

Israel begins aggression against Rafah: Palestinian Foreign Ministry



Rafah, Palestinian Territories - The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Tuesday that the violent bombing launched by the Israeli occupation on the city of Rafah 'is a serious beginning to expand its crimes there', despite the presence of more than a million displaced people.

According to the ministry, Israel's attacks on Rafah are daily and systematic, resulting in the destruction of homes and the loss of numerous lives. 'Israel began its aggression on Rafah without seeking permission from anyone and without announcing these, potentially to avoid inter-

national backlash.' Furthermore, the ministry criticised Israel for ignoring international and American calls to protect civilians and to ensure their humanitarian needs are met. This disregard for international demands is seen as exacerbating the situation in Rafah.

The timing of Israel's escalation in Rafah, coincides with the visit of US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken to the region. Blinken had previously highlighted the absence of a serious Israeli plan to protect civilians in Rafah and called for immediate action to address this issue.

The ministry condemned in the strongest terms the brutal and deadly bombardment by Israeli forces against the Palestinian people, particularly the recent escalation that resulted in numerous casualties and destruction of homes in Rafah.

Agencies

Oman's soft power ranking down 3 places

Our Correspondent Muscat

Global Soft Power Index 2024 has ranked Oman 49th, three places down from 2023.

Now in its fifth iteration, the 2024 edition examines the perceptions of all 193 member states of the United Nations for the first time. The index is based on comprehensive fieldwork, with responses gathered from over 170,000 people across more than 100 markets by UK-based Brand Finance - an independent brand valuation and strategy consultancy.

The United States is the most influential soft power nation in the world, followed by the United Kingdom, China, Japan and Germany making the top five. France is sixth, followed by Canada, Switzerland, Italy and the United Arab Emirates - ranked tenth.

In the GCC, UAE is the top ranked country, followed by Saudi Arabia (ranked 18th), Qatar (21st), Kuwait (37th), Oman (49th) and Bahrain (51st).

The index incorporates a broad range of measures including: Familiarity - nation brands which people know, and have mental availability of, have greater soft power; Reputation - is this country deemed to have a



strong and positive reputation globally?; Influence - the degree to which a nation is seen to have influence in the respondent's country as well as on the world stage; and perceptions across eight core soft power pillars - Business and Trade, Governance, International Relations, Culture and Heritage, Media and Communication, Education and Science, People and Values, and Sustainable Future.

Oman has fallen in all three measures, while it has improved in soft power pillars like Media and Communication, where it has risen from 46th in 2023 to 40th in 2024, and Sustainable Future from 53rd to 43rd this year. It has maintained its position in Business and Trade at 39th position and International Relations at 35th.

The greatest improvements in the ranking over the past five iterations of the Index have been recorded by the UAE (+13.8 points and eight ranks to tenth), Saudi Arabia (+14.1 and eight ranks to 18th), Qatar (+16.0 and ten ranks to 21st), and Türkiye (+14.3 and five ranks to 25th).

'All four are characterised by conscious efforts to grow their Soft Power through nation branding projects, diplomatic initiatives and by hosting major events. The Gulf nations especially, are seeing enhanced Influence and Reputation as well as strengthening International Relations and Business and Trade credentials, with the UAE receiving 10/10 marks and top position globally on the key 'strong and stable economy' attribute this year,' the report stated.



Saudi firm T2 acquires Omani data analysis startup Promise



'Human-made famine in Gaza still preventable'



Cowboy boots, bolo ties and fringe

Breast cancer cases rise 119% in Muscat

Our Correspondent Muscat

The 2023 Muscat Breast Cancer Incidence Report of Ministry of Health (MoH) reveals an alarming increase in cases.

The statistics show that the total number of breast cancer cases recorded in Muscat was 2,458 in 2023, compared to 1,122 in 2022 - an increase of 119%. The increase is a staggering 834% when compared to 263 cases in 2021.

In the sultanate, breast cancer is the most common cancer among women, followed by colorectal and thyroid cancers.

A statement issued by MoH, said, 'The Directorate-General of Health Services in Muscat confirms an increase in the number of women registered in the breast cancer early detection programme in Muscat governorate.' The target group was women between 40 and 69 years.

According to predictions of WHO's International Agency for Research on Cancer, the number of new cancer cases globally will reach 35mn in 2050, 77% higher

than the figure in 2022. It cited tobacco and alcohol consumption, obesity and air pollution as key factors in the predicted rise.

In response to this concerning trend, MoH emphasises the importance of raising awareness on cancer causes and implementing preventive measures. The ministry advocates basic guidelines to lower cancer risk, including reducing alcohol consumption, avoiding tobacco use, maintaining a healthy body weight, and consuming a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, while limiting processed meats.

MoH recommends regular cancer screenings, particularly for women aged 40 to 69, including self-examination of breasts every month and mammograms every two years. 'Early detection through these screenings offers the best chance of identifying cancer before it spreads.'

It called for proactive measures to control cancer at an early stage, emphasising the importance of awareness, lifestyle changes and regular screenings in combating the rise in breast cancer cases in the sultanate.

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3kg

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1 RIAL .690

1 RIAL .190

أرز بسمي (اختيار العائلة) ٣ كيلو

Family Choice basmati rice 3kg

2kg

SAVE 31%

1 RIAL .000

0 RIAL .690

سكر أبيض (الأسبره) ٢ كيلو

Al Osra white sugar 2kg

35%

3 RIAL .100

1 RIAL .990

سكر أبيض (الأسبره) ٢ كيلو

Al Osra white sugar 2kg

1L

SAVE 35%

3 RIAL .100

1 RIAL .990

زيت زيتون أسباني بكر (رافايل)

Rafaella Spanish pomace olive oil 1L

2 Pieces

SAVE 47%

3 RIAL .790

1 RIAL .990

زيت دوار الشمس (عافية) ١.٥ لتر

Afia sunflower oil 1.5L

PER KG

SAVE 23%

3 RIAL .000

2 RIAL .290

بلح الشام

Balah Aisham

PER KG

SAVE 24%

2 RIAL .900

2 RIAL .200

كنافة بالكريمة

Kunafa with cream

PER KG

SAVE 18%

1 RIAL .100

0 RIAL .850

قطايف

Katayef

3 Pieces

SAVE 44%

8 RIAL .990

4 RIAL .990

طقم أواني حفظ الطعام الساخن

Namson S.Steel hot pot set

9L

SAVE 35%

19 RIAL .990

12 RIAL .990

إناء تقديم الطعام الساخن

Blumen chaffing dish

12 Pieces

SAVE 50%

5 RIAL .990

2 RIAL .990

طقم طعام (لارا أوبالا) متنوع

Lara Opala dinner set assorted

1950

1.3L

1400W

4.2L

SAVE 51%

52 RIAL .900

25 RIAL .900

مقلدة هوائية كهربائية (تيفال)

Tefal airfryer TFEY111B4

4G

RAM 3GB

SCREEN

Memory 32GB

SAVE 55%

42 RIAL .000

18 RIAL .900

كمبيوتر لوحي (إكسبند)

Exceed Tab EX7W4

SAVE 50%

19 RIAL .900

9 RIAL .900

مكواه بخار (إمبيكس)

Impex garment steamer GSM6012



Fajr	Duhr	Asr	Maghrib	Isha
4.56am	12.19pm	3.45pm	6.23pm	7.33pm

Much-awaited Ramadan Cricket Tournament starts at PSM

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The highly anticipated Ramadan Cricket Tournament kicked off at Pakistan School Muscat (PSM) on the first Friday of this year's Ramadan. Over 300 people, including families, gathered to witness the event held after prayers and iftar.

Four teams played on the first day of the tournament which was inaugurated by Bilal Hasan, Deputy Head of Mission and Head of Chancery of Pakistan Embassy in Oman, and Ameer Hanza, Chairman of PSM, in the presence of school board members and embassy officials.

Syed Zaib Hassan, organiser of the tournament and Head of Protocols at the embassy, said, "This is one of the most sought-



after events in Oman during Ramadan where we have cricketers of various nationalities, including Bangladeshis and Indians, participating. Each innings consists of eight overs. The matches will continue till mid-Ramadan; the date of the finals will be announced soon."

The first match last Friday saw Hadi XI take on SK 1010 Team, while the second match featured a Pakistan Embassy team play against PSM. The school team defeated the embassy team. It scored 128 runs and successfully

defended its total, restricting the embassy team to 97 runs. Syed Jamil Zaidi, chief organiser of the event, added, "This year, a total of 22 teams have registered for the tournament. However, more are expected to join as it progresses."



MASS IFTAR HELD TO BRING JOY TO THE ELDERLY

Our Correspondent
Muscat

To engage the elderly in social activities, Ihsaan Association organised a mass iftar on Saturday for the seventh consecutive year, under the theme 'Our iftar together brings joy'.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Jokha Mohammed Khamis al Farsi, head and founder of Ihsaan Association, highlighted the significance of the iftar initiative, which aims to foster a sense of responsibility among children towards the elderly and raise awareness in the community about the importance of caring for them.

"Over 130 elderly individuals participated in the iftar, which featured cultural competitions, the distribution of gifts among participants, and a video presentation showcasing the association's endeavours," Jokha informed.

She elaborated on the association's efforts, emphasising its commitment to conducting awareness events in schools and Omani Women's Associations, as well as organising talks addressing the needs of the elderly. "Ihsaan Association also works to arrange foster families for the elderly. Under this programme, we have arranged homes for over 1,000 individuals across various wilayats. These foster families serve as alternative support systems for elderly individuals who have no children or relatives to care for them, providing accommodation, food and



healthcare services as needed." Additionally, the association offers medical assistance at affordable rates, including prosthetic limbs for those with limited income. It also provides free ambulance services to facilitate the transportation of elderly and disabled individuals to hospitals for regular check-ups and other medical requirements. It has assisted approximately 5,000 elderly persons in accessing healthcare facilities across Oman

thus far. Jokha affirmed the association's determination to expand its awareness campaigns to include all wilayats of the sultanate. "Last week, the association, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development, signed an agreement to construct a permanent headquarters spread over 4,000sqm in Mabela, Seeb. We hope to get support from private companies in realising this initiative."



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MoH issues guidelines for healthy iftar, suhoor

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has issued guidelines for healthy iftar and suhoor during the holy month of Ramadan.

In a statement, the ministry emphasised the importance of following the Sunnah of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) by having a light iftar that includes dates and other nutri-

tional foods.

According to the guidelines, individuals who fast should break their fast with a meal before and after the Maghrib prayer, each served in two bowls. MoH highlighted the need of ensuring a balanced nutritional intake, including soup, salad, starches, legumes and meat. To promote overall well-being, the ministry advised

against excessive consumption of sweetened juices during the evening meal. It encouraged drinking approximately three litres of water between iftar and suhoor. For suhoor, MoH recommended a meal rich in fibre, vegetables, fruits and whole grains, and suggested the inclusion of lentils, bananas, dates and yogurt. "These guidelines aim to support individuals in maintaining a healthy and balanced diet throughout the month of Ramadan," it stated.

MARKET WATCH

MSX304,770.28

Sensex72,748.42

FOREX RATES

(ROI equals)

India	215.42
Pakistan	726.30
Bangladesh	285.27
Philippines	144.50
Sri Lanka	793.54

*Rates as on March 19

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

World Bank to provide \$6bn to Egypt in next 3 years

The World Bank Group announced that it will provide more than \$6bn of support to Egypt over the next three years.

The amount includes \$3bn in financial support to the government's programmes and \$3bn for the private sector that includes mobilisation.

The programmes will focus on increasing opportunities for private sector participation in the economy, including through the government's Asset Monetization Program, strengthening the governance of state-owned enterprises, and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public resource management.

The World Bank Group said its current operational portfolio of over \$8bn in Egypt consists of \$6bn from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, \$1.9bn from the International Finance Corporation and \$0.5bn from the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency.

Oman crude price climbs to highest level in 5 months

Our Correspondent

Muscat



The price of the Oman Crude Future Contract rose 0.9% to \$86.44 per barrel at the Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME) on Tuesday, marking the highest level since early October 2023

months of 2024, China's industrial production grew 7% from the same period last year, boosting prospects for energy demand.

China accounts for more than 90% of Oman's total oil shipments.

Oman's total oil exports reached 26.2mn barrels in January 2024, of which China accounted for over 96% of volumes. The sultanate's oil exports constituted 83.9% of the total volume of oil production, which stood at 31.2mn barrels.

Oman's oil exports to China grew 16.5% in January this year to 25.2mn barrels compared to the same period in 2023.

Our Correspondent

Muscat

inked with Ammar International Furniture for a project spanning an area of 7,200 sqm.

The second contract was signed with Al Eman for Trade and Investment to establish a project focused on manufacturing plastic products from non-hazardous waste across 4,700 sqm, with an investment of RO850,000.

The third agreement, with Quality Medical Supply, involves establishing a manufacturing unit for instruments and appliances for medicine and surgery, and veterinary medicine, covering 5,000 sqm and backed by an investment of RO550,000.

Suhar Industrial City signs three investment deals

Our Correspondent

Muscat

Suhar Industrial City, affiliated to the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), on Tuesday signed three investment contracts worth RO2.4mn for projects specialising in plastic products, medical devices, and mattresses.

Spanning across a total area of 16,900 sqm, these projects aim at delivering high-quality goods using state-of-the-art technology, catering to both local and international markets while boosting the national economy.

The first investment contract, valued at RO1mn, was

inked with Ammar International Furniture for a project spanning an area of 7,200 sqm.

The second contract was signed with Al Eman for Trade and Investment to establish a project focused on manufacturing plastic products from non-hazardous waste across 4,700 sqm, with an investment of RO850,000.

The third agreement, with Quality Medical Supply, involves establishing a manufacturing unit for instruments and appliances for medicine and surgery, and veterinary medicine, covering 5,000 sqm and backed by an investment of RO550,000.

CBO issues RO70mn treasury bills

Muscat - The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) announced that the total issuance of government treasury bills this week amounted to RO70mn.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO5mn, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached RO99.615 for every RO100, and the minimum accepted price also arrived at RO99.615.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO28.6mn, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached RO98.734 for

every RO100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO 98.705.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO36.4mn, for a maturity period of 182 days. The average accepted price reached RO97.446 for every RO100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO97.430.

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

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Audited Financial Statements Consolidated for 31 December 2023

Chairman's Report

Dear Shareholders,
On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the annual report of your company along with the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Business Environment

Oman has been steadfast in its pursuit of a diversified economy. The government's focus on targeted sectoral development supported by the lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic, emphasizing the importance of self-sufficiency, notably in food and medical supplies.

The retail sector has witnessed significant growth, fueled by factors including population growth, rising disposable incomes, increased tourist arrivals, and the emergence of e-commerce.

Key Highlights

Omani Gulf Food Company, previously an associate of ours, was fully acquired through the purchase of stakes from Dhofar International Development & Investment Holding Company SAOG and Dhofar Insurance Company SAOG. This transaction was executed through a share-based mechanism, with the purchase consideration settled in the form of equity shares in our company. Company paid-up capital increased from RO 8,085,000 to RO 17,431,154.

Company CEO Dr. Fady El Assaad resigned, and Mr. Ahmed Ali Qattan was appointed as acting CEO until the appointment of a new CEO.

Mr. Baljinder Singh was appointed as our new Chief Financial Officer. He brings with him a wealth of experience and expertise in financial management.

Despite the challenges posed by cyclone Tej, the company incurred no financial loss.

We bid farewell to our former Chairman, Mr. Nasser bin Muhammad bin Salim Al Harthy, who passed away during this year. His visionary leadership, unwavering dedication, and profound contributions to the company will be remembered and cherished. We are committed to upholding his legacy and continuing the journey he embarked upon with such passion and determination.

The government extended feed subsidy programs for ruminant and poultry feeds for 6 months starting from 1st Jan 2023. The company is entitled to RO 118,000 which pertains to the years 2022 and 2023.

Financial Performance

Parent Company

The revenue for the period stood at RO 35.66 million, reflecting a notable increase of 15% compared to RO 31.04 million in 2022 (Restated). Similarly, our gross profit margin significantly improved, reaching 18% compared to 9% in 2022 (Restated). This substantial increase in gross profit can be attributed to both an increase in volume and price.

Distribution and administration overheads decreased by 2% year-on-year, demonstrating our commitment to efficient cost management practices.

However, the finance cost saw a substantial increase due to the funding of increased commodities, rising by 10% year-on-year. Despite this increase, we remain focused on optimizing our financial strategies to mitigate such impacts and maintain sustainable growth.

Group Companies

The group, comprising three subsidiaries and one associate, achieved a consolidated revenue of RO 56.7 million, marking a significant increase from RO 36.8 million in 2022 (Restated). This notable 54% increase in group revenue can be attributed primarily to the revenue contribution from the newly acquired subsidiary.

Despite this substantial revenue growth, the group reported a net loss of RO 0.412 million, a considerable improvement from the net loss of RO 2.63 million in 2022 (Restated). Our focus remains on enhancing operational efficiencies and optimizing performance across all subsidiaries to achieve sustained profitability and growth.

One of our subsidiaries operates in the poultry segment, maintaining revenue at RO 9.0 million in 2023, unchanged from 2022 (Restated). However, the segment incurred a net loss of RO 2.3 million during the period. In contrast, our packaging subsidiary saw a slight decline in revenue by 3%, reaching RO 12.4 million. Nonetheless, the company managed to maintain profitability, reporting a profit of RO 48,000.

The Oman Gulf Foods SPC, newly acquired subsidiary, specializing in the edible oil business, made a significant contribution to our group revenue, totaling RO 15.55 million. This acquisition reflects our strategic expansion into new market segments. It contributed an after-tax profit of RO 104,633 to our overall financial performance.

Operational Highlights

Your company has demonstrated significant improvements in its operational efficiency. Streamlined processes and optimized resources have resulted in better overall operations and financial results.

Mitigate procurement costs, ensuring sustainable and cost-effective sourcing practices. This strategic approach has positively impacted on our bottom line.

Leveraging synergies across our diverse business units has been instrumental in driving innovation and unlocking new growth avenues. By collaboration and cross-functional integration, we have maximized the value proposition for our stakeholders and fortified our market position.

Corporate Governance & Internal Control

The Company and its Board of Directors believe that to succeed on a sustainable basis, it must maintain high standards of corporate governance towards its shareholders, employees, consumers, and community. To this end, the Board has constituted the Audit Committee and the Executive, Nomination and Remuneration Committee. The Company has always and will remain focused on good corporate governance.

Your company has adhered to all the regulations covering corporate governance in Oman and your Board is fully committed to ensure compliance of all the applicable rules and regulations. The Board has taken all possible measures to ensure full compliance with the rules and regulations. To improve the internal audit process, the board has outsourced the internal audit functions to an external audit firm.

Human Resources

Your company is supporting the national recruitment policy of the government. In line with this, local nationals are currently working at various levels of management and constitute 41 % of the work force. The total workforce is 754. Graduate trainees' programs are in place to train the qualified young candidates. We continue to develop our staff to lay a solid foundation for our future growth with great emphasis being initiated to develop national talent.

Future Outlook

"Oman vision 2040" strategy emphasis on diversification into non-oil segment, logistics and services and increase importance on food security initiatives. Your company is well placed in this segment and will be able to grow in line with government initiatives. The domestic market is highly price sensitive and controlled by government price control authorities. Despite price controls, the company was able to obtain a 10 % - 20 % minimum price increase with proper justifications for dairy segment in 2023. Profitability will improve and the company will be able to break even by the end of the financial year. The highly volatile commodity prices and packing materials are closely monitored and actions will be taken to mitigate the price variances to the minimum.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my fellow board members and our shareholders, customers, lender, suppliers and employees for their continued support and commitment. I would also like to thank the CMA & MSX for their support and cooperation.

We wish further development, stability, progress, and prosperity for our beloved country under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq, and we wish him good health and longevity.

Said Ahmed Saifur

Chairman

Separate and consolidated statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2023

	Year ended 31 December 2023 RO'000	Year ended 31 December 2022 RO'000	Year ended 31 December 2023 RO'000	Year ended 31 December 2022 RO'000
Revenue	35,659	31,040	56,712	36,833
Cost of revenue	(29,326)	(28,154)	(48,543)	(32,519)
Gross profit	6,333	2,886	8,169	4,314
Selling and distribution expenses	(4,343)	(4,472)	(6,166)	(5,479)
General and administrative expenses	(1,496)	(1,458)	(3,114)	(2,297)
Directors' remuneration	(248)	(87)	(293)	(125)
Dividend income	217	182	217	182
Other income	1,416	1,545	1,580	1,619
Share of result of associates	-	-	182	1,008
Operating profit / (loss)	1,879	(1,404)	575	(778)
Gain on remeasurement of investment in an associate	2,154	-	934	-
Impairment of investment in subsidiary	-	(941)	-	-
Finance costs	(1,266)	(1,156)	(1,986)	(1,683)
Profit / (loss) before tax	2,767	(3,501)	(477)	(2,441)
Income tax expense	-	(135)	65	(407)
Profit / (loss) for the year	2,767	(3,636)	(412)	(2,848)
Other comprehensive income/(loss) for the year:				
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss				
Revaluation of property, plant and equipment	12,118	-	16,274	-
Deferred tax on revaluation	(1,818)	-	(2,402)	-
Movement in fair value reserve	(908)	(2,545)	(908)	(2,545)
Total comprehensive income / (loss) for the year	12,159	(6,181)	12,552	(5,393)
Profit / (loss) attributable to:				
Shareholders of the Parent Company	2,767	(3,636)	(315)	(2,755)
Non-controlling interest	-	-	(97)	(93)
	2,767	(3,636)	(412)	(2,848)
Total comprehensive income / (loss) attributable to:				
Shareholders of the Parent Company	12,159	(6,181)	12,535	(5,300)
Non-controlling interest	-	-	17	(93)
	12,159	(6,181)	12,552	(5,393)
Earnings / (loss) per share - basic and diluted (RO)	0.016	(0.045)	(0.002)	(0.035)

Separate and consolidated statement of financial position as at 31 December 2023

	Parent Company 31 December 2023 RO'000	Group 31 December 2022 RO'000	31 December 2023 RO'000	31 December 2022 RO'000
ASSETS				
Non-current assets:				
Property, plant and equipment	18,678	7,115	36,613	13,181
Right-of-use assets	685	864	1,403	956
Intangible assets	14	26	69	70
Investment in subsidiaries	15,541	1,992	-	-
Investment in associates	812	2,812	873	3,911
Investments at fair value through other comprehensive income	10,889	11,797	10,889	11,797
Investment properties	2,090	2,090	2,090	2,090
Biological assets	4,156	4,316	4,156	4,316
Deferred tax assets	96	96	101	101
Other non-current assets	-	-	70	-
Total non-current assets	52,961	31,108	56,264	36,422
Current assets:				
Inventories and biological assets	8,249	9,456	15,688	12,331
Trade and other receivables	7,133	5,165	14,412	4,887
Cash and cash equivalents	344	277	5,025	592
Total current assets	15,726	14,898	35,125	17,810
Total assets	68,687	46,006	91,389	54,232
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
Equity:				
Share capital	17,431	8,085	17,431	8,085
Legal reserve	2,875	2,599	2,875	2,599
Voluntary reserve	3,712	3,712	3,712	3,712
Revaluation reserve	10,300	-	14,380	525
Fair value reserve	2,851	3,759	2,851	3,759
Retained earnings	3,478	987	413	1,004
Equity attributable to shareholders of Parent Company	40,647	19,142	41,662	19,684
Non-controlling interest	-	-	(77)	3
Total equity	40,647	19,142	41,585	19,687
Non-current liabilities:				
Term loans	2,969	822	4,872	1,868
End of service benefits	639	628	1,346	938
Lease liabilities	380	511	1,163	600
Deferred tax liabilities	1,818	-	2,851	14
Total non-current liabilities	5,806	1,961	10,232	3,420
Current liabilities:				
Borrowings	10,042	14,065	19,352	18,834
Term loans	1,236	852	1,661	1,534
Trade and other payables	10,611	9,586	18,000	10,231
Lease liabilities	345	400	373	415
Income tax payable	-	-	186	111
Total current liabilities	22,234	24,903	39,572	31,125
Total liabilities	28,040	26,864	49,804	34,545
Total equity and liabilities	68,687	46,006	91,389	54,232
Net assets per share	0.233	0.237	0.239	0.243

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

Japan raises interest rates for first time in 17 years

Tokyo, Japan – The Bank of Japan (BOJ) on Tuesday scrapped its negative interest rate policy in its first rate hike in 17 years, overhauling the central bank’s unprecedented monetary easing framework of the past decade that aimed to end deflation.

The BOJ decided at a two-day meeting to guide short-term interest rates within a range of zero and 0.1%, judging that its goal of attaining stable 2% inflation is “in sight.”

The symbolic move signals that the BOJ is gravitating toward policy normalisation that analysts still expect to be slow at best, with the central bank saying financial conditions will remain “accommodative.” The decision was not unanimous, with two of the nine board members opposed.

The departure from the negative rate policy means higher borrowing costs for companies and households but a boost in the profitability of commercial banks and other financial institutions.

Since 2016, the BOJ has set short-term interest rates at minus 0.1%, making it less attractive for financial institutions to leave excess funds at the central bank. The goal was to prompt commercial banks to increase lending and investment in order



A file photo shows pedestrians walking in front of the Bank of Japan headquarters in Tokyo

to rejuvenate the economy.

The Policy Board also decided to scrap its yield cap programme, under which long-term interest rates have been at extremely low levels, and end its purchases of assets such as exchange-traded funds.

“It came into sight that the price stability target of two per cent would be achieved in a sustainable and stable manner,” the BOJ said in a post-meeting statement.

The monetary easing framework, which involved a negative rate and yield curve control pro-

gramme, has “fulfilled” its role, the bank said.

Despite the removal of the yield cap, the central bank will continue to buy long-term Japanese government bonds in “broadly the same quantities as before” when bond yields rise sharply.

While cost-push inflation may be a major factor in accelerating wage growth, it is viewed as a critical development for Japan to ensure a virtuous cycle of pay and price hikes.

The BOJ expects the Japanese economy to continue to recover

moderately, though economists point to weak domestic demand, especially private consumption. Japanese firms have robust capital investment plans and the focus is on whether they will materialise.

Heading into the latest policy meeting, BOJ board members have sounded more confident about the probability of achieving two per cent inflation, supported by wage growth.

The preliminary reading of a 5.28% pay hike offered by Japanese firms on average during this year’s labour-management

negotiations has apparently boosted hopes for a virtuous cycle of pay and price increases. The pace is the fastest in over three decades.

BOJ chief Kazuo Ueda had indicated that the negative rate policy and yield control programme would be reviewed when the inflation goal came into view. Still, he shot down expectations that the central bank would raise rates rapidly, saying financial conditions will remain accommodative.

The BOJ’s persistence with ultra-low rates sharply weakened the yen as its global counterparts rushed to raise rates to fight surging inflation.

The yen fell against the US dollar shortly after the BOJ’s decision. A weak yen cuts both ways, as it boosts import costs for resource-scarce Japan but can be a boon to exporters by inflating their overseas earnings in yen terms.

Market participants also pay close attention to the outlook for US monetary policy. The Federal Reserve is scheduled to hold a two-day policy-setting meeting starting Tuesday, and analysts expect it to end its aggressive monetary tightening to fight soaring inflation and start cutting rates sometime this year.

[Source: Kyodo News]



UAE, Germany agree on 15-year LNG deal

Abu Dhabi, UAE – Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) and Berlin-based SEFE Securing Energy for Europe inked a long-term deal for the delivery of 1mn tonnes per annum (mtpa) of liquefied natural gas (LNG), both companies announced.

The LNG will come from ADNOC’s lower-carbon Ruwais LNG project, currently under development in Al Ruwais Industrial City, Abu Dhabi. Deliveries are expected to start in 2028, upon the commencement of the facility’s commercial operations, ADNOC said in a statement.

SEFE said the agreement “is contingent upon a final investment decision (FID) on the project, including regulatory approvals, and the negotiation of a definitive sales and purchase agreement between the two companies.”

Commenting on the deal, Fatema al Nuaimi, executive vice president of downstream business management at ADNOC, said, “This LNG agreement, the first with a European company

from the Ruwais lower-carbon LNG project, underscores ADNOC’s position as a reliable and responsible global energy provider.”

“Gas accounts for almost a quarter of Germany’s primary energy use, and we look forward to supporting its efforts to diversify its energy sources and enhance its energy security,” Nuaimi added.

For his part, Egbert Laege, CEO of SEFE, said, “We are delighted to be the first European company to secure LNG volumes from ADNOC’s low-carbon Ruwais LNG project and look forward to this deal being the foundation for more enhanced collaboration in LNG and low-carbon alternatives.”

Frederic Barnaud, Chief Executive Officer of SEFE’s Marketing & Trading department, said the deal marks a new chapter in the five-year partnership between SEFE and ADNOC with the joint exploration of low-carbon energy developments.

Anadolu Agency

Inflation, US elections expected to affect Fed’s rate cut cycle



US Federal Reserve headquarters in Washington, DC

Washington, US – Uncertainties remain as to when the US Federal Reserve will start its interest rate cuts, with the course of inflation in the US and the presidential elections expected to affect a possible rate cut cycle.

According to experts, as reported by Anadolu Agency, the Fed will keep its interest rates unchanged at its March conference, while there is still uncertainty caused by mixed signals from macroeconomic data on when the bank will start cutting rates.

The US Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased 0.4% month-on-month in February, within expectations, while it exceeded market forecasts with an increase of 3.2% on an annual basis.

The Producer Price Index (PPI) hiked 0.6% on a monthly basis, and 1.6% year-on-year in February, exceeding expectations.

The Core PPI, which excludes volatile food and energy prices, also outperformed forecasts, rising 0.3% month-on-month, and 2% on an annual basis in the same period.

“Inflation is running too hot for the Fed to be confident that they’re going to achieve their target of 2%,” Chris Rupkey, chief economist at FWD Bonds, told Anadolu Agency.

He stated that the Fed may take one of the three interest cuts foreseen for this year off the table due to the high inflation. “The presidential election is ahead as well and although policymakers traditionally say they’re not political, I think they would have to be brave to venture out and cut interest rates at the September meeting before the November elections,” he said.

“I can’t recall any other Fed in recent economic history that has cut rates so close to a presidential election so maybe we still get one rate cut in June if the monthly inflation reports cool off,” he added.

Rupkey mentioned that Fed officials signaled that they are in no hurry, and that there could be a rate cut at the December meeting this year post-elections, adding that the Fed could end the year with a 5% interest rate.

“The FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) needs to see more data to gain confidence that inflation is heading sustainably toward its 2% target,” Philip Marey, Senior US Strategist at Rabobank, told Anadolu Agency.

Marey said they continue to estimate that the first interest rate cut will be in June, though the risk that the Fed will start later than June has also increased.



Muscat Finance (S.A.O.G)

P.O.Box: 888, Ruwi, P.C. 112, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: 24625300, Fax: 24625310

Muscat Finance: Director’s Report 2023

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the Annual Report for the year ended December 31, 2023.

Economic Environment

Benefiting from protective government policies, Oman witnessed significant positive changes, leading to upgrade in credit ratings from major global agencies in 2023. These improvements, spanning fiscal performance, external trade, economic growth, and debt sustainability, are expected to reduce the cost of debt for the entire financial sector, including your company.

Following a budget surplus in 2022, Oman maintained fiscal responsibility with a surplus in the 2023 budget. Economic indicators signal growth driven by investments, increased trade, and heightened consumer confidence, projecting a positive outlook. However, caution is warranted amid global macro-economic challenges.

Global interest rate hikes over the past two years to counter inflationary pressures and geopolitical tensions pose potential risks, exemplified by the failure of large banks in certain major economies. Oman has been able to maintain low inflation through visionary fiscal measures and prudent monetary policies, but global events continue to pose to the nation’s economic growth. Your company, with a conservative leverage ratio of 1.4 times and a robust capital buffer, is resilient and well-prepared to navigate uncertainties arising from such economic environment. While global economic risks and oil price fluctuations may impact the financial system, your company is strategically positioned to leverage opportunities arising from Oman’s positive economic developments in 2023, providing a solid foundation for growth.

Business Results

Despite the formidable challenges posed by rising interest rates in the financial sector throughout the year, your Company adeptly navigated these testing times, securing consistent profitability. The net profit before tax for the year 2023 stands at RO 9,307 Million, compared to the net loss before tax of RO 9,598 Million. In anticipation of an increased interest rate environment during the past two years, the Board has decided to ensure that new loans are sanctioned above the expected cost of fund interest rate. As a result average interest rate on performing new business booked increased from 10.16% in 2020 to 10.97% in 2021 to 11.62% in 2022 and 11.23% in 2023. This strategy has resulted in Net Investment in Finance Debtors decreasing to RO 923.3 Million at the end of 2023, compared to RO 984.8 Million in the preceding year. The Board has also given the direction to be more prudent in credit selection approach.

Liquidity

Your company sustained robust operating cash flows, generating net cash from operating activities of RO 5,728 Million in 2023, similar to the preceding year’s RO 5,786 Million. This was allocated towards a prudent reduction of debt by RO 3,524 Million and property investments, including the Head Office building aggregating to RO 1,027 Million.

Liquidity (continued)

Consequently, your Company successfully delivered, aged, reducing overall liabilities to RO 59,809 Million in 2023 from RO 64,678 Million in the previous year, marking an 8% drop.

In line with its strategy to maintain a diversified funding base with moderate costs, your Company retains a mix of funding from bank lines and corporate deposits. Exploring additional funding sources, your company may consider alternative avenues, including capital market instruments like bonds, depending on available pricing in the coming years. The company is exploring in having a fund raising program through a bond, which can be increased or reduced depending on the prevailing rate. This will help the company have wider individual participation of bond holders who can benefit from the lucrative rates offered by your company. In return the company is expected to benefit from a better interest rate spread through reducing its cost of funding.

A detailed review of the operational results of Your Company has been covered in the Management Discussion and Analysis Report.

Capital Management and Dividends

Your Company maintains a robust capital position well beyond the Central Bank of Oman’s (CBO) minimum requirement of RO 25 million. Your Company remains committed to preserving its capital and optimizing gearing levels to navigate potential short-term economic shocks, particularly in liquidity.

interest rates, and potential fluctuations in crude oil prices.

Achieving to CBO guidelines, in the year 2023, your Company has allocated RO 1.78 million from retained earnings to the impairment reserve taking it to RO 5.74 million as at December 31, 2023.

Strategy

Your company remains committed to inclusive growth, organizing interactive strategy workshops involving employees from mid to senior management, engaging with board members.

With a focus on strengthening core retail business and a selective approach to the corporate segment, your company’s prudential credit selection has led to a progressive improvement in the quality of business bookings. The average 12-month probability of default for accounts opened has notably decreased over the past three years, from 5.1% in 2020 to 2.6%, 1.1%, and 0.6% in 2021, 2022, and 2023, respectively. This trend signifies your company’s successful credit selection post-pandemic, reflecting the effectiveness of risk management strategies.

Despite concentrated efforts on collections to control non-performing assets (NPAs), there was an increase this year due to delinquency in certain large exposures, a challenge prevalent in the entire banking industry. Your Company is actively taking various measures to address NPAs and is awaiting affected entities by offering suitable restructuring terms while bolstering safeguards through incremental credit enhancements. Your company has used all available legal measures to speed up the recovery of these NPAs.

Human Capital

Your Company fully recognises that having a competent, highly motivated, and performance-oriented workforce is key to ensuring the success of our business. The current year witnessed changes in the company’s leadership after the Mr. Hussain Lawati, the CEO’s contract came to an end. I thank him for his invaluable contribution to the company and wishes him well for his future.

Your Company has recently appointed Mr. Rashad Al Shaikh as its new CEO to bolster the strategic capabilities. Mr. Shaikh is an accomplished leader having over 25 years of exceptional leadership experience in banking industry. I welcome him to your Company and wish him well to take your Company to greater heights.

To further our digitization focus, Mr. Ali Al Khawaidh has been appointed as Chief Digital and Transformation Officer, leveraging his experience in digital journey implementation aligning you’re Your Company’s strategic vision.

Other strategic appointments include Chief Financial Officer, Chief People Officer, and Chief Risk Officer, reinforcing capabilities in financial strategy, human resource, and risk management.

Emphasizing human capital development, the Company invests in employee training and has recently developed additional online modules to complement offline and in-house training initiatives. Prioritizing the empowerment of Omani nationals, Your Company’s Omanisation ratio improved contributing to sustainable development.

Information Technology and Customer Delight

Your Company is actively harnessing technology to enhance customer satisfaction. Recently, a Customer Complaint module has been seamlessly integrated into the website, aiming to identify potential areas for improvement and elevate customer service.

In line with its digitization goals, Your Company is collaborating with leading technology providers to implement a cloud-based CRM system. This initiative aligns with your company’s objective of reducing paper consumption. This project is anticipated to increase the business volume through round the clock approved loan disbursements.

To simplify customer onboarding, Your Company is exploring Business Process Automation (BPA) using Robotic Process Automation (RPA) for precise data capture and improved analytics. Additionally, a cutting-edge Near Field Communication (NFC) based eKYC module is under consideration for seamless data capture and customer onboarding.

Information Technology and Customer Delight (continued)

In 2023, Your Company set up a state-of-the-art Head Office, fostering vibrant work culture with Wi-Fi enabled infrastructure supporting smart technologies

and IoT growth for enhanced mobility, collaboration and productivity. The premises also house an extended data center, symbolizing technological sophistication, ensuring reliability and autonomy with minimal human involvement.

The new office premise is meticulously planned with the customer journey in mind, aiming to make the customer experience even more enjoyable. The open-plan office promotes interdepartmental coordination, ultimately enhancing customer service and speeding up turnaround time to its customers. Innovative features under implementation include a Drive-Through facility for convenient service delivery, round-the-clock man-less kiosks for easy access, and the incorporation of Internet of Things (IoT) devices for superior data capture and analytics. In addition, Your Company is introducing a WhatsApp based customer support system as part of its digital initiatives. This will not only reduce paper consumption but also enhances customer support by enabling advanced scheduling options and minimizing waiting times.

Rating Update

Capital Intelligence, an independent credit rating agency, which has been rating our Company has maintained a National Scale rating of omv+ (Long Term) and AD (Short Term) based).

Awards and achievements:

Your Company received an award from Oman Economic Review in recognition for Pioneering success over the last 35 years.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Your Company recognizes its duty to contribute to the community, acknowledging that societal support is integral to Your Company’s long term success and is committed to sustainable community benefits. In the year 2023, your company made CSR contributions towards Fellowship Environment Fund.

Your Company is actively developing sustainable strategies to increase financing towards green energy contributing positively to reducing carbon footprints. Aligning with Oman’s Vision 2040 and the Central Bank of Oman’s inclusive growth objective, Muscat Finance S.A.O.G supports SMEs through entrepreneurial lending fostering private sector growth in line with the government’s structural transformation goals.

Initiatives at the new office, emphasizing natural lighting through an open-house design, aim to decrease energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Digital efforts, including the planned whatsapp based queuing system and B2B Direct Debit payments, will contribute to reduced paper consumption, aligning with Your Company’s environmentally friendly objectives.

Corporate Governance

Your Company is steadfast in its commitment to sustainable business practices and upholding the highest standards of ethics and corporate governance. The Board of Directors, recognizing the inseparable link between strategy, risk, performance, and sustainability, oversees Your Company’s performance. We believe that the current Board members possess the collective skills, experience, and diversity necessary to achieve the Company’s objectives and create sustainable stakeholder value in the long term.

Business outlook for 2024

The government achieved a fiscal surplus of RO 933 Million in 2023, marking the second consecutive year of surplus. This accomplishment is particularly commendable given the substantial decline in oil revenues, offset by a well-managed and objective-driven expenditure policy. The fiscal surplus has not only consolidated gains but has also alleviated fiscal pressures for the government. In the initial three years (2021-2023) of the current five-year plan, the cumulative fiscal surplus amounted to RO 854 Million, reflecting effective fiscal management and disciplined expenditure control.

IMF, buoyed by demonstrated growth, predicts a 2.7% expansion in Oman’s real GDP for 2024. These projections have the potential to bolster the country’s credit ratings and propel its economic expansion. Your Company is poised to actively contribute to this sustainable national growth, aligning its own growth with that of the nation.

In a move to enhance financial inclusion, the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) has granted authorization for Finance & Leasing Companies (FLCs) to diversify their product offerings by including corporate deposit backed facilities, personal loans and real estate financing. Your Company views these regulatory enablers positively and foresees promising business prospects through expansion of product umbrella of

to express our sincere gratitude and best wishes to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Taieq to lead the Sultanate of Oman with his wisdom and vision, towards a path of prosperity.

I would like to thank His Majesty’s Government, the Central Bank of Oman, the Capital Market Authority and other regulatory Authorities for their continued support and guidance. We are grateful to customers for their continued patronage and support, to our bankers for their unwavering trust and support, and to all the shareholders for the confidence reposed in its Board. On behalf of the Board, I would like to express our appreciation to the dedicated management and staff of the Company for their hard work, commitment, and support.

On Behalf of the Board of Directors
Faisal Mohamed Al Yousef
Chairman

Acknowledgement
On behalf of the Board and the Company, I would like

Statement of financial position as at 31 December 2023

	31 December 2023	31 December 2022	31 December 2023	31 December 2022
	US\$ '000	US\$ '000	RO '000	RO '000
ASSETS				
Cash and bank balances	4,550	4,088	1,752	1,574
Investment securities	-	2,600	-	1,001
Net investment in finance debtors	259,619	256,603	92,254	98,792
Other receivables and prepayments	774	1,124	298	433
Deferred tax asset	1,260	2,165	485	833
Investment property	1,844	-	710	-
Property and equipment	5,832	156	2,284	80
Statutory deposit	649	649	250	250
TOTAL ASSETS	254,628	267,385	98,033	102,943
EQUITY				
Share capital	79,778	79,778	30,715	30,715
Legal reserve	8,115	8,044	3,126	3,098
Impairment reserve	14,919	10,275	5,743	3,955
(Accumulated losses)/ retained earnings	(3,531)	1,291	(1,360)	497
Total equity	99,281	99,388	38,224	38,265
LIABILITIES				
Short term borrowings	82,645	80,796	31,818	31,106
Other liabilities	13,587	17,084	5,232	6,577
Corporate deposits	44,234	51,686	17,030	19,899
Long term loans	14,881	18,431	5,729	7,096
Total liabilities	155,347	167,997	59,809	64,678
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	254,628	267,385	98,033	102,943
Net assets per share	0.323	0.324	0.124	0.125
Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2023				
	Year ended 31 December 2023	Year ended 31 December 2022	Year ended 31 December 2023	Year ended 31 December 2022
	US\$ '000	US\$ '000	RO '000	RO '000
Interest income	22,061	23,454	8,501	9,000
Interest expense	(9,625)	(8,722)	(3,705)	(3,356)
Net interest income	12,436	14,732	4,796	5,672
Other operating income	1,977	1,696	761	654
	14,413	16,421	5,557	6,326
Expenses				
Selling, general and administrative expenses	(9,005)	(9,331)	(3,466)	(3,592)
Depreciation	(241)	(140)	(93)	(94)
Director’s remuneration and sitting fees	(179)	(132)	(69)	(51)
	(9,425)	(9,603)	(3,628)	(3,697)
Profit before allowance for impairment and litigation losses	5,010	6,828	1,929	2,629
Allowance for impairment	(4,213)	(3,187)	(1,622)	(1,227)
Loss on litigation	-	(3,896)	-	(1,500)
Net profit/ (loss) before tax for the year	797	(255)	307	(96)
Income tax	(83)	1,689	(32)	650
Net profit after tax for the year	714	1,434	275	552
Other comprehensive income:				
Items that are or may be reclassified to profit or loss:				
Net movement in fair value of cash flow hedges	-	(42)	-	(16)
Total comprehensive income for the year	714	1,392	275	536
Basic and diluted earnings per share	0.002	0.005	0.001	0.002
NOTE :- The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder or other interested party who requests them, in either Arabic or English, within 7 days of such request.				



Bank Muscat organises seminar for Najahi Business Banking Customers

Bank Muscat, the leading financial institution in the Sultanate of Oman, organised a seminar for entrepreneurs titled ‘Your Company on Autopilot’ presented by Ahmed Nadom, an entrepreneurial consultant. The seminar was attended by a number of Bank Muscat officials and Najahi Business Banking customers in Muscat.

During his opening speech, Saleh Mohammed al Maaini, Deputy General Manager - Capital Regions, Bank Muscat, said, “Business landscape in Oman is offering various opportunities to support the work of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and encourage them to implement new initiatives and ideas to contribute in enhancing the sector.

“Bank Muscat is keen to provide financial services and facilities and implement training programmes and seminars to continue supporting entrepreneurship. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to Najahi customers for their continuous participation in the bank’s events and for their confidence in the services and products offered to SMEs.”

Ahmed Ndom, an entrepreneurial consultant, held a workshop titled ‘Your Company on Autopilot’. It focused on how business owners can increase their employees’ productivity and focus on expanding their business. To ensure business continuity, 3 fundamental points need to be implemented, namely a clear business structure, clear tasks and written processes, and a weekly meeting to discuss topics and plans. The speaker emphasised on the importance of enhancing problem solving skills in managers as it is an essential leadership characteristic.

Bank Muscat realises the importance of SMEs and works to enhance its role in supporting the sector. One step taken in this regard is the inauguration of Najahi Business Banking in 2014 to support SMEs by providing a suite of financing options. The products and services provided are designed to help these enterprises grow and thrive in their business, thus creating a positive impact on the community.

By providing tailor-made financial and non-financial solutions as well as handholding small businesses in their entrepreneurial journey, Bank Muscat’s Najahi Business Banking is helping many Omani nationals, especially the youth, to establish themselves as a strong economic force that contributes substantially to the economy.

OAB mobile app brings unmatched Ramadan deals

Oman Arab Bank (OAB) has launched its Ramadan Auto Loan Campaign for 2024 which will be running throughout the holy month.

Carefully designed to simplify car ownership with industry-leading financing options and exclusive benefits, the campaign promises customers speed, service, and convenience. OAB customers can also instantly apply for the auto loan with a click of a button through the OAB app.

In addition to its competitive interest rates starting from 3.9% per annum, OAB’s Ramadan Auto Loan offers the highest financing tenure in the market of up to ten years on new and pre-owned cars. Customers will also be able to enjoy flexible payment options, allowing them to purchase now and start paying three months later. They will enjoy complimentary third-party insurance for the first year. As an extra perk, customers will also receive a fuel card worth ROSO alongside numerous other benefits.

“We are delighted to offer our valued customers these exceptional auto loan options during the holy month of Ramadan,” said Khalid al Amri, Acting Chief Retail Banking Officer. “Our goal is to make car ownership more affordable and enhance our customers’ lives with unmatched financial solutions and benefits.”

Ooredoo marks 20 years of ‘Goodwill Journey’

Celebrating two decades of making an effective contribution for good, Ooredoo kicked off its 20th Goodwill Journey, one of the telco’s flagship and community-led Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives.

Every year during Ramadan, volunteers travel across Oman to upgrade the worlds of communities and citizens, including women, youth, and people with disabilities, by driving sustainable change and partnering with local stakeholders to make a real difference to everyday lives. This year, the celebratory send-off from Muttrah took place under the auspices of Sayyid Saud bin Hilal al Busaidi, Governor of Muscat. Originally launched in 2004 to support communities during Ramadan, the Goodwill Journey is part of the company’s broader CSR Programme.

Bassam al Ibrahim, Chief Executive Officer at Ooredoo, said “Over the past two decades, Ooredoo’s Goodwill Journey has been based on turning good intentions into action. Every year, volunteers travel thousands of kilometres across Oman to create a positive, long-term and measurable impact on our communities. As we focus on sustainability, we can measure the progress we have made in achieving our purpose, which is to upgrade the worlds of Omani people while fostering sustainable growth by making effective contributions to society.”

Through various projects across three main focus areas: People & Society, Economy & Development, and Sustainable Environment, Ooredoo aims to provide people with the knowledge, skills and/or means to improve their lives in both big and small ways. The Goodwill Journey 20 will centre on social development, education and training, digital projects and empowerment.

The specific themes include ‘A Digital Lifestyle in Education and Training’, ‘Youth, Women, and Small Office/Home Office (SoHo)’, ‘Environment’, ‘People with Disabilities and Special Needs’, and ‘Community-Wide Support projects’.





Dhofar Poultry Company (S.A.O.C)

Chairman Report for the year financial year ended 31 December 2023

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the annual report of your company along with the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Business Environment

Oman has been steadfast in its pursuit of a diversified economy. The government’s focus on targeted sectoral development supported by the lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic, emphasizing the importance of self-sufficiency, notably in food and medical supplies.

The retail sector has witnessed significant growth, fueled by factors including population growth, rising disposable incomes, increased tourist arrivals, and the emergence of e-commerce.

Key Highlights

The Revenue for the year is RO. 8.9 million, a reduction of 1.14 % compared to RO. 9.0 million in prior year. The gross loss for the period was RO. 0.009 million compared to RO. 1.299 million in 2022. The major reason for the gross loss was Mediterranean egg imports sources were banned by Oman authorities and company was forced to purchase Eggs at high cost. This transition incurred higher mortality and volatility in the supply chain over the last 9 months of the year. The net loss for the period was RO. 2.295 million compared to a loss of RO. 1.237 million in 2022.

The company has revalued its assets as per the policy and RO. 3.169 Mn revaluation surplus was considered. The net equity of your company is RO. 1.680 million as of the end of the financial year.

GCC poultry meat demand has been increasing in the last few years. The Company is working with strategic partners to increase local and regional sale volume & operations efficiency. International Consultants have been appointed by our Parent Company for Process Improvement, Cost Reduction etc. to avoid further losses.

Despite high market competition from local GCC Suppliers & potential new entrants, the Company has addressed sale and marketing factor and focused on Brand building activities. The company focuses on the chilled segment and is a current market leader in this category.

Future Outlook

“Oman vision 2040” strategy emphasis on diversification into non-oil segment, logistics and services and increase importance on food security initiatives. Your company is well placed in this segment and will be able to grow in line with government initiatives. The domestic market is highly price sensitive and controlled by government price control authorities. Profitability will improve in the next financial year and the company will be able to break even. The highly volatile commodity prices and packing materials are closely monitored and actions will be taken to mitigate the price variances to the minimum.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my fellow board members and our shareholders, customers, lender, suppliers and employees for their continued support and commitment. I would also like to thank the CMA & MSX for their support and cooperation.

We wish further development, stability, progress, and prosperity for our beloved country under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq, and we wish him good health and longevity.

Salim Bin Abdullah Al-Awadi
Chairman

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

	31 December 2023 RO	(Restated) 31 December 2022 RO
ASSETS		
Non-current assets:		
Property, plant and equipment	9,337,020	6,513,478
Intangible assets	37,242	44,334
Right-of-use assets	29,776	23,474
Total non-current assets	9,404,038	6,581,286
Current assets:		
Inventories	912,463	1,523,401
Biological assets	1,014,362	1,149,680
Trade and other receivables	2,089,274	2,192,688
Cash and bank balances	240,122	311,700
Total current assets	4,256,221	5,177,469
Total assets	13,660,259	11,758,755
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Equity:		
Share capital	2,800,000	2,800,000
Revaluation surplus	3,221,487	556,011
Accumulated losses	(4,340,672)	(2,078,680)
Total equity	1,680,815	1,277,331
LIABILITIES		
Non-current liabilities:		
Staff terminal benefits	304,589	266,668
Lease liabilities	16,606	21,526
Term loans	698,655	1,046,121
Deferred tax liability	571,890	101,512
Total non-current liabilities	1,591,740	1,435,827
Current liabilities:		
Term loans	425,010	681,943
Bank borrowings	4,495,820	4,555,387
Trade and other payables	5,450,633	3,692,583
Lease liabilities	16,241	4,642
Income tax payable	-	111,042
Total current liabilities	10,387,704	9,045,597
Total liabilities	11,979,444	10,481,424
Total equity and liabilities	13,660,259	11,758,755
Net assets per share	0.060	0.046

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Year ended 31 December 2023	(Restated) Year ended 31 December 2022
Revenue	8,986,669	9,090,002
Cost of revenue	(8,996,409)	(7,790,824)
Gross (loss) / profit	(9,740)	1,299,178
Other income	146,467	84,751
General and administrative expenses	(983,121)	(846,271)
Selling and distribution expenses	(1,094,503)	(1,020,420)
Loss from operation	(1,940,897)	(482,762)
Finance costs	(465,548)	(489,507)
Loss before tax	(2,406,445)	(972,269)
Income tax credit / (expense)	111,042	(264,843)
Loss for the year	(2,295,403)	(1,237,112)
Other comprehensive income:		
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:		
Revaluation surplus	3,169,265	-
Deferred tax liability	(475,390)	-
Other comprehensive income for the year	2,693,875	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	398,472	(1,237,112)
Earnings / (loss) per share	(0.082)	(0.044)

Sultanate of Oman

The Supreme Judicial Council



ANNOUNCEMENT

The Court Secretariat announces that the appellant, Data Trading and Services Company, has filed a commercial Appeal No. 1080/7103/2021 against MARIA THERESA DE LEON and others, and in implementation of the ruling of the Commercial Department of the Supreme Court issued at session dated 23/5/2023 in Appeal No. 329/8103/2022 for reversal of the judgement and remanding the case for consideration by a different body/panel.

Since it was not possible to notify the defendant through normal means, and in accordance with Article (11) of the Civil and Commercial procedures law issued by the Royal Decree No. 29/2002 as amended, this announcement is considered a notification to the defendants by enrolling the appeal No. (935/7103/2023) for consideration before a different panel in the session date 31/03/2024 at the Court of Appeal, Muscat (Al Khuwair, Courts Complex, Ministries District).

ROHM launches its Ramadan Concert series



The Royal Opera House Muscat launched its first Ramadan concert series with a captivating performance by the Ibn Arabi Ensemble from Morocco, alongside Oman's very own Al Zawya Ensemble. The event, held at the Royal Opera House of Musical Arts, offered a deeply immersive

evening in Sufi chanting, fostering a profound connection with the audience. Established in 1988 in the vibrant city of Tangier, the Ibn Arabi Ensemble stands as one of the oldest Sufi groups in existence, celebrated for their mastery of Sufi instrumental and

The Al Zawya Ensemble of Oman joined forces with the Moroccan ensemble, creating a unique two-part concert. The near sold-out concert marked the debut of ROHM's Ramadhan concert series

chanting traditions. During the performance, the Moroccan ensemble focused on popular well-known tunes, with songs from famous Sufi poems by well-known figures such as Ibn Arabi, Ibn al Farid, Rabi'a al Adawiya, Abu al Najib Suhrawardi, and others.



In a beautiful display of cultural harmony, the Al Zawya Ensemble of Oman joined forces with the Moroccan ensemble, creating a unique two-part concert. The near sold-out concert marked the debut of ROHM's Ramadan concert series, promising a culturally enriching experience for audiences. This series aims to bring together various regional artists in collaboration with local Omani artists creating a profound connection through music during the holy month of Ramadan. In the next few weeks, ROHM will welcome renowned artists such as the Mawlawiyyin and Levantine Religious Chants Group of Syria, accompanied by the talented Khalid al Araiimi on March 25, followed by Ali el Helbawy and Oman's own Sami Al-subhi on April 1. Both upcoming concerts will be held at the Royal Opera House of Musical Arts, starting at 9.30pm.

Underwater cinematographer Pawel Achtel explores new era of high-resolution filmmaking

The world of videography and filmmaking is constantly evolving, with new technologies pushing the boundaries of what's possible. The latest of these technologies is 8K resolution video which offers a new level of detail and clarity that was previously unimaginable. With 8K, filmmakers and videographers can capture images - both above and below sea level - in incredible precision and realism, giving TV viewers a truly immersive viewing experience. Meet Pawel Achtel, a world-renowned professional in underwater cinematography with a career spanning over 35 years and more than 5,000 dives ranging from the equator to Antarctica. The filmmaker's extensive diving experience informs his cinematographic work - which has captured the attention of in-



dustry leaders such as National Geographic, BBC and Discovery - providing a unique perspective on life underwater and highlighting his expertise in designing and producing advanced cinematog-

raphy equipment. He was also involved in capturing 8K resolution underwater sequences for *Avatar: The Way of Water*. Samsung Newsroom sat down with Pawel Achtel to dive

into the details of underwater cinematography and explore how Samsung's Neo QLED 8K lineup is reshaping the landscape for filmmakers and viewers at home. In fields like underwater cine-

matography, where visuals matter most, Samsung's Neo QLED 8K is indispensable. Not only does it help viewers feel immersed in the scene, but it is also vital for filmmakers to assess underwater footage. Due to variables like ocean currents and light refraction, filming underwater in true 8K quality can be difficult. "But, when all the circumstances line up, the results are breathtaking," shared Achtel. While advanced technologies like submersible lenses assist in capturing these shots, Neo QLED 8K - known for its high resolution and clarity - allows filmmakers like Achtel to closely examine even the smallest details of underwater scenes. This close look helps improve sharpness and other aspects of image quality after filming.



Vodafone Oman's 'steps for goodness' returns with more

Building on its successful 2023 debut, Vodafone Oman is bringing back its 'Steps for Goodness' this Ramadan with bigger impact for customers and the community through My Vodafone App. Founded on a simple yet profound concept, the initiative aims to foster a culture of healthy living using technology by converting steps into good deeds in partnership with Al Rahma Association. With more than 560mn steps converted to renovate underprivileged homes in 2023, Vodafone Oman is determined for the 2024 chapter of the campaign to give 'more' back through several creative new features centred on walking, community comradery and digital content. As such, and in addition to counting their own steps, customers are encouraged to join with families, friends, and communities to double their points and make a bigger difference. A testament to its digital leadership, Vodafone Oman has also introduced podcast content to the campaign, offering customers the opportunity to listen, learn, walk and double their points yet again; all through the My Vodafone App.

Steps for Goodness is a campaign very close to our hearts, and a reflection of who we are and what we stand for as a brand and as people

USAMA ABDULLAH AL SAIFI

He added, "Another new addition this year, is how and when we are spreading the goodness. Tying up with Al Rahma Association, we will be donating funds raised on a weekly basis to one of four programs starting with support for people with special needs, and including Gaza relief aid, Eid donations for underprivileged families and emergency support for individuals who have fallen into financial crisis through the Fak Kurba programme."

Ramadan Arcade at Manarat Al Saadiyat returns

The Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi) has announced the return of the 6th edition of Manarat Al Saadiyat community event, Ramadan Arcade, set to take place from March 21 to 31 from 9pm to 2am. Ramadan Arcade became the go-to event for many of Abu Dhabi's youth and residents, embracing the spirit of community and togetherness during the holy month. It offers diverse elements of art, culture and entertainment to offer an enriching and memorable experience. For the first time this year, Ramadan Arcade will introduce a ladies-only experience by The Pink Majlis Community that will be hosting a variety of workshops and gaming tournaments. The event's main stages will showcase a diverse array of musical performances, including



daily sessions and a special Ramadan concert by Bait al Oud. Additionally, attendees can enjoy a traditional Malid performance and a series of instrumental showcases presented by

The Fridge Entertainment. A captivating performance titled 'Majeediyat' a series of instrumental reinterpretations of Abdul Majeed Abdallah's renewed songs directed by Row-

dha al Sayegh along with Musician and Qanun Player Odai al Suliman. Popular Arab comedians will add humour to the event during a comedy night hosted by 808 Entertainment, featuring co-

medians Mina Liccione, Ali al Sayed, Abz Ali, and Abdullah al Qassab. Abu Dhabi Gaming will introduce exclusive Emirati-made board games for visitors of Ramadan Arcade, along with VR stations by Pixoul Gaming. Additionally, there will be a selection of classic arcades and board games, as well as the Arcade's renowned FIFA and Carom tournaments. The Arcade will feature as well an interactive photobooth by Concept. Abd, offering visitors a chance to capture Instagram-worthy moments. Additionally, a collective of emerging local artists will be joining us this year hosting workshops and showcasing their upcoming projects under their studio 'Studio Untitled', providing attendees with a glimpse into the vibrant creativity of our community.

SpaceX launches 22 more Starlink satellites into orbit

California, US - SpaceX announced on Monday evening that it successfully launched 22 more Starlink internet satellites into orbit, marking another milestone in the American company's history.

SpaceX shared a video of the Falcon 9 rocket's launch to its official X account, captioned 'Liftoff!'

At precisely 7.28pm (0228GMT), the workhorse Falcon 9 rocket launched from Space Launch Complex 4 East at Vandenberg Space Force Base in California.

This launch was significant

because it was the 10th flight for SpaceX's first-stage booster, demonstrating the company's commitment to reusable space exploration technology, the firm said in a statement posted on its website.

After completing its mission, the booster made a smooth homecoming to Earth, landing on the 'Of Course I Still Love You' dronship stationed in the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean.

With this launch, the constellation of Starlink satellites continues to expand, aiming to revolutionise global connectivity through high-speed, low-latency



SpaceX shared a video of the Falcon 9 rocket's launch to its official X account, captioned 'Liftoff!'

internet coverage.

This veteran booster has a track record of hauling payloads, having previously supported missions for the US Space Development Agency and several other Starlink launches.

Notably, this operation marked SpaceX's 26th mission of the year, further solidifying its position as a leader in the space industry.

Last Friday, SpaceX successfully deployed an additional 23 satellites, demonstrating the company's remarkable capability. The Starlink project, made up of over 5,000 satellites, is a bold

attempt to bridge the digital divide and provide internet access to underserved communities around the world.

Among these accomplishments, SpaceX's Starship stands out as the pinnacle of engineering excellence, claiming the prestigious title of the world's largest and most powerful space rocket.

As SpaceX continues to push the boundaries of space exploration, each launch serves as a testament to human ingenuity and the relentless pursuit of progress in the cosmos.

Anadolu Agency

Kamala Harris calls Trump 'threat' to democracy, fundamental freedoms

The US VP said she and Joe Biden will protect voting rights, and address gun violence epidemic

Washington, DC, US - US Vice President Kamala Harris has called former president Donald Trump a 'threat' to democracy and fundamental freedoms and vowed to restore Roe v Wade, protect voting rights and address gun violence issues.

In a post on X, Kamala Harris stated: "Donald Trump is a threat to our democracy and fundamental freedoms. President @JoeBiden and I will restore Roe, protect voting rights, and finally address our gun violence epidemic. The contrast could not be clearer."

US President Joe Biden's campaign spokesperson, James Singer, said that Trump 'wants

another January 6' after the former president on Saturday said that there would be a 'bloodbath' in the country if he lost the upcoming polls, reported CNN.

Condemning his statement, Singer emphasised that the US people would not make him win the presidential elections.

"American people are going to give him another electoral defeat this November because they continue to reject his extremism, his affection for violence, and his thirst for revenge," Singer said.

Addressing a rally near Ohio's Dayton, Trump said: "We're going to put a 100% tariff on every single car that comes across the line, and you're not going to be able to sell those guys if I get elected." Trump said in Vandalia, Ohio. "Now, if I don't get elected...it's going to be a bloodbath for the country," Politico reported.

It was not clear what Trump exactly meant by his remarks, as the former president was complaining about the automobile industry. Addressing the crowd, he said China will not be able to sell any vehicles imported to the US if he gets re-elected, Politico reported. Now, the US vice presi-



US Vice President Kamala Harris

The US vice president's statement comes days after Biden and Trump secured the Democratic and Republican presidential nominations, respectively

dent's statement comes days after Biden and Trump have secured the Democratic and Republican presidential nominations, respectively, setting up a rematch with each other, according to CNN.

10 people killed in Haiti in gang violence

Port-au-Prince, Haiti - At least 10 people were killed in a suburb of Haiti's capital on Monday as tensions continued to rise in the Caribbean nation.

They died in an exchange of gunfire between armed gangs in Petion-Ville on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, according to local media. Haitian police said that security forces had nothing to do with the incident.

Haiti has been struggling with gang violence and political instability for years. The situation dramatically deteriorated in recent months, with kidnappings, killings, armed robberies and other violent crimes becoming commonplace.

The rampant instability has further exacerbated an exodus of migrants from Haiti, and Prime Minister Ariel Henry resigned last week after fleeing the island nation for Puerto Rico.

Since February 29, several neighbourhoods in Port-au-Prince have been targeted by increased armed attacks.

Anadolu Agency

Gunmen abduct 87 in Nigeria, escalate wave of violence

Abuja, Nigeria - Gunmen have once again struck in Nigeria, abducting a staggering 87 persons in a brazen attack, as reported by residents and law enforcement officials, Al Jazeera reported.

This incident follows closely on the heels of a previous assault in which an armed gang seized 286 students and staff from a school earlier this month.

The latest attack unfolded in the Kajuru area of Kaduna State, with the victims including women and children, according to officials who spoke on Monday.

Bandits, known for their routine looting of villages and perpetration of mass kidnappings for ransom, have plunged northwest and north-central Nigeria into a state of turmoil, displacing approximately one million people, as noted by the United Nations, according to Al Jazeera.

Authorities have appeared powerless to stem the tide of near-daily attacks, placing immense pressure on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Kaduna police spokesperson Mansur Hassan disclosed that the Kajuru incident occurred on Sunday night, with security forces mobilised in an effort to rescue the abducted villagers.

Eyewitnesses revealed that the armed assailants, donning army uniforms, infiltrated the village undetected after parking



The latest attack unfolded in the Kajuru area of Kaduna State

The incident follows closely on the heels of a previous assault in which an armed gang seized 286 students and staff from a school earlier this month

their motorbikes at a distance. Tanko Wada Sarkin, the village head, confirmed that 87 individuals were forcefully taken captive.

Aruwa Ya'u, another resident, recounted his harrowing experience of being captured and subsequently released due to his frail health. He sought treatment at a local government clinic following

the ordeal.

Haruna Atiku, whose wife and two daughters are among the missing, described the sudden onslaught by the bandits, who unleashed violence with impunity, Al Jazeera reported.

Just days before this incident, 16 people were kidnapped in the Dogon Noma area, a mere 10km away, according to officials.

This comes on the heels of the large-scale abduction of more than 250 students from a school in Kuriga village on March 7, situated approximately 150km from Kajuru, marking one of the most significant attacks in recent years.

Initially associated with Boko Haram, school kidnappings have become a favoured tactic of criminal gangs seeking hefty ransom payments.

ANI

US Supreme Court again blocks Texas from implementing immigration law

Washington, DC, US - The US Supreme Court on Monday blocked Texas from implementing immigration law that would enable state officials to arrest and detain people they suspect of entering the country illegally, CNN reported.

Justice Samuel Alito has issued the order as he oversees the matters arising from the appeals court that is currently considering the case.

The order issued by Justice Alito does not include an expiration date for the stay. The stay will continue to remain in place while the court considers emergency appeals from the Biden administration and others, who want the justices to block enforcement of the law while their legal challenges to it play out, according to CNN report.

Immigration advocates of increased racial profiling as well as detentions and attempted deportations by state authorities in Texas sparked concerns after Senate Bill 4 was signed into law by the Texas Republican Governor Greg Abbott in December.

The US Justice Department has stated that the law would 'profoundly' amend the status quo 'that has existed between the United States and the States in the context of immigration for almost 150 years', CNN reported.



This file photo shows a mother helping her child over the barbed wire fence in Eagle Pass, Texas on August 25, 2023

In the court papers, Attorneys for a pair of immigration groups and El Paso County wrote: "People can disagree about immigration. They always have. And Texas may be deeply concerned about recent immigration."

"But the same was true of California in the 1870s, Pennsylvania and Michigan in the 1930s, and Arizona in 2012. Nevertheless, for 150 years this Court has made clear that states are not allowed to regulate the core immigration field of entry and removal," they added, the report said.

A federal judge in Texas'

Austin had blocked the state government from enforcing the law. However, the 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals granted a temporary stay on the decision announced by the lower court. The court said the law would be implemented on March 10 if the Supreme Court did not take any action.

The appeals were soon filed and Justice Alito issued the administrative stay on March 4. During the court proceedings, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, a Republican, and other officials told the Supreme Court that

the 'Constitution recognises that Texas has the sovereign right to defend itself from violent transnational cartels that flood the State with fentanyl, weapons, and all manner of brutality'. CNN reported.

The state officials called Texas in court papers as being the US 'first-line defence against transnational violence'. The state officials stressed that Texas has been 'forced to deal with the deadly consequences of the federal government's inability or unwillingness to protect the border'.

ANI

‘Human-made’ famine in Gaza still preventable: UN human rights chief

Volker Turk reiterated his call for a full restoration of essential services and an immediate ceasefire

Geneva, Switzerland - As experts warn that Gaza is on the verge of catastrophic famine, the UN's human rights chief said on Tuesday that such a 'human-made catastrophe' could still be prevented.

"The projected imminent famine in Gaza can and must be prevented. The alarm bells sounded over the past months by the UN, including my office, have not been heeded," human rights spokesperson Jeremy Laurence read the remarks of Volker Turk at a UN press briefing in Geneva.

"This catastrophe is human-made and was entirely preventable," Turk said.

The situation of hunger, starvation, and famine is 'a result of Israel's extensive restrictions on the entry and distribution of humanitarian aid and commercial goods, displacement of most of the population, as well as the destruction of crucial civilian infrastructure', he said, underlining that law and order were breaking down as desperation mounts.

He urged Israel to ensure that the population could access this aid in 'a safe and dignified manner'.

"The clock is ticking," he said. "Everyone, especially those with influence, must insist that Israel acts to facilitate the unimpeded entry and distribution of needed humanitarian assistance and



Palestinians hold empty containers to receive food, distributed by aid organisations as Israeli attacks continue at Jabalia refugee camp in Jabalia, Gaza on Monday

commercial goods to end starvation and avert all risk of famine."

The rights chief reiterated his call for a full restoration of essential services and an immediate ceasefire.

According to a special brief by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Initiative

(IPC) released on Monday, famine is 'imminent' in Northern Gaza and Gaza City, which is projected to occur anytime between mid-March and May.

Bridging the funding gap

Flexible funding and stable funding would help bridge the

The alarm bells sounded over the past months by the UN, including my office, have not been heeded

VOLKER TURK

funding gap in humanitarian aid, said the World Food Programme's executive director on Tuesday.

"WFP is making very painful choices as a result of this as to how we can assist. ... And so private partnerships are now a large part of what we're doing," Executive Director Cindy Mc-

Cain said at the European Humanitarian Forum in Brussels on Tuesday.

She explained that flexible funding is important to bridge the funding gap, and added: "More flexible funding that, as you know, we can find, we can find direct funds wherever they're needed, and we can

place them where they're needed in a fast and efficient way."

McCain also thanked the Nordic countries and Belgium for their response.

"Predictability is a large part also what we're increasing, and making much more robust within our organisation. These are stable funding helps, and these things help us plan more efficiently and more effectively," the executive director added.

She emphasised that the WFP is 'stepping up the engagement to explore closer collaboration with national governments'.

'Adopt a new narrative'

Anton Leis Garcia, the director of Spanish Agency for International Development, said for his part that humanitarian aid should adopt a new narrative, and not be looked at just as a solidarity action.

"What is happening in Gaza has direct implications in our security, in the security of this world. What is happening with investing in climate, in resilience, in adaptation, investing in anticipatory action anywhere in the world, it's also good for our citizens," Garcia said.

"We need civil society, we need also the private sector," he also stressed.

Anadolu Agency

50 killed at Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza

Jerusalem - Israeli forces killed 50 Palestinians at the Al-Shifa Hospital in the northern Gaza Strip, the military said on Tuesday.

The army said its forces also detained 180 suspects as part of its raid on the facility since Monday.

"Battles are taking place between Israeli forces' and Palestinian fighters, the army added in a statement.

The Israeli army on Monday stormed the hospital in Gaza City, which houses thousands of ill and wounded patients, as well as displaced people.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian death toll from Israel's deadly offensive on the Gaza Strip since October 7 has jumped to 31,819, the Health Ministry in the enclave said on Tuesday.

The Gaza-based Health Ministry made the statement as Israel continues to wage its deadly onslaught on Gaza for the 165th day.

The ongoing attacks have also injured 73,934 Palestinians, it added.

Over the past 24 hours, the Israeli army committed nine massacres across the Gaza Strip, killing 93 people and injuring 142 others, the statement noted.

"Many people are still trapped under rubble and on the roads and rescuers can't reach them," it added.

Israel has pounded the Gaza Strip since a cross-border attack by Hamas, which Tel Aviv says killed nearly 1,200 people.

The Israeli war on Gaza has pushed 85% of the territory's population into internal displacement amid acute shortages of food, clean water, and medicine, while 60% of the enclave's infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, according to the UN.

Israel stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Anadolu Agency

Chinese envoy meets Hamas leader Haniyeh in Qatar

Istanbul, Turkey - In a first such meeting since the October 7 cross-border Hamas raid and consequent Israeli war on Gaza, a Chinese foreign ministry envoy called on Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Qatar, Beijing said on Tuesday.

In a brief statement, the foreign ministry said Ambassador Wang Kejian met the head of Hamas' political bureau in Doha.

The two 'exchanged views on the Gaza conflict and other issues', the statement concluded.

It is the first known public contact between Beijing and the Palestinian resistance group that governs Gaza, since October 7, when Israel launched a massive bombardment on the besieged coastal enclave following an attack by Hamas inside Israel.

In Beijing, China's foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian on Tuesday called on all factions in Palestine to use dialogue to 'achieve internal reconciliation'.

Extending congratulations to Mohammad Mustafa on taking



Chinese Ambassador Wang Kejian met the head of Hamas' political bureau Ismail Haniyeh in Doha

office as the new prime minister, Lin said China 'supports' the Palestinian Authority in 'enhancing authority'.

Beijing supports 'all political factions in Palestine in achieving internal reconciliation through consultation and dialogue', Lin added. Reacting to the Israeli

raid on Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City on Monday, Lin said: "What has happened in Al-Shifa Hospital epitomises the humanitarian crisis in Gaza."

"The top priority now is to realise immediate ceasefire, protect civilians with utmost efforts, avoid greater casualties

and alleviate the humanitarian crisis," said the ministry spokesman.

A senior Palestinian police officer was killed by Israeli forces in the northern Gaza Strip on Monday, the Palestinian government media office said.

Anadolu Agency



Germany doesn't need any nuclear weapons, says Chancellor Scholz

Berlin, Germany - Chancellor Olaf Scholz has rejected suggestions that Germany should have its own nuclear warheads and reduce its reliance on US protection.

"Germany doesn't need any nuclear weapons of its own," Scholz said on Tuesday, during a panel discussion, and underlined that NATO remains the cornerstone of European security.

Responding to a question at the 'Europe 2024' conference, Scholz said transatlantic ties remain strong and essential.

"Maybe we do have geopolitically different assessments, but one thing is quite clear, we share values with democracy and the rule of law. And that makes us different from others," he said.

Anadolu Agency

Washington will not let Ukraine fail, vows Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin

Berlin, Germany - Washington will not let Ukraine fail, US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said on Tuesday amid congressional Republicans in the US blocking the flow of military aid.

"We remain determined to provide Ukraine with the resources that it needs to resist the Kremlin's aggression," Austin told a high-level meeting of NATO allies and partners at Ramstein Air Base in Germany.

He said Ukrainian troops cur-

rently face 'harsh conditions and hard fighting' and they need more weapons and ammunition from Western countries to counter Russia's military aggression.

"Ukraine won't back down and neither will United States. So our message today is clear. United States will not let Ukraine fail. This coalition will not let Ukraine fail, and the free world will not let Ukraine fail," Austin said.

Touting a new US\$300mn



US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin

additional security assistance package the US announced last week, he said it would support Ukraine's most pressing needs for air defence, artillery and anti-tank capabilities.

By bypassing Republicans in the US Congress, the package was assembled from defence savings in other areas.

"The Czech Republic recently procured 800,000 urgently needed artillery shells Germany, (and) France, Denmark and

Sweden have each recently announced important new military aid packages," Austin said.

He also said the countries that lead 'capability coalitions' held a special session this morning to discuss ways to boost arms deliveries to Ukraine, ongoing training missions, and defence cooperation initiatives.

"The capability coalitions have made significant progress in recent weeks. We'll keep working together with all of the

capability coalitions to identify gaps to maintain cross cutting needs, and to help Ukraine build a formidable force for the future," he said.

The Ramstein meeting comes amid growing concerns in Kyiv about the sustainability of US military support for Ukraine, due to Republicans blocking aid during an election year, and the likelihood of a second term for former President Donald Trump.

Anadolu Agency

INDIA

Country demands a change, says Congress chief Kharge as CWC deliberates manifesto

New Delhi, India - The Congress working committee (CWC), met on Tuesday and 'deliberated' thoroughly on the party's manifesto for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, dates for which were announced on Saturday.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, former party chiefs Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and other congress leaders were present at the meeting.

"The country is fervently demanding a change. The guarantees currently being touted by the present government would have the same fate as that of the 'India Shining' slogan of 2004," Kharge said.

The meeting was held at AICC headquarters in Delhi.

Former finance minister P Chidambaram, who headed the manifesto committee, said earlier the draft report will be presented to Kharge and will be discussed by the CWC.

Welcoming the members, Kharge said a committee had been set up under the chairmanship of Chidambaram to prepare the draft Manifesto.

"The committee successfully ensured public participation in this exercise, rather than merely confining it to an academic one. It held extensive consultations in different parts of the country and submitted a draft to me on March 6," Kharge said.

He said that suggestions and



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge along with parliamentary party chairperson Sonia Gandhi and leader Rahul Gandhi during the CWC meeting in New Delhi on Tuesday (ANI)

comments were also solicited through an online website which was called 'Awaaz Bharat Ki'. "Whatever has been promised in Manifesto, will be strictly implemented. Before making promises in the Manifesto, in-depth deliberation has been made to ensure that these promises are implementable," he said.

He said it is because of this very fact that right from 1926, the Congress party's manifesto

Whatever has been promised in manifesto, will be strictly implemented. Deliberation has been made to ensure that these promises are implementable

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE

has been regarded as a 'document of trust and commitment'. Kharge recalled after independence, the Congress party's first manifesto was released

under the leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru which was famously called 'What Congress stands for'.

Speaking on the recently con-

cluded Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, he said: "Mumbai is an important place for us because our party was formed here. The freedom movement got its final fillip with the Quit India movement in 1942."

"These were not just political Yatras but will be noted as the largest mass contact movement in our political history. One can't undermine the fact that nobody in our times has undertaken such a massive exercise. Both

these Yatras managed to take the issue of the people to the national centre stage," Kharge said.

"During the Yatra, both me and Rahul Gandhi addressed several public rallies in which we spoke of our guarantees and commitments under the five pillars of the Yatra - Kisan Nyay, Yuva Nyay, Naari Nyay, Shramik Nyay and Hissedari nyay," he said.

The Congress leader said

that over the last two months, a total of 25 Guarantees - five guarantees each for the five Nyays were announced.

Hailing Rahul Gandhi he said 'he has done his maximum through the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra as far as these guarantees are concerned. But in the coming days, we must spell out what our priorities, policies and programmes are going to be for the next 5 years'.

"I am sure by now you would have all been made aware of these promises. Most of them are derived from the draft manifesto itself," he said while addressing the CWC members.

"All of us have a responsibility to ensure that our manifesto gets the widest publicity in different states and that our commitment is taken to every household across the country and people at large," the Congress chief said.

Later, in a post on X, Kharge said: "The Congress Working Committee (CWC) deliberated thoroughly on the Congress Manifesto, today."

His post added: "The country is fervently demanding a change."

Lok sabha Elections 2024 would be held in seven phases starting on April 19 and ending on June 1. The results will be declared on June 4.

ANI

VOTE FOR BETTER INDIA



A student has her face painted as part of an awareness campaign for first-generation voters ahead of the general elections, in Chennai on Tuesday (ANI)

India committed to protect Indian Ocean region: PM

New Delhi, India - Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday reaffirmed India's commitment to safeguarding freedom of navigation and combating piracy and terrorism in the Indian Ocean region.

His remarks came in response to a message from Bulgarian President Rumen Radev, expressing gratitude for the safe return of seven Bulgarian nationals.

On Monday, the Bulgarian president expressed his gratitude to the Indian Navy for successfully carrying out a rescue operation on the hijacked Bulgarian ship, MV Ruen.

Modi expressed appreciation for Radev's message, and conveyed India's satisfaction that the seven Bulgarian nationals were safe and would soon be returning home.

"Appreciate your message President @PresidentOfBg. We are happy that 7 Bulgarian nationals are safe and will be returning home soon. India is committed to protecting free-



Modi's remarks came in response to a message from Bulgarian President Rumen Radev, expressing gratitude for the safe return of seven Bulgarians

dom of navigation and combating piracy and terrorism in the Indian Ocean region," said the

PM in a post on X.

The 'Rouen' ship with eight Bulgarians, nine Myanmar and one Angolan citizen on board was captured by pirates in the Arabian Sea in December last year.

Meanwhile, Bulgaria's Foreign Minister Mariya Gabriel in a Facebook post said on Saturday that she held a conversation with the Indian Ambassador to Bulgaria Sanjay Rana for the Indian Navy's operation on MV Ruen and thanked him for rescuing Bulgarian nationals.

ANI

Vinay Kumar appointed as Ambassador to Russia

New Delhi, India - Vinay Kumar, presently Ambassador of India to Myanmar, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Russian Federation, informed the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

He is expected to take up the assignment shortly, the ministry said.

Russia, which recently underwent elections, has been a longstanding and time-tested partner for India.

The development of India-Russia relations has been a key pillar of India's foreign policy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi wished Vladimir Putin for the huge victory in the 2024 polls.

"Warm congratulations to H E Mr Vladimir Putin on his re-election as the President of the Russian Federation. Look forward to working together to further strengthen the time-tested Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between India and Russia in the years to come," said Modi in a post on X.

Since the signing of 'Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership' in October 2000, India-Russia ties have acquired a qualitatively new character with enhanced levels of cooperation in almost all areas of the bilateral relationship including political, security, trade and economy, defence, science and technology, and culture, the MEA said in a statement.

ANI

PM's ensuing Bhutan visit to further strengthen bilateral ties

New Delhi, India - As Prime Minister Narendra Modi prepares for his visit to Bhutan this week, the stage is set for further strengthening the multifaceted cooperation between the two neighbouring nations across various sectors.

India and Bhutan share a unique and exemplary bilateral relationship founded on mutual trust, goodwill, and understanding. Formal diplomatic ties between the two countries were established in 1968, with the cornerstone being the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation

signed in 1949, subsequently renewed in February 2007.

Over the years, high-level exchanges have played a pivotal role in nurturing the strong bond between India and Bhutan.

King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, has made several visits to India, underscoring the close ties between the two nations. His last visit to India was in November 2023.

Similarly, PM Modi's visit to Bhutan in August 2019 marked a significant milestone, with the



Bhutan Prime Minister Dasho Tshering Tobgay called on Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in New Delhi on March 14 (ANI)

launch of major bilateral projects aimed at bolstering economic cooperation and connectivity.

The recent official visit of Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay of Bhutan to India in March 2024 further reaffirmed the commitment of both countries to enhancing bilateral relations across various domains, including development cooperation and vibrant economic ties.

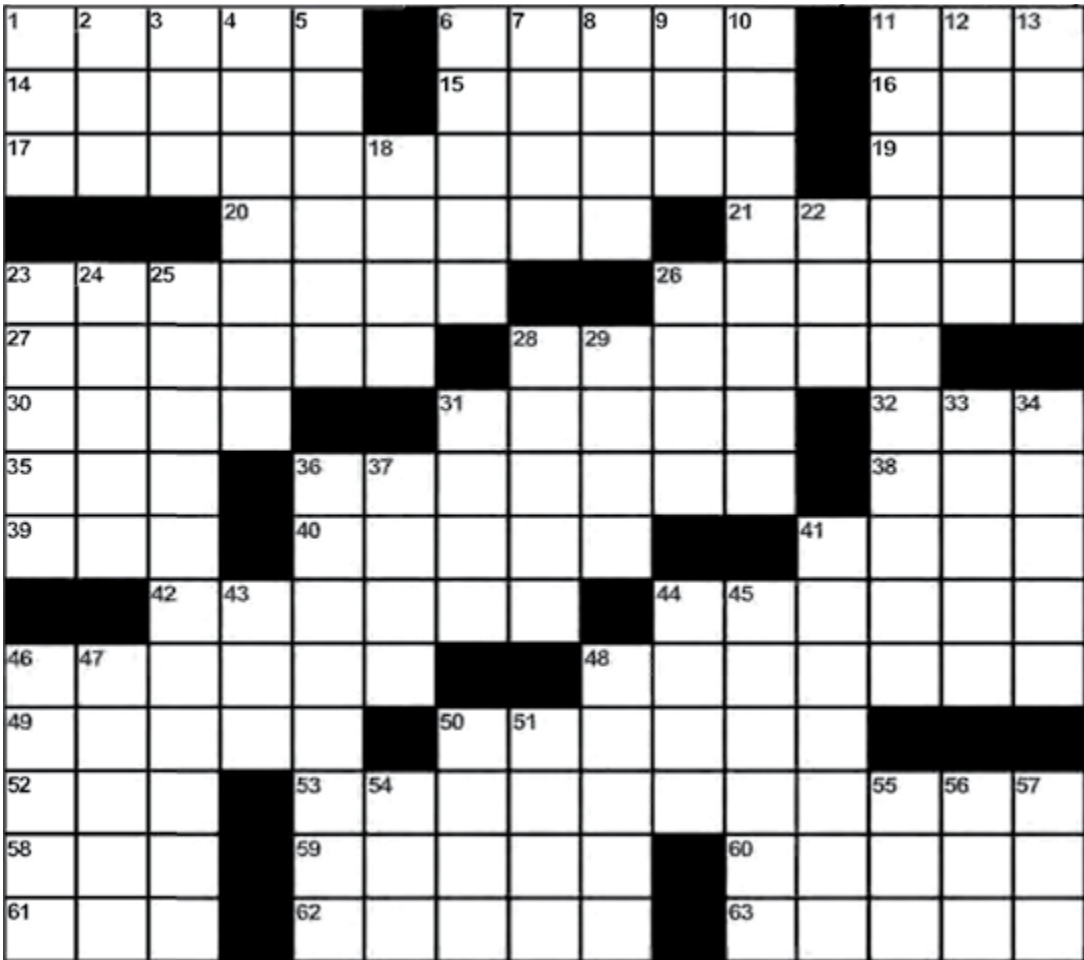
The economic partnership between India and Bhutan has flourished over the years, driven by the India-Bhutan Agreement

on Trade, Commerce, and Transit. This agreement, first signed in 1972 and revised multiple times, has facilitated a free trade regime between the two countries, promoting bilateral trade and economic growth. India stands as Bhutan's top trade partner, both in terms of imports and exports.

The bilateral trade volume has seen a significant surge, reaching Rs 11,178 crores in 2022, showcasing the robust economic engagement between the two nations.

ANI

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Bedouin, for one
- 6) Grain husks
- 11) Blazing
- 14) TV studio sign
- 15) They form central angles
- 16) "How_ you?"
- 17) Boisterous celebration
- 19) ATM need
- 20) Haberdashery item
- 21) Waited and wanted
- 23) Infant Native American
- 26) Antiknock fluids
- 27) Doles out
- 28) Insistence on traditional correctness
- 30) Scotsman
- 31) Argument
- 32) Move back, as a tide
- 35) Zeta's follower
- 36) Like Mona Lisa
- 38) Second-smallest st.
- 39) _ Plaines, Ill.
- 40) Be quiet, in scores
- 41) Royal honorific
- 42) "At the _Core" (Burroughs novel)
- 44) Make harmonious
- 46) Out-of-date
- 48) Feeling such a fool
- 49) Martin's partner in

- classic TV
- 50) Less difficult
- 52) "Do_ say, not ..."
- 53) Welcoming warmly
- 58) "_ the Good Times Roll"
- 59) Like many a Poe tale
- 60) Winter wanner-upper
- 61) Cry in "A Christmas Carol"
- 62) Parks, Bonheur and Ponselle
- 63) Abrasive board
- DOWN**
- 1) _ de plume
- 2) Common tip jar item
- 3) Disfigure
- 4) Reduce engine heat
- 5) Timber problem
- 6) Have a hankering for
- 7) Maori war dance
- 8) Way in for a miner
- 9) Fish propeller
- 10) Engaged in combat
- 11) What an arbitrator hopes to find
- 12) Corbeled bay window
- 13) Guards, as a hockey goal
- 18) A pope may lead it
- 22) Surprise cries
- 23) Called by loudspeaker

- 24) Get_ start (run behind)
- 25) Happy about
- 26) "_ go brag"
- 28) Whines
- 29) Feet or tons, e.g.
- 31) Having a fortune
- 33) Swiss capital, to the Swiss
- 34) Run, as a dye
- 36) Less familiar
- 37) Actor Dillon
- 41) Hollywood hopeful's hope
- 43) "It just came to me!"
- 44) Where to find most humans
- 45) From that point on
- 46) Big name in dental products
- 47) "_ turn" (unlucky board game activity)
- 48) " ..._ dust to dust"
- 50) They're good listeners
- 51) Hit ballad for Sarah McLachlan
- 54) Summer zodiac sign
- 55) Beverage cooler
- 56) Neither go-with
- 57) Writer Talese

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

It's one of those days you've been waiting for, when it's in your best interests to do as little as possible! It's not that you should give over all of your responsibilities to other people, it's just that you should give other people the opportunity to shine. You're capable and everyone knows it. Now you should give someone else a chance to show the world what they can do. From presenting at a meeting to picking a restaurant for dinner, let someone else do it all. They'll thank you.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Anyone can get you on their side today as long as they appeal to your intelligence. You are swayed by analytical minds. You want logic and reason to guide you, which makes it a good day to do research and then listen to your instincts when you're making decisions. You're not going to have automatic answers. You are much more willing to see the other side of arguments and mull over whether or not you might want to change your opinions. You are open to any good arguments.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

If you just can't seem to get revved up and active today, maybe you should stop trying so hard. If you're part of a team or partnership, let the other people take over the reins for a while. Let them push things along while you take a break. Give them motivational and emotional support. That's the value of teamwork, isn't it? You've taken up the slack when other people haven't felt quite up to the task, and now it is their turn to pick up the slack for you. They won't mind.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

If your group of friends or coworkers just isn't making any progress right now, then it's a good time for you to step in. Throw your weight around. You have facts and logic on your side, and you will be able to get your friends focused on working together instead of trying to outdo each other. You can turn things around and get great results because you know that if you appeal to the best in people, they will show you the best that they have to offer.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

A lot of new people have been popping into your group of friends lately, and you should make room for each and every one of them. If you start to fear that one of these newcomers is taking your place in a cherished relationship, relax. This person can't hold a candle to you, and even if they are trying hard to move into your territory, there is no chance they will succeed. You are secure in what you've built with this other friend and have absolutely nothing to worry about. Believe it.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

What is beautiful? Your answer to that question is different from anyone else's answer. No two people can always agree on aesthetic issues, and you will need to remember that today. Something you see as a great work of art won't get quite the ecstatic reception you were expecting, so try not to take it personally. These critics might not like what they are seeing, but that doesn't mean that they don't like you. Respecting their opinions doesn't mean you have to agree with them.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

The position you're put in today requires you to make a tough decision. Do you opt for the choice that will be best for you or best for someone else? Avoid the urge to consult other people about what you should do. While getting input is a fine idea, it could end up confusing you in the end if you talk to too many people. Plus, you might come off as someone who doesn't really know what they are doing. To protect your reputation, you've got to make this call on your own.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

If you truly want to achieve harmony with a grumpy friend right now, you need to stop and get centered yourself. Stop doing what you think they want you to do and start being real. When you strip away all the anxiety about what to say and how to act, you can see things much more clearly, and the answer will be obvious. And get ready to do more than your fair share to make things right between the two of you. When it comes to things like this, you have to bend a little.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

If your present life and location are less than stimulating, then put your brain to work on making some new travel plans. There's nothing like a change of scenery to shake things up and make life interesting again. Push the ideas that you've had in the back of your mind a little further forward and start turning one of them into reality today. Do some preliminary research and figure out if you want to go on your own or with a friend. Find out where the bargains are this time of year.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Today, try to keep from getting too sentimental about people and events from the past. You need to keep things moving in a forward direction. Stay positive! Remembering special friendships and reliving past successes may make you feel warm and cozy, but they are only going to encourage your mind to wander and limit your progress. You need to start making plans for the coming months. Organize an outing with family members or just think about what you want to do over the next few months.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Your aesthetic senses are heightened right now, and all day long you will see ways to improve the space around you. Every drab room you see will spark your creativity and get your imagination working. There should be some redecoration projects in your future. Take another look at your bathroom, bedroom, or kitchen and make some plans. Start sketching out your ideas. Look online for additional inspiration. Beautiful changes are coming.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

If you don't treat yourself well, how will other people know to do it? Today, you need to set an example for your friends and family to follow. Treat yourself to an indulgence you've long kept yourself from enjoying. Maybe it's a splurge at a jewellery store, a new gadget you've had your eye on, a day at a spa, or a meal at a fancy restaurant. Remind yourself that you are in charge of your own life by getting yourself something you really want.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Where is the United Kingdom's National Space Centre?

- A. Bristol
- B. Runnymede
- C. Cardiff
- D. Leicester

02. What does a copywriter do, such as Peter Wimsey in Dorothy Sayers's book "Murder Must Advertise"?

- A. Researches legal permissions to use text or graphic material
- B. Creates text for marketing
- C. Finds text to copy
- D. Copies out texts

03. Which production company is behind the UK TV comedy series "Whose Line Is It Anyway" (1988-1999) and "Have I Got News for You" (1990-present)?

- A. Hartwood Films
- B. All3Media
- C. Hat Trick Productions
- D. Shed Media

Answers: 1.D 2.B 3.C

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

S	L	D	A
L	I	E	S
V	V	E	E
U	A	Qu	E

Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters. A three letter word is worth one point, a four letter word is worth two points, and so on. Valid words must be at least three letters long.
Solution 20-25 words: Excellent, 15-20 words: Very good, 10-15 words: Good, 5-10 words: Average

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

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

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



Antoine Griezmann

Injury ends Griezmann's record 84-game streak with France

Paris, France - France will be without Antoine Griezmann for this month's friendlies against Germany and Chile after the Atletico Madrid player suffered an ankle injury, the national team said on Monday, ending his world record run of 84 straight games for his country.

The 32-year-old Atlético Madrid forward, France's fourth-highest scorer with 44 goals in 127 appearances, will be replaced by midfielder Matteo Guendouzi following his withdrawal from the 23-man squad.

Guendouzi, 24, plays for Serie A club Lazio, on loan from Olympique de Marseille, and has been capped seven times for France.

France host Germany at Parc Olympique Lyonnais on Saturday, followed by Chile at Stade Velodrome on March 26.

MADRID CALL OUT RACISM

Referee 'negligent' on Vinicius abuse, say LaLiga leaders

Madrid, Spain - Real Madrid have filed a complaint with the Spanish Football Federation [RFEF] calling the referee in their 4-2 LaLiga win at Osasuna "negligent" for failing to include insulting chants aimed at Vinicius Jr in his match report.

Television cameras picked up part of the crowd singing "Vinicius, die" during Saturday's game at El Sadar, with Madrid teammate Dani Carvajal then gesturing towards referee Juan Martinez Munuera. Vinicius scored twice in the match and celebrated his second goal in the 64th minute by turning to the crowd and pointing at his ear.

Martinez Munuera made no mention of any offensive chanting in his formal match report.

"Our club has filed a complaint with the Disciplinary Committee of the Royal Spanish Football Federation against match referee Juan Martinez Munuera, as a result of the negligent drafting of the referee's report.

"The referee voluntarily and deliberately omitted the insults and humiliating chants repeatedly directed towards our player Vinicius Junior, despite being warned insistently by our players at the same time that they were occurring," Madrid said in a statement.

"In addition, Real Madrid has also filed a complaint with [the RFEF] in relation to the aforementioned insults and humiliating chants, and forwarded them to the Olympic Stadium in Montjuic and the Metropolitano Stadium in Madrid, requesting that the perpetrators be identified.

"Real Madrid once again condemns these violent attacks of racism, discrimination and hatred, and demands that the necessary measures be taken, once and for all, in order to eradicate the violence that our player Vinicius Junior has been suffering."

Last week, cameras captured fans chanting "Vinicius, die" ahead of Barcelona's Champions League round-of-16 tie with Napoli at Montjuic, while a group was recorded shouting "Vinicius, chimpanzee" before Atletico Madrid's game with Inter Milan.

Vinicius has repeatedly been targeted with racist abuse from opposition fans.

Our club has filed a complaint with the Disciplinary Committee of the Royal Spanish Football Federation against match referee Juan Martinez Munuera

REAL MADRID



Real Madrid say the referee did not include insulting chants aimed at Vinicius Júnior (pictured) in his report after their LaLiga match against Osasuna

Messi sidelined for Argentina friendlies

Buenos Aires, Argentina - Argentina captain Lionel Messi is out of this month's friendlies in the United States due to a hamstring injury, the country's FA (AFA) said on Monday.

The 36-year-old forward missed Inter Miami's Major League Soccer game at DC United on Saturday after coming off injured in their midweek CONCACAF Champions League win against Nashville.

"Lionel Messi will not be in the squad for the friendlies in the U.S. due to a minor right hamstring injury sustained in the Inter Miami game against Nashville," the AFA said on its official X account.

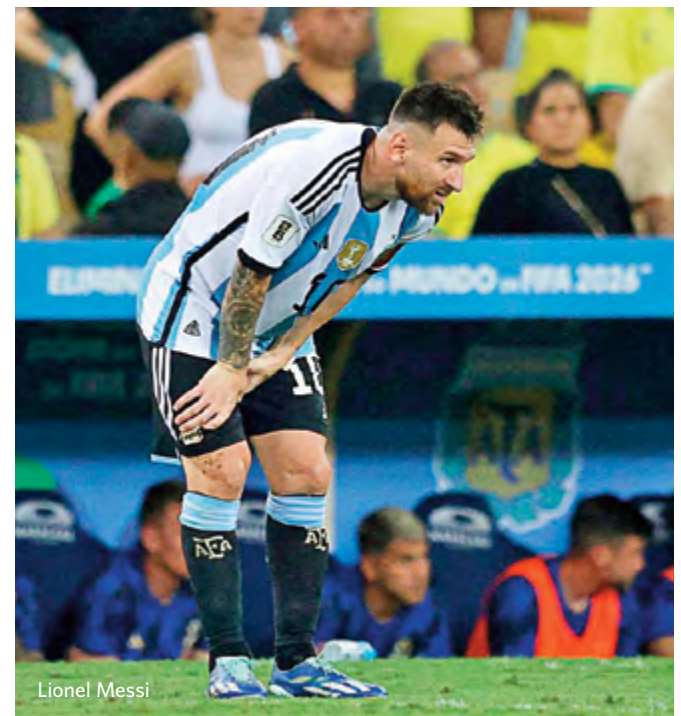
Messi is the latest absence for Lionel Scaloni's side following injuries to AS Roma forward Paulo Dybala, Bayer Leverkusen midfielder Exequiel Palacios and Bournemouth defender Marcos Senesi.

Argentina will face El Salvador on Friday at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia before playing Costa Rica four days later at the Los Angeles Coliseum.

Brazil's Gabriel Magalhães will miss their upcoming friendly matches against England and Spain due to an injury, with Gleison Bremer named as his replacement, coach Dorival Junior said on Monday.

The 26-year-old Arsenal defender, capped six times for his country, had been included in the 26-man squad announced on Saturday.

Gabriel is the latest absence for Brazil following injuries to Arsenal winger Gabriel Martinelli, Manchester United midfielder Casemiro, Manchester City goal-



Lionel Messi will not be in the squad for the friendlies in the U.S. due to a minor right hamstring injury sustained in the Inter Miami game against Nashville

AFA

Acerbi leaves Italy squad after being accused of using racist expression

Milan, Italy - Italy's Inter Milan defender Francesco Acerbi has left the national team camp ahead of this month's friendlies after being accused of using a racist expression by Napoli's Juan Jesus in a Serie A game, the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) said.

The 36-year-old Acerbi, who was part of the 28-man Italy squad announced by manager Luciano Spalletti for games against Venezuela and Ecuador in the United States on Friday, will be replaced by AS Roma's Gianluca Mancini.

Italy play Venezuela on Thursday followed by Ecuador on March 24.

The alleged incident occurred during Sunday's 1-1 draw between Serie A leaders Inter and seventh-placed Napoli, with defender Jesus later saying Acerbi had apologised.

Acerbi has denied using racist language towards Jesus.

"I did not say any racist phrases. I have been playing football for 20 years and I know what I say," Acerbi told Italian journalists when he returned from the camp.

"Many things happen on the pitch ... but when the referee blows his whistle, you shake hands, and it all goes back to how it was before.

"There must be no racism anywhere in the world. I'm sorry I had to leave the national team training camp, but that's how it was and it's right."

FIGC said Acerbi, capped 34 times, explained his side of the story to Spalletti and his teammates in Rome on Monday morning.

"From the Nerazzurri defender's report, in waiting for what happened to be reconstructed in compliance with the autonomy of sporting justice, it emerged that there was no defamatory, denigrating or racist intent on his part," the FIGC said in a statement.

"However, it was agreed that Acerbi should be left out of the squad for the next two friendlies ... to let things settle for the national team and the player himself, who will return to his club today."

Former Napoli boss Spalletti, addressing the media before Italy's departure to the U.S., said everyone should be careful about their behaviour.



Infantino wants authorities to take action after Turkish league violence

Ankara, Turkey - Violence in the Turkish Super Lig is "unacceptable", FIFA President Gianni Infantino said on Monday as he called on authorities to take action following a brawl after Fenerbahçe's 3-2 win at Trabzonspor.

Trabzonspor fans stormed on to the pitch after the final whistle on Sunday and attacked visiting Fenerbahçe players who fought back to defend themselves.

It came after there have been other violent incidents in the Turkish league this season, including an attack on a referee by a club president and protests against refereeing decisions.

Turkish police detained 12 fans following the incident, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said in a post on X on Monday.

Fenerbahçe players left Trabzon by private plane on Sunday night, accompanied by extensive security measures.

"The violence witnessed after the Turkish Super Lig match between Trabzonspor and Fenerbahçe is absolutely unacceptable- on or off the field, it has no place in our sport or society," Infantino said in a statement. "All players have to be safe and secure to play the game which brings such joy to so many people all over the world."

"I call on the relevant authorities to ensure that this is respected at all levels and for the perpetrators of the shocking events in Trabzon to be held accountable for their actions."

"We are going through a period that Turkish football is now completely fed by chaos, where tensions are constantly high, and where we cannot use the healing power of football," Trabzonspor coach Abdullah Avcı said.

"I don't understand why this place is so tense. Don't we have the right to celebrate? We need to overcome these things. We need to be tolerant towards each other and have common sense," Fenerbahçe manager İsmail Kartal told reporters.

"We are in contact with our representatives and state authorities regarding the incidents that took place during and after the match," The Turkish Football Federation said in a statement.

"No one should have any doubt that after the investigations are completed, the necessary penal sanctions will be imposed on those responsible (for the violence) to prevent the repetition of such incidents."



A Trabzonspor fan invades the pitch and clashes with Fenerbahçe players and security staff after the match

Sabalenka's boyfriend Konstantin Koltsov dies

Miami-Dade police say Former NHL player dies in 'apparent suicide'

Miami, US - Konstantin Koltsov, the Belarusian former pro ice hockey player and boyfriend of tennis player Aryna Sabalenka, died in an "apparent suicide" the Miami-Dade police department said on Tuesday.

Police said in a statement sent to Reuters that they had responded to a call on Monday at a Miami resort about reports of a man jumping off a balcony.

"At approximately 12:39 a.m., Bal Harbour Police and Fire Rescue were dispatched to the St. Regis Bal Harbour Resort, 9703 Collins Avenue, in reference to a male that jumped from a balcony," said the Miami Dade police department.

"The Miami-Dade Police Department, Homicide Bureau, responded and has taken over the investigation of the apparent suicide of Mr. Konstantin Koltsov.

"No foul play is suspected."



Konstantin Koltsov with Aryna Sabalenka

The former forward, who was 42, played for the Belarus national team in the 2002 and 2010 Olympics and spent parts of three seasons with the National Hockey League's Pittsburgh Penguins from 2002 and 2006.

His death was confirmed by Russian club Salavat Yulaev, where he was an assistant coach.

"It is with deep sorrow that we inform you that the coach of Salavat Yulaev, Konstantin Koltsov, has passed away," Salavat Yulaev, which is based in the Russian city of Ufa, said in a statement.

"He was a strong and cheerful person, he was loved and respected by players, colleagues, and fans. Konstantin Evgenievich forever wrote himself into the history of our club.

"May he rest in peace."

Sabalenka, the world's number two-ranked women's tennis player and Australian Open champion, is in Miami for a women's WTA event.

According to media reports Sabalenka is not withdrawing from the Miami Open, which gets underway on Tuesday, but will not do press conferences following her matches. Sabalenka has a first round bye and is scheduled to play either Romanian Simona Halep or Spain's Paula Badosa.



Simona Halep

Returning Halep to face Badosa in Miami opener

Miami, US - Simona Halep will make her competitive return this week after winning an appeal over a doping suspension when she takes the court at the Miami Open where Indian Wells champion Iga Swiatek will look to pull off the Sunshine Double.

Halep, who accepted a wild card into the Miami Open after her four-year ban was cut to nine months by the top court for global sport, will face Paula Badosa on Tuesday with the winner getting world number two Aryna Sabalenka in the second round.

For Halep, the clash against world number 80 Badosa of Spain will mark her first match since the 2022 U.S. Open where she was upset in the first round by Ukrainian qualifier Daria Snigur. Halep, a former Wimbledon and French Open champion, was suspended in October 2022 after testing positive for roxadustat - a banned drug that stimulates the production of red blood cells - at that year's U.S. Open. Halep vigorously denied the charges against her.

The Romanian former world number one owns a 2-0 record in head-to-head meetings with Badosa, having never lost more than three games in a set.

Top seed Swiatek missed her Miami Open title defence last year due to injury but returns in stellar form and fresh off a dom-

inant 6-4 6-0 win over ninth seed Maria Sakkari in the Indian Wells final.

Now Swiatek will set her sights on capturing the Indian Wells and Miami Open titles back-to-back, a feat known as the Sunshine Double given the tournaments' respective locations in California and Florida, for a second time. Should Swiatek, who will face either Italy's Camila Giorgi or fellow Pole Magdalena Frech in the second round, claim the Miami title she would join Steffi Graf (1994, 1996) as the only women to complete the Sunshine Double twice.

Florida resident Coco Gauff, who reached the Indian Wells semi-finals, will enjoy plenty of crowd support as she returns to Miami for the first time since her triumph at last year's U.S. Open.

On the men's side, Carlos Alcaraz will also chase the final piece of the Sunshine Double after a successful title defence at Indian Wells where he beat reigning Miami Open champion Daniil Medvedev in a rematch of the 2023 California final.

While the Miami men's draw is stacked, one notable absence will be world number one and six-times champion Novak Djokovic, who expressed a desire to limit the number of events he plays at this stage of his decorated career.

Australia call off T20 series against Afghanistan over women's rights

MELBOURNE, Australia - Australia have called off a T20 series against Afghanistan citing a deteriorating human rights situation for women and girls in the Taliban-ruled country, Cricket Australia (CA) said on Tuesday.

Australia withdrew from a one-day series scheduled for March last year in the United Arab Emirates after the Taliban imposed strict restrictions on Afghan women, including banning them from attending universities.

The teams were scheduled to play three T20 matches in the UAE in August this year but CA said that after consultations with



Australia withdrew from a one-day series scheduled for March last year in the UAE after the Taliban imposed strict restrictions on Afghan women

the Australian government it had decided to call off the series.

"The government's advice is that conditions for women and girls in Afghanistan are getting worse," the cricket board said in a statement.

"For this reason, we have maintained our previous position and will postpone the bilateral series against Afghanistan."

The Afghanistan Cricket Board was not immediately available to comment but a spokesperson for the Taliban administration, which calls itself the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA), defended the regime's human rights record.

"Afghanistan is a country that has fully observed human rights," Zabihullah Mujahid told Reuters. "This action of Australia isn't important to us. The IEA and Afghans are active in other fields of sports as well."

CA added that it would engage with its Afghan counterpart as well as the International Cricket Council to "... determine what actions could be taken to support the resumption of bilateral matches in the future".

Afghanistan's women team were disbanded and several members fled the country after the country's Taliban takeover in 2021.



Fermin Aldeguer

Spanish teenager Aldeguer to race in MotoGP with Ducati

Rome, Italy - Spanish teenager Fermin Aldeguer will move up to MotoGP with Ducati in 2025 on a two-year deal with an option for two more years, the Italian manufacturer said on Monday without naming the team.

The 18-year-old is currently competing in Moto2 and won the final four races of last season, finishing third overall. He is widely expected to join the Pramac satellite team.

Ducati Corse general manager Luigi Dall'Igna said in a statement that Aldeguer was "one of the strongest riders in the

new generation of MotoGP.

"Over the last few years, we have followed his evolution; during the last season, he showed incredible speed.

"He is a very young guy with the potential and characteristics to do well, and we will give him all the technical support to help him grow." The rider said he was realising a childhood dream.

"The time has arrived to take the big leap and compete with the world's finest riders, and what's more I'll be doing it with the best bike on the grid," he said.

Bach: Russia government becoming more aggressive towards Olympic movement

Paris, France - Russia's government is becoming increasingly aggressive towards the International Olympic Committee as the Paris Games draw near, IOC President Thomas Bach said on Tuesday.

Russia sports minister Oleg Matytsin said last week Russia should not boycott the July 26 to Aug. 11 Games despite restrictions on its athletes imposed by the IOC over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

The IOC will allow Russian and Belarusian athletes who qualify to take part as neutrals without their countries' flags, emblems or national anthems.

"As far as their participation is concerned, we have heard the rather polite signal (from the Russian sports minister) ... but on the other hand, we've also seen the government's very aggressive comments," Bach told French daily Le Monde.

He added that their participation in the opening and closing ceremonies would be discussed on Tuesday and Wednesday at the IOC's executive board.



Thomas Bach

The IOC doesn't comment, but we can see that the government's aggressiveness is growing by the day, against the IOC, against the Games, against me

THOMAS BACH

"The IOC doesn't comment, but we can see that the government's aggressiveness is growing by the day, against the IOC, against the Games, against me," he said.

"They range from 'fascist' to

'destroyer of the Games and the Olympic movement'. And it all comes from Russian officials. I don't know if it's coming from Vladimir Putin himself, I don't look at Telegram every day, I'm not that masochistic, but the at-

tacks are coming from all levels."

Bach also ruled out the idea of Israeli athletes taking part as neutrals in Paris amid growing criticism over Israel's military campaign against Hamas in Gaza.

"Things are very clear. Unlike the Russian Olympic Committee, the Israeli Olympic Committee has not violated the Olympic Charter," the German said.

"The Russian Olympic Committee wants to exercise its authority over the regions annexed by the Russian government. This is a violation of the territorial integrity and the National Olympic Committee of Ukraine.

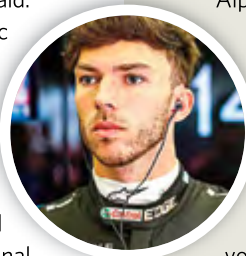
"In the Olympic world, we have had for 30 years what the political world calls a two-state solution: we have an Israeli National Olympic Committee and a Palestinian National Olympic Committee. "These two national Olympic committees have coexisted peacefully for 30 years," he added.

F1 driver Gasly invests in French third-tier football club

Paris, France - Formula One driver and Paris St Germain fan Pierre Gasly has become an investor in third-tier French semi-professional football club FC Versailles.

The 28-year-old, who drives for Renault-owned Alpine, was announced on the club's website on Monday as the third partner owner. "I am delighted to get involved with FC Versailles because I have always wanted

to get involved in professional football," said the 2020 Italian Grand Prix winner. "With Alexandre (Mulliez) & Fabien (Lazare), we share values, ambition and a keen competitive spirit which will allow us to positively develop the club."



Pierre Gasly



The new system will have the TV umpire and Hawk-Eye operators in the same room, with more split screens and better frame rates

IPL introduces Smart Replay System for quicker, accurate reviews

Mumbai, India - To increase the accuracy and speed of decision-making, IPL 2024 will have the Smart Replay System.

ESPNcricinfo has learned that under the Smart Replay System, the TV umpire will receive inputs directly from two Hawk-Eye operators who will be sitting in the same room as the umpire and provide him with images captured by Hawk-Eye's eight hi-speed cameras across the ground. The TV broadcast director, who used to be a conduit between the third umpire and the Hawk-Eye operators until now, will no longer be involved under the new system.

It is understood that the Smart Replay System will allow the TV umpire to refer to more visuals than they previously had access to, including split-screen images.

Take the example of a relay catch taken mid-air by the first fielder on the boundary rope. In the past, the broadcaster was unable to provide a split screen of the fielder's feet and hands at the precise moment when the ball was caught.

Under the new system, a split screen can show the umpire when the ball was caught, or released, alongside synchronised footage of the feet.

Similarly, a split screen can now show, in case of an overthrow that goes for four, whether the batters had crossed or not when the fielder released the ball (think 2019 World Cup final for an example of a specific use case).

Previously the TV umpire did not get such clear visuals, primarily because the broadcaster couldn't marry the two images.

There are eight Hawk-Eye cameras at any match: two on each side of the ground on the straight boundaries and two on each side square of the wicket.

Until IPL 2023, Hawk-Eye cameras were mainly used for ball tracking and UltraEdge. So, outside of checks for lbws and edges, the broadcaster largely used footage from their own cameras for any on-field referral. That included referrals for stumpings, run-outs, catches and overthrows.

HARDIK READY TO BOWL IN THE IPL

New Mumbai Indians captain says Rohit is 'going to have a hand on my shoulder always'

Mumbai, India - Hardik Pandya has declared himself fit to bowl as he returns to captain Mumbai Indians in IPL 2024. The all-rounder said he has been fit since the start of this year, after suffering an ankle injury during the 2023 ODI World Cup that ruled him out of all cricket since October.

"Yes, I will be bowling," Hardik said at a pre-season press conference in Mumbai on Monday. "My injury in [the] World Cup was a freak injury. It had nothing to do with my past injuries, it had nothing to do with my fitness. When I got fit, the Afghanistan [T20I] series had just started [in January]. I've been fit since then, but there were no games to play."

Hardik had injured his ankle in his follow-through while bowling during India's World Cup league match against Bangladesh in Pune. He said that his attempts to recover in time for the knock-out stages had aggravated the injury.

"My injury, from day one, showed that I'm going to be out of the World Cup, but playing for India has always been special,



Hardik Pandya during a training session

especially in a World Cup. [So] we pushed [for] ten days - we knew that it's an uphill task to be fit for the World Cup semi-finals or finals," he said. "When we pushed, I kind of triggered my injury [further], and the injury became a little longer."

Hardik's return to Mumbai as captain, replacing Rohit Sharma who had led the team since 2013, is one of the biggest talking points of this IPL season.

"I don't think it will be awkward, or anything different, it will be a nice feeling because we've been playing [together] for ten years," Hardik said of his relationship with Rohit and the new team dynamic. "I've played my whole career under him, and I know he's going to have a hand on my shoulder always."

"He's been traveling, he's been playing. It's been a couple of months since we've seen each other. Once he comes [and joins the MI camp], we'll definitely have a chat."

The Mumbai coach Mark Boucher said that Rohit freed from the responsibility of captaincy could be key for the team. "I think Rohit's in fantastic form. I've been watching the games against England and the way that he's hitting the ball, his movements into the ball are fantastic," Boucher said. "So I'm really looking forward to Rohit going out and really expressing himself, without the captaincy on his shoulders."

Rohit has had a tough time with the bat in recent IPL seasons, averaging 24.89 and going at a strike rate of 127.54 in 70 innings across the last five years.

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HEALTHY AGING

Four secrets to Timeless Beauty

Every workout must include a few exercises to sculpt your inner and outer thigh muscles, build functional strength in your quadriceps and hamstrings, and target your obliques and core muscles



Revitalising secrets for ageing women involves age-defying products, antioxidants, retinoids, serums, and face masks, contributing to effective skin rejuvenation and combating signs of ageing

The journey towards timeless beauty is an exploration that goes beyond the years, especially for women. As women age, their skin changes, such as wrinkles and dullness. Achieving timeless beauty is more than skin deep; it celebrates self-care and embracing one's unique story.

SKINCARE ROUTINES

To maintain timeless beauty, a well-thought-out anti-ageing skincare routine is essential. This involves using ingredients like retinol, collagen-boosting peptides, and antioxidants. These elements address fine lines and wrinkles, creating a rejuvenated complexion. This commitment to self-love goes beyond appearances; it is a daily ritual that values the individual.



ACHIEVING A YOUTHFUL GLOW

Rejuvenating skin care practices for mature women are paramount in maintaining a youthful glow. Natural changes, including collagen depletion, necessitate a proactive approach through a healthy lifestyle and a consistent skincare routine. Essential steps like cleansing, moisturising, and sunscreen application are fundamental. Choosing products with rejuvenating ingredients, such as retinol, hyaluronic acid, and peptides, promotes collagen production and hydration, resulting in a more youthful appearance. The quest for a youthful glow is a cosmetic pursuit and a commitment to self-love and empowerment in the face of ageing.



SUN PROTECTION FOR SKIN

Sun protection is crucial for mature skin, which is susceptible to damage from harmful UV rays. Choosing the right sun protection products and antioxidants contributes to maintaining youthful skin. Skin-tightening solutions target sagging and loss of elasticity. Exfoliation and renewal rituals remove dead skin cells, revealing a fresher complexion. These practices are essential for older women seeking to restore elasticity and firmness.



SKIN REJUVENATION PRACTICES

Understanding the ageing process is vital for older women, and prioritising skin rejuvenation practices becomes increasingly important. Sun exposure, lifestyle choices, and genetics contribute to ageing skin, emphasising the need for an effective skincare routine. Identifying the specific needs of mature skin and incorporating key steps like cleansing, exfoliating, and moisturising can help maintain a youthful glow. Revitalising secrets for ageing women involves age-defying products, antioxidants, retinoids, serums, and face masks, contributing to effective skin rejuvenation and combating signs of ageing. Non-invasive treatments like Botox and dermal fillers provide additional options for a youthful appearance.



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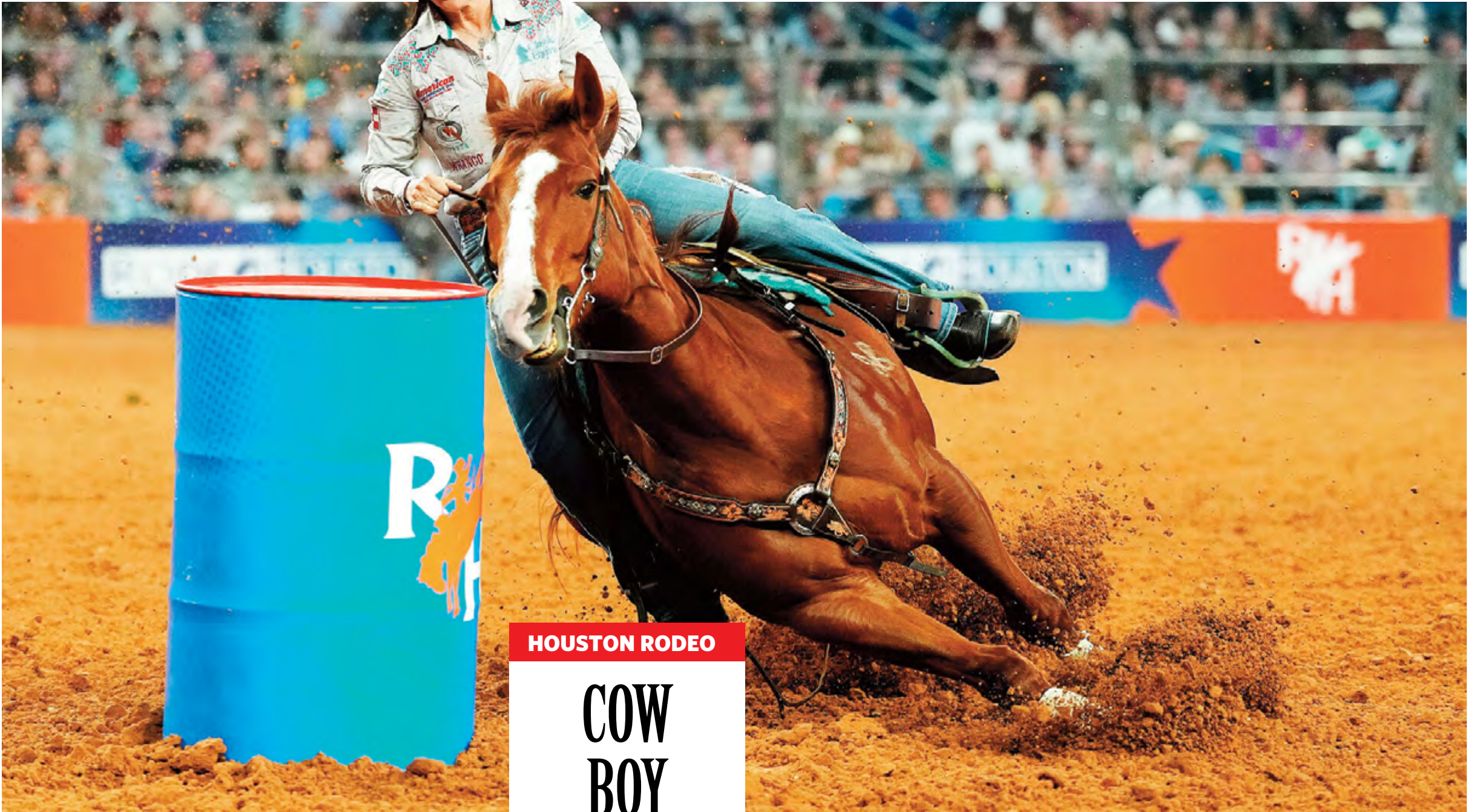
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HOUSTON RODEO

COW BOY BOOTS, BOLO TIES, AND FRINGE

It's week three of the 2024 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, and deep in the underbelly of NRG Stadium, Bernard 'Bun B' Freeman is in his dressing room. He wears black leather from neck-to-toe; ribbons of gunmetal fringe run down each leg and across his back in wingspan fashion. A panel of white on his motorcycle jacket reads 'UGK' - shorthand for Underground Kings, the hip-hop duo he co-founded with Chad 'Pimp C' Butler in Port Arthur, Texas, circa 1987. In a few hours, he'll take the stage to headline the Houston Rodeo's 'All-American Takeover', welcoming guests including Drake, Nelly and Rick Ross. But beforehand, he takes a moment to talk fashion.

Like many a Texan, Bun B has clocked western-wear's recent surge in mainstream popularity. "Fashion every now and then sets its eye on the common man, the working man," he says. "Just look at what Pharrell [Williams] has done."

For his sophomore show as Louis Vuitton Men's creative director, Williams sent three versions of the LV Texan Boot - crafted at the French house's leather goods atelier, Rochambeau Ranch, in North Texas, with input from El Paso-based Stallion Boots - down the Paris runway in January. The following month, Beyoncé, a born and bred Houstonian, tipped her Stetson hat to Williams at the Grammys in a variation of Vuitton's fall 2024 menswear collection closing look. Add to that forthcoming country albums from Carter and Lana Del Rey, chaps proliferating fall 2024 collections, and the horse girl-ification of Bella Hadid amid her romance with cowboy Adan Banuelos.

Every year, the Houston Rodeo transforms over 140 hectares of NRG Park (home of the NFL's Houston Texans) into a temporary Small Town, Texas. Founded in 1932, the volunteer-run, 501(c)3 organisation is the largest livestock show on earth, with a daily population that reaches up to 165,000. There are 19 nights of concerts, three days of world championship Bar-B-Que contest under chandelier-lined white tents, and 10-gallon cowboy hats ay every turn.

Bun B emerged as the unofficial sheriff of the annual microcosm in 2022, when it was restored to its pre-pandemic glory. The rapper and entrepreneur, who is also behind Houston's wildly

popular Trill Burgers, has been dressing the part ever since. This year, he collaborated with Houston native and Purple streetwear CEO Luke Cosby on his all-leather-everything look. The monogrammed stamp on the heel of his Lucchese caiman cowboy boots came courtesy of DTLA Custom, which is owned by fellow Houstonian Tara Martin. "It's all an effort to keep things as Houston-centric and hyper-localized as possible," Bun B says.

Tonight, as Vogue descends upon one of the birthplaces of western fashion, the crowd's inclination toward disco ball cowboy hats and mirrored accessories buck against fashion's more straightforward interpretation of the trend. (Beyoncé performed two shows at NRG Stadium in August, and many rodeo goers appear to remain firmly in their Renaissance era.) Shaniqua Barnes, 31, is awash in silver sequins and wearing a pink cowboy hat; Tytiana Williams, 31, is dripping in crystal fringe.

Elsewhere on the grounds, Brandon Citizen, 38, spins proudly in a vintage beaded suede Scully jacket, passed down from his late father after several decades of authentic wear. A western trend enthusiast, Citizen raises his phone, flashing an Instagram photo of Drake posted earlier that day; the rapper is in the exact same jacket. "Hey, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery," Citizen says.

There are, of course, rodeo purists who appreciate their everyday uniform being replicated on catwalks and TikTok, (should someone tell content creators that wearing damp socks is the fastest way to soften stiff cowboy boot leather?) though are otherwise unfazed. They've spent years earning sartorial bragging rights. You'll know a rodeo lifer by the number of gold pins on their badge, swinging low and heavy on a lanyard, or by the patina on their squash blossom necklace, which around these parts, often costs more than a Ford pick-up truck.

Dana Barton, of Austin-based Schaefer Outfitter, entrusted Maida's Belts & Buckles to make her one-of-a-kind turquoise necklace. As a member of the Rodeo Auction Angels, a philanthropic steer buying group, she spends early mornings in the dirt surveying cattle, with little to no time for glam before concerts.



Bun B



Ben Conda



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