

Speed, negligence major causes of accidents

Our Correspondent
Muscat

National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) has released data on traffic accidents in Oman in 2023, revealing a worrying trend in road safety, with speed and negligence emerging as the primary causes of fatalities and injuries.

A total of 595 deaths were attributed to traffic accidents in 2023, an increase from 532 in 2022. Injuries resulting from road accidents totalled 2,129, compared to 2,080 in 2022. The total number of traffic accidents increased from 1,877 in 2022 to 2,040 in 2023.

Speeding continued to be the leading cause of traffic-related deaths and injuries. In 2023, speeding caused 304 deaths and 1,037 injuries, marginally fewer than 334 deaths and 1,070 injuries in 2022. Speeding caused



TOTAL
Deaths **595**
Injuries **2,129**
Accidents **2,040**

Speeding
Deaths **304**
Injuries **1,037**
Accidents **1,009**

Negligence
Deaths **103**
Injuries **245**
Accidents **308**

(NCSI data for 2023)

1,009 accidents last year.

The second leading cause was negligence, resulting in 103 deaths and 245 injuries in 2023, a significant increase from 66 deaths and 234 injuries in 2022. Negligence-related accidents increased from 248 to 308.

Reckless driving behaviour led to 80 deaths and 418 injuries in 2023, compared to 63 deaths and 433 injuries in 2022.

Improper overtaking led to 48 deaths and 98 injuries in 2023, up from 27 deaths and 88 injuries in 2022. Tailgating resulted in 35 deaths and 160 injuries in 2023, up from 12 deaths and 158 injuries in 2022.

Defective vehicles caused nine deaths and 72 injuries in 2023, down from 12 deaths and 39 injuries in 2022.

Fatigue-related accidents caused six deaths and eight injuries in 2023, up from two deaths and three injuries in 2022,

while driving under the influence resulted in four deaths and 50 injuries, down from nine deaths and 30 injuries in 2022.

Adverse weather conditions caused four deaths and 20 injuries, up from two deaths and five injuries in 2022.

Poor road conditions led to two deaths and 21 injuries, compared to five deaths and 20 injuries in 2022.

Muscat and Dhofar recorded the highest number of accidents - 426 resulting in 85 deaths and 270 resulting in 113 deaths respectively.

The data underscores the urgent need for stricter enforcement of traffic regulations and enhanced road safety measures. With speeding and negligence being the top causes of fatalities, authorities and motorists alike must work towards fostering safer driving habits to reduce these preventable tragedies.

Birth rate decreases, life expectancy increases

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has released its *Annual Health Report* for 2023, presenting important health trends and developments across the sultanate. The comprehensive report covers critical health indicators and provides an overview of the country's healthcare infrastructure, workforce and service utilisation.

The report indicates an increase in hospital admissions - more than 302,000 in 2023, an increase of 2.6% compared to 2022. The average length of stay also increased to 3.5 days per patient taking total bed occupancy to 65.1%.

There was also a notable increase in number of visits to outpatient clinics - 15.3mn, up 2.7% from 2022. The average number of visits per Omani individual to outpatient clinics was 5.0 visits, while the number of x-rays performed increased 9.5% to approximately 1.8mn.

MoH performed a total of 86,955 surgical procedures in 2023 - 39,976 on males and 46,979 on females.

Eleven liver, 19 kidney and 20 cornea transplants were also performed.

The annual report shows a decline in crude birth rate, dropping from 15.7 per thousand popula-



Hospital admissions up 2.6% to 302,000	Average length of stay 3.5 days/patient	Bed occupancy 65.1%	Visits to outpatient clinics up 2.7% to 15.3mn
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tion in 2022 to 13.8 in 2023. Infant mortality rate decreased from 8.8 deaths per thousand live births in 2022 to 8.5 in 2023. However, maternal mortality increased to 19.9 deaths per 100,000 live births, up from 17.1 in 2022.

Reflecting improvements in overall health and healthcare services in the sultanate, life expectancy rose to 78.3 years.

H E Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health, highlighted MoH's collaborative efforts with government and private agen-

cies. "These efforts focus on developing the health system, integrating services, implementing unified procurement of medicines, and reviewing health policies and strategies," H E Dr Sabti said.

Health institutions affiliated with MoH include 50 hospitals offering a total of 5,024 beds, 21 health complexes and 194 health centres providing comprehensive services across the governorates. The report noted significant progress in controlling infectious diseases, with cases of measles

reducing to 25 in 2023. Oman has maintained its polio-free status since 1993, with no cases of diphtheria or neonatal tetanus since 1992.

However, there has been a rise in dengue fever cases - 2,711 in 2023 up from 1,989 in 2022. MoH is actively working with relevant authorities to address this by focusing on controlling *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, the primary vector of the disease.

At the end of 2023, MoH reported an increase in its workforce. There were 6,117 doctors, 876 pharmacists and 16,000 nurses, taking the total workforce to over 39,500. Omanisation rate stood at 71%.

The total number of doctors in the sultanate increased to 9,933, while nurses working in various institutions numbered 22,130. This translated to 19.2 doctors and 42.8 nurses per 10,000 people nationwide, compared to 19.1 doctors and 43.1 nurses per 10,000 people in 2022.

MoH has invested in professional development of its personnel by sending employees abroad to enhance their medical, paramedical and technical skills, and facilitating participation in scientific seminars and training courses. In 2023, 47 employees pursued studies in various paramedical and technical fields, and 75 doctors engaged in further studies.

Bangla PM Sheikh Hasina resigns, flees to India

Dhaka, Bangladesh - Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 15-year rule ended on Monday as she resigned and fled the country following more than a month of deadly protests.

Hasina had sought to quell nationwide protests against her government since early July but she fled after a brutal day of unrest on Sunday in which nearly 100 people were killed.

"We want a corruption-free Bangladesh, where everyone would have the right to express their opinion," said Monirul Islam, a 27-year-old man among thousands in the streets near the prime minister's palace.

Bangladesh's army chief Gen Waker Uz Zaman said in a broadcast to the nation that Hasina had resigned and the military would form a caretaker government.

He added that he would seek the president's guidance on forming a new government. "I am taking full responsibility," the general said, although it was not clear if he would head a caretaker government.

Gen Zaman also promised justice for all those killed during weeks of anti-government protests, adding that the military would stand down. "Keep faith in the military; we will investigate all the killings and punish the responsible," he said. "I have ordered that no army and police will indulge in any kind of firing."

In his address, he also called on students to remain calm and



People celebrate the resignation of Sheikh Hasina (inset) on the streets of Dhaka

I am taking full responsibility. Keep faith in the military; we will investigate all the killings and punish the responsible

GEN WAKER UZ ZAMAN

go home, saying he was trying to "find a solution for the country".

Local media reports in India said that an aircraft carrying Hasina and her sister landed at Hindon Air Base near New Delhi.

On Monday, huge crowds stormed the prime minister's palace, preventing Hasina from delivering a speech.

At least 20 more people were killed during violence in Dhaka as protesters stormed buildings, a police officer told the French news agency AFP.

"We've got 20 bodies here," said Bacchu Mia, a police inspector at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, without giving details of their deaths, although witnesses and other police officers reported mobs launching revenge attacks on rival groups.

Despite the violence, by early afternoon, the mood on the streets had turned to one of celebration after the news of the premier's departure spread.

Agencies

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Oman crude price falls 5.9% as US recession fears mount

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Why can't the UN do something about Gaza?

Islamic nations rally in support of Palestinian cause

Mecca, Saudi Arabia - The world's Islamic states have joined support for the Palestinian cause, asserting the need to grant the Palestinian people their legitimate rights and to protect them against the brutal attacks of Israeli forces, notably in the Gaza Strip.

In the closing statement of the Conference of Ministers of Endowments and Islamic Affairs in the Islamic World, attendees emphasised the need to grant the Palestinian people their legitimate rights, including their right to establish an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. They also called for es-



tablishment of just and lasting peace.

Represented by the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, Oman concluded its participation in the two-day conference held in Mecca, Saudi Arabia on Monday. The ninth edition of the

conference was titled 'Role of Ministries of Endowments and Islamic Affairs in Promoting the Principles of Moderation and Consolidation of Islamic Values'.

Oman's delegation was led by H E Dr Mohammed Said al Maa-mari, Minister of Endowments

and Religious Affairs.

The closing statement urged the international community and all official, civil, charitable, humanitarian and relief organisations to support the Palestinian people in their ordeal and help end their suffering.

The conference underscored the requirement of Islamic countries to stay united - it being one of the greatest principles of Islam - and avoid anything that might lead to division or rebellion against the Muslim community or its leaders. It cautioned that division and rebellion entail immense corruption, bloodshed, violation of sanctities and the incitement of sectarianism.

It stressed the importance of protecting moral and social values and safeguarding Muslim societies against alien social concepts.

The conference emphasised the urgent need to address hate speech against Islam and Mus-

lims, urging the development of cultural programmes and future strategies to combat the distortion of Islam's image and incitement to violence based on religion or race.

The conference welcomed the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of a resolution on 'Measures to Combat Islamophobia' and appointment of a United Nations Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia.

In its concluding session, the conference recommended bolstering calls for moderation and balance in religious discourse, stressing the importance of combating extremism, fanaticism, moral decay and atheism.

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Council of Oman vital for legislative progress

Muscat - Council of Oman, comprising the State Council and Majlis A'Shura, continues to play a pivotal role in the sultanate's legislative process. Guided by the Basic Law of the State and the Law of the Council of Oman, it is instrumental in shaping the nation's development and growth.

In the first session of its eighth term, the State Council convened five sessions, deliberating on the draft state budget for 2024 and various government-referred draft laws. Notable among these were the 'Draft Law on the Protection of Bank Deposits', 'Draft Law on Regulating Trade in Wildlife' and 'Draft Media Law'.

The State Council also addressed the responses from the Council of Ministers to previous studies and proposals.

A joint session with Majlis A'Shura focused on resolving differences on several draft laws referred by the government. The State Council's office held five meetings, reviewing 41 topics, including submissions from its committees, Council of Ministers' responses and members' proposals.

During the first session, the

(ONA)

State Council formed three special committees, tasked with studying the contents of the Royal Speech at the opening of the first session of the eighth

term of the Council of Oman; ways of diversifying sources of income in the sultanate; and the role of local flora in strengthening the local economy.

The State Council's permanent committees held 58 main meetings and 46 subcommittee meetings during the eighth term. It hosted 22 events, engaging

specialists from the public and private sectors.

Additionally, the State Council hosted officials and specialists to discuss national efforts and the roles, plans and programmes of their institutions. Notable presentations included those by the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, Ministry of Finance and Oman Investment Authority.

In its first annual session of the tenth term, Majlis A'Shura held 12 regular sessions, four of which were dedicated to ministerial statements. The majlis reviewed nine draft laws and 12 draft agreements referred by the government.

The State Council and Majlis A'Shura work in close partnership, coordinating through joint committees to resolve differences on draft laws. This collaborative legislative process underscores Council of Oman's commitment to national development and effective governance.

MHUP launches six agricultural investment opportunities in Dhahirah

Ibri - Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning (MHUP) has introduced six new investment opportunities through the Tatweer platform for agricultural projects in Dhahirah covering a total of 27 acres.

These projects aim to enhance the agricultural sector and encourage investment in sustainable agriculture.

The projects include two for cultivating cucurbits and Omani garlic in the Kabara area of Ibri, each spanning 4.5 acres. Four projects are for date palm cultivation and production, also in Kabara and covering 4.5 acres each.

These investments are expected to support growth of the agricultural sector and encourage investors to participate in viable agricultural projects.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources is collaborating with MHUP and private sector entities to develop plans for these projects with the objective of achieving food security and promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

These efforts align with Oman Vision 2040, which seeks to boost the agricultural sector and ensure long-term food security.

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Dakhliyah awards development projects worth over RO3mn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Internal Tenders Committee in Dakhliyah has awarded tenders worth over RO3mn for several municipal development projects. These were awarded during a meeting on Monday chaired by Sheikh Hilal bin Saeed al Hajri, Governor of Dakhliyah.

The governor informed that the projects are part of the Governorates Development Programme aimed at achieving national development goals.

The awarded projects include construction of internal roads in the wilayats of Bidbid, Jabal Akhdar and Manah, and supply of ready-made asphalt for road

(Supplied photo)

maintenance in the governorate.

The committee also reviewed tenders currently in the analysis phase, including one for construction of Dakhliyah Boulevard and another for a walkway in Izki.

Additionally, 27 tenders are in the bidding process and several projects in final design preparation phase, which include road projects in the wilayats of Samail, Izki, Adam and Bahla.

These projects aim to enhance the municipal sector and improve infrastructure and services in the governorate in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Youth Ambassadors Project to be held in Sept

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Directorate General of Youth Affairs in the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth has announced the launch of the second edition of Youth Ambassadors Project.

Organised in cooperation with Foreign Ministry and United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), it will be held in September in Muscat.

Building on the success of its first edition in 2023, the Youth Ambassadors Project aims to qualify 100 young men and women in leadership and diplomacy. The programme will prepare them for regional and international forums and famil-

iarise them with the UN's principles and working mechanisms.

The programme is part of the 10th Five-Year Plan and will enhance youth participation and develop their skills and capabilities.

Hilal bin Saif al Siyabi, Director General of Youth Affairs, informed that the programme includes 21 seats allocated for participants from other Gulf and Arab countries.

The programme consists of several modules, including meetings between young people and diplomats, training sessions with UNITAR and a Model United Nations simulation.

"The ultimate goal of this pro-

ject is to qualify a number of young national leaders capable of highlighting the identity and essence of the Omani personality in regional and international forums," Siyabi stated. He added that the programme will feature discussions on various topics, provide youth with essential knowledge to represent the sultanate, and equip them with the skills needed to address contemporary issues at Model United Nations.

The Youth Ambassadors Project is a key initiative to connect Omani youth with the international community, fostering their development as leaders capable of contributing to global discussions and representing Oman on the world stage.

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29 Digital Use Cases in Delivery



Automated more than 70 processes using robotic process automation



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Identified and prioritised over 170 potential projects



Developed and launched an integrated management system (MARSAD)



Signing an agreement with SAP to build SAP Cloud (S/4HANA) in Oman

2020 - 2022

2023

2024

ACHIEVEMENTS AT A GLANCE[☆]



\$22 + Million
Return of Investment



120 +
Automated Processes



194K +
Manhours Saved



\$9+ Million
Invested in ICV Projects

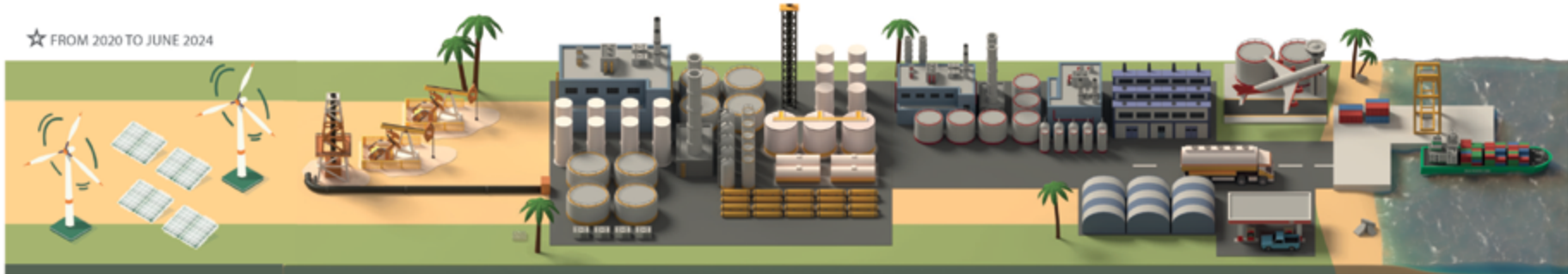


2500
Employees to be trained on new technologies



13
SMEs specialised in emerging technologies have been engaged as part of the Digital Factory

☆ FROM 2020 TO JUNE 2024



Key Highlights

2024



1st FIRST
Digital Twin Implementation in Oman



1st FIRST
company to Utilise AI to analyse environmental, social, and governance (ESG) impacts in Oman



193
Digital Use Cases Identified

29
Digital Use Cases in Delivery

8
Executed with AI

TOP 7 SUCCESS PROJECTS



DIGITAL TWIN

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DATA FOUNDATION

Maximising data use to support informed decision-making at OQ by providing accurate, timely information. AI is also employed to cleanse data and enforce quality standards.

MARKET WATCH	
MSX30	4,648.52
Sensex	80,429.04
FOREX RATES (RO1 equals)	
India	217.41
Pakistan	722.87
Bangladesh	305.09
Philippines	151.93
Sri Lanka	788.84

*Rates as on August 05

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

OECD inflation at lowest level since October 2021

The annual inflation averaged at 5.6% in the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) area in June, down from 5.9% in May.

"This is the lowest level since October 2021, although a similar rate was already approached several times since the beginning of 2024, at 5.7%," the organisation said on Monday.

In June, the annual inflation decreased in 24 of 38 OECD countries and stood below 2% in nine countries.

Energy inflation in the OECD area declined to 2.3% in June from 2.5% in May, falling in 24 countries.

In the G7, the annual inflation was at 2.7% in June, down from 2.9% in May and decreased from 2.6% to 2.5% in the euro area.

Oman crude price falls 5.9% as US recession fears mount

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman crude price sharply dropped by 5.9% on Monday to their lowest level since January 2024, as fears of a recession in the US overshadowed concerns that escalating tensions in the Middle East could affect oil supplies.

The October delivery price of Oman crude oil contract, which is traded at the Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME), closed at \$74.55 per barrel on Monday, marking a sharp fall of \$4.65 compared to Friday's closing price of \$79.20 per barrel, the DME data showed.

The DME data indicated that the average price of Oman crude for August delivery has stabilised at \$82.50 per barrel, which is \$1.39 per barrel lower than July delivery price.

After a major drop on Friday, oil prices continued to fall on Monday, with both global benchmarks Brent and WTI dropping to their lowest levels since January. The collapse in oil prices, which started on Friday, was driven by fresh US recession fears due to a weak July payrolls report.

On Monday afternoon, WTI had fallen by over 2.38% to \$71.77 per barrel and Brent had



After a major drop on Friday, oil prices continued to fall on Monday, with both global benchmarks Brent and WTI dropping to their lowest levels since January

dropped by 2.08% to \$75.21 per barrel. Both benchmarks fell more than 3% on Friday, posting their fourth straight weekly declines in their biggest stretch since November.

Monday's drop in oil prices marks the third consecutive day of decline, driven by investor con-

cerns that the United States may be heading toward a recession, which has negatively affected the outlook for crude demand. Concerns over the US economy reverberated around the world on Monday, with Asian stocks tumbling and Japan's Nikkei posting its largest-ever decline.

Analysts believe that demand concerns from China have been weighing on oil prices for quite some time, and fears of a recession in the US will only add to the downward pressure on oil prices.

The US economy added 114,000 jobs in July, significantly below market estimates of

176,000, according to figures released by the US Labor Department on Friday. Data fuelled worries that the US central bank could have been too late to ease its monetary policy, pushing the US economy into a recession.

Oil also came under pressure from a decision by the OPEC+ group to stick to its plan to phase out voluntary output cuts from October, which means that supplies will rise later this year.

(With inputs from agencies)

CBO issues RO20mn treasury bills

Muscat - The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) on Monday announced the issuance of the government treasury bills worth RO20mn for a maturity period of 91 days.

The average accepted price for the new treasury bill reached RO98.745 for every RO100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO98.740 per RO100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.0337% and 5.0977%, respectively.

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

The Central Bank of Oman acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

The interest rate on the Repo operations with the CBO is 6.00% while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with the central bank is 6.50%.

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

IGC signs first spot gas sales deal in Oman

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's state-owned Integrated Gas Company (IGC) on Sunday signed the first spot natural gas sales contract in Oman with Octal, the Salalah-based world-leading polyethylene manufacturer.

As per the agreement, IGC will supply Octal with 15,000 cubic meters of natural gas per day for four months, reflecting the development of the energy sector in Oman, according to an Oman News Agency report.

The agreement was signed by Abdulrahman bin Humaid al Yahyai, CEO of IGC, Eng Ahmed bin Abdullah al Najjar, Vice President of Government Affairs and External Relations at Octal, and Robert Khoury, Site Director - Manufacturing and Supply Chain at Octal.

Dr Musallam Qatan, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Integrated Gas Company, said, "This strategic partnership confirms the company's commitment to diversifying the national economy in accordance with Oman Vision 2040. The



Integrated Gas Company will supply Octal with 15,000 cubic meters of natural gas per day for four months, reflecting the development of the energy sector in Oman

agreement enhances the position of Oman in global energy markets, contributing to increasing the company's revenues, driving progress and growth, and encouraging local companies and factories to enhance their production capacity."

Yahyai said that the agreement reflects the company's

ability to meet the needs of economic sectors for natural gas immediately, contributing to sustainable economic development.

This agreement represents a cornerstone in enhancing the fruitful role of the Integrated Gas Company in various Omani sectors. The company aims to enhance economic sustainability by activating commercial partnerships in different economic sectors.

Integrated Gas Company is a government entity wholly owned by the Ministry of Finance. It seeks to expand its role in the energy sector by achieving economic diversity and prosperity in the long term and developing sources of income, ensuring a sustainable industrial future.

Meethaq Islamic Banking launches sharia'a-compliant equity fund

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Meethaq Islamic Banking, the Islamic banking arm of Bank Muscat, has launched the Meethaq Equity Fund, a sharia'a-compliant equity fund, in partnership with Bank Muscat's asset management unit.

The Meethaq Equity Fund is designed to capitalise on the growing potential of the GCC economies, providing investors with a gateway to invest in the fast-growing equity markets.

The initial public offering (IPO) for the Meethaq Equity Fund opened on August 4 and will run till August 15. The initial offer price for the fund will be RO1.010 per unit, including issuance costs.

The Meethaq Equity Fund offers daily liquidity with no minimum holding period. Investors can subscribe to the fund with a minimum subscription amount of RO50. The fund's net asset value (NAV) will be published daily on the websites of Meethaq Islamic



Banking, Bank Muscat, and on Muscat Stock Exchange, allowing investors to track the value of their investments daily.

Meethaq Islamic Banking and Bank Muscat customers who wish to subscribe to this new fund during the IPO can download the subscription form from the respective websites (www.meethaq.om/www.bankmuscat.com) and submit it to the nearest Meethaq or Bank Muscat branch. Bank Muscat customers can also subscribe to the fund through the internet banking platform of Bank Muscat.

In a press statement, Khalifa

Abdullah al Hatmi, Deputy General Manager, Investment Banking and Capital Markets, Bank Muscat said, "The Meethaq Equity Fund offers an attractive investment option for investors to benefit from the investment expertise of Bank Muscat's Asset Management and the robust sharia'a governance of Meethaq Islamic Banking. Having demonstrated our expertise in developing and managing investor-centric products designed to provide the best investor experience, we are confident that the Meethaq Equity Fund will meet investors' expectations."

Ali Ahmed al Lawati, Assis-

tant General Manager, Meethaq Corporate Banking, said, "We are delighted to offer the Meethaq Equity Fund to investors. The sultanate's equity markets particularly and GCC equity markets generally offer an attractive investment proposition for medium to long-term investors. The fund will provide investors an opportunity to diversify their investments and benefit from growth in the regional markets. Additionally, this offering is in line with Meethaq's objective to introduce more sophisticated products to meet the growing demand of Islamic structured solutions."

The objective of the Meethaq Equity Fund is to achieve long-term capital appreciation and dividend distributions by primarily investing in a portfolio of sharia'a-compliant stocks listed in the GCC region. The fund is an open-ended fund registered under the jurisdiction of the Financial Services Authority (FSA).

India's energy consumption expected to rise by 3-4 times in a decade

New Delhi, India - Growing industrialisation, urbanisation, and rising incomes have led to India's energy consumption rising rapidly. According to a recent report by India Energy and Climate Centre (IECC) India's energy consumption is expected to increase three to four-fold in the coming decade.

The report adds that India is projected to be the largest contributor to additional global energy demand between 2020-2040. In comparison to other industrialised economies, India lags by US\$1-2tn in its energy infrastructure investment,

which is likely to take place in the next 2-3 decades.

Per capita electricity consumption in India is much below the global average, but total electricity demand is growing at 8-9% per year and is projected to double by 2030 if compared with demand in 2020. Because of global warming and increased pay-out capacity, electricity demand for cooling appliances is projected to increase six-fold by 2040.

The IECC report anticipates that India's energy demand growth is accompanied by a deep reduction in clean energy



technology costs, especially for wind turbines, solar PV cells, lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries, and hydrogen electrolyzers.

India currently has over 130GW of renewable capacity installed. At the United Nations Climate Change Conference of

the Parties (COP-26) in Glasgow in November 2021, Prime Minister Modi announced that India would deploy 500GW of non-fossil fuel power generation capacity by 2030.

In the past five years, India has added 55GW of renewable capacity, 18GW higher than coal-based power plants (27GW) during the same duration.

In 2020, investment in renewables surpassed investment in fossil fuels for the fifth consecutive year, but there are concerns about the capacity value of Renewable energy generation. Whether renewable energy can

generate electricity during peak load periods.

However, coal still accounts for over 70% of electricity generation in India, the country has some of the largest coal reserves in the world. But renewables are now cost-competitive and with thermal power generation throughout India, even in regions previously considered resource-poor for renewable generation.

The report says the cost of co-located solar and storage projects with approximately 2-4 hours of energy storage to meet evening peak demand is projected to be Rs3-4 per kWh by

2030, which is lower than the variable cost of nearly half (80-100GW) of India's existing coal capacity.

Recent large-scale Round-The-Clock power and storage auctions by the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) and National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) have demonstrated the cost-effectiveness of energy storage in India.

IECC said, "Our analysis has demonstrated that energy efficiency measures could avoid 40-50GW of additional load during the evening peak hours."

ANI

Stock markets in meltdown as US recession fears trigger global rout

Markets faced a tech-lead version of Black Monday following the biggest selloff in Asia markets since 1987



Martin Baccardax

Stock markets worldwide plunged lower Monday, while safe-haven US Treasury bonds rallied and oil prices slumped to multi-month lows, amid a global market rout tied to US recession fears, overbought tech stocks and rising geopolitical risks.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average tumbled 1,000 points, while the Nasdaq Composite and S&P 500 also fell by 3.9% and 3.2%, respectively.

Stocks in Japan were wiped out Monday, with the Nikkei 225 falling 12.4% and suffering its biggest single-day decline since the Black Monday collapse of 1987 as investors dumped risky trades and fled to safe-haven assets.

European stock markets sank on Monday following nosedives

in Asia as fears rise that the US economy is slowing down.

In London, the FTSE 100 index fell by 2.8% while in Paris the CAC-40 dropped by 2.5% and Frankfurt's DAX slid by 3.2%. The region-wide Stoxx 600 was marked 2.6% lower in Frankfurt.

In Asia, stock markets in Taiwan, South Korea, India, Aus-

tralia, Hong Kong and Shanghai all tumbled.

Benchmark 10-year US Treasury note yields hit a mid-2023 high of 3.723% in overnight trading, and were last marked 5 basis points lower from their Friday close at 3.741% heading into the

Wall Street's fear gauge surged more than 125% in after-hours trading on Monday to the highest level since the depths of the pandemic

daily moves of around 115 points each day for the next thirty days, more than triple the volatility price into markets in early July.

"It feels like the perfect storm triggered by the Fed rate decision last week followed by a US jobs report that recalibrated the mar-

ket's assessment of a recession," Saxo Bank strategists wrote. "This was the trigger. The rest is mechanical trading decisions based on risk."

"The turmoil will give the long-term investor some excellent opportunities which we will write about this week," they added.

Markets were also on edge amid the rising military tensions in the Middle East, where US officials are urging Americans to leave Lebanon and Israel is bracing for a possible retaliatory attack from Iran and Hezbollah following the killing of a senior Hamas leader last week in Tehran. On Wall Street, tech stocks look set to take the brunt of the expected selloff, with futures contracts tied to the Nasdaq suggesting a 770 point plunge at the start of trading.

(Source: TheStreet)



Nikkei closes with largest drop in history, down 12%

Tokyo, Japan - Japan's Nikkei stock index closed with its largest single-day point drop in history on Monday, tumbling over 4,400 points and 12%, in a global market crash amid a firming yen and escalating fears of a US recession triggered by disappointing economic data.

The 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average ended down 4,451.28 points, or 12.4%, from Friday at 31,458.42. The broader Topix index fell 310.45 points, or 12.23%, to 2,227.15. The figures marked the lowest closes for both indexes since October last year.

Every industry category on the top-tier Prime Market lost

ground, led by insurance, bank and securities house shares.

Stocks plunged from the outset and continued to deepen their losses in the afternoon, with the Nikkei's decline eclipsing the 3,836-point drop registered on Oct. 20, 1987, the day after the Black Monday stock market crash.

The benchmark marked the second-largest percentage drop on record since the 14.9% plunge on the day after the Black Monday sell-offs.

The steep falls triggered a stock circuit breaker for Topix and Nikkei futures, temporarily halting trading. The step was taken for Topix futures for the first time since March 15, 2011,

four days after a powerful earthquake hit northeastern Japan.

The market was hit by a "triple punch" of disappointing US economic data stoking recession fears, the Bank of Japan's sudden decision to hike interest rates, and the perception that the artificial intelligence bubble may have popped, analysts said.

"It is not just an issue in Japan but a worldwide crash, reflecting the bursting of an asset bubble inflated by excessive post-COVID monetary easing," said Tomoichiro Kubota, senior market analyst at Matsui Securities Co.

Kyodo News

India's RBI unlikely to cut policy rates, experts say



New Delhi, India - The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is unlikely to change the repo rate, say experts. The three-day monetary policy committee (MPC) meeting to decide on policy rates begins today.

The RBI's repo rate, currently at 6.5% since it was last increased in February 2023, is widely anticipated to remain unchanged for the ninth consecutive bi-monthly policy review says experts.

"Our take is that the MPC's stance in the forthcoming Policy will continue to be "withdrawal of accommodation" and the Repo Rate (last changed in February 2023) will be kept unchanged for

the ninth consecutive time" said Manoranjan Sharma, Chief Economist, Infomeric Ratings pre-policy expectations.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), chaired by Governor Das, is set to convene in Mumbai this week to deliberate on key policy decisions amidst a challenging economic landscape.

The central bank's stance on the benchmark interest rate has garnered significant attention, particularly given the persistent inflationary pressures, especially in the food sector.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das had indicated in the last policy briefing that food inflation is still a concern and the regulator is in

no hurry to take a decision on rate cut.

Recently a SBI report also noted that the Consumer Price Inflation in India is expected to remain around 5% in the financial year 2024-25 except for September and October months.

"Despite 7-8% steady growth in Asia's third-largest economy, all is not well on the inflation front-not by a long shot. These concerns are manifested in inflation breaching the 5% mark in June 2024 (a five-month high of 5.08% in June 2024) and persistently sticky food inflation despite continuously declining core inflation" added Sharma.

ANI

IndiGo to start wide-body services on Airbus 350-900 by 2027: CEO

New Delhi, India - The aviation sector in India is changing very rapidly stated Pieter Elbers, Chief Executive Officer of Indigo in an exclusive conversation with ANI.

He also added that IndiGo is also preparing for the requirements of the changing needs of the Indian customers.

"We are celebrating 18 years and these 18 years have been a wonderful and amazing journey for IndiGo. Today, we welcome 100mn customers on board our flights. We fly to 88 destinations in the nation itself and 33 international. The very foundation of IndiGo is those three customer promises, on-time performance, affordable fares, courtesy and hassle-free service. You'll find a business class for us which is adjusted to that courtesy and hassle-free service. So we put things in the business class which are important for our customers. We invest in the important things, and we leave aside the things that are not important," said Elbers.

IndiGo on Monday announced the introduction of business-class services for the first time since its inception. The announcement comes as the airline celebrates its 18th anniversary. Indigo announced that it is set to launch business class flight services on 12 metro routes in India starting in November.



IndiGo announced the introduction of business-class services for the first time since its inception 18 years ago. The airline is set to launch business class flight services on 12 metro routes in India starting in November

Highlighting the journey of IndiGo in the last 18 years in India Elbers mentioned that IndiGo operates in 88 destinations domestically and 33 on international routes.

"I think it's right on time. For an airline, you should be in the

market at the right moment at the right time. Whatever has happened in India over the past two-three years is probably accelerated in terms of those needs. We feel that by introducing it now and having it live before the end of the year, at IndiGo we love to announce things and then actually do it and implement it and that spirit is there.

"So we made the announcement, it's going to be on sale from tomorrow. The first flight will be operational in the middle of November and then in the next 12 months, we roll it out through all the routes where we will fly this product."

While bookings will open im-

mediately, the new business class service, however, will be available for travel beginning only this November. This move represents a major departure for IndiGo, which has built its reputation on providing affordable, no-frills service.

The introduction of a business class option could attract a new segment of travellers seeking added comfort and convenience on domestic routes.

IndiGo also announced a wide-body aircraft operation on its 18th anniversary, that by 2027 IndiGo will start IndiGo wide body services on Airbus 350-900 planes.

ANI

Gulf Students Forum kicks off to promote financial culture

The Gulf Student Forum for Financial Culture, organised by the Ministry of Education, began at the Rotana Salalah Resort in Dhofar governorate on Sunday.

Represented by the Khazna project, the forum is being held in cooperation with the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, to instill the principles of financial culture among school students, a release stated.

Under the slogan 'Towards Building Financial Culture for School Students', the forum began with a welcome speech by Dr Haifa al Maamari, Director of the Khazna project.

Addressing the participating students and their supervisors, she provided an introductory overview of the forum's events and activities, represented in financial awareness and investment, and the production of promotional content for projects.

Ali al Lawati, a financial expert in investment and governance, presented a paper in the first session of the forum.

In his paper - titled 'Concepts of Financial Culture', Lawati discussed the concept of culture - in general - and the intellectual methods, habits and standards acquired over time, which affect the interaction with others, in addition to the concept of financial



Represented by the Khazna project, the forum is being held in cooperation with the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, at the Rotana Salalah Resort

education, and the reasons for the emergence of personal financial management at the family and global levels.

The second session - on the topic of 'Financial Awareness' - discussed the importance of fi-

ancial culture and the effects of the imbalance in financial knowledge.

Shahad al Kuwari, a student participant from Qatar, said, "In this Gulf Student Forum, I learned the concept of financial

culture, the elements that affect the cultures of the country, how to deal with other cultures, and how to learn about people's opinions about their culture - in general.

"I also learned from the paper presented by Ali Al Lawati the correct concept of culture - whether it being Gulf, Arab, or international, in addition to some of the good behaviours of people."

It is worth noting that the

Khazna project aims to spread awareness and instill the principles of financial culture among school students.

It mainly aims to raise a financially aware generation, and consists of 19 diverse programmes that include guides, documents, training and awareness programs, and purposeful activities and events.

The forum will continue until Thursday this week.

Mitsubishi Oman gets leadership award at WMC

General Automotive Company (GAC), the official distributor of Mitsubishi Motors in Oman, announced Mitsubishi Oman as the winner of the prestigious Brand Leadership Award 2024 at the CMO (Chief Marketing Officer) Asia Awards.

Affiliated to the World Marketing Congress, the CMO Asia Awards is a celebration of outstanding brand-building and marketing efforts; it is an independent brand recognition exercise that is aimed at nurturing market awareness and inspiring excellence in the professional community.

This distinguished accolade is a testament to Mitsubishi brand's enduring popularity and GAC's unwavering commitment to delivering unparalleled automotive experiences in Oman.

Renowned for their robust performance, innovative technology, and time-tested reliability, Mitsubishi vehicles have consistently captured the hearts of Omani drivers.

GAC's pivotal role as the official distributor of Mitsubishi in Oman has been instrumental in establishing Mitsubishi as a leading automotive brand in the sultanate. By providing unparalleled sales and after-sales services, GAC has cultivated a loyal customer base that appreciates the



exceptional value and ownership experience offered by Mitsubishi.

In effect, the Brand Leadership Award is a reflection of Mitsubishi's strong brand identity in the local market. It resonates with the aspirations of Omani customers from all walks of life.

From the adventurous spirit embodied by its iconic SUVs to the sleek elegance of its sedan and hatchback, Mitsubishi offers a diverse range of vehicles that cater to the varied lifestyles and preferences of the Omani market.

GAC's extensive network of nine showrooms, 14 service centres and 18 Parts centres across the country ensures that Mitsubishi owners enjoy convenient access to world-class sales and after-sales support anywhere in the sultanate.

Dhofar Islamic seeks to promote 'good financial habits' in minors

As the school season is approaching, Dhofar Islamic continues to offer innovative banking solutions that meet the various financial requirements of customers throughout the year, with the Minor Savings Account, a sharia'a compliant account based on Mudarabah Structure.

The account is designed to empower young individuals and instill positive financial habits from a young age.

The Minor Savings Account offers a comprehensive range of features that provide a strong foundation for a secure financial future. It brings to fore Dhofar Islamic's commitment to financial literacy, demonstrating that the account isn't just about deposits and withdrawals.

The Minor Savings Account is specially crafted to cater to the unique needs of minors aged between 13 and 18 years, providing them with a safe and accessible



platform to manage their funds while learning the essential principles of money management.

With no minimum balance requirement, profit payment with expected rates based on monthly average balance, flexibility in changing withdrawal limits as per the request of the father/guardian, young account holders enjoy the benefits of an innovative product whilst being assured

of monthly financial assistance through social protection programme.

The Minor Savings Account can be opened by the minor's father/guardian with a copy of a passport or national ID, birth certificate, and proof of address (electricity/water bill). The father/legal guardian will also have to provide ID (if Omani). Expatriates will have to provide copies

of their resident cards and the passport visa page.

On the other hand, Dhofar Islamic enables customers to open a new Minor Account at their convenience in a few minutes, with easy steps through its mobile banking application.

Customers may download Dhofar Islamic's Mobile Banking App, which is available for IOS, Android and Huawei - App Gallery mobiles or smart devices, and follow the steps. In addition to the account opening, users may follow-up on the status of their application through Dhofar Islamic's mobile App. This option is available for all Omani and non-Omani residents of the Sultanate of Oman.

Dhofar Islamic - BankDhofar's Islamic Banking window - offers a wide range of sharia'a compliant financial solutions and services to cater to the needs of its retail and corporate customers.



Pinch.om wins ITHRA prize

The Tourism Experience app - Pinch.om - won the award at the 33rd Comex International Technology Exhibition, which honours emerging technology start-ups.

This comes a few weeks after the soft launch of pinch.om.

With Filters/categories leading to Forts, Treks, Springs, Water Falls, Caves, Viewpoints, Museums, Attractions such as Festivals and family entertainment, Pinch.om aims to Digitise Tourism in Oman by using an in-

tuitive interface, to eliminate mystery, offer ease and save time. The app aligns with vision 2040 in technology, digitalisation and tourism, combining them in a 'Digital Tourism' experience.

'No experience is complete without guides. So, the app offers two options, either be your own guide and use the info presented by the app; or connect with a guide and enhance your experience and 'fulfill' your need to Dream, Plan, Book, experience

and share easily,' said a release.

Pinch.om focuses on the talents of its communities. As the vision 2040's pillars dictate, Pinch.om connects community members to tourists and in the process help enrich through tourism. 'Tourism is a vast universe that needs to be available in the palm of our hands. Be your own Guide', it further stated.

Pinch.om is available in Oman, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

NBO partners with Aster Al Raffah Hospital to extend health benefits

In a continuous effort to enhance the benefits for its valued customers, the National Bank of Oman (NBO) is pleased to announce an exclusive partnership with Aster Al Raffah Hospital.

This collaboration brings a range of significant discounts and complimentary services to NBO cardholders, making quality healthcare more accessible across Oman.

From August 1, all NBO credit cardholders will receive a complimentary annual basic health check-up, designed to promote health and wellness, includes eleven essential tests and consultations that comprehensively overview one's health status.

Abdullah Zahran al Hinai, Chief Executive Officer at NBO commented on the partnership: "We are delighted to collaborate with Aster Al Raffah Hospital to offer these exclusive health benefits to our credit cardholders.



This partnership underscores our commitment to providing value-added services that enhance the well-being of our customers. By making quality healthcare more accessible and affordable, we aim to support our customers in leading healthier lives."

Shailesh Guntu, Chief Executive Officer at Aster Hospitals and Clinics, said that the hospital

management and the staff are 'honoured' to partner with the National Bank of Oman, marking a significant milestone in their commitment to enhancing healthcare accessibility in Oman.

"This collaboration will provide NBO account and credit card holders with special discounts and the option to pay their healthcare bills in install-

ments through an EMI service, ensuring that quality medical care is within everyone's reach."

Additionally, special discounts will be available for card holders and employees of NBO across all Aster Hospitals and Clinics in Muscat, Sohar and Ibri, he added.

Aster Al Raffah Hospital & Clinics, Oman, exemplifies their dedication to delivering world-

class healthcare locally, eliminating the need for patients to seek treatment abroad. "With over 16 years of presence in Oman and a legacy of 37 years in healthcare excellence, we are proud to redefine patient experience and clinical excellence in the country. Together, we aim to foster a healthier future for the people of Oman," the CEO stressed.

In addition to the complimentary health check-up, NBO cardholders will enjoy a 60% discount on outpatient department (OPD) services at all Aster facilities in Oman, excluding Aster Royal Hospital Muscat.

A 30% discount will be applied for investigations at these facilities, ensuring affordable access to necessary medical diag-

nostics. At Aster Royal Hospital Muscat, cardholders will benefit from a 30% discount on consultations and a 20% discount on investigations, making premium healthcare services more affordable. Moreover, expecting mothers, who are NBO credit cardholders can avail 25% discount when upgrading to the Royal Delivery Package.

Dubai welcomes record 9.31mn visitors

Dubai received 9.31mn international overnight visitors from January to June this year, a 9% increase over the 8.55mn tourist arrivals in the first half of 2023, according to data published by the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET).

Following a landmark 2023, when the city hosted 17.15mn international overnight visitors, Dubai has continued to sustain its strong tourism momentum. The growth in the first six months of this year puts the city on track for a record performance in 2024.

Guided by the visionary leadership of H H Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and driven by DET's efforts in collaboration with stakeholders, the rise in international visitation aligns with the ambitious goal of the Dubai Economic Agenda D33 to further consolidate Dubai's position as a leading global destination for business and leisure.

H H Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the UAE, and Chairman of The Executive Council of Dubai, said: "Guided by H H Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum's visionary leadership, Dubai's tourism sector continues to demonstrate its robust growth potential and attractive proposition for global travellers.

"With its sustained growth, Dubai is setting the standard for cities worldwide, in line with the



General of Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), said: "The significant increase in visitation numbers in the first half of 2024 reflects the vision and leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and aligns with the D33 Agenda's objective to make Dubai the world's best city to visit, live, and work in.

"This robust performance, reinforced by global recognition, validates the ambition and agility driving Dubai's tourism and wider economy. Our success stems from a diversified market approach, strong public-private partnerships, liberal visa policies,

kets, DET's targeted campaigns resulted in Dubai achieving impressive growth in key markets in the first half of 2024.

With bespoke strategies and activities highlighting the city's unique offering, dynamic appeal and connectivity, Dubai has maintained its position as a first-choice travel destination for visitors both from key traditional and emerging markets.

From January to June 2024, proximity markets in GCC and MENA had a combined 26% share of overall visitors, with 1.27mn (14%) and 1.09mn (12%) arrivals respectively. Western Europe accounted for 20% of visitors to Dubai, with 1.89mn in total. South Asia was

Guided by Mohammed bin Rashid's visionary leadership, Dubai's tourism sector continues to demonstrate its robust growth potential and attractive proposition for global travellers

HAMDAN BIN MOHAMMED

objective of the Dubai Economic Agenda D33 to establish Dubai as one of the world's top urban economies."

The Dubai Crown Prince urged all industry stakeholders to expand partnerships with key markets, explore new opportunities and work to enhance Dubai's value offering by creating rich and memorable experiences.

"The strong tourism growth achieved by Dubai in the first half of 2024 is testament to the city's ability to foster productive pub-

lic-private partnerships and build extensive global networks of collaboration. With every year, Dubai continues to consolidate its status as a frontrunner in the global tourism landscape and grow in popularity as an international destination. We remain committed to maintaining this successful trajectory and boosting the tourism sector's contribution to Dubai's GDP. By further developing our infrastructure and providing exceptional services for visitors, we aim to set

new benchmarks and records in 2024," HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed added.

The rise in international visitation during H1 2024 is the result of citywide strategies established across key tourism pillars, created and implemented in partnership with stakeholders across the public and private sectors. Beyond the growth demonstrated through the performance, these efforts also yielded international recognition. Starting 2024 on a high note, Dubai was named

the No.1 global destination for an unprecedented third successive year in the Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Awards in January, making it the first city to achieve this unique accolade. The first half of the year also saw Dubai named the Middle East's leading destination by the World Travel Awards, while Dubai International Airport and Mina Rashid were named the Middle East's leading airport and leading cruise port for 2024 respectively.

Helal Saeed Almarri, Director

and alternative growth pathways, all catalysts for the continued surge in both leisure and business visitation, along with increasing levels of investment and inflows of global talent.

"Looking ahead, we are committed to sustaining and building upon this trajectory, leveraging diverse source markets to enhance tourism's contribution to Dubai's GDP."

In collaboration with domestic stakeholders and more than 3,000 global partners in 80 mar-

another major source market, with 1.62mn visitors (17%), as was CIS and Eastern Europe with 1.37mn (15%). North-East and South-East Asia grew from an 8% share at the beginning of the year to a 10% share (896,000) of total visitors by the end of H1 2024, driven by strong recovery from China. Other regions also saw a rise in visitation to Dubai, including the Americas with 617,000 (7%), Africa with 404,000 (4%) and Australasia with 154,000 (2%).

Omantel takes 'Bisat Al Reeh' campaign to Khareef Dhofar

Following its success in North Batinah, Omantel has brought the 'Bisat Al Reeh' to Dhofar governorate, as part of its participation in Khareef Dhofar, highlighting the beauty and splendor of the Governorate and weaving magnificent stories about the treasures of the governorate.

The 'Bisat Al Reeh' is part of Omantel's 'Towards Dhofar' campaign among other key activities of Omantel's participation in Khareef Dhofar Festival this year.

Omantel's participation includes ICT event for corporate customers and corporate social responsibility initiatives conducted in association with government institutions and charitable organisations in the governorate, in addition to interactive activities for families and children throughout the festival period.

'Bisat Al Reeh' is a journey that spans the whole of Oman, weaving stories about its schol-

'Bisat Al Reeh' is part of Omantel's 'Towards Dhofar' campaign among other key activities of Omantel's participation in Khareef Dhofar Festival this year

ars, people, topography, geography, cities, villages, its stories and heroes. It also embraces Oman's history and legends. 'Bisat Al Reeh' is designed to help spectators explore the land and human elements of Oman, as well as learn about the past and the present, so as to take off to a brighter future.

"We are always delighted to participate in this tourism forum, which attracts thousands of visitors and tourists from across the region, to explore the natural and tourism

elements of the Dhofar Governorate. Dhofar Khareef Festival is an ideal platform for Omantel to interact and communicate with all segments of the public," said Hamid al Awfi, Senior Manager of Campaigns Management.

"Bisat Al Reeh campaign provides information to our audience, helping them gain knowledge of Oman's ancient past and its astounding present through personalities and events that played an important role in the history of our nation, in addition to exploring the various touristic places in the sultanate," she added.

The 'Bisat Al Reeh' campaign kicked off last February in Suhar in North Batinah Governorate, highlighting the most famous aspects of the governorate - fertile plains, marine industries, and heritage elements.

Moving to Dhofar, the campaign narrates the popular story of the lost city of 'Ubar', a release stated.

Ooredoo brings Fire Gaming at Khareef Champions Zone

Want to amp-up your online gaming experience? Are you in Dhofar or planning to travel there soon to escape the summer heat with a quick getaway? Do you want to do something really cool while enjoying the even cooler weather?

If yes, then the Khareef Champions dedicated gaming zone, powered by Ooredoo, is for you! It's on now at Auqad Park in Salalah until the end of August 2024. The ultimate gaming experience is open to all and for free at the Khareef festival, Dhofar's main entertainment venue during the balmy season, and powered by Ooredoo's lightning fast Fibre network.

"So, when you're ready for some online entertainment, you'll get the best gameplay experience at the Khareef Champions Gaming Zone. So, join your peers and race, battle, build, and just game on," Ooredoo stated.

The Khareef festival, sponsored by Ooredoo, offers loads of fun experiences, activities, and



youth engagement. There's a little something for everyone planning to enjoy the rainy weather, because in addition to the thrilling gaming event, visitors can enjoy stage shows every Friday.

Visitors to Dhofar can stay connected with Ooredoo's Fibre network at a new kiosk in Al Hafa waterfront and Ateen Square, plus all stores nationwide, where there are some great savings to

be had, and some awesome value plans and promotions.

So, don't miss out on the festive fun. Head to the Ooredoo website or the award-winning Ooredoo App to find out more about Ooredoo's big-value and hassle-free khareef offers now.

Ooredoo - an Omani Qatari Telecommunications Company - was founded and registered in Oman in December 2004. Ser-

vices were launched in March 2005, originally operating under the name Nawras.

Ooredoo provides individuals and businesses with cutting edge products and services and a unique digital-first customer experience. Ooredoo generated revenues of RO259.1mn as of December 31, 2023 and is listed on the Muscat Stock Market (MSM) under the 'ORDS' ticker.

Dubai-based Landmark Group launches 4th VIVA store in Oman

Excitement rippled through the local community as the highly anticipated fourth branch of the renowned VIVA supermarket opened its doors.

Situated in the bustling heart of Mabila at Al Nahdi Walk, next to the Mall of Muscat, the new store promises to bring high-quality products at the lowest prices to residents in this vibrant neighbourhood.

The grand opening ceremony, attended by local officials and enthusiastic shoppers alike, marked a significant milestone for the supermarket chain, known for its commitment to

providing a wide range of products sourced worldwide - fresher, cheaper, better shopping.

The new 10,000sqft store in Al Nahdi Walk will stock over 1,400 exclusive brands of products across fresh, food, and non-food categories.

Georg Fischer, CEO of VIVA, inaugurating the new store, described it as a proud moment for the group,

"As it believes in and delivers The Highest Quality Products at The Lowest Prices to the customers. The celebration of the new milestone is of special sig-



nificance, and appropriately we have chosen to locate it at Al Nahdi Walk," he said.

"There has been widespread acceptance of the value concept we launched 10 months ago, and the 4 stores in such a short period are a testimony to it."

The opening of the fourth branch in Seeb, Oman, not only enhances accessibility to quality products but also brings employment opportunities to the area, with the creation of many new jobs within the supermarket. Residents expressed their delight at the new supermarket, noting its convenient location and the

promise of the Highest Quality Products at The Lowest Prices.

As the fourth branch opens its doors, VIVA looks forward to becoming an integral part of the community, fostering lasting relationships with customers, and contributing to the local economy. For those eager to explore what the new VIVA Supermarket branch has to offer, the store is open daily from 8 am to 12 midnight, inviting everyone to discover a new standard in grocery shopping. One can download the VIVA Plus+ App for the latest promotional activities, new arrivals and much more.

The catastrophic conflict in Gaza has created an appalling situation in terms of deaths, casualties and terrible human suffering.

It has also brought into focus long standing issues about how the main bodies of the United Nations work to try to ensure peace, stability and justice.

The United Nations has many different bodies, but this article will focus on three key UN institutions: the UN Security Council, the UN General Assembly and the International Court of Justice.

On June 10, 2024, after 247 days of war in Gaza, the United Nations Security Council finally adopted a resolution proposing a comprehensive ceasefire deal to end the war.

It was only after eight months of talks and repeated failures to agree on multiple resolutions that the Security Council was able to present a plan urging both Israel and Hamas to comply fully and without delay and condition.

Even then, the decision was not unanimous. Fourteen of the 15 members of the Council voted in favour. Russia abstained.

All this despite repeated votes by the UN General Assembly by overwhelming majorities calling for an immediate ceasefire.

The first came on October 18, eleven days after Hamas attacked Israel. The United States vetoed that resolution which would have called for 'humanitarian pauses' to deliver lifesaving aid to millions in Gaza.

On December 8, the Security Council failed to adopt another resolution - presented by the United Arab Emirates - that would have demanded an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza due to another veto by the United States.

On March 22, 2024, the Security Council again failed to adopt a resolution, this time presented by the United States, that would have determined the imperative of an immediate and sustained ceasefire in Gaza due to vetoes from China and Russia.

It was to be a further two months before another USA resolution on the war on Gaza was finally approved.

The dismissal of so many ceasefire proposals has led to increasing anger over the apparent inability of the Security Council to intervene in international conflicts.

This frustration has given new force to calls for an overhaul of the way the UN's key bodies function with critics asking if the Security Council is still fit for purpose in the 21st century.

So what are all these different UN bodies, what role do they play and how do they relate to each other?

The General Assembly, the Security Council and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) are three of the main bodies of the United Nations. All were established under the UN Charter when the organisation was founded in 1945.

The General Assembly is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN. All 193 member states of the UN are represented, making it the only UN body with universal representation.

But the votes of the UN General Assembly are not binding on the Security Council or UN members, even if they are passed by overwhelming majorities.

Only the Security Council has the power to make decisions that member states are obliged to implement under the UN Charter.

The Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 members, five permanent and ten non-permanent. Five of the non-permanent members are elected each year by the General Assembly for a two-year term.

The non-permanent members are chosen to represent different geographic regions equitably. There are five from Africa or Asia, two from Latin



Why can't the United Nations do something about Gaza?

The conflict in Gaza has brought into focus issues about how the key bodies of the United Nations operate

America, one from eastern Europe and two from western Europe or other areas.

Eligibility for the non-permanent positions is based on a country's contribution to 'the maintenance of international peace and security', which can include financial or troop contributions to peacekeeping operations or leadership on regional security issues.

Oman was a member of the Council from 1994-1995.

Each member of the Security Council has one vote. But the creators of the United Nations Charter established that five countries would continue to play a central role in the maintenance of international peace and security because of their key roles in the establishment of the United Nations.

Those five countries are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

They were granted the special status of Permanent Member States at the Security Council and granted a special voting power known as the 'right to veto'.

It was agreed by the drafters that if any one of the five permanent members cast a negative vote, the resolution or decision would not be approved.

If a permanent member does not fully agree with a proposed resolution, but does not wish to cast a veto, it may choose to abstain, thus allowing the resolution to be adopted if it obtains the required number of nine favourable votes.

But it is the repeated use of vetoes and abstentions over Gaza and full UN membership for Palestine that has led to the stand-off between the General Assembly and the Security Council.

On May 10, the General Assembly overwhelmingly backed a Palestinian bid for full UN membership by recognising it as qualified to join and recommending the Security Council 'reconsider the matter favourably'.

The vote by the General Assembly demonstrated global support for the Palestinian bid - a move that would effectively recognise a Palestinian state - after the United States vetoed it in the Security Council in April.

The assembly adopted a resolution with 143 votes in favour and nine against - including the

The ongoing ineffectiveness of the Security Council in agreeing upon and enforcing multiple resolutions has led to growing calls for change

U.S. and Israel - while 25 countries abstained. It does not give the Palestinians full UN membership but recognises them as qualified to join.

The Palestinians are currently a non-member observer state, a de facto recognition of statehood that was granted by the General Assembly in 2012.

Under the founding UN Charter, membership is open to 'peace-loving states' that accept the obligations in that document and are able and willing to carry them out.

Oman was among the member states who expressed regret at the failure of the Security

Council to pass the resolution granting Palestine its 'rightful membership of the United Nations'.

The repeated refusal of the Security Council to endorse the votes of the overwhelming majority of the General Assembly has prompted calls for reform.

In a speech at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies in the United Kingdom in February, Oman's Foreign Minister, Sayyid Badr Albusaidi, said: "The structure of the United Nations Security Council is a Cold War artefact. It is not properly multilateral. The veto is part of a zero-sum logic and should be removed."

He added: "Representatives vote in accordance with political calculations, and five of them possess the power to block even a near unanimous judgement."

In June 2024, Oman joined other countries in calling for a review of the working mechanism of the Security Council.

Mohammed bin Ali Al Shehhi, a member of the Sultanate's permanent delegation to the UN in New York, said the power of veto should only be used in responsible and legal ways that do not conflict with the UN's objectives in defence of international law.

In his Oxford speech, Sayyid Badr compared the perceived ineffectiveness of the Security Council with the structure of the International Court of Justice.

The ICJ is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. The Court has two functions: to settle legal disputes submitted by states and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorised UN organs and specialised agencies.

Fifteen judges serve on the ICJ. The members of the court are elected by the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council and serve for nine years.

The ICJ's decisions are binding on the states involved in the dispute but it does not have direct enforcement powers. Compliance is based on the goodwill of the states and enforcement can be referred to the UN Security Council.

So the recent opinion of the ICJ on the illegality of Israeli practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is not binding - even if it carries considerable political and moral authority.

Sayyid Badr said: "In the International Court of Justice, a wide range of legal experts from different countries can reach a considered judgment based on paying attention to the evidence and the arguments. If their judgment is not unanimous, those who disagree can register their dissent, but the judgment stands."

In May 2024, ICJ judges ordered Israel to halt its offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah and to withdraw from the enclave.

The case was brought by South Africa accusing Israel of genocide, citing 'immense risk' to the Palestinian population.

Commenting on social media on the ICJ's decision, Sayyid Badr welcomed the Court's ruling that Israel must 'prevent and punish incitement to genocide'.

Sayyid Badr added: "Israel must no longer be allowed to contravene international law without consequences."

Though not legally enforceable, decisions of the ICJ carry important weight - shifting the understanding of those around the world about the legality or illegality of the actions taken by the states involved.

While the ICJ settles disputes between states, the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutes individuals for international crimes - genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and aggression.

The ICC was established by an international treaty - the Rome Statute - which came into force in 2002. Currently, 124 states are party to the statute.

In May 2024, the ICC's chief prosecutor, Karim Khan, applied for arrest warrants against senior Israeli and Hamas leaders for alleged war crimes.

Khan applied for the warrants for alleged crimes committed during the Hamas-led October 7 attack on southern Israel and Israel's subsequent war on Gaza.

However, Israel is not a member of the ICC and does not recognise its jurisdiction. Hamas also denounced the application.

Another United Nations body which has ruled on the Israeli war on Gaza is the Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

The UNHRC's mission is to promote and protect human rights around the world. The Council has 47 members elected for staggered three-year terms on a regional group basis.

In April 2024, the UNHRC adopted a resolution - presented by Pakistan on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation - condemning the alleged 'use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare in Gaza', while also calling for an arms embargo on Israel.

Unlike the Security Council, UNHRC resolutions are not legally binding on states but carry significant moral weight.

But it is what critics see as the ongoing ineffectiveness of the Security Council in agreeing upon and enforcing multiple resolutions that has led to growing calls for change.

In his Oxford speech, Oman's Foreign Minister compared the Council with the ICJ and posed this question: "Which of these two institutions is best suited to resolving conflicts?"

"Or what kind of new body might we imagine that would better suit our multipolar world?"

British PM chairs emergency Cobra meeting

London, UK - British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Monday chaired an emergency Cobra meeting with senior police officials amid widespread far-right riots that have erupted across towns and cities in England.

More than 150 people were arrested during violent disorder in various UK towns and cities over the weekend.

The violence, which marked some of the worst rioting the UK has seen in recent years, erupted in response to the fatal stabbing of three young girls in Southport last week.

Police were called to manage violent scenes in Rotherham, Middlesbrough, Bolton, and several other locations across the country on Sunday.

Addressing the nation on Sunday, Starmer condemned the 'far-right thuggery' and vowed that the rioters would 'regret' their ac-



Far-right extremists try to burn down a hotel where asylum seekers were staying in UK

tions.

He pledged that those involved would 'face the full force of the law'.

The Cobra meeting saw the prime minister gather senior Cabinet figures to discuss the

government's and police's response to the ongoing unrest.

The recent surge in violence has prompted calls from a growing number of MPs for parliament to be recalled to debate the riots.

The parliament was last recalled in the summer of 2021 during the evacuation of UK forces from Afghanistan.

Veteran Labour MP Diane Abbott said on X: "Nationwide anti-immigrant riots on a scale never

seen before. Threatening life, property and our police force. We need to recall Parliament."

Similarly, Reform UK leader and Clacton MP Nigel Farage demanded MPs return to the Commons, saying: "In the short term, we will quell the riots, but deeper long-term problems remain."

Over the weekend, calls for the recall of parliament came from both sides of the political spectrum.

Tory leadership contender Dame Priti Patel and left-wing MP Zarah Sultana emphasised the urgency of the situation.

A hotel housing asylum seekers in Rotherham town in South Yorkshire, a metropolitan county of England, was targeted by far-right rioters on Sunday, on the sixth day of violent disorder, leaving the hotel damaged and people in 'shock'.

Anadolu Agency

North Korea moves 250 missile launchers to southern border

Seoul, South Korea - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised the delivery of 250 nuclear-capable missile launchers to military units along the southern border, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported on Monday.

In a speech during the event, which took place on Sunday, Kim said the launchers were an 'up-to-date tactical attack weapon' which he 'personally designed'.

The 'transferring ceremony' included lines of army-green launcher trucks filling up a long street, with seemingly thousands of spectators attending the event, which included fireworks, according to images on state media.

"We believe [the missile launchers] are intended to be used in various ways, such to attack or threaten South Korea..."

Deploying near the border would mean that the range is not long," Lee Sung-joon, spokesperson for South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a media briefing.

Tensions running high

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are currently running high, with the North increasingly testing weapons and sending balloons filled with trash over the border to the South.

The South has resumed broadcasts of propaganda and pop music at the DMZ, while restarting live-fire drills near the border.

This year, North Korea declared South Korea its 'principal enemy', and ended cooperation and outreach programmes with the South. DW

Israel claims killing of Gaza’s deputy minister of economy

Jerusalem - The Israeli army on Monday claimed responsibility for the assassination of Abdul Fattah Al-Zeriei, the deputy minister for economy in Gaza, in an airstrike on Sunday that also killed his mother.

A military statement said that an airstrike ‘eliminated Abdul Fattah Al-Zeriei’, claiming that he was an ‘operative in the Manufacturing Department of Hamas’ Military Wing, who also served as Hamas’ minister for economy in the Gaza Strip’.

The statement further claimed that Al-Zeriei was responsible for the distribution of fuel, gas, and funds for hostile purposes. On Sunday, the Gaza Media Office said that Al-Zeriei was killed in an airstrike on a house in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza, which also claimed the life of his mother.

Since the onset of its military campaign against Gaza on October 7, 2023, Israel has targeted and killed numerous officials in the Palestinian enclave’s administration.

Meanwhile, at least eight Palestinians were killed in an Israeli strike targeting an aid vehicle in the central Gaza Strip on Monday, according to a medical



source. The fatalities occurred when an Israeli drone hit a vehicle securing humanitarian aid near al-Matahin intersection southeast of Deir al-Balah, the source told Anadolu.

There was no comment from the Israeli military on the attack.

Separately, two Palestinians were killed in Israeli shelling of a group of civilians near Kuwait Roundabout in Gaza City, another medical source said.

Additionally, Israeli warplanes targeted the Al-Ridwan Mosque in the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood in northern Gaza City with at least two missiles, according to witnesses. The mosque had already been destroyed at the start of the Israeli offensive.

Death toll in Gaza rises to 39,623

At least 40 more Palestinians were killed in Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip, bringing the overall death toll to 39,623 since last October 7, the Health Ministry in the battered enclave said on Monday.

A ministry statement added that some 91,469 other people have been injured in the assault. Anadolu Agency

Targeted military locations in northern Israel, says Hezbollah

The Lebanese group said it struck newly established headquarters of the 91st Division at the Elite Base



Rocket barrage being fired from southern Lebanon toward northern parts of Israel

Istanbul, Turkey - Lebanese group Hezbollah said that it targeted Israeli military sites in the northern part of the country early on Monday.

In a statement, the group reported striking the newly established headquarters of the 91st Division at the Elite Base in northern Israel, resulting in several casualties among soldiers and officers.

The Lebanese group also announced in another statement that a drone hit the Malkia site.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army said that ‘an explosive drone launched from Lebanon at night fell in the area of Malkia in northern Israel, with no injuries reported’.

In addition, the army said in a statement that ‘an interceptor

I am deeply worried about the rising risk of a wider conflict in the Middle East and plead with all parties to act urgently to de-escalate

VOLKER TURK

was fired towards a suspicious aerial target that crossed from Lebanon’.

“The incident has concluded. Rocket and missile sirens were

sounded due to the danger of falling shrapnel from the interceptor,” the statement added.

In a related development, the army said: “Overnight, it struck

a weapons storage facility and multiple Hezbollah infrastructure sites in the area of Kfarkela in southern Lebanon.”

It also reported that ‘artillery fired towards the areas of Chebaa and Rachaya Al Foukhar in southern Lebanon’.

‘Deeply worried’

Meanwhile, the UN human rights chief on Monday said that he is ‘deeply worried’ about

the rising risk of wider conflict in the Middle East, and called for an urgent de-escalation.

“I am deeply worried about the rising risk of a wider conflict in the Middle East and plead with all parties, along with those States with influence, to act urgently to de-escalate what has become a very precarious situation,” Volker Turk said in a statement.

Turk reminded parties that

human rights and the protection of civilians must be the top priority.

Stressing that civilians - mostly women and children - have already endured ‘unbearable pain and suffering’ as result of the bombs and guns over the past 10 months, he said: “Everything, and I mean everything, must be done to avoid this situation spiralling further into an abyss that will only have even more terrible consequences for civilians.”

Tensions have escalated between Lebanon’s Hezbollah and Israel since Tel Aviv assassinated the group’s senior military commander Fuad Shukr in an airstrike on a suburb of Beirut on July 30.

Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated in the Iranian capital Tehran the following day in an attack blamed on Israel, although Tel Aviv has not confirmed or denied its responsibility.

Hamas and Iran have vowed to retaliate for Haniyeh’s assassination, while Hezbollah has pledged to respond to Shukr’s killing.

Fears have grown of a full-blown war between Israel and Hezbollah amid a months-long exchange of cross-border fire. Anadolu Agency

German court finds teen guilty in school shooting

Berlin, Germany - A court in the southern German city of Würzburg on Monday sentenced a 15-year-old boy to eight years and six months in juvenile detention for murdering a 14-year-old boy who was a pupil at the same school.

The court had to decide whether the shooting, which the accused had admitted carrying out during the trial, was a case of planned murder or of second-degree, unpremeditated murder.

State prosecutors, who argued that the murder had been carried out with malice - one element that can lead to a murder conviction under German law - as the bullet hit the victim in the back of the head, had called for eight years and nine months detention in a therapy facility with the option of more severe detention.

In its verdict, the court has accepted that line of reasoning.

Defending lawyers, for their part, argued that the killing was not premeditated, calling for a six-year sentence for second-degree murder.

DW



Toll from suicide bombing at Somalia beach surges to 37

Mogadishu, Somalia - The death toll from a suicide bombing late last week on a crowded beach in the Lido area of the Somali capital Mogadishu rose to 37 on Sunday.

“As of now, the number of people killed in the heinous attack stands at 37, while nearly 70 others were wounded,” said Ahmed Abdi, a police officer in Mogadishu who spoke by phone to Anadolu. He said an investigation into the attack is underway, while the government has named a ministerial committee tasked with coordinating the emergency response and support for the

wounded.

Somali Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre, who visited Recep Tayyip Erdogan Hospital in the capital, said security officials and soldiers in charge of the area where the attack took place were arrested due to negligence.

“Rest assured, we are taking strict action against those responsible,” Barre said in a brief statement on X. He did not elaborate further on how many soldiers and officials were arrested.

Lido Beach is frequented by civilians, security officials and businesspeople.

The Al-Qaeda-affiliated Al-Shabaab terrorist group claimed responsibility for the attack.

The blast was one of the deadliest terrorist attacks so far this year in Somalia, which has been plagued by insecurity for years, with the main threats emanating from Al-Shabaab and the Daesh/ISIS terror groups.

Since 2007, Al-Shabaab has been fighting the Somali government and the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) - a mission authorised by the African Union.

Anadolu Agency

Magical flight experience in Tanzania

Tarangire, Tanzania - High above the plains of Tarangire National Park in Tanzania, a hot air balloon glides smoothly through the morning sky, carrying anxious tourists on a magical flight experience.

“Watching the balloon inflate is like seeing magic happen right before your eyes,” said Sarah Abraham, a Canadian tourist. “I can tell it is going to be a wonderful experience.”

As the sun’s rays pierce through the park, renowned for its vast elephant herds and giant baobab trees, the balloon ride offers a wonderful experience for tourists drifting above the plains to catch glimpses of the amazing nature below.

The trip begins at Silale Swamp with a briefing from the pilot and ground crew of Serengeti Balloon Safaris. The initial briefing covers safety protocols to prepare tourists for the adventure.

As the roaring burner fills up the balloon, its sheer size thrills the tourists as it gently lifts off into the sky.

“I really loved watching the park from above. It was just amazing,” said Abraham.

Piloting the giant balloon is



I really loved watching the park from above. It was just amazing...I can tell it is going to be a wonderful experience

SARAH ABRAHAM

Mohammed Masudi, a seasoned US-trained balloonist who has spent over a decade navigating the skies of Tanzania.

“Steering the balloon is both a

science and an art,” Masudi told Anadolu. “We use the wind currents at different altitudes to guide our direction.”

He described how understanding these air currents is crucial.

“Hot air balloons don’t have engines, so we rely on the wind,” he said. “By heating the air inside the balloon, we can rise to higher altitudes where the wind might be blowing in a different direction. This allows us to change our course.”

The process is delicate and requires a keen sense of timing and observation.

“It’s all about feeling the air

and making small adjustments,” Masudi added. “We use a burner to heat the air, which makes the balloon rise, and we let the air cool to descend. By doing this, we can find the right wind layer to take us where we want to go.”

Flying over Tarangire offers a unique perspective of the park’s diverse wildlife.

“From up here, you can see elephants, giraffes and zebras moving across the landscape,” said Masudi. “It’s like watching a nature documentary in real life. Interestingly, our presence does not in any way disturb animals.”

Anadolu Agency

Sheikh Hasina lands at Indian air base

The Bangladesh PM held discussions with India’s National Security Advisor Ajit Doval

New Delhi, India - Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday evening landed at the Hindon Air Base near New Delhi in a C-130 Hercules military transport aircraft.

Sheikh Hasina held discussions with India’s National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval on the present situation in Bangladesh and her future course of action at the Hindon Air Base in Ghaziabad on Monday, according to Sources.

Indian Air Force has put its personnel on alert in every eastern sector in view of the present developments.

Moreover, the Indian Air Force and other security agencies are providing security to her and she is being moved to a safe location, according to the sources.

The security has heightened outside the Bangladesh High Commission in Delhi after PM Sheikh Hasina reached India after leaving Dhaka amid the ongoing protests.

Moreover, a senior BSF officer said that they are constantly in touch with Border Guard Bangladesh over the current situation. “As of now, the situation is normal at the border. Due to the curfew in Bangladesh, there are restrictions on traffic movement at Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) along the India-Bangladesh border,” a senior BSF officer said.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar also briefed PM Modi



This file photo shows Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina calling on Indian President Droupadi Murmu, at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi, India on Jun 22 (ANI)

The security has heightened outside the Bangladesh High Commission in Delhi after PM Sheikh Hasina reached India after leaving Dhaka amid the ongoing protests

on Monday evening about the current political situation in Bangladesh after Sheikh Hasina reached India.

Sources have told ANI that the aircraft will be parked near the Indian Air Force’s C-17 and C-130J

Super Hercules aircraft hangars. It is, however, not clear if the Bangladeshi Prime Minister will stay in Delhi or move to another location. Reports in media outlets of Bangladesh have speculated that Sheikh Hasina may proceed

to London.

According to sources, Indian Air Force fighter aircraft were airborne soon after the Bangladeshi C-130 aircraft entered Indian airspace and kept an eye on it for some time. The Indian Air Force and Indian Army were prepared to meet any contingency, the sources said.

Meanwhile, leading Bangladeshi daily newspaper Prothom Alo said that Army Chief General Waqar-uz-Zaman will soon hold direct talks with stu-

dent-teacher representatives in the country. It cited a circular issued by the Directorate of Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Monday evening.

Celebrations and protests were reported from across Dhaka and Bangladesh after Sheikh Hasina tendered her resignation and left the country accompanied by her sister.

‘India will watch developments’
Meanwhile, former Indian High

Commissioner to Bangladesh Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty has said that India will be watching the developments in the neighbouring country and noted that New Delhi will look forward to working with the new government in Bangladesh.

He said the resignation of Sheikh Hasina, following protests that saw violence, is a major development and there could be a period of uncertainty in Bangladesh which will not be good for the region.

“Political leaders change but the countries have long-term interests which will not go away. Bangladesh is a neighbour with which we have had good relations. If you look at the history of India’s relations with Bangladesh we have dealt with every government including military dictators. We will be dealing with Bangladesh as it is an important country for us. India will look forward to working whichever new government comes in Bangladesh,” Chakravarty told ANI.

“Clearly, the government there was under pressure. The Army which is a powerful institution in that country must have stepped in some way, if it is true that she has resigned, and told her that things are bad...It is a major event in Bangladesh, and we will see a new kind of government there. It is also not good for the region. India will be watching what is going to happen,” he said. ANI

Pakistan: Torrential rains claim 22 lives

Islamabad, Pakistan - At least 22 people were killed and several others were injured in the last 24 hours as torrential rains wreaked havoc across Pakistan on Sunday, reported Geo News.

The heavy rains have caused widespread losses to life, property, and infrastructure. Heavy rainfall in the plains and hilly parts of Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and Balochistan flooded rivers and streams and caused landslides in mountainous places.

At least nine people have perished in KP as a result of various rain-related accidents, including four who perished in today’s flood in Karak city. According to rescue personnel, the victims’ remains were extracted from the rushing water during a search and rescue mission.

In KP’s North Waziristan district, a house’s roof collapsed due to heavy rain, injuring numerous people - including women and children. The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) in Sindh also confirmed another casualty on Saturday.

ANI

LURING TOURISTS



People visit a sunflower field in Abbotsford, Canada on Sunday. Covering over 45 acres, this field is planted with 25 different varieties of sunflowers, attracting thousands of visitors in midsummer (Oxhuu)

Famine in Sudan: UN agency calls for action

Geneva, Switzerland - The UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on Monday called for action in Sudan as famine conditions were confirmed in parts of Darfur by the latest food security assessment report.

In response to alarming new findings, FAO is urging ‘an immediate cessation of hostilities, rapid scale-up of life-saving food, nutrition, and cash assistance as well as of the emergency agricultural aid’, the agency said in a statement. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) has found that famine conditions are ongoing in the Zamzam Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp which hosts 500,000 IDPs outside of El Fasher town in Darfur.

“We are witnessing horrific famine conditions in parts of North Darfur and an increasing risk of famine in other settlements and conflict-affected areas, especially in Darfur, South Kordofan, Khartoum and Al Jazirah,” FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu said.

“We have been raising the



alarm about this looming catastrophe, yet due to the ongoing conflict and limited humanitarian access these communities are still not getting the immediate support they need,” Qu said. “We need urgent, concerted action to prevent an even greater catastrophe from unfolding.”

Noting that famine can be halted, he said that the immediate cessation of hostilities could be an essential first step for that.

“Peace is a prerequisite for food security, and the right to food is a basic human right,” he added.

Sudan is highly dependent on

agriculture, with nearly 65 per cent of its population engaged in the sector. And it is this sector, rural livelihoods and agrifood systems that are on the front line of the conflict, suffering severe damage and disruption - with cascading and worrying consequences for food security and nutrition. The agency underlined Sudan’s ‘high’ dependence on agriculture, with nearly 65 per cent of its population engaged in the sector, and said that rural livelihoods and agrifood systems are on the front line of the conflict.

Anadolu Agency

Security tightened as Kashmir marks five years of special status removal

Srinagar, India - Authorities in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday heightened security and temporarily suspended Hindu pilgrimage as the region marks its fifth anniversary since the special status of the region was scrapped.

Several politicians said they have been placed under house arrest.

Former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti said August 5, 2019 ‘will go down in history not just as a dark day’ for Jammu and Kashmir but a ‘blot on Indian democracy’.

New Delhi on August 5, 2019, removed the special status granted to Jammu and Kashmir

under Articles 370 and 35A. It also downgraded and divided the disputed region into two federally-administered Union Territories (UT).

Since then, the UT of Jammu and Kashmir, and the UT of Ladakh have been separately administered.

“This is what passes for democracy and free speech in Jammu and Kashmir. A handful of BJP (Bhartiya Janta Party) ‘leaders’ are encouraged to celebrate today while those who would have registered their protest against what was done to Jammu and Kashmir are locked up in homes across the valley,” said Omar Abdullah, the former



Jammu and Kashmir People’s Democratic Party leaders and supporters protest in Jammu on Monday (ANI)

New Delhi, on August 5, 2019, removed the special status granted to Jammu and Kashmir under Articles 370 & 35A

chief minister representing National Conference.

Mufti said New Delhi had ‘disempowered, dismembered and robbed’ Jammu and Kashmir of ‘everything special and sacrosanct to us’ on August 5.

“Since then, the state has been threatened into silence

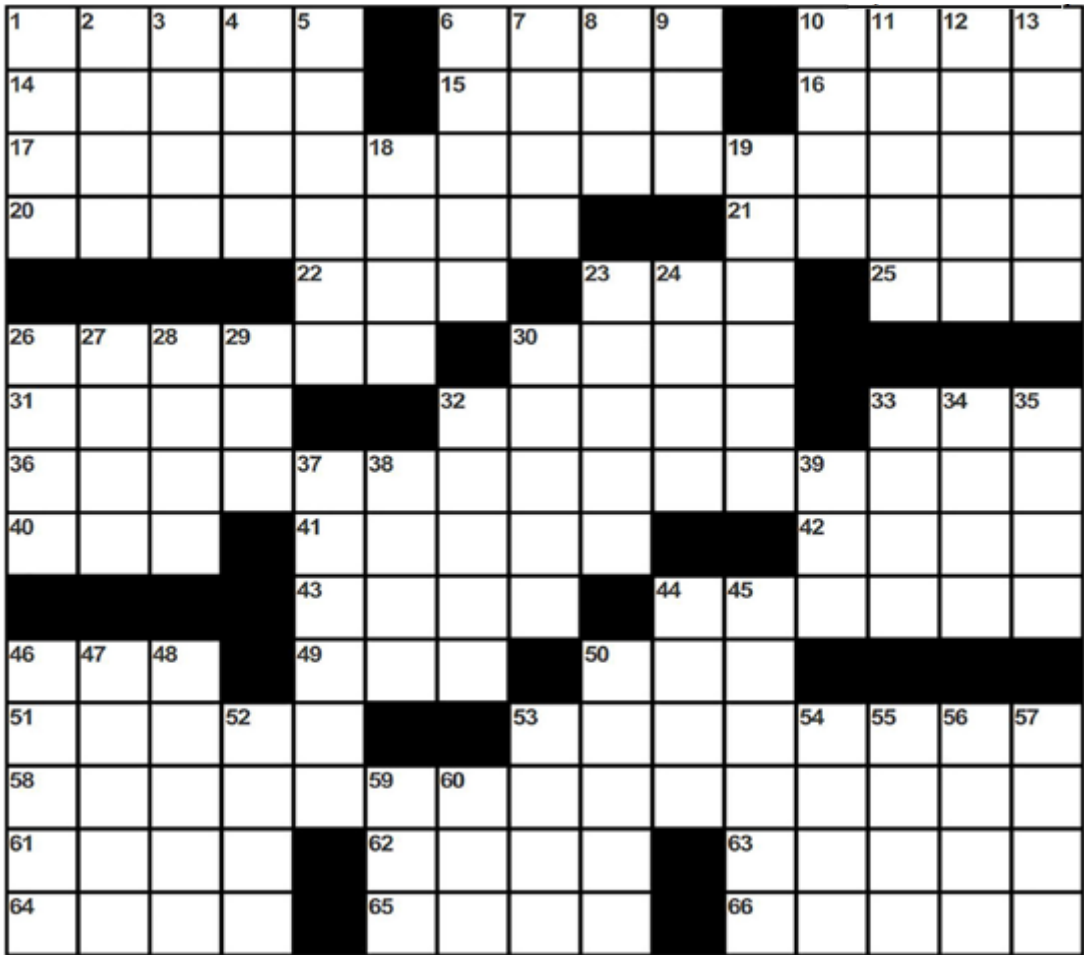
which is touted as ‘peace and normalcy’ to the rest of the country. Five years on the siege continues but so does the unyielding defiance and resistance. We Kashmiris refuse to be erased and unpeopled,” she said on X.

Regarding the security situation, Mufti’s daughter Iltija said: “The arrogance is such that (a) police officer from a local police station has locked us up inside our own house and taken the keys away. Cops or new-age jailers? You decide.”

National Conference said the government had ‘once again unjustly placed our leaders under house arrest’.

Anadolu Agency

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Footnote abbr.
- 6) Meet activity
- 10) Type of solo perfor-
- 14) Go no further
- 15) Button on a deli scale
- 16) Archaeology projects
- 17) You can do this when
- 20) Cheap way to travel
- 21) Throw forcefully
- 22) Play for a sap
- 23) Mangy mutt
- 25)" Miz"
- 26) Tight spot
- 30) "The Elder" of Rome
- 31) Screwdriver or gimlet
- 32) Kitchen wrap brand
- 33) Lobbying org.
- 36) You can do this when
- 40) Small, in Dundee
- 41) Autobahn autos
- 42) Nash's "one-1" fellow
- 43) Fingerboard ridge
- 44) Colorer's need
- 46) Riled, with "up"
- 49) "Go on ... "
- 50)_ Carangi (Jolie title
- 51) Affair of the heart

- 53) Disney movie with
- dancing hippos
- 58) You can do this when
- you're 18
- 61) Buckwheat's affirma-
- tive
- 62) Stadium shape
- 63) Formal decree
- 64) Cartoon collectibles
- 65) Circus safety gear
- 66) Indian metropolis
- DOWN**
- 1) Phil who sang "Draft
- Dodger Rag"
- 2) Bog growth
- 3) Spelunker's hangout
- 4) Words of understand-
- ing
- 5) Rip to shreds
- 6) Old West transport
- 7) Suffix with "soft" or
- "hard"
- 8) Vaccine spot
- 9) Louvre Pyramid archi-
- tect
- 10) Wood-dressing tool
- 11) Match in ability
- 12) Brushhoff to a solicitor
- 13) Volcanic spew
- 18) High-pH substance
- 19) Restroom seat,
- slangily

- 23) Golfers' transports
- 24) Zion National Park
- state
- 26) Slow-cooked fare
- 27) Gelato holder
- 28) Casting director's
- offer
- 29) "Aladdin" prince
- 30) "Shut up!"
- 32) Aligned oneself (with)
- 33) Make an appeal
- 34) Shells, but not ziti
- 35) Printer's blue hue
- 37) Serengeti outing
- 38) Go sour
- 39) Cotton State (Abbr.)
- 44) Pres.'s military title
- 45) Sang to the cops
- 46) Mass destruction
- 4 7) Overplay one's part
- 48) Wreck completely
- 50) Iona College athletes
- 52) 180-degree turns,
- slangily
- 53) Tuned too low
- 54) Errand runner
- 55) Flower pot filler
- 56) Ruler marking
- 57) Sparkling wine town
- 59)_ sequitur
- 60) Genesis outcast

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You're still walking on air, aren't you? Still thinking that there's nothing that could possibly be any better than how you're feeling now? Well, you might be right, but you'll never know if you don't try to push the pleasure envelope just a bit further. The Universe will be more than happy to help, and so will one particular person. No use arguing with either entity. See just how far you can ride this wave.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

You might need to come up with a compromise today, but your diplomacy skills are stronger than ever. Be confident that you can ensure clear communication and help everyone feel heard, valued, and as though they're getting what they need. Encourage everyone to talk more slowly and listen to each other before responding. The sooner you step up and take charge, the sooner all the tension will be over.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

It's too soon to tell whether or not your latest scheme is going to work out the way you want it to, so don't be too confident about it. On the other hand, don't worry too much about it either. All the elements are working nicely together, and things are moving of their own accord. You can't affect the situation much today, if at all. But you should see this lack of control as a good thing. The weight is no longer on your shoulders.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Since you're in the mood to let the world know just how you're feeling, the world is in the mood to hear it. So while you may be quite surprised by the morning's agenda, you won't have to worry about not being happy with it. You'll love every second, and if you have company handy, they'll love it too. And speaking of love, isn't that what's really going on here? Might be time to think it over.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 23

You might need to work some overtime, but chances are good that you won't mind a bit. The cash will come in handy, and you have a natural inclination to help anyway. Besides, you're in a good mood and there isn't much anyone can do to spoil it. Oh, and talk about energy. You're brimming over with it. You might want to save a bit of it for later tonight if you have any plans in the romance department.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Here we go! The changes you've been waiting for are en route and in motion as of right now. You'll have plenty of energy to get the job done; enough and more, in fact. So when you're suddenly asked to step up to the plate and take on a bit more responsibility, you'll be only too happy to accept. And don't worry about being compensated either. You'll likely be very pleased with what you're offered.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

The best part of being flexible is that when something totally unexpected happens, you're able to enjoy it rather than worry about it. But in order to tap into this potential, you should be of service to anyone and everyone as soon as you're out and about today. That's one of your many positive traits, and your ability to pass that confidence along is well known. You'll need to use it today, most likely to help someone who's having more trouble than you accepting the changes.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You might need to work some overtime, but chances are good that you won't mind a bit. The cash will come in handy, and you have a natural inclination to help anyway. Besides, you're in a good mood and there isn't much anyone can do to spoil it. Oh, and talk about energy. You're brimming over with it. You might want to save a bit of it for later tonight if you any plans in the romance department.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Choose to appeal to people's intellect and not their emotions. Instead of charming them to get them on your side, use logic. Talk to them about the facts and they'll be able to have a deeper understanding of what you want and whether or not they can give it to you. This applies to every type of conversation you have, from asking for a favour to asking for that raise you know you deserve.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Someone thinks something about you that isn't true. As soon as you find out about it, you need to help them see the truth. You've worked very hard to build your reputation, and it should be your top concern now. Chances are just talking to this person and answering their questions will be enough to clarify any confusion they have about what you're about. Being responsive is all it takes to gain their confidence.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Let someone else be the sensible one while you spend some time on the crazier side of things for a while. Your conservative side has been in control for a long time, so today brings a chance to let your wild child out to play. You need a vacation from the staid stuff of life and an overall mood renovation. Today, give yourself permission to stop taking things so seriously. The big things in life will iron themselves out eventually.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Your latest accomplishment is brightening your life, so it's only natural that you want to spread some of that light around. But don't brag too much. It's too easy to drift over the line of being justifiably proud of yourself into the territory of being a bore. People want to applaud you and pat you on the back and then be done with it. Droning on and on about your situation will only bring diminishing returns. Be sensitive to that.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Where did the 1819 event known as Peterloo take place?

- A. Brussels, Belgium
- B. Manchester, England, UK
- C. St Petersburg, Russia
- D. Louisville, Kentucky, USA

2. What is the Latin for "therefore"?

- A. In situ
- B. Etcetera
- C. Ergo
- D. In vino veritas

3. What is the name of the shallow sea between West Papua and the Gulf of Carpentaria in northern Australia?

- A. Bismarck
- B. Banda
- C. Arafura
- D. Celebes

Answers: 1. B 2. C 3. C

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

T	L	A	N
M	I	L	W
L	S	O	E
B	G	B	U

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Italy's D'Amato wins gold in balance beam as Biles falls

Paris, France - Italian gymnast Alice D'Amato emerged as the surprise champion on the balance beam at the Paris Olympics on Monday after American favourite Simone Biles unexpectedly fell off the 10cm wide apparatus during the final to finish out of the medals.

D'Amato had ranked only seventh during the qualifying competition but after performing a routine devoid of any major errors on Monday, she emerged triumphant with a score of 14.366 points.

The 21-year-old dropped to her knees and sobbed uncontrollably when she realised she had just clinched her first Olympic title.

Zhou Yaqin of China, the runner up to Biles on balance beam at last year's world championships, had been the top qualifier for the final after eclipsing her American rival by a razor thin margin eight days ago.

Zhou made a solid start her routine but she had to bend over and grab the beam with both hands during her jump sequence to prevent herself falling off. Despite the error, she captured sil-



Alice D'Amato of Italy in action on the balance beam

ver with 14.100 points.

D'Amato's compatriot Manila Esposito finished third, 0.1 of a point behind her Chinese rival.

Biles, the most decorated gymnast of all-time, was one of four finalists to fall off the apparatus on Monday.

The 27-year-old was had been expected to perform a sequence featuring handspring lay-

out-layout but and she aborted the series after the first layout and loud gasps could be heard around Bercy Arena as she lost her balance and slipped off.

The American, a two-time Olympic bronze medallist and a four-time world champion on the balance beam, finished a disappointing fifth with 13.100.

Biles' teammate Sunisa Lee,

It was just crazy to kind of see how everybody was going down like that. But I think it's just because there's just so much pressure. You could feel the tension in the room.

SUNISA LEE

the 2020 all around Olympic champion, crashed to the mat during her flight sequence and finished sixth.

"It was just crazy to kind of see how everybody was going down like that," Lee said. "But I think it's just because there's just

so much pressure. You could feel the tension in the room."

Biles falters again

Biles suffered a shocking defeat in the floor exercise final after two costly errors allowed Brazilian gymnast Rebeca Andrade to

snatch an unexpected gold medal. Biles had to settle for a disappointing silver, while her American teammate Jordan Chiles claimed bronze.

Biles was heavily favoured coming into the final given the difficulty of her high-flying routine but landed with two feet out of bounds on two of her four tumbling passes.

Finke breaks world record as US dominate pool in Paris

Paris, France - Iron-man Bobby Finke and the US women's medley relay team shattered world records in golden performances as the Olympic swim meet ended in exhilarating fashion on Sunday with the Americans on top again.

Floridian Finke took down Sun Yang's 12-year 1,500m world record as he retained the gold medal in the lung-busting event before the American women smashed their previous world mark for gold in the medley relay.

The golds saw the Americans finish with eight at the top of the swimming medal table, one more than second-placed Australia whose ambitions of ruling the Olympic pool for the first time since Melbourne 1956 were quashed.

It was by no means an American shut-out, though, with the U.S. men's medley relay team suffering their first defeat ever at Olympics meets dating back to the 1960 Rome Games in a febrile atmosphere at La Defense Arena.



Bobby Finke of the US celebrates after winning gold with a world record in the 1500m freestyle

China, anchored by the human missile Pan Zhanle, took the gold ahead of the U.S. team, whose talisman Caeleb Dressel took his first minor medal from a previously uniform set of nine golds.

Sarah Sjostrom finished the Games on a huge high after

but I mean, how can I top this ever?"

Doping storm

Though the sport shone on the closing night, there was also a clear note of dissent over China's success amid a doping storm that engulfed the team in the leadup

Americans finished with eight gold at the top of the swimming medal table, one more than second-placed Australia whose ambitions of ruling the pool for the first time since Melbourne 1956 were quashed

claiming the women's 50m freestyle in 23.71 seconds, the evergreen Swede's two-gold haul surpassing all returns at her previous four Games.

"This was definitely my best (Olympics)," said the 30-year-old, who took the first of her three golds at Rio 2016.

"I'm definitely going to continue swimming for many years,

to Paris.

China, who finished fifth on the swimming medal table with two golds among their 12 medals, came to the Games under a cloud of suspicion after revelations in April that 23 of their swimmers tested positive for a banned heart medication but were allowed to compete at the Tokyo Games.

Axelsen bags men's title

Paris, France - Denmark's Viktor Axelsen beat Kunlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand to win his second successive men's singles Olympic gold medal in badminton at the Port de La Chapelle Arena in Paris on Monday.

Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia bagged the bronze after defeating India's Lakshya Sen.

The 30-year-old from Denmark defended his men's singles title Monday by beating Vitidsarn 21-11, 21-11 in the final in just 52 minutes.

Axelsen celebrated by run-

ning around the court and waving the red-and-white Danish flag over his head. Fans in the stands chanted, "Viktor! Viktor!"

Axelsen went over to a young fan and handed over his racket while receiving a standing ovation from the crowd.

"I feel like I'm playing at home," Axelsen said.

"So many red and white colors, so many Danish people here supporting me. ...

"This support means a lot. I'm just on the moon right now."



Viktor Axelsen

South Korea's An wins women's badminton gold

Paris, France - South Korea's An Se-young beat He Bingjiao of China 21-13 21-16 to capture the badminton women's singles Olympic gold medal at the Port de La Chapelle Arena on Monday.

Indonesia's Gregoria Tunjung took bronze by default as her would-be opponent, Spain's Carolina Marin, was forced to retire midway through her women's singles semi-final against China's He on Sunday with what appeared to be a serious knee injury.

"We met in the medical centre after the matches," Tunjung said, adding that Marin congratulated her. "Carolina said her condition was very bad.

"I hope she can continue playing badminton."



An Se-young

An was already the women's singles world number one player and world champion. Her presence on court has been compared to that of China's Lin

Dan, widely thought to be the best men's singles badminton player of his generation as a two-time Olympic gold medallist and a five-time World champion.

On Monday, An had large bandages strapped around her right leg, which she injured at the 2023 Asian Games. She had to withdraw during the 2024 India Open in January after causing more damage.

"My injury was very difficult to overcome. At first there was a little bit of a misdiagnosis," An said, adding by the time they re-diagnosed it there was very little time before the Olympics. "My coach helped me through."

"I always try to dream big and have the confidence that I can achieve that dream," An said.

The 22-year-old An powered through in Paris, however, as her controlled pacing finished off He, with the pair at one point delivering a rally that lasted nearly a minute.

OTHER STORIES



Graham Thorpe

Former England batsman Thorpe dies aged 55

London, England - Former England cricketer and coach Graham Thorpe has died at the age of 55, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said on Monday.

Thorpe, known for his stylish batting style, is regarded as one of the best players of his generation. He played 100 Test matches between 1993 and 2005, scoring 6,744 runs with an average of 44.66 including 16 centuries.

The left-handed middle-order batter also played 82 ODIs. Thorpe's hometown club Surrey, whom he represented in first-class cricket, called him a "Surrey and England legend."

In a post on X the ECB said: "There seem to be no appropriate words to describe the deep shock we feel at Graham's death ... more than one of England's finest-ever batters, he was a beloved member of the cricket family and revered by fans all over the world.

"The cricket world is in mourning today."



Jeffrey Vandersay

Vandersay stars as Sri Lanka beat India in second ODI

Colombo, Sri Lanka - Sri Lanka leg-spinner Jeffrey Vandersay ripped through India's batting line-up with a maiden one-day international six-wicket haul to guide his side to a 32-run win in the second game of the three-match series in Colombo on Sunday.

After winning the toss and electing to bat, Sri Lanka struggled against seamer Mohammed Siraj, who dismissed opener Pathum Nissanka with the first ball of the match before Avishka Fernando and Kusal Mendis steadied the innings with a 74-run stand.

India's chase got off to a blistering start as in-form captain Rohit Sharma scored 64 runs off 44 deliveries before he was dismissed by the 34-year-old Vandersay.

Sri Lanka did a terrific job of defending the total and bowling India out for 208 in 42.2 overs.

NOAH TALKS THE TALK AND RUNS THE RUN

American star wins 100m gold by five thousandths of a second

Paris, France - Welcome to The Noah Lyles Show, everyone. Glad you could tune in. The American sprint star who has launched a personal campaign over the last few years to raise the profile of global athletics just exploded on its biggest stage: The Olympic Games as 100-metre champion at Paris 2024. But it's not an act. Lyles, ever the showman, outspoken, electrifying and unafraid to set expectations sky-high for himself, soared when it mattered most, running his fastest-ever 100m race to clip Jamaica's Kishane Thompson at the line by five-thousandths of a second. He ripped his name bib from his shirt and held it aloft with his red, white and blue varnished fingernails, announcing himself, as he had always promised he would be, as the fastest man in the world. "It's the one I wanted, it's the



Noah Lyles of the United States wins gold in the 100 metres in Paris on Sunday

hard battle, it's the amazing opponents," said Lyles, the first American male Olympic 100m champion since Justin Gatlin in 2004. "I didn't do this against a slow field - I did this against the best of the best, on the biggest stage, with the biggest pressure."

He was right about that, as it was the first time eight men have broken 10 seconds in a wind-legal 100 metres race. American Fred Kerley took bronze in 9.81 and Akani Simbini of South Africa was fourth, making it a remarkable six fourth or fifth-placed finishes in global

championships, albeit with the consolation of a national record time of 9.83. Defending champion Lamont Marcell Jacobs of Italy, heavily strapped, finished fifth in 9.85 and Letsile Tebogo of Botswana also set a national record with 9.86 in sixth.

If you think this was the Hollywood ending that the 27-year-old from Gainesville, Florida, has long dreamed of, you'd only be partly right. He set out the goal of winning not one, not two, not three but four gold medals at these Games. And, he says, the 100m isn't even his best event.

"It feels good to back it up," Lyles said of his on-track performance aligning with his big-talking ways after his victory. What does he want next? "I want my own shoe," he said. "I want my own trainer - I'm dead serious. There ain't no money in spikes, it's in sneakers.

I didn't do this against a slow field - I did this against the best of the best, on the biggest stage, with the biggest pressure.

NOAH LYLES

And even Michael Johnson didn't have his own sneaker. "I feel like for how many medals we bring back, for the notoriety we get ... the fact that that hasn't happened, that's crazy to me. I was like, 'Yeah, that needs to happen.'" It's a plot line that has been unfolding for the better part of five years, when Lyles became the world champion in the 200m at the World Athletics Championships in 2019, but was then interrupted by the global pandemic - and a bronze medal he said that stung at Tokyo 2020 in 2021. He carried that bronze to Paris 2024 as a reminder: He has long seen himself as the main character, not a supporting one. "I was fueled as soon as I saw this in my hands," Lyles said of the bronze medal, holding it up for reporters to see. "That's when I was fueled." But that didn't slow Lyles from chasing passions outside of the sport - and weaving them into his persona on it. Earlier this summer, at the U.S. Olympic Trials, Lyles made a habit of making an entrance to the venue dressed for a fashionable night out. He even convinced rapper Snoop Dogg to join him for a walk into the venue.

Lyles-Thompson showdown latest in Jamaica-US rivalry

Paris, France - Jamaica's Kishane Thompson came so close to emulating his compatriot Usain Bolt and becoming Olympic 100 metres champion on Sunday but American Noah Lyles denied him by a heartbeat. Thompson led for most of the race and clocked the same 9.79 time as Lyles who won by five thousandths of a second in a photo finish after timing his dip to cross the line to perfection. Even Lyles admitted he thought Thompson, who came into the final as the fastest man this year, had beaten him. "He said, 'Hey Kishane I thought you got it' and I said,

"I'm not sure'," Thompson said. "I wasn't patient enough with myself to let my speed bring me at the line, in the position that I know I could have gone to, but I have learned from it." Asked if he thought the pair should share the medal, Thompson said: "I think the sport is too competitive, no offence to any other sport. It's too competitive for us to share a gold medal." Thompson's time - 9.789, against Lyles' 9.784 - was two-hundredths of a second off his personal best of 9.77 set in June. The Lyles-Thompson showdown was the latest chapter in a sprint rivalry between the U.S.



Kishane Thompson

and Jamaica that has gripped the sport for almost two decades. Bolt won three successive 100 and 200 metres Olympic golds, and Yohan Blake weighed in with a silver in 2012. In world championships, Bolt and Blake won four 100s in a row between from 2009 to 2015 while Bolt nailed four successive 200s and helped his country to four sprint relay golds. It was a domination the United States could not match during the best part of a century as the sprint superpower, and with Jamaica's women also routinely filling the top step of their podiums, the Caribbean nation

was on top of the world. Since Bolt's retirement in 2017, however, Jamaica's gold rush has dried up, and a succession of male sprinters have been built up as "the new Bolt", a pressure they could surely do without. "I know that Jamaica would have wanted me to get the gold, everybody loves winners," Thompson said. "I would have loved to win today, but big up to the whole field." Fellow Jamaican Oblique Seville, who had beaten Lyles to win their semi-final on Sunday, was left in tears after finishing last, albeit in an impressive time of 9.91 seconds.



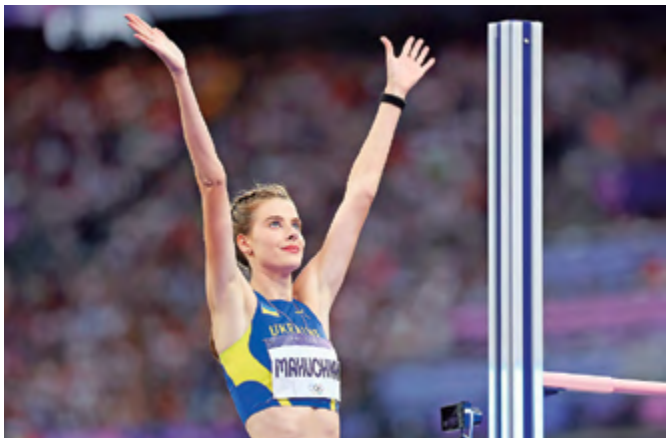
Gianmarco Tamberi posted a picture of himself in a hospital

Kidney stone issue clouds Tamberi's Olympic hopes

Paris, France - Gianmarco Tamberi's defence of the high jump gold medal he shared in one of the most iconic moments of the Tokyo Olympics is under threat after he was taken to hospital with a suspected kidney problems, four days before the qualifying event. Three years ago Tamberi and Mutaz Barshim of Qatar, who had been friends and rivals for years, agreed to share gold after asking permission from the event officials. On Sunday, however, Italian Tamberi posted a picture of himself in a hospital bed. "Unbelievable... This can't be true," he said. "Yesterday, two hours after I wrote 'I deserve it' on social media, I felt a stabbing pain in my side. Emergency room, CT scan, ultrasound, blood test. Probable kidney stone. "And now I find myself, three days before the event for which I sacrificed everything, lying in a bed, helpless, with a fever of 38.8." Tamberi said he had been advised to postpone his flight to Paris until tomorrow. "Only one thing is certain, I don't know how I will get there, but I will be there on that platform and I will give my soul until the last jump, whatever my condition will be," he wrote.

Ukraine's Mahuchikh wins gold in women's high jump

Paris, France - Ukraine's Yaroslava Mahuchikh completed her trophy cabinet with the women's Olympic high jump gold medal on Sunday, clearing 2.00 metres in front of an adoring crowd at the Stade de France. Australian Nicola Olyslagers took silver and Ukraine's Iryna Gerashchenko and Australian Eleanor Patterson shared the bronze. Mahuchikh fled her home in Dnipro after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 but has kept her competitive career going and claimed Olympic gold weeks after breaking a world record that had stood since 1987 with a leap of 2.10m. The world champion cleared the winning height on her first attempt and took the gold over the Australian by virtue of having fewer failures, bowing to the crowd as she took one shot at clearing 2.04m but knocked the bar down. Mahuchikh was all business



Ukraine's Yaroslava Mahuchikh celebrates winning gold in high jump

and kept her cool during the competition as she laid down on the ground with a sleeping bag wrapped around her while her competitors took their turns. She and Olyslagers were the only two not to knock the bar down through 1.98 and it was game on from there, as the Australian revved up the crowd but could not get over 2.00m until the third attempt.

Neither competitor could get over 2.02 and Mahuchikh, her eyes adorned with blue-and-yellow makeup in her country's colours, smiled after her failure at 2.04. The bronze medal winners, who could not clear 1.98 but reached the podium with the fewest failed attempts, each ran to the stands as it became clear they were going home with a piece of Olympic hardware.

Canada's Katzberg continues his dominance in hammer throw

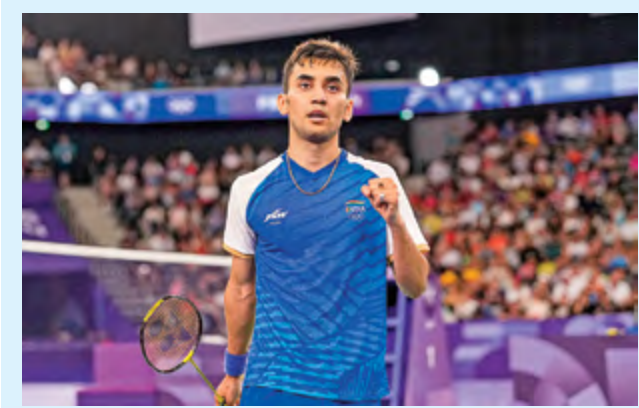
Paris, France - Canada's Ethan Katzberg won gold in the men's hammer throw at the Paris Olympics on Sunday, cementing his dominance of the discipline after becoming the youngest ever world champion last year. Katzberg, 22, who cuts a distinctive figure with his moustache and long curly hair, asserted himself with a first throw of 84.12 metres, and none of his rivals could respond. "I don't think I expected it, but I had the preparation in mind to get a good round on the first throw, and to throw 84 metres felt really good," Katzberg said. Hungary's Bence Halasz won silver with 79.97 and Ukraine's Mykhaylo Kokhan won bronze with 79.39. The three hammer throwers jokingly took turns to put questions to each other in the press conference after their win, as journalists in the Stade de France thronged the men's 100-metre medallists instead.



Canada's Ethan Katzberg won gold with his first throw of 84.12 metres

A podium of Katzberg, Halasz, who was celebrating his 27th birthday on Sunday, and 23-year-old Kokhan, represented a changing of the guard as defending Olympic champion, Poland's Wojciech Nowicki, 35, finished seventh and his teammate, Tokyo bronze medallist Pawel Fajdek, was fifth, taking a bow after his final throw. Kokhan, who secured his

bronze medal after Ukraine's Yaroslava Mahuchikh and Iryna Gerashchenko won gold and bronze in the high jump, said it was a great night for his country. "These medals are very important for Ukraine. Because our people finally have happy time, they can cheer us, and they can celebrate this with us. Not to think about the war for one day," he said.



Lakshya Sen

India’s Lakshya Sen misses out on bronze after losing to Lee

Paris, France - India's Lakshya Sen missed a historic men's singles bronze medal at the Paris 2024 Olympics badminton tournament after losing to Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia on Monday.

At La Chapelle Arena, Lakshya Sen, 22nd in the badminton rankings, suffered a 13-21, 21-16, 21-11 loss to world No. 7 Lee Zii Jia in 71 minutes.

The 22-year-old Sen failed to become the first Indian badminton player to win an Olympic medal in the men's event.

Despite outclassing his opponent in the first game, Sen conceded eight straight points to 26-year-old Lee Zii Jia to lose the second game.

He couldn't mentally recover in the third game and the Malaysian dictated the rallies in the decider to win the bronze medal at Paris 2024. Sen also struggled with a bruise to his right forearm which bled and had to be taped for most of the contest.

Lakshya Sen, the reigning Commonwealth champion, began the contest with a 6-2 lead with his opponent making unforced errors early on. The Indian also made use of the court dimensions well and with line calls going in his favour, he went into the break with an 11-5 lead.

With the score at 17-12, Sen won four of the next five points to comfortably take the first game and put Lee Zii Jia under pressure.

The second game began with the Indian playing a sensational cross-court smash and kept pushing to make the score 7-2.

But Lee Zii Jia bounced back and won five consecutive points to restore parity at 8-8.

The Malaysian continued to press forward and went into the break with an 11-8 lead to put Sen on the backfoot.

'THIS SUPERSEDES EVERYTHING'

Djokovic says winning Olympic singles gold is his greatest achievement

Paris, France - Novak Djokovic described beating Carlos Alcaraz to claim the Olympic singles gold medal at the fifth attempt as the biggest achievement of his career on Sunday.

The 37-year-old Serb ended an eight-month trophy drought with a vintage display to win 7-6(3) 7-6(2) and complete his career Golden Slam in memorable fashion, not dropping a set in six matches at Roland Garros.

He is the oldest man to win the Olympic singles title since tennis returned to the Games in 1988. Remarkably he did it 21 days after being pummeled by Alcaraz in the Wimbledon final and two months after undergoing knee surgery. "I won the bronze in my first Olympic Games (2008) and ever since then failed to win the medal and played three out of four Olympic Games in semi-finals and couldn't overcome that obstacle," Djokovic, proudly wearing his medal, told reporters.



Novak Djokovic defeated Carlos Alcaraz for his first Olympic gold

I won the bronze in my first Olympic Games (2008) and ever since then failed to win the medal and played three out of four Olympic Games in semi-finals

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

"And then now at age 37, with a 21-year-old that is probably the best player in the world right now, winning Roland Garros and Wimbledon back-to-back and playing incredible tennis.

"When I take everything into consideration, this probably is the biggest sporting success I've ever had in my career."

The 24-time Grand Slam champion produced a level of tennis that has been missing this year to fight off Alcaraz.

After belting away a forehand winner to end a ferocious, near three-hour battle, the emotion poured out of Djokovic as he sobbed on court before climbing into the stands to embrace his family, including wife Jelena and son Stefan, and his team.

"Until today I thought that carrying the Serbian flag at the 2012 opening ceremony in London is the best feeling that an athlete could have," he said.

"This kind of supersedes everything that I imagined, that I hoped that I could experience and that I could feel."



Laura Lindemann of Germany beats Taylor Knibb of the US and Beth Potter of Great Britain to win the triathlon mixed relay in the Paris

Germany win gold in triathlon mixed relay

Paris, France - Laura Lindemann won a thrilling sprint finish to give Germany gold in the Olympic triathlon mixed relay on Monday, outkicking the United States and Britain after highly-fancied France were scuppered by a bike crash on the first of four legs.

There was a photo finish for second place, with officials initially announcing that Beth Potter had taken it for defending champions Britain, only for Taylor Knibb and the U.S. to be upgraded - though neither team were aware of the switch until they were lining up in the wrong places for the medal presentation.

It was a redemptive race for Lindemann, who had suffered a bike crash in the individual event and finished eighth, as well as for Germany, who finished sixth in Tokyo but came to Paris as back to back world champions.

"I believed in myself and I just gave it my all. It's amazing. The team did such a great job and we deserved it," Lindemann said.

Lead athlete Tim Hellwig said his teammate's finish was "so

exciting" to watch.

"We know she has one of the strongest kicks in world triathlon, but you always have to pull it off on the biggest stage, it's always one day and anything can happen but we trusted in her and she did the job in the end," said Hellwig.

Lisa Tertsch, however, whose scorching run in the second leg brought Germany right back into the mix, said: "I couldn't watch. It was too much."

In front of huge crowds lining the Paris streets, Alex Yee, win-

ner of the individual race last week and who anchored Britain to relay gold in Tokyo, gave the defending champions an early lead with a fantastic run, with France 40 seconds back in last place after Pierre le Corre was brought down by New Zealand's Hayden Wilde and then struggled to get his chain back on.

With sprint distances of a 300metre swim, 7km bike and 1.8km run, it effectively ended the hosts' chance.

Britain's Georgia Taylor-Brown, also part of the Tokyo

gold-medal winning team, was caught by Tertsch at the halfway point but Sam Dickinson made up time to hand individual bronze medallist Potter a slight lead to start the last lap.

Knibb took over in sixth place but immediately started working through the field.

A standout cyclist who also competed in the road time trial last week where she suffered several crashes on the wet roads, Knibb caught up with Lindemann on the bike, then overtook Potter just before the last transition.

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MEAT ALTERNATIVES

Hearty
debate

Recent research concludes that plant-based meat alternatives are healthier for the heart than meat

Even though there is substantial variability in the contents and nutritional profiles of plant-based meat alternatives (PBMA), the nutritional profiles tend to reflect a heart-healthy dietary pattern.

A review article of the available studies directly comparing the impact of plant-based and animal-based meats consistently suggests that the plant-based alternatives improve cardiovascular risk factors.

Even though there is substantial variability in the contents and nutritional profiles of plant-based meat alternatives (PBMA), the nutritional profiles tend to reflect a heart-healthy dietary pattern. A review article appearing in the Canadian Journal of Cardiology, published by Elsevier, of the available studies directly comparing the impact of plant-based and animal-based meats consistently suggests that the plant-based alternatives improve cardiovascular risk factors.

PBMAs are highly processed plant-based food products that typically replace meat in the diet. In Canada, the growing demand for PBMA coincides with public health recommendations to reduce ultra-processed food consumption,

which prompts the need to investigate the long-term health implications of PBMA.

Lead author Matthew Nagra, ND, Vancouver, BC, Canada, says, "While the plant-based meat market has experienced significant growth in recent years and more and more Canadians are enjoying plant-based burgers, surprisingly, little is known about how these meat alternatives may impact health, and in particular, cardiovascular disease risk. Thus, we sought to review the available literature on the topic to identify what is currently known and to provide direction for future research."

The authors of the article reviewed the research published from 1970 to 2023 on PBMA, their contents, nutritional profiles, and impact on cardiovascular disease risk factors, such as cholesterol levels and blood pressure.

Their analysis shows:

- There is substantial variability in the contents and nutritional profiles of PBMA.
- On average, PBMA tend to have a more heart-healthy nutritional profile than meat,

although the high sodium content of some products may be of concern.

- PBMAs have been shown to improve some cardiovascular risk factors, including cholesterol levels, in several randomised controlled trials.
 - PBMAs have not been shown to raise blood pressure, despite the high sodium content of some products.
 - There is currently a lack of long-term research evaluating how these alternatives may affect the risk of developing a heart attack or stroke.
 - There is currently little research on the healthfulness of some common components of PBMA, such as vital wheat gluten (seitan).
- The authors of the review ar-

ticle were surprised to find that there is a near complete lack of research on vital wheat gluten, which is the primary protein source incorporated into many popular PBMA, and cardiovascular risk factors.

Dr Nagra continues, "Further, the lack of research on cardiovascular outcomes as of 2023 is shocking, given that there are randomised controlled trials evaluating risk factors dating back to 1990. More detailed research is needed in light of the increasing consumption of PBMA and our lack of knowledge of how these products impact risk."

In an accompanying editorial, J David Spence, professor emeritus of Neurology and Clinical Pharmacology,

Western University, notes, "In an excellent review of PBMA, Nagra et al focus on reduction of cardiovascular risk factors, and the effects of various individual dietary factors on cardiovascular risk."

He, however, points out that, "What really matters is not the effect of individual components of a diet, nor the effect of diet on cardiovascular risk factors - it is the effect of diet on the actual risk of cardiovascular events such as myocardial infarction and stroke. Most physicians markedly underestimate the cardiovascular benefit of diet and place far too little emphasis on diet in the management of patients at high risk of cardiovascular events."

(Courtesy: sciencedaily.com)





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GET FIT

Couch to 5K

Couch to 5K is one of the most popular running programmes for beginners who seek to start their fitness journey. C25K balances walking, jogging, and running to make one ready to take on a 5km run with ease

Are you fed up of being categorised with those who shun fitness and prefer the couch during leisure hours? Does your inner self urge you often to get up and get going but you never pay heed?

So, now's the time to take a decision for a fitter lifestyle, and it all begins with a genuine desire to bring in change. The odds will be in your favour, if you simply have the will to do so. And you can start out from just there – the couch!

'Couch to 5K' is a perfect way to start running. It has been designed for people who have never run before. The C25K programme has helped millions of people the world over, not just to get into running but adopt a fitter lifestyle.

What is Couch to 5K?

Couch to 5K is a running programme designed for absolute beginners looking to build up to running a 5km race at the end of the programme.

C25K mixes walking, running, and jogging to get you going. As you progress through the programme and your fitness improves, you'll start running more and walking less. By the end of the programme, you should be able to run 5km at a pace that feels comfortable for you.

Couch to 5K works by slowly building up your ability and confidence over time. Instead of throwing you in at the deep end, you're encouraged to get comfortable with a blend of walking and running as your body gets used to a new level of activity.

Unlike other programmes, C25K is all about accessibility and working for everyone. It's a great way of getting into running because it helps you improve at a steady pace. It can help you build confidence, tackle weight loss, joint health, mental health, improved sleep, stress reduction, building muscle as well as maintain regular exercise regimen.

Different versions

There are different versions of the C25K programme that take different lengths of time to complete. If you're returning to running, you

might prefer a 6-week variation that introduces running quickly. If you're an absolute beginner, a 9-week C25K programme is good for you.

The duration of each session can be customised to suit your own convenience. It all depends on the speed at which you are comfortable to run, jog, or walk. Each session is designed with a time in mind, not a distance. That means you can complete every session at a pace that works for you.

If you're coming back to running after some time off, you may find the first few weeks aren't too challenging. If this sounds familiar, try jumping forward a week and seeing if this feels more suitable for you.

How does it work?

The programme starts off with a blend of jogging and walking that's instantly accessible for people who've never run before. Don't worry about speed, tempo, pace, or what you look like when you run. You can take things at your pace and find a speed that's comfortable for you.

Remember that every run is progress and that a training plan is designed to build your ability over time. Whilst the length of each Couch to 5K programme varies slightly, the basic idea is the same.

You begin at week 1 and complete a series of runs before progressing on to week 2. Each run will have a time element attached to it. For example, Week 1 Day 1 might look like 'a brisk 5-minute walk followed by 30 seconds of running, alternated with 60 seconds of walking'.

No need for special equipment

The best thing about running is that you don't need any equipment - all you need is a comfortable pair of running shoes to get you going.

The programme discourages spending loads on fancy tech when you're starting out. Non-essential items like smartwatches, heart rate monitors, and expensive kits can be picked up further down the line when you're sure running is right for you.

(Courtesy: nuffieldhealth.com)

C25K tips

- Never skip the warm up: Warming up and cooling down are vital for avoiding injury.
- Pace yourself: Always run at a pace that is comfortable for you
- Never ignore an injury: If something doesn't feel right, get yourself checked out.
- Mix up your routes: Running the same route every run will quickly get boring.
- Stick to the plan: If you're new to running, following a plan helps avoid injury
- Don't overinvest: The best thing about running is you don't need a lot of expensive gear
- Start small, dream big: Think of C25K as a stepping stone towards bigger running goals
- Focus on completing the distance: Speed, weight loss, and PBs will all come naturally.
- Celebrate your achievements: Each run is a progression, so take stock and celebrate.



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