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H M confers with Dutch, Iranian and Qatari leaders on regional situation

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik held telephonic conversations with King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands, President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian of Iran, and Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, Emir of Qatar, on Tuesday.

The discussions focused on the latest developments following the escalation between Iran and Israel, including the grave repercussions of the conflict and expansion of hostilities to Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar.

His Majesty and King Willem-Alexander welcomed the commencement of a cease-fire agreement between Iran and Israel, emphasising the importance of consolidating this de-escalation. They underscored the need for intensified regional and international efforts to end the conflict through dialogue and peaceful negotiations in a manner that safeguards lives, preserves resources, protects the interests of peoples, and enhances security and stability in the region and beyond.

In his conversation with President Pezeshkian, His Majesty discussed regional

developments and the rise in military tensions in the wake of recent escalations. Both leaders stressed the significance of maintaining security and stability, calling for restraint, wisdom and dialogue to break the cycle of escalation. They noted that this is essential to prevent further deterioration and to allow space for diplomatic solutions.

President Pezeshkian expressed deep appreciation for Oman's balanced and constructive stance, commending its efforts in supporting regional security and de-escalation. He reaffirmed Iran's commitment to cooperate in order to avert further tensions.

In his call to the Emir of Qatar, His Majesty expressed Oman's full solidarity with Qatar and praised its wise handling of recent developments. He reaffirmed Oman's firm rejection of any acts that threaten the security, sovereignty or stability of countries in the region.

The emir, in turn, expressed pride in the fraternal ties between the two nations and praised His Majesty and Oman's principled stance on the current regional situation.



H M issues two Royal Decrees

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued two Royal Decrees on Tuesday reading as follows:

Royal Decree No 57/2025 amends the name of the Secretariat General of Tender Board, defines its competencies and approves its organisational structure.

Article 1 amends the name of the Secretariat General of the Tender Board to 'Authority of Projects, Tenders and Local Content', according to legal, fiscal and administrative autonomy. The authority will report to the Council of Ministers.

Article 2 states that the Authority of Projects, Tenders and Local Content will have a chairman, with special grade, who will be appointed by Royal Decree.

Article 3 states that the chairman of the authority will undertake the management of all administrative and financial affairs of the authority, represent it before other parties and before the judiciary and will have the powers of 'Head of Unit' as stipulated in laws and Royal Decrees that are applicable to the units of the State's Administrative Apparatus.

Article 4 states that the authority will assist the Tender Board and the executive committee formed vide a Council of Ministers decision to follow up the implementation of local content policies as these (the Tender Board and the committee) exercise their prescribed competencies by conducting all technical and administrative tasks and providing necessary logistic services.

Article 5 determines the competencies of the authority in accordance with Annex No 1 attached to this decree.

Article 6 states that the organisational structure of the authority will be approved in accordance with Annex No 2 attached to this decree.

Article 7 stipulates that the provisions of this decree will not supersede any competencies ascribed to the Tender Board in laws and Royal Decrees.

Article 8 replaces the two phrases 'Secretariat General of Tender Board' and 'Secretary General of Tender Board', wherever these might occur in laws and Royal Decrees with the phrases 'Authority of Projects, Tenders and Local Content' and 'Chairman of Authority of Projects, Tenders and Local Content'.

Article 9 cancels Royal Decree No 84/2020 on the Secretariat General of Tender Board and Royal Decree No 73/2023.

Continued on Page 02



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Filmmakers call for culture-based cinema

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Leading Omani filmmakers and cinema experts are calling for a genuine, globally competitive film industry rooted in local culture to convey Oman's identity to the world.

Mohammed bin Abdullah al Ajmi, Chairman of Oman Film Society (OFS), said culture must be at the heart of developing authentic national cinema. "We have a deep reservoir of narratives that can lift cinema from entertainment to a platform for intellectual and cultural dialogue," he said.

Ajmi highlighted Oman's linguistic diversity and rich heritage of folktales as fertile ground for symbolic and spiritual storytelling. He added that the country's diverse landscapes - from deserts to mountains and coastlines - should be consciously integrated into films, shaping stories that showcase the natural beauty.

"These landscapes embody a philosophy of life that is distinctly Omani yet universal," Ajmi said.

He urged investment in a full cinematic ecosystem, including local and international festivals and dedicated screening platforms. "Festivals are vital for creative exchange. These allow Omani filmmakers to connect with global intellects and artistic trends," he said.



Global appeal does not mean compromising cultural authenticity. Audiences want honest cinematic voices. Nothing is more genuine than stories told from one's roots

MOHAMMED BIN ABDULLAH AL AJMI



Ajmi stressed that true global appeal does not mean compromising cultural authenticity. "Audiences want honest cinematic voices. Nothing is more genuine than stories told from one's roots."

Filmmaker Anwar bin Khamis al Ruzeiqi described Omani cultural elements as "hidden treasures"

that can anchor a distinctive national cinema. He encouraged filmmakers to reinterpret local narratives through modern cinematic language and emphasised the narrative power of Oman's landscapes.

"Oman's settings are not just backgrounds - they mirror emotions and carry symbolic weight,"

Ruzeiqi said. He called for bigger festivals, co-productions, and nurturing of young talent to raise technical standards and broaden reach.

"For international success, our cinema must tackle universal themes from an Omani perspective - authentic stories told in a unique visual and narrative style,"

Oman Film Society spotlights young talent at 23rd anniversary event

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Film Society (OFS) marked its 23rd anniversary on Monday with a ceremony in Mawaleh attended by filmmakers and cultural figures. The event, held under the patronage of Sayyid Khalid bin Hamad al Busaidi, former chairman of Oman Football Association, included screening of two films produced under the 2024 edition of the Support and Production Fund.

Speaking at the celebration, Mohammed bin Abdullah al Ajmi, President of OFS, said the society continues to serve as a platform for filmmakers and artists across the sultanate. He expressed gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham

bin Tarik for supporting arts and culture as part of Oman's modern renaissance.

Ajmi also thanked the society's former presidents for consolidating OFS's role as a cultural institution. He noted that the 2024 Youth Media Excellence Award in the Digital Media category for the society was a testament to the efforts of young Omani filmmakers.

Former OFS presidents spoke about key milestones from the society's 23-year journey at the ceremony.

Financed by the 2024 Support and Production Fund, Issa al Subhi's *Wahm* (Illusion), which won the Golden Palm Award at the Saudi Film Festival, tells the story of an academic's struggle with

depression after his release from a psychiatric ward.

The second film to be screened, *Al Majhool* (The Unknown) - directed by Mohammed al Kindi and produced by Youssef al Busaidi - is a 20-minute drama about the mysterious disappearance of a young man from an ancient village.

Kindi said the film involved six months of pre-production before shooting commenced at various locations including Muscat, Ibbi, Sur, Hamra and Nizwa. Post-production work was completed in India.

"The anniversary reflects OFS's mission to support local productions, nurture young talent and promote cinema as a cultural force that represents Oman's identity to the world," he said.

he said, adding that strategic marketing is key to taking these stories abroad.

Filmmaker Muzna al Musafer said Oman's cinema must move beyond traditional portrayals and capture the spirit of the modern Omani. "We need a vision that shows people in harmony with nature, yet in step with contemporary life. Filmmakers must develop this vision and present it to the world with sophistication."

Qaisar bin Salem al Hinai, another filmmaker, said Oman's cultural and natural wealth provides a strong foundation for cinema with cross-cultural appeal. "From Musandam's linguistic diversity to Dhofar's oral heritage

and our landscapes - these are the raw materials for a cinema that is authentic and relatable globally," he said.

"Omani cinema can become a voice that connects cultures, but this demands sustained investment in artistic vision and technical skills without losing touch with our heritage."

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National Museum brings 1920s Tunis to life through vintage photographs

Our Correspondent
Muscat

An exhibition titled *Tunisia in Focus 1920*, presented at National Museum, in partnership with Embassy of Republic of Tunisia and Tunis International Centre for Digital Cultural Economy, opened on Monday. It offers visitors a rare glimpse into the daily life, architecture and artistic heritage of early 20th-century Tunis.

Inaugurated under the patronage of H E Ibrahim bin Saeed al Kharousi, Undersecretary for Heritage in Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, the exhibition will run till July 7.

On display is a curated collection of vintage photographs that capture scenes from over a century ago - including Youssef Sahib al Tab'a Mosque, the historic cloth market of Tunis and other landmarks that illustrate the city's layered cultural history.

H E Ezzedine al Tissi, Tunisia's Ambassador to Oman, said the exhibition is more than an archival display. "*Tunisia in Focus 1920* reminds us that delving into history is not just remembering but understanding the present and shaping a better future," he said.



ture," he said.

He noted that the century-old photographs have been digitally restored to preserve Tunisia's visual heritage for future generations.

A notable feature of the exhibition is its use of modern technology. Visitors can scan QR codes beside each exhibit to access virtual reality reconstructions of the original scenes, offering an immersive look at Tunis as it appeared in the 1920s.

This blend of historical preservation and digital innovation aligns with the aims of Tunis International Centre for Digital Cultural Economy. Affiliated with Tunisia's Ministry of Cultural Affairs, the centre works to protect heritage while supporting cultural tourism and promoting the creation of original digital content. It also seeks to nurture a new generation of cultural entrepreneurs, positioning creative industries at the heart of sustainable development.

H M issues two Royal Decrees

Continued from Page 01

The latter decree transferred powers related to revision of contracts from Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs to Secretariat General of the Tender Board. Article 9 cancels all that contradict this decree or contravenes its provisions.

Article 10 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No 58/2025 ascribes public utility status to Sultan Faisal bin Turki Road Project (Dibba-Lima-Khasab) in Musandam.

Article 1 states that the said road project, as defined in the memo and diagram attached to this decree, is henceforth deemed a public utility project.

Article 2 instructs the departments concerned to expropriate, through direct implementation, the properties and lands necessary for the aforementioned project, along with installations therein, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Utility Expropriation Law promulgated by Royal Decree No 71/2023.

Article 3 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.



MCSY highlights role of culture in driving entrepreneurship

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MCSY) organised a session titled ‘Fundamentals of Cultural Entrepreneurship’ on Tuesday as part of its Knowledge Dialogue programme.

The session focused on cultural entrepreneurship as a means to sustainable development and driver for building a creative economy anchored in Omani heritage.

Speakers stressed on the potential of transforming the country’s diverse cultural heritage into ventures that generate economic and social value. The discussion underlined the need to empower youth, expand job opportunities and preserve Oman’s cultural identity. Key topics included strategic opportunities in cultural entrepreneurship, turning cultural assets into marketable products and services, and the role of digital platforms and emerging technologies in promoting cultural goods.

Participants also discussed in-

novative funding models, marketing challenges, and the importance of developing managerial skills among young cultural entrepreneurs.

Moderated by writer Mohammed bin Saif al Rahbi, the session featured Dr Saeed bin Mohammed al Siyabi, an academic and researcher in cultural and media affairs, who shared examples of successful projects in Oman and abroad. The session highlighted the need for stronger partnerships between the public and private sectors and civil society to create an ecosystem that supports cultural initiatives.

Proposals included conducting training programmes, offering incentives for investors, developing government-backed entrepreneurship initiatives, and creating funding mechanisms to sustain cultural projects.

MCSY stated that its efforts aim to increase awareness of culture’s role in economic and social progress and attracting greater investment and support from both public and private entities.

ROP adopts virtual reality to fight drug abuse, trafficking

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Royal Oman Police is deploying virtual reality (VR) technology and smart applications as part of its strategy to curb the spread of drugs and psychotropic substances, a senior official said on Wednesday.

Col Said bin Salem al Maawali, Assistant Director-General for Combating Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances at ROP, said the initiative aligns with this year’s International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking observed globally on June 26.

This year’s theme - ‘Breaking the Chains: Prevention, Treatment and Recovery for All’ - highlights the right to rehabilitation and the importance of scientific prevention and recovery programmes.

Col Maawali described drug abuse and trafficking as one of the most severe threats to modern societies with widespread consequences. “Drug trafficking is a major source of funding for transnational organised crime,” he said. “Global data shows over 275mn people use drugs and more than 500,000 die each year due to drug-related causes.”

He added that combating the problem requires coordinated international action, intelligence sharing, harmonised laws and greater public awareness, espe-



cially among youth.

“The fight against drugs crosses borders. Smuggling networks are using advanced and varied methods, so joint operations between countries are

vital,” he said.

Highlighting Oman’s approach, Col Maawali said ROP works with military, civil and international partners to detect and dismantle trafficking net-

This year’s International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking highlights the right to rehabilitation and the importance of scientific prevention and recovery programmes

works. He noted that police have intercepted large quantities of narcotics and psychotropic substances trafficked via land, sea and air, and warned that criminal groups increas-

ingly use social media to target young people.

He urged families to help protect children and the public to report suspicious activities. “This is a shared responsibility. Communities must support efforts to identify and rehabilitate addicts so they can return as responsible members of society. This is essential for national safety and stability.”

International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking provides an opportunity for countries to review policies, share experiences and develop unified strategies to tackle the evolving global drug trade.

Dhofar municipality reviews plans to boost khareef tourism

Our Correspondent
Salalah

In preparation for khareef 2025, Dhofar Municipal Council held its sixth meeting of the year on Tuesday, chaired by H H Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar.

The session focused on a wide range of development, tourism, environmental and service initiatives aimed at improving infrastructure and the visitor experience during the monsoon season.

Key topics of discussion included updates following recent field visits to Al Shurooq and Dhahreez, where ongoing urban planning projects were assessed. Officials from the Directorate General of Housing and Urban Planning presented progress of the ‘Future City’ concept, which aims to modernise local infrastructure and consolidate Dhofar’s reputation as a sustainable tourism destination.



In support of Oman’s digital transformation goals, the council reviewed plans to instal smart digital signage across the governorate. These signs will provide visitors with real-time updates on attractions, facilities and services, improving navigation and visitor engagement during the peak tourism period.

An environmental briefing outlined progress on the ‘Green Belt’ project, which aims to expand vegetation, limit desertification and enhance air quality. The

project covers urban and industrial areas and is part of broader efforts to promote eco-tourism and environmental sustainability.

The council also discussed expanding afforestation initiatives by using treated wastewater for irrigation and working with local nurseries to add greenery to public spaces, residential neighbourhoods and recreational areas. These steps are expected to enrich domestic tourism and improve living standards.

Economic development was

another priority with the council reviewing investment opportunities in Raysut Industrial City. Attracting private sector participation in industrial, commercial and service activities is seen as vital for diversifying Dhofar’s economy and supporting year-round tourism.

Infrastructure and public services were also addressed, including reports from Nama Water Services on water quality in schools in mountain and desert areas.

Crackdown on coconut stalls in Salalah for health violations

Our Correspondent
Salalah

Directorate General for Consumer Protection in Dhofar, in cooperation with Dhofar Municipality and Directorate General of Labour, carried out a joint inspection campaign targeting coconut stalls in Salalah recently.

The drive is part of continued efforts to ensure a safe consumer environment and check compliance with health and commercial regulations during the peak khareef tourism season.

Inspection teams visited 56 coconut stalls and detected several violations. Officials detained individuals for illegally adding sugar to coconut drinks and confiscated two banned substances used to speed up banana ripening, which pose health risks.

Several vendors were also found operating without clearly displayed price lists, violating consumer protection rules.

Ten stalls were ordered to



shut down for failing to meet health and technical requirements, while 52 wooden tables used for cutting coconuts were removed for breaching safety and hygiene standards.

Consumer Protection Authority stressed that the ongoing campaign is part of a wider strategy to raise public awareness,

prevent unsafe practices and safeguard consumer welfare.

Officials urged all vendors to comply with relevant laws and confirmed that similar inspections will continue in coordination with other agencies to protect public health and maintain high standards throughout the tourism season.

CDAA issues safety advisory as house fires remain high in summers

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) has renewed its call for heightened fire safety awareness as the sultanate enters the peak summer months, a period often associated with an increase in residential fires.

In its latest report, CDAA recorded 1,530 residential fires in 2024, a marginal decrease from 1,539 cases the previous year. A senior CDAA official noted that despite the slight decline, domestic fires continue to rank among

the most common emergencies handled by the authority.

“Residential fires pose a serious threat to life and property. While we welcome the reduction, sustained public awareness and precautionary measures are vital to prevent loss and damage,” the official said.

Investigations show that leading causes of house fires include unattended cooking, leaving gas cylinder valves open, children playing with matches or lighters, indoor smoking, overloading electrical sockets, use of substandard appliances, and un-



qualified electrical repairs.

To reduce risks, CDAA advises households to instal smoke and gas detectors, disconnect electrical appliances when not in use, maintain household equipment regularly, and rely solely on licensed professionals for electrical work.

Residents are reminded to familiarise themselves with safe evacuation procedures. In the event of a fire alarm, occupants should stop activities immediately, avoid lifts, use designated exits, and gather at agreed meeting points outside their

building. Re-entry is only permitted once cleared by emergency responders. The authority also urged families to assist children, the elderly and people with disabilities during evacuations, and not to return indoors for valuables. In dense smoke, people should cover their nose and mouth with a wet cloth and stay low while moving towards an exit.

Emergency services can be reached on 9999 or 24343666. CDAA stressed the importance of drafting and practising a home evacuation plan as an essential safety measure.

New roadmap to strengthen GCC e-commerce data, policy planning

Muscat - A regional workshop on e-commerce and digital economy statistics, organised by the GCC Statistical Centre, concluded in Muscat on Tuesday, a report stated.

The event resulted in the development of a regional roadmap for GCC countries to measure e-commerce and the digital economy, aligned with national action plans.

Intisar bint Abdullah al Wahabi, Director General of the GCC Statistical Centre, stated that the regional roadmap aims to unify statistical standards and methodologies and harmonise data collection and analysis processes across the GCC. This enables the production of indicators that are regionally and internationally comparable, thereby enhancing national capacities in digital statistical measurement and supporting data-driven decision-making.

These indicators offer policy-makers accurate insights to assess the performance of the digital economy and e-commerce and guide investments accordingly.

She added that understanding the size of the digital market and consumer behaviour in GCC countries also encourages businesses and investors to make informed decisions based on reliable data, while contributing to the growth of digital entrepreneurship across the region. This ultimately supports the development of a competitive, data-driven, and interconnected digital economy that serves the interests of governments, businesses, and societies alike.



The regional roadmap aims to unify statistical standards and methodologies and harmonise data collection and analysis methods across GCC countries

INTISAR AL WAHAIBI



indicators for businesses, households, and individuals on both the supply and demand sides, as well as methods for assessing the size and contribution of the digital economy.

The workshop also covered the proposed model questionnaire for digital economy surveys for both businesses and households, methodologies for using administrative records, and innovative data sources for measuring e-commerce and digital

activity.

Additionally, the multi-year (2024-26) regional work programme for GCC countries was presented, alongside the national action programmes of each country, including their goals, timelines, and implementation strategies. Discussions focused on aligning these national efforts with the regional roadmap, as well as future steps for execution, monitoring, and cooperation.

The workshop brought to-

gether representatives from the GCC General Secretariat, national statistical centres, ministries of commerce, central banks, and other government entities across the region. It reflects the GCC Statistical Centre's commitment to building statistical capacities and advancing the infrastructure needed to develop shared indicators and standards for e-commerce and the digital economy at both regional and global levels.



H E Qais al Yousef

Oman, Algeria explore trade, investment ties

Algiers, Algeria - The Algerian-Omani Business Forum, titled 'Algerian-Omani Economic Partnerships: Pioneering Fields and Promising Prospects', convened on Tuesday in Algiers as part of Oman's participation as Guest of Honour at the 56th Algiers International Fair.

H E Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, said the forum reflects the commitment of both countries to strengthening economic ties, enhancing bilateral investment and identifying trade opportunities to boost imports and exports.

Addressing business leaders from both countries, the minister said Oman is focused on diversifying its import base, promoting exports and building investment integration with Algeria. He noted that the forum seeks to expand joint collaboration and lay the groundwork for a competitive economy that is resilient, globally connected and aligned with national growth objectives.

He added that both governments are committed to providing the necessary incentives, frameworks and support mechanisms to enable private sector engagement and sustainable development.



OCCI participates in Arab-British Economic Summit in London

London, UK - Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) took part in the 4th Arab-British Economic Summit 2025, held in London on Monday.

The summit, held under the theme 'Friendship Through Trade', was organised by the Arab British Chamber in cooperation with the Union of Arab Chambers.

The summit highlighted the importance of consolidating the strategic partnership between Arab countries and the United Kingdom, action to expand cooperation into different commercial sectors to enrich British and Arab markets and promote sustainable tourism, e-commerce and franchises. It also touched on means of activating the sectors

of banking and financial services.

The summit saw the participation of high-level government officials, CEOs, intellectuals and decision-makers from Arab countries and the United Kingdom. The participants exchanged ideas and discussed emerging opportunities for trade and investment in new technology-based industries.

OAB seeks shareholder nod to raise authorised capital to RO500mn

Muscat - Oman Arab Bank (OAB), one of Oman's leading financial institutions, announced that its Board of Directors has invited its shareholders to approve an increase in the Bank's authorised capital from RO200mn to RO500mn.

In addition, the bank will raise its paid-in capital by RO50mn through a rights issue to be underwritten by the bank's shareholders.

This capital enhancement, which remains subject to regulatory approval, will further strengthen the bank's capital adequacy ratios, support accelerated growth in retail and corporate lending, and provide a robust platform for continued digital banking innovation.

Sulaiman al Harthi, Chief Ex-



ecutive Officer of Oman Arab Bank, stated, "The proposed increase in authorised and paid-up

capital highlights our strong foundations as a brand. With a larger capital base, we can ex-

pand our credit to vital economic sectors, invest in the next generation of digital services, and deliver long-term, sustainable value to all stakeholders.

"This will pave the way for strengthening the bank's balance sheet, strengthening its Tier 1 capital ratio, and providing the necessary flexibility to weather economic fluctuations."

The paid-in capital increase will be executed via a rights issue. Existing shareholders of record as of the bookclosure date (to be announced) will be entitled to subscribe on a prorata basis. The authorised capital increase will give the bank flexibility to undertake additional equity issuances in the future as market opportunities arise, while remaining within prudential limits.

Oman to host major energy conference to boost transformation efforts

Muscat - The fourth edition of the Oman Electricity and Energy Conference 2025 will be held from October 13 to 15 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, to be organised by Nama Electricity Distribution in collaboration with the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE).

At a press conference on Tuesday, Nama Electricity Distribution reviewed preparations, confirmed local and international participation, and outlined key topics under the theme 'Mechanisms for Accelerating Energy Transformation Efforts in Oman'.

This year's event will address opportunities to diversify the energy mix, improve network efficiency, and apply modern technologies such as artificial intelligence in the electricity sector.



It supports the sultanate's wider strategy to achieve sustainable energy goals in line with Oman Vision 2040.

More than 2,000 participants and over 100 speakers from 30 countries are expected to attend. The programme will include

panel discussions, workshops, and an exhibition showcasing the latest technologies and solutions in electricity and energy.

Ahmed bin Zayed al Shaqsi, General Manager of Strategy and Sustainability at Nama Electricity Distribution, said the conference

aims to be a professional platform for specialists, decision-makers and experts to discuss the sector's future and share solutions and experiences.

He expressed hope that the dialogue and knowledge ex-

Head of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Sultan Qaboos University and President of IEEE, described the conference as a forum aligned with global technological developments in energy.

He highlighted that Oman's commitment to the energy transition opens opportunities for collaboration, with sessions covering policies, smart grid technologies, energy efficiency, renewable energy integration, asset management, energy storage and distribution system optimisation.

The conference comes as Oman steps up its shift towards renewables, with targets to increase renewable energy's share to 30% by 2030, expand green hydrogen projects and cut carbon emissions.

More than 2,000 participants and over 100 speakers from 30 countries are expected to attend the event

change would help advance Oman's energy transformation and strengthen national competencies through local and international partnerships.

Ahmed bin Saeed al Maashri,

Oil price drops, shares jump as Trump announces Israel-Iran ceasefire deal

Brussels, Belgium - Stocks rose and oil prices fell on Tuesday after President Trump said Israel and Iran had agreed to a ceasefire.

Stocks rallied on Tuesday after US President Trump said that a "complete and total ceasefire" between Iran and Israel has taken effect..

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian has said that Iran will respect the truce with Israel as long as Israel does. Pezeshkian also said Iran is open to dialogue and would protect the interests of Iranians at the negotiating table.

The truce, which Trump labelled the end of the "12-day war", came after Iran attacked a US base in Qatar on Monday, retaliating against the US bombing of its nuclear sites over the weekend.

In response to Tuesday's development, oil prices dropped as fears over a blockage to the Strait of Hormuz subsided.

About 20% of global oil and gas flows through this narrow shipping lane in the Gulf.

Brent crude, the international standard, dropped 3.83% to



In response to Tuesday's development, oil prices dropped as fears over a blockage to the Strait of Hormuz subsided. About 20% of global oil and gas flows through this narrow shipping lane in the Gulf

\$68.74, while WTI dropped 3.85% to \$65.87.

Last week, Brent reached over \$78 a barrel, a level not

seen since the start of this year.

European markets opened in the green. The DAX was 1.99% higher at 23,730.98, the CAC

40 was up 1.71% at 7,666.69, while the FTSE 100 rose 0.81% to 8,828.83 in morning trading. The STOXX 600 increased

1.48% to 542.93, while the EURO STOXX 50 rose 1.9% to 5,320.97.

Looking to the US, S&P 500

futures rose 0.97% to 6,135.75 on Monday, while Dow Jones futures increased 0.89% to 43,284.00. Australia's

S&P/ASX 200 jumped 0.89% to 8,550.10, South Korea's Kospi rose 2.75% to 3,097.28, and the Shanghai Composite index climbed 1.07% to 3,417.89.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng rose 2% to 24,162.70 and the Nikkei 225 increased 1.16% to 38,796.39.

The US Dollar Index slipped by 0.32% to 98.10. The euro gained 0.25% against the dollar while the yen dropped 0.48% in comparison to the greenback.

Economists had suggested that persistent threats to oil would increase the value of the US dollar and hurt other currencies such as the euro, notably as the US economy is more energy independent.

Greg Hirt, chief investment officer with Allianz Global Investors, told Euronews earlier this week that although the dollar may see a short lift on the Iran-Israel conflict, "structural issues around a twin deficit and the Trump administration's volatile handling of tariffs should continue to weigh on an over-valued US dollar".

Euronews



Why Strait of Hormuz is critical for global economy

Doloresz Katanich

This narrow shipping route in the Gulf region sees one-fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) passing through, fuelling a big part of the global economy. And Iran controls its northern side.

As oil prices climbed after the attacks on Iran by Israel and then the US, investors are closely watching the fate of a narrow sea passage in the Middle East.

The Strait of Hormuz is vital for gas and oil exporters in the Gulf region, as this is the only route by sea to export large volumes of oil and gas produced among the oil-rich countries in the region.

This narrow passage is located between Oman and Iran, connecting the Persian Gulf with the Sea of Oman and the Arabian Sea.

It is about 167km long, and at its narrowest point, 39km wide.

According to the Joint Maritime Information Centre, June 2024 averaged 114 vessels transiting the strait daily and so far traffic in June 2025 is consistent with this. On 21 June, for instance, there were 122 vessels passing through the strait.

The passage is deep enough and wide enough to handle the world's largest crude oil tankers, and it is one of the world's most important oil chokepoints (narrow channels along widely used global sea routes that are critical to global

energy security).

Oil tankers on average carry through the strait 20 million barrels per day (b/d), or the equivalent of about 20% of global petroleum liquids consumption, according to the US Energy Information Administration analysis.

"A potential Iranian blockade of the Strait of Hormuz would send shockwaves through the global economy," Professor Guido Cozzi, Chair of Macroeconomics at the University of St. Gallen, said to Euronews.

June 2024 averaged 114 vessels transiting the strait daily and so far traffic in June 2025 is consistent with this. On 21 June, there were 122 vessels passing through the strait

He added that any disruption to the oil flow in this narrow waterway would drive up energy prices, fuel inflation, and strain supply chains.

Continental Europe and China are losing the most, both heavily reliant on imported energy and lacking domestic buffers.

"They would face rising costs, slower growth, and heightened inflation without any upside," Cozzi said.

Meanwhile, the US and the

UK would see their exports become more competitive, as they are sourcing the majority of their energy from elsewhere. And if the strait would be closed, pushing prices up globally, that would benefit Western producers more than it would harm them, according to the professor.

Natural gas supplies are also at risk

Besides oil, global natural gas supply could also be seriously impacted, as Qatar, one of the world's biggest natural gas exporters uses the narrow seaway to export about 77 million metric tons of liquefied natural gas (LNG) a year. This is one-fifth of the global LNG supply.

"Alternative supply routes for Middle Eastern oil and gas are limited, with pipeline capacity insufficient to offset potential maritime disruptions through the Persian Gulf and Red Sea," S&P said in an analysis.

"Any Iranian closure of the Strait of Hormuz would affect not only its own exports but also those of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait and Qatar, potentially removing over 17 million b/d of crude oil from global markets," added the analysis, saying that Saudi Arabia and the UAE have pipelines that can circumvent the strait.

Analysts expect oil prices to skyrocket and surpass \$100 a barrel if Iran decides to close the passage.

Euronews

Trump's tariffs may reduce German exports to US: Report

Berling, Germany - US President Donald Trump's tariffs may lead to a more than 38% reduction in German exports to the United States, according to German think-tank the ifo Institute's latest report.

The German manufacturing industry is expected to shrink 2.8% if the current standoff in tariff negotiations between Washington and the European Union ends and the sweeping US tariffs are applied to the bloc and Germany. The report found that German exports to the US will fall 38.5% while German exports to China will decline 2.8% in this scenario.

Germany's auto and pharma-



ceutical sectors are also expected to be hit. The auto sector is expected to lose up to 6% of its added value and the pharmaceutical sector may lose up to 9%. Meanwhile, the services and agriculture sectors are expected to grow 0.4% due to tariffs.

The institute bases its esti-

mates on the possible reimposition of reciprocal tariffs that were announced on April 2 as a 90-day tariff pause and negotiation grace period end on July 9.

After July 9, EU exports to the US will be hit with 50% tariffs.

The ifo Institute considered the 25% tariffs on steel, alu-

The report found that German exports to the US will fall 38.5% while German exports to China will decline 2.8%

minum, automobiles, auto parts, pharmaceuticals and electronic products while making the estimates and excluded retaliatory tariffs by the EU against US imports. The US was the largest trading partner of Germany in 2024 with a trade volume of over 250 billion (\$290 billion).

CEO of Dubai Chambers elected to International Chamber of Commerce

Dubai, UAE - The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) has elected Mohammad Ali Rashed Lootah, President and CEO of Dubai Chambers, as a member of its Executive Board, reinforcing Dubai's leadership in advancing global trade, driving business growth, and fostering international partnerships.

The ICC is the world's largest business organisation, representing a network of 45mn companies ranging from small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to multinational corporations (MNCs) that collectively employ over one billion people in more than 170 countries.

Founded in Paris in 1919, the ICC serves as the voice of the global business community. The value of merchandise trade conducted through its membership network exceeds US\$17.5tn annually, with the organisation maintaining a presence in over 100 countries through its various national committees.

The appointment of Dubai Chambers' President and CEO to the ICC Executive Board reflects Dubai's prominent role in driving global cooperation, as well as building constructive partner-



ships that advance global trade and strengthen collaboration between business communities worldwide.

The move further consolidates Dubai's status as a hub for shaping the future of global trade, facilitating business activity, and influencing international economic policy.

The appointment reaffirms the global community's confidence in Dubai's unique economic model, which combines an ambitious vision with flexible legislation, strong public-private sector collaboration, and robust support for business growth. It also reflects the emirate's deep international ties and global position among the world's leading centres for

economic decision-making.

The ICC plays a vital role in promoting global trade growth and shaping international economic policy in collaboration with local and global institutions. The organisation is instrumental in establishing the rules governing international commercial transactions and the global economy.

Lootah commented, "Dubai is continuing to advance its efforts to strengthen international economic cooperation and enhance cross-border trade flows, with a strong focus on developing a dynamic global ecosystem that fosters private sector growth and promotes a more competitive business environment."

WAM

EDGE, CS Group to collaborate on tactical projects

Abu Dhabi, UAE - EDGE, one of the world's leading advanced technology and defence groups, and CS Group - part of Sopra Steria, the European tech leader - specialising in the design, development, and implementation of tactical communication solutions and information systems, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on an advanced tactical communications project.

Signed at the International Paris Airshow 2025 by Waleid Al Mesmari, President - Space & Cyber Technologies, EDGE, and Pierre Lopez, Chief Executive Officer of CS Group, the MoU lays the foundation for the integration of an operational command system with a tactical data network, enabling the development of a world-class sovereign solution.

BankDhofar pioneers hybrid fleet transition

In a landmark move for the sultanate's financial industry, BankDhofar has announced the transition of its operational vehicle fleet to hybrid electric models, becoming the first bank in Oman to adopt this sustainability-driven initiative.

This step reinforces the bank's position as a leader in environmental innovation and aligns with the national goals outlined in Oman Vision 2040, a press release said.

The transition involves replacing the bank's existing petrol-powered vehicles with 25 Hybrid cars, recognised for their superior fuel economy and lower carbon emissions. These vehicles emit just 98g of carbon dioxide per kilometre, a significant reduction from the 167g emitted by the previously used models. This shift translates into a 41 per cent decrease in emissions per vehicle.

BankDhofar estimates that its new fleet will collectively avoid over 76,000 kilograms of carbon dioxide emissions each year, equivalent to the environmental benefit of planting nearly 1,900 trees annually. Over a five-year period, this reduction will amount to approximately 380,880kg of CO₂, effectively



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matching the environmental benefit of removing 83 conventional gasoline-powered vehicles from the road for a full year.

Commenting on the milestone, Ammar Askari, head of

Customer Experience and Sustainability, stated, "This transition reflects our resolve to lead by example. By cutting emissions by 76 tonnes annually, we're not just reducing our carbon footprint—we're investing

in Oman's future." He added, "The Hybrid cars efficiency proves that eco-friendly choices can also drive operational excellence. This is a win for our planet and our stakeholders."

The initiative underscores

BankDhofar's strategic commitment to sustainability, a value enshrined at every level of its operations. As detailed in its 2024 Sustainability Report, the bank has institutionalised Environmental, Social, and Gover-

nance (ESG) principles across all tiers of leadership, ensuring that sustainability is not a side project but a core business priority. The hybrid vehicle rollout is the latest in a series of measures designed to help BankDhofar contribute meaningfully to Oman's transition to a Net Zero economy by 2050, in line with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Beyond its internal operations, BankDhofar continues to invest in green finance, energy efficiency, water conservation, and waste reduction initiatives, demonstrating that responsible banking is not only possible but essential in today's financial landscape. This first-mover step also positions the bank favourably among customers and investors who increasingly prioritize climate-conscious practices, while ensuring it remains ahead of potential future regulations such as carbon taxation or emissions mandates.

Through initiatives like this, BankDhofar continues to reinforce its identity as a forward-thinking, sustainability-led financial institution, committed to creating long-term value for its customers, shareholders, and the communities it serves.

Bank Muscat bags 'best bank for investment solutions'

Bank Muscat continues to demonstrate its leadership as one of the top asset managers in the MENA region with Assets Under Management (AUM) of US\$3.5bn as of March 31. In this context, the bank announced that it has recently been awarded The Best Bank for Alternative Investments at the Euromoney Private Banking Awards 2025.

Speaking on the award, Khalifa Abdullah al Hatmi, deputy general manager - Investment Banking and Capital Markets at Bank Muscat, said, "We are tremendously thrilled at being recognised with the best bank in Oman for offering alternative investment solutions to individual and corporate customers. We thank Euromoney for this prestigious recognition, which stands as a testament to the excellent performance of our Asset Management team and, in specific, to our capabilities in managing Real Estate across asset classes as well as local and regional markets."

"This recognition also reaffirms the trust of the international financial community in the Bank's performance and

the unparalleled products and sustainable services it provides. We aim to continue developing contemporary and customised solutions to accommodate the unique requirements of our customers by consistently focusing on innovation, agility and customer-centricity in all of our engagements and solutions. We thank all customers for their continuous trust in the services that Bank Muscat is constantly providing."

Bank Muscat's Asset Management Department (AMD) has a track record of managing funds and portfolios since 1993. This strong position in the local and regional markets has been achieved due to the solid performance of its funds that are managed by a professional and the most experienced team of fund managers. The bank, represented through its AMD, offers a wide range of investment solutions covering equities, fixed income, real estate and alternate investments. Real Estate investments is at the core of its expertise with, AMD managing more than US\$450mn of real estate assets.



Ford Taurus floats summer benefits

Own the Ford Taurus now and get exclusive benefits including 5 years/100,000km Service (whichever is earlier), 5 Years/100,000km manufacturer's warranty, free registration, free 3M paint protection Film and free accessory package. The offer ends on July 23.

Bold, refined and effortlessly powerful, the Ford Taurus redefines what it means to drive in style. With a design that exudes modern elegance and a performance that commands attention, the Taurus has been crafted to elevate your drive, turning every journey into a memorable experience, a press release said.

From its first impression to the last mile, the Taurus capti-



vates. Its aerodynamic form is accentuated by sleek 19-inch polished alloy wheels, a distinctive chrome-accented grille, signature dual exhausts and a

flowing hood-line that speaks volumes of its confidence. LED auto high beams, a futuristic two-piece headlamp design and power-deployable door handles

not only add character but bring unmatched functionality.

The Taurus roars with purpose. Its 2ltr EcoBoost engine offers an exhilarating 239hp and

382Nm of torque, delivering punchy acceleration and smooth cruising power through an advanced 8-speed automatic transmission. Whether you choose to drive in Normal, Sport, or Eco mode, you will enjoy the perfect fusion of thrilling performance and fuel efficiency, clocking up to 15.3 km/ltr.

Slide into the cabin and step into a sanctuary where luxury and comfort meet cutting-edge design. With 10-way power-adjustable driver seating and dual-zone automatic climate control, every ride becomes satisfying. With noise-reducing materials and customisable ambient lighting in seven hues, the Taurus offers a peaceful environment.

Škoda Auto announces Q-Auto as distributor in Qatar

Škoda Auto has announced Q-Auto as its new exclusive distributor in Qatar, emphasising the Czech brand's commitment to one of the region's most dynamic economies.

A brand-new showroom, which is set to launch in the second half of 2025, will reflect Q-Auto's strong reputation of delivering high-quality, customer-oriented mobility solutions, a press release said.

Škoda Auto's partnership with Q-Auto will ensure the brand's presence in the market is built on a foundation of trust, expertise, and exceptional service. Q-Auto, a respected name in the Qatari



automotive sector, brings deep market knowledge and operational sales and aftersales excellence to this partnership. Moreover, all existing warranties for Škoda cars will continue to re-

main valid, guaranteeing peace of mind for all customers.

New-car buyers in Qatar can now choose from five high-value models - the Kodiaq, Škoda's flagship seven-seat SUV cele-

brated for its space and versatility; the Karoq, a well-rounded compact SUV that balances practicality with style; the Kushaq, an agile, city-focused SUV; the Octavia, a global favourite renowned for performance, practicality and comfort; and, launching soon, the all-new Superb, whose generous cabin and efficiency make it an ideal choice for Qatar's growing fleet market. Collectively, these models showcase Škoda's hallmarks of European craftsmanship, safety and Simply Clever features that simplify everyday driving.

Lukas Honzak, managing di-

rector of Škoda Middle East, commented, "Our partnership with Q-Auto, which brings a strong reputation for service excellence through its previous work with Volkswagen and Audi, is a major milestone for the brand in Qatar. This partnership fully supports our regional expansion plan and lays the foundation for long-term growth here. With rising demand for intelligent, value-driven vehicles, Qatar offers an ideal platform for Škoda to showcase its top-tier products. It also supports our target of achieving 10,000 annual deliveries across the Middle East in the coming years."

UTAS Al Mussanah launches annual 'Summer of the Future' programme

The University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) Al Mussanah has launched its annual summer programme under the theme 'Summer of the Future', organised by the Department of Continuing Education and Community Service.

This initiative reflects the university's mission to connect education with real-world experiences and strengthen its community role in building an innovative knowledge society, a press release said.

The programme aims to make productive use of the summer

break by offering a diverse selection of interactive workshops and training courses designed to enrich participants' knowledge and develop their skills in areas such as technology, science, innovation, critical thinking, grammar, leadership, entrepreneurship, and languages.

With around 45 training programmes delivered by a team of academic and industry experts, the initiative targets the university community, public and private sector employees, and the wider public interested in personal/professional development.



Dr Khalifa Salim al Hatmi, head of the Department of Continuing Education and Community Service, emphasised the university's ongoing efforts to reinforce its social responsibility and community engagement.

"We are pleased to launch the 'Summer of the Future' programme, which runs until mid-August. It is tailored for students, graduates, employees, and anyone eager to enhance their skills and explore new paths for personal and professional growth," he stated.

The opening day saw active

participation, with nearly 100 attendees joining sessions including a Beginner English Skills Workshop and a specialized IELTS preparation course, where participants were divided into two groups based on their proficiency levels to ensure effective, needs-based learning.

'Summer of the Future' stands out as one of the university's leading annual initiatives, reinforcing its commitment to empowering the community through education, fostering innovation, and cultivating a collaborative learning environment.

Shura Council participates in GCC legislative heads meeting

Shura Council Chairman stresses the responsibility of parliaments and legislative councils to uphold humanitarian principles and stand against aggressive policies that violate international law and the UN Charter.

The Shura Council participated on Monday in the Gulf-European Parliamentary Meeting held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, with the participation of the heads of Shura, National, and Parliamentary Councils of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, along with Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament, a press release said.

The meeting forms part of on-going efforts by both sides to activate channels of constructive dialogue and enhance cooperation on various shared concerns.

During the meeting, Khalid Hilal Al Maawali, chairman of the Shura Council and head of the delegation, delivered an address in which he stated, "The wise directives and forward-looking vision of the leaders of the GCC serve as a guiding compass for our legislative bodies in such forums. These gatherings aim to strengthen cohesion among our nations and institutions, deepen partnerships with regional and international counterparts, and work towards common goals. Inspired by this vision, we seek to enhance coordination, exchange experiences, and reinforce bilateral ties that contribute to economic and developmental integration, supporting a more prosperous and stable future for our countries."

He commended the outcomes of the joint final commu-



The joint meeting focused on food and energy security, climate change, the shift to renewable and clean energy sources, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, digital transformation, and the role of advanced technologies in sustainable development

niqué of the first EU-GCC Leaders' Summit, titled 'Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity,' and lauded the results of the GCC-European Parliamentary Committee meeting with the Delegation for Relations with the Arabian Peninsula in the European Parliament. He also emphasised the importance of this parliamentary channel in promoting ties between the EU and the GCC, particularly through enhanced cooperation in economic and development sectors

to achieve sustainable growth.

Maawali further highlighted the need to expand collaboration across areas such as climate change, regional security, and humanitarian assistance in crisis regions. He also called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, unimpeded humanitarian access, and serious efforts to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state, in line with international resolutions and the Arab Peace Initia-

tive—ensuring the right of peoples to live in freedom, dignity, and safety, with full respect for fundamental human rights.

"We express our concern over the recent developments between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Israel, which threaten regional stability and undermine international efforts—particularly those led by the United States and Iran—to reach a peaceful agreement. We believe that the responsibility of parliaments and legislative councils

extends beyond lawmaking and oversight; it includes defending humanitarian values and opposing aggressive policies that violate international law and the UN Charter. Therefore, we urge national, regional, and international parliaments to take clear and responsible stances that contribute to de-escalation, support peaceful solutions, and protect peoples' rights to security, sovereignty, and stability."

The joint meeting focused on key priority areas, including food and energy security, climate change, the shift to renewable and clean energy sources, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, digital transformation, and the role of advanced technologies in pro-

moting sustainable development.

Participants praised the strength of the strategic partnership between the GCC and the European Union, founded on mutual respect, cooperation, and shared interests aimed at enhancing security, stability, development, and prosperity for both sides.

They also stressed the importance of intensifying joint efforts to develop cooperative frameworks for addressing urgent challenges such as climate change, energy security, sustainable development, counterterrorism, and promoting universal human values of coexistence and tolerance.

NBO launches Summer Rewards campaign

The National Bank of Oman (NBO) has announced launching an exclusive summer campaign targeting Debit, Credit, or Badeel Travel Prepaid cardholders on international transactions.

Running until September 14, the campaign enables customers to maximise spending while earning rewards with every swipe. Applicable to all international point-of-sale and e-commerce purchases, it rewards top monthly spenders with NBO Rewards points, a press release said.

Each month, 30 high-spending customers will receive RO50 worth of NBO reward points, with 18 debit cardholders, 10 credit cardholders, and 2 Badeel prepaid travel cardholders. Upon the campaign's closure, the top 10 overall spenders will receive a grand prize of RO100 in the form of NBO reward points each. In addition, 3 highest spenders will receive a travel voucher worth RO500 to a destination of their choice.

The campaign is open to all retail NBO cardholders, including staff, and is designed to boost usage, reactivate dormant cards, and provide value for those travelling or shopping internationally. Customers can participate through using their cards abroad.

Sohar Aluminium to fund Bahla Cultural Centre for Science and Innovation

Sohar Aluminium signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bahla Cultural Centre for Science and Innovation to support funding the construction of the centre, being a cultural landmark aimed at enriching the cultural and intellectual landscape of the Wilayat of Bahla in Al Dakhliyah Governorate. This initiative falls within the company's ongoing commitment to its social responsibility and support for sustainable projects, a press release said.

The MoU signing ceremony was held in the presence of Sheikh Said bin Ali al Nuaimi, Wali of Bahla, and attended by other officials and representatives from both parties. The MoU was signed by Jameel Mohammed Shakeel, Corporate Communications and Social Responsibility manager at Sohar Aluminium, and Hilal bin Saeed al Yahyaei, chairman of the cen-



tre's Founders Board.

Under this agreement, Sohar Aluminium will contribute to funding the construction for Bahla Cultural Centre for Science and Innovation. The Centre is being built over an area of a 2,000sqm and consists of two floors. It will include multipurpose halls for meetings and exhibitions, a library, and other facilities to support community

activities.

Ahmed bin Mohammed al Kharusi, general manager of Human Resources and Corporate Affairs at Sohar Aluminium, stated that this initiative reflects the company's commitment to supporting sustainable community development. "Culture is an integral part of a community's identity, and at Sohar Aluminium, we are proud of our

partnership with Bahla Cultural Centre for Science and Innovation, given its positive impact on promoting identity, culture, and preserving authentic Omani heritage," he said.

Yahyaei commended Sohar Aluminium's support to this project. He noted that completion of the centre's building will help expanding its cultural programmes and community events.

The Chedi Muscat earns global concierge acclaim

The Chedi Muscat proudly announces that two of its senior concierge team members, Sulaiman al Hasni and Emad al Hasani, have been awarded the prestigious Les Clefs d'Or Golden Keys, the highest international distinction for concierge professionals.

This accolade recognises outstanding service, discretion, and dedication within the global hospitality industry. With this achievement, Sulaiman and Emad join an elite group of concierges across more than 80 countries, marking a proud moment for Oman on the world stage, a press release said.

Positioned between the Al Hajar Mountains and the Gulf of Oman, The Chedi Muscat has long stood as a symbol of refined Omani luxury and cultural authenticity. Known for their in-depth knowledge and personalised guest experiences, Sul-



aiman and Emad are regarded as cultural ambassadors who elevate each guest journey through their insight and professionalism.

The recognition also reflects Chedi Hospitality's wider commitment to nurturing local talent

and empowering Omani professionals to thrive on a global level. Through continuous investment in training, mentorship, and cultural exchange, the brand remains dedicated to fostering excellence and giving back to the communities it serves.

Discovery Channel celebrates 40th anniversary of iconic storytelling

Discovery Channel is commemorating its 40th anniversary by honouring its long-held mission to inspire curiosity and wonder about the natural world.

The celebration will take place throughout the year, across both US and international markets, and will feature special programming, social media extensions, consumer products, and a new brand spot, a press release said.

Warner Bros Discovery is also partnering with the Arbor Day Foundation to plant over 40,000 trees globally, helping support biodiversity and make communities healthier around the world. A special 40th Anniversary Collection, a testament to the brand's commitment to sparking curiosity and expanding the boundaries of discovery, will be available on discovery+, along



As part of the 40th anniversary celebration, Discovery invites viewers to experience the '40 Years of Discovery' pop-up channel on OSN tv, highlighting Gold Rush

with treasured legacy content.

As part of the 40th anniversary celebration, Discovery invites viewers to experience the '40 Years of Discovery' pop-up channel on OSN tv, highlight-

ing one of its most iconic franchises - Gold Rush. From adventures to mining missions, fans can relive the grit, glory, and gold that made the series a global phenomenon.

US: SC paves way for Trump admin to restart third-party deportations

Houston, US - The US Supreme Court ruled on Monday that the Trump administration can continue to deport migrants to third-party countries, lifting a lower court's injunction pausing those deportations.

In the unsigned order that did not explain its reasoning, the nation's highest court put a hold on US District Judge Brian Murphy's ruling that said migrants being deported to nations other than their country of origin should have a 'meaningful opportunity' to bring claims that they would be at risk of torture, persecution or death if they were sent there.

The Trump administration has made deals to deport migrants to countries like South Sudan, where there are documented human rights violations. The Supreme Court's ruling now paves the way for the government to quickly remove migrants from the United States to those countries without any legal challenges.

The three liberal justices on the 6-3 conservative-majority high court said their colleagues were 'rewarding lawlessness'.

"Apparently, the Court finds the idea that thousands will suffer violence in far flung locales more palatable than the remote possibility that a District Court exceeded its remedial powers when it ordered the Government to provide notice and process to which the plaintiffs are constitutionally and statutorily entitled," Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote in her dissent.

"Rather than allowing our lower court colleagues to man-



The nation's highest court put a hold on US District Judge Brian Murphy's ruling

The Supreme Court ruling now paves the way for the Trump administration to quickly remove migrants from the US to countries, where there are human rights violations, without legal challenges

age this high-stakes litigation with the care and attention it plainly requires, this Court now intervenes to grant the Government emergency relief from an order it has repeatedly defied,"

she added.

The Trump administration will now be able to restart its third-party deportations as the case returns to a federal appeals court, but the final decision could ultimately end up back at the hands of the Supreme Court.

"The ramifications of the Supreme Court's order will be horrifying," Trina Realmuto, executive director of National Immigration Litigation Alliance - one of the groups that filed the lawsuit - said in a statement. "It strips away critical due process protections that have been protecting our class members from torture and death," she continued.

The plaintiffs identified in the lawsuit are from Cuba, Honduras,

Ecuador and Guatemala.

Funding Florida's detention centres

Meanwhile, US Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said on Monday that the federal government will fund Florida's plan to establish immigration detention centres, including the proposed 'Alligator Alcatraz' site in the Everglades.

Noem said Florida's immigration detention centres will be largely funded by the Federal

Demand for closure of Guantanamo facility

Washington, D.C., US - US Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib led 15 members of Congress in a letter to the Trump administration on Monday, demanding the permanent closure of the US detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

"We write to express our outrage at the ongoing and recently proposed expansion of detention of immigrants at Guantanamo Bay," the lawmaker wrote in the letter to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem and Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth.

The letter followed recent reports which said the Trump administration is planning to send up to 9,000 undocumented migrants to Guantanamo. The move is part of

the president's crackdown on illegal immigration with a push for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids to net more arrests and deportations of undocumented migrants.

Stressing that for over two decades, Guantanamo Bay has been 'synonymous with injustice, torture, and Islamophobia', the lawmakers said that President Donald Trump's decision to hold thousands of immigrants in a facility 'notorious for human rights abuses is morally abhorrent and unlawful'.

"As long as the United States maintains a detention facility at Guantanamo, future administrations will continue to use it to try and deprive non-citizens of meaningful access to the courts," the letter said.

Zelenskyy says Russia could attack a NATO member within five years

London, UK - The Ukrainian president has said that Russia could attack a NATO country within five years, adding that the alliance's plan to increase defence spending to 5% of GDP is 'very slow'.

In an interview with Sky News, aired on Tuesday, Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he believes that Russia could attack a NATO member state within five years to test Article 5 - an attack against one NATO member is considered an attack against all.

When asked if this could happen within months, Zelenskyy said he does not 'believe' (Russian President Vladimir Putin) is ready'.

"We believe that, starting



Volodymyr Zelenskyy

from 2030, Putin can have significantly greater capabilities," he noted, referring to plans for NATO members to increase defence spending to 5% of GDP by 2035. "Today, Ukraine is holding him up, he has no time to drill

the army," said the Ukrainian president

Saying that Putin 'needs a pause', and needs 'sanctions to be lifted', he added: '10 years is a very long time. He will have a new army ready (by then).'

For the Ukrainian president, sanctions against Russia are not working, as some countries are allowing dual-use components used in the production of drones and missiles to still make their way into Russia.

His remarks came during his visit to London on Monday where he held talks with UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, focused on bolstering defence co-operation.

During the visit, the UK and

Ukraine signed a 'landmark agreement' to share battlefield technology.

The deal will boost Ukraine's drone production and link up the UK's defence industry 'with the cutting-edge technology being developed on the front lines in Ukraine', according to a statement by the UK Prime Minister's Office.

Meanwhile, Zelenskyy on Monday slammed what he called an 'absolutely insane' Russian missile strike that hit a lyceum in Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy, in the southern Odesa region, killing at least two staff members and possibly trapping others beneath the rubble.

Anadolu Agency

Resettlement needed for 2.5mn refugees in 2026, says UNHCR

Geneva, Switzerland - The UN refugee agency on Tuesday projected that 2.5mn refugees will need resettlement in 2026, according to its newly released report, amid shrinking quotas.

While the figure remains substantial, it marks a decline from the estimated 2.9mn for 2025, largely due to voluntary returns by Syrian refugees. "We are seeing some people pull out of resettlement processes in favour of plans to go home to rebuild," said UNHCR spokesperson Shabia Mantoo during a press briefing in Geneva.

The highest resettlement needs are anticipated among Afghan (573,400), Syrian (442,400), South Sudanese



(258,200), Sudanese (246,800), Rohingya (233,300), and Congolese (179,500) refugees, Mantoo noted. She added that host countries requiring the most resettlement support include Iran, Türkiye, Pakistan, Ethiopia, and Uganda.

Mantoo stressed the impor-

ance of resettlement as a life-saving alternative to perilous journeys and said that resettlement offers 'a concrete alternative to dangerous journeys, showcases meaningful international solidarity and fosters partnerships with host countries'.

Anadolu Agency

Axiom 4 mission to International Space Station targets Wednesday launch

Florida, US - NASA, Axiom Space, and SpaceX are targeting 2:31am EDT on Wednesday (Noon IST) for launch of the fourth private astronaut mission to the International Space Station, Axiom Mission 4.

The mission will lift off from Launch Complex 39A at NASA's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida. The crew will travel to the orbiting laboratory on a new SpaceX Dragon spacecraft after launching on the company's Falcon 9 rocket. The targeted docking time is approximately 7am Thursday, June 26.

NASA had earlier stood down from a proposed launch date of June 22. According to the ISS, additional time was needed to evaluate station operations following

recent repair work in the aft segment of the Zvezda service module. Due to the highly interconnected nature of the orbital laboratory's systems, NASA is reviewing relevant data to ensure readiness for the arrival of additional crew members.

Highlighting the global significance of the mission, ISS noted that the agencies 'appreciate the historic nature of this mission for the nations of India, Poland, and Hungary, as well as the world'.

The four-member crew remains in quarantine in Florida and is prepared to launch once the station is cleared to receive them. Axiom Mission 4 will be commanded by Peggy Whitson, a former NASA astronaut and now Axiom Space's Director of



Human Spaceflight. Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla from ISRO will serve as the mission's pilot. The mission specialists are

ESA project astronaut Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski from Poland and Tibor Kapu from Hungary.

SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket and Dragon spacecraft remain healthy on the launch pad at Launch Complex 39A at NASA's

Kennedy Space Centre in Florida.

According to Axiom Space, the Ax-4 mission will 'realise the return' to human spaceflight for India, Poland, and Hungary, marking each nation's first government-sponsored flight in more than 40 years.

While this is the second human spaceflight mission in history for these countries, it will be the first time all three will execute a mission aboard the International Space Station. This historic mission highlights how Axiom Space is redefining access to low-Earth orbit and elevating national space programmes globally. Ax-4 will be the second commercial spaceflight mission made up of government and ESA-sponsored national astronauts.

The Ax-4 research complement includes around 60 scientific studies and activities representing 31 countries, including the US, India, Poland, Hungary, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Nigeria, UAE, and nations across Europe. This will be the most research and science-related activities conducted on an Axiom Space mission aboard the International Space Station to date, underscoring the mission's global significance and collaborative nature to advance microgravity research in low-Earth orbit (LEO), as per Axiom Space.

The mission emphasises scientific portfolios led by the US, India, Poland (in partnership with ESA), and Hungary.

ANI

Trump warns Israel not to attack Iran, says both sides broke ceasefire pact

Istanbul, Turkey - Israeli war-planes launched a new round of airstrikes inside Iran after a ceasefire on Tuesday despite US President Donald Trump's call for Tel Aviv not to attack Tehran.

Fighter jets struck a radar installation near the capital Tehran, Israeli public broadcaster KAN reported.

Iran's Mehr News Agency confirmed Israeli airstrikes in Babolsar, a coastal city in northern Iran's Mazandaran province.

State-run Press TV also reported that two explosions were heard in north of Tehran following Israeli airstrikes.

The attacks came despite Trump's call for Israel to refrain from launching airstrikes against Tehran, after the Israeli army claimed a missile attack from Iran after a ceasefire that took effect between the two sides early on Tuesday.

Trump voices displeasure

Trump on Tuesday voiced displeasure with Israel, saying both Tel Aviv and Tehran violated a ceasefire agreement.

"They don't know what they're doing," Trump told reporters at the White House before departing for the NATO summit in The Hague, Netherlands, noting that he needs to get Israel to 'calm down'.

The statement came after reports of violations of the Iran-Israel



The ceasefire was initially announced by Trump, who said it would involve a phased halt to operations - with Iran beginning it first and Israel following 12 hours later. A full end to hostilities was to be declared at the 24-hour mark

rael ceasefire.

A ceasefire between Israel and Iran came into effect at 0400GMT on Tuesday, ending 'the 12-day war'.

However, Israeli Defence

Minister Israel Katz ordered his army earlier on Tuesday to launch intense strikes on Tehran, claiming that Iran violated the truce. Iran denied the claim, vowing a resolute response to any

new strikes.

Trump warned Israel against bombing Iran, calling it a 'major violation' of a ceasefire agreement he announced earlier. "Israel. Do not drop those bombs. If

you do it is a major violation, Bring your pilots home, now!" Trump said in a post on his social media platform Truth Social.

In a later post, Trump assured: "Israel is not going to attack Iran. All planes will turn around and head home, while doing a friendly 'Plane Wave' to Iran. Nobody will be hurt, the Ceasefire is in effect!," he said in another social media post.

Trump also declared that Iran will never rebuild its nuclear fa-

cilities, which were destroyed in Israeli and US attacks over the past few days.

The ceasefire was initially announced by Trump, who said it would involve a phased halt to operations - with Iran beginning the ceasefire first and Israel following 12 hours later. A full end to hostilities was to be declared at the 24-hour mark.

On Monday, Iran launched a barrage of missiles at the US military's Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar,

marking a dramatic escalation in tensions following US strikes on three Iranian nuclear sites on Sunday.

The US attacks came as part of a US-backed Israeli military assault on Iran that began on June 13 and prompted Tehran to launch retaliatory attacks on Israel.

Trump not for a 'regime change'

Trump also said he does not favour regime change in Iran, warning that such a shift would cause 'chaos', Sky News reported on Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One en route to a NATO summit in The Hague, Trump said he does not wish to see regime change in Iran, arguing the transition would 'make chaos'.

The statement represents a shift from Trump's former position, as over the weekend he suggested he was open to the idea of regime change in Iran, arguing that the current government hinders the country's development.

"It's not politically correct to use the term, 'Regime Change', but if the current Iranian Regime is unable to make Iran great again, why wouldn't there be a Regime change??? MIGA!!!" he wrote on social media on Sunday.

Anadolu Agency

From Gaza to Iran, Benjamin Netanyahu waging wars for his own political survival: Experts

Istanbul, Turkey - As a fragile ceasefire, or at least the possibility of one, emerges between Israel and Iran, scepticism abounds over whether any sort of truce could actually be sustained, with observers pointing to Tel Aviv's persistent violations of similar deals for Gaza and Lebanon.



Another major cause for doubt is Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's own calculations, which analysts suggest are driven by the sole objective of political survival as he faces growing domestic unpopularity, corruption trials, and a weakening coalition.

Wars have evidently become a key part of Netanyahu's survival strategy, with Israel's attacks on Iran coming shortly after the premier narrowly survived no-confidence votes that threatened to dissolve parliament and trigger early elections.

For one of them, only a last-minute deal for mandatory military service with ultra-Orthodox parties prevented his government's collapse, showing just how thin the political ice is getting under Netanyahu.

Israeli academic Neve Gordon believes Israel's decision to attack Iran was largely driven by Netanyahu's pride and his desire to re-establish himself as a 'successful leader'.

"I do think it's about hubris. It's about his hubris and about Israel's hubris as a member state in the Middle East," Gordon told Anadolu.

Following Hamas' October 7, 2023 attacks, Netanyahu recognised his historical reputation had been severely damaged, prompting his deadly and drastic actions, Gordon said.

"He launched a genocidal war on the Palestinian people in Gaza in order to dismantle Hamas,"

said the academic.

According to Gordon, Netanyahu believes the 'only way to come back to history as a winner ... is to dismantle the nuclear programme in Iran'.

This was reflected in the official Israeli statement put out on

For months now, experts have argued that Netanyahu has deliberately prolonged Israel's war on Gaza to maintain support from his far-right political allies

Tuesday to accept US President Donald Trump's ceasefire call, which claimed that Israel had achieved the 'operation's goals' and 'removed the double existential threat in the nuclear and the ballistic missile areas'.

Gordon emphasised that Netanyahu, in the first place, launched the Iranian offensive despite US intelligence and other assessments contradicting Israeli claims that Tehran was close to

attaining nuclear weapons.

"Even though he knew in advance that such a war could lead to scores, if not hundreds, of Israeli dead and could develop into a regional war impacting the whole world, he decided to go ahead with it to ensure his place in history is marked by this so-called success," said the expert.

For months now, experts have argued that Netanyahu has deliberately prolonged Israel's genocidal war on Gaza to maintain support from his far-right political allies. "It's clear that if he decided to stop it, some coalition members in his government would leave, and his government would fall," Gordon said.

If Netanyahu's government collapses, he added, new elections would follow, a scenario he seeks to avoid due to ongoing corruption trials.

Gordon, a professor of international law and human rights at Queen Mary University of London, highlighted Netanyahu's declining popularity prior to the Iranian conflict.

"Polls did not show that he was going up, and it was not clear that if there were elections, even after 21 months of genocidal violence against the Palestinians ... he would win the elections."

Anadolu Agency

Israeli forces kill 50 more Gazans

Gaza City, Palestine - At least 50 civilians, most of them people trying to reach food, were killed, and over 200 others injured in fresh Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip on Tuesday, medics said.

A medical source told Anadolu that 37 people lost their lives in Israeli army fire while waiting near an aid distribution point in the Netzarim Corridor in central Gaza and in a strike on a house in eastern Gaza City.

Al-Awda Hospital confirmed that it had received 146 people injured, including 62 critically, by Israeli fire at an aid distribution point in Salah Al-Din Street in central Gaza.



At least 503 Palestinian aid seekers have been killed and 3,000 others injured by Israeli fire in Gaza since May 27

According to witnesses, several bodies are still scattered on the ground near the Netzarim Corridor with medics unable to recover them due to the Israeli shelling.

Eight more people were killed in an Israeli strike on a home in the al-Zaytoun neighbourhood of Gaza City, medics said.

Three other people were killed

and others injured by Israeli shelling on a tent sheltering displaced civilians in northern Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip, a medical source said.

The source added that the bodies of two people killed in previous Israeli attacks were retrieved in Khan Younis.

According to the UN Human Rights Office, at least 503 Pales-

tinian aid seekers have been killed and 3,000 others injured by Israeli fire in Gaza since May 27.

Rejecting international calls for a ceasefire, the Israeli army has pursued a brutal offensive against Gaza since October 2023, killing nearly 56,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children.

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.

Israel also faces a genocide case at the International Court of Justice for its war on the enclave.

Anadolu Agency

US judge blocks Trump order barring Harvard from enrolling foreign students

Washington, D.C., US - A federal judge has indefinitely blocked the US government from barring Harvard University from enrolling new international students, local media reported on Monday.

Judge Allison Burroughs of the US District Court in Massachusetts ruled that Donald Trump's presidential proclamation was part of what she described as 'a retaliatory campaign' against the university, according to CNN.

"This case is about core constitutional rights that must be safeguarded: freedom of thought, freedom of expression, and freedom of speech," Burroughs wrote



in a 44-page opinion.

She warned that the government's efforts to 'control a reputable academic institution' posed a threat to democracy.

The Trump administration had argued that Harvard failed to properly vet incoming international students and presented the policy as a national security

measure.

However, the court rejected that justification.

Burroughs had previously blocked a similar attempt by the Department of Homeland Security and the State Department to revoke student visas for international scholars at Harvard - a move that would have forced thousands to leave the US or transfer.

The ruling also affects Trump's broader effort to withhold more than US\$2bn in federal funding from Harvard, primarily allocated for medical and scientific research.

Anadolu Agency

INDIA

Airlines announce resumption of flights after disruption amid West Asia tensions

New Delhi - Amid escalating tensions in West Asia, Air India announced on Tuesday it will progressively resume flights to the region starting from Tuesday as airspaces gradually reopen in certain parts of the Middle East.

The airlines also said that flight operations to and from Europe will also resume today.

In a statement, Air India spokesperson said: "As airspaces gradually reopen in certain parts of the Middle East, Air India will progressively resume flights to the region starting today, with most operations to and from the Middle East resuming from June 25. Flights to and from Europe, previously cancelled, are also being progressively reinstated from today, while services to and from the East Coast of the US and Canada will resume at the earliest opportunity. Some flights may experience delays or cancellations due to consequential impacts and extended re-routings/flight times, but we are committed to minimising disruptions and restoring our schedule integrity. Air India will continue to avoid airspaces assessed as unsafe at any given time."



Indigo issues travel advisory

Meanwhile, IndiGo Airlines issued a travel advisory on Tuesday, confirming that flight operations to and from Gulf countries had stabilised and were operating as per schedule. However, the airline also alerted

passengers about possible delays on some international routes due to continued airspace restrictions over Iran.

In a post on X, IndiGo wrote: "The flight operations into, out of, and through the Gulf countries have stabilised and are operating as scheduled."

Despite this, the airline stated that certain flights may still experience delays or route changes due to the restricted Iranian airspace. "However, as airspace over Iran remains restricted, some flights may take alternate routes, which could result in longer travel times," the state-

IndiGo Airlines issued a travel advisory, confirming that flight operations to and from Gulf countries had stabilised. However, the airline also alerted passengers about possible delays

ment added.

Passengers have been advised to monitor their flight status closely to stay informed about any last-minute changes or delays.

IndiGo further assured travellers of full support during their

journey. "We recommend keeping a close watch on your flight status for the latest updates. Rest assured, we are here to assist you and ensure smooth facilitation throughout your journey."

"Thank you for your continued understanding and trust as we work to bring you safely to your destination," according to the advisory.

Flight operations severely affected

Flight operations at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport have been severely affected since last night, with 48 cancellations reported across both arrivals and departures, according to airport sources.

Among the affected services, 28 were incoming flights and 20 were outbound, with national carrier Air India and low-cost operator IndiGo bearing the brunt of the disruptions.

Air India had 17 arrival and 10 departure cancellations, totalling 27 flights. IndiGo followed with eight arrival and seven departure cancellations, amounting to 15 flights. Other airlines, including global carriers, saw three arrivals and three departures cancelled.

ANI

HEAVY RAIN FLOODS SURAT



Commuters pass through a waterlogged road amid heavy rainfall, in Surat, Gujarat on Tuesday. Over 100mm of rain has blocked roads and led to waterlogging in several low-lying areas (ANI)

IAF evacuates Indians from Israel, Iran

New Delhi - A total of 268 Indian nationals were evacuated by the Indian Air Force under Operation Sindhu from Egypt in an effort to get citizens back home safe amid the Israel-Iran conflict. The IAF's C-17 aircraft landed in Delhi on Tuesday morning, and the passengers were welcomed by Minister of State L Murugan.

The spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, Randhir Jaiswal, informed about the flight in a post on X, adding: "268 Indian nationals who returned in the third flight from Israel were received by MoS Dr L Murugan. The IAF C-17 flight from Sharm-El-Sheikh, Egypt, landed in Delhi at 1100 hrs on 24th June."

He informed that a total of



Minister Pabitra Margherita welcomes a boy as he receives nationals evacuated from Iran, in New Delhi on Tuesday (ANI)

594 Indians have returned so far from Israel as part of Operation Sindhu.

Earlier, a total of 165 Indian nationals were evacuated by the Indian Air Force under Op-

eration Sindhu from Jordan in an effort to get citizens back home safely amid the Israel-Iran conflict.

"In response to heightened tensions in conflict-affected areas in West Asia, IAF C-17 aircraft commenced missions from Jordan and Egypt to extricate Indian nationals and citizens of friendly countries. The IAF remains committed as first responders to provide assistance within the country and across the globe in times of need," the Air Force said in a post on X.

Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that the safety and security of Indian nationals abroad remain the government's highest priority.

ANI

PIL filed in top court to ground Air India's Boeing fleet

New Delhi - A Public Interest Litigation plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking an interim suspension of all of Air India's Boeing flights following the fatal Air India crash in Ahmedabad on June 12 that killed 241 of the 242 passengers.

The plea has been filed by Advocate Ajay Bansal, who has sought a safety audit of all of Air India flights and those of other airlines to address systemic safety failures in Air India's operations, particularly its Boeing fleet.

The plea has raised several grounds, the foremost being the gross violation of Article 21 of the Constitution, which guarantees the Right to Life and Personal Liberty. The petitioner argues that passenger safety is an integral part of this right, and chronic maintenance failures, such as those evident in the present case, constitute an infringement of the same.

Further, the petition highlights a breach of statutory duties under the Aircraft Act and Rules, especially Rules 30 and 134, which mandate periodic airwor-



thiness and fitness checks. It alleges that Air India's conduct demonstrates clear non-compliance with these mandatory requirements. Additionally, the petitioner emphasises that the statutory obligation to conduct regular safety audits and provide adequate passenger facilities on international flights has not been met, resulting in a major accident and the loss of 241 passengers, including many aspiring doctors, thereby affecting families and

The plea has sought a safety audit of all of Air India flights and those of other airlines to address systemic safety failures in Air India's operations, particularly its Boeing fleet

communities at large.

The plea also asserts that there has been inadequate enforcement of safety regulations by the Directorate General of

tioning systems before take-off, routinely evade the oversight of these authorities, showing a failure to implement mandatory pre-flight procedures.

The petitioner highlights that the Supreme Court has, in the past, issued guidelines in similar public interest matters concerning safety in the transportation sector, such as in *MC Mehta v Union of India* (1987). Therefore, there is a pressing need to strictly enforce all rules, regulations and guidelines under the Aircraft Act, 1934; the Aircraft Rules, 1937; DGCA directions; Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR); advisory circulars; and international conventions such as the Montreal Convention, 1999, which establishes a carrier's duty of care, the plea adds.

On these grounds, the petitioner seeks interim reliefs, including the issuance of mandatory, time-bound guidelines for safety and operational checks, unannounced audits with public disclosure of findings and immediate grounding of any non-compliant aircraft.

ANI

Civil Aviation (DGCA) and Bureau of Civil Aviation Security.

The plea further alleges that systemic maintenance gaps, including malfunctioning air condi-

ICMR develops Nipah rapid detection kit with 100% accuracy

Pune, Maharashtra - The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has developed a portable test kit for detecting Nipah virus cases with 100% accuracy, which can provide results within 1-2 hours.

According to Dr Naveen Kumar, Director, ICMR-NIV, Pune: "Based on amplification of viral gene without the need for a specialised machine at the field level, it's 100% sensitive and specific."

This test can provide results in "1-2 hours", he said.

The Nipah virus is a Zoonotic virus that primarily spreads through fruit bats, and the virus has a 50% mortality rate, making it one of the most dangerous viral diseases.

The cost of the test is 250 rupees, and the name of this kit is Loop-mediated isothermal amplification (LAMP) assay for rapid detection of Nipah virus.

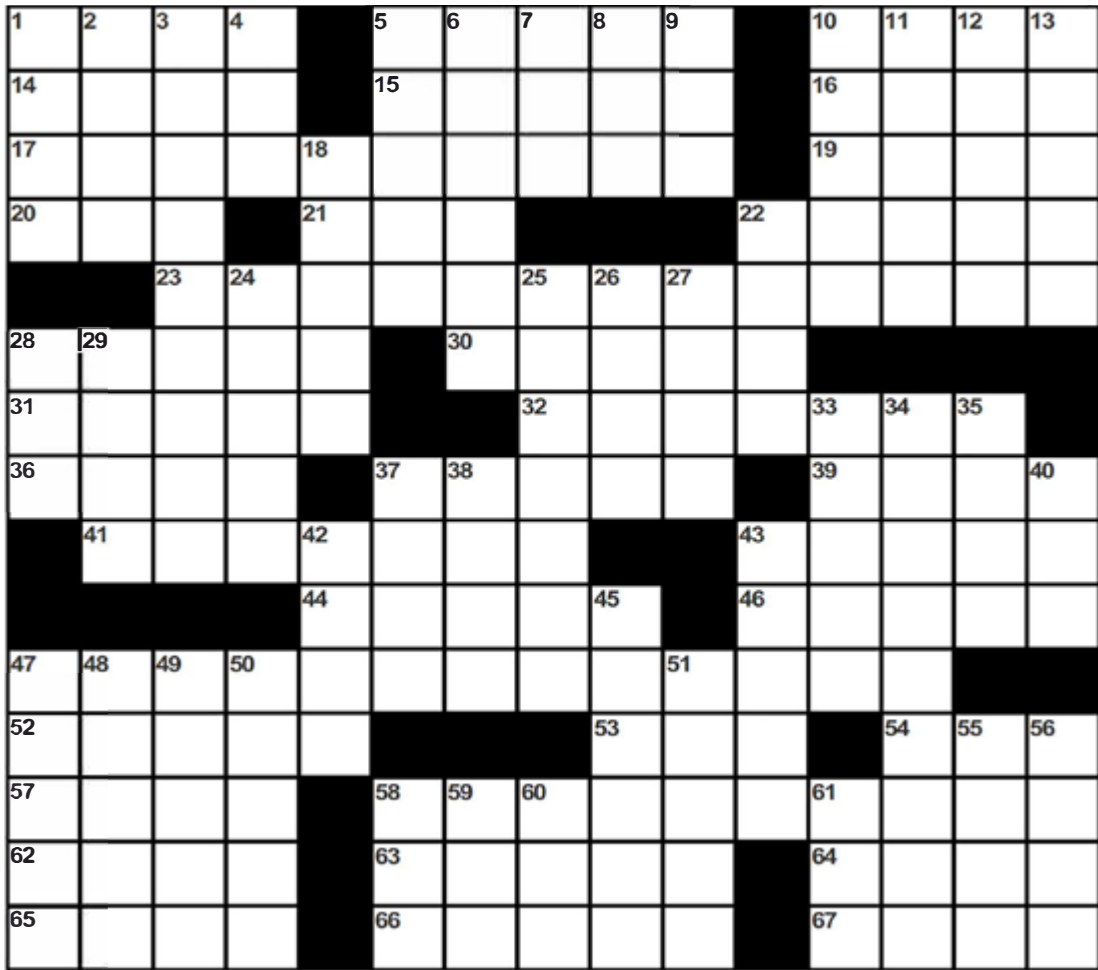
Meanwhile, Monoclonal antibody development is underway in collaboration with Zydyus Health Sciences, Ahmedabad and Translational Health Sciences Technology Institute, Faridabad. The ICMR is also working on an indigenous vaccine for the Nipah virus.

The National Institute of Virology (NIV) is the only lab in the country that cultures the Nipah virus.

Nipah virus (NiV) is transmitted from animals to humans and can also be transmitted through contaminated food or directly between people. In infected people, it causes a range of illnesses from asymptomatic (subclinical) infection to acute respiratory illness and fatal encephalitis. The symptoms are fever, headaches, muscle pain, vomiting, sore throat, dizziness, altered consciousness, and Atypical pneumonia.



DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Historical chapters
 - 5) Short singing refrain
 - 10) Protrudes
 - 14) Boorish person
 - 15) Kidney-related
 - 16) One of the seven continents
 - 17) Long-haired equestrian of legend
 - 19) Brad of films
 - 20) Mister in Mumbai
 - 21) Max.
 - 22) Hairy-chested
 - 23) Solitary equestrian?
 - 28) Places for laces
 - 30) Whimpers
 - 3 1) Some English noblemen
 - 32) Pick for digging
 - 36) Lake near Niagara Falls
 - 37) It's just part of an act
 - 39) Turns soil, in a way
 - 41) Certain work unit
 - 43) Common suburban sights
 - 44) Not use a script
 - 46) Began the day
 - 4 7) Equestrian at the Battle of Little Bighorn
- DOWN**
- 1) 90-degree add-ons
 - 2) Lion's warning
 - 3) They are found in schools
 - 4) Sloppy farm feature
 - 5) Memorable bridge-guarder
 - 6) Variety of grass
 - 7) "Wheel of Fortune" request?
 - 8) Abbreviated john?
 - 9) In the manner of
 - 10) Sea or country
 - 11) Manipulating
 - 12) Car-seller's need
 - 13) Lecherous man
 - 18) Take a stab at
 - 22) Vertical pole
 - 24) Troy resident
 - 25) Like many keypads
 - 26) Pizzazz
 - 27) Anatomical network
 - 28) Espy
 - 29) Damage
 - 33) Chicago acreage
 - 34) Fellow laborers
 - 35) Mental perceptions
 - 37) Ice cream complement, sometimes
 - 38) Select and gather
 - 40) Chicago-to-Miami dir.
 - 42) Fabled loser
 - 43) Espresso and milk drink
 - 45) Head of a household?
 - 47) Weakens
 - 48) Circumvent
 - 49) Like some voices
 - 50) Found in a compound
 - 51) "That's a __ excuse!"
 - 55) God of love
 - 56) Chap
 - 58) Pen partner
 - 59) Andy Capp's favorite
 - 60) Mountain tribe
 - 61) Limo rider, for instance

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Some wild news comes your way, but luckily just about all of it is positive for you. The word should arrive via some higher-up you were positive had never even noticed you, much less thought you were worth thinking about. Once you're past the amazement and you've discovered that you weren't being ignored, you need to make a big decision. A wonderful bolt from the blue should make that a lot easier!

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

You need to stop trying to convince the world that you're unique and decisive. You may even be ready to choose a partner who's just as entertaining and fiery as you are! The disappointment you may feel should they disappoint you is likely to be fierce. Still, that's no reason not to try, and you get over such things pretty quickly anyway.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

You're famous for consistently being game to experience the last thing on earth anyone else might try, and then tell everyone you know all about it. Today's nutty energy is perfect for you. An invitation sets you off on a path that includes not just adventure, but a new and improved relationship with a good friend or sweetheart. No matter how subtle the invitation may be, you're up for it.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Which of these is an English fashion and portrait photographer, the winner of four Tony and two Academy Awards, whose costume design for the stage version of "My Fair Lady" (1956) led to his work on two film musicals, "Gigi" (1958) and "My Fair Lady" (1964)?

A. Cecil Beaton
B. David Bailey
C. George Eastman
D. Henri Cartier-Bresson

02. In what month or months does the annual sardine run happen?

A. August
B. May to July
C. November and December
D. April

03. In a 1545 book Roger Ascham invented a word, "toxophily", meaning what?

A. Interest in infections
B. Use of poison
C. Love of or expertise in archery
D. Collecting weapons of war

Answers: 1. A 2. B 3. C

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Some news comes your way that you may not know quite what to do with. It likely puts you in the position of making a sudden decision, so be ready. There are several factors underlying the situation, but the last person on earth you'd ever think of should probably be first on your list of suspects. If you need to make your choice based on your instincts, your intuition guides you through it nicely provided you listen!

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

After months of wondering how nothing ever seems to happen as it should when it comes to your relationships, you've reached the point of believing in pure fate. This could mean trying to ignore your friends, some of whom aren't looking out for you, others of whom feel the need to constantly remind you that you're doing this to yourself. You need to remember that the only person you owe explanations to right now is you.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Several big influences conspire to cause some object in your possession, be it electrical, mechanical, or electronic, to shirk its responsibilities. Your first impulse may be to go after it with a hammer, since vengeance comes first and simple tools can't fail you. If you avoid that destructive impulse, you should find someone who can actually repair the offending item or maybe show you the manual.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

You're usually one of the last ones to take things seriously, especially if there's any way to have some fun. Right now, though, your keen instincts have informed you that something needs to be done right away and that you're the only one equipped to make the decision! Fortunately, it just concerns where to go and who to take along as you head out on some kind of grand adventure.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Your specialty is taking care of others, though more often than not that comes at your own expense without any hope of being reimbursed. Startling news from a family member or an old, dear friend, should finally convince you that it's time to start taking care of one person and one person only: you. It may be a brandnew concept, but you need to get used to it quickly.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Just when you thought you were done informing the world how exactly it should be run, you've discovered that certain key elements just aren't cooperating. You may be up for a few days of instructing them in the right way to go about their business, and you should rally if it means convincing them to toss their loyalties aside for the moment. For now, just do what you do best: win them over with pure logic.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Your idea of an ideal relationship involves combining your interests (financial, emotional, familial, and otherwise) and then assembling them to come up with one solid, grounded asset that you and your loved ones can all share. Does this mean that you're meeting new acquaintances who know more about these matters than you? That's likely, but in the meantime, don't worry about making decisions.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Clear your throat and prepare to make the big announcement. You need to immerse yourself in nothing but the best interests of number one. It's your turn to treat yourself to a stretch of being nice to you and no one else. In your case, the deeper side of your mind is what makes you personally happiest. Intimacy, intensity, and maybe just a touch of intrigue are vital.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You should be more than ready to wear your heart on your sleeve, even when you're supposed to be tough and insensitive. Does this mean you're invulnerable at the moment? In a way, but only on the surface. Just in case it only goes skin deep, call someone you trust to come along and chaperone, especially if you're about to venture into unknown, inhospitable territories.

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

N	C	L	S
P	S	U	S
K	E	P	A
O	G	H	A

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

BARCA CLASS REUNION

PSG’s Luis Enrique meets his former star players in Club World Cup round of 16

Miami, US - Lionel Messi will lead a quartet of former Barcelona players into a meeting with their former coach Luis Enrique when Inter Miami face European champions Paris St Germain in the last 16 of the Club World Cup in Atlanta on Sunday.

Messi, Jordi Alba, Sergio Busquets and Luis Suarez all played under Luis Enrique in Spain, and were in the side who knocked PSG out of the Champions League last 16 in the 2016-17 season.

Miami qualified for the last 16 of the Club World Cup as Group A runners-up with a 2-2 draw against Palmeiras on Monday.

French giants PSG have certainly moved on from their traumatic Champions League exit in 2017, when they won the first leg in Paris 4-0 but were thrashed 6-1 in the return match in Barcelona.

The French side claimed their first Champions League title this season in a campaign masterminded by Luis Enrique, but Messi and Co. will be eager to cause another upset.

"We know that we are going to face maybe the best team in Europe. It will be difficult but we will try to do our best," said



Lionel Messi with Luis Enrique during their Barcelona days

Miami coach Javier Mascherano. "We are going to try to show our quality and to try to prove our worth."

The Argentinian made a point of noting the importance of Inter Miami's progress to the Round of

16. "It is historic for MLS to have a team through to the last 16. We are one of the best 16 teams in the world so we will look to continue," he said.

Meanwhile, Suarez showed that at 38, he still has the game to

score on the big stage, notching Miami's second in their draw with Palmeiras.

"If we make these mistakes against PSG we will pay a heavy price. Obviously, in this kind of tournament there is always going

to be a favourite, that's just a fact. We'll be facing the European champions and we will have to try and take our chances," said Suarez.

"Luis Enrique has seen many players and he influenced me a lot. I already had a competitive

DNA but he made me even more competitive."

Despite making their first appearance at the Club World Cup, Luis Enrique believes his side have what it takes to go all the way in the United States.

"It's a competition where you

have to be ready to go to Atlanta, Philadelphia, or even elsewhere," Luis Enrique said.

"We want to go as far as possible, and I think the players are ready. The real competition starts now, and it will be very difficult.

"After each match, we have to see if we qualify or not. We're motivated"

Despite their victory, Luis Enrique took the time to express his frustration at the playing surface at Lumen Field.

"What matters is the state of the pitch. And I say that today, even though we won. We're a long way from European stadiums," Luis Enrique added.

We'll be facing the European champions and we will have to try and take our chances. Luis Enrique has influenced me a lot... he made me even more competitive

LUIS SUAREZ, INTER MIAMI

"They're good, but the ball bounces like a rabbit. Today, since it was an artificial pitch before, and now a natural pitch, you have to water it by hand and it dries out in 10 minutes.

"It's an obvious problem, it's not an excuse. We can't play at the level we want to. And FIFA has to take that into account. Not only in stadiums, but also during training camps.

"I can't imagine an NBA court with holes. We play in stadiums where the ball looks more like a rabbit than a ball. If we have to criticise, it deserves to be changed."

Wydad coach, team doctor involved in traffic accident

Field, Philadelphia, US - Wydad Casablanca coach Mohamed Amine Benhachem and the team's doctor were involved in a traffic accident in the United States, where the team is participating in the Club World Cup, but have no serious injuries, the Moroccan club said on Monday.

"We would like to inform our fans that a traffic accident occurred this morning in which coach Amine Benhachem was involved in addition to team doctor Dr. Abdelrazak Hefti," Wydad, said on X.



Kvaratskhelia, Hakimi score as PSG beat Seattle to reach knockout stage

Seattle, US - European champions Paris St Germain advanced into the knockout stage of the Club World Cup as Group B winners with a 2-0 victory over hosts Seattle Sounders on Monday.

The Ligue 1 champions, who suffered a shock defeat by Botafogo on Friday and were guaranteed a spot in the last 16 with a win over Seattle, scored in each half through Kvaratskhelia and Achraf Hakimi.

With the result, coupled with Atletico Madrid's 1-0 victory over Botafogo, PSG finished first in Group B with six points from three games. PSG face the Group A runners-up on Sunday in Atlanta while Botafogo will play the winner from that group on Saturday in Philadelphia.

"It's a happy day. It feels good," said PSG midfielder Joao



Paris St Germain's Achraf Hakimi celebrates his goal against Seattle Sounders on Monday

Neves. "We are going to Atlanta ... we will try to put our idea into the game no matter what team we are playing against."

Seattle, who needed to beat PSG by a margin of three goals or more to even stand a chance of progressing, exit the Club World Cup winless after three

games played in their home stadium.

PSG broke through in the 35th minute moments after the ball was cleared following a corner but fell to a wide open Vitinha on the edge of the box. Vitinha's strike was headed off target but bounced off Kvaratskhelia's back

and into the Seattle goal.

They doubled their lead in the 66th minute after substitute Bradley Barcola drove into the area and, after an over-commitment by five Seattle players, spotted a wide open Hakimi who easily finished into the back of the net.

Seattle made a fast start to the game and had PSG pinned in their own defensive third during the opening minutes but the MLS side were unable to connect on a pair of early corner kicks.

On Seattle's first corner, the ball dropped for Obed Vargas just outside the area but his volley sailed way right of the net while PSG's Marquinhos headed the ball to safety at the second corner.

"It was a good start," Seattle coach Brian Schmetzer said of his team's effort. "We knew we were going to have to come out and be ready for the best league team in Europe so our guys came out into the game fired up."

Palmeiras hold Miami to reach Club World Cup last 16

Miami, US - Palmeiras rallied from two goals down to snatch a 2-2 draw against Inter Miami and qualify top of Group A for the Club World Cup last 16 on Monday, a result that sent both teams through to the knockout phase.

Goals from Tadeo Allende and Luis Suarez gave Miami a two-goal lead before Paulinho and Mauricio scored in the last 10 minutes to get Palmeiras back on level terms.

Both teams finished on five points with Inter Miami second on goal difference, while Al Ahly and Porto were both eliminated after drawing 4-4.

Lionel Messi's side will take on European champions Paris St Germain, where the Argentine spent two seasons from 2021-23, while Palmeiras face fierce rivals Botafogo in an all-Brazilian clash for a place in the quarter-finals.

"It was a great game from us, it's difficult to play against one of



Mauricio of Palmeiras celebrates after scoring against Inter Miami

the best teams in South America," said Inter Miami coach Javier Mascherano, who described it as a "historic night" for Major League Soccer.

"Maybe at the end we had the game in our hands so the feeling is strange but before the start of the tournament if someone told me we were going to have this kind of performance against these kind of teams I would have signed it."

Abou Ali scores hat-trick, but Al Ahly and Porto exit after eight-goal thriller

East Rutherford, New Jersey - Al Ahly and Porto shared a 4-4 thriller in their final game at the Club World Cup on Monday but both will head home after Inter Miami and Palmeiras drew to progress to the round of 16 from Group A.

Palestine striker Wessam Abou Ali scored a hat-trick and Mohamed Ali Ben Romdhane also found the net for the Egyptian champions but Porto pegged them back every time they went ahead.

Teenagers Rodrigo Mora and William Gomes, substitute Samu Aghehowa and Pepe all scored

for the Portuguese club as both teams all but abandoned defending in search of goals that might keep them alive in the tournament.

In the end, though, a draw was not enough for either side and the 2-2 stalemate between Inter and Palmeiras in Miami was enough to render all of the many other permutations null and void.

"I'm very sad, very, very sad," said Abou Ali. "I feel like we should have scored maybe five, six goals in the end, the opportunity was there to at least win the game and score some goals."

Both teams came into the



Al Ahly's Wessam Abou Ali celebrates after scoring against Porto

match played in suffocating heat at MetLife Stadium without a goal from open play in the tournament but they made up for it in a sometimes frenetic contest.

Al Ahly took the early initiative and got their reward when Abou Ali gave them the lead in the 15th minute with a cool finish into the far corner of the net.

Lively 18-year-old Mora equalised eight minutes later after skipping through the Al Ahly defence and past goalkeeper Mohamed El-Shenawy before clipping the ball into the net.

Egypt midfielder Zizo was brought down in the box by Fabio

Vieira running onto an Abou Ali cutback in stoppage time at the end of the first, and the Palestinian sent Claudio Ramos the wrong way from the spot to put Al Ahly 2-1 up at the break.

Three goals in three minutes soon after the break had the scores back level at 3-3 in the 53rd minute, Gomes starting it all off by curling a beautiful shot into the top right-hand corner of the net.

Abou Ali then completed his hat-trick with a powerful header from a corner but Aghehowa responded in kind almost immediately down the other end.

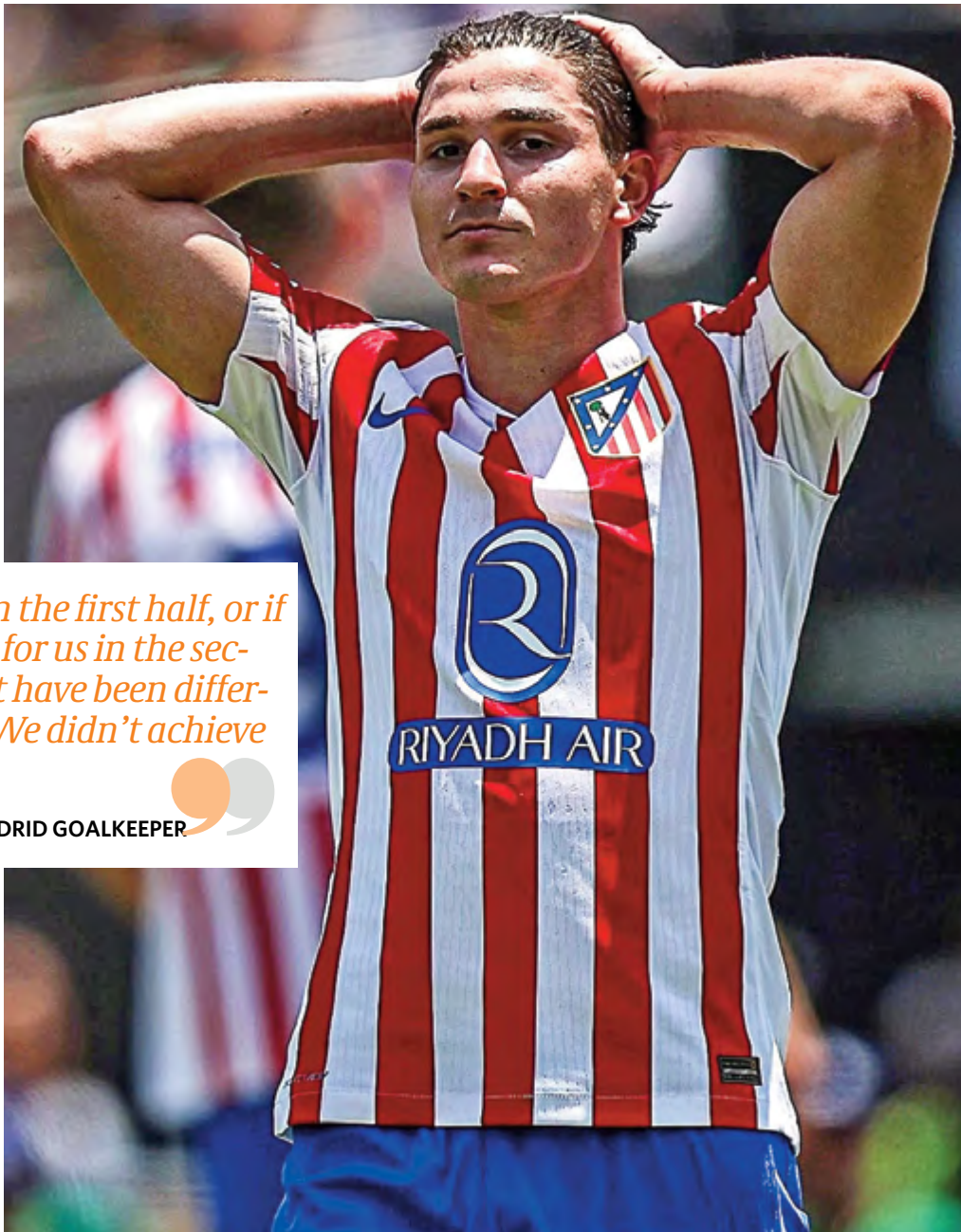
TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

Atletico exit Club World Cup despite win as Botafogo progress on goal difference

Pasadena, US - A late strike from Antoine Griezmann handed Atletico Madrid a 1-0 win over Botafogo on Monday but the victory could not save the LaLiga side from a group stage exit at the Club World Cup.

Following Paris St Germain's 2-0 over Seattle Sounders in Monday's other Group B game, the French side finished level on six points with Botafogo and Atletico.

However, PSG secured top spot thanks to a superior goal difference, with Brazilian side Botafogo also advancing to the last 16 after finishing second.



Atletico Madrid's Julian Alvarez looks disappointed during their match against Botafogo on Monday

If we had scored in the first half, or if it had been easier for us in the second, things might have been different. But it's over. We didn't achieve what we needed

JAN OBLAK, ATLETICO MADRID GOALKEEPER

Atletico, in third, and Seattle, bottom with no points after three games, were eliminated.

PSG will face the Group A runners-up on Sunday, while Botafogo will take on the Group A winners on Saturday.

Even though they were aware that a two-goal defeat would secure them a place in the next round, Botafogo's Igor Jesus and Jefferson Savarino forced Atletico keeper Jan Oblak to make a couple of brilliant saves.

"Many people doubted whether we would qualify. We proved that our squad has quality," said Jesus, who rumoured to be moving to Europe.

"At no point did I think about this match being my farewell at Botafogo. I want to defend Botafogo as long as I can. My confidence grew after the match

against PSG. I knew we could qualify. Now we have to keep working to correct the mistakes we made in this match to avoid repeating them in the next one,"

he added.

Following their shock 1-0 win over Champions League winners PSG, Botafogo defended their ground fairly well throughout a

cagey encounter, with Atletico dominating possession but rarely presenting a real threat to goal-keeper John.

However, tempers spilled over when Atletico appealed for a penalty after Botafogo's Gregory appeared to step on Julian Alvarez's foot inside the box.

Following a VAR review, referee Cesar Ramos ruled out the penalty due to an earlier foul by Atletico's Alexander Sorloth in the build-up.

The decision left Atletico manager Diego Simeone furious, with the Argentine storming onto the pitch at halftime to confront the Mexican official.

"There is frustration of not going through," said Simeone. In today's game we had chances to go ahead. We're clear on what we need to improve. Credit to the opponent - they worked very well, with honesty and courage."

As Atletico made a late run desperately looking for the three goals they needed, substitute Griezmann fired the winner in the 87th minute from inside the box, a bittersweet goal that denied Botafogo a top-placed finish in the group and handing PSG that accolade.

"It hasn't been enough, unfortunately, the ball didn't go in," said Oblak. "If we had scored in the first half, or if it had been easier for us in the second, things might have been different. But it's over. We didn't achieve what we needed."

"We definitely gave everything in the second and third matches, but we didn't play well in the first and that cost us."



Kenan Yildiz

Young Turkish star Yildiz is creating his own legacy at Juventus

Philadelphia, US- Juventus FC fans saw him celebrate by sticking out his tongue, just like their hero Alessandro Del Piero used to do. And after a classic Del Piero-style goal, with a curled right-footed finish that kissed the post on its way in, the comparisons came flooding in. Kenan Yildiz had made his mark with the first goal of the new 2024/25 UEFA Champions League phase.

Up to that point, the youngest Juventus scorer in the Champions League had been none other than Del Piero himself, but with his strike against PSV last year, the young Turkish superstar rewrote history. "I'm happy it was you that broke my record and even better, you did it in the same number 10 shirt," the FIFA World Cup winner told him, as an emotional Yildiz fought back tears.

20, Yildiz already boasts a seemingly endless skill set and he put it on full display during Juventus' 4-1 victory. It was a performance sure to make the world take notice.

In the sixth minute, a deflection off Abdelmounaim Boutouil saw him denied credit for Juventus' opener, but the second was all his. Named Michelob Ultra Superior Player of the Match, he tried to deflect the spotlight with

At just 20, Yildiz already boasts a seemingly endless skill set and he put it on full display during Juventus' 4-1 victory against Wydad

We gave absolutely everything, says Simeone after Atletico's early exit

Pasadena, US - Atletico Madrid will have to pick themselves up again as they pack their bags to travel back home earlier than most expected from the Club World Cup, after being knocked out of the tournament in the group stage.

Diego Simeone's side were eliminated despite a 1-0 victory over Brazil's Botafogo in their final Group B match on Monday, as they finished third in the so-called "group of death", level on six points with Paris St Germain

and Botafogo but falling short on goal difference.

The damage was largely inflicted in that opening 4-0 thrashing by PSG, a scoreline that would ultimately prove fatal to their ambitions in FIFA's revamped multi-million dollar showcase.

Simeone's men arrived in the United States with high hopes, boasting a squad that included Argentinian forward Julian Alvarez, former France captain Antoine Griezmann, and several

other international names.

However, their heavy loss to PSG and lacklustre performances overall raised further questions about the team's direction under their long-serving manager. Reflecting on the campaign, Simeone expressed pride in his players' efforts but lamented what he deemed poor officiating.

"Proud of the boys' work. We gave absolutely everything we had. We won two out of three matches and even so, sadly

we're out," he told DAZN after the Botafogo win.

"With six points, it wasn't bad, but the match against PSG condemned us, where every refereeing decision always went against us."



Diego Simeone

We've shown the value of Brazilian football, says Botafogo captain Freitas

Pasadena, US - Botafogo have defied their critics by making it to the Club World Cup last 16, the Brazilian team's captain Marlon Freitas said, even after his side lost 1-0 to Atletico Madrid and finished second in Group B on Monday.

Antoine Griezmann's late strike secured victory for Atletico, but it was not enough to overhaul the Brazilian side's goal difference as they finished second to Paris St Germain in Group B.

Freitas emphasised the achievement of advancing to the knockout stage from what many had dubbed the "group of death".

"Sure, we wanted to win, and I think we had our chances. We knew how to defend, and I believe we deserved at least a draw. Conceding that late goal was heartbreaking because we wanted to finish top of the group," Freitas told TV Globo.

"However, we should cele-



Botafogo's Marlon Freitas and Atletico Madrid's Marcos Llorente (top) battle for the ball

brate because, before the tournament started, everyone thought we had no chance against two top opponents from major European leagues. We've shown the value of Brazilian football. We are champions of South America, and we deserve respect."

Veteran defender Alex Telles echoed Freitas' comments.

"It's difficult to talk about it right now," Telles said.

"PSG and Atletico showed us more respect than most fans and pundits did. The team did what it had to do to advance to the next stage."

"Here we are, those who some said came to see Mickey in Disneyland, through to the round of 16 in the group of death. Qualifying shows the work done by this incredible group of men."

Botafogo will now face the Group A winners on Saturday, while PSG take on the runners-up on Sunday.

Ribas revelling in Flamengo's success

Two-time CONMEBOL Copa Libertadores winner Diego Ribas was still wearing the red and black of Flamengo when they lifted the trophy back in 2022, which secured their place at the FIFA Club World Cup 2025, and is proud to have played a part in taking the Rubro-negro to the first edition of FIFA's global club competition.

The former attacking midfielder, who came through the youth ranks at Santos, went on to represent a number of European giants who have also made the trip to the USA for the tournament (namely, FC Porto, Juventus FC and Atlético de Madrid). However, his spell at Flamengo at the end of his playing days was the one that really defined his career.

The former Brazil midfielder, now retired from playing, spoke to FIFA during the tournament about how much he is enjoying having the chance to watch his former team-mates shine on the global stage, particularly in Flamengo's impressive win over



Diego Ribas

Chelsea FC.

"I always feel very grateful and privileged to have been a part of an incredible rebuilding process, helping to form a team that has gone on to be as successful as they have", said the former player, who scored 42 times in his 285 appearances for the club, spanning seven seasons in Rio.

Ribas gained an invaluable amount of experience during a

12-year stint in European football, a spell that made him really appreciate those who have trodden similar paths. One such player was Filipe Luis, a teammate of his during his time in Madrid, who has since made the move into the dugout. The Brazilian duo won a La Liga title as well as a UEFA Europa League with Atleti, and they also spent four seasons together at Flamengo until Ribas retired in 2022.

Amazing job: Raducanu praises Wimbledon for blocking stalker



Emma Raducanu

London, England - Briton Emma Raducanu said she felt reassured about her safety after Wimbledon prevented a man who had been stalking her from buying tickets for the Grand Slam that begins on Monday.

The former U.S. Open champion had been followed by the man to WTA events in Singapore, Abu Dhabi and Doha earlier this year and she broke down in tears after noticing him during one of her matches at the Dubai Championships in February.

The man was given a restraining order by Dubai police and banned from all Tour events but officials at Wimbledon, which is organised by the All England Club, had to block him following a sweep of the public ballot applicants.

"Wimbledon and everyone did an amazing job," Raducanu told the BBC. "I got a notification, the police contacted me and told me everything was OK."

"I know that I'm not the first athlete to go through this, and I

probably won't be the last - not just as an athlete, but females in general."

The 22-year-old, who had not yet been born when then world number one Monica Seles was stabbed in the back by a fan at an event in 1993, said she felt much safer with extra security at events.

"I have a lot more protection around me - especially the ones here in the UK, where it's busy and there's more spectators around. I feel a difference, and that reassures me and makes me feel more comfortable," she added.

Raducanu also praised British number two Katie Boulter for sharing her experience of online abuse.

"I try and not read the comments or look at the messages because it makes you upset," she said. "It doesn't matter how many positive comments you read, you are always going to remember the more negative ones - so I just try and stay away."

POWER OF BEN TON

Duckett's knock hands England the edge in big chase despite India's fightback

Leeds, England - England opener Ben Duckett bossed a lacklustre Indian attack smashing a fine century as England inched closer towards victory despite losing four wickets with a session's play left in the opening Test here on Tuesday.

In pursuit of a target of 371, Duckett played Indian bowlers to score 149 off 170 balls as England reached 269 for 4 at tea with only 102 runs required in the final session on the fifth day.

Joe Root (14 batting) and skipper Ben Stokes (13 batting) with a cumulative experience of 266 Test appearances between them will need to put the finishing touches in the final session.

Left-handed Duckett did survive a quality morning spell from Jasprit Bumrah (0/55 in 16 overs) but stuck to his strengths with amazing conviction, laying a foundation for victory with a 188-run opening stand alongside Zak Crawley (65).

But India fought back hard with four wickets in the second session to apply brakes on Eng-



England's Ben Duckett celebrates his century against India on Tuesday

land's charge.

Shardul Thakur struck twice in as many balls to remove the dangerous Duckett (149) and Harry Brook (0) to lead India's fightback after Prasidh Krishna claimed two early wickets in the rain-interrupted second session.

Krishna accounted for Zak Crawley (65) and Ollie Pope (8).

Earlier, looking to achieve what would be their second highest successful run chase in Tests, England started the day on 21-0 and continued to look untroubled.

Uncharacteristically for a team renowned for their ultra-aggressive batting, Crawley and Duckett took 99 balls to bring up their 50 partnership - the longest it has taken the pair to do so for England.

Duckett continued his consistent form as he reached fifty in Tests for the 19th time, before another fine Crawley drive took the England openers past 2,000 Test runs together, with India's attack offering little threat.

The openers did start to play more shots, the second 50 coming in half the time.

This was Duckett's first century in the fourth innings of a Test and his third at home. He joined an elite group of England openers-including Graham Gooch, Geoffrey Boycott, Alastair Cook, and Andrew Strauss-who have registered a hundred in the fourth innings of a Test match.

Paolini battles past Fernandez into Bad Homburg quarters



Jasmine Paolini

Bad Homburg, Germany - Second seed Jasmine Paolini overcame a brave fightback from Leylah Fernandez to beat her 7-6(8) 7-6(6) in a dramatic round of 16 clash at the Bad Homburg Open on Tuesday in which Fernandez saved four match points.

Paolini edged the opening set in a tiebreak, saving a set point at 5-4 before sealing it 10-8 after a gruelling 26-shot rally.

The Italian looked on course

for a straight-sets win when she led 5-2 in the second, but Canadian Fernandez saved a match point with an ace and clawed her way back. Paolini held more match points at 6-5, but Fernandez saved all three to force a tiebreak. Fernandez went up 6-4 in the breaker, but Paolini held firm, saving two set points before clinching victory on her fifth match point.

Despite converting only five of

her 17 break points, Paolini secured her first win on grass this season after a two and a half hour match.

"It's very fun to play on grass, but you have to get used to it and you have to have confidence as well in your game, if not it's really tough," Paolini said.

"I really like also to go on the net and doing drop volleys and it's fun, it's really fun, but at the same time it's a bit tricky."

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STATUS SYMBOL

Omani women drive a surge in handbag imports as lifestyles and spending habits evolve

Mohammed Taha & Hubert Vaz

Oman recorded a sharp rise in women’s handbag imports in 2024, with the total value reaching RO 9.5mn - a 37% increase over the previous year, according to figures from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). The data has drawn attention from retailers, social commentators, and economists, who say the trend reflects shifting consumption patterns, increasing financial independence, and a broader cultural shift in women’s visibility in public and professional spaces. Retailers in Muscat say international handbag brands have seen growing demand, with premium and mid-range labels performing particularly well.

Fatma said the rise in imports is linked to greater financial independence among women, particularly in urban areas.

Style statement

Dr Ahmed al Maamari, a sociologist, said the trend reflects broader social and economic transformations. “We’re witnessing a cultural shift where consumerism intersects with identity,” he said. “For many women, owning an international handbag is no longer seen as extravagant but as part of a modern lifestyle. It’s also worth noting that many young people are now delaying marriage and choosing to spend more on themselves.” Maamari added that greater global exposure, following the COVID-19 pandemic, has contributed to the rise in demand for branded goods. But not all observers are celebrating the trend. “There’s a growing concern about materialism, especially when families with limited income feel pressured to keep up with trends,” said Aisha al Balushi, a community counselor in Dakhliyah. “We need to strike a balance between embracing modern fashion and encouraging financial responsibility.”

Still, many see the surge as part of a broader transformation in Oman’s consumer landscape. “Whether seen as a reflection of independence, modernity, or rising affluence, the surge in handbag imports is likely to continue as Omani consumers become increasingly brand-conscious and digitally connected,” said Aisha. “It’s a telling sign of the times. The handbag is more than an accessory now - it’s a statement.”

Work-life-social blend

“I’m definitely a big-bag person, I like designs that can accommodate my work-life-social blend. That said, I keep smaller pouches inside to hold my essentials, so I can easily switch between bags. Practicality matters, but it must come with style,” says Buthaina al Zadjali. “Sadly, many of the brands I gravitate toward aren’t readily available in Oman. So when I travel, I make it a point to visit outlet villages abroad.” She further said, “Lately, I find myself leaning more toward brands that embrace sustainability and ethical production. Designers like Stella McCartney, Chloé, Cuyana, Matt & Nat, and even Gucci have made notable strides in eco-conscious design. For me, investing in pieces that are not only beautiful and durable but also environmentally responsible adds deeper meaning to each purchase. It is also why I prioritise timelessness - a great bag should last a lifetime, and if possible, beyond.” As is a trend in many families, Buthaina asserts, “In my family, handbags are more than just fashion. I often pass mine down to my younger sisters and cousin, or we exchange our favourites once we’ve made good memories with them. For me, it is all about owning pieces that reflect your lifestyle, values, and identity, and a well-chosen bag does exactly that.”

Ladies' arm-our

Social media influences

“Brands like Michael Kors, Kate Spade, and even luxury players like Gucci are becoming increasingly popular among Omani women,” said Salim al Hinai, a fashion retail manager in Seeb. “The younger generation is highly influenced by global fashion trends, and social media plays a big part in shaping their buying choices.” He said the growth of e-commerce and targeted marketing on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok has made international fashion more accessible. The trend is also being seen by social workers and gender experts as an expression of identity and empowerment. “Handbags today are not just utility items - they’re status symbols and forms of self-expression,” said Fatma al Riyami, a Muscat-based social development specialist. “As more women take up jobs, participate in entrepreneurship, and engage in public life, their choices in personal fashion are becoming bolder and more diversified.”

STYLE STATEMENT

PERSONAL



I’ve always believed that a designer handbag is more than just an accessory - it is a wearable work of art, a statement of personal style, and often, a long-term investment. I do love branded handbags, and Hermès sits at the top of my list. Its exquisite craftsmanship and timeless appeal ensure that, when cared for properly, the value of a Hermès piece never truly depreciates. I also admire leather goods from Goyard, Tod’s, and Chloé - brands that offer a classic aesthetic with modern versatility.

Buthaina al Zadjali



I do love branded handbags. It all depends on what I’m looking for - to suit a specific purpose, work, or evening wear. The type of bag really depends on the life stage - when my children were young, I preferred big ones to carry lots of stuff. Now, I prefer medium sized ones. I like leather ones because they have an elegant look. I also like fabric ones for summer and beach bags. We do have a lot of options in Oman with a variety of price ranges.

Dr Muna Ismail



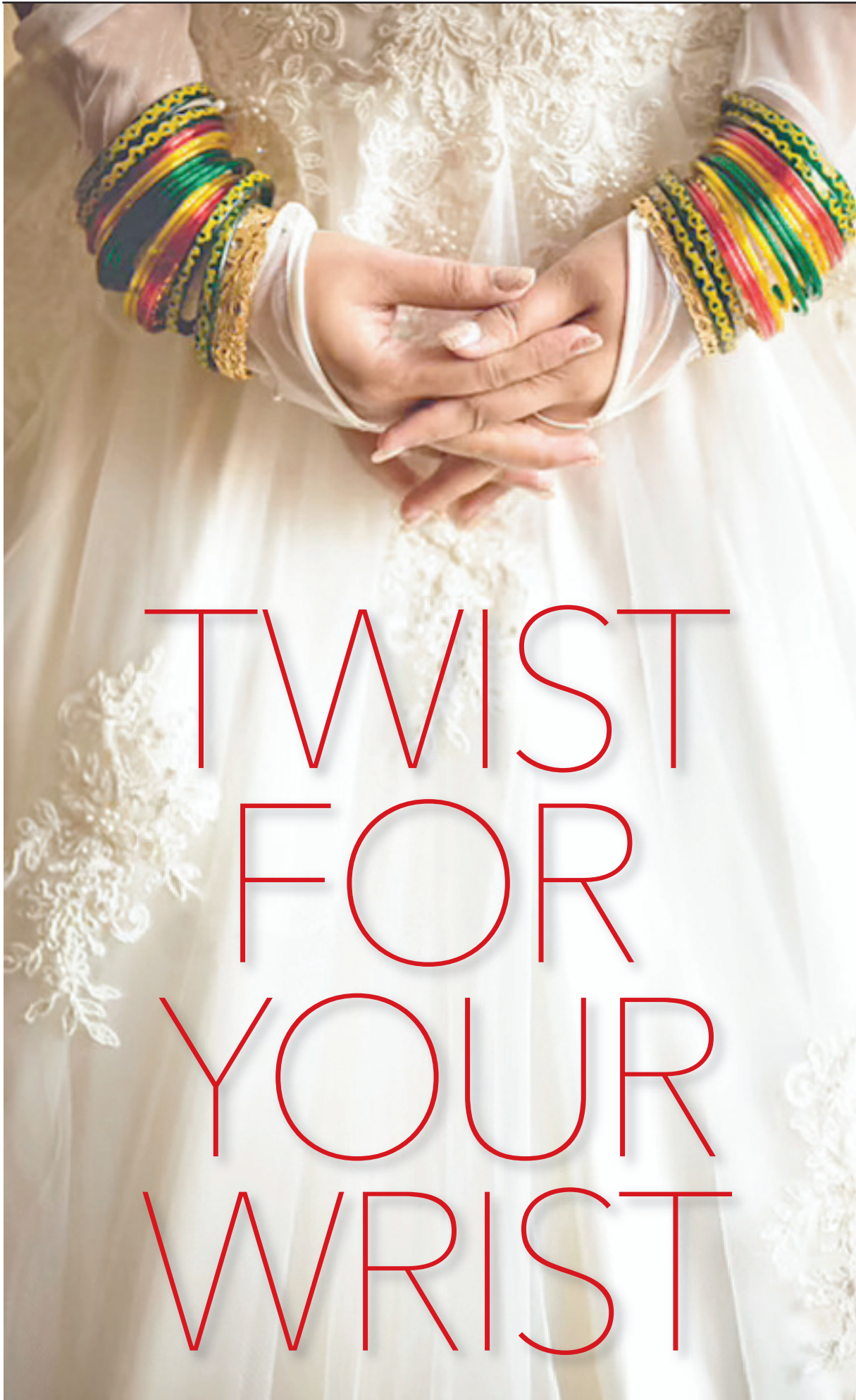
I don’t have a specific favourite brand — I usually choose what suits me best in terms of design and quality. I love leather bags, especially medium to small-sized ones in neutral colours. I mostly use crossbody bags because they’re practical and fit my everyday movements. Sometimes I find something I like in local stores, but most of the time I order from international websites for more variety.

Khadija al Maamari



I don’t care about branded bags, but I do love handicrafts. In my twenties, I preferred elegant, distinctive, and colourful styles, and coordinated them with my attire. I had a home business that coordinated bags with the hijab. However, when I became a mother, having a black, spacious, and organised bag was more important. In Oman, there are shops that specialise in branded bags, but very few that sell bags made by local artisans.

Ahlam al Moqbali



BANGLES

ACCESSORISING WITH BANGLES IS A DYNAMIC WAY TO BRING PERSONALITY AND STYLE TO AN OUTFIT. BUT MAKE SURE TO WEAR THE APPROPRIATE ONES FOR THE RIGHT OCCASION

If you love wearing bangles, you will look for them everywhere you go, and your personal collection can take up half of your wardrobe space, as most bangle-buffs cannot really have enough of these klinky accessories.

Whether choosing a precious metal bangle for a formal event or a unique bangle made from unconventional materials for everyday wear, the options are limitless. Silver bangles provide a versatile option for those preferring cooler tones, while diamond bangles offer a sparkling statement perfect for special occasions. Choosing the right bangle is about matching personal style with the type of occasion, keeping comfort and the overall look in mind.

To wear bangles correctly, focus on size, style, and occasion. Consider your hand's widest point for proper sizing, and choose a comfortable fit, whether snug or slightly loose. Bangles can be worn on one or both wrists, stacked for a bohemian look, or paired with a watch for a casual style.

Mix and match colours and materials for a playful look, or choose a bold colour to make your own statement

have different sizing requirements than round ones.

STYLING: A single, statement bangle can be elegant and refined, perfect for pairing with a cocktail dress or for special occasions. Create a bohemian or layered look by stacking multiple bangles on one or both wrists.

MIX AND MATCH: Experiment with different colours, materials, and textures to create a unique and playful style. Pair bangles with a watch for a casually chic look.

No-dominant hand: Traditionally, bangles are worn on the non-dominant hand to minimise interference with daily tasks, but ultimately, it's a matter of personal preference.

FESTIVE LOOK: When it's time for a wedding or festival, go all out with traditional bangles. Think glass, gold, or even embellished sets that match your outfit. For instance, if you're wearing a red and gold ethnic outfit, stack gold bangles with a few red ones to tie the look together. The clinking of glass bangles adds to the festive vibe—because sometimes, the noise is all part of the fun.

PROFESSIONAL LOOK: Office wear calls for a subtle and classy approach. Stick to sleek, minimal bangles - like thin gold or silver ones - that don't jingle with every move. Pair them with a watch for a polished look that says you mean business.



TIPS FOR WEARING

RELAX YOUR HAND: When putting on a bangle, relax your hand and let it collapse slightly to help it slide over your knuckles.

MOISTURIZER OR OIL: If a bangle is too tight, try using moisturiser or oil on your hand to help it slide on more easily.

PLASTIC BAG METHOD: A plastic bag can also be used to help the bangle slide over your hand.

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(5 Nos)

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Reliable International Automotive LLC. C.R. No. 1707183, Wattayah: 24579846/47; Al Mawelah: 93204360; Barka: 93201347; Nizwa: 99874368; Sohar: 92837722; Sur: 25546190/98235042;
Rustaq: 92869449; Salalah: 23211460/99884217. Saturday Showroom Timing: Muscat, Al Mawelah, Barka, Sohar & Salalah from 9.00 AM to 1.00 PM

Welcome Bonus amount can be adjusted in the deal as a part of down payment. This Welcome Bonus is in addition to the normal Cash Gift offer applicable on the models. Welcome Bonus of RO. 500/- is applicable on all models & a Welcome Bonus of RO. 3000/- is applicable only on EV Models. @ Total applicable Service benefit will be from 5 Years/50,000km to 10 years/100,000kms whichever is earlier. 50,000Kms/ 5 years' Service. On K3, K8 stocks of (24MY), Picanto, Pegas, K3, K5 PE, Sonet, Seltos, Sportage RVC, Sorento PE, Telluride, Carens, Carnival stocks of (25MY), K4, K5 PE, Seltos, Carnival stocks of (26MY) & 100,000Kms/ 10 years' Service on Sportage 1.6T 5MK & all 'L' Trims (25MY). The Service Benefit applicable on EV vehicles is 105000 kms / 7 years whichever is earlier. # 1 year insurance & 1 year registration (as applicable) would be given on all models except Picanto, Pegas, Sportage RVC, Sorento PE, Telluride, Carens, Carnival (26MY). For models where insurance is offered as a benefit, additional cash gift can be offered to customer in lieu of insurance, if opted. ** iPhone 15 (256GB) - 5 Nos. Winnings are through Raffle coupons on all models. Raffle coupons to customers will be provided only after the finalization & approval of their standard deal by their FC companies/Banks. Raffle Date: 05/08/25 at the end of campaign. Subject to full payment of purchased car. The handover of the Raffle prize will be done after 10th Aug 2025 upon completion of all legal & financial documents towards purchase of new vehicle such as formal delivery note & invoice and new vehicle ROP Registration. All the above benefits are not applicable on Ministry, Bulk fleet, Corporate & RAC deals. Scheme Period: 18/05/2025 to 16/07/2025 Vehicles may also include some Dealer Installed Accessories. Pictures & Colors are indicative. For further details, please visit your nearest Kia showroom.

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Vehicles shown for illustrative purposes. Accessories shown not part of standard equipment.

Specifications subject to change without notice. *Conditions apply. *All aforementioned prices are not VAT inclusive.

* Free insurance & registration offer is exclusive only to Starray.