

RO70mn for housing assistance

His Majesty chairs meeting of Council of Ministers

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik presided over a meeting of the Council of Ministers at Al Barakah Palace on Tuesday.

At the outset of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan gave thanks and praise to the Almighty Allah for the bounties with which He endowed Oman, its noble people and all those residing on its land.

His Majesty the Sultan prayed to Allah the Almighty to bestow His riches on all and to grant all good health, wellbeing and prosperity.

Then, His Majesty the Sultan reviewed domestic conditions. On the economic aspect, the Council of Ministers approved the closing account of fiscal year 2023, which indicated an improvement in the financial standing and a decline in the volume of its public debt - leading to improved credit rating of the Sultanate of Oman. His Majesty commended all the efforts made in this respect.

Pursuant to the Council of Oman's keenness to develop the capital market sector, activate its role as a funding option, enhance the contribution of commercial companies to the local economy and to augment the market value of Muscat Stock Exchange and to increase the number of companies listed therein, His Majesty the Sultan issued Royal Directives to launch an incentive programme that comprises a number of initiatives to convert com-



panies interested in the aforementioned programme into joint stock companies and list them in stock markets.

The Royal Directives also provide for the establishment of a secondary market at Muscat Stock Exchange, to be named 'Promising Companies Market', that targets private firms, family companies, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and startups.

The Royal Directives also point to the launch of an initiative to convert limited liability companies into closed companies, notably by offering a package of incentives to the aforementioned companies.

Due to the importance of the industrial sector, being one of major economic diversification sectors and a propeller of Oman Vision 2040 and to establish a culture of industrial innova-

tion in Oman, the Council of Ministers approved the 'Industrial Strategy 2040' aimed at accelerating economic diversification, improving the standard of Omani industrial products and establishing a modern technology-based infrastructure for converting industries.

His Majesty the Sultan supported all efforts made by government departments that participated in devising the aforementioned strategy.

In affirmation of the attention accorded by His Majesty to the social aspect, notably through the priorities set by the government to develop the endowment (Waqf) system in the sultanate and its contribution to consolidating principles of collaboration and compassion among members of society, to introduce a new vision for endowments and ensure the sustainability of endowment funds and prepare them for investment, His Majesty the Sultan issued directives to establish 'Oman Endowment Foundation'.

This foundation will be mandated to invest endowment funds and funds from Bait Al Mal (House of Funds). The new foundation will be set up in accordance with the best practices in this field. The foundation will be provided by persons of expertise in the fields of investment and financial management, both from the public and private sectors.

Pursuant to the government's continuous quest to develop norms for a dignified life and to provide decent residences for citizens in a manner that tallies the development plans, the Council of Ministers approved the addition of RO70mn to boost the residential assistance programme at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning for the years 2024 and 2025.

Part of the fund will be dedicated to purchasing readymade residences for those entitled in modern projects. This is made within the context of the national initiatives for neighbourhoods that is overseen by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning.

Continued on Page 02

Establish Promising Companies Market on MSX

Programme to convert firms into joint stock companies

Initiative to convert limited liability companies into closed companies

Establish Oman Endowment Foundation

Approval of Industrial Strategy 2040

Monthly allocation to students on domestic scholarships

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Al Rifaa

Policy of developing relations with Oman will continue: Iran

Tehran, Iran - The interim Iranian president Mohammad Mokhber told Oman's Foreign Minister H E Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi on Monday that the Tehran-Muscat relations will continue as in the past.

In a meeting with the Omani delegation in Tehran, Iranian caretaker President emphasised that his country's policy of developing relations with Oman will continue, Iran's Mehr News Agency reported.

Mokhber thanked Oman for its messages of condolence and solidarity following the martyrdom of President Ebrahim Raeisi and his accompanying delegation in the last week's tragic helicopter crash.

He said that the policy of Iran and its late president Raeisi to develop full-fledged cooperation with Oman will continue.

Alluding to the historical and brotherly relations between Iran

and Oman, Mokhber said, "There are untapped capabilities and potential in the two countries, especially in the economic field, and if they are utilised, our economic relations will gain momentum."

Deepening relations

Referring to the meeting with H E Sayyid Badr, Iran's acting minister of foreign affairs Ali Bagheri Kani stated that the policy of strengthening and deepening re-

lations with neighbours will continue. Bagheri Kani wrote on the social network 'X' about his meeting with H E Sayyid Badr, "We received the message of friendship, brotherhood and good neighbourliness from the high-ranking officials of the Sultanate of Oman."

During a press conference, both the foreign ministers stressed on the pursuit of sending urgent humanitarian aid to

the people of Gaza and intensifying political pressure against the Israel to stop the genocide.

"My visit is to convey the brotherly feelings and solidarity we have with Iran during this tragic time," H E Sayyid Badr was quoted by *Tehran Times*.

He further elaborated on the discussions with Iran's acting Foreign Minister, highlighting the continuation of consultations between Iran and Oman on various bilateral and regional issues, with a particular focus on Palestine.

"Our brothers in Palestine are enduring severe oppression, and significant efforts are being made to alleviate their suffering. Our mutual goal is the establishment of an independent Palestinian state," he asserted.

Bagheri Kani, on his part, expressed gratitude towards Oman for its supportive gestures during the period of mourning.

Agencies

Oman plans launching new low-cost airline

Our Correspondent Muscat

In a major boost to Oman's aviation sector, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has announced a 'promising investment opportunity' for launching a new low-cost airline in the sultanate.

This initiative is part of Oman's broader strategy to expand its aviation industry and increase its attractiveness to both investors and travellers.

According to a CAA statement, this move is designed to 'shape the future of air travel in Oman' and contribute to the transformation journey of the aviation industry within the region.

The authority has expressed its intention to license a new airline that will capitalise on Oman's strategic location and its rapidly growing air traffic facilitated by its award-winning modern airports.

Oman's modern infrastructure, including recently upgraded airports, position it as an ideal base for a low-cost carrier that could serve not only domestic routes but also connect to broader regional and international networks.

This move is designed to shape the future of air travel in Oman and contribute to the transformation journey of the aviation industry in ME

CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

Earlier in the month, Naif bin Ali al Abri, Chairman of CAA, announced that Oman was set to build six new airports, which are expected to begin operations be-

tween 2028 and 2029.

In an interview on the sidelines of the Future Aviation Forum in Riyadh, Abri informed that the consulting designs for the new airports have begun.

Through this planned expansion, he said, Oman aims to increase the number of airports in the country to 13, facilitating domestic aviation and bolstering tourism.

The CAA chairman asserted that with the completion of these projects, Oman anticipates a significant surge in airport passenger traffic, projected to reach 50mn by 2040 from the current 17mn.

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Pact signed to manage Oman Startup Hub

Our Correspondent Muscat

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT) signed an agreement with Al Jabr company to manage the Oman Startup Hub (OSH).

The contract was executed in the presence of H E Dr Ali bin Amer al Shidhani, Undersecretary for Communications and Information Technology in MTCIT, and Mohammed bin Salem al Wahaibi, CEO of Al Jabr.

OSH is designed as a dynamic platform aimed at bridging connections among nascent tech companies in Oman, fostering communication and collaboration among startups, support entities, investors, advisors, and entrepreneurs.

The platform is intended to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experiences within the tech startup ecosystem, offering a

comprehensive overview of the ecosystem, startup needs and a calendar of related activities and events.

The heart of the platform is also a dynamic ecosystem map, which allows users to navigate the supporting ecosystem, and find the support they need regardless of what stage or sector the startup is in. The map is always up to date and allows for growth as more supporters create profiles on the site.

In conjunction with the contract signing, a panel discussion was held to explore the role of the OSH platform in bolstering the tech startup ecosystem. MTCIT has called on tech startups to update their information on the platform and is actively enhancing the platform to better support these companies.

OSH was developed by IDO Investments, a technology investment firm supported by the Oman Investment Authority.

RO70mn for housing

Continued from Page 01

Following the continuous Royal attention to education and action to address the livelihood challenges posed to some students on scholarships at private higher education institutions, His Majesty the Sultan issued directives to the departments concerned to dedicate monthly allocations, with effect from next academic year, to entitled students on domestic scholarships at private higher education institutions, in accordance with the measures endorsed by the National Subsidy System Committee.

In his review of regional and international issues, His Majesty the Sultan referred to the conditions in the region and the ongoing unjust war in the Gaza Strip. He also spoke about bilateral relations with Arab and friendly countries and about the outcome of recent visits and meetings with Arab countries. In this context, His Majesty the Sultan affirmed the keenness of the Sultanate of Oman to strengthen its relations with all Arab and friendly countries and to upgrade cooperation with them in a manner that serves common interests among the peoples.

At the conclusion, His Majesty the Sultan touched on various aspects of concern to the nation and citizens, and he issued Royal Directives to this effect.

Three Omani films triumph at Moroccan film festival

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Three Omani films have clinched top honours at the Atlas International Film Festival held in Morocco from May 23 to 26.

Dr Humaid bin Saeed al Amri's *Al Darrooj* secured the grand prize, while *Al Murad* directed by Mohammed al Ajmi and *You Will Not Dive Alone* by Fahd al Maimani won the jury awards.

Mohammed al Ajmi's documentary *Al Murad* explores the Al Tabseel tradition, portraying the unity and joy of a family engaged in the date harvesting season. Ajmi described *Al Murad* as more than just a documentary about tradition; it symbolises the bond that holds the family together under the palm trees.

"*Al Murad* is the rope that extends from the top of the palm tree to the ground, symbolising the beautiful distance that keeps the family together to reap the fruits," Ajmi said.

He also discussed the broader impact of film festivals, noting that local and international participations facilitate exchange of cinematic experiences and stimulates competition. "Such opportunities motivate filmmakers to develop their skills and intersect cinematic cultures."

Ajmi highlighted the value of workshops and exhibitions at these festivals, which serve as vital platforms for filmmakers to converge and grow.

Reflecting on the success of Omani films at the festival, Ajmi remarked, "This victory is a testament to the ongoing cinematic



Being present at international festivals and engaging with global audiences are crucial steps for promoting Omani culture and elevating the stature of Omani cinema

FAHD AL MAIMANI

This victory is a testament to the ongoing cinematic achievements of Omani films on the international stage. It highlights the dedication of Omani directors to use cinema to promote the rich Omani traditions

MOHAMMED AL AJMI



achievements of Omani films on the international stage. It highlights the dedication of Omani directors to use cinema as a medium to express and promote the rich customs and traditions of Oman."

The movie *Al Darrooj* tackles a poignant social issue, focusing

on the struggles of a young widow with a disabled child, who faces societal rejection. The film delicately explores her challenging decision between her future and her commitment to her son.

You Will Not Dive Alone offers a visually stunning journey into the depths of the ocean, spot-

lighting Oman's ancient maritime culture and the pristine beauty of the Daymaniyat Islands. The film narrates the story of two Omani sailors - Faisal al Yazidi and Ahmed al Busaidi - and their connection with the marine world, led by exceptional cinematography.

Maimani shared his elation over the film's success, stating, "This victory is not just mine; it is a victory for Oman. The joy of seeing hard work and dedication recognised is indescribable."

He viewed this achievement as a significant milestone in his career, hopeful that it will spur greater creativity and recognition for Omani cinema.

Maimani also highlighted the needs of the film industry, stressing on the importance of continuous support from the cultural and governmental bodies, greater funding, and international collaboration to enhance skills and expose Omani cinema to a wider audience.

"Being present at international festivals and engaging with global audiences are crucial steps for promoting Omani culture and elevating the stature of Omani cinema at the international level," he added.

'Commonly seen snakes do not pose danger to humans'

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) has released the second edition of the *Guide to Snakes in the Sultanate of Oman* that illustrates various types of snake species - including venomous, mildly toxic and harmless types - found in the sultanate.

This comprehensive guide aims to raise awareness about the various types of snakes found in Oman, and help people avoid the danger of venomous snakes and prevent the mistaken harm of non-venomous ones.

The guide's scientific content was prepared by Hanan bint Mansour al Nabhaniyah, head of the Collections Management Department at the Natural History Museum.

In a statement, MHT informed that the scientific material of the guide was reviewed by Dr Salvador Karenza, a herpetology expert at the Institute of Evolutionary Biology in Barcelona, Spain, and researcher Ahmed al Busaidi, a wildlife specialist at the University of Nizwa.

The guide details the characteristics and features of all types of snakes found in Oman. Hanan explained that the primary danger of snakes in

Oman and the Gulf comes from marine snakes and nine types of land snakes. The book informs that different snake species are not uniformly distributed across Oman. For instance, the black desert cobra is absent from northern Oman, the horned snake inhabits sandy areas, the false horned snake is found in the northern high mountains, while the puffed snake, pit viper and Arabian cobra are found in southern Oman.

Hanan mentioned that the guide includes local and mountain names of these snakes, noting that many commonly seen snake species do not pose a danger to humans.

"Most snakes naturally avoid humans and will only bite if provoked. Even when they do bite, they often do not inject venom, and it is rare for the venom to cause serious harm to humans. Fatal snake bites are extremely rare."

The guide offers general information and scientific facts about snakes, explaining the differences between various species. It also includes an index of snake names in Arabic, providing crucial information on prevention, avoidance, and first aid procedures for snake bites.

The guide is available in both Arabic and English within the same volume.



Oman Vision meet reviews sustainable growth of cities

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit kick-started a meeting on Monday in the wilayat of Nizwa in Dakhliyah governorate, focused on the 'All of Oman' project, which prioritises development of sustainable cities and governorates.

The three-day meet opened under the patronage of Sheikh Hilal bin Saeed al Hajri, Governor of Dakhliyah.

The meeting reviewed audio-visual presentations on the Oman Vision 2040 and the All of Oman project, officials informed. Additionally, workshops on continuous improvement methodology will be held to simplify procedures, review existing projects, prepare implementation plans, and discuss their outcomes.

The three-day meeting also features a session with youth, as part of the government's community participation programme.

It recognises community participation as essential in achiev-

ing the future goals, while a session with the youth attempts to showcase the governorate's prominent young talents.

"To implement the initiatives of the Community Participation Programme, we seek to visit all governorates," said Abdullah bin Nasser al Saidi, supervisor of the Community Participation Programme for the Oman 2040 Vision.

"So far, we have visited three governorates: Buraimi, North Batinah, and South Sharqiyah. As we tour Dakhliyah, we will carry out a number of activities and events targeting local administrations, and governmental and private institutions to achieve the necessary partnership and empowerment to align efforts towards the Vision 2040."

Saidi added that a dedicated session will introduce young people to the most important developments in the stages of implementing the vision, explain their roles, and gather their suggestions, while stressing that the programme continues to achieve its goals.



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BRIEFS

US house prices jump 6.6% in Q1

US house prices annually jumped 6.6% in the first quarter of 2024, from the same period last year, the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) said Tuesday.

House prices, meanwhile, were up 1.1% in the January - March period, compared to the previous quarter, the FHFA said in a statement.

On a seasonally adjusted monthly basis, they increased 0.1% from March, it added.

"U.S. house prices continued to grow at a steady pace in the first quarter," said Anju Vajja, acting deputy director for FHFA's Division of Research and Statistics.

"Over the last six consecutive quarters, the low inventory of homes for sale continued to contribute to house price appreciation despite mortgage rates that hovered around 7 percent," added Vajja.

Oman Data Park launches \$29mn data centre projects

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Data Park, the sultanate's premier managed cybersecurity and cloud services provider, has unveiled major data centre projects to be located across different regions in Oman, with an investment of \$29mn.

On the sidelines of the ongoing COMEX 2024, Oman Data Park highlighted the progress of their data centre projects. As part of the company's ambitious growth plan, Oman Data Park's current data centre capacity has reached 10MW, with a target of expanding it to 50MW in the next five years.

In a press statement, Maqbool al-Wahaibi, CEO of Oman Data Park, emphasised the significance of these data centre projects in driving digital transformation by adhering to the best international practices.

He said, "These advanced data centres are equipped with the latest technologies and expertise, ensuring robust data management solutions."

Oman Data Park signed an agreement with Mideast Data Systems (MDS) for the implementation of the Firq Data Centre in Nizwa. This project, previously initiated with Omantel in 2021, involves an investment of \$25mn.



Oman Data Park signed an agreement with Mideast Data Systems (MDS) for the implementation of the Firq Data Centre in Nizwa, with an investment of \$25mn

The Firq Data Centre, with a substantial power capacity of 4.5MW and over 370 racks, is designed as a pivotal disaster recovery site. It aims to support critical entities across various sectors, ensuring resilience and continuity in the face of disruptions.

Oman Data Park also announced the launch of the Rusayl Data Centre 2, the first green data centre in Oman. Located in Rusayl, this facility is designed to house over 200 racks and boasts a power capacity of 2.4MW, with an investment of \$4mn.

Rusayl Data Centre 2 is the first data centre in Oman to incorporate solar power in its energy mix, beginning with a capacity of 1.4MW and the potential to expand to 10MW. This initiative aligns with the Sustainable Environment Pillar of Oman Vision 2040, promoting energy efficiency and reducing environmental impact.

Oman Data Park continues to support Oman's digital transformation by offering comprehensive solutions in computing, cloud computing, data storage, networking, web hosting, and network security. The company also provides Oman's first AI-ready cloud infrastructure, Nebula AI powered by Nvidia.



Al Hadeetha begins copper concentrate exports from Oman

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Al Hadeetha Resources Company on Tuesday announced the first export of copper concentrate from Oman. This achievement marks a major milestone for both Oman and Al Hadeetha Resources, symbolising the beginning of a new era in the sultanate's minerals sector.

The copper project, spearheaded by Al Hadeetha Resources, is a cornerstone of Oman's strategic initiatives to diversify its economy. The project encompasses state-of-the-art mining and processing facilities in Al Washihi - Al Majaza in the North Al Sharqiyah region.

The project is designed to extract and refine copper ore to produce high-quality copper concentrate. This venture not only aims to boost the local economy but also positions Oman as a significant player in the global copper market.

In a press statement, Sayyid Khalid bin Hamed al Busaidy, Chairman of Al Hadeetha Resources, said, "This is a remarkable day as it marks the beginning of a new journey for Oman and the company in the field of minerals and mines. This milestone will contribute to the sultanate's economy in various forms, including creating employment opportunities for Omani citizens, attracting hard currency into the country, thereby raising the in-country value, and providing substantial support to local communities."

He added that the export of the first copper concentrate is a testament to Oman's commitment to economic diversification and sustainable development.

CBO issues RO22mn worth of treasury bills

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) announced the issuance of a treasury bills tender on behalf of the sultanate's government.

The value of the allotted government treasury bills amounted to RO22.03mn, for a maturity period of 91 days.

The average accepted price reached RO98.732 for every RO100 treasury bill, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO98.725 for the same. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.0865% and 5.1518%, respectively.

Notably, the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 6.00% while the discount rate



on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with the central bank is 6.50%.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance. These instruments 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).

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

Oman Cables Industry's employees become shareholders for second consecutive year

Muscat - Oman Cables Industry Company (OCI), the leading cable solutions provider in the sultanate, announced the continued success of its inclusive share ownership plan, now in its second consecutive year.

This groundbreaking initiative, first introduced in 2022, emphasises OCI's commitment to empowering its employees and giving back to them. Notably, 70% of all OCI employees have doubled their shares within the past year as a result of the program's success.

This plan aligns with the company's Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) approach, reflecting OCI's commitment to retaining and empowering its workforce. The plan covers both desk workers and non-desk workers and is a cornerstone of OCI's 'Empowerment, Innovation, and Excellence' vision. It grants OCI employees shares of Prysmian Group, OCI's strategic



partner, based on achieving specific local and regional targets.

In a press release, Erkan Aydogdu, CEO of Oman Cables Industry, said, "We are thrilled to celebrate the success of our pioneering initiative that transforms our employees into shareholders of the company. This remarkable accomplishment highlights our commitment to recognising and rewarding our team's dedication while fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace. At OCI, we continuously seek innovative ways to empower our employees and involve them directly in our collective success."

This initiative, as part of OCI's vision, contributes to Prysmian Group's Social Ambition 2030, which aims to bring 50% of employees globally on board as shareholders and enhance the financial engagement of employees towards the long-term interests and performance of the company.

OCI's successful share ownership plan, along with its employee welfare and parental support policies, reflects a steadfast commitment to building a positive and engaging environment for its workforce. As OCI continues to prioritise the well-being of its employees, it sets a benchmark for inclusive growth and sustainable development in the industry.

Oil prices rise on US fuel demand expectations, Middle East tensions

Muscat - Oil prices climbed in Asian trade on Tuesday, extending gains from the previous session, buoyed by expectations of strong fuel demand from the US during the summer, ahead of an output policy decision from OPEC+ at a June 2 meeting.

July Brent crude rose 21 cents to \$83.31 a barrel. The more-active August futures rose 21 cents to \$83.09. The West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures for July were at \$78.90 a barrel, up \$1.18, or 1.52%.

Oil prices rose over 1% on Monday in muted trade owing to public holidays in Britain and the United States.

Meanwhile, all eyes will also



Oil traders are focusing on the upcoming online meeting of OPEC+ on June 2, where traders and analysts are expecting production cuts to stay in place and buoy prices further

be on the upcoming online meeting of the OPEC+ on June 2, 2024, where traders and analysts are expecting production cuts to stay in place and buoy prices further.

Uncertainty over the timing of the US Federal Reserve's first interest rate cut is bolstering oil

market demand concerns. The latest data reveals that consumer confidence has partially improved in the US, the world's largest oil consumer.

There is a 50% possibility that the Fed will decrease interest rates for the first time in September, a 63% probability for November, and an 82% chance for December.

Market players will focus on the US Federal Bank's Beige Book and economic growth data, which will be announced this week. Additionally, they will follow the Fed's inflation indicators and officials' comments to gauge the bank's future economic policy.

The world's biggest oil producers will hold a meeting on June 2. At the next meeting of OPEC+, led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, the group will discuss whether to extend voluntary output cuts of 2.2mn barrels per day into the second half of the year.

Because of low interest rates, the US dollar lost value relative to other currencies, declining by

0.12% to 104.390, while lowering the cost of oil for consumers paying in other currencies and simultaneously boosting investor demand for oil.

Meanwhile, tensions continue in the Middle East, where major oil producers and trade routes are located, to put oil prices under pressure.

Iranian-backed Houthi in Yemen announced that they targeted two US warships and three ships in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean on Monday, a day after US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced that it destroyed an unmanned aerial vehicle belonging to the Houthis in the Red Sea.

Agencies

Red Sea tensions: Maritime traffic in Suez Canal falls 85% in six months

London, UK – The number of vessels passing through the Suez Canal has fallen by 85% in the last six months due to ongoing political tensions while the number of vessels passing through the Cape of Good Hope has more than doubled, according to MarineTraffic data compiled by Anadolu.

Since Yemen's Houthis intensified their attacks on vessels in the Red Sea linked to Israel in response to its ongoing war on Gaza, especially since the end of last year, the region has been undergoing a change in maritime trade dynamics.

Most shipping companies using the Suez Canal – the shortest maritime route between Asia and Europe which accounts for about 15% of the global maritime trade volume – have diverted to the longer route around South Africa's Cape of Good Hope.

"The alternative was to go around the Cape of Good Hope. A lot of shipping lines put an interim service to bridge the gap of what they thought would be a couple of months and this was only supposed to be a temporary solution," Tom Stainer, a sales manager at UK-based logistics company Westbound Logistics Services, told Anadolu Agency.

The total number of commercial vessels including container-ships and LNG, LPG, dry and wet



bulk, roll-on/roll-off (ro-ro), and dry breakbulk carriers in the Suez Canal fell from 1,094 in November to 923 in December, when the Houthis began to intensify their attacks.

Vessel passages dropped to 233 in January, 94 in February and 85 in March. Last month, a total of 159 ships used the Suez Canal, marking a sharp decline of 85% in the traffic in the region, according to calculations by

Anadolu based on MarineTraffic data.

The Suez Canal revenues have dropped by 50% amid growing tensions in the Red Sea, Egypt's planning minister said last month.

"The decline was caused by a disruption in shipping due to tensions in the Red Sea," Hala el-Saeed said on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Most shipping companies using Suez Canal – the shortest maritime route between Asia and Europe – have diverted to the longer route around South Africa's Cape of Good Hope

Cape of Good Hope traffic surges

Vessel traffic in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait also declined by 60.7% in the last few months. The strait saw the passage of 341 vessels in November, before dropping to 310 in December and 189 in January.

The number of vessels in the strait fell to 151 in February, 152 in March and 134 in April.

The data showed that ships

passing through the Cape of Good Hope totaled 1,682 in November and 1,800 in December. However, this skyrocketed to 2,699 in January and 2,728 in February. A total of 2,922 vessels used the Cape of Good Hope route in March, and the number was little changed in April at 2,873.

Maritime trade in the Cape of Good Hope increased by 125% in the last six months, reflecting the

diversions from both the Suez Canal and Bab-el-Mandeb Strait.

The number of containers and LNG tankers was up by 260% and 180% in this period, respectively.

"Most of the shipping lines put on smaller vessels to take the empty containers back to the Far East. This has created the problem of containers being out of position. Containers are spending longer transit times on the water," Stainer said. "They are also taking a longer route on the vessels to come back to China. There are not as many of them going back to China. So this has created a shortage of equipment in some of the main Chinese ports."

Freight rates could stay high

Stainer noted that in a season now when European countries are gearing up for the busy summer months and lots of ships are coming into the peak season, the demand for containers in the UK, for instance, is increasing.

The demand and supply balance has already had an impact on freight rates.

Freight rates increased from an average level of \$1,000-\$1,500 to about \$7,500-\$8,000 during this period, Stainer said, but noted that shipping volumes have not increased.

Anadolu Agency

Kuwait Oil awards six drilling contracts to Saudi's ADES

Muscat – State-owned Kuwait Oil Company awarded Saudi Arabia's ADES Holding six drilling contracts for onshore upstream work as Kuwait moves ahead in its expansion work to offset declines in some of its large aging oil fields.

The award covers ADES' four existing operating rigs in Kuwait as well as two newbuild units, ADES said in a May 26 statement to Tadawul, where its shares trade, S&P Global Commodity Insights reported.

With the latest contracted work, ADES will "triple the size of [its] contracted fleet in Kuwait from four to 12 rigs upon deployment in 2025," Mohamed Farouk, CEO of ADES Holding, said in the statement.

The work includes deep drilling in Kuwait with work set to commence during the second and third quarters of 2025. The contract, valued at \$707mn, is for a five-year term with a one-year optional extension, ADES said.

ADES currently has 10 operating rigs in Kuwait. Saudi companies such as ADES are looking to allocate their resources to other countries in the region and inter-



nationally following the cancellation of Saudi Aramco's 1mn barrels per day capacity expansion plan.

Kuwait's upstream sector is seeing a ramp-up of activity as OPEC's fourth-largest producer looks to expand its production capacity to 4mn bpd by 2035. On May 17, the UAE's ADNOC Drilling said it received the approval to tender in Kuwait and

Oman for oil and gas rig operations, expecting to bring "live services on the ground" in 2025 in those countries.

Around 3.65mn bpd of Kuwait's expanded production capacity will come from state-owned Kuwait Oil's assets, while 350,000 bpd of capacity will be from the country's portion of the Neutral Zone shared with Saudi Arabia.

Global markets remain focused on inflation

Tina Teng

This week, investors are focusing on inflation data from the major Eurozone economies, seeking clues about the interest rate path of the European Central Bank (ECB).

Some key economic data will drive market sentiment, with the Consumer Price Indices (CPIs) from major European countries set to be in the spotlight this week. Additionally, Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) will be a focus for investors looking to gauge central banks' interest rate trajectories.

Following the hotter-than-expected inflation data from the UK last week, major economies, including Germany, France, Spain, and Italy are poised to release their estimated CPI for May this week.

At a country level, Germany will release the prelim CPI for May on Wednesday. The country's inflation stood at 2.2% year-on-year, the same as in March, and cooled from 2.5% in February. Spain and Italy are both poised to report their prelim CPI for May on Thursday. France will be the last economy in this group to release its preliminary CPI, which is due on Friday. The



country's inflation also fell to 2.2% in April, down from 2.3% in March.

In the UK, the Bank of England (BoE) Governor and several members of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will testify on inflation and the economic outlook before Parliament's Treasury Committee on Thursday. This event will be critical for the regional market, as the country

recently reported hotter-than-expected CPI data. Inflation cooled to 2.3% in April, higher than the estimated 2.1%, although significantly down from 3.2% in the previous month.

The US

On Wall Street, the focus will be on key economic indicators from the US, including the CB Consumer Confidence for May, the

Q1 preliminary GDP, and the PCE index for April. The Wall Street rally appeared to lose momentum last week. Softening economic data and persistent inflation could continue to pressure market sentiment.

Consumer confidence fell to 97.0 in April, the lowest level since July 2022, and a sharp decline from 104.7 in March. According to the Conference Board, "Consumers have become less positive about the current labour market situation," stated Dana M. Peterson, chief economist.

Asia

Key economic data in the Asia-Pacific region this week includes Australia's CPI for April, China's manufacturing and services PMI for May, and Japan's Tokyo Core CPI for May.

Annual inflation in Australia resurged to 3.5% in March from 3.4% in February while the annual core CPI in Japan cooled to 1.6% in April. The divergent trajectory in the two Asian countries' inflation rates may continue to widen the gap between their respective government bond yields, potentially leading to further weakness in the Japanese Yen against the Australian dollar. (Source: Euronews.com)

China's industrial sector gathers steam as profits rebound in April

Beijing, China – China's industrial sector posted stronger growth momentum last month, with a sharp profit rebound suggesting sustained recovery.

Profits of China's major industrial enterprises increased by 4% year on year in April 2024, reversing a 3.5% decline registered in the previous month, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said Monday. Revenue growth of such enterprises also saw a turnaround with a 3.3% expansion recorded last month, compared to a 1.2% drop in March.

Analysts said this encouraging

data was produced by a combination of government supportive policies and rising domestic demand, and that it reflected a steady broader economy.

As market demand continued to improve and industrial production picked up pace, these enterprises reported better performance last month, NBS statistician Yu Weining said.

The data showed major industrial enterprises, with an annual main business revenue of at least 20mn yuan (about \$2.8mn), had generated 2.09tn yuan in total profits in the first four months of



Workers assemble equipment at a loader manufacturer in Qingzhou City, China on Tuesday (Xinhua)

this year, a 4.3% year-on-year increase, which is the same as the increase recorded in the first three months of 2024.

Yu said 75.6% of the 41 major industrial sectors saw an increase in profits during the January-April period this year, rising from a level of 68.3% in the first three months.

Manufacturers saw their profits grow by 8% from a year earlier and businesses in the power industry logged a 44.1% surge in profits thanks to lower coal costs and increased power generation.

However, the mining and gas industries suffered losses during

this period.

Notably, the statistician pointed out that the equipment manufacturing industry, with a 16.3% profit increase in the first four months, had continued to drive the growth of the whole industrial sector.

"The industry has witnessed significant strides in advancing towards high-end, intelligent, and environmentally friendly production, and fostering new quality productive forces," Yu said.

In breakdown, the electronics industry witnessed a significant surge in profits, recording a re-

markable increase of 75.8%, driven by robust demand for smartphones, integrated circuits, and liquid crystal displays. The transportation equipment industry saw a 40.7% profit upswing, thanks in part to fast-growing shipbuilding orders. The automotive industry, meanwhile, registered a 29% profit increase.

Moreover, Yu added that warming consumer sentiment had resulted in consumer goods production also showing a notable upward trend, with profits climbing by 12%.

Xinhua

MoH undersecretary inspects Al Mazyona Hospital project



H E Dr Said Harib al Lamki, undersecretary of the Ministry of Health for Health Affairs, visited Al Mazyona Hospital project in Dhofar Governorate, whose construction works have been completed.

Al Mazyona Hospital is a significant addition to the healthcare services in Dhofar Governorate. The built-up area of the project is 15,276.6sqm, with a construction cost of RO13mn, a press release said.

The main building of the project consists of three floors with a capacity of approximately 250 beds. The hospital includes outpatient clinics, laboratories with various specialties, a nephrology unit, a surgical department, an

internal medicine department, pediatric, women's, and men's wings, special care units for premature babies, women, and men, a maternity unit, an operating room, an accident and emergency unit, in addition to other accompanying services and parking facilities.

In addition, Lamki visited Al Mazyona Health Centre, where he met with the officials of the centre and listened to a detailed explanation of the work mechanism there. He also heard their suggestions and opinions for improving and enhancing the services provided at the center, urging them to exert their utmost efforts to overcome obstacles and facilitate the provision of

healthcare services to patients.

On the other hand, the undersecretary, visited H E Sheikh Saif Hamoud al Busaidi, Wali of Mazyona and the two sides discussed many issues related to health and ways to enhance, develop, and improve the health services provided in the Wilayat.

Visit to Al Wusta

H E Lamki also paid a visit to several healthcare institutions in Al Wusta Governorate, especially Haima Hospital, where he was briefed on the progress of work in various departments, wards, and units of the hospital. He met with the staff and healthcare workers, listened to suggestions and opinions on improving the

quality of services provided, and urged everyone to exert maximum effort to overcome challenges and facilitate the delivery of healthcare with the required quality.

During his tour of the hospital, Lamki inaugurated an orthopedic surgery clinic and the CT scan unit. Launching such services emphasises the ministry's commitment to supporting healthcare services in the governorates to achieve the highest required standards, facilitating access for citizens without the need to travel to central hospitals in Muscat.

He later also visited Mahoot, Madirah, and Wadi Al-Sail Health Centres.

Bank Muscat attracts good turnout at COMEX

As the annual largest technology exhibition unfolds, Bank Muscat and Meethaq Islamic Banking's stall witnessed a great turnout during the launch of COMEX 2024, which was held under the patronage of H H Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth.

Visitors got introduced to a wide selection of services and digital banking solutions offered through Internet Banking and Mobile Banking, a press release said.



Bank Muscat and Meethaq's participation encompasses their keenness to continuously participate in various exhibitions and events that shed light on their role in digital transformation and demonstrate their state-of-the-arts products, financial facilities and digital services. Moreover, the bank's participation and support are in line with its role in strengthening national development and digitalisation of the economy.

About Bank Muscat participation in the 33rd edition of COMEX, Abdullah Hamood al Jufaili, assistant general manager - Digital Banking, Bank Muscat, said, "We are proud of all the successes and achievements that the bank has achieved during the past period, especially in the field of digital transformation and enhancing the awareness of community members in the use of digital banking channels as

one of the options in completing transactions. The digital channels have become an essential option for a large number of customers and individuals in general.

"The bank has sought to update its systems and services in accordance with the latest technologies used in this sector to ensure providing high-quality service to customers all the time. The bank's participation represents an opportunity to introduce its role in the field of enhancing digital banking services as well as introducing the newest financial solutions. I would like to take this opportunity to invite customers to visit the booth in the exhibition and get more details about the digital services offered."

About Meethaq's participation, Sami Bait Rashid, assistant general manager - Meethaq Personal Banking, said "Meethaq is

dedicated to investing in the development of its infrastructure to keep pace with the rapid developments in the banking sector, particularly in Islamic banking. For this, it recently upgraded its internal system to a more sophisticated system, aiming to provide services and products catering to the needs of its customers in accordance with international standards.

"Meethaq's digital channels, including Internet Banking and Mobile Banking, offer a wide range of features and services, enabling customers to manage their financial transactions easily and securely. I am pleased to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt appreciation to Meethaq customers for their confidence in our services and products. We reaffirm our commitment to continuing the development process to meet their aspirations."

OETC launches sustainable projects

As part of its commitment to social responsibility and sustainable goals aimed at creating a positive impact on Omani society, the Oman Electricity Transmission Company has recently launched three sustainable projects.

These initiatives are designed to provide essential support to various community organisations, improve the quality of life for individuals, and enhance their integration into the local community, contributing to a more prosperous future for the Sultanate of Oman, a press release said.

The sustainability projects included supporting the Omani Association for the Disabled by providing 55 wheelchairs to be distributed to people with disabilities, in order to facilitate their movement and reduce their dependence on others, as well as to enhance their integration into society. They also included supporting the Omani Association for the Hearing Impaired by pro-



viding 20 specialised and advanced hearing aids, to be distributed to students in schools to improve their integration into society, enhance their self-confidence, and improve their quality of life.

Additionally, the sustainability projects included supporting the Omani Cancer Association (OCA) by providing 8 specialised and advanced models to support awareness campaigns about breast cancer, and the importance of early detection for better treatment opportunities.

These models will be distributed across all governorates of the sultanate to facilitate the movement of association members and enhance awareness campaigns and initiatives in this regard.

In confirmation of the OETC's commitment to supporting the community and launching such initiatives, Samira Salem al Mughairi, communication and sustainability manager, highlighted the various initiatives, projects, and plans the company is working on.

Oman Cables staff become shareholders

Oman Cables Industry (OCI), the leading cable solutions provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced the continued success of its inclusive share ownership plan, now in its second consecutive year.

This groundbreaking initiative, first introduced in 2022, emphasises OCI's commitment to empowering its employees and giving back to them this year. Notably, 70% of all OCI employees have doubled their shares within the past year as a result of the programme's success, a press release said.

This plan aligns with the Environmental, Social and Governance approach, reflecting OCI's commitment to retaining and empowering its workforce. The plan covers both desk workers and non-desk workers and is a cornerstone of OCI's 'Empowerment, Innovation, and Excellence' vision. It grants employees shares of Prysmian Group, OCI's strategic partner, based on achieving specific local and re-



gional targets.

Erkan Aydogdu, CEO of Oman Cables Industry, said, "We are thrilled to celebrate the success of our pioneering initiative that transforms our employees into shareholders of the company. This remarkable accomplishment highlights our commitment to recognising and rewarding our team's dedication while fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace.

"At OCI, we continuously seek innovative ways to empower our employees and involve them directly in our collective success."

This initiative, as part of OCI's vision, is contributing to Prysmian Group's Social Ambition 2030, which aims to bring 50% of employees globally on board as shareholders and enhancing the financial engagement of the employees towards long-term

interests and performance of the company.

As a pioneering move in the industry, OCI has implemented a comprehensive welfare policy which states that in the unfortunate event of an employee's demise under specific conditions, the company will provide a monthly subsidy to the spouse or child under their 19th birthday or for a period of maximum 15 years whichever comes first.



Sharakah, National Finance together host two-day 'Zaad Al Ruwaad'

Sharakah, Oman's premier SME development organisation, successfully hosted a two-day event named Zaad Al Ruwaad at the Crowne Plaza - Muscat, near the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

This initiative, a collaborative effort with National Finance Company, assembled a wide range of participants including entrepreneurs and academicians. This distinctive workshop provided a thorough representation

of the business world, guiding attendees through the intricacies of launching their own businesses. It took them through each phase, facing opportunities and obstacles that closely resemble project management.

The programme was wide-ranging, addressing essential elements like choosing the best site, managing finances, planning human resources, and pricing strategies for products or services.

Ali Ahmed Muqaibal, CEO, Sharakah, said, "We were pleased with the response we got from the community. It proved that thoughtfully designed initiatives and programmes tailored for ambitious

entrepreneurs are very necessary. At Sharakah we are dedicated to driving economic growth, creating jobs, and promoting innovative practices.

H H Sayyida Wisam al Said, AGM Corporate Communica-

tions Marketing and ESG at National Finance, said, "Sharakah's educational programmes and workshops, especially those that align with national goals like skill development, have shown significant value."

Oxy Oman launches new Electronic Preparation Platform for teachers

Oxy Oman representatives recently attended the launch event for the Electronic Preparation Platform for Teachers, a project exclusively sponsored by Oxy Oman in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.

The e-platform is planned to serve over 50,000 teachers within the Ministry of Education school system across the sultanate, a press release said.

The launch event was held at the Ministry of Education, under the auspices of Majid bin Saeed al Bahri, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Administrative and Financial Affairs. Steven Lauver, president and general manager of Oxy Oman, attended the event, along with senior representatives of the company.

The platform aims to contribute to the enhancement and efficiency of online education in Oman. The system would enable teachers to prepare lessons and material electronically, and con-



duct various daily tasks outside of student teaching, without the need for physical administrative meetings and office attendance.

The e-platform was implemented in line with the Educational Goals of Oman Vision 2040 and is intended to stream-

vancing education through innovative technology solutions. We hope that the availability of the platform to thousands of teachers across the sultanate will enhance teachers' day-to-day activities and educational plans, and ultimately improve the

We hope that the availability of the platform to thousands of teachers across the sultanate will enhance teachers' day-to-day activities and educational plans

STEVEN LAUVER

line teachers' daily tasks and long-term plans. The platform includes features for study materials, classes, and outlining teaching strategies and goals.

"We are thrilled to see the launch of the Electronic Preparation Platform for teachers, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. This initiative reflects Oxy Oman's commitment to ad-

learning experience for school students," said Lauver.

This sponsorship falls under Oxy Oman's umbrella of strategic partnerships and continuous collaboration with key stakeholders, and is part of Oxy Oman's endeavour and long-term commitment to support programmes that enhance economic growth and sustainable development.

Oman takes part in 77th World Health Assembly

The Sultanate of Oman is taking part in the 77th session of the World Health Assembly, currently held in Geneva, Switzerland, and scheduled to continue until June 1. Oman will also participate in the 155th session of the Executive Board of the World Health Organization, set to convene on June 3 and 4.

The Oman health delegation is headed by H E Dr Hilal Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health, along with H E Dr Ahmed Salem al Mandhari, MOH's Undersecretary for Planning and Health Regulation, and several other senior officials from the Ministry, a press release said.

Oman will present at this meeting, on behalf of the Eastern Mediterranean Region's member states, a draft of the global action plan on infection prevention and control. Moreover, within pillar one, the delegation will be involved in topics related to prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, acceleration towards the Sustainable Development Goal targets for maternal health and child mortality, and antimicrobial resistance.

The assembly will also review matters considered by the WHO Executive Board, including universal health coverage, the Immunisation Agenda 2030, end tuberculosis (TB) strategy, the roadmap for neglected tropical diseases 2021-2030, in addition to the Global technical strategy and targets for malaria 2016-2030.

The meetings under pillar 2 will discuss topics related to preparedness and response to public health emergencies. They will also review and update issues considered by the Executive Board, including the WHO's work in the field of health emergencies, Global Health and Peace Initiative, polio eradication efforts, and smallpox eradication.

The meetings under pillar 3, regarding one billion more people enjoying better health



Dr Ali al Sabti

Oman will present at this meeting, on behalf of the Eastern Mediterranean Region's member states, a draft of the global action plan on infection prevention and control

and well-being, will review issues considered by the WHO Executive Board including social determinants of health, maternal, infant, and young child nutrition, well-being and health promotion, climate change, pollution, and health, as well as economics and health for all, in addition to WHO global strategy for food safety.

On the sidelines of the 77th session of WHA, a meeting of the 60th regular session of the Arab Health Ministers Council was held, in which Oman health delegation participated, headed by Mandhari.

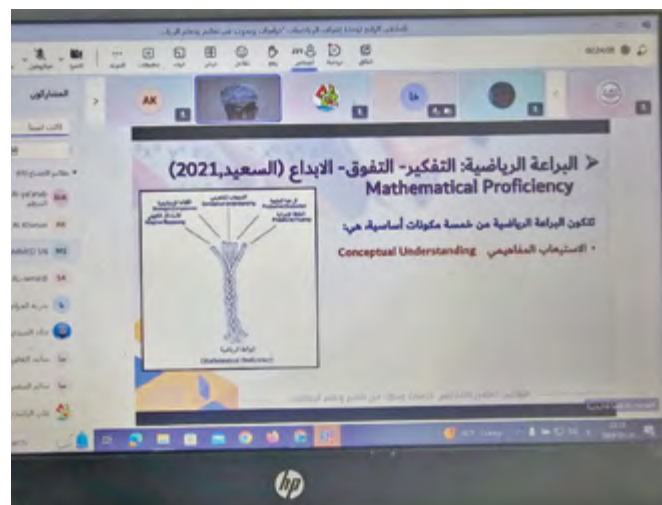
The Omani delegation will further participate in several other meetings and accompanying events of the World Health Assembly, including discussions on climate change and health, an event organised by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 'The Era of Health Statistics and Data,' and a roundtable discussion on 'Artificial Intelligence for Health: Opportunities, Risks, and Governance.'

MoE holds virtual scientific forum for mathematics

The Ministry of Education, represented by the Directorate-General of Educational Supervision, Applied Science Supervision, Department of Applied Science Supervision, implemented a virtual scientific forum, 'Studies and Research in Teaching and Learning Mathematics'.

The forum targets teachers, senior teachers, supervisors, and senior supervisors in the educational directorates in the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. This is to develop their abilities by focusing on the reality of their practices, in order to solve problems related to teaching and learning mathematics for students, a press release said.

The virtual scientific forum discusses a number of topics, including developing problem-solving skills and all kinds of thinking skills, information technology employment skills, and digital media. The forum also discusses modern trends such as future skills, lifelong learning skills, mathematical prowess, active learning strategies, and diag-



nostic and effective treatment studies based on scientific tools for student performance.

The forum began with the main paper titled Modern Trends in Mathematics Education presented by Dr Said alSunaidi, head of the Department of Educational Studies at the College of Education in the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Rustaq.

Dr Salem al Maamari, Mathematics supervisor in Dhahirah

Governorate, presented a paper titled Impact of an Educational Program Based on Blended Learning in Engineering Thinking, and Motivation towards Learning Engineering among second-year Students with Different Cognitive Styles. Dr Wafaa al Salti, Mathematics Supervisor in South Sharqiyah Governorate, also presented her paper on Effectiveness of a Proposed Programme Based on the Science, Technology, Engineering.

SalamAir launches direct flights from Muscat to Cairo

SalamAir announced the launch of direct flights from Muscat to Cairo, providing passengers with convenient access to Egypt's vibrant capital city.

Starting from June, with 3 flights a week, travellers can enjoy the ease and comfort of flying directly to Sphinx International Airport, a press release said.

The launch of direct flights to Cairo holds significant importance as it caters not only to leisure travellers but also to the thriving Egyptian community residing in Oman. SalamAir recognises the importance of facilitating travel for expatriates, students, and professionals, further strengthening people-to-people ties, and cultural and trade exchange between the two countries.

"We are excited to introduce direct flights between Muscat and Cairo," said Captain Ahmed Shidhani, CEO of SalamAir.



Capt Ahmed Shidhani

"Cairo holds great appeal for many travellers, not only for its iconic history and landmarks, but also the immense infrastructural developments it is currently seeing. We are proud to connect passengers from Oman and the rest of the GCC to this dynamic destination, offering them more choice, convenience, and value for money."

Bait Al Zubair Foundation signs MoU with TICKone digital platform

Bait Al Zubair Foundation signed a memorandum of understanding with TICKone, a digital platform specialised in training and qualifying students enrolled in educational institutions and facilitating their access to appropriate training in institutions related to their specialisations.

Regarding this partnership, Saleh al Rashdi, CEO of the TICKone platform, said, "This partnership with Bait Al Zubair is a significant step, and will have a good impact regarding training opportunities for students through the platform, and introducing what Bait Al Zubair offers in the fields of culture and arts."

The MoU was signed by Dr Muna Habras al Sulaimiyah, general manager of the Bait Al Zubair Foundation, and Saleh al Rashdi for TICKone.



Five Guys to arrive at Dubai airport

Five Guys, the UAE's favourite burger brand will be landing at a new location soon, with its first ever airport branch outside of the US at Terminal 3 - Concourse B in Dubai International (DXB).

Set to open next month, the 15th Five Guys branch in the UAE will span across 6,200 square feet and will be the largest location in the country, offering travellers a chance to unwind and refuel with their favourite burgers, fries and milkshakes before hopping on their outgoing and transit flights.

Known for its made to order 100% halal beef burgers, milkshakes, grilled cheese sandwiches, hotdogs, and famous hand-cut fries, Five Guys continues to elevate customer experiences and will be providing branch-exclusive additions to its menu that will be only available at Dubai.

Potentially habitable exoplanet discovered 40 light-years away

Washington, D.C., US - Astronomers have discovered a potentially habitable Earth-like exoplanet, Gliese 12b, situated 40 light years away, according to a recent study.

International teams using NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) published their findings last Thursday in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, opening up exciting possibilities in the search for extraterrestrial life and understanding planetary habitability.

Scientists have confirmed 'Gliese 12b', an exoplanet orbiting a 'cool red dwarf star every 12.76 days within the habitable zone (or Goldilocks Zone)', with an 'estimated surface temperature of 42°C (107°F)', which could support 'liquid water'.

At only '40 light-years away', Gliese 12b has been described as one of the 'the nearest, transiting, temperate, Earth-size world located to date', with a radius just '1.0 times' that of Earth, making it 'one of the smallest exoplanets discovered'.

The study also revealed that Gliese 12b receives 'less radiation than Venus' but might have 'a similar surface temperature'.

'Gliese 12b' is orbiting a cool red dwarf star every 12.76 days within the habitable zone, confirm scientists

While the size and location suggest potential habitability, the presence or composition of Gliese 12b's atmosphere remains unknown, astronomers are reportedly planning to use advanced telescopes like the James Webb Space Telescope to study the planet's atmosphere, which could reveal its 'composition and suitability for life'.

The discovery of Gliese 12b marks a significant step forward in the search for habitable exoplanets and our understanding of planetary system formation.

Anadolu Agency

due to potential atmospheric differences.

Studying this planet could provide insights into why Earth and Venus, despite similarities, have such contrasting environments, according to the article.

Spain pledges \$1bn in military aid to Ukraine

Madrid, Spain - Spain has pledged US\$1.1bn in military aid to Ukraine as the country continues to defend itself against Russia's invasion, reported Al Jazeera.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky signed a security deal in Madrid on Monday. The deal 'includes a commitment for one billion euros in military aid for 2024', Sanchez said at a joint news conference.

The pact, which covers the next decade, calls for the supply of modern military equipment for ground, aerial, naval and other uses, 'prioritising Ukraine's key capacity needs', and an emphasis on protecting sea routes for Ukraine's food exports, but it gave no specifics, Al Jazeera reported.

"It will allow Ukraine to boost its capabilities including its essential air defence systems to protect its civilians, cities and infrastructure, which are still suffering indiscriminate attacks as seen this weekend in Kharkiv," Sanchez said, referring to a Russian strike on the northeastern city that killed at least 16 people at a hardware supermarket on Saturday.

Ukrainian President Zelensky visited Madrid as the country battles a Russian ground offensive in the Kharkiv region that began on May 10 and has seen Moscow make its biggest territorial advances in 18 months.

As Russia's full-scale invasion reaches its third year, Ukraine has been appealing for more weapons for its outgunned and outnumbered troops and seeking help to address its lack of air defence systems, Al Jazeera reported. The Spanish PM stressed

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Spanish PM Pedro Sánchez signed the agreement in Madrid

It will allow Ukraine to boost its capabilities including its essential air defence systems to protect its civilians, cities and infrastructure

PEDRO SANCHEZ

that Spain had already pledged to supply Patriot missiles but what Zelensky needed from Ukraine's allies was 'the systems to launch these missiles'.

Following the deal, the Ukrainian President thanked Spain for 'tangible and truly life-saving support' to Ukraine.

He further said that the two leaders also discussed how Madrid could play a role in strengthening Kyiv's air defence.

Spain will send 'another batch of Leopard tanks and above all

ammunition', Sanchez said, pledging to keep working with Kyiv 'to understand how else - and with what other alternative systems - we can help ensure Ukraine's air security'.

Moreover, Zelensky has signed bilateral security agreements with several other countries, including France, Germany and the United Kingdom, as reported by Al Jazeera.

He said that Ukraine needed at least seven more Patriot missile launchers to defend itself

Islamophobia on the rise in Austria: Report

Geneva, Switzerland - Austria recorded the highest number of incidents of Islamophobia last year since it began keeping records in 2015, according to a report released on Monday.

The Documentation Centre on Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Racism's annual report was published on its website.

It said the number of reported cases has risen, especially since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war on October 7 last year.

More cases were recorded from October to December than in the first nine months of 2023.

The first place where more cases were reported from October was schools, the report said. In the education sector, anti-Muslim incidents were reported by parents, pupils and teachers.

Overall, 66.7 per cent of the documented cases took place online and 33.7 per cent offline.

Some 87.8 per cent of the cases documented online concerned the spread of hate.

Muslims were dehumanised and compared to animals in online comments, according to the report.

Many would also attribute sole responsibility for anti-Semitism to Muslims, it noted.

It said 40.8 per cent of all reported cases involved unequal treatment and 19.5 per cent involved insults. The spread of hatred accounted for 8.9 per cent and 2.6 per cent involved physical assaults.

The remaining incidents were divided into the categories of vandalism (7.5 per cent), police violence (7.3 per cent), dangerous threats (3.2 per cent), incitement to hatred (1.8 per cent), bullying and stalking (0.8 per cent) and other (7.7 per cent)

In its report, the documentation centre emphasised that its statistics are a snapshot and that the actual number of cases is thought to be significantly higher.

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A GOOD HARVEST

Farmers harvesting rice in paddy fields at Krueng Seupeng village in Aceh Province, Indonesia (Xinhua)

World only halfway through 2025 target for essential health services: WHO

Geneva, Switzerland - Despite huge strides in coverage, the World Health Organization's (WHO) chief said on Monday that only 585mn more people will be covered by essential health services without catastrophic health spending by 2025, putting the UN's international public health organisation only slightly more than halfway toward its goal of one billion.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told the annual World Health Assembly (WHA) in the high-lights of his annual report that two billion people face financial hardship due to out-of-pocket health spending. "Although 30 per cent of countries have made progress since 2000 on both service coverage and financial protection, at the global level, we're going backwards on financial protection," Tedros stated in his report at the WHA, which is normally held annually.

Half of the world's population is not fully covered by essential health services as in 2023, the WHO responded to 65 global emergencies, he said, describing it as a year of many challenges, but also many accomplishments.

These included earthquakes in Turkey and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as conflict and insecurity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Gaza, Haiti, Myanmar, Sudan, and Ukraine.

It also responded to outbreaks of cholera, dengue, diphtheria, hepatitis E, Marburg, measles, mpox and others.

Tedros also emphasised the WHO's role in providing health services in conflict zones such as Gaza, Sudan, and Ukraine, calling for an immediate ceasefire in all three war-torn regions.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus speaks at the World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland (Xinhua)

Although 30% of nations have made progress since 2000 on service coverage and financial protection, at the global level, we're going backwards on financial protection

TEDROS GHEBREYESUS

three targets that we estimate will be met, with 1.5bn people expected to be enjoying better health and well-being by 2025," he said.

Climate-change greatest threat

"Perhaps the greatest threat to health of our time comes from our changing climate," noted Tedros.

He said that, for the first time, an entire day of the programme was dedicated to health at the COP28 climate conference in the UAE last year.

The WHO chief said 149 countries signed the COP28 declaration on climate change and health, and donors pledged more than US\$1bn to address the health impacts of climate change.

WHO and the global health community also helped ensure

that the final agreement included a commitment to transition away from fossil fuels. "Last year, we supported the electrification of health facilities with solar energy in Somalia, and with UNICEF and Gavi, we started supporting other countries including Uganda, Ethiopia, Zambia, Pakistan and Yemen," he said.

He also explained that tobacco use is declining in 150 countries, and there are now 19 million fewer smokers globally than there were two years ago.

More than 90 countries increased their tobacco excise tax between 2020 and 2022.

"In December, WHO published a call to action to prevent the uptake of e-cigarettes, along with a technical note on the evidence of the harm they do," said the world health chief.

Anadolu Agency

Hamas calls for UNSC action to halt Israel's ongoing offensive in Rafah

Israeli tanks reached the centre of Rafah on Tuesday amid its ground offensive

Gaza City, Palestine - Hamas called on the UN Security Council on Tuesday to take 'immediate' measures to halt Israel's ongoing offensive in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.

In a statement, the Palestinian group urged the council 'to fulfil its legal and moral responsibilities towards Israel's disregard for the decision of the International Court of Justice'.

Last week, The Hague-based court ordered Israel to immediately halt its operation in Rafah, where over a million Palestinians had sought refuge from the war before it was invaded on May 6.

Hamas warned that the Israeli onslaught in Rafah 'risks causing massacres in the small city, which is crowded with displaced people'.

Israeli tanks reached the centre of Rafah on Tuesday amid its ground offensive on the city.

Israel's current expansion of its incursion into the city makes the Israeli army close to fully control the border area between Gaza and Egypt, known as the Philadelphi Corridor, a demilitarised buffer zone running along the Gaza-Egypt border.



At least 16 Palestinians were reported killed on Tuesday in a series of Israeli heavy bombing on areas in western and central Rafah

Israel's current expansion of its incursion into the city makes the Israeli army close to fully control Philadelphi Corridor, a demilitarised buffer zone running along the Gaza-Egypt border

The Israeli army has so far seized control of almost two-thirds of the corridor area as it advances under heavy bombardment and shelling.

The army, on Tuesday, announced sending another fighting brigade in Rafah, to join five brigades already in the city. According to the Israeli Army Radio,

the army's infantry Bislamach Brigade entered Rafah on Monday, the sixth fighting brigade in Rafah.

Death toll surges to 36,096

Meanwhile, Gaza's death toll from Israel's ongoing offensive has surged to 36,096, the Health Ministry in the besieged enclave said on Tuesday.

At least 81,136 people have also been injured in the on-

slaught, the ministry added in a statement. "Israeli forces killed 46 people and injured 110 others in five 'massacres' against families in the last 24 hours," the ministry said.

At least 16 Palestinians were reported killed on Tuesday in a series of Israeli heavy bombing on areas in western and central Rafah as the onslaught entered its 235th day.

According to an Anadolu correspondent, thousands of Pales-

tinians fled the western areas of Rafah after the Israeli army expanded its incursion into the city on Monday night.

Among the victims in Rafah, seven Palestinians were killed in Israeli airstrikes that targeted tents for displaced people in Tal al-Sultan, northwest of Rafah city centre, a medical source told Anadolu.

The Israeli heavy shelling overnight on western Rafah left the medical staff and patients

trapped inside the Tal al-Sultan clinic and the Indonesian field hospital in the city, witnesses said.

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) on Monday said in a statement on its X account that nearly one million Palestinians fled Rafah during the past three weeks.

It added that the mass fleeing of people from Rafah takes place despite 'nowhere safe to go and amidst bombardment, lack of food and water'.

The agency warned that providing aid and protection to people became 'nearly impossible', and reiterated its call for an immediate ceasefire.

Before the launch of the Israeli military operation against Rafah on May 6, it was home and shelter to over 1.5mn displaced Palestinians who fled their areas across the Gaza Strip due to the Israeli onslaught that started on October 7, 2023.

Protest at Hebrew University

Tuesday also witnessed dozens of Palestinian students demonstrating at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem against Israel's brutal offensive on the Gaza Strip.

Waving the Palestinian flag, protesters raised banners denouncing the Israeli onslaught and voicing support for Palestinians, according to an Anadolu reporter. The protest was organised by the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, known as Hadash, the Israeli public broadcaster KAN reported.

Anadolu Agency

Egyptian President Sisi arrives in China



Abdel Fattah El-Sisi

Beijing, China - Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi on Tuesday arrived in Beijing to pay a state visit to China, state media reported. Sisi will also attend the 10th ministerial conference of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum which is slated for Thursday.

Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Tunisian President Kais Saied, and United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan will also attend the forum, alongside

Chinese President Xi Jinping.

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Mauritanian counterpart Mohamed Salem Ould Merzouk will co-chair the forum. Foreign ministers or representatives of the Arab states and the secretary-general of the League of Arab States will attend the conference, said the ministry.

Founded in 2004, the forum serves as a formal dialogue initiative between China and the Arab League to discuss the pri-

mary multilateral coordination mechanism between the world's second-largest economy and the Arab states.

The Arab leaders are also set to hold separate bilateral meetings with the Chinese leader.

Besides bilateral diplomatic and trade relations, the war in Gaza and the peace in the Middle East, along with other regional and international issues, are expected to be discussed during the meetings.

Anadolu Agency

Ireland, Norway, Spain formally recognise Palestinian statehood

Athens, Greece - Ireland, Norway and Spain on Tuesday formally recognised Palestine as a state.

Irish Foreign Minister Micheal Martin said on X: "Today's Government decision authorizes the establishment of full diplomatic relations with the State of Palestine."

"Recognition of Palestine is not the end of a process; it is the beginning," Martin emphasised, highlighting 'our long-standing development cooperation programme'.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez also announced the development, saying: "This is a historic decision that has a single goal - to contribute to achieving peace between Israelis and Palestinians."

"We recognised Palestine because it's the time to do so. We can't wait any longer," said Spain's Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares, commenting on the government's decision.

When asked how he would respond to Israel's recent diplomatic attacks against Spain, Albares told journalists on Tuesday that Spain will deliver a 'coordinated, serene and firm response', alongside Norway and Ireland.

On Tuesday, Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz compared Spain's Deputy Prime Minister Yolanda Diaz to the leaders of Hamas and Iran, posting on X that she is calling for the 'elimination of Israel', even though she has insisted that she believes in a two-state solution.



This is a historic decision that has a single goal - to contribute to achieving peace between Israelis and Palestinians

PEDRO SANCHEZ

Norway's recognition was announced by Foreign Minister Espen Eide in a statement.

"Today, when Norway officially recognises Palestine as a state, is a milestone in the relationship between Norway and Palestine," he said.

"We've seen decades of violence, pain and destruction; decades of talking about peace. Now is the time to turn it into reality," Spain's Foreign Minister Albares said.

Meanwhile, Sanchez noted

that Spain will recognise the Palestinian state based on 1967 borders, only recognising changes that have been agreed upon by both parties.

"Although it's not up to Spain to define the borders of other nations, our position is aligned with the resolutions of the UN Security Council, ... and with the position traditionally held by the European Union," he said.

Sanchez explained that the Palestinian state should be 'viable' with the West Bank and Gaza connected with a corridor and East Jerusalem as its capital. Spain will also recognise a unified Palestinian state governed by the Palestinian Authority, which Sanchez called 'our partner for peace'.

The move to recognise Palestine is not against Israel, but 'shows our direct rejection of Hamas - which is against the two-state solution', the prime minister stressed.

Anadolu Agency

Ex-Mossad chief 'threatened' former ICC prosecutor over Israeli war crimes probe

Istanbul, Turkey - Yossi Cohen, former head of Israel's intelligence agency Mossad and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's 'unofficial messenger', threatened Fatou Bensouda, former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), during a series of covert meetings, pressuring her to abandon investigations into Israeli war crimes in the occupied Palestinian territories, a well-known British daily said in its investigative report published on Tuesday.

"Yossi Cohen's covert contacts with the ICC's then prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, took place in the years leading up to her decision to open a formal investigation into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in occupied Palestinian territories," *The Guardian* said in its report. That investigation, which began in 2021, culminated last week when Karim Khan, Bensouda's successor, an-



Former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court Fatou Bensouda

nounced that he was seeking an arrest warrant for Netanyahu for the country's actions during the Gaza war.

The prosecutor's decision to apply to the ICC's pretrial chamber for arrest warrants for Netanyahu and his Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, as well as three Hamas leaders, is something Israel's military and political establishment has long

feared, the daily said.

"Cohen's personal involvement in the operation against the ICC took place when he was the director of the Mossad," it said.

According to the report, a senior Israeli official's actions were sanctioned 'at a high level' and justified in light of the court's perceived threat of prosecuting military personnel.

The Mossad's aim was 'to

compromise the prosecutor or enlist her as someone who would cooperate with Israel's demands', the UK's daily said in the report, citing another Israeli source familiar with the threats against Bensouda.

Cohen, described as one of the prime minister's 'closest allies' and 'unofficial messenger', is said to have led Mossad's role in Israel's nearly decade-long effort to undermine the ICC. According to four sources cited by *The Guardian*, Bensouda informed a select group of senior ICC officials about Cohen's efforts to exert pressure on her, raising concerns about the 'threatening nature of his behaviour'.

Cohen is accused of saying to the ICC prosecutor: "You should help us and let us take care of you. You don't want to be getting into things that could compromise your security or that of your family."

Anadolu Agency

Measles cases continue to surge across Europe, say UN agencies

56,634 cases and four deaths were reported during the first 3 months of 2024

Geneva, Switzerland - Measles cases across Europe continue to surge, and they will soon exceed the number of cases reported throughout 2023, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN children's agency (UNICEF) warned on Tuesday.

According to the latest available data, 56,634 measles cases and four deaths were officially reported across 45 out of 53 countries in the WHO European Region during the first three months of 2024.

Throughout 2023, a total of 61,070 cases and 13 deaths were reported by 41 countries.

The effect of measles is devastating on children's health, with young children most at risk of severe complications, the world health body warned.

"Even one case of measles should be an urgent call to action," said Dr Hans Henri P Kluge, WHO's regional director for Europe.

"No one should suffer the consequences of this devastating but easily preventable disease," he



Throughout 2023, a total of 61,070 cases and 13 deaths were reported by 41 countries

Even one case of measles should be an urgent call to action. No one should suffer the consequences of this devastating but easily preventable disease

HANS HENRI P KLUGE

added.

High rates of hospitalisation and long-lasting weakening of children's immune systems make children more vulnerable to other infectious diseases.

Over half of those who contracted measles in the WHO European Region in 2023 were hospitalised, demonstrating the severe burden on individuals, families, and healthcare systems.

Kluge applauded every coun-

try that has accelerated their efforts to interrupt transmission through catch-up vaccination.

Call for action

"I urge all countries to take immediate action, even where overall immunisation coverage is high, to vaccinate the vulnerable, close the immunity gaps, and thereby prevent the virus from taking hold in any community," said the WHO regional head.

Nearly half of the reported cases in 2023 occurred among children under five years of age, reflecting an accumulation of children who missed routine vaccinations against measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases during the COVID-19 pandemic, said the WHO.

The tendency was linked to a slow recovery in vaccination coverage in 2021 and 2022.

"An increase in measles cases is a clear sign of a breakdown in immunisation coverage," said Regina De Dominicis, UNICEF regional director for Europe and Central Asia.

"As cases of measles continue to surge, we need urgent government action to both strengthen health systems and implement

effective public health measures to secure protection for all children from this dangerous but preventable disease," she said.

More than three-quarters of children under five who contracted measles in 2023 had not received any measles vaccination doses.

Around 99 per cent of these children did not receive two doses of measles-containing vaccine, which confers the required protection.

Measles cases are also rising globally.

In 2023, there were over 300,000 cases of measles worldwide, and the numbers reported so far in 2024 indicate that the total for the year will match or exceed the total in 2023.

The WHO said those countries currently experiencing outbreaks need to continue their efforts to vaccinate all susceptible individuals.

They need to intensify case finding and contact tracing and use epidemiological data to identify gaps in vaccination coverage so that the programmes can protect affected communities and prevent future outbreaks.

UNICEF and WHO said they, along with other regional and global partners, will continue to support such efforts by countries.

Measles is one of the most contagious diseases in the world. It is spread when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes.

Anadolu Agency



Rafale-M jets are meant to operate from Indian Navy's two aircraft carriers

India, France to negotiate on Rafale-M jet deal

New Delhi, India - In a significant development, contract negotiations between the governments of India and France in the over Rs 50,000 crore deal for 26 Rafale Marine fighter jets is scheduled to begin on Thursday with the arrival of a high-level French team here.

The French side would meet with Indian Defence Ministry counterparts to begin official negotiations in the fighter jet deal for the Indian Navy under which aircraft would be operated from both aircraft carriers operated by the force, defence industry officials told ANI. The French team will include officials from their defence ministry and industry including original equipment manufacturers Dassault Aviation and Thales, the officials said.

The Indian side would include members from the defence acquisition wing and the Indian Navy. Sources in the government said that they would try to complete negotiations with France

and sign the agreement by the end of this financial year.

France had submitted its response to India's tender for buying 26 Rafale Marine jets for the Indian Navy's aircraft carriers - INS Vikrant and INS Vikramaditya in December itself.

The response to India's Letter of Acceptance had been submitted by France in New Delhi.

The Indian side has carried out a detailed study of the French bid for the Indian deal including the commercial offer or price for the aircraft, along with other details of the contract, they said.

India will now go in for tough negotiations in the deal with French government officials, as it is a government-to-government contract.

The Navy Chief has directed his team to ensure that the timeframe required for the project is squeezed significantly to ensure early finalisation and induction of the planes in the inventory.

ANI

Peru's President Dina Boluarte faces constitutional complaint

Bogota, Colombia - Peru's attorney general's office lodged a constitutional complaint on Monday against President Dina Boluarte in a case known as 'Rolexgate' related to several watches and other luxury items the president wore without declaring them.

According to the document, the items - including three Rolex watches and a bracelet with 94 diamonds - were delivered by the governor of the Ayacucho region, Wilfredo Ocorima, to the president in exchange for a series of decrees issued by Boluarte, who benefited the region by increasing its budget allocations.

The 'Rolexgate' corruption investigation began on March 18 when local media revealed that the president had been wearing expensive watches since taking office in December 2022.

In Peru, authorities must inform the government of any assets worth more than 10,300 soles (US\$2,753) and report gifts received from third parties. Prosecutors argue that Boluarte did not declare the jewellery, valued at approximately US\$32,000. As



Peru's President Dina Boluarte

part of the investigation, the president's house has been raided with the support of officials from the public prosecutor's office and the police.

Boluarte has said that she bought the watches with money she earned since she started working when she was very

young, but the uncovering of the case has led her to return the luxury items.

The accusation must now be evaluated by Congress, which will determine whether there is sufficient evidence to admit it. If accepted, a subcommittee on Constitutional Accusations will be created to investigate and issue a report that will be debated and voted on. If approved, this would result in the suspension and removal of the president and an impeachment trial.

Boluarte has seen her approval rating drop to a new low, with only five per cent of the people indicating that they support the president amid several corruption scandals, the most recent due to the arrest of her brother for alleged influence peddling.

Congresswoman Ruth Luque announced that she will file another constitutional complaint against the president for being absent from office for 12 days due to post-operative cosmetic procedures.

Anadolu Agency

AFTER THE CYCLONE



Vehicles pass on a waterlogged road after heavy rainfall following cyclone Remal, in Guwahati on Tuesday (ANI)

Not euthanasia: French parliament debates on bill to legalise 'assisted dying'

Paris, France - The French parliament on Monday began debate on a bill to legalise 'assisted dying', which the health minister says is not euthanasia, according to media reports.

The draft law seeking to legalise 'assisted dying' will be debated for two weeks in the lower chamber of parliament, or the National Assembly, with a final vote scheduled for June 11.

At the start of the session, Health Minister Catherine Vautrin introduced the proposed

legislation to the National Assembly, stressing its importance for adoption.

"What ethical response can we give to unbearable situations of suffering? she asked. Can we turn a blind eye to situations of unbearable pain that medicine and the current legislation cannot answer? Can we accept that some of our citizens go abroad to end their days? ... It must be noted that the current legislation in force is no longer enough," she said, persuading other members



The draft law will be debated for two weeks in the lower chamber of the parliament, with a final vote scheduled for June 11

to support the government in passing the bill. The eligibility criteria for assisted dying are that

you must be over the age of 18, have a serious and incurable illness in the advanced or terminal stage, suffer from an untreatable and unbearable physical condition as well as psychological suffering associated with it, and be able to express your will freely.

Lethal substances in assisted dying can be administered by the patient if they are capable, a doctor, a nurse, or someone the patient designates and who accepts to administer it.

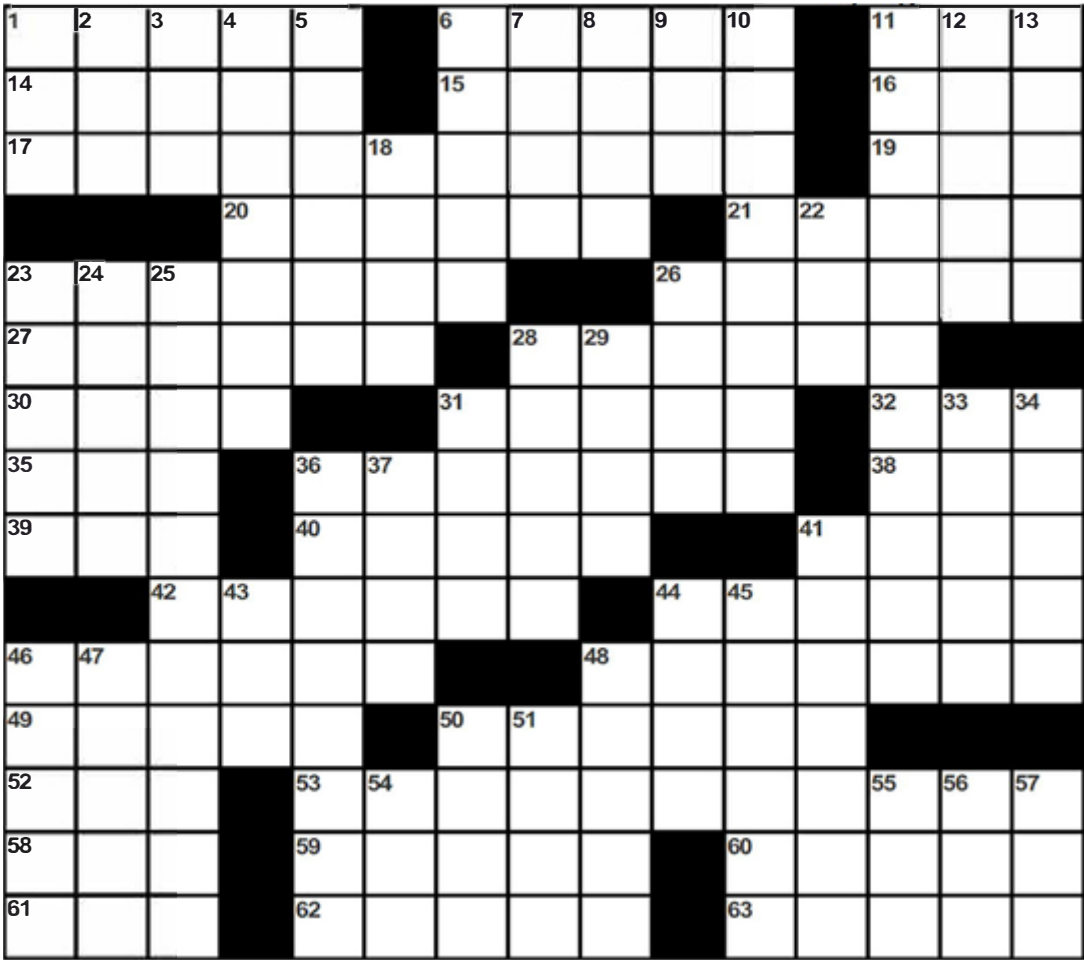
The bill also includes a one-

year sentence and a 15,000 (approximately US\$16,300) fine for attempting to prevent someone from engaging in assisted dying or learning about it.

Vautrin clarified that this is not a euthanasia model because an outsider only intervenes if the patient is unable to physically administer the lethal substance. It is not an authorisation to commit suicide because there are strict conditions and a medical decision.

Anadolu Agency

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Dog tag datum
- 6) Sanctified (var.)
- 11) Summon a genie, in a way
- 14) French wine region
- 15)4:1,e.g.
- 16) Metal-in-the-raw
- 17) Occurs
- 19) Like a burning candle
- 20) Bog
- 21) Sound of impact
- 23) Clad
- 26) Cause of concern at the polls
- 27) One of the friends on "Friends"
- 28) Altogether
- 30) Does some tailoring
- 31) Condescending one
- 32) Furry household member
- 35) Bank offering, for short
- 36) Sgts., e.g.
- 38) Type of lab
- 39) The Tigers, on scoreboards
- 40) Birdlike
- 41) Accomplishment
- 42) Pieces for eight
- 44) Cascades peak

- 46) Noisy toy
- 48) Hunter, to the prey
- 49) Broadcasting
- 50) Old Turkish coins
- 52) Fleur-de- _
- 53) Focus on satisfaction
- 58) Columbus Day mo.
- 59) University in Beaumont, Texas
- 60) "Falstaff" composer Edward
- 61) "Comprende?"
- 62) Bullpen sound
- 63) Shortsighted one
- DOWN**
- 1) Mythical monster
- 2) First name in comedy?
- 3) _ de plume
- 4) Adversaries
- 5) Soak up again
- 6) Like some humor
- 7) Pool exercises
- 8) Flight data, briefly
- 9) " _ boom bah!"
- 10) Drunkards
- 11) Slatted furniture item
- 12) Bathsheba's first husband
- 13) Legendary TV actress White
- 18) Birch or banyan
- 22) Butter unit

- 23) Ladybug's snack
- 24) "So _!"
- 25) Sauce ingredient, sometimes
- 26) Molecular bit
- 28) Ancient Peruvians
- 29) Twelve, half of the time
- 31)A gitated state
- 33) Related maternally
- 34) Golden Horde member
- 36) Innately gifted ones
- 37) Kitchen appliance
- 41) One way to be accused
- 43) Certain special effect, in movies
- 44) Short stride
- 45) Globetrotter's home
- 46) Some shirts
- 47) Chilled
- 48) Badminton or tennis
- 50) BBs, e.g.
- 51) Antares, for one
- 54) "At Seventeen" singer Janis
- 55) "Long_ and far away ..."
- 56) Maple product
- 57) " _ he drove out of sight"

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Be honest. You're known for being assertive, but for the most part, your boldness is often a bark that's more intimidating than your bite. This time, however, the boldness of your opponent will call for a real, live bite, and that's what they're going to get. Fortunately, you'll be in a great mood today and perfectly willing to use humor to chill this situation out before it gets ugly. Keep smiling. And consider if it's worth it.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

You're in the mood to be up close, personally involved, and oh, so affectionate -- so, needless to say, your lucky partner will be just tickled. It's common knowledge that no one can spoil someone the way that you can, especially when you set out with that objective in mind. Of course, since you'll want to pamper each and every one of your loved ones today, you'd better make a list and check it twice -- at least twice. Just in case someone happens to be the jealous type.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

You might not be doing it consciously, but you're revving up to say something you've been dying to get off of your chest for some time now. It's no secret that you're a force to be reckoned with when you're being brutally honest, but just try not to go too far overboard. Besides, if you drive someone away, you'll feel so guilty that you'll want to apologize -- and you'll probably have to go to Timbuktu to do it.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

For the next few days, it's going to be all about relationships for you. Other than feeding yourself and your critters, you'll forget about work, play, cleaning, and just about anything else. If you're already attached, the object of your affection will finally understand just how lucky they really are. If you're not, it's definitely time to resume the hunt in earnest for "the one." The Universe has equipped you with everything you need. Get busy.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Your words may inadvertently be very potent now -- so much so that you might unintentionally hurt someone deeply without meaning to. If a loved one pushes your buttons, count to at least 500 in another room if possible before your answer them. Either that, or just say 'Let me think about it.' Just don't let go with anything that's deliberately hurtful. There's no use burning a bridge simply because your mouth has temporarily turned into an atomic weapon.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Your natural leadership skills are a curse and a blessing. They're a blessing for others because, when things get out of control, they know they can turn to you for help. The curse part comes in when you're out for recreation, looking forward to some fun, and then, suddenly, you're asked to take over. Like today, for example. Oh, well. Think of it as a compliment -- or resolve to find yourself another companion.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Getting through the day may be tougher than you thought it would be -- especially if some rather distressing news arrives. Just don't try to avoid the situation. It won't work, so be brave, meet it head on and deal with it. That means no calling in sick to work, no asking to leave early and no dragging yourself through the day pouting. Be brave, be meticulous and take care of business like the mature, responsible grownup you are.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You'll be in the mood to go through those special things today -- scrapbooks, photo albums and anything else you have because it means something to you. Tend to those mementos now -- in private, if at all possible. When you're ready, tidy them up, repackaging them, give them a squeeze and then tuck them back into storage.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Crow has never been known to be too tasty, and you've never been especially good at dining on it. But you may receive information today that will force you to peruse the Internet in search of recipes that will make it at least somewhat digestible. Don't expose the secret just yet. Wait and see if they come to you first, then give them a great, big wet 'MWWAH!' on the cheek.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Sure, they're making you crazy. You work together, so you're rather like an extended family -- and you know how family members torture each other. It's part of your job to make each other crazy. So if either of you seems a little too focused on a situation at the moment, call in an unbiased third party to help you out. It will be well worth the effort. Honest.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Everything you feel will quite literally be written all over your face now. Everything. So if you're angry, don't bother trying to hide it, and do not -- repeat -- do not -- drive. Instead, why not just tell the person who's pushed your buttons exactly how you feel about what they've done? You don't have to be mean about it. In fact, the calmer you are, the more firmly you'll make your point.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You're due to cross paths with some very interesting, very magnetic types, and soon, too. Maybe tonight. To prepare yourself for their arrival, be sure you can postpone anything that's not absolutely necessary. If you've already met them, don't be shy. Get in contact, make some plans, and get together. These are kindred spirits -- don't let them get away from you.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. What does the Greek word "Eureka" mean?

- A. I am dripping on your shoes
- B. It's a sudden and unexpected discovery
- C. The volumes match
- D. I have found it

02. In the United Kingdom, what is "The Solent"?

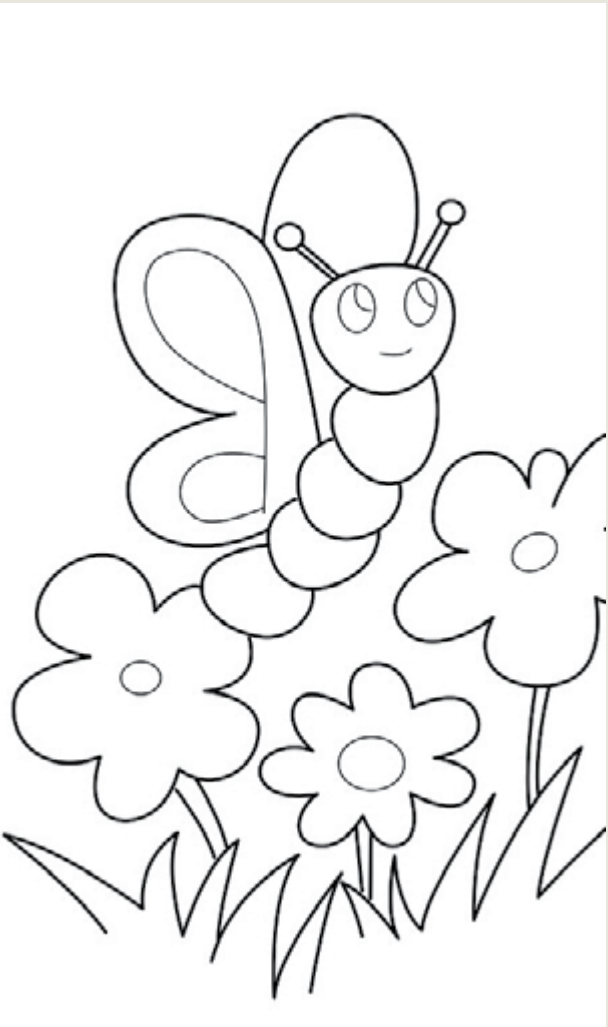
- A. A bay
- B. An island
- C. A desert
- D. A strait

03. What name is given to the neuropsychiatric disorder in which a person holds a belief that they are dead, do not exist, are putrefying, or have lost their blood or internal organs?

- A. Zombie Disorder
- B. Necropsy
- C. Therianthropy
- D. The Cotard Delusion

Answers: 1. D 2. D 3. D

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

E	A	U	J
R	G	S	S
U	E	R	U
E	T	P	H

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

THE GOAL MERCHANT

Ronaldo breaks Saudi League's single-season scoring mark

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - Al Nassr's Cristiano Ronaldo capped his first full Saudi Pro League season in style as he broke the record for the most goals scored in one campaign on Monday.

The Portuguese 39-year-old scored a brace in his side's 4-2 win over Al Ittihad on the final matchday to bring his league tally this season to 35 goals.

Ronaldo later wrote on Instagram: "I don't follow the records, the records follow me," and in an interview he added: "I'm very happy. Firstly because the team won and finished the league well. Then to break a league goal record, I have to confess it makes me very happy, I wasn't expecting it. For me it's important. The most important [thing] is always the team. We are in good shape. We ended the league well and now we have to win the Kings Cup."

The previous record was held by former Al Nassr forward and Moroccan international Abdelrazak Hamdallah, who scored 34 goals in 2018-19.

Ronaldo, who played for Sporting, Manchester United, Real Madrid and Juventus, joined Al Nassr in January 2023.

In the final seconds of the first half, Ronaldo, who had already had two goals ruled out for off-side, chested down a long pass



Al Nassr's Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates after scoring against Al Ittihad on Monday

I'm very happy. Firstly because the team won and finished the league well. Then to break a league goal record, I have to confess it makes me very happy, I wasn't expecting it.

CRISTIANO RONALDO

from Mohammed al Fatil and opened the scoring with a low shot from the left side of the area.

With 21 minutes remaining,

the five-time Ballon d'Or winner headed home a corner from Marcelo Brozovic and celebrated wildly. He was substituted off the

field five minutes later to a standing ovation from the home fans.

It ended an action-packed season for Ronaldo, who scored four hat-tricks and collected one red card. He was also suspended for an obscene gesture in February at Al Shabab fans who had been chanting the name of Lionel Messi, Ronaldo's longstanding soccer rival.

Despite the individual accolades for Ronaldo this campaign,

it was a disappointing one for a talented side that boasted other global stars such as Sadio Mane and Brozovic.

Al Nassr finished a distant second behind Al Hilal in the league table and failed to win a trophy in the Saudi Cup or Asian Champions League.

Al Hilal were too strong even without Neymar, who joined the club in August from Paris Saint-Germain but suffered a season-

ending ACL injury in October.

Aleksandar Mitrovic stepped in and ended the season with a goal in the final seconds to clinch a 2-1 win over Al Wehda. The Serbian striker, signed from London club Fulham last summer, reached 27 league goals, second only to Ronaldo.

On their way to the title, Al Hilal went on a 34-game winning streak in all competitions, a new world record for a top-tier team.

It is a week to enjoy, says Ancelotti as Real prepare for Champions League final

Madrid, Spain - The best advice Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti can give his players as they prepare to face Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League final is to enjoy the moment, he said on Monday.

Heading into his eighth Champions League final, his sixth as a manager and third with Real who are bidding for a record-extending 15th European crown and sixth in 10 years, the 64-year-old Ancelotti believes his players have the experience to cope with the emotions.

"It is a week to enjoy. The challenge, the opponent... We're



Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti with his players during a team training session

going to enjoy it until Friday. Reaching a final is always a success," the Italian told a news conference on Monday.

"We have a lot of confidence. As for being favourites, we don't think about that. We have to play against a team that has done very well in eliminating PSG... Atletico Madrid. They have shown commitment and attitude."

Known for his calmness and tactical acumen, Ancelotti is one of the most successful coaches in the world, the first manager to win titles in each of Europe's top five leagues. When he was lured

back to Madrid for a second spell in 2021 following the departure Zinedine Zidane, he knew his only mission was to increase Real's trophy haul.

Having won the Champions League twice as AC Milan manager and with Real in 2014, the Spaniards' "Decima" (10th) European crown, before being sacked 12 months later, Ancelotti led the Spanish giants to their 14th title in 2022.

They knocked out Chelsea, Paris St Germain and Manchester City to reach the final in Paris where they beat Liverpool 1-0.

Ramos, Asensio left out of Spain's Euro squad

Madrid, Spain - Forward Marco Asensio was the surprise omission when three-time champions Spain named their 29-man preliminary squad for the European Championship on Monday as Ferran Torres and Ayoze Perez made the cut.

Barcelona teenagers Lamine Yamal and Pau Cubarsi were also included along with team mate Fermin Lopez who received his first call-up.

Real Madrid centre back Nacho returned to the squad as defenders Sergio Ramos, Pau Torres and Pedro Porro missed out but the omission of Paris St Germain's Asensio was the biggest shock.

"I admire Asensio. Let's focus on those who are here and give them the value they deserve," coach Luis de la Fuente told a news conference on Monday.

"I am left with their (Torres and Perez) enthusiasm. In addition to their talent, they have shown enthusiasm. They are very versatile players. Fermin is



Marco Asensio

going to make a leap forward with this call-up. I hope they show all the potential they have."

"Maybe one of those players that now I'm thinking that wouldn't make the cut for the tournament changes my mind and make his case to deserve a place in the final 26-man squad" De La Fuente said. The deadline for naming the final squad is June 7.

"Unfortunately, there could be injuries," De La Fuente said. "We want to give guarantees and minimise the risks."

Last year's UEFA Nations League champions Spain play home friendlies against Andorra and Northern Ireland before travelling to Germany where they begin their Group B campaign against Croatia on June 15.

Fiorentina out for revenge after last season's defeat, says captain Bi-

Florence, Italy - Fiorentina's painful defeat last season will inspire them in this year's Europa Conference League final against Olympiakos, where they will bid to lift the trophy for their late general manager Joe Barone and loyal fans, captain Cristiano Biraghi said.

Biraghi required medical attention when hit by a cup thrown by opposition fans during last year's final. The captain soldiered on, but his side lost 2-1 to West Ham United, going down to a penalty and a 90th-minute goal.

Fiorentina also lost the Coppa Italia final last season, but Biraghi does not feel any extra pressure and believes the lessons learned can help them against the Greek club on Wednesday.

"I wouldn't say pressure, but there is definitely even more desire for revenge, getting to the final is certainly beautiful but losing hurts very, very badly," Biraghi told Reuters in an interview.

"We certainly have more experience, we know what we did



Cristiano Biraghi required medical attention when he was hit by a cup thrown by opposition fans during last year's final

wrong and what we shouldn't do again, playing a final has always taught us something, both positively and negatively."

This year has brought more than its fair share of pain, as Fiorentina lost their general manager Barone, who died after suffering a cardiac arrest in March while with the team for a league

game at Atalanta.

"Joe was a point of reference for us, a central figure. Together with our owner, Rocco Comisso, they have done incredible things to grow the club," Biraghi said.

"We had a special, intense relationship with Joe. We said things to each other frankly but



Axel Witsel

Belgium recall Witsel to Euro 2024 squad

Brussels, Belgium - Belgium have recalled Axel Witsel to the squad for Euro 2024 in Germany next month but there is no place for Thibaut Courtois despite the Real Madrid goalkeeper being in line to feature in Saturday's Champions League final.

Coach Domenico Tedesco announced his 25-man squad for next month's tournament on Tuesday with Witsel's recall a major surprise. Tedesco had visited the 35-year-old Atletico Madrid defender to persuade him to come back to the team.

Witsel won the last of his 130 caps at the World Cup

Courtois walked out on Belgian squad last June when he was not named captain in the wake of Hazard's retirement

in Qatar in late 2022, when Belgium were eliminated in the group stage.

Courtois walked out on the Belgian squad last June when he was not named captain in the wake of Eden Hazard's retirement, leading to a public falling out with Tedesco.

He was criticised by teammates and has since expressed regret but the rift between him and the coach appears not to have healed.

Soon after the walkout, Courtois suffered a serious knee injury that sidelined him for most of the season, returning for Real Madrid only earlier this month.

NADAL: I HOPE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, BUT I DON'T KNOW

Roland Garros favourite exits French Open after defeat to Zverev

Paris, France - Rafael Nadal exited what could be his last French Open to an outpouring of love and support with a first-round defeat by Alexander Zverev, wishing to be back at Roland Garros for the Paris 2024 Olympics.

"I hope to see you again, but I don't know," Nadal told an ecstatic crowd after his straight-sets loss on Monday.

"There's a big percentage I will not be back here but I am not 100 per cent sure. I hope to be back on this court for the Olympics, that motivates me."

It will be the third time since his debut at Roland Garros in 2005, that Nadal, whose body has been martyred by 23 years of professional tennis and who left the tournament with a crushed foot after his record-improving 14th title two years ago, does not get to celebrate his June 3 birthday in Paris.

The French, who tend to arrive on court Philippe Chatrier fashionably late on the back of a long lunch, skipped coffee and digestif to fill the arena before the king, racket in hand as usual, stepped onto the court to deafening roars.

Spain's Nadal stuck to his routine, avoiding the lines and crossing them with his right foot, sprinting to the baseline during warm-up and positioning his two bottles diagonally aimed at the court.

On a rainy day in Paris, organisers closed the roof, adding to the intimacy of the moment. On a court he knows like no one else, Nadal struggled to find his mark early on, netting a routine drop shot and serving a double fault to give Zverev the opening game.

The German, who after winning the Rome Masters was the worst possible draw for Nadal,



Rafael Nadal greets the crowd after his match against Alexander Zverev

kept his foot on the gas pedal to take the first set even if the Malorcan showed glimpses of his best with a couple of spinning forehand winners down the line.

As soon as Zverev eased the pressure, however, Nadal converted his first break point to take

a 3-2 lead in the second set.

"Rafa! Rafa!" went the crowd, again, as world number ones Iga Swiatek and Novak Djokovic, as well as fellow Spaniard Carlos Alcaraz, joined the party. Nadal served for the set but Zverev levelled and forced a tiebreak, which

he comfortably won.

There was another break for Nadal in the third set, and some 'I-can-still-do-it' fist pumps as he launched a renewed bid for a maiden title in Paris.

There's a big percentage I will not be back here but I am not 100 per cent sure. I hope to be back on this court for the Olympics

RAFAEL NADAL

was too good this time.

'Olympics main goal'

Nadal likened his struggles with injury in the last 18 months to being in a jungle as the 14-times French Open champion hoped to return to Roland Garros for the Olympic Games after making a premature exit from the Grand Slam on Monday.

Never far from physical issues in his glittering career, the 37-year-old missed almost all of 2023 with a hip problem and his comeback earlier this year was stalled by a muscle tear, before small niggles affected his preparation for the claycourt major.

"My body has been a jungle for two years. You don't know what to expect. I wake up one day and I find a snake biting me. Another day a tiger," Nadal told a packed press conference.

"I've been fighting with all the things that I went through. But the dynamic is positive the last few weeks. I felt ready. I think tomorrow I'll be ready to play again if I have to. But I will not have to.

"So that's the thing. Now, I need to prepare myself, I need to clear my ideas and see what's the new calendar to try to be ready for Olympics. I can't say anything today, but my main goal now is to play the Olympics."



Rafael Nadal with Mats Wilander after winning the French Open title in 2005

Nadal got worst draw, says Mats Wilander

Paris, France - Rafa Nadal's level of tennis during his French Open defeat by Alexander Zverev on Monday would have earned him victory against the vast majority of players in the draw, according to former Roland Garros champion Mats Wilander.

In what was possibly his last match at the tournament he has dominated for almost two decades, Nadal showed flashes of his former brilliance and has made no secret of targeting a return to Roland Garros for this year's Paris Olympics. He also offered some hope to his legions of fans that he might extend his career a little longer.

Wilander said the prospect of him playing at the Olympics was exciting.

"Obviously the Olympics

are huge and for him to have the chance to play here on Philippe Chatrier is amazing and could be an unbelievable end to his career," Wilander told Eurosport.

"I think he beats 90 per cent of the draw today. There's only a few guys that would beat him playing this well. And Zverev was the worst opponent possible in the first round, worse than playing (Novak) Djokovic, worse than playing (Carlos) Alcaraz."

Wilander said the fact the roof on Philippe Chatrier was closed for the match worked against Nadal.

"The circumstances, it's indoor, cold outside, the ball doesn't travel. So I think all that, and still being so close it's all positive for Rafa and with that passion, why not."



Zheng Qinwen (R) with Alize Cornet after their match

Zheng thumps retiring Cornet

Paris, France - Seventh seed Zheng Qinwen powered past Alize Cornet 6-2, 6-1 and into the second round of the French Open on Tuesday, sending the Frenchwoman into retirement with a heavy defeat at her home Grand Slam, where she has featured for 20 straight years.

The 34-year-old Cornet, holder of the Open era women's record for consecutive major main draw appearances, had previously announced that she would bring the curtain down on her career after the tournament.

Cornet will still compete in the women's doubles and mixed doubles events before she walks away from the sport after almost 20 years as a professional.

"I was already in tears after Rafa Nadal's match (on Monday). I'm in more tears now. Lots of emotions. I've been preparing myself for weeks for this moment but you're never really

ready when you have to say goodbye," Cornet said.

"I gave everything to tennis. I was just really lucky to have the life I've had. It took a lot of efforts and sacrifices and questioning yourself. There were lot of ups and downs. But what an adventure."

Rybakina beats Minnen

World number four Elena Rybakina recovered from a rocky start to comfortably beat Belgian Greet Minnen 6-2 6-3 in the first round on Tuesday, showing a full recovery from her recent illness.

Rybakina was unable to defend her Italian Open title and after losing serve in the opening game at Roland Garros and going 2-0 down, it looked like the Kazakh could be in trouble.

Rybakina withdrew from the French Open last year before her third-round match.



Casper Ruud hits a return to Felipe Alves

Ruud makes winning start in renewed title bid

Paris, France - Two-time French Open finalist Casper Ruud eased past Brazilian qualifier Felipe Alves in straight sets on Tuesday as he launched a renewed bid for a maiden title in Paris.

Fresh from his win in Geneva last week the world number seven and three-time Grand Slam finalist looked confident on the Paris clay.

He served close to 90% first serves as he sped past the Brazilian in under two hours.

He will face either Monaco's Valentin Vacherot or Spaniard Alejandro Davidovich Fokina in

the second round

"This is one of the biggest tournaments for me and for everyone every year. One of my highlights," Ruud said.

"I'm always looking forward to it. The last two years have given me so much here in Paris. I hope I can make it another good year."

"I think it's been a good clay season for me. Madrid and Rome could've gone a bit better. It wasn't what I hoped for. But other results went well. All in all I'm happy."

Ruud, a losing finalist in the previous two editions of the

French Open, earned three break points at 3-2 and more on the Brazilian's next service game before snatching a break on his seventh opportunity to go 5-3 up and bag the first set.

Alves had matched Ruud's power game for about an hour but gradually the mistakes piled up as Ruud did not give a single break point away in the entire second set.

Another early break in the third saw Ruud firmly in the driving seat and the 25-year-old sealed his 6-3 6-4 6-3 win in just under two hours.

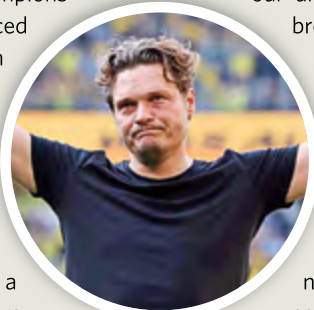
Dortmund ready to snap Real's perfect Champions League final run, says Terzic

Dortmund, Germany - Borussia Dortmund can break Real Madrid's winning run in Champions League finals when they meet in the showcase in Wembley on Saturday, coach Edin Terzic said on Tuesday.

Real have won all eight finals they have contested since the Champions League replaced the European Cup in 1992.

They have also won five Champions League titles in the past 10 seasons for a total of 14 European crowns.

Terzic said



Edin Terzic

records were there to be broken, but Dortmund would need to perform at the highest level.

"We have to have the belief that we can achieve big things," Terzic told a press conference. "We have to invest everything to bring the trophy back to Dortmund. It has been a long time."

Dortmund won the title in 1997 and reached the final again in 2013, losing to Bayern Munich in an all-German

showdown.

"The most important thing is if you want to win the Champions League you have to beat the champions," the coach said. "We now face the absolute champions."

"They have had this experience 14 times, won it five times in the past 10 years. But our aim is always to break it down to one game."

"Eight Champions League finals and they never lost. But what matters is not what happened in the previous eight. What matters is only the next one. It is time to break that run."

Dortmund finished fifth in the Bundesliga this season, narrowly securing their Champions League spot for next season.

They had been title contenders after missing out on the league trophy on the final matchday in 2023.

Terzic said that bitter experience a year ago, however, contributed to their success this season.

'OMAN'S PREPARATIONS FOR WORLD CUP ARE ON TRACK'

Mendis-coached team defeat Papua New Guinea in their warm-up match in Trinidad

Muscat - Oman's preparations for the ICC T20 World Cup is on track with the Men in Red notching up a win in the official warm-up game against Papua New Guinea (PNG) in Trinidad on Monday and the fourth win on a trot since their arrival in West Indies.

On Monday, Oman, coached by Sri Lankan great Duleep Mendis, chased down PNG's total of 137 with five balls to spare to win by three wickets at Brian Lara Stadium, Tarouba in Trinidad.

Having been put in to bat, PNG found scoring tough going with Lega Siaka posting their highest score with 28 off 20 balls before being dismissed to leave his side at 55 for three.



Zeeshan Maqsood top-scored with 45 as Oman defeated Papua New Guinea by three wickets in their first warm up match

A late cameo of 17 from 10 balls from Alei Nao pushed PNG to 137 from their 20 overs as captain Aqib Ilyas disrupted the middle order with three wickets for 22. Having already delivered with the ball, experienced Zeeshan Maqsood then impressed with the bat for Oman.

The all-rounder had conceded just one boundary off his three overs of left-arm spin before making 45 from 42 balls.

Oman's scoring was not fast however, and Mohammad Nadeem provided some much-needed impetus.

With four boundaries off the penultimate over he ended with 22 from 11 before Mehran Khan hit the winning runs with a four.

Oman now face Afghanistan in the final warm-up game on Wednesday at Queen's Park Oval in Port of Spain in Trinidad. It was the fourth successive win for Oman since Mendis' men arrived in the West Indies on May 15.

The team had been training during their camp in Barbados, the venue for their first two World Cup games against

Namibia and Australia.

Oman were the first of the participating teams to arrive in the West Indies and over the past two weeks, the team played three unofficial warm-up games.

In the three warm-up games in Barbados, Oman won two against Barbados XI and one against the University of West Indies team.

In his remarks after the win against PNG, Mendis said: "Our preparations are on track and these victories are morale-boosters for the players. The confidence among my boys is great and they are in good shape."

He added, "It was a good win against PNG in the first official warm-up match. We have played so far three unofficial games in Barbados and one official warm-up match [vs PNG]. We won all of the four. Our preparations are ideal for the World Cup, where we have tough teams to negotiate."

The head coach said: "The early arrival has helped the boys a lot as they got time to acclimatise to the weather conditions and also got a feel of the wickets in the West Indies."



Jos Buttler

Buttler to miss third Pakistan Twenty20

Cardiff, Wales - England captain Jos Buttler will miss their third T20 International against Pakistan for the birth of his third child, the team said ahead of Tuesday's match in Cardiff.

Buttler has returned home to be with his wife after leading England to a 23-run win at Edgbaston on Saturday, which gave them a 1-0 lead in the four-match series following the washout of the first game in Leeds.

"Jos Buttler is set to miss

our third IT20 match vs Pakistan as his wife Louise is expecting the birth of their third child," England Cricket said in a statement.

All-rounder Moeen Ali will captain England in Buttler's absence. The team did not say whether Buttler would return in time to play in the final match of the series at The Oval on Thursday.

Holders England are set to leave for the T20 World Cup in the United States and West Indies on Friday.



Mitchell Starc

Starc fires warning shot before World Cup with IPL heroics

Melbourne, Australia - A slow start in the Indian Premier League put Mitchell Starc's record price tag under the microscope but the Australian all-formats hero underlined his worth as he lifted Kolkata Knight Riders to a third title.

Starc, the costliest cricketer in the history of the league, was named Player of the Match after taking 2-14 against Sunrisers Hyderabad, including bowling opener Abhishek Sharma with an

I am older and more experienced now, so that has helped with managing the expectations and leading the attack

MITCHELL STARC

unplayable delivery that pundits judged the tournament's best.

The performance followed on from his brilliant semi-final when he took three wickets and bowled Australia team mate Travis Head

paucity of wickets.

It also led to a few light-hearted barbs from team mates.

None will be laughing at him now. "There have been plenty of jokes. A lot has been made of the money," said the rangy left-armed.

"I am older and more experienced now, so that has helped with managing the expectations and leading the attack.

"It's been a lot of fun, it's been great to learn and see how these guys go about it but full credit to

the whole players and staff, it's made my life pretty easy."

Starc's stunning return to form in the IPL burnishes his record in big matches and comes days before the T20 World Cup starts in the US and the Caribbean.

He took three wickets in the final of last year's 50-over World Cup against hosts India and will likely be important for Australia's hopes of becoming the first nation to hold cricket's three global trophies in Tests, ODIs and T20.

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LATEST BEARD STYLES

O MAN!

STYLISTS SAY, IF YOU GROW A BEARD YOU MUST PERFECT IT. AND THERE’S NO POINT IN PERFECTING YOUR BEARD IF YOU NEGLECT YOUR HAIRSTYLE - THEY MUST COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER



Choosing the right haircut or best hairstyle to complement your beard and moustache is essential for achieving a cohesive look. If you do grow a beard, it is important to understand the significance of this combo, and get yourself the most appropriate grooming solution.

Your beard and hairstyle must complement each other – they cannot exist in disarray – and together they must also match your personality. There’s no point in imitating the look of a macho icon who has been idolised by many if your personality is nowhere near him. Also, one must not underplay the stronger aspects of your appearance by sporting a beard that is contrary to your looks. So, you need to go for the most appropriate beard style and pick a perfect hairstyle to match it.

The basics

Consider factors like your face shape and hair type before selecting a haircut that complements your beard and mustache. The right hairstyle should enhance your facial features and blend seamlessly with your facial hair.

When assessing your face shape, consider whether you have a square, oval, round, or heart-shaped face. Different face shapes lend them-

selves to different haircuts. Similarly, understanding your hair type, whether straight, wavy, or curly, will help you choose a style that maximises your hair’s natural texture.

Beards fall under three key categories – trimmed/stubble beards, full beards and epic beards. And one must match the hairstyle to suit the type of beard you sport.

Slicked back hairstyle

If you want a polished look, consider the slicked-back hairstyle. This style involves combing your hair straight back using a high-quality pomade. It pairs well with trimmed beards and full beards, creating a sleek, classic impression and works well for straight hair and curly hair.

Side part hairstyle

For a timeless, versatile haircut, the side part is a great choice. This style works well with shorter

hair lengths and is good for both formal and casual occasions — and straight, wavy, and curly hair. Comb your hair to the side for a sleek look.

Crew cut hairstyle

If you prefer a low-maintenance style, the crew cut is the way to go. This short haircut works best with trimmed beards. Since minimal styling is required, it’s a practical and stylish option for those on the go.

Low fade hairstyle

Choosing a short beard style with stylish faded sides creates an enticingly contemporary look. The fade haircut tapers the hair on the sides and back while leaving more length on top. If you’re hoping to embrace your natural texture, the low fade haircut works wonders for wavy hair.

Top knot hairstyle

The top knot/man bun works well with all styles of beards. Here, however, beard stubble won’t probably work that well, instead try a mid-sized beard about 4–6 weeks of growth, although it will depend on the rate at which your hair grows. This is the look often worn by a majority of men.

FADED BEARDS

The art of the beard fade, complemented by a scruffy beard, has become a cornerstone in men’s grooming, offering a sleek, polished look that bridges classic style with modern flair. Here are a few tips to help you master your style.



Sharp fade

This style is all about sharp contrasts. The beard is meticulously faded into the skin with a clear demarcation line that emphasises the jawline. The hair on top is kept longer and styled forward for a contemporary vibe. It’s a striking statement look.



Classic fade

This fade is subtle yet effective, creating a smooth transition from the full hair on top to the more sculpted beard. It’s an effortless look that’s both timeless and versatile, perfect for the man who values a neat yet understated style.



Subtle fade

This beard fade is so smooth that it creates a gentle shadow rather than a stark contrast. The hair on top is left longer for a fuller look, with the sides faded down to complement the beard. It’s a harmonious blend of softness and structure, ideal for the man who prefers a low-maintenance look.



Textured fade

Exuding contemporary cool, this style is marked by its textured layers on top and a beard fade that’s done with a modern flair. The texture provides an effortlessly cool look, while the fade is so well-integrated that it enhances the overall shape of the hairstyle.

TRIMMING TIPS

Achieving the perfect beard fade is both an art and a science. It requires precision, patience, and the right tools.

- Decide the type of beard fade that best suits your face shape and personal style
 - Start with a clean, dry beard. Comb it out to remove any tangles
 - Use a beard trimmer to cut your beard to the general length you want
 - Identify where you want your fade to start and end.
 - Start trimming as you move down your face and
- gradually decrease the guard size to create a smooth transition
 - Switch to a lower guard setting and blend the areas where different lengths meet
 - Use a precision trimmer or razor to define the edges of your beard
 - After trimming, apply a quality beard oil or moisturiser to keep your skin hydrated

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The recently concluded Cannes Film Festival 2024 showcased much glitter and glam, indicating that fashion fervour is back like never before

CANNES 2024 WRAP-UP

Sequins, satins, sheens

The red carpet on the famed steps of the Palais des Festivals has been rolled up for the year following the conclusion of this year's Cannes Film Festival on Saturday. The event gave designers and stars alike ample opportunity to flaunt their most grandiose wares alongside the premiere of their varying anticipated projects.

The festival has become a destination for such spectacle as brands increasingly intertwine with the film industry, dipping their toes where they can in order to capture even just a small fraction of the market. The pursuit of such makes sense in the context of business and exposure, expanding the portfolio's of some of fashion's biggest names to ultimately connect with a vastly different audience.

For 19 years, Chanel, for example, has worked with Tribeca Festival on the Artists Awards Programme, an initiative supporting filmmakers and artists, the 2024 participants of which were named amid Cannes Film Festival. The French fashion house also supported the production of a number of films taking part in this year's event, including Christophe Honoré's Marcello Mio and Francis Ford Coppola's Megalopolis, with which the brand accompanied the film on the red carpet by dressing some of its central stars.

The ten-day event is a key performance driver for fashion and luxury brands, generating a buzz unlike any other in the world. Compared to the Met Gala, which is always themed and often more costume dressing than the haute couture of dreams, the sophisticated locale of the French Riviera enhances the overall ambience, making the

red carpet appearances even more stunning. The timing in late May, just before summer, also means favourable weather that allows for more daring and avant-garde fashion choices.

Stevie Nicks sheens

In contrast, albeit parallel to the penchant for foregone decades, an array of stars strayed towards gowns that appeared to reference the aesthetics of 70s icons. Crushed velvet was the linchpin of this apparent trend, as seen on Italian actress Valeria Golino, whose Dior dress mirrored none other than the era's core 'it' girl Stevie Nicks, complete with her signature beaded fringe sleeving. A similar iridescent sheen was present on the Louis Vuitton gown of two-time Oscar winner Emma Stone, with the ruffles and burgundy tone emphasised through the use of hand embroidery.

The golden girls

Colour of the occasion, meanwhile, was that of bright gold, which stood proudly against the backdrop of crowds of press and the distinct carpet. Louis Vuitton once again captured the spotlight here, dressing Cate Blanchett in a honey gold cape dress with micro glass tubes highlighting the shoulders. A more subtle take on the awards-centric colour was worn by Sasha Pivovarov, whose gold satin Prada bandeau gown

Lea Seydoux brings the glitz in a sequinned gown



contrasted an oversized black bow that embellished the front.

Heavy on sequins

In the same realm of overt sparkliness, sequins suitably continued their grasp on Hollywood's elite, having already commanded attention at award ceremonies prior. Their reign continued at Cannes, where an abundance of simple yet sequin-heavy gowns graced the famed red carpet ahead of the anticipated films on show. From Chloe Fineman's cherry red streamlined number to Saint Laurent's strong shouldered cut out design for Greta Gerwig, there was no shortage of sparkle in the Côte D'azur.

Simple satins

A more polished yet similarly sleek red-carpet classic was in the presence of strong satins, each typically donning metallic effects while maintaining classic silhouettes. While Uma Thurman's ivory silk satin dress was styled under a floor-sweeping trench coat, evoking the signature codes of its creator Burberry, Greta Gerwig's design took on an even more structured shape that streamed out from a draped off-shoulder neckline held together with crystal brooches.

Powdery purples

A core colour this year could be defined as a 'powdery purple', a lilac that was as discrete as it was eye-catching. Its range was also expansive, featured on both fluffy floral designs, as that of Margaret Qualley's SS24 Chanel midi, and gowns with polished Grecian flair, Diane Kruger's Tom Ford draped piece being a fine example of such.

(Courtesy: CNN, Vogue)



Heidi Klum in a red off-the-shoulder dress



Greta Gerwig in Balenciaga