



BEGINNING A NEW CHAPTER

The visit underscores the shared goals between the two nations, known for their role-model status in handling regional and global issues with a similar diplomatic stance

Kuwait City - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik received a warm welcome upon arrival in the State of Kuwait on Monday on a two-day state visit.

Sheikh Meshal al Ahmad al Jaber al Sabah, Emir of Kuwait, led the welcoming party for His Majesty the Sultan at Amiri Airport, wishing His Majesty and his accompanying delegation a pleasant stay in Kuwait.

Alongside the Emir of Kuwait, His Majesty was also received by Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah al Ahmad al Sabah, Prime Minister; Sheikh Sabah Khalid Hamad al Sabah, Head of the Mission of Honour; Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud al Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Defence and Minister of Interior; Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah al Mubarak al Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs; Sherida Abdullah Saad al Maousherji, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Council of Ministers Affairs; Imad Mohammad al Atiqi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil; Abdullah Ali al Yahya, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Ahmad Fahad al Fahad, Undersecretary of Amiri Diwan; Dr Mohammed Nassir al Hajri, Ambassador of Kuwait to Oman; senior Kuwaiti officials and members of the Omani Embassy in Kuwait.



Official reception protocols were conducted for His Majesty the Sultan upon his arrival. When the Royal airplane Nizwa entered the airspace of Kuwait, it was escorted by a fleet of Kuwaiti Air Force until it landed at Amiri Airport.

There, the Emir of Kuwait received His Majesty the Sultan. Passing between rows of guard of honour, the two leaders headed to the Dais of Honour at Amiri Hall, where the Omani Royal Anthem was played, followed by the Kuwaiti National Anthem.

After that, His Majesty the Sultan inspected the Guard of Honour, which saluted His Majesty. Then, His Majesty the Sultan shook hands with senior members of the Kuwaiti welcoming party, while the Emir of Kuwait shook hands with members of the official delegation accompanying His Majesty the Sultan, welcoming them and wishing them a pleasant stay.

This was followed by His Majesty the Sultan, accompanied by Sheikh Meshal, boarding the motorcade that took His Majesty to his residence at Bayan Palace in Kuwait City.

As the motorcade of the two leaders left Amiri Airport, it was flanked by a group of motorcycles. Children lined the sides of the road,

waving the Omani and Kuwaiti flags in an emotional manifestation of amity and fraternity, while helicopters carrying the flags of the two countries hovered above the sky of the ceremony.

Upon arrival of the motorcade carrying the two leaders at Bayan Palace, the artillery fired a 21-gun salute to His Majesty the Sultan, while a group of cavalymen surrounded the parade.

After that, a group of Kuwaiti folklore bands performed Ardha, chanting songs and poetic verses and rejoicing over the auspicious arrival of His Majesty the Sultan.

His Majesty the Sultan and Sheikh Meshal later held formal discussions at Bayan Palace. The talks focused on the long-standing fraternal ties between the two nations, continually nurtured by both leaders, and explored ways to enhance cooperation across various sectors for mutual benefit. The leaders also exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest, reaffirming their commitment to further develop the strong relations between Oman and Kuwait.

A dinner was held in honour of His Majesty the Sultan later in the evening at Bayan Palace. ONA



Oman, Kuwait strengthen ties with four MoUs

Kuwait City - Oman and Kuwait signed four memorandums of understanding (MoUs) aimed at enhancing cooperation across various sectors during His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's state visit to Kuwait on Monday.

These agreements span direct investment, metrology activities, and diplomatic studies and training, besides a strategic MoU between Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA).

The foreign ministries of both countries agreed to collaborate in the fields of diplomatic studies and training. This MoU is designed to foster cooperation; develop modern training methods for specialists in foreign policy, international relations and political science; and facilitate exchange of documents, studies



and experiences on topics of mutual interest.

Additionally, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) signed two MoUs with its Kuwaiti counterparts. The first agreement with Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority sets a framework for cooperation in direct investments, enhancing knowledge and experience exchange. The second agreement with Kuwait Public Authority for Industry is focused on standardisation, quality control, and conformity assessment activities to enhance quality of non-food industrial products and services exchanged between the two nations.

OIA's MoU with KIA outlines a framework for cooperation and coordination in joint investments,

exploring future investment opportunities, and establishment of a joint investment fund focused on sectors such as energy, utilities, infrastructure, communications, transportation and logistics.

The Omani delegation, led by Abdulsalam Mohammed al Murschidi, President of OIA, and Qais Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, signed these agreements alongside Ibtisam Ahmed al Farooji, Undersecretary for Investment Promotion in MoCIIP, and Dr Saleh Amer al Kharousi, Oman's Ambassador to Kuwait.

The agreements mark a milestone in Oman-Kuwait relations, setting a foundation for enhanced cooperation and mutual growth aligning with both countries' broader strategic interests in the region.

'LEADER'S ORDER' CONFERRED ON H M BY ARAB PARLIAMENT



On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs and Special Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, received the 'Leader's Order' conferred on His Majesty by the Arab Parliament for his efforts to serve the Arab cause. The medal is the highest honour conferred on Arab leaders by the parliament (ONA)

Govt unveils ambitious urban development agenda for 2024



Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Secretariat-General of Tender Board held the inaugural Development Projects Forum for 2024 on Monday, aiming to showcase forthcoming projects slated for tendering this year.

The primary objectives of the forum include allowing equal opportunities, enhancing tender transparency and furnishing essential project data. A total of 129 projects are expected to be tendered, with 63 earmarked for the second quarter, 50 for the third quarter and 16 for the fourth quarter.

The forum was held under the patronage of Badr bin Salem al Maamari, Secretary-General of Tender Board. Dignitaries, officials, specialists and over 300

There has been a substantial uptick in proposed projects since 2021 and exponential increase in total value - RO1bn in 2023

BADR BIN SALEM AL MAAMARI

companies from diverse sectors attended the event.

Maamari highlighted the forum's significance, emphasising its role in affording companies the opportunity to preview forthcoming projects, thereby facilitating strategic planning and upholding principles of equity and transparency.

He underscored the fact that there has been a substantial uptick in proposed projects since 2021 and exponential increase in total value - RO1bn in 2023.

Additionally, Maamari high-

lighted the forum's role in enabling small and medium enterprises and local suppliers to compete effectively for projects.

The Tender Board has introduced initiatives aimed at facilitating exemptions from registration fees, nominal pricing of tender documents and waivers for tender insurance.

The secretariat outlined key projects slated for tendering this year, encompassing diverse developments including infrastructure enhancements, road



2024 Science Fiesta to be held this weekend

Muscat - The 2024 edition of Science Fiesta, organised by Indian Science Forum (ISF), will be held on May 17 and 18 at the Al Hail campus of National University of Science and Technology. With a surge in interest and participation last year, the event promises to be a celebration of science, education and environmental consciousness.

Spearheaded by Dr J Retnakumar, Coordinator of ISF, Science Fiesta has witnessed a 45% increase in participation this year, with over 2,900 students registering from 20 schools. Organisers hope to expand participation to include international and Omani schools.

Addressing a press conference on Monday, Retnakumar said, "The event aims to promote science in society, particularly among youth and students."

The theme of this year's event - Environment - reflects a growing global concern for ecological preservation. Renowned environmental activist Dr Muralee Thummarukudy, Director of G20 Global Land Initiative Coordination Office of UN Convention to Combat Desertification, will deliver the keynote address.

Rubai-

Oman lifts ban on import of poultry from Turkey

Our Correspondent
Muscat

H E Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, issued Ministerial Decision No 85/2024 to lift the ban.

A statement issued by the ministry said, 'The decision is based on recommendations of the competent veterinary authority. It aims to increase trade and import of live birds and their products and derivatives.'

إعلان مناقصة

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

SOHAR Port and Freezone invites Tenderers to the following tender

تدعو شركة ميناء صحر والمنطقة الحرة للموردين للمشاركة في المناقصة أدناه

الترتيب	الرقم المرجعي للمناقصة	عنوان المناقصة	تكاليف المناقصة
1	SFZ 2024/023	Consultancy Services for Site Supervision in SOHAR Freezone	105.00

• The above-mentioned tender fees including the VAT 5 %.

• Tenderers can request to receive the electronic tender documents from 9:00 am on Tuesday, 14/05/2024 until 4:00 pm on Thursday 30/05/2024.

• Tenderers to follow the below procedures and steps to obtain the electronic tender documents:

• **Step 1:** Interested Tenderers should remit the stated tender fees as per the below bank details:

• يتسلم رسوم المناقصة المذكورة أعلاه ضريبة القيمة المضافة وفحدها 20

• بإمكان مقدمي العطاءات طلب الاستلام وثائق المناقصة إلكترونياً ابتداء من يوم الثلاثاء الموافق 14 مايو 2024م (الساعة 9: صياحاً) وحتى يوم الخميس الموافق 30 مايو 2024م (الساعة 4: مساءً).

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

• **الخطوة الأولى:** يجب على مقدمي العطاءات سداد رسوم المناقصة وفقاً للتفاصيل المبكية أدناه.

Account Name

اسم الحساب

SOHAR Industrial Port Co

شركة ميناء صحر الصناعي

Account Number

رقم الحساب

3101-007970-500

Bank Name

اسم البنك

Oman Arab bank SAOC – Main Br

بنك عمان العربي ش.م.ع.م - الفرع الرئيسي

SWIFT

رمز السوفيت كود

OMAROMRUXXX

Note: Bank transfers is the only mode of payment accepted

ملاحظة: التحويل البنكي هي الطريقة الوحيدة المقبولة للدفع

Step 2:

Tenderers to send the following documents:

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

Step 3:

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

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

الخطوة الثانية:

يتعين على مقدمي العطاءات تقديم المستندات التالية:

- طلب الحصول على النسخة الإلكترونية من مستندات المناقصة
- نسخة من إكمال الترخيص التجاري
- أوراق سجل التجاري للشركة على أن يتم إرسالها إلى: procurement@soharportandfreezone.om

الخطوة الثالثة:

سوف يستلم مقدمي العطاءات نسخة إلكترونية من مستندات المناقصة عن البريد الإلكتروني:

- تدعو الشركة ميناء صحر والمنطقة الحرة قبول أو رفض أي مورد بدون الإفصاح عن أسباب
- يطلب على جميع المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة تقديم بطاقة ريادة إلى جانب مستندات الشركة
- في حال وجود أي أسئلة أو استفسارات تتعلق بالمناقصة الرجاء التواصل معنا عبر البريد الإلكتروني: procurement@soharportandfreezone.om

It all starts here

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AUCTION NOTICE

Port of Duqm Company S.A.O.C., hereby announces the following Auction (in closed envelopes) to auction the below listed used vehicles (each vehicle separately):

St No	Vehicle Type	Inspection Site
1	Toyota Prado 4WD, Engine Capacity 4 liter, Model Year 2012	Muscat Governorate, N. Azaiba, 18 November Street
2	Toyota Prado 4WD, Engine Capacity 4 liter, Model Year 2012	
3	Toyota Prado 4WD, Engine Capacity 4 liter, Model Year 2013	
4	Toyota Prado 4WD, Engine Capacity 4 liter, Model Year 2014	
5	Toyota Sedan Camry, Engine Capacity 2.4 liter, Model Year 2011	
6	Toyota Sedan Camry, Engine Capacity 2.4 liter, Model Year 2011	

Auction No	Date for inspection	Date for Receiving bids (sealed envelopes)	Fess
PODC/SCM/01/2024	May 19, 2024 to May 23, 2024 From 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.	May 28, 2024 From 8:00 a.m. to 14:00 p.m.	25/- OMR Non Refundable

General conditions:

- Interested bidders or individuals who would like to inspect the vehicles, should obtain bidding form by email: procurement@portofduqm.om
- Bids to be submitted in sealed envelope and red wax, with auction number and title addressed to "Procurement Manager" Port of Duqm Company SAOC, the envelope should not make any reference to the bidder details.
- All bidders are required to submit the bid in the Tender box in the main office of Port of Duqm Company North Azaiba, November 18th Street, Al-Mashreq Building during official working hours from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on 28th May 2024. Offers submitted after the above mentioned date and time shall not be considered.
- Interested Bidders must deposit an amount of 25/- Omani Rials to Bank Muscat, account name Port of Duqm Company SAOC account No. 0423047518510013, Ghalu Corporate Branch.
- Successful bidder is obligated to pay the full auctioned value of the vehicle within a maximum period of 10 working days from the date awarding notification. Failing to pay the outstanding amount within the specified period, the bidder shall be disqualified.
- Successful bidder is obliged to transfer the ownership of the vehicle after paying the auctioned value in full within a maximum period of 7 days from the date of payment and carry the necessary arrangement to transfer the vehicle outside the port within 3 days from ownership transfer. Failing in transferring the ownership in the specified period, will result in paying penalty charge of 10/- OMR per day as a daily space rent at site.

For any further inquiries related to the auction: please contact auction coordinator during official working hours (Sunday to Thursday) in Muscat mobile 95595141.

Notes:

- * Vehicles are sold as they are in their current condition.
- * Port of Duqm Company SAOC reserve the right to cancel or postpone the auction without giving any reasons.
- * Port of Duqm Company SAOC reserves the right to issue sales orders either in part or in full to the auctioned vehicles without any justifiable reasons.

Port of Duqm Company S.A.O.C.
PO Box: 2409, PC: 111, Sultanate of Oman, Almarshreq Building, 18 November Street, N. Azaiba
T: (+968) 24342800 | F: (+968) 24587343 | www.portofduqm.om

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Al Rifaa

New parks in Mawaleh to advance urban green spaces in Muscat

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Muscat Municipality has reached a significant milestone, achieving 60% completion in the development of two new parks in Seeb, which have been chosen to enhance recreational facilities for residents, while expanding the city's green spaces.

The Al-Khouth 7 and Hay Jabreen parks in Mawaleh, cover areas of 3,000sqm and 8,000sqm respectively.

These projects are part of the municipality's strategic plan to increase the number of parks across various wilayats of the Muscat governorate this year.

The initiative underscores the commitment of the governorate to augment green spaces in res-

idential areas, offering a safe and enjoyable environment for families and enhancing the social and health life of the community.

The construction of the park in the Jabreen residential area is particularly noteworthy. Positioned behind the Islam Mosque, this park sits in a vibrant setting surrounded by residential and

commercial establishments.

Similarly, the Al-Khouth 7 Park is developing swiftly to meet the needs of its community.

The new parks are designed with inclusivity in mind, providing facilities for people with disabilities and incorporating elements such as sports walkways, children's play areas, physical exercise equipment, and seating areas. Additional amenities include landscaping, green spaces, enhanced lighting, a café, restrooms, a prayer hall, and public parking.

The implementation of these parks not only beautifies the residential areas but also aligns with Muscat's urban expansion plans. By optimising the use of small spaces for green areas, the projects aim to provide sustainable services to the region's residents, encouraging physical activity and creating a tranquil environment free from urban noise and pollution.

These parks are envisioned as central hubs for community interaction, promoting social connections and improving the quality of life in Muscat.

Malaysia holds roadshow to promote tourism

Our Correspondent
Muscat

With an aim to promote tourism in Oman, Tourism Malaysia held a roadshow and several B2B meetings with the presence of 23 Malaysian companies comprising hotels and travel agents, in Muscat on Sunday.

The visiting team showcased the diverse travel offerings available across Malaysia, with a special emphasis on the enchanting cityscape of Kuala Lumpur and other cities.

Showcasing the latest tourism products and services, the organisers envisioned reignition of interest in tourism between Oman and Malaysia.

Highlighting the significance of the bilateral ties between the

H E Shaiful Anuar Mohammad

two countries, H E Shaiful Anuar Mohammad, the Ambassador of Malaysia to Oman, said, "We are dedicatedly working towards rekindling the vibrant tourism exchanges of the pre-

pandemic era.

"As the world gradually emerges from the shadows of the pandemic, endeavours like the Tourism Malaysia roadshow underscore a collective effort to revive the tourism sector," the Ambassador said, stressing that "with a rich tapestry of cultural heritage, breathtaking landscapes, and unparalleled hospitality, Malaysia stands poised to reclaim its status as a premier tourist destination on the global stage".

Malaysia received over 18,000 visitors from the Arab world in 2023, including nearly 2,500 from Oman. With the direct flights to Kuala Lumpur operated by Oman Air and Salam Air, travelling between Oman and Malaysia became easier.



Dhofar International Development And Investment Holding Company (SAOG)AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES

P.O.Box 2163, Salalah, Postal Code 211, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: 23295400, Fax: 23291500, Email: didico@omantel.net.om, Website: www.didic.com

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE THREE MONTHS ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the Un-audited Financial Results of Dhofar International Development & Investment Holding Company SAOG ("DIDIC") for the period ending 31st March 2024.

During the first three months of 2024 Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) improved by 122 points and closed at 4,636 points as on 31st March, 2024 which is a 2.69% increase over the three months period. During this period, however, the Company's investments in equities at a group level recorded a marginal decrease of RO 0.096 million on account of drop in the prices of few of its key equity investments.

Group Consolidated Performance

During the three months period ending 31st March 2024, Net Profits were RO 3.153 million and the total comprehensive income attributable to our shareholders amounted to RO 3.322 million as compared to net profit of RO 2.696 million and total comprehensive profit of RO 2.765 million for the same period in 2023.

The Group ended the first three months of 2024 with total assets of RO 228.691 million, an increase of 3.13% while shareholders' equity of RO 135.243 million registered an increase of 3.79% from the first three months of 2023 where total assets amounted to RO 221.753 million and shareholders' equity attributable to our shareholders was RO 130.309 million.

Performance of Key Associates

Bank Dhofar, our banking associate, reported after tax net profit of RO 10.805 million for the three months period ended 31 March 2024 as compared to RO 10.022 million for the same period in 2023, representing an increase of 7.8%. The net interest income and net income from Islamic financing activities and investments decreased to RO 28.789 million compared to RO 29.619 million during same period of 2023 registering a decrease of 2.8%. Net fees and commission income for the period was RO 6.636 million which is almost flat as compared to same period last year. Net loans and advances including Islamic financing receivables witnessed an increase of 7.02% and reached RO 3.71 billion as at 31 March 2024 as compared to RO 3.46 billion as at 31 March 2023. Similarly, customer deposits including Islamic deposits, significantly increased by 19.16% compared to comparative period of last year. Total shareholders' equity in the bank registered a marginal increase of 1.11%, increasing to RO 562.718 million from RO 556.540 million a year prior.

Dhofar Insurance, our insurance associate recorded a decrease of 6.4% in its insurance revenue to RO 23.14 million from RO 24.73 million a year earlier for the three months period. Its insurance service results were marginally up from a net revenue of RO 1.551 million to a net revenue of RO 1.558 million. Also, its net insurance finance results improved from a net expense of RO 0.296 million to a net expense of RO 0.080 million for the first three months of 2024. It reported

net profit of RO 1.792 million for this period as compared to RO 1.562 million a year earlier; a growth of

14.74%. The shareholders' equity has increased by 27.31%, from RO 29.874 million as at 31 March 2023 to RO 38.034 million as at 31 March 2024.

Oman Investment & Finance Company, our billing and collection associate that has also ventured into money exchange and contracting operations through two specialized subsidiaries, had its revenue dropped in its group operations in the first three months of 2024 by 11.85%. However, net profits increased significantly by 77% to RO 2.52 million from RO 1.42 million a year earlier. The Shareholder's equity increased by 12.24%, from RO 27.595 million as at 31 March 2023 to RO 30.974 million as at 31 March 2024.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the board of directors, I would like to extend our gratitude to the leadership of the FSA, CBO and MOCI for their continued support. I would also like to thank the management teams of DIDIC, our subsidiaries and associate companies for all their hard work and dedication.

Finally, we wish our country continued safety and stability under the wise leadership and guidance of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, may God protect him and prolong his life.

Khalid Bin Mustahail Ahmed Al Mashani
Chairman

Note: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who request the company in either Arabic or English as requested within 7 days of receipt of the request.

UN-AUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Group 2024 RO	Parent Company 2024 RO	Group 2023 RO	Parent Company 2023 RO
ASSETS				
Cash and bank balances	879,409	216,169	4,510,051	3,573,384
Receivables and prepayments	8,366,970	14,401,943	1,892,983	4,527,193
Inventories	9,777	-	23,300	-
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	-	-	-	-
- Investment in equities	39,189,402	23,894,921	41,338,194	25,645,214
- Investment in term deposits	730,000	730,000	1,830,000	1,830,000
Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	1,827,896	-	1,148,457	-
Investment in subsidiaries	-	1,534,094	-	2,861,487
Investment in associates	172,398,080	172,398,080	165,588,529	165,588,529
Loan to subsidiary	-	4,950,000	-	4,950,000
Investment property	247,212	247,212	247,212	247,212
Property and equipment	5,041,839	503,621	5,174,279	537,431
Total assets	228,690,586	218,876,040	221,753,005	209,760,450
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
Equity				
Share capital	54,472,000	54,472,000	54,472,000	54,472,000
Legal reserve	11,031,792	11,031,792	10,210,339	10,210,339
General reserve	7,070,404	7,070,404	7,070,404	7,070,404
Investment revaluation reserve	(2,918,454)	(2,918,454)	(3,435,829)	(3,435,829)
Retained earnings	65,587,023	65,178,436	61,992,435	61,583,848
Total equity due to shareholders of the Parent Company	135,242,764	134,834,177	130,309,349	129,900,762
LIABILITIES				
Other liabilities	3,296,752	2,907,863	1,008,237	436,652
Income tax payable	162,237	106,901	169,383	-
Loans and borrowings	89,988,833	81,027,098	90,268,036	79,423,036
	93,447,822	84,041,862	91,443,656	79,859,888
Total equity and liabilities	228,690,586	218,876,039	221,753,005	209,760,450
Net assets per share	0.330	0.329	0.318	0.317

UN-AUDITED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Group 2024 RO	Parent Company 2024RO	Group 2023 RO	Parent Company 2023 RO
INCOME				
Dividend income	1,057,396	997,131	1,187,293	1,075,781
Net revenue of a subsidiary	45,000	-	96,521	-
Unrealised (loss)/gain on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(96,246)	(83,802)	(578,475)	(585,144)
Interest income	17,985	175,154	38,735	154,713
Other income	79,251	23,069	25,076	22,300
Total income	1,103,386	1,111,552	769,150	667,650
EXPENSES				
Administrative and general expenses	(380,836)	(319,794)	(467,275)	(309,983)
Depreciation	(41,238)	(16,665)	(42,110)	(15,898)
Total expenses	(422,074)	(336,459)	(509,385)	(325,881)
Operating (loss)/profit	681,312	775,093	259,765	341,769
Finance costs	(1,585,025)	(1,438,292)	(1,409,452)	(1,236,300)
Deferred finance cost	(23,729)	(23,729)	(32,212)	(32,212)
Share of loss from subsidiaries	-	(240,514)	-	(255,156)
Share of profit from associates	4,187,069	4,187,069	3,878,344	3,878,344
Profit for the period before tax	3,259,626	3,259,627	2,696,445	2,696,445
Income tax	(106,901)	(106,901)	-	-
Profit for the period	3,152,725	3,152,726	2,696,445	2,696,445
Other comprehensive income(loss)				
Items that will not be subsequently reclassified to profit or loss				
Changes in fair value of financial assets through other comprehensive income	920,074	-	(40,003)	-
Share of other comprehensive (loss)/profit of subsidiaries	-	920,074	-	(40,003)
Share of other comprehensive profit(loss) of associates	(750,681)	(750,681)	108,981	108,981
Other comprehensive income for the period	169,393	169,393	68,978	68,978
Total comprehensive income for the period	3,322,118	3,322,118	2,765,423	2,765,423
Basic earnings per share	0.008	0.008	0.007	0.007

Oman's growth outlook is favourable: IMF

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Monday said that Oman's near- to medium-term growth outlook is favourable, with risks to the outlook being broadly balanced.

An IMF staff team, led by Cesar Serra, visited Muscat from April 30 to May 8, 2024, to discuss economic and financial developments, the outlook, and the country's policy priorities. At the conclusion of the mission to Oman, Serra issued a statement.

In his statement, Serra said, "The near- to medium-term outlook is favourable, and risks to the outlook are broadly balanced. On the upside, growth and fiscal and external positions would be strengthened by a surge in oil



prices, driven by supply and demand imbalances, and accelerated reforms under Oman Vision 2040, along with committed investments from regional partners. Downside risks to the outlook stem from further inten-

sification of geopolitical tensions in the region, an abrupt global slowdown, particularly in China, and higher-for-longer global interest rates."

He noted that Oman's economic activity continues to ex-

pand, while inflation remains low. Despite OPEC+ oil production cuts, the sultanate's real GDP grew by 1.3% in 2023, driven by the expansion of non-hydrocarbon activities.

"Economic growth is expected

Economic growth is expected to remain moderate at 0.9% in 2024, due to extended oil production cuts in the first half of this year before accelerating to 4.1% in 2025

CESAR SERRA

to remain moderate at 0.9% in 2024, due to extended oil production cuts in the first half of this year before accelerating to 4.1% in 2025, supported by a rebound in hydrocarbon activity following the expected relaxation

of OPEC+ quotas," Serra added.

According to the IMF, Oman's non-hydrocarbon growth is projected to increase to 2.6% in 2024 and 3.2% in 2025 - up from 2.1% in 2023 - driven by continued reforms and investment projects. Average headline inflation decelerated further from 0.9% in 2023 to nil during January-March 2024 (year-over-year), reflecting continued easing of core, food, and transport inflation.

Serra noted that favourable oil prices and sustained reform efforts continue to shore up Oman's fiscal and external positions. "The fiscal balance recorded a surplus of 6.6% of GDP in 2023 and is forecast to remain in surplus over the medium term, supported by comfortable hydrocarbon re-

ceipts, increasing non-hydrocarbon revenues, and continued fiscal discipline."

He acknowledged that the Omani government's debt as a share of GDP was further reduced to 36.5% in 2023 from 40.9% in 2022, as the government continued to use part of the fiscal surplus to prepay its debt.

According to Serra, the sultanate's banking sector remains resilient. Bank capital and liquidity ratios, as well as profitability, continue at comfortable levels amid strong asset quality.

"Omani banks' net foreign asset position turned positive in December 2023 for the first time since 2014 due to rising investments in foreign securities, while credit to the private sector continued to expand," he added.



Oman showcases bold energy transition vision at World Hydrogen Summit 2024

Rotterdam, Netherlands - Oman is marking its participation in the World Hydrogen Summit 2024 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands from May 13-15, by showcasing its bold vision to become one of the largest exporters of low carbon hydrogen by 2030.

The World Hydrogen Summit in Rotterdam is the largest and most senior global hydrogen event, and Oman is participating in its biggest edition to date. The high-level Omani delegation includes senior officials of Oman's Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Transport, the Sultanate's Embassy in the Netherlands, alongside a consortium of Oman's biggest hydrogen-focused players including Hydrom and OQ Alternative Energy.

In addition to an impressive pavilion steeped in true Omani hospitality, Oman's participation at the summit includes a carefully planned roster of activities including speaking opportunities, high-level discussions and meetings as well as site-visits to green hydrogen projects in Amsterdam.

Throughout these engagements, the Omani delegation will focus on presenting the country's ongoing efforts to build a full-

fledged ecosystem that capitalises on its strategic position and unlimited potential to become a rising global hub on the green hydrogen map.

As the cornerstone of Oman's aggressive energy transition plan, Hydrom has secured over \$49bn to produce 1.38mn tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2030. This significant milestone, achieved after the successful second round of green hydrogen block auctions in Dhofar, marks the completion of Phase A of Oman's Hydrogen Strategy.

In preparation, Oman is ramping up its infrastructure, planning to install 40mn solar panels, 2,000 wind turbines, and 650 electrolyzers by 2030 to power its green hydrogen ambitions

Speaking on Oman's successful participation in the World Hydrogen Summit, H E Mohsin al Hadhrami, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, said, "Oman's participation in one of the most prominent forums for the hydrogen sector globally reinforces our commitment to join world efforts to create a sustainable energy future and aligns with our national strategy for energy transforma-

tion and environmental preservation which aims to reduce emissions without affecting economic growth and global energy supply."

Oman has developed a roadmap aimed at achieving Net Zero by 2050. This strategic planning has facilitated the establishment of a solid foundation for a green hydrogen sector, serving as a cornerstone for driving investment opportunities to the country, together with over 50,000 sqkm of land earmarked for green hydrogen and renewable projects, an investment friendly ecosystem and by our local capabilities and expertise.

Oman's ambitious plans aim to produce more than 1mn tonnes of hydrogen by 2030, and approximately 8mn tonnes by 2050, with expected investments amounting to \$140bn.

"The sultanate has also begun setting controls for the exploration and production of geological hydrogen, and is close to completing a feasibility study for blue hydrogen, which is considered a type of low-carbon hydrogen that contributes to reducing emissions of some sectors that Oman seeks to attract," Hadhrami said.

CBO raises RO33mn via treasury bills

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) on Monday announced the issuance of government treasury bills worth RO33mn. The treasury bills were issued in two maturity periods - 28 days and 91 days.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO8mn, for a maturity period of 28 days.

The average accepted price reached RO99.645 for every RO100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO99.645. The average discount rate and the average yield

reached 4.6276% and 4.6441%, respectively.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO25mn, for a maturity period of 91 days.

The average accepted price reached RO98.747 for every RO100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO98.730. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.0265% and 5.0903%, respectively.

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, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The CBO 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. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures.



NATIONAL ALUMINIUM PRODUCTS COMPANY S.A.O.G

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR THE Quarter ENDED 31 March 2024

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of National Aluminium Products Company SAOG (NAPCO), I present the unaudited financial statements for the quarter ended 31 March 2024 and an overview of the Company's performance.

Economic environment:

Economic recovery and growth projections under current geopolitical situation remains below pre-pandemic averages with persistent core inflation despite decline in global headline inflation.

Performance Review:

The financial performance of National Aluminium Products Company SAOG (Parent Company) and Novel Aluminium Products Company LLC (Subsidiary Company), collectively represented as "Group", during the first quarter of 2024 as compared to the same period in 2023 is summarized below:

	RO 000s			
	Group		Parent	
Particulars	YTD 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2024	YTD 2023
Revenue	5,345	8,697	5,321	8,602
Net loss before taxation	(600)	(511)	(586)	(563)
Net loss after tax	(600)	(427)	(585)	(478)

The Group realized revenues of RO 5.345 million compared to RO 8.697 million during the same period last year representing a 38% decrease. A net loss after tax of RO (0.512) million is reported, compared to a loss of RO (0.427) million during the same period last year. Total dispatch quantity decreased by 36% and the LME price dropped by 8% compared to the first quarter of the previous year. The Company continues to face severe working capital shortages and significant delays in collections exacerbated by the high cost of borrowing. Considering the Company's financial challenges, the board decided to reduce sitting fees for its members.

Future outlook:

The economies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are projected to grow at 3.2% in 2024, slower than the previous year, in the face of lower oil and gas earnings and a global economic slowdown, according to the new World Bank Gulf Economic Update (GEU).

The Company is exploring all options to reinstate its capital, enhance its working capital facilities and secure the raw material at reasonable cost and palatable credit terms. Management also strives to develop new markets and widen its customer base with high yield and good margin opportunities.

Acknowledgement and Appreciation:

We are grateful to our honorable shareholders for their faith and support, to our clients, vendors, banks, regulatory authorities, MSX and CMA and to Management and staff for their loyalty, hard work, dedication and contribution in achieving our goals.

We express our gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tareq bin Taimour and his wise government for continued support, encouragement, and guidance in

leading Oman to achieve greater progress and prosperity.

For & on behalf of the Board of Directors
National Aluminium Products Co. S.A.O.G.

Dr. Zakia Hassan Al-Naseeb
Chairperson

	Group	Parent
	Unaudited period ended 31 March 2024 RO	Unaudited period ended 31 March 2023 RO
ASSETS		
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	10,185,169	10,331,218
Intangible assets	40,850	46,922
Right-of-use asset	935,307	945,234
Investment property	400,000	400,000
Investment in subsidiary	-	-
Deferred tax asset	215,834	215,834
Total non-current assets	11,777,160	11,939,208
Current assets		
Inventories	2,191,343	2,951,717
Trade and other receivables	7,007,000	6,713,910
Cash and cash equivalents	102,826	187,232
Total current assets	9,301,169	9,852,859
Total assets	21,078,329	21,792,067
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Equity:		
Share capital	857,145	857,145
Legal reserve	-	-
Revaluation reserve	1,307,625	1,356,219
(Accumulated losses)/retained earnings	(4,961,121)	(5,517,052)
Total equity	(3,347,816)	(2,747,757)
LIABILITIES		
Non-current liabilities		
Term Loan	8,576,570	2,620,000
Lease liability	1,092,983	1,091,107
Employees' end of service benefits	325,655	329,931
Total non-current liabilities	9,995,208	4,041,038
Current liabilities		
Lease liability	66,781	66,781
Borrowings	7,823,364	13,448,653
Trade and other payables	6,540,792	6,983,352
Total current liabilities	14,430,937	20,498,786
Total liabilities	24,426,145	24,539,824
Total equity and liabilities	21,078,329	21,792,067
Net assets per share	(0.391)	(0.321)

	Group	Parent
	Unaudited period ended 31 March 2024 RO	Unaudited period ended 31 March 2023 RO
Revenue	4,682,555	7,748,984
Scrap sales	662,921	947,994
Cost of sales	(5,291,672)	(8,287,664)
Gross Profit	53,804	409,314
Other income	30,539	5,701
Expenses:		
General and administrative expenses	(206,695)	(300,110)
Selling and distribution expenses	(134,331)	(290,950)
Allowance for expected credit losses	-	(29,074)
Net finance costs	(343,376)	(305,795)
Loss before tax	(600,059)	(510,914)
Income tax	-	84,393
Loss for the period	(600,059)	(426,521)
Other comprehensive income for the period	-	-
Total Comprehensive loss for the period	(600,059)	(426,521)
Basic loss per share	(0.280)	(0.051)

NOTE

The Company does not have items under other comprehensive income.

Certain comparative figures have been reclassified to confirm to presentation adopted in these financial statements.

The complete accounts will be sent to any shareholder who requests them either in Arabic or English as required within 7 days of receipt of the request.

All-new 2024 Kia Sorento now in Oman

The all-new 2024 Kia Sorento - one of the much-awaited Kia models in Oman - has arrived and made an impact in the sultanate soon after its arrival.

The all-new Sorento with its impressive profile, build quality and performance is designed to make lasting impressions.

The all-new Sorento is a perfect companion for adventure enthusiasts looking forward to escaping the city's routine with a drive by the country side.

Equipped with the advantage of space and comfort, the Sorento packs more punch with its impressive features that offer owners and families alike several opportunities to realise their desires.

The 2024 Kia Sorento is designed to draw attention with its stylish LED headlamps, LED rear combination lamps, LED front and rear fog lamps and LED daytime running lights.

The Sorento's 19-inch machine finished alloy wheels and panoramic roof, give it a style statement that makes the bold SUV a completely desirable model.

The 2024 Sorento's front design, has a strong yet sensual



look emphasizing its pronounced look and stance. The hood sculpted with a stronger sense of volume provides an upscale SUV image. The three-dimensional radiator grille and Kia's next-generation signature vertical Star-map DRL graphics emphasise the progressive and high-tech SUV image. The rugged and confident front mask with a skid plate that harmonizes with the boldly proportioned wide bumper design. A wide & technical-shaped rear skid plate in harmony with black cladding realizes a solid SUV presence. A new star-map graphic that connects the two vertical tail lamps reinforces the new Kia design identity.

The 2024 Sorento interior is spacious, appealing and emphasises wideness with a horizontal layout. The interior includes a high-tech image through a panoramic curved display and a switchable Keyboard.

Info/Climate switchable control provides convenient and efficient

usability by applying Info/Climate switchable controller. Horizontal air vent creates a wide sense of space with a horizontally arranged air vent design. Passengers in the 2024 Sorento can benefit with leather seats, multi-colour ambient mood lighting, rear side manual curtains and more.

The all-new Sorento makes moments fun and exciting with its range of safety features and technology that includes anti-lock braking system, electronic stability programme, vehicle stability management, downhill brake control, hill-start assist control, driver and passenger front airbags, blind spot collision avoidance assist, lane keeping assist, reverse parking collision avoidance assist, forward collision avoidance assist, lane following assist and more.

The Sorento packs a punch with its powerful 268hp, 3.5L engine that is paired to an 8-speed automatic transmission.

The highly capable SUV sports a 2815mm wheelbase with 176mm ground clearance, allowing enthusiasts to make the most of their adventurous journeys.

ahlibank holds branch managers' meeting to discuss achievements and strategies of Q1



In a recent esteemed gathering aimed to discuss and highlight key points, achievements, operations, and overarching strategy, ahlibank held its branch managers meeting for the first quarter of the year 2024.

The meeting acted as a unique platform for employees

to share thoughts, opinions, and insight on various topics regarding the performance of ahlibank.

The gathering highlighted discerning topics such as branch control, product development, customer experience, central operations, audit, marketing, and more. Powered by its extensive

branch network established nationwide, the branch managers provided insight into their joint efforts, exploring new avenues to boost customer experience and address the various strategies to implement.

During the gathering, Muneer al Balushi, AGM - Head of Retail

Distribution, commended the various team's efforts, saying, "Our commitment to excellence remains steadfast, as we gather to highlight our journey over the past three months and plan for our future in delivering unparalleled service, thereby instilling trust and adding value to our

customers.

"Through our collaborative efforts and shared vision, we will seize opportunities, and continue to elevate our customer's banking experience; meeting their needs and surpassing their expectations. ahlibank will continue to be the partner in excellence by

setting new standards and enhancing its presence throughout the country."

The meeting ended with distribution of awards to the best-performing branches. The several ahlibank teams received recognition for their efforts in propelling the bank forwards.

ESL FACEIT creates new Fortnite with Unreal Editor

ESL FACEIT Group (EFG), the leading esports and video game entertainment company, recently announced ESL Featuring Fortnite, an all-new competitive format built in Fortnite and powered by Unreal Editor for Fortnite (UEFN).

"By pairing the creative capabilities of Epic's UEFN tools and Creator Economy with EFG's industry-leading expertise building world-class competitive ecosystems at scale, we're creating a groundbreaking experience within Fortnite," said Rodrigo Samwell, Chief Commercial Officer, EFG.

"We're not just building a game - we're developing a self-sustaining competitive gaming platform."

ESL Featuring Fortnite will offer more ways to compete, watch, and win through a reimagined experience built in Fortnite.

Let's Read Children's Writing Competition ends with award ceremony

Teachers, parents and winners of the 18th Let's Read Children's Writing Competition came together for the award ceremony at the Let's Read Bookshop in Oman Avenues Mall on Saturday.

Over the years, Let's Read has chosen many different themes and subjects for the students to write about. Winners have seen their work published in the press and in the five books that have been published of winning entries to the competition.

They are: Stories of Our Ancestors, Tales with a Twist, My Homeown, Stories from Oman and My Favourite Place in Oman.

Sometimes the competition has focused on fiction writing, encouraging the students to use their imagination and create exciting stories. 'This year, we asked the students to write a factual piece on heroism. It involved possible research into the lives of inspiring historical personalities, or famous individuals in the public eye, both at home or abroad. The third option was for the students to write about a someone known to them, someone who had had a great impact on the life of the writer' said Jane Jaffer, founder of the annual Children's Writing Competition.

Before the students could determine who they would choose to write about in the 'My Hero' competition, it was necessary for them to define what it means to be a hero.

Is it a person who shows great courage in the face of adversity?

An air ambulanceman who risks life and limb to rescue others from danger, as we have seen in Oman during the recent floods? Is a hero someone who has achieved great things and inspired others?

A child who has courageously fought against disease or disability? A nun who has taken a vow of poverty and devoted her life to others, no matter what the consequences may be?

Or is it a scientist who has changed the world by inventing something beneficial to mankind? Many of us have witnessed journalists on our TV screens, risking their lives to report the truth. It takes extraordinary courage for a young girl,



Best entry from school: Yohan Choi, Mohammed Zaarour, Ilias A Lamki, Izma Ifran, Renad al Busaidi, Emmanuel Rajiv

1st prize: Dania al Habsi, Fatima al Mandhari (from Rustaq) Lena Bazzi, Muhammed Narmawala and Loay al Maskari

2nd prize: Maha Haider Fuad, Kashvi Verma, Vihaan Tiwari and Malak al Shidi

3rd prize: Maryam al Nomani, Johann Gladson, Hrithik S Kumar, Chithiri Binulaka and Azlan Asad

who has been shot, to continue to fight for education for girls.

Let's Read received nearly 200 entries from 17 different schools and the nine judges had a difficult task deciding on the winners.

One of the judges, writer and poet, Roshni Goyate, said she was blown away by the raw talent and enjoyed reading about the inspirational characters chosen by the students.

The judges were: Roshni Goyate, Marijke Talyarkhan, Nadia al Taii, Fatma Mae saidkki, Dana Sarhan, Nalini Subramanian, Sue Tappin, Anisha Bansal and Rumaiha al Busaidi.

Jane said, "It would not have been possible to hold the writing competition without the financial support of our sponsors. We would like to thank Renaissance Services and the London Speaker Bureau for their assistance.

"We have been able to purchase laptops, cameras, smart watches, notebooks and pens with the sponsorship money given to us."

Toyota Gazoo Racing clinches first-place

Toyota Gazoo Racing (TGR) clinched the first place in the 6 Hours of Imola, the second round of the 2024 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC), after an incredible team effort.

Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and Nyck De Vries took victory in the No. 7 Toyota GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar despite turbulent conditions thanks to faultless driving and intelligent strategy on a day of twists and turns among a 19-strong vehicle line-up.

This round marks TGR's first outing at the 4,909km Autodromo Internazionale Enzo e Dino Ferrari, located around 40 km south-east of Bologna in the Emilia-Romagna region. It replaces Monza as Italy's representative on the 2024 schedule, the circuit boasting its own illustrious motorsports history since its opening in 1953 and hosting of three World Championship endurance races throughout the years.

"Congratulations to Conway, Kobayashi and De Vries for battling it out to the top of the podium in the team's first participation in 6 Hours of Imola," Nobuyuki Takemura, Chief Representative of Middle East and Central Asia Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation,

"The Toyota GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar continues to prove itself across the world's most demanding racetracks and increasingly staunch competi-



tion. Toyota's ongoing motorsports participation allows us to shape a more sustainable future fueled by our passion for developing 'ever-better cars' to ensure that no one is left behind. My most sincere thanks go to our teams who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make this

most recent win a reality, as well as every Toyota fan whose support fuels our ongoing success."

The TGR crew used smart strategy and pace around their perfectly executed pit stops to gain positions throughout the day. Conway, whose fighting spirit was on full display in the

opening laps, expertly navigated the narrow Imola circuit to move into the top three before handing the No 7 Toyota GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar to De Vries at the first driver change.

He put intense pressure on the competition before rain and different strategies in the fourth

hour. De Vries made an opportunistic move to take second and moments later took the lead.

Rain intensified during the safety car period, particularly in the final sector. When the green flags waved, TGR immediately pitted for wet tyres, allowing it to lap significantly faster than its

Hypercar rivals. He soon emerged into a lead of more than 20 seconds as the race entered its final 90 minutes.

In the last hour, Kobayashi made his penultimate pit stop and quickly returned to the front. But with less fuel on board than his rivals, the No.7 Toyota

GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar had to drive efficiently going into the final stretch, setting up a tense showdown for victory. He fought valiantly to hold onto the lead under intense pressure to win in Italy for the second successive season, by a mere 7.081secs.

Over the years, Toyota has been participating in many different forms of motorsports, including Formula One, the World Endurance Championship (WEC), and the Nürburgring 24 Hours endurance race.

Toyota's participation in these events was overseen by separate entities within the company until April 2015, when Toyota established TGR, to consolidate all of its motorsport's activities under one in-house brand. Representing Toyota's belief that 'the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,' TGR highlights the role of motorsports as a fundamental pillar of Toyota's commitment to making 'ever-better' cars.

Harnessing years of experience gained under the extreme conditions of various motorsports events, TGR aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone.

The TGR team will be competing for a sixth consecutive victory at the Le Mans 24 Hours, the highlight of the WEC season set to take place on June 10 and 11.



MoE runs practical classes in curriculum digitisation

The Ministry of Education (MoE) has conducted trial application sessions for digital books for Arabic language and science subjects at Al Mahamed School for Basic Education, as part of the follow-up to the trial application of the curriculum digitisation project for grades 1-12.

The sessions were conducted in the presence of Youssef al Ajili, CEO of B B Oman Company; Dr Yahya al Harithi, Director-General of Curriculum Development,

Chairman of the main committee supervising the project; Dr Ali al Jahouri, Director-General of Education in Muscat Governorate, and a number of officials from the Ministry of Education and B B Oman Company.

The visiting team expressed their joy with the implementation of the project due to its positive impact on motivating students and their excitement towards learning. They also found great interaction from students within

the classroom, which contributed to increasing their motivation, and also facilitated the effort and time for teachers in providing digital contents that support the curriculum.

Some developmental aspects were also presented to support the activation of the curriculum digitisation project in the school environment through the dialogue that took place between the visiting team and the school's administrative and teaching staff.

Bestune B70S stands out with cutting-edge technology

The Bestune B70S, a stylish coupe SUV, is setting new standards in its category with exceptional handling. It comes with two engine options: a powerful 2.0-litre turbocharged variant or a smaller 1.5-litre option.

The 2.0-litre model, equipped with a six-speed transmission, offers 215 HP and 340 torque. Developed on the cutting-edge FMA architecture, the B70S features an array of active safety technologies for a safe and comfortable journey.

A spokesperson for GGS LLC said, "The Bestune B70S SUV represents a fusion of sporty sophistication and expansive comfort. Boasting a comprehensive array of safety features and state-of-the-art technology, it offers a driving experience that is both safe and innovative.

"The vehicle's ample seating and smart connectivity enhance its appeal. Most importantly, the B70S stands out for its exceptional control and stability, offering a driving experience that is as assured as it is comfortable."



Spanning 4,555mm in length, 1,850mm in width, and 1,515mm in height, with a wheelbase of 2,750mm, the B70S is crafted to stand out. Its physique resembles a streamlined coupe SUV, giving it a nimble and modern look.

The front boasts a sturdy design with an expansive trapezoidal lower grille and eye-catching headlights, making for a striking appearance. The rear's broad, flat tail adds to the vehicle's sporty vibe, resulting in

a design that is as fashionable as it is practical.

Complementing with a touch of luxury and convenience, the SUV comes equipped with a range of features like a panoramic sunroof, combined LED headlights and daytime running lights, rhythmic LED tail lights, and automatic headlights. Additionally, the vehicle includes an electric adjustment switch for the external rear-view mirrors, which also automatically fold.

Other intelligent amenities include rain-sensing technology that automatically closes the sunroof, rear window heating and defrosting, a front windshield intelligent camera, a rear wiper, and welcome lights for the main driver.

The new B70S features safety attributes such front airbags, front seat airbag, side air curtain, electronic stability program (ESP), electrical park brake, automatic parking (AUTO HOLD), anti-lock Brake System (ABS), Electronic Braking Force Distribution (EBD/EBV), Emergency Brake Assist (BA), Traction Control System (TCS/ASR/TRC), Hill Assist Control (HAC), front parking radar, rear parking radar, 360° panoramic image.

Offering supreme comfort, the interior of the B70S has a top-grade feel and offers customised leather, driver's seat six-direction power adjustment, front passenger manual four-direction seat, heated front seats, driver's seat memory, automatic rear sliding of driver's seat.

Lulu expands retail footprint in Oman with 30th store in Al Ansab

To further expand its presence in the Sultanate of Oman, prominent retailer in the region Lulu Group has unveiled its latest retail destination in the country.

Sheikh Faisal Abdullah al Rawas, chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry (OCCI) officially inaugurated the store, which is also 30th in Oman at Al Ansab in the august presence of H E Amit Narang, Indian Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman; Brig Jamal Saeed al Taie, Director General of Financial Affairs, Royal Oman Police (ROP); other senior officials from the ROP; Yusuff Ali M A, Chairman of Lulu Group and other dignitaries.

During the inauguration ceremony, Sheikh Rawas empha-



sised Oman's commitment to being an attractive destination for investors and its favourable business environment. The government's policies actively en-

courage and welcome large-scale projects, such as Lulu, to invest and thrive in the region. During the event, he presented a copy of the latest edition of the

Al Ghorfa magazine to Yusuff Ali. Spanning over 14,000sqm approximately, the latest shopping destination offers enriching shopping experience to the citi-

zens and residents of Al Ansab and its surrounding areas.

Special features of Hypermarket include an emphasis on healthy and diet food choices, an

extensive range of 'Free From' foods, pet foods, a seafood section that also extends to freshly made sushi and grilled fish, premium meats and an expansive

imported product range.

There will be a global spread of fresh fruit and vegetables along with a wide choice of freshly made items, from fresh-squeezed juices to fresh-baked breads and cakes. Lulu Hypermarket offerings also include latest fashion, beauty products, electronics & IT Products, home appliances, sports, luggage, stationery and much more.

Lulu Al Ansab also hosts fine selection of brands that includes banks, money exchanges, ATMs, coffee shops and restaurants, fitness centre, pharmacy, perfume shops, Funtazmo Children's Amusement centre, optical centre and other amenities making it a complete retail and entertainment destination in the area.

Russia: Putin replaces Shoygu with Andrei Belousov as defence minister

Moscow, Russia - Russian President Vladimir Putin decided on Sunday to dismiss Sergey Shoygu as defence minister in a rare Cabinet shake-up.

Shoygu, a longtime ally of the president, had been holding the post since 2012.

According to a decree published on the Kremlin's website, Putin appointed Shoygu as secretary of Russia's Security Council and recommended Andrei Belousov, a former deputy prime minister who specialises in economics, for his post.

Commenting on Putin's decision, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said a civilian official will assume the post of head of the Ministry of Defence due to the need to introduce innovations in its work.

Belousov will also address the task of facilitating the integration of the defence economy into the country's economy.

The previous head of the Security Council, Nikolay Patrushev, has been appointed to a new position that will be announced in the coming days, Peskov said.

Other ministers responsible for various aspects of security as well as the foreign minister will be the same as in the previous Cabinet,



Andrei Belousov, a former deputy prime minister, has his specialisation in economics

inet, he noted.

Russia's parliament will consider candidates for ministerial posts next week.

Who is Andrey Belousov?

Belousov served as first deputy prime minister in the previous

Cabinet, overseeing Russia's economic development.

He was born on March 17, 1959 in Moscow into the family of Ram Belousov, a Soviet scholar-economist who played a role in the economic reform of the 1960s.

In 1981, he graduated with

honours from Russia's renowned Moscow State University with a degree in economics and cybernetics, earning a doctorate in economics in 2006.

From 1981 to 2000, Belousov focused on scientific research, holding various positions at state research institutions. In 2000, he

became the general director of the Centre for Macroeconomic Analysis and Short-term Forecasting, which served the state's practical needs.

Simultaneously, he served as a freelance adviser to the head of the Russian government and collaborated with the Centre for Strategic Research on Russia's development programme until 2010.

From 2006 to 2008, he was the deputy minister of economic development and trade, followed by heading the Department of Economics and Finance in the

as deputy governor at the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. From 2013 to 2015, he worked at the presidential administration as Putin's adviser for economic issues.

In 2020, Belousov was appointed as first deputy prime minister, serving until May 7, when the government automatically resigned following the presidential inauguration.

During Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin's treatment for a coronavirus infection from April 30 to May 19, 2020, Belousov performed the duties of the head of

Besides introducing innovations in the work, Belousov will also address the task of facilitating integration of the defence economy into the country's economy, according to Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Paskov

the government.

Belousov is married for the second time to journalist Larisa Avdeyeva and has a son named Pavel from his previous marriage.

He has never served in the army and has no known connections with the military domain.

Anadolu Agency

UAE tops global fibre connectivity

Dubai, UAE - The UAE has once again been recognised as the global leader in Fibre to the Home (FTTH) penetration. This marks the eighth consecutive year the country has held this top position with a penetration rate of 99.3 per cent, as reported by the FTTH Council in its latest annual report.

The report analysed data from 20 countries that have exceeded 50 per cent FTTH availability and compared global statistics on fibre optic network penetration. It placed the UAE above Singapore (97.1 per cent), Hong Kong (95.3 per cent), China (92.9 per cent), and South Korea (91.5 per cent).

The ranking solidifies the UAE's position as a global leader in high-speed fibre connectivity and underscores the vision of the nation's leadership to prioritise next-generation digital infrastructure. With its commitment to digital innovation and interconnectivity, e& UAE has played an integral part in realising the nation's connectivity ambitions.

WAM



Death toll from heavy rains, floods in Brazil rises to 144

Bogota, Colombia - The death toll from floods caused by heavy rains in Brazil has risen to 144, authorities said on Sunday.

Following heavy rains that have been affecting the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul since last week, loss of life and property is steadily increasing.

According to the state's civil defence agency, 125 people are still missing.

The number of injured has risen to 800, and more than 2.1mn people have been affected.

Additionally, the statement noted that more than 620,000 people have been displaced.

At least 81,000 people have been accommodated in

churches, schools and sports halls as search and rescue operations continue following the disaster.

Rio Grande do Sul Gov. Eduardo Leite in a statement on May 3 noted there were still areas that officials could not reach.

"We are going through an extremely exceptional situation. This is not just a critical event; it is the most devastating event in the history of the state," he said.

Leite announced a 'state of disaster' for 180 days due to the magnitude of the tragedy and highlighted efforts to evacuate victims.

Anadolu Agency

Ukrainian attack claims at least 15 lives in city of Belgorod, says Russia

Belgorod, Russia - At least 15 people have been killed after a 10-story residential apartment building partially collapsed in Russia's southwestern city of Belgorod, Russian news agency TASS reported on Monday, citing the Russian Emergencies Ministry's statement.

According to the report, the building collapsed following a 'Ukrainian attack' on Sunday.

"Rescuers found another body. In all, 15 bodies have been already recovered from the rubble," the statement reads.

Belgorod and its suburbs came under massive shelling by the Ukrainian armed forces earlier on Sunday. Fragments of a downed Tochka-U tactical missile damaged a 10-storey residential building, causing one of its sections to collapse.

Moreover, search and rescue operations at a partially collapsed 10-storey residential apartment building in Russia's southwestern city of Belgorod have been completed, a spokesperson for the Russian Emergencies Ministry, TASS reported.

"The search and rescue operations and debris removal in the city of Belgorod have been completed," the spokesperson



Rescuers working at the scene of a collapsed residential building in Belgorod, Russia on Sunday (Xinhua)

stated. "Seventeen people were rescued and unfortunately we have recovered 15 bodies from under the rubble."

According to TASS, Belgorod and its suburbs came under massive shelling by the Ukrainian armed forces on Sunday. Fragments of a downed Tochka-U tactical missile damaged a 10-

storey residential building, causing one of its sections to collapse.

Earlier, the Emergencies Ministry said that 12 people, including two children, were rescued from the site, Al Jazeera reported.

Belgorod Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov posted a video to Telegram showing a collapsed

building with a large hole in it.

"Following direct shell fire on a residential building... the entire entrance, from the tenth to the ground floor, collapsed," Gladkov said, condemning 'massive bombings' by the Ukrainian army.

The Russian Ministry of Defence later wrote on social media

that the building had been struck by fragments of a downed Tochka-U TRC missile. It also said that air defences had shot down several more rockets over the Belgorod region, as well as two drones that were destroyed in a separate incident, Al Jazeera reported.

ANI

Catalan separatist parties lose majority in regional elections in Spain

Oviedo, Spain - Separatist parties in Spain's northeastern Catalonia region lost their majority in elections on Sunday, with the Socialist Party winning the biggest vote.

"This opens a new era for all Catalan residents - whatever they think, whatever language they speak and wherever they come from," said Socialist candidate and former Spanish Health Minister Salvador Illa in his victory speech.

However, with 42 seats, the Socialist Party still falls significantly short of the 68-seat majority needed to form a government in the regional Parliament. The

clearest path to governability seems to be a left-wing coalition with Socialists teaming up with the left-wing separatist party ERC, which lost 13 seats compared to 2021, and the far-left party Sumar.

Yet that path is far from guaranteed. Tough negotiations are likely to ensue in the coming days and weeks.

While the left-wing parties achieved a majority with exactly 68 seats, overall Catalonia's political landscape shifted away from the independence movement and toward the right wing.

With more political conces-



sions to Catalonia like political amnesty from Spain's central government, the Socialist Party's representation grew by nine seats compared to the last elections in 2021. But the conservative Spain-centred Popular Party saw the most dramatic jump, moving from three seats to 15. The far-right Vox party remained the same, winning 11 seats. The far-left Sumar/Comunes dropped by two seats. The liberal party Ciudadanos disappeared.

As Carles Puigdemont, Catalonia's former president who has been self-exiled from Spain since 2017, pointed out, his party

Junts was the only mainstream separatist group that gained any seats - with its representation increasing by just three seats.

The far-right separatist party Aliança Catalana also broke onto the map, winning its first two seats. Like Spain's national parliament, Catalonia's parliament is highly fractured with an uncertain future.

In his speech on Sunday, Puigdemont called on the ERC to find a way to make the exiled leader president and to 'build a solid government whose obedience is purely to Catalonia'.

Anadolu Agency

WAR ON GAZA

360,000 Palestinians leave Rafah

Israeli bombardments and other evacuation orders have created more displacement, says UNRWA

Gaza, Palestine - The number of Palestinians who were forced to leave Rafah due to attacks by Israeli forces rose to 360,000, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees said on Monday.

"Nearly 360,000 people have fled #Rafah since the first evacuation order a week ago," UNRWA stated on X.

"Meanwhile, in north #Gaza bombardments & other evacuation orders have created more displacement & fear for thousands of families," it added.

The agency further underlined: "There's nowhere to go. There's NO safety without a #ceasefire."

Israel has waged an unrelenting offensive on the Gaza Strip since a cross-border attack by Hamas last October 7 which killed some 1,200 people.

More than 35,000 Palestinians have since been killed in Gaza, mostly women and children, and 78,400 others injured, according to Palestinian health authorities.

Over seven months into the Israeli war, vast swathes of Gaza lay in ruins, pushing 85 per cent of the enclave's population into internal displacement amid a crippling blockade of food, clean water, and medicine, according to the UN.

Israel stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice. An interim ruling in January said it is 'plausible' that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza and ordered Tel Aviv to stop such acts and take



Nearly 360,000 people have fled Rafah since the first evacuation order a week ago

Protection of civilian population plays a very important role in such military action. Two-state solution is the only solution to sustainably resolve the Middle East conflict

CHRISTIAN WAGNER

measures to guarantee that humanitarian assistance is provided to civilians in Gaza.

'Protect civilian lives'

Meanwhile, Germany on Monday urged the protection of civil-

ian lives in Rafah, the southern Gazan city that is home to over 1.4mn refugees and where a 'precise' Israeli military operation is underway.

We think it's 'incredibly difficult' to conduct a large-scale ground offensive in a densely populated city like Rafah. That's why we always appeal that 'the protection of the civilian population plays a very important role

in such military action', deputy Foreign Ministry spokesman Christian Wagner told journalists in Berlin. He reiterated the need for accelerated diplomatic efforts to resolve the Gaza war that began on October 7, 2023.

"Ultimately, we are all united by the goal that we must come back to a political process that ultimately shows a solution to this conflict. In the long term, the

two-state solution is the only solution to sustainably resolve the Middle East conflict," Wagner said.

Earlier on Sunday, the Gaza Health Ministry said at least 500 medical personnel have been killed since the beginning of Israel's war on Gaza, as the world marked International Nurses Day. "Here in Palestine and in Gaza in particular, this

day passes as the Israeli occupation has killed 138 nurses. This year's International Nurses Day is exceptional, and it is our right to name this year the Year of Nursing," ministry spokesperson Khalil al-Daqran said during a news conference on the sidelines of a sit-in organised by nurses at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the city of Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip.

"Nurses, midwives and medical teams are an integral part of the fabric of the Palestinian people. They were the martyrs who played their national and humanitarian role to save the lives of the wounded and the sick," said al-Daqran.

"They fulfilled their professional oath in a year where records were broken in terms of the amount of treatment provided under circumstances where the medical personnel were martyred, injured, displaced in tents or detained in Israeli racist prisons, with the number of medical personnel reaching 500 martyrs, 1,500 wounded and 312 detainees," he added. Al-Daqran called on the 'international community and free people of the world to protect medical personnel and health institutions and to criminalise attacks against them'.

He also urged unions, international organisations and the World Health Organization (WHO) to send medical and nursing teams to support health teams in Gaza.

Anadolu Agency

China demands end to opposition to Palestine's accession to UN

Istanbul, Turkey - Ahead of a possible UN Security Council vote, China on Monday called for an end to opposition to Palestine's accession to the world body.

Extending support to the UN General Assembly's latest resolution over Palestine, China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said Beijing urges 'relevant countries not to continue to stand in opposition to the international community's moral and human conscience'.

China urges countries 'not to further obstruct resolutions on Palestine's accession to the UN', said Wang.

Beijing's renewed support for Palestinian statehood comes after the UN General Assembly on Friday overwhelmingly endorsed a resolution calling for the re-evaluation of Palestine's



UN membership bid and granting additional rights.

The resolution, which was spearheaded by the United Arab Emirates on behalf of the Arab Group, was adopted with 143 member states voting in favour, recommending the Security Council to 'reconsider the matter favourably'.

The US was among nine

countries to oppose it, while 25 others, including the UK, abstained. Palestine applied for full membership in the UN in 2011 but did not receive the necessary support from the Security Council under a US veto. It, however, in 2012 obtained 'permanent observer status'.

In the UN system, memberships are decided by the coun-

cil, and last month, Washington vetoed a bid for full membership of Palestine.

Meanwhile, comparing Israel's war on Gaza to the US atomic bombings of Japan during World War II, US Senator Lindsey Graham argued on Sunday that Israel should do whatever it has to do.

Anadolu Agency

Oxfam warns of 'deadly epidemic outbreak' in Gaza

London, UK - Israel's land operation in Rafah has further worsened the situation, pushing the Gaza Strip to the brink of a 'deadly epidemic outbreak', according to a UK-based charity on Monday.

In a statement, Oxfam warned that the destruction of critical water and sanitation infrastructure by the Israeli forces along with overcrowding, malnutrition, and heat brought a severe risk of epidemic outbreak to Palestinians in the besieged enclave. "The situation is further compounded by the Israeli invasion of Rafah which has forced over 350,000 people to flee to already overcrowded shelters and camps, and food and fuel are running out with the closure of border crossings," it noted.

The charity said at least five of its life-saving water and sanitation projects in the Gaza Strip



had been severely damaged or destroyed in the Israeli attacks since October 7, 2023.

"Israeli attacks since October caused at least US\$210mn worth of damage to Gaza's water and sanitation infrastructure," added Oxfam, citing its staff on the ground that piles of human waste and rivers of sewage in the streets, which 'people are having to jump between'. "They also reported

people having to drink dirty water and children being bitten by insects swarming around the sewage," said the statement, adding conditions are ripe for the outbreak of epidemics including Hepatitis A and cholera. Sally Abi Khalil, Oxfam's Middle East director, described the situation as 'desperate' with so many people in Gaza living in fear.

Anadolu Agency

Australia: Demand for divestment from Israel

Sydney, Australia - Pro-Palestinian student protesters in Australia on Monday called for divestment from Israel. A petition, demanding 'Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions', was launched by students at the University of Sydney (USyd) which has seen pro-Palestinian encampments for many days.

Seeking a meeting with the university officials, the USyd Students for Palestine, said: "We ... demand

that Sydney University disclose all of their ties with Israel, divest from those ties, and sign on to the international Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions statement."

The students particularly expressed their opposition to 'the partnerships our university holds with weapons companies known to be part of the Israeli military's supply chain, including Thales and Lockheed Martin'.

Anadolu Agency

Israel's occupation: 76 years of Palestinian tragedy

Ramallah, Palestine - The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics released a report on Sunday marking the 76th anniversary of the Nakba (Great Catastrophe) indicating that since 1948, approximately 134,000 Palestinians and Arabs have been killed both inside and outside Palestine.

The bureau's report details the grim statistics of death, detention, settlement construction and land confiscation in Palestine coinciding with the anniversary of May 15, 1948.

Since October 7 alone, the start of the Israel-Hamas war, at least 35,034 Palestinians have



been killed in Gaza, with 14,944 being children and 9,849 women.

The bodies of around 7,000 people are yet to be recovered.

In the West Bank, 492 Palestinians have lost their lives due to attacks by Israeli soldiers and Jewish settlers since October 7.

According to data from the

Since 1948, approximately 134,000 Palestinians and Arabs have been killed inside and outside Palestine

Palestinian Prisoners' Society and the Palestinian Authority's Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs, approximately one million people have been detained since 1967.

The number of arrests in the West Bank alone has reached

8,520 since October 7, with some released and others remaining in custody.

As of the end of April, the number of detainees in Israeli prisons had reached 9,400, including 3,600 held without trial.

As of the end of 2022, the number of Israeli military checkpoints and settlements in the West Bank had reached 483, with the settler population reaching 745,467, mainly in Jerusalem. A significant increase in settlement construction was observed in 2023, with Israeli authorities approving plans for more than 18,000 units.

Anadolu Agency

Britain’s Prince Harry ends 3-day Nigeria visit on high note

Lagos, Nigeria - Britain's Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle wrapped up their 3-day visit to Nigeria on Sunday with hopes for global support for the wounded servicemen in one of Africa's largest nations.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex arrived in Nigeria earlier on Friday to promote the Invictus Games, an initiative by Prince Harry to garner global support for wounded-in-action troops and veterans.

“My visit is to uplift their spirit and boost their morale despite

the fact that they have laid down their lives,” Prince Harry said during a courtesy visit to the governor of northwest Kaduna State, Uba Sani.

Before the visit, Prince Harry met wounded troops at a military referral hospital in Kaduna, a flashpoint for terrorist, bandit, and armed gang attacks.

Nigerian forces are currently conducting a special military operation in the state.

Moses Abiimaje, a defence journalist who also covered the royal couple’s visit to Kaduna,



The Duke and Duchess of Sussex arrived in Nigeria on Friday

said he expects the historic visit to trigger global engagements for the wounded veterans.

“Most Nigerians hope that it will culminate in global support for wounded-in-action military personnel, those who have paid the supreme price, and veterans who fought to ensure we have peace not only in Nigeria but in Africa,” he told Anadolu.

On Saturday, Harry and Meghan engaged in various activities. The Duke of Sussex played a volleyball match with injured soldiers, put together by

the country's chief of defence staff - Team CDS.

Shortly after the match, Nigerian defence chief General Christopher Musa described the Harry and Meghan visit as inspiring.

“It has been a very inspiring experience having the prince in our country. It shows a lot of people show concern about what is happening in our country and the sacrifice our troops are making to provide security to Nigerians,” he said.

Meghan, on the other hand,

attended an event in the capital Abuja for the families of military personnel. There she was treated to traditional dances and African cultural displays.

She said the visit was an eye-opening experience having earlier suggested she found her roots in Nigeria.

The Duchess of Sussex also attended a forum on women in leadership, co-hosted by the head of the World Trade Organization, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in Abuja.

Anadolu Agency

India: Kejriwal to remain Delhi CM

The top court dismissed a plea on seeking the removal of Kejriwal as the CM of Delhi

New Delhi, India - The Supreme Court dismissed a plea on Monday seeking the removal of Arvind Kejriwal as the Chief Minister of Delhi because of his arrest by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) in connection with the Delhi excise policy-linked money laundering case.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta said it cannot go into such issues and it is up to the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi to look into it.

The bench said: “How should we go into all this? Let the LG take action if he wants to... there is no legal right.”

Last week, the bench granted interim bail to Kejriwal in view of the upcoming Lok Sabha election in Delhi on June 1. The bench, however, said that Kejriwal cannot discharge the functions of the chief minister, sign any official files, or use the Chief Minister’s Office.

Earlier, the Delhi High Court dismissed pleas seeking directions to remove Kejriwal as the chief minister of Delhi following



Arvind Kejriwal addresses the party workers and supporters at a party event after being released from Tihar Jail, in New Delhi on Saturday (ANI)

his arrest by the central agency. Petitioner before it was attempting to drag the court into a political thicket, the Delhi HC had said.

The Aam Aadmi Party’s (AAP) national convener and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal re-

ceived a big relief from the Supreme Court, which on Friday granted him interim bail till June 1 in the alleged money laundering case linked to Delhi’s excise policy.

He spent over 50 days in Tihar Jail after being arrested by

the ED in connection with the case on March 21, days after the election schedule for the general elections was announced.

The bail is applicable till June 1, and Kejriwal must surrender to authorities on June 2. The Delhi CM can participate in poll cam-

paigning but cannot attend his office as the chief minister.

The Lok Sabha elections in Delhi’s seven parliamentary constituencies will be held in a single phase on May 25. The counting of votes will take place on June 4.

Last week, the apex court granted interim bail to Kejriwal in view of the upcoming Lok Sabha election in Delhi on June 1

Kejriwal, on Sunday, launched a strong attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and said he was sent to jail because he built schools for children in Delhi, facilitated proper medical care for people and provided uninterrupted and free electricity to all the residents in the national capital.

“I was thinking why did he (Prime Minister Narendra Modi) send me to jail? What is my fault? My fault is that I built schools. When your children were not getting properly educated, I facilitated good schools for your children. This is my fault. When anyone from your family got sick, you used to spend lakhs in private hospitals. I facilitated proper medical care for you. This is my fault,” Kejriwal said while holding a roadshow at Delhi’s Moti Nagar area along with Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann.

The AAP chief also claimed that the jail authorities did not even provide him with medication for his treatment of diabetes for 15 days.

ANI

Shehbaz steps down as PML-N president

Islamabad, Pakistan - Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday resigned as the President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), ARY News reported, citing sources.

Shehbaz Sharif has submitted his resignation as party president to Nawaz Sharif, the PML-N supremo.

In light of the senior politician’s resignation, the PML-N has decided to call a general council meeting in Lahore on May 28 to elect a new president.

The PML-N had earlier announced to hold general council meeting on May 11, reported ARY News.

In a recent presser, Rana Sanaullah stated that the Punjab chapter of the PML-N has asked Nawaz Sharif to take up the party presidency once more, stressing the importance of his leadership to the party’s achievements.

He stated that a resolution asking Nawaz Sharif to lead the party once more through this trying time was passed during the PML-N Punjab meeting, according to ARY News.

ANI



Rescue team members work in a damaged area in West Sumatra, Indonesia, on Monday (Xinhua)

Death toll in Indonesia’s lava floods rises to 37

Jakarta, Indonesia - The number of fatalities of the lava floods in Indonesia’s West Sumatra province rose to 37 with 17 others missing, a senior official of the local disaster agency told Xinhua on Monday.

Fajar Sukma, head of emergency unit of disaster management and mitigation agency of West Sumatra province, said the

search and rescue operation for the missing people has resumed.

Soldiers, policemen, the personnel of the disaster agency and the search and rescue office were involved in the search and rescue mission, he added. Muharrindolwan, a senior press officer at the provincial disaster management and mitigation agency, said an information centre has been

established in Tanah Datar regency to make the information about the floods more valid.

Rains on Saturday night had swept away cold lava from Marapi volcano and Singgalang volcano, resulting in cold lava floods that hit the regencies of Tanah Datar, Agam and Pariaman, and Padang Panjang town.

Anadolu Agency

Generational shift in Singaporean politics

Singapore - Singapore’s new Prime Minister Lawrence Wong will be sworn in on Wednesday amid a generational shift in the island’s politics.

Current Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who has led the country for 20 years, will step down on the same day to hand over power to 51-year-old Wong, who is presently serving as the deputy prime minister.

Wong will be Singapore’s fourth prime minister since its independence in 1965, capping the country’s long-planned leadership transition. He had been touted as the next prime minister since April 2022, when he was picked as the leader of the ruling People’s Action Party’s (PAP) fourth-generation team.

“I accept this responsibility with humility and a deep sense of duty. I pledge to give my all in this undertaking,” Wong said on April 15, minutes after the Prime Minister’s Office announced the date for the handover. The party’s original choice for the top job, Heng Swee Keat, a former central bank chief and education minister, stepped aside suddenly in 2021 to pave the way for a younger person to lead the country.

Troubled time

The incoming premier, who en-



Lawrence Wong will be Singapore's fourth prime minister since 1965

Current Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who has led the country for 20 years, will step down on Wednesday to hand over power to 51-year-old Lawrence Wong, who is presently serving as the deputy prime minister

tered politics 13 years ago, is taking the helm at time when the country is facing a slew of domestic challenges, particularly a cost-of-living crisis and immigration, while the ruling party has also been rocked by a rare corruption scandal.

Also, it happens at a more troubled time for the world, with raging wars in Europe and the

Middle East and uncertainty in the global economy.

However, political analysts say he is no novice to administrative and foreign affairs and has been making the rounds to build ties with partners.

Most recently, in April, Wong, who is also the finance minister, visited Germany and France. In 2023, he made a trip to the US

and also met with leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The COVID-19 pandemic also helped Wong come into prominence. He gained plaudits for leading the country’s fight against the coronavirus pandemic as co-chair of the task force on COVID-19 along with Health Minister Ong Ye Kung and Trade and Industry Minister Gan Kim Yong.

New team will be ‘probed’

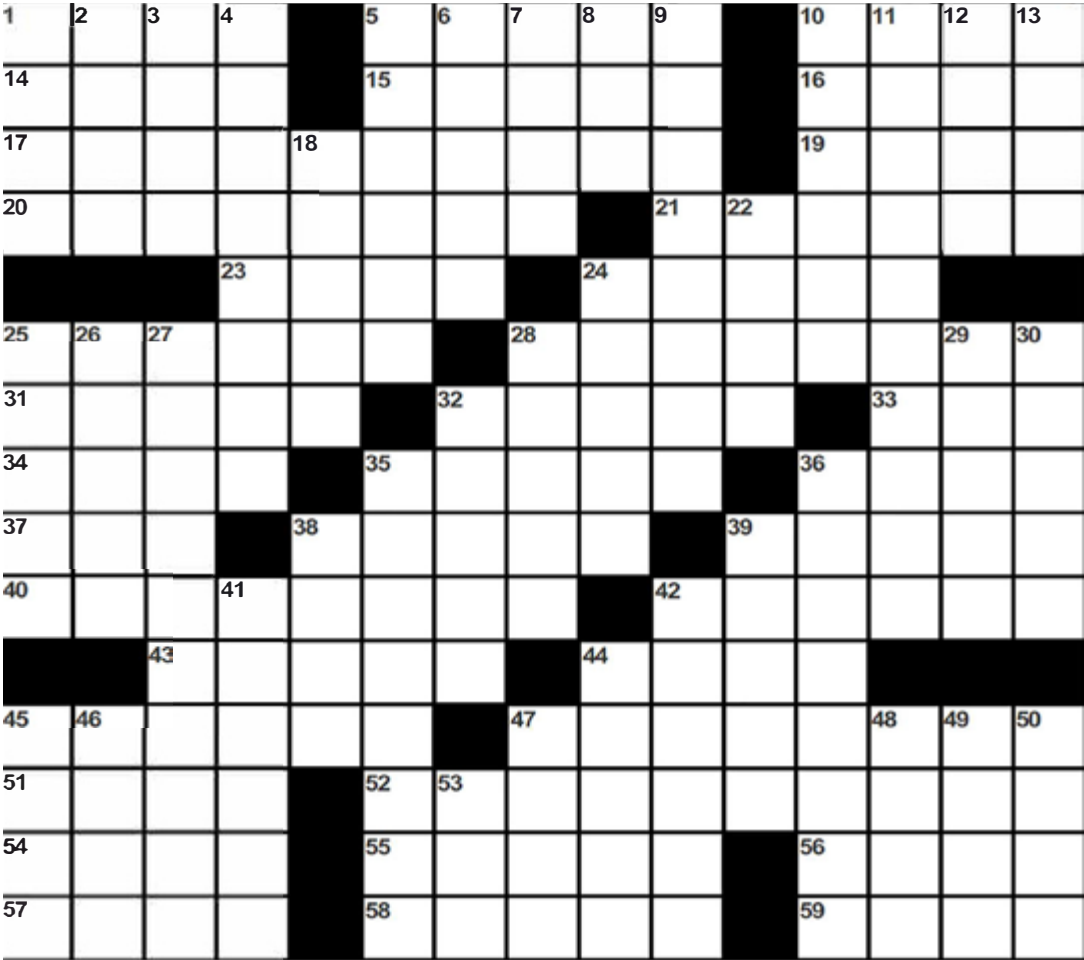
Sandwiched between Malaysia and Indonesia, the tiny island nation plays an oversized role in international affairs as a key ally both to the US and China.

According to outgoing Premier Lee, who is now 72, people will check his successor’s domestic standing and support as well as his ability to engage and hold his own.

“I think that the new team will be probed, certainly. Tested, well, maybe gently, maybe issues will come, and people might push a little bit harder, or maybe not,” he said in an interview with the local New Straits Times newspaper when asked if Singapore might be tested amid the upcoming leadership transition.

Anadolu Agency

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Jason's ship
- 5) Scarecrow's stuffing
- 10) Sound of a hoofbeat
- 14) Saturday service site
- 15) English Channel harbor town
- 16) Fury
- 17) Fish measurement
- 19) Cay
- 20) Talked, talked and talked
- 21) Scrabble unit
- 23) Attention-attracting sound
- 24) Twisted lock?
- 25) Fastens anew
- 28) Half-moon
- 31) A void capture by
- 32) Skirt fold
- 33) Bluejacket
- 34) Gentlemen
- 35) Turned sharply
- 36) Birthday party center-piece
- 37) 2,000 pounds
- 38) Acted the farrier
- 39) Minds your own business?

- 40) Goulash containers
- 42) Answers skillfully
- 43) Sweeties
- 44) No longer working (Abbr.)
- 45) Eighth of a circle
- 47) They play by themselves
- 51) Sheep calls
- 52) Hare ball?
- 54) Lake near Niagara Falls
- 55) Teamsters, for one
- 56) Sandwich cookie
- 57) Bellow
- 58) Absorbent cloth
- 59) Go by bus

DOWN

- 1) Like a post-volcanic landscape
- 2) Ostrich cousin
- 3) Island discovered by Magellan
- 4) Unmarried ladies, once
- 5) Germ cells
- 6) Carved pole
- 7) Highway or street alternative
- 8) "Aladdin" prince
- 9) Knowledgeable, via books

- 10) Film reviewer
- 11) Perfectionist's concern
- 12) Look up and down
- 13) Jury member
- 18) Slightly amused reaction
- 22) "... ofEden"
- 24) Raise Labradors, e.g.
- 25) Bandstand breaks
- 26) "Adam Bede" novelist
- 27) Was a coward
- 28) Parts of a crossword puzzle
- 29) In one's birthday suit
- 30) Highlight holder?
- 32) Conspires
- 35) Timesaver
- 36) IOU holder
- 38) Bridge measurement
- 39) Scaler's spike
- 41) Animal that goes "pop"
- 42) Arson or robbery, e.g.
- 44) Helicopter blade
- 45) Follow, as orders
- 46) Be concerned
- 47) Cookbook direction
- 48) Delhi dress
- 49) Drew even with
- 50) _ gin fizz
- 53) Best-selling number?

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Your mind is taking on some seriously crazy psychic powers that are scary in a good way! The person you've been thinking about so often and ardently has been picking up on your vibes, and they are thinking about you too. Today isn't the perfect time to move forward with this relationship, but take note of their change in attitude toward you. Go slowly with this, and make it clear that you just want to get to know them a little better for now.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

This will be an educational day, and you will enjoy learning a few valuable lessons about how to win people over to your cause without sending them on a guilt trip. It's all about using your charm in a genuine way. By being honest and upfront about what you want, you show people respect. And when others feel appreciated, they start liking you a whole lot more. Karma is taking note of how you are interacting with people, so try to be compassionate.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Whether or not you consider yourself creative, your ideas have a way of getting out into the world and making themselves known. No one sees things quite the way you do, and people like your take on the world. Look for some of your ideas to leak out today in an unconscious act on your part. You may not have meant to break out and be such a star, but everyone can't help but notice what you bring to the table. Try to use this attention to get something you've been wanting.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. When Dartmoor Prison first opened in 1809 what was its purpose?

- A. To house prisoners-of-war
- B. To house serious offenders
- C. A correctional house for young offenders
- D. A workhouse

2. Which of these describes a boisterous, knockabout style of humour?

- A. Bostick
- B. Yardstick
- C. Slapstick
- D. Chapstick

3. Who was the first British monarch of the House of Windsor?

- A. George V
- B. Victoria
- C. Edward VII
- D. Stephen

Answers: 1.A,2.C,3.A



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Step back from any unrealistic expectations and just seek shelter where you know your feelings are safe. You need the space to ensure that any upcoming, life-changing decision is really what you want. It's hard to choose, especially because it looks so good on paper, and all your loyal supporters are cheering for your advancement. Still, you need to make sure that this choice is right for you in the long run.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Any combative energy that starts swirling around you today will be immediately ended once you give in. You have the power to ease someone else's tension and cooling their attitude simply by letting them have a little more control over things for a while. Toss them a task that will keep them busy and make them feel more useful. Otherwise, if you insist on doing absolutely everything yourself, you will inevitably get involved in a power struggle with them.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

If you have a set plan for how you want this day to go, you should just toss it out the window! If you are open to a last-minute postponement today, you definitely won't be disappointed. Things like romance, excitement, and adventure have a way of showing up when it's least convenient, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't rearrange your entire day to accommodate it. You have the flexibility you need to put things off for another day.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Your friends at work know you better than you think they do. Sure, even if you never socialize with them, they see you every day and they've observed how you act under pressure. That's why you should listen when they have something to tell you today. Take the advice of these friendly associates and take it seriously. Some of what they say might not sound like a good idea at first, but if you think about it long enough, it will start to make lots of sense.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

It's payback time, but in a good way. Reviewing what you owe others and what others owe you, and making a plan to even things out again, will leave you feeling totally together and organized (even if the truth is a little messier). This doesn't have to be just about financial matters. Time is just as valuable as money, so make time for those people who have given you so much of theirs. Plan a nice dinner with someone special.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Growth is always a good thing, but you should take a break from pushing yourself now. Today isn't best spent challenging yourself or starting any difficult conversations. Settle into a routine and find comfort in doing the same things in familiar patterns. There is something to be said for predictability. Plus, if things never got boring, shaking them up again would not feel nearly as wonderful. Let the dust settle on your newly renovated life.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Today, all the different elements of your life will come together and be more connected. You will suddenly see some parallels between your family and your job that you hadn't noticed before. They could be advantageous to the growth of your career. Your quick mind will come up with a way to capitalize on and work these associations to everyone's advantage. An exciting sense of possibility is coming into your life.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Even though having a routine in your life might get boring from time to time, you will find a great deal of comfort in knowing what's going on for the next few days. There are few (if any) mysteries or problems for you to solve right now, and that should suit you just fine. You need a period of stability. It will give you the firm foundation you need as you prepare to tackle your next big challenge.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Whether or not you think that your dreams are messages from your subconscious, there is no denying that the visions your mind creates while you're sleeping can give you some insights. Evaluate the strange images that have been invading your snoozing hours. Analyse them long enough and you'll start to see some patterns emerge, patterns that you need to change. You are being told about something, so heed that message.

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

L	H	I	R
L	O	T	F
L	H	R	L
G	E	I	I

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

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

L	8	9	1	5	Z	E	4	6
Z	5	4	L	E	6	1	8	9
E	6	1	9	8	4	5	Z	L
8	L	Z	E	1	5	9	6	4
1	9	6	Z	4	8	L	5	E
4	E	5	6	9	L	8	1	Z
6	Z	8	5	L	9	4	E	1
9	4	E	8	Z	1	6	L	5
5	1	L	4	6	E	Z	9	8

STAGE ALL SET FOR A GRAND FINALE

Arsenal right where they want to be with one game left says Arteta after win against Manchester United

Manchester, England - Arsenal are exactly where they want to be with one game remaining in front of their fans at the Emirates Stadium and the possibility of claiming a first Premier League trophy in 20 years, manager Mikel Arteta said on Sunday.

Leandro Trossard scored in the 20th minute to secure a 1-0 victory at Manchester United on Sunday that saw Arteta's side provisionally overtake Manchester City atop the Premier League, ensuring the title race will be decided on the final day.

Arsenal have 86 points with one game left of the tightest title race in years. While City remain in the driving seat with 85 points and two matches to play, Arteta said Arsenal's season finale against Everton will be a moment to cherish.

"Today, we wanted to open that box of dreams to live the last day of the season in front of our people with the opportunity to win the Premier League," he told reporters. "That's something we're going to live together and I'm so pleased we're going to do it with these players and staff."

City, who are aiming for an unprecedented fourth consecutive English top-flight title, can retake

the lead if they beat Arsenal's London rivals Tottenham Hotspur away on Tuesday.

History did not favour Arsenal on Sunday as they had won on just one of their previous 16 trips to Old Trafford.

"Today we had to play in a really special place that our history was not very optimistic about what could happen but we found

Today, we wanted to open that box of dreams to live the last day of the season in front of our people with the opportunity to win the Premier League

MIKEL ARTETA

a way to win it," Arteta said. "That says a lot about how much the team wants it."

A draw could have set City up to clinch the title with a victory on Tuesday and the high stakes made for some nervy moments for Arteta and his men.

"Because at the end you know

what the consequences are to draw," he said. "When you are there and you really want it ... (but) I felt the team in a really good head space before the game."

Arsenal's victory on Sunday was a club record 27th this season in the Premier League. They topped that mark twice in the old top flight back in 1970-71 (29 wins) and 1930-31 (28).

"That's not progress, that's history," a proud Arteta said. "That's very difficult to do, especially in the league where we are playing now. Big compliment to all the players and staff for what they've done."

Asked if fifth-placed Tottenham could secure any points against City, Arteta said: "My experience in this league is that any team can beat any team."

"I lived it various scenarios in the last day when a lot of teams have necessities. The margin of respect that everybody puts in the games is phenomenal. We know we need a result. We need to do our own thing still in the last game."

Arsenal face an Everton team who are 15th in the table but undefeated in six of their last seven games.



Arsenal's Leandro Trossard celebrates with Kai Havertz after scoring against Manchester United on Sunday

Ten Hag rues injuries to key Man United players

Manchester, England - Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag blamed an injury crisis at the Old Trafford club for a poor campaign after his side fell to a 1-0 loss to Arsenal in the Premier League on Sunday - their ninth home defeat across all competitions this season.

United, who have now equalled their tally for most defeats at home in a season, had at least six defenders out through injury, as well as playmaker Bruno Fernandes and forward Marcus Rashford. Ten Hag, who has been forced to play defensive midfielder Casemiro at centre-back in



Erik ten Hag

recent matches, has seen his side now concede 82 goals this season in all competitions - their most in a single campaign since 1970-71.

"I don't know where we should be when we had all the players on board, but definitely it is if there are players all on board, then you will get more points," Ten Hag told the club's website.

"Definitely, you will (have) more consistency, especially in the backline because yeah, now we concede a lot of chances, a lot of goals and last year we had the most clean sheets in the Premier League. You can't progress a team when, in particular in certain

key areas, it is like swimming with your hands behind your back, then you have to keep your head up and above the water level, this is what we are trying to do."

"Still we are in a cup final, this is good but if you want to progress a team we need fit players. You have seen with our opponent today that only one player for (Arsenal) was not available. We had so many."

United are eighth in the league standings with 54 points. Their remaining league fixtures include a home game against sixth-placed Newcastle United on Wednesday.



Bayer Leverkusen's Amine Adli celebrates after scoring against VfL Bochum on Sunday

Trophyless Bayern beat Wolfsburg

Munich, Germany - Second-placed Bayern Munich beat VfL Wolfsburg 2-0 with teenager Lovro Zvonarek scoring on his first start in their final Bundesliga home game of the season on Sunday as they eased towards the end of a trophy-less campaign.

Bayern have 72 points, two ahead of third-placed VfB Stuttgart with one game remaining.

Four days after Bayern's Champions League semifinal exit to Real Madrid confirmed their first season without silverware in over a decade, the Bavarians put in a solid performance against the Wolves despite a string of changes to Thomas Tuchel's team.

They were missing striker Harry Kane, nursing a minor back problem, and were also without Serge Gnabry, who was injured in their defeat by Real, Leroy Sane and Jamal Musiala.

It was a day of milestones with Manuel Neuer making his 500th Bundesliga appearance, only the fourth goalkeeper in the



Lovro Zvonarek (C) of Bayern Munich celebrates with teammates after scoring against Wolfsburg

league's history to reach the mark. Zvonarek, the 19-year-old Croatian who had only made a handful of substitute appearances for the team, scored four minutes into his first start, drilling home for the lead.

Leon Goretzka doubled the

advantage nine minutes later with the hosts quickly taking full control of the game.

Bryan Zaragoza also thought he had netted on his first league start for the Bavarians but the 22-year-old Spaniard's effort was disallowed for offside.

The hosts took their foot off the gas with Tuchel's Bayern career coming to an end next week, a year earlier than his contract, after a disappointing domestic campaign that also included a German Cup exit to third-tier club Saarbruecken.



Thomas Tuchel

Tuchel skips goodbye from fans

Munich, Germany - Departing Bayern Munich coach Thomas Tuchel opted on Sunday to quietly slip into the changing rooms instead of joining his players to celebrate the final home match of the season with the fans after the Bavarians beat VfL Wolfsburg 2-0.

Tuchel will be leaving at the end of the season - a year earlier than his contract ends - following a disappointing campaign with no silverware.

The victory came four days after Bayern's Champions League semi-final exit to Real Madrid confirmed their first season without a trophy in over a decade.

Leverkusen stretch unbeaten run to 50 matches with big win

Bochum, Germany - Bundesliga champions Bayer Leverkusen crushed hosts VfL Bochum 5-0 on Sunday to stretch their remarkable unbeaten run across all competitions this season to 50 consecutive matches.

On Thursday, Xabi Alonso's all conquering team, aiming for a treble of titles, surpassed Benfica's long-standing European unbeaten record set from 1963 to 1965 with a 2-2 draw against AS Roma that sent them through to the Europa League final.

On Saturday they did not ease off against lowly Bochum, scoring twice late in the first half.

Patrik Schick put Leverkusen in the driving seat in the 41st minute and Victor Boniface doubled their lead with a penalty in first-half added time, with Bochum down to 10 men following a

straight red card for Felix Passlack in the 15th minute.

Amine Adli made it 3-0 in the 76th and Josip Stanisic added another in the 86th with a low drive before delivering an assist for Alejandro Grimaldo to score in stoppage time with a tap-in.

'Leverkusen ready to make history'

Leverkusen are ready to become the first team in Bundesliga history to go an entire season unbeaten, coach Xabi Alonso said after the demolition of Bochum.

"After that red card it was a completely different game for us," Alonso told a press conference.

"I am very satisfied with the result. It was important for us. Now we have a super goal on Saturday to win the title without any defeat. That has never happened before."



FIFTH GEAR ENGAGED!

Patidar, bowlers keep Bengaluru in playoffs race with win against Delhi

Bengaluru, India - A fifth successive win not only kept Royal Challengers Bengaluru in contention for a playoffs spot but also lifted them to fifth spot on the points table, just above Delhi Capitals who have the same points as RCB but an inferior net run rate.

The M Chinnaswamy had gone all quiet when RCB lost Faf du Plessis and Virat Kohli inside four overs. It seemed their batting troubles from the start of the season had come back to haunt them. Will Jacks and Rajat Patidar put to rest any such worries with a counter-attacking partnership, but the DC bowlers struck back with a near-perfect death-overs show to restrict RCB to 187 for 9.

With the Bengaluru crowd firmly behind them, the RCB bowlers had their tails up. They reduced DC to 30 for 4, which included the massive wicket of Jake Fraser-McGurk, who was run out at the non-striker's end after a straight drive from Shai Hope deflected off Yash Dayal's fingers onto the stumps.

Earlier, in his 250th IPL outing, Kohli had a relatively easy opponent first up: Ishant Sharma, against whom he had scored 93 off 67 balls without being dismissed. He kept out a sharp in-swinging on the first ball of the match and then pulled one over square leg for a six on the last ball of the opening over.

In Ishant's next over, he hit a four - via an outside edge - and a crisply-timed no-look shot over wide long-on for a six off successive balls before nicking one be-



Rajat Patidar smashed 20 sixes.

hind to the wicketkeeper. With a 13-ball 27, Kohli made his intent clear but failed to do justice to the Midas touch he seemed to be in.

Before Sunday, Patidar had been dismissed by pace in eight of his 11 outings in IPL 2024. But here, he raced to 15 off eight balls with the help of three fours in a Mukesh Kumar over. When Axar Patel, the stand-in captain for DC, brought himself on in the sixth over, Patidar duly slogged him over deep midwicket. He also tore into Kuldeep Yadav, bashing him straight over his

head. At the other end, Jacks also hit Kuldeep for a six in each of his first two overs as RCB put the dismissals of their openers behind them. Thanks to the assault from Patidar and Jacks, RCB scored 49 in the four overs after the powerplay. In the process, Patidar brought up his fourth half-century in his last five innings, and his first in Bengaluru this season. That the fielders missed four chances in 11 balls, including two dropped catches in a Kuldeep over, did not help DC.

DC fight back
DC brought Rasikh Salam on in the 11th over and he could have dismissed Patidar first ball but Axar failed to hang on at cover. But Salam exacted revenge in his next over with a hard-length ball. Patidar looked to force it over the off side off the front foot but ended up miscuing it towards cover, where Axar moved to his right to pouch that. That brought curtains to his 88-run stand with Jacks, who fell soon after to Kuldeep. But Mahipal Lomror and Cameron Green combined to

TODAYS MATCH

MATCH 64

6 PM

DELHI CAPITALS VS LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

take 22 off Kuldeep's final over, the 17th of the innings, to raise RCB's hopes. Khaleel Ahmed, who was taken for 23 in his first two overs, struck twice in three balls in the 18th over to dismiss Lomror and Dinesh Karthik. He finished with figures of 2 for 31 from his four overs. Salam got rid of Swapnil Singh and returned 2 for 23 from his three.

DC conceded only 40 in the last four overs, and picked up five wickets, to keep RCB under 200 on a surface where the ball was gripping.

Fraser-McGurk played true to his form and struck left-arm spinner Swapnil for a massive six over wide long-off to get going. But a lucky break for RCB meant the DC opener walked back cheaply.

This was after David Warner, back in the side after missing four matches, was out for 1 off two.

ESPNcricinfo

Livingstone leaves IPL to get his knee 'sorted' ahead of T20 World Cup

New Delhi, India - Liam Livingstone, the Punjab Kings and England allrounder, has left India ahead of schedule in a bid to get his knee "sorted" ahead of June's T20 World Cup.

Livingstone has suffered from a series of muscle injuries in the past two years and missed two games early in the IPL season after he went down in the field during a defeat to Lucknow Super Giants last month.

He was later left out by PBKS as they looked to find their best combination of overseas players, but he returned to the side in their loss to Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Thursday.

"IPL done for another year, had to get my knee sorted for the upcoming World Cup," Livingstone wrote on Instagram. "Thanks once again to the Punjab Kings fans for all their love and support. Disappointing season as a team and personally, but as always I loved every minute of playing in the IPL"

With PBKS now eliminated from the tournament, with four wins and eight defeats

from their first 12 games, Livingstone has returned home. ESPNcricinfo understands that his knee injury is not serious enough to place his prospects of travelling to the T20 World Cup in doubt but requires a period of rest before England play Pakistan in four T20Is later this month.

Livingstone struggled to make an impact for PBKS in what he described as a "disappointing" campaign. He made 111 runs at 22.20 in seven innings, striking at 142.30, and took three wickets in 12 overs. It extends a

lean winter for him in franchise cricket after a quiet SA20 season with MI Cape Town and a two-match stint with Sharjah Warriors.

The other members of England's World Cup squad who have been at the IPL - Moeen Ali, Jonny Bairstow, Jos Buttler, Sam Curran, Will Jacks, Phil Salt and Reece Topley - will begin to return home in the next few days and are expected back in the country this weekend.

They will meet up in Leeds ahead of England's first T20I at Headingley on May 22.



Liam Livingstone

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Neeraj Chopra

‘Olympics gold more important than 90m throw’ for Chopra

New Delhi, India - India's Neeraj Chopra is keen to join javelin's elite 90-metre club but will happily settle for a shorter throw in Paris if it proves enough for him to hold on to his Olympic title, his coach told Reuters.

The mop-haired Chopra catapulted himself into instant stardom three years ago when he threw 87.58 metres in Tokyo to earn independent India's first Olympic gold medal in athletics.

The 26-year-old has gone on to become the world champion and in 2022 registered a personal best (PB) distance of 89.94 metres at the Stockholm Diamond League.

Defending the Olympic title remains Chopra's absolute priority, his coach Klaus Bartonietz said. "A medal is more important than a mark. The mark increases almost every year, but the medal stays," Bartonietz told Reuters.

"Nobody asks Neeraj how far his throw reached in Tokyo. It was 87.58 and it was

enough. If it's 85 metres and still gets you an Olympic gold, you should be okay with it."

Bartonietz said it was tough for athletes to produce personal bests at the Olympics because of the pressure that accompanies performing on the biggest stage in sport.

Although the 90 metre-mark has been surpassed 125 times by 24 athletes since the competition javelin was redesigned in 1986, only three of those throws have come in Olympic competition.

"I'd be happy if Neeraj can produce his PB in Paris. It should be enough," Bartonietz said. "It's one thing to throw 90 metres, and a totally different thing to do it in the most important competition in a four-year cycle."

Chopra, the first Indian to win the Diamond League trophy, has been remarkably consistent in big events, and Bartonietz said he would not be surprised if the thrower from Haryana hits the magical mark in Paris.

Ready for an encore

Oman Rally Team's Al Rawahi and Al Hmoud resume MERC title defence at Jordan Rally

Amman, Jordan - Oman's Abdullah al Rawahi and his Jordanian co-driver Ata al Hmoud resume the bid to retain their FIA Middle East Rally Championship (MERC) titles at this weekend's Jordan Rally (from Thursday to Saturday).

The second round of the regional series has attracted 29 entries across the various categories but the Oman Rally Team duo will be focused on the seven-strong Rally2 section and what promises to be a thrilling tussle with title rival and joint defending champion Nasser Saleh al Attiyah, his fellow Qataris Abdulaziz al Kuwari, Khalid al Suwaidi and Nasser Khalifa al Atya, local driver Bader al Fayed and debutant Denis Krotov.

Al Rawahi and Al Hmoud finished third overall at the opening round in Qatar behind two stars from the FIA World Rally Championship, Pierre-Louis Loubet and Mads Østberg. Although the Frenchman and the Norwegian scored points in Qatar, neither are tackling the full regional rally series and that has left Al Rawahi



Oman's Abdullah al Rawahi; (right) in action at the Jordan Rally last year

and Al Hmoud in a strong position at this early point in the season. They will again use a Skoda Fabia prepared and run by Autotek Motorsport.

A puncture and suspension issues cost Al Attiyah and his new co-driver Giovanni Bernacchini a finish in Qatar and the multiple

winner of the event and the championship is pointless after round one, with Al Rawahi and Al Hmoud already sitting in third place in their respective championships with 25 points apiece.

The Oman Rally Team was forced to miss the second round of the Junior World Rally Cham-

We are looking forward to the second round of the Middle East Rally Championship. I've had a few issues with my back and we've been making sure that I'm back into shape.

ABDULLAH AL RAWAHI

onship. I've had a few issues with my back and we've been making sure that I'm back into shape. We are still working on that. Hopefully I will be fit to race. It's going to be a great challenge, the same as last year. I am hoping to push again and win for the second time and extend the lead in the championship, since the two drivers ahead of me are not participating in the whole championship."

Al Hmoud added: "Jordan Rally, of course, I am very excited, especially as Abdullah and I won last year. We are looking to win again. For sure, it will not be an

easy job especially now Nasser got a new car, which is a bit more advanced than our car. Both are Škoda but he has the latest version (RS). That does not mean we will not fight. We have the points from Qatar and he has zero points. We have the experience in Jordan. This is my country event and we need to win. We also have another five RS cars to contend with. It will be a big battle between those cars, but hopefully we can do it."

Based at the Dead Sea, the Jordan Rally will be fought out over 15 gravel special stages and 223.96km in a two-day route of 532.39km.

Toulouse spoil Paris St Germain's title celebrations

Paris, France - Paris St Germain were left stunned after they were beaten 3-1 by Toulouse on Sunday, with the newly-crowned champions slumping to only their second Ligue 1 defeat this season.

Luis Enrique's side struggled for form after their midweek Champions League semifinal loss to Borussia Dortmund and remain on 70 points from 32 games, six clear of second-placed AS Monaco with two games remaining.

"This defeat spoils the party a bit. It's always frustrating, even if you're champion, to lose like that in front of your home crowd," PSG forward Ousmane Dembele told Canal+.



Paris St Germain players celebrate with the Ligue 1 trophy

"We need to rethink things after a defeat and not lose like that at home, even if we are champions."

Kylian Mbappe, who confirmed on Friday that he will

leave PSG at the end of the season, opened the scoring after eight minutes with a fine finish

into an open goal following a pinpoint clearance from goalkeeper Arnau Tenas.

"He gave so much to the club, he did so much," Dembele said referring to Mbappe. "We're happy with everything he's done, he's grown up well at PSG, he's achieved so much, he's a PSG legend. We're proud of him."

Toulouse equalised five minutes later through Thijs Dalling, who coolly slotted home from close range before Yann Gboho put the visitors ahead with a superb curling effort into the top right corner in the 68th minute.

Frank Magri's stoppage-time strike sealed the win for Toulouse, who are 10th in the standings with 43 points.



Renaissance Berkane has a one-goal advantage against Zamalek after the first leg of the African Confederation Cup final

RS Berkane beat Zamalek in first leg of African Confederation Cup final

Berkane, Morocco - Morocco's Renaissance Berkane beat Cairo giants Zamalek 2-1 in the African Confederation Cup final, first leg at the Municipal Stadium on Sunday ahead of the return in Egypt a week from now.

The hosts had a dream start after being awarded a 13th minute penalty, converted by skipper Issoufou Dayo, and then grabbed a second goal in the 32nd when Adil Tahif squeezed in a header at the back post catching out goalkeeper Mohamed Awad.

But Zamalek, who won the Confederation Cup five years ago when they beat Berkane on penalties in the final, netted a potentially vital away goal two minutes into the second half as Seifeddine Jaziri powered home a header from Ahmed Zizo's cross. Berkane came close to restoring a two-goal lead when Youssef Mehri's shot skimmed the bar in the 62nd minute.

The return leg in Cairo next Sunday will see Berkane, winners

in 2020 and 2022, seeking a third success in the continent's secondary club competition.

The Moroccan club qualified for the final after a disputed semi-final against holders USM Alger. Neither leg of the tie was played during a diplomatic spat over Berkane displaying a map of Morocco on their shirts featuring the disputed annexed territory of Western Sahara that Algeria does not recognise.

Berkane had their kit confiscated by Algerian customs when they travelled for the first leg last month and they refused to play. They were awarded a 3-0 victory by the Confederation of African Football's disciplinary committee.

USM Alger then travelled to Morocco for the return leg but refused to leave their changing rooms at kick off time and were disqualified. They have taken the matter to the Court of Arbitration for Sport but were unable to force a halt to Sunday's final, first leg.

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Djokovic's defeat in Rome opens top-ranking door for Sinner at French Open

Rome, Italy - Novak Djokovic's shock exit from the Italian Open on Sunday could prove to be a decisive moment in the race for the world number one spot, as the top-ranked Serb prepares for his French Open title defence with Jannik Sinner poised to leapfrog him.

Two days after accidentally being hit on the head by a water bottle while signing autographs in Rome, an off-colour Djokovic crashed to his earliest defeat in the tournament he has won six times after a 6-2, 6-3 third-round thrashing by Alejandro Tabilo.

Djokovic will remain 1,090 points ahead of Sinner before the year's second Grand Slam begins

on May 26, but the 36-year-old is on shaky ground as he will be defending 2,000 points in Paris and winning the title may not be enough to stay on top.

"It was a very unfortunate, unlucky situation ... that guy leaned over the fence, and the bottle dropped from his rucksack and landed on my head," Djokovic said, reflecting on the freak accident that hurt his chances to pull away from Sinner. "It was unexpected. I wasn't even looking up. Then I felt a very strong hit in the head. That has really impacted me. After that I got the medical care. Been through half-an-hour, an hour of nausea, dizziness, blood, a lot of different things."



Novak Djokovic



BANE OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY

When people think of the health problems of children, they typically think of measles and influenza, and not cardiovascular disease or diabetes. Research has indicated that the seeds of these degenerative diseases are sown in infancy, childhood through adolescent years. And the root cause of this is obesity.

The incidence of childhood obesity is rising so rapidly that it has taken the shape of an epidemic, especially evident in nations where people live sedentary lifestyles and eat more convenience foods loaded with empty calories. Trends indicate that obesity rates in children are rising across gender lines, across the country and age, race, and educational levels.

Why are kids getting fatter?
It's neither the genes that have suddenly changed in a single generation nor has the nutritional needs changed drastically in the past 20 years. What has changed, is the environment in which children are living today. Factors associated with obesity in kids are:

- **Fast food and its super-sizing:** It has become easier than ever to overeat at any time. Regular consumption of high-calorie foods, such as fast foods, cola beverages and happy meals that have contributed to weight gain. Snacks are packaged in bigger sizes and carry more calories per serving. 'Super-sizing' of fast-food meals poses the biggest threat to children's health.
- **Unhealthy beverages** - Children have more than doubled their consumption of soft drinks and fruit beverages. Even pure fruit juice has come under scrutiny. If for 1-6-year-olds, fruit juice is a weighted trap then for slightly older kids, it's soft drinks. Fruit drinks are as bad as soda beverages in terms of calories or added sugar content.
- **Unhealthy fats** - The fast food era has also ushered in the entry of unhealthy fats (saturated fats/trans fats)



VANDANA CHAWLA



NUTRITION & YOU

into our diets. Excessive consumption of these slowly creates an abnormal lipid profile in children.

- **The inactive child** - Living in big cities means living in a paradise of energy conservation at the level of the individual. The percentage of children involved in physical education programmes is dropping and is replaced by sedentary activities, like, TV viewing, playing video games. The more the number of hours spent in screen time, the more likely, the kid is going to be obese. This promotes sedentary behaviour, requires no energy, plus reduces the metabolic rate. It is correlated with meal snacking and that too calorie-dense foods, which are heavily advertised on children's programmes. Parents, due to their increasingly busy lives, get tempted to use video games or TV viewing as an alternative to babysitting.
- **Genetics and family environment** - Genetics, only puts a child at risk but it is the environment in the house that poses a greater risk. Households, where eating out is a regular feature, kitchen shelves are stocked up with high-calorie foods, irregular sleeping hours are followed and physical activity is not encouraged, become the breeding ground for obesity. Can this epidemic be controlled? Who can reverse the trend? The next episode on childhood obesity deals with strategies to handle it.

(Vandana Chawla is an Online Nutrition Expert and a Registered Nutritionist-UKVRN)

5 EXERCISES FOR A HEALTHY DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

Whether you suffer from digestive issues or want to keep your body in good shape, the following exercises from The Alabama Colon & Rectal Institute are helpful:

Walking

While it may seem simple, brisk walking can significantly impact your digestive fitness. During your walk, your digestive system is stimulated by movement. This mobility causes your stomach and intestines to contract, pushing food and waste throughout the system more efficiently. Walking just a few blocks daily, you can experience less bloating and gas and more consistent bowel movements.

Yoga

Yoga is an excellent exercise choice for those who want better digestive health in 2023. Yoga is proven to reduce stress, which can positively impact your digestive system. Additionally, certain yoga poses, like downward dog, boat, child's pose, upward dog, and triangle, can help you reach your goal of optimal digestion. Over time, these exercises can relax your muscles while strengthening your

core and enhancing your gut health

Biking

If you're a cardio fanatic, you'll be thrilled to know that biking is great for the gut. The quick movement of biking quickly encourages the movement of food and stimulates your digestive system. Biking can also lessen the water lost in your stool, which can help with constipation. On top of these benefits, biking can reduce belly fat, the type of fat most likely to contribute to health problems.

Sit-ups/Crunches

Abdominal exercises can strengthen your core muscles and contribute to a more efficient digestive system. At Alabama Colon and Rectal, we recommend sit-ups and crunches, but any activity stimulating your abdominal muscles will do the trick. You can begin with 8-10 repetitions of the exercise a few times per week and increase the frequency over time. The optimal time for these abdominal exercises is on an empty stomach.

Pelvic Floor Activation

Your pelvic floor muscles support your pelvis and include the bladder and bowel. If you're female, your vagina and uterus also play a role in supporting your pelvis. You can improve urinary incontinence and bowel movements by strengthening your pelvic floor.

To activate your pelvic floor, focus on squeezing the muscles in your pelvis upwards while relaxing your legs and buttocks.



Yoga - Boat pose

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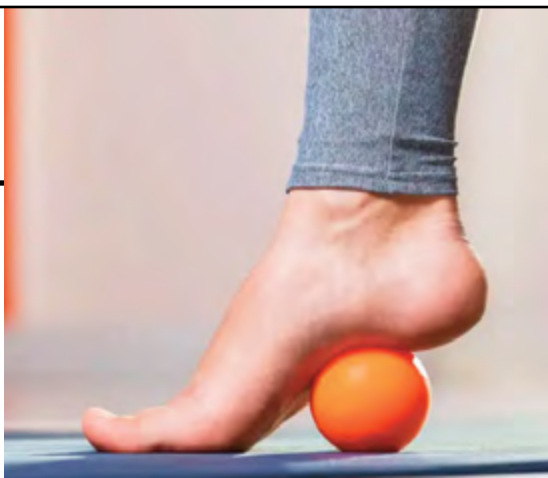
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PLANTAR FASCIITIS IS THE LEADING CAUSE OF HEEL PAIN IN ADULTS. MOST PHYSICIANS RECOMMEND RICE – REST, ICE, COMPRESSION, ELEVATE, TO TREAT MILD FORMS OF THIS CONDITION

PLANTAR FASCIITIS



Plantar fasciitis is the leading cause of heel pain in adults. About 1 in 10 people will experience plantar fasciitis at some point in their lives, with it affecting more women than men. The disorder is caused by strain in the plantar fascia - the thick, web-like tissue under the skin at the bottom of the foot that extends from the heel to the toes. Patients with plantar fasciitis experience pain in their heel or arch. Often, the first step out of bed in the morning is the most painful. You can think of it like a rubber band from your heel to your toes. If the band is loose while you're sleeping, your first step pulls on the rubber band. This causes lots of pain.

Risk factors
It's not just runners and other athletes who are at higher risk for plantar fasciitis. People whose jobs require standing on hard surfaces, such as teachers, nurses, and mail carriers, are also at risk for plantar fasciitis. Other risk factors include obesity, an inactive lifestyle, high or low arches of the foot, and low flexibility of the Achilles tendon or calf muscles. Physicians caution people who want to begin an exercise routine to be patient. Remember to stretch and go slow to avoid problems like plantar fasciitis.

Treatment
Patients who manage their plantar fasciitis symptoms usually get better in about a year. You can help improve your plantar fasciitis by stretching your lower legs, focusing on the calf muscles. It also helps to get shoes with good arch support. For anyone with plantar fasciitis who would still like to stay physically active, cross-training such as swimming or biking can help lessen foot pain. Runners can use a specific taping technique to take pressure off the fascia and should get new shoes regularly to keep good cushioning. After the gym or a long day at work, most physicians recommend RICE - Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevate which is effective for most mild forms of plantar fasciitis. Also, try stretching before bed, and consider a night splint. You can also freeze a 500ml water bottle and roll it under your affected foot, while sitting on a coach/chair, to help relieve pain. If plantar fasciitis symptoms continue or worsen, there are other options to help with your quality of life. Physical therapy is very important for patients who have plantar fasciitis. If other treatments don't work, further options include steroid or platelet-rich plasma injections, shock wave therapy, or surgery, depending on the severity of the condition.

Do you have plantar fasciitis?
While plantar fasciitis is common, patients should make sure they actually have it. Nerve injuries such as tarsal tunnel syndrome, stress fractures, or autoimmune disorders can also cause similar foot pain. A visit to an orthopaedic clinic can quell such doubts so that you undertake the correct form of treatment.



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