

Oman, UAE establish investment partnerships worth RO13.5bn



UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan bids farewell to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik at the end of the latter's two-day state visit to the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday (ONA)

Our Correspondent
Abu Dhabi

Oman and United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed several agreements and memoranda of understanding worth RO13.5bn aimed at enhancing economic ties on Tuesday.

The signing ceremony took place at Emirates Palace Hotel in Abu Dhabi during the visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the UAE.

The agreements span renewable energy, green metals, railway, and digital infrastructure and technology investments.

On the occasion, Mohamed Hassan al Suwaidi, Emirati Minister of Investment, said, "The UAE and Oman have strong historical relations that are founded on shared values, goals and principles. The agreements represent a major milestone in our bilateral ties, as these pave the way for us to leverage our collective strength to realise our shared vision of advancement and prosperity."

Representatives from Oman, including Abdulsalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, President of Oman Investment Authority, Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and Dr Ahmed bin Hilal al Busaidi, Ambassador of Oman to the UAE, attended the signing ceremony, alongside officials from relevant authorities.

From the UAE side, Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed al Nahyan, Managing Director of Abu Dhabi Invest-

ment Authority, Suhail al Mazrouei, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, and Mohammed bin Hadi al Hussaini, Minister of State for Financial Affairs, and others were present.

Oman-UAE rail gets new identity

Oman-Etihad Rail Company unveiled 'Hafeet Rail' as the new identity of Oman-UAE Rail Network on Tuesday. The name pays tribute to Jabal Hafeet, which extends between Oman and the UAE, highlighting its strategic location and historical significance to both countries.

Oman-Etihad Rail Company - a joint venture between Oman Rail and Etihad Rail - will operate the railway network linking Sohar Port to the UAE National Rail Network, with a total project investment of US\$3bn. Three agreements pertaining to the joint rail project were signed in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday.

The first is a partnership agreement between stakeholders including Etihad Rail, Oman Rail and Mubadala Investment signalling project commencement.

The second agreement pertains to civil contracts for the joint network, awarded to an Omani-Emirati joint venture led by Trojan Construction Group and Galfar Engineering and Contracting. The third agreement involves the systems and integration contracts for the railway network, awarded to a partnership between Siemens and HAC.

See also [Page 02](#)

AGREEMENTS

- An industrial and energy megaproject valued at RO12.2bn encompassing renewable energy initiatives, including solar and wind projects, alongside green metals production facilities. The signatories included Abu Dhabi National Energy Company, Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company (MASDAR), Emirates Global Aluminium, Emirates Steel Arkan, OQ Alternative Energy and Oman Electricity Transmission Company.
- Establishment of technology-focused Jusoor Fund by Abu Dhabi Developmental Holding Company (ADQ) and Oman Investment Authority represented by IHCA Group, worth RO69mn.
- Cooperation in multiple sectors, notably digital infrastructure, food security, energy, transport and other areas of mutual interest. This agreement was signed by the UAE Ministry of Investment and the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Investment Promotion of Oman.
- A shareholding partnership between Etihad Rail, Mubadala and Omani Asyad Group Company.
- Formation of an alliance between Oman and the UAE to enhance bilateral economic and trade relations.

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Two leaders praise efforts to enhance bilateral ties

Abu Dhabi, UAE - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik concluded his two-day state visit to the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday, following which a joint statement was issued by Oman and the UAE. The statement said His Majesty's visit was in response to an invitation from Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan, President of the UAE.

Discussions were held in a spirit of brotherhood and solidarity that confirmed the results of the state visit made by Sheikh Mohamed to Oman in September 2022 starting a new phase of cooperation and fruitful strategic

partnership between the two countries in several fields.

The two leaders also discussed regional and international developments of common interest and exchanged views on these. They stressed the strengthening of coordination in a way that serves common interests and consolidates the foundations of stability and security in the region, emphasising their positions calling for stability, security, prosperity and development for all countries and peoples of the region and the entire world.

In the context of regional developments, the two leaders



called on parties involved to exercise utmost self-restraint to spare the region and its peoples from the dangers of escalation and instability. They stressed their position calling for adher-

national peace and security.

On bilateral economic and investment matters, the two leaders praised the efforts made by competent authorities in both countries to enhance bilateral co-

operation. They stressed the importance of stimulating and encouraging the public and private sectors to develop and diversify trade and investment exchange, and the importance of setting up

strategic partnerships that meet the aspirations of the peoples of the two countries and enhance prospects of comprehensive co-operation in the future.

At the conclusion of the visit, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his gratitude and appreciation to Sheikh Mohamed, the UAE government and the brotherly Emirati people for their warm reception and generous hospitality, wishing the country continued progress and prosperity.

Utmost self-restraint urged to spare the region from the dangers of escalation and instability

ence to international laws and resolving differences through diplomacy and dialogue, renewing their demands to the UN and Security Council to carry out their responsibilities to promote inter-

operation. They stressed the importance of stimulating and encouraging the public and private sectors to develop and diversify trade and investment exchange, and the importance of setting up

H M meets Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed



Abu Dhabi, UAE - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik met Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, Vice President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Ruler of Dubai, on Tuesday morning.

The two sides reviewed the fraternal bonds binding Oman and the UAE. They also discussed bilateral relations and means of promoting these in various spheres to serve the interests of the Omani and Emirati peoples.

His Majesty visits Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque

Abu Dhabi, UAE - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik visited Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday as part of his state visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

His Majesty the Sultan was accompanied by Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al Nahyan, UAE Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of Presidential Court (Head of Mission of Honour).

Upon his arrival at the mosque, His Majesty the Sultan was received by Dr Yousuf al Obaidli, Director General of Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Centre.

His Majesty the Sultan went on a tour of the mosque's halls and corridors. He took note of the edifice's role in promoting the culture of coexistence and openness inspired by the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan.

On the occasion, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his admiration for the mosque's depiction of aesthetics and arts of Islamic architecture, architectural designs and the edifice's collections. He praised the role of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Centre in portraying the tolerant nature of Islam and extending bridges of rapprochement with different cultures of the world.

At the end of his tour, His Majesty the Sultan signed the Visitors' Book at the mosque.



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Oman's tallest flagpole unveiled, to be ready for National Day

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Muscat Municipality unveiled details of its latest project - Al Khuwair Square - in Ministries District on Tuesday. It features Oman's tallest flagpole - a towering 126m.

To be financed by Jindal Shadeed, the ambitious project was announced in the presence of Sayyid Saud bin Hilal al Bussaidi, Governor of Muscat, Ahmed bin Mohammed al Humaidi, Chairman of Muscat Municipality, and Harssha Shetty, CEO of Jindal Shadeed Iron and Steel, a subsidiary of Jindal Group in Oman.

The project spans an area of 18,000sqm and includes numerous recreational amenities. Alongside the flagpole, the square will feature lush green areas, palm trees, walking and cycling tracks, an outdoor arts and crafts exhibition, a skate park and designated areas for sports activities. The project will include public amenities such as restrooms and a parking lot with 107 spaces.

The space will be a sanctuary for leisure and outdoor sports



enthusiasts, making it a stunning addition to the heart of the city.

The flagpole at Al Khuwair Square will be Oman's tallest man-made structure, surpassing the height of a 40-storey building, constructed with 135 tonnes of steel. The Omani flag adorning the pole will measure 18m in width and 31.5m in length. It will also be equipped with a warning

light for aircraft.

Governor Sayyid Saud anticipated that the flag will be hoisted on the new flagpole during the 54th National Day celebrations this November.

Announcing the project, Humaidi said, "What sets this apart is its exemplary model of cooperation and partnership between the public and private sectors,

aligned towards serving the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. The Al Khuwair Square project exemplifies the fruitful collaboration between Muscat governorate, represented by Muscat Municipality, and Jindal Shadeed Iron and Steel, a leading iron and steel producer in the region and globally. It serves as a pioneering model for synergising efforts in

What sets this project apart is its exemplary model of cooperation and partnership between the public and private sectors

AHMED AL HUMAIDI

initiatives with multifaceted impacts."

On the occasion, Shetty added, "We take pride in partnering with Muscat governorate to realise this ground-breaking project and erect Oman's tallest flagpole, inspiring future generations to perpetually strive for progress and success. An Omani company established 15 years ago, Jindal Shadeed has emerged as one of the region's largest iron and steel producers, spearheading green industrialisation initiatives in Oman and beyond. With this remarkable journey, we present this architectural marvel as a gift to the people and government of Oman, who have tirelessly supported our collective success."



H M the Sultan receives written message from King of Bahrain

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq has received a written message from King Hamad bin Issa al Khalifa of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The message was handed over to Sayyid Asaad bin Tariq al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs and Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, when he received in his office Dr Juma Ahmed al Ka'abi, Ambassador of Bahrain to Oman, on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the ambassador conveyed greetings of the King of Bahrain and best wishes of good health, wellbeing and a long life to His Majesty the Sultan. He also conveyed the Bahrain monarch's wishes of further progress and prosperity to the Omani people.

On his turn, Sayyid Asaad asked the ambassador to convey greetings of His Majesty the Sul-

tan and best wishes of wellbeing, happiness and continuous success to the King of Bahrain and further development and growth to the people of Bahrain.

They reviewed the advanced, bilateral relations between the two countries and means of promoting these in various spheres, in addition to reviewing several matters of mutual interest.

Bids farewell to Kazakh envoy

In another meeting on Tuesday, Sayyid Asaad received Najmedin Muhametali, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Oman, in his office to bid him farewell at the end of his tour of duty.

The ambassador expressed his gratitude to His Majesty the Sultan for the support extended to him by the Government and the Omani people during his tour of duty.

ONA

MAFWR implements plan to protect North and South Batinah from floods

Muscat - In an effort to mitigate flood risks, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) has announced an initiative to implement a study on flood mitigation and to build flood protection dams in North and South Batinah governorates.

This is part of a broader strategy to enhance disaster preparedness and protect vulnerable areas from devastating impacts of extreme weather events.

As part of the study, MAFWR has completed designs for several new flood protection dams, which are now ready for implementation in North and South Batinah. These designs are based on updated flood risk maps that identify areas prone to flooding, allowing targeted interventions to safeguard communities and land in these vulnerable regions.

Construction of a significant water reservoir in Wadi Ahin has



been plan, based on the study, alongside a protective dam to enhance the area's resilience to flooding.

This project is particularly important as the current Wadi Ahin dam, constructed in 1994, primarily serves to improve groundwater recharge and support agricultural water supply, with a storage capacity of 6.8mn m³.

During the exceptional

weather conditions of April 16, precipitation in Wadi Ahin area measured 95mm. An estimated 18mn m³ of water collected, which exceeded the dam's storage capacity, resulting in damage to a 30m section of its overflow structure.

The ministry, however, assured that the remainder of the dam is functioning as intended, securely holding approximately

4.76mn m³ of water, or 70% of its total capacity.

MAFWR has implemented a periodic maintenance plan for all existing dams, including the one at Wadi Ahin. This plan involves sediment removal, clearing of vegetation and debris, and maintenance of water discharge gates to ensure dams continue to function effectively even under adverse weather conditions.

REGIONAL WEATHER		
	Max	Min
Muscat	30	23
Abu Dhabi	33	21
Doha	37	22
Kuwait City	33	22
Manama	32	23
Riyadh	33	19

Mwasalat transports over 89,000 passengers during Eid holiday

Our Correspondent
Muscat

During the recent five-day Eid al Fitr holiday, Oman National Transport Company - Mwasalat - transported more than 89,000 passengers. According to a statement from Mwasalat, over 85,000 passengers utilised its bus services, while more than 4,000 passengers were transported via its ferry services from April 9 to April 13. On the second day of Eid, over 23,000 passengers rode its buses.

Mwasalat informed that Route 1 (Ruwi-Mabela) was the most popular, with over 14,800 passengers availing this bus service. Among its ferry services, the Shannah-Masirah route saw significant usage, transporting more than 3,500 passengers.

The ferry services also played a crucial role in transporting goods, with Mwasalat transporting 932 vehicles and more than 506.7 tonnes of goods.

Mwasalat attributes these figures to robust marketing activi-

ties and continuous efforts to enhance efficiency of services. The company firmly believes customer satisfaction is the key to its achievements.

Mwasalat experienced significant growth in passenger numbers in 2023 compared to 2022. The company transported over 4.5mn passengers, a 40% increase over the 2022 figure when it served 3.2mn passengers.

With over 11,700 daily passengers, Mwasalat's buses transported 4,271,732 passengers across the sultanate, compared to over 3mn in 2022. Its ferry service transported over 236,986 passengers in 2023 compared to 221,000 in 2022.

Omanis made up 32.5 % of the passengers availing its bus services, while on ferries they accounted for 79.7 % of the total. Female passengers availing buses accounted for 13.5% and 21% on ferries.

Mwasalat's ferries transported over 61,000 vehicles, while buses transported more than 23,000 tonnes of goods.

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Tender Number	Description of Tender	Last date to collect the tender	Tender return date
(PRE/23/210) Re-Call	Construction of Remedial Measures For Revetment Failure Along Al Bahri Road In Muttrah Area Phase 1	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/040 Re-Call	Roads Paving at A'Seeb	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/050 Re-Call	Consultancy Services for Outdoor advertising and commercial signboards	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/072	Design & Construction of Internal Roads in Commercial Area at Al Mabela South	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/090	Supply of Heavy Vehicles for Muscat Municipality Fleet	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/091	Supply of Photograph Devices	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/095	RFP for Application Support for Oracle EBS CRM	12/05/2024	13/05/2024
PRE/24/098	Supply of Scanners for MM	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/099	Renewal of AMC for MM External Infrastructure	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/101	Renewal of AMC for Database Administration Support for MM	02/05/2024	13/05/2024
PRE/24/102	Supply & Installation of Flag Poles	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/103	Supply of Building Materials	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/109	Design & Construction of Balance Internal Roads in Boshier & Muttrah	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/117	Protection Works at Wadi Al Ghadeer in Al khuwair	12/05/2024	02/06/2024
PRE/24/118	Consultancy Services for Master Plan for Development of the commercial Area in Qurum	12/05/2024	02/06/2024

- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically.
- Clarification and Support:
 - For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) .
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FOREX RATES

(RO1 equals)

India	216.35
Pakistan	723.18
Bangladesh	284.77
Philippines	149.21
Sri Lanka	779.08

*Rates as on April 23
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Aramco to buy 10% stake in China's Hengli

Saudi Arabia's national oil company, Aramco, is in talks to secure a 10% stake in Chinese company Hengli Petrochemical, the oil major announced on Monday.

Aramco signed a memorandum of understanding with the Hengli Group, the parent company of the Hengli Petrochemical, on Monday, which aligns with the Saudi oil giant's strategy to expand its downstream presence in key high-value markets, the oil major said in a statement.

Mohammed Y al Qahtani, Aramco's downstream president, said, "This MoU supports our efforts to grow our global downstream footprint."

"We continue to explore new opportunities in important markets as we seek to progress in our liquids-to-chemicals strategy," Qahtani said.

OIA, Abu Dhabi's ADQ launch \$180mn tech-focused fund

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Abu Dhabi-based investment and holding company ADQ on Tuesday announced the launch of a \$180mn technology-focused fund, Jasoor Fund, with Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and represented by ITHCA Group.

This commitment is part of broader framework agreement signed between OIA and ADQ in 2022, ADQ said in a press statement.

Jasoor Fund aims to bolster the digital economy in Oman as well as the wider MENA region by supporting high-growth technology companies in sectors such as FinTech, EdTech, HealthTech, CleanTech, food and agriculture, and logistics. Its core focus will be on innovative technology companies established in the sultanate, in addition to technology startups in other countries in the region.

The fund will undertake investments in high-growth technology companies at various stages of development that have established business models.

Mohamed Hassan Alsuwaidi, Managing Director and CEO of ADQ, said, "Building on ADQ's strategic partnership with OIA established in 2022, the launch of Jasoor Fund reinforces our



commitment to make investments that unlock the potential of key sectors of the economy, while creating lasting value for stakeholders. Together, we will continue to advance trade and promote investments that will contribute to the growth of both economies."

Abdulsalam al Murshidi, President of the Oman Investment

Authority, said, "The establishment of a technology-focused fund with ADQ marks a pivotal moment for Oman's technology sector. Through this strategic partnership and the significant commitment by ADQ which underpins it, we are setting the stage for a new era of innovation and growth that will propel both nations into a future powered by

digital transformation and technological advancement."

Said Abdullah al Mandhari, CEO of ITHCA Group, said, "The establishment of the Jasoor Fund aligns with our venture capital investment strategy, focusing on funding contemporary, emerging and cutting-edge technological projects, while also providing Omani youth with opportunities

to develop their ventures and expand globally."

In 2022, ADQ and Oman Investment Authority identified investment opportunities worth over \$8bn in key sectors of Oman's economy. The partnership aims to contribute to increased economic cooperation and trade between both nations.

GCC oil firms can absorb low-carbon investments

Our Correspondent
Muscat

National oil companies (NOCs) in GCC countries can absorb the incremental investments that are necessary to move toward net zero targets, while maintaining solid credit metrics, assuming moderate cash calls from shareholders, S&P Global Ratings said.

"GCC NOCs' average low-carbon investments would have to total \$15bn-\$25bn annually at least until 2026 to keep up with those of global listed peers. Even after factoring in these investments, the overall effect on NOCs' debt to EBITDA would be below 2.0x on average," said S&P Global Ratings credit analyst Rawan Oueidat.

"We expect that GCC NOCs will have sufficient financial buffers and competitive advantages to absorb the incremental investments that are necessary to catch up with global peers and that they can preserve their credit ratios over the next five years," Oueidat added.

S&P expects that GCC countries' investments in renewable energy will further increase. This spells opportunity for green, social, sustainable, and sustainability-linked bond issuance.

The Financial Corporation Co. SAOG

CONSOLIDATED UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dear Shareholders,
We present the unaudited financial results of The Financial Corporation Co. SAOG (FINCORP) for the period ended 31 March 2024.

FINANCIAL RESULTS

The Company achieved a total income of RO 257,225 compared to a total income of RO 214,309 during the period ended March 2024 and earned a Net profit of RO 141,336 during the period ended 31 March 2024 compared to a net profit of RO 108,080 during the previous period.

A summary of the financial results is tabulated below.

DETAILS	31-Mar-24 (in R.O)	31-Dec-23 (in R.O)	Variance %
Total Income	257,225	214,309	20%
Total Expense	(115,889)	(106,229)	9%
Net Profit/ (Loss) before taxes	141,336	108,080	31%
Profit / (Loss) per share (RO)	0.002	0.002	31%

MARKET OUTLOOK

Oman's economic growth is expected to grow from 1.6% in 2023 to 2.1% in 2024 driven by stable hydrocarbon production. We also anticipate cut in interest rates expected in H2 2024. Inflation rate in 2023 stands at 0.9% and will remain around 1.7% in the year 2024.

Although there is visibility of financial surpluses after seven years of deficits with Oman government's measures to reduce public spending and increase non-oil revenues in addition to positive results from the restructuring of government companies.

GCC GDP Growth is projected at 2.7% for the year 2024 from 1% in 2023. Despite the energy sector exerting downward pressure on GCC economic growth, non-energy sector performance is expected to offset some of the impact. GCC Regional data of Non-Oil PMI index is slightly down in March month. However, disruptions in shipping routes through the Red Sea and Suez Canal have pushed up shipping & raw material costs, suggesting a possible loss of momentum in the coming months.

U.S. Federal Reserve and other major central banks have made progress against inflation and kept policy rates stagnant which appears close to their peak levels. Annual real GDP growth is now projected at 2.6% (from prior projection 2.3%). The upward revision reflects somewhat higher forecasts for growth in several countries, including US, UK, India & Brazil. There is strong possibility that US Federal reserve will cut the interest rates in June-2024.

CONTINGENCIES

During the previous year, the Company appointed an independent consultant to review and assess the impact of discrepancies in the international brokerage accounts. The process of substantiating the accuracy of account balances has been initiated and is expected to be completed during this year. The potential impact cannot be reliably measured until the investigation is completed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We express our gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq for his wise leadership and progressive vision as he continues to lead the country on the path of growth and prosperity. We also extend our appreciation to Muscat Securities Market, Capital Market Authority and Muscat Clearing and Depository Company for their valuable co-operation and support. Finally, we grateful to all our staff for holding on during these difficult times, shareholders for their faith and our esteemed clients for the confidence, trust and support extended to FINCORP.

Abdullah Masoud Al Harthy
Chairman of the Board

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	31-Mar-24 RO	31-Dec-23 RO
ASSETS		
Bank balances and cash	1,218,434	1,063,513
Investments at fair value through profit and loss	4,130,036	4,355,544
Trade and other receivables	950,918	744,311
Investment in associate	1,777,344	1,833,172
Deferred tax asset	61,069	61,071
Property and equipment	4,240	4,299
Investment property	270,000	270,000
Total assets	8,412,041	8,331,910
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Equity		
Share capital	7,002,996	7,002,996
Legal reserve	1,014,366	1,000,233
Accumulated losses	(351,922)	(479,125)
Total equity	7,665,440	7,665,440
Liabilities		
Employees' end of service benefits	45,027	43,194
Trade and other payables	693,960	756,998
Taxation	7,614	7,614
Total liabilities	746,601	807,806
Total equity and liabilities	8,412,041	8,473,246
Net assets per share	0.109	0.107
Assets under portfolio management and held in trust	12,280,091	12,501,085

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	31-Mar-24 RO	31-Mar-23 RO
INCOME		
Fees and commission income	36,375	72,588
Net realised gain on investments at fair value through profit or loss	67,813	13,075
Fair value changes in investments at fair value through profit or loss	(75,254)	(72,293)
Dividend income	124,668	87,415
Other income	32,642	16,845
	186,244	117,630
EXPENSES		
Salaries and employee related costs	61,314	62,601
Operating expenses	54,575	43,628
	115,889	106,229
Profit / (loss) from operations	70,355	11,401
Share of results of associate	71,525	96,618
Finance Income (net)	(544)	61
Profit / (loss) for the period before taxation	141,336	108,080
Taxation	-	(23,095)
Net profit / (loss) and total comprehensive income for the period	141,336	84,985
Basic earnings per share	0.002	0.001

Note:

The complete accounts, either in Arabic and English as requested, will be sent by mail within 7 days of request to any unitholder who requests the Fund at the address: PO Box 782, PC 131, Sultanate of Oman, Tel : +968 24822327, Fax : +968 24822390



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Technip wins EPC contract for Marsa LNG project in Oman

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Technip Energies, a leading engineering and technology company, has been awarded a substantial contract by TotalEnergies and OQ for the Marsa LNG project located in Sohar.

The contract covers engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) of a natural gas liquefaction train with an LNG production capacity of 1mn tonne per annum. The plant will use electric-driven motors instead of conventional gas turbines and will be powered by renewable electricity from a planned nearby solar farm which will cover 100% of the annual power consumption of the LNG plant.

"This is positioning the Marsa LNG project as one of the lowest greenhouse gases intensity LNG plants ever built worldwide. The LNG produced will notably be used as a marine fuel to reduce the shipping industry's carbon footprint," Technip Energies said in a press statement.

Arnaud Pieton, CEO of Technip Energies, said, "The world's net-zero trajectory will require LNG as a critical source of en-



ergy, while addressing emissions abatement. TotalEnergies and OQ's progressive Marsa LNG project is an example of how we can decarbonise the LNG value chain by powering its production with renewable energy and using it as a marine fuel to reduce emissions linked to maritime transportation.

"By leveraging our innovation and global leadership in LNG infrastructure design and delivery, we are proud to support TotalEnergies and Oman in providing reliable, affordable and sustainable energy to the world."

The Marsa LNG project is an integrated LNG project developed by TotalEnergies and OQ. TotalEnergies and OQ on Monday announced the Final Investment Decision (FID) for the Marsa LNG project. The project will be jointly established by the two companies at Sohar Port

with an estimated cost of \$1.6bn.

The Marsa LNG project, 80% owned by TotalEnergies and 20% owned by OQ, combines upstream gas production, downstream gas liquefaction, and renewable power generation.

According to TotalEnergies, 150mn cubic feet per day of natural gas, coming from the 33.19% interest held by Marsa in the Mabrouk North-East field on onshore Block 10, will provide the required feedstock for the LNG plant.

As part of the Marsa LNG project, a 1mn metric tonne per year capacity LNG liquefaction plant will be built at the Port of Sohar. The LNG production is expected to start by the first quarter of 2028 and is primarily intended to serve the marine fuel market (LNG bunkering) in the Gulf. LNG quantities not sold as bunker fuel will be offloaded by TotalEnergies (80%) and OQ (20%).

Additionally, a dedicated 300MWp solar plant will be built to cover 100% of the annual power consumption of the Marsa LNG plant, allowing a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.



Advertisement

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Saudi to host WEF meeting

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - Saudi Arabia will host the World Economic Forum (WEF) Special Meeting on Global Collaboration, Growth, and Energy for Development during April 28th and 29th, reported the Saudi Press Agency (SPA).

The WEF Special Meeting sessions will promote productive dialogues to enhance global collaboration and stimulate collective international action to devise sustainable solutions. The Meeting will focus on three central themes.

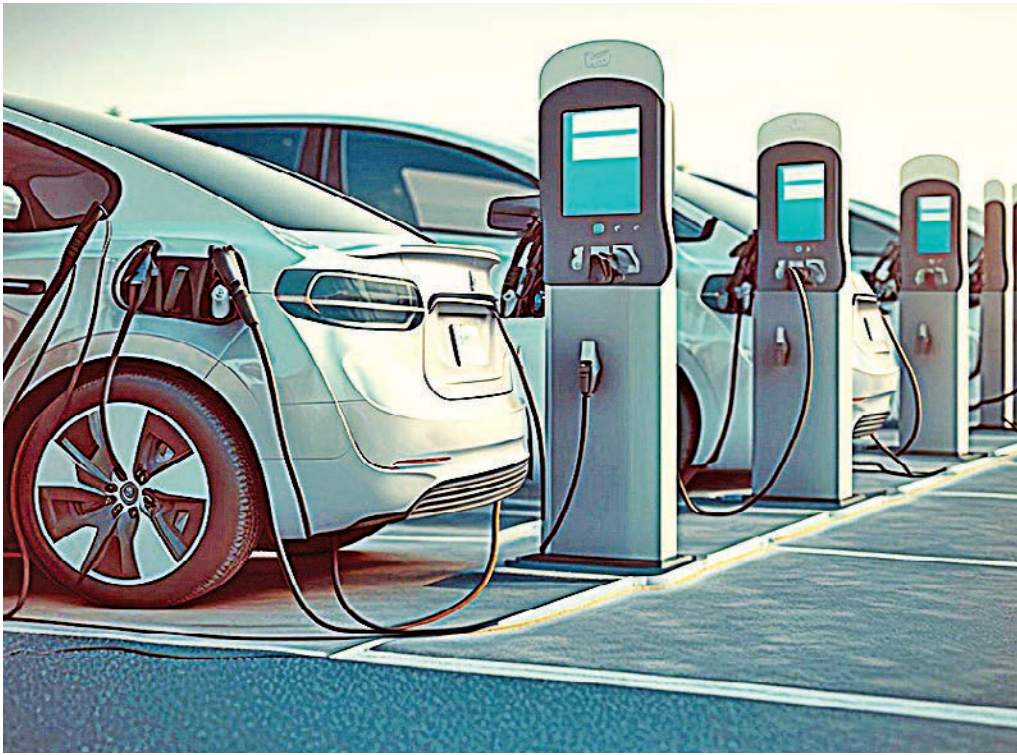
Global EV sales growing strongly: IEA

Paris, France – More than one in five cars sold worldwide this year is expected to be electric, with surging demand projected over the next decade set to remake the global auto industry and significantly reduce oil consumption for road transport, according to the new edition of the International Energy Agency's (IEA) annual Global EV Outlook.

The latest outlook, published on Tuesday, finds that global electric car sales are set to remain robust in 2024, reaching around 17mn by the end of the year. In the first quarter, sales grew by about 25% compared with the same period in 2023 – similar to the growth rate seen in the same period a year earlier, but from a larger base.

The number of electric cars sold globally in the first three months of this year is roughly equivalent to the number sold in all of 2020.

In 2024, electric cars sales in China are projected to leap to about 10mn, accounting for about 45% of all car sales in the country. In the United States,



According to IEA's estimates, global electric car sales are set to remain robust in 2024, reaching around 17mn by the end of the year. Last year, global electric car sales soared by 35% to almost 14mn

roughly one in nine cars sold are projected to be electric – while in Europe, despite a generally weak outlook for passenger car sales and the phase-out of subsidies in some countries, electric cars are still set to represent

about one in four cars sold.

This growth builds on a record-breaking 2023. Last year, global electric car sales soared by 35% to almost 14mn. While demand remained largely concentrated in China, Europe and the United States, growth also picked up in some emerging markets such as Viet Nam and Thailand, where electric cars accounted for 15% and 10%, respectively, of all cars sold.

Substantial investment in the electric vehicle supply chain, ongoing policy support, and declines in the price of EVs and their batteries are expected to produce even more significant changes in the years to come. The IEA Outlook finds that under today's policy settings, every other car sold globally is set to be electric by 2035.

"The continued momentum behind electric cars is clear in our data, although it is stronger in some markets than others," IEA's Executive Director Fatih Birol said in a press release. "Rather than tapering off, the global EV revolution appears to

be gearing up for a new phase of growth. The wave of investment in battery manufacturing suggests the EV supply chain is advancing to meet automakers' ambitious plans for expansion. As a result, the share of EVs on the roads is expected to continue to climb rapidly."

"Based on today's policy settings alone, almost one in three cars on the roads in China by 2030 is set to be electric, and almost one in five in both the United States and European Union. This shift will have major ramifications for both the auto industry and the energy sector," he added.

The report finds that manufacturers have taken major steps to deliver on the strengthening EV ambitions of governments, including by making significant financial commitments. Thanks to high levels of investment over the past five years, the world's capacity to produce batteries for EVs is well positioned to keep up with demand, even as it rises sharply over the next decade. The pace

Reliance Jio becomes world's largest mobile operator in data traffic

Mumbai, India – India's telecom giant Reliance Jio has become the world's largest mobile operator in terms of data traffic, surpassing China Mobile. The announcement came on Monday as Jio revealed its quarterly results, showcasing staggering numbers and milestones achieved in various segments.

As of March 2024, Jio boasts a subscriber base of 481.8mn, out of which 108mn subscribers are on Jio's True5G Standalone network. The number reflects Jio's stronghold in the Indian telecom market.

According to a press release, the total traffic on the Jio network has reached 40.9 exabytes, marking a 35.2% year-on-year increase. This surge is attributed to the growing adoption of 5G and Home services.

Notably, 28% of the traffic comes from 5G subscribers, indicating a swift transition towards next-generation connectivity. Additionally, Jio's Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) services have contributed significantly to the data traffic.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a



Mukesh Ambani

dramatic 2.4 times increase in annual data traffic, with per capita monthly data usage skyrocketing to 28.7 GB from just 13.3 GB three years ago. This surge underscores the growing reliance on digital connectivity in India.

Commenting on the results, Mukesh Ambani, Chairman and Managing Director of Reliance

Industries Limited, expressed his satisfaction with the company's performance and its contribution to the Indian economy.

He highlighted the significant achievements, including becoming the first Indian company to cross the Rs1tn-threshold in pre-tax profits. Ambani said, "Initiatives across RIL's businesses have made a remarkable contri-

bution towards fostering growth of various sectors of the Indian economy. It is heartening to note that alongside strengthening the national economy, all segments have posted a robust financial and operating performance. This has helped the company achieve multiple milestones. I am happy to share that this year, Reliance became the first Indian company to cross the Rs1tn-threshold in pre-tax profits."

Ambani also emphasised Jio's role in driving the digital transformation in India, from upgrading 2G users to smartphones to leading the effort in producing AI-driven solutions. He noted, "With over 108mn True 5G customers, Jio truly leads the 5G transformation in India. From upgrading the hitherto 2G users to smartphones, to leading the effort of producing AI-driven solutions, Jio has proved its capability in strengthening the nation's digital infrastructure."

He reiterated Jio's commitment to strengthening the nation's digital infrastructure and its continued efforts to provide innovative solutions to consumers.

ANI

Uruguay bullish about GCC meat export prospects

Dubai, UAE – The National Meat Institute of Uruguay is targeting the GCC beef and lamb markets as part of a trade mission to showcase the country's finest quality halal beef and lamb, lauded for its healthy diet status thanks to low levels of saturated fats, balanced Omega 6 and Omega 3, iron and vitamin E.

Uruguay's optimal conditions, thanks to its temperate climate and fertile soils, allow suppliers to produce meat naturally. More than 80% of the territory is dedicated to livestock, and as a result of the pasture-based cattle feeding, Uruguayan meat is recognised as a major contributor to healthier lifestyles.

Uruguay is one of a few countries worldwide that have a mandatory electronic traceability system for all livestock, which dates back to 2006. Each animal has a visual caravan (plastic) and an electronic chip (with RFID) that can be read with special tools, sending the information to the Ministry of Livestock in a data storage centre.

In a press release, Conrado Ferber, Chairman of The National



Conrado Ferber

Meat Institute of Uruguay, said, "Meat quality begins with animal welfare and culminates with an industrial process that guarantees a safe product. We're proud to be the only country in the world with 100% traceability of livestock and meat."

According to the institute's statistics, beef exports from Uruguay increased rapidly last year and grew consistently in the second half of 2023, reaching 45,000 tonnes in December and 52,000 tonnes in January, representing an 11.5% increase over

the same period in 2023 and a record figure for the country's beef industry.

Uruguay made a significant mark in the GCC market, exporting a record-high \$13mn worth of halal-certified beef. The UAE led the imports, accounting for 40% of the supply, with Saudi Arabia following closely. The GCC also proved to be a substantial market for Uruguayan lamb exports, with \$5mn of halal-certified products shipped in 2023. Oman, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE were the primary markets, receiving 75% of the exports.

The country is now promoting its high-quality halal beef and lamb to consumers and restaurants in the GCC at a time when, alone, the UAE's red meat market is expected to reach \$860.64mn by 2029, growing at a CAGR of 1.73% between 2024 and 2029, according to research from Mor-dor Intelligence.

"Despite accounting for only a small proportion of Uruguayan beef and lamb meat exports, the GCC remains a key market for us thanks to its high-value proposition and rapidly growing demand," Ferber added.

Japan to take 'appropriate steps' as yen falls sharply

Tokyo, Japan – Japan will take appropriate action to counter excessive volatility in the currency market without ruling out any options, Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki said Tuesday, as the yen weakened further and neared the psychologically important 155 line against the US dollar.

Suzuki said the government is monitoring foreign exchange movements with "a high sense of urgency" while maintaining close communication with the monetary authorities of other nations.

Amid caution over direct market intervention by Japanese authorities, the yen has continued to weaken even after the Bank of Japan last month raised interest rates for the first time in 17 years.

The Japanese currency's weakness also comes amid receding expectations that the US Federal Reserve will start cutting interest rates as soon as June following aggressive monetary

tightening to fight inflation.

"We are carefully watching market developments based on our firm stance that we will take appropriate action against excessive fluctuations without excluding any options," Suzuki told reporters.

Last week, the finance chiefs of Japan, South Korea and the United States shared "serious concerns" about the sharp depreciation of the yen and won relative to the dollar.

Separately, the Group of Seven or G7 finance ministers and central bank governors reiterated that excessive and disorderly foreign exchange movements negatively affect the economy.

During a parliamentary session, Suzuki stressed the need for close communication with monetary authorities in other countries, signalling the government is laying the ground for another market intervention.

Kyodo News

Nvidia's 5-year investment return hit 1700%

New York, US – The US chipmaker Nvidia is having another fantastic year. After ending 2023 as the best S&P 500 performer, with a whopping 236% gain, the AI giant added over one trillion dollars to its stock value in Q1, or 15% more than in the entire 2023.

The company's 2024 price rally has brought investors 70% gains. However, its five-year investment return is even more impressive.

According to data presented by Stocklytics.com, Nvidia's five-year investment return hit a whopping 1,700%, seven times more than Apple's and eighteen times more than Amazon's.

Ever since revealing how much it expects to profit from the rise of artificial intelligence, Nvidia's stock has been on a meteoric rise. Last year, the US chipmaker added almost \$880bn to its stock value, rising from \$359bn in January to over \$1.1tn in December.



Nvidia's market cap stood at around \$113.7bn in April 2019. Since then, this figure has jumped more than eighteen times, reaching over \$2.1tn last week

While this is quite an impressive gain, the company managed to outdo it in the first

three months of 2024 after adding more than one trillion dollars to its market cap.

Although many investors are questioning whether Nvidia stock is in a bubble, its strong fundamentals and growth potential show it is on a stable path, and those who have invested in it have seen quite impressive gains. According to Stocklytics data, Nvidia's five-year investment return hit over 1,700%, much more than any other tech giant.

Assuming an investor bought \$1,000 worth of Nvidia stocks in April 2019, they would have picked up 22 stocks priced at around \$46. Since then, Nvidia's price has jumped more than eighteen times and hit \$846 last week, turning that \$1,000 investment into \$18,200.

Nvidia's five-year investment return is even more impressive when compared to other tech giants. The world's most valuable car producer and AI giant Tesla has the second-highest investment return in five years of 723%, or more

than twice less than Nvidia.

Apple and Microsoft stocks brought around 240% gains to their investors in the same period. Meta, Alphabet (Google), and Amazon follow with 181%, 154%, and 92% gains, respectively.

\$2.1tn market cap

Besides bringing impressive profits to its investors, Nvidia's stock price rally has helped the company add more than \$2tn to its stock value in the past five years. Statistics show the US tech giant's market cap stood at around \$113.7bn in April 2019. Since then, this figure has jumped more than eighteen times, reaching over \$2.1tn last week.

This impressive growth has turned Nvidia into the third-largest tech company in the world by market cap, ahead of Amazon, Alphabet, and Meta Platforms and right behind the industry's giants, Microsoft and Apple.

BankDhofar provides varied saving solutions

Bank Dhofar provides multiple savings options with the aim of improving customers' financial plans, which achieves unparalleled lucrative returns on their investments.

The bank has designed a Recurring Deposit Account as a powerful and flexible savings tool to meet the financial needs of customers and their future aspirations to achieve competitive returns and sustainable growth for their money, a press release said.

The Recurring Deposit Account from BankDhofar is characterised by unique benefits for customers from all segments of society, especially for those who are looking for reliable and rewarding financial solutions, as the account allows the commitment to deposit small amounts of money, starting from 0.500 baizas, in order to achieve higher returns than a regular account. In addition to the flexibility to pay on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis, with an interest rate of up to 5%.

Depending on the deposit structure, customers can commit to an amount starting from 0.500 baiza for a daily plan, RO5 for a weekly plan, and RO10 for a monthly plan. The interest rate



on the Recurring Deposit Account ranges between 4.25% - 5%.

Amjad al Lawati, Chief Retail Banking Officer at the bank, said, We at BankDhofar, through the Recurring Deposit Account, try to help customers build a good financial plan to achieve their goals in financing their children's education, their dream trip, or opening a small or medium business, etc by allowing customers

deposit a fixed amount of money every month on a regular basis. In addition, account holders have a clear advantage in obtaining competitive interest rates in the market and achieving better returns on their investments.

BankDhofar also offers a different group of deposits that allow customers to enriching their savings experience and giving them an opportunity to grow their wealth, such as a fixed de-

posit, especially for individuals who are looking to secure their savings at a competitive interest rate, in addition to the high-yield savings account, which is a suitable option for customers who prefer flexibility and liquidity with get the best returns, as it offers competitive interest of up to 4.25% annually on balances.

The bank also provides another saving option for customers in US dollars.

Ministry of Health holds NWCCP workshop

The Ministry of Health (MOH), represented by the Department of Women and Child Health organised the National Women and Child Health Care Plan workshop (NWCCP) under the auspices of H E Dr Saeed bin Hareb al Lamki, MOH Undersecretary for Health Affairs, at the Inter-City Hotel yesterday.

The two-day national workshop gathered general directors of hospitals, general directors of health services in the governorates, representatives from the Royal Oman Police Hospital, the Armed Forces Hospital, Al Diwan Hospital, Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, and the Petroleum Development Oman Polyclinic, in addition to department directors from the Directorate General of Health Services in the Ministry's General Office and representatives from private hospitals, a press release said.

Approximately 200 healthcare professionals from both governmental and private healthcare facilities, specifically those working in maternity and childbirth units within hospitals, as well as those from

primary healthcare centres participate in the national workshop. Additionally, members of the national committee and subcommittees tasked with monitoring, researching, and studying maternal morbidity and mortality are also in the workshop.

H E Dr Saeed bin Hareb al Lamki, MOH Undersecretary for Health Affairs, stated that Women health and well-being are essential, not just for their own lives but also for future generations of our country. The Ministry of Health is focused on consistently improving the services provided for women, particularly in the area of maternal health. Since the 1970s, many efforts have been made to initiate, develop and improve the services available for women.

Lamki stressed that maternal and perinatal death audit and review is widely recommended as an intervention to reduce maternal and childhood mortalities, and to improve quality of care, and could be key to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals and health vision 2040. As maternal and childhood mortalities

are indicators in the Sustainable Development Goals and Ministry of Health Strategic plan for Oman Vision 2040.

He added that one of the main actions taken by the Ministry of Health to reduce maternal deaths was the adoption and implementation of the Maternal Death Surveillance and Response system since 1991 through the national and regional Maternal Mortality committees. The National Maternal Mortality Committee is one of the longest serving committees in the Ministry of Health. The Committee review and discuss each maternal death thoroughly to identify the gaps and recommend actions. At the higher level in the Ministry of Health, we take the committee findings and recommendations seriously.

Despite all the efforts to provide a comprehensive maternal care and investments in reproductive health services to reduce the maternal deaths, still the committee found that 51% of our maternal deaths are preventable. These deaths can be avoided if appropriate interventions were taken timely and vigorously.

Arabic language symposium begins

The Fourth Arabic Language Symposium began on Monday under the slogan - 'Teaching and Learning the Arabic Language: Insights and Practical Experiences', under the patronage of Habib bin Mohammed al Riyami, president of the Sultan Qaboos Higher Center for Culture and Science and in the presence of high-level dignitaries from the Ministry of Education.

The symposium, organised by the Ministry of Education, is implemented over the course of three days, with the participation of a number of experts and specialists in teaching and learning the Arabic language from inside and outside the Sultanate of Oman.

This symposium aims to shed light on (practical visions and experiences in teaching and learning the Arabic language) in accordance with the best effective practices at the local and international levels. It also sheds light on the reality of teaching and learning the Arabic language in light of modern educational trends and reviews the applications of technology and artificial intelligence in the field of language teaching, by presenting successful and inspiring practical experiences from local and inter-



national experts and teachers.

In its fourth round, this symposium includes five basic topics - teaching and learning the Arabic language in light of modern educational trends, strategies for literacy and language empowerment, learning theories and results of educational studies in language empowerment, methods for evaluating language skills, and practical experiences and applications in Arabic language teaching and its learning.

The symposium includes many dialogue sessions and seminars on the topics of teaching and learning the Arabic language, and papers presented by a number of local and international experts and specialists from the Ministry's General Diwan and the educational field, and training seminars on the skills of teaching the Arabic language.

SaudiFood show to focus on F&B industry

The inaugural edition of SaudiFood Manufacturing, the first dedicated F&B manufacturing event in the Kingdom spanning processing, packaging and ingredients, will be the launchpad for the industry to take its place at the heart of Saudi Arabia's economic transformation.

Following the highly successful launch of The SaudiFood Show, the largest food event in the Kingdom, organisers KAOUN International and dmg events, unveiled highlights of the much-anticipated SaudiFood Manufacturing event, taking place at Riyadh Front from April 30 to May 2, under the patronage of the minister of Industry and Mineral Resources, Bandar bin Ibrahim AlKhorayef, a press release said.



Underpinning the fast-growing F&B market in Saudi Arabia - currently worth around USD60bn and growing at 4% per year, the Saudi F&B manufacturing industry is on the cusp of a step change in its growth and importance within the nation's economy.

Trixie LohMirmand, CEO of KAOUN International, said, "The launch of SaudiFood Manufacturing coincides with a pivotal moment in the F&B manufacturing industry, both in Saudi Arabia and globally.

To achieve the goals of Vision 2030, the Saudi government is focusing on diversifying the nation's industrial base, while enhancing the security and resilience of food systems and encouraging investments in F&B.

Oman participates in GCC Youth Games 2024

Oman national sailing team bagged seven medals on the closing day of a competition held at Abu Dhabi aquatics Club between April 17 and 21.

The competition is part of the first edition of GCC Youth Games, hosted by UAE, which continues till May 2, with partic-

ipation of Oman, UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain, a press release said.

Oman sailing team bagged a gold medal in the optimist team category while Omani sailor Tamem al Balushi claimed a silver medal after a deep competition among 16 players in the

general optimist category. He also won a silver medal in the male optimist category.

Tartil al Hesani won a bronze in the female optimist category while Abdullatif al Qasimi won a gold medal in ILCA4 class, and his team mate Faris al Hashimi finished sixth out of

seven players. Elyas al Fedhaly got a gold in ILCA6 while his compatriot Hatim al Erami claimed a bronze in the same class within 7 participants from all GCC countries.

The national junior handball team lost to Saudi Arabia 38-24 in the second match that was

held at Al Batha Club hall in Sharjah. Oman handball team did not perform as expected after the first match against the host UAE team which was, however, outclassed by Oman.

Oman junior volleyball team lost their second test to Kuwait in three games to nothing.

Omantel to support families affected by the recent 'Al Mateer'

As part of its efforts and social responsibility strategy, the Board of Directors of Oman Telecommunications Company 'Omantel' has decided to donate RO150,000 to help families affected by the 'Al Mateer' depression that hit a number of governorates of the sultanate last week.

This support will be distributed to the affected families in coordination with the Ministry of Social Development and the Governor Offices in the affected governorates, a press release said.

Commenting on this initiative, Talal bin Said al Maamari, CEO of Omantel, said, "Al Mateer rain



Al Mateer rain depression has impacted families in various governorates of the sultanate. We believe that it is our duty as a national company to show our solidarity with the community and contribute to supporting efforts aimed at helping these families

Talal bin Said al Maamari

depression has impacted families in various governorates of the sultanate. We believe that it is our duty as a national company to show our solidarity with the community and contribute to supporting efforts aimed at helping these families to recover from the damages caused by the

depression, in cooperation with the concerned government entities."

This support comes in addition to the amount allocated for community service of RO750,000 approved by Omantel General Assembly at its annual meeting held on March 30.

Toyota offers Biggest Excitement benefits

The Toyota Veloz is now available with 'Biggest Excitement' benefits.

Customers looking forward to owning the Veloz can avail a chance to enter the Raffle draw and win Toyota Crown cars and avail exclusive benefits including Service for 3 Years/30,000km (whichever is earlier) and Insurance 1 Year. Apart from that customers can also avail attractive instalments, a press release said.

The campaign is valid up to May 1 (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year, and manufacturing year. EMI calculated are for base models with 20% down payment for 10 years. Loan approval is based on the sole discretion of banks.

The Veloz is impressively fuel-efficient and packed with performance, easy manoeuvrability, and ample interior space. The three rows of seats in the Veloz can comfortably accommodate seven passengers due to flexible configurations, to offer an exceptional ride. The vehicle's outstanding performance is ready to heighten the thrills and excitement in daily drives, while its enhanced safety features deliver added protection and peace of mind.

The Toyota Veloz is equipped



with MacPherson strut-type front suspension, which provides linear and direct driving dynamics, while the rear is equipped with a new torsion beam suspension system. Drivers can experience three different driving

modes with a choice of ECO, Sport, and Power modes to suit a variety of driving conditions and styles. The vehicle also boasts excellent manoeuvrability, with a 5m turning radius. The Veloz keeps you on the

go with a four-cylinder 1.5ltr capacity engine with 16-valve DOHC and dual VVT-i, which produces 104.6 horsepower and 138 Nm of torque with fuel consumption of 19.3 km/l. Paired with Continuously Variable

Transmission (CVT) that simulates a seven-speed sequential shift transmission to deliver powerful, smooth acceleration from start-off and at low speeds, as well as quiet, efficient transmission at higher speeds with

excellent fuel efficiency. Upon entering the vehicle, passengers are welcomed by ambient lighting that complements the overall feel of the spacious cabin, which comes with a range of advanced and practical

features. These include a 7-inch colour Multi-Information Display (MID), which is complemented by an 8-inch multimedia screen with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto™ integration for seamlessly connected journeys.

The Toyota Veloz's second and third rows can be folded together or individually for different layouts that provides passengers with more comfort and can carry more cargo, including longer items. Additional comforts include a 6-speaker sound system, a powerful automatic air conditioning system with rear control panel, rear sonar, and smart entry and start systems. Meanwhile, parents benefit from the added peace of mind with the ISOFIX safety system, which attaches baby seats securely.

As with any Toyota model, the vehicle comes complete with a comprehensive array of safety features. These include six SRS airbags (front airbags for the driver and passenger, side airbags for the front seats, and side-curtain airbags for all three rows of seats), Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Electric Parking Brake (EPB) with Brake hold function, Emergency Stop Signal (ESS), Traction Control (TRC), Hill-start Assist Control, etc.

Marks & Spencer introduces all-new linen collection

Marks and Spencer operated by Al Futtaim Group, introduces the all-new linen collection offering everyday styles, trusted quality and value.

Discover the new versatile and timeless pieces for everyday wear, allowing you to mix and match to create unique styles. Additionally, workwear just got more stylish with the new collection introducing breathable and 100% pure linen blazers and trousers in various colourways for both men and women.

Crafted with moisture-wicking fabric across the collection, the shop outfits offer the perfect combination of style and functionality, a press release said.

Step into the spotlight where classic sophistication meets contemporary allure. Dive into a sea of tropical greens, space blues and classy neutrals as you explore a wide selection of linen pieces. From breezy dresses and maxi slip skirts to edgy cargo trousers and wide-leg pants, this linen collection offers a range of styles for everyone's preferences.

Workwear has never been better with the latest 100% pure linen blazers and trousers. Elevate your office styles with the Pure Irish Linen Single Breasted



Blazer with trousers that come in a beautiful willow colourway or choose the Pure Linen Gingham Single Breasted Jacket and Wide Leg Trousers for a more classic look.

In menswear, expect to see rich indigo tones, calming sage greens, classic patterns, and neutrals. Discover a blend of iconic menswear pieces and smart casual styling options that showcase timeless elegance. New styles added to the collection include short sleeves with pastel stripes and buttoned down breathable linen shirts offering a laidback look. Pair these with linen trousers and chinos that come in colourways such as brown, green, beige and black.

Officegoers can explore a wide range of workwear introduced in pure linen including the Italian Linen Miracle Suit Jacket.

Thai Trade Show next month

The fifth Thai Trade Exhibition in Oman is set to showcase authentic Thai products and services to both traders and customers in Oman.

Scheduled from May 7 to 11 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) in Muscat, this premier trade event will host nearly 100 exhibitors from Thailand, offering diverse products and services at attractive prices. Open to both traders and general visitors, the exhibition presents a special opportunity for attendees to discover and enjoy a truly unique shopping experience, a press release said.

At the exhibition, visitors can explore a wide array of high-quality products spanning beauty and wellness, fashion and accessories, lifestyle and home goods, as well as food and beverages, along with various miscellaneous items. Beauty and wellness offerings encompass oud oil, cosmetics, spa essentials, and wellness products.

Fashion and accessory selections feature clothing, footwear, bags, and accessories. Lifestyle and home products include home decorative items. Likewise, the food and beverage segment includes dried fruits, ready-to-eat snacks, food ingredients, and beverages. Additionally, hospitals and healthcare service providers are part of this premier trade show this year.

Organised by Vega Intertrade and Exhibition and co-organised by the Federation of Thai Industries, the Thai Trade Exhibition Oman 2024 receives support from the Oman International Exhibition Centre, Thonburi Hospital, Med Park Hospital, BPK 9 International Hospital, Intra Oud and Agarwood, St Agarwood Trat, Oud EBA, Jintana Bra, Neo Corporate Public Company Ltd, and Hatai Gems & Jewellery.

The exhibition offers a platform for buyers from Oman and the wider Middle East region to connect with Thai exporters.



Parents Council in Muttrah meets

Members of the Muttrah Parents Council held a meeting chaired by Al Mundhir bin Ahmed al Marhoon, Wali of Muttrah, to discuss a number of topics related to the council.

The meeting reviewed ideas and proposals for holding a Parents Council ceremony and honouring the brilliant, distinguished and excellent students for academic achievement, as well as members of the teaching and administrative staff and the council's members. This is in appreciation of their efforts and achievements in the scientific, administrative and social aspects.

The Parents Council seeks to enhance relations and cooperation with the parents' councils in the wilayat's schools. It also participates in preparation and implementation of programmes that assist the local community.

During the ceremony, the bank representative delivered a speech, expressing delight on the inauguration of the lighting system in Tadamun team's play yard which comes within the Green Sports Programme, one of the sustainable social responsibility programmes of Bank Muscat, a press release said.

The initiative aims at supporting Omani youth and contributing to the development of local teams spread across governorates. This project allows team members to practice evening sports, which will help developing their skills while contributing to strengthening the infrastructure of Omani sports.

Yousuf bin Ali al Hatemi, head of the Tadamun Sports and Cultural Team, expressed gratitude to Bank Muscat for its support provided to the local sports teams in Oman, adding that Green Sports programme represents an example to follow in the field of supporting youth talents and contributing to the development of local playgrounds, which are strategic locations for organizing various sports and community events and activities.

He confirmed that the lighting system installed for Tadamun team is considered a qualitative leap that will allow the team to organise various events and activities during the evenings, as well as to organise various sports and cultural competitions. This will also enable them to develop their talents.

At the beginning of the year, Bank Muscat announced the launch of the 13th edition of the Green Sports programme for 2024.

Twenty sports teams from across the sultanate will be supported in four areas including greening of football fields with natural or synthetic turf, floodlights and water desalination equipment in areas facing water salinity.

Bank Muscat inaugurates new lighting project

As part of the Green Sports Programme from Bank Muscat, the bank participated in the celebration of the opening of the Tadamun Sports and Cultural Team Lighting Project in Rustaq, South Batinah Governorate, under the patronage of H E Dr Hamad bin Saif Bin Ali al Hammami, permanent representative of the Sultanate of Oman to UNESCO.

Also present, were Adnan bin Ahmed al Balushi, assistant regional manager of Bank Muscat branches, South Batinah Governorate, Yousuf bin Ali bin Khalfan al Hatemi, head of the Tadamun Sports and Cultural Team, and a number of guests and team members.

During the ceremony, the bank representative delivered a speech, expressing delight on the inauguration of the lighting system in Tadamun team's play yard which comes within the Green Sports Programme, one of the sustainable social responsibility programmes of Bank Muscat, a press release said.

The initiative aims at supporting Omani youth and contributing to the development of local teams spread across governorates. This project allows team members to practice evening sports, which will help developing their skills while contributing to strengthening the infrastructure of Omani sports.

Yousuf bin Ali al Hatemi, head of the Tadamun Sports and Cultural Team, expressed gratitude to Bank Muscat for its support provided to the local sports teams in Oman, adding that Green Sports programme represents an example to follow in the field of supporting youth talents and contributing to the development of local playgrounds, which are strategic locations for organizing various sports and community events and activities.

He confirmed that the lighting system installed for Tadamun team is considered a qualitative leap that will allow the team to organise various events and activities during the evenings, as well as to organise various sports and cultural competitions. This will also enable them to develop their talents.

At the beginning of the year, Bank Muscat announced the launch of the 13th edition of the Green Sports programme for 2024.

Twenty sports teams from across the sultanate will be supported in four areas including greening of football fields with natural or synthetic turf, floodlights and water desalination equipment in areas facing water salinity.



Dubai Airports back to normal operations after record rainfall in 75 years

Dubai, UAE - After the heaviest rainfall the UAE experienced in 75 years Dubai Airports is making remarkable strides in restoring and normalising operations at Dubai International Airport (DXB).

Paul Griffiths, CEO of Dubai Airports, said that since yesterday, ahead of its recovery schedule, DXB has returned to its normal flight schedule and is back to operating around 1,400 flight movements a day.

“With roads in and around the airport 100 per cent clear of water accumulation, our manpower, logistics and facilities are operating as usual again. To

have the airport back up and running is no small feat. Also, 2,155 flights were cancelled, and 115 were diverted. We had to work closely with our airline partners and service providers to rework schedules, boost manpower and look after all those who had been disrupted.

“I’m continuously amazed by the unwavering dedication of our Dubai Airports employees, airline partners, government agencies, commercial partners and service partners. It has been the most challenging adverse weather event we’ve had to navigate, and our people and partners worked



DXB has returned to its normal flight schedule and is back to operating around 1,400 flight movements a day

tirelessly to keep the operation running and to assist our guests.”

He added that 31 flights were diverted to Dubai World Central (DWC), and by April 19, all guests at the airport were successfully supported and continued onwards to complete their travel plans. Guest welfare remained a key priority throughout the disruption, and although there were initial challenges in transporting supplies due to road closures around DXB and DWC, over 75,000 food packs were delivered across both airports.

“While certain challenges remain, including processing the baggage backlog, we’re working closely with our service partners but know there’s still more work to be done and once again, thank guests for their patience while we work through this,” added Griffiths.

He noted: “We’re deeply saddened by the ongoing impact of the heavy rainfall on affected communities and businesses across the UAE. We’re also supporting our own people who were badly affected by the weather and will continue to support wherever we can.”

WAM

UK Parliament passes Rwanda bill

London, UK - The UK Parliament has passed the contentious bill, allowing the government to send asylum seekers to Rwanda for their claims to be considered by the East African nation, reported CNN.

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s efforts to pass the bill had been stuck between opposition in the Houses of Parliament and challenges in the British courts, as lawmakers and activists have sought to scupper the legislation on human rights grounds.

Moreover, Sunak’s inability to implement the policy has caused considerable embarrassment, as the British government has sent millions of pounds to Rwanda to fund a scheme that has failed to deliver any results to date, CNN reported.

It has been designed to prevent irregular migration into the UK, particularly people travelling on illegal and dangerous small boats from France, arranged by criminal gangs.

Meanwhile, in theory, the legislation will see some landing in the UK sent to Rwanda where their asylum claim will be considered. If their claim is accepted, they will stay in Rwanda. If it is declined, the bill says they cannot be deported by Rwanda to anywhere other than the UK, though it is unclear what would ultimately happen in this scenario.



UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak

UK PM’s efforts to pass the bill had been stuck between opposition in the Houses of Parliament and challenges in the British courts, as lawmakers and activists have sought to sink it on rights grounds

The scheme was first conceived in 2022 when, Sunak, who became prime minister then, made it the mission of his government to put a stop to these arrivals by following through on a Conservative

pledge to ‘stop the boats’.

Two years after the scheme was first conceived, the absence of any deportations so far has been considered a major failure for Sunak, CNN reported.

Last year, the Supreme Court

of the UK ruled that the policy is unlawful ‘because there are substantial grounds for believing that asylum seekers would face a real risk of ill-treatment by reason of refoulement to their country of origin if they were removed to Rwanda’.

Refoulement is the practice where asylum seekers or refugees are forcibly returned to a place where they would face persecution or danger, against important principles of international human rights law.

The judges noted that as re-

cently as 2021, the UK government criticised Rwanda for ‘extra-judicial killings, deaths in custody, enforced disappearances and torture’.

The government responded by introducing the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill in January of this year, which effectively enshrines in UK law that Rwanda is a safe country, overriding the judges’ concerns.

Home Secretary James Cleverly, in a video posted on X on Monday, said that ‘the Safety of Rwanda Bill has passed in Parliament and it will become law within days’.

He added that the act would ‘prevent people from abusing the law by using false human rights claims to block removals. And it makes clear that the UK Parliament is sovereign, giving the government the power to reject interim blocking measures imposed by European courts’, reported CNN.

However, even with the bill passed, the government might face legal challenges in the European Court of Human Rights, as the UK is still a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights. The European court has previously barred it from sending asylum seekers to Rwanda.

The bill has suffered long delays because of attempts to amend it.

A process colloquially known

as ‘ping pong’, where the two parts of the UK’s parliament - the House of Commons and the House of Lords - send legislation back and forth, has been going on for months.

Every time the House of Lords makes amendments to the bill, the House of Commons, where Sunak has a majority, must vote to remove them, according to CNN.

In 2022, the number of people arriving by small boats was 45,744, according to the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford.

Moreover, net migration in the same year was 745,000, according to government figures.

This is a problem for Sunak and his governing Conservative Party, as they are set to face the public in a general election that must be called before the end of this year.

Parties on the right - most notably Reform UK, the new political home of arch-Brexiteer Nigel Farage, will push the issue of illegal migration as hard as possible.

Notably, the opposition Labour party has already promised to scrap the Rwanda plans if it comes to power at the next general election, which must be held by January next year but is widely expected to take place later this year, Al Jazeera reported.

ANI

Malaysia: 10 killed in navy copter collision

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia - Ten crew members have been killed after two Malaysian Navy helicopters met a tragic fate on Tuesday after they collided mid-air, and later crashed to the ground, Al Jazeera reported.

In a statement, the Royal Malaysian Navy said that the two aircraft collided on Tuesday morning as they were taking part in aerial training in northern Lumut, where the navy has its headquarters.

One helicopter, an Agusta Westland AW139 Maritime Operations Helicopter (HOM), crashed onto the steps of the stadium at the complex while the second, a Eurocopter Fennec, fell near a swimming pool, as per Al Jazeera.

According to the navy, there were three crew members aboard the Eurocopter and seven on the Agusta. At the site of the crash, the deaths of all crew members were confirmed.

The incident took place when the helicopter crews were practicing for next week’s Navy Day celebrations which start on May 3.

ANI

‘At least 2,500 killed, injured or kidnapped in Haiti in 2024’

Washington, D.C., US - At least 2,500 people have been killed, injured or kidnapped in Haiti due to gang violence so far this year, the executive director of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) said on Monday.

Speaking at a briefing to the UN Security Council on Haiti, Catherine Russell described the situation in the country as ‘catastrophic’, warning that it grows worse by the day.

“Five and a half million people, including three million children - or two in every three children across the country - need humanitarian assistance,” she said.

Russell reiterated that years of political turmoil and devastating economic conditions have led to the proliferation of armed groups.

“Today, an estimated 2.7mn people, including 1.6mn women and children, live in areas under their effective control,” she said.

She also said the UN has verified more than 400 grave rights violations against children in Haiti and revealed that more than 180,000 children are now internally displaced.



An armoured tank patrols the area around Toussaint Louverture international airport, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti

UN has verified more than 400 grave rights violations against children in Haiti and revealed that more than 180,000 children are now internally displaced, said the UNICEF executive director

internally displaced.

The executive director called for increased regional and inter-

national support for the nation.

“But even if all the right steps are taken to quell this crisis, it will

not be solved quickly. We must deliver comprehensive political and financial support, now and over the long term,” she added.

A political deadlock and surging gang violence in the country escalated after President Jovenel Moise’s assassination in 2021. Thousands have been killed in the conflict, while hundreds of thousands have fled the country.

Anadolu Agency

Opening arguments begin in Trump hush money trial

Houston, US - Opening arguments began on Monday in the Donald Trump hush money trial in an historic case of the first-ever criminal charges being levied against a former US president.

Trump was front and centre in the New York courtroom as prosecutor Matthew Colangelo spelled out the case to the jury regarding the 34 criminal counts the former president faces, according to media outlets.

Colangelo said that Trump conspired with his former attorney and ‘fixer’ Michael Cohen and David Pecker, the former publisher of the *National Enquirer* tabloid, to pay off porn star Stormy Daniels and former Playboy model Karen McDougal from disclosing their alleged sexual affairs with him. The price of what is known as the ‘catch and kill’ scheme cost more than US\$130,000 and US\$150,000 for Daniels and McDougal, respectively, which prosecutors said Trump falsely listed as business expenses to ‘conceal that illegal election fraud’.

“This case is about a criminal conspiracy and a cover-up,” said Colangelo. “The defendant, Don-



This file photo shows Donald Trump arriving at Manhattan court prior to a trial in hush money deal, in New York, on April 15

ald Trump, orchestrated a criminal scheme to corrupt the 2016 presidential election. Then he covered up the criminal conspiracy by lying in his New York state business records over and over and over again.”

On the converse end, Trump’s defence attorney Todd Blanche flipped the script, countering that Cohen, the prosecution’s star witness, was a liar who was ‘obsessed’ with Trump and that Cohen’s success hinged upon Trump’s ‘destruction’. Blanche emphasised that Trump did nothing illegal.

“Spoiler alert: There’s nothing wrong with trying to influence the election. It’s called democracy,” said Blanche. “President Trump did not commit any crimes.”

Blanche also aimed to soften the jury’s perception of Trump by humanising the former president.

“He’s also a man, he’s a husband, he’s a father,” he said. “And he’s a person, just like you and me.”

After the day’s proceedings wrapped up, the former president told reporters that the trial was going ‘very well’.

Anadolu Agency

200 DAYS INTO WAR ON GAZA

Israel persists in aggravating situation

Israeli army has killed 34,183 Palestinians and injured over 77,000 others in Gaza since October 7

Gaza City, Palestine - The Israeli army's devastating onslaught against the Gaza Strip entered on Tuesday its 200th day amid plans by Israel to attack Rafah city, southern Gaza, which is home to nearly 1.4mn displaced Palestinians.

In the course of the Israeli onslaught against Gaza since October last year, the Israeli army has killed 34,183 Palestinians and injured over 77,000 others, mostly children and women.

According to the Gaza-based Government Media Office, the Israeli army committed 3,021 massacres against families across the Gaza Strip since the start of the Israeli war.

It added that at least 485 medical staff, 66 civil defence personnel, 140 journalists, and 224 relief workers were among the Palestinian victims.

Over 7,000 Palestinians remain missing under the rubble of the destroyed homes across the Palestinian enclave, the office also said.

Difficult conditions

More than two million Palestinians suffer from catastrophic living and health conditions, especially for those living in shelter centres, according to UN reports. The situation is worse in



Palestinians inspect the destroyed buildings after the Israeli attack on the Bureij refugee camp as Israeli attacks continue in Gaza City, Gaza on Monday (Anadolu Agency)

Over 7,000 Palestinians remain missing under the rubble of the destroyed homes across the Palestinian enclave

the northern part of the Gaza Strip with international warnings that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians there are on the verge of famine.

According to the Palestinian

health authorities in Gaza, at least 30 Palestinian children died due to malnutrition and hunger.

The lack of cooking gas forced Palestinians to use alter-

natives, including coal, wood, and plastic items to cook, endangering their health, the Government Media Office reported.

Vast areas of destruction

The Gaza Strip was turned into a vast destroyed area due to the Israeli bombardment which never stopped for 200 days.

According to satellite images

by the New York University, more than 56 per cent of Gaza buildings have been either destroyed or damaged in addition to the infrastructure.

The Government Media Office said the Israeli army fired nearly 75,000 tonnes of explosives across the Gaza Strip that left an unprecedented scale of destruction in the tiny enclave.

It added that 86,000 house

units were completely destroyed, and 309,000 others were partially damaged but still uninhabitable.

Military developments

The Israeli army still carries out military operations across the Gaza Strip, leaving further destruction in the areas across Gaza. The last Israeli military of-

fensive was on April 11 against the Nuseirat refugee camp, central Gaza Strip.

Ismail Thawabteh, the director of the Government Media Office, said the Israeli army destroyed completely 14 residential buildings, and damaged dozens of others during the Israeli incursion into the Nuseirat refugee camp.

On April 7, the Israeli army withdrew from Khan Younis city, southern Gaza Strip, after a four-month military campaign, leaving a wide scale of destruction across Khan Younis.

On Monday, the Palestinian Civil Defence service said it had recovered 283 bodies of Palestinians killed and buried in mass graves by the Israeli forces in the Nasser hospital in Khan Younis.

Despite international warnings about a planned Israeli invasion against Rafah, the Israeli army persists to go ahead in attacking the tiny city that is home to nearly 1.4mn displaced Palestinians. Last week, an Israeli government spokesperson said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu set a date for invading Rafah, which is the last remaining area in the enclave where Tel Aviv has not yet formally announced the entry of its troops.

Anadolu Agency

Rally demands release of captives

Jerusalem - Israeli citizens and families of captives held in Gaza rallied on Tuesday in Tel Aviv, demanding the Israeli government strike a prisoner swap deal with the Hamas group, as they reach the 200-day captivity mark.

According to the Times of Israel news website, the families of the captives and their supporters painted their hands red and held them up to the sky in an act of protest at the city's HaBima Square.

The rally also called on the government to act to secure their release.

The Israeli opposition as well as families of the captives accuse Premier Netanyahu of hindering an agreement with the Hamas group for his own political reasons.

In early April, Hamas said Israel's position over the ceasefire talks remains 'intransigent'.

"The Israeli position remains intransigent and has not responded to any of the demands



of our people and our resistance," Hamas said.

Tel Aviv believes 134 Israelis are being held in Gaza, while Israel is holding not less than 9,100 Palestinians in its jails.

Indirect talks between Israel and the Hamas group are taking place in both Cairo and Doha aimed at reaching a deal that includes a prisoner swap under

which the Israeli captives will be released in exchange for Palestinians release from Israeli jails.

487 killed in West Bank

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Health Ministry on Tuesday said 487 Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli forces and illegal settlers across the occu-

pied West Bank in the past 200 days. Around 4,900 others were also injured across the West Bank and Jerusalem since October 7, the ministry said in a statement.

Those killed include 122 children, 4 women, 5 elderly people and 10 detainees who died in Israeli jails, the statement added.

Anadolu Agency

UN human rights chief Turk decries latest Israeli strikes

Geneva, Switzerland - The UN human rights chief on Tuesday decried the latest series of Israeli strikes on Gaza killing mostly women and children.

Volker Turk's remarks came after at least nine children among 16 Palestinians were killed on Sunday in an Israeli bombing targeting several homes east of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.

"The latest images of a premature child taken from the womb of her dying mother, of the adjacent two houses where 15 children and five women were killed - this is beyond warfare," OHCHR spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani told a UN briefing in Geneva, reading Turk's statement on the matter.

Turk reiterated such an operation to Rafah would lead to further breaches of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as well



UN human rights chief Volker Turk

as it would 'risk more deaths, injuries and displacement on a large scale - even further atrocity crimes, for which those responsible would be held accountable'.

He also said he was 'horrified' by the destruction of the Nasser Hospital and Al Shifa Hospital and the discovery of mass graves in and around these locations, calling for 'independent, effective and transparent' inves-

tigations into the deaths.

On 'grave human rights violations' continuing in the occupied West Bank, Turk said that despite international condemnation of massive settler attacks from April 12-14 facilitated by the Israeli Security Forces (ISF), 'settler violence has continued with the support, protection, and participation of the ISF'.

Asked on the reports that Israel will expand so-called 'humanitarian zones' in Gaza ahead of its Rafah ground attack, Shamdasani stressed: "There are no safe places in Gaza and any pretence that creating safe zones is actually dangerous."

"What we need is an immediate ceasefire," she reiterated.

Meanwhile, Lebanese group Hezbollah said on Tuesday that it had carried out a drone attack on a military command centre in Acre in northern Israel.

Anadolu Agency

Iraq, Turkey sign over 20 deals to boost ties

Baghdad, Iraq - Iraq and Turkey on Monday struck more than 20 deals in various fields during a rare visit by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Iraq.

The deals were signed between Erdogan and Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani after their meeting in Baghdad, the prime minister's office said in a statement.

During the talk, the two leaders discussed bilateral cooperation in security, rail and road construction, irrigation infrastructure and water management and witnessed the signing of more than 20 Memorandums of Understanding.

In the area of security cooperation, Al-Sudani said that

the two sides talked about confronting the challenges posed by the presence of militants that may cooperate with terrorism and violate the security of the two countries.

"The security of Iraq and Turkey is indivisible, and co-operation between us is important for security in the region," he added.

During Erdogan's visit, the Turkish president and Iraqi premier also witnessed the signing of a preliminary four-way agreement by ministers from Turkey, Iraq, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to cooperate on a road development project, the prime minister's office said in a separate statement.

Xinhua

Ukraine, US finalise pacts on ATACMS missile systems

Kyiv, Ukraine - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said his country and the US finalised 'all the details' in the agreements on ATACMS tactical missile systems, amid talks with his American counterpart Joe Biden.

Zelensky said in an evening video address late on Monday that especially after the 'positive shift' in terms of American assistance to Ukraine and work to ensure the provision of weapons needed by Ukrainian soldiers, they must work to keep the situation in the front line 'under control' and 'return the initiative' to Kyiv.

Expressing that he and Biden talked in particular about this issue during their talk, Zelensky thanked his counterpart and the US Congress for their support and decision, and said: "(It) benefits our protection from Russian terror and our ability to end the war justly."



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky

On Saturday, the US House of Representatives passed a US\$60.8bn aid bill to Ukraine as the country continues to fight off Russia's war that began in February 2022. Zelensky further touched upon a missile attack on the country's eastern city of

Kharkiv that struck the city's television tower, just before talks with Biden, describing this to be 'an intimidation' and an effort to try to limit Kharkiv in terms of communication and access to information.

He said work is underway to

restore the signal, and that different cities, including Kharkiv, and communities need air defence.

Zelensky went on to say that they also need to inflict 'maximum damage on everything that Russia uses as a base for terror and for its military logistics'.

"I am grateful to everyone in the world who is willing to help us in this regard, and we are working with our American partners to increase our capabilities," Zelensky said.

In this regard, Ukraine's president outlined priorities for Kyiv, namely 'protection of the sky, modern artillery, long-range capability, and ensuring that the American support packages arrive as quickly as possible'.

Ukraine's president also said his country and the US have started working on a bilateral security agreement, and that they can make their potential agreement 'a true paragon that will not

only provide greater security for our people, but also help the entire course of European history proceed in the right direction and only in peace'.

Ukraine has already signed bilateral security treaties with nine other countries - the UK, Germany, Denmark, Latvia, Finland, France, Italy, Canada, and the Netherlands.

Meanwhile, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has pledged the largest-ever military aid package to Ukraine, including more than 1,600 strike and air defence missiles, his office said.

During his visit to Poland on Tuesday, Sunak will announce a £500mn (US\$618.6mn) package for Ukraine.

The crucial package will include some 400 vehicles, 1,600 munitions and four million rounds of ammunition, according to a statement.

Anadolu Agency

INDIA

Delhi court extends judicial custody of Kejriwal, Kavitha

The court extended custody of the Delhi CM and the BRS leader in excise policy case till May 7

New Delhi, India - The Rouse Avenue Court on Tuesday extended judicial custody of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and BRS leader K Kavitha in the excise policy case till May 7.

Special Judge Kaveri Baweja allowed the application moved by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) seeking an extension of judicial custody of Arvind Kejriwal, K Kavitha and Chanpreet Singh in the Delhi excise policy case. The Court also extended the judicial custody of Kavitha in the case being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

On Monday, the same Judge passed an order on Kejriwal's plea for the administration of insulin and also to ensure that the applicant is provided all the requisite medical treatment.

The court said 'though it



Sunita Kejriwal, wife of Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, offers prayers at Hanuman Temple, at Connaught Place, in New Delhi on Tuesday (ANI)

shall continue to be the primary duty of Tihar jail authorities, who are stated to be fully equipped to take care of the health of the applicant, to ensure that all requisite medical treatment is provided to him in jail; however, in the event of any requirement for specialised consultation, the jail authorities shall consult the Medical Board to be constituted by Director, All India Institute of Medical

Sciences (AIIMS), comprising of a senior endocrinologist/diabetologist', as per request dated April 20, already sent by DG Prisons.

The Delhi CM was arrested on March 21 by the ED in connection with a money laundering case in the alleged excise policy scam. ED alleged that the Aam Adami Party (AAP) is the major beneficiary of the proceeds of crime generated in the

alleged scam.

The ED arrested Kavitha MLC, Telangana Legislative Council, on March 15, in the case of the alleged liquor policy scam.

The CBI inquiry was recommended based on the findings of the Delhi Chief Secretary's report filed in July showing prima facie violations of the GNCTD Act 1991, Transaction of Business Rules (ToBR)-1993,

Delhi Excise Act-2009, and Delhi Excise Rules-2010, officials said.

The ED and the CBI had alleged that irregularities were committed while modifying the excise policy, undue favours were extended to licence holders, the licence fee was waived or reduced and the L-1 licence was extended without the competent authority's approval.

ANI

EU announces easier access to Schengen visa

Brussels, Belgium - The European Commission announced adoption of specific rules on the issuing of multiple entry visas to Indian nationals, which are more favourable than the standard rules of the Visa Code that applied to date.

This new visa 'cascade' regime, adopted on April 18 for Indian nationals residing in India who apply for Schengen (short-stay) visas in India will provide easier access to visas with multi-year validity for travellers with an established travel history, if the passport validity allows.

According to the newly adopted visa 'cascade' regime for India, Indian nationals can now be issued long-term, multi-entry Schengen visas valid for two years after having obtained and lawfully used two visas within the previous three years. The two-year visa will normally be followed by a five-year visa, if the passport has sufficient validity remaining. During the validity period of these visas, holders enjoy travel rights equivalent to visa-free nationals.

This decision comes in the context of strengthened relations under the EU-India Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility, which seeks comprehensive cooperation on migration policy

between the EU and India, with facilitation of people-to-people contacts being of key aspect due to the importance of India as a partner for the EU.

Schengen visas allow the holder to travel freely in the Schengen area for short stays of a maximum of 90 days in any 180-day period. The visas are not purpose-bound, but they do not grant the right to work.

The new visa 'cascade' regime, will provide visas with multi-year validity for travellers with an established travel history

The Schengen area consists of 29 European countries (of which 25 are EU states): Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden, along with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

ANI

Australia looks forward to more Indian students

New Delhi, India - The Australian High Commissioner to India, Philip Green on Tuesday said that he is looking forward to having more Indian students coming to Australia next year for their education.

The High Commissioner said that it is wrong to say that there's been a surge in visa rejections of Indian students by Australian universities as reported by some media recently, and that they are giving a re-think to their higher education plans.

He stressed the fact that the statistics have been seen by himself, and underlined that 'they are very similar this year to what they were last year' and that 'there hasn't been a surge in rejection of students'.

"There has not been a surge in rejection of students. I have looked at these statistics myself and they are very similar to



Australian High Commissioner to India, Philip Green (ANI)

this year to what they were last year. Unlike some other countries, Australia has not put a cap on the number of foreign students coming to our country. Yes, we want to make sure that students coming forward from reputable institutions will have a good experience in Australia," said Envoy Green during an interview with ANI.

"We make apologies for the fact that we want good students and we want to make

sure that they are paired with the right courses. This is utterly wrong to say that there has been a surge in rejections; we look forward to as many or perhaps even more Indian students coming to Australia in the next year," he added.

Lauding the cooperation between India and Australia in the field of Education and skill development, the High Commissioner hailed the Australian university's foreign branch opening in India which marked the first time a foreign university opened its campus in India.

The country's Deakin University earlier inaugurated its branch campus in GIFT City, Gujarat. "A large number of Indians choose to come to Australia as part of their education, and we normally work on that, and there will be more of it," Green said.

ANI

Call for appointing sitting judges to tribunals and commissions

New Delhi, India - Adish C Aggarwala, President of the Supreme Court Bar Association, wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, requesting to introduce suitable amendments in statutes to provide the appointment of sitting judges instead of retired judges to tribunals and commissions.

In his letter, Adish said: "I wish to highlight the impact of the appointment of retired judges of the Supreme Court and high courts as chairpersons and members of commissions and tribunals and other such positions by the government on the perception of people about the neutrality of these judges and of the decisions that had been rendered by these judges while they were in service. The government is, as is well known, the biggest litigant in the courts. Apart from cases by or against the government, there are cases



Supreme Court Bar Association president Adish Aggarwala (ANI)

involving ministers and other politically active persons. The judge who is deciding a case is looked on as an impartial umpire who is not approachable by either party."

"When this judge is, immediately upon retirement, hand-picked by the government to hold a certain position, people cannot help but speculate if the

judge was appealing the government when occupying the chair to be favourably considered by the government on his retirement, in return for the favour," he added.

The President of the Supreme Court Bar Association also mentioned that this trend had started in 1988.

"The Consumer Protection

Act and later the Protection of Human Rights Act set up consumer courts and human rights commissions, which were headed by retired judges. There is now a large number of retired Supreme Court judges, chief Justices and judges of different high courts who are presiding over commissions and tribunals in different parts of India, having been appointed by the central and state governments," he pointed out.

He also mentioned that there is a crying need to amend the statutes to change the eligibility requirement from a retired judge to sitting judges or practicing lawyers.

Adish Aggarwala further added that the Constitution itself provides for the direct appointment of advocates as judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts.

ANI

Pakistan: PML-N emerges victorious in by-elections, claims 21 seats

Islamabad, Pakistan - The ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) celebrated as provisional results released by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) revealed its dominance in by-elections held on 21 national and provincial seats across the country, Dawn reported.

Despite the allegations of 'record rigging', temporary suspension of cellular services in certain districts of Punjab and Balochistan, and instances of violence, the PML-N has emerged victorious. However, a PML-N supporter lost his life in a clash outside a polling station in Narowal.

The by-polls held on five National Assembly (NA) seats - two from Punjab, two from Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and one from Sindh. Additionally, twelve provincial seats were up for grabs in Punjab, along with two each in KP and Balochistan. Repolling in all constituencies of Balochistan's PB-50 (Qila Abdullah) was also conducted separately, as reported by Dawn.

According to the provisional results (Forms-47) issued by the ECP, the PML-N secured victory on two NA seats in Punjab, while the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) and an independent candidate each claimed one seat in KP. Meanwhile, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) triumphed on the NA-196 seat from Sindh.

In Punjab, the PML-N clinched ten provincial seats, while the PPP and the Istehkam-i-Pakistan



Party (IPP) won one each. KP saw one provincial seat each going to the SIC and an independent candidate. In Balochistan, the PML-N and the Balochistan National Party-Mengal (BNP-M) each secured one provincial seat. Additionally, the Awami National Party (ANP) clinched a provincial seat from PB-50, where repolling was conducted.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz extended congratulations to the winning PML-N candidates, attributing their success to the public's confidence in the party's policies. She asserted that the PML-N was the true representative of the people.

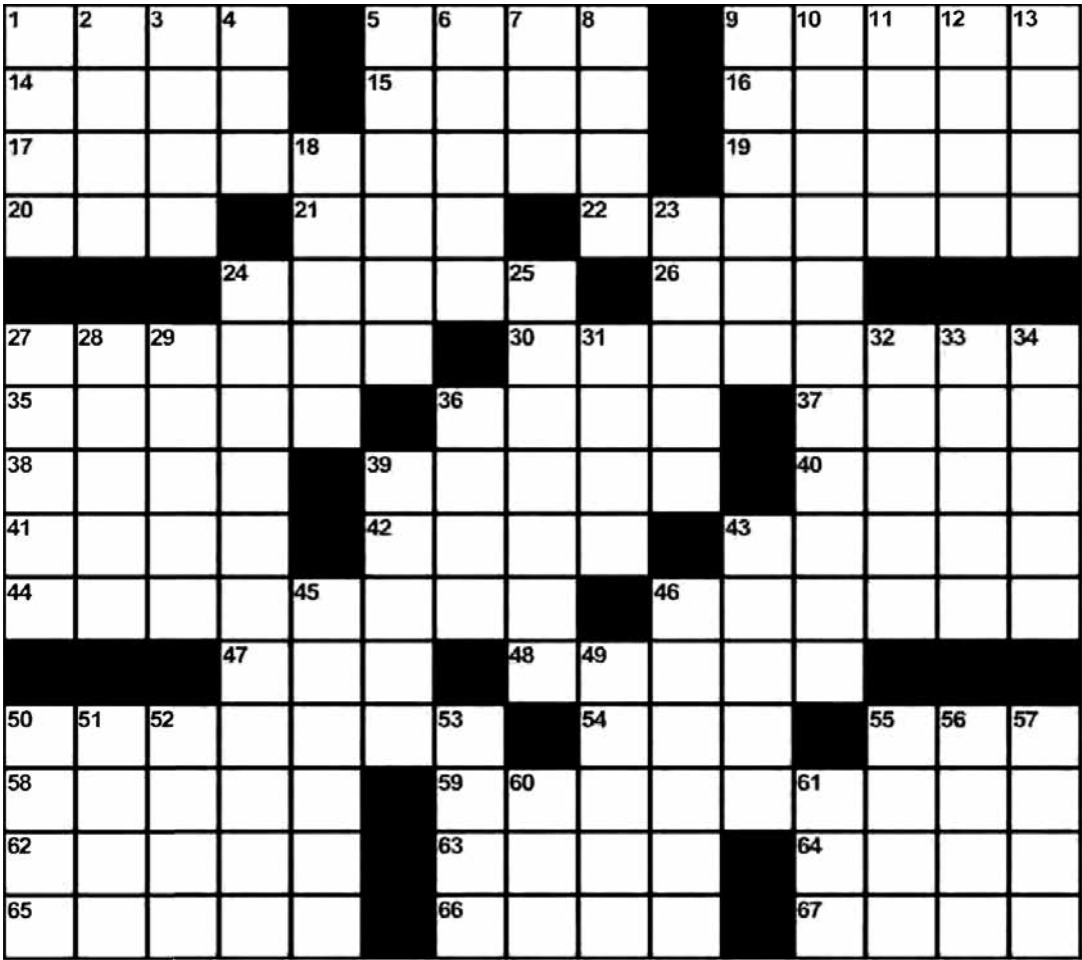
However, KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur alleged that the poor performance of the SIC-

PTI alliance candidates was due to rigging. Expressing concerns during a press conference in Peshawar, CM Gandapur lamented that his party faced hindrances in campaigning, opening offices, and conducting rallies. He questioned the discrepancy in voter turnout between the by-elections and the general elections held on February 8, insinuating a case of severe rigging.

In Punjab, the PML-N secured victory on two NA constituencies and ten Punjab Assembly seats, as per the provisional ECP results, according to Dawn. In Lahore's NA-119, PML-N's Ali Parvez emerged victorious with 61,086 votes, while SIC's Shahzad Farooq trailed with 34,197 votes.

ANI

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Baylor University's locale
- 5) Smugly superior type
- 9) Samantha of the silver screen
- 14) Musical miscellany
- 15) Skedaddled
- 16) Carried, as by the wind
- 17) Parent of 39-Across
- 19) Sandy shade
- 20) Busy bug
- 21) Number on a grandfather clock
- 22) Fuddy-duddies
- 24) Scottish clans
- 26) Regret
- 27) Philosopher Jean-Paul
- 30) Lack of slack
- 35) Brainless sort
- 36) Husky food?
- 37) Splashy party
- 38) Not "for here"
- 39) Offspring of 17-Across
- 40) Degree candidate's exam
- 41) Nutmeg cover
- 42) Considered individually
- 43) Terra_ (potting material)

- 44) Raccoonlike carnivore, surprisingly
- 46) Adorned with a cummerbund
- 47) Personal connections
- 48) British quart
- 50) Melancholy poems
- 54) "All the Things You..."
- 55) Heavy drinker
- 58) Type of tape
- 59) Incumbents on their way out
- 62) Words before a high note?
- 63) Priestly garb
- 64) Introduction to psychology?
- 65) High times
- 66) Untidy state
- 67) Part of a galaxy

- 11) Diluted rum
- 12) Diarist Frank
- 13) Some Major Leaguers
- 18) Rival of Navratilova, once
- 23) Place to put bags
- 24) Police informer
- 25) Impassive (Var.)
- 27) Eastern lute
- 28) Be crazy about
- 29) Unbending
- 31) Foot span
- 32) Terra firma
- 33) Patio flooring, sometimes
- 34) Caesar or chef
- 36) Nigeria neighbor
- 39) Burn a perfume stick
- 43) Had a conscience
- 45) Charged particles
- 46) Strain
- 49) Poetic feet
- 50) Caught up
- 51) Prefix with "type"
- 52) Edible corm
- 53) Harshly criticize
- 55) "Shoo!"
- 56) Stew vegetable
- 57) Pre-revolutionary ruler (Var.)
- 60) Andy Capp's brew
- 61) Bullish times

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

As optimistic as you usually are, there's one particular person out there who can bring you down, make you doubt yourself and others, and set you to wondering if it's really all worth the effort you've invested. Your mission right now is to avoid that person for at least the next couple days. It isn't that you'll never see them again, but you need all the positive energy you can muster today, and they can't help you there.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Being diplomatic is nice, and it's good to be a team player, but you should feel free to take control today. Act with your best interests in mind. At work, a lot of meaningless chitchat is causing everything to spin in circles, so step up and tell everyone what you think the best move would be. Everyone else will be grateful that you spoke up. In your personal life, use this self-assuredness to bring up sensitive issues and get them out of the way.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

The fact is people sometimes disagree and fight about issues, but that doesn't mean that they can't ever find common ground. And it definitely does not mean that they don't care about each other. So if you are feeling especially mismatched or out of sync with a close friend or romantic partner now, don't worry. This is not the end. It's just a weird phase that will end when it needs to end. Maybe you two need some space apart for a while.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

You know how to deal with stress like a pro, so raise your hand when your group asks who wants to be leader. Your killer combination of objectivity and charm will put all your team members at ease, and more importantly, inspire their confidence. You are in a very secure position, and if things don't go as well as everyone hopes they would, you will stay clear of blame. This is your chance to change people's minds, so go for it.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

You know exactly what you are doing right now, but that could become a problem soon. When you're never confused or uncertain, you are comfortable, but are you growing? Today, look for a mystery or two to solve. Find a problem that you can't figure out how to approach and try to use your brain in a whole new way. You'll surprise yourself with an unexpected level of ingenuity and creativity. You have more skills like this that need to be developed.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Nothing is going to stay on course today. People will behave inconsistently, and you won't be able to count on anyone following through with anything. Luckily for you, you're in the midst of a productivity streak, so you won't need anyone else's help anyway. Today is a good example of "if you want something done right, you have to do it yourself," and you will feel good about your ability to handle a confusing task. You are cool in a crisis.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Forget that whole "keep your friends close, your enemies closer" baloney. You're wasting time by giving energy to people who don't want the best for you right now. Ditch your enemies and devote your free time to getting closer to the people who make you smile and feel good about yourself. And given the fact that you should be sticking to a modest budget for the next few days, any type of get-together needs to be inexpensive and quiet. Conserve your money.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

All is forgiven later on today when you suddenly feel an overwhelming affection for a former foe. Something in the Universe is showing you that conflict can be a choice, and it's one you don't want to make any more. This positive perspective is going to open you up and let you find some inspiration in the actions of a loved one. Stay close to your family or love partner and block out the rest of the world. Celebrate your happiness with those who helped you attain it.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Some interruptions in your day might throw you off your game for a while, but not for very long. You shouldn't get frustrated. Just fix them and get on with it. You know how to take the initiative and put things back on track so expertly that you are likely to get a few glowing compliments from the people who have been watching you in action. Go ahead and let this go to your head. You could use a little ego boost right now, and you deserve to be proud of yourself.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Your uncomfortable emotions are often the most educational, so when you're feeling the urge to flee the room today, stay put and listen. Just because someone is voicing an opinion you don't agree with doesn't mean that what they are saying isn't illuminating or legitimate. Even if all you learn is that you detest everything that this person stands for, you will still be better off staying and listening than you would be taking off. Don't close yourself off from new experiences.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Today is a good day to slow down a little. Take a long, hard look at what you've accomplished lately. Count everything, not just the big things. Have you made your bed most days? Point for you! Have you brushed twice a day, and flossed at least once? Big points! Have you, in the last week or so, told at least one person you're close to that you appreciate them? Really gargantuan point! What does your list of accomplishments look like?



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Sometimes, having restrictions put on you can be a help, not a hindrance. So if you are feeling like your hands are tied today, do not struggle against it. Accept the limits put on you, because they will spark your creativity and force you to get even more innovative than you typically are. Necessity is the mother of invention, and you are entering a situation where you need to get things done. This will be a very productive and fulfilling period for you.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. FFC stands for

- A. Foreign Finance Corporation
- B. Film Finance Corporation
- C. Federation of Football Council
- D. None of the above

2. Fastest shorthand writer was

- A. Dr. G. D. Bist
- B. J.R.D. Tata
- C. J.M. Tagore
- D. Khudada Khan

3. Epsom (England) is the place associated with

- A. Horse racing
- B. Polo
- C. Shooting
- D. Snooker

Answers: 1.B 2.A 3.A

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

I	S	S	A
A	L	S	O
U	R	S	I
E	B	L	T

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

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

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

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

INTER REIGN SUPREME

Simone Inzaghi's side secure Serie A title after tense derby victory over Milan

Milan, Italy - Inter Milan won their 20th Serie A title on Monday after a 2-1 win at AC Milan gave Simone Inzaghi's side an unassailable lead in the standings.

A goal from Francesco Acerbi and Marcus Thuram in each half proved sufficient to secure Inter's victory, with Fikayo Tomori scoring a late goal to reduce the deficit.

The match also witnessed three red cards in stoppage time, with Milan being reduced to nine men as tensions flared, with Theo Hernandez and Davide Calabria getting their marching orders along with Inter's Denzel Dumfries.

Inter, who have lost only once in the league this season, hold a 17-point advantage over second-placed Milan with five matches remaining.

For Inzaghi, this was the first Serie A title of his managerial career and sixth trophy with Inter.

"There are so many protagonists of this success, first and foremost the players, but also the directors and chairman Steven Zhang, as anything we needed during this journey was provided



Inter Milan players celebrate after winning the Serie A title on Monday

for us," Inzaghi said to DAZN.

"It's an incredible sensation, we did something incredible and it's only right to share it with as many people as possible."

The San Siro was packed with supporters from both clubs, with Inter fans displaying two stars to symbolise their impending 20th

Scudetto, spelling out a message to their rivals: 'Our destiny, your nightmare.'

The match heated up in the opening minutes as both sides engaged in pushing and shouting following a late challenge on Inter's Nicolò Barella. However, play resumed a few minutes later

without any bookings.

After 18 minutes, the away fans erupted after Benjamin Pavard flicked a corner to a completely unmarked Acerbi, who had little trouble heading in the lead for Inter.

Just before the break Inter keeper Yann Sommer made a su-

There are so many protagonists of this success, first and foremost the players, but also the directors and chairman Steven Zhang, as anything we needed during this journey was provided for us

SIMONE INZAGHI

perb reflex save on a Calabria effort. Four minutes after the break, Thuram doubled Inter's lead by sending a low shot from the edge of the box into the bottom-left corner.

As the minutes ticked closer to the end, fans set off flares in the stands, casting a foggy veil over the pitch.

Milan reignited the match 10 minutes before the time when a

save from Sommer rebounded off the post and fell into the path of Fikayo Tomori, who headed it home.

In stoppage time, tempers flared as a scuffle broke out between the players which resulted in Dumfries and Hernandez being shown red cards.

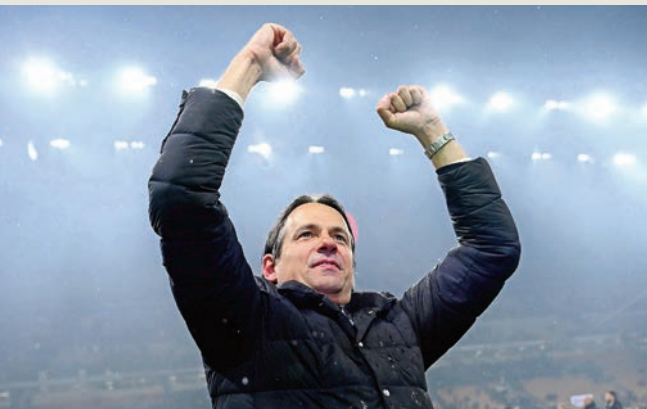
Inter's title triumph a testament to Inzaghi's managerial prowess

Milan, Italy - Inter Milan have dominated Italian football this season and when the final whistle blew on their 2-1 win over AC Milan at San Siro, marking the club's 20th Serie A title, it was a moment of sweet triumph for Simone Inzaghi's side.

Inter have suffered only one league defeat this season and conceded just 18 goals, by far the fewest in Serie A, securing the Scudetto with five games to spare. They had an extremely ef-

fective close-season transfer window, acquiring players who seamlessly fitted into the club's plans for the season as they replaced stalwarts who departed.

Snagging forward Marcus Thuram on a free transfer and bringing in defender Benjamin Pavard and goalkeeper Yann Sommer from Bayern Munich for less than 40 million euros (\$42.62 million) combined provided alternatives for Romelu Lukaku, Milan Skriniar and



Inter Milan coach Simone Inzaghi celebrates their triumph

Andre Onana who all left before the season.

With Lukaku departing after a soap opera that saw him join AS Roma on loan from Chelsea, Inzaghi gave more responsibility to Argentine Lautaro Martinez, who took over as captain from now retired keeper Samir Handanovic, in a rejigged attack.

They signed Frenchman Thuram from Borussia Moenchengladbach to establish a dynamic partnership with

Martinez and the deadly duo have provided Inter with 35 goals and 16 assists this season in Serie A, with the team scoring 79 goals in total.

The strikers have been supported by Nicolò Barella, who has shown technical quality and physicality at the heart of Inter's five-man midfield, with Hakan Calhanoglu and left back Federico Dimarco chipping in with goals and assists. With Inter's potent strike force driving them

to 27 wins in 33 games their challengers fell by the wayside.

Juventus had looked like battling for the Scudetto but Massimiliano Allegri's side buckled at the end of January and are now far adrift of the champions in third spot. Milan, once viewed as Inter's main title rivals, have had an inconsistent season, with several key players injured for long periods and some lacklustre performances that put them out of contention for the title.



Barcelona say Lamine Yamal's effort had crossed the goal line but VAR could not find a clear camera angle

Barcelona demand action over disallowed Yamal goal

Barcelona, Spain - Barcelona may request a full replay of Sunday's 3-2 LaLiga loss at Real Madrid if Lamine Yamal's 28th-minute attempt to score, deemed not a goal after a VAR review, is confirmed to be a goal, club president Joan Laporta said.

The club will request all footage and audio of the incident from the Spanish Football Federation, Laporta said on Monday.

The match was paused for several minutes as the VAR tried to determine whether Yamal's effort had crossed the goal line, but it could not find a clear cam-

era angle and the decision not to award a goal stood.

"If... the club understands that an error was made in the revision of the incident, we will take all available measure to reverse the situation, without discounting, obviously, any necessary legal action," Laporta said. "If it is confirmed that it was a legal goal, we will move ahead and we do not discount requesting that the game be replayed, just as has happened in another game in Europe due to a VAR error."

A Belgian Pro League match between Anderlecht and Genk,

originally played in December, was scheduled to be replayed in full due to a VAR error, after the Disciplinary Council for Professional Football ruled in favour of a Genk appeal. Laporta said he was dissatisfied with the "improper use" of VAR, adding the tool was creating "confusions with contradictory criteria according to matches and teams."

"We understand the difficulty faced by officials, but it's for that reason that such tools exist (like VAR) which should help the competition be fairer and not the other way around," he said.

Mourinho says he didn't get the same support as Ten Hag

London, England - Former Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho has said he did not have the same kind of support at the club during his 2-1/2 year tenure as current Old Trafford boss Erik ten Hag.

"What Ten Hag has in his time at Manchester



Jose Mourinho

United I didn't have. I didn't have that level of support. I didn't have that level of trust," Mourinho told The Telegraph. "So I left sad because I felt I was in the beginning of the process."

"In some moments, I felt if they trusted me and believed in my experience, things could be different."



Nottingham Forest were unhappy over being denied three penalties at Goodison Park including Ashley Young's challenge on Callum Hudson-Odoi

Forest request release of VAR audio from Everton defeat

Nottinghamshire, England - Nottingham Forest have submitted a formal request to referees' body PGMOL to make the audio recordings between officials during their 2-0 Premier League defeat by Everton public, the club said on Monday, after they were denied several penalty claims.

Forest, battling relegation, were angry over being denied three penalties at Goodison Park on Sunday against Ashley Young after the full back knocked the foot of Gio Reyna followed by a handball claim and a challenge on

Callum Hudson-Odoi.

The Midlands club issued a strongly worded statement after the game on social media platform X accusing the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) Stuart Attwell of being a Luton Town fan.

"Nottingham Forest has today submitted a formal request to the PGMOL to release into the public domain the audio recordings between officials during yesterday's match against Everton at Goodison Park," Forest said.

"The club has requested this be shared for three key match in-

cidents - Ashley Young's challenge on Giovanni Reyna (24th minute), Ashley Young's handball (44th minute) and Ashley Young's challenge on Callum Hudson-Odoi (56th minute).

"We firmly advocate for the broader football community and supporters to have access to the audio and transcript for full transparency, ensuring the integrity of our sport is upheld."

Having been docked four points for financial breaches, Forest are 17th with 26 points, four fewer than 16th-placed Everton.

Billy Gun: Fast and fabulous

Oman’s Bilal Khan becomes first bowler from an ICC associate nation to reach 100 T20I wickets

Muscat - He is fondly known as 'Billy Gun'. And why not? He is the most potent weapon in Oman's pace arsenal. Armed with precision and power, he rarely veers off target when he's on his game.

With his toe-crushers, in-swinging yorkers, and menacing bouncers, he is now ranked among the elite in the T20I cricket world.

Meet Oman's pace spearhead, Bilal Khan, who recently achieved a proud milestone for himself and Oman Cricket. The 37-year-old belies his age, with his speed and skills, and became the first and only bowler from the 96 ICC Associate nations to reach the historic 100 wickets mark in T20 internationals.

Bilal joins an illustrious list of bowlers from across the world as he also became the third joint-fastest bowler in the world to achieve the milestone in T20Is.

Bilal's historic record was achieved on April 15 during the recently concluded ACC Men's Premier Cup at the Oman Cricket Academy ground where Oman lost to the UAE in the final.

Bilal's 100th wicket came in his 72nd match to share the record as the third fastest in the world alongside Ireland's Mark Adair, who did it in 2023. The exclusive club of quickest bowlers to reach 100 T20I wickets is led by Afghanistan's spinner Rashid Khan, who reached in just 53 matches while Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga is second, completing his century of wickets



Bilal Khan's 100th wicket came in his 72nd match, at the ACC Men's Premier Cup

I would like to thank God that I could reach this milestone. I worked hard and in the past few games of the ACC Men's Premier Cup was determined to reach the mark.

BILAL KHAN

in 63 games. While the top two in the 100-wicket club are spinners, both Bilal and Adair, are pacers.

The Oman speedster is a crafty left-armer who may not have express pace but his reverse-swinging yorkers during the death overs can rip through any team's batting lineup.

Among the top-ten fastest bowlers to achieve this record are Lasith Malinga (Sri Lanka, 76), Ish Sodhi (New Zealand, 78), Mustafizur Rahman (Bangladesh, 81), Shakib Al Hasan (Bangladesh, 84), Tim Southee

could reach this milestone. I really worked hard and in the past few games of the ACC Men's Premier Cup was determined and focused to reach the mark.

"I am satisfied and very happy as I am the first and only Associate bowler to reach this mark. It is a big thing for me."

The soft-spoken bowler said the key for his success has been "spending hours and hours in the gym and training hard."

He said: "There is no other way than hard work to succeed and I have been honest with my trainer and physiotherapist. They have helped me a lot in keeping me fit."

Asked about his most memorable spell in his T20I career, Bilal doesn't even bat an eyelid to talk about the match that powered Oman to the ICC T20 World Cup.

He said: "It was in 2019 in Dubai during the 2019 T20 World Cup Qualifier and we were playing against Hong Kong in an elimination match. It was a do-or-die situation, and I picked four wickets as we qualified for the T20 World Cup. I still remember the date, October 30, and the memories are so vivid."

Bilal expressed his gratitude and thanks to Oman head coach Duleep Mendis, his bowling coaches over the years, Aavishkar Salvi of India and Champaka Ramanayake of Sri Lanka.

He said: "Duleep Mendis Sir trusts me a lot and that gives me a lot of confidence. I have learnt a lot from Salvi Sir, who worked with me for 3-4 years and now Champaka Sir.



Jude Bellingham with the Laureus Breakthrough Player of the Year award

Bellingham eyeing triple trophy success

Madrid, Spain - Jude Bellingham is targeting LaLiga and Champions League titles with Real Madrid this season, as well as the Euros with England this summer, the 20-year-old said after winning the Breakthrough of the Year prize at the Laureus awards on Monday.

Bellingham has scored 21 goals for Real since signing in the close season from Borussia Dortmund for 103 million euros (\$109 million). The Englishman scored in added time to secure a 3-2 comeback win over Barcelona on Sunday as Real opened up an 11-point lead over their rivals.

"It's definitely something I want to do," Bellingham said of his trophy targets. "We've still got a few more games to wrap up LaLiga and then we've got two very difficult games against (Bayern) Munich (in the Champions League semi-finals)."

"For the Euros hopefully we can take our form from the last few tournaments and do one

better."

Bellingham's impact at Real has been undeniable. His leadership qualities have been praised by his team mates and he is the league's second-highest goal

"We've still got a few more games to wrap up LaLiga and then we've got two very difficult games (against Bayern) Munich)

JUDE BELLINGHAM

scorer with 17, one behind Girona's Artem Dovbyk.

Having made his debut in 2020, Bellingham has 29 caps for England and scored three goals. England are grouped with Slovenia, Denmark and Serbia at Euro 2024, which begins on June 14.



Fabio Cannavaro

Udinese appoint Cannavaro as coach

Udine, Italy - Udinese have appointed former Italy defender Fabio Cannavaro as manager after sacking Gabriele Cioffi on Monday, with the Serie A club in danger of relegation.

Cannavaro, 50, has coached several sides in China plus Serie B team Benevento and takes over from Cioffi, who was given the job in October with the club 18th in the standings. Udinese have lost three of their last four matches and now sit 17th, level on 28 points with third-bottom Frosinone.

Djokovic, Bonmati win top Laureus awards

Madrid, Spain - Spain's World Cup-winning midfielder Aitana Bonmati was named the Sportsman of the Year, while Serbia's Novak Djokovic captured the top men's honour at the Laureus awards ceremony on Monday.

Bonmati, who has cemented her place at the top of women's football by winning FIFA's The Best, Ballon d'Or and World Cup MVP among other accomplishments, made her way on to the stage for a second time on Monday as the Spanish women's football team were named Team of the Year, the first female squad to win the award.

Seven-time Super Bowl champion Tom Brady handed Djokovic his fifth Laureus award after the top ranked tennis player enjoyed a remarkable 2023. The Serb equalled Margaret Court's all time record haul of 24 Grand Slam titles after winning U.S. Open last September.

Djokovic contested all four major finals in 2023, also win-



Novak Djokovic and Aitana Bonmati with their Laureus awards



ning the Australian and French Opens. He was the runner-up at Wimbledon.

England midfielder Jude Bellingham, who has taken LaLiga by storm in his first season with Real Madrid, was named the Breakthrough Player of the Year, the first footballer to win this award.

Gymnast Simone Biles won

Comeback of the Year award after winning four gold medals at last year's world championships, her first international event since competing at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021.

Biles headed to the Tokyo Games eyeing a record haul of six gold medals but returned home with just a silver and a bronze after suffering a crisis of

confidence that saw the American drop out of multiple events due to "the twisties", a type of mental block where gymnasts are disoriented. Biles, who is the most decorated gymnast with 37 world and Olympic medals, then took a two-year break from the sport to protect her mental health before making her triumphant comeback last year.

Scheffler, Korda make history with glorious winning streaks

Texas, US - Scottie Scheffler and Nelly Korda, the two leading players in the men's and women's games, respectively, have produced the most dominant run that professional golf has seen in years and neither appears ready to slow down.

With his three-shot win at Hilton Head Island on Monday, Masters champion Scheffler has won four of his last five starts and become the first player to win a major and win on the PGA Tour the following week since Tiger Woods in 2006.

Scheffler's triumph came a day after Korda won the year's first major to become the third player since 1978 to win five con-



Scottie Scheffler and Nelly Korda



secutive events on the LPGA Tour, joining Nancy Lopez (1978) and Annika Sorenstam (2004-2005). "One of the people here asked me, like, is this turning into a competition between you and Nelly, and I was like, I don't know, man, I think if it's a competition she's got me pretty beat right now," Scheffler said on Monday.

"Five wins in a row. She had that T16 at the beginning of the year, which was just terrible; I can't believe she did that," a smiling Scheffler added.

In their last 10 starts, the dynamic American duo have combined for nine wins - including a major triumph each - the only blemish coming from Scheffler as

his five-foot birdie putt to force a playoff missed in his final start before the Masters.

Sustaining excellence for so long in golf is no easy feat and perhaps why the sport has not seen such dominance from both a man and a woman at the same time since World Golf Hall of Famer members Woods and Sorenstam were on top of their game.

Korda had to complete the last seven holes of her weather-delayed third round early Sunday and trailed by one going into the final round where she carded a three-under-par 69 to finish two shots clear of Sweden's Maja Stark.



CLASSY DISPLAY

Sandeep, Jaiswal shine in Rajasthan's comfortable win against Mumbai

Jaipur, India - Sandeep Sharma announced his return from injury with magnificent figures of 5 for 18, the best by any bowler in this season's IPL, before Yashasvi Jaiswal blazed back to form with a sparkling 59-ball century, as Rajasthan Royals signed off from the Jaipur leg of their campaign with a seventh statement win in eight matches to cement their table-topping status.

Set a middling 180 for victory after a Mumbai Indians' innings that owed everything to a 99-run fifth-wicket stand between Tilak Varma and Nehal Wadhwa, Royals' chase was signalled and sealed by Jaiswal, who had 31 from 18 balls prior to a 30-minute rain delay, before converting his first fifty of a difficult season into a towering 104 not out from 60 balls.

Jaiswal added 74 in eight overs with the in-form Jos Buttler, who made 35 from 25, and a further 109 in 65 with Sanju Samson, whose terrible reprieve on 19 by Tim David at midwicket was the moment all hope evaporated for Mumbai. By then, Jaiswal had also had a major let-off, on 50, when Wadhwa at deep cover dropped a leading-edged swipe off Piyush Chawla over the ropes for six.



Yashasvi Jaiswal of Rajasthan Royals celebrates his century against Mumbai Indians

Mumbai's performance was summed up by the deployment of their two outstanding bowlers of the campaign. After being riled by a first-ball slap for six, Gerald Coetzee bowled like the wind in

his solitary powerplay over, troubling Jaiswal with his pace, in particular with a top-edged pull that flew over the keeper for four. Yet he was not given another over until Jaiswal was into the 80s,

when he again got a well-set batter flinching, but by then the match was already lost.

And though Jasprit Bumrah bowled with his peerless verve up front, including a two-run first

TODAYS MATCH

MATCH 40

6 PM

DELHI CAPITALS VS GUJARAT TITANS

over to limit Buttler's early intentions, he too was held back too late into the chase - and when he did return, his comeback over was not a success. A first-ball no-ball was followed by a second-ball wide on height, where upon Jaiswal swung the rolled-over free hit for six, en route to a 16-run over, Bumrah's most expensive of a stellar season.

At the Wankhede three weeks ago, Trent Boult silenced Mumbai's home support with the prized scalp of Rohit Sharma, who grazed his first ball of the match - and the fifth of the innings - through to Sanju Samson behind the stumps. It was a case of rinse-and-repeat in the re-match: Again from the fifth ball, albeit this time with 6 to his name. One filleted four through deep third, then a wild swing through the full length, for Samson to rush round from behind the stumps and gather.

ESPNcricinfo



Sunil Narine

Sunil Narine rules out Windies comeback for T20 World Cup

Kolkata, India - Sunil Narine has ruled himself out of a recall to West Indies' squad for the forthcoming T20 World Cup in the Caribbean and USA, insisting that "that door is now closed" despite his stellar form for Kolkata Knight Riders at the IPL.

Narine, 35, is currently leading the tournament's MVP standings after a remarkable run of form, including a magnificent 109 not out from 56 balls against Rajasthan Royals last week, his maiden T20 century.

He is also KKR's joint-leading wicket-taker, taking nine at 22.11 with his offspin, at an economy rate of 7.10. That form led West Indies' T20I captain, Rovman Powell, to admit he had been "whispering in [Narine's] ears" over the previous 12 months, ahead of what will be West Indies' first home World Cup campaign since 2007.

Narine, however, retired from international cricket in November 2023, having not played for West Indies since 2019, and in a statement issued by KKR, he insisted he was not about to change his mind.

"I'm truly flattered and humbled that my performances recently have moved many people to publicly express their wish for me to come out of retirement and play in the upcoming T20 World Cup," Narine wrote.

"I have made peace with that decision and whilst I never wish to disappoint, that door is now closed and I will be supporting the guys who take the field in June for West Indies.

"Guys who have worked hard for the past few months and deserve to show our wonderful fans that they are capable of winning another title - I wish you all the best."

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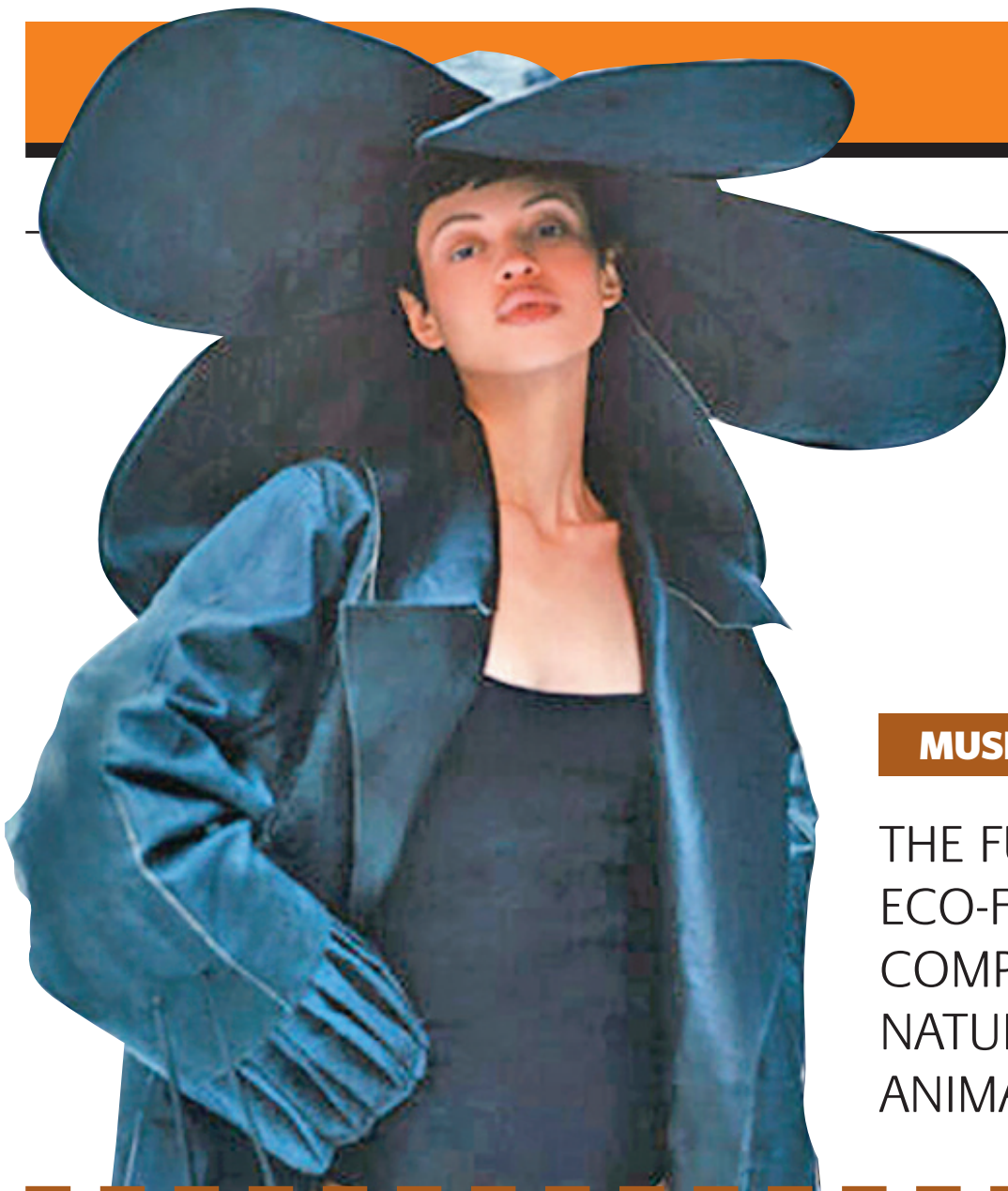
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ECO-FRIENDLY
ATTIRE

Imagine disposing of an old pair of shoes by simply composting it.

The mycotextile industry is placing a big bet on that future and redefining the limits of fashion.

In present-day Romania, a dwindling number of artisans practice what's thought to be a centuries-old craft. They search the forest for hoof fungus, which grows within trees and sends out shelf-like mushrooms a few inches wide.

The fungus is pried off trunks and, with a sickle, shaved lengthwise into thin strips the colour of gingerbread. Those strips are then hammered and stretched to form broad, felt-like sheets called amadou, which can be crafted into hats, bags, jewellery, and ornaments.

These products are beautiful and eco-friendly, if painstaking to forage for and create. As far back as 1903, Tlingit artisans, in what is now the state of Alaska, were crafting pouches out of a sturdy mat-like material. A 2021 study in the journal Mycologia suggests that these mats were produced by the agarikon fungus, a hardy polypore native to old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest. But, again, the artisans' process was about foraging for materials, not cultivating them for mass production.

Today, inside a 136,000sq ft facility in Union, South Carolina, the biotechnology company MycoWorks is pioneering a more intentional and scalable approach. Beneath dim red lighting that resembles a darkroom's, stacks of metal trays are arranged in tall columns. Large mechanical arms whirl about, ready to pluck them individually for close inspection by a small team of technicians who wear sterile suits and examine the contents with flashlights.

At the MycoWorks factory, a sheet of

the company's patented leather-like material is displayed. The strain of Ganoderma fungus, set in a deep tray for moulding purposes, has grown through a layer of agricultural waste, like sawdust or bran, to produce a finished sheet. It will then be peeled off, packaged, and sent to a tannery.

Each tray is incubating mycelium, a mesh of fine filaments that, for fungi, are roughly analogous to a plant's root system.



tem. Mycelium is a structural marvel - simultaneously soft, dense, and strong - which makes it a great potential replacement for leather. Coaxing mycelium to grow in predictable ways may be a com-

plex task, but recent advances in biotech have opened up a cottage industry for mycotextiles.

The early efforts appear to be more ethical, environmentally sustainable, and efficient than the multibillion-dollar industry that is animal leather. And MycoWorks is just one of a wave of innovators, all of which are betting big that a better understanding of mycelium can redefine the limits of fashion and design.

MycoWorks co-founder Phil Ross has been experimenting for more than 30 years with Ganoderma, a genus of fungi that grow a lot like hoof fungus in the wild. As an artist in his San Francisco apartment, he learned how to manipulate the fungi into a range of forms: In 2009 he constructed a "teahouse" made of bricks that could be removed and brewed into tea.

Ross first considered mycological-based construction materials, but an inquiry from a shoe company in 2015 helped him and co-founder Sophia Wang refocus on fashion. The material that MycoWorks now produces is called Reishi, borrowing the Japanese word for Ganoderma.

Inside what's known as the 'clean room' in MycoWorks' 136,000sq ft facility in Union, South Carolina, robots with



mechanical arms deliver trays of fermenting mycelium for flashlight-wielding human technicians to review for any contamination or imperfections.

The low-energy operation starts with agricultural waste, like sawdust and bran, which is heated to eliminate any existing microbial life that might be competition for the fungus. Once sterilised, the substrate goes into 'deep-dish, lasagna-like trays' of varying sizes, says Ross.

Then Ganoderma joins the party, digesting and growing through the biomass. In some cases, fabric can be added to the tray as a scaffolding for the mycelium to weave around, creating a composite material. The sheet of mycelium is eventually peeled off the

sawdust block, and growth comes to a halt. From there, it can be 'tanned' to yield a material easily mistaken for traditional leather before being crafted into, say, a purse or hat.

MycoWorks CEO Matt Scullin, who has a background in materials science, praises the 'wet spaghetti' structure of mycelium, which is composed of filaments - called hyphae - that entangle one another and branch off in tree-like patterns while leaving empty space between the cells. The result accounts for some of Reishi's most appealing properties. "It has a bit of a velvety touch to it," Scullin says. "It has a bounce. It has an absorptivity to the oils and heat that emanate from your fingers when you touch it."

Grown from a strain of Ganoderma, MycoWorks' patented leatherlike material is achieved by encouraging the fungus's strands of mycelium to spread, says CEO Matt Scullin. In nature, when a mycelium reaches the end of its food source, it reproduces, through an interplay of temperature, light, and humidity.

While mycelium can be grown in mechanised warehouses, Aniela Hoitink, the founder of the Dutch company Neffa, short for New Fashion Factory, uses a liquid-culture technique to create bags, crop tops, even lampshades.

On a recent day, she held up a small black handbag as proof of that proprietary process. Neffa uses bioreactor tanks - basically a fermenting system similar to a brewery's - to concoct a mycelial slurry that is strained out of the liquid and then poured onto a mould to dry into any desired form.

(Courtesy: nationalgeographic.com)

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How ‘brand value’ influences revenue

Brand value is the financial worth of a company. It influences the revenue of certain businesses and markets and corresponds to customers' awareness of a good brand. It keeps the cycle of business in motion and needs to be constantly maintained or enhanced.

Entrepreneurs are ready to spend millions of dollars on building brand awareness to make customers recognise their brands and purchase from them. Hence, brand value influences the revenue of certain companies and markets.

If customers appreciate one particular brand and often buy its goods, this company usually obtains a higher ROI (return on investment). Moreover, if brands

within a market have high customer loyalty, this can discourage new companies from entering such a market and increase the existing firms' market share.

Brands are intangible assets, yet they carry financial value. That's why knowing brand value is essential when we talk about investments and whether stakeholders should consider them. Companies need to pay attention to brand equity (what consumers think about a certain brand and how they perceive it) to raise their brand value.

Brand Value and Brand Equity

These two concepts are crucial for every business, yet they are



sometimes misinterpreted. Brand value can be defined as a cost of a particular company. Business owners should calculate how much it costs in the market to find this measure. Sim-

ply put, it is how much money someone would pay to purchase a particular business.

This metric helps to be aware of the directional changes, namely whether a company is gaining value or losing it. With this information in mind, entrepreneurs can decide to change their strategy or improve their marketing campaigns.

Each company has to raise brand equity to improve brand value. Let's take Tide, for example. This brand of laundry detergent is more famous than other smaller companies. The money Tide invested into marketing, creating brand awareness, and customer loyalty enables the company to increase revenues significantly.

Brand equity is the value a business obtains from its name and recognition. Brands should provide their customers with products of superior quality that are easy to recognise and memorable to create this value. As a result, although consumers can purchase such products from competitors at a lower cost, they are ready to pay higher prices. Customers do it because they want to buy goods or services from brands they love, trust, and admire.

Brand equity, therefore, consists of consumer perception, negative or positive effects, and the resulting value. It influences the sales volume of a certain brand and its profitability.

(Source: sendpulse.com)

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