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Nizwa Fort



4 HISTORIC OMANI SITES IN ARAB HERITAGE LIST

Four prominent historical landmarks in Oman have been officially added to the Arab Architectural and Urban Heritage list, a registry overseen by Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO). The sites are Al Hamouda Mosque in Jalan Bani Bu Ali, Suhar Fort, Nizwa Fort and Al Shawadhna Mosque in the village of Al Aqar, Nizwa. The recognition highlights Oman's continued efforts to preserve its rich architectural and cultural heritage, and affirms the significance of these landmarks within the broader context of Arab civilisational history. The Arab Architectural and Urban Heritage list was established by ALECSO to document and promote sites of cultural importance across the Arab world, supporting regional collaboration in heritage protection and restoration.



Al Shawadhna Mosque, Nizwa

Suhar Fort



Al Hamouda Mosque, Jalan Bani Bu Ali

Licensing mandatory for 43 jobs in energy and minerals sector

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Labour has announced that starting September 1, licensing requirements will be enforced for 43 technical and operational professions within establishments operating in Oman's energy and minerals sector.

The decision, taken in coordination with Ministry of Energy and Minerals, aims to regulate the labour market and enhance efficiency of national cadres.

As per the announcement, individuals currently engaged or newly appointed in the listed professions must obtain a professional practice licence from Oman Energy Association's Sector Skills Unit for the Energy and Minerals Sector. The licence will be a mandatory requirement for new and renewal of



work permits for these roles.

'Ministry of Labour will not issue new or renew any work permit unless the approved licence is submitted,' the ministry stated. 'All establishments are requested to comply and take the necessary steps to ensure implementation.'

This licensing system applies to a wide range of professions, including HSE advisors, various equipment oper-

ators such as crane, forklift and excavators, lifting supervisors, technicians, welders, scaffolders, electricians and drilling specialists.

Ministry of Labour emphasised that the new licensing framework forms part of its broader strategy to improve skill standards, support Omanisation and align workforce qualifications with sector-specific demands.

MTCIT plans unified EV charging app, invites the public to name it

Our Correspondent
Muscat

To accelerate green mobility ambitions, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT) has launched a nationwide community survey to choose a name for Oman's first unified national electric vehicle (EV) charging application.

Currently under development, the platform will serve as the central access point for all EV charging stations in the sultanate, integrating services offered by various operators under one digital umbrella. Supervised by MTCIT, the application aims to streamline access for EV users, offering a seamless charging experience across Oman and, in the future, expanding to cover Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

The ministry has invited the public to participate in an online survey to select the app's name from a shortlist or suggest alternatives. The shortlisted names include EVNet OM - a technical name highlighting a unified national EV network, NEVO - short for National Electric Vehicles Oman, EV-Go OM - a marketing-friendly option suggesting readiness and movement, ECO - representing both environmental focus and electric charging, and EV Connect OM - emphasising the user-station connectivity within a single network.

Participants are also asked to indicate whether they currently own an EV, plan to purchase one or are simply contributing to the national conversation. The survey reflects Oman's inclusive approach to sustainable



The platform will serve as the central access point for all EV charging stations in Oman, integrating services offered by various operators

transformation, inviting citizens to shape what the ministry called a 'pioneering national identity' in the green transport sector. The survey period ends on August 9.

This initiative is in line with MTCIT's broader strategy to achieve zero carbon neutrality in the transport sector. In January, the ministry announced that by the end of 2024 Oman had introduced 25 initiatives and pilot programmes focused on legislation, governance and infrastructure development for sustainable mobility.

These include the use of biofuel in public transport, installation of over 150 EV chargers nationwide and registration of more than 1,500 EVs. Trials for hydrogen-powered vehicles are also underway.

MTCIT aims to operationalise the unified EV charging platform this year.

OIA discusses investment cooperation in Mongolia

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia - Abdulsalam al Murshidi, President of Oman Investment Authority (OIA), met Gombojav Zandanshatar, Prime Minister of Mongolia, in Ulaanbaatar on Monday to discuss avenues of bilateral cooperation in investment and economic sectors.

Zandanshatar welcomed strengthening ties with Oman, expressing his government's interest in building a partnership based on mutual benefits. He highlighted Mongolia's openness to facilitating investment opportunities in key priority sectors.

Murshidi emphasised the importance of advancing bilateral cooperation, particularly in investment and other fields of shared interest.

The Omani delegation held meetings with several senior Mongolian officials, including Gongor Damdinnyam, Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources; Idesh Batkhoo, Secretary-General of Ministry of Economy and Development; Bataa Ganbold, Advisor and Head of Office of Deputy Prime Minister; V Enkhbaatar, Director General of Investment and Trade Agency; and Munkhtur Togooch, Advisor to Minister of Food, Agriculture and Light Industries.

Discussions centred on identifying opportunities in mining, energy, agriculture and food production. The meetings also explored ways to boost trade exchange, establish joint projects and create a supportive environment for long-term investment. Both sides committed to intensifying efforts to lay the groundwork for executive frameworks to guide bilateral cooperation.

Oman suspends shark trading amid population concerns

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Environment Authority (EA) has extended the ban on issuing permits for export, import and re-export of all types of sharks and derivatives of these for three months, effective August 3.

The move follows a similar three-month suspension intro-

duced from April 24 this year and is aimed at facilitating a comprehensive assessment of shark populations in Oman's seas.

An EA statement on Monday said the decision was taken for 'environmental considerations related to assessment of the status of sharks in the seas of Oman'.

The renewed ban underscores growing concern over shark pop-



ulations following increased fishing activity in recent years. According to official statistics, artisanal fishermen landed 7,602 tonnes of sharks in 2024, up from 5,268 tonnes in 2023 and 4,774 tonnes in 2022. The highest volume of landings last year was recorded in Dhofar (2,088 tonnes), followed closely by South Sharqiyah (2,083 tonnes).

While shark fishing is permitted in Oman, the practice of finning - removing shark fins and discarding the rest of the body - is prohibited. Sharks must be landed and sold whole. Oman has been a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) since 2008. Under CITES regulations,

the trade of threatened species, including the great hammerhead and whale shark, is subject to strict controls.

EA has stated that it will continue monitoring shark populations during the suspension period and that further regulatory measures may be introduced based on the outcome of ongoing assessments.



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MENA IT spending set to reach \$169bn by 2026

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Oman Air Holidays launches new digital platform

Muscat - Oman Air officially launched its new digital platform - Oman Air Holidays - in collaboration with global tourism group TUI on Monday. The one-stop platform offers integrated bookings for flights, hotels and tours with the aim of simplifying travel planning for customers both in Oman and abroad.

Covering over 20 destinations worldwide, Oman Air Holidays caters to travellers seeking seamless booking and post-sale support. The platform enables customers in Oman to plan international holidays and also supports inbound tourism by promoting Oman as a destination to global travellers.

"This platform is a natural extension of the work we've been doing to drive tourism into Oman," said Michael Rutter, Chief Commercial Officer at Oman Air. "It brings together the



elements we've been building - greater accessibility, stronger partnerships and more compelling reasons to visit. It also marks an important step in our digital journey, as we continue to invest in more connected, guest-centric experiences."

Rutter added that the platform complements the airline's wider tourism strategy, including its stopover programme with Visit Oman and efforts to boost point-to-point traffic. Recent additions to Oman Air's international network include

The platform allows users to create personalised packages across destinations in Oman, Europe, the Far East, the GCC and Africa

Amsterdam and Rome. The airline also joined the oneworld alliance in June, expanding its reach to more than 170 countries through partner carriers.

On the occasion, David Schelp, CEO of TUI Markets + Airline, said, "Partnering with

while delivering the high-quality experiences TUI is known for."

The platform allows users to create personalised packages across destinations in Oman, Europe, the Far East, the GCC and Africa. Travellers can book award-winning flights, selected hotels, curated tours and transfers through a single platform at holidays.omanair.com, with instant pricing and confirmations.

Surya Kuchibotla, VP of Retailing, Ancillary and Commerce at Oman Air, said the platform ensures efficiency and convenience. "Typically, travellers must coordinate with multiple parties - airlines, hotels and tour operators - which can be stressful if problems arise. But with us, we serve as a single point of contact. Whether it's a flight delay or a late hotel check-in, customers only need to reach out to Oman Air for swift resolution."

Experts warn of increased snake activity, bites during khareef

Salalah - As Salalah transforms into a lush green paradise during khareef, it draws thousands of nature lovers and adventure seekers to its mist-covered hills and valleys. But while the landscape becomes a picture of serenity, danger slithers nearby hidden to the eye. Experts are urging residents and tourists to exercise caution, as encounters with venomous snakes tend to rise during this damp, vegetation-rich season.

"Khareef brings not just greenery, but also a spike in snake activity," warned Ahmed al Busaidi, a wildlife and snake specialist at University of Nizwa. "The combination of moisture, dense grass and human presence in natural habitats increases the likelihood of snake sightings and even bites."

According to Busaidi, Dhofar is home to several venomous species that pose serious risks if provoked or accidentally disturbed. Among these is the desert cobra (*Walterinnesia aegyptia*), a glossy black snake found in dry areas of Dhofar. Though not naturally aggressive, its bite carries neurotoxic venom



Most bites happen when people unknowingly step too close or disturb a snake while hiking or camping. That's why awareness is crucial - not fear, but respect for the wild

AHMED AL BUSAIDI

that can seriously affect the nervous system.

Another dangerous species is the Khosatzki's Saw-scaled Viper (*Echis khosatzkii*), a quick and aggressive snake that produces a raspy 'sawing' sound when

alive during khareef. Its hooded display is a clear sign of attack readiness, and its venom impacts both the nervous and respiratory systems.

In forested valleys, the puff adder (*Bitis arietans*) lurks under foliage, relying on its camouflage to remain unseen. Though slow-moving, it delivers a potent cytotoxic venom capable of causing severe tissue damage and even amputation if untreated.

"Most bites happen when people unknowingly step too close or disturb a snake while hiking or camping," said Busaidi. "That's why awareness is crucial - not fear, but respect for the wild."

At University of Nizwa's Venom Research Lab, ongoing studies aim to better understand native reptiles while also educating the public. The lab not only serves as a scientific centre but also trains civil defence teams, municipality workers and environmental staff in the safe handling of venomous snakes.

"Nature is beautiful," Busaidi said, "but during khareef season, it's important we remember that it's also wild."

(Contributed by Asma al Balushi)

Registration for Third Youth Ambassadors Project opens

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MCSY) has opened registration for the third edition of the Youth Ambassadors Project set to be held in Muscat in October. Organised in cooperation with Foreign Ministry and United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the project aims to build youth capacity in leadership, diplomacy and global engagement.

Part of Oman's 10th Five-Year Plan, the project prioritises youth empowerment and follows the success of its previous editions in 2023 and 2024.

"The Youth Ambassadors Project is an initiative the ministry is committed to implementing annually, especially considering the strong response and impact observed over the last two years," said Hilal bin Saif al Siyabi, Director General of Youth Affairs at MCSY. "We witnessed participation of 75 young men and women in the first edition. That number grew to 100 in the second."

This year's edition aims to



train 120 participants, including 21 from Gulf and Arab countries. Siyabi confirmed that most of these countries have given initial approval to participate.

The programme includes direct engagements between youth and diplomatic leaders, training sessions delivered in partnership with UNITAR and a simulation of Youth Model United Nations. Selected participants will also be nominated to represent Oman in regional and international youth events.

Youth Model United Nations simulates the core functions of UN bodies including the General Assembly, Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Participants assume the roles of diplomats, debate pressing global

issues and negotiate resolutions according to official UN protocols.

"Young people act as ambassadors of the countries they represent, delivering speeches and negotiating outcomes on topics such as human rights, peace and security, climate change and economic development," the ministry noted.

Applicants must be Omani nationals aged 18 to 29, in good health and willing to commit fully to the programme. Participants of earlier editions of the project are not eligible. The selection process will include a proportional distribution of candidates from each governorate, with a gender balance based on national demographic data.

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UNPRECEDENTED DEMAND FOR AZURA BEACH RESIDENCES SIGNALS STRONG MARKET MOMENTUM



*Al Mouj Muscat secured a record-breaking sales of Azura Beach Residences
Phase two set to launch as long waitlist builds for
Oman’s most sought-after beachfront living experience*



“The overwhelming response to the launch of Azura Beach Residences is a clear reflection of the market’s trust in Al Mouj Muscat as Oman’s most compelling and established lifestyle destination. We are proud to see our vision for Azura Beach Residences resonate strongly with our customers from the architectural elegance to its harmony and integration with the natural coastline and the vibrant life of Al Mouj Marina. Azura is more than just a residence it represents the next chapter in oceanfront living in Oman, where its design fosters a genuine sense of belonging and elevates everyday quality of life. It is testament to what’s possible when exceptional design, a stunning setting, and enriching lifestyle experiences come together”
Nasser Al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat

With 309 residences claimed within two weeks, Al Mouj Muscat is now preparing to launch phase two in response to strong market demand and a growing waitlist. Azura Beach Residences comprising 286 apartments, and 23 beach chalets drew exceptional interest that far surpassed expectations.

Located within the prestigious Marsa District, Azura Beach Residences captured the attention of discerning buyers for its rare dual-frontage offering uninterrupted views of both the beach and the marina and its contemporary design centered around wellness, light, and space.

Due to the significant number of buyers waitlisted, Al Mouj Muscat is now preparing to launch the second phase of Azura Beach Residences. The upcoming release will build on the success of phase one and deliver the same uncompromising design ethos, connectivity, and lifestyle that define this new oceanfront icon.

This milestone reinforces Al Mouj Muscat’s standing as Oman’s most

established oceanfront destination and its continued success in shaping the future of lifestyle-driven destination.

Designed with a flowing connection between indoor and outdoor spaces, residents at Azura Beach Residences will enjoy an elevated resort style living experience, with access to a pristine beach, infinity pool, co-working lounge, and a vibrant marina promenade all within walking distance. With freehold ownership open to all nationalities, the project attracted a healthy mix of Omani and international buyers, underscoring the project’s cross-border appeal.



“We anticipated strong interest, but the depth of demand has surpassed our expectations,” said **Saleh Al Siyabi, VP of Sales.**

“This success affirms the strength of our product and go-to-market strategy and reflects the growing appeal of Al Mouj Muscat as a truly multinational lifestyle destination.”



“Azura was designed with insight into the evolving preferences of buyers,” added **Salma Al Hashmi, VP of Marketing.**

“The result is a product that goes beyond filling a market gap, it fosters a deeply meaningful connection to place, lifestyle, and legacy.”

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Championship
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400
Berth Marina



90
& Oceanfront
Culinary
Experiences



6km
Community
Beach



3.5km
Cycling Trail



3.5
Jogging Track



14
Swimming
Pool



19
Parks



4
Indoor Kids Play
Hub



5
Gym



3
Spa



Urban
farm



Multiple
Sports
Courts



Sailing
School and
Water Sport
Centre



Diving
Centre



Yoga
Studio



Padel
and Tennis
Court



Cosmic
Bowling

INTERVIEW

MAHENDRA UNADKAT, MANAGING DIRECTOR AND CEO, BLACK BOX TECHNOLOGY

Empowering digital transformation through secure innovation

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Black Box Technology, a premier IT solutions provider in Oman, was recently awarded 'Best IT Infrastructure Solutions Provider' at the second edition of the Muscat Daily Cybersecurity & Cloud Conference and Awards. The firm was honoured for delivering innovative, secure, and scalable IT infrastructure solutions that drive business growth and digital transformation. In this exclusive interview, Mahendra Unadkat, Managing Director and CEO of Black Box Technology, shares insights into the company's mission, core offerings, and strategic roadmap. From supporting national priorities under Oman Vision 2040 to driving innovation in cybersecurity and hybrid cloud solutions, Unadkat sheds light on how Black Box Technology is helping businesses across the sultanate embrace a resilient and future-ready digital landscape.

Black Box Technology recently won the 'Best IT Infrastructure Solutions Provider' award. What does this recognition mean for your team, and how does it validate your vision of driving secure digital transformation in Oman and beyond?

We are truly honoured to receive the award for Best IT Infrastructure Solutions Provider. This recognition is a testament to our team's dedication, technical expertise, and unwavering focus on client success. It validates our long-standing vision of empowering Omani businesses with secure,



scalable, and future-proof digital infrastructure. More than just a milestone, this accolade energises us to continue leading digital transformation initiatives both within Oman and across the region. It reinforces our commitment to aligning with national development goals while staying ahead of global technology trends.

Black Box Technology is known for its innovative and scalable infrastructure solutions. For readers unfamiliar with your full offering, could you walk us through the core services you provide, and how they uniquely address the

needs of Omani enterprises and institutions?

At Black Box Technology, we offer a comprehensive suite of IT infrastructure services designed to meet the evolving needs of Omani enterprises. Our core offerings include: cybersecurity services; IT infrastructure design and deployment; software licensing and IT peripherals; cloud and hybrid environment management; and IT staffing and managed services. What sets us apart is our deep understanding of the local market. Every solution we deliver is tailored to comply with Omani regulations and to support the operational realities of

We take a security-first, multi-layered approach to digital transformation. Our goal is to make digital advancement both accessible and meaningful – helping clients become active contributors to Oman's broader vision for a diversified, knowledge-based economy

MAHENDRA UNADKAT

both large organisations and SMEs. We work together with our clients to address sector-specific challenges, helping them achieve business continuity, operational efficiency, and scalable growth.

Cybersecurity and hybrid cloud are top concerns for businesses today. How is Black Box Technology enabling Omani organisations to transition securely into modern IT environments, while ensuring compliance, resilience, and operational efficiency?

At Black Box Technology, we take a security-first, multi-layered approach to digital transformation. We start by

conducting thorough Vulnerability Assessment and Penetration Testing (VAPT) to identify and mitigate risks early. From there, we design and deploy hybrid cloud architectures that meet both global standards and local regulatory requirements. Our 24/7 Security Operations Centre (SOC) and surveillance services ensure continuous monitoring of critical infrastructure, enhancing resilience and reducing response times.

Beyond technology, we also support clients with audit readiness, compliance frameworks, and data protection policies – ensuring their IT environments are not just modern and efficient, but also fully compliant and secure.

With Oman Vision 2040 driving digital transformation across sectors, how is Black Box Technology aligning its technology roadmap and consulting approach to support this national agenda – particularly for SMEs and mission-critical industries?

Oman Vision 2040 places strong emphasis on digital transformation, sustainability, and inclusive economic development – principles that closely mirror our mission at Black Box Technology. We have structured our technology roadmap to directly support these national priorities. For SMEs, we focus on delivering scalable, cost-efficient IT solutions that grow with their evolving needs, helping them compete and innovate without being burdened by complexity or high costs. For mission-critical sectors like finance, healthcare, and utilities, our approach centres on resilience, security, and

strategic consulting. We work closely with these industries to implement robust digital infrastructures that not only meet today's demands but also support long-term transformation goals. Ultimately, our goal is to make digital advancement both accessible and meaningful – helping clients become active contributors to Oman's broader vision for a diversified, knowledge-based economy.

Looking ahead, what are Black Box Technology's strategic priorities following this award and the exposure at the Muscat Daily Cybersecurity and Cloud Conference? Can we expect any new innovations, partnerships, or expansions in the Omani market soon?

Absolutely. This recognition marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter for Black Box Technology. Building on the momentum from the Muscat Daily Cybersecurity and Cloud Conference, we are strategically focused on expanding our footprint in Oman through meaningful partnerships, enhanced service offerings, and breakthrough innovations in cloud and AI-driven infrastructure. We are also investing heavily in talent development and strengthening our managed services to better support key sectors like government, banking, and healthcare. You can certainly expect to see new strategic collaborations and local initiatives that not only reflect our commitment to secure digital transformation but actively shape its future in the region.

OQ Group joins SWIFT network to advance digital financial transformation

Muscat – OQ, Oman's international integrated energy group, has officially joined the SWIFT network, the global financial messaging system operated by the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication. This strategic move enables OQ to receive electronic bank statements directly via its own SWIFT address, without intermediaries. SWIFT is a global financial network that enables fast and secure cross-border money transfers. The integration empowers OQ Group to manage its financial operations with greater transparency, accuracy, and real-time access to banking data from both local and international institutions. This enhances investor confidence and strengthens the



group's global appeal. "This achievement marks a major milestone in OQ's digital transformation journey and reflects our ongoing commitment to implementing international best practices," said Sabrina al Bakri, Chief Financial Officer at OQ. "By adopting advanced finan-

cial infrastructure and streamlining institutional financing processes, OQ continues to position itself as a future-focused energy leader rooted in operational excellence," she added. Direct integration with SWIFT significantly streamlines bank reconciliation cycles, enhances the accuracy and timeliness of fi-

nanacial reporting, and reinforces the integrity of daily transactional accounting. This advancement supports OQ's broader strategy to modernise its financial architecture and implement digital solutions that drive operational agility and fiscal discipline across the Group. OQ is a global energy investment group rooted in Oman. The group has operations across 17 countries that cover the entire value chain from exploration and production of oil and gas, refineries and petrochemicals to marketing and distribution of end-user products reaching more than 80 countries worldwide. Committed to sustainability, OQ Alternative Energy focuses on investments in renewables and green hydrogen in Oman.

Oil prices increase despite OPEC+ Sept output hike

Muscat – Oil prices rose on Monday despite a decision by OPEC+ to increase production in September, as tight inventories and renewed tensions between Washington and Moscow offset concerns over growing supply. International benchmark Brent crude was trading at \$69.48 per barrel at 07:50 GMT, up 0.30% from the previous session's close of \$69.27. The US benchmark, West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude, rose 1.86% to \$66.77 per barrel, up from \$65.55 in the prior session. Prices edged higher after eight OPEC+ members – Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, the UAE, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria and Oman – agreed to raise oil production by 547,000 barrels per day (bpd) in September compared to August levels, OPEC said in a statement on Sunday. The increase is part of a phased and flexible rollback of 2.2mn bpd in voluntary cuts that began on April 1. The September adjustment corresponds to four monthly increments outlined in the group's plan. Citing a stable global economic outlook and healthy market fundamentals reflected in low oil inventories, the group stated, "The phase-out of the additional voluntary production adjustments may be paused or reversed, subject to evolving market conditions." Meanwhile, weak US employment data released on August 1 bolstered expectations that the Federal Reserve may cut interest rates in September. The US economy added 73,000 jobs in July,



Oil prices edged higher after eight OPEC+ members – Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq, the UAE, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Algeria and Oman – agreed to raise oil production by 547,000 barrels per day in September compared to August levels

serve Chair Jerome Powell – have sparked concerns over the central bank's independence. Tensions between Trump and former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, alongside remarks about nuclear submarines, have further raised fears regarding global energy security. On Sunday, Trump stated that two US nuclear submarines had arrived "where they need to be", after ordering their deployment in response to comments made by Medvedev. "They are in the region, yeah, where they have to be," Trump told reporters before leaving his golf resort in New Jersey. The remarks followed Medvedev's warning last week that US pressure on the Kremlin over the war in Ukraine risks escalating into a broader conflict, not only between Russia and Ukraine but potentially involving the United States as well. Trump has threatened to impose new sanctions and secondary tariffs on Russia unless it ends the war in Ukraine within "about 10 or 12 days", a significant shortening of the previous 50-day deadline he set in July. The combination of a weakening economic outlook and rising supply is likely to lead to further downward pressure on oil prices, Daniel Hynes, senior commodity strategist at the Australia and New Zealand Banking Group, told Anadolu Agency. "For the moment, this is offsetting some bullish factors. Trump continues to put pressure on Russia to reach a truce deal with Ukraine." Agencies

CBO issues treasury bills worth RO33mn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) on Monday announced the issuance of two tenders of government treasury bills worth a total of RO33mn. The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO5mn, with a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached RO99.700 per RO100, and the minimum accepted price was RO99.700 per RO100. The av-

erage discount rate and the average yield stood at 3.9107% and 3.9224%, respectively. Meanwhile, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO28mn, with a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached RO98.944 per RO100, and the minimum accepted price was RO98.940 per RO100. The average discount rate and the av-



erage yield stood at 4.2373% and 4.2825%, respectively. The interest rate on Repo operations with CBO is 5.00%, while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 5.50%. Treasury bills are short-term, highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, providing licensed commercial banks the

opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman acts as the Issue Manager and offers the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo). Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever deemed necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures.

MENA IT spending set to reach \$169bn by 2026

Dubai, UAE – Global research and advisory firm Gartner has forecast that IT spending in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region will reach \$169bn in 2026, representing an 8.9% increase over 2025.

Mim Burt, Practice Vice President at Gartner, said the MENA region is rapidly emerging as a global technology hub, as GCC countries leverage their advanced infrastructure and forward-looking policies to attract international partners and build digital capabilities that foster innovation and support resilient, AI-enabled economies.

Despite global economic and geopolitical uncertainty, Chief Investment Officers (CIOs) in the region are making strategic investments in artificial intelligence, intelligent automation, multi-cloud strategies, enhanced cybersecurity, and workforce upskilling.

Gartner predicts that spending on data centre systems in the MENA region will increase by 37.3% in 2026, making it the fastest-growing IT segment. However, growth is expected to be slower this year as the market shifts from rapid expansion to more gradual and sustainable investment.

Eyad Tachwali, Vice President of Advisory at Gartner, said spending on data centre systems is expected to rise in parallel with increased investment by CISOs in AI-powered software and updated AI infrastructure.

"This growth is primarily being



Gartner predicts that spending on data centre systems in the Middle East and North Africa region will increase by 37.3% in 2026, making it the fastest-growing IT segment. This growth is primarily being driven by the rising demand for generative AI and advanced machine learning

driven by the rising demand for generative AI and advanced machine learning, both of which depend heavily on robust computing capabilities for large-scale data processing."

He added that the majority of this demand will come from governments, major cloud service providers, technology vendors,

and institutions focused on developing and deploying AI models, rather than from traditional enterprises or consumers.

According to Gartner, software spending in MENA is projected to rise by 13.9% to \$20.4bn in 2026, fuelled by the accelerating adoption of generative AI capabilities across organisations.

Gartner also expects that by 2028, 75% of global software spending will be directed towards solutions featuring generative AI capabilities.

WAM



The natural gas pipeline, which connects Kilis in southern Türkiye to Aleppo in northern Syria, has a daily transport capacity of up to 6mn cubic meters

Qatar, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Syria inaugurate cross-border gas pipeline

Istanbul, Turkey – Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Qatar and Syria announced on Saturday the official opening of the Türkiye-Syria Natural Gas Pipeline, marking the start of natural gas deliveries from Azerbaijan to Syria through Turkish territory.

In a joint statement shared on the X account of the Turkish Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, the pipeline, which connects Kilis in southern Türkiye to Aleppo in northern Syria, has a daily transport capacity of up to 6mn cubic meters (mcm).

The restored natural gas pipeline, completed in record time, is part of a broader effort to support Syria's post-conflict reconstruction and regional energy integration.

"This marks a milestone of regional solidarity and a significant step in strengthening ties among our nations," the four countries said in a joint statement released during the ceremony on August 2.

The State of Qatar is providing financial support for electricity generation in Syria through the Qatar Fund for Development.

The new gas flow is expected to boost output at the Aleppo Power Plant, significantly increasing electricity availability in the war-torn region.

Officials say the project carries both humanitarian and strategic significance, aiming to improve living conditions in Syria while fostering long-term regional cooperation.

"Our countries reaffirm their commitment to advancing peace, stability and prosperity in the region," the joint statement read, emphasizing the goal of cooperation over division and mutual trust over conflict.

Anadolu Agency



ADNOC Gas signs LNG supply deal with India's Hindustan Petroleum

Abu Dhabi, UAE – ADNOC Gas and its subsidiaries, a world-class integrated gas processing and sales company, on Monday announced the signing of a Heads of Agreement with Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) to supply 0.5mn metric tonnes per annum (mmtpa) of liquefied natural gas (LNG) for a 10-year term.

The agreement underscores ADNOC Gas' expanded global footprint, particularly across the high-demand Asian LNG market, reinforcing its role as a reliable global supplier of LNG. The long-term contract strengthens ADNOC Gas' partnership with key Indian players as it continues to support India's energy security, building on recent agreements with Indian Oil Corporation and GAIL India Limited.

Fatema al Nuaimi, Chief Executive Officer of ADNOC Gas, said, "This long-term agreement with HPCL, our third with Indian companies in the past year, re-

fects the robust energy partnership between the UAE and India. This milestone underscores ADNOC Gas' ability to reliably meet rising global demand for LNG and support India's ambition

Long-term gas supply agreement covers delivery of 0.5mn metric tonnes per annum LNG sourced from ADNOC Gas' Das Island liquefaction facility, which has a production capacity of 6mn metric tonnes per annum

to increase natural gas to 15% of its primary energy mix by 2030."

The LNG will be supplied from ADNOC Gas' Das Island liquefaction facility, which has a production capacity of 6 mmtpa. As

the world's third longest-operating LNG plant, Das Island has shipped over 3,500 LNG cargoes worldwide since starting operations.

ADNOC Gas is a key player in ADNOC's strategy to enhance its natural gas production capacity and expand global LNG exports. As a crucial transitional fuel, natural gas offers lower carbon emissions compared to other fossil fuels and serves as an important raw material in industrial value chains.

ADNOC Gas, listed on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange, is a world-class, large-scale integrated gas processing and sales company operating across the gas value chain, from receipt of feedstock from ADNOC through large, long-life operations for gas processing and fractionation to the sale of products to domestic and international customers. ADNOC Gas supplies approximately 60% of the UAE's sales gas needs and supplies end-customers in over 20 countries.



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Al Maha Ceramics SAOG

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DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the results of Al Maha Ceramics SAOG for the half year ended 30th June 2025.

Company's Performance:

Your company has achieved revenue of RO 3.311 million during the first half of 2025, compared to revenue of RO 2.398 million during the same period last year, reflecting a strong growth of 38.1%.

The net profit after tax for the half year is RO 0.308 million, a significant turnaround from the net loss of RO 1.366 million reported in the same period last year.

The Company has also recorded an operational profit of RO 0.354 million as compared to a loss of RO 0.482 million during the corresponding period of the previous year.

Future Outlook:

The global geopolitical environment continues to face disruptions, particularly due to the ongoing tariff wars. As a result, overall market sentiment remains subdued. The market was also affected due to festival of Eid ul Fitr and Eid al Adha, both falling in same quarter and thus affecting the business activities.

In a significant development, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment promotion, through its notification dated 24th April 2025, has imposed anti-dumping duties effective 29th May 2025 on all ceramic and porcelain products originating from India and China, with certain exceptions. Though this grace period allowed the local importers to heavily dump cheap imports thereby imposing serious challenges in demand for local products and also affecting cashflow cycle, it is expected that this measure will strengthen the Company's market position in Oman in near future.

Your Company is focused on improving the profitability through enhancing sales volume, cost optimization and better product mix.

Corporate Social Responsibility:

The Company believes in supporting the community and has a policy for contribution. Over the years the company has contributed significantly towards the welfare of the society through various social activities. Under the CSR policy the company mainly emphasizes on healthcare, education and society.

Thanks, and Appreciation:

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to Government entities, our esteemed shareholders, customers, banking partners, and suppliers for their continued trust and unwavering support to Al Maha. Also, I would also like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for the dedicated efforts of the management team and all employees.

I pray to Almighty Allah to bless His Majesty with long life, health and grant him success to pursue the march of goodness and development for the prosperity of Oman and its people.

For & on behalf of the Board of Directors of

Al Maha Ceramics SAOG

Masoud Humaid Malik Al Harthy
Chairman

UNAUDITED CONDENSED INTERIM STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at 30th June

	2025 RO	2024 RO	Audited Dec 2024 RO
ASSETS			
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	3,988,020	4,707,888	4,341,112
Investment property	225,000	225,000	225,000
Investment in associate	-	33,736	-
Right-of-use asset	442,804	546,976	494,890
	<u>4,655,824</u>	<u>5,513,600</u>	<u>5,061,002</u>
Current assets			
Inventories	2,074,348	1,853,261	2,069,685
Trade and other receivables	3,540,371	2,296,103	1,900,660
Cash and bank balances	205,903	126,407	254,502
	<u>5,820,622</u>	<u>4,275,771</u>	<u>4,224,847</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>10,476,446</u>	<u>9,789,371</u>	<u>9,285,849</u>
EQUITY			
Share capital	5,500,000	5,500,000	5,500,000
Share premium	88,199	88,199	88,199
Statutory reserve	1,833,333	1,833,333	1,833,333
Retained earnings	238,181	28,874	(70,354)
TOTAL EQUITY	<u>7,659,713</u>	<u>7,450,406</u>	<u>7,351,178</u>
LIABILITIES			
Non-current liabilities			
End of service benefits	280,149	317,282	272,107
Deferred tax liability	68,372	172,074	68,372
Non-current portion of lease liabilities	388,637	494,142	438,887
	<u>737,158</u>	<u>983,498</u>	<u>779,366</u>
Current liabilities			
Bank borrowings	203,592	-	-
Trade and other payables	1,770,878	1,255,362	1,050,200
Current portion of lease liabilities	105,105	100,105	105,105
Income tax payable	-	-	-
	<u>2,079,575</u>	<u>1,355,467</u>	<u>1,155,305</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>2,816,733</u>	<u>2,338,965</u>	<u>1,934,671</u>
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	<u>10,476,446</u>	<u>9,789,371</u>	<u>9,285,849</u>
Net assets per share	<u>0.139</u>	<u>0.135</u>	<u>0.134</u>

UNAUDITED CONDENSED INTERIM STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

	6 months ended 30 June 2025 RO	6 months ended 30 June 2024 RO
Revenue	3,311,429	2,397,786
Cost of sales	(2,465,193)	(2,202,846)
Gross profit	<u>846,236</u>	<u>194,940</u>
Administrative and general expenses	(195,148)	(439,355)
Selling and distribution expenses	(339,371)	(249,846)
Other Income / (expenses)	41,852	12,159
Profit from operations	<u>353,569</u>	<u>(482,102)</u>
Finance charges	(21,790)	(19,575)
Profit before tax	<u>331,779</u>	<u>(501,677)</u>
Income tax	(23,244)	-
Profit after tax	<u>308,535</u>	<u>(501,677)</u>
Share of profit/(Loss) of associate for the period	-	(863,919)
Comprehensive income and net profit for the period	<u>308,535</u>	<u>(1,365,596)</u>
Basic earnings per share	<u>0.006</u>	<u>(0.025)</u>



iCAUR debuts two global models featuring range-extended system

Global cool automotive brand iCAUR recently hosted its grand Brand Night in Dubai, the UAE, marking the Global debut of two heavyweight new models - the rugged mid-to-large SUV iCAUR V27 REEV and the smart boxy SUV iCAUR 03T REEV.

The event represented a key milestone in iCAUR's deepening global market presence and boldly declared its unique identity and innovation strength as the 'global cool player' with segment-leading golden range-extender technology and ground-breaking cool store design. The launch instantly ignited excitement among users worldwide, with the cool store design establishing the brand as a new offline hotspot for the young and young at heart.

As a key pillar of Chery's global NEV strategy, the iCAUR brand leverages the group's worldwide resources to build a fully digitalised system covering both R&D and manufacturing. Entering the market as a cool player for the young and young at heart, iCAUR is bringing fresh energy to the global NEV landscape.

iCAUR is brought to Oman by New World Autos, a Saud Bahwan Group company. Introduced as a deliberate response to evolving customer expectations, this partnership reflects New World Autos and Saud Bahwan Group's passion for customer satisfaction and their ongoing commitment to delivering the finest ownership experiences.

More than just a new name on the road, iCAUR represents a clear shift towards thoughtful, purpose-driven mobility in Oman.

As iCAUR's first rugged mid-to-large SUV, the V27 REEV is rooted in the J-style design philosophy. It blends retro aesthetics with modern technology. Saud Bahwan Group brings this to Oman

delivers a striking visual presence that far exceeds expectations in its segment, measuring over 5 meters in length and nearly 2m in both width and height. Whether it is family camping with full gear, comfortable journeys for multiple passengers, or carrying essential equipment for off-road adventures, the V27 is built to meet diverse mobility needs with ease. It fully embodies the growing demand for practical space, positioning itself as a true all-scenario leader set to redefine the value benchmark in the mid-to-large SUV segment. The V27 also offers exceptional range performance, eliminating anxiety on long journeys. Its golden REEV powertrain ensures stable, consistent power delivery, even in complex terrain conditions.

From effortless daily commutes to long-distance explorations, the V27 REEV adapts seamlessly, making every drive smooth, confident and worry-free.

The iCAUR 03T REEV is a smart boxy SUV designed for young and young-at-heart drivers. Equipped with a class-leading i-AWD system, it continuously monitors road conditions. It dynamically adjusts power distribution for optimum traction and stability.

Whether navigating rain-slicked city streets or gravel-covered mountain trails, the 03T REEV delivers confident control across all terrains. As a cool player for every journey, it empowers users to explore freely and drive with confidence.

The 03T REEV features a pioneering all-aluminium multi-cavity cage body that significantly reduces overall weight while enhancing structural integrity. Its honeycomb-style embedded high-strength aluminium beams create a robust safety shell.

In the event of a collision, the body efficiently absorbs and dissipates impact energy, safeguarding the survival-safe cabin.

A comprehensive passive safety suite includes six airbags to form a 360-degree protection shield. At the same time, 540° panoramic imaging eliminates blind spots and an ultra-HD driving recorder captures real-time road data. Complemented by 11 active safety features, the 03T REEV offers a full-chain safety solution, from risk prevention to collision protection, ensuring a worry-free drive where enjoyment takes the front seat.

A key highlight of the event was the unveiling of the 'Dream Garage' built around the iCAUR V23. As a vivid embodiment of iCAUR's open ecosystem, the Dream Garage showcases multiple variants of the V23, including pickup, convertible and space-themed editions, alongside a wide array of customisation options.

From quick-release fenders and interchangeable bumpers to LEGO-style high-mounted brake lights, the system leverages standardised interfaces and nearly a hundred aftermarket accessories. Powered by one platform, shaped by a thousand possibilities, this approach brings personalised mobility into reality.

Media and users on-site actively explored and praised the hands-on modification experience. The space also featured interactive demonstrations with the AiMOGA humanoid robot, offering scenario-based services that blend vehicle functions with lifestyle applications, reinforcing iCAUR's positioning as a cool player for the young and young at heart.

Omantel supports MEIRA annual meeting

Omantel is proud to support and sponsor the upcoming Middle East Investor Relations Association (MEIRA) annual conference and awards, set to take place in September in the Governorate of Muscat.

The initiative reflects Omantel's commitment to elevating Oman's presence on the regional and global investment stage, while contributing to the growth of more diverse and integrated capital markets.

The conference will bring together over 750 professionals and organisations from across the investor relations landscape to explore global trends, emerging innovations, and new opportunities shaping the future of financial communications in the Middle East. The event will also honour excellence and celebrate institutional achievements in investor relations.



Commenting on the occasion, Ghassan al Hashar, Chief Financial Officer at Omantel, said: "Our support for the MEIRA Conference, hosted in the Sultanate of Oman, reflects our firm belief in the importance of transparency and meaningful engagement between companies and the investment community. It also reaffirms our long-standing commitment to strengthening the investment environment and enhancing the competitiveness

of capital markets in the region. At Omantel, we actively uphold international best practices in investor relations, aligned with our broader vision for strong governance and sustainable growth."

Paolo Casamassima, Chief Executive Officer of MEIRA, added, "Omantel continues to lead the way in advancing investor relations standards, not only in Oman but across the wider region. As a founding member of MEIRA's Oman chapter and a consistent supporter of our initiatives, Omantel plays a key role in driving collaboration and enabling the growth of capital markets in the Middle East.

"We are pleased to welcome them as a strategic partner for this year's conference in Muscat, where we will work together to elevate the profession and attract long-term, sustainable investment."

NBO introduces Shell V-Power fuel vouchers for infinite credit card holders

The National Bank of Oman (NBO) has launched an exclusive reward for Infinite Credit Card holders, further enhancing the appeal of its premium offering.

Under this feature, cardholders who spend RO1,500 or more in a calendar month on point-of-sale and e-commerce transactions will receive a Shell V-Power e-voucher worth RO10.

Customers can redeem the voucher through the Shell Asia App and enjoy complimentary V-Power fuel at Shell stations across Oman. Valid for three months from the date of issuance, the vouchers are designed to offer flexibility and convenience.

Faisal al Wahaibi, General Manager & Chief Retail & Digital Banking Officer, said, "At NBO, our approach to innovation is driven by a deep understanding of our customers' evolving



lifestyles. With the Infinite Credit Card, we aim to offer more than financial utility; we create everyday moments of convenience, recognition and ease.

"This collaboration with Shell is part of our broader strategy to transform banking into a more personalised, experience-led journey. By aligning with trusted partners, we continue to deliver meaningful enhancements that resonate with the needs of our most valued clients."

Suresh Nair, General Manager, Mobility & Convenience at Shell Oman said that his group is committed to building and growing meaningful partnerships that ensure the best for its customers. "This initiative with NBO enables us to directly engage with cardholders through a platform they already trust and continue rewarding them in ways that are relevant and impactful with the best fuel we have to offer.

"We believe innovation is not

only about technology but about creating shared value that add value to people's lives. This collaboration reflects that mindset."

This partnership with Shell Oman strengthens NBO's portfolio of lifestyle-led features tailored to premium cardholders. As part of its ongoing digital strategy, the bank continues to enhance everyday banking by embedding practical, high-impact experiences through well-matched partnerships.

Oman REFCO esports championship concludes, spotlighting young talents

The Oman REFCO Esports Championship concluded on August 1, drawing more than 400 participants from governorates across the country and marking the largest event of its kind in Oman.

Organised by Oman REFCO and Omani Gaming & Esports Committee in partnership with Active Oman, E-sports Arena and Oman Automobile Association, the two-day event represented a key step in empowering youth and advancing digital talent nationwide.

Held at Active Oman Centre, the championship aimed to empower Omani youth in digital media and competitive gaming,

in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 to build a digital society and knowledge-based economy.

Saba al Busaidi, Head of the Omani Gaming & Esports Committee, said: "Public-private partnerships are vital to nurturing young talent and developing their skills across diverse sectors. This collaboration serves as a strong model for how we can support young Omanis. Through the Oman REFCO Esports Championship, we are offering youth a meaningful opportunity to hone their skills within the esports ecosystem.

"Our joint effort directly supports the objectives of Oman Vi-



sion 2040 and our shared ambition of building an advanced digital society."

Suleiman bin Abdullah al Salmi, Head of Human Resources and Corporate Services at Oman REFCO, said: "At Oman REFCO, we believe investing in youth is investing in the future of Oman. Our support for this championship reflects our commitment to transforming the gaming sector from a recreational space into a viable economic and professional driver that contributes to the country's economic diversification." He added, "Through this event, we aim to create a dynamic environment for youth, enabling them to

strengthen their digital capabilities and explore new avenues in the world of digital innovation. We remain in close coordination with the Omani Gaming & Esports Committee to expand and strengthen this momentum moving forward."

Participants competed in three main categories - FIFA 25, Tekken, and Assetto Corsa - with high energy, attractive cash prizes, and motivational workshops featured throughout the competition.

The championship was generously sponsored by Brigadier Jamal al Tai, Chairman of the Oman Automobile Association and Active Oman.

Al Fay Health Centre opens in Mahdha to boost primary care

The Al Fay Health Centre was officially inaugurated in the wilayat of Mahdha, Buraimi governorate, on Monday, marking a significant step in strengthening primary healthcare services in the region.

The facility offers a range of essential medical services, including general medicine, maternal and child healthcare, treatment of communicable and non-communicable diseases, breast cancer screening, and health promotion programmes.

Equipped with modern infrastructure, the centre includes medical clinics, vaccination rooms, nursing units, a pharmacy, a laboratory, and dedicated areas for health education and awareness.

The opening ceremony was held under the patronage of Dr Hamad bin Ahmed al Baisadi, Governor of Buraimi, and attended by H E Dr Saeed bin Hareb al Lamki, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health for Health Affairs.

Speaking at the event, Dr Hilal bin Saud al Hatmi, Deputy Wali of Mahdha, said the facility reflects the commitment of au-



Equipped with modern infrastructure, the centre includes medical clinics, vaccination rooms, nursing units, a pharmacy, a laboratory, and dedicated areas for health education

thorities to enhance healthcare accessibility and quality. "The project is a result of collaboration between government bodies and civil society, particularly the Ahd Foundation, which has played a key role in supporting health and

community initiatives," he noted.

Dr Majid bin Rashid al Muqbal, Director General of Health Services in Buraimi, described the centre as "a valuable addition to the governorate's primary healthcare network."



OCCI, Public Prosecution encourage investments

An introductory meeting titled 'A Safe Investment Environment' was held in Salalah on Monday, bringing together senior officials, legal experts, and business leaders to discuss ways of fostering a transparent and compliant business climate in Dhofar.

Organised by the Public Prosecution in collaboration with the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), the event is part of wider efforts to strengthen institutional partnerships and align with the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

The meeting was attended by members of the OCCI Board, investors, company representatives and professionals in legal and economic affairs.

Nasr bin Khamis al Sawai, Attorney General, stated that the Public Prosecution aims to broaden cooperation with national institutions to promote legal awareness within the private sector. "Our goal is to safeguard the investment environment from irregularities and uphold the rule of law, thereby ensuring justice and economic stability," he said.

Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of OCCI, highlighted the strategic importance of the partnership. "This meeting forms

part of our collaboration with the Public Prosecution to improve the legislative environment and attract both local and foreign capital," he said.

Naif bin Hamed Fadhel, Chairman of OCCI's Dhofar branch, described the event as "a vital platform for institutional dialogue on investment development in the governorate," adding that Dhofar offers diverse opportunities for investors across sectors. A working paper was presented by Assistant Public Prosecutor Khalfan bin Saeed al Maawali, reviewing key legal frameworks including criminal liability under the Commercial Companies Law and compliance with Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing legislation.

The meeting also included a dialogue session with the Attorney General and the OCCI Chairman, focusing on legislative challenges faced by the private sector and presenting proposals for reforming the legal landscape to improve the investment climate. The initiative is part of a broader national effort to consolidate governance and transparency, and to empower the private sector in line with Oman Vision 2040.

Ecolab brings new solution to revolutionise data centre

Ecolab, a global sustainability leader offering water, hygiene and infection prevention solutions and services, has announced the Middle East deployment of a transformative global technology created to drive high-performance data center cooling.

Ecolab's new solution, 3D TRASAR Technology for Direct-to-Chip Liquid Cooling, helps protect data center servers by monitoring coolant health indicators in real time such as temperature, pH and flow rates.

With this solution and other offerings, Ecolab now covers the entire data center cooling landscape using proprietary technology and powerful insights to deliver growth while reducing

demand on vital natural resources - supporting the region's rapidly growing AI infrastructure and long-term sustainability goals.

According to PwC, the Middle East's data center capacity is expected to triple - from 1 GW in 2025 to 3.3 GW over the next five years. As data centres expand to support the acceleration of AI technology, so does their need for reliable water and power to cool high-performance computing systems.

This growth places added demand on water and energy in the Middle East, where high temperatures and severe water scarcity challenge sustainable infrastructure planning - highlighting the need for scalable, resource-effi-



Stefan Umiastowski

cient solutions. Data centers play a critical role in enabling industries to thrive in today's digital world which underscores the importance of optimising water use

while driving business growth.

Stefan Umiastowski, Ecolab's Senior Vice President & CEO for India, Middle East, and Africa, said: "The Middle East is rapidly emerging as a global hub for AI and digital infrastructure - and with that growth comes rising demand for water and energy. This new technology arrives at a critical time, helping our customers meet the demands of AI-driven expansion while managing resources efficiently. In one of the most water-scarce regions in the world, performance and sustainability must go hand in hand."

The new technology was developed with critical feedback from data centre operators and IT equipment manufacturers to

meet the unique demands of data centres.

Ecolab's full portfolio of cooling management solutions now equips operators to optimize performance at every stage from cooling towers to direct-to-chip infrastructure. This integrated system supports water and energy savings and enables better performance.

"Water is no longer just a utility - it's a strategic asset. And with the right approach, AI can help solve the very challenges it creates. By combining Ecolab's expertise with advanced digital tools, we're helping data centers do more with less - aligning environmental stewardship with business performance," added Umiastowski.

VOX Cinemas to screen BTS's programme in Amsterdam

VOX Cinemas is excited to announce that it will be the only cinema exhibitor in the Middle East to screen #RUNSEOKJIN_EP.TOUR in AMSTERDAM: LIVE VIEWING on Sunday (August 10) at 2pm across the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar and Lebanon.

The concert screening marks the BTS member's first solo world tour finale, broadcasted live from Ziggo Dome in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Tickets are now live on voxcinemas.com and the VOX Cinemas app.

#RUNSEOKJIN_EP.TOUR in AMSTERDAM: LIVE VIEWING provides a rare chance for BTS ARMY and global audiences to collectively experience Jin's distinct charm as a multi-talented musician in cinemas worldwide, building on the themes of connection and sincerity found in his second solo album Echo released in May 2025, which charted on the Billboard Hot 100.

VOX Cinemas previously broadcasted j-hope Tour 'HOPE ON STAGE' in JAPAN: LIVE VIEWING, SUGA | Agust D TOUR 'D-DAY' THE MOVIE (2024), BTS Permission to Dance on Stage - Seoul: Live Viewing (2022) and BTS World



The concert screening marks the BTS member's first solo world tour finale, to be broadcast live from Ziggo Dome in Amsterdam, offering live viewing across Oman and other GCC states

Tour: Love Yourself in Seoul (2019) which sold out. In addition to major blockbusters and new movie releases, the region's largest cinema exhibitor regularly screens concerts, live comedy, football matches, and documentaries to cater to the different tastes and preferences of its guests.

#RUNSEOKJIN_EP.TOUR in AMSTERDAM: LIVE VIEWING is presented by Trafalgar Releasing and produced by HYBE and BIGHIT MUSIC.

Omani medical research team utilises AI to uncover inherited heart conditions

A groundbreaking research initiative led by Dr Ahmed al Amri, Consultant of Molecular Genetics Lab and Head of Training and Professional Staff Development at the National Genetics Center of the Royal Hospital, has made significant progress in identifying the genetic causes of cardiomyopathy in the Sultanate of Oman.

The study, titled 'Implementation of Machine Learning Approach to Predict Pathogenicity of Genetic Variants Associated with Cardiomyopathy', utilises Whole Exome Sequencing (WES) and advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) methodologies to investigate the underlying genetic contributors to this complex heart condition.

Cardiomyopathy a heterogeneous group of myocardial disorders, remains a significant health burden worldwide.

In the Sultanate of Oman, the genetic basis of the disease has been insufficiently characterised, hindering effective diagnosis and intervention. This study aimed to bridge that gap by conducting genetic analysis on a cohort of Omani families affected by cardiomyopathy.

Dr Amri explained that central to the research is the development of a novel AI-based analy-



Dr Ahmed al Amri

sis model called 'CardioVar'.

This model is designed to enhance the interpretation of WES data through the integration of more than 50,000 genetic variants and mutations linked to cardiomyopathy, supported by multiple AI algorithms to ensure analytical precision.

The research project achieved a diagnostic success rate of over 80%, uncovering both known and previously unreported genetic mutations, some of which involve genes not previously linked to cardiomyopathy.

These findings offer valuable insight into the genetic landscape of the disease within the Omani population and present new opportunities for further re-



Nibras al Mahrami

search to confirm the clinical relevance of novel variants. The AI model significantly improved both the speed and accuracy of genetic analysis, demonstrating its practical value in overcoming the limitations of traditional sequencing approaches.

Dr Amri emphasised that this approach not only advances the understanding of the genetic basis of cardiomyopathy in the Sultanate of Oman but also provides a scalable framework for implementing AI in genomic medicine, enhancing diagnostic accuracy and personalised care.

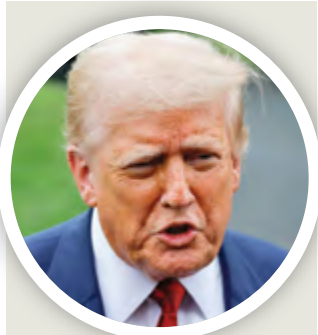
The multidisciplinary research team included Dr Amri, Dr Aisha al Balushi, Nibras al Mahrami, Dr Musallam al Ariami, Dr Nadia al



Dr Mohammed al Rawahi

Hashimi, Dr Mohammed al Rawahi, Dr Tuqa al Lawati, Dr Bushra al Shamsi, Dr Fahad al Hattali and Mashael al Balushi. Together, they have contributed to a practical model that blends clinical knowledge, laboratory science, and artificial intelligence to achieve high-impact results.

This research not only advances the scientific understanding of inherited cardiomyopathy in the Sultanate of Oman but also exemplifies how AI can transform genetic diagnostics. It stands as a national model for the integration of precision medicine into routine clinical care, with plans to expand the study to include other hereditary heart conditions.



Nuclear submarines deployed in in Russia, says Trump

Washington, D.C., US - US President Donald Trump has said that nuclear submarines have been deployed in Russia.

"They are in the region, yeah - where they have to be," Trump told reporters before boarding Air Force One in Allentown, Pennsylvania on Sunday.

When asked if there was anything Russia could do to avoid sanctions at this point, Trump said: "Yeah, get a deal where people stop getting killed."

He further said that he was looking for fairness and not leverage when he was imposing tariffs.

"I'm not looking for leverage - I'm looking for fairness. We want to see reciprocal wherever we can, and all I can say is this: our country will be taking in hundreds of billions of dollars."

Trump said on Friday that he was ordering two US Navy nuclear submarines to 'appropriate regions', in response to remarks by Dmitry Medvedev, Russia's Former President and current deputy chairman of its Security Council.

In what he called an effort to be 'prepared', Trump said in a Truth Social post that he had 'ordered two Nuclear Submarines to be positioned in the appropriate regions, just in case these foolish and inflammatory statements are more than just that'.

Trump later on Friday said the repositioned nuclear submarines were moved 'closer to Russia', CNN reported. He said on Thursday he intended to place new sanctions on Moscow, and called Russia's attacks on Ukraine 'disgusting'. In an earlier social media message, Trump said the Ukraine war 'should have never happened', as per CNN.

ANI

Why do African elites seek medical treatment abroad?

Over 30 AU member states allocate less than 10 per cent of their budget to health

Abuja, Nigeria - Choosing where to seek medical help is a deeply private decision. But the numerous occasions African leaders have sought treatment abroad have thrown the spotlight on local healthcare investment. To a large extent, leaders are responsible for the development of proper health care for the citizens of their countries.

The deaths of former leaders Muhammadu Buhari and Edgar Lungu in foreign medical facilities have not calmed accusations that African leaders neglect public health systems in their own countries.

"The state of health care in Nigeria is deeply concerning. The biggest problem is infrastructure. There are no drugs and functional medical equipment," Jamila Atiku, a researcher on public health in Nigeria, told DW.

Low investment in public health

Reasons for medical tourism include: lack of specialised treatment available locally, poorly equipped hospitals, and security fears for politicians.

Another factor, according to Zimbabwean health rights advocate Chamunorwa Mashoko, is an over-reliance on foreign aid.

"Among African countries, over 32 out of 54 countries are not allocating significant budgets to health. This is motivated by overdependency on donor aid," he told DW.

"Africa is failing to realise that foreign funding in health is just for diplomacy. Those assisting us with all that aid, it is really nothing to do with our health challenges,"



The deaths of former presidents Muhammadu Buhari and Edgar Lungu in foreign medical facilities have again sparked debate on whether African leaders trust their countries' health care systems

Mashoko added.

African countries receive in excess of US\$60bn in health funding, representing just a fraction of the total health financing needed for the continent.

Under the 2001 Abuja Declaration, African Union (AU) member states committed to end the continent's health financing crisis by pledging to allocate 15% of their annual national budgets to healthcare. But over two decades later, only three countries, Rwanda, Botswana, and Cape Verde, have consistently met or exceeded the target.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that over 30 AU member states allocate less than 10% of their budget to health, with some allocating as little as 5-7%.

"Nigeria has been fluctuating between 4-6% of the annual budget," said Atiku, adding that politicians are only concerned about other infrastructure development projects like roads.

"Doctors and health care professionals are always going on strike because they are underpaid," she said.

Inadequate public financing of health has resulted in poorly run, underperforming health systems across many African countries.

"Over reliance on external funding is highly unsustainable and inconsistent with achieving Universal Health Coverage," said Itai Rusike, of the Zimbabwe-based Community Working Group on Health. "The Abuja target of 15% allocation to health has remained an elusive target. It is now outdated given the population increase, huge disease burden and the levels of neglect of infrastructure and health worker retention," Rusike added.

Medical services sought abroad

A chronic lack of specialised treatment and facilities is driving many African patients to seek medical treatment abroad. The sectors affected include oncology, cardiology, neurology, orthopaedics, organ transplants, fertility, and paediatrics for the management of rare genetic disorders. Over 300,000 Africans travel to India annually for medical services, spending more than US\$2bn each year.

India is said to be generating more than US\$6bn each year from medical tourism.

Projections show the Asian country could get US\$13bn in medical tourism by 2026 under the 'Heal in India' initiative.

According to the African Jour-

nal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, Nigerians are estimated to spend US\$1bn annually on medical tourism. 60% of that amount is spent on oncology, orthopaedics, nephrology, and cardiology. Additionally, the figure represents almost 20% of the annual public health expenditure that covers the salaries of health workers.

An estimated 5,000 Nigerians fly out of the country monthly for medical treatment, with large numbers traveling to India.

What needs to be done

Some African health authorities argue they are doing their best to improve healthcare for their countries.

"There is room for improvement to fund the health sector. We are targeting to ensure by 2027 at least 17,000 primary health care facilities are functional in Nigeria," Nigeria's Minister of State for Health and Social Welfare, Iziq Adegunle Salako, told DW. "There is not a health system in the world that is 100%. We believe we are headed in the right direction in implementing solutions."

Health experts say African governments need to build modern health facilities to offer services currently being outsourced abroad.

"Looking up to politicians will not work. Communities need to come together and pull resources to create health care systems that work for them," health rights advocate Chamunorwa Mashoko told DW.

DW

South Korea removes loudspeakers on border with North

Seoul, South Korea - South Korea began dismantling loudspeakers broadcasting anti-North Korea messages along the border on Monday, according to the country's Defence Ministry.

The move is part of President Lee Jae-myung's efforts to improve relations with Pyongyang.

"Starting today, the military has begun removing the loudspeakers," Lee Kyung-ho, spokesperson for the South's Defence Ministry, told reporters.

"It is a practical measure aimed at helping ease tensions



South Korea seeks to reduce tensions and revive long-stalled dialogue with the North. However, North Korea rejected the overture, stating it had no interest in talks with Seoul

with the North, provided that such actions do not compromise the military's state of readiness."

He added that all loudspeakers are expected to be removed by the end of the week.

Shortly after taking office in June, following the impeachment of his predecessor, Lee's administration halted the broadcasts to 'restore trust'. A day later, Pyongyang also stopped its broadcasts, which had long been a source of irritation for South Korean residents near the border.

Although the two countries

remain technically at war, Lee seeks to reduce tensions and revive long-stalled dialogue with the North. However, North Korea recently rejected the overture, stating it had no interest in talks with Seoul.

"If the ROK... expected that it could reverse all the results it had made with a few sentimental words, nothing is more serious miscalculation than it," North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's sister Kim Yo Jong said last week, using South Korea's official name.

DW

Record low level: Why birth rate in Germany continues to nosedive?

Berlin, Germany - When Julia Brandner recently presented her book *I'm Not Kidding*, the 30-year-old influencer and comedian was confronted by a barrage of insults. One 72-year-old mother of three children took to the floor and attacked her in front of the audience as an egoist, Brandner told DW.

However, the book, in which the Austrian-born and Berlin-based Brandner explains, with great humour and frankness, why she never wanted to become pregnant and underwent sterilisation for that reason, also drew many positive reactions.

Speaking about the hate that she has experienced from several quarters, she said: "You get stamped as a revolutionary. If you say you don't want children, you are very quickly blamed for sabotaging the pen-

sion system and the intergenerational contract, and actually for singlehandedly bringing about the extinction of the human race."

This criticism is fuelled by a number that many young women celebrate as a sign of progress in female self-determination, but that others see as a fearful portent of dwindling prosperity and a continuously shrinking population: 1.35.

That's the average number of children had by women in Germany in 2024, according to the Federal Statistical Office.

The average birth rate for women with German nationality was just 1.23, a figure that rose to 1.89 for non-German nationals. In total, 677,117 children were born in Germany in 2024, a decrease of 15,872 from the year before.



AfD calls to boost birth rate

Brandner was 28 years old when she was sterilised. Her gynaecologist demanded a psychiatric assessment of her mental capacity before carrying out the operation.

Brandner was surprised by the controversy caused by her book. She said she is noticing an increasing rightward shift in these tumultuous times, along with a return to more 'traditional' values, where women stand at the stove and are sup-

posed to look after the children.

The far-right Alternative for Germany party (AfD) has also latched onto the topic of the sinking fertility rate and is calling for more children instead of immigration as a way to combat the lack of skilled workers.

Brandner feels that even in 2025, the topic of children is still very widely seen as something that concerns just women.

"The many single mothers are being left to cope on their own, while fathers are often let off the hook. For women, having children puts them at huge risk of poverty. It can't be that even today a woman has to give up her prosperity to ensure the prosperity of society," she said.

Fertility rates sinking worldwide

But Germany isn't the only country experiencing a sinking fertility rate, by far. Numbers are going down drastically across the world, reaching as low as 0.75 in South Korea. Vietnam rang alarm bells earlier this year, when its birth rate hit a record low. The only excep-

tion is the Sahel zone, where women are still having more than five children on average.

Michaela Kreyenfeld is a sociologist and was one of the experts behind the German government's family report. She sees a growing connection between economic crises and uncertainties and the birth rate. "Is it egoism or simply autonomous behaviour that women don't want to have any children? We have been talking about that since the 1970s at least, so it's nothing new," she told DW.

What is new, she said, are the multiple crises: "The COVID pandemic, rampant climate change and high inflation. For the young generation in particular, that is a new situation," said Kreyenfeld.

DW

Syria reopens Bosra al-Sham corridor after clashes in Suwayda

Damascus, Syria - The Syrian government on Monday reopened the Bosra al-Sham humanitarian corridor in the southern province of Daraa, allowing aid deliveries to resume to neighbouring Suwayda after the route was closed a day earlier due to violent clashes.

The state-run Ikhbariya TV, citing a security source at the Interior Ministry, said the crossing was reopened after the area was secured and 'the threat posed by armed groups was removed'.

The corridor, which has been used in recent days to deliver humanitarian assistance and relief supplies to Suwayda, was

temporarily shut down on Sunday after heavy fighting erupted between internal security forces and armed groups in the province.

According to the ministry, the groups violated a recent ceasefire agreement by launching attacks on several security posts in Tal Hadid, Rimat Hazem, and Walgha. The statement accused them of fuelling sectarian tensions, stealing aid supplies, carrying out unlawful arrests, and targeting villages with rockets and mortars, which resulted in casualties among security personnel. The Interior Ministry stressed that the state has been



working to stabilise the situation and ensure civilian safety since the start of the truce.

Sunday's escalation marked the latest flare-up in Suwayda, which has witnessed ongoing unrest and armed confrontations. Suwayda has observed a ceasefire since July 19 following a week of armed clashes between Druze groups and Bedouin tribes that left 426

dead, according to the London-based Syrian Network for Human Rights.

Syria's transitional administration, formed after Bashar al-Assad was ousted on December 8, 2024, is working to restore stability across the country after nearly 25 years of authoritarian rule.

US Special Envoy for Syria Tom Barrack expressed concern on Monday over renewed violence in Syria's Suwayda and Manbij regions, calling for calm and dialogue among all parties.

A Syrian security member was killed, and others were injured when outlaw groups led by Druze leader Hikmat al-Hijri violated a ceasefire in southern Syria's Suwayda province on Sunday.

A rocket was also launched by YPG/PKK-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) on a military position in Manbij in the north, according to the state news agency SANA.

"Disturbing violence erupted yesterday in Suwayda and in Manbij. Diplomacy is the best way to stop violence and build a peaceful, lasting solution," Barrack, who also serves as US Ambassador to Turkey, said on his official X account.

Anadolu Agency

Gaza: 22 killed in fresh Israeli attacks

At least 60,933 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip since October 2023

Gaza City/Istanbul - At least 22 Palestinians were killed and many others injured on Monday in latest Israeli attacks in the war-torn Gaza Strip, according to medics and witnesses.

Four Palestinians were killed in an Israeli strike targeting a gathering of civilians in the Shejaiya neighbourhood of Gaza City.

Three more people were killed and others wounded in another attack targeting a gathering of civilians in the same area.

Two Palestinians were also killed in an Israeli strike on a civilian gathering in the town of Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip.

Eight people lost their lives to Israeli fire near a US aid distribution centre in the vicinity of the



Gaza's Health Ministry said five people died from famine and malnutrition in the last 24 hours, raising death toll from starvation since October 2023 to 180, including 93 children

Netzarim Corridor in central Gaza.

Three Palestinians, a man, his wife and daughter, were also killed, while others were wounded or went missing, in a strike that targeted a house in the

Al-Hekir area of Deir al-Balah, central Gaza Strip.

In the southern Gaza Strip, two Palestinians, including a woman, were killed and more than 20 others injured when Israeli forces opened fire on civil-

ians waiting for aid near a distribution centre in Rafah, southern Gaza.

Meanwhile, Gaza's Health Ministry said that five people died from famine and malnutrition in the last 24 hours, raising

the death toll from starvation since October 2023 to 180, including 93 children.

The ministry also said that three people, including two children under 15, died from Guillain-Barré syndrome. It warned of a surge in paralysis cases linked to severe malnutrition, calling for urgent international action to provide life-saving medicines and end Israel's months-long blockade on the enclave.

Death toll rises to 60,933

At least 60,933 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip since October 2023, the Health Ministry said on Monday.

A ministry statement said that 94 bodies were brought to hospitals in the last 24 hours, while 439 people were injured, taking the number of injuries to 150,027 in the Israeli onslaught.

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

The ministry also noted that 29 Palestinians were killed and 300 injured while trying to get humanitarian aid in the last 24 hours, bringing the total number of Palestinians killed while seeking aid to 1,516, with over 10,067 others wounded since May 27.

The Israeli army resumed its attacks on the Gaza Strip on March 18 and has since killed 9,440 people and injured 37,986 others, shattering a ceasefire and prisoner exchange agreement that took hold in January.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army on Monday shot and killed a Palestinian man and injured another in the town of Qabatiya in the northern West Bank, and seized

his body, the Health Ministry said. In a statement, the ministry said the General Authority for Civil Affairs (liaison body with the Israeli side) informed that a Palestinian was killed by Israeli gunfire in the town of Qabatiya, south of Jenin.

It identified the victim as Yousef al-Amer, 33, noting that the Israeli army withheld his body.

Israeli forces surrounded an agricultural warehouse between the towns of Mirka and Qabatiya and targeted it with shoulder-fired rockets, killing the Palestinian man and destroying the warehouse, witnesses told Anadolu.

Israeli military vehicles bulldozed the site and retrieved the body before withdrawing, they added.

The ministry said a 21-year-old was also wounded by Israeli gunfire and arrested in the same town.

Since the start of Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip in October 2023, at least 1,013 Palestinians have been killed and more than 7,000 injured in the West Bank by Israeli forces and illegal settlers, according to the ministry.

Anadolu Agency

US House Democrats urge Trump admin to recognise Palestinian state

Washington, D.C., US - Over a dozen US House Democrats signed a letter urging the Trump administration to officially recognise a Palestinian state, Axios reported on Monday.

In a letter addressed to the US President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, lawmakers wrote: "This tragic moment has highlighted for the world the long overdue need to recognise Palestinian self-determination."

The lawmakers highlighted French President Emmanuel Macron's recent pledge to recognise Palestinian state at a UN meeting in September, which



Rubio strongly rejected.

"We encourage the governments of other countries that have yet to recognise Palestinian statehood, including the United States, to do so as well," the letter said.

Representative Ro Khanna, who is leading the initiative, told Axios that he 'just started outreach this past week' and that 'the response has been over-

whelming'.

"The recognition would come by embracing the 22 state Arab League Plan just passed this week that calls for a Palestinian state and the recognition of Israel as a Jewish democratic state," Khanna said.

He pointed out that over 147 countries have recognised a Palestinian state, saying: We cannot be isolated from the rest of the free world."

France, Britain, Canada, and Malta have indicated plans to recognise a Palestinian state in September, while Australia has signalled it may follow.

Anadolu Agency

Israeli strike injures 2 in southern Lebanon

Beirut, Lebanon - Two people were injured in an Israeli strike in southern Lebanon on Monday, in the latest violation of a fragile ceasefire agreement, the Health Ministry said.

A ministry statement said fighter jets hit the town of Khiam in the Marjayoun district.

There was no immediate comment from the Israeli army on the attack.

Israel launched a military offensive in Lebanon on October 8, 2023, which escalated into a full-scale war by September 2024, killing more than 4,000 people and injuring around 17,000.



14 civilians killed by RSF in Sudan's North Darfur: Rights group

Khartoum, Sudan - At least 14 civilians were killed and dozens injured by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in El-Fasher, the capital of the North Darfur State, a rights group said on Monday.

According to the Emergency Lawyers, an independent human rights watchdog, the RSF committed 'a horrific massacre' targeting civilians trying to flee Qarni village, northwest of El-Fasher city, on Saturday, leaving 14 civilians dead and several others injured with varying severity.

The group said several civilians were also abducted, without giving further details.

The latest attack came amid a 'suffocating siege imposed by the RSF on El-Fasher for over two months, which has led to a near-total collapse of health services, severe shortages in food and

medicine, and widespread malnutrition and disease among thousands of civilians, especially children', the rights group said.

It called on the international community to establish humanitarian corridors to ensure safe evacuation of civilians, and launch an international investigation into the RSF siege on the city.

There was no immediate comment from the RSF on the report.

El-Fasher is a vital hub for humanitarian operations in Darfur but has been under a strict RSF siege and recurrent clashes for more than a year, despite international efforts to broker a humanitarian truce and allow aid deliveries.

Sudan has been ravaged by fighting between the army and the RSF since April 2023, killing more than 20,000 people.

Anadolu Agency

Iran confirms visit by senior IAEA official within 10 days

Tehran, Iran - A senior official from the UN nuclear watchdog will visit Iran within 10 days, the Iranian Foreign Ministry confirmed on Monday.

"The date for the visit of the senior IAEA official to Tehran has been set, and the trip will take place within the next 10 days," ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said in comments carried by the state news

agency IRNA.

Last month, Iran said it had agreed to a visit by a technical team from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to the capital, Tehran, without inspecting nuclear sites.

Iran said the framework of its cooperation with the UN nuclear agency will be discussed during the visit, following recent Israeli and US attacks on the country.

"Iran has consistently emphasised that the agency and its officials must act solely based on their technical and professional responsibilities within this international body and must avoid being influenced by political pressure," Baqaei said.

On the nuclear talks with US, Baqaei said Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi stressed that 'any future interaction or nego-

tiation - if the conditions for it are met - will certainly be different from the situation before June 12'.

"The circumstances have changed drastically, and in any potential negotiations or discussions, without a doubt, the issue of holding the US accountable and demanding compensation for committing a military attack against Iran's peaceful nuclear

facilities will be one of the main items on the agenda," he added.

Negotiations between Iran and the US were being held through Omani mediators until Israel's surprise attack on Iran on June 13, which triggered a 12-day war, targeting military, nuclear, and civilian sites as well as senior military commanders and nuclear scientists.

Anadolu Agency



Top US, Pakistani diplomats discuss international, regional issues

Karachi, Pakistan - Top US and Pakistani diplomats discussed bilateral relations, and regional and international issues, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said on Monday, a day after Islamabad hosted the Iranian president. Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar spoke with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio by telephone, as per a statement from the ministry in Islamabad.

"The two leaders discussed a range of bilateral matters and exchanged views on current regional and international issues," the statement said.

Both sides agreed to remain in contact and continue cooperation on areas of mutual interest.

Iranian President Masood Pezeshkian concluded his two-day visit to Islamabad on Sunday. During the crucial visit following a 12-day war between Israel and Iran in June over the Iranian nuclear programme, Pakistan declared its support to Tehran's pursuit of nuclear capability for 'peaceful objectives and in accordance with the UN charter'.

Islamabad also supported

Tehran's right to defence against Israeli aggression.

This is the second contact between the two top diplomats in less than two weeks. Dar and Rubio met late last month in Washington, where the US secretary of state expressed appreciation for Pakistan's continued willingness to play a constructive role in mediating conversations with Iran and its commitment to preserving regional stability.

Ties between Islamabad and Washington have improved in recent months, with the two sides last week sealing a trade deal and devising plans to jointly exploring oil reserves in the South Asian country.

Earlier, at the height of hostilities between Pakistan and India, President Donald Trump brokered a ceasefire following a four-day armed conflict in May. India, however, says there was no US mediation. Trump also hosted Pakistan's army chief General Asim Munir at the White House for lunch in June.

Anadolu Agency

Trump sends Witkoff to Russia ahead of sanctions

Washington, D.C./Moscow - US president's special envoy Steve Witkoff is travelling to Russia this week, just days before a deadline for Moscow to reach a deal with Ukraine or face major tariffs.

Donald Trump said Witkoff may be going to Moscow 'Wednesday or Thursday'. "They would like to see him. They've asked that he meet, so we'll see what happens," he added.

The Kremlin-controlled media later reported that Witkoff is expected in Moscow on Wednesday, August 6.

US president also reiterated that sanctions would take effect by Friday if Russia does not agree to a ceasefire by that date. "There'll be sanctions, but they seem to be pretty good at avoiding sanctions," Trump said.

"They're wily characters, and they're pretty good at avoiding sanctions, so we'll see what happens." Trump announced earlier that the measures would include significant secondary tariffs on countries that continue to import Russian oil, gas and other goods - a move that would significantly affect major trading partners such as China and India.

Is Moscow ready for a ceasefire?

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said on Monday that Moscow is 'always happy' to hold talks with Witkoff. "We consider these contacts to be important, meaningful and very useful."

Peskov also said that the Kremlin has not ruled out the possibility of a meeting between Witkoff and Russian President



US president's special envoy Steve Witkoff is expected in Moscow on Wednesday

US president Donald Trump reiterated that sanctions would take effect by Friday if Russia does not agree to a ceasefire by that date

Vladimir Putin this week in Moscow.

US special envoy met with the Russian president in April, drawing criticism not only for repeating Moscow's narratives about Russia's all-out war against Ukraine, but also for using the Kremlin-provided translators for these talks.

In a stark demonstration of Moscow's ceasefire intentions, Russia has intensified its daily attacks against Ukraine, targeting

civilians and residential infrastructure with barrages of missiles and drones across the country.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has reiterated the calls to the US to sanction Russia, saying: "The world has enough power to stop this and protect people."

"Ukraine looks forward to the implementation of every agreement on strengthening defence that has been reached with its

partners. Every day of delay results in the loss of our people," he added.

Is Zelenskyy-Putin meeting possible?

Zelenskyy also reiterated his willingness to meet with Putin.

"We understand who calls the shots in Russia, and thus Ukraine is once again offering to move beyond technical talks - not to exchange statements, but to actually meet at the level of leaders," the Ukrainian president said. Zelenskyy has been repeatedly calling for a meeting with his Russian counterpart.

When the direct talks between Kyiv and Moscow were renewed in March this year, Ze-

lenskyy personally went to Turkey, calling on Putin to come to Istanbul for direct negotiations between the presidents.

Putin was a no-show and has been rejecting the possibility of meeting Zelenskyy since then.

On Monday, Peskov once again said that a face-to-face meeting between the presidents is not on the agenda, claiming that 'all the preparatory work has not been completed yet'.

Putin's spokesperson did not provide details and more information on what precisely this preparatory work involves and what Moscow's expectations are regarding the possible meeting between the two.

Euronews

Heat wave triggers wildfire alerts across southern France, Spain

Istanbul, Turkey - Southern Europe is on high alert as extreme heat and dry conditions fuel the risk of wildfires across France, Spain, and Portugal, prompting authorities to issue red and orange warnings and mobilise fire-fighting forces.

Meteo-France placed the southern French department of Aude on red alert for forest fires on Tuesday, the highest level, warning of 'very high' risk due to scorching temperatures and dry winds, the French news broadcaster BFM TV reported.

The region around Carcassonne, recently hit by major wild-

fires in July, could see temperatures soar to 35C (95F) in Narbonne and Castelnaudary.

In early July, more than 1,000 firefighters were deployed to battle a blaze that burned over 2,000 hectares in Aude.

Nine other French departments, including Haute-Garonne, Hérault, Gard and Bouches-du-Rhône, were placed under orange 'high' alert for fire risk.

According to Meteo-France, 'weather conditions make the risk of forest and vegetation fires starting and spreading very high compared to summer norms'.



The heat wave extends beyond France.

In the Iberian Peninsula, day-

time temperatures are currently 5 to 10C (41-50F) above seasonal averages, with several

Spanish regions placed under orange alert, according to the Spanish Meteorological Agency

(Aemet).

"The heat wave is likely to be long and persist at least until next Sunday," Aemet said on X.

In Galicia, Spain, the fire in Vilardevos (Ourense) has scorched 570 hectares but was stabilised late on Sunday, according to the Military Emergency Unit.

Efforts to prevent reignition continue, with over 100 personnel, 10 aircraft, and many ground vehicles mobilised, the Spanish broadcaster RTVE reported.

Meanwhile, three wildfires remain active in the A Coruña municipality of Ponteceso, affecting

a combined area of over 400 hectares.

"There is intense arson activity, with around 50 warnings a day and weather conditions that aren't helping," said Regional Rural Affairs Minister Maria Jose Gomez, urging the public to act responsibly.

Neighbouring Portugal also faces critical conditions.

The Portuguese government declared a 'very high' fire risk until Thursday amid the second heat wave of the summer, the Portuguese state news agency Lusa reported.

Anadolu Agency

INDIA'S GANGA OVERFLOWS



A view of the flooded area as the water level of the Ganga river rises, in Patna, India on Monday. The water level of the river has been continuously rising since Saturday (ANI)

Philippine President Marcos arrives on a five-day state visit to India

New Delhi, India - Philippine President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr arrived in the national capital on Monday for a five-day state visit to India, aimed at further strengthening the India-Philippines relationship, the Ministry of External Affairs stated.

This is the first visit by the President of the Southeast Asian country to India since he assumed office back in 2022, marking a significant milestone, as his visit aligns with the celebration of the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties between the two nations. According to a post on X by the MEA, Marcos was welcomed with a warm reception by the Minister of State for External Affairs, Pabitra Margherita.

"Mabuhay, President Ferdinand R Marcos Jr! President Bongbong Marcos has arrived in New Delhi on his first State Visit



Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr

to India. Received by MoS Pabitra Margherita and accorded a warm welcome. India & the Philippines are celebrating 75th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic ties. This visit will lead to further strengthening of India-Philippines relations," the MEA stated on X.

He was accompanied by First Lady Louise Araneta Marcos and a high-level delegation including several Ministers from his Cabinet. According to a statement by

the MEA, during his visit, President Marcos will be holding talks with President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with other officials.

He will also be meeting with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. On August 5, he will lay a wreath at Rajghat, and following that, he will hold talks with PM Modi at the Hyderabad House.

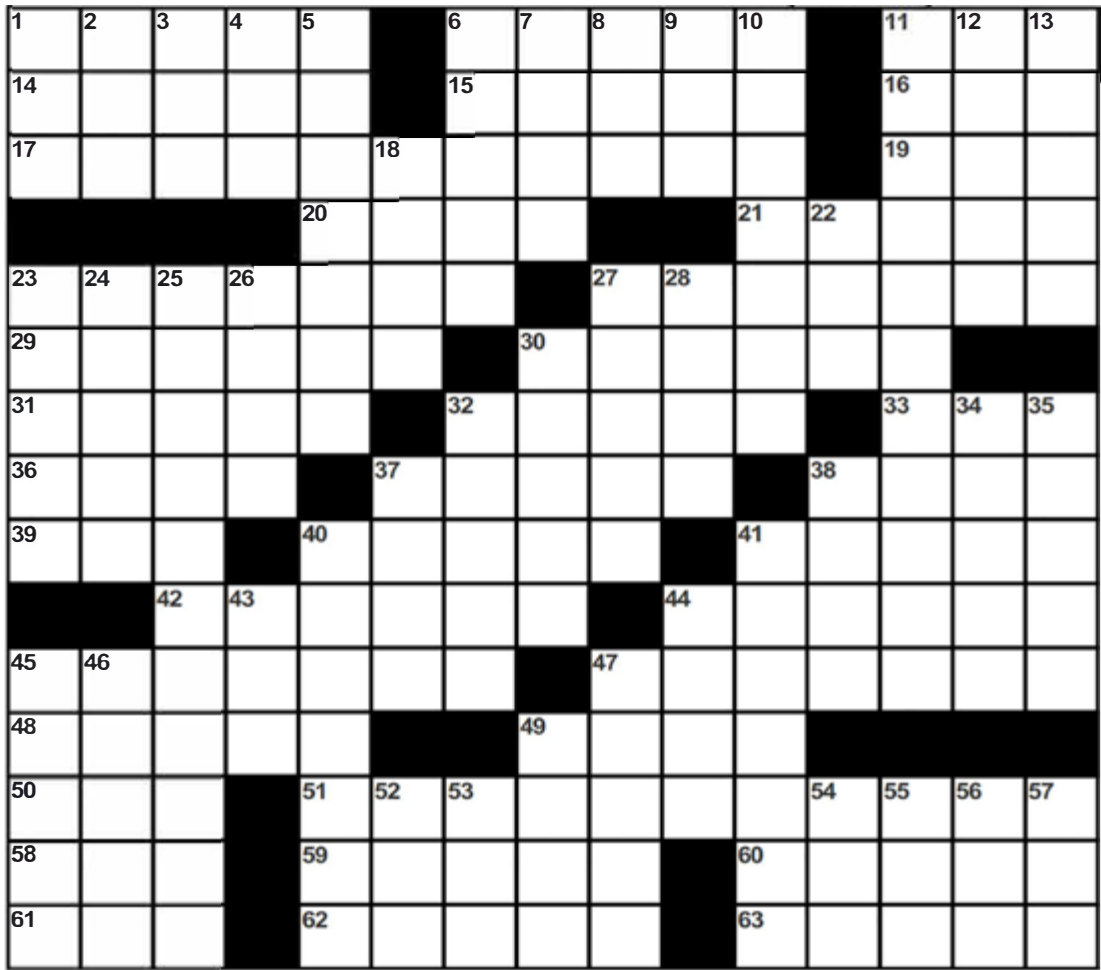
Exchange of Memoranda of Understanding and Press Statements will take place thereafter.

The Philippine President will then meet Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare J P Nadda and thereafter President Droupadi Murmu.

Diplomatic relations between India and the Philippines were established in November 1949. Both countries have since developed a strong partnership across a broad spectrum of areas.

ANI

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Make pigtailed
 - 6) Trendy place to go downhill
 - 11) Agent for trips?
 - 14) Wavelike design
 - 15) Brahman, for one
 - 16) Ring bearer, often
 - 17) Busy bodies?
 - 19) Card to keep
 - 20) Apple leftover
 - 21) "Four" at the fore
 - 23) Movie theater purchase
 - 27) Knight to remember
 - 29) Many have chapters
 - 30) Erase
 - 31) Claims on homes, e.g.
 - 32) Chops finely
 - 33) Nipper's co.
 - 36) Damed thing
 - 37) This makes five in this puzzle
 - 38) Broadway star Verdon
 - 39) Hurricane heading, sometimes
 - 40) Popular game
 - 41) Beside
 - 42) California county
 - 44) Far from eager
 - 45) Opens a map
 - 47) More expressionless,

- as a stare
- 48) Hauled away
 - 49) Exec, in slang
 - 50) "How was _ know?"
 - 51) Computer user's locale
 - 58) Dog that's far from a purebred
 - 59) Arctic inhabitant
 - 60) Event with cowboys and lassos
 - 61) Inquire
 - 62) Requires
 - 63) Brenda who was drawn out
- DOWN**
- 1) Mercedes competitor
 - 2) "Winnie-the-Pooh" baby
 - 3) Requirement for a useful balloon
 - 4) Aggravate
 - 5) Some church officers
 - 6) Squash type
 - 7) Ad headline, often
 - 8) Letters on tires
 - 9) "Yadda, yadda, yadda"
 - 10) Snuggles down
 - 11) It's done in some tanneries
 - 12) Pelvic bones
 - 13) Apprehension
 - 18) _ d'oeuvre (appetizer)
 - 22) "Dig in!"

- 23) Sign of life
- 24) Bermuda vegetable
- 25) Complicated, eccentric person
- 26) Bop on the head
- 27) Little leapin' lizard
- 28) Pub offerings
- 30) Funeral hymn
- 32) Ding-_ (doorbell sounds)
- 34) Perfume by burning
- 35) Rage
- 37) Breeze component
- 38) Hidden valley
- 40) Variety of apple
- 41) Images representing posters
- 43) Lobster eggs
- 44) Came down to earth
- 45) Central New York town
- 46) "We didn't do it!"
- 47) Some sculptures
- 49) Prepare to crash
- 52) Half and half
- 53) Have regrets
- 54) "Sesame Street" viewer
- 55) Potato state (abbr.)
- 56) " _ the ramparts ... "
- 57) Word partnered with "neither"

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

There's nothing to fear but fear itself, for you, anyway! Take on something big that you've been putting off. You should find that as soon as you step up it isn't nearly as bad as you'd feared. In fact, it might not be such a bad thing at all. This might give you such inspiration that you finish it all up in no time, and you might also be ready to take on a few other things you've been wanting to avoid.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Every now and then, people accuse you of making it all about you, but even those folks couldn't find any fault with your current mood. It's much more pleasant to spend your time (and boundless energy) helping someone who badly needs assistance. It's tempting to ask yourself what you're getting out of it all, but that's just old habits talking. Let your superheroic self-shine!

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Your boss, client, or mate is demanding hard information, but you've been trying to take care of the big picture. Try to figure out what they're really asking for. It might not be all that far removed from what you need to do for yourself. The small details are the groundwork for future successes, so work with your people to shore them up. If you stick to your own agenda, you are sure to end up at odds with each other.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. What indicates the legal limit to which a ship may be loaded?

- A. Sneaker line
- B. Plimsoll line
- C. Trainer line
- D. Pumps line

2. Which legendary character is the subject of musical settings of his adventures, notably by Purcell, Glöck and Mozart?

- A. Flick the Little Fire Engine
- B. Don Juan
- C. The Barber of Seville
- D. Barry Manilow

3. Where is the term "brinelling" used?

- A. In coastal waters
- B. Suspension bridges
- C. In cooking, when food is soaked in brine
- D. When measuring a surface's hardness

Answers: 1.B 2.B 3.D

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

They say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and right now nearly everyone is beholding you in the right way. You take care of yourself like you're an extremely valuable object of art, and for good reason. People respond to this well-deserved self-confidence by finding reasons to hang around you. While they're digging your beauty, check out some art together.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

You're quite disciplined in your work and home lives, and you can't argue with the results. It's the perfect day for finishing up tasks and starting new ones as well. Practically nothing can stop you, especially when your energy is such a powerfully motivating force. Whether you need to wrap up something or push forward with a bold new plan, everything is working for you.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Big projects are generally pretty easy for you, but don't forget that even you need to get out and play (for real) now and then. This is even more true if you're stuck behind a desk or have to sit anywhere for more than an hour or two. Prioritize getting outside in some way. Go for a walk around the block, take a hike in the park, or sit under a tree and eat your lunch. It should recharge your batteries.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

If you're all talk and no action, those around you are likely to get irritated, so figure out how to back up those big ideas with some hard work. You're great at weaving tales and dreaming up one awesome idea after another, but it's past time for you to give them the confidence they deserve. After all, you're more versatile and flexible than anyone realizes, so show off those skills by building something lasting.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Expect good news related to something that you've been thinking about for quite a while, so you can stop worrying now! Instead, try turning your attention to the little details that have escaped from you while you were fretting about recent events. It's amazing how quickly they grow! Instead of pressuring yourself to deal with them all now, you need to reprioritise and focus on the most pressing to the exclusion of all else.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

You're feeling totally grounded right now even as you keep reaching for bigger and better things. This should give you an oddly helpful and unique view on today's situation. That is, you're able to bring your intelligent perspective even to the most routine activities. Even better, your much-needed practical mind helps any blue-sky brainstorming sessions. Your sense of balance is essential!

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

You often take on jobs knowing full well that you're the only one who can make sure that every tiny detail is performed to your precise standards, and usually, you're dead right. Now, though, your energy is pushing you to relax and ease your typical take-no-prisoners attitude. There are others out there dying to connect with you. You might benefit from their advice if you're willing to listen.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Your energy is perfect for taking care of that one big, important relationship in your life. With the right level of determination, it could evolve into a long-lasting, life-changing bond. Go right ahead and take someone under your wing who needs what you've got to offer, especially your compassion. This partnership can teach you about communication, patience, and generosity.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You're usually incredibly accepting and understanding, but some annoying influences are almost certainly waking up your inner critic. It's true that a clear head is always beneficial, but only if it's working with a kind heart as well. Look at the big picture, then go ahead and offer your advice, but only if you keep everything thoughtful.

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

D	E	S	U
B	A	T	E
H	Qu	E	K
A	E	A	C

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

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

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

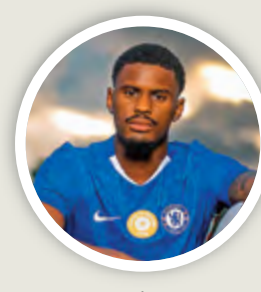
7	4	6	8	2	1	9	3	5
9	1	3	4	7	5	8	2	6
8	2	5	3	9	6	7	4	1
4	3	2	9	1	7	5	6	8
5	7	1	6	8	3	4	9	2
6	8	9	5	4	2	1	7	3
3	6	4	7	5	9	2	8	1
1	9	8	2	6	4	3	5	7
2	5	7	1	3	8	6	4	9

Chelsea sign Dutch defender Hato from Ajax

London, England - Chelsea have signed Dutch defender Jorrel Hato from Ajax Amsterdam for 44.18 million euros (\$51.18 million), both clubs said on Sunday.

Chelsea said the 19-year-old has signed a seven-year long deal and will join his new teammates this week. Hato was named Johan Cruyff Talent of the Year in the Eredivisie last season.

Hato came through Ajax's academy and made his senior debut in January 2023, going on to make



Jorrel Hato

over 111 appearances for the club. Hato made his senior debut for the Netherlands aged 17 and has since earned six caps.

"I'm very excited, I'm so happy to be here," Hato said. "I thought a lot about my future and wanted to take the next step in my career. Chelsea is the best place for me to do that."

Chelsea, who finished fourth in the league last season and won the Club World Cup in July, begin their 2025-26 Premier League campaign at home against Crystal Palace on August 17.

Former Milan captain Baresi undergoes lung surgery

Milan, Italy - Former AC Milan and Italy defender Franco Baresi is recovering well after undergoing surgery to remove a pulmonary nodule, the Serie A club confirmed on Sunday.

The honorary vice president and former captain for Milan underwent a routine medical check which revealed the issue and will un-



Franco Baresi

dergo oncological recovery therapy.

"Dear fans, I just want to let you know that it will take me a little time to get back to full strength," Baresi said in a statement.

The 65-year-old Baresi is regarded as an icon at San Siro, having spent his entire 20-year career with the club and captaining the team for 15 seasons before retiring in 1997. He was part of the Italy squad that won the 1982 World Cup and captained the team to the 1994 final, which ended in a narrow penalty shootout loss to Brazil.

CROWNING GLORY

Marta proves her reign isn't over with a timeless display in the women's Copa America final



Quito, Ecuador - "A queen never loses her crown," they say. But not even all the world's best sayings could sum that phrase up better than Marta's performance in the final of the CONMEBOL Copa America Femenina 2025.

With two stunning goals, the No. 10 led Brazil to glory against Colombia to help secure a ninth South American trophy for the women's national team.

Considered by many to be the greatest women's player of all time, Marta showed in the final that she still has plenty of talent in her boots.

The 39-year-old entered the field in the 82nd minute, with the game then tied at 2-2 and almost immediately witnessed Linda Caicedo slide the ball to Mayra Ramirez to finish, seemingly handing the trophy to Colombia.

In the final moments of the game, however, fate offered Marta a second chance. And the most magical left foot women's football has ever seen showed that she still has tricks up her sleeve. With a beautiful and powerful strike from outside the area, Brazil's queen tied the game 3-3 in the 96th minute.

"I was already anticipating

that the ball could bounce back to me and I would have to be under control to strike it hard and hit the goal. I had it on my mind, but obviously there are things that we can't explain with so much clarity," Marta said. "Hitting a shot like that, it was a banger. Perfect. I think that even a men's football goalkeeper couldn't save it, because it was extremely fast."

The draw took the match into extra-time — and it didn't take long for her to show her

their lead almost until the end, but just as extra-time was about to expire, Leicy Santos curled in a perfect free-kick to tie the game once again.

The game went to penalties, hostile territory in Marta's past. She had already missed a few crucial spot-kicks for Brazil with the most significant being in the F I F A Women's World Cup C h i n a



Hitting a shot like that, it was a banger. Perfect. I think that even a men's football goalkeeper couldn't save it, because it was extremely fast

MARTA

magic again. In the 105th minute, Marta was on the end of a gorgeous cross from Angelina. The initial idea was to go for a header, but whilst the ball was in flight, she realised she wouldn't be able to make it.

A quick bit of improvisation led to her getting her right foot on the ball and diverting it into the back of the net. Brazil held onto

2007 final, against Germany.

She was tasked with taking the fifth penalty, potentially the decider if she could convert it. However she was stopped in her tracks by Kate Tapiá.

"I was pleading with God to not punish me so harshly, after coming into the game like I did, being blessed with the equaliser, and then scoring another goal."

Son bids emotional farewell to Tottenham in Seoul

Seoul, South Korea - Tottenham Hotspur captain Son Heung-min played what is expected to be his final match for the club in front of 64,773 fans at the Seoul World Cup Stadium on Sunday, and teammate James Maddison was carried off with a knee injury.

The 33-year-old Son, who is under contract until 2026, is set to leave Spurs after a decade. He led Spurs to their first trophy in 17 years with their win over Manchester United in the Europa League final in May.

Sunday's friendly against Newcastle United ended 1-1, with Spurs forward Brennan Johnson scoring in the fourth minute and Newcastle winger Harvey Barnes equalising in the 38th. Son was substituted off in the 65th minute

for new signing Mohammed Kudus.

Son received a guard of honour from both Spurs and Newcastle players, along with a warm ovation from the crowd, as he bade a teary farewell. He is expected to stay in South Korea while the rest of the Spurs players fly to London.

"At first, I really didn't think I was going to cry. But obviously, it is not easy leaving a team I've spent so much time with," Son said.

"And hearing from all these players made me really emotional. I've had an unforgettable day thanks to all the fans, my teammates and my opponents. I feel so happy that I don't think I will be able to sleep tonight."



Son Heung-Min receives a guard of honour as he is substituted off in his final game for Tottenham

"My career is not over yet, and I want to continue to bring (the fans) joy. I know I have more things I want to accomplish as a football player."

Son joined the north London club from Bayer Leverkusen in 2015 and though he did not disclose his next destination, British media have linked him with a move to Major League Soccer club Los Angeles FC.

"Unbelievable scenes for Son from his teammates and the respect from the Newcastle players," Spurs manager Thomas Frank said. "First we had the walkaround and then the teammates gathered around and he was emotional. In the changing room it was more of the same... It was beautiful."

We were a bit lazy: Fernandes criticises Man United after draw against Everton

Atlanta, US - Manchester United captain Bruno Fernandes let rip at his teammates following their 2-2 pre-season draw with fellow Premier League side Everton, saying their performance was "lazy" and calling for further reinforcements.

A second-half goal from Mason Mount had United on course for victory in Atlanta, Georgia after Fernandes's opener was cancelled out by Iliman Ndiaye, but a bizarre 75th-minute own goal by Ayden Heaven gifted Everton the draw on Sunday.

The draw put a slight damper on the Old Trafford club's tour of the United States, after promising victories over West Ham United and Bournemouth last month.

"It's been important for developing how we want to play and getting the new players involved



Bruno Fernandes

too," Fernandes told NBC Sports.

"We didn't want to finish in this way. Our performance wasn't the best and we were a little bit lazy today. We want to avoid that because with laziness

you can pay at any moment."

United had their worst-ever Premier League campaign in the 2024-25 season, finishing 15th in the standings, and are looking to strengthen in the transfer win-

dow, signing Matheus Cunha and Bryan Mbeumo - both of whom started against Everton.

"It's improving. But it's not the place it needs to be. I don't want to take a dig at anyone but the club is doing the best they can in terms of the financial situation they talk about," Fernandes said.

"But it was crystal clear we needed more competition for the players that were here, more quality to get everyone to step up a little more to get to the XI, and I think that is what the club are trying to do."

"Hopefully we can get one or two players more to help with that."

Asked about Fernandes's comments, manager Ruben Amorim told reporters: "I think I'm happy for the players to have that feeling. It's saying that they understand the situation. So, it's a good feeling."



PSV Eindhoven players celebrate with the Johan Cruyff Shield

PSV beat Go Ahead Eagles to win Dutch Super Cup

Eindhoven, Netherlands - Dutch champions PSV Eindhoven came from behind to defeat cup winners Go Ahead Eagles 2-1 on Sunday to take the Johan Cruyff Shield, the country's Super Cup.

American fullback Sergino Dest scored the winning goal in the 84th minute at the Philips Stadium, six minutes after an own goal by Eagles defender

Gerrit Nauber had levelled the scores.

Go Ahead had led in the 35th minute when Mathis Suray turned home a low cross from left back Dean James.

Go Ahead Eagles won their first ever Dutch KNVB Cup in April, beating AZ Alkmaar 4-2 on penalties. PSV won last season's league title.

AL MANAR MARCH ON

Al Zubair and teammate Klingmann clinch podium in France



Al Faisal al Zubair and Jens Klingmann celebrate with the trophy; (below Al Manar Racing by Team WRT in action at the GT World Challenge Europe powered by AWS Sprint Series at Magny-Cours in France



Muscat - Al Manar Racing by Team WRT's Al Faisal al Zubair and Jens Klingmann followed up a superb second place in the Gold Cup category in the first Sprint race with fourth position in race two at the latest round of the GT World Challenge Europe powered by AWS Sprint Series at Magny-Cours in France.

The BMW M4 GT3 EVO duo initially finished third in race one and were promoted to second after a post-race penalty was applied to one of their Gold Cup rivals. The duo started at the rear of the Gold Cup grid for race two but managed to move up two po-

It was a tough weekend. It was difficult. I think we maximised what we had with the BMW

AL FAISAL AL ZUBAIR

sitions to take points for fourth place.

Oman-based Al Zubair said: "It was a tough weekend. It was difficult. I think we maximised what we had with the BMW. Compared to some of the other manufacturers, it was almost impossible to do any better. Saying that, it's good points for the championship, but, at this rate, we are a little out of hand.

"P2 was good yesterday. I don't think we could have done any better. We were slower than the other cars. In Sprint we are fourth now in the championship.

We were strong in testing here and we get 30kg more (weight penalty) and 30mm more. It depends what we get for the final round."

The result now means that Emil Frey Racing's Chris Lulham and Thierry Vermeulen lead the series on 90 points from Sain-téloc Racing (87.5pts) and the Garage59 Team (80pts). Tresor Attempto Racing (73pts) and Al Manar Racing by Team WRT remain fifth with 68.5 points.

Klingmann took part in the first qualifying session and a best run of 1min 36.921sec gave the German fourth place on the grid behind the pole-winning Chris Lulham of Emil Frey Racing, the Garage 59 McLaren and Sain-téloc Racing's Audi. Tresor Attempto Racing and Barwell Motorsport line duo in fifth and sixth on the grid for the first of the one-hour Sprint races.

Klingmann took the wheel for the first stint in Sprint race one and made good progress with the car well-placed in third after the driver changeover with Al Zubair taking the wheel.

Al Zubair went on to put in a superb stint behind the wheel of the BMW under the lights and was rewarded with second place in the final results of the race behind Louis Prette in the Garage 59 McLaren after a post-race penalty had been applied to one of his rivals that lifted the BMW up a place in the rankings. The Tresor Attempto Racing Audi rounded off the podium places. The result also lifted Al Manar Racing by Team WRT back into title contention.



Katie Ledecky

Ledecky heroics paper over disappointing US campaign at the worlds

Singapore - Katie Ledecky's sustained brilliance and a late gold rush by her female teammates added gloss to an underwhelming campaign for Team USA at the swimming world championships in Singapore.

The team's preparations were hit by a bout of gastroenteritis during a pre-meet camp in Thailand and they rallied to finish top of the medal table with nine golds, one better than rival power Australia.

But three years out from the Los Angeles Olympics, where swimming will be the crowning event of the second week, alarm bells are ringing for the hosts. Luca Orlando won the only individual title for the American men in the 200 metres butterfly, an event the France's Olympic champion Leon Marchand conveniently sat out.

There were no men's relay titles to boost the medal count but plenty of queries about selections and strategy from pundits and fans.

Just as at last year's Paris Olympics, it was up to the women to save the team's blushes, with Ledecky underlining her greatness with another golden double in the 800m and 1500m freestyle.

Gretchen Walsh's 50-100 butterfly double was another huge boost among the six individual titles won by the American women.

The spoils gave the swimmers some ammunition to fire back at critics like Ryan Lochte and Michael Phelps when two of the all-time greats of U.S. men's swimming made their disappointment clear on social media.

Olympic men's 1,500m freestyle champion Bobby Finke, who took bronze in Singapore, called some of the criticism "weak" and "stupid".

"You're never going to win with those people," said Finke.

"So I have a lot of thoughts. My brain has just been spiralling. I'm just disappointed, but I'm going to back these boys no matter what they say."

As close to perfect as you can get: Brown hails McLaren's Budapest show

Budapest, Hungary - McLaren boss Zak Brown hailed the team's 200th Formula One win, with Lando Norris ahead of championship leader Oscar Piastri in a one-two finish in Hungary on Sunday, as close to perfect.

The win was Norris's fifth of the season and McLaren's seventh one-two in 14 races as well as the team's fourth in a row.

"You're never perfect in a race but I think that was as close to perfect as you can get," Brown told Sky Sports television.

"The drivers were awesome, pit stops amazing, strategy was great to get Lando up there, Oscar drove brilliantly. I couldn't be prouder of this racing team."

Norris and Piastri crossed the finish line 0.698 of a second

apart, with the pair almost touching when the Australian tried to make a move on his British teammate on the penultimate lap and locked up.

Team principal Andrea Stella said it had been 'firm' racing but also fair between rivals now separated by just nine points. "We had a bit of a lock-up with Oscar but at the same time Lando left some space because he knew that Oscar would have been at the limit of braking," said Stella.

"We keep being very proud of our Lando and Oscar for racing. I think this is a great way of honouring Formula One racing. These are the value of McLaren."

Despite celebrating his ninth career win, Norris said he needed to improve because he was mak-



McLaren's Lando Norris celebrates with the trophy after winning the Hungarian Grand Prix on Sunday

The drivers were awesome, pit stops amazing, strategy was great to get Lando up there, Oscar drove brilliantly. I couldn't be prouder of this racing team

ZAK BROWN

ing life too hard for himself.

He won from third on the grid, after dropping to fifth at the start and then making a one-stop strategy work with Piastri on two.

"It's going to be a good and tough battle probably until the end. It takes a lot out of you trying to focus so much for every single session, race, everything. So, it's going to be a long second half of the season, I'm sure," he said.

"There are those things I need

to improve on and want to improve on. I'm not giving myself the best opportunities. Even though the results have looked great, I'm not making my life very easy for myself at the minute.

"So if I can work on those things, then I'll be in a better place."

McLaren are only the second team to chalk up 200 grand prix wins since the world championship started in 1950.

Osaka shines at Canadian Open; Swiatek suffers shock defeat

Montreal, Canada - Iga Swiatek was the latest top player to suffer an upset loss in Montreal as the Wimbledon champion and tournament second seed fell 7-6(1) 6-3 to Dane Clara Tauson in the Canadian Open round of 16 on Sunday.

The 22-year-old Tauson used her creativity and firepower to frustrate the six-time Grand Slam champion from Poland, staying calm when she was broken in the second set and sealing the win when Swiatek's backhand landed in the net.

"It's tough conditions here with the wind but I tried my best to keep my head cool and keep working," Tauson said in her on-court interview.

"Even though I got broken in the second set, I was feeling confident and I'm really happy about the win."



Naomi Osaka

Swiatek's loss came a day after top seed Coco Gauff was stunned in straight sets by Canadian teenager Victoria Mboko, and both Swiatek and Gauff will

look to sharpen their games ahead of the start of the U.S. Open later this month.

World number one and U.S. Open defending champion Aryna

Sabalenka is not competing in Montreal.

Tauson, seeded 16th, will face Madison Keys in the quarterfinals after the big-serving American saved two match points to emerge with a hard-fought 4-6 6-3 7-5 win over Czech Karolina Muchova. Tauson beat Keys in their only previous meeting in Auckland in January. Keys went on to capture her first Grand Slam title at the Australian Open later that month.

Former world number one Naomi Osaka showed flashes of her past dominance to reach the quarterfinals, needing just 49 minutes to steamroll Anastasija Sevastova 6-1 6-0.

It marks the first time the Japanese player has advanced to the last eight of a WTA 1000 event in 19 months, which came in Doha in 2024.

Ferrari baffled by Leclerc's sudden drop-off in Hungary

Budapest, Hungary - Ferrari feared Charles Leclerc might not finish Sunday's Hungarian Grand Prix after the Monegasque, who started on pole position, suffered a dramatic loss of performance after his second pitstop.

Leclerc pitted from the lead on lap 40 of 70 and ended up fourth, with teammate Lewis Hamilton 12th in a race won by McLaren's Lando Norris.

Team boss Fred Vasseur told reporters that the situation had been "quite strange" after being in control for the first 40 laps.

"The last stint was a disaster, very difficult to drive, the balance was not there. Honestly, we don't know exactly what's happened so far," he said.

"We have to investigate if there's something broken on the chassis side or whatever. At one stage I thought that we would



Charles Leclerc

never finish the race."

Leclerc had taken Ferrari's first proper pole of the Formula One season on Saturday, apart from Hamilton's sprint pole in Shanghai in March, and led cleanly away from the start at a circuit where overtaking is difficult.

Norris switched from a two-stop strategy to a one-stop, despite McLaren's initial reservations about the tyres lasting, after dropping to fifth on lap one and needing to do something different to teammate Oscar Piastri.

Championship leader Piastri had failed to get past Leclerc on strategy but was able to take second and close the gap to Norris after the Ferrari lost speed.

"We had to try and do something to beat Leclerc because it wasn't obvious that we just had enough pace to blow past him and go and win that way," said Piastri of a failed attempt to get ahead with an earlier first pitstop.

"I don't know what happened to Charles in the second half of the race, but clearly something happened because he looked quite quick for the first half."



India's Mohammed Siraj celebrates with Dhruv Jurel after castling Gus Atkinson with a yorker to take India to victory in the fifth Test on Monday

Siraj takes five wickets as India register stunning win against England in Oval Test

London, England - Mohammed Siraj was inspired as India took the last four wickets in under an hour to bowl England out for 367 and win an astonishing fifth Test by six runs to draw the series 2-2 on Monday.

England had resumed on 339-6 in an atmosphere of unremitting tension at The Oval and a fired-up Siraj dismissed Jamie Smith and Jamie Overton before bowling Gus Atkinson to complete his five-wicket-haul.

After Prasidh Krishna had bowled Josh Tongue for nought, Chris Woakes walked out to bat wearing a sling to protect his dislocated shoulder with 17 runs still needed.

Atkinson hit Siraj for six to give England brief hope and cleverly protected Woakes from the strike, but player-of-the-match Siraj produced another brilliant yorker to earn India their narrowest-ever Test win.

"With 60, 70-odd runs to win

with seven wickets in hand you don't get to see many games like this," India captain Shubman Gill said.

"Very happy to get this over the line, a little bit of luck for us." England, 301-3 at one stage, lost their last seven wickets for 66 runs, a collapse prompted by Harry Brook's reckless dismissal after he had made a superb century.

India suddenly had a chink of hope and they took full advantage, removing Jacob Bethell and Joe Root (105) before bad light and rain ended the fourth day early.

England still needed 35 runs to complete their second-highest Test run chase and by far the largest for any team on this ground.

The Oval was full for the final act of a series that fluctuated wildly over seven weeks, and under grey skies one of the most dramatic Test endings duly played out.

"It has been one of the all-time best Test matches," England coach Brendon McCullum said.

"We turned up today with high hopes, but Mohammed Siraj and the passion of the Indian boys was too strong and ultimately they deserve to win this test match," he added.

"We had our chances, we will look back on our dropped catches and the position we were in with

the bat."

It was fitting that Siraj was India's hero because he had stepped over the boundary cushion after dropping Brook on 19 on Sunday, an error that looked likely to cost his team the match.

Woakes was the not out batsman having not faced a ball but running bravely in obvious pain.

"I didn't expect him to come out like that, batting with one hand. Kudos to him," Gill said after his team did a lap of honour.

Miyu Yamashita celebrates with the Women's Open trophy on Sunday

Japan's Yamashita win's Women's Open

Porthcawl, Wales - Miyu Yamashita won the Women's Open by two shots to claim the first major of her career after the 24-year-old kept Charley Hull and Minami Katsu at bay to become the fourth different major champion from Japan in the last two years.

Yamashita finished with an overall score of 11-under at Royal Porthcawl after she sank three birdies on the front nine and she remained steady on the back nine before weathering a late stumble with her first bogey of the day on the par-four 17th.

Hull mounted a spirited challenge with five birdies that brought her to within one shot of Yamashita. However, the Briton's title hopes crumbled with back-to-back bogeys on the 16th and 17th, while a missed birdie putt on the 18th sealed her fate.

Katsu also tied for second with four birdies, offset by a bogey on the second, to finish with a final-round score of 69.

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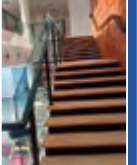
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LYME DISEASE

TICKED OFF

SINGER JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE REVEALS HE HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH ‘LYME DISEASE’. HOW WILL THIS AFFECT THE POP STAR?

At the culmination of his highly popular and hectic world tour – Forget Tomorrow – Singer Justin Timberlake shared via an Instagram post that he has been diagnosed with Lyme disease. Timberlake’s tour wrapped up in Turkey on Wednesday after more than 120 shows around the world.

The singer described the tour, which lasted for over a year, as the most fun, emotional, gratifying, physically demanding, and, at times, grueling experience. He also said that living with Lyme disease “can be relentlessly debilitating, both mentally and physically”, adding that learning about the diagnosis was a ‘shock’.

The former NSYNC star, who described himself as a private person, wrote he considered ending the tour when diagnosed, but that he “decided the joy that performing brings me far outweighs the fleeting

stress my body was feeling. I’m so glad I kept going.”

Lyme disease is transmitted by Ixodes ticks, also known as deer ticks. It can cause flu-like conditions, neurological problems, joint pain and other symptoms. The first sign is often a red, round bull’s-eye rash.

Untreated Lyme can cause severe arthritis and damage the heart and nervous system. In the vast majority of cases, Lyme disease is successfully treated with antibiotics.

“I honestly don’t know what my future is onstage, but I’ll always cherish this run! And all of them before! It’s been the stuff of legend for me,” Timberlake wrote.

Many celebrities have spoken up about their experience with Lyme disease in recent years, including comedian Amy Schumer and singers Justin Bieber and Shania Twain.

Former Real Housewives of Beverly Hills star Yolanda Hadid has become a major voice on the issue after she said she was diagnosed with chronic Lyme disease in 2012. She later revealed two of her children – models Bella and Anwar Hadid – suffered from the same illness.

There is no scientific consensus over whether a chronic form of Lyme disease actually exists. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) “discourages use of the term Chronic Lyme Disease” as the cause for prolonged symptoms is not currently known.

Hadid released her memoir ‘Believe Me: My Battle with the Invisible Disability of Lyme Disease’ in 2017. “This disease has brought me and many others to our knees, often wishing to die of utter hopelessness and exhaustion,” she had said in a speech at the 2016 Global Lyme Alliance Gala in New York.



SYMPTOMS OF LYME DISEASE

A circular or oval shape rash around a tick bite can be an early symptom of Lyme disease in some people. The rash can appear up to 3 months after being bitten by an infected tick, but usually appears within 1 to 4 weeks. It can last for several weeks.

The rash can have a darker or lighter area in the centre and might gradually spread. It’s not usually hot or itchy. It may be flat, or slightly raised, and look pink, red, or purple when it appears on white skin. It can be harder to see the rash on brown and black skin and it may look like a bruise.

Unfortunately, there is still no vaccine for Lyme disease in humans although trials are ongoing to develop one, but new research shows a vaccine given to mice could influence the bacterium that causes Lyme in ticks.

The researchers vaccinated mice to create antibodies against another ‘Trojan horse’ bacteria in an effort to influence ticks’ gut microbes. They found that the ticks that bit the vaccinated mice had fewer Lyme-causing bacteria in their gut microbiota than those that bit the unvaccinated animals.



NUTRITION

Many diets focus on what to eat, but intermittent fasting is all about when you eat.

With intermittent fasting, you only eat during a specific time. Research shows fasting for a certain number of hours each day or eating just one meal a couple days a week may have health benefits.

With internet, TV and other entertainment available 24x7, many adults and children stay awake for longer hours to watch TV, scroll through social media, play games and chat online. That can mean sitting and snacking all day — and most of the night.

Extra calories and less activity can mean a higher risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and other illnesses. Scientific studies are showing that intermittent fasting may help reverse these trends.

There are several different ways to do intermittent fasting, but they are all based on choosing regular time periods to eat and fast. For instance, you might try eating only during an eight-

INTERMITTENT FASTING

Intermittent fasting is an eating plan that switches between fasting and eating on a regular schedule. Research shows that intermittent fasting is a way to manage your weight and prevent — or even reverse — some forms of disease

hour period each day and fast for the remainder. Or you might choose to eat only one meal a day two days a week. There are many different intermittent fasting schedules.

Intermittent fasting works by prolonging the period when your body has burned through the calories consumed during your last meal and begins burning fat. Hence, it helps in losing weight.

You can pick a daily approach, which restricts daily eating to one six- to eight-hour period each day. For instance, you may choose to try 16/8 fasting: eating for eight hours and fasting for 16.

Another intermittent fasting plan, known as the 5:2 approach, involves eating regularly five days a week. For the other two days, you limit yourself to one 500-600 calorie meal. An ex-

ample would be if you chose to eat normally on every day of the week except Mondays and Thursdays, which would be your one-meal days.

During the times when you’re not eating, water and zero-calorie beverages such as black coffee and tea are permitted. During your eating periods, eating normally does not mean going crazy. Research shows that you’re not likely to lose weight or get healthier if you pack your feeding times with high-calorie junk food, super-sized fried items and treats.

Benefits

- Improves thinking power and memory
- Improves blood pressure and resting heart rates
- Fat loss while maintaining muscle mass
- Lower levels of fasting glucose/fasting insulin

Not advised for:

- Children below 18 years of age
- Pregnant women
- Those with type-1 diabetes

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WORKOUT FOCUS

A WELL-DEVELOPED CHEST ISN'T JUST ABOUT AESTHETICS - IT'S THE POWERHOUSE FOR PUSHING STRENGTH, POSTURE SUPPORT, AND UPPER BODY BALANCE

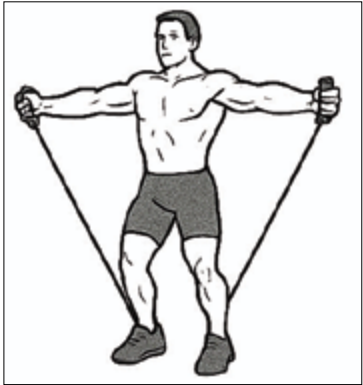
BUILD A STRONG CHEST

Builds the often-neglected upper chest. The incline angle shifts focus to the clavicular head of the pectoralis major - key for a full, defined upper chest.

How to do it

- Set the bench at a 30- to 45-degree incline.
- Perform the press as you would on a flat bench, lowering to the upper chest.
- Tip: Don't go too steep—higher inclines shift emphasis to the shoulders.

Chest Flys (Cable or Dumbbell)



Flys isolate the chest and deliver a deep stretch during the eccentric phase of the movement, promoting growth.

How to do it

- With arms slightly bent, bring the weights or cables together in an arc-like motion.
- Squeeze at the top and return slowly to the starting position.
- Tip: Control is key—never let the weights pull too far back.

Bonus: Dips (Chest Version)



An underrated chest builder. Leaning forward during dips shifts the emphasis from triceps to chest. It's a great bodyweight move to build strength and size.

How to do it

- Use parallel bars, and lean slightly forward as you lower your body.
- Push back up without locking your elbows.

For most people, twice a week is ideal - balancing volume with recovery. Mix compound movements (like presses) with isolation (like flys) for full development.

A strong chest isn't built overnight. Consistency, progressive overload, proper form, and adequate rest are key. Combine smart training with good nutrition, and your chest will thank you - visibly and functionally.

Would you like to develop strong chest muscles? Whether you're aiming for a sculpted physique or improving overall fitness, chest training should be a non-negotiable part of your workout routine.

Here's a guide to tried-and-tested chest exercises:

Barbell Bench Press



This is the classic king of chest exercises. The bench press targets the pectoralis major - the thick fan-shaped muscle that gives the chest its bulk. It also recruits the front deltoids and triceps, making it an excellent compound lift.

How to do it

- Lie flat on a bench, feet planted firmly.
- Grip the bar slightly wider than shoulder-width.
- Lower the bar to mid-chest level, pause briefly, and push it back up.
- Tip: Keep your back slightly arched and your shoulder blades pinched together throughout.

Dumbbell Chest Press

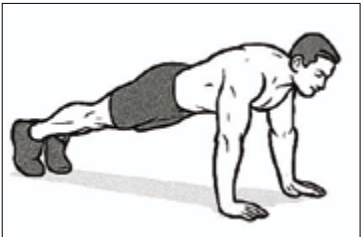


A joint-friendly alternative with more range of motion. Dumbbells allow each arm to move independently, correcting muscle imbalances and engaging stabiliser muscles.

How to do it

- Lie on a flat bench with a dumbbell in each hand.
- Press the weights up from chest level until arms are extended, then lower under control.
- Tip: Avoid clashing the weights at the top - keep tension throughout the movement.

Push-Ups



Push-ups are accessible and effective, especially when done with strict form. They engage the chest, shoulders, core, and even the glutes.

How to do it:

- Place hands just wider than shoulders, body in a straight line.
- Lower until your chest nearly touches the floor, then press back up.
- Variations: Try incline push-ups for beginners, decline push-ups for upper chest focus, or diamond push-ups to hit the triceps harder.

Incline Bench Press





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