

OMAN CALLS FOR PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD TO END MIDEAST CONFLICT

New York, US - Oman has stressed that ending the conflict in the Middle East can only be achieved by establishing a Palestinian state and granting it full membership in the United Nations.

This move is deemed a strategic need for the next stage and a global demand supported by the international community, said Mohammed bin Ali al Shehhi, a member of Oman's permanent delegation to the UN in New York, before the UN General Assembly during a discussion on a Security Council report.

Oman expressed regret at the Security Council's failure to pass the resolution granting the State of Palestine its legitimate right to United Nations membership. This failure contradicts the international consensus supporting the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and hampers efforts to promote justice and peace worldwide.



13
Road behind Ruwi mosque now concretised

Majlis A'Shura proposes support for jobseekers

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In a move to boost employment efforts, Majlis A'Shura, represented by its committee for jobseekers, proposed new recommendations during a session held on Wednesday.

The committee informed that the number of jobseekers has surpassed 100,000 - close to 45,000 men and 62,000 women. The majority hold a General Education Diploma or its equivalent, followed by others with university degrees; over 75% jobseekers have no prior work experience.

It noted a 4% increase in Omanis employed in the private sector in 2023, compared to a 7% increase among expatriates. Omanisation averaged 17% in small and medium enterprises and 44% in large enterprises.

Additionally, it stated that a total of US\$9bn was remitted from the sultanate in 2022.

The committee approved several recommendations, including urgent unemployment benefits for jobseekers and housewives registered as jobseekers, facilitating the establishment of compa-



nies by jobseekers, and giving them priority in governorate development projects.

Additionally, it suggested prioritising full-time owners of small and medium enterprises in land distribution across governorates and implementing full Omanisation in specific sectors like money exchange and insurance.

The committee endorsed setting up tests to spot talent at all educational levels and allocating RO40mn to support wages of government employees.

The shura established the committee in 2023, aiming to monitor jobseekers' development, and providing comprehensive analysis of their skills in relation to labour market demands. It also studies legislative, economic and technological developments affecting job structures, reviews vocational education and training policies, and assesses the impact of these on preparing jobseekers with the ultimate goal of developing proposals and recommendations that effectively address challenges within the labour market and employment in Oman.

On Wednesday, Majlis A'Shura also referred the draft Public Health Law and Financial Law, proposed by the government, to the State Council to finalise in its legislative session.

His Majesty issues two Royal Decrees

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

Royal Decree No 29/2024 ratifies the agreement on regular air services between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, signed in Cairo on April 23, 2024.

Article 1 ratifies the abovementioned agreement in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

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

Royal Decree No 30/2024 ratifies the agreement on air transport between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, signed in Muscat on June 15, 2022.

Article 1 ratifies the aforementioned agreement in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

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

ONA

H M THE SULTAN CONFERS MILITARY ORDER ON JORDANIAN JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has conferred the Oman Military Order (2nd Class) on Maj Gen Yousef al Huneiti, Chairman of Jordanian Joint Chiefs of Staff, in appreciation of his efforts to consolidate military cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Jordan. The medal was presented to Maj Gen Huneiti on Wednesday by Dr Mohammed bin Nasser al Za'abi, Secretary-General of Ministry of Defence (ONA)

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Two Omanis ride to Umling La, world's highest motor pass



Usama Moosawi (L) and Khalil Ali Naser al Oufi (Supplied photos)

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In a remarkable feat, two Omani bikers, Usama Moosawi and Khalil Ali Naser al Oufi became the first Omanis - and the first Arabs, they claim - to reach the Umling La Pass, the highest motorable pass in the world.

The Umling La Pass ascends to a staggering height of 5,799m (19,024 feet), making it the world's highest motorable road, higher than the Mount Everest base camp.

Umling La Pass overtook Khardung La Pass, also in Ladakh, to become the highest motorable road in the world when it was inaugurated in 2021.

"I completed the ride on the pass up and down from Leh in 12 hours", Moosawi said, which he claimed is a record.

Moosawi achieved the feat on June 8, while Oufi did so three days later.

Friends for many years, the bikers needed to pass three phases to reach the pass. The

The Umling La Pass ascends to a height of 5,799m (19,024 feet), making it the world's highest motorable road, higher than the Mount Everest base camp

first involved 150km on regular roads, while the other two were challenging - a narrow winding 60km road followed by 40km of off-roading. "The road is so narrow that two cars can't pass each other," he said.

When Moosawi reached Leh, he felt sick due to lack of oxygen and needed hospitalisation. "Hospital staff said it went down by 48%, but I was determined not to give up and complete the ride."

A former member of Oman Riders, Oufi completed seven rides in the Leh region before venturing to Umling, which he completed on June 11.

Oufi said the physical and mental preparations required for the arduous journey were draining. "It was a long drive to the top. I had to come back fast as the temperature was freezing and the air very thin. The road leading to the pass was not easy and involved off-roading."

He added that conditions at such an altitude present numerous challenges, the main one being low oxygen levels. "We had to be dressed appropriately to avoid cold and frostbite, ensuring we were physically - and also mentally - equipped for the demanding ride. Reaching the Umling La Pass was a dream come true. It is a matter of pride that I am only the second Omani to reach this point," Oufi said.

The Himalayan range has been a popular destination for bikers from Oman. Recently 12 bikers from Oman Riders embarked on a 1,500km adventure from Ladakh to Kashmir.

Moosawi and Oufi are now preparing for their next escapade - a 15-day ride to North Cape in Norway.

Oman, Uzbekistan hold political consultation

Muscat - The Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Uzbekistan held a political consultation session in Muscat on Wednesday, reinforcing historical ties and commitment to advancing bilateral cooperation across diplomacy, economy, culture and science.

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, led the Omani delegation, while Bakhtiyor Saidov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, headed the Uzbek side during the consultations. Discussions included perspectives on developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict, focusing on the Palestinian issue and actions by Israeli authorities, alongside various regional and global matters of shared concern.

Additionally, the two sides signed a mutual visa exemption agreement covering diplomatic, special and service passports between Oman and Uzbekistan.

The political consultation session was attended by Sheikh Humaid bin Ali al Maani, Head of Foreign Ministry's Global Affairs Department, Abdulalam Khata-mov, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Oman, and several senior officials from both sides.



Bakhtiyor Saidov with Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi on Wednesday

Meeting with Sayyid Asaad

Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, H. H. Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs and Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, received Saidov in his office on Wednesday.

During the meeting, the two

reviewed bilateral cooperation and means of enhancing these in various fields to serve joint interests. They also discussed several matters of mutual interest.

The meeting was attended by Sayyid Badr, the Secretary General and Advisor in the Office of H. H. Sayyid Asaad, the Uzbek Ambassador to Oman and the delegation accompanying Saidov.

Symposium highlights national efforts towards Net Zero 2050

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Education, represented by Omani National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, organised a symposium on Wednesday focused on achieving zero carbon neutrality by 2050, showcasing initiatives of national institutions.

The symposium, held in collaboration with Petroleum Development Oman and attended by 50 participants representing various national authorities dedicated to carbon neutrality, aimed to introduce the concept and local benefits of zero carbon neutrality.

It highlighted ongoing projects and initiatives by authorities in Oman working towards net zero.

Emphasising the importance of inter-institutional dialogue in realising Oman Vision 2040, the symposium underscored environmental priorities and sustainable development goals. The discussions aimed to help strike a balance between leveraging natural resources sustainably and boosting national economic growth.

The symposium programme comprised two working sessions. The first introduced zero carbon neutrality and fostered community awareness. It included detailed

discussions on four working papers: the role of the Unesco-Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Conservation, the private sector's contribution to achieving zero carbon neutrality, the national strategy for net zero, and initiatives aimed at enhancing environmental awareness.

The second session spotlighted ongoing projects and initiatives across Oman towards achieving net zero, including efforts by Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, University of Technology and Applied Sciences, and Environment Society of Oman.



PORT OF DUQM

TENDER NOTICE

The Internal Tender Committee of Port of Duqm Company SAOC., hereby announces the following Tender:

Tender No.	Description	Last Date of receiving Specifications	Date of Bid Submission	Suppliers	Tender Fee OMR (Inclusive of VAT 5%)	Place of Submission
ITC/T/102/2024	Operation & Maintenance of Membrane Bio Reactor system (MBR) STP	08 th July 2024	25 th July 2024	Only Specialized Companies	75/- Non-Refundable	Port of Duqm Company 3rd floor, Al Mushraq Building, Azaliba
PODC/MT/006/2024	Providing Handling Services (Un Skilled) At Port of Duqm on Need Basis	04 th July 2024	11 th July 2024	Only Specialized Companies	50/- Non-Refundable	
PODC/SCM/003/2024	IP2 Water Network Rectification	04 th July 2024	11 th July 2024	Only Specialized Companies	25/- Non-Refundable	Via Email

Taking into consideration the following:

All specialized companies that wish to participate in the tender must deposit the tender amount into the bank account of the Company (details of the bank account is set out hereunder) and send the payment receipt of the tender along with a copy of the Commercial Registration Certificate and the contact details of the authorized individual (business card) to the following e-mail address procurement@portofduqm.om

From 07:00 – 15:00 (Sunday – Thursday).

Payment Information:

Account Name	Port of Duqm Company S.A.O.C
Account Number	0423047518510013
Bank Name	Bank Muscat
Branch	Ghala Corporate Branch
Bank ID Code	BMUSOMRXXXX

Complete Tender documents should be submitted in sealed envelope with red wax with tender number and title and addressed to the "Chairman of Internal Tender Committee". The envelope should not make any reference to the bidder's details. All applicants are required to submit the Tender in the Tender box in the main office of Port of Duqm Company at or before 15:00 PM on the assigned date for submission of the Tender. Tenders submitted after the above-mentioned date and time shall not be considered.

* All participating SME's holding Riyada card are exempted from tender fees.
* The company is not obliged to accept the lowest offer or any other offer without any justifiable reasons.
* The company reserves the right to issue the order either in part or full for the quoted items without any justifiable reasons.
* The company reserves the right to reject the tenders not complying with the tender documentation requirement. For any clarification, please contact us through procurement@portofduqm.om

Port of Duqm Company S.A.O.C.
PO Box: 2409, PC: 111, Sultanate of Oman,
Almashreq Building, 18 November Street, N. Azaliba
T: (+968) 24342800 | F: (+968) 24587343 | www.portofduqm.om



RECALL

RECALL DATE: 27TH JUNE, 2024

MAZDA CX-60

BRAND OF COMMODITY	YEAR OF PRODUCTION	NUMBER OF AFFECTED COMMODITIES
MAZDA CX60 (2.5L)	2023	55

RECALL CONSEQUENCE

While idling or driving at low speed after the engine is restarted under the condition that the fuel temperature in the fuel tank is exceeding 55°C (evaporative gas concentration is increasing), the engine stall may occur. The engine can be restarted using the push button start.

RECALL ACTION

Reprogram the Powertrain Control Module (PCM) with modified software.

TO CHECK THE SERIAL NUMBERS OF THE AFFECTED COMMODITIES, PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITE FOR RECALLS & WARNINGS: [HTTP://RECALL.PACP.GOV.OM](http://RECALL.PACP.GOV.OM)



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\$500mn Trump International resort launched

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Introducing a paradigm shift in opulent living and hospitality, Dar Global, an international luxury real estate developer, launched Trump International Oman at its AIDA project in Yiti, one of the largest premium mixed-use real estate developments in the world.

The US\$500mn Trump International Oman project is the latest addition to Trump's prestigious global portfolio. Scheduled to open in December 2028, this 140-key, five-star hotel complex features a range of accommodations, including hanging suites, furnished villas and serviced apartments. Guests will enjoy complimentary private beach access. The resort also boasts an exquisite 18-hole golf



hoods in the world. A product of Dar Global and The Trump Organization's core values of creating distinction in every offering, we see this landmark establishment not only setting the bar high for international hospitality standards but also advancing Oman's tourism vision, drawing in a broader global audience while also stimulating domestic tourism."

Eric Trump, Executive Vice-President of The Trump Organization, said, "This project heralds a new era of sophistication, impeccable service and exclusivity synonymous with the Trump standard of excellence. This venture underscores our shared commitment to curating iconic luxury experiences for discerning travellers and investors, while also elevating Oman's status as a premier global destination."

Trump International Oman offers a collection of luxury rooms and suites, including the exclusive and picturesque hanging suites. These unique accommodations feature a private pool and a bedroom with an ensuite bathroom, all framed by floor-to-ceiling windows that provide sweeping views.

For golf enthusiasts, the spectacular championship golf course enhances the sporting experience with its perfect blend of rough and fair terrain, slopes, rattios, tracks and intervals.

Designed to complement the golfing lifestyle, the resort features a training academy and a members-only club with exclusive amenities, perfect for networking and social events.

Spread over 3.5mn sqm, AIDA is set to complete its first phase in 2027.

MAFWR unveils RO30mn fish farming project in Seeb

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) announced a new fish farming project in the wilayat of Seeb, Muscat on Wednesday.

The project, valued at RO30mn, underscores the ministry's commitment to enhancing Oman's aquaculture sector.

Undertaken by United Fish Farming Company, the project site, situated 7km offshore, offers convenient access and ensures essential resources for farming operations.

Spread over 152.15 hectares, the project will employ floating cages to farm European sea bream, with an expected production capacity of 5,000 tonnes in its initial phase.

United Fish Farming Company anticipates annual produc-



Spread over 152.15 hectares, the project will employ floating cages to farm European sea bream

tion to eventually reach 10,000 tonnes, thus enhancing the ability to meet local demand.

Additionally, it has signed an agreement with Madayn Company in Sohar to set up a fish feed production project of 100,000 tonnes capacity. This strategic project aims to cater to the Omani market's needs and facilitate global expansion.

MAFWR's plans include es-

support to facilitate implementation. The aim is to establish an advanced and sustainable framework for the fish farming sector, aligning with international best practices.

A nominal fee is being imposed for the use of allocated project sites to attract investments in aquaculture, making Oman an appealing environment for such ventures.

MAFWR's efforts are focused on bolstering the fish farming industry in Oman to consolidate its role in the national economy.

These efforts also aim to contribute significantly to food security and create employment opportunities within the sector.

The ministry's overarching goals include meeting domestic market demand, expanding into international markets, and optimising the utilisation of fish resources in the sultanate.

Municipality cracks down on illegal warehouses

Muscat - Muscat Municipality has issued a statement warning against the illegal practice of using residential buildings as unauthorised warehouses.

The civic body highlighted its efforts to combat the illegal use of residential buildings as unauthorised storage for goods. Such practices violate the security and

safety of the area and compromise public health.

'Using residential buildings as warehouses for food items or commercial and industrial goods without permission violates public safety regulations and health requirements,' the statement reiterated.

The municipality highlighted

several adverse effects of this illegal practice, including risk to residents from fires, health hazards such as the spread of insects and rodents, disruption to traffic caused by loading and off-loading activities, and accumulation of waste and garbage.

It urged residents to call 1111 to report such violations.

CPA conducts 12,377 inspections, reports 210 violations

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) carried out extensive supervisory and inspection efforts across various markets in the sultanate during the Eid al Adha holiday break.

CPA conducted 12,377 inspection visits targeting various sectors, including sheep pens, meat shops, fruit and vegetable shops, markets, commercial complexes, beauty centres, salons, tailoring, pastry and all other shops that witness increased customer turnout during Eid holidays.



During these inspections, CPA identified 210 violations. The most common of these were failure to fix price labels on goods

and services (55 violations), failure to issue purchase invoices (44 violations), raising prices without obtaining prior approval from the authority (34 violations), and failure to deliver commodities or complete services by the agreed due date (20 violations).

CPA has provided multiple platforms for consumers to report complaints and issues, including a toll-free consumer line (80079009/80077997), CPA social media accounts, and direct communication with its inspectors in markets.

These measures are part of the authority's ongoing efforts to ensure fair trade practices and protect consumer rights during peak shopping periods.

TENDER NOTICE



The Internal Tender Committee of Duqm Industrial Land Company LLC., hereby announces the following Tender:

Tender No.	Description	Last Date of receiving Specifications	Date of Bid Submission	Suppliers	Tender Fee OMR (Exclusive of VAT 5%)	Place of Submission
DILC/001/2024	Construction of Road and related services in DILC	By July 2024	21st July 2024	Only Specialized Companies	400/- OMR Non Refundable	Duqm Industrial Land Co. LLC, Azaiba 18th Nov Street, Al Hashrig Building 3rd floor

Taking into consideration the following:

All specialized companies that wish to participate in the tender must deposit the tender amount into the bank account of the Company (details of the bank account is set out hereunder) and send the payment receipt of the tender along with a copy of the Commercial Registration Certificate and the contact details of the authorized individual (business card) to the following e-mail address: tenders@portofduqm.om

From 07:00 – 15:00 (Sunday – Thursday).

Payment Information:

Account Name	Duqm Industrial Land Company LLC.
Account Number	3102-384830-500
Bank Name	Oman Arab Bank
Branch	Azaiba Branch
Bank ID Code	OMABOMRXXXX

Complete Tender documents should be submitted in sealed envelope with red wax with tender number and title and addressed to the "Chairman of Internal Tender Committee". The envelope should not make any reference to the bidder's details.

All applicants are required to submit the Tender in the Tender box in the main office of Duqm Industrial Land Co. LLC at or before 15:00 PM on the assigned date for submission of the Tender. Tenders submitted after the above-mentioned date and time shall not be considered.

* All participating SME's holding Riyada card are exempted from tender fees.

* The company is not obliged to accept the lowest offer or any other offer without any justifiable reasons.

* The company reserves the right to issue the order either in part or full for the quoted items without any justifiable reasons.

* The company reserves the right to reject the tenders not complying with the tender documentation requirement. For any clarification, please contact us through tenders@portofduqm.om

Duqm Industrial Land Company LLC.
PO Box: 2409, PC: 111, Sultanate of Oman,
Almashreeq Building, 18 November Street, N. Azaiba
T: +968 25468666

Expo City Dubai to host summit for Asia Pacific cities and mayors' forum in October

Dubai, UAE - Expo City Dubai will host the 2025 Asia Pacific Cities Summit (2025APCS) & Mayors' Forum - one of the world's largest and most diverse convening of mayors, city and business leaders to be held in the Middle East for the first time.

The event, which will take place at the Dubai Exhibition Centre from October 27 to 29 this year, was the subject of bidding from cities across the Asia Pacific region.

Linking the Middle East, Africa and South Asia with the wider Asia Pacific region, the event will attract a global network of those at the very forefront of shaping cities for the future and will focus on creating business and investment opportunities in sustainable growth and urbanisation.

An initiative of Brisbane City Council, delivered by Expo City Dubai and with programme and

event advisory from Expo Dubai Group, the 2025APCS will welcome mayors, city leaders, policymakers, business leaders, startups, young professionals, leading academics, and industry professionals from around the world.

Reem al Hashimy, Minister of State for International Cooperation and CEO of Expo City Dubai Authority, said, "Expo City Dubai is proud to have been selected from a competitive bid of global cities to host the 2025 Asia Pacific Cities Summit.

A unique place to work and live, close to the new Al Maktoum International Airport and Dubai Exhibition Centre, we are a hub for city and business leaders interested in collaborating for sustainable growth.

"We draw upon a decade of key insights and lived experience, from the successful World Exhi-



bition that was Expo 2020 Dubai, delivered with 192 nations, to hosting COP28, to our urban development journey that

has seen us transform into a city of opportunity and knowledge creation and exchange."

Abdulla Mohammed al Basti,

Secretary General of the Executive Council of Dubai, said, "Committed to global progress in sustainable economic growth, in-

Committed to global progress, integrated urban planning, effective climate action as well as smart infrastructure, Dubai is excited to host the 2025APCS

ABDULLA MOHAMMED AL BASTI

tegrated urban planning, effective climate action as well as smart infrastructure, Dubai is excited and honoured to host the 2025APCS.

"Cities are catalysts for investment, community wellbeing and the productive exchange of ideas, and we are embracing innovative solutions to make cities more liveable, efficient, and resilient. In this way, Expo City Dubai is playing an essential role in the advancement of future cities in the region and far beyond. The Dubai Exhibition Cen-

tre will make a natural hub for leaders looking to connect, collaborate and drive positive and responsible growth for generations to come."

Running for 28 years, APCS boasts an alumnus of over 600 cities and is widely regarded as a hallmark event for the Asia Pacific region, powering economic growth and deeper collaboration across cities.

Established by Brisbane City Council in 1996, APCS is hosted biennially between Brisbane and an international location.

Sharakah ropes in be'ah to support startups

Muscat - Sharakah, Oman's premier SME development firm, has signed a memorandum of collaboration (MoC) with Oman Environmental Services Holding Company (be'ah) to establish a framework to streamline the funding process for startups within be'ah's SME accelerator Eco-Innovate Oman (EiO).

The MoC was signed between Umaima al Ghidani, investment manager of Sharakah,

and Dr Farah al Barwani, senior manager - Research & Development at be'ah. The EiO programme is a pioneering initiative dedicated to nurturing and supporting Omani eco-preneurs in the field of sustainability and circular economy by transforming their innovative green ideas into successful businesses.

Under this MoC, EiO will identify startups within its programme that meet the criteria

established by Sharakah for potential funding. Sharakah will approve these startups based on factors such as innovation, market potential, team capabilities, and alignment with Sharakah's investment strategy.

The terms of funding will involve equity investments, formalised through the execution of SAFE notes (Simple Agreement for Future Equity) with each approved startup.

In addition to financial support, Sharakah will offer non-monetary assistance such as business coaching and workspace support, providing a comprehensive support system to help these startups succeed.

Both parties will maintain the confidentiality of sensitive information exchanged during the collaboration, to ensure that startup profiles, financial data, and investment terms remain secure.

DME's trading volume, physical delivery rise

Dubai, UAE - Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME), the premier international energy futures exchange in the Middle East, recorded an impressive increase in total volume and physical delivery in 2023 compared to last year, cementing its position as the main crude oil benchmark in the East of Suez market.



Raid al Salami

DME's front-month trading volume in 2023 surged to 800mn barrels, surpassing the 2022 figure of 752mn barrels, and attaining the highest levels since 2018.

Similarly, the physical delivery volume for 2023 rose to 210mn barrels from the 2022 count of 181mn barrels, achieving another highest since 2018.

Furthermore, DME's total physical exposure in 2023 rose to 262mn barrels from 214mn in

"In 2023, we experienced a dynamic period marked by notable achievements in business performance and strategic collaborations," said Raid al Salami, Managing Director, DME.

"These successes have significantly strengthened our market share and overall value. As we enter the New Year, we remain confident in sustaining our positive momentum despite ongoing changes across regional and global energy landscapes. We will continue to set new benchmarks of excellence and deliver value to our stakeholders," he added.

DME's accomplishments in 2023 included key milestones such as delivering 3bn barrels through the exchange mechanism since its inception and over 20bn barrels traded in total.



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Tender Announcement

Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company SAOG invites Bidders to submit their proposal for the below detailed tenders:

Tender No.	Description	Tender Fee (Nonrefundable) OMR	Tender Purchase deadline	Clarification deadline	Tender Submission Date
TENDER /2024/06/ENG /013	Construction Of Commercial Buildings at Al Raki In Wilayat Yanqul at Al Dhahirah Governorate.	100/-	03.07.2024	08.07.2024	14.07.2024
TENDER/2024/06/ ENG/014	Construction Of New Filling Station at Saih Rawl in Al Dakhiliya Governorate.	150/-	03.07.2024	08.07.2024	14.07.2024

Bank Name & Account Number**Bank Muscat (0423005687760617)**

The Conditions:

- Collection of Tenders:** Interested, specialized companies and establishments registered under grade 3 and above (in C.R) with minimum of 3 years' experience in the same field. Bidders can collect the tender documents from the procurement department by sending a copy of the payment slip to procurement@almaha.com.om The tender may be collected on any working day between 08:00 AM – 03:00 PM.
- Bank Guarantee:** The bidder should enclose a bank guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for an amount equivalent to (1%) of the tender value, with a validity of (90) Days from the last date of submission and addressed to Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company SAOG.
- Offer Submission:** Tender bid should be submitted a sealed envelope and addressed to the Chairman of Tender Committee, Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing SAOG marked with tender number and subject. Other marks or any reference must not be printed outside the envelope. The exterior of the envelope containing the tender document must not reveal the identity of the bidder.
- Submission Location:** The bid should be deposited in the tender box at Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing SAOG head office located in Ghala before 01:00 PM on the submission date.
- Any bid received after the specified date or if it does not meet the conditions will not be considered.
- Each bid shall be signed and stamped with the signature of the authorized person.
- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG reserves the right to accept, reject or cancel the tender without giving any reasons.
- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG reserves the right to add or cancel some of the works mentioned in the tender if necessary.
- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG is not bound to accept the lowest bid or any other bid without giving any reasons.
- For any enquiry email us at (procurement@almaha.com.om) or by calling **24610289/24610287/24610355**



EMDAD
LOGISTICS SAOG
شركة إمداد اللوجستية ش.م.ع.م

TENDER NOTICE

The Internal Tender Committee of Emdad Logistics Company SAOC., hereby announces the following Tenders:

Tender No.	Description	Last Date of receiving Specifications	Date of Bid Submission	Suppliers	Tender Fee OMR (Inclusive of VAT 5%)	Place of Submission
ITC/E/006/2024	Hire of Heavy Lifting Equipment (Call of contract)	08 th July 2024	18 th July 2024	Only Specialized Companies	290/- Non-Refundable	Emdad Logistics Company, 3rd floor, Al Mushraq Building, Azaiba
ITC/E/007/2024	Providing Local Transportation (Trailers) - (Call of Contract)	08 th July 2024	18 th July 2024	Only Specialized Companies	160/- Non-Refundable	

Taking into consideration the following:

All specialized companies that wish to participate in the tender must deposit the tender amount into the bank account of the Company (details of the bank account are set out hereunder) and submit the original payment receipt of the tender along with a copy of the Commercial Registration Certificate and the contact details of the authorized individual (business card) to the address presented below: procurement@portofduqm.om

From 07:00 – 15:00 (Sunday – Thursday)

Payment Information:

Account Name	Emdad Logistics Co SAOC
Account Number	018020025780
Bank Name	Sohar International Bank SAOG
Branch	Al Khoudh Branch
Bank ID Code	BSHROMRXXX

Complete Tender documents should be submitted in sealed envelope with red wax with tender number and title and addressed to the "Chairman of Internal Tender Committee". The envelope should not make any reference to the bidder details.

All applicants are required to submit the Tender in the Tender box in the main office of Port of Duqm Company at or before 02:00 PM on the assigned date for submission of the Tender. Tenders submitted after the above-mentioned date and time shall not be considered.

* All participating SME's holding Riyada card are exempted from tender fees.
* The company is not obliged to accept the lowest offer or any other offer without any justifiable reasons.
* The company reserve the right to issue the order either in part or full for the quoted items without any justifiable reasons.
*The company reserve the right to reject the tenders not complying with the tender documentation requirement. For any clarification, please contact us through tenders@portofduqm.om

Emdad Logistics Company S.A.O.C.
PO Box: 2409, PC: 111, Sultanate of Oman,
Almashreq Building, 18 November Street, N. Azaiba
T: +968 25468666



National Finance honoured at Transform Awards for ME and Africa

Recognising the success of its exceptional brand transformation and strategic redesign, National Finance, the Sultanate of Oman's leading finance company, was recently honoured with the award for 'Best Brand Evolution' at the prestigious Transform Awards Middle East and Africa 2024.

Held at the Mandarin Oriental Jumeirah Beach, Dubai, the ceremony witnessed the attendance of industry luminaries from the region, C-suite executives and distinguished ministerial dignitaries. Receiving the award on behalf of the company were Sayyida Wisam Jaifar al Said, AGM - Marketing, Corporate Communication, Events and ESG, and Marwa al Siyabi, Marketing Supervisor at National Finance.

The Transform Awards MEA 2024 is the region's premier event dedicated to celebrating the transformative power of brand strategy and design. The ceremony marks the success of rebranding, repositioning and brand development endeavours across the region, highlighting their continuous strive for improve-

Receiving recognition on the distinguished platform, is a testament to the company's vision to revamp all facets of its approach

TARIQ AL FARSI

ment and operational enhancement.

First unveiled in early 2023, National Finance's brand transformation exemplifies the company's commitment to excellence and growth, blending the company's 36-year history, expertise and trusted reputation with a fresh identity.

Tariq bin Sulaiman al Farsi, Chief Executive Officer, National Finance, said, "At National Finance, we are truly humbled by this honour. Receiving recognition on the distinguished regional platform that is the Transform Awards MEA, is a testament to the company's vision to revamp all facets of its approach."

OAB hosts ex-minister for discussion on leadership

As part of its efforts to empower national leaders and develop the skills of its employees, Oman Arab Bank (OAB) hosted Maqbool bin Ali Sultan, former minister of Commerce and Industry, in a dialogue session on strategic planning and its role in effective leadership and decision-making.

The session witnessed great interaction and inspirational discussions by the attendees, led by senior management of OAB.

Members of 'Ruwad Al Arabi' and 'Ruwad Alizz' programmes were also in attendance, adding to the conversation that focused on modern leadership methodologies and their impact on leadership within the banking industry.

The former minister's speech highlighted modern leadership trends, emphasising the importance of innovation, continuous improvement, and developing leadership skills to keep pace with the evolving banking sector. He also emphasised the role of technology in boosting productivity and business performance.

"Oman Arab Bank is honoured to host Maqbool bin Ali Sultan in this dialogue session, where he shared his unique and diverse leadership experiences



throughout his long career," said Sulaiman al Harthi, CEO of Oman Arab Bank.

He informed that the session was part of the bank's ongoing dialogue series, featuring some of the most prominent Omani leaders within the National Leadership Development Programme 'Ruwad Al Arabi'.

"We are proud of being one of the leading programmes in the Sultanate of Oman, significantly contributing to the support of national talents, the preparation of

future leaders, and the development of human resources."

Harthi is of the opinion that the new generations of banking leaders have great ambitions and broad potential to contribute to Oman's continuous development in the financial sector and its increasing role in sustainable development.

"OAB relies on its long-term growth strategy to support these ambitions through cadres' continuous development, providing them with the opportunities to

expand their role in driving the national economic diversification efforts and sustainable growth," the bank CEO added.

OAB hosted dialogue sessions with an impressive roster of leaders in the Sultanate of Oman, including Dr Ahmed al Saidi, the former minister of Health, who reiterated the importance of flexible and adaptable leadership in overcoming challenges.

The dialogue sessions are a key component in an integrated series of theoretical and practical

educational programmes and events within national leadership and talent development initiatives. They provide a platform for future leaders to gain valuable insights, exchange practical experiences and learn about modern leadership methodologies and trends, both in general and specifically within the banking sector. These sessions offer participants the opportunity to engage with prominent Omani leaders, benefiting from their extensive experience.

Alizz Islamic launches exchange programmes with China varsity

Alizz Islamic Bank recently launched the first-of-its-kind cultural exchange programme with the bank hosting eight delegates from Peking University for a 12-day programme that serves as a platform to enhance bilateral co-operation and outline the future trajectory of the two nations' collaboration.

The bank has developed a comprehensive programme through which the Chinese delegation will gain knowledge of the history of Oman, learn about Islamic banking and how it works, meet a number of officials in different institutions and visit some historical landmarks in the Sultanate of Oman.

Alizz Islamic Bank is dedicated to building a community with a shared future for mankind, knowing the importance of an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalisation.

The continuous collaboration between Alizz Islamic Bank and Peking University contributes to

strengthening relations between both nations, marking a model of successful cooperation between nations with diverse backgrounds and systems.

In recent years, economic and cultural exchanges between China and Oman have witnessed significant and profound development and trade cooperation has flourished, with the bilateral trade volume reaching \$30 billion by the end of 2023.

"We are honoured to launch this cultural exchange pro-

gramme with Peking University. It further cements the banks pioneering role in reinforcing the enduring friendship between both nations, building upon the cultural bonds and paving the way forward for enhanced collaboration in various domains," said On this occasion, Ali al Mani, CEO of Alizz Islamic Bank.

"At Alizz Islamic Bank we believe that it is our civil duty to raise the profile of our beautiful nation and being one of the first dedicated Islamic banks in Oman

we focus on sharing knowledge and experiences to support the development of Islamic Banking both locally and globally"

Peking University, also known as Beijing University, is a national public research University in Beijing, China. Within this esteemed educational institute is the 'Sultan Qaboos Chair in Arabic Studies'.

The objective of the Chair includes the teaching and learning of the Arabic language and literature to Chinese students in Peking University.



MG Oman celebrates 100 years with unbeatable prices

MG Motor, a symbol of British automotive heritage and innovation, proudly marks its 100th anniversary with an incredible celebration in Oman. To honour this milestone, MG Motor Oman announced 'unbeatable offers' on their SUV range, promising exceptional value for all customers.

This summer, customers can drive home in select brand-new MG SUVs, with prices starting from an incredible RO7,349. Customers can enjoy the following special offers on select models: The MG RX8 from RO8,999, the MG HS from RO9,999, the MG RX5 from RO7,999, the MG ZS from RO7,349, and the MG T60 from RO9,799.

These offers come with added benefits, including free insurance and registration, 10,000 km free service, and comprehensive

roadside assistance, ensuring a hassle-free ownership experience for all cars mentioned, except the T60, which includes free registration only.

These exclusive benefits are designed to provide customers with a hassle-free and enjoyable driving experience, further highlighting MG's commitment to customer satisfaction.

Founded in 1924, MG has a rich heritage of producing stylish, reliable, and performance-driven vehicles. Over the past 100 years, MG has continually evolved, embracing cutting-edge technology and design to meet the needs of modern drivers. This limited-time offer is a testament to MG's enduring legacy and a celebration of its journey from a historic British marque to a globally recognized brand.

MG Oman invites all car enthusiasts and prospective buyers to visit their showrooms and take advantage of this exceptional offer. Our knowledgeable and friendly sales team is ready to assist you in choosing the perfect MG model to suit your lifestyle and preferences.

Mohsin Hani Bahrani, CEO of MHD ACERE, remarked "As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of MG (Morris Garages), we are excited to launch a special price campaign to mark this historic milestone. This limited-time offer is our way of saying thank you to our loyal customers and inviting new ones to experience the legacy and excellence of MG. We are proud to honour a century of automotive heritage and look forward to driving into the future with you."

Special EMI on luxurious Changan CS85

Own Changan CS85, a sporty crossover that merges sleek coupe aesthetics with robust SUV capabilities.

Now available with an enticing EMI of just RO148, the 2024 Changan CS85 blends luxury and performance, offering you an unrivalled driving experience with its dynamic handling and stylish design.

This EMI is calculated on a 20% down payment with a loan tenure of six years, pending credit approval. This exclusive offer applies to personal vehicle purchases only and is subject to the lender's terms and conditions.

The premium Changan CS85 Coupe SUV (2.0L Turbo Engine, 224 hp, 8-speed AT) stands out with its striking appearance, exceptional quality, and cutting-edge technology, including advanced radar capabilities. At its core, a turbocharged direct injection engine delivers a powerful 224 HP and a peak torque of 360 Nm. This impressive powertrain is paired with an 8-speed automatic transmission, enabling the CS85 to accelerate from 0 to 100 km/h in just 7.5 seconds. With four adaptable driving modes, the CS85 redefines driving sophistication and agility.

"Now is the ideal time to book the 2024 Changan CS85 Coupe with its sporty crossover design. The 2024 Changan CS85 Coupe SUV features a 2.0L Turbo GDI engine, delivering 224 hp and 360 Nm of torque, paired with an 8-speed automatic transmission," a spokesperson for AGAE



said. "This 2WD vehicle measures 4720x1845x1665 mm, has a wheelbase of 2705 mm, and comes with a 58-litre fuel tank. This vehicle epitomises individuality, featuring an elegant design and remarkable agility. Owning this sporty coupe brings style and sophistication into your life, thanks to the Blue Core Powertrain Technology that ensures powerful, clean, and quiet operation for an efficient and energy-saving performance."

Sourcing its key components from leading global suppliers, the CS85 Coupe delivers an unparalleled driving experience, engaging the senses with its visual appeal, tactile satisfaction, auditory pleasure, and advanced

safety features.

The Changan CS85 makes a bold sporty statement with its expansive body and robust shoulders, accentuated by horizontal lines along its sides. Its sleek exterior is complemented by a luxurious interior, meticulously crafted with premium materials and advanced technological features.

Equipped with state-of-the-art driving technologies and radar-based systems, the Changan CS85 ensures a seamless and controlled driving experience.

It offers a suite of features, including a 360° HD camera, blind spot monitoring, forward collision warning, adaptive cruise control, and lane departure

warning, keeping drivers secure and in command on the road.

The vehicle features 19" alloy wheels, LED headlamps with LED DRLs, automatic headlamps with a follow-me-home function, matrix fog lamps, roof rails, quad chrome-finished exhaust pipes, a panoramic sunroof, and electrically adjustable, folding ORVMs with heating and memory functions. The interior style of the Changan CS85 coupe is dynamic, elegant, and luxurious.

Significant features of the vehicle include cruise control, keyless entry, electric tailgate opening, vehicle control (forward and reverse) with remote control, and one-touch up-down movement for all four windows.

Childbirth rate in South Korea rises for 1st time in 19 months

Seoul, South Korea - The number of babies born in the Republic of Korea marked a growth for the first time in 19 months in April, data showed on Wednesday, as the country is struggling to boost its ultra-low birth rate.

Korean news agency Yonhap reported that a total of 19,049 babies were born in April 2024, up 2.8 per cent from a year earlier, according to the data compiled by Statistics Korea. It was the first time since September 2022 that the figure logged a

growth.

"The growth came as the number of newly married couples rose over the past couple of years after the COVID-19 pandemic, though it remains to be seen if such an uptrend could continue," an agency official said.

The rebound was also partly attributable to a high base effect, as the number of newborns hit an all-time low of 18,528 in April 2023, falling 12.5 per cent compared to same period in the previous year. During the first four



months of 2024, however, the number of newborns reached a record low of 79,523. The total fertility rate, which means the average number of expected births from a woman in her lifetime, also hit a record yearly low of 0.72, which came far below the 2.1 births per woman needed to maintain a stable population without immigration.

In the first quarter of 2024, the fertility rate came to 0.76, falling 0.06 year-on-year. The number of deaths rose four per

cent to 28,659 in April 2024, and the population, accordingly, declined by 9,610. The number of deaths has outpaced that of newborns since November 2019.

The number of couples getting married surged 24.6 per cent to 18,039 in April, following a 5.5 per cent fall the previous month. The number of couples getting divorced went up 5.7 per cent to 7,701, the data showed.

The Republic of Korea is experiencing grim demographic changes, as many young people

opt to postpone or give up on getting married or having babies in line with changing social norms and lifestyles. Many have also pointed to high home prices and a tough job market as major reasons.

Korea is expected to be a highly aged country by 2072 as the median age will increase from 44.9 in 2022 to 63.4 in 2072, and the population will tumble to around 36.22mn in 2072 from last year's 51mn.

WAM



S Korean airport shuts down after N Korea sends 'trash balloons'

Seoul, South Korea - A South Korean airport was shut down for three hours after North Korea launched balloons for the second straight day on Wednesday.

Takeoffs and landings of both domestic and international flights at Incheon International Airport were suspended or delayed from 1:46am to 4:44am local time, Seoul-based Yonhap News reported, citing airport officials.

Earlier, the military in Seoul said Pyongyang sent more than 250 trash-carrying balloons toward South Korea overnight, the sixth such launch since last month. According to South Korean media, over 2,000 trash-carrying balloons have been sent to South Korea since May 28.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff said over 100 balloons on Wednesday were carrying scrap papers and landed in Seoul and the northern part of Gyeonggi Province.

Earlier this month, South Korea claimed that Pyongyang had re-

sumed air-dropping trash, with more than 300 balloons crossing the border after Seoul resumed propaganda broadcasts over loudspeakers after six years.

Pyongyang has described its move as a 'tit-for-tat' response to anti-regime leaflets flown into North Korea from South Korea.

Earlier, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's sister Kim Yo-jong also warned that Pyongyang would use 'new responses' to Seoul's leaflets and loudspeaker broadcasts. She called Seoul's actions a 'prelude to a very dangerous situation'.

Meanwhile, North Korean media said a mass rally was held in Pyongyang on Tuesday as the country commemorated the Korean War anniversary. Around 100,000 people attended the mass rally at the May Day Stadium on the day of struggle against 'US Imperialism', Korean Central News Agency reported.

Anadolu Agency

WikiLeaks founder back to Australia as a 'free man'

Canberra, Australia - A 'calm and free' Julian Assange returned home to Australia after 14 years of detention over espionage charges by the US.

The WikiLeaks founder pleaded guilty to a felony charge, ending a years-long stalemate with the US government.

His plane landed in Canberra late on Wednesday evening, local time, according to WikiLeaks.

Early today, Assange appeared in a courtroom on the US Pacific Island territory of Saipan in the Mariana Islands, a US commonwealth in the Western Pacific Ocean near his native Australia.

Assange pleaded guilty to a felony charge of violating the Espionage Act after he was accused of obtaining and publishing classified military and diplomatic documents in 2010.

While entering the courtroom in a black suit, the WikiLeaks founder did not respond to reporters' questions.

Journalists covering the event said Assange was 'calm'.

Outside the courtroom, Assange's US attorney Barry Pollack said: "We firmly believe Mr Assange never should have been charged under the Espionage Act."

"Julian walks out of Saipan federal court a free man. I can't stop crying," his wife Stella said on X.

"At today's proceeding, Assange admitted to his role in the conspiracy to violate the Espionage Act and received a court-imposed 62-month time-served



Julian Assange's plane landed in Canberra late on Wednesday evening, local time, according to WikiLeaks

Assange pleaded guilty to a felony charge of violating the Espionage Act after he was accused of obtaining and publishing classified military and diplomatic documents in 2010

sentence, reflecting the time he served in a UK prison as a result of the US charges," said the US Justice Department in a statement. Following the imposition of the sentence, Assange walked free after a years-long legal battle and departed for Australia. He was detained in the UK based on the US charges for the last 62 months while he contested extradition.

"Pursuant to the plea agreement, Assange is prohibited from

returning to the United States without permission," said the statement.

According to the Washington Post, the judge questioned the rationale behind filing the case in Saipan. In response, US attorney Matthew McKenzie explained that the island's proximity to Assange's home country of Australia would facilitate his return home 'shortly after this proceeding'.

The Post also reported that

Assange defended himself in court by describing himself as a journalist who he said should be protected by the First Amendment.

Meanwhile, Assange had crowdfunded the cost of his repatriation to Australia. A campaign was launched to pay the cost of the flights to his country.

"Julian Assange has embarked on flight VJT199 to Saipan. If all goes well, it will bring him to freedom in Australia. But the flight comes at an enormous cost: Julian will owe US\$520,000, which he is obligated to pay back to the Australian government for the charter flight to Saipan and onward to Australia," said the campaign.

Anadolu Agency



Dutch PM Mark Rutte

Dutch PM Mark Rutte is next NATO chief

London, UK - NATO allies have selected outgoing Dutch premier Mark Rutte as the military alliance's next secretary general, according to an official statement released on Wednesday.

"On Wednesday (26 June 2024), the North Atlantic Council decided to appoint Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte as the next Secretary General of NATO, succeeding Jens Stoltenberg," NATO said in the statement.

Rutte will take over as secretary general on October 1, when Stoltenberg's term expires following 10 years at the helm of the alliance. NATO's outgoing chief Stoltenberg welcomed the appointment and wished him success.

"Mark is a true transatlanticist, a strong leader and a consensus-builder," Stoltenberg wrote on X.

Anadolu Agency

A TOURIST PARADISE IN EAST CHINA



Tourism in Qingdao, east China's Shandong Province, is heating up as tourists throng to enjoy coastal scenery and cool off in hot summer days (Xinhua)

Uneasy calm in Kenya after violent protests over tax hike legislation

Nairobi, Kenya - An uneasy calm prevailed in Kenya on Wednesday following a day of violent protests and clashes with police that claimed at least 10 lives.

Streets in the capital Nairobi are noticeably quieter than usual amid law enforcement patrol, with many businesses closed as residents fear a resurgence of the vandalism and looting they witnessed on Tuesday.

At least 10 people were killed and dozens more injured when police opened fire on hundreds of protesters who stormed the parliament compound in Nairobi in protest of the recent legislation passed by lawmakers to increase taxes. Several locations visited by an Anadolu correspondent throughout the capital city showed that police presence is still heavy, with officers patrolling key areas to maintain law and order and prevent any untoward incidents of violence.

Businesses, particularly those targeted during the protests, have opted to remain closed until the situation has been normalised.

The usually bustling City Centre now has a more subdued atmosphere as residents remain



cautious and await further developments. Vincent Kioko, a local business owner, expressed his concerns about the situation to Anadolu, saying: "I had to close my shoe shop to protect it from looters. It's heartbreaking to see our city in this state, but safety comes first. If things remain calm, I'll reopen."

Mary Muthoni Wanjiru, a university student, expressed her concerns about the future, telling Anadolu: "The protests were frightening, but they also demonstrated how desperate people are."

He believed that the new taxes would make things even more difficult for students like me who are already struggling.

The heightened security comes in the wake of widespread unrest sparked by opposition to the proposed Finance Bill 2024, which suggests tax hikes.

The protests, fuelled by rage over the tax increases proposed in the bill, resulted in widespread looting and property damage throughout the city.

Meanwhile, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed his sadness over the situation in a statement on Wednesday, stating: "I am deeply saddened by the reports of deaths and injuries - including of journalists and medical personnel - connected to protests and street demonstrations in Kenya."

Anadolu Agency

Lebanon hit with white phosphorus bombs

The Israeli warplanes targeted Mtolleh in the border town of Khiyam

Beirut/Ankara - Israeli warplanes struck a town in southern Lebanon with white phosphorus bombs, according to Lebanese media on Wednesday.

The attack targeted Mtolleh in the border town of Khiyam, the state-run National News Agency reported. No reports were yet available about casualties.

Under international humanitarian law, the use of airburst white phosphorus is unlawfully indiscriminate in populated areas. Three homes were also destroyed in Israeli airstrikes in the occupied Shebaa Farms in southern Lebanon, according to an Anadolu reporter.

Israeli artillery shelling was also reported in Wazzani, Wadi Hamoul and Dhayra in southern Lebanon.

Tensions have risen along Lebanon's border with Israel amid cross-border attacks between Lebanese group Hezbollah and Israeli forces as Tel Aviv pressed ahead with its deadly offensive on the Gaza Strip, which has killed



Under international humanitarian law, the use of airburst white phosphorus is unlawfully indiscriminate in populated areas

over 37,700 people since October following an attack by the Palestinian group Hamas.

‘Stand with Lebanese people’ Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on

Wednesday called on all regional countries to stand with Lebanon against Israel's invasion plan.

In an address to the parliamentary group of his Justice and Development (AK) Party in the capital Ankara, Erdogan said: "Israel, which has devastated Gaza,

is now setting its sights on Lebanon. We see that Western powers are supporting Israel behind the scenes."

"Türkiye stands with brotherly Lebanese people and state and I invite other countries in the region to stand in solidarity with

Lebanon as well," said Erdogan.

"Netanyahu's plans to spread the war across the region will lead to a major catastrophe," he warned, adding: "Islamic world and Middle Eastern countries should be the first to react to these bloody plans."

"It is extremely dire, pathetic that states, which talk about freedom, human rights, and justice, are held captive by a madman like Netanyahu," the president added. Erdogan said that the photo of Gazan children with their skin clinging to their bones because

they cannot find a bite to eat is inscribed in the book of shame of the modern world.

"This photo will be remembered with sorrow, not only as a symbol of the bankruptcy of the global system but also as a symbol of the impotence of the Islamic world," said Erdogan.

Recognition of Palestinian state

Erdogan said that during his visits to Spain and Italy on the eve of Eid al-Adha, he brought up the Israeli oppression against Gazans.

During his visits, Erdogan told his counterparts that 'as long as the policies of occupation and massacre continue in Palestine, no place in the world will be safe'.

He underlined that the most effective response to Israel's arrogance and disregard for law is the recognition of the Palestinian state.

Erdogan expressed hope that the conscientious stance exhibited by Norway, Ireland, and Slovenia would serve as an example for all of Europe.

"We are pleased with Armenia's decision to recognise the Palestinian state under Prime Minister Pashinyan's leadership," said Erdogan.

"We will continue our efforts to ensure that many more countries recognise Palestine," the Turkish leader added.

Anadolu Agency

At least 10 killed in Gaza Strip

Gaza City, Palestine - At least 10 Palestinians were killed and dozens injured in Israeli bombardment in several areas across the Gaza Strip, according to medical sources on Wednesday.

Israeli artillery shelling targeted several areas in Rafah in southern Gaza, killing at least 10 people, the sources said.

Several houses were blown up in the Saudi neighbourhood in western Rafah. Israeli forces also shelled several targets east of the Bureij refugee camp and Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip, according to witnesses.

Fatalities were reported in Israeli airstrikes targeting two houses in al-Tuffah and al-Daraj neighbourhoods, east of Gaza City, witnesses said.

Israeli forces carried out a limited incursion east of Khuza'a town in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, according to an Anadolu reporter.

At least 60 more Palestinians were killed in Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip during the last 24 hours, pushing up the overall death toll to 37,718 since last October 7, the Health Ministry in the besieged enclave said on



Wednesday. A ministry statement added that some 86,377 other people have been injured in the onslaught. "Israeli forces killed 60 people and injured 140 others in four 'massacres' against families in the last 24 hours," the ministry said.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army on Wednesday detained 20 more Palestinians during raids across the occupied West Bank, prisoners' affairs groups said.

The Commission of Detainees' Affairs and the Palestinian Prisoners' Society said in a joint statement that the arrests took place in the cities of Hebron, Jenin, Bethlehem, and Qalqilya, during which Israeli forces assaulted and threatened the detainees and their family members, as well as vandalised their homes.

The new arrests bring the total number of Palestinians detained by the Israeli army in the West Bank since October last year to 9,400, including those who were released after being arrested, according to Palestinian figures.

Over the past few years, the Israeli military has conducted regular raids in the West Bank, which have escalated with the beginning of the war on Gaza on October 7, 2023. Palestinians have also been violently attacked by illegal Israeli settlers.

At least 553 Palestinians, including 133 children, have since been killed and nearly 5,200 others injured by Israeli army fire in the occupied territory, according to the Health Ministry.

Anadolu Agency

Gaza pier resumes operations

Washington, D.C., US - The US military's floating pier off the coast of the Gaza Strip resumed operations again after a maintenance halt, the Pentagon said on Tuesday.

"The pier is operational. It resumed operations again today. As you know, yesterday, they took a day to do some scheduled maintenance on the pier...Aid is flowing across the causeway," spokesman Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder told reporters.

More than 6,800 metric tonnes or 15mn pounds of humanitarian aid was delivered since the pier became operational on May 17, Ryder added.

"This is a temporary pier. So this is a temporary solution to help rush aid into the zone, again, recognising the dire security situation there. But again, we're going to continue to look at all ways to get aid into Gaza," he stressed.

Asked about reports that the UN will suspend aid operations in Gaza unless Israel acts to better protect humanitarian workers, he said the Pentagon is working with the interagency and international NGOs to facilitate the delivery of



Pentagon spokesman Major General Pat Ryder

aid. "We've got to take into account the capacity of the marshalling area. We're not quite there yet. So, you know, again, we're going to continue to be in communication with the UN, with the World Food Programme, USAID and look at those things," he said.

A UN spokesman said on Tuesday that humanitarian operations have repeatedly been in the 'crosshairs' in Gaza, adding

the risks are becoming 'increasingly intolerable'.

US President Joe Biden ordered the establishment of a sea route to deliver food and aid to Palestinians on March 8 amid Israeli restrictions and months of conflict in the enclave.

The JLOTS - the floating pier and the Trident pier - became operational on May 17 when trucks carrying humanitarian assistance began moving ashore via the pier.

Anadolu Agency

Call for balance: The human cost of Tanzania's anti-poaching laws

Manyara, Tanzania - In a mud-walled shack, Maria Ngoda sits with her head bowed, her face etched with sorrow.

This wasn't the life she imagined after her husband's death, when she vowed to uphold her family's honour. Yet a single act of kindness led to four months behind bars. Ngoda, a fish vendor, was on November 11, 2023 sentenced to 22 years in prison after allegedly being found with 12 pieces of antelope meat.

Her ordeal began on a seemingly ordinary day as she scaled and cleaned fish at home. A friend asked her to look after a sealed plastic bucket for a few hours. "I didn't know I was walking into a trap," Ngoda says.

Hours later, police raided Ngoda's home, discovering that the bucket contained illegal antelope meat, a serious offense in Tanzania. Despite her pleas of innocence, Ngoda was arrested and detained. "I told them I didn't know what was in the bucket, but they wouldn't listen. They just took me away."

For four months, Ngoda languished in jail while waiting for trial, her spirit slowly eroding. Ngoda's children, left to fend for themselves, suffered in her absence. "We didn't know what to do," says her eldest daughter, Amina. "We prayed every night for mama's return."

The courtroom verdict was a moment of disbelief. Ngoda, known for her honesty, was found guilty. Ngoda's verdict sparked outrage in the local community, with neighbours rallying to her defence.

Ngoda's lawyers appealed, and she was subsequently acquitted on February 23, 2024. Upon her return home, she found her house stripped of its belongings and her children scattered.



Across Tanzania, efforts to combat poaching and protect biodiversity through stricter anti-poaching laws have had unintended, devastating consequences for women. Many have found themselves wrongfully trapped by the justice system, a predicament that has profoundly

tended, devastating consequences for women. Many have found themselves wrongfully trapped by the justice system, a predicament that has profoundly

disrupted their livelihoods.

Struggle for survival

Neema Kajuna, a 34-year-old mother of three, lives in Kikwa village on the edge of Serengeti National Park. "Before the anti-poaching laws tightened, my husband could sometimes earn money by guiding tourists or helping with legal hunting. Now the crackdown has left us with fewer options," she complains.

Kajuna's daughter had to drop out of school because her parents couldn't afford the fees anymore. Jane Atieno, a young widow, tells of the mysterious disappearance of her husband.

"He was arrested on suspicion of poaching and never returned. I assume he's dead," she says. "The laws are there to protect the animals, but who is

there to protect us?" Since then, Atieno has become a passionate advocate for equitable enforcement of these regulations. "We need to find a balance," she says. "Protect the wildlife, yes, but also support the communities who coexist with them."

Richard Mbeki, a renowned wildlife conservationist, acknowledges the complexities.

"Anti-poaching laws are vital for the survival of many species on the brink of extinction," he explains. "However, they must be enforced with an understanding of the socio-economic realities faced by local communities."

Mbeki suggests that involving local communities in conservation efforts and providing them with sustainable livelihoods could be a game-changer.

Anadolu Agency

INDIA

Om Birla elected LS Speaker

The motion moved by PM Modi was adopted through a voice vote

New Delhi - National Democratic Alliance (NDA) candidate and BJP MP from Kota, Om Birla has been elected as the Speaker of the 18th Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

The motion moved by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and seconded by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was adopted by the house through a voice vote.

The house echoed with 'Ayes' and 'Noes' and the protem speaker Bhartruhari Mahtab declared Om Birla as the Speaker of the lower house. The opposition which had filed K Suresh as the Speaker candidate of the INDIA bloc did not press for a division vote.

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi also extended wishes to Birla and accompanied him to the chair along with Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju and PM Modi.

After the INDIA bloc fielded K Suresh as its candidate, the appointment of Speaker became interesting as the election was held for the first time in decades.

Traditionally, the Lok Sabha Speaker and Deputy Speaker are elected through consensus between the ruling party and the Opposition.

The contest between BJP's Om Birla, a three-time MP from Kota in Rajasthan, and Kodikunil Suresh, an eight-term parliamentarian from Kerala's Mavelikara came after the NDA refused to accept the opposition INDIA bloc's demand that the Deputy Speaker's position be left for the Opposition in exchange for its support to the



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla conducts the proceedings of the House, at Parliament on Wednesday (ANI)

In the last decade, the expectations, hopes and aspirations of the people have increased... it becomes our responsibility to make collective efforts to fulfil their expectations and aspirations

OM BIRLA

NDA nominee.

The NDA, which commands 293 MPs in the 543-member Lok Sabha, was able to demonstrate its clear majority to ensure that Om Birla returns to the chair he held in the 17th Lok Sabha.

The first session of the 18th Lok Sabha began on June 24 and will conclude on July 3. The 264th Session of Rajya Sabha will commence on June 27 and conclude on July 3. On June 27, President Murmu is scheduled to address a joint sitting of both houses of Parliament.

Meanwhile, Om Birla urged the newly formed Lok Sabha to

work towards fulfilling the aspirations of the people.

"The NDA government has been formed for the third consecutive term under the leadership of PM Modi. In the last decade, the expectations, hopes and aspirations of the people have increased. Therefore, it becomes our responsibility to make collective efforts to fulfil their expectations and aspirations effectively," he said.

"This 18th Lok Sabha is the world's largest celebration of democracy. Despite other challenges, more than 64 crore voters participated in the elections with great enthusiasm. On behalf of the House, I express my gratitude to them and the people of the country. I thank the Election Commission for conducting the election process in a fair, unbiased and transparent manner and for the efforts made by them to ensure that even a single vote is cast in remote areas," Birla added.

In his first speech as Leader of Opposition of the 18th Lok Sabha, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi congratulated Om Birla for being re-elected as Lok Sabha Speaker. Gandhi said that the Lok Sabha Speaker is 'the final arbiter of the voice of the people, and the Opposition this time represents that voice significantly more than the 17th Lok Sabha'.

"This House represents the voice of India's people and you are the final arbiter of that voice. The government has political power but the opposition also represents the voice of India's people and this time, the opposition represents significantly more voice of the Indian people than it did last time," the Congress MP said.

Rahul Gandhi also assured the Speaker on behalf of the entire opposition of assisting him in the functioning of the House. "The opposition would like to assist you in doing your work. We would like the House to function often and well. It is very important that cooperation happens based on trust. It is very important that the voice of the Opposition is allowed to be represented in this House," said Rahul Gandhi.

ANI

CBI arrests Delhi CM Kejriwal from courtroom

New Delhi - The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Wednesday arrested Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal from the courtroom, in connection with the Excise policy case.

CBI arrested the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor Kejriwal after the Vacation Judge of Delhi Court allowed CBI to examine/interrogate him in the courtroom so that the agency could proceed with his formal arrest.

The court also asked CBI to place on record the material that they have for his arrest.

Kejriwal was today produced before the court of vacation judge Amitabh Rawat in compliance of the production warrant issued by the court yesterday.

During the hearing, Kejriwal's wife Sunita Kejriwal, AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh and AAP leader Dilip Pandey remained present in the courtroom.

CBI's Special Public Prosecutor D P Singh extensively argued and opposed submissions by Kejriwal's lawyer. The advocate also moved an application seeking a supply of applications for interrogation by CBI and the order passed related to that.

Kejriwal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in the Excise Policy money laundering case on March 21 this year and is presently in Judicial Custody in the case.

One of the lawyers for the Aam Aadmi Party also posted



AAP leader and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal

on X, and said: "Modi government fears the release of Arvind Kejriwal by SC and has asked to CBI to make arrest in the same matter almost a year after he joined the investigation. What it shows? Nothing changed the vindictive mindset of BJP. Shame."

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday had stayed Kejriwal's bail order passed by the trial court, saying that the trial court should have at least recorded its satisfaction with the fulfilment of twin conditions of section 45 of Prevention of the Money Laundering Act (PMLA) before passing the impugned order.

The vacation bench of Justice Sudhir Kumar Jain, while passing the order, said that documents and arguments were not appreciated properly by the trial court.

On June 20, the trial judge granted bail to Kejriwal in the money laundering case. The next day, the ED moved an urgent petition before the High Court challenging the bail order.

ANI

Will hold NDA govt accountable for their actions: Rahul Gandhi

New Delhi - Lok Sabha's Leader of Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, on Wednesday said that together Congress will 'raise the voice of every Indian in Parliament, protect our Constitution, and hold the NDA government accountable for their actions'.

"I thank Congress President @khargeji, and all the Congress leaders and Babbar Sher karyakartas from across the country for their overwhelming support and warm wishes. Together, we will raise the voice of every Indian in Parliament, protect our Constitution, and hold the NDA government accountable for their actions," the Congress leader said in a post on X.

Lok Sabha did not have a

Leader of the Opposition in the last 10 years because no political party, other than the ruling party, was able to secure the minimum Lok Sabha seats required to nominate a Leader of the Opposition.

Rahul Gandhi won from both Raebareli and Wayanad Lok Sabha constituencies in the recently concluded Lok Sabha polls. While Rahul Gandhi won with a margin of 364422 votes from Wayanad defeating Communist Party of India's Annie Raja, in Raebareli, he won with a margin of 390030 votes defeating Bharatiya Janata Party's Dinesh Pratap Singh.

After Rahul Gandhi announced that he would resign as an MP from Wayanad and keep



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge felicitates the newly elected leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, at Kharge's residence in New Delhi on Wednesday (ANI)

the Raebareli constituency, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge announced Priyanka

Gandhi's candidature from Wayanad last week. If Priyanka Gandhi wins from

Wayanad, three members of the Nehru-Gandhi family will be in Parliament - Sonia Gandhi in

Rajya Sabha and Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi in the Lok Sabha.

The leader of the largest opposition party having not less than one-tenth seats of the total

Undertakings, Estimates and several Joint Parliamentary Committees.

He is entitled to be a member of various selection committees responsible for appointing

Lok Sabha did not have a Leader of Opposition in last 10 years as no political party, other than the ruling party, was able to secure minimum seats required to nominate a Leader of Opposition

strength of the Lok Sabha is recognised as the leader of the Opposition.

He will be a member of crucial committees such as Public Accounts (Chairman), Public

heads of statutory bodies like the Central Vigilance Commission, the Central Information Commission, the CBI, the NHRC, and the Lokpal. ANI

1st time in 7 years, S Korea resumes live-fire drills near maritime border with North Korea

Seoul, South Korea - South Korea on Wednesday resumed live-fire drills near the maritime border with North Korea, for the first time in seven years.

The full-scale live-fire drills were held in the islands of Yeonpyeong and Baengnyeong in the Yellow Sea, just south of the Northern Limit Line (NLL) - the de facto inter-Korean maritime boundary, Seoul-based Yonhap News reported.

During the exercises, the South Korean soldiers fired 290 live rounds into the waters off the islands. It also involved K9 howitzers, Chunmoo multiple rocket launcher systems, and Spike anti-tank missiles.

The last time the South Ko-



rean forces held live-fire exercises was in 2017 ahead of the 2018 inter-Korean tension reduction agreement that barred both

sides from such activities.

The agreement that set up a maritime buffer zone around the NLL to ban such drills, among

other measures, to reduce cross-border tensions was recently fully suspended by both neighbours. The latest development also

came after North Korea launched a suspected ballistic missile toward the East Sea on Wednesday morning. According to the South Korean military, Pyongyang test-fired a hypersonic missile but it exploded in the air.

On Tuesday, Seoul said South Korea and the US held joint drills aimed at strengthening their combined logistics capabilities.

The US, South Korea and Japan also plan to hold the first-ever trilateral multidomain exercises, dubbed Freedom Edge, which will be held later this month.

The USS Theodore Roosevelt already arrived on the peninsula ahead of the planned exercises. Anadolu Agency

Terrorist attack kills 20 soldiers in western Niger

Kigali, Rwanda - Twenty Nigerien soldiers and a civilian were killed in an attack by 'a coalition of terrorist groups' in western Niger on Tuesday, the government said.

The incident occurred around 10am local time when a detachment of the Defence and Security Forces was attacked on the outskirts of the village of Tassia in the Tillaberi region in the tri-border area, the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

At least nine other soldiers were wounded, it added.

The military government declared three days of national mourning from Wednesday, during which

flags will fly at half-mast.

The defence ministry said the army later launched an operation in which dozens of terrorists were neutralised and their means of transport destroyed.

Lt. Gen. Salifou Mody, the Minister of State for National Defence, in his condolence message assured the population of 'the unwavering will of the defence and security forces to continue the fight for sovereignty'.

The Tillaberi region, which borders Burkina Faso and Mali, faces regular attacks blamed on an affiliate of the Daesh/ISIS terror group.

Anadolu Agency

MARCEL HOWITZER FLOORS THE DUTCH

Austria enter Euro 2024 last 16 as group champions

Berlin, Germany - Hoary old cliché it may be but in the final analysis the simple truth is that the irrepressible, irresistible Austrians wanted it more than the Dutch in their final Euro 2024 Group D clash.

Maybe the fact the Netherlands were already guaranteed a last-16 place spiked their guns, or perhaps there was nothing they could do to repel the industry and energy of the Austrians.

Either way, the men from the mountains towered over their opponents from the low countries by the end of a sizzling 3-2 victory at Berlin's Olympiastadion.

"When you win like that, win the group, score the winning goal, it doesn't get any better than that," said Austria's man-of-the-match Marcel Sabitzer. "Now we need to calm down, clear our heads and then keep attacking."

The die had seemed cast from the kick off.

Well set up, disciplined, and with a measured plan to execute, the Austrians instantly set about their task with furious energy as soon as the whistle blew.



Austria's Marcel Sabitzer scores against the Netherlands in their Euro 2024 group match on Tuesday

While the Netherlands were a team of step overs, fancy flicks, jinks and arms thrown up in frustration, the men in white buckled down to the job in hand - namely clearing their lines, maintaining their shape and employing a great high press and strong,

physical tactics to snuff out Dutch inspiration whenever it threatened to momentarily catch light.

Austria's approach was rewarded almost before either bench had a chance to get comfortable, pressing Dutch mid-

fielder Donyell Malen to scythe the ball past his own goalkeeper after only five minutes.

If Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman was sanguine in appearance, his demeanour suggested he was far less so in outlook, and he appeared to seethe on the

touchline. The last time the Oranje played at a Euros in this neck of the woods, they emerged champions in West Germany.

Koeman was among the heroes who won the final 36 years ago to the day.

How, on a balmy evening in

Berlin, he must have yearned for the majesty of a Ruud Gullit or menace of a Marco van Basten.

Mercurial to the point of confusing themselves at times, the Dutch lacked purpose, with their lead striker Memphis Depay drifting in and out of the game.



Ronald Koeman

Koeman: We made too many mistakes

Berlin, Germany - Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman did not mince his words about the performance of his team, assured of a place in the knockout stages, after their loss to Austria in their final European Championship Group D game on Tuesday night in Berlin.

"Do you have quite some time? Because I can list quite a few mistakes," Koeman told reporters after Austria grabbed a thrilling 3-2 win over the Netherlands that sent them into the last 16 at Euro 2024 as group winners.

"Normally we have good defenders. We don't get a lot of goals against us. Not today," he said, describing the defensive position as running around like a headless chicken.

"It was awful, very bad, so we did not control the match," he said.

"It's all about the responsibility to follow your man. If you watch the second and third goals - it's too easy."

Poland building 'foundations for the future', says Probiez

Dortmund, Germany - Poland have built the foundations for a more successful future despite being the first team eliminated from Euro 2024, coach Michal Probiez said after his side held France to a 1-1 draw in their final Group D game.

After giving up an early lead before conceding a late winner in their first match against the Netherlands, Poland were dumped out with a game to spare after their 3-1 defeat by Austria.

But neither their boisterous fans nor their players acted as if their final match was a non-event.

Poland were thankful for a man of the match performance from goalkeeper Lukasz Skorupski, but looked set for yet another defeat after Kylian Mbappe converted a second-half penalty.



Michal Probiez

Yet the Poles fought back and after veteran striker Robert Lewandowski levelled from the spot, even put France under some late pressure to threaten a winner which could have given a below-par France a challenging last-16 clash.

Probiez admitted Poland's overall tournament was a let-down, but said his players could take positives from their performance against a talented France side.

"I just need to accept what happened here. We need to explain that to the fans," he told reporters.

"We should not feel sad. It's just foundations for the future to compete against every opponent that we may face. Against the runners-up of the World Cup, we can play as equals."

Mbappe, Lewandowski score as Poland draw with France

Dortmund, Germany - A Kylian Mbappe penalty was cancelled out by Robert Lewandowski's spot kick as already-eliminated Poland held France to a nervy 1-1 draw in Dortmund on Tuesday, meaning the French finish second in Group D.

Mbappe broke the deadlock in the 56th minute with his first European Championship goal - and the first scored by a French player at Euro 2024 - when he calmly slotted home a penalty given for Jakub Kiwior's clumsy challenge on Ousmane Dembele. The lead would have meant France topped the group regardless of the result of a see-saw game between Netherlands and Austria.

However, Dayot Upamecano brought down Polish substitute Karol Swiderski, which allowed Lewandowski to level from the spot in the 79th minute - after his first effort was saved by Mike Maignan, who was adjudged to have advanced off his line too early.

With Austria then grabbing a



Kylian Mbappe with Robert Lewandowski after the match

later winner against the Dutch, the draw means France finish second in Group D behind Austria and will face whoever comes second in Group E, where Romania, Belgium, Slovakia and Ukraine are all on three points.

It is the first time France have

Mbappe broke the deadlock in the 56th minute with his first European Championship goal - and the first scored by a French player at Euro 2024

failed to finish top of their group at a major tournament in 12 years under manager Didier Deschamps. It was another uninspired performance by France, who lacked imagination from top to bottom.

They dominated possession

but were denied by Poland's excellent goalkeeper Lukasz Skorupski who made a string of decent saves to deny Mbappe, Theo Hernandez, Ousmane Dembele and Bradley Barcola's close-range efforts.

But after Poland found the equaliser, France had to endure a late flurry by the animated Polish who were roared on by their fans who woke up after Lewandowski's goal to create a raucous atmosphere at Dortmund BVB Stadion.

With Mbappe back into the starting eleven after breaking his nose in their opening match versus Austria, Deschamps deployed two holding midfielders in Adrien Rabiot and Aurelien Tchouameni which allowed France to use their full backs Jules Kounde and Theo Hernandez in full attacking mode, almost as wingers.

The move, however, didn't help France to be more vertical or aggressive and ended up leaving them exposed to counter attacks.

We need to be more clinical, says Deschamps

Dortmund, Germany - France manager Didier Deschamps said his side need to sharpen up in front of goal at Euro 2024 but the knockout rounds will give them an opportunity for a fresh start after they ended their group stage campaign with a 1-1 draw with Poland on Tuesday.

France finished second in Group D with five points, behind surprise table-toppers Austria, booking their spot in the last 16 where they will face the runners-up in Group E, where Romania, Belgium, Slovakia and Ukraine are all on three points.

Deschamps' side began their campaign with a 1-0 victory over Austria that came courtesy of an

own goal, before they drew a blank in a 0-0 draw with the Netherlands and finished with Tuesday's draw in which Kylian Mbappe scored with a penalty.

We need to hit them where it hurts but we have always had a goal average that is quite impressive, for these three games it hasn't quite been there

DIDIER DESCHAMPS

Their lack of goals is a concern for Deschamps, who hopes they can rediscover the impressive scoring form they showed in qualifying.

"We need to score more goals, we need to be more clinical, and I am looking for that," Deschamps told reporters. "We can improve but that's it. We need to hit them where it hurts but we have always had a goal average that is quite impressive, for these three games it hasn't quite been there."

"But I am positive, I am always

positive. It is a new competition starting for us."

France took the lead against already-eliminated Poland when Mbappe fired home from the penalty spot after Ousmane Dembele was brought down by a clumsy challenge in the area.

It was Mbappe's first European Championship goal as he made his return to the France side wearing a face mask after breaking his nose in their opener against Austria.

Deschamps said it was important for Mbappe to get back into action although, wearing a mask some issues.

"I thought he was quite good

on his feet, with the mask he had to get used to it even though when he sweats it stings in his eyes and he needs to wipe his eyes," Deschamps said.

"But he is hungry to play and the game will have done him some good."

France were pegged back when Robert Lewandowski levelled with another penalty, which he had to retake after his first effort was saved by France keeper Mike Maignan, who was adjudged to have come off his line.

France had 19 shots in the game but could not find a way past Poland keeper Lukasz Skorupski - who was named man-of-the-match - from open play.



France manager Didier Deschamps talks to N'Golo Kanté during the match

MUTUAL BENEFIT

Goalless draw enough for England to seal top spot while Slovenia also ensure progress

Cologne, Germany - Underwhelming England sealed top spot in Group C but hardly issued a statement of intent ahead of the Euro 2024 knockout rounds as they toiled to a 0-0 draw with Slovenia, who progressed for the first time in their history on Tuesday.

For the third game in row England's fans were left frustrated as a team billed as pre-tournament favourites managed a paltry three attempts on target in a dour clash.

While England have big questions to answer, Slovenia's players and raucous fans celebrated wildly as the draw ensured they finished the group in third spot after three draws.

England, who had already qualified for the last 16 with a

game to spare, ended the group stage with five points but managed only two goals in three games.

Slovenia finished with three points to take the third spot, the same as second-placed Denmark who were held to a 0-0 draw by Serbia.

Although they had the same goal difference, goals scored and disciplinary record, the Danes advanced in second place with UEFA saying they would clarify the process by which the nations were separated later.

While the final whistle sparked delirium in the Slovenian ranks, many England fans left before the end and vented their frustration as they players walked to greet them, booing and throwing a few plastic

glasses on to the pitch.

"We can be proud of finishing top, it's not easy in these major tournaments," captain Harry Kane said.

"It was a tough game but probably our best performance of the three, energy with the ball, we pressed better, but we lacked a bit of magic in the final third. But that will come."

England enjoyed 72 per cent possession and completed 694 passes compared to the 208 of their opponents but very few of them caused any real concern in the Slovenia defence in which Vanja Drkusic and Jaka Bijol were both outstanding.

On the plus side for England, they have ended up in the opposite side of the knockout draw to France, Germany, Spain and Portugal and there was a bright cameo off the bench for Cole Palmer who injected some much-needed flair while Kobbie



England's Declan Rice and Slovenia's Petar Stojanovi battle for the ball during their Euro 2024 group match on Tuesday

Mainoo also impressed after coming on for the second half.

England's fans were in full voice before kickoff on a muggy

night by the Rhine -- expecting their side to fire after a mediocre win over Serbia and shambolic 1-1 draw against Denmark.

But they were silent throughout the first half as England laboured yet again as an attacking force.



Denmark players celebrate after their match against Serbia

Denmark reach last 16, Serbia exit

Munich, Germany - Denmark secured a place in the knockout phase of Euro 2024 with a nervy 0-0 draw in Munich on Tuesday against Serbia - who head home after coming bottom of Group C - and will next face three-time European champion Germany.

The Danes - knowing they only needed a draw to move into the next phase - had more chances with Christian Eriksen pulling the strings from midfield,

but were unable to turn that into a goal in their third draw of the tournament.

Denmark finish second in the group with Slovenia third, but both sides go through. The two teams finished level on points, goal difference, goals scored and disciplinary record but Denmark finished higher due to the next tiebreaker of who had the best qualifying ranking.

"It's going to be great against

Germany," Danish keeper Kasper Schmeichel said of the last-16 match in Dortmund on Saturday. "If we don't believe in our chances, we might as well go home."

Serbia defended stoutly for long periods, but could not provide opportunities for veteran striker Aleksandar Mitrovic who appealed unsuccessfully for a penalty several times. They came fourth in the group with

two points from two draws.

Both teams had goals disallowed, Denmark for a corner that went out of play and Serbia for offside.

Serbia's Dusan Tadic called the result a huge disappointment and a failure while Mitrovic lamented the talented side's inability to create chances.

"We did not create enough chances to score the goal and that cost us," Mitrovic said.

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INDIA LOOK TO END TITLE JINX

Men in Blue want to continue their aggressive game against England in T20 World Cup semifinal

Georgetown, Guyana - India can take a huge step towards winning their first major title in over a decade and bury any doubts about their backbone in the knockout rounds when they face defending champions England in the Twenty20 World Cup semi-finals on Thursday.

Despite being backed by the world's richest cricket board, success on the biggest stage has largely proved elusive for India and their 2013 Champions Trophy triumph is the most recent of their five global titles.

Rohit Sharma's team, however, head into the clash with England in Guyana on a six-match unbeaten streak in the tournament and determined to emulate the title success of the 2007 side in the inaugural edition.

Rohit, who along with fellow stalwart Virat Kohli could be playing at a last World Cup, returned to form with a 41-ball 92 in a thumping win over Australia in the Super Eight stage and said his side would continue being aggressive.

"We don't want to do anything different. We want to play the same way we've been playing, understand what individuals need to do at certain points in the game and play freely, not trying to think too much about what lies ahead," he added.



Rohit Sharma (R) and Jasprit Bumrah (2R) have been India's most potent weapons in the T20 world Cup so far

"It's important that we play our cricket well. So far we've been doing that consistently. Nothing changes for us, we want to focus on what we want to do

and take the game on." Indian fans will still be anxious given their team's shaky displays in the latter stages of big tournaments. A dominant Indian side

topped the group stage in the 2019 50-overs World Cup but crashed out in the semi-finals to New Zealand. They also fell at the same stage of the T20 World

Cup in 2022, going out to England.

After more heartbreak in the 2023 World Test Championship, where they lost in the final to

It's important that we play our cricket well. So far we've been doing that consistently. Nothing changes for us, we want to focus on what we want to do and take the game on.

ROHIT SHARMA

Australia, India's only defeat at last year's ODI World Cup on home soil was in the title decider against the same opponents.

But India look in fine fettle

with both bat and ball this time around. Rohit has scored 191 runs in six matches, while pace bowler Jasprit Bumrah has 11 wickets and spinner Kuldeep Yadav, a late entry into the side, has claimed seven in three games.

England's campaign has stuttered with losses to Australia and South Africa in the group

stages and they only made the Super Eights by virtue of having a better net run rate than Scotland.

Now, however, they stand only two victories away from becoming the first team to retain the T20 World Cup trophy.

"In tournament cricket, sometimes it is better to sneak up and nick it at the end," said all-rounder Liam Livingstone.

"Hopefully that's the way we will go. A lot of lads have been contributing in the last few games, which should stand us in good stead going forward."

Al Harthy relishing challenge at 24 Hours of Spa

Muscat - Fresh from the biggest race in world motorsport, the 24 Hours of Le Mans, Oman's number one racing driver Ahmad al Harthy is preparing for his second twice-round-the-clock contest in as many weeks just a few days from now, the CrowdStrike 24 Hours of Spa.

Round two of the Fanatec GT World Challenge Europe powered by AWS Endurance Cup season, taking place this coming weekend, 29th/30th June, is arguably the greatest race in the world solely for GT3 cars and Al Harthy is relishing the prospect of being back at Belgium's Spa-Francorchamps.

"It's been a very busy few weeks with the Le Mans 24 Hours and now the Spa 24 Hours. This is why we're here, though, to be part of the biggest endurance races in the world and to challenge the very best drivers and teams out there in GT3 racing, while proudly flying the flag for Oman. There has been a lot of hard work behind the scenes, the demands of a 24 hour race are not insignificant, and I'm very happy with our preparations,"



Ahmad al Harthy is happy with his preparations for the 24 Hours of Spa

said Al Harthy.

"It's great to be back with OQ by Oman Racing for the second race of the GTWCE Endurance season, and I'm obviously looking forward to being back with Sam and Jens and, of course, working

with Calan for the first time.

"I always love racing at Spa, we've had some incredible moments in the 24 Hours before and it would be amazing if we can create more special memories this weekend."

It's great to be back with OQ by Oman Racing for the second race of the GTWCE Endurance season

AHMAD AL HARTHY

As a track where the Omani has enjoyed outstanding success over the years in GT endurance racing, not least with past class victory in the 24 Hours of Spa, Al Harthy is looking forward to being back in action with OQ by Oman Racing team-mates Sam De Haan and Jens Klingmann. The squad expands to four drivers for the longest race of the campaign, with Australia's Calan Williams joining the trio.

At the first event of the GTWCE Endurance Cup season, a visit to Circuit Paul Ricard in France in early April, the No.30 entry got their Bronze class campaign underway with sixth - a podium bid impacted by an unfortunate track limits penalty for

De Haan midway through the three-hour race.

In his maiden year of racing with the BMW M4 LMGTC3, and also with Team WRT powering the OQ by Oman Racing entry, Al Harthy has adapted to the fresh challenge impressively. Whether at the first race of the GTWCE season, or his dual programme in the FIA World Endurance Championship with Maxime Martin and Valentino Rossi, the Omani has shown impressive pace and performance.

With key support from prestigious partners OQ, Oman Ministry of Culture Sports and Youth, Omantel and BMW Oman, two-time GTWCE Endurance Cup Pro-Am class Champion Al Harthy is determined to push for a season-best showing at Spa and climb the Bronze class points table.

The 2024 staging of the CrowdStrike 24 Hours of Spa is the landmark 100-year anniversary race and, as is always the case, there will be a spectacular packed grid of GT3 machinery with 66 entries set to contest this incredible encounter.

Argentina edge Chile to enter Copa America quarterfinals

East Rutherford, New Jersey - Argentina became the first side to book passage into the Copa America quarterfinals after a late strike from Lautaro Martinez earned them a 1-0 Group A victory over Chile on Tuesday.

The defending champions had to wait until the 88th minute for the winner. Giovanni Lo Celso's shot was saved by Chile's Claudio Bravo after a Lionel Messi corner kick but Martinez was on hand to fire home the rebound.

The goal stood after a lengthy VAR review for offside.

Argentina top the group with six points after two matches, with Canada in second on three following their 1-0 win over Peru earlier on Tuesday. Chile and Peru have one point each.

"These matches are always



Argentina's Lautaro Martinez celebrates his goal with teammates

like this, we have to continue in the same way, treating the matches in this way, as they are all going to be complicated," Martinez told TyC Sports.

The loss extended Chile's

winless streak against Argentina in the Copa America to 30 matches. Chile have won the Copa twice but have never beaten Argentina in regulation time at the tournament.

David strike helps Canada get the better of 10-man Peru

Kansas City, US - A second-half strike from forward Jonathan David helped Canada secure a 1-0 victory over 10-man Peru in their Copa America Group A match in Kansas City on Tuesday, boosting their hopes of a top-two finish and a spot in the knockout stages. David's 74th-minute goal was Canada's first under new manager Jesse Marsch. Prior to Tuesday's victory the Canadians had failed to score in two international friendlies and their opening Copa America match against Argentina.

"We're going to enjoy the moment, but know the work isn't done," captain Alphonso Davies said. The win moves Canada into second spot in the group on three points.

Mistakes to avoid when starting a business

According to the US Bureau of Labour Statistics, more than 18% of new businesses fail during their first two years of operation, and more than 55% of all businesses don't survive past the fifth year. So how do you successfully launch and run your startup?

Consider the following tips, arrived at after reaching out to hundreds of small business owners, growth strategists, financial advisors and business consultants:

Being afraid to fail
The biggest mistake you can make is to be afraid of failure. Failure is key to your success, and jumping into your fear is very positive for your future business.

Not making a business plan
Too many businesses start without a basic plan, and if you fail to plan, you are essentially planning to fail. A startup should map out a business plan, even if it is just one page.

Being disorganised
Running a small business is like being a circus ringmaster. It's normal to have dozens of things happening at once. So, prepare a daily task list, and list them by their priority to avoid being dis-



organised.

Define your target audience
A common startup mistake is

not taking the time to understand the market or customers you're building for. It's important to recognise that building a great product often doesn't translate

into a successful business.

Proper legal structure
The biggest mistakes startups make are not registering their

business, picking the right business entity or protecting their intellectual property. These three areas are crucial to a business starting right.

Don't do everything yourself
A big mistake entrepreneurs make is thinking they are all alone, and they try to operate independently without surrounding themselves with wise counsel. Don't try to run a new business by yourself

Avoiding contracts
One of the biggest mistakes a business owner/entrepreneur can make when starting a business is the failure to implement contracts. No matter how good relationships may be, they can come to a screeching halt when systems and agreements are not put in place.

Hiring too soon
Don't be in a hurry to hire. It is very easy to run a small business with part-timers, subcontractors and the services of other professionals.

Capital estimates
Most entrepreneurs think they can get further with less. In an effort to minimise equity dilution, they forget to factor in unknowns, challenges or delays along the way. Also, handling money incorrectly and being irresponsible with cash flow is a

death sentence for startups with limited access to capital.

Pay yourself what you deserve
Paying yourself too little or too much is a common mistake. It's often easier to determine the salary for a new hire than determining an owner or partner's pay. Consider paying yourself a percentage of revenue.

Value your product/service
Don't price too high, but don't price too low just to gain market share. If you are good, price like it! Many entrepreneurs start with the best of intentions and give things away for free or do free things for charity, community or visibility. Be very careful with this.

Launching too quickly
One of the biggest mistakes startups make is launching before they are ready. The saying 'Done is better than perfect' is the right advice; however, the 'done' needs to ensure it can handle new clients.
Once you have launched into the public and you start getting clients, ensure your systems and processes are in place to maintain continuity.

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SUMMER COOLERS
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IN TOWN
Eid revelry in different parts of the capital and Mahaban Yoga session



16

ENTERTAINMENT
A peek into tinsel town in Hollywood and Bollywood

RESURFACED ROAD

SEWER TO SEWER

The ‘road less cared for’ behind the Ruwi mosque, has now been concretised to get rid of the perennial potholes and facilitate easy flow of traffic, much to the relief of citizens and motorists residing in the area. But have the real ‘irritants’ been tackled?

Hubert Vaz

The MBD area now has an all-new road - albeit a small stretch - something that hasn't happened this side of town over the past 2-3 decades! This road connects an unsung, yet frequently used area, leading to the Central Bank of Oman on one end and Badr al Samaa Hospital on the other. And citizens have hailed the prompt civic action.

Apart from the series of flyovers created to connect the Al Bustan Road, from the Wadi Kabir roundabout to Darsait Heights, a project that spanned over five years and caused untold hardships and diversions to motorists while the construction was on, one hasn't seen such huge civic developmental works here for long.

A year ago, this stretch appeared akin to the craters on the Moon, with deep depressions filled with sewage water and gravel strewn all over, compelling motorists to negotiate serpentine routes at the risk of head-on collisions and forcing pedestrians to stay aloof. The condition had been so here for well over a decade.

Kudos to the Roads Department of the Muscat Municipality

which took cognisance of the problem and swung into action following several complaints by citizens and critical reports in a section of the press. Less than a year later, civic officials inspected the site, and works were undertaken over the past six months when both ends were cordoned off to facilitate the construction works on a stretch between two sewer channels that, though sunken, serves as a by-pass.

Over 110 sections of concrete demarcated by tarred strips have been laid, connecting two sewers - one at the mini roundabout near the Central Bank of Oman and one behind the Ruwi Mosque. The surface of this road is now somewhat aligned with the floor of the sewers.

The reinforced concretised stretch now would be rid of the formation of potholes which was caused due to the constant flow of sewage water emanating from the vicinity of the mosque's drainage as well as from the main sewer at the junction. These two irritants, however, continue to add a shabby sight to this road, though the effluent can now flow off the road towards the sewer yonder.

A cross-section of motorists and pedestrians in the area hailed the new concrete stretch



Sewage water continues to flow over the repaired road everyday

Photos: V K Shafeer



The newly concretised stretch between two sewer channels on both ends

as a much-needed solution to a perennial problem but hoped that the sewage could be, somehow, diverted, instead of flowing over the road daily.

K Ashwin, a motorist who regularly uses this road, pointed out to the flowing sewage water on the new

road, saying, "We are happy that this road has been repaired but what about this sewage water that flows on the road every day. There should be a solution for that, too."

A resident of the area, Mohammed Jamal, said, "We work here and pass by this road several times a day. It is a big relief to see it in good condition now."

Another added, "The municipality should regularly inspect such internal streets and do the needful. Citizens or expatriate residents will not take any initiative to draw their attention."

Most people upheld the civic action, especially because there is an Omani school adjacent to this road, and huge school buses regularly ply the stretch.

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OMAN'S 1st

cook-up

SUMMER COOLERS

Coconut Cooler

Ingredients

- 1 medium coconut cut into small pieces

1 cup coconut water from the coconut

8 cups water divided

450ml sweetened condensed milk

350ml evaporated milk

1tsp pure vanilla extract

Ice

Method

If you are using a natural coconut, begin by making a small hole in the coconut to remove the water. Open it in half and chop the coconut flesh into small pieces. Put the coconut flesh, the fresh coconut water, 4 cups of the water, condensed milk, evaporated milk, and vanilla into a blender. Blend until smooth and the coconut is very soft.

Strain half of the mixture into a pitcher and add the remainder of it without straining, so you have some pieces of fresh coconut. If you prefer not to have any pieces of coconut, strain all of it. You may add a tablespoon or two of the contents in the strainer for extra flavour. Add the remaining 4 cups of water to the pitcher. Stir and refrigerate or serve immediately over glasses filled with ice.

Garnish with slices of coconut, mint, cinnamon or sliced fresh pineapple.

Rooh Afza Milk Shake

Ingredients

- 2-3tbsp Rooh Afza

300ml chilled milk

1tbsp powdered sugar

½ cup rabri milk, ½tsp rose water

1 pinch cinnamon powder

100ml chilled water

1tsp grated cashews

1tsp sliced almonds

1tsp grated pistachios

Method

In a blender, add chilled milk, powder sugar, rabri milk, rose water, and a pinch of cinnamon powder. Then add Rooh Afza syrup and chilled water and mix well. Add 1tsp dried nuts - cashews, almonds, and pistachios (reserve some for garnish). Blend all the ingredients together to make it frothy. Now in a tall glass, pour 1tbsp of Rooh Afza along the sides. Pour the blended milk shake in the glass and mix slightly. Garnish with chopped nuts and serve.

Kiwi and Lime Cooler

Ingredients

- ½ cup caster sugar

½ cup boiling water

4 gold, 4 green kiwi fruit

1/3 cup lime juice

½ cup mint leaves

2 cups ice cubes

250ml sparkling water

Method

In a large jug, dissolve the caster sugar in half cup boiling water, then place in an ice bath or fridge to chill. Peel and roughly chop 4 gold and 4 green kiwi fruit, then blend until smooth with the cooled syrup, 1/3 cup lime juice, half cup mint leaves and 2 cups ice cubes. Pour into a jug and top up with 250ml sparkling water, or divide among glasses and top up with the water. Serve with extra mint

Just chill

Summer’s the time when appetites ebb and when one wants to stay away from foodstuff that generates heat within. Settle for summer coolers to satiate your thirst as well as hunger



Watermelon Crush

Ingredients

- 4 cups of watermelon cubes, deseeded

2tbsp lime juice

2 cans lemon soda

Fresh mint leaves and watermelon wedges - for garnish

Crushed ice

Method

Have two tall glasses filled with crushed ice ready. Blend the watermelon cubes to get a smooth juice. Add half a cup of watermelon juice and 1tbsp of lime juice to each of the glasses. After that, top everything off with lemon lime soda. Next, make sure to give the drink a gentle stir with a bar spoon. You can garnish your drink with fresh mint and some fresh watermelon wedges.

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take a break

IN TOWN

Eid holiday revelry



People in the capital spent the 9-day long Eid holiday unwinding in different ways



Photos: V K Shafer

Marhaban Yoga



The Embassy of India hosted a special session at Indian School Muscat to mark the 10th International Day of Yoga

Photos: V K Shafer

BOGGLER

S	U	T	A
D	R	R	O
I	E	G	Y
I	V	E	L

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

LEVEL EASY:

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

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

TRIVIA QUIZ - FOR TEENS

1. What is the sugar found in fruits called?



- A. Glucose
- B. Fructose
- C. Saccharin
- D. Adipose

2. What does 'anthophilous' mean?

- A. Animal lover
- B. Loving flowers
- C. Having sharp hearing
- D. Knowledgeable

3. What's the right word for a business innovator?

- A. Entrepreneur
- B. Entertainer
- C. Enterpriser
- D. Enterprener

Answers
1. B
2. B
3. A

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

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ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

It's all about depth, intensity, and focus for you now, so you won't stand for anyone who wants to play games or give you anything less than their all, and that goes for even the most casual encounters. Anyone who knows you will understand that you're not in a lighthearted mood as soon as they set eyes on you.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

You've always found intense people extremely interesting, not to mention exciting. Someone who answers that description will be along shortly. Your job is to take your time getting to know them so that you'll know if they're just dangerous in the exciting way or dangerous in a truly scary way.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Do your homework before you make a decision. Secrets are definitely in the air, secrets of all kinds. A coworker who's been putting out some rather mysterious signals lately will have you wondering what they're up to. If you've known them for a long time and you tend to trust them, don't get carried away, especially if you don't have all the facts.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

You're fascinated, no doubt about it. You're so intrigued, in fact, that you can't believe you've never made an effort to get to know this person before. If this is someone you want to know even better, don't let the evening come to an end. If anyone can sweet-talk their way into an extended conversation, it's you.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

For some darned reason, whenever there's a problem in your family, everyone comes to you to solve it. And you don't mind. Truth be told, you kind of like it, and you know you're good at it. But at this particular moment in time you're not thrilled about the position you've been put in, and the responsibility you've been given shows no signs of letting up.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

You're just not good at holding your tongue, especially when you feel that clearing the air is important. When you've absolutely got to let someone in on a secret, you'll say that too. At the moment, you have an awful lot to share, and even if you don't, the look on your face will tell the story.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You need to take stock of what's going on in your life. You need to figure out what's important to you and what's not, and you'll put your heart and soul into it. The good news is that your sweetheart or a trusted friend is more than willing to talk with you about it, and they'll have just the perspective you need. All you have to do is call that all-important meeting.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

If there's any way at all for you to pull a disappearing act, this would be a fine time to do it, especially if you have a partner in crime to hibernate with, which you most certainly do. You don't have to advertise it either. You know exactly the person to call. You're in the mood for secrets, mysteries.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Here they come, that crowd of admirers you've been trying your best to duck out on. You're still not in the mood to mingle much, and it will be extremely tough to talk you into it. But if you have to come out of hibernation to deal with the fans (also known as your best friends and closest family members), do your best to be pleasant.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

You're officially off duty now. And after everything you've been doing lately, even someone as hardworking and diligent as you wouldn't be able to think of a single reason why you shouldn't be entitled to some serious, guilt-free time off. Now that you've actually been given a chance to sit back and relax, don't mess around. Do it up right. Line up a few movies, a pizza, and some ice cream.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Every now and then someone does a favor for you, someone you not only didn't ask or expect to ask, but someone you would least expect to do anything selfless. You'll be totally amazed by what happens now and by who's going to do that favor for you, but sit tight. If it happens to be an authority figure, you'll be able to repay them in short order.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You've never been afraid to put some distance between you and a problem that just won't be solved. You don't do it often, but when you've tried your best for a long time and not gotten anywhere, you're smart enough to know that a change of scenery can work wonders. So now that you've decided you're just about done putting all your energy into what's beginning to look like a no-win situation, isn't it time for a trip? Just a quick one?

entertainment



'DESPERATE HOUSE-WIVES' STAR CRIES FOUL

Eva Longoria called Hollywood out this week for not being "pro-gressive" towards women and people of colour. "You know, people think Hollywood is a liberal, progressive industry, but it's not," the 49-year-old *Desperate Housewives* alum told *Grazia* magazine in a piece published on Monday. "It would be great to have gender equity in all positions, we just don't. We have fewer female direc-tors and fewer Latinos in front of the camera than we did a couple of years ago. So, we're actually going in the wrong direction, even though the perception is that we're doing so great."

Justin Timberlake appeases fans

Justin Timberlake shared a heartfelt message to his fans at his first concert after being arrested for allegedly driving while intoxi-cated in the Hamptons.

"We've been together through ups and downs, lefts and rights. It's been a tough week, but you're here and I'm here, and nothing can change this moment right now," the singer-actor told the Chicago crowd as they erupted in cheers, according to videos shared on X.

Timberlake's Friday tour stop at the United Cen-ter in Chicago, Illinois, was the *Can't Stop the Feel-ing!* singer's first performance since being arrested by local police in Sag Harbour, New York, early Tuesday morning. He was reportedly arraigned on one count of driv-ing while intoxicated before being released without bail.



Travis Kelce joins Taylor Swift onstage, says 'More memories to come'

Travis Kelce has responded to his recent surprise appearance on-stage at Taylor Swift's *Eras Tour* in London on Sunday night, sug-gesting that fans might see more of him in the future.

The memorable moment occurred during Swift's third show at Wembley Stadium on Sunday. Kelce joined Swift onstage during the transition between *The Smallest Man Who Ever Lived* and *I Can Do It With a Broken Heart*, alongside Swift's dancers, Kam Saunders and Jan Ravnik. The trio, dressed in matching suits and top hats, delighted the audience with their performance.

Jackson's son remembers him on his 15th death anniversary

Michael Jackson died on June 25, 2009, after he went into car-diac arrest in Los Angeles. He was 50.

Prince Jackson, his son, remem-bers his late father on the 15th anniver-sary of the pop star's death. The 27-year-old took to his Instagram Story on Tuesday to post a photo from his father's 1993 Super Bowl XXVII Halftime Show at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, where he performed *Heal the World*.

He wrote, "Miss you pops. The world felt better with you in it."



COMING SOON

DESPICABLE ME 4

In the first *Despicable Me* movie in seven years, Gru, the world's favourite supervillain-turned-anti-villain League-



agent, returns for an ex-citing, bold new era of Minions mayhem in Illu-mination's *Despicable Me 4*.

Genre: Action. **Starring:** Kristen Wiig, Steve Carell, Pierre Coffin, Will Ferrell
Language: English.
Release Date: July 4



Sonakshi Sinha weds
Zaheer Iqbal

Sonakshi Sinha's wedding is the stuff made of fairytales. After seven years of dating, the Heeramani actress tied the knot with Za-heer Iqbal. Sonakshi Sinha's wedding outfit sarees have been the talk of the town, from her ivory vintage saree to the red Banarasi brocade silk piece. Sonakshi Sinha is the perfect bridal inspiration for girls who want to keep it classic for their big day. Sinha's look was compared to Anushka Sharma's Delhi wedding reception look because the styling of the two Banarasi sarees was very similar. But there is a huge difference in the price point. Sonakshi's look is ac-tually affordable for any bride-to-be who wants to recreate the Bollywood diva look.

BOLLYWOOD MOVIE REVIEW:
CHANDU CHAMPION
Genre: Biopic, sports drama
Starring: Starring: Kartik Aaryan, Vijay Raaz, Bhuvan Arora

Kartik Aaryan has come of age with *Chandu Champion* - a movie valued not so much for its storyline but for the great acting skills and screen presence of this 'loverboy' who managed to shake off that tag as well as display a good, athletic physique, a pre-requisite for this sports biopic.

Chandu Champion is a Hindi-language biographical sports drama film written and directed by Kabir Khan and produced by Sajid Nadiadwala. It profiles the life of Murlikant Petkar, India's first Paralympic swimming medal winner who fell by the wayside despite his Herculean struggles and achievements.

The movie begins with a scene where an aged Murlikant Petkar arrives at a local police station, saying that he wants to file a complaint against the President of India for not being awarded the Arjuna Award for his achievements. Though, this seemed a bit juvenile, it forms the premise for a flashback of events from the life of this sports personality.



TRAMP TO CHAMP

Set in1952, Murlikant grows up in a small village called Peth Islampur in Ma-harashtra. At a young age, he develops the ambition to win an Olympic gold medal for India, for which he is mocked and made fun of by his classmates and non-support-ive father. Events lead him to run away from home and join the Indian Army Corps of EME, where he eventually gets selected and trained as a boxer.

Murli represents India in boxing at the International Services Sports Meet 1964 in Tokyo, where he does well, but loses in the final round. Disappointed at his losing, in spite of his potential, his coach Tiger Ali (Vijay Raaz - the talented yet bit-part vil-lain you see here and there in many films) refuses to train him further.

In 1965 their unit is involved in the Indo-Pakistani war, in which their camp comes

under air attack. He is injured severely, with a bullet injuring his spine, rendering him a paraplegic and is admitted to an in-firmary for war wounded, where, he gives up on his dream of winning an Olympic medal.

However, in1972, his former coach Tiger Ali visits him in the infirmary and in-spires him to compete in the Paralympics. He trains hard and qualifies for the 1972 Summer Paralympics in the 50m freestyle swimming event. There is a sudden turn of events to dishearten him further but his never-say-die attitude gets him closer to his goal.

It is commendable that Aaryan carries the entire film on his shoulders, and it has comfortably crossed then Rs500mn mark, a great stride in his career. Also, the young actor is now poised to attract more meaty roles in future, rather than the usual sim-pleton lover that he has been playing in a string of films with other hopefuls over the years.

The movie has its moments of subtle humour and some touching, tear-jerking scenes. And don't miss the army buddies song-and-dance sequence in the first half which punctuates the sombre mood of the film with some unusual glee. If you let this one pass, wondering why there had been no huge Eid releases this time round, you were mistaken. Go watch it!

Rating ★★★★★

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