

MoSD issues new rules for collecting public donations

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) has issued new regulations governing the collection of public donations by private organisations with the aim of enhancing transparency and oversight.

The rules, outlined in Ministerial Decision No 336/2024 issued by H E Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, mandates private entities must obtain a licence from MoSD to conduct any fundraising activity. However, government-established committees, institutions and funds are exempt from this requirement.

Licences will only be issued for charitable causes that align with the applicant organisation's objectives. Private fundraising for personal causes is strictly prohibited. MoSD will closely monitor all licensed fundraising activities and coordinate with approved or-



(Image for illustrative purpose)

ganisations to ensure compliance. No individual is allowed to engage in fundraising or promotional activity independently unless specifically authorised by a licensed organisation. However, organisations can hire individuals to share pre-approved content related to fundraising efforts.

Under the new regulations, organisations may collect funds in various ways, including mobile apps, websites, SMS and elec-

tronic payment systems. In-kind donations can also be converted to cash via public auctions with prior ministry approval. Events eligible for fundraising include charity markets, exhibitions, cultural and sports events, and social gatherings. Organisations can deduct up to 2% of the total collected funds to cover administrative and operational costs, provided all event details, including ticket price and venue capac-

ity, are disclosed in advance.

Collected funds must be deposited into an approved bank account within two working days of the fundraising period. Non-compliance with these procedures could lead to administrative penalties ranging from warnings and fines to the suspension or revocation of licences. Initial penalties may include warnings with a seven-day period to resolve non-compli-

Funds collected in violation of the rules will be confiscated, with the ministry deciding on the allocation of the collection. Ministerial Decision No 336/2024 comes into effect today

ance. Repeated violations could result in fines between RO10 and RO500 or licence suspension. Persistent breaches may lead to licence cancellation.

Additionally, funds collected in violation of the rules will be confiscated, with the ministry deciding on the allocation of the collection.

The decision was published on October 29 and comes into effect on November 4.

His Majesty issues four Royal Decrees

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued four Royal Decrees on Sunday reading as follows:

Royal Decree No 51/2024 establishes the National Records Centre and defines its prerogatives.

Article 1 stipulates that a public administration, to be named 'National Records Centre', will be established within the organisational structure of the Royal Oman Police.

Article 2 states that the prerogatives of the National Records Centre will be defined in accordance with the annex attached to this decree.

Article 3 stipulates that all allocations, assets, rights, obligations and origins of the national records at the Electronic Census of Population, Housing and Establishments 2020 Project will be transferred to the National Records Centre.

Article 4 states that employees of the Electronic Census of Population, Housing and Establishments 2020 Project will be transferred to the National Records Centre with their financial grades.

Article 5 states that the Inspector-General of Police and Customs will issue the regulations and decisions necessary for the implementation of the provisions of this decree

Article 6 cancels all that contradicts the decree or contravenes

its provisions.

Article 7 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No 52/2024 promulgates the National Records Law.

Article 1 stipulates that the National Records Law attached to this decree will be enforced.

Article 2 states that the Inspector-General of Police and Customs will issue the regulations of the attached law after the approval of the Council of Ministers. Till such time, existing regulations and decisions in force will continue to be applied without prejudice to the provisions of the attached law.

Article 3 cancels all that contradicts the attached law or contravenes its provisions.

Article 4 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from the day following its date of issue.

Royal Decree No 53/2024 appoints a Permanent Representative for the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations in New York.

Article 1 transfers Omar bin Said bin Omar al Kathiri, the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain and appoints him as Oman's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York.

Continued on [Page 03](#)

SQUH-Belgian team finds new mutation linked to Parkinson's

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A research team from Sultan Qaboos University Hospital (SQUH), in collaboration with VIB-KU Leuven Center for Brain & Disease Research of Belgium, has identified a new genetic mutation associated with early-onset Parkinson's disease.

The finding emerged during the treatment of two Omani sisters who exhibited rapid disease progression and poor response to conventional treatments.



Dr Abdullah bin Rashid al Asmi, Associate Professor and Head of Neurology at College of Medicine and Health Sciences at SQUH, informed that the sisters, who visited the Neurology Clinic 14 years ago in their early 20s,

presented symptoms typical of Parkinson's alongside behavioural and mental challenges. Notably, one sister had a history of epileptic seizures prior to developing Parkinson's symptoms.

Investigations revealed that the sisters' condition stemmed from a first-degree marriage. Extensive investigations into known genetic causes of early-onset Parkinson's were inconclusive prompting a search for new genetic factors.

Collaborating with Dr Patrick Versiksen at VIB-KU Leuven, the

team successfully identified a mutation in SGIP1 - a gene not previously linked to Parkinson's - in both sisters. This mutation impacts the communication between brain cells, shedding light on the mechanisms underlying the development of early Parkinson's and potential treatment avenues.

To explore the effects of the SGIP1 mutation, researchers developed a laboratory model using fruit flies deficient in the gene. These flies exhibited Parkinson's-like symptoms, including

movement disorders and neuronal degeneration, highlighting the mutation's role in disrupting neuronal connections essential for healthy brain function.

Underscoring the importance of this discovery, Sabine Koenen, a co-author of the study, said, "Finding this mutation in the SGIP1 gene is exciting because it provides a fresh perspective on how these neurological disorders develop. It's a reminder that even small changes in our genetic code can have a profound impact on brain function."

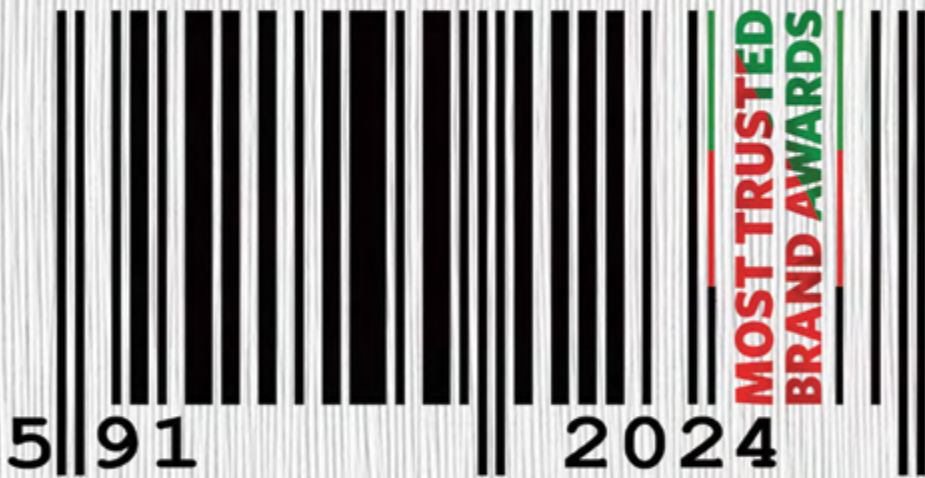


Omani film wins award for best animation in Morocco



Namat Competition winners awarded

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CARROTS OR STICKS

Implementing fines for latecomers can be tricky and sometime counterproductive. From flexible start times to incentives for punctuality and team-building meetings, here’s what *Muscat Daily* readers think could help improve punctuality and overall workplace culture in the private sector –

Ali al Hooti
Private sector employee

I think that the private sector should offer flexible start times to accommodate different schedules, which can reduce stress and improve punctuality.

Samia al Balushi
Designer

I believe that private sector employees should get incentives for punctuality.

ality. Rewards – such as recognition or small bonuses – should be considered for employees who consistently arrive on time.

V Santosh
Photographer

Brief morning meetings should be implemented to foster team spirit and make punctuality feel more important and provide resources for commuting, like subsidies for public transport or

carpooling initiatives.

Rumu Das
Businessman

The management at private sector companies should create a positive and engaging workplace culture that motivates employees to arrive on time. They should also clearly communicate the importance of punctuality and how it impacts the team and overall productivity.



Saleh al Kalbani
Engineer

I believe that the management staff of companies should be open to dialogue, where employees can express challenges they face in getting to work on time, and ensure they themselves are models of punctuality, as leadership behaviour can significantly influence staff.

Zeenath Chowdhury
Artist

Start by clearly stating the work hours and explaining why it matters for team success. If possible, offer flexible hours to accommodate different needs. Regularly remind everyone how being on time helps the team work better together. You could also introduce rewards for those who are consistently on time, like small prizes or recognition. Lastly, consider providing time management tips or conducting workshops to help employees improve their habits. A supportive environment will encourage everyone to arrive on time.

? NEXT ON YOUR SAY

As the winter season begins, how can Oman leverage its natural beauty and outdoor activities to attract more tourists?

The views stated here are those of the respondents and not endorsed by *Muscat Daily*. If you feel strongly about the issues discussed here, you can email your comments to muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om You can also log on to our Facebook page or tweet us your comments on the issue.

SEND YOUR COMMENTS

Share your comments in not more than 50 words along with your full name and profession before next Sunday, 10am, via WhatsApp, Facebook or Instagram

SEND US ON OUR NEW WHATSAPP NO 91953774

Sultanate of Oman سلطنة عُمان
وزارة التراث والسياحة
Ministry of Heritage and Tourism

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN INTERNAL TENDERS

Tender No.	246/2024/MHT/HQ-62	Tender Name	Consulting services to provide technical support for hotel and tourism projects.
	247/2024/MHT/HQ-63		Design, production and implementation of content works for screens at the Bisya and Salut Visitor Center.

Fees of Tender Documents	25 O.R
Tender Document Sales End Date	24/11/2024
Last Date for Bid Submission	17/12/2024
Grade	First Third & Fourth
E-Tendering Portal	https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om

Interested Companies registered with Tender Board (in the mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E.Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>, against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of documents.

The Tenderers must acknowledge commitment to the bid.

The Ministry shall not be obligated to accept the lowest or any other bids

The bid submission period starts after the end of the inquiry period shown in the e-tendering system, until the last date for submitting bids before (10:00 am, Oman time).

Support and inquiries	For more information, related to the tender, kindly communicate through the website of the e-tendering system: https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om
	For inquiries related to the technical support for the e-tendering system, kindly communicate through etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om or 24402200

For further information	Email : sotic@mht.gov.om Phones : 22088348 - 22088085
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ASMED pushes for more financing for SMEs



Muscat – With the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) working to boost financing options for SMEs, the share of commercial banks’ lending to small businesses rose from 3.5% in the first quarter of 2024 to 3.7% in the third.

The figures were announcement at a dialogue session on commercial loans for SMEs organised by ASMED on Sunday. The session aimed to broaden SME access to financing from commercial banks, a move seen as critical to supporting business growth and increasing the contribution of small businesses to Oman’s gross domestic product.

Discussions centred on the current SME financing landscape, challenges faced by commercial banks and potential solutions to

improve access to credit. The session was part of a broader national strategy for SME financing developed in collaboration with the National Sustainability Programme, Central Bank of Oman (CBO), the banking sector and other stakeholders. The strategy focuses on setting a 5% SME financing target within commercial bank portfolios and exploring strategies to drive credit growth for small businesses.

On the occasion, Tahir Salim Abdullah al Amri, Executive President of CBO, underscored the need for cooperation between the apex bank and ASMED to support SMEs, while describing commercial banks and financial institutions as key to developing financing solutions. He highlighted CBO’s directives for banks to establish specialised SME fi-

naning units, and offering training and ongoing support to businesses.

Halima bint Rashid al Zaria, Chairperson of ASMED, emphasised the pivotal role of Oman’s financial sector in fostering entrepreneurship, with the authority working alongside banks to identify financing challenges. She informed that ASMED is exploring alternative financing models and initiatives to equip entrepreneurs with business management skills and lower credit risks associated with commercial loans.

With the current focus on SME financing, Oman’s business community is optimistic that such initiatives will open new doors for small businesses, helping them grow and contribute more significantly to the economy.

OCCI signs three MoUs to boost SME sector

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) signed three memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with private sector companies on Sunday to support and sustain small and medium enterprises.

On the occasion, Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of OCCI, informed that the agreements will enable entrepreneurs to benefit from training programmes and inclusion in purchasing systems. He emphasised the importance of collaboration between private sector companies and SMEs to bolster entrepreneurship in Oman.

Zakaria bin Abdullah al Saadi, CEO of the chamber, described partnership between the private sector and SMEs as pivotal for the long-term growth and continuity of the latter. He added that the agreements align with OCCI’s goals of supporting economic diversification and providing innovative solutions that enhance the sustainability and competitiveness of SMEs.

Sheikh Ahmed bin Amer al Musalhi, Chairman of OCCI’s SME Committee, pointed out that these agreements reflect the chamber’s commitment to enabling small businesses access local and international markets and share expertise.

Dhahirah expands infrastructure projects

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Dhahirah has embarked on a development drive to enhance healthcare, education, tourism and infrastructure across the wilayats of Ibri, Yanqul and Dhank.

Governor Najib bin Ali al Rawas has stated that these initiatives align with Oman Vision 2040 and reflect the aspirations of the citizens of the governorate.

For 2024, Dhahirah's key projects include developing scenic facilities in Yanqul and Dhank, each spanning 65,000sqm, with a combined investment of RO4mn. In Ibri, a science and innovation centre valued at RO1.5mn is under construction, supported by OQ Refineries and Petroleum Development Oman.

The governorate is also investing in communications and road infrastructure. In partnership with Oman Towers Company, decorative communications towers are being installed, while RO7mn has been allocated for road paving. This includes 60km of internal roads in Ibri and 25km in both Yanqul and Dhank. Additionally, more than RO2.7mn has been allocated to repair roads damaged in April's tropical storms.

Furthering digital transformation, Dhahirah is implementing business continuity initiatives and upgrading technical infrastructure. Preparations are underway for the second Dhahirah Tourism Festival in 2025, alongside plans for new community facilities, including a youth centre in Ibri, a public park and a slaughterhouse.



(Supplied photo)

Tourism in the governorate has shown robust growth with 45% increase in hotel establishments from 33 in 2023 to 48 this year. According to Ali bin

Khamis al Sudairy, Assistant Director of Heritage and Tourism Department, the number of hotel guests in 2024 reached 10,976 by September, marking a 13% in-

crease over the previous year. Revenue from tourism doubled, reflecting Dhahirah's growing appeal to visitors.

Dhahirah is also focusing on

heritage preservation. Working with experts from Poland, France and the United States, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has conducted archaeological surveys and excavations across the governorate. The findings show-

ance and harvesting equipment, with programmes also encouraging onion and garlic cultivation. By September 2024, agricultural and animal holdings reached 13,832, including 10,633 farms and 3,199 animals.

Tourism in the governorate has shown robust growth with 45% increase in hotel establishments from 33 in 2023 to 48 this year. Hotel guests increased 13%

case Dhahirah's rich history and add to the governorate's cultural offerings.

In agriculture, Dhahirah is ranked third among the governorates in wheat production, yielding around 249 tonnes in the 2023-2024 season. To support farmers, the governorate provides high-yield seeds, guid-

Water resource management is also a priority, with the Directorate of Water Resources overseeing a major falaj maintenance project. Budgeted at RO848,434, the project has already completed work on 44 falaj systems, and efforts are underway to construct ten dams and maintain four existing ones.

Omani film wins award for best animation at Marrakech fest

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Director Mohammed al Darushi's *Ta* has won the award for best short film in the animation category at the International Festival of Marrakech for Mini Short Films.

Organised by Friends of Theatre and Cinema Association, the festival ran from October 30 to November 2, bringing together filmmakers from around the world. Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Darushi expressed pride in *Ta*'s achievement, noting its distinction as the first Omani animation film to receive an international award.

The film competed against over 300 entries from 13 countries, making its success particularly meaningful. "The film was recognised for its quality, its impactful human story and the transformation of its idea into cinematic form," he said. Darushi attributed the film's success to



(Supplied photo)

its engaging message, and its visual and audio appeal enhanced by skilled editing.

The two-minute film took time to complete due to Darushi's unfamiliarity with animation techniques. His earlier work focused on documentaries. "It is a unique project because I shot, hand-painted and later animated using After Effects," he said, adding, "I wanted to create something different."

Ta combines traditional and digital animation techniques,

using programmes such as Adobe Premiere, Vegas and Moho. Darushi's approach allowed him to expand storytelling techniques, creating a narrative he hopes will resonate deeply with audiences.

He informed that 103 festival entries from Arab, African, European and Asian countries were selected for final evaluation. Winners were chosen by a technical committee, which evaluated the films for artistic and technical merit.

Ibri Arena inaugurated, billed to be motorsports enthusiasts' hub

Our Correspondent
Ibri

Ibri Arena, a dedicated car drifting venue, opened on Friday. Organised by Dhahirah Governor's Office in partnership with Oman Automobile Association (OAA), the opening included a free show and witnessed a large turnout.

The inauguration was held under the patronage of Dr Saeed bin Humaid al Harthy, Wali of Ibri.

Ahmed bin Rashid al Marshoudi, Director of Media Department in Dhahirah Governor's Office, noted that the arena, an important addition to the governorate's infrastructure, is part of a series of ongoing developmental projects aimed at promoting tourism and community engagement in Dhahirah.

Spread over 21,000sqm, Ibri Arena can seat over 6,000 spectators and includes ample park-



(Supplied photo)

ing and service facilities. The arena is designed to host a wide variety of sports and entertainment events, providing a versatile space for the community while attracting visitors to the governorate.

Marshoudi added that the governorate is committed to organising annual events, activities and festivals that will highlight Dhahirah's cultural and recreational offerings, helping to stim-

ulate local tourism and economic growth. "This arena is a testament to our commitment to showcasing Dhahirah's potential as a vibrant destination for tourists and motorsports enthusiasts alike."

Mohammed bin Taleb al Raisi, Marketing Director of OAA, informed that the association is keen to use Ibri Arena to boost sports and tourism activities in the governorate. "Our

goal is to provide a unique experience for motorsports fans, and we have ensured that the arena meets the highest safety standards to offer an exciting and secure environment for participants and spectators," he said.

The opening event featured more than 60 competitors from Oman and the region participating in drifting contests in saloon and four-wheel drive vehicles.

'Experience South Batinah' tourism fest in Jan

Our Correspondent
Muscat

South Batinah will host the second edition of the 'Experience South Batinah' tourism festival in January 2025 to bolster domestic tourism and stimulate economic activity in the governorate.

The festival will feature a variety of entertainment, tourism and cultural activities designed to showcase the governorate's unique attractions.

According to Masoud bin Saeed al Hashmi, Governor of South Batinah and Chairman of the festival's organising committee, such events highlight the diverse tourism components, and natural, historical and cultural



heritage sites that each governorate has to offer. "South Batinah is particularly appealing to tourists due to its rich tourism and heritage landscape. The festival aims to attract visitors and promote the distinctive features

of each wilayat in the governorate."

He added that organising such events, with the involvement of the private sector and other stakeholders, plays a vital role in revitalising the economic,

tourism, entertainment and cultural sectors.

He further said that engaging the local community in these events is a key objective for South Batinah with the aim of strengthening national identity and preserving historical and cultural heritage. These festivals benefit all segments of society, particularly entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises that require support and resources.

Events of the festival in January 2025 are set to take place in Khabat al Qadan, renowned for its unique tourism offerings and beautiful deserts, attracting a large number of visitors all year round.

His Majesty the Sultan issues four Royal Decrees

Continued from Page 01

Article 2 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No 54/2024 appoints judges at the Supreme Court.

Article 1 states that the individuals named in the list attached to this decree will be appointed as judges at the Supreme Court.

Article 2 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

LIST OF JUDGES APPOINTED AT THE SUPREME COURT

Mohammed bin Said bin Khalfan al Yahya'ee
Ahmed bin Abdullah bin Sulaiman al Mahrouqi
Abdullah bin Masoud bin Ali al Sunaidi
Khalfan bin Salim bin Nasser al Busaidi
Dr Ahmed bin Said bin Ahmed al Shukaili
Dr Jabir bin Khalfan bin Salim al Hattali
Aqeel bin Salim bin Mohammed al Sharif Ba'alawi
Dr Saif bin Ali bin Abdullah al Hadidi

Juma bin Sulaiman bin Rashid al Gharibi
Hisham bin Obaid bin Khalfan al Abri
Said bin Salim bin Said al Ghusaini
Dr Hilal bin Nasser bin Abdullah al Seyabi
Dr Said bin Musabah bin Mohammed al Gharibi
Dr Badr bin Khamis bin Said al Yazidi
Dr Ali bin Mohammed bin Salim al Adawi
Abdullah bin Amer bin Khayef al Amri

Dr Nasser bin Rashid bin Salim al Mushaifri
Yahya bin Saud bin Mattar al Ramadani
Moosa bin Salim bin Saleh al Farsi
Malik bin Humaid bin Salim al Bahri
Dr Mazin bin Saud bin Hamad al Maashari
Dr Mahfoud bin Mayoof bin Ali al Sharji
Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Ahmed al Nofali

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Oman's oil output drops 5.1% in 2024, exports remain resilient

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's oil production has experienced a notable decline, with total output dropping by 5.1% to 272.4mn barrels in the first nine months of 2024, down from 287mn barrels in the same period last year, according to the data released by the National Center for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The figures revealed a 6.7% year-on-year decrease in crude oil production, which fell to 208.5mn barrels during January-September period this year from 223.5mn barrels in the same period of 2023. However, condensate production showed a slight increase of 0.6%, reaching 63.9mn barrels compared to 63.8mn barrels a year earlier.

Average daily oil output for Oman was recorded at 994,200 barrels per day (bpd), reflecting a 5.1% decline from 1.047mn bpd during the corresponding period in 2023. September's production averaged 991,500 bpd. The production drop is largely attributed to Oman's compliance with OPEC+ production cut agreements.



In early 2024, Oman and fellow OPEC+ nations agreed to extend voluntary production cuts into the second quarter. Oman implemented an additional voluntary cut of 42,000 bpd, which remained in effect until the end of June 2024, on top of a previously announced cut of 40,000

bpd that extends through December 2024.

Exports reach 230mn barrels

Despite the reduction in crude oil output, Oman's oil exports remained relatively stable in 2024. Total oil exports increased by 0.1% to 230.5mn barrels in the first nine months of 2024, compared to 230.3mn barrels in the

same period of the previous year, according to NCSI data.

Oman sold its crude oil at an average price of \$82.60 per barrel during the January-September period, marking a 3.5% rise from the \$79.90 per barrel average in the same timeframe last year.

Exports to China, Oman's largest customer for crude oil, rose by 4.5% to 219.5mn barrels,

Oman sold its crude oil at an average price of \$82.6 per barrel during the January-September period, marking a 3.5% rise from the \$79.9 per barrel average in the same timeframe last year

compared to 210.1mn barrels a year earlier. The world's second largest economy accounted for 95% of Oman's total oil export volumes during January-September period of 2024.

In contrast, crude exports to Japan saw a steep decline of over 46%, falling to just 3.95mn barrels from 7.38mn barrels in the same period last year. Conversely, exports to South Korea increased nearly 32%, reaching 3.75mn barrels. Oil shipments to India declined by 26%, totaling just 2mn barrels during the January-September period of 2024.



IMF begins Article IV consultations with Oman

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Thursday commenced its 2024 Article IV consultations with Oman. The delegation of IMF experts was hosted by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) and the Ministry of Finance.

During the consultations, IMF experts are scheduled to hold a series of meetings with officials and specialists from the CBO, Ministry of Finance, and various other government entities, as well as representatives from civil society and the private sector, according to a statement from the CBO.

The discussions will focus on

four main themes: pursuing fiscal initiatives to ensure sustainability and intergenerational equity; enhancing the effectiveness of monetary policy; safeguarding financial stability while promoting financial sector development; and advancing reforms to bolster non-oil growth prospects. Additional topics related to Oman's financial and monetary policies will also be addressed.

These annual consultations are conducted by IMF experts with all 190 member states under Article IV of the IMF Articles of Agreement. The IMF assesses potential risks to the economy and recommends necessary reforms in monetary and financial policies to strengthen economic stability.

THE FINANCIAL CORPORATION Co. SAOG AND ITS SUBSIDIARIES			
Financial Statement for the period ended 30 september 2024			
Board of Directors' Report			
Dear Shareholders, We present the unaudited financial results of The Financial Corporation Co. SAOG (FINCORP) for the period ended 30 September 2024.			
FINANCIAL RESULTS The Company achieved a total income of OMR 645,168 during the period ended 30 September 2024 compared to a total income of OMR 838,017 during the period ended 30 September 2023 and earned a Net profit before taxes of OMR 31,354 after adjusting the provision for claims of OMR 210,409 during the period ended 30 September 2024 compared to a net profit before taxes of OMR 515,538 during the period ended 30 September 2023.			
DETAILS	30-September-24 OMR	30-September-23 OMR	Variance %
Total Income	645,168	838,017	-23%
Total Expense	(403,405)	(322,479)	25%
Provisions during the quarter	(210,409)	-	100%
Net Profit/ (Loss) before taxes	31,354	515,538	-94%
Profit / (Loss) per share (OMR)	0.0004	0.007	-94%
A summary of the financial results is tabulated below.			
MARKET OUTLOOK GDP growth of Oman is projected to 0.7% in 2024 which has been highly impacted by lower crude oil prices. However, non-hydrocarbon growth would continue to be robust and expanding at an estimated 2.6% on continued spend and investment projects. Growth is however expected to accelerate during the year 2025 & 2026 to 2.7% and 3.2% respectively as projected by World Bank, driven by a recovery in oil and gas production and once Duqm refinery reaches to its full capacity utilisation. We also estimate that a rebound in agricultural production, construction activities and a robust services sector would help a sustained economic growth. A contained inflation at an average of 1.3% over 2024-2026 will also provide a credit expansion to the corporate sector. US Federal Reserve's decision to cut interest rates led recovery in the end of September. After a flip flop during the Q3, the global economy remains resilient. As inflation slowing globally, we estimate that central banks will continue cutting interest rates create a cheap capital creation to boost the economic expansion activities and capital markets going forward.			
CONTINGENCIES During the previous year, the Company appointed an independent financial consultant to review and assess the impact of discrepancies in the brokerage accounts. The process of substantiating the accuracy of account balances has been initiated and is expected to be completed during this year. A provision for claims of OMR 210,409 has been taken based on the initial report of the independent financial consultant against any potential claims. However, the provision for claims in the third quarter is subject to change considering the completion of audits, which are expected to be completed by the end of the year.			
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS We express our gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq for his wise leadership and progressive vision as he continues to lead the country on the path of growth and prosperity. We also extend our appreciation to Muscat Securities Exchange, Financial Services Authority and Muscat Clearing and Depository Company for their valuable co-operation and support. Finally, we are grateful to all our staff, shareholders for their faith and our esteemed clients for the confidence, trust and support extended to FINCORP.			
Dr. Abdullah Masoud Al Harthy Chairman of the Board 30.10.2024			
P.O. Box 782, Postal Code 131, Sultanate of Oman, Phone: (968) 24822354, Fax: (968) 24822390 E-mail: alam@fincorp.org Website: www.fincorp.org			
فيلكورب FINCORP شركة المركز المالي ش.م.ع. The Financial Corporation Co. SAOG ادارة الاسول وساطة تمويل الشركات والاستشارات بحوث Asset Management Brokerage Corporate Finance and Advisory Research			



OPAZ floats tender for Duqm fishing port infrastructure

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) announced a tender on Sunday for the complementary works project at the fishing port in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD). The tender includes construction works for infrastructure and utility networks.

Funded by the Saudi Development Fund, the project involves establishing utility services such as road networks, traffic signals and signage, power supply for road lighting, rainwater drainage systems, sewage systems, drinking water networks, fire-fighting systems, and communications at the fishing port in SEZAD.

OPAZ has invited experienced Omani and Saudi company coalitions to participate in the tender through the electronic

OPAZ has invited experienced Omani and Saudi company coalitions to participate in the tender. Deadline for submission of tender documents is set for November 18

tender platform 'Isnad'. The deadline for submission of tender documents is set for November 18.

The existing port covers an area of approximately 7.5 square kilometers and includes 3.3 kilometers of breakwaters, a fixed quay of 1.3 kilometers, six floating berths with a draft depth of up to 10 meters, and a dedicated berth for Coast Guard boats.

The location of the fishing port in Duqm, part of which is already operational, is strategically close to the planned fisheries and food industries area, designed to meet the basic investment needs for targeted food industries. This area currently hosts six factories. OPAZ aims for the fishing port in Duqm to also support environmentally friendly green energy projects.

The fishing port is operated by Duqm Port Investment Company, a coalition led by several companies from the Omani Investment Authority (OIA), including Oman Fish Development Company (FDO), Asyad Ports and Harbors Company, Al Wusta Fisheries Industries Company, and Oman Food Investment Holding Company. The coalition also includes the French Lorient Port Company, one of the largest fishing ports in Europe.

Qatar Chamber proposes study on carbon tax implications for GCC

Doha, Qatar - Qatar Chamber has launched an initiative to prepare a study to assess the impact of imposing a carbon tax on the economies of the GCC countries.

Chairman of Qatar Chamber, Sheikh Khalifa bin Jassim al-Thani emphasised the importance of the consultative meeting among the ministers of commerce and industry and the heads of unions and chambers of commerce in the GCC states, highlighting its role in advancing Gulf economic integration. He

made these remarks during the recent consultative meeting.

He said that the Qatar Chamber proposes to conduct a study to assess the impact of imposing a carbon tax on the economies of GCC countries. He noted that Gulf economies rely primarily on oil, gas, and hydrocarbon industries, and that such a tax could therefore reduce the competitive advantage of Gulf exports.

The Chairman of Qatar Chamber noted that the European Union plans to impose this tax in 2026, targeting exports of

aluminum, petrochemicals, steel products, and manufactured goods.

He emphasised that Qatar Chamber looks forward to increased cooperation with GCC unions and chambers, as well as stronger partnerships between the private sector in Qatar and its counterparts in the Gulf countries. He stressed that this collaboration aims to enhance trade and economic cooperation and elevate the levels of intra-GCC trade.
QNA

World faces \$2.7tn annual climate investment gap

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ahead of COP29, a new Moody's interactive data story revealed that climate investment needs could reach \$2.7tn annually by 2030 – around 1.8% of global economic output. While investment has increased since the 2015 Paris Agreement, it remains insufficient to achieve the goal of global net zero emissions by 2050, the rating agency said in a report.

Of the \$2.7tn gap, Moody's analysis indicates that the annual climate mitigation investment gap is projected to grow to nearly \$2.4tn by 2030, with over \$300bn needed for adaptation investment.

'Vast sums are required for the world to transition to a low-carbon economy, build resilience, and adapt to the impacts of climate change. While investment has risen significantly since the 2015 Paris Agreement, much more is needed to achieve the goal of global net zero emissions by 2050,' Moody's stated in the report.

Significant investment gaps exist for both climate mitigation (reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (adjusting to the impacts of climate



Worldwide climate losses could reach 14% of GDP, affecting both emerging markets and advanced economies, with Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia likely to be hardest hit, according to Moody's

change). Although nations are expected to spend nearly \$2tn on clean energy in 2024 – including low-carbon power, infrastructure, energy efficiency, and electrification – Moody's analysis shows an annual climate mitigation investment gap

of nearly \$2.4tn by 2030.

Adaptation investment has received much less funding due to its more limited commercial potential, falling well short of the estimated annual need of about \$400bn, standing at around \$72bn in 2022.

'This totals an annual climate investment gap of \$2.7tn by 2030 and exposes vulnerable communities to increasing risks from climate change, particularly in emerging markets where investment needs are most pronounced,' Moody's said.

Far-reaching credit implications

According to Moody's, climate change has far-reaching credit implications for economies and businesses, whether through the physical impacts on livelihoods and infrastructure or through the changes necessary to reduce carbon emissions across nearly all activities.

'Worldwide climate losses could reach 14% of GDP, affect-

ing both emerging markets and advanced economies, with Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia likely to be hardest hit. These regions could lose over 30% of their economic output by 2050 under current policies and planned clean energy investments,' the agency noted.

The good news is that early investment in clean energy can mitigate substantial economic losses from climate change, leading to better outcomes for populations compared to current policies. In addition to saving lives, rapid climate spending could promote higher growth and increase government revenue globally over time.

In a net zero scenario, the benefits to the global economy would begin to outweigh the costs after about a decade, potentially saving 2% of GDP annually by 2050.

'The downside is that the benefits will take years to materialise, and governments will need to invest heavily in the next decade to avert the worst effects of climate change, which could result in significantly higher debt. Such delayed benefits can be challenging for policymakers to communicate to their electorates,' Moody's warned.

'Moreover, costs and benefits will not be evenly distributed across economies and sectors, contributing to social and political risks. Even if financing gaps are closed, there is no assurance that funds will be deployed efficiently, which could create its own set of challenges,' the agency added.

Moody's pointed out that climate finance for emerging markets falls significantly short of the required levels, posing substantial risks. This could create a vicious cycle in which a lack of financing hampers emerging market governments' efforts to enhance infrastructure resilience, transition to a low-emissions economy, or assist communities reliant on high-carbon industries in finding new sources of income.

In such scenarios, governments' relative credit strength could diminish, making it more difficult and costlier for them to secure financing and further weakening their positions.

'Examining six major greenhouse gas emitters, if the private sector steps in to fill the gap through 2030, their increase in debt-to-GDP ratio will be considerably smaller than if the public sector bears the full cost,' Moody's concluded.

OpenAI introduces ChatGPT Search for web sources



San Francisco, US – American artificial intelligence company OpenAI on Thursday introduced ChatGPT Search for users to get fast answers with links to relevant web sources.

"ChatGPT can now search the web in a much better way than before," the company said in a blog post. "You can get fast, timely answers with links to relevant web sources, which you would have previously needed to go to a search engine for."

"This blends the benefits of a natural language interface with the value of up-to-date sports scores, news, stock quotes, and more," it added.

ChatGPT will choose to search the web based on what users ask, or users can manually

choose to search by clicking the web search icon, according to the post.

OpenAI said it has also partnered with news and data providers to add up-to-date information and new visual designs for categories such as weather, stocks, sports, news, and maps.

ChatGPT Search will be available at chatgpt.com besides desktop and mobile apps.

All ChatGPT Plus and Team users, and SearchGPT waitlist users will have access to ChatGPT Search.

Enterprise and Edu users will get access in the next few weeks, while the company said it will roll out to all free users over the coming months.

The move comes as competi-

tion in search engines has intensified among Google, Microsoft's Bing and Perplexity.

The move also positions OpenAI as more of a competitor to Microsoft and its businesses. Microsoft has invested close to \$14bn in OpenAI, yet OpenAI's products directly compete with Microsoft's AI and search tools, such as Copilot and Bing.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman wrote Thursday in a post on X that search is his "favorite feature we have launched" in ChatGPT since the chatbot's original debut. OpenAI says users can "search in a more natural, intuitive way" and ask follow-up questions "just like you would in a conversation."

Agencies

Fitch upgrades Egypt's rating to B with stable outlook

Istanbul, Turkey – Fitch Ratings said that it upgraded Egypt's long-term foreign currency issuer default rating to B from B- with a stable outlook.

The rating agency said the upgrade reflects the country's lower external risk, policy adjustment, replenished external buffers, new capital inflows and more flexible exchange rate.

While inflation fell to 26.4% in September from 35.7% in February, Fitch forecasts it slowing to 12.5% at the end of

fiscal year 2025.

The rating agency projects the interest rate to be held at 27.25%, following increases of a total of 800 basis points during the first quarter of this year.

Fitch forecasts Egypt's GDP growth picking up from 2.4% in 2024 fiscal year to 4% in 2025 fiscal year amid strengthening confidence, real incomes, remittances and foreign direct investments. According to Fitch, further escalation of regional conflict represents a key risk for

Egyptian economy, primarily through lower Suez Canal and tourism revenue.

"We forecast the former recovers only gradually to around half of the 2023 level in 2026, mitigating risks. Tourist revenue has been relatively resilient, broadly unchanged in 2024. Escalating conflict represents a moderate risk to our base case that the government contains any large-scale influx of refugees," Fitch said.

Anadolu Agency



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DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2024

In its meeting held on 29th October 2024, the Board of Directors approved the Company's unaudited financial results for the period ended 30th September 2024.

SUMMARY FINANCIALS

In OMR'000

	Quarter			9 Months		
	Q3/24	Q3/23	%	2024	2023	%
Revenue	130,515	139,635	(7%)	373,151	389,585	(4%)
Gross profit	9,265	10,458	(11%)	25,817	27,599	(6%)
Add: Other income	1,119	1,101	2%	3,321	3,224	3%
Less: Selling, distribution and administrative expenses	(7,910)	(8,614)	(8%)	(23,270)	(24,170)	(4%)
Less: Financing and taxation	(1,063)	(1,120)	(5%)	(2,898)	(2,860)	1%
Profit and comprehensive income	1,411	1,825	(23%)	2,970	3,793	(22%)

■ Nine Months Revenue was OMR 373,151 million, 4% lower than the same period last year reflecting lower volumes in the period.

■ Nine Months Gross Profit was OMR 25,817 million, 6% lower than the same period last year impacted by lower volumes and lower stock price reduction in 2024.

■ Nine months Selling and Administrative expenses were 4% lower than the same period last year reflecting ongoing cost optimization measures and improved operational efficiency.

■ Nine Months Profit and Comprehensive Income was OMR 2,970 million 22% lower than the same period in 2023 due to lower gross margin.

BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

Mobility Business maintained its commitment towards Goal Zero in HSSE and continued to offer customers our services and products through operational excellence. To welcome customers and travellers to Oman during Khawarizmi Week, the business introduced various Shell Select offers in the food and beverages category to boost patronage while they are on the go. This was coupled with attractive offers and promotions for both Shell Select and fuels including Shell V-Power. The business also continued its footprint expansion of its strategic partnership on Convenience-retailing "Grocery & Supply Chain Partnership" with Al Horos Markets LLC. A move that improved both our customer value proposition and retail value proposition by expanding our shop offers and bringing in exclusive products to Shell Select whilst optimising supply chain management through single sourcing. This quarter witnessed the re-opening of Shell Select shops in prime locations specifically Shell Alwakel, Alkhalid South, Airport, North Alkhalid and Al Khawarizmi Service Stations. These shops adopted the Shell Select Convenience 5 design that has evolved to meet customer needs with a focus on enhancing the coffee experience at Shell Select shops across the Sultanate. The business also continued its mobile destination for customers. Shell Select shops also introduced new clip in partners such as Shell Street Brews and Al Waco mats and chocolate to continue enhancing our customer value proposition for Shell Select to be more than a convenience store and offer a variety of products and services in Shell sites.

Fleet Solutions Business remained focused on gaining new customers specifically targeting the construction and energy industries, which subsequently resulted in a growth in Shell Fleet Solutions business volumes vs the same period last year. The business continued to address existing customer needs through automation of its digitalization journey with the rollout of our new and enhanced Vehicle Recognition System (VRS) that aims to bring in more customers to Shell sites through its touchless approach. This new system is now available in 70 Shell Service Stations and will be in all our sites by Q1 2025.

The Lubricants Business has achieved an increase in volume growth to last year. In the month of July, the business recorded high sales volume in the local market, surpassing 2019 highest monthly sales volume for the 1st time since the pandemic. In the B2B segment, Q3 witnessed renewals of key contracts in the Oil & Gas and Construction sectors and added new customers from the Power sector. These achievements highlight our continued focus on business growth and delivering value to our customers and partners.

Oman Lubes Blending Plant has sustained a strong safety performance with 745 days No harm and 2576 days No Leak. While customer operational efficiency across all workstreams including order fulfillment and proactive planning and maintenance practices. Additionally, the business created offering customers an operational excellence (OP) by providing the differentiated fuel option, which is expected to positively contribute to volume growth, while ensuring safety, reliability, operational excellence, and commercial flexibility.

Marine Business faced challenges in Q3 due to restrictions on sea movement following geo-political developments, in addition to scarcity of tenders in the market. However, the business continued to increase volumes through its existing customers while focusing on HSSE, operational excellence and our ethics and compliance standards. In the meantime, the business is also working on introducing new financial and operational models to support its footprint across all major ports in the Sultanate.

Customer Operations has continued the journey towards enhancing customer experience. In Q3, we introduced the Live Chat feature which is accessible to all users to improve response time & the overall customer experience. Customer Operations team has also successfully completed the Online Portal upgrade for Commercial Fleet customers. These digital advancements underline our commitment to operational excellence and customer-centricity to further strengthen our service delivery capabilities.

Aviation Business continued to apply efficiency and cost optimization solutions to its operations to improve its profitability whilst ensuring that we serve our customers in a safe and reliable manner. These efforts resulted in strengthening our financial and HSSE performance whilst upholding to high operational excellence records as reflected in audit results. In addition, the business is progressing in recommissioning Sabah International Airport fuel farm and commissioning Fahad Airport fuel farm. The business continues to explore new operational models to improve our competitiveness and resilience and adapt to the businesses landscape.

Commercial Fuels Business in Q3, the industry overall faced challenges due to delays in awarding major projects in the market, however, the business managed to retain and expand its footprint as it achieved higher volumes in comparison to the first half of the year. Additionally, the business created offering customers an operational excellence (OP) by providing the differentiated fuel option, which is expected to positively contribute to volume growth, while ensuring safety, reliability, operational excellence, and commercial flexibility.

HEALTH, SAFETY, SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENT (HSSE)

Our Goal Zero efforts continued in Q3 as we had Zero recordable incidents and loss of primary containment incidents this quarter; a testament of our dedication towards achieving Goal Zero and our commitment to sustain HSSE as our main priority. We continued to focus on ensuring the well-being of our employees, service champions, workers and truck drivers through several initiatives focused on caring for people, building frontline competencies, and implementing effective Assurance Programmes. As part of our safety and well-being initiatives, we completed a worker wellness survey with a good number of contractor participants and launched a Summer and Fatigue Management campaign during the summer period. Furthermore, we held several training sessions focused on building frontline capabilities and equipping them to manage day-to-day operational risks. Additionally, the company held an emergency response training workshop on Shell Oman's first Hydrogen construction site. The workshop was attended by the Civil Protection Team represented by the Civil Defense and Ambulance Authority and comes under our role in knowledge sharing and cooperation with the local authorities to deal with emergencies in a safe and effective manner. Lastly, we completed a targeted assurance programme by focusing on first-line assurance on retailer collect, top-loading facilities, asset integrity, operational safety, construction safety standards, vehicle design and maintenance, operational controls review, quarterly safety performance review, and risk management.

STRATEGY & ENERGY TRANSITION

As we strive to achieve our energy transition strategy, the Company started incorporating the data from its GHG (Green House Gas) emissions to build a comprehensive approach and establish the carbon-reduction road map by identifying and tracking the company's carbon emissions in 2024 for its major operational facilities and assets. To support us in this journey, we have partnered with a local SME to retain ownership about carbon emission reduction and upskill our staff on data gathering and data analysis. Moreover, Shell Oman is currently in the final stages of constructing the first Hydrogen Service Station in the Sultanate. The station will include various services including, and not limited to, on-site hydrogen fuel generation and handling facilities, Shell V-Power and other grades of fuel, non-fuel convenient retailing options as well as the first EV hub in Oman. The company is in continuous engagement with the authorities to explore introducing a variety of products that contributes to achieving net zero emissions, including biofuels produced by our Low Carbon Fuels (LCF) business, Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) amongst others. In addition, we continue to work closely with the authorities to enhance the EV journey in the Sultanate and explore expansion plans and opportunities in the market.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

As a responsible corporate citizen, Shell Oman continued to build on its strategic corporate social responsibility themes which are Environment, Health, Community Skills & Enterprise Development. This is done through the delivery of its planned initiatives as well as regularly addressing requests from local entities and charitable organizations.

Following the completion of the first version of the EVHub programme in partnership with the Youth Centre, we held a graduation ceremony for 31 young people who successfully completed the programme. This was a learning experience that equipped the participants with the required knowledge and skills for creating a sustainable future. We have also launched our very first In-Country Value (ICV) booklet which reflects Shell Oman's commitment in being a responsible corporate citizen. The booklet showcases our commitment to local development by outlining the company's dedication in supporting and enhancing the local economy and prioritizing the procurement of Omani goods and services. It emphasizes our focus on developing the skills and capabilities of Omani youth and enterprises, ensuring long-term, sustainable growth for local businesses and communities. Furthermore, the booklet enhances transparency with our stakeholders and business partners as it is a valuable resource to foster greater collaboration and understanding of our approach in delivering In-Country Value. During Q3, the company continued to extend its social outreach across different parts of the Sultanate through community initiatives such as visiting the Charity team to get introduced to the various activities conducted at the local level and to contribute via distributing school bags to students supported by the charity. In August, the company held its second Investor Relations session with active attendance from investors to present key highlights on the financial and operational performance of the company during the first half of the year, in addition to sharing the focus areas for the upcoming quarter. We will continue playing our role and contributing to Powering Lives, in line with Shell's Powering Progress strategy and Oman's Vision 2040.

Walid Hadi
Chairman, Shell Oman Marketing Company SAOG

Muscat, October 29, 2024

Unaudited Financial Statements for the 9 months ended 30 September 2024

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE 9 MONTHS ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

	Unaudited 9 months ended 30 Sep 2024 OMR'000	Unaudited 9 months ended 30 Sep 2023 OMR'000	Audited 12 months ended 31 Dec 2023 OMR'000
Revenue	373,151	389,585	519,466
Cost of sales	(347,334)	(361,986)	(483,995)
Gross profit	25,817	27,599	35,471
Other income	3,321	3,224	4,188
Selling, distribution and administrative expenses	(23,270)	(24,170)	(32,411)
Operating profit	5,868	6,653	7,248
Interest expense	(2,391)	(2,196)	(2,963)
Interest income	10	10	14
Profit before income tax	3,487	4,467	4,299
Income tax expense	(517)	(674)	(696)
Profit and comprehensive income for the period	2,970	3,793	3,603
Basic and diluted earnings per share (OMR)	0.030	0.038	0.036

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

	Unaudited At 30 Sep 2024 OMR'000	Unaudited At 30 Sep 2023 OMR'000	Audited At 31 Dec 2023 OMR'000
ASSETS			
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	62,994	62,030	63,888
Right-of-use assets	38,201	37,956	39,816
Intangible assets	110	163	150
Deferred tax assets	681	138	358
Total non-current assets	101,986	100,287	104,212
Current assets			
Inventories	6,825	10,229	7,364
Receivables and prepayments	62,199	55,538	52,194
Cash at bank and in hand	6,160	8,885	3,997
Total current assets	75,184	74,652	63,555
Total assets	177,170	174,939	167,767
EQUITY			
Share capital	10,000	10,000	10,000
Legal reserve	3,587	3,587	3,587
Retained earnings	39,292	40,112	39,922
Total equity	52,879	53,699	53,509
LIABILITIES			
Non-current liabilities			
Long-term lease liabilities	37,154	35,915	37,397
Employee terminal benefits	170	211	150
Total non-current liabilities	37,324	36,126	37,547
Current liabilities			
Short-term loans	31,000	20,000	15,000
Short-term lease liabilities	2,716	3,340	3,081
Payables and accruals	52,324	61,038	57,658
Income tax payable	863	702	935
Provisions	64	34	37
Total current liabilities	86,967	85,114	76,711
Total liabilities	124,291	121,240	114,258
Total equity and liabilities	177,170	174,939	167,767
Net assets per share (OMR)	0.529	0.537	0.535

■ The complete financial statements are available from the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX).

■ The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder on request, in either Arabic or English, within 7 days of receipt of the request. The request should be sent to the Chief Financial Officer at the address shown above.

H2-diplo Decarbonisation Dialogue highlights Oman's key role in sector

On October 16, the 'H2-diplo Decarbonisation Dialogue' convened around 90 participants, including top executives, senior government officials, and industry leaders from Oman, Germany and other countries in Muscat.

This event marked a significant moment for Oman's green hydrogen sector as it aligns with the goals of Germany's H2Global initiative, which aims to establish a global clean hydrogen market through innovative procurement models and robust international partnerships.

H2-diplo, a diplomatic initiative, fosters international cooperation and dialogue around hydrogen and decarbonisation. Through events like this dialogue, H2-diplo promotes cross-sector collaboration among public, private, and academic institutions, creating a platform for knowledge-sharing and cooperative action, a press release said.

The timing of this dialogue was especially significant, coinciding with H2Global's inaugural visit to Oman. Markus Exenberger, executive director of H2Global, introduced the foundation's approach to overcoming the 'chicken-and-egg' challenge in hydrogen markets. By implementing a double auction system, H2Global seeks to create a structured demand that connects producers and consumers



through transparent, equitable pricing. With the support of 72 donor companies, H2Global is

emerging as a leading model for establishing a sustainable hydrogen market and mitigating entry

risks for producers and buyers alike. Oman's Minister of Energy

and Minerals, H E Salim al Aui, and the German Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, H E Dirk Lolke, both highlighted the importance of such events and of a continuous dialogue. H E Aui, reiterated the necessity of maintaining a focus on comprehensive decarbonisation strategies, stating, "Green hydrogen is Oman's best chance to achieve net-zero goals while simultaneously building local value creation."

H E Lolke added, "Oman, a nation already investing heavily in hydrogen, is an ideal partner for Germany, given its strategic location and abundant natural resources."

The event also featured

keynote addresses from Eng Abdulaziz al Shidhani, managing director of Hydrom, who underscored the essential role of the hydrogen ecosystem for sustainable economic growth, as well as from Markus Exenberger, executive director of H2Global, explaining the strategy behind the German initiative H2Global.

The two panels provided actionable insights into hydrogen trade and market readiness. Panel 1, moderated by Dr Ruth Prelicz, head of H2-diplo in Oman, addressed the pathway to net-zero and critical mechanisms for green hydrogen trade. Panelists from Oman's Ministry of Energy and Minerals, the Dutch Embassy, OQ Alternative

Energy, VNG, and H2Global shared perspectives on building a sustainable hydrogen market through partnerships, synchronised infrastructure development for export/import, CO2 pricing, and demand creation for renewable energy products, e.g. by mechanism suggested by H2Global.

Panel 2, led by Maria Noack from the H2-diplo global team, focused on creating an enabling environment for green hydrogen in the areas of skills and financing. Representatives from Hydrom, Deutsche Bank, and Sohar International Bank addressed the complexities of financing large-scale hydrogen projects, while Prof Michael Braun, vice chancellor of GUTech, and a GIZ representative highlighted the need for strategic investments in education programmes to address Oman's projected 200,000 new hydrogen-sector jobs through practical, industry-aligned training supported by international expertise

With participants from ten embassies and leaders from major companies, the event reaffirmed the H2-diplo initiative's importance in fostering international partnerships for hydrogen. Closing with a call for collaboration, the dialogue set a renewed vision for advancing the green hydrogen economy.

BankDhofar provides mobile screening units for breast cancer in three branches

BankDhofar has organised a special initiative to raise awareness among its customers about breast cancer prevention methods by providing a mobile screening unit in three branches - Bousher, Qurum and Seeb Town, to conduct early detection tests and raise awareness of this global disease.

This initiative coincides with the observances during the month of October, which is dedicated to raising awareness of breast cancer, in partnership with the Oman Cancer Association, a press release said.

Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer among



women in the Sultanate of Oman. The Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Re-

search Center recorded approximately 1,145 cases of breast cancer last year. This center pro-

vides counselling and genetic testing for all newly diagnosed breast cancer patients.

The center also receives patients suspected of having breast cancer at the One-Stop Breast Clinic, with the aim of obtaining a rapid diagnosis and starting treatment as soon as possible in case of confirmation.

Said bin Juma al Busaidi, head of Marketing and Corporate Communications at BankDhofar, emphasised that the bank's top priority is to support issues that concern the community, which is why we support initiatives launched by various government and private entities. During October, the bank supported the initiatives and directions taken by the Oman Cancer Association.



SeaOman becomes Oman's first digital member of Green Fins

SeaOman has strengthened its commitment to protecting coral reefs through sustainable tourism by becoming the first digital member of Green Fins in the Sultanate of Oman.

Established in 2004, Green Fins is the world's first independent certificate to stop the environmental impact from marine-based tourism. SeaOman's practices already aligned with many of the goals of Green Fins and with member status the two organisations can work towards a future where environmentally friendly practices are standard across the marine tourism industry, a press release said.

Khamis al Anbouri, commercial director at Oman Sail, said, "Oman is blessed with a wonderfully diverse natural environment and SeaOman is proud to continue sharing this beautiful underwater world with global visitors while always being considerate of nature. Snorkelling and other forms of marine tourism are fantastic activities to introduce people to the marine environment, share our nation with visitors, and create new ocean advocates. However, unmanaged, these activities can have negative impacts on fragile ecosystems like coral reefs. It is our goal to champion conservation efforts and share that mes-

sage with more people across Oman and around the world.

"We happily committed to following the Green Fins code of conduct, as many of the practices align with what we were already doing, making it a natural fit. We already enforce a strict no touch policy for marine life, use reef friendly sunblock, and participate in conservation projects throughout the year to lead by example. Being a member of Green Fins underlines this commitment and shows the world that Oman Sail and SeaOman are responsible operators."

The Green Fins code of conduct outlines 15 environmental standards for marine tourism operations to adopt. This comprehensive list covers best practices for both, above and below, the water and considers the role of managers, operator staff and tourists, and although designed around protecting coral reefs, these standards can apply to all marine environments

Coral reefs cover 1% of the seafloor but coral reefs hold 25% of all marine life, making the reefs some of the most valuable ecosystems on Earth. Coral reefs provide the planet with many benefits, such as plentiful seafood, a first line of defence against storms, and cutting-edge medicines developed to treat cancer, heart disease, etc.

Quriyat Wali reviews urban plans, services



Sheikh Talal bin Saif al Hosani, Wali of Quriyat, held a meeting with the Department of Housing and Urban Planning to review its urban strategy, future plans and services.

Many sheikhs, leaders, and managers of government organisations from various sectors attended it, a press release said.

The Wali, accompanied by engineers from Muscat Municipality's Technical Affairs Department, also visited the suggested site for levelling the land for the '23 July Sports and Cultural Team' in Hay Al Dahir region. It was agreed to support the pro-

ject to enhance the team's youth activities.

He also toured Khobar village, accompanied by the Engineer Director General of Muscat Municipality and many sheikhs and residents of the village. Representatives of Khimji and the manager of the 'Fisheries Development Department' were also present.

The visit aims to re-evaluate ways to protect the western side of the valley. It was agreed with Khimji Construction Company to move the existing stones and construct a concrete barrier for the valley stream.

Efforts on to increase greenery in Muscat Governorate

On October 31, Omani Agriculture Day, which is celebrated every year in the Sultanate of Oman, Muscat Governorate, represented by the municipal sector, has launched a variety of environmental initiatives that reflect its commitment to environmental sustainability and creation of green spaces.

These initiatives are part of the 'Green Muscat' initiative, which aims to engage the community in preserving vegetation, preventing desertification, and increasing green spaces, a press release said.

The initiatives included the distribution of 4,000 seedlings to various areas, with the first part of the campaign being implemented in collaboration with 'Muscat Charity Team' to distribute 2,000 seedlings. This aims to encourage an environment preservation culture among young people by involving them in cultivation.

Additionally, distribution of seedlings, in cooperation with



Seeb Charity Team at Sur Al Hadid Beach, was carried out. To celebrate this activity, another campaign will be launched on November 3 in Quriyat in cooperation with the Basmatna Gheer Team, which will distribute another 2,000 seedlings at an event at Quriyat Club headquarters.

These campaigns come as the overall aim's preview of the 'Green Muscat' initiative, which pursues the cultivation of 10 million trees within the sustainable development purposes and the future vision of Oman.

Muscat Governorate prioritises increasing green spaces, believing that it has a great impact on improving the quality of life and achieving a sustainable environment for residents. The green spaces cultivated in the governorate reached 2,730,446sqm, including 19,565 palm trees, 51,831 varied trees, 336,777 shrubs and hedges, 84,205sqm of seasonal flowers, and 426,577sqm of soil cover.

Muscat Municipality also launched the 'Fins Beach Park' in Quriyat in collaboration with the Ministry of Heritage & Tourism.

US long-range bomber joins air drill with South Korea, Japan

Seoul, South Korea – Japan, South Korea and the United States on Sunday conducted a joint air drill in response to North Korea’s recent test-firing of a new intercontinental ballistic missile, the South Korean military said.

“The exercise demonstrates the commitment of the ROK-US alliance to integrated extended deterrence in response to the advancing nuclear and missile threats from North Korea,” said South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff in a statement.

The drill involved the US B-1B nuclear bomber, as well as South Korea’s F-15K and KF-16 fighter jets, and Japan’s F-2 jets, which escorted the US strategic bomber to a designated location south of the Korean Peninsula, ‘demonstrating an overwhelming capability to swiftly and accurately strike simulated targets’, Seoul’s military added.

It was the fourth time this year that the nuclear bomber has been used on the Korean Peninsula. It was also the second time for a trilateral air exercise



It was the fourth time this year that the nuclear bomber has been used on the Korean Peninsula

aimed at countering Pyongyang’s military threats, the statement said.

The drill took place three days after Pyongyang launched the Hwasong-19, one of its most powerful and advanced solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), which experts say could reach targets in the continental United States.

According to Pyongyang and the militaries in Seoul and Tokyo, which tracked it in real time, the missile flew higher and stayed airborne longer than any previous missile North Korea has fired.

The official Korean Central News Agency hailed it as ‘the world’s strongest strategic missile’. Leader Kim Jong Un ‘expressed great satisfaction’ at the successful launch, calling it ‘an appropriate military action’ to address external security threats from its rivals.

The ICBM test was seen as an attempt to grab American attention ahead of this week’s US presidential election.

DW

US election: More than 75mn vote early

More voters chose to vote in-person than by mail this presidential election cycle

Washington, D.C., US - More than 75mn Americans voted early in the US presidential election, according to data released late on Saturday.

The figures from the University of Florida’s Election Lab tracker show 75,093,872 people have voted either by mail or in-person at polling stations.

More voters chose to vote in-person than by mail this presidential election cycle.

The number of registered voters in the US is about 168mn people, unlike in 2020, when the US was in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic.

Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris and her Republican rival, former President Donald Trump, held rallies in southern swing states with less than two days before Election Day.

Harris held a rally in Atlanta, Georgia, and attended an event in Charlotte, North Carolina. Trump campaigned in Gastonia, North Carolina, then travelled to Salem, Virginia, before returning to Greensboro, North Carolina.

During her rally in the state of Georgia, Harris said Trump is fo-



The figures from the University of Florida’s Election Lab tracker show 75,093,872 people have voted either by mail or in-person at polling stations

Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris and her Republican rival Donald Trump held rallies in southern swing states with less than two days before Election Day.

cused on his ‘enemies list’ and added that she will be focused on her ‘to do list’.

“This is not someone who is thinking about how to make your life better. This is someone, who is increasingly unstable, ob-

essed with revenge, consumed with grievance, and the man is out for unchecked power,” said the Democratic candidate.

At his rallies, Trump took aim at his contender, saying he would usher in an American golden age.

“Kamala broke it, I will fix it, and America will be rich again,” he said in Gastonia.

Meanwhile, Harris is expected to join the ‘Saturday Night Live’ television programme in New York City, CNN reported, citing a source familiar.

Polling indicates that Harris and Trump are locked in a dead heat, particularly in the seven critical battleground states.

Battleground states are pivotal because the US does not

directly elect its presidents. Instead, the process plays out via the Electoral College where 538 representatives cast their ballots in line with their states’ outcomes.

A candidate needs to secure 270 Electoral College votes to claim victory. Electors are allocated to states based on their population, and most states give all of their electors to whichever candidate wins the state in the general vote.

Meanwhile, former US National Security Adviser John Bolton expressed concerns that Donald Trump may refuse to accept the results of the presidential election if he loses to Kamala Harris on November 5.

“No, I don’t think so. And I think we should be ready for it,” Bolton said in an interview with CNN, when asked if he believes the former president would accept the results.

He emphasised the need for

vigilance. “I think everybody ought to be ready because Trump never loses. And if he loses, it’s because it’s ‘stolen’ so it will be difficult,” he said.

Bolton’s remarks came amid Trump’s efforts to cast doubt on the legitimacy of the election, claiming he is already winning in key swing states like Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

A recent CNN poll conducted by SSRS reveals that a majority of American voters doubt the Republican nominee would concede if he loses.

Only 30% of registered voters believe Trump would accept defeat, while 73% think the Democratic nominee, Harris, would concede if she loses.

Among Harris supporters, 95% do not expect Trump to concede, whereas 57% of Trump supporters believe he would accept the results.

Bolton addressed Trump’s controversial comments regarding former Republican congresswoman Liz Cheney, whom he criticised during a recent campaign event.

He said Trump’s disdain for Cheney is rooted in her vote to impeach him after the January 6 insurrection at the Capitol. “The fact is, she voted to impeach him, and he cannot get it out of his head,” said Bolton.

As the election approaches, the political landscape remains charged with uncertainty, particularly regarding the acceptance of its outcomes.

Anadolu Agency

Russian deserters find home in France

Paris, France - “Deserters are not traitors, and desertion is not a crime, because there is no other way out of this situation,” Alexander tells DW. The young Russian man says it is ‘a reasonable decision for a well-educated person not to take part in a war of aggression’.

Alexander is one of six Russian deserters who have arrived in Paris in recent months. They first fled to Kazakhstan, and then on to France during 2022 and 2023. They are now hoping to be granted political asylum.

Pro Asyl, a German human rights and refugee protection association, estimates that at least 250,000 military conscripts have sought protection in other countries from February 2022, when Russia launched its war against Ukraine, through September 2023.

Most have sought safety in Kazakhstan, Georgia, Armenia, Turkey, Serbia and Israel. There are reports, however, that deserters were deported back to Russia from Kazakhstan and Armenia.

Pro Asyl reports that only a few Russian soldiers fled to any of the Schengen states as reaching these countries is challenging and because EU countries have very restrictive visa regulations.



More and more men are reportedly deserting from the Russian army

France sets precedent

France has now become the first EU country to allow former military personnel who oppose Russia’s war on Ukraine to enter the country without a passport. However the men were previously vetted in Kazakhstan to rule out any issues.

“I understand the concerns of Western countries and why they do not hand out travel documents to many deserters, as they could include Russian secret service agents or war criminals,” Alexander says. This is why the men’s journey from Russia and onward travel was monitored.

“We checked the background

of all six deserters,” Alexei Alshansky of the Conflict Intelligence Team (CIT), an independent investigative organisation originally from Russia, told DW. CIT itself was forced to leave Russia in 2022.

Alshansky is a former member of the Russian military who has helped deserters come to France.

“At some point, we contacted human rights activists in the EU and then the advocacy work began, lasting a year,” Alshansky told DW. “The deserters were in Kazakhstan that whole time.”

Of the six men now hoping to be granted asylum in France, only Alexander was directly involved

in the Russian invasion of Ukraine, where he served as an officer. In the winter of 2022, he was stationed in Crimea, which had been annexed by Russia.

At first, everything looked as if Russia was running a military exercise, he told DW. But on February 24, 2022, all soldiers were sent off in a convoy.

“There was no order to attack Ukraine, there were no instructions, we simply crossed the Ukrainian border and only then did we realise what was going on,” Alexander recalls. “I was shocked and didn’t know why we were in Ukraine.”

DW

Moldova votes in tense presidential poll runoff

Chisinau, Moldova - People in Moldova headed to polls on Sunday to vote in a presidential election runoff that could play a crucial role in the country’s European future, amid fears of meddling from Russia.

Pro-European Union incumbent Maia Sandu is facing off with former prosecutor general Alexandr Stoianoglo, who is backed by the pro-Russian Socialist Party, in a taut second-round.

Push for EU membership

Sandu bagged 42.5% of the vote in the first round of the presidential ballot.

Stoianoglo - who was fired as prosecutor general by Sandu last year - got 26% of the vote.

However, analysts are forecasting a close battle as Stoianoglo has since garnered the support of other defeated candidates.

52-year-old Sandu, a former World Bank economist, is looking to chart a new pro-European course for the country.

“Joining the European Union is Moldova’s Marshall Plan,” she



has said referring to the economic recovery plan to rebuild Europe after World War II.

But her plan for Moldova to join the EU received a setback after a referendum on the issue, held last month, was passed by a razor-thin ‘yes’.

Sandu blamed ‘foreign interference’ for the narrow vote, which saw 50.35% backing a membership.

The first round of the presidential ballot and the referendum on EU membership were both held on the same day.

Sandu also alleges that Stoianoglo is the Kremlin’s man and a ‘Trojan horse’.

Stoianoglo, who is praised by his supporters for keeping his dis-

tance from the EU, says that his opponent’s claims are untrue. He has accused Sandu of indulging in divisive politics in a nation that has a considerable Russian-speaking minority.

Police in Moldova have tightened their watch in an attempt to avoid a repeat of what they say was an extensive vast vote-buying scheme in the first round last month. It is believed to have been brought into play by Russian-backed fugitive oligarch Ilan Shor.

Shor resides in Russia and has used social media to urge people to vote against Sandu, promising a payout for following his instructions.

DW

Drone strikes cause destruction in Kyiv

Kyiv, Ukraine - Russian drone strikes overnight caused destruction in Kyiv on Sunday, but officials reported no injuries as debris fell across various parts of the city.

According to the capital's military administration, the attack damaged buildings, roads, and several power lines.

Serhiy Popko, the head of Kyiv's military administration, said on the Telegram messaging app that falling drone debris damaged the entrance and windows of at least five buildings in the Shevchenkivskiy and Holosiivskiy districts, including a hostel.

The military administration posted several photos on Telegram showing a blown entrance to one building, damaged windows in another, and power lines in the street.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian air force said Russia fired 96 attack drones and one X-59/69 missile at Ukraine. Air defence forces confirmed the downing of the rocket and 66 drones in several Ukrainian regions.

Ukraine 'holds back' powerful Russian offensive

The air attack came as the Ukrainian military said it held back one of Russia's strongest offensives since Moscow's full-scale invasion began in February 2022.

"Ukrainian forces are stopping one of the most powerful Russian offensives from launching a full-scale invasion," General Oleksandr Syrskiy wrote on the Telegram messaging app on Saturday.

Russian troops advanced in September at their fastest pace since March 2022, the month after President Vladimir Putin ordered the invasion, according to open-source data. On Saturday, Moscow announced that it had captured two more settlements along the Donbas front line.

DW

'Dismantling UNRWA will deprive Palestinian children of learning'

Istanbul/ Gaza - The head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) called on Sunday to mobilise efforts to reach an agreement to end the Israeli war on Gaza instead of focusing on banning the UN agency.

"Dismantling UNRWA in the absence of a viable alternative will deprive Palestinian children of learning in the foreseeable future," UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini warned in a statement.

"Children and their education are not featured in any discussions when 'experts' or politicians talk about replacing UNRWA," he said.

Lazzarini warned that without learning, children will fall prey to exploitation, including joining armed groups.

"Without learning, this region will remain unstable and volatile. Without UNRWA, the fate of millions of people will hang by the thread."

Until October 2023, UNRWA provided education to over 300,000 boys and girls in Gaza, constituting half of the school-age population in the territory, according to Lazzarini.

Gaza's children 'are now losing a second year of education', he said.

"UNRWA is the only UN agency that directly provides education in UN schools," he said, noting that nearly 50,000 children also go to UNRWA schools in the West Bank.

On Monday, the Israeli Knes-



This file photo shows a school getting inaugurated in Khan Yunis city in the southern Gaza Strip with the support of UNRWA on September 7, 2024

Until October 2023, UNRWA provided education to over 300,000 boys and girls in Gaza, constituting half of the school-age population in the territory

set (parliament) officially approved, by a majority vote of 92 out of 120, a ban on the activities of UNRWA in the occupied Palestinian territories, a move that was condemned by Euro-

pean and Western countries and international organisations.

Israel has accused UNRWA employees of complicity in the October 7, 2023 attack by Hamas, alleging that the

agency's educational programmes 'promote terrorism and hatred'. UNRWA, headquartered in East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood, denies the accusations and asserts that it remains neutral, solely focusing on supporting refugees.

Despite a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire, Israel has continued a devastating offensive on Gaza since an attack last year by the Palestinian resistance group.

More than 43,300 people have since been killed, mostly women and children, and over 102,000 others injured, according to local health authorities.

Israel faces a genocide case at the International Court of Justice for its actions in Gaza.

Meanwhile Palestinian resistance group Hamas on Saturday called Gaza ceasefire proposals a 'smokescreen' as they do not include an end to the Israeli war or withdrawal from the enclave.

Senior Hamas member Izzat al-Rishq said ceasefire proposals floated in recent days don't include an end to the Israeli assault, withdrawal from Gaza, or the return of displaced Palestinians to their areas.

"We are positively engaged with any proposals and ideas that ensure the cessation of aggression and the withdrawal of the occupation forces from Gaza," he added.

Anadolu Agency

Pakistan shuts schools in Lahore over record pollution

Lahore, Pakistan - Primary schools in Pakistan's second-largest city Lahore will close for a week as a result of unprecedented air pollution, the provincial government announced on Sunday.

The metropolis in the country's east has for days been blanketed in a thick layer of smog caused by traffic fumes, smoke from seasonal crop burning on farms, and pollution-trapping winter temperatures.

Lahore, home to of 14mn people, was at the top of a real-time list of the world's most polluted



Lahore is at the top of a ranking of the world's most polluted cities

cities on Sunday, based on data released by Pakistani authorities and Swiss air quality monitoring group IQAir.

The city's air quality index, which measures a range of pollutants, climbed to over 1,000, which the Punjab provincial government described as 'unprecedented'. The level of 300 is already considered 'dangerous'.

"Don't leave your homes," Punjab senior minister Marriyum Aurangzeb told a news conference. "This smog is very harmful for children. Masks should be mandatory in schools. We are

keeping an eye on the health of children in senior classes."

As part of the emergency measures, 50% of office employees have been ordered to work from home from Monday, Aurangzeb said, while hospitals would be given smog counters.

The Punjab government has deployed special police units to check emissions from factory sites, vehicles with faulty engines and the burning of crop residues.

Aurangzeb also blamed the worsening air quality on winds carrying pollution from neighbouring India.

"This issue cannot be solved without talking to India and without joint efforts on both sides of the border," she said.

Smog levels often deteriorate in the region as winter approaches because cooler temperatures trap pollution close to the ground.

According to the World Health Organization, air pollution can cause a raft of health problems, with prolonged exposure increasing the risk of strokes, heart disease, lung cancer and respiratory diseases.

DW



Turkey reiterates commitment for partnership with African nations

Ankara, Turkey - Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan on Sunday reiterated his country's commitment to fostering robust partnership with African nations.

He was speaking at the third Turkey-Africa Partnership Ministerial Review Conference in the West African country of Djibouti.

Fidan began by conveying greetings from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and praised African Union leaders for their contributions to the conference.

He acknowledged Africa's youthful population, vast resources, and burgeoning markets, which he noted are positioning

the continent for a 'greater role' in the 21st century.

However, he also highlighted the complex challenges Africa faces, including 'terrorism, inequality, adverse effects of climate change, under development and irregular migration'.

Turkey, as a strategic partner of the African Union since 2008, has worked to develop bilateral relations with African countries through a structured and customised approach.

Fidan emphasised Ankara's dedication to 'African solutions to African problems', affirming Turkey's alignment with the union's principles and Agenda

2063, which aims for comprehensive development across the continent.

Addressing security concerns, Fidan emphasised Turkey's support for African nations in combating terrorism and stabilising regions affected by conflicts.

He particularly focused on the situation in Sudan, urging the international community to work together for an immediate ceasefire and lasting peace.

Since mid-April 2023, Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces have been locked in a deadly conflict, which has resulted in over 20,000 deaths.

Anadolu Agency

Israel issues new evacuation orders for civilians in eastern Lebanon

Beirut, Lebanon - The Israeli army issued new evacuation orders on Sunday for civilians in eastern Lebanon ahead of imminent attacks in the area.

Military spokesman Avichay Adraee claimed that residents in the town of Douris and the city of Baalbek were in proximity to facilities allegedly associated with Hezbollah.

He ordered residents to evacuate immediately and move away from the area by at least 500 metres within the next four hours.

Israel has escalated its air campaign in Lebanon since late September against what it claims are Hezbollah targets in an escalation from year-long cross-border warfare between Israel and Hezbollah since the start of Israel's brutal offensive on the Gaza Strip.

More than 2,900 people have been killed and over 13,000 injured in Israeli attacks since last October, according to Lebanese health authorities.



An Israeli military statement said warplanes killed two senior Hezbollah commanders Farouq Amin al-Ashi and Yusuf Ahmad Nun in the border town of Khiam

Israel expanded the conflict by launching an incursion into southern Lebanon on October 1.

'Killed 2 Hezbollah commanders'

Meanwhile, the Israeli army claimed on Sunday to have killed two senior Hezbollah commanders in an airstrike in southern Lebanon.

A military statement said Israeli warplanes killed Farouq Amin al-Ashi and Yusuf Ahmad Nun in the border town of Khiam. The army accused Ashi and

Nun of being responsible for numerous rocket attacks on northern Israel.

There was no comment from Hezbollah on the Israeli claim.

Lebanon, meanwhile, said on Saturday that it will file a complaint with the UN Security Council regarding the Israeli abduction of a Lebanese citizen.

A Lebanese citizen was kidnapped on Friday in a suspected Israeli naval operation in Batroun, about 30km north of Beirut.

Lebanese authorities said that the abductee was a sea captain, denying that he was a Hezbollah commander.

A statement by Prime Minister Najib Mikati's office said the premier instructed his Foreign Minister Abdullah Bouhabbib to file a UN complaint over the abduction. The statement said Mikati contacted Army Commander General Joseph Aoun to be briefed on the ongoing investigation into the circumstances of the case.

Anadolu Agency

Who is new UK Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch?

London, UK - Kemi Badenoch was 16 years old when she arrived back in London from Nigeria. She was alone and only had £100 (US\$130) in her pocket. Her parents had sent her to the United Kingdom, where she could forge a better life, away from the political chaos of her home country and the military regime. When not at school, she supported herself by working at McDonald's.

Today, Badenoch, 44, is the next leader of the UK Conservative Party, also known as the Tories. She has blamed left-wing politics for destroying Nigeria, and said this is why she became a fan of the late British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Badenoch has said she shares Thatcher's 'values of self-reliance, personal responsibility and free markets'.

Like the Iron Lady, Badenoch is fearless and combative. She believes conservatism is in crisis, and that her party has to get 'back on track', having lost sight of its principles and values. For her, this has become clear since the party's general election defeat in July. The Conservatives went from having 365 seats and an absolute majority in parliament to just 121.

Not shy of controversy
In the months since former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced his intention to step down following the Conservatives' disastrous defeat, Badenoch has dominated the headlines. She, along with Robert Jenrick, a former immigration minister in Sunak's government who, like Badenoch, is part of the party's right-wing, were the final



Kemi Badenoch believes that people who come to Britain must integrate and adopt British values

If elected, I will develop the fullest and most detailed plan to control immigration that any political party has ever proposed

KEMI BADENOCH

two candidates in the running for party leader.

The mother of three recently said maternity pay was 'excessive', which lost her the support of many women. According to UNICEF, the UK is one of the worst performers in Europe when it comes to family policy, and parents already receive limited benefits. Badenoch later clarified her comments, saying that she did 'believe in maternity pay'.

Her remarks at a fringe event

at the Conservative party conference, that 5-10% of civil servants were 'very, very bad ... should-be-in prison bad', did not go down well with everyone. One trade union head called on Badenoch to withdraw her comments, which she argued were a joke.

The former trade minister, born in London to Nigerian parents and raised in Lagos, also doesn't mince her words when it comes the topic of migration. She believes British voters urgently want migration curbed.

"If elected, I will develop the fullest and most detailed plan to control immigration that any political party has ever proposed," she wrote in a September article for the British daily newspaper *The Telegraph*.

Badenoch believes that people who come to Britain must integrate and adopt British values, and has proposed implementing an 'integration strategy'.

"We must never allow our tolerance to be taken advantage of by those who arrive, only to undermine the very values that have allowed us to succeed," she wrote in *The Telegraph*.

Those who criticise Badenoch have to be ready for a fight. "If you swing at me, I swing back," she said in an interview with Sky News in late September.

She said her father, who was a

doctor, instilled in her a sense of 'personal responsibility' and taught her that one should not be put off one's path by what other people say.

A computer science graduate from the University of Sussex, Badenoch moved into politics from the banking world. She joined the Conservative Party when she was 25 and quickly climbed the ladder, starting off in the London Assembly and becoming a member of parliament in 2017.

Just two years later, Prime Minister Boris Johnson appointed her Parliamentary undersecretary of state for children and families. She then rose to become equalities minister in 2021. Johnson's successor, Liz Truss, appointed her as secretary of state for international trade in 2022.

Charles Walker, a former Conservative lawmaker, has followed Badenoch's political ascent with interest. He said it was clear from the start that she had 'some X factor' and 'authenticity', telling DW that people liked her. "They really do. She's not a machine politician, and I think that's important," he said, adding that her West African background made her particularly interesting.

However, he isn't convinced that she's the new Thatcher. "It's not just about having strong views. Margaret Thatcher had her views intellectually underpinned and was pragmatic," he said. "I'm afraid quite a lot of our candidates, male and female, who try and channel Thatcher just think it's Thatcher because they've got sharp elbows and strong views that make them the heir to Thatcher, and they've got a loud voice."

DW



Former Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

Ex-Bangladeshi premier Hasina faces ICC case

Dhaka, Bangladesh - A criminal case has been filed at the International Criminal Court (ICC) against former Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and 69 associates, accusing them of crimes against humanity during the uprisings in July and August this year.

The complaint, filed on October 28, seeks an independent investigation into alleged crimes committed by Hasina, members of her Cabinet, and various law enforcement agencies. Md Ashrafur Arefin, a Bangladeshi-origin British lawyer and plaintiff in the case, revealed details at a press conference in London on Friday, accompanied by Barristers Sarah Fore and Emil Lixandru from Bolt Court Chambers.

Arefin accused Bangladeshi security forces of deploying live ammunition, rubber bullets, sound grenades, and other lethal weapons against peaceful demonstrators, adding that there were claims of bodies being burned and buried in mass graves to cover up evidence.

"We submitted extensive evidence, including documents, video clips, and records of violence and repression conducted by Hasina's administration, to help the court bring charges against her and issue an international arrest warrant," Arefin stated.

The case has been filed under Article 15 of the Rome Statute, which permits the ICC prosecutor to initiate investigations on the basis of information submitted by individuals.

Arefin expressed doubts about Bangladesh's judicial ability to carry out an impartial investigation, citing the influ-

ence of officials appointed by the former Hasina-led government. He also questioned the likelihood of any local verdict being enforced, given potential political support for Hasina from neighbouring India.

"India may be pressured to cooperate with the international community if an ICC

The case has been filed under Article 15 of the Rome Statute, which permits the ICC prosecutor to initiate investigations on the basis of information submitted by individuals

warrant is issued," Arefin noted, emphasising the international significance of the case.

Following protests led by students, Hasina's government deployed various security forces, including the police and the elite Rapid Action Battalion, along with Awami League party affiliates and its student wing, the Bangladesh Students' League.

In response to demands from the demonstrators, the transitional government, which took office on August 8, later banned the Bangladesh Students' League, labelling it a terrorist organisation.

On October 17, Dhaka's International Crimes Tribunal issued a domestic arrest warrant for Hasina, who fled to India on August 5.

Anadolu Agency

India: Sarang Helicopter team leaves for Bahrain show

Sulur, India - The Sarang Helicopter display team of the Indian Air Force left from Sulur Airbase on Sunday for Bahrain International Air Show 2024 at Sakhir Airbase starting on November 13.

The team left for Bahrain in a mighty C-17 aircraft along with peacock-coloured helicopters and essential gear.

In a post on X, the Indian Air Force said: "Taking flight to Bahrain. The Sarang Helicopter Display Team lifted off from Sulur Airbase, packed into a mighty C-17 along with their vi-



brant peacock-coloured helicopters and essential gear."

"A swift night-loading ensured they're Bahrain-bound. Get set for awe-inspiring performances at the Bahrain International Air Show 2024 at Sakhir Airbase from November 13," the post read.

The Sarang Helicopter Display Team was formed in 2003 and their very first International public performance was in 2004, at Asian Aerospace Show Singapore. Initially formed and raised as a three-helicopter formation, the Sarang team now boasts of a

thrilling five-helicopter display and has performed over 1200 displays at more than 385 venues all around the globe.

According to the official website of Bahrain International Air Show (BIAS) 2024, The International Airshow was established in 2010 to create a distinctive event. BIAS offers the industry a platform for high-level corporate hospitality, unique access to military and civil delegations, and showcasing technological innovations to potential buyers around the world.

ANI

Archaeological town from bronze age discovered in Saudi Arabia

Riyadh, KSA - The Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU) announced that archaeologists discovered a Bronze Age town in the Khaybar Oasis, located in the northwest of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a discovery published in the scientific journal PLOS ONE.

The announcement was made at a press conference held by RCU in the Saudi Press Agency conference centre in Riyadh. The conference highlighted the significance of this discovery to the Kingdom's standing in the field of antiquities, as well as on its cultural richness.

The discovery is proof of the Kingdom's commitment to safeguarding its cultural and historical heritage, as well as its desire to exchange knowledge and experience with the international community, and promote awareness about the common

human heritage, consistent with the goals of the Kingdom's Vision 2030.

It also underscores the need to strengthen international partnerships, to present such rich heritage to future generations, globally.

The transition from a mobile pastoral life to a settled urban life in the region during the second half of the third millennium BC is illustrated by the discovery, which was made in the framework of the Khaybar Longue Duree Archaeological Project, led by Dr Guillaume Charloux, researcher at the French National Centre for Scientific Research, and Dr Munirah AIMushawh, the archaeological survey manager at RCU. This change in paradigm challenges the previous notion that pastoral and nomadic society was the dominant socio-economic model in northwestern



Arabia during the early and middle Bronze Age.

The research points out that regions such as Khaybar were

significant urban centres that permanently maintained the stability of their communities, particularly with the introduction of

agriculture. They also served as centres of trade and commerce for nomadic communities. The emergence of this urban design

The transition from a mobile pastoral life to a settled urban life in the region during the second half of the third millennium BC is illustrated by the discovery

significantly influences the socio-economic paradigm of the region.

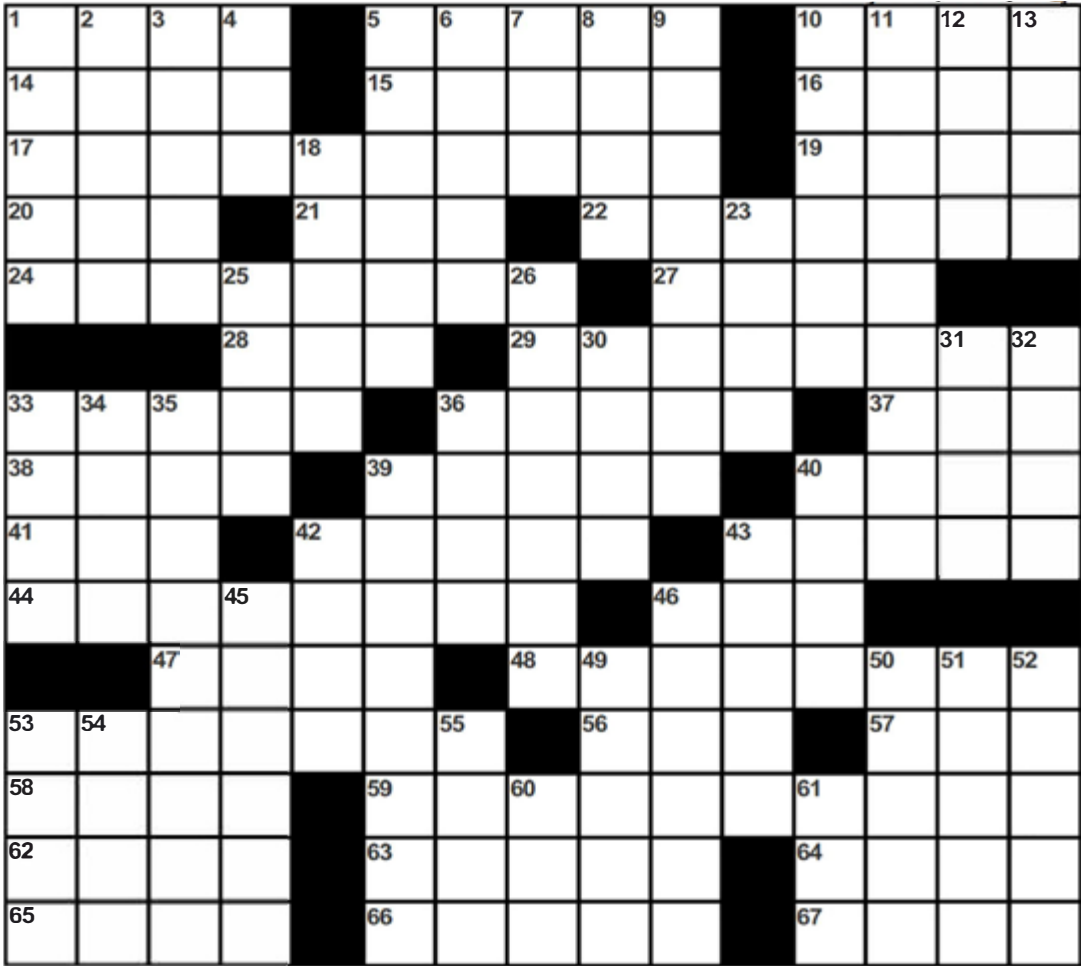
In the Bronze Age, the northwestern Arabian Peninsula was home to a significant number of nomadic pastoral communities, but the region also had a number of walled oases that were connected to one another and were located around fortified cities like Tayma.

The discovered town, called

Al-Natah, provides evidence of a clear division, within forts and cities, of residential and funerary areas. The site encompassed an area of 2.6 hectares, was inhabited by 500 individuals between 2400 and 2000 BC until 1500 and 1300 BC. The Khaybar Oasis was surrounded by a 15km-long stone wall to ensure its protection. The study was conducted by the Royal Commission for AlUla in collaboration with the French Agency for the Development of AlUla (AFALULA) and the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). Khaybar Oasis, located on the edge of the Harrat Khaybar volcanic field, formed at the meeting point of three valleys in a highly arid area. The remains of the town were discovered on the northern edge of the oasis, buried beneath layers of basalt rock for thousands of years.

ANI/WAM

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Doll's cry
 - 5) Mark down drastically
 - 10) App-based car service
 - 14) In a while, in poetry
 - 15) Historic 15th-century caravel
 - 16) Janet in the Clinton Cabinet
 - 17) Creator of Holden Caulfield, born 1/1
 - 19) Coach's hands-up signal
 - 20) Stuff in a seam
 - 21) Whiz kid
 - 22) Henri who painted "The Junk mail addressee"
 - 27) PlayStation maker
 - 28) B&B part
 - 29) Took a phone call
 - 33) Oktoberfest vessel
 - 36) Works at steadily
 - 40) Speller's clarifying words
 - 41) Comics bark
 - 42) Count of jazz
 - 43) Showing great passion
 - 44) Lunar appearance
 - 46) Teary-eyed
 - 47) Horse coloring

- 48) "Don't move!"
 - 53) Puts up a fight
 - 56) Trawler's gear
 - 57) Coxswain's order
 - 58) Some are fine
 - 59) Patriot in a Longfellow "Dance" poem, born 1/1
 - 62) Hook's henchman
 - 63) "Quaking" tree
 - 64) Slosh through the surf
 - 65) "Saved" scores in golf
 - 66) Proctors' handouts
 - 67) Marginal mark
- DOWN**
- 1) Big-league
 - 2) Wrestling's_ the Giant
 - 3) Charlton Heston role
 - 4) _ Alicia of "Falcon Crest"
 - 5) Added zip to
 - 6) Closet filler
 - 7) "Life of Pi" director Lee
 - 8) Pocket watch part
 - 9) Gives grief to
 - 10) Like Smokey
 - 11) Noted seamstress born 1/1
 - 12) Slaughter in Cooperstown
 - 13) Weapon in Clue
 - 18) Full of cargo
 - 23) Helps off the highway
 - 25) Storklike bird
 - 26) Vote counts
 - 30) Prime time, informally
 - 31) Clean up, in a way
 - 32) Turn down
 - 33) Verbal putdown
 - 34) Pacific tuber
 - 35) "A Passage to India" novelist, born 1/1
 - 36) Skip a turn
 - 39) March honoree, for short
 - 40) Car with a four-ring logo
 - 42) Uplifting attire
 - 43) Dunkin' Donuts buy
 - 45) Some urban pollutants
 - 46) Rear ends
 - 49) Place to drop anchor
 - 50) Like a Hall offamer
 - 51) Huge crowd
 - 52) Message with a hashtag
 - 53) Talk like Satchmo
 - 54) "At Wit's End" writer Bombeck
 - 55) Ed.'s request
 - 60) Co. with brown trucks
 - 61) German "bugs"

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

If you're not feeling so hot about your ability to get things done on schedule, it's time to reach out and ask for help. Get your ego out of the way. Don't worry about how this request will look to others. People know you've been asked to do the impossible, so they're half expecting your call anyway. Deadlines are deadlines, and there is no getting away from your responsibilities for meeting them.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Have you let your flirting skills get rusty? Shame on you! Whatever your excuse (you're in a committed relationship, you haven't been feeling confident, you've just been a bit lazy), today offers you a major opportunity to add some sizzle to your life. Remember that flirting doesn't have to be a commitment. Flirting is just about having fun. Loosen up a bit. Try to make someone smile. You'll take a lot of tension out of the day.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Now that you have reached a point in your life when you can sit back and relax for a little bit, be sure to do it with gusto. Just coast and experience things for a while. There is no need to get involved in anyone's drama or big new idea. Reserve your strength and plan a little getaway if you can. Solo travel is favored highly. It will enable you to do whatever you want, whenever you want. And what could be more relaxing than that?



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

So what if folks aren't giving you your props? They may have been bitten by the green-eyed monster! If others are giving you a hard time for feeling cocky, it might also be karma's way of sending you a message. Next time the people around you score a big win, try hard to be the first one to congratulate them, and mean it! The generous energy you put out will come right back to you when it's your turn to shine.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

When the accolades come your way today, don't be shy about accepting them graciously. On the other hand, don't brag about what you've done either. Let other people do that for you! True, it's a very tricky thing to balance your humility and your pride, but you can find a great way to make it happen. Creative impulses should be obeyed today. If you want to make or create something, then you must do it!



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Whatever insight you've been taking from your dreams lately will serve you well today. Follow your gut and do what you think you need to. Certain images and issues are recurring themes in your life. Your subconscious is keying you in to what you need to deal with first. It's now time to confront things once and for all. Getting to the heart of the matter as quickly as you can today will save you a lot of headaches later.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

It's much more helpful to get your ideas and concerns out in the open. There's nothing wrong with debating with yourself to come to a firm conclusion about how you feel on a certain issue, but there's a problem with internal talk. No one can hear you! When you unlock your feelings and thoughts from the vacuum of your mind, you can quickly see what makes the most sense. Any interested bystander could serve as the sounding board you need.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Organization is key for understanding the details that will shower down on you today. Dates, names, budgets, and itineraries will all need your full attention right now, so get ready to get it together! Like a harried conductor trying to get all the musicians playing the same notes in the same way, you will need to utilize all your patience and creativity to create that beautiful music. But the good news is that this challenge will bring you joy.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

One of your friends is seeking a bit more independence in your relationship, and it could feel as if they are pushing you away. Don't let your fears get the better of you. Just because they are being vague about future plans or declining your social invitations doesn't mean you've fallen out of their good graces. Being alone is a skill everyone should learn, and they are in the midst of their lesson now. Give them space.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

You will be struck by visions of what can be today. When you look at a child, you'll see a glimpse of the talented adult they might grow up to become. When you look at an empty lot, you'll see the elaborate home that could stand there some day. It's a day of fanciful imagining and creativity, so apply your most positive way of thinking to everything you see. Imagine things the way you want them to be, and you will give the Universe some hints to go on.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You're deep in the thick of a work situation, and while you are enjoying this particular challenge, it might be causing you some stress. Today, you should make sure this stress doesn't bleed into the other areas of your life. Give some attention to a friend who desperately needs your insight. A few words of wisdom on your part will make them feel cared for. You're paying attention to your career, but you should pay attention to the people you love too.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

The normal routine of your day could be disrupted early on by someone who needs your help with something entertaining. Turns out they could end up giving you some help too, although you might not understand just how to ask them for it yet. In a business negotiation, your creativity will enable you to get what you want without sacrificing any of your hard-earned resources. If you make it clear that you are not willing to compromise, you must stand behind that statement.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. The majority of active volcanoes in Africa are in which country?
- A. Tanzania
 - B. Kenya
 - C. Democratic Republic of Congo
 - D. Ethiopia
02. In "Ink and Incapability", the second episode in the third of British TV series "Blackadder", what iconic work of English literature is destroyed?
- A. Samuel Johnson's A Dictionary of the English Language
 - B. Gulliver's Travels
 - C. The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman
 - D. Robinson Crusoe
03. In the course of which hostilities did Rome suffer what is seen as its greatest defeat?
- A. The second Punic War
 - B. The third Servile War
 - C. The second Samnite War
 - D. The Battle of Allia River

Answers: 1. D 2. A 3. A

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

E	T	E	T
A	Y	D	R
W	M	H	I
B	A	I	E

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

SOLUTION

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

SPURS DISMANTLE VILLA

Solanke scores double as Tottenham rally to thrash Aston Villa

London, England - Two second-half goals from Dominic Solanke and a sublime James Maddison free kick helped Tottenham Hotspur come from behind to overwhelm Aston Villa 4-1 on Sunday and end the visitors' seven-match unbeaten run in the Premier League.

Spurs climbed to seventh in the table on 16 points, two points behind Villa who stayed fifth.

Unai Emery's Villa led at half-time through Morgan Rogers, but Spurs were level soon after the break when Brennan Johnson tapped in at the far post.

Solanke's two goals in four minutes, including a flowing team move finished off with a delightful dink over Emiliano Martinez, secured the win, before Maddison curled in a free kick in stoppage time.

Villa's goal punctuated a drab first half at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, with Rogers poking home from a yard out after Lucas Digne's corner was flicked on into the six-yard box.

Spurs skipper Son Heung-min provided an assist on his return

from injury, whipping an excellent outswinging ball across the goal for Johnson to slot home at the back post shortly after half-time. Ange Postecoglou's Spurs had struggled to break Villa down in the first half, largely resorting to shots from distance, but they upped their intensity in the second period and two quick

When we are playing well we can score many goals and we showed that today. We've had some great games but haven't managed to do it but we think we're capable of it.

DOMINIC SOLANKE

goals from Solanke sealed the win.

"We always believe we can score many goals. It all came together today in the second half," said Solanke.

"We had to adapt to the way they were playing. At half-time we had time to regroup and discuss what we had to do. It's been a few games without one [goal].

I've been trying to get one and I got two. Buzzing with it. Nice dink finish, I enjoyed that.

"When we are playing well we can score many goals and we showed that today. We've had some great games but haven't managed to do it the whole season but we think we're capable of it."

His first was a flowing one-touch team move, with Solanke latching onto Dejan Kulusevski's cute pass and chipping the ball over the onrushing Martinez.

A mistake by Villa defender Pau Torres set Spurs charging forward again with second-half substitute Richarlison squaring for Solanke to grab his second.



Tottenham Hotspur's Dominic Solanke celebrates after scoring against Aston Villa

Arsenal failed to adapt in defeat to Newcastle, says frustrated Arteta

Newcastle, England - Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta was disheartened with how his team performed in a 1-0 loss to Newcastle on Saturday in a potential blow to their Premier League title chase, saying they were sucked into playing Newcastle's style of game.

Alexander Isak headed home in the 12th minute in Newcastle's first win in six league games, leaving Arsenal third in the Premier League table behind Manchester City and Liverpool.

Arteta's side generated few chances on an afternoon that marked the first time since May

2022 that they had lost two consecutive away league matches. They were shocked 2-0 by Bournemouth on Oct. 19.

"We deserved to lose today," Arteta told Premier League Productions. "I thought we started really well and were really dominant. We didn't defend the box well enough. Credit to them. They scored a great goal with a good ball.

"Then the game changes and you start to play a different game. You have to adapt and we didn't do that well enough. I am very frustrated.

"We got dragged into a game



Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta acknowledges the crowd after their match against Newcastle United

I thought we started really well and were really dominant. We didn't defend the box well enough.

MIKEL ARTETA

they are looking for constantly and we couldn't play the game that we wanted."

Newcastle defender Lewis Hall threw his body in front of Arsenal's lone shot on target, block-

ing Mikel Merino's volley from close range in the first half. Declan Rice squandered a terrific chance in injury time, latching on to a cross but firing it wide of the net.

"We had two big chances - Mikel had a big one, Declan had a big one. We lacked answers," Arteta said.

His squad are winless in their last three Premier League matches. "We can say whatever we want. We will struggle to find the words today. We have to show it on the pitch on Wednesday night (against Inter Milan in a Champions League match).



Borussia Dortmund's Maximilian Beier celebrates with Nico Schlotterbeck after scoring against RB Leipzig

Dortmund beat Leipzig to return to winning ways

Dortmund, Germany - Injury-hit Borussia Dortmund came from a goal down to bag a 2-1 victory over second-placed RB Leipzig in the Bundesliga on Saturday, snapping their three-game losing run across all competitions.

Dortmund, missing nine players through injury, bounced back from their midweek German Cup defeat by VfL Wolfsburg ahead of next week's Champions League game with Sturm Graz and stretched their perfect Bundesliga home record to five straight wins.

The victory, which lifted them to fifth on 16 points - four behind Leipzig and seven off leaders Bayern Munich - was also a welcome respite for coach Nuri Sahin, whose team have yet to win an away game in the Bundesliga this season.

Leipzig suffered their first league defeat of the campaign ahead of Tuesday's trip Celtic in the Champions League.

Guehi goal helps Crystal Palace hold Wolves

Wolverhampton, England - Wolverhampton Wanderers are stuck at the bottom of the Premier League despite an entertaining 2-2 draw at home to Crystal Palace on Saturday with all the goals coming in the second half.

Goals by Jorgen Strand Larsen and Joao Gomes inside five minutes midway through the second period turned the game in Wolves' favour after Trevoh Chalobah had given Palace the lead.

But Palace defender Marc Guehi equalised from close range in the 77th minute after a corner was flicked on to leave Wolves still without a league win so far this season after 10 games.

A point was the least Palace deserved as they carved out the game's best chances. They also had a stoppage-time goal ruled out.

Wolves prop up the table with three points while Palace, who claimed their first win last week, are 17th with seven. Some boos



Crystal Palace's Marc Guehi celebrates his goal against Wolverhampton Wanderers on Saturday

rang out at the end and Wolves manager Gary O'Neil remains under pressure after a horrid start to the campaign.

It is only the third time in their history that Wolves have failed to win any of their opening 10

league games - and the first time since 1926-27.

"I don't think it's all on him. The whole group has a lot of responsibility. We need to keep going," Wolves striker Matheus Cunha said.

Kompany praises players for maintaining intensity in win

Munich, Germany - Bayern Munich coach Vincent Kompany praised his players for keeping up the intensity level over 90 minutes in their 3-0 win over Union Berlin in the Bundesliga on Saturday.

The league leaders, who host Benfica in the Champions League on Wednesday, were never troubled by the visitors and despite taking a 2-0 win by halftime they came out fighting in the second half, bagging another goal six minutes after the restart to kill off the game.

Striker Harry Kane scored twice while Kingsley Coman was also on target for the Bundesliga leaders.

"I think the team was working hard in first and second half, but I was really happy with our performance in the second half because we did not concede momentum," Kompany told a press conference.

"We did it really well. It was not an easy game therefore it is a great result for us."

This was Bayern's third league



Bayern Munich's Kingsley Coman scores against Union Berlin in the Bundesliga on Saturday

win in a row without conceding a goal and they are now on 23 points, three clear of second-placed RB Leipzig who lost to Borussia Dortmund.

The Bavarians, undefeated in the league, are desperate for a win over Benfica to turn their European fortunes around.

Bayern have lost two of their three games in the competition

so far but for Kompany this does not mean elimination given the new format.

The European top-flight has switched from a group stage to a league phase where 36 teams play eight matches each, with the top eight in the table progressing directly to the next round, while the next 16 teams enter a two-legged playoff.

Lookman unstoppable

Nigerian forward's double propels Atalanta to win against leaders Napoli

Naples, Italy - Forward Ademola Lookman scored twice in the first half to inspire Atalanta to an emphatic 3-0 win at Serie A leaders Napoli on Sunday as the visitors moved second in the standings.

Lookman opened the scoring after 10 minutes, volleying home from close range after a headed cross from Charles De Ketelaere.

The Nigerian doubled the lead just after the half-hour mark with a long-range strike from another De Ketelaere pass, before substitute Mateo Retegui added the third in stoppage time to end Napoli's 100% home league record this season.

Europa League champions Atalanta, provisionally second on 22 points, have cut the gap to their opponents at the top to three points. They are one point above third-placed Inter Milan, with a game in hand, and Juventus in fourth.

Napoli, who clinched a 2-0 win at AC Milan on Tuesday, were unbeaten in their last 10 games across all competitions, winning their previous five Serie A fixtures.

Juventus win

Juventus got a 2-0 win at Udinese after an own goal by



Atalanta's Ademola Lookman celebrates his goal against Napoli on Sunday

Maduka Okoye and Nicolò Savona's strike in Serie A on Saturday, as the visitors snapped a three-game winless run in all competitions.

Following a Champions League defeat and two league draws, Juve remain unbeaten in Serie A and provisionally moved up to third on 21 points, level with second-placed Inter and four behind leaders Napoli, both with a game in hand.

Thiago Motta's side dominated from early on and took the lead in the 19th minute when Khephren Thuram's shot struck the far post

Europa League champions Atalanta, provisionally second on 22 points, have cut the gap to their opponents at the top to three points. They are one point above third-placed Inter Milan, with a game in hand.

before bouncing off goalkeeper Okoye's back and into his own net.

Savona doubled the lead when he slammed home a loose ball after another rebound off the post from Kenan Yildiz's shot in the 37th minute.

The hosts tried to push forward after the break but were unable to pose any real threat, with Lorenzo Lucca's header against the bar late on the closest they came to scoring.

The defeat leaves Udinese seventh on 16 points, three points shy of the European places.

"This is a team victory, because we interpreted the match in the best way," Juve coach Motta told DAZN.



Marcelo leaves Fluminense

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - Brazilian defender Marcelo has left Fluminense by mutual consent, the Brazilian Serie A club said on Saturday.

The reasons for the 36-year-old former Real Madrid full back's departure were not disclosed.

Marcelo had a disagreement with coach Mano Menezes at the Maracana during a 2-2 draw with Gremio on Friday.

He was ready to come on when Menezes reacted to something he said and ordered him back to the bench.

"I was going to put Marcelo in at that moment, but I heard something I didn't like, so I changed my mind," Menezes said.

Marcelo came through the youth ranks at Fluminense and briefly played in the first team before earning a move to Real in January 2007. He rejoined his boyhood club in February 2023 following a brief stint with Greek side Olympiakos in 2022.

Zverev to face Humbert in Paris Masters final

Paris, France - Third seed Alexander Zverev produced a near-flawless display to outclass former champion Holger Rune 6-3 7-6(4) on Saturday and return to the Paris Masters final after a gap of four years.

The 27-year-old Zverev, who is poised to leapfrog Carlos Alcaraz into second in the world rankings ahead of this month's season finale in Turin, next meets Ugo Humbert after the home favourite beat 2018 champion Karen Khachanov 6-7(6) 6-4 6-3.

"I feel like I made it a little difficult for myself, but he (Rune) is a champion," Zverev said. "It's probably his favourite tournament and favourite court, but I'm happy to be in my second final here. I'm looking forward to it."

Sustained pressure from the baseline helped Zverev grab the

early break for a 3-1 lead but the German had to work a lot harder in the fifth game before unleashing a couple of booming serves to consolidate it.

The Roland Garros runner-up shrugged off a late double fault to wrap up the opening set on the back of 11 winners at a packed Palais Omnisports in Bercy.

A tighter second set ensued as Rune ramped up the aggression by serving and volleying at times, but Zverev was undeterred and came up with a powerful smash at the net to break the 21-year-old Dane again in the seventh game.

Zverev held his serve to love in the next game to go within touching distance of his first ATP 1000 hardcourt final since a run to the Cincinnati title three years ago.

Reijnders earns Milan victory against Monza

Lombardy, Italy - AC Milan managed a 1-0 win at lowly Monza thanks to a first-half header from Tijjani Reijnders in Serie A on Saturday.

Midfielder Reijnders scored two minutes before halftime, nodding the ball home after Alvaro Morata's header from a Christian Pulisic cross was blocked.

Monza were left frustrated after missing numerous wasted opportunities in the first half.

"I was above all concerned in the first half, as we weren't aggressive enough and didn't win enough individual duels, but I don't really remember Monza chances in the second half," said Milan manager Paulo Fonseca.

His side are seventh with 17 points, eight adrift of leaders Napoli after 10 games, while Monza are 18th on eight.

Fonseca welcomed back Theo Hernandez and Reijnders from



AC Milan's Tijjani Reijnders celebrates his goal against Monza

suspension, along with Pulisic, who had been struggling with flu symptoms, as his side secured a much-needed win after losing two of their last three league matches.

Milan were fortunate when Monza had an early effort disallowed, as Dany Mota's half-volley was ruled out for a foul in the build-up.

Just before the half-hour mark, Monza nearly took the lead, but Mike Maignan denied them with a brilliant one-handed reflex save from Pedro Pereira's powerful header.

Daniel Maldini then showcased his magic minutes later as he expertly manoeuvred through the Milan defence. However, it was a wasted effort as he ended up hitting the post and was also ruled offside.

The visitors went into the break fortunate to be ahead, with Monza the more dominant side

but unable to score, while the second half turned into a more evenly matched contest.

Minutes before the final whistle, substitute Rafael Leao had the opportunity to double the score for Milan when he broke through the defence and faced Stefano Turati one-on-one, but he sent the ball straight into the keeper's arms.

Leao had another chance to seal the match minutes later but shot sky-high, to the frustration of the Portuguese forward.

Monza coach Alessandro Nesta was disappointed with the officials' decision to disallow Mota's early goal.

"Football used to be simpler, it used to be a contact sport, now every tiny touch is penalised, a toenail is offside, you have to go into a challenge with your hands clamped behind your back or it might be a penalty," he told Sky Sports Italia.

Unbeaten PSG edge 10-man Lens

Paris, France - Leaders Paris St Germain continued their unbeaten start to the Ligue 1 season as an early goal from Ousmane Dembele secured a 1-0 home win over RC Lens, who had defender Abdoukodie Khusanov sent off on the hour for a dangerous lunge at Achraf Hakimi.

After second-placed Monaco's shock 1-0 loss at home to Angers on Friday, the win took PSG six points clear on 26 after 10 games, with Lille third on 18. Lens are seventh with 14.

PSG beat 10-man Olympique Marseille 3-0 away last week with an electric first-half display and looked on course for a similar performance in front of their home fans but they never really caught fire despite plenty of possession and chances.



Paris St Germain's Ousmane Dembele celebrates with Bradley Barcola after scoring against RC Lens

down the wing and keeping it in play before flashing it across goal for Dembele to steer home in the

fourth minute and give the capital club the lead. Emboldened by the goal, PSG poured forward looking for more but striker Marco Asensio struggled with his range and timing, letting some great chances go begging.

Lens had a few decent chances of their own but their task became almost impossible when Khusanov was shown a red card in the 59th minute after a VAR review of his challenge on Hakimi. Brice Samba in the Lens goal was by far the busier of the two keepers, making several saves although most were of the routine variety as PSG's attackers continued to misfire.

The visitors almost grabbed an unlikely point when Andy Diouf connected with a volley in the 80th minute but it went wide.

Sabalenka eases past Zheng in WTA Finals

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - No. 1 seed Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus had little trouble getting past China's Qinwen Zheng in a group-stage match at the WTA Finals on Saturday, prevailing 6-3, 6-4 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Sabalenka finished with just three aces to Zheng's eight, but she won 31 of 33 first-serve points and rallied from deficits of 1-0, 2-1, 3-2 and 4-3 in the second set.

"I'm super happy with the win, especially against Qinwen," Sabalenka said.

Eight players are currently competing in two round-robin groups at the WTA Finals -- the Purple Group and the Orange Group.

Sabalenka and Zheng are in



Aryna Sabalenka

the Purple Group along with fourth-seeded Italian Jasmine Paolini and No. 5 seed Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan.

Defending champion and No. 2 seed Iga Swiatek of

Poland, Americans Coco Gauff (third seed) and Jessica Pegula (sixth seed) and Barbora Krejickova of the Czech Republic, seeded eighth, make up the Orange Group.

WHITEWASHED BY BLACK CAPS

New Zealand win third Test against India to complete series sweep

Mumbai, India - New Zealand capped a tough tour of Asia with an unprecedented 3-0 series sweep in India, while the bruised and battered home side will face uncomfortable questions ahead of their trip to Australia for five Tests.

The Black Caps' spinners ran riot on a challenging wicket in Mumbai to dismiss India for 121 in the second innings and secure a famous 25-run victory on the third day of the third and final Test on Sunday.

The last time India were blanked at home was in 2000, in a two-match series against South Africa, and Rohit Sharma's side were totally outplayed by the tourists in different conditions.

"We're ecstatic. Looking back to the start of the series to now be in this position, the boys have done a fantastic job over the last three tests," said New Zealand's new permanent skipper Tom Latham, who took over after a 2-



New Zealand players celebrate with the trophy after winning the Test series against India

0 defeat in Sri Lanka.

"We spoke about it after each Test match, trying to back it up, and I guess to finally do it here in Mumbai on a completely different surface, one that challenged us with bat and ball, we're pretty happy.

"Just being able to adapt to each ground... Different guys stood up at different times. That's the beauty of team sport. It was an all-round great team effort. I'm proud of the guys."

India dropped to second below Australia in the World Test Championship table and will need a big effort to reach a third straight final next year.

Rishabh Pant was the lone Indian batsman to show resistance as he made a sublime 64 after the hosts were reduced to 29-5 on a turning Wankhede Stadium

It's something you dream of. To come over here and actually achieve it is pretty special against a world class Indian team.

DARYL MITCHELL

to win a Test match here at this historic ground but also to win a series 3-0," said Daryl Mitchell, who scored 82 in the first innings.

"It's something you dream of. To come over here and actually achieve it is pretty special against a world class Indian team.

"We're just a bunch of Kiwis taking on the world."

The tourists blew India away with pace to win the opening match in Bengaluru by eight wickets for their first Test victory in India in 36 years, and wrapped up the series days later on a turning wicket in Pune with a 113-run win.

In Mumbai, New Zealand kept cool in oppressive heat and humidity to dismantle India, leaving the hosts' confidence dented before they face Australia from Nov. 22.

New Zealand's maiden series triumph in India going back to 1955 also snapped the hosts' home streak of 18 straight series wins since a 2-1 loss to England in 2012.

Rohit threw the first punch by stepping out of his crease to hit Matt Henry for a four in the first over, but the skipper's disappointing recent run of form continued as he fell for 11 after a rash shot against the same bowler.

He now has only one half-century in 10 innings, with six single-digit scores.

Patel made it two wickets in two overs as Shubman Gill, who had scored a splendid 90 in the first innings, left a ball that crashed into the stumps and departed for one.

The out-of-form Virat Kohli did not last long after arriving at the crease as he edged Patel to slip on one.

The crowd fell silent again as Yashasvi Jaiswal was trapped lbw for five by Glenn Phillips and Sarfaraz Khan hit a full toss from Patel straight to Rachin Ravindra in the deep on one.

Ravindra Jadeja steadied the ship alongside Pant in a 42-run stand, but a stunning catch by Will Young meant India were on the ropes at 71-6.

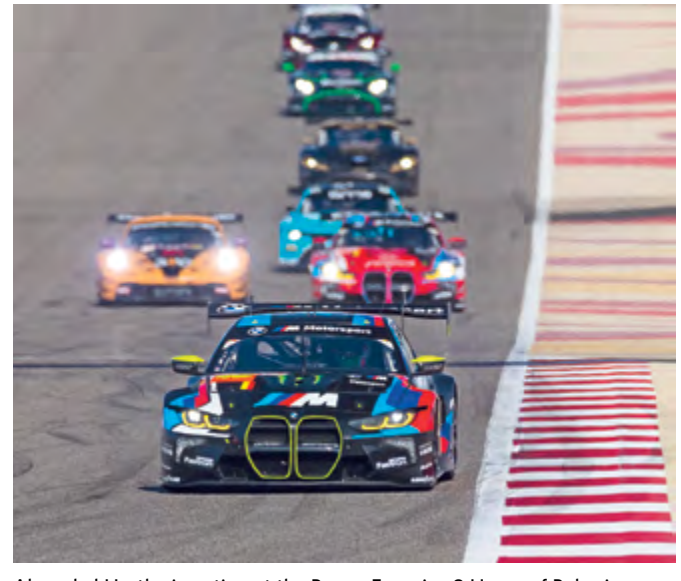
Al Harthy, Martin and Rossi end FIA WEC season sixth in LMGT3 Championship

Muscat - Bahrain International Circuit provided a challenging final race of the FIA World Endurance Championship season for Ahmad al Harthy, Maxime Martin and Valentino Rossi on Saturday, with the trio ending the Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain 14th in LMGT3.

While round eight didn't deliver the result the Team WRT drivers had hoped or worked for, largely due to tyre degradation issues, they still managed to close out a very strong season in the World Championship sixth in the LMGT3 driver standings - the inaugural year for the class.

"Bahrain has been one part of a very busy and competitive World Championship. It's been a huge honour to represent Oman, and achieve some amazing results, in FIA WEC this year - it really is one of the toughest championships in endurance racing. We wanted to have ended the WEC season stronger, but it just wasn't our weekend," said Al Harthy.

"The tyre degradation meant we struggled a lot compared to



Ahmad al Harthy in action at the Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain

our other competitors.

"Once again, I want to thank everyone who has worked with us this season in WEC, my teammates Maxime and Vale, and everyone behind the scenes at BMW and WRT for a very, very hard-fought season in World Endurance. Of course, I am also so grateful for all of the amazing support we have had this year from our incredible partners and everyone back in Oman."

Lining-up 13th on the class grid for the eight-hour season finale, OQ, Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Omantel, Experience Oman and BMW Oman supported racer Al Harthy made a customary good start and gained two places. Leapfrogging the sister Team WRT BMW M4 in the process, he ended the opening lap in 11th position.

Moving into the top 10 later in the first hour, as the first round of pit-stops started to be served, the Omani stayed out on track initially and climbed further into the top six as a result with just under 55 minutes elapsed.

Following his first visit to the pits soon after, Al Harthy emerged in 10th position and aimed to make progress but was instead shuffled back to 12th in the second hour.

Rossi climbed behind the wheel of the No.46 BMW M4 for his first race miles and when the order settled he was 12th. Gaining a couple of places to reappear in the top 10, Rossi pitted around 45 minutes into hour three and rejoined in 12th once again.

Al Harthy returned to the driving seat for his final stint before the end of hour four, running in 14th and staying in that position up to the next pit visit. Martin then took over driving duties, joining the race in 15th place. With two and a half hours to go he was up into 13th position, before Rossi took over for his final running of the race.

Norris wins sprint in Sao Paulo

Sao Paulo, Brazil - Lando Norris cut Max Verstappen's Formula One lead to 44 points after his McLaren team mate Oscar Piastri obeyed orders and gifted the Briton a sprint-race victory in Sao Paulo on Saturday.

Piastri had started on pole position and led until handing over two laps from the end after Red Bull's Verstappen had passed Ferrari's Charles Leclerc for third and became an increasing threat.

The switch came just before a virtual safety car (VSC) period left a tense final lap with Australian Piastri crossing the line 0.593 behind Norris in a one-two finish.

Verstappen finished third, 0.904 further adrift, but was handed a five-second penalty for a VSC infringement that dropped him back behind Leclerc. The triple champion was also given a penalty point.

"Oscar drove well and he deserved the win today. I'm not proud of winning a sprint race or any race like this, so I thank Oscar and the team," said Norris, who started second on the grid.

"But it's our objective, it's what we have to work towards as a



Lando Norris (R) with Oscar Piastri

team. We get the points in the constructors' and I get the points in the drivers'. That's our target."

Piastri's race engineer thanked the Australian, who is out of title contention, over the radio for his "massive support to the team".

McLaren are now 34 points clear of Ferrari in the constructors' standings after a gain of five.

Verstappen and Leclerc had a lively battle for third before the Red Bull overtook on the 18th of 24 laps and Nico Hulkenberg then triggered the virtual safety car by stopping by the side of the

track in a smouldering Haas on lap 21.

It was the first time this season that Verstappen has been beaten in a sprint and he will also have a five-place grid penalty for Sunday's race due to exceeding his engine allocation.

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz was fifth, with George Russell sixth for Mercedes and Pierre Gasly seventh for Renault-owned Alpine while Mexican Sergio Perez secured the final point in eighth for Red Bull ahead of RB's Liam Lawson.

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The fourth edition of Namat Competition, an esteemed annual competition celebrating Omani government schools for their outstanding sustainability initiatives, concluded with great success.

This year's event underscored the growing commitment of schools across the sultanate to environmental stewardship, inspiring a new generation of leaders dedicated to sustainability, a press release said.

Sponsored by Veolia Oman, which is part Veolia group, a global leader in waste water and energy efficiency sectors, the 2023-2024 edition of Namat Competition was organised by the Environment Society of Oman (ESO) under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. The competition attracted a remarkable 164 schools nationwide, with 144 qualifying for the competition.

Following a comprehensive three-stage evaluation process, three schools were awarded top prizes for their exceptional sustainability projects, while three additional schools received special Namat Competition awards. The winners were honoured at a prestigious ceremony under the patronage of H E Dr Madiha bint Ahmed al Sheibani, Minister of Education.

Since its inception in 2019, Namat Competition has engaged over 600 schools, solidifying its place as one of ESO's flagship educational programmes. The competition encourages schools from Grades 5 to 12 to form teams comprising students, staff, and a parent council representative. These teams work together to develop environmental projects that address key sustainability challenges, including water management, waste management, and energy conservation. In addition, these projects actively involve local communities, fostering a culture of environmental responsibility that extends beyond the classroom.

The initiatives sparked by Namat Competition create a ripple effect, engaging local communities by actively involving parents and residents in the planning and

implementation of school-led projects. Through this platform, vital messages about environmental conservation, energy efficiency, resource management, recycling, waste reduction, and climate change mitigation are widely shared. The competition aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, emphasising the importance of education in driving sustainability.

Dr Amor al Matani, president of ESO's Board, said, "Through Namat Competition, the Environment Society of Oman has inspired students and teachers across the country to tap into their creativity and problem-solving abilities to develop unique solutions for advancing environmental sustainability. Namat Competition has the potential to spark meaningful climate action among Oman's student population, driving lasting change."

The 2023-2024 edition was made possible by the generous support of Veolia, a long-time partner of Namat Competition since its inception. Veolia's sponsorship has been instrumental in bringing the competition to life, with the company reaffirming its commitment by sponsoring both the current and upcoming 2024-2025 editions. Operating in over 58 countries, including Oman, Veolia is a key player in the water, environmental, and energy services sectors.

Erwan Rouxel, CEO of Veolia Oman, highlighted the company's alignment with Namat Competition's mission, stating: "The environmental themes of the Namat Competition are closely aligned with Veolia's core values and expertise. By empowering young minds to develop innovative solutions, we're not just shaping the future of sustainability - we're actively creating it. Veolia is proud to support this initiative, which aligns perfectly with our GreenUp 2024-2027 strategic programme based on decarbonisation, depollution, and regeneration of resources. These students are the change-makers of tomorrow, and their passion for environmental protection gives us great hope for a greener, more sustainable future."



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PAY AND HIKE

MADEIRA'S *magic*

From January 1, 2025, non-residents will need to pay to hike over 30 routes in Madeira

Madeira has introduced a new fee for non-residents on some of its most popular hiking trails. The move is part of a push towards sustainable tourism and proceeds will fund conservation efforts.

The surcharge currently applies to seven of the most trafficked routes but will

be expanded to all recommended trails on the Portuguese archipelago from January 1, 2025.

Madeira is an autonomous region of Portugal. It is an archipelago situated in the North Atlantic Ocean, in the region of Macaronesia, just under 400km north of the Canary Islands, 520km west of the

Kingdom of Morocco and 805km south-west of mainland Portugal. With steep peaks, verdant forests, and lush waterfalls, the archipelago's hiking trails are some of its top visitor draws.

Madeira's regional secretary of Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment, Rafaela Fernandes, said the charge is necessary to protect the area's natural landscapes and manage the increasing influx of tourists. Hence, tourists will have to pay to hike Madeira's trails from 2025.

The €3 fee applies to all non-residents over the age of 12 and is currently in place on Madeira's most popular trails. These include Pico do Areeiro, Pico Ruivo, Levada do Risco, Levada do Caldeirão Verde, Balcoes, Levada do Rei and Ponta de São Lourenço.

From 1 January 2025, non-residents will also need to pay to hike over 30 routes managed by the Institute of Forests and Nature Conservation (ICNF) in Madeira. Hikers who do not pay face fines of up to €50.

Visitors can pay using the regional government portal, Simplifica. Alternatively, there are on-site payment options available at ICNF stations located along many of the trails. The Madeira hiking fee will fund trail maintenance and nature conservation. All profits from the new tourist fee will be put towards trail maintenance, cleaning and preservation efforts, according to Fernandes.

Madeira is experiencing an increase in tourism, particularly in peak hiking seasons, so the trail charge aims to manage the flow of visitors on paths and help protect the natural landscape.

Madeira's authorities have also launched an awareness campaign to inform visitors about the charge and its purpose. Fernandes says the move has been welcomed by tourists who appreciate the importance of supporting conservation efforts.

(Courtesy: euronews.com)



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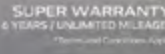
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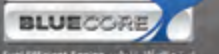


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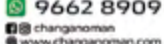
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