



His Majesty to visit Kuwait on Monday

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq will embark on a state visit to the State of Kuwait on Monday, when he will meet Sheikh Mishal al Ahmad al Jaber al Sabah, Emir of Kuwait.

A statement was issued by Diwan of Royal Court to this effect reading as follows: 'In affirmation of the deep-rooted and fraternal relations biding the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Kuwait, His Majesty Sultan

Haitham bin Tariq will go on a state visit to Kuwait with effect from May 13, 2024, during which he will meet with Sheikh Mishal al Ahmad al Jaber al Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait.

'The visit stems from distinguished relations between the two sides. It also reflects the keenness of the two countries' leaderships to push the joint cooperation towards wider horizons.

'The visit will explore areas of the existing cooperation between the two countries in various spheres and means of promoting these to serve interests and aspirations of the Omani and Kuwaiti peoples. It will also discuss a set of topics that boost the march of the GCC action, in light of regional and international developments.

'During the visit, His Majesty will be accompanied by a high-ranking official delegation comprising Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidi, Minister of Diwan of Royal Court, Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Nuamani, Minister of Royal Office, Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Dr Hamad bin Said al Aufi, Head of Private Office, Abdussalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, President of Oman Investment Authority, Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and Dr Saleh bin Amir al Kharousi, Ambassador of Oman to Kuwait.

'May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty in his journeys and grant the two wise leaderships success for the welfare of their countries!'

Travel, tourism sector set for historic growth

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The 2024 *Economic Impact Research* of World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has unveiled a promising future for Oman's travel and tourism sector. With strong government support and strategic initiatives, the sector is poised to not only recover but show unprecedented growth this year.

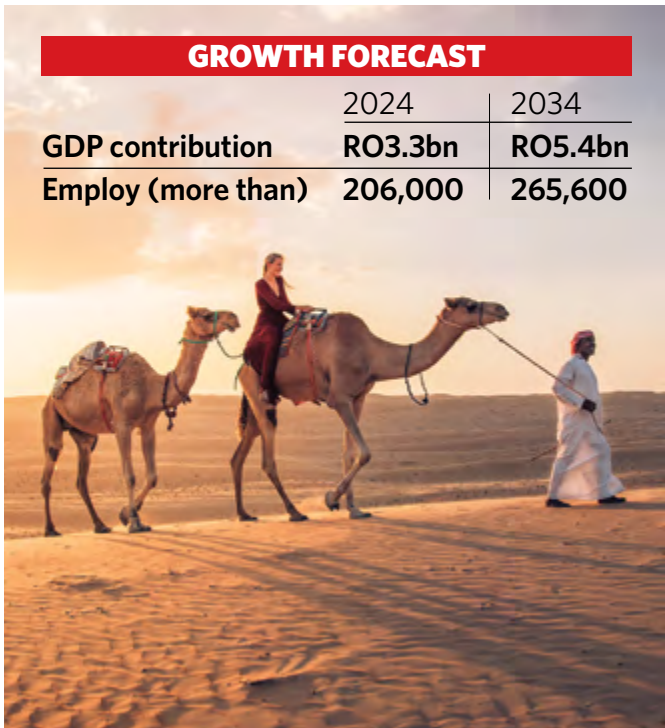
In 2023, the travel and tourism sector's contribution to GDP surged almost 35%, totalling RO2.8bn, on track to surpass previous records. The sector witnessed robust job growth of 15%, now employing 191,500 individuals nationwide.

The global tourism body is forecasting the sector will grow its GDP contribution to more than RO3.3bn in 2024 - or 7.6% of the country's economy - and employ more than 206,000 individuals across the country, with one in 14 people working in the sector.

Last year, international visitors injected RO1.1bn into the economy, a remarkable 69% increase from 2022, while spending by domestic travellers rebounded to RO1.4bn.

Domestic visitor spending is predicted to continue growing, to reach RO1.5bn, beating the 2019 level by just over 8%. Although international visitor spending is forecast to still be behind 2019 levels by RO142.3mn, it is expected to continue growing through 2024.

WTTC is forecasting the sector will grow its annual GDP con-



Oman's travel and tourism sector is on the cusp of a historic revival in 2024

JULIA SIMPSON

tribution to RO5.4bn by 2034 - 9.8% of Oman's economy - and employ more than 265,600 people across the country, with one in 13 residents working in the sector.

Oman as a premier destination

Oman's status as a top tourist destination in the Middle East is clearer than ever, thanks to strategic government investment

and support.

These efforts are not only rejuvenating the economy but also setting the stage for further increases in international travel spending and overall economic contribution from the sector.

Julia Simpson, President and CEO of WTTC, said, "Oman's travel and tourism sector is on the cusp of a historic revival in 2024. The Oman Government has strong support for travel and tourism and is aiming to achieve unprecedented economic growth and job creation."

According to Dr Hashil al Mahrouqi, CEO of Omran Group, the growth of Oman's travel and tourism industry demonstrates the robust support of Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and Oman Investment Authority.

HON'BLE LADY ADMIRES EGYPTIAN ARCHITECTURAL WONDERS

Honourable Lady Sayyida Ahad bint Abdullah bin Hamed al Busaidi, Spouse of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, paid a visit to Egyptian Opera House in the City of Arts and Culture in the new administrative capital in Cairo and the Grand Mosque on Friday. She was accompanied by Entisaar el Sisi, Spouse of President Abdel Fattah el Sisi. The Hon'ble Lady expressed her great admiration for the Islamic edifice and its striking design inspired by the style of Egyptian architecture of the Mamluk era, stressing its prominent role in consolidating the city's identity and promoting the values of peace and tolerance. The Hon'ble Lady began a visit of Egypt on Thursday



Oman airports target 16mn passengers by 2024 year end

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Airports in Oman are projected to host over 16mn passengers by the end of 2024, according to Sheikh Ayman bin Ahmed al Hosani, CEO of Oman Airports.

This announcement was made at Arabian Travel Market in Dubai last week.

Speaking to Omani media at ATM, Hosani emphasised Oman Airports' goal to reach the pre-pandemic passenger count of 16mn by year-end and highlighted the significance of the annual event as a platform for showcasing the services offered at Oman's airports.

He informed that participation in ATM aligns with efforts to promote tourism in Oman by engag-



The hospitality of the Omani people is a key attraction for tourists

SHEIKH AYMAN AL HOSANI

ing with airlines, travel agencies and country pavilion officials.

Hosani described hospitality of the Omani people as a key attraction for tourists and highlighted initiatives like the Omani Cooking Corner at ATM, which witnessed local dishes wooing visitors. Regarding Salalah Airport's readiness for khareef, he informed about three new airlines operating flights to Salalah this season and existing carriers planning to increase frequency.

"Additionally, direct flights to

Salalah from European countries during the winter season have boosted tourism in Dhofar."

He also informed that negotiations are currently underway with airlines like British Airways, Lufthansa, Swiss Air and KLM to attract them to Muscat International Airport and expressed confidence in finalising agreements before year-end or early next year, emphasising the provision of incentive services to facilitate their operations at the airport.

The national travel operator

'Visit Oman' and Oman Airports signed a memorandum of understanding with Emirates Airlines at ATM to promote Oman's tourism packages across its global network.

According to Shabib bin Mohammed al Mamari, Director General of Visit Oman, the agreement aims to identify potential markets interested in Omani tourism.

"The agreement will see the launch of specialised programmes with Emirates Airlines, including tickets, tourist experiences and hotels in Oman. We will discuss the best marketing options and launch a targeted marketing campaign to attract as many travellers and travel companies to Oman as possible," Mamari said.

Oman welcomes support for Palestine's UN membership

Muscat - Oman has welcomed a vote by an overwhelming majority of members of the United Nations General Assembly in favour of a resolution supporting Palestine's right to obtain full membership of the United Nations.

UN General Assembly voted on Friday to support a Palestinian bid to become a full UN member by recognising it as qualified to join and recommending the UN Security Council 'reconsider the matter favourably'.

The General Assembly stated that the global majority is appealing to the UN Security Council to recognise the State of Palestine, as the practical path that will pave the way for a two-state solution and establishment of a just



peace in accordance with international resolutions.

The current resolution does not give Palestinians full membership, but recognises them as qualified to join, and it gives

Palestine more participation and some rights within the UN General Assembly.

Memberships can only be decided by the UN Security Council, and last month, the US vetoed a

Spain, Ireland and other EU states to recognise Palestine on May 21

Madrid, Spain - Spain, Ireland and other EU member states plan to recognise the State of Palestine on May 21, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell, has said.

In an interview on Spanish national radio RNE on Thursday, Borrell was asked to confirm re-

ports in Irish media that Spain, Ireland and a handful of other EU member states could formally recognise the State of Palestine on May 21. Confirming the plans, he said that Spanish Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares had told him that May 21 was the proposed date.

bid for full membership.

The assembly adopted a resolution with 143 votes in favour and nine against - including the US and Israel - while 25 countries abstained.

"We want peace, we want freedom," Palestinian UN Ambassador Riyad Mansour told the assembly before the vote. "A 'yes' vote is a vote for Palestinian existence, it is not against any

state... It is an investment in peace."

An application to become a full UN member first needs to be approved by the 15-member Security Council and then the General Assembly. If the measure is again voted on by the council, it is likely to face the same fate: a US veto.

Robert Wood, Deputy US Ambassador to the UN, told the General Assembly after the vote that unilateral measures at the UN and on the ground will not advance a two-state solution.

Gilad Erdan, Israel's ambassador to the UN, said, "You have opened up the United Nations to modern-day Nazism. It makes me sick."



Omani students get Indian patent for concrete reinforced with date palms



Front-row FIA WEC start for Ahmad al Harthy at Spa-Francorchamps



MoH inaugurates expanded services in Sur Hospital

Our Correspondent
Sur

To ensure the delivery of healthcare services to citizens and reduce waiting lists and referrals, the Ministry of Health (MoH) inaugurated several new services in Sur Hospital on Thursday.

The services expansion project, costing in excess of RO900,000, was financed by Oman LNG.

The inauguration ceremony was held under the patronage of Sheikh Sabbaa Hamdan al Saadi, Secretary-General of Secretariat General of National Celebrations, in the presence of H E Dr Hilal Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health, and several senior officials.

Dr Yahya al Masroori, Director of Sur Hospital, stressed the fact that the ministry has prioritised development of healthcare services to meet the needs of the population and provide them with the highest level of care by enhancing institutional structures characterised by sustainable decentralisation.

This includes providing a healthy work environment for continuous professional devel-

opment, which would positively impact healthcare services.

The services expansion project was supervised directly by the Ministry of Health to align with the government's concerted efforts to ensure the delivery of healthcare services to citizens and enhance decentralisation in governorates based on with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

The expansion project includes a number of rooms equipped with the latest catheterisation equipment, a control room, a reception area, and a magnetic resonance imaging unit, funded by Oman LNG. Dedicated staff qualified in cardiac catheterisation were recruited and nursing teams trained for these services.

The expansion includes an oncology unit comprising an outpatient clinic for patient examination, a room for chemotherapy preparation, and beds in the day-care unit to provide chemotherapy treatment. Oman Cancer Association in South Sharqiyah supported the project by training teams at the National Oncology Centre in The Royal Hospital.

Oman officiates as guest of honour in Doha book fair

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The sultanate is participating as guest of honour in the 33rd edition of Doha International Book Fair, which opened on Thursday under the patronage of Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al Thani, Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The event, which runs till May 18, was attended by H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth.

Oman is participating in the book fair, themed 'Knowledge builds civilisations', with a two-wing pavilion. The first wing showcases a range of Omani publications - from government institutions and civil society associations - while the second displays publications by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MCSY), the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and Sultan Qaboos Uni-



versity.

This is in addition to selected publications from Omani Society of Writers and Literati, the Cultural Club, Oman Memory Centre, and other cultural entities that highlight Omani heritage, intellectual and literary products, and popular and artistic aspects.

The design of Oman's 160sqm pavilion was inspired by Al Alam Palace's architectural style and decor with the sea depicted in it representing the depth of Oman's maritime history.

Ahmed Saud al Rawahi, Assistant Director-General for Knowledge and Cultural Devel-

opment at MCSY, informed that Oman's participation in Doha International Book Fair embodies the depth of fraternal bonds between the peoples of Oman and Qatar.

According to Rawahi, several publications will be launched at the event, including an ency-

clopaedia for young people (*Mawsu'at al Nashi'aa*), a book documenting recent artistic accomplishments (*Al Munjaz Al Tashkeel*) and a book titled 'Treasury of Manuscripts in Oman'.

MoU in culture

On the sidelines of the book fair, Oman and Qatar signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in the field of culture.

The agreement, signed by H E Saeed bin Sultan al Busaidi, Undersecretary for Culture in MCSY, and Dr Ghanem bin Mubarak al Ali, Undersecretary in Qatari Ministry of Culture, will focus on enhancing cooperation across multiple cultural spheres. These include publishing, authorship, translation, digitisation, music, theatre, libraries, archiving, and the protection of intangible cultural heritage.

Additionally, the MoU aims to strengthen ties between cultural institutions and facilitate the exchange of cultural events and initiatives.

Regional workshop to address human exposure to EFM

Muscat - Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), in collaboration with International Telecommunication Union, will organise a regional workshop titled 'Electromagnetic Field Compatibility: Balancing Tower Connections, Safety and Site Selection in the Arab Region'.

The event will take place at

Grand Millennium Hotel from May 13 to 16.

According to a TRA official, the workshop aims to address concerns regarding human exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF) by enhancing awareness levels, reinforcing international standards and showcasing national efforts in Arab countries. It

will feature a meeting of a regional group for the Arab region on telecommunications measurement.

Additionally, the workshop seeks to raise awareness on human exposure to EMF in alignment with international recommendations and standards. It will delve into the regulatory and

legal prerequisites for establishing telecommunications towers, exploring associated challenges, difficulties and proposed solutions. It will also elucidate the impact of urban planning on telecommunications infrastructure, including the placement of telecommunications towers.

The workshop will spotlight

national initiatives in Arab countries and introduce awareness campaigns aimed at proposing practical approaches for measuring EMF. Notably, the event is tailored to a diverse audience comprising telecommunications regulators, ICT policy makers, health and safety experts, and authorities vested in EMF matters.

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Progress of Golden Jubilee Walk project in Seeb reviewed

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ahmed bin Mohammed al Humaidi, Chairman of Muscat Municipality, made a site visit on Thursday to monitor ongoing development of the Golden Jubilee Walkway project in Seeb.

Spread over 84,400sqm, the project is being developed in the middle of the wilayat close to the vibrant hubs of Mawaleh, Al Hail and Al Khoudh. The project includes recreational elements, areas for picnics and physical activity, a bicycle track and various other facilities.

The project will have 38,250sqm of green spaces, pro-

viding a natural environment for outdoor activities.

'The project aims to develop modern outlets that serve the community, enhance physical health, and activate social and economic aspects of the community,' municipality stated.

The civic body added that the project will help spread the culture of sports, stimulate commercial activities and provide a place to hold exhibitions and recreational events.

The project includes a 1,972m pedestrian walkway, a 1,972m bicycle path of 3m width, two sites equipped with equipment for sports, two children's play areas, and car park for 140 vehicles.

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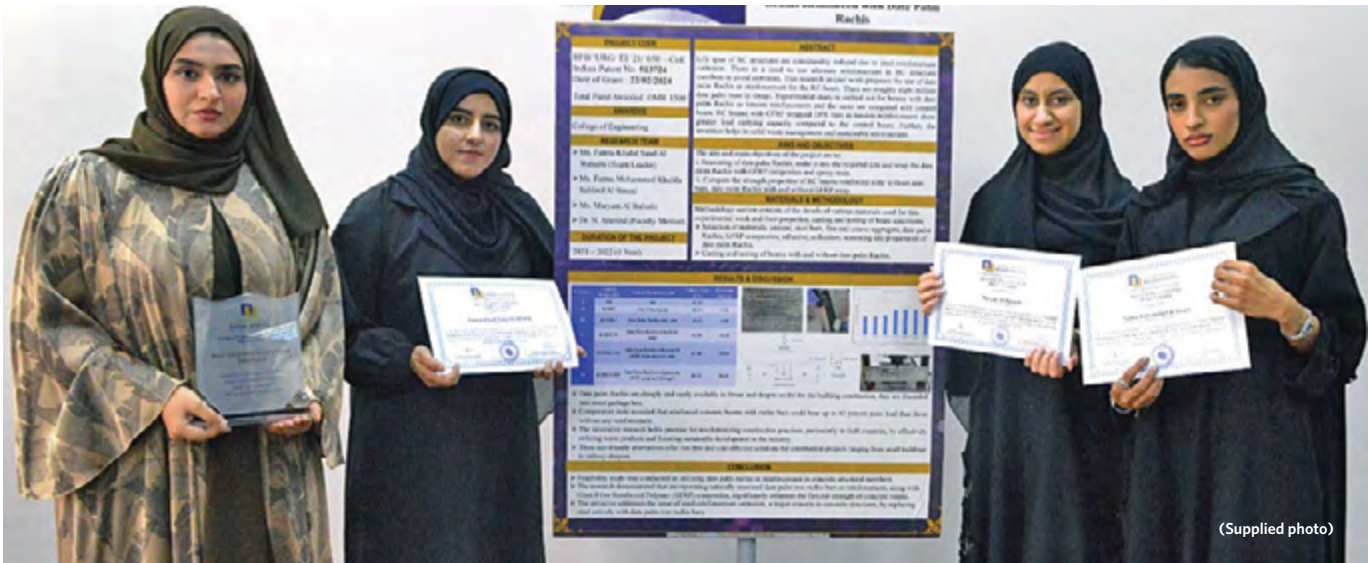
Omani students get Indian patent for concrete reinforced with date palms

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In a remarkable feat of innovation, students and staff of National University of Science and Technology in Muscat have been granted an Indian patent for their pioneering work on utilising date palm rachis as an alternative to steel reinforcement bars in concrete beams.

The eco-friendly alternative offers a rust-free and cost-effective solution for construction projects ranging from small buildings to railway sleepers.

The groundbreaking research, spearheaded by Omani students Fatma Khalid Saud al Wahaibi, Fatma Mohammed Khalifa Sahlouf al Sinani and Maryam Mohammed al Belushi, under the mentorship of Dr N Aravind, Assistant Professor in Department of Civil and Environmental Engi-



neering, has garnered widespread acclaim.

The research proposal, submitted to Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, secured funding of RO1,500 under the Undergraduate Research Grant scheme.

Explaining the essence of the innovation, the student inventors highlighted the abundance of date palm trees in Oman and the significance of repurposing date palm rachis, which are often discarded as waste.

The research demonstrated that incorporating naturally seasoned date palm rachis bars as reinforcement, along with glass fibre reinforced polymer composites, significantly enhances

The eco-friendly alternative offers a rust-free and cost-effective solution for construction projects ranging from small buildings to railway sleepers

flexural strength of concrete beams. Comparative tests revealed that concrete beams reinforced with rachis bars could bear up to 42% more load than those without any reinforcement.

The research also addresses

the issue of steel reinforcement corrosion, a major concern in concrete structures, by replacing steel entirely with date palm rachis bars.

Prof A Vallavaraj, Dean of College of Advanced Technology, provided the impetus for this innovative endeavour, while laboratory instructor Eman Muhye Adeen Muhye al Hatali played a pivotal role in completing the experimental works.

Acknowledging the support received, the innovators expressed gratitude to the Government of India for granting the patent on February 22, 2024. They also extended thanks to Dr Hafez al Sadeq, head of Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Prof Ahmed Hassan al Bulushi, Dean of College of Engineering, Prof K P Ramachandran, Dean of PG Studies and Research, and Prof Syed Mohammed Rizwan, Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies and Research, for their encouragement and providing laboratory facilities.

The research holds promise for revolutionising construction practices, particularly in the Gulf countries, by effectively utilising waste and fostering sustainable development in the construction industry.

4-day national drive to raise climate, tsunami awareness starts today

Our Correspondent
Muscat

North Batinah will host an event called 'National Awareness Campaign on Climate Hazards and Tsunami' from May 12 to 15.

Led by Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), in collaboration with several government entities including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Information, Governorate of North Batinah, Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority, and the National Committee for Emergency Management, the event aims to raise awareness and preparedness for climate ex-

tremes and tsunamis.

An official at CAA said, "The campaign has multiple objectives, including raising awareness among individuals and institutions about the risks associated with climate extremes and tsunamis, enhancing preparedness measures for emergencies, and fostering community partnerships for effective response and recovery efforts."

He added that the key aspects of the campaign include promoting safe behaviour during emergencies and educating the public on ways to mitigate the impacts of such events. This aligns with

Oman's efforts in disaster preparedness, as demonstrated by the establishment of the National Multi Hazard Early Warning System in 2015, which is designed to provide timely alerts for various natural hazards, including tsunamis, cyclones and flash floods.

According to the official, CAA has undertaken several projects to bolster aviation safety and enhance meteorological services, such as installation of a hydrogen generator, establishment of new automatic meteorological stations, and implementation of a wireless emergency alert system for tsunami warnings.

The 'Muzn' programme aims to improve quality of alerts and early warning systems, while the early warning broadcast service for weather conditions via mobile phones, launched in collaboration with Telecommunications Regulatory Authority in 2023, enhances public access to critical information.

"Additionally, efforts such as the 'Friends of Meteorology' initiative aim to engage amateur meteorologists through meetings and training sessions focused on weather forecasting, fostering a broader community involvement in weather-related activities."

Sayyid Badr holds talks with Algerian counterpart

Algiers, Algeria - H E Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, and Ahmed Attaf, Minister of Foreign Affairs and National Community Abroad of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, held a session of political talks on Thursday within the framework of the official visit made by the former to Algeria.

The two sides stressed the importance of working together to serve their common interests. They discussed means of coordination ahead of the Omani-Algerian Joint Committee's next session scheduled to be held this year in Algeria.

They also exchanged views on regional and international issues of common concern, as well as means of enhancing bilateral co-operation to address the current challenges.



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- Interested parties can view used Expired devices in auction yard and receive the bidding on Tuesday and Wednesday 14-15/05/2024 (from 03:00 pm to 05:00 pm.
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- Submitting the offer in a sealed envelope after viewing the Expired devices, entitled by the name of the head of the committee for selling Expired devices, and put the envelope in bid box.
- The presented offer is binding on its owner if it is placed on it, and in the event that the buyer does not pay the purchase price on time, the insurance amount will be forfeited, and the sale will be awarded to another applicant.
- Those who win the bidding will be contacted. They must pay the remaining sum, and they are responsible for moving their items within 3 days from 09:00 am to 03:00 pm.
- The Expired devices are sold in their current condition and SQU is not responsible for any loss or damage to the sold material if the shifting is not completed until 20/05/2024 and it will be imposed (10) Omani riyals as a penalty for each day after 20/05/2024.

Notes:

- Prices are sorted according to groups and the higher price is taken.
- Funds will be collected electronically through visa cards.
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Focusing on Innovation and Sustainability

Gulam Ali Khan
Muscat

Shell Oman Marketing Company, a leading fuel marketing firm in the sultanate, stands as a beacon of innovation and consumer trust in Oman's fuel marketing industry. The company was honored with Oman's Most Trusted Brand Award 2023 in both fuel station and lubricant categories. In this exclusive interview with Muscat Daily, Suresh Nair, General Manager – Mobility at Shell Oman, shares insights into the company's success and future vision, highlighting their groundbreaking and innovative product developments and visionary strategies for a sustainable future.

What do you believe are the main reasons behind Shell Oman's success as a trusted brand in Oman?

Shell Oman takes pride in its relentless commitment to excellence and customer satisfaction. Our success stems from a holistic approach that prioritises quality products, exceptional services, and unwavering adherence to the highest standards of Health, Safety, Security, and Environment (HSSE) as well as ethics and compliance.

At Shell Oman, we understand that the trust is earned through consistent delivery on promises. Behind the scenes, our frontline staff, the heroes of our operations, undergo rigorous training through our 'People Make the Difference Real' programme, ensuring they deliver exceptional customer service while upholding stringent HSSE practices. Through ongoing promotions and offers, we cultivate brand loyalty, providing a fully integrated service experience to our valued customers.

Shell Oman recently introduced the new and improved Shell V-Power. Could you highlight its distinctive features and explain how it sets itself apart from other fuel types currently available?

The introduction of the new and improved Shell V-Power marks a milestone in enhancing motorist's journeys

in Oman. This premium fuel, meticulously engineered over five years, is designed to clean up to 100% of critical engine components, maximising engine performance and keeping the engine running like new. Unlike conventional fuels, Shell V-Power's unique formulation is tailored to meet the needs of both older and new vehicles, ensuring an ideal driving experience characterised by cleanliness, and protection.

This innovation symbolises our unwavering commitment to exceeding customer expectations and setting a benchmark for fuel excellence in Oman.

The new and improved Shell V-Power is now available at 60 Shell service stations in Oman and will be expanded to all Shell sites in a phased manner.

Can you elaborate on the technology utilised in the development of Shell V-Power, and how it enhances vehicle performance?

The new Shell fuels, including Shell V-Power, have been developed through research by Shell's international team of fuel scientists, who also work in close collaboration with the team that develops Shell V-Power race fuels for Scuderia Ferrari, over the course of five years, leveraging both their expert knowledge and long heritage in innovation. The cleaning and engine performance recovery of the fuels have also been demonstrated through rigorous industry standard and Shell proprietary tests.

There are many stages of testing before we are ready to share a new product with our customers, from the conception of an idea – through to the delivery of the fuel – and finally to the pumps. The first round of testing predominantly takes place in the laboratory, where we investigate a vast array of formulations. The ones that look most promising then go on to bench engine testing, which involves an engine being taken out of a vehicle and being operated under tightly controlled test conditions – this eliminates as many experimental conditions and variables as possible.



To continue building and evolving Shell brand locally in the future, our clear focus is on innovation and sustainability. We aim to provide our customers with cutting-edge products and services that meet their evolving needs and contribute to a more sustainable future

SURESH NAIR
GENERAL MANAGER – MOBILITY, SHELL OMAN MARKETING COMPANY

After that, we test the fuel in a real vehicle, on a rolling road – otherwise known as a chassis dynamometer – which represents road driving conditions but in a more tightly controlled environment. The final stage of testing

involves us using the products in a trial in vehicles under real road conditions.

How many service stations does Shell Oman currently operate in Oman? Additionally, could you discuss the company's plans for future expansion, including the addition of new locations and products?

Shell Oman has a multi-years investment programme that takes into account the sultanate's key economic indicators. At present, Shell Oman has 211 service stations across the sultanate. We are committed to expanding our presence in the country to ensure that our customers have convenient access to our services. Our future expansion plans will be based on market demand and customer needs, and we will continue to prioritise sustainability and innovation in our operations.

We are planning to increase our network of quality Shell service stations especially that will serve the newly developing highways and main roads as well as the urban developments and strategic projects in Oman, while relentlessly investing in making our customers experience better and safer by introducing new products and services. Our extensive network of service stations play a crucial role in our growth while supporting the economic development plans in the sultanate.

How do you envision continuing to nurture and evolve the Shell brand to uphold its position as one of the leaders in Oman's fuel marketing industry?

To continue building and evolving the Shell brand locally in the future, our clear focus is on innovation and sustainability. We aim to provide our customers with cutting-edge products and services that meet their evolving needs and contribute to a more sustainable future.

Moreover, we are working towards smart service stations. Our smart service station concept makes

Shell Oman the first fuel marketing company in Oman to plan to implement these state-of-the-art modular service stations and which hopefully will come into implementation in the near future. We are also working towards green mobility and have taken steps in that direction. Our first electric vehicle-charging unit in Oman at the Al Bandar Service Station in Seeb is a shining testament of the same.

We aim to expand our EV charging network with an aim to connect the main cities in Oman over the coming years. We currently have 15 EV charging points in strategically selected service station to cater to electric vehicle driving needs.

Moreover, the Shell Go+ app for our loyal customers enables them to gain access to exclusive offers and accumulate reward points for each visit. These points can be utilized to obtain special offers at Shell service stations.

By continuing to invest in these areas and our evident focus on innovation and digitisation, we are determined to meet the evolving needs of our customers while contributing towards a more sustainable future.

With Oman aiming to achieve Net Zero Emissions by 2050, sustainability and environmental concerns have gained significant importance across industries. How does Shell Oman define sustainability, and what specific initiatives is the company undertaking in this regard?

Shell Oman is committed to sustainability, driving Oman's energy transition towards net-zero emissions by 2050. We have until today solar-powered infrastructures, EV charge points for passenger vehicles as well as vapor recovery systems in selected service stations. We will continue to work with the government, community and industry to navigate this journey whilst also leveraging on our strength and developments in the mobility space to ensure that the needs of our customers in their life journeys continue to be met in the years to come.

CB&I bags major contract for Marsa LNG storage tank in Oman

Our Correspondent
Muscat

CB&I, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the US-based McDermott, has been awarded a 'significant' contract by Marsa LNG – a joint venture between TotalEnergies and OQ – for the engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) of a full containment concrete LNG storage tank located in the Port of Sohar.

CB&I is the world's leading designer and builder of storage facilities, tanks, and terminals. It defines a 'significant' contract as between \$100mn and \$250mn.

The Marsa LNG project is an integrated LNG project which is being jointly established by TotalEnergies and OQ at Sohar Port with an estimated cost of \$1.6bn. TotalEnergies and OQ recently announced their Final Investment Decision for the Marsa LNG project.

Under the scope of its contract, CB&I will provide turnkey EPC services for a 165,000m³ full containment concrete LNG storage tank and associated pip-



Through this project, CB&I will contribute to the construction of one of the lowest greenhouse gas emissions intensity LNG plants ever built and the energy transition market in Oman

CESAR CANALS

ing to grade. Project delivery will be executed in Oman, where CB&I has been continually present since 1968, with support from CB&I's Dubai office.

"Through this project, CB&I will contribute to the construction of one of the lowest greenhouse gas emissions intensity LNG plants ever built and the

energy transition market in Oman," Cesar Canals, President, and CEO of CB&I, said in a press statement.

He said, "It supports our ambition to build storage for projects that will help provide reliable energy to markets with a reduced environmental impact. It will also pave the way for similar storage opportunities in the future and continue our long history of execution excellence in the Middle East, specifically

Oman."

CB&I said that the work is expected to commence with construction activities in the fourth quarter of 2024. The project is targeted for completion in 2028.

The Marsa LNG project, 80% owned by TotalEnergies and 20% owned by OQ, combines upstream gas production, downstream gas liquefaction, and renewable power generation.

In April, Technip Energies, a leading French engineering and technology company, was awarded a major EPC contract by TotalEnergies and OQ for the Marsa LNG project. The contract covers EPC of a natural gas liquefaction train with an LNG production capacity of 1mn tonnes per annum.

The Marsa LNG plant will use electric-driven motors instead of conventional gas turbines and will be powered by renewable electricity from a planned nearby solar farm, which will cover 100% of the annual power consumption of the LNG plant.

MSX, Crowe organise ESG reporting workshop

Muscat – The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) and Crowe Oman, a leading audit and advisory firm, last week organised a collaborative two-day workshop on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting.

The workshop, titled 'ESG 30 Metrics Masterclass,' was held on May 7th and 8th at the Novotel Hotel in Muscat. Delegates from almost all the listed companies in Oman and a few government institutions attended the workshop.

Speaking at the event, Haitham al Salmi, CEO of MSX, said that the Muscat Stock Exchange is leading the initiative to improve the corporate reporting of ESG activities, aligned with Oman Vision 2040, which aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Davis Kallukaran, Managing Partner of Crowe Oman, said, "Oman is at the forefront of embracing best practices in

the Middle East, whether in environmental sustainability or corporate governance. This is evident from Oman's Vision 2040 strategic objectives."

He explained that the term 'ESG 30 Metrics' refers to a set of metrics used to measure an organisation's environmental and social impact, which has become increasingly

important in investment decision-making over the years.

During the first session of the workshop, Karl Jackson said, "ESG is no longer a

fringe concept but a mandatory consideration for both companies and investors. Today, ESG data is used to evaluate a company's performance on specific environmental, social, and governance issues. Companies are required to report on the environmental and social impact of their business activities, as well as the impact of their ESG initiatives."



Fed officials in ‘wait-and-see’ mode on interest rate cuts

Terry Lane

Ahead of this week’s inflation data, US Federal Reserve officials reiterated their skepticism about making any changes to interest rates before they are certain that inflation is slowing down.

Chicago Fed President Austan Goolsbee and Minneapolis Fed President Neel Kashkari said that interest rates were on hold until the Fed got more data that showed the rate of inflation was slowing, during an interview with CNBC Friday.

They joined other Federal Reserve officials Friday who expressed similar sentiment, as the six interest rate cuts once anticipated in 2024 could now be



none.

Dallas Fed President Lorie Logan said at an event today it was “too early” to be considering rate cuts, while Federal Reserve Governor Michelle Bowman

commented that she didn’t expect any rate cuts this year.

The comments come ahead of a bevy of inflation data next week, including the Consumer Price Index, as well as the whole-

sale price report. Progress made in 2023 seemed to be slowing down a little this year, with inflation coming in at 2.7% in its latest reading.

Fed officials said they are looking for signals that annual price increases are coming back down to their target of 2%, though April’s numbers may not give them exactly what they’re looking for.

“We need to gather more information and wait and see,” Goolsbee said, while both said rate hikes could be possible depending on what future data showed.

Kashkari continued to raise questions over whether interest rates were “restrictive” enough,

suggesting that it could take longer to bring down the inflation rate. He pointed to a housing market where prices continue to soar, despite the Fed’s efforts to raise rates.

“When we look at real activity, like in the housing market, we’re not seeing as much of a pullback as expected, and that’s what makes me cautious,” Kashkari said.

Though Goolsbee said he looked at the “real fed funds rate,” which are interest rates that are adjusted for inflation.

“The level of that is as high as we’ve been for some time, so I feel that we’re restrictive,” Goolsbee said.

(Source: Investopedia.com)

AYURVEDIC CENTRE FOR IMMEDIATE SALE

A full fledged Ayurvedic Treatment Centre with MOH Licence and Commercial Registration is for sale at Barka, (Near Lulu). This one year old centre has 700 Sq. Mtrs space spread over 2 floors and has the following facilities.

- Reception table and medicine rack
- Male and female waiting areas.
- Pharmacy
- Two tretament rooms with all equipments including:
 - Pathy
 - Dara stand with pot
 - Steam chamber and
 - Other accessories for Panchakarma Treatment.
 - Two consultation rooms with examination tables, Doctors chairs, etc

Expected Price: OMR. 10,000 Only

Interested parties please contact
Mr. Aswath on Mobile: 95214372
or email: ashnan4@gmail.com

Send your comments to
muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om



شركة استثمار عمان والإمارات للاستثمار والقابضة (ش.م.ع.)
OMAN & EMIRATES INVESTMENT HOLDING CO. SAOG

P.O. Box 2205, Ruwi, Postal Code 112, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: +968 24489458, Fax: +968 24489465,
E-mail: oeiomana@omantel.net.om
Website: www.omanemirates.com

Board of Directors’ Report – 31st March 2024

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board, I take this opportunity to present the financial performance of Oman & Emirates Investment Holding Co SAOG for the three months period ended 31st March 2024.

Financial Results:

The Company (Group & Parent) achieved Net Profits of RO 905,202 and RO 925,797 respectively during the period January to March 2024, compared to (Group & Parent) recorded Net Profits of RO 141,370 and RO 142,754 respectively during January to March 2023. The details are shown below:

Particulars	Equity Holding %	Jan– Mar 2024 RO	Jan – Mar 2023 RO
Profit/(Loss) before share of results of Subsidiaries and Associates		621,739	35,367
FINCORP Al Amal Fund	-	-	-
FINCORP SAOG	51.20%	72,361	43,511
Oman Hotels and Tourism Co. SAOC	31.72%	78,421	34,100
Oman Fiber Optic Co. SAOC	20.97%	153,276	29,776
Net Profit/ (Loss) - Parent		925,797	142,754
Oman Euro Food Industries Co. SAOG	80.84%	(20,595)	(1,384)
Net Profit/ (Loss) - Group-		905,202	141,370

Stock Market Indices:

During January to March 2024, MSX and DFM increased by 2.68% and 4.59% respectively, while ADX decreased by 3.65% (January to March 2023: MSX and DFM increased by 0.12% and 2.12% respectively, while ADX decreased by 7.65%).

Net Equity, Investments and borrowing:

The Net Equity of the Group and the Parent Company increased by 4.04% and 3.91% respectively during the three month period ended 31st March 2024. The Net Equity of the Group increased from RO 22.420 Million at 31.12.2023 to RO 23.326 Million at 31.03.2024

(31.03.2023: RO 22.382 Million). The Net Equity of the Parent increased from RO 23.650 at 31.12.2023 to RO 24.576 Million at 31.03.2024 (31.03.2023: RO 23.446 Million).

The total value of investments of the Group and the Parent Company reduced to RO 31.516 Million and RO 29.533 Million respectively as at 31.03.2024 (31.03.2023: Group - RO 32.745 Million and Parent Company RO 30.778 Million respectively).

The total borrowing of the Group and the Parent Company reduced to RO 11.785 Million and RO 7.664 Million respectively as at 31.03.2024 (31.03.2023: Group - RO 13.219 Million and Parent Company - RO 9.498 Million).

Future Outlook:

Geopolitical risks, continuing Russian war in Ukraine and the potential emergence of a large-scale conflict in the Middle East will maintain uncertainties high and play out against the backdrop of many countries facing challenges with inflation and lowered prospects for growth in economic activity.

Acknowledgement:

I take this opportunity to convey our gratitude to the Governments of the Sultanate of Oman and United Arab Emirates for their support to our Company, the stock market authorities for their guidance, banks for their cooperation, shareholders for their trust and employees their unwavering efforts.

MOHAMED ABDULLA MOHAMED AL KHONJI
Chairman
7th May 2024

Consolidated and separate condensed interim statement of financial position as at 31 March 2024(Expressed in Omani Rial)				
	Group		Parent Company	
	31 March 2024 (Un-audited)	31 December 2023 (Audited)	31 March 2024 (Un-audited)	31 December 2023 (Audited)
ASSETS				
Cash and bank balances	1,531,488	1,419,372	148,541	266,746
Trade and other receivables	1,799,940	1,307,712	382,620	74,976
Inventories	368,228	446,409	-	-
Investments at fair value through profit and loss	14,895,425	14,731,511	10,765,389	10,375,967
Investment in associates	16,620,413	16,444,544	4,843,069	14,611,372
Investment in subsidiaries	-	-	3,924,592	3,852,231
Investment property	2,795,400	2,826,450	2,525,400	2,556,450
Property, plant and equipment	1,927,416	1,993,075	305,989	326,283
Right-of-use asset	372,269	372,270	-	-
Deferred tax asset	61,071	61,071	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS	40,371,650	39,602,41	4 32,895,600	32,064,025
EQUITY				
Capital and reserves				
Share capital	12,187,500	12,187,500	12,187,500	12,187,500
Legal reserve	5,076,866	5,062,733	4,062,500	4,062,500
Retained earnings	6,061,558	5,170,489	8,325,838	7,400,041
Total capital and reserves of Parent Company	23,325,924	22,420,722	24,575,838	23,650,041
Non-controlling interest	3,444,582	3,380,490	-	-
TOTAL EQUITY	26,770,506	25,801,212	24,575,838	23,650,041
LIABILITIES				
Lease liabilities	400,616	400,615	-	-
Bank borrowings	183,683	94,144	115,976	25,836
Term loan	2,547,970	2,629,917	2,547,970	2,629,917
Trade and other payables	1,815,875	2,023,526	655,816	758,231
Loans from Governments	8,653,000	8,653,000	5,000,000	5,000,000
TOTAL LIABILITIES	13,601,144	13,801,202	8,319,762	8,413,984
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	40,371,650	39,602,414	32,895,600	32,064,025
Net assets per share	0.191	0.184	0.202	0.194

Consolidated and separate condensed interim statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the three-month period ended 31 March 2024				
	Group		Parent Company	
	Period from 1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024 (Un-audited)	Period from 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023 (Un-audited)	Period from 1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024 (Un-audited)	Period from 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023 (Un-audited)
Dividend income	436,681	424,577	312,013	337,162
Realised gains on sale of investments at fair value through profit or loss	110,856	21,866	43,043	8,791
Unrealised gains/(losses) on investments at fair value through profit or loss	314,168	(192,979)	389,422	(120,686)
Share of profit from investment in associates and subsidiaries	303,222	160,492	304,058	107,386
Rental income	37,371	38,567	37,371	38,567
Gross profit on sale of food products	76,152	98,161	-	-
Asset management fees	22,823	22,693	-	-
Brokerage commission income	13,552	49,895	-	-
Other income	100,842	17,077	68,000	-
Interest income	37	63	16	63
Total income	1,415,704	640,412	1,153,923	371,283
Expenses				
Staff costs	(191,748)	(184,929)	(84,726)	(77,501)
Administrative expenses	(179,295)	(186,768)	(95,900)	(115,227)
Investments related expenses	-	(2,635)	-	(2,635)
Total expenses	(371,043)	(374,332)	(180,626)	(195,363)
Operating profit for the period	1,044,661	266,080	973,297	175,920
Finance costs	(75,367)	(60,468)	(47,500)	(33,166)
Net profit before tax for the period	969,294	205,612	925,797	142,754
Income tax expense	-	(23,095)	-	-
Net profit after tax and total comprehensive income for the period	969,294	182,517	925,797	142,754
Net profit after tax attributable to:				
Parent Company	905,202	141,370	925,797	142,754
Non controlling interest	64,092	41,147	-	-
	969,294	182,517	925,797	142,754
Earnings per share - basic and diluted	0.007	0.001	0.008	0.001

Note: The complete Financial Statements of the Company in Arabic or English will be made available to any shareholder on request.

MoE, Outward Bound Oman, UK Embassy mark closing of 'Climate Shapers' programme

The Ministry of Education (MoE), the British Embassy, and Outward Bound Oman celebrated the closing of the 'Climate Shapers' programme at Outward Bound Oman, Muscat Training Centre, a press release said.

This programme aimed to equip 50 school students aged 12-16 years old with a deeper understanding of sustainability's importance, as well as the causes and impacts of climate change. Emphasising solutions, mitigation, and opportunities was at the core of this initiative.

The ceremony celebrated the 'Climate Shapers' graduates, attended by H E Dr Abdullah bin Khamis Ambusaidi, Undersecretary for Education in the Ministry of Education, H E Dr Liane Saunders, British Ambassador to Oman, Dr Abdulla Ali al Amri, chairman of the Environment Authority, programme graduates, and parents.

Regarding this event, H E Ambusaidi noted that this collaboration stems from our continuous commitment to empowering fu-



ture generations with the necessary skills to confront various challenges.

"The 'On the Green Path' programme focuses on increasing students' awareness of several environmental issues and enhancing the life skills required in our ever-evolving world. A group

of students had a unique experience in the Eastern Sands aimed at augmenting their scientific knowledge gained from the Green Schools programme through experiential learning in an outdoor environment."

The programme intended to empower young Omanis with

the knowledge to positively impact, influence, and inspire the communities around them. Utilising Outward Bound Oman's training centres in the Sharqiyah Desert and at Jabal Akhdar.

Outward Bound Oman, established in Oman in May 2009 by founding partners Dentons, Shell,



and Suhail Bahwan, is supported by many leading corporates in Oman as part of their social investment programme.

It is part of an international network that utilises challenging outdoor journeys to develop the national talent of Oman.

Each year, approximately

200,000 people worldwide take part in an Outward Bound course in one of 34 countries.

Outward Bound Oman offers a variety of courses tailored to different age groups. Beginning with school students through the Skills for Life courses, it focuses on enhancing the employability

of young people throughout the sultanate.

Additionally, it provides Next Generation courses for University Students and Job Seekers. Corporate courses are custom designed for employed individuals to meet the unique requirements of their companies.

Sohar International floats Soft POS payment solution

Affirming its position as a leading digital bank in Oman, Sohar International, the fastest-growing bank in Oman, continues its commitment to enhancing customer experiences with the introduction of its Soft POS solution.

Designed to revolutionise the payment landscape, Soft POS empowers businesses to conduct sales transactions effortlessly and securely through their Android smart devices. Sohar International's Soft POS solution enhances the payment experience for both merchants and customers by offering a convenient method for accepting payments, a press release said.

Customers can make secure transactions using their contactless cards, with the added convenience of accepting payments through Samsung Pay. By simply downloading the user-friendly Sohar International POS app, businesses can seamlessly integrate their NFC-enabled Android devices and eliminate the need for traditional POS machines.

This advancement not only enhances convenience but also reduces procurement costs,



The introduction of this innovative solution aligns with the bank's dedication to delivering exceptional banking experiences and supporting the success of its customers

streamlines merchant onboarding processes, and eliminates on-site installation and maintenance expenses.

Additionally, the solution emphasises 'Go-Green' as a prominent feature, as it eliminates operational issues faced by mer-

chants on paper roll supply for traditional POS systems, further aligning with sustainable business practices.

Reflecting on the launch of this innovative payment solution, Sajeel Bashiruddin, chief digital officer at Sohar International,

emphasised the necessity of adapting to the rapid evolution of the digital landscape.

"In order to thrive, it's imperative to extend payment methods beyond cash. The soft POS is not only meeting this imperative but also establishing a new benchmark for seamless and convenient payment solutions. At Sohar International, we are committed to driving digital transformation within the banking sector.

"With the introduction of Soft POS, the bank aims to catalyse growth and innovation for businesses, unlocking unprecedented levels of convenience and efficiency in their day-to-day operations," Bashiruddin asserted.

The introduction of this innovative solution perfectly aligns with the bank's dedication to delivering exceptional banking experiences and supporting the success of its customers.

The soft POS solution aims to offer innovative alternatives, enhancing payment procedures for merchants. Accessible through Google Play Store, it empowers them to efficiently and securely process contactless payments.

Oman United Insurance bags Top Insurance brand award

Oman United Insurance Company emerged as the Top Insurance brand at the prestigious Top Omani Brands Awards ceremony recently held at Sheraton Hotel.

The highly anticipated annual corporate event serves as a beacon of recognition, while celebrating the resilience, innovation and excellence of Oman's most impactful brands.

Sayyid Nasser bin Salim al Busaidi, chief management executive of OUI, dedicated the accolade to the company's highly motivated, professional and results-oriented team. Their collective determination to exceed expectations and uphold the highest standards of professionalism and service helped clinch the award in the company's favour.

N Sivakumar, deputy CEO, accompanied by Sanjay Jha, general manager, received the honour at the award ceremony, a press release said.

With a commitment to delivering unparalleled service and comprehensive insurance solutions, Oman United Insurance has established itself as a



trusted leader in the insurance industry. This accolade reaffirms the company's dedication to excellence in service delivery and its unwavering focus on meeting the evolving needs of its customers.

Being recognised as the Top Insurance brand underscores the company's relentless pursuit of quality, integrity and customer satisfaction. As Oman's premier insurance provider, Oman United Insurance Company continues to

set benchmarks for excellence, driving innovation and shaping the future of the insurance landscape in the Sultanate of Oman.

As Oman United Insurance Company basks in the glow of this prestigious accolade, it remains committed to its mission of protecting and empowering individuals, businesses and communities across the sultanate, cementing its legacy as a true champion of the insurance industry.



DGHS in South Sharqiyah organises forum patronised by health minister

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) in South Sharqiyah organised on Thursday a forum under the patronage of H E Dr Hilal Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health, a press release said.

The forum aimed to shed light on the projects and initiatives

accomplished in the Governorate during the year 2023, and the key achievements of the innovation and development plan implemented the previous year.

The winning institutions in the best primary healthcare institution competition were honoured during the forum. Furthermore, it

highlighted the projects and events supported by the Oman Liquefied Natural Gas Company in the governorate and some hospitals and healthcare institutions in other governorates. This contributed to the introduction of new diagnostic services at Sur Hospital.

Bank Muscat to send four Visa credit card holders to Paris Olympic Games

As part of its commitment to providing distinctive offers and services that meet the aspirations and needs of customers, Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has partnered once more with Visa, a world leader in digital payments, to present four special packages to attend the Olympic Games, courtesy of Visa, which will be held in Paris from July 26 to August 11.

The offer is valid for cardholders of Bank Muscat's Private Banking Visa Infinite credit card, Asalah Visa Signature credit card, Al Jawhar Visa Platinum credit card, as well as Bank Muscat Oman Air Visa Platinum credit cards, a press release said.

Customers will have the opportunity to enter the draw and



win one out of four exclusive and unrepeatable packages to attend the Olympic Games in France, courtesy of Visa, when spending RO250 or more when using the eligible credit cards via international Points of Sales (POS) or international e-commerce during the promotional period, lasting

until May 31.

The Visa credit cardholders from these segments will have the opportunity to automatically enter the draws once they meet the eligibility criteria of minimum spends, after which they will receive additional chances for every RO50 spent via Interna-

tional POS and International e-commerce.

The four packages includes full flight and attendance costs, including a 4-night stay for two in a luxury hotel with breakfast, as well as entrance tickets to the Olympic Games track, transportation to and from the Games circuit via the Paris metro and gifts worth US\$400, courtesy of Visa.

On this occasion, Abdulnasir N al Raisi, general manager - Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said, "This offer comes in cooperation with Visa with the aim of providing unique and distinctive benefits to Bank Muscat's Private Banking, Priority Banking, Privilege Banking Visa credit cardholders, as well as holders of Bank Muscat Oman Air Visa Platinum credit cards.

Lulu triggers ‘Mango Mania’

Lulu Hypermarket Oman has launched the ‘Mango Mania’, a delectable occasion for mango lovers from every corner of the country to unite and revel in the succulent glory of this juicy golden fruit.

The mango festival will be held from May 11 to May 18, 2023 across all Lulu stores in Oman as a celebration of the goodness of the ‘King of Fruits’.

The event, which was inaugurated by H E Amit Narang, Indian Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, on Saturday, showcased some of the sweetest, juiciest mangoes brought in from all over the world. The yearly event is an attraction for both locals and expatriates alike to indulge in the flavours of the best mangoes.

Speaking on the occasion, the Ambassador underscored the importance of the annual Lulu Mango Mania festival. He expressed his sincere appreciation to Lulu for curating a selection of over 75 distinct varieties of mangoes, aptly named the ‘King of Fruits’, for the customers.

The Ambassador further remarked on the widespread appreciation for Indian mangoes amongst Lulu’s clientele, highlighting their prominent position



H E Amit Narang (centre), Indian Ambassador to Oman, inaugurates the Mango Mania at the Lulu Hypermarket, Avenues Mall, Baushar in the presence of Yusuff Ali M A, Chairman and Managing Director of Lulu Group, (on left), Ashraf Ali M A, Lulu Executive Director, Ananth A V, Lulu Oman Director, Shabeer K A, Lulu Oman Regional Director among other officials

on customer palettes. He concluded by warmly acknowledging the presence of Yusuff Ali M A, Chairman and Managing Director of Lulu Group. “We see ourselves as a responsible entity, and that means offering not just a wide range of products, but also offering a dynamic and engaging shopping experience. Strategic promotions and events like ‘Mango Mania’

The annual event is an attraction for both locals and expatriates alike to indulge in the flavours of as many as 75 distinct varieties this year

are key to achieving this. We’re confident these initiatives will drive high customer involvement, and we’re showcasing a wide selection from across the world.” Yusuff Ali M A, told reporters at the inauguration of ‘Mango Mania’ festival.

Be it just a juicy slice, or blended into a refreshing smoothie, or incorporated into decadent mouth-watering desserts, the ‘Mango Mania’ is the perfect opportunity for customers to relish some of the special mango treats in the hot food, bakery, sweets and pickles section. Special mango delicacies, pickled mangoes, as well as mango preserves, smoothies, pulps, juices, jellies, and jams will also be available during the promotion.



Said Abdullah al Hatmi

ahlibank’s Q1 results showcase growth

ahlibank’s customer deposits grew by 6.7% reaching RO2,496.3mn during the first quarter, compared to the same period in 2023.

This is what has been shown in financial indicators, as the bank announced its results for the first quarter of 2024. Reflecting its commitment to excellence in Oman’s banking sector, the Q1 results show the bank’s net loans, advances and financing expanding by 9.0% amounting to RO2,802.1mn.

The bank’s operating income increased by 4.4% to reach RO24.35mn, and its operating expenses rose by 8.6% reaching RO11.03mn, the bank informed.

As showcased by its overall performance, profit during the period reached RO8.63mn, increasing by 3.4% in the first quarter of 2024, compared to the same period in 2023.

Commenting on the financial results, Said Abdullah al Hatmi, Chief Executive Officer at ahlibank, said, “As we move forward on our promising journey into the year 2024, ahlibank’s performance during the first quarter reaffirms our strategic direction and resilience that characterise our operational processes. At ahlibank, we are committed to maintaining excellence in all aspects of our ethos, while implementing digital solutions, thereby empowering our customers through a seamlessly integrated diverse portfolio of digital products and services.”

Fly Jinnah marks its first flight to Muscat

Fly Jinnah, Pakistan’s low-cost carrier commenced its first non-stop flight from Islamabad International Airport in Pakistan to Muscat International Airport.

Upon arrival at Muscat International Airport, the flight was greeted with a traditional water cannon salute and a welcome ceremony. The newly added route will initially start with a frequency of two weekly flights connecting the two capitals.

Commenting on the inauguration of the airline’s third international flight, Fly Jinnah’s spokesperson said, “Celebrating our continued growth and commitment to enhancing air travel opportunities, we are proud to have commenced non-stop flights between Islamabad in



Pakistan and Muscat, our third international destination. This expansion underscores our dedication to offering more affordable and quality air travel solutions, both domestically and internationally.”

Fly Jinnah remains steadfast in offering convenient and affordable service to its passengers. With its modern fleet of five Airbus A320 aircraft, the airline serves five major cities in Pakistan: Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar, and Quetta. This new route adds to Fly Jinnah’s growing list of international destinations, complementing the existing flight route to Sharjah.

In addition to the extra comfort provided by the most gener-



ous seat-pitch of any economy cabin, the carrier offers affordable and value-driven travel experiences through ‘SkyCafe’ onboard menu where passengers can enjoy a wide variety of delicacies between snacks, sandwiches, and meals at affordable prices. The aircraft is also equipped with ‘SkyTime’, a free in-flight streaming service that allows passengers to stream a wide selection of entertainment directly to their devices.



ICAI begins Omani CFO mentoring programme in OCCI Sohar

Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) and The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) Muscat Chapter (under the sponsorship of the College of Banking and Financial Studies (CBFS)) launched the Omani CFO mentoring programme in Sohar on May 4.

ICAI Muscat Chapter successfully completed the program in Salalah and Sohar during 2023 jointly with OCCI.

“Sohar being a fast-growing business location in Oman, definitely it needs more finance professionals and this initiative is to support the development of local talents to take up bigger responsibilities” said Jim Joseph Itty, ICAI Muscat Chapter chairperson.

“For Chartered Accountants in Oman, this is giving back to the society from where we gained the experience,” he added.

OCCI’s North Batinah chairman Saeed bin Ali-Abri observed “This is a good opportunity for the aspiring accounting professionals in this region and we thank ICAI Muscat Chapter for this initiative.”

More than thirty participants will attend the program which is planned over eight weekends. A team of twenty experienced mentors will deliver the sessions and share their experience with the attendees.

The first session was led by Gaurav Kapoor, Vice Chairman of ICAI Muscat Chapter with Deepak Gupta, Sohar sub-com-

mittee lead and the mentors were Badri N Subudhi and Joby Joseph.

Established in 2008 under the sponsorship of CBFS, ICAI Muscat Chapter has more than 350 registered members. The Chapter has sub-committees in Sohar and Salalah. ICAI is the largest professional accounting body in the world with over 400,000 members.

In the words of Dr Zahran al Salti, Dean, CBFS - “The Omani CFO mentoring programme is playing a significant role in building local capacity in the key areas of finance and accounting. The sponsorship of ICAI Muscat Chapter is an important element of the community engagement strategy of CBFS.”

Barceló Hotel Group invests over \$400mn for global expansion

Barceló Hotel Group, the leading Spanish hospitality management company, reveals its 2024 global expansion strategy with a robust pipeline of new property openings in new and existing key source markets, totalling an investment of over US\$400mn.

In 2024, Barceló Hotel Group also extends its presence in the Middle East, Africa and Türkiye (MEAT) region, with a slated line-up of property openings over the year. The group’s mega investment leverages its momentum of 2023’s exceptional performance, both in Average Daily Rate (ADR) and occupancy rate, where it opened 25 new properties, and achieved a 20% increase in total revenue.

In 2024, Barceló Hotel Group is focused on acquiring new hotels, refurbishing existing properties and repositioning projects, underscoring its commitment to new and existing source markets, and strengthening its positioning as the leading Spanish hospitality management company in the MEAT region.

José Canals, Managing Director for Middle East, Asia, Mediterranean and North Africa at Barceló Hotel Group says, “In 2023, Barceló Hotel Group experienced incredible success



The Spanish hospitality group augments its regional expansion strategy with a phased pipeline of planned property openings in Oman, the UAE, Saudi, Bahrain and Qatar

across our global portfolio. Building on this, we have outlined a strategic expansion approach that will support growing our footprint across thriving global travel destinations.

“The MENA region has rapidly grown in demand for international tourism, and our

growth strategy will focus on key source markets. At Barceló Hotel Group, we are poised to meet the needs of international and local travellers, enhancing guest experiences with the Spanish hospitality flair.”

Barceló Hotel Group’s 2024 plans include a phased pipeline

of property openings in international and regional source markets, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and Türkiye.

Augmenting its regional presence, Barceló Hotel Group is set to bolster its portfolio in the Middle East with the opening of its debut property in Bahrain in the second half of 2024.

Barceló Hotel Group will also strengthen expansion plans in the Sultanate of Oman with a new property signings slated in the coming years.

GAZA WAR



Children in Gaza demand schools to reopen soon

Gaza, Palestinian Territories - Dozens of children gathered Saturday in front of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central Gaza Strip town of Deir al-Balah to express a desire to return to schools and live in peace. Palestinian children are deprived of their right to education because of Israeli attacks. Organised by a group of young people, the children carried banners with slogans such as, 'Education is our right, we demand education' and 'We want to live in peace and security'. Nine-year-old Iman told the children that "like other children in the world, we want to live in peace and security, and return to our homes and schools. Why did they ruin our lives? Don't we deserve to live in peace?" Iman, condemning Israel for

Children carry banners with slogans such as 'Education is our right, we demand education', 'We want to live in peace and security'

killing innocent children, encouraged countries to stop the on-slaughter against Gaza so that children could return to their beautiful lives and regain their freedom like other children. Children also sang songs and danced during the demonstration. Anadolu News

Pro-Palestine encampment continues 5th day in Oxford

Oxford, UK - Students from the University of Oxford continued an encampment for a fifth day in solidarity with the Gaza Strip to demand full divestment from Israel and a boycott of Israel-linked companies. Students have attended the encampment with dozens of tents outside the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford where people from different backgrounds are welcomed. They continued protesting in an atmosphere of solidarity at the area where congressional Friday prayers were performed with the attendance of many. Along with a prayer room, the encampment also includes a medical tent, snack area and meeting points, with many Palestinian flags and signs. One read: "Generation after generation, until total liberation." There is also a media room named after female Palestinian journalists killed by Israeli attacks and a memorial library, named after Refaat Alareer, a prominent Palestinian professor, poet and writer, who was killed in an airstrike in Gaza in December. Despite Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's recent statement that urged university administrators to protect Jewish students from "harassment" and "anti-semitic abuse" at campuses, Jewish



Students have attended the encampment with dozens of tents outside the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford

I've been sleeping on campus since Monday and I would say that I feel safer here at this encampment than I usually do at the university A Jewish student

students are among attendees at the Oxford protest. 'I feel safer here at this encampment' Kendall Gardner, a 25-year-old Jewish student, said she has

"absolutely" no concern about being at the protest. "I've been sleeping on campus since Monday and I would say that I feel safer here at this encampment than I usually do

at the University of Oxford as a Jewish student," she told Anadolu. Gardner said that protesters have invited other Jewish students from the university to come into the camp and have conversations, and they understand that some Jewish students feel very differently about what is happening in Gaza. "But to us, that's really not the point. This is a genocide -- 1.7 million people are currently

at risk of displacement during the current escalation in Rafah," said Gardner. "We are more than happy for Jewish students from around the community to come in and chat with us about that," she added. On their demands, Gardner said they want the university divest from all arms companies, specifically any involved in the "Israeli occupation apartheid in genocide currently happening in Gaza". Anadolu News

Over 150,000 Palestinians have fled Rafah, says UN agency

The UN agency for Palestine refugees (UNRWA) on Saturday said around 150,000 Palestinians have left Rafah, the southern Gaza city where an Israeli invasion is underway despite international outcry. "Everywhere you look now in west Rafah this morning, families are packing up. Streets are significantly emptier," Louise Wateridge, a UNRWA spokeswoman, said on X. "UNRWA estimates 150,000 people have now fled Rafah," she added.

"New areas have been issued evacuation orders towards central Rafah in south Gaza and Jabalia in North Gaza," Wateridge said, referring to instructions by the Israeli military Saturday morning. Israel has attacked the Gaza Strip in retaliation for an Oct. 7, 2023 cross-border incursion by Hamas which killed around 1,200 people. Nearly 35,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children, have since been killed, and many others injured, according



Caption

to Palestinian health authorities. Vast swathes of Gaza also lay in ruins amid a crippling blockade of food and other necessities. Ahead of its ground assault, Israeli forces this week issued evacuation orders for 100,000 people in eastern Rafah, which is home to some 1.4mn displaced Palestinians. Israel is accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice. An interim ruling in January said it is "plausible" that Tel Aviv is committing genocide in Gaza, ordering it to stop such

acts and take measures to guarantee that humanitarian assistance is provided to civilians. South Africa on Friday asked the ICJ to order Israel to withdraw from Rafah as part of additional emergency measures. The Palestinian Health Ministry on Saturday said more than 520 bodies were found in seven mass graves at hospitals in Gaza. 'We found 80 bodies in three mass graves in the courtyards of the Al-Shifa Medical Complex,' the ministry said. Anadolu News

Hamas to remain in Rafah despite potential large-scale operation



Jerusalem - Hamas will remain in Rafah even if the Israeli army launches a large-scale operation in the entire city, Israeli newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth said on Saturday. The newspaper cited an unnamed Israeli military source emphasising the critical significance of post-war decision-making concerning Gaza. "Even if we work throughout Rafah, Hamas will remain there

including its infrastructure," the source said. "The most effective way to replace Hamas, is by presenting a viable alternative, whether it's a military regime backed by substantial economic resources or another political entity to supplant it," the sources added. Meanwhile, the Israeli army claimed in a statement that, "so far, about 300,000 residents of Rafah have moved towards the

expanded humanitarian zone in Al-Mawasi," west of Khan Yunis in southern Gaza Strip. Earlier Saturday, the Israeli army demanded the evacuation of additional areas in eastern Rafah after the Israeli security Cabinet voted on Friday to expand the operation in the city. Several countries had warned Israel against carrying out a military operation in Rafah, which houses nearly 1.4mn displaced Palestinians.

Israel has pounded the Gaza Strip in retaliation for an October 7, 2023 cross-border attack by Hamas which killed around 1,200 people. Nearly 35,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children, have since been killed, and nearly 78,600 others injured, according to Palestinian health authorities. Anadolu News



Work of art in Barcelona's Jardines de Caterina Albert Park

Barcelona, Spain - An Argentinian artist has immortalized an iconic photograph taken by an Anadolu photojournalist in the Gaza Strip, by transforming it into a graffiti mural in Spain's Barcelona. Juan Kantor, the visionary behind this project, drew inspiration from the poignant work of Anadolu's photojournalist Ali Jadallah, depicting a

Palestinian woman cradling a girl in the aftermath of Israeli airstrikes on the Ridwan neighbourhood of Gaza City on October 23, 2023. The work of art, the making of which spanned 7 hours, was revealed on Wednesday in the free graffiti space at Jardines de Caterina Albert Park. Kantor's collaboration with the organization "Unmute

Gaza," an advocate for Palestinian photojournalists and ceasefire in the blockaded Strip, underscores the solidarity and support extended to the region. Through Jadallah's lens, the enduring turmoil and devastation wrought upon Gaza since October 7 are vividly portrayed, resonating with audiences worldwide. Anadolu News

Rain, flash flood kill 300 in Afghanistan

Some 2,500-3,000 houses were damaged as flood inundates entire villages in some areas

Islamabad, Pakistan - At least 300 people have now been confirmed killed as torrential rain and devastating floods battered north and northwestern Afghanistan, UN Food Program said on Saturday.

'Flash floods ravage #Afghanistan, killing more than 300 people in Baghlan and destroying more than 1000 houses,' UN Food Program said on X.

'This has been one of many floods over the last few weeks, due to unusually heavy rainfall,' it added.

Heavy downpours caused floods in four provinces, destroying 2,500 to 3,000 houses, killing hundreds of livestock, while damaging roads and other infrastructure, said Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid.

'Rescue teams have already reached all the affected areas. They have taken the injured to hospitals by helicopters as roads were closed due to heavy flooding,' he added.

The Taliban administration dispatched rescue and relief teams from Kabul and other provinces.



Heavy downpours caused floods in four provinces, killing hundreds of livestock, while damaging roads and other infrastructure

"We requested all the Afghan people to come forward and help the victims of the flood, which caused severe damages and destroyed entire villages in some areas," Mujahid said.

Last month, at least 70 people were killed and dozens of others injured in heavy rain and floods in different areas of Afghanistan. Afghanistan's neighbour Pakistan was also hit by rain and flooding that killed nearly 100 people and injured 89 others in April.

Anadolu News

Deluge has wrought extensive devastation: Taliban spokesman

Istanbul, Türkiye - The interim Taliban administration said Saturday that hundreds of lives have been lost, and many more have been injured as a result of torrential floods in Afghanistan.

"Regrettably, hundreds of our fellow citizens have succumbed to these calamitous floods, while a substantial number have sustained injuries," said administration spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid, without specifying numbers.

In the wake of recent catastrophic floods that have ravaged several provinces, including Badakhshan, Baghlan, Ghor and Herat, Afghanistan extended its deepest condolences to affected families and pledged support in recovery efforts, he



Zabiullah Mujahid

wrote on X.

"The deluge has wrought extensive devastation upon residential properties, resulting in significant financial losses," he said.

Mujahid urged residents to contribute to the aid initiatives to assist those in need during this challenging time.

Flash floods struck several parts of Afghanistan, officials said on Friday night.



Joost Klein

Eurovision axes Dutch contestant

Joost Klein, the Dutch contestant at this year's Eurovision, was disqualified from the competition Saturday over an "incident" that organizers claimed did not involve any other performers or delegation member.

The news comes after Klein was put under investigation Friday by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) for asking Israel's Eden Golan at a press conference to justify her participation in the Eurovision Song Contest amid Tel Aviv's war on Gaza.

The EBU, however, claimed that their decision to disqualify Klein had to do with him allegedly making verbal threats to a female production worker at the event's venue in Malmö, Sweden, on Thursday night.

"We would like to make it clear that, contrary to some media reports and social media speculation, this incident did not involve any other performer or delegation member," the organisers said. "We maintain a zero-tolerance policy towards inappropriate behaviour at our event and are committed to providing a safe and secure working environment for all staff at the contest. In light of this, Joost Klein's behaviour towards a team member is deemed in breach of contest rules."

Turkish defence integrates payloads into unmanned land vehicle

Ankara, Türkiye - Different capabilities developed within the Turkish defence industry are coming together on the same platform and turning into new solutions for security forces.

The homegrown ecosystem formed in the defence industry carries out studies by taking into account developing technologies and needs arising on the battlefield and user demands.

One example of those efforts was carried out for the unmanned land vehicle platform.

New payloads were integrated into the unmanned land vehicle *Barkan*, which was recently added to the inventory of security forces.

In this context, the 40mm Automatic Grenade Launcher (RDS40-AGL) produced by Repkon Defence, took its place on *Barkan* with the Trakon Lite Remote Controlled Weapon System developed by Unirobotics.

After integration works, *Barkan* was tested in closed and open areas with its new weapon and remote-controlled weapon system, and showed a successful performance.

Barkan, a 'medium class level 1 unmanned land vehicle', was



The 40mm Automatic Grenade Launcher produced by Repkon Defence, took its place on Barkan

Barkan, which entered the inventory at the end of 2023 after field tests, can overcome difficult terrain and harsh weather conditions, as well as eliminating asymmetric threats against security forces

developed by Turkish defence giant, Havelsan, as one of the land-based elements of the 'digital unity' concept.

Barkan, which entered the inventory at the end of 2023 after field tests, can overcome difficult

provide advanced security in scenarios requiring agility.

It can reach speeds of more than 13km per hour and can operate for more than five hours.

With the integration of Trakon Lite, *Barkan* will gain the ability to carry 7.62-, 5.56-mm machine guns and 12.7mm heavy machine guns.

The 40mm Automatic Grenade Launcher is capable of firing 40x53mm ammunition.

The RDS40-AGL stands out among its counterparts.

Anadolu News



The PKK is using northern Iraq as a hideout to plot attacks on Türkiye

Türkiye 'neutralises' 2 PKK terrorists in northern Iraq

Istanbul, Türkiye - Türkiye 'neutralised' two Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) members in northern Iraq in a strike conducted through combat drone, the National Defence Ministry said on Saturday.

The terrorists were targeted in the Metina region, the ministry said on X, adding 'Our heroic Turkish Armed Forces will continue their operations in the region with determination and resolve until the last terrorist is neutralised'.

Turkish authorities use the

term 'neutralise' to imply the terrorists in question surrendered or were killed or captured.

The PKK is known for using northern Iraq, near the Turkish border, as a hideout to plot terror attacks on Türkiye.

In its nearly 40-year campaign against Türkiye, the PKK - listed as a terrorist organisation by Türkiye, the US, and EU - has been responsible for the deaths of over 40,000 people, including women, children, and infants.

Anadolu News

Azerbaijan, Armenia end talks in Kazakhstan with pledge to continue discussing 'controversial' bilateral issues

Moscow, Russia - Baku and Yerevan have agreed to continue negotiations on controversial bilateral issues, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry said on Saturday after a meeting in Kazakhstan.

The ministry said in a statement that during two-day negotiations in the Kazakh capital Almaty, the two sides welcomed the progress on the border delimitation and addressed provisions of a future peace treaty.

Negotiations were held on Friday and Saturday in the Kazakh city of Almaty between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Jeyhun Bayramov, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Ararat Mirzoyan.

'The ministers welcomed the



progress in the delimitation of borders and the agreements reached in this regard. The ministers and their delegations continued to discuss the provisions of the draft bilateral Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and Interstate relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia. The parties agreed to continue negotiations on the remaining open issues on which there are still differences,' the ministry said.

It added that apart from normalization talks, Bayramov and Mirzoyan also held a trilateral meeting, and separate meetings with their Kazakh counterpart Murat Nurtleu.

'Minister Jeyhun Bayramov thanked the Kazakh side for holding talks between Azerbaijan and

Armenia,' the ministry said.

Relations between Baku and Yerevan have remained tense since 1991, when the Armenian military occupied Karabakh, a territory internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan, and seven adjacent regions.

Most of the territory was liberated by Azerbaijan during a 44-day war in the fall of 2020, which ended after a Russian-brokered peace agreement that opened the door to normalisation and the demarcation of their border. Last September, Azerbaijan established full sovereignty in Karabakh following an 'anti-terrorist operation' after which separatist forces in the region surrendered.

Anadolu News

INDIA'S GENERAL ELECTION



Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrives for a public meeting for the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, in Bargarh in the eastern Indian state of Odisha on Saturday (ANI)

Modi’s main aide claims biggest win in southern states

New Delhi, India - India’s Home Minister and Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s most trusted aide Amit Shah on Saturday asserted that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will emerge as the single largest party in the southern states.

Addressing a press conference in Hyderabad, the capital of the southern state of Telangana, Shah expressed confidence in BJP ‘making a sweep’ in southern India, including Andhra Pradesh and Telangana where the voting is scheduled to be held on May 13 in the fourth phase.

The party, which has a massive support base in the northern part of India is seeking a strong foothold in the southern states such as Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Kerala in the ongoing general elections.

“In the last three phases of the election, the BJP-led NDA and its constituents have reached the mark of 200 seats. We expect good results from the fourth phase too, and we will move towards our goal of 400 seats,” a confident Shah said. “The polling in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana is scheduled in the fourth phase. In both the states, NDA and BJP will make a clean sweep,” he added.

“On the day of results, that is on June 4, the BJP will emerge

as the single largest party in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. In these states, the BJP will get the most number of seats. In Telangana, we will win more than ten seats,” he added.

Shah also hit out at the Congress party and its alliance partners accusing them of corruption worth millions as he highlighted Prime Minister Modi’s 10-year tenure.

In the last three phases, the NDA and its allies have reached the mark of 200 seats. We expect good results from the fourth phase too

AMIT SHAH

“On one hand, there is the Congress and its allies who are involved in corruption and scams worth around ₹12tn. On the other hand, there is Narendra Modi, who has not been accused of corruption of even 25 paise despite being the Chief Minister for 23 years or Prime Minister for ten years,” the Home Minister said.

He further emphasised that under Modi’s leadership, the Indian economy is in 5th position globally. “As soon as the heat increases, some leaders regu-

larly go on holiday to Thailand, Bangkok. On the other side is Narendra Modi who has not taken leave even on Diwali day for the last 23 years. On Diwali, he celebrates with the soldiers who protect the country on the borders,” he said.

“The economy of India has been handled expertly by Modi ji. We are fortunate to have a leader like Modi Ji. On the other hand, Rahul Yaan has been launched unsuccessfully 20 times and an attempt is being made to launch him for the 21st time,” Shah said.

On the interim bail given to Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal, Shah pointed out that the Delhi Chief Minister has to surrender on June 2 and it is not a ‘clean chit’ for him.

“The Supreme Court has given interim bail to Kejriwal only for the election campaign. He had filed a case in the Supreme Court that my arrest was wrong, which the Supreme Court did not accept. Then he modified it to grant me bail, but that too was not accepted by the Supreme Court. He has been granted bail till the 1st date (of June) only to campaign for the elections and has to surrender again on the 2nd. If Arvind Kejriwal considers this a clean chit, then his understanding of the law is very weak,” he said. ANI

Delhi Chief Minister hurls salvos at Modi after apex court grants interim bail



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal with Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann (in turban) holds a roadshow in New Delhi on Saturday (ANI)

New Delhi, India - Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday went hammer and tongs against India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), accusing them of ‘dictatorship’ in the country.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convenor was released from Delhi’s most prominent Tihar Jail on Friday, after the country’s Supreme Court granted 21-day interim bail on Friday.

He has been granted bail till June 1 in connection with a money laundering case connected to the excise policy scam, which came to be known as ‘liquorgate’.

The interim bail has been granted in order to enable Kejriwal to campaign for the country’s general elections, which come every five years.

Kejriwal held a roadshow on Saturday, along with Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann in Mehrauli in the country’s

capital New Delhi for the party’s South Delhi Lok Sabha candidate Sahiram Pahwalan.

Thousands of spectators gathered at the rally as the Delhi Chief Minister waved at the crowd.

The Supreme Court on Friday gave interim bail to the Aam Aadmi Party convenor till June 1. However, as per the terms of his bail, Kejriwal cannot make any comment about his role in the Delhi liquor scam

The entire road stretch was decked up with AAP flags on either side of the road, and thousands of party workers and supporters cheered the leaders and greeted them.

Earlier in the day, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal claimed that no other party has been allegedly “harassed to this extent in the 75 years”. He targeted Prime Minister

Narendra Modi, who he said is claiming to ‘fight’ corruption, “but all the thieves are in his party”.

He also warned that all the opposition leaders would be sent to jail in case the BJP-led

coalition National Democratic Alliance (NDA) comes to power for another term.

In his first address to party workers and supporters after being granted interim bail by the Supreme Court in the excise policy case, Kejriwal attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi who he said had “left no stone unturned” to crush the AAP. The Supreme Court on Fri-

day gave interim bail to the Aam Aadmi Party convenor till June 1. However, as per the terms of his bail, the Delhi Chief Minister cannot make any comment about his role in the Delhi liquor scam case.

Kejriwal spent over 50 days in Tihar Jail after being arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in an excise policy case on March 21, days after the election schedule for the general elections was announced.

The ruling BJP’s firebrand leader Amit Shah, who holds the country’s home portfolio, said that the interim bail - given to Kejriwal asking the latter to surrender on June 2 - is not a ‘clean chit’.

The bail is applicable till June 1 and Kejriwal has to surrender to authorities on June 2.

The Delhi CM can participate in the poll campaigning but cannot attend his office as Chief Minister. ANI

N Korea to deploy 240mm multiple rocket launcher



Ankara, Türkiye - North Korea will equip its military with a new 240mm multiple rocket launcher this year, state-run media said on Saturday.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw on Friday a live-fire test of the ‘technically updated’ version rocket system, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported.

The updated rocket launcher will be ‘deployed to units of the

Korean People’s Army as replacement equipment from 2024 to 2026’.

The KCNA said Kim also discussed ways to raise production of the new rocket launcher system and shells to ‘the highest level’. A ‘significant change’ will be soon made in increasing the army’s artillery combat ability, it added.

Inter-Korean relations are at one of their lowest points in

years, and Pyongyang has declared South Korea, a US ally, its ‘principal enemy’.

The US has also accused North Korea of providing munitions and military equipment to Russia to help boost its war effort in Ukraine.

Moscow and Pyongyang have strengthened ties in recent months, and Kim paid a state visit to Russia last year.

Anadolu News

Japanese PM reiterates need for summit with North

Istanbul, Türkiye - Japan’s Prime Minister Fumio Kishida Friday reiterated the need for a summit with North Korea, with the support of the international community, including the US.

Kishida’s call for the summit came during a meeting on Friday in Tokyo with relatives of Japanese nationals allegedly kidnapped by North Korea, during which the prime minister also sought the support of the US and the international community.

The group recently visited the US, where they sought help from American lawmakers and officials solve the abduction issue, Japanese public broadcaster NHK reported.

Kishida indicated that he will step up calls on North Korea to hold a summit with help and understanding from



Fumio Kishida

the US. “The government will work with the international community to continue high-level talks to realize a Japan-North Korea summit,” he said.

Tokyo had early this year twice sought a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. But Pyongyang turned down the proposal, saying North Korea “has nothing to solve”.

Anadolu News

Severe geomagnetic storm hitting Earth could knock out power

Houston, US - A rare and powerful geomagnetic storm hitting Earth this weekend could spark power outages across the world, according to scientists.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) upgraded its original G4 geomagnetic storm watch to a G5 - the most powerful storm of its kind on a scale from G1 to G5. The unusual atmospheric event began late Friday and is expected to last throughout the weekend.

NOAA officials said the agency has not issued an alert of this magnitude in more than two decades, with the last G5 storm hitting Earth in October 2003.

Scientists said the powerful geomagnetic storm could knock out power and electronics across the globe. They noted that the storm that hit Earth in 2003 caused power outages in Sweden and damaged transformers in South Africa.

‘Geomagnetic storms can impact infrastructure in near-Earth orbit and on Earth’s surface, potentially disrupting communications, the electric power grid, navigation, radio and satellite operations,’ NOAA said in a statement.

The anomalous event could, however, give residents living in the US the rare opportunity to see the aurora borealis, also known as the northern lights.

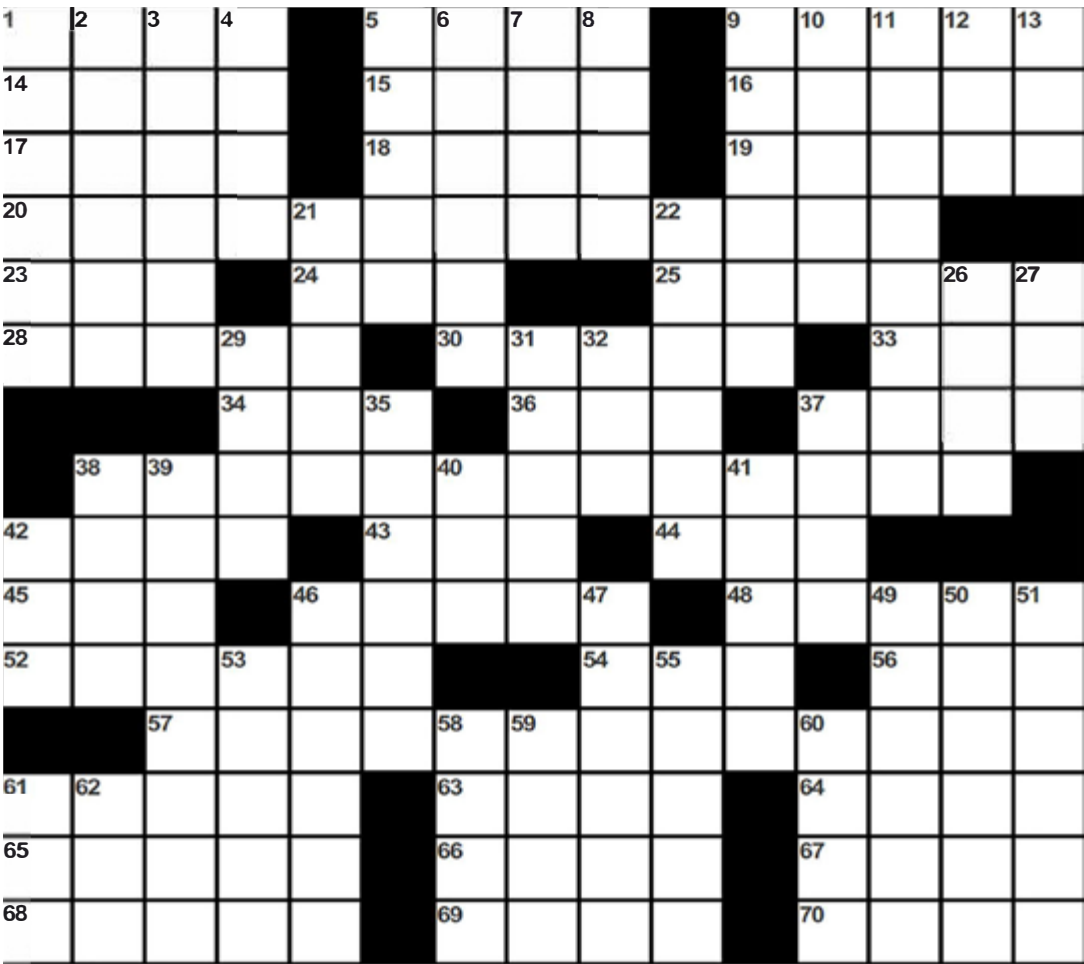
Those as far south as Alabama and Northern California might get a chance to see the spectacular light show.

Scientists explained that the northern lights are caused by disturbances in the magnetosphere that shoot solar flares and clouds of magnetic particles generated by the sun into space.

The massive and powerful electromagnetic storms light up the sky with a magnificent burst of colour.

Anadolu News

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Native of Novi Sad
 - 5) Sassy, like a shampoo brand?
 - 9) Riding costume
 - 14) Cafe_ (black coffee)
 - 15) Gray-matter creation
 - 16) Freezing home
 - 17) Birdbath organism
 - 18) Godmother, sometimes
 - 19) Senator who made the rounds?
 - 20) Bird-brained baseball instructors?
 - 23) Snacked on
 - 24) Army bunk
 - 25) Initial start
 - 28) Pain spasm
 - 30) It's canceled when it's accepted
 - 33) It puts you off-course
 - 34) Chat
 - 36) Keg contents, sometimes
 - 37) Like average grades
 - 38) Result of a bird-brained dissection?
 - 42) Feature of some modern stadiums
 - 43) Model, originally
 - 44) Sphere
 - 45) Cousin of an ostrich
 - 46) One submitting a I 040
 - 48) Anything of material value
 - 52) A Rockefeller
 - 54) Have something
 - 56) In the style of, on menus
 - 57) Bird-brained posterior?
 - 61) Practical
 - 63) Java can be found in it
 - 64) Ready to be picked
 - 65) Strongboxes
 - 66) Talese and Goldin
 - 67) Aphrodite's husband
 - 68) Pharaoh's land
 - 69) Buttocks, in slang
 - 70) Nag, e.g.
- DOWN**
- 1) Speak irritably to
 - 2) Stone Age tool
 - 3) Square_ (sailing ship)
 - 4) Highlands hill
 - 5) Key instrument?
 - 6) Chemical extractions
 - 7) You may get a hand here
 - 8) "Bye now!"
 - 9) Loftily situated
 - 10) Shoelace end
 - 11) Response to a sneeze
 - 12) A positively charged atom
 - 13) Amount of bricks?
 - 21) Cousteau's bailiwick
 - 22) Certain facial blemish
 - 26) Opposite of west
 - 27) "_ can play that game"
 - 29) Jack's giant, for one
 - 31) One of the five senses
 - 32) Kentucky boxing leg-end
 - 35) It has two pieces on the beach
 - 37) Cries openly
 - 38) Scholarly reference book
 - 39) Disperse oil in water
 - 40) Nada
 - 41) One of the Muses
 - 42) Bear's lair
 - 46) Woodlands
 - 47) Pine products
 - 49) Comedic takeoff
 - 50) Emulates Romeo and Juliet
 - 51) Least wild
 - 53) Drag behind
 - 55) Make ashamed
 - 58) "The Metaphysics of Morals" author
 - 59) Jacob's twin brother, in the Bible
 - 60) Duffer's sandy challenge
 - 61) Fair_ (copyright issue)
 - 62) Clothing attachment

NOTE PAD

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

A meeting or informal discussion at work could reveal a real problem that you all need to address right away. Chances are you either know how to fix it easily or know someone who can, so speak up. You owe it to the group to share what you know. Be the voice of reason in a trying situation, and you'll be a calming force on those freaked-out folks. Your hero status will grow as the day continues and possibly even throughout the rest of the month or year!

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Don't rein in your instinct today, especially if it's telling you to kick up your heels and get a little bit wild. It's been too long since you've set your workload aside and really cut loose. You're overdue for some fun. See a movie during your lunch hour, eat ice cream for breakfast, or take two naps in one day. It's time to indulge yourself. You won't get in trouble! And if today just isn't the day for goofing off, then at least schedule in a fun date in the future.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Your imagination will be strong today, but try not to let it carry you away. You have to maintain control and see the world for the way it truly is. In any situation where you are meeting someone new today, make sure you keep your feet on the ground and take people at face value. Drawing conclusions or making assumptions about who they are or what they want from you could take you down the wrong track. Accept things for what they claim to be.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Keeping the peace is simply not your job. Today, do not take on any additional burdens by trying to ease tense situations. Your compassion is admirable, but if a conflict is going on today, you need to do your best to avoid it. Resist the urge to step in and make these people talk to each other or try to come to an agreement. This is something you are not a part of, and you should stay out of it. Let them work out their problems on their own. You can't help.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Be wary of any people who like to take the problems in their private life and broadcast them for the world to hear. Ignore them as much as you can. Their quest for attention is not admirable, and they are not trying to gain attention in a legitimate way. Airing dirty laundry might titillate some gossipmongers, but it is only going to confuse an already confusing situation. Steer clear of the drama that is unfolding and just focus on your own life.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Beautiful words can turn anyone's head today, so if you have been working up the courage to make your move on a certain someone, today is the day to do it. Unleash your creative writing skills and think outside the box about how to approach this person in a way that will highlight your differences. Writing a love letter or even a love song will get you noticed and show them that you are someone who sees life in a unique way. All that extra effort is also flattering.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Your intellectual strengths are not fading, but nevertheless, you might start to wonder where all your smart went today. Everything everyone is saying is just so darned confusing! You're going to have multiple misunderstandings today, which will leave you awash in frustration. Luckily, you don't have to do lots of communicating with new people, so at least you can avoid making a bad first impression. Save the tough thinking for another day.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You will find a great deal of comfort in your daily routine today, so embrace the sameness and don't try to change things just for the sake of it. What might seem dull and boring to other people, you find interesting and rewarding. All your confusion is starting to clear up. This is a time to revel in your accomplishments and savor the success. The people who crave constant action are the people who aren't happy with themselves.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

You know that if you can try and stay grounded in your everyday life, you can balance the good days and the bad days and not be affected by the roller-coaster ride that life can take you on from time to time. But today it is going to be extremely difficult to keep your feet on the ground. You're in the mood for fantasy and would rather think about dreams and hopes than about the reality of what needs to be done. This will be fine if no deadlines are looming.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Be prepared for your mind to wander today. And while you're at it, enjoy the experience immensely! It's healthy to let your mood dictate your actions every once in a while, so let that brain of yours roam all it wants. You're sure to end up in some unusual places and meet an interesting person. There's no certain path or direction to follow anyway in life, so toss out your usual routine and go adventuring as much as you can. You'll gain some bright ideas.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Today is the perfect time to mix things up and get a little bit silly! Hard work can wait for a while. It's not going anywhere any time soon. Stop worrying so much about work or school. You can finish what you need to finish. There is still plenty of time. Right now, you should start exploring the more romantic and exciting aspects of life. And the romance doesn't have to be related to love. Investigate romantic music, fashion, art, and anything else that stimulates your emotions.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

It's one thing to be flexible, but it's quite another to let someone take advantage of you. Today, speak up if you feel as if people are walking all over you, but do it maturely. You might feel too scared to make a scene, but who says you have to? There's no need to scream at them to get your point across. A quiet word to the right person will get you all the satisfaction you need. Display the maturity that others lack and rise above the drama to demand respect.

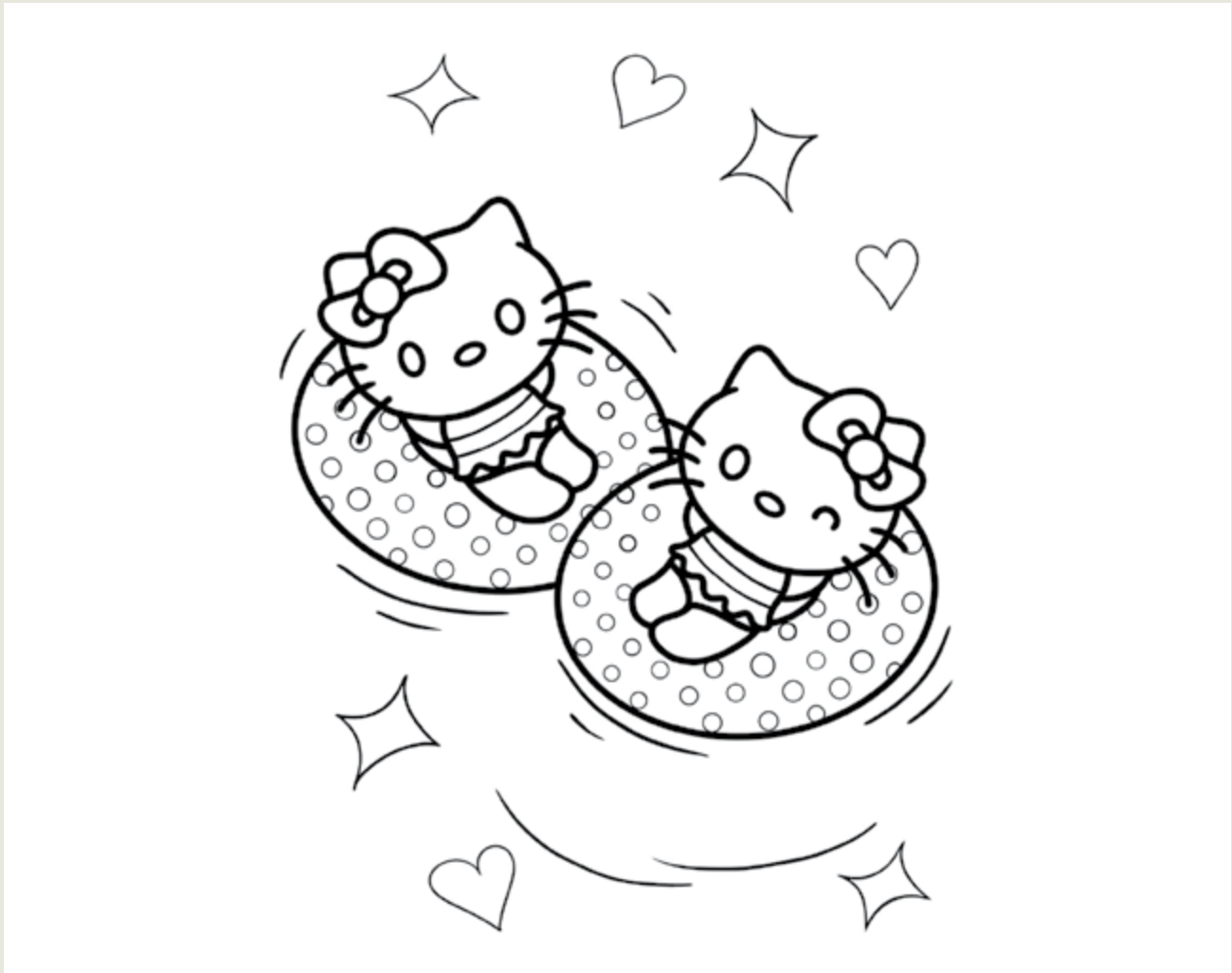


TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Which of these fought to unify Italy in the 19th century?
- A. Joachim Murat
 - B. Benito Mussolini
 - C. Giuseppe Garibaldi
 - D. Canaletto
2. What is the national anthem of the UK?
- A. Land of Hope and Glory
 - B. God Save the Queen
 - C. Rule Britannia
 - D. Jerusalem
3. The filings of wood or metal are referred to as ...?
- A. Shavings
 - B. Swarf
 - C. Shavetails
 - D. Sweals

Answers: 1.C 2.B 3.B

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

N	G	O	I
I	R	I	U
O	S	O	T
D	N	W	S

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

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

'PSG WILL GET EVEN BETTER'

Luis Enrique proud of club legend Mbappe, understands decision to leave the club

Paris, France - Paris St Germain coach Luis Enrique said he was proud to have had Kylian Mbappe in his team and understood the club's all-time leading scorer's decision to end his seven-year stay.

Mbappe, whose contract expires this season, announced his departure in a video on Friday after months of speculation about his future.

"All I can say is marvellous things about Kylian Mbappe as a footballer and person," Enrique told reporters on Saturday.

"I understand his decision. He has been here for seven years and as a club legend. He has given everything to this club, and this club has given him everything as well. I wish him all the best for the future.

"I have been proud to have him in this team. He has helped us and is a leader, and he has done so with a smile on his face."

But losing Mbappe, who has scored 255 goals for PSG in all competitions and won six Ligue 1 titles with them, will not change things at the club, according to Enrique.

"These are things that we have known for a long time... it was only made public yesterday," the coach said. "But it doesn't change anything in terms of our general outlook. Everything



Luis Enrique with Kylian Mbappe

I understand his decision. He has been here for seven years and as a club legend. He has given everything to this club, and this club has given him everything as well.

KYLIAN MBAPPE



will stay the same.

"Regardless of those who are here or who are absent, my aim is to be stronger next season."

Enrique said exiting the Champions League after losing to Borussia Dortmund in the semi-finals still hurt and it was important for PSG to end the

season by winning the French Cup final against Lyon on May 25.

"PSG will continue to be a great team and we'll get even better. We will bring in players with strong mentality and players who identify with the club... that's how life works," he added.



Inter Milan's Davide Frattesi scores against Frosinone on Friday

Inter's big win gives coach Inzaghi 'all answers needed'

Frosinone, Italy - Clinical Inter Milan returned to winning ways with a 5-0 thrashing of relegation-threatened Frosinone on Friday and coach Simone Inzaghi admitted he had no questions left following his side's stellar performance.

Champions Inter stumbled to a 1-0 loss at relegation-battling Sassuolo last weekend but bounced back at Frosinone when five different players were on target to further hamper Frosinone's hopes of steering away from the relegation zone.

"I got the answers I wanted even though there was no need (for them)," Inzaghi said.

"A lot of guys who have played less answered and even contributed with a goal, I'm thinking about (Tajon)

Buchanan and (Marko) Arnautovic. Important answers also came from (Kristjan) Asllani, who has grown a lot and has also played parts in important games."

Inter, who remained on track to beat the club record of 97 points set in the 2006-07 season, have also equalled the 15 away wins recorded in that season and maintained their 10th clean sheet, previously seen in 2007-08.

"I have a club that has been working for some time to ensure that the team improves because we always have to grow," Inzaghi said when asked would the team keep up the pace next season. "Now we have two matches in which we will do our best and then we will think about next season."

Girona held to 2-2 draw at Alaves



Jon Guridi of Alaves celebrates after scoring against Girona

Barcelona, Spain - Girona let slip an away win as Jon Guridi's last-gasp effort snatched a 2-2 draw for Alaves on Friday to leave the visitors' hold on second place in the LaLiga in jeopardy.

Girona have 75 points, only two clear of Catalan rivals Barcelona, who host Real Sociedad on Monday. Real Madrid have secured the league title, sitting on 87 points with four games left.

Alaves remain 11th with 42 points.

The visitors grabbed an early

lead through defender Eric Garcia's towering header off a corner only four minutes into the game before Guridi equalised in the 12th with a close-range finish.

Despite Alaves looking more dangerous, Girona restored their lead just before halftime thanks to Yangel Herrera's superb strike into the top right corner.

Michel's side had chances to extend their advantage after the break, but Guridi scored his second deep into stoppage time after capitalising on a loose ball in the box to seal the draw.



Como, returning to the Italian top flight after a 21-year absence, are coached by former Arsenal and Barcelona player Cesc Fabregas

Parma, Como gain promotion to Serie A

Como, Italy - Parma and Como sealed promotion to Serie A on Friday after finishing at the top of Serie B, and a third club will join the Italian top flight after the playoffs.

Leaders Parma drew 1-1 with Reggiana to finish with 76 points,

while Como, coached by former Arsenal, Barcelona and Chelsea midfielder Cesc Fabregas, ended second with 73 after a draw with Cosenza.

Como, who are returning to the Italian top flight after a 21-year absence, also have former

England and Chelsea legend Dennis Wise as their CEO, while Thierry Henry is an investor and a board member.

Venezia, who finished third after losing 2-1 to Spezia, will join Cremonese, Catanzaro, Palermo, Sampdoria and Brescia in the

playoffs, which begin on May 17 and culminate in a two-legged final on May 30 and June 2.

Bottom club Lecco will be relegated to Serie C with Feralpisalo and Ascoli, while the playoffs will be held between Bari and Ternana on May 16 and 23.



Guillermo Ochoa

Ochoa out of Mexico squad for Copa America

Mexico City, Mexico - Mexico regulars goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa and forward Hirving Lozano were left out of the Copa America squad as the country aims for a generational change, coach Jaime Lozano said on Friday.

Lozano named 10 players from the under-23 national team in his preliminary 31-man squad, intending to develop players ahead of the 2026 World Cup in Mexico, the United States, and Canada.

"We want a dynamic and strong team. It is important to lay the foundations for 2026 and 2030," Lozano told a news conference.

"We have spoken to all those who are not here. It is the ideal tournament to see who are standing out and to have a bigger deck of players for what is to come.

"If we want the national team to be as good as possible for the World Cup at home and give the best performance, we have to make decisions according to the big challenge we are setting ourselves."



Endrick

Endrick in, but no place for Richarlison and Casemiro in Brazil's Copa America squad

São Paulo, Brazil - Brazil have included Palmeiras prodigy Endrick in their 23-player strong squad for the upcoming Copa America, but defensive midfielder Casemiro and forward Richarlison have missed out on a place, coach Dorival Junior announced on Friday.

Endrick, who is due to join Spanish giants Real Madrid when he turns 18 in July, has scored two goals in four appear-

ances for Brazil since his debut last year. He is the youngest male player to score an international goal at Wembley.

Five times Champions League winner with Real Madrid, Casemiro has lost out on a spot having struggled with form and fitness at his current club Manchester United. The 32-year-old has been capped 75 times.

Tottenham Hotspur forward

Richarlison was Brazil's top-scorer at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, where they were knocked out in the quarter-finals by Croatia, but has failed to make the cut for the Seleccion this time.

Richarlison, 27, has netted 12 times and provided four assists in 31 appearances across all competitions this season.

Arsenal's Gabriel Jesus alongside fellow forward Matheus Cunha, who plays for

Wolverhampton Wanderers, were the other notable absentees. Vinicius Jr and Real Madrid team mate Rodrygo will likely lead the forward line, with Raphinha and Gabriel Martinelli also securing a place in the squad.

Real Madrid defender Eder Militao has also made the cut after suffering a Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) injury earlier in the season.



DOUBLE TROUBLE

Gill, Sudharsan break records and hurt CSK's playoff chances

Ahmedabad, India - Shubman Gill and B Sai Sudharsan ripped up the Chennai Super Kings (CSK) attack and the record books to keep Gujarat Titans' (GT's) playoff hopes just alive. The result, however, punctured CSK's chances and left them facing a tricky route to the playoffs.

Next up, CSK face a super-quick turnaround: they will meet Rajasthan Royals (RR) on Sunday afternoon at Chepauk. They will then run into a resurgent Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in their last league fixture, in Bengaluru, on May 18. The defeat to GT means their qualification for the playoffs might come down to net run-rates - CSK, though, still have the best NRR among the three teams with 12 points - and one more defeat could leave the defending champions teetering on the brink.

GT captain Gill spent some time off the field in their successful defence of 231 because of cramps. But he had already handsomely contributed with the bat in a 210-run partnership with Sudharsan - the joint-highest opening stand in the history of the IPL. Along the way, Gill and Sudharsan pushed the IPL century count past 100.

Gill and Sudharsan are no Travishek. They are more orthodox top-order batters. But on a bouncy, red-soil Ahmedabad pitch on Friday, they showed that they can be just as destructive with their hitting.

It was Gill who made the early running when he took left-arm fingerspinner Mitchell Santner



Shubman Gill (R) and B Sai Sudharsan put up a 210-run partnership for the opening wicket for Gujarat Titans

for a four and a six in a 14-run opening over.

Then, in the final over of the powerplay, Gill played what was arguably the shot of the day. When Simarjeet Singh bowled a blameless back-of-a-length delivery on off, Gill used his gifts to make it look like a bad ball and imperiously swatted it over mid-

on for six.

Sudharsan, becalmed in the early exchanges, then caught fire, whacking Ravindra Jadeja for 21 off seven balls at a strike rate of 300. The presence of the spin-hitting Sudharsan meant Jadeja could not bowl more than two overs on the night.

Ruturaj Gaikwad turned to

Daryl Mitchell's cutters, but he was dispatched for 4-0-52-0.

Sudharsan accelerated so quickly that he and his captain had identical scores at the end of the 16th over: 96 off 48 balls. Gill was the first to bring up his hundred with a four, and four balls later, Sudharsan joined him there with a six.

TODAYS MATCHES

MATCH 61

2 PM

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS VS RAJASTHAN ROYALS

MATCH 62

6 PM

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE VS DELHI CAPITALS

In the next over, however, Tushar Deshpande had both Sudharsan and Gill holing out in the space of five balls.

Deshpande could have cut short Gill's innings on 72 had he not dropped him at the long-off boundary - he ended up parrying it onto the rope for six. But he came back strong at the death with his defensive skills on show, with Shardul Thakur for company.

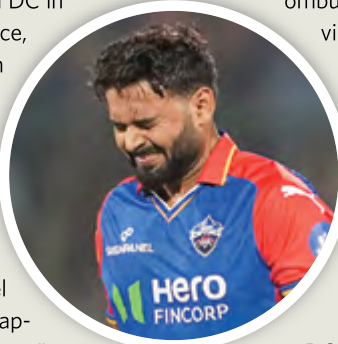
They kept hiding the ball away from the swinging arcs of the GT batters and allowed them to score only 41 runs off the last five overs. Only one boundary was scored off the last three overs, but the chase was always going to be a tall order for CSK.

ESPNCricinfo

Pant to miss crucial game against Bengaluru due to over-rate suspension

New Delhi, India - Delhi Capitals captain Rishabh Pant has been suspended for one match for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct after his team maintained a slow over-rate during the match against Rajasthan Royals in Delhi on May 7. It was Pant's third over-rate penalty this IPL and, as a result, he will miss DC's crucial fixture against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, at the Chinnaswamy Stadium on Sunday. Axar Patel will lead DC in Pant's absence, with both teams desperately needing a win to keep their playoff hopes alive.

"Axar Patel will be our captain tomorrow," DC's head coach Ricky Ponting said



Rishabh Pant

plans, and make sure he's ready to lead the team well tomorrow."

Pant was also fined INR 30 lakh while the rest DC's playing XI in that game, including the Impact Player, were fined either INR 12 lakh or 50% of their match fees, whichever is lower. A BCCI release said DC filed an appeal challenging the ruling of the match referee, following which the issue was referred to the board's ombudsman for review. The ombudsman conducted a virtual hearing and upheld the match referee's decision.

In their appeal, DC cited multiple reasons for the delay, including that the RR batters had hit 13 sixes and that the Sanju Samson dismissal had consumed extra time. However, it was ruled that there was no statistical information submitted explaining exactly how much time was additionally consumed by these events. Each team in the IPL is allowed 85 minutes (4.25 minutes per over) to complete their 20 overs. In the match against RR, DC took 117.82 minutes to complete their 20 overs, which was in violation of the minimum over-rate requirements under the Code of Conduct.

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DAZZLING CITY

Gvardiol scores double as Guardiola’s men go top with 4-0 thrashing of Fulham

London, England - Manchester City hit the top of the Premier League with one week of the season remaining as two goals by Josko Gvardiol and one each for Phil Foden and Julian Alvarez sealed a 4-0 demolition of Fulham on Saturday.

City’s stroll in the London sunshine, their seventh successive league win and 16th consecutive victory over Fulham in all competitions, moved Pep Guardiola’s a step closer an unprecedented fourth English title in a row.

They have 85 points from 36 games, with Arsenal on 83 from 36. Arsenal can regain top spot by beating Manchester United on Sunday but City, who play their game in hand at Tottenham Hotspur on Tuesday, are now two wins away from history.

Croatian defender Gvardiol slotted them in front in the 13th minute after a neat one-two with Kevin De Bruyne and Foden gave them breathing space in the 59th minute.

Gvardiol made sure of the points when he slid in to touch home Bernardo Silva’s cross at the back post and City’s fans, with former Oasis frontman Noel Gallagher in their ranks, were in party mode when Alvarez tucked away a stoppage-time penalty after being fouled by Issa Diop who was sent off. It was the type of ruthless performance City inevitably produce down the stretch in title race and they now look likely to wrap up it up at home to West Ham United.

"The great players enjoy playing with great pressure," Guardiola said.



Manchester City’s Josko Gvardiol celebrates after scoring against Fulham on Saturday

ola said. " Our dream is as we said a few weeks ago when they (Arsenal) lost against Aston Villa was to arrive in the last games with it in our hands, to play West Ham at home with the destiny belonging to us. We did a really good job today."

City established a new English record for consecutive wins by one club over another as they beat Fulham yet again, but it is a landmark fourth successive title they crave.

They took a huge step towards that goal by stretching their unbeaten league run to 21 games, piling the pressure on Arsenal ahead of their trip to Old Trafford.

Guardiola’s side have had to play catch-up recently with their last three victories all coming after Arsenal had won, but this time they were given the chance to test the London club’s resolve in the weekend’s opening game.

Mid-table Fulham began their final home match of the season in positive fashion with early forays forward but City quickly found their slick passing rhythm to take the lead. Left back Gvardiol displayed his recent appetite for goals when he played a one-two with De Bruyne, side-stepped a Fulham defender and dispatched a shot past a static Bernd Leno.

For all City’s domination they were unable to extend their lead before the interval as Manuel Akanji missed a sitter and with Arsenal’s form giving City no margin for error there were a few jitters early in the second half as keeper Ederson was forced to scramble away a deflected cross.

Ireland stun Pakistan

Dublin, Ireland - Pakistan were handed a sobering reality check ahead of next month’s 20-overs World Cup, following their first ever loss on Friday in a T20 International to Ireland in Dublin.

Put into bat, Pakistan managed a modest 182-6 against the limited bowling resources of their opponents at the Castle Avenue.

Skipper Babar Azam made 57 and opener Saim Ayub contributed 45 but it was not really a flying start as Pakistan reached the 100-mark in the 13th over.

Iftikhar Ahmed smashed 37 not out off 15 balls down the order but Pakistan still settled for a middling total.

Andy Balbirnie (77) top-scored for Ireland, who chased down the target with one ball to spare to go 1-0 up in the three-match series.

"The pitch was two-paced. I think 190 would have been a par score," Babar said after Pakistan’s loss.

"I don’t think we executed the plans. We attacked in the first six overs but didn’t finish well.

"I think we were ahead in the first 10 overs but not in the last 10 overs."

Pakistan will play four T20 matches in England later this month before the 2009 champions begin their World Cup campaign with a June 6 match against tournament co-hosts United States in New York.

Front-row FIA WEC start for Oman’s Ahmad al Harthy at Spa



Oman’s Ahmad Al Harthy was impressive as he secured his first LMGT3 front-row start of the season

Muscat - Oman’s Ahmad Al Harthy delivered another sparkling qualifying performance at Spa-Francorchamps on Friday to secure his first LMGT3 front-row start of the season for the third round of the FIA World Endurance Championship campaign.

Going into the weekend fourth in the championship standings along with teammates Maxime Martin and Valentino Rossi, Al Harthy relished the prospect of being back at Spa, a

track where he has enjoyed considerable GT racing success over the years, and he didn’t disappoint in qualifying.

Lapping second fastest around the Ardennes track in the main LMGT3 session, producing a time of 2m21.233 seconds (178.5 km/h), the BMW M4 GT3 driver easily progressed into the all-important Hyperpole shoot-out to continue his unbroken run of doing so this season.

Al Harthy was able to shave a tenth of a second off that time in

Hyperpole shortly after, producing a best of 2m21.138 seconds (178.6 km/h), which secured third on the LMGT3 grid for this afternoon’s TotalEnergies 6 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps. Following an exclusion for the No.95 McLaren, though, Al Harthy was elevated onto the front-row, less than 0.4 seconds shy of pole position.

Much of the focus for the squad throughout free practice on Thursday and earlier on Friday, was on delivering the

strongest possible car for the race. As a result Al Harthy - who is partnered by OQ, Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Omantel and BMW Oman - was especially pleased with the pace he showed in qualifying trim.

After lapping fifth fastest in the opening free practice, the squad was third quickest in session two and then in session three, the final chance to prepare the car ahead of qualifying, they ended 13th on the times.

"To go through into Hyperpole and to get a front-row grid start here at Spa is very, very good and I’m really happy with that. It puts us in a very good situation to start the race and then, hopefully, we can build on that. The six hours here is very difficult, obviously tyre degradation is much higher and so it’s about managing it for the race," said Al Harthy.

"We’ve been working a lot in the last few days to make sure we have a good race car."



Jorginho with Mikel Arteta

Jorginho: Arsenal must ensure Arteta stays on

London, England - Arsenal must hold on to manager Mikel Arteta in the long run as he has created something special at the club, midfielder Jorginho said with his coach yet to renew his contract which expires at the end of next season.

Arsenal top the Premier League table with two games left, one point ahead of champions Manchester City who have a match in hand.

"I feel that he could stay way longer," Jorginho said. "I feel he feels good here and I honestly don’t see him going.

"It is really important for the club for him to stay because him, with (technical director) Edu (Gaspar) and the board, the whole club, they have created something special.

"What he (Arteta) has been doing here since he joined has been incredible. It is not just a coincidence that we are where we are now."

Former Arsenal player Arteta became manager in 2019 and the Spaniard has been linked with a move to Barcelona.

Arsenal visit Manchester United on Sunday.

French Open decision not clear in my mind, says Nadal after Rome exit

Rome, Italy - Rafa Nadal said he was still in two minds about whether he will play in the French Open starting this month after he was eliminated from the Italian Open in straight sets by seventh seed Hubert Hurkacz on Saturday.

Poland’s Hurkacz beat Nadal 6-1 6-3 in the second round to end the Spaniard’s run at the tournament he has won a record 10 times, his last title coming in 2021.

Nadal had come through a three-set win over Zizou Bergs on Thursday but was broken four times by Hurkacz before he bowed out in 93 minutes.

The 37-year-old Spaniard, who has said he expects to retire after this season, spent most of last year nursing a hip issue that required surgery, before a muscle tear in Brisbane stalled his comeback in January.

Nadal has won the French Open a record 14 times but competing at his favourite Grand Slam is still not certain for the 22-times Grand Slam winner.



Rafa Nadal

"You can see today on the court how difficult is," Nadal told reporters.

"Probably one is to say, 'Okay, I’m not ready, I’m not playing well'. Then it’s the moment to take a decision in terms of not playing Roland Garros. Another is accept how I am today and

work the proper way to try to be in a different way in two weeks.

"The decision, as you can imagine, is not clear in my mind today. But if I have to say what’s my feeling and if my mind is closer one way or the other way, I’m going to say 'Be in Roland Garros and try my best'.



Novak Djokovic

Djokovic struck on the head by water bottle

Rome, Italy - World number one Novak Djokovic required medical attention after being struck in the head by a water bottle following his second-round win against France’s Corentin Moutet at the Italian Open on Friday.

The Serbian was signing autographs after his easy 6-3 6-1 victory against the lucky loser when he was hit in the head by the bottle and he immediately clutched his head as fell to his knees. He remained crouched on the ground for several seconds as staff ran to his aid and was eventually helped off court.

Tournament organisers said there was no cause for concern over his condition.

"Novak Djokovic on leaving the Central Court at the end of his match was hit on the head by a water bottle while signing autographs (for) spectators," the tournament said in a statement posted on social media. "He underwent appropriate medication and has already left the Foro Italico to return to his hotel."

Footage posted to social media showed the bottle had slipped out of a fan’s backpack and hit him.

SEEING FOREST

Treasure from trash

With one of the highest population densities of any country in the world, Singapore often draws up associations with bustling urbanism.

Artist Robert Zhao Renhui wants to challenge that perception. His exhibition Seeing Forest, which represents Singapore at this year's Venice Biennale (April 20-November 24), explores the city-state's secondary forests - once-developed land which has been since reclaimed by nature.

Secondary forests make up approximately 4% of Singapore's land mass; unlike primary forests, however, they don't enjoy governmental protections and are often reclaimed for building projects.

The flora and fauna that have flourished in these ecosystems, many of them not native to Singapore, become protagonists in Zhao's multimedia works. The Owl, The Travellers and The Cement Drain (2024), the two-channel video installation at the heart of the Biennale exhibition, teems with owls, eagles, wild boars, and lizards. Two humans explore the wilderness together, but more often, it's human detritus that dots this liminal terrain: abandoned tents, century-old booze bottles, old tapping cups from when much of Singapore was a rubber plantation, and more.

In Zhao's Trash Stratum (2024), a partner piece to The Owl, The Travellers and The Cement Drain, twelve screens are embedded within a deconstructed curiosity cabinet. They display footage of the animal visitors to a dustbin Zhao found abandoned in a secondary forest. In one scene, frogs float placidly in the bin, filled with rainwater - an ecosystem within an ecosystem, a treasure from one man's

'My presentation aims to capture that sense of being in the forest - of being enveloped by images, pulses, energies, and other beings,' says artist Robert Zhao Renhui who has presented 'Seeing Forest', an exhibition representing Singapore at the Venice Biennale 2024



Thermal image of a walker in the forest, still from The Owl, The Travellers and The Cement Drain



A monitor lizard swims, still from Trash Stratum



Crown Shyness



While Singapore is often described as a Garden City, I felt that there was an impersonal, anonymous image of nature

ROBERT ZHAO RENHUI



An eagle drinks from a trash can in a secondary forest, Trash Stratum

trash. That image eloquently sums up Zhao's practice. For more than a decade, Zhao, 41, has tried to escape simplistic dichotomies between 'wild' and 'developed' land - a binary that exists mainly in the human imagination and nowhere else.

"Where I live exists at this boundary line between city and nature, between urbanised cities and wild secondary forests," Zhao says. "I'm interested in the collapsing of such categories because they tend to espouse a kind of conservative - and misguided - thinking that prioritises 'wildness,' 'virgin' and 'untouched' as somehow superior to, say, an abandoned village where a forest of unremarkable and common tree species has taken over."

Zhao says secondary forests are the 'longest and most persistent' of his ecological interests: he's been filming and photographing secondary forests in Singapore for seven years now. But the roots of Seeing Forest stretch back to 2008, when Zhao started the Institute for Critical Zoologists.

Though its title parodies lofty research think-tanks, Zhao says the ongoing one-man project is as serious as they come. Under the banner of the semi-fictional Institute, he's studied the last wild cow in Singapore, which died



The Owl, The Travellers and The Cement Drain

in 2016, the migration patterns of bird species near the border between China and North Korea, and the effects of human settlement on Christmas Island under Singaporean control until 1958.

"I could explore the interactions between humans and nature while focusing on everything that tends to be ignored in zoological research," Zhao says.

Singapore, Very Old Tree (2015) - Zhao's permanent exhibition at the National Museum of Singapore - is another work which builds on this fascination. Zhao photographed 17 trees in Singapore, paired with oral histories about them by residents. Trying to Remember A River (2022), recently presented at the 2023 Gwangju Biennale, is a still-closer precursor to the work in Seeing Forest: motion-sensor cameras captured the wildlife surrounding a 'forgotten' river in Gillman Forest in Singapore, near the institution where Zhao undertook a research residency.

"While [Singapore is] often described as a Garden City, I felt that there was an impersonal, anonymous image of nature," Zhao says. "Exploring the city's

history through a zoological lens seemed a fascinating and multi-layered way to connect Singaporeans with their own stories."

In addition to Trash Stratum and The Owl, The Travellers and The Cement Drain, the pavilion exhibition will also feature Buffy (2024), a digital print of a buffy fish owl native to Southeast Asia, and a printed map of an unnamed, fictional forest, in which visitors are invited to imagine themselves as they progress through Zhao's works.

"My Venice presentation aims to capture that sense of being in the forest - of being enveloped by images, pulses, energies, and other beings - without trying to rationally reduce these sensations into statements of fact or opinion," Zhao says.

Commissioned by National Arts Council, Singapore and organised by Singapore Art Museum, Seeing Forest by Robert Zhao Renhui in collaboration with curator Haeju Kim, is open at the Singapore Pavilion on the second floor of the Arsenal's Sale d'Armi building from April 20 to November 24.

(Courtesy: artnews.com)

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