



OIC calls on world to end Palestinian crisis, terrorism

Rabat, Morocco - Member states of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation (OIC) reaffirmed their commitment to supporting Palestine, drawing attention to the ongoing challenges faced by the Palestinian people in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanese territories.

The commitment was made during the 52nd Session of the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Union of OIC Member States that took place in Rabat on Monday. The meeting saw member states addressing pressing issues facing the Islamic world, particularly the Palestinian cause and the fight against terrorism in the Sahel region.

Members strongly condemned the actions of Israeli forces, denouncing the killings in Gaza and the West Bank and the violence carried out by extremist settlers who have destroyed homes and displaced Palestinian families. The committee called on the international community, including influential powers and the UN, to intervene, urging an end to the aggression and lifting the siege on Palestinian territories. They also emphasised the need for unrestricted access to food and medicine for those in Gaza, alongside international protection for the Palestinian people.

The committee also condemned terrorist acts in the Sahel region and reaffirmed its support for nations battling terrorism there.

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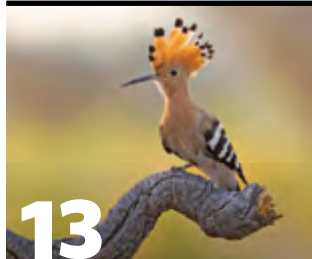
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Wildlife photographer Ahmed al Washahi showcases Omani wildlife



Industries record strong growth

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's industrial sector witnessed a boost in the first quarter of 2024 with 9.2% growth compared to the same period in 2023, according to National Centre for Statistics and Information. Production value surged from RO871mn to RO951mn, now contributing 10% to the GDP at constant prices.

The rise in basic chemical industries stood out, growing 6.4% from RO317.8mn to RO338.2mn. Other manufacturing industries saw a 6.3% increase with production value rising from RO513.1mn to RO545.2mn.

H E Dr Saleh bin Saeed Masan, Undersecretary in Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, informed that Oman's industrial growth far exceeds the global average. "While the global industrial production increased just 0.9% in the first quarter of 2024, Oman's indus-

INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT	CONTRIBUTION TO GDP	CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	CIP INDEX - RANK	FDI IN INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS IN 2024
RO951mn	10%	RO338.2mn	4th (regionally)	RO2bn	RO885mn



While the global industrial production increased just 0.9% in the first quarter of 2024, Oman's industrial sector has outperformed significantly

H E DR SALEH MASAN



trial sector has outperformed significantly," he said referring to a report from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Global challenges such as inflation, energy price fluctuations, supply chain disruptions and regional conflicts have impacted industrial growth

worldwide. H E Masan attributed the growth to the efforts of Omani industrialists and government institutions. "The industrial sector's success is driven by continuous support, increased local demand and expansion of exports to new markets," he explained. Adoption

of advanced technologies, improved supply chains and strategic investments have further boosted competitiveness. Oman's efforts to modernise its industrial framework have also been reflected in its rise in the Competitive Industrial Performance (CIP) Index 2024. The

sultanate secured the 53rd position globally and fourth regionally among 153 countries ranked by UNIDO. Foreign direct investment (FDI) this year in the industrial sector reached RO2bn by August, with 60 new industrial projects totalling RO885mn in

investments signed this year. Non-oil exports grew 11.2% till the end of May, with notable increases in exports to the UAE (15%), the US (14.6%) and a remarkable 1,000% increase in exports to South Korea, driven by a new free trade agreement between the GCC and South Korea.

Jassim bin Saif al Jadeedi, Technical Director at Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, highlighted the fact that Omani industrial exports to South Korea reached RO288mn in the first five months of 2024. This surge was mainly due to higher exports of petrochemical products, minerals, food items and building materials, even before the free trade agreement with South Korea was fully implemented.

The strong performance of Oman's industrial sector underlines its vital role in the country's economic diversification and growth.

Nama installing over 400,000 smart water meters nationwide

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Nama Water Services (NWS) is set to enhance the accuracy of water billing by installing more than 400,000 smart meters across the sultanate this year.

The initiative was announced on Wednesday during a press conference, which featured a presentation by Mohammed bin Sulaiman al Kindi, Governor of North Batinah, and attended by key officials.

Khalid bin Hassan al Lawati, Acting Director General of Meters and Data Management at NWS, informed that the company has already installed over 320,000 smart water meters in Muscat governorate and 70,000 in South Batinah.

Lawati added that NWS has officially launched the second phase of its digital transformation project in North Batinah. Over the next three months, the company aims to instal more than 115,000 new smart meters across several wilayats. This follows the successful completion of Phase 1 when over 80,000 meters were installed.

The ongoing project is part of



a broader plan to deploy over 400,000 digital meters throughout the governorates served by NWS demonstrating the company's commitment to advancing digital transformation.

The new smart meters provide continuous, hourly consumption readings and support both pre-paid and postpaid billing options. This technology enables remote meter reading, allowing for electronic invoices based on actual usage rather than estimates. Subscribers will receive their bills via email or through the NWS elec-

tronic portal, where they can also update their information.

The digital meters are designed to optimise water consumption by delivering real-time data, helping subscribers monitor their usage and detect internal leaks through notifications. This feature facilitates prompt leak detection and resolution, thereby reducing complaints related to high consumption bills.

Additionally, the meters aid in minimising water loss for the company by comparing the total water distributed, as measured by the main meter, with the total

recorded by individual home meters. Discrepancies between these measurements can help identify and address locations of water loss effectively.

In the company's 2023 annual report, Qais Saud al Zakwani, CEO, stated that reducing and managing water losses constitutes a central pillar of NWS' strategic plan.

"The company is particularly focused on the smart meter project, representing a significant advancement in how water bills are calculated utilising real readings obtained remotely," he stated.

Oman ranks 21st to do business, investments

Muscat - Oman has been ranked 21st globally in the 2024 list of World's Best Countries to Invest In or Do Business compiled by CEOWORLD magazine.

The ranking underscores Oman's strategic efforts to foster a business-friendly environment and highlights the initiatives that have positioned the country as a prime destination for international investment.

Oman's standing is a testament to its commitment to Oman Vision 2040, which aims to diversify the national economy, reduce dependency on oil revenues and create a sustainable, innovation-driven future.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) has been instrumental in driving reforms, providing a solid framework for enhancing economic growth, promoting the private sector and boosting investor confidence.

Through Invest OMAN, the government's dedicated arm for large-scale investments, the sultanate continues to streamline the investor journey, offering a comprehensive suite of services that guide investors from inquiry to project realisation.

The report by CEOWORLD

Oman has an economic stability score of 92.12 and received commendable ratings for its government policies (92.36) and skilled labour force (92.75)

magazine - a New York based business publication providing insights and rankings related to global economic trends - highlights key metrics contributing to Oman's success. The country has an economic stability score of 92.12 and received commendable ratings for its government policies (92.36) and skilled labour force (92.75). These factors, coupled with Oman's institutional framework rating of 92.34, underscore its attractiveness for foreign investment and entrepreneurship.

Additionally, Oman's infrastructure development - from free zones to special economic zones, such as Duqm and Sohar - further enhances its ability to attract foreign direct investment.

MTCIT issues safety directives for jet ski, marine operators

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT) has issued a safety alert for jet ski and recreational marine unit operators to ensure a secure environment for all those who use these facilities.

The ministry's alert aims to foster a safer environment for recreational marine activities and safeguard the well-being of all involved.

In a statement, MTCIT said, 'The ministry underscores the importance of maintaining safety standards for both operators and users. Riding jet skis and other marine entertainment units is prohibited after sunset to enhance safety. Additionally, all operators must ensure that life jackets are provided for all users to prevent drowning incidents.'

To prevent overcrowding and

ensure safety, no more than eight jet skis or similar units are allowed at a single location.

Operators are required to oversee the use of marine recreational units to mitigate risky behaviour and hazardous conditions.

A reliable means of communication must be available for emergencies, and users should remain within designated areas to avoid potential dangers. Operators must also have a rescue crew and first aid kit available at all times.

'Checking weather conditions in advance is essential to ensure safety, and water bikes or boats designated for emergencies should be readily available.'

Renting water bikes and marine recreational units to individuals under the age of 16 unless accompanied by an adult is prohibited.



Excitement in Muttrah corniche over new visa for cruise tourists

Our Correspondent
Muscat

To give the country's cruise tourism sector a fillip, the government has introduced a new visa category for cruise ship passengers and crew. The decision, issued on September 3, includes ten-day and one-month visit visas, designed to streamline the process for visitors arriving by cruise ships.

The decision comes at a time when Oman's tourism sector is experiencing steady growth. According to the National Centre for Statistics and Information, the number of visitors in 2024 reached 2.3mn by the end of July, a 2.4% increase compared to the same period last year.

Commenting on the new decision, Sreedhu Nair, Director of Sales and Marketing at Travel Diaries, said, 'Oman's move to offer a free ten-day visa for cruise passengers is a strategic initiative designed to attract more tourists and enhance its position in the competitive cruise market.'

Nair added that as Oman continues to strengthen its position as a key destination for cruise tourism, the new visa regulation will not only attract more visitors but also provide a boost to local



businesses.

Jen Meyer, a tourist at Muttrah, said, 'I am revisiting Oman after the COVID-19 pandemic; it has been a long time indeed. Oman has so much to offer, from stunning landscapes to its rich

history. With the new visa, I can now spend more time visiting places I hadn't planned on, like Sur and Nizwa. I'm really happy to have more flexibility with my trip.'

The new visa regulation has

We always look forward to cruise ship tourists and this new visa means more opportunities for business

SADIQ KHAN

the winter season. Shopkeepers at the souq are excited in anticipation of more tourists and sales.

Sadiq Khan, who runs an antique shop in the souq, said, 'We always look forward to cruise ship tourists and this new visa means more opportunities for business. When tourists stay longer, they often come back to the souq to buy souvenirs, especially antiques.'

Echoing Khan's excitement, shawarma shop owner Nurul Alam, said, 'More tourists means more footfall. A lot of them come back for a second or third shawarma during their stay. This new visa is a win-win for both visitors and us.'

NOTICE



Zoomillion Heavy Industry SPC wishes to inform that the Mr Wei Lee, holding ID No. 81929096, who previously served as our General Manager, no longer represents the company in any capacity. Effective immediately, the company will not be responsible for any dealings conducted by him on behalf of Zoomillion Heavy Industry SPC.

Any transactions or agreements made with Wei Lee after the publication of this notice are at the individual's own risk, and Zoomillion Heavy Industry SPC disclaims all responsibility.

For any claims or concerns regarding Mr. Wei Lee, please contact the company within two weeks of the date of this publication. You may reach us at 98881392.

Seminar held on managing energy sector emergencies

Our Correspondent
Muscat

OQ Group held a seminar dedicated to emergency management for the energy sector in Oman in collaboration with National Emergency Management Centre on Wednesday. It aimed to explore the challenges associated with risk management, devise effective prevention strategies and establish robust response mechanisms.

The seminar attracted a diverse group of specialists in emergency management from various sectors, including representatives from government and private institutions.

Discussions centred on two key areas. The first session focused on evaluating and managing risks within the energy sector, highlighting the sector's connection to the national risk register and emergency management strategies. The importance of integrating these strategies with the national system was emphasized.



Ali bin Mohammed al Lawati

sised to ensure comprehensive preparedness.

The second session delved

into the role of the medical response sector in addressing injuries specific to the oil and gas industries and managing hazardous materials. The discussions underscored the need for effective responses to sector-specific accidents and the critical role of coordinated efforts in mitigating such incidents.

Ali bin Mohammed al Lawati, Chief Executive for People, Technology and Culture at OQ, informed that the seminar's primary goal was to enhance preparedness and coordination for emergencies within the energy sector. He stressed the importance of taking adequate precautions and improving collaboration with the National Emergency Management Centre and other relevant entities.

The seminar also focused on assessing risks, examining major accidents and developing joint mechanisms for coordination. These efforts are aimed at ensuring continuity and resilience of essential energy sector operations.

MAFWR cracks down on illegal fishing

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) has launched a campaign to curb unlicensed kingfish fishing. This is part of efforts to preserve the kingfish population and promote sustainable fishing practices.

In a statement, the ministry said a fish control team of the Directorate General of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in Al Wusta intercepted a truck in the coastal area of Hitam in the wilayat of Duqm. The truck was carrying 500kg of kingfish which was caught during a period when fishing this species is banned.

A two-month ban on catching and trading in kingfish has been in place since August 15. MAFWR has urged all fishermen, transporters and businesses engaged in the fisheries sector to comply. Additionally, it has called on businesses to register their existing kingfish stocks before the ban began.



ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders: -

Tender Ref.	Description	Last date for Collection of tenders Document	Closing Time/ Day/ Date	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non-Refundable)
2024/3486	Wadi Tayeen Hospital Renovation work	Before 8 am on Sunday 22/ September /2024	Before 9 am on Sunday 20/ October /2024	Specialized companies registered with the Tender Board with Fourth grade	R.O 25,000
2024/3454	Miss Health Center Renovation work	Before 8 am on Thursday 19/ September /2024	Before 9 am on Thursday 17/October /2024	Specialized companies registered with the Tender Board with Fourth grade	R.O 25,000

- All Specialized and interested Companies registered with Tender Board on the above mentioned Grade may obtain Tender documents from the E. Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.

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MoE discusses introducing financial literacy in schools

Our Correspondent Muscat

The Ministry of Education (MoE) on Wednesday launched a two-day symposium to promote financial awareness among school students.

Held under the theme 'Towards School Students' Awareness of Financial Culture Principles', the event began with the participation of several key officials, including two ministers.

H E Dr Saeed bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy, inaugurated the symposium, with H E Dr Madiha bint Ahmed bin Nasser al Shaibani, Minister of Education, in attendance.

The symposium has been designed with papers and presentations to underscore the importance of financial education in achieving sustainable development goals.



It initiated discussions on integrating financial culture into school curricula. Participants began exploring how financial literacy can foster creativity, innovations and entrepreneurship, besides looking at the role of technology in broadening one's financial knowledge.

The symposium kicked off with a series of working papers. The opening paper, titled 'The Importance of Understanding Financial Culture and Its Effects on

the Lives of Individuals and Societies', stressed the need for financial education in schools.

It outlined practical steps to incorporate financial literacy into the curriculum and explored how behavioural economics can support educators in shaping positive financial habits.

During these two days, 12 training sessions for students - from grades 1 to 12 - will be conducted by experts in financial education. These sessions will take

place across all educational directorates in the governorates, with the second day featuring student visits to local banks.

H E Majid bin Said al Bahri, Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs in MoE, highlighted the importance of instilling financial awareness as part of sustainable development. "This initiative addresses both social and economic aspects, ensuring students are better equipped for the future," he said.

Malaysia showcases 'Breakfast Culture' to foodies in Oman

Our Correspondent Muscat

The embassy of Malaysia organised an event at the Grand Millennium Hotel on Wednesday showcasing the delectable breakfast items from Malaysia.

With over 100 guests, including diplomats, attending the celebration, the event witnessed several popular breakfast dishes from the Far Eastern country.

The event, titled Malaysian Breakfast Culture, featured a diverse range of traditional dishes, including the popular nasi lemak (rice cooked in coconut milk), roti canai (a flat bread) and tek tarik (tea).

Speaking about the event, H E Shaiful Anuar Mohammad, Ambassador of Malaysia, said, "This event was held to showcase the mouth-watering breakfast delicacies that are an integral part of the Malaysian culture."

He informed that his country has nominated its breakfast cul-



ture to the Unesco list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, underscoring the country's commitment to preserving its culinary traditions as part of its rich and diverse heritage.

In the event in Muscat, guests were treated to not only a delicious spread but also live demonstrations, including a teh

tarik (pulled tea) performance and a live roti canai cooking show, adding excitement to the interesting morning.

The event succeeded in offering attendees a delightful taste of Malaysia's culinary diversity while celebrating the importance of preserving these cultural traditions for future generations.

MoH releases guidelines on mpox

Our Correspondent Muscat

In a move to enhance public health awareness, the Ministry of Health (MoH) has on Wednesday released an informative bulletin on mpox (monkeypox). The bulletin provides comprehensive details about the disease, including its definition, prevention strategies and symptoms.

Mpox spreads through direct skin-to-skin contact, including sexual contact, with an infected person or by touching contaminated items, stated the bulletin. 'To lower your risk of contracting mpox, it's important to maintain good hand hygiene by washing your hands frequently with soap and water.



Additionally, consult your healthcare provider to discuss the possibility of vaccination for added protection," it added.

Symptoms of mpox can include a rash with blisters that may appear anywhere on the body, often starting in the mouth, anus or genital area. Other symptoms may include rectal pain and inflammation, swollen lymph nodes, and

fever. Additional signs may involve headache, muscle ache, and fatigue.

'If you have these symptoms, seek medical advice and get tested,' MoH stated. 'Avoid close contact with others and cover any lesions if you are in close proximity to them. Inform those close to you and your sexual partners if they have similar symptoms, and continue to practice good hygiene. If you have been in contact with someone with mpox, seek medical advice immediately. You may be eligible for vaccination to reduce the risk of infection and severe disease.'

Stay informed and take the necessary precautions to protect yourself and your community from mpox, MoH urged.

Tour of Salalah cycling event comes to end

Our Correspondent Salalah

Tour of Salalah - an internationally recognised cycling event of Dhofar - concluded on Wednesday with the final stage culminating at Darbat Waterfalls.

This year's event, jointly organised by Dhofar Municipality, the Oman Cycling Association, and the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth, was a showcase of both local and international cycling prowess.

The international cycling tour saw participation from 90 cyclists representing 15 teams from across Asia, Africa, and Europe. In the climactic fourth stage, Al-

gerian cyclist Yassin Hamza took first place in a challenging 133km race from Al Mughsail to Darbat Waterfalls.

Achieving significant milestones this year, the tour earned international recognition after getting included in the International Cycling Union's calendar. This elevated status attracted top-tier teams such as the UAE national team, Algeria's Madar Pro Cycling team, Japan's Shimano Racing team and Belgium's Flanders team, among others.

In the general classification, Brazilian cyclist Nicolas Cesar was crowned the overall winner, donning the prestigious golden jersey. Dutch rider Quentin Fling

secured the green jersey for the best time classification, while Moroccan cyclist Ibrahim al Sabahi claimed the white jersey for being the best under-23 rider. The grey jersey went to Mongolian cyclist Benjarar.

The tour comprised four stages, beginning with a 131km race from the Wilayat of Sadah to the Fort of the Wilayat of Mirbat. The second stage covered 120km from the beach of Damariz to Wadi Darbat, followed by a 119km stage from the market of Al Hafa to Itin Park.

The final stage, spanning 133km, scripted the end of the tour with a race from Al Mughsail to Darbat Waterfalls.



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*Rates as on September 11

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Russia's trade surplus rises to \$87.9bn in Jan-July

Russia's trade surplus rose 20.2% year-on-year to \$87.9bn in January-July 2024, according to export-import data that the Federal Customs Service (FCS). Interfax news agency reported that the data indicate that Russia's exports of goods increased 0.7% year-on-year to \$241bn and imports decreased 7.8% year-on-year to \$153.1bn in January-July 2024. The FCS said that the country's trade surplus totalled \$73.1bn in January-July 2023, including exports at \$239.2bn and imports at \$166.1bn. Exports from Russia to Europe in seven months decreased 30.6% to \$37.4bn. Exports to Asia totalled \$181.6bn, an 8.5% increase year-on-year. Exports to Africa totalled \$14.3bn, a 27.1% increase, and exports to the Americas increased 13.5% to \$7.6bn.

Countdown begins for BT Oman CFO Forum & Awards 2024

Muscat – The inaugural edition of Business Today 'Oman CFO Forum & Awards' is just days away. Scheduled for September 17th at the Sheraton Oman Hotel in Muscat, this premier event will unite top finance executives, industry experts and thought leaders for a day of stimulating conversations and an exchange of expertise.

H E Nasser bin Khamis al Jashmi, Chairman of the Tax Authority, will grace the occasion as the chief guest and keynote speaker.

Saleh Zakwani, Executive Chairman of Apex Media, said, "We are dedicated to fostering thought leadership and facilitating knowledge sharing within the business community through our diverse media channels. The Business Today 'Oman CFO Forum & Awards' aligns with our broader national objectives as set out in Vision 2040. This esteemed gathering is designed to empower CFOs to drive innovation, manage complexities and explore sustainable growth opportunities in today's dynamic business landscape. Additionally, the forum will celebrate outstanding achievements in finance with the Business Today Oman CFO Awards."

The forum will bring together a large and diverse group of delegates, including senior officials,



H E Nasser bin Khamis al Jashmi

CFOs, CEOs, finance heads and industry professionals from sectors such as oil and gas, banking, finance, investments, consulting, insurance, manufacturing, telecom, logistics, etc. along with top government officials.

The event is backed by prominent industry bodies and institutions, including the College of Banking & Financial Studies (CBFS), the Muscat Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Ac-

countants of India (sponsored by CBFS), the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) Middle East, Oman Banks Association, Oman American Business Council, Al Mouj Muscat, Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing, Mazda, Taageer Finance, Oman LNG, Shell Oman Marketing Company, Vodafone Oman, Dhofar Insurance, Oman Qatar Insurance Company, Mubashir and



The forum will bring together a large and diverse group of delegates, including senior officials, CFOs, CEOs, finance heads, industry professionals and top government officials

Concept Communications.

As keynote speaker, Saif al Harthi, Finance Functional Director at Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), will open the forum with a thought leadership address. Following this, two insightful panel discussions will take place.

The first panel, 'Leading Through Change – Redefining the CFO's Role in Business Transformation,' will feature Ali

Hassan Moosa, Advisor-Estidamah, Ministry of Finance and Member of the Finance and Insurance Committee, Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry; Muhsin al Rustom, Group CFO, Asyad; Lamees al Lawati, CFO, Shell Oman Marketing Company; Khamis al Hashmi, CFO, Oman LNG; Ahmed al Shuaili, CFO, Vodafone Oman; Diren Dorai Raj, Group CFO, Towell Group; and Hiriyanna Narayanaswamy, CFO, Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing. This discussion will be moderated by Paul Callaghan, Partner – Risk Advisory and Consulting, Moore Stephens.

The second panel, 'Strategic Responses & Compliance: Navigating the Evolving Tax Landscape & Emerging Trends,' will explore the complexities of regulatory compliance in today's shifting tax environment. Panelists include Said Ahmed al Shanfari, Director General of the Second Department of Taxes (Large Taxpayer), Tax Authority of Oman; Fatick al Balushi, CFO, Oman Cement Company; Aabha Lekhak, Tax Partner, KPMG Oman; Ghalia al Sharji, Tax Director, PwC; Manjot Singh Chug, Tax Partner, Deloitte & Touche; and Asrujit Mandal, Tax Partner, BDO Oman. The session will be moderated by Unmesh Bhome, Vice Chairman of the Muscat

Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India.

Between the engaging today discussions, the Business Today 'Oman CFO Awards' will honour the exceptional contributions of CFOs and finance teams who have demonstrated excellence and innovation. The awards will recognise top performers across a range of sectors, highlighting their significant contributions to their organisations.

Following the awards ceremony, Gaurav Kapoor, Chairman of the Muscat Chapter of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, and Rashad al Musafir, Managing Partner of FinScape, will deliver two key presentations, adding further depth to the event.

On this occasion, Business Today will publish a special edition featuring the Awards winners and showcase the Top 50 CFOs in Oman who have set new benchmarks in business success through their innovative strategies and leadership.

Organised by Interactive Apex and Muscat Daily, the Business Today 'Oman CFO Forum & Awards 2024' is set to be a landmark event for Oman's financial community. For more information, contact sajir@apex-media.co.om or call +968 9947 4314, or visit www.bt-cfoforum.com

Oil prices fall below \$70 for first time in nearly 3 years

Muscat – Brent oil price declined by more than 4% on late Tuesday, falling below \$70 per barrel for the first time since December 2021.

The price of Brent crude traded at \$68.95 per barrel in morning trade on Wednesday. US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) fell by 4.5% to \$65.58 per barrel, the lowest level since May 2023, after closing at \$68.71 in the prior session.

Data indicating a slowdown in economic activity in the US and China, the world's top oil-consuming countries, fuelled market

players' demand fears and contributed to the price falls.

Downward price movements were also influenced by OPEC's revision to its global oil demand growth forecast for this year. The group lowered its forecast by 80,000 bpd from the previous month's assessment.

The Vienna-based OPEC expects demand to grow by 2.03mn barrels a day this year and 1.74mn barrels a day in 2025, from 2.11mn and 1.78mn barrels a day previously, according to a Wall Street Journal report.

Total demand is estimated to reach 104.2mn barrels a day in 2024 and 106mn the following year.

Tuesday's report by OPEC came after oil prices tanked last week, erasing all gains made this year due to mounting concerns over the global demand outlook. A disappointing batch of economic and trade data from top crude importer China, as well as prospects that Libya would restore full production and OPEC+ extend output cuts, prompted fears of a supply surplus.

Agencies

Sultanate showcases investment opportunities before US Congress

New York, US – An Omani delegation led by H E Qais Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, on Wednesday met with officials of the US Administration and the Congress during their visit to the US.

The Omani delegation also met the representatives of the US companies specialised in energy, health, information technology and tourism sectors.

The two sides discussed ways to develop investment and trade partnerships between Oman and the United States. The Omani side showcased investment opportunities available in Oman with the objective of realising the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

The two sides also looked into measures to make optimum use of the Oman-US Free Trade



Agreement (FTA).

During the visit, H E Yousef also met with Omani students studying in the states of New York, Washington and Arizona. His delegation toured a number of American cities.

On the sidelines of the visit, the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman to the United States of America organised a reception

at the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center in Washington. In a speech on the occasion, H E Yousef outlined the objectives of the visit and its desired outcomes.

For his part, the Vice President of the US Export-Import Bank spoke about the strong bonds between Oman and United States. She expressed ap-

preciation for Oman's efforts to enhance joint economic cooperation.

The visiting delegation went on tour of the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center where it was briefed about efforts to spotlight Omani culture and ancient history, as well as Omani heritage valuables collected by Center. ONA

UAE's NMDC IPO oversubscribed by 31 times

Abu Dhabi, UAE – The UAE's NMDC Energy, a provider of engineering, procurement and construction services for offshore and onshore energy clients, and a majority-owned subsidiary of NMDC Group, Wednesday began trading on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX) following an Initial Public Offering (IPO) that was oversubscribed by 31.3 times.

Mohamed Hamad Almehairi, Chairman of NMDC Energy, led the ADX bell-ringing ceremony and officially opened the market to trading of NMDC Energy shares.

The offering of 1.15bn shares in NMDC Energy, representing 23% of the total share capital, was made available to eligible investors at AED2.8 per share. Final allocations were approximately 0.17% to retail investors



and 6% to professional investors.

Almehairi said, "NMDC Energy's listing is an exceptional achievement that will define the pace for the sector's engineering, procurement and construction business in Abu Dhabi and beyond. To meet the future demands of the energy sector, we will continue to collaborate with value-add partners that share our forward-thinking mentality. Together, we will keep pushing forward with unstoppable

momentum."

Yasser Zaghloul, Group CEO of NMDC, said, "Today is a historic day for NMDC Energy, our group, and the UAE, and it is one that lays the foundation for more great things to come. NMDC IPO opens trading today after drawing AED88bn in investment locally, regionally, and internationally. On behalf of everyone in our group, I would like to thank ADX for the opportunity to make history, and I am proud

that today we are a visible example of the Abu Dhabi vision becoming reality."

International Securities was the placement agent and listing advisor. First Abu Dhabi Bank acted as lead receiving bank and lead manager for the IPO. Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, WIO Bank, and Al Maryah Community Bank were other receiving banks. Hadeef and Partners were the legal advisors.

For 50 years, NMDC Energy has provided integrated engineering, procurement, and construction solutions to the energy sector. The company's Abu Dhabi manufacturing facilities cover 1.3mn square metres, and it is also developing a new 400,000 square metre manufacturing facility at Ras Al Khair Port in Saudi Arabia. WAM

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Modi sets \$500bn target for India's electronics industry

Greater Noida, India - Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set an ambitious \$500bn target for India's electronics sector. At present, the electronics manufacturing sector is estimated to be about \$150bn, growing at a rapid pace over the past decade.

"Look at how far we have come. Today, India's electronics sector is worth more than \$150bn. And now our target is even bigger. By the end of this decade, we want to take our electronics sector to \$500bn. This will create about 6mn jobs for the youth of India," Modi said on Wednesday, addressing the inaugural session of three-day 'Semicon India 2024' event in Greater Noida.

"Our goal is that 100% of electronic manufacturing should happen in India. India will make semiconductor chips and the finished product too," Modi added.

The three-day conference will showcase India's semiconductor strategy and policy which envisions making India a global hub for semiconductors.

Modi explained that while industries invest and create value, the government on the other hand provides stable policies and Ease of Doing Business. Informing that India's contribution to the world of designing is 20% and is growing continuously, Modi said that India is creating a



Today, India's electronics sector is worth \$150bn. And now our target is even bigger. By the end of this decade, we want to take our electronics sector to \$500bn. This will create about 6mn jobs for the youth of India

NARENDRA MODI

semiconductor workforce of 85,000 technicians, engineers and R&D experts.

"India is focused on making its students and professionals industry ready", the Prime Minister remarked, recalling the first meeting of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation which aims to give new direction and energy to India's research ecosystem. He also mentioned a

special research fund of 1tn rupees.

Prime Minister Modi emphasised, "India's semiconductor ecosystem is a solution not just for India's challenges but also for global challenges."

The government has so far approved five semiconductor units in India, of which construction in two sites is on, and soon the work in the rest three will

start.

In June 2023, India's Union Cabinet approved a proposal for setting up a semiconductor unit in Sanand, Gujarat. In February 2024, three more semiconductor units were approved - two in Gujarat and one in Assam.

Earlier this month, the government approved the proposal of Kaynes Semicon Pvt Ltd to set up a semiconductor unit in Sanand,

Gujarat. They have already made a cumulative investment of almost 1.5tn rupees.

American chipmaker Micron's high-end semiconductor fabrication plant at Gujarat's Sanand, which is India's first, is coming up at a rapid pace. It is expected to be operational in late 2024.

"There are many proposals under evaluation. After evaluation, we will take them to cabinet for approvals," Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told reporters today.

The Minister also announced that the central government will soon unveil the Semicon 2.0 programme, having a much expanded scope than the previous programme.

The minister further announced that the upgrade plan for the semiconductor lab in Mohali is ready and it will be taken up in the Cabinet soon

"Semicon 2.0 may be unveiled in three to four months. The second phase will focus on the complete value chain," the Union minister said.

The Programme for Development of Semiconductors and Display Manufacturing Ecosystem in India (or Semicon 1.0) was notified on December 21, 2021, with a total outlay of 760bn rupees.

ANI



UK economy flatlines for 2nd month in row

London, UK - The much-anticipated bounce back in the UK economy following the general election has failed to materialise, with official data showing no growth for the second consecutive month in July.

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) data released on Wednesday, gross domestic product (GDP) remained unchanged in both June and July, dashing hopes for a post-election surge in economic activity.

This economic stagnation came as a surprise to financial markets, which had forecast a modest 0.2% rise in July.

Despite this flat performance, the economy grew by 0.5% in the three months to July, buoyed by stronger growth earlier in the year.

The first quarter of 2024 saw

a 0.7% expansion, followed by a 0.6% increase in the second quarter, suggesting a steady recovery from the mild recession that hit in late 2023.

However, the latest ONS data indicates that the momentum has slowed significantly since Labour took office in June, with the City taken aback by the economy's weak performance during the government's first weeks in power.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves acknowledged the challenging outlook.

He said, "I am under no illusion about the scale of the challenge we face, and I will be honest with the British people that change will not happen overnight. Two quarters of positive economic growth do not make up for 14 years of stagnation."

Anadolu Agency

Google loses EU appeal of \$2.7bn fine

Nisha Gopalan

The Court of Justice of the European Union (EU) has ruled against Alphabet's Google, which had appealed a 2.4bn-euro (\$2.7bn) fine for abusing its dominant position by favoring its own shopping services over those of its competitors.

Europe's top court upheld a 2017 decision by the European Commission, the EU's executive arm.

The Court of Justice also ruled against fellow tech giant Apple on Tuesday, saying it must pay a 13bn-euro (\$14.4bn) tax bill after overturning a lower court ruling on Irish tax breaks.

"We are disappointed with the decision of the Court. This judgment relates to a very specific set of facts," a Google spokesperson told Investopedia.

"We made changes back in 2017 to comply with the European Commission's decision. Our approach has worked successfully for more than seven years, generating billions of clicks for more than 800 comparison shopping services."

Last week, the UK's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) said Google may have broken competition laws by abusing its influence and using "anti-competitive" practices in prioritising its own ad exchange.

Meanwhile, early last month a US federal judge ruled that Google held an illegal monopoly on search.

Alphabet shares rose more than 1% soon after the opening bell Tuesday and are about 8% higher year-to-date.

(Source: Investopedia.com)



US consumer inflation rises 2.5% in August

Washington, US - Consumer inflation in the US annually rose 2.5% in August, marking the slowest annual increase since February 2021, according to data released Wednesday.

The consumer price index (CPI), which measures changes in the prices of goods and services from a consumer's perspective, came in line with market estimates, and showed a significant slowdown from a year-on-year increase of 2.9% recorded in July.

The figure is also a sharp decline from the 9.1% annual gain recorded in July 2022, which was the highest since November 1981.

On a monthly basis, CPI showed an increase of 0.2%, and came in line with market expectations, following also a 0.2% gain in July.

"The index for shelter rose 0.5% in August and was the main factor in the all items increase," the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics said in a statement.

"The food index increased 0.1% in August, after rising 0.2% in July," it added. "The energy



index fell 0.8% over the month, after being unchanged the preceding month."

Core CPI, which excludes volatile food and energy prices, gained just 0.3% in August from the previous month, coming in higher than market estimates of 0.2%, but slightly gaining pace from the 0.2% increase in July.

Annually, core CPI climbed 3.2% in August, coming in line

with expectations, and following a 3.2% year-on-year gain recorded in July.

The shelter index annually showed a gain of 5.2% in August, accounting for over 70% of the annual increase in core CPI, according to the US agency.

The energy index, on the other hand, decreased 0.8%, after being unchanged in July. While the gasoline index de-

clined 0.6% on a monthly basis, it plummeted 10.3% year-on-year.

The electricity index, meanwhile, fell 0.7% last month, and the index for natural gas decreased 1.9%. The medical care index declined 0.1%, after falling 0.2% in July.

The US National Economic Advisor Lael Brainard said consumer inflation has fallen close

to a level the month before the coronavirus pandemic started.

"With inflation coming back down close to normal levels, it is important to focus on sustaining the historic gains we have made for American workers during this recovery," she said in a statement released by the White House.

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Anadolu Agency

European car makers are struggling in electric vehicle market

Piero Cingari

Electric vehicle sales in July 2024 totalled 853,000 globally, increasing by just 6% year-on-year, a tepid performance that highlights weaker-than-expected demand for battery-powered models and raises doubts about the sector's ability to sustain its growth momentum.

What's even more worrying is the underperformance of European car makers, with several key brands such as Stellantis, Volkswagen, and Mercedes-Benz seeing significant losses in market share, according to the latest Bank of America's EV Tracker report.

In contrast, sales of plug-in hy-

brid electric vehicles surged by 58% year-on-year, driven primarily by China's strong demand.

This shift towards plug-in hybrids may reflect consumers' concerns over the range limitations of fully electric vehicles and the higher total cost of ownership associated with battery electric models, particularly in Europe.

European automakers struggle to keep pace in global EV market

European car makers are struggling to keep pace with the competition, particularly in the battery electric vehicle segment, as Bank of America data showed.

Stellantis' market share dropped to 2.7% in July, a sharp decline from 3.6% in the second



quarter of 2023 and 4.0% a year earlier.

Volkswagen Group's market share fell to 6.6%, down from 7.5% in the second quarter of 2023, while Mercedes-Benz, traditionally a leader in the luxury segment, saw its market share tumble to just 1.9%, down from 2.5% a year prior.

"Electric vehicle sales in Germany suffer currently from a very high comparison base from a year ago, when purchase subsidies for company cars expired in September 2023," Bank of America analysts noted.

The global electric vehicle market continues to grow, but the weak performance of European car makers and the rise of

plug-in hybrid electric vehicles indicate that the transition to fully electric vehicles could take longer than expected.

Despite the broader challenges facing European car makers, BMW has managed to buck the trend, reporting significant growth in its battery electric vehicle market share.

BMW's electric vehicle sales soared by 40% year-on-year in July 2024, pushing its market share to 4.6%, up from 3.7% in the second quarter of 2023.

"The i4 and iX1 keep selling very well and the recently launched i5 is contributing meaningfully to the annual growth rate," analysts wrote.

(Source: Euronews.com)



Dhofar Islamic participates in IFN Oman Forum on Islamic finance

Dhofar Islamic, a leading Islamic financial window in the sultanate of Oman, sponsored the IFN Oman Forum 2024, a prominent event showcasing the growth and development of Islamic finance in the region.

The forum was organised by REDmoney in partnership with the Financial Services Authority, where it provided a platform for industry experts, regulators, and financial institutions to discuss key trends, challenges, and opportunities in the Islamic finance sector.

Mohsin Shaik Mohamed,

head of Investment Banking & Capital Markets at Dhofar Islamic, represented Dhofar Islamic at the forum. He contributed as a moderator on a session entitled 'Building on Oman's Growing Position as a Centre for Islamic Capital Markets' discussing the influence of the new bond and Sukuk regulations on the Islamic capital market, the role of flourishing equity and IPO market play as part of a broader divestment program and the meaning of the new Virtual Assets Regulatory Framework for digital assets in Oman.

The IFN Forum 2024 brought together the brightest minds in the Islamic finance space to discuss essential developments and the ethical impact of Sharia compliant banking practices.

Attended by key dignitaries, industry experts and potential investors, the forum highlighted a selection of fundamental topics, including; Shariah Compliant Funds and Collective Investment Schemes in Oman, Islamic Structured Finance and Capital Markets in Oman and Shariah Compliant Marketplace Financing and Digital Initiatives in

Oman among other discussions.

Dhofar Islamic's participation reaffirms the commitment to promoting responsible and sustainable Islamic banking practices in the Sultanate of Oman.

Over the years, Dhofar Islamic maintained its position as a leading financial service provider in Oman, the bank stated.

The Islamic banking window of BankDhofar maintains standards of corporate governance, research and development, corporate social responsibility and customer service.

Dhofar Islamic aims to distin-

guish itself with outstanding customer experience, investing in Fintech, developing innovative products and launching state-of-the-art financial solutions.

Earlier this year Dhofar Islamic rebranded to mark its 10th anniversary and celebrate a decade of excellence.

'Our new logo represents Dhofar Islamic's evolution from a single star to a galaxy of enhanced capabilities. Each star in the constellation symbolises our core values, emphasising ethical banking, transparency, and customer-centricity,' it added.

Sohar Islamic introduces house finance at 4.25%

Sohar Islamic, Sohar International's Islamic Window, announces a new initiative to enhance homeownership opportunities through its fully Shariah-compliant housing finance offer.

This programme features a compelling profit rate starting at just 4.25% and will be available until December 31.



The initiative reinforces Sohar Islamic's commitment to providing market-leading financial solutions that blend competitive profit rates with flexible repayment options, ensuring accessible and efficient home financing while upholding the highest standards of financial integrity and customer satisfaction.

Abdul Wahid al Murshidi, Chief Islamic Banking Officer at Sohar International, said that the bank's primary focus is to prioritise its customers by delivering solutions that are not only value-driven but also responsive to market needs.

"This new home finance offer reflects our profound understanding of customer expectations and the dynamic real estate market. As a pivotal player in Oman's financial ecosystem, we are dedicated to supporting the real estate sector, which plays a critical role in the nation's economic growth," he stressed.

"Through this initiative, we

aim to facilitate homeownership, stimulate real estate demand, and contribute to the overall economic stability of the sultanate. This underscores our commitment to fostering long-term prosperity and sustainable development across the region."

The new home finance offer is available to individuals employed in the private sector, semi-government institutions, and government roles, with a minimum salary requirement of RO300. The financing solutions come with flexible finance tenures of up to 25 years.

Sohar Islamic has streamlined its application process to ensure a seamless experience from application to approval, backed by competitive finance terms and exceptional service from our expert team. By offering attractive profit rates, flexible terms, and extensive support, Sohar Islamic aims to significantly impact the local real estate market.



OMASCO Honda launches Africa Twin 2024 motorcycle

OMASCO Honda has proudly unveiled the latest addition to its esteemed motorcycle lineup, the Africa Twin 2024.

As the first ever Africa Twin with dual clutch transmission (DCT) to reach the GCC region, the Africa Twin launch has cemented its reputation for conquering diverse terrains with unparalleled ease and reliability, a release said.

Designed to excel on both paved roads and challenging dirt tracks, the Africa Twin builds upon its rich legacy to offer riders an enhanced journey through the landscapes of possibility.

Just in time for the season, the Africa Twin's automotive clutch system is poised to enhance journeys by eliminating the need for manual clutch changes, keeping rider's hands free for greater control and comfort. This bike represents a major advancement for adventurers, and its arrival is a landmark event.

Oman's motorcycling community has long wished for a bike that seamlessly balances on-road performance with off-road prowess, and the Africa Twin 2024 emerges as the definitive answer to this demand. Whether embarking on a cross-country road trip or tackling rugged trails, riders can trust the Africa Twin to deliver a superior experience without compromise.

The Africa Twin DCT is set to make its mark by empowering

adventurers to explore remote and breathtaking locations - from the rugged mountains and wadis of Oman to the terrains that have challenged riders around the world. As it debuts in the sultanate, this powerful machine is ready to conquer diverse landscapes, allowing riders to push the boundaries of adventure like never before.

Key features of the all-new Africa Twin 2024 trims include:

Improved handling: Engineered for precision and agility, the Africa Twin Adventure Sport DCT trim offers superior handling, ensuring confidence and control across diverse terrains.

Adaptable seat: With an adjustable seat designed to accommodate riders of varying heights, the Africa Twin 2024 ensures comfort and ergonomics for all adventurers.

Front-wheel enhancements: Equipped with a 19-inch front wheel, the Africa Twin Adventure Sport DCT trim enhances stability and traction, empowering riders to tackle challenging conditions with ease. Africa Twin Standard features a 21-inch front tubeless wheel to further optimize performance and manoeuvrability.

Upgraded exhaust: The Africa Twin 2024 boasts an upgraded exhaust system, delivering improved performance and a captivating engine soundtrack.

Adjustable screen: Riders can

personalize their riding experience with an adjustable windscreen, allowing customisation for maximum aerodynamics or enhanced wind protection based on individual preferences.

Engine performance: Both the Africa Twin Standard and Adventure Sport DCT ESS models showcase a remarkable improvement in torque output, with an increase from 105Nm to an impressive 112Nm. This enhancement translates to even more robust acceleration and power delivery across various riding conditions, ensuring a thrilling and dynamic riding experience for adventure enthusiasts.

Advanced suspension: Experience a smoother and more controlled ride with the electronic suspension, providing superior ride quality and stability.

Enhanced comfort & convenience: The Africa Twin 2024 is designed with features that prioritize rider experience. Heated grips provide improved comfort during colder rides, while the 12V charging socket offers the convenience of powering devices while on the move, ensuring continuous connectivity.

The Africa Twin 2024 lineup offers two distinct trims tailored to cater to diverse preferences and riding styles.

Its standard ESS is ideal for riders seeking a perfect balance between performance and versatility.

Kaldi 850 opens 20th store at Aqua-Tots

Kaldi 850, one of Oman's leading premium coffee brands, has opened its 20th store, at the Aqua-Tots Swimming Center in Seeb, Muscat.

'This exciting milestone marks the company's continued growth and commitment to bringing high-quality coffee experiences to customers across the sultanate,' the group stated, adding that the new store is particularly special, as it is Kaldi 850's first drive-thru location in the Muscat region.

This innovative concept reflects the company's dedication to enhancing customer convenience by offering a quick, seamless way to enjoy their favourite coffee on the go.

The drive-thru service is set to cater to the growing demand for speedy service without compromising on quality.

"We are incredibly proud to open our 20th store and our very first drive-thru in Muscat," said Paul Biswajit, General Manager



of Kaldi 850.

"As we continue to expand, our goal remains to offer premium coffee and exceptional service to our customers, and this new location at Aqua-Tots is another step toward achieving that vision."

Located within the popular Aqua-Tots Swimming Center in Seeb, the new Kaldi 850 store of-

fers a full range of the brand's signature drinks, including espresso-based beverages, speciality brews, and a selection of fresh, locally sourced snacks. Whether customers are stopping by for a coffee break after a swim or grabbing a drink on their way to work, the new location is designed to provide a welcoming and efficient experience.

As we continue to expand, our goal remains to offer premium coffee and exceptional service to our customers

PAUL BISWAJIT

MHD ITICS launches Nihon Kohden products



Mohsin Haider Darwish Infrastructure, Technology, Industrial and Consumer Solutions (MHD-ITICS) has announce the official launch of an advanced range of Nihon Kohden patient monitoring systems, including EEG, ECG, and EMG devices, in Oman.

This strategic initiative underscores MHD-ITICS' ongoing commitment to expanding its footprint in the healthcare sector

and delivering top-tier medical products and services to customers across the sultanate.

A leading Japanese manufacturer renowned for its healthcare equipment, Nihon Kohden, was established in 1951 under the guiding vision of 'Fighting Disease with Electronics'. The company has become a global leader in the production of medical electronic equipment, with its

products now utilised in over 120 countries. The company is the largest supplier of EEG products worldwide, with a reputation built on 60 years of continuous innovation, quality, and user-focused design.

The event was marked by the active participation of MHD-ITICS, with its director Mohsin Talal al Bahrani at the forefront. Bahrani highlighted the critical

importance of providing high-quality healthcare products, coupled with dependable after-sales support, to the Oman market.

He expressed his satisfaction with the MHD-ITICS healthcare division's ability to bring Nihon Kohden's superior products to the local healthcare industry, emphasising the positive impact of these innovations on the medical field in Oman.

Kenya airport in chaos as staff strikes against lease to Adani

Nairobi, Kenya - Kenya's main international airport in Nairobi was plunged into chaos overnight as its staff went on strike at midnight Wednesday to protest a planned takeover.

Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) came to a complete standstill, AFP reported, adding that management was drafting a statement.

Kenya's Aviation Workers Union confirmed that they went on strike starting midnight, in a post on social media website X. Images on social media

showed passengers trying to get their luggage while Kenya Airways warned that passengers were likely to face delays and cancellations of some flights, due to the strike.

Staff at the airport are protesting a plan to lease the airport to India's Adani Group for 30 years in exchange for US\$1.8bn in investment.

Owned by Gautam Adani, the Indian conglomerate has several publicly listed companies in sectors such as airports and ports, power generation and



Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) came to a standstill

transmission, as well as coal and gas trading.

Adani, the second richest man in India, enjoys close ties with the ruling party including Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In a strike notice to Henry Ogoye, acting managing director and CEO of Kenya Airport Authorities, the union said their hand had been forced by the management which failed to heed demands.

Fears of mass layoffs

The union representing airport workers said that in three previous letters, it had demanded 'the immediate resignation of the entire Board of Directors for their show of incompetence in presiding over the unlawful intended sale of JKIA to Adani Airport Holdings of India while they should have exercised prudence and accountability as the custodians of this national strategic asset on behalf of Kenyans'.

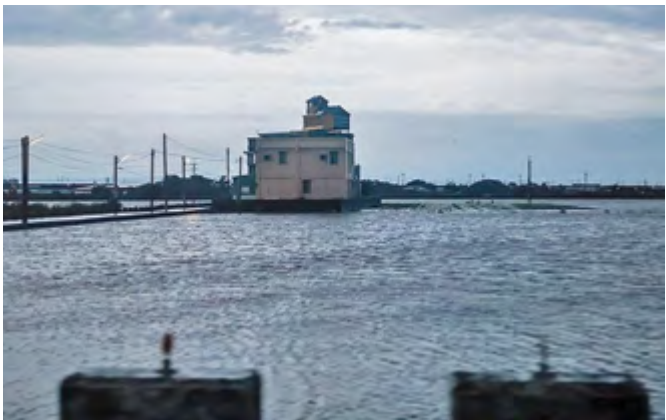
The union said that the Adani Group intended to lay off the majority of employees and bring in workers from outside of Kenya to work on the project.

Moreover, the few Kenyans who will be retained will likely be forced to accept 'inferior terms and conditions of service that suits the Indian firm', it said.

Freight and passenger fees from the JKIA accounts for more than 5% of Kenya's GDP.

Kenya's government has defended the deal as a necessary move to refurbish the airport. However, Kenya's high court temporarily blocked the proposal on Tuesday.

DW



Hanoi: Thousands evacuated as Yagi death toll passes 150

Hanoi, Vietnam - Thousands of people were evacuated from Vietnam's capital, Hanoi, on Wednesday as the death toll from Typhoon Yagi passed 150.

Weather authorities said Hanoi's Red River had reached its highest level in 20 years, threatening residents along the swollen banks.

"We are bringing them to public buildings turned into temporary shelters or they can stay with relatives. There has been so much rain and the water is rising quickly," a Hanoi police officer told the AFP news agency.

Yagi also caused a landslide that engulfed the remote mountain village of Lang Nu in Lao Cai province, state media reported on Wednesday.

The landslide, which occurred on Tuesday, killed at least 22 people in the village that was home to around 35 families.

"Authorities are mobilising forces to approach the landslide area to continue the search for survivors," district party chief Hoang Quoc Bao said.

The government estimated around 140 people were still missing nationwide.

Typhoon Yagi also brought torrential rains and floods to areas of northern Thailand, Laos and Myanmar. Damage was also reported in China.

At least two people were

Typhoon Yagi also brought torrential rains and floods to areas of northern Thailand, Laos and Myanmar. Damage was also reported in China. At least two people were killed in Thailand and hundreds more were left stranded across 2 provinces

killed in Thailand and hundreds more were left stranded across two provinces.

Thai Prime Minister Paetong-tarn Shinawatra said around 9,000 households had been impacted. "Water currents are still strong," she told reporters.

"All agencies are prepared and when the current eases, they will go in immediately."

Benjamin Horton, director of the Earth Observatory of Singapore, said that storms like Typhoon Yagi are 'getting stronger due to climate change, primarily because warmer ocean waters provide more energy to fuel the storms, leading to increased wind speeds and heavier rainfall'.

DW

India: Will Sheikh Hasina's fate harm relations with Bangladesh?

India has not given details on Hasina's location, and she is said to be housed in a safe place



Sheikh Hasina fled to India in a military helicopter last month after Bangladesh was hit by a wave of student-led protests

Bangladesh has a criminal extradition treaty with India which was signed in 2013, while Sheikh Hasina's government was in power

MOHAMMAD TAJUL ISLAM

New Delhi/Dhaka - More and more voices in Bangladesh, including its top prosecutors, are demanding the extradition of ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The veteran leader fled to India in a military helicopter last month after Bangladesh was hit by a wave of student-led protests. Hundreds lost their lives in clashes between anti-government protesters, government supporters, the military and the law enforcement.

Mohammad Tajul Islam, the newly appointed chief prosecutor of Bangladesh's war crimes tribunal, recently named Hasina 'the main perpetrator' responsible for the deadly violence.

"Bangladesh has a criminal extradition treaty with India which was signed in 2013, while Sheikh Hasina's government was in power," Islam told reporters on Sunday. "As she has been made the main accused of the massacres in Bangladesh, we will try to legally bring her back to Bangladesh to face trial."

India has not provided details on Hasina's location, though she is believed to be sheltering in a safe house. The new interim government in Dhaka has already revoked Hasina's diplomatic passport.

In mid-August, Hasina released a statement demanding

those 'involved in killings and vandalism' during the anti-government protests be 'identified and punished'.

In the statement released through her son, who is based in the US, Hasina also called upon Bangladesh to mark August 15 as the National Day of Mourning. On that date her father and the founder of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was assassinated. Hasina's activity in India has already prompted a response from interim govern-

ment leader Muhammad Yunus, who described her comments as 'problematic'.

"No one is comfortable with her stance there in India because we want her back to (put her on trial). She is there in India and at times she is talking, which is problematic. Had she been quiet, we would have forgotten it; people would have also forgotten it as she would have been in her own world," Yunus told Indian news agency PTI.

"But sitting in India, she is speaking and giving instructions. No one likes it."

Former diplomats and academics consulted by DW say New Delhi is likely to resist pressure from Dhaka to deliver Hasina for trial.

"India would not, in any scenario, extradite Sheikh Hasina to Bangladesh, regardless of the pressure. However, India would prefer that she relocates to a Western haven of her choice, allowing her departure to be a quiet exit that does not strain relations with the new Bangladeshi government," India's former high commissioner to Pakistan Ajay Bisaria told DW.

"To build ties with the new regime, India may dispatch a high-level envoy, possibly the external affairs minister, to visit Bangladesh once the new government stabilises. If Sheikh Hasina remains in India during this visit, her presence could dominate the agenda and hinder India's efforts to build bridges," added Bisaria.

Separately, India's former ambassador to the US, Meera Shankar, noted that Washington is not offering to accept Hasina.

"Sheikh Hasina has taken shelter in India as both the USA and UK did not offer her political asylum," she told DW. "This is in keeping with India's tradition."

South Asia expert Sreeradha Datta also pointed to long-running links between India and Hasina's regime, saying it was 'unlikely that India will let Hasina down' by deportation.

DW

UNGA's 79th session kicks off with main priority on resolution of conflicts

Hamilton, Canada - The 79th session of the UN General Assembly kicked off on Tuesday with the resolution of conflicts as one of its main priorities.

Dennis Francis, president of the 78th General Assembly, handed over the gavel to his successor, Philemon Yang.

Yang, Cameroon's candidate, who was elected as president of the 79th General Assembly in June, took the oath and assumed office. Saying that his main priority would be sustainable economic growth, Yang also noted that another priority is peace and security.

"I will urge the assembly to intensify its determination, to prioritise the resolution of conflicts, including the intractable ones in the Gaza Strip, Haiti and Ukraine," he said, adding that "human rights will remain at the core of our General Assembly".



Yang also emphasised that he would work to strengthen international legal frameworks.

In his address to the General

Assembly, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that last year was very 'tumultuous' with poverty, inequality and injustice

as well as conflict and violence persisting. He emphasised that many tasks lie ahead for member states in the 79th session.

"In confronting the challenges before us, the United Nations General Assembly remains an indispensable tool and a vital path-

way towards a peaceful and just future for all people," he added.

Francis said that serving in his role as president of the 78th session of the General Assembly had been the 'honour and privilege of a lifetime'. He stressed that he adhered to the principles of the UN Charter throughout his term.

He said that due to various circumstances, he was unable to meet with Israelis and Palestinians on the ground but closely followed developments and raised the issue at every meeting.

Francis further expressed his heartfelt wish that the ongoing efforts would lead to a ceasefire and a long-term political solution.

Emphasising that manmade suffering had increased globally, with Gaza being one of the most visible examples, Francis said: "Over the course of last year, we have witnessed a scale of death and destruction not seen in decades."

On May 10, a resolution adopted at the General Assembly called for the reconsideration of Palestine's UN membership in the UN Security Council and the granting of additional rights to Palestine, which holds observer status. The resolution called for arrangements to allow Palestine to participate in General Assembly sessions, UN meetings and conferences, specifying that this would be done 'on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent'.

In this regard, Yang announced that the necessary arrangements had been made.

Palestine's Permanent Mission to the UN announced via social media that they would take their place among member states for the first time by participating in the General Assembly session.

Anadolu Agency

US election: Harris puts Trump on defensive in a fiery debate

Separated in opinion polls by the barest of margins, candidates stayed true to expected strategies

Philadelphia, US - US presidential nominees Kamala Harris and Donald Trump faced off in an occasionally fiery debate in Philadelphia on Tuesday evening, with the November election still on a knife-edge.

Separated in opinion polls by the barest of margins, the candidates stayed true to their expected strategies. Democratic candidate Harris attempted to provoke Trump, while suggesting that what she called his divisive rhetoric had no bearing on Americans' real concerns.

"Donald Trump was fired by 81mn people," she said, in one of the evening's more memorable lines. "And clearly he is having a very difficult time processing that."

Her Republican counterpart, meanwhile, hammered his favourite issues - inflation and undocumented migrants, even when they were not the subject of the question - and repeated several outlandish, debunked claims, including that immigrants in Springfield, Ohio were eating family pets - a claim that has made the round on social media, amplified by Trump's running mate, Ohio Senator JD Vance.

"We have millions of people pouring into our country from prisons and jails, from mental institutions and insane asylums, and they're coming in, and they're taking jobs that are occupied right now by African Americans and Hispanics and also unions," the former president claimed.

Harris offers optimistic vision
Vice President Harris took several opportunities to bring up what



Kamala Harris attempted to provoke Donald Trump, while suggesting that what she called his divisive rhetoric had no bearing on Americans' real concerns

WHO WON THE DEBATE?

Philadelphia, US - In the aftermath of the 90-minute confrontation - the first time Harris and Trump have ever met - the consensus among pundits and pollsters appears to be that Harris narrowly won the night. But whether this makes a difference in the election, just under two months away, is less clear.

"I don't know that this debate necessarily changes the course, but we've seen in a lot of polling recently that though Harris had been in the lead within the margin of error, that had been declining slightly - and I suspect that

that trend might be stopping after this debate," said Wilson. "I feel that generally she gave a very strong debate performance."

But Wilson also thinks Trump was able to land a few key lines. "In the concluding statement, Donald Trump did a really good job in saying that, if she wanted to make these changes, she could've done it in three-and-a-half years," she said. "But Harris was careful not to tie herself to Biden, not to mention him too much."

The Democrats were given a boost in the immediate

aftermath of the debate when pop superstar Taylor Swift declared in an Instagram post that she would be voting for Harris and her running mate, Tim Walz. How decisive that could prove remains to be seen.

"Trump's supporters will remain loyal to him, even after this performance," said DW's Ines Pohl. "Harris' supporters may be even more energised after her strong showing. This debate won't propel either candidate over the finish line, but Taylor Swift's endorsement of Kamala Harris might."

has become her new campaign slogan - "We're not going back" - and did all she could to offer Americans an optimistic vision, in contrast to what she painted as Trump's backward-looking, negative vision of the state of the US.

"In a normal world, there would be hardly any question: Kamala Harris would be the clear winner of this debate," said Ines Pohl, DW's Washington bureau chief.

"She presented herself as in charge, confident, well-informed and capable of leading this country into a brighter future. Donald

Trump, on the other hand, was put on the defensive by her; he could hardly finish a complete sentence and spewed one lie after another, sometimes so irrational that it's hard to believe."

But for half of the US electorate, this might not matter, concluded Pohl. "The bitter truth is that the United States of 2024 is no longer a place where truth and facts matter."

Clash on economy, abortion
Nevertheless, Harris was also on the defensive during the debate,

Kamala Harris presented herself as in charge, confident, well-informed and capable of leading this country into a brighter future. Donald Trump, on the other hand, was put on the defensive

INES POHL

with Trump often trying to shift attention to her part in President Joe Biden's record since 2021 and what he termed Biden's failures. According to recent polls, more US voters trust Trump on the economy.

The debate opened with a question directed at Harris that is considered a weakness for the Democratic candidate: "Do you believe Americans are better off than they were four years ago?"

Harris evaded the point slightly, responding: "I was raised as a middle-class kid, and I am actually the only person on this

stage who has a plan that is about lifting up the middle class and working people of America."

Laura Merrifield Wilson, an associate professor of political science at the University of Indianapolis, suggested Harris had a good reason to sidestep the issue. "She has a hard time being able to differentiate herself from Biden in this regard," Wilson told DW. "You can look at some economic measures and say the economy might be doing fine, but for most American families, they are looking at their grocery bills and how they were much lower

four years ago. I don't know that she addressed exactly how a Harris presidency would change that."

But Harris was on much firmer ground on abortion - an issue that has come to define this election for many, and which Trump has often changed his position over the years.

On Tuesday night, the Republican candidate took to claiming - wrongly - that some Democrats want to make abortions legal in the ninth month of pregnancy, or even after birth - which would be murder, and which, as the ABC moderators pointed out, remains illegal in every US state. Harris says she 'will always give Israel the ability to defend itself'

Some 50 minutes into the debate, the debate turned to international affairs - specifically the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East. Trump avoided the repeated question of whether he wanted Ukraine to win the war, insisting instead that he could resolve the conflict almost immediately after being elected.

He also claimed that neither conflict would have started had he been president in the last three years, and that if Harris were elected, "Israel would not exist within two years from now."

Harris rejected this claim and attempted to give a more nuanced answer, repeating a line she has uttered often over the last year: "Israel has a right to defend itself, and how it does so matters."

While she condemned the Hamas attacks of October 7, 2023, she added, 'it is also true that far too many innocent Palestinians have been killed', and suggested that under her presidency, the US would continue to work toward a ceasefire and a two-state solution, which has been the official US position for many years.

Nevertheless, she added that the US would continue to supply Israel with weapons, saying she would 'always give Israel the ability to defend itself'. What she failed to do, according to Wilson at the University of Indianapolis, was make clear how she could balance these aims.

DW

DR Congo receives 50,000 doses of mpox vaccine from the US

Kigali, Rwanda - The Democratic Republic of Congo received 50,000 doses of mpox vaccine from the US on Tuesday to boost efforts aimed at halting the disease outbreak.

Lucy Tamlyn, the US ambassador to the country, who announced the donation, said vaccines are a crucial element in preventing the spread of mpox.

"US support for the fight against mpox in the DRC is part of a decades-long health partnership that has seen our countries cooperate in the fight against a range of deadly diseases including malaria, tuberculosis, HIV and Ebola. We remain committed to supporting the DRC and working with international partners to end the current outbreak and protect the health and lives of people in the region," she said.

The vaccine doses come days after the country received a first shipment of nearly 100,000 doses of mpox vaccine donated by the European Commission's Health Emergency Preparedness



The plane carrying the mpox vaccines landed at N'djili International Airport in the capital Kinshasa, DRC

and Response Authority.

The Democratic Republic of Congo, the most affected country in the region, is seeing multiple outbreaks of mpox driven by different strains of the virus, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

The current outbreak in the eastern part of the country is

driven by a new variant of clade I, called clade Ib, which is spreading between people, including through sexual transmission.

The WHO said the new strain has now been detected in other countries in East and Central Africa including Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. It has also been detected among travellers

in countries outside Africa.

Since early 2024, the Democratic Republic of Congo has reported over 4,900 confirmed mpox cases and more than 620 deaths, the latest figures from the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) show.

Anadolu Agency

Over 11,700 civilians killed in Ukraine since start of war: UN

Hamilton, Canada - The UN said on Tuesday that more than 11,700 civilians have been killed since the start of Russia's war in Ukraine in February 2022, urging leaders preparing for the 79th General Assembly session to seize all opportunities to end the conflict.

"Regrettably, two and a half years since the escalation of this war, the situation only continues to worsen. The death toll is mounting. Human suffering continues at intolerable levels," Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Joyce Msuya said at a UN Security Council session.

The session, which was held at the request of France and Ecuador, addressed Russia's attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure in Ukraine.

Msuya emphasised that 10 million people have been forcibly displaced in Ukraine and large-scale attacks have been ongoing across the country since August 26.

"We are deeply concerned by



Fire breaks out in a factory after Russian shelling in Konstantinovka

the recent expansion of fighting to new areas on both sides of the Ukraine-Russia border," she said.

Noting that military operations in Russia's Kursk region have displaced 130,000 people, Msuya said that civilians and civilian infrastructure have also been targeted in this region.

"I must remind all parties of the obligation to take constant care to spare civilians and civilian objects as international humanitarian law demands," she said.

Emphasising that the increase in military activities is hindering

humanitarian operations and endangering aid workers, she expressed gratitude for an 'almost US\$1.4bn' donation for the humanitarian response in Ukraine.

"However, three-quarters of the way through the year, the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan is still less than half funded. To sustain operations in an increasingly complex and dangerous environment, we urgently need donors to increase and accelerate flexible funding for the response," she said.

Anadolu Agency

Biden calls Israeli killing of activist in West Bank an ‘accident’

Washington, D.C., US - US President Joe Biden called the shooting last week of a Turkish American activist in the head by an Israeli sniper in the occupied West Bank an ‘accident’.

“Apparently it was an accident - it ricocheted off the ground, and she got hit by accident. I’m working that out now,” Biden told reporters on Tuesday.

Aysenur Ezgi Eygi, 26, was fatally shot by Israeli forces on Friday during a protest against illegal Israeli settlements in Beita, a town just outside of Nablus.

The Israeli army said on Tuesday that it is ‘highly likely’ that Eygi was ‘indirectly and unintentionally’ hit by fire from its forces.

Earlier, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Israel’s killing of Eygi was ‘unprovoked and unjustified’ and that it is ‘unacceptable’.

Eygi, born in Antalya, Turkey in 1998, graduated in June from the University of Washington, where she studied psychology and Middle Eastern languages and cultures. She arrived in the West Bank last Tuesday to volunteer with the International Solidarity Movement as part of an



Crowds hold vigil in California for Aysenur Ezgi killed by Israeli soldiers in West Bank

effort to support and safeguard Palestinian farmers.

Meanwhile, the partner of Eygi rejected Biden’s characterization of her shooting by an Israeli sniper as ‘an accident’.

“She was fatally shot in the head by a bullet that came from an Israeli sniper positioned 200 metres away. This was no accident, and her killer must be held accountable,” Hamid Ali said on Tuesday in a statement.

He said that Aysenur was ‘peacefully standing for justice as an international observer and witness to Palestinian suffering’.

Ali also criticised the lack of communication from the White House, saying: “For four days, we have waited for President Biden to pick up the phone and do the right thing: To call us, offer his condolences, and let us know that he is ordering an independent investigation of the killing of Aysenur.”

Biden has not spoken with the family of Eygi to offer his condolences, White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said on Monday in response to a question.

Anadolu Agency

Egypt's Sisi calls for European pressure to reach Gaza ceasefire

Sisi affirmed his country’s rejection of Israel’s use of hunger as a weapon against Palestinians



Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi was speaking during a joint press conference in Cairo with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier

The Egyptian leader said his talks with his German counterpart also dwelt on a dam project being built by Ethiopia on the Nile River, which Cairo sees an ‘existential threat’ to its water share from the Nile

helicopter crash in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, the military said on Wednesday.

A military statement said a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter

crashed as it was evacuating a soldier seriously wounded in clashes with Palestinian fighters last night.

The army said the helicopter hit the ground while trying to make a landing and was not hit by fire. It, however, said the crash was still under investigation.

Five killed in West Bank

Meanwhile, in the city of Tubas, the occupied northern West Bank, the Israeli army on early Wednesday killed five Palestinians in an airstrike, as the army started an incursion into the city.

In a statement, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society said that after the airstrike, its medical teams transferred five bodies from the Tawheed Mosque in Tubas to the hospital.

Anadolu Agency

Erdogan reaffirms support for Ukraine

Istanbul, Turkey - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan reiterated Wednesday Turkey’s steadfast support for Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity while emphasising ongoing support for Crimean Tatar rights.

“Our support for Ukraine’s territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence is unwavering. The return of Crimea to Ukraine is a requirement of international law,” Erdogan declared in a video message to the Fourth Crimea Platform Leaders Summit.

He highlighted Turkey’s stance on Crimea, stressing that its return to Ukraine aligns with international legal standards, pointing out the enduring pain experienced by Crimean Tatar Turks, whose suffering has persisted for eight decades.

Erdogan also expressed confidence in further actions to support the Crimean Tatar Turks, saying: “I believe that additional steps will continue to be taken to strengthen the rights of the Crimean Tatar Turks in the upcoming period.”

Anadolu Agency

Chinese Premier Li holds talks with Saudi Crown Prince Salman

Riyadh, KSA - China seeks to boost ties with Saudi Arabia as Premier Li Qiang and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman held high-level talks in Riyadh on Wednesday.

Li arrived in the Saudi capital late on Tuesday to co-chair the fourth Saudi-Chinese High-Level Committee with Bin Salman.

The two sides are expected to engage in in-depth discussions to ‘strengthen friendship and expand cooperation’, according to a handout from Beijing.

Li hoped that Beijing and Riyadh would ‘further strengthen the alignment of their development strategies and elevate bilateral ties to a higher level’.

“Since the establishment of diplomatic relations 34 years ago, bilateral relations have achieved leapfrog development through joint efforts, yielding fruitful results in practical cooperation,” he said after arriving in Saudi Arabia.

Li recalled that Chinese President Xi Jinping attended the first China-Arab States Summit and the first China-Gulf Cooperation Council Summit in December 2022. “For over a year, both sides



Chinese President Xi Jinping had attended the first China-Arab States Summit held in Riyadh in December 2022

Both sides have actively implemented the key outcomes of the summits... maintaining close communication

LI QIANG

have actively implemented the key outcomes of the summits... maintaining close communication and coordination on regional and international affairs, and continuously enhancing the China-Saudi Arabia comprehensive strategic partnership,” the Chinese premier said.

Ahead of Li’s trip to Riyadh, China delivered the largest offshore oil and gas platform it has

ever built to Saudi Arabia.

The Marjan oil and gas collection and transportation platform weighs more than 17,200 tonnes and is taller than a 24-story building with a deck area equivalent to 15 basketball courts.

China is Saudi Arabia’s second-largest oil importer as the bilateral trade volume surged to around US\$106bn last year.

Anadolu Agency

Iranian President Pezeshkian visits Iraq on first trip abroad

Baghdad, Iraq - Iran’s new president, Masoud Pezeshkian, travelled to Iraq on Wednesday on his first official trip abroad since taking office.

During his trip, Pezeshkian hopes to cement Tehran’s ties with Baghdad as regional tensions draw both countries into the widening turmoil.

“Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani welcomes the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Masoud Pezeshkian,” the Iraqi premier’s office said in a statement alongside an image of the pair shaking hands on the tarmac at Baghdad airport.

Iraq’s relations with US, Iran

Matters in Iraq are complex as the country hosts several Iran-aligned parties and armed groups. Yet Iraq is also a partner of the United States, hosting around 2,500 US troops.

“We are planning to sign several agreements,” Iran’s state media quoted Pezeshkian as saying ahead of the visit. “We will meet senior Iraqi officials in Baghdad.”



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian meets with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani in Baghdad, Iraq on Wednesday

Pezeshkian has vowed to make relations with neighbouring countries a priority as he seeks to mitigate the impact of US-led sanctions on its economy.

On Tuesday, Western powers declared fresh sanctions on Tehran for supplying Russia with short-range missiles for use against Ukraine.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani said Britain, France and Germany ‘will face the appropriate and proportionate action’ for their

‘hostile’ act.

Pezeshkian’s visit comes amid soaring tensions in the Middle East, largely related to the ongoing conflict in Gaza, which has attracted Iran-backed armed groups around the region and complicated Baghdad’s ties with Washington.

Hours before Pezeshkian’s arrival in the Iraqi capital, a blast rocked a base at the airport used by a US-led anti-militant coalition, security officials said.

DW

DOUBLE DELIGHT FOR TON-UP HARRY

Kane scores brace against Finland in his 100th game for England

London, England - England captain Harry Kane marked his 100th senior international appearance in trademark fashion with both goals in his team's 2-0 victory over a feeble Finland side in Nations League Group B2 at Wembley on Tuesday.

The 31-year-old Bayern Munich striker, who received a golden cap before kickoff and sported a pair of dazzling golden boots, broke Finland's gritty resistance with a dipping right-footed strike in the 57th minute.

At times it appeared to be a battle between Kane and Finland's impressive keeper Lukas Hradecky on a wet London night with the stopper making several fine saves to deny the striker. But Kane beat Hradecky again in the 76th minute, sweeping in another right-footed effort to take his England tally to a record-extending 68. Kane, who also had a first-half header ruled out for offside, was given a standing ovation when he was substituted in the 80th minute.

England's win was their sec-



England captain Harry Kane celebrates with Declan Rice after scoring against Finland on Tuesday

ond under interim manager Lee Carsley after the away victory over Ireland on Saturday and puts them joint top of their Nations League group with Greece who beat Ireland 2-0 on Tuesday.

While the debate about whether Carsley can become the full-time manager in the wake of Gareth Southgate's resignation following Euro 2024, the statistics make a compelling argument that Kane is his country's greatest striker. He became only the third player to score on his 100th England appearance, although Wayne Rooney and Bobby Charlton only managed to hit the net once on their big nights.

The former Tottenham Hotspur striker was rightly criticised during England's run to the Euro 2024 final, looking heavy-legged and struggling to make much of an impact. But he was back to his best against an admittedly limited Finland side.

"It was a big night for me, really proud. I want to score goals and help the team. Whenever you are doubted, it makes you more hungry to prove people wrong," Kane, the first England men's team player to reach 100 caps since Rooney in 2014. "I always back myself to score goals and I am excited for the future."

Carsley handed a first senior England start to midfielder Angel Gomes and also brought in Manchester City full-back Rico Lewis for only his second England start.



Niclas Füllkrug

Germany's Füllkrug to miss out for West Ham against Fulham

Amsterdam, Netherlands - Germany striker Niclas Füllkrug will miss West Ham United's clash at Fulham in the Premier League on Saturday after picking up an injury on international duty.

He was left out of the lineup for the 2-2 draw with the Netherlands in Amsterdam on Tuesday due to a calf strain.

The Germany camp sent the 31-year-old back to his club in London before the start of the match.

"It's nothing serious. Unfortunately, the area is a bit problematic because it's the transition to the Achilles tendon at the bottom of the calf," Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann said.

Füllkrug was left out as a precautionary measure to avoid long-term consequences for the striker.

"If something were to happen, it would be long-term. That's why we're not taking any risks."

Czech Republic edge past Ukraine in Nations League



Czech Republic's Pavel Sulc celebrates after scoring against Ukraine on Tuesday

Prague, Czech Republic - Two first-half Pavel Sulc goals guided the Czech Republic to a 3-2 win over Ukraine on Tuesday in the Nations League, with a late penalty ensuring the win for the hosts in a match in which both sides created a number of chances.

The Czechs, with a revamped lineup following a 4-1 thrashing by Georgia, struck first when Sulc

re-directed a Vaclav Cerny shot past Ukraine goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin.

Ukraine kept pushing forward and equalised in the 37th minute when Vladyslav Vanat headed home after Mykola Shaparenko whipped in a cross from the left flank.

Sulc netted his second for the Czechs just before the break when he brought the ball down

with his chest and hammered a volley into the net. Captain Tomas Soucek extended their lead with an 80th-minute penalty before Georgiy Sudakov pulled a goal back for Ukraine.

Ukraine remain winless in Group B1 while the Czechs notched their first victory.

The Czechs next host Albania while Ukraine face Georgia in October.

Germany rally to draw 2-2 with Netherlands

Amsterdam, Netherlands - Germany conceded a goal after 100 seconds but forced their way back to share the points as they drew 2-2 with the Netherlands in an entertaining Nations League Group A3 clash at the Johan Cruyff Arena on Tuesday.

Deniz Undav scored on his first start for Germany and captain Joshua Kimmich netted the second for a 2-1 halftime lead after the Dutch grabbed an early goal through Tijjani Reijnders.

But the hosts recovered to equalise through Denzel Dumfries early in the second half in a game played at a quick tempo and with occasional flashes of temper to make it a spicy derby.

Germany top the standings, level on four points with the second-placed Netherlands, after both won their opening group games on Saturday. Bosnia, who are third, and Hungary in fourth place have a point apiece after they drew 0-0 in Budapest.

Netherlands, who beat Bosnia 5-2 in their opener, got off to a dream start as a perfect through ball from Ryan Gravenberch set



Germany's Joshua Kimmich celebrates after scoring against the Netherlands on Tuesday

Reijnders away to storm down on goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen and expertly tuck the ball into the net.

While the home side created opportunities, the Germans dominated possession, moving the ball around quickly, and soon had the Dutch on the back foot.

Germany's Jamal Musiala intercepted an errant pass from

Matthijs de Ligt, who had a similar defensive lapse against Bosnia, to set up the 38th minute equaliser for Undav.

The visitors were ahead on the stroke of halftime after stretching the Dutch defence, who had by then lost Nathan Ake to a suspected hamstring injury that saw him carried off on a stretcher.



Greece's Fotis Ioannidis scores against Ireland on Tuesday

Ioannidis, Tzolis score as Greece beat Ireland

Dublin, Ireland - Greece's Fotis Ioannidis scored his third goal in two games to help them make a perfect start to their Nations League campaign with a comfortable 2-0 win away to toothless Ireland on Tuesday.

Christos Tzolis added a late second with a fine run and finish as Group B2 leaders Greece took six points from their opening two matches. It was Ireland's second defeat.

The visitors led after 50 minutes when Ioannidis was given far too much time and space to pick his spot from 25 metres and brilliantly curled the ball into the back of the net.

He scored twice in the 3-0 home win over Finland on Saturday, which should have been a warning for Ireland but one that was not heeded.

The points were safe when Tzolis used his pace to get behind the Ireland defence three minutes from time and showed composure in the box before drilling the ball low into the net.

Ireland winger Chiedozie Ogbene had netted a superb strike from 25 metres four minutes before halftime but was offside in the build-up.

Ireland travel to Finland and Greece for their next two games in October.

Arsenal's Odegaard could be out for weeks, says Norway doctor

London, England - Arsenal captain Martin Odegaard could face several weeks on the sidelines after injuring his right ankle during Norway's Nations League victory against Austria on Monday, according to the Norwegian team doctor.

Odegaard hobbled off the pitch and was photographed using crutches as he boarded a plane back to London where he underwent further scans to reveal the extent of the injury.

Arsenal face north London rivals Tottenham Hotspur in the

Premier League on Sunday when they will also be without midfielder Declan Rice who is suspended.

"Such ankle injuries often take at least three weeks. Anything other than that is just a bonus. And then it can take longer," medic Ola Sand was quoted as saying by Norway's VG.

"Ankle injuries are very painful right away. With Martin, it was extremely painful. He became very worried. "What we have so far obtained from the MRI examination in London is that there is



Martin Odegaard grimaces in pain after suffering an ankle injury during Norway's Nations League match against Austria on Monday

His response to the rehabilitation in the next few weeks is the most important. It will start carefully on the bike

OLA SAND

probably no fracture in the ankle. In the event of a fracture, we are talking about being out of action for six weeks plus."

Odegaard has become a talismanic figure at Arsenal and has missed only a handful of Premier League games in the last three seasons under Mikel Arteta.

A lengthy absence would be a huge blow to Arteta especially as new signing Mikel Merino also out with a fractured shoulder.

"His response to the rehabilitation in the next few weeks is the most important," Sand added. "It will start carefully on the bike, carefully in relation to what he can tolerate from pain. Then you take it gradually."

'FITNESS AND EXPERIENCE DECIDED THE OUTCOME'

Head coach Jaroslav Silhavy still hopeful of Oman's chances despite defeat to South Korea

Muscat - Oman head coach Jaroslav Silhavy said he believed that his team are still very much in the hunt for a World Cup place despite their second defeat, to South Korea in Muscat on Tuesday.

"I deeply apologise for this result and I thank the fans who attended and supported us throughout the match," said Silhavy.

"Anyone who understands football knows that the Korean team are strong and have experienced players who play in major leagues.

Hwang Hee-chan had given South Korea a 10th minute lead but Oman drew level through Jung Seung-hyun's own goal in first half stoppage time.

However, the East Asian side secured victory through goals from Son Heung-min (82nd) and Joo Min-kyu (90th).

"I am proud of my players and what they presented during the match. In the first half we played well and were able to come back but our fitness level declined at the end of the second half, and we conceded two goals.



Oman's Muhsen al Ghassani challenges South Korean goalkeeper Jo Hyeon-woo for the ball during their World Cup qualifier in Muscat on Tuesday



In the first half we played well and were able to come back but our fitness level declined at the end of the second half

JAROSLAV SILHAVY

"Fitness and experience ultimately decided the outcome of this match. Despite this result, I believe that our chances are still there in the competition."

Meanwhile, Korean coach Hong Myung-bo credited their second half tactical adjustment for the win.

"This was a difficult match. I would like to congratulate my players from the bottom of my heart. Overall, things went according to our game plan. When the match was tied in the second half, we made some tactical changes and the players responded really well," said Hong.

"We slowed down towards the end of the first half and ended up conceding a goal. We should have ended the first half without conceding."

Son urges South Korea to play with confidence

Muscat - Skipper Son Heung-min believes South Korea will secure an 11th straight trip to the World Cup finals if they continue to play with the confidence they showed in the qualifying win over Oman on Tuesday.

South Korea were booed off the pitch in Seoul after a goalless draw against Palestine last week but rebounded with a 3-1 win in Muscat to move into second place in Asian qualifying Group B behind Jordan.

Tottenham Hotspur forward Son said he had talked to his teammates about putting their false start behind them in the five days between the two qualifiers.

"I tried to lead by example," Son said in televised comments reported by Yonhap news agency.

"Some players feel the pressure of being on the national team. Obviously, we should all hold ourselves accountable but I also told the guys that they don't have to hang their heads because we had played just one match.

"We have eight matches to go and that means we have eight more opportunities to play our best. If we can play with confidence like we did today, I believe we will be in good shape."

Hwang Hee-chan gave the South Koreans a good start with



Son Heung-min

a goal in the 10th minute at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex but that was cancelled out just before halftime when defender Jung Seung-hyun headed the ball into his own net.

Son put South Korea ahead again by curling a left-foot shot just inside the post from the edge of the box in the 82nd minute and Joo Min-kyu put the victory beyond doubt with a strike deep into stoppage time.

"We didn't get off to such a great start," Son added. "But after winning this difficult away match, I feel like we've become a better team."

A top-two finish in Group B will secure direct passage to the 48-team finals in the United States, Mexico and Canada.

South Korea next face a trip to Jordan on Oct. 10 and Son hoped the playing surface at Seoul World Cup Stadium would be in better condition than it was last week by the time they host Iraq in the capital five days later.

"The field was in such excellent shape that we played with confidence," Son said of the Muscat pitch.

"I hope conditions at our home stadium will continue to improve.

"We'll try to play the best match of our lives every time we go out."



Mauricio Pochettino named new US coach

New York, United States - Former Chelsea manager Mauricio Pochettino has been named new coach of the United States men's team, U.S. Soccer announced on Tuesday.

Pochettino, who parted ways with Premier League side Chelsea in May after one season in charge, will take the reins in the U.S. ahead of the 2026 World Cup, which will be co-hosted by Mexico, Canada and the United States.

The Argentine, a former Paris St Germain and Tottenham Hotspur manager, said his decision to join U.S. soccer was not just about football, but about the journey the country was on and he couldn't pass up the opportunity.

"The energy, the passion, and the hunger to achieve something truly historic here - those are the things that inspired me," he said in a statement.

"I see a group of players full of talent and potential, and together, we're going to build something special that the whole nation can be proud of."

U.S. Soccer Sporting Director Matt Crocker said Pochettino was a "serial winner with a deep passion for developing players".

"His track record speaks for itself, and I am confident that he is the right choice to harness the immense potential within our talented squad."

Arnold under pressure after lacklustre Australia drop points in Jakarta

Melbourne, Australia - Australia coach Graham Arnold was engulfed in a storm of criticism from home fans and media on Wednesday after the scoreless Socceroos again failed to despatch a low-ranked opponent in World Cup qualifying.

Hoping to rebound from a shock 1-0 loss to Bahrain on home soil last week, the Socceroos were held 0-0 by world number 133 Indonesia in Jakarta on Tuesday in a setback to their hopes of direct qualification for the 2026 showpiece in North America.

By contrast, Group C heavyweights Japan backed up their 7-0 demolition of China with a 5-0 thrashing of Bahrain in Riffa to hold top spot on six points, while West Asian powerhouse Saudi Arabia beat China away to lie second.

With only the top two quali-

fying directly, fifth-placed Australia will be under huge pressure to take maximum points at home against China in next month's qualifying window.



Graham Arnold

Australia have long struggled to score against teams who sit back and defend in numbers but patience is wearing thin. "It sharpens the scrutiny on Arnold, his tactics and his selections, with the national team clearly struggling to function in attack," soccer

writer Vince Rugari wrote in the Sydney Morning Herald.

Australia had 15 corners and hogged 63% of possession against Indonesia, and while they racked up 19 shots on goal only five of them were on target. Underlining his frustration, Arnold, usually the most staunch defender of his players, was critical of them, saying he could not "play the game for them". "Second spot is on four (points) at the moment," he said. "So it's not like it's a disaster, but I've got to go home and do a lot of thinking."

Plenty of fans on social media suggested Arnold has had more than enough thinking time and called for change.

Less than two years ago, Arnold was feted as a national hero as the Socceroos reached the last 16 at Qatar and won two matches at a World Cup for the first time.

China showed improvement in defeat to Saudi Arabia, says coach Ivankovic

Beijing, China - China coach Branko Ivankovic has said he will not resign despite his team going down 2-1 to 10-man Saudi Arabia in Dalian on Tuesday to make it two losses in two games in the third phase of Asian qualifying for the 2026 World Cup.

The Croatian's team need to finish in the top two of Group C to qualify directly for the finals for the second time after 2002, while third or fourth place would offer a passage via further rounds of qualifiers.

After a 7-0 drubbing at the hands of Japan in their group opener in Saitama last week, Ivankovic was encouraged that the task was achievable as China lost to the Saudis only by virtue of Hassan Kadish's 90th-minute header. "The question shouldn't be directed at me," Ivankovic said when asked if he would resign, Xinhua news agency reported.

"We suffered a substantial loss in the first match, but we im-



Branko Ivankovic

proved in the second.

"This group includes some strong opponents and our goal is to reach the top four. We're working towards that with eight matches still remaining."

Ivankovic also defended himself against criticism of his decision not to make earlier substitutions to chase the win against a Saudi side reduced to 10 men by the dismissal of Mohammed Kanno in the 19th minute. "The team was well-or-

ganised on the pitch, so I decided not to make changes," he added.

"The match was very complicated, so I needed some substitutes available to handle different situations."

The match was played against the backdrop of an earlier announcement by the China Football Association in Dalian that 38 players, including three former internationals, and five club officials had been banned for life for match-fixing.



Son Jun-ho

South Korea's Son Jun-ho denies China match-fixing accusations

Seoul, South Korea - South Korean soccer player Son Jun-ho tearfully denied on Wednesday accusations by Chinese authorities that he participated in match-fixing and bribery when playing in the country and said he gave a false confession under duress.

The Chinese Football Association (CFA) declared a lifetime ban the previous day on 38 players, including Son and five officials, following a two-year investigation into match-fixing and gambling that was part of a crackdown on corruption.

"I never took part in match-fixing," Son told a news conference. "The only evidence they have is my false confession made under coercion," he added, breaking down in tears. "I was threatened that if I didn't accept the charges, my wife would be arrested and investigated, too."

The midfielder, who has lost his spot in the South Korean side since the scandal broke, was re-

leased and returned home in March after nearly 10 months of detention in China.

Son said he had agreed not to talk about his experience during detention as a condition of his release but decided to speak up because he was shocked to be included in China's bans.

He was not mistreated during detention, Son added, but described the conditions in which he was held as harsh.

The Chinese Football Association could not immediately be reached for comment on Son's remarks. The General Administration of Sport of China and the foreign and public security ministries did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Three former Chinese internationals, Jin Jingdao, Guo Tianyu and Gu Chao were also banned for life, in findings made public on Tuesday at a press conference by the public security ministry and the General Administration of Sport of China.

BACK WITH A VENGEANCE

Rodriguez scores winner as Colombia beat Argentina in World Cup qualifier

Barranquilla, Colombia - James Rodriguez scored from the penalty spot as Colombia avenged their Copa America final defeat with a 2-1 win over defending World Cup champions Argentina in a South American World Cup qualifier on Tuesday.

Injured Argentina star Lionel Messi didn't play in Barranquilla in what was the first match between the teams since the Copa América final.

Yerson Mosquera opened the scoring for Colombia in the 25th minute, but Argentina equalised in the 48th when Nico Gonzalez capitalised on a defensive blunder from the Colombians.

James' 60th-minute penalty secured the win at the Metropolitano Stadium.

World Cup champions Argentina lifted the Copa América trophy after a 1-0 overtime victory over Colombia in July.

Colombia, who hadn't beaten Argentina since 2019, are still unbeaten in South American World Cup qualifying.

Argentina lead the round-robin competition with 18 points after eight matches, two points clear of Colombia.

The top six teams in South American qualifying will get automatic spots at the 2026 World Cup.

Colombia once again had the



Argentina lifted the Copa América trophy after a 1-0 victory over Colombia in July. Colombia, who hadn't beaten Argentina since 2019, are still unbeaten in South American World Cup qualifying.

Colombia's James Rodriguez celebrates after scoring against Argentina in their World Cup qualifier on Tuesday

33-year-old Rodríguez to thank after he gave a perfect cross for Mosquera to nod in and opening the scoring. That equalised Carlos Valderrama's record of 11 assists in South American World

Cup qualifying.

A mistake by Rodríguez allowed Argentina to equalise, with Nico González stealing the ball from him and shooting past goalkeeper Camilo Vargas.

But Rodríguez made amends when he beat Emiliano Martínez, a prolific penalty stopper, and equalised Falcao García's mark of 13 goals in World Cup qualifying. Argentina's strikers Lautaro Martínez and Julián Álvarez failed to offer as much danger as

they do when veteran Messi is there to create opportunities for them.

Elsewhere on Tuesday, Chile's hopes of qualifying suffered another body blow after they slumped to a 2-1 loss at home to Bolivia.



Paraguay's Diego Gomez celebrates with teammates after scoring against Brazil on Tuesday

Brazil stunned by Paraguay

Asuncion, Paraguay - Brazil slumped to a fourth defeat in their last five World Cup qualifiers on Tuesday after a first-half goal by Diego Gomez gave Paraguay a 1-0 win in Asuncion.

Five-times world champions Brazil, who scraped a 1-0 home win over Ecuador on Friday, are fifth in South American qualifying for the 2026 World Cup with 10 points, ahead of Venezuela on goal difference.

The top six qualify directly for the World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada, with

Qualifying isn't easy, it's a difficult time and we've to know how to manage it. It's a time of transition, we're not confident.

MARQUINHOS

the seventh place offering passage via further rounds of qualifiers. Manager Dorival Jr, who took over from Tite after Brazil's quarter-final exit at the 2022 World Cup, looked forlorn on the sidelines as his side were comprehensively outplayed and fortunate not to lose by more.

Brazil failed to record a shot on target in the first half and fell behind in the 20th minute when Gomez rifled home from the edge of the box, the ball smacking the post on its way past Alisson into the net.

"The coach is still figuring out the best way for us to play and

that's reflected in the result," defender Marquinhos told Brazilian TV Globo. "There are a lot of new players, we are lacking confidence. Qualifying isn't easy, it's a difficult time and we have to know how to manage it. It's a time of transition, we're not feeling confident. We're going to work hard, getting results on the pitch is the best answer."

Brazil had only three shots on target, all via Vinicius Jr, who has been unable to have the same impact for his country as he has for club side for Real Madrid.

Ivory Coast blank Chad, Salah scores for Egypt

Cape Town, South Africa - Defending champions Ivory Coast, as well as Egypt and Algeria, won a second Africa Cup of Nations qualifier on Tuesday in their bid to reach the 2025 finals but Cameroon and Nigeria stumbled on a busy day of matches across the continent.

There were a total of 15 games played on Tuesday as the second round of qualifiers for the next finals in Morocco came to a conclusion.

A third and fourth round will be played next month and then the last two rounds in November after which the field for the 24-team tournament will be decided.

With the top two teams in each group qualifying, the Ivorians look on course to ensure they will be on hand to defend their title after beating Chad 2-0 away in neutral Cameroon and sit three points clear at the helm of Group G.

Chad are among the many African countries barred from hosting international games until they upgrade their stadiums and are forced to play their home



Egypt's Mahmoud Trezeguet celebrates after scoring against Botswana

games at neutral venues.

Ivorian striker Jean-Philippe Krasso, who scored both goals in the 2-0 home win over Zambia last Friday, was again on the scoresheet followed by a second half effort from Oumar Diakite.

Egypt's Mahmoud Trezeguet got two goals in the first half hour

and Mohamed Salah added to the tally as they won 4-0 away to Botswana in Francistown to lead Group C.

The kickoff of the match was delayed by several hours because the home team only arrived back in the country on Tuesday morning after playing in

Mauritania on Saturday.

The fatigue of the journey and Botswana's rush to get home gave them little chance against the powerful Egyptians.

Algeria were 2-0 up inside 25 minutes in Liberia and went on to win 3-0 to top Group E, opening up a four-point advantage.

Cameroon, whose two matches were again overshadowed by the power struggle for control of the team between the country's football federation and its sports ministry, were held to a 0-0 draw by Zimbabwe in Kampala.

Although their own team were not playing, several thousand locals flocked to the stadium to cheer on Manchester United goalkeeper Andre Onana.

The Premier League enjoys much popularity in Uganda and Onana did not disappoint with several key stops to keep Cameroon's goal intact.

Nigeria were held 0-0 away to Rwanda after Ademola Lookman had an effort disallowed and Victor Boniface struck the woodwork. They lead Group D by a point from Benin.

Mertens cruises on day of upsets in Jasmin Open

Monastir, Tunisia - Top seed Elise Mertens cruised to victory, but fourth-seeded Nadia Podoroska and fifth-seeded Jacqueline Cristian were not as fortunate in the first round of the Jasmin Open Tunisia on Tuesday in Monastir, Tunisia.

Belgium's Mertens, ranked No. 32 in the world, posted a 6-2, 6-0 victory over Anastasia Zakharova of Russia. Mertens converted 7 of 10 break-point chances and won 69.2 percent (9 of 13) of her first-serve points and 65.4 percent (17 of 26) on her second serves.

Antonia Ruzic of Croatia rallied for a 1-6, 6-2, 6-4 win over Argentina's Podoroska. British qualifier Sonay Kartal, ranked No. 151 in the world, ousted Romania's Cristian, ranked No. 74, in a 4-6, 6-3, 7-5 battle in two hours and 43 minutes for her third Top 100 win of 2024. Kartal converted 8 of 13 break-point opportunities (61.5 percent) to 7 of 14 for Cristian.

Other first-round winners were seventh-seeded Lucia



Elise Mertens

Bronzetti of Italy, Jana Fett of Croatia, Rebecca Sramkova of Slovakia, Ann Li of the United States, Zeynep Sonmez of Turkey and Yuliia Starodubtseva of Ukraine.

Meanwhile in Guadalajara Open Akron, Italy's Martina Trevisan powered to a 6-3, 6-2 win

over eighth-seeded Caroline Dolehide of the United States in the first round of the WTA 500 tournament in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Trevisan converted six of her 13 break-point opportunities while saving two of the four break points on her own serve.



14

BANANA DELIGHTS
Slit a banana and churn out a scrumptious dessert in minutes



15

HOPIBI'S AROUND
Are you a responsible shopper? Do you shop till your drop?



16

ENTERTAINMENT
A peek into tinsel town, in Hollywood and Bollywood

SHOT IN THE DARK

Feathers and fur

While romancing his passion for wildlife photography, Ahmed al Washahi showcases Omani wildlife to boost tourism and conservation efforts in the sultanate

Mohammed Taha

He spends hours on end awaiting drama in the thicket...his lens captures the minutest details - from the calculating glance of a lean lizard contemplating a leap to the subtle grimaces of owls perched on tree-tops. His show usually begins when twilight adorns the horizon...
For Ahmed al Washahi, 39, a keen wildlife photographer hailing from the Wilayat of Shinas in North Batinah governorate, every moment away from the hustle and bustle of the city is an opportunity to relish the wonders of nature. And he does so with absolute flourish, devouring as well as documenting what could be gone in a split-second.
To promote Omani tourism and underscore the importance of wildlife conservation, Washahi has shared over 500 captivating images on social media and his work has received widespread attention and appreciation from scores of his followers and fans, many of whom are well placed in organisations dealing with conservation of wildlife and the environment.
Speaking with Muscat Daily, Washahi reflected on his life-long fascination with wildlife. "Since my youth, I've been mesmerised by wildlife. I followed birds as

they nurtured their young and explored the intricate details and colours of small insects.
"In 2013, however, I decided to turn this passion into a documented form by starting with wildlife photography using my mobile phone. The encouragement from my family and friends was invaluable. By 2016, I upgraded to a professional camera, capturing the beauty of wildlife in greater detail."
Washahi has photographed a variety of species, including the Arabian red fox, owls, and eagles, showcasing the diverse and stunning wildlife of Oman.
"My focus on wildlife photography stems from a deep love and passion for nature. This field is often underappreciated due to the significant patience and perseverance it demands. I am committed to continuously refining my techniques to achieve my desired results," he says.
"Moreover, my goal is to use wildlife photography as a tool to educate people about the importance of conservation. Protecting these natural treasures is essential for maintaining an ecological balance and ensuring the well-being of both, wildlife and humans."
Oman is exceptionally rich in wildlife and features diverse environments, including plains, mountains, seas, and deserts, he points out, adding, "Each habi-

tat supports distinct forms of biodiversity, making wildlife photography both challenging and rewarding."
To effectively capture the essence of each environment, photographers must study the specific conditions of each habitat thoroughly. This diversity not only makes wildlife photography demanding but also inspires a deeper exploration and understanding of the natural world, Washahi asserts.
He noted that destinations known for their rich wildlife, such as nature reserves, wetlands, beaches, and deserts, are highly celebrated for their biodiversity. These areas attract photography enthusiasts with their unique and abundant wildlife, providing endless opportunities to capture the beauty of nature.
Regarding the challenges of wildlife photography, Washahi observed that it is one of the most demanding forms of photography due to the unpredictable movements of living creatures. Success in this field requires repeated attempts and immense patience.
Additionally, the high cost of photography equipment and the rugged, challenging locations where wildlife is found demand considerable effort and time for each shot.
After work hours, Washahi always sets specific goals and locations for his wildlife photography sessions. He typically uses the afternoons to reach these locations and capture his shots. Some areas near his workplace are frequented by migratory birds, which he also takes time to photograph and document.
Looking ahead, Washahi is featured in two films showcasing his wildlife photos - Wetlands and Owls in the Sultanate of Oman - directed by Abdullah al Raisi. He plans to continue using his wildlife photography to promote tourism in Oman and encourages Omani youth to pursue their dreams with dedication and hard work.



“
Since my youth, I've been mesmerised by wildlife
Ahmed al Washahi



cook-up

Banana delights

WHEN YOU WANT TO CHURN OUT AN INTERESTING DESSERT AT HOME AT SHORT NOTICE, TURN TO THE HUMBLE BANANA FOR A DELICIOUS FEAST FOR THE SENSES



Banana fritters

- Ingredients**
- 3 ripe bananas
 - 1 cup all-purpose flour
 - 1tbsp rice flour
 - ½tsp salt
 - ½tsp baking powder
 - ½tsp turmeric powder
 - Oil for deep frying

Method

Blend the all-purpose flour, rice flour, baking powder, salt and turmeric with 1 cup water to make a smooth, free flowing batter. Peel and slice the bananas lengthwise from the centre – each banana would form two halves lengthwise. Heat oil in a wok for deep frying. When it is hot enough, not smoking hot, gently dip the bananas into the batter to coat evenly and place them, one by one, with a spoon into the hot oil. Cook till golden brown and remove with a slotted spatula onto absorbent kitchen tissues. Enjoy warm as an evening snack with a hot cup of tea.

Banana Split

- Ingredients**
- 2 bananas
 - 2 scoops chocolate ice cream
 - 2 scoops vanilla ice cream
 - 2 scoops strawberry ice cream
 - 3-4tbsp strawberry syrup
 - 3-4tbsp chocolate syrup or sauce
 - 3-4tbsp pineapple in syrup - chopped
 - 6tbsp whipped cream
 - 6 candied/fresh cherries
 - 2tbsp chopped, toasted nuts (walnuts/almonds)

Method

Peel the bananas and cut them lengthwise in half. Place the two banana slices on the sides of a long, shallow dish. Arrange scoops of the ice-creams in a row between the banana slices. Place the pineapple on the vanilla ice cream. Pour the strawberry syrup over the strawberry ice cream. Pour the chocolate syrup over the chocolate ice cream. Garnish each scoop of ice cream with whipped cream and place the cherries on top of the cream. Garnish with chopped nuts and serve.

Banana Oat Muffins

- Ingredients**
- ¾ cup all-purpose flour
 - ¾ cup quick-cooking oats
 - 1tsp baking powder
 - 1tsp ground cinnamon
 - ½ tsp baking soda
 - ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
 - 2 large egg whites
 - 1 cup mashed ripe bananas
 - ½ cup packed brown sugar
 - ¼ cup fat-free milk
 - ¼ cup canola oil
 - ½ cup chopped pecans

Method

In a large bowl, combine the first 6 ingredients. In a small bowl, beat the egg whites, bananas, brown sugar, milk and oil. Stir into dry ingredients just until moistened. Stir in pecans. Coat muffin cups with cooking spray, fill two-thirds full with batter, bake at 180° C for 15-20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool for 5 minutes before removing from pan to a wire rack.



CLASSIFIEDS

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An experienced Indian male with over 15 years of experience in civil projects, fitout project management, and planning engineering, along with a valid Oman driving licence, is seeking a suitable placement. Contact: +968-98908664

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BIRTHDAY WISHES



YUG

May your special day be filled with excitement, laughter and all the fun you can imagine. You are a strong and brave little one. And we are very proud of you. Happy Sixth Birthday YUG. From Mumma, Pappa and Shreshta

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Birthday/Anniversary wishes to wish@apexmedia.co.om with your resident card copy (It's free of cost)



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take a break

HOPPING AROUND WITH HOPIBI



Be a responsible shopper!

Hi friends, I'm back, your old friend Hopibi!

Last week, I hopped around to the nearest hypermarket to my home to take a look at shoppers, shopping attitudes, as well as vendor strategies which were designed to keep people going around in circles, spending more than they intended to, and making the shopping arena buzz till midnight.

To my amazement, I noticed many things amiss - some at the behest of shoppers, some tricks played by the owners of the plaza, and some blatant oversights that put shoppers at peril.

While shuffling through the grocery shelves, I noticed many packages containing eatables opened up - chips, candies, nuts and so many other food-stuff items. One could find wrappers strewn along aisles, half-consumed pouches as well some spilt along shelves - all the handiwork of irresponsible shoppers.

Even on sections displaying household goods, garments, footwear, electronics, etc, there were many excesses which the owners of the outlet need to contain every single day. While price tags had been removed or switched for some items, in the garment section, I even saw a few vests and briefs removed from within packages of sets of 3 or 5, keeping the packaging intact. Surely, these pinched goods wouldn't be detected by the scanners at exits while people carrying them flitted in and out of hypermarkets.

As for vendor flaws, there were a few, like outdated items on shelves, wrong price-tags, faded/invisible barcodes, posters indicating expired offers to beckon buyers, discounts that were not valid, as well as some goods which had deteriorated even though they were within the super-scribed expiry date.

As for oversights that could be perilous to shoppers, there were sharp corners and edges on shelves, uncleaned floors with traces of stuff that were dropped by shoppers (which could induce a fall) rotten vegetables/fruit tucked between good ones, and closed billing counters even while shoppers suffered in long queues in a few counters.

I had hopped in only for an ice-cream, but when I found my favourite chocobar inside the box of another brand, I retreated my steps. Guys, can we not be more responsible shoppers?



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Your subconscious will be quite entertaining today, and it will come up with all sorts of amusing ideas and images without much effort. Having an active inner voice will be a blessing right now, because it will help you stay happy and alert as you carry out all of the day's mundane responsibilities. Try to take special notice of the people around you.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

You've been hitting it hard for a while now, doing your job and someone else's too. But now, finally, the recognition you deserve is en route. Don't worry if it doesn't happen immediately; it's in the works. The higher-ups have been watching you, and they're pleased. Stick out that chest, and be as proud of yourself as others are.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

If an email correspondence between you and a coworker has gotten a bit tense or catty, it's time to move this discussion out of the virtual realm and into the real world. If you can't meet with them in person, at least pick up the phone and give them a call. It's important for them to hear the intonation of your voice, but it's just as important for you to hear their voice.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

It's time to get social today, at least as much as your schedule allows! Make connecting with others a priority in your day and you won't regret it. Even just asking how someone is doing will trigger deeper connections with the people around you, and that is a nourishing thing for your soul. You don't have to make any new friends.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

One of your most important relationships is going through a transition now, and while it might be uncomfortable and worrisome for a while, it will all work out for the best in the end. In the meantime, you should go out and start exploring other kinds of relationships. Find out for yourself what it's like to be an independent person.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

There are many small details you'll need to pay attention to today if you want to keep things on a positive track at work or at school. Dates, numbers, and other types of facts will be tossed around by your group, and it will be in your best interests to write them down and get things organised. No one else will be paying attention.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

When you're working on tasks for other people today, you can't be too meticulous! Whether you're just doing someone a favour or taking on a project that has the potential to change your entire career path, you have to be very careful and methodical in your efforts. Don't go halfway with this. Pull out all the stops and show them that you are someone they can depend on.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

It's all about putting out the right kind of energy today, so be generous and kind and project the type of person you want others to see you as. Whatever you put out there will eventually come back to you, so go over the top with the things that you offer to other people. Keep it genuine, but don't be afraid to make big promises.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Dealing with authority figures may be a difficult challenge for some people now, but it isn't for you! You can easily handle tricky conversations with the biggest movers and shakers, in part because you know what you're talking about and you know that they know too! Your confidence will help you cover all the details.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Today's events will create too many details for most people to handle, but for you it's a great day for making plans. Your curious brain will flourish under the heavy downpour of dates, times, facts, and figures. Embrace all the chaos and tie up all the loose ends into a beautiful bow. You are entering a time of great organisational skill when multitasking isn't just a trait on your resume.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Someone in your group needs a refresher course on what exactly is going on. They've been out of the loop for quite a while now. It's up to you to cover all the details with them, so try to take care of that business as early in the day as possible. Don't adjust your schedule to accommodate theirs. If they need to learn these things, they need to do so when it's most convenient for you.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You'll find out the ugly truth about someone when you happen to catch an unedited comment. You don't like what you hear, and it's hard to reconcile their statement with how they promote themselves. Ask yourself who you're really dealing with. It's time for you to take a step back from the situation you're in and wait a little bit longer before you commit any more time and energy.

IN TOWN

Reconnect



The British Business Forum Oman hosted a 'Reconnect' meet for members on Sunday



Photos: V K Shafer

BOGGLER

L	H	I	R
L	O	T	F
L	H	R	L
G	E	I	I

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

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

TRIVIA QUIZ - FOR TEENS

- What are the names of Harry Potter's parents?
A. Lily and Jonah
B. Lily and James
C. Lola and Jacob
D. Jane and Joe
- What term is used in tennis for 40-40?
A. Love all
B. Game
C. Deuce
D. Break point
- Where is Oman's only suspension bridge - Khor al Batah - located?



- A. Sohar
B. Salalah
C. Suwaiq
D. Sur

Answers
1. B
2. C
3. D

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

entertainment



SPIDEY 4 MOVES FAST

Tom Holland and Zendaya-starrer *Spider-Man 4* seems to be moving fast at the Marvel Cinematic Universe, especially after the recent chain of events. *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* director Destin Daniel Cretton has been roped in to helm the fourth instalment of the franchise that's been directed by John Watts so far. Real-life star couple Tom and Zendaya will also reprise their roles of Peter Parker and his girlfriend MJ respectively.

TAYLOR SWIFT BACKS HARRIS, slams TRUMP

Taylor Swift has formally endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris. In a lengthy new statement that the 34-year-old pop star shared to Instagram on September 10, she also blasted Republican candidate Donald Trump and his team for using AI-generated images of her earlier this summer.

Kidman dedicates award to her late Mom

Nicole Kidman's Venice Film Festival experience was abruptly cut short due to the tragic loss of her mother. After gracing the red carpet in an avant-garde couture by Daniel Roseberry for Schiaparelli, the Hollywood A-lister missed out on the Best Actress award, which was later accepted by *Babygirl* director Halina Reijn on her behalf. Nicole shared a written statement about landing in Venice but leaving as soon as she heard the devastating news. In the acceptance speech, she dedicated the award to her mother.

SELENA GOMEZ SAYS SHE CAN'T HAVE CHILDREN

Only Murders in the Building star Selena Gomez has revealed that she can't carry her own children due to several health risks. The 32-year-old, however, said she had planned to start a family by the time she turned 35. "I haven't ever said this, but unfortunately I can't carry my own children. I have a lot of medical issues that would put my life and the baby's in jeopardy. That was something I had to grieve for a while," Gomez disclosed in a recent interview.



Bromance at TIFF 2024

Nisha's KRR SH

Girls! Our wishes have been granted. Pookie Hyun Bin and forever cutie Lee Dong Wook walked the red carpet together at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). Their period drama *Harbin* premiered at the revered festival. This is the first time the twin stars are sharing the screen together. But, what stole the show was the relaxed camaraderie between the two stars. Walking the red carpet hand in hand, the duo dazzled the paparazzi and added to the delight of the present crowd. They had the loudest cheers in the whole festival. Wookie and Daddy Bin interacted with fans on the red carpet too. Both stars also posed for a selfie with fans. OMG - If my soul could be projected out of my body it would fly to Canada for this moment alone! And yes, the film *Harbin* will be on the big screen in December.



Genre: Thriller
Starring: James McAvoy, Mackenzie Davis, Scoot McNairy, Aisling Franciosi, Alix West Lefler,
Language: English

WHAT'S ON

SPEAK NO EVIL

When an American family is invited to spend the weekend at the idyllic country estate of a charming British family they befriend on vacation, what begins as a dream holiday soon warps into a snarled psychological nightmare.

RANVEER, DEEPIKA WELCOME BABY GIRL

Bollywood couple Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone welcomed their first baby girl on September 8, six years after their marriage in 2018. The couple have been flooded with greetings from a wide spectrum of well-wishers ever since, from fans to celebrities. Indian business tycoon Mukesh Ambani also visited the couple in the Mumbai hospital.



HAUTE PURSUIT

BOLLYWOOD MOVIE REVIEW: THE BUCKINGHAM MURDERS

Genre: Crime thriller Starring: Kareena Kapoor Khan, Keith Allen, Ranveer Singh Brar

The *Buckingham Murders* is a 2023 Indian crime thriller film directed by Hansal Mehta and produced by Kareena Kapoor Khan, Shobha Kapoor and Ekta Kapoor. The film stars Kapoor Khan as a grieving British-Indian detective who is assigned the case of a murdered child in Buckinghamshire. This movie marks Kareena's first production venture and her in the film is said to be inspired by Kate Winslet's character in the miniseries *Mare of East-town*. Released in theatres this week, *The Buckingham Mur-*



ders had premiered at the 67th BFI London Film Festival in October 2023. It had also marked the opening of the 2023 Mumbai Film Festival at the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre on 27 October. While initial reviews consider this movie as 'a cinematic powerhouse' with a strong emotional core, it also is a pat on the back for Mehta whose skillful direction did bring out the best in Kareena who plays a police officer - Jaspreet Bhamra - grappling with personal loss while handling a high-profile case. Aside from her lovey-dovey performances in Bollywood masala films, Kareena

shows a new side to herself, conveying both, deep vulnerability and strength, thereby keeping audiences emotionally connected throughout. This film takes up themes such as prejudice, identity, and community, all founded into a compelling narrative that keeps viewers engrossed. It also features Indian celebrity chef Ranveer Brar in a key role, peppered with a few Hindi dialogues. In fact, the film has a blend of English and Hindi dialogues that are easily grasped even if one is not conversant with one of the two languages. If you hated Kareena for her superficial performance in

Crew, which could've sounded the death knell for her career, this mystery thriller might change that perception. And given the fact that she is no more mainstream 'heroine material', her diversion into such character driven roles could be good decision to salvage her screen presence, after all. If you are an avid Kareen fan, you would, indeed, notice similar expressions and mannerisms you have seen before, especially those in *Jab We Met* (2007), *Heroine* (2012) and *Jaane Jaan* (2023, Netflix) A good watch, indeed! Rating ★★★★★

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