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Algeria rolls out red carpet for H M

First bilateral state visit by an Omani Sultan to Algeria

Algiers, Algeria - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik arrived in Algiers on Sunday on a two-day state visit to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of Algeria led the welcoming party for His Majesty the Sultan and received him at the foot of the aircraft ramp in Houari Boumediene International Airport.

His Majesty was also received by senior officials in the Algerian government.

His Majesty the Sultan and the Algerian President then ascended the dais of honour as the Royal anthem of Oman and the national anthem of Algeria were played.

This was followed by His Majesty the Sultan inspecting a guard of honour, while an artillery unit fired a 21-gun salute.

His Majesty the Sultan shook hands with members of the welcoming party from the Algerian side and personnel of the sultanate's embassy in Algeria.

On his turn, the Algerian President shook hands with members of the official delegation accompanying His Majesty the Sultan.

Then, President Tebboune escorted His Majesty the Sultan

H M THE SULTAN, TEBBOUNE HOLD BILATERAL MEETING

Algiers, Algeria - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria held a bilateral meeting at the former's place of residence in Algiers on Sunday.

At the meeting, the two leaders underlined the distinguished relations between

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Majority of worker complaints linked to unjust dismissals: GFWF

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Muhab Mohammed al Ahabi turns his passion for the sea into a tourism venture

OHRC launches multilingual guide to boost legal compliance in workplaces

Our Correspondent Muscat

Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) launched a multilingual guide outlining the rights of private sector workers on Sunday in a move aimed at boosting legal awareness and promoting workplace justice.

Released under the patronage of H E Dr Mahad bin Saeed bin Ali Baowain, Minister of Labour, the guide is available in six languages - Arabic, English, Urdu, Hindi, Bangla and Tagalog - to ensure accessibility across Oman's diverse expatriate workforce.

The publication is part of

The guide addresses the growing need for clarity on rights and obligations under the Omani Labour Law

DR RASHID BIN HAMAD AL BALUSHI

wider efforts to enhance Oman's human rights framework and reaffirm its commitment to international labour conventions. It seeks to build a work environment grounded in equality, legal compliance and respect for

human dignity.

Dr Rashid bin Hamad al Balushi, Chairman of OHRC, said the guide addresses the growing need for clarity on rights and obligations under the Omani Labour Law.

"This guide provides a detailed explanation of key worker rights, including the requirement for a written employment contract, a copy of which must be given to the employee," Balushi said.

"It also affirms the prohibition on employers from retaining workers' passports or personal documents without written consent, outlaws all forms of forced or compulsory labour, and guar-

antees equality among workers regardless of gender, language, religion, race or social status."

The guide outlines entitlements such as weekly rest, annual and sick leave, overtime pay, end-of-service benefits and safety regulations. It includes provisions related to first aid, medical care, accommodation, transportation and meals where applicable.

Workers are entitled to file complaints and grievances through established legal channels, the guide notes. It includes official contact points for both employees and employers seeking support or clarification.

DAGESTAN PM VISITS N SHARQIYAH TO EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES

Abdulmuslim Abdulmuslimov, Prime Minister of the Republic of Dagestan, visited North Sharqiyah on Sunday to discuss investment and cooperation opportunities with Omani officials. He met Governor Mahmoud Yahya al Dhuhli who highlighted the governorate's potential in sectors such as agriculture, tourism and industry (ONA)

SO MANY BOOKS, SO LITTLE TIME

Reading maketh a full man, but reading habits are fast fading with time and distractions from technology. Though Muscat International Book Fair is rekindling an interest in reading, how can we further encourage young minds to embrace books over screens? Here is what *Muscat Daily* readers said -

Aisha al Balushi
Homemaker

Muscat International Book Fair has reignited an interest in books, but to encourage young minds further, we must create vibrant reading corners in schools, host storytelling sessions and introduce reading challenges that reward participation. Making books fun and accessible can help divert attention away from screens.

Khalfan al Amri
Private sector employee

The book fair reminds us that knowledge comes best through reading. To engage young minds, schools could invite authors, organise interactive reading workshops and promote creative writing competitions.



but parents and teachers must continue the effort. Regular library visits, book clubs and even author meet-ups can inspire them to explore new worlds through books instead of spending hours on devices and TV games.

Priya Verma
Painter and homemaker

The book fair is a celebration of imagination. To further its impact, we can encourage children with fun book review activities and family reading challenges. We can start with comics like Tintin and Asterix. When children find books they connect with, they'll prefer the joy of reading over the temporary thrill of a screen.

Arjun Kapoor
Private sector employee

Muscat International Book Fair rekindles curiosity. It is difficult to disregard and abandon devices totally in the present era. To keep alive the habit of reading, combining technology with books - like interactive e-books and reading apps - could help bridge the gap.

Alnisa Vikinga
Private sector employee

Parents need to sit down with their children and read for them or let children read for their parents from a book. When you engage kids in reading, kids do more than just absorb information; you offer a rich tapestry of ideas, narratives and perspectives to sift through. Every word or sentence acts as a key, unlocking doors to new thoughts, solutions and inspirations. The more they read, the more they will know.

YOUR SAY

Will lower electricity bills lead to more power use? What simple steps do you take to reduce your electricity bill during summer?

The views stated here are those of the respondents and not endorsed by *Muscat Daily*. If you feel strongly about the issues discussed here, you can email your comments to muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om You can also log on to our Facebook page or tweet us your comments on the issue.

SEND YOUR COMMENTS

Share your comments in not more than 50 words along with your full name and profession before next Sunday, 10am, via WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram or muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om

The views stated here are those of the respondents and not endorsed by *Muscat Daily*.

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The Chairman's Report For the Period ending March 31st 2025

On behalf of the Fund Management Body, I am pleased to present the financial results of Jabal Furus Fund for the period ending March 31st 2025.

Below is a summary of the financial results:

For the period ending March 31, 2025	
	OMR
Total Income	(60,958)
Total Expenses	(19,806)
Profit (Loss) for the Period	(80,764)
Profit (Loss) per Unit	(0.022)
Total Net Assets	3,434,215
NAV per Unit	0.947

Market Performance

The local benchmark MSX 30 total return index continued its underperformance declining 1.9% YTD on the back of GCC and foreign investors sell-off. The index hit a high of 6,473 points in Jan 2025, and touched low of 6,114 points in Mar 2025 amidst selling pressure across key industrial and services sectors companies. Asyad Shipping completed its IPO at the MSX during this quarter, while the post market performance is subdued and supported by price stabilization. Despite stable macro-environment, Omani capital markets continued to diverge and reveal negative sentiments.

Fund Performance

As of 31st Mar 2025, the Total AUM of the fund stood at RO 3.44 million. Since inception (23rd May 2024), the fund has declined 5.7% in line with the benchmark return of -5.6%. For YTD, the fund has underperformed c. 40 bps with -2.3% return. We remain overweight on select large banks and underweight in the Telecom sector, which led to positive contributions. On the other hand, the overweight position in OQEP, Abraj and Renaissance has led to underperformance of the fund.

Economy and Market outlook

As per S&P, Oman's real GDP is forecasted to grow above 2% over 2025-2028, up from 1.2%-1.3% in 2023-2024 driven by non-oil sectors, supported by government's reform agenda and privatization efforts. Oman's green transition anchored in hydrogen and renewable energy investments is set to diversify exports, attract FDI, and support non-oil growth, laying the foundation for a more resilient post-oil economy.

Overall budget surpluses are forecasted to average 1.0%-2.0% of GDP through 2028, assuming average brent crude at \$70/bbl. Overall public debt has declined sharply from 62% of GDP in 2021 to 36% in 2024, with a further decline expected to 30% by 2028. Oman is currently in a net asset position, with liquid assets near 40% of GDP.

On the corporate earnings, the preliminary Q1 2025 results (excluding Omantel) reveal earnings growth of 4% YoY. The financial sector earnings, especially banks, continued to remain strong amidst credit off-take, stable costs, and lower provisions. On the capital markets perspective, several efforts are underway to reclassify Oman's market from 'frontier' to 'emerging', which could attract increased foreign investment and improve market liquidity.

Overall MSX is trading at a steep discounted valuation as compared to its 10-year average and higher dividend yield to remain supportive. Oman is relatively isolated to the recent USA tariffs, while caveat remain on low oil price for longer period. The fund aims to build cash position and invest in stable and high yielding assets including fixed income to balance returns and ensure stability.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the members of the Fund Management Body, I would like to extend our thanks to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq bin Taimur for the leadership and vision and the Omani government for the efforts towards driving growth and economic stability.

I would like also to thank the Financial Services Authority and the Muscat Stock Exchange for their relentless efforts in developing the capital market, and for the fund manager and the service providers for their efforts in managing the fund, and our valued unitholders for their confidence and support given.

On behalf of the Fund Management Body
Chairman
29 April 2025

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income For the period ending 31 March 2025

	31-03-2025 RO (3 Months)	31-12-2024 RO (12 Months)
Income		
Dividend income	173,335	30,687
Interest income	1,520	25,410
Net realized loss on sale of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	-	(37,012)
Net unrealized loss on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(235,813)	(93,258)
Net investment loss	(60,958)	(74,173)
Expenses		
Management fees	(17,492)	(43,899)
Custodian fees	(1,531)	(3,841)
Transaction Cost	(5)	(404)
General and administrative expenses	(778)	(52,067)
Total expenses	(19,806)	(100,211)

Loss and total comprehensive loss and decrease net assets attributable to The unit holders for the period	(80,764)	(174,384)
Loss per unit	(0.022)	(0.051)

Statement of Financial Position As at 31 March 2025

	31-03-2025 RO	31-12-2024 RO
ASSETS		
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	3,253,363	3,417,095
Cash and cash equivalents	68,232	117,998
Other asset- interest receivable	122,088	-
Total assets	3,443,683	3,535,093
LIABILITIES		
Accruals and other payables	9,468	22,748
Total liabilities	9,468	22,748
Net assets attributable to the unitholders	3,434,215	3,512,345
Total liabilities and net assets attributable to the unitholders	3,443,683	3,535,093
Net assets value per unit attributable to the unitholders	0.947	0.969



The Chairman's Report For the Period ending March 31, 2025

On behalf of the Fund Management Body, I am pleased to present the financial results of Jabal GCC Equities Fund for the period ending March 31, 2025.

Below is a summary of the financial results:

For the period ending March 31, 2025	
	OMR
Total Income	58,562
Total Expenses	(80,189)
Profit (Loss) for the Period	(21,626)
Profit (Loss) per Unit	(0.011)
Total Net Assets	1,957,305
NAV per Unit	1.009

Market Performance

The regional markets had mixed performance during Q1 2025 amidst ongoing global markets volatility, US trade policies uncertainties, and US-China tariff wars. Most of the negative impact was seen in the developed markets, especially in the US and the tech stocks with an increase in volatility. The emerging markets, including the region, have relatively outperformed. S&P GCC total return index increased 1.97% for the first quarter. Among the GCC markets, as at end of Q1 2025, Kuwait all share index closed higher by 9.7% year to date (YTD). While the biggest market in the region Saudi Arabia closed marginally down by 0.1%. Abu Dhabi and UAE markets closed lower by 0.5% and 1.2% respectively. Qatar and Oman emerged as underperformers declining 3.2% and 4.6% YTD respectively.

Fund Performance

Jabal GCC Equities Fund successfully completed its subscription during Q4 2024 and has adopted staggered investments in the regional markets during the quarter. As at end of 31st March 2025, NAV per unit of the fund is at RO 1.009, delivering 0.92% positive returns during the quarter. The fund provides a compelling opportunity for the investors to participate in the growth story of the GCC aiming at long-term returns.

Economy and Market outlook

GCC economy is projected to grow by 3.4% in 2025, with non-oil sectors expanding by approximately 4.1%. This growth is led by Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 initiatives, the UAE's real estate and tourism projects, and Qatar's expanding natural gas production. Inflation across the GCC is expected to remain subdued, averaging between 2.3% and 2.8%, supported by currency pegs to the USD and low imported inflation.

GCC countries continue to implement expansionary fiscal policies to support economic diversification. Qatar, the UAE, and Oman show resilience with lower fiscal breakeven oil prices compared to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, allowing for sustained investment in infrastructure and diversification projects despite potential oil price fluctuations.

GCC markets are poised for solid growth in 2025, with projected returns of about 8%-10% as key sectors rebound, and financial conditions remain relatively stable. Saudi Arabia and UAE bolstered by robust diversification drives are expected to lead regional equity gains, although global factors like oil price swings and US Federal Reserve policy which Gulf central banks mirror due to currency pegs could influence investor sentiments. IPO activity in the GCC is set to remain subdued, averaging between 2.3% and 2.8%, supported by currency pegs to the USD and low imported inflation.

The Fund will be adopting an active bottom-up investment approach in finding themes and stocks across the region. The current portfolio is relatively balanced to mitigate volatility and generate consistent alpha over the long term.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the members of the Fund Management Body, I would like to extend our thanks to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq bin Taimur for the leadership and vision and the Omani government for the efforts towards driving growth and economic stability.

I would like also to thank the Financial Services Authority and the Muscat Stock Exchange for their relentless efforts in developing the capital market, and for the fund manager and the service providers for their efforts in managing the fund, and our valued unitholders for their confidence and support given.

On behalf of the Fund Management Body
Chairman
23 April 2025

Statement of comprehensive income For the period from 08 December 2024 to and as at 31 March 2025

	08-12-2024 to 31-03-2025 RO
Income	
Dividend income	29,471
Net realized gain/ (loss) on sale of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	5,850
Net unrealized gain/ (loss) on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	13,725
Interest Income	9,516
Net investment Profit	58,562
Expenses	
General and administrative expenses	(46,939)
Management fees	(12,338)
Custody and administration fees	(3,134)
Foreign exchange loss	(17,777)
	(80,189)
Net profit/ (loss) and total comprehensive income / (loss) and decrease in net assets attributable to the unit holders for the period.	(21,626)
Profit / (Loss) per unit	(0.011)

Statement of Financial Position For the period from 08 December 2024 to and as at 31 March 2025

	31-03-2025 RO
ASSETS	
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	1,803,184
Cash and cash equivalents	154,276
Other Receivables	6,750
Total assets	1,964,210
LIABILITIES	
Accruals and other payables	6,905
Total liabilities	6,905
Net assets attributable to the unitholders	1,957,305
Total liabilities and net assets attributable to the unitholders	1,964,210
Net assets value per unit attributable to the unitholders	1.009

Muscat book fair ends, sees over 649,000 visitors

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The 29th Muscat International Book Fair concluded on Saturday with 649,589 booklovers visiting its stalls at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

This year's edition was one of the largest to date, featuring 674 publishing houses from 35 countries. Of these, 640 participated directly, while 34 were represented through local and regional agencies. The event's digital catalogue listed more than 681,000 titles - including 467,413 Arabic books and 213,610 in other languages - underscoring the fair's global appeal.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, Ahmed bin Saud al Rawahi, Director of the fair, said it has played a vital role in promoting reading culture and enhancing Oman's cultural landscape. He noted its impact on the publishing industry and broader economic sectors, while also showcasing the country's literary achievements.

Highlighting regional culture, North Sharqiyah was this year's Guest of Honour at the fair. The governorate presented a rich programme reflecting its artistic and intellectual heritage. Additionally, the fair hosted 'Saudi Cultural Days', marking enhanced cultural ties with the kingdom through participation of leading Saudi writers and creatives.

Rawahi announced Al Wusta as Guest of Honour at the 30th edition.



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MoCIIP tightens fuel station licensing rules

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In a move to enhance governance and operational standards in the fuel distribution sector, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) has introduced a comprehensive regulatory framework for licensing of fuel stations across the sultanate.

Ministerial Decision No 142/2025, issued by H E Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, came into effect on May 4 replacing all previous licensing regulations and directing fuel stations to regularise their status within one year.

The regulation outlines detailed requirements for establish-



ing and operating various station types - including integrated, commercial, private, mobile, self-service and marine-based facilities.

A central feature of the new rules is a four-tier classification system based on land area and range of services. First Class stations must occupy at least 10,000sqm and provide comprehensive services, while Fourth Class refers to mobile units. Each

category has its own technical specifications and service requirements detailed in the regulation.

To prevent market saturation and ensure sustainable growth, the regulation mandates minimum distance buffers between stations. Article 8 specifies that new stations must be at least 5km apart from existing ones, while integrated stations must be spaced at least 50km apart. In urban areas such as Muscat, Salalah and Suhar, additional factors including feasibility, security and municipal planning will influence approvals.

Licensing will be processed through authorised marketing companies, which are now responsible for conducting feasibility studies before submitting applications to the Directorate General of Trade. The approval process includes initial clearances, temporary licensing and final operational licences - valid for three years and renewable.

Violations will attract penalties ranging from written warnings to fines between RO1,000 and RO3,000, with amounts doubling for repeat offences. Operating a station with an expired licence will incur a RO500 monthly fine, while marketing firms delaying fee payments will be fined RO5,000.

Licences will be automatically cancelled if a station remains inactive for more than six months without justification or if false information was provided during the licensing process. The regulation also establishes an appeals mechanism for those affected by administrative decisions.

TRA regulations for submarine cables issued

Muscat - Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has issued Decision No 1111 introducing a comprehensive regulatory framework governing international telecommunications cables in Oman.

The new regulations aim to establish a secure, accessible and future-ready infrastructure to support Oman's ambitions of becoming a competitive and investment-friendly destination in the global telecommunications sector.

The framework covers submarine telecommunications cables that traverse Oman's economic zones and straits without anchoring, as well as all related activities including surveying, installation, operations, maintenance and repair.

Majority of worker complaints linked to unjust dismissals: GFW

Our Correspondent
Muscat

General Federation of Oman Workers (GFW) marked International Workers' Day on Sunday with the release of its 2024 annual report, highlighting labour rights issues and calling for expanded safeguards for private sector employees.

The report showed that the majority of complaints lodged with the federation involved unilateral termination of contracts without valid justification. Other common grievances included dismissal following project completion or company bankruptcy, delayed or unpaid wages and bonuses, violation of occupational safety standards, and transfer of employees to locations not specified in contracts.

Despite challenges, GFW



said it achieved 100% success rate in legal cases, handling 453 consultations and 90 legal interventions. Favourable rulings led to reinstatements, continuation of existing contracts and broader employment prospects for nationals through training and skill-building initiatives. Workers affected by company shutdowns or liquidation were referred to the

job security fund for temporary financial assistance.

The federation also raised several concerns, including the need to expand social protection for low-income workers, extend the six-month job security allowance period, implement a minimum pension for private sector retirees, and conduct regular reviews of the minimum wage.

On the occasion of International Workers' Day, GFW chairman Nabhan bin Ahmed al Batashi said, "Today, we honour the tireless contributions of Omani workers to national development. We remain committed to expanding sustainable employment for youth, improving wages and strengthening social protection."

He added that efforts are underway to enhance legal, administrative and educational support for trade unions, empowering these to better advocate for workers' rights.

As part of efforts to modernise operations, GFW also launched its new Digital Trade Union Data Management System. The platform aims to unify labour data nationwide, streamline internal processes, and improve transparency and communication across the union network.

Rising Omani golfers set for pan-Arab championship

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A team of Omani golfers is preparing for the 2025 Pan Arab Junior and Ladies Golf Championship taking place from May 7 to 10 in Cairo, Egypt.

The tournament will be held on two premier courses - Madinaty Golf Club and Katameya Dunes Golf Club - under the auspices of Arab Golf Federation in collaboration with Egyptian Golf Federation.

Oman will be among 13 nations vying for honours alongside regional powerhouses such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE and host Egypt. Other participating countries include Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mo-



rocco, Palestine, Qatar and Tunisia.

The participation underscores the sultanate's growing investment in golf and sports development. The national squad will

compete in multiple age categories, showcasing a mix of experienced and emerging talent. Representing Oman in the ladies' category are Huwaida al Barwani, Sheikha al Ghaithi and Wafa al

Hadhrami.

The Girls U16 category will see Miraeri Sampat and Yasmin al Kathiri in action, while Pransh Jagwani will represent the country in the Boys U18 group. Yusuf al Rumhi and Taimur al Busaidi will compete in the Boys U13 category.

Adding to the excitement, this year's championship coincides with a special golf festival at Madinaty Golf Club commemorating the 50th anniversary of Arab Golf Federation.

With golf steadily gaining traction among youth in Oman, the tournament presents a valuable platform for the nation's young athletes to test their skills against the region's best and gain international exposure.



صندوق جبل للسيولة النقدية
Jabal Money Market Fund

The Chairman's Report For the Period ending 31st March 2025

On behalf of the Fund Management Body, I am pleased to present the financial results of Jabal Money Market Fund for the period ending 31st March 2025.

Below is a summary of the financial results:

	For the period ending December 31, 2024
	OMR
Total Income	14,062
Total Expenses	(44,512)
Profit (Loss) for the Period	(30,451)
Profit (Loss) per Unit	(0.016)
Total Net Assets	1,911,468
NAV per Unit	1.005

Market Performance
Onshore OMR money market rates have declined in February but stabilized in March. The 91-day OMRT-Bill declined from 4.26% to 4.19% over the month of February and continued to decline slightly at the start of March but remained stable at the 4.15% levels throughout March, indicating liquidity in the system has stabilized. The decline in rates was in line with decline in USD rates along with flushed liquidity in the onshore OMR market.

Given that it was quarter end in March, there was a jump in the 28-day bill indicating the need for short term liquidity. We expect rates to stabilize and perhaps increase given that oil prices have declined substantially.

SAMA bills yield also lowered marginally in February and March due to lower USD rates. Liquidity has generally been ample across most of the Gulf over the month and placement opportunities were slightly limited.

Bahrain's economic outlook has been downgraded to negative from stable by Fitch Ratings, which affirmed the country's B+ rating due to mounting fiscal pressures, high debt levels, and delayed economic reforms. Fitch highlighted Bahrain's persistent fiscal deficits and escalating interest burdens as primary concerns.

Fund Performance
The total asset under management of the Jabal Money Market Fund since its inception early this year until 31 March 2025 amounted to OMR 1,915,471. The fund provides liquidity with minimal market risk, making it the best option for short-term capital allocation.

Market Outlook
Rate cuts appear to potentially be accelerated if Fed Chair Jerome Powell is forced to leave his position. His successor will likely be incentivized to accelerate rate cuts, which may reduce money market rates across the Gulf.

However, rates may not be sustained at a lower rate for long as inflation is also expected to remain higher-than-expected due to Liberation Day tariffs, which may push the US economy into a state of stagflation.

In most markets, we continue to see a preference for placements in longer term maturities compared to short term maturities.

Acknowledgements
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I would like also to thank the Financial Services Authority and the Muscat Stock Exchange for their relentless efforts in developing the capital market, and also for the fund manager and the service providers for their efforts in managing the fund, and our valued unitholders for their confidence and support given.

On behalf of the Fund Management Body
Chairman
23rd April 2025

Statement of comprehensive income For the period from 20 January 2025 to and as at 31 March 2025

	20-01-2025 to 31-03-2025 RO
Income	
Interest income	14,062
	14,062
Expenses	
General and administrative expenses	(40,692)
Management fees	(1,875)
Custody and administration fees	(1,945)
	(44,512)
Net profit/ (loss) and total comprehensive income / (loss) for the period.	(30,451)
Profit / (Loss) per unit	(0.016)

Statement of Financial Position For the period from 20 January 2025 to and as at 31 March 2025

	31-03-2025 RO
ASSETS	
Term deposits	685,865
Cash and cash equivalents	1,227,599
Interest and other receivables	2,007
Total assets	1,915,471
LIABILITIES	
Accruals and other payables	4,003
Total liabilities	4,003
Net assets attributable to the unitholders	1,911,468
Total liabilities and net assets attributable to the unitholders	1,915,471
Net assets value per unit attributable to the unitholders	1.005

588MW Manah II solar project begins commercial operations

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Sembcorp Utilities, a wholly owned subsidiary of Singapore-headquartered Sembcorp Industries, on Sunday announced the commencement of commercial operations at the 588MW Manah II Solar Independent Power Project (IPP) located in Manah, Oman.

This significant development follows the successful completion of a series of rigorous acceptance tests, which were previously announced by Sembcorp. The commencement of operations marks the formal start of electricity supply under a long-term, 20-year power purchase agreement (PPA) with Nama Power and Water Procurement Company, Oman's sole procurer of electricity and related water services.

Sembcorp confirmed that the acceptance tests were successfully completed in December 2024, enabling the project to achieve commercial operation status more than four months ahead of the originally scheduled timeline.

With a peak installed capacity of 588 megawatts, Manah II represents Sembcorp's largest utility-scale solar project within its



With a peak installed capacity of 588 megawatts, Manah II Solar Independent Power Project represents Sembcorp's largest utility-scale solar project within its global renewable energy portfolio to date

global renewable energy portfolio to date. The project significantly enhances Sembcorp's well-established footprint in Oman's power generation and water desalination sectors.

Notably, Manah II is the company's first greenfield renewable energy development in the Middle East, underscoring its strate-

gic expansion into the region.

'The Manah II Solar Independent Power Project aligns closely with Oman Vision 2040 by supplying clean, sustainable energy to the national grid,' Sembcorp said in a press statement. 'It plays a vital role in advancing the sultanate's national ambition of sourcing 30% of its electricity

needs from renewable sources by the year 2030.'

The Manah II project was awarded through a competitive bidding process by Nama Power and Water Procurement Company to the consortium known as Sembcorp Jinko Shine, a joint venture between Sembcorp Utilities and Jinko Power Technol-

ogy. The consortium was tasked with the responsibility to build, own, and operate the Manah II solar project.

Sembcorp Industries is a global leader in sustainable solutions that support the ongoing energy transition and promote urban development. With its headquarters in Singapore, the company boasts a robust and diversified energy portfolio totalling 25.3 gigawatts (GW), which includes 17.2GW of gross renewable energy capacity spread across 11 countries.

OPEC+ fast-tracks oil output increase

Eight OPEC+ nations - Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, the UAE, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria, and Oman - will boost oil production by 411,000 barrels per day (bpd) in June, compared to May levels, as part of a plan to gradually unwind voluntary output cuts, the group said following a virtual meeting.

OPEC stated that low oil inventories continue to signal healthy market fundamentals, supporting the gradual roll-back of voluntary supply reductions.

The June increase is part of a phased return of 2.2mn bpd in voluntary cuts, a process first outlined in a decision made on December 5, 2024. The 411,000-bpd adjustment reflects the cumulative total of three monthly increments.

OPEC+ noted that the pace of the production increase could be paused or reversed, depending on evolving market conditions. The next meeting, set for June 1, will determine output levels for July.

On April 3, the group confirmed it would begin lifting the voluntary cuts starting in May, with a 411,000 bpd increase. That move, coupled with US trade tariffs, pushed oil prices

below \$60 a barrel - their lowest point in four years.

Crude oil markets took a fresh hit OPEC+ stunned traders by announcing a larger-than-expected output increase for June.

The move follows a similar surge announced for May and signals a sharp reversal from OPEC+ efforts to defend oil prices. Instead, Saudi Arabia appears to be embracing a low-price strategy, aiming to discipline overproducing members like Kazakhstan and Iraq. Both nations have repeatedly exceeded their quotas, with Kazakhstan surpassing its March target by 422,000 bpd.

'OPEC+ has just thrown a bombshell to the oil market,' Jorge Leon of Rystad Energy told Bloomberg. 'With this move, Saudi Arabia is seeking to punish lack of compliance and also ingratiate itself with President Trump.'

Oil prices had already been under pressure, with Brent trading near \$61 a barrel on Friday, a four-year low. The OPEC+ decision sent prices tumbling another 6%, compounding bearish sentiment triggered by trade war fears and weakening economic data.

Agencies



Asyad reinforces its position as global logistics provider during Logistics Day 2025

Muscat - Asyad Group, Oman's global integrated logistics provider, reaffirmed its pivotal role in shaping the sultanate's logistics future through its active participation in the Logistics Day 2025 organised by the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology. The group continues to deliver on its mandate to enhance Oman's global competitiveness, leveraging its integrated solutions, sustainable initiatives, and strategic partnerships to create a resilient, investor-friendly logistics ecosystem aligned with Oman Vision 2040.

During the event, Asyad presented a paper titled 'Asyad's Role in Empowering Oman's Logistics Sector: Growth, Resilience, and Opportunities,' highlighting the pillars of its comprehensive strategy to develop a globally connected logistics network, expand its footprint across international markets, empower local private-sector players, and unlock opportunities for Omani talent. The presentation also shed light on the group's 2024 milestones: a pivotal year marked by its first international acquisition. This move expanded Asyad's operational presence to over 90 locations worldwide and underscored its sustained financial and operational growth driven by innovation and excellence.

Further supporting port development and value-added

services, Asyad Ports and Freezones signed an agreement with O Bunkring Company to deliver bunker fuel services at Sultan Qaboos Port, enhancing Oman's maritime readiness and attracting new commercial activities.

Reinforcing its commitment to growth and innovation, Sohar Port and Freezone signed three major agreements to support the development of its LNG terminal. The port partnered with WSP Middle East - Oman for engineering consul-

Asyad highlighted its comprehensive strategy to develop a globally connected logistics network, expand its footprint across international markets, empower local private-sector players, and unlock opportunities for Omani talent

tancy and project management services, Boskalis for dredging 3.8mn cubic meters of marine material, and Six Construct for constructing the LNG jetty and coastal protection infrastructure.

Sohar Port and Freezone also earned national recognition at the ministry's Logistics Best Practices Awards. The 'Marasi' Port Management

System won first place in the Continuous Improvement and Innovation category after achieving 90% digitalisation in maritime operations and reducing paperwork by 85% through smart operating tools. The port also secured second place in the Net Zero category for pioneering the use of biodiesel produced from recycled cooking oil, in marine tugboats, a first for any port in the Middle East.

Demonstrating its commitment to enhancing urban mobility integration, Mwasalat signed two strategic agreements. These included a first-and-last-mile service development initiative connecting micro-mobility to public transport in select higher education institutions Muscat and Salalah in partnership with the University of Technology and Applied Sciences; and an agreement to develop an integrated public transport station in North Al Batinah in coordination with the Office of the Governor of North Al Batinah. These efforts aim to boost urban mobility efficiency and contribute to broader sustainability objectives.

These projects reflect Asyad Group's holistic vision to build a connected, sustainable logistics network powered by local capabilities and world-class partnerships. Asyad remains steadfast in its mission to position Oman at the heart of global trade routes through innovation, infrastructure, and talent.

MSX kicks off introductory meetings for Parallel Market for Promising Companies

Muscat - Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) held on Monday the first awareness session of its investment campaign on the Parallel Market for Promising Companies and the Incentive Programme.

The first event, hosted at the National Bank of Oman (NBO) headquarters, was held under the patronage of Mahmood bin Abdullah al-Aweini, Secretary General of the Ministry of Finance, and attended by officials, investors, and financial specialists. The initiative aims to boost investment awareness and promote financial literacy across all segments of society.

The introductory meetings, scheduled to be held in a number of governorates, are in line with the efforts of the National Programme for Fiscal Sustainability to enhance a culture of investment in Oman, and develop the financial sector as well. This is being done in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the Financial Services Authority, and Muscat Clearing and Depository Company, as part of Muscat Stock Exchange's ongoing efforts to raise investment awareness and promote financial literacy



The first introductory meeting was hosted by MSX at the NBO headquarters on Sunday

across the community.

Through this programme of meetings, the exchange also aims to reflect the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, which include building an efficient and integrated financial system that supports sustainable growth and provides an attractive investment environment based on transparency and efficiency.

The launch meeting also addressed the 'Incentive Programme for the Capital Market Sector', highlighting the fundamental link between government-led incentives and the dynamics of the financial market.

Several key themes were discussed, most notably the direct

and indirect economic impact of the incentive programme in driving investment; the role of Muscat Stock Exchange in converting these financial flows into long-term investment instruments; and enhancing financial inclusion by involving new categories of investors, especially youth and entrepreneurs.

The session witnessed notable engagement from attendees, including university students, representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises, and individuals interested in the fields of economy and investment. Discussions covered topics such as governance mechanisms, the importance of transparency, and

the need to empower local investors.

To build on this initiative, MSX will organise a series of meetings in the governorates in cooperation with the branches of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Starting with the inaugural awareness session in Muscat Governorate on Sunday, it will be followed by South Al Batinah on May 14, North Al Batinah on May 19, Al Dakhiliyah on May 21, and South Al Sharqiyah on May 22. The meetings in Al Dhahirah and Al Buraimi will be held on May 26 and May 27, respectively. The session in North Al Sharqiyah will be held on June 2, followed by Al Wusta on June 16, and Dhofar on June 18. The date for the session in Musandam Governorate will be determined at a later time.

These meetings and sessions are an extension of a comprehensive strategy aimed at creating a more attractive investment environment for both local and foreign investors, supporting the government's efforts to diversify sources of income by developing the financial sector, and preparing a new generation of knowledgeable and experienced investors.

Trump rules out firing Fed Chair Jerome Powell

Washington, US - US President Donald Trump insisted he doesn't plan to fire Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell despite his sustained criticism over the pace of interest rate cuts.

"Why would I do that?" he said in an interview on NBC's Meet the Press with Kristen Welker that aired Sunday, as reported by Bloomberg. "I get to replace the person in another short period of time."

On Wednesday, Trump issued another denunciation of the central bank chief as the president faces growing pressure



Jerome Powell

from the backlash to his sweeping deployment of tariffs.

Powell's term as chair ends in

May 2026.

As per the Bloomberg report, Fed officials are widely expected to hold rates steady when they meet in Washington on Tuesday and Wednesday. While concerns of a possible recession are mounting, government data on Friday showed a strong 177,000 jump in April payrolls.

If the Fed indeed declines to cut rates, Powell, who was appointed by Trump in 2018, could face even more pressure.

Trump said in the interview taped Friday that Powell doesn't want to cut rates "because he's

not a fan of mine. You know, he just doesn't like me because I think he's a total stiff."

Senior aides, including Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, have privately urged Trump to soothe jittery markets by making clear he's not planning to remove Powell, Bloomberg has reported. In mid-April, Trump set off fears by saying in a social media post that "Powell's termination cannot come fast enough!" followed by Oval Office remarks to reporters that "if I want him out, he'll be out of there real fast, believe me."

US-China trade war is hurting global oil demand

Tsvetana Paraskova

Signs have emerged that the US-China trade war is already hitting oil demand in the shipping and aviation sectors, and this weakness could soon move into the US trucking business and reduce diesel demand.

Container traffic from China to the United States is plummeting, while US airlines warn of a hit to consumer spending amid weakened consumer sentiment with the tariffs and expectations of higher inflation.

Shipping and aviation account for a combined 10% of global oil consumption, and the decline in container shipping traffic is set to hurt demand, a decline that could become worse if the US trucking

business suffers – which analysts expect it will.

Hapag-Lloyd, one of the world’s biggest container shipping firms, told Reuters last week that customers had already canceled 30% of shipments from China to the United States due to the trade war and the escalation of the US tariffs on imports of Chinese goods.

But demand for shipments from Southeast Asian nations such as Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia has spiked, according to a spokesperson for Hapag-Lloyd.

Mitsui OSK Lines Ltd, the Japanese shipping giant, expects a decline in profits this year, also due to expected slow cargo movement amid “concerns over



inflation and global economy stagnation due to the US tariff policies.”

Leisure is also being hit with weakened consumer sentiment – Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings says it has seen softening in its

12-month forward booked position.

“While we recognise there may be potential pressures on the top line, we believe these can be effectively offset by the continued execution of our cost sav-

ings initiatives,” president and CEO Harry Sommer said this week.

London-based shipbroker Clarksons issued a profit warning, noting that “uncertainty arising from the potential of a global trade war has escalated.”

Gene Seroka, executive director of the Port of Los Angeles, told CNBC that he expects cargo volume from China to plunge by 35% next week compared with the same period in 2024, as US retailers halt shipping from China due to the tariffs.

“Realistically speaking, until some accord or framework can be reached with China, the volume coming out of there – save a couple of different commodities – will be very light at best,” Seroka

told CNBC.

The plunge in shipping routes from China to the US will hit American trucking, Apollo Global Management said in a presentation to clients at the end of April.

By mid-May, containerships to US ports will grind to a halt, by late May, trucking demand will come to a halt, early June will see layoffs in the trucking and retail industry, and recession is coming in the summer of 2025, Apollo Global Management predicts.

Apart from business confidence, consumer confidence in the US is also plummeting, and a record-high share of consumers think business conditions are worsening, according to Apollo’s dire forecasts, which say there will be empty shelves and Covid-

like shortages soon.

Airlines are also noting a decline in leisure demand as consumers spend less, anticipating higher inflation and a worsening economy.

“The year started out very strong. However, that changed and we saw demand weaken as the quarter progressed, especially in leisure demand,” Southwest Airlines’ President and CEO Bob Jordan said on the earnings call last week.

Southwest Airlines did not reiterate its profit guidance for 2025, as “Amid the current macroeconomic uncertainty, it is very difficult to confidently forecast given recent and short lived trends,” Jordan added.

(Source: Oilprice.com)

Warren Buffett to step down as CEO of Berkshire Hathaway

Warren Buffett said Saturday he plans to step down as Berkshire Hathaway CEO at the end of this year, and that he will recommend Greg Abel succeed him.

“I think it’s the time has arrived where Greg should become the chief executive officer of the company at year-end,” said Buffett, who was chairing his 60th annual meeting. “And I want to spring that on the directors, effectively, and give that as my recommendation.”

Abel, currently vice chairman at Berkshire Hathaway who oversees the company’s non-insurance businesses, had been tabbed as Buffett’s successor back in 2021.

Buffett added that “I would still hang around and could conceivably be useful in a few cases. But the final word would be Greg’s.”

Ahead of his announcement on Saturday, Buffett said he’d only discussed the decision with two members of the Berkshire board, his children Susie and Howard. Which means Abel was not clued in on the plan, either. The balance of the board will begin the discussion Sunday.

Buffett said that he has no plans to sell any of his shares of Berkshire Hathaway as part of this transition. Buffett has served as CEO of Berkshire Hathaway since 1970. The company takes its name from the textile mill Buffett’s investment partnership ac-



I think it’s the time has arrived where Greg Abel should become the CEO of the company at year-end. And I want to spring that on the directors, effectively, and give that as my recommendation

WARREN BUFFETT

quired in 1965.

Since Buffett’s takeover of Berkshire, per-share value of the company has compounded at a 19.9% rate, almost double the 10.4% average annual gain of the S&P 500, and resulted in a 5,502.284% return for shareholders. Meaning \$10,000 invested in Berkshire in 1965 is now worth over \$500 million.

Called “Woodstock for Capitalists,” the weekend’s main event kicked off with the legendary investor taking questions from CNBC’s Becky Quick and Berkshire shareholders.

(Source: Yahoo Finance)

Eurozone inflation rises amid rate cuts hopes

Brussels, Belgium – Price pressures in the eurozone exceeded expectations in April, raising fresh challenges over the disinflation trend and potentially complicating the European Central Bank’s (ECB) roadmap to lower interest rates further in the coming months.

According to preliminary figures released by Eurostat, consumer prices rose 2.2% year-on-year, unchanged from March but slightly above the 2.1% forecast by economists.

On a monthly basis, inflation accelerated by 0.6% as in March, suggesting that disinflationary momentum may be stalling.

More worryingly for policymakers in Frankfurt, core inflation—which excludes volatile food and energy prices – rose

to 2.7% in April, up from 2.4% the previous month and well above the 2.5% consensus estimate.

It was the first uptick in core inflation since May 2024, with services once again leading the charge.

Services inflation, a central metric in the ECB’s assessment of underlying price pressures, surged to 3.9% annually, up from 3.5% in March. On a month-on-month basis, services prices increased by 0.9%.

The rise in food, alcohol and tobacco inflation – from 2.9% to 3.0% – added to the upside pressures, while energy prices continued to drag on the headline figure, falling 3.5% compared to the same period last year.

(Source: Eurozone.com)



The National Detergent Co. S.A.O.G.

P.O.Box 3104, Ruwi, Postal Code 112, Sultanate of oman

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE THREE MONTHS PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the unaudited interim results of the Company for the three-month period ended 31st March 2025.

Financial Performance

During the period under review, the Company achieved sales revenue of RO 7,053,189, compared to RO 6,445,697 for the same period in 2024, reflecting a year-on-year growth of 9%.

This growth demonstrates the Company’s continued focus on building upon the strong performance delivered in FY 2024. We are pleased to report a higher topline compared to the previous year. Sales volume showed improvement across markets both local & exports. The Company was also able to maintain the input costs and support costs which have helped to maintain the margins.

The Profit before tax for the period stood at RO 422,994, compared to RO 464,460 during the same period last year.

Our flagship brand, **BAHAR**, improved its market share during the quarter, with growth observed in both the domestic and export markets.

Omanization

The Company continues its efforts to enhance Omanization across all levels of the organization, including senior and middle management. These efforts are supported by training and development programs. During the quarter, the Omanization percentage remained above 45%.

Compliance and Internal Controls

The Company maintains a robust internal control system, appropriate to the size and nature of its operations. Internal audits are conducted periodically by an internationally recognized audit firm, and the Audit Committee regularly reviews financial and operational performance. The Company remains fully compliant with all applicable local laws and regulations.

Outlook

Looking ahead, the Company is focused on sustaining revenue growth while maintaining effective control over input costs. However, prices of certain key raw materials have been on the rise. Additionally, the imposition of additional tariff by the United States on certain countries is expected to have a delayed impact, potentially leading to increased input costs in the upcoming months. The company is monitoring the same and necessary steps will be taken accordingly.

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the Board of Directors and myself, I extend our deep appreciation to **His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik** – may Allah protect him – for his continued support and encouragement to the industrial sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

We also thank the various Ministries for their cooperation and guidance. Our sincere gratitude goes to our shareholders for their continued trust in the Board, as well as to our auditors, bankers, customers, and business partners for their unwavering support. We express our heartfelt thanks to our employees for their commitment and dedication to the Company’s success.

Mohamed Abdul Hussain Baqer Al Lawati

Chairman, Board of Directors
The National Detergent Co SAOG

Note:

- The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder on request either in Arabic or English within 7 days of receipt of the request.
- Shareholders and investors are advised to read the full financial statements.
- Certain comparative figures have been reclassified in order to conform to the presentation for the current period.

Unaudited Statement of Financial Position At 31 March 2025

	31 March 2025 RO	31 March 2024 RO	Audited 31 December 2024 RO
Assets			
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	17,553,604	16,983,184	17,492,282
Lease Assets	2,158,235	1,050,058	2,209,951
Total non-current assets	19,711,839	18,033,242	19,702,233
Current assets			
Inventories	5,664,607	4,058,820	5,618,787
Trade and other receivables	8,316,781	7,446,280	6,528,563
Investment	100,000	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents	530,419	903,869	910,071
Total current assets	14,611,807	12,408,969	13,057,421
Total assets	34,323,646	30,442,211	32,759,654
Equity			
Share capital	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Share premium	364,263	364,263	364,263
Legal reserve	666,667	632,835	666,667
Revaluation reserve	10,892,250	10,892,250	10,892,250
Retained earnings	3,043,782	2,719,244	3,684,237
Total equity	16,966,962	16,608,592	17,607,417
Liabilities			
Non-current liabilities			
Lease liabilities	2,227,284	1,001,286	2,254,746
Deferred taxation	1,939,871	1,990,924	1,951,040
Employees’ end of service benefits	834,639	830,316	770,518
Total non-current liabilities	5,001,794	3,822,526	4,976,304
Current liabilities			
Current portion of lease liabilities	112,074	133,098	112,074
Short term bank borrowings	4,931,258	2,497,016	3,500,000
Trade and other payables	6,926,287	7,288,905	6,253,206
Taxation	385,271	92,074	310,653
Total current liabilities	12,354,890	10,011,093	10,175,933
Total liabilities	17,356,684	13,833,619	15,152,237
Total equity and liabilities	34,323,646	30,442,211	32,759,654
Net assets per share	Bzs 848	Bzs 830	Bzs 880

UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

	Three months period ended 31 March 2025 RO	Three months period ended 31 March 2024 RO
Revenue	7,053,189	6,445,697
Cost of sales	(4,541,555)	(4,169,965)
Gross profit	2,511,634	2,275,732
Selling and distribution expenses	(1,590,932)	(1,331,459)
Administrative and general expenses	(410,774)	(412,938)
Other operating income	7,668	5,113
Profit from operations	517,596	536,448
Finance costs	(94,602)	(71,988)
Profit before tax	422,994	464,460
Taxation	(63,449)	(69,669)
Net profit for the period	359,545	394,791
Basic earnings per share	Bzs 18	Bzs 20

Lulu’s Mango Mania: A feast of flavours for fans of king of fruits

It’s mango season - and Lulu Hypermarket is going all out to celebrate the king of fruits with its much-awaited Mango Mania festival!

From now until May 10, all Lulu outlets across the sultanate will be bursting with colour, flavour and the unmistakable aroma of ripe, juicy mangoes.

Whether you like them sweet, tangy or somewhere in between, Mango Mania is your golden ticket to fruity indulgence.

The festival was officially inaugurated at Lulu Hypermarket Bausher by H E G V Srinivas, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, alongside government officials, Lulu executives and excited customers.

Speaking on the occasion, the Ambassador expressed his appreciation for being part of such a diverse and professionally managed promotional event by Lulu. “Every layer of the entire mango value chain has been considered, right from the ‘farm to the fork’. Delighted to see that it is not only mangoes and mango products, but also culinary delicacies from different parts of India is included in this festival,” the ambassador said.

H E Srinivas further highlighted the celebration of 70 years of India - Oman diplomatic relations and the role of such events in boosting the cultural as well as trade relations between



the two countries.

This year’s Mango Mania features over 100 mango varieties from around the world - including bite-sized sugar baby mangoes and the massive ‘Ammini’, each variety will be an explosion of sweetness to the taste buds. The assortment of mango vari-

eties featured in this year’s Mango Mania underscores Lulu’s commitment to bringing extraordinary global flavours to customers under one roof.

And it’s not just fresh fruit on offer. Customers can dive into a delicious spread of mango-infused dishes, including mango

biryani, tangy pickles, soft mango cakes, smoothies, jams, juices, jellies, and much more across Lulu’s hot food, bakery and sweet counters. The tropical treasure trove includes mangoes flown in from 13 countries - including India, Yemen, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Colombia, Brazil,

Sri Lanka and Uganda - alongside locally grown favourites.

“This isn’t just a fruit festival - it’s a full-on mango celebration,” said Shabeer K A, Director of Lulu Hypermarkets Oman. “We’re showcasing mangoes across the full spectrum from the tiniest to the biggest and even

some most luxurious fruits in the world. Mango Mania has become a summer staple for our customers, bringing together the best varieties from across the globe under one roof.”

It’s a chance to savour the season’s juiciest delights - from the sweet and succulent to the

tangy and tropical. ‘Lulu’s Mango Mania boasts an impressive array of mango varieties that will leave customers craving for more. This is an ideal occasion for customers to indulge in a delectable exploration of the finest mango varieties from around the globe’, Lulu stated.

Outward Bound Oman, bp Oman launch ‘Wa’ed’ programme

In partnership with bp Oman, Outward Bound Oman in collaboration with the SME Development Authority announced the launch of ‘Wa’ed’ programme, to empower Omani startups in the fields of technology and innovation, aiming to contribute to their growth and sustainability.

The programme targets 100 Omani entrepreneurs from startups and students’ companies and offers them with a comprehensive training experience in three phases, with each phase focusing on developing skills that support the growth and sustainability of their companies such as leadership, communication, teamwork skills as well as collaboration, innovation, and environmental stewardship, by combining both indoor and outdoor training activities.

Mohamed al Zadjali, Acting Executive Director at Outward Bound Oman, said, “Our partnership in the ‘Wa’ed’ programme reflects the importance of collaboration between government sector, private sector, and civil society, unifying efforts to serve the entrepreneurship sector, which is a key component of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Sultanate of Oman.”

Ibrahim al Hinai, Social investment manager at bp Oman, Kuwait, and Qatar, commented: “Empowering local capabilities is a key focus at bp Oman, and supporting Omani start-ups growth plays a crucial role in this. This programme will work with various

promising Omani start-ups, allowing them to expand, develop, and grow, which will further enhance Oman’s economy and contribute to building a stronger community.”

Qais al Tobi, Vice-President of Finance and Investment at the SME Development Authority and General Supervisor of the Rising Omani Startups Programme, added: “The ‘Wa’ed’ programme repre-

The programme targets 100 Omani entrepreneurs from startups and students’ companies and offers them with a comprehensive training experience in three phases

sents a practical model of integration between government entities, the private sector, and civil society to support the entrepreneurship and startup ecosystem in the Sultanate of Oman. It reflects our commitment, through The Rising Omani Startups Programme, to empowering Omani entrepreneurs and building their leadership and managerial capacities.

“We firmly believe that enhancing youth skills directly contributes to creating startups capable of competing both locally and globally, in alignment with the aspirations of Oman Vision 2040.”

BankDhofar’s ‘Leadership Development’ programme aims to empower leaders

Aligned with Oman Vision 2040, BankDhofar - the sultanate’s second-largest bank - has launched a transformative ‘Leadership Development’ programme; in partnership with the Indian School of Business (ISB), a globally elite institution affiliated with Wharton, Kellogg, and London Business School.

This initiative empowers Omani talent with world-class expertise, fostering visionary leaders to propel Oman’s economy forward. By blending local ambition with global excellence, BankDhofar reinforces its commitment to sustainable growth and national progress, ensuring Oman’s future is led by capable, innovative minds.

The programme aims to enhance the leadership skills of participants in several aspects, including strategic thinking, problem solving, digitisation, change management, and innovation and it is designed to enhance participants’ leadership capabilities in key areas such as



strategic thinking, problem-solving, digitisation, change management, and innovation.

Dr Khalid bin Salem al Hamdani, Head of Human Resources at BankDhofar, remarked: “This six-month programme is part of our commitment to developing national talent and empowering them with access to global leadership models and experiences. It hones both their cognitive and professional skills in line with the

objectives of Oman Vision 2040.”

The ‘Leadership Development’ programme features a mix of intensive educational sessions, interactive workshops, and practical training. Participants will tackle real-world challenges, particularly those arising from the rapid changes shaping the global economy and the banking sector.

Dr Khalid added that the programme will equip participants

with strategies for effective problem-solving and team leadership, aimed at enhancing organisational productivity and performance.

Usama bin Ismail al Farsi, Head of Organisational Development and Career Planning, further emphasised, “The Leadership Development programme is a vital step towards strengthening national initiatives across the sultanate to build

highly competent, transformative leaders who can drive positive change at both the organisational and social levels.”

This new programme adds to BankDhofar’s growing suite of initiatives aimed at building the skills and capabilities of its workforce. Notably, eight years ago, the bank launched the ‘Ruwad’ programme to equip fresh graduates from various disciplines with essential skills, including leadership, finance, communication, and digital competencies. ‘Ruwad’ continues to contribute to workforce Omanisation and talent development at the bank.

In addition, BankDhofar has forged strategic partnerships with several government entities - including the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Office, the Central Bank of Oman, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation - to strengthen collaboration and share expertise in national capacity building.

Distinctive luxury in Lincoln Nautilus: Arabian Car Marketing

The Lincoln Nautilus blends bold design with refined elegance. Its contemporary silhouette is instantly recognisable, featuring Lincoln’s signature grille, a sculpted rear fascia and an elegant full-width light bar complemented by refreshed tail lamps.

A newly styled spoiler not only adds a touch of athleticism but also enhances aerodynamic performance, perfectly echoing the Nautilus’ confident, modern aesthetic. The Reserve trim adds an extra layer of allure with head-turning 21” bright machined aluminium wheels with premium-painted pockets, adding a dynamic, upscale edge.

Open the doors and the Na-



tilus welcomes you into a world of quiet luxury. Ambient lighting gently illuminates the cabin and exterior, setting a serene tone for

every journey. Acoustic side glass keeps the outside world at bay, creating a whisper-quiet environment inside. Engineered for

smoothness, the ride is free from road harshness and vibrations, allowing every drive to feel like a retreat. Plush materials invite you to sink into seats that do more than cradle, they comfort. Ventilated, massaging and highly adjustable, these seats are crafted to elevate both long and short drives. The redesigned steering wheel, wrapped in premium Wollsdorf leather and accented with precision European stitching, is ergonomically enhanced for a sportier grip and unmatched tactile pleasure.

At your fingertips sits an expansive 11.1-inch LCD Capacitive Touchscreen, delivering crisp visuals and intuitive swipe con-

trols—putting vital information and entertainment right where you need it.

Every detail inside the Nautilus speaks to thoughtful innovation. The centre console departs from convention with a vertically-aligned Push-Button Shifter, integrated seamlessly into the instrument panel. Each button is uniquely textured for natural, intuitive control. For those who demand peak comfort, the Ultra Comfort front seats, developed with input from orthopaedic specialists, offer 22-way adjustability and lumbar massage, helping to reduce fatigue and improve well-being on long drives.

RAM launches societal communication programme

The Royal Academy of Management (RAM) has recently launched the Societal Communication Programme for current public sector leaders who hold the positions of Undersecretaries and Directors-General.

Designed to elevate the skills and capabilities of national leaders in the area of community engagement, the landmark programme is in line with the bold vision of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik al Said, may God protect him, which aims to elevate and strengthen the knowledge and skills of national leaders.

This strategy is clearly aligned with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and the requirements of national strategic initiatives and programmes.

The main purpose of the Societal Communication Programme for Undersecretaries and Directors-General is to further build trust between the government and society and, thus, increase national social cohesion.

The programme focuses on strengthening the role of these leaders as intermediaries between the government and society while enabling them to contribute to the government's vision in an effective manner that aligns with Omani values, culture, and society.

The Societal Communication Programme aims to:

- Equip participants with a



more community-centred communication mindset by increasing their awareness of societal needs and providing them with the necessary skills to implement government directions and policies clearly and accurately, as well as to manage the public communication process effectively.

- Provide them with advanced tools and techniques that enhance their crisis management skills and improve leadership communication strategies to navigate social challenges effectively.
- Enable participants to build trust-based relationships with citizens and other community

stakeholders by leveraging comprehensive communication techniques to involve these entities in the process of formulating, implementing, and evaluating government policies.

The Societal Communication Programme targets 50 participants from the public sector and will constitute 25 Undersecretaries and 25 Directors-General. The selected candidates will embark on an enriching and comprehensive learning journey that will run until September 10.

The programme will comprise different themes. It has been designed to elevate essential and effective community communication and crisis management

skills and explore stakeholder engagement.

Apart from focusing on empowering strategic communication skills, it will also focus on the strategies leveraged by government institutions' strategies to enhance public trust, the methodology of gauging and handling public opinion while navigating social challenges in Oman.

Participants will also be exposed to developing and implementing comprehensive public communication strategies using various channels and take part in a workshop about building the characteristics of a community leader in the local context.

The programme will be delivered through modern executive learning methods, including a carefully curated blend of lectures, interactive workshops, case studies, and engagement with real-world scenarios.

Participants will review and analyse local and international examples, including challenges in community engagement, officials informed.

The programme will also feature guest speakers from Oman who are leaders in community engagement and leadership communication, allowing participants to explore the best practices and experiences in these respective fields.

NBO recognised by Euromoney for excellence

The National Bank of Oman (NBO) has been honoured with two prestigious accolades at the Euromoney Private Banking Awards 2025, securing the titles of Oman's Best Private Bank and Best for High-Net-Worth (HNW) Customers.

These awards underscore NBO's commitment to delivering tailored financial solutions and comprehensive wealth management strategies, while providing personalised experiences for its clientele.

Commenting on the recognition, Ali Mustafa al Lawati, Assistant General Manager - Head of Private Banking and Segments at NBO said, "This recognition is a testament to our long-standing commitment to building a wealth management offering that reflects the needs, values and ambitions of our clients. We view private banking not as a product, but as a relationship; one built on trust, expertise and an evolving understanding of what matters most to our customers. These awards affirm that our approach continues to resonate and we remain focused on delivering with purpose and precision."

NBO's Private Banking offers a comprehensive suite of services tailored for High Net Worth and Ultra-High Net Worth individuals. These include global investment funds, structured products, securities brokerage, systematic investment plans, global investment advisory, trade



execution, wealth planning, trust services and diverse financing options.

The bank's team of consultants leverages the latest technology and industry insights to assist customers towards long-term financial well-being.

Complementing this, NBO Sadara Priority Banking provides customers with exclusive benefits such as dedicated personal relationship managers, tailor-made investment opportunities, preferential rates on bank charges, competitive interest rates on savings and more.

These titles reinforce NBO's role in shaping Oman's private banking sector, highlighting its agility, reliability and deep understanding of customers' aspirations. NBO continues to focus on strategic investment advisory, digital-first services and client-centric planning to strengthen long-term relationships and build trust with customers who value stability and excellence.

Oman Air showcases commitment to tourism and connectivity at ATM

Oman Air proudly participated in the 2025 edition of the popular Arabian Travel Market (ATM) in Dubai, joining the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in showcasing Oman's growing appeal as a world-class tourism destination.

The four-day travel trade show brought together a record-breaking 2,800 exhibitors from 161 countries, alongside around 55,000 attendees from across the world.

Ahmed al Mahrouqi, Oman Air's Vice President of Sales, said, "ATM is a great opportunity for us to connect with partners old and new - and to show them all the exciting things the airline is doing. It's also about inviting travelers to experience the spirit of Oman, starting with the hospitality they receive on board. Together with our Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, we're



here to showcase the best of Oman and to open up new journeys for our guests."

As part of its activities at the event, Oman Air signed new General Sales Agent (GSA) agreements with Mohammed Abdulaziz al Othaim Travel & Tourism Company in Saudi Ara-

bia and Nsas Avia Solutions in Egypt, strengthening the airline's presence in two key markets and supporting its regional commercial growth strategy.

Meanwhile, Oman Air remains a key enabler of inbound tourism to Oman - the airline recently announced a significant

increase in its Point-to-Point traffic, has added new routes like Rome and Amsterdam and increased flights to London and Moscow, and launched two new stopover programmes which offer an attractive proposition for transit passengers to pause in Muscat.

Oman Air (WY) began operations in 1993. Initially founded to serve important domestic routes, it has since undergone rapid growth and is today recognised as a major international carrier connecting cities around the world to Oman's stunning nature, rich heritage and welcoming culture.

The award-winning airline has been instrumental in transforming Muscat into one of the Middle East's most desirable travel destinations, while supporting adjacent commercial, industrial and tourism activities.

Towell hands over keys Mazda raffle winners

Towell Auto Centre concluded its Mazda Ramadan Raffle with keys handover ceremony on April 30, awarding four lucky winners with brand-new Mazda 6 sedans.

The prize was given through a lucky draw for existing customers who had bought their cars from Mazda Oman through Ramadan Promotion. The event brought together customers, representatives and guests in a celebration that highlighted Mazda's ongoing commitment to rewarding loyalty and strengthening community engagement.

The winners - Ruqaiya Ahmed, Omar Nadeem, Wissal T and Serap Yildirim - were each presented with the keys to their new sedans during the joyful occasion.

The atmosphere was filled



with excitement and heartfelt appreciation as the winners shared their happiness and pride in receiving a Mazda 6. Many described the experience as unforgettable, a special moment made even more meaningful by its timing during the holy month of Ramadan.

The Mazda 6, one of the brand's flagship sedans, stood at

the heart of the celebration. Recognised for its refined KODO design, the Mazda 6 combines elegant lines with aerodynamic performance. Under the hood, its Skyactiv-G engine delivers spirited power and efficiency, making every drive both responsive and smooth.

Inside, the sedan features a driver-focused cabin with pre-

mium materials, leather-trimmed seating, Mazda Connect infotainment and a Bose audio system offering both sophistication and connectivity. Safety remains a priority with i-Activsense technologies, including adaptive cruise control, lane-keep assist and blind-spot monitoring for a confident driving experience.

Salim Al Shanfari : Dean of Geology in the Sultanate

Salalah

Engineer Salim bin Omar Al Shanfari's name is etched into the geological and industrial history of Oman. With a career spanning more than three decades, Al Shanfari has made landmark contributions to the Sultanate's mining and private sectors, earning him the title of the "Dean of Geology."

Al Shanfari's journey began in 1996 when he founded Oman Quarries LLC, a pioneering step that paved the way for the Sultanate's rise as a global player in the gypsum industry. Under his leadership, the company became the first in Oman to manufacture gypsum boards and produce raw gypsum at scale, tapping into the country's rich geological resources and strategic geographic location.

Thanks to his vision and perseverance, Oman Quarries not only overcame significant logistical and operational challenges but also gained international recognition. Today, it stands as one of the world's leading exporters of gypsum, a status it has maintained for more than seven consecutive years.

Expanding on this success, Al Shanfari went on to establish the Global Quarries and Gypsum Group, which quickly gained prominence regionally and internationally. Beyond business growth, Al Shanfari has remained committed to national development—empowering young Omani talent, creating employment oppor-



tunities, and supporting SMEs, particularly in Dhofar Governorate.

A strong advocate of youth leadership, he mentored and entrusted younger generations with key roles, ensuring continuity and sustainable growth. His leadership has left a lasting impact on the lives of employees, communities, and the broader private sector.

One of his former colleagues, Ahmed Bashir Mohammed Al Khair, a Sudanese national who worked alongside Al Shanfari from 1998 to 2007, reflected on his experience:

"I began my career with him and found in him not just a leader but a mentor and father figure. He taught us responsibility, self-confidence,

and resilience. The work environment he cultivated was rooted in honesty, respect, and humility. We grew under his guidance in an atmosphere filled with diligence, fairness, and vision."

Ahmed concluded his tribute with a heartfelt prayer: "I ask God Almighty to grant the founder, Engineer Salim Al Shanfari, continued success and good health. He has always exemplified sincerity, integrity, and dedication in every step of his distinguished professional career."

Engineer Salim Al Shanfari's legacy in geology and mining is one of innovation, leadership, and nation-building—qualities that continue to inspire a new generation of Omani professional.

Advertorial

Saudi's Jubail launches Gulf's first smart buoy for marine protection

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - The National Center for Environmental Compliance (NCEC) has activated the first smart buoy in the Arabian Gulf at King Fahd Industrial Port in Jubail, contributing to a national initiative to deploy 35 smart buoys across the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf this year as a key element of a comprehensive marine and coastal environmental monitoring strategy.

NCEC general manager of monitoring operations Anwar Alnahdi stated that the deployment of these smart buoys is progressing rapidly. He noted that the first buoy was launched in the Red Sea off Jeddah Islamic Port, followed by deployments in Yanbu and Jizan, and is now extending to the Arabian Gulf. He confirmed that the full network of 35 buoys will be operational by the end of 2025.

Alnahdi emphasised that the Arabian Gulf's first buoy marks a significant advancement in environmental monitoring, allowing real-time data transmission from both the kingdom's eastern and western coasts to its major ports. This will provide crucial data to enhance environmental oversight and informed decision-making.



He explained that the solar-powered buoys are equipped with smart sensors capable of measuring various parameters, including temperature, salinity, oxygen levels, dissolved solids, and specific chemicals. They also feature a wireless system for real-time data transmission, enabling swift detection and early response to pollutants.

Arabian Gulf's first buoy marks a significant advancement in environmental monitoring, allowing real-time data transmission

Alnahdi highlighted the importance of this technology in light of the Kingdom's active maritime traffic and ongoing development within its ports, which could potentially lead to pollutants that threaten the marine and coastal environment if not promptly addressed.
SPA



UAE President, Emir of Qatar discuss fraternal ties in Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi, UAE - UAE President H H Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan on Sunday met with H H Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, in Abu Dhabi.

During the meeting, the two leaders discussed fraternal relations and ways to strengthen cooperation across various fields in a manner that serves the mutual interests of both countries and contributes to the further progress and prosperity of their peoples.

The two sides also reviewed regional and international issues of mutual interest, particularly the latest developments in the Middle East, and exchanged views on efforts to address them.

The meeting was attended by H H Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al Nahyan, Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister, and Chairman of the Presidential Court; H H Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed al Nahyan, Deputy Ruler of Abu Dhabi and National Security Advisor; H H Lt General Sheikh Saif bin Zayed al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior; H H Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin

Zayed al Nahyan, Deputy Chairman of the Presidential Court for Development and Fallen Heroes' Affairs; Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Tahnoon al Nahyan, Advisor to the UAE President; Ali bin Hammad al Shamsi, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for National Security; Khaldoon Khalifa al Mubarak, Chairman of the Executive Affairs Authority; Jassim Mohammed Buatabh al Zaabi, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Department of Finance; Sheikh Zayed bin Khalifa bin Sultan al Nahyan, UAE Ambassador to Qatar; and a number of top officials, along with the delegation accompanying His Highness the Emir of Qatar.

Qatar's delegation included Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs; Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani, Minister of Interior and Commander of the Internal Security Force; Abdullah bin Mohammed al Khulaifi, Chief of the Amiri Diwan; Sultan Salmeen al Mansouri, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the UAE, and several senior officials.

RSF militia killed 300 civilians in south: Sudanese ministry

Khartoum, Sudan - The Sudanese Foreign Ministry accused the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on Saturday of committing a "massacre" against civilians in Al-Nahud in West Kordofan state, resulting in the deaths of 300 victims.

The RSF had not issued a comment on the accusation but the group announced that it had taken control of El-Khuwei in West Kordofan, one day after seizing Al-Nahud in southern Sudan.

'The RSF militia continues to commit crimes against humanity, massacres, and ethnic cleansing in various parts of the country,' the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

'Over the past two days, this militia has committed a new heinous massacre against civilians in the city of Al-Nahud, where killings were carried out on an ethnic basis. The number of victims has so far reached approximately 300 dead.'

It renewed its demand on the UN Security Council and international actors to abandon 'a lenient approach bordering on indifference toward the RSF militia'.



ence toward the RSF militia'.

The RSF announced on Friday that it had taken full control of Al-Nahud and seized the headquarters of the Army's 18th Infantry Brigade in the city, following clashes.

Al-Nahud had previously been under army control and

was declared the temporary administrative capital of West Kordofan in July 2024, after the RSF captured its original capital of El-Fula.

Since April 15, 2023, the RSF has been battling the army for control of Sudan, resulting in thousands of deaths and one of

the world's worst humanitarian crises.

More than 20,000 victims have been killed, and 15mn displaced, according to the UN and local authorities. US researchers, however, estimate the death toll at around 130,000.

Anadolu Agency

Al-Tharwa: Open-air museum of Islamic inscriptions

Najran, Saudi Arabia - Hidden within the creek of Al-Tharwa Mountain, south of King Fahd Park in Najran Region, lies a remarkable collection of early Islamic art etched into the mountain's rocky landscape, serving as a living archive of rare inscriptions that provide a historical record of the ancient past and the richness of Islamic civilization.

The inscriptions embody the precision and splendor of early Islamic calligraphy, representing a significant transitional phase in the history of Arabic arts. This makes Al-Tharwa Mountain an open-air museum narrating the beginnings of Islamic civilization.



In an interview with the Saudi Press Agency, Dr. Salem Bin Tairan, professor at King Saud University specializing in Semitic languages, ancient writings, and archaeology, emphasized the im-

portance of Islamic inscriptions for studying Islamic history and civilization. He highlighted Najran's wealth of inscriptions from the early Islamic period, noting that an archaeological survey in

the region has identified and documented over 200 Islamic Kufic inscriptions across various sites, with Al-Tharwa Mountain alone yielding 33 inscriptions, 26 of which were attributed to members of a single family.

Although the inscriptions lack explicit dates, their script style and the names mentioned suggest they date back to the second and third centuries AH. Most of these inscriptions feature religious formulas and supplications, expressing faith in death, trust in Allah, monotheism, and prayers for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), along with the signatures of those who carved them.

Abdullah Al-Suqour, a member of the Najran Tourist Club and a certified tour guide, highlighted Al-Tharwa Mountain as a crucial archaeological and tourist landmark. He explained that the historical evidence found there underscores the importance of early Islamic inscriptions, which are distinguished by their beauty, organisation, and precise linguistic structures. Notably, some inscriptions were written by women, who etched their names alongside commemorative and religious phrases into the mountain's rocks, indicating a period of widespread education across all segments of society.

SPA

UAE calls for strengthening Arab parliamentary cooperation



Algiers, Algeria - The Federal National Council (FNC) emphasised that the challenges facing the region - ranging from political conflicts and disputes, economic and climate crises, to technological complexities - are increasingly shaping the present and influencing the trajectories of the future. These challenges place a collective responsibility on all of us to strengthen joint Arab parliamentary action, activate tools of parliamentary diplomacy, promote peaceful solutions, and enhance frameworks of dialogue, integration, cooperation, and Arab solidarity.

This was stated in the FNC's address delivered by Dr Tariq Humaid al Tayer, First Deputy Speaker of the FNC and Chairman of the UAE Parliamentary

A unified and steadfast Arab stance is required - one that reflects the hopes and aspirations of people amid the painful events in the Palestinian territories. This includes strengthening solidarity and joint action to protect lives

Division delegation to the Arab Inter-parliamentary Union (AIPU), on behalf of Saqr Ghobash, Speaker of the Federal National Council, during the 38th Conference of the AIPU held in Algiers, Algeria, from May 2 to 4. The UAE Parliamentary Division stressed the importance of intensifying efforts in parliamentary diplomacy - regionally and internationally - in cooperation with all partners to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid, de-

escalation of conflicts, and the protection of civilians in accordance with the rules of international humanitarian law. Dr Tayer stated that the Palestinian cause remains the foremost issue for Arabs, Muslims, and indeed humanity at large. It is currently undergoing a highly critical and existential moment, facing immense challenges and an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe. This calls for a unified Arab position

that matches the scale of the tragedy, restores justice, dignity, and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. He added that the war in Gaza, now entering its second year, has resulted in tens of thousands of casualties and injuries, forced mass displacement from Palestinian territories, and caused widespread infrastructure destruction. The resulting humanitarian disaster has been exacerbated by the brutal siege imposed by Israel on the Gaza Strip, threatening the collapse of the humanitarian aid system and endangering civilian lives while undermining even the minimum conditions for survival. Dr Tayer affirmed that moral obligation, historical responsibility, and our shared humanity

compel us to rise to this challenge. A unified and steadfast Arab stance is required - one that reflects the hopes and aspirations of our peoples amid the painful events unfolding in the Palestinian territories. This includes strengthening solidarity and joint action to protect the lives of our Palestinian brothers and sisters, urgently providing humanitarian aid, and urging governments and the international community to fulfill their responsibilities regarding this humanitarian catastrophe. He emphasised that the United Arab Emirates, throughout its history, has never spared any effort in supporting the Palestinian people - politically, developmentally, and in humanitarian relief. The UAE has con-

sistently stood by them during various circumstances and continues its humanitarian efforts through 'Operation Chivalrous Knight 3', which is part of its ongoing aid and relief support to the people of Gaza. This embodies the UAE's deeply rooted humanitarian approach established by the late founding father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan, and continues under the state's steadfast policy in supporting the Palestinian people and defending just causes. He reiterated the UAE's firm stance rejecting Israel's policy of collective punishment and all attempts at the forced displacement of Palestinians from their lands. He called for an end to starvation and settlement policies. WAM



Abundant olive blossoms in Al-Jouf

Al-Jouf, Saudi Arabia - The olive flowering season commenced in Al-Jouf Region in recent days, with many farmers reporting profuse blooms, raising expectations for a substantial olive harvest from the region's farms and projects this year. The flowering process begins with bud growth and the formation of dense clusters of small, green fruit pods on the branches. The buds then open into small white flowers, transforming the olive trees into a display of white blossoms interspersed with their dark green, elongated leaves. The olive flowering season often coincides with date palm pollination in April, while the olive harvest occurs toward the end of the year. During the flowering period, proper irrigation, pest control, and fertilization are crucial for optimal fruit development. Al-Jouf is home to over 23mn olive trees, producing 150,000 tonnes of table olives annually. SPA

KUWAIT DEPUTY FM MEETS US AMBASSADOR TO STRENGTHEN BILATERAL TIES



Kuwaiti Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Jarrah Jaber al Ahmad al Sabah receives US Ambassador to Kuwait Karen Hideko Sasahara, to discuss strengthening bilateral relations and confronting regional and international issues of mutual concern (KUNA)

Kuwait stresses nuclear disarmament under NPT

New York, US - State of Kuwait underlined nuclear disarmament as the ultimate goal and basic principle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), considering it a main pillar of international stability and NPT credibility. The call was made by the Diplomatic Attache' of the Kuwaiti Permanent Delegation at the UN Bandar al Enezi before the Third Preparatory Committee of the NPT on Thursday. He said that though the treaty came into force more than 50 years ago, its main goal of nuclear disarmament has not been attained, a worrying thing that requires some urgent international action. He added that policies of nuclear deterrence and continued modernization of nuclear arsenals



have fuelled the arms race and increased regional and international tensions in a clear-cut breach of relevant international commitments. The Kuwaiti diplomat regarded that the complete and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons as part of an internationally verifiable framework is

deemed the only guarantee to avert their future use. Calling on all countries, especially nuclear ones, to comply with relevant treaties and international resolutions, Enezi echoed his country's support for all initiatives aiming at criminalising the use of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

Dubai Autism Centre concludes 19th awareness campaign

Dubai, UAE - The Dubai Autism Centre has concluded its 19th annual Autism Awareness Campaign, launched in early April under the patronage of H H Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Chairman of The Executive Council of Dubai. Marking the conclusion of the campaign, the Dubai Autism Centre announced the opening of the region's first Arabic-language podcast studio that aims to broaden understanding and encourage meaningful conversations about autism in the Arab world. Mohammed al Emadi, Director General and Board Member of the Dubai Autism Center,

stated, "This achievement crowns a series of initiatives and events organised by the Centre throughout April in alignment with the goals of the 'Year of the Community'. The launch of this podcast studio marks a significant milestone in our efforts to raise public awareness around autism. Through this platform, we aim to amplify the voices of individuals with autism, their families, and caregivers, especially across the Arab world, highlighting their stories and experiences to help build a more inclusive and understanding society." On this occasion, Al Emadi expressed his sincere gratitude to OP3 Design for their contributions to designing, building, and



sponsoring the studio. He also announced that the first episode of the podcast would be hosted by Joyce Chamoun, Business Development Manager at the Dubai Autism Centre. Charles Chang, Managing Di-

rector of OP3 Design, commented, "We are proud to partner with the Dubai Autism Centre on this pioneering project.

At OP3, we believe design can be a tool for positive change, and this studio is a living example - providing a space for expression, engagement, and community dialogue." Regarding the campaign's key outcomes, Al Emadi explained that this year's campaign featured weekly in-person and virtual awareness workshops that reached 673 public and 509 private schools across the UAE. Additionally, educational lectures targeted around 1,500 employees from various public and private sector institutions. The Community Awareness Team from the Centre also participated in key forums and panel discussions on current autism-related topics, including events hosted

by the Dubai Health Authority and Abu Dhabi University. The campaign also included the announcement of a new group of autism-friendly destinations in Dubai, notably the Mohammed Bin Rashid Library, Union Coop, and Mercato Mall, each of which received the Autism-Friendly Certificate (AFC). This initiative reflects a strong commitment by these organisations to integration and sustainability, and supports the 'My Community... A City for Everyone' initiative aimed at transforming Dubai into a model city that is friendly to people of determination by providing enabling environments that foster their full participation in society. WAM

US mineral deal could unlock \$30bn arms aid: Zelenskyy

Istanbul, Türkiye - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hailed a new US-Ukraine mineral resources agreement as a 'win-win' that could help secure vital air defence systems and deepen strategic ties, following talks with US President Donald Trump.

Zelenskyy said the agreement, which creates a joint investment fund for mineral extraction and processing, opens the Ukrainian market to American investment and offers a long-term economic and security partnership.

"This mineral resources deal is beneficial for both sides," he told journalists Saturday in Kyiv.

"I told President Trump I believe our teams will make every effort to move forward constructively and set a firm date for signing," he was cited by Interfax-Ukraine.

He said the fund would help protect US investments and build trust in Ukraine's economic future. "In particular, we aim to defend our territory and our people with air defense systems. That's why we're ready for these systems to be part of the deal," he added.

Kyiv has already shared its required number of air defense systems with Washington, and Trump expressed a readiness to work on the request, according to Zelenskyy. He emphasized that "these things are not free" and called for access to purchase



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy

US-made weapons.

Zelenskyy referenced a \$15 billion US military aid package for 2025 and a separate \$15 billion for 2026, approved by Congress. He suggested both tranches

could be advanced and delivered in 2025, under the new fund's framework, with Ukraine gradually repaying its share.

"This would be a \$30 billion US contribution, and Ukraine

This mineral resources deal is beneficial for both sides... I told President Trump I believe our teams will make every effort to move forward and set a date for signing

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY

economy and envisions long-term cooperation beyond exporting raw materials. He explained that profits could later support Ukrainian infrastructure, provided both sides agree.

He stressed the duty-free export of raw materials to the US while expressing a desire to move toward value-added manufacturing in Ukraine. One of the strategic mineral sites noted is near Pokrovsk in Donetsk, an area close to front-line conflict zones with Russia.

"For American businesses, this mineral agreement is the best form of insurance available right now," said Zelenskyy. "Trump told me personally, and I consider it a very serious guarantee, that Russia won't touch Ukraine, because we're partners now."

He also disclosed that he raised the issue of expanded US sanctions on Russia during his meeting with Trump, calling the American president's response "very powerful," though he did not elaborate.

Anadolu Agency



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov

Russian Foreign Minister meets India's Jaishankar

Istanbul, Türkiye - Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar discussed bilateral ties as well as rising India-Pakistan tension following last month's attack in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir.

During his phone conversation on Friday, Lavrov called for resolving disputes between New Delhi and Islamabad 'by political and diplomatic means on a bilateral basis', reaffirming Russia's support for the principles outlined in the 1972 Simla Agreement and the 1999 Lahore Declaration, according to a read-out issued by the Russian Foreign Ministry on Saturday.

The two top diplomats also reviewed the schedule for upcoming top-level contacts between Russia and India,

reaffirming continued engagement.

The discussion comes as tensions are running high between the nuclear-armed neighbours following the attack in the Pahalgam tourist resort that claimed the lives of 26 people.

India blamed Pakistan, saying the attack had 'cross-border links'. Islamabad denied and instead offered a neutral probe with third-party monitoring.

Both countries have taken diplomatic measures against each other, including cancelling visas for each other's citizens and recalling some diplomatic staff. India also suspended its participation in the Indus Waters Treaty, a 1960 water use and distribution agreement with Pakistan.

Anadolu Agency

Japan's Foreign Minister discusses Gaza with French, Saudi counterparts

Istanbul, Türkiye - Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya on Friday discussed the situation in the Gaza Strip with his Saudi and French counterparts, according to a statement from the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

Iwaya discussed Gaza and Palestine with French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot while visiting France.

The Japanese top diplomat also acknowledged the importance of implementing the ceasefire agreement in Gaza and the need to improve the critical humanitarian situation with Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan on Thursday, during a visit to that country. Both sides also agreed to continue efforts for the realization of a two-state solution.



The Israeli army renewed its assault on Gaza on March 18, shattering a Jan. 19 ceasefire and prisoner exchange agreement with the Palestinian resistance group, Hamas. It has killed more than 52,000 Palestinians in Gaza

since October 2023, most of them women and children.

Faisal and Iwaya discussed energy and defence cooperation as well as US-Iran talks about Tehran's nuclear program.

Iwaya and Barrot called secu-

The Japanese top diplomat also acknowledged the importance of implementing the ceasefire agreement in Gaza and the need to improve the critical humanitarian situation

rity in the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific 'inseparable', and discussed ensuring a stable supply of critical minerals, economic cooperation and other cooperation areas.

Anadolu Agency



The Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea

China rebuts Japan's assertion of airspace intrusion near Senkakus

Beijing, China - China on Sunday rejected Japan's claim that a Chinese coast guard helicopter entered its airspace near the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea the previous day, instead blaming the incident on the activities of a Japanese civilian aircraft at the time.

Liu Jinsong, head of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's Asian Affairs Department, lodged a protest with Akira Yokochi, chief minister at the Japanese Embassy in Beijing, over what he called the "intrusion of a civilian aircraft operated by Japan's right-winger" into the airspace over the islands. The Senkakus are administered by Japan but claimed by Beijing, which calls them Diaoyu.

Liu urged Japan to "immediately stop illegal activities" and "take concrete measures to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents", the Chinese Foreign Ministry said.

According to the Japanese Embassy, the exchanges between Liu and Yokochi were held over the phone.

In response, Yokochi reiterated Tokyo's protest over the violation of Japanese airspace by a helicopter from a China Coast Guard ship, strongly demanding measures to prevent similar incidents from happening again, the Japanese embassy said.

According to the Japanese Defence Ministry and coast guard authorities, the helicopter took off from one of the four Chinese coast guard ships that entered Japan's territorial waters around the uninhabited Senkaku islets on Saturday afternoon.

Japan Coast Guard patrol vessels spotted the helicopter flying above the territorial waters for about 15 minutes, prompting the Air Self-Defence Force to scramble two jet fighters, according to the defence ministry.

The ministry is looking into

any possible connection to a small Japanese civilian aircraft that was flying in the area around the same time.

Saturday's incident marked China's fourth intrusion into Japanese airspace, three of which occurred near the Senkaku Islands, according to the Japanese ministry. Liu told Yokochi that China will resolutely safeguard its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, the Chinese ministry said.

Senior Col. Zhang Xiaogang, spokesman for China's Defence Ministry, said Sunday in a statement that its coast guard's action to drive away the civilian aircraft was "completely legitimate and legal".

"China urges the Japanese side to strictly restrain its citizens' activities and stop provocative acts that complicate the situation" in the sea and airspace around the islets, Zhang said.

Kyodo News

China's Xi to visit in Moscow ahead of Victory Day events, says Russia

Istanbul, Türkiye - Russia said on Sunday that Chinese President Xi Jinping will arrive in the country's capital Moscow on an official visit, as it is set to host ceremonial events marking the 80th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory in World War II next week.

A statement by the Kremlin said that Xi will pay an official visit to Moscow between May 7-10, at the invitation of his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, where he will take part in Victory Day events in the country's capital.

The statement said the talks to be held between Putin and Xi during the latter's visit will address main issues concerning the development of bilateral



ties between Moscow and Beijing, as well as current issues of the international and regional agenda.

"A number of bilateral inter-governmental and interdepartmental documents are planned

to be signed," the statement added.

Early last month, Putin told Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi that Xi will be the main guest at the May 9 celebrations marking the 80th anniversary

of the victory in World War II.

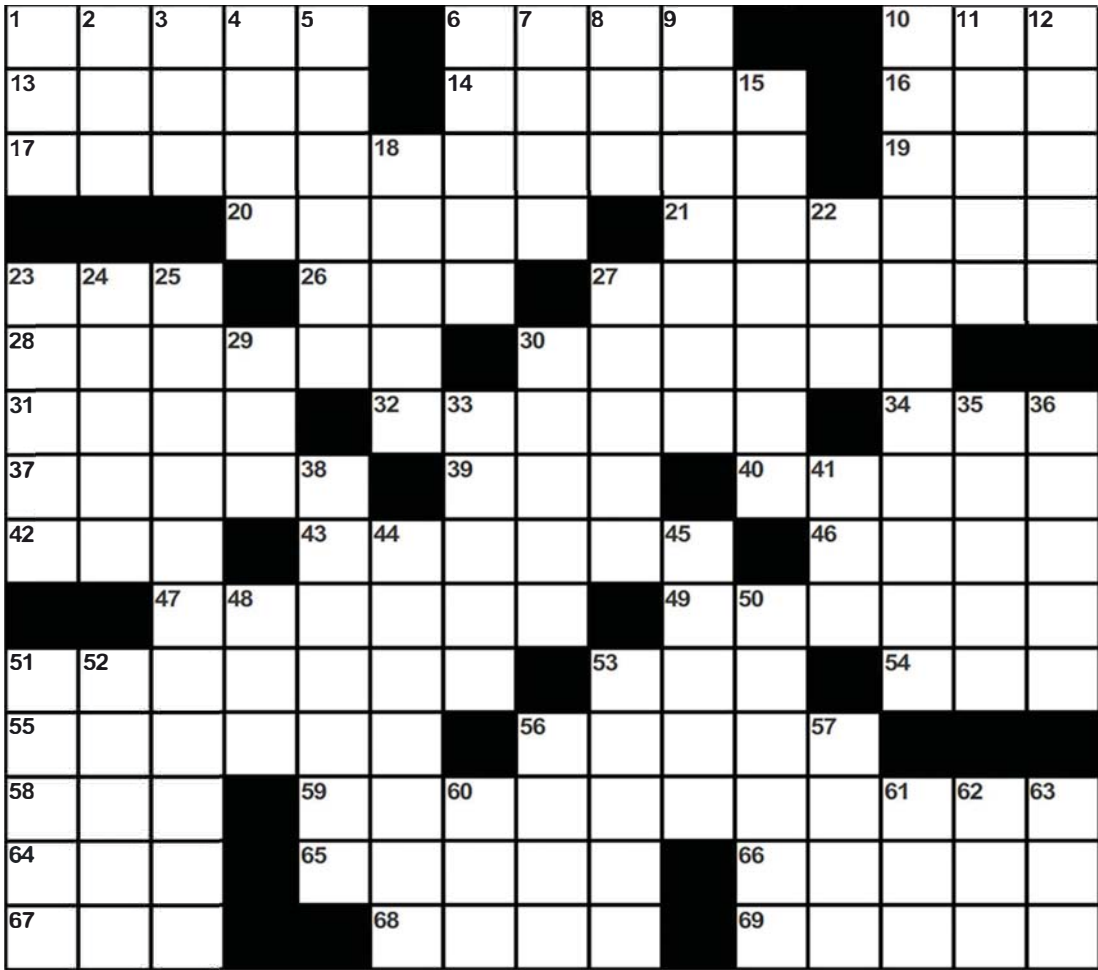
The Chinese Foreign Ministry confirmed Xi's participation in the ceremonial events, adding that he will engage in "strategic communication" with the Russian president.

Victory Day is a holiday celebrated in Russia and various former Soviet countries on May 9 in commemoration of Nazi Germany's surrender during World War II, a conflict Russia officially calls the Great Patriotic War.

As part of events surrounding the May 9 celebrations, an annual military parade is held at the Red Square located in Moscow, which has also been attended by foreign leaders.

Anadolu Agency

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Wide open
 - 6) Housebroken
 - 10) Canary's bill
 - 13) Boston airport
 - 14) Semester finals
 - 16) Phrase of commitment
 - 17) Feature of serious roller- coasters
 - 19) Classic introduction?
 - 20) Mountain ridge
 - 21) Italian from Florence
 - 23) "NCIS" network
 - 26) Cosmetics queen Mary Kay
 - 27) Ventilation opening
 - 28) Summarizes, as the news
 - 30) Name derived from a person
 - 31) Blacksmith's metal
 - 32) Weasel type
 - 34) Tire-pressure letters
 - 37) Cowboy's conquest
 - 39) Dr. J played in it
 - 40) Alex Haley block-buster
 - 42) Maple syrup base
 - 43) Like some requests
 - 46) Georgetown mascot
 - 47) Damaging encroachment
 - 49) Bustling activity

- 51) Some large envelopes
 - 53) Barbecue munchie
 - 54) "Hold on a..."
 - 55) Fished or schemed
 - 56) Some museum sculptures
 - 58) 2016 Olympics city
 - 59) Lively festivities
 - 64) Ostrich cousin
 - 65) Balloon used in atmospheric probes
 - 66) Do some waiting?
 - 67) 6-1, in tennis
 - 68) "No news is... news!"
 - 69) Rosemary's baby-daddy
- DOWN**
- 1) More than most
 - 2) Baby's first word, sometimes
 - 3) Long time follower?
 - 4) Hemingway's moniker
 - 5) Lure into danger
 - 6) Subject of dentistry
 - 7) Bridge toll unit
 - 8) Longtime Chinese chairman
 - 9) Android's lack
 - 10) Fools or simpletons
 - 11) Perfection standard
 - 12) Kentucky explorer Daniel
 - 15) Scornful one
 - 18) "Siddhartha" author

- 22) Not outgoing
- 23) Baby berths
- 24) Yankee legend Yogi
- 25) Working a ladle
- 27) Concerning bees
- 29) Cape..., Mass.
- 30) Fix firmly in place
- 33) Hindu music selections
- 35) Do a salon job
- 36) "I, Robot" author Asimov
- 38) Large migratory shorebirds
- 41) "Now I see!"
- 44) Driver who's tough to pass
- 45) Show place?
- 48) Common soccer score
- 50) Be preoccupied with
- 51) Colts' moms
- 52) Japanese cartoon style
- 53) Caught, as a dogie
- 56) List type
- 57) Brain flash
- 60) Lennon's wife
- 61) Dinner table dropping
- 62) Lab eggs
- 63) John McCain is one, briefly

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

If anyone decides that it might be fun to see just how far you can be pushed, they are in for a serious lesson. At this point, you're not willing to go very far at all. If people came with warning labels (how did that get skipped?), yours would say "Danger! Do not exceed capacity." Of course, with your fiery energy, this situation isn't exactly rare, so the next best thing is to shut all doors as soon as you can.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Your friends live by one simple rule: when you're happy, everyone's happy. Your fiery nature just doesn't allow anyone to be depressed in your immediate vicinity unless you're feeling down yourself! At the moment, you're feeling pretty great, which means you do your very best to make everyone around you as happy as they can be. It's a great way to celebrate that well-deserved streak of luck you're currently enjoying!



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Generosity and excess are dangerous qualities to tote around in tandem, and it takes a very special kind of person to pull it off. For the most part, you're up for the challenge, and pretty happy about it too! Still, you really need to make sure that everyone appreciates what you're doing for them and that they don't just take you for granted. You should also take a little time for yourself now just because you can.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Making a new friend isn't easy for anyone, especially if we enjoy privacy, as you certainly do. You may be feeling even more secretive at the moment, however, so if you decide to let someone in on your feelings and plans and how you've reached this point, they need to understand just how special that makes them. If they didn't, though, you probably wouldn't have let them get this close to begin with



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

If you're not sure quite how you should handle a certain situation that's a little too delicate for prime time, then hold off on mentioning it to anyone, at least for the time being. You know perfectly well that there are still interlocking issues to be resolved, and until then silence is the best strategy. You're in charge, and you know it, so call a meeting if you must just to be sure that everyone is on the same page.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

No matter what the subject or where you happen to be, you are rarely shy about expressing an opinion. You're not exactly shy now either, but you may start to feel a bit of unusual emotional interference coming on, so remind yourself that if anyone has the right to be confident, it's you. You've been diligent and hardworking for a long time, so relax. Let the rest of the world worry about your feelings for a change!



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

You know well how wonderful it is to have entertaining friends. You've spent plenty of time assembling just such a crew, and you take their affection seriously. You don't just invite any old person into that circle without considering what they're likely to add to it, or how your current friends might take to them. If you're ready to open the books, be sure that someone lets this fortunate newcomer know just how special the invitation is.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Relationships are almost always your number one priority, but at the moment nothing else can even come close! Your lucky partner, prospective partner, or even latest crush should enjoy all kinds of sweet attention aimed simply at ensuring that they know how deeply and securely you care for them. You expect your feelings to be returned, but it's still vital to have the conversation anyway.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

If you're worried that you might say or do something to offend someone, especially if you know what's coming, take a friend along for the ride who's well equipped to mediate when necessary. You know who you need to ask because you've probably had to call on them in the past! Remember, though, that it's not you who they're watching out for; it's anyone who gets in your way or challenges your opinions.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

You've always had a decent relationship with your bosses, teachers, and other authority figures. In fact, they have often treated you as an equal. That's exactly how you feel now when higher-ups actually come to you for advice. If you hear gossip, try not to get too stressed about it. Everyone needs someone else to talk about!



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You know how to make awesome plans and see them through to the end, never even thinking about aborting the mission. You're a planner and a plotter, containing equal parts detective and analyst. Today's plan is just about perfect from beginning to end, so much so that you should be confident about sharing it with anyone, even rivals.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

One particular secret that you've always wondered about, something you've never really understood from way back, is about to come to the surface now. When the truth is finally revealed, you may be equally relieved and startled to learn how it all fits together. The good news is that the outcome you've always wished for is most likely what comes out.

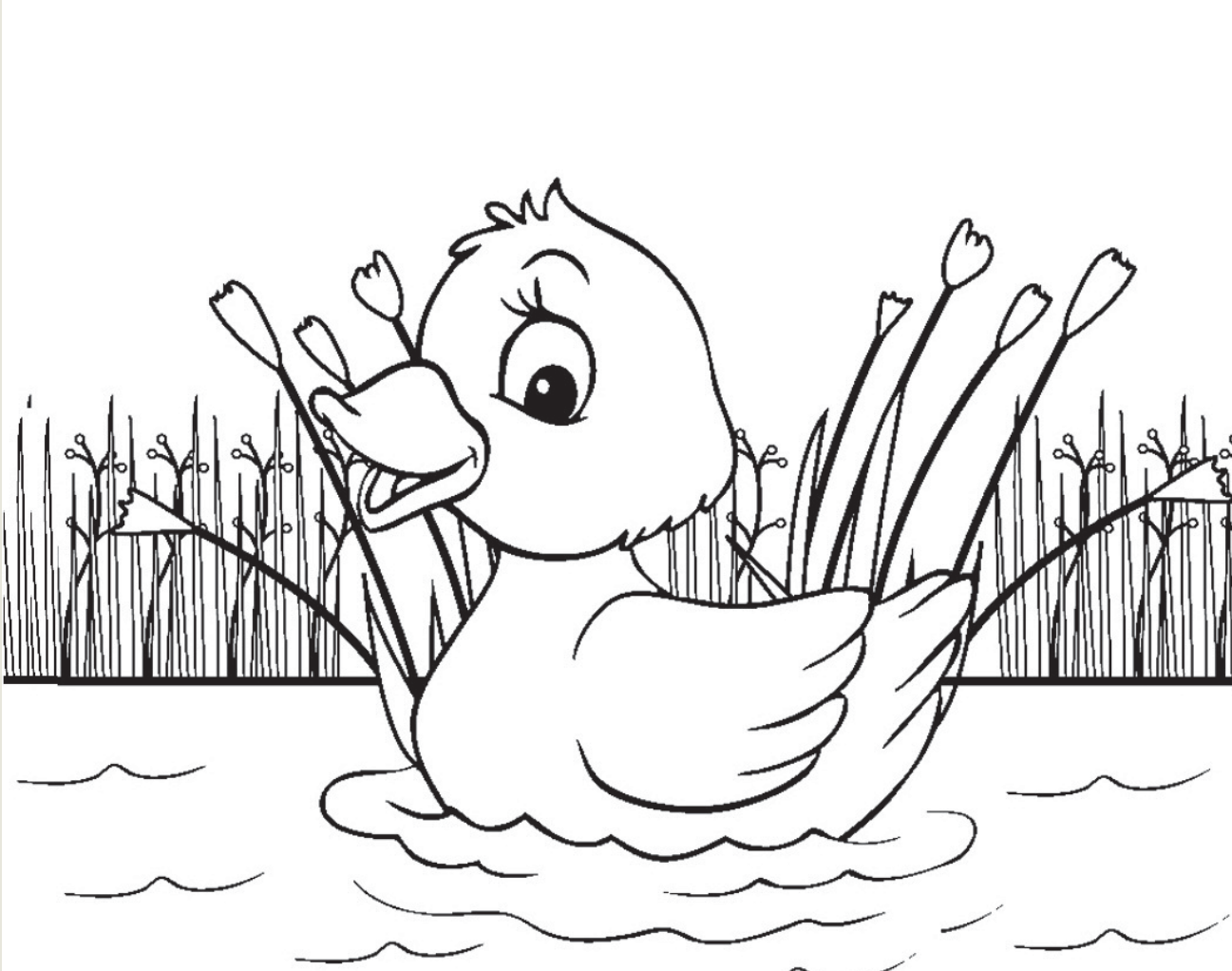


TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- 01. What is a Saanen?**
- A. A kind of bell
 - B. A goat
 - C. A chocolate
 - D. A wolf
- 02. Who has hosted the US series "Power of 10", "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" and "The Price Is Right"?**
- A. Larry King
 - B. David Letterman
 - C. Regis Philbin
 - D. Drew Carey
- 03. An operation known since prehistory, to relieve pressure inside the skull or remove splintered bone is known as what?**
- A. Trepanging
 - B. Trepidating
 - C. Treponemation
 - D. Trepanning

Answers: 1.B 2.D 3.D

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

A	U	K	T
A	C	C	M
O	R	B	A
E	M	A	R

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

SOLUTION

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

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

STILL IN THE HUNT

Mbappe hits double as Real beat Celta Vigo to put pressure on Barca

Madrid, Spain - Kylian Mbappe scored two goals as Real Madrid fought off a late comeback attempt from Celta Vigo to secure a 3-2 win on Sunday and stay within four points of LaLiga leaders Barcelona whom they visit in El Clasico.

Arda Guler broke the deadlock for Real shortly after the half-hour mark as the Turkish 20-year-old took a short corner for a one-two with Lucas Vazquez before dispatching an excellent left-footed shot from a tight angle through a gap between defenders.

Mbappe doubled Real's lead six minutes later as Jude Bellingham's lobbed ball unleashed the Frenchman down the opposition half for a right-footed finish. Then Guler's through ball set up Mbappe's second goal three minutes after the break. Seventh-placed Celta Vigo made a late charge as Javi Rodriguez scored for the visitors in the 69th minute and Williot Swedberg also struck seven minutes later, but Real were able to see off the late pressure to ensure the win.

Barcelona win at Valladolid

Earlier on Saturday, Barcelona had extended their lead to seven points with a 2-1 comeback win



Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe celebrates his goal against Celta Vigo on Sunday

at relegated Real Valladolid thanks to second-half strikes by Raphinha and Fermin Lopez.

Valladolid took a surprise lead after six minutes when Ivan Sanchez latched onto Raul Moro's through ball and fired a deflected cross into the far post past Marc-Andre ter Stegen, who was making his return after a seven-month injury absence.

"I was really looking forward to playing this game," Ter Stegen told DAZN. "It's always better to win. We continue with the same dynamic, which was important. We're looking forward to the next few weeks, which are going to be

They had nothing to lose. I'm sorry they're getting relegated because they're a spectacular team with these fans

MARC-ANDRE TER STEGEN

great for everyone. When you're 1-0 down it's difficult on any pitch. They had nothing to lose. I'm sorry they're getting relegated because they're a spectacular team with these fans," he added.

Barcelona's attempts to respond to going a goal down before the break were thwarted by Andre Ferreira's fine goalkeeping, with the Portuguese denying Ansu Fati and Lopez as the visitors struggled for rhythm.

Simeone disappointed as blunt Atletico held again

Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain - Atletico did not carry any threat in a lukewarm first-half display in the 0-0 draw at relegation-threatened Alaves in LaLiga on Saturday, their manager Diego Simeone said.

The draw left Atletico in third place with 67 points, 12 behind leaders Barcelona.

Atletico failed to record a single shot in the opening 45 minutes - the third time they have done so this season - and had to wait until the 71st minute for their first shot on target. Alaves keeper Antonio Sivera was kept busy in the closing stages, but the visitors were unable to find a winner.

"What we all saw was a flat first half from both sides, with no team play or shots on goal. We played in the middle of the pitch, without danger," Simeone said.



Bournemouth rally to stun Arsenal

London, England - Arsenal suffered a 2-1 loss to Bournemouth who came from behind to take all three points in the Premier League on Saturday, with Evanilson's scrappy winner giving the visitors a huge boost in their push for European football.

Declan Rice gave the Gunners the lead in the 34th minute, running on to Martin Odegaard's neat reverse pass and rounding goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga before producing an accomplished finish on his 100th Arsenal appearance.

The hosts had chances to extend their lead, with Bukayo Saka curling narrowly wide, but Dean Huijsen gave Bournemouth a deserved equaliser in the 67th when he headed substitute Antoine Semenyo's long throw into the bottom corner. Evanilson bundled home from a corner eight minutes later to complete the turnaround after a lengthy VAR review determined there was no conclusive evidence he handled the ball.

Arsenal stay second behind champions Liverpool and on 67 points, three points above



Bournemouth's Dean Huijsen (L) celebrates with teammates after scoring against Arsenal on Saturday

Manchester City in third. They need six points from their remaining three games to guarantee a top-five finish and a return to the Champions League next season.

Brentford beat Man United

Brentford edged a young and

Newcastle United escaped the Amex Stadium with a point after Alexander Isak scored a last-gasp penalty in a 1-1 draw with Brighton & Hove Albion in a key result for their chase of Champions League qualification

much-changed Manchester United side 4-3 on Sunday to give their hopes of qualifying for European competition a big boost.

United fielded their youngest starting lineup in Premier League history and took the lead through Mason Mount but an own goal from Luke Shaw and a Kevin Schade header gave Brentford a 2-1 lead going into the break.

United briefly looked resur-

gent in the second half, but Schade grabbed another goal with a similar header at the far post before Yoane Wissa made it 4-1.

Alejandro Garnacho curled one in from the edge of the box before Amad Diallo made it 4-3 in added time but Brentford sealed the win to move up to

ninth with 52 points.

Newcastle United escaped the Amex Stadium with a point after Alexander Isak scored a last-gasp penalty in a 1-1 draw with Brighton & Hove Albion in a key result for their chase of Champions League qualification.

Brighton looked poised for victory after Yankuba Minteh struck in the first half, but Isak hit home his 89th minute spot kick for his 23rd league goal of the season.



Inter Milan's Kristjan Asllani celebrates with teammates after scoring against Hellas Verona on Saturday

Inter edge Verona to stay in title hunt

Milan, Italy - Inter Milan maintained their flickering Serie A title hopes with a 1-0 home win over Hellas Verona on Saturday, courtesy of an early penalty by Kristjan Asllani, as they rested players ahead of their Champions League clash with Barcelona next week.

The result keeps the Scudetto race ticking over, with Inter on 74 points, three behind leaders Napoli as the final three rounds await. Verona are 15th.

Inter were feeling the pressure as Napoli had earlier secured a 1-0 victory at Lecce with a Giacomo Raspadori goal.

Coach Simone Inzaghi and midfielder Hakan Calhanoglu were also missing as they served one-match bans from Italy's soccer association over their relations with hardcore 'ultra' fans, so assistant coach Massimiliano Farris was in charge.

"We knew Verona would be compact, and it wasn't easy to find gaps. Maybe in the second half, we could have been quicker in some decisions, but we didn't

face many serious dangers," Farris told Sky Sport Italia.

With Inter's semi-final return leg at home to Barca on Tuesday, following a 3-3 draw in Spain, defender Yann Bisseck was the only player to keep his place from the previous game.

Inter took the lead after nine minutes through Asllani's penalty following handball by Nicolas Valentini.

The visitors offered little threat, with forward Amin Sarr providing their only real spark with an angled strike that forced Josep Martinez into a sharp save.

Asllani came close just before the break with a long shot from a tight angle that skimmed the bar and landed on top of the net to the dismay of the home fans who thought it had gone in.

The intensity waned in the second half, though, with the match becoming a midfield battle littered with lost possession and attacks that came to nothing as Inter held on for the win.

Kompany proud of Bayern's second-half show in draw

Leipzig, Germany - Bayern Munich's three-goal second half run for a 3-3 draw at RB Leipzig on Saturday confirmed the team's strong mentality even though they will have to wait just a bit longer to celebrate the title win, coach Vincent Kompany said.

In a rollercoaster game, Bayern found themselves 2-0 down at halftime before scoring two goals in two minutes to level and then taking an 83rd-minute lead through Leroy

Sane. Leipzig, however, struck deep in stoppage time to equalise through Yussuf Poulsen.

The result put Bayern on 76 points, nine ahead of champions Leverkusen, who travel to Freiburg on Sunday. Bayern, with two games left and a much better goal difference than Leverkusen, will secure their 34th league crown should Leverkusen fail to win.

"In the first half we did not have the energy," Kompany told



Vincent Kompany

a press conference. "It was a good game for the fans and not a bad result for us, and I am very

proud of the second half."

"The reason I am proud is we had quite a few players not there (through injury) and the image and energy was not too different than what we do in our best moments."

Bayern are missing several through injury, including Jamal Musiala, Dayot Upamecano, Alphonso Davies, Hiroki Ito among others.

Bundesliga top scorer Harry Kane was also missing on Saturday due to a suspension.

Kompany, in his first season in charge, is looking to bring the league trophy back to Munich after Leverkusen ended Bayern's 11-year league stranglehold last season with a domestic league and Cup double win.

Bayern can now secure the title in front of a home crowd next week against Borussia Moenchengladbach.

"Congratulations to the boys and we are close now," said Kompany.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

Al Ahli blank Kawasaki to win Asian Champions League title

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia - Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli beat Japan's Kawasaki Frontale 2-0 to win the Asian Champions League Elite title for the first time at a raucous King Abdullah Sports City Stadium on Saturday.

Brazil winger Galeno broke Kawasaki's resistance in the 35th minute when he bent an unstoppable strike into the top corner to send the home side on the way to their first Asian title, with Franck Kessie heading in the second seven minutes later.

The victory makes Al Ahli the third Saudi club to win the competition in its various guises, joining city rivals and twice winners Al Ittihad and Riyadh's four-time champions Al Hilal.

"We are so proud," said Al Ahli goalkeeper Edouard Mendy. "Once we knew the final eight would be played in Jeddah it was our goal to be champions in front of our fans. Since I came here 18 months ago they have supported us so much."

"As I said when I signed here, it's to make history, to continue to win trophies and make this club as big as it was before."

Al Ahli were heavy favourites with a lineup featuring an expensively acquired array of foreign talent that includes UEFA Champions League winners Riyad Mahrez and Roberto Firmino.

Twice inside the opening six



Al Ahli players celebrate with the trophy after winning the Asian Champions League Elite title on Saturday

Once we knew the final eight would be played in Jeddah it was our goal to be champions in front of our fans. Since I came here 18 months ago they have supported us so much

EDOUARD MENDY, AL AHLI GOALKEEPER

minutes, Louis Yamaguchi denied the home side, the Kawasaki goalkeeper blocking Ivan Toney's viciously struck right-foot effort before making a point-blank block at the resulting corner from Ziyad al Johani. The Japanese outfit almost silenced the crowd in the 11th minute with a moment

of individual skill from Marcinho, the Brazilian gliding beyond Ali Majrashi to bear down on goal only to shoot across the area and past the far post.

Toney fired wide and Roger Ibanez was just off target with a curling effort from the edge of the area as Al Ahli increased the

pressure, but a disciplined Kawasaki held firm.

However, the opener eventually came with 10 minutes remaining of the first half when Kawasaki gave away possession close to their own goal.

Firmino fed Galeno in space 25 metres out and, as midfielder So Kawahara made a late, vain attempt to close the Brazilian down, the former Porto man bent a perfectly-measured right-foot strike into the top corner.

Al Ahli doubled their lead soon after, the Saudi side capitalising on their opponents being temporarily down to 10 men with left back Sota Miura off the field injured. Firmino was heavily involved again, bursting through on the right side of the area to clip a cross into the six-yard box that the quickly arriving Ivorian Kessie rose to head home.

Substitute Sai van Wermeskerken nodded wide as Kawasaki sought a way back into the game and substitute Tatsuya Ito, the hero of Kawasaki's semi-final win over Al Nassr, shot just wide with 15 minutes remaining.

Ito flashed another strike across Mendy's goal and Ibanez denied Shin Yamada a late opportunity as Al Ahli celebrated victory in their third appearance in the final.

It's a crazy journey, says Jaissle after Al Ahli win Asian title

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia - Coach Matthias Jaissle credited Al Ahli's supporters for their devotion to the club after steering his team to the Asian Champions League Elite on Saturday, two years after the Jeddah-based outfit were playing in Saudi Arabia's second division.

"It's a crazy journey to be honest," Jaissle said of Al Ahli's climb to the Asian summit. "Not that long ago it looked completely different."

"But the fans, the club, they deserved it. How emotional they are and how much support they bring into the club is unbelievable and therefore the guys could deliver today and bring something back that they deserve."

Al Ahli are considered one of Saudi Arabia's leading clubs but have often lived in the shadow of neighbours Al Ittihad and Riyadh's Al Hilal.

Al-Ittihad, the current Saudi Pro League leaders, won back-to-back Asian Champions League titles in 2004 and 2005 while Al Hilal have been continental champions on a record four occasions, most recently in 2021.

Al Ahli, in contrast, had twice been runners-up in

Asia's club championship without winning the trophy and they hit difficult times in 2022 when they were surprisingly relegated to the country's second tier.

While an immediate return to the Saudi Pro League was secured, it was significant investment from Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund in 2023 that lifted the club, attracting the likes of Riyad Mahrez, Roberto Firmino and Ivan Toney.

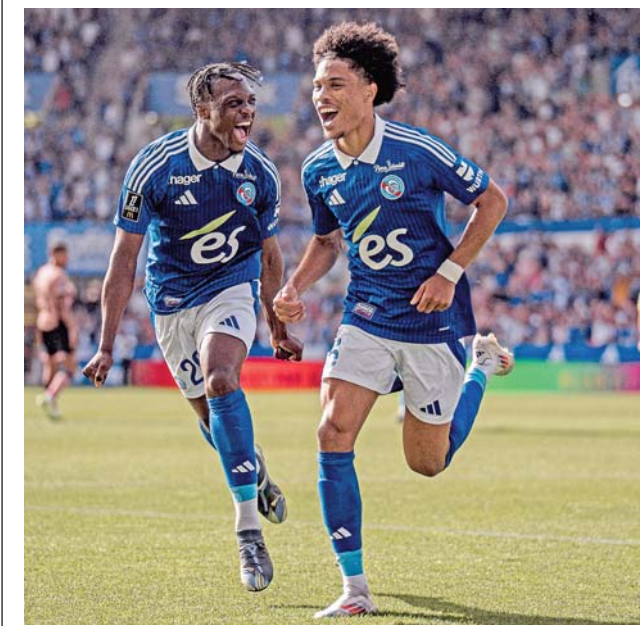
Those high-profile signings have not been able to deliver the club's first domestic league title since 2016, but first half goals from Galeno and Franck Kessie against Kawasaki secured a first Asian crown with an unbeaten record.

"I'm so, so proud of the players," said Jaissle, who joined the club ahead of their first season back in the Saudi Pro League. "How they were performing, the whole journey in this competition."

"They put all the effort into that and the fans, who always created an amazing atmosphere and support, which is something we never took for granted."



Matthias Jaissle celebrates with the trophy



Felix Lemarechal of Strasbourg celebrates his goal against Paris St Germain on Saturday

Second-string PSG lose to Strasbourg

Strasbourg, France - A second-string Paris St Germain side fell to a 2-1 defeat at fourth-placed Strasbourg on Saturday, giving the Ligue 1 champions another reverse in the closing stages of the campaign.

With the title wrapped up and PSG's undefeated league run ended by a 3-1 loss to Nice in the last round, the only thing at stake for the visitors was preserving a 39-game unbeaten Ligue 1 away record - the most ever in Europe's top five leagues.

However, manager Luis Enrique retained only Joao Neves from the starting lineup that featured in the 1-0 Champions League win at Arsenal in the semi-final first leg in mid-week, seemingly resting key players ahead of Wednesday's return game.

For Strasbourg, the result puts them fourth, level on 57 points with Nice in third and one point behind second-

placed Olympique de Marseille, with the top three spots securing Champions League football.

"I think it was a very close match between two teams who want to play in the Champions League next season," Luis Enrique said.

"It was a very high-level match. All the objectives I had in mind came to fruition, apart from the result. It's ridiculous to go beyond that. I also want to say that we were close to a draw, we had chances."

"It's not easy to play against this Strasbourg team. They have a lot of quality and experience. Now, we have to recover and focus on Wednesday's match."

PSG went behind after 20 minutes when their defender Lucas Hernandez clumsily connected with a flicked header by Strasbourg's Mamadou Sarr from a corner, steering it into his own net to give the hosts the lead.

Norris edges Piastri to win Miami sprint

Miami, US - Lando Norris lucked in to win a rain-hit and crash-strewn Miami Grand Prix sprint race in a McLaren one-two on Saturday that trimmed teammate Oscar Piastri's Formula One lead to nine points.

Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton, winner of the season's first sprint in China, had a smile on his face again after finishing third with the safety car leading the closing laps before peeling off at the end.

"My luck in Miami seems pretty good at the minute, really happy," grinned Norris, who won last year's main grand prix for his first F1 victory after also benefiting from a safety car period.

"I don't think I will be buying any lottery tickets at this place," commented Piastri over the car radio.

Norris got lucky with the safety car deployed just as he pitted for slick tyres, with Piastri having already stopped, and came back out still in the lead he



Lando Norris celebrates with the trophy after winning the Miami Grand Prix sprint race on Saturday

I probably would've preferred if this had happened tomorrow, rather than today, but I'll take it. Good job by the team

LANDO NORRIS

had inherited from the Australian.

"I probably would've preferred if this had happened tomorrow, rather than today, but I'll take it. Good job by the team," he said.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen was demoted to last place after being handed a 10 second penalty for an unsafe release that led to a pitlane collision with Mercedes' pole-sitter Kimi Antonelli.

Antonelli finished 10th but moved back to seventh after

Williams' Alex Albon, Racing Bull's Liam Lawson and Haas's Oliver Bearman all collected time penalties and dropped out of the top eight.

That lifted Mercedes' George Russell to fourth, Lance Stroll to fifth for Aston Martin and Red Bull's Yuki Tsunoda to sixth after starting in the pit lane.

The final point went to Alpine's Pierre Gasly, who was 11th at the chequered flag.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc crashed on his way from the pits to the starting grid in treacherous conditions and did not start.

The safety car led the field around before the start procedure was suspended, with drivers struggling to see in the spray, and all 19 cars returned to the pit lane before an eventual standing start on a drying track.

Piastri seized the lead into turn one, with Antonelli forced wide and dropping to fourth as Norris and Verstappen also went past.

Sabalenka beats Gauff to win Madrid Open title

Madrid, Spain - World number one Aryna Sabalenka overcame a second-set fightback by fourth seed Coco Gauff to secure a 6-3 7-6(3) win and clinch her third Madrid Open on Saturday as the three-times major winner claimed her third title this year on the WTA tour.

Sabalenka, who has played the last three finals of the WTA 1000 tournament, equalled Petra Kvitova's record haul of three Madrid Open titles. She also caught up with Gauff in head-to-head, with five wins apiece.

"I always enjoy fighting against you, you're such a fighter," Sabalenka told Gauff at the presentation ceremony after she won her sixth straight match against top-10 ranked opponents



Aryna Sabalenka poses with the trophy after winning the Madrid Open title on Saturday

this year without dropping a set.

"I'm super happy I was able to win this year."

Sabalenka won four games straight without conceding a point to build a 4-1 lead in the first set. Although Gauff battled back with a break to make it 4-2, the Belarusian secured the set with another break.

Gauff broke Sabalenka to go 2-1 up in the second set and held under pressure to build a 5-3 lead. But Gauff's double faults while serving for the set allowed Sabalenka to break back and make it 5-5 before winning the title in a tiebreak. "Incredible tournament, you're always tough to face... congratulations on all the success that you're having," Gauff told Sabalenka.

KOLKATA WIN THRILLER

Parag’s knock in vain as Rajasthan lose again

Kolkata, India - One run was all that separated Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and Rajasthan Royals (RR) in a rollercoaster of a game that could have gone either way until the last ball. Riyan Parag hit six sixes in six balls, five of which came in a 32-run over against Moeen Ali - and Shubham Arora for two fours and a six with 22 needed in the final over.

With three needed off the final ball, Shubham drilled the yorker from Arora to long-on and took off to try and force a Super Over. Jofra Archer, the non-striker at the other end, got a head start but was found well short thanks to a sharp throw from Rinku Singh.

The win keeps KKR’s playoffs hope alive in IPL 2025. It was built on Andre Russell’s 25-ball 57 that helped them score 70 in their last five overs after a slow-



Kolkata Knight Riders players celebrate their win against Rajasthan Royals on Sunday

down against spin. Moeen and Varun Chakravarthy had RR on the ropes in the chase but Parag turned things around with a take-down of his own.

Disappointment was written all over Parag’s face, however, when Varun flattened Wanindu Hasaranga’s off stump. RR were nearly out needing 136 off 73 balls at the time and the required rate touched 13 with only three fours coming in the next four overs. But the last two of those helped Parag get into a rhythm.

Then came the 32-run over against Moeen. Four of those sixes came over square leg or midwicket. When Moeen went wide, the ball sailed over long-off. Parag’s next ball was from Varun and reverse-swept for six more.

Shimron Hetmyer played within himself and was going at just over a run a ball for the majority of his innings but his presence was reassuring as proved by the two boundary-less overs after his dismissal.

Harshit Rana returned with figures of 0 for 28 off two overs and conceded a boundary off the first ball. He then bowled three full balls and peppered in two short ones to dry up the runs. The second bouncer went off Hetmyer’s bat into the hands of the

TODAY’S MATCH

MATCH 55

6 PM

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD VS DELHI CAPITALS

keeper. KKR brought Narine back with RR 43 needing off 24. He went for just five and nearly had Parag caught at deep midwicket.

Rana built on the pressure despite bowling a no-ball with yorkers and slower ones. Parag was nearly run out on the third legal ball. He holed out to long-on slapping a wide cutter very next ball and RR slipped to 173 for 7.

Arora’s wide-yorker plan started the final over with three runs. Shubham went 6-4-6 when Arora went short and wide before faltering with back-to-back yorkers. Arora, nonetheless, stuck with it last ball and it paid off.

The day started with Sunil Narine and Rahmanullah Gurbaz stepping down the leg side quite often. Narine fell cheaply and Gurbaz mistimed a few but picked up four boundaries and a six, with the majority on the leg side. Yudhvir Singh was the costliest bowler in the 56-run powerplay.

ESPNCricinfo

Prabhsimran Singh hit a 48-ball 91 to help Punjab Kings post 236 for 5 against Lucknow Super Giants. Shreyas Iyer made 45 off 25 balls while Shashank Singh scored an unbeaten 33 off 15 balls

Teenager Mhatre makes his mark

New Delhi, India - The euphoria around the 14-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi has not died down yet and India appear to have unearthed another teenage batting sensation in Chennai Super Kings opener Ayush Mhatre.

Rajasthan Royals batter Suryavanshi smashed a 35-ball hundred in an Indian Premier League match against Gujarat Titans to become the youngest centurion in men’s T20 cricket drawing rich praise from the game’s greats including Sachin Tendulkar.

Mhatre, 17, fell short of a hundred against Royal Challengers



Ayush Mhatre

Bengaluru on Saturday but Chennai head coach Stephen Fleming cannot stop gushing after the opener’s 94 off 48 balls.

“He’s got talent. He’s got hand-eye coordination. He’s got a beautiful, silky swing. He’s aggressive. Everything that we like about a modern-day T20 player,” Fleming told reporters after Bengaluru beat Chennai by two runs.

“To me, it’s the temperament and being able to execute in a trial and then on the big stage. That’s what I’m most impressed with.”

“It’s one thing to have a lot of

shots, but to be able to execute that game plan on a big stage in front of some of the biggest players in the world is what I admire.”

Mhatre came into the side only after an elbow injury cut short skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad’s season and has scored 163 in four innings with a strike rate of 185.

Former New Zealand captain Fleming marvelled at the skill-sets of both Suryavanshi and Mhatre.

“It’s extraordinary to watch that fearless approach. But you’ve got to have skills as well.”

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DISCOVER ZANZIBAR

Spice Island

A 'JEWEL OF THE INDIAN OCEAN', ZANZIBAR IS A HOT FAVOURITE OF BEACH LOVERS, ADVENTURERS, HONEYMOONERS AS WELL AS CULTURAL ENTHUSIASTS

In the heart of the Indian Ocean lies an archipelago that has sparked the imagination of travellers for centuries. Zanzibar, with its idyllic beaches, rich cultural diversity, and exotic charm, remains a beacon for adventurers, honeymooners, and culture enthusiasts.

Zanzibar is not just a paradise for beach lovers, it is also a historical and cultural melting pot. From the winding alleys of Stone Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, to the lively spice farms that have earned Zanzibar the nickname 'Spice Island', every corner has a story waiting to be told.

The labyrinthine streets and bustling bazaars of Stone Town reveal a fascinating blend of Arab, Persian, Indian, and European influences. Here, history buffs can explore ancient fortresses, palaces, and the former slave market, offering a glimpse into the island's dark past.

A stunning beach experience

For those seeking sun and sand, Zanzibar's



SPICES OF ZANZIBAR

Located off the coast of Tanzania, the picturesque archipelago of Zanzibar is not only known for its stunning beaches and rich cultural heritage but also for its exotic and aromatic spices.

Today, Zanzibar remains a treasure trove of spices, where lush plantations produce a wide array of aromatic delights. Here are some of the prominent spices that continue to enthrall locals and visitors alike:

CLOVES: Known for their sweet and warm flavour, cloves are perhaps the most famous of all Zanzibar spices. They are the dried flower buds of the clove tree and have been used in various culinary and medicinal applications for centuries. Zanzibar's humid climate provides the perfect conditions for clove cultivation, and the islands are among the world's leading producers of this precious spice.

CINNAMON: Derived from the inner bark of the Cinnamomum tree, cinnamon is another prominent spice grown in

Zanzibar. It is widely used in both sweet and savory dishes, adding a distinctive and delightful aroma to cuisines across the globe.

NUTMEG AND MACE: Nutmeg is the seed of the evergreen tree Myristica fragrans, while mace is the red, web-like covering that envelops the nutmeg seed. These spices have a warm and slightly sweet flavour, making them popular additions to many dishes.

CARDAMOM: With its intense, aromatic fragrance, cardamom is a highly sought-after spice in Zanzibar. The locals use it to flavour both food and beverages, including the famous spiced tea found in the region.

BLACK PEPPER: Known as the "king of spices," black pepper is an essential element of Zanzibari cuisine. The islands' pepper plantations are known for producing some of the finest peppercorns, prized for their sharp and pungent taste.

VANILLA: Zanzibar is one of the world's

leading vanilla producers. This delightful spice, derived from the orchids of the genus Vanilla, is used to add a sweet and aromatic flavour to various desserts and beverages.

No visit to Zanzibar is complete without embarking on a spice tour. These guided excursions take visitors on a sensory adventure through lush plantations, where they can see, smell, and taste the various spices that grow in abundance.

During spice tours, knowledgeable guides share insights into the history of spice trade in Zanzibar and the traditional cultivation and harvesting methods. Visitors have the opportunity to witness the entire process, from the cultivation of spice saplings to the drying and processing of mature spices.

The aromatic 'Urojo' soup is a must-try for visitors, known for its diverse flavours resulting from a mixture of spices and other ingredients like tamarind and coconut milk.

the taste buds. Visitors can also take spice tours to learn about the cultivation of cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon, and black pepper, with opportunities to taste and purchase these aromatic treasures.

Beyond its beaches and historical sites, Zanzibar offers a variety of activities for adventurous travellers. Snorkeling and diving excursions reveal a vibrant underwater world teeming with colourful fish and coral reefs. Animal lovers can visit the Jozani Forest to see the rare red colobus monkeys or take a dhow cruise to explore nearby islands and sandbanks.

Adventure and leisure

Zanzibar is a semi-autonomous region of Tanzania in East Africa. The main islands are Unguja (often referred to as Zanzibar) and Pemba. It is known for its historical significance, rich culture, and stunning natural beauty. Zanzibar's tropical climate makes it a year-round destination for travellers.

As a travel destination, Zanzibar effortlessly combines relaxation and adventure, history and modernity. The hospitable locals, stunning natural beauty, and rich cultural heritage make it a must-visit. Whether lounging on a beach, wandering through the ancient streets of Stone Town, or savouring the flavours of the Spice Island, Zanzibar promises an unforgettable experience.

Laguna Palace Resort

While there are many wonderful accommodations in Zanzibar, one stands out for its exceptional blend of tradition and modern luxury: Laguna Palace Resort. Described as a 'little piece of paradise', this private resort with only nine suites embodies the essence of a true Zanzibar vacation.

The suites at Laguna Palace Resort are built and decorated in traditional Zanzibar style, offering an authentic and immersive experience. Guests can wake up to the resort's signature breakfast, featuring a delicious selection of Zanzibar specialties, providing the perfect start to the day.

Nestled in a lush garden adorned with coconut palms and tropical plants, the resort's pool is an oasis of tranquility. Here, guests can relax and unwind, surrounded by the beauty of nature.

The resort offers guided tours, excursions, and a variety of activities to help you explore the wonders of Zanzibar. Additionally, the famous Sunset Beach is just a short walk from the resort, providing the perfect spot to end the day with a breathtaking view.



coastline is dotted with pristine beaches, crystal-clear waters, and vibrant coral reefs. The beaches of Nungwi and Kendwa at the northern tip of the island are known for their powdery white sand and breathtaking sunsets. Paje and Jambiani on the south-eastern coast attract kite surfers and divers with their turquoise waters and rich marine life.

Flavours of Zanzibar

No visit to Zanzibar is complete without indulging in the island's culinary delights. The island's cuisine reflects its diverse cultural influences, with dishes like Zanzibar pizza, biryani, and grilled fish tantalising



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IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

MUHAAB MOHAMMED AL SHABLI TURNS HIS PASSION FOR THE SEA INTO A THRIVING TOURISM VENTURE, ENABLING TOURISTS TO EXPLORE THE UNDERWATER WONDERS OF THE SULTANATE



to create local jobs and foster a culture of environmental stewardship.

Muhab highlighted the importance of storytelling in tourism. "We showcase each location not just with visits, but by creating lasting memories through photography and immersive experiences."

The journey to success, however, wasn't smooth. "From boat preparations to navigating complex permit processes, the beginning was full of challenges. But with persistence and a focus on quality, we built a loyal customer base, many of whom now promote us through word of mouth," he said.

Untapped potential

Muhab initially self-financed the project through savings and support from family, later applying for a small business grant through Oman's SME Development Authority. His success reflects the growing trend of youth-led ventures in the country, supported by national entrepreneurship programmes like Riyada and Intilaaqah.

He emphasised the untapped potential of marine tourism in Oman. "It's a national treasure that needs strategic support - from better promotion and simplified licensing to smart infrastructure that serves both, tourists and investors."

According to the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Oman welcomed over 3.5 million visitors in 2023, with coastal and marine tourism forming a key growth sector under Oman Vision 2040. Muhab believes that with more visibility and collaboration between the private sector and government entities, marine tourism could become a major contributor to the national economy.

Looking ahead, Muhab envisions Aquaventure becoming the leading name in marine tourism in Oman, with branches in new regions and a globally recognised brand that retains its authentic Omani character.

To aspiring entrepreneurs, he offered heartfelt advice, "Believe in your potential and start, even if it's a small gesture. Develop your project until it becomes your dream. Smart risk-taking creates success stories. Don't wait for opportunities - create them. And let the sea teach you how to rise, no matter how high the waves."

AQUAVENTURE

Mohammed Taha

Fuelled by a deep love for the sea and a spirit of adventure, 29-year-old Muhab Mohammed al Shabli, a resident of Muscat, has launched Aquaventure, a marine tourism initiative that aims to transform how tourists experience Oman's pristine coastline.

Fluent in English and currently studying Spanish and French, Muhab is expanding his linguistic skills to cater to a wider range of international visitors. Bubbling with enthusiasm to showcase the underwater wonders along the coast of Oman, he feels his show has only begun.

"I founded Aquaventure in 2023 to give tourists the opportunity to explore Oman's stunning marine life and coastal beauty," Muhab said in an interview with Muscat Daily.

What began with a single boat, offering tours to view coral reefs, turtles, and vibrant marine ecosystems has since grown into a promising business. Today, Muhab owns two boats, each accommodating 12 passengers. His

tours include diving excursions to the famed Daymaniyat Islands, as well as quick getaways to closer destinations like Bandar Al Khiran and Qantab.

"Aquaventure is more than just a boat trip," Muhab said. "It's your gateway to a world of marine adventures in the heart of Oman's coast. We started with a passion and turned it into an unforgettable experience."

Eco-friendly tourism

Operating from Marina Bandar Al Rowdha, Aquaventure offers private sea tours, island explorations, fishing trips, snorkeling, and diving experiences. Key destinations include the Daymaniyat Islands, Al Fahal Island, and Bandar Al Khiran. "Our trips uncover hidden gems - secluded beaches, sea caves, and crystal-clear waters that are only accessible by boat," he disclosed.

Aquaventure has also introduced environmentally conscious practices, such as educating tourists on marine conservation and encouraging reef-safe sunscreen use. Muhab ensures that his team - mostly young Omanis - are trained in eco-friendly tourism and customer service, helping

We showcase each location not just with visits, but by creating lasting memories through photography and immersive experiences



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