



UNMANNED AIRCRAFT TO TRANSFORM LOGISTICS

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman National Transport Company Mwasalat is working to revolutionise aerial logistics networks in Oman by collaborating with two American companies involved in managing and operating vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) aircraft.

Mwasalat signed an agreement on July 17 to operate up to 25 uncrewed air vehicles called Laila developed by sustainable aviation specialist Odys Aviation.

In another development, the multinational conglomerate Honeywell and Odys Aviation signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) last week to collaborate on the design of new ground control stations to support rollout of the latter's hybrid VTOL aircraft in Oman and the wider Middle East and Pacific.

Under the terms of the MoU, Honeywell will provide a ground control station for uncrewed aerial system operations, supporting Odys Aviation's uncrewed air vehicle Laila. Pilot programmes using Laila and the new ground stations are expected to kick off in 2025.

Laila is designed in multiple configurations to deliver cargo. With a 370km range, it is ideal to



Oman is laying meaningful groundwork to becoming a leader in this exciting new age of aviation

BADER AL NADABI

support pipeline inspections, leak detection, geological surveys, maritime operations and logistics services, including the delivery of time-critical goods.

The companies will collaborate to launch initial pilot programmes on unpopulated and defined routes with pre-production aircraft in 2025.

Both companies intend to work closely with Mwasalat to roll out aerial logistics programmes in Oman.

Honeywell's ground control station, which can be scaled to meet the needs of any VTOL platform, enables remote pilots to manage multiple vehicles simultaneously, over long distances and without direct visual contact. In addition, several advanced automation functionalities such as traffic awareness, contingency management and ground-based detect-and-avoid help reduce pilot workload.

According to Bader al Nadabi, CEO, Mwasalat is excited to be pushing the boundaries of sustainable aviation and working with companies like Honeywell and Odys Aviation to bring the region closer to rolling out operations.

"Together with the proven experience of Honeywell and the technological innovation of Odys Aviation, Oman is laying meaningful groundwork to becoming a leader in this exciting new age of aviation, and as a leading company in providing transportation to Oman, we're excited to be at the forefront of this revolution," Nadabi said.

David Shilliday, Vice-President of Advanced Air Mobility at Honeywell Aerospace Technologies, noted that with companies developing uncrewed vehicles, safe operations from a remote environment is becoming critical. "Our planned collaboration with Odys Aviation will represent a significant milestone, moving our innovative solutions from testing to real-life scenarios."

James Dorris, CEO and Co-founder of Odys Aviation, informed that Honeywell shares his company's belief that the key to commercialising new aircraft technologies and moving from R&D to market lies in partnerships. "Honeywell has shown extensive leadership in the sustainable aviation space, and we're excited to be working hand-in-hand with their world-class team to deliver on the promise of advanced aerospace technologies as soon as next year."

Oman enhances efforts against human trafficking

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman will join the global community on Tuesday in observing World Day Against Trafficking in Persons. The sultanate is actively combating human trafficking and was among the first countries to enact specific legislation - known as the Anti-Trafficking Law - addressing this crime.

On the occasion, Sheikh Humaid bin Ali al Maani, Head of Global Affairs Department at Foreign Ministry, said, "Oman's interest in promoting a culture of human rights and raising awareness about challenges and crimes that undermine human dignity stems not only from international commitments but also from our religious and national duties rooted in Omani values and identity."

Maani highlighted the fact that Oman has established national laws to combat human trafficking and has ratified and joined numerous international agreements, charters, instruments and protocols. These agreements, which address the exploitation of individuals, especially women and children, have been integrated into local laws to ensure effective implementation.

Human trafficking is recognised as a grave crime that threatens human security, necessitating international cooperation



Oman's interest in promoting human rights stems from our religious and national duties rooted in Omani values and identity

SHEIKH HUMAID AL MAANI

to combat it. Maani emphasised the need for a clear strategy that addresses the nature and severity of the crime, which is contrary to human nature and the teachings of Islamic law and other religious doctrines that sanctify the human body and forbid its violation.

Maani also addressed the significant role of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking in Oman. It works to mitigate the problem and provides protection and support to victims. It has established a shelter - Dar al Wifaq - which offers various services to human trafficking victims, including psychological, social, health and legal support.

7mn passengers transit Oman's airports

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The number of passengers travelling through Oman's airports increased 11.9% in the first half of 2024 to 7,074,854 flying in 53,316 flights. This compares to 6,322,152 passengers on 49,013 flights in the same period in 2023.

Data from National Centre for Statistics and Information indicates that Muscat International Airport saw 6.39mn passengers in 2024 till the end of June - up 11.8% from the same period in 2023 - on 48,052 flights, up 8.7%.

Salalah Airport recorded 628,951 passengers, up 10.9% compared to June 2023; the number of flights increased 7.3% to 4,688. Of these, 2,475 were international flights carrying 306,989 passengers and 2,213 domestic carrying 321,962 passengers. Sohar Airport handled 29,751 passengers on 268 flights,

while Duqm Airport saw 29,885 passengers on 308 flights.

Indian nationals - 185,389 passengers - were the highest in number at Muscat International Airport at the end of June 2024. Of these, 73,762 were arrivals and 111,627 departures. Omani nationals were the second highest with 131,108 passengers, including 57,585 arrivals and 73,523 departures. Pakistani nationals accounted for 52,925 passengers - 26,152 arrivals and 26,773 departures.

Airports in Oman are projected to host over 16mn passengers by the end of 2024, according to Sheikh Ayman bin Ahmed al Hosani, CEO of Oman Airports. This announcement was made at Arabian Travel Market in Dubai in May.

He informed of Oman Airports' goal to reach the pre-pandemic passenger count of 16mn by year-end and described the hospitality of Omani people as a key attraction for tourists.



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'Promising future for Sri Lanka-Oman ties'



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Lebanon's Hassan beats Eubanks, creates history

8 hurt, including children, in UK stabbing

London, UK - At least eight people, some of them children, were injured in stabbings in Southport, England on Monday. Police said they had detained a man and seized a knife.

Merseyside police said they responded to a 'major incident' at a property in the seaside town, where there were 'a number of reported casualties', but said there was no wider threat to the public.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer called the attack "horrendous and deeply shocking".

The injured were taken to local hospitals, including a children's hospital.

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Al Rifaa

4mn mangrove plantation begins in two governorates

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Environment Authority (EA) started a campaign to plant 4mn mangrove seeds in Khor Shinas in North Batinah and Khor Ghawi in Al Wusta on Monday.

The campaign will continue for 14 days to mark International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem – celebrated on July 26 - and is part of a national drive to plant 10mn indigenous trees.

EA planted 2mn mangrove seeds in North Batinah, South Sharqiyah and Al Wusta last year by August.

This plantation campaign aligned with EA's ambitious plan to plant 10mn indigenous trees in a ten year period that started in January 2020, underlining a commitment to bolster coastal wetland ecosystems and achieve national conservation objectives.

WORLD
MANGROVE
DAY



In another development, EA signed a contract with MSA Green Projects Company in October 2023 to plant 100mn mangrove trees in four years. As part of this project, 20,000 hectares of land – including artificial lakes - in Al Wusta will be transformed into mangrove habitats.

Once completed, the project is estimated to eliminate 14mn tonnes of CO2 and generate US\$150mn through carbon credit certificates, according to EA.

Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Amri, Chairman of EA, informed that the project aligns with Oman Vision 2040. It supports efforts to conserve ecosystems and safeguard wildlife, while enhancing Oman's environmental indicators at both national and international levels. The project also contributes to the country's planned transition to carbon neutrality by 2050.

Mangrove and tidal marsh ecosystems are notable for their ability to capture and store significant volumes of coastal blue carbon, contributing to climate change mitigation.

Amri added that mangroves play an essential role in regional ecosystems, offering vital protection against beach erosion and maintaining ecological balance.

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INTERVIEW

H E AHAMED LEBBE SABARULLAH KHAN, AMBASSADOR OF SRI LANKA

Promising future for
Sri Lanka-Oman ties

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman and Sri Lanka share long-standing relations in culture, business and knowledge, having maintained a cordial, economically beneficial and culturally vibrant bond.

The two nations have continued to strengthen relations in recent times through diplomatic dialogue and collaboration in various fields such as energy, infrastructure, sports, food and art.

H E Ahamed Lebbe Sabarullah Khan, Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Oman, shared insights into the ties and future plans between the two countries, including trade and business. Excerpts from an exclusive interview -



(V K Shafeer)

“ Sri Lanka and Oman have always enjoyed very cordial relations at all levels. Omani traders and seafarers have visited Sri Lanka since ancient times. Sri Lanka was a port of call for the famous Omani dhow *Jewel of Muscat* during its voyage to East Asia in the 19th century

H E Ahamed Lebbe Sabarullah Khan

How many visas were issued to Omanis to travel to Sri Lanka last year? What were the main purpose of visits?

Omani nationals can obtain Sri Lankan visas online. Currently, the visa is issued at srilankaevisa.lk. Last year, nearly 2,500 Omani nationals visited Sri Lanka for tourism, with general sightseeing and Ayurvedic rejuvenation being major purposes. Sri Lanka is rated one of the top five tourism destinations by leading publications such as Forbes, Fortune and India Today. We expect more Omani nationals as well as expatriates in Oman will visit Sri Lanka this year for various activities such as wellness, adventure, watersports and motorsports tourism.

How does the Sri Lankan embassy assist runaway maids?

Employers spend large sums of money to recruit female domestic workers, while the latter expect a safe workplace. When they face unexpected difficulties such as overwork, delayed salaries, and other exploitations, they tend to run away from their workplaces. When they come to the embassy seeking assistance, they are referred to the concerned authorities or registered recruitment agencies to find amicable solutions. We also arrange temporary shelters, medical treatment, counselling and repatriation costs on a case-by-case basis.

Are there any plans to upgrade Sri Lanka School Muscat?

The school was started as a community initiative to serve Sri Lankan children in Muscat. In compliance with local regulations, it currently functions as an international school managed by the parents. Its student enrolment has reached full capacity with increasing requests for admission from not only Sri Lankans but also other nationals. The school board of management is currently considering expansion of infrastructure to increase student capacity.

Which sectors have seen new investments and business exchanges?

Sri Lankan small and medium en-

trepreneurs positively view Oman for business joint ventures and investments due to its geographical location, ease of doing business and free trade agreements. A Sri Lankan manufacturer of rubber gloves is currently setting up a new facility in Oman, while an upcoming hospitality company is working on setting up tourist resorts in Jabal Akhdar. Omani investors have entered the Sri Lankan market for garment manufacturing, boat building and real estate development.

What is the status of people-to-people relations between the two countries?

Sri Lanka and Oman have always enjoyed very cordial relations at all levels. Omani traders and seafarers have visited Sri Lanka since ancient times. Sri Lanka was a port of call for the famous Omani dhow *Jewel of Muscat* during its voyage to East Asia in the 19th century. A variant of Omani halwa is fondly known as ‘Muscat’ in Sri Lanka. Both countries have evolving cinema industries that provide room for future collaboration.

'Pass by Duqm' campaign unwraps huge discounts

Duqm - In its second edition, the 'Pass by Duqm' campaign has come up with exclusive discounts up to 40% on a number of hotels and cafés in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

The region has witnessed an upsurge in visitors with the start of khareef season, driving up demand for restaurants, hotels, beaches and other service amenities in Duqm.

The promotional campaign, which coincides with the khareef season, focuses on encouraging

visitors to and from the Governorate of Dhofar to visit Duqm.

The aim is to boost internal tourism and highlight the tourist attractions that the wilayat of Duqm offers as a stopover between the north and south of Oman, besides being a prominent spot blessed with sea link and abundant natural beauty.

The campaign offers a variety of savings and promotions on numerous hotel amenities, cafés and restaurants in SEZAD. The campaign, launched on July 18,



will run until September.

As part of the campaign's activities, several contests with exclusive prizes are being planned. The authorities have decided to hold a Best Picture Competition for amateur photographers to showcase Duqm's natural beauty, genuine heritage, culture, and way of life. The campaign aims to make visitors aware about its goals, activities and offers by re-

leasing promotional publications across multiple media platforms.

'Pass by Duqm' campaign is part of SEZAD management's efforts to spread more information about the zone and its tourist spots to expand its revenue generation model.

Tourism is developing big time in Duqm with the latest addition of three more hotels this year. This addition brings the total number of hotel options to 15, including four-star establishments.

Oman Met predicts imminent relief amid intense heatwave

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman has once again come in the grip of a heatwave, with temperatures exceeding 49°C. On Sunday, Oman Meteorology recorded a high of 49.2°C in Bidiayah, marking the highest temperature in the last few days.

During the past week, mercury levels ranged between 46°C to 47°C. However, the temperature crossed the 49°C mark again on Sunday.

Large parts of Oman continue to witness high temperatures. On Sunday, Jalan Bani Hassan and Al Kamil Wa'al Wafi recorded a high of 48.6°C, Al Qabil experienced 48.5°C, followed by Fahud and Zamaim at 48.1°C, while Dima Wa Taien and Mudhaibi recorded 48°C.

The lowest temperature recorded on Sunday was 21.9°C in Dalkhut.

Temperatures, however, are expected to decrease, with Oman MET forecasting a low-pressure system starting on



Tuesday.

In a statement, MET said the latest forecasts and analyses from the National Multi Hazard Early Warning System indicate that Oman's atmosphere will be impacted by an extension of a low-pressure system from Tuesday evening and lasting until August 2.

'During this period, cloud cover is anticipated over most governorates. There is a likelihood of scattered rains of varying intensity, which may occasionally be accompanied by thunderstorms,' MET stated.



MoL begins conference on institutional risks

Muscat - The Ministry of Labour (MoU) on Monday started a two-day meeting on risk management at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC), under the auspices of H E Dr Nasser Rashid al Ma'awali, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy.

The Corporate Risk Management Conference brought together a large number of CEOs and senior heads of various units from the State's Administrative Apparatus and the private sec-

tor. Officials heading risk management departments and employees of various offices tasked with the implementation of Oman Vision 2040, specialised oil sector executives and other departments concerned were also seen attending the conference, which focuses on the latest trends and challenges in the field of risk management.

It seeks to draw a roadmap to enhance related skills and expanding common understanding of risk management.

Omani startup connects hospitality sector businesses

Muscat - An Omani startup is helping connect suppliers and businesses in the hospitality sector, including hotels, restaurants and cafés/catering (HORECA).

Bon Plus seeks to streamline communication and cooperation among business owners and suppliers, notably by providing options for managing orders and contracts through its app.

Bon Plus is supported by the Programme for Omani Promising Startups (POPS) and supervised by Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises (ASMED).

Qais Mohammed al Jidyani,

CEO of Bon Plus, informed that the app serves 40 suppliers and more than 450 customers. "The company has embarked on attracting more subscribers by improving its services, providing promotional offers and enhancing digital marketing efforts."

Bon Plus devises solutions for customer-tailored needs and employs artificial intelligence to analyse data and provide personalised recommendations.

It is currently expanding the scope of services on the platform to cover other areas in the hospitality sector.



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Directors' Report

Dear Shareholders,
On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the interim unaudited Financial Statements for the six-month period ended 30 June 2024.

Financial Performance Highlights

	Jan-Jun 2024 RO '000	Jan-Jun 2023 RO '000	Increase RO '000	Increase %
Sales	248,596	239,048	9,548	4%
Cost of Sales	(235,228)	(225,925)	9,303	4%
Gross profit	13,368	13,123	245	2%
Other income	3,356	3,065	291	9%
Total expenses	(13,634)	(13,120)	514	4%
Net profit after tax	3,090	3,068	22	1%
Earnings per share (RO)	0.045	0.044	0.001	1%

- Total revenue grew by 4% i.e. by RO 10 million from RO 239 million in Jan-Jun 2023 to RO 249 million during Jan-Jun 2024, on account of increase in sales volume by 5%.
- Other Income grew by 9%, reaching RO 3.4 million in the first half of 2024 compared to RO 3.1 million in the first half of 2023, mainly due to an increase in Non-Fuel Revenues.
- Net profit during the period grew to RO 3.1 million, an increase by 1% compared to the corresponding period in 2023, primarily driven by the growth in sales volume.

Recognition of "One of Oman's Strongest Brands"
As an acknowledgment of our unwavering commitment to delivering excellence in our products and services, your Company was bestowed with the award of **"One of Oman's Strongest Brands"** in May 2024, in an annual survey conducted by Alam Al-Iktisaad magazine in collaboration with the Arabian Research Bureau (ARB).

Market Segments Performance:
Your Company's strategy focuses on enhancing its brand and enriching customer experiences through successful marketing campaigns, strong customer partnerships, and ongoing investments in technology to deliver innovative products and services.

During the period from January to June 2024, sales volume increased by 5%, indicating a growing demand for the Company's products and services, as summarised below:

- Retail Segment sales volume has gone up by 6%
- Commercial Segment sales volume has increased by 6%
- Aviation Segment sales volume has decreased by 2%
- Lubricants Segment sales have increased by 13%

1) Retail Segment
During the first half of 2024, the Retail Segment, which represents 75% of the Company's total sales volume, demonstrated its crucial role as a primary revenue driver by achieving a 6% increase in sales volume. This growth reflects the Company's successful strategy in maintaining customer satisfaction and loyalty through various value-added programs.

New milestone "250 Fuel stations"
During the period three more new fuel stations were opened, bringing the total retail network to 250 across the Sultanate, while four existing stations were renovated as part of the Company's development plan. The Company remains committed to improving and expanding its network to enhance the customer experience. Several new stations, convenience stores, and service centers are nearing completion and will soon offer exceptional services and a unique customer experience.

2) Commercial Segment
During this period, the Commercial Segment, which represents bulk sales, experienced a 6% increase in sales volume, reflecting improvement despite challenges from some major customers shifting to gas as an alternative energy source. Despite intense competition, positive growth indicators are evident, supported by increased government spending and foreign investments in infrastructure projects. These factors are expected to drive growth and enhance business activity. The Company is capitalizing on these opportunities by implementing strategies to leverage current economic trends and improve its market competitiveness.

3) Aviation segment
In the first half of 2024, the Aviation Segment faced challenges due to a 2% decrease in sales volume, primarily caused by a reduction in demand from a key customer. Despite this, the Company mitigated the impact by increasing sales to other customers.

4) Lubricant Segment
The Lubricant Segment experienced a significant increase in sales volume by 13% compared to the same period last year, driven by the positive response to the new brand "AMPRO" and the Company's success in expanding its customer base through strategies to access new channels.

5) Non-Fuel Retail Segment
In line with our strategic direction to continue expanding and diversifying our activities to maintain sustainable growth and keep pace with changes in the business environment, Your Company has unveiled two major projects of high national importance viz., **"Ghubrah Front project"** in association with Saud Bahwan Group and **"Al Maha Walk"** in association with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MoCSY), which are aimed to provide enriching experiences for the community and visitors, representing an important addition to the attractions in Muscat Governorate and in the Sultanate of Oman.

"Al Maha Plus" App is now live
Continuing our initiatives to digitalize our offerings, the Company launched the new smart mobile application "Al Maha Plus" in May 2024. The application enhances user experience with easy transactions, loyalty rewards, and convenient service locators. It introduces a fresh, user-friendly interface, comprehensive tools, and new features that make managing fuel and rewards effortless.

Quality, Health, Safety and Environment (QHSE)
The Company is dedicated to the highest standards of QHSE, emphasizing sustainable development and a safe working environment. Ensuring the health and safety of customers and the community is a top priority. Compliance with QHSE regulations is regularly monitored and reviewed across all units and departments. During this period, comprehensive audits were conducted at various offices, sites, and projects. Additionally, specialized training programs were organized to enhance employee awareness and competence in QHSE.

Corporate Social Responsibility
The Company is committed to social responsibility, focusing on education, health, the environment, and local community development. In the first half of 2024, the Company launched several initiatives, including support for charitable institutions and nonprofit organizations, demonstrating its role as an active and responsible community member. These efforts aim to provide meaningful support tailored to the needs of the communities it serves, ensuring a direct positive impact on society.

Future Outlook
Economic trends in the Sultanate forecast a bright future. The government is steadfast in implementing the Tenth Five-Year Development Plan and Oman Vision 2040, aiming at economic diversification, enhancing the private sector's role, and increasing employment opportunities for Omanis. The Government is expected to continue improving the investment environment and supporting SMEs as key growth drivers. Additionally, major infrastructure projects and digital transformation initiatives are anticipated to boost economic growth effectively.

As the year's first half concludes, the Company's outlook for 2024 remains cautiously optimistic. The Company is committed to supporting national economic objectives, sustainable development, and enhancing prosperity through a strategic approach that leverages opportunities and addresses economic challenges.

Acknowledgment
On behalf of the Board of Directors and executive management, I take this opportunity to express our most sincere gratitude and loyalty to **His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq** and his efforts toward a prosperous Oman.

We thank the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, OQ Refineries, our shareholders, customers, and officials of the Financial Services Authority, the Muscat Stock Exchange, and Muscat Clearing & Depository Company for their valuable support and co-operation. We also appreciate the dedicated and committed service of our staff members.

Dr. Saif Salim Saif Al-Harathi
Chairman
28 July 2024

INTERIM CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AT 30 JUNE 2024

	30 June 2024 RO'000 (Unaudited)	31 December 2023 RO'000 (Audited)
ASSETS		
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	29,801	29,428
Right-of-use asset	6,261	6,296
Investment properties	423	447
Contract assets	2,931	2,643
Deferred tax assets	2,855	2,776
	42,271	41,590
Current assets		
Inventories	4,127	4,013
Trade and other receivables	79,258	76,560
Contract assets	1,492	1,952
Short term deposits	2,000	-
Bank balances and cash	21,925	42,389
	108,802	124,914
TOTAL ASSETS	151,073	166,504
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Equity		
Share capital	6,900	6,900
Legal reserve	2,300	2,300
Special reserve	2,104	2,104
Retained earnings	33,552	36,672
Total equity	44,856	47,976
LIABILITIES		
Non-current liabilities		
Lease liabilities	5,688	6,152
Employees' end of service benefits	259	251
	5,947	6,403
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	48,235	49,192
Short term borrowings	48,817	59,559
Lease liabilities	1,184	659
Contract liabilities	1,444	1,444
Income tax payable	590	1,271
	100,270	112,125
Total liabilities	106,217	118,528
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	151,073	166,504
Net assets per share (RO)	0.650	0.695

INTERIM CONDENSED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE SIX MONTHS PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

	Six months ended 30 June 2024 RO '000 (Unaudited)	2023 RO '000 (Unaudited)	Three months ended 30 June 2024 RO '000 (Unaudited)	2023 RO '000 (Unaudited)
Revenue	248,596	239,048	127,527	118,177
Cost of sales	(235,228)	(225,925)	(120,342)	(111,505)
Gross Profit	13,368	13,123	7,185	6,672
Other Operating Income	3,356	3,065	1,729	1,574
Operating and administration expenses	(12,354)	(12,075)	(6,367)	(6,170)
Operating Profit	4,370	4,113	2,547	2,076
Finance costs	(1,307)	(1,191)	(719)	(630)
Finance Income	492	694	186	358
Profit before income tax	3,555	3,616	2,014	1,804
Income tax expense	(465)	(548)	(234)	(340)
Profit and total comprehensive income for the period	3,090	3,068	1,780	1,464
Basic and diluted earnings per share (RO)	0.045	0.044	0.026	0.021

Note:
The complete report is available in Muscat Stock Exchange website and Company's website.

The complete report will be sent to any shareholder who requests them either in Arabic or English as required within 7 days of receipt of the request.

The request should be sent to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at the above mentioned address.



Turbulence brewing for global markets as rate decisions in focus



Tina Teng

This week will be marked by interest rate decisions from three major central banks: the Bank of England (BOE), the US Federal Reserve (Fed), and the Bank of Japan (BOJ). Additionally, inflation readings from the euro area will be in the region's spotlight. Global stock markets experienced a sharp sell-off last week as company earnings weighed on sentiment, while investors assessed central banks' policy paths. This week, market turbulence may continue amid critical central banks' rate decisions from the BOE, the Fed, and the BOJ.

Earnings season will continue with influential tech companies, including Microsoft and Meta Platforms. In Europe, major energy companies, including Shell and BP, are also set to report their quarterly results.

Europe

The July flash consumer price index (CPI) for the euro area will be seen as the most influential economic indicator for the region, as the data is the critical gauge for the European Central

Bank (ECB) to decide on its interest rate. Annual inflation in the euro area cooled to 2.5% in June from 2.6% in the previous month. However, the data remained above the ECB's target level of 2% due to high prices in the services sector. Consensus suggests that annual inflation will cool further to 2.4% in July. In the UK, the BOE is set to decide on the interest rate, a critical event for the British stock markets and the pound. In June, inflation returned to the BOE's target of 2%. However, the reading was higher than expected, which was expected to delay the central bank's decision on a rate cut in August.

The US

The Fed's policy meeting remains a critical event for Wall Street as well as the global markets. The reserve bank is widely expected to keep the interest rate on hold at 5.5% at this meeting but will most likely deliver a cut in September. Inflation in the country cooled to 3.3% in June, which was cooler than expected, further strengthening the odds for the Fed to commence the first rate cut since 2020.

However, any more hawkish-than-expected rhetoric would rattle the markets. Moreover, the US earnings season is expected to continue driving market volatilities with major tech giant's quarterly results. Microsoft and Meta Platforms are scheduled to report quarterly performance on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Asia Pacific

The BOJ's monetary policy is considered a critical event for Asia. Analysts expect the bank to raise its policy rate for the second time and taper bond purchases. In March, the BOJ implemented its first rate hike since 2007 and ended the negative rate regime that had been in place since 2016. China is poised to release its manufacturing and non-manufacturing Purchasing Manager Index (PMIs) for June. Manufacturing activities contracted for the second consecutive month in June, evidencing the sluggish economic recovery in the country. Consensus forecasts that manufacturing PMI will remain contracted in July. (Source: Euronews.com)

Oil up over fears of widening Middle East conflict

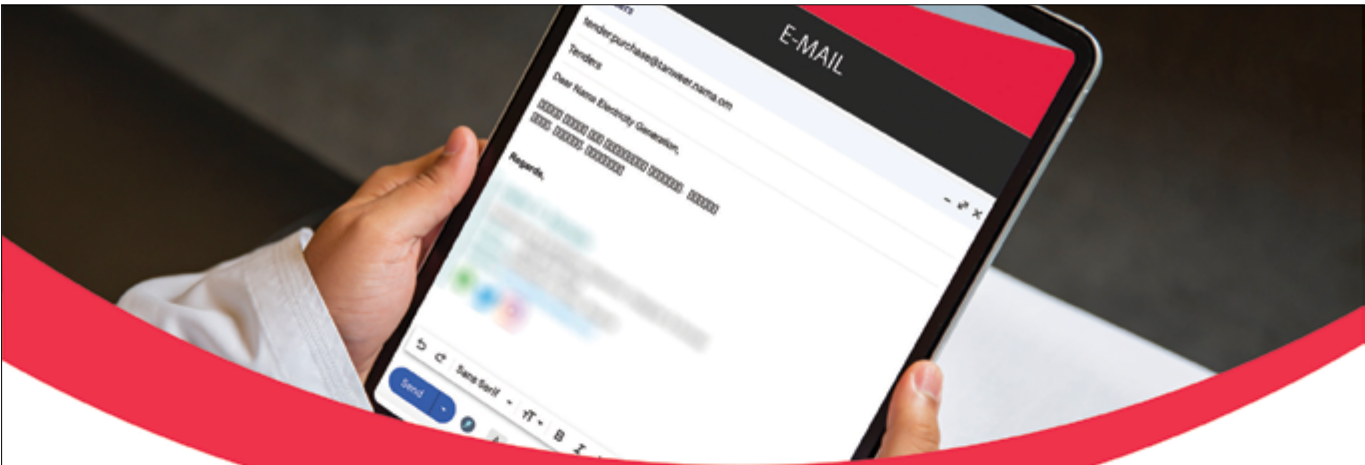
London, UK - Oil prices increased on Monday over fears of a widening conflict in the oil-rich Middle East. International benchmark Brent crude traded at \$80.67 per barrel in morning trade in London, an increase of 0.49% from the closing price of \$80.28 per barrel in the previous trading session. The US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) traded at \$77.50 per barrel at the same time, a 0.44% rise from the previous session that closed at \$77.16 per barrel. Both benchmarks started the week with upward movements following an attack in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. Despite cease-fire negotiations, escalating geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, home to a vast majority of global oil reserves, increases supply risk in the markets. On Saturday, a missile attack was carried out on a football field in the town of Majdal Shams in the occupied Golan Heights, killing 12 people. Israel blames Hezbollah for the attack, but the Lebanese group denied playing any role. Fear over a full-blown war between Israel and Hezbollah has grown amid an exchange of cross-border attacks between



the two sides. The escalation comes against the backdrop of a deadly Israeli onslaught on Gaza which resulted in the death of more than 39,300 people since last October. Meanwhile, negotiations regarding the cease-fire in Gaza and the exchange of prisoners between Hamas and Israel are currently stalled after the postponement of the Israeli delegation's visit to next week, which was initially scheduled for Thursday. However, gains were weak as the outlook for crude demand in the world's largest crude oil importer remained bleak. Prices continue to be depressed by concerns about demand in China as it grapples with a slowing economic recovery. Anadolu Agency

China's industrial profits rise 3.5%

Beijing, China - Profits of China's major industrial firms increased 3.5% year-on-year in the first six months of this year, up from the 3.4% increase recorded in the first five months, official data showed on Saturday. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported that industrial profits rose by 3.6% year-on-year in June alone, an increase of 2.9 percentage points from May. NBS statistician Yu Weining said China's industrial sector witnessed a steady profit recovery in the first half of 2024, bolstered by the effective implementation of various macroeconomic policies. In breakdown, the rapid advancement of high-end, intelligent, and green manufacturing led to a 6.6% year-on-year profit growth in the equipment manufacturing sector in the first half of the year, according to the NBS. Despite the recovery, Yu highlighted that insufficient domestic demand continued to constrain improvements in corporate profits, while a complex international environment increased operational pressures on companies. The foundation for industrial profit recovery still needs to be consolidated. Looking ahead, Yu said efforts will focus on expanding domestic demand, developing new quality productive forces and fostering new growth drivers to underpin the recovery of the industrial economy. Xinhua



TENDERS

The Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.A.O.C) invites the specialized companies to participate and submit their best offers for the tenders below:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Grade	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Last Date for Proposal Submission
RFP 03/ NEGC/2024	Providing Information Technology Services for Nama Electricity Generation Company HQ	Specialist Companies	5 August 2024	11 August 2024
RFP 04/ NEGC/2024	Supply, Delivery, Installation, Configuration, Testing of Access Control System, IP Surveillance System, Conference System, Room Scheduling System & TV with Accessories for Nama Electricity Generation Company HQ	Specialist Companies	5 August 2024	11 August 2024
RFP 05/ NEGC/2024	Providing Auction Services for Nama Electricity Generation Assets	Specialist Companies	5 August 2024	11 August 2024
RFP 06/ NEGC/2024	Providing Multi-Services for the Corporate Department for Nama Generation Company- Head Office	Specialist Companies	5 August 2024	11 August 2024

- Collection of Tender:** Interested and specialized companies and establishments registered with the Rural Areas Electricity Company, Tender Board may obtain the tender documents via email: (tender.purchase@tanweer.nama.om) during the working days between 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM.
- Offers Submission:** Bids should be submitted in three separate sealed envelopes (Pre-Qualification, Technical & Financial) with red wax addressed to the **Chairman of Procurement Committee**, Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.A.O.C) marked with tender number and name. No indication or any reference to bidders' identity is permitted on the envelope.
- Submission Location:** Bids should be dropped in the tender box at the main office of the Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.A.O.C) at Wilayat Al Seeb, no later than 12:00 PM on the last date of submission.
- Site visit:** For bidders requesting site visits for tender No. RFP 04 /NEGC/2024, scheduling will occur upon receipt of an official request from bidders.
- Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.A.O.C), without mentioning the reason, is not bound to accept the lowest or any other tender.



Nama Electricity Generation
Al Maabilah, Al Seeb
P.O Box 1166, Post Code 113, Sultanate of Oman.
Phone Number: +968 91766576



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شركة الخدمات المالية ش.م.ع.ع FINANCIAL SERVICES COMPANY SAOG



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dear Shareholders

After compliments,

I am pleased to present to you the unaudited financial results as on 30th June 2024. The MSX – 30 Index decreased by 1.6% compared to the same period last year. Trading volumes increased by 31% compared to the same period last year 2023.

Revenues :-

Total operating revenue reached at RO 265,036 (Omani Rials Two Hundred & Sixty-Five Thousand & Thirty-Six) compared to RO 167,885 (Omani Rials One Hundred & Sixty-Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty-Five) for the same period last year, increase of 58%.

Net Profits :-

The total expenses amounted to RO 256,005 (Omani Rials Two Hundred & Fifty -Six Thousand & Fife) compared to RO 284,287 (Omani Rials Two Hundred & Eighty -Four Thousand Tow Hundred Eighty- Seven) in the same period last year 2023, a decrease of 10%. The Company Profit RO 9,031 (Omani Rials Nine Thousand & Thirty-One) compared to a Loss of RO 116,402 in the same period last year.

Shareholders' Equity:-

Shareholders' equity amounted to RO. 3,077,163 (Omani Rials Three Million & Seventy-Seven Thousand One Hundred & Sixty-Three) compared to RO. 3,164,701 (Omani Rials Three Million One Hundred Sixty-Four Thousand Seven Hundred & One) for the corresponding period last year, a decrease of 3%. The book value per share was RO 0.154 as on 30th June 2024.

Dear Shareholders,

Finally, we ask Almighty Allah to protect His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, may Almighty Allah protect and preserve him, and to preserve the Omani people and perpetuate the blessing of security and safety.

Omar bin Ahmed bin Abdullah Mahfoodh Al-Sheikh
Chairman

UNAUDITED INTERIM BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE 2024

	30 June 2024 RO	30 June 2023 RO
ASSETS		
Cash in hand and at bank	763,513	1,474,639
Investments	1,785,066	1,705,235
Other receivables	1,055,336	612,515
Property and equipment	24,184	21,411
Investments Properties	1,770,000	1,790,000
Total assets	5,398,099	5,604,800
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Equity		
Share capital	2,000,000	2,000,000
value reserve	702,721	605,591
Reserve of change in buildings value	862,859	862,859
(Accumulated losses)/retained earnings	(488,417)	(303,749)
Total equity	3,077,163	3,164,701
LIABILITIES		
Bank overdraft	961,908	906,524
Accounts payable	1,340,997	1,506,872
Accruals and other liabilities	8,517	18,721
End of service benefits	9,514	7,982
Total liabilities	2,320,936	2,440,099
Total equity and liabilities	5,398,099	5,604,800
Customer securities held in trust	317,723	320,830
Net assets	3,077,164	3,164,701
Net asset value per share	0.154	0.158

UNAUDITED INTERIM INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE SIX MONTHS ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

	30 June 2024 RO	30 June 2023 RO
Income		
Net brokerage commission	156,438	92,328
Dividend and other income	111,086	86,611
Net gain (loss) on sale of investments	10,461	(1,416)
Un realized profit/ loss at fair value through profit or loss	(12,949)	(9,638)
Total	265,036	167,885
Expenses		
Salaries and related costs	(160,700)	(186,059)
Administrative and general expenses	(68,371)	(71,221)
Interest and financial charges	(22,493)	(23,902)
Depreciation	(4,441)	(3,105)
	(256,005)	(284,287)
Profit (Loss) for the period	9,031	(116,402)
Earning (Loss) per share (Baizas)	0.0005	(0.0058)

Khedmah app consolidates leadership position with one million downloads

In a milestone that underscores customer trust and cements its leadership in the electronic payment industry, Oman Investment and Finance Company (OIFC) has reached a record number of one million downloads of its 'Khedmah' mobile application.

This remarkable achievement highlights the excellence of Khedmah's digital solutions and the app's esteemed reputation among its users.

Khedmah is the most trusted electronic payment channel in the Sultanate of Oman. Its latest achievement is a testament to the success of the developments that Khedmah has brought to the electronic payment landscape in the sultanate, a release stated.

The achievement came on the foundation of its commitment to innovation and excellence in providing a seamless and secure digital payment experience.

"We are immensely proud to achieve this great milestone, which reflects the company's progressive approach in pushing the boundaries of innovation to

This milestone reflects our progressive approach in pushing the boundaries of innovation to provide unparalleled digital solutions to our customers

SAID AHMED SAFRAR

provide unparalleled digital solutions to our esteemed customers," said Said Ahmed Safrar, Chief Executive Officer, Oman Investment and Finance Company (OIFC) Khedmah.

"One million downloads of the Khedmah app is a testament to the efforts made by the Khedmah team to elevate the services provided and underlines the company's continuous endeavours to drive the digital transformation journey in the country," he further said.

This success, Safrar said,



would not have been possible without the support and trust of our customers. "We consider this achievement a motivator to set more benchmarks and intensify our efforts to provide digital solutions that keep pace with the latest developments and meet our customers' growing needs."

The Khedmah app features a variety of services, including electricity, water, telecommunications, and internet bill payments. It also offers services such as recharging electricity meters and mobile phones, vehicle insurance, and paying monthly subscriptions for the Social Protection Fund.

Additionally, the app allows inquiries and payment of traffic fines to the Royal Oman Police.

Moreover, customers can buy and recharge entertainment vouchers and access several services, including purchasing remote learning lessons from TutorComp. Customers can also donate to various charitable organisations through the app.

It is worth noting that this year, Khedmah launched its innovative e-wallet, Khedmah Pay,

through the Khedmah app, providing a seamless and secure digital payment experience. The company was awarded the prestigious title of 'Most Powerful Omani Brand' in the 'Electronic Payment' category in recognition of its innovative initiatives in the digital payment scene in the country.

Oman Investments and Finance Company (OIFC) Khedmah has been the leading company in the sultanate in the field of billing and collection for four decades. Khedmah offers a central point for customers to pay all their public service bills through its network of 61 branches, covering various governorates and regions nationwide, in addition to kiosks strategically located across the country. Furthermore, its electronic platforms such as the Khedmah mobile application, website and the pioneering e-wallet, Khedmah Pay, have revolutionised digital payments, further enhancing convenience and accessibility for all.



شركة التغليف المحدودة (ش.م.ع.)

Packaging Co Ltd. (SAOG)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we present the Chairman's Report of Packaging Co Ltd (SAOG) for the Half year ended on 30th June 2024.

The Six month ended with revenue of RO. 4,657,096/- and net profit of RO.44,551/- as against revenue of RO. 5,416,824/- and net profit of RO. 180,142/- In the same period of previous year. The profit before depreciation for the period under review was RO. 347,489/- compared to profit of RO. 483,597/- before depreciation in the same period of previous year.

The Company is facing very stiff competition from local carton manufacturers resulting in lower realization and profit.

Paper prices have started increasing again and may impact on Company's future profitability due to competition.

We would like to place on record our thanks to all our employees for their dedication and hard work.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to all of you for the patience and confidence reposed in the company. We also thank the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Muscat Securities Market for their support.

On behalf of the Board or Directors, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to His Majesty for his vision and growth-oriented policies aimed at bringing about a prosperous national economy.

Chairman of the Board of Directors

Statement of Financial position. Current/non current

Statement of Financials position Consolidated And Separate

	Consolidated 01.01.2024 - 30.06.2024	Acutals Omani Riyal Un audited Consolidated 01.01.2023 - 30.06.2023	Audited Consolidated 31.12.2023
ASSETS			
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	4,695,396	5,185,771	4,921,421
Total non-current assets	4,695,396	5,185,771	4,921,421
CURRENT ASSETS			
Current inventories	1,959,493	3,035,180	2,612,428
Trade and other current receivables	3,620,988	4,358,108	3,650,949
Cash and bank balances	26,408	3,260	26,173
Total current assets other than non current assets or disposal group classified as held for sale or as held for distribution to owners	5,606,889	7,396,548	6,289,550
Total current assets	5,606,889	7,396,548	6,289,550
Total assets	10,302,285	12,582,319	11,210,971
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES			
EQUITY			
Issued capital	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Share premium	90,811	90,811	90,811
Statutory reserve	550,595	539,548	550,595
Other reserves	634,986	634,986	634,986
Retained earnings (accumulated profit (losses))	567,918	604,085	523,367
Total equity attributable to owners of parent	4,844,310	4,869,430	4,799,759
Total Equity	4,844,310	4,869,430	4,799,759
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Non - current Provisions for employees benefits	52,241	31,612	41,686
Total non current provisions	52,241	31,612	41,686
Borrowings non-current	451,132	609,012	530,072
Deferred tax liabilities	256,314	264,216	263,259
Total Non current liabilities	759,687	904,840	835,017
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
CURRENT PROVISIONS			
Trade and other current payables	2,010,950	3,195,621	2,376,797
Borrowing current	2,672,431	3,601,295	3,199,398
Current tax liabilities, current	14,907	11,133	0
Total Current Liabilities other than liabilities included in disposal groups classified as held for sale	4,698,288	6,808,049	5,576,195
Total Liabilities	5,457,975	7,712,889	6,411,212
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	10,302,285	12,582,319	11,210,971
Number of outstanding shares	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Net Assets per share	1.615	1.623	1.600

INTERIM CONDENSED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, 30.06.2024

	Consolidated 01.01.2024 - 30.06.2024	Acutals Omani Riyal Un audited Consolidated 01.01.2023 - 30.06.2023
REVENUE		
Cost of sales	4,657,096	5,416,824
GROSS PROFIT	4,031,401	4,665,736
GROSS PROFIT	625,695	751,088
Other income	76,907	102,222
Other expenses	315,734	310,630
General and administration expenses	224,978	212,545
Selling and distribution expenses	161,890	330,535
PROFIT FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	109,377	118,602
Finance costs	52,513	211,933
Profit(loss)before income tax, continuing operations	7,962	31,791
Income tax expense, continuing operations	44,551	180,142
Net profit/(Loss) for the period	44,551	180,142
PROFIT (LOSS), ATTRIBUTABLE TO		
Profit (loss), attributable to owners of parent	44,551	180,142
Basic earnings (loss) per share from continuing operations	0.018	0.071
Total basic earnings (loss) per share	0.018	0.071

Note: The Complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who request them either in Arabic or English within 7 days of the receipt of the request at the company's address at PO Box No 2818, Ruwi, Postal Code 112, Sultanate of Oman.

Sohar International sees remarkable success in 'summer credit card offer'

Sohar International, Oman's best bank, continues to see success with its Summer Credit Card Offer, thanks to the enthusiastic participation of its credit card customers.

The exclusive offer, featuring a total reward of RO10,000, is designed to bring excitement to the summer season. This limited-time promotion provides customers with the opportunity to win substantial cash prizes while enjoying the convenience and benefits of using their Sohar International credit cards.

Until August 31, every RO10 spent using a Sohar International credit card will earn the customers one entry ticket into a special raffle draw. The more the customers spend, the greater their chances of winning,' the bank stated.

This exciting offer is part of



Sohar International's ongoing commitment to reward and engage with its valued customers. At the end of the promotion, a total of ten lucky winners will be selected, each receiving a cash prize of RO1,000. The raffle draw will take place shortly after the offer period ends, and the win-

ners will be announced through Sohar International's official channels.

"We are delighted to see the great response to our summer offer for our credit cardholders," said Abdul Qadir al Sumali, Chief Retail & Premier Banking Officer at Sohar International.

"Our customers are at the heart of everything we do, and this promotion is a testament to our commitment to providing exceptional value and rewarding their loyalty.

"We encourage all our credit cardholders to take advantage of this opportunity and increase their chances of winning by using their Sohar International credit cards for all their summer purchases."

Sohar International credit cards offer a range of benefits, including no annual fee for life, 0% installment plans, travel benefits including airport lounge access across the world, free Entertainer app, and exclusive discounts at partner merchants. This summer, the added incentive of the raffle draw makes using a Sohar International credit card even more rewarding.

Stellantis completes acquisition of Sopriam

In a strategic move, Stellantis has announced a two-phase acquisition of Sopriam, a subsidiary of the Al Mada group in Morocco.

The initial phase involves immediate majority control, followed by the full acquisition of 100% of shares by early 2025.

Stellantis will now directly handle the import and distribution of its Peugeot, Citroën, and DS Automobiles brands in Morocco, in addition to its existing brands (Fiat, Abarth, Jeep, Alfa Romeo) through its established distribution network.

This capital injection marks a significant step in consolidating Stellantis' presence in Morocco, a journey that began in 2015 under a strategic partnership with the Moroccan government.

French Embassy, Amal al Raisi sign MoU to train one member in Paris

Amal al Raisi - an Omani fashion house that captures the essence of fusing tradition with modernity while honouring Arab roots - has signed a memorandum of understanding with the French Embassy to train one member of the fashion house for two weeks in Paris, France.

The MoU was signed by Oman's fashion icon Amal al Raisi, the founder of the fashion house by her name, and H E Veronique Aulagnon, the Ambassador of France to Oman, at the French Embassy in Muscat on Wednesday.

This partnership marks a pivotal moment for both Amal Al Raisi and The Embassy of France to Oman, combining their respective strengths to create new opportunities for the youth of Oman, a release stated.

The Embassy of France to Oman will be sponsoring one candidate from the Amal Al Raisi Fashion Future Programme for a fully paid two-week internship in Paris with the famous Lebanese designer Rabih Kayrouz at Maison Rabih Kayrouz.



The Fashion Future Programme is a nine-month internship programme conducted by Amal Al Raisi at the Dar Al Aseel Atelier. The programme is powered by Sohar International following a MoU signed by both parties at the Authentic Journey to Oman Fashion Show held at the prestigious Oman Across Ages Museum, in October last year.

Ten students were shortlisted out of 100 plus applicants who

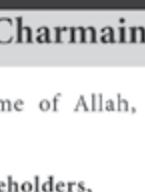
were interviewed by Amal al Raisi. The nine-month programme is a holistic one, that includes over twenty fashion design related subjects. The programme gives the students a comprehensive view across both practical and theoretical knowledge in the fashion industry.

This partnership with the French Embassy represents a significant milestone in Amal al Raisi's dedication to put Oman on the international fashion map.

Programme has been designed to equip young Omani graduates with the skills needed for banking

Khaled al Mukhaini

The graduate development programme will also strengthen the Omanisation levels across the bank.

 شركة الكروم العمانية Oman Chromite Company P.O. Box: 346, PC 321, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: 26845115, Fax: 26845155																																																																																																																				
UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30, JUNE, 2024.																																																																																																																				
Charmain report	Statement of Financial Position As At 30 Jun 2024																																																																																																																			
In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Dear, Shareholders, After compliments, On behalf of my self and the Board of Directors, I would like to present the unaudited financial statement for the Second quarter ended on 30 June 2024. During this period, the company produced 13,852 tonnes and sold 35,713 tonnes of chrome ore, while production reached 29,293 tonnes and sales reached 58,140 tonnes in the corresponding period last year. The decrease in production and sales is due to the following reasons:- 1. Production and transportation processes are affected by unusual rainfall in the operating areas during first quarter . 2. Some Changes on mining plans because of some technical complexity and challenges . Despite these challenges, the company has made significant efforts to increase its reserves by securing new sites and enhancing exploration and production activities in existing areas in addition to obtaining of a Mining Concession 11-A that was mentioned and well explained in the company report for the last quarter. We hope that this region in addition to the activities in the current regions will contribute to increasing the company's reserve thus inventory and enhancing its production in the future. The company achieved a net profit of RO 633,226 at the close of the second quarter of this year after deduction of assessed tax. Finally, on behalf of the board of directors and the executive management of the company, I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, may God protect him, and convey our thanks to the wise government for the extended support. I would also like to thank all the shareholders of the company for their continued support, confidence and above all for their trust in the board and the, executive management of the company and its employees. Thank you, Humaid bin Masoud Al Maqbali Chairman	<table> <tr> <th></th><th>Jun-2024 OMR</th><th>Jun-2023 OMR</th></tr> <tr> <td>Asset</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Non-current Asset</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Plant and Equipment</td><td>880,168</td><td>698,811</td></tr> <tr> <td>Intangible Assets</td><td>975,208</td><td>498,497</td></tr> <tr> <td>Investment in Associate Company</td><td>486,210</td><td>390,171</td></tr> <tr> <td>longTerm deposits</td><td>2,350,000</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr> <td>Bank Guarante</td><td>152,000</td><td>152,000</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total Non-current Assets</td><td>4,843,586</td><td>1,739,479</td></tr> <tr> <td>Current Assets</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Investments at Fair Value Through Profit or Loss</td><td>5,026</td><td>5,121</td></tr> <tr> <td>Inventories</td><td>938,580</td><td>971,447</td></tr> <tr> <td>Trade and Other Receivables</td><td>965,689</td><td>887,609</td></tr> <tr> <td>Short Term Loan for associate Company</td><td>115,452</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr> <td>Cash and Bank Balance</td><td>27,368</td><td>765,115</td></tr> <tr> <td>short Term Deposits</td><td>250,000</td><td>2,550,000</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total Current Assets</td><td>2,302,114</td><td>5,179,292</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total Asset</td><td>7,145,700</td><td>6,918,771</td></tr> <tr> <td>Equity and Liabilities</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Capital and Reserve</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Share Capital</td><td>3,300,000</td><td>3,000,000</td></tr> <tr> <td>Legal Reserve</td><td>1,006,335</td><td>1,000,000</td></tr> <tr> <td>Optional Reserves</td><td>171,135</td><td>104,175</td></tr> <tr> <td>Retained Earnings (loss)</td><td>1,783,754</td><td>1,729,279</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total Capital and Reserve</td><td>6,261,225</td><td>5,834,030</td></tr> <tr> <td>Non-current Liabilities</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Employees Benefits Liabilities</td><td>40,801</td><td>36,135</td></tr> <tr> <td>Deferred Tax Liability</td><td>59,857</td><td>39,087</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total Non-current Liabilities</td><td>100,658</td><td>75,222</td></tr> <tr> <td>Current Liabilities</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Trade and Other Payables</td><td>672,071</td><td>687,313</td></tr> <tr> <td>Income Tax (Estimate)</td><td>111,746</td><td>322,206</td></tr> <tr> <td>Bank Borrowings</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr> <td>Paid dividend</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total Current Liabilities</td><td>783,817</td><td>1,009,519</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total Liabilities</td><td>884,475</td><td>1,084,741</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total Equity and Liabilities</td><td>7,145,700</td><td>6,918,771</td></tr> <tr> <td>Net Assets Per Share</td><td>1.897</td><td>1.945</td></tr> </table>			Jun-2024 OMR	Jun-2023 OMR	Asset			Non-current Asset			Plant and Equipment	880,168	698,811	Intangible Assets	975,208	498,497	Investment in Associate Company	486,210	390,171	longTerm deposits	2,350,000	0	Bank Guarante	152,000	152,000	Total Non-current Assets	4,843,586	1,739,479	Current Assets			Investments at Fair Value Through Profit or Loss	5,026	5,121	Inventories	938,580	971,447	Trade and Other Receivables	965,689	887,609	Short Term Loan for associate Company	115,452	0	Cash and Bank Balance	27,368	765,115	short Term Deposits	250,000	2,550,000	Total Current Assets	2,302,114	5,179,292	Total Asset	7,145,700	6,918,771	Equity and Liabilities			Capital and Reserve			Share Capital	3,300,000	3,000,000	Legal Reserve	1,006,335	1,000,000	Optional Reserves	171,135	104,175	Retained Earnings (loss)	1,783,754	1,729,279	Total Capital and Reserve	6,261,225	5,834,030	Non-current Liabilities			Employees Benefits Liabilities	40,801	36,135	Deferred Tax Liability	59,857	39,087	Total Non-current Liabilities	100,658	75,222	Current Liabilities			Trade and Other Payables	672,071	687,313	Income Tax (Estimate)	111,746	322,206	Bank Borrowings	0	0	Paid dividend	0	0	Total Current Liabilities	783,817	1,009,519	Total Liabilities	884,475	1,084,741	Total Equity and Liabilities	7,145,700	6,918,771	Net Assets Per Share	1.897	1.945
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	Statement of Comprehensive Income For The Period Ended At 30 Jun 2024																																																																																																																			
	Jun-2024 RO	Jun-2023 RO																																																																																																																		
Revenue	2,397,479	4,083,113																																																																																																																		
Cost of Sales	(1,153,475)	(1,312,726)																																																																																																																		
Gross Profit	1,244,004	2,770,387																																																																																																																		
Other Income	1,953	654																																																																																																																		
Total Operating Profit	1,245,957	2,771,041																																																																																																																		
Amortization (Unsuccessful Site)	(103,002)	0																																																																																																																		
Selling and Distribution Expenses	(263,547)	(501,171)																																																																																																																		
General and Administrative Expenses	(224,534)	(260,767)																																																																																																																		
Social Responsibility Exp	(23,975)	(40,831)																																																																																																																		
Partnership 30% at Waisit Sohar	(9,933)	0																																																																																																																		
Profit from Operations	620,965	1,968,272																																																																																																																		
profit/(losses) form investments	45,401	(210,829)																																																																																																																		
Realised Gains on Sales of Investment at Fair Value Through Profit or Loss	(11)	1,827																																																																																																																		
Interest Income	78,616	49,913																																																																																																																		
Net Profit Before Tax for the Period	744,971	1,809,183																																																																																																																		
Income Tax Expenses	(111,746)	(171,377)																																																																																																																		
Net Profit After Tax and Total Comprehensive Income for the Period	633,226	1,537,805																																																																																																																		
Basic Earnings Per Share	0.192	0.513																																																																																																																		

India: Heat and sickness march together

New Delhi, India - Indians are no strangers to scorching summers, but this year's hottest months - from April to June - felt unbearably hot and agonizingly deadly. Temperatures shot past 50 degrees Celsius (122 Fahrenheit) in New Delhi and the northern states of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

The country faced its worst heat wave in over a decade, with hundreds dying and thousands others having their health severely impacted by extreme weather conditions.

Then came the monsoon season and the heat broke. This month, however, torrential rain triggered flood and landslides in India's north and northeast, killing scores of people and affecting hundreds of thousands. And both heat and flooding are exacerbating an even deadlier problem - the spread of disease.

'Beyond human tolerance'

In India, experts say, climate change is boosting the spread of malaria, dengue, yellow fever,

The government needs to implement long-term strategies to minimise vulnerability and inequalities across communities especially when heat waves are getting deadlier every passing year

DILEEP MAVALANKAR

cholera, and chikungunya, as well as chronic diseases, particularly among the millions of people who already experience poor sanitation, pollution, malnutrition, and a shortage of drinking water.

In India's urban centres 'temperatures are rising beyond human tolerance, humidity is increasing, and so is the night-time heat', Sunita Narain, head of



Experts say that climate change is boosting the spread of various diseases in India

Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), a New Delhi-based public interest research and advocacy organisation, told DW.

Recent studies have shown that temperature rising a few degrees above our body heat levels have an array of harmful effects on mental and physical capabilities. Women working in heat-sensitive jobs such as agriculture or construction are

at risk for pregnancy-related complications.

Narain warns that cholera, a disease thought to be virtually eradicated was now 'back again with a vengeance'. At the same time, she says there is more to the problem than rising temperatures. "It is not climate change that is bringing cholera. The fact is, it is the mismanagement of the environment," Narain said.

Attributed to other causes

Experts warn that heat waves may be deadlier than we realise, as many heat deaths are attributed to other factors on the death certificate.

"Most people dying during heat waves are not recorded as connected to the heat. There needs to be a proper formulation of heat action plans for cities and

towns," Dileep Mavalankar, former head of the Indian Institute of Public Health, told DW.

"The government needs to implement long-term strategies to minimise vulnerability and inequalities across communities especially when heat waves are getting deadlier with every passing year," he added.

A rise in diseases

Climate-sensitive diseases are rising in India, with some of them showing a clear link to the monsoon rainfall and heat. The government is also aware of the link between mortality and heat, and has listed detailed objectives to build up its capacities and prepare India's medical system to mitigate risks.

However, experts trying to plan and ameliorate these issues often face a fundamental problem - a lack of data.

"This is the first hurdle that we need to work on if we are to save lives," climate scientist Roxy Mathew Koll from the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology told DW.

"Most of the data is not available. Some cities and districts have annual or monthly aggregates, and for a short time, which are insufficient. Hence, it is possible for us to prepare early warning systems that can inform and save lives and livelihoods if data is available. Basically, the health departments do not share the data that they have," adds Koll.

Children and the poorest segments of India are believed to be bearing the brunt of health risks associated with changing climate. A recent study showcased by Indian officials explored the association between climate parameters and infectious diseases in a three-year study involving 461 children under 16 in the northern city of Varanasi.

The researchers established that climate parameters like temperature, humidity, rainfall, solar radiation, and wind speed were significantly associated with the infectious diseases like gastrointestinal diseases, respiratory diseases, vector-borne diseases, and skin diseases in the children. DW

شركة صناعة مواد البناء (ش.م.ع.)

Construction Materials Industries (S.A.O.G)

PO. Box: 1791, Ruwi, Postal Code 112, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: 26752247/26752287, Fax: 26750867

MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Management of Construction Materials Industries SAOG has the honour of submitting the report on the performance of the Company for the six months ended on 30th June 2024.

Key Performance Indicators

Particulars	2024 30 - Jun RO	2023 30 - Jun RO	Increase / (Decrease)	% of Increase / (Decrease)
Sales	1,394,666	1,296,165	98,501	7.60%
Gross Profit	134,871	202,550	(67,679)	(33.41)%
Finance Cost - Interest on Lease Liability (IFRS16)	16,978	51,583	(34,605)	(67.09)%
Amortization of Lease Liability	41,946	32,067	9,879	30.81%
Profit/(Loss) before Tax	(94,354)	(30,049)	(64,305)	(214.00)%
Net Profit/(Net Loss) after Tax	(94,354)	(30,049)	(64,305)	(214.00)%
Earnings Per Share	(0.0015)	(0.0005)	(0.0010)	(214.00)%
Particulars	2024 30-Jun RO	2023 31-Dec RO	Increase / (Decrease)	% of Increase / (Decrease)
Total Assets	8,241,050	7,798,498	442,552	5.67 %
Total Liabilities	1,859,342	1,322,436	536,906	40.60 %
Net Assets	6,381,708	6,476,062	(94,354)	(1.46) %
Total Number of Shares	62,500,000	62,500,000	---	---
Net Assets Per Share	0.102	0.104	(0.002)	(1.92) %

OPERATING PERFORMANCE

Production:

During the reporting period 2024, Quick Lime production has been decreased by 12.72% (3,576 MT) compared to the same period last year (2024 - 24,547MT, 2023 - 28,123MT) as the 200MT per day Quick Lime Kiln production was shut down for major refractory replacement and maintenance work.

Sales:

Sales has been increased by 7.60% (RO.98,501/-) during the reporting period 2024, compared to the same period in the previous year mainly due to sale of the ready finished goods from the previous year.

Comparative sales amount for the second quarter are 2024: RO.1,394,666/- and 2023: RO.1,296,165/-

Net Profit/Loss:

The Company's result for the first half of this year was affected by several factors, the most important of which are:

- The increase in direct production costs such as raw material - lime stone, factory land rent and increase in custom duties in addition to an increase in water and electricity tariffs.
- Production from 200MTPD Quick Lime kiln was stopped for 42 days to perform necessary regular refractory maintenance and during that period customer request were met from the stock.
- The decision of the Ministry of Transport to prevent the entry of (empty) land transport vehicles from neighboring countries that were transporting the company's products to water desalination plants in the neighboring countries, which greatly affected the Company's ability to fully fulfill its obligations to supply the required materials, in addition to the highest cost of transportation.

However, the Company's management is still striving to find possible solutions to reduce the impact of this during the coming period and achieve the best possible results under these difficult circumstances, as the periodic maintenance work for the lime kiln was completed during the month of July, as well as obtaining the necessary permits from the Ministry of Transport.

On the other hand, the company still faces some obstacles of which the most important are mentioned below:

- Preventing the entry of (empty) land transportation vehicles to the Sultanate of Oman to transport hydrate lime, which had a negative impact on the company and led to a decline in its sales.
- Increasing the customs tariff from the customs authority on consignments exported outside Sultanate of Oman by 15 riyals (double the previous fee) per shipment.
- The high cost of direct and indirect production, as well as the result of intense competition in neighboring countries, the company is unable to charge this increased cost to selling prices, including the increase in tariffs for electricity, water, natural gas and other components used in operating the lime kilns, which negatively affected the company's ability to compete in the markets, domestic and foreign.
- Increase in customs duties imposed by neighboring countries on importing raw materials and exporting our products, the most important of which is the increase and introduction of road tolls, which negatively affect significantly in the cost of the product.
- The fierce competition that we face in the local market from competitors from neighboring countries is very difficult, as we are unable to pass those additional expenses to our customers.

Future Outlook:-

The Company's management and all employees strive diligently and continuously to find solutions to the problems and challenges facing the company through:

- Developing production methods, reducing expenses and costs and maintaining the level of product quality. This resulted in concluding contracts to supply and install a new hydrate lime production unit with 150ton production capacity per hour. It is expected that the project will be completed and start operating during the fourth quarter of this year. This will have an impact in increasing the factory's production capacity, reducing costs and increasing company's ability to compete in local and foreign markets.
- Opening new markets and new customers for quick lime, dolomite and hydrated lime products to compensate for the negative effects that affected the company's sales as a result of the reasons mentioned above. And as a result of the effort and continuous endeavor, negotiations are under way with some customers in foreign markets to find new markets for quick lime, dolomite and hydrated lime products which heralds promising results, God willing.
- Continue to follow up with relevant government authorities to obtain the necessary permits to allow the entry of land transportation (empty) in to the Sultanate, which will have a significant on the company's ability to fulfill its obligations in supplying materials to neighboring countries and reduce the cost of transportation.
- Work is underway to study some projects that will contribute to developing and modernizing production methods, reducing expenses and costs, and maintaining the level of product quality through maintenance and continuous improvement of the performance of production machines and developing the factory's technical staff.

"UN AUDITED" STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT JUNE 30, 2024

	2024 June RO	2023 December RO
ASSETS		
Current Assets:		
Cash and bank balances	649,377	123,860
Term deposit	----	515,112
Trade and other receivables	858,656	710,356
Inventories	1,636,686	1,771,961
Total Current Assets	3,144,719	3,121,289
Non-current Assets:		
Property, plant and equipment	4,582,812	4,121,744
Right of use of Assets	513,519	555,465
Total Non-current Assets	5,096,331	4,677,209
TOTAL ASSETS	8,241,050	7,798,498
LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY		
Current Liabilities:		
Trade and other payables	473,428	382,587
Short Term Bank Borrowings	125,058	---
Tax provision	1,320	1,320
Amount due to related parties	----	----
Current Portion of Lease Liability	64,717	62,780
Total Current Liabilities	664,523	446,687
Non-current Liabilities:		
Employees service benefits	180,432	177,325
Bank Term Loan	348,922	----
Non-Current portion of Lease Liability	520,315	553,274
Provision for decommissioning	17,755	17,755
Deferred Tax Liability	127,395	127,395
Total Non-current Liabilities	1,194,819	875,749
Total Liabilities	1,859,342	1,322,436
Shareholders' Equity:		
Share capital	6,250,000	6,250,000
Legal reserve	370,078	370,078
Accumulated profit/(loss)	(238,370)	(144,016)
Total Shareholders' Equity	6,381,708	6,476,062
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY	8,241,050	7,798,498
Net Assets Per Share [face value RO.0.100 each]	0.102	0.104

"UN AUDITED" STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE SECOND QUARTER ENDED ON JUNE 30, 2024

	June 2024 RO	June 2023 RO
Sales	1,394,666	1,296,165
Cost of sales	(1,259,795)	(1,093,615)
Gross Profit	134,871	202,550
Other income	2,000	48,758
General and administrative expenses	(172,960)	(187,801)
Selling and distribution expenses	(42,906)	(49,414)
Interest - bank facilities (net)	1,619	7,441
Interest - on lease liability (IFRS16)	(16,978)	(51,583)
Profit/(Loss) for the period before taxation	(94,354)	(30,049)
Taxation provision	(----)	(----)
Profit/(Loss) for the Period	(94,354)	(30,049)
Earnings/(Loss) per share [basic and diluted]	(0.0015)	(0.0005)

Note: The complete accounts either in English or Arabic will be sent to any shareholder by mail within 7 days of receipt of request

Quad reaffirms support for next summit in India



Foreign ministers of India, Japan, Australia and the US after the Quad FM's Meeting, in Tokyo on Monday (ANI)

Tokyo, Japan - Foreign ministers of Quad countries- Australia, India, Japan and the US - on Monday reaffirmed that India will host the summit later this year.

"We look forward to India hosting the next Quad Leaders' Summit later this year, and to the United States hosting the next Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting in 2025," a joint statement after the meeting held in Tokyo said.

India's external affairs minister S Jaishankar, Japan's foreign minister Yoko Kamikawa, Australia's foreign affairs minister Penny Wong and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken participated in the Quad foreign ministers' meeting held on Monday in Tokyo.

In a White House briefing held on July 25, US National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby responding to a reporter's question about President Joe Biden attending the Quad Summit being hosted by India later

On 24 September 2021, the White House hosted the first in-person Quad summit and since then the Quad countries have been holding on rotation basis an annual summit

this year said: "We're still committed to there being a Quad leaders' summit this year. But there's nothing on the calendar right now for it."

The US presidential elections are scheduled to be held in November this year.

Biden had been instrumental in bringing together his counterparts of the Quad for a meeting in March 2021 that was held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The US President raised the level of the summits of the four-nation grouping to include national leaders instead of just meetings of foreign ministers.

On 24 September 2021, the White House then hosted the first in-person Quad summit and since then the Quad countries have been holding on rotation basis an annual summit. India is scheduled to hold the next summit this year.

"We continue to express our serious concern about the militarisation of disputed features, and coercive and intimidating manoeuvres in the South China Sea," the joint statement issued after the meeting of the top diplomats of the Quad countries read.

They also listed out their concerns on the increasing use of various kinds of dangerous tactics, and 'efforts to disrupt other countries' offshore resource exploitation activities'. ANI

Pakistan: Toll rises to 43 in tribal clashes

Karachi, Pakistan - At least 43 people have been killed in tribal clashes erupted over a land dispute in northwest Pakistan over one week, authorities and locals said on Monday.

Intermittent clashes are still continuing in several parts of volatile Kurram district of northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, which borders neighbouring Afghanistan, despite a ceasefire brokered by tribal elders on Sunday, Sahid Turi, a former lawmaker from the district, told Anadolu on telephone.

Nearly 180 people have been injured in the clashes in last one

week, Mir Hassan Jan, the medical superintendent of the Kurram District Head-quarters Hospital, told reporters.

Confirming the death toll, Turi, who is also a member of the 'jirga' or tribal assembly, which is trying to maintain the fragile ceasefire, said that another eight people were killed in overnight artillery duels between the rival tribes.

Clashes initially erupted over a land dispute between Boshehra and Maleekhel tribes but later triggered into sectarian skirmishes in different parts of the district, according to Turi. "Ceasefire has been im-

planted in several areas but some parts are still under fire," Turi further said.

"We are trying our best to fully put out violence," he added.

Rival tribes are using rockets and mortars against each other, Ali Afzal, a local journalist, told Anadolu on telephone.

Located some 218km (135 miles) off the provincial capital Peshawar, Kurram district has seen frequent tribal and sectarian clashes in recent years. The district's Parachinar town is one of the few Shia-dominated areas in largely Sunni Pakistan. Anadolu Agency

Two more Hezbollah fighters killed as tension on Lebanese border soars

Beirut, Lebanon - Lebanese group Hezbollah said on Monday that two more fighters had been killed in cross-border clashes with Israel amid fears of a full-blown war between the two sides.

Hezbollah did not provide details about the circumstances of their death, saying only they were killed 'on the road to Jerusalem', in reference to Hezbollah's fight in support of Palestinian resistance groups facing a devastating Israeli onslaught in the Gaza Strip.

Lebanon's official news agency reported that an Israeli drone struck a car between the towns of Mays al-Jabal and Chaqra on the road to Al Qala, resulting in two injuries.

A second attack on a motorcycle on the Mays al-Jabal-Chaqra road near the Dubayeh Castle resulted in two fatality and three additional injuries. Among the injured is a child who is in critical condition, according to the news agency.

Emergency teams transported the injured to Tebnine Governmental Hospital.

As of yet, there has been no comment from the Israeli side on the incident.

Monday's fatalities brought Hezbollah fighters killed in cross-border clashes with Israel to 386 since October 8, 2023, according to an Anadolu tally.



Flights resume at Beirut airport

Meanwhile, flights at Beirut's Rafic Hariri International Airport resumed on Monday after airlines reported delays and cancellations.

The airport's online data indicated that several flights landed on Monday morning from key destinations, including Amman, Dubai, Doha, and Larnaca.

However, morning departures from the airport proceeded as scheduled, while some flights to prominent destinations such as Frankfurt, Amsterdam, and Sweden were cancelled.

On Sunday evening, Middle East Airlines (MEA), Lebanon's national carrier, announced the postponement of certain flights returning to Beirut from Sunday to Monday morning. The decision comes amid Israeli threats of military action against

Lebanon. MEA is headquartered in Beirut and operates flights to various destinations in the Middle East, Europe, Africa, and beyond. Local media sources also reported that foreign airlines, including Qatar Airways, Transavia, and Eurowings, cancelled their flights to Beirut on Sunday evening.

The escalation of Israeli threats reached a fever pitch following a missile strike on Saturday in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, targeting the town of Majdal Shams.

The attack resulted in the deaths of 12 members of the Druze community, most of whom were children, and left around 40 others injured.

While Israel has blamed Hezbollah for Saturday's attack in Majdal Shams, the group denied any responsibility.

According to Israel's Army Radio, the military formulated scenarios for a potential attack on Hezbollah and placed them on the table for further political-level discussions to assess the situation.

Discussions took up the possibility of 'undertaking more severe military action' in Lebanon, the broadcaster said.

On Saturday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed that Hezbollah will 'pay a heavy price' for the attack.

Fears have grown about a full-blown war between Israel and Hezbollah amid an exchange of cross-border attacks between the two sides.

The escalation comes against the backdrop of a deadly Israeli onslaught on Gaza, which has killed more than 39,300 people since last October, following an attack by the Palestinian resistance group Hamas.

Anadolu Agency

Russia claims downing 39 Ukrainian drones

Moscow, Russia - Russia on Monday claimed that it downed 39 Ukrainian drones over multiple regions. A statement from the Russian Defence Ministry said that the country's air defence systems downed 19 of the drones over the Kursk region bordering Ukraine.

The statement further said that nine and five drones were also intercepted over the border regions of Belgorod and Bryansk, respectively.

In both the Leningrad and Voronezh regions, the Russian air defence systems downed three drones, the statement added.

Kursk Governor Alexey Smirnov said on Telegram that falling debris from the drones was recorded in the region's administrative capital, as well as the Ponyrovsky, Pristensky, Solntsevsky, Sudzhansky and Zolotukhinsky districts.

A road bridge in the Sudzhansky district and power lines in the Solntsevsky district were damaged by the falling debris, Smirnov said. In the Voronezh region, damage has been reported only in the Ostrogozhzsky district.

Anadolu Agency



Palestinian child dies of severe malnutrition

Gaza City, Palestine - A Palestinian child died on Monday of severe malnutrition caused by Israel's crippling blockade on the Gaza Strip, according to a local medical source.

Ali Anas al-Tater, 6, breathed his last at the Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital in Gaza City as a result of acute malnutrition exacerbated by the prolonged Israeli siege and the ensuing food crisis, the source told Anadolu.

Earlier this month, Hatem al-Hour, head of the neonatal department at Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis, warned that the number of Palestinians suffering from malnutrition was beyond the capacity of hospitals amid the ongoing Israeli war.

On July 11, the United Nations World Food Programme warned that the collapse of the health care system and lack of sustainable food sources put Gaza's children at risk.

Israel has imposed a crippling siege on the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023, leaving the territory's 2.3mn population on the verge of starvation.

According to Gaza's government media office, humanitarian aid has not reached Gaza City and northern areas for over two months.

In June, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor issued a warning about an unprecedented return to famine conditions in the region.

Menwhile, the Israeli army intensified on Monday its artillery bombardment across various areas in the Gaza Strip.

Witnesses reported to Anadolu that the Israeli forces continued their fifth consecutive day of incursions into the southwestern outskirts of Gaza City, forces and their vehicles remain present in the Tel al-Hawa area, specifically near the Jordanian Hospital. They continue to burn homes, abduct civilians, and carry out killings.

"Three martyrs were recovered from the Sabra neighbourhood after being targeted by Israeli artillery a few days ago," Basal added.

In central Gaza, Israeli airstrikes and artillery targeted the al-Bureij refugee camp, resulting in the destruction of a residential block.

The northwestern areas of the Nuseirat refugee camp, the town of Al-Musaddar, and northeastern Deir al-Balah city in the central governorate also experienced intense artillery bombardment.

In southern Gaza, Israeli military vehicles made limited incursions into the east of Khan Younis. Witnesses reported heavy artillery fire and intense gunfire.

Anadolu Agency

particularly in the neighbourhoods of Tel al-Hawa and Sabra. The invading forces opened fire with machine guns toward residential buildings, conducting search and inspection operations that involved detonations and the burning of several residential structures, the witnesses said.

The southern neighbourhoods of Gaza City, including Sabra, Zeitoun, Tel al-Hawa, and Sheikh Ajleen, were subject to heavy artillery shelling, they added.

Meanwhile, the Gaza Civil Defence spokesperson, Mahmoud Basal, said: "Israeli occupation

Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis had already warned that the number of Palestinians suffering from malnutrition was beyond the capacity of hospitals amid the ongoing Israeli war

The Financial Corporation Co. SAOG

CONSOLIDATED UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2024				
BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S REPORT				
Dear Shareholders, We present the unaudited financial results of The Financial Corporation Co. SAOG (FINCORP) for the period ended 30 June 2024.				
FINANCIAL RESULTS The Company achieved a total income of RO 406,968 during the period ended 30 June 2024 compared to a total income of RO 752,876 during the period ended 30 June 2023 and earned a Net profit before taxes of RO 173,420 during the period ended 30 June 2024 compared to a net profit before taxes of RO 543,214 during the previous period.				
A summary of the financial results is tabulated below.				
DETAILS	30-June-24 RO	30-June-23 RO	Variance %	
Total Income	406,968	752,876	-46%	
Total Expense	(233,548)	(209,662)	11%	
Net Profit/(Loss) before taxes	173,420	543,214	-68%	
Profit/(Loss) per share (RO)	0.002	0.007	-68%	
MARKET OUTLOOK Oman's economic outlook remains slightly favourable, with real growth expected to reach 1.5% in 2024 (vs 1.3% in 2023). Growth is expected to further accelerate over the medium term supported by global demand recovery, increased investment in non-hydrocarbons and renewable energy. Inflation is forecast to converge to 2% over the medium term.				
OPEC+ agreed to extend the cuts of 1.65 million bpd by a year until the end of 2025 and prolong the cuts of 2.2 million bpd for three months until the end of September 2024. The forecast for GDP growth in the GCC has been revised downward to 2.2% for 2024, down from projection of 2.7% which is attributable to extended oil production cuts by the OPEC+ group.				
Central banks around the world reached a pivotal point in June 2024, with European Central Bank becoming the first major economy to cut interest rates with 25 basis points followed by Swiss National Bank. In March 24, Bank of Japan hiked rates for the first time in last 17 years. In United States, Fed may begin cutting interest rates in September 2024 post clear visibility on stable inflation data. The resilience of the US economy, a cooling labour market and easing inflation trend have increased the Fed's confidence that inflation (Current CPI - 3% vs Highest CPI YoY of September'23 - 3.7%) is on the path to sustainably reaching the 2% target which raises the probability of interest rate cut beginning from September 2024.				
CONTINGENCIES During the previous year, the Company appointed an independent consultant to review and assess the impact of discrepancies in the brokerage accounts. The process of substantiating the accuracy of account balances has been initiated and some client accounts have been reconciled and it is expected to be completed during this year. The potential impact cannot be reliably measured until the investigation is completed.				
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS We express our gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq for his wise leadership and progressive vision as he continues to lead the country on the path of growth and prosperity. We also extend our appreciation to Muscat Securities Exchange, Financial Services Authority and Muscat Clearing and Depository Company for their valuable co-operation and support. Finally, we are grateful to all our staff, shareholders for their faith and our esteemed clients for the confidence, trust and support extended to FINCORP.				
Dr. Abdullah Masoud Al Harthiy Chairman of the Board 29.07.2024				
P.O. Box 782, PC 131, Sultanate of Oman, Phone: (968) 24822327, Fax: (968) 24822390, E-mail: fincorp@fincorp.org , Website: www.fincorp.org				
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2024				
	30-Jun-24 RO	31-Dec-23 RO		
ASSETS				
Bank balances and cash	1,237,552	1,063,513		
Investments at fair value through profit and loss	4,069,100	4,355,544		
Trade and other receivables	943,084	744,311		
Investment in associate	1,823,245	1,833,172		
Deferred tax asset	61,069	61,071		
Property and equipment	3,712	4,299		
Investment property	270,000	270,000		
Total assets	8,407,762	8,331,910		
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
Equity				
Share capital	7,002,996	7,002,996		
Legal reserve	1,017,575	1,000,233		
Accumulated losses	(323,047)	(479,125)		
Total equity	7,697,524	7,697,524		
Liabilities				
Employees' end of service benefits	26,522	43,194		
Trade and other payables	676,102	756,998		
Taxation	7,614	7,614		
Total liabilities	710,238	807,806		
Total equity and liabilities	8,407,762	8,505,330		
Net assets per share	0.110	0.107		
Assets under portfolio management and held in trust	4,253,774	4,251,094		
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2024				
	30-Jun-24 RO	30-Jun-23 RO		
INCOME				
Fees and commission income	83,059	150,181		
Net realised gain on investments at fair value through profit or loss	72,998	99,157		
Fair value changes in investments at fair value through profit or loss	(53,428)	(38,345)		
Dividend income	152,088	142,440		
Other income	34,517	8,811		
	289,234	362,244		
EXPENSES				
Salaries and employee related costs	122,166	124,100		
Operating expenses	111,382	85,562		
	233,548	209,662		
Profit / (loss) from operations	55,686	152,582		
Share of results of associate	117,426	181,719		
Finance Income (net)	308	896		
	-	208,017		
Profit / (loss) for the period before taxation	173,420	543,214		
Taxation	-	(39,093)		
Net profit / (loss) and total comprehensive income for the period	173,420	504,121		
Basic earnings per share	0.002	0.007		
Note: The complete accounts, either in Arabic and English as requested, will be sent by mail within 7 days of request to any unitholder who requests the Fund at the address: PO Box 782, PC 131, Sultanate of Oman, Tel : +968 24822327, Fax : +968 24822390				
FINCORP شركة المركز المالي ش.م.ع. The Financial Corporation Co. SAOG				
ادارة الاصول وساطة تمويل الشركات والاستشارات بحوث Asset Management Brokerage Corporate Finance and Advisory Research				

Maduro declared winner in Venezuela's presidential vote

Caracas, Venezuela - Nicolas Maduro, 61, has been declared the winner of Venezuela's presidential election, securing 51% of the vote against 44% received by opposition leader Edmundo Gonzalez, according to the National Electoral Council (CNE).

The announcement was made early on Monday by Elvis Amoroso, head of the electoral authority, who said the results are based on 80% of voting stations.

In his victory speech, Maduro said that his reelection will bring peace and reiterated that fascism 'will not happen' in the country.

"The voice of peace triumphed, and in Venezuela there will be peace, peace and peace for our country," he said.

The opposition, led by Maria Corina Machado, has rejected the result. "It is an outrage against the truth." The opposition claims that the results announced by the CNE do not correspond to the votes cast. Several exit polls that were disclosed during the day showed a win for opposition candidate Gonzalez. They have also criticised the six-hour delays in releasing official tallies.

Machado said Gonzalez won 70% of the vote in the presidential election.

"We want the whole world to know that we won in every sector and every state in the country. We know what happened today. We've been making sure all the information was collected and reported. This shows the results. It is irrefutable," she said.

Various countries including the US, Brazil, Argentina and



In his victory speech, Maduro said that his reelection will bring peace and reiterated that fascism 'will not happen' in the country

The opposition claims that the results announced by the CNE do not correspond to the votes cast. Several exit polls showed a win for opposition candidate Gonzalez

Chile have insisted for free elections in the South American country. Shortly after the results were known, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that the Washington has 'serious concerns' that the Venezuelan election result were not accurate.

"We have serious concerns that the result announced does not reflect the will or the votes of the Venezuelan people," Blinken said while in Japan.

The EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, meanwhile, called for respecting the will of the

Venezuelan people in the latest election. "The people of Venezuela voted on the future of their country peacefully and in large numbers," he said on X.

"Their will must be respected," he said, adding: "Ensuring full transparency in the electoral process, including detailed counting of votes and access to voting records at polling stations, is vital."

Some regional leaders applauded Maduro, while others rejected the results and called for independent audits.

Bolivian President Luis Arce congratulated Maduro and celebrated that 'the will of the Venezuelan people was respected at the polls'.

"We have been closely following this democratic celebration and we welcome that the will of the Venezuelan people has been respected at the polls," Arce said.

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel also congratulated Maduro on this 'historic victory'.

"Today the dignity and courage of the Venezuelan people triumphed over pressures and manipulations," wrote the Cuban leader on X. Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and his wife Rosario Murillo sent a letter to Maduro, which was published by the Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yvan Gil, in which they

hailed the 'great victory'.

Honduran President Xiomara Castro congratulated Maduro on his 'undisputed victory that reaffirms his sovereignty'.

Chilean President Gabriel Boric also cast doubt on the results. "The Maduro regime must understand that the results it publishes are difficult to believe," he wrote on X, and made it clear that his country will not recognise data 'that is not verifiable'.

"The international community and especially the Venezuelan people, including the millions of Venezuelans in exile, demand total transparency of the electoral records and the process, and that international observers not compromised with the government account for the veracity of the results," he added.

Anadolu Agency



France: Fibre optic installations face vandalism

Paris, France - Following Friday's sabotage targeting railway networks, France's fibre optic infrastructure faced multiple acts of vandalism on Monday morning.

The incidents mainly affected installations belonging to the phone operators SFR and Bouygues, impacting at least six departments across the country, according to police.

"Cables were cut in electrical cabinets of these companies in Herault, Bouches-du-Rhone, Oise, Meuse, Drome and Aude," a police source told local media.

Landlines are said to be more affected than mobile lines, while the extent of the damage is not yet known and no one has claimed responsibility.

An investigation was launched after a fire broke out at a relay antenna near Toulouse. The prosecution is looking into an anti-Olympic 'ultra-left' claim as a 'NO Olympics' tag was found near the scene of the fire'.

After three days of sabotage on the public railway company SNCF network, which occurred on the day of the Paris Olympics opening ceremony, French police arrested a far-left activist on Sunday.

The 29-year-old activist was known to territorial intelligence

for his membership in the far-left movement, and the police found elements suggesting that he could be planning to commit acts of vandalism, and he was taken into custody in Rouen.

The man had a 'set of universal keys', 'cutting pliers' and 'access key to SNCF technical premises'. He also had literature books related to the far-left, according to a source close to the case.

At 4am (0200GMT) last Friday, fibre optic cables running near the tracks and ensuring the transmission of safety information for drivers were cut and set on fire at various strategic points in Croisilles (LGV Nord) and Pagny-Sur-Moselle (LGV Est) and Courtalain (LGV Atlantique).

The public railway company SNCF announced on Sunday that the repair work was 'completely finished' and that there would be 'no further disruption' for passengers starting from Monday.

Transport Minister Patrice Vergriete assured that 'all trains' on the French high-speed rail network were running 'normally' on Monday morning. Patrice Vergriete confirmed that the coordinated arson attacks on Friday morning targeted key points of the rail infrastructure.

Anadolu Agency

SA: ANC expels Jacob Zuma

Johannesburg, SA - Former South African President Jacob Zuma has been expelled from the African National Congress (ANC) party, where he had been a member for many decades, public broadcaster SABC reported on Sunday.

Zuma, 82, who has been an ANC party member for 60 years, was found guilty of founding and campaigning for the uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) party, which obtained 58 seats in parliamentary elections in May, it said.

The broadcaster said it was in possession of documents confirming Zuma's expulsion. The ANC has, however, not yet issued a statement regarding the expulsion.

The report said the ANC's

National Disciplinary Committee found Zuma guilty of prejudicing the integrity of the party by acting in collaboration with uMkhonto weSizwe in a manner contrary to the aims, policies and objectives of the ANC.

Zuma, who governed the country as president for nearly a decade, was also the former president of the ANC, which ruled South Africa since 1994 without a coalition.

The ANC, which liberated South Africans from white minority rule and racial segregation, used to secure more than 60% in all elections since 1994, barring 2019, when its parliamentary share dipped to 57.5%.

Anadolu Agency

North Korea's Kim Jong Un oversees flood rescue operation

Seoul, South Korea - North Korean state media on Monday said more than 5,000 people isolated by flooding in northwest North Korea had been rescued in airlifts.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was reported to have 'personally guided' the 'miraculous' military rescue operation, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

According to KCNA, 'a grave crisis' was created by heavy rainfall on Saturday, which caused a river along the North Korean-Chinese border to exceed dangerous levels.

The rescue operation overseen by Kim, KCNA said, involved about 10 military helicopters and navy and government boats.

The evacuation efforts fo-



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspects evacuation of residents in northern Phyongan province (KCNA)

cused on the cities of Sinuiju and Uiju. KCNA did not provide details on casualties or the extent of damage caused by the flooding. The evacuation efforts were

hampered by bad weather, media reports said.

Kim criticised officials for inadequate disaster preparedness, and for not heeding to his earlier

warnings to improve measures against natural disasters.

"They, seized with defeatism at combat with nature, do not confidently turn out in the disas-

ter prevention work, only expecting chance from the sky," Kim was cited by KCNA as saying.

North Korea's weak infrastructure and deforestation make it vulnerable to natural disasters like flash flooding.

One day in July, Kaesong City experienced an unprecedented 463mm (18.2 inches) of rain. This was the highest recorded in the North in 29 years, South Korea's meteorological department said.

Experts see Kim Jong Un's involvement in the rescue operation as an effort to build his image, especially during a time of strained relations between the two Koreas. Amid rising tensions, Pyongyang has cut off all official military and political communication with Seoul. DW

US President Biden to propose sweeping Supreme Court reforms

Washington, D.C., US - US President Joe Biden is set to propose sweeping reforms to the conservative-dominated Supreme Court.

The proposals include term limits and a binding code of conduct for the court's nine justices, who can now serve for life. They will also include a constitutional amendment to eliminate broad presidential immunity.

It is believed that the measures are unlikely to pass, with Congress closely divided and only 99 days to go ahead of the US presidential election.

Biden is due to present the proposal during a speech at the presidential library of former

President Lyndon B Johnson in Austin, Texas.

The proposed reforms

The US president wants to impose 'binding, enforceable' rules that oblige justices to disclose gifts and refrain from public political activity. Justices would also be required to recuse themselves from cases where they or their spouses have conflicts of interest.

The White House has also said Biden's reforms include as well an 18-year term limit for justices. This would 'reduce the chance that any single presidency imposes undue influence



for generations to come'.

Moreover, Biden is proposing a constitutional amendment that clarifies that ex-presidents are not guaranteed immunity from federal

criminal indictment, trial, conviction or sentencing.

"This nation was founded on a simple yet profound principle: No one is above the law. Not the president of the United States.

No one is above the law. Not the president of the United States. Not a justice on the Supreme Court of the United States. No one

JOE BIDEN

Not a justice on the Supreme Court of the United States. No one," Biden said in an opinion piece published on Monday.

"What is happening now is not normal, and it undermines

the public's confidence in the court's decisions, including those impacting personal freedoms. We now stand in a breach."

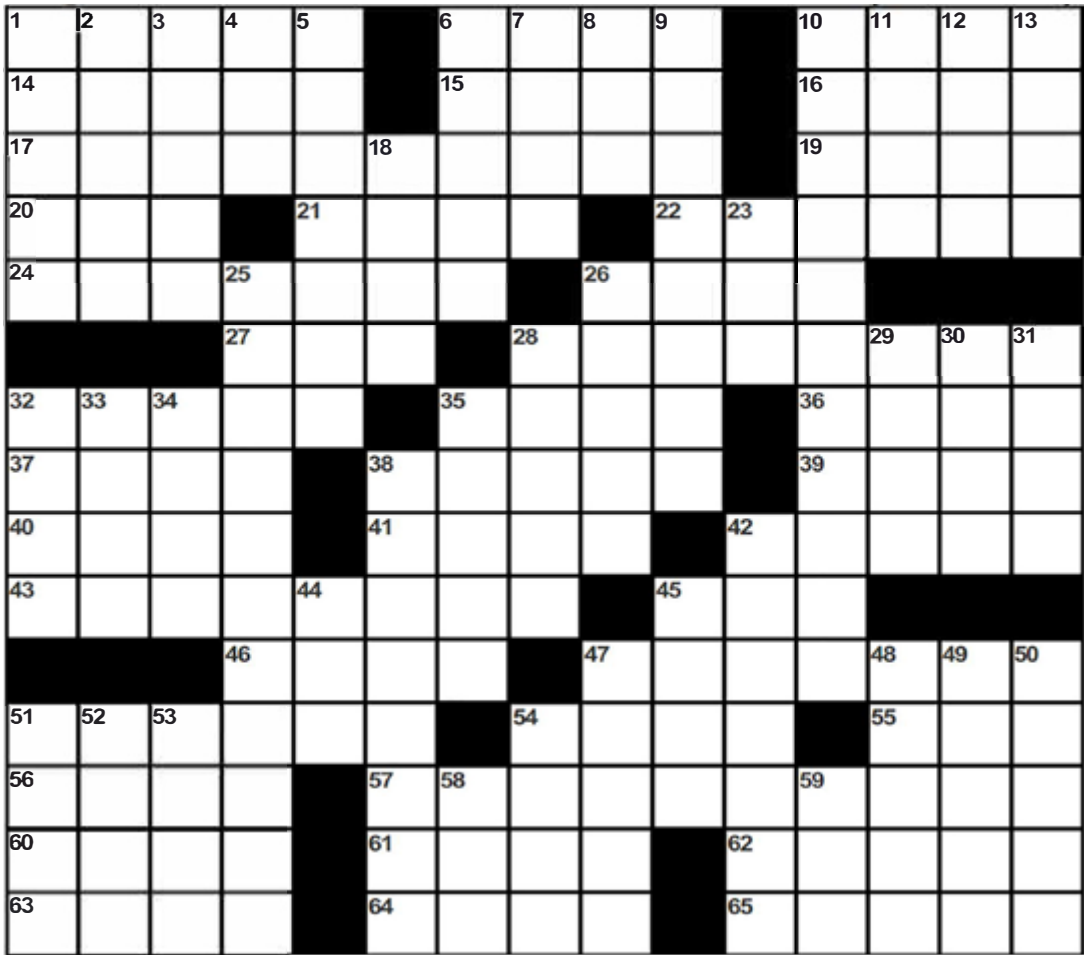
The top court has a 6-3 conservative majority. Three of its judges were appointed during Donald Trump's presidential term.

The court took the world by storm in 2022 when it overturned the 1973 Roe v Wade ruling that had underpinned the federal right to abortion. It has also taken other decisions which blocked Biden's agenda on immigration, student loans, vaccine mandates and climate change.

Earlier this year, it significantly scaled back the power of federal agencies. In early July, the court ruled in favour of Republican presidential nominee Trump's immunity claims, under the pretext of being an ex-president. Trump is now using the top court's ruling to challenge his criminal conviction in a porn star hush money case, among other prosecutions.

The court has also suffered a string of scandals among its conservative justices. One of its justices has admitted he took two luxury vacations in 2019 funded by a billionaire Republican political donor. DW

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Touch base after a fly-out
6) Bronx Zoo houseful
10) Fissionable particle
14) Jumped up
15) Grid great Starr
16) Dumbbell
17) Mr. Moto portrayer, 1935-
57
19) Ice and Iron, for two
20) "Time_ Bottle" (Croce tune)
21) Spelunker's milieu
22) Big name in inns
24) Nine-to-five's grind
26) Plays for a sap
27) Soccer fan's cheer
28) "Hold it!"
32) Hacienda brick
35) Poker holding
36) California wine valley
37) Smoke an e-cig
38) Chicken coop raiders
He , Mister!
39) Sink problem
40) In excess of
41) Was in the hole
42) Part of a pie
43) Totally lost it
45) _ Jeanne d'Arc

- 46) The Flintstones' pet
47) Outdoor dining spot
51) Duelist's aide
54) Comics possum
55) Gangster's gun
56) Arabian Peninsula land
57) Mr. Freeze portrayer, 1967
60) 15th-century caravel
61) "Dirty" Cajun dish
62) Slender and graceful
63) Baseball card tidbit
64) Work out in the ring
65) Head of cattle
DOWN
1) Floppy-snouted beast
2) Sphere of action
3) Subtly suggested
4) Make a patsy of
5) Bed sheet fabric
6) Higher in rank
7) Trim, as expenses
8) Go astray
9) Illegal muscle enhancers
10) Mr. Deeds portrayer, 2002
11) Frat party garb
12) Pundit's piece
13) Flat-topped formation
18) Valentine trim

- 23) Tidbit for an aardvark
25) Mr. Chips portrayer, 1939
26) Flogged, in a way
28) Does a car wash job
29) Agra garb
30) Cast-of-thousands film
31) Matador's prop
32) Declare finny
33) Brubeck of jazz
34) Tourney for all
35) Bookstore section for DIYers
38) Original members
42) Enjoys the boardwalk
44) Diarist Ana is
45) Game company with a hedgehog mascot
47) Cell company's structure
48) Marble material
49) Private stock
50) Anesthetic of old
51) Peyton and Eli, to Archie
52) Send out
53) Water-to-wine site
54) Twelve-point type
58) Backtalk
59) More than tipsy

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Ever been on the verge of finishing a jigsaw puzzle only to discover the last piece has gone missing? And remember how frustrating it feels to not find it after hours of searching, only to discover it a day later hiding under the sofa? A small but possibly life-changing piece of your own personal puzzle will fall into place, but only when you're not hunting for it. Don't try and force this. It'll happen quite nicely on its own.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

What's gotten into your friends and family? It seems like they're being contrary simply for the sake of needing each other (and especially you). Whatever the reason, try and let it roll off your back. To avoid a full-on fight with someone you care about, resolve to turn the other cheek and ignore their bizarre behaviour. They might not do the same for you, but it will keep the peace for the time being.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Be brave, be bold, and be first. Your pioneering spirit is exactly what's needed to get things moving, and that's more than fine with you. Is there anything you love more than the chance to be the first to explore brand-new territory? It's especially appealing when you're also given limitless freedom to exercise your imagination. With your vision and creativity, the limits are only where you decide they are.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Ouch! Someone's working their way under your skin and trying to provoke you. Instead of being irritated by what you see as their needless rebellion, take a step back and a deep breath and view things objectively. Maybe they actually have a point? Would changing your mind and your ways on this matter actually benefit you in the long run? These are all very good questions to consider.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Go ahead and listen to your naughty, adventurous side. After all, it has some very good ideas about what you should be up to right now, especially if you're feeling like having a change of pace. The stars promise plenty of that and more if you obey what your instincts are telling you. You're usually all about following the rules and being good, but right now you're much more interested in being bad.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

It's tempting to tinker with something, but your efforts to do so might raise a whole chorus of dissent. Reassure folks that you won't be changing the substance of who you are or what you do, but a definite style refresher might be due. After all, it will keep you from getting bored and prepare you to face new challenges. What could be better than that?



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

You're the hub of a big social wheel. You have some marvellous social gifts, one of them being the ability to connect people from all walks of life. Another is the ability to make new acquaintances feel like old friends and the insight to see fresh angles on lifelong friends. Why not bring both groups of people together right now? With you at the centre, all kinds of great connections could get started right now.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You have energy and imagination to spare, and when it comes to the social scene, you're the top. No one needs to fear an awkward silence as long as you're around spreading your special brand of goodwill and even handed charm. Your honest enjoyment of people always ensures a good time, and that goes double today. You can turn the lunch line at your local sandwich shop into a party with graciousness and ease.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Look at you! Actually, the real question right now is who isn't looking at you? All eyes can't help but be drawn in your general direction. You have a light and a spark about you that just won't quit. So if you have plans or a change of direction and you need some people to accompany you, do not worry. You'll have all the company one person could ever hope for or need thanks to your undeniable magnetism.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

One reason willow trees can survive storms is that they bend, and instead of breaking once the thunder and lightning has passed, they simply bounce right back. Let the willow be your example today, especially when it comes to dealing with emotions or discussions about topics that could get heated. Simply remind yourself to bend with the current influences, and you'll snap back as right as rain in no time.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Crowds have never been high on your list of things you love, and that's especially true right now. You need solitude to contemplate some changes that need to be made. Certain stubborn habits have become ingrained in your personality, and it's making you feel rigid in lifestyle choices that you aren't sure suit you as well as they did a few years ago. Take some time on your own to think things over.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

If you step back and look at the big picture today, it will become immediately apparent that not everything has been resting on your shoulders. You can let go a bit. This is the point of least resistance with a usually cantankerous coworker. Could there be signs of peace and reconciliation in the future? Most people say that you can attract more flies with honey than with vinegar, so if you want to play nice (which you don't have to do), try turning up your sweetness factor.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

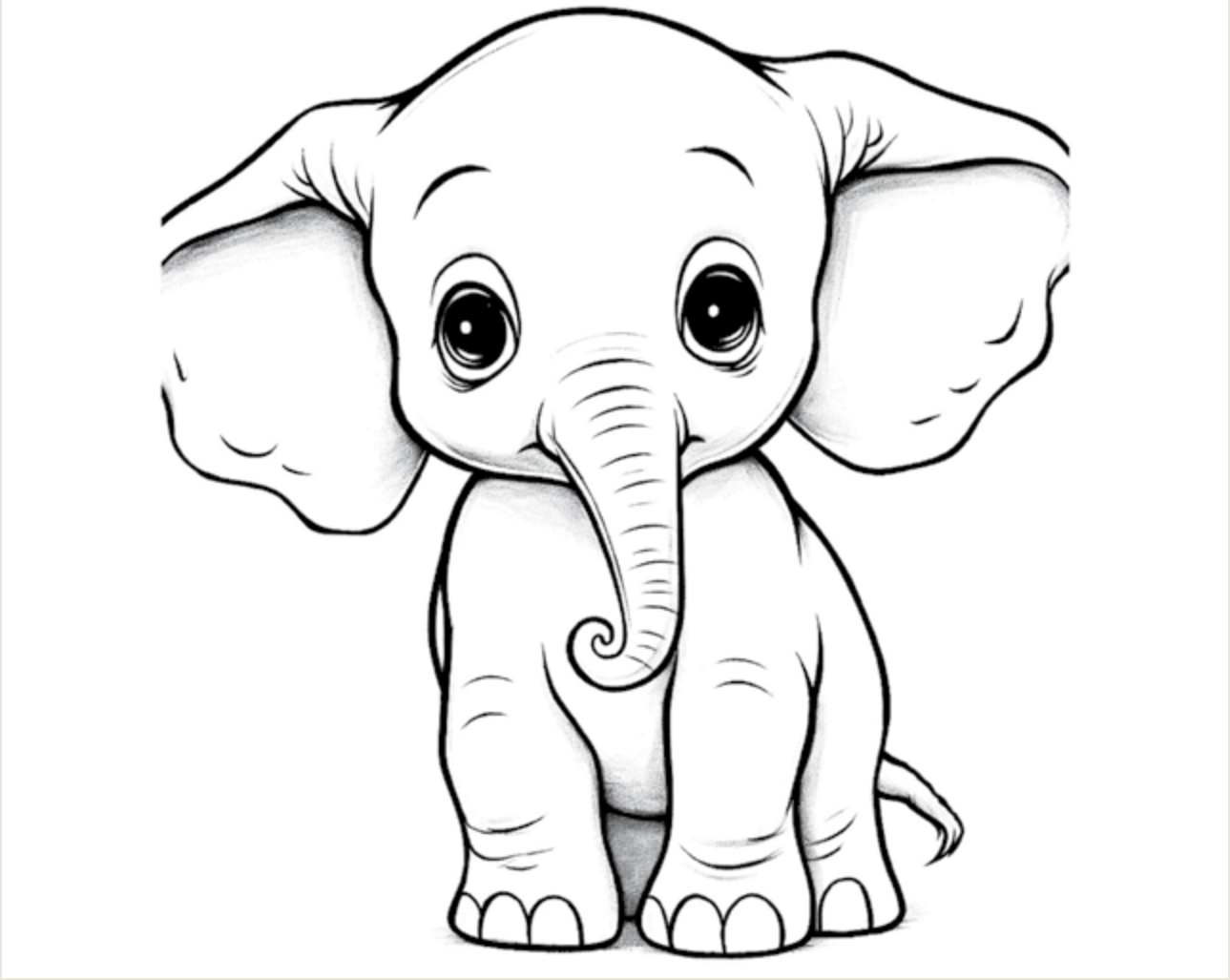
01. Which pioneer of molecular gastronomy is also the founder and proprietor of 3-Michelin-star restaurant "The Fat Duck" in Berkshire, England?
A. Jamie Oliver
B. Alain Ducasse
C. Anne-Sophie Pic
D. Heston Blumenthal

02. George Harrison was deported from which city where the early Beatles had long term engagements, because of his youth?
A. Rotterdam
B. Hamburg
C. Berlin
D. Paris

03. Which of these Mexican cities is close to the Caribbean Sea?
A. Chilapa
B. Punta Gorda
C. Monterrey
D. Acapulco

Answers: 1. D 2. B 3. B

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

E	A	R	B
E	U	R	Y
L	S	E	K
Y	P	E	M

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

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

WORD BUILDER

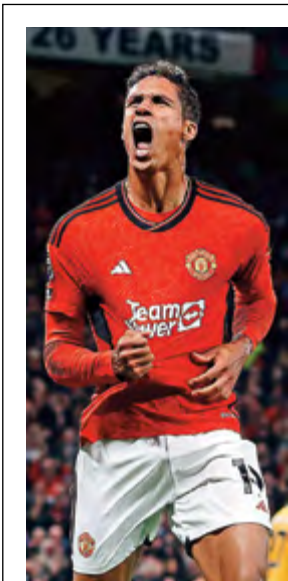


You have three minutes to find all the words contained in this word.

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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



Raphael Varane

Varane joins Italian club Como

Rome, Italy - French defender Raphael Varane has joined Como on a two-year deal with an option to extend the contract, the newly-promoted Serie A club said on Sunday.

The 31-year-old World Cup-winner, who had spent the last three years at Manchester United after a trophy-laden career with Real Madrid, arrives as a free agent.

"Raphael is a special player and his signing is proof of the ambition we have for this club," new Como manager Cesc Fabregas said.

Varane's arrival adds to the growing list of Premier League players joining the Italians ahead of the season, including former Liverpool keeper Pepe Reina and defender Alberto Moreno.

SILVER SHINE IN GOLD CUP

Al Manar Racing by Getspeed's Al Zubair, Baumann and Grenier finish second at Nürburgring

Nürburgring, Germany - Oman's Al Faisal bin Khalid al Zubair, Austrian Dominik Baumann and Canadian Mikael Grenier delivered another impressive performance to finish second in the Gold Cup category in the third round of the 2024 Fanatec GT World Challenge powered by AWS Endurance Cup at Germany's Nürburgring circuit on Sunday evening.

The three-hour race developed into a predictable duel between the Saintéloc Racing trio of Paul Evrard, Gilles Magnus and Jim Pla and the Al Manar Racing by Getspeed crew in their Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo.

Grenier drove the last stint of the three-hour race and finished just 4.974 seconds behind Magnus in the Saintéloc Racing Audi, as the two teams pulled clear of their rivals in the title race after the German race weekend.

The Haupt Racing Mercedes crew finished third and the CSA Racing Tresor Attempto Racing Audis rounded off the Gold Cup leader board after a demanding race on the German circuit.

Al Zubair said: "It was a good race today and very tight between the Gold Cup contenders. I feel with the package that we



Al Manar Racing by Getspeed Mercedes in action at Nürburgring



Oman's Al Faisal bin Khalid al Zubair, Austrian Dominik Baumann and Canadian Mikael Grenier had plenty to celebrate in Nürburgring

It was a good race today and very tight between the Gold Cup contenders. I feel with the package that we had coming into the weekend that a win was definitely possible.

AL FAISAL BIN KHALID AL ZUBAIR

had coming into the weekend that a win was definitely possible. But we were just short of that. Second place here at the Nürburgring and second in the championship, just nine points behind the leaders, I believe. Anything can happen at the final two rounds. "The fight for the championship is still on. We have been quite consistent now

with a second, first and second, so I am happy with that. We struggled with the car a bit and that got us short of the win but the Audi seemed a bit too quick here this weekend. Hopefully, we will be back on the top step in Monza."

Gold Cup rivals Saintéloc Racing topped the times in Saturday morning's free practice session

with a best lap of 1min 56.043sec. Haupt Racing carded the second quickest Gold Cup run of 1min 57.458sec with Al-Manar Racing by Getspeed down in fourth with a fastest tour of 1min 58.541sec.

In the opening qualifying session on Sunday morning Al Zubair carded a best lap of 1min 56.695sec on his fourth tour of the circuit to slot into third behind Saintéloc Racing's Jim Pla and Tresor Attempto Racing's Lorenzo Patrese.

Seventh place for Al Harthy and OQ by Oman Racing in Germany

Nürburgring, Germany - OQ by Oman Racing posted a seventh-place finish in the Bronze class in round three of the Fanatec GT World Challenge Europe powered by AWS Endurance Cup at Germany's Nürburgring on Sunday, to record their second points-scoring result of the 2024 campaign.

Ahmad al Harthy and teammates Sam De Haan and Jens Klingmann combined to make strong progress from 13th on the Bronze grid during the three-hour encounter, with British racer De Haan shining during the opening stint as he charged through the order.



Oman's Ahmad al Harthy in action

We had an improvement in the race, obviously, from where we left off in qualifying. Sam did a really good job in the first stint

AHMAD AL HARTHY

At one stage challenging for the podium in the OQ, Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Omantel and BMW Oman supported No.30 BMW M4 GT3, in the end, the trio had

to settle for seventh position and departed Germany 15th in the Bronze class driver standings.

"We had an improvement in the race, obviously, from where we left off in qualifying," said Al Harthy.

"Sam did a really good job in the first stint, he managed to pass quite a few cars and performed very well.

"When I took over it was a hard stint in the middle of the race, against some very competitive drivers, but in general we did well and I was happy with my average lap times in the end.

"We knew it would be difficult, the pace of the competition

is very strong and the best we could achieve today was P7.

The team did a really good job with the strategy, trying to make up as many places as we could at the start and during the pit-stops. We're looking forward to having a break between now and the FIA WEC at COTA [Circuit of the Americas], there is a lot we will work on to make sure we have the strongest finish we can to both the GTWCE and WEC seasons."

Sunday afternoon's race began behind the Safety Car when the original green flag formation lap was impacted by a couple of cars making contact.

Saudi Arabia plans new stadium with 92,000 capacity in Riyadh

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - Saudi Arabia said on Sunday it plans to build a 92,000-capacity stadium in Riyadh that can host major international events, with the kingdom looking set to win the right to host the 2034 World Cup.

The Saudi sports ministry unveiled the approved design for the stadium, which is scheduled to be completed in the fourth quarter of 2029, according

This design was chosen from several submissions by six international companies, ensuring it meets FIFA requirements and standards

to the state news agency SPA.

The stadium is set to serve as the main base of the Saudi national team and will be part of a sports complex featuring an indoor sports hall, an Olympic-sized pool and other facilities. It will be named after Saudi King Salman.

"This design was chosen from several submissions by six international companies, ensuring it meets FIFA requirements and standards of sustainability and architectural excellence," SPA said.



Sri Lanka players celebrate with the trophy

Sacrifice pays off for Women's T20 Asia Cup champions Sri Lanka

Dambulla, Sri Lanka - Sri Lanka captain Chamari Athapaththu said years of sacrifice had finally paid off after they beat seven-time champions India by eight wickets in Dambulla on Sunday to win the Women's Twenty20 Asia Cup for the first time.

India, who had beaten Sri Lanka five times in previous finals, including the first four editions when the tournament was played in the 50-over format, posted 165-6 after deciding to

bat first.

India's openers were both dismissed by all-rounder Kavisha Dilhari, who took 2-36.

In reply, Athapaththu (61) got hosts Sri Lanka off to a flying start in an 87-run partnership with player of the match Harshitha Samarawickrama for the second wicket.

Dilhari (30 not out) and Samarawickrama (69 not out) got Sri Lanka over the line with eight balls to spare at 167-2.

India win rain-curtailed second T20I to seal series against Sri Lanka

Colombo, Sri Lanka - India beat Sri Lanka in a rain-affected Twenty20 clash by seven wickets via the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method in Pallekelle on Sunday, securing their first series win under new head coach Gautam Gambhir and T20 captain Suryakumar Yadav.

Leg spinner Ravi Bishnoi did the bulk of the damage with the ball for India, running through the Sri Lankan middle-order to take three wickets for 26 runs.

Missing newly-appointed T20 vice-captain Shubman Gill due to a neck spasm, India won the toss and elected to bowl after rain delayed the start of the match, restricting the hosts to 161-9.

Kusal Perera was Sri Lanka's highest run-getter of the day, scoring 53 runs off 34 deliveries after their opening pair of Kusal Mendis (10) and Pathum Nissanka (32) were removed cheaply.

Sri Lanka had lost just two



India's Ravi Bishnoi took three wickets for 26 runs

wickets for 130 runs in the first 15 overs but suffered another middle-order collapse, which saw them lose seven batters for 31 in the last five overs.

With the chase reduced after rain interrupted play, India needed 78 runs to win in eight overs with two overs of power-play.

The visitors got off to a shaky

start as Sanju Samson, who replaced Gill, fell for a golden duck. But fellow opening batter Yashasvi Jaiswal and Suryakumar stabilised the Indian innings by scoring 30 and 26 runs, respectively.

All-rounder Hardik Pandya finished things in style, blasting 22 runs off nine deliveries as India chased the target with nine

balls to spare.

"We spoke about this before this tournament — what brand of cricket we want to play, even if it's a shorter target or whatever target we are chasing, I think this is a template which we would like to go ahead with," Suryakumar said.

The final T20 will be played on Tuesday.



Oman's Issa al Adawi with coach Amer Bin Rokia during a training session in Paris

Oman's Al Adawi in fine shape, says coach

Paris, France - Young Omani swimmer Issa al Adawi is keen to put up a strong show in his second Olympics in Paris on Tuesday.

Al Adawi will compete in the 100metre freestyle event at Paris La defense Arena. The 22-year-old will feature in the second heats of the preliminary rounds alongside top swimmers including Libyan Youssef Abubakr, Estonian Nixon Hernandez and Tanzanian Kolios Salibuko.

There are ten heats in total, with 16 swimmers with the best timing progressing to the semifinals which will take place on the same day during the evening session. The finals will take place on Thursday.

At Tokyo 2020 Al Adawi finished the 100-meter freestyle in sixth place with a time of 51.81 seconds in the preliminary rounds of Group 3 and he will be keen to put up a better show in Paris.

"This Olympic participation follows three years of significant developments in my technical and preparatory programme," said Al Adawi.

"The training programme was very intensive and went over long and regular periods to reach optimal readiness. I will be looking for a quick sprint in the first 25

meters and will follow the coach's directions who divided the 100-meter freestyle into four parts focusing on specific technical aspects in each 25 meters," he said

Coach Amer Bin Rokia said Al Adawi will eye for a strong showing. "He is now in better physical

The training programme was very intensive and went over long and regular periods to reach optimal readiness.

xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

HOPEFUL START

Omani shooter Said Al Khatri registers 70 points on the opening day of qualification in men's trap event in Paris

Adil Al Balushi
Paris, July 29:

Oman's shooter Said al Khatri ended in the 26th position with 70 points on the opening day of the preliminary qualifications for the men's trap shooting event at the Paris Olympics.

Al Khatri delivered an impressive performance at the main range of the Châteauroux Shooting Center on Monday as he managed to earn 23 out of 25 points in the first round and then 25 out of 25 in the following round. The concluding round of first day finished with 22 out of 25 with a total of 70 points.

The Omani will eye to achieve positive scores on the second day of the preliminary qualifiers to advance to the next stage. Sweden's Levin Andreas lead the table with 74 points while Australia's James Willett finished second with 74 points and Croatian shooter Giovanni Cernogoraz, also on 74, is in third place.

The second day of the qualifying rounds will begin on Tuesday at 12:00 pm (Oman time). Shooters will target 50 points divided into two rounds of 25 targets each. The top six shooters with the highest scores will advance to the finals where the gold, silver, and bronze medals



Oman shooter Said al Khatri in action on the opening day of the qualifications for the men's trap shooting event

lists will be determined.

Athletics team gear up

Oman's athletics team are underway in their serious daily warm up sessions under watchful eyes of coach Fahad al Mashaykhi. Women's runner Mazoon al Alawi will compete in the preliminary rounds of the

100-meter event on Friday while sprinter Ali al Balushi will participate in the same category on Saturday. Both athletes aim to showcase their high technical abilities to achieve a positive and honourable participation for Oman in this Olympic event striving to set new personal and record timing.

The technical meeting for athletics competitions will take place on Tuesday. National coach Fahad al Mashaykhi will attend the meeting representing runners Ali al Balushi and Mazoon al Alawi who will participate in the 100-meter race event. The groups for the Omani athletes and the competition schedules will be determined during the meeting.

letics competitions will take place on Tuesday. National coach Fahad al Mashaykhi will attend the meeting representing runners Ali al Balushi and Mazoon al Alawi who will participate in the 100-meter race event. The groups for the Omani athletes and the competition schedules will be determined during the meeting.



Novak Djokovic

Djokovic masters Nadal to reach third round

Paris, France - Serbia's top-seeded Novak Djokovic overcame a brief bout of nerves in the second set before beating 14-time French Open champion Rafael Nadal 6-1, 6-4 at the Paris Olympics on Monday and moving into the third round.

While Djokovic remains in the hunt for his elusive Olympic gold, Spain's Nadal now has only the doubles competition left to add to his two Olympic gold medals, partnering Carlos Alcaraz.

Djokovic, who has won 24 Grand Slam singles titles to Nadal's 22, left nothing to chance in a flawless display over a set and a half.

The home crowd were ready for a mouth-watering epic between two of the greatest players to have graced the sport on their record-extending 60th encounter but instead they were being treated to what looked like a fast-track Djokovic win.

Ambassador praises Oman's Olympic participation

Paris, France - HE Ahmed Mohammed al Araiimi, Oman's Ambassador to France, expressed his great pleasure over Oman's remarkable presence in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

"The Summer Olympic Games is one of the most prominent international sports event which is characterised by the extensive participation of

professional athletes from various countries across the World. These athletes are very keen to be part of this global event which is taking place every four years," he said

"This year's edition of the Olympics in Paris features a record participation of more than 10,500 athletes representing different parts of the world

competing in 47 Olympic sports for 329 Olympic medals. Omani athletes' presence is a unique opportunity to compete with top-ranking athletes, helping them to gain essential technical skills and experience to advance their performance to higher levels of sports competition."

"The French government made significant efforts and

proper planning in organising this edition of the Olympic Games. The opening ceremony on Seine and featured athletes entering by boats, deviated from the traditional style and was exceptional. The Omani delegation stood out during the ceremony by wearing Oman's official dress reflecting the authentic identity on this grand global stage."



HE Ahmed Mohammed al Araiimi

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8	Cup Lock Ledger 1.8 Mtr	1800
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16	Cup Lock Ledger 1 Mtr	6200
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Swimming training cancelled over Seine pollution

Paris, France - Paris Olympics organisers cancelled the triathlon swimming training session for the second day in a row on Monday, with 24 hours to go until the men's race, after heavy rain affected water quality levels in the Seine.

Fifty-five triathletes are scheduled to line up at 8 a.m. on Tuesday on a floating pontoon next to the Pont Alexandre III and dive into the Seine, marking the first time athletes have competed in the river at an Olympics since 1900.

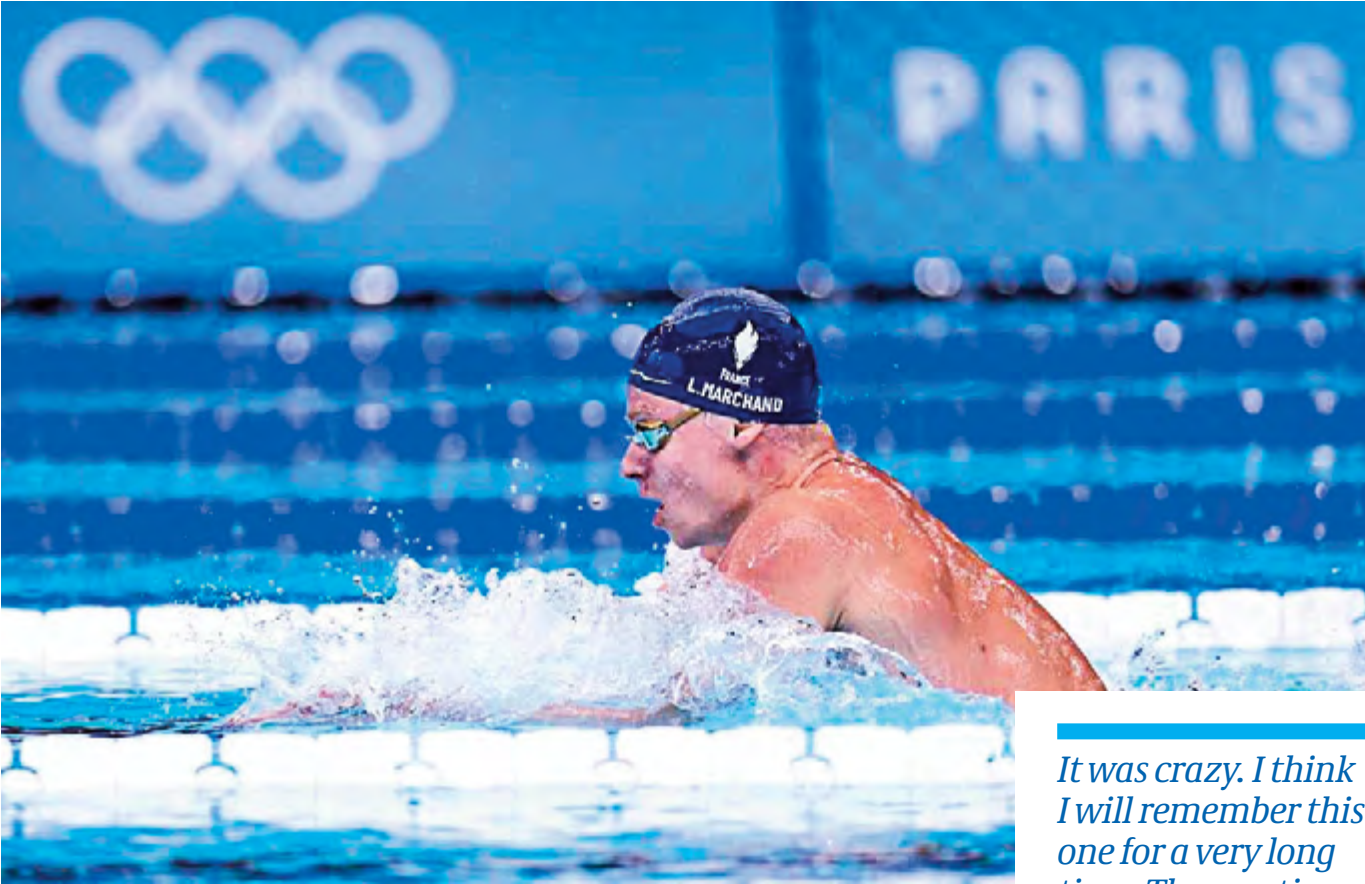
The women's individual race is scheduled for Wednesday, also at 8 a.m.

Organisers have set aside Aug. 2 as a contingency day for the individual races and Aug. 6 for the mixed relay in case water quality levels do not improve in time. "They still seem really hopeful for men tomorrow and women Wednesday," said Team Bermuda coach Dan Hugo, the husband of Tokyo gold medalist Flora Duffy. "But if needs be one or both will get moved to Friday."

Paris 2024 has already had to rejig some schedules, with men's skateboarding delayed to Monday from Saturday due to rain. A swimmable Seine is a key legacy Games organisers aim to leave behind for Paris residents.

France has invested some \$1.4 billion in new wastewater infrastructure to cut the amounts of sewage flowing into the

GOLD MARCHANT DELIVERS AGAIN



Leon Marchand broke the Olympic record and flirted with his own world record mark as he won 400m IM

Frenchman crushes rivals to win 400m individual medley

Paris, France - World record holder Leon Marchand stormed to the 400 metres individual medley gold at his home Paris Olympics on Sunday to send fans into delirium at La Defense Arena and affirm himself as one of the rarest of swimming talents.

The 22-year-old, nicknamed the "French Michael Phelps", carried the expectations of a nation into his first event but he simply crushed his rivals in a swim of four minutes and 2.95 seconds that broke the Olympic record

and flirted with his own world record mark.

It was not so much a contest as a coronation for Marchand, with Japan's silver medalist Tomoyuki Matsushita and bronze-winning American Carson Foster never threatening the young Frenchman as he became his nation's first Olympic champion in an individual medley event.

The crowd were berserk from start to finish. There were synchronised cheers of "Allez! Allez (Go! Go!) with every stroke of his

breaststroke leg and then one, long deafening roar as he motored home in the freestyle.

"It was crazy. I think I will remember this one for a very long time," said Marchand.

"The emotions are very difficult to describe. It was incredible for a swimmer.

"I opened my eyes, listened to everything that was happening around. And that really pushed me to already have a great race and have a lot of fun.

"I opened my present this afternoon, this evening."

Prepared by Bob Bowman, the coach who turned American Phelps into a gold medal machine, Marchand will bid for an-

It was crazy. I think I will remember this one for a very long time. The emotions are very difficult to describe.

LEON MARCHAND



Nicolo Martinenghi celebrates his win in Paris

Martinenghi ends idol Peaty's reign to win gold

Paris, France - Nobody expected Nicolo Martinenghi to win the gold in the 100 metres breaststroke to deny his idol Adam Peaty a third straight Olympic title on Sunday, but the Italian knew he had a fighting chance before the race when he started in his favourite lane.

Martinenghi, 24, was placed in lane 7 while pre-race favourite and world record holder Peaty was in lane 4 with Tokyo runner-up Arno Kamminga and Qin Haiyang on either side of him.

But when the race finished with the slimmest of margins, Martinenghi was 0.02 seconds faster than both Peaty and American Nic Fink, who shared the silver.

"I grew up with that goal in my mind, so to become Olympic champion today is a dream come true, next to Adam, one of my idols I grew up with," a beaming Martinenghi said. "When I touched the wall and I saw the red light on the block, just one red light (to signify the winner), I said, 'I did it!' It's incredible.

"I was in my favourite lane, so nobody could see me, I was like

in the shadows. I love to race in that way... The last 10 strokes I saw Nic next to me (in lane 6) and I said, 'OK, now let's fight, I'm ready to fight!'"

Martinenghi said he grew in confidence when his coach told him earlier in the day that he would be in lane 7 for the final.

"That lane was good, it was wonderful, my favourite lane," he added.

"I've got a seven on my chain. He said maybe it's a sign, because when I was younger, I was training every day in the seventh lane."

Huske wins 100m butterfly gold

Torri Huske reeled in US teammate and world record holder Gretchen Walsh to win the women's 100 metres butterfly gold by 0.04 of a second on Sunday.

The 2022 world champion touched out in 55.59 to secure the U.S. team's first individual swimming gold of the 2024 Games, with Walsh taking silver in 55.63 after leading at the turn on world record pace.

Lebanon's Benjamin Hassan beats Eubanks, creates history

Paris, France - Benjamin Hassan secured a landmark victory on Sunday as he became the first Lebanon player to win a match in an Olympic tennis event, stunning American Christopher Eubanks.

Germany-born Hassan, ranked 170th in the world, won 6-4 6-2 for one of the best victories of his career to fully vindicate being handed a Universality place by the ITF.

"I am unbelievably happy. We just enjoy it from the whole team. We are really proud and I'm also proud of myself," the 29-year-old told reporters.

"It was an unbelievable atmosphere. I was just trying to be calm because

"I didn't want to waste too much energy. When I won I could let it all out."

Hassan did not even set about becoming a professional until the



Benjamin Hassan

age of 22, having previously played just for fun. But now he is living the dream as an Olympian and has a second-round clash against Argentina's Sebastian Baez to look forward to.

He has thrown himself into life in the athletes village, amassing quite a collection of pins.

"I think the most special one is

Japan because I'm a huge fan of Japan. I like watching a lot of animated mangas," he said.

Hassan was not the only Lebanon player in the draw as Hady Habib lost to French Open champion Carlos Alcaraz on Saturday

Hassan and Habib also lost in the doubles on Sunday.

Malaysia beat China in badminton mixed doubles

Paris, France - China suffered its first badminton defeat of the Paris Olympics on Monday, when mixed doubles favourites Feng Yanzhe and Huang Dongping were upset by Malaysian duo Chen Tang Jie and Toh Ee Wei in the opening session of group play.

The country has long dominated Olympic badminton, winning 47 medals, or more than double the combined tally of Indonesia and South Korea, the second- and third-most successful teams. In 17 group stage matches in three days in Paris so far, it has now been defeated once, while in Tokyo, China lasted four days before losing a match. Chen and Toh won 21-17 15-21 16-21 against Huang and Feng.

"I am happy we overcame them and gave them a good fight," Toh said.



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Breathtaking performances

An extra challenge might face many elite sportsmen and women at the Paris 2024 Olympics - handling a chronic lung disease like Asthma

The Olympic Games spotlight the world's most breathtaking athletic achievements - quite literally. For those taking part in Paris 2024, a majority are likely to suffer in some way from a chronic lung condition - asthma.

Between 15 and 20 per cent of Olympic athletes have asthma, according to a 2023 study published in the *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports*. The same study states that up to 80 per cent of endurance sport athletes are affected by exercise-induced bronchoconstriction (EIB), otherwise known as exercise-induced asthma.

Some popular gold-medal winning Olympians who suffered from asthma include Greg Louganis (Diving), Mark Spitz (swimming), Kristi Yamaguchi (figure skating), Nancy Hogshead-Makar (swimming), Amy Van Dyken (swimming), Apolo Anton Ohno (speed skating), Noah Lyles (track and field), Paula Radcliffe (marathon runner), Peter Vanderkaay (swimming).

Asthma is a chronic lung disease that causes inflammation and narrowing of the small airways. Symptoms include shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing, and a tightness in the chest that can trigger a potentially life-threatening asthma attack when extreme.

Inhalers are prescribed as a treatment in two forms - preventer inhalers (brown coloured) - which are used daily, and reliever inhalers (blue coloured), for managing symptoms when necessary.

While most commonly diagnosed in early childhood, asthma can also develop in adulthood. Genetics, allergies, pollution, and lung infections are all listed as potential causes by the UK's National Health Service (NHS). Still, there is a lack of scientific evidence to confirm for certain.

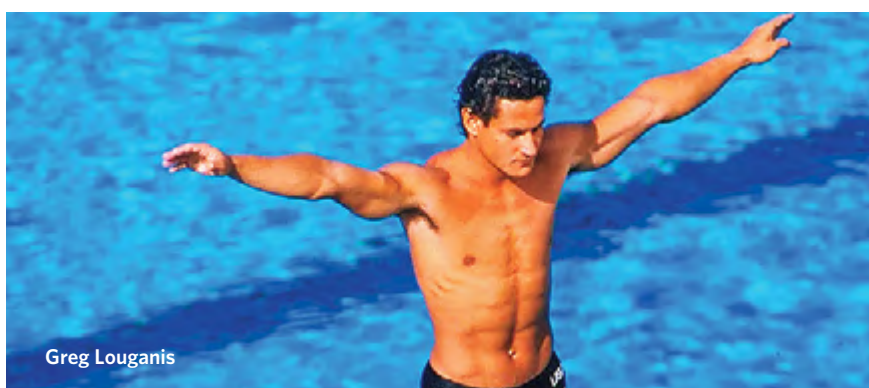
Why do so many Olympians struggle with asthma?

Struggle with asthma: High endurance exercise triggers symptoms in nine out of 10 people with asthma, according to Asthma & Lung UK, a non-profit organisation. It can also have a similar effect on those without pre-diagnosed asthma.

"If you're an elite athlete, you're twice as likely to experience an asthma-related condition than you are if you were just a member of the general population," John Dickinson, a Professor in Sport and Exercise Sciences at the University of Kent, told Euronews Health.

Exercise-induced bronchoconstriction (EIB), or exercise-induced asthma, refers to a strain of asthma that's triggered by strenuous physical activities, especially in cold and dry conditions.

"When you exercise, your ventilation



rates increase, so you breathe more air. And a lot of this air comes through our mouths. So, by the time it gets into our lungs, it's quite dry and it hasn't been filtered and it hasn't been warmed," Dickinson explained.

"In athletes' airways that have exercise-induced asthma, their airways get dehydrated because they have to humidify the air they just breathed in. That causes a kind of an inflammatory response. And then you get this muscle constriction around the airway," he pointed out.

It's more likely to impact endurance athletes that practice in cold air, like cross-country skiers, professional cyclists, and track runners.

Swimmers, in particular, have the highest occurrence of asthma when compared to other water sports, a study published in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* found. This is thought to be because of chlo-

rine byproducts on the surface of the pool, which can irritate the lungs.

Olympic participants with an asthma diagnosis are allowed to use inhalers during the Games, but need to be careful about the type of inhaler they use and the dosage. Those containing glucocorticoids are fine, but inhaled beta-2 agonists that relax airway muscles are mostly prohibited outside of specific doses by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

Many athletes have achieved incredible things despite having asthma.

British long-distance runner Paula Radcliffe, who was diagnosed with exercise-induced bronchospasm (EIB) as a teenager, held the Women's World Marathon Record for 16 years, while American track racer and asthma sufferer Jackie Joyner-Kersey won six Olympic medals (three of which were gold) throughout her career.

(Courtesy: euronews.com)

Which oil is healthiest?



Mention the term "Heart Attack" and most people imagine a middle-aged man drenched in sweat and clutching his chest. Few people seem to consider cardiovascular disease (CVD) as a woman's disease. Women are six times as likely to die of heart disease as of breast cancer.

We cannot expect a kitchen without cooking oil. Oil not only adds taste and texture to food, it also carries health benefits.

From giving calories to helping in absorbing some nutrients, to protecting our organs or supporting cell function and helping in forming some hormones, fats perform many functions in our body.

Supermarket shelves are flooded with a variety of oils - coconut, olive, avocado, canola, sunflower, groundnut, to name a few. This brings confusion in our minds about which one is healthiest.

To understand this lets first understand what is cooking oil. As we all know, oil is made up of fat and we have both healthy and unhealthy fats. In simple words, the kind of fat present in cooking oil will decide if it is healthy or unhealthy.

Unhealthy fats present in oil include saturated fats and trans fats. Saturated fats are solid fats and hence keeps the cooking oil in which it is present in large proportion also solid at room temperature. They primarily come from animal foods. Butter, dairy fat, red meat, skin of poultry, coconut oil, palm oil are all sources of saturated fats. These fats increase bad cholesterol in the body and hence, are the cause for many heart diseases.

Trans fats are artificially created fats and considered by many health scientists as worst of the worst in one's diet. Very small amounts are found naturally in animal fats but most of it is created in factories. These fats are mainly found in the processed and packaged foods like cookies, biscuits, cakes, microwave popcorns, margarine, frozen pizzas etc. It can be created at home or in restaurants, by using same oil repeatedly.

While saturated fats have some health ben-

efits and is good, if taken in small amounts, trans fats have no health benefits and, on the contrary, have detrimental effects on our body. Trans fats not only increase the bad cholesterol levels, but also decrease the good cholesterol levels. Hence these are associated with coronary heart disease, colorectal cancer and other metabolic disorders.

Healthy fats include monounsaturated fats which are found in foods like, olive, avocados, nuts and seeds and polyunsaturated fats which include, omega 6 and omega 3 fats.

Oils containing these fats, are healthy when compared with saturated or trans fats. But there is a slight twist to this. It is the ratio of Omega 6 to Omega 3 fats - higher the ratio, higher is the risk to inflammatory diseases.

Oils coming from nontropical fruits, vegetables, nuts or seeds are healthier choice which includes, olive oil, avocado, sesame, safflower, and to some extent, canola oil. These oils are considered healthy owing to their composition. They contain higher percentage of healthy fats as compared to unhealthy fats and ratio of omega 6 to 3 is not too high. Oils like palm oil or coconut oil do have lower ratio but as they have higher percentage of saturated fats, their use must be limited.

In addition to composition, the processing technique used in extracting these oils also affect their nutritional content. After extraction, many oils undergo a refining process to make them more heat stable and to increase their shelf-life. Refining removes some vital nutrients and hence the nutritive value gets affected.

Unrefined oils, cold pressed oils or extra virgin oils although nutritionally healthy, are different in taste, flavour and appearance. They are always more expensive than their refined counterparts. So, it is safe to:

- Go for oil that is low in saturated fats.
- Avoid oils or foods containing trans fats.
- Go for unrefined and non-tropical oils, like olive, peanut, avocado, canola
- Go for oil that best suits your cooking methods. Oils like, peanut, avocado, canola can withstand high temperature without undergoing any damage are suitable for frying or searing. Olive oil is best suited for sautéing, baking or salad dressing as it can withstand medium heat.

To conclude, do not use excess healthy oils as it can add excess calories to food. Moreover, unhealthy fats like saturated fats, when used in small amounts, will not cause harm. Remember, both quality and quantity matter when it comes to selecting the right cooking oil.

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

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GLUTE WORKOUT

Sitting for most part of the day can slacken your base... quite literally. If you need to tone up your butt, working out your glutes is the answer...and you don't need to go to the gym for this

BUILD YOUR BUTT

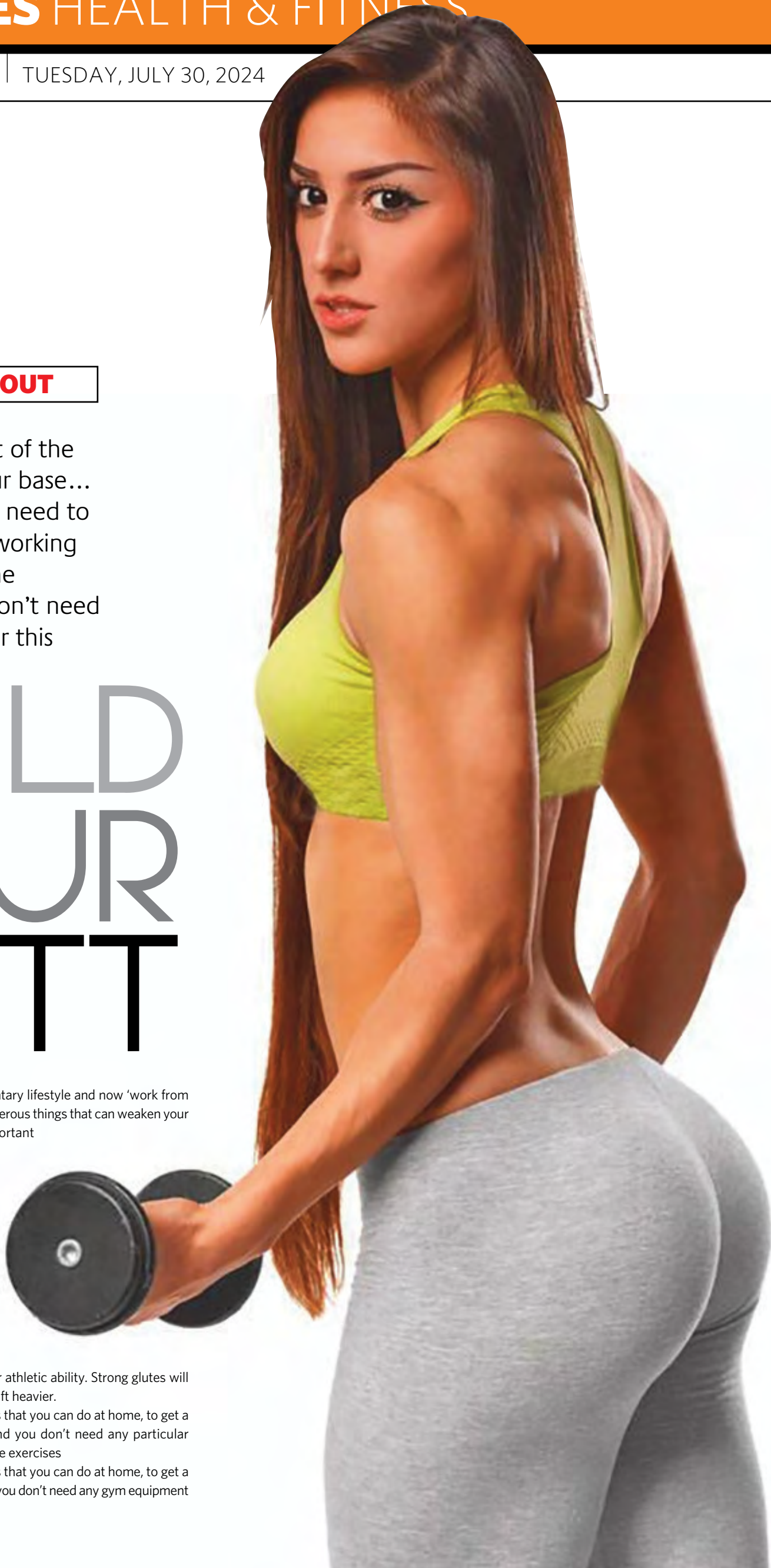
Blame it on the desk job, sedentary lifestyle and now 'work from home' options - there are numerous things that can weaken your glutes, one of the most important and powerful muscle groups in our body.

The glutes are made up of three muscles, all working together to provide form and function in daily activities and exercises. The three glute muscles are Gluteus Maximus (largest), Gluteus Medius, and Gluteus Minimus (smallest).

Growing your glutes not only makes you look great but boosts your athletic ability. Strong glutes will help you run faster, jump higher and lift heavier.

Here are 5 amazing glute exercises that you can do at home, to get a better-looking and stronger butt. And you don't need any particular weights or gym equipment to do these exercises

Here are 5 amazing glute exercises that you can do at home, to get a better-looking and stronger butt. And you don't need any gym equipment to do these exercises.



Single Leg RDL

- Stand tall with feet directly under shoulders. Lift one foot off the floor, keeping only the toes in contact with the floor. Keep the other foot firmly planted on the ground.
- Push your hips back, tilting your torso forward whilst simultaneously lifting the resting foot off the ground, extending the leg out behind you. Keep a soft bend in the standing leg.
- Tilt forward, aiming to get your belly button facing the floor. Keep your shoulders and hips square. Tilt until you feel a stretch in the hamstring of the standing leg, maintaining a neutral spine. Aim to bring your torso to a 45-degree angle with the floor so your body forms a T-shape, or as close to this as you can whilst maintaining a flat back.
- Pause, then return to standing by driving through your heel and pushing your hips forward. Squeeze your glutes as hard as possible at the top.
- Repeat for desired reps.



Split Squats

- Stand tall and take a step forward roughly three to five feet with one leg. Your feet should be shoulder-width apart, not in line with one another.
- Focusing your gaze in front of you and keeping a proud chest, take a breath in and drive your back knee down towards the floor until it lightly touches it.
- Push through the heel of your front leg to extend your legs and come back to standing in your split stance.
- Pause at the top, then repeat.



Curtsy Lunge

- Stand with your feet directly under you, hands by your side.
- Step one leg behind and across your other leg, bending your knees so your back knee drives down close to the floor, clasping your hands in front of your chest as you do so. Keep your chest proud and your gaze focused straight ahead.
- Pause, then return to standing by driving through the front heel to straighten the legs, bringing the back leg back in line with the standing leg as you do so.
- Switch legs, repeating the same steps on the opposite side.

Warm up

Even though we aren't using weights in our butt workouts at home, we still need to warm up. As the largest muscle group in our body, it's important to make sure our glutes are properly primed before we train them.

First, you'll want to focus on raising your heart rate a little. If you're planning on doing your glute exercises at home and don't have access to cardio machines or equipment, then try a couple of rounds of plyometric exercises such as squat jumps, jumping lunges and mountain climbers.

Next, you'll want to do some dynamic stretching. Focus on stretches that target the lower body, specifically the hips.



Air Squats

- Stand with feet slightly wider than hips, toes pointing forward, or slightly out.
- Clasp your hands in front of your chest, keeping your chest proud. Take a deep breath into your core.
- Bend your knees, pushing your hips back, until your thighs are parallel with the floor, knees bent at 90 degrees, travelling in line with toes.
- Drive up out of the squat, pushing through your heels to straighten your legs. Squeeze your glutes at the top.
- Repeat for the prescribed rep range.



Crab Walks

- Take your feet into a squat stance (just outside shoulders, toes pointing slightly out). Clasp your hands in front of your chest and squat down into a quarter squat.
- Keeping your body facing forward and a straight back, move your right foot out to the side, then move your leg foot over to meet your right foot.
- Shuffle laterally, moving the right foot out and then meeting it with the left one, for 8-10 reps. Then go back the other way, stepping the left leg out and bringing your right leg to meet it.
- Repeat for 2 -3 lengths in each direction.

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