

Insurance made mandatory for self-employed Omanis

Our Correspondent Muscat

Social Protection Fund (SPF) has made insurance mandatory for self-employed Omanis in a move to provide comprehensive social protection.

This requirement applies to individuals with commercial records and licences for their professions and activities. The mandate takes effect from the

date of initiating the first activity or upon obtaining the licence.

The insurance system remains optional for retirees, those already insured in government sectors (civilian, military or security) or the private sector, including those working additional jobs at institutions, charitable societies or managing private businesses.

Categories covered under the system include business own-



ers, legal practitioners, medical professionals, engineers, accountants, auditors and freelancers in various fields. Individuals required to register include those involved in trade, industry and other economic activities, as well as partners in commercial entities except public joint-stock companies. The system also covers self-employed individuals in professions like fishing, agriculture and pub-

lic transport driving.

An SPF official emphasised the importance of the new insurance system, noting its role in providing social protection against risks associated with aging, disability and death. "The insurance ensures a dignified livelihood, guaranteeing individuals a sense of security and stability," the official said.

Under the comprehensive insurance umbrella, individuals

are entitled to a retirement pension based on their specific circumstances, including age, type of risk, length of service and income level. The system aims to secure their future and empower them to pursue their livelihoods sustainably.

The minimum monthly contribution required is RO5.5, ensuring equitable participation while maintaining the system's sustainability and effectiveness.

Private sector contributed RO8.8bn to GDP in Q4 '23

Our Correspondent Muscat

Preliminary data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information shows private sector entities in the sultanate contributed RO8.85bn to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in the fourth quarter of 2023. This accounted for 81.2% of the GDP at current prices, compared to 84% in the same period of 2022.

Large corporations made the biggest contribution, adding RO6.58bn to the GDP, representing 60.4% of the total, down 6.5% compared to Q4 2022. Medium size enterprises contributed RO681.9mn - 6.3% of the total - reflecting a 3.2% decrease.

Small enterprises contributed RO718.6mn - or 6.6% - showing a drop of 2%. Micro enterprises added RO870.7mn - or 8% of the GDP - an increase of 0.7%.

The number of workers in private institutions rose 6.4% from 1.71mn in the fourth quarter of 2022 to 1.82mn in the fourth quarter of 2023. The total number of private institutions reached 240,765, up 8.7% compared to the same period in 2022.

Oman's real GDP recorded an annual growth of 1.3% from RO37.7bn recorded in 2022 to RO38.2bn at the end of 2023, as



Large corporations	RO6.58bn
Medium size enterprises	RO681.9mn
Small enterprises	RO718.6mn
Micro enterprises	RO870.7mn
Private sector workers	1.71mn

per Ministry of Economy statistics.

The sultanate's nominal GDP - gross domestic product at current market prices - decreased 2.8% to RO41.8bn in 2023 compared to the previous year, the

ministry added.

The growth in GDP achieved last year was mainly supported by a 2.4% growth in the added value of non-oil activities. The non-oil sector's contribution to the sultanate's overall GDP in-

creased from RO26.6bn in 2022 to RO27.3bn at the end of 2023.

Oil sector activities increased marginally - 0.4% - in 2023 contributing RO12.4bn to the overall GDP compared to RO12.3bn in 2022. The slight growth in oil activities reflects the impact of developments in the global oil market and Oman's commitment to the OPEC+ agreement to maintain stability of the oil market.

The Ministry of Economy informed that in 2023, growth rates were good despite global challenges and changes in the oil market that led to a decline in oil production and prices from the highs witnessed in 2022.

According to the ministry, the Omani economy is expected to continue to grow this and next year, with expectations of continued good levels of oil prices, good performance of non-oil activities, and constant development of new initiatives that enhance diversification efforts.

In January, the Ministry of Finance estimated Oman's economy to achieve growth of at least 3% in 2024, while continuing to maintain annual inflation at moderate levels.

Supporting the growth are strategic investments in industrial cities and free zones, alongside major agreements in green industries and green hydrogen.

Institutional Innovation Guidebook in pipeline

Our Correspondent Muscat

The sultanate has initiated a groundbreaking project - Institutional Innovation Guidebook - for the government sector, becoming the first country in the MENA region to implement a single, unified innovation guidebook across the public sector benefiting more than 44 organisations.

The project has been rolled out based on the framework of Global Innovation Institute (GII) in close coordination with the sultanate's Innovation Hub and strategic support from Alizz Islamic Bank and Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit.

GII is a US-based professional certification and business accreditation firm in the field of innovation.

Countries across the MENA region have traditionally implemented separate innovation directives for individual organisations.

The guidebook project will eventually pave the way for greater free-flow of collaboration across the government and private sectors, thereby ensuring an all-encompassing and consistent vision for innovation-based growth and joint cooperation in the sultanate.

The project aims to foster a culture of innovation and collaboration within Oman, while addressing key issues such as



Oman first country in MENA to implement a unified innovation guidebook for the public sector

innovation strategy alignment, organised and structured innovation efforts, and cultivation of competency and talent in the sphere of innovation.

The Institutional Innovation Guidebook sets out to fulfil the objectives Oman Vision 2040 - prescribed as the nation's blueprint for sustainable progress and development over the long term.

Underscoring the project's significance, Dr Munther al Busaidi, Vice-Chairman of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, stated, "Fostering a culture of innovation is of paramount importance to our country's future

economy and society as it creates a dynamic platform to help overcome challenges and solve problems in a sustainable and efficient way. The Institutional Innovation Guidebook is a landmark initiative, as it establishes a unified vision among a wide array of stakeholders in the country. The project reflects Oman's status as a leader in the region for innovation policymaking and for accelerating transformation for long-term growth."

Since its inception in December 2023, the project has been lauded for its unique approach, demonstrating progress in key areas in early 2024.

Reflecting the project's objectives, and ensuring broad participation from all government entities, the team responsible of the project has visited all the governorates and held extensive discussions in partnership with Alizz Bank. The goal of these discussion is to ensure the Directorate Generals in all governorates are synchronised with the project.

NCSI WINS KUWAIT'S INFORMATICS AWARD



National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) won the 23rd Sheikh Salem al Ali al Sabah Informatics Award in the Digital Transformation in Sustainable Development category. The award - presented to the centre for the 2020 Electronic Census of Population, Housing and Establishments - was handed over by Sheikh Meshaal al Ahmad al Jaber al Sabah, Emir of Kuwait, to Khalifa Abdullah al Barwani, CEO of NCSI, in Kuwait City, on Monday (ONA)

Dhofar Municipality expands khareef activities to attract more visitors

Our Correspondent Muscat

Dhofar Municipality announced on Monday the extension of tourist activities in the governorate throughout the three-month khareef season - June 21 to September 21 - as opposed to one month earlier.

The decision, announced during a press conference at Arabian Travel Market 2024 in Dubai, aims to bolster tourism in the region by providing an extended window for visitors to enjoy khareef in Dhofar.

Dr Ahmed Mohsen al Ghassani, Chairman of Dhofar Municipality, informed of the civic body's ambition to surpass last year's tourist numbers by at least 300,000 in 2024.

Notably, 2023 khareef attracted nearly a million tourists. "This extension in tourist activities, a collaborative effort between the municipality and relevant authorities, seeks to maximise tourist engagement and raise hotel occupancy across the governorate. By prolonging



Dhofar Municipality aims to surpass last year's tourist numbers by at least 300,000 in 2024

DR AHMED MOHSEN AL GHASSANI

the tourist activities, organisers aspire to create a more immersive and enriching experience for both local and international guests, thereby further promoting Dhofar's unique cultural and natural attractions," Ghassani said.

H E Azzan al Busaidi, Undersecretary for Tourism in Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, stated that Oman's participation in Arabian Travel Market 2024 includes 36 tourism institutions - both public and private sector en-

tities - as well as several small and medium enterprises. "The aim is to enhance joint cooperation with various international companies and institutions in the field, which would increase the number of tourists to the sultanate."

He informed that several tourist activities and events that take place in the sultanate will be promoted at Arabian Travel Market, such as the khareef season in Dhofar and elevation of Sur as Arab Tourism Capital 2024.



Association for children with disabilities gets new HQ



Hundreds leave eastern Rafah after evacuation orders



Oman Sail's 49er teams in La Grande Motte this week

Our Correspondent

Muscat

The Association of Early Intervention for Children with Disabilities' new headquarters in Airport Heights was inaugurated on Monday at a ceremony held under the patronage of H E Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health, and graced by H E Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najjar, Minister of Social Development.

Built for a total capacity of 400 children, the new centre is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities including nine day-care classrooms, seven vocational training classrooms, and a rehabilitation department consisting of physiotherapy, speech therapy, occupation therapy, behavioural therapy and special education.

The centre also features supportive services such as sensory integration rooms, darkroom, ob-



servation rooms, specialised sports facilities and aqua therapy services; paid activities such as gait analysis and 3D insole production services; and a shop for assistive devices.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Sabah al Bahlani, CEO of the association, said, "Our vi-

sion is to reach every child with developmental challenges so that they can live to their maximum potential with the highest possible degree of independence and inclusion in Omani society. Our mission is to preserve the right of children with disabilities to live with dignity, equality and

quality of life."

She added that though the centre has volunteers, it needs more trained professionals to deal with the children. "Opening of the new centre paves the way for the association to become a national centre in providing rehabilitation, social education and



training services to children with disabilities and their families across Oman," Sabah said.

The association expressed its gratitude to the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, bp Oman, CC Energy Development Oman, Oxy Oman, Daleel Petroleum, OQ and Petroleum Development

Oman for their support.

On the occasion, Dr Ali al Rajhi, Director General of Planning and Studies in the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, said, "This project reflects our priorities at the ministry and Oman Vision 2040 for a decent and sustainable life for all, including

children and persons with disabilities. The centre offers a comprehensive range of services to support children with disabilities and their families in facing their challenges and gives these children equal opportunities to thrive, learn and become an integral part of society."

Our Correspondent

Carbon6, a social ideation enterprise, will host a camp called Sustainable Leadership for Youth on May 10 and 11 at Crowne Plaza Muscat OCEC.

The camp will unlock circular potential in three main categories - technology and innovation, environment and circular economy, and sustainable tourism and hospitality.

The camp intends to equip young attendees with the tools and knowledge necessary to become future leaders in sustainability

The event aims to serve as a platform for dialogue and interaction among youth, stakeholders and experts to address social and environmental issues. Through workshops, activities and informal discussions, it seeks to involve high-

profile supporters and provide practical insights into sustainability.

The objectives of the camp are multifaceted. It intends to equip young attendees with the tools and knowledge necessary to become future leaders in sus-

tainability. It also aims to foster dialogue that supports Oman's net-zero agenda and highlight opportunities for emerging sustainable leaders.

Additionally, the camp seeks to increase youth engagement in sustainability, enhance skills for building a climate-resilient future, and strengthen overall capacity building.

According to Carbon6, the way forward is to collaborate inclusively with various stake-

holders to enhance sustainability awareness across sectors. The camp is expected to lead to more effective social solutions, improved capabilities and better resource management.

Support for the youth camp has come from several prominent organisations, including Omran, be'ah and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, demonstrating a significant endorsement of the event's objectives and Carbon6's mission.



Kuwait - In an effort to enhance the field of nursing and develop skills of healthcare professionals, a cooperation agreement was signed between Oman College of Health Sciences (OCHS) and the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health in Kuwait on Monday.

The agreement includes several specialised programmes to train nursing staff with the aim of enhancing their scientific knowledge and practical skills in these specialties. The agreement will come into effect with implementation of training in critical care nursing for adults, followed by paediatric critical care nursing, scheduled to commence mid-May.

The collaboration aims to facilitate exchange of knowledge and experiences between the two parties, and develop training and educational curricula to

meet the needs of the nursing job market, ultimately improving the quality of healthcare provided in hospitals and medical centres.

The signing of the agreement is a qualitative leap in enhancing bilateral cooperation between Kuwait and Oman in the healthcare sector, and strengthening capabilities of healthcare professionals in both countries to meet the aspirations of the community and achieve the highest levels of healthcare.

In Kuwait, the OCHS team conducted several relevant visits to discuss areas of cooperation. The team met H E Dr Saleh Amer al Kharousi, Ambassador of Oman to Kuwait, and visited the Nursing College of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training, Jaber al Ahmad al Sabah Hospital and Amir Hospital.



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Doha	38	26	Duhr	12.08pm
Kuwait City	31	22	Asr	3.33pm
Manama	34	25	Maghrib	6.43pm
Riyadh	37	20	Isha	7.59pm

Madinat Al Irfan to host inaugural SOCCA World Cup in November

Muscat - Omran Group has on Monday entered into an agreement with the Sports Makers to sponsor the SOCCA 2024 World Cup for six-a-side football, the event that is expected to expand the horizon of the tourism sector by creating new opportunities and reasons for people to visit the country.

Following this agreement, Oman will be hosting the tournament's inaugural edition in the Middle East, scheduled to take place from November 28 to December 8 this year, in Madinat Al-Irfan, Muscat.

The agreement was signed by Dr Hashil Obaid al Mahrooqi, CEO of Omran Group, and Waleed Juma al Obaidani, President of the International SOCCA Federation in the Middle East and CEO of Sports Makers, in the presence of several officials from both the organisations.

Commenting on the agreement, Sultan Sulaiman al Khudhoori, Asset Manager at Omran Group, stated that hosting the SOCCA 2024 World Cup is a landmark event that will attract visitors from around the world.

"This agreement reflects the group's ongoing efforts to support various prominent international events, which play a crucial role in enhancing Oman's global



tourism profile. The group remains committed to supporting initiatives aimed at revitalising tourism in Oman."

Obaidani added, "We value the strategic partnership with Omran Group to host the

This agreement reflects the group's ongoing efforts to support various prominent international events, which play a crucial role in enhancing Oman's global tourism profile

SULTAN AL KHUDHOORI

The six-a- side football tournament is expected to feature the participation of around 44 to 85 teams from various countries. Additionally, it is anticipated that many spectators will attend to immerse themselves in this global competition.

Omran Group is actively collaborating with various local, regional, and international institutions and entities to enhance tourist experiences across different destinations.

Furthermore, the group is identifying opportunities and projects aimed at strengthening the tourism sector and its role in achieving sustainable development goals.

Registration opens for MCSY children's culture awards

Our Correspondent Muscat

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MCSY) has announced the launch of the second edition of its awards programme that recognises children and individuals promoting cultural awareness among children.

The award comprises two competitions: 'Oman Speaks' and 'Speak So I Can See You'.

Huda Said al Riyamiya, Director of the Department of Cultural Activities at MCSY, highlighted the award's objective of enhancing children's cultural and literary skills, particularly in speaking.

"This initiative aims to encourage Omani writers to enrich children's literature with values that promote loyalty and a strong connection to Oman's cultural heritage," she explained.

The 'Oman Speaks' competition will be focused on marine heritage and the marine environment, based on recommendations from the judges' committees.

Participants must be Omani or Arab writers residing in Oman,

and their short stories should cater to children aged 6-10.

Stories should revolve around Oman's marine environment and maritime heritage. Writers can explore topics such as marine museums, sea turtles, whale and dolphin conservation, marine reserves, coral reefs, sustainable tourism, and ancient trade routes.

The 'Speak So I Can See You' competition provides a platform for exceptionally talented children to showcase their speaking skills. Participants will create a video of 2 to 4 minutes, delivered in classical Arabic or the local dialect. Each contestant will select a topic from a predefined list and present their thoughts on it.

The competition aims to nurture children's social communication skills, enabling them to articulate their ideas confidently in public.

It also seeks to groom them as purposeful content creators for the future.

Through this platform, young speakers can hone their communication skills, express themselves authentically, and captivate audiences with their words.



Asyad Group opens applications for logistics accelerator programme

Muscat - Asyad Group, Oman's global integrated logistics provider, in partnership with Omantel Innovation Labs, has opened applications for its highly anticipated Asyad Accelerator Programme.

The initiative marks a significant milestone in enhancing Oman's technology and logistics sectors by supporting the nation's most innovative technology startups.

Focused on supply chain optimisation, sustainable logistics and cold chain logistics, the six-month accelerator programme has been designed to empower early-stage Omani startups that are developing cutting-edge solutions to address key challenges and seize opportunities within the logistics industry.

This effort aligns with Asyad's commitment to bolster SMEs and foster entrepreneurship throughout Oman, stated a press release.

Participants in the accelerator programme will benefit from expert mentorship in financial viability, market desirability, technical feasibility, and fundraising strategies.

The programme also offers a comprehensive perks package that grants access to global resources such as legal, accounting, bookkeeping, and cloud computing services.

Moreover, startups enrolled in the programme will have a



unique opportunity to secure potential investment from Omantel Innovation Labs and connect with a global network of mentors, corporate partners, and investors.

Khalfan al Khusaibi, Group In-Country Value Lead at Asyad Group, emphasised the programme's role in the regional logistics landscape.

"Our mission at Asyad Group is to propel the development of Oman as a global logistics hub through our integrated logistics ecosystem," he said.

"We strongly believe in the vital role of the private sector, especially SMEs, in achieving this mission. This programme is Asyad's call to innovative, vision-

ary entrepreneurs to join us in redefining the future of logistics in Oman and beyond. Through this targeted accelerator, we look forward to enabling Oman's most promising startups to grow and thrive."

To be considered for this opportunity, eligible startups should demonstrate that they are developing proprietary solutions with potential to enhance Asyad Group's operations.

Applicants should have a minimum viable product and be ready to scale.

Earlier stage companies and technology startups outside of the programme's focus areas will be considered based on relevance and viability.

John Crane announces third expansion in Oman with Seven Seas Petroleum LLC

John Crane, a global leader in rotating equipment solutions and energy transition technologies and services, and a business of Smiths Group plc, is pleased to announce the opening of its Oman Service Center under the Patronage of His Excellency, Mohsin bin Hamad Al-Hadrami, the Undersecretary of Energy and Minerals, John Crane's third expansion in Oman with Seven Seas Petroleum LLC, a partner specializing in rotating equipment.

The new service center in Oman, located at the heart of Muscat, solidifies John Crane and Seven Seas Petroleum LLC's commitment to bolstering country value and investment in the region. This partnership aims to not only enhance the local service capabilities but also contribute significantly to Omanization efforts by providing employment opportunities and technical skill upgrades for the citizens of Oman.



Since this partnership's inception in 2004, it has served prestigious customers in Oman including Petroleum Development Oman, OQ Group of companies, Occidental of Oman, Oman LNG, and various other Omani-based companies. This long-standing relationship underscores the trust and reliability established over these years.

One of the key highlights of this expansion is the introduction of state-of-the-art technology to Oman. The facility will fea-

ture a 3D scanner, marking the first of its kind to be used in any John Crane repair center in the Middle East. Additionally, the inclusion of a 36-inch lapping machine with a pneumatically operated load application will cater to the maintenance needs of large-diameter wet mechanical seals, further enhancing efficiency and precision.

Moreover, the facility is fully equipped with in-house machining and stocking capabilities, ensuring faster turnaround times for clients. This enhanced infrastructure also positions the service facility to cater to reliability-based, comprehensive mechanical seal maintenance contracts, meet-

ing the evolving needs of the industry.

In line with their commitment to knowledge sharing and capacity building, the new service center will offer vocational and hands-on training programs for Oman customers. The facility includes a dedicated training room, facilitating interactive learning experiences and fostering skill development within the local workforce. Adhering to the highest standards of quality assurance, the service facility conforms to the rigorous John Crane quality assurance protocols, ensuring consistent and reliable service delivery.

The expansion of the John Crane and Seven Seas Petroleum LLC partnership represents a significant milestone in enhancing in country value and investment in Oman. With its focus on Omanization, adoption of cutting-edge technology and commitment to knowledge sharing, the new service center is poised to contribute to the long-term socio-economic development of the region while meeting the diverse needs of its customers.

About John Crane

John Crane is a global leader in mission-critical technologies for the energy and process industries and an innovator in rotating equipment, encompassing mechanical seals, couplings, filtration systems and cutting-edge asset management and digital diagnostics solutions. Blending a rich legacy of innovation with a commitment to service excellence, we've enabled our customer's reliable and sustainable operations for over a century.

While recognizing the role of traditional energy, we are pioneering solutions that enable cleaner alternatives, crafting a vision for a sustainable energy future. Our extensive global presence underscores our promise to customers, with over 200 service centers in 50 countries. With £1 billion in revenues in 2023, we are an integral pillar of Smiths Group plc, a FTSE 100 listed company dedicated to improving our world through smarter engineering.

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Leading the way in safety and quality for Oman’s vehicles

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Dunlop tyres are well-known for their Japanese quality, world-class safety and service, delivering better performance. Hamdan Trading Group, the sole distributor for Dunlop tyres in Oman, has played a significant role in establishing the Dunlop brand as a popular choice among customers in the sultanate. Dunlop recently won Oman’s Most Trusted Brand Award 2023 in the Tyres Category for the third consecutive year.

In an interview with Muscat Daily, Alwyn Martin, General Manager of Hamdan Trading Group-Dunlop Division, discusses the success and strengths of the Dunlop brand in Oman’s competitive tyre market. He also elaborates on Dunlop’s and Hamdan Trading Group’s commitment to quality and safety, as well as their strategies to meet the diverse needs of Omani consumers.

Dunlop has won Oman’s Most Trusted Brand Award for the third consecutive year. What key factors have contributed to Dunlop’s success in Oman’s tyre market?

Dunlop’s success in Oman’s tyre market can be attributed to several key factors such as the high quality and reliability of products, a widespread distribution network, and effective marketing and communication strategies. Dunlop has been consistently delivering high-quality tyres that specifically cater to the needs of Omani consumers, especially in terms of durability and performance.

In terms of reliability, establishing a strong brand reputation in Oman since 1981 has led to increased trust and loyalty among consumers. Hamdan Trading Group has a widespread and

efficient distribution network all across Oman, ensuring easy availability of Dunlop tyres to consumers. Additionally, effective marketing and communication strategies also contribute to the success of Dunlop brand in the sultanate.

How do Dunlop and Hamdan Trading Group maintain customer satisfaction and trust to ensure they remain the most trusted brand in the Omani market?

At Dunlop and Hamdan Trading Group, we prioritise several key strategies to maintain customer satisfaction and trust. First, we place a strong emphasis on quality assurance, ensuring that our tyres consistently meet the highest standards of quality, reliability, and performance. Second, we are dedicated to providing excellent customer service to address any inquiries, concerns, or feedback from our customers promptly and efficiently. We are also committed to continuous improvement and actively seek feedback from our customers to identify areas where we can enhance our products and services.

What really makes Dunlop stand out in Oman’s competitive tyre market? How does Dunlop’s commitment to Japanese quality and world-class safety contribute to its success?

Dunlop stands out in Oman’s competitive tyre market, perhaps most notably due to its unwavering commitment to Japanese quality and world-class safety standards. Dunlop’s dedication to Japanese quality is a key differentiator. Japanese manufacturing is renowned for its precision and attention to detail, implementing a wide range of tools and techniques such as Lean Six Sigma, Kaizen, etc.

This commitment to quality translates into tyres that are not only reliable



Dunlop stands out in Oman’s competitive tyre market, perhaps most notably due to its unwavering commitment to Japanese quality and world-class safety standards

ALWYN MARTIN
GENERAL MANAGER, HAMDAN TRADING GROUP-DUNLOP DIVISION

and durable but also perform exceptionally well in a variety of driving conditions, like wet, dry, and off-road. Additionally, safety is a top priority for consumers, and Dunlop recognises this by prioritising safety features in its tyre designs.

Can you tell about Dunlop’s wide range of tyres that cater to the diverse needs of vehicle owners in Oman?

The latest flagship models of Dunlop tyres currently in the Omani market include the SP Sport Maxx 060+, which features the incorporation of a new compound with enhanced silica dispersibility, providing improved fuel efficiency and significantly longer tyre life. The Grandtrek PT5 is the flagship tyre for SUVs, specifically designed to provide outstanding performance in terms of comfort and stability, which is often sought after by consumers in this market.

How does Hamdan Trading Group’s distribution network ensure that Dunlop tyres are readily available and accessible to customers across Oman, including remote areas and regions with difficult terrain?

Hamdan Trading Group leverages strong and strategically located warehouses, logistics partners, and operating branches in regions such as Haima, Ibri, and Ibra to ensure that Dunlop tyres are readily available and accessible to customers all across Oman, including remote areas. This network allows for efficient transportation and timely replenishment of stock to meet customer demands effectively.

How many Dunlop showrooms and branches are there in Oman? What are the expansion plans for the near future?

Currently, there are eight branches in

operation all across Oman, with the head-office located in Ghala, Muscat. We are planning to open seven more branches in the near future.

How does Hamdan Trading Group work with Dunlop to ensure that their tyres meet the unique needs of Oman’s road conditions and climate?

Hamdan Trading works closely with Dunlop to ensure that their tyres are specifically tailored to meet the unique road conditions and climate present in Oman. This partnership involves research and development to understand the challenges presented by Oman’s terrain, temperature variations, and road surfaces, along with a long-standing relationship between the two groups. Regular tire feedback and data collected while monitoring the tires further assist in the continuous improvement of Dunlop’s tyres, ensuring they consistently meet the demands of Oman’s roads and climate.

How does Dunlop ensure that its tyres are affordable and environmentally friendly for vehicle owners in Oman?

Hamdan Trading Group and Dunlop prioritise affordability and environmental sustainability through advanced manufacturing processes to optimise production costs without compromising quality. Through continuous research and development, Dunlop also designs tyres that are fuel-efficient and durable, reducing the overall cost for vehicle owners along with the carbon footprint produced. Additionally, Dunlop is also working on utilising eco-friendly materials in the production process to minimise the overall environmental impact.

What future plans does Hamdan Trading Group have to further strengthen its partnership with Dunlop and enhance the brand’s presence in Oman?

Hamdan Trading Group is committed to strengthening its partnership with Dunlop through several future initiatives such as marketing and promotional activities to promote awareness of Dunlop’s product offerings, expansion of the dealer network across Oman, and collaboration on market research to identify emerging trends and customer preferences.



Samail Industrial City signs investment deal for RO16mn beverages plant

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Samail Industrial City, pertaining to the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), has signed an investment agreement with Al Khayal Business and Investment Company to establish a manufacturing plant for beverages, juices and soft drinks.

The project is planned to be

implemented on a total area of 5,000 sqm, involving an investment of RO16mn for phases 1 and phase 2 of the project.

On another note, Madayn has recently announced an investment opportunity of equipping, managing, and operating the Medical Fitness Examination Centre in Samail Industrial City. The Medical Fitness Examination Centre aims at delivering top-tier

healthcare services to the workforce within the industrial city and the surrounding population.

The prime location of the centre facilitates easy access, thanks to its proximity to the entrance gate and the highway. The centre covers an area of 1100.71 sqm and comprises various facilities, including laboratories, clinics, X-ray facilities, offices, among other facilities.

Dentons advises Actis and Fortescue on Dhofar green hydrogen project

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Global law firm Dentons announced that it advised the consortium comprising Actis and Fortescue on their successful bid to acquire land to develop a world-scale green ammonia project in Oman.

The Actis-Fortescue consortium recently signed long-term project development agreement and sub-usufruct agreement with Hydrogen Oman (Hydrom) for Block 6 in the southern region of Dhofar, following Hydrom’s second round of green hydrogen auctions.

The project, which is still in its feasibility phase, could be located in the Dhofar region. It is one of two blocks awarded under the second round and will comprise up to 4.5GW of solar PV and wind generation, hydrogen electrolysis and ammonia conversion technologies and an expected production capacity to of 200,000 tonnes of green hydrogen per annum.

The Dhofar block, known for its potential in renewable re-



sources, is set to become a cornerstone in the production of green ammonia, contributing to Oman’s position as a leader in the global energy transition with its abundant natural resources and strategic location.

The multi-jurisdictional Dentons team advised on all aspects of the bid and negotiation of the project agreements with Hydrom, according to a press statement.

Dentons’ involvement in this

project underscores the firm’s leading position in the nascent green hydrogen sector, as well as the strength of its international teams’ major project development practice.

Actis is a leading global investor in sustainable infrastructure. Fortescue is a global integrated green energy, metals and technology company.

Fortescue and Actis are both major players in the green energy space globally. Actis has

an extensive track record developing renewable power projects, with approximately 21GW of renewable energy capacity (16GW operational, 5GW under construction or contracted) managed by the firm to date. Fortescue is a global leader and innovator in the green hydrogen industry with a pipeline of projects globally, including three which have reached final investment decisions.



CBO issues treasury bills worth RO85mn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) on Monday announced the issuance of four tenders of government treasury bills worth RO85.5mn.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO6.5mn, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached RO99.647 for every RO100 bill, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO99.645. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.5976% and 4.6138%, respectively.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO17mn, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price

reached RO98.745 for every RO100 bill, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO98.740. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.0349% and 5.0989%, respectively.

Furthermore, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO42mn, for a maturity period of 182 days. The average accepted price reached RO97.450 for every RO100 bill, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO97.445. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.1144% and 5.2483%, respectively.

On the other hand, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO20mn, for a maturity period of 364 days. The average accepted price reached

RO95.160 for every RO100 bill, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO95.160. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.8533% and 5.1001%, respectively.

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

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

Russia's Gazprom records worst loss in decades as European gas exports falter

Indrabati Lahiri

Gazprom, the Russian energy giant majority owned by the Kremlin has recently revealed the worst loss in more than 20 years, of 629bn roubles (€6.38bn) in 2023. This was much worse than the 447bn roubles loss expected by the market, according to the Interfax news agency. It was also sharply at odds with the 1.2tn roubles profit seen in 2022.

Furthermore, the company clocked in a sales net loss of 364bn roubles in 2023, also a disappointment from the 1.9tn roubles profit seen in the previous year. Total revenue also dropped to 8.5tn roubles in 2023, a slide from the 11.7tn seen in the previous year.

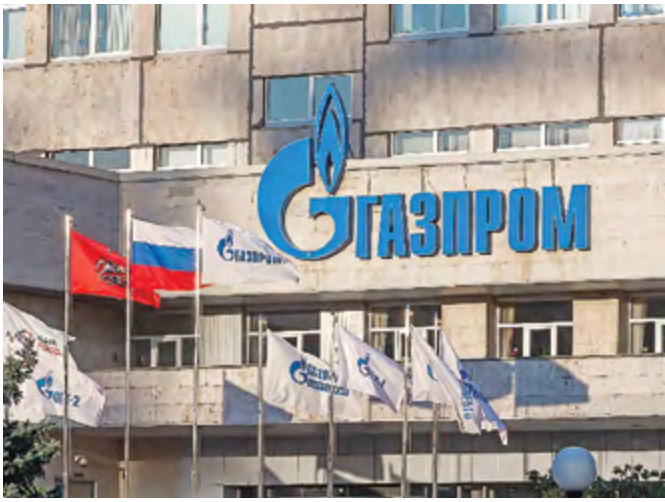
These disappointing figures were mostly due to Gazprom's European exports falling significantly, as a result of Europe's continuing sanctions on both Gazprom, and several of its individual employees because of the Russia-Ukraine war.

This has been an especially hard blow, as prior to the Ukraine war, Europe was the largest export market for both Russia and Gazprom. Gazprom has also not revealed any of its export figures since the beginning of last year.

Why is Gazprom struggling?

Gazprom has long been one of Russia's most influential companies, with the ability to use its gas supplies as leverage to dictate the course of several regional conflicts, such as those in Moldova and Ukraine.

It also tried doing the same



Apart from the decline of European exports, Gazprom is also reeling from natural gas prices stabilising following the Russia-Ukraine war

with Europe, as retaliation for the EU sanctions, by choking natural gas supplies through its Nord Stream pipelines. However, this move backfired, as instead of forcing Europe to fold and soften the sanctions, it has accelerated the search for other energy providers for the continent.

This has led Europe to turn more towards other major suppliers, such as the US, North Africa and Qatar, who have offered significant support in helping the continent stock up on natural gas for the winter months. However, a milder than expected winter in 2023 also

meant that less energy supplies than previously anticipated were used.

Apart from the decline of European exports, Gazprom is also reeling from natural gas prices stabilising following the Russia-Ukraine war, which has significantly slashed the bumper profits several energy companies were seeing in the past couple of years.

Gazprom has also been trying to make up for its dwindling European exports by selling more gas to developing nations such as India and China, which have also been taking advantage of the cheaper energy provided by Russia.

As of now, Gazprom has been hiking its natural gas supplies to China, with the help of a pipeline going through Siberia. However, China also seems reluctant to commit to a new 1,700 mile pipeline with Russia, which could be an additional blow to both the country's economy and its war chest.

(Source: Euronews.com)

UAE's Mubadala plans \$13.5bn biofuels investment in Brazil

Abu Dhabi, UAE – Mubadala Capital, the wholly owned subsidiary of Abu Dhabi sovereign investor Mubadala Investment Company, is planning to invest \$13.5bn in the biofuels sector in Brazil over the next decade, according to a Financial Times report.

Mubadala Capital's head of Brazil told the Financial Times in an interview that the move is a part of Abu Dhabi's broader plans for the Latin American giant, which includes the creation of a new stock exchange.

Oscar Fahlgren revealed a "large-scale development" by its energy company, Acelen, will comprise five \$2.7bn "modules", which will begin production by the end of 2026, FT reported. Each will feature a biorefinery with the capacity to process 20,000 barrels of fuel per day.

Mubadala Capital will also spearhead the conversion of an existing oil refinery in the north-eastern Brazilian state of Bahia, acquired from state-controlled



Petrobras in 2021, with the total \$13.5bn investment to be funded through a mix of equity and debt over a period of five to 10 years, Fahlgren said in the same interview.

Mubadala Capital is also looking to open a bourse in Brazil by next year through its Americas Trading Group, a financial assets

trading platform it purchased in 2023, he further revealed to the FT.

"Brazil is a very large country. It has only one stock exchange. And I think that's suboptimal infrastructure for the players that operate in this segment," Fahlgren told the FT. "It will probably be a staged launch –

perhaps start with equities, then expand. No asset classes are off the table."

Fahlgren added that Mubadala Capital was also involved in talks for a proposed new football league in Brazil whose goal is to package up and sell the commercial rights.

(Source: Zawyia)



Gulf International Chemicals SAOG

(An ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company)

P.O.Box 132, Rusayl, Postal Code: 124, Sultanate of Oman, E-mail: info@gicomman.com
Website: www.gicomman.com, Tel: 24446800, Fax: 24446808

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Gulf International Chemicals SAOG (GIC), I am pleased to present you a brief report on the company's activities for the first quarter of 2024.

The Group's total revenue for the period under review was RO 493,312. The net profit after taxation amounted to RO 29,392 and the net asset per share stood at 127 Baiza.

During the first quarter of 2024, regional construction markets continued the slow pace. Both Oman and UAE markets are in oversupply and less demand situation for construction chemicals due to sharp reduction in construction projects which is mainly attributable to limited government spending on construction and infrastructure projects.

However, several mega construction projects have been announced lately in Oman and it is likely that this will improve the local construction market once the construction of these projects starts in 2025-2028. The outlook for the remaining of year 2024 is very conservative due to unlikely immediate recovery and slow improvement in the purchasing power in the construction sector as it is mainly linked to the improvement of regional circumstances and improvement in the local investment climate and real estate market. Moreover, it is very likely that the competition will be fierce in the future as the dominant multinational companies (after the global mergers and acquisitions in the construction chemicals industry) seek greater market share in our markets.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to His Majesty's Government for its generous support and for paving the way for growth and prosperity.

Best Regards,
Board of Directors

CONSOLIDATED UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 2024 (EXPRESSED IN OMANI RIALS)

	Group 2024	Group 2023
ASSETS		
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	74,121	109,923
Right-of-use assets	10,313	12,266
Intangible asset	57,316	65,229
Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	350,625	283,419
Deferred tax asset	82,384	74,017
Total non-current assets	574,759	544,853
Current assets		
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	-	-
Inventories	227,391	272,500
Trade and other receivables	1,068,815	1,070,357
Term deposits	700,000	650,000
Cash and bank balances	381,654	436,533
Total current assets	2,377,860	2,429,390
Total assets	2,952,619	2,974,243
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Capital and reserves		
Share capital	2,100,000	2,100,000
Legal reserve	608,689	599,721
Fair value reserve	(214,039)	(195,539)
Revaluation reserve	50,112	50,112
Retained earnings	130,117	42,550
Total capital and reserves	2,674,879	2,596,844
Non-current liabilities		
Lease liabilities	10,177	11,996
Employees' benefit liabilities	82,828	88,147
Total non-current liabilities	93,005	100,143
Current liabilities		
Lease liabilities	1,636	1,636
Trade and other payables	183,099	274,055
Income tax payable	-	1,566
Total current liabilities	184,735	277,257
Total liabilities	277,740	377,399
Total equity and liabilities	2,952,619	2,974,243
Net assets per share (OMR)	0.127	0.124

CONSOLIDATED UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (EXPRESSED IN OMANI RIALS)

	Group 2024	Group 2023
Revenue from contracts with customers	493,312	489,603
Cost of sales	(330,235)	(337,089)
Gross profit	163,077	152,514
Other income	12,585	12,387
	175,661	164,901
Expenses		
General and administrative expenses	(109,198)	(100,843)
Selling and distribution expenses	(42,466)	(42,821)
Profit from operations	23,997	21,237
Finance income	10,763	6,233
Finance cost	(181)	(181)
Profit before tax for the period	34,579	27,289
Taxation	(5,187)	(4,247)
Net profit after tax for the period	29,392	23,042
Earnings per share	0.001	0.001

MoE honours winning student companies in 'Oman My Destination' programme

The Ministry of Education (MoE), represented by the Center for Vocational Guidance and Student Counseling, in cooperation with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, celebrated on Sunday morning the honouring of the winning student companies of the Oman My Destination programme, a release stated.

The programme, held under the patronage of H E Azzan bin Qasim al Busaidi, Undersecretary for Tourism in the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, was attended by Sheikh Yaqoub bin Saif al Shuhaimi, Director-General of the Center for Vocational Guidance and Student Counseling.

The honouring ceremony, which took place at Oman Hall at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism's General Diwan, began with the playing of a piece from the Royal Anthem, followed by a presentation of the Oman My Destination programme. The presentation included an introduction to the programme, its idea, objectives, its target group, its content, its implementation mechanism, and its fields.

In his speech, H E Busaidi reminded that the tourism sector is one of the sectors on which the Sultanate of Oman relies for sources of economic diversification. "It is one of the sectors that provide job opportunities for young people, and these opportunities are not necessarily direct



job opportunities, but provide opportunities for self-employment through student companies to carry out self-employment work carried out by graduates at various stages of training," further said, adding that the ministry works either through joint initiatives such as this initiative or even through initiatives to provide programmes to prepare and qualify students to be ready to take advantage of these opportunities in the tourism sector.

Student Ismail bin Asaad al

Ameri, Director of Finance at Joby Company, gave a speech in which he said, "In the 'Oman My Destination' programme, we went through a new and unique experience, in which we benefited and learned a lot from, as our perceptions expanded and we were introduced to different ideas and experiences, which made our participation an enriching experience that we will record in the list of our achievements. This is not the end of the journey, but rather the beginning of the hard work, the burning de-

sire, and the passion that leads to achievement and accomplishing goals."

Then, two experiences for two startup companies in the tourism sector were presented, 'Darbak Company' and 'Venture City'.

The presentations included an introductory overview of the companies, their advantages and objectives, challenges and applications, services, future plans and vision, coverage, regional partnership, and achievements in the tourism sector.

After that, the patronage of



the celebration honoured the programme supervision committee, the judging committee from the Ministries of Education, Heritage and Tourism, administrators, department heads, school principals, specialists, and students, and honoured the student companies 'Qahtan Company' and 'Incense Tears Company' with incentive prizes, and the companies that won the three first places.

The first in the Sultanate of Oman as distinguished student companies in the tourism sector,

where Rahali Company from Buraimi won third place, Yalla Wayana Company from North Batinah came second, and Joby Company from South Batinah won the first place.

The ceremony ended with a musical piece presented by the two students, Hud bin Said al Balushi, and Jhailam bin Abdul Rahim al Balushi, from Sheikh bin Salem bin Said al Sayeghi School in Seeb.

The ceremony reviewed the programme's goals and activities, highlight its achievements,

results, vision, and future aspirations, and provide thanks and appreciation to everyone who helped implement the activities and events on the ground and contributed to their success, and provide an opportunity for all organisers and participants in those events to get to know each other within the framework of the programme in a beautiful and elegant festive atmosphere.

On the sidelines of the ceremony, an exhibition was also held for student companies participating in the programme.

Bank Muscat, ROP, continue partnership in anti-fraud action

With the increased popularity of digital channels due to the ease with which they bring services closer and enable transaction processes, criminal activities from all over the world have been on the rise to scam the public through a variety of deceptive methods via these channels.

Against this background, the Royal Oman Police and Bank Muscat have announced that they continue to partner closely in implementing a joint anti-fraud campaign for the fifth consecutive year. The campaign focuses on raising public's awareness about this phenomenon among different institutions and individuals in the community.

The awareness campaign will be carried out as part of social responsibility efforts of both institutions using various media channels including Oman TV, radio, print, online media, and social media.

This year, the campaign will include a number of new programmes and topics reflecting the more recent deceptive activities used by criminals.

The public can contact the Royal Oman Police hotline at 80077444 to report fraud or for any fraud-related queries.

The jointly-run campaign launched this year will be supported by a number of new awareness messages in various media channels, websites and electronic newspapers to reduce the consequences of falling for fraud. Criminals use multiple methods such as sending phishing emails or links to employees and mem-

bers of the community in general. People can also fall for fraud when playing online games or making online purchases without verifying the persons or entities being dealt with.

With cases of electronic fraud increasing globally and often causing tremendous financial and psychological harm to both individuals and businesses, Bank Muscat has further strengthened its efforts to combat this crime by partnering regularly with a

ROP and Bank Muscat have announced that they continue to partner in a joint anti-fraud campaign for the fifth year

number of institutions and authorities including the Royal Oman Police, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology and other institutions. The campaign sought to help the public recognise fraud and avoid falling prey to it. Royal Oman Police and Bank Muscat will continue during the coming period to spread new messages reflecting the importance of never sharing personal details with anyone, including those claiming to be a bank employee or an official as this is an essential first step to defend oneself against criminal activities.

BankDhofar high yield saving account continues to offer competitive interest rates up to 4.25%

As part of BankDhofar's constant endeavour to help customers achieve their financial goals that suit their future aspirations, the bank continues to offer a High-Yield Account to obtain an interest rate of up to 4.25%, which is calculated on a daily balance at the end of each day, to be added to the customer's account at the beginning of the subsequent month.

The High-Yield savings account includes a number of features that allow customers to achieve their financial goals at an accelerated pace, as the account provides a world of convenience and possibilities, whether as an account for daily transactions, optimal returns on funds, or access to various services such as



debit and credit cards, and term deposits and insurance options.

Additionally, customers can access the account around the clock via the mobile application

and online banking services, and the ease of conducting banking transactions through ATMs, cash deposits, direct debit cards, and the cardless withdrawal feature.

An existing customer of BankDhofar can open a High-Yield Saving Account, via the mobile application. New customers can open a High Yield Saving Account via our Intilaqa App or can visit one of the bank's 118 branches conveniently located throughout Oman.

BankDhofar is one of the leading banks in the region, providing integrated banking services to the corporate and the individual customers, as well as commercial financing services. It also works to meet customers needs by implementing the best international practices in the world of banking and finance.

The bank continuously seeks to enrich the banking services provided to customers by devel-

oping products based on their needs. The Bank is aligned to the government's Vision 2040 and build the proposition with a commitment to drive economic growth and development in Oman.

BankDhofar is also committed to keeping pace with digital developments that appear from time to time in the world through a huge investment in technology, in addition to adopting innovative strategies to improve customer experience, simplifying operations, and provide a comprehensive set of digital services. The bank recently launched 'Dhofar-Pay', a service the bank provides to customers that allows them to pay via smart phones easily and safely.

Cirkopolis blends theatre, circus in ROHM show

The Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) hosted Oman's premiere of Cirkopolis, the critically acclaimed show by Montreal-based troupe Cirque Éloize for three nights from May 3 to 5.

With Cirkopolis, Cirque Éloize presents their breathtaking blend of circus arts, theatre, and dance in a highly-stylized metropolis setting. In front of a captivated audience, twelve acrobats and multidisciplinary artists rebelled against monotony, reinventing themselves and challenging the limits of the factory-city.

Since the show began touring in September 2012, it has received rave reviews from the public and critics alike.

The New York Times wrote 'There aren't more beautiful [shows than Cirkopolis]', while the New York Post wrote 'Extraordinary! There's the circus, and then there's Cirque Éloize. These guys are on a whole other level.'

As a world-class venue, ROHM has welcomed interna-



tionally acclaimed shows this season, focusing on a diverse programme of performances especially popular with young and family audiences.

"Cirkopolis was imagined as a crossroads - between imagination and reality, between individuality and community, between

limits and possibilities. The show is driven by the poetic impulse of life, the physical prowess of the circus and its humour, at once serious and light-hearted. Entering Cirkopolis is all about letting go and allowing yourself to be borne aloft by hope," explains Cirque Éloize's Cirkopolis Artistic

Director and Co-Director Jean-not Painchaud.

"I am proud to present this iconic show at the prestigious Royal Opera House Muscat. We aim to provide the audience in Oman with a poetic and unforgettable experience," Painchaud emphasised.

TradeReads: Young boy launches app

In a remarkable display of innovation and leadership, Krish Kamath, a 16-year-old student and Head Boy at Indian School Wadi Kabir Cambridge in Muscat, has launched 'TradeReads' mobile application aimed at transforming the landscape of educational resource sharing.

Krish's initiative promises to revolutionise the way students access and exchange educational materials. 'TradeReads' serves as a platform connecting individuals seeking books with those willing to share them, fostering a community-driven approach to education.

'TradeReads' encourages the reuse of books, promoting not only knowledge enrichment but also sustainability by reducing waste. Users can easily list books, search for specific titles across various categories, and directly communicate with others to arrange exchanges.

BEC, SVT Products Germany host joint technical seminar

Bahwan Engineering Company LLC and SVT Products Germany jointly conducted a technical seminar with live demonstration, showcasing the effectiveness and importance of implementing Passive Fire Protection measures.

Bahwan Engineering Group (BEC Group) who regularly bring leading products and innovative solutions to Oman, hosted a technical seminar together with SVT Products Germany, a leading provider of world class passive fire protection solutions, on April 30.

Aimed at showcasing state-of-the-art 'Passive Fire Protection Products and Solutions', the seminar, held at Crowne Plaza Muscat garnered significant attention from major clients representing diverse sectors such as healthcare, infrastructure, defence, utilities, engineering, construction and more.

Among the distinguished attendees were prominent organisations including Public Authority of Civil Defence and Ambulance, Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Defence Engineering Services (MODES), Royal Oman Police (ROP), Ministry of Education, and Nama Electricity Distribution Company (NEDC). The diverse representation highlighted the widespread recognition and relevance of SVT



Products' offerings across various industries.

The seminar featured an insightful agenda designed to provide attendees with comprehensive knowledge and practical insights into passive fire protection offering attendees an in-depth understanding of the latest advancements in the field of passive fire protection. SVT team of experts covered several topics such as fire-stop materials, passive fire protection solutions, installation techniques, regulatory compliance, and more.

One of the highlights of the event was a live demonstration conducted outdoors, showcasing the effectiveness and reliability

of SVT Products' passive fire protection solutions. Attendees had the opportunity to witness firsthand how these solutions perform under simulated fire conditions, emphasizing their critical role in safeguarding lives and property.

Commenting on the success of the seminar, Thomas Frommeyer, Vice President, Head of Sales, Construction-Emerging Markets at SVT Products, expressed gratitude to the attendees for their participation and engagement.

"We are delighted to have had the opportunity to share our expertise and solutions with such esteemed clients," Thomas said.

"The overwhelming response underscores the importance of proactive fire safety measures in today's world."

The seminar served as a platform for meaningful dialogue and collaboration among industry stakeholders, paving the way for enhanced fire safety standards and practices across various sectors. SVT Products. Several attendees commended the BEC Group for its commitment to driving innovation and excellence in all spheres of the Industry, be it Products, Projects or Services.

The Seminar on passive fire protection for increasing the safety of life & assets was highly appreciated by the attendees.

ahli islamic adds features for kids' savings accounts

ahli islamic has unveiled exciting new features for its exemplary children's savings account, a press release said.

Providing its customers with state-of-the-art, Sharia'a-compliant products and services, ahli islamic guarantees its discerning clientele simple and streamlined, hassle-free processes. Rest assured that with the new features, you can grow your child's fortune, instilling in them sound financial literacy.

The enhanced new features to the children's savings account allows customers to safeguard their children's financial well-being. Of the new features to note is the receiving of a well-coming gift from ahli islamic when opening the account. With an expected profit rate of up to 1.5%, customers can partake in growing their children's wealth.

Moreover, customers gain 1% cashback of up to RO250 on an initial deposit as a gift from the bank. The account also provides dedicated offers from selected merchants. Most notably, the children's savings account can be opened via ahli islamic's mobile app, with no minimum balance charges.

"We are delighted to announce the enhanced new features of our children's savings account," said Noora Sultan, AGM - Head of Retail Banking at ahli Islamic.



Through perseverance, she said, the bank aims to nurture financial literacy from an early age. "The enhancements showcase our commitment to empower minors with the right tools to navigate the intricacies of the modern financial landscape. With confidence and integrity, we have enabled the up-and-coming innovators, and change-makers of our society, thereby empowering them to make meaningful contributions to the world around them. ahli islamic invites parents to join us in our stride as we pave the way towards a more prosperous future for our children and the greater community."

Shaping your child's financial

future is easier with ahli islamic's enhanced children's savings account, as it is an investment that sows seeds which reap greater rewards. It is an opportunity to instill financial awareness and responsible practices that help grow a robust savings culture in the younger generation. By enabling parents to easily open a savings account for their loved ones, ahli islamic has set the standard for financial growth into the minds of tomorrow's leaders.

In line with the best Islamic finance practices and principles, alongside the implementation of cutting-edge technology, ahli islamic acts as the enabler for families, who plan their children's finances responsibly.



Healthcare leadership programme kicks off

The eighth and final module of the Leadership Development Programme in Healthcare Management, which targets hospital directors and a group of second-line leaders, commenced on Sunday at the Grand Millennium Hotel in Muscat.

Thirty-eight participants from the health sector, Medical City for Military and Security Units, Sultan Qaboos University Hospi-

tal, and Diwan of Royal Court are taking part in the programme, a release stated.

This three-day module includes discussions on the concept of change management and its application mechanisms in projects proposed by the programme participants.

It's worth noting that the programme has been ongoing for the past six months.

Al Maha one of Oman's strongest brands

Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company has been acknowledged as one of Oman's strongest brands in an annual survey conducted by Alam Al-Iktisaad magazine in collaboration with the Arabian Research Bureau (ARB).

The company was bestowed with an award in recognition of the achievement at a glittering ceremony held at the Sheraton Oman Hotel under the patronage of H H Sayyid Muhammad bin Thuwaini bin Shihab al Said.

"This acknowledgment underscores our unwavering commitment to delivering excellence in our products and services. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the organisers, participants, and supporters of this esteemed award," said Hamood al Amri - Head of Technical Division.



Kalyan Jewellers announces Akshaya Tritiya mega-bonanza offers

Kalyan Jewellers, one of the largest and most-trusted jewellery brands has recently announced mega-bonanza giveaways as part of its Akshaya Tritiya celebrations.

Following a customer-centric approach, the jewellery brand has been offering exciting offers to ensure patrons gain maximum benefits on their jewellery purchases. It is offering a 2-gram gold coin on purchase of Diamond or Polki jewellery worth RO600 and a 1-gram gold coin free on purchase of platinum, precious stones and uncut jewellery worth RO600 or Diamond or Polki jewellery worth between RO350-RO599.

Moreover, the jewellery brand is also offering a 0.5gm gold coin free on gold jewellery purchases worth RO600 or platinum, precious stones and uncut jewellery worth between RO350-RO599. Also, a 0.25gm free gold coin on purchase of gold jewellery between RO350 and RO599. Apart from these,



the brand has also launched an exciting array of new festive collections for their patrons.

Ramesh Kalyanaraman, Executive Director, Kalyan Jew-

ellers said, "Akshaya Tritiya is a special time for new beginnings and cherished traditions like family gift exchanges. At Kalyan Jewellers, we understand the

deep emotional connection our customers have with jewellery and festivals."

Through this exciting giveaway offers, he said that com-



pany aims to enhance their celebrations by offering exceptional jewellery and enabling them to maximise benefits on their purchases.

To streamline the Akshaya Tritiya shopping experience, Kalyan Jewellers introduced an attractive pre-booking programme so customers can con-

veniently select and place their jewellery orders in advance, ensuring a hassle-free pickup on or near the auspicious day. This initiative aims to alleviate the rush and long waits traditionally associated with the festival, offering their patrons a seamless and stress-free shopping experience. The pre-booking option also helps customers to stay protected against price hikes within that time period.

All Kalyan Jewellers showrooms stock Muhurat - their bridal jewellery line curated from across India. They also have exclusive sections featuring Kalyan's popular house brands such as Tejasvi (Polki jewellery), Mudhra (Handcrafted Antique Jewellery), Nimah (Temple Jewellery), Glo (Dancing Diamonds), Ziah (Solitaire-like Diamond Jewellery), Anokhi (Uncut Diamonds), Hera (Daily Wear Diamonds), Rang (Precious Stones Jewellery), and the recently launched Lila (Coloured Stones and Diamond Jewellery).

Vladimir Putin to be sworn in as Russian president for 5th term

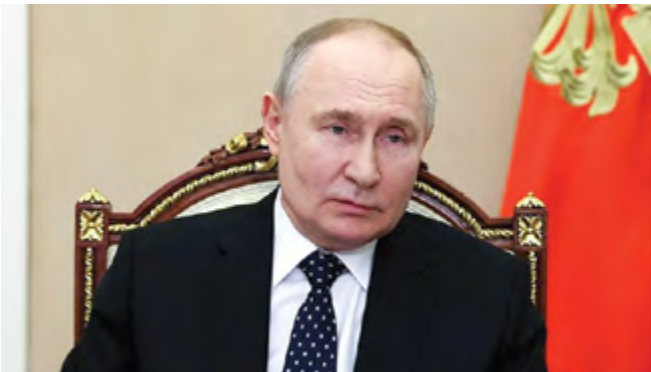
Moscow, Russia - Vladimir Putin will be sworn in as Russia's president for a fifth term at an inauguration ceremony that will be held in the capital Moscow on Tuesday.

The ceremony, scheduled to take place in the Kremlin, will officially mark the start of another six-year term in office for Putin, who won 87.28 per cent of the vote during the presidential election held in March.

Following the inauguration ceremony, the current Russian government will resign and a new government will take office with the approval of the country's parliament, in accordance with the constitutional amendment made in 2020.

In this regard, Putin will present his candidate for prime minister to the Russian State Duma, the country's lower house of parliament, for approval.

While the parliament has the power to accept or reject the candidate, Putin will be able to directly appoint the prime minister without a need for parliamentary approval should lawmakers



reject the candidate three times. In such a case, Putin will also have the right to dissolve the parliament and hold new parliamentary elections.

According to local media, in-

The ceremony, scheduled to take place in the Kremlin, will officially mark the start of another six-year term in office for Putin

seen as a as a successful head of government based on the country's growing economy despite the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and subsequent economic sanctions by the West.

Putin will directly appoint the country's foreign, defence, justice, emergency situations, and interior ministers in consultation with the Federation Council, the upper house of the Russian parliament.

It is said that current Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu will retain their posts, while changes are also not expected in ministries related to economy and finance.

However, due to public criticism of education, sports and cultural policies, there could be some changes in the relevant ministries and there is also the possibility of creating a Youth Ministry.

Based on Russian law, the approval process of the new government can take until May 20 at most.

Anadolu Agency

Chad Presidential election begins; Masra likely to win

N'Djamena, Chad - In the lead-up to Chad's presidential election, candidates delivered their final campaign messages on Saturday, marking the nation's first vote since the passing of long-time leader Idriss Deby, Africanews reported.

Among the prominent contenders is Succes Masra, the current prime minister of the interim government. Addressing supporters in the capital, N'Djamena, Masra, a former executive of the African Development Bank, pledged a brighter future for the country's youth, emphasising job creation as a central focus.

His platform includes a bold five-year plan aimed at generating 200,000 jobs, evenly distributed between the private and public sectors, forming what he calls a 'minimum package of dignity'. Masra's grassroots movement also pledges to tackle pressing issues like access to essential services such as electricity, water, and ensuring security for all citizens, as reported by Africanews.

"We aspire to a nation of peace and reconciliation, where victory is not merely partisan, but a collective triumph for all Chadians," Masra asserted, advocating for hope and progress over past challenges.

Ahead of the polls, Masra urged his supporters to remain vigilant throughout the elec-



toral process, emphasising the importance of transparent and fair elections.

Elsewhere in the city, General Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno, commonly known as 'MIDI', the country's interim president, addressed his supporters. Deby ascended to power three years ago following the demise of his father, Idriss Deby, who ruled Chad with an iron fist for three decades. Despite initially promising elections within 18 months, Deby's government postponed the vote, allowing him to participate as a presidential candidate. He enjoys widespread support from a diverse coalition of political parties and civil society organisations, with many anticipating his victory.

"Our candidate's success is assured, unmatched by any other contender," declared supporter Abakar Bishala.

ANI

Panama's Mulino emerges winner in presidential poll

Bogoto, Colombia - Panama's electoral authority declared Jose Raul Mulino, a right-wing former public security minister, as the winner of the country's presidential election on Sunday.

With more than 90 per cent of the votes counted, the candidate of the opposition alliance comprised of the Realising Goals party and the Alianza movement, who took 34 per cent of the vote, claimed victory over the anti-system candidate Ricardo Lombana, who trailed behind with 25 per cent.

Two days before the elections, the country's Supreme Court rejected a move to disqualify Mulino, who stepped in as a candidate in February by replacing former President Ricardo Martinelli. Mulino, 64, who had been Martinelli's vice-presidential candidate, took over the ticket for the former president's party, leading the voting intention over his two closest rivals, the lawyer Lombana and ex-president Martín Torrijos.

Martinelli, who was once the favourite to win this year's presidential race, was disqualified from running by Panama's electoral tribunal because he was sentenced to more than 10 years in jail for money laundering.

The former president, who remains very popular in Panama, has been living in the Nicaraguan embassy in Panama City since seeking asylum there in February.



Jose Raul Mulino delivers a speech in Panama City, Panama, on Sunday (Xinhua)

Mulino has dismissed the criminal case against Martinelli as politically motivated, but opponents have called Mulino a puppet of Martinelli and have suggested he could take advantage of his new position to pardon the former president.

A short video released by Mulino's campaign shows him visiting the former president at the Nicaraguan embassy after voting on Sunday. In the video, they are seen hugging at the diplomatic headquarters.

Eight candidates were competing to replace centre-left President Laurentino Cortizo, who leaves behind a country that is facing a severe drought, massive protests and an economic slowdown.

Mulino will be faced with an economy whose growth is expected to fall from 7.3 per cent in 2023 to 2.5 per cent in 2024, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), but he has pledged to stimulate it by creating jobs and boosting investments and infrastructure.

He will also have to deal with the Darien Gap between Colombia and Panama, which he has promised to shut down. The 575,000-hectare wall of vegetation has become a corridor for migrants from South America trying to reach the United States through Central America and Mexico. Over half a million people, including 113,000 children, crossed the Darien Gap in 2023 and Panamanian authorities estimate that the number of people crossing is likely to be even higher in 2024.

Anadolu Agency

COOLING OFF AMID HEATWAVE



People cooling off in a swimming pool at a resort in Bulacan Province, the Philippines, on Sunday (Xinhua)

Russia blames 'hostile' Baltic countries for severing of ties, threatens to respond

London, UK - Russia accused Baltic countries on Sunday of conduct that led to them severing their relations with Moscow and threatened to respond with asymmetric measures.

The Kremlin blamed the 'hostility' of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia for the severing of ties.

"Because of the openly hostile line of Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn, all interstate, interdepartmental, regional and sectoral ties with Russia have been severed," Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told the RIA state news agency.

She added that 'unfriendly states are doing everything in their power to complicate relations'. Without going into the details of what the three countries had allegedly done, Zakharova warned that Moscow would respond.

"We will also respond to the hostile actions of the Baltic states with asymmetrical measures, primarily in the economic and transit spheres," she said.

Zakharova pointed out that the transit of Russian goods hav-



Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova

ing been redirected to ports in northwestern Russia has had a very negative effect on the Baltic nations' economies.

She added that the Kremlin never seeks a complete discontinuation of diplomatic relations.

"Russia will never completely sever ties with other countries, in an attempt to maintain the possibility of dialogue," she said adding that cutting diplomatic ties would be extremely unfortunate for Russian-speaking people living in the Baltic countries, including Russian citizens.

She stressed that stopping the activities of diplomatic missions would amount to 'leaving our citizens and hundreds of thousands of compatriots at the mercy of arbitrary action by the police'.

Zakharova emphasised that Moscow will continue putting diplomatic pressure on the Baltics. In response, Estonian Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna said the Kremlin severed relations with the Baltics by invading Ukraine.

"We have reduced mutual relations to the bare minimum level

as Russia sullied its relationship with the West by launching a war of aggression against Ukraine, in violation of international law and the sovereignty of states," Tsahkna was quoted as saying by national broadcaster ERR.

"Estonia will continue to make diplomatic efforts to see the war ended and for Ukraine to have the opportunities and means it needs to kick out the aggressor," he added.

Last week, Baltic ministers accused Russia of violating air traffic rules when two Finnair flights had to divert back to Helsinki after GPS interference prevented them from landing at an airport in the southern part of Estonia.

They said the suspected Russian jamming of GPS flight systems has become 'too dangerous to ignore'. Tsahkna described the incident as a 'hybrid attack' by Russia.

Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia were also among the countries that recently expressed concern over what they called Russian espionage, NATO said last week.

Anadolu Agency

Hundreds evacuate from eastern Rafah

Gaza City, Palestine - Hundreds of Palestinians began evacuating from areas east of Rafah amid Israeli plans to invade the city in the southern Gaza Strip, according to witnesses.

Witnesses told Anadolu that evacuees began to move toward central and western Rafah, west of Khan Younis and north of Deir al-Balah.

The Israeli army issued on Monday morning urgent evacuation orders to Palestinian residents and displaced individuals in several areas of eastern Rafah ahead of a possible ground invasion, urging them to immediately relocate to the town of al-Mawasi.

Rafah is home to 1.4mn displaced Palestinians who have taken refuge from the war that started after the October 7, 2023 Hamas incursion that claimed around 1,200 lives and took 250 as hostages.

"The Israeli army is expanding the humanitarian zone in Al-Mawasi and urging Palestinians to temporarily evacuate from the eastern neighbourhoods of Rafah to the expanded humanitarian zone," army spokesperson Avichay Adraee wrote on X.

"The expansion of the humanitarian zone in Al-Mawasi includes field hospitals, tents, large quantities of food, water, medicine, and other supplies," he added.

"The army also allows collaboration with certain international organisations and other countries to expand the scope of humanitarian aid being delivered to the



Hundreds of Palestinians, including children, migrate from eastern neighbourhoods after Israel warns them with pamphlets to evacuate Rafah, Gaza on Monday

The Israeli army is expanding the humanitarian zone in Al-Mawasi and urging Palestinians to temporarily evacuate from the eastern neighbourhoods of Rafah

AVICHAY ADRAEE

Gaza Strip," he said, adding that 'this process will proceed gradually based on ongoing assessments of the situation'.

"In this context, leaflets will be

distributed, text messages and phone calls will be sent, and information is being broadcast through Arab media outlets," Adraee said.

"Army will continue working to achieve the objectives of the war, including dismantling Hamas and returning all Israeli hostages," he added.

The military also posted maps on its social media accounts illustrating evacuation routes.

According to Army Radio, the decision to evacuate residents from eastern Rafah was taken late on Sunday in cabinet session. It said that around 100,000 civilians believed to be present in the

area set to be evacuated.

Defence Minister Yoav Gallant is said to have briefed his American counterpart Lloyd Austin on the decision to begin evacuation of residents from the southern city.

Israeli aircraft dropped leaflets over the city, urging residents in the eastern areas to evacuate and head towards Al-Mawasi. The brochures included a map of the area and its boundaries, as well as the areas that need to be cleared.

The handouts warned against returning to Gaza City or northern areas of the Strip or 'approaching the eastern and southern security fence (bordering Egypt)'.

'Unacceptable'

The EU foreign policy chief on Monday called on the international community to prevent Israel's planned ground offensive in Rafah, calling its evacuation orders to civilians 'unacceptable'.

"Israel's evacuation orders to civilians in Rafah portend the worst: more war and famine. It is unacceptable. Israel must renounce to a ground offensive and implement UNSCR (UN Security Council Resolution) 2728," Josep Borrell wrote on X. He said that the EU, with the international community 'can and must act' to prevent such a scenario.

Quoting Borrell, EU Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarcic also said that the months-long suffering of civilians in Gaza is 'unbearable'.

"Israel's ground operation in Rafah would only make it worse," he noted.

Lenarcic added that a ceasefire is 'long overdue' to liberate the hostages and provide life-saving aid to those in need.

UNRWA's concerns

Meanwhile, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) expressed on Monday grave concerns about the potential consequences of an Israeli offensive in Rafah, stressing that such actions would result in increased civilian suffering and fatalities.

"An Israeli offensive in Rafah would mean more civilian suffering and deaths," UNRWA wrote on X. "The consequences would be devastating for 1.4mn people," it added.

In response to the escalating situation, UNRWA emphasised its commitment to maintaining a presence in Rafah for as long as possible.

Anadolu Agency

Gaza death toll surpasses 34,700

Gaza City, Palestine - At least 34,735 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's ongoing offensive on the Gaza Strip since last October, Gaza's Health Ministry said on Monday.

A ministry statement added that 78,108 other people have also been injured in the onslaught. "Israeli attacks killed 52 people and injured 90 others in the last 24 hours," the statement said.

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

Israel has waged an unrelenting offensive on the Gaza Strip since a cross-border attack by the Palestinian group Hamas last October 7 which killed some 1,200 people.

Tel Aviv has also imposed a crippling blockade on the Gaza Strip, leaving its population, particularly residents of northern Gaza, on the verge of starvation.

More than six months into the Israeli war, vast swathes of Gaza lay in ruins, pushing 85 per cent of the enclave's population into



Palestinians mourn their loved ones killed in Israeli attack on Rafah, Gaza on Monday

The Israeli army bombed a building belonging to the UNRWA in the Gaza Strip late on Sunday

internal displacement amid a crippling blockade of food, clean water and medicine, according to the UN.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army bombed a building belonging to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) in the Gaza Strip late on Sunday, local media reported. Israel's state broad-

caster KAN said Israeli forces claimed the building was a "military command center" used by the Palestinian group Hamas.

Apart from the attack, many people died in airstrikes carried out by Israeli warplanes on two schools in Gaza where displaced families had taken shelter.

Anadolu Agency

Israeli army besieging paramedics in West Bank

Ramallah, Palestine - The Israeli army is besieging a group of paramedic volunteers inside a house in a refugee camp in the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society said on Monday in a statement.

It added that Israeli forces have begun demolishing the facade of the house, located in the Tulkarm Refugee Camp in the northern part of the West Bank.

The statement also noted ongoing communication and coordination with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on developments.

A significant Israeli military force early on Monday stormed the Tulkarm camp, surrounding it from all directions and imposing a curfew.

Witnesses reported that the Israeli military demolished infrastructure, shops, and homes amid armed clashes with Palestinians.

The military started evacuating Palestinian families from the Al-Sawalma neighbourhood in



the camp, they said.

The Israeli military has also besieged the Thabet Thabet Hospital in the city of Tulkarm and searched ambulances, according to witnesses.

Tensions have been high across the West Bank since Israel launched a deadly military offensive against the Gaza Strip following a cross-border attack by Hamas last October 7.

At least 497 Palestinians have

been killed and more than 4,950 injured by the Israeli army in the occupied West Bank since October 7.

Israel stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice, which in an interim ruling in January ordered Tel Aviv to stop genocidal acts and take measures to guarantee that humanitarian assistance is provided to civilians in Gaza.

Anadolu Agency

Leaders of China, France, EU call for Gaza ceasefire

Paris, France - Chinese President Xi Jinping, French President Emmanuel Macron and EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen on Monday reiterated their call for a ceasefire in Gaza at a three-way meeting in Paris.

In brief comments to the media after the meeting, the EU Commission chief said: "We discussed the situation in the Middle East which is of great concern to both of us."

"No effort can be spared in de-escalating tensions and preventing a wider conflict in the region," said von der Leyen.

"Once again, we call for a ceasefire (in Gaza) and for the release of all hostages and we continue to work to provide all humanitarian support possible while working for a two-state solution," said the EU Commission chief.

Xi reached Paris on Sunday, on a first trip to Europe since 2019. He will also visit Hungary and Serbia during the trip which will conclude on May 10.

Von der Leyen said the trilateral meeting also discussed Russia's war on Ukraine, Iran and climate change.

Anadolu Agency

Nearly 2,500 held at pro-Palestinian rallies across US

Houston, US - Nearly 2,500 people have been arrested at pro-Palestinian rallies at college and university campuses across the US, according to media outlets.

In a report released on Sunday by CNN, the number of arrests made since April 18 has surpassed 2,200, while the numbers released in a similar report by Fox News show the total of arrests to be more than 2,400.

Demonstrations are expected to continue over the coming weeks as graduation ceremonies take place, and campus officials are adding extra police security, or in some cases, cancelling commencement ceremonies altogether.

In the state of California, po-



lice in Los Angeles cleared out a protest encampment at the University of Southern California (USC) on Sunday, but no arrests were made. In addition, USC has called off its main graduation ceremony due to security concerns.

"The Los Angeles Police Department is clearing the centre of UPC (University Park Campus). If you are in the centre of campus, please leave. People who don't leave could be arrested," the university said on X.

As part of the intervention, police removed some students taking part in the demonstrations from the campus centre. They evacuated the encampment area and also removed the tents.

"The encampment at UPC has been cleared. The campus remains closed," USC added on X.

Pro-Palestinian supporters clashed with counter-protesters on Sunday at Chicago's DePaul University in the state of Illinois. Police did not make any arrests, but there were reports of several people getting injured as the situation transpired.

In the state of Virginia, 25 protesters were arrested at a pro-Palestinian rally at the University of Virginia in Char-

lottesville on Saturday. Police cleared out a tent encampment set up by students after declaring an unlawful assembly near the centre of campus.

Also on Saturday, in the state of Michigan, police removed a group of pro-Palestinian protesters at the University of Michigan's main commencement in Ann Arbor which briefly interrupted the ceremony, but no arrests were made.

April 30 saw the largest number of arrests in a single day, with more than 400 made at college campuses. The majority of those arrests (282) happened at Columbia University in the state of New York.

Anadolu Agency

Indian-origin astronaut Sunita Williams to fly to space again

Washington, D.C., US - Indian-origin astronaut Captain Sunita Williams and her fellow veteran NASA astronaut Butch Wilmore are set to fly to the International Space Station (ISS) on a brand new spacecraft, the Boeing Starliner on Monday.

The duo will launch into space from the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, Florida in the first crewed test flight of Starliner. The flight, if it succeeds, will become the second private firm being able to provide crew transport to and from



Astronaut Captain Sunita Williams

the ISS. The launch is scheduled to take place on 10:34pm. EDT Monday, May 6, ie May 7 at 8.04am Indian Standard Time.

Boeing's competitor Elon Musk's SpaceX was able to fly its crew flight test in the year 2020. It has sent 12 crewed missions to the ISS since 2020. After a botched attempt in December 2019, Starliner made a successful second uncrewed test flight in May 2022.

Williams, 59, a retired US Navy captain and Wilmore will pilot the flight, which Boeing is

calling its Crew Flight Test (CFT) and that will be docked with the ISS for about a week. The Starliner flight to the ISS is expected to last about 26 hours, and the two astronauts will live and work on the ISS for eight days before undocking and returning to Earth on May 15.

During the test flight, the astronaut duo will take the Starliner through a series of tests before NASA certifies it to be fit to fly to space on rotational missions to the ISS under the US space agency's Commercial

Crew Programme.

Unlike previous US capsules that splashed down in the sea on returning to Earth, the Starliner will touch down on land at a site somewhere in the western part of the United States, NASA said.

Both the astronauts will be launching on a United Launch Alliance's Atlas V rocket to the International Space Station.

Williams and Wilmore were both former commanders of the International Space Station.

Williams, from Needham, Massachusetts, earned a physi-

cal science degree from the US Naval Academy, and a master's in engineering management from the Florida Institute of Technology. Her first spaceflight was Expedition 14/15 (from December 2006 to June 2007) launching on space shuttle Discovery's STS-116 mission to reach the International Station, according to NASA.

While onboard, Williams established a world record for women at the time with four spacewalks.

ANI

Missing tourists found dead in Mexico

Ensenada, Mexico - The discovery of three bodies, bearing gunshot wounds to the head and dumped in a well, has been confirmed as those of missing tourists, including a US citizen, Mexican authorities revealed on Sunday, CNN reported.

Relatives of American Jack Carter Rhoad and Australian brothers Jake and Callum Robinson were able to positively identify the bodies without resorting to genetic tests, as stated by the Baja California Attorney General's office in a Sunday statement.

Following the grim discovery, three Mexican citizens, previously questioned in connection with the tourists' disappearance, have been apprehended on suspicion of kidnapping, as announced by the attorney general's office. Among the suspects, one was identified as Jesus Gerardo 'N', also known as 'El Kekas', according to CNN.

The trio of friends vanished on April 29 while on a surfing and camping expedition near the town of Ensenada, approximately 60 miles south of Tijuana. Authorities believe they were victims of murder.

ANI

Russia begins drills in response to Western 'provocations, threats'

The military exercise will involve non-strategic nuclear weapons

Moscow, Russia - Russia said on Monday that it began preparations for a military exercise involving the country's non-strategic nuclear weapons in response to what it described as Western 'provocations and threats'.

A statement by the Russian Defence Ministry said that preparations began for holding an exercise in the near future with missile formations of the country's southern military district, together with the involvement of the country's aviation and navy.

Indicating that the exercise was ordered by President Vladimir Putin, the statement said it aimed to 'increase the readiness of non-strategic nuclear forces to carry out combat missions'.

"During the exercise, a set of activities will be carried out to practice the preparation and use of non-strategic nuclear weapons," the statement further said.

It also said that the exercise aims to ensure Russia's sovereignty and territorial integrity 'in response to provoca-



Preparations began for holding an exercise in the near future with missile formations of the country's southern military district, together with the involvement of aviation and navy

DEFENCE MINISTRY

tive statements and threats by individual Western officials against the Russian Federation'.

Bill banning 'foreign agents'

Besides, Russia on Monday

adopted a bill banning its citizens designated as 'foreign agents' from participating in elections in the country.

The Russian State Duma said in a statement that the lower house of parliament adopted

amendments to the law 'On Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights and the Right to Participate in a Referendum of Citizens of the Russian Federation'.

Indicating the bill was adopted in the second and third reading, the statement said the bill bans 'foreign agents' from participating in elections at all levels.

"In accordance with the law, by the time the documents required for registration are submitted, the candidate must cease to be a foreign agent. The norm will be rele-

vant for elections to federal bodies of state power, regional authorities, public authorities of the federal territory and local governments," the statement further said. It also said that 'foreign agents' will not be able to act as observers in an election or authorised representatives of candidates and electoral associations.

Six killed in drone attack

Meanwhile, at least six people were killed and 35 injured due to a Ukrainian drone attack in Rus-

sia's border region of Belgorod, local authorities said on Monday.

Belgorod Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said on Telegram that two buses and a passenger car transporting people to work were attacked by drones near the village of Berezovka in the region's Borisovsky district.

"Unfortunately, as a result of the explosion, six people died on the spot ... I express my sincere condolences to the families and friends of the deceased residents," Gladkov said.

Anadolu Agency

Indian Coast Guard detains fishing vessel from Iran

Kochi, India - In a swift and coordinated sea-air operation, the Indian Coast Guard intercepted and detained an Iranian fishing vessel in the Arabian Sea, just off the coast of Kerala.

The vessel, carrying six Indian crew members employed on a contractual basis in Iran, was apprehended following allegations of exploitation and mistreatment by the boat's owner.

The India Coast Guard (ICG) swiftly took action upon receiving reports of the alleged mistreatment, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to maritime security and welfare.

The vessel was promptly brought to Kochi, where it will undergo further investigation to ascertain the veracity of the claims and ensure appropriate measures are taken.

The interception highlights the importance of maintaining maritime security and upholding the rights and welfare of crew members operating in international waters.



The ICG's decisive action underscores their dedication to enforcing maritime laws and regulations to safeguard the well-being of seafarers.

"@IndiaCoastGuard in a swift sea-air coordinated operation intercepts & detains #Iranian fishing vessel in #Arabian sea west off #Kerala coast with O6 #Indian crew employed on contractual basis at Iran. Crew alleges exploitation & mistreatment by the boat owner. The boat has been brought to #Kochi for further in-

vestigation. Upholding maritime security & welfare #ICG demonstrates unwavering commitment," said the India Coast Guard in a post on X. Authorities have not disclosed further details regarding the nature of the alleged exploitation or the conditions on board the detained vessel.

Earlier on May 1, India Coast-Guard Ship C-153 displayed swift response, undertaking Medical Evacuation of a 40-year-old fisherman from IFB Francis II.

ANI

'Over 23mn Afghans in need of humanitarian aid'

Kabul, Afghanistan - The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reports that a staggering 23.7mn people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance in 2024, Khaama Press reported.

Despite a decline in violence, Afghanistan continues to grapple with significant humanitarian challenges, as emphasised by UNAMA on Sunday.

Of the 23.7mn individuals requiring aid, 5.9mn are women and 5.4mn are men, according to the agency's statement, as reported by Khaama Press.

Echoing similar concerns, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has also highlighted the severe deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

Millions of Afghans endure the consequences of four decades of conflict, poverty, repeated disasters and an economic downturn.

Since the Taliban assumed control of the country in August 2021, the political transition, con-



Of the 23.7mn individuals requiring aid, 5.9mn are women and 5.4mn are men

traction of the economy and reduced levels of donor funding have increased risks and needs at the local level, witnessing an exacerbation of the humanitarian crisis, marked by forced deportations and dwindling international aid.

Returnees from neighbouring countries face a myriad of obstacles, including scarcity of food, clean water, adequate shelter,

and employment opportunities.

The recent surge in migrant expulsions from neighbouring nations, coupled with recent earthquakes and natural calamities such as floods, has further underscored the pressing need for humanitarian intervention, Khaama Press reported.

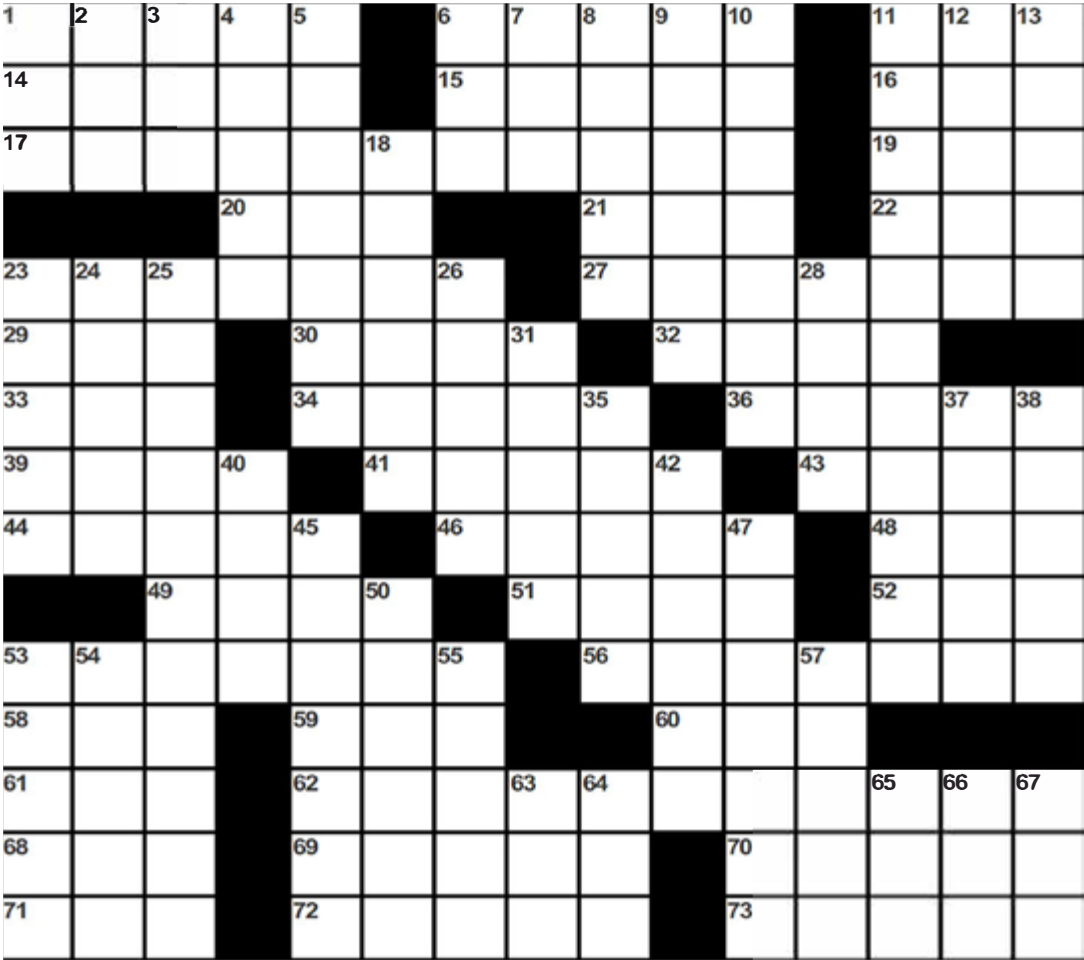
According to the Taliban's Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, around 2,800 Afghan

migrants returned from Iran, both voluntarily and forcibly, on May 1, according to TOLONews.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has characterised the state of human rights, particularly the rights of women and girls as well as religious and ethnic minorities in Afghanistan, as grave.

ANI

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Barn attics
- 6) Gemstones for some Libras
- 11) Prankster with pointy shoes
- 14) Be useful to
- 15) High hideaway
- 16) Postal motto conjunction
- 17) Definitely not now?
- 19) Word with "cents" or "faced"
- 20) Longoria of TV
- 21) Title of respect, abroad
- 22) Decaf alt.
- 23) Roof supports
- 27) Groups of four
- 29) Sculler's item
- 30) Enonnous birds of myth
- 32) In a minute
- 33) Canton that borders Bern
- 34) Casino machines, briefly
- 36) Postgame segment
- 39) Lushes
- 41) More in need of liniment
- 43) Bone-dry
- 44) Get in
- 46) Measuring tube (var.)

- 48) Misfortune
 - 49) Some signatures of old
 - 51) Kind of helmet
 - 52) Egyptian cobra
 - 53) Square dancer's need
 - 56) Mariners' assents
 - 58) Current or former court org.
 - 59) _ of Good Feelings
 - 60) Movie, in Hollywood lingo
 - 61) Ticket word
 - 62) What a convict seeks
 - 68) Keogh alternative
 - 69) Form of lyric poem
 - 70) Cornball
 - 71) Yorkshire's home
 - 72) Supergiant in Cygnus
 - 73) Kitchen wrap
- DOWN**
- 1) Judges lay it down
 - 2) Caesar's salad ingredi-ents?
 - 3) Wray of "King Kong"
 - 4) Lhasa is its capital
 - 5) Drools
 - 6) Acorn producer
 - 7) Seat at the wedding
 - 8) Buddhist in Nirvana
 - 9) Feudal vassals
 - 10) Washington, D.C. resi-dent
 - 11) Threshold location

- 12) Emulated a cow
- 13) Leaping amphibians
- 18) December ditties
- 23) Force out
- 24) Brother of Moses
- 25) Squander slowly
- 26) Ice-cream portion
- 28) Reddish deer
- 31) Get naked
- 35) Brown tone
- 37) Sprang up
- 38) Makes baby chick sounds
- 40) Canonical hour
- 42) Fix a word-processing error
- 45) Continued a subscrip-tion
- 47) Some believers
- 50) Outerwear in Sonora
- 53) Home to Notre Dame
- 54) Cancel, to NASA
- 55) Synthetic fiber
- 57) African coastal capital
- 63) Poem of homage
- 64) Four winter wks.
- 65) Gas-station offering, sometimes
- 66) Bake sale organizer, for short
- 67) Suffix for "Hallow"

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You've been making some great changes in your life, and others are starting to notice. In fact, you've been the topic of some speculation for several days now, and a few people are turning green with envy over your accomplishments. A strong support network surrounds you, and it's time you realized it. The warmth will give you a nice sense of momentum that will drive you into one heck of a great mood all day.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Try to get into a conversation with the smartest person you know today, even if it's online. They have a plan you need to hear, and it involves an unusual cultural experience. Find out what they have cooking and if you can get involved. Even if you're not too into the idea, try to muster some enthusiasm just the same. It's important to be more open right now. This person holds the ticket to your next big spiritual growth spurt, so take this opportunity.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

It's usually a great idea to have a direct manner with people, but sometimes it's much smarter to be subtle in your communication. Drop a hint and see if anyone picks up on it. Even if all you want to do is start a conversation, let someone else be the one to start it. Plant the seed with a brief mention of a tempting topic, and the curiosity of the people you're with will take it from there. You are capable of being provocative without being pushy right now.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Which of these was an important part in the car that travelled in time in the "Back to the Future" series of films?

- A. Warp drive
- B. Flux capacitor
- C. Difference engine
- D. Nuclear fribulator

2. Which of these is a form of alternative medicine, first proposed by German physician Samuel Hahnemann in 1796, which uses reference books known as "repertories"?

- A. Abroadopathy
- B. Awayopathy
- C. Homeopathy
- D. Houseopathy

3. Which US President has figured on the cover of the magazine Sports Illustrated, twice?

- A. George W Bush
- B. Ronald Reagan
- C. Dwight Eisenhower
- D. Donald Trump

Answers: 1. B 2. C 3. B



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

ou are feeling curious right now, especially about people and customs of other countries. This could be one of the most enlightening periods of your life if you let yourself follow your desire to ask more questions and take more social risks. Keep probing into areas that confuse, beguile, or even frustrate you. If you don't understand something, then you need to figure it out. Don't stop until you feel educated and rewarded. It shouldn't take too long.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Today, someone's brilliant one-liner will do more than tickle your funny bone. It will ignite a tiny spark in your heart. Few people realize how having fun can lead to romance, though you have always understood the connection. Your ideal partner is more likely to be someone who makes you smile than someone who makes you swoon. Remember this when you are considering which crushes to pursue. Hold off on accepting an invitation from anyone who's coming on too strong.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

You just accomplished a big victory, but you'd be wise to stop reminding others about it. You've definitely earned the position you're in, but people are very sensitive about things right now. Their egos are delicate, and it's vital to maintain your good relationships with them. You don't need to minimize your accomplishments; you just have to avoid being pompous. Think about the future and cultivate goodwill today. People are impressed by good winners.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

You have many layers to your personality, which is good because it makes you an interesting person. But it can also be bad because each one of those layers is something you have to nurture consciously. Right now, you aren't spreading your energy around equally. Today, do something you've been neglecting for a while. Maybe it's a hobby, maybe it's accepting a truth, maybe it's devoting attention to a loved one. But get yourself back in balance.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

When the going gets rough today, just reach out to your friends. That's what they are for! While they might not be able to fix your problems, they can at least figure out a way to put a smile on your face. You've been in a bit of a low phase, but that isn't necessarily anything to worry about. Everyone goes through these periods. It's part of life. You need to feel whatever you're feeling and work your way through emotions even if they are negative.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

All of the inspiration and energy you've been waiting for will finally roar into your life first thing. You'll want to jump right on this wave of productivity as soon as possible, because it probably won't last all day long. Others will love your new and improved attitude, so much so that you could gain some support from former foes. Today, it's all about having fun and getting stuff done while you can and then relaxing when you can't.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Relationships are about creating a healthy balance of power, and you've been the one giving it up for too long. It's time to get things back to an equitable state and for you to get more of what you want. Today, it's not only okay for you to push the scales so they tip in your favor, it's healthy for the relationship. The other person won't put up nearly the fight you fear they will. They've grown a bit tired of being the leader for so long. They're ready to hand over the reins.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

It's time to start recognizing all of the attention you have been getting for what it truly is: praise and admiration! You may present a humble appearance on the outside, but let yourself feel very proud on the inside. You've earned the respect and popularity you have gained. Those compliments you keep getting are not the kind everyone else gets. They are not given lightly either. You're someone others are watching with an eye toward the future. Recognize the impact you have on the world.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Why are you trying so hard to be modest about all of your accomplishments? It makes no sense to be humble now. Let everyone know how proud you are of yourself. You'll get no denials from anyone. You will join the ranks of friends in high places because your credibility and influence are about to increase dramatically. Start acting and looking the part. It's a great time to invest in building your wardrobe into something more impressive.

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

U	N	S	E
I	W	H	E
M	L	I	T
S	C	L	N

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

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

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

TOO GOOD, BUT TOO LATE

Liverpool regain form with big win over Spurs

Liverpool, England - Liverpool found some form after a dismal run in a comfortable 4-2 Premier League victory over Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday in much-loved manager Jurgen Klopp's penultimate game at Anfield.

Strikes from Mohamed Salah, Andy Robertson, Cody Gakpo and Harvey Elliott secured a much-needed victory for Klopp's men, who had won one of their previous five league games and seen their title challenge crumble.

While still mathematically in with a chance of finishing top of the pile, they are five points off leaders Arsenal in the table with two games remaining and four points behind holders Manchester City, who have a game in hand over both.

"It was a disappointing few weeks where the results were not what we wanted," Gakpo told Sky Sports. "Everyone wanted to do their best in the last few weeks but it didn't work. We wanted to enjoy it (Sunday), play for goals, defend together and it was a good result."

Liverpool talisman Salah, who had a touchline row with Klopp in



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah scores against Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday

Three points is enough and the boys thought that. Anfield was a special place today. Mo was outstanding, he played a really good game. Mo showed what he is capable of.

JURGEN KLOPP

last week's 2-2 draw with West Ham United, headed home his 18th league goal of the season when he sprinted onto Gakpo's

cross to the far post in the 16th minute. Robertson doubled their lead just before halftime after keeper Guglielmo Vicario saved

an initial shot from Salah. Gakpo headed in Elliott's cross in the 50th, and later dedicated the goal to his newborn son, then Elliott bagged his own with a rocket from 20 yards out that curled into the top corner.

"I would say three points is enough and the boys thought that," Klopp said. "Anfield was a special place today. Mo was outstanding, he played a really good game. Mo showed what he is capable of."

Richarlison and Son Heung-min pulled two back to make for a lively ending, but a comeback was not on the cards for Spurs who are fifth in the table. The score could have further favoured Liverpool who had 13 shots on target to Spurs' six.

Salah, who was back in the starting lineup after coming off the bench last week, struck the crossbar in the first half and then missed a sitter in the 77th minute.



Chelsea's Noni Madueke celebrates with teammates after scoring against West Ham United

'Chelsea going to do utmost' in bid for European football'

London, England - Chelsea need to focus on what they can control and win their last three games of the Premier League season to put themselves in the best position to qualify for Europe next season, winger Noni Madueke said after their 5-0 thrashing of West Ham United.

Chelsea's win on Sunday lifted them to seventh in the league standings with 54 points, overtaking Manchester United, who play later on Monday. The London club are two points behind Newcastle United in sixth place.

Mauricio Pochettino's side next travel to Nottingham Forest on Saturday and Brighton & Hove Albion on May 15, before ending their season at home to Bournemouth on May 19.

"Of course we have a chance.

If we win all our games we'll see how the chips fall, but we've got to focus on the last three games. There are two tough away games coming up. We'll be taking them very seriously," Madueke told the BBC.

"When you play for one of the biggest clubs in the world, you have to play in Europe all the time. It's been a disappointment this season that we weren't participating in any of those competitions, however we have a great chance to do so next year and we have to go and get it.

"We're going to do our utmost to finish as high as possible to qualify for European competition for next season. We know what we can do now. So for the rest of the season we'll put everything into it and go again."

Milan coach Pioli respects protest of fans demanding improvement

Milan, Italy - AC Milan manager Stefano Pioli said he respected the silent protest carried out by thousands of frustrated fans during Sunday's 3-3 Serie A draw against Genoa.

With second-placed Milan left trophyless for a second successive season and trailing champions and city rivals Inter Milan by 18 points, irritated fans unfurled banners demanding improvements to the team, while the hardcore ultras stayed silent in protest throughout Sunday's encounter.

Fans left behind a banner which read "the sound of silence" as they filed out en masse from the entire Curva Sud section of the San Siro stadium shortly after Olivier Giroud had put Milan 3-2 ahead in the 75th minute.

By the time Genoa pulled level late in the match, thanks to an



A banner reads 'the sound of silence' after fans filed out en masse from the entire Curva Sud section of San Siro on Sunday

own goal by Malick Thiaw, the stand was completely empty.

"The fans have chosen this type of protest and we just need to respect them," Pioli, whose side have already secured their spot in next season's Champions

League, said. "Our fans have been an added value in recent years. They will have their reasons if they chose this protest."

Sunday's draw also meant Milan are winless in their last four league matches.

"The start was poor. We didn't have the proper concentration and unity in the opening 20 minutes and conceded an early opener," Pioli said.

The match started in the worst way for the hosts as Genoa's Mateo Retegui converted a penalty five minutes in, following a trip by Fikayo Tomori on Alessandro Vogliacco.

Milan then got on top, with Genoa goalkeeper Josep Martinez making several impressive saves to deny the hosts an equaliser for much of the first half, before Alessandro Florenzi managed to break free from his marker just before the break to head in Milan's leveller.

However, Genoa shocked the home crowd again three minutes after the break when Caleb Ekuban headed a cross past Milan keeper Marco Sportiello.



Timothy Weah of Juventus (L) battles for the ball with AS Roma's Angelino during their Serie A match on Sunday

Juve miss big opportunity

Rome, Italy - Juventus were held to a 1-1 draw at AS Roma on Sunday as they missed the chance to close in on AC Milan in second place in Serie A.

An early goal from Romelu Lukaku for the hosts was cancelled out by Gleison Bremer's effort just after the half-hour mark in a fast-paced and entertaining match.



DANIELE DE ROSSI

Third-placed Juve have 66 points, five behind AC Milan who drew 3-3 with Genoa earlier on Sunday.

Roma are fifth with 60 points, four behind fourth-placed Bologna.

"We're not that happy with draws, but seeing the attitude of the lads, the way they never stop fighting to achieve a result, I am so pleased with that," Roma manager Daniele De Rossi said to DAZN.

Roma will now turn their attention to their Europa League semi-final second leg against Bayer Leverkusen on Thursday as they look to overturn a 2-0 deficit from the first match.

"We've seen what Bayer Lev-

erkusen are like when they break the first press and have space to run into, so we need to be energetic and intense, but also intelligent," De Rossi added.

The hosts had the first chance of the match when Rasmus Kristensen hit the bar with a header from distance.

Roma then took the lead after 15 minutes when Lukaku found himself in the perfect position to

tap in the rebound from a Bryan Cristante shot.

Bremer levelled with a header for Juve after 31 minutes when Federico Chiesa's cross found him inside the box.

Both sides had chances to find a winner in the final minutes, with Roma keeper Mile Svilar

Alonso's Leverkusen are 'always moving forward'

Frankfurt, Germany - Bayer Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso still believes his side have the potential to improve after they extended their unbeaten run to 48 matches across all competitions on Sunday to equal the record in European football.

Champions Leverkusen thrashed Eintracht Frankfurt 5-1 in the Bundesliga on Sunday to equal Benfica's record for the longest unbeaten run in all competitions including European matches set from 1963-65.

"Our level, our consistency throughout the season is great. But we are always moving forward. We are always concentrating on the work and improving," Alonso said.

Leverkusen, who are edging closer to an unbeaten season across all competitions, have two



Bayer Leverkusen's Granit Xhaka (C) celebrates with teammates after scoring against Eintracht Frankfurt

league matches remaining as well as the German Cup final.

They are also in the Europa League semi-finals and face AS Roma at home in the second leg on Thursday, when they will have the chance to break Benfica's record after a 2-0 win in Rome last week. "It's a big challenge, we have two (league) games left, it will be the perfect run. We will certainly try," Alonso said.

"We still have games to play to achieve our big goals in all competitions. The next game is important for us, the second leg of the Europa League semi-final: a chance to reach the final," he added. "In football it's sometimes difficult to stop. You have to prepare for the next game. And the next game is a big game for us. Hopefully we have the chance to be in a European final again."

With a pinch of luck, we could've won, but so could they. That's the definition of a draw, really. Juventus have exceptional players and they deserve credit too

making a fingertip save to push Manuel Locatelli's volley over the bar, while at the other end Wojciech Szczesny denied Roma's Tammy Abraham in a one-on-one.

"With a pinch of luck, we could've won, but so could they. That's the definition of a draw, really. Juve have exceptional players and they deserve credit too," De Rossi said.



REIGN OF NARAININE

Kolkata go top after commanding win over Lucknow

Lucknow, India - Sunil Narine crashed 81 off 39 deliveries and Ramandeep Singh got only six balls to face and smashed 25 in those. In addition, Phil Salt, Angkrish Raghuvanshi and Shreyas Iyer played aggressive innings. All of which meant that Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) surged to 235 for 6 in their 20 overs, which in Lucknow - one of the lower-scoring venues in IPL 2024 - was always going to be incredibly difficult to surpass.

The Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) innings didn't really take off. There was a 50-run second-wicket partnership between KL Rahul and Marcus Stoinis, but even that went at too slow a pace (they took 33 balls) to cause serious problems for KKR. Once that stand was broken, the innings fell apart quickly, the last nine wickets falling for 67 runs, as the required rate ballooned out of control.

Varun Chakravarthy and Harshit Rana took three wickets each. Andre Russell took two. And Ramandeep claimed two catches, the first of which was one of the most spectacular of the season.

Salt was the first aggressor, hitting 24 off the first nine balls he faced. But he was soon out for 32 off 14, and from then, it was the Narine show.

Narine warmed up with five fours, then started getting the big hits going at the end of the fourth over, bludgeoning a Mohsin Khan short ball over deep square-leg, clubbing Krunal Pandya over deep midwicket not long after,



Sunil Narine crashed 81 runs, which included seven sixes and six fours, off 39 deliveries

and later thrashing Yash Thakur over the square-leg boundary. In the middle overs, he dealt almost exclusively in sixes, and by the end of his stay, he had walloped seven, to go with six fours. He holed out to long-off attempting another six off LSG's best bowler Ravi Bishnoi, who was the only one to finish with an economy

rate lower than 11. LSG had a good period between overs 14 and 18, where they conceded only 45 while taking three wickets. Thanks to Narine, Salt and Raghuvanshi, with whom Narine shared a 79-run partnership, KKR were headed for a mammoth score. But the slight slowdown might have

given LSG a foot in the door. Ramandeep pushed the total back into gargantuan territory in spectacular style. He took a two in front of square on the leg side to start with, bashed a six over cow corner second ball, bludgeoned one over long-on fourth ball, ramped a four over short third next, then

TODAYS MATCH

MATCH 56

6 PM

DELHI CAPITALS VS RAJASTHAN ROYALS

thumped a full toss over mid-wicket to finish the innings. To recap, he went 2, 6, 1, 6, 4, 6. As if scoring at a strike rate of more than 400 wasn't impressive enough, he also pulled off one of the catches of the season to get rid of Arshin Kulkarni. He took another catch at deep point later, to dismiss Rahul, the other LSG opener. With a required rate of almost 12 set from the start of the innings, LSG were always going to struggle, given the quality in KKR's attack. They scored 13 off the fourth over, bowled by Mitchell Starc, but then Narine came in with a four-run fifth over, and by the end of the powerplay, the required rate was up near 13. When LSG tried to hit out, wickets fell rapidly. At no point did they seem to have the measure of this chase. ESPNcricinfo

A poor performance overall, says Rahul after Lucknow's defeat

Lucknow, India - Kolkata Knight Riders crushed Lucknow Super Giants on Sunday at the Ekana Stadium after posting 235. Speaking after the heavy defeat, LSG's captain KL Rahul tagged it a "poor performance overall" from his side, but particularly pinpointed the bowling as having cost LSG on the night.

It was the first time this IPL season that a side had scored 200 or more batting first in seven matches in Lucknow. Rahul felt LSG lost their way while trying to go hard to haul in the target, saying his bowlers allowed KKR to score "20 or 30 runs above par". "When you're chasing a big total, you try to go hard and you end up losing wickets. So just a poor performance overall," Rahul said at the post-match presentation.

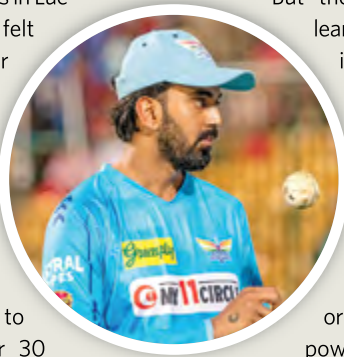
Sunil Narine and Phil Salt got KKR off to another explosive start, helping their side post 70 in the powerplay, the sixth time in 11 games this season that KKR managed those many or more. Rahul said that approach by KKR's openers "put a lot of pressure" on his "young bowlers". "We've seen how they have batted. They put a lot of pressure on the opposition, and our

young bowlers just couldn't handle that kind of pressure," he said. "He [Narine] hit some really, really good shots, and that's how the IPL is: you'll come up against some really good players, and that's when your character is tested. And I think we weren't up to the mark today.

"Once we come here [to Lucknow], it's about execution, and we went wrong on that part. Bowlers tried their best.

But the sooner you learn, the better it is for our team. We've made a couple of mistakes when we've come up against batters like Sunil or anyone who is powerful, and is striking over 200 or 250. Someone with that kind of intimidation has put a bit of pressure on our bowlers."

In reply, LSG were 70 for 1 in the eighth over of the chase, with both Rahul and Marcus Stoinis set. However, the required run rate had by then climbed above 13 runs an over, and then an LSG slide began. They lost 9 for 67 in less than nine overs, and were bowled out for 137 with almost four overs to spare. Rahul admitted there was nothing wrong with the pitch, but said scoreboard pressure probably derailed LSG.



KL Rahul

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LANDO PROMISE!

McLaren's Norris wins in Miami for first F1 win

Miami, US - McLaren's Lando Norris capitalised on a bit of good fortune to win the Miami Grand Prix on Sunday, holding off Red Bull's triple world champion Max Verstappen for his first Formula One victory.

It was a long overdue triumph for the Briton who held the record for most podiums without a win (15), having finished runner-up an agonising eight times in 110 grand prix.

Verstappen had seemed well placed to claim a fifth win in six races until a midway crash allowed McLaren to cash in on a safety car period, with Norris pitting and coming out with the lead.

Seeking a Miami hat-trick of wins, the Dutchman filled Norris's mirrors on the restart but his Red Bull could offer no challenge as the McLaren pulled clear.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc completed the podium, coming home third ahead of team mate Carlos Sainz, who was later penalised five seconds for his involvement in a collision with McLaren's Oscar Piastri dropping the Spaniard to fifth.

The penalty moved Verstappen's Red Bull team mate Sergio Perez up one spot to fourth.

"About time! What a race. It's been a long time coming. Finally I've managed to do it," Norris told Sky Sports. "I'm so happy for my



McLaren's Lando Norris celebrates after winning the Miami Grand Prix on Sunday



About time! What a race. It's been a long time coming. Finally I've managed to do it. I'm so happy for my whole team.

LANDO NORRIS

whole team. I finally delivered for them.

"Long day, tough race. Finally on top, so I'm over the moon. I'm

just proud. A lot of people doubted me along the way.

"I've made a lot of mistakes over my last five years in my short career but today we put it all together."

In a season dominated by Red Bull it was a hugely popular win by the 24-year-old Briton.

Pulling into the pit lane Norris was mobbed by his team, congratulated by the other drivers and cheered by a massive crowd at the Miami International Autodrome that included former U.S. president Donald Trump, who visited the McLaren garage prior

to the race.

Until Sunday it had been another dominant weekend for Red Bull as Verstappen topped the timesheets in the only practice session and sprint qualifying on Friday and then won the sprint race and took pole on Saturday.

His second place in the grand prix had little impact on the drivers' standings as he continues to hold a commanding 35-point lead over his Perez.

Mercedes' seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton was sixth and RB's Yuki Tsunoda seventh followed by George Russell in the other Mercedes.

Aston Martin's double world champion Fernando Alonso grabbed ninth while Esteban Ocon earned struggling Alpine their first point of the season crossing 10th.

Starting from pole, Verstappen was in command through the first 20 laps but was unable to open up more than a three-second lead on Piastri.

As the race reached the midway mark Verstappen made a rare unpressured mistake, going wide and hitting a bollard that broke and was left on the track, bringing out the virtual safety car.

Verstappen was then quickly into the pits with Piastri, who had already pitted, assuming the lead.

With the first round of pit stops about to be completed and Verstappen about to retake the lead, McLaren got a lucky break.

Williams' Logan Sargeant spun into the wall, bringing out the safety car and allowing Norris to pit and come out still in the lead, which he never let go.



Paula Badosa

Badosa announces split with Tsitsipas

Madrid, Spain - Former world number two Paula Badosa is no longer in a romantic relationship with fellow tennis player Stefanos Tsitsipas after nearly a year together in the spotlight, the Spaniard said.

Badosa and Tsitsipas made their relationship official on social media during last year's French Open and have often been seen at each other's matches, while also posting pictures on their joint Instagram account.

But the 26-year-old Badosa, who has fallen to number 126 in the world with a string of injuries derailing her career, said that the sport's power couple dubbed Tsitsidosa by fans had split amicably.

"After careful consideration and many cherished moments together, Stefanos and I have decided to amicably part ways," Badosa wrote in an Instagram story on Sunday.



Alou Kuol of Central Coast Mariners celebrates after scoring against Al Ahed FC in the AFC Cup final in Muscat

Kuol strike secures Central Coast Mariners historic title

Muscat - Central Coast Mariners were crowned AFC Cup champions after defeating Lebanon's Al Ahed FC 1-0 thanks to a late Alou Kuol strike at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex on Sunday.

On their debut in the competition, Mariners became just the second Australian club to win an AFC competition, a decade after Western Sydney Wanderers won the AFC Champions League on their own debut.

The final marked the last-ever game in the AFC Cup which will make way for the three-tier AFC competitions from next season; the AFC Champions League Elite, AFC Champions League 2 and AFC Challenge League.

After a cagey start typical of a continental final, 2019 champions Al Ahed had the first sight of goal after 25 minutes. A well-worked string of passes down the left side opened space for Mohammed Al Hallak and the Syrian

playmaker whipped a cross for Lee Erwin who rose highest to head it towards the bottom corner, only to be denied by a fine diving save from Danny Vukovic.

Central Coast Mariners responded within three minutes as Josh Nisbet broke into the Al Ahed box from the left, sending a low cross that seemed destined to be converted by Ryan Edmondson who somehow failed to connect with it, and the ball fell to Miguel Di Pizio at the far post, but his finish was tame and was easily collected by Mostafa Matar.

Neither goalkeeper could be beaten before the break but the deadlock was finally broken in the 84th minute thanks to Kuol. The 22-year-old had come off the bench 20 minutes earlier, replacing Edmondson. He latched onto a fine through ball from Barcellos, hitting it low through the legs of goalkeeper Matar to bag what proved to be the winner.

PSG not obsessed with two-goal margin, says Luis Enrique ahead of Dortmund tie

Paris, France - Paris St Germain lost the Champions League semi-final first leg 1-0 to Borussia Dortmund, but that doesn't mean they will go all out to score twice in the return game, manager Luis Enrique said on Monday.

The Ligue 1 champions overturned a one-goal deficit against Barcelona in the quarter-finals, winning 4-1 in the second leg, but PSG are prepared to take the game with Borussia to extra time if that is what is needed.

"The aim isn't to win by two goals, but to win, if you think you have to score two goals that seems like a big target," Luis Enrique told a press conference ahead of Tuesday's game in Paris.

"We just want to play and score. If we score in the 89th minute, it will carry on. We don't need to score right away, we just want to win the game.

The manager wants his side concentrated on all aspects of their game, not only in attack, and



Luis Enrique

a goal from the Germans won't be the end of the world.

"You could score twice in two minutes, but you could also concede a goal," Luis Enrique said.

"We have to be 100% focused

on attack and defence. If we concede a goal, it is not serious, we have to stay calm. It will be an even game with a high level of play on and off the ball, so it will be tough for both teams."

"That is the only sentence I know in French, 'on va gagner' we are going to win," the coach said.

"It is a sentence I like, and I always think my team will win, so that is what I say."

'Great opportunity' for Oman Sail's 49er teams at European Championships in La Grande Motte

Muscat - Oman Sail's 49er teams return to action this week in La Grande Motte, France, as the 2024 49er, 49erFX and Nacra 17 European Championships get underway. The pairings of Musab al Hadi and Waleed al Kindi, and Abdul Rahman al Mashari and Ahmed al Hasni, will join 71 teams from 25 nations in the 49er competition as a total of 148 crews, including Olympic sailors vying for national selection, look to take home the gold.

The two Omani teams will be battling against 11 Olympic qualifiers, in the last big meet before



Oman Sail's 49er teams are hopeful of a good performance in France

the Paris 2024 Sailing Competition. Having narrowly missed out on qualification, all four Omani sailors will be looking to show

their skill on the water and continue to improve ahead of a busy second half of the year.

Hashim al Rashdi, Oman Sail's

Head of Performance and 49er coach, said, "The European Championships are a great opportunity to continue our journey in the 49er competition and compete against some of the very best crews in the world. It is also the start of a new campaign and we're hopeful of a strong performance in France this week. The conditions and the fleet are very similar to the Olympic competition and the level of competition is expected to be very high. This is our chance to grow as sailors while learning from more experienced competitors in the 49er event."



Andrey Rublev celebrates with the Madrid Open trophy

Rublev wins Madrid Open title

Madrid, Spain - Andrey Rublev overcame an opening set wobble to beat Felix Auger-Aliassime 4-6 7-5 7-5 in the final of the Madrid Open on Sunday to win his second Masters 1000 title.

Auger-Aliassime was chasing his first ever Masters title and looked well set for victory before a resurgent Rublev, who had been struggling with a fever during the tournament, recovered to prevail in a little under three hours.

The 26-year-old Russian had come into the tournament in Madrid in poor form having lost his previous four matches on the tour but dropped only two sets en route to the title.

"No words, if you knew what I've been through in the last nine days, you wouldn't imagine that I would be able to win a title... Last six weeks I was losing in the first rounds," Rublev said.

"I was (close to pulling out) because there were few issues I couldn't fix, but I have to give full credit to the doctors. They were magical and did some tricky things... Somehow I was able to play. I've never seen this in my life.

"I would say this is the most proud title of my career."

Internal alignment

CHIROPRACTIC

'CHIROPRACTIC FOCUSES ON JOINTS, NOT BONES, AND DOES NOT NECESSARILY INVOLVE CRACKING SOUNDS,' SAYS DR DOMINIK SCHEIBER WHO FORESEES GREAT SCOPE FOR CHIROPRACTIC IN OMAN IN COMING YEARS, GIVEN THE GROWING TENDENCIES TOWARDS A SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE



The brain is connected to every organ via the nervous system. By aligning the spine, we improve the internal connection and thereby stimulate good body functions

DR DOMINIK SCHEIBER

Anirban Ray

Over the past few years, Oman's healthcare landscape has witnessed rapid transformations, embracing various alternative treatment modalities. Among these, Chiropractic care has been gradually gaining traction. Chiropractic, a branch of alternative medicine, focuses on analysing and aligning the spine to restore nerve system function. Recent science has shown that multiple dysfunctions and musculoskeletal disorders of the human body can effectively be improved through spinal adjustments.

Dr Dominik Scheiber, founder of Spine Line in Qurum, shares some details on Chiropractic care, emphasising its unique approach to spinal alignment for people of all ages in Oman who often suffer from various conditions for years when conventional medicine doesn't offer solace. "The brain is connected to every organ via the nervous system. By aligning the spine, we improve the internal connection and thereby stimulate good body functions, and promote overall health and well-being, besides solving a multitude of body-related issues," he said. One key difference of Chiropractic care is its focus on the nervous system rather than just the muscles, unlike tra-

ditional massages. Dr Scheiber notes that even athletes are turning to chiropractic care followed by massage to enhance their energy levels and alertness, highlighting its potential benefits beyond pain relief. In Oman, sedentary lifestyles have contributed to common issues like back pain, affecting people across all age groups, he asserted, adding, "Extended periods of sitting at desks cause the spine to stagnate, impacting the nervous system and brain activity. This sedentary lifestyle has led to various health problems and dysfunctions in today's society." Despite misconceptions, Chiropractic care has been proven to complement

traditional treatments effectively. Dr Scheiber clarifies, "Chiropractic focuses on joints, not bones, and does not necessarily involve cracking sounds." Additionally, it has shown promise in treating children with learning disabilities and autism by activating the spine and brain. It is gentle and beneficial for children, too, aiding learning disabilities by activating the spine and brain. "Indeed, my doctorate paper has been with the subject and it has been seen to be effective with regular adjustment sessions," he added. Chiropractic's origins date back to ancient civilisations, and its integration into modern healthcare has been notable,

says Dr Scheiber highlighting its growing popularity among athletes who seek its benefits in enhancing performance and recovery. Dr Scheiber stresses the significance of movement in maintaining spinal health, underscoring that a sedentary lifestyle can have adverse effects on overall wellbeing. "Chiropractic care offers a holistic approach to improve health, addressing not only pain but also promoting overall wellness. As awareness grows and misconceptions are addressed, Chiropractic care has the potential to play a significant role in Oman's evolving healthcare landscape," he assured.

Thirst management in summer



During hot summer days, one cannot resist the need to gulp down water and other liquids frequently, as you go about your daily routine indoors as well as outdoors. Many people dream of sipping lemonade while gently rocking in a hammock during the sultry summer days. Yet, for people with kidney failure, the lemonade, or more specifically the amount of lemonade they drink, could be a problem. During hot summer days, controlling thirst can become a complicated matter for people with kidney failure. Here are 6 tips to drink less and control thirst in summer.

Light sprays
Using a refreshing spray can re-wet the mouth and will use less fluid than drinking from a container. Mix 1tsp of peppermint extract in 1 cup of water or ½ cup lemon juice in ½ cup of water, fill it in a spray bottle and give yourself

occasional sprays in the mouth.

Frozen fruit
Ice can sometimes quench thirst better than water. Try freezing lemon juice with water to make lemon ice cubes. Also, try sucking on frozen grapes.

Chew gum
Eating salty and sugary foods can encourage thirst. Chew sugar free gum or mints.

Use apple sauce
Use apple sauce to take medicines instead of liquid, which controls the thirst.

Avoid direct sun
Try avoiding the sun between 10am and 4pm when the sun's rays are strongest.

Maintain a food diary
People with kidney failure may not re-

alise how much fluid they eat or drink. Maintain a fluid or food diary to keep a tab on consumption.

WATERMELON FOR BREAKFAST

Watermelon, the most preferred fruit during the summer months, is also a staple in diets in tropical countries. Watermelon, with its 92% water content, also contains lycopene and other rich antioxidant compounds. Diabetic individuals, however, need to be cautious when consuming this fruit because of its sugar content in the form of fructose. Consuming fruits with high

water content, like watermelon, when feeling hungry are recommended. But in individuals at risk of hypoglycemia, it can raise blood sugar while providing cooling. The best way to consume watermelon is in the form of a slice along with breakfast.



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SUMMER SPLASH

Water aerobics is the performance of aerobic exercise in water, as in a swimming pool. Done typically in waist deep or deeper water, it is an ideal summer workout

AQUA AEROBICS

Summer's here and working out has become tougher. So, if you find it difficult to hit the gym or the jogging track, here's how to keep fit and have fun at the same time...turn to aqua aerobics!

Water aerobics is a form of aerobic exercise that requires water-immersed participants. Most water aerobics is in a group fitness class setting with a trained professional, focusing on aerobic endurance, resistance training, and creating an enjoyable atmosphere with music.

Different forms of water aerobics include aqua Zumba, water yoga, aqua aerobics, and aqua jogging.

Aqua Zumba combines the South American Zumba rhythm and dance steps with a pool party. It offers a fun but challenging, water-based, body-toning workout.

Water yoga, or aqua yoga, is a thermal, aquatic activity, which utilises modified movements and principles of yoga to accommodate people of all fitness levels. It's simply about practicing yoga asanas, breathing techniques and meditation in the water.

Aqua jogging allows you to replicate the same running form you have on land. By including water jogging in an overall training plan, you can increase cardio output, improve posture and form, and increase muscular strength.

In general, aqua aerobics helps you lose weight, get stronger, and improve your fitness too, without putting much strain through your joints. This makes them great for people with mobility issues as the water supports the joints, allowing you to get stronger without

putting yourself at risk of injury.

So, during summer, swimming pools are more than just relaxing places in which to unwind - they're actually one of the safest, most comfortable, and effective settings for some of the best - and even the most fun, fat-busting and fitness-improving workouts.

Water is up to 800 times denser than air, every single movement in the pool requires more effort. Aquatic resistance training, prenatal water aerobics, and any other water workouts are really effective water activities to lose weight.

Not only do you get excellent resistance and cardio training, but all that extra effort also burns through more calories faster and more effectively than on land, boosting metabolism and leading to weight loss, stronger muscles, leaner physique, and higher stamina and fitness, as well as the mental health benefits that working out and enjoying a healthier body entail.

Naturally, you might think that all that fat-burning in the pool is too intense, especially for the disabled, injured, or people with other limitations. However, you couldn't be more wrong - gravity's pressure is much weaker in the pool, making in-water exercise gentle, low-impact, and easy on the joints.

What's more, most of the best water aerobics for weight loss are simple, making them easy for most people to take part in and enjoy - even those with physical limitations such as injuries, disabilities, and mobility issues linked to high body weight. So, with all this in mind, grab your pool noodle and indulge in pool aerobics that burn fat.

POOL AEROBICS THAT BURN FAT



The bicycle

rest your elbows on the pool-side and 'pedal' through the water, as if on an imaginary bicycle. Whilst burning fat, this exercise also strengthens your shoulders, legs, and core.

The dolphin

this one targets your core, legs, and back. Start by grasping the pool's edge with your left hand and pointing your right hand and fingers down just beneath the water's surface. When you're ready, hold your legs together and allow them to float upwards, after which you start kicking like a dolphin.

The ball

to work your core, you start this activity by standing with

your right leg bent and your left leg tucked back. Whilst maintaining this pose, hold an inflated ball with both hands positioned in front of your belly. Hold this stance for 30 seconds and switch legs, doing this process five times on each side.

The sprint

lean on the pool's edge with your elbows whilst holding your legs straight and together. Lift your legs until they reach the water's surface and lower them back down again. Repeat as many times as desired.

Tuck jump

stand up in the water and jump upwards as high as you can, bringing your knees up to your chest. Repeating this in multi-

ple sets not only strengthens your core, but also trims your legs.

Noodle plank

simply do the classic planking exercise in the pool using a pool noodle to hold onto whilst pushing your legs out straight into the plank position. This water resistance will give your abs an epic fat burning pool aerobics workout.

Add weights

all aqua-fitness exercises can be intensified by adding special weights designed for the pool. You can add them to your arms and/or legs, which applies extra weight and resistance and thus burns more calories, fat, and helps to build lean muscle mass.

