

Canadian envoy lauds Oman for facilitating peace talks

Joydeep Bhattacharjee
Muscat

Saudi-based Canadian diplomat Jean-Philippe Linteau has lauded Oman's great leadership in resolving disputes between countries at war like no other player in the region.

While the region is bleeding due to multiple wars or war-like situations, Oman's leadership has continued to facilitate global leaders coming to negotiating tables for restoration of peace.

"Canada holds Oman in high esteem, like the other G7 members, for the unique abilities and friendly relations that it enjoys with every country," the Canadian Ambassador to Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Yemen, said during his recent visit to Muscat.

Referring to the sultanate's stature on the global stage in resolving disputes and restoring peace in the region, the new Canadian envoy highlighted his country's excellent working relationship with Oman.

He praised His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for his leadership in regional and global peace efforts.

Speaking exclusively to Muscat Daily, the ambassador touched upon the ongoing conflict in



Gaza that has resulted in an unimaginable humanitarian crisis. Canada has taken a firm stand on Gaza, calling on all parties involved to immediately cease fire and allow humanitarian aid, while focusing on a long term solution to this decades-old dispute.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau spoke with His Majesty the Sultan earlier in January to discuss the situation in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza,

Linteau informed.

Trudeau underscored his country's "enduring support for a two-state solution", while calling for the immediate release of all hostages. Linteau asserted his country's uncompromised position on the protection of Palestinian lives caught in the crisis.

Canada voted to stop arms shipments to Israel over the Gaza war and announced a five-fold increase in visas for Palestinians in

Gaza. Canadian Immigration Minister Marc Miller has stated that 5,000 visas will be offered to Palestinians seeking to join family in Canada.

His Majesty the Sultan and Prime Minister Trudeau shared their deep concern for the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza and "stressed the importance of upholding the international humanitarian law, ensuring access to affected areas and protecting

civilians."

The two leaders also discussed the regional security implications of the conflict and efforts toward de-escalation, Linteau added.

On a visit to Muscat last month, he held meetings with several ministers and senior officials.

Linteau expressed his delight for the opportunity to visit and revive relations with Oman. Following a diplomatic disengagement between Riyadh and Ottawa in 2018, relations between Oman and Canada also saw a dull phase until recently.

"We want more people-to-people exchange, besides visits at the ministerial level," Linteau said.

In this context, the envoy spoke about Canada's strong standing in the educational field and encouraged students from Oman to take advantage of his country's cutting-edge education system.

"I was told that the medical practitioners trained in Canada are doing really well with their high skill sets. We would like to take it further up."

Linteau presented his credentials to His Majesty the Sultan on Monday, officially taking charge as Ambassador to Oman.

SQU up 92 places in 2025 QS rankings

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) has advanced an impressive 92 places to rank 362nd globally in the QS World University Rankings 2025, marking a significant improvement for the institution following sustained efforts spanning over a year.

The university saw improvements across various indicators within the QS classification, including academic reputation, employment reputation, employment outcomes and sustainability. These advancements can be attributed to SQU's strategic investments in nurturing close and enduring collaborations with academics and researchers worldwide, as well as active contributions of its faculty to colleges and research centres, a statement issued by SQU said.

'Partnership with the labour sector played a crucial role in this

achievement, with direct coordination and communication with entities, such as the National Employment Programme and Royal Oman Police, positively impacting indicators related to job reputation and employment outcomes.'

The introduction of the Sustainability Index in the QS World University Rankings in 2025 helped underscore SQU's commitment to sustainable development goals in Oman, particularly in social and environmental domains, as evidenced by its ranking of 286th globally in the QS Sustainability Ranking.

H H Dr Fahad al Julanda al Said, Vice-Chancellor of SQU, expressed pride and satisfaction with the progress, emphasising its alignment with Oman Vision 2040. He highlighted the university's achievement of its first strategic goal within the vision to be among the top 500 global universities.

Continued on Page 02



روية عمان 2040

Discover the Future of Cyber Resilience

The Muscat Daily Cybersecurity & Cloud Conference 2024 will bring together industry leaders, innovators and professionals to discuss the latest trends, challenges and advancements in cybersecurity and cloud solutions, and honour outstanding achievements in the industry.

12 JUNE 2024

INTERCITY HOTEL AL KHUWAIR

ENDORSED BY

جمعيّة المصارف العمانيّة
Oman Banks Association

OMAN AMERICAN BUSINESS COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PARTNER

INSSG

AON

SUPPORT PARTNERS

Securado
a Phoenix Company

DATA PARTNER

VIDOPIX

KEY TOPICS:

- Future challenges in cybersecurity & cloud with emerging technologies
- Optimizing cybersecurity ROI in digital transformation projects
- Critical infrastructure security in an era of targeted attacks
- Advanced threat detection using AI & ML
- Security architecture for multi-cloud environments
- Managing & securing IoT ecosystems
- Digital forensics & advanced incident response techniques

AWARD CATEGORIES:

- Cyber Security Company of the Year
- Cloud Service Provider of the Year
- Innovative Cyber Security Startup
- Digital Identity Solution Provider of the Year
- IT Person of the Year
- CISO or Information Security Professional of the Year
- Cyber Security Solution of the Year
- Cloud Services Solution of the Year
- Most Impactful Cyber Security Project
- Cyber Security Awareness Initiative of the Year

MUSCAT DAILY
CYBER SECURITY & CLOUD AWARDS
MUSCAT, SULTANATE OF OMAN

ORGANISED BY

INTERACTIVE apex APEX MEDIA

MUSCAT DAILY

For more information, contact:

Sajir
sajir@apexmedia.co.om
+968 9947 4314

Follow us on [in]

The Future of Cyber Resilience

Terms And Condition Applies



Enjoy discounts on VOX Cinemas tickets

With Al Rifaa Privilege Account

Visit your nearest branch today



2479 919 | www.bankdhofar.com

Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn | bankdhofar

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

EA plants over 16mn wild seeds for national initiative

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Environment Authority (EA) has announced the planting of over 16mn wild seeds, marking a significant milestone in its national initiative to plant 10mn indigenous trees.

The announcement was made on the occasion of World Environment Day observed on June 5.

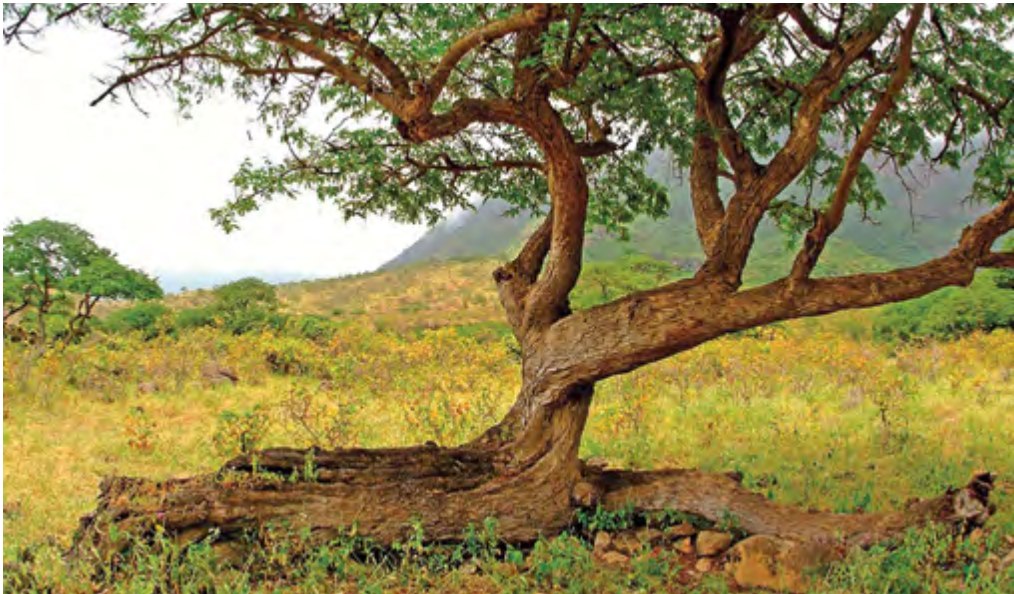
Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, an EA official stressed on the global significance of World Environment Day in raising awareness and fostering collective action for environmental preservation.

This year, Oman aligns with the international community's focus on land restoration, desertification and drought resilience under the slogan 'Our land. Our future. We are #GenerationRestoration.'

Under the UN Environment Programme, Saudi Arabia is host of the 2024 World Environment Day global celebrations.

In an effort to combat desertification and land degradation, EA has spearheaded various initiatives, including the national drive launched in 2020 to plant 10mn wild trees nationwide in ten years.

Towards this end, the authority has planted more than 16mn wild seeds and over 900,000 mangroves. Additionally, 373,000 wild saplings have been distributed for plantation across



Oman was the first country in the Near East and North Africa region to join the Agreement on Port State Measures targeting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

different governorates.

The 10mn wild trees plantation initiative includes ghaf, al samar and sidr for which nurseries are being set up.

To facilitate tree planting, the authority has initiated the construction of Green Belt fences in Dhofar. Forty-five fences are cur-

rently being installed. Additionally, awareness campaigns targeting diverse community groups have been launched to advocate farming and the preservation of green spaces.

Emphasising EA's commitment to strategic planning, the national plan to combat desertification undergoes updates every ten years, with the 2018-2030 plan currently in progress. Efforts are underway to develop a national plan to combat drought in collaboration with the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development.

Day of action against illegal fishing

Represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water

Resources, the sultanate marked International Day for the Fight against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing on June 5.

Oman was the first country in the Near East and North Africa region to join the Agreement on Port State Measures, which is the first binding international agreement to specifically target illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

The ministry has implemented a series of robust legislations and policies designed to safeguard marine resources, ensuring their sustainability and proper management. These measures are part of a broader strategy to treat fisheries as renewable resources that must be preserved for future generations.

Bids invited for development of Musannah fishing port

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) is inviting bids for the development of a fishing port in Musannah, South Batinah, to support local fishermen and consolidate the fisheries sector.

An official at MAFWR stated, "The ministry has floated a tender to establish, manage, operate and maintain projects within Musannah fishing port."

He further informed that the tender - facilitated through the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning's Tatweer platform - is open to companies and investment institutions with expertise in managing, operating and maintaining investment projects.

Highlighting the strategic importance of the port's location, the official emphasised its potential for growth and development across multiple sectors.

MAFWR has earmarked ap-



proximately 32,828sqm of land for various projects, including those in the fisheries sector, as well as services and investments encompassing commercial and tourism ventures. In its commitment to enhancing facilities and services for the fisheries sector and other stakeholders, MAFWR has allocated land for investment for up to 25 years.

Musannah fishing port also aims to generate employment opportunities for citizens, stimulate economic activity in the gov-

ernorate and shore up local revenues. "Ancillary economic sectors such as hotels, restaurants and tourism services are expected to benefit from the fishing port."

The official underscored the project's objective of fostering robust partnerships with the private sector to achieve sustainable development goals, fortify the local economy, and create avenues for success and prosperity in the sector.

The deadline for submitting bids is June 16, 2024.

SQU up 92 places in 2025 QS rankings

Continued from Page 01

On her part, H H Dr Mona bint Fahd al Said, Assistant Vice-Chancellor for International Cooperation at SQU, extended gratitude for the university's elevated position. She emphasised the university's commitment to sustainability and continuous improvement in applying best practices to enhance its global

standing.

The QS Foundation analysed data from 5,663 international universities in 106 countries, with only 1,503 universities included in the 2025 global rankings. Of these, 23 were new additions this year.

Sohar University debuts in QS rankings

Sohar University has found a

place in the QS rankings for the first time, ranked in the 1001-1200 category. The position gives it the recognition of being the second highest-ranking university in Oman.

It ranked 38th globally for its contributions to the international scientific research network, and 35th for its research papers among universities in Arab countries.

NOW
LOOK CLOSER



Double-Power cleaning at work

INTRODUCING
سبارك
Spark



Kills 99.9% of Germs

From the makers of
بحر
BAHAR

RO38mn Wadi Adai Dam to protect Muscat from floods

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) has started construction of Wadi Adai Dam, a project crucial to enhancing Muscat's flood protection mechanism.

Laid across Wadi Adai in the wilayat of Muttrah, the dam is being built at a cost of RO38mn.

Nasser bin Mohammed al Battashi, Director General of Water Resources at MAFWR, stated that the dam is strategically positioned to manage rain and flood waters originating from six southern wadis in the wilayat of Amerat, including water flow from Al Ahbas al Alawiyah to Qurum.

"This dam is a crucial part of our flood protection strategy designed to safeguard Qurum commercial area and support urban development in Amerat against heavy rains," Battashi informed.

Construction started in Febru-



The dam is strategically positioned to manage rain and flood waters originating from six southern wadis in the wilayat of Amerat

NASSER AL BATTASHI

and a side concrete spillway designed to handle the maximum flood water volume, complemented by gates to regulate water discharge.

The dam's reservoir is designed to hold up to 23mn m3 of water. To ensure structural integrity, MAFWR plans to equip the dam with various monitoring instruments. These will include devices to track groundwater level, water level in the lake, silt accumulation and potential subsidence.

ary 2024 and will take 30 months with completion expected in 2026 end. Wadi Adai Dam, the third among a system of six planned, follows completion of Amerat Dam and Al Ju-

faina Dam.

Elaborating on the technical aspects of the dam, Battashi informed its construction involves deep foundation treatment up to 50m below the surface and in-

cludes a composite structure of stone and compacted earth stretching 220m in length and 39m in height. Additionally, the dam will feature a central asphalt core to prevent water seepage



Mobile subscriptions surpass 6.98mn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

tration rate of 80 per 100 households.

Mobile phone subscriptions increased 3% in 2023 to 6.98mn, recording a penetration rate of 135 per 100 individuals.

According to Telecommunications Regulatory Authority's biannual report for July to December 2023, there was remarkable growth - 102% to 5,238 - in 5G stations compared to the same period in 2022.

Fixed telephone subscriptions increased 3% to 579,000, reaching 82 per 100 households. Fixed broadband subscriptions saw a 5% increase compared to 2022, totalling 562,000 subscriptions and achieving a pene-

Postal sector

The number of outbound packages increased 27% to 207,515, while local packages surged 46% to 1,738,918 in the second quarter of 2023 compared to the same period in 2022. Incoming mail witnessed an 84% growth to 1,197,119 in this period.

United Arab Emirates led in sending international express mail to Oman in the second quarter of 2023, followed by the United States and Saudi Arabia.

The top three destinations for international express mail originating from Oman were Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar.

Agreement signed to establish RO3mn, 286 acre-poultry farm in Buraimi

Muscat - Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, in partnership with Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, signed an agreement on Wednesday with Royal Poultry Farms to establish a breeder poultry farm valued at RO3mn in Buraimi.

The project in the Al Awha area of the wilayat of Mahda,

spread over 286 acres, will target an annual production capacity exceeding 6mn birds.

Poised to generate substantial employment opportunities, the project will also play a crucial role in supporting food security in the governorate and the sultanate.

Providing details of the scope and significance of the



project, Nasser bin Ali al Marshodi, Director General of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in Buraimi, said, "This is a milestone in our efforts to boost the agricultural sector's capacity and sustainability."

Marshodi informed that more than 20 investment contracts worth over RO5mn have

been signed in the governorate in 2024, with 30 more investment opportunities expected before the end of the year.

According to Marshodi, an ongoing collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning will result in 20 new investment opportunities soon. Plans are also underway to formalise six additional inv-

estment opportunities focused on promoting wheat cultivation in the governorate.

Signing of the agreement for the poultry farm marks a significant step in Oman's strategic efforts to develop self-sustaining agricultural practices and enhance food security, aligning with broader economic diversification goals.

11.2% increase in farm fires in 2023: CDAA



Our Correspondent
Muscat

Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) has reported an increase of 11.2% in farm fires in 2023, with 947 incidents recorded across the sultanate compared to 851 in 2022.

Highlighting the severity of the situation, the authority emphasised the challenges faced in dealing with various types of farm fires, including in agricultural waste. Characterised by high temperatures and dry vegetation, summer months contribute significantly to a spike in fire incidents.

CDAA underscored the importance of preventive measures, urging farm owners to

implement fire safety protocols such as proper storage of fertiliser and pesticides away from sunlight, safe disposal of cigarette butts, and controlled burning of waste in designated areas.

Emphasising the role of weather conditions, CDAA advised choosing appropriate time for waste burning to prevent fires from spreading due to windy conditions. It recommended the use of sturdy farm fences to provide protection against fires.

Additionally, CDAA issued a cautionary reminder to holiday-makers cooking or barbecuing near farm areas to ensure fires are completely extinguished before departing to prevent potential fire outbreaks.

oman OASIS

Exclusive OFFER

Eid Mubarak

50% ONLY

20% ONLY

Hot & Cold Dispenser + 2 Full Bottles + 30 Refill coupons

White Tap Dispenser + 2 Full Bottles + 15 Refill coupons

OASIS WATER COMPANY SAOC
P.O.Box: 87, Rusayl 124, Sultanate of Oman.
E.O. No. 180442 / 199 / 06/15/2024
Offer valid from 10th March to 30th June 2024.

800 71 222
9275 5522

مستشفى الحياة الدولي
AL HAYAT INTERNATIONAL HOSPITAL
Quality Care Without Compromise

COMPLETE ANTENATAL BUNDLE
All Three Trimesters Together

190 OMR 170 OMR

60 OMR 1st Trimester

80 OMR 2nd Trimester

50 OMR 3rd Trimester

Normal Delivery 320 OMR | C-Section Delivery 580 OMR

*Package contains Delivery rates and Baby care charges including vaccines

MOH NO - 940380 | 2200 4000 | 9972 8290 | 9797 1672

WE EXCHANGE TRUST

WORLD WIDE REMITTANCE

WE BUY & SELL GOLD & SILVER

1 gm to 1kg 24ct gold bars available at best international rate.

PURSHOTTAM KANJI EXCHANGE

شركة برشوتم كنجي للصرافة

Download & NOW!

+968 91787627 | 99497229

www.pkexchange.com

MARKET WATCH

MSX30	4,778.69
Sensex	74,382.24

FOREX RATES
(RO1 equals)

India	216.63
Pakistan	723.24
Bangladesh	305.22
Philippines	152.47
Sri Lanka	785.61

*Rates as on June 05

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Oil prices continue near four month lows

Oil prices hovered near four-month lows in Asia on Wednesday as markets digested an OPEC+ decision to boost supply later this year and following an increase in US crude and refined products stocks.

Global benchmark Brent crude futures were up 1 cent at \$77.53 a barrel by 0638 GMT, while the US benchmark West Texas Intermediate crude futures were down 2 cents at \$73.23 a barrel, Reuters reported.

Both contracts fell nearly a dollar on Tuesday to their lowest settlement levels since early February, and had declined around \$3 a barrel on Monday.

Since Wednesday oil prices have witnessed consistent decline after OPEC+ announced that it will extend output cuts into 2025.

Salalah Port ranks as second most efficient container port in the world

Salalah – The Port of Salalah retained its position as the second most efficient container port in the world, according to the 2023 Container Port Performance Index (CPPI). Additionally, Salalah Port claimed the top spot in the West Central and South Asia region.

The CPPI, developed by the World Bank and S&P Global Market Intelligence, is based on an extensive dataset from 405 ports worldwide, the largest to date. This dataset comprises over 182,000 vessel calls, 238.2mn moves, and approximately 381mn twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) for the full calendar year of 2023.

Port performance is measured by the efficiency of vessel turnaround time, known as 'Total Port Hours' – the total duration from when a ship reaches the port limits, pilot station, or anchorage zone until it departs the berth after completing its cargo exchange.

According to the report, the Port of Salalah, with 1,146 vessel calls, achieved 164.72 index points, ranking second only to Yangshan in China, which had 3,509 vessel calls and an index score of 177.9.

Amidst the changes in global rankings caused by regional dis-



According to 2023 Container Port Performance Index, Port of Salalah, with 1,146 vessel calls, achieved 164.72 index points, ranking second only to Yangshan in China, which had 3,509 vessel calls and an index score of 177.9

ruptions, China's Yangshan Port retained its first-place position, while the Port of Salalah secured its second-place ranking. The Port of Cartagena in Colombia

moved up to third place, Tanger-Mediterranean in Morocco held fourth, and Malaysia's Tanjung Pelepas Port rounded out the top five.

Salalah Port's strategic location, expanding connectivity, and world-class operations provide its customers with a significant competitive edge in the region. As a vital transshipment hub, Salalah also plays a crucial role in boosting the local economy in Dhofar by offering exceptional connectivity for importers and exporters to trade globally.

The port's high efficiency enhances local business confidence and attracts investment, including foreign direct investment (FDI).

The Port of Salalah is currently carrying out a \$300mn container terminal upgrade and expansion project. Next week, the port will receive the final four out of ten new ZPMC ship-to-shore

cranes. The first cranes, with a 75-meter/26-container outreach, arrived at the start of 2024 and are currently being commissioned and tested to start operations.

Once the project is completed in the first quarter of 2025, annual capacity at the terminal will increase from 5mn to 6mn TEUs. The extra capacity will allow it to efficiently serve as a key hub for the Gemini Cooperation - a long-term operational collaboration between Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd, which will start in February 2025, with additional capacity available for other shipping lines.

"Retaining this title for the third consecutive year reaffirms our strong commitment to continuous performance improvement, even during challenging times," said Keld Christensen, CEO of the Port of Salalah.

Scott Selman, Chief Operating Officer of Salalah Port, said, "I am pleased to see the Port of Salalah retaining our position despite the challenges to global container trade that have negatively impacted vessel schedules. The year 2023 has been particularly challenging operationally due to the ongoing Container Terminal upgrade construction."

ONA

Tethys Oil submits Block 56 field development plan

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Swedish energy company Tethys Oil has achieved a significant milestone in its oil exploration and appraisal activities in Oman.

The company, through its wholly-owned Oman subsidiary, has submitted its first comprehensive Field Development Plan (FDP) for Block 56, Mudawrat Concession, to the Omani Ministry of Energy and Minerals for review and approval.

The FDP details the plan to develop and appraise resources in three discovered oil fields, the Al Jumd, Menna, and Sarha fields, covering multiple reservoirs, Tethys Oil said in a statement on its website.

The development of the fields is expected to be conducted by drilling several horizontal development wells.

"The surface development concept will be designed to accommodate future needs and will initially use a fast-track option with export via neighbouring operators, as was the case during the Al Jumd extended well test in 2023," the company said.

Tethys Oil added that the FDP also includes a roadmap for a



continued exploration strategy for Block 56's additional leads and prospects.

Upon the Ministry of Energy and Minerals' approval, the terms of the Exploration and Production Sharing Agreement for Block 56 will be extended to fulfill the commercial development of the discovered fields in the block.

The partner group for Block 56 consists of Tethys Oil as the operator with a 65% share, and the partners Biyaq Oilfield Services with a 25% share, Medco Arabia Ltd with a 5% share, and Intaj LLC with a 5% share.

"We are very pleased to have submitted the FDP for Block 56, a major milestone for Tethys Oil. We now look forward to getting the ministry's approval to declare

commerciality and start the implementation of the FDP as well as putting the fields in production. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, Petroleum Development Oman, and MedcoEnergi for their cooperation and support. I would also like to thank our team for their hard work and our partners on Block 56, Biyaq Oilfield Services, Medco Arabia Ltd, and Intaj LLC, for their valuable contributions," Magnus Nordin, Managing Director of Tethys Oil, said.

Tethys Oil is an oil exploration and production company focused on onshore areas with known oil discoveries. The company's core area is Oman, where it holds interests in Blocks 3&4, Block 49, Block 56, and Block 58.

Oman participates in Russia's flagship economic forum as guest country

Our Correspondent
Muscat

For the first time, Oman is participating as a guest country at the 27th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF), which is being held from June 5 to June 8 in the Russian city of St. Petersburg.

Oman's participation in Russia's flagship forum underscores the sultanate's commitment to promoting economic cooperation and partnerships with Russia. The forum highlights investment opportunities across various sectors and introduces new markets for Omani exports.

The Omani delegation to SPIEF 2024 is led by H E Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion. The delegation includes senior-level government officials and representatives from several government and private sector companies in tourism, mining, food security, and logistics.

The primary objectives of Oman's participation at SPIEF 2024 are to attract high-quality direct investments from Russia, boost Omani exports to Russia, optimise the utilisation of Omani



ports for re-exports, and showcase comprehensive investment opportunities.

This strategic initiative is designed to fortify economic and trade relations between the two nations. Leveraging its presence in international forums, Oman is keen to promote its investment incentives, available opportunities, and a favourable business environment for establishing commercial projects in target sectors, in alignment with Oman Vision 2040.

Highlighting the importance

of this participation, H E Yousef emphasised Oman's dedication, represented by government entities and the private sector, to explore all possible economic cooperation fields with Russia.

He noted the sincere desire to exchange knowledge and expertise with the Russian side, hoping the forum will meet both countries' aspirations on various levels and address the challenges facing business activities, especially in trade and investment.

On the sidelines of the official

forum, the Oman-Russia Forum will be held today, promoting Oman's investment and commercial environment.

The St. Petersburg International Economic Forum is a significant global event bringing together representatives from 130 countries. The forum provides a platform for exchanging expertise and viewpoints among decision-makers worldwide, discussing key economic issues, and addressing challenges facing Russia, emerging markets, and the global economy.

Bank Muscat honours government institutions and corporates

Muscat – Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in Oman, celebrated the 17th edition of its annual Partners in Progress Awards ceremony at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. This annual event aims to acknowledge the efforts made by top merchant partners from government institutions and private sector companies to implement various payment acceptance solutions using POS terminals.

During the event trophies were handed to the winners from top 40 institutions. The gala



event was attended by members of the bank's management team and representatives from the respective institutions participating.

Nine ministries and government institutions won awards for implementing the bank's payment acceptance solutions at the awards ceremony including

Royal Oman Police, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Housing & Urban Planning,

Behar, Oman Development Bank, Supreme Judiciary Council and Nama.

Corporate merchant partner winners included: Lulu Hyper-

market, Landmark Group, Oman Oil, ONEIC, OIFC, Talabat, Carrefour, Sharaf DG, NMC Healthcare, IKEA, Liva Insurance, Al Shaya International, Shell Oman Marketing, Malabar Gold Jewellery, Pizza Hut, Muscat Pharmacy, Oman International Container Terminal, Apparel International, Salam Air, The International School of Choueifat, Global Money Exchange, Makkah Hypermarket, Thawani, Tageer Finance, Six Senses Zighy Bay, Saud Bahwan Automotive, Al Fair, YAAS Modern Shopping,

My Tour, OoredooOman and Omantel.

In a press release, Abdulnasir al Raisi, General Manager – Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said, "Our partners from government institutions and private companies have contributed immensely in enhancing the use of digital payment solutions. This spread and influence contributed in supporting the development and launch of advanced payment options to enhance customer experience and facilitate a much easier transaction process."

Indian stocks revive after worst day in 4 years



Mumbai, India - Indian stock markets experienced a significant surge of over 3% by the closing session on Wednesday, bouncing back from the losses incurred during the election results on Tuesday.

The NSE Nifty 50 index soared by 3.36%, settling at 22,620.35 points, while the BSE Sensex saw a robust increase of 3.2%, closing at 74,382.24 points. Both indices surpassed their closing levels from the previous Friday, when the Nifty index closed at 22,531 points.

On the day of the election results, the Nifty had plunged to a

low of 21,281, and the Sensex had dropped to 46,078. Since then, the Nifty has recovered by 1,346 points, and the Bank Nifty has gained 3,250 points from the previous day's lows.

"Indian market exhibited a spirited recovery driven by broad based buying across various sectors, as political stability appears assured. However, attention will remain on the formation of the government and the forthcoming RBI policy meeting. The market does not expect any change in RBI's policy stance given persistent high food inflation, and an expectation of an increase in gov-

On Wednesday, NSE Nifty 50 index soared by 3.36%, settling at 22,620.35 points, while BSE Sensex saw a robust increase of 3.2%, closing at 74,382.24 points

ernment spending, which has led to a notable traction in FMCG stocks," said Vinod Nair, Head of

Research, Geojit Financial Services.

All sectoral indices on Wednesday saw gains ranging from 2.3% to 5.8%. The key sectors such as banking, automobile, financial services, FMCG, and metal demonstrated notable increases, each rising by over 4%. In the broader market, the BSE MidCap index surged by 4.48%, and the BSE SmallCap index climbed by 2.93%.

The positive performance on Wednesday followed a turbulent session on Tuesday, where the Sensex closed at 72,079.05 points, down by 4,389.73 points

or 5.74%, and the Nifty closed at 21,884.50 points, down by 1,379.40 points or 5.93%.

During that session, all Nifty sectoral indices, except for Nifty FMCG, were deeply in the red. Indices such as Nifty Metal, Nifty Bank, Nifty Financial Services, Nifty PSU Bank, Nifty Private Bank, Nifty Realty, and Nifty Oil and Gas experienced the most significant declines.

The recovery on Wednesday reflects investor optimism and confidence returning to the market, with broad-based gains across various sectors.

ANI

Modi 3.0 will have policy continuity amid fiscal challenges: Moody's

New Delhi, India - India's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) secured a majority in the general elections, securing a third term for Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

This victory indicates continuity in policy, particularly in infrastructure spending and boosting domestic manufacturing, which are expected to support robust economic growth, according to Moody's Ratings.

However, the NDA's slim margin of victory and the BJP's loss of an outright majority in parliament may slow down more extensive economic and fiscal reforms, potentially impeding fiscal consolidation efforts. Moody's projects India's economic strength to continue, with an anticipated real GDP growth of around 7% over the three-year period from fiscal 2023-24 to 2025-26. This growth is expected to benefit from ongoing infrastructure development and digitalisation efforts.

Despite this outlook, structural weaknesses pose risks to long-term growth potential. High youth unemployment

and low productivity growth in the agriculture sector constrain economic expansion, the ratings agency said.

Moody's said that the government's focus on fiscal consolidation is expected to continue, but significant improvements in debt ratios and interest servicing have yet to be realised. Since the trough in fiscal 2020-21, the central government's deficit has likely narrowed for three consecutive years.

India's general government debt is projected to stabilise above 80% of GDP over the next three years, compared to 70.5% in fiscal 2018-19.

General government interest payments are forecast to fall to around 24% of general government revenue over the next two years, down from over 28% in fiscal 2020-21, but still higher than the pre-pandemic ratio of less than 23%.

This situation underscores the need for the incoming government to balance fiscal consolidation with growth-supportive measures.

ANI



MENA investments to rise in 2024 as interest rates expected to drop

Dubai, UAE - According to Tenet Consulting, the subdued M&A activity witnessed in 2023, marked by its lowest step-up in a decade across numerous venture capital (VC) markets worldwide, raised concerns about the health of the investment landscape.

However, anticipation is brewing for a potential turnaround in 2024, fueled by the expected drop in interest rates.

This impending shift has the potential to breathe new life into initial public offerings (IPOs) and M&A deals, reigniting investor confidence and deal-making momentum. Tenet Consulting presented its study on Global Startup Valuation Trends during the third edition of VC Weekend by Gingo Partners.

"The forecasted interest rate decline carries significant implications for valuation dynamics. Lower interest rates generally translate to cheaper borrowing costs, incentivising businesses to



pursue expansionary strategies such as mergers and acquisitions," said Alexey Bogdanov, Partner at Tenet Consulting.

"Moreover, the prospect of reduced borrowing expenses could entice more companies to go public, tapping into the equity markets to fuel growth initiatives."

The slowdown in VC investments was not unique to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, as it mirrored a global trend preceding the decline witnessed last year.

However, the region had previously stood out due to the significant support from government-related entities, keen on fostering their local tech ecosystems by heavily backing regional VC funds.

Expectations are high for a resurgence in investment activity across the MENA region this year, following a dip in 2023. Forecasts indicate that startups based in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates will likely continue to take center stage in dealmaking.

ECB expected to cut interest rates now

Piero Cingari

The European Central Bank (ECB) is expected to cut interest rates at its June 6 meeting, as widely signalled in recent weeks by its policymakers.

The interest rate on the main refinancing operations, the marginal lending facility, and the deposit facility are anticipated to drop by 25 basis points to 4.25%, 4.50%, and 3.75%, respectively.

This will mark the first cut since March 2016 for both the main refinancing operations rate and the marginal lending rate while, for the deposit rate, it will be the first reduction since September 2019.

The overall increase of 450 basis points implemented by Frankfurt between July 2022 and September 2023 has contributed to bringing down the headline inflation rate in the eurozone from a peak of 10.6% in October 2022 to 2.6% in May 2024.

President Christine Lagarde indicated in March that more clarity and sufficient data would be available by June. It appears that moment has arrived.

While inflation has not yet completely met the 2% target, its substantial decrease signals a



continuing downward trend expected to persist in the coming months.

According to the latest ECB projections from March 2024, the average inflation rate is expected to decrease to 2% in 2025 and 1.9% in 2026. As for core inflation, which excludes energy and food prices, projections see it at 2.1% for 2025 and 2.0% for 2026.

The 25 basis points cut would also continue to maintain positive real interest rates, as nominal rates will remain above the

current inflation rate. Thus, it will indicate a reduction in the degree of monetary policy restrictiveness, rather than a broader normalisation.

The rising and elevated cost of borrowing has created a slowdown in the bloc's economic growth, containing demand to put a brake on price pressures.

While the euro area's economy expanded by 0.3% in the first quarter of 2024, the preceding two quarters were both marked by 0.1% contractions. The second quarter of 2023 saw

a minor 0.1% growth, and the first quarter of 2023 and the last of 2022 saw stagnation.

Despite the widely anticipated rate cut in June, recent remarks from ECB officials suggest that there will be no pre-commitment to future cuts afterward.

This means that a further rate cut in July remains uncertain, as the ECB aims to retain flexibility in its decisions and continue monitoring economic data.

Eurozone inflation edged higher in May, reaching 2.6%, above the expected 2.5%, while core inflation rose to 2.9% from 2.7% in April.

The ECB faces the challenge of balancing the risks of cutting rates too much against those of cutting too little. If Frankfurt eases monetary policy too quickly and significantly, it would likely boost consumer demand and investment. However, this could also risk rekindling inflationary pressures before the 2% target is fully achieved.

The ECB would expose itself to uncertainties related to energy prices and geopolitical tensions with reduced buffers, potentially leading to undesirable effects on price dynamics.

(Source: Euronews.com)

Tamer US inflation in April revives hopes for interest-rate cut in September

Diccon Hyatt

Friday's US data on Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) from the Bureau of Economic Analysis could please officials at the Federal Reserve after a streak of hotter-than-expected inflation reports at the outset of the year suggested the fight against rapidly rising prices was taking a turn for the worse.

Echoing another inflation measure released earlier this

month, the PCE price index showed inflation rose 2.7% over the year in April, in line with expectations and unchanged since March. The annual number is still well above the 2% annual rate that the Fed is aiming for, but the lack of movement stifled fears that inflation has reignited.

Of special note to Fed-watchers, the report showed "core" inflation increasing 0.2% over the month, easing from a 0.3% rate the month before. Fed officials pay close attention to core infla-



Federal Reserve building in Washington, DC

tion since it excludes volatile prices for food and energy and serves as an indicator of longer-term inflation trends.

The central bank is aiming to tamp down inflation by keeping borrowing costs high for all kinds of loans, discouraging spending and allowing supply and demand to rebalance. Fed officials in recent weeks have said they'll keep it at its current level, a 23-year high, for as long as it takes to quell inflation.

By itself, one inflation report is

unlikely to be enough to convince the Fed that inflation is beaten and they can safely lower the benchmark fed funds rate, economists said. A string of similarly cool inflation reports over the summer, however, could set the stage for a rate cut later in the year, several economists said.

"Although further progress is likely needed before the Fed is comfortable easing policy, the April data largely make the hot inflation data at the start of the

year look more like a blip rather than renewed acceleration in price growth," Tim Quinlan and Shannon Seery Grein, economists at Wells Fargo Securities, said in a commentary.

"This inflation data combined with the softening in overall spending suggests the door is still open for potential Fed easing later this year, though it will need to see further progress on inflation before rate cuts are truly in play."

(Source: Investopedia)



MoH launches second PSFI

The Ministry of Health (MoH), represented by the Quality Assurance Center, marked on Tuesday the launch of the second edition of Patient Safety Friendly Initiative (PSFI) under the patronage of Dr Ahmed al Mandhari, undersecretary for Planning and Health Regulation, Ministry of Health, in the presence of director generals and hospital directors of different governorates.

The initiative was launched in six governorates, with three health centers in each governorate. The Patient Safety Initiative involves assessing healthcare institutions according to globally recognised standards by the World Health Organisation, a press

release said.

In 2022, the project was commenced in primary healthcare and has been successfully implemented in five governorates, encompassing a total of nine health centres, completing the second assessment. Moreover, the third edition of the initiative framework was launched in seven hospitals on Monday, which were previously evaluated by WHO as a patient-safety friendly hospital in the second edition.

The events were attended by heads of quality management and patient safety departments, primary care directors, as well as focal points for patient safety and chairpersons of patient safety.

Alfa Romeo Oman delivers nine Stelvios to MHD Leasing

Alfa Romeo Oman announced the delivery of nine Alfa Romeo Stelvio SUVs to MHD Leasing, marking a significant milestone for the brand in the region.

The Alfa Romeo Stelvio, celebrated for its Italian heritage, stunning design, and dynamic performance, is set to integrate into MHD Leasing's premium fleet. This acquisition underscores the growing demand for luxury vehicles that offer a blend of performance, innovation, and sophisticated design, a press release said.

Mohsin Hani al Bahrani, CEO of MHD Automobiles, commented, "We are delighted to see the Stelvio becoming an integral part of MHD Leasing's fleet. This transaction highlights the trust and recognition Alfa Romeo has earned in the market. The Stelvio's combination of luxury, performance, and advanced features will undoubtedly impress MHD Leasing's clientele."

The addition of the Stelvio to MHD Leasing's portfolio demonstrates a shared vision of offering premium, high-performance vehicles to discerning customers. As Alfa Romeo Oman continues to expand, this delivery exemplifies the brand's commitment to excellence and



The addition of the Stelvio to MHD Leasing's portfolio demonstrates a shared vision of offering premium, high-performance vehicles to discerning customers exemplifying the brand's commitment

customer satisfaction.

The Alfa Romeo Stelvio is available in two variants in Oman. The Veloce variant offers a superior driving experience with its 2ltr Turbo Engine delivering 280hp, paired with an 8-speed automatic transmission and All-Wheel Drive (AWD). Enhanced by Level 2 Advanced Driver Assist Systems, it ensures safety and convenience while reflecting Alfa Romeo's rich heritage through its Italian design. The perfect weight distribution and Alfa Link suspension system contribute to uncompromising driving dynamics and maximum comfort.



Kaldi 850, Al Woshil Football Team announce partnership

Kaldi 850, a leading name in premium coffee, has announced a dynamic new partnership with the Al Woshil Football Team.

This collaboration aims to bring together the energy of sports and the rich tradition of coffee to create a vibrant and engaging experience for fans and the community, said Paul Biswajit, Country Head of Kaldi 850 Coffee.

As part of this partnership, Kaldi 850 will become the official coffee sponsor of the Al Woshil Football Team, this partnership underscores Kaldi 850 Coffee's commitment to supporting local sports

and community engagement.

The collaboration is seen to bring mutual benefits, including increased brand visibility for Kaldi 850 Coffee and financial or logistical support for Al Woshil, enhancing its performance and outreach in the football community.

Khedmah unveils future projects at COMEX 2024

Oman Investment & Finance Co (OIFC) Khedmah, a pioneer in payments and bill collection services in the Sultanate of Oman, has unveiled several future projects at the 33rd edition of COMEX 2024 - the Sultanate's premier technology event, recently held from May 27 to 30, 2024, at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center (OCEC).

Among the prominent projects to be launched soon is 'Khedmah Delivery', a brand-new mobile application designed to meet customer needs and simplify the food ordering and delivery experience, a press release said.

These pioneering projects that Khedmah is working on are the result of its deep technical expertise in understanding the dynamics and needs of the local market, keeping pace with the latest technological developments, and harnessing them to serve customers better. Khedmah's participation in



COMEX 2024 reaffirms its continuous commitment to pushing the boundaries of innovation in the electronic payment landscape and providing products and services that meet diverse customer needs.

Said Ahmed Safrar, CEO at OIFC said, "We are very pleased to unveil the future projects that Khedmah is working on at

COMEX 2024. These pioneering projects reflect the company's diligent efforts to diversify its business portfolio and support the digital transformation in the country by adopting a digital innovation approach and leveraging technology to simplify customers' lives.

"We will soon launch the Khedmah Delivery app in re-

sponse to the demands of the contemporary local business environment, characterised by the integration of technology in all commercial operations, especially in the field of food delivery. Through this, we aim to enhance the food ordering and delivery landscape in Oman and take it to new heights of growth and development.

KR Eshraqa's 'Tasees Programme' pre-incubation concludes

The Khimji Ramdas (KR) Eshraqa 'Tasees Programme', in collaboration with SME Development Authority (SMEDA), has successfully concluded the sixth edition of its Pre-incubation Programme for startups.

Designed to equip entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and knowledge to translate their innovative ideas into businesses, Tasees' Pre-incubation Programme guided participants through the essential phases of business development. SMEs that underwent the programme were eligible to apply for a loan through the Authority's funding initiative (Al Azm) upon completion of the Jahiziah programme, a press release said.

With the objective of provid-



ing entrepreneurs with the essential tools and knowledge to translate their concepts into

real-time businesses, the Pre-incubation Program consisted of comprehensive modules span-

ning over three weeks. These modules include in-class instructional sessions covering

idea validation, business model canvas, marketing plans, operations planning, and financial

management, followed by individual coaching and final business plan presentations.

Nineteen participants presented their business projects, aligning with the pillars of Oman Vision 2040; in various fields, including manufacturing, tourism, agriculture, fish farming, technical applications, and educational and consulting institutions. They presented their business plans to the evaluation team, which included Qais Rashid al Toubi, general supervisor of 'The Rising Omani Startups' Programme at the SMEs Development Authority (SMEDA), and Mahmoud bin Khalifa al Saqri, CEO of Eshraqa Foundation.

Nailesh Khimji, director, Khimji Ramdas stated, "The

Eshraqa Foundation's 'Tasees' has successfully guided and trained diverse groups of entrepreneurs to achieve excellence. Alongside SMEDA, we are committed to empowering them to leverage available entrepreneurship resources and contribute effectively to the Sultanate of Oman's economic development, in alignment with Oman Vision 2040."

Toubi added, "Our collaboration with KR Eshraqa's 'Tasees' has resulted in training and qualifying many aspiring entrepreneurs, equipping them with the essential skills and competencies needed for sustainability and risk management. This programme exemplifies our joint commitment to supporting SMEs."

Over 1mn people in Gaza ‘expected to face death, starvation’ by mid-July: UN

Ankara/Gaza - Over one million people, almost half of the Gazan population, are ‘expected to face death and starvation by mid-July’, the UN’s Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) said on Wednesday.

In a report called Hunger Hotspots Report: famine looms in Gaza while the risk of starvation persists in Sudan, Haiti, Mali, and South Sudan, the FAO pointed out the dangers that the Israeli-Palestinian crisis has brought.

“The ongoing conflict in Palestine is expected to further aggravate already catastrophic levels of acute hunger, with starvation and death already taking place, alongside the unprecedented death toll, widespread destruction and displacement of nearly the total population of the Gaza Strip - the report warns,” the FAO said.

“In mid-March 2024, famine was projected to occur by the end of May in the two northern governorates of the Gaza Strip, unless hostilities ended, full access was granted to humanitarian agencies, and essential services were restored,” it noted.

The agency warned: “Over one million people - half the population of Gaza - are expected to face death and starvation (IPC Phase 5) by mid-July.”

The report also cautions about the wider regional consequences of the crisis, which could worsen the existing food security challenges in Lebanon and Syria.

Israel has continued its brutal



This file photo shows a Palestinian child carrying empty containers to get food distributed by charitable organisations as Israeli attacks continue in Rafah City of Gaza on January 25

The ongoing conflict in Palestine is expected to further aggravate already catastrophic levels of acute hunger, with starvation and death already taking place, alongside the unprecedented death toll

FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION

offensive on Gaza since an October 7 Hamas attack despite a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire. More than 36,500 Palestinians have since been killed in

Gaza, the vast majority being women and children, and nearly 83,000 others injured, according to local health authorities.

Nearly eight months into the Israeli war, vast swathes of Gaza lay in ruins amid a crippling blockade of food, clean water, and medicine.

Israel stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice, which in its latest ruling has ordered Tel Aviv to immediately halt its operation in the southern city of Rafah, where over a million Palestinians had sought refuge from the war before it was invaded on May 6.

Israeli army expands Rafah incursion

Meanwhile, the Israeli army on Wednesday expanded its incursion into Rafah in the southernmost of the Gaza Strip, along with advancing toward the eastern areas of the Bureij and Maghazi refugee camps, central the strip. An Anadolu correspondent quoted eyewitnesses that confirmed the Israeli military vehicles’ advancement toward the ‘Eastern Garage’ area and in the vicinity of Al-Awda Mosque in central Rafah.

The witnesses added that the Israeli army’s advancement comes amid heavy Israeli artillery shelling on Rafah.

In Khan Younis, the Israeli army made an incursion into the Qarara town, eastern Khan Younis city, according to Anadolu reporter. In the central Gaza Strip, the Israeli army conducted a limited incursion toward the eastern areas of the Bureij and Maghazi refugee camps under heavy artillery shelling on the area, leaving casualties among Palestinians.

The Health Ministry is yet to confirm the number of casualties in the area.

US awaiting Hamas response

The US is still waiting for a response from the Palestinian group Hamas on a proposed Gaza cease-fire deal, National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said on Tuesday.

“The ball is in Hamas’s court as to whether they’re going to accept it or not. Now we are waiting for a response from Hamas,” Sullivan told reporters.

The US is in contact with Qatari mediators who conveyed the proposal from the Israeli negotiators to Hamas, Sullivan said, adding that Hamas needs to accept the proposal.

Sullivan added that CIA Director William Burns will be in the capital Doha consulting with Qatar’s prime minister as well as its emir.

“Bill Burns will be quite interested in hearing firsthand, in person, what the nature of those discussions was and where things go from here,” he said.

Anadolu Agency

US House votes to sanction International Criminal Court

Washington, D.C., US - The US House of Representatives voted on Tuesday to impose sanctions against the International Criminal Court (ICC) in response to its chief prosecutor seeking arrest warrants against Israeli leaders.

The bill was passed along bipartisan lines in a 247-155 vote joined by 42 Democrats despite opposition from the White House.

The Illegitimate Court Counteraction Act would require mandatory sanctions and visa restrictions on any foreign person working or providing funds for the ICC in prosecutions against the US, Israel or any other US ally that is not party to the ICC.

The vote came after ICC Chief Prosecutor Karim Khan last month recommended war crimes charges against Israeli



leaders including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant.

The White House previously said it was ‘deeply concerned’ about the ICC prosecutor’s application for arrest warrants against Israeli leaders but said the Biden administration ‘strongly opposes’ the legislation.

“There are more effective ways to defend Israel, preserve US positions on the ICC, and promote international justice and accountability, and the Administration stands ready to

work with Congress on those options,” it said in a statement on Monday.

The bill is largely symbolic, since the US does not recognise the jurisdiction of the ICC.

Last week, the top four Congressional leaders - House Speaker Mike Johnson, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell - officially invited Netanyahu to deliver an address to a joint meeting of Congress.

The date is still unclear. US Senator Dick Durbin said on Tuesday that he would not have invited Netanyahu to address a joint meeting of Congress. “I would not have sent a letter of invitation,” Durbin told reporters.

Anadolu Agency

Israel ready for ‘extremely powerful action’ against Lebanon: PM Netanyahu

Jerusalem - Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday sent a tough warning to the Lebanese Hezbollah group, stressing that the Israeli army is prepared for ‘an extremely powerful action’ against Lebanon.

Netanyahu made the statement during his visit to the northern settlement of Kiryat Shmona which witnessed attacks by the Hezbollah group in recent days.



Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

“We are prepared for an extremely powerful action in the north’ against Lebanon, Netanyahu wrote on his X account along with a video message taken during his tour in the north near the borders with Lebanon.

Netanyahu also met with the Israeli army’s Brigade 769 command to discuss the operational situation along the Lebanese-Israeli border areas.

Meanwhile, the Israeli Army Radio said the Israeli government approved call-up of 50,000 more reservist soldiers in preparation for possible escalation on the Lebanon front.

The radio also said the government allowed to increase the number of active reservist soldiers from 300,000 to 350,000 in preparation for a possible fighting in the north with Lebanon.

The Israeli army’s Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi said on Tuesday that Israel is close to making a decision regarding Hezbollah’s daily attacks on northern Israel, stressing the army’s preparedness for such a

The Israeli Army Radio said the Israeli government approved call-up of 50,000 more reservist soldiers in preparation for possible escalation on Lebanon front

decision. Tension has flared along the border between Lebanon and Israel amid intermittent exchanges of fire between Israeli forces and Hezbollah, in the deadliest clashes since the two sides fought a full-scale war in 2006.

Use of white phosphorus bombs

Meanwhile, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said on Wednesday that Israeli forces have used white phosphorus bombs in at least 17 municipal-

ities across southern Lebanon, including populated residential areas, since October last year.

“It verified the use of white phosphorus munitions by Israeli forces in at least 17 municipalities across south Lebanon since October 2023, including 5 municipalities where airburst munitions were unlawfully used over populated residential areas,” HRW stated in a report, adding that this illegal act has put civilian lives in grave risk.

The report said the use of white phosphorus also contributed to civilian displacement from their homes in southern Lebanon.

“Under international humanitarian law, the use of airburst white phosphorus is unlawfully indiscriminate in populated areas,” it warned.

“Israel’s widespread use of white phosphorus in south Lebanon highlights the need for stronger international law on incendiary weapons,” the international rights watchdog said.

Anadolu Agency

China ‘successfully’ tests first-ever drone delivery on Mount Everest: State media

Beijing, China - China on Wednesday said it has ‘successfully’ completed the first-ever drone delivery tests on Mt Everest, the world’s tallest mountain, from the Nepali side, paving the way for facilitating high-altitude mountaineering, emergency rescue and environmental protection operations, state media reported.

A DJI FlyCart 30 was used in the April tests, during which three oxygen bottles and 1.5kg of other supplies were flown from the Base Camp (at an altitude of 5,364m) to Camp 1 (at about 6,000m) of the world’s highest peak, also known as Mt Qo-



molangma in China, and trash was carried down on the return trip, Beijing-based Xinhua News reported. The drone could carry 15kg of supplies between the camps in 12 minutes for a round trip, day or night, according to the Chinese drone maker DJI.

During the tests, FlyCart 30 flew as high as 6,191.8m on Mt Everest situated on the border of Nepal and China and could carry a 15kg payload steadily at an altitude of 6,000m. Following the tests, a Nepali drone company was contracted to establish drone delivery operations on Mount Everest from May 22.

Anadolu Agency

Number of students coming to schools hungry rising in UK: Survey

London, UK - Primary schoolteachers in the UK pointed out the increasing number of students coming to schools feeling hungry and without proper clothing or school supplies compared to the last year, a survey revealed on Wednesday.

A recent research carried out by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) said that since 2021, the UK has experienced remarkable hikes in energy expenses, rapid escalations in food prices, and significant upticks in housing costs, particularly in rent and mortgage

payments, leading to a substantial surge in the overall cost of living.

While inflation has declined since its winter 2022 peak, persistently high costs against incomes significantly impacted both students and their families as well as school expenditures, the NFER stressed.

An online survey, conducted in March 2024 among over 1,200 teachers and senior leaders in mainstream schools to determine if there have been alterations in students' needs compared to 2023, assessed the types of support schools are offering to students and



how these efforts have evolved over time. It also evaluated the persistent effects of cost pressures, including rising living expenses, on schools' resources and financial statuses.

"Primary teachers report that the share of pupils coming into schools hungry, without adequate clothing or equipment for lessons, continues to increase compared to last year," the research showed.

This year, approximately 19 per cent of primary teachers and 17 per cent of secondary teachers indicated using their personal funds to address students' pastoral or welfare re-

quirements, including necessities like food or clothing, it stressed.

It mentioned that roughly a quarter of respondents estimated that they have personally spent more than £100 (over US\$108) throughout the current academic year, spanning from September 2023 to March 2024.

Nearly all senior leaders in schools, with 93 per cent in primary and 87 per cent in secondary education, have implemented budget cuts in at least one aspect due to financial strains, it said.

Anadolu Agency

Biden to meet Zelensky in Normandy

Biden will also have an opportunity several days later to see Zelensky again at the G-7 summit in Italy

Washington, D.C., US - US President Joe Biden will meet his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky during 80th anniversary commemorations for D-Day in Normandy, France, the White House said on Tuesday.

"While he's in Normandy, he'll have the opportunity to sit down with President Zelensky," National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters during a briefing aboard Air Force One en route to France.

Biden will also have an opportunity several days later to see Zelensky again at the G-7 summit in Italy, he added, stressing that the president will not attend the Ukraine peace summit that will take place from June 15-16 in Switzerland.



US President Joe Biden will meet his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky during 80th anniversary commemorations for D-Day in Normandy, France

Asked whether Biden would consider sending US military advisors to Ukraine for training purposes, Sullivan said: "We're not planning to send US military advisors or troops, trainers, to train

Ukrainians in Ukraine."

"For our part, we're not planning for a training mission in Ukraine," he stressed. Ukraine needs a 'continued flow of weaponry, which we are going to

supply to them', Sullivan added.

Biden last week granted Ukraine secret approval to use US-supplied weapons to strike inside Russia, but only near the northeastern Ukrainian city of

Kharkiv, where Russian forces entered in early May and have since advanced. "The president thought it was right that if Russian forces are hitting Ukraine, from Russia into Ukraine, that

Ukraine should have the right to hit back, including with American made weapons, and so he authorised the use of weapons for that specific purpose," Sullivan said.

Crucial weeks for Ukraine

Meanwhile, Zelensky has said the coming weeks will determine how the summer and the rest of

lations with the EU, and the situation on the front lines in the war with Russia and domestic production, he said his government is doing its best in all of these areas to achieve positive results.

"I am grateful to everyone who has helped! I am grateful to everyone who is doing everything possible to ensure that this war ends in a way that is fair to

The president thought it was right that if Russian forces are hitting Ukraine, from Russia into Ukraine, that Ukraine should have the right to hit back, including with American made weapons

JAKE SULLIVAN

the year will unfold in terms of the war with Russia, the peace summit in Switzerland, and relations with the EU.

"Today, I gave several instructions on the preparations for the next meetings of the Staff and the decisions. We see the threats that exist... It is only the beginning of June, but these are already the weeks that will determine the whole summer and, in many ways, this year," Zelensky said in a video address broadcast late on Tuesday. Regarding the upcoming Ukraine peace summit in Switzerland, re-

Ukraine," he further said.

The president also talked about the staff meeting earlier on Tuesday, saying he heard reports on the front lines from Ukraine's military leadership and government reports on the energy sector as well as the production and procurement of drones.

"This is the area where we must constantly increase the volume. In this war, it has been proven - and especially by our warriors (soldiers) - that drones can provide an advantage and help regain the initiative.

Anadolu Agency

UN chief Antonio Guterres urges to act against pollution, climate chaos

New York, US - The UN Secretary-General has called for safeguarding Earth's vital ecosystems from rampant pollution, worsening climate impacts and 'biodiversity decimation'.

In a message marking Wednesday's World Environment Day, António Guterres emphasised that countries 'must deliver' on all their commitments to restore degraded ecosystems and land, and on Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework, the global agreement to protect biodiversity. "They must use their new national climate action plans to set out how they will halt and reverse deforestation by 2030. And we must drastically scale up finance to support developing countries to adapt to violent weather, protect nature, and support sustainable development."

The UN chief further highlighted that prompt and effective action makes economic sense.

"Every dollar invested in ecosystem restoration creates up to thirty dollars in economic benefits," he said. "It's time to break free. Failure to curb runaway pollution, climate chaos and biodiversity destruction are clear for all to see. Healthy, fertile lands are transforming into deserts, thriving ecosystems into dead zones and rising carbon



UN Secretary-General António Guterres

dioxide emissions.

"That means crops failing, water sources vanishing, economies weakened, and communities endangered - with the poorest hit hardest ... It is time to break free," the UN chief said.

"We are Generation Restoration. Together, let us build a sustainable future for land, and for humanity," he added.

Celebrated by millions around the world, World Environment Day has been held annually since 1973 and has grown to be the largest global platform for environmental outreach ever.

This year, it is being commemorated under the overarching theme 'land restoration, desertification and drought resilience'.

Address 'triple planetary crisis'

Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), called on everyone to join the global movement on putting those words into action. "By restoring ecosystems, we can slow the triple planetary crisis: the crisis of climate change, the crisis of nature and biodiversity loss, including desertification, and the crisis of pollution and waste."

In addition, by doing so, the world can get closer to limiting global temperature rise in line with the 2015 Paris Agreement by increasing carbon storage, and reduce poverty and hunger, in line with the Sustainable Develop-

We must drastically scale up finance to support developing countries to adapt to violent weather, protect nature, and support sustainable development

ANTONIO GUTERRES

ment Goals (SDGs), she added.

"Land restoration can be a golden thread that ties these together, ties together action and ambition across all these three important gatherings."

Kicking off the commemorations, in Asia and the Pacific, the UN's regional development arm (ESCAP) alongside UNEP will bring together key stakeholders to identify priority actions.

Broad solutions under discussion include circular water resource use, sustainable food production and resilient urban development. Saudi Arabia is the host for the 2024 global commemoration. The country is also hosting the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP16).

WAM



US President Joe Biden and former president Donald Trump

Biden, Trump wind down primary election season with easy victories

Houston, US - US President Joe Biden and former president Donald Trump handily won primary elections on Tuesday in the states of Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico and South Dakota, according to media outlets.

This was Trump's first time appearing on the ballot since his historic felony conviction in the New York City hush money trial last week.

The former president won hands down in New Jersey with 98 per cent of the vote, where he ran unopposed.

Biden also easily won in New Jersey with 88 per cent of the tally, even though nearly nine per cent of voters checked off the 'uncommitted' box at the

polls.

Trump prevailed in New Mexico with 84 per cent of the tally, where voters could still opt to vote for rivals who had dropped out of the Republican presidential race.

Former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, who ended her presidential bid in March and announced two weeks ago that she would vote for Trump in the November 5 presidential election, still received nearly 9 per cent of the vote in New Mexico.

Biden took home the win in New Mexico with 84 per cent, but again gave up nine per cent to the 'uncommitted' ballot option. Trump won the Montana primary with 87 per cent of the

vote but relinquished 10 per cent of the tally to the 'no preference' choice at the polls.

Biden had his largest victory of the night in Montana, taking home 91 per cent of the vote.

Biden received the majority of the votes in South Dakota, with 73 per cent. But he gave up 12 per cent of the tally to little-known challenger Marianne Williamson, a political activist and bestselling author, and 11 per cent of the vote to Minnesota Congressman Dean Phillips, another outlier Democratic candidate.

Trump was the only Republican candidate in South Dakota and was certified as the winner by that state's Republican party.

INDIA

NDA elects Narendra Modi as leader

New Delhi, India - The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) unanimously passed a resolution to elect Narendra Modi as their leader. Twenty-one NDA leaders signed a letter to elect Narendra Modi as their leader during a key meeting held at his official residence in Delhi on Wednesday.

During the meeting, the NDA leaders congratulated the prime minister for his leadership and the strides made by the nation under him in the last 10 years.

They appreciated the efforts made by him in nation-building, highlighting that he has a clear vision for 'Viksit Bharat' and that they are partners in this goal.

"In the last 10 years, 140 crore citizens of India have seen the country develop in every sector due to the welfare policies of the NDA government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. After a very long gap, of almost six decades, the people of India have chosen a powerful leader with an absolute majority for the third consecutive time," the NDA leaders' letter mentioned.

"We are all proud that the NDA fought and won the 2024 Lok Sabha elections unitedly



Narendra Modi along with Bihar CM Nitish Kumar, TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu and Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde during the NDA leaders meeting in New Delhi on Wednesday (ANI)

under the leadership of Narendra Modi. We NDA leaders unanimously choose Narendra Modi as our leader," it further stated.

The leaders asserted that the NDA government, under the leadership of Modi, is committed to serving the poor, women, youth, farmers, and the exploited, deprived, and op-

pressed citizens of India.

NDA leaders lauded the Prime Minister's efforts towards poverty eradication and pledged to continue the good work.

"The NDA government will continue to work to improve the living standards of every person in India and the all-round development of the country by protecting the heritage of India," it

added.

The meeting was attended by BJP president J P Nadda, BJP leaders Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh, and the BJP's allies, including Janata Dal (United) chief Nitish Kumar, Telugu Desam Party (TDP) supremo N Chandrababu Naidu, Shiv Sena chief Eknath Shinde, Janata Dal (Secular) leader H D Ku-

maraswamy, Janasena Party chief Pawan Kalyan, Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) chief Chirag Paswan and Nationalist Congress Party (Ajit Pawar faction) leader Praful Patel, among others.

According to sources, discussions were held on government formation by the NDA.

The NDA leaders will meet

President Droupadi Murmu after a meeting with the newly elected members of the Lok Sabha scheduled for June 7. The sources added that Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, and Nadda will hold a meeting with the allies to discuss government formation. PM Modi will take the oath for the third time on June 8, sources said.

President Droupadi Murmu dissolved the 17th Lok Sabha on Wednesday after recommendation of the Union Cabinet

The participation of Naidu and Nitish Kumar in the meeting is a significant step, as the support of their parties is crucial for the BJP to form a government. This time, the BJP fell 32 seats short of the majority mark of 272 and will need to rely on its allies to form a government.

As per the results announced by the Election Commission of India on Tuesday, the BJP won 240 seats and the Congress 99 seats. BJP had won 303 seats in the 2019 general elections and 282 seats in the 2014 general elections.

Meanwhile, President Droupadi Murmu dissolved the 17th Lok Sabha on Wednesday after the recommendation of the Union Cabinet.

ANI



INDIA bloc leaders hold a meeting at the residence of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge in New Delhi on Wednesday (ANI)

'Mandate is against PM Modi and his style of politics': Kharge

New Delhi, India - Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday said that the result of the Lok Sabha elections is a political loss for Prime Minister Narendra Modi personally apart from being a 'moral defeat' as well.

Addressing the INDIA bloc meeting held at his residence, Kharge said: "I welcome all INDIA partners. We fought well, fought unitedly, fought resolutely. The mandate is decisively

against Modi and the substance and style of his politics. It is a huge political loss for him personally apart from being a clear moral defeat as well."

"However, he is determined to subvert the will of the people. INDIA welcomes all parties that share its fundamental commitment to the values enshrined in the Preamble to our Constitution and to its many provisions for economic, social and political justice," Kharge added. Several

INDIA bloc leaders arrived at the Congress President's house to attend the meeting.

Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi also arrived at the meeting. Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav arrived at the residence of Kharge along with his uncle Ram Gopal Yadav ahead of the meeting to discuss a strategy to form the central government. Ahead of the meeting, Jharkhand CM Cham-

pai Soren said: "We will decide our strategy as an alliance. Let the meeting begin."

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav told ANI: "We want the government which will be formed to take care of Bihar and ensure that it gets special status. It is a good opportunity for Nitish Kumar to make sure that Bihar gets a special status and conduct caste-based census in the entire country."

ANI

Odisha CM resigns; BJP to form new government

Bhubaneswar, India - After suffering a massive defeat in the State Assembly and Parliamentary elections, the 24-year-old tenure of Odisha CM and BJD chief Naveen Patnaik concluded as he submitted his resignation to the Odisha Governor Raghubar Das at the Raj Bhavan in Bhubaneswar on Wednesday.



The Biju Janata Dal which has ruled Odisha since 1997 lost to the BJP breaking the 24-year-old reign of Naveen Patnaik as the Chief Minister.

The Bhartiya Janata Party secured 78 seats in the 147-seat assembly. The BJD secured 51 seats way behind the majority mark of 74 and the Indian National Congress secured 14 seats.

In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls also BJP performed well by securing 20 out of the 21 parliamentary seats of the state, the remaining one seat was won by Congress.

Naveen Patnaik had made an unexpected entry into state pol-

itics through the BJD, a party named after his father, the former Odisha CM Biju Patnaik.

His political journey began with a victory in the 1998 Lok Sabha bypoll, representing his father's constituency of Aska. Following the BJD's success in the 2000 Assembly elections, forming a coalition with the BJP and gaining a majority, Patnaik resigned from his position in the Union Cabinet to assume the role of chief minister.

Since then, he has been the second longest-serving Chief Minister after Sikkim CM Pawan Kumar Chamling.

BJP sweeps Delhi

Meanwhile, the BJP won all seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi for the third consecutive time, dashing the hopes of the AAP-Congress alliance.

AAP-Congress alliance, which contested with a 4-3 seat-sharing arrangement, did not enthrone the voters of the nation's capital much. However, the INDIA bloc was able to make a dent in the BJP's vote share which reduced from 56.7 per cent in 2019 to 54.35 per cent in 2024.

ANI

Rahul 'fought with love, truth and kindness': Priyanka

New Delhi, India - Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra penned down an emotional note for brother Rahul Gandhi, after he won both the seats he contested and the party improved its tally in the Lok Sabha elections.

Heaping praise on Rahul, Priyanka Gandhi said that that despite his conviction being doubted and 'overwhelming propaganda of lies' being spread against him, Rahul never backed down and kept 'fighting for truth'.

Calling him the 'bravest of all', she said that Rahul Gandhi fought with love, truth and kindness, adding that she is proud of him.

"You kept standing, no matter what they said and did to you...you never backed down whatever the odds, never



Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and party leader Rahul Gandhi show victory signs, in New Delhi on Tuesday (ANI)

stopped believing however much they doubted your conviction, you never stopped fighting for the truth despite the overwhelming propaganda of lies they spread, and you never

allowed anger and hatred to overcome you, even when they gifted it to you every day," Priyanka Gandhi said in her post on X.

"You fought with love, truth and kindness in your heart. Those who could not see you, see you now, but some of us have always seen and known you to be the bravest of all. Bhai @RahulGandhi, I am proud to be your sister," she added.

Rahul Gandhi, who contested from two seats - Rae Bareilly in UP and Wayanad in Kerala, won both constituencies by huge margins.

Rahul Gandhi won the seat of Rae Bareilly by defeating BJP's Dinesh Pratap Singh by a margin of 3,90,030 votes. Gandhi had contested this seat aiming to save the lone bastion of the party in the state after he lost

Amethi in 2019.

The Congress leader also won the seat of Wayanad, which paved his entry to the Lok Sabha in 2019. He defeated Communist Party of India candidate Annie Raja by 3,64,422 votes.

Earlier on Tuesday, hailing the results, Rahul Gandhi thanked the people of Wayanad and Raebareilly for making him win with a huge majority and said that the people have saved the Constitution and democracy in the country.

"The deprived and poor population of the country stood with India to protect their rights. Congratulations to all the alliance partners and the lion-like workers of the Congress party," said the Congress leader.

ANI

Kejriwal to be in judicial custody till June 19

New Delhi, India - The Rouse Avenue Court on Wednesday dismissed the interim bail plea moved by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal seeking seven days bail citing medical reasons in excise policy money laundering case.

While dismissing the plea, the court directed the Tihar Jail Authorities to conduct all required medical tests and avail treatment for the applicant, Arvind Kejriwal. Meanwhile, the Court also extended his judicial custody until June 19, 2024. Arvind Kejriwal was produced through virtual mode before the court.

In compliance with Supreme Court directions, Kejriwal had surrendered him-

self before the Tihar Jail on June 2.

The same court on June 1, had kept the order reserved on the bail plea moved by him.

During arguments, Senior Advocate N Hariharan, who appeared for Kejriwal, submitted that 'the interim bail was for the purpose of campaigning for my party, which is a national party...I am out for 20 days...It was a lot of stress due to the campaigning, and you know that stress is an aggravator of diabetes. What was alarming was that KETO levels rose in the urine. The aspect of concern is high level of sugar and the keto numbers.'

ANI

ALCARAZ ALL CLASS

Spaniard gets the better of Tsitsipas in straight sets

Paris, France - Carlos Alcaraz continued his domination of Stefanos Tsitsipas with a comfortable victory on Tuesday night in the Roland Garros quarterfinals. Through to the Paris semis for the second straight year, the Spaniard will next meet soon-to-be World No. 1 Jannik Sinner on Friday.

"I'm really, really happy to be back in the semifinals here at Roland Garros," Alcaraz said in his post-match press conference. "It's always special being able to play a semi-final in a Grand Slam. I'm really, really excited to play Friday against Jannik again. A really difficult challenge. I'm ready for that."

"Hopefully everyone is going to



Carlos Alcaraz was in total control against Stefanos Tsitsipas

It's always special being able to play a semi-final in a Grand Slam. I'm really, really excited to play Friday against Jannik again. A really difficult challenge. I'm ready for that.

CARLOS ALCARAZ

enjoy that match as much as I'm going to."

Alcaraz improved to 6-0 head to head against Tsitsipas with a 6-3, 7-6(3), 6-4 victory on Court Philippe-Chatrier. The No. 3 in the rankings set the tone with a break in the opening game and further asserted himself by racing to a 3-0 lead in set two. Tsitsipas made his push late in the second, raising his level to break serve and force a tie-break, but the dramatic tension was short-lived as Alcaraz opened up a 5/1 lead in the tie-break.

In a rematch of their 2023 Roland Garros quarterfinal meeting, Alcaraz once again succeeded in attacking his opponent's one-handed backhand with height and depth. Playing within himself, the Spaniard consistently created favourable

patterns of play. Some of the biggest highlights of the night came when Alcaraz charged the net, where he won 14 of 22 points, many with show-stopping volleys from well below the net.

Tsitsipas had even more success at net, winning 34 of 46 points. But he was unable to match Alcaraz from the baseline, where the bulk of the match was

played. As the entertaining match approached its seemingly inevitable conclusion, the only thing that could delay Alcaraz from serving out the victory was an extended wave by the Chatrier crowd.

The Spaniard smiled at the spectacle and then coolly escaped 0/30 to clinch the win, sealing the deal with an untouch-

able drop shot.

While Alcaraz has owned his series with Tsitsipas, his head to head against Sinner is knotted at 4-4. Alcaraz won their most recent match, an electric three-setter on his way to this year's Indian Wells title, but Sinner has won both of their previous Grand Slam meetings at Wimbledon and the US Open, both in 2022.



Coco Gauff

Gauff can stay in 'Big Four', says Jabeur

Paris, France - Coco Gauff's game intelligence and fighting spirit will go a long way in establishing herself in the "Big Four" of women's tennis, Tunisia's Ons Jabeur said after losing to the American in the French Open quarter-finals on Tuesday.

Third seed Gauff battled back from a set down to beat Jabeur 4-6 6-2 6-3 and reach the semi-finals for the second time. She finished runner-up in 2022.

Since Ash Barty's retirement, world number one Iga Swiatek, Aryna Sabalenka and Elena Rybakina have won six of the last eight Grand Slam titles to earn the "Big Three" tag.

But 20-year-old Gauff has climbed up to third in the rankings.

"I think Coco is an amazing player. My favourite thing about Coco is her fighting spirit. I think she's playing great tennis right now," Jabeur told reporters.

"Obviously, she's such a fighter, she always tries to find ways, she's really smart on the court."

"I definitely see her becoming maybe (a member of) the 'Big Four'."



Jannik Sinner

New world No 1 Sinner proud to spearhead 'Italian movement'

Paris, France - Jannik Sinner took an unexpected path to the world number one ranking on Tuesday after Novak Djokovic's French Open withdrawal but the youngster said it was the culmination of years of hard work and represented a proud moment for Italy.

Sinner arrived at Roland Garros needing to reach the final to assure himself of the top spot next week but got confirmation when organisers announced that Djokovic had pulled out with a knee injury sustained in his fourth-round win on Monday.

It meant the 22-year-old, who was informed of the news shortly after his 6-2 6-4 7-6(3) quarter-final win over Grigor Dimitrov, becomes the first Italian man to achieve the feat. "It means a lot to me for sure. It's not the way we all were expecting. He (Djokovic) had two long, tough matches, five sets, so it's tough. The first one he finished really late also," Sinner told reporters.

"It's tough also for the tournament. Novak retiring, it's always tough. Talking about myself, I'm very happy about this achievement. It's a lot of work we put in daily. It's a daily routine. Obvi-

ously happy to have this number.

"In two days there's a very important match for me, the semi-finals (against Carlos Alcaraz), so I'm focused about that at the moment. But yes, happy to have this number now."

Sinner, who guided Italy to the Davis Cup title last year, said the country deserved its recent success.

"It means a lot, but I think it's great for Italy. We're a great country with great coaches and players and we can see this now how this moment is," Sinner said.

"I'm happy to be part of this Italian movement. People, they start to play tennis now more and more, which is great to see."

Talking about myself, I'm very happy about this achievement. It's a lot of work we put in daily. It's a daily routine.

JANNIK SINNER

CLASSIFIEDS

SEND
YOUR
REQUEST
FOR

Birthday/Anniversary
wishes to
wish@apexmedia.co.om
with your resident card copy
(It's free of cost)

عيادة فصول السنة للطب الهندي التقليدي
ALL SEASON AYURVEDA CLINIC

The most efficient and authentic
Ayurvedic Treatment & Medicine,
Yoga, Kalari, Panchakarma, Massage,
Dhara etc... Rehabilitation, Beauty
therpay & post Delivery Care

Zaher Building, 1st Floor, Flat 8A,
Al Khuwair Service Road ,near Al Zawawi
Mosque & Burger-king Tel:24475280,
GSM: 95371664 , 92504980 ,
Website:www.siddhayur.com

CLASSIFIED
LISTINGS

MUSCAT DAILY offers a variety
of classified listings for individuals
and establishments:

Situations Vacant/Wanted, Accommodation Wanted or
Available, Sale of Household Items, Cars for Sale or Wanted,
Matrimonial Alliances, etc

Please email your listing to dailyclassifieds@apexmedia.co.om
or call: 99104346

FOR
RENT/SALE

Available 2100 sq meter best in class
Warehouse cum office Space,
fully furnished ready to use, Located at
Prime area of Ghala in the heart of the
city having easy access to airport &
express Way.

Contact: Mr.Sumit Mudgil - 95616835
Girish Sewani - 93893596

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals
at competitive prices.

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 | Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

أوربت
ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

- Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
- Choose from a wide range of brands & models
- PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
- Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

mai alkaline

pH 9.1 to 9.5

Alkaline Ionized Drinking Water

HYDRATE SMARTLY

- Ultra-hydrating
- Revitalizing
- Energizing
- Electrolytes

oman
OASIS

800 71 222
9275 5522

CA No: 7899452

OmanOasis
OmanOasisOfficial
OmanOasisWater

'WE'RE BETTER PREPARED'

Oman ready to tackle Australia's challenge in the second match, says captain Ilyas

Bridgetown, Barbados - In cricket, especially within the annals of T20 World Cup history, moments of unexpected victory have been plentiful across various editions. From Namibia's stunning victory over Sri Lanka to Scotland's triumph against West Indies during the ICC T20 World Cup in 2022, these results continue to resonate over the years.

It may be early to expect such upsets early in the ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup in West Indies and the USA, but the stories of shock victories and David versus Goliath tales within the T20 World Cup form a backdrop ahead of Oman's Group B clash against defending Test and ODI World Cup champions Australia on Wednesday (Thursday 4.30am, Oman time).

It will be a historic encounter for the Duleep Mendis coached team as they clash with cricketing behemoth Australia for the first time.

Australia begin their campaign in the T20 World Cup as favourites as they eye a treble after winning the World Cup titles in the other two formats.

The T20 format has undeniably fostered a culture of disrupting the established hierarchy, and whether this year's tournament will bear witness to such an upset remains to be seen. Oman's skipper Aqib Ilyas didn't show any nerves at the pre-match press conference on Tuesday and said: "It will be a great experience to play at this stage against Australia that boasts of some of the biggest names in modern-day



Oman will 'approach the match against Australia with a positive mindset'

cricket."

Ilyas said: "Though we've never encountered such formidable opposition in any ICC tournaments before, we approach this match with a positive mindset and utmost respect for our opponents. We are certainly not overawed to play them at this stage."

Acknowledging the magnitude of the challenge ahead, Ilyas emphasised, "Our coach, Duleep Mendis, has instilled in us the importance of playing with courage and heart. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain from giving our best effort against a world-class side like Australia."

Reflecting on the significance

of the match, Ilyas remarked, "If we perform well tomorrow, we could very well find ourselves making headlines."

"When you come up against the top sides, that is when you get highlighted all over the world. The boys have a lot of opportunity. Every time there is a World Cup, there is an upset... the

Bilal is our strike bowler, and while he faced challenges in last match, we stand behind him. Every cricketer encounters off-days, but I'm confident he will bounce back stronger.

AQIB ILYAS



spearhead Bilal Khan, who was off-colour in the Super Over, Ilyas offered his unwavering support.

"Bilal is our strike bowler, and while he faced challenges in the previous match, we stand behind him. Every cricketer encounters off-days, but I'm confident he will bounce back stronger."

Australia would be heavily favoured to win against Oman, given their experience and the powerful line-up, with most of the World Cup squad coming from the recently concluded IPL, where players like Travis Head, Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Jake Fraser-McGurk, Marcus Stoinis, Cameron Green and Glenn Maxwell had notable contributions.

Head unfazed by unknown Oman attack

Bridgetown, Barbados - He has been in roaring form at the recently concluded IPL in India. Opening batter Travis Head, who was one of the few Australian players to arrive late in West Indies for the T20 World Cup, admitted that he knows very less of their opponents, Oman, as they open their campaign in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup on Wednesday (Thursday, 4.30am, Oman time).

On Tuesday, speaking at the pre-match press conference at the Kensington Oval after rains washed out the training session, the in-form opening Australian batter said: "I don't have much knowledge about the Oman bowlers. But, at some stage over the next sort of tonight or tomorrow I may have a quick look at some of the guys."

Head, whose recent form saw him plunder a pile of runs in the IPL, said: "I will be provided with footage of the Oman bowlers, but I prefer to get an up-close look when they go through their warm-ups."

"You'll get heaps of footage,



Travis Head

but for me personally, I'll probably just watch a little bit in the warm-up, sort of try and get a rough idea on who's who. A little bit like I was in India [during IPL] as well, just sort of see the bowlers going through, stand somewhat near them in the warm-up and have a look at what's going on around the bowling stuff and then stay pretty calm and relaxed."

Head added: "I will talk to Tom,

the analyst here, about how they sort of stack up in the power play and I'll try and worry about that part and then take it from there. Try and get a rough idea who those guys are and then probably just watch them live in the warm-up and get a feel for what I'm coming in to expect."

Head is among the lot of late-arriving Australians after making a quick trip home from India. It

meant he missed both warm-up games and the final practice session was rained out on Tuesday.

It's the first T20 World Cup for Head, who was player of the match in Australia's ODI World Cup triumph in India last year, having also been player of the match in the World Test Championship final, showing he was a man for the big events.

Head said it was important not to get too fired up too early.

"The one-day World Cup didn't really feel like a World Cup until we get down to the business end of it, so a little bit the same here," he said.

"You want to be winning every game. You want to be peaking at the right time, so for us, we start tomorrow, but also, we want to do the right things, get the Super Eights and be peaking in the back end. I think we did that really well in the one-day tournament. We want to be going fine at the right time. So, we want to get everything right in these first few games and make sure we're in the right position to accelerate in the back half of the tournament."



Rohit Sharma (L) with Rahul Dravid

Such a big role model: Rohit reflects on Dravid's career-long influence

East Meadow, New York - India's captain Rohit Sharma unsuccessfully tried to get the outgoing coach Rahul Dravid to stay on in the job. Rohit, who played under Dravid, with Dravid, then against Dravid in the IPL and against teams coached by him, said he wanted the association to carry on. Dravid, though, decided not to seek an extension after the current term ends with the T20 World Cup 2024.

"I tried convincing him to stay, but obviously, there are a lot of things that he needs to look after as well," Rohit said. "But yeah, I've personally enjoyed my time with him. I'm sure the rest of the guys will say the same. It's been great working with him and I hope...I'm not going to say anything, actually."

In the end Rohit was trying not to jinx it by saying that he hoped they sent Dravid off with a trophy. He could look back at fond memories, though. "We have not really thought of it," Rohit said when asked if they were looking to do something special for the outgoing coach. "But my equation with him goes a long way back. He was my first interna-

tional captain when I made my debut in Ireland. Then I've seen him play while I was just coming into the team, Test matches, when he was captain. And such a big role model for all of us. Growing up, we watched him play.

"We know what he's achieved personally as a player and also what he's done for the team over the years, bailing out the team from difficult situations. And that is what he's known for. He's shown a lot of great determination throughout his career, and that is something that, when he came here as a coach, I wanted to learn from him. It's been very fruitful, other than the big silverware I think we've won all the major tournaments and series

and all of that.

"Having said that, I think I've enjoyed every bit of it, working with him, deciding what direction the team needs to head. And for him to buy into that thought makes a huge difference. And he was the first one who came and said, this is what we need to do as a team."

That missing silverware has become a bit of a stumbling block for India. Rohit's international career began in 2007 when he was part of the T20 World Cup winning team. Virat Kohli was part of the ODI World Cup win in 2011. They both won the Champions Trophy in 2013. Since then, though, India haven't won a world title. Losing the final after a dominant run at home in last year's ODI World Cup left Rohit heartbroken. He has spoken of the struggle getting out of that funk. Now, he said, he wanted to not think of the title before making it to the summit clash.

"I have thought a lot about all this," Rohit said. "Now I'm just going to play my game and help the team in whatever way I can and get everyone together to play as a team."

I tried convincing him to stay, but obviously, there are a lot of things that he needs to look after as well

ROHIT SHARMA

Netherlands beat Nepal to open account

Dallas, US - Tim Pringle and Logan van Beek's three-wicket hauls backed up by Max O'Dowd's patient half-century got Netherlands over the line in a nervy chase in their opening game of the T20 World Cup 2024, against a spirited Nepal in Dallas.

It was a rude welcome for Nepal in their first T20 World Cup in a decade, with the Netherlands bowlers putting up a fine show and bowling them out for a mere 106 in 19.2 overs. But Nepal weren't done yet. They squeezed the Netherlands batters in the middle overs and took



Tim Pringle of the Netherlands celebrates with teammates after a wicket

the chase into the 19th over. O'Dowd, however, held his own with an unbeaten 54. He rode his

luck and made sure to take his side over the line by six wickets and eight balls to spare.

Early-morning rain and overcast conditions delayed the toss by 30 minutes and Netherlands captain Scott Edwards had no hesitations in bowling after winning the toss. The bowlers backed up their captain's decision with Pringle, van Beek, Paul van Meekeren and Bas de Leede all getting among the wickets.

In reply, Nepal put up a fight but dropped a couple of crucial chances at key intervals.

The Grand Prairie Stadium can seat 7000 but the vocal Nepal fans made it feel a lot bigger, flocking in nice and early getting behind their team.

GOALS AND GLORY

Ageless Ronaldo out to prove a point with Portugal

Portugal captain Cristiano Ronaldo has been a model of longevity for more than two decades in an outstanding career, breaking numerous records and playing for some of the biggest clubs in the world, and he will be determined to make his mark at Euro 2024.

His move away from the European elite to Saudi Arabia after a disappointing showing at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, which ended with Portugal's shock 1-0 defeat by Morocco in the quarter-finals, has raised questions about whether the 39-year-old Ronaldo's brilliant career is nearing an end.

However, he will be out to prove he can still make a difference at the highest level and will arrive in Germany for Euro 2024 as the trusted leader of a talented team under the guidance of former Belgium manager Roberto Martinez.

Among Ronaldo's many achievements, he is the leading scorer in the history of men's international football with 128 goals in 204 official matches.

Almost 20 years have passed between his first Portugal goal against Greece at Euro 2004 and his most recent versus Lithuania in November 2023 -- with



Cristiano Ronaldo needs nine more goals to touch the 900 mark

It's going to be quite difficult to reach 1,000 goals but it's about how I am mentally, my motivation. "If, physically, my legs treat me as well as I treat them... We'll see."

CRISTIANO RONALDO

the nation's 2016 Euros triumph the pinnacle of his international career.

Ronaldo has scored 891 times in his career, holds the record for the most Champions League goals in the competition's history with 140 and is the only player to have scored in five consecutive

European Championship tournaments.

He will try to extend that record in Germany as he edges close to 900 goals, a number that could be within reach during the tournament. But his aim is much higher.

"It's going to be quite difficult

to reach 1,000 goals but it's about how I am mentally, my motivation," Ronaldo said after scoring twice against Slovakia.

"If, physically, my legs treat me as well as I treat them... We'll see. To get to 1,000, you have to get to 900 first. I think I'll get there."



Khvicha Kvaratskhelia

Georgia's Euro hopes ride on Kvaratskhelia's magic

Georgian winger Khvicha Kvaratskhelia made a name for himself last season helping Napoli to win Serie A and now he is ready to shine on the international stage to help Georgia make the most of their first major tournament appearance at Euro 2024.

Kvaratskhelia had already attracted the attention of major clubs while playing in Georgia and later in Russia but his fame exploded when he lit up Serie A stadiums in Italy week after week, as Napoli fans fell in love with their new hero.

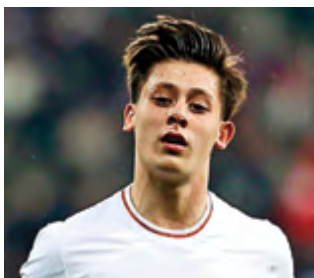
Kvaratskhelia won Serie A's Most Valuable Player award last season, along with the Goal of the Season vote, as he played a major part in Napoli winning their first league title since 1990 and the first without club great Diego Maradona, whose shadow still looms large over Naples.

Turkey eye Euro glory after impressing in qualifiers

Ankara, Turkey - Turkey enter Euro 2024 with high hopes and a renewed sense of purpose following a stellar qualifying campaign after the Crescent Stars showcased resilience and consistency to top Group D with five wins and just one defeat from eight games.

Vincenzo Montella, who took charge in September 2023, has instilled a new tactical discipline, leading the team to three victories in six matches.

Turkey hope that momentum could help them to leave behind memories of a disappointing Euro 2020 performance and failure to qualify for the 2022 World Cup



Arda Guler is expected to play a crucial role for Turkey in Euro 2024

in Qatar. A pivotal figure in Turkey's resurgence is their captain, Hakan Calhanoglu. The Inter Milan star has transitioned from an attacking midfielder role to a deep-lying playmaker, orchestrating the game with poise and vi-

sion, and Turkey will rely heavily on his experience and creativity.

Adding youthful excitement to the squad is Real Madrid's teenage sensation Arda Guler. Brimming with talent, the 19-year-old represents the future of Turkish football and is expected to play a crucial role in the attacking third, providing flair and unpredictability.

Galatasaray forwards Kerem Akturkoglu and Baris Alper Yilmaz have featured in every game since Montella took charge but the scoring duties have been shared around the team with 17 players finding the net in the qualifiers.

De Bruyne key to Belgium, but fitness remains a question mark

Manchester - Belgium midfielder Kevin De Bruyne's form since his return from injury at club level with Manchester City has seen him play a big part in their Premier League title success and his national team are hoping it continues into the European Championship.

The 32-year-old maestro is very much the talisman for his club as well as his country, who will have high hopes of doing well at the tournament in Germany, but there is a perennial air of fragility over De Bruyne's physical condition. He missed the early part of City's season with a



Kevin De Bruyne

hamstring injury and won the last of his 99 caps for Belgium more than a year ago in a March 2023 friendly win away to Germany.

De Bruyne's return to the national side will be eagerly anticipated as he provides key experience and a match-winning drive. Just as at his club, he is the creative brain, given the freedom and responsibility to direct matters on the field.

His technical ability, exemplified by his first touch and the range and accuracy of passing, is matched by his ability to expertly read the play and make game-changing decisions.



CATEGORY: FRONT OFFICE

SHAPE YOUR FUTURE WITH GOOD COMMUNICATION AND COURTESY

Nominate your Champions

Go to champions.nhioman.com to register your property and nominate your Omani staff from the categories listed

Closing date: JUNE 27, 2024

Don't miss the chance... Call: 98246267

apex media | nhi

PRESENTS

HOSPITALITY

Champions

2024

RECOGNISING OMANI TALENT



14

ICE-CREAM AT HOME
Don't grumble over the heat, stock up irresistible cool stuff in your freezer



15

IN TOWN
Home Quarantine book launch and 'Musical Moments' concert



16

ENTERTAINMENT
A peek into tinsel town in Hollywood and Bollywood

FREESTYLE WRESTLER

RING MASTER

Mohammed Taha

All of 21 now, the little lad who used to wrestle with his dad after being awestruck by the razzmatazz surrounding freestyle wrestling shows on television, has now himself entered the ring...

Anas al Riyami, who hails from Barka, has made Oman proud as the first Omani to take up freestyle wrestling as a profession and compete in international championships.

A student of University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Muscat, Anas shared his blossoming journey and achievement -

A young Omani shines in global freestyle wrestling championship and seeks to promote the sport by working towards establishing necessary facilities for it in Oman



My goal is to showcase the talent and potential of Omani youth to the world
ANAS AL RIYAMI



ments in the sport meant for a few. With absolutely no regrets about chasing his childhood passion, he believes freestyle wrestling is waiting to be discovered in a big way in Oman

"I started wrestling as a child in the backyard of our house after watching it on TV with my father. I realised there was more to this act than being just an entertaining show. Wrestling generates a lot of money worldwide as it is a combination of sports and entertainment which attracts people varying interests and stakes in it."

To satisfy his childhood fantasy of someday becoming a freestyle wrestler himself, Anas said, "I began searching for the nearest wrestling academy in the Middle East and discovered the Qatar Pro Wrestling Academy. They invited me to attend classes after seeing some of the wrestling clips that I had posted online."

Till date, Anas has participated in numerous international tournaments, including WrestleFest DXB (May 18) in

Dubai, and several tournaments in Qatar since 2022.

He emphasised that wrestling requires proper qualifications and professional training, rather than merely imitating what is seen on television. Professional wrestling combines dramatic physical performance and sports competition, where wrestlers showcase exciting performances that blend high athletic skills to invoke audience interaction, he explained.

The goal of professional wrestling is to provide a fun and exciting experience for viewers, combining combat movements and dramatic stories to captivate audiences of all ages around the world, he asserted, adding that "professional wrestling can be described as a form of mass theatre."

He further lamented that there is no

ing includes learning basic moves, holds, falls, and in-ring psychology, including strikes, throws, and submission moves. It is crucial for everyone to understand how to execute moves safely for both, the performer and the opponent.

Anas also pointed out that wrestlers must be able to attract a fan following as well as audience attention through their personality and speaking skills on the microphone. Developing a strong personality and the ability to deliver convincing dialogues are vital. Additionally, understanding how to tell a story through a match, coordinating movements, and the importance of interacting with the audience are crucial for a successful wrestling career.

"My goal is to showcase the talent and potential of Omani youth to the world. I aspire to attract a global audience and demonstrate that young Omanis possess the passion, ability, and determination to achieve their dreams in this field, too. Through my journey, I aim to inspire others to relentlessly pursue their own dreams. I am dedicated to promoting the growth of professional wrestling in the Sultanate of Oman and to create a supportive community for wrestling fans," he said.

Currently working on creating training programmes and organising local events in cooperation with regional and international wrestling organisations, Anas says, "My goal is to provide opportunities for talent development, aiming to elevate the sport's level in our region. Additionally, I aspire to inspire and empower a new generation of Omani wrestlers to succeed globally. I also aim to establish an exhibition wrestling ring in Oman and establish a professional federation in the sultanate. No dream is impossible!"



cook-up

Vanilla Ice-cream

- Ingredients**
- 1 cup whole milk
 - 1/3 cup granulated sugar
 - 1 cup heavy cream
 - 2tsp vanilla extract

Method

Whisk together the milk and sugar until the sugar is dissolved. Gently stir in the heavy cream and vanilla. Churn according to the directions of your ice-cream maker at home. Serve and enjoy immediately as soft serve, or freeze in a covered container to your desired firmness - at least 2 hours or overnight.

Chilling tips

- Store the bowl of your ice cream maker in the freezer to get a jump start on the freezing process for your ice cream.
- Don't whip the mixture too much once you've added the heavy cream, it will change the texture of the finished product.
- If you find your ice cream gets too hard or has large ice crystals, try churning the mixture longer.



Home-made Ice-cream

WHEN THE MERCURY
HITS THE ROOF, IT'S TIME
TO STOCK UP COOL
SCOOPS APLENTY
TO BRING IN SOME RESPITE
MORNING, NOON,
AND NIGHT



Mango Ice-cream

- Ingredients**
- 200g heavy cream or whipping cream
 - 4 cups ripe mango puree
 - ½ cup granulated white sugar

Method

To prepare mango puree, dice the pulp of fresh mango into chunks. Blend it to a smooth puree along with sugar without using any water. You can use canned mango puree.

Next, whip the cream using a hand mixer till soft peaks form. You can use a stand mixer as well for the purpose. Add mango puree in the whipped cream. Whisk using the hand blender or spatula for 1 - 2 minutes or until well combined. Taste and add more sugar, if needed. Pour the ice cream into a freezer friendly container with a lid. Freeze for 5 - 6 hours or until set. Stand for 5 minutes to soften slightly, then scoop and serve.



Malai Kulfi

- Ingredients**
- 5 cups full fat whole milk
 - 1/3 cup sugar, few strands of saffron
 - Chopped almonds/pistachios for garnish - optional

Method

Take a heavy bottom pot and bring the milk to boil on medium to high heat. Reduce the heat and keep on stirring the milk till 75% of the milk has been reduced. Keep on scraping the malai formation from

sides of the pot while you stir as this is the good stuff you want in your kulfi. It takes around 35-40 minutes to reduce the milk, slowly and steadily. Once it is reduced to 25%, remove the pot from the heat and add sugar and saffron strands, and mix it for few minutes. Let the mixture cool and then pour it in the kulfi moulds or small steel tumblers. Freeze them overnight and enjoy the kulfi next day garnished with chopped nuts. (You may introduce ice-cream sticks in each mould when half set.)

taste the

NEW GOODNESS

طبيعي أطيب

NATURAL IMMUNITY BOOST

DISTRIBUTED BY **CATERING SOLUTIONS TRADING LLC**

CONTACT NO.: +968 22060236 / 237

take a break

IN TOWN

Book launch



Home Quarantine' - a unique book by Indian artist Dr Shalini Gupta Kumar, with illustrations and trilingual texts, was launched by H H Sayyida Susan al Said on Tuesday



Musical Moments



The first concert for talented children of different nationalities, organised by Sarah Topolska Shanfari, at the residence of the Austrian ambassador a fortnight ago

Photos: V K Shafeer

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

When it comes to someone as outgoing and personable as you, it's easy to see how staying at home might not be your favorite activity, at least not on a regular basis, and certainly not alone, and absolutely, positively not now, when the heavens are fairly bursting with rebellious energy.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

There's nothing like the company of family, as you've always known and believed. You could be reminded of that now via an insatiable urge to connect with like-minded others who just so happen to share your bloodline and your most intimate memories. You're after something you know you can only get from them: camaraderie and understanding.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Remember when Dorothy is trying to decide whether to go back to Kansas or stay in Oz with her new friends? You're due for that type of experience: the urge to take yourself somewhere you've never been. If you have a spontaneous travel companion handy who's urging you on, that invitation could be especially irresistible.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

You know that well-deserved reputation you've acquired for being considerate, cooperative, and extremely easy to get along with? It might temporarily be in danger, not because you've "lost that loving feeling," by any means, but because you're about to have a serious urge to fight city hall and all its representatives on behalf of a loved one.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

For some reason, individuals of a certain type seem to be gravitating toward you. You've just about had it with listening to sad stories, pleas for redemption and promises to do better next time. It's not just you either. It's just your turn, and everybody gets one. Practice saying no and walking away. It might be tough to master at first, but you'll get the hang of it.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

After yet another day of teasing you with lingering glances, a certain person will finally be ready to say exactly what's on their mind. If you're unattached and interested, be prepared for them to approach you and confess their feelings. In fact, how about staring back just a second longer than they do?



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You have been amply endowed with charm, the ability to persuade, and an absolutely illegal amount of allure. Not surprisingly, others find those qualities irresistibly attractive, and you know that you need to be careful where you aim that charm. You know how potent it is. You've had to turn away more than one admirer who mistook your friendliness for flirting.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Your feelings are as deep-seated as they come, and you don't usually share them unless you have to. However, the time to reveal yourself could become apparent today. At the moment, someone who has been distancing themselves from you is about to ask for an audience. If you're game, let them back into your immediate circle.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

When you reach the end of your rope and you're done trying to bring your usual brand of humor to a tricky situation, you tend to spout off a bit more candidly than usual. That may be what happens over the next day or so. If you're with the usual suspects, no one will blink an eye or notice anything they shouldn't. If you're with anyone who isn't accustomed to your frank, direct style, walk away.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Your financial situation might feel a bit shaky at the moment, or is it only that you're worried because you've been distracted by more important professional matters? Regardless of how or why it's happened, return your attention to career, just for a bit. If your concerns are for real, they won't go anywhere, definitely not in the time it takes to balance the checkbook.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

You don't relish the thought of it happening, but every now and then your verbally rebellious streak gets a little out of control and becomes a bit hard for you to handle, much less to explain to the rest of the world. For now, though, since you're perfectly entitled to let someone have it who's had it coming for some time, why not indulge yourself?



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Sometime soon you'll need to make a decision whether or not to let a secret see the light of day. That's not an easy thing for you, because you can usually see both sides of an issue. Use that famous intuition of yours to make the decision, and above all else don't (repeat, do not) feel guilty if your ultimate choice is to let the truth be told. Clearing the air is always the best tack in the long run.

BOGGLER

R	I	I	P
O	K	O	Y
I	N	L	L
B	A	S	L

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

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

TRIVIA QUIZ - FOR TEENS

1. Which is the largest organ of the human body?
- a) Liver
b) Skin
c) Large intestine
d) Stomach

2. What is the most selling beverage in Oman?
- a) Pepsi
b) Coke
c) Sprite
d) Mountain Dew



3. How many bones do sharks have?
- a) 20
b) 0
c) 120
d) 60

Answers
1. B
2. D
3. B

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

entertainment

J LO CANCELS
UPCOMING TOUR

Jennifer Lopez just announced that she has cancelled her upcoming tour, less than one month before it was due to kick off in Orlando. She has chosen to cancel the 'This Is Me' live tour to be with her children, family and close friends. However, the singer's fans and non-fans are trolling her saying the real reasons for cancelling might be the poor ticket sales.



ANGELINA'S DAUGHTER
TO CHANGE NAME

Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt's Daughter, Shiloh Jolie-Pitt, doesn't want to be associated with her famous father any longer. This is really the only impression we can take away after the 18-year-old legally requested this week to drop actor Brad Pitt's last name from her official name. Based on legal documents obtained on May 30 by TMZ, Shiloh made this request three days prior, on the day she turned 18 and had the power to make adult decisions. She wants to simply be known, moving forward, as Shiloh Jolie.



'THE CHOSEN' OFFICIAL
SEASON STREAMING
BEGINS

At last, *The Chosen* season four streaming date begins on June 2. Initially, the drama will be exclusively available on its own *The Chosen* app, with additional streaming and broadcast options being announced soon. The fourth season was previously shown in theatres via Fathom Events screenings, becoming the first TV series to run an entire season in theatrical release. The season's first episode was released on June 2 while the second will be released on June 6, at 8.30pm, with ensuing episodes released on Sundays and Thursdays over the course of four weeks.



Broadway centenarian dies

Janis Paige, a popular Hollywood and Broadway actress who danced with Fred Astaire, has died aged 101. Paige also toured with US comedy giant Bob Hope during her career which continued into her 80s. Paige had made her Broadway debut opposite Jackie Cooper in mystery comedy *Remains To Be Seen* in 1951, and appeared with John Raitt in smash hit musical *The Pajama Game* three years later.

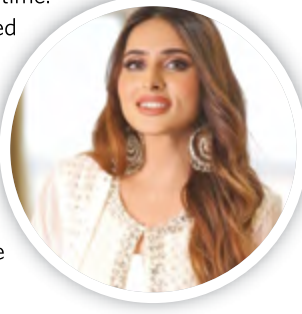
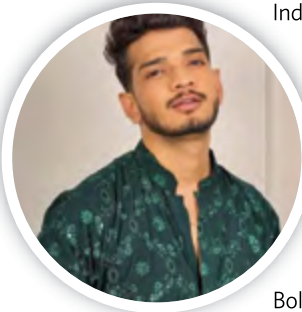


Maya Hawke admits
being a 'nepo baby'

Maya Hawke has accepted the term 'nepo baby'. The *Stranger Things* star, daughter of actors Uma Thurman and Ethan Hawke, recently opened up to The Times of London about her path to Hollywood, acknowledging that she's had an advantage because of her parents. "I'm comfortable with not deserving it and doing it anyway," she said about getting cast for *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*. Following the film's premiere, the audience gave Kevin a 10-minute standing ovation, and it clearly moved the *Field of Dreams* star. He reportedly dabbed away a tear before giving a speech, according to *People*. Despite the emotional moment, Kevin began his speech with a short joke. "I'm sorry you had to clap that long for me to understand that I should speak," he told the crowd.

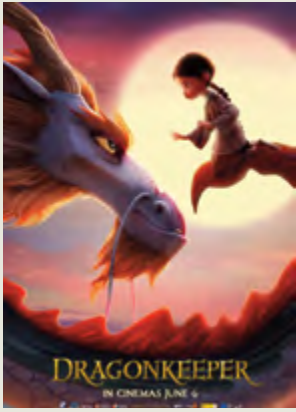
Munawar Faruqi weds again

Indian stand-up comedian Munawar Faruqi, who had won *Bigg Boss 17* after being popular for all the wrong reasons when he came under a cloud over his first marriage and 'several' relationships, has wed for the second time. Faruqi wed Mehzabeen Coatwala, a Bollywood make-up artist and divorcee who has a 12-year-old daughter from her first marriage. Munawar, too, has a five-year-old son from his first marriage which ended in divorce last year.



WHATS ON

DRAGONKEEPER



The fate of ancient China rests on the shoulders of one young girl, who must find the last remaining dragon egg and fulfill her destiny.

Genre: Animation.
Starring: Bill Nighy, Mayalinee Griffiths, Anthony Howell.
Language: English.
Release Date: 06 June 2024

PURSUIT OF PRESTIGE

HOLLYWOOD MOVIE REVIEW:
BAD BOYS: RIDE OR DIE
Genre: Action, comedy
Starring: Will Smith, Martin Lawrence, Vanessa Hudgens, Alexander Ludwig

Bad Boys: Ride or Die is a 2024 American buddy cop action comedy film starring Will Smith and Martin Lawrence in the fourth installment of the Bad Boys film series. Directed by Adil Bilal and written by Chris Bremner and Will Beall, the movie has Joe

Pantoliano, Vanessa Hudgens, Alexander Ludwig, Paola Núñez, Jacob Scipio, and DJ Khaled reprise their roles from the previous film with Tasha Smith taking over the role of Theresa Burnett from Theresa Randle, who previously played the character in the last three films. The new cast members include Eric

Dane, Ioan Gruffudd, Rhea Seehorn, Melanie Liburd and Tiffany Haddish. The plot revolves around detectives Mike Lowrey and Marcus Burnett investigate corruption within the Miami PD when their late Captain Conrad Howard is posthumously accused of being involved with the Romanian Mafia, but a setup turns them into fugitives, forcing them to work outside the law in order to solve the case. It's the rare movie franchise that peaks with its fourth install-



ment. This buddy-cop series starring Will Smith and Martin Lawrence as Miami narcotics de-

ever, isn't doing anything groundbreaking with its story. While Mike and Marcus are working to redeem the good name of their beloved Captain Conrad, it sets them on the run and continues some of the more heightened, soap-opera-esque elements from the previous instalments. Some might find this movie extremely silly due to its cheesy dialogues and some jokes that fall flat. But there's much more to entertain audiences than just wisecracks and it grows on you slowly. The film is poised for a good run at the box office. It's a good weekend watch.

Rating ★★★★★

EID SALE

25-75% OFF



IDdesign | **KARE**

SHOP IN STORE & ONLINE

📷 📱 🌐 IDdesignoman | ☎️ 80080888 | 📍 Markaz Al Bahja Mall