

Flood risk management under review

Specialised firm to update flood risk maps and devise emergency plans for across Oman

Our Correspondent Muscat

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) has appointed a specialised firm to update flood risk maps and develop management and emergency plans for flood risks across Oman. This initiative, scheduled between 2024 and 2026, aims to address the growing threat of floods, especially in low-lying coastal areas and wadis.

Oman's urban coastal areas face significant flooding risks due to sea-level rise and storm surges during extreme weather events. In Muscat, 45% of the city is vul-

nerable to wadi floods, while 20% is at risk of coastal floods. To mitigate these threats, the project will update existing flood maps and create new ones, identifying flood plains and categorising these into high, medium and low danger zones.

MAFWR stressed the importance of the maps, noting that these will assist the National Committee for Emergency Management (NCEM) in saving lives and protecting property during extreme climatic conditions. These maps are also crucial for urban planning, ensuring that construction near wadis adheres to safety standards and min-



imises risks.

The project will be carried out in three main stages. The first - data analysis stage - lasting 12 months, will involve analysing rainfall and surface runoff data across all governorates. This includes evaluating hydrological data from rain stations and

wadis to develop tables for rainfall intensity and frequency. A flood design guide will also be created to better understand the relationship between rainfall and runoff.

The second stage, taking seven months, will focus on creating detailed flood risk maps

using advanced technology to assess flood levels and identify primary wadi channels. The final stage, lasting five months, will involve developing flood risk management plans and emergency procedures. This includes preparing scenarios and protocols for flood control and making recom-

In Muscat, 45% of the city is vulnerable to wadi floods, while 20% is at risk of coastal floods. New maps will assist NCEM in saving lives and protecting property

mendations for waterway demarcations and emergency responses.

Both experts and citizens have reacted to the project. Economic analyst Hamoud al Tooqi emphasised the fact that Oman frequently experiences floods affecting infrastructure, the econ-

omy and tourism. "This study will help NCEM manage risks and provide reassurance to investors," he said.

Businessman Nasser al Hosni noted that while the study itself is not new, its implementation marks significant progress. "The project will help preserve tourist and heritage sites, reduce financial losses and enhance community security," he added.

In April this year, Muscat Municipality, in collaboration with MAFWR, announced that it has devised a flood risk protection system for Muscat governorate. Based on recommendations of feasibility studies, there are plans for 18 protection dams to be strategically built across several wadis in the governorate, with priority assigned to regions deemed most vulnerable to such hazards.



SAYYID SHIHAB RECEIVES PAKISTANI MILITARY OFFICIAL

H H Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, received Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, at his office in Al Murtafaa Garrison on Monday. The meeting reviewed the advanced relations between Oman and Pakistan. The two sides also discussed topics of mutual interest. The meeting was attended by Vice-Admiral Abdullah Khamis al Raisi, Chief of Staff of Sultan's Armed Forces (ONA)

Oman, Mongolia sign MoU to enhance cooperation

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia - Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, met Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh in Ulaanbaatar on Monday.

During the meeting, Sayyid Badr conveyed the greetings and best wishes of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the president and the people of Mongolia, wishing them continued growth and prosperity.

In return, the Mongolian President sent his heartfelt regards to His Majesty the Sultan, along with his best wishes for the Omani people, while expressing a desire to see further development in relations between Oman and Mongolia.



Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi and Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh in Ulaanbaatar on Monday (ONA)

Their discussions focused on strengthening bilateral ties with both sides committing to enhance cooperation across various fields. They also exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual concern.

The meeting was attended by Nasser Mohammed al Busaidi, Oman's Ambassador to China and Non-Resident Ambassador to Mongolia, Sheikh Abdulaziz Mohammed al Hosni, Head of Asia and Pacific Department at Foreign Ministry, and several officials from both sides.

In a separate meeting, Sayyid Badr met Battsetseg Batmunkh, Mongolia's Foreign Minister, to discuss ways to boost economic, trade and investment cooperation. They reviewed recent regional and international developments, stressing the im-

portance of collaboration to ensure security and stability in the Middle East and beyond. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the two foreign ministries to facilitate bilateral consultations.

During his visit, Sayyid Badr also toured the National Museum in Ulaanbaatar, where he and his delegation were introduced to Mongolia's rich historical and cultural heritage. The exhibits showcased traditional arts, ancient manuscripts and artefacts, highlighting the diversity and long history of the Mongolian people.

Expressing his admiration for

the museum's rare and valuable collection, Sayyid Badr praised the efforts made to preserve Mongolia's cultural heritage. He emphasised the importance of cultural cooperation between Oman and Mongolia, particularly in the areas of museums and heritage, and the fact that he looked forward to enhancing exchange of expertise and knowledge.

In conclusion, Sayyid Badr thanked his hosts for the warm reception and underscored the importance of cultural communication in strengthening the bonds of friendship between Oman and Mongolia.

Oman, Brazil explore new avenues for economic ties

Our Correspondent Muscat

The Omani-Brazilian Business Forum, held on Monday, focused on strengthening economic and commercial ties between the two countries.

Discussions covered a range of investment opportunities across key sectors, including information technology, food security, pharmaceuticals, tourism

and industry.

Hamoud bin Salem al Saadi, Second Deputy Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), highlighted the eagerness of Oman's private sector to collaborate with Brazilian counterparts. He noted particular interest in sectors such as food security, construction, pharmaceuticals and information technology, and added that OCCI is committed to facil-

itating meetings between Omani and Brazilian business owners to foster commercial partnerships and exchange expertise.

Marcelo Lucas, head of the Brazilian business delegation, said he was pleased to be in Oman and praised the strong economic and commercial relations between the two countries. "These relations are key to achieving the development goals both nations aspire to."

The forum featured a presentation titled 'Invest in Oman', which showcased the progress the sultanate has made in credit ratings and international rankings. The presentation also highlighted the sectors critical to achieving the economic diversification goals of Oman Vision 2040, such as logistics, industry, tourism and food security, alongside emerging areas like health, education and IT.



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Oman, Brunei celebrate 40 years of diplomatic ties



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250,000 Gazans forced to flee Deir al Balah

Contest launched to drive innovation in generative AI

Our Correspondent Muscat

Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology launched a month-long competition aimed at advancing innovation in artificial intelligence (AI) on Monday in collaboration with SAS Media Company.

The competition has attracted 100 participants, divided into 25 teams, and is focused on fostering innovation in the field of generative AI. It is open to students, jobseekers and professionals interested in advancing and applying generative AI technologies.

The event was inaugurated by H E Dr Nasser bin Rashid al Mawali, Undersecretary in the



Ministry of Economy.

The competition started with an introductory workshop designed to boost innovation, enhance technical skills and support local talent in this cutting-edge field.

Participants were given a comprehensive overview of generative AI and its diverse applications across various sectors. The launch event included sessions on e-learning platforms and ac-

tivities designed to foster communication and collaboration among contestants.

The competition is structured into several phases, beginning with an intensive training camp.

Open to students, jobseekers and professionals interested in advancing and applying generative AI technologies, the contest has attracted 100 participants

Participants will then develop technical solutions using generative AI, culminating in a final evaluation to determine the winners.

Tawwa Abdullah al Dawood, Head of Development and Stud-

ies Department at National Centre for Space, Advanced Technology and Artificial Intelligence, said that progress in AI hinges on capacity building and talent support. She highlighted the importance of creating a stimulating environment, providing necessary resources for innovators and developers, and fostering collaboration between public and private sectors to maximise the benefits of AI applications.

Tawwa noted that the competition is being held at a time of rapid global advancements in AI and hoped that it will uncover and nurture local talent. She encouraged participants to seize the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and creativity.

FUELING GROWTH,
POWERING THE NATION:
OUR ENERGY
PRODUCTION
JOURNEY

1



Production Highlights

246,000
barrels of oil equivalent



Daily Production

89 million
barrels of oil equivalent



Annual Production



2



81
million barrels
Processed



530,000+
barrels/day
Total Refining
Capacity



198,000
barrels/day
Sohar Refinery



116,000
barrels/day
Mina Al Fahal Refinery



230,000
barrels/day
Duqm Refinery
(JV with )

3



Refinery and
Petroleum Industry
Products



15,705,600+ barrels
91-Octane Gasoline



11,044,300 barrels
95-Octane Gasoline



32,425,900 barrels
Diesel



7,861,000 barrels
LPG



9,866,500 barrels
Jet Fuel



4



216,700 cubic metres
Fuel Storage Capacity

19,700
cubic metres

Sohar

Jifnain

160,000
cubic metres

Raysut

37,000
cubic metres

OQ

☆ All Data is for 2023

> oq.com



OQ celebrates groundbreaking of strategic fuel reserve project valued at US\$124mn

Muscat, August 2024 – OQ, the global integrated energy group, today celebrated the groundbreaking ceremony of the strategic fuel reserve project in the Dhofar Governorate, marking an investment of over 47 million Omani Riyals (equivalent to USD 124 million). The ceremony was held under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Marwan bin Turki Al Said, the Governor of Dhofar, and attended by various officials and dignitaries from the governorate.

The strategic fuel storage facility aims to enhance the local fuel supply in Dhofar and ensure preparedness for emergency situations by storing key petroleum derivatives, including MOGAS-91, MOGAS-95, Gas Oil and jet fuel. With a storage capacity exceeding 110,000 cubic metres, the facility is designed to secure a 30-day fuel supply for Dhofar, thereby enhancing the governorate’s resilience to potential energy crises.

This initiative is part of OQ’s broader efforts to meet the nation’s demand for petroleum products, aligning with the growing population and the surge in commercial and investment activities.

Commenting on the occasion, His Highness Sayyid Marwan bin Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar, stated: “This project is a culmination of the efforts by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals and OQ to enhance Dhofar’s energy infrastructure and ensure its growing needs for petroleum derivatives are met. We are confident that this investment will significantly contribute to sustainable economic development in the governorate and secure essential fuel supply during emergencies.”

His Excellency Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Auqi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, emphasised that: “The groundbreaking of the strategic fuel reserve project in Dhofar is a significant step in reinforcing Oman’s strategic fuel reserves, ensuring the availability of essential products, and securing supplies during emergencies. This development is crucial in guaranteeing our petroleum product needs are met.”

His Excellency further highlighted that a similar strategic fuel reserve project is scheduled to commence soon in the Musandam Governorate, with a planned capacity of 14,536 cubic metres. Upon completion, this initiative will elevate the nation’s total fuel storage capacity to over 350,000 cubic metres, encompassing key facilities



The groundbreaking of the strategic fuel reserve project in Dhofar is a significant step in reinforcing Oman’s strategic fuel reserves, ensuring the availability of essential products, and securing supplies during emergencies. This development is crucial in guaranteeing our petroleum product needs are met

SALIM BIN NASSER AL AUFI



such as the 160,000 cubic metre Jif-nain station in Muscat Governorate, the 19,700 cubic metre Suhar station in North Al Batinah Governorate, and the 37,000 cubic metre Raysut station. In a speech delivered at the ceremony, Ashraf Hamed Al Mamari, Group CEO of OQ, stated: “The strategic fuel storage facility, with a capacity of 110,000 cubic metres, is another milestone in OQ’s investments in Dho-

far Governorate, complementing our existing projects such as the liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), ammonia, methanol plants, and gas pipelines.”

He explained that “The strategic fuel reserve project in Dhofar has been initiated under the directive of the Omani government, represented by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, which places great importance on ensuring the supply of petroleum products across all governorates in the Sultanate.

He noted that all aspects related to the project’s commencement, such as engineering contracts and land usufruct agreements in the Salalah Free Zone, have been finalised. Al Mamari further emphasised that OQ is committed to securing the supply of petroleum derivatives for Oman, with a total refining capacity of 530,000 barrels per day. This includes the production capacity of the Duqm Refinery at 230,000 barrels per day, the Mina Al Fahal Refinery at 116,000 barrels per day, and the Suhar Refinery at 198,000 barrels per day.

The project consists of three key components: a fuel reserve facility within the free zone, a pipeline connecting the pumping station at Salalah Port to the fuel storage tanks in the free zone, and the expansion of the existing pumps at Salalah Port. Additionally, the new Salalah station will be connected to the existing Raysut station.

The reserve facility will be built on an area of 150,000 square metres, with the construction phase set to span 36 months, encompassing engineering works, procurement, and construction activities, culminating in the initial operation.

The facility will feature tanks, a warehouse, a control room, an administration building, a maintenance workshop, a pump area, a tanker loading zone, firefighting and safety facilities and other complementary components. Provisions for future expansion and increased storage capacity have also been considered.

OQ continues to secure the production of petroleum derivatives, which play a vital role in supporting Oman’s industrial sector. In 2023, OQ Refineries and Petroleum Industries produced over 15.7 million barrels of MOGAS-91, 11 million barrels of MOGAS-95, 32.4 million barrels of MOGAS-95, 32.4 million barrels of gas oil, 9.8 million barrels of jet fuel, and 7.8 million barrels of LPG.

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Sales centre opened for upscale Al Shorouk project in Salalah

Our Correspondent
Salalah

Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning (MHUP) inaugurated an integrated service centre in Salalah on Monday to address reservation requests for residential units in the Al Shorouk project, part of a national initiative for integrated residential neighbourhoods.

The opening ceremony was attended by H E Dr Khalfan bin Saeed al Shuaili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning.

At the opening, the minister and attendees reviewed designs and stages of implementation of the Al Shorouk project. The event also saw the signing of partnership agreements with small and medium enterprises to support the project's execution.

MHUP stated that the sales centre will serve as a crucial communication hub, providing essential information and support to prospective residents, particularly those eligible for units in the Al Shorouk project, which will be executed in three phases, each spanning two years.



The residential project, the first of its kind in Salalah, features villas of various sizes, apartments, service and entertainment centres, and other amenities.

Spread over 324,000sqm, including 40,000sqm of green spaces, the development will include over 558 residential units.

The project will offer three types of villas with modern design, outdoor seating areas and gardens. Additional facilities include a commercial centre, a cultural centre, a mosque and a fuel

station, all designed with modern infrastructure and lighting.

The Al Shorouk project represents a model of integrated residential planning, launched under the 'Prosperous Communities' programme of MHUP aimed at offering diverse housing options.

The opening event also saw the signing of a cooperation agreement with Oman Housing Bank to provide financing facilities for eligible recipients and prospective property owners in the project.



Oman, Brunei celebrate 40 years of diplomatic ties

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Sultanate of Oman and Brunei Darussalam marked the 40th anniversary of their diplomatic relations with a special event at Foreign Ministry in Muscat on Monday.

The celebration included unveiling of a commemorative logo symbolising the enduring partnership and collaborative efforts between the two nations.

At the event, H E Sheikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Undersecretary for Political Affairs in Foreign Ministry, emphasised the deep-rooted and dynamic nature of

the bilateral relations, while highlighting the progress made in various sectors, including economic, cultural and political.

He also spoke on ongoing projects and investment opportunities in fish farming, healthcare and student exchange, and stressed that efforts are on to enhance relations further.

H E Noralizan Abdul Momin, Ambassador of Brunei Darussalam to Oman, commended the steady and stable development of relations since 1984. She highlighted the exceptional progress achieved over the past four decades in several areas of cooperation.



Aquaculture sector expanding rapidly, boosting production

Our Correspondent
Muscat

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, farmed fish production has surged to 5,117 tonnes - valued at RO15.1mn - this year till August. This represents a 7% increase in volume and 50% in financial value compared to 2023, which saw production of 4,767 tonnes valued at RO10.99mn.

An upward trend in production is evident from previous years. In 2022, fish production

weighed 3,179 tonnes worth RO6.9mn, marking a 135% increase in volume compared to 2021, which recorded 1,350 tonnes valued at RO2.7mn. This growth trajectory has been consistent since 2018, when production volume was 350 tonnes valued at RO700,000.

Production continued to expand in subsequent years: 862 tonnes in 2019 valued at RO1.72mn (146% growth from 2018); and 1,060 tonnes in 2020 valued at RO2.12mn (23% increase from the previous year).

Diversity of farmed species

has also grown significantly. The current production includes 33 species, including white shrimp, Omani abalone, finfish, European cod, Atlantic and Norwegian salmon, rock oysters, sea cucumber, sea bass, and tuna.

The ministry continues to promote investment in fish farming, emphasising the importance of leveraging natural resources, modern technologies, human expertise, and scientific research. This strategic focus aims to foster sustainable growth in the sector and enhance its contribution to the national economy.

47% increase in student enrolment in Duqm

Our Correspondent
Duqm

There has been a notable increase in student enrolment in both public and private schools in Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), aligning with its expanding investment opportunities and growing residential community.

In the past five years, the number of students in general and basic education has surged 47.3% from 1,181 in the 2018/2019 academic year to over 1,740 in 2023/2024.

The opening of Al Saad International School in 2021 significantly contributed to the increase.

According to Ahmed bin Ali Akaak, Acting CEO of SEZAD, further investments are anticipated in the zone's education

SEZAD is focused on providing services and facilities for a stable family life to both citizens and expatriate workers

AHMED BIN ALI AKAAK



sector reflecting the ongoing expansion of projects.

He added that the management of SEZAD is focused on attracting further investments and provide services and facilities for a stable family life to both citizens and expatriate workers. These ef-

orts include implementing various projects designed to make Duqm an increasingly attractive location for living, working and settling.

Currently, Duqm has eight schools, including six government and two private institutions - Al Saad International School and Indian School Duqm. Additionally, there are several kindergartens.

Al Saad International School enrolled over 200 students of 22 nationalities in the last academic year, while Indian School welcomed 52 students of five nationalities. Affiliated with India's Central Board of Secondary Education, the Indian School was established to serve the growing Indian community and other expatriate families, providing a modern educational environment.

Industrial Innovation Specialist programme launched in Dhofar

Our Correspondent
Salalah

Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) in Salalah has launched a programme called 'Industrial Innovation Specialist in Dhofar' which will run for 15 days.

The programme aims to boost national competencies in the knowledge economy by provid-

ing training for entrepreneurs, innovators, small and medium enterprise (SME) owners, and home-based business operators in the food and beverage sector in Dhofar.

Abdul Qader bin Salem al Balushi, Director General of Raysut Industrial City, highlighted the fact that the programme, hosted at Raysut Industrial City, focuses on developing entrepreneurs' ideas and transforming these into market-ready products. The programme is particularly aimed at the food and beverage sector, given the governorate's rich agricultural and livestock resources.

The programme will support 30 local participants in developing innovative food products for markets and commercial centres. To ensure high-quality training, Madayn has enlisted several international experts.

In the first half of 2024, Raysut Industrial City launched eight investment projects with a total investment of over RO43mn. The city's strategic plans include further expansion to attract additional investments, enhance the economy of Dhofar and create job opportunities. Omanisation rate in the industrial city currently exceeds 38%.

OQGN inaugurates 208km new gas pipeline in Dhofar

Salalah – OQ Gas Networks (OQGN), the exclusive operator of Oman's Natural Gas Transmission Network, celebrated on Monday the inauguration of the Saib Project, an additional gas pipeline in Dhofar Governorate with a length of 208km and investment of RO76mn.

The inauguration ceremony was held under the patronage of H H Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, along with government officials, community leaders, OQGN Board of Directors and key stakeholders and contractors.

The Saib Project aligns with OQGN's strategic goals to expand the gas network's capacity in response to rising population, urban development, and economic growth.



With the inauguration of the project, the capacity of the gas network will increase by 60% from 10mn cubic meters per day to 16mn cubic meters per day.

The project consists of two loops, the first loop with a length of 32km at Hubara, in the wilayat

of Haimea, and the second loop with a length of 176km from Harweel to Raysut station in Salalah with a total of 208km of 32 inch pipeline alongside the existing 24 inch pipeline.

The project scope includes the extension of six block valve stations along with three new

launching and receiving stations.

A total of 16,978 pipes (each with a 32 inch diameter and 12.5m length) were transported to the work sites crossing mountainous terrains within Governorate of Dhofar and Al Wusta.

Eng Mansoor bin Ali al Abdali, CEO of OQGN, said, "The inauguration of the Saib Project in

Dhofar Governorate is a significant milestone in our company's projects records. It addresses the increasing demand for gas in the region and underscores our commitment to supporting local communities and fostering economic development in line with

Oman vision 2040."

He said, "Completing the Saib Project represents a major advancement in strengthening the natural gas infrastructure in Oman. This strategic expansion not only meets the growing energy needs of Dhofar Governorate but also highlights our dedication to sustainable growth and our determination to lead the transition to clean energy in the near future."

Over the past ten years, OQGN has maintained an impressive gas availability rate of 99.9%, with no interruptions in supply. It has successfully transported approximately 40bn cubic meters of natural gas and operates around 4,031km of gas pipelines throughout the sultanate.

Along with this project,

OQGN has actively supported its In-Country Value (ICV) initiatives by investing RO11.5mn in local materials and services for project implementation. The project also engaged the local community, employing more than 380 Omanis during its execution.

OQGN acts as a key link connecting gas producers with gas consumers working in key sectors for raw material production or electricity generation, such as LNG, power generation, water desalination, oil and gas, industrial and commercial plants (petrochemical plants, fertiliser plants, aluminum plants and steel plants).

FSA suspends Abu Timam audit firm for one year

Our Correspondent Muscat

Oman's Financial Services Authority (FSA) has suspended the audit firm Abu Timam Grant Thornton Chartered Accountants for one year, barring it from providing external audit services to entities regulated by the FSA.

The FSA's decision, effective Sunday, August 25, 2024, requires all entities under its regulation to terminate their contracts with Abu Timam and appoint a new external auditor from the list of firms accredited by the FSA.

'This decision was made due to the firm's violations of applicable laws and regulations while auditing several companies listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange and other regulated entities,' the FSA said in a statement on its website. 'The firm accepted accounting practices that did not comply with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and International Standards on Auditing (ISA), compromising the integrity of financial statements disclosed to investors.'

The FSA's statement detailed specific failures by the firm, including inadequate auditing procedures involving component auditors, issuing audit reports before completing thorough examinations of significant balances and transactions, and conducting inappropriate tests to verify reported balances. 'The firm also failed to address discrepancies between financial



FSA's decision requires all entities under its regulation to terminate their contracts with Abu Timam and appoint a new external auditor from the list of firms accredited by FSA

and non-financial reports in annual reports. Additionally, it provided non-audit services to audit clients, violating legal requirements.'

The FSA has previously issued regulations governing auditing firms to ensure compliance with ISA and IFRS standards. The authority regularly evaluates the performance of audit firms through its regulatory examination teams, recognising the critical role these firms play in safeguarding investors and other stakeholders by providing accurate

rate and reliable financial information.

The FSA urged all audit firms to maintain high standards of professionalism and integrity when reviewing and auditing financial accounts. The authority also emphasised the importance of conducting continuous internal quality reviews in accordance with ISQM-1, ISQM-2, and ISA-220 standards to ensure compliance with regulatory and professional requirements, thus avoiding any legal repercussions.

Galfar secures RO117mn contract from Nama

Our Correspondent Muscat

Galfar Engineering and Contracting Company announced that it has been awarded a major contract worth RO117mn by Nama Water Services Company. The contract is for the construction of water distribution networks in the Dhahirah Governorate.

'We are pleased to inform our esteemed shareholders that Nama Water Services has awarded Galfar the tender (design and build) for the construction of water distribution networks for Ibri, Yanqul, and Dank Wilayats in Dhahirah Governorate package 1. The letter of award was accepted on Monday,' Galfar said in a disclosure to the Muscat Stock Exchange.

The company added, 'The value of this project is approximately RO117mn, with an execution period of 44 months from the commencement date.'

Galfar noted that this contract will further strengthen its order-book and sustain its market share within the water sector projects. 'We take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Nama Water Services for the confidence placed in Galfar through the award of this project,' the company added.

This new contract marks the third major contract Galfar has secured within less than a month.



Galfar said that this contract will further strengthen its order-book and sustain its market share within the water sector projects

On July 30, Galfar was awarded a contract for the expansion of the Raysut Water reclamation plant by Nama Dhofar Services Company in the Dhofar Governorate. The company said that this project is valued at approximately RO35mn, with an execution period of 36

months from the commencement date.

On August 11, Galfar secured a five-year service contract worth RO18.5mn from Occidental Oman (Oxy), the largest independent oil producer in the sultanate. This contract includes an option for a two-year extension, with an estimated additional value of RO6.5mn.

Galfar also secured contracts of significant value during the first half of 2024, which boosted the company's order-book. As of June 30, 2024, Galfar's order-book reached to RO816mn, compared to RO644mn a year ago.

'This strong order-book provides a positive outlook for the company's future in terms of

sustainability, growth, and market share. The improvement in our order-book came as a result of new project awards totaling RO279mn, which are strengthening the company's position in the oil and gas and Infrastructure sectors,' Galfar noted in its financial report submitted to the Muscat Stock Exchange.

In the first half of 2024, Galfar generated significantly higher sales revenue and continued to deliver positive operating results. The parent company generated revenue of RO128.9mn, an increase of 10.8% compared to the previous year. It also achieved a net profit of RO0.86mn, compared to RO1.24mn for the same period last year.



Oman-China Economic Exchange Forum explores investment and trade opportunities

Muscat – A forum on economic and commercial exchange between Oman and China kicked off on Monday in Muscat. Organised by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the forum explored major opportunities for establishing investment projects in vital sectors, notably technology

and digital transition.

The forum allowed Chinese investors and their Omani counterparts to elaborate on chances to optimise investment opportunities across different sectors, including means of supporting digital transition initiatives.

Thuraya Ahmed al Balushi, Director of Economic Diversification Investments at the Oman Investment Authority (OIA), said that the forum provided a step forward to consolidate cooperation between business communities in Oman and China.

During the meeting, the OIA outlined its investments in Oman and abroad, while the Chinese delegation showcased the investment opportunities available in China.

The forum aimed to encourage Chinese investors to utilise Oman's national initiatives aimed to attract foreign direct investment. It also explained the incentives provided by the sultanate for investors.

ONA

CBO issues RO50mn treasury bills

Our Correspondent Muscat

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) on Monday announced the issuance of government treasury bills worth RO50mn.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO10mn, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price and minimum accepted price both reached RO99.635 for every RO100 bill. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.7580% and 4.7754%, respectively.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO18.06mn, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached RO98.769 for every RO100 bill, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO98.765. The



average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.9391% and 5.0007%, respectively.

On the other hand, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO21.94mn, for a maturity period of 182 days. The average accepted price reached RO97.522 for every RO100 bill, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO97.520. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.9690% and 5.0953%, respectively.

The interest rate on the

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

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

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

South China Sea tension threat to global trade

The South China Sea is a vital crossroads for both intra-Asian trade as well as for commerce with the rest of the world, especially Europe, the Middle East and Africa

Nik Martin

The post-COVID era has been punishing for global trade. Lock-downs and factory closures sparked supply chain delays worldwide and helped fuel decades-high inflation. Attacks on shipping by Yemen-based Houthis over the past 10 months have forced a rerouting of container vessels from the Red Sea via Africa. And now China's military standoffs in the South China Sea could also impact the smooth flow of trade.

Making up part of the western Pacific Ocean, the South China Sea sits between southern China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Malaysia.

About a third of global maritime trade passes through the 3.5mn sqkm seaway annually, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Around 40% of petroleum products traded globally are delivered via the sea every year.

In 2016, an estimated \$3.6tn worth of goods and commodities travelled the seaway, according to the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Another estimate put the figure as high as \$5.3tn.

Tens of thousands of cargo vessels move through the South China Sea every year, carrying around 40% of China's, a third of India's and 20% of Japan's trade with the rest of the world, according to CSIS data.

Out of all of Asia, the three countries' economic security is most closely tied to the smooth running of the waterway. The South China Sea is a vital crossroads for both intra-Asian trade as well as for commerce with the rest of the world, especially Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Controversial issue

Beijing claims almost all of the South China Sea as its own, angering its neighbours who say China's territorial ambitions cut into their exclusive economic



zones. China ignored a 2016 ruling by an international arbitration court in The Hague, Netherlands, that Beijing has no legal or historical basis for its expansive claims under international law.

The Chinese military has staged increasingly aggressive actions in the seaway recently, including clashes with Filipino ships, fuelling fears of a full-scale conflict. The United States has repeatedly warned that it is obli-

gated to defend the Philippines if the Filipino military were to be attacked, including in the South China Sea.

Vietnam filed a claim last month with the United Nations for an extended continental shelf beyond the current 200 nautical miles (370km) in the seaway. The Philippines made a similar move in June.

China also regards Taiwan, which split with the mainland at

the end of a civil war 75 years ago, as a renegade province with which it must eventually be reunified. Concerns that Beijing may use military force to bring the democratic island under its control have further raised tensions in the South China Sea.

The South China Sea is estimated to hold about 5.38tn cubic meters of proven and probable natural gas and 11bn barrels of oil reserves, according to the US En-

ergy Information Administration.

The disputed waters also contain large deposits of rare-earth minerals crucial to China's technological ambitions, including electric vehicle batteries and advanced electronics.

If tensions between China and its neighbours deteriorate further, it could open a third front in the global shipping crisis. Maritime firms may look to avoid sections of the South China Sea.

Subsequent hold-ups and price hikes could cause shortages of goods and commodities and cut vital revenue to key Asian ports, including those in Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan.

Chokepoint in South China Sea

While the main current tensions are between China, the Philippines and Taiwan, the real threat to trade in the South China Sea could come in the Malacca Strait, which lies further south between Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore.

Last year, 23.7mn barrels of oil and petroleum products were moved through the strait per day, according to the US Energy Information Administration (EIA). The figure was 13% higher than through the Strait of Hormuz.

The Malacca Strait is just 64km wide at its narrowest point and is already vulnerable to congestion and collisions. Over the years, the waterway has seen many incidents of robbery and piracy.

Some geopolitical and military experts have predicted that if China were to invade Taiwan, for example, the US and its allies could blockade the Malacca Strait, limiting Chinese access to oil as well as exports from Asia's largest economy. DW

Bank of Japan chief says global financial markets remain unstable

Tokyo, Japan – Bank of Japan chief Kazuo Ueda said that financial markets remain "unstable," adding he will watch their developments "with extremely high" vigilance after stocks showed volatile moves earlier this month following the BOJ's latest interest rate hike.

"There is no change in our basic stance to adjust the degree of monetary easing" if the central bank confirms that its 2% inflation goal has been attained, Ueda told a parliamentary session.

Regarding the possibility of additional interest rate hikes, the governor said the BOJ will make a decision after cautiously examining the impact of its latest rate hike in July on the economy and prices.

Ueda's stance that the central bank will continue to seek policy normalization sent the yen firmer against the US dollar Friday



Kazuo Ueda

morning, but the rise was limited as he appeared considerate of market developments.

The yen had appreciated sharply after Ueda said on July 31 after deciding on an interest rate hike that rates could be raised further later this year, leading to a historic loss on the Nikkei stock index, coupled with concerns

about the US economy.

Ueda expressed the view that the developments in the Japanese stock market were caused by concerns over a potential US recession following weaker-than-expected economic data.

Also at the session, Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki reiterated

the government's position that the Japanese economy is "not in a state of deflation," but warned of the possibility that it could come back.

On July 31, the BOJ raised its short-term interest rate to around 0.25% from a range of zero and 0.1%, in a further shift toward monetary policy normalization.

The Nikkei benchmark registered its largest-ever point loss on August 5 following the BOJ's decision and Ueda's remarks after its policy meeting, but it ended the following day with a record-high point gain.

Stocks have further recovered after BOJ Deputy Governor Shinichi Uchida expressed a cautious stance on August 7 over monetary tightening, saying the BOJ would not raise interest rates further if financial markets are unstable.

Kyodo News

After UPI, India's central bank will now launch ULI for friction less credit

Bangalore, India – The technology platform for providing "frictionless credit" launched by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) last year as a pilot project will be introduced nationwide soon, said Reserve Banks of India Governor, Shaktikanta Das on Monday.

This technology platform will be named "Unified Lending Interface (ULI)", Das said while speaking in Bengaluru at the event of the Global Conference on Digital Public Infrastructure and Emerging Technologies.

Governor Das said, "Just like UPI transformed the payments ecosystem, we expect that ULI will play a similar role in transforming the lending space in India. The 'new trinity' of JAM-UPI-ULI will be a revolutionary step forward in India's digital infrastructure journey."

The ULI platform facilitates a seamless and consent-based flow of digital information, including even land records of various states, from multiple data service providers to lenders. The technology platform introduced last year as a pilot projects cuts down the time taken for credit appraisal, especially for small and rural borrowers.

Das stated that the ULI architecture has common and stan-



Just like UPI transformed the payments ecosystem, we expect that Unified Lending Interface (ULI) will play a similar role in transforming the lending space in India

SHAKTIKANTA DAS

dardised APIs, designed for a 'plug and play' approach to ensure digital access to information from diverse sources.

"This reduces the complexity of multiple technical integrations. It enables borrowers to get the benefit of seamless delivery of credit, and quicker turnaround time without requiring extensive documentation," the RBI Governor said.

"By digitising access to cus-

tomers' financial and non-financial data that otherwise resided in disparate silos, ULI is expected to cater to large unmet demand for credit across various sectors, particularly for agricultural and MSME borrowers," he stated.

Showing confidence in the newly launched ULI, Das said, "Just like UPI transformed the payments ecosystem, we expect that ULI will play a similar role in transforming the lending space in India." Das remarked that the 'new trinity' of JAM-UPI-ULI will be a revolutionary step forward in India's digital infrastructure journey.

Speaking about the success of Unified Payment Interface (UPI) Das said, "The current ecosystem of digital payments in India offers a bouquet of simple, safe, and secure options for instant or quick transfer of funds, both large and small value, for businesses and individuals."

Das further stated that the apex bank is consistently trying to secure the financial system in the country. "We are constantly working on devising policies, approaches, systems and platforms that will make our financial sector stronger, nimble and customer-centric," Das said. ANI

Oil prices rise as Gaza ceasefire talks stall

London, UK – Oil prices rose on Monday, spurred by hope of an interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve and a prolonged blockade in ceasefire negotiations in the Middle East.

International benchmark Brent crude rose 0.73% to \$78.72 per barrel in morning trade in London, up from the previous session's close of \$78.15.

US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) increased by 0.82% to \$75.44 per barrel, after closing at \$74.83 in the prior session.

On Friday, US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell signaled an interest rate cut at the central bank's upcoming meeting in September. Commodity prices increased after Powell's much-anticipated speech at the annual Jackson Hole symposium in the US state of Wyoming.

A reduction in interest rates in the US, the world's largest oil consuming country, is expected to increase economic activity



and raise oil demand.

Fed Chair Powell said his confidence has grown that inflation is on a sustainable path back to 2%, saying "time has come" for an adjustment in monetary policy.

"The direction of travel is clear, and the timing and pace of rate cuts will depend on incoming data, the evolving outlook, and the balance of risks," he told the annual Jackson Hole symposium. He added that overall, the

economy continues to grow at a solid pace.

The unsuccessful ceasefire negotiations in the Middle East, home to a vast majority of global oil reserves, contributed to price increases and heightened supply concerns among market players.

Despite international ceasefire negotiations, Israel hasn't slowed its attacks on the blockaded Gaza Strip. Since October 7, 2023, the Israeli onslaught has resulted in over 40,400 Palestinian deaths, mostly women and children, and over 93,000 injuries, according to local health authorities.

The latest round of cease-fire talks ended in Cairo on Sunday without an agreement. The Palestinian group Hamas demanded Israel adhere to what was agreed upon on July 2, in accordance with a proposal by US President Joe Biden laid out on May 31 and a UN Security Council resolution.

Agencies

'Unemployment rising in advanced economies'

New York, US – Unemployment rates have been increasing in the past six months in a number of large developed economies, Fitch Ratings said in a report.

Unemployment rates have been increasing in the US, UK, Canada, Germany, Australia and Switzerland, said the rating agency.

The unemployment rate in the US rose to 4.3% in July, from 3.5% a year earlier, while in the UK it increased to 4.2%

in May from 3.8% in November 2023.

In Canada, unemployment jumped to 6.4% in July from 5% in January 2023, and Germany's came in at 3.4% in June from 2.9% in May 2023.

In Australia, it rose to 4.2% in July, from 3.5% in June 2023; in Switzerland it increased to 2.5% in July from 2% in June 2023.

"The ECB, Bank of England, Swiss National Bank and the Bank of Canada have all cut

rates in the last two to three months and US 10-year yields have fallen in anticipation of Federal Reserve rate cuts in the near future," said the report.

"Unemployment remains low by historical standards, but easing labour market conditions are starting to take some pressure off wage inflation. This is helping central banks in advanced economies justify interest rate cuts, which are now gathering pace," Fitch added. Anadolu Agency

MoE, MoHERI hold joint meeting

The joint committee of the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI) held its second meeting last week in the Nizwa Hall at the ministry's General Diwan.

The meeting was chaired by H E Prof Abdullah bin Khamis Ambosaidi, Undersecretary in the Ministry for Education, and by H E Dr Bakhit bin Ahmed al Mahri, Undersecretary in the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

The meeting discussed aspects of joint cooperation and exchange of expertise and information in various aspects between the two ministries in the field of controls and conditions for accepting students in educational specialisations and educational qualification programmes, and the involvement of experts and curriculum specialists in the ministry in joint committees with MoHERI.

The meeting also addressed the creation of post-graduate programmes and studies that are compatible with the new curricula and study paths to prepare specialised teachers, and the extent of readiness for the outputs of the vocational and technical education path in co-ordination with educational institutions to accommodate these outputs to continue university studies in these specialisations according to priority.

It also discussed the development of a description of the new study materials for the

academic year 2024-25 that are compatible with the offered study programmes, and participation in determining the elective materials for grades 9-12 that are compatible with the needs of higher education institutions and the labour market.

The committee also reviewed the cooperation in implementing the 'Work Experience' and 'My Specialisation is My Profession' programmes.

The meeting discussed aspects of joint cooperation and exchange of expertise and information between the two ministries; and the involvement of experts and curriculum specialists in joint committees

The committee also discussed the possibility of MoHERI meeting the MoE's needs for teachers and specialisations for the next five years.

It also discussed ways to develop appropriate plans to provide these needs and to establish lists of students benefiting from the specified study seats for the teaching jobs localisation programme, and other areas of joint cooperation between the two ministries.

Bank Muscat takes part in Salalah Eat Festival

Introduces Khareef Dhofar visitors to various banking services

Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, is participating in the third edition of the Salalah Eat Festival, which currently underway in Al Hafa beach market, with participation of a number of small and medium enterprises.

Bank Muscat's teams are also available in the festival to cater to all enquiries related to the bank's products and services such as accounts, loans, credit cards and more, a release stated.

There will also be a dedicated team to cater to enquiries specific to small and medium enterprises in terms of current account, financing or payment solutions, it added.

The main focus of the festival, which began on August 22, is to strengthen the tourism sector, support small and medium-sized enterprises, and encourage entrepreneurship. It also looks into enrich the visitors' experience with a range of various events and accompanying entertainment offers aimed at various segments of society to enhance the tourist movement in Dhofar governorate.

"The bank is keenly taking part in the Salalah Eat festival, which is attracting large numbers of visitors during the Khareef Dhofar season to enjoy the distinctive atmosphere and spend exceptional times. I would like to extend thanks and appreciation to the organisers of the festival and invite customers to



I would like to extend thanks and appreciation to the organisers of the festival and invite customers to visit our corner to take advantage of the services it offers and enjoy the accompanying events

TAYA EID BAIT SABEEA

visit the Bank Muscat corner to take advantage of the services it offers and enjoy the accompanying events," said Taya Eid Bait Sabeea, deputy general manager - Interior Regions at Bank Muscat.

The Bank Muscat booth offers a variety of services such as those provided to micro, small

and medium enterprises through Najahi Business banking, encompassing collateral-free loans, opening of current accounts and other credit-related facilities to grow their businesses.

Bank Muscat's sales team available at the booth delightedly answers visitors queries and provide immediate services like chil-

dren, Floosi and Shababi accounts opening, in addition to credit cards enquiries and requests which bears exclusive offers and benefits for customers.

The booth displays various payment solutions provided by Bank Muscat featured with speed and security catering to

the business owners' requirements. Customers will get a closer look to the Tap'N'Go payment service available on various Android devices that are enabled with the Near Field Communication (NFC) feature. The service facilitates transactions of payment collection by eliminating the need of having a physical terminal to accept payments.

Bank Muscat is keen to adopt top-notch banking services, enabling customers to complete their transactions safely in no time. The innovative digital solutions are designed to meet customers' needs and fulfill their changing requirements.

The bank's booth witnesses a great turnout of Khareef Dhofar visitors, offering a variety of entertaining activities such as a photo zone, games zone, and VR zone. Visitors to the Bank Muscat's booth will have the opportunity to enter the raffle draw and win valuable prizes, the bank informed.

Bank Muscat attaches great importance to participating in such events, as part of its commitment to introduce customers to the various banking services it provides on the one hand, and to bring these services closer to them on the other hand.

Over the past years, Bank Muscat has succeeded in supporting a number of initiatives and events aimed at promoting tourism and supporting national development priorities.

Oman hosts regional meeting on medical laboratory supplies

The Sultanate of Oman hosted the meeting of the Gulf Health Council's Committee for Updating and Tendering the Guidelines of Medical Laboratory Supplies & Blood Transfusion Services (No 22), which began at the Hormuz Grand Hotel, Muscat, on Sunday.

The five-day meeting will work on updating the guidelines, preparing the tender for medical laboratory supplies, reviewing recommendations from previous technical committee meetings, and discussing the items listed in the guidelines.

They will consider proposals from member countries for



adding, modifying, or removing items to ensure the procurement of high-quality products at competitive prices, aiming to create a consistent healthcare system across the GCC.

The meeting will also cover members' technical remarks regarding item-related issues, review the general and technical conditions of the tender, discuss technical specifications, supply conditions, reports of non-compliance by companies with delivery deadlines. Additionally, it will address the list of companies recommended for participation by member states.

Remarkable attendance at Sports Spark

The Sports Spark activities, organised by Muscat governorate in cooperation with the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, concluded on Saturday, with remarkable success after a busy month of sports and entertainment activities that extended from July 25 to August 24.

The 'Sports Spark' event succeeded to achieve its purposes effectively by the partnership activation between the public and private sectors to organise a united sporting and enjoyable event by the private sector experiences' benefit in events' organisation and management.

The event presented various activities that included all age groups. The activities included 23 leagues and sports competitions in which more than 500 competitors participated. Besides, a summer camp's organisation for children in which more than 300 children participated weekly. These various activities also contributed to make the sports' culture as a lifestyle, and to



entertainment. It supported Muscat governorate's efforts to be a lively centre that hosts activities that strengthen social links and provide a safe and enjoyable environment for everyone.

The Sports Spark event offered added value on various levels. It contributed to form about 150 job opportunities during the event period, which helped provide jobs for Omani youth and enhance economic activity in the governorate.

Additionally, the event offered an opportunity for 16 small and medium enterprises to benefit from the event, which helped it improve its presence in the local market. Therefore, this reflects Muscat Governorate and its partners' commitment to organize the event to support and enable small and medium enterprises through effective partnerships.

The 'Sports Spark' event witnessed a wide audience that at-

tract more than 30,000 visitors for a full month. This large attendance reflects the activities' variety and the organisation quality. It highlights the event's ability to attract various society's groups.

About 250 individuals played an essential role to make this event successful, in cooperation with the participating institutions. Therefore, it contributed to offer a notable experience that visitors and participants praise it greatly.

Ooredoo's Maktabi ties up with TallyPrime to boost operations

Ooredoo's office-in-a-box solution, Maktabi has teamed up with Tally Solutions, the easy-to-use, affordable, and integrated business management software, to help small businesses digitise their accounting and bookkeeping processes.

Maktabi and Maktabi Plus are Ooredoo's one-stop fixed line and mobile communication solutions, while TallyPrime is an integrated business management software tool, provided by Tally Solutions. TallyPrime assists SMEs with managing their accounting, invoicing, inventory and payroll easily and efficiently. The software also provides insightful reports to help business owners with decision-making and growing their business, all the while with the peace of mind of staying compliant with VAT and other finance regulations.

Saied al Lawati, Director of Business Marketing at Ooredoo, said, "Like Maktabi, TallyPrime is



TallyPrime is a simplified and easy-to-use digital solution that can be used by anyone - from the start-up SoHo to the rapidly expanding SME

SAIED ALLAWATI

a simplified and easy-to-use digital solution that can be used by anyone running a business, from the start-up SoHo to the rapidly expanding SME. It's easy to use,

even for the non-tech savvy, and those with no accounting background.

"Aligned with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, this powerhouse partnership supports the digital transformation of entities and helps to save entrepreneurs time and money, so they can focus on their growth and stability."

Tally Solutions has been simplifying financial operations for SMEs since its inception in 1986. Accredited by the local tax authorities FTA in the United Arab Emirates and the GAZT in Saudi Arabia, the company has had a strong presence in the GCC for the last decade.

With the trust of over two million businesses worldwide, it meets the needs of more than seven million users across industries in over 100 countries.

Starting from just RO29 per month, Ooredoo offers two plans - Maktabi and Maktabi Plus.

23 dead, nearly 6mn affected by floods in Bangladesh

Dhaka, Bangladesh - The floods in parts of Bangladesh have left 23 people dead, affected nearly six million people, and displaced hundreds of thousands of families.

According to the daily disaster situation report by the country's National Disaster Response Coordination Centre (NDRCC) under the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, 57,01,204 people were affected due to floods in 11 out of the country's total 64 districts as of Monday afternoon.

The report published on the ministry website said 23 people died in flooding in the country

while 12,38,048 families remained marooned in the 11 districts. Two people were also reported missing.

TV reports showed that wide areas of land are underwater in parts of Bangladesh as major rivers overflowed since last week.

Floods also reportedly caused widespread damage to habitation, crops, roads and highways across vast swathes of the country.

Bangladeshi interim government's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus on Sunday asked all concerned to continue their robust efforts in rescuing stranded



57,01,204 people were affected due to floods in 11 out of the country's total 64 districts as of Monday afternoon

people, providing emergency healthcare and extending all-out cooperation for the flood victims.

Authorities have rushed teams of disaster response forces to carry out rescue operations, distribute relief materials, and supervise centres where around half a million flood-affected people have taken shelter.

In the face of the significant challenges posed by the flooding in Bangladesh, the Chinese Embassy in Bangladesh donated ready-to-eat meals, drinking water, and essential living supplies to the hardest-hit area of Feni on Sunday.

Chinese Ambassador to

Bangladesh Yao Wen met with Chairman of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society M U Kabir Chowdhury and donated US\$100,000 on behalf of the Red Cross Society of China to assist flood victims.

During a ceremony, Yao said that the Chinese government and people are deeply concerned and empathise with the people of Bangladesh. "As a country that also frequently suffers from natural disasters, China extends its sincere sympathies to the interim government and the people of Bangladesh," he said.

Xinhua



Wild pheasants pushed to the edge in Pakistan

Karachi, Pakistan - Pakistan is fast losing several rare wild pheasant species due to a string of threats including habitat degradation, hunting, climate change and human intervention, with wildlife experts warning that their extinction would be 'disastrous' for ecosystems and biodiversity.

Due to increasing habitat loss driven by climate change, deforestation and poaching, the population of wild pheasants in Pakistan is under persistent threat, according to Mohebullah Naveed, a wildlife expert in the capital Islamabad.

"Pheasants cannot thrive without their habitat," Naveed, who is associated with a pheasant conservation project, told Anadolu.

Depletion of forest cover due to climate change and increasing housing and agriculture needs are primary reasons for the wild birds' dwindling numbers, he said.

While all native pheasant species are protected under local wildlife laws, hunting and poaching are an equally major threat to two main pheasant species in Pakistan, he said.

"Poaching and hunting are mostly done by locals living close to the (pheasant) habitats. They enjoy this as a sport, although hunting pheasants is illegal," said Naveed, who serves as a wildlife conservation officer with the Himalayan Wildlife Foundation, an Islamabad-based wildlife group.

Another motive behind the poaching and hunting of pheasants is their prized bush meat and beautiful feathers that are used in traditional hats in parts of northern Pakistan, he said.

In addition, disturbances caused during the collection of medicinal plants in the summer are also a factor, he added.

Endangered and vulnerable

Pakistan is home to six pheasant species: the western horned tragopan (Tragopan melanocephalus), Himalayan

monal (Lophura impejanus), koklass pheasant (Pucrasia macrolopha), white-crested kalij (Lophura leucomelanos), Indian peafowl (Pavo cristatus) and cheer pheasant (Catreus wallichii).

Sprawling forests in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the northern Gilgit-Baltistan region are home to wild pheasants.

Cheer pheasants and western horned tragopans are the rarest and most threatened species in Pakistan, while others still have viable populations, Muhammad Naeem Awan, director of research and conservation at the World Pheasant Association's Pakistan chapter, told Anadolu.

These two species have been classified as 'endangered'

Depletion of forest cover due to climate change and increasing housing and agriculture needs are primary reasons for the birds' dwindling numbers

and 'vulnerable' and are on the Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), according to Awan, who is also a member of the IUCN's Species Survival Commission.

"The population of these two species is on the decline and the situation demands urgent measures," he warned, asserting that they should be declared 'priority species' by the government to bolster efforts to revive their population.

Public awareness and engagement in conservation efforts are also essential for 'long-term success', he said.

Supporting the argument, Naveed called for habitat preservation and restoration to be a top priority.

Anadolu Agency

At least 56 killed in multiple terrorist attacks in Pakistan

Karachi, Pakistan - At least 56 people, including 12 terrorists, were killed in multiple clashes and attacks that lasted several hours in southwest and northwest Pakistan, officials and local media reported on Monday.

Suspected militants killed 23 passengers in southwestern Balochistan province on Monday morning after forcing them to disembark from several vehicles, the latest in a string of heinous terrorist incidents in the province.

The incident occurred near the Musakhel district, where heavily armed militants blocked a key road, stopped several vehicles, and offloaded passengers before spraying bullets.

Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti confirmed the incident, saying the terrorists targeted 'innocent' people, vowing that they and their 'facilitators' will be brought to justice.

According to police, the attackers set at least 10 vehicles on fire before fleeing.

Local broadcaster Geo News aired footage of several charred and partially charred vehicles lining the road.

Shahid Rind, a Balochistan government spokeswoman, told reporters that the terrorists searched buses and trucks and checked the passengers' identities before killing them. The deceased are said to be from the northeastern Punjab province.

Meanwhile, another 10 people, including five security personnel and as many citizens, were killed in a night-long clash between militants and police on the National Highway in Balochistan's Qalat district,



According to police, the attackers set at least 10 vehicles on fire before fleeing

The incident occurred near the Musakhel district, where militants blocked a key road, stopped several vehicles, and offloaded passengers before spraying bullets

Qalat City Police chief Dostin Dashti told reporters.

Separately, local police found four bullet-riddled bodies in the mountains of Bolan district.

Police said 12 attackers have so far been killed and several injured in clashes. Separately, armed assailants stormed and took control of a police station in the province's Mastung district for several hours.

They set fire to the record and

several vehicles that were parked inside the police station.

The police said they regained control of the police station, forcing the attackers to flee.

However, the body of an unknown man has been found outside the police station.

Meanwhile, a bomb blast in the Bolan district destroyed a key railway bridge, killing two people and halting rail traffic between Balochistan and other

provinces.

No group has claimed responsibility for the recent attacks. However, security forces point the finger at outlawed Baloch separatists who have long targeted security forces and non-Baloch residents of the province.

In northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, at least four people were killed and several injured in a remote-controlled bomb blast in Rizmak town of North Waziristan tribal district, which borders Afghanistan.

Pakistan has seen a surge in terror attacks in recent years, particularly in the provinces of northwestern Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa and southwestern Balochistan.

Mineral-rich Balochistan is Pakistan's largest but poorest province. Security forces have long faced a low-intensity rebellion from Baloch separatists, who claim the province has been denied major developments in the province.

The province is also a key route for the US\$64bn China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, which aims to connect China's strategically important northwestern Xinxiang province with Balochistan's Gwadar port via a network of roads, railways, and pipelines for cargo, oil, and gas transportation.

Anadolu Agency

Philippines reports 2 new mpox cases

Manila, The Philippines - The Philippines has reported two new cases of mpox, raising the number of active cases in the country to three this year, the Health Ministry said on Monday.

The new cases include two men in their mid-30s, one of whom is from the capital Manila, local broadcaster ABS-CBN News reported.

"Both have MPXV Clade II, which is the milder form of the mpox virus," Albert Domingo, a spokesperson for the Department of Health said.

The Philippines reported its first mpox case of this year last week. The country has recorded 12 mpox cases since July 2022.

The WHO has declared the mpox situation a 'public health emergency of international concern'. Since the beginning of 2024, over a dozen African countries



The Philippines reported its first mpox case of this year last week

tries have reported the disease, with the Democratic Republic of Congo accounting for more than 90 per cent of reported cases.

The variant of mpox is believed to be both more contagious and more deadly than the

'clade 2' variant, which was responsible for the global outbreak that began in 2022.

Formerly known as monkeypox, mpox is a viral disease that can spread through close contact and contaminated materials like

Since the beginning of 2024, over a dozen African countries have reported the disease, with the Democratic Republic of Congo accounting for more than 90 per cent of the reported cases

sheets, clothing and needles, according to WHO.

Cases in Indonesia

Meanwhile, Indonesia has recorded 88 cases of mpox since it was first detected in August

2022, according to Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin on Monday.

In 2024 alone, the number of mpox cases has reached 14.

"The cases in Indonesia are still under control, with a higher prevalence of the Clade IIB variant, which is recoverable and has a low fatality rate. All those who were sick have recovered," Sadikin told reporters in Jakarta.

Jakarta has reported the highest number of mpox cases at 59, followed by West Java with 13, Banten with nine, East Java and Yogyakarta each with three cases, and Riau with one case.

The government is readying 4,450 vaccine doses for 2,225 individuals, with each person slated to receive two doses to curb further spread. In 2023, 495 individuals were vaccinated.

Agencies

Israeli evacuation orders force around 250,000 Gazans to flee Deir al-Balah

Gaza City, Palestine - Israeli evacuation orders have forced around 250,000 Palestinian civilians to flee their neighbourhoods in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip, according to local authorities on Monday.

The Israeli army on Sunday demanded Palestinians evacuate an area east of Deir al-Balah in central Gaza that was previously designated as a 'humanitarian area' by the military.

"The new evacuation orders have created a new tragedy and deepened the suffering of the people of Deir al-Balah," the municipal office said in a statement.

According to the office, the city was home to around half of Gaza's population. The evacuation orders 'have caused the forced displacement of about 250,000 people and put 25 shelters out of service', it added.

The office said that four new water wells were forced out of service due to Israeli attacks in the area. "The number of non-operational wells has reached 14, which used to supply water to about 70 per cent of the city's population," it said.

"This will exacerbate the residents' conditions and make it difficult for them to access water," the office warned.

The municipal office warned that the Israeli evacuation orders also 'threaten a main water reservoir in the city, which is the only remaining reservoir after two others went out of service due to Israeli attacks'.

On Tuesday, United Nations spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric warned of the dangers posed by Israeli evacuation orders on residents and displaced civilians in Gaza.



Deir al-Balah in central Gaza was previously designated as a 'humanitarian area' by the Israeli military

total area of the enclave.

7 fishermen killed

At least seven fishermen were killed and several others injured in an Israeli drone strike near Gaza City beach on Monday, according to a medical source.

The strike targeted the fishermen as they were fishing, the source told Anadolu. The drone fired a missile into a group of fishermen as they gathered on Gaza City beach, witnesses said.

Death toll rises to 40,435

At least 30 more Palestinians were killed in Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip, bringing the overall death toll since last October 7 to 40,435, the Health Ministry in the enclave said on Monday.

A ministry statement added that some 93,534 other people have been injured in the assault.

"Israeli forces killed 30 people and injured 66 others in two 'massacres' of families in the last 24 hours," the ministry said.

"Many people are still trapped under the rubble and on the roads as rescuers are unable to reach them," it added.

Anadolu Agency

UN nuclear agency to inspect Kursk plant

Istanbul, Turkey - The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) announced on Monday that he will personally lead a mission that would inspect the situation at the Kursk Nuclear Power Plant, which Russia claimed Ukraine tried targeting in a drone attack last week.

"Given the serious situation, I am personally leading the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) mission to the Kursk Nuclear Power Plant (KNPP) in the Russian Federation," Rafael Grossi said in a statement published by the IAEA.

Last Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin claimed Ukraine tried to strike the Kursk Nuclear Power Plant, and that the IAEA had been informed of the situation and promised to send specialists to assess the situation at the plant.

Ukrainian authorities have not commented on Putin's claim, and independent verification of the claim is difficult due to the ongoing conflict. Grossi said that he has been closely following developments on the ground, adding that the IAEA 'will be there' when



the international community needs an independent assessment of the safety and security of a nuclear facility.

"This is an evolving situation, and it is vital when I arrive at the plant tomorrow that I see firsthand the situation and discuss modalities for further activities as may be needed to evaluate the nuclear safety and security conditions of the KNPP," he said.

The Kursk Nuclear Power Plant, located in the town of Kurchatov, is almost 60km (about 37 miles) from the Ukrainian border.

The broader Kursk region has been the site of an 'operation' by Kyiv since the night of August 5-6, when Ukrainian forces entered

the region near the town of Sudzha, about 10km (6.2 miles) from the border.

Putin accused Kyiv of carrying out a 'large-scale provocation' and 'indiscriminate shooting', defining the incursion as a 'terrorist attack'.

Days later, Zelensky admitted it was an 'operation' by Ukraine's troops, specifying that the goal is to create a 'buffer zone' against Russian attacks.

On August 17, Russia's State Nuclear Energy Corporation Rosatom indicated that the situation around the Kursk Nuclear Power Plant had deteriorated due to Ukrainian attacks.

Anadolu Agency

London fire forces 100 residents to evacuate

London, UK - A fire broke out in the early hours of Monday in an apartment building in Dagenham, east London, forcing the evacuation of over 100 people.

London Fire Commissioner Andy Roe said on Monday that the London Fire Brigade (LFB) had declared a major incident, which would allow them to focus its resources on the fire.

The incident occurred at 2:44am, while many residents

were sleeping. By around 7:30am, heavy smoke was still emanating from the structure and local residents were advised to keep windows and doors closed.

Some 40 fire engines and 225 firefighters tackled the fire at the building, which engulfed both residential and commercial units. But the cause of the fire is still unknown.

"The building has a number of fire safety issues known to London Fire Brigade," Roe said.

"A full simultaneous evacuation of the building was immediately carried out and a significant search and rescue operation is under way," he added.

The London Ambulance Service said four people were injured and treated at the scene, while two others were taken to the hospital.

"The brigade has stood up full strategic arrangements to deal with the incident and a rest centre has been set up at Becontree Health and Leisure Centre," LFB said, in the aftermath of the evacuation.

Local Member of Parliament Margaret Mullane credited the swift response of the emergency services for the blaze resulting only in 'minimal' injuries.

DW

US defence chief orders two carrier strike groups to remain in Middle East

Washington, D.C., US - US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin ordered two American carrier strike groups to remain in the Middle East on Sunday after Israel and Hezbollah exchanged intense cross-border fire overnight.

The announcement came in the Pentagon's readout of Austin's call with Yoav Gallant, his Israeli counterpart.

During the call, Austin discussed 'Israeli actions to defend against attacks by Lebanese Hezbollah', and 'reiterated Israel's right to defend itself and the United States' ironclad resolve to support Israel's defence against threats from Iran and its regional partners and proxies', spokesperson Major General Pat Ryder said in a statement.

"As part of that support, the Secretary has ordered the presence of two Carrier Strike Groups to remain in the region. The Secretary also expressed support for completing negotiations on a ceasefire and hostage-release deal," added Ryder. He used a variant spelling for 'Hezbollah'.

The US has previously acknowledged the deployment of the USS Abraham Lincoln and the USS Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Groups to the region.



The United States has previously acknowledged the deployment of the USS Abraham Lincoln and the USS Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Groups to the region

group's 'success' in its military response to Israel's assassination of top commander Fuad Shukr, accusing Tel Aviv of 'lying and failing'.

"We identified the Galilot base as the primary target of our operation. It houses Unit 8200, which is responsible for intelligence gathering and espionage. The base is located 110km (68 miles) from the Lebanese border and only 1,500 metres (0.93 miles) from Tel Aviv," Nasrallah said in a televised speech.

"Our operation today was in two phases. In the first phase, we launched 340 Katyusha rockets

targeting 12 sites and military barracks in northern Israel and the occupied Golan Heights. In the second phase, we directed dozens of drones towards military targets in the depth of enemy territory."

Regarding the results of the attack, he said 'our data indicates that a significant number of drones successfully reached the two specified targets with precision, but the enemy remains secretive as usual'.

"We focused on hitting sites connected to military intelligence and the Israeli Air Force because

of their involvement in the assassination of the leader Shukr," he added.

Israeli warplanes launched over 40 airstrikes on southern Lebanon early on Sunday in the most severe attack since cross-border attacks with Hezbollah began on October 8, 2023. The Israeli army claimed that the strikes aimed to prevent an impending Hezbollah attack.

The Lebanese group said it launched hundreds of missiles and drones deep into Israel in the 'first phase' of its response to last month's assassination of Shukr in the capital Beirut.

Since October 8, 2023, Hezbollah has been engaged in daily exchanges of fire with Israeli army across the Blue Line that marks the frontier between south Lebanon and northern Israel.

Anadolu Agency

REMEMBERING MOTHER TERESA



Missionaries of Charity sisters, nuns and devotees pay obeisance to Mother Teresa at her birth anniversary, in Kolkata, India on Monday (ANI)

Ukraine's Zelensky urges Western partners to step up their assistance

Zelensky said America, UK, France, and other partners have the power to help stop the terror

Kyiv, Ukraine - Ukraine president, Volodymyr Zelensky on Monday issued another plea to Western partners to step up their assistance. "The time for decisive action is now," he said after Russia launched a 'massive' missile and drone attack aimed at energy infrastructure across Ukraine overnight into Monday, CNN reported, citing Ukrainian officials statements.

The massive attack killed at least four people and caused power outages in several cities.

Zelensky shared a video on X and described the attack as 'one of the largest attacks - a combined strike, involving over a hundred missiles of various types and around a hundred 'Shaheds'.

"Across Ukraine, we could do much more to protect lives if the aviation of our European neighbours operated in concert with our F-16s and air defence systems. If such unity has proven ef-



Ukraine on Monday said that at least four people were killed as 15 regions were affected by Russian airstrikes that targeted the country's energy infrastructure

fective in the Middle East, it must work in Europe too," the Ukrainian leader stressed.

"Ukraine cannot be constrained in its long-range capabilities when the terrorists face no such limitations," he said, adding: "America, Britain, France, and our other partners have the power to

help us stop this terror. The time for decisive action is now."

Further, Zelensky also slammed Russian President Vladimir Putin and stated: "Putin can only act within the limits the world sets for him."

According to CNN, Ukraine's air force said it detected dozens

of missiles and drones targeting almost all regions of the country, from the frontline eastern regions of Kharkiv and Dnipro to the southern port city of Odesa, as well as the capital, Kyiv.

"Russian terrorists have once again targeted energy infrastructure," Ukrainian Prime Minister

Denys Shmyhal wrote on Monday on Telegram.

At least 15 regions were targeted by a combination of drones, cruise missiles and hypersonic Kinzhal missiles, he said.

Ukraine's national energy company, Ukrenergo, has been

forced to implement emergency power cuts to stabilise the system, Shmyhal said, as per CNN. Power outages have been recorded in several cities, including Kyiv and Dnipro, according to Serhii Kovalenko, chief executive of the Yasno energy company.

Ukraine had been bracing for

a major Russian attack for weeks, in response to Kyiv's shock incursion into the border region of Kursk - the first foreign invasion of Russia since World War II.

Ahead of Ukraine's Independence Day on August 24, the US Embassy in Kyiv had warned of an increased risk of Russian drone and missile attacks.

The overnight assault came hours after Ukraine's foreign ministry called on Belarus to withdraw what it described as a 'significant' buildup of Belarusian forces and equipment at their shared border.

Kyiv also reported that former Wagner mercenaries were among the troops at the border and urged Minsk 'not to make tragic mistakes for their country under Moscow's pressure'.

Over two-and-a-half years of war, Russia has repeatedly targeted Ukraine's energy infrastructure, attempting to plunge its citizens into darkness and use freezing winter temperatures as a weapon of war. After Monday's attack, Ukraine's Energy Minister Herman Halushchenko said 'the energy sector is in the crosshairs' and the extent of the damage was being investigated.

Deaths have been reported in the Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Volyn and Zhytomyr regions, according to Ukrainian authorities.

ANI

India: Centre announces five new districts in Ladakh

New Delhi, India - The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Monday announced the creation of five new districts in Ladakh and simultaneously instructed the Union Territory (UT) administration to establish a committee for evaluating various aspects related to the new districts to ensure that all details are carefully reviewed and addressed.

The committee will evaluate various aspects related to these new districts - Zaskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra, and Changthang - such as headquarters, boundaries, structure, creation of posts, and any other aspect related to the formation of the districts and submit its report within three months.

After receiving the committee's report, the Union Territory of Ladakh will send a final proposal to the MHA for further action based on this re-

port. The newly established districts aim to bring governance and development directly to the people's doorsteps, ensuring that the benefits of progress reach every corner of this remote and diverse landscape, according to Home Minister Amit Shah.

Shah took to X to announce the initiative: "In pursuit of PM @narendramodi Ji's vision to build a developed and prosperous Ladakh, the MHA has decided to create five new districts in the union territory. The new districts, namely Zaskar, Drass, Sham, Nubra and Changthang, will take the benefits meant for the people to their doorsteps by bolstering governance in every nook and cranny."

Shah further said that the Modi government is committed to creating abundant opportunities for the people of Ladakh.

ANI

Will not allow terrorists to destroy peaceful coexistence: Olaf Scholz

Berlin, Germany - Germany will not allow terrorists to destroy peaceful coexistence in the country, Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Monday.

He made the remarks during a visit to the city of Solingen, where a stabbing attack claimed the lives of three people and left eight others injured.

"That was terrorism, terrorism against all of us, by threatening our lives, our coexistence, the way we live," he told reporters, after visiting the square where the attack occurred on Friday night.

"They are threatening the peaceful coexistence of us all, the peaceful coexistence of Christians, Jews and Muslims. We are all one country that sticks together, and we will not let these evil criminals destroy this cohesion, and we will take tough and harsh action against them," Scholz said.

The incident claimed the lives of two men, aged 67 and 56, and a woman, aged 56.



We are all one country that sticks together, and we will not let these evil criminals destroy this cohesion, and we will take tough and harsh action against them

OLAF SCHOLZ

It stunned Germany and led opposition parties to demand stricter immigration laws.

The suspect, who randomly attacked people during a live

music show in Solingen's city centre, turned himself in to police on Saturday.

He was identified by officials as Issa Al H, a 26-year-old Syrian,

who was suspected of being a member of the Daesh/ISIS terrorist group, and following their radical ideology.

Authorities have said the suspect came to Germany in 2022, but he did not qualify for refugee status in the country under immigration rules. He was supposed to be deported last year to Bulgaria, the first country he entered in the EU.

In a statement, prosecutors said that due to his 'radical Islamist convictions, (the suspect) decided to kill as many people as possible at the Solingen city festival'. The suspect went on a significant manhunt before turning himself in. The man stated 'I'm the one you're looking for', to the officers while covered in blood, according to the daily Bild, reported CNN. Because of the event, authorities had previously searched a refugee shelter. A 15-year-old kid was also taken into custody by the police in relation to the incident.

Agencies



US Vice President Kamala Harris

Kamala Harris raises \$540mn in campaign donations

Washington, D.C., US - US Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris has raised US\$540mn in campaign donations since unexpectedly announcing her candidacy on July 21, local media reported on Sunday.

Harris's campaign chair Jen O'Malley Dillon made the announcement after the Democratic Party convention in the Midwestern metropolis of Chicago, according to The Hill online.

Dillon announced that Harris' campaign raised an additional US\$82mn during the four-day convention, bringing the total to US\$540mn.

She also noted a significant increase in donors and reported that 200,000 new volunteers have signed up since the convention began.

A third of the donations came from first-time contributors, with teachers and nurses being the top donor professions, she said.

The Democratic National Convention was held in Chicago last Monday through Friday.

After President Joe Biden's endorsement of her presidential bid, Harris raised US\$81mn in the first 24 hours, the highest single-day fundraising amount on record.

Anadolu Agency

Namibian woman finds niche by leveraging traditional cuisine

Windhoek, Namibia - In an informal settlement about 10km from the city centre of Windhoek, the Namibian capital, a local woman entrepreneur is leveraging traditional food to transform the business scene in the area and has achieved success via catering business.

Saima Mukwillongo, the owner of Sai's Kitchen, said she established the eatery in 2017 in the informal settlement popularly known as Havana, to redefine the often overlooked local cuisine and create employment, which is a challenge in Namibia.

According to the Namibia Statistics Agency, the country's unemployment rate stands at

33.4 per cent.

The food outlet, which is named after the first three letters of the founder's name, offers traditional meals using indigenous ingredients. The menu includes dishes made with spinach, peas, tripe, marula oil, chicken, mahangu (pearl millet), maize porridge, and various types of meat. It provides a range of services, including sit-down dining, takeout, delivery, and event catering.

"It is also about taking people back to their cultural roots and making traditional food easily accessible in an urban setting," she said in a recent interview.

Mukwillongo developed her culinary skills while working at a



An employee serves traditional dish at Sai's Kitchen in Windhoek (Xinhua)

restaurant in Windhoek during her second year of studies at the International University of Management, where she was pursuing a degree in HIV/AIDS management.

"While I wanted to earn money to offset costs, it sparked my interest in food, something I was not really good at. Growing up here, I played more with my boy siblings as I am the only girl child," she said.

According to the 30-year-old mother, her other goal was to redefine business models in informal settlements, which are dominated by informal and unregistered businesses.

"While the outlet architecture

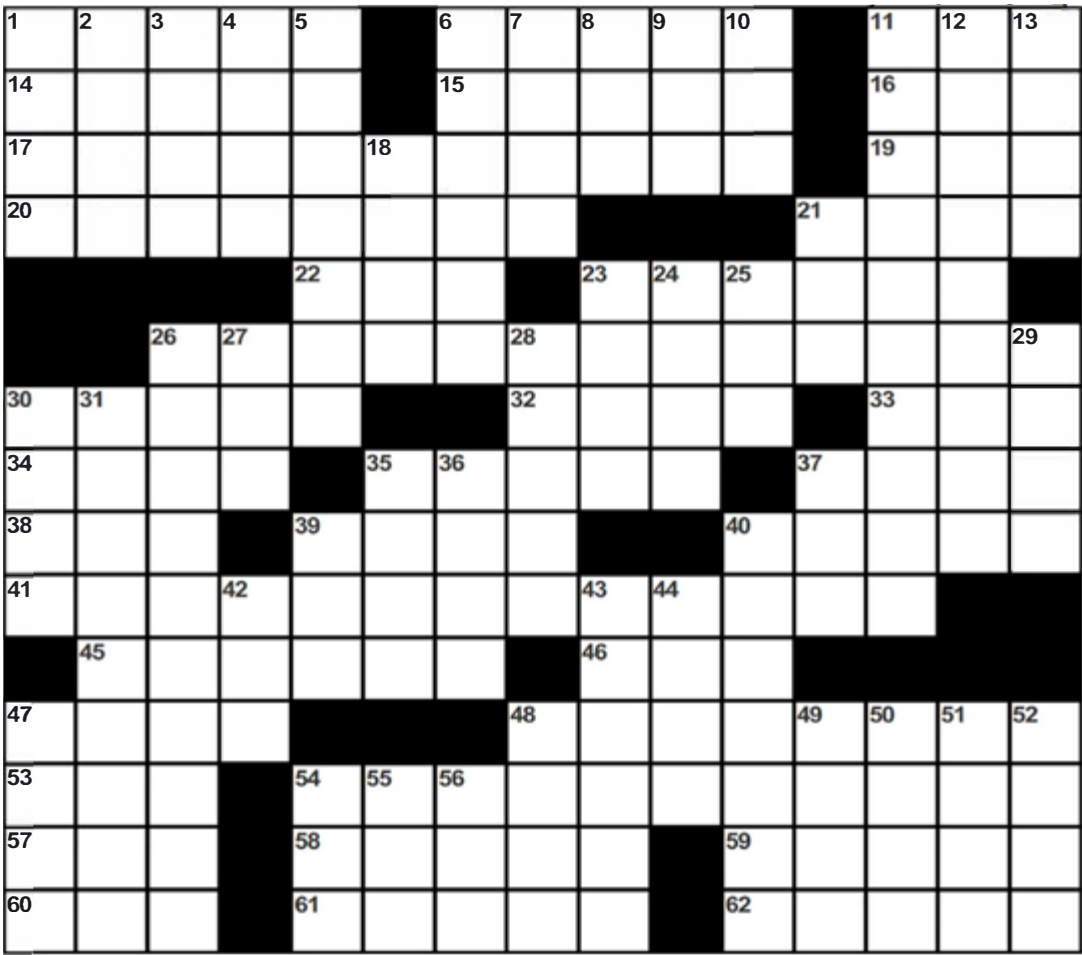
is still corrugated iron to create an essence of belonging, the business model is formal and friendly, which is our niche," she said.

Over the years, Mukwillongo has managed to attract new clientele by highlighting the value of tradition through aggressive social media marketing.

According to her, many people are surprised to find a food enterprise like hers in an informal settlement. Eight years on, the establishment has served nearly 10,000 clients who seek to immerse themselves in traditional food. Sai's Kitchen has also become a hub for socialisation.

Xinhua

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Rock band's handouts
 - 6) Sultan's women
 - 11) Cookware item
 - 14) Lewis Carroll heroine
 - 15) 2008 "Yes We Can" slogan
 - 16) _ Alicia of "Falcon Crest"
 - 17) Hawaiian-born LPGA star
 - 19) Thespians' org.
 - 20) Makes absolutely certain
 - 21) Rugged wheels, for short
 - 22) "To each_ own"
 - 23) High point in an orbit
 - 26) Very early morning
 - 30) Make improvements to
 - 32) Good earth
 - 33) Eminem's genre
 - 34) Rolling stone's lack
 - 35) Bill who led the Comets
 - 37) Buster Brown's dog
 - 38) "The Addams Family" cousin
 - 39) Swoosh, to Nike
 - 40) Initiated, frat-style
 - 41) "Lost my train of thought"
 - 45) Ides of March victim
 - 46) _ double-take
 - 47) Muffs it
 - 48) Oscar presenters, e.g.
 - 53) Like 1960s British fashion
 - 54) Nintendo game-players
 - 57) "Sorta" suffix
 - 58) Craig Biggio, notably
 - 59) Group mailing tool
 - 60) General on Chinese menus
 - 61) Gave pills to
 - 62) Box score data
- DOWN**
- 1) Beavers' handiwork
 - 2) Nobelist Wiesel
 - 3) Computer plug-ins
 - 4) Phil who sang "Draft Dodger Rag"
 - 5) Did a slow burn
 - 6) "Total patient" treatment
 - 7) Drive the getaway car, say
 - 8) U nedited, as text
 - 9) British record label until 2012
 - 10) West of "Sextette"
 - 11) Remove bacteria from, as milk
 - 12) As a rule
 - 13) Makes "it," in a game
 - 18) Lane of the Daily Planet
 - 21) In days of yore
 - 23) Natural emollient
 - 24) Shakespeare work
 - 25) Resistance unit
 - 26) Wagon master's cry
 - 27) New USN officer
 - 28) Give the green light
 - 29) Hotfooted it
 - 30) Kingsley who wrote "Lucky Jim"
 - 31) Grueling race for bikers
 - 35) Bar mitzvah dance
 - 36) Golden_, (senior)
 - 37) Shooting marble
 - 39) "_ Miz"
 - 40) Typically black vehicles
 - 42) "_ a Rebel" (Crystals hit)
 - 43) Johnny Depp title role
 - 44) Parti-colored horse
 - 47) Give off
 - 48) Plot size, perhaps
 - 49) Numskull
 - 50) Director Kazan
 - 51) Take five
 - 52) JFK landers, once
 - 54) Glob of gum
 - 55) Prefix with bar or metric
 - 56) FWIW part

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

It's easy to teach an old dog new tricks when the dog wants to learn them. So if you're looking to pick up a new skill or get rid of a bad habit, make sure you have the honest desire to do so. If you don't feel that strongly about change, then you're just wasting your time trying. Are you letting other people's expectations drive your goals? You have to make sure your ambitions are you own or they are never going to inspire you.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Today, putting physical energy into changing your intimate surroundings will energise you and fill you with a sense of pride that you haven't felt in quite a while. It's a perfect day for minor household renovation like a new coat of paint on some walls, a few new pillows for the couch, or setting up a grill on the patio. You have a vision for how you want to change your home, and it's about time you started to make it come true.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Your creativity has always been a big part of your intelligence, but never more so than right now. The tasks you're working through require the kinds of smarts that you have in spades! This is a very exciting time for you, full of unique people who are helping you to see things in a new light. There might be a frustrating person in the mix, but even though they rub you the wrong way from time to time, the sensation they leave you with is always positive.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

It's the right day for any power struggles. You're clear headed and there is no way that you can lose a fight today! Just make sure while you're busy fighting for what you want, you aren't losing focus on the more important things around you. Other people, not power, should be your top priority right now. So only get into it if you have to. As skilled as you are at beating the competition. at heart you're a lover, not a fighter!

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 23

When you're dealing with new people in any kind of group situation today, you need to take your ego out of it. There is no reason to try to impress upon them how wonderful you are. They will be able to figure that out on their own soon enough. Although your routine has changed recently, you should not feel threatened by new people who are taking over some of your responsibilities. They are here to help you, and you need to let them help. Be careful not to get too defensive.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Sometimes your dreams are just silly, weird plays your subconscious performs at night, not visions of what your future holds. So if disturbing images have been keeping you tossing and turning lately, don't worry too much about it. This is just a phase that will be over soon. Turn your attention away from your dreams. You can't control them. Instead, start exerting more power over your waking hours. Then you'll start to see things change.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Today you are much more open to using your mind in new ways and thinking through foreign (or even uncomfortable) ideas. It might be frustrating to figure out some of the heavier concepts right now, but it will also be very rewarding. Your brain needs some exercise, and you are going to be in a position to give it a fantastic workout. Do not shy away from that certain person who always intimidates you. If there was ever a day to engage them in conversation, it's today!

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Having a carefree life doesn't require you to forgo all your responsibilities and live like a free spirit. If you are trying to focus on just having a good time right now, don't make the mistake of clearing your calendar to do it. Having commitments helps you appreciate your downtime all the more, so be sure to keep a healthy balance between work and play. If you have no reason to wake up in the morning or no place to feel useful, you'll never truly be happy.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

You might feel like all of your emotions are going to spill out of your mouth at any moment today, and so what if they do? You'll be surrounded by people who respect and admire you. There is nothing you can say or confess that will make them change how they feel about you! You have much too much good credit built up with them already. Don't be afraid to speak the truth today. People will listen and be affected by it. Compassion is all around you

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

A small complication or drama could pop up today, but don't worry. It's nothing that will concern you, so there is no need to try to figure it out. Just sit back and watch as people who have different ideas about what to do try their best to solve the issue. They might not get as far as you would with it, but it's good for them to try. You can't go around solving everyone's problems all the time. Focus your troubleshooting skills on your own issues for a while.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You should spend at least some of your day today trying to stimulate your mind with innovative ideas or new philosophical concepts. You might get confused and even a little bit frustrated, but you will also learn a lot, and that is what is important. That is what creates new paths for you to pursue in your life. Be open to new ideas. It's the best way to improve yourself.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Your subconscious is extremely active right now, maybe too active! It's so full of ideas and questions that you are going to have trouble with your routine today. When you have so many thoughts zooming around in your head it's hard to focus on anything. The good news is that all of this ruminating will result in some pretty cool ideas very soon.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. How heavy is a megagram?

- A. 0.1 tonnes
- B. 10 tonnes
- C. 100 tonnes
- D. 1 tonne

2. The 2nd and 6th presidents of the USA had the same surname. What was it?

- A. Jefferson
- B. Adams
- C. Grant
- D. Lincoln

3. In which of these areas would you be most likely to find a traditional dwelling called a rondavel?

- A. Pacific Islands
- B. Alaska
- C. Mongolia
- D. South Africa

Answers: 1.D 2.B 3.D

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

I	G	I	T
U	E	A	F
C	R	S	S
I	N	S	O

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

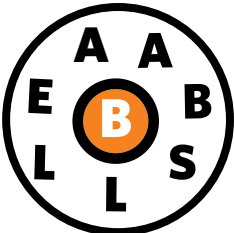
SOLUTION
20-25 words: Excellent,
15-20 words: Very good,
10-15 words: Good,
5-10 words: Average

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

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

Ancelotti ‘very happy’ with Real Madrid substitutes

Madrid, Spain - Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti said on Sunday that he was happy with their 3-0 win over Valladolid despite his side's unconvincing performance during the LaLiga clash.

Following a lacklustre display by starters such as Kylian Mbappe, Vinicius Jr and Rodrygo, Ancelotti heaped praise on his substitutes after Brahim Diaz and Endrick came off the bench to secure Real the points with late goals after Federico Valverde broke the deadlock in the 50th minute.

“The taste of a win is always good, when we win a game I have to be happy, taking into account the difficulties we had, especially in the first half when we were slow and soft,” Ancelotti told a press conference on Sunday. “We were better after the break, with much more mobility and speed in possession. I am very happy that those who come off the bench and take advantage of the few minutes they have.

“Setting the line-up is always complicated, it bothers me, makes me a bit sad although it's my responsibility, I'm the one who has to choose the eleven players that start.”



Carlo Ancelotti

Ancelotti said he expects his starters to be less selfish and should ask to be substituted when they are tired, mainly during the beginning of the season in which the games have been played in scorching Spanish summer heat.

“Bearing in mind that in this period of the season, in the heat, it is expected that players get tired. So it would be right that when a player is tired, he should raise his hand and ask to leave, but in my 40 years in soccer it has never happened.”

“So it is up to me, the coach, to pick out the ones I think are tired. I think the players have to be more responsible with that. I say it here because I have said it to them privately. I have a lot of resources to use in this squad...”

Ancelotti said he was not worried about Mbappe's struggle up front. “Mbappe is a spectacular striker, very quick, he moves very well without the ball, he attacks the back, he has had three or four chances today,” Ancelotti said.

“In this position he is going to score as he has always scored. He doesn't need to play on the left or in the centre... in the end, he will score goals, wait and see.”

LACKLUSTRE WIN

Endrick scores but Real Madrid fail to impress in 3-0 victory against Valladolid

Madrid, Spain - Second-half strikes by Federico Valverde, Brahim Diaz and Endrick gave feeble Real Madrid an unconvincing 3-0 win over lowly Real Valladolid on Sunday, earning the defending champions their first win of the LaLiga season.

Kylian Mbappe's home debut as a Real Madrid player is unlikely to live long in the memory as the France captain and most of the club's so-called “New Galacticos” were ineffective in a lacklustre performance.

Following what looked like a promising start to Mbappe's era with a 2-0 win over Europa League champions Atalanta to lift the UEFA Super Cup less than two weeks ago, Real have put on dreary performances to kick off the LaLiga season, with a 1-1 draw at Mallorca last week.

On Sunday, although Real dominated possession, they struggled to breach Valladolid's ultra-defensive approach in a slow-paced first-half.

Despite an early volley by Mbappe that was palmed away by goalkeeper Karl Hein, Real were out of ideas up front, missing England maestro Jude Bellingham who will be out for several weeks due to a leg mus-



Real Madrid's Endrick celebrates after scoring against Real Valladolid on Sunday

cle injury sustained in training on Friday.

Other than a couple of individual efforts by Rodrygo, they were unable to create any chances and went to the changing room to the sound of boos from some of the home fans.

Real came back unchanged yet livelier in the second half and broke the deadlock from a free kick in the 50th minute, with Valverde slotting in a thunderous strike from the edge of the box.

Arda Guler and Rodrygo adjusted the angle to tee up the ball for Valverde who flashed a daisy-cutter across the Santiago Bern-

On Sunday, although Real dominated possession, they struggled to breach Valladolid's ultra-defensive approach in a slow-paced first-half

abeu turf and into the back of Hein's net, just inside the left post.

Rodrygo, Guler and Mbappe missed three chances minutes later in a short spell when the locals looked more inspired but they slowly reverted to the first-half version of themselves and were lucky not to concede goals.

Late strikes by substitutes Diaz, in the 88th minute, and Endrick, six minutes into added time, secured Real a win that failed to tell the full story of their performance.



Antoine Griezmann of Atletico Madrid scores against Girona

Atletico blank Girona at home

Madrid, Spain - Goals from Antoine Griezmann, Marcos Llorente and Koke secured Atletico Madrid a 3-0 win over Girona in their first home game of the LaLiga season on Sunday.

Atletico put on a solid performance at the Civitas Metropolitano stadium to overcome last season's surprise package. They moved up to four points, having drawn at Villarreal in their league opener. Griezmann opened the scoring in the 39th minute when he sent his free kick into the bottom far corner after Girona goalkeeper Paulo Gazzaniga got a

yellow card for handling the ball outside of the box.

“The fans and the players were really looking forward to coming home after such a long time. A perfect night and let's keep it going,” Griezmann told DAZN.

“I was waiting to see where the keeper was standing and I saw that there was a little gap at the far post and with a bit of luck it went in.”

Llorente doubled the advantage with a powerful long-range effort past Gazzaniga following a solo run three minutes after the break.

“(Llorente) is like that, he always gives everything for the team,” Griezmann said. “No matter what position you put him in, he gives 100% and these are the players we need at the club. Captain Koke, who came on early in the second half, sealed the rout with a tap-in in stoppage time off a Llorente cross for his first goal since the 2021-22 season.

“The goals came at the worst time for us. In the first half we did some very good things. The team leaves with a heavy defeat, but there are positives,” Girona midfielder Oriol Romeu said.

We have to give Alvarez time, says Simeone

Madrid, Spain - Atletico Madrid manager Diego Simeone said blockbuster signing Julian Alvarez must be given time to find his feet in the team after a 3-0 home win over Girona, as he is an “incredible player for the present and future” of the club.

Atletico, who finished fourth last season, looked strong with a mix of youngsters, new signings and settled players such as Antoine Griezmann, Marcos Llorente and Koke, whose goals earned them their first win of the season.

While Alvarez had a quiet performance in his first start for the club, Simeone expressed optimism over what the former Manchester City striker can deliver. “Top players demand things to happen, people go to the sta-



Julian Alvarez

dium to watch them. We know what Julian brings and what he can give us,” Simeone said.

“We will try to exploit his best qualities, as a first striker or second striker, or on the flank... he is still missing connection but that will come with training and matches, he has only just arrived but we have to give him time.”

Meanwhile, the Argentine coach heaped praise on midfielder Llorente, who was named player of the match after scoring his second goal of the season and grabbing an assist playing at right-back.

Simeone added the Spaniard's fine form will boost internal competition as regular right-back Argentina's Nahuel Molina will have to step up to fill that position as well throughout the season.

Former Brazil winger Costa joins Sydney FC

Melbourne, Australia - Former Brazil winger Douglas Costa will hope to revive his flagging career in Australia after signing a two-year deal with Sydney FC.

The 33-year-old, who won a slew of trophies with Bayern Munich and Juventus, will arrive at the five-times A-League champions following a difficult term with Fluminense in Brazil's top flight.

Costa failed to score in 22 appearances for the Rio de Janeiro

club where he landed in January after Juventus ignored his appeals to return to the Italian giants.

Prior to Fluminense, Costa had a lucrative but troubled two-season stint at Major League Soccer side LA Galaxy where he was blighted by injuries and off-field legal problems.

Though Costa's best days are likely behind him, Sydney FC hailed his signing as a “massive



Douglas Costa

coup” for the club and for Australia's struggling professional league which has slashed funding to clubs to cover mounting losses in recent years.

“He is one of the most high-profile footballers to ever play on these shores and the eyes of the football world will be on Sydney FC and the A-League this season,” Sydney FC Chairman Scott Barlow said in a media release on Monday.



Michel

Michel urges Girona to forget past success and keep growing

Madrid, Spain - Girona manager Michel said they must forget all about last season's third-place finish in LaLiga and that the players are starting from scratch in the current campaign after Sunday's 3-0 defeat by Atletico Madrid left them in the bottom three.

After securing their best-ever league finish and a place in the Champions League for the first time Girona have been off the pace in the new campaign, drawing at Real Betis in their opener before losing heavily at Atletico.

“That is one of the challenges I have as a coach, to get the best

version of each player by putting the counter to zero, no one can think that our goal is to finish third again,” Michel told a news conference.

“We're always going to be compared but it's clear to us that we're a team that has to work with humility, we have to keep

growing, we have pride and we want to be better than last year, we'll try but we'll always keep our feet on the ground.”

Despite the score, the Spaniard took some positives from their performance against “a great team”. “I don't look too much at the result, but we have

to be quicker in the game and we have to be more aggressive with and without the ball,” he added. “In defence and in pressing situations we did well.”

Girona will look for their first LaLiga win of the season on Thursday when they host Osasuna.

'I JUST TAKE ONE RACE AT A TIME'

Dutch GP winner Norris says he has a long way to go before challenging Verstappen

Zandvoort, Netherlands - Lando Norris said it was stupid to talk about winning the Formula One title after his statement Dutch Grand Prix win on Sunday, but the McLaren driver's chances were certainly being discussed by others.

The 24-year-old Briton's second career triumph, and second of the season, was particularly resonant coming in Max Verstappen's backyard with more than 100,000 mostly orange-shirted fans cheering for Red Bull's championship leader.

Norris took the chequered flag a mighty 22.896 seconds ahead of Verstappen, the biggest margin so far this year, but is still a huge distance behind the triple world champion with nine races remaining.

"I've been working hard the whole year and I'm still 70 points behind Max. So it's pretty stupid to think of anything at the minute," he said when asked about the title.

"I just take one race at a time and just keep doing what I'm doing now because there's no point to think ahead and think of the rest."

No Formula One driver has ever overcome a deficit of such a magnitude but Red Bull's motor-sport adviser Helmut Marko was concerned anyway.

"As Max said before the summer break, the team has to work harder and must find improvements because like that his



McLaren's Lando Norris celebrates after winning the Dutch Grand Prix

I've been working hard the whole year and I'm still 70 points behind Max. So it's pretty stupid to think of anything at the minute

LANDO NORRIS

championship is in threat," the Austrian told the www.autosport.com website.

Norris clawed back eight points on Sunday, one for fastest lap, but he will need Verstappen to start squandering many more over the coming months and the Dutch driver does not have a history of doing that.

McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri will also have to take points off Verstappen, to boost Norris's chances, but the Australian finished fourth on Sunday.

It would also help if Mercedes, winner of three races this season, and Ferrari, twice triumphant, pushed the Red Bull further down the field as well.

McLaren are only 30 points adrift of Red Bull in the team battle, however, and looking increasingly like they could win their first constructors' title since 1998.

Sunday's race also allowed Norris to slay one particular bugbear, it being the first time he had won a grand prix from pole position after costly mistakes in the past by both driver and team.

He was also willing to concede

that his McLaren, upgraded for the first time since Miami in May, was the quickest car out there.

"Today, this whole weekend, I think we've had the best car. I think we've, on average, had the best car for sure," he said.

"We worked hard over the summer break to just try and take a step back and reset and go again. So yes, we've had a great car... it's still a long way to go."



Sven-Goran Eriksson

Former England coach Eriksson dies at 76

Stockholm, Sweden - Swedish football manager Sven-Goran Eriksson, who became the first foreigner to lead the England national team, died on Monday at the age of 76.

Eriksson, a charismatic coach who led Swedish, Portuguese and Italian clubs to major trophies in the 1980s and 1990s before taking on the England job in 2001, announced in January that he was terminally ill with pancreatic cancer.

Eriksson's long-time agent Bo Gustavsson said Eriksson had lost his battle with cancer early on Monday, surrounded by his family.

"We knew it was going to end bad, it all went really fast in the last few weeks," said Gustavsson. "I have been fascinated by him for a long time, he has always been so positive and has had time for others and never thought of himself, and he was that until the very end," the agent added.

Eriksson led England to the quarter-finals of the 2002 and 2006 World Cups, and to the 2004 European Championship, managing a golden generation of

players, including David Beckham, Paul Scholes, Frank Lampard, Wayne Rooney and Steven Gerrard.

In his native Sweden, where he is known simply as "Svennis", Eriksson was praised as a great sports leader.

"Svennis was a soccer innovator and a very popular person who maintained his core values despite all his international success," Sweden's Minister of Social Affairs Jakob Forssmed said in a post on social media platform X.

After leaving the England job in 2006, Eriksson coached Manchester City and Leicester City as well as the Mexico and Ivory Coast national sides and clubs in China and the Philippines.

He fulfilled a career ambition to take charge of a Liverpool team at Anfield when he coached the Reds Legends in a charity match in March.

"Rest in peace, Sven-Goran Eriksson. The thoughts of everyone at the club are with Sven's family and friends at this extremely sad time," Liverpool said on X.

Alcaraz not worried at all for US Open participation after injury scare at training

New York, US - Carlos Alcaraz said he will be "at 100%" for the US Open despite stopping his training in New York on Saturday as a precaution after twisting his ankle.

Four-time Grand Slam champion Alcaraz has dealt with a number of injuries in recent times, including an ankle injury that forced him to withdraw in the first round of the Rio Open earlier this year.

Alcaraz's injury worries returned on Saturday, leading him

to suspend his training session with Argentina's Francisco Cerundolo. However, the Spaniard said he never feared for his participation in the tournament.

"I just stopped my practice for precaution. I didn't feel comfortable enough to keep practising just in case if everything is going to be worse," Alcaraz told a news conference.

"A few hours later, I feel good, tomorrow I will try to practise again without thinking about it.



Carlos Alcaraz

"I wasn't worried at all for my U.S. Open participation. Obviously I was angry because I don't want to stop the practice, to respect Cerundolo, as well.

"Tomorrow or in two days I'm going to be my at 100%, for sure. It's about time."

The 21-year-old begins his tournament at Flushing Meadows on Tuesday against Australian Li Tu as he chases a second U.S. Open title after winning in 2022.

Alcaraz said he hoped to ap-

proach important matches with a better mentality following his disappointment at losing to Novak Djokovic in the final of the Olympics earlier this month.

"It was a difficult moment for me, losing the gold medal in a really close match that I had opportunities," he said.

"But in front of me I had a really good player and he deserved it. So days after the Olympics I realize that I won the silver medal, a great achievement that I have to be proud of.

"I try to keep going and learn about this. The next important matches of my career I will deal in a different way or a better way than I did in Olympics."

Alcaraz, who last week lost to Gael Monfils in the Cincinnati Open Round of 32, said he is not worried about having played few hard-court matches ahead of the year's final Grand Slam.

"Heading into Roland Garros, I hadn't played too many matches on clay, and it was a pretty good result."

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Bayern Munich's Serge Gnabry scores against VfL Wolfsburg

Winning start for Kompany as Bayern edge Wolfsburg

Wolfsburg, Germany - A late goal by Serge Gnabry secured Bayern Munich a 3-2 Bundesliga victory at VfL Wolfsburg on Sunday and gave their new coach Vincent Kompany a winning start.

Wolfsburg began brightly but it was the visitors who made the better chances in the first half, taking the lead after fine work by Frenchman Sacha Boey down the right to set up Jamal Musiala for an easy tap-in.

Bayern made a poor start to the second half, however, as they gave away a penalty when Tiago Tomas was brought down by Boey, and Lovro Majer made no mistake from the spot.

Wolfsburg created all kinds of trouble for the visitors' defence and, in the 55th minute, Patrick Wimmer squared the ball for Majer, who slotted it home to score his second goal.

Winger Jakub Kaminski's own goal brought Bayern on level terms before Gnabry, assisted by

Harry Kane, struck into the corner in the 82nd minute to secure all three points for the Bavarians.

"We are very happy and are happy to take it. It's good for morale and self-confidence," Gnabry said.

"It was a very exhausting Sunday afternoon. The equaliser straight after halftime knocked our socks off a bit. Then we were down 2-1, which made it even more difficult. But at the end of the day, we were rewarded and won 3-2."

With Kane and new signing Michael Olise looking lively and frequently finding promising positions, Bayern created a host of other chances, but Wolfsburg goalkeeper Kamil Grabara made some brilliant saves to deny the duo. Thomas Mueller, who equalled a club record with his 709th competitive appearance for Bayern, breathed life back into his side after coming on as a substitute in the 65th minute and was decisive in their win.

REDS IN SLOTLIGHT

Liverpool cruise past Brentford in new manager's home debut

Liverpool, England - Arne Slot's comfortable start to life as Liverpool manager continued when his new side strolled to a 2-0 victory over Brentford in the Premier League on Sunday.

Liverpool dominated early on, scoring a fine opening goal on the counter attack when Luis Diaz arrowed his first of the season into the top corner with 13 minutes on the clock.

Brentford responded well, going close with two short-range headers either side of halftime, but Mohamed Salah ended the visitors' hopes of taking anything from their trip to Anfield with a second goal 20 minutes from time.

"For me, it is not a surprise this team plays like this - and for you it shouldn't be a surprise at all because you saw them playing like this many times last season as well," said Slot.

Dutchman Slot now has two 2-0 wins from two games as he undertakes the difficult task of replacing Juergen Klopp as Liverpool boss, with a testing trip to Manchester United up next.

"The time with Juergen (was) amazing and the time with the new boss is a joy and he has a certain way of playing," Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk told Sky Sports.

"We work a lot on so many good things and you see a lot



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah celebrates after scoring against Brentford in the Premier League on Sunday



For me, it is not a surprise this team plays like this - and for you it shouldn't be a surprise at all because you saw them playing like this many times last season as well

ARNE SLOT

with and without the ball that gives confidence to the team. We have to, I won't say forget about the Juergen period, but that is in the past and we had an amazing time and now it is a time for the new boss to hopefully be successful.

"I think if we stayed more calm we could have more space at times but it is still a work in progress. It's a good time and hopefully we have so much to improve and go for it."

Before Sunday, no Liverpool boss since Graeme Souness in 1991 had secured wins in their two opening league games in charge.

Liverpool upped the ante after the break and deservedly got their second goal, with Salah adding to his strike on the opening day at Ipswich Town with another well-taken shot to seal the victory.



Vincent Kompany

'It wasn't perfect, but we'll keep going'

Wolfsburg, Germany - New Bayern Munich head coach Vincent Kompany praised his side's mentality after they came from behind to beat VfL Wolfsburg in their Bundesliga opener on Sunday.

An 82nd-minute goal by Serge Gnabry secured the record German champions a 3-2 win at Wolfsburg and handed Kompany, who replaced Thomas Tuchel after their disappointing third-place finish last season, a winning start in the Bundesliga.

Bayern took the lead thanks

Mistakes happen, the important thing is how the team reacts. That took a while in the second half. Mueller and Coman came in with the right mentality

VINCENT KOMPANY

to Jamal Musiala's 19th-minute goal but started the second half in shocking fashion as they gave away a penalty seconds after the restart and made a defensive error which put the hosts ahead.

However, Gnabry and Harry Kane linked up to grab a late

winner and seal all three points for Bayern. "I enjoyed it, it was my first Bundesliga game as a coach," Kompany, the former Burnley manager, said.

"The first half was dominant, as it should be. We didn't concede any chances. The second

half wasn't good at the beginning, we conceded two quick goals. The third point is that our mentality was right at the end, and that's why we won the game.

"Mistakes happen, the important thing is how the team reacts. That took a while in the second half. Thomas Mueller and Kingsley Coman came in with the right mentality and the tempo came back.

"At the end of the second half, we had a lot of courage to win the game. It wasn't perfect, but we'll keep going."



Napoli's Khvicha Kvaratskhelia celebrates after scoring against Bologna 3-0 on Sunday

First win for Conte as Napoli blank Bologna

Naples, Italy - Napoli beat Bologna 3-0 in their lively Serie A home opener on Sunday, securing a first win for new manager Antonio Conte.

Giovanni Di Lorenzo, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and substitute Giovanni Simeone were all on target for the hosts, sparking hope among fans at the Diego Armando Maradona stadium that Napoli can put behind them the woes of last season when they finished in 10th place.

Forward Giacomo Raspadori threatened Bologna's goal inside the first minute, striking low from outside the box just wide of the post.

Napoli, the 2023 champions, grew into the game as the half wore on and Kvaratskhelia had a great chance just before the break, when he nodded Matteo Politano's sublime cross from a distance into the crossbar.

Defender Di Lorenzo eventually gave Napoli the lead in first-half stoppage time, scoring with a simple finish from Khvicha Kvaratskhelia's precise cross.

It was Napoli's first competitive goal in front of a home crowd since their 2-2 draw against AS Roma on April 28.

The hosts increased the tempo even more after the break and Kvaratskhelia doubled their advantage in the 75th minute.

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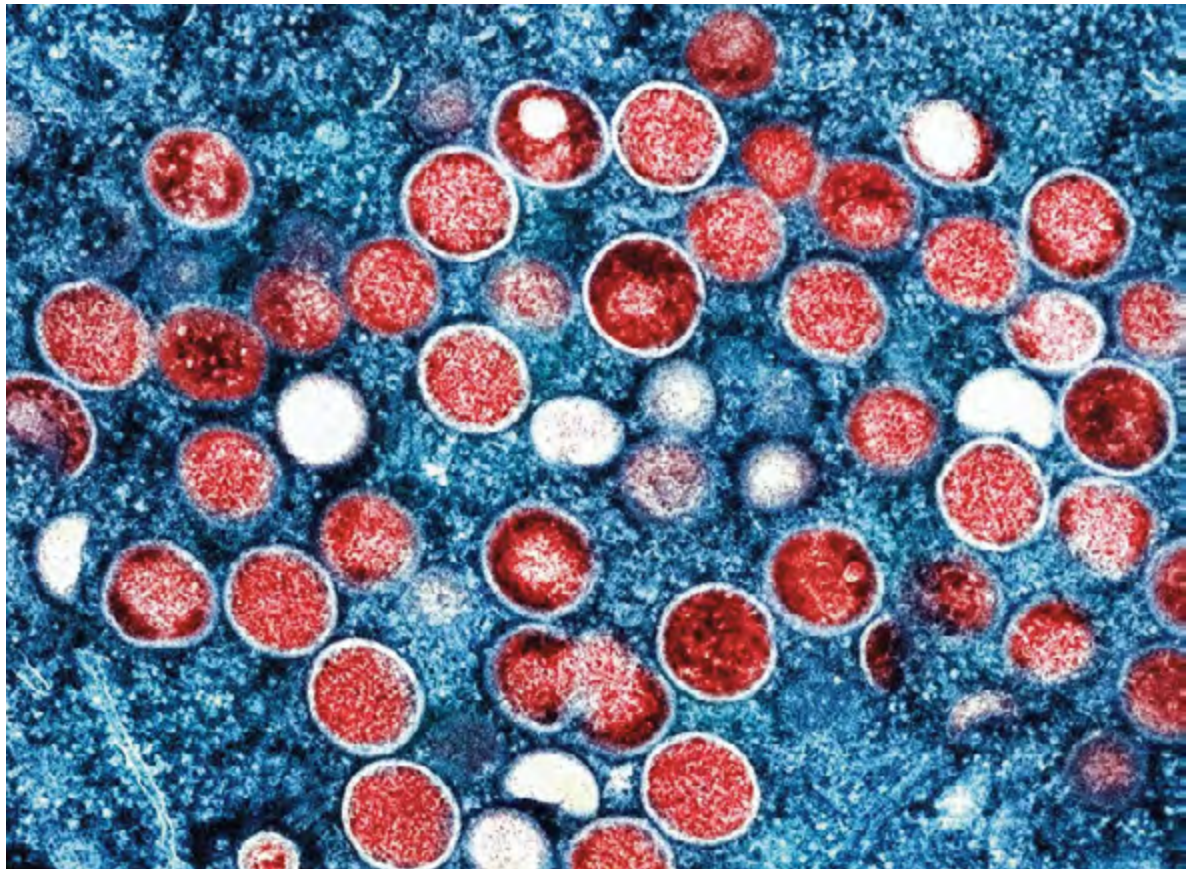
THE VIRAL SPIRAL

CLAIMS OF A POSSIBLE LINK BETWEEN MPOX AND COVID VACCINATION ARE FALSE AND BASELESS

The current mpox outbreak is the subject of misinformation online. A widely circulated claim suggests a link between mpox and COVID-19 vaccinations. What is the truth behind the claims? Just one day after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the highest level of alert for mpox outbreaks in African countries for the second time in two years, the first case in Europe was also reported. The infected individual is said to have contracted the virus while staying in an African region experiencing a significant outbreak of the disease, according to the director-general of the Swedish Health Agency during a press conference on Thursday. These recent developments have led

Claim: 'What they are selling us as MONKEYPOX is, in most cases, actually herpes zoster; one of the most common side effects of the COVID vaccine', wrote this X-user on August 14, 2024, quoting the German doctor and politician Wolfgang Wodarg. The post has already been viewed 2 million times. The claim originates from a video interview with Wolfgang Wodarg, a physician and former Social Democrat (SPD) member of the German Bundestag, who later became a leading candidate for the small party dieBasis (the base), which was founded in the context of protests against COVID-19 measures. The video was released in 2022 by the controversial Austrian broadcaster AUF1. Most of the posts found on this topic were in Spanish and Portuguese. Ac-

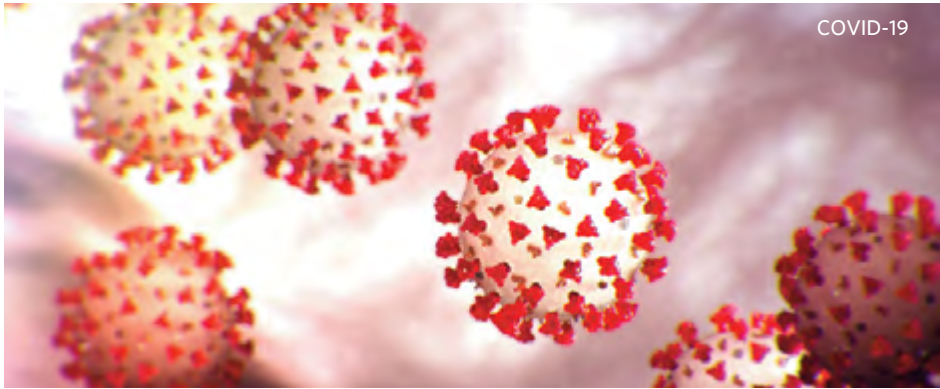
When asked if there is a connection between the COVID-19 vaccine and the mpox outbreak, microbiologist and immunologist Kari Moore Debink from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in the US said in a DW interview, "The COVID mRNA vaccines were used globally, while mpox cases are typically found in specific countries in Africa, with some low case numbers outside of those regions. Therefore, there is no geographic link between COVID mRNA vaccine use and mpox cases." William Schaffner, a professor of infectious diseases at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, US, added, "These are two completely different viruses, and of course, the vaccine against COVID has nothing to do with mpox."



Mpox



The EU Commission approved the Imvanex vaccine against monkeypox in 2022



COVID-19

to an increase in discussions on social media, with a noticeable rise in claims about the viral disease — many of which are untrue. **Mpox and mRNA vaccines: Is there a connection?**

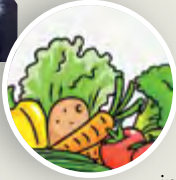
cording to a study by Loyola University Andalusia, which analysed the period from May 7 to September 10, 2022, the narrative that mpox is a side effect of COVID-19 vaccines was shared more frequently than any other false claim about mpox.

The claim that the AstraZeneca COVID vaccine contains weakened viruses from chimpanzees as carriers for the DNA of the coronavirus spike protein has been thoroughly debunked in a recent fact-check. DW

VANDANA CHAWLA



NUTRITION & YOU



one is more beneficial. Let's have a comparative view of these power-houses of nutrition. Appearance, taste and properties Both Chia and basil seeds may look similar but when closely seen, chia seeds are larger, round shaped with black, grey, white spots, while basil seeds are elliptical, smaller, and black or brown in colour. Chia seeds are neutral in taste and usually take the taste of the food in which it is mixed. Basil seeds are little sweeter and have a mild, nutty flavour. Both the seeds, when soaked in water, form a gel like coating, which looks transparent with a black dot inside. Basil seeds take longer time to get this gelatinous coating. **Nutritional profile** The nutritional profiles of Chia seeds and basil seeds are very impressive. Chia seeds are great source of healthy fats or Omega 3 fatty acids, dietary fibre, proteins, antioxidants, some B vitamins and minerals. Basil seeds are also packed with

CHIA SEEDS VS BASIL SEEDS



Omega 3 fats but in lower amounts as compared to chia seeds. It also contains slightly lower amounts of proteins, but it has an edge over chia seeds when it comes to certain minerals and vitamins.

Basil seeds are also a great source of antioxidants. **Health benefits** With such great combination of vital nutrients, these tiny seeds offer

equally great health benefits.

- Owing to high content of Omega 3 fatty acids, Chia seeds are essential for heart health, brain function, and to reduce inflammation.
- High soluble fibre content in both the seeds helps in digestion, maintaining gut health, and in maintaining weight and blood sugar levels.
- Higher Protein content of chia seeds, makes it a valuable addition to vegetarian diet.
- Packed with different types of antioxidants, both these seeds help to combat oxidative stress, protect cells from damage, thereby giving protection against anti-inflammatory diseases.
- In addition, basil seeds offer some cooling properties, which help in giving relief from acidity and heartburn, particularly in summer.
- Presence of different sets of vitamins and minerals in both the seeds, contribute to overall well-being.

Side-effects Excess of everything is bad and the same is true with these seeds. If

taken in excess, they may result in indigestion, bloating, gas or even diarrhoea. Those with inflammatory bowel disease should take these seeds with caution. Individuals who are sensitive to high fibre, should gradually introduce these seeds in their diet and at the same time drink plenty of water. In addition, soaking these seeds in good amount of water will help in better tolerance. In the title fight between the two seeds, chia seeds has an edge over basil seeds in terms of Omega 3 fatty acids and proteins. Also, basil seeds are not very far behind as they offer excellent cooling properties along with a good quantity of certain vital nutrients. These tiny seeds are mighty seeds that help in blood glucose regulation, weight management, and cardiac health. Both are valuable additions to a healthy diet and offer great health benefits.

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

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Headstand pose or sirasana

This is the first inversion balance posture that apprentice yogis try to master. It offers a new perspective on the practice and allows you to prepare for other, more difficult balance postures!

How to do it

- Join the fingers of both hands and form a triangular base on the ground with your two hands linked and elbows on each side, which will be your base.
- Lean forward and place the top of your head on the floor, the back of your head against your hands.
- Move your feet towards your head with your leg straight, your back straightens little by little.
- Slowly lift your feet off the floor, bend your knees toward your chest. Slowly straighten your hips until your bent knees are pointed toward the ceiling.
- Slowly straighten your knees, feet rise upwards.

How to prepare

Dolphin pose is a great way to prepare

for headstand pose.

Benefits

Head rest improves concentration and memory.

8-cornered posture or Ash-tavakrasana

The 8-corner pose might be easier than it seems. Don't be afraid to give it a go: if you can hold a low plank for about thirty seconds, you probably have enough strength to perform ashtavakrasana.

How to do it

- Start with your legs stretched out in front of you.



Mayurasana

- Bend your right knee and pass your right arm underneath.
- Hook your right knee firmly over your right shoulder. The palms are firmly anchored to the ground, on either side of the hips.
- Raise your left leg and lightly cross your left ankle over your right ankle.
- Bend your elbows 90° and tilt your upper body forward, chest and gaze raised.

How to prepare

You should always take the time to warm up before tackling the eight-cornered pose. For this, there's nothing like a few rounds of sun salutations. Yoga

poses that can help prepare for Eight Angles Pose are side plank, turtle, ladder pose, and baby cradle.

Benefits

In addition to strengthening the wrists, arms and heart, this posture is an excellent self-confidence booster. It helps develop concentration and improves digestion.

Scorpion or Vrischikasana

Impressive in the strength it requires, the scorpion is far from easy to perform, even for the most experienced. It is an advanced balancing posture in which the body takes the shape of a scorpion's tail ready to sting.

How to do it

- Get into dolphin pose.
- Raise your left leg as high as possible, well aligned with the body.
- Slowly bring the leg back then raise the other leg.
- The weight of the body now rests solely on the forearms and elbows.
- Reverse your back and bring your feet as close to your head as possible by bending your knees.
- The gaze rests on an imaginary point on the ground.

How to prepare for it

Many preparatory postures are there to help you access the effort and demands of the scorpion posture: the handstand posture, the peacock posture or the wheel posture.

Benefits

Scorpio pose improves mind-body coordination, strengthens arms, legs and hips while improving blood circulation. From a mental point of view, it boosts self-confidence and helps combat stress.

Wheel or urdhva-dhanurasana

The wheel posture and its many variations is a posture for opening the heart in back flexion. This yoga posture which activates all the chakras is not recommended for beginners but remains accessible, provided you prepare yourself little by little.

How to do it

- While lying on your back, bend your knees, bringing your feet as close to your glutes as possible.
- Place your hands on either side of your face, pointing your fingers toward your feet.
- Push the whole body back using the arms and legs to bring the pelvis towards the sky.

How to prepare for it

Train with all the more accessible yoga postures that work on back flexion - cobra, upward facing dog, dolphin, sphinx, etc. Also remember to practice the half-bridge, a simplified version of the wheel, ideal for getting started!

Benefits

The wheel posture relaxes the spine and strengthens the arms and legs. It improves breathing and reduces stress.

Flying crow or eka pada galavasan

The flying crow is halfway between the posture of the crow and the pigeon. A beautiful balance on the wrists that gives the impression of flying!

How to do it

- Start standing in chair pose. Shift your weight to your left foot. Lift your right foot off the ground.
- Keeping both knees bent, cross your right ankle over your left thigh. Begin to enter a forward bend on your right shin.
- Bend your left leg enough so that you can place your palms flat on the floor.



Eka pada galavasan

- Hook the toes of your right foot around your upper left arm. Bend both elbows to support your right shin.
- Lean your torso forward, resting your right shin on your arms.
- Lift your left foot off the ground and straighten your leg.

How to prepare for it

Work on yoga postures that require the strength of the wrists: upward facing dog, downward facing dog, plank, etc. A prerequisite is of course knowing how to do the crow posture and that of the pigeon to properly prepare hip opening and arm strength!

Benefits

The flying crow pose provides general strengthening of the body, with emphasis on the arms and abdominal muscles. As it is difficult to execute, this posture brings humility and confidence to those who know how to persevere. Once successful, a feeling of strength will be your reward.

Peacock or Mayurasana

The peacock yoga posture is one of the unfair postures because despite its apparent difficulty, some yogis will get there quite easily and others will take years to master it. The outstretched legs levitating above the ground recall the long tail of the peacock, when it is not on a wheel.

How to do it

- In a kneeling position, place your hands flat on the floor, facing outwards and pointing towards your knees.
- Bend your elbows to form a solid base. Lean forward and place your stomach on your elbows.
- Bring your head to the floor, then straighten your legs back.
- Take flight by lifting your legs, one after the other, contracting your abdominal muscles.

How to prepare for it

Work on postures that deeply engage the wrists and shoulders to acquire the strength necessary to get into peacock pose, unless you get there naturally.

Benefits

The peacock pose undeniably develops strength, physical and mental, works the back muscles, glutes, quadriceps and even the calf muscles to fight against gravitational force.

(Courtesy: geopellie.com)



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