

Traffic violations surge

OVER 20 ARRESTED, 200 UNLICENSED BIKES IMPOUNDED FOR TRAFFIC VIOLATIONS DURING RAMADAN, AS YOUTH ENGAGE IN RECKLESS ROAD BEHAVIOUR

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Royal Oman Police (ROP) has escalated its campaign against unlicensed motorcyclists and reckless bicyclists across several governorates in a crackdown on road safety violations.

Intensified action during Ramadan has led to arrest of over 20 young riders and confiscation of over 200 unlicensed motorcycles and bicycles in Dakhliyah, North Batinah and South Batinah.



(Supplied photo)

Despite a significant reduction in fatal accidents involving unlicensed motorcycles in recent years, ROP remains concerned over the persistent danger and young riders' blatant disregard for traffic regulations, reiterating its call for all motorcyclists and bicyclists to strictly follow traffic rules to ensure the safety of all road users.

Recent ROP activities have highlighted the scale of the problem. In Dakhliyah on Monday, two individuals were detained for using unlicensed motorcycles,

engaging in inappropriate conduct and causing distress to others on the road, while in South Batinah on Sunday, 13 were arrested and 49 bicycles and four motorcycles impounded on various offences, including disturbing public peace and endangering lives.

On March 17, North Batinah Police Command arrested two people for drifting a vehicle and seized 129 bicycles and 19 motorcycles for traffic violations. A day earlier, strict enforcement operations were carried in Dakhliyah,

underscoring ROP's commitment to combating the problem.

Experts and community leaders emphasise the crucial role of educational institutions and families in addressing the challenges resulting from youngsters' reckless road behaviour.

Rashid al Balushi, Founder and General Manager of Motorcycles Learning Centre, voiced concern over the risks posed by underage and unlicensed riders. "Youngsters on motorcycles without licences pose a risk not only to themselves but also to others.

The lack of awareness on road safety and the absence of protective gear, like helmets, exacerbate the problem," Balushi remarked.

He further highlighted the tragic consequences of such recklessness, including long-term disabilities and emotional, physical and social strain on families of the injured. Balushi stressed the importance of parental guidance and educational initiatives in instilling a sense of responsibility and awareness among young riders.

In addition to law enforcement efforts, Public Prosecution has taken steps to address disturbance in public spaces, emphasising penalties for disruptive behaviour, including imprisonment for three months and fines of up to RO300 as per the law.

Collective efforts of the ROP, educational bodies and families are crucial in nurturing a culture of road safety and responsibility among Oman's youth, reducing incidence of traffic violations and ensuring a safer environment for all road users.

Royal Decree establishes Financial Services Authority

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq issued three Royal Decrees on Monday reading as follows:

Royal Decree No 18/2024 amends the Criminal Procedures Law.

Article 1 states that the attached amendment will be made to the Criminal Procedures Law.

Article 2 states that this Royal Decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from the day following its date of publication.

Royal Decree No 19/2024 promulgates the Sultan Qaboos University System.

Article 1 states that the provisions of Sultan Qaboos University System attached to this decree will be enforced.

Article 2 states that the Vice-Chancellor of Sultan Qaboos University will issue necessary regulations and decisions to implement the provisions of the attached system. Till

such time, the existing regulations and decisions will continue to be enforced without prejudice to the provisions of the system attached to this decree.

Article 3 cancels the Sultan Qaboos University Law issued by Royal Decree No 71/2006. It also cancels all that contradicts the system attached to this decree or contravenes its provisions.

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

Royal Decree No 20/2024 establishes the Financial Services Authority and promulgates its system.

Article 1 stipulates that an authority named the 'Financial Services Authority' will be established and that it will have legal personality, financial and administrative independence.

Continued on [Page 03](#)

Silhavy sets sight on repeating earlier success against Malaysia today

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman national football coach Jaroslav Silhavy has stressed preparedness of the team to face Malaysia in the fourth round of both the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup and the 2027 Asian Cup, which will take place

on Tuesday at 6pm (Oman time) at Bukit Jalil Stadium in Malaysia.

At a press conference on Monday, Silhavy said, "We hope to repeat the result of the first round and secure a win. Our players are ready and prepared to deal with any situation, including rain, or pitch condition."

While emphasising the fact



Jaroslav Silhavy

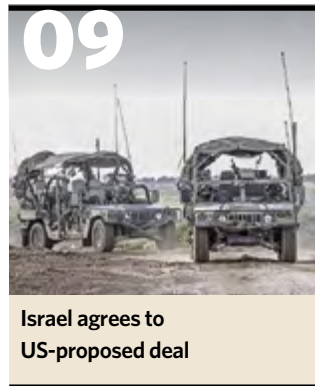
that the Malaysian team is strong, well-organised and has fast players, he expressed confidence in the Red Warriors's ability to stop it.

"We have prepared well for the match and not worried about the results of the Malaysian team against other opponents."

He did, however, regret the

absence of striker Essam al Subhi out due to two yellow cards and informed that there were no injuries among the players.

Forward Ali al Busaidi said the team was in Malaysia to "win and secure three points. We are capable of winning under any circumstances. We will implement the coach's plan on the field".



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02 MUSCAT DAILY TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024	PRAYER TIMINGS	Fajr	Duhr	Asr	Maghrib	Isha
		4.49am	12.18pm	3.44pm	6.25pm	7.36pm

Public Prosecution warns against begging

Muscat - The Public Prosecution has issued a stern warning against begging in public spaces emphasising that it is both socially unacceptable and a punishable offence under the law.

During Ramadan, the number of people seeking charity, including beggars, increases every year. Beggars are often seen at mosques and commercial centres during the holy month.

According to Omani laws, exploiting minors or involving them in begging activities constitutes a crime punishable with a fine of RO100 and prison term of three years. The prison term is extended if the perpetrator is identified as the minor's guardian, trustee or someone entrusted with their care or supervision.

The Ministry of Social Development cooperates with government agencies, including the Ministry of Labour, Royal Oman Police and the Public Prosecution to combat begging.



Omani Women's Association hosts Ramadan contest in Samail

Our Correspondent Muscat

The Omani Women's Association in Samail is hosting the third edition of its Ramadan Cultural Competition, which is seeing participation of six associations from across Dakhliyah.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Rabaa al Jabri, head of Omani Women's Association in Samail, informed that each participating association has formed a team consisting of four members. The competition includes cultural, religious, sports and literary aspects.

Rabaa explained that the objective of the competition is to elevate cultural knowledge of association members, while fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie among the associations in the governorate.

The top three performing teams will win prizes and certificates of appreciation will be presented to participating associations. "In addition to the cultural competition, it has activities related to religion and health, such as discussions on 'Keys to Success in Contemplating the Holy Quran' and insights into 'Laylat al Qadr and the Last Ten Days of Ramadan,'" Rabaa added.

Samail Omani Women's Association holds lectures on health focused on specific topics such as 'Fasting for Breastfeeding Mothers' and 'Maintaining the Health of Pregnant Women' during the holy month. Additionally, it organises entertainment activities for children, ensuring the engagement of all community members during Ramadan.

Rabaa further informed that her association is participating in 'Ishraq Ahad', a forum held in acknowledgement of the esteemed contributions of Honourable Lady Sayyida Ahad bint Abdullah bin Hamed al Busaidi, Spouse of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

"Four artists from our association are participating in the forum, which will continue until March 31. This is our token of appreciation to the Honourable Lady for her unwavering support and for serving as an inspiration to Omani women, encouraging them to fulfil their national duties and represent Oman admirably on the international stage."

MoCIIP drive to cut risks associated with non-compliant electrical appliances

Our Correspondent Muscat

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) has launched a campaign to reduce the risks associated with non-compliant electrical appliances in North Sharqiyah during the holy month of Ramadan.

A statement issued by MoCIIP said, 'The directorate in North Sharqiyah has stepped up efforts to ensure electrical appliances comply with GCC standard regulations for low voltage electrical appliances.'

As part of the initiative, informative posters are being prominently displayed in stores across the region. These posters serve as a visual reminder for consumers to prioritise purchasing electrical appliances that meet the required safety standards of GCC states.

'The primary objective of this campaign is to inform consumers about the critical importance of choosing electrical appliances that adhere to safety regulations. By raising awareness among citizens, the ministry endeavours to enhance consumer protection and foster a culture of safety-consciousness,' the statement added.

Through this concerted effort, MoCIIP aims to significantly reduce the risks associated with non-compliant electrical appliances and ensure the well-being of citizens. It underscores the government's commitment to promoting safety and maintaining high standards of consumer protection.



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ROP publishes highway codes handbooks to improve safety

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In a concerted effort to mitigate traffic accidents and promote a culture of safety on the roads, Royal Oman Police (ROP) has launched handbooks on Oman Highway Code for heavy and light vehicles. The initiative is pivotal in ROP's strategy to bolster traffic safety and spread critical knowledge about safe driving practices throughout the sultanate.

Eng Fatima bint Abdullah al Riyamiya, Assistant Director of Traffic Engineering at Directorate General of Traffic and Technical Advisor for the project, told *Muscat Daily*, "Publication of these handbooks reflects our relentless commitment to reducing traffic accidents and their consequences. Our objective is to enhance traffic safety awareness and ensure compliance with safe driving practices and regulations."

Introduction of the handbooks aims to empower all road users with vital knowledge and skills, fostering a responsible and safe driving culture. "With detailed guidance on driving, road rules



(Supplied photos)



With detailed guidance on driving, road rules and safety gained from the handbooks, motorists will navigate the sultanate's roads with greater responsibility

ENG FATIMA AL RIYAMIYA

and safety gained from the handbooks, we anticipate that motorists will navigate the sultanate's roads with greater responsibility," Fatima explained.

To ensure widespread accessibility, ROP has employed various distribution strategies targeting general public and professionals alike. "We are distributing the handbooks at traffic

safety exhibitions during Gulf Traffic Week and through Traffic Safety Institutes across the governorates. The handbooks are also downloadable in PDF format from our website, accompanied by QR codes for easier access," Fatima added.

The content of the Oman Highway Code for Light Vehicles encompasses a wide array of

topics, including how to acquire a driving licence, following public safety measures and observing safe driving rules. It particularly caters to the informational needs of first-time visitors and tourists driving in Oman, shedding light on the nation's traffic regulations.

The edition for heavy vehicles is designed to guide heavy vehicle drivers, transport companies and establishments that emphasise on safe driving techniques, compliance with labour, health and safety laws, and adoption of advanced road safety solutions.

"This year marks the inaugural edition of the Oman Highway Code for Heavy Vehicles, which we launched during Gulf Traffic Week 2024," Fatima informed. It builds on the foundation laid by the 2015 Driver's Guide for light

vehicles, now amended to align with current standards and needs.

While addressing traffic violations and promotion of road safety, Fatima highlighted the significance of raising awareness about correct driving practices. "These handbooks will be instrumental in implementing our traffic safety strategy aimed at significantly reducing traffic-related incidents and their impact."

The handbooks have received backing from several government and private sector partners, demonstrating a collective commitment to road safety. "The support from various entities underscores a shared dedication to improving traffic safety, affirming that road safety is a communal responsibility," Fatima added.

Sharakah, OPAL collaborate to support SMEs

Muscat - Oman's leading SME development firm Sharakah signed a Memorandum of Understanding recently with Oman Energy Association (OPAL), a non-profit dedicated to the energy and minerals sector.

The partnership aims to support the development of youth projects in Oman, emphasising the significance of nurturing business growth for a more substantial impact.

The agreement was signed by Ali Ahmed Muqabail, CEO of Sharakah, and Abdulrahman al Yahyai, CEO of OPAL.

Under the agreement, both Sharakah and OPAL commit to fostering the spirit of entrepreneurship and enhancing the promotion of Omani SMEs within specific fields. The collaboration is expected to create jobs and stimulate the national economy further, a press release stated.

Central to the partnership are initiatives aimed at environmental, economic and social sustainability, including the provision of smart funding solutions and development of programmes addressing strategic areas such as In-Country Value (ICV), waste management, de-carbonisation

and energy transition.

"Our partnership with OPAL marks a strategic collaboration where our smart funding capabilities will play a pivotal role in nurturing the growth and success of Omani SMEs," Muqabail said.

On his part, Yahyai said, "In alignment with Sharakah, we are committed to providing the necessary technical support, driving initiatives that boost awareness and contribute to the thriving ecosystem of SMEs in Oman."

A key component of the collaboration involves proposing potential energy projects that could significantly benefit the SME sector, setting a precedent for impactful business environment enhancements. The specifics of these initiatives, including parameters, requirements and conditions, will be mutually agreed upon annually, ensuring relevance and effectiveness.

In terms of knowledge sharing, Sharakah and OPAL pledge to actively exchange expertise and insights, nurturing a culture of collaborative learning and growth. This open channel of communication is expected to enhance the overall effectiveness of their partnership.

SAYYID SHIHAB RECEIVES ALGERIAN ENVOY



H H Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, received Dr Mohammad Ali Boughazi, Ambassador of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to the Sultanate of Oman, in his office at Al Murtafa'a Garrison on Monday. During the meeting, existing bilateral relations were reviewed and ways of enhancing these were explored. They also discussed several matters of mutual interest (ONA)

Royal Decree establishes Financial Services Authority

Continued from Page 01

The Financial Services Authority will report to the Council of Ministers and it will be governed by the provisions of the system attached to this decree.

Article 2 states that the Financial Services Authority will have its headquarters in the Governorate of Muscat and that, by virtue of a decision from the authority's Board of Directors, it may establish branches in other governorates.

Article 3 stipulates that all allocations, origins, rights, obligations and assets of the Capital Market Authority will be transferred to the Financial Services Authority, and that all employees of the Capital Market Authority will be transferred to the Financial Services Authority, along with their financial grades.

Article 4 instructs the Chairman of Board of Directors of the Financial Services Authority to issue the regulations and decisions necessary for the implementation of provisions of the system attached. It states that, till such time, the current laws, regulations and decisions will continue to be applied without

prejudice to the provisions of the system attached.

Article 5 states that the speciality of regulating the profession of accounting and auditing will be transferred from the 'Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion' to the 'Financial Services Authority'.

Article 6 states that the phrase 'Financial Services Authority' will replace the phrases 'Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion' and 'Section of Professions and Crafts at the Department of Corporate Affairs at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion', 'Director General of Directorate General of Commerce' - wherever quoted in the Law Regulating the Profession of Accounting and Auditing issued pursuant to Royal Decree No 77/86.

Also, the phrase 'Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion', wherever quoted in the aforementioned Law Regulating the Profession of Accounting and Auditing will be replaced by the phrase 'Chief Executive Officer of the Financial Services Authority'.

The Board of Directors of the Financial Services Authority will undertake to structure the committee referred to in Article 24 of the Law Regulating the Profession of Accounting and Auditing, provided that the committee will have two or more accountants as members.

Article 7 replaces the phrase 'Capital Market Authority', wherever quoted in laws and Royal Decrees with the phrase 'Financial Services Authority'. Also, the phrases 'Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Capital Market Authority' and 'Chief Executive Officer of the Capital Market Authority' will be replaced, wherever quoted in laws and Royal Decrees with the phrases 'Chairman of Board of Directors of the Financial Services Authority' and 'Chief Executive Officer of the Financial Services Authority'.

Article 8 cancels all that contradicts this decree or the system attached to this decree or contravenes their provisions.

Article 9 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on its date of issue.

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Pakistan	722.47
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Philippines	146.12
Sri Lanka	785.02

*Rates as on March 25

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Switzerland becomes first major economy to cut rates

The Swiss National Bank (SNB) has cut its main interest rate, making it the first major economy to start easing monetary policy.

The policy rate was cut 25 basis points to 1.50%, the first such move by the SNB in nine years, according to a bank statement about the surprise move.

"The easing of monetary policy has been made possible because the fight against inflation over the past two-and-a-half years has been effective," read the statement.

Switzerland's annual inflation rate slowed to 1.2% in February, the lowest reading since October 2021, according to the Swiss Federal Statistical Office.

The bank projects the inflation rate will likely remain below 2% over the next few years.

The SNB has cut its average inflation forecast to 1.4% this year and 1.2% next year. The Bank of England is set to release its rate decision later Thursday.

OPES to focus on sustainable and clean energy solutions

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Oman Petroleum & Energy Show (OPES), one of the biggest gatherings for the oil, gas, and energy sectors within the sultanate, will be organised under the patronage of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals from April 22 to April 24, 2024, at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. OPES will also feature a conference organised by the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE).

Organised by CONNECT (Oman Exhibitions Organizing Company), OPES partners with the host organisation, Petroleum Development Oman (PDO). The event will convene an esteemed gathering of numerous experts in the petroleum and energy industry from around the world, along with decision-makers and other stakeholders.

The event sets a promising path for enhancing and advancing efforts in transforming the energy industry to reduce carbon emissions, aiming to achieve carbon neutrality goals.

The Oman Petroleum & Energy Show, commencing on April 22, is expected to feature a distinguished array of local and international exhibitors.

Speaking at a press conference to announce OPES 2024 details on Sunday, Dr Saleh al Anboori, Conference Chairperson and Director-General of Exploration and Production of Oil and Gas at the Ministry of Energy



and Minerals, said, "The Oman Petroleum and Energy Show 2024 provides a unique opportunity to learn about the most prominent developments in the energy sector, locally and internationally. It brings together a select group of pioneers in the oil

and gas and energy industry and has become a significant platform that sheds light on the most important developments in the energy scene globally."

This year's Oman Petroleum & Energy Show is poised to welcome over 300 exhibiting companies from more than 24 countries, drawing over 15,000 visitors

that promises to ensure sustainability," he said.

This year's OPES is poised to welcome over 300 exhibiting companies from more than 24 countries, drawing over 15,000 visitors. With more than 200 expert speakers and 900 conference delegates, attendees can expect engaging discussions and

valuable insights throughout the event.

A noteworthy highlight of the event will be the SPE Conference centered on the theme of 'Affordable, Sustainable, and Clean Energy'. The conference aims to drive discussions on the sector's latest innovations, technologies, and industry best practices fostering the global energy transition.

The event will also host a free-to-attend workshop called 'OPES Talks' that will offer insights into a wide spectrum of technologies and other topics vital to the oil, gas, and energy industries. From navigating EPC contracts and project management to embracing digital transformation, the sessions will also delve into operational excellence, focusing on cost reduction, quality control, and improved functionality.

Sustainable practices and en-

vironmental compliance will take center stage, alongside discussions on optimising supply chains and logistics. The lineup will be completed with strategies for crisis management, resilience building, and workforce development.

OPES, as a national-level event, holds immense importance for Oman's energy landscape. It serves as a vital platform for innovation and collaboration, fostering domestic expertise while bolstering Oman's regional leadership in sustainable energy. The exhibition embodies Oman's pioneering efforts in sustainable energy, setting a splendid example in balancing economic development enhancement with environmental preservation, aiming to create a green future characterized by prosperity and growth.

SEZAD starts provision of public services in schemes

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The management of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) has initiated the implementation of the Council of Ministers' decision to develop and oversee municipal services and public facilities in areas not classified as public utilities within SEZAD's outlays.

SEZAD has commenced the introduction of municipal licensing services and technical assistance, alongside employee training to deliver these services, while simultaneously establishing a dedicated office to oversee municipal services for the old Sayy commercial district.

Represented by Tatweer Company, SEZAD is currently evaluating the existing status of services in areas not classified as public utilities. This initiative encompasses activities such as road construction, lane opening, debris removal, and signboard installation.

Within SEZAD, a total area of 33 sqkm, designated as not public utility, is distributed across nine different sectors, including the old Sayy commercial district and other areas allocated for industrial, commercial, and residential purposes.



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Red Sea attacks continue to disrupt global trade: IMF

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In the past few months, global trade has been held back by disruptions at two critical shipping routes. Attacks on vessels in the Red Sea area reduced traffic through the Suez Canal, the shortest maritime route between Asia and Europe, through which about 15% of global maritime trade volume normally passes. Instead, several shipping companies diverted their ships around the Cape of Good Hope. This increased delivery times by 10 days or more on average, hurting companies with limited inventories.

On the other side of the world, a severe drought at the Panama Canal has forced authorities to impose restrictions that have substantially reduced daily ship crossings since last October, slowing down maritime trade through another key chokepoint that usually accounts for about 5% of global maritime trade.

The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) high-frequency transit estimates indicate that the volume of trade that passed through the Suez Canal dropped by 50% year-over-year in the first two months of 2024, and the volume of trade transiting around the Cape of Good Hope



IMF's high-frequency transit estimates indicate that the volume of trade that passed through the Suez Canal dropped by 50% year-over-year in the first two months of 2024

surged by an estimated 74% above last year's level.

Meanwhile, the transit trade volume through the Panama Canal fell by almost 32% compared with the prior year, according to an IMF blog.

The IMF data also shows that in January and February 2024,

there was a 6.7% decline year-over-year in port calls to the 70 ports its platform tracks in sub-Saharan Africa. The corresponding declines for the European Union and the Middle East and Central Asia were 5.3%.

'These decreases likely reflect the transitory effects of longer

shipping times. If continued, the ripple effects of these disruptions could temporarily hamper some supply chains in affected countries and cause upward pressure on inflation (in part due to higher shipping costs),' the IMF said.

An important implication of these shipping disruptions is that official statistics on recorded imports (and exports) based on customs records may be affected by the temporary impact of ships being re-routed. This, as per the IMF, will make it more difficult to gauge the underlying momentum of global trade and

economic activity in the coming months.

For example, merchandise trade reports for January in many countries in Africa, the Middle East and Europe may show slowing import growth as some imports that would normally have been recorded in January were only delivered in February. For the same reason, many low-income countries that obtain a significant share of their fiscal revenues from import duties (and export taxes) may report lower fiscal revenue than expected for January.



Oil prices increase as geopolitical tensions fuel supply concerns

Muscat – Oil prices increased on Monday amid global supply concerns supported by heightened geopolitical risks.

Global benchmark Brent crude traded at \$85.21 per barrel in morning trade in London, a 0.45% rise from the closing price of \$84.83 per barrel in the previous trading session. The US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) traded at \$81.01 per barrel at the same time, a 0.47% increase from the previous session that closed at \$80.63 per barrel.

Since major oil routes are still under threat from ongoing attacks on oil refineries and as the conflict between Russia and Ukraine intensifies, geopolitical risks continue to impact oil prices.

Last week, the Russian governor of the Rostov region, Vasily Golubev, stated on Telegram that attacks by Ukrainian drones had shut down the largest oil re-

finery in the southern part of the country.

The official said drones fell on the territory of the Novoshehtinks refinery, which has an annual oil processing capacity of 7.5mn tonnes.

Furthermore, hopes of a ceasefire in the Middle East subsided after the UN failed to pass a ceasefire resolution on Gaza on Friday.

The UN Security Council was set to vote on a US draft resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza linked to the release of all hostages. On Friday, Russia and China, two of the five permanent Security Council members, vetoed the US-proposed resolution.

Meanwhile, the rise of the US dollar against other currencies is expected to reduce demand and slow the rise in oil prices.

The US dollar index increased by 0.33% to 104.35 on Monday. Agencies

China's growth spurs optimism

Beijing, China – China's commitment to fostering new quality productive forces and promoting high-quality development is set to provide investors with significant market opportunities and growth prospects amid rising global economic uncertainties, senior officials and executives said on Sunday at the opening of the China Development Forum 2024 in Beijing.

According to China Daily, China's economy – shortly after announcing its 5% growth target for the year – has embarked on a positive trajectory. This can be attributed to effective macroeconomic policies, stable production growth, and sustained recovery in demand.

Zheng Shanjie, Head of the National Development and Reform Commission, emphasised that China's cultivation of new high-quality productive forces not only promotes its own economic growth but also injects momentum into global economic recovery and expansion.

sion.

Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of International Monetary Fund, noted that China is at the forefront of emerging economies in terms of artificial intelligence preparedness, with its well-developed digital infrastructure providing a head start.

She added that establishing a robust AI regulatory framework and strengthening economic ties with other innovative countries will help China maintain its position as a key contributor to global economic growth in the medium term.

Finance Minister Lan Fo'an stated that China will reinforce fiscal policies to drive industrial upgrades, foster the growth of emerging industries, and cultivate future sectors. The government aims to shape new drivers and advantages for sustainable economic growth by adopting a region-specific approach to forging new quality productive forces.

WAM

India aims for 30% of all vehicle sales to be electric by 2030: Care Edge Ratings

New Delhi, India – An analysis by Care Edge Ratings shows that the demand for vehicles powered by traditional fuels in India is progressively shifting towards those that utilise alternative fuels.

The share of petrol vehicle sales, as a percentage of total vehicle sales, has recorded a significant decline, decreasing from 86% in 2020 to 76% in 2023 while for diesel vehicles it has slightly decreased from 12% in 2020 to 11% in 2023.

At present, EVs offer the lowest lifetime cost, followed by CNG. Demand for EVs is booming, driven by government incentives, reducing battery costs, and rising fuel costs, especially petrol and diesel. India aims for 30% of all vehicle sales to be electric by 2030.

India's sales volume of alternative fuel-driven vehicles recorded a growth of more than 400% in 2023 as compared to 2020, though on a much smaller base.

To encourage the growth of charging stations, the Indian



government has launched several schemes to incentivise the development of alternative fuel infrastructure, such as subsidies and grants.

While EVs have a higher upfront cost, their lower fuel and maintenance expenses, coupled with government incentives, make them relatively more cost-competitive compared with petrol and diesel vehicles in the long run, especially for high-mileage drivers.

The recent announcement of enhanced allocation of FAME-II by Rs15bn is a positive step towards encouraging EV adoption in India. The enhanced allocation and strategic focus of FAME-II are expected to accelerate EV adoption in India by March 2024 to encourage potential buyers to take advantage before it exhausts.

"Overall, the Indian automobile market is at a crossroads, with EVs and CNG emerging as

strong contenders to challenge the traditional dominance of petrol and diesel fuel-driven vehicles. The future will depend on factors like government policies, technological advancements, and consumer preferences", said Arti Roy, Associate Director, CareEdge Ratings.

On March 15, in a move towards bolstering India's position as a manufacturing powerhouse for EVs, the Union Government has greenlit a comprehensive

scheme aimed at attracting investments in the EV sector and promoting indigenous manufacturing of EVs equipped with cutting-edge technology.

The policy, approved by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, is poised to revolutionise the automotive landscape in the country by fostering a conducive environment for reputed global EV manufacturers to establish their presence in India.

The overarching objective of the newly approved E-Vehicle Policy is to facilitate the manufacturing of EVs in India, thereby providing Indian consumers with access to state-of-the-art technology while fortifying the Make in India initiative.

By encouraging investments in the EV sector, the policy seeks to galvanise the entire EV ecosystem, fostering healthy competition among industry players, driving up production volumes, realizing economies of scale, and ultimately lowering the cost of production.

ANI

AI boom and energy transition: Opportunity for savvy investors

Muscat – The convergence of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) boom and the global energy transition is a compelling investment opportunity for forward-thinking investors, according to the CEO and founder of one of the world's largest independent financial advisory, asset management and fintech organisations.

The bullish analysis from Nigel Green of deVere Group comes as John Podesta, the top US climate envoy, visits Japan, to discuss how the world's largest and third-largest economies can collaborate to speed-up decarbonisation.

"There's no question that if



we're going to avert a catastrophic human disaster, we need to make that transition and increase the pace and scale of that action," said Podesta.

In a press release, the deVere CEO said "While there was no mention of AI specifically, just 'technologies' by the US climate envoy on his trip to Japan, we be-

lieve that there's a huge opportunity for AI to boost the energy transition. The AI boom is fundamentally reshaping our economies, how we do business, and our lives in real-time."

"The climate crisis is the defining issue of our time. The convergence of the two – the AI era and critical environmental issues – presents enormous opportunities for investors," Green said.

At the heart of this convergence lies the transformative power of AI.

With its ability to analyse vast amounts of data, optimise processes, and make informed deci-

sions in real-time, AI serves as a catalyst for innovation across the energy landscape.

When applied to the challenges of transitioning to renewable energy sources, AI unlocks a multitude of opportunities.

"Renewable energy sources such as solar and wind are inherently intermittent, presenting challenges for grid stability and energy management," Green said.

"However, AI algorithms can analyse weather patterns, energy demand forecasts, and historical data to optimise the deployment and operation of renewable energy assets. By maximising effi-

ciency and minimising downtime, AI ensures that renewable energy generation reaches its full potential, driving down costs and increasing competitiveness."

Energy storage is a critical component of a sustainable energy system, enabling the integration of variable renewable sources and providing stability to the grid.

The deVere CEO noted, "AI-driven algorithms can optimise the performance of energy storage systems by predicting demand fluctuations, managing charging and discharging cycles, and identifying opportunities for revenue generation through an-

cillary services."

As the demand for energy storage continues to rise, AI-powered solutions offer a strategic advantage in capturing market opportunities and delivering value to investors, he said.

The modernisation of energy infrastructure requires intelligent grid management systems capable of handling diverse energy sources and dynamic demand patterns.

AI technologies enable utilities to monitor, analyse, and optimise grid operations in real-time, reducing transmission losses, minimising downtime, and improving overall efficiency.

Oman's first electric car Mays unveiled

Muttrah Wilayat hosted the first electric car of its kind in the Sultanate of Oman - Mays - which is assembled locally by Mays Company.

The vehicle was received by Muttrah Wali's deputy, Abdul Hamid bin Abdul Rahman al Kharousi, in the presence of Hamad bin Khalfan al Wahaibi, the municipal council's member in Muttrah. When it arrived at the office headquarters, Sheikh Issa bin Mansour al Sulaimi and Haider bin Adnan al Zaabi were on board to present a full explanation about the electric Mays car, a press release said.

Muttrah Wali's deputy looked at the vehicle's components, then took a short tour to learn about its features while driving. Muttrah Wali's deputy praised the first Omani product of its kind, which is a source of pride for the Omani industry and a major experience that has become a reality and will have a great importance on the future of the global vehicle industry.

The world witnesses to produce electric cars that are environment-friendly and economical in consumption. Sheikh Sulaimi, the Board of Directors' member of Al Sulaimi Group and one of the partners in manufacturing the car, said, "We are happy today that the electric car 'Mays' will be installed in Muscat Governorate, specifically in Muttrah Wilayat. It is one of



the first productions in the Sultanate of Oman through gathering and using some available parts from Oman factories.

"Firstly, the name 'Mays' was derived from the name of the horse of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said 'Mysore Horse' - they took the first three letters from it 'Mays'."

As a brand, he pointed out that the vehicle is designed according to international standards of high quality in terms of

security and safety, with all amenities inside. The car is economical and doesn't require any maintenance.

He further said, "Mays is a fully electric car that runs on electric charge and is designed to

Mays is a fully electric car that runs on electric charge and is designed to suit the weather features in the Arabian Gulf. Today, the dream has become a substantial reality that the product became a reality

SHEIKH ISSA BIN MANSOUR AL SULAIMI

in India, being responsible for making more than 20% of all the types of drive that include batteries for electric cars in India?

"Then we worked with international factories and companies in China, and we visited various factories, including the factory that manufactures VinFast cars, a car company from Vietnam. We also cooperated with the industrial and engineering basis of BYD. It designs, engineers, and supplies parts for all BYD cars. We partnered with the largest auto parts factories in China, which manufacture many industries for European and American companies, including Ford, Toyota, and Hyundai.

"Among the Mays team are designers and engineers from the Jordanian engineering community, which was an essential partner in this journey. They have significant cumulative experience in automotive engineering design. They applied their designs to several international companies, including Tesla, Mercedes, BMW, Audi, Toyota, etc.

SAMENA Telecom Council appoints rotating chairman

SAMENA Telecommunications Council, a well-established non-profit organisation fostering collaboration among stakeholders in the South Asia and MENA regions to address common challenges and drive innovation in the telecommunications industry, has recently announced Eng Aladdin Baitfadhil, Chief Commercial Officer at Omantel, as the rotating chairman to lead the Service Innovation Working Group's activities within the main Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) Working Group.

Aladdin is a seasoned leader with over 18 years of experience in the Information and Communication Technology sector. He has played a pivotal role in driving innovation and growth for the company, a press release said.

The appointment is also a recognition of Omantel's success in the 5G rollout, achieving an average 5G traffic yearly growth of 400% during the last three years.

Significantly, Omantel is among the highest globally in 5G utilisation. In 2023, Omantel won the SAMENA Telecom



Aladdin Baitfadhil

Award for Best 5G Adoption.

In his role leading the Service Innovation Working Group's activities, Aladdin is eager to channel his passion for technology and expertise, aiming for a more focused approach to the transformative impact within communities. Furthermore, it presents a valuable opportunity to share

Omantel's knowledge and expertise in the rollout and implementation of 5G with other telecom operators.

Aladdin extends his heartfelt thanks to the SAMENA Council for their trust, emphasizing his full commitment to meeting the expectations of the Council and its members.

Kia Oman announces winners of Mega Rewards Ramadan

Reliable International Automotive, the distributors for Kia in Oman, recently announced two winners of the Mega Rewards Ramadan Campaign who won the Kia Pegas.

Kia Oman's latest Ramadan campaign offers customers buying a new Kia an opportunity to embark on winning journeys and enjoy mega rewards. Customers get 9 chances to win a car in a raffle. Apart from that, they can avail Service from 50,000km up to 100,000km, Insurance and more. The campaign is valid from February 29 till April 28, a press release said.

Sharing his thoughts on winning the raffle, one of the winners said, "Thank you Kia for this unique Ramadan campaign. I have always felt that Kia is one of the few automotive brands that is always giving customers experiences that they will love. I am a winner and all I can say is that, own a Kia to know the difference and you will definitely be a Kia customer for life."

The second winner who also won the Pegas said, "It has always been a wish to win a car.



Today with Kia, I have realised that wish. I am indeed thankful to the Almighty for granting my wish and to Kia Oman for presenting such a wonderful opportunity to be a winner with Kia. My family has always been customers of Kia. That's why I have got an opportunity to drive, feel and experience all that Kia is renowned for."

The next raffle draws are on March 25, April 1 and 8 when customers have a chance to win Kia Pegas. The Grand Raffle is on May 6 when one lucky customer

can win a Seltos.

The Kia Pegas with its compact size, impressive storage space and comfortable legroom, makes a perfect choice for those in search of a second car. It is ideal to navigate ways around crowded city streets or even fit in the tightest parking spaces. The Pegas is equipped with a range of features, technology and space for fun journeys. Powering the Pegas is an efficient 1.4ltr MPI (multi-point injection) gasoline engine, which produces maximum output of 94PS at

6,000rpm and maximum torque output of 13.5 @ 4,000rpm. It offers an impressive fuel-efficiency of 17.8km/ltr.

The Pegas is also immensely practical for storing luggage. The trunk has a capacity of 475 litres, enough to store up to three golf bags, or a couple of large suitcases. As the trunk lid opens, illumination within the trunk also reveals any smaller items that could be forgotten. In terms of safety, the Pegas is equipped with many safety features and Electronic Stability Programme.

Bank Muscat to host Souq Al Wathbah

The Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority and Bank Muscat have joined hands to organise the annual Ramadan Souq Al Wathbah at Bank Muscat's Head Office, Airport Heights, from March 28 to 30.

This annual initiative comes as part of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of Bank Muscat, aiming at promoting small enterprises and providing them a space to introduce attractive Omani products and services to visitors, a press release said.

This year, more than 150 entrepreneurs and SMEs will participate in the 2024 edition of Souq Al Wathbah. The exhibition



will showcase a number of Omani products encompassing fashion, beauty, health and food.

The three-day Souq will be open from 8 pm to 12 midnight. Souq Al Wathbah represents

a broad space for home-based projects and businesses to network with entrepreneurs and exchange experiences. It comes within the strategies of both the SMEs Development Authority and Bank Muscat to support Omani entrepreneurs, SMEs and startups, and educates the community about the importance of supporting MSMEs being the backbone of Oman's economy.

Since its first inception, the Ramadan Souq achieved successful results and this year's edition is expected to also witness excellent participation from the public and the media, especially as it is one of the well-known souqs held during the month of Ramadan.

MODERN EXCHANGE الصرفاء الحديثة				
SUMMARY OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2023				
	31-12-2023 RO.000'	31-12-2022 RO.000'		
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES:			ASSETS:	
Capital and reserve	5,559	5,994	Cash in hand	822 1,495
Borrowing from bank	-	-	Deposit with Central Bank of Oman	170 170
Balances due to branches	-	-	Precious metals	- -
Balances due to money exchangers	-	-	Balances due from banks	4,653 4,963
Loans and advances payable	-	-	Balances due from branches	- -
Cheques and draft issued and outstanding	-	-	Balances due from money changers	- -
Other liabilities	1,008	1,477	Cheques and draft purchased (collection)	- -
	-	-	Loans and advances	- -
	-	-	Investments	- -
	-	-	Fixed assets	432 357
	-	-	Other assets	490 486
TOTAL	6,567	7,471	TOTAL	6,567 7,471
We certify that the above balances are in agreement with the books and records of Modern Exchange Company LLC as of December 31, 2023. RDO Date: 05-03-2024,Muscat				

Trendyol launches 'Serenity in Style'



Trendyol, one of the world's leading e-commerce platforms, is celebrating the launch of its first own-brand womenswear Ramadan fashion collection, since launching in the GCC.

Themed Serenity in Style, this modest collection, reflects the peaceful ambience of the holy month with traditional values and spirit, interpreted through contemporary design in a variety of fits and colour palettes, a press release said.

It was created exclusively by Trendyol in-house design team, produced by a selection of high-quality manufacturers in Turkiye

also uses ruffles, belt details, voluminous sleeves and multi-layered skirt forms to create a flawless look, perfect for family gatherings, iftar and suhoor events.

Irem Cagri Yilandil, head of Trendyol's Gulf Operations, said, "We took the SS24 catwalk trends as our main inspiration for this special collection. We wanted to achieve a contemporary, romantic feel where 3D flowers and semi-transparent chiffon fabrics are used with ostrich feathers, tassel details and dreamy flower patterns in soft fabrics. We created silhouettes



We took the SS24 catwalk trends as our main inspiration for this special collection

IREM CAGRI YILANDIL

and is now available across Trendyol's entire GCC footprint - Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait.

The 105-piece collection features romantic chiffon dresses, satin occasion/evening gowns, multi-use dresses, abayas, kaptans, tailored-look blazer sets and dresses, as well as feminine blouses with dramatic collars, bows and cuff details. The range

that are more voluminous and have a more tailored feel compared to our standard range."

"We also added details that elevate the looks, such as pleats, pearls, handmade floral and beadwork belts. The capes, which are currently trending across global fashion houses, are a perfect versatile complement to a modest look, but can easily be removed for different effect," she concluded.

OPINION

SALEH MIRI, MUSCAT DAILY COLUMNIST, IS AN ARCHITECT WHO CAME TO OMAN IN THE EARLY 1980s



PREPARING FOR TOMORROW'S WORLD

Humans first appeared in the African continent, but it was proven that the first civilisations were established in Asia, which has been the cradle of the world's culture and civilisations.

In 2023, the total population of Asia was revealed to be 4.8 billion people, representing more than 50% of the total world population. Chinese Han, which invented government organisations, paper, time control, etc, the Persian Achaemenid Empire, which created human rights, paid workers, and avoided slaves, the Moghul dynasty, the largest empire in history and so many others developed this continent over all these years, covering an area of 47 million sqkm.

Although this continent has developed culture and knowhow all these centuries, it is the US and Europe who claim their superiority, although their past track record is far behind the Asian continent.

A coordination centre was created named CCCACD which concentrates on Asian cooperation dialogue. It has 35 member-countries and is presently managed by Iran. It is focusing on the following aspects - Connectivity-Science Technology and Innovation, Education and Human Resource Development, Interrelation of Food, Energy and Water Security, Culture and Tourism, and Promoting approaches to inclusive and sustainable development.

Conferences and discussions are constantly taking place and some progress has been achieved. During this

time, Women's association of Iran representing over 40 million women, known as Asian creative children's festival, has suggested and implemented an alternative approach. Highly talented Ladies educate the children from 5 to 15 through artwork to learn the values and represent them into artwork.

Several exhibitions have taken place in India, and recently in Muscat, to exhibit the works of these children. Through this approach, the understanding of values and local culture allow the children to better understand the incredible beautiful planet on which we live and concentrate their minds on real values, inherited from our ancestors.

Cooperation between this women association and similar organisations in Oman can help create a better future generation for the regional countries and revive the real values away from material and evaporating values, preparing for a more valuable and human future. We need to invest in our youth to have a better world.

The views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Muscat Daily or Apex Press & Publishing

Royal Commission for Alula marks key milestone

The Royal Commission for Alula (RCU) has marked a significant milestone in the development of the Sharaan Resort with the inaugural rock excavation for the much-anticipated project.

The initial excavation symbolises the start of a mission that combines Jean Nouvel's architectural innovation with Bouygues' engineering expertise. This milestone is an important step forward in AIUla's evolution into a premier destination for sustainable luxury tourism, a press release said.

Nestled within the ancient geological wonders of the



Sharaan Nature Reserve, the Sharaan Resort will offer an experience unlike any other. With 38 custom suites carved into sandstone mountains, comprehensive wellness facilities, family-friendly amenities, diverse dining options, and

unique panoramic views, the resort embodies tranquillity, luxury, and an immersive engagement with AIUla's unparalleled beauty.

RCU and its contractor partners have developed construction techniques that take the

ancient Nabataean practice of creating spaces within rock, and then apply modern engineering methods to create habitable spaces that are more aligned to modern-day expectations. Part of the project's uniqueness lies in having excavated areas one on top of the other.

Aligned with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and the AIUla Sustainability Charter, this project represents RCU's dedication to pioneering sustainable development practices. It serves as a model for visionary planning, innovative construction techniques, and operational strategies designed to minimise the environmental impact.



Ma Hawa to distribute 'water from air'

Ma Hawa, an Emirati brand owned by Baynunah Watergeneration Technologies SP, will distribute over 30,000 eco-friendly water bottles through the Emirates Red Crescent (ERC) during Ramadan as a part of its community initiatives and sustainable hydration awareness efforts.

Ma Hawa water bottles are filled with pure drinking water harvested directly from the air using Ma Hawa's innovative Atmospheric Water Generator (AWG) technology, while the company is committed to the UAE's sustainability goals and the efforts under the Mohammed bin Zayed Water initiative, a press release said.

We are humbled to play a role in supporting the community and promoting sustainable hydration practices this Ramadan

AMRO ASMAEL

In addition, the company will also deploy a number of innovative AWG machines at numerous mosques across the country, continuing its mission to provide sustainable and reliable sources

of clean drinking water for worshippers beyond Ramadan.

Amro Asmael, head of Marketing at Ma Hawa, said, "We are humbled to play a role in supporting the community and promoting sustainable hydration practices this Ramadan. Our efforts align with Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan's 'Water Initiative' that aims to address water security through innovative solutions to build a brighter future for future generations."

Ma Hawa's technology transforms atmospheric humidity into refreshing water, and offers solutions that can provide drinking water to homes, and even towns.

UAE Health Council discusses upgradation strategies

The UAE Health Council, featuring various government health entities and representatives from the private sector, has discussed key strategic initiatives in the country's health sector including plans for establishing a national center for epidemic prevention as well as the latest developments on the health cloud project.

During a meeting held on March 21, the Council endorsed several decisions aimed at bolstering the health sector and fostering a cohesive approach between federal and local health authorities along with strategic partners, a press release said.

Chaired by Abdulrahman bin



Mohammed al Owais, minister of Health and Prevention, the meeting was attended by Mansoor Ibrahim al Mansoori, chairman of the Department of Health - Abu Dhabi, Awadh Seghayer al Ketbi, director general of the Dubai Health Authority, Dr Ab-

dulaziz al Muhairi, chairman of the Sharjah Health Authority, as well as representatives from government health authorities and the private health sector.

The meeting aimed to strengthen cooperation and coordination among various health

initiatives and projects, and foster unity to realize the UAE's national health objectives. It also aimed to develop a future plan for the country in the health sector, positioning it for leadership and excellence in this field.

The Health Cloud project utilises cutting-edge cloud computing technology, offering a secure platform for storing, sharing, and managing health data. It facilitates quick and easy access to health information, thereby enhancing the quality and efficiency of healthcare services.

The health cloud project paves the way for enhancing healthcare delivery and outcomes.

AI plays key role in protecting Australia's giant kelp forests

Istanbul, Turkey - A project initiated to protect the giant kelp population in Australia, which is at risk of extinction due to global warming, is progressing more rapidly with the analysis of thousands of satellite images by Google's artificial intelligence (AI) technology and studies on heat-resistant genes.

Giant kelp forests, which extend from the seabed to the water surface and can reach heights of up to 30 metres (98 feet), constitute one of Australia's natural beauties.

This plant community serves as an underwater forest, providing habitat for thousands of marine creatures ranging from small penguins to leafy sea dragons.

Kelp forests are found in five states across the country.

The Australian government listed kelp as an endangered plant and began conservation efforts in 2012 when much of this ecosystem disappeared over the years.

One of the efforts to improve the habitat in the region is being carried out with the support of Google's AI technology.

Google Australia and Google Research, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) affiliated with the Australian government, the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies at the University of Tasmania, the Nature Conservancy, the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, and the Seaweed Forests Association are among the stakeholders of the project.



Australian government listed kelp as an endangered plant and began conservation efforts in 2012 when much of this ecosystem disappeared over the years

This plant community serves as an underwater forest, providing habitat for thousands of marine creatures ranging from small penguins to leafy sea dragons

Craig Johnson, a member of the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies at the University of Tasmania, spoke to Anadolu about the project.

Johnson noted that due to the increase in ocean temperatures and the resulting lack of nutrients in the waters, 95 per cent of the giant kelp forest in the region has

been lost. "Up until about 1980, giant kelp forests were really obvious and they were an important part of the coastline of Tasmania. In fact, we had an industry that was based on harvesting the giant kelp," he added.

Johnson described the current situation as an ecological disaster, highlighting its complexity and the challenges in improvement efforts. "Artificial intelligence helps us in two ways. One

is mapping, and the other is genetic studies focusing on kelps' tolerance to warm water," he added.

Before collaborating with Google, Johnson noted the lack of a map pinpointing kelp populations, citing the challenge of locating fluctuating kelps.

Underlining that it is vital to locate the plants for conservation efforts, Johnson said artificial intelligence has a 'great' contribu-

tion at this point. AI analysis of satellite images since 2016 has provided crucial mapping data, aiding conservation efforts significantly, he added.

On the role of AI in studying heat-resistant kelps, he said it helped in processing complex information of the genetic data that was sent to CSIRO.

"It's not something that a single human brain can actually deal with," Johnson said.

On the efforts to cultivate heat-resistant kelp, he said attempts are underway based on AI-acquired data, with positive progress in lab and seabed studies. Final results remain uncertain, Johnson noted.

He acknowledged AI's capabilities surpassing human capacity but stressed human intervention in implementing AI-generated solutions.

Emphasising the need to address greenhouse gas concentrations, he said: "What we are doing here is trying to buy time until we solve the real problem."

Scott Riddle, Google Australia's strategic partnerships manager, expressed enthusiasm for AI's significant contributions to environmental efforts.

Riddle emphasised AI's role in data analysis, citing its potential to solve environmental problems by generating large-scale geographic data and making it understandable through mapping. "As soon as people can understand a problem better, it's much easier for them to solve it," he added.

Anadolu Agency

US, Japan to bolster security pact

Tokyo, Japan - The US military plans to bolster functions of its command headquarters in Japan, as it aims for smoother cooperation with the Asian country's self-defence forces in tackling security threats posed by China and North Korea according to diplomatic sources cited by Kyodo news agency.

Japan and the United States will also work on further steps to enhance their response capabilities, Kyodo reported. Tokyo had in 2022 decided to acquire the capability to strike enemy bases even under Japan's war-renouncing Constitution.

Also, Japan is set to establish a joint headquarters to command its ground, maritime and air forces by the end of March 2025 with Kishida's government is aiming to deepen cooperation between the US military and the joint headquarters.

The development comes amidst what the two countries, which have been allies since the World War II, view as a growing threat from North Korea and China in the backdrop of Pyongyang's missile tests and Beijing's military activities in the South China Sea as well as the Taiwan conflict.

ANI

UN chief calls for release of detained UN staff members

New York, US - António Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, has applauded the bravery and commitment of the UN staff members working in conflict and disaster zones across the world. In his message on the occasion of International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members, which is observed on March 25, he said: "Today is a solemn reminder of the grave risks facing our staff members as they carry out their vital work under the United Nations flag."

These brave women and men, Guterres stressed, represent humanity's highest calling: helping people in their hour of desperate need. They come from countries spanning the globe, but are united in their common dedication to the



United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

noble causes of peacekeeping, delivering aid and assistance, and upholding international law and human rights in countries and regions rocked by conflict and disaster, he noted. "They also face enormous and unacceptable risks - including violence, detention and abduction," the UN chief pointed out.

Since 2022, 381 UN person-

nel have been detained - including seven in January and February of this year. In total, 27 UN personnel are still in detention, he revealed.

"Our hearts are with their families and colleagues, and I will not relent in calling for their release and safe return."

In their name, the Secretary-General urged all countries to fully implement the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, and the 2005 Optional Protocol to the Convention.

"On this important day, let us honour the courage and dedication of humanitarians everywhere by pledging to protect and support them as they help build a more peaceful, humane world for us all," he concluded.

WAM

Japanese premier proposed summit with Kim Jong Un, says North Korea

Ankara, Turkey - Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has conveyed his intention to hold a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, Pyongyang said on Monday.

In a statement carried by the state-run Korean Central News Agency, the North Korean leader's powerful sister Kim Yo Jong said that opening a new chapter in the relationship between North Korea and Japan would depend on Tokyo's 'political decision'.

Kishida said in parliament on Monday that his government has lobbied for a 'possible' meeting with the North Korean leader, Tokyo-based Kyodo News Agency reported.

He stressed the importance of talks to secure the return of Japanese nationals allegedly abducted by Pyongyang in the past.

Kim Yo Jong said in February that Kishida's visit to Pyongyang



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida

is possible if Tokyo does not make the issue of the past abductions of Japanese nationals an obstacle between the two countries.

In 2002, North Korea admit-

ted that it had sent agents to abduct 13 Japanese people in the 1970s and 1980s, pressing them into service training its spies in Japanese language and customs.

Ever since, it has remained an

Kishida said in parliament on Monday that his government has lobbied for a 'possible' meeting with the North Korean leader

emotional issue in Japan.

Japan's former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi paid a landmark visit to Pyongyang in 2002 and met Kim's father Kim Jong-il.

His visit led to the return of five Japanese nationals and a follow-up trip by Koizumi, but the diplomacy soon broke down, following Tokyo's claim that Pyongyang was not coming clean about the abduction victims.

Anadolu Agency

Senegal's opposition candidate takes early lead in presidential poll

Kigali, Rwanda - Early results from Senegal's presidential election on Sunday showed that opposition candidate Bassirou Diomaye Faye is ahead of other candidates.

Preliminary results from the electoral body released on Sunday night showed Bassirou Diomaye Faye leading with 56.7 per cent of the vote, followed by his main rival former Prime Minister Amadou Ba of the ruling coalition, who received 31 per cent.

Faye's supporters began to celebrate his victory on Sunday evening after receiving congratulatory messages from many of

his competitors.

However, Amadou Ba, chosen by outgoing President Sall, has promised to provide his analysis of the results on Monday afternoon.

"I respect both the law and the republic. Our teams are working on the results, and I will return tomorrow (Monday) at noon at the latest to assess the preliminary results from the ballot box," Ba told reporters at the ruling party's headquarters in the capital, Dakar.

"For our part, and considering the feedback of the results from our team of experts, we are certain that, in the worst



case scenario, we will go to a run-off," he added.

The first official results must be published no later than March 29.

'High turnout'

The presidential election saw a high turnout in different regions of the country, according to Abdoulaye Sylla, the president of the Autonomous National Electoral Commission (CENA).

"We have toured the departments of Dakar. What we noticed at first glance is that the turnout is very high, at 42 per cent at the polling stations we visited. We are delighted with

this strong turnout," CENA president told reporters.

There were 19 candidates, including the only female candidate, Anta Babacar Ngom, but two dropped out to back Faye.

President Sall, whose term ends on April 2, cast his vote in the western town of Fatick.

Speaking after voting, he stressed that only the country's Constitutional Council is empowered to announce the final results of the election.

"No candidate or (political) camp should proclaim victory before the official results," he said.

Anadolu Agency

WAR ON GAZA

Israel agrees to US-proposed deal

Tel Aviv, Israel - Israel has nodded to a US proposal on a prisoner-hostage exchange deal, under which Tel Aviv would release over 700 Palestinian prisoners, including 100 serving life sentences for killing Israeli nationals, in exchange for the release of 40 Israeli hostages held by Hamas in Gaza, according to CNN.

Israel has agreed to make 'significant compromises in order to return the abductees home', CNN affiliate Channel 11 (Kan News) also reported on Sunday, quoting a senior Israeli official.

Additionally, CNN also confirmed the update with a diplomatic source, who said outstanding issues remain, including the entry of aid, and 'Israeli military repositioning' in Gaza.

Israel agreed to the proposal put forth by CIA Director Bill Burns. Burns was in Doha, where Hamas and Israel are engaged in talks through mediators, according to CNN analyst Barak Ravid reporting on the recent round of talks in Doha, Qatar.

The agreement has not gotten any approval from the Hamas side and it could take one to three days to respond to the deal, Ravid said.



Israel is also exploring alternative routes to get weapons to sustain its ongoing offensive on the Gaza Strip

"Those details need to go from Hamas representatives in Doha, who are negotiating, to the person who really calls the shots, and this is Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar in Gaza, who is in a bunker some 100 feet under the ground, so this takes

a long time," CNN analyst Ravid said.

Ravid said the proposed exchange will 'definitely include some' American hostages, because it will include the release of men over the age of 50.

Hamas' latest proposal this

month demanded that some 700 to 1,000 Palestinian prisoners be released. Israel, at that time, described the demands as 'ridiculous' and 'absurd'.

CNN reported that the agreement, if it happens, is expected to have multiple phases.

In the first stage, Hamas has proposed releasing the hostages, who are women, including Israeli soldiers, elderly, sick and wounded. That number is believed to be roughly 40 out of the around 100 hostages who remain alive.

Israel seeks to sustain attacks

Meanwhile, Israel is exploring alternative routes to get weapons to sustain its ongoing offensive on the Gaza Strip, Israel's public broadcaster said on Monday, amid tensions with the

US over the launch of military operation in Rafah city in southern Gaza. The broadcaster did not specify the alternative routes Israel would pursue to obtain the required weaponry.

However, it quoted an unnamed security official as saying that tensions with the US over the Rafah operation and the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip will have an impact on Washington's readiness to continue assisting Israel at the same pace.

The US, Israel's staunchest supporter, recently differed with Tel Aviv over the danger of starting a military operation in the densely populated Palestinian city of Rafah. In this regard, the broadcaster reported that some countries have already halted ammunition supplies to Israel as part of their 'quiet boycott' policy.

On March 20, Canada announced a ban on arms sales to Israel. Despite international outrage over the dire situation in the Palestinian enclave, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has long stated his intention to attack Rafah, the southernmost town in Gaza and one of the last significant communities spared a ground invasion.

Agencies

Forced displacement is war crime, says French president

Paris, France - Forced displacement of populations is a 'war crime', French President Emmanuel Macron has told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who plans a military operation in the southern Gazan city of Rafah to achieve 'total victory' over Palestinian group Hamas.

Macron and Netanyahu spoke over the phone, the French presidency said in a statement on Sunday.

Macron reiterated his call for an immediate and durable ceasefire in Gaza, and expressed his concerns over the continuing operations undertaken by Israeli forces around the Al-Shifa hospital. Israel claims the facility to be the command centre of Hamas.

The president 'once again expressed his firm opposition to an offensive on Rafah', the statement read. "He recalled that the forced displacement of populations is a war crime in terms of international law, and



French President Emmanuel Macron

Macron reiterated his call for an immediate and durable ceasefire in Gaza, and expressed his concerns over the continuing operations undertaken by Israeli forces around Al-Shifa hospital

Gaza's future can only be decided in the framework of the creation of a future Palestinian state and under the responsibility of the Palestinian authority."

Macron urged Israel to open unconditionally and without

delay all land crossing borders to Gaza.

He also asked Israel to avoid any escalation in Jerusalem and the West Bank during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Anadolu Agency

Israeli army arrests 500 at Gaza hospital

Jerusalem - The Israeli army said on Monday that it had arrested 500 Palestinians in and around Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City in the past week.

A military statement said the detainees were taken into custody for their links to Palestinian groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad. There was no comment from the two groups on the Israeli allegation.

The army raided the hospital on March 18, which houses thousands of ill and wounded patients as well as displaced residents. According to Gaza's government media office, more than 250 Palestinians have been killed and injured in the Israeli raid on the facility.

Meanwhile, several Palestinians were killed and injured on Sunday evening when Israeli warplanes bombed a house in Rafah, south of the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli army targeted a house in Jenin city in the east of Rafah, belonging to the Issa family, resulting in casualties including children, eyewitnesses told an Anadolu correspondent. Many of the injured and killed,



The army raided the hospital on March 18, which houses ill and wounded patients as well as displaced residents

including children, were evacuated from the targeted house to hospitals in Rafah by medical teams and civil defence.

Witnesses said the bombing destroyed the house and caused significant damage to nearby houses and properties. Due to a lack of resources, Palestinian Authority teams struggle to clear the rubble from the targeted homes.

The exact death toll and injuries from the house bombing

have yet to be determined.

Despite warnings from regional and international leaders and organisations, Israel is planning a ground invasion of Rafah, which houses approximately 1.4mn displaced Palestinians who were driven to the area by the Israeli army under the guise of safety, only to launch attacks that resulted in casualties.

The Israeli army also detained 15 more Palestinians in military raids in the occupied

West Bank, according to prisoners' affairs groups on Monday.

A child and former prisoners were among the detainees, the Commission of Detainees Affairs and the Palestinian Prisoner Society said in a joint statement.

Most of the arrests took place in the cities of Hebron, Bethlehem, Qalqilya, Jenin, Ramallah and Jerusalem, the statement said.

Anadolu Agency

Blast kills at least 3 in Kenya's border region

Mandera, Kenya - At least three people, including two police officers, were killed and 13 others injured in a blast that targeted a local hotel in Mandera County, the northeastern part of Kenya, on Monday, the police confirmed.

The police said the blast was caused by an improvised explosive device (IED) that had been planted in the hotel and was set off as patrons sat for food.

The police said in a security report released after the attack that the explosive device had been planted on Sunday night and targeted the hotel patrons. "It was established that an IED had been planted

at the hotel, which is mostly frequented by non-locals, including our security officers," the police said in the security report.

Among those killed were two police officers and a civilian woman.

Police said the woman was the owner of Mama Samaki Hotel, which was affected by the blast.

The latest blast comes as the area has been experiencing a lull in attacks from the Al-Shabab terror group.

Security officials claimed the bomb was set up by the militants who had crossed from neighbouring Somalia.

Xinhua

'Europe not prepared for impacts of climate change'

Oviedo, Spain - "Europe is far from being prepared for the economic and social impacts of climate change," Spanish Environment Minister Teresa Ribera said in Brussels on Monday.

Ahead of the EU Environment Council meeting, Ribera highlighted the World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) report that 2023 smashed the previous global temperature record with the land 1.45 degrees Celsius (2.61 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than the pre-industrial average.

Last year, the sea temperatures also defied all previous records.

"All of this drives us to a situation that is enormously worrying," said Ribera. "And Europe is the fastest warming continent in the world," she added, citing



Spain's Environment Minister Teresa Ribera

the recent European climate risk assessment.

The Spanish minister emphasised the risks coming from water disruption as well as environmental degradation, two things on the ministers' agenda

for Monday.

"The risks related to water are skyrocketing, and not just for the Mediterranean countries," she said. "Two years ago, we saw how drought forced French nuclear plants to stop working and

got in the way of river transport in Northern Europe."

Parts of Spain also continue to be gripped by drought, with Barcelona eyeing the possibility of having to bring in fresh water by boat this summer.

Ribera emphasised the need to restore and conserve natural environments, which she stressed is incredibly important for small-scale farmers who need access to water and quality soil to survive and compete with larger agro-businesses.

Belgium, which holds the EU presidency, will later discuss the pivotal EU Nature Restoration Law, expected to be finally passed.

Late last week, its final approval was dropped from the agenda after EU member states failed to reach the needed major-

ity. "It would be an enormous failure for Europe not to commit to restoring nature and to listen to those who say the green agenda should be paused or backtracked," she said.

While Ribera seemed disappointed in the delay, she remained optimistic that the EU can take vital steps forward, citing Spain's success in reducing climate emissions while growing GDP.

"We know that investing today in nature and climate security not only generates benefits, but it reduces the costs and damages, including for people like small farmers, those who face flooding, and people who are most vulnerable to heat and other climate conditions," the environment minister added.

Anadolu Agency

Pakistan: Islamabad court orders to produce Khan, wife on April 4

Islamabad, Pakistan - A district and session court in Islamabad ordered to produce former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, on April 4, Pakistan-based ARY News reported.

According to details, the session court judge, Tahir Abbas Sipra, heard the bail pleas and issued production orders for Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi. PTI lawyer Khalid Yousaf Choudhary appeared before the court, where the court ordered the Adiala Jail superintendent to produce Imran Khan on April 4.

Earlier, the District and Sessions Court in Islamabad acquitted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan in two vandalism cases filed against him, ARY News reported.

Imran Khan has been booked in two cases at Lohi Bheer and Sahala police stations during the party's long march in Islamabad. Judicial Magistrate Ayesha Kundi acquitted him in both cases. Meanwhile, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) has directed the Adiala jail superintendent to arrange virtual meetings between Imran Khan and his lawyers till the resolution of the security issues.

As per the judgement, the Islamabad High Court said that



Former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi

Imran Khan's lawyer had said that they were restricted from meeting their client due to security issues, according to ARY News report.

PTI founder Imran Khan has been facing over 100 cases since his ouster from office. He is currently incarcerated in Adiala jail following convictions in toshakhana, cypher and 'unlawful' marriage cases.

In another development, a local court issued a production order for Khan and party leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi, directing the Adiala jail authorities to present them before the court before April 20, as reported by The International News. The district and sessions court issued the production order while hearing a petition related to the Parliament attack case, which sought Khan and Qureshi's presence in court proceedings.

According to The International News, Khan's counsel, Naeem Panjotha, presented his arguments before Judicial Magistrate Mureed Abbas, who presided over the hearing. Panjotha informed the court that the superintendent of Adiala jail does not obey the order of any court. He pleaded to the court to ensure that the jail officials adhere to the orders and produce Khan before it.

He added that jail authorities made excuses and the PTI founder was not even being presented for a hearing via video link, as per The International News. In response, the judicial magistrate acknowledged Khan's confinement in Adiala jail and the challenges posed by the situation.

While noting the availability of video link attendance, the magistrate underscored the preference for physical attendance in the e-court. Imran Khan's lawyer requested the court order the authorities to present Khan in the courtroom.

Panjotha added that the internet works in Adiala jail, but only in the case of PTI founder, it stops working. "Adiala jail superintendent is afraid to bring PTI founder on video link," the counsel said.

ANI

No contacts with West, says Russia

Statement came after the Crocus City Hall shooting which killed at least 137 people

Moscow, Russia - The Kremlin on Monday said currently there are no contacts between Russia and the West following the Crocus City Hall shooting which killed at least 137 people and injured over 180.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists in Moscow that while there are no contacts with Western countries, President Vladimir Putin has had many phone conversations during the past day with world leaders, which focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation in combating terrorism.

Commenting on whether the US warned Russia of the attack on the concert hall, Peskov said



intelligence is provided to special services, but cannot be disclosed as it falls into the category of sensitive information. Peskov said the Kremlin is currently not participating in

the discussion of lifting the moratorium on the death penalty, amid discussions of taking such a step among Russian lawmakers in parliament.

The spokesman refused to

comment on who the detained people in the investigation surrounding the shooting are, expressing that an investigation is underway.

Asked about the Daesh/ISIS

group claiming responsibility for the attack, Peskov urged to rely on information from law enforcement agencies.

At least 137 people were killed and over 180 others injured after gunmen on Friday opened fire when rock band Picnic was about to perform at the Crocus City Hall in Moscow region.

The Investigative Committee

said it detained 11 people, including four perpetrators, in the border region of Bryansk on their way to Ukraine.

The four suspects

Meanwhile, the four suspects, named by Russian authorities as Dalerdzhon Mirzoyev, Saidakrami Rachabalizodu, Shamsidin Fariduni and Muhammadsobir Fayzov were tried in Basmany Court in Moscow.

The court hearing went on behind closed doors and Fayzov, who filmed the attack on the concert hall in Krasnogorsk, attended the hearing on a stretcher and had difficulty talking, the TASS report said.

All four are to be held in detention until at least May 22, the court said.

Earlier, a TASS correspondent reported from the courtroom said that one of the men charged with committing the terror attack is a Tajik national. CNN reported that all four are from the former Soviet republic of Tajikistan and have been in Russia on either temporary or expired visas.

Anadolu Agency

NZ's glaciers appear 'smashed, shattered'

Wellington, New Zealand - A top government scientist in New Zealand on Monday warned that the country's glaciers 'appear smashed and shattered due to enduring ice loss' and called for tackling the issue of rising greenhouse gases.

"Overall, the snowline has been rising and in the most recent years we're seeing that rise accelerate, so we're experiencing a continued trend of glacial ice loss," said Andrew Lorrey, the country's principal scientist on climate and environmental applications.

"Even if we got a few cooler seasons, they wouldn't be enough to undo the damage that's already been done," Lorrey added.



New Zealand witnessed seven of the 10 warmest years in the past decade while last year was the second warmest

year on record, he said, adding that such a trend followed the rest of the world as 86 per cent of the planet witnessed above-average temperatures that year.

"Difference between today and five decades ago is like going to a ski field in the summer and then in the winter. That's how stark it is, and it's

not just happening in New Zealand but all over the world," said Lorrey, quoting his colleague Trevor Chinn.

"New Zealand is one of the few mid-latitude places where people live near glaciers, where people can see and visit them easily. But this is getting tougher. Tourism operators are having to penetrate further and further into the mountains to reach them," he said.

"I worry that they won't be around for our children to enjoy. Not to mention the impacts their disappearance will have on our environment and cultural heritage. A warming planet means fewer cold places and less ice," the scientist warned.

Anadolu Agency

PhD student from India dies in London

London, UK - An Indian student died after being run over by a truck while cycling back to her apartment in London last week, according to a social media post by Niti Aayog former CEO Amitabh Kant.

The 33-year-old Cheistha Kochhar was a PhD student at the London School of Economics, her father retired Lieutenant General Dr S P Kochhar said in a post on LinkedIn.

Kochhar, who had previously worked with the public policy think-tank NITI Aayog, was pursuing her PhD in Behavioural Science from LSE.

Amitabh Kant in his post on X said that Cheistha Kochhar had worked with him on the LIFE programme in Niti Aayog. He described her bright, brilliant brave and always full of life. "Cheistha Kochhar worked with me on the #LIFE programme in @NITI_Aayog. She was in the #Nudge unit and had gone to do her Ph.D in behavioural science at #LSE. Passed away in a terrible traffic incident while cycling in London. She was bright, brilliant & brave and always full of life. Gone away too early. RIP."

Mission LIFE is an India-led global mass movement to nudge individual and community action to protect and pre-

serve the environment.

Lieutenant General Kochhar (Retd) stated that he is still in London trying to collect the remains of his daughter, Cheistha Kocchar.

In a post on LinkedIn, Lieutenant General Kochhar stated: "I am still in London trying to collect the remains of my daughter, Cheistha Kochhar. She was run over by a truck on 19 Mar while cycling back from LSE, where she was doing her PhD. It has devastated us and her large circle of friends."

The 33-year-old Cheistha Kochhar was a PhD student at the London School of Economics

Cheistha was a doctoral candidate at the LSE since September last year, according to her LinkedIn profile. Prior to that she worked as senior advisor in the National Behavioural Insights Unit of India, Niti Aayog from June 2021 - April 2023. Previously, she worked as associate director in Centre for Social and Behaviour Change.

ANI

Pakistan to launch second phase of repatriation of Afghans

Islamabad, Pakistan - Pakistan has started preparations to launch the second phase of its repatriation drive to send nearly one million 'documented' Afghans back to Afghanistan, with orders given to district authorities and police to find and gather data of their whereabouts across the nation, Pakistan-based Dawn reported citing documents.

An official aware of the development said directives have been issued to district administrations and police to expedite the mapping of Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders, the report said.



No date has been announced yet. However, an official said the campaign to repatriate ACC holders could start in early to mid-summer, after receiving go ahead from Pakistan's federal government. Speaking to Dawn, Abid Majeed, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's additional chief secretary, said: "We have already started the mapping process." He said: "It will pick up the pace after Ramazan and we hope to complete the survey before April 30."

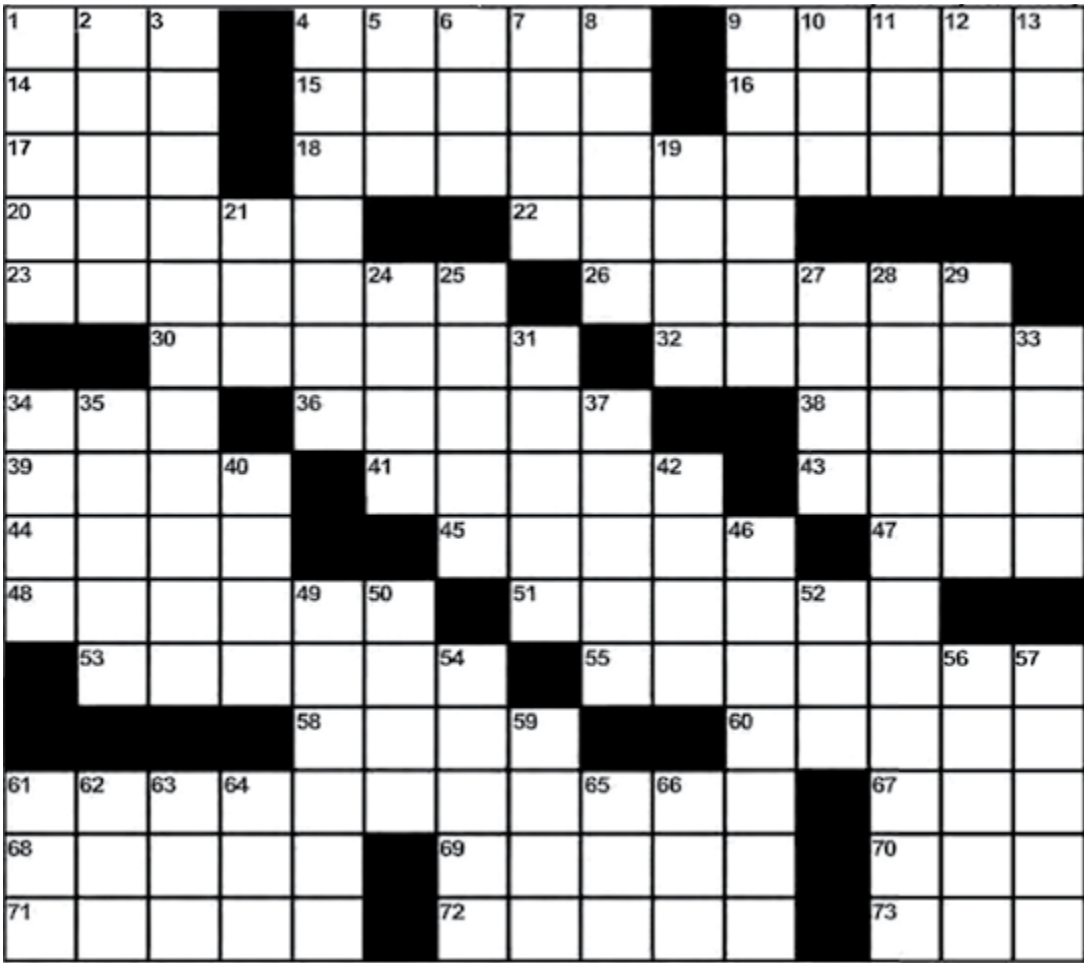
According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are

2.18mn documented Afghan refugees in Afghanistan, which include 1.3mn refugees having Proof of Registration (PoR) cards as per the census conducted in 2006-07 and an additional 880,000 refugees issued ACCs after a registration drive in 2017.

Afghans arrived in Pakistan after the Taliban seized power in August 2021. According to officials, the number of Afghans who arrived in Pakistan was between 600,000 and 800,000, some with valid travel documents, but an uncertain future.

ANI

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Show piece?
- 4) More adorable
- 9) Eye problems
- 14) Scary exclamation
- 15) 18 or 21, typically
- 16) Ado
- 17) Australia's "ostrich"
- 18) Engaged in disorderly play
- 20) Striped predator
- 22) Travel in a windjammer
- 23) Bagel spread
- 26) Chicken selection
- 30) Stay clear of
- 32) Infielders and outfielders make them
- 34) Spy novelist Deighton
- 36) Synagogue scroll
- 38) Largest island in the Marianas
- 39) "A Prayer for_ Meany"
- 41) River through Alaska
- 43) Admire amorously
- 44) Change the furnishings
- 45) When pigs fly
- 47) Laugh-track sound
- 48) Non-Christian priests
- 51) God-fearing
- 53) Mast extensions

- 55) Problem with pipes
 - 58) Tennis units
 - 60) Put off 'til later
 - 61) Used fists
 - 67) Count on both hands?
 - 68) Loosen, as laces
 - 69) Alpaca's relative
 - 70) Curved letter
 - 71) " ... with_ in sight"
 - 72) Dr. Seuss title creature
 - 73) Receiving a pension (abbr.)
- DOWN**
- 1) Assists at a heist, e.g.
 - 2) Kind of book or relief
 - 3) Made to have a thicker skin
 - 4) Fix
 - 5) Sci-fi craft
 - 6) Greek letter
 - 7) They're found under layers
 - 8) Betty Ford Clinic program, e.g.
 - 9) Anger
 - 10) What U sometimes means
 - 11) "Mayday!" signal
 - 12) Common title word
 - 13) Feeling blue
 - 19) Add to the staff
 - 21) "Bad" place in Germany

- 24) Nautical shout
- 25) Second showing
- 27) Affleck flick
- 28) Much in demand
- 29) Syllables sung while skipping
- 31) Roused
- 33) Merganser's relative
- 34) Manor master
- 35) Still-life subjects
- 37) Hardly a palace
- 40) Black, along the Somme
- 42) Campbell of "Scream"
- 46) Driver's levy
- 49) Was a gossip
- 50) Galley notation
- 52) Godfrey's instrument
- 54) Kind of camera
- 56) Skein fliers
- 57) _ & Young (accounting firm)
- 59) Normandy town
- 61) Games' companion
- 62) Lennon's bride
- 63) 4 x 4, briefly
- 64) Card game winner's cry
- 65) Dinghy thingie
- 66) Thurman of Hollywood

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Don't be too rough on yourself. You're about as sharp as they come, but no one could corral every little detail that you're responsible for. So if a few minor things have slipped your attention recently, don't beat yourself up about it. These little mistakes will either fix themselves before the day is through or prove to be inconsequential. Perfection is not a realistic goal. In fact, trying to achieve it can prevent you from being as good as you can be!



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

If you are hanging out with someone because of their connections and not their personality, don't beat yourself up about it. Just change it. You are wasting their valuable time and your own by continuing a false friendship. And whatever you might gain from it, like a job connection, date, or something else, will be tainted by the fact that you faked something to get it. It's not too late to get out of this without making anyone mad. Always be true to yourself.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Are you becoming more jaded? The simple things that used to give you simple pleasure, like a great cup of coffee or a child's giggle, are leaving you cold. So before you lose sight of the wonders of the world, you need to try to dig up some of your old idealistic tendencies today. They aren't gone. They just need to be thawed out. Give yourself time to be alone. Let yourself be impressed by the magic that is around you every day. Smile at a stranger when they smile at you.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

You're getting closer to a very special person in your life, and it's only natural that you might be feeling a growing sense of responsibility toward them. But make sure you draw the line at being responsible for their happiness. All you can do is support them and respect their choices. If they are looking for answers, you have to make it clear that you don't have them. Help them learn that the solutions they seek lie within them, not in another person.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

You can change the minds of some very important people today and get what you want. All it will require is some quick reasoning and cold logic. So it's a good thing that you have tons of both to spare! You can enlighten these people about the facts of the situation without sounding like you're lecturing them. These folks like your style and they want to hear what you have to say. Once you start talking, they will start listening.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Sometimes your impressive intellectual strengths can be intimidating to lesser minds. But today, your brains will help you make good connections with and great impressions on people from all different walks of life. You are going to be exposing folks to an avalanche of new ideas, and they're going to get quite excited about the possibilities you are showing them. This level of power and influence feels new for you, but it is something you need to get used to.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

It takes a lot of energy to be a conscientious person, but you show a knack for it today. You know how to make everyone else feel comfortable and at ease, which will be invaluable for just about any experience today. If you are meeting lots of people for the first time, you will be the one to set a calm scene for a great conversation. You know how to feed someone's ego just enough to make them feel comfortable, but not so much that they feel patronized.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

There are some good vibes buzzing around you today, and you need to get them out into the world. Communicate your innermost self through whatever means of expression feels right. Send out some messages, make a few calls, and stop by a favorite coworker's desk to let them know what you think of them. This is one of those days when sharing your ideas will only bring you closer to people who see the world like you do.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

You can make resolutions about your life at any time. If you want change, there is no time like the present! It's a good day to make a fresh start, turn over a new leaf, and put bad habits behind you. You shouldn't wait any longer, especially if you feel the urge to change right now. You have clarity now, which isn't always going to be the case. Cut out the bad and start focusing more on the new.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

No message should be sent today without you double-checking it first. Besides spelling errors, how is the tone? Are you coming across as sarcastic or mean? Your communication could be easily misconstrued today if you are not careful. Sure, you know what you mean, but the person on the other end doesn't. If you don't have the time to ensure perfection in your written words, then try to speak in person or over the phone. It's the safest tactic for you today.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

In a group situation, you could notice an unusual minor detail. Could someone's behavior hold the secret to your team's success? Absolutely! Someone is definitely not bringing this project their best, and you seem to be the only person who's noticed. Rather than call this person out in front of everyone else, get a quiet moment alone with them to find out what's going on. You could help them get out of a blue funk just by listening. Offer some genuine encouragement.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You are still focused intently on one aspect of your life, maybe your career, maybe your relationship. You can sense that you are almost there in terms of a resolution. But perhaps it's time to pull back and widen your scope. You are capable of using your energy on many issues, so you don't have to just stick to one thing. You can achieve successes in many areas, you know. Don't sell yourself short or limit yourself to small thinking when you have such a big brain.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Which family of 3 painters depicted the life of peasants, paintings in which devils and witches appear, and landscapes?

- A. Rembrandt
- B. Dali
- C. Brueghel
- D. Holbein

02. What expression that comes from angling means "everything"?

- A. Bell, book and candle
- B. Lock, stock and barrel
- C. Hook, line and sinker
- D. Blood, sweat and tears

03. In the film "Batman Forever", released in 1995, who played the villain called "The Riddler"?

- A. Jim Carrey
- B. Jack Nicholson
- C. Tommy Lee Jones
- D. Arnold Schwarzenegger

Answers: 1. C 2. C 3. A

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

G	S	E	Y
L	E	O	K
N	H	E	O
N	O	L	R

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

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

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

TYLER-MADE TRIUMPH

US blank Mexico to win third straight Nations League title

Arlington, US - Goals by Tyler Adams and Gio Reyna led the US men's national team to a 2-0 victory over Mexico in the final of the CONCACAF Nations League in Arlington, Texas, for a third consecutive title.

Adams scored in the 45th minute and Reyna extended the lead in the 63rd.

The US won the inaugural Nations League final 3-2 in extra time over Mexico in 2021 and took the second title in 2023, besting Mexico in the semifinal before downing Canada 2-0.

The Americans have a seven-game unbeaten streak in the series (5-0-2) since Mexico's last victory, 3-0 in East Rutherford, N.J., on September 6, 2019.

Adams stunned the Mexicans with a screamer from 35 yards to the upper left corner. He has two goals in 38 U.S. matches. The other was against Mexico on September 11, 2018.

The oft-injured midfielder made his first start for the US since the loss to Netherlands in the World Cup Round of 16 on December 3, 2022, a span of 475 days.

Adams, who is coming off two surgeries on his hamstrings, was on a 45-minute limit and was replaced at halftime by Johnny



US players celebrate with the trophy after winning the CONCACAF Nations League

The United States won the inaugural Nations League final 3-2 in extra time over Mexico in 2021 and took the second title in 2023, besting Mexico in the semifinal before downing Canada 2-0

Cardoso. Reyna, who came off the bench Wednesday to assist a pair of extra time goals by Haji Wright in the 3-1 semifinal win over Jamaica, struck from the upper left side of the box.

Christian Pulisic made a swerving dribble at the end line to send the ball in front of the

goal, where it was cleared by Mexican defender Johan Vasquez to Reyna, who has two goals and five assists in his past five Nations League matches.

A penalty was awarded to Mexico's Santiago Gimenez in the 72nd minute after a high kick by Antonee Robinson but it was

quickly overturned after video review and Gimenez was carded for embellishment.

Until Adams' brilliance, the best scoring opportunity for either side came in the fifth minute when Pulisic dribbled into the box to force a save by Guillermo Ochoa at the near post.



Son Jun-ho

South Korean footballer Son Jun-ho released by China

Seoul, South Korea - South Korean soccer player Son Jun-ho, who had been detained in China since May 2023, has recently been released and returned home, South Korea's foreign ministry said on Monday.

The midfielder was detained in China last May "on suspicion of accepting bribes by non-state employees", the Chinese government said at the time, without providing further details.

Son "recently arrived in South Korea as his detention ended" after 10 months, the South Korean Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Monday.

The government has provided "active legal assistance through close communication with Son's family", it added.

The Foreign Ministry did not reveal when he returned or whether the charges against him were proven.



Conor Gallagher

Chelsea star Gallagher hopes his club form boosts chances of making England squad

London, England - Chelsea's Conor Gallagher is hoping his experience of playing a leading role at Chelsea this season could pave the way for a spot in England's squad for this year's European Championship in Germany.

Gallagher has been named in every England squad since the 2022 World Cup, where he was an unused substitute, having made five appearances in Euro qualifying games.

The 24-year-old, who has been with Chelsea since the age of six, has captained the Premier League club on several occasions this season while Reece James and Ben Chilwell were sidelined by injury.

Gallagher has been one of the few dependable players for Chelsea in a season where Mauricio Pochettino's squad has struggled for consistency, having made 38 appearances across all competitions.

"I've had to step up and be more of a leader this season at Chelsea which I've really enjoyed and I think that's helped

me develop more as a player as well," Gallagher told reporters after England's 1-0 defeat to Brazil in an international friendly on Saturday.

His 90th-minute winner against Leeds United last month helped Chelsea advance to the FA Cup quarter-finals, where they beat Leicester City to set up a semi-final clash against Manchester City.

"The experience I've had in the two cup competitions with Chelsea and getting as far as we have done will definitely help being in those positions," he said.

"It is what (England manager) Gareth (Southgate) and the others are looking at. I'll continue to work my hardest for Chelsea and give myself the best opportunity to be in (the Euros) squad."

England, who face Belgium on Tuesday in a friendly match, are grouped with Slovenia, Denmark and Serbia at Euro 2024, which begins on June 14.

Pellegrini, Barella goals help Italy beat Ecuador

New Jersey, US - An early goal from Lorenzo Pellegrini and a late strike from Nicolò Barella gave a revamped Italy side a 2-0 win over Ecuador in a friendly at Red Bull Arena in New Jersey on Sunday.

Italy coach Luciano Spalletti made 11 changes to the lineup from Thursday's 2-1 win over Venezuela, which was the first of the two matches on the U.S. tour, giving more players a chance to prove themselves before the Euro 2024 finals in Germany.

There was a minute's silence in honour of Fiorentina director Joe Barone, who passed away on Tuesday.

Pellegrini put Italy ahead after three minutes by smashing home after the ball rebounded off the wall from a free-kick.

Minutes later, Nicolò Zaniolo came close to doubling Italy's lead as he battled for the ball but his attempt was foiled by onrushing goalkeeper Javier Burrai.

Ecuador became a more at-



Italy's Nicolò Barella celebrates after scoring against Ecuador in their friendly match in New Jersey on Sunday

tacking threat after the hour mark, with Italy keeper Guglielmo Vicario making a diving save after a dangerous attempt from outside the box by Gonzalo Plata.

However, deep into stoppage time Italy counter-attacked and

Barella cleverly lobbed Burrai to seal the win.

Spalletti said the US tour had been positive for the team as they prepare to defend their European title in June. "There were many events, appointments and con-

tinual journeys, so managing to put it all together the way we did between the (Italian Football) Federation and the team on the field, that makes it a very good tour," he told RAI Sport. "We had some good performances, there

were some things we need to sort out and didn't have much time to work on, but these games help us to analyse and then find something positive."

After scoring a last-second goal, Barella celebrated his first game as Italy's captain and was very upbeat.

"Perhaps we suffered a bit too much in the second half, considering our quality, but that helped us and me to keep back that energy for the final sprint and joy of scoring a goal," he told RAI Sport.

"We are getting to grips with what the coach asks of us, we are improving, there is more work to do, but we are creating a good group with players who want to give their all."

Italy have two more friendlies in June, against Turkey and Bosnia, before heading to the tournament in Germany.

Italy have been drawn with Spain, Albania and Croatia in Group B at the month-long Euros, which starts on June 14.

De Silva, Kamindu hit cracking centuries as Sri Lanka crush Bangladesh in first Test

Sylhet, Bangladesh - Sparkling centuries by middle-order batsman Kamindu Mendis and captain Dhananjaya de Silva helped Sri Lanka thrash Bangladesh by 328 runs on the fourth day of the opening Test on Monday to take a 1-0 lead in the series.

Having set Bangladesh a mammoth victory target of 511 after Kamindu scored 164 and De Silva 108 in the second innings in Sylhet, Sri Lanka bowled out the hosts for 182 in 49.2 overs.

Kamindu and De Silva stitched together a 173-run partnership on the third day as Sri Lanka made 418 all out, marking only the third time ever that two 150-plus



Dhananjaya de Silva

stands had been shared in one Test match by the same pair.

Bangladesh lost half their side on Sunday with only 47 on the board - still needing 464 for vic-

tory - and folded after a late fight-back on the fourth day, with Kasun Rajitha taking 5-56 and Vishwa Fernando claiming 3-36.

Mominul Haque offered resis-

tance with an unbeaten 87 but could not prevent the inevitable.

Earlier in the match, knocks of 102 by Kamindu and De Silva were the outstanding performances on a challenging wicket as Sri Lanka were dismissed for 280 on the opening day.

After Bangladesh's Khaled Ahmed and Nahid Rana took six wickets, it was the turn of Sri Lanka's seam bowlers to shine and they ripped through the hosts to secure a 92-run lead.

Fernando captured four wickets before Dimuth Karunaratne's 36th Test half-century helped the tourists increase their lead late on the second day.

Algeria's coach slaps own players on pitch

Algiers, Algeria - Algeria's Under-20 manager slapped at least one of his own players on the field during an altercation with opponents Tunisia in a friendly on Saturday.

In a video shared on social media, coach Yacine Mana appeared to slap one of his team's players on his second attempt and tried to hit another.

Local media reported that Mana was trying to disperse his players and calm them down during the quarrel that erupted over a refereeing decision in their 3-2 defeat by Tunisia.



Coco Gauff

Gauff breezes past Dodin to reach fourth round in Miami

Miami, US - It took Coco Gauff a while to wake up on Sunday, but when she did it was lights out for Oceane Dodin as the American third seed stormed back from 4-2 down to earn a 6-4 6-0 win and a place in the Miami Open fourth round.

World number one Iga Swiatek was working the night shift at Hard Rock stadium but also had trouble getting in gear before taming Czech 26th seed Linda Noskova 6-7(7) 6-4 6-4 to keep her bid for a second "Sunshine Double" - back-to-back wins at Indian Wells and Miami Open - on track.

While Swiatek was not at her best, the effort was enough to improve her season record to 22-2 and set up a meeting with 14th seed Ekaterina Alexandrova in the round of 16.

"Sometimes we have matches like that and we need to figure out how to close them anyway," Swiatek told reporters. "For sure it wasn't easy."

Gauff sleepwalked through much of her opening set in the first match on Hard Rock Stadium court, but when the alarm went off the U.S. Open champion swept 10 straight games to stun the French lucky loser.

With Gauff pouring on the pressure, Dodin began to crumble, piling up nine double faults

and 26 unforced errors compared to just seven by her 20-year-old opponent.

"She's a big hitter. She likes the game on her terms," Gauff told reporters. "I was trying my best to get deep in the court and just weather the storm."

"Overall I feel good so far. "I'm trying to improve with each match. Definitely playing a little bit better than I was last

I'm trying to improve with each match. Definitely playing a little bit better than I was last week in Indian Wells.

COCO GAUFF

week in Indian Wells."

With the win, Gauff matched her best Miami result and will await the winner between Caroline Garcia and Naomi Osaka for a place in the quarter-finals.

After a disappointing day for the American men on Saturday when three of the top four seeds exited, the U.S. women picked up the flag with fifth seed Jessica Pegula and 20th seed Emma Navarro also advancing.



Oman are in a confident mood after their victory against Malaysia in Muscat last week

'WE BELIEVE WE'LL WIN'

Oman coach Silhavy confident of beating Malaysia in World Cup qualifier

Muscat - Oman are confident of a positive result when they meet Malaysia in a World Cup football qualifier on Tuesday.

Oman defeated Malaysia in Muscat last week and want to build on their momentum as they play the return leg at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil.

At a pre-match press conference, Oman's Czech coach,

Jaroslav Silhavy, said his team aim to beat Malaysia for the second time in two weeks.

Silhavy said Oman have a good idea of how to play Malaysia.

"We believe Malaysia is a very organised team. We respect them and know they will get home support but we will push for a win.



Jaroslav Silhavy

"We aren't worried too much because we believe we'll win the game."

Meanwhile, Oman defender Ali Sulaiman Al Busaidi said: "We're here to win. If we do so, we'll continue to top the group."

"We respect Malaysia and we know they have good players. But our team are filled with good players, too."

Al Busaidi provided two assists as Oman defeated Malaysia to get their campaign back on track.

Oman are now top of the group on goal difference, on six points with Kyrgyz Republic and Malaysia after goals from Issam Al Sabhi and Muhsen Saleh Al Ghassani gave them a 2-0 victory.

Melbourne gives Ferrari momentum to take on Red Bull

Melbourne, Australia - Thousands of red-clad Ferrari fans descended on Lygon St in Melbourne to party in the Italian restaurant strip until the wee hours of Monday after Carlos Sainz's unlikely win in the Australian Grand Prix.

The Italian Formula One team will hope the celebrations continue at Suzuka in two weeks after Albert Park breathed new life into the championship.

Sainz and teammate Charles Leclerc's 1-2 in Australia trimmed Red Bull's lead to four points in both the drivers' and constructors' title races, a major momentum shift following Max Verstappen's Middle East dominance.

Ferrari had the fortune of Ver-



Ferrari's Carlos Sainz and Charles Leclerc celebrate with their team members

stappen flaming out with a brake problem at Albert Park which ended Red Bull's two-year run of avoiding DNFs (non-finishes) on race day.

Ferrari nonetheless leave Mel-

bourne delighted by the pace of their SF-24 car after being trounced by Red Bull in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.

"This weekend is good evidence that when we are putting

everything together, and I'm not sure that we'll be able to do it every single weekend, we can put (Red Bull) a little bit under pressure," said team boss Fred-eric Vasseur.

"It's when they are under pressure that they will also have more mistakes. We have to continue in this direction."

With triple world champion Verstappen topping the podium ahead of team mate Sergio Perez in the season's first two races, Red Bull were blindsided by setup struggles from the get-go in Melbourne.

Red Bull team boss Christian Horner said Red Bull had not got to grips with conditions while Ferrari, clearly, had.

"I think the nature of the surface (was a factor), as well. I think that the tyre graining here in particular was something that Ferrari looked in control of," he said. "Certainly from Friday their long runs looked good."

Murray departs Miami for last time after resolute performance

Miami, US - In what was his final appearance at the Miami Open, Andy Murray gave tennis fans a resolute performance to remember on Sunday in a 5-7, 7-5, 7-6(5) third-round defeat to Czech Tomas Machac.

For all his talent it is Murray's heart and refusal to wave the white flag that powered him to three grand slam titles and earned him respect from his fellow players and an army of fans.

The 36-year-old displayed those qualities in his Miami swan song with a vintage performance that drew roaring approval from the packed house on Butch Buchholz court.

The match statistics alone did not measure Murray's work.

Tied at a set each and 5-5 in third, the match looked finished when Murray rolled over on his left ankle, dropped his racquet and then covered his face screaming in pain as he hopped to his bench grimacing.

After being treated by the trainer a defiant Murray re-strapped his ankle and returned to the court.



Andy Murray waves to the crowd after his match against Tomas Machac

The third set would go to a tie-break with Murray building a 5-3 advantage but the former world number one could not close the deal as Machac, who had earlier upset fifth seed Andrey Rublev, added another big name to his victims list. As he will likely do many times as his retirement nears Murray grabbed his gear, walked out onto the court one more time and applauded the crowd soaking up the moment.

"I wasn't thinking about all the matches I played just more that that's the last match that I am

going play here which is sad because I love it here," Murray told a small group of reporters. "I've spent so much of my tennis career here and I would have liked it to have gone on a little bit longer. This tournament in particular for me is an important one so it was a bit more emotional leaving the court today than it might be at some of the other events."

"I am looking forward to the end now, giving my best the next few months and get to be at home with my family."

Gritty Sinner rallies to beat Griekspoor

Miami, US - Second seed Jannik Sinner pulled off a Miami Open great escape by coming back from the brink with a gritty 5-7, 7-5, 6-1 win over Tallon Griekspoor to move into the fourth round on Sunday.

In contrast, defending champion and third seed Daniil Medvedev had mostly drama-free passage taking down Briton Cameron Norrie 7-5 6-1.

The final that fans are hoping to see next weekend between Sinner and top seed Carlos Alcaraz seemed in danger when big-hitting Dutchman Griekspoor took the opening set and was serving for a 6-5 lead in the second.

But second seed Sinner, displaying some of the steel that has made him a Grand Slam champion, came through in the clutch by securing his first break of the match when he needed it most to go up 6-5 and then held serve to level the contest at 1-1.

After flirting with danger, the Italian took command by breaking the 26th-ranked Griekspoor at the first opportunity in the third set and broke a second time to go 5-1 ahead before serving



Jannik Sinner

Mentally I tried to stay strong, which I did, and I was in a tough situation today. It's been a tough day for me, but very happy about the result.

JANNIK SINNER

out the match with a forehand winner into an open court.

"I think even the first set was really close, but it went away," said Sinner, who will next play the winner of the match between Chris O'Connell and Martin Damm. "Mentally I tried to stay

strong, which I did, and I was in a tough situation today.

"It's been a tough day for me, but very happy about the result."

There was no escape for sixth-seeded Dane Holger Rune who was swept aside 6-1 6-1 by Fabian Marozsan in 59 minutes.

The Hungarian, known for his delicate touch and one of best drop shots in the game, struck 23 winners and converted all five of his break opportunities while Rune was 0-3 on his chances.

Ranked 57th, danger man Marozsan is quickly developing a reputation as a giant killer, having last year knocked off then world number two Alcaraz in the third round of the Rome Masters, which was widely rated as the upset of the year.

The 24-year-old also took down eighth seed Casper Ruud at the Shanghai Masters, reaching at least the last 16 in all three Masters 1000 events he has played.

Blocking Marozsan's path to the fourth round is Australian Alexei Popyrin, who advanced with a 6-4 6-4 victory over Czech Jiri Lehecka.

After Americans Taylor Fritz, Tommy Paul and Frances Tiafoe all exited in the second round, Ben Shelton is the top seeded U.S. player left in the draw, the 16th seed making the third round with a 6-3 6-4 victory against Spanish wildcard Martin Landaluce.



TITANS WIN THRILLER

Umesh holds nerves in final over to defeat Hardik's Mumbai

Ahmedabad, India - In a game that witnessed momentum swing like a pendulum between the two sides, the Gujarat Titans pulled off a narrow six-run victory over Mumbai Indians to start their Tata Indian Premier League 2024 campaign. It came down to the last over, with Mumbai needing 19. Hardik Pandya flat-batted the first ball over cover for a massive six and then hit one along the ground to the boundary. Umesh Yadav held his nerve and produced a short ball that made Pandya pull it straight to long-on. Piyush Chawla then hit the fourth ball straight to deep mid-wicket as the huge crowd at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad celebrated an impending win. Umesh finished the job and ensured the win for Gujarat.

For a major part of Mumbai's innings, it looked like they were on course to victory. Chasing a



Gujarat Titans players celebrate the fall of a Mumbai Indians wicket

target of 169, Mumbai got off to a tough start when Ishan Kishan edged the fourth ball of the innings to wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha. Debutant Azmatullah Omarzai got the new ball to swing away from Kishan, who poked at it. Naman Dhir settled in and attacked during Omarzai's second over, smashing three fours before lofting one into the stands over long-off. Omarzai then came back by trapping him leg-before off the last ball.

Dewald Brevis was introduced

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CHENNAI SUPER KINGS VS GUJARAT TITANS

as an Impact Player in place of Luke Wood and controlled proceedings with Rohit Sharma. The duo kept up the tempo of the run-chase, attacking the Gujarat bowling almost every over. Their attacking intent was evident, with Rohit taking on Umesh Yadav in the fourth over. Brevis, the promising batter, essayed some great shots. One of the highlights was an upper-cut for six, which welcomed Spencer Johnson to the Tata IPL.

The 77-run stand put Mumbai

on course before R Sai Kishore trapped Rohit leg-before for 43. Gujarat managed to pull things back thereafter, as they conceded only one boundary across the next four overs. With five overs in hand, Mumbai needed 43 runs with seven wickets in hand. Brevis's attractive 46 ended when he hit one back to Mohit Sharma, who held on to a remarkable reflex catch in his follow through.

Gujarat's bowling came together in the slog overs. Johnson delivered a crucial penultimate over. Despite being hit for six off the first ball, he kept it tight thereafter and accounted for two scalps. The game then moved towards that dramatic finale featuring Umesh.

It was a game of firsts, with Gill making his captaincy debut in the IPL and leading Gujarat. Pandya too was captaining Mumbai for the very first time in the tournament. As many as five players made their IPL debuts in the match.

Gill praises 'outstanding' bowling against Mumbai

Ahmedabad, India - Shubman Gill, in his first game as Gujarat Titans captain, was thrilled by how his bowlers pulled off a heist against Mumbai Indians, led by his former skipper Hardik Pandya. Mumbai Indians needed only 48 runs off the last six overs with seven wickets in hand, and heavy dew hindering the bowlers, but they fell six runs short.



Shubman Gill

"I think the way the boys held up their nerves in the death overs, especially with the dew coming in, the way we bowled was outstanding," Gill said after the match. "There was a lot of dew. The way our spinners bowled, Rashid [Khan] and Sai [Kishore], they made sure we were in the game always. In the end it was all about putting on the pressure and holding our nerves."

Left-arm spinner R Sai Kishore had not been a regular starter for Titans in their first two seasons: only five games in 2022 and none in 2023. Picked for their season opener in 2024, he conceded only 24

runs in four overs despite dew making the ball hard to grip, and also pinned Rohit Sharma lbw for 43 off 29 balls. Rashid didn't take a wicket but went for only 23 in his four overs and it was towards the end of his spell that Mumbai began to flounder.

There was an unusual incident in Rashid's final over, the 17th of the chase. Tim David, who at No. 6 had been promoted ahead of Hardik Pandya, lofted Rashid towards the deep midwicket boundary. He and Tilak Varma could have run two if they pushed hard, but they settled for a single to bring the left-handed Tilak on strike.

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Welcome to B-Spoke by Dr Faisal Salim, a leading force in re-defining beauty through innovative technologies. B-Spoke is a clinic, at Al Wasl Road, Dubai, that epitomises excellence, with cutting-edge technology at its core. Here, precision and progress converge, defining the future of beauty.

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The field of plastic surgery is abuzz with excitement over cutting-edge techniques and trends.

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Dr Faisal Salim

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Dr Faisal's practice is centred around delivering natural results. His specialisation in deep plane

CUTTING-EDGE SOLUTIONS



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B-Spoke by Dr Faisal offers beauty solutions and more without a surgical appearance. His specialisation in deep plane face and neck lifts ensures the most natural and long-lasting outcomes

face and neck lifts ensures the most natural and long-lasting outcomes desired by his patients. No longer do patients have the 'surgical' appearance, as Dr Faisal's deep plane facelifts leave them looking refreshed and rested.

When it comes to skin tightening, Renuvion takes centre stage. This innovative procedure combines helium plasma and radiofrequency energy for effective skin tightening.

At B-Spoke, these cutting-edge techniques are integral to enhancing the customer experience. Dr Faisal and his skilled team elevate these procedures, ensuring that each one is not only technologically advanced but also tailored to meet the unique needs of every client.

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Amidst the dynamic evolution of the beauty industry, a new era is unfolding, where tradition and innovation converge to shape the future of beauty standards.

In this transformative landscape, B-Spoke seamlessly blends tradition with innovation, and Dr Faisal's commitment to staying at the forefront of technology positions the clinic as a pioneer in the field.

In a world that continues to evolve, Dr Faisal actively shapes the beauty standards of tomorrow. It's not just about appearances; it's about ensuring that you receive the best, supported by the latest advancements.

Are protein shakes healthy?



VANDANA CHAWLA

NUTRITION & YOU

Proteins are one of the most vital nutrients.

Every cell, tissue of our body is made of protein. Not only this, proteins also repair damaged cells, helps build muscle, work as a carrier and transporter for all nutrients in the body, and most importantly, it is a key component of our immune system.

Protein-rich foods have a high satiety, that is, it keeps one full for a long time, hence, it is the favourite of people on a weight-loss diet.

Since proteins are so essential, then protein shakes or powders become a convenient way of incorporating this vital nutrient in our diet. Protein shakes are getting so popular that health stores and gyms are flooded with these products. Before making this part of our daily diet, let's understand it.

What are protein shakes?

Protein shakes are powdered form of proteins. The proteins in these products come from animal foods like eggs or milk or from plants like, soybeans, rice, hemp, or pea. In addition, shakes contain vitamins, minerals, artificial flavouring, thickeners, and added sugar.

Every scoop of this powder may provide 10-30g of proteins. Powders specific for weight loss have relatively less protein content than the ones used for muscle building.

Benefits

- Helps maintain and build muscle
- Supports recovery from workout
- Helps in weight management.

All the statements mentioned above, indicate the possibility of help or support that these shakes may offer. This is due to the variety of shakes that comes with variety of ingredients present in

each, the dosage taken, how often taken, plus the health and tolerance of everyone.

Harvard Health Publishing, clearly states that protein shakes, which are chemical-free should be taken under medical supervision by:

- Individuals with impaired appetite or eating problems
- Post-surgical cases
- Conditions where high-protein and high-calorie diet is extremely essential.

Potential risks

- It's a dietary supplement, not regulated by FDA



- Long-term effects still not known
- May have digestion related issues, particularly in individuals with pre-existing dairy allergies or with digestion problems
- Some of the protein shakes are high in added sugars and calories, which can cause other problems
- Some of the shakes are also contaminated with certain

toxins, like heavy metals, BPA

Athlete's needs

- Taking commercial protein shakes, every day should be avoided
- To get the same benefits as from protein shakes, include more of animal proteins, like eggs, lean meat, fish, and dairy in diet
- Try adding one source of pro

tein in every meal

- Try combining vegetable proteins, like nuts, legumes, beans with animal proteins
- Try creating your own home-made protein smoothies or shakes, by mixing nut butter/ nuts, milk/ yoghurt, and fruits

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

Advertisement for Sifr Sodium Free Drinking Water. It features a purple background with a crescent moon and a star. The text says "Sifr SODIUM FREE DRINKING WATER" and "Exclusive Ramadan & Eid OFFER". There are two main offers: "50% OFF" on a "HOT & COLD DISPENSER" and "20% OFF" on a "WHITE TAP DISPENSER OR TAP DISPENSER OR MANUAL WATER PUMP OR CRADLE WITH TAP". Both offers include "2 FULL BOTTLES" and "30 REFILL COUPONS". The offer is valid from 10th March to 30th June 2024. The company is OASIS WATER COMPANY SAOC, P.O. Box 87, Muscat 114, Sultanate of Oman. Contact numbers are 800 71 222 and 9275 5522. There is also a QR code and a logo for Oman's Exchange.

Advertisement for Al Hayat International Hospital. It features a green and white logo with a cross and the text "مستشفى الحياة الدولي AL HAYAT INTERNATIONAL HOSPITAL Quality Care Without Compromise". The main offer is the "RAMADAN Silver Health Package" for 17 OMR. The package includes a Liver Profile, Lipid Profile, Renal Profile, Iron Deficiency, Vitamins Profile, Complete Hemogram - CBC (21 test), Free Thyroid Profile, and Diabetic Screen. The offer is valid from 10th March to 30th June 2024. The hospital is located at MOH NO.- 940380. Contact numbers are 9972 8290 and 9797 1672.

Advertisement for Purshottam Kanji Exchange. It features a blue and white background with the Statue of Liberty and the Burj Khalifa. The text says "SEND USD WORLDWIDE FOR BUSINESS, EDUCATION, FIXED DEPOSITS & MORE" and "OMR 4 SERVICE FEE". It also says "SEND MONEY TO ANY BANK ACCOUNT IN UAE FOR CORPORATES AND INDIVIDUALS" and "OMR 2.5 SERVICE FEE". The company is PURSHOTTAM KANJI EXCHANGE, شركة برشوتم كانجي للمرافعة. Contact numbers are +968: 91787829, 99849289, and 91787829. The website is www.pkexchange.com.

LIGHT
WORKOUT

During Ramadan, it's essential to maintain physical fitness while also being mindful of one's fasting schedule and energy levels. Here are ten points to ponder for staying fit during Ramadan:

- 1 Light cardio: Engage in low-intensity cardio exercises such as walking, cycling, or swimming during the non-fasting hours. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate activity most days of the week.
- 2 Bodyweight workouts: Perform bodyweight exercises such as squats, lunges, push-ups, and planks at home or in a quiet space. These exercises help maintain muscle tone and strength without the need for equipment.
- 3 Yoga and stretching: Practice gentle yoga or stretching routines to improve flexibility, mobility, and relaxation. Focus on deep breathing and mindfulness to enhance the mind-body connection.
- 4 Short, high-intensity workouts: Consider incorporating short, high-intensity interval training (HIIT) workouts during the non-fasting hours. HIIT sessions typically last 20-30 minutes and involve alternating between intense bursts of activity and brief rest periods.
- 5 Pre-dawn workouts: If possible, engage in light exercise or stretching routines before the pre-dawn meal (suhoor) to boost energy levels and metabolism for the day ahead.
- 6 After sunset workouts: Schedule more intense workouts, such as strength training or cardio sessions, after breaking the fast (iftar) and before the evening meal (taraweeh). Aim to hydrate well before and after exercise to replenish fluids lost during fasting.
- 7 Listen to your body: Pay attention to your body's signals and adjust your exercise routine accordingly. If you feel fatigued or lightheaded, opt for gentler forms of exercise or consider taking a rest day.
- 8 Stay hydrated: Hydration is crucial during Ramadan, especially when exercising. Drink plenty of water during the non-fasting hours and consider consuming hydrating foods such as fruits and vegetables.
- 9 Be mindful of timing: Plan your workouts around the fasting schedule, taking into account meal and prayer times. Avoid strenuous exercise during the hottest part of the day to prevent dehydration and overheating.
- 10 Consult a doctor: If you have any underlying health conditions or concerns about exercising during Ramadan, consult with a healthcare professional or fitness expert for personalised advice and guidance.



POINTS FOR RAMADAN FITNESS

Staying fit while fasting requires careful planning and consideration of your body's needs during the fasting period. Light workouts work best





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