

Restrictions on promotional offers eased

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In a significant move aimed at energising the local economy, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), in collaboration with Consumer Protection Authority, has announced that commercial establishments can with immediate effect offer discounts and promotional prices on products without prior permission from the ministry.

However, to ensure transparency and proper monitoring, establishments planning to offer

Increased commercial activity will have positive ripple effects across society, contributing to overall economic well-being

MUBARAK AL DOHANI

such discounts must notify the authority via email at csdg@pacp.gov.om

The decision is expected to stimulate commercial activity,



enhance market competitiveness and ensure products are available at reasonable prices, MoCIIP stated.

The new regulation, which comes as a relief to many business owners, outlines specific conditions to maintain fairness and protect consumers. Discounts and promotional offers

are limited to a duration of three consecutive days per week and should not be held more than three times within a single calendar month. Additionally, the discounts offered must not exceed 30%.

Mubarak bin Mohammed al Dohani, Director General of Commerce at MoCIIP, informed that this new regulation is part of the ministry's ongoing efforts to streamline procedures, allowing businesses to provide high-quality products and services alongside attractive offers more efficiently.

According to Dohani, this regulatory adjustment is expected to stimulate commercial and market activities, thereby triggering local economic growth. "Increased commercial activity will have positive ripple effects across society, contributing to overall economic well-being."

Additionally, Dohani noted, the measure will create a more vibrant and flexible commercial environment, which is crucial for sustaining business growth in the local market. "The ministry aims to strengthen collaboration between the public and private sectors to achieve sustainable development and economic prosperity for all stakeholders."

Approximately 7,370 permits for promotional offers and discounts had been issued as of mid-2024.

MoCIIP launches initiative to overcome investment challenges

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), represented by Invest in Oman Hall, has launched an initiative called Rapid Intervention in its efforts to attract investment and support the economy.

An official at MoCIIP informed that the ministry has established a technical committee to address challenges encountered by investment projects during their establishment phase. "The Rapid Intervention initiative seeks to expedite decision-making processes and resolve issues faced by both local and foreign in-

vestors. These challenges are evaluated and studied collaboratively with relevant authorities."

The initiative aims to bolster national income by attracting investment projects within sectors prioritised by Oman Vision 2040, including logistics, industry, circular economy, education, information and communication technologies, food security, mining, healthcare, renewable energy, and tourism.

According to the official, MoCIIP has defined specific criteria for eligibility under this initiative. "These include the project cost must be at least RO1mn, it must be in the establishment phase, and in the sectors identi-



fied in Oman Vision 2040."

He explained that for consideration, projects must be encountering challenges involving relevant authorities with delays in obtaining necessary licences.

"The initiative is designed to address issues commonly faced by investors, including those requiring judicial intervention for fi-

nancial exemptions related to bank financing or rejections by authorities due to non-compliance with requirements or submission procedures," he added.

MoCIIP encourages investors interested in Oman to submit their applications through intervention@investoman.om

In 2023, the ministry launched Invest in Oman Hall at the Civil Aviation Authority premises. This facility serves as a centralised hub offering integrated services to investors seeking opportunities exceeding RO1mn. It collaborates with various public and private entities, following international best practices.

The hall aims to streamline the investor journey by ensuring compliance to unified government service guidelines and service level agreements. It addresses challenges faced by investors and proposes solutions, facilitating the establishment, completion and operations of investment projects in the sultanate.

Participants in Invest in Oman Hall include key government bodies, including Ministry of Interior, Muscat Municipality and Royal Oman Police (Immigration and Passports). Private entities in the hall provide essential services such as banking, telecommunications, legal advice and accreditation.



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ROP confronts rising infiltration challenges

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Illegal migrants attempting to enter the sultanate is a significant challenge, the Royal Oman Police (ROP) has stated.

ROP statistics show that in May and June this year, 58 individuals attempting to enter Oman illegally were apprehended.

The most recent reported incident includes arrest of two Asian nationals on June 13 by Buraimi Governorate Police Command for smuggling people for financial gain.

A day earlier, North Batinah Coast Guard Police arrested 13 Asian nationals attempting to enter the country illegally. On June 4, a boat carrying 12 Asian infiltrators was intercepted in another Coast Guard operation in North Batinah.

On May 28, a boat carrying 18 Asian nationals attempting to leave the country illegally was seized off the coast of



(Supplied photos)



Brig Mohammed al Kindi

North Batinah.

Dhofar Coast Guard Police seized a boat with three Arab nationals attempting to smuggle over 13,300 prohibited cigarettes on May 22.

A week earlier on May 15, Dhofar Coast Guard Police apprehended four more Arab nationals attempting to smuggle

7,612 illegal workers deported in H1 2024

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Labour (MoL), in collaboration with Security and Safety Corporation, deported 7,612 workers in the first half of 2024. The Joint Inspection Team in Muscat reported a total of 9,042 arrests, with 7,612 workers subsequently deported.

In a statement, MoL said, 'In June 2024 alone, the ministry apprehended 1,366 workers for violations, deporting 919 individ-

uals following inspections conducted by the Joint Inspection Team. These intensified campaigns target private sector establishments and the expatriate workforce across all governorates, aiming to enforce labour market regulations in alignment with Oman Vision 2040 goals.'

In 2023, MoL and Security and Safety Corporation signed an agreement to establish an inspection unit aimed at enhancing security support services

and overseeing labour welfare facilities.

Under the agreement, the inspection unit transports violators to designated labour welfare facilities, the Ministry of Labour, Public Prosecution or any other relevant entity within the inspection system.

Additionally, the unit regulates workers found in violation of labour laws and provides necessary security, besides ensuring effective operations of labour welfare activities.

ues such as drug trafficking and begging are also exacerbated by infiltrators."

He stressed the critical role of citizens and society in supporting national efforts to mitigate the impacts and risks associated with infiltration.

He also underscored the importance of awareness initiatives through media campaigns and educational programmes, advocating the inclusion of infiltration-related topics and laws in school curricula.

He urged citizens and residents to cooperate with authorities by reporting infiltrators, and not sheltering or employing them.

Brig Kindi added that combating infiltration requires unified efforts across all sectors of society, highlighting Oman's regulations governing foreign residency through Royal Decree No 16/95 enforced by the Inspector General of Police and Customs, which includes penalties for violations.

131 businesses fined for not offering e-payment option in Dhofar

Our Correspondent
Salalah

The Inspection Department of Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) has carried out several inspection visits to shops and fuel stations in a campaign aimed at enhancing preparedness for Khareef Dhofar 2024.

The campaign reflects the ministry's commitment to providing quality services to consumers and to assess compliance of commercial and service establishments with MoCIIP's regulations.

As a result of the campaign, 131 commercial establishments were issued violation notices for failing to offer an electronic payment option to customers, as re-



MoCIIP personnel inspect a fuel station in preparation of khareef

quired by ministry regulations to facilitate consumer transactions.

Additionally, MoCIIP's Inspection Department visited and evaluated the service level at several fuel stations situated along the Adam-Haima-Thumrait road, Mahout-Salalah Road

and other parts of the governorate.

A total of 59 gas stations were inspected, leading to warnings being issued to ten for failing to comply with the standards and requirements established by MoCIIP.

Jood collects over RO2mn from 115,000 donors

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Jood digital platform for charitable donations has crossed significant milestones since its activation in October 2023. As of the end of June 2024, the platform collected over RO2.1mn in donations from a community of 115,533 donors, according to data provided by Ministry of Social Development.

The platform aims to compile a unified database, streamlining record keeping of beneficiary data for charitable aid and assistance, expediting case assessment and facilitating the

seamless distribution of aid to eligible recipients.

Currently, the platform hosts a network of charitable organisations, comprising 30 associations, 63 teams and three endowment institutions. Together, these entities contribute to an array of charitable initiatives (597) and programmes (181).

Through its integrated approach and collaborative efforts, Jood continues to make significant strides in enhancing the efficiency and impact of charity, thereby positively impacting communities across Oman.

The platform is envisioned as a pivotal component of Oman

Vision 2040, focusing on enhancing welfare and social protection by integrating all charitable associations and volunteer teams throughout the sultanate.

The platform offers a wide range of donation categories to cater to diverse needs and preferences of donors, including general donations, orphan sponsorship, school meals, Eid clothing, sacrifices (qurbani), zakat, housing assistance, and disaster relief.

Additionally, the platform facilitates in-kind donations, allowing donors to give goods and materials directly to those in need.

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UAE’s first honey quality laboratory launched

Abu Dhabi, UAE - M42, in partnership with the Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council (ADQCC), has launched the UAE's first and only fully equipped honey testing laboratory at the Central Testing Laboratory (CTL).

This state-of-the-art facility, Honey Quality Laboratory, is supported by M42's Environmental Sciences team and is designed to ensure the quality, safety and authenticity of honey products, setting new standards for the industry.

The Honey Quality Laboratory is equipped to test a variety of factors, ensuring that honey products are free from additives and other contaminants. It will also verify the unique characteristics of different honey types, such as the popular Abu Dhabi Sidr honey, and assess sugar content, moisture levels and acidity to ensure compliance with international standards.

Abdulla al Muaini, Executive Director, CTL, at Abu Dhabi Quality and Conformity Council, said, "By establishing this advanced testing facility with M42, we aim to support local producers and enhance the market positioning of Abu Dhabi honey on a global scale. Our efforts contribute to the broader goals of the ADQCC in maintaining high quality and conformity standards. This initiative ensures that local and international standards are met, fostering trust and confidence among consumers and stakeholders."

The laboratory uses state-of-the-art technology, enabled by proprietary data and an AI-enhanced Lab Information Management System (LIMS). This ensures efficient, accurate and optimized testing processes. The specialised team of experts perform a wide range of tests to assess honey quality, from unique genetically modified organism-testing mechanisms, to detecting any form of adulteration the honey might have undergone.

Albarah Elkhani, Senior Vice President, Operations, M42, said, "By leveraging advanced technol-

By establishing this facility, we aim to support local producers and enhance the market positioning of Abu Dhabi honey on a global scale

ABDULLA AL MUAINI

ogy and scalable capabilities, we are not only contributing to the local economy and national goals, but we're also setting a benchmark for global applicability. M42 focuses on people, not just patients; health, not just healthcare; prevention, not just treatment."

He added, "Our 'One Health' approach highlights the vital connection between planet and human health. By ensuring high-

quality standards in products like honey, we indirectly support biodiversity and look to safeguard the health of people, communities, and ecosystems alike."

M42's collaboration with ADQCC is underpinned by a 10-year agreement, signed at COP28, to enhance the CTL laboratories in Abu Dhabi. This partnership supports various government entities, including the Abu Dhabi Food Safety Authority, providing critical testing services that ensure public health and safety.

Dr Wael Elamin, Medical Director, Environmental Sciences, M42, said, "Our partnership with ADQCC enables us to enhance testing capabilities and optimize operations utilizing AI solutions, providing critical insights and vital data to government agencies, businesses and consumers. Our honey testing service is a key component of our food and beverage testing portfolio, making us the leading, and only, lab in the region with such holistic and fully equipped testing capabilities to provide real-time insights for decision-makers."

M42 optimises Central Testing Laboratory operations utilising AI, with the goal of strengthening current testing and conformity services in areas such as food and beverages, water, medicines, medical devices, cosmetics, agriculture, packaging materials, food contact materials, radiation and environmental checks.

WAM

Global trade resumes growth in first quarter of 2024: UNCTAD report

Geneva, Switzerland - Global trade trends turned positive in the first quarter of 2024, with the value of trade in goods increasing by around 1% quarter-over-quarter and services by about 1.5%.

According to the latest Global Trade Update released by UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the growth was primarily driven by increased exports from China (9%), India (7%) and the US (3%).

Conversely, Europe's exports showed no growth and Africa's decreased by 5%.

The report expects the increase to add approximately US\$250bn to trade in goods, and US\$100bn to services trade, in the first half of 2024 compared to the second half of 2023.

The short-term trade outlook is cautiously optimistic as the global forecasts for GDP growth remain at around 3% for 2024.

The report says that if positive trends persist, global trade in 2024 could reach almost US\$32tn, but unlikely to surpass the record level seen in 2022.

Trade in developing countries and South-South trade increased by about 2% in both imports and



This file photo shows UN Trade and Development Secretary-General Rebeca Grynszpan speaking at the opening ceremony of the organisation's 60th anniversary Global Leaders Forum in Geneva, Switzerland, on June 12

exports during the first quarter of 2024.

In comparison, developed countries saw flat imports and a modest 1% rise in exports.

South-South trade rose by 2% in the first quarter of 2024. However, its value is still significantly

below the levels of 2022, as its four-quarter moving average remains negative at -5%.

The report highlights that trade growth varied significantly across sectors, with green energy and artificial intelligence-related products experiencing

stronger increases.

The trade value of high-performance servers rose by 25% compared to the first quarter of 2023, while other computers and storage units saw an 8% increase.

WAM

World trade volume to reach \$32tn this year

Istanbul, Türkiye - Global trade is expected to reach US\$32tn this year if existing positive trends persist, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) said on Tuesday.

Global trade trends turned positive in the first quarter of this year, with the value of trade in goods rising by around 1% quarter-over-quarter and services by about 1.5%, a press release said.

It noted that this surge, fuelled by positive trade dynamics for the United States and developing countries, particularly large Asian developing economies, 'is expected to add approximately



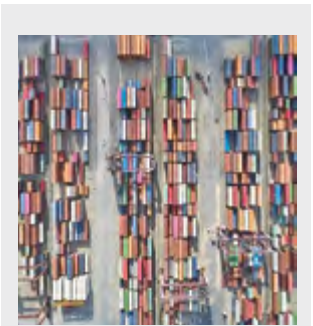
US\$250bn to goods trade and US\$100bn to services trade in the first half of 2024 compared to the second half of 2023.'

It added that world trade growth this January-March was mainly driven by increased exports from China (9%), India

(7%), and the US (3%).

Conversely, Europe's exports showed no growth.

Anadolu News



Türkiye's share of world trade on rise

Istanbul, Türkiye - Türkiye's share of world trade is on the rise once again as the country's exports soared 3.6% to US\$63.6bn in the first quarter of 2024, while exports worldwide were down 0.6% in the same period, the Turkish Trade Ministry said on Tuesday.

Citing World Trade Organization data, the ministry released a statement saying that while world exports in Q1 fell 4.2% to US\$23.8tn on an annual basis, Turkish exports rose 0.8% to US\$257.6bn.

The ministry added that Türkiye's annual share of global exports soared by 5 basis points to 1.082% compared to the first quarter of 2023.

How US is stalling hard-fought global tax reform

Franfurt, Germany - It all seemed too good to be true: a global campaign to stamp out tax avoidance and harmonise international tax rules for companies that operate across national borders.

At the forefront of the transparency drive is a minimum tax rate for multinational corporations, no matter where they operate. No more exploiting tax loopholes and shifting profits to countries with a low tax rate to avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) says US\$240bn (€223bn) is lost each year through such tax avoidance. Discussions about unifying taxation of corporations have gone on for years.

In 2021, it seemed that a consensus had been reached in the OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework. Now over 140 countries from Albania to Zambia are negotiating to implement the deal.

Pillars of global taxation

The global tax cooperation deal has two pillars: Certain taxable income will be shifted, and taxed, to where it is earned, and a global minimum tax will be levied on



corporations. The latter, a global minimum tax, is a mechanism to ensure companies pay taxes without using loopholes or low-tax jurisdictions to avoid taxes.

The current model sets a 15% corporate tax rate on multinationals with revenues in excess of €750mn in at least two of the past four years. Companies that pay some tax but not 15% will have to 'top up'. Some countries have already introduced the new rules, while others are still in the process of doing so.

In Ireland, for example, the minimum tax rules came into effect on January 1 this year. But

since they only apply to businesses with €750mn turnover, over 99% of companies operating in the country will still be taxed at 12.5%, said Robert Dever, a Dublin-based partner and Irish tax practice lead at Pinston Masons, a multinational law firm.

Paying taxes where profits are made

The other pillar of the OECD plan is proving more difficult to implement. Again, this rule applies to big multinationals.

Instead of making sure companies pay taxes at all, this regu-

lation is about where those taxes are paid. That means reallocating certain income to jurisdictions where profits are made, regardless of whether a company has a physical presence in a country or where it is headquartered.

This is meant to make the taxation fairer for companies that are unable to use tax loopholes. And it would bring tax revenue to countries - especially poorer countries - that could use the income.

To make the deal happen, countries have said they would not implement their own rules. Additionally, local digital services

taxes are to be dropped, giving precedence to the global agreement. It's an unprecedented effort in international cooperation.

The deal was supposed to be signed by June 30, but is struggling to become a reality as a number of countries rethink their participation. The biggest stalemate is in the United States.

Global chaos

American participation is vital for the initiative simply because so many US-headquartered companies would be affected, says Robert Dever.

"Unfortunately, this means that the success of the deal will likely be held hostage by the political situation in Washington and a deadlock in the US Senate," he told DW.

President Joe Biden supports the plan but doesn't have enough votes to push it through. Presidential candidate and Biden's predecessor Donald Trump, who is against such a treaty, would put a nail in its coffin, if elected.

"The failure of the agreement is a real possibility due to US non-participation in the deal," said Dever, who has experience advising large domestic and multinational corporations."

Another problem is that the

United Nations has stepped in and offered its own plan for global tax cooperation at the insistence of developing countries that want more say. This power struggle dilutes the OECD plan and is pulling apart a wider consensus.

Where will the global tax debate end?

If a global agreement fails to come into force, countries will again compete against each other on taxation with their own domestic rules.

This could turn into "a form of 'tax war'," warned Dever. "And this would likely take the shape of unilateral digital services taxes as countries seek new revenue streams to fill the tax gap."

There are already signs of this. Canada recently passed legislation on a digital services tax and New Zealand and Kenya have started the process, the exact thing a global deal was meant to stop.

American Big Tech companies like Google and Facebook will be hit the hardest and "the risk of punitive trade actions by the US in response to such digital services taxes will be heightened," Dever said.

DW

Europe inflation down, no rate cuts on the cards

Frankfurt, Germany - Inflation in the 20-nation eurozone crept lower to 2.5% in June, but remained stuck above the level favoured by the European Central Bank, which is in no hurry to add more rate cuts after a first tentative reduction in its benchmark rate.

The figure released on Tuesday was down from 2.6% in May, welcome news as inflation continues to fall from its peak of 10.6 percent that robbed consumers of spending power and mired the European economy in months of near-zero growth, the Associated Press reported.

But key indicators on Tuesday remained at levels that suggest inflation may remain stuck between 2% and 3% for a while yet. Inflation in services prices ran at 4.1%, unchanged from the month before.

Tightrope of rate cuts

The ECB's caution in making sure inflation is under control comes as the US Federal Reserve holds off on cutting rates from current highs. The central banks do not want to belatedly discover that inflation is more stubborn than they thought and reverse course - a mistake that would make inflation harder to wring out of the economy and would dig their credibility into the bargain.

High rates aim to squelch inflation by making it more expensive to borrow money to buy



goods or invest in new factory equipment. That relieves pressure on prices - but can also dampen growth. That is the tightrope the ECB and the Fed are trying to walk: make sure inflation is contained, without pushing their economies into recession.

ECB President Christine Lagarde said in a speech on Monday that the bank needed to first make sure inflation was firmly under control before cutting its key rate again after a first, quarter-point cut at its 6th-June meeting to the current 3.75%.

"It will take time for us to gather sufficient data to be certain that the risks of above target inflation have passed," Lagarde said in a speech at an ECB conference in Sintra, Portugal. She said that though growth in the eurozone was uncertain,

the jobs market remained strong with low unemployment levels. That is a sign that the economy is holding up even with rates much higher than before.

No series of rate cuts
Even so, higher rates have held

back credit-sensitive areas such as real estate and construction. Mortgage rates for house purchase have risen, and a yearslong rally in house prices in the eurozone has come to an end. Savers, however, are seeing relief from the earlier period of zero rates

that saw some banks paying negative interest on savings - in other words, charging people to keep their money there.

Lagarde has characterized the first rate cut in June as merely "moderating the level of restriction" on the economy and not as the start of a rapid series of cuts. She says decisions will be based on incoming data on a meeting-to-meeting basis.

Analysts say that no cut is likely at the bank's meeting 18th July, meaning the discussion about rates remains focused on the bank's September meeting.

The European economy has slogged through quarter after quarter of near-zero growth, with a modest upturn of 0.3% in the first three months of this year. Recent indicators such as S&P Global's purchasing managers' index indicate that factory activity in the eurozone is contracting.

Europe's economy slowed after an outbreak of inflation caused by higher energy prices robbed consumers of purchasing power that they are only now regaining through new labour agreements and pay increases.

Energy prices soared after Ukrainian crisis, and those higher prices fed through into prices for other goods and then to services, a broad category including everything from medical care and concert tickets to haircuts and restaurant bills.
WAM

Dubai Free Zones emphasises on role of technology for better transaction safety

Dubai, UAE - The Dubai Free Zones Council, in its 27th meeting headed by H H Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed al Maktoum, Chairman of the Dubai Free Zones (DFZ) Council, highlighted that, under the vision of H H Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, Dubai continues to establish a vibrant, flexible, and sustainable economic model.

The council noted that this model enhances the role of Dubai's free zones in economic diversification, development of opportunities, and attraction of foreign direct investment. The Council pointed out that it adopts the latest technological advancements to multiply Dubai's economy size over the next decade, aiming to place it among the world's top three economic cities.

The council explained that doubling foreign direct investment to AED650bn by 2033 is a strategic goal of the Dubai Economic Agenda D33. The council members discussed the Free Zones 2030 model that is being developed by the DFZ Council to



enhance the free zones' contribution to achieving Dubai's ambitious objectives through adding value to the socio-economic aspect of Dubai, and by incentivising international companies and investors to establish and expand their operations from Dubai's free zones.

The council was briefed on the new system for approvals in Dubai's free zones, and its role in accelerating the issuance of approvals in an immediate and timely manner that keeps pace with future work requirements. Moreover, the Free Zone en-

hanced Business Gateway Portal was presented, facilitating the investor's journey in obtaining opportunities available to conduct business in free zones' sectors. In addition, the council's official website was discussed, to highlight its role and the strategic initiatives and events.

The council members discussed the new version of the Unified Free Zone Passport, to provide options for investors to expand their businesses and benefit from other free zone facilities in Dubai with simple and flexible procedures, thus achiev-

ing ease of doing business among free zone authorities, and fulfilling the requirements of economic accelerators.

The council underlined the social aspect of empowering UAE nationals and enhancing their presence in the private sector and free zones authorities, noting that Dubai's free zone-based companies are encouraged to attract qualified Emirati human capital.

The council also urged the companies in the free zone to provide further opportunities to train young Emirati talents across

various disciplines and career paths, facilitated by the flexible regulatory frameworks and facilities offered by Dubai's free zone authorities in order to take advantage of the potentials and competencies of this category.

This initiative supports Emiratization targets and achieves comprehensive economic and social development.

The council discussed the report from Dubai Data and Statistics Establishment, which shows a significant increase in foreign direct investment in Dubai's free zones, underlining the importance of smooth economic data flow through an accessible and user-friendly dashboard for stakeholders.

The Operations Center of Economic Crimes presented to the council members the development of working and collaboration mechanisms to exchange and implement best practices to ensure the protection of clients' funds at free zone-based companies, and enhance the reputation of economic, trade, and banking sectors.
WAM



Unemployment rate in Europe steady at 6.4%

Brussels, Belgium - The eurozone unemployment rate held steady at a record low in May, data published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, showed on Tuesday.

The jobless rate came in at seasonally adjusted 6.4%, which was unchanged from April and matched expectations, German news agency, dpa, reported.

The unemployment rate was 6.5% in May 2023. There were 11.078mn unemployed people in

May. Compared with April, unemployment increased sharply by 38,000 but rose only 3,000 from the prior year.

The jobless rate among young persons aged below 25 years was unchanged at 14.2% in May. Data showed that the overall unemployment rate in the EU27 also remained unchanged in May, at 6.0%, while the youth jobless rate dropped slightly to 14.4% from 14.5%.

WAM

EUDR: Can Europe really preserve global forests?

European supermarket shelves may soon be stocked with several deforestation-free products, thanks to a 'game-changing' EU law.

The EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) requires traders placing certain products on the EU market or exporting them from it to prove they don't originate from land that was deforested after 2020.

It targets commodities with the heaviest deforestation footprint, including cattle, cocoa, coffee, palm oil, rubber, soy and wood, as well as products such as chocolate, tires, furniture and paper derived from them.

"It is the first of its kind," said Anke Schulmeister-Oldenhove, senior forest policy officer with



the World Wildlife Fund, a conservation NGO. "It is a paradigm shift that is beneficial for us." In recent weeks, the United States has called for a delay to the law, which was adopted last summer and will apply from the end of 2024, stating it would

hurt producers that could not comply. Several other countries, including several member states within the EU itself, have raised concerns about the administrative burden it would place on farmers. While the EU has not yet pub-

licly responded to the US calls for a delay, a European Commission spokesperson said it was 'working very actively' to prepare the law's entry into effect next year. So, what impact could it have on the world's forests and environment?

The law aims to curb Europe's contribution to the 'alarming rate' of global deforestation and its attendant emissions and biodiversity loss.

EU consumption is estimated to have accounted for around 10% of global deforestation in recent decades.

Forests are vital for life on the planet, supporting the existence of over 80% of all terrestrial animals, plants and insects. They ensure we have enough air to

breathe, filter our drinking water and provide protection from landslides, floods and storms.

And they are crucial when it comes to climate change. Forests act as giant carbon sinks and if they are destroyed, CO2 is released back into the atmosphere, fuelling temperature rises.

Despite most countries pledging to stop forest loss by 2030, the world is nowhere near the levels needed to achieve this.

In 2023 alone, tropical forest cover the size of Singapore disappeared every week. Deforestation is one of the most significant drivers of climate change, contributing up to an estimated 20% of greenhouse gas emissions.
DW

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Malabar Gold & Diamonds Introduces NUWA

Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the sixth largest jewellery retailer globally with a strong retail network of over 350+ outlets spread across 13 countries, unveiled its latest diamond jewellery collection named 'NUWA' at a grand event in the UAE.

Bollywood diva Kareena Kapoor Khan unveiled the collection. Kareena, known for her timeless elegance, embodies the very essence of the NUWA collection, making her the perfect ambassador for this launch, a press release said.

The NUWA collection is a celebration of nature's intricate designs, waves, forms, folds and textures, masterfully crafted into luxurious pieces of diamond jewellery. Drawing inspiration from the elegance and resilience found in the natural world, each piece in the collection has been meticulously crafted, refined over time, and perfected to emerge as a glorious, intricate work of art. Just like women, who navigate the ups and downs, standing tall and resolute in the dreams they hold. Each piece is a testament to the elegance, strength, and grace that women



embody.

MP Ahammed, chairman, Malabar Group, said, "We are incredibly proud to introduce the NUWA collection, which celebrates both nature and the indomitable spirit of women. Each piece in this collection has been crafted with immense care and precision, reflecting the intricate beauty of nature and the resilience of women. We are honoured to have Kareena Kapoor Khan launch this collection, as she perfectly represents the grace and awe that NUWA stands for."

The NUWA collection by Malabar Gold and Diamonds stands as a testament to the women of today, their commitment to excellence, celebrating the intricate beauty of nature and the empowering essence of womanhood. Like all diamond jewellery at Malabar Gold & Diamonds, NUWA also comes with the assurance of Malabar Promises like responsibly sourced natural diamonds, tested and certified diamonds, 100% exchange value, 100% transparency, guaranteed buy-back, etc.



ISB celebrates achievements of two students

Indian School Bousher announced the outstanding achievements of two of its talented students from Grade IV - Zaara Vasim Assadi and Niyola Pinto, at prestigious competitions held recently.

Zaara showcased her exceptional gymnastics skills at the GymnastEx Sports Service com-

petition held at the Sports Hall of Jumeirah Baccalaureate School in the UAE. Competing against around 600 participants from across the GCC, Zaara excelled in the highly competitive Level-1 category, which featured over 250 participants. She achieved gold medals in both the floor and beam events, and a silver medal

in the vault event. Her dedication, hard work, and remarkable performance have made her a source of immense pride for our school community.

In another proud moment for Indian School Bousher, Niyola has secured the 2nd Runner-up position in the Karnataka State Girls U9 Championship. Her out-

standing performance in this highly competitive event demonstrates her dedication and skill in her sport.

The entire Indian School Bousher community is incredibly proud of Zaara and Niyola's achievements and committed to nurturing the potential of its students and encouraging them to

excel in all areas of their interest.

"Zaara's and Niyola's accomplishments are an inspiration to their peers and a testament to the high standards of excellence we strive for at Indian School Bousher. We congratulate them on their outstanding accomplishments," a statement by the school said.

Bank Muscat floats summer travel offers

In line with its pioneering role in providing exceptional offers to customers during summer travel season, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced an exclusive travel offer for credit card holders.

During the offer period, customers will get the chance to enter a draw to win RO50 cash-back when they spend a minimum of RO50 using their Bank Muscat credit cards internationally on POS (Point of Sale) machines. For every additional RO50 spent, customers will get another chance to win in the draw. There will be 2024 winners by the end of the campaign. The offer continues until August 31, a press release said.



We are pleased to enable customers to enjoy the best value proposition for Bank Muscat's products and enhance their banking experience

For those looking to participate in the offer, Bank Muscat offers a variety of credit cards carefully curated to fit the needs of its customers offering a plethora of benefits such as free travel insurance, rewards on spends and discounted offers across a wide range of categories including, lifestyle, health and beauty, entertainment, travel and hotel stays.

On this occasion, Abdulnasir al Raisi, general manager - Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said, "We are pleased to continue our summer offerings for our valued customers, enabling them to enjoy the best value proposition for Bank Muscat's products and enhance their banking experience. I would like to take this opportunity to invite customers to take advantage of this special offer as they enjoy their summer holidays. Going forward, we will continue to elevate our services and offerings to provide a memorable experience for all customers."

Raisi further added that this special offer comes as part of Bank Muscat's strategy to provide special offers to customers and users of Bank Muscat's credit cards. Such offers will help to enhancing the concept of electronic payment and completing various transactions.



Snow Oman's Summer Camp offers winter fun

Oman's coolest summer camp is back! From June 30 to August 29, Snow Oman welcomes kids ages 4-10 to beat the heat with 'snow', much fun, and learning, from snow park rides and games, workshops, trips to VOX Cinemas, and more!

Packages are available for

One-Day Summer Camps (RO20), One-Week Summer Camps (RO75), and One-Month Summer Camps (RO250) from Sunday to Thursday, a press release said.

Visitors can also enjoy up to 15% savings with the exclusive Siblings' Discount.

Huawei launches new generation Matepad

Tablets are finally getting good. And Huawei's new MatePad 11.5"S is gunning to prove it. It's packing the new generation PaperMatte Display that claims to make reading, writing, and even painting just as comfortable as on paper.

Based on specs alone, the new tablet has a lot going for it. A crisp 2.8K display, buttery-smooth 144Hz refresh rate, and a nearly bezel-less design that's perfect for binge-watching or getting work done. But the real star of the show is the M-Pencil integration and Huawei's own Notes and GoPaint apps. The M-Pencil together with the new generation PaperMatte Display promises a natural writing and

sketching experience.

The MatePad 11.5"S takes a bold step ahead with its PaperMatte Display technology. This technology replicates the feel of reading on real paper, using a complex 27-layer soft lighting process that includes anti-glare nano-level etching, magnetically controlled nano-optical coating, and proprietary display optimisation algorithms. The result? A significant reduction in environmental light interference, with screen reflectivity cut down to a mere 2% - a remarkable 60% lower than typical tablet screens. This screen ensures your eyes stay comfortable even during extended use, without sacrificing the sharpness or vibrancy.

Quriyat committee reviews assistance to needy

The Social Development Committee in Quriyat held its second meeting chaired by Sheikh Talal bin Saif bin Muhammad al Hosani, Wali of Quriyat, to discuss a range of topics including assistance to needy families.

The committee reviewed the issue of helping some needy families in the wilaayat by offering them with electrical and electronic devices, besides maintaining and renovating some homes, and paying off some debts. The committee approved several recommendations for action to be taken in coordination with the experienced authorities.



It is noteworthy that the Social Development Committee in the walis' offices is responsible for looking into a number of issues like improving the standard of living of the individual, family and society in cooperation with the specialised authorities.

Additionally, supporting needy families in homes' construction or renovation for social security families and low-income people, supporting and controlling volunteer work in its various institutions, as well as studying various topics that are referred to the committee by the wali.

Hongqi revolutionises driving experience with HS5, Ousado

Hongqi, a prestigious name in the automotive industry, proudly showcases its range, including the Hongqi HS5 and Hongqi Ousado, designed to redefine the driving experience with a blend of luxury, performance, and technology.

These models stand as a testament to Hongqi's commitment to delivering unparalleled luxury and performance to the discerning drivers of Oman.

Ousado: Luxury, modernity redefined

The Hongqi Ousado is a remarkable blend of luxury and modernity, making a bold statement on Oman's roads. Its prominent exterior embodies a sophisticated design that seamlessly integrates contemporary aesthetics with luxurious details. Inside, the Ousado offers an exquisite interior that harmoniously balances comfort, nobility, and luxury, creating an environment of pure indulgence.

Underneath its stylish exterior, the Ousado is powered by a high-performance aluminium 2.0 turbo-charged engine, paired with an 8-speed transmission. This powerful combination allows the Ousado to accelerate from 0 to 100 km/h in just 7.8 seconds, providing a thrilling and dynamic driving experience.

Key features of the Hongqi Ousado include: dynaudio surround sound system, large panorama glass sunroof, 12.6-inch central control screen equipped with automatic CarPlay for seamless connectivity, parking assistance, wireless charging to keep one stay connected on the go.



HS5: A symphony of delicacy, power

The Hongqi HS5 brings a unique blend of aesthetic brilliance, safety, and comfort, making it a standout on the roads of Oman. The HS5's exterior features extremely delicate aesthetic elements, ensuring it shines in the

round sound system, large panorama glass sunroof, 12.6-inch central control screen equipped with automatic CarPlay for seamless connectivity, parking assistance, wireless charging to keep one stay connected on the go.

limelight. Its unique "Wing of Hongqi" welcome light resembles an eagle spreading its wings, offering an honourable experience every time you approach your vehicle.

Key features of the Hongqi HS5 include an extremely delicate design that adds to the vehicle's aesthetic elements - making it shine in the limelight, with a unique 'Wing of Hongqi' welcome light design.

The vehicle is extremely safe with over 60% of high-strength steel sheet and 1500MPa high-strength thermos steel sheet create a safe cage-type body

structure.

Nappa and Alcantara seat trim, aviation-grade side foldable headrest, heated and ventilated seats offer extreme driving and riding enjoyment, a release stated.

Hongqi HS5 offers five driving modes - economy, comfort, sports, off-road, and snow modes coordinate with the intelligent damper control suspension system to provide a pleasant driving experience - in five stunning colours allowing personalisation to match individual style.

"Our goal at Hongqi Oman is to provide our customers with a driving experience that transcends the ordinary. The Hongqi HS5 and Ousado models embody our commitment to innovation, luxury, and performance," said Mohsin Hani Bahrani, CEO MHD ACERE.

"We are proud to offer vehicles that not only meet the highest standards of quality but also provide a unique blend of elegance and technology," Bahrani added. 'Hongqi Oman invites you to experience the future of driving with HS5 and Ousado. These vehicles are not just modes of transportation; they are symbols of luxury,' MHD ACERE added.

BankDhofar wins Euromoney's best bank award

BankDhofar, a leading bank in the Sultanate of Oman, has been recognised as the 'Best Bank for Corporates in Oman' by Euromoney, a world-renowned financial publication.

This award underscores BankDhofar's dedication to providing comprehensive and innovative financial solutions to Omani Corporates that empower businesses to thrive.

BankDhofar has a comprehensive suite of products to meet the growing needs of Omani Corporates including Lending and Working Capital, Trade Finance products including import and export financing, Transaction Banking products ensuring faster collection and automated reconciliation services.

Euromoney's Awards for Excellence are highly respected within the global banking sector. Winning this distinction solidifies BankDhofar's position as a leader in corporate banking within the Sultanate of Oman.

The bank has been recognised for its commitment to delivering a comprehensive suite of corporate banking products and services, providing tailored financial solutions to meet the unique needs of each client and offering exceptional customer service and support to corporate clients.

BankDhofar's dedication to corporate banking is reflected in its various initiatives, including developing industry-specific so-



lutions for different sectors, providing cash management solutions to optimise business finances and offering trade finance solutions to facilitate international trade.

By prioritising exceptional corporate banking services, BankDhofar empowers businesses in the Sultanate of Oman to achieve their financial goals. This win reinforces the bank's commitment to being a one-stop shop for all corporate banking needs in Oman.

BankDhofar puts technology and innovation at the core of its strategy to improve the experience of its customers. The Bank is constantly keeping pace with the technological developments while designing new products and services to ensure convenient banking experience for customers. Customers may conduct their transactions at ease and around the clock through the highly-secured and user-friendly digital banking channels.

SalamAir begins Khareef Salalah campaign across its network

SalamAir has begun its network-wide social media engagement campaign to celebrate the enchanting Khareef season in Salalah, Oman.

This campaign aims to gather travellers from around the world in a collective celebration and promotion of Salalah as a must-visit destination during the summer months, renowned for its refreshing cooler weather and stunning natural beauty.

"We invite all our passengers to capture and share their favourite moments from Salalah during Khareef for a chance to win a free return ticket to any of our destinations," SalamAir said in a statement.

"We are thrilled to reveal this interesting social media campaign, designed to harness the power of our vibrant community of travellers and showcase the enchanting Khareef season in



Salalah," said Sherif Hosny, Director of Marketing and Digital Sales at SalamAir.

"By encouraging our passengers to share their personal experiences, we highlight Salalah's unique beauty and create a deeper connection with our audience and community. This strategic initiative aims to magnify Salalah's appeal as a premier summer destination, leveraging user-generated content to in-

spire and attract more visitors to experience its refreshing cooler weather and captivating landscapes."

This campaign is more than just a contest; it's an opportunity to join a community of travellers, who appreciate the unique charm of Salalah during Khareef.

Salalah transforms into a verdant city with cooler temperatures, offering a refreshing escape from the summer heat.

Fuso Oman launches sizzling summer service campaign for its customers

As Oman's scorching summer season gathers heat, General Automotive Company (GAC), the official distributor for Fuso in the Sultanate of Oman, is strategically launching an exciting summer service campaign, offering Fuso vehicle owners the chance to enjoy fantastic rewards and exceptional discounts.

Through this summer promotion, GAC is not only encouraging customers to service their vehicles with the authorized dealers but also providing them with an opportunity to win an unforgettable vacation and enjoy attractive giveaways.

Customers who service their Fuso vehicles at any GAC service center during the campaign period will earn the chance to win a luxurious five-night stay at a 5-star hotel in Thailand. This incredible prize includes air tickets



and a complete holiday package, promising the ultimate summer getaway. In addition to the grand prize, GAC is offering several exciting giveaways such as two gift vouchers for a buffet at Shangri-

La Barr al Jissah; two RO25 gift vouchers for Lulu Hypermarket and two gift vouchers for free vehicle service. Additionally, GAC has also announced a 45% discount on parts for repair jobs on

all Fuso vehicles under the campaign, demonstrating its commitment to providing outstanding value, while maintaining the highest standards of customer satisfaction.

Travellers extending stays in Middle East: Mastercard Economics Institute

The travel sector in 2024 is breaking boundaries. This year consumer spending on travel is robust with significant increases in passenger traffic, according to the latest global report from the Mastercard Economics Institute.

Despite fluctuating exchange rates and varying levels of affordability, the desire to travel remains stronger than ever. In 2024 the travel sector is flourishing, with nine out of the last 10 record-setting spending days in the global cruise and airline industry occurring this year. Travellers leaving the Middle East region are more strategic with where and when they travel and are increasingly spending closer to home within the region.

Interestingly, travellers to Africa and the Middle East are extending their trips by an extra three days compared to pre-pandemic.



"The travel sector in the Middle East region is incredibly strong and resilient, supported by consumer demand, an ap-

petite to discover destinations closer to home, while enjoying memorable and authentic experiences. It's great to see travellers

extend their stays, and this is something that's very positive for the tourism industry at large, as well as local governments build-

ing diversified economies," said Natalia Lechmanova, Chief Economist EEMEA at Mastercard Economics Institute.

Drawing on a unique analysis of aggregated and anonymised transaction data, including Mastercard SpendingPulse, and third-party data sources, the report takes a deep dive into key travel trends globally for the year and beyond, including:

Record travelling

Globally, international travel has surged in Q1 of 2024 overall. Similarly, in the Middle East, tourism boards have announced some historic firsts:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia exceeded three million inbound visits per month for the first time in its history, and repeated that for three consecutive months (January to March 2024).

Egypt recorded 27% year-on-year growth in visitors in 2023. Tourist arrivals in Morocco reached 3.3 million at the end of the first quarter of 2024, up

12.8% on the same period a year earlier. After setting a new visitor record in 2023, Dubai recorded a 11% increase in Q1-2024 tourism numbers. The surge in travel reflects greater activity, fuelled by a stronger desire to travel.

Leisure for longer

Tourists in the Middle East and Africa have spent an extra three days on vacation on average, compared to the global average of one extra day. In contrast to pre-pandemic stays, visitors to the UAE are spending about a day longer, while in Morocco, they're staying about four days longer. The Mastercard Economics Institute finds a clear inverse relationship between the price of the destination and the incremental number of days tourists spend while in those destinations.

WMO declares Tropical Cyclone Freddy longest-lasting on record

Geneva, Switzerland - The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on Tuesday declared Tropical Cyclone Freddy the longest tropical cyclone on record, at 36 days.

The cyclone made landfall in the Indian Ocean basin, starting off the coast of Northwest Australia, and reached southern Africa in February and March 2023. It caused significant human and economic losses in the countries most affected.

A WMO international committee of experts recognised Freddy's duration of '36.0 days at tropical storm status or

higher as the new world record for the longest tropical cyclone duration'. The previous record holder was Tropical Cyclone John in the North Pacific Ocean in 1994. According to the UN weather agency, it existed at tropical storm status or higher for a combined duration of 714 hours, or 29.75 days.

Freddy was also declared the second longest cyclone in terms of distance, as it travelled 12,785km (7,945 miles, 6,905 nautical miles) at tropical storm status or above. John covered 13,159km (8,177 miles, 7,105 nautical miles) at tropical storm



status or above.

The WMO said that such a distance is 'nearly 33 per cent of the Earth's circumference'.

"Freddy was a remarkable tropical cyclone, not only for its longevity but also for its ability to survive multiple land interactions, which unfortunately had significant consequences for southeast African populations," Chris Velden, committee member and tropical cyclone/satellite expert from the University of Wisconsin in the US, said in a press release.

Due to its prolonged passage near and over land, Freddy was particularly destructive, especially in Madagascar, Malawi and Mozambique.

Over 1,200 people were reported dead or missing and more than 2,100 were injured in Malawi, the WMO said. In Mozambique, more than 1.3mn people were affected, with more than 180 deaths, while in Madagascar, nearly 200,000 people were affected by the first and second landfall. The damage caused by Freddy is estimated at US\$481mn, according to the African Risk Capacity's Tropical Cyclone Explorer model.

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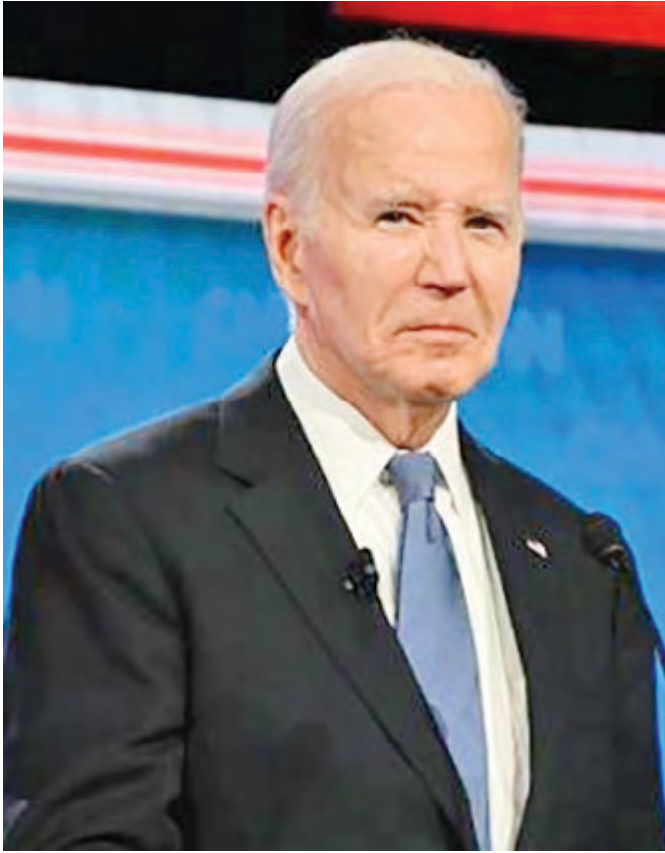
Joe Biden slams top court's presidential immunity ruling

US Supreme Court granted former, future presidents immunity from prosecution for official acts

Washington, D.C., US - US President Joe Biden has criticised the 'dangerous precedent' set by the Supreme Court's ruling granting former and future presidents immunity from prosecution for official acts saying it gives the executive office, and possibly Donald Trump, the power 'to do whatever he pleases, whenever he wants to do it'.

Biden said that the court had done 'a terrible disservice' to the people of this nation by effectively blocking any chance that Trump could see trial related to the January 6 riot.

The US Supreme Court on Monday (local time) delivered its ruling, in which the 6-3 majority ruled that Trump may claim immunity from criminal prosecution for some of the actions he took as president before leaving office, likely delaying his federal election subversion trial related to his actions on January 6 even further.



US President Joe Biden

Biden said that the court had done 'a terrible disservice' to the people of this nation by effectively blocking any chance that Trump could see trial related to the January 6 riot

He quoted and concurred with liberal Justice Sonia Sotomayor's dissent against the ruling that the majority decision means that 'the President is now

a king above law with fear for our democracy' and she urged the American people should dissent too. "I dissent," Biden added. "Each, each of us is equal be-

fore the law. No one is above the law, not even the president of the United States," Biden said during his live remarks from the White House.

Biden added: "With today's Supreme Court decision and presidential immunity that fundamentally changed for all practical purposes, today's decision almost certainly means that there are virtually no limits on what the president can do."

Biden once again blamed Trump for the January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol and said the American people deserve to have an answer in the courts about what happened then, before they vote in November's election.

"And it's a dangerous precedent because the power of the office will no longer be constrained by the law, even including the Supreme Court of the United States," Biden said.

Criticising the apex court's decision, Biden said that the decision undermines the rule of law of this country.

"This decision today, has continued the court's attack in recent years on a wide range of long-established legal principles in our nation. From gutting voting rights and civil rights to taking away a woman's right to choose, to today's decision that undermines the rule of law of this nation," he said.

ANI



North Korea claims new missile can carry 4.5-tonne warhead

Seoul, South Korea - North Korea on Tuesday said it successfully tested a new tactical ballistic missile capable of carrying a 'super large warhead', according to state news agency KCNA.

Pyongyang said the test, named Hwasongpho-11 Da-4.5, was conducted with a simulated heavy warhead to verify flight stability and accuracy. The report did not elaborate on the nature of the simulated warhead.

This comes a day after South Korea reported the launch of two ballistic missiles by Pyongyang, adding that the second missile blew up over land soon after the launch.

Ballistic missiles, depending on their design, can carry conventional high explosives as well as chemical, biological, or

nuclear munitions. North Korea is prohibited from testing ballistic projectiles by the UN and faces several sanctions for advancing its nuclear capabilities. North Korea's military is set to conduct another launch of the same type of missile in July to test the 'explosion power' of the super-large warhead, KCNA said. This is a rare disclosure of a planned missile launch.

How did South Korea react?

North Korea's report on the missile test was likely 'deception', Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff spokesperson Colonel Lee Sung-jun told a briefing.

"Conducting a test-fire inland is extremely rare and it is highly likely to be false to claim it has succeeded," he said.

Seoul's military conducted artillery drills within 5km of the Military Demarcation Line in the Demilitarised Zone of its border with the North, an army official said in the briefing.

These exercises were resumed after the North launched hundreds of balloons carrying garbage toward South Korea, leading to the suspension of a military pact signed with Pyongyang.

South Korea has been increasingly concerned over the North's warming relations with Russia.

North Korea is suspected of supplying ballistic missiles and artillery shells to Russia - an allegation both countries deny despite their pledges of military cooperation and a pact of mutual military support.

DW

39 killed in anti-tax protest in Kenya, says rights watchdog

Nairobi, Kenya - At least 39 people have lost their lives in recent anti-government protests in Kenya against the new tax hike, reported Al Jazeera, citing the national rights watchdog.

The activists have geared up for a new round of protests this week in Kenya.

The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) announced the toll on Monday, which is almost double the figure previously disclosed by the government for those killed while demonstrating against a raft of unpopular tax increases that have now been withdrawn.

KNCHR records further indicated that 39 people have died and 361 have been injured 'in relation to the protests country-wide', the state-funded body said in a statement, adding that the figures covered the period from June 18 to July 1, reported Al Jazeera.

It further stated that there had



been 32 cases of 'enforced or involuntary disappearances' and 627 arrests of protesters.

Moreover, largely peaceful anti-tax rallies, led by mostly

young Gen-Z protesters, descended into shocking scenes of deadly violence last Tuesday when lawmakers passed the contentious legislation.

Later, following the announcement of the vote, crowds ransacked the parliament complex in central Nairobi and it was partly set ablaze as police fired live bul-

lets at protesters, as reported by Al Jazeera.

Notably, it is the most serious crisis to be confronted by the government of President William

Ruto since he took office in September 2022 following a deeply divisive election in a nation often considered a beacon of stability in a turbulent region.

Ruto, in a televised interview on Sunday, said that 19 people had died in the protests, but insisted that he did not have 'blood on my hands' and pledged an investigation into the deaths.

The KNCHR 'continues to condemn in the strongest terms possible the unwarranted violence and force that was inflicted on protesters, medical personnel, lawyers, journalists and on safe spaces such as churches, medical emergency centres and ambulances', the rights body said.

The watchdog also said that it 'strongly condemns the violent and shocking acts of lawlessness that were exhibited by some of the protesters' including the parliament and other government buildings.

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Irregular migration: US, Panama sign deal

Washington, D.C., US - The US and Panama signed a memorandum of understanding Monday designed to 'jointly reduce the number of migrants being cruelly smuggled through the Darien (Gap), usually en route to the United States'.

The US will support Panama's efforts to begin the 'swift, safe and humane' repatriation of migrants who do not have a legal basis to remain in Panama, White House National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said in a statement.

"By returning such individuals to their country of origin, we will help deter irregular migration in the region and at our southern border and halt the enrichment of malign smuggling networks that prey on vulnerable migrants."

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Saeed Jalili

Conservative candidate running for Iran’s presidency

Tehran, Iran - Saeed Jalili, a high-profile Iranian diplomat and politician, was one of the first candidates to announce his bid for Iran’s presidency on the first day to register to run for office.

Jalili, a conservative political figure, garnered 9.4mn votes in Friday’s snap presidential election, ending in the second spot after senior lawmaker and reformist candidate Masoud Pezeshkian.

The two will now face each other in a run-off election on July 5 as they got the maximum number of votes but fell short of the 50 per cent vote mark.

After filing his application for candidacy on April 30, Jalili spoke of the ‘historic opportunity’ facing the Iranian nation and pledged to keep alive the legacy of late President Ebrahim Raisi, who died in a helicopter crash last month.

Jalili’s notable assignments include leading the country’s nuclear talks with the US in 2007-2013 under then-President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

He also served as head of the Supreme National Security Council, a top influential security body in the country. Before that, he was deputy director of North and Central America at the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

In 2013, Jalili made his first bid for the presidency and finished third. In 2021, he joined the race again but eventually pulled out in favour of the eventual winner, Raisi.

He has been one of the most vocal opponents of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, a position he highlighted in his election campaign, including in televised debates.

Pre-election opinion polls showed Jalili and parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf evenly poised for victory.

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Israeli army prepares for 3rd phase of operations in Gaza

Jerusalem - Israeli media on Tuesday reported that the Israeli army is preparing to enter the war’s third phase of the military operations in Gaza, after almost nine months of fighting.

The Israeli Channel 12 said that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, the army’s southern command and general security service (Shin Bet) held a discussion on the achievements in Gaza, and preparations for the third phase of the war.

In recent weeks, Israeli media indicated that the third phase of the war means transitioning from intensive bombing of Gaza to targeted airstrikes based on intelligence. The channel added that the army’s commanders asked from the political leadership level a period of four months to finalise the military operations in Rafah, the southern Gaza Strip.

The Israeli army started a major military campaign against Rafah on May 6, pushing tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians to leave the tiny city, amid intense bombardment across the city. The army’s military commanders said during the meeting that Israel must not announce the end of the war on Gaza until the return of all Israeli captives held by the Hamas group whether dead or alive.

The Israeli authorities estimate that around 120 Israelis are currently held in Gaza.

Netanyahu hailed what he said the serious and considerable achievements of the army in Gaza, adding that the Israeli ministers must be informed about the developments there, the



channel also said.

The army commander also said at the meeting that after finalising the ground operation in the Gaza Strip, the army will remain in the Netzarim Corridor area, established by the Israeli army in central Gaza to separate northern Gaza from the southern parts, and in the Rafah crossing border area with Egypt.

Israel, flouting a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire, has faced international condemnation amid its continued brutal offensive on Gaza. At least 25 more Palestini-

The army’s military commanders said during a meeting that Israel must not announce the end of the war on Gaza until the return of all Israeli captives held by the Hamas group whether dead or alive

ans were killed in Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip, pushing up the overall death toll to 37,925 since last October 7, the Health Ministry in the besieged enclave said on Tuesday.

A ministry statement added

that some 87,141 other people have been injured in the onslaught. “Israeli forces killed 25 people and injured 81 others in three ‘massacres’ against families in the last 24 hours,” the ministry said.

Meanwhile, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees on Tuesday said about 250,000 Gazans were affected by the recent evacuation orders issued by Israel, and that they are heading towards the West.

“UNRWA estimates that around 250,000 people have been impacted by these orders. Of course, as usual, we expect these numbers to grow,” said a senior communications officer of the agency participating virtually in the UN briefing from Central Gaza. Describing evacuation orders as not only ‘an-

other devastating blow to the humanitarian response’ but also devastating for the people and the families on the ground, Louise Wateridge stressed that making decisions such as where to go is ‘now impossible’.

“Our understanding so far is people are going towards the west, so that is towards the coast, but we will have more information on this throughout the day and as this unfolds,” she responded to a question on the possible route of people fleeing the area.

Anadolu agency

Finland parliament approves defence pact with US

Helsinki, Finland - Finland’s parliament on Monday unanimously approved a defence treaty which allows a US military presence and the storage of defence materials in the Nordic country, local media reported.

The US-Finnish Defence Cooperation Agreement signed by the government last December grants Washington access to 15 of its military bases for potential use by US forces and will also

allow the US to bring defence equipment, supplies, materials, and soldiers to Finland, according to national broadcaster Yle.

The agreement, which creates a framework for US activities and a more permanent presence in the Scandinavian country, will see the creation of certain military zones, which will include facilities to which only US personnel will have access to.



In addition, cooperation between the two nations in crisis situations will be strengthened.

Kimmo Kiljunen, social democratic chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, hailed passage of the treaty as a ‘historic moment’ for his nation.

“The task of this agreement, just like the task of Finland’s NATO membership, is to strengthen the security of Finland and the Finnish people,” he

stressed.

Eleven other NATO countries, including Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, have signed similar agreements with the US.

The vote on Sweden’s defence pact on June 18 was preceded by a heated debate, with critics warning the treaty could lead to the deployment of nuclear weapons and permanent US military bases in Sweden.

Anadolu Agency

Can Pakistan’s new military campaign end militancy?

Islamabad, Pakistan - Pakistan has launched a new military operation aimed at stamping out militancy and tackling a surge in armed violence.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s government named the new operation Azm-e-Istehkam, meaning Resolve for Stability in Urdu. It is the latest in a series of operations that Pakistan’s military has launched against militant groups.

The South Asian nation has witnessed a dramatic increase in violent attacks over the past two years. The attacks have claimed the lives of at least 62 soldiers, including two officers, so far this year. The military said it killed 249 and arrested 396 terrorists in more than 13,000 intelligence-based operations.

Most of these attacks are claimed by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan - an umbrella group of Islamist militant outfits known by the acronym TTP - which has been waging a war against the state to try to overthrow the government.

The TTP wants to run Pakistan as an Islamic state governed by its own harsh interpretation of Islam.

More cross-border strikes?

The group is ideologically aligned with the Afghan Taliban, who seized power in neighbouring Afghanistan in 2021 as US and NATO troops were in the final stages of their pullout from the country after 20 years of war. Islamabad has since repeatedly accused Kabul of providing them a safe haven on Afghan soil, an allegation the Afghan Taliban has denied.

The mountainous Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has long been a hive of Islamist militant groups, including the TPP and the local chapter of the ‘Islamic State’ group.

The TTP unilaterally ended a ceasefire with the Pakistani government in November 2022.

Pakistan’s new plan is, therefore, expected to focus on fighters crossing over from



Afghanistan.

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has warned that his military will not hesitate to launch attacks on the territory of Afghanistan. “Nothing is more important than Pakistan’s sovereignty,” he told a foreign media outlet when asked about the possibility of launching cross-border attacks in Afghanistan to contain militants.

“Indiscriminate action will be taken against the terrorists. Operations will be conducted against anti-state anarchists and religious fanatics, irrespective of their sect or religion,” a senior security official, who asked not to be named, told DW.

Maria Sultan, a defence analyst based in Islamabad, told DW that the campaign aims to ensure stability in Pakistan. “The

purpose of the operation is to keep the resolve to maintain stability in Pakistan and to address the challenge of increased acts of terrorist activity in Pakistan.”

Worsening tensions

But some fear the latest military operation could further exacerbate the tensions between Islamabad and the Taliban rulers in Kabul.

“The timing of this new counter-terror operation reflects a few factors: Pakistan having reached the end of its options when it comes to talks with the TTP and asking the Afghan Taliban to pressure the TTP,” Madiha Afzal, a fellow at the Brookings Institution, told DW. She pointed out that the attempts to talk to the TTP and put pressure on the group haven’t worked.

In March, Pakistan launched rare airstrikes inside Afghanistan, targeting the suspected hideouts of Pakistani militant groups.

The strikes killed eight people and prompted Afghan forces to return fire on the border.

Afzal pointed to the Taliban’s assertion that they would view Pakistan’s attacks on Afghan soil as ‘a violation of their sovereignty’.

“This will exacerbate tensions with the group and make Pakistan’s western border increasingly troubled,” she noted.

Not everyone in Pakistan is in

favour of the military campaign.

Pakistan’s jailed former prime minister, Imran Khan, said last week that he opposed any new military operation in the north-western and southwestern parts of the country.

He also directed his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party to stand against it.

The PTI currently governs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at the provincial level.

“Imran Khan opposed any new military operation in any part of the country, and he directed that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government would not become part of any decision related to the new military operation,” Ali Amin Gandapur, the province’s chief minister, told reporters outside the jail, after meeting Khan on Monday.

A senior PTI leader, speaking to DW on the condition of anonymity, said the military would find it challenging to carry out the operation.

DW

INDIA

'Congress conspiring to spread economic unrest'

New Delhi - Prime Minister Narendra Modi slammed the Congress during his speech in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, saying that the party has been conspiring to spread 'aarthik aarajkta' (economic unrest) in the country by allegedly taking certain uneconomic steps in the states governed by them.

"The Congress is conspiring calculatively to spread aarthik aarajkta (economic unrest) in the country. During the time of elections, the promises that they made and the economic steps that they are taking in the states governed by them, it is paving the way to take the country towards economic unrest," PM Modi said while delivering his motion of thanks to the President's address in the Lok Sabha.

"They are consciously conspiring so that their states become an economic burden on the country," he added.

The Congress is in power in Telangana and Karnataka, while it is a partner with the DMK in Tamil Nadu and the JMM in Jharkhand.

The Prime Minister said that in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections, the Congress had allegedly said that if the electoral results are not in accordance to their wishes they will spread unrest in the country.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks in the Lok Sabha in New Delhi on Tuesday (ANI)

"They clearly announced during their electoral campaigns that if the electoral results do not come as per their wish, they will create unrest in the country. They announced that people will assemble and spread unrest. Spreading unrest is their motto," PM Modi said.

The Prime Minister said that the Congress has been creating misunderstanding among people during the protests against

the Citizenship Amendment Act.

"They tried to create unrest by questioning India's electoral process. They spread unrest about CAA, and tried to create misunderstanding among people and the entire ecosystem strengthened them so that their political goals are fulfilled. The country has also seen how they instigated the country to get involved in riots," PM Modi said.

'Truth cannot be expunged'

Meanwhile, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday took a swipe at PM Modi after several portions of his speech in Lok Sabha on Monday were expunged on the orders of the Speaker.

"In Modi ji's world, truth can be expunged. But in reality, the truth cannot be expunged. I said

what I had to say, that is the truth," Rahul Gandhi told reporters on Tuesday.

"They can expunge as much as they want. Truth is truth," the Congress MP said.

Several portions of Gandhi's maiden speech in Lok Sabha as Leader of Opposition on Monday were expunged on the orders of the Speaker after his remarks against the central government drew criticism from

Treasury benches.

Rahul Gandhi in his speech in the lower house, during the debate on the motion of thanks on President Droupadi Murmu's address accused the BJP and RSS of preaching and spreading violence and hatred. He also targeted the government over the NEET row, the Agnipath scheme, Manipur violence and minorities among others.

PM Modi and Union Ministers Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh among others stood up to

They (Congress) clearly announced during their campaigns that if the electoral results do not come as per their wish, they will create unrest in the country

NARENDRA MODI

express their protest and rebut the Congress MP's remarks.

The BJP leaders accused the Congress MP 'of speaking lies, misleading the House and terming the entire Hindu community violent'.

Among the portions of Rahul Gandhi's Lok Sabha speech that got expunged were his accusations against the BJP, stating that the party was treating minorities unfairly and perpetrating violence.

Portions of the Congress MP's remarks on industrialists Adani and Ambani and on the Agniveer Scheme were also expunged.

ANI



Zika virus cases reported in Pune, total tally rises to six

Pune, Maharashtra - The Zika virus continues to spread in Pune, with two more cases reported on Monday. This has brought the total number of confirmed cases in the city to six, with both new cases involving pregnant women residing in Erandwane.

The first cases of Zika in Pune were reported by a doctor and his teenage daughter, who live in the same area as the two new cases. Following their positive test results, health officials conducted inspections and collected samples from the affected area. On Saturday, it was confirmed that one pregnant woman from Erandwane and a 22-year-old man from Mundhwa had also tested positive for the virus.

Dr. Kalpana Baliwant, health officer for the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC), stated that among the 25 samples collected, 12 were from Erandwane, including seven from pregnant women. Out of these, two pregnant women tested positive for Zika. An additional

13 samples were collected from Mundhwa, with no reports of pregnant women testing positive.

Pregnant women infected with Zika are considered to be at higher risk. So health officials are conducting anomaly scans for them and increasing surveillance in both affected areas.

Residents in the affected areas have been advised to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites and monitor their health for any symptoms of Zika. The PMC is working closely with health authorities to track and contain the spread of the virus in Pune.

The PMC is urging citizens to follow the guidelines and take necessary precautions to prevent the spread of the Zika virus. They have assured that they are closely monitoring the situation.

ANI

Uttar Pradesh: Around 50-60 people killed in Hathras stampede

Hathras, Uttar Pradesh - In a tragic incident, a stampede at a private event in Hathras has claimed 50-60 lives, Hathras district magistrate Ashish Kumar confirmed.

He said that the district administration is actively investigating the incident.

"District administration is in-

vestigating the matter. The injured are being taken to the hospital and people are still being recovered. A figure of nearly 50-60 deaths has been reported to me by the doctors," Ashish Kumar told ANI.

"Permission for the event to be held was given by the SDM and it was a private event. A

high-level committee has been formed to investigate the matter. The primary focus of the administration is to provide all possible help to the injured and kin of the deceased," he added.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed condolences over the incident during the parliament session.

"There are reports of many people dying in the stampede in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh. I express my condolences to those who lost their lives in this accident. I wish for the speedy recovery of all the injured. The administration is engaged in relief and rescue work under the supervision of the state govern-

ment. Senior officials of the central government are in constant touch with the Uttar Pradesh government. I assure everyone through this House that the victims will be helped in every way," Modi said.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has also taken cognizance of the tragic inci-

dent and expressed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families of the deceased. The CM issued immediate directives to the district administration to expedite relief efforts at the site of the incident.

The chief minister has instructed officials to promptly transport the injured to hospi-

tals and ensure they receive adequate medical treatment. He has also wished for the swift recovery of those injured.

Additionally, CM Yogi has ordered district administration officials to arrive at the scene without delay and accelerate the relief and rescue operations.

ANI

Pakistan rejects UN group's opinion on Imran Khan's trial

Karachi, Pakistan - The Pakistani government on Tuesday rejected the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention's opinion on jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan's legal challenges, saying his detention is an 'internal matter'.

In a statement aired by the state-run Pakistan Television, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said: "The arrest of the PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) founder and the pending cases are an internal matter of Pakistan."

"The PTI founder is entitled to all rights under the national Constitution and laws, as well as international principles," Tarar said, adding that Khan is

currently in jail as a convicted prisoner.

The UN working group on Monday said Imran Khan's detention is 'arbitrary and in violation of international law', and he should be released immediately.

In an opinion, the group requested steps to 'remedy the situation of Khan without delay', which would be to release him 'immediately and accord him an enforceable right to compensation and other reparations, in accordance with international law'.

Khan came to power in 2018 and was removed in a no-confidence vote in 2022.

Anadolu Agency

Nepal PM Dahal to face vote of confidence

Kathmandu, Nepal - Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal has decided to face the vote of confidence and not resign immediately.

Secretary of the CPN-Maoist Centre, Devendra Paudel confirmed to ANI that PM Prachanda would take the floor test and not step down from the post. "He will not resign. He has decided to take the vote of confidence, test the mathematics. The office bearers meeting also has decided to support the decision of PM for which talks will be held with various parties including the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), Nepali Congress and even the CPN-UML and move forward," Paudel confirmed ANI over phone.

The latest decision of the Nepal PM comes after the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML have struck a midnight deal to form a new alliance.



Pushpa Kamal Dahal

As per the agreement signed in between Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba and the UML Chairman K P Sharma Oli, an agreement of sharing one and half year's tenure each has been reached in between the leaders.

K P Sharma Oli will lead the new government expected to be formed soon for one and half years and then will hand over to

The latest decision of Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal came after the Nepali Congress and CPN-UML struck a midnight deal to form a new alliance

Sher Bahadur Deuba for the remaining one and half year term until the next election.

Along with the new alliance also has formed a committee to give suggestions on amending the election procedures and the constitution under the leadership of former Chief Justice Kalyan Shrestha.

In the overnight agreement,

the largest and the second largest party in the parliament also drafted a constitutional amendment agreement where it was stated that the Vice President would be made the chairman of the National Assembly.

Right before the signing of the agreement, leaders from the Congress as well as the UML also had reached President Ram Chandra Paudel and informed about the change in the coalition.

During the meeting, the leaders informed the President about activating Section 76 (2) to form a new government in case the incumbent Prime Minister failed to take a vote of confidence after UML withdrew its support.

Prachanda should take the vote of confidence again from the parliament after any of the parties on board the government withdraw support. Dahal who came to power right after the 2022 General Election already

have taken the floor of parliament test for a record four times.

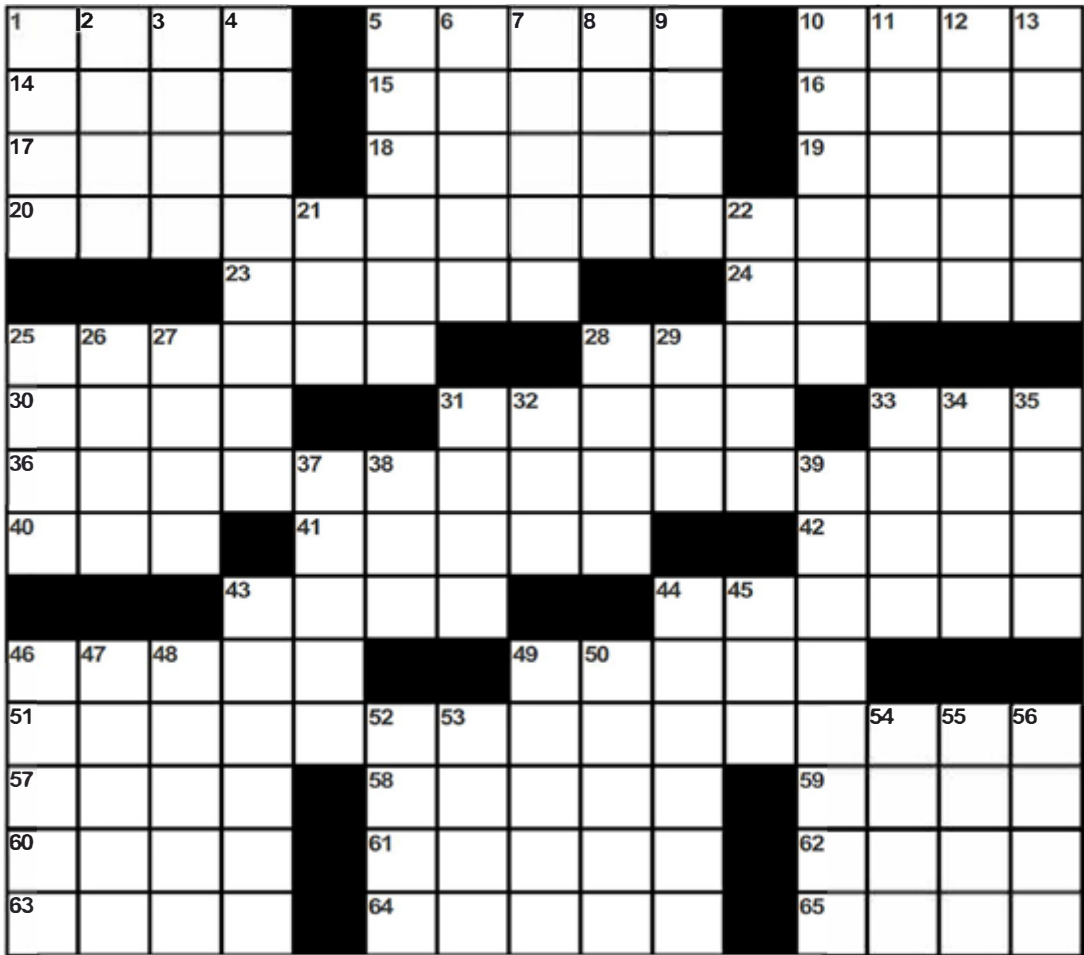
Earlier on March 4, Dahal made a surprising turn by deciding to revive a coalition with the CPN-UML which caught the largest coalition partner, NC, off guard.

A new coalition including the CPN-UML, CPN-Maoist Center, Rastriya Swatantra Party, and Janata Samajwadi Party was initially formed. The following day (on 5th March), the Nepali Congress formally retracted support to the Dahal government activating the Article 100 Sub-section (2). A Prime Minister is required to cross the threshold of 50 per cent which is 138 votes as per the present number of parliamentarians.

The Janata Samajbadi Party Nepal walked out of the government after the formal split and is now in opposition.

ANI

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) United voting group
5) La_ (opera house)
10) Unappetizing food
14) Turner of old Holly-wood
15) Of musical sound
16) 12-point type
17) Dec. 24 and 31
18) "Astro Boy" genre
19) Feed store items
20) Household conveniences
23) Apres-ski drink
24) Lift the spirits of
25) Colorless, odorless fuel gas
28) Miner's exit
30) Blacken with fire
31) Athenian lawman
33) "Emergency!" at sea
36) Not bleed?
40) It may have a silver lining?
41) Toy that hums
42) Bridge toll unit
43) Camp Lejeune, e.g.
44) Fire-suppression rake
46) Human moles, e.g.
49) In a vertical direction, nautically
51) In need of a lifeboat

- 57) Enthusiastic about
58) Borneo ape
59) Sundial 8
60) Order to a broker, sometimes
61) Bar Harbor locale
62) Slight advantage
63) Ilditarod necessity
64) Immigrants'_ Island
65) Musical symbol
DOWN
1) Used a Breathalyzer
2) Kilauea outpouring
3) Billfold bills, often
4) Emergency plastic
5) What a batter gets into
6) Zaire, today
7) Inner personality, to Jung
8) Mongolian monk
9) Guinness who was Obi-Wan
10) Pampered to a fault
11) Thick jungle vine
12) Eight people as a unit
13) Antiquated
21) Electrically charged particle
22) "Die Lorelei" poet Heinrich
25) Sound on the rebound
26) God with a hammer

- 27) Alan of "Gilligan's Is-land"
28) Sax type
29) "How dumb ofme!"
31) 42 regular, e.g.
32) Lennon's bride
33) Medieval German re-gion, to the French
34) Christianity, now
35) Tool building
37) Edict of the Russian tsar
38)Faux_
39) Easy task
43) "Look at that!" old-style
44) Combines into one company
45) Truck driver's com-partment
46) Cheese choice
47) Comic-strip unit
48) Basketwork fiber
49) To no_ (worthless)
50) Old copper coin of Finland
52) Stadium with a roof
53) Like some testimony
54) Man Friday
55) Fixes, as fights
56) Program for losers

NOTE PAD



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, certainly not alone, and absolutely, positively not now, when the heavens are fairly bursting with rebellious energy. So if you just can't force yourself to stay in even if you're tired, don't. Remember that you can always catch a power nap tomorrow, right?



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 firmly and then walking away. It might be tough to master at first, but you'll get the hang of it soon enough.



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 into 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 bat an eye or notice anything they shouldn't. If you're with anyone who isn't accustomed to your frank, direct style, there's only one thing to do: call it a night.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. First human heart transplant operation conducted by Dr. Christian Barnard on Louis Washkansky, was conducted in
A. 1967
B. 1968
C. 1958
D. 1922
2. Galileo was an Italian as-tronomer who
A. developed the telescope
B. discovered four satellites of Jupiter
C. discovered that the movement of pendulum produces a regular time measurement
D. All of the above
3. Habeas Corpus Act 1679
A. states that no one was to be imprisoned without a writ or warrant stating the charge against him
B. provided facilities to a prisoner to obtain either speedy trial or release in bail
C. safeguarded the personal liberties of the people against arbitrary imprisonment by the king's orders
D. All of the above

Answers: 1. A 2. D 3. D



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

There's nothing like the company of family, as you've always known and believed. You'll 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. There's also a distinct possibility that one of them will introduce you to someone who'll end up being far more than just a friend.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

After yet another day of teasing you with lingering glances that last just a tad too long to go unnoticed or be written off as something else, 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 to confess. In fact, how about staring back just a second longer than they do? Think of it as a contest. Just don't be surprised if once it happens, neither of you can stop staring at all.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Your financial situation feels a bit shaky at the moment, or are you just distracted by important professional matters? Regardless of how or why it's happened, return your attention to career, just for a bit. If your concerns are real, they won't go anywhere, definitely not in the time it takes to balance the accounts, sort through the receipts, and get back to the basics of your organized life.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

The Universe has sent along exactly what you need to change your work situation, complete with a brand-new friend or acquaintance who will inspire and guide you to get the job done. Even if you haven't been consciously thinking along those lines, you can still become self-employed, at least part time. Either way, enjoy the inspiration and the excitement that goes along with new beginnings.



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. But you need to be careful where you point that charm. After all, you know how potent it is. You've had to turn away more than one admirer who mistook your friendliness for flirting. The object of your romantic aim is definitely your mark, and you're doubly lethal at the moment, so good luck to them.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

You don't relish the thought of it happening, but every now and then your verbally rebellious streak gets out of control and tough to handle, much less 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? They need to be told, you need to tell them, and it's time.



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? Let's just say 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. The thing is you'll be pretty darned good at it without even trying.



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, like if someone you know needs to hear them to feel better, or you know that it's impossible to keep them hidden any longer. At the moment, someone who has been distancing from you is about to ask for an audience. If you're game, let them back into your immediate circle. If not, maybe it's time for a change.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Sometime soon you'll need to make a decision whether 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 feel guilty if your ultimate choice is to let the truth be told. Clearing the air is always the best tactic, if not immediately, then in the long run.

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

O	V	O	T
R	Z	C	S
R	A	I	V
M	E	N	E

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

Costa saves Ronaldo's blushes

Portugal to face France in quarters after surviving shootout against Slovenia

Frankfurt, Germany - Goalkeeper Diogo Costa saved all three penalties as Portugal won 3-0 in a shootout against a brave Slovenia side who had held them to a 0-0 draw after Cristiano Ronaldo's extra-time miss from the spot in a dramatic Euro 2024 last-16 clash on Monday.

Portugal had the lion's share of the chances but also their brilliant goalkeeper to thank for a one-on-one save from Slovenia striker Benjamin Sesko as they stumbled into a quarter-final meeting with France in Hamburg on Friday.

Costa also saved from Josip Illicic, Jure Balkovec and Benjamin Verbic in the shootout - the first keeper to save three penalties in a Euros shootout - to send his

helped the team."

Ronaldo in particular will come under the spotlight as he wasted several opportunities to go with a penalty miss in extra-time that left him in a flood of tears and needing to be consoled by team mates.

"Even the strongest people have their (bad) days. I was at rock bottom ... when the team needed me the most," Ronaldo said in a post-match interview before bursting into tears again.

"Sadness at the start is joy at the end. That's what football is. Moments, inexplicable moments," he said.

"I feel sad and happy at the same time. But the important thing is to enjoy it. The team did

Even the strongest people have their (bad) days. I was at rock bottom ... when the team needed me the most. Sadness at the start is joy at the end. That's what football is.

CRISTIANO RONALDO

side through despite a team performance that lacked spark for the most part.

"This is probably the best game of my life," Costa said. "I focused on doing what I had to do. I went with my gut feeling. Of course we had analysed the penalty takers, but players change how they shoot. I'm very happy and very excited to have

an extraordinary job.

"We fought right to the end and if you look at it, if you analyse the game, I think we deserved it because we had more authority."

Portugal were awarded the penalty late in the first half of extra time when Diogo Jota's storming run into the box was illegally stopped by defender Vanja Drkusic, who had already



Portugal's Diogo Costa saves a penalty in the match against Slovenia

been booked and was lucky not to receive a second yellow card.

They have a reliable penalty taker in their team in Bruno Fernandes but captain Ronaldo elected to take it and his effort was superbly saved to his left by Slovenia's Jan Oblak, who pushed the ball onto the post.

Ronaldo, aiming to become the oldest scorer in Euros history

at 39, had looked out of sorts all through the match, missing several headed chances.

He also insisted on taking all four free-kicks Portugal were awarded in shooting range, with none of them particularly threatening for Oblak.

Slovenia defended superbly and every time they had a scrap of possession they sent the ball

long to forwards Andraz Sporar and Sesko to try and make something of it. It was a ploy that worked well and Sesko had two one-on-one opportunities in the game, both from Pepe mistakes.

His first was scuffed wide and the second, some seven minutes from the end of extra time, was well saved by Costa.

That miss will no doubt haunt

him and when it came to the pressure of the shootout Slovenia wilted in the face of excellent goalkeeping, much to the relief of Ronaldo, who to his credit scored the first penalty for Portugal.

Slovenia go home having played out four draws in Germany, but having qualified for the knockout rounds of a major tournament for the first time in their

history.

"Unfortunately, it did not work out for us. I'm lost for words, the atmosphere here is amazing and that's what makes it that much more difficult," Oblak said.

"There's nothing more to add. You see what happened in extra time, we had the opportunity to score, but we were probably missing a bit of luck."



Portugal's Diogo Costa celebrates after saving a penalty

'This was the game of my life'

Frankfurt, Germany - Portugal goalkeeper Diogo Costa was overwhelmed after he saved all three penalties in a 3-0 shootout win against Slovenia that secured a place in the quarter-finals of Euro 2024.

"I think this was the game of my life," he told reporters. "Maybe the game where I was most useful. I am very, very happy and I am also very excited that I helped the team."

The man of the match tried to read the body language of the Slovenia penalty takers but in the end it was pure instinct. "What I thought, I need to stop this - and went with my gut."

Despite the match remaining goalless after 90 minutes, Cristiano Ronaldo had a chance to break the deadlock for Portugal from the penalty spot in the first half of extra time.

However, Slovenia goalkeeper Jan Oblak produced a spectacular save to deny the Portugal captain.

"Cristiano is the hardest worker. I understand how frustrated he is, he devotes all his time to this", Costa said.

Ronaldo's tears suggest Father Time fast catching up on legend

Frankfurt, Germany - "Time beat him. Time takes everybody out. It's undefeated," said Rocky Balboa in the film Creed and those words could easily be applied to Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo who struggled to impose himself on their Euro 2024 last-16 game with Slovenia on Monday.

A tearful Ronaldo being embraced and comforted by team mates after missing a penalty in extra time that could have helped Portugal secure a spot in the quarter-finals before a shootout win is a cathartic image that stunned fans around the world.

Portugal won 3-0 on penalties minutes later, with Ronaldo converting the first spot kick and apologising to fans in the stands immediately after scoring before breaking down in tears following the game and being unable to finish an interview.

His tears showed more than just the sorrow or guilt of a player feeling the weight of responsibility from almost letting his country down.

They were the tears of a frustrated player who expects great-



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo looks distraught after missing a penalty

ness but was not the difference maker he once was. During the 2022 World Cup Ronaldo said: "The best timing is my timing" as he arrived in Qatar with his career in turmoil, about to leave Manchester United to play in Saudi Arabia.

Ronaldo, a five-times Ballon D'Or winner, had arrived with a

mission to prove he could still make a difference on the world stage. But he ended the tournament on the bench and had no impact as a substitute in the 1-0 quarter-final loss to Morocco.

After that defeat, the shocking image of Ronaldo running to the tunnel in tears as desolate as the football world had ever seen him

was something Portugal fans were not used to.

But with long-time Portugal manager Fernando Santos gone and newcomer Roberto Martinez trusting him with the captaincy and a leadership role in a young and talented squad, Ronaldo was given another shot at glory in Euro 2024.

Tedesco speechless after another early exit

Duesseldorf, Germany - Belgium felt a familiar feeling of gloom on Monday at yet another disappointing tournament where they had plenty of possession and chances but failed to make them count.

Coach Domenico Tedesco looked so upset at Belgium's exit from Euro 2024, after a low-key 1-0 defeat to France in the last-16, that he answered most post-match questions with a shrug and a reply that it

was too early to analyse his team's showing.

He did, though, express astonishment that Belgium had failed to score in all but one of their four games in Germany.

"If you think that (striker) Romelu (Lukaku) will go home with zero goals after this kind of games, and also (winger) Jeremy Doku,

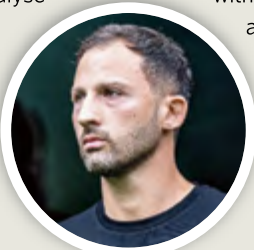
with zero goals and zero assts, for me, it's a pity, it's unbelievable, because they did well and they deserved more," he said at a glum news conference.

"An hour after the final whistle and after conceding a goal in minute 85, it's really difficult for me to give an analysis ... We will

see in a few weeks."

Koen Casteels, who saw Randal Kolo Muani's shot deflected past him for France's goal, said the players were hurting. "It was for us a very mid-dling tournament ... I think it will be a very quiet changing room full of disappointment," he said.

Underlining Belgium's problems up front, their captain Kevin De Bruyne had a great chance but shot straight at the goalkeeper.



Domenico Tedesco



Randal Kolo Muani celebrates with Jules Koundé after his deflected shot gave France the lead against Belgium

Lack of goals a big concern as France enter quarterfinals

Duesseldorf, Germany - France got the better of Belgium once again, grabbing a late winner in a cagey contest on Monday to take a quarterfinal place at the European Championship.

But it was a victory without much conviction.

Randal Kolo Muani's deflected effort keeps the pre-tournament favourites on course, but a major improvement is needed in front of goal if they are to clear the next hurdle.

Kylian Mbappe showed several bursts of pace and turns of foot to remind the Belgians of their two previous losses to their neighbour, in the semifinals of the 2018 World Cup and the 2021 Nations League.

In one dazzling move on Monday he danced past Yannick Car-

rasco with such ease that the Belgian forward was left with a resigned look of bemusement on his face.

But Mbappe's wizardry was all too infrequent and more alarmingly for France, he fluffed a handful of chances in front of goal that he would ordinarily have buried without much effort.

It could be he is still struggling with the mask he was wearing to protect his broken nose.

Mbappe has made it clear he hates it but has to wear it as a necessary protection.

Mbappe is not the only concern. Antoine Greizmann was brought back to play behind the two strikers but could not find the range on his attempts at incisive passes and is also lacking sharpness.

Uruguay send US crashing out

Copa America hosts eliminated after 1-0 defeat

Kansas City, US - Copa America hosts United States were bundled out of the tournament at the first hurdle on Monday after a 1-0 defeat by Group C winners Uruguay consigned them to third place and allowed Panama to advance as runners-up.

Defender Mathias Olivera scored to give Uruguay the win that sees them advance to the quarter-finals as group winners, with the South Americans winning three of their first-round matches for the first time since 1959.

Panama's 3-1 win over Bolivia saw them finish second on six points, three ahead of the United States.

"The pitch was very hard to play on," Uruguay midfielder Manuel Ugarte said.

"But hey, when we have to score, we score; when we have to play, we play. It's a bit of adapting to the matches and the moments of each match."

The defeat has ramped up the pressure on U.S. coach Gregg Berhalter, with fans chanting: "Fire Gregg" in the second half and after the final whistle.

"We know that we're capable of more, and this tournament, we didn't show it," Berhalter told reporters. "It's really as simple as that. I think that, you know, you



Uruguay's Nahitan Nández (L) battles for the ball with Ricardo Pepi of the US during their Copa America group match on Monday

look at the stage that was set with the fans in this tournament, with the high level of competition in this tournament, and we should have done better."

Needing a win to give themselves the best chance of progressing, the U.S. started well but Uruguay grew into the game as the first half wore on.

The match was punctuated by a series of stoppages and physical altercations, with the referee struggling to maintain control at times and making some questionable decisions when it came to playing advantage.

Uruguay lost Maximiliano Araujo in the 27th minute after a coming-together with U.S. de-

fender Tim Ream. The forward had a neck brace fitted before being carried off on a stretcher and replaced by Cristian Olivera.

US striker Folarin Balogun also had to be substituted after appearing to pick up an injury in a nasty collision with Uruguay goalkeeper Sergio Rochet.

Despite the hosts' early attacking intensity, Uruguay produced the better chances in the first half, nearly taking the lead in the 38th minute when Olivera whipped a dangerous cross into the box but Darwin Nunez shot just wide.

The biggest cheer of the night from the crowd at Arrowhead Stadium came in the second half when Bolivia scored an equaliser against Panama in the other Group C match, briefly moving the US up to second place, but their joy was short-lived.

Uruguay took the lead in the 66th minute as Olivera bundled in a rebound after U.S. goalkeeper Matthew Turner could only parry Ronald Araujo's header back into the box. The goal was given after a lengthy VAR review for offside.

The US had an excellent opportunity to equalise in the 75th minute when Rochet spilled the ball and found himself stranded several metres from the goal but Christian Pulisic's deflected shot was kept out by a goal-line clearance from Ugarte.

The US continued to battle deep into stoppage time but Uruguay's backline proved up to the challenge and held out to clinch their first win against the US since the 1993 edition of the Copa America.



Uruguay's Mathias Olivera celebrates his goal with teammates

We are designed to be protagonists, says Uruguay assistant coach Reyes

Kansas City, Us - Uruguay assistant coach Diego Reyes said their tough 1-0 Group C win over the United States on Monday showed they can adapt to difficult situations and would stand them in good stead for tests to come at the Copa America.

Uruguay's win sealed top spot in the group and booked a quarter-final match-up with the runner-up in Group D, where Brazil and Costa Rica are vying to join Colombia in the next round.

Uruguay, who have been coached by Marcelo Bielsa since last year, won all three of their group games, scoring eight goals.

The 15-times champions have impressed in recent months, implementing Bielsa's brand of attack-minded football and high-energy, high-pressing style to great effect.

However, they were on the back foot early on against the U.S. and had little possession in the first 25 minutes.

"We are a team who is prepared and we are designed to be protagonists," Reyes, standing in for the suspended Bielsa, told reporters after the win.

"So when we don't have the ball, that's something we don't like. For some moments at the beginning of the match, it was hard for us to come up with those moments where we could recover the ball.

"We were arriving a bit late.

I believe that after some minutes (against the U.S.), the team was able to find its way.

DIEGO REYES

Once that was corrected, we were able to recover the ball and then we were able to express our game better and we could see the Uruguay we all want."

With heavyweights Brazil and in-form Colombia likely to progress from Group D, Uruguay's task gets even more difficult in the United States.

"They are two great oppo-

nents. Colombia is living a very good moment presently," Reyes added.

"Brazil, we all know they are great, so we're going to start analysing in depth as of tomorrow, once we are sure who we are going to be against, and we will try to come up with a game plan that is favourable for us.

"I believe that after some minutes (against the U.S.), the team was able to find its way. This is a good thing because the upcoming matches will look a lot like this, so I think it's a good comparison point vis-à-vis what's next.

"There's always things to correct, and that's what we are going to try to do."



Nestor Lorenzo

With Brazil you are never a favourite: Colombia coach Lorenzo

Santa Clara, US - Colombia are on a 25-match unbeaten streak coming into Tuesday's Copa America match against Brazil but coach Nestor Lorenzo said he does not consider his side favourites against the five-time world champions.

Colombia have already booked their spot in the quarter-finals after two straight wins in Group D and need at least a draw at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara to secure top spot.

Brazil, who have won just two of their last six meetings with Colombia, sit second after drawing their opening game against Costa Rica before thrashing Paraguay 4-1.

"With Brazil you are never a favourite, they are a team with a lot of history," Lorenzo said.

"We are just beginning to write a few pages of the history of Colombia, which has been very good at some point, but we hope for more, to maintain it, we will do our best to be up to it. The priority is to come out first in the group, beyond being qualified we want the first place, the team will go out to play in the best way."

Chelsea to sign teenager Anselmino from Boca

Buenos Aires, Argentina - Chelsea have reached an agreement with Argentine giants Boca Juniors to sign defender Aaron Anselmino in an \$18 million deal, a source with the Buenos Aires-based club said on Monday.

Anselmino began his Boca career aged 12, made his first-team debut in 2023 and after 10 appearances attracted interest from European clubs, including Manchester United and AC Milan. The Argentine side agreed with Chelsea to retain the 19-year-old for at least six more months so that fans can "enjoy" the centre-back before he joins the Premier League.

"The agreement is complete, paperwork is being exchanged. The transfer will be finalised now, but he will stay at Boca," a source said. Boca president and



Aaron Anselmino

former Argentina international Juan Roman Riquelme said a few days ago that Anselmino "will become a great footballer and will be a national team player".

Boca, who on Monday unveiled midfielder Tomas Belmonte as a new signing, have not given any official details on Anselmino's transfer.

Spurs sign Gray

Tottenham Hotspur have signed 18-year-old midfielder Archie Gray from English Championship side Leeds United on a contract until 2030, the Premier League club said on Tuesday.

British media reported the deal was worth around 40 million pounds (\$50.53 million).

Panama reach quarters with win against Bolivia

Orlando, Us - Panama beat Bolivia 3-1 on Monday to finish second in Group C and qualify for the Copa America quarter-finals after tournament hosts the United States were eliminated following a 1-0 loss to group winners Uruguay.

The win moved Panama, playing in only their second Copa America, up to second on six points, three more than the U.S., as the central American side reached the knockout stage for the first time.

Jose Fajardo opened the scoring for Panama while substitutes Eduardo Guerrero and Cesar Yanis scored late to seal all three points, with Bolivia's lone goal coming from Bruno Miranda.

"Football is daily suffering, but today there was a lot at stake,"



Panama's Eduardo Guerrero celebrates his goal

Panama boss Thomas Christiansen told reporters.

"We knew that not even a win guaranteed that we would make it to the quarter-finals after the first goal.

"Our performance dropped at

times ... they (Bolivia) began to control the game and they scored. We started to get a bit more anxious.

"But we reacted quickly. Our players were able to overcome those odds and the substitutions made a huge difference."

Bolivia needed a win with only a slim chance of staying alive in the tournament, but it was Panama who broke the deadlock in the 22nd minute when Cristian Martinez set up Fajardo.

The 30-year-old forward expertly controlled Martinez's header into the box, let it bounce and volleyed the ball past Bolivia goalkeeper Guillermo Viscarra.

Bolivia equalised in the 69th minute when Ramiro Vaca found Miranda, who slipped his shot past the keeper.

VONDROUSOVA'S WOES

Czech player becomes first defending champ to fall in opener since Steffi Graf

London, England - Defending champion Marketa Vondrousova was knocked out in the first round of Wimbledon on Tuesday, the first female holder to fall at the opening hurdle since Steffi Graf 30 years ago.

Czech Vondrousova, who became the first unseeded woman to lift the title last year, earned a far less welcome accolade after a 6-4 6-2 defeat by Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro.

Ranked world number 83, Bouzas Maneiro had won only one tour-level match all year heading into Wimbledon, but secured her first win across all Grand Slams when she slapped a backhand down the line.

"It is one of the most important moments of my life," the Spaniard smiled as she soaked up the cheers. "I'm just... I'm surprised with myself to be honest. The atmosphere was so nice, so... elegant... it feels like I was at home, I don't know why," she added, explaining her lack of nerves on one of the sport's greatest stages.



Marketa Vondrousova looks disappointed during her match against Jessica Bouzas Maneiro

I'm just... I'm surprised with myself to be honest. The atmosphere was so nice, so... elegant... it feels like I was at home, I don't know why

JESSICA BOUZAS MANEIRO

The 21-year-old from Galicia hit the ball cleanly throughout an unremarkable Centre Court clash, but only really needed to keep it in play as errors flew from champion Vondrousova's racket with alarming regularity.

Struggling with a hip injury which derailed her preparation, sixth-seeded Vondrousova now heads for the exit while Bouzas Maneiro will next face compatriot Cristina Bucsa or Romanian Ana Bogdan in the second round.

Pegula cruises

Fifth seed Jessica Pegula made light work of fellow American Ashlyn Krueger 6-2 6-0 in the Wimbledon first round under gloomy skies on Tuesday.

Pegula, a quarter-finalist last year at the All England Club, broke in the opening game of the match before racing into a 4-0 lead in 10 minutes.

The 20-year-old Krueger did get on the scoreboard, using her six feet, one inch frame to great

effect in her powerful serves. However, Pegula never looked seriously troubled against her 75th ranked opponent and sealed the first set with an ace.

Former champion Elena Rybakina swept aside Romanian Elena-Gabriela Ruse, her power and movement proving too much for the Romanian qualifier.

Rybakina, who won the championship in 2022, lost her first game of the match as she sought to find her big-serving rhythm.



Novak Djokovic

Djokovic dismantles qualifier Kopriva

London, England - Seven-time Wimbledon champion Novak Djokovic eased concerns about his knee with a clinical display to beat Czech qualifier Vit Kopriva 6-1 6-2 6-2 on Tuesday and reach the second round.

Playing with a support on his right leg following a minor operation less than four weeks ago that cut short his French Open, the 37-year-old made a solid start and drew first blood in a marathon fourth game.

The Serb, bidding for a record 25th Grand Slam title to end his trophy drought this year, broke on his sixth attempt and breezed through the opening set under the Centre Court roof before heaping the pressure on Kopriva early in the next.

He let out a big roar having grabbed another break after a 21-shot rally and used it as a platform to double his advantage in the match, as the 123rd-ranked Kopriva struggled to keep pace with last year's runner-up.

The Wimbledon main draw debutant offered resistance early in the third set but was unable to subdue second seed Djokovic, who shifted up another gear to run away with the match.

Earlier on Monday, Jannik Sinner wobbled midway through his first-round clash with unseeded German Yannick Hanfmann but the world number one recovered to seal a 6-3 6-4 3-6 6-3 win and book a meeting with fellow Italian Matteo Berrettini.

Earlier, former world number one and four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka returned to Wimbledon after a five-year absence and came through a topsy-turvy clash against France's Diane Parry, winning 6-1 1-6 6-4.

Twice French Open runner-up Casper Ruud reached the second round by beating Australian qualifier Alex Bolt 7-6(2) 6-4 6-4. Men's 10th seed Grigor Dimitrov continued his resurgence with a 6-3 6-4 7-5 win against Dusan Lajovic, while three-times Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka beat British wildcard Charles Broom 6-3 7-5 6-4.

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COUTURE SHOW

Men grasping a rope battled for supremacy in a staged game of tug of war at the hallowed ‘Musée des Arts Décoratifs’ gallery in Paris, where the American designer Thom Browne riffed off the upcoming Olympic Games to tell a story about sports, old-world couture and camp.

Quoting both antiquity and American myths, models replicated stereotypical poses of athletes throughout time — from archers and disc throwers to weightlifters — playfully deconstructing both gender roles and classical tailoring.

The latter moulded bodies into exaggerated shoulder lines and tiny waists reminiscent of vintage sport iconography. Tennis skirts and dramatic heel-less track boots, complete with laurel wreath headdresses paved the way for playful homages to France - dresses adorned with hand-painted blue swimming briefs or red bikinis (the two-piece was invented in France in 1946) and beaded ‘tricolore’ lapels on jackets and overcoats.

Browne launched his label in 2001 in New York’s West Village, first operating by appointment only, and has since won the CFDA Menswear Designer Award in 2006, 2012, and again in 2016. His collections have been coveted by celebrities, collectors and museums.

Thom Browne (which has, since 2018, been part of Zegna group who own a 90% stake) is also a ready-to-wear business currently offered in over 300 department-stores and boutiques across 40 countries, as well as in 110 Thom Browne retail stores.

“I have a very successful commercial side of my business,” Browne explained in an interview with CNN. “Couture balances the other side of what I do.”

As is the way with Browne, the show was an entertaining and playful vehicle to exhibit traditional couture techniques. “I like to tell a story,” he explained. “I like to entertain and to ground it in beautifully made clothes.”

“The work in progress becomes the final work... Couture,” wrote Thom Browne in their show notes, of the decision to use toile in the collection.

Perhaps, surprisingly for a couture collection, it was muslin - the simple, lightweight cotton used to create initial mock-ups of clothes (called ‘toiles’) at ateliers - that comprised much of Browne’s finished pieces. To quote the show-notes - ‘The toile as the source text... The toile as the finale garment... The work-in-progress becomes the final work... Couture.’

Using exposed stitching as well as ancient techniques including hand-basting (an intricate and ancient method used by artisans when working with delicate fabric or to create precise alignment), the designer’s aim, he said, was to play with tailoring and proportions.

Models clad in gold, silver and bronze on a makeshift ‘podium’ alongside one wearing an intricate golden laurel leaf headdress. Laurel leaves — supposedly worn by Apollo, the ancient Greek patron of sport — have been used by the Olympics as symbols of success and victory.

Jared Ellner, a celebrity stylist who dressed influencer Emma Chamberlain and actor Molly Gordon for the show and regularly works with singer Sabrina Carpenter said of Thom Browne, “It’s so easily and instantly recognisable, yet pushes barriers aesthetically... Never making everyone look the same but allowing each person to add their own style to it... Sabrina and Emma like to dress up like a character... really pushing their own individuality.”

And at a time when most discreet details are lost on camera, perhaps that could be the ultimate luxury.

(Courtesy: cnn.com)

TRUE TO HIS THEATRICAL FORM, THOM BROWNE’S FALL 2024 COUTURE SHOW OPENED WITH SPECTACLE

THE FALL GUY



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GLAM BY MAOOSAM

Maoosam M Mistry, the creative mind behind Glam by Maoosam, which blends Western, Arabic, and Indian styles to make them appealing to fashion buffs in Oman and the region, says her goal is to use clothing and accessories to help people recognise and embrace their own beauty. With a creative, yet keen, eye on customer needs, Maoosam personally oversees every design created by her fashion boutique. “My fashion philosophy revolves around using style to change people's perceptions and celebrate originality,” she tells **Hubert Vaz** in an exclusive tete-a-tete. Excerpts:

FUSION FASHION

What sets Glam apart from other fashion houses in Oman?

Glam by Maoosam boutique in Al Qurum distinguishes itself by providing a complete styling experience alongside clothing. We offer customers a seamless shopping journey where they can undergo a full makeover, complete with makeup and accessories. Our blend of Arabic, Western, and Indian fashions ensures customers receive customised, premium fashion solutions. Every style and design decision is carefully made to showcase each individual's distinct personality. This personalised approach sets Glam by Maoosam apart as a standout fashion destination in Oman.

Are your designs in high demand in Oman as well as in the region?

Yes, there is significant demand for our designs in Oman and across the region. Our multicultural aesthetic appeals to a diverse range of customers, including Indian and Omani women. The blend of Arabic, Western, and Indian styles at Glam by Maoosam has proven popular among those seeking distinctive, high-quality clothing. The growing recognition of our unique fashion approach is reflected in this demand, enhancing the fashion scene with adaptable and cross-cultural styles.

What is your definition of fashion, and what essential aspects must it convey?

Fashion, to me, is about discovering and expressing one's true style while fostering originality. It should exude self-assurance, grace, and individuality. Key elements of fashion include originality, quality, and the ability to alter perceptions. Fashion should embrace individuality

and help people express their true selves. At Glam by Maoosam, we believe that everyone can look their best with the right styling.

What differentiates Omani styles from those in the wider Arab world?

Omani styles stand out due to their intricate needlework and traditional elements that highlight the region's rich cultural heritage. While Omani designs share similarities with broader Arab fashion, they often feature unique craftsmanship, including specific Omani patterns, materials, and techniques. These distinct characteristics create a fusion of style and heritage that celebrates Oman's cultural past through a distinctive fashion identity.

Are Glam's creations inspired by Western trends?

Glam by Maoosam crafts pieces that seamlessly blend Arabic, Western, and Indian aesthetics. We ensure each piece maintains a touch of cultural authenticity while appreciating the refinement and elegance of Western styles. This combination allows us to cater to a diverse clientele that values contemporary style with classic elements. Our goal is to strike a balance between cultural aesthetics and modern trends, ensuring our designs are distinctive and adaptable.

For any bespoke piece (garment, shoes, accessories, jewellery), how much weight do you give to the client's requirements versus educating them on what works best for them?

WHICH DESIGNER DO YOU ADMIRE OR DRAW INSPIRATION FROM?

I draw immense inspiration from Sabyasachi Mukherjee. His ability to seamlessly blend traditional Indian craftsmanship with contemporary aesthetics resonates deeply with my approach to fashion. Sabyasachi's designs celebrate cultural richness while maintaining a timeless allure, this aligns perfectly with Glam by Maoosam's mission to create distinctive, culturally infused fashion.

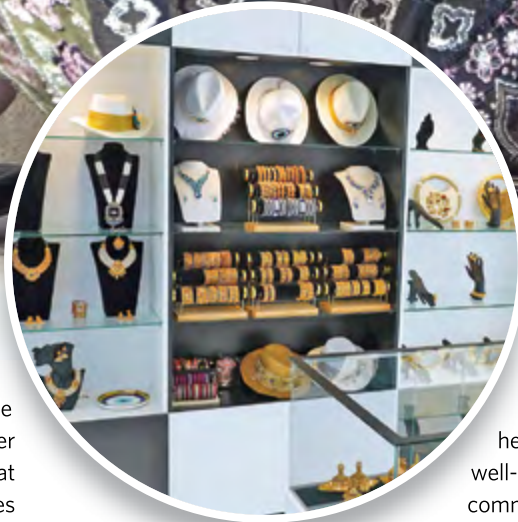


Key considerations for bespoke pieces include the client's unique style, preferences, and comfort. While prioritising client needs, we also offer guidance to help them discover what suits them best. This balance ensures each item is unique, attractive, and meets the client's needs effectively. Providing style advice enhances the overall experience and aids clients in making informed decisions, capturing their individuality through custom works.

Are Arabic fashion trends still rooted in tradition, or have they evolved significantly?

Arabic fashion trends continue to evolve while maintaining a strong traditional foundation. Despite modern influences, Arabic fashion values rich materials, intricate designs, and cultural significance. The blend of modernism and tradition creates a vibrant and diverse fashion scene. At Glam by Maoosam, we respect classical characteristics while embracing evolving trends, ensuring our designs retain timeless appeal.

Where do you source your materials



items, and an enticing range of jewellery featuring precious stones. We will also offer Reiki healing crystals to enhance overall well-being. These additions reflect our commitment to offering a holistic approach to fashion and beauty

from and how skilled is your team?

We source our materials from multiple locations, focusing on superior craftsmanship and authenticity. Our team comprises highly skilled individuals dedicated to maintaining our distinctive, aesthetic, and high standards. Fine materials and expert craftsmanship converge to create beautifully crafted pieces. Each design reflects our commitment to quality and authenticity.

Are you currently working on any new styles or designs?

We are currently developing new designs that blend classic and modern elements. Additionally, we will introduce skincare products, health and wellness

What are the common mistakes that most fashion designers make?

Fashion designers often make critical mistakes that impact their success. They may overlook diverse body shapes, blindly follow trends without adding unique elements, misunderstand customer preferences, neglect business fundamentals, like pricing and sales strategies, fail to establish strong Unique Selling Propositions, and underutilise digital marketing opportunities. Addressing these challenges is essential for designers to align their designs with market needs, enhance brand competitiveness, and foster customer engagement effectively.

Fun with Fashion

Where is 'Glam by Maoosam' boutique located?
A. Madinat al Sultan Qaboos
B. Jawharat al Shatti
C. Al Qurum

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