

4 initiatives unveiled to boost electricity, water services

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR) has introduced four groundbreaking initiatives aimed at enhancing service quality and energy efficiency, while meeting rising demand for electricity and water services across the sultanate.

These developments were announced at APSR's annual media meeting on Monday, where the authority also reviewed its achievements in 2023 and outlined its strategic plans for the future.

The first of these initiatives announced guarantees direct compensation for electricity consumers should service providers fail to meet predefined quality standards. This approach will ensure accountability, with compensations directly adjusted in subscribers' electricity bills in case of



non-compliance by service providers.

In a significant move towards renewable energy, APSR announced the establishment of five new wind energy stations: Dhofar 2 (132MW), Sadah (99MW), Duqm (270MW), Mahout (400MW) and Jaalan

Bani Bu Ali (105MW). This expansion of 1,006MW wind power underlines Oman's commitment to diversifying its energy sources and bolstering its renewable energy capacity.

The third initiative introduces a spot selling project in Oman's electricity market, designed to at-

tract investments, streamline the purchasing process, and enhance transparency between consumers and electricity generation plants.

The fourth initiative focuses on implementation of home wastewater treatment plants to expedite sanitation service coverage, aiming to minimise both capital and operational expenditures associated with wastewater management.

Dr Mansour bin Talib al Hinai, Chairman of APSR, emphasised the significant reduction in water service connection fees by 70% for both residential and commercial users, alongside improved service delivery timelines - cut down to nine days for water and two days for electricity.

Hinai also highlighted the substantial work assigned to small and medium enterprises within the electricity, water and sanitation, and natural gas transportation sectors, worth RO73mn.

He highlighted resolution of 91% of customer complaints and a 40% reduction in response time, marking a significant stride towards consumer satisfaction.

Last year also saw enactment of the Water and Sanitation Regulation Law, establishing a robust legislative framework for the sector.

With remarkable increase in actual reading rates and installation of over 676,000 smart meters in the electricity sector and 332,000 in the water sector, APSR is making headway in technological adoption.

Hinai further shed light on the critical electrical interconnection project between the sultanate's north and south, aiming to optimise energy use and reduce carbon emissions by 32,000 tonnes annually.

Oman takes golf diplomacy to seven countries



This initiative aims to introduce Oman as a tourist destination and to establish a connection with golf enthusiasts, made up of businesspeople and high-net-worth individuals

H E KHALID AL MUSLAHI

Following the success of the inaugural Oman Golf Trophy diplomatic initiative held in partnership with public and private sectors in 2022-2023 in Italy and Oman, the Foreign Ministry, in collaboration with participating entities, revealed details of the second edition of the event in 2024 on Monday.

The tournament is set to attract a diverse mix of local and international golf enthusiasts, bolstering Oman's standing as a premier sports tourism destination. Eighty qualifying rounds will take place across seven countries from April to November 2024 with 7,400 participants vying for a spot in the final.

The finale will be held at Al Mouj Golf in December 2024 featuring 140 players. Notable business and media figures from participating countries will gather in Muscat, adding prestige to the championship's conclusion.

Commenting on the launch of the second edition, H E Khalid bin Hashil al Muslahi, Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs in the Foreign Ministry, stated, "This initiative aims to introduce Oman as a tourist destination and to establish a connection with golf enthusiasts, made up of businesspeople and high-net-worth individuals. It also aims to highlight Oman's potential and attract investors, business owners, tourists and media personnel from participating countries, promoting it as an attractive destination for golf and other sports."

H E Basil bin Ahmed al Rawas, Undersecretary for Sports and Youth in the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, emphasised the fact that Oman Golf Trophy is the first sports championship bearing the name 'Oman' held abroad. He said this year's edition will see the event expand to seven participating countries in the qualifying rounds, compared to the inaugural played only in Italy and Oman. "It presents a significant opportunity to promote investment opportunities, especially in sports tourism, in line with Oman Vision 2040."

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US vice president Harris calls for cease-fire in Gaza

MHT sets \$31bn investment plan for tourism by 2040

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The sultanate has planned to invest over US\$31bn by 2040 in the tourism sector, H E Azzan al Busaidi, Undersecretary for Tourism in the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT), stated in Berlin, Germany on Monday.

He made the comments at a press conference held to kickstart

Oman's participation in the ITB Berlin tourism trade fair.

H E Busaidi elaborated on Oman's strategy to utilise the platform provided by ITB Berlin to highlight its rich tourism offerings and future projects with the aim of drawing global attention to the sultanate's diverse attractions.

Year 2023 marked a significant uptick in tourism for Oman, with the sultanate welcoming

4mn visitors, of which 231,000 were German tourists - up 182% from 2022.

The undersecretary underscored the ministry's dedication to creating a favourable environment for tourism expansion. Efforts include streamlining visa procedures and easing restrictions for travellers from over 100 countries. Additionally, Oman is channeling more than US\$5.9bn

into 360 projects aimed at enhancing infrastructure and enriching tourist experiences.

Dr Mario Tobias, CEO of Messe Berlin, the organiser of ITB Berlin, said he was honoured to welcome Oman as the host nation at the exhibition. He informed that plans for Oman's participation had been in the works for years, delayed only by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Sale of homes in Sultan Haitham City begins

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning (MHUP) has initiated sale of residential units in the Al Wafa neighbourhood of Sultan Haitham City, marking a significant milestone in the development of one of the future city's premier residential areas.

Spread over approximately 1mn sqm, Al Wafa will have 1,800 housing units upon completion of its five-phase construction with an estimated total investment of RO280mn.

Launch of Phase 1 introduces 375 residential units, including a mix of apartments and villas, designed to cater to a diverse range of preferences and needs. These units are scheduled for handover by the end of 2026, aligning with



(Supplied photo)

Starting price for residential apartments is set at RO29,000 for Omanis eligible for housing assistance, with villa prices beginning at RO65,000. For non-eligible Omanis and foreigners, prices start at RO101,000

the anticipated completion of essential infrastructure services such as roads, telecommunications, water, sanitation, electricity and street lighting.

The sales initiation ceremony was led by H E Dr Khalfan bin

Saeed al Shuaيلي, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, and Salim bin Ali al Siyabi, Chairman of Board of Directors of Al Abrar Real Estate, a key developer of Sultan Haitham City.

In an effort to make homeownership more accessible, MHUP has set the starting price for residential apartments at RO29,000 for Omanis eligible for housing assistance, with villa prices beginning at RO65,000. For non-eligible Omanis and foreigners, prices start at RO101,000.

Projected to house 100,000 residents, Sultan Haitham City will spread over 14.8mn sqm and feature 19 integrated neighbourhoods, promising a holistic living experience. The city's development is planned in four phases, beginning from 2024 to 2045.

Bids invited to develop access road to Oman Botanic Garden

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As part of its efforts to develop roads and facilitate traffic, Muscat Municipality has floated a tender to develop an access road to Omani Botanic Garden.

A statement issued by Muscat Municipality said, 'Bids are invited to expand the road leading to Oman Botanic Garden in Al Khoud in the wilayat of Seeb.'

The project will cover a distance of 1.5km, linking the Special Tasks Force Roundabout to Omani Botanic Garden roundabout.

A network of secondary roads spanning 1km will also be built to facilitate smooth access to the garden, in addition to barrier railings, surface water drainage systems and other facilities.

Oman Botanic Garden will showcase all the native plant species of Oman in carefully created natural habitats, from bone-dry deserts to lush green monsoon forests.



The garden will also feature traditionally cultivated crops and the many ways people use plants in Oman. Located at the foothills of the Al Hajar mountains in Al Khoud, the site is one of only a handful of locations in the world where the ancient seabed is visible sitting 100m above sea level.

According to the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, 1,407 species of indigenous flora have been grown in environments simulating their natural habitat. The team has conducted about a thousand field trips since the beginning of the project.

The project is the first of its

kind in the region; no other botanical garden represents the entire flora of one country in habitat settings, presenting an unprecedented opportunity for visitors to experience the natural vegetation of Oman, while learning about agricultural heritage, cultural traditions and the legendary hospitality of the sultanate.

The project will include cable cars, nurseries, a visitor centre, research centre, field study centre, habitat gardens, habitat pavilions, amenity areas, play areas and family zones in garden settings that are unique to Oman.

Sohar Aluminium, MoH to set up dialysis unit in Dhank

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Sohar Aluminium has inked a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Health (MoH), specifically the Directorate General of Health Services in Dhahirah, to fund the construction of a new dialysis unit in Dhank Health Centre.

The agreement, signed in the presence of Najeeb bin Ali bin Ahmed al Rawas, Governor of Dhahirah, and representatives from both public and private sectors, on Monday underscores a significant collaboration aimed at bolstering healthcare services in the governorate.

The pact was formalised by Jameel bin Mohammed Shakeel,



(Supplied photo)

Communications and Corporate Social Responsibility Manager at Sohar Aluminium, and Dr Ahmed bin Said bin Khamis al Kalbani, Director General of Health Services in Dhahirah.

The initiative is a testament to the shared commitment of the public and private sectors towards enhancing Oman's healthcare landscape, specifically aiming to support government's

endeavours to improve health services and foster sustainable community development across various governorates.

Ahmed bin Mohammed al Kharusi, GM of HR and Corporate Affairs at Sohar Aluminium, highlighted the significance of the project, describing it as a continuation of the company's sustained efforts in social investment in the healthcare sector. "This initiative not only adds to our portfolio of contributions towards healthcare but also reaffirms our dedication to supporting vital sectors for the betterment of society," Kharusi said. The company has also supported healthcare through the construction of facilities and provision of medical equipment.

Dhofar Municipality invests RO4mn to bolster SMEs

Salalah - Dhofar Municipality allocated RO4mn for development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the governorate in 2023.

This financial commitment underscored a strategic collaboration aimed at fostering a robust partnership between the Authority for Small and

Medium Enterprise Development and the municipality, with the goal of stimulating the SME sector in Dhofar for sustainable growth.

The support sought to synergise SME development and the tourism sector, particularly during the peak tourist seasons of monsoon, spring and winter.

The municipality's efforts are concentrated on amplifying the role of SMEs in rejuvenating the tourism landscape of Dhofar, offering substantial support to employment ventures associated with the maintenance and operations of public spaces and recreational sites during these seasons.

The allocation extended support to 353 SMEs and institutions, enabling them to manage sites effectively. It not only facilitated essential services during tourist influx but also generated temporary employment opportunities, significantly benefiting local SMEs and productive families in the governorate.

RECALL

MAZDA CX-60 & MAZDA CX-90

RECALL DATE: 5TH MARCH, 2024

BRAND OF COMMODITY	YEAR OF PRODUCTION	NUMBER OF AFFECTED COMMODITIES
MAZDA	2023	90

STEERING CONSEQUENCE

While driving, the customer may feel a sudden increase of effort when steering the vehicle. Sudden and unexpected change of steering effort while driving may increase the risk of a crash.

RECALL ACTION

1. Reapply grease to the steering gear teeth.
2. Replace the spring engaging the worm gear with an improved part. The improved spring will reduce the spring force to the worm gear in the steering assembly.

TO CHECK THE SERIAL NUMBERS OF THE AFFECTED COMMODITIES, PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITE FOR RECALLS & WARNINGS: [HTTP://RECALL.PACP.GOV.OM](http://recall.pacp.gov.om)

Ministry of Health

NOTICE

The Ministry of Health (MOH) would like to announce to the citizens and residents, who have been accepted to perform the Hajj pilgrimage this year (1445H/2024G), to head to the health institutions specified by the Ministry in each Governorate to receive the required following vaccines:

1.The Quadric-vaccination against Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (ACYW135)

Receiving one dose of the Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (ACYW135) helps in safeguarding against the complications of meningitis. This vaccine provides five-year protection. People who have previously taken the vaccine and can provide proof of it are not required to take the vaccine again unless it has been more than five years since their last dose.

2.Seasonal flu vaccine.

Getting vaccinated with a single dose of the seasonal flu vaccine can protect against complications and provide immunity.

Therefore, MOH urges all prospective Hajj pilgrims to receive vaccinations at least ten days before their travel.

The above requirements are considered a prerequisite to entering the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to prevent the spread of infection and safeguard public health.

Razat Farm develops new banana variety

Our Correspondent
Salalah

Agricultural specialists at Royal Razat Farm in Salalah, operating under Royal Court Affairs, have achieved a breakthrough in banana cultivation.

The farm has developed a new banana variety, which first evolved naturally through spontaneous genetic mutation within a field of Williams variety (AAA) bananas, a member of the widely cultivated Cavendish group and a principal variety grown in Oman.

Efforts for this scientific development began in 2015 when experts selected several seedlings of this novel variety for cultivation. The new banana plant variety was developed through meticulous observation and cultivation over three years.

A period of careful monitoring confirmed the genetic stability and advantageous attributes of the new variety when compared to its progenitor, the Williams variety.

The new strain exhibits several unique genetic traits, includ-



ing exceptional adaptation to local soil, water and climatic conditions. Notably, the flower-bearing stem of this variety is shorter than that of its parent, a trait that enhances the plant's ability to support the fruit cluster and shield it from wind damage.

Named Moz Razat in homage to the farm where it was developed, the variety boasts robust leaves and the plants reach harvest maturity three weeks earlier than the Williams variety. Additionally, it produces heavier stems and yields bananas that are less curved, and promises to increase economic returns of banana cultivation in the region.

Sur Maritime Heritage Festival showcases rich seafaring traditions

Our Correspondent
Sur

The Maritime Heritage Village has become the star attraction at the ongoing Sur Maritime Heritage Festival held to celebrate Sur's recognition as Arab Tourism Capital 2024.

Nestled on the scenic shores of Khor al Batah in Al Ayjah, the village offers a unique glimpse into the rich maritime history of South Sharqiyah.

An official of Ministry of Heritage and Tourism described the village as a journey through time, emphasising the deep-rooted connection between the people of Sur and the sea. "This village is more than just a tourist attraction; it's a testament to the enduring legacy of Sur's inhabitants and their centuries-old maritime heritage," the official stated.

Dedicated to the preservation of Oman's seafaring heritage, the village showcases traditional craftsmanship and Sur's historical importance as a pivotal trading and maritime centre.

Visitors are treated to an immersive experience that recreates the bustling life of ancient Omani ports, complete with en-



actments of activities like loading goods - dates, fish and dried lemons - alongside renditions of songs that sailors sang as they set off on voyages across the Arabian Gulf to ports in Iraq, Iran, East Africa and India.

The village also has a remarkable collection of artefacts, offering insights into the traditional tools and techniques used in fishing.

Heritage enthusiasts and experts share their knowledge with visitors, bringing to life stories and practices of Oman's maritime past. The village has become a hub for collectors and aficionados of maritime heritage, promoting the exchange of traditional maritime arts and crafts.

3,543 applicants get admission to Indian schools in Muscat

Muscat - A total of 3,543 applicants have been allotted seats in the seven Indian schools in Muscat through a computer-generated draw held on Sunday at Indian School Muscat.

The draw was overseen by Dr Sivakumar Manickam, Chairman of Board of Directors, Indian Schools Oman. "The centralised admission system with online registration introduced by the Board of Directors of Indian Schools Oman has facilitated the

entire admission process, making it convenient for parents and schools to take care of rush for admissions," said Manickam.

A total of 1,402 applications were received for KG1, 458 for KG2, 594 for Class 1, 191 for Class 2, 192 for Class 3, 152 for Class 4, 135 for Class 5, 126 for Class 6, 98 for Class 7, 103 for Class 8 and 92 for Class 9.

About 72% of applicants got admission in their first choice of school, a press release said.

Oman takes golf diplomacy to seven countries

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Munthir bin Salem al Barwani, President of Oman Golf Association, stated, "The Oman Golf Trophy is an initiative of the Unified

National Plan team to promote the sultanate under the auspices of Oman's Foreign Ministry. The first edition of the tournament saw 800 participants in the qual-

ifying rounds in Italy from September to November 2022. Fourteen players qualified to compete in the final round at Al Mouj Golf Course, where Enrico Pardazi

won the men's and Barbara Moratti the women's category."

Qualifying rounds will be held in Italy (April to October), Austria (April to September), Germany

(April to October), South Africa (May to August), India (August to November), France (September to October), and Japan (August to October).



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Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co. SAOG

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Chairman's Report

Dear Shareholders,
On behalf of the Board of Directors, I congratulate **His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik Al Said** on His Majesty's fourth anniversary of assuming leadership of the Sultanate, under whose wise leadership the Sultanate continues to flourish and progress.

3 decades of Excellence
The year 2023 saw your Company celebrating 3 decades of its excellence in the dynamic and ever-evolving petroleum downstream industry in the Sultanate of Oman. Over the past 30 years, Al Maha Petroleum has weathered market fluctuations, embraced technological advancements, and navigated regulatory changes with resilience and innovation and since been a strategic partner in developing and supporting the Sultanate's infrastructure sector. Our commitment to excellence and dedication to providing high-quality petroleum products have been the cornerstones of our success.

Year of success
I am also delighted to introduce the 20th Annual Report of our Company, which includes the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended on 31 December 2023, and to discuss the key highlights of the year.

In 2023, Oman's economy witnessed robust growth and stability. The GDP increased by 2.3% to RO 43.7 billion, and the country achieved a notable fiscal surplus of RO 931 million, influenced by oil prices averaging US\$82 per barrel, significantly higher than projected. This economic upturn was bolstered by focused efforts from various government units to control spending and enhance spending efficiency, contributing considerably to the positive fiscal performance.

During the past year, the Government continued to exert intensive efforts to increase non-oil revenues and improve the efficiency of public spending. These policies have significantly contributed to enhancing economic diversification, fortifying the economic stability, and reducing public debt to reach 35% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which led to an improvement in the Sultanate's credit rating. The measures taken not only bolster sustainable economic growth but also contribute to creating an attractive and stable investment environment in the country.

In alignment with these positive economic developments, your Company has effectively broadened its customer base through various customer-focused initiatives, seizing new business opportunities throughout the year. As a result, the Company has demonstrated positive growth, evidenced by:
a) a growth in sales from RO 492.7 million in 2022 to RO **493.8** million in 2023,
b) an increase in net profit from RO 6.2 million in 2022 to RO **6.3** million in 2023

	2023 RO '000	2022 RO '000	Increase RO '000	Increase %
Sales	493,810	492,731	1,079	0.2%
Cost of Sales	(465,909)	(465,237)	672	0.1%
Gross profit	27,901	27,494	407	1.5%
Other income	6,578	4,949	1,629	33%
Total expenses	(28,166)	(26,251)	1,915	7.3%
Net profit after tax	6,313	6,192	121	2%
Earnings per share (RO)	0.091	0.090	0.001	1%

- Total revenue increased to RO 493.8 million in 2023, a growth of 0.2% from RO 492.7 million in 2022, mainly due to an increase in sales volume by 3%
- Other Income increased by 33% from RO 4.9 million in 2022 to RO 6.6 million in 2023, mainly attributed to the positive impact of managing the Fuel Farm at Muscat International Airport from January 2023, the growth in non-fuel revenues and the effectiveness of the operational performance index.
- Net profit grew by 2% from RO 6.2 million in 2022 to RO 6.3 million in 2023, demonstrating commitment to operational efficiency & cost management.
- Earning per Share (EPS) increased by 1% from 90 Baisa in the previous year to 91 Baisa in 2023.

Market Segments Performance:
The Company focused on enhancing operational efficiency and effectively responding to market challenges by adapting to changing consumer preferences and industry trends. This approach adopted by the Company has led to strengthening its brand and positively reflected on its sales during the year 2023. Major investments in technology have also improved the customer experience and assisted in introducing innovative products and services.

As a result, sales volume in 2023 increased by 3% compared to the previous year, reflecting the growing demand for the Company's products and services, as outlined below:

- Retail sales volume has gone up by 3 %
- Commercial sales volume has decreased by 7%
- Aviation sales volume has gone up by 19%
- Lubricants sales have gone up by 24%

1) Retail Segment:
As the cornerstone of our business and a leading contributor to our revenue, the Retail segment has demonstrated remarkable achievements. Key highlights include:
a) Strategic expansion and modernization

- Eight new retail outlets have been opened, bringing the total number of filling stations to 248
- Three retail fuel outlets have been revamped/rebranded.
- The Company is currently applying the final touches to a number of new fuel stations, car service centers, and other services, which will soon be opened to provide exceptional services and a unique experience to our customers.

b) Smart Fuel Card Business: Simplification and Leading Innovations

- The implementation of advanced RFID technology and the launch of new NFC wireless cards has enhanced customer experience, increased efficiency, and raised security in fuel purchasing operations.
- Successful promotional campaigns for smart cards throughout the last year have resulted in significant customer turnout and boosted retail sales performance.

c) NSS Cards Business: Supporting Fuel Subsidies with Smart Solutions

- Registered and active Al Maha NSS Fuel Cards increased by 37% with innovative smart card technology implementation.

d) Fully Onsite Fuel Delivery: Meeting B2B Needs Effectively

- During the year 2023, sales grew by 127% due to rising demand for onsite fuel delivery from B2B customers.

2) Commercial Segment
The Commercial segment, characterized by its high level of competitiveness, faces ongoing challenges, the most notable of which is the decreasing demand for Gasoil. This challenge emerges as some of the key customers shift toward using gas as an alternative energy source for electricity generation. Despite these challenges, there are positive indicators signaling potential growth. It is expected that increased government spending and foreign investments in infrastructure projects will boost commercial activity and drive growth in this segment.

3) Aviation segment
In 2023, Aviation sector witnessed exceptional achievements in aviation fuel sales, paralleling the growth of the aviation industry. This period saw a notable increase in fuel sales for Oman Air and other major airlines, reaffirming the sector's return to stability. Furthermore, the Company's significant milestone in securing a prestigious contract from Oman Airports to manage the Fuel Farm at Muscat International Airport for a five-year term starting January 2023 has contributed to enhancing the Company's other income. It also marks a turning point in its status as a key player in the market and in its ability to achieve success in a competitive environment for such projects.

4) Lubricant Segment
During 2023, the lubricant segment saw significant advancement, driven by the increasing popularity of Al Maha's brand lubricants in both the local and international markets. The introduction of the 'AMPRO' brand – an acronym for Al Maha's professional range of lubricants – played a key role in enhancing the attractiveness of our products. In August 2023, the Company entered a new and exclusive seven-year commercial agency agreement with 'Now Fuel Co' in Saudi Arabia. This strategic partnership is designed to distribute Al Maha lubricants throughout the Kingdom, a move that is expected to bolster the Company's presence in the Saudi market. The agreement is anticipated to positively influence the growth of our lubricant segment in the coming years, demonstrating the Company's dedication to expanding its reach and strengthening its position in regional markets.

5) Other Income including Non-Fuel Retail (NFR)
Other income for 2023 increased to RO 6.6 million, primarily due to:
Fuel Farm depot management income
Your Company's success in securing the prestigious contract with Oman Airports to manage the Fuel Farm at Muscat International Airport, effective from January 2023, contributed to the increase other income during the period.
The NFR Segment:
This segment has played a crucial role in the Company's overall success due to its widespread popularity and close association with the retail segment of the petroleum industry. Numerous convenience stores, commercial buildings, and automotive service centers were launched during 2023, contributing to the expansion of non-fuel retail activities at fuel outlets and generating additional financial revenues.

Dividend
In line with our consistent dividend policy of maintaining a sustainable dividend payment, the Board of Directors has recommended a cash dividend of Bzr **90** (2022: Bzr 85) per share, amounting to RO **6.210** million (2022: RO 5.865 million) representing **90%** (2022: 85%) of share capital, subject to the approval of the shareholders' Annual General Meeting to be held on 26 March 2024.

Corporate Governance
The Company upholds Corporate Governance as a key pillar for ensuring effectiveness and responsibility at every organizational level, from the board of directors to executive management. More than just defining roles and responsibilities, our commitment to these standards is about ensuring fairness for all stakeholders through transparent policies and complete disclosure. These governance principles also significantly empower and actively engage our employees in decision-making. A dedicated section in the Annual Report provides a detailed Corporate Governance Report. This section highlights the critical role of these practices.

Quality, Health, Safety and Environment (QHSE)
The Company is committed to conducting business with a robust Quality, Health, Safety, and Environmental conscience, ensuring sustainable development, safe workplaces, and enrichment of the quality of life of its employees, customers, and the community as a top priority.

Compliance with Quality, Health, Safety, and Environment systems, procedures, and laws is monitored at the unit, division, and corporate levels. The Company's QHSE activities are reviewed periodically in board meetings.

The continuous improvement year after year in achievements of Quality (ISO 9001), Health & Safety (ISO 45001), & Environment

(ISO 14001) certificates are a testament to our consciousness at all levels regarding the importance of commitment to Quality, Health, Safety, & Environment guidance.

During 2023, comprehensive audits of the Quality, Health, Safety, and Environment systems were conducted across various Company offices, sites, and projects. In addition, a series of specialized training programs in quality, health, safety, and environment were organized throughout the Company, aiming to enhance awareness and improve the proficiency of all employees.

Corporate Social Responsibility
The Company prioritizes its social responsibility commitment towards the community, focusing on contributing to vital areas such as education, health, and the environment. These contributions are reflected in well-thought-out initiatives aimed at providing support that aligns with the needs of the communities it operates in. In 2023, the emphasis was on supporting charitable, non-profit organizations and service facilities that serve the community, reflecting the Company's commitment to its role as an active and responsible member of society. This support is part of the Company's ongoing efforts to positively and tangibly contribute to the development of local communities, encompassing a wide range of activities and programs designed to positively and directly impact people's lives.

Future Outlook
As we advance into 2024, the economic landscape of Oman shows promising signs of growth and stability, aligning with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and the Tenth Five-Year Development Plan. The Government's cautious budgeting, assuming an average oil price of \$60 per barrel and achieving economic growth of at least 3%, indicates a balanced strategic approach toward maintaining financial resilience in the face of global economic volatility and oil price fluctuations.

With the Sultanate focusing on stimulating economic growth and maintaining inflation at moderate levels, the Government's commitment to enhancing the business environment and fostering foreign investment creates favorable conditions for us to explore new markets and strengthen our existing operations. Our Company is poised to thrive in this environment.

In light of the Government's initiatives like the Sustainable Finance Framework and the Public Debt Law, the Company has adapted its strategies to align with these developments, ensuring sustainable and responsible growth. The emphasis on digital transformation and the enhancement of the business environment also present opportunities for our Company to integrate more innovative solutions and expand into emerging markets.

Furthermore, the Government's significant investment in infrastructure, health, education, and social welfare sectors opens up new avenues for collaboration and growth. We intend to leverage these opportunities, particularly in areas receiving substantial government investment.

Looking forward, Your Company is actively planning to expand into new markets within the GCC region to ensure sustainable and robust growth. Additionally, there is a focus on exploring alternate energy businesses as part of our diversification and decarbonization strategy.

Our outlook for 2024 is one of cautious optimism. We are strategically positioned to navigate through the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities presented by the economic landscape. Our commitment remains strong towards aligning with national economic goals, ensuring sustainable development, and contributing positively to the Sultanate's prosperity.

Acknowledgment
On behalf of the Board of Directors and executive management, I take this opportunity to express our most sincere gratitude and loyalty to **His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq** and his efforts toward a prosperous Oman.

We thank the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, OQ Refineries, our shareholders, customers, and officials of the Capital Market Authority, the Muscat Stock Exchange, and Muscat Clearing & Depository Company for their valuable support and co-operation. We also appreciate the dedicated and committed service of our staff members.

Dr. Saif Salim Saif Al-Harhi
Chairman
18 February 2024

	2023 RO'000	2022 RO'000
ASSETS		
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	29,428	28,191
Investment properties	447	494
Right-of-use assets	6,296	6,368
Contract assets - non current	2,643	3,085
Deferred tax assets	2,776	2,741
	41,590	40,879
Current assets		
Inventories	4,013	3,824
Trade and other receivables	76,560	69,647
Contract assets - current	1,952	1,952
Bank balances and cash	42,389	35,241
	124,914	110,664
TOTAL ASSETS	166,504	151,543
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Equity		
Share capital	6,900	6,900
Legal reserve	2,300	2,300
Special reserve	2,104	2,104
Retained earnings	36,672	36,224
Total equity	47,976	47,528
Liabilities		
Non-current liabilities		
Lease liabilities – non current	6,152	6,163
Employees' end of service benefits	251	235
	6,403	6,398
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	49,192	51,342
Short term borrowings	59,559	42,900
Lease liabilities – current	659	720
Contract liabilities – current	1,444	1,462
Income tax payable	1,271	1,193
	112,125	97,617
Total liabilities	118,528	104,015
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	166,504	151,543
Net assets per share (RO)	0.695	0.689

	2023 RO'000	2022 RO'000
Revenue	493,810	492,731
Cost of sales	(465,909)	(465,237)
Gross profit	27,901	27,494
Other operating income	6,578	4,949
Operating expenses	(24,007)	(23,588)
Administrative and general expenses	(1,923)	(1,061)
Operating profit	8,549	7,794
Finance costs	(2,838)	(1,899)
Finance income	1,792	1,422
Profit before tax	7,503	7,317
Income tax expense	(1,190)	(1,125)
Profit and total comprehensive income for the year	6,313	6,192
Basic and diluted earnings per share (RO)	0.091	0.090

Note:
The complete report is available in Muscat Stock Exchange website and Company's website. The complete report will be sent to any shareholder who requests them either in Arabic or English as required within 7 days of receipt of the request. The request should be sent to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at the above mentioned address.

MARKET WATCH

MSX30	4,577.81
Sensex	73,095.22

FOREX RATES

(RO1 equals)

India	215.29
Pakistan	718.72
Bangladesh	285.02
Philippines	145.67
Sri Lanka	806.52

*Rates as on March 04
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Oil rises amid OPEC+ cuts extension

Oil prices increased on Monday amid an OPEC+ decision to continue production cuts until the end of June and call for a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas.

International benchmark Brent crude traded at \$83.78 per barrel for a 0.28% increase from the closing price of \$83.55 a barrel in the previous trading session.

The American benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) traded at \$80.09 per barrel at the same time, for a 0.15% rise after the previous session closed at \$79.97 per barrel.

Saudi Arabia and Russia will cut daily output by 1 million barrels and 471,000 barrels, respectively, while Iraq and the UAE will reduce daily production by 220,000 barrels and 163,000 barrels, respectively.

OOMCO to further expand retail network

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Oil Marketing Company (OOMCO), which recently completed 20 years of operations, is planning to further expand its network of retail service stations in Oman as well as in Saudi Arabia and Tanzania, which are among the key growth markets of the company.

OOMCO celebrated its 20th anniversary in the fuel retail sector by reflecting on its success and a host of key milestones. Under the auspices of H E Qais Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, OOMCO brought together a host of its stakeholders to mark the special occasion.

On the occasion, Hilal Ali Saif al Kharusi, Chairman of OOMCO, said, "Our journey has always been defined by putting the growth of Oman and its people first. While we are a company of many firsts, we remain committed to aligning our strategy with the Oman Vision 2040. Over the years, OOMCO has consistently taken the next strategic steps in the transformation of the fuel supply industry, and we will continue to achieve more milestones for generations to come."

OOMCO has reached 277 service stations in Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Tanzania. Currently, it operates 235 service stations



OOMCO celebrated its 20th anniversary under the auspices of H E Qais Mohammed al Yousef (left)

Oman Oil Marketing Company has reached 277 service stations in Oman, Saudi Arabia and Tanzania. The company is planning to open 20 more stations in Saudi Arabia and two more stations in Tanzania by end of 2024

in Oman, 30 stations in Saudi Arabia, and 12 in Tanzania. The company forecasts its network of service stations to reach 308 locations.

Addressing a press confer-

ence on Sunday, Khamis al Shuaibi, General Manager of Shared Services at OOMCO, said that the company is planning to expand its retail stations network in both the Saudi and

Tanzanian markets this year.

"In Saudi Arabia, we currently operate 30 service stations and are planning to open 20 more to reach 50 stations by the end of 2024. Similarly, we currently op-

erate 12 service stations in Tanzania and are planning to open two more stations this year," Shuaibi said.

He informed that OOMCO's portfolio also includes a total of 86 service stations that include electric vehicle (EV) charging points. Moreover, 12 of these sites are powered by solar panels, while 24 service stations across Oman have a Vapor Re-

covery System, significantly reducing the carbon footprint of these sites.

In addition, OOMCO signed a partnership agreement with Synergy Investment to establish Electrical Vehicles One, known as EVO. EVO is tasked with developing Oman's EV infrastructure and supporting green mobility initiatives.

"Since our establishment in 2003, we have been a company that consistently delivers on its brand purpose, which is to become the most customer-centric oil fuel marketer in the region, while staying true to our Omani roots. Our purpose has always been to create value and achieve progress for the communities we serve," said Tariq bin Mohammed al Junaidi, Chief Executive Officer of OOMCO.

"We have been building a brand that provides more than just quality fuel. The gradual roll-out of mega service stations and green stations in Oman is a glimpse into the future of service stations to offer a variety of services to inspire customers and meet and exceed their expectations."

OOMCO has four subsidiaries in Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Tanzania, including OOMCO Marine Bunker Terminal at the Port of Duqm, and Ahlain International LLC, which specialises in express retail services at OOMCO's service stations.

Oman, OPEC+ members extend oil output cuts through June

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman and other OPEC+ member nations agreed to extend their voluntary cuts to oil production through the second quarter of 2024. The move is part of the OPEC+ group's strategy to stabilise the oil market and prices by reducing supply.

The sultanate will extend its additional voluntary cut of 42,000 barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil until the end of June 2024, in coordination with some OPEC+ participating countries, the Ministry of Energy and Minerals announced.

This voluntary cut is in addition to the voluntary cut of 40,000 bpd previously announced by Oman in April 2023, which extends until the end of December 2024.

"Accommodating the additional cuts during the second quarter of this year, Oman's production will be 759,000 bpd until the end of June 2024. Afterwards, in order to support market stability, these additional cut volumes will be returned gradually subject to market condi-



Oman will extend its additional voluntary cut of 42,000 barrels per day of crude oil until the end of June 2024, in coordination with some OPEC+ member countries

tions," the Minister of Energy and Minerals said in a statement posted on X.

This additional voluntary cut by Oman, as per the ministry, comes to reinforce the precautionary efforts made by OPEC+ countries with the aim of supporting the stability and balance of oil markets.

Oman crude prices rose 1.9%

to close at \$83.12 per barrel on Monday at the Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME).

The OPEC Secretariat noted the announcements of several OPEC+ countries extending additional voluntary cuts of 2.2mn bpd, aimed at supporting the stability and balance of oil markets.

These voluntary cuts are calculated from the 2024 required production level as per the 35th OPEC Ministerial Meeting held on June 4, 2023, and are in addition to the voluntary cuts previously announced in April 2023 and later extended until the end

GCC firms will hold up against refinancing needs in 2024: S&P

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Most GCC corporate and infrastructure firms benefit from broadly supportive credit conditions in their domestic markets. This is despite soft global economic growth, high interest rates, and considerable geopolitical risks in the Middle East, according to S&P Global Ratings.

"Most GCC corporate and infrastructure ratings should remain resilient to the soft global economic growth and high interest rates in 2024," said S&P Global Ratings credit analyst Rawan Oueidat in a statement on Monday.

"We expect continued growth in both EBITDA and capital expenditure overall, largely reflecting rated companies' ambitious economic development plans. Their credit metrics should therefore either remain broadly unchanged, or improve marginally," Oueidat added.

S&P Global Ratings believes that refinancing risk is largely manageable for its rated portfolio, since 75%-80% of the debt maturing in 2024 sits at highly rated government-related enti-



ties (GRES).

In addition, the rating agency said that the level of absolute reported debt across GRE and non-GRE issuers in the GCC region is relatively stable. Aggregate reported debt hardly changes under our base-case scenario in 2024 and 2025, despite sizable spending needs.

"We expect oil, gas, and chemicals companies' earnings to rebound in 2024," Oueidat said. "We estimate that non-oil sector earnings will grow by about 7% in 2024, compared with 15% in 2023," Tatjana Lescova added.

"In infrastructure, we anticipate an acceleration in the implementation of various decarbonization initiatives following COP28, alongside issuers' progressive return to the capital markets for debt refi-

naning," S&P Global Ratings analyst Sofia Bensaid noted.

"We expect GCC infrastructure assets to remain resilient to market risk over 2024, as they often have long-term concessions that fully mitigate this risk," Bensaid continued.

"More than 95% of our outlooks on rated GCC corporate and infrastructure firms are stable, attesting to our view that ratings will remain resilient in 2024. However, this also means that we will see limited rating upside this year," Bensaid added.

According to S&P, rating pressure could arise for companies operating in cyclical sectors and making large investments if this leads their leverage metrics to increase. High geopolitical risk in the region poses a risk to companies that depend on investor confidence.

Amazon Web Services to launch Infrastructure Region in Saudi Arabia

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia – Amazon Web Services (AWS), an Amazon.com company, Monday announced it will launch an AWS Infrastructure Region in Saudi Arabia in 2026.

The new AWS Region will give developers, startups, entrepreneurs, and enterprises, as well as healthcare, education, gaming, and nonprofit organizations, greater choice for running their applications and serving end users from data centers located in Saudi Arabia, ensuring that customers who want to keep their content in-country can do so.

As part of its long-term commitment, AWS is planning to invest more than \$5.3bn in Saudi Arabia.

"Today's announcement supports Saudi Arabia's digital transformation with the highest levels of security and resilience available on AWS cloud infrastructure, helping serve fast-growing demand for cloud services across the Middle East," said Prasad Kalyanaraman, vice president of Infrastructure Services at AWS.

"The new AWS Region will enable organizations to unlock the full potential of the cloud and

build with AWS technologies like compute, storage, databases, analytics, and artificial intelligence, transforming the way businesses and institutions serve their customers. We look forward to helping Saudi Arabian institutions, startups, and enterprises deliver cloud-powered applications to accelerate growth, productivity, and innovation and spur job creation, skills training, and educational opportunities."

"The partnership with AWS and their announcement of an AWS Region, backed by a \$5.3bn investment, ignites a new



era of technological excellence and innovation for the Kingdom," said Abdullah Alswaha,

Saudi Arabia's Minister of Communications and Information Technology. "This AWS Region

demonstrates a firm commitment to research, innovation, and empowering entrepreneurs to achieve prosperity for our region and the world."

The new AWS Region will consist of three Availability Zones at launch, adding to the existing 105 Availability Zones across 33 geographic regions globally. With today's announcement, AWS has plans to launch 18 more Availability Zones and six more AWS Regions in Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and the AWS European Sovereign Cloud.

AWS offers the broadest and deepest portfolio of services, including analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), compute, database, Internet of Things (IoT), machine learning (ML), mobile services, storage, and other cloud technologies. Customers from startups to enterprises to public sector organisations and nonprofits will be able to use advanced technologies from the world's leading cloud to drive innovation, meet data residency preferences, achieve lower latency, and serve demand for cloud services in Saudi Arabia and across the Middle East.

Meethaq Islamic Banking upgrades its e-channels

Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat has reached a significant milestone in its digital transformation journey by upgrading its e-channels system. This upgrade involved transitioning from a legacy core banking system to the advanced (T24) platform with the support of Systems Limited, a global system integrator.

This strategic step underscores Meethaq's commitment to driving innovation through cutting-edge technology, addressing customer needs and expectations, reducing operational costs, and enhancing time-to-market capacity, a press release said.

The implementation of this new system is poised to reshape the Islamic Banking Landscape in the sultanate, enhancing the customer experience and enabling them to easily and efficiently follow up on their transactions. Further, it will expand the range of banking services and functionalities available through Meethaq's mobile app and Internet banking platforms. Meethaq remains steadfast in its pursuit of leadership by offering a diverse range of Shari'a compliant Islamic



banking products and services.

The initiative aligns with Meethaq Islamic Banking long-term goals and strategy of fostering innovation and staying up-to-date with the global industry trends. By elevating its mobile app and Internet banking platforms through this digital transformation, Meethaq is poised to significantly enhance

customers' digital experience. With state-of-the-art features such as utility payments, fund transfers between accounts, PASI payments, Credit Card outstanding payments and the ability to open savings and fixed deposit accounts, customers can enjoy unprecedented convenience and flexibility in managing their finances.

Furthermore, Meethaq has implemented enhanced security features to safeguard customers' sensitive information, ensuring peace of mind while banking online. Additionally, customers can now conveniently request debit cards, seamlessly link debit cards to multiple accounts, reserve safe deposit lockers and purchase gift vouchers for popular

platforms such as Apple iTunes, Google Play, PlayStation, Xbox and Steam. These ongoing efforts reflect Meethaq's commitment to delivering unparalleled service excellence and driving forward the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Meethaq Islamic Banking maintains its position as the most preferred provider of Sharia-compliant services and solutions in Oman, offering a comprehensive suite of Shari'a-compliant retail, corporate, and wholesale banking products and services. With a network of over 28 branches across the sultanate, Meethaq ensures enhanced accessibility to banking services through a dedicated network of over 50 ATMs/CDMs along with free access to over 800 ATMs and CDMs of Bank Muscat. This accessibility underscores Meethaq's commitment to serving a broad customer base.

In recognition of its pioneering role in the Islamic banking sector, Meethaq Islamic Banking has received numerous accolades from regional and global institutions, including the Leading Islamic Banking Brand Award.



AJIA unveils all-new MINI Countryman

Al Jenaibi International Automobiles (AJIA), the official importer of BMW Group vehicles in Oman, has unveiled the all-new MINI Countryman. The much-anticipated 2024 model, with its innovative design overhaul and cutting-edge technology, sets the benchmark for compact crossovers with an eye towards the future.

The heart of the new the all new MINI Countryman beats with a choice of powerful and efficient petrol engines, tailored to deliver an unmatched blend of excitement and efficiency, a press release said.

The lineup includes the front-wheel-drive MINI Countryman C, the all-wheel-drive S ALL4, and the high-octane JCW ALL4 variant. These models boast engines ranging from a dynamic 1.5ltr turbo-petrol with 167 bhp to a robust 2.0ltr turbo-petrol, culminating in the JCW's breathtaking 296 bhp and 400 NM of torque, sprinting from 0-100kmph in just 4.5 seconds.

Labelled 'Charismatic Simplicity', the 2024 MINI Countryman pioneers a new design language that is bold, modern, digital, and unmistakably MINI. This philosophy is a harmonious blend of futuristic interiors and retro exteriors, celebrating MINI's storied heritage while propelling it into the future. Characterised by upright proportions, a distinctive octagonal radiator grille, and a sculptural bonnet - among other elements - it embodies MINI's adventurous spirit and emphasises a fun driving and user experience.

The exterior is all about expressive minimalism with its distinctive silhouette, highlighting MINI's iconic design language. The clear-cut surfaces, wider wheel arches and slightly curved roof seamlessly transition into the C-pillar in a trim-specific shape, and the characteristic circumferential Black Band.

The interior of the Countryman, meanwhile, takes a leap into the future, featuring innovative materials such as recycled polyester - in the form of a high-quality 2D knit surfaces - for a homely, feel-good atmosphere. A completely revised dashboard, state-of-the-art 9.4-inch touchscreen infotainment system, the MINI Interaction Unit featuring a high-resolution OLED display and the intuitive MINI Operating System 9 complete the picture.

"We are excited to share the latest chapter in MINI's storied legacy with our customers in Oman. We're sure that all our MINI fans - past, present and future - will find it as exciting to drive as it is to behold, with its brave new design and powerful engine line-up," said Rachid Zamani, managing director of Al Jenaibi International Automobiles.

Vodafone brings home 11 Opensignal awards

Vodafone Oman has dominated the January 2024 Opensignal Mobile Network Experience Report claiming 11 of the 14 categories, either outright or jointly.

As Oman's fully digital operator, Vodafone set the benchmark on how to harness the power of technology to deliver seamless, uninterrupted and fast online mobile experiences to customers, a press release said.

The global independent analytics company reported Vodafone Oman the outright winner

of both overall speed awards (Download Speed Experience and Upload Speed Experience), both games experience awards (Games Experience and 5G Games Experience), Video Experience, 5G Upload Speed and Consistent Quality. Vodafone Oman was also a joint winner in two categories - 5G Video Experience and is part of the three-way statistical tie for 5G Availability.

Receiving the accolades at MWC in Barcelona, Bader Al



Zidi, Vodafone Oman CEO said, "It is a moment of great pride to be receiving multiple award wins from Opensignal as a result of our hard work, dedication and perseverance. In 2023 we had ambitious plans for our network, aiming to fast-track our 5G roll-out and grow our reach and population coverage all the while focusing on providing customers with an overall elevated experience. Opensignal has validated our efforts, through first-hand customer experience analysis."

Sohar International backs Muscat Open 50th edition



In line with its commitment to contribute to the promotion of Oman as an international sporting destination, Sohar International, the fastest-growing bank in Oman, has recently expanded its support as the Platinum sponsor for the 50th Muscat Open Golf Championship 2024.

Acknowledged as a premier amateur golf tournament in the GCC, the two-day event took place on February 23 and 24 at the Ras Al Hamra Golf Course. The championship attracted enthusiastic participants from Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Great Britain, a press release said.

Ahmed al Musalmi, CEO of

Sohar International, said, "As golf continues to ascend as a worldwide sport, the 50th Muscat Open emerges as a defining moment, spotlighting Oman as a premier sports destination on the world stage. Our partnership with this esteemed international sporting event underscores Sohar International's steadfast dedication to advancing the nation's socio-economic development. Our commitment to such endeavours not only enhances the sporting landscape but also inspires individuals to strive for excellence, propelling them toward their highest potential."

Golf in Oman has emerged as a powerful catalyst for socioeco-

nomic growth. The establishment of world-class golf courses and associated infrastructure has not only attracted international tourists but also spurred investments in other sectors, including hospitality and real estate.

As Oman positions itself on the global sports tourism stage by hosting international golf tournaments, the nation gains prestige, visibility, and opportunities for further partnerships, solidifying the sport's role as a dynamic driver of Oman's economic and social advancement. Sohar International aims to further contribute to the development of golf in Oman.



OETC welcomes first batch of winter trainees

The Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) recently welcomed the first batch of students for the year 2024 within the 'Winter Training' programme.

The number of students in this batch was 27 from various Omani higher education institutions. The students will undergo

a two-month consecutive training programme in various relevant fields, aimed at developing their skills and enhancing their readiness and efficiency to compete in the job market by acquiring the required competitive skills such as technical, leadership, and behavioural skills, a press release said.

Mubarak al Jahwari, general manager of Human Resources at the OETC, highlighted that the company is always seeking to contribute to the development of Omani youth as part of its social responsibility. It aims to enhance their competencies and capabilities to engage in the job market.

The company annually wel-

comes two batches of students to participate in intensive training programmes related to their fields of study. This effort has continued over the years as part of its initiatives to support and empower the youth, organise workshops and visits to transfer and exchange knowledge and experiences.

Ooredoo floats vanity number auction

Ooredoo Oman believes giving back is a privilege, not merely a duty, and decided to run another vanity number auction for charity.

Do you want one of the 100 unique Gold or Diamond mo-

bile numbers that are up for grabs and that others can easily remember? Are you passionate about supporting charities? If yes, start bidding during Ooredoo's auction beginning on March 5.

The vanity number online auction is an exciting opportunity to get a unique mobile number that makes you stand out from the rest while making a real difference in the lives of others. Ooredoo will donate

proceeds to good causes. Registration starts on March 4 and bidding begins at 9 am on March 5. Those interested in placing a bid on one or more Gold or Diamond numbers can browse the online list.



Sidrah 2.0 holds graduation ceremony

Sidrah 2.0, a youth leadership programme for Omani women ages 20-30, recently celebrated the graduation of 60 participants representing nine governorates from its multifaceted development programme.

Under the patronage of Hon-ourable Sayyida Rawan bint Ahmed al Busaidi, member of the State Council, the ceremony not only highlights the personal growth of each participant but the involvement of the programme itself, reaffirming its dedication to developing effective

The graduation of these 60 women marks a strategic stride towards realising Oman's Vision 2040, with female leadership at its heart

SHATHA SALIM AL MASKIRY

programmes to support the next generation of female leaders, a press release said.

Co-created and executed by Lahunna Oman and Outward Bound Oman, Sidrah 2.0 delivered a robust programme that

successfully forges skilled, ethical leaders in line with the Oman Vision 2040 objectives. This second iteration received over 1,000 applications, with the top candidates being selected for their willingness to learn and

contribute to positive change in Oman.

The programme included camping and hiking, in-person workshops, group coaching, personal coaching, online learning and community service. It also provided an ensemble of exercises, conducive to fostering both self-development and professional development. Within this enriching environment, participants reported significant improvements in self-awareness, confidence, and the ability to collaborate effectively.

HH Sayyid Faisal bin Turki al Said, Patron of OBO said, "Since its establishment in 2009, Outward Bound Oman has taken on the responsibility of training and developing the human capital in the Sultanate of Oman, encompassing both males and females. In our collaboration with Lahunna Oman, we reiterate our dedication to the Sultanate's approach, which recognises women's rightful contribution to advancing development and strives to provide them with suitable opportunities for growth

and prosperity."

Shatha Salim al Maskiry, Lahunna's Founder, said, "The graduation of these 60 women marks a strategic stride towards realising Oman's Vision 2040, with female leadership at its heart. Through Sidrah 2.0, we are nurturing promising individuals who will spearhead innovation and sustainable development in Oman. At Lahunna, we eagerly anticipate the bright futures awaiting these individuals"

The ceremony marks 104 total Sidrah alumni, whose

achievements extend far beyond the programme. Among Sidrah 2.0 graduates, many report launching their own businesses, securing jobs, garnering prestigious awards, completing advanced degree programmes, etc. "The success of our programme wouldn't have been possible without the right partners and mentors. We worked closely to assure every session flowed seamlessly to the next, with careful attention to customise each unique cohort," Shatha added.



OQ unveils comprehensive Road Safety Strategy

OQ, the global integrated energy group, showcased its strategy, plans, and systems for road safety across its companies, sectors, and facilities, including the systems, regulations, and requirements it adheres to, such as compliance with national and international traffic regulations.

During its participation in the 'Gulf Traffic Week' in the governorates of Muscat, Dhofar, and Musandam, organised by the Royal Oman Police under the slogan 'Driving Without a Phone', OQ highlighted its educational initiatives aimed at raising traffic awareness and promoting compliance with established regulations, with the goal of increasing awareness about the dangers of using mobile phones while driving and enhancing safe driving behaviour.

The group makes significant efforts in road safety as part of its security, safety, and environmental strategies, embedding them within its companies and

sectors. It contributes to road risk awareness, establishes controls and requirements for vehicle drivers to comply with traffic regulations through regulations binding employees and contractors as indicators, and imposes penalties on violators of regulations.

OQ applies national and international safety standards to avoid any incidents resulting in casualties due to accidents in its companies and facilities. In 2023, it worked on adopting the second road safety strategy, automating the trip management system, implementing virtual reality in driver training, installing a driver fatigue detection system (camera) using artificial intelligence, and installing two solar-powered speed radar units to ensure compliance with specified speeds.

It also mandated vehicle tracking systems, defined approved speed limits, required drivers to undergo defensive

driving courses as a prerequisite for employment within operational areas, in addition to adopting a periodic medical examination programme for drivers to ensure their good health and assess their impact on driving, setting criteria for driver acceptance based on age, years of experience, and previous accident record (if any), as well as evaluating actual driver performance on the road.

All new drivers undergo a training programme on the company's road safety laws and requirements, and road safety teams are appointed responsible for improving driver visibility, examining vehicles, and ensuring compliance with road safety requirements. Monthly awareness bulletins are shared with all drivers to keep them informed of the latest and best practices in road safety. A rewards and positive reinforcement system is also adopted for committed and outstanding drivers.

Intercity Hotel welcomes guests for Ramadan

IntercityHotel Bawshar Muscat, the newest in the IntercityHotel chain in the Middle East, is a vibrant hospitality destination located just 600m from the Mall of Oman and only a ten-minute drive from Muscat International Airport, the Royal Opera House Muscat, and the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque.

The hotel is an architectural landmark boasting state-of-the-art amenities for both business and leisure travelers, including 96 well-appointed rooms, a



panoramic rooftop pool, gym, 5 fully-equipped meeting venues, and 3 unique F&B options.

The F&B options include The Breakery, an energetic space with German roots, which invites

guests to immerse themselves in the mouth-watering aroma of freshly baked delights, as well as The Gourmet House, a refined dining destination where guests enjoy an exciting fusion of international and timeless Omani delicacies.

During Ramadan, The Gourmet House will be offering a signature Iftar Buffet with both, delicious local and global flavours for just RO10 per person. Special bookings are available for larger groups.



شركة العنقاء للطاقة (ش.م.ع.)
Phoenix Power Company (SAOG)

INVITATION TO THE ORDINARY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF PHOENIX POWER COMPANY SAOG

The Board of Directors of Phoenix Power Company SAOG (the "Company") have the pleasure to invite the respected shareholders to attend the Ordinary Annual General Meeting of the Company to be held at 3:00 pm on Monday, 18th March 2024 through the electronic platform of the General Meeting, which can be accessed through the Muscat Clearing and Depository website (www.mcd.gov.om). However in case of the quorum being incomplete, a second meeting shall be held on 3:00 pm on Monday, 20th March 2024 through the electronic platform of the General Meeting, to discuss the following agenda:

- To consider and approve the Board of Directors' report for the financial year ended 31 December 2023
- To consider and approve the Corporate Governance Report for the financial year ended 31 December 2023.
- To consider and approve the Auditors' Report and approval of the financial statements (balance sheet and income statement) for the financial year ended 31 December 2023.
- To approve the proposal authorizing the Board of Directors' to determine and distribute cash dividends to the Company's Shareholders (who are registered with the MCDC as of the dates to be decided by the Board of Directors) in July 2024 and January 2025 out of the retained earnings as per the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2023, provided that the aggregate amount shall not exceed 5.25 Baizes per share after obtaining no objection from Lenders.
- To notify the General Meeting of the related party transactions during the financial year ended 31 December 2023 .
- To notify the general meeting of the activities of the Company in relation to the Corporate Social Responsibility for the financial year ended 31 December 2023.
- To allocate an amount of RO. 50,000 as a budget of the Company in relation to the Corporate Social Responsibility for the financial year ending 31 December 2024.
- To appoint an independent consultant to carry out annual appraisal for the performance of the Board of Directors for the financial year ending 31 December 2024 and determine their remuneration
- To elect two directors to fill in a vacant seat in the Board of Directors of the Company from the shareholders or non-shareholders.
- To appoint Statutory Auditors for the financial year ending 31 December 2024 and determine their remuneration.

Any person who wishes to nominate himself/ herself to the Board of Directors should complete the nomination form. The completed forms should be sent to the Company at least five days prior to the AGM date. Nomination forms received after 5:00 pm on Wednesday, 13th of March 2024 shall not be accepted. The candidate must consider fulfilling the conditions prescribed for membership of the board of directors.

According to the Articles of Association of the Company and the rules for convening general meeting using the modern technology issued by the Authority, we would like to draw your attention to the following:

(A) Only juristic persons shall have the right to appoint a proxy to attend the general meeting and vote on their behalf via electronic means provided that such proxy must has an investor number in Muscat Clearing and Depository Company.

(B) Voting on the items of the agenda begins from three (3) days prior to the date of the AGM until end of voting process in the meeting day. Where the number of shares of any shareholders is increased or reduced, any voting or candidacy process performed before convening the general meeting will be cancelled and he/she vote again if willing to do so.

Respected shareholders are requested to attend at the AGM venue half an hour before the meeting.
For further information, please contact Mr. Ahmed Al Abri on telephone no. (+968) 22009968.

Deputy Chairperson	Auditor	Legal Advisor
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P.O. Box: 96, P.C: 102, Qurum, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: +968 2200 9967, Fax: +968 2200 9975

Nikki Haley notches first win over Trump in US Republican primary

In Washington DC, Haley garnered 1,274 votes against former president Trump’s 676

Washington DC, US - Former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley has defeated former US president Donald Trump in Washington DC in the Republican primary according to *The Hill* projections on Monday.

Haley garnered 1,274 votes to former President Trump’s 676 with all precincts reporting, according to the US-based news daily. This is her first victory over the former president in the 2024 campaign to become the Republican presidential candidate.

The contest took place in a downtown hotel just steps away from the heart of Washington DC’s lobbying hub over the weekend. According to Republican party officials, Haley carried nearly 63 per cent of the vote, Politico reported.

Nikki Haley’s win in Washington, DC Republican primary came after Trump defeated her in caucuses in Missouri and Idaho and at a Republican convention in Michigan on Saturday. Trump is moving towards the GOP nomination and is favoured to secure win in primaries across 16 Super Tuesday states this week.

The GOP electorate in DC, where Republicans constitute just five per cent of registered voters is hardly representative of the conservative base found in majority of the other parts of the US, according to Politico report.

Patrick Mara, chair of the DC Republican Party, said: “This universe is a little more sophisticated than just about any universe in



Former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley

Nikki Haley’s win in Washington DC Republican primary came after Trump defeated her in caucuses in Missouri and Idaho and at a Republican convention in Michigan on Saturday. Trump is moving towards the GOP nomination

any other state.” He further said: “I listen to the political podcasts in the morning. I read the newsletters throughout the day. That’s probably, like, half the people showing up at this.”

Dan Schuberth, who runs a trade association in downtown DC and backed Haley in the pri-

mary called his fellow DC Republicans as ‘a pretty unique electorate’, perhaps the only in the nation where many several voters personally know the people working on one or both of the campaigns.

Voting for the Washington, DC Republican primary took

place at the Madison Hotel over three days. On Friday, Haley held a campaign rally there, according to Politico report. As per the news report, Trump’s prospects to win the DC GOP primary were not high as he was at third spot behind Marco Rubio and John Kasich during the contest in 2016.

This year, Trump’s campaign warned DC lobbyists that they will be blacklisted from any future Trump White House access if they did not cast vote in the weekend’s primary.

During her campaign in Massachusetts on Saturday, Haley criticised Trump for the move. She said: “You can’t threaten people. You can’t push them out, because that is not a winning combination.” Despite her win in the primary on Sunday, Haley has not hinted that she plans to continue her campaign after the contests on Tuesday.

Speaking to a roundtable of DC political reporters on Friday, Haley maintained that she was only ‘thinking about Super Tuesday’, and not what she plans to do beyond that. She is scheduled to hold a campaign in Texas on Monday. However, she has no public events or election gathering scheduled for Tuesday.

Trump still has an early lead in delegates attained that will likely grow significantly on Tuesday with the additional states voting. Candidates need at least 1,215 delegates to clinch the Republican nomination.

ANI

Magnitude 6.1 quake shakes Kazakhstan

Istanbul, Turkey - Kazakhstan on Monday was shaken by a magnitude 6.1 earthquake near Almaty, the largest city in the Central Asian country.

In a statement, the Kazakh Emergency Situations Ministry said that the epicentre of the earthquake was recorded 31km (19.2 miles) south of Almaty and at a depth of 10km (6.2 miles).

It further said that Almaty’s emergency department immediately sounded sirens and intercepted television and radio channels following the quake that took place at 11:22am local time (0622GMT).

Indicating that emergency lines are operating in the city, as well as the Almaty and Zhetysu regions, the Emergency Situations Ministry urged local residents to not panic and be prepared for aftershocks.

“Stay calm and trust only official sources of information,” it also said, adding in a later statement that a second quake was recorded in China at 11:45am located 263km (163.4 miles) south of Almaty. The Kyrgyz Emergency Situations Ministry also reported on the quake near Almaty, saying that it was felt in the country’s capital Bishkek at a magnitude of 3.5.

Anadolu Agency

South Korea to begin suspension of licences of protesting medics

Seoul, South Korea - The South Korean government on Monday said it will begin taking punitive action against at least 7,000 protesting medics, including the suspension of licences which would be ‘irreversible’.

The warning came as doctors held a mass rally in western Seoul while police have imposed a travel ban on four leaders of the Korean Medical Association’s emergency committee.

The government ‘intends to make on-site investigations to find out violations, which will be followed with responses under the law and principles’, Second Vice Health Minister Park Min-soo told reporters in Seoul.

The action came as walk-off duty protests as well as mass resignations by around 9,000 trainee doctors entered the 14th day as the junior doctors and medical interns want the government to shelve plans of adding 2,000 medical seats annually.

The government has called protests by medics an ‘illegal’



The warning came as doctors held a massive rally in western Seoul while police have imposed a travel ban on four leaders of Korean Medical Association

labour action.

Currently, the government admits 3,058 medical students.

“The responses to key officials responsible for the collective action leading to chaos in the medical sector will be executed sternly and promptly,” said Park. “Doctors are subject to suspension of their medical licenses for up to a year, or could face three years in prison or a fine of 30mn won (US\$22,455), for not complying with such government orders,” according to Yonhap News. The protests by the medics have forced hospitals to postpone surgeries and emergency treatment.

Anadolu Agency

Zelensky claims Ukraine downed 15 Russian aircraft since February

Istanbul, Turkey - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has claimed that his country downed a total of 15 Russian military aircraft since the beginning of last month.

“This week alone, we managed to shoot down seven Russian military aircraft. ... Since the beginning of February, Russia has lost 15 military aircraft. This is the proper dynamics of their losses,” Zelensky said in a video address late on Sunday.

The more capabilities Kyiv possesses to shoot down Russian military aircraft, the more Ukrainian lives they will save by destroying Moscow’s logistics in the regions it controls, he added.

Expressing that they are capable of providing these capabilities and that Ukraine’s partners know Kyiv’s needs, Zelensky said the key in this regard is the ‘political will to implement everything’.

“If this does not happen, it will become one of the most disgraceful pages in history. ... Russian evil should not be encouraged by weak decisions, delays in deliveries, or hesitation,” he noted. He also said Ukraine’s military is holding out ‘against the onslaughts’ and defending their positions despite the significant shortage of artillery.

“We are waiting for vital supplies, waiting specifically for an American decision. The support is crucially needed,” Zelensky



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky

said, adding: “We must finally find a solution to the situation on the Polish border, which has gone beyond both economics and morality long ago.”

Russia summons German envoy

Russia on Monday summoned Germany’s Ambassador to Moscow Alexander Lambsdorff over leaked military discussions

between German officers last week. Russian media outlets reported Lambsdorff entering the country’s Foreign Ministry building and later leaving the building without giving comments to journalists. The Russian Foreign Ministry has yet to release a statement on the matter.

Lambsdorff was summoned as Russian media outlets on Friday shared a 38-minute recording of a conversation between German officers in which they discussed the theoretical possibility of Ukraine using German Taurus cruise missiles.

The recording also includes discussions about Ukraine’s potential strike on the Kerch Bridge that connects mainland Russia to Crimea, which Moscow illegally annexed in 2014.

A day later, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz pledged a swift clarification of the issue, which he described as a ‘very serious matter’.

Anadolu Agency

Australia announces new funds for maritime partnerships in Southeast Asia

Melbourne, Australia - Australia on Monday announced new funding for maritime partnerships in Southeast Asia as Canberra hosts a special summit with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Foreign Minister Penny Wong said the Australian government will invest US\$64mn over the next four years, including US\$40mn in new funding, to ‘enhance Australia’s Southeast Asia maritime partnerships’.

The announcement came as Prime Minister Anthony Albanese is hosting at least nine

ASEAN leaders - the biggest diplomatic gathering of world leaders in Australia since 2018 - in Melbourne to discuss, among other things, economy and security.

Disputes in the South China Sea are also expected to feature during the summit which concludes on Wednesday.

The new commitment in funding ‘will expand Australia’s maritime cooperation with regional partners and contribute to the security and prosperity of the region, consistent with the priorities of Southeast Asian coun-



tries’, said Wong in a statement.

As part of the summit, Wong addressed the Maritime Cooperation Forum.

ASEAN and Australia are commemorating 50 years of relations as Canberra is the Southeast Asian regional bloc’s oldest official dialogue partner.

“We share a region and we share a future, and the Special Summit is about working together to shape our future for the better,” Wong said after having a bilateral meeting with her Indonesian counterpart Retno Marsudi.

Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said Manila will not budge on its sovereign rights in the South China Sea, which it calls the West Philippine Sea.

“Illegal actions continue to infringe on our sovereignty,” Marcos told an event hosted by the Lowy Institute think tank.

Calling for turning the disputed waters into a sea of peace and stability, Marcos said the Philippines was still facing ‘serious difficulties’ at the sea, referring to overlapping maritime claims by China.

Anadolu Agency

Airdropping aid in Gaza ‘ineffective’

Gaza City, Palestine - The famine in Gaza is deepening and airdrops of humanitarian aid are ‘ineffective’, the Palestinian enclave’s media office said on Sunday.

The office said in a statement on Telegram that ‘2.4mn people suffer from severe food shortages and famine is deepening further in Gaza and the north’.

It said the famine ‘is worsening in the northern and Gaza governorates, where so far 15 children have succumbed to hunger, malnutrition and dehydration’ and this ‘threatens the lives of more than 700,000 Palestinian citizens suffering from extreme hunger’.

The media office pointed out that ‘dropping aid by air and turning a blind eye to bringing it in through the crossings is an attempt to circumvent the radical solutions to the problem’.

“Aerial aid drops now carry serious consequences for the people, posing a major challenge, as some of them are dropped near the buffer zone (with Israel) or areas controlled by the occupation army or located within the occupied Palestinian territories,” it noted. It said this ‘poses a danger of death to citizens attempting to obtain aid’.

‘The aid that is dropped by air does not achieve justice at all’ and requires people to ‘run after this aid that does not reach safe places in disgraceful, humiliating and inhuman behaviour’, it added.



Displaced children wait for food in the Gaza Strip on Monday (WAFA)

The office reiterated that it is ‘holding the US administration, the international community and the Israeli occupation fully responsible for the genocidal war being waged by the occupation against civilians, children and

women’ and also holds them responsible ‘for the famine and promoting the starvation policy’.

The US said on Saturday that it had carried out its first airdrop of humanitarian aid into Gaza, with more than 30,000 meals

parachuted from military planes.

Days ago, the Egyptian army announced in a statement the participation of Qatar and France in an aerial operation in which Egypt, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates took part to pro-

vide aid to the Gaza Strip, which has been witnessing an Israeli war since October 7.

Gaza death toll rises to 30,534

At least 124 Palestinians were

killed and 210 others injured over the last 24 hours as Israel continued its onslaught on the besieged Gaza Strip, the territory’s Health Ministry said on Monday.

“The Israeli occupation committed 13 massacres against fam-

ilies in the Gaza Strip, leaving 124 martyrs and 210 injured during the past 24 hours,” the ministry said in a statement.

“Many people are still trapped under rubble and on the roads as rescuers are unable to reach them,” the statement said.

Flouting the International Court of Justice’s provisional ruling, Israel continued its onslaught on the Gaza Strip where at least 30,534 Palestinians have been killed, mostly women and children, and 71,920 injured since October 7, according to Palestinian health authorities.

Israel has pounded the Gaza Strip since a cross-border attack by Hamas, which Tel Aviv says killed nearly 1,200 people.

The Israeli war on Gaza has pushed 85 per cent of the territory’s population into internal displacement amid acute shortages of food, clean water and medicine, while 60 per cent of the enclave’s infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, according to the UN.

Israel stands accused of genocide at the International Court of Justice. An interim ruling in January ordered Tel Aviv to stop genocidal acts and take measures to guarantee that humanitarian assistance is provided to civilians in Gaza. Hostilities have continued unabated, however, and aid deliveries remain woefully insufficient to address the humanitarian catastrophe.

Anadolu Agency

US vice president Harris calls for cease-fire in Gaza

Washington, US - US Vice President Kamala Harris called on Sunday for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza.

During remarks in Alabama to mark the 59th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, the day state law officers attacked Civil Rights demonstrators on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Harris said the threat posed by the Palestinian group Hamas to Israel must be eliminated. “And given the immense scale of suffering in Gaza, there must be an immediate cease-fire for at least the next six weeks, which is what is currently on the table,” she added.

She said the cease-fire would get hostages out and much-needed aid into Gaza. “This would allow us to build something more enduring to ensure Israel is secure and to respect the right of the Palestinian people to dignity, freedom and self-determination,” she said.

Harris described the situation in Gaza as ‘devastating’.

“We have seen reports of families eating leaves or animal feed, women giving birth to mal-



US Vice President Kamala Harris

nourished babies with little or no medical care, and children dying from malnutrition and dehydration,” she said.

“As I have said many times, too many innocent Palestinians have been killed. And just a few days ago, we saw hungry, desperate people approach aid trucks, simply trying to secure food for their families after weeks of nearly no aid reaching northern Gaza. And they were met with gunfire and chaos.”

“Our hearts break for the victims of that horrific tragedy and for all the innocent people in Gaza who are suffering from

what is clearly a humanitarian catastrophe,” she said. “People in Gaza are starving. The conditions are inhumane. And our common humanity compels us to act.”

Restrictions on Al-Aqsa Mosque entry

Extremist right-wing Israeli Minister of National Security Itamar Ben Gvir, meanwhile, has urged the police to allow only a few thousand Muslims to enter the Al-Aqsa Mosque during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, according to Israeli media.

During their meeting, Ben Gvir on Sunday told Police Commissioner Kobi Shabtai to restrict the number of Muslim worshippers in Al-Aqsa to ensure police readiness to swiftly respond to any disturbances, the Israeli daily *Maariv* reported.

The daily also noted that Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu is expected to discuss the issue of restrictions at the mosque with Ben Gvir, Shabtai, and officials from the Shin Bet security service and the Israeli army.

Anadolu Agency

Israel bombs ‘makeshift cemetery’

Gaza City, Palestine - Israeli warplanes targeted a ‘makeshift cemetery’ on Sunday built by residents of the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza, causing the bodies of Palestinians recently killed by Israeli forces to emerge.

“The Israeli army bombed a mass grave containing the bodies of hundreds of martyrs who were recently buried,” Ahmed al-Kahlot, the director of civil defence in the northern Gaza Strip, told Anadolu.

“The bombing resulted in the destruction of the cemetery and the emergence of bodies from beneath the soil,” he added.

Al-Kahlot noted that civil defence teams are working diligently to re-bury the bodies.

Since the beginning of the war launched by Israel on the Gaza Strip on October 7 last year, residents of all governorates of the besieged enclave have resorted to establishing makeshift collective and individual graves in various locations including residential neighbourhoods, house yards and sports fields.

It comes as accessing regular cemeteries is impossible due to road closures and the destruc-



Israeli warplanes targeted a ‘makeshift cemetery’ built by residents of the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza

Since the beginning of the war, the Israeli army has been engaged in excavating and targeting graves in areas where its military vehicles penetrate

House targeted in Rafah

Several people were killed and others injured, including children,

late on Sunday as an Israeli airstrike targeted a house in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip.

House targeted in Rafah

The airstrike completely de-

stroyed the house of Al Gharib family in the city, resulting in deaths and injuries, eyewitnesses told Anadolu.

No official Palestinian figures have been released detailing the number of casualties resulting from the airstrike.

Israel’s Cabinet has recently discussed an ‘evacuation’ plan for Palestinians from Rafah as part of preparations for a potential incursion, despite international warnings.

Anadolu Agency

UN rights chief Volker Turk calls upon world to ‘regain mindset of peace’

Geneva, Switzerland - The world needs to ‘regain a mindset of peace,’ the UN human rights chief urged on Monday amid 55 conflicts flaring up around the globe.

“Rarely has humanity faced so many rapidly spiralling crises,” Volker Turk said during his global update at the 55th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

“A wave of conflict is battering people’s lives, destroying economies, profoundly damaging human rights, dividing the world, and upending hopes for multilateral solutions,” he said.

Noting that there are 55 ongoing conflicts around the world, he lamented that widespread viola-

tions of international humanitarian and human rights law are generating a ‘devastating impact’ on millions of civilians.

They caused displacement and humanitarian crises to already reach an ‘unprecedented scale’, he said, adding that all of those conflicts have regional and global impact.

“Overlapping emergencies make the spectre of spillover conflict very real. The war in Gaza has explosive impact across the Middle East. Conflicts in other regions - including in the Horn of Africa, Sudan, and the Sahel - could also escalate sharply. Increasing militarisation on the Korean Peninsula raises threat levels,” the human rights



UN human rights chief Volker Turk

chief said. “The deteriorating security crisis in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which the Council will address on April 3, is alarming.”

“In the Red Sea, as well as the

Black Sea, attacks are creating shock-waves for the global transport of goods, adding to the economic pain inflicted on less developed countries,” Turk continued.

Emphasising the right to

peace is the ‘mother of all human rights’, he stressed, saying that without peace, all other rights are ‘quashed’.

“It is urgent that we devise ways to counter warmongering, fear, and the illogic of escalating

hatred and hostility - which bring short-term profit to a few while ruining the lives and rights of millions,” he said. “We need to regain a mindset of peace.”

“This means the art of de-escalation, keeping communication channels open, rebuilding trust, and the long-term work of healing and reconciliation - re-establishing a sense of the interconnectedness and shared destiny of all humanity,” he added.

‘Tanks running over civilians’

Israeli tanks ‘deliberately’ ran over Palestinians alive on Sunday, Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor said on Monday in a

statement. The Geneva-based organisation described these crimes as ‘part of Israel’s genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip’.

Euro-Med reported several cases of Israeli forces running over Palestinian civilians alive, including a man on February 29, a family on January 23, displaced people in December 2023, and another family on February 20.

“Euro-Med Monitor affirmed that all of these violations are part of a larger Israeli effort to dehumanise every Palestinian in the Gaza Strip, in order to justify and normalise the crimes being committed against them,” the statement added.

Anadolu Agency

INDIA

AG calls for Indo-US collaborative law platform

Attorney General R Venkataramani was addressing the first-ever India-US Legal Services Summit

New Delhi - The Attorney General of India R Venkataramani on Monday called for setting up an Indo-US comparative and collaborative law platform in a bid to create vibrant exchange platforms in the domains of law and justice.

Addressing the first-ever 'India-US Legal Services Summit on Indo-US Cooperation on Corporate and Legal Issues' organised by Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC), the Attorney General said that there is a need for global legal common premised global knowledge and resources.

He was of the view that Indians have been playing a significant role in the American economy and also have taken up major roles in the country's legal sector.

"Indians occupying important positions in the legal field is a great story. Alongside, we must create more enduring and vibrant exchange platforms in the domains of law and justice. An Indo-US comparative and collaborative law platform can be visualised," he said.

"A global legal common premised on global knowledge



R Venkataramani addresses the Legal Services Summit in New Delhi on Monday (ANI)

and resources common should be our vision and goal. I also think that the marriage of human rights and wellbeing and wealth protection regime will also be an agenda and pursuit,"

Venkataramani added. He emphasised on the need for more and more of globally relevant congregations of people from the legal fraternity. "We need more and more de-

bates and deliberations on common concerns," he said.

With the growing bilateral engagement in terms of businesses and investments, Tushar Mehta, the Solicitor General of

India urged the IACC and the gathering to contemplate on setting up a permanent mechanism wherein investors and businesses of both the countries can approach for legal help and consultation in terms of investments both in India and the US. Noting that investors need

systems and governance frameworks in both countries. Firm constitutional foundation, independent judiciary, equality before law, ease of access of justice, a robust human rights guarantees form the bedrock of the rule of law frameworks in both the countries."

responsibility on the legal professionals of the two countries also to continue to cooperate."

"We have excellent relationship with the American Bar Association and the Bar Association of India and the Society of Indian Law Firms. We keep on having frequent exchanges of visits, joint events being held together," Bhasin said.

The Executive Chairman of Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas and Company Shardul Shroff in his keynote address at the inaugural ceremony of the event highlighted on the need for engagement between the two countries in terms of sustainability and actions to curb climate change.

Pratibha Jain, Chairperson of the American Bar Association (ABA) South Asia/Oceania and India Committee, said that although both the US and India give significance on pluralism and diversity, there is need to have a greater number of women holding top offices in India in the private sector, as their share is still lower than the other economies.

ANI

Indians occupying important positions in the legal field is a great story. Alongside, we must create more enduring and vibrant exchange platforms in the domains of law and justice. An Indo-US comparative and collaborative law platform can be visualised

R VENKATARAMANI

legal advisory, the Solicitor General suggested setting up of a specific centre for such legal services.

Talking of the significance of rule of law both in India and the US, Manoj Kumar Additional Secretary, Union Ministry of Law and Justice (Legislative Department) said: "The rule of law is a fundamental principle in both Indian and the United States, of course keeping in mind the differences. The rule of law forms part of the backbone of the legal

He, however, noted that the challenges regarding development goals in both the economies require constant engagement to drive a global sustainable and a globally prosperous environment.

Observing that the summit is aimed at strengthening the Indo-US relations as India aims to become a developed nation by 2047, Lalit Bhasin, Chairman, IACC National Committee on Legal Services said: "Countries are cooperating but there is a big

MHA hands over Bengaluru Cafe blast probe to NIA

New Delhi - The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has handed over Bengaluru's The Rameshwaram Cafe blast probe to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), which has re-registered the case and started an investigation.

The case was handed over to the NIA last week following the visit of an NIA team to the blast site. The blast took place at the cafe on March 1 in Bengaluru's Whitefield area where several people were injured following an explosion that occurred during the busy lunch hour.

Over half a dozen people got injured after a low-intensity blast took place in The Rameshwaram Cafe, a popular eatery in Bengaluru's Brookfield area.

Earlier, the Bengaluru Police had registered a case under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and Explosives Substances Act in connection with the explosion at the cafe.

The blast took place at 1pm



Windows at the Rameshwaram Cafe are seen broken after a low-intensity explosion which took place in Bengaluru on Friday (ANI)

on March 1 and the police had also found a suspect in the CCTV footage, keeping a bag inside the cafe. The police probe so far indicated that an IED device with a timer was used to carry out the explosion.

Earlier, Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara had assured that the suspect would be arrested soon.

"We are continuing our investigation. Eight teams have been formed and all are working

in different directions and looking at different aspects. We have collected several CCTV footages. We are examining every angle including if there is any jealousy factor. I also appeal to the opposition to cooperate with us and not to make this a political issue...We do not know if there is any connection with the Mangaluru blast. They have used a similar material and the same system technically."

ANI

No immunity for MP or MLA for taking bribes: Top court

New Delhi - A seven-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on Monday ruled that an MP or MLA cannot claim immunity from prosecution on a charge of bribery in connection with the vote or speech in the Parliament or Legislative Assembly.

In an unanimous view, the SC's Constitution Bench overruled the 1998 judgement in the P V Narasimha Rao case.

"We disagree with the judgement in P V Narasimha case which grants immunity to legislator for alleged bribery for making a speech or vote in a particular manner in the House that has wide ramifications," Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud observed during the hearing.

The top court held that corruption and bribery by legislators destroy the functioning of Indian parliamentary democracy. The bench headed by the CJI said that the bribery is not



A view of the Supreme Court of India building, in New Delhi (ANI)

rendered immune citing Article 105 or 194.

"A member indulging in bribery indulges in a criminal act which is not essential for casting a vote or giving a speech in the legislature," the CJI said.

The Supreme Court said that the interpretation of P V Narasimha judgment is contrary to Articles 105 and 194 of the constitution. The court said

that interpretation which has been placed on the issue in question and the judgment of the majority in P V Narasimha Rao results in a paradoxical outcome where a legislator is conferred with immunity when they accept a bribe and follow through by voting in the agreed direction.

The interpretation of P V Narasimha judgement is contrary to Articles 105 and 194,

the CJI added.

Chief Justice Chandrachud further observed that the offence of bribe is crystallised on the taking of illegal gratification and it does not depend on whether the vote or speech is given later.

Speaking after the verdict, Advocate Ashwini Upadhyay said that the apex court through its judgment made it clear that if any legislator takes bribes to ask questions or cast vote in the legislature will not be immune to prosecution.

The lawyer said that the accused legislator will not be treated with any special protocols but will be charged with corruption.

"The Supreme Court ruled that the asking questions or casting votes by taking bribes will be equivalent to destroying India's parliamentary democracy," the lawyer said.

ANI

South Korea, US begin 11-day military exercise

Seoul, South Korea - South Korea and the US on Monday launched one of the major military exercises, the first one since the 2018 inter-Korean military accord was scrapped by divided Korea last November.

The annual 11-day military exercise, dubbed as Freedom Shield, is to 'reinforce deterrence against North Korea's nuclear and missile threats amid concern Pyongyang could use the manoeuvres as a pretext for provocations', Yonhap News reported.

It will focus on 'multi-domain operations by utilising land, sea, air, cyber and space assets, and countering the North's nuclear operations' as the two militaries said the exercise was 'aimed at improv-

ing' their combined defence posture. The two sides plan to hold 48 military exercises which is more than double held last year.

Pyongyang last November scrapped altogether the 2018-signed military pact with Seoul which was aimed at reducing border tensions.

North's move came after the South had partially ended the pact. The joint military drills by the US and South Korea had invited severe criticism from Pyongyang which has been denouncing such exercises as 'rehearsals for an invasion against it'.

Pyongyang has fired multiple missiles this year besides sending a spy satellite into space last year.

Anadolu Agency

Shehbaz Sharif sworn in as 24th PM of Pakistan

Islamabad, Pakistan - Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Shehbaz Sharif was on Monday sworn in as the 24th prime minister of Pakistan, Dawn reported. The swearing-in took place amid protests in different parts of the country by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) which has alleged rigging in the general elections held last month.

Shehbaz was administered oath by President Arif Alvi at the Aiwan-i-Sadr.

The ceremony was attended by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, former president Asif Ali Zardari, Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir and the chief ministers of Sindh, Punjab and Balochistan, according to Dawn.

Shehbaz Sharif was elected as the prime minister after he secured 201 votes in the National Assembly on Sunday defeating



Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Shehbaz Sharif

his rival Omar Ayub Khan who was backed by PTI.

The government formation in Pakistan has taken place after protracted talks involving PML(N), PPP and smaller parties.

PTI leader Meher Bano Qureshi said they will consider moving a no-confidence motion against Shehbaz Sharif, Dawn

reported.

Speaking to Dawn News programme 'Doosra Rukh', she said: "If our mandate is restored, and we get justice from the ECP and the courts, then we will tell the prime minister to take a vote of no confidence."

"And if he's unsuccessful, then we'll demand that the party with

The ceremony was attended by former PM Nawaz Sharif, former president Asif Ali Zardari, PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, army chief Asim Munir and CMs of Sindh, Punjab and Balochistan

the most representation in the National Assembly gets the right to form a government," she added. She said that the PM's election took place in an 'incomplete parliament'.

PTI MNA Gohar Ali Khan said Shehbaz Sharif's election as the prime minister, was a 'sad day for democracy'. Speaking in the Na-

tional Assembly, Gohar said: "None of us has imagined that such a person will be elected, the button of Pakistan's atomic power will be handed over to someone who does not have a public mandate and has been in power for four decades, which are a living documentation of their personal gains."

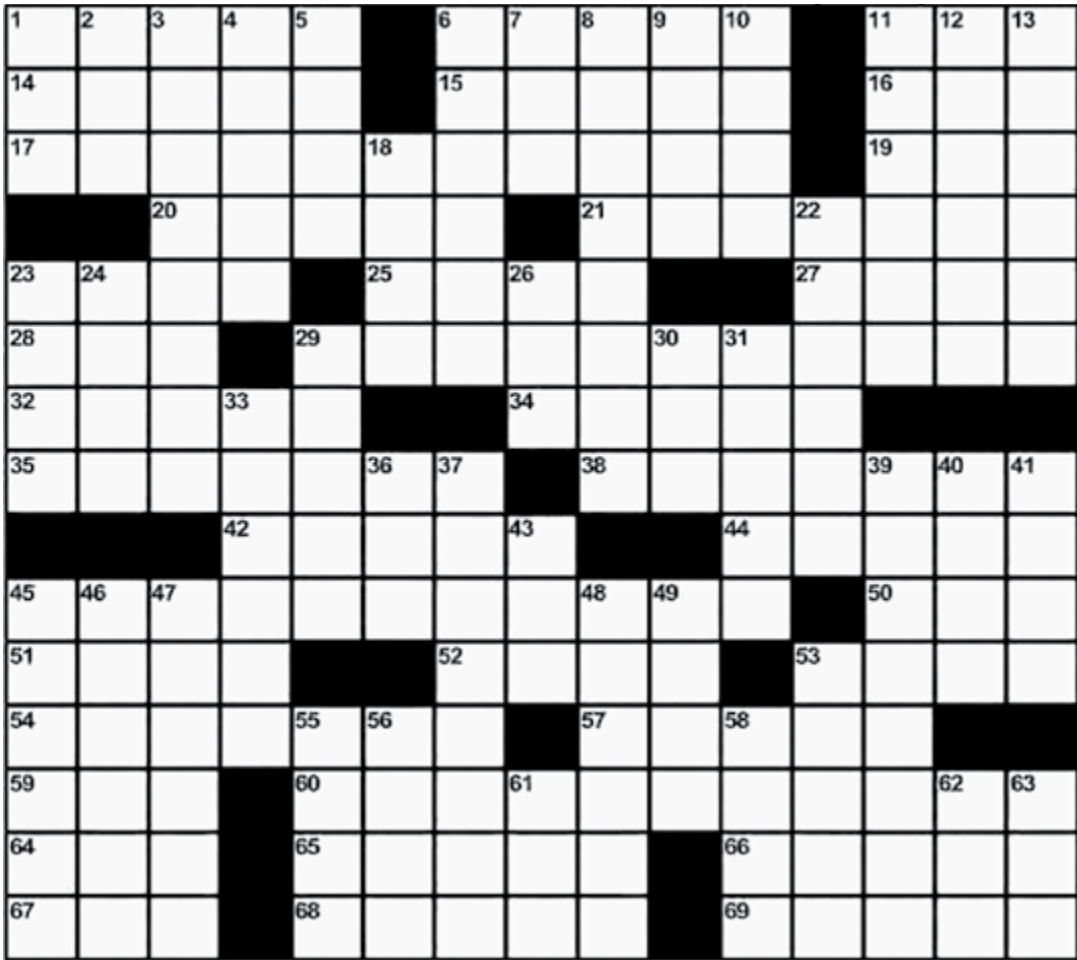
On Sunday, Omar Ayub Khan, the PTI-backed Independent candidate and a rival for the top post, called the ruling coalition as a 'fascist regime focused solely on looting Pakistan's resources without any ideology'.

Addressing the Assembly, the PTI leader raised his grievances over 'unfair electoral practices'.

Yesterday, as soon as the session began, Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) lawmakers chanted slogans to record their protest while holding PTI founder Imran Khan's pictures.

ANI

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Well-dressed pitcher?
- 6) Chanel of fashion, and namesakes
- 11) "The Rum _ Tugger"
- 14) It's tucked under the chin
- 15) Mom's kinsman
- 16) Santa _ winds
- 17) Con's way out
- 19) Wasn't the seeker, in a game
- 20) Peach container
- 21) Island of France
- 23) It's tailor-made
- 25) Apollo's parent?
- 27) "Up and _!"
- 28) Beast that bore Bal-aam
- 29) Careers, classes, etc.
- 32) Doth speak
- 34) Taxpayer's headache
- 35) Daily occurrence
- 38) Dakar's domain
- 42) Most desirable people?
- 44) Love a lot
- 45) Orchestra's setting
- 50) Start of the last qtr.
- 51) Alto woodwind
- 52) Superman's sandwich choice?
- 53) Big deals

- 54) Stamp incorrectly, perhaps
 - 57) Faint gleam
 - 59) Numerical ending, sometimes
 - 60) Doctor who specializes in diagnosis
 - 64) Ball holder
 - 65) Adam Bede's creator
 - 66) Allegro and andante
 - 67) "Bobby Hockey"
 - 68) Cults
 - 69) Geometric figures
- DOWN**
- 1) "Hail!" to Caesar
 - 2) Start to approve?
 - 3) Sort of snake
 - 4) Eye-opener?
 - 5) _ Valley, Calif.
 - 6) Breakfast bowlful
 - 7) Lennon married her
 - 8) Range where Prometheus was bound
 - 9) Football great Graham
 - 10) Crystal-ball gazer
 - 11) "Mutiny on the Bounty" isle
 - 12) Halloween charity
 - 13) Title for Marie Tus-saud
 - 18) Europe's tallest active volcano

- 22) Like many peanuts
- 23) Verbal feistiness
- 24) Old Testament twin
- 26) Calypso offshoot
- 29) During
- 30) Work with lofty words
- 31) Semester ender
- 33) Made an outline
- 36) Title of respect
- 37) Having a sense of the beautiful (Var.)
- 39) What a party host looks to provide
- 40) Bowed, in music
- 41) Allows
- 43) Emphatic article, often
- 45) Awaken
- 46) _ dictum (passing remark)
- 47) Person enjoying a light snack
- 48) Specialized vocabular-ies
- 49) Act relaxed
- 53) Ire
- 55) Humankind's cousins
- 56) Tall story
- 58) Extremely small amount
- 61) Extremely popular
- 62) Spot for a relaxing soak
- 63) Poet's contraction

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You start to see positive change in a troubled relationship today, and it might be in a direction you weren't expecting. You could have many more discussions about your future together, because things are no longer what you thought they were going to be. The two of you need to come up with a road map of where you're going together and, more importantly, where you aren't going to go. Get ready to enjoy a healthier, more balanced period.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Watch out for people who are giving you big smiles today. They may be concealing something that they will reveal only when it's too late. Trust is something that needs to be earned, so don't dive right in with anything unknown. And try not to commit any of your finances to anything that is even remotely risky right now. Chances are you're being told one thing when something entirely different is true. You don't want to get burned.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Being cheerful is always nice, but today someone else's optimism is going to bug you for some reason. Maybe you're just so set on being grumpy that you don't want to be talked out of it. Or maybe this cheerful person just rubs you the wrong way in general. Either way, you need to steer clear of them and their chipper mood. You are not capable of being swayed, but they don't know that. and they are not going to stop trying. Get away from them and feel what you want to feel.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

If you have been struggling with planning an event or party, it's time to cut yourself some slack. Get a team of your favorite people together to help you out and things will start to feel fun again! Other people have great ideas and a great attitude about what's on tap, and their positive vibes will help you see this endeavor in a brand-new light. If you put yourself in charge of everything, you'll never have enough time to enjoy the event.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Cloudy days are going to be far behind you for a while. Today, things are clear and easy to navigate. You will have all the time you need to organize your plans and get back in touch with someone you've been playing phone tag with for far too long. Call them and spend as much time as it takes to catch up. Use this day to start prioritizing the tasks that are coming down the pike. You'll be able to get a great head start and keep the good times going even longer.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

It's a wise idea to team up today. Whatever you want to do will be more enjoyable and more rewarding if you do it with someone else. Combining forces is always a good way to get further faster and have loads of fun while you're at it. You have been going it alone for some time and doing a great job with it, but now it's time to mix it up and explore other ways of doing things. You need someone else's perspective to inform your actions.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

You may be feeling extra sensitive to criticism right now, so if you need a place to feel safe and completely accepted for who you are, turn to your family for the comfort you need. And if you can't physically be in the same room with them, just make a short phone call to see how they are doing. They are always ready to tell you what you need to hear in times like these, and they can help you see the positive value in any negative words you have been hearing.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

If you need to deliver some negative news to someone today, take them out to lunch or dinner to discuss things. Not only will the comforting food make them much more receptive to what you have to say, but being in a structured situation will encourage more discussion. No one's going to stomp away when they haven't finished their dessert. You two need to talk this out and figure out how things should move forward. And you should pick up the tab



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

When you find yourself in situations that usually make you nervous, take a moment to gather your thoughts. Try to stay loose and you'll feel more grounded. You'll be able to see that you have no reason to feel intimidated or uncomfortable. First impressions are always important, but today that's even more so. And if you can stay cool and calm, you're sure to make people notice you in a whole new way. And you'll be perfectly poised to take advantage of a gigantic opportunity.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

You've got a lot of things going on, but today is the perfect day to clean up all the tasks on your list. First, you have to delegate as much as you can to family members, coworkers, or friends. It's not cheating. It's smart management. Then call in some favors and see who can help you at the last minute. Remind them what they owe you in the charming and disarming way that only you can. What's left to do after that will take you less than half the day.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

A tough challenge lies ahead of you today, but everything will be fine if you just take your time. Don't think of all the many different details at once. You will only get overwhelmed. And whatever you do, don't make any specific promises. The last thing you need are unnecessary deadlines hanging over your head. Show the people involved that they can trust you to get the job done by being calm and confident even if you don't feel that way.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

It might not sound logical, but the more you keep your distance from one of your troubled friends, the healthier your relationship with them will be. They are going through some drama that you should not become a part of. It would be good for both of you to get some distance from each other so that each of you can feel free to do whatever you need to do. Even if you're getting along, it's time to give them some space and let them deal with their issues on their own.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Which play, and then novel, explores, through the 164-year-history of one family, a social system much criticised since the 19th century?
- A. Three Kingdoms
 - B. The Lehman Trilogy
 - C. Mission Drift
 - D. The James Plays

2. What do the "C"'s stand for in the acronym CCUS?
- A. Commander (in) Chief
 - B. Climate change
 - C. Competition (between) China
 - D. Carbon capture

3. Football Golf has annual World and European Championships, as well as Open Tournaments in Germany, Denmark, Sweden and what other country?
- A. The Netherlands
 - B. Finland
 - C. Estonia
 - D. Spain

Answers: 1.B 2.D 3.D

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

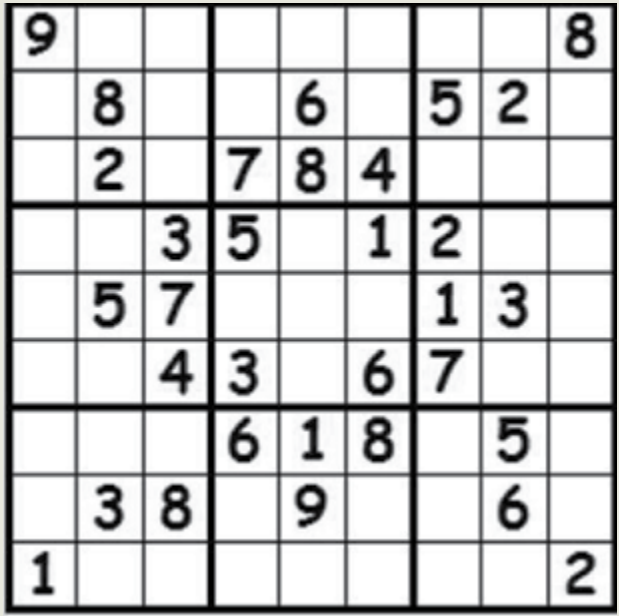


Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters. 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



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



PHIL FANTASTIC

Foden inspires Man City to turnaround win over Manchester United

Manchester, England - A Phil Foden double and Erling Haaland's stoppage-time strike earned Manchester City a 3-1 turnaround victory over Manchester United to move a point behind leaders Liverpool.

Marcus Rashford gave United a shock early lead with a thunderous long-range goal with what was the visitors' only shot on target of the match. But Foden replied with his own long-range stunner before scoring his second with 10 minutes remaining. Haaland sealed the win, making up for a glaring miss in the first half.

Up next for City is a huge showdown at Anfield against title-rivals Liverpool on Sunday 10 March, while a second consecutive defeat leaves Man Utd 11 points behind fourth-placed Aston Villa.

Man City made five changes to the side that beat Luton Town in their midweek FA Cup win, with Ederson, Ruben Dias, Jeremy Doku, Rodri and Foden returning, while Josko Gvardiol was back on the bench after recovering from an ankle injury.

For Man Utd, Jonny Evans replaced the injured Harry Maguire



Manchester City's Phil Foden scores against Manchester United on Sunday

Marcus Rashford gave United a shock early lead with a thunderous long-range goal with what was the visitors' only shot on target of the match. But Foden replied with his own long-range stunner

for his first start in a Manchester derby at the Etihad Stadium since December 2012. Kobbie Mainoo also returned, while Sofyan Am-

rabat and Antony were on the bench from the side that beat Nottingham Forest in the FA Cup on Wednesday.

United stunned the home fans through Rashford's sensational strike. Andre Onana's long ball over the top found Bruno Fernandes, and the Man Utd captain laid the ball off for Rashford, who hammered a shot in off the underside of the crossbar.

It was Rashford's fifth Manchester derby goal in the Premier League, with only Wayne Rooney, with eight, and Eric Cantona, seven, netting more for

Man Utd.

It also was the 12th time Man City had fallen behind in a Premier League match this season. The only time they have done so in more under Pep Guardiola was in 2019/20 (13), the last season in which they did not win the title.

Rashford then missed two great opportunities, firstly taking a poor touch with his head when in a great position, before producing an air kick with the goal at his

mercy at the back post.

At the other end, Foden was denied in a 1v1 by Onana, who also produced a fine stop to keep out Rodri's low strike.

But Man City's biggest chance came in the 45th minute. Foden headed the ball across goal and from just two yards out, Haaland somehow volleyed over the crossbar.

"The only thing that can make the ball go up in that situation is if you volley it," said Michael Owen, scorer of 150 Premier League goals. "I would fling my chest at it or possibly head it. The last thing I'd want to do is volley it. You should hit it with anything that kills the speed of the ball."

Man City had 18 shots by the break, the joint-most on record that Man Utd have faced in the first half of a Premier League match.

Foden is the best player in the Premier League right now, says Guardiola

Manchester, England - Phil Foden is the best player in the Premier League on current form and will become a Manchester City legend, manager Pep Guardiola said after his second-half double inspired a crucial 3-1 comeback win against Manchester United on Sunday.

City were utterly dominant but still trailing to a spectacular eighth-minute pile-driver by Marcus Rashford when forward Foden took centre stage in the second half.

The 23-year-old local boy struck a sublime left-foot shot into the roof of the net in the 56th minute and then beat Andre Onana with a precise finish after 80 minutes.

Erling Haaland's 18th league goal of the season rounded things off in stoppage time - his sixth goal of the week - but nothing could steal the limelight from Foden who now has 11 league goals this season, equalling his record.

"It is the amount of games he is playing. He was always a talented player but now he is more mature and understands more the game, especially defen-



Pep Guardiola with Phil Foden

sively," Guardiola told the BBC.

"He can play middle, right, make moments and cut inside, play in the left, scoring from the left. What can I say? He is the best player in the Premier League right now for the amount of things he does. Unbelievable."

Foden's quality and level of consistency is making him undroppable even in a squad laced with world class players. His current form also makes it unthinkable that he cannot be accommodated in Gareth Southgate's England side.

"We don't negotiate over that," Guardiola said when asked about Foden's defensive discipline.

"The guy who doesn't do that doesn't stay in the team. He loves football, he lives for football. He is a joy and his work ethic is unbelievable."

Guardiola was no less effusive in his praise of Foden when talking to Sky Sports.

"He will already be a legendary player because in a short age, the games played, the minutes, the goals scored, the titles won and he is from the home and that is why the connection with the fans is unbelievable," Guardiola said.

"He is the player of the season. No-one has been so decisive for us as him this season."



Giacomo Raspadori of Napoli (L) scores against Juventus on Sunday

Raspadori strikes late to help Napoli edge Juve

Naples, Italy - Substitute Giacomo Raspadori scored an 88th-minute winner as champions Napoli beat visitors Juventus 2-1 in Serie A on Sunday to secure their first back-to-back wins in five months and boost their slim hopes of a late charge into the top four.

Napoli moved up to seventh in the standings on 43 points, three points behind sixth-placed Atalanta, four adrift of AS Roma in fifth and eight behind fourth-placed Bologna.

Juventus remained second with 57 points after 27 games as their cushion over third-placed AC Milan narrowed to a point. They are 12 points off leaders Inter Milan who host Genoa on Monday.

Napoli, who on Wednesday demolished Sassuolo 6-1 to celebrate their first win under new coach Francesco Calzona, won consecutive league games for the first time since they beat Udinese and Lecce in September.

"By winning this match the team gave a signal that it wants to reach important positions," Calzona told a press conference.



Bruno Fernandes

Every time you don't win a game it is a damage, says United's Fernandes

Manchester, England - Manchester United's hopes of a Champions League berth took another hit on Sunday but the fact it was crosstown rivals Manchester City delivering the blow was secondary, captain Bruno Fernandes said.

United's 3-1 derby loss to City at the Etihad Stadium left them 11 points behind fourth-place Aston Villa in sixth with 11 games remaining. "Every time you don't win a game it is a damage at this club," Fernandes said. "We know what this club demands and we want to win the games we are involved in."

"We didn't get the three points today but there's still a long way to go. We know it is not everything in our hands because other teams have to lose points but we have to do our job."

Marcus Rashford gave United an unlikely lead eight minutes into the game with a rasping strike measured at 72 miles per hour. His goal came days after he hit back at critics in a column in The Players Tribune and was one of the lone bright spots for United, who had just three shots to City's 27.

The loss amplified the ongoing conversation around manager Erik ten Hag's future, which has only increased since new co-owner Jim Ratcliffe took control of football operations, with changes expected off the pitch.

United have lost 11 of their 27 league matches this campaign, two more than all of last season. The two previous seasons with 12 league losses (2013-14 and 2021-22) led to managerial changes.

United had been unbeaten in their previous 143 league matches when leading at half-time with 123 wins and 20 draws - an illustrious run they saw end on Sunday.

Nice lose to Toulouse, Brest edge Le Havre

Toulouse, France - Fifth-placed Nice lost 2-1 at Toulouse on Sunday after conceding two second half goals to the hosts who claimed their third straight Ligue 1 victory.

Brest, who are second, beat lowly visitors Le Havre 1-0 thanks to a first-half goal by midfielder Pierre Lees-Melou to narrow the gap on leaders Paris St Germain to nine points.

Nice, now without a win in five league games, stay on 40 points, a point behind fourth-placed Lille, who won 1-0 at



Toulouse players celebrate a goal against Nice on Sunday

Reims on Saturday, and two off Monaco in third spot after they held visiting PSG, who have 55 points, to a 0-0 draw on Friday.

Nice took the lead against Toulouse in the eighth minute.

Terem Moffi scored from close range after Evann Guesand's cross into the area was deflected towards goal and keeper Guillaume Restes could only parry the ball away.

Toulouse levelled in the 65th when Thijs Dallinga stretched to score from Warren Kamanzi's low cross.

Four minutes later Yann Gboho controlled Dallinga's cross before rifling a shot to the roof of the net.

UNSTOPPABLE

Leverkusen move 10 points clear at the top after beating Cologne

Cologne, Germany - Bayer Leverkusen went 10 points clear of second-placed Bayern Munich with a 2-0 Bundesliga win over struggling neighbours Cologne, who were reduced to 10 men in the first half of a hotly-contested Rhein derby on Sunday.

Leverkusen extended their unbeaten run to 34 games in all competitions this season and now have 64 points. They extended their lead over Bayern, who drew 2-2 at Freiburg on Friday.

Cologne had Jan Thielmann sent off after 14 minutes and Leverkusen took the lead through Jeremie Frimpong ahead of the break before Alex Grimaldo netted his ninth league goal of the season in the 73rd to end Cologne's brave fight.

Leverkusen, looking to win their first league title, made the short trip across the Rhine river, where the only relaxed figure in the raucous stadium was Cologne's mascot Hennes the goat who munched happily pitchside oblivious to the tension.

Tempers flared in the 12th minute after a foul from behind by Thielmann on midfielder Granit Xhaka and, although the referee initially only awarded a



Bayer Leverkusen's Alex Grimaldo (C) is joined by his teammates as he celebrates his goal against Cologne on Sunday

free kick, Thielmann was shown the red card after a VAR check.

Despite the extra man, Leverkusen struggled to create any clear-cut chances until the 37th minute.

Grimaldo's cross was flicked on by Patrik Schick and Frimpong tapped home from close range for his eighth league goal this season as Leverkusen took a 1-0 lead into the break.

Six minutes after the interval, Cologne had a chance to level when Rasmus Carstensen's cross was met by the unmarked Sargis Adamyan, but his volley hit the post with goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky well beaten.

Leverkusen laboured, despite the extra man, and manager Xabi Alonso sent on Borja Iglesias and Amine Adli with 25 minutes left and eight minutes later Adli's

work set up the second goal.

He pulled the ball back from the goal line to the edge of the six-yard box and Grimaldo's first time shot took a slight deflection off Cologne defender Julian Chabot and went through the legs of keeper Marvin Schwabe.

Leverkusen easily saw out the rest of the game and, with 10 matches left, they will now be expected to go from "Neverkusen"

to taking the crown away from Bayern, winners of the last 11 Bundesliga titles, despite their players urging caution for now.

"There are still a few games to play. We have seen in the past what else can happen," defender Jonathan Tag told Dazn. "It's important to maintain focus."

Cologne's defeat leaves them in 16th - the relegation playoff spot - on 17 points.



Rafa Nadal (R) with Carlos Alcaraz

'It's a good thing that I will not face him many times'

Las Vegas, US - Rafa Nadal said one good thing about nearing the end of his career is that he will not have to face Carlos Alcaraz too many times after the 37-year-old Spaniard lost to his compatriot in an exhibition match in Las Vegas on Sunday.

Nadal, who has won 22 Grand Slam titles, added that the future of Spanish tennis was in good hands with the 20-year-old.

Alcaraz has already won majors at the U.S. Open and Wimbledon and is ranked number two in the world behind Novak Djokovic.

"It's a good thing that as a player I will not face him many times," said Nadal, who expects to retire in 2024 after a series of injuries limited his appearances on the circuit.

"As a fan, I will enjoy watching him for many years hopefully.

"In Spain, we should be

very, very happy about having someone like Carlos coming.

"He's an amazing player. He's only 20-years-old and he's already won two Grand Slams and a couple of important tournaments."

Nadal, who spent almost a

He's only 20-years-old and he's already won two Grand Slams

RAFA NADAL

year on the sidelines with a hip flexor injury before suffering a muscle injury at the start of this season, said he felt "much better than expected" during the exhibition match.

Nadal and world number two Alcaraz are next in action at the Masters tournament at Indian Wells.

Barcelona frustrated by Athletic in goalless draw

Bilbao, Spain - Champions Barcelona were left frustrated as they squandered a chance to close the gap with LaLiga leaders Real Madrid after being held to a lacklustre 0-0 draw at Athletic Club on Sunday.

With Real dropping points on Saturday following a 2-2 draw at Valencia, Barca were hoping to secure the win that would help them to close the gap with the pace setters and also enable them to leapfrog Girona into second place in the standings.

Instead, Sunday's stalemate meant they still trail Real by eight points and remain one-point adrift of surprise package Girona, who are on 59 after suffering a 1-0 loss at Mallorca earlier in the day.

Barca suffered two injury blows, with midfielders Frenkie



Barcelona's Frenkie de Jong (pictured) and Pedri were forced out in the first half after suffering injuries

de Jong and Pedri forced out in the first-half.

De Jong was carted off the field in the 26th minute after he landed awkwardly on his right foot following a challenge with a rival player.

We'll know more about their injuries between today and tomorrow, but it doesn't look good. We were affected by that and I imagine that both will be out for several matches.

XAVI HERNANDEZ

Moments before halftime, Pedri left the pitch in tears after suffering what looked like a right leg injury.

It is the ninth leg muscle injury sustained by the 21-year-old midfielder since the end of the

2020-21 season.

Pedri broke down in tears while walking off, suggesting his latest injury could keep him out for a lengthy period.

"It is a sad day," Xavi told Movistar Plus.

"We'll know more about their injuries between today and tomorrow, but it doesn't look good. We were affected by that and I imagine that both will be out for several matches."

Barca's Joao Cancelo came

closest to scoring in a tepid first half.

Cancelo's shot from near the halfway line arched over Athletic's goalkeeper but was cleared away by a defender.

The home side who were more aggressive following the interval, with Inaki Williams and Alex Berenguer a constant menace.

But they were frustrated by a solid Barca defence that withstood the late pressure to secure a point against an in-form team who are bidding for a top-four finish.

Athletic, who entered the contest on the back of a 10-match winning streak at home in all competitions, are fifth in the standings with 50 points, five behind fourth-placed Atletico Madrid.

TECS win A/B Division T20 title

Muscat - TECS defeated Bank Muscat by three runs in the final of the A/B Division T20 tournament powered by Khimji Ramdas LLC & Al Ansari Group of Companies at the Oman Cricket Academy Ground recently.

Electing to bat first, TECS posted 147/9 despite Ravi Sharma (28) and Abdul Malik (57) providing a rollicking start. Bank Muscat's Usman Ali Shah picked up three wickets to restrict TECS from getting a big total. In reply, Bank Muscat lost early wickets courtesy of Shanidh KT and Devansh Loya and could only score 17 off the first five overs. Although, Zain Raza's sublime 56 and Usman Ali Shah's 53 helped Bank Muscat recover.

However Jaleel Kannambath, who was the key to TECS' qualifying for the final, starred again and took two wickets for just eight runs in his final two overs



TECS players celebrate with the trophy

to help TECS win by three runs.

The post-match prize distribution ceremony was graced by Anil Khimji, Director - Khimji Ramdas and Kiran Asher, Founder - Al Ansari along with Duleep Mendis, Chief Development Officer - Oman Cricket.

Duleep Mendis presented Jaleel Kannambath of TECS with the Man of the Match Award, Kiran Asher handed the runners up trophy to Abbas Al Balushi and Ajay Hirlekar of Bank Muscat and Anil Khimji handed the winners trophy to Rahul Ra-

machandran and Jayaprakash Devaraju of TECS.

Brief scores: TECS 147/9 (Abdul Malik 57(46); Usman Ali Shah 3(15) beat Bank Muscat 144/9 (Zain Raza 56(37); Jaleel Kannambath 3(24, Shanidh KT 3(23) by 3 runs.

Girona beaten at Mallorca

Mallorca, Spain - High-flying Girona came crashing back to earth with a frustrating 1-0 defeat at Mallorca on Sunday, a third consecutive loss away from home that provided another reality check to the Catalans' lofty LaLiga title ambitions.

Girona, the season's early pacesetters, were unbeaten in 15 successive league games until their 4-0 thrashing by Real Madrid three weeks ago, and they have not been the same since, winning just one of their last five. They remain second in the standings on 59 points, seven behind leaders Real Madrid and two points ahead of third-placed Barcelona, who have a game in hand and will play at Athletic Bilbao later on Sunday.

Although there had been some indications that Michel's well-oiled machine was not running quite as smoothly as it



Mallorca players celebrate their victory against Girona

could, Girona had still looked set to maintain their push for a first LaLiga title.

Now they are in danger of being overtaken by the likes of Barcelona and fourth-placed Atletico Madrid, who are edging closer on 55 points.

Energised after a hard-fought win on penalties at Real Sociedad in midweek earned them a spot in the Copa del Rey final, Mallorca were dangerous on the counter against a toothless Girona who were out of ideas upfront.

MAX IN THE MIDDLE

Verstappen caught in crossfire as father's outburst threatens Red Bull unity

Manama, Bahrain - Jos Verstappen's call for the sacking of Red Bull Formula One boss Christian Horner has raised questions about his son Max's future just as the team and their triple world champion celebrate a truly crushing win in Bahrain.

Saturday's season-opening race at the Gulf kingdom's Sakhir circuit offered fewer twists and turns, and considerably less drama, than the apparent power play being acted out in the paddock.

What started with misconduct allegations against Horner by a female employee, that he denied and an independent investigation dismissed, has exposed divisions within the sport's most dominant team.

The energy drink brand's majority owner, Thai billionaire Chalem Yoovidhya, was public in his support of Horner in Bahrain but reports have suggested the Austrian side of the company is less enthusiastic.

Verstappen senior's comments to the *Daily Mail*, saying Red Bull would 'explode' if Horner stayed, left questions hanging in the air as the circus heads to Saudi Arabia for Saturday's race in Jeddah.

The *Daily Telegraph* said Verstappen senior was understood to have told friends his son would leave Red Bull if he had to.

Horner, 50, had insisted in Bahrain that the team was more united than ever.



Max Verstappen (R) with Christian Horner

There is tension here while he remains in position. The team is in danger of being torn apart. It can't go on the way it is. It will explode. He is playing the victim

JOS VERSTAPPEN

That line was repeated on Sunday, although Verstappen senior is not officially a member of the team.

The overnight outburst, after a widely reported row between Jos and Horner shortly after Friday's qualifying, meanwhile accelerated around the world.

"There is tension here while he remains in position. The team

is in danger of being torn apart. It can't go on the way it is. It will explode," the Dutchman told the *Daily Mail*. "He is playing the victim, when he is the one causing the problems."

The BBC said Jos Verstappen had confirmed he spoke out after a row with Horner. His son was aware of the comments and had not said anything.

The face-off took place a day after an email, purporting to contain evidence submitted to the misconduct probe into Horner, was sent anonymously to journalists and key figures in the sport.

Verstappen senior, who was also on the list of recipients, denied being behind it.

Horner, speaking to reporters after the race, would not comment on the motives behind the email. The question now is whether the tensions, simmering away under the surface for some time, have pushed the team to breaking point and how Max Verstappen, 26, will react.

Horner is the sport's longest-serving team boss, having

brought Red Bull into Formula One in 2005, and enjoys a celebrity lifestyle and starring role in the Netflix 'Drive to Survive' docu-series.

Married to Spice Girls singer Geri Halliwell, he led the Milton Keynes-based team to their sixth constructors' title last year with 21 wins from 22 races.

Max won a record 19 races last year and his 55th win on Saturday was a 'grand slam' of pole position, fastest lap and every lap led. Prodigiously talented, he scored far more points on his own account last season than second placed constructor Mercedes managed with two drivers including seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton.

Pat Cummins named Sunrisers Hyderabad captain

Hyderabad, India - Pat Cummins has been appointed captain of Sunrisers Hyderabad for IPL 2024, replacing Aiden Markram who had led the team in the 2023 season.

Cummins has not led a side in the IPL before - in fact, he has not led a team in top-flight T20 cricket before - but his appointment comes after a successful period as captain of Australia, during which he led them to victory in the World Test Championship and the 2023 ODI World Cup, with both wins in the finals coming against India.

The move means that SRH will have the flexibility of playing their new signings - Australian batter Travis Head and Sri Lankan legspinner Wanindu Hasaranga - in addition to finisher Heinrich Klaasen instead of Markram if they want to do so,



Pat Cummins

while Cummins slots in as the overseas fast bowler. Afghanistan's Fazalhaq Farooqi and South Africa's Marco Jansen are the other overseas quicks in the squad.

Cummins had withdrawn from IPL 2023 to focus on international cricket but entered the auction for the 2024 season, where he became the first player in IPL history to get a bid of INR 20 crore (USD 2.4 million approximately).

DP World chief Pelley says golf will be unified

London, England - It is a matter of time before the rival tours in professional golf come together to form a unified entity, outgoing DP World Tour Chief Executive Keith Pelley said on Sunday as the PGA Tour and LIV Golf continue working on plans to join forces.

Pelley, who will be replaced by the current European Tour Deputy CEO and Executive Director Guy Kinnings on April 2, has been advocating for a deal between the PGA Tour and LIV, backed by the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF).

He told The Times newspaper that he remains "convinced the game will be unified".

"Whether it be in six months, a year, two years or 10 years, I think people are coming to the realisation that a collective product is in the best interest of global



Keith Pelley

golf," Pelley said.

"It is the only way growth and prize funds continue at this level. It is inevitable."

Pelley, who is highly unlikely to witness the deal before his exit, moves into the role of President and CEO of MLSE, whose brands include the NHL's Toronto Maple Leafs and NBA team Toronto Raptors.

"Would I love to stay and see it through? Yes. But you can't control timing," he added.

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STIFF JOINTS?

DO YOU EXPERIENCE WORSENING JOINT AND MUSCLE STIFFNESS DURING THE WINTER? COLDER TEMPERATURES OFTEN MAKE JOINT STIFFNESS WORSE. HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO ALLEVIATE THESE SYMPTOMS

WINTER EXERCISES

KEEP MOVING

As tempting as it is to stay indoors and rest during the darkest months of the year, one of the best ways to improve joint stiffness is to keep moving. Exercise increases blood flow to muscles and joints - even a brisk walk can improve the range of motion in stiffened joints.

An indoor gym or mall is ideal for this activity during the colder months. Other great options include riding a seated exercise bike or swimming in a heated pool.

LOW-IMPACT EXERCISES

If you're inflexible all year, winter could be a great time to pick up a low-impact exercise routine. Yoga, Tai Chi and Pilates are all great low-impact exercise routines that are proven to increase flexibility, core strength, and overall fitness. There are several free apps and YouTube videos you can follow within the comfort of your own home. Joining a group class adds the benefit of camaraderie and guided practice which can be ideal for beginners.

APPLY HEAT

Moist heat and heating pads can be very effective for relieving stiff and achy joints, however, they should be used with caution. It's recommended to apply heat for no more than 20-minute increments and to check the skin every five minutes for adverse skin reactions. As tempting as it is to fall asleep with a heating pad, this can be dangerous.

WARM UP

Warm up exercises are important before participating in exercise or a sport. They help relieve tension, make you feel relaxed, and get you prepared for your workout. Some great ways to warm up include simple exercises such as toe touches, shoulder shrugs, overhead stretches, and shoulder shrugs. There are many low impact stretches you can do to warm up. Low impact exercises tend to be much easier on your joints.

YOGA AND PILATES

Yoga and Pilates have similar characteristics that make them perfect for someone with joint pain, since both involve a lot of low-impact exercises that are easy on the joints. Yoga and Pilates are a great way to build strength, mobility, and flexibility. These exercises reduce pain and improve joint function. Plus, they're done indoors. Look into finding some classes near you during the colder months and year-round.

WALKING

Walking is a much better option than running for people with joint pain. A mall or a large store is a great place to walk when the weather is too cold. You can also walk on a treadmill or an elliptical if you have access to one. Walking is considered one of the most important exercises you can do if you have arthritis. You can walk for just 30 minutes a day, strengthening your core and legs and putting less stress on your joints.

INDOOR SWIMMING

Water reduces the effects of gravity, making swimming a great low-impact exercise for people with joint pain. Moving through water is a great way to tone your muscles, get your heart rate up, and strengthen your joints. Swimming encourages a full range of motion, allowing you to work out those stiff joints that you can't usually get to.

BIKING

Biking is a great exercise for people with arthritis. When the weather isn't nice enough for biking outside, you can always hop on a stationary bike. The smooth continuous motion it takes to cycle is great for your joints. Biking is a low impact exercise and strengthens your heart and lungs, too. Think about adding this exercise to your everyday workout routine.



VANDANA CHAWLA

NUTRITION & YOU

Man has very few days of nice sunny winter. The weather is just perfect for sitting out, enjoying the sun, and grabbing some tasty food. People wait for this weather to sit out with family and friends. In all these outings and fun, food plays an integral role.

Mother nature also blesses us with some wonderful foods which are just apt for this season. They are mood enhancers, immunity boosters and if taken in correct amounts and combinations help in weight loss.

Let's delve more deeply into these foods, which are rightly termed as 'winter foods'.

Does our nutrient requirement change during winter?

During winter our body experiences changes in metabolism, energy levels and food prefer-

ences. These changes can make us go for high calorie foods and beverages which are presumed to be comforting and warming. Plus, our body makes adjustments by increasing the need for certain vitamins and minerals which helps to boost our immunity to compensate for the change in metabolism and to keep us healthy and warm.

Health experts feel the need to winterise our diet by adding some healthy seasonal cold-weather foods, which are rich in Vitamin A, C, D, B vitamins, iron, calcium, zinc, magnesium.

To winterise our diet:

- **Include green leafy vegetables** - Spinach, kale, lettuce, coriander, fenugreek, mustard, rocket leaves are seen in abundance in their vibrant colours. These are packed with vitamin A, C, iron, calcium, magnesium, folate - all great for boosting immunity, plus help in keeping us warm. Soups, curries or even salads made with these tasty veggies are a great winter treat.
- **Add root vegetables** - Carrot, beet, turnip are at their best during winter. Carrots are a great source of B carotene a precursor of vitamin A plus beets are great source of fibre, fo-



late manganese, potassium, iron, and vitamin C. Turnips, too, are rich in vitamin C and A. Use them in soups, salads or add to curries to make your winters healthier and comforting.

- **Oats** - A great convenient breakfast food. Rich in soluble fibre, zinc, along with cholesterol lowering effects, oats serve as a great winter food. Adding some warming spices, like cinnamon, cardamom, combined with some nuts, can make it a complete meal. Powdered oats when used in pancakes, served with some

warm sauce or fruits, is another way of having this healthy food.

- **Go the Sushi way** - Instead of looking for foods loaded with sugar and fats as comfort foods for winters, go for simple yet healthy and tasty Sushi. Lined with healthy foods like avocados, salmon, tuna or some interesting fillings, Sushi can really be a great healthy option for winters.
- **Broccoli and cauliflower** are true cousins coming from the cruciferous family, possess-

ing similar appearance and similar health benefits. Both are rich in fibre, vitamin C, low in calories and possess anti-inflammatory properties, making them an ideal food for boosting immunity and keeping the heart healthy. Be it in soup form, in roasted or grilled form, they can make any meal tasty and comforting.

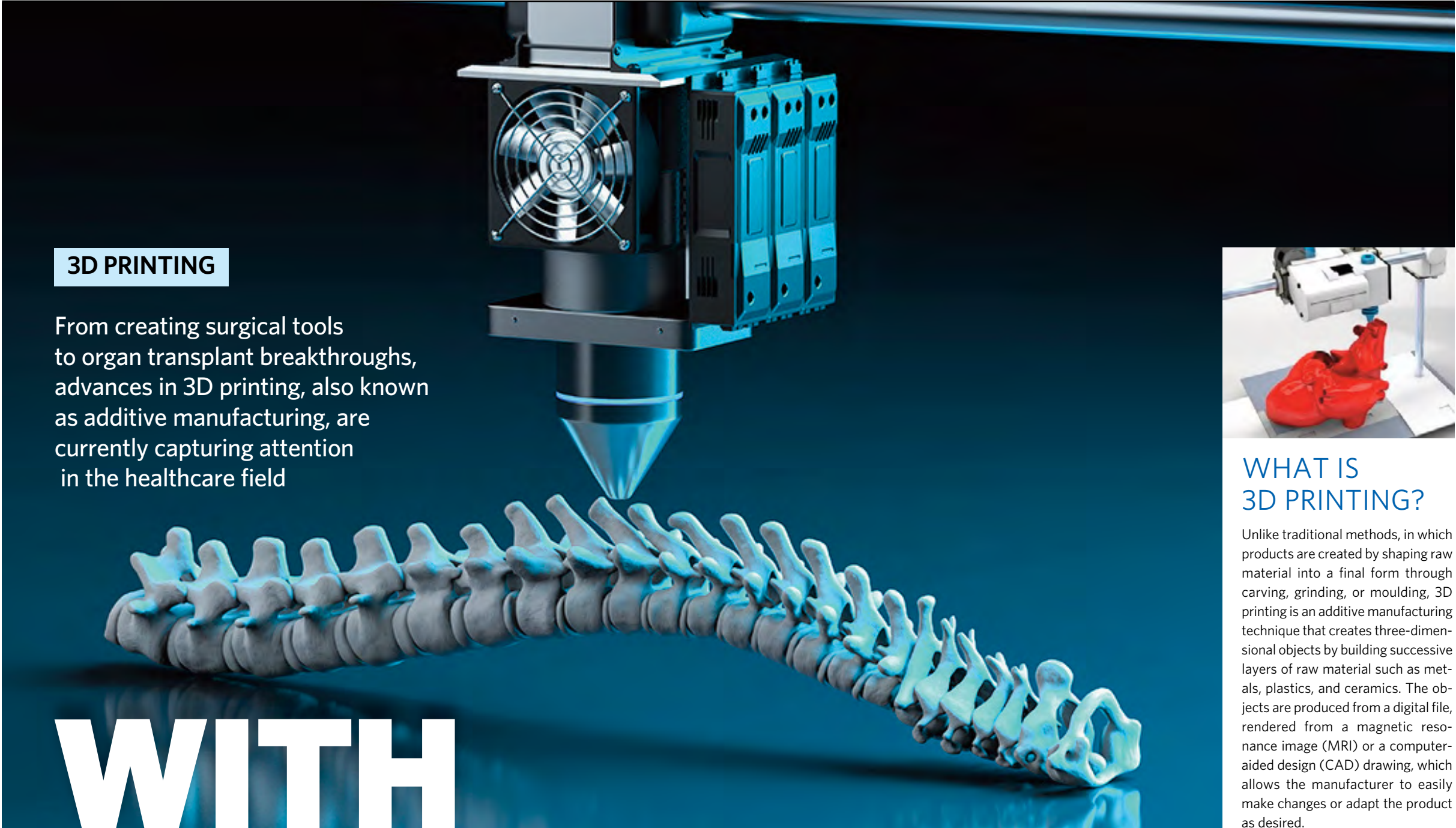
- **Nibble on nuts and seeds** - A great way to snack healthily during winter is by grabbing a handful mix of nuts and seeds. Be it almonds, cashews, pistachio, pecans, walnuts, pumpkin, sunflower or flax seeds, all are packed with a multitude of nutrients. The best part of these foods is that they taste good, both, when eaten alone or when mixed in curries, soups, salads, or smoothies.
- **Herbs and spices** - Herbs like basil, rosemary, lime leaves, or spices like turmeric, cloves, cinnamon, ginger, black peppercorns, possess some vital health benefits that work great to treat cold, cough, sore throat, or flu related symptoms. Decoctions or green teas made with these natural herbs and spices is one of the most soothing winter beverages.

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

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3D PRINTING

From creating surgical tools to organ transplant breakthroughs, advances in 3D printing, also known as additive manufacturing, are currently capturing attention in the healthcare field

WITH ADDITIVES

The latest in medical technology is 3D printing, the scope and application of which has been ever widening since its humble beginning a few decades ago.

A radiologist, for instance, might create an exact replica of a patient's spine to help plan a surgery, a dentist could scan a broken tooth to make a crown that fits precisely into the patient's mouth. In both instances, the doctors can use 3D printing to make products that specifically match a patient's anatomy.

And the technology is not limited to planning surgeries or producing customised dental restorations, 3D printing has enabled the production of customised prosthetic limbs, cranial implants, or orthopaedic implants such as hips and knees. At

the same time, its potential to change the manufacturing of medical products - particularly high-risk devices such as implants - could affect patient safety significantly.

Yet a relatively novel method of manufacture, 3D printing has, however, diversified massively in terms of printing methods, materials, and design possibilities, finding niche application in a range of fields, including healthcare and the life sciences.

3D printing has a transformative impact on the way surgery and dentistry is performed, and how prosthetics and implants are designed, allowing the creation of custom, personalised items fit for the patient or the particular task at hand.

This technology typically refers to an additive manufacturing process, i.e. one where material is

added in successive layers or stages, rather than being removed from bulk material (subtractive) or directly moulded to shape, as with materials such as thermosetting plastics.

Research into this technology was ongoing throughout the 1970s and patented in 1984, and is broadly utilised to produce custom manufactured parts. The type of resin employed can be adapted to purpose; for biocompatibility in cases of biological implant or prosthesis, for toughness and rigidity where required, and so on.

This method of printing evolved into many of the types perhaps more commonly used today, which employ a frame capable of moving an extrusion head in three dimensions above a platform, such as fused deposition modelling (FDM)

3D printing.

Now, there are over 18 methods of 3D printing, each with numerous modifications, allowing custom products to be manufactured in a broad range of materials, with differing degrees of ease and accessibility, quality, and suitability towards medical applications.

Innovations in surgical tools and equipment

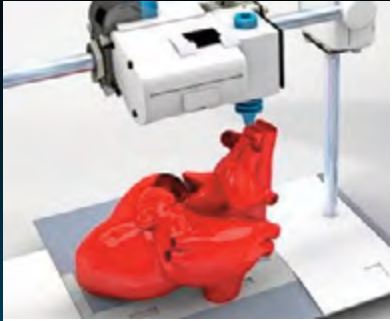
3D printing is increasingly employed in the creation of surgical aids, including the design and production of accurate training models, specialised instruments, and scaffolds that aid in implantation or tissue repair.

One of the major advantages of 3D printing technologies is that iterative changes can be made to newly designed tools based on immediate

feedback from surgeons and other medical professionals; design changes can be implemented in silico and a new device printed overnight.

Some of the major issues with ordinary mass-produced prosthetics is surrounding abandonment; the user ceases to wear the prosthetic as they are uncomfortable, awkward, or unappealing aesthetically. The custom sizing possible using 3D printing technologies, however, allows much more comfortable prosthetics to be manufactured from biocompatible components, potentially in more complex designs and lower mass than traditional prosthetics.

There are several types of organ 3D printing, and the technology is still in its infancy. One of the earliest and most broadly employed methods is known as cell seeding, wherein a supporting scaffold is 3D printed from biocompatible materials and then seeded with cells that will propagate to fill the structure, potentially in situ in order to aid in wound healing.

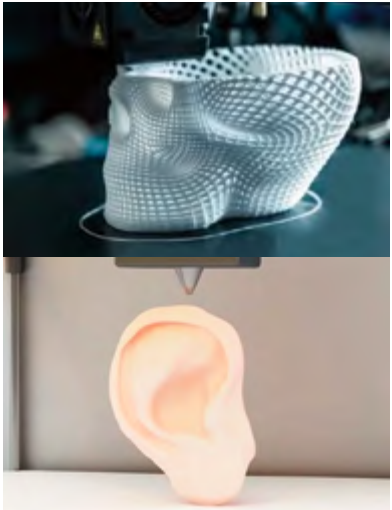


WHAT IS 3D PRINTING?

Unlike traditional methods, in which products are created by shaping raw material into a final form through carving, grinding, or moulding, 3D printing is an additive manufacturing technique that creates three-dimensional objects by building successive layers of raw material such as metals, plastics, and ceramics. The objects are produced from a digital file, rendered from a magnetic resonance image (MRI) or a computer-aided design (CAD) drawing, which allows the manufacturer to easily make changes or adapt the product as desired.



Anatomical model of a hand, including the 'skin' made out of an elastic 3D printing material. Below, other creations



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