co-founder of the Free Rohingya Coalition, Nay San Lwin, said that following forced displacements in Rakhine State, there are approximately 600,000 Rohingyas Muslims in the region, with estimates suggesting that 10,000 were forced to seek refuge in Bangladesh last week.

"If the international community fails to resolve this issue once again, we will lose our homeland. The most critical issue is impunity. The Myanmar army has been acting with impunity since 1978," he said in an interview with Anadolu, where he assessed the role of international organisations in addressing the issues faced by the Rohingya community.

Lwin noted that there are ongoing international court cases concerning the atrocities faced by the Rohingya community, but the duration of these cases remains uncertain.

He emphasised that a crucial step for the Rohingya Muslim community would be intervention by international organisations, a resolution by the UN Security Council, or the formation of an international coalition to assist the Rohingyas.



Half of the remaining Rohingya - 300,000 people in Buthidaung and Maungdaw - would be forced to flee to Bangladesh, the rights activist warned

If the international community fails to resolve this issue once again, we will lose our homeland. The most critical issue is impunity

NAY SAN LWIN

If there is no intervention, the violence could escalate beyond the 2,000 to 2,500 deaths reported in the last three to four months, warned Lwin.

He added that half of the re-

maining Rohingya - 300,000 people in Buthidaung and Maungdaw - would be forced to flee to Bangladesh.

"If we lose these two towns, we will have no place to return to. Everything depends on the international community," he said. "It is up to them to decide how to protect the Rohingyas and how to ensure their return to their home-

land."

Since last November, the Myanmar Army and the Arakan Army, a Buddhist militant group, have used areas inhabited by Rohingyas Muslims as conflict zones, Lwin noted.

He said the Arakan Army's efforts to control the entire region have led to continued displacement, mass killings, atrocities,

and human rights violations, leaving the population with no access to services such as humanitarian aid and health care.

Lwin noted that in 2017, the Myanmar Army burned 400 villages, sexually assaulted hundreds of women, and even burned and killed infants.

He said neither the Myanmar Army nor the Arakan Army shows any intention of improving conditions for the people, making international intervention the only hope for the community.

Lwin emphasised that Bangladesh, where Rohingyas refugees have sought asylum due to attacks by the Myanmar Army, must persuade the international community to lead the repatriation process. He warned that if Bangladesh fails to achieve that goal, the Rohingyas will be forced to remain in Bangladesh until the situation changes.

Lwin explained that the 600,000 Rohingyas living in Myanmar are in two different conditions. About 130,000 are in camps, which he described as barbed-wire-enclosed, surveillance-tower-equipped detention centres.

He noted that the remaining Rohingyas struggle to survive in conditions resembling open-air prisons, with the situation worsening, particularly in areas controlled by the Arakan Army.

Anadolu Agency

Boeing's beleaguered Starliner lands on Earth without crew

Washington, D.C., US - The Boeing-produced Starliner left the International Space Station (ISS) on Friday, landing back on Earth in the early hours of Saturday, without the astronauts who rode up on the spacecraft.

The Starliner autonomously undocked from the space station at 6:04pm Eastern Time (2204 GMT). Shortly after undocking, Starliner performed a powerful 'breakout burn' to quickly move away from the station to avoid a collision.

This manoeuvre would have been unnecessary if Starliner had a crew on board, as they would be able to manually control the ship.

The empty spacecraft landed gently at White Sands Space Harbor in New Mexico at 0401 GMT.

What happened to the spacecraft?

After years of delays, Starliner blasted off in June for what was supposed to be a week-long test mission before it could finally be



Starliner returns to Earth without crew

After years of delays, Starliner blasted off in June for what was supposed to be a week-long test mission before it could finally be certified to ferry crews to and from the ISS

certified to ferry crews to and from the ISS. But unexpected engine failures and helium leaks on the way up derailed those plans. NASA ultimately decided it would be safer to bring astronauts Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams back on a rival craft, the SpaceX Crew Dragon.

Two NASA astronauts have been bumped off that flight so that Wilmore and Williams can return to earth.

Their stay was to last only a

week but now they have to wait until February 2025 to return.

As experienced astronauts and retired Navy captains, Wilmore and Williams expected hurdles on the test flight. They've been busy in space, helping with repairs and experiments. The two are now full-time station crew members, along with the seven others on board.

The Starliner will now be analysed for flaws and improved. Steps will be taken to prevent helium leaks and overheating of the propulsion system.

The Starliner, built by Boeing, is a partially reusable spacecraft consisting of a crew capsule about 3 metres high and a service module.

Unlike the Crew Dragon vehicle built by Elon Musk's SpaceX, the Starliner lands on land instead of water.

The landing feature is similar to that of NASA's former workhorse, the Space Shuttle, the last of which was retired in 2011.

DW

US: Kamala Harris' campaign raises \$361mn in August

Washington, D.C., US - US Vice President Kamala Harris' campaign has so far raised a massive US\$361mn, which is around three more than the US\$130mn raised by her Republican rival Donald Trump, CNN reported.

This also gives Harris a whopping US\$404mn in cash reserves for the final, two-month sprint to Election Day, her campaign aides announced on Friday.

The cash stockpiled across Harris' affiliated committees tops the US\$295mn that Trump's campaign said it had available in its bank accounts. This underscores how much Harris' historic and late-breaking candidature has energised donors and transformed the 2024 race, according to CNN. Notably, the US\$361mn is by far the best monthly haul for either party this cycle.

At this rate, Harris is poised to collect over US\$1bn in the condensed campaign window between becoming the party's de facto nominee in late July and Election Day. She has already



US Vice President Kamala Harris

raised more than US\$615mn since President Joe Biden ended his re-election bid on July 21, her campaign noted on Friday.

Last month's haul also topped the US\$310mn that Harris and Democrats raised in July and came amid the fanfare of her announcing Minnesota Governor, Tim Walz as her running mate and formally accepting her party's nomination at last month's celebrity-studded Chicago convention, which also included appearances from Biden and two of his White House pre-

decessors. The third strongest grassroots fundraising day of the campaign came on August 6 - the day Harris announced Walz's selection, campaign officials said.

The August haul does not best the monthly fundraising record of US\$383mn set by the Biden-Harris political operation in September 2020 at the height of that presidential campaign.

The August totals announced by Trump's team show his fundraising pace has slowed - with his election effort bringing in slightly less last month than the US\$138.7mn it had collected in July. Earlier, CNN had reported an analysis of donations, which showed that among the donations that exceeded US\$200mn this cycle found that some of Trump's biggest fundraising days came in May around his felony conviction in New York, exceeding even the amounts the campaign reported collecting in July during his party's nominating convention.

Anadolu Agency

Israeli opposition leader urges government to end Gaza war

Critics say Netanyahu is blocking the deal out of fear that his government might collapse

Jerusalem - Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid on Saturday called for a deal with Hamas to bring back Israeli captives from Gaza and end the ongoing conflict. "Strike a deal, end the war, fix the country," Lapid, the leader of the Yesh Atid party, said in a brief post on X.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says his military must retain control over Gaza's southern border area with Egypt - known as the Philadelphi Corridor - a position that threatens to derail ceasefire efforts.

Critics say Netanyahu is blocking the deal out of fear that his government might collapse.

Mickey Levy, a Knesset member from Lapid's party, told Israeli public radio on Saturday: "Until May, the Philadelphi Corridor wasn't even on the table."

"The fear of the government collapsing and fear of (far-right National Security Minister Itamar) Ben Gvir and (far-right Finance Minister Bezalel) Smotrich, who have Netanyahu by the throat, is what led to this situation," he added.

Levy warned that remaining in control of the Philadelphi Corridor could lead to the needless deaths of many Israeli soldiers.

A poll released by Israel's Channel 12 on Friday night revealed that 60 per cent of Israelis believe that securing a deal to bring back hostages from Gaza is more important than holding



Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid in a post on X urged to 'strike a deal, end the war, fix the country'

The fear of the government collapsing and fear of Ben Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, who have Netanyahu by the throat, is what led to this situation

MICKEY LEVY

onto the Philadelphi Corridor.

Egypt, a mediator in the ceasefire talks along with the US and Qatar, has also demanded a timeline for Israel's withdrawal from the corridor.

Besides, Nadav Argaman, former head of Israel's Shin Bet security agency, criticised Benjamin Netanyahu for his insistence on maintaining control over the Philadelphi corridor along the Gaza-Egypt border, suggesting the prime minister's actions are motivated by a desire to prevent his government from collapsing.

In an interview with Channel 12 on Friday evening, Argaman, who led the agency from 2016 to 2021, called for an immediate halt to the war and a withdrawal from Gaza, urging the return of Israeli hostages.

Netanyahu has insisted for weeks that his forces will not

withdraw from the Gaza-Egypt border, a key demand of both Hamas and Egypt in talks to reach a ceasefire deal.

Argaman refuted Netanyahu's recent claims about the significance of the Philadelphi corridor made during a press conference earlier this week. Netanyahu says weapons are being smuggled into Gaza through this route.

Argaman countered that 'there is no connection between the weapons in Gaza and the Philadelphi corridor'.

Netanyahu had argued that once Israel relinquished control over the Philadelphi corridor, rockets, drones, and other weaponry were smuggled into Gaza.

Argaman dismissed these claims, saying 'the Philadelphi corridor is only required for the Netanyahu-Smotrich axis to preserve this messianic and dangerous government'.

According to him, most of Gaza's weaponry is self-produced by Hamas from materials that enter the enclave as dual-use items, such as agricultural fertilizers.

He advocated for a deal to release the hostages, acknowledging that it would be a painful agreement involving the release of prisoners, but deemed it necessary. The former intel chief suggested that Israel needs to pursue a ceasefire, withdraw from Gaza, and shift focus to the northern front with Lebanon and the West Bank, while forming a regional and international alliance against Iran.

Anadolu Agency

30 rockets fired from Lebanon hit Upper Galilee

Jerusalem/Beirut - Israel on Saturday said 30 rockets were fired from Lebanon, landing in open areas in the Upper Galilee, northern Israel.

In a statement, the Israeli army said: "About 30 shells were fired from Lebanon and fell in the Metat area in the Upper Galilee without causing injuries."

"Following airstrikes on multiple rocket-launching platforms last night (Friday), Israeli fighter jets attacked a Hezbollah rocket-launch platform in the Yater area (Bint Jbeil District in southern Lebanon) during the night," the army added.

Israeli private Channel 12 said the rockets fired from Lebanon targeted the Mount Meron illegal settlement in northern Israel.

On Saturday morning, air raid sirens were activated in Metat illegal settlement and Mount Meron in the Upper Galilee, warning of rocket fire.

Separately, a house was directly hit, and a fire broke out in two illegal settlements in northern Israel's Upper Galilee following rocket strikes from southern Lebanon, according to Israeli Army Radio.

The Army Radio confirmed that eight more rockets had been fired from Lebanon toward western Galilee, with some landing in open areas without causing any injuries.

Earlier in the day, the Israeli Home Front Command instructed residents of 13 illegal settlements in the Upper Galilee to stay close to shelters and avoid gatherings due to fears of renewed rocket fire from Hezbollah.

Hezbollah confirmed it launched Katyusha rockets at the Israeli military base on Mount Neria.

In a statement, the group said its forces 'fired salvos of Katyusha rockets at the Mount Neria military base'.

It said the attack was 'in response to the Israeli enemy's assaults on southern villages and peaceful homes, especially the recent attack on the village of Froun'.

Anadolu Agency

Africa CDC, WHO launch joint plan to combat mpox

Nairobi, Kenya - The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) on Friday jointly launched a continental plan to scale up the response to the ongoing mpox outbreak in Africa.

The initiative, announced in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, focuses on improving surveillance, laboratory diagnostics, and vaccination efforts to curb the spread of the disease.

The plan emphasises collaboration among African countries to ensure that all nations are adequately equipped to handle potential outbreaks.

Jean Kaseya, Africa CDC Director General during the launch noted that, 'we are proud to jointly launch this plan which unites all stakeholders in a coordinated approach to tackling the mpox outbreaks across Africa'.

"This unified strategy ensures that all partners are aligned on common objectives, eliminating duplication and maximizing impact," he added.

The Mpox Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, with a budget of US\$600mn, focuses on both response and preparedness across 29 Member States.

Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa, noted that it aims to strengthen surveillance, laboratory testing, community engagement, and ensure the availability of critical countermeasures.

"By coming together we can achieve more, and our collective strength will carry us further, ensuring that communities and individuals are protected from the threat of this virus," he said.

Congo on Thursday received its first shipment of mpox vaccines to help curb the spread of the virus in the epicentre of the outbreak on the continent. The WHO declared mpox a global public health emergency on August 14 and Africa CDC declared it a Public Health Emergency of Continental Security a day earlier.

Anadolu Agency



Patients infected with mpox virus receive treatment at a medical facility in Nyiragongo, Kivu, DRC

Child among 11 killed in Gaza

Gaza City, Palestine - At least 11 Palestinians were killed and 30 others, including children, were injured on Saturday as Israeli forces targeted homes and civilians in central and northern Gaza Strip, sources and witnesses said.

Medical sources at the Al-Awda Hospital in northern Gaza told Anadolu that five Palestinians were killed in an Israeli strike on a civilian gathering in the Nuseirat refugee camp, central Gaza. Mahmoud Bassal, the spokesperson for Gaza's civil defence, said six Palestinians, including a child and a woman, were killed in strikes on Gaza City and the al-Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza.

Separately, witnesses said Israeli artillery targeted populated areas in Beit Lahia, northern Gaza, injuring dozens of civilians including children. At least 30 people were injured in the attack, according to medical sources.



Wounded Palestinians are brought to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital following Israeli attack in Deir Al Balah, Gaza on Friday

According to the Health Ministry in the enclave on Saturday, the Israeli army killed 61 more Palestinians in attacks on the Gaza Strip, raising the overall death toll to 40,939 since October 7, 2023. The ministry also reported that approximately 94,616 people have been injured in the ongoing assault.

"Israeli forces killed 61 people and injured 162 others in four

'massacres' against families in the last 48 hours," the statement said. "Many people are still trapped under rubble and on the roads as rescuers are unable to reach them," it added.

Israel has continued its brutal offensive on the Gaza Strip following an attack by the Palestinian group Hamas last October 7.

Anadolu Agency

Family demands independent investigation after American activist killed by Israeli forces

Washington, D.C., US - The family of Aysenur Ezgi Eygi, a Turkish American activist who was killed on Friday by Israeli forces during a protest in the occupied West Bank, urged the Biden administration for an independent investigation into her killing.

"A US citizen, Aysenur was peacefully standing for justice when she was killed by a bullet that video shows came from an Israeli military shooter. We welcome the White House's statement of condolences, but given the circumstances of Aysenur's killing, an Israeli investigation is not adequate," the family said in a statement. "We call on President Biden, Vice President Harris, and Secretary of State Blinken to order an independent investigation into the unlawful killing of a US citizen and to ensure full accountability for the guilty parties," they added.

Eygi, 26, was shot and killed by Israeli forces during a protest against illegal Israeli settlements in the town of Beita in the Nablus district of the occupied West Bank. Witnesses reported that Israeli soldiers opened live fire on a group participating in a demonstration condemning the illegal settlements on Mount Sbeih in Beita, south of Nablus.



Aysenur Ezgi Eygi

Eygi, 26, was shot and killed by Israeli forces during a protest against illegal Israeli settlements in the town of Beita in the Nablus district

They said Eygi was standing away from the main protest area when she was fatally shot. Despite being rushed to a nearby hospital, medical workers were unable to save her.

The US State Department confirmed the killing of the volunteer peace activist with the anti-occupation group, the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), and said it was gathering

more information about the circumstances of her death.

The White House said it was seeking additional information from Israel and had requested an investigation.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry described Eygi's death as a 'murder' committed by the government of Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Israeli military acknowledged the firing, claiming it responded to a 'violent activity who hurled rocks at the forces and posed a threat to them (Israeli security forces)'. Israel's claim had been disputed by witnesses and the ISM.

Eygi's family said they were in 'shock and grief', describing her as 'strong, beautiful, and nourishing' like the 'olive tree she lay beneath where she took her last breaths'.

Anadolu Agency

US President Biden to host UK PM Starmer

The two leaders are expected to have in-depth discussions on a range of global issues of mutual interest

Washington, D.C., US - US President Joe Biden is set to host United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer, next week, and the two leaders are expected to have in-depth discussions on 'a range of global issues of mutual interest', including the ongoing wars in Ukraine and Gaza amid other issues.

The White House press secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre, said in a statement that the September 13 Oval Office visit will mark the second meeting between the two leaders since Starmer was voted as the British Prime Minister earlier this July.

Discussions between the leaders will include continuing robust support to Ukraine in its



This file photo shows British PM Keir Starmer shaking hands with US President Joe Biden during NATO leaders' summit in Washington, D.C. on July 10

defence against 'Russian aggression' and securing a hostage release and a ceasefire deal to end

the war in Gaza. Protecting international shipping in the Red Sea from Iranian-

backed Houthi threats, and advancing a free and open Indo-Pacific will also figure in the

discussions, according to the White House press secretary. Biden and Starmer will also

discuss opportunities to strengthen US-UK cooperation to secure supply chains and increase climate resilience, the White House said.

Starmer visited the White House in July this year and held one-on-one talks with Biden when he was in Washington for the NATO Summit.

Earlier this week, US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby stated that the Biden

administration believes that the ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas is 90 per cent agreed on, adding, "That's how close we believe we are," Al Jazeera reported.

"Nothing is negotiated until everything is negotiated," Kirby said. He noted that several detailed issues remain to be resolved, adding that 'that's when things get difficult'.

Earlier, British PM Keir Starmer was among other global leaders to express condolences

on the death of six Israeli hostages, found dead in a tunnel in Gaza. Starmer said he was 'completely shocked' at the 'horrific and senseless killing' of the hostages, and said that a ceasefire deal must be agreed by all sides immediately to end the suffering.

"I am completely shocked at the horrific and senseless killing of six hostages in Gaza by Hamas. My thoughts are with their loved ones at this awful time. Hamas must release all the hostages now, and a ceasefire deal must be agreed by all sides immediately to end the suffering," Starmer posted on X.

US President Joe Biden said that he was devastated and outraged by the killing of Israeli hostages. He also informed that Israeli-US citizen Goldberg-Polin was among the people killed by Hamas. ANI

The September 13 Oval Office visit will mark the second meeting between the two leaders since Starmer was voted as the British Prime Minister earlier this July, said the White House in a statement

Pakistan capital reports first polio case in 16 years

Islamabad, Pakistan - Pakistan's capital Islamabad has reported its first poliovirus case in 16 years, taking the tally to 17 this year.

The victim is an eight-year-old boy in Islamabad's Union Council Rural 4, the Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme said in statement.

"This is the first human case reported from Islamabad in 16 years, while environmental samples from the federal capital and neighbouring Rawalpindi district have been positive for WPV1 since June, underscoring the persistent threat of polio to children's well-being," it said.

The South Asian country has confirmed 17 cases this year, including 12 from the southwestern Balochistan province. Three were reported in the southern Sindh province, one in Punjab and one Islamabad.

In 2023, Pakistan reported six cases, while in 2022 the figure was 20.

The Health Ministry has decided to launch a campaign from September 9-13 to vaccinate 33mn children under the age of five in 115 district across the country.

"It is incredibly heart-breaking that another Pakistan child has been affected by a disease that has no cure, but is entirely preventable with the help of an easily accessible vaccine," said Ayesha Raza Farooq, prime minister's focal person for polio eradication.

Polio is a highly infectious disease caused by poliovirus mainly affecting children under the age of five. It invades the nervous system and can cause paralysis or even death.

Anti-polio campaigns in Pakistan are also marred by violence.

Anadolu Agency

Abu Dhabi Crown Prince to visit India on September 9-10

New Delhi, India - Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan will be on an official visit to India on September 9-10 at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

This would be the first visit of Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to India as the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi.

He will be accompanied by several Ministers from the UAE government and a business delegation, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Saturday.

On September 9, the Crown Prince will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and hold discussions on a wide range of areas of bilateral cooperation. He is also scheduled to call on President Droupadi Murmu.

He will also visit Rajghat to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi.

On September 10, the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince will visit Mumbai to participate in a Business Forum, in which business leaders from both countries will participate.

"India and UAE share historically close and friendly ties. In recent years, the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and UAE has deepened in a wide range of areas, including po-



Indian PM Narendra Modi and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, in Abu Dhabi, UAE on July 15 (ANI)

litical, trade, investment, connectivity, energy, technology, education, and culture," the MEA stated.

"The Crown Prince's visit will further reinforce strong India-

UAE bilateral relations and open avenues for partnership in new and emerging areas," it added.

In February this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited UAE. He held discussions with

UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on the India-UAE bilateral relationship and witnessed the exchange of eight agreements.

PM Modi and President Al Nahyan welcomed the MoU for creation of an intergovernmental framework between India and the

On September 10, the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince will visit Mumbai to participate in a Business Forum, in which business leaders from both countries will participate

UAE on the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC), which reflected the lead taken by the UAE and India in furthering regional connectivity.

The two leaders further endorsed the efforts from both sides to strengthen the strong economic and commercial cooperation and explore new areas of collaboration.

ANI



China urges US to 'maintain' stable climate policies

Beijing, China - Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi emphasised the need on Friday for stable US climate policies and increased cooperation, according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

Wang highlighted recent progress in bilateral climate discussions in a meeting with John Podesta, senior advisor to US President Joe Biden on international climate policy.

"Since the beginning of this year, the climate change teams of both sides have communicated closely and reached a series of pragmatic cooperation results," he said.

He urged the US to 'maintain policy stability' and 'avoid protectionism and pan-secu-

ritisation' in addressing global challenges.

The minister stressed that climate cooperation is 'an integral part of the US-China relationship' and dialogue is crucial to implement the consensus reached at the San Francisco summit between the leaders of the two nations.

Podesta echoed that sentiment, describing climate change cooperation as a key component of US-China relations and global multilateral efforts. Wang reaffirmed China's commitment to green, low-carbon development, asserting that Beijing will 'certainly implement the policies it has formulated.

Anadolu Agency

Bangladesh flood victims struggle to rebuild devastated lives

Dhaka, Bangladesh - After seeking shelter in a school building for over a week, Sirajul Islam returned home last Monday to find his corrugated tin dwelling drenched in mud and covered in water hyacinth.

His home was one of countless others devastated by flash floods across swathes of eastern and southeastern Bangladesh.

"We lost everything ... The wooden bed and wardrobe are completely ruined, as the water reached chest-deep during the relentless rains and flooding of the past week," Islam told Anadolu. "Even the drum of rice we could not take with us is entirely spoiled from the water."



Members of Bangladesh Army help evacuating civilians during rescue and relief distribution operations

Floodwaters began to recede earlier this week in most areas, but in Domurua village, part of the Panchgachia union in Feni district where Islam lives, many homes have been reduced to ruins.

Relief efforts from both government and private organisations are scarce and have yet to reach remote areas like Domurua, which is about 30km (18.6 miles) from Feni's town. The narrow district roads connecting the union to the main town were submerged and damaged in many places, complicating relief distribution.

Since the floods began inundating roads and homes on August 21, Feni residents have

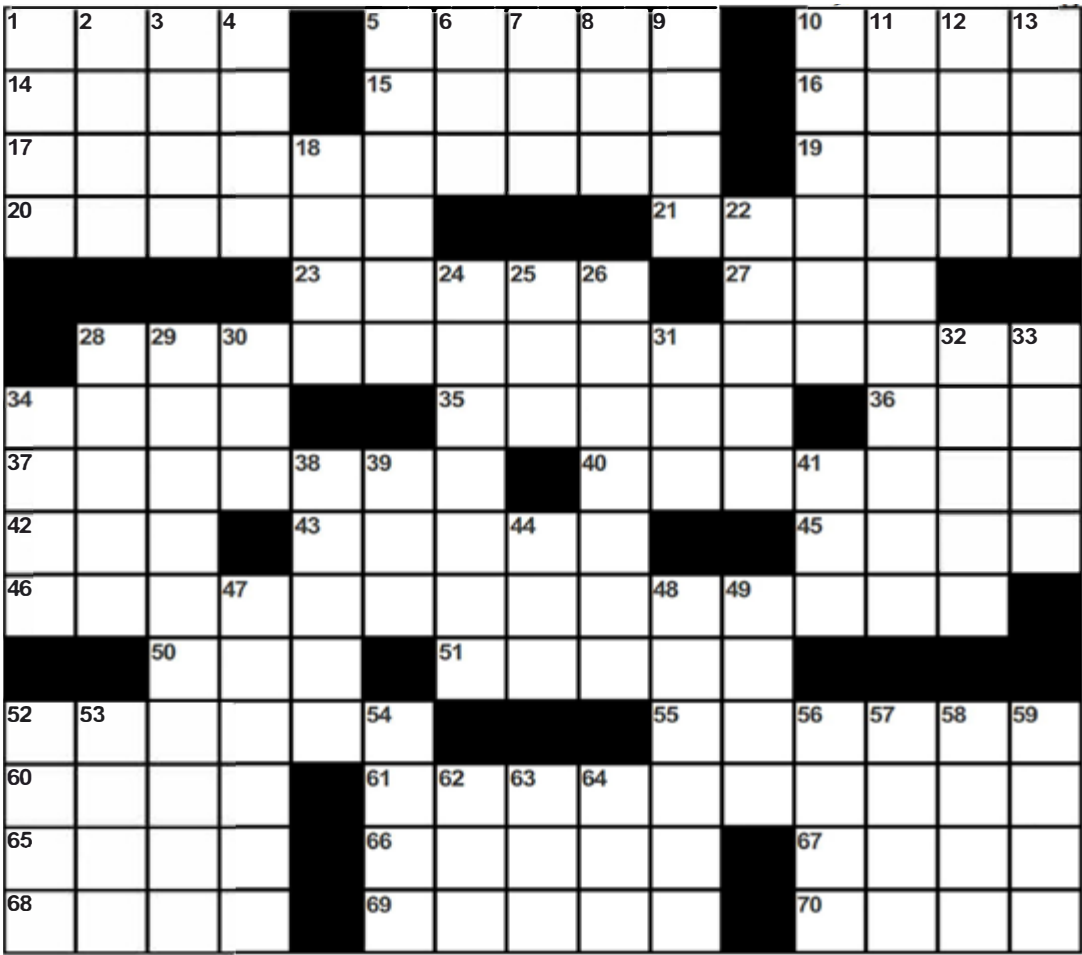
been fleeing to shelters. Despite this, large areas of the district have remained underwater for days, with no clear relief in sight. Residents like Islam are still facing severe hardship in the shelters, compounded by the spread of waterborne diseases like diarrhoea.

The floods in central, eastern, and southeastern Bangladesh have claimed 71 lives and impacted over 5.7mn people.

As the waters slowly recede, there is an urgent need for food, clean water, medicine, and dry clothing among those affected, particularly in remote areas where the situation remains especially dire.

Anadolu Agency

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) "The_Not Taken"
 - 5) City-related
 - 10) Cookbook author Rombauer
 - 14) Capital on a fjord
 - 15) Hero's character trait
 - 16) Brunch, for one
 - 17) Relative of a wingnut
 - 19) Skin, as an apple
 - 20) Cellphone feature
 - 21) Loud kisses
 - 23) On the wrong side (of)
 - 27) All Hallows' Eve mo.
 - 28) Art activity for tots
 - 34) Art_ (architectural style)
 - 35) Poet Alighieri
 - 36) By way of
 - 37) Jack up
- HANDY FOURSOME**
- 40) Babes' place
 - 42) Picnic discard
 - 43) Follower of "yes" or "no"
 - 45) Beehive State natives
 - 46) Lout
 - 50) The Browns, on scoreboards
 - 51) Numskull
 - 52) Barely get by

- 55) Suspended, in a way
 - 60) Field of expertise
 - 61) Chirology practitioner
 - 65) Brad of "Ocean's Twelve"
 - 66) Part of ACLU
 - 67) Zero
 - 68) Give lip to
 - 69) Watch parts
 - 70) Sprout up
- DOWN**
- 1) Campus military org.
 - 2) Workplace watchdog org.
 - 3) Reunion attendee, for short
 - 4) Capitol feature
 - 5) Liable to cause an accident
 - 6) Remote control button
 - 7) "It's f-f-freezing!"
 - 8) D.C.'s Pennsylvania, e.g.
 - 9) _ conference
 - 10) Significant effect
 - 11) Put back into service
 - 12) Con man's target
 - 13) Dart players' quaffs
 - 18) Hype oneself
 - 22) Part of a Monopoly set
 - 24) Sent for
 - 25)_ creek (out of luck)
 - 26) Portable illumination
 - 28) One in maximum security, say
 - 29) Where bottles of bubbly may chill
 - 30) Armistice Day mo.
 - 31) "Who am_ argue?"
 - 32) San Fran griddier
 - 33) Gallivants, with "about"
 - 34) It may be stacked
 - 38) Made inquiries
 - 39) Poetic contraction
 - 41) Tote around
 - 44) Campus address extension
 - 47) Golf shoe attachments
 - 48) Squirrel's stash
 - 49) Chromosome unit
 - 52) Travelers' aids
 - 53) Soprano's show-stopper
 - 54) Major composition
 - 56) Put up, in a way
 - 57) Dumpster emanation
 - 58) Former late-night star
 - 59) Did some cartooning
 - 62) Formicary denizen
 - 63) More than a stretch
 - 64) Tat word

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

For Aries natives, tomorrow is going to be quite special. You may have some inner conflicts, but if you step forward to help someone in need, it will be beneficial for you. There is no need to worry excessively about any task. If you approach your matters with patience, it will be better for you. You may develop an interest in some new work. It would be better if you direct your energy towards the right activities.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Tomorrow, Leo natives might embark on a long-distance journey. You must be extremely careful while using vehicles. There may be some opposition from family members on certain matters, leading to tension due to mutual disputes. However, a sense of mutual cooperation will remain in your heart. You need to think carefully about your tasks. The arrival of a new job for your child will bring you joy. A religious event may be organized in the family.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Tomorrow will bring ups and downs for Sagittarius natives. Avoid making anyone a partner in your workplace, as they may try to trouble you. You may hear some good news from a family member. Your stalled plans will gain momentum. You might receive a surprise gift from your spouse. Students may get an opportunity to appear in an examination.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. What effect do anthocyanins have on the part of a plant in which they are abundant?

- A. They colour it red, purple, blue, or black
- B. The part shrivels
- C. They boost the action of chlorophyll
- D. They boost the plant's toxic defences against attack



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Taurus natives who are in business should avoid taking big risks tomorrow. Your rivals may behave like friends, so you need to be cautious in identifying them. You will receive full support from your brothers and sisters. You may plan to make significant changes in your business. With multiple tasks at hand, you may feel restless, but you might also travel far to meet your partner. Those looking for a job may hear some good news.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Tomorrow is likely to be a comfortable day for Virgo natives. Your mind will be occupied with various things. Married life will be harmonious. It would be good to start something new tomorrow. If there has been a dispute over property, it is likely to be resolved tomorrow. Your desire to buy a new house may also be fulfilled.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

For Capricorn natives, the day may be filled with challenges. You may be worried about a family member's deteriorating health. If you receive any disappointing news from a relative, try to remain calm. Those employed may feel burdened by an increase in workload. It would be better to buy a new vehicle, but also pay full attention to the needs of family members.

02. Argentina invaded UK's Falkland Islands, Israel invaded Southern Lebanon, Canada became officially independent of the UK, Leonid Brezhnev, leader of the USSR, died, all in what year?

- A. 1980
- B. 1982
- C. 1985
- D. 1975



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Tomorrow could be a day of confusion for Gemini natives. If you have been troubled by some long-standing unfinished work, you will make every effort to complete it. Seeing a friend in trouble, you might even arrange some money for them. If you proceed with any work without proper thought, you may incur a loss. While your family will value your words, some minor conflicts may cause you distress.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Libra natives should avoid any disputes tomorrow. Some tension may linger in your mind. There will be harmony in your family life. In business, make any new decisions with careful consideration. You may face some problems due to an encounter with an unknown person. A crucial decision may have to be made regarding the career of a family member. Stay cautious of people living around you.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Aquarius natives need to move ahead cautiously tomorrow. Someone at the workplace may accuse you of something. If that happens, be sure to present your side of the story. There is a possibility of betrayal in your love life. You must maintain harmony in family relationships, or else there could be a risk of disputes escalating. Students will show more interest in their studies. You might get a chance to go on an outing.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

For Cancer natives, tomorrow is expected to be better than other days. Your respect and honor in the family will increase, and your advice will prove useful to others. In business, you should focus on increasing your sources of income, and married individuals might welcome a new addition to the family. A family member may face some eye-related issues. You should avoid unnecessary expenses.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Scorpio natives should not hesitate to share their thoughts with their parents. There will be some ups and downs in your health, but don't be alarmed. If something is bothering you, you should discuss it with your spouse. You should make some plans for saving money to secure your future. If there have been any disputes in your work, try to resolve them.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

For Pisces natives, tomorrow is expected to be moderate. Receiving a major project at work will bring immense joy. If you rush into any task, you might make a mistake. If there were any disputes with your spouse, they could be resolved through conversation. You might have to purchase a new vehicle at the request of your children. A religious event may be organized within the family.

03. Which of these countries has a border with France?

- A. Austria
- B. Australia
- C. Germany
- D. Greece

Answers: 1. A 2. B 3. C

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

A	S	D	E
A	A	K	E
O	N	H	N
M	Y	S	E

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

US players will believe they can go deep in slams, says Tiafoe



Frances Tiafoe

New York, United States - Frances Tiafoe came up short in his all-American semi-final clash at the U.S. Open on Friday but leaves Flushing Meadows seeing the “floodgates” open for U.S. men’s tennis.

The match at Arthur Ashe Stadium - the crown jewel of American tennis - was appointment viewing for U.S. fans. The two rivals put on a show for much of the affair before Taylor Fritz pulled away in the fourth set 4-6 7-5 4-6 6-4 6-1. While the defeat will sting for some time, Tiafoe said strong American performances in New York this year will make an impact on the sport, as Fritz is the first U.S. man in 15 years to reach a major final.

“It opened the floodgates for sure. I think guys are gonna start believing they can go deep in slams,” he said. “A lot of guys are going to be able to think they can do it, especially in this one where later in the season, stuff like that with American crowds and what have you. I think it’s big.”

Tiafoe reached the 2022 semi-final and the quarter-final in New York last year, and he was in top form after reaching his first ATP Masters 1000 final in Cincinnati last month.

The ebullient fan favourite was already looking to the future, telling reporters he wanted to end the year on a positive note with the Asian swing and Laver Cup next on his agenda.

HISTORIC SHOWDOWN

American Fritz to take on world No.1 Sinner in US Open final

New York, United States - Taylor Fritz held on to beat Frances Tiafoe 4-6 7-5 4-6 6-4 6-1 in a blockbuster all-American semi-final at the US Open on Friday and will take on the role of the underdog when he meets Italian top seed Jannik Sinner in the finale.

It’s the first time in 15 years that an American man has reached a major final and both Fritz and Tiafoe wanted to be the one to break the barren streak. But Fritz had the legs to go the distance with 16 aces while Tiafoe lost steam in the fourth set.

It capped an action-packed programme at Arthur Ashe Stadium, as Sinner took down ailing Briton Jack Draper 7-5 7-6(3) 6-2, overcoming muggy conditions in a chaotic match.

Fritz and Sinner, who are deadlocked 1-1 in career head-to-head, will meet on Sunday.

“It’s a dream come true, I’m in the final so I’m going to come out and give everything I possibly have and I know that for a fact,” an emotional Fritz said after the match. “I’m going to give it everything I can possibly give.”

Fritz got a 0-3 head start in the first set but Tiafoe showed he would not be pushed around as he broke back from the baseline in the fifth game and outlasted Fritz in a 16-shot rally to take the lead in the seventh game.



Italian top seed Jannik Sinner (L) will start as the favourite against Taylor Fritz of the US in the US Open final on Sunday



The longer rallies gave way to quick points in the second set, where Fritz held to love in five straight service games and put up just three unforced errors before breaking Tiafoe with a terrific drop shot on set point.

Tiafoe got his revenge as he sent a forehand winner down the line to go up a break in the opening game of the third set and he raised his fist in satisfaction after taking the frame. Tiafoe began to show signs of fatigue in the fourth

set after an epic, 31-shot rally in the seventh game and he helped Fritz to the break in the 10th with a pair of double faults and a couple of unforced errors.

An exhausted Tiafoe tossed his racket in frustration after a double fault on break point saw him trailing 0-4 in the final set.

He got on the board when he broke Fritz in the fifth game but that sliver of momentum evaporated quickly and Fritz smiled after closing it out with an ace.

“He was overwhelming from the baseline,” said Fritz. “He was taking the ball so early, changing lines so well. It was really overwhelming.”

Sinner had an easier day as he closed it out against Draper in straight sets but left Flushing Meadows with injury concerns after he fell in the second set and appeared to hurt his wrist.

Little went right for Draper, who vomited three times in the second set as he struggled with

heat and humidity that also left his shirt soaked in sweat. Ten double faults also failed to help the 22-year-old’s bid to reach a Grand Slam final for the first time.

“It was a very physical match as we saw. I just tried to stay there mentally,” said Sinner, who has survived the intense pressure of being the overwhelming favorite to win his first U.S. Open title following the early exits of Novak Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz.

I tried to fight as hard as I can, says Draper after resolute show

New York, United States - Jack Draper never considered retiring in his straight-sets semi-final defeat to top seed Jannik Sinner on Friday, the Briton said, after a gruelling match that saw him vomit three times.

The 25th seed had not dropped a set in New York before Friday but his dream run to a first major semi-final quickly turned into a nightmare as heat, humidity and nerves saw him queasy by the second set.

The 22-year-old said it only got worse from there, as he became dizzy because he was unable to take in much fluid. He lost 7-5 7-6(3) 6-2.

“I’m not going to retire in the semis of a Grand Slam. I know the last set, you know, it probably looked liked from court side or on TV that it was, you know, not a great look,” he said.

“I was fighting hard. You know, I’m proud of myself. I tried to fight as hard as I can. Just not going to get it done against someone like that.”

There were plenty of positives for Draper to take from his tenth major main draw, as he became the first British man to reach the U.S. Open semi-finals since Andy Murray won the tourna-



Jack Draper

I just need to keep on learning, keep on growing, keep on having situations like today where I came unstuck

JACK DRAPER

ment 12 years ago. Draper was ranked 123rd

when he made an inspired run to the fourth round last year despite an injury-plagued season, and he believes he will get results with more experience.

“I just need to keep on learning, keep on growing, keep on having situations like today where I came unstuck,” he said.

“It’s experiences, doing all the right things, it’s training consistently, and over time you just progress and you get stronger and you get better.”

Ostapenko and Kichenok win women’s doubles title

New York, United States - Latvian Jelena Ostapenko and Ukraine’s Lyudmyla Kichenok won the women’s doubles crown at the U.S. Open with a 6-4 6-3 victory over the Chinese-French pairing Zhang Shuai and Kristina Mladenovic on Friday.

The win marked the first women’s Grand Slam doubles title for former French Open singles champion Ostapenko and Kichenok, who also reached the final together at this year’s Australian Open.

“We are a really great team and I think it was just an amazing two weeks,” Ostapenko said during the on-court trophy presentation.

“We didn’t expect anything, we were just playing better and better every match, we didn’t lose one set, so it was a really good tournament.”

Ostapenko and Kichenok broke in the second game for an early advantage and, after the Chinese-French pairing got the set back on serve, had a massive hold in an eight-deuce game during which they fought off five break points for a 5-4 lead.



Latvia’s Jelena Ostapenko and Ukraine’s Lyudmyla Kichenok celebrate after winning the women’s doubles title

From there, Zhang was unable to keep the stanza alive and ultimately gifted the frame to her seventh-seeded opponents with a double-fault on the second set point.

In the second set, Zhang and Mladenovic broke early for a 2-0 lead but Ostapenko and Kichenok broke the Chinese for a third time to reach 3-3 and broke the Frenchwoman at love to reach 5-3 before Ostapenko

closed out the match on her serve.

“I still have goosebumps after match point. It feels amazing,” said Kichenok, who now has two Grand Slam titles after winning her first at the Wimbledon mixed doubles event in 2023.

“I’m blessed to have such partner by my side on the court. Thanks for carrying me these two weeks.”

Sinner plays down wrist injury sustained in semifinal

New York, United States - US Open finalist Jannik Sinner is hopeful the wrist injury he sustained in a fall during Friday’s win over Jack Draper will not be a bother during the final.

Top seed Sinner, the first Italian man to reach a U.S. Open singles final, received medical attention beside the court during the gruelling straight-set win, while his opponent vomited three times in the New York heat.

“The physio (loosened) it up very fast on court, so after I felt OK in the beginning. Then, after, it went away by playing, which is good,” Sinner said. “Let’s see how it is tomorrow when it’s cold. It’s going to be a different feeling. Hopefully it’s nothing to concern about.”

The 23-year-old said he expected Britain’s Draper, who reached a Grand Slam semi-final for the first time, to be a strong contender.

“Playing against Jack, it’s never easy. He served very well... Happy to win this one,” Sinner said.

The Australian Open champion, who faces American 12th seed Taylor Fritz in the final on Sunday, said he expected a difficult match.



Italy’s Sara Errani and Andrea Vavassori celebrate after winning the mixed doubles title

Italy’s Errani and Vavassori win mixed doubles title

New York, United States - Italian Sara Errani said winning her maiden mixed doubles Grand Slam title at the U.S. Open on Thursday had capped off an impressive season that exceeded even her wildest dreams.

The 37-year-old teamed up with compatriot Andrea Vavassori to defeat American pair Taylor Townsend and Donald Young in the final at Arthur Ashe sta-

dium. Errani, a five-times women’s doubles Grand Slam champion, took home a gold medal alongside Jasmine Paolini at the Paris Olympics as well as winning the Italian Open this year. She and Paolini also reached the final of the French Open.

“No words. It is more than a dream. I never dreamed this, so it’s much more. It’s an unbelievable year,” Errani told reporters.

It is more than a dream. I couldn’t expect this. I’m enjoying a lot. When you win, you enjoy a lot. When you lose, not too much.

SARA ERRANI

“(We won) in Rome, then we did the final in Paris. I play good also in singles. Now this mixed doubles. I have no words.

“I couldn’t expect this. I’m enjoying a lot. Of course when you win, you enjoy a lot. When you lose, not too much. But you have to stay there, to keep going even in the tough moments, and I think that I did that also.”

Errani’s success has added to

an already impressive season for Italian tennis, with Jannik Sinner winning the Australian Open, while Paolini finished runner-up at the French Open and Wimbledon. “It’s an incredible year for me, but also for Italy,” Errani said.

“Jannik, Jasmine, Simone (Bolelli) and him (Vavassori) in doubles, me and Jasmine, so it’s really good moment for Italy, I think.”

STUNNING COMEBACK



Didier Deschamps

Deschamps' experiment 'damaged the overall performance'

Paris, France - France manager Didier Deschamps spoke before Friday's game with Italy about using the Nations League as an opportunity to test new players, and after their 3-1 defeat, that plan has not changed.

Deschamps was heavily criticised after Euro 2024, where, his side had failed to impress, and against Italy he gave forward Michael Olise his debut, and also brought on midfielder Manu Kone for his first game.

"It's a question of balance/imbalance, the team is young and some made their debuts today," Deschamps said. "I know that by not putting the starting team on the pitch I took some risks and this damaged the overall performance."

At the Euros, France conceded three goals in six games, but conceded three to Italy as Deschamps left Jules Kounde and Dayot Upamecano on the bench.



Italy's Federico Dimarco celebrates after scoring against France in their Nations League A Group 2 opening match on Friday

Italy shock France despite conceding after just 12 seconds

Paris, France - Italy went behind after 12 seconds but came back to beat France 3-1 in a highly entertaining Nations League A Group 2 opening game on Friday.

Bradley Barcola found the net in the opening minute when he caught Giovanni Di Lorenzo napping and raced into the area before curling his shot past Gianluigi Donnarumma.

ing to impress at Euro 2024, but it was Italy who earned the much-needed victory.

It was a terrible start for the visitors with Di Lorenzo taking far too long over a back-pass and Barcola pounced to score his first international goal. A frantic start to the game gave Italy the chance to level five minutes later but Frattesi hammered a close range header off the crossbar.

Donnarumma pulled off saves from Kylian Mbappe and Michael Olise, making his debut, before Italy found the equaliser, with Tonalì's assist just as impressive as the strike which found the net.

Tonalì, back in the side after serving a 10-month ban for breaching betting rules, played a

Five minutes after the interval and France were rocked again with Davide Frattesi putting Italy ahead, and Giacomo Raspadori gave the visitors the breathing space they needed in the 74th minute

Italy levelled after half an hour with Federico Dimarco volleying home a deft back-heel flicked pass from Sandro Tonalì, and the sides went in level at the break after a pulsating opening half.

Five minutes after the interval and France were rocked again with Davide Frattesi putting Italy ahead, and Giacomo Raspadori gave the visitors the breathing space they needed in the 74th minute to silence the Parc des Prince crowd.

Both sides came into the game looking for redemption after fail-

beautiful one-two with Dimarco who continued his run into the box and struck a sweet left-footed volley beyond the reach of Maignan.

Italy came out of the blocks quickest in the second half and Retegui's perfect ball across the goal found Frattesi sliding in and his shot beat Maignan at his near post. They found the third goal with two substitutes combining. Destiny Udogie passed to Raspadori running into the box and he went round William Saliba to fire past the oncoming Maignan.

'Money speaks louder than players' voices'

Debrecen, Hungary - Manchester City midfielder and Belgium captain Kevin De Bruyne said money talks louder to FIFA and UEFA as he raised concerns over the impact of a crammed calendar on players' health and performance.

All three European club competitions have been expanded to 36 teams this season and FIFPRO's European member unions have started legal action against FIFA over the expanded men's 32-team Club World Cup, starting next June in the United States.

The 33-year-old was asked if he is concerned about the added fixtures in both club and international competitions. "The real problem will emerge after the Club World Cup," De Bruyne told reporters ahead of Friday's Nations League match against Israel. "We know there will be only three weeks between the Club World Cup final and the first Premier League match. So, we have three weeks to rest and prepare for another 80 matches."

In July, soccer players' union FIFPRO said it is filing a complaint with EU antitrust regulators regarding FIFA's in-

ternational match calendar.

A report released by FIFPRO on Thursday said some players have as little as 12% of the year to rest, which is a result of competition organisers not prioritising player welfare.

"Maybe this year things will be okay, but next year could be problematic. The Professional

The issue is that UEFA and FIFA keep adding extra matches, and we can raise concerns, but no solutions have been found.

KEVIN DE BRUYNE

Footballers' Association in England and other player associations have tried to find solutions. The issue is that UEFA and FIFA keep adding extra matches, and we can raise concerns, but no solutions have been found. It seems that money speaks louder than the players' voices."

Brazil edge Ecuador to return to winning ways

Curitiba, Brazil - Brazil got back to winning ways in the South American World Cup qualifiers with a drab 1-0 victory over Ecuador on Friday thanks to first-half goal by Real Madrid forward Rodrygo.

After its first streak of losses in three successive qualifiers, Brazil did just enough to earn the win that lifted the struggling five-time World Cup champions to fourth in the standings with 10 points.

They are eight points behind leaders Argentina and only two points over Ecuador in sixth, the last spot guaranteed a berth at the 2026 finals.

Playing their first match after a disappointing Copa America defeat to Uruguay in the quarter-final, Brazil had another lacklustre performance, dominating possession but failing to create clear chances throughout the match.

Brazil misplaced too many passes and struggled to connect up front, out of ideas on how to beat Ecuador's rock solid defensive block.

Ecuador were relentless while applying a physically aggressive pressure high with three hard-working forwards, making the locals uncomfortable when putting the ball in play. They Brazil almost no room to get inside their box ei-



Rodrygo scored the winner for Brazil

ther, forcing them to roam the ball horizontally around their penalty area and resort to strikes from long range.

Brazil's only two shots on target on the first half were made by Rodrygo, who, after stinging the goalkeeper's hands from a free kick early, were lucky to break the deadlock in the 29th minute. His effort fired from the edge of the box deflected off a defender and arched around the wrong-footed goalkeeper before hitting the right

post and finding the back of the net.

Ecuador almost levelled in a counterattack right before the break, but defender Gabriel Magalhaes denied Moises Caicedo's effort with a last-minute goal-line clearance.

Brazil came back even worse in the second half, with an uninspired Vinicius Jr creating their only shot on target in an absolutely morose 45 minutes, with boos greeting the final whistle.



Luis Suarez failed to find the target in his farewell match for Uruguay

Paraguay hold Uruguay goalless in Suarez farewell match

Montevideo, Uruguay - Paraguay held Uruguay to a goalless draw in their South American World Cup qualifier on Friday, with striker Luis Suarez bringing his 17-year international career to an end at the Centenario stadium in Montevideo.

The 37-year-old forward reached 143 appearances for his country, finishing as their all-time leading scorer with 69 goals.

Marcelo Bielsa's side, who finished third in the Copa America, played without five players from their starting line-up, including Darwin Nunez, who were suspended for their involvement in clashes with fans following the

defeat to Colombia in the continental showpiece in July.

Uruguay wasted several chances, most notably a first-half right-footed volley from Suarez that struck the post after Facundo Pellistri's cross.

Paraguay also created clear-cut opportunities, with Miguel Almiron coming closest only to be denied by goalkeeper Sergio Rochet, but neither side managed to capitalise.

Uruguay remain second in the World Cup qualifying standings on 14 points, four behind leaders Argentina. They face Venezuela on Tuesday, while Paraguay take on Brazil.



Belgium's Kevin De Bruyne celebrates after scoring against Israel

De Bruyne's double helps Belgium beat Israel

Debrecen, Hungary - Kevin De Bruyne netted twice to lead Belgium to a 3-1 win over Israel in their opening Nations League clash on Friday, played behind closed doors in neutral Hungary because of security concerns.

Belgium's captain put his side ahead after 21 minutes but Israel equalised nine minutes before the break despite spending most of the half defending at Debre-

cen's Nagyerdei Stadion.

Youri Tielemans restored Belgium's lead directly after half-time and De Bruyne tucked away a penalty soon after to extend their advantage.

Belgium could afford to waste another penalty as they went top of League A Group 2 alongside with Italy, who beat France 3-1 in Paris in Friday's other group game.

De Bruyne's double came one day after he had emphasised his commitment to the Belgian side, ending months of speculation over his future with the national team.

The 33-year-old had complained about the prospect of playing too many matches and left his future with Belgium uncertain after the European Championship in mid-year.

'WE WILL WORK HARD TO KEEP OUR HOPES ALIVE'



Oman's Ahmed al Khamisi (L) battles for the ball with Iraq's Aymen Hussein during their World Cup qualifier in Basra on Thursday

Coach Jaroslav Silhavy says Oman will bounce back after going down fighting to Iraq in World Cup qualifier

Basra, Iraq - Oman head coach Jaroslav Silhavy felt his side deserved something from the match after they went down fighting to Iraq 1-0 in their opening AFC Asian Qualifiers - Road to 26 Group A match at the Basra Stadium on Thursday. Aymen Hussein scored in the

first half for Iraq who play Kuwait on Tuesday, while Oman will be aiming to bounce back when they face South Korea. Hussein broke the deadlock in the 13th minute when he rose highest to head home Ali Jasim's corner. "The match could have ended with a better result than a loss, and the Iraqi team snatched the victory by exploiting a corner kick," said Silhavy. "Our players were able to regain their composure after falling behind but were unable to score. This loss does not end our campaign and we will work hard to keep our hopes alive." Oman sprung into action in the 24th minute with Abdulrahman Al Mushaifri missing his headed attempt from inside the box before Issam Al Sabhi forced Iraq keeper Jalal Hassan into ac-

Our players were able to regain their composure after falling behind but were unable to score. This loss does not end our campaign and we will work hard to keep our hopes alive.

JAROSLAV SILHAVY

tion moments later. Al Saadi wasted another attempt for Oman in the 25th minute after shooting his effort from distance over the bar following Al Busaidi's headed pass, while Jameel Al Yahmadi had his attempt saved from inside the six-yard-box two minutes later. Oman kept Hassan busy in the second half with the shot-stopper keeping out All Mushaifri's long range effort in the 49th minute before foiling Al Yahmadi a minute later. Despite the introduction of Zahir Al Aghbari, Muhsen Al Ghassani and Khalid Al Braiki, Oman struggled to create clear cut chances with Hassan pulling off a fine save to repel Abdullah Fawaz's effort from distance in the 88th minute. Oman suffered more woes in the fifth minute of added time as Arshad Said Al Alawi was sent off after picking up a second yellow card as Iraq held on for the points.

Iraq coach Jesus Casas said they still have a long way to go to secure a ticket to the World Cup. "The most important thing is the three points. In general the first match is always not easy, and we saw teams like Australia, Qatar and South Korea suffer," said Casas. "We did not have much possession of the ball and the physical factor was the reason for that. In any case, these are just three points from one match, and we have nine matches remaining and we have to think about each one separately." "We have four days left before the match against Kuwait, and they are not enough to help the players with the physical factor but we have 26 players, we have alternatives to compensate for those who are exhausted."



Rahul Dravid

IPL side Rajasthan Royals appoint Dravid as head coach

Jaipur, India - Former India captain and coach Rahul Dravid has been appointed Rajasthan Royals' head coach on a multi-year contract ahead of the 2025 Indian Premier League (IPL) season, the IPL franchise said on Friday. Dravid will begin his tenure immediately, working with the team's Director of Cricket Kumar Sangakkara. The 51-year-old will return to Rajasthan after spending five seasons with the team from 2011 to 2015, having captained the side in 2012 and 2013 and working as their mentor in 2014 and 2015. "We are delighted to be bringing Rahul back to the franchise. His exceptional coaching capabilities are evident with the transformation he's driven in Indian cricket," Jake Lush McCrum, Royals' Chief Executive Officer, said. "Rahul has already got to work

with Kumar (Sangakkara) and the rest of the team, as we prepare for this exciting new period for the franchise starting with IPL retention and the auction just around the corner." Dravid led Rajasthan to a third-place finish in IPL 2015 and soon after took charge as the head coach of the India Under-19 and India A teams, leading the U-19 team to victory in the 2018 World Cup final. After four years as coach of the junior teams, Dravid was named Head of Cricket at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in July 2019, followed by his appointment as head coach of the Indian National Cricket team in Nov. 2021. Dravid led the national team to the top of the test, one-day internationals and Twenty20 rankings during his tenure and then stepped down from his role in June after India's T20 World Cup triumph.

Ivory Coast, Egypt, Morocco post victories in Cup of Nations qualifiers

Cape Town, South Africa - The Ivory Coast left it late but still made a winning start to the defence of their Africa Cup of Nations title by beating Zambia 2-0 at home on Friday in their opening qualifier for the 2025 final. The Ivorians won the last edition on home soil in Febru-

ary and are heavily fancied to be one of the top two finishers in Group G and book a place at the next tournament. But they had to turn to substitute striker Jean-Philippe Krasso to ensure success, as he came off the bench in Bouake to net twice in the final 16 minutes.

Friday's round of qualifying matches also saw a win for Morocco, who will host the 2025 finals and are automatically in the 24-team field but still participating in the preliminary competition. The Democratic Republic of Congo and Egypt were the other former continental

champions who got their campaigns off to successful starts. Four penalties were awarded in the first half of Morocco's 4-1 win over Gabon in Agadir - two converted for the hosts by Hakim Ziyech but Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang had his first effort for Gabon saved before netting a second

spot kick 24 minutes later for a 2-1 halftime deficit. Aubameyang also struck the woodwork but a 59th minute goal from Real Madrid's Brahim Diaz and a late effort, from a near impossible angle, from Ayoub El Kaabi ensured a comprehensive 4-1 victory for Morocco.

Sadio Mane's 16th-minute goal handed Senegal the lead in their Group L clash with Burkina Faso. He raced away to score after teammate Nicolas Jackson had stripped the visitors of possession to set Mane away. But they gave away a late equaliser deep in stoppage

time for a 1-1 draw. Egypt made light work in Cairo of the threat of the Cape Verde Islands, who were the surprise package of the last finals, with Rami Rabia and Omar Marmoush netting in the first half and Ibrahim Adel adding a 70th minute effort for a 3-0 success.

CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED

A smart, honest and efficient male, having a total experience of 22 years+ in MIS, Budget, Cashflow, Treasury, Banking, Tax, Audit, with the knowledge of SAP FICO, ERP, GPS, Tally, is looking for a senior position in Accounts & Finance. Contact: +968-91468679, Email: amitpandit007@gmail.com.

Indian male over 15 years experience in a leading MNC for civil project, fitout project and planning engineer with valid Oman driving licence is looking for a suitable placement. Contact: +968-96568922

An experienced teacher with master's in Food Science & Nutrition, seeking roles in elementary school teaching/food quality department in hotels or food companies. Contact: +968-79115006 92781722 email: abreezaanees60401@gmail.com

BIRTHDAY WISHES



ABHINAV.S.

For being such an amazing boy, we hope that you have the best birthday party ever! Wishing our sweet yeast a very Happy Birthday!!! Shyam & Lekshmi

SEND YOUR REQUEST FOR

Birthday/ Anniversary wishes to wish@apexmedia.co.om with your resident card copy (It's free of cost)



FOR RENT/SALE

Available 2100 sq meter best in class Warehouse cum office Space, fully furnished ready to use, Located at Prime area of Ghala in the heart of the city having easy access to airport & express Way.

Contact: Mr. Sumit Mudgil - 956 16835
Girish Sewani - 93893596



WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

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

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



عيادة فصول السنة للطب الهندي التقليدي ALL SEASON AYURVEDA CLINIC

The most efficient and authentic Ayurvedic Treatment & Medicine, Yoga, Kalari, Panchakarma, Massage, Dhara etc... Rehabilitation, Beauty therapy & post Delivery Care

Zaher Building, 1st Floor, Flat 8A, Al Khuwair Service Road, near Al Zawawi Mosque & Burger-king Tel: 24475280, GSM: 95371664, 92504980, Website: www.siddhayur.com



RHEIM ALKHADI

Templates for Liberation

Iraqi American artist **Rheim Alkadhi** offers a path toward liberation in Palestine-themed artworks in London

If you enter the lower galleries of London's Institute of Contemporary Arts right now, you'll encounter a postcard-like image described by the museum as 'an intervention'.

The image's front side shows a beautiful portrait of a person while the other side portrays a very direct statement on the genocide in Gaza, according to its maker, artist Rheim Alkadhi, who first visited Palestine around three decades ago as a teenager.

There, she said in an interview, she "got a picture early on of the discrepancy between the news we are given and what is actually happening."

That card sets the stage for 'Templates for Liberation', Alkadhi's first show in the UK. The statement on the card is the Berlin-based artist's way of 'seeking this very direct, relevant, irresistible confrontation in art,' she said, speaking to ARTnews following the opening of the show. She added that the text instructs the viewer to leave the exhibition and to resist among co-equals.

The Iraqi American artist's show centers on the artist's thinking about the possibilities of art as an agent for change and as a means for proposing solutions to the lasting effects of issues like colonialism and war, not just in her



Rheim Alkadhi's ICA London solo show featuring floor and wall sculptures made with tarpaulin



family's homeland, but also in other countries including Palestine, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sudan. Her goal, she said, is to ultimately allow viewers to find "ways of arriving at liberation outside the gallery".

Alkadhi's installations are often composed of sculptures, texts, and images, all of which stem from her field research. She has conducted that research in countries ranging from Palestine to Lebanon, from Iraq to Jordan, from Morocco to sites along Europe's borders. Her work has begun appearing across the globe, in biennials staged in Shanghai, Sharjah, and elsewhere.

Fascination for 'plasticised fields'

The 2020 Guggenheim Fellow's body of work is on view in the London show across two gallery spaces. The main gallery space features sculptural installations created out of tarpaulin, a material used to cover goods transported by vehicles on long distance travels.

Her first contact with tarpaulin was when she saw used fragments of the material while collecting objects in Jordan - the country with the second-largest number of refugees worldwide, according to the UN, in the early 2010s. The fragments looked to her like 'multi-coloured plasticised

fields," she recalled. "This fascinated me, ground that is able to be folded, rolled, transported. It also spoke of migration, taking the concept of land with you."

Alkadhi lived in Jordan around the time of the Arab Spring, a series of protests that led to some Middle Eastern and North African presidents leaving their posts. At the time, she was also invited to do a residency in Palestine, where she lived with three sisters and their mother in the West Bank. She said this was a really important moment for her.

Ironically, tarpaulins cross borders with little difficulty. At the same time, humans, often escaping wars or destruction of their homeland largely caused by Western governments and corporations, are criminalised trying to cross borders around the world.

Alkadhi said that, some four years ago, she witnessed this very phenomenon during months of research on the Greek Island of Lesbos at the European border with Turkey. To get there, many people crossing from parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Asia face a dangerous boat ride. Upon arrival, these migrants could face criminal charges.

"It's all part of the capitalist framework of the world we live in," Alkadhi said. "What are being transported or distributed are raw

materials or products derived from extraction industries depleting the soil mostly of the Global South."

She added, "For me, that's what the tarp represents - a bitter comparison between cargo and migrant bodies."

The second gallery space has been turned by Alkadhi into a reading room. Titled 'The Land and the People', this piece features digitally rendered portraits, books, and text commentary by Alkadhi that highlight the impact of colonial borders drawn by Britain and France between the 1910s and '20s. These borders

have continued to affect modern-day Iraq, where the loss of land for farming to international oil companies, the destruction of the environment, and the realities of war remain constant.

In that room, there are volumes of The Anthropology of Iraq, published initially in the 1930s and based on studies started about a decade earlier in Iraq by anthropologist Henry Field, who worked on commission for the Field Museum and, later, the British government. These studies saw locals identified only by a number, photographed in mugshot-style, and then divided into different groups. The data that was collected was used by then United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt for his previously secret 'M' project to scout underpopulated regions for the resettlement of millions expected to be displaced by World War II.

Narrative of liberation

Before entering the second space from the first, a visitor is faced with a border - a dirty, stained, straightened-out, and slightly

crushed tarpaulin sculpture titled 'Disappeared Border Segment: Toward the Inalienable Right of the Dispossessed to Cross From Any Direction'.

"It's proposing legal right of passage in any direction but only for the dispossessed - not the legal right of passage for big corporations, rich people, or people vacationing," the artist explained.

Topics such as these may seem contemporary, but they have been subject of Alkadhi's work for more than a decade. In 2012, ICA London curator Andrea Nitsche-Krupp came across Alkadhi's work at Documenta 13, but it was not until August of last year that the two began discussions for the current show.

Then the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel happened followed by Israeli military action in Gaza, where more than 40,000 people have been killed since then, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

"Everything became much more urgent," Nitsche-Krupp said, adding that Alkadhi "had been thinking about a narrative of liber-

ation. Templates for liberation had been something on her mind before this point, but once things escalated to such an insane degree, [it] added a kind of urgency around [adding] Palestine to the project in thinking about templates for liberation."

A world beyond

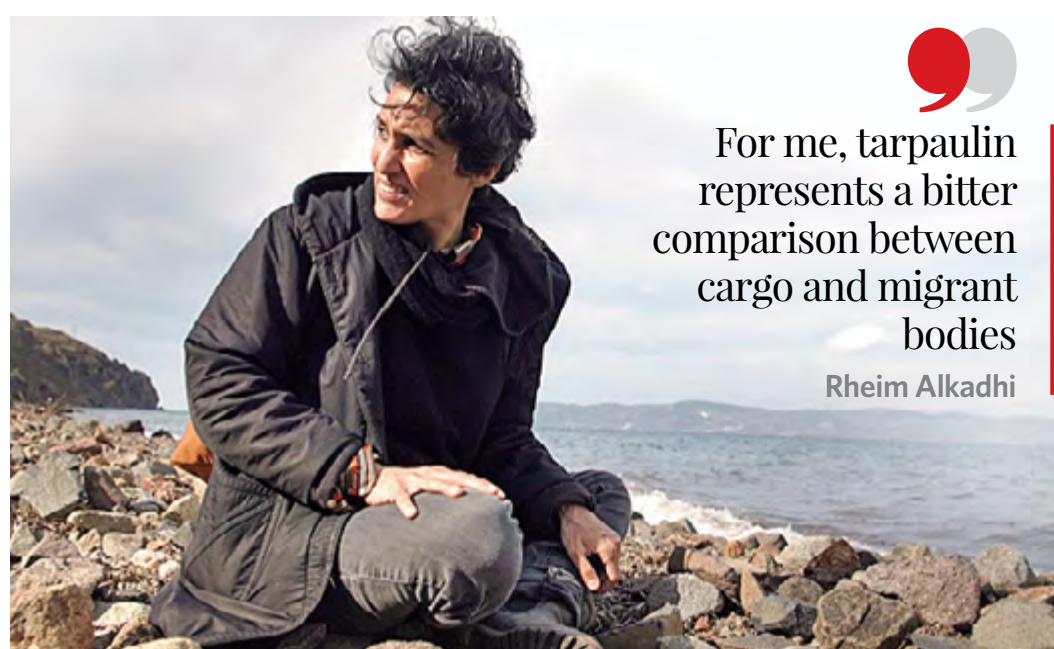
Alkadhi was born to an Iraqi father and an American mother in Buffalo, New York, in 1973. Her family then moved to Baghdad, and remained there until 1980, when the artist and her parents left Iraq for the United States. This was just before the start of the Iran-Iraq war, and Alkadhi recalled 'relative ease' of the move, something, she said, was possible because of her mother's nationality.

"I remember distinctly the tension of those months and leaving belongings in a room of a house that I was sure I would see again," she said. "It was my home, after all, but I never saw any of it again."

The artist was introduced to field research through her mother, the anthropologist Ann Bragdon, whose profession involved work in Iraq. Tagging along with her mom, a young Alkadhi was exposed to a world beyond the one where she lived in. She also met people from all walks of life. The artist said that today, she thinks of art as a voice, one that she uses to advocate for those who can't do so for themselves. She attributed that line of thought to her mother.

As part of the exhibition, an artist book is published in collaboration with the artist and Joe Shakespeare, who heads the ICA Bookshop. In it, Alkadhi wrote prose that connects the exhibition to the present. The book also includes documentary photos taken by Alkadhi's mother in Iraq in the 1970s.

(Courtesy: artnews.com)



For me, tarpaulin represents a bitter comparison between cargo and migrant bodies

Rheim Alkadhi

INTERVIEW:
R MADHAVAN

The re-release of the 2001 Bollywood movie *Rehna Hain Tere Dil Mein* - which enjoys a cult status - starring yesteryear chocolate hero R Madhavan and Miss Asia Pacific International 2000, Dia Mirza, unleashed a romantic hysteria among the younger generation this week. “I did have butterflies in my stomach once again,” Maddy (as Madhavan is fondly known) tells **Hubert Vaz** in an exclusive chat from London, on the sidelines of a shoot over the weekend. Excerpts:



Maddy mania

Looking back at *Rehna Hain Tere Dil Mein* (RHTDM), why was it decided to re-release the film now, since it is just 23 years later, and not a milestone like 25 years? Actually, this should be a question for the producers (Vashu Bhagnani). There seemed to be a nice ‘window of opportunity’ in the theatres with no major films releasing, so, they took a chance with the re-release. I didn’t expect this sort of an outcome but, I think, the best person to answer that would be Vashuji and his team.

What are your frank sentiments about the re-release - did you have any doubts or butterflies in your stomach, just as in 2001? Release or re-release time are both the same, and there is definitely butterflies in the stomach, though the stakes are not as high. I was very eagerly looking forward to how the audiences today will react to the film, so, I did have butterflies in my stomach once again. Of course, this was a film that was released 23 years ago and it had not been a box-office success then,

though it later on became an iconic film. But, what was surprising is the fact that the film is now available on *YouTube*, on multiple *OTT* channels and has been on television almost twice every week since the re-release. So, it has been viewed many times over, despite which I was really stunned to see the number of people who came to see the film on the first weekend and it is very good to know that some of the work you’ve done has stood the test of time for over two decades.

Looking back at your performance, do you now feel that some things could’ve been done better? I don’t know why, but I hate all my performances on retrospect, especially if the film doesn’t do well. With RHTDM, I hated it because I thought I could’ve look better, I could’ve dressed better, I could’ve underplayed, may be. Like I did in my first film *Alai Payuthey* (Tamil, in 2000). But over a period of time, when the film got its cult status, I could see what people liked in the performance. Very strangely, I began to really like the free-flowing emotions and intensity of both, Madhav Shastri and Reena (the two lead characters) in the film. And, its only when my son and wife pointed out, the spirit of the

character, and the way I had played it with gay abandon, is when I started wondering whether I still have it in me to do something like that again. I would love to have that charm but, considering my age, I’m very restricted with having to choose a character like that but I can see why people loved Madhav Shastri – he was fire, he really was. And when college students took up mechanical engineering because of that, and gave up engineering because of *3 Idiots*, I feel guilty for both. But it really feels good to be part of iconic films.

Did you already have the nickname ‘Maddy’ then or was it a gift by the movie, that stayed on till date? Do you love it or hate it? Oh, my nick name has always been Mad or Maddy. That’s a name I got when I was living with cowboys in Canada, as an exchange student, in 1989. They couldn’t pronounce Madhavan, so it became Madhave and Madhaav, and finally Mad or Maddy. I’m really proud of that name, it has an endearance to it – people call me Maddy with a lot of love and so, I’m totally comfortable with it.

You were a silent lover in RHTDM as well as in Tanu Weds Manu - is it in any way close to your real personality? I think both, Madhav Shastri (in RHTDM) and Manu (in *Tanu Weds Manu*), are an amalgamation of my real life character. I won’t say in its entirety, but a large part of their characters is very much me. It’s difficult to play those characters if you don’t have those traits inbuilt in you.

Would you say Student of the Year had similar overtones inspired by RHTDM? Well, some bits of it do have similarities.

Since you had done the original Tamil movie (Minnale), was it an advantage doing the Hindi version - RHTDM - as you were conversant with the soul of the character? Doing a remake is very difficult for me and I don’t really enjoy the process. And doing a remake of your own work is even more difficult and very actors have had the opportunity to understand what I’m saying. I doubt, I can even count that on one hand – actors who’ve remade their own films in a different language - may be Kamal Hassan Sir, at best. But, it’s a very creepy experience, you know. When you need your entire mental faculty at your disposal while you’re performing, one corner of your brain is thinking ‘are you doing

it as well as the original or are you not being sincere enough?’ And that part of my brain I can use when I’m doing it for the first time freely. So many films, like *Vikram Vedha* and *3 Idiots* and a couple of other films that were offered to me to be made in a different language and I refused politely, because I don’t think I have the ability to pull it off in today’s world, with the similar freedom I’d done the original with.

Looking back, do you think there was anything wrong with the storyline, which could’ve been changed? No, I don’t think so. On retrospect, it’s unfair to comment on the story. I thought, it was a very convincing story and I wouldn’t have changed anything, with respect to the story as of now.

The re-release has been well received now, when the dynamics of cinema and cinema houses has changed drastically. How do you feel about that? It’s very empowering, very flattering and absolutely a delight that the audiences in the theatres today are singing, dancing, whistling, sending reels from the theatre, pre-empting the dialogues and the phone number of the girl, and repeating the dialogues before I can say it. This is happening at the theatres and I’ve put up multiple stories on my *Instagram*. To see the audience is so involved, is a blessing. I’ve never seen that for years. And the whistles, the laughter, the tears, people singing along...it’s like a party, it’s like going to a stadium full of fans from the same team. What is stunning for me, is not only are the grandmothers and the daughters coming (to see the film), but the grandchildren in their teens are sending me videos from the theatre, saying how much they loved the film and the dialogues. That was unexpected – it’s good to know that you have a newer generation of fan followers.

If Madhavan had set out to realise his dream in the current situation, do you think things would’ve worked out in his favour? I’m sure of one thing – if I was sent out in the world today, I would definitely do things differently from the others, I would have the ability to think laterally, and I would have the courage to follow through with my instincts. And that would’ve definitely made me stand out. I do not know how successful I would’ve been, but being mundane and ordinary has always been a big fear for me.



شانجان اوتو
CHANGAN AUTO
الابتكار في كل شيء



Luxury in every detail

2.0L Turbo Engine, 233 hp, 8-Speed AT, 4WD
SUPER WARRANTY 6 YEARS / UNLIMITED MILEAGE*

EMI
OMR 199
for 6 years





3.5" TFT + 10.25" TFT + 9.2" TFT cluster



Wireless Charging



21" Alloy Wheels



Hidden Door Handles



Front Airbags, Side Airbags, Curtain Airbags



360° Camera



Forward Collision Warning & Intelligent Adaptive Cruise Control



Lane Change Assist

Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment LLC

800 508000
9662 8909
www.changanoman.com

Showrooms : Qurum 96641010, Mawaleh 97888180
Sohar 95391200, Salalah 96629050, Ibbi 96628930
Sales Centers : Nizwa 96628940, Barka 96629010, Sur 96628920



LYNK & CO

EXCLUSIVE OFFERS ON PREMIUM RANGE

09



03+



03



01



05



EMI Starting from
^168 OMR /Month

EMI Starting from
^196 OMR /Month

EMI Starting from
^118 OMR /Month

EMI Starting from
^135 OMR /Month

EMI Starting from
^146 OMR /Month



**5Years,
100,000**
KMs Service*



200Ltrs.
Free
Fuel**



1Year
Free
Registration



6 Years
Unlimited
Kms Warranty#



6 Years AAA
Roadside
Assistance##



Trade-in
Benefits***



Showroom - Ghala Heights, Muscat

Offer valid during 8th September to 10th September, 2024 only, on all models.*Conditions apply

71611137

lynkcooman.com

lynkcooman

