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OMAN, ALGERIA EXPAND TIES



Algiers, Algeria - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune presided over the signing of multiple agreements on Monday aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation across several sectors.

The ceremony, held at the Presidential Palace in Algiers, saw the signing of a preliminary agreement, four memoranda of understanding, two cooperation MoUs and four executive programmes.

A key outcome of His Majesty's visit was establishment of a joint Oman-Algeria Investment Fund worth US\$300mn to be equally shared between the two countries. The agreement was signed between Oman Investment Authority and Algeria's Ministry of Finance. The fund will target investments in food security, pharmaceuticals, mining and other strategic sectors.

In the mining sector, Minerals Development Oman and Algeria's National Company for Mineral Exploration and Production signed an MoU to promote co-operation in mining and related industries with a focus on knowledge transfer and sustainable development.

Abraj Energy Services and Algeria's state-owned Sonatrach signed key terms for a joint

venture based on a previously signed MoU. Earlier this year, the two parties agreed to develop vocational training in the oil and gas sector and build frameworks for technical and managerial skill development.

In healthcare, Ministry of Health and Algeria's Ministry of Industry and Pharmaceutical Production signed an MoU to enhance

H M, President Tebboune oversee signing of major bilateral agreements to deepen economic and sectoral cooperation

cooperation in drug manufacturing, pharmacovigilance, scientific research and pharmaceutical investment.

Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs signed a cooperation agreement with Algeria's Ministry of Justice to expand collaboration in judicial matters, including training, sharing best practices and drafting international conventions, while Supreme Judiciary Council inked an MoU with Algeria's Ministry of Justice to support joint training, legal

research and exchange of court rulings.

Agricultural cooperation was formalised through an MoU between the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources and Algeria's Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries focused on desert farming, agricultural biotechnology and food safety.

An executive programme was activated to implement an existing MoU on plant protection and animal health enabling technical collaboration in quarantine procedures, seed production and phytosanitary standards.

Oman Marine Science and Fisheries Centre and Algeria's National Centre for Research and Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture signed an executive programme to support cooperation in marine research, aquaculture and smart fishing technologies.

An executive programme in education, stemming from a 2006 bilateral agreement, was signed to facilitate academic exchange, scholarships and collaborative research between institutions in both countries.

Additionally, Ministry of Labour and Algeria's Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security signed an executive programme to strengthen cooperation in labour inspection, dispute resolution and training.

Joint fund to boost bilateral investment

Algiers, Algeria - An official reception ceremony was held for His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik at El Mouradia Presidential Palace in Algiers, led by President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, on Monday on the occasion of his state visit to Algeria.

This was followed by a bilateral meeting and an official session of talks exploring opportunities for economic and investment cooperation between the two countries.

Prior to these official engagements, His Majesty the Sultan visited the Memorial of the Martyr - Maqam E'chahid - and the National Museum of Moudjahid in Algiers.

Joint communiqué

At the conclusion of the state visit, a joint communiqué hailed the establishment of the Oman-Algeria Investment Fund aimed at financing joint projects and diversifying economic cooperation between the two countries.

The two leaders described their talks as constructive, reflecting the deep historical and cultural ties between Oman and Algeria. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening co-operation across various sectors.

They noted significant progress since President Tebboune's visit to Muscat in October 2024.

The two leaders called for faster implementation of ongoing discussions in areas such as automotive manufacturing and labour cooperation.

Efforts to boost trade volumes and economic exchanges were discussed, with both sides encouraging greater engagement between public and private sector stakeholders. They referred to



the outcomes of a business forum held in Algiers last June and Oman's upcoming participation as guest of honour at the 56th Algiers International Fair in June 2025. Algeria is also set to be the guest of honour at the Oman AgroFood Exhibition in December 2025.

Several agreements and memoranda of understanding were signed during the visit, covering sectors such as investment, justice, fisheries, labour, energy and legal affairs.

The two leaders praised the role of the Algerian community in Oman in strengthening people-to-people ties. They also exchanged views on regional and global developments, under-

scoring the need for greater coordination within the Arab League to confront common challenges.

Addressing the ongoing war in Gaza, the leaders issued a joint condemnation of Israel's military campaign calling it a genocidal war responsible for unprecedented humanitarian devastation. They urged the international community, particularly the UN Security Council, to push for an immediate ceasefire and a just resolution based on a two-state solution with East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital.

At the end of the visit, His Majesty the Sultan thanked President Tebboune and the Algerian people for their warm hospitality and wished Algeria continued prosperity.



03
Muscat hosts global energy regulators



05
Global AI spending seen surging by 60% in 2025

Over 245,000 firms don't employ even a single Omani: MoL

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Labour (MoL) has introduced a set of new regulations requiring all private sector firms operating for more than a year to employ at least one Omani national in an effort to address disparities in national employment across the sultanate's labour market.

Announcing the decision, MoL said the directive targets companies that have failed to hire Omanis despite benefiting from the country's pro-business environment. Official data shows that more than 245,000 establishments currently employ over 1.1mn expatriates but not a single Omani, resulting in a

Regulations issued designed to correct disparities, curb hidden trade practices, ensure a fairer distribution of job opportunities, and enhance the overall competitiveness of the labour market

zero Omanisation rate. In contrast, around 1,000 large firms employ 200,000 Omanis and 245,000 expatri-



ates, reflecting Omanisation rate of 44%. Additionally, 19,000 establishments employ 60,000 Omanis and 300,000 expatri-

ates - a rate of just 17%. 'The newly announced measures are designed to correct these disparities, curb hidden

trade practices, ensure a fairer distribution of job opportunities, and enhance the overall competitiveness of the labour market in a sustainable and equitable manner,' the ministry stated.

To support implementation, the ministry has rolled out a package that includes training programmes linked to employment, on-the-job training, wage support and flexible hiring options. These include counting self-employed and part-time Omani workers towards the required Omanisation quota.

Companies will be given deadlines based on their size. Establishments that have been operating for a year without hiring an Omani must submit an oper-

ational plan within one month of being notified by the ministry.

Firms with ten or more employees must appoint an Omani within three months of notification. Smaller companies with fewer than ten workers will have six months.

Full-time self-employed individuals have one year to regularise their commercial status in line with the new rules.

A special committee will be formed to handle complaints, assess exceptional cases and monitor implementation impact.

MoL said the initiative forms part of a wider strategy to empower the national workforce and align employment practices with Oman's long-term economic and social goals.

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Oman swelters under extreme heat; experts urge caution

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman is experiencing a heat-wave with temperatures soaring across much of the country. Suwaiq recorded 45.7°C, the highest temperature in the last 24 hours, according to Civil Aviation Authority's meteorological stations.

Sur and Suhar followed closely, recording 45.6°C and 45.5°C respectively. Other places that reported high temperatures include Seeb (44.7°C), Hamra al Duru (44°C), Al Awabi (43.8°C), Fahud (43.7°C), Qal-hat (43.6°C), Samail (43.5°C), Ibri (42.4°C) and Um Zamaïm (42.3°C).

With the extreme heat showing no immediate signs of easing, health professionals are advising caution. Dr Nadia al Mazrouei, Consultant Internist at a private hospital, warned that fluid loss is rapid even without exertion at such temperatures. "People should drink water frequently, even if they're not thirsty, and avoid caffeine," she said.

She added that symptoms like dizziness and confusion in the heat should be treated as emergencies.

Dr Sanjay Deshmukh, an emergency medicine specialist, informed that heatstroke can de-



Water-rich fruits like watermelon and citrus can help maintain hydration levels

DR AMAL RAHMANI

velop quickly. "Wearing light clothing and avoiding strenuous activity outdoors is essential. Keeping a damp cloth handy to cool the face and neck helps lower body temperature," he said.

As energy demand spikes, residents are being encouraged

to use electricity wisely. Fatma al Harthy, an energy efficiency advisor, suggested closing blinds in sun-facing rooms and using fans with a bowl of ice to cool indoor spaces effectively.

Fitness and nutrition experts are also sounding the alarm. Leila Khan, a fitness coach, recommended exercising indoors or early in the morning. "Outdoor workouts in this heat can be dangerous," she said.

Sports enthusiast Omar al Shaibani added, "Even experienced athletes should take breaks every 15 minutes and stay hydrated."

Dr Amal Rahmani, a holistic nutritionist, suggested lighter meals and avoiding salty snacks. "Water-rich fruits like watermelon and citrus can help maintain hydration levels," she said. She also stressed the fact that children and the elderly need

special care. "Children overheat quickly and should be kept indoors, while older adults must be encouraged to drink fluids regularly, even if they don't feel thirsty."

For those working outdoors, authorities have reiterated the need to follow heat safety guidelines. Ali al Balushi, an occupational safety expert, said shaded rest areas and hydration stations are now mandatory at high-risk sites such as construction zones. "Employers are also required to enforce midday work breaks (June to August) and provide training on heat stress," he said. "Neglecting these measures can be fatal."

With the heatwave expected to persist, authorities are urging the public to stay indoors during peak hours, drink fluids regularly, and remain alert to signs of heat stress.

Global meet on museums, tourism on May 18-20

Our Correspondent
Manah

Oman Across Ages Museum will host an international conference titled 'Museums and their Role in Tourism Development' in collaboration with National Records and Archives Authority and Ministry of Heritage and Tourism from May 18 to 20.

The three-day event will bring together over 40 researchers, academics and museum experts from 21 countries, along with key stakeholders in the heritage and tourism sectors from within and outside the sultanate.

The conference will feature 42 scientific papers covering a range of topics, including the role of museums and heritage institutions in boosting tourism and preserving cultural identity, the contribution of museum tourism to the cultural economy and investment opportunities in the sector.

Presentations will explore the educational and academic potential of museums, with a focus on partnerships and integration of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality to enhance visitor experiences.

In addition to the main sessions, the conference will include three specialised workshops and an exhibition showcasing the participation of government and pri-



The conference aims to serve as a global platform for the exchange of expertise and best practices in the field of museums

AL YAQZAN BIN ABDULLAH AL HARTHY

vate entities, alongside researchers and academics. The exhibition aims to highlight the economic and cultural significance of museums and their growing role in society and tourism development.

Al Yaqzan bin Abdullah al Harthy, Director General of Oman Across Ages Museum and General Supervisor of the conference, said the event aims to serve as a global platform for the exchange of expertise and best practices in the field of museums. He emphasised the growing importance of Omani museums as

knowledge hubs that contribute to diversifying the national economy through cultural tourism.

Dr Mohammed al Balushi, Chairman of the conference's Scientific Committee, said it received more than 300 research abstracts from 21 countries, of which 42 were selected based on academic quality and diversity.

He added that a number of scientific posters will also be displayed at the conference, offering further opportunities for knowledge exchange and showcasing innovative research in museum development and tourism.

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OCCI eyes retail sector revival through events, reforms and investment push

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Trade and Retail Committee of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) has outlined a series of initiatives aimed at revitalising the retail sector and stimulating business activity.

At a meeting chaired by Hassan bin Jama al Ishaq on Sunday, committee members reviewed plans to launch a specialised study in collaboration with a professional consultancy. The study will examine the root causes behind weak market activity and recommend practical measures to improve commercial performance across sectors.

The committee discussed plans for a series of sector-focused seminars targeting key areas of retail, including malls, traditional markets, clothing, jewellery, furniture, perfumes and cosmetics.

A proposal to develop a comprehensive national calendar of

events and trade exhibitions was highlighted as a means to support retail growth.

"We are working to launch strategic initiatives that enhance the efficiency and competitiveness of the retail sector in line with market and consumer expectations," Ishaq said. "Our approach is rooted in strong public-private partnerships and we are addressing ongoing sector challenges - such as electricity tariffs, direct import support for

local companies and incentives to attract new investors."

The committee is also working on regulatory improvements for e-commerce to better serve both businesses and consumers.

A key proposal discussed was hosting the Middle East Retail Expo in Oman. "Such an event would elevate Oman's profile as a regional trading hub and strengthen ties between international investors and local businesses," Ishaq said.

Research links mobile learning with better English skills

Mostafa Morady Moghaddam from Shahrood University of Technology in Iran.

The project was one of 13 winners at the 11th National Research Award organised by Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, taking top honours in the PhD category under the Education and Human Resources field.

"This recognition inspires me to continue pursuing innovative projects that contribute to language learning and education," Abri said.

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Mobile-assisted learning techniques significantly improve vocabulary and speaking skills among English language learners, a study conducted in Oman has found.

Led by Dr Abdullah bin Humaid Abdullah al Abri of University of Technology and Applied Sciences Nizwa, the research investigated the use of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) tools in classrooms. It

concluded that students using mobile platforms showed better lexical fluency and oral performance than those taught through conventional methods.

"Teachers reported positive views on the flexibility and effectiveness of MALL tools, highlighting their potential to enhance language teaching practices," said Abri.

The study also found that MALL promoted a more student-centred environment, encouraging participation from learners typically hesitant to speak in

class. Qualitative data showed that students were more engaged and motivated when using mobile tools for vocabulary acquisition and speaking practice.

The findings were part of a project titled 'Exploring Learning-Oriented Assessment in Enhancing Students' Lexical Fluency through MALL', published in the journal *Education and Information Technologies*.

The research was conducted in collaboration with Dr Fatemeh Ranjbaran Madiseh from Sultan Qaboos University and Dr



SQU awards Royal Grant to 10 strategic research projects

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) marked the 25th anniversary of the University Day with the announcement of the 2025 Royal Grant for Strategic Research Projects. The event, held under the patronage of H E Sultan bin Salim al Habsi, Minister of Finance, honoured ten research initiatives spanning artificial intelligence, renewable energy, healthcare, and cultural studies.

Among the recipients were Prof Dr Aisha bint Salem al Harthi, recognised for her work on social innovation in Omani learning cities; Dr Jalila bint Saeed al Shukailli, who is developing newborn screening for immunological disorders; and Prof Dr Tasneem Pervez, focused on solar cells using locally sourced polymers.

Other researchers awarded include Dr Malik bin Mohammed al Wardi for an AI-driven drought prediction model, Dr Rashid bin Salem al Hajri for green hydrogen production and Dr Amira bint Khamis al Amri for her study on the socioeconomic

costs of road traffic accidents. Projects on carbon capture, digital archiving of Omani heritage, and national identity also received the grant. Speaking at the event, Dr Amer bin Saif al Hina'i, Vice Chancellor for Postgraduate Studies and Scientific Research, said, "We wanted this to be more than a celebration – a chance to consolidate SQU's research achievements that have strengthened Oman's regional and international presence in science and innovation."

Dr Ghazi bin Ali al Rawas, Dean of Scientific Research, noted that the Royal Grant has supported nearly 4,500 projects with over RO78mn in funding. He credited the continued support of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for driving Oman's research-led development.

The anniversary also included the International Conference on Scientific Research and Sustainability, which focused on sustainable funding and partnerships. An exhibition showcased SQU's research milestones and tools supporting scientific publishing and sustainability.

Muscat hosts ME's first ERRA meet for global energy regulators



Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman is hosting the 22nd Annual Conference of the Energy Regulators Regional Association (ERRA), marking the first time the global forum is being held in the Middle East.

The two-day conference opened on Monday under the patronage of H H Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs and Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan. The event has attracted delegates from over 50 countries and more than 250 international energy experts.

Organised by the Authority

for Public Services Regulation (APSR), the forum highlights Oman's expanding role in global energy regulation. Held under the theme 'Progressing Energy Transition via Effective Policies and Regulation', the conference

Oman is a strategic partner capable of influencing the global energy governance, particularly in market regulation, interoperability and investment facilitation

ANDRIJANA NELKOVA CHUCHUK

serves as a platform for dialogue on clean energy investments, regional energy cooperation, and regulatory frameworks.

In his opening address, H E Dr Mansour Talib al Hina'i, Chair-

man of APSR, outlined Oman's progress in renewable energy. He said four renewable energy plants with a combined capacity of 1,550MW have been commissioned, while eight more solar and wind projects are under de-

influencing the global energy governance system", particularly in market regulation, interoperability, and investment facilitation.

The conference includes 15 technical sessions and bilateral



meetings involving government officials, regulators, and private sector representatives. Monday's sessions addressed energy sustainability in the Gulf, regional market harmonisation, and the

integration of renewables into existing grids.

The agenda for Tuesday will focus on sustainable fuels, including natural gas, green hydrogen and low-carbon alternatives, as well as energy storage, financing mechanisms, and the cost of technology adoption in developing countries.

A separate session on solar energy will review national policy frameworks, innovative financing models, and efforts to involve SMEs in decentralised energy production. Technical and bilateral meetings are also being held on the sidelines of the event, covering institutional cooperation, data sharing, green financing, and partnerships for regional energy projects.



Nearly 800 marine fishing violations in Q1

Muscat - Omani authorities registered 792 violations of the Marine Fishing Law and Protection of Living Aquatic Resources between January and March, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR).

Of the cases, 73 were breaches of fishing licence regulations and 137 instances involving the use of prohibited fishing methods or unauthorised equipment. The ministry also recorded 22 cases of fishing in restricted areas or during banned periods, 37 cases involving unlicensed expatriate workers, 73 violations related to the absence of registration plates on vessels, and 76 other infractions.

A ministry official said 98 boats and vessels, 91 engines, 150 fishing tools, 3,340 nets and 78 cages were seized during inspections. Authorities also detained 420 foreign workers found in violation of the law.

Additionally, 681kg of lobster, 183kg of shrimp and 345kg of other fish, including abalone, were confiscated during the first quarter.

The official added that monitoring campaigns are regularly organised in coordination with the Coast Guard of the Royal Oman Police, Royal Oman Navy, Maritime Security Centre and the Ministry of Labour. These efforts cover all major fishing sites.

JABAL

صندوق جبل الصين أي إم سي للتأمين للأسهم

Jabal ChinaAMC Loong Equity Fund

The Chairman's Report

For the Period ending March 31 2025

On behalf of the Fund Management Body, I am pleased to present the financial results of Jabal ChinaAMC Loong Equity Fund for the period ending March 31 2025

Below is a summary of the financial results:

For the period ending March 31, 2025
OMR
Total Income 40,842
Total Expenses (71,867)
Profit (Loss) for the Period (31,025)
Profit (Loss) per Unit (0.013)
Total Net Assets 2,345,539
NAV per Unit 1.006

Market Overview and Outlook

The stimulus announcement in September 2024 of RMB 1tn (\$137bn) + RRR cut of 0.50% with further guidance on cuts given for the year + Property Market Support, led to the bottoming of the China and HK markets.

Since January 2025 we have seen the mainland China fraction of the market consolidate and lose its steam gradually till March YTD performance CSI300 1.75% while the HSI till March-end was one of the outperformers of the year led by a tech-based stock rally YTD Performance 17.82%

The geopolitical factors coupled with local and global events have ruled the volatility of the markets since January '25. We have seen the Chinese government prepare a plan for stimulus activities in March (annual governors meeting) and have set the GDP target for the year at 5% + raised the deficit from 1 to 3% which will mainly be due to stimulus activities thru the year and to support local governments a special bonds quota of about 4bn

China and HK Stocks trade at very attractive valuations (CSI300 PE 12.9x and HSI PE15.3x) and with the improvement in economic data only adds to our conviction to keep deploying the cash held in the high conviction names.

Economic Data

GDP 1Q25 +5.4%; Fixed Asset Investment +4.2%; Retail Sales in 1Q +4.6% and in March +5.9% March Manufacturing PMI 50.5(12m high)

Stock market sentiment has improved dramatically + with Fiscal Support stepping up and a very low base of entry valuations adds to the comfort of allocating to China and HK for a 3–5-year perspective

Fund Performance

Jabal ChinaAMC loong Equity Fund started initial deployment on 27 Jan 2025 and is in the final stages of deploying its initial capital owing to the set up of the HK accounts.

As of 31st March 2025, the Total AUM of the fund stood at RO 2.34mn. Since inception (27th Jan 2025), the fund has returned +0.9% outperforming the CSI300 by 2.7%

Acknowledgements

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

On behalf of the Fund Management Body

Chairman

28 April, 2025

Statement of comprehensive income

For the period from 20 January 2025 to and as at 31 March 2025

	20-01-2025 to 31-03-2025 RO
Income	
Dividend income	-
Net realized gain/ (loss) on sale of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	-
Net unrealized gain/ (loss) on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	38,278
Interest Income	2,564
	40,842
Expenses	
General and administrative expenses	(51,282)
Management fees	(8,282)
Custody and administration fees	(1,973)
Foreign exchange loss	(10,330)
	(71,867)
Net profit/ (loss) and total comprehensive income / (loss) for the period.	(31,025)
Profit / (Loss) per unit	(0.013)

Statement of Financial Position

For the period from 20 January 2025 to and as at 31 March 2025

	31-03-2025 RO
ASSETS	
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	1,333,362
Cash and cash equivalents	1,010,141
Other Receivables	2,036
Total assets	2,345,539
LIABILITIES	
Accruals and other payables	8,028
Total liabilities	8,028
Net assets attributable to the unitholders	2,337,511
Total liabilities and net assets attributable to the unitholders	2,345,539
Net assets value per unit attributable to the unitholders	1.006

JABAL

صندوق جبل للدخل الثابت

Jabal Fixed Income Fund

The Chairman's Report

For the Period ending March 31 2025

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

Below is a summary of the financial results:

For the period ending March 31, 2025
OMR
Total Income (11,338)
Total Expenses (48,701)
Profit (Loss) for the Period (60,039)
Profit (Loss) per Unit (0.022)
Total Net Assets 2,724,830
NAV per Unit 0.996

Market Performance

10-year USTs rallied throughout 1Q25 by 37bps and closed at 4.207% on the back of increased expectations for rate cuts as weaker growth was expected due to the Liberation Day tariffs.

EM spreads tightened in the first half of the quarter but widened in the second half of the quarter and closed at 111bps in 1Q25 due to initial expectations of rate cuts which was then pulled back as market volatility increased post tariff announcements.

As such in 1Q25, EM has underperformed DM by 334bps, largely due to the volatile macro backdrop.

Fund Performance

As of 31st March 2025, the Total AUM of the fund stood at RO 2,729,697. Since inception (5th February 2025), the fund has returned -0.75% underperforming the market by 2.20%.

The Fund began its maiden trade in February 2025 post set-up finalization and is now fully invested as at end March. The fund focused on high quality names across all markets to maximize yields.

Economy and Market outlook

EM spreads remain substantially higher than DM spreads, providing consistent significant pick-up especially with the selloff in markets at the start of 2025. Spreads widening is expected to continue in 2Q25. As such, we expect investors to return to EM markets as the DM trade unwinds, especially post tariffs, and the hunt for yield begins.

EM is expected to continue to provide opportunity for investors to search for Alpha in this space especially on the back of a tumultuous macro environment which will cause dips in markets, which provide timely opportunities to pick-up bonds. The variety in EM markets provide opportunity to flexibly rotate between markets to maximize potential returns in this space.

The recent selloff in USTs of 10-year at close to the 4.5% provides a timely opportunity to lock in yields at good levels as spreads have widened substantially. In the medium term, potential capital appreciation and supernormal returns for EM IG is expected creating a favourable macro backdrop for EM IG.

Markets are expected to remain volatile, providing trading opportunities to actively manage the fund and to lock in stable yields for the fund over the medium term.

Acknowledgements

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

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

On behalf of the Fund Management Body

Chairman

27th April 2025

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income For the period from 05 February to and as at 31 March 2025

	From 05-02-2025 to 31-03-2025 RO
Income	
Interest income	-
Other income	9,198
Net realized gain on sale of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	-
Net unrealized loss on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(20,536)
	(11,338)
Expenses	
Management fees	(3,791)
Custody and administration fees	(1,507)
General and administrative expenses	(43,030)
Foreign exchange loss	(373)
	(48,701)
Net profit / (Loss) and total comprehensive income/ (loss) for the period.	(60,039)
Profit / (Loss) per unit	(0.022)

Statement of Financial Position For the period from 05 February to and as at 31 March 2025

	31-03-2025 RO
ASSETS	
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	2,639,179
Cash and cash equivalents	53,929
Other receivable	36,589
Total assets	2,729,697
LIABILITIES	
Accruals and other payables	4,867
Total liabilities	4,867
Net assets attributable to the unitholders	2,724,830
Total liabilities and net assets attributable to the unitholders	2,729,697
Net assets value per unit attributable to the unitholders	0.996

MARKET WATCH	
MSX30	4,339.181
Sensex	80,796.84
FOREX RATES (RO1 equals)	
India	218.82
Pakistan	730.96
Bangladesh	315.84
Philippines	144.56
Sri Lanka	778.46

*Rates as on May 05
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Skype shuts down after more than 2 decades

Skype, the iconic internet chat and phone service owned by Microsoft, was shut down on Monday after around 22-year service term.

A group of engineers launched the popular chat application, and Microsoft purchased it in 2011.

On February 28 this year, Microsoft announced that Skype has reached the end of its life.

"Starting in May 2025, Skype will no longer be available," the announcement read.

Microsoft offered users to sign in to Microsoft Teams Free with their Skype accounts to stay connected with all their chats and contacts.

The statement said with Teams, users will have access to the same core features they use in Skype such as one-on-one calls, and group calls, messaging, and file sharing.

Oman-Russia Business Forum seeks investment and trade opportunities

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) on Monday organised the Oman-Russia Business Forum, as part of the multi-day visit of Abdulmuslim Abdulmuslimov, Prime Minister of the Republic of Dagestan, and his accompanying delegation to Oman.

The forum aimed to develop trade relations between Oman and the Republic of Dagestan, strengthen economic and investment cooperation, open new avenues for investment and partnerships across various vital sectors, enhance trade exchange, and explore promising investment opportunities - particularly in agriculture, tourism, trade, fisheries, livestock, and construction. The event targeted investors, producers, exporters, importers, wholesale companies, and government agencies, according to an Oman News Agency report.

Speaking at the Oman-Russia Business Forum, Abdulmuslimov highlighted the importance of the forum in reinforcing trade ties between the two sides, noting the significant opportunities it presents in economic and commercial cooperation. He emphasised



During the event, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between OCCI and the Chamber of Commerce of the Republic of Dagestan, with the aim of enhancing trade and investment cooperation and expanding collaboration across several key economic sectors

that the Republic of Dagestan places great importance on deepening collaboration with Oman in various fields, and that such events mark an important step towards developing future partnerships.

Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of the OCCI, said that

He added that joint cooperation between the public and private sectors forms the foundation upon which future success is built. "Strengthening partnerships between the two sides will help unlock new business opportunities and foster the development of joint projects."

The Oman-Russia Business Forum, which served as a starting point for further fruitful cooperation, is expected to stimulate bilateral business activity, and will enhance the OCCI's role in supporting entrepreneurship and advancing national economic

objectives.

During the event, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Commerce of the Republic of Dagestan, with the aim of enhancing trade and investment cooperation and expanding collaboration across several key economic sectors.

The forum also featured a visual presentation titled 'Explore the Omani Market', delivered by Shurooq bint Hamad al Farsi, Head of the Committees Department at the OCCI. She reviewed the investment opportunities available in Oman and highlighted current economic trends in the country.

For its part, the Dagestani delegation presented a promotional video showcasing investment prospects in the Dagestan region, its competitive advantages, and its importance as a growing economic and commercial hub.

The forum concluded with bilateral meetings between Omani and Russian business representatives, during which they discussed potential areas of cooperation and exchanged insights on trade and investment opportunities that could benefit all parties involved.

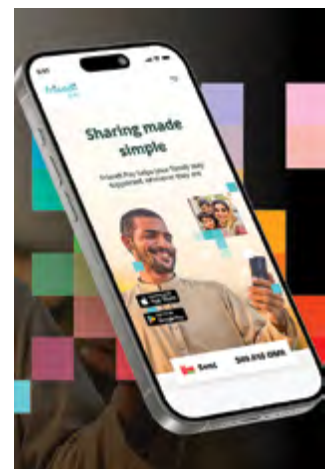
Beyond ONE launches FRiENDi Pay mobile wallet service in Oman

Muscat - Beyond ONE, the digital services provider and global tech company, on Monday announced the launch of FRiENDi Pay, a licensed digital mobile wallet service that may transform how people in Oman makes payments and send money internationally.

Building on FRiENDi Mobile's established reputation serving more than 750,000 Oman users, FRiENDi Pay offers a comprehensive financial solution for all Oman residents and citizens seeking hassle-free money transfers.

The platform simplifies both international remittances and local transactions, allowing users to support family overseas or manage expenses with friends nearby, Beyond ONE said in a press release.

"With FRiENDi Pay, users can instantly send money to key destinations including Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and the Philippines at competitive rates. The service also enables quick and convenient peer-to-peer transfers within Oman, utility bill payments, and wallet top-ups - all



through an intuitive, multilingual interface,' the company said.

Tawfiq al Lawati, CEO of FRiENDi Pay Oman, said, "At FRiENDi Pay, we're not just simplifying transactions - we're transforming the way people in Oman experience money. From international transfers to local bill payments and peer-to-peer exchanges, we've made every interaction seamless - even enabling transfers directly within a chat or with a shared photo, making each moment more personal and meaningful.

"What sets us apart is our be-

lief that fintech should start with people - not features. We've built FRiENDi Pay to be a truly human-centric solution, shaped by the real needs and habits of our diverse communities. It's not just digital. It's designed to feel natural, inclusive, and emotionally connected."

"And this is only the beginning. Our journey is guided by a bold roadmap focused on bringing the most relevant, impactful financial innovations to Oman - always with the user at the center," he added.

The introduction of fintech services to Beyond ONE's digital platform for FRiENDi Mobile is part of the organization's broader mission to enhance, simplify and widen the worlds of its customers, wherever they are.

FRiENDi Pay's core features include instant wallet top-up, international money transfers at competitive rates, peer-to-peer transfers, bill payments, and multi-language support. The platform ensures security through advanced encryption and full compliance with Oman's financial regulations.

Oil prices plunge as OPEC+ plans to accelerate production increase

London, UK - Crude oil prices plunged to a multi-year low on Monday following OPEC+'s decision to accelerate production hikes for June. During Monday's Asian session, Brent futures slumped as much as 4.6% to \$58.50 per barrel, while West Texas Intermediate futures dropped nearly 5% to \$55.53 per barrel at a point, both at their lowest levels since February 2021.

On Saturday, eight OPEC+ members agreed to raise output by 411,000 barrels per day (bpd) next month, extending the group's ongoing plan to unwind production cuts that began in April. The cumulative increase will reach 957,000 bpd in June, further weighing on prices already pressured by deteriorating global trade conditions.

The group, which accounts for around 40% of global oil supply, has jointly reduced production by approximately 2.2mn bpd in 2023. The quicker-than-expected phased rollback began with a 135,000 bpd increase in April, tripling to 411,000 bpd in May. The acceleration is seen as a punitive



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measure against members which failed to comply with agreed production quotas, with Kazakhstan and Iraq identified as recent overproducers.

"The gradual increases may be paused or reversed subject to evolving market conditions. This flexibility will allow the group to continue to support oil market stability," OPEC+ said in a statement on Saturday. "The eight OPEC+ countries also

noted that this measure will provide an opportunity for the participating countries to accelerate their compensation."

The group's next meeting is scheduled for 1 June.

Crude prices have been sliding throughout the year, now down over 20% since mid-January. The decline has been driven in part by US President Donald Trump's pro-drilling stance, the escalating global

trade war, and rising US-China tensions. The downtrend intensified after Trump announced sweeping reciprocal tariffs in early April. OPEC+'s increased output has added to bearish sentiment in fossil fuel markets.

Crude prices fell more than 7% last week - the largest weekly decline in a month - due to weakening demand outlooks amid the ongoing US-China trade war.

Oil traders are now closely watching the development of trade relations between Washington and Beijing. During an interview with NBC on Sunday, Trump indicated he may lower tariffs on China "at some point", stating: "Because otherwise, you could never do business with them, and they want to do business very much."

On Friday, China said it was assessing the potential for trade negotiations with the US. "The US has recently sent messages to China through relevant parties, hoping to start talks with China," the Ministry of Commerce said. "China is currently evaluating this."

Agencies

Trade war, uncertainties are weighing on Middle East economies: IMF

The IMF's regional outlook report for the MENA region said Brent crude oil prices - which are down from highs above \$120 a barrel in 2022 - are likely to be \$65 to \$69 per barrel in 2025 and 2026, making energy-exporting economies in the Middle East vulnerable to market fluctuations.

"Tariff plans by the US and other countries and geopolitical tensions also have created mounting economic uncertainty globally that is weighing down

on the region's economies, which could negatively impact their growth by anywhere from 2% to 4.5%", Jihad Azour, director for Middle East and Central Asia at the IMF, said.

"Therefore, countries need to react and need to devise policies in order to protect their economies," Azour said in an interview in Dubai.

Reductions in foreign aid coming into the region also will play a role, Azour said, as US President Donald Trump has



pulled his country back from its position as the world's single largest aid donor.

"The drop in international assistance, especially for countries in fragility, is something that is creating new risks for the region," Azour noted.

Growth in the MENA region is expected to be 2.6% this year, as compared to 1.8% last year, Azour highlighted, but he added that global uncertainty could impact the outlook.

Economies in the Persian

Gulf continue to attract substantial foreign direct investment, rising by nearly 2% of GDP since the pandemic, while other MENA nations struggle with slower inflows.

The IMF says it is willing to work with some of the struggling nations and the new government in Syria. He also said that IMF staff and Lebanese officials were in discussions in Lebanon.

"The Syria recovery will be a long process that would require

mobilization of regional and international support and also a comprehensive program of building institutions, reforming their economy, and also addressing a certain number of key issues like infrastructure, refugees and rebuilding a new social contact," Azour said.

Despite the global economic uncertainty, MENA nations can drive growth through structural reforms and diversifying economic ties, the report said.

(Source: Euronews.com)

Fed faces ‘tug of war’ with Trump over rates

Jennifer Schonberger

The biggest question facing the US Federal Reserve as it gathers again this week is how to grapple with a tariff-related “tug-of-war” between sticky inflation and a slowing economy – as well as a president who wants looser monetary policy. How that dilemma gets resolved could mean two very different courses for interest rates in the coming months.

President Trump has made his views known in recent weeks: He wants rates lowered ahead of any slowing of the economy possibly triggered by his trade policies. And he is not happy with the caution of Fed Chair Jerome Powell, who has said the central bank will “wait for greater clarity” while weighing both sides of its mandate for stable prices and full employment.

There is a “strong likelihood,” Powell said last month, that the economy will be moving away from both of the Fed’s goals for the “balance of the year, or at least not making much progress.”

New reports on the economy, jobs, and inflation released last week reinforced the Fed’s conundrum as it looks for patterns in the data. A GDP report showed the US economy contracted for the first time in three years to begin 2025 due largely to a rush by importers to beat the start of President Trump’s tariffs. But an April jobs report released Friday also showed the labour market remained resilient even in the weeks after Trump’s “Liberation Day” announcements shook markets.

An inflation gauge favoured by the Fed showed that price growth slowed in March to an annualised 2.6%, but it was still a hotter-than-expected 3.5% for the quarter. And both marks are



above the Fed’s target of 2%.

Some economists expect inflation to kick higher and the economy to fall further in the months ahead.

The ‘tug-of-war’

The challenge for the Fed, Wilmington Trust bond portfolio manager Wilmer Stith said, is that it has to ferret out “the tug-of-war between how much inflation is over the 2% target versus a deteriorating job market.”

Luke Tilley, chief economist for Wilmington Trust, isn’t expecting much change in the Fed’s stance at this week’s meeting. He does expect Powell to reiterate the tension between

President Donald Trump in recent weeks has repeatedly made clear that he wants Fed Chair Jerome Powell to cut interest rates and has accused him of being late. He wants rates lowered ahead of any slowing of the economy possibly triggered by his trade policies

lower growth and higher inflation. “They will hold where they are at this meeting, citing all of the uncertainty and that, if you look through the GDP data that still looks pretty strong and domestic demand was strong,” he said.

Tilley said underlying demand was actually inflated during the first quarter by businesses stocking up on inventory ahead

of the president’s tariffs. He expects the economy to slip into a mild, short recession in the second quarter, which he expects will lead the Fed to cut rates.

“I expect that by the end of the year they will be cutting rates and more so than they think right now – and more so that they’d ever be willing to say right now,” Tilley said.

Tilley sees a rate cut at every

meeting for the rest of the year starting in June, amounting to 125 basis points of reductions by year-end. But he doesn’t think the Fed will cut until there is an actual drop in economic growth. That could lead to even more tension with the occupant of the White House.

Trump in recent weeks has repeatedly made clear that he wants the Fed to cut rates and

has accused it and Powell of being late. “There can be a SLOWING of the economy unless Mr. Too Late, a major loser, lowers interest rates, NOW,” the president posted on his social media website, Truth Social, on April 21, saying that “‘Pre-emptive Cuts’ in Interest Rates are being called for by many.”

The White House even studied firing Powell before Trump made it clear he had “no intention” of firing the chair, whose term expires in May 2026.

Transitory or permanent?

Powell and some other Fed officials have stressed that the Fed

must keep inflation expectations well anchored and that the central bank needs to ensure that one-time price increases from tariffs do not turn into ongoing inflation. That seems to imply officials would err on the side of holding rates steady to keep inflation and inflation expectations in check.

But not everyone inside the Fed may feel that way, indicating that the debate in the coming months could get heated.

Fed governor Chris Waller, for example, said last month that he expects that the tariffs’ impact on inflation and jobs will be simultaneous and that he would err toward the side of needing to cut rates if the unemployment rate went up.

Waller said if the unemployment rate started ticking up by a tenth each month, it “wouldn’t be a big problem,” but if it starts going up two or three tenths per month, it would be indicative of layoffs taking off.

Esther George, former president of the Kansas City Federal Reserve, is among those who believe the real risk for the Fed is whether inflation from tariffs proves to be longer-lasting.

“Some people call it hawkish,” George said. “I don’t think it’s so hawkish as it is just practical to say in a more stagflationary environment, the one thing I can affect is inflation, and the anchoring of expectations is going to be critical here, because you might be able to take a rise in unemployment to a certain level.”

Tilley is among those who argue inflation won’t be long-lasting if the US consumer and economy do, in fact, weaken. He downplayed any return of a so-called stagflation situation that roiled America in the 1970s, with inflation rising and the economy weakening at the same time.

Yahoo Finance



Global AI spending seen surging by 60% in 2025

New Delhi, India – Global artificial intelligence (AI) spending is projected to rise sharply in the coming years, with global banking giant UBS estimating a 60% year-on-year increase in 2025, to \$360bn.

The momentum is expected to continue in 2026, with a further 33% rise to \$480bn.

However, the share of spending attributed to the Big 4 tech giants – Microsoft, Amazon, Alphabet, and Meta – is anticipated to decline, falling from 58% in 2025 to 52% in 2026.

The UBS research report stated, “We expect global AI spend to increase by 60% year on year in 2025 to reach \$360bn and 33% in 2026 to reach \$480bn... We expect the combined share of these companies as a percentage of AI spend to rise from less than 20% in 2023 to more than 40% in 2025.”

It also highlighted that this broadening of AI spending across a more diverse set of players is a healthy develop-

ment for the overall AI theme. A reduced concentration of investment among a few companies could eventually lead to less volatility in the market, the report said.

The share of global AI spending attributed to the Big 4 tech giants – Microsoft, Amazon, Alphabet, and Meta – is anticipated to decline, falling from 58% in 2025 to 52% in 2026

Spending outside the Big 4 is expected to reach a robust \$150bn in 2025. A significant portion of this is projected to come from China, which is likely to account for 35% of the total spend outside the Big 4.

According to UBS, the rise in

China’s AI investments is being driven by the success of low-cost models such as DeepSeek, strong government support, and the growing use of AI in consumer-facing applications like e-commerce, social media, and advertising.

The report mentioned that the Neocloud providers – companies offering specialised AI-integrated cloud services – are also emerging as a key segment, expected to capture around 25% of the non-Big 4 AI spending in 2025.

The remaining spend is likely to come from other hyperscalers and enterprise or sovereign cloud providers, including players such as Oracle and SoftBank.

While UBS advises investors to continue monitoring guidance from the Big Four, the report emphasises that other AI-focused companies are now accelerating their investments and are crucial to the ongoing resilience of the sector.

ANI

ASEAN+3 finance ministers warn of trade protectionism after US tariffs

Milan, Italy – The finance chiefs of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) plus Japan, China and South Korea warned Sunday of the potential global economic fallout of protectionist trade policies, following the announcement of higher import tariffs by US President Donald Trump.

“Escalating trade protectionism weighs on global trade, leading to economic fragmentation, affecting trade, investment and capital flows across the region,” the finance ministers and central bank governors said in a statement adopted when they met on the sidelines of the Asian Development Bank’s annual meeting in Milan, Italy.

The statement of the ASEAN-plus-three countries, which did not mention the United States by name, also reaffirmed their com-



Finance ministers and central bank governors from ASEAN members, China, Japan and South Korea met on the sidelines of the Asian Development Bank’s annual meeting in Milan, Italy

mitment to a rules-based, free, fair and “transparent multilateral trading system.”

In addition to sector-based tariffs, including on automobiles, Trump announced “reciprocal” tariffs in early April, which are set to deal a heavy blow to many ex-

port-reliant Asian economies.

ASEAN members Cambodia and Vietnam are facing hefty US levies of 49% and 46%, respectively, although Trump later announced a 90-day pause for most countries except China.

Trump imposed tariffs of 24%

on imports from Japan, including a baseline levy of 10% that remains in place as negotiations continue.

Noting that the outlook is “subject to heightened uncertainties,” the finance chiefs called for “enhanced regional unity and cooperation.”

“We reaffirmed the significance of collaboration to achieve economic stability,” Japanese Finance Minister Katsunobu Kato told a news conference after the ASEAN-plus-three meeting.

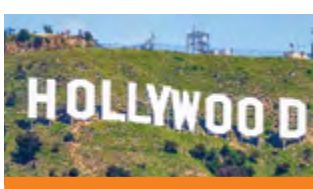
During the gathering, the finance chiefs also agreed to update the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation, launched in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian financial crisis to provide liquidity in times of emergency, widening its scope to cover pandemics and natural disasters.

Kyodo News

Trump pledges to slap 100% tariff on films made abroad

Washington, US – In a post-Sunday night on his Truth Social platform, US President Donald Trump said he has authorised the Department of Commerce and the Office of the US Trade Representative to slap a 100% tariff “on any and all movies coming into our Country that are produced in foreign lands.”

“The Movie Industry in America is DYING a very fast death,” he wrote, complaining that other countries “are offering all sorts of incentives to draw filmmakers and studios away from the US. “This is a concerted effort by other Nations and, therefore, a



The movie industry in America is dying a very fast death. Other countries are offering all sorts of incentives to draw filmmakers and studios away from the US

US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

National Security threat. It is, in addition to everything else, messaging and propaganda!”

It wasn’t immediately clear how any such tariff on international productions could be implemented. It’s common for both large and smaller films to include production both in the US and other countries. Big-budget movies like the upcoming “Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning,” for instance, are shot around the world.

Incentive programmes for years have influenced where movies are shot, increasingly driving film production out of Cal-

ifornia and to other states and countries with favourable tax incentives, like Canada and the United Kingdom.

Yet tariffs are designed to lead consumers toward American products. And in movie theaters, American-produced movies overwhelmingly dominate the domestic marketplace.

China has ramped up its domestic movie production, culminating in the animated blockbuster “Ne Zha 2” grossing more than \$2bn this year. But even then, its sales came almost entirely from mainland China. (Source: Euronews.com)

Badr Al Samaa Royal Hospital opens Intensive Coronary Care Unit

In a recent development, Badr Al Samaa Royal Hospital, the flagship premium venture of Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals inaugurated the state-of-the-art and very advanced Intensive Coronary Care, Cardiac Critical Care & Observation Unit (ICCU) to treat seriously ill heart patients suffering from heart attacks, heart failure and other critical heart conditions.

The ICCU was inaugurated by chief guest Ameer (Dr) Abdul Malik bin Sulaiman bin Khalaf al Kharusi, Assistant Chairman - Medical City for Military & Security Services (Supplies & Support) & Senior Consultant - General Medicine & Cardiology; in presence of guest of honour Dr Najib al Rawahi, Director of the National Heart Centre & Chairman of the Advanced Heart Failure Committee, Royal Hospital, MoH, Managing Director; Dr P A Mohamed, Executive Director; Firasath Hassan, Senior Management of Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals and various dignitaries from public and private sector.

This advanced ICCU at Badr Al Samaa Royal Hospital is fully equipped to cater seriously ill heart patients suffering from



heart attacks, heart failure and other critical heart conditions. With a capacity of total seven beds, the unit is equipped with state of the art equipment and manned by an expert team of doctors and nurses under the leadership of Dr Benny Panakkal, Senior Consultant Interventional Cardiologist having more than two decades of experience in Oman.

In his welcome note, Firasath Hassan reiterated the vision of the group in providing the most advanced medical facilities with

Oman and considerably reduce the need to patients to travel abroad. He said this addition of ICCU is one more step towards providing the best healthcare services to the people of Oman.

Dr P A Mohamed, in his address said, "Since the time we in-

augurated this Badr Al Samaa Royal Hospital we continuously kept upgrading our technology and services and today, with addition of ICCU I am proud to share that our cardiology department at Badr Al Samaa Royal Hospital is now well established."

Abdul Latheef, Managing Director of Badr Al Samaa Group and Board Member of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, on this occasion said, "We have plans to add more advanced facilities and clinical experts to Badr Al Samaa Royal

Hospital, which will eventually increase of competence aimed at exceptional treatment outcomes."

Moiden Bilal, Executive Director of Badr Al Samaa Group expressed satisfaction over this step of advancement at Badr Al Samaa Royal Hospital. He said due to centralised location of hospital, the ICCU will prove live saving to a wider population.

Chief guest Dr Kharusi said the launch of this ICCU will boost the national capacity for Cardiac Critical Care which eventually will help treat and save many more lives. He congratulated Badr Al Samaa Royal Hospital for this step towards advanced heart care. Guest of Honour Dr Rawahi appreciated this addition of services by Badr Al Samaa Group. He said any addition to cardiac care is an addition to national capacity building and Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals has always been progressing in service to the community.

Dr Benny Panakkal delivered a presentation focusing how Badr Al Samaa Group pioneered Cardiac Critical Care in private health sector of Oman more than two decades back.



La Traviata stuns; Plácido Domingo return to ROHM

The Royal Opera House Muscat was graced with two extraordinary performances of Verdi's beloved opera La Traviata on May 1 and 3, delivering a highlight of the season as world-renowned conductor Plácido Domingo returned to lead the Orchestra and Chorus of Teatro Carlo Felice di Genova.

Under the direction of Marta Domingo, this sophisticated production transported audiences to the elegance of the 1920s, with soaring performances from Ju-

lia Grigoryan as the tragic Violetta, Yusif Eyvasov as Alfredo, and Caner Akgün as Germont. With dynamic staging, stunning costumes, and flamenco-infused choreography by the Antonio Gades Company, La Traviata proved a powerful blend of tradition and innovation.

As the season nears its close, the presence of Plácido Domingo was especially meaningful. In his remarks following the performance, Director General Umberto Fanni shared:

"It is always an honour to welcome Plácido Domingo back to the Royal Opera House Muscat. Our enduring artistic relationship is a source of pride, and his presence at this point in the season is a beautiful reflection of the calibre and continuity of excellence that ROHM strives to uphold."

This breathtaking opera not only reaffirmed ROHM's commitment to showcasing global masters but also celebrated the timeless emotional power of the operatic stage.

Liva Insurance joins national efforts to promote safer roads

Liva Insurance has reaffirmed its commitment to community well-being and responsible driving by launching a nationwide awareness campaign as part of the Gulf Traffic Week 2025.

The initiative includes a bold Out-of-Home (OOH) and social media campaign, focused on educating the public about road safety, and echoes the company's mission to protect lives and promote responsibility behind the wheel.

This year's Gulf Traffic Week, observed across the region under the theme 'Safe Driving, Saves Lives', shines a spotlight on one of the most critical issues on the road today: The dangers of using a phone while driving. The campaign calls on individuals, corporations, and institutions to recognise their role in creating a safer road environment.

In full alignment with the Royal Oman Police's (ROP) objectives, Liva Insurance's campaign focuses on raising awareness about distracted driving, using impactful visuals, safety-first messaging, and community-wide outreach to encourage more mindful behaviour behind the wheel.

As part of its broader Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts, Liva Insurance also took part in the Royal Air Force of Oman's (RAFO) Traffic Day, held at Ghala Air Force Base earlier this month. The event, organised with strong community engagement and public education in mind, served as a platform for dialogue between government bodies, private entities, and youth - a core focus in Liva's ongoing social mission.

Sharing her thoughts, Hanaa al Hinai reminded that traffic safety is not just a campaign - it's a call to action. "Our roads are shared spaces, and we all have a role to play in keeping them safe. At Liva Insurance, we take pride in supporting the Royal Oman Police's vision and contributing to initiatives that create lasting impact across Oman."

Liva Insurance continues to lead by example - championing awareness, empowering communities.



Abraj highlights energy excellence at OPES 2025

Abraj Energy Services, Oman's leading oil and gas services provider, will participate as an Official Sponsor in the 13th edition of the Oman Petroleum and Energy Show (OPES), which will take place from May 12 to 14, at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre.

The company will spotlight its operational excellence, cutting-edge oil and gas technologies, and ongoing commitment to sustainability and workforce development.

Throughout OPES 2025, Abraj will showcase its competitive solutions and services, latest technologies and projects, success stories, and future business opportunities. The company's participation aims to strengthen its positioning as a technical leader in drilling and well services, foster new partnerships, and expand its contribution to the industry's sustainable growth and innovation.

This year, Abraj will host a mini-conference featuring a series of specialised sessions focused on the emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities shaping the future of the oil and energy industry. The programme will cover key topics such as occupational health and safety, operational excellence in drilling and well services, innovation and sustainability in the energy sector, and the latest industry insights and developments. Delivered over two days, the sessions will include expert keynotes, dynamic panel discussions, and insightful presentations.

The company will spotlight advanced drilling technologies, strategic ties, and its expanding role in shaping Oman's energy future

"Abraj's participation in OPES 2025 underscores our ambition to lead as a technical authority and knowledge hub in drilling and well services," said Saif al Hamhami, CEO of Abraj Energy Services.

"Through this platform, we showcase our expertise, drive innovation, and foster partnerships that fuel Oman's energy future. Collaboration, insight, and excellence are the pillars of our journey," Hamhami asserted.

Bank Muscat inaugurates project for Al Raheeb in Sur

In line with the Bank's commitment to community development and promoting Oman as a sporting nation, Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, continues to hand over Green Sports Fields across the sultanate.

Recently, the bank participated in the inauguration of the Al Raheeb Sports and Cultural Team's project in Qalhat in the wilayat of Sur. The event was held under the patronage of Sheikh Ahmed Mohammed al Busaidi, deputy wali of Sur and in the presence of Abdullah Juma al Araiimi, Senior Regional Manager of Bank Muscat's Sharqiyah and Dhakhliyah branches and team



members. Abdullah Juma al Araiimi, Senior Regional Manager of Bank Muscat's Sharqiyah and Dhakhliyah branches, said, "The bank's landmark CSR programme, Green Sports, continues

to achieve great success in creating sustainable green spaces across the sultanate. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Al Raheeb Sports Team in the wilayat of Sur for the inauguration of their project, wishing them the best of luck.

"The bank has participated recently in the inauguration of new sports fields' projects across the sultanate. More teams have

been added to the list of local sports fields inaugurated since the inception of the programme."

Yasir Hamdon al Shuaibi, Head of Al Raheeb Sports Team, said, "We are pleased to celebrate today the completion of the team's project. We affirm our commitment to maintain this project to maximise the benefit for all team members and the surrounding community in general. The bank's 'Green Sports' initiative contributed positively in supporting local sports teams and youth and we hope such initiatives continue in the future."

A number of Al Raheeb Sports and Cultural Team members also expressed their happiness over the inauguration.

NBO highlights innovations, collaborations at award ceremony

The National Bank of Oman (NBO) hosted its inaugural Digital Partnership Awards ceremony at its head office in Muscat, an exclusive event celebrating innovation, collaboration, and the outstanding contributions of public and private sector partners.

The ceremony recognised strategic partnerships that are driving Oman's digital transformation and accelerating NBO's vision of delivering seamless, customer-centric digital banking experiences. By leveraging these alliances, NBO continues to enhance its platforms, simplify customer journeys, and adopt innovative technologies that promote financial inclusion, aligned with the ambitions of Oman Vision 2040.

Key themes of the event included the importance of cross-sector collaboration, the power of digital innovation in improving customer experiences, and the collective role in shaping a future-ready digital ecosystem.

Award categories included Best Digital Payment Acquirer Excellence and Best Digital Payment Processor, among others, honouring impactful efforts that have elevated Oman's digital infrastructure.



Ministry of Health celebrates International Day of Midwife

In recognition of the vital role midwives play in safeguarding the health of mothers and newborns - especially during times of crisis - the Sultanate of Oman celebrated on Monday the International Day of the Midwife 2025 under the theme 'Midwives: Critical in Every Crisis'.

The event was organised by the Ministry of Health (MoH), represented by the Directorate General of Health Services and Programmes, and the National Center for Women and Children's Health, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The event was attended by

Jocelyn Fenard, UNFPA Representative to the GCC, resident in Oman; Dr Jean Jabbour, WHO Representative in Oman; and Dr Badriya Mohsin al Rashdiya, Director General of Health Services and Programmes; along with a number of ministry officials.

Participants included healthcare professionals, midwives, healthcare specialists, academic experts, and decision-makers from both public and private sectors.

In her speech, Dr Badriya emphasised Oman's continued commitment to strengthening the role of midwives within the national healthcare system. She

highlighted that this day honours midwives across Oman for their tireless efforts, stressing that midwives are an essential part of the healthcare framework and that the country is dedicated to supporting them with the training and resources they need to ensure high-quality, compassionate care for mothers and newborns in all circumstances.

Discussions during the event focused on the crucial role of midwives in addressing the needs of women during crises, highlighting key issues such as limited access to basic healthcare services, increased gender-based violence, and health complica-

tions during emergencies.

Indeed, midwives are recognised for ensuring safe births, providing pre- and postnatal care, and offering psychological and social support for mothers under challenging conditions.

The event further emphasised the role of midwives in raising community awareness about the importance of breastfeeding and delivering family health consultations in difficult situations, showcasing their commitment to sustainable and humane healthcare even during extraordinary times. A key feature of the event was a panel discussion among academic experts, decision-makers,

and health organisations. The session allowed for the exchange of best practices in crisis midwifery. Particular attention was paid to the impact of natural disasters in Oman - such as heavy rains and storms - that can disrupt healthcare services.

The importance of collaboration between government entities and the private sector was also stressed to improve midwifery response during emergencies. In the closing session, several recommendations were presented to strengthen the role of midwives in enhancing healthcare in Oman, especially in emergencies. These included the

development of ongoing training programs to ensure midwives are fully prepared to respond to health crises, and the need for better coordination among healthcare institutions like the MoH, hospitals, and private clinics. Additional recommendations included improving healthcare infrastructure in remote areas and ensuring the availability of essential medical tools and supplies during crises. Attendees also called for public awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of maternal and newborn care in emergencies and how communities can support midwives under such conditions.

OAB promotes financial awareness among youth

Oman Arab Bank, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, has launched its pioneering initiative, Money Adventures for Young Savers, to prepare future generations for financial success.

H E Majid bin Said al Bahri, Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs in the Ministry of Education, inaugurated the programme during a ceremony at Al-Ula Basic Education School in Ghubrah.

The event marked the official launch of a nationwide campaign to equip students with essential financial literacy skills, in line with the ministry's 'Khazna' initiative. Launched at a pivotal time, Money Adventures for Young Savers aligns with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 by fostering a financially aware and responsible generation. The programme employed a forward-thinking educational model that combines interactive learning with real-life experiences.

Under this programme, stu-



dents can explore key financial concepts such as earning, saving, smart spending, and charitable giving through age-appropriate activities and engaging, hands-on learning stations.

In its first year, the programme will reach 3,000 students across 50 schools in Oman, with 60 students participating from each school. Organisers will divide students into two groups to maximise engagement and learning outcomes. Seven interactive stations will offer rich

educational content and experiential learning opportunities that make financial education accessible and enjoyable.

At the launch, Sulaiman al Harthi, CEO of Oman Arab Bank, said, "In today's rapidly evolving economic landscape, it's vital to equip young people with the financial knowledge to make informed, responsible decisions. Through Money Adventures for Young Savers, we aim to nurture a new generation that values saving, investing, and prudent fi-

nancial management. Our collaboration with the Ministry of Education enables us to deliver this impactful initiative and contribute meaningfully to the financial education of Oman's youth."

This initiative reflects a strong national partnership. Skilled Omani youth from Oman Arab Bank and the Ministry of Education developed the programme's educational content, training materials, and interactive tools. Their collaboration highlights a shared commitment to nurturing local talent and investing in educational initiatives that build a solid financial knowledge foundation among students.

The programme will expand to include more schools across the sultanate, reaffirming Oman Arab Bank's and the ministry's commitment to providing inclusive, high-quality financial education. The goal is to empower all students with the financial skills they need to navigate life confidently and responsibly.



Muscat governorate holds training programme for project management

The weeklong professional projects management training programme conducted by Muscat governorate kicked off on Sunday. It aims to improve its employees' skills including projects managers, workers in the planning and wilayats' development departments, participants in planning teams and people who require working on projects in other administrative divisions. Engineer Salih al Khalidi, an

expert in projects management and digital transformation delivered it.

The Professional Projects Management Programme reflects Muscat governorate's effort to develop the human resources' abilities and their efficiency to implement projects according to professional scientific foundations. This programme provides participants with the knowledge and skills required to

plan, implement and manage projects efficiently through introducing the basic concepts of project management.

They include strategic planning, resource management, quality control, and performance monitoring, ensuring consistent with Muscat governorate's development strategy.

This programme also develops the technical and administrative skills for project success.

Oman Electricity marks World Day for Safety and Health at Work

In alignment with its unwavering commitment to promoting health and safety in the workplace and ensuring the implementation of the highest standards and best practices, Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) celebrated the World Day for Safety and Health at Work, observed globally on April 28 each year.

The occasion serves as a global platform to raise awareness of the importance of occupational health and safety and to encourage institutions and employees to adopt leading health practices and comply with safety standards that safeguard all

stakeholders. Each year, the global observance of this day adopts specific themes and slogans, reflecting global trends and developments across various sectors. OETC's participation in this year's celebration reflects its firm belief in the critical role of health and safety in achieving sustainable progress in line with national visions and aspirations.

This year's celebration focuses on 'Revolutionising Health and Safety: The Role of AI and Digitalisation at Work'. This theme underscores the role of AI and digital technologies in advancing occupational health and safety, minimising workplace in-



juries, and encouraging institutions to embrace innovative systems that enhance worker wellbeing and operational performance.

OETC organised a series of activities and events to mark the occasion, including a lecture on

aerial inspection of overhead transmission lines using drone technology, a recognition ceremony honouring top performers in Health, Safety, and Environmental (HSE) reporting, an interactive quiz competition using the Kahoot platform on workplace safety, and a showcase of AI technologies designed to improve health and safety performance in the workplace.

Fahad Nasser al Kiyumi, General Manager of Quality, Health, Safety, Security, and Environment at OETC emphasised the company's strong commitment to fostering a culture of safety, protecting employee wellbeing,

and achieving the highest standards of compliance with all relevant policies, procedures, and regulations.

Kiyumi highlighted the company's most recent achievements in this area, noting that OETC has surpassed 55mn safe man-hours since the last lost-time injury. This remarkable accomplishment reflects the diligence and collective commitment of all employees to maintaining and adhering to the company's comprehensive HSE systems and practices.

"We firmly believe that health and safety are foundational pillars of success in any organisa-

tion. Continuous improvement in this area is a shared responsibility that requires deep awareness and full commitment," he stated.

"At OETC, we are dedicated to implementing the highest standards and initiating programs and activities that strengthen our health and safety culture. These include awareness campaigns, training sessions, field visits, alongside inspection and audit campaigns. Furthermore, we have embedded health and safety objectives into our institutional goals, ensuring that every individual plays a role and takes ownership in upholding our policies and frameworks."

Trump renews threat to annex Greenland

Washington, D.C., US - US President Donald Trump renewed his threat of using military force to annex Greenland on Sunday.

"I don't rule it out," he told NBC in a Meet the Press interview that was aired on Sunday. "I don't say I'm going to do it, but I don't rule out anything."

"We need Greenland very badly," he said, adding that the Danish self-governing territory was needed for 'international security'.

"Greenland is a very small amount of people, which we'll take care of, and we'll cherish them, and all of that," Trump said.

Trump's interest in Greenland

Since returning to the office in January, the US president has repeatedly expressed interest in acquiring Greenland despite Denmark's rejections.

Greenland has been part of the Kingdom of Denmark since the 18th century and was granted home rule in 1979.

Situated between the Arctic and Atlantic oceans, Greenland is rich in minerals and strategically located.

Both Denmark and Greenland have rejected any proposal to sell the territory. A survey conducted in January found that 85% of Greenland's population opposes joining the US.

In March, Greenland's Prime



US President Donald Trump renewed his threat of using military force to annex Greenland

Minister-elect Jens-Frederik Nielsen urged European countries to stand with the territory, asserting that it is not for sale.

"Stand with us and make clear that Greenland is not and will never be for sale. Greenland is run by the Greenlandic people, and that will never change," Nielsen told Anadolu.

Trump not for a 3rd term

US President Donald Trump said he will be an 'eight-year president', ending rumours that he is considering a third term.

"I'll be an eight-year president, I'll be a two-term president. I always thought that was very important," Trump told

NBC News in an interview that aired on Sunday.

"I'm looking to have four great years and turn it over to somebody, ideally a great Republican, a great Republican to carry it forward," he said, noting that the Republican Party also has a number of names who can succeed him, mentioning Vice President J

The 22nd Amendment of the US Constitution specifies that a person cannot be elected to the presidency more than twice, whether the terms are consecutive or not. Trump is currently serving his second term, leaving some of his allies to suggest that a path to a third stint in office could be secured via succession rather than an election.

Seeking to amend the Consti-

Prisons together with the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI to 'reopen a substantially enlarged and rebuilt' version of the facility.

"When we were a more serious Nation, in times past, we did not hesitate to lock up the most dangerous criminals, and keep them far away from anyone they could harm," he said.

We need Greenland very badly... for international security. Greenland is a very small amount of people, which we'll take care of, and we'll cherish them, and all of that

DONALD TRUMP

tution to remove the 22nd Amendment's prohibition would be nearly impossible, given the two-thirds majority required in both chambers of Congress and ratification by three-quarters of the states.

Alcatraz prison to be reopened

Trump said on Sunday that he is directing agencies to rebuild and reopen Alcatraz prison in San Francisco Bay 'to house America's most ruthless and violent Offenders.'

"Rebuild and open Alcatraz!" Trump said on his Truth Social platform, adding he has instructed the Federal Bureau of

"We will no longer be held hostage to criminals, thugs, and Judges that are afraid to do their job and allow us to remove criminals, who came into our Country illegally.

"The reopening of Alcatraz will serve as a symbol of Law, Order, and Justice," he added.

The notorious prison, which is one of San Francisco's most popular tourist destinations, was closed in 1963 after 29 years of operation.

According to the Federal Bureau of Prisons' website, the prison was shut down because it was three times more expensive to operate than other prisons.

Anadolu Agency

France, EU hold conference in Paris to attract US researchers

Paris, France - France and the European Union are holding a conference in Paris on Monday to attract US researchers into the continent, as academic institutions come under increasing political and financial pressure due to President Donald Trump's policies.

French President Emmanuel Macron and the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will launch the 'Choose Europe for Science' initiative at the conference at the Sorbonne University, whose aim is to 'encourage researchers and public and private entrepreneurs from around the world to choose Europe and France as their place of practice', according to the Elysee Palace.

"In the United States, once a paradise for researchers, academic freedom is being called into question. The boundary between truth and falsehood, between facts and belief, is being weakened," French Education Minister Elisabeth Borne said in her opening speech.

She pointed out the recent positions contradicting 'scientific



consensus' in matters of climate, biodiversity, public health and gender equality, stressing that

Academic institutions in the US has come under increasing political and financial pressure

science and researchers face 'unprecedented rejections' all around the world.

"We must draw the conse-

quences of these upheavals with clarity. In the face of them, France and Europe must rise to the occasion by opening their doors to threatened researchers and by firmly reaffirming their unwavering commitment to academic freedom and scientific independence," Borne added.

The initiative comes at a time when tensions between the Trump administration and elite universities escalate over issues including admissions, hiring practices, curriculum oversight, and responses to pro-Palestine campus protests.

Anadolu Agency

Major travel disruptions on Spain's high-speed rail after cable theft

Oviedo, Spain - Tens of thousands of people saw their travel disrupted on Sunday evening and on Monday morning after a cable theft threw Spain's high-speed rail network into chaos.

Cables were stolen at four locations along the rail line connecting Madrid with Seville, stranding many travellers heading south from Madrid after a long weekend and Spanish Mother's Day.

"The economic gain from an operation like this is negligible compared to the damage it causes. I wouldn't call it theft - I'd rather call it sabotage," Transport Minister Oscar Puente told broadcaster Cadena Ser on Monday morning.

"Four cable thefts of very little value at four different locations. It's quite a coordinated action. Whoever did this knew exactly what they were doing because it's an area with no cameras," he added.

The head of Spain's rail operator Renfe posted on X that on top of the cable theft, another train experienced a 'snag' that



Thousands of travellers saw their trains cancelled or severely delayed, as service remained irregular

dragged down the overhead power line supplying electricity to the train.

Renfe asked passengers heading to Toledo, Puertollano and Andalusia not to go to Madrid's Atocha station until after 8am local time (0600GMT) due to the delays.

Later, the company said affected trains would gradually resume service from 9.30am -

more than 15 hours after they ground to a halt. Renfe said around 30 trains carrying 10,700 passengers were stranded between destinations.

Jesus Navarro, a reporter for Spanish broadcaster RNE, was among those affected. He said he spent 15 hours on the train.

"To get the train moving, a diesel locomotive had to come and tow it to a point where it

could once again receive electricity," he said, calling it a 'tremendous morning'.

Thousands more travellers saw their trains cancelled or severely delayed, as service remains irregular.

The incident came less than a week after Spain suffered a near-nationwide blackout, which also severely disrupted rail traffic.

Anadolu Agency

Anthony Albanese, 'man of the match' in Australian general elections

Canberra, Australia - Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has declared victory following a strong lead in Saturday's general election results, suggesting that he has secured a historic second consecutive term in office for the ruling Labor Party, something no one has accomplished in the past 20 years.

The 62-year-old Labor Party leader pledged to 'repay trust' to his voters 'every day' as he prepares to begin his second term in office after the electoral authority announces the final results.

The official count of total votes has yet to be released, although estimates by state-run media gave Labor close to 85 seats, well above the minimum 76 required.

Labor trounced the opposition coalition of conservative Liberal and National parties in the general elections, securing a 2nd consecutive term in government.

Over 18mn Australians were eligible to vote in the federal election, which saw political parties campaigning on biting economic challenges and foreign policy issues, particularly with US President Donald Trump shaking up global politics.

The 190 seats were up for grabs, including 150 in the House of Representatives and 40 in the Senate.

It was also the first time in Australian politics that opposition leader Peter Dutton, known for his anti-Muslim bigotry, lost his own seat.



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese

Ali France, who defeated Dutton in his third attempt for the Dickson parliamentary seat, received special mention in Albanese's emotional victory

speech.

Albanese, the 'man of the match'

Albanese was born in 1963 to a

single mother of Irish descent. He was first elected at the age of 33 in 1996 and has continued to win until May 2022, when he became Australia's 31st prime minister.

He led the first Labor government to rule the country since 2013.

Albanese grew up in public housing in Camperdown, Sydney's inner-west suburb.

He attended St Joseph's Primary School in Camperdown and St Mary's Cathedral College in central Sydney before enrolling at the University of Sydney, where he received a degree in economics.

Albanese also had a two-year stint with the Commonwealth Bank.

Shortly after his mother died, he began looking for his father, Carlo Albanese, whom he had met in Italy.

Albanese became involved in Labor politics in the early 1980s, following in his mother's footsteps.

He began working as a research officer for a party politician named Tom Uren, who later became Albanese's political mentor.

Albanese also served as president of Young Labor in New South Wales from 1985 to 1987 and then as senior policy adviser to New South Wales Premier Bob Carr from 1995 to 1996.

Although Australia is well-known for its world-class cricket team, Albanese is a passionate

rugby fan.

Albanese, a Catholic, has defended the free health care system and is regarded by many as a 'working-class hero'.

Albanese, one of Australia's longest-serving lawmakers, rose to the rank of senior minister when Labor took power in 2007.

"Albanese has been a proficient as well as a lucky general," wrote Paul Strangio, Emeritus Professor of Politics at Monash University.

The 'second term', Strangio stated in his latest write-up for the Australian media outlet, 'will test whether he (Albanese) can make the transition from a solid to a weather-making prime minister'.

Anadolu Agency

Israel approves plan to expand military onslaught on Gaza, occupy territories

Jerusalem/Ankara - Israel's Security Cabinet unanimously approved a plan early on Monday to expand its ongoing military onslaught on the Gaza Strip and occupy territories inside the enclave.

In a statement, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said the Cabinet approved 'the operational plan' submitted by army chief Eyal Zamir to 'defeat Hamas' and return Israeli captives held in Gaza.

According to the statement, the plan requires the army 'to conquer Gaza and hold the territory under its control'.

Israeli Channel 12 said the plan also includes the forcible relocation of Palestinians from northern Gaza to the south.

Israeli Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi said the Israeli plan will help accelerate the relocation of Palestinians out of Gaza under US President Donald Trump's plan.

Karhi claimed that the migration of Palestinians from Gaza is 'the solution' for the enclave, according to the public broadcaster KAN.

There is 'political activity' for Israel in looking for countries that may accept Palestinians from Gaza, he added.

On February 4, Trump said that the US would 'take over' and 'own' Gaza, describing it as a 'completely destroyed' area. The idea has been rejected by the Arab world and many other nations, who say it amounts to ethnic cleansing.

There was no immediate



In a statement, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said the Cabinet approved 'the operational plan' submitted by army chief Eyal Zamir

Israeli Communications Minister Shlomo Karhi said the Israeli plan will help accelerate the relocation of Palestinians out of Gaza under US President Donald Trump's plan

Palestinian comment on the Israeli plan.

Israeli estimates suggest 59 captives remain in Gaza, with 24 believed alive. In contrast, more than 9,500 Palestinians remain imprisoned in Israel under harsh

conditions, including reports of torture, starvation, and medical neglect, according to Palestinian and Israeli rights organisations.

20 more killed in Gaza Meanwhile, the Israeli army has

killed at least 20 more Palestinians in fresh strikes across the Gaza Strip since early Monday as the genocide continues unabated.

The official Palestinian news agency Wafa quoted medical sources as saying that 15 people were killed and 10 others injured in an Israeli airstrike on an apartment in the Al-Karama area, northwestern Gaza City.

Four others were killed and five injured in an Israeli airstrike on a home in the Salateen neigh-

bourhood of Beit Lahia town in the northern Gaza Strip, Wafa added.

One more victim was killed in an Israeli drone strike on a group of civilians in the eastern area of Jabalia, northern Gaza.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army's demolition operations against Palestinian homes and buildings were reported in different areas of eastern Gaza City and in Rafah, the southern Gaza Strip.

At least 52,567 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's geno-

cidal war since October 2023, the Health Ministry said on Monday.

A ministry statement said that 32 people were killed in Israeli attacks in the enclave in the last 24 hours, while 119 others were injured, taking the number of injuries to 118,610 in the Israeli onslaught.

"Many victims are still trapped under the rubble and on the roads as rescuers are unable to reach them," it added.

The Israeli army resumed its

deadly offensive on the Gaza Strip on March 18 and has since killed nearly 2,500 people and injured over 6,500 others despite a ceasefire and prisoner exchange agreement that took hold in January.

Last November, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

Anadolu Agency

BACK FROM MAY DAY HOLIDAY



Traffic flows on Jiangyin grand bridge on Beijing-Shanghai expressway in China on Monday. On the last day of the May Day holiday, a peak in return trips was observed nationwide (Xinhua)

Next pope must unify Church: Experts

Vatican City - With the Catholic Church preparing for its next papal conclave on Wednesday, Vatican analysts say cardinals are under pressure to elect a pope capable of bridging the growing divide between reformist and conservative wings of the Church.

The mourning period for Pope Francis, who died on April 21, ended on Sunday. All eyes are now on the College of Cardinals, who will gather in the Sistine Chapel on May 7 to elect the next pope. "This is a particularly dramatic conclave," Italian journalist and author Marco Politi told Anadolu. "The Church has never been as divided as it is now in the last 50 years."

Politi said that Pope Francis'



reformist papacy, marked by outreach to marginalised communities and a push for transparency and accountability, faced persistent resistance from ultra-conservative factions. In his final public message before his death, Francis acknowledged these tensions and urged unity.

Politi said that after a decade of internal pushback, the next pontiff must be someone who can 'bring unity', though he cautioned that cardinals - particularly those from outside Europe - often lack strong personal ties, complicating consensus.

Names mentioned in Vatican

circles include Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Patriarch Pierbattista Pizzaballa, and Cardinal Matteo Maria Zuppi, among others. Politi noted that before any decision is made, cardinals must first agree on the themes and priorities that will shape the Church's direction.

Italian journalist Giovanna Chirri, who broke the news of Pope Benedict XVI's resignation in 2013, said the conclave represents a pivotal moment.

"The next pope must carry forward Francis' legacy while also uniting various factions," Chirri said. She added that while a total reversal of Francis' reforms is unlikely, the new pope may adopt a more conciliatory tone and less assertive style.

Anadolu Agency

Conquering of Gaza worrisome: Germany

Berlin, Germany - Germany said on Monday it was very concerned over Israeli plans for a permanent occupation of Gaza.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Sebastian Fischer told journalists in Berlin on Monday that the media reports about Israel's 'conquering of northern Gaza, are very worrisome'.

"I just want to remind you that the G7 already made a clear statement in 2023, rejecting the occupation, settlement, and reduction of Gaza's territory, and also emphasising that there can be no solution over the heads of the Palestinians," he added.

"Gaza belongs to the Palestinians, and in this sense, we would reject a permanent occupation," he added.

Fischer called 'on all parties to continue their serious efforts



Sebastian Fischer

now for a ceasefire, for the release of hostages and for the resumption of humanitarian aid'.

Meanwhile, Spain will contribute an additional €500,000 (over US\$560,000) to support UN investigations into human rights violations and possible war crimes committed in Gaza, Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares announced on Monday.

Anadolu Agency

Yemen's Houthis report 11 US strikes as tension spikes

Ankara, Turkey - US warplanes launched 11 fresh airstrikes in Al-Jawf province in northern Yemen on Monday as regional tension continues to escalate over the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip, the Houthi group said.

The Houthi-run Al-Masirah TV said eight airstrikes targeted Al-Hazm district in the province, while three others hit the Khab wa Ash Sha'af area.

No information was yet available about casualties or damage from the attacks.

The attacks came one day after a Houthi missile landed at Israel's Ben Gurion Airport on Sunday, disrupting flight schedules and prompting several international carriers to cancel their Sunday flights to Tel Aviv. Israel has vowed to respond to the Houthi attack.

Yemen has faced an intensified US military campaign since



mid-March, including around 1,300 air and naval strikes, resulting in hundreds of civilian casualties, according to the Houthi group.

The Houthis have targeted ships passing through the Red and Arabian seas, the Bab al-Mandab Strait and the Gulf of Aden since November 2023 in

solidarity with Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

The group halted attacks when a Gaza ceasefire was declared in January between Israel and the Palestinian resistance group Hamas.

But Houthis resumed attack after Israel's renewed airstrikes on Gaza in March.

Iran rejects link to Houthi strike

Meanwhile, Iran on Monday rejected any link to a Houthi missile strike that hit the grounds of Israel's Ben Gurion Airport.

A Foreign Ministry statement called accusations linking Tehran to the Houthi attack 'an affront to that proud and op-

pressed nation'.

It said these claims 'constitute a deliberate misrepresentation aimed at deflecting attention' from Israeli atrocities in the Palestinian lands, 'concealing strategic failures, and manufacturing pretexts for further destabilisation of the West Asian region'.

"It must be underscored that it is the US military that, in support of the Zionist regime (Israel's) genocidal campaign, has entered into direct conflict with the people of Yemen and is committing war crimes by targeting civilian infrastructure and non-military objectives across various Yemeni cities," it said.

Iran condemned US airstrikes against Yemen as 'flagrant violations of the Charter of the United Nations and fundamental principles of international law'.

Anadolu Agency

Germany: CDU/CSU alliance seals coalition deal with SPD

Berlin, Germany - German Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) officially signed a coalition deal with the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) on Monday, paving the way for a new government after weeks of negotiations.

Conservative leader and Chancellor-designate Friedrich Merz said the new coalition government would take on historic responsibility for Germany's future amid growing challenges in national security and economic stability.

"Tomorrow, our citizens will have a government determined to move Germany forward," Merz said during the official ceremony in Berlin. "A government that takes people's concerns seriously and aims to build the infrastructure our country needs. A government whose voice will resonate in Europe and across the world," he said.

After Monday's signing ceremony, the German parliament will convene on Tuesday to elect Merz as the country's new chancellor, replacing Social Democrat Olaf Scholz. The conservative CDU/CSU alliance



and the SPD finalised their coalition agreement last month, with party governing bodies and members officially approving the deal last week.

The Christian Democrats secured 28.5% in February's snap elections - falling short of an outright majority. Despite the Social Democrats recording their lowest-ever result at 16.4%, they emerged as a cru-

cial coalition partner. Together, the parties will control 328 seats in parliament, well above the 316-seat threshold required for a governing majority.

Social Democrats name ministers

The SPD, meanwhile, has announced its Cabinet ministers on Monday for Germany's new conservative-left coalition government, appointing six women and three men to key ministerial positions.

SPD co-leader Lars Klingbeil will serve as vice chancellor and finance minister in the new government led by conservative Friedrich Merz, according to the party's announcement before Monday's coalition signing ceremony.

Boris Pistorius, Germany's most popular politician who enjoys a 60% approval rating in recent polls, will retain his position as defence minister - a role he has held since 2023. His reappointment follows broad acclaim for his leadership in modernising and restructuring the armed forces.

Anadolu Agency



US to restart collections on student loans

Washington, D.C., US - The US federal government will restart collections on defaulted student loans beginning on Monday, ending a pause that began in March 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to local media reports.

According to NBC News, the Trump administration will use the Treasury Department's Offset Programme to reclaim unpaid debts, including through wage garnishment, tax refund seizures and reductions in Social Security benefits.

Education Secretary Linda McMahon said in an April 21 statement that the decision aimed to protect taxpayers.

"American taxpayers will no longer be forced to serve as collateral for irresponsible student loan policies," NBC quoted her as saying.

Of the nearly 43mn Americans holding student loans, only about one-third have made regular payments, according to fed-

eral data cited by NBC.

The national student loan debt now totals US\$1.6tn.

Borrowers in default were sent emails from the Office of Federal Student Aid urging them to contact the Default Resolution Group.

Options include income-based repayment plans or loan rehabilitation, which allows for default status to be removed after several on-time payments.

Sabrina Calazans, executive director of the Student Debt Crisis Center, warned that the decision could create a 'financial catastrophe'. "The plans and proposals being put forth by the Trump administration are going to harm millions of individuals and families," she added.

Before leaving office, former President Joe Biden had cancelled debt for over five million borrowers, including public service workers and those misled by for-profit colleges, NBC reported.

Anadolu Agency

The new deal between Ukraine and US includes the development of mineral, oil and gas projects

Kyiv, Ukraine - Ukraine said the minerals agreement it recently signed with the US is an important part of future security guarantees for the war-torn country.

Speaking in an interview with CBS News on Sunday, Ukraine's Ambassador to the US Oksana Markarova said their strategic partnership with Washington is important for Kyiv, and that they are grateful to the American people for their support.

She argued that without Javelins and other weapons provided to Ukraine by the US during Donald Trump's presidency, Kyiv would not have been able to defend itself.

Markarova recalled the economic partnership agreement signed between Ukraine and the US late last month, saying the deal will take their partnership to a new level. The new deal includes the development of mineral, oil and gas projects.

"So look, we might have some disagreements in some areas, but Ukraine is committed to peace. Ukraine wants peace more than anyone, and we need



Meanwhile, the Kremlin said on Monday that Russia needs to first analyse the minerals agreement signed last month between Ukraine and the US in order to comment on the deal itself

(the) US," Markarova said.

"And now it's not only the right or moral thing to do, to the fact to support Ukraine, but also, the US has, as your Secretary of Treasury said, an interest and specific economic interest in Ukraine," she added.

With regards to security guarantees for Ukraine, the ambassador said the recently signed economic partnership deal is, in itself, an important part of a

broader security architecture.

"And frankly, that fund will be successful if Ukraine is stable and peaceful. So in a way, it's an important part of the future security guarantees," she said.

Markarova also reacted to statements by Russian President Vladimir Putin on the use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine.

"I mean, I think at this point it doesn't matter how we interpret what he says. We just have to

believe what he says and understand what he says," she said. He is a threat, not only to Ukraine, but also to anyone who believes that nations should live peacefully, do not challenge each other's borders, and just focus on the economic cooperation."

In a documentary film about Putin's quarter of a century as Russia's leader, the president said there has been no need to use nuclear weapons and he

hopes they will not be required.

He added that his country has enough strength and resources to bring the armed conflict in Ukraine, which has continued since February 2022, to its 'logical conclusion', and with the 'result that Russia needs'.

The Kremlin said on Monday that Russia needs to first analyze the minerals agreement signed last month between Ukraine and the US in order to comment on the deal itself. "The agreement itself needs to be analysed. I am not familiar with the text," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters in Moscow.

Anadolu Agency

A GESTURE OF LOVE AND PEACE



A boatman offers a rose to a tourist riding on a shikara boat as a gesture of love and peace, as Kashmir faces lower footfall after the Pahalgam attack, in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir on Monday (ANI)

Romania election: Hard-right George Simion wins first round

Bucharest, Romania - Romania's hard-right populist leader on Sunday secured more votes over his challengers, winning the first round of a presidential election that is a rerun of the original vote last year.

Official electoral data showed George Simion winning 40.5% of the vote. He will face off against pro-EU Bucharest mayor Nicusor Dan in the May 18 runoff who received a 20.9% share of the vote while the governing coalition's candidate, Crin Antonescu, missed out on the showdown after garnering 20.3% of the ballots cast.

"I want to thank from the bottom of my heart all those who chose to vote (for me) with the number one position on the ballot paper," Simion said in a recorded message.

"It was an act of courage, trust and solidarity. I am grateful and assure them that their trust will not be betrayed," he said.



Simion opposes EU leadership

The original vote last year was cancelled because of widespread concerns over Russian interference in favour of far-right Calin Georgescu, who has been placed under investigation and has been disbarred from running for office.

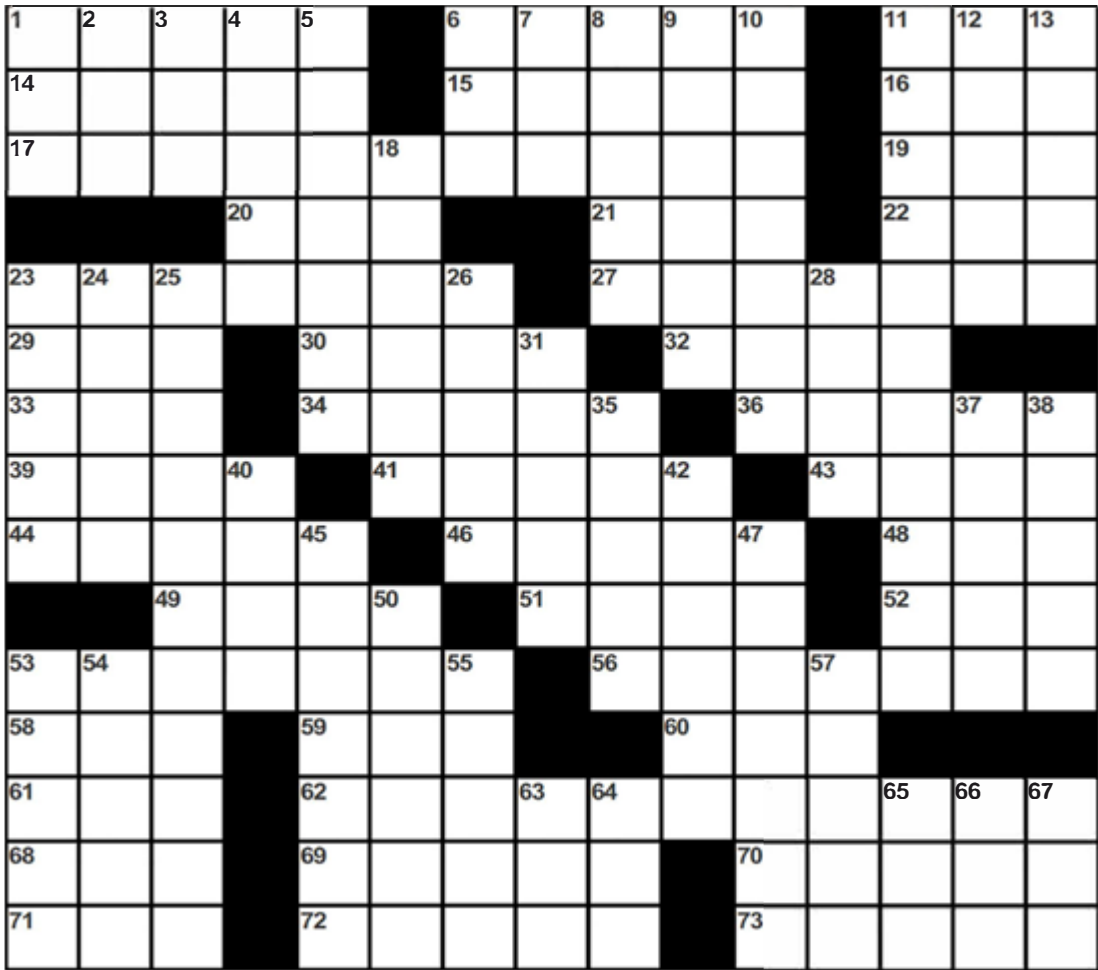
Georgescu ally, Simion, who is 38 years old, opposes military aid to neighbouring Ukraine and is critical of European Union leadership.

Simion says he's aligned with the US President Donald Trump's 'Make America Great Again' movement and appears to be riding a similar wave of popular anger in the European Union and NATO member country of Romania.

He told DW that he wants Romania to have 'a strategic partnership with the US' but the 'EU Commission should not meddle' with policies regarding 'cultural and sexual aspects'.

DW

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Make scholarly revisions
 - 6) Fan part
 - 11) Mongrel
 - 14) San_ (California city)
 - 15) "Nevermore" speaker
 - 16) Gene material, briefly
 - 17) Testy garden flowers?
 - 19) Wood-shaving tool (var.)
 - 20) Fuss
 - 21) Came in first
 - 22) Feed lines to
 - 23) Inept
 - 27) Followed obsessively
 - 29) "Close Encounters" craft
 - 30) Nevada's second-largest city
 - 32) Keystone State port
 - 33) Chop, as tree limbs
 - 34) Follows recipe directions
 - 36) Guessed wrong, e.g.
 - 39) Artist's apartment
 - 41) Cook, as crabs
 - 43) Not quite closed, doorwise
 - 44) Brew, in a teapot
 - 46) Deep sleep
 - 48) Title of respect, abroad

- 49) Customer come-on
 - 51) Effervescent beverage
 - 52) Shed tears
 - 53) Private's privy
 - 56) Abolishes or cancels
 - 58) Jackie O's spouse
 - 59) Org. quoted on tooth-paste tubes
 - 60) "Go team!"
 - 61) Carving mo. in the U.S.
 - 62) Laughing very hard, in slang
 - 68) Docs in a bloc
 - 69) Disclose
 - 70) Commit character assassination?
 - 71) Mineo of old Holly-wood
 - 72) More than a third of "Mississippi"
 - 73) Roomy vehicle
- DOWN**
- 1) Bad _, Germany
 - 2) Dog's best friend?
 - 3) Flier's concern, for short
 - 4) Country bordering Tibet
 - 5) Walks unsteadily
 - 6) Grille cover
 - 7) Hang back
 - 8) Declares openly
 - 9) De musical sign?
 - 10) Catch in a trap
 - 11) First-rate
 - 12) Type of influence
 - 13) Brought down the house
 - 18) Red colors used by painters
 - 23) Ships' bottoms
 - 24) Underway, as a game
 - 25) Musical extravaganza
 - 26) Agitated states
 - 28) Italian cash, once
 - 31) Cookies with three parts
 - 35) It's a matter of taste
 - 37) Tidal bore
 - 38) Mule-drawn vehicles
 - 40) Kind of drop
 - 42) Up-to-date
 - 45) Easily bent
 - 47) Wreaks havoc on
 - 50) Provides with a trait
 - 53) Turner and Cantrell
 - 54) Free bakery treat?
 - 55) 90-degree headings
 - 57) Midwest airport
 - 63) Little piggie, for one
 - 64) Write-_ (some vote-getters)
 - 65) _ about (wander)
 - 66) "Anytown, _"
 - 67) Midmorning hour

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
You can cut to the chase in a way that few other people can match, and that sincere desire to speak (and hear) the truth helps you out in all sorts of ways right now. A flash of insight can lead to you clearing the way for a new path. You and a few close friends might not have thought it was possible, but go ahead and lead the way anyway.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
Spontaneity is your business, and today's energy is pushing you to be a tycoon. You're feeling frisky when it comes to social business and even more talkative than usual (it can happen). Even better, you're inclined to let bygones be bygones and ignore incidents that otherwise would have caused you needless hours of apologies. Accept any invitations that come your way to celebrate your new energy.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
Some people may try to stereotype you as overly concerned with fun and games, but they don't realize that all your clowning serves a much higher purpose. For you, especially right now, it's not about just having a good time. You're seeking ways to a higher sense of joy, one that includes both pleasing yourself and working for others. If anyone can find the right path between those two impulses, it's you.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
Someone is telling you to push, push, push, but your innately stubborn nature comes to your rescue and balks. You just go at your own pace, and you'll get where you're going in your own sweet time. You know you're absolutely right this time, so stick to your guns no matter how frantic everyone else seems. Just because they're in a panic it's no reason to join them. You should soon see the wisdom of your choice.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
Give yourself props for a job well done, but make sure that you keep moving! There are always more goals to meet and even more to accomplish. Your recent flirtation with success should give you enough momentum to plow through everything you've got in front of you, as well as the confidence to be more assertive. It's time to deal with all those situations you normally try to avoid.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
Try a fresh approach to an old problem. It's important for you to apply wild, untried methods to solving this current conundrum. After all, if it's back in your life, the old techniques must not have worked too well the first time! Talk to strangers, go online, or try randomly picking strategies to get you out of your current mindset and pick up a fresh outlook on whatever it is you're grappling with.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
It's hard to imagine how anything ever gets done without you to get things going. The Universe has appointed you muckraker-in-chief right now. Your talent for instigating movements, starting discussions, and bringing up important but ignored issues makes life much more interesting. Even if others balk initially, they are sure to thank you for your initiative by the end of the day.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
You've got sass to spare, so if anyone feels the need to challenge your positions, especially if they're just interested in grandstanding, they are in big trouble! With your energy levels running this high, you're not about to hand over the reins to someone you know is less committed or capable than yourself. You should let them know in no uncertain terms. Focus on leadership above all else right now.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
You've never been all that afraid to be different, and it's just that quality that helps you ensure that your radical ideas are implemented. Others are afraid to change, but you're a visionary who can see which way the tide is turning before almost anyone else. It's time for you to stand apart from the pack and rely on your ability to think ahead and consider what can make things better in the long run.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
If someone close asks you how they look, they want to hear the truth. That means you need to really listen to what they're asking and how they're asking it. Something more is sure to be going on with their feelings, so treat even the most innocuous questions with care to avoid causing a ruckus by accident. Your delicate handling of all situations is rewarded by a relatively stress- and trouble-free day.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
Some bossy types might be in the mood to teach you a few so-called valuable lessons, but remind yourself that they mean well. You know how to confidently hold your ground without turning it into trench warfare. Normally, you have no fear in staking your claim and speaking truth to power, but things could get quite heated today, so try instead to agree to disagree.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
Your usual selflessness is nudged aside (for the moment) by some very inward-directed instincts. Why not just go with it? When you get tired of being there for everyone else and feeling a little neglected, you need to say so. Your honesty can really cut through any residual feelings of resentment or frustration. Believe it or not, people are much happier to hear what you really feel.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- 01. If you were to fly due east from the southernmost point of the Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego what is the next land mass, bigger than the island you set out from, which you would meet?**
- A. The South Island of New Zealand
 - B. Tierra del Fuego
 - C. Falkland Islands, or Islas Malvinas
 - D. The Antarctic
- 02. What influential and at times highly controversial book was published in November 1859?**
- A. "On the Origin of Species" by Charles Darwin
 - B. "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea" by Jules Verne
 - C. "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens
 - D. "The Name of the Rose" by Umberto Eco
- 03. Pankaj Advani has won multiple World Championships in which two disciplines?**
- A. High jump, and long jump
 - B. Chess, and Bridge
 - C. English billiards, and snooker
 - D. Kayak, and canoe
- Answers: 1. B 2. A 3. C**

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

U	N	S	E
I	W	H	E
M	L	I	T
S	C	L	N

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

FREI PASS TO GLORY

Bayern win Bundesliga title after Leverkusen stumble to draw against Freiburg

Berlin, Germany - Bayern Munich secured their 34th German league title on Sunday without kicking a ball after title rivals Bayer Leverkusen were held to a 2-2 draw at Freiburg, leaving the leaders with an unassailable eight-point lead with two games left to play.

Leverkusen needed to win on Sunday to maintain any mathematical chance of claiming the title after Bayern drew 3-3 at RB Leipzig on Saturday. But Sunday's result left last season's champions in second place on 68 points, with Bayern on 76 and sealing their record-extending 33rd Bundesliga title since the introduction of the top league in 1963.

"We can take a moment now to enjoy winning the Bundesliga," said Bayern coach Vincent Kompany in a club statement. "What an incredible feeling! I want to congratulate the players for their outstanding effort throughout the season. You've done this together. You've won it as a team."

"The season's not over yet, and there's still so much to look forward to. Let's finish strong, together," Kompany, in his first season at the club, said. Bayern will take part in the new-format Club



Bayern Munich missed a chance to secure the Bundesliga title on Saturday when they were held to a 3-3 draw against RB Leipzig, but title rivals Bayer Leverkusen could only manage a draw at Freiburg on Sunday, handing the Bavarians their 34th German league title

What an incredible feeling! I want to congratulate the players for their outstanding effort throughout the season. You've done this together. You've won it as a team

VINCENT KOMPANY

World Cup starting in June in the United States.

The Bavarians, who all gathered in Munich to watch Leverkusen's game together, will be presented with the league trophy on Saturday in their last home

game of the season against Borussia Moenchengladbach.

Bundesliga top scorer Harry Kane, who won his first major title at the age of 31, posted a video of himself and teammates singing "We are the Champions"

after the Leverkusen game.

The England captain, who two weeks ago broke a league record with his 60th goal in his first 60 league games for Bayern, also looks set to become the first player in Bundesliga history to be crowned top scorer in both his first two seasons.

Freiburg, battling to secure a spot in next season's Champions League, came out fighting with Leverkusen nowhere to be seen.

The hosts scored with Maximilian Eggstein's slightly deflected shot in the 44th minute and were in complete control.

Freiburg struck again four minutes after the restart with Leverkusen's Piero Hincapie turning the ball into his own net for an own goal after a goal mouth scramble.

Leverkusen, whose coach Xabi Alonso looks set to leave at the end of the season with several top clubs, including Real Madrid, eager to sign him, left their comeback until very late.

They cut the deficit with a Florian Wirtz solo effort and superb finish in the 82nd and Jonathan Tah then levelled in stoppage time to set up a dramatic finale.

Palmer back in form as Chelsea heat up top-five race

London, England - For most of the 90 minutes at Stamford Bridge it was the delirious Liverpool supporters making all the noise, as they continued celebrating their Premier League title-winning season.

But after Cole Palmer lashed home a late penalty, the Chelsea fans decided to join them - and it was Palmer who stole the show, not the new Premier League champions.

This was a wild and fun afternoon in the London sunshine.

At the final whistle the rivalry between these teams melted away, as fans of both clubs danced together to the saxophone riff of Madness's "One Step Beyond" song.



Chelsea's Cole Palmer celebrates his goal against Liverpool on Sunday

Despite losing for only the third time in the league this season, and suffering their heaviest defeat under Arne Slot, the travelling Liverpool fans seemed to burst into chants of "champions" every five minutes, as well as serenading the Liverpool substitutes as they warmed up nearby - much to the enjoyment of the players, who seemed to hang around longer than they needed to.

Yet Chelsea, in the end, were the happier. It isn't often in football that everybody has a good day.

Chelsea have beaten the champions to go three points clear of sixth-placed Nottingham Forest in the race for a top-

five finish, and although the difficulty of their fixtures means the path to UEFA Champions League qualification remains narrow, this result is a huge boost.

Had Enzo Maresca's side fallen short, as many thought they would, they would have been on the precipice, knowing that defeat to Newcastle United next weekend could all but end their hopes of finishing in the top five.

Instead, we now have the exciting possibility of Newcastle, Forest and Chelsea all locked on 63 points going into next weekend, gifting us with a mini-league that includes two head-to-heads to come.

Madrid-linked Alexander-Arnold to leave Liverpool

Liverpool, England - Trent Alexander-Arnold is leaving Liverpool, the club he has been at since the age of six, he said on social media platform X on Monday, calling it the hardest decision of his life.

He has been strongly linked with a move to Real Madrid who reportedly made an offer for the England defender just before the January transfer window opened.

Born in Liverpool, Alexander-Arnold rose through the youth ranks to become one of the best right backs in the world, winning two Premier League titles, the Champions League and the Club World Cup with the English team.

"This club has been my whole life - my whole world - for 20 years," Alexander-Arnold said in his statement. "From the Academy right through until now, the support and love I have felt from everyone inside and outside of the club will stay with me forever. I will forever be in debt to you all."

"But, I have never known anything else and this decision is about experiencing a new challenge, taking myself out of my comfort zone and pushing myself both professionally and personally."

The 26-year-old frequently played in a hybrid midfield role for Liverpool in recent seasons, operating as a full back when out of possession but moving into midfield during attacks.

Alexander-Arnold, who made his senior debut in 2016, has racked up 352 appearances for the Reds, scoring 23 goals and winning eight major honours, including this season's Premier League title.

He had been in discussions with Liverpool about a new deal but whereas Mohamed Salah and captain Virgil van Dijk signed contract extensions with the club, Alexander-Arnold chose to move on.

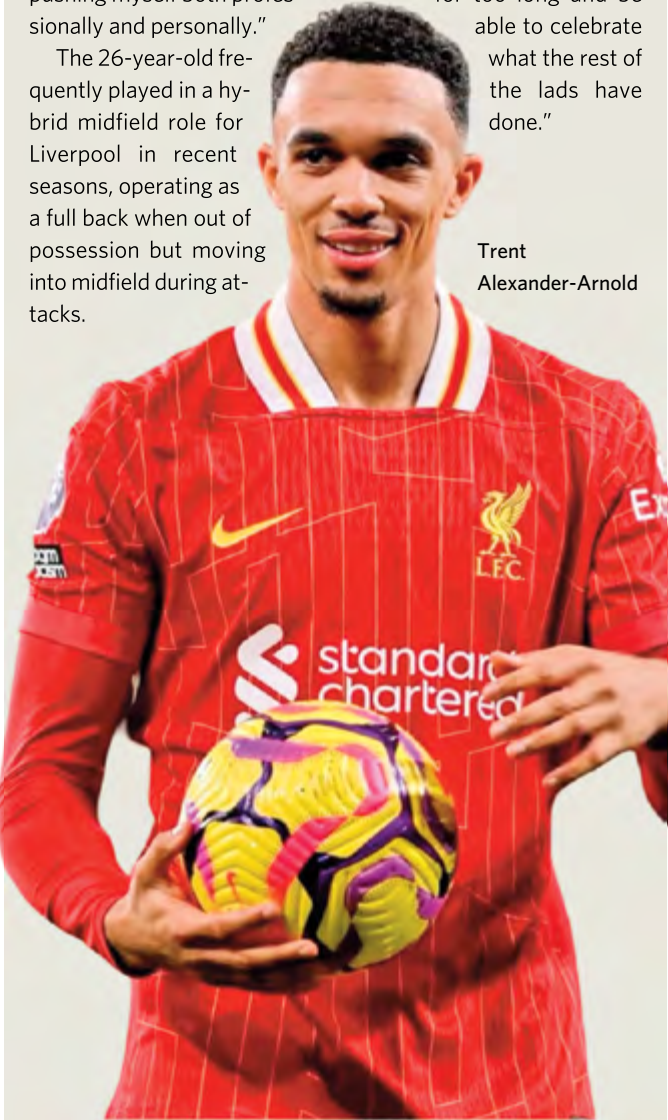
"Alexander-Arnold will depart with our gratitude and appreciation for his contribution during a sustained period of success," the club said in a statement.

Alexander-Arnold is hoping the news of his departure is not a distraction over Liverpool's final three games of the season.

"I'm just hoping that we're able to carry on winning games, the noise (from my decision) doesn't take away from the fact of what we've achieved this season," he said.

"It has been an amazing season. It has been amazing to be part of it and I just hope that everyone is able to maybe not dwell on this news for too long and be able to celebrate what the rest of the lads have done."

Trent Alexander-Arnold



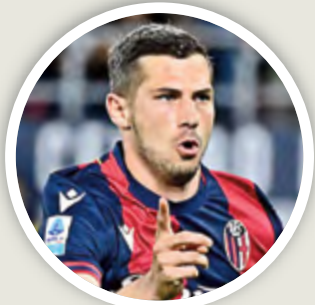
Chance missed as Juventus held to 1-1 draw at Bologna

Bologna, Italy - Juventus played out a tense 1-1 Serie A draw at top-four rivals Bologna on Sunday, as the visitors missed the chance to cement fourth place in the chaotic race for Champions League qualification.

With leaders Napoli and Inter Milan locked in a fierce battle for the title on 77 and 74 points respectively, and Atalanta holding third with 68, attention is turning to the increasingly tense scrap for the final Champions League spot.

Juve sit fourth with 63 points, level with AS Roma and Lazio in fifth and sixth, while Bologna are seventh, one point behind, with three rounds remaining.

Khephren Thuram gave Juve a flying start after nine minutes, picking up the ball outside the box, spotting a gap in the



Bologna's Remo Freuler celebrates after scoring against Juventus on Sunday

Bologna defence and drilling a low shot that slipped beneath keeper Lukasz Skorupski.

Juve had several chances to double their lead and even put the ball in the net twice, but both efforts were ruled out for offside.

Instead Bologna levelled nine minutes into the second half, as Remo Freuler capitalised on a scrappy sequence following a cross and fired the ball home.

The hosts dominated late on and had a golden opportunity to seal it in the final seconds, but Lewis Ferguson squandered the chance, firing well over the bar from inside the box.

A Boulaye Dia goal in the first minute gave Lazio a 1-0 win at Empoli, with both sides having a player sent off in a heated encounter.

Lorenzo Colombo was dismissed for Empoli in the first half, while Elseid Hysaj received his marching orders for Lazio shortly before the end.

Red-hot Roma extended their unbeaten league streak to 19 matches with a vital 1-0 home win over Fiorentina, secured by a late first-half strike from Artem Dovbyk.

Paqueta bursts into tears after yellow card against West Ham

London, England - West Ham United's Brazilian midfielder Lucas Paqueta burst into tears of frustration after being cautioned during his side's 1-1 draw with Tottenham Hotspur in the Premier League on Sunday, manager Graham Potter said.

Paqueta, under a cloud of uncertainty over his future career after being charged with alleged betting irregularities, looked distraught and appeared to wipe away tears after he was shown a yellow card in the second half following a foul on Spurs' Mikey Moore.

The Brazil international disputed the decision, remonstrating with his arms before television images showed him wiping a tear away from his eye.

Referee Michael Oliver warned him about his conduct and several teammates urged him to calm down.

Paqueta, 27, is awaiting the



Lucas Paqueta

outcome of a Football Association hearing into alleged spot-fixing and is facing a possible lifetime ban if he is found guilty of deliberately receiving four yellow cards in Premier League matches for betting purposes. He has denied the allegation.

"I think he's just a player that's trying his absolute best and wants the situation to be better and probably got a bit frustrated with the action," said Potter.

"And then you see a human being, not perfect, but I love Lucas. He's given everything and in difficult circumstances he's in as well. He's given everything and he's absolutely fine now."

Paqueta is facing a frustrating wait because the case will not finish until June at the earliest.

The independent panel presiding over the hearing did not conclude proceedings in March because of its complexity and adjourned proceedings.

GOLDEN HOUR BRANDS HATCH

Oman’s Al Faisal al Zubair and teammate Jens Klingmann win at Brands Hatch

Muscat - Al Manar Racing by Team WRT’s Al Faisal al Zubair and teammate Jens Klingmann delivered a sensational performance to win the second of the one-hour Sprint races at the opening round of the 2025 GT World Challenge Europe powered by AWS Sprint Series at Brands Hatch circuit in England on Sunday.

After finishing fifth in the first of the two short races, Al Zubair and Klingmann delivered a masterclass in pit strategy to kick start their season in the new series with outright victory in the Gold Cup category and sixth position overall in Sprint race two at the helm of the Al Manar Racing by Team WRT BMW M4 GT3 EVO.

Al Zubair said: “Starting off doing very minimal laps in the Sprint Championship was something to get used to. Brands Hatch is such a difficult track and we didn’t have much running time. There were a few red flags in practice. I think we did a total



Al Faisal al Zubair and Jens Klingmann won the second of the one-hour Sprint races at Brands Hatch on Sunday; Al Zubair and Klingmann (C) celebrate on the podium



of 20 laps before we got into qualifying. It was not so easy.

“We started off with qualifying on the wrong foot. We finished fifth in class in the first race and then we won the second race. To jump so many people in the second stint and in the pit stop is something that we should be very happy of. It is good to get a start like this and we can look

forward to the rest of the season.”

Al Zubair began the opening one-hour Sprint race from sixth on the Gold Cup grid but was not able to make headway through the opening laps. Arthur Rougier drove the Emil Frey Racing Ferrari to give the CSA Racing McLaren a brief lead but Chris Lulham hit the front again in the Ferrari after

the mid-race pit stop and driver change.

Klingmann took over from Al Zubair with the sole target of moving up the field and he managed to sneak ahead of James Kell in the CSA Racing McLaren following the driver changeovers after 23 laps.

Lulham continued to lead from Louis Prette in the Garage 59

McLaren as the opening Sprint race headed into its closing stages and on to the chequered flag. Klingmann held on to secure a fifth-place finish for the Al-Manar Racing by Team WRT BMW after 42 laps of racing.

Race two took place in similar cool and overcast conditions in the afternoon. Klingmann took the wheel for the first stint and

quickly settled into fourth place behind the Emil Frey Racing Ferrari, the Saintéloc Racing Audi and the Tresor Attempto Racing Audi.

Full course yellows failed to prevent Klingmann from maintaining his position but the damage was done at the driver changeover when the Al Manar Racing by Team WRT delivered

the strategy to perfection and Al Zubair hit the front.

The Omani continued to lead from the defending champions, Saintéloc Racing, and overcame another full course yellow to win race two with a margin of just under three seconds to Thierry Vermeulen and Chris Lulham in the Emil Frey Racing Ferrari 296 GT3 after 37 laps.



Scottie Scheffler

Scheffler secures emphatic win at CJ Cup Byron Nelson

Texas, US - An emotional Scottie Scheffler flirted with golf history at his hometown tournament on Sunday, tying the PGA Tour scoring record for his first win of the season at the CJ Cup Byron Nelson in McKinney, Texas.

Scheffler finished with a 31-under par 253 to equal the tour record for the lowest 72-hole score at the tournament where he had his first professional start as a teenager 11 years ago, with his sister serving as his caddy.

It was his 14th PGA title but arguably among the most meaningful for the American, who became emotional after the win as he addressed the fans with his baby son in his arms.

“I grew up coming to watch it. This was my first start on the PGA Tour when I was in high school. The girl I was dating at the time is now my wife,” said Scheffler.

“My family was all able to be here, and it was just really, really special memories, and I think at times it all comes crashing down to me at once. We have a lot of great memories as kids coming to watch this tournament.

“I just dreamed to be able to play in it, and it’s more of a dream to be able to win it.”

Scheffler finished eight shots clear of Erik van Rooyen of South Africa and he nearly clinched the PGA scoring record outright until he suffered a bogey on the par-3 17th hole, finishing the final round with an eight-under par 63.

Piastri wins Miami Grand Prix to stretch F1 lead

Miami, US - Oscar Piastri won the Miami Grand Prix in an utterly dominant McLaren one-two on Sunday to complete a hat-trick and stretch his Formula One championship lead over teammate Lando Norris to 16 points after six rounds.

The win from fourth on the grid was the Australian’s third in a row, after Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, and fourth of the season. McLaren have so far been beaten only once.

George Russell finished third for Mercedes but a mighty 37.644 seconds behind.

“Two years ago at Miami we were the slowest team. I think we were lapped twice,” said Piastri after another implacably flawless drive.

“Now to have won the Grand Prix by over 35 seconds to third is an unbelievable result.”

Red Bull’s world champion Max Verstappen was fourth, overtaken by both McLarens and maintaining a sequence dating back to the race’s debut in 2022 of the driver starting on pole position in Miami failing to win.

Alex Albon was fifth for Williams, ahead of Kimi Antonelli in a Mercedes and the Ferrari pair of Charles Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton.

Carlos Sainz made it a double points finish for Williams in ninth and Red Bull’s Yuki Tsunoda was 10th despite a five second penalty.

The start provided an immediate talking point with Norris challenging Verstappen for the lead but then having to go off after making contact at turn two and losing three places, with Antonelli second and Piastri third.

“He forced me off,” said Norris over the team radio. “What am I meant to do? Just drive into the wall or something? I was completely alongside.”

Stewards took a look and decided no further action was needed.

“Max put up a good fight as always and I paid the price, but it’s the way it is,” Norris said later.

“If I don’t go for it, people complain. If I go for it, people complain, so you can’t win. But it is the way it is with Max, it’s crash or don’t pass.”

Piastri passed Antonelli on lap



Oscar Piastri celebrates after winning the Miami Grand Prix on Sunday

Two years ago at Miami we were the slowest team. I think we were lapped twice. Now to have won the Grand Prix by over 35 seconds to third is an unbelievable result

OSCAR PIASTRI

four, after a brief virtual safety car period triggered by Jack Doohan stopping his Alpine at turn 14 after a collision at the start with Racing Bulls’ Liam Lawson.

“I got completely hit. No idea what the Alpine was doing,” said New Zealander Lawson, who dropped to last and eventually retired.

Norris was back in third place by lap nine, after passing both Mercedes drivers with rain threatening, while Piastri was on Verstappen’s tail and passed the Dutch driver, who drifted wide, on lap 14 after several thwarted attempts.

Verstappen held off Norris until lap 17 when both went off

the track but the McLaren driver handed back the position without the stewards needing to intervene.

Norris made the move stick soon after but Piastri was already eight seconds down the road.

Both McLarens pitted when the virtual safety car was deployed again on lap 30 after Haas’s Ollie Bearman stopped with a power unit issue.

Verstappen had pitted a lap earlier to cover after Antonelli came in on lap 26.

The virtual safety car was then deployed for a third time when Sauber’s Brazilian rookie Gabriel Bortoleto stopped his car on lap 33.

Masterful Ruud beats Draper to win Madrid Open title

Madrid, Spain - Norway’s Casper Ruud won his first Masters 1000 title on Sunday, as he stormed to a 7-5 3-6 6-4 victory over fifth seed Jack Draper in the Madrid Open final with a gutsy performance that showcased his clay-court mettle.

The 26-year-old 14th seed, playing in his 18th claycourt final, overcame both a rib injury sustained in the semi-final and a resilient Draper to secure the trophy after previously dispatching Taylor Fritz, Daniil Medvedev and Francisco Cerundolo.

“It’s been a long time coming. I have been dreaming about this since I was young. I knew Jack was playing unbelievably, so I had to bring my A+ game,” Ruud said in an on-court interview.

Ruud had previously reached three Grand Slam finals, including two at Roland Garros, and Masters 1000 finals in Miami in 2022 and Monte Carlo last year.

Ruud staged an impressive comeback from 3-5 down in the opening set, breaking Draper twice to take it 7-5.

The Briton refused to go quietly in the second, however, holding to love for 3-3 before breaking Ruud twice while mak-



Casper Ruud celebrates with the Madrid Open trophy on Sunday

ing just one unforced error to force a decider.

Although Draper was more composed at the start of the third set, it was Ruud who seized the initiative, breaking the Briton to take a 3-2 lead and securing the title with a hold to love.

Despite the loss, 23-year-old Indian Wells champion Draper will leapfrog Novak Djokovic to a

career-high number five in the world rankings on Monday.

“I want to congratulate Casper on your first ATP Masters win, I think you really deserve it. The way you played, you were braver than me in the key moments. You deserve it and you have put in so much work over the years,” Draper told a packed stadium.

Osaka wins first title in four years



Naomi Osaka

Saint-Malo, France - Four-time Grand Slam winner Naomi Osaka won her first WTA title since triumphing at the 2021 Australian Open after beating Slovenia’s Kaja Juvan 6-1 7-5 in the final of the L’Open 35 de Saint-Malo - a WTA 125 tournament on clay.

It was the 27-year-old Japanese player’s first WTA title since she became a mother in July 2023.

“Kinda ironic to win my first trophy back on the surface that I thought was my worst. That’s one of my favourite things about life though, there’s always room to grow and evolve,” Osaka posted on X.

Osaka struggled with her lack of power and accuracy as she failed to progress beyond the second round of any Grand Slam last year.

SINGHS IN HARMONY

Prabhsimran, Arshdeep shine as Punjab dismantle Lucknow to march towards playoffs

Kolkata, India - Punjab Kings (PBKS) are marching towards a spot in the IPL 2025 playoffs, moving up to No. 2 on the table. They dispatched one of their main rivals, Lucknow Super Giants (LSG), with a power-packed batting performance, scoring 236 for 5, and winning by 37 runs.

Shreyas Iyer actually wanted to bowl at the toss. But he said he was “up for the competition”, and it seemed so was his team. They hit 34 boundaries in the innings - 16 sixes and 18 fours - en route their 11th total of 200-plus in the IPL. Only Mumbai Indians (MI) have more.

Prabhsimran Singh was the architect of this chaos. He attacked nine of his first 15 deliveries, and in that time he could have been dismissed for 22 off 11 balls. But Nicholas Pooran put down a skier. When a similar ball came down just seconds later, Prabhsimran played the same shot and found the straight boundary. He is an intent machine with a very short memory. He made his third fifty on the trot, having come into this season with only four fifty-plus scores in his IPL career.

There was a small period when Prabhsimran stalled. He got to 45 off 24 balls. Then made only 8 from the next 11 balls, but made up for that by hitting 38 off his last 13 deliveries.

The batters at the other end matched Prabhsimran's fire. In fact, every time LSG took a wicket, the new partnership began with a boundary within two deliveries, leaving the visitors with no place to hide. Iyer once again showed he is a changed man. Until IPL 2024, he was striking at 125. Since then, he has been striking at 163. That has not come at the cost of his productivity. He averaged 32 before. Now it's 44.

Shashank Singh played the perfect cameo, 33* off 15 balls, which included a six off Mayank Yadav that legit tried to scale up



Mayank went for 60 runs in his four overs. Avesh Khan leaked 26 runs in the 19th over. Digvesh Rathi went for 40-plus in only one of his first nine matches. In his last two, he has gone for 48 and 46

to one of the Dharamsala mountain tops.

Mayank went for 60 runs in his four overs, the joint-worst figures by an LSG bowler in the IPL. Avesh Khan leaked 26 runs in the 19th over, which included three fours and two sixes. Digvesh Rathi went for 40-plus in only one of his first nine matches. In his last two, he has gone for 48 and 46. At a time when they need to be peaking, LSG were floundering. Their best hope was that their top order fired.

Mitchell Marsh, Aiden Markram and Pooran had made 63% of all their team's runs coming into this game. Arshdeep

Singh knocked two of them out in the third over, and returned for the last man standing. LSG were reduced to 38 for 3, their lowest powerplay score this season. Rishabh Pant fell for 18 off 17 balls, his ninth score below 25 in 11 innings. His dismissal was a spectacle. He swung so hard at the ball that he lost control of the bat, which flew out to midwicket while the catch was taken at deep cover.

Arshdeep Singh of Punjab Kings celebrates with teammates after taking a Lucknow Super Giants wicket on Sunday

Rinku under injury cloud after saving the day for KKR in the field

Kolkata, India - Rinku Singh played a crucial role in Kolkata Knight Riders' (KKR) last-ball win over Rajasthan Royals (RR) at the Eden Gardens but may have injured himself in the process of keeping his team alive in the race to the playoffs in IPL 2025.

He first scored an unbeaten 19 off 6 balls as KKR took 22 off the final over of their innings to post a total of 206 for 4. Then, when RR needed 22 off the last six balls of the chase, Rinku made a couple of critical saves. Off the first ball of the 20th over, he ran to his right at deep cover and dived full length to deny Jofra Archer a boundary, after which he was seen limping while holding the region near his right groin.

With RR needing three runs off the last ball - two to take the game into a Super Over - Shubham Dubey dug out a yorker from Vaibhav Arora towards mid-off. Rinku charged in from his position on the long-off boundary, collected the ball, and threw it on the bounce to Arora, who ran out the diving Archer to seal a one-run win. Rinku was originally placed at long-off but was moved to long-off by captain Ajinkya Rahane just before that ball.

“[The diving effort on 19.1] was very important because everyone in India knows that the outfield here is very fast,” Rinku told the broadcaster after the match. “So you have to react accordingly. Once the field restrictions are lifted after the powerplay, I field outside the 30-yard circle. I enjoy my fielding a lot. And to be honest, I like fielding more than batting.”



Rinku Singh



Pat Cummins of Sunrisers Hyderabad celebrates the wicket of Delhi Capitals opener Karun Nair. Cummins took three wickets for 19 runs in his four overs to help Hyderabad restrict Delhi to 133 for 7

TODAY'S MATCH

MATCH 56

6 PM

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The silence in my office feels different these days. It has been a month since Mariam left for her internship at Massachusetts General, and I found myself missing our impromptu discussions in the break room. The clinic ran efficiently as always, but something was missing - that spark of youthful enthusiasm that had reinvigorated my own passion for surgery.

I scrolled through my afternoon appointments, pausing at a familiar name: Khalid Al-Farsi, three-week post-operative check-up. Clicking through his file, I reviewed the details: 38-year-old physical education teacher, complete ACL tear during a football match, reconstructive surgery using a hamstring graft. The surgery had gone smoothly, but I was curious to see how his early rehabilitation was progressing.

The knock on my door was tentative. "Come in," I called.

Khalid entered, moving with the deliberate caution of someone newly acquainted with crutches. His athletic frame seemed diminished somehow, his typically confident posture compromised by the need to balance.

"Assalamu alaikum, doctor," he greeted me, his voice carrying a weariness that his smile couldn't quite mask.

"Wa alaikum assalam, Khalid. Please, sit." I gestured to the chair. "How are you feeling today?"

"Alhamdulillah, better than yesterday," he replied automatically, the phrase more habit than honest assessment as he lowered himself carefully, wincing slightly.

"But not as good as you'd hoped at this point," I suggested, noting the dark circles under his eyes.

He sighed. "I thought I'd be further along by now. I expected to be at least putting some weight on it." He glanced down at his knee, still in a brace. "Instead, I'm still dependent on these." He tapped one of his crutches.

The physical examination revealed moderate swelling, limited range of motion, and the beginning of muscle atrophy in his quadriceps. Nothing unexpected for just three weeks post-op, but clearly not matching his internal timeline.

"Everything looks as it should for three weeks," I explained. "The hamstring graft is integrating well, no sign of infection, swelling within

Journey of rehabilitation



(Photo for illustrative purpose only)

normal parameters."

"But?" he caught the unspoken caveat.

"But you're clearly frustrated with your progress, and that concerns me almost as much as any physical finding."

Khalid ran a hand through his

hair. "I'm a PE teacher. My whole life has been about movement. My students expect me to demonstrate techniques, to play alongside them. The school has already replaced me for this term. If I can't get back by next term..."

I nodded, understanding his fear.

For Khalid, this wasn't just about a knee; it was about his identity.

"Tell me about your rehab routine," I prompted.

"I've been doing everything the physiotherapist prescribed. The exercises, icing, elevation. I even bought one of those electrical



Dr Biswajit Dutta Baruah
Consultant orthopaedic surgeon,
KIMS Oman

stimulation machines you mentioned."

"And how often are you doing the exercises?"

He hesitated. "Three times a day. Sometimes more."

I raised an eyebrow. "More?" "I thought if the prescribed amount helps, then doing extra would speed things up." He looked away. "I need to get back as quickly as possible."

I pulled out a blank sheet of paper. "Let me show you something." I drew a straight diagonal line from bottom left to top right. "This is what most patients expect from recovery. Linear, predictable, constant improvement."

"And that's not realistic?"

"Not even close." I started a new line, one that zigzagged upward with plateaus and occasional dips. "This is reality. Some days you'll feel significant improvement. Then you might plateau for weeks. You might even have days where you feel like you've regressed."

Khalid stared at the jagged line. "So when will I know if I'm on track?"

"That's why we have regular follow-ups and an entire rehab team. Your journey is unique to you."

I set the paper aside. "Recovery isn't something you can force through sheer determination. It requires patience and listening to your body. When Mariam - my previous intern - left, she asked what was the most common mistake patients make during recovery."

"And what did you tell her?"

"That they treat rehabilitation like a battle against their own body, rather than a collaboration with it. Your body isn't your enemy, Khalid. It's working incredibly hard to heal, even when you can't see the progress."

For the first time, some of the tension eased from his face. "So,

what should I be doing differently?"

"First, stick to the prescribed frequency. Quality matters more than quantity. Second, pay attention to pain—not normal discomfort, but sharp or persistent pain. That's your body's warning system."

"And third?" he asked.

"Expand your definition of 'recovery.' It's not just about the knee returning to its previous state - it's about adapting to a new normal, which might be better than before."

Khalid looked sceptical. "Better?"

"Many patients report that rehabilitation taught them body awareness they never had before. They learned to move more efficiently, to prevent injuries in other areas."

I handed him a small notebook. "Each day, write down three things: what felt better today than yesterday, what was challenging, and one thing you're grateful your body can still do despite the injury."

We spent the next fifteen minutes adjusting his rehabilitation plan, adding pool therapy and scheduling a consultation with the sports physio at Bausher.

As Khalid prepared to leave, he paused. "Doctor, do all patients eventually reach full recovery?"

"Recovery isn't a destination; it's a journey with many possible paths. Some patients recover 100%. Others adapt to a new normal that's 90% or 95% there. But your odds improve dramatically when you respect the process."

After he left, I found myself reflecting on our conversation. His journey mirrored what all of us experience after significant changes—the impatience to return to normalcy, the frustration with the non-linear path, the eventual realisation that sometimes we don't recover what was lost but instead discover something new.

I glanced at my phone, considering whether to message Mariam about this case—she would have appreciated the psychological aspects we'd discussed. But I stopped myself. She was forging her own path now, just as Khalid was navigating his. Just as I was adapting to the quiet spaces in my clinic where her questions once filled the air.

Perhaps that was the ultimate lesson of rehabilitation, whether from physical injury or life's other inevitable disruptions: that healing is never merely about returning to what was, but about growing into what might be.

VANDANA CHAWLA



NUTRITION YOU



In today's world where attention spans are short, time is even shorter, the term, Snackable nutrition has emerged as a modern solution to modern problems. It's not just a buzzword, it's a lifestyle shift that combines convenience, wellness, and smart eating habits. But what exactly is snackable nutrition, where did it come from, and is it truly healthy? Let's understand it and take a closer look.

What is snackable nutrition?

Snackable nutrition refers to the practice of consuming small, nutrient-dense foods throughout the day instead of relying solely on three large meals. It's like going for Greek yogurt with berries, or a protein-packed smoothie made of oats, nuts, seeds, dairy, instead of the usual breakfast of bread, egg, fruits and beverage. This is not just one meal but combines the nutrition of other meals, as well. It's all

about eating smarter, eating more condensed meals but not necessarily less. The focus is on convenience, balance, and energy. How did the concept originate? The concept of Snackable Nutrition comes from:

- **Busy lifestyles:** With hectic schedules, more work from home culture, no fixed time for work or meals, all gave way to grab-and-go eating habits.
- **Fitness freaks:** People obsessed with gym or exercise, started popularising multiple small meals a day to maintain energy and muscle growth.
- **Social media:** Platforms like TikTok and Instagram accelerated the trend, beautifully presenting 'snack plates' and mini meals that are both, attractive and easy to replicate.

Is it healthy?

When any concept is to be understood from a health perspective it is then studied from the viewpoint of its impact on one's weight, metabolism, and various health related issues.

Here, small meals or snacking may

be done often, but more important is the content of these meals that will decide if its healthy. The key is focusing on quality over quantity. Hence, Healthy snackable nutrition should include:

- **Lean proteins** - boiled eggs, Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, beans, lentils
- **Healthy fats** - avocados, nuts, seeds

- **Healthy carbs** - whole grains, fruits, veggies, lentils, beans
- **Fibre** - raw veggies and fruits

Combining the above in the right amounts and proportions, one can create a healthy snackable dish. It gives sustained energy, boosts metabolism, and keeps one full for a longer time. As a result, one feels full, cravings are less and at the same do not tend to overeat during the next



snacking time.

Be creative

By combining the above mentioned nutrients, one can create many different snacks. Some of the snackable ideas are:

- Oats pudding/smoothies = Oats+ Greek yogurt + nuts+ seeds+ fruits
- Salad bowls = Veggies +Fruits + beans + cheese+ quinoa
- Sandwiches/wraps = Whole grain bread + veggies + egg + hummus
- Rice = Rice + beans + veggies+ nuts

These are some examples - one can be more innovative and creative. Now, let's see the health benefits.

- **Steady energy** throughout the day - one feels more active, energetic and focussed.
- **Better blood sugar** control by preventing sugar spike.
- **Reduces overeating** by curbing extreme hunger - this further helps in maintaining healthy weight.
- **Ideal** for those with active lifestyles or digestive sensitivity to

large meals - keeps the gut healthy and prevents issues like bloating, acidity etc.

- Customisable to dietary needs: vegan, keto, gluten-free, etc, as it is more of a DIY approach. Snackable nutrition can turn unhealthy, due to many reasons:
- Easy to overeat if snacks aren't portion-controlled
- Can turn into mindless eating without structure
- Packaged 'healthy snacks' can be high in sugar and sodium
- May not suit everyone.

Tips to healthy snackable nutrition

- **Plan ahead:** Prepare a few go-to snacks weekly - trail mix, hummus with veggie sticks, boiled eggs, etc.
- **Focus on macronutrients:** Combine protein + fibre + healthy fats for sustained energy
- **Watch the sugar:** Even 'healthy' bars or fruit snacks can be a sugar bar, read the labels before you buy.
- **Keep yourself hydrated** : People often snack when they're actually thirsty. Keep water handy.
- **Make it mindful:** Avoid eating straight from the bag or while distracted. Port-portion the snack.

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

LOVE HANDLES

DON'T GET SIDELINED

Be on the move

Finding simple ways to increase the number of calories you burn throughout the day is an excellent way to lose excess body fat - this means, be on the move all day long. Those who lead sedentary lifestyles and work desk jobs that involve sitting for hours on end are ideal subjects for love handles. So, setting a timer every half hour to get up and walk to the water cooler or a colleague's desk can make a big difference for weight loss.



LOVE HANDLES ARE ANOTHER NAME FOR THE EXCESS FAT THAT SITS AT THE SIDES OF THE WAIST AND PROTRUDES OVER THE TOP OF TROUSERS. ALSO KNOWN AS A MUFFIN TOP, THIS FAT CAN BE HARD TO LOSE, BUT IT IS POSSIBLE WITH THE RIGHT NUTRITION, EXERCISE, AND OTHER LIFESTYLE CHANGES. CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

Cut off sugar

Healthy eating is key when you're trying to lose fat in any area of the body. Cutting off added sugar from your diet is one of the best ways to clean up your diet. Added sugar is found in foods and beverages like cookies, candies, sports drinks and sodas. The term does not apply to the natural sugar found in fruit.

Aside from being linked to a slew of health issues, such as heart disease, metabolic syndrome and diabetes, eating too much added sugar can lead to an increased amount of body fat, particularly in the belly area.

Focus on healthy fats

Filling up on healthy fats like avocados, olive oil, nuts, seeds and fatty fish can help slim your waistline. Not only do healthy fats taste delicious, they help you feel full, causing you to consume fewer calories throughout the day.

A high-fat Mediterranean diet, supplemented with olive oil, is helpful to get reduce belly fat significantly. Hence, replacing less nutrient-dense foods with healthy fats may help you lose body fat. This could be as simple as adding a few slices of tasty avocado to your meal.

Fill up on fibre

Adding foods rich in soluble fibre to your daily routine may help you get rid of stubborn love handles. Soluble fibre is found in foods like beans, nuts, oats, vegetables and fruits which helps keep you feeling full for a longer period of time by slowing down digestion and decreasing feelings of hunger. What's more, whole foods that are rich in soluble fibre are good for the friendly, health-promoting bacteria in your gut.

Lift weights

Engaging in any kind of physical activity can help you lose your love handles, but adding weight training to your routine may be especially beneficial. The terms weight training, strength training and resistance training are generally interchangeable. They all mean contracting your muscles against some form of resistance to build your strength.

Resistance training helps the body build lean muscle and burn more calories, and combining resistance training with aerobic exercise is an effective way of burning off belly fat.

Get enough sleep

Like stress, not getting enough sleep increases cortisol levels in the body, which can lead to weight gain. Studies have shown that sleep-deprived people tend to weigh more and have more body fat than those who get enough sleep. Lack of sleep has also been linked to an increased risk of diabetes and obesity.

Increase your cardio

Cardiovascular or aerobic exercise is defined as any activity that raises your heart rate for an extended period of time. Aerobic workouts help burn calories and reduce excess fat on the body, which can help slim down love handles.

Many people feel intimidated by the high-intensity nature of some aerobic workouts, like spinning or running. However, there are plenty of low-impact, beginner-friendly aerobic workouts that are easy to do.

Swimming, working out on the elliptical machine or simply going for a brisk walk are all excellent ways to get into an aerobic workout routine.

Behind closed doors

A hidden mental health toll of substance abuse in Oman

When discussing substance abuse, attention often focuses on physical harm or crime. However, an equally urgent issue remains less visible - the mental health impact on individuals, families, and communities.

International research shows that individuals with substance use disorders face significantly higher risks of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. According to the World Health Organization, up to 40 per cent of people with drug dependence experience mental health conditions, yet many do not access support.

Amphetamines, which account for nearly 70 per cent of drug-related cases in Oman (as per Royal Oman Police records in 2024), can lead to psychosis, paranoia, and severe mood disturbances. Even after detoxification, long-term psychological recovery is often needed. While Oman has made important progress in addressing substance abuse, the mental health dimension remains a critical area for continued focus.

Families carry a heavy burden as well. Caregivers frequently experience stress, anxiety, and depression. In a society where stigma around both, addiction and mental health, remains strong, silence often delays access to help.

Young people are especially vulnerable. The adolescent brain is still developing, making it more susceptible to the lasting emotional and cognitive effects of drug use, with potential consequences for future wellbeing.

Recognising the need for holistic care, Positive Vision Association (PVA) formalised a partnership in April 2025 with Whispers of Serenity Clinic, Oman's first private mental health and wellness clinic. Through this collaboration, individuals and families affected by substance abuse or HIV/AIDS can access professional counselling and psychological support provided by licensed specialists at Whispers of Serenity Clinic. This initiative seeks to break the silence and stigma around addiction and mental health, offering pathways to healing and resilience.

Addressing substance abuse involves more than physical treatment. It means supporting the mind, empowering families, and challenging stigma. Mental health is not a secondary concern, it is central to recovery and the foundation of a healthier, more resilient society.

(Watch out for this monthly column on the first Tuesday of every month for an inspirational read on the subject.)



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