

Royal Decree promulgates law on Omani nationality

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued **Royal Decree No 17/2025** promulgating the Omani Nationality Law on Sunday. The decree reads as follows:

Article 1 stipulates that provisions of the Omani Nationality Law attached to this decree will be enforced.

Article 2 states that the Minister of Interior will issue the Executive Regulation and decisions necessary for implementation of the provisions of the attached law. Until such time, the existing regulations and decisions will continue to be enforced in matters not specifically provided for in the attached law, without prejudice to its provisions.

Article 3 cancels **Royal Decree No 38/2014** on the Omani Nationality Law. It also cancels all that contradicts the attached law or contravenes its provisions.

Article 4 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from the day following its date of publication.

ONA



03
Turki al Junaibi claims Hamdan photo award

Programme launched to maximise governorates' economic potential

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Royal Academy of Management (RAM) has launched 'Governorates Planning and Economic Capacity-Building Programme' in partnership with Ministry of Economy to enhance local leadership and support sustainable development efforts across the sultanate.

It was inaugurated on Sunday under the patronage of Dr Saeed bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy.

Aligned with the Royal Vision of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and Oman Vision 2040 objectives, it is focused on empowering leaders with skills essential for governance, planning and economic growth. The programme aims to strengthen local executive departments, promote decentralisation and maximise every governorate's economic potential.

Dr Ali bin Qassim al Lawati, President of RAM, said the programme reinforces collaboration between governorates and supports executive departments in fulfilling their developmental, economic and social responsibilities. "It is part of our ongoing efforts to build leadership capacity at different levels within governorates," he stated.

Participants will receive training



(Supplied photos)

The programme is part of our ongoing efforts to build leadership capacity at different levels within governorates

DR ALI BIN QASSIM AL LAWATI



The programme will help governorates develop data-driven plans, ensuring optimal resource allocation

DR NASSER BIN RASHID AL MAAWALI

in strategic planning, budgeting, performance measurement and best practices in governance. A key component of the programme is professional support beyond the training period, including tailored consultations to

assist in implementing local development plans.

Dr Nasser bin Rashid al Maawali, Undersecretary in Ministry of Economy, said, "By equipping professionals with skills in financial and investment plan-

ning, we are empowering them to manage development projects effectively and promote economic decentralisation."

He added that it would help governorates develop data-driven plans, ensuring optimal resource allocation and a favourable investment environment.

In its first phase, the programme targets 44 participants from administrative divisions across all governorates. Its performance will be evaluated to assess effectiveness in meeting set objectives with the aim of refining and enhancing future stages for maximum impact.

The programme covers five key areas - local governance and decentralisation, economic decentralisation, development budgeting, contract management, and economic analysis with focus on investment promotion.



Muscat Nights sets record with 1.7mn visitors in 41 days

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Muscat Nights festival has set a new benchmark in Oman's events scene drawing a record-breaking 1.7mn visitors in 41 days. According to Ahmed bin Mohammed al Humaidi, Chairman of Muscat Municipality, the festival was a resounding success, marking a significant milestone in Oman's cultural and tourism landscape.

Held from December 23, 2024 the festival spanned seven locations - Amerat Park, Naseem Public Park, Oman Automobile Association, Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, Al Hail Beach, Wadi al Khoud and Qurum Natural Park. The diverse venues were carefully chosen to ensure accessibility for both residents and tourists across Muscat.

This edition marked the first time the festival was held in as

many as seven venues, with a wide array of activities ranging from sports to cultural exhibitions to entertainment shows.

"The festival's success was not just in entertaining visitors but also in supporting local businesses. More than 1,000 small and medium enterprises and artisan families participated, showcasing their products and services. Additionally, over 1,300 personnel were deployed to manage operations, supporting jobseekers throughout the event," Humaidi informed.

He stressed on the economic and community impact of the festival, noting that it provided a platform for local talent and businesses to flourish while enhancing the capital's appeal as a cultural hub.

Though the festival ended on Saturday, Muscat Nights activities at Wadi al Khoud will continue till February 16.

Good company makes a difference

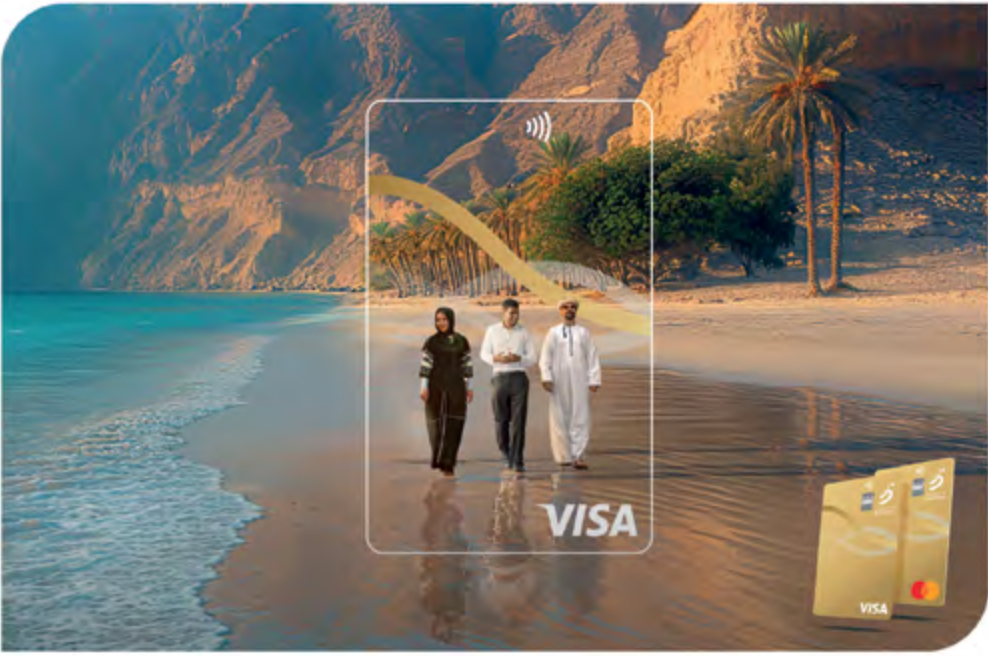
The stage is set for celebrations of
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Oman, Iraq explore enhancing trade relations, investments

Baghdad, Iraq – H E Qais Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, met Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al Sudani in Baghdad on Sunday to discuss strengthening economic ties.

The two sides reviewed bilateral relations and explored ways to enhance trade and investment, aiming to boost partnerships and address regional economic challenges. Sudani affirmed Iraq's commitment to deeper economic cooperation with Oman, emphasising the importance of greater integration in business and investment sectors.



Oman's delegation is in Iraq as guest of honour at the 48th Baghdad International Fair

Baghdad International Fair
Oman's delegation is in Iraq as guest of honour at the 48th

Baghdad International Fair, which began on February 1. The participation aims to ex-

pand trade and investment ties, explore new business opportunities, and strengthen partnerships between Omani and Iraqi companies. The delegation also attended the opening of an economic forum accompanying the fair.

During the visit, the Omani delegation met Ghassan Farhan, Iraq's Undersecretary of Commerce, and held discussions with

Iraqi business leaders on investment opportunities in trade, industry and logistics. H E Yousef highlighted the potential of the Iraqi market, describing it as a promising destination for investment.

Faisal Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, stressed the importance of strengthening business ties between the two countries. He noted that enhanced trade and investment co-operation would drive economic growth and create new opportunities for the private sector.

Oman's pavilion at the fair features more than 30 companies from sectors including industry, trade, logistics, energy and technology. The fair has drawn participation of 20 countries and over 1,000 companies.



BE SMART, DON'T START

According to World Health Organization, tobacco use causes more than 5mn deaths annually, a number that could increase to over 8mn by 2030 if decisive action is not taken. Oman launched a year-long nationwide campaign to combat tobacco use recently. What other steps should be implemented to reduce smoking among teenagers? Here is what *Muscat Daily* readers said -

Hamed al Busaidi
Teacher

Social media campaigns can have a great impact on teenagers, as they are always online. Influencers and celebrities should actively promote anti-smoking messages and healthy living habits. Additionally, we should provide teenagers with engaging alternatives like sports activities or creative workshops to divert their attention from harmful habits.

Rajesh Nair
Sales executive

Educational institutions must include smoking prevention as part of their curriculum focusing on the harmful effects. We also need to create more smoke-free zones in public places and neighbourhoods to discourage the habit. Additionally, organising free health check-ups and counselling for teens can be a powerful deterrent.

Salma al Kharusi
Homemaker

Raising awareness through schools and colleges is crucial. Teenagers need to understand the long-term health effects of smoking, which can be done through interactive sessions and real-life stories. The government should also introduce stricter regulations on the sale of tobacco to minors and increase taxes on cigarettes to make them less affordable. Parents must also be involved in anti-smoking programmes.

Priya Menon
Student

More restrictions should be placed on the advertising of tobacco products in every medium including social media. Media campaigns should show the serious consequences of smoking. Parents and teachers should receive special training to recognise early signs of smoking in teenagers and intervene at the right time.

James Thompson
Engineer

Peer pressure plays a major role in teenage smoking. Schools should introduce mentorship programmes where older students guide younger ones on making healthier choices. The government can also offer incentives such as scholarships or rewards to students who stay tobacco-free. Raising the legal smoking age and enforcing strict penalties on stores selling cigarettes to minors can further curb the problem.

Mohammed al Balushi
Private sector employee

We need to encourage peer-led initiatives like sports or making short films, where students influence each other positively. Banning smoking in all public spaces and introducing harsher penalties for those who sell tobacco to minors is another necessary step.



? NEXT ON YOUR SAY

Should authorities identify more camping areas in and around Muscat? If so, where?

SEND YOUR COMMENTS

Share your comments in not more than 50 words along with your full name and profession before next Sunday, 10am, via WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram or muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om

The views stated here are those of the respondents and not endorsed by Muscat Daily.

SEND US ON OUR NEW WHATSAPP NO 91953774

REMEMBRANCE



Sneha Iyer
27-01-2009 - 03-02-2022

Those we love don't go away, They walk beside us every day, Unseen, unheard but always near, Still loved, still missed and forever dear.

Missing you

Parents and Sister

Turki al Junaibi claims Hamdan photo award



Our Correspondent
Muscat

Omani photographer Turki bin Ibrahim al Junaibi has won the prestigious Hamdan International Photography Award (HIPA) for 2025. Founded in 2011 under the patronage of Dubai's Crown Prince Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid bin Mohammed al Maktoum, it is one of the most renowned global photography awards.

Junaibi won the gold medal in



Turki bin Ibrahim al Junaibi

the competition which attracted over 1,000 photographers from around the world in this edition.

In an interview with *Muscat Daily*, Junaibi said, "I am proud to

have won this award. It will motivate me to create more artistic work."

This year's competition was themed 'Once Upon a Time'. "Winning was not easy. The competition featured very creative and innovative participants, which made the victory even more rewarding," Junaibi said.

His winning photograph, titled *The Time of Simplicity*, was taken in Masirah Island capturing a nostalgic moment of childhood. It portrays a little boy listening to

the news on a radio while another is absorbed in reading a book.

Junaibi aims to promote Oman as a tourist destination through his work. "I participate in international competitions with the objective of raising the Omani flag at global platforms," he said.

Looking ahead, he plans to hold a solo exhibition of his work soon. "I believe the art of photography can be used to convey important messages to the community," he added.

SAYYID SHIHAB RECEIVES FRENCH OFFICIAL



H H Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, received Gen Thierry Burkhard, Chief of Defence Staff of the French Republic, and his accompanying delegation in his office at Al Murtafa'a Garrison on Sunday. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed bilateral relations between the two countries and discussed several topics of mutual interest (ONA)

Muscat welcomes maiden charter flight from Slovakia

Muscat – Muscat International Airport received its first weekly charter flight carrying 182 passengers from Slovakia on Saturday. The service will continue throughout the tourist season in the coming years, boosting direct connectivity between Oman and Slovakia, according to Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.

The service is part of the ministry's strategy to expand Oman's tourism market and attract more international visitors. Efforts are also underway to activate Suhar and Duqm airports to receive charter flights in the coming tourist seasons.

Dhofar has been receiving charter flights in large numbers for several years, improving accessibility to Oman and maintaining a steady flow of international tourists. The ministry noted that the charter flights sector plays a key role in supporting tourism-related industries, including trans-



port and retail, while also creating job opportunities for Omani youth in various logistics roles.

Speaking at the 2nd Arab Forum for Tourism Statistics in October 2024, H E Salim Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, announced that more than 450 charter flights were expected in

the winter season, providing a significant boost to Dhofar's tourism industry.

In the 2023/2024 tourist season, more than 74,000 passengers arrived in Oman via charter flights - marking a 15% increase from the previous season - generating revenues exceeding RO23mn.

Crackdown on illegal camps in Bandar al Khairan, Yiti

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Authorities have dismantled 16 illegal tourist camps in Bandar al Khairan and Yiti as part of efforts to regulate tourism and protect the environment.

'In a joint operation aimed at preserving the natural beauty and safety of coastal areas, Muscat Municipality, in collaboration with Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and Royal Oman Police, cracked down on illegal tourist camps in Bandar al Khairan and Yiti,' the municipality said in a statement.

Officials stressed the importance of adhering to tourism regulations and urged visitors to use authorised campsites to avoid penalties and help preserve the environment, warning that fur-

ther enforcement actions would follow. They advised tourism operators and individuals to comply with regulations to avoid legal consequences.

Bandar al Khairan has been designated an ecotourism area under Royal Decree No 45/2007, which prohibits economic, tourism or other development activities in specific locations. Ministry of Heritage and Tourism manages the area, ensuring that all facilities meet environmental standards.

In December 2024, Muscat Governor's Office issued new camping regulations for the winter season to ensure a safe and environmentally responsible experience. According to the advisory, camping for more than 48 hours requires a permit, with a mandatory insurance fee of

RO100 for a seven-day renewable permit. Campsites are restricted to designated areas, at least 10m from beaches and 5m apart from each other. Camping is also prohibited in fishing zones and security-restricted areas.

Permitted campsites must follow technical guidelines, including displaying licence number, organising parking and entry points, and using noise-regulated generators. The use of heavy machinery for site preparation is not allowed, and permits cannot be transferred.

Camping without a permit incurs a RO200 fine, with repeat offenders being removed immediately. Additional violations, such as improper site use or environmental damage, result in a RO50 fine.

World Wetlands Day observed

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman celebrated World Wetlands Day on Sunday, highlighting the crucial role of wetlands in maintaining ecological balance and supporting biodiversity.

Observed under the theme 'Protecting Wetlands for Our Common Future', the event emphasised the importance of these ecosystems.

Badr bin Saif al Busaidi, a specialist at Environment Authority, informed that wetlands in Oman are a vital source of fresh water, while supporting agriculture, en-

vironmental sustainability and economic activities. "These areas play a fundamental role in mitigating climate change by acting as natural carbon sinks," he said, adding that wetlands help regulate water quality and preserve biodiversity.

Environment Authority implemented several initiatives in the past year to protect wetlands, including planting 4mn mangrove seeds and 54,000 mangrove seedlings in coastal areas. A study was conducted to assess changes in 59 coastal and inland wetland sites, alongside a project to survey bird and marine

life in these ecosystems. Phase 1 of the Oman Blue Carbon Project has also been launched to enhance conservation efforts.

Oman has been working to strengthen regional and international cooperation in wetland conservation by sharing expertise and providing mangrove seeds to neighbouring countries. The sultanate formally joined the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands in 2013, reflecting its commitment to preserving these ecosystems and contributing to global conservation efforts.

World Wetlands Day serves as an opportunity to raise awareness on the role these ecosystems in sustaining life on Earth.





صندوق غراس الوقفي للاستثماري

Gheras Endowment Investment Fund



Capital

أموال استثمارية

The Chairman's Report

For the Year/Period ending December 31th, 2024

The primary objective of the fund is to achieve capital appreciation and protection through a diversified, low-risk portfolio through investments in fixed income instruments and Sharia-compliant stocks at GCC Markets and MENA region.

A summary of financial results is as follows:

Figure 1	For the Year/Period ending December 31th, 2024 (OMR)
Total Income	135,288
Total Expenses	(47,166)
Profit (Loss) for the Year/Period	88,122
Basic profit (loss) per unit	0.061
Profit (Loss) per Unit for the Year/Period	1.062

Fund Performance:
For the period ending December 30th, 2024 the performance of Gheras Fund is as follows:

Figure 2:	For the Year/Period ending December 31th, 2024
Net Asset Value (OMR)	1,550,281
Number of Outstanding Units	1,460,320
Net Asset Value per Unit	1.062
Gheras Performance for the Year/Period	6.2%
Benchmark* Performance for the Year/Period	3.82%

*The blended benchmark index comprises of a 70% weight given to S&P GCC Sukuk index during the period and 30% weight for the performance of the S&P GCC Shariah Index (for equities).

Gheras Fund achieved a 6.2% return, as of 31th December 2024, resulting in a NAV of RO 1.062 per unit. This compares with an increase in the blended benchmark index, for the fund, comprising of S&P GCC Shariah index (for equities) and S&P GCC Sukuk Index, equating to 3.82% and resulting in an outperformance of 2.38%.

Market Performance
Figure A: Index Returns

Index	December 31th, 2024 (OMR)
Boursa Kuwait	8.0%
Dubai Financial Market	27.1%
Saudi Stock Exchange (Tadawul)	0.6%
Bahrain Bourse	0.7%
Muscat Stock Exchange	1.4%
BLENDED BENCHMARK INDEX	3.82%
Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange	-1.7%
Qatar Exchange	-2.4%

Economy and Markets
The fourth quarter of 2024 experienced calmer volatility in regional markets due to easing geopolitical tensions. Additionally, the Federal Reserve reduced the interest rate by a cumulative 100 basis point during Q4 and the Eurodollar markets implied cuts for 2025 are currently split between 1 and 2 cuts. Moreover, the inauguration of Donald Trump comes with a lot of risk factors to stay on top of for Q1 of 2025, Trump's policies around the tariffs, immigration and DOGE remains the top three areas of concern influencing market volatility going forward.

In terms of the oil part of the economy in the GCC, we are yet to see to what extent could the net positive follow through of the spread widening in our region's crude blends vs. global benchmarks amid the USA sanctions on Russian oil exports will offset the voluntary supply curbs of OPEC+ into March 2025.

The non-oil sectors across various Middle Eastern economies are showing promising signs of growth beyond initial economic forecasts. Based on the latest Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) readings, the UAE's leading the non-oil GDP positive impulse, followed by Saudi, Qatar & Kuwait in that order. The common theme across the GCC is that retail trade sector as well as construction are the main drivers of non-oil GDP growth.

Qualitative reports suggest that Saudi's retail sector lifted most of its latest non-oil GDP growth, the report also pointed to a broad-based shortage of labor. Qatar's non-oil GDP growth is steadily rising on the back of construction and real estate, the construction sector is witnessing the highest output growth whilst wholesale and retail are witnessing the highest new orders growth. Lastly, Kuwait's non-oil GDP witnessed increased demand for machinery and building materials.

Acknowledgements
On behalf of the Fund Management Body, I extend my thanks to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq bin Taimur for his government's progressive policies and constant encouragement to the financial services sector.

I also take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, FSA, MSX & MCD for their support and cooperation, our valued unitholders, members of the Fund Management Body for their valuable time and guidance, for your continued support and trust and the fund manager and service providers for their efforts.

On behalf of the Fund Management Body

Chairman
Gheras Endowment Investment Fund
Rajab 28th, 1446AH
January 28th, 2024

Statement of financial position As 31 December 2024

31 December 2024

RO

INCOME	
Dividend income	11,093
Net realized gain on investments at fair value through profit or loss	
	54,018
Fair value changes in investments at fair value through profit or loss	
	11,382
Profit from wakala call account	58,795
	135,288
Expenses	
Brokerage commission	8,841
Management fee	13,231
Administration and custodian service fee	4,918
Foreign exchange loss	5,938
General and administration	14,238
	47,166
Net profit and total comprehensive income for the period	88,122
Net profit per unit	0.061

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income For 31 December 2024

31 December 2024

RO

ASSETS	
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	1,405,221
Cash and cash equivalents	132,270
Receivables	18,978
Total assets	1,556,469
LIABILITIES	
Current liabilities	
Accruals and other payables	6,188
Total liabilities	6,188
Total net assets attributable to the Unitholders	1,550,281
Net asset value per unit	1.062

For more information please contact:
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Nama launches RO45mn Salalah sewage network

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Nama Dhofar Services Company, the provider of electrical, water, and wastewater services in the Dhofar region, has launched a major sewage network project in Salalah, valued at RO45mn. The project aims to enhance the city's sanitation infrastructure to meet the growing needs of the population.

According to a statement issued by Nama Group, Nama Dhofar Services inaugurated the first phase of the sewage network project in the Sahalnout area of Salalah on Sunday.

The project, which was implemented over a period of three years at a total cost of approximately RO45mn, was inaugurated with a ceremony attended by H H Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, along with several dignitaries and officials.

Eng Ali bin Issa Shamas, CEO of Nama Dhofar Services, gave a speech highlighting that the coverage of sewage networks in Dhofar Governorate has reached 70%, with a total network length exceeding 1,200km. He also mentioned that the number of subscribers to the sewage service has now reached approximately 60,000.



The project, which was implemented over a period of three years, was inaugurated with a ceremony attended by H H Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said

The project currently serves approximately 4,000 subscribers, with plans to expand to 5,500 subscribers in the first phase. In the long term, the network is designed to accommodate up to 20,000 subscribers, covering neighboring areas and the future city of Salalah, while

meeting both current and future demand for the Sahalnout region. The project spans 1,375 hectares and includes a comprehensive sewage network with a total length of over 165km. Additionally, it features 1,200 inspection chambers, around 6,000 sub-house inspection chambers,

and a main sewage pumping station designed to handle a flow rate of 18,510 cubic meters per day.

A tender has been awarded for the expansion of the main treated water station in Raysut, aimed at increasing its capacity to 90,000 cubic meters per day. The project, valued at RO35mn, began construction at the start of this year and is expected to be completed by 2027, supporting the growing demand in line with urban development.

Trading activity at MSX falls sharply in January

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Trading activity on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) showed a marked decline in January 2025, with both volume and value of trades falling over 30% compared to the previous month.

The total volume of shares traded on the exchange plummeted by 33.4%, reaching 424.8mn shares in January, down from 638.1mn in December 2024. Similarly, the total value of trades dropped by 32.3%, falling to RO71.3mn from RO105.2mn in the preceding month, according to a research report from Kamco Investment.

OQ Exploration & Production topped the value traded chart, with RO17.5mn in trades, followed by OQ Base Industries (OQBI) and Bank Muscat at RO13.3mn and RO9.3mn, respectively. In terms of volume, OQBI led the way with 45.6mn shares traded, followed by OQ Exploration & Production with 54.4mn shares and OQ Gas Networks at 40.1mn.

The MSX 30 Index ended January with a marginal decline of 0.7%, closing the month at 4,543.21 points. After early gains in the month, the index was offset by losses in the final week of January.

Sectoral performance was mixed, with only one out of the



three MSX sector indices showing a decline. The Services Index fell by 2.9%, closing at 1,692.3 points, primarily due to significant drops in shares of larger companies in the sector, including Salalah Port Services (-10.8%) and Al Jazeera Services Co (-8.3%).

Conversely, the Financial Index rose by 1.3%, closing the month at 7,824.03 points, while the Industrial Index recorded a stronger 2.6% gain, finishing at 5,409.3 points.

Construction Material Industries Company topped the list of gainers, with a 51.1% surge in its share price, following a 97% reduction in its annual loss to RO4,230 in 2024, down from RO145,720 in 2023. Majan Glass Company and Financial Corporation Company followed, with gains of 28.6% and 24.2%, respectively.

On the downside, Oman Chromite Company saw the

largest decline, with a 21.9% fall in its share price, followed by National Finance Company and Oman Investment & Finance Company, whose shares dropped by 14.3% and 13.7%, respectively.

Equity markets across the GCC region started the year on a positive note, reversing the losses experienced in December 2024. Kuwait's Boursa saw the strongest performance, posting a 5.7% gain, its largest monthly rise in a year. Saudi Arabia followed with a 3.1% gain, while UAE markets also saw modest increases, with Abu Dhabi gaining 1.8% and Dubai up 0.4%.

Bahrain, however, experienced a decline of 5.4%, the largest fall in the GCC, as the Bahrain All Share Index dropped to its lowest level in over 25 months. This was largely due to an 18.5% fall in shares of Aluminum Bahrain, following the end of merger talks with Saudi Arabia's Maaden.



Oman's non-oil exports boost national economy

Muscat - Omani non-oil exports are one of the main pillars for achieving sustainable economic development in the sultanate, as they contribute to diversifying sources of national income and reducing dependence on oil as a major source of revenue.

Promoting Omani exports provides opportunities to expand the base of national production, stimulate growth in various economic sectors, and generate more job opportunities. It also contributes to enhancing the competitiveness of Omani products on the global stage, by improving quality, innovation, and benefiting from international markets.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion is always keen to provide the best services to Omani exporters, helping them enter new export markets and enhance current exports to international ones. In cooperation with all stakeholders from the government and private sectors, the ministry proposes promotional policies and plans to diversify the balance of trade.

Non-oil Omani exports have witnessed remarkable growth,

accounting for 33% of total Omani exports at the end of the first half of 2024. The volume of non-oil Omani exports until the end of June 2024 amounted to approximately RO3.575bn, compared to the same period in 2023, which amounted to RO3.307bn, re-

Non-oil exports have witnessed remarkable growth, accounting for 33% of total Omani exports at the end of the first half of 2024

flecting an increase in export value of more than 8%.

Mineral products topped the list of non-oil commodity exports, with a value of RO1.304bn, compared to RO1bn for the same period in 2023, an increase of 21.5%. Ordinary metal products and their derivatives came second, with a value of RO671mn, an increase of 7.3%, followed by plastic and rubber products, with an export value of RO 473mn, an increase of 11.5%.

Oman seeks to strengthen its presence in regional and global markets to achieve economic diversification and increase the contribution of non-oil sectors to the gross domestic product. Oman is targeting several markets, including the Gulf countries, East Asia, the Indian subcontinent, African countries, the United States of America, Europe, and China.

Ibtisam Ahmed al Farooji, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Investment Promotion, explained that non-oil Omani exports are a fundamental pillar for boosting the national economy and achieving the economic diversification that the sultanate seeks within its future vision.

She pointed out that there are significant opportunities for the growth of non-oil exports. She affirmed that enhancing the competitiveness of Omani products in global markets is an effective means of stimulating the local economy, increasing the contribution of the private sector, and opening new horizons for investment. ONA

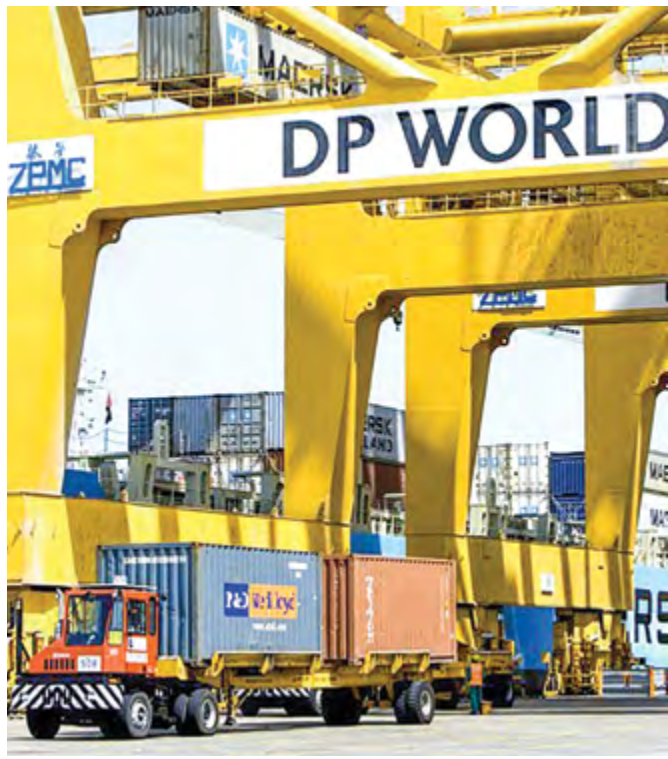
GCC trade projected to grow over 5% annually, reaching \$2.3tn by 2033

Our Correspondent
Muscat

According to new research from Boston Consulting Group (BCG), world trade in goods is projected to grow at an average annual rate of 2.9% through 2033, with the GCC region playing an increasingly pivotal role in connecting major trade routes between East and West.

The BCG report reveals a strong outlook for GCC trade, with total trade volume expected to reach \$2.3tn by 2033. This growth is driven by significant expansion across multiple trade corridors, with China emerging as the largest growth market at \$88bn (5.7% CAGR), followed by Japan at \$46bn (9.4% CAGR). The analysis also highlights that the GCC's non-hydrocarbon trade will grow by 3.5% annually, underscoring the region's successful economic diversification efforts.

As global trade patterns shift, the GCC is strengthening its position as a critical connector between East and West. This is evidenced by the broader transformation in global trade flows, where China's trade with the Global South is expected to in-



crease by \$1.25tn, and trade between developing nations is projected to grow by \$673bn by 2033. The GCC's strategic location and expanding infrastructure position the region to capture value from these evolving trade dynamics.

Rami Rafih, Managing Director and Partner at BCG, said, "The reconfiguration of global

trade flows presents a pivotal moment for the GCC. As trade routes transform, the region is not just a geographic intermediary but a central orchestrator of new patterns. The GCC's deliberate investment in capabilities positions it to achieve greater success by developing proactive and risk-based options rather than defaulting to reactionary re-

sponses. The key is leveraging this foundation to shape emerging trade corridors, particularly as commerce in the Global South evolves."

The report identifies major transformations across key trading regions that will reshape global commerce. While North America solidifies its position as a resilient trade bloc, with US-Mexico trade increasing by \$315bn by 2033, ASEAN stands out as a significant beneficiary of global shifts, with 3.7% annual trade growth. India's trajectory is particularly noteworthy, with total trade expected to reach \$1.8tn annually by 2033, driven by its growing role as a global manufacturing hub.

The increasing power of the Global South represents one of the most significant developments in global trade. Representing 18% of global GDP and 62% of the world's population, these 133 developing nations are set to significantly expand their trade. Annual trade among Global South nations will grow by \$673bn over the next decade, while trade between the Global South and developed economies is projected to reach \$1.67tn annually by 2033.

Apple posts record revenue, net income in Q4

Cupertino, US - US tech giant Apple reported record-breaking revenue and net income for the three-month period ending December 28, 2024, marking the first quarter of fiscal 2025.

Apple's revenues rose 4% year-on-year to \$124.3bn, up from \$119.6bn in the same period last year, according to figures released by the company on Friday. Net income also grew 7%, reaching \$36.3bn. Earnings per share (EPS) rose from \$2.18 to \$2.40 for



the period. "Our record revenue and strong operating margins drove EPS to a new all-time record

with double-digit growth and allowed us to return over \$30 billion to shareholders," said Kevan Parekh, Apple's chief fi-

nancial officer. "We are also pleased that our installed base of active devices has reached a new all-time high across all products and geographic segments," he added.

But iPhone sales dipped slightly by about 1% year-on-year to \$69.1bn in the period of three months ending December 28. In contrast, Mac computer sales grew by 16% to \$8.9bn, and iPad sales saw a 15% jump to \$8.1bn. Anadolu Agency

Trump tariffs on Mexico, Canada and China set to start Tuesday

Ben Werschkul

US President Donald Trump moved forward Saturday with his plans for tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China, ending a guessing game about how aggressively he would move to penalise America's three largest trading partners.

The tariffs – as Trump has promised since after his election win – will be 25% duties on Canada and Mexico and 10% on China over issues of fentanyl and illegal migration.

The duties on all three countries will be fully in force by Tuesday, February 4, according to the orders signed by Trump Saturday afternoon in Florida.

But tariffs on crucial energy imports from Canada will be lower with 10% duties on those products. The carveout was an acknowledgment of US and Canadian energy interdependence.

Trump said the drug and migration issues constituted a national emergency and moved forward on the duties using authority in the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).

"We need to protect Americans, and it is my duty as President to ensure the safety of all," Trump added in a Truth Social post. He then posted a video clip reiterating his view that tariff is his favourite word.

Canada, Mexico, and China quickly responded and are also set to roll out retaliatory measures of their own across a range of goods. Canada acted first with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announcing a plan for 25% retal-



US President Donald Trump before boarding Air Force One on Friday as he headed to Mar-a-Lago for the weekend (Yahoo Finance)

New tariffs will be 25% duties on Canada and Mexico and 10% on China. Canada, Mexico, and China quickly responded and are also set to roll out retaliatory measures of their own across a range of American goods

atory tariffs of their own that will begin to be in effect on Tuesday.

Other Canadian politicians rolled out their own measures including one effort to remove US made alcohol brands made in

Republican-led states from Canadian retail stores.

"We did not want this, but Canada is prepared," said Trudeau.

Mexican President Claudia

Sheinbaum added her own post that called Trump's charges against her country "slander" saying the issues of illegal drugs and migration would not be solved by tariffs.

Trump's executive orders also include provisions that could allow the US tariffs to go even higher if the duties kick off a trade war.

A clause states that the US may respond to any retaliatory measures and "the President may increase or expand in scope the duties imposed under this order to ensure the efficacy of this action."

Economic effects

The economic effects of the duties are likely to be significant on all economies involved, especially if they are kept in place for an extended duration.

Yale's Budget Lab has offered an estimate of the duties, suggesting that these new tariffs could translate in a decline of about \$1,250 in annual purchasing power for a middle-class family.

EY chief economist Greg Daco has taken a macroeconomic look and estimated that US GDP would contract by 1.5% in 2025 and 2.1% in 2026 if the tariffs stay in place.

On the other side of the ledger, the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget estimates that the duties are likely to raise up to \$1.5tn for the US Treasury over the coming decade if they are made permanent.

The White House has meanwhile tried to downplay possible economic effects while disputing any link between inflation and price increases.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt on Friday avoided a question about whether the administration would reverse tariffs if they do in-

crease prices accusing the media of looking at the issue "in a microscope rather than looking at the whole of government economic approach that this president is taking."

Technical details of duties

Trump imposed the new duties using a presidential authority granted in a 1977 law that allows them to be in place quickly. The use of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act does give Trump considerable latitude to move quickly but could also open him to legal challenges. The law also only asks for consultation with Congress "in every possible instance."

Overall, Saturday's move is seen as a likely restarting of trade wars that marked Trump 1.0 but at a higher volume with the president now promising to go even further in the weeks and months ahead.

Trump's actions between 2017 and 2020 were often wide-ranging – covering well over half of Chinese imports, for example – but often limited and focused on specific sectors like steel and aluminum.

This time around, Trump has acted first on large umbrella tariffs which the Tax Foundation estimates will hit about \$1.4tn worth of imports, compared to \$380bn during Trump's first term.

And additional sector specific tariffs could be in the offing soon and Trump himself listed many goods Friday that could be in store for additional duties in the months ahead.

(Source: Yahoo Finance)

China firmly opposes US tariff move, vows measures

Beijing, China – China is strongly dissatisfied with and firmly opposes the US decision to impose an additional 10% tariff on goods imported from China, the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) said Sunday.

In response to the erroneous action by the United States, China will file a complaint at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and take corresponding countermeasures to firmly safeguard its rights and interests, an MOC spokesperson said in a statement.

The US unilateral imposition of extra tariff seriously violates WTO rules, the spokesperson said, noting that this move would not only fail to resolve its own problems but also disrupt normal economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

China urges the US side to view and address its fentanyl and related issues objectively and rationally, rather than frequently using tariffs to threaten other countries, according to the statement.

The US side should correct its mistakes and work with China to meet each other halfway, the spokesperson noted, calling on the United States to face problems directly, engage in candid dialogues, strengthen cooperation, and manage differences on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect.

Xinhua

ECB chief hints at further rate cuts

Frankfurt, Germany – European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde hinted that the path for further rate cuts is clear, as financing conditions remain restrictive amid an economy that stagnated in the fourth quarter.

The ECB cut its three key interest rates by 25 basis points on Thursday in a unanimous decision, as widely expected by market participants, bringing the deposit rate – the benchmark for Frankfurt's monetary policy – to 2.75%.

The main takeaways from the press conference were support for further monetary easing and the dismissal of Bitcoin as a reserve asset on the ECB's balance sheet.

Lagarde indicated that the ECB will continue to adopt a data-dependent approach, yet hinting that further rate cuts are likely if inflation continues to decline and economic conditions warrant additional support.

"We know the direction of travel," she said, stressing that the pace and magnitude of future cuts would be guided by incoming data.

According to Lagarde, interest rates are still "currently restrictive" and not at neutral level, thus hinting at further adjustments.

She didn't close the door to another easing at the next policy meeting March as new information will become



Christine Lagarde

available.

Lagarde expressed confidence that inflation will sustainably reach the 2% target in 2025, despite potential near-term fluctuations. Overall, market participants expect additional three ECB rate cuts by 25 basis points this year.

Lagarde acknowledged that risks to economic growth remain "tilted to the downside," citing geopolitical tensions and trade frictions as potential headwinds.

The eurozone economy stagnated in the fourth quarter of 2024, with both Germany and France printing an unexpected contraction in their gross domestic product pace.

Lagarde firmly dismissed speculation about the ECB holding Bitcoin as a reserve asset.

"Reserves have to be liquid, secure, and safe," she said, adding that Bitcoin does not meet these criteria due to its volatility and potential risks linked to money laundering and illicit activities.

Her remarks contrast with the unexpectedly open stance of Fed Chair Jerome Powell, who stated on Wednesday that commercial banks "are perfectly able to serve crypto customers as long as they understand and can manage the risks."

(Source: Euronews.com)

US businesses brace for higher inflation and fear Trump's tariffs spell trouble ahead

Daniel Bellamy

The Budget Lab at Yale University estimates Trump's tariffs would cost average American household \$1,000 to \$1,200 in annual purchasing power

From an ice cream parlour in California to a medical supply business in North Carolina to a T-shirt vendor outside Detroit, US businesses are bracing to take a hit from the taxes President Donald Trump imposed on Saturday on imports from Canada, Mexico and China – America's three biggest trading partners.

The levies of 25% on Canadian and Mexican and 10% on Chinese goods will take effect Tuesday. Canadian energy, including oil, natural gas and electricity, will be taxed at a lower 10% rate.

The Budget Lab at Yale University estimates Trump's tariffs would cost the average American household \$1,000 to \$1,200 in annual purchasing power.

Gregory Daco, chief economist at the tax and consulting firm EY, calculates the tariffs would increase inflation, which was running at a 2.9% annual



rate in December, by 0.4 percentage points this year. Daco also projects the US economy, which grew 2.8% last year, would fall by 1.5% this year and 2.1% in 2026 "as higher import costs dampen consumer spending and business investment."

The Penny Ice Creamery in Santa Cruz, California, has had to hike prices of its ice cream, including popular flavours "strawberry pink peppercorn" and "chocolate caramel sea salt," repeatedly in recent years as an inflationary surge increased the cost of its supplies.

"I feel bad about always having to raise prices," co-owner

Zach Davis said. "We were looking forward to inflation coming down, the economy stabilising in 2025 ... Now with the tariffs, we may be back at it again."

Trump tariffs, Davis said, threaten to drive up the cost of the mostly made-in-China refrigerators, freezers and blenders he'll need if Penny Ice Creamery goes ahead with plans to add to its six shops. He still has painful memories of the extra equipment costs the company had to absorb when Trump slapped massive tariffs on China during his first term.

In Asheville, North Carolina, Casey Hite, CEO of AeroFlow

Health, expects to take a hit because his company gets more than half its supplies, including breast pumps, from Chinese manufacturers, providing them to American patients through insurance plans. AeroFlow Health gets paid by insurers at pre-negotiated rates, put in place before Trump decided on his tariffs.

Hite said the tax on Chinese imports would hit the company's finances, forcing it either to purchase cheaper and lower-quality products or pass higher costs along via higher health insurance premiums. Those might take two years to materialise, Hite said, but eventually they would hit consumers' budgets.

"It will impact the patients," Hite said. "In time, patients pay more for the products."

Even the made-in-USA absorbent incontinence pads AeroFlow Health buys aren't safe from Trump's import taxes. They may include pulp from tariff target Canada and plastics and packaging from China, according to the AeroFlow Health, which warns of "turbulences" from the tariffs.

(Source: Euronews.com)

Japan expresses 'serious' concerns over US tariff move

Tokyo, Japan – Japanese Finance Minister Katsunobu Kato on Sunday expressed serious concern over the potential impact of US tariffs on China, Canada and Mexico.

Kato said on a TV program that he is "very concerned about the possible impact on the global economy," and stressed the



Katsunobu Kato

need to "thoroughly assess" foreign exchange movements and the outlook of monetary policy in the United States, a key trade partner of Japan.

US President Donald Trump on Saturday ordered tariffs of 25% on imports from Canada and Mexico, and an additional 10% on goods from China.

"We will have to closely look at how Japan would be particularly affected and take the necessary steps (in response)," Kato said, partly referring to rising inflation concerns linked to the hefty tariffs imposed by the Trump administration.

Kyodo News

Alizz Islamic SSB holds its first meeting of 2025



The Shari'a Supervisory Board (SSB) of Alizz Islamic Bank held its first meeting for the year at the bank's head office in Bowshar, in the presence of the chairman of the Shari'a Supervisory Board, Sheikh Dr Essam al Enezi and other members of the SBB as well as Ali bin Saif al Mani, the bank's CEO.

Members of the executive management team and the Shari'a Compliance and Audit

Department were also present at the meeting which was attended by scholars from the second batch of the 'Tamkeen' (empowering the second line of Shari'a Supervisory Board members) programme, where they participated alongside members of the Shari'a Supervisory Board for practical experience and direct vocational training, a press release said.

The meeting covered various

topics including the local economic performance, the bank's performance in 2024 and the way forward during the coming period. Moreover, the meeting discussed the Financial Report for the fourth quarter of 2024 and the Shari'a Compliance and Risk Reports, as well as a number of issues of interest.

It is worth mentioning that the Shari'a Supervisory Board, reaffirms its commitment to sharia

compliant governance by ensuring all directives, decisions and operations align with the Islamic banking principles. It also provides expert guidance on value-added products and financing solutions to meet customers' dynamic market demand. Their involvement enhances transparency, mitigate risks and strengthens stakeholder confidence.

The Shari'a Compliance and

Audit Department plays an important role to uphold its commitment into corporate governance, responsible finance and sustainable economic development. It plays a very important role in overseeing the right mechanisms used to develop products and create product related documents, while examining the executed transactions and applying control and auditing tools.

Malabar Gold 'Heart to Heart' collection celebrates love

Ushering in the 'Season of Love', Malabar Gold and Diamonds, the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally with over 375 showrooms across 13 countries has launched the 'Heart to Heart' jewellery collection.

The elegant array of adornments from the world-renowned jeweller comprises of over 100 heart-shaped designs with prices starting from just RO85 that makes a perfect gifting option. The limited-edition collection can be availed across all showrooms of Malabar Gold and Diamonds until February 15.

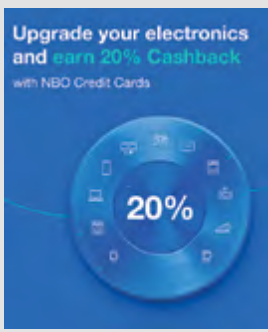
Giving customers a wide range of options to choose from, the brand has incorporated numerous light weight and elegant designs in necklaces, pendants, bangles, bracelets, earrings & rings into the 'Heart to Heart' collection. With options available in both, responsibly sourced natural diamonds and 18K gold, the brand has gone out of its way to ensure that the gifting needs of the entirety of its customer base are met.

"It is a well-accepted fact that the gift of jewellery is one among the most pristine and thoughtful gifts that one can present. Malabar Gold and Diamonds has always strived to be the perfect gifting partner for jewellery



lovers and as we step into the season of love, customers need not look further than our new Heart-to-Heart collection to find a gift that manages to express all your emotions. With a low starting price point, we have made it easier and more lucrative than ever to convey your love this season", said Shamal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold and Diamonds.

In addition to the elegant array of jewellery, Malabar Gold and Diamonds also has a wide range of collections in gold, diamond and precious gem jewellery for those suited for the varied preferences of its multi-ethnic customer base.



NBO offers exciting 20% cashback

The National Bank of Oman (NBO) is delighted to announce an exclusive 20% cashback promotion in collaboration with Sharaf DG from February 2 to 8.

The promotional campaign allows NBO retail VISA Credit Card holders to enjoy substantial rewards while shopping for electronics at Sharaf DG stores across Oman, a press release said.

Maha Saud al Raisi, assistant general manager and head of Product at NBO, said, "We are excited to partner with Sharaf DG to offer our valued customers an exclusive chance to be rewarded for their purchases. This collaboration reflects our consistent efforts to enhance the value of NBO retail VISA Credit Cards and provide greater benefits to our customers. This promotion offers NBO Credit Card holders the chance to earn valuable rewards while shopping for electronics during the campaign. We invite our customers to visit Sharaf DG stores in Oman during the offer period to take advantage of this limited-time promotion and enjoy the exciting cashback rewards."

Customers making purchases on Easy Payment Plan (EPP) transactions at Sharaf DG stores during the promotional period will receive 20% cashback.

LuLu Financial Holdings MD reacts to Indian Budget

LuLu Financial Holdings MD Adeeb Ahamed, reacting to India's Union Budget, said, "The Union Budget 2025-26 is clearly designed to boost short-term consumption, with the decision to remove Income Tax on income up to 12 lakh standing out as a direct move to increase middle-class spending power."

He further elaborated, this is expected to stimulate demand, especially in sectors like real estate, retail, and automobiles, which benefit from increased disposable income, a press release said.

It is commendable that FDI in the insurance sector will be raised from 74% to 100%, a move that will attract foreign capital, enhance competition, and drive innovation in the sector. Similarly, the decision to increase the TCS exemption limit for remittances under the RBI's Liberalised Remittance Scheme from 7 lakh to 10 lakh will provide relief to individuals sending money abroad, particularly for



Adeeb Ahamed

travel and investment purposes. Additionally, the removal of TCS on remittances for education purposes when financed by an education loan is a positive step that will ease the financial burden on students studying abroad, he pointed out.

It is encouraging to see MSMEs receiving strong focus, rightly recognised as one of the key engines of India's growth. Measures such as enhancing the credit guarantee cover, increasing investment and turnover limits, and boosting loans for exports.

be'ah felicitates leadership graduates

Be'ah has honoured its employees who completed leadership programmes organised by the Royal Academy of Management.

These programmes, including the Future Leaders Programme and Etimad, the national leadership development programme, aim to nurture future leaders and empower mid-level Omani managers in the private sector, a press release said.

Participants highlighted the profound impact these programmes had on enhancing their leadership skills and boosting productivity. Be'ah's investment in national talent aligns with its commitment to fostering innovation and sustainability across various sectors.

Employees contributed to practical projects addressing key environmental and economic challenges, including 'Increasing petrochemical production from natural gas Integrated Sea cucumber and seaweed farming in Al Wusta,' 'Reducing reliance on private transport in favour of shared mobility in Muscat,' 'Enhancing economic returns from marble waste Improving municipal solid waste collection services,' 'Leveraging consumer



boycotts to enhance the market position of the National Detergent Company,' and 'Inspiring Experiences from Be'ah Employees.'

Graduates of these leadership programmes shared their transformative experiences. Ahmed Abdullah al Kharusi, acting senior manager of Corporate Communication, said, "Etimad has been a thrilling and challenging transformational journey, instilling in us a profound sense of responsibility towards Oman, Be'ah, and our teams. The experience

has shaped us into dedicated stewards of progress and innovation."

Ahmed Khalfan al Qasbi, senior manager of Legal Affairs, added, "The seven-month Etimad journey has been an inspiring adventure in mastering organisational leadership and change management, guided by top international experts. This remarkable programme has ignited my passion for innovation and equipped me with practical tools to tackle complex business challenges head-on."

Karima Saud al Raaisi, senior executive - Material Recovery, said, "My participation in the Etimad Programme provided me with invaluable opportunities to network with peers from various sectors and organisations, significantly enhancing my knowledge and enriching my professional experience. The coaching sessions were particularly impactful, as they played a vital role in refining my management style. One of the greatest benefits of transformational coaching is its ability to foster lasting change."

Mercedes Benz offers certified pre-owned luxury

Mercedes-Benz Oman sets the tone for a remarkable year ahead with a meticulously curated selection of certified pre-owned vehicles seamlessly combining timeless elegance, innovative engineering, and exceptional value with exclusive prices valid until March 31.

Each certified pre-owned vehicle is rigorously inspected and certified to the highest Mercedes-Benz standards, ensuring one experiences unparalleled performance and peace of mind. With models that cater to various tastes, from sleek coupés to versatile SUVs, there's a vehicle to match every lifestyle, a press release said.

For example, the CLA 200 Coupé Special Edition (2025) makes a bold statement in Polar



White with a Leather 2-Tone Red Pepper/Black interior, delivering sophistication and sportiness. Available now for RO19,995, it has only 7,764km on the clock. The GLA 200 (2024) in Spectral Blue Metallic, is also available at RO20,995 with just 9,896km.

Each vehicle on offer includes a comprehensive multi-point inspection, a full-service history, a manufacturer-backed warranty, and 24x7 roadside assistance. This ensures that every journey is as reliable and worry-free as enjoyable. Experience the highest standards of quality, performance, and reliability. These vehicles offer timeless style and advanced features to enhance your driving experience and keep you connected wherever the road takes you.

Al Mouj Muscat partners with Aster Royal Al Raffah Hospital

Al Mouj Muscat, Oman's leading waterfront destination, has recently partnered with Aster Royal Al Raffah Hospital to deliver 24x7 emergency response services, reinforcing its commitment to providing an exceptional environment that prioritises safety, health and quality of life.

This agreement is aimed at providing immediate medical care and ambulance service to the Al Mouj Muscat community enhancing the sense of security and well-being for all who live, work and visit Al Mouj Muscat.

Nasser al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat, said, "Our commitment to enriching the lives of those who call Al Mouj Muscat home, along with our valued visitors, remains steadfast. This partnership with Aster Royal Al Raffah Hospital reaffirms our dedication to fos-



tering a secure and vibrant community where residents and visitors can live with confidence and peace of mind knowing that emergency care is always within reach."

Shailesh Guntu, CEO of Aster Royal Al Raffah Hospital,

nity, we ensure residents have access to critical care when they need it most."

Aster Royal Al Raffah Hospital, renowned for its advanced medical technology and skilled professionals, is uniquely equipped to meet urgent medical needs of Al Mouj Muscat's community.

With a resident satisfaction rate of 92%, Al Mouj Muscat continues to redefine urban living in Oman.

This partnership with Aster Royal Al Raffah Hospital reaffirms our dedication to fostering a secure and vibrant community

NASSER AL SHEIBANI



SQU student wins 'Young Medical Researcher'

Abdullah bin Mohammed al Lawati, a final year student at the College of Medicine and Health Sciences at Sultan Qaboos University, won the 'Best Young Medical Researcher' award at the Asia Global Research Initiative (AGRI) 2025 competition, one of the most prestigious awards in the field of global scientific research, after competing with more than 500 international researchers.

Lawati received this honour in recognition of his pioneering research in the medical field, characterised by scientific innovation and academic excellence, a press release said.

"This award is not only a personal achievement, but also a testament to the support of my teachers and the innovative system at Sultan Qaboos University," said Lawati. "I aspire to inspire young Omanis to engage in research that addresses global challenges."

Lawati has also published 22 scientific research papers in high-level international journals with a high impact factor. His research covers vital fields such as cancer tumours, artificial intelligence, and public health policies. He has also won numerous awards at international conferences in Canada, Bulgaria, India, and the UAE, reflecting his ability to transform research into applied solutions.

Bank Dhofar Money Market Fund attracts investors

Bank Dhofar Money Market Fund (MMF) launched last year by Bank Dhofar, has emerged as an attractive choice for investors seeking consistent returns with efficiency and flexibility.

This fund represents the first step in the bank's broader investment initiatives, aimed at strengthening its position in the investment sector, a press release said.

Bank Dhofar Money Market Fund focuses on low-risk securities, offering returns in line with



short-term market rates. It achieves this by investing in liquid, high-quality securities issued by banks, government and semi-government entities, and other organisations across Oman and the GCC region.

The fund's key benefits include liquidity, and a diversified portfolio of short-term, high-quality debt instruments. The fund is managed by a skilled team of professionals, operating under robust regulatory supervision and adhering to trans-

parency standards to ensure healthy returns.

Individuals and institutions can invest in the fund with a minimum subscription of RO1,000. The fund invests into a diverse mix of instruments, including call accounts, fixed deposits, certificates of deposit, treasury bills, commercial papers, short-term bonds, sukuk, and other money market instruments.

The fund invests only in instruments denominated in Omani Riyals, GCC currencies,

US Dollars, British Pounds, or Euros. Prioritising safety, liquidity, and credit quality, Bank Dhofar's Asset Management team employs its expertise to assess and manage risks.

Bank Dhofar Money Market Fund complements the bank's comprehensive asset management services, which include investment fund management, discretionary/non-discretionary portfolio management, and strategies covering money markets, fixed income, etc.

National University of Science and Technology graduation held

The National University of Science and Technology (NUST) held its graduation ceremony for the academic year 2023-24 on January 30 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The event was held under the patronage of H E Dr Mohammed Bin Saeed Bin Khalfan al Mamari, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, a press release said.

A total of 817 graduates from various disciplines, including Medicine, Pharmacy, Engineering, and Maritime Studies, were conferred their degrees.

The ceremony commenced with a welcome address by Dr P Mohammed Ali, chairman of the Board of Directors, followed by a congratulatory message from vice-chancellor Dr Ali Al Bimani. The event was graced by no-



table academicians, including Dr Christopher Martin, director for Global Engagement at West Virginia University, USA, Prof Iain Cameron of Glasgow Caledonian University, UK, and Dr Hossein Haj-Hariri from the University of South Carolina, USA. Dr Salim al Araimi, deputy vice-chancellor,

concluded the ceremony with a vote of thanks.

In recognition of academic excellence and citizenship, prestigious awards were presented to outstanding graduates. Dr Mamari conferred the Sheikh Salim al Fannah al Araimi Award to six top scorers. He also presented

the Dr P Mohammed Ali Academic Excellence Award to 12 students for outstanding academic achievements. The Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Fannah Al Araimi Citizenship Award was also given to eight graduates for exceptional qualities of citizenship and studentship.

International Science Council concludes General Assembly

The International Science Council (ISC) has concluded its 3rd General Assembly, bringing together ISC Member delegates, fellows, and scientific representatives for two days of strategic discussions.

Hosted by the Sultanate of Oman, the assembly served as a pivotal moment for shaping the future of international science cooperation, a press release said. It provided a critical platform to address key challenges and opportunities for science in the coming years.

Reflecting on the outcomes of the Assembly, ISC president Peter Gluckman highlighted the significance of the discussions, stating,

"This meeting would not have been possible without the generous support of the Sultanate of



Oman, our esteemed host. We are deeply grateful for their exceptional assistance in organizing this event. Our sincere thanks go to the Sultan, the Royal Family, and Oman Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation for their support, as well as for their outstanding hospitality and commitment to advancing

the work of the ISC."

Dr Yousef bin Abdullah al Balushi, a member of the Fellowship Council at the International Science Council, said, "We witnessed the first in-person meeting of the International Science Council's General Assembly, attended by approximately 400 scientists."

Year-round cultural activities planned as part of 'Russian Seasons'

The National Museum inaugurated the museum programme of the 'Russian Seasons' in the Sultanate of Oman in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and the ANO 'Russian Seasons'.

Additionally, the museum inaugurated the State Hermitage Museum's Corner titled 'Gifts of Bukharan and Central Asian Emirs to the Russian Imperial Court'. The event was attended by Olga Lyubimova, the minister of culture of the Russian Federation and Dr Mona bint Fahd al Said, assistant vice chancellor of Sultan Qaboos University for International Cooperation, vice chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Mu-

seum, besides cultural and museum specialists.

Jamal bin Hassan al Moosawi, secretary general of the National Museum, presented a cultural and museum cooperation timeline between the National Museum and the Russian Federation. Olga also highlighted the key activities and events of the 'Russian Seasons' that will take place throughout the year in partnership with various institutions in the Sultanate of Oman. These events will span different cultural fields, including museums, theatre, music, and literature.

As part of the event, the National Museum signed an agreement with the Russian Seasons



Foundation for the inauguration of the 'Russian Seasons' in Oman. The agreement was signed on behalf of the National Museum by Moosawi, while director Svetlana Anatolyevna Kondratyeva signed on behalf of 'Russian Seasons'.

Moosawi said, "Today, we celebrate the inauguration of the museum programme of the 'Russian Seasons' in Oman, as well as the opening of the second exhibition 'Gifts of Bukharan and Central Asian Emirs to the Russian Imperial Court' at the National Museum in cooperation with the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg. This event comes in an effort to enhance cultural exchange and

introduce the civilisational heritage of both countries, which share historical relations that span centuries and are committed to strengthening these relations.

"This coincides with the celebration of the 40th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between Oman and Russia. This initiative is part of broader efforts to enhance cultural diplomacy, with the National Museum - being a key institution representing Oman's historical and cultural dimensions - playing an active role in fostering these relations through collaboration with Russian cultural and museum institutions."

What do Donald Trump's executive orders mean for 'illegal' migrants?

Washington, D.C., US - Donald Trump's approach is clear: make immigration and asylum more difficult, deport undocumented immigrants, close the borders. He has already signed several executive orders to implement his plans.

Executive orders allow a US president to take action without the approval of Congress. Though Trump seems to be making particularly extensive use of this tool, they are not uncommon as a means of taking urgent measures or concretising existing laws.

Executive orders can be challenged in court if they are deemed to be unconstitutional or to interfere with the powers of the states. They can also be overturned by Congress. But a president retains the power to veto such a decision, which in turn can be overridden by a two-thirds majority in Congress. DW takes a look at some of Trump's key executive orders on migration, and the legal implications.

Migrant facility on Guantanamo Bay

Donald Trump has announced plans to detain up to 30,000 'criminal illegal aliens' in a 'migrant facility' at the controversial US Guantanamo Bay naval base in Cuba. Legal experts and human rights organisations have expressed doubts about the



US President George W Bush established the Guantanamo Bay military prison in 2002, during the 'war on terror' that followed September 11 attacks

plans and predict that he will not be able to enforce them legally in the long term.

The Center for Constitutional Rights issued the following statement from its executive director Vince Warren: "President Trump's decision to use Guantanamo - global symbol and site of lawlessness, torture, and racism - to house immigrants should horrify us all. Like many of Trump's authoritarian attacks on human rights, this one has shameful precedents in US his-

tory. Long before the second Bush administration used the facility to hold and abuse nearly 800 Muslim men and boys as part of its 'war on terror', the first Bush administration held Haitian refugees there to try to deny them their rights under international law."

A facility on the exclave is already used for migrants and asylum seekers caught at sea. Human rights organisations have criticised inhumane conditions there.

US President George W Bush established the Guantanamo Bay military prison in 2002, during the 'war on terror' that followed the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the US. It soon became notorious for the extreme conditions that detainees were subjected to, which included torture. Human rights organisations criticised the arbitrary nature of the detentions. There are currently 15 men still imprisoned there, including Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, accused of being

the mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks.

Birthright citizenship

Trump has signed an executive order to abolish birthright citizenship in the US. Currently every person born on US soil is granted US citizenship. This principle was adopted by the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution in 1868 and upheld by the Supreme Court in 1898 in the case of the United States v Wong Kim Ark.

This week, a federal judge in

the western coastal state of Washington issued a temporary order to block the executive order on the grounds that it was 'blatantly unconstitutional'. John Coughenour said that he had been on the bench 'for over four decades' and could not 'remember another case where the question presented was as clear'. His emergency order is valid for 14

This allows him to use funds without congressional approval and to deploy the military. The Department of Homeland Security has also been instructed to take measures to deport migrants who do not have the right to reside in the US, as well as to identify undocumented migrants.

In the executive order entitled 'Protecting the American People

Trump has announced plans to detain up to 30,000 'criminal illegal aliens' in a 'migrant facility' at the controversial US Guantanamo Bay naval base in Cuba

days.

More than 20 states, including California, New York, Illinois and Washington, have also filed suits against the executive order, as have several civil rights organisations, including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). The cases could end up before the US Supreme Court, which has moved significantly to the right in the past 10 years, largely thanks to appointments made during Trump's first term. It remains to be seen how its judges would interpret the constitution.

US border with Mexico

Trump has also declared a national emergency at the US' southern border with Mexico.

Against Invasion', reference is made to an article of the Constitution that guarantees that the federal government will protect all states from 'invasion'. Trump has described the influx of migrants at the US' southern border as such. However, constitutional lawyers say that the term refers to military attacks.

Trump already declared a national emergency on the US-Mexico border in 2019, in an attempt to secure funds for the construction of a border wall, which Congress had refused to finance. Some interpreted the controversial measure as infringing on separation of powers and as an abuse of executive power.

DW

US secretary of state in Panama

Washington, D.C., US - US Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrived in Panama on Saturday, marking his first international trip as the country's top diplomat amid President Donald Trump's bid to reclaim control over the Panama Canal.

Trump has suggested that China's growing influence in the region, particularly through its investment in Panama's ports, poses a national security risk.

He has refused to rule out military action to take back the canal, which the US handed over to Panama in 1999.

"They've already offered to do many things," Trump said on Friday, "but we think it's appropriate that we take it back," adding that Panama had violated agreements by allowing excessive Chinese involvement.

Rubio is set to meet with Panamanian President Jose Raul Mulino, who has firmly rejected



Rubio is set to meet with Panamanian President Jose Raul Mulino

any negotiations regarding US control of the canal.

"I cannot negotiate, much less

open a process of negotiations on the canal," Mulino said on Thursday, saying that the issue

'is sealed'.

"The canal is Panama's," he said.

However, his administration has launched an audit of Hong Kong-based CK Hutchison Hold-

ings, which operates ports on both sides of the canal.

Rubio on tour of Central America

Rubio, while downplaying the question military intervention, told SiriusXM radio in an interview before the trip that the Panama Canal is a 'core national interest' for the US.

The Panama Canal serves as a vital trade route, connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and facilitating 40% of US container traffic.

"We cannot allow any foreign power - particularly China - to hold that kind of potential control over it that they do," Rubio said. "That just can't continue."

Rubio's visit is part of a broader tour of Central America, which will also include El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic. DW

Donald Trump orders strikes on Islamic State targets in Somalia

Washington, D.C., US - US President Donald Trump on Saturday said he ordered military airstrikes on a senior 'Islamic State' attack planner and others from the terrorist network in Somalia.

"These killers, who we found hiding in caves, threatened the United States and our Allies," Trump said on Truth Social. "The strikes destroyed the caves they live in, and killed many terrorists without, in any way, harming civilians."

Coordinated strikes

The strikes were carried out in the Golis Mountains, a range on the northern coast of the Somali Peninsula, Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said, adding that the mission was coordinated with Somalia's government.

An official in the Somali president's office, speaking on condi-



US President Donald Trump

tion of anonymity and reported on by Reuters, said Somalia's government backed the strikes.

"Somalia cannot be a safe haven for terrorists," said the official.

Later on Saturday, the Somali president's office said President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud 'was informed of the US strike targeting senior ISIS leadership in

northern Somalia this evening'.

"He acknowledges the unwavering support of the United States in the fight against international terrorism and welcomes the continued commitment under the decisive leadership of President Donald Trump," the office posted on X.

"This latest operation reinforces the strong security partnership between Somalia and the United States in combating extremist threats. Somalia remains resolute in working with its allies to eliminate international terrorism and ensure regional stability."

An initial assessment by the Pentagon indicated that 'multiple' operatives were killed in the operation. In its assessment, the Pentagon said that no civilians were harmed in the strikes. DW

Conflicting altitude data emerges in US midair collision investigation

Washington, D.C., US - Preliminary investigations into the January 29 midair collision near Reagan National Airport in Washington, D.C., have uncovered conflicting altitude data on Saturday between the two aircraft involved, according to officials.

The crash, which killed a total of 67 people onboard an American Airlines jet and a US Army Black Hawk helicopter, has raised questions about flight path adherence and operational errors.

Data from the jet's flight recorder indicated it was flying at approximately 325 feet (99 metres), plus or minus 25 feet, at the time of impact, said investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

Radar data from the control tower, meanwhile, showed the



The January 29 midair collision killed a total of 67 people

helicopter at 200 feet, the maximum altitude allowed for the designated flight corridor.

The nearly unexplained 100-foot discrepancy is a key focus of the investigation led by the NTSB. Officials are working to reconcile the conflicting readings and retrieve data from the helicopter's black box.

"That's what our job is, to figure that out," said Todd Inman, NTSB board member, during a news conference.

Investigators are examining whether the chopper deviated from its approved flight path and if any operational errors contributed to the collision.

Anadolu Agency

CHINESE NEW YEAR IN MALAYSIA



People watch lion dance at the Penang Miaoheui (temple fair) in celebration of Chinese Lunar New Year in George Town, Malaysia on Saturday (Xinhua)

46 sick, injured Palestinians from Gaza enter Egypt for treatment

Rafah border crossing was reopened on Saturday after more than eight months of closure

Gaza City, Palestine - Some 46 sick and injured Palestinians left the Gaza Strip via the Rafah border crossing into Egypt on Sunday for treatment, a medical source said.

The terminal was reopened on Saturday after more than eight months of closure due to Israeli military operations in the southern Gaza Strip.

"Some 46 Palestinian patients and wounded individuals, alongside their companions, left Gaza via the Rafah crossing," the source told Anadolu.

He said cancer patients made up the majority of people who crossed the terminal on Sunday.

According to the source, around 50 patients and injured individuals will leave Gaza every day for treatment under the supervision of the World Health Organization (WHO).

On Saturday, around 50 children and patients left the enclave, marking the first movement through the Rafah crossing since its closure in May 2024.

On January 19, the first six-



Sick and injured Palestinians, who were taken from Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, arrive at El-Arish Hospital for treatment in Arish, Egypt on Saturday

According to the source, around 50 patients and injured individuals will leave Gaza every day for treatment under the supervision of the World Health Organization (WHO)

week phase of a ceasefire agreement and prisoner exchange between Hamas and Israel went into effect, halting Tel Aviv's genocidal war that has killed

nearly 47,500 people and injured more than 111,500 others since October 2023.

The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants in

November last year for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

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

Qatar's call

Qatar's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mo-

ammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani called on Sunday for the full implementation of the Gaza ceasefire agreement.

During a press conference with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan in Doha, bin Abdulrahman stressed the need to start the second phase of the agreement to bring stability to the region.

The three-phase ceasefire agreement includes a prisoner

exchange and sustained calm, aiming for a permanent truce and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

Palestinian factions have released 18 captives under the agreement in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

New attacks

Meanwhile, new Israeli attacks were reported in the Gaza Strip

on Sunday despite a ceasefire agreement that halted a 15-month Israeli war on the enclave.

According to witnesses, an Israeli drone fired two missiles near a cart traveling along the coastal Al-Rashid Street northwest of the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza. No injuries were reported.

The attack has caused panic among Palestinians using the road to return to their areas in northern Gaza, witnesses said.

Israeli forces also opened fire towards Palestinian homes east of the Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza and in eastern Rafah in southern Gaza.

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians began to return on Monday to their areas in northern Gaza for the first time since the ceasefire took effect on January 19.

Earlier, the families of Israeli hostages in the Gaza Strip said on Saturday that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government are attempting to obstruct a prisoner exchange deal with Hamas.

It came during a news conference organised by the families near the Defence Ministry headquarters in Tel Aviv, in response to Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who claimed that the war in Gaza would resume immediately after the completion of the first phase of the agreement.

The families said: "Netanyahu is trying to hinder the prisoner exchange agreement."

Anadolu Agency



Israel conducts large-scale raid in northern West Bank

Istanbul, Turkey - The Israeli army launched a large-scale raid in the northern West Bank early on Sunday amid tension in the occupied territory, witnesses said.

Israeli military vehicles and two bulldozers pushed into the town of Tammun, southeast of Tubas city, and Al-Far'a refugee camp and imposed a curfew in the two areas, they added.

According to witnesses, Israeli soldiers forced families out of their homes in Al-Far'a camp and turned the buildings into military outposts.

The Palestinian official news agency Wafa confirmed the Israeli raid in the two areas.

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society, for its part, accused Israeli forces of preventing its medics from evacuating a sick Palestinian in Al-Far'a camp.

Local authorities in Tubas announced a suspension of school classes in Tammun and Al-Far'a camp following the Israeli raid.

The new raid came days

after 10 Palestinians were killed on Thursday by an Israeli airstrike in Tammun.

On January 21, the Israeli army launched a military assault on Jenin city and its refugee camp, killing at least 24 Palestinians. The offensive was later expanded to include the city of Tulkarm, where three Palestinians were killed.

The escalation in the occupied West Bank came after a ceasefire and prisoner exchange deal took effect in Gaza on January 19.

Meanwhile, a Palestinian freed in a prisoner swap deal with Israel last year was killed by an Israeli airstrike in the occupied West Bank, local reports said on Sunday.

Abdul Hadi Issam Alawneh lost his life in the attack that targeted a vehicle on Saturday evening in the town of Qabatiya, south of Jenin, the Hamas-run Prisoners Media Office said in a statement.

Another Palestinian was killed in the Israeli attack.

Alawneh was released from Israeli custody under a prisoner

exchange deal between Israel and Hamas in November 2023.

On January 21, the Israeli army launched a military assault on Jenin city and its refugee camp, killing at least 25 Palestinians. The offensive was later expanded to include the city of Tulkarm, where three Palestinians were killed.

More than 900 Palestinians have been killed and over 6,700 others injured in the occupied West Bank in attacks by Israeli forces and illegal settlers since October 2023, according to Palestinian figures.

Besides, an elderly Palestinian was shot dead by Israeli forces in the West Bank city of Jenin on Sunday, the Health Ministry said.

A ministry statement said that a 73-year-old man was killed by Israeli army fire in the Jenin refugee camp in the northern West Bank.

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said that its teams had transferred the victim to a hospital from the camp after the Israeli attack.

Anadolu Agency

Israeli PM departs to meet Trump

Jerusalem - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu departed for Washington on Sunday to meet with US President Donald Trump.

In pre-departure statements at Ben Gurion Airport, Netanyahu called his meeting with Trump 'a testimony to the strength of the Israeli-American alliance'.

He said his talks with Trump will take up 'critical issues facing Israel and our region: victory over Hamas, achieving the release of all our hostages and dealing with the Iranian terror axis in all its components'.

"We can strengthen Israel's security, expand the circle of peace even further and usher in a remarkable era beyond our imagination," he added.

The Israeli premier is expected to return to Israel on Thursday following his high-profile discussions in Washington.



Netanyahu's office said on Saturday that the premier will begin talks on a second phase of the Gaza ceasefire, which took effect on January 19, on Monday.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu decided not to send a negotiation team to Qatar for talks on the second phase of a ceasefire deal until after he met with US President Donald Trump, according to a report by the Walla news outlet.

The report said Netanyahu

prefers to delay any action until after his meeting with Trump, citing an unnamed senior Israeli source.

The decision comes as negotiations on the second phase of the deal set to begin Monday.

Israel has not publicly reacted to the reports.

Additionally, Netanyahu reportedly cancelled a planned meeting with Mossad chief David Barnea, Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar and other senior ne-

gotiators, instead sending his military secretary, Roman Gofman, to inform them of the delay.

The Israeli leader is also said to be considering appointing Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer as head of the team, arguing that the talks are more diplomatic than security-focused, the Times of Israel news outlet reported.

The ceasefire and prisoner exchange agreement between Hamas and Israel, which took effect January 19, has resulted in the release of 583 Palestinian prisoners, 13 Israelis and five Thai nationals. The first phase of the deal aims to release more than 1,900 Palestinian prisoners and 33 Israeli captives within 42 days. Israel announced that talks on the second phase of the ceasefire and prisoner swap deal would begin February 3 in Washington, D.C.

Anadolu Agency

After 21 years, Ramouz regains his freedom

Ramallah, Palestine - After spending more than two decades in Israeli prisons, Palestinian Imad Abu Ramouz, 50, has finally regained his freedom.

Describing his release as 'escaping the clutches of death', Abu Ramouz returned to his hometown of Hebron in the occupied West Bank on Saturday following his release as part of a prisoner exchange deal.

Despite being freed, he said Israeli intelligence officers continue to threaten him. "I am still being threatened by Shin Bet officers. Every word I say is monitored and counted against me," he stated.

Reflecting on the moment of his release, he said: "We waited,



moment by moment, to escape from the jaws of death."

Overcome with emotion, he struggled to find words to thank those who welcomed him. "I thank our people, I mourn the martyrs, and I pray for the recovery of the wounded," he said.

Describing the harsh conditions he endured, Abu Ramouz

said the past 16 months - marked by Israel's war on Gaza - were worse than the previous 20 years he spent in prison.

"The occupation showed its true face - insults, beatings to the head, solitary confinement, torture, and even forced stripping," he said.

He revealed that he had to

change his clothes inside the transport vehicle before reaching home. "If I removed my shirt, the scars from my detention would be clear," he said.

"Every inch of my body is bruised and bleeding, but I hid it so my family wouldn't worry," he added.

He said Israeli special forces violently assaulted Palestinian prisoners between 300 and 400 times in the past 16 months.

Despite the ordeal, Abu Ramouz found comfort in the overwhelming support he received upon his release.

"The love and solidarity of our people make 21 years of suffering worthwhile," he said.

Anadolu Agency

World’s largest iceberg on crash course with remote island

Karachi, Pakistan - The world’s largest and oldest iceberg is on a crash course with a remote island potentially putting wildlife in peril, Australian broadcaster SBS News reported on Sunday.

The whopping chunk of ice, commonly known as a ‘megaberg’, is drifting toward South Georgia, a British overseas territory in northern Antarctica.

The A-23-A iceberg which first broke away from the Antarctic shelf in the 1980s, is 40 metres (131 feet) tall and weighs an estimated one trillion tonnes, but what makes it remarkable, experts said, is how long it has survived.

Sue Cook, a glaciologist at the University of Tasmania, said with about 90% of the ice sitting underwater, the iceberg got stuck on the sea floor.

“So like a ship with a really deep keel, if it gets into shallow waters, it can run aground on the ocean bed. And that happened with this iceberg for more than 30 years,” she was quoted by SBS.

The iceberg broke free in 2020 and has since been traveling north.

Its journey has been delayed at times by ocean forces that kept the iceberg spinning in place for months at a time.

But experts said it now appears to be drifting toward South Georgia Island, and could



reach the island within weeks, though it is possible it may bypass it, according to Petra Heil, a sea ice scientist at the Australian Antarctic Division.

South Georgia Island is often referred to as the ‘Galapagos of the South’ because of its rich abundance of wildlife.

Petra observed that if it is headed for the island, the iceberg will likely split before it reaches the shore.

“It’s highly unlikely that a complete iceberg, the A-23-A will run aground on the island. It’s more likely that the iceberg itself will ground near shore in shallow waters. And due to the stress of this grounding process, the iceberg is possibly breaking up in smaller fragments,” she maintained.

Nonetheless, she warned that the smaller pieces could still put wildlife under threat, blocking access to their crucial nesting and feeding grounds.

“They conceivably have the potential to block actual pathways of certain colonies or other nesting ground of penguins, seals, and other animals, especially those animals that rely on getting access to the sea for feeding,” said Petra.

As a natural phenomenon, icebergs can be beneficial for the planet, releasing nutrients into the oceans, which are crucial to supporting marine life.

Anadolu Agency

Trudeau says Canada will respond to US trade actions

Trenton, Canada - Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Saturday that Canada has struck back on US tariffs with CAN\$155bn (US\$106bn) in tariffs on American products entering Canada.

“Tonight, I am announcing Canada will be responding to the US trade actions, with 25% tariffs against US\$155bn worth of American goods,” Trudeau said at a news conference, following an hours-long meeting with Canada’s provincial premiers.

Trudeau said US\$30bn on American goods will take effect on Tuesday, the same day as US tariffs. Another US\$125bn in goods will have tariffs enacted in a few days.

The list of targeted goods was not provided by the US, but in Canada, Trudeau said some American imports such as alcohol would be affected.

Trudeau said provincial premiers and the federal government are united in the trade war.

“We are united,” Trudeau said. “We will stand tall for Canada.”

But Trudeau said the American tariffs raised a perplexing question in what is now a trade war: Why US President Donald Trump would attack its closest neighbour and ally? Foreign Minister Melanie Joly could not understand it either.

“Canadians have been nothing but the strongest allies and the best neighbours to the United



Canada PM Justin Trudeau said provincial premiers and the federal government are united in the trade war

States,” Joly posted Saturday on X. “These tariffs are completely unjustifiable...Canada will not back down.”

Ontario Premier Doug Ford went on CNN late on Saturday and said Trump’s tariffs were ‘unjustified, unfair and frankly illegal’ because they contravene free-trade deals with Canada, Mexico and the US. Trudeau was asked

about whether Canada still sees the US as an ally, but said only that Washington is a ‘friend’ and ‘partner’.

Trump said he would put tariffs on goods imported from Canada and Mexico unless the two countries tightened up the borders to cut down on drugs entering the US, as well as illegal immigrants. He also announced a

10% tariff on Chinese imports.

Trump was concerned primarily with the drug, fentanyl, entering from Canada, but Canadian government officials said the amount is minuscule compared to the drug coming into the US from Mexico. But an immediate plan by Canada to spend US\$1.4bn to stop the flow of drugs and illegal immigrants was

ignored by Trump.

The 25% tariff will apply to virtually all Canadian imports to the US and 10% on oil imports.

Earlier in the day, Ford said he thinks Trump’s motives for the

Tonight, I am announcing Canada will be responding to the US trade actions, with 25% tariffs against US\$155bn worth of American goods

JUSTIN TRUDEAU

crushing tariffs may well be in pursuit of an ultimate goal to make Canada a 51st state.

“He thinks he can break Canada,” Ford said, speaking from the border city of Windsor, Ontario. “He thinks he can buy Canada. He doesn’t know what we know, the Canadian spirit can never be broken and, friends, Canada is not for sale.”

British Columbia Premier Dave Eby said Canada needs to find new markets for its goods because of the unstable US government run by Trump.

“We will never again be beholden to the whims of one person in the White House,” Eby said after the war council meeting between Trudeau and Canadian premiers.

Anadolu Agency



14 people killed in Russian missile strike on Poltava

Kyiv, Ukraine - Ukraine on Sunday claimed that at least 14 people were killed in a Russian missile strike on the city of Poltava a day earlier.

“The death toll has risen to 14 people, including two children. One person died in hospital,” said a statement by the Poltava Regional Military Administration on Telegram.

Indicating that 17 people were injured, including four children, the statement said that 22 others were rescued from the area of the strike.

Earlier, the Poltava Regional Military Administration said that 12 people were killed in the attack, and that search and rescue efforts at the site of Saturday’s attack are still ongoing.

It further said that 18 residential buildings and an unspecified number of kindergartens in Poltava were damaged, adding that three days of national

mourning have been declared in the region until February 4.

On Saturday, Ukraine’s Air Force claimed on Telegram that Russia launched over 40 missiles toward the country. It did not provide details on how many of the missiles were downed.

On the same day, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky reaffirmed the need for further support for Kyiv.

“Every air defence system, every interceptor missile, means a life saved. It is crucial that our partners take action, fulfil our agreements, and increase pressure on Russia,” Zelensky said on X.

Russia’s Defence Ministry claimed that it successfully carried out an overnight strike on gas and energy infrastructure facilities supporting Ukraine’s military-industrial complex.

Anadolu Agency

Anti-war Russian Orthodox priests struggle in German exile

Berlin, Germany - After Russia began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, hundreds of Orthodox priests faced repression because they disagreed with the policies of Russian secular and church officials, according to estimates by human rights activists.

Many fled Russia, fearing prosecution, or were banned from ministry by the Russian Orthodox Church controlled by Moscow. Others were imprisoned for speaking out against Russia’s aggression in Ukraine.

As well as encountering the classic immigrant challenges, such as applying for a visa and finding a job, the fleeing clergy face unique issues as they often don’t have transferable skills.

DW talked with several Russian priests living in exile in Germany to find out how they are adapting to life in their new home.

Washing dishes, studying German

Father Yakov, whose name has



Some of the Russian priests living in exile in Germany have managed to find new opportunities to carry out their work

been changed for safety reasons, had been officiating at an Orthodox church in Russia’s west since the late 2010s. When Russia invaded Ukraine, he became involved in anti-war initiatives.

This engagement allowed him to obtain a humanitarian visa for

an Eastern European country shortly before Russia announced the partial mobilisation of military reservists in September 2022.

“Even though I wasn’t prosecuted directly by either secular or church authorities, I realised that

I had no more prospects of staying in Russia ... under the current political regime and the situation in the Russian Orthodox Church,” he told DW.

Yakov said he had already planned to leave Russia but after the mobilisation was announced,

he only had a few days to pack up and flee.

Although clergy can gain an exemption from military service, he said, even if that was true at the time, he was worried that ‘tomorrow everything could change’.

But Yakov struggled to get back on his feet in the new country. For several months, he washed dishes illegally, earning just US\$3.65 an hour. Later, he was offered a scholarship to study German in Germany where he has been living since September 2023.

Yakov is still worried about the future. He wants to keep studying in Germany but said his job as a Russian Orthodox priest makes it hard to find a position anywhere in Western Europe.

“It’s possible if you have some decent secular job. For instance, if you are an IT specialist priest or have a scientific background, it’s much less of a problem,” he said.

IT specialist priest

Like dozens of other anti-war clergy from Russia, Yakov receives help from the nonprofit Peace unto All, which was co-founded by Father Valerian Dunin-Barkovsky.

In 2024, the organisation helped 45 clerics and their fami-

lies with financial support totalling 120,000, Dunin-Barkovsky said.

“The question of finances is decisive for us. The main thing that those in need require is time. Some need to learn a new profession after they were banned from ministry. Some need to live in a third country to apply for a visa. Some must wait for their case to be reviewed, so they’ll be allowed to serve in a new country,” he told DW.

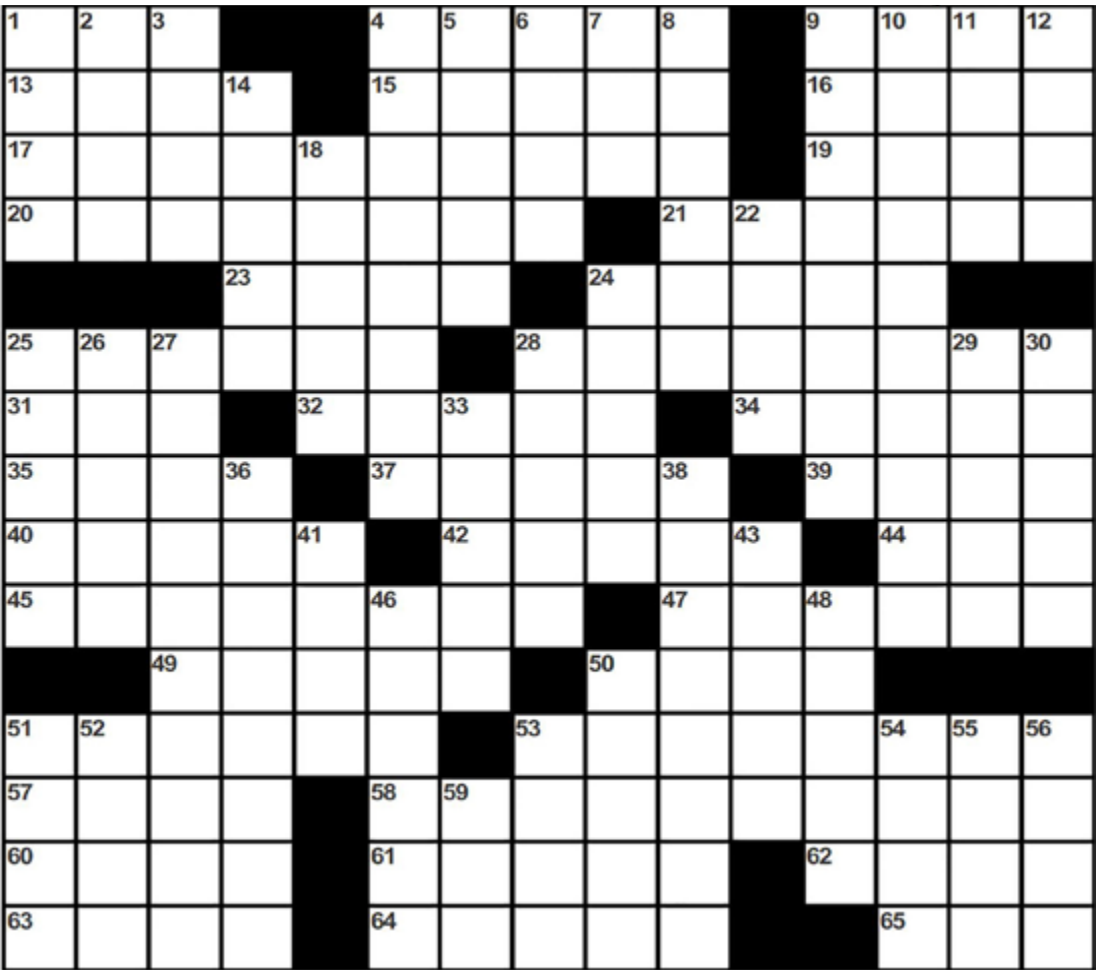
Dunin-Barkovsky, who is now based in Germany, became involved in the church while still in Russia.

In 2018, his eldest son was prosecuted for attending demonstrations organised by then-Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who died in prison in 2024.

“So we realised we had to leave,” Dunin-Barkovsky said. “I received an offer and left my well-paid position in Moscow for some strange job in Germany. And I’ve been here ever since.”

DW

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Cup or can material
 - 4) Having a strong resemblance
 - 9) Milo's movie pal
 - 13) "Isn't that_much?"
 - 15) Grandma with the great use of color
 - 16) "Tomb Raider" heroine
 - 17) Try to escape
 - 19) Big name in office equipment, once
 - 20) Word with "cooker" or "point"
 - 21) Cook up
 - 23) Bathroom decoration
 - 24) With great force
 - 25) Spanish hotel
 - 28) The Flintstones' era
 - 31) With 34-Across, a place in Michigan
 - 32) Home of a biblical witch
 - 34) See 31-Across
 - 35) Some men of the familia
 - 37) Bulbous plant
 - 39) River flowing into the Moselle
 - 40) Worked for AAA
 - 42) Everest locale
 - 44) USN title
 - 45) Certain rays
 - 47) Kind of tape
 - 49) Home and Olin
 - 50) Night vision?
 - 51) Rain forest growths
 - 53) Repeated over and over
 - 57) "Puppy Love" singer Paul
 - 58) Certain gambling bet
 - 60) Kind of tea
 - 61)_ in the sky (slangy satellite)
 - 62) Sword type
 - 63) Job for Sherlock
 - 64) They publish lists
 - 65) Nile reptile
- DOWN**
- 1) Pack down
 - 2) Construction beam
 - 3) Big name in sneakers
 - 4) Moving about
 - 5) Peter of"The Maltese Falcon"
 - 6) "That makes sense"
 - 7) Mauna _ (Hawaiian volcano)
 - 8) Kind of pie?
 - 9) Knighted thespian Laurence and kin
 - 10) Amazed
 - 11) Something to strike while hot
 - 12) Film maker Gus Van _
 - 14) Seed covering
 - 18) Comment to the audience
 - 22) Wendy's pet in "Peter Pan"
 - 24) "Take_down memory lane"
 - 25) Pop singer LaBelle
 - 26) Kind of ring
 - 27) They come down to Earth
 - 28) Cobbled
 - 29) Lose it
 - 30) Miscalculation
 - 33) Sandy expanses
 - 36) Sing to a lover
 - 38) Dressmaking guides
 - 41) "Great" dog
 - 43) They make whoppers
 - 46) Spoke hoarsely
 - 48) Old, rickety vehicle
 - 50) Lager holder
 - 51) Not of the cloth
 - 52) Native ofperu
 - 53) Popular furniture store
 - 54) Snack in Madrid
 - 55) _ out a living
 - 56) Bottomless, seemingly
 - 59) " _ Como Va" (Santana hit)

NOTE PAD

ISHIS TENO SPAS
NOONE ORYX WALK
THEFACULTYPARTY
LOSEFACE MONROE
ROTH AONE
THEROSEGARDENER
OARED LAOS ODO
STAR CLEAN SLIP
ICS MAIA SUITE
THEBIRDMATTRESS
ELEESHIV
ITSELF ONEPIECE
THEBIRDSYEVVIEW
SEAL ESSA NORSE
ANNE ETAT DRESS

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
Why struggle with this? You've been trying not to say what's on your mind just as soon as it arrives, but you're not having much luck with it. In fact, the stronger you feel about something, the more difficult it becomes to really keep quiet. What should that tell you? Well, that you're not supposed to be keeping quiet for starters! Stop wasting your energy on silence and put it toward sharing your opinions constructively.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
You've always taken good care of your friends, really good care of them. You're so devoted to them, in fact, that your family members are often quite jealous, much as they may be right now. Well, they'll just have to get over themselves. If anyone loves their friends and knows how to be a good one in return, it's you. It's your specialty and that's that. No apologies.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
Just when you thought it was safe to come out, duty calls. That doesn't mean you'll have to abandon all thoughts of romance, however. If you play your cards right, and if anyone can, it's you, you'll be more than able to find enough time and energy to devote to your professional and your personal needs. Of course, at some point a priority may emerge. If that's the case, you'll have no choice but to put everything else on the back burner.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. A two decade long relationship was broken in August 2021 between what celebrated sportsman and the club he had played with all his sporting career?

A. Lionel Messi
B. Neymar
C. Kylian Mbappé
D. Sergio Ramos

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
Okay, so it's expensive. And really quite lavish. But it's not for you. It's for someone else. Doesn't that help justify the expense? Maybe, maybe not. Just be sure you really can afford it before you throw down the money. If you're doubtful, settle for something a little less expensive but equally meaningful. They really couldn't care less about how much it costs, by the way. They're far more interested in your thoughtfulness.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
A higher-up who's always seemed a bit more reckless than you has just said or done something that removed all doubt from your mind. Now you're officially wondering what to do about it. Should you keep working for them knowing what they're capable of or duck out now? The answer really depends on your ability to magically produce money. Can't do it? Then try to be patient.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
Even when you're not consciously working at it, there's something about you that's tough to resist. It happens without any effort at all. So when you're consciously and passionately involved in the outcome of a situation, as you are now, you're positively lethal -- which means your willing hostage will say or do just about anything to stay in your presence. Seeing exactly what that might be would certainly be fun and definitely tempting -- but would it be fair?

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
You're not quite sure what's up with them, but your family and friends have been acting quite strangely of late, almost as if they're avoiding you. Before you get upset about it and threaten to disown them, and you know how you get when you feel uncertain about someone's feelings, be sure you have all the information. They might be planning something you're not supposed to know about yet.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
After days of putting absolutely all of your energy into guidance and caretaking, you're thinking that it's your turn for some TLC. A volunteer for that mission, someone you're quite fond of, has wisely suggested that a change of scenery might get the show on the road in earnest. Since you've been thinking about travel anyway, why not let them do their job to the best of their ability? Book the tickets. You'll feel better immediately.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
You've never been afraid to say what's on your mind, and you're good at saying it in an entertaining fashion. What's in your heart is another matter. That's tougher for you to talk about even if you're in trusted company. For the next day or so, however, you'll be more than happy to express your feelings to anyone who asks. Better warn them first, though. You know how you get when you're on a roll.

02. The Russian choreographer and dancer Mikhail Fokin created which of these?

A. La Boutique Fantasque (1919)
B. Giselle (1841)
C. Les Saisons (1900)
D. Chopiniana (1907)

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
Here's another day that was tailor-made by the Universe to help you learn the tricks of your trade: the art of restoring synchronicity. So when a tough situation comes up, demanding that someone fix it, guess who will quietly spring into action? That's right, you will. Just be sure you're not doing all of this at your own expense. You must tend to your own needs too, you know.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
You need to be sure that anything you even come close to signing is exactly what it's cracked up to be. That goes double for anything of a joint financial nature. For the most part, you'll do just fine with any agreement. But if a deal comes along that just doesn't smell right, even if it sounds extra sweet, go with your gut. Check it out with someone you trust who knows what they're doing.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
Be careful about getting involved in any business dealings right now, no matter how promising they seem. Circumstances beyond your control are holding you back, and you don't have all the freedom you need in order to make the right choices or investments. You can try to negotiate with the things or people restraining you, but your time will be better spent accepting the situation the way it is now. Wait for another chance.

03. Under what name was the country of Umbuso weSwatini, or eSwatini, known internationally until 2018?

A. Lesotho
B. Swaziland
C. Senegal
D. Côte d'Ivoire

Answers: 1.A 2.D 3.B

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

L	A	D	A
E	P	O	F
E	O	R	R
S	O	C	B

Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters. A three letter word is worth one point, a four letter word is worth two points, and so on. Valid words must be at least three letters long.

SOLUTION

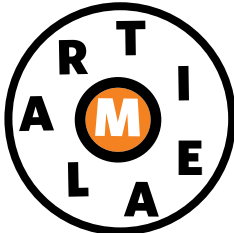
20-25 words: Excellent,
15-20 words: Very good,
10-15 words: Good,
5-10 words: Average

DO YOU SUDOKU?

LEVEL EASY: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9 and only one instance of each number

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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



Matheus Cunha

Brazilian striker Cunha signs new deal with Wolves

Wolverhampton, England - Brazilian striker Matheus Cunha has signed a new four-and-a-half year contract with Wolverhampton Wanderers, the Premier League club said on Saturday.

The announcement came after Cunha, the club's top scorer this season with 11 Premier League goals, netted in a 2-0 home win against Aston Villa.

The player had been linked in media reports to Arsenal, currently second in the standings, as well as Nottingham Forest and Chelsea.

"We can all see his quality on the pitch, but off it he's developed into a leader of the group, and we're delighted that he's signed a new contract," said Wolves chairman Jeff Shi.

"It's always important to us that we reward our strongest and most impactful players, and Matheus deserves this new deal."

Man United sign Dorgu from Lecce

Manchester United have signed 20-year-old Danish left back Patrick Dorgu from Italian Serie A side Lecce on a contract until 2030, the Premier League club said on Sunday.

British media reported the deal was worth 30 million euros (\$31.1 million), with a further five million in performance-related add-ons.

Dorgu moved to Lecce from Danish side Nordsjaelland in 2022 and made 57 appearances for the Italian team.

"I cannot wait to work with (United manager) Ruben Amorim; his vision for this team and the future of the club is incredibly exciting," Dorgu said in a statement.

"There is a clear plan set out for my development, and I feel that Manchester United is the perfect place to fulfil my potential and complete my huge ambitions."

Capped four times for his country, Dorgu became United's second signing since Amorim replaced Dutchman Erik ten Hag in November.

MORE MAGIC FROM SALAH

Egyptian superstar's double helps leaders Liverpool beat Bournemouth

Bournemouth, England - Liverpool opened up a nine-point lead in the Premier League title race as Mohamed Salah continued his sensational season with both goals in a 2-0 win at Bournemouth on Saturday.

Arne Slot's side rode their luck at times against a side unbeaten in 11 league games but Salah once again proved the difference as he took his league tally to 21 this season.

Salah rifled home a penalty after half an hour and then curled home an exquisite second in the 75th minute and has now topped 20 goals in a Premier League season five times.

"It feels good to be fair, scoring goals, the team winning, it's an incredible feeling," Salah said.

"But I said many times before, the main target is winning the Premier League. We are going in the right direction."

Bournemouth, who remain seventh, hit the woodwork twice - through Antoine Semenyo when it was 0-0 and then Marcus Tavernier shortly before Salah wrapped up the points.

Liverpool have 56 points from 23 games, with second-placed Arsenal and Nottingham Forest on 47. Arsenal host Manchester City, who are fourth with 41, on Sunday.

Andoni Iraola's Bournemouth had beaten the other three members of the top four at home this season and there was huge

expectation that they might slow Liverpool's march.

But Liverpool showed the clinical edge that allows them to keep accumulating points even when not in top gear and with 15 games remaining, they look indestructible.

Salah's second goal, a nonchalant left-footed curler from the right side of the penalty area, lifted the Egyptian into sixth place on the all-time Premier League scoring list with 178 goals, ahead of former Chelsea player Frank Lampard.

It was a cruel blow for Bournemouth who moments earlier had seen substitute Tavernier's left-footed thud against the post with Justin Kluivert firing the rebound wide of a gaping goal.

Bournemouth had begun full of energy and visiting keeper Alisson was called into action after 15 seconds to save a shot by the dangerous Semenyo.

Semenyo then thumped an effort from tight-angle against the frame of the goal with Alisson beaten for pace.

But Liverpool, with captain Virgil van Dijk his usual calming influence in defence, gradually began to exert some authority and went ahead when Bournemouth's Lewis Cook inadvertently clipped Cody Gakpo in a sprint inside the area and Salah dispatched his penalty in ruthless fashion.



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah celebrates his goal against Bournemouth on Saturday

It feels good to be fair, scoring goals, the team winning, it's an incredible feeling. But I said many times before, the main target is winning the Premier League.

MOHAMED SALAH

Wolves blank Aston Villa to move out of relegation zone

Wolverhampton, England - Struggling Wolverhampton Wanderers stunned high-flying rivals Aston Villa 2-0 in the Midlands Derby on Saturday to end a run of four straight defeats and move out of the Premier League relegation zone.

Jean-Ricner Bellegarde scored the opener in the 12th minute, lighting up Molineux with an angled shot rifled in at the near post after Pablo Sarabia played the ball through, and Matheus Cunha made it 2-0 deep into second-half stoppage time.

The three points, against a side who sealed a Champions League last 16 spot in midweek, lifted Wolves out of the bottom three on a day when relegation-threatened rivals Ipswich Town and Leicester City both lost.

"We played as a team with true spirit, working together and suffering together," said Wolves manager Vitor Pereira after his side's first league win of 2025.



Jean-Ricner Bellegarde of Wolverhampton Wanderers scores against Aston Villa

"We know it's a long way, a difficult way. With our supporters and this spirit we can do it."

Villa, who made four substitutions at the break and had a goal disallowed in the second half, stayed eighth in the standings -- missing an opportunity to close the gap to fourth-placed Manchester City from four points to one.

Their third win under Pereira was a massive boost for Wolves, whose next league game is a daunting trip to runaway leaders Liverpool, and lifted them to 17th on 19 points and two clear of Leicester. Wolves missed an early opportunity to go 2-0 up in the 36th minute when Brazilian Cunha muscled clear on goal but

Emiliano Martinez saved the shot and Goncalo Guedes then fired a second attempt wide.

Guedes missed an even better opportunity in the 44th when he went one-on-one with Martinez, who dived to cover as the ball flew well clear of the post, as Wolves finished the half looking the more-together team.



Jean-Philippe Mateta of Crystal Palace celebrates with teammates after scoring against Manchester United

Mateta helps Palace pile on misery for Manchester United

Manchester, England - Jean-Philippe Mateta was the hero for Crystal Palace as his brace earned a 2-0 win over Manchester United at Old Trafford.

The Frenchman, who had missed a glorious opportunity to open the scoring in the first half, made no mistake with his chances in the second and was on hand to bundle in a rebound from close range in the 64th minute.

He then made sure of the points with one minute remaining, neatly slotting Daniel Munoz's low cross past Andre Onana to finish off a blistering counter-attack.

Kobbie Mainoo had struck a post early in the match for United, though the hosts looked unlikely to trouble Palace, who defended staunchly throughout.

Palace leapfrog United in the table, moving up to 12th on 30 points, while Ruben Amorim's side now sit one point and one place below them.

Tottenham Hotspur ended their Premier League seven-match winless run with a 2-0 victory over Brentford at the

Gtech Community Stadium.

Ange Postecoglou's side halted a run of four successive league defeats to claim their first win in the competition since a 5-0 rout of Southampton on 15 December.

The visitors broke the deadlock in the 29th minute when Vitaly Janelt turned

Frenchman Mateta, who had missed a glorious opportunity to open the scoring in the first half, made no mistake with his chances in the second

Pedro Porro's corner into his own net.

Pape Sarr sealed the points in the 87th minute, moments after Djed Spence cleared off the line from Fabio Carvalho, condemning Thomas Frank's side to a fifth defeat in six home matches across all competitions.

Dembele hits hat-trick as PSG thrash Brest

Brest, France - Ousmane Dembele scored his second hat-trick of the week and Goncalo Ramos scored a late brace in Paris St Germain's 5-2 win at Brest on Saturday as the champions remain unbeaten in Ligue 1.

PSG's 15th win of the campaign moved them to 50 points from 20 matches, 13 above second-placed Olympique de Marseille who have a game in hand. Eighth-placed Brest remained on 28 points.

"I'm well placed, I'm in the role of number nine and I have to score goals. It was a game where I played a bit of a carrot behind the defence," Dembele said after

rising to the top of Ligue 1's scoring chart with 14 goals.

Hosts Brest threatened early on with Abdallah Sima running to the penalty area from the left and looking to set up Ludovic Ajorque but goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnaumma intervened. Sima set up Ajorque again in the 18th minute but the Mainz 05 loanee fired wide.

PSG soon took control, dominating possession and building pressure. Fabian Ruiz sent Bradley Barcola through on the left and he flicked it across to Dembele. The forward, who struck three times in Wednesday's 4-1 Champions League win



Paris St Germain's Ousmane Dembele celebrates after scoring against Brest on Saturday

at VfB Stuttgart, tapped into the empty net just before the half-hour mark.

PSG seemed to be cruising, but soon after the break Romain Del Castillo equalised for Brest, firing home when Willian Pacheco's attempt to keep out Kenny Lala's ball fell to the midfielder.

Dembele stepped up to restore PSG's lead seven minutes later when Bizot's attempt to block Khvicha Kvaratskhelia's shot found its way to the France forward who calmly slotted into the corner. Five minutes later, Dembele had his third. The 27-year-old made no mistake as Lee Kang-In got hold of a cross from

the right and beat two defenders with a sharp turn to find Dembele in the box.

"I think you have to congratulate the team and especially the passers. Because on the first goal, all I had to do was push it home. And on the third, Kang-In's pass was exceptional," Dembele said.

Ajorque, who was a persistent threat in the first half, finally got on the scoresheet in the 71st minute, with a stunning strike from just outside the box.

But as the hosts pushed for a late equaliser, Ramos, who had replaced Dembele in the 67th minute, restored PSG's cushion in the 89th minute.

BOLT FROM THE BLUE

Late Romero goal helps Espanyol stun leaders Real Madrid in LaLiga

Barcelona, Spain - LaLiga leaders Real Madrid were stunned at lowly Espanyol on Saturday after losing 1-0 thanks to a late Carlos Romero strike.

The result means Real, on 49 points, are one point clear of Atletico Madrid, who beat Mallorca 2-0, ahead of next weekend's Spanish capital derby at Santiago Bernabeu.

Third-placed Barcelona, who play Alaves on Sunday, are on 42 points.

Vinicius Jr appeared to have given Real the lead in the 21st minute after latching onto Kylian Mbappe's pass. However, the goal was disallowed after the Frenchman had fouled Espanyol's Pol Lozano in the build-up.

The hosts kept Real at bay in the second half, with Lucas Vazquez, Rodrygo and Jude Bellingham all having efforts brilliantly saved by goalkeeper Joan Garcia.

The visitors were aggrieved when, on a breakaway attack, Romero fouled a running Mbappe from behind, but was only shown a yellow card as the Real players appealed for a VAR review.

"This foul is inexplicable, the decision they made, the referee, the VAR. The most important thing is to take care of the player and protect him. It was a very bad tackle that risked injury, which fortunately did not happen," said Real coach Carlo Ancelotti.

The Italian manager brought on Luka Modric, Brahim Diaz and Raul Asencio, but they failed to



Espanyol's Carlos Romero celebrates his goal against Real Madrid on Saturday

conjure any magic and it was Romero who broke the deadlock in the 85th minute.

The defender latched onto Omar El Hilali's through-ball and fired home to lift Espanyol to 17th on 23 points, one place above the relegation zone.

"I think this gives us life, we were playing good matches, competing, we had to suffer... Our people give us an edge and at home we have to be strong, it's going to be very difficult to take points away from us here," Romero told DAZN.

We could have done better: Ancelotti

Real coach Carlo Ancelotti said his side are still in the driving seat in the title race despite the shock defeat.

"We had chances and could have scored, but despite the defeat we are still in the fight. We have to focus on the next game," Ancelotti told a press conference.

"We could have done better, the result was deserved," he added.

The Italian manager also criticised the decision not to show a red card to eventual goalscorer Carlos Romero for a foul on Kylian Mbappe, who was running up the field on a breakaway attack.

"It was a clear foul, a very ugly tackle, but fortunately nothing happened," Ancelotti added.

Defender Antonio Rudiger left the pitch with a muscle problem and Ancelotti said it was too early to tell for how long the German may be out.



Diego Simeone

Simeone celebrates 500 games in charge with win

Madrid, Spain - Atletico Madrid coach Diego Simeone took time to reflect happily on his time at the club on Saturday after his side's 2-0 home win over Mallorca in LaLiga, the Argentine's 500th league game in charge of the team.

Simeone, who became Atletico coach more than 13 years ago, saw his team put in a solid display as a first-half goal by winger Samuel Lino and a stoppage-time stunner from forward Antoine Griezmann secured the three points.

"I am very happy with this journey, without a doubt," Simeone told a press conference.

"Many people in the coaching staff who are no longer here helped us get to this point, many footballers who shared an idea and represented it on the pitch, leaders who are no longer here and accompanied us... It makes me very happy. I'll make a special section for my family... Without their support and company, this would be impossible. It has been many years giving all the love and responsibility to a club that I love very much, but we take a lot of time away from the family."

Atletico continued their impressive defensive record, having conceded a league-low 14 goals this season and keeping clean sheets in half of their 22 LaLiga games.

"The teams that end up fighting for important things are the ones that concede the fewest goals," Simeone said.

"Our goal is to maintain this solidity and continue to grow in the offensive part. The team competes very well. We needed this victory, we were coming off a defeat (and a draw), a bad moment, and we had to win."

"We could have (wrapped up the points) earlier, both in the first half and in the second. These are games in which, with a 1-0, any situation can lead to a draw. Luckily, it ended with a brilliant move, a delight from Antoine to secure the victory."

Our goal is to maintain this solidity and continue to grow in the offensive part. The team competes very well

DIEGO SIMEONE

The French forward has struggled with form, scoring in the league for the first time in almost two months.

"It is impossible not to continue saying more positive things about Griezmann," Simeone added. "He continues to age, working in the same way (he did before) and is forceful in the way he plays."

"We have to help him so that he does not stray from this line. People have become accustomed to having him and always want to see his best version."

Griezmann, Lino on target as Atletico blank Mallorca

Madrid, Spain - Goals by winger Samuel Lino and forward Antoine Griezmann helped Atletico Madrid beat Mallorca 2-0 in LaLiga on Saturday as Diego Simeone's side returned to winning ways in the manager's 500th game in the Spanish top flight as Atletico boss.

Lino put the home side in front in the 26th minute with a low strike inside the far post before Griezmann doubled the advantage in stoppage time, lobbing Mallorca goalkeeper Dominik Greif from distance.

Atletico, who on Wednesday booked their place in the last 16 of the Champions League with a dominant 4-1 win at Salzburg, were winless in their previous two league games.

They are second in the standings on 48 points, one point off



Atletico Madrid's Antoine Griezmann scores against Mallorca

leaders Real Madrid who visit Espanyol later on Saturday before the two city rivals face each other next weekend at Santiago Bernabeu. Last year's Copa del Rey finalists Mallorca, who extended their losing streak in all competitions to five games, remained seventh with 30 points.

The visitors looked good at the start but were quickly faced with Atletico's attacking powers.

Lino broke the deadlock halfway through the opening half, after forward Giuliano Simeone took over the ball around the halfway line and set up the Brazilian with a neat pass onto the edge of the area.

Greif pulled off a brilliant save before the break, denying Simeone from close range, while the visitors did not manage a shot on target before the interval.

Mateo's penalty miss proves costly for Atalanta

Bergamo, Italy - Atalanta were held to a 1-1 draw at home by Torino on Saturday, a result which puts a major dent in the hosts' Serie A title ambitions after Mateo Retegui missed the chance to win the tie from the penalty spot.

Atalanta are third in the standings on 47 points, three adrift of Inter Milan in second who have played two fewer games and face AC Milan on Sunday. Leaders Napoli, who play AS Roma on Sunday, are a further three points ahead. Torino remain 11th on 27 points.

Torino displayed little urgency, and were even warned for time wasting in the opening half, before a goal from the hosts spurred them into life.

Atalanta made the breakthrough in the 35th minute from



Torino goalkeeper Vanja Milinkovic-Savic celebrates after denying Atalanta's Mateo Retegui from the penalty spot

a corner kick, where Berat Djimsiti rose above his marker to power a header past the goalkeeper from the edge of the six-

yard box, but could only hold their lead for five minutes.

Torino won a free kick, which Valentino Lazaro floated towards the back post, and Guillermo Maripan got ahead of everyone for a free header from close range to level.

Juventus win

A quick-fire double from new signing Randal Kolo Muani helped Juventus to a comeback 4-1 home win over lowly Empoli on Sunday and lifted them into the top four.

Empoli took a shock lead after four minutes through Mattia De Sciglior, before Kolo Muani equalised. The France forward put Juventus in front three minutes later before Dusan Vlahovic and Francisco Conceicao completed the rout late on.

Kane double helps Bayern edge Kiel

Munich, Germany - Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich beat Holstein Kiel 4-3 after conceding three times in the second half on Saturday, with Harry Kane scoring twice to set a record for most goals after 50 league games, to open a provisional nine-point lead at the top.

England captain Kane headed in either side of the break to take his league tally since joining Bayern in 2023 to 55 league goals, more than any other player in their first 50 games in the league's history.

Bayern eased off after the break and let in three goals in the last 28 minutes, with coach Vincent Kompany fuming on the sideline after a shaky second half display, but they held on for the win that took them further ahead in the title race. They have 51 points, nine more than second-placed champions Bayer Lev-



Bayern Munich's Harry Kane scores against Holstein Kiel

erkusen, who host lowly Hoffenheim on Sunday.

"His (Kane's) quality is just unusual," Kompany told a press conference. "But it is also his mentality. How calm he remains, how hard he works if sometimes he does not score for a game...it

is impressive."

Kompany was unhappy with Bayern's finish to the game though. "Of course, I think for us for 80 minutes to be able to lead at home 4-0 it was a pretty complete game until that point."

"The way we finished the

game in the last 10 minutes is something we need to review with the players. You can sometimes concede a goal but if you concede momentum you give the other team a chance and that is what happened," Kompany added.

A CLASS APART

Trisha stars as India thrash South Africa to win second successive U-19 women's T20 World Cup

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia - India won a second successive U-19 Women's T20 World Cup title with a nine-wicket shellacking of South Africa in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday.

On the back of the efforts of Aayushi Shukla, G Trisha, Vaishnavi Sharma and Parunika Sisodia - who took nine wickets between them - India restricted South Africa to 82. Trisha then starred with the bat as well, helping chase down a simple target in 11.2 overs to leave a heartbroken South African side in tears at the Bayuemas Oval in Kuala Lumpur.

After captain Kayla Reyneke opted to bat, South Africa started strongly in the first over with opener Jemma Botha belting two fours in the off VJ Joshitha. But trouble began as early as the second over with Sisodia having Simone Lourens bowled for a duck, with a skiddy delivery that deflected off the batter's pads and onto the stumps.

India put the brakes on almost instantly after that, but Botha - South Africa's top-scorer of the tournament - once again displayed her quality, hitting



India players celebrate with the U-19 Women's T20 World Cup trophy

On the back of the efforts of Aayushi Shukla, G Trisha, Vaishnavi Sharma and Parunika Sisodia - who took nine wickets between them - India restricted South Africa to 82. Trisha then starred with the bat as well.

Joshitha for a four down the ground. With Shabnam Shakil's introduction in the fourth over came the crucial wicket of Botha, thanks to a stunning catch by wicketkeeper G Kamalini, who threw herself to the right to grab a one-hander.

One brought two for India, as left-arm spinner Shukla struck with the first ball in the very next over, having Diara Ramlakan bowled with a straighter one for

3. At the end of the powerplay, South Africa were in trouble at 29 for 3.

India's spinners maintained the stranglehold on their opposition, drying up the runs in the middle overs, with no boundaries scored between seven and 14. In that passage, two more wickets fell, with Trisha removing Reyneke for 7 and Shukla taking her second by knocking Karabo Meso's middle stump.

Mieke van Voorst, South Africa's highest scorer in the game, broke the pressure with the team's first boundary in 56 balls, and went on to hit a couple more. But Trisha's double-strike in the 18th over once again pegged South Africa back, with both van Voorst and Seshnie Naidu getting out.

Fay Cowling then hit the first and only six of the game, but Vaishnavi recovered very well removing Cowling and Monalisa Legodi, both bowled trying to sweep, in the same over. Sisodia removed Ashleigh van Wyk off the last ball of the innings as South Africa lost five wickets in 14 balls to crumble to 82 all out. India were also superb on the field, especially with their ground

fielding, with only one difficult return catch missed by Trisha.

India charged at the total from the first over, with Trisha hitting three fours off the first five balls she faced. She took on legspin ner Naidu for three fours in the fourth over as well. Reyneke then broke through, having Kamalini caught at long-on, but India did not slow down even then. Sanika Chalke joined Trisha and brought out a classy cover drive off her fourth ball.

Chalke wrapped it all up for India in the 12th over with a boundary and Trisha finished as the highest-run scorer of the tournament with 309 runs and was named the Player of the Match and the Player of the Tournament.



Yalla Shabab Giants players celebrate with the trophy after winning the Oman D50 title on Friday

Yalla Shabab Giants win Oman D50 Title

Muscat - Yalla Shabab Giants beat Royal Oman Stallions by six wickets to win the second edition of Oman Cricket's Oman D50 trophy at the Oman Cricket Academy Ground on Friday.

Yalla Shabab Giants, owned by Chaitanya Khimji, finished second in the league stage below Royal Oman Stallions who won 5 out of 5 in the league featuring six premier division teams, but they put their best foot forward when it mattered the most.

The tournament was played in a single round-robin format followed by the top two locking horns in the final.

Winning the toss, Yalla Shabab Giants (YSG) elected to bowl first. They started strong in the powerplay picking the top four of Royal Oman Stallions (ROS) within 15 overs. Small partnerships and Usman Ali Afridi's 31 off 26 guided ROS's total to 107.

In the 2nd innings, early strikes led by Hassnain Ali Shah put YSG on the backfoot but a 68-run partnership between Sanju Sajeew and

Gowtham Sagar ensured they sail through without much turbulence to lift the trophy.

Duleep Mendis, Head Coach and CDO - Oman Cricket reflecting on the tournament said, "It was an excellent competition between six of the most competitive sides in Oman. We would congratulate the players and management of Yalla Shabab and Oman Stallions for claiming the Champions and Runners-Up berth. This also served as an apt-preparation for the national pool of players for our upcoming ICC CWC League 2 starting early February between USA and Namibia."

In the closing ceremony, Sanju Sajeew was handed the Player of the Match while Jatinder Singh of Muscat CT was adjudged Player of the Tournament for his record-breaking 522 runs in 5 matches consisting a double-hundred and two hundreds. Kiran Asher, Board Member - Oman Cricket along with Duleep Mendis presented the awards to the individuals and the teams.

Rohit, Kohli have to 'play a massive role' in Champions Trophy, says coach Gambhir

Mumbai, India - India coach Gautam Gambhir said Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli have much to offer the team despite their poor run of form in recent matches, stressing the veteran duo will play a key role in this month's Champions Trophy.

Captain Rohit and batter Kohli were both part of the test team that suffered a 3-0 series sweep at home by New Zealand fol-

lowed by a 3-1 hammering in Australia which ended their decade-long hold on the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

Following the defeat to Australia, both players returned to domestic cricket in a bid to rediscover their best form.

"I think both Rohit and Virat, they add so much value to the dressing room. They add so much value to Indian cricket as

well. They've got to play a massive role (in the Champions Trophy)," Gambhir told reporters on Saturday.

"And I've said it before as well, those guys are so hungry, they want to play for the country. They have the passion to play for the country and deliver for the country."

India are in Group A in the Champions Trophy and meet

Bangladesh in Dubai on Feb. 20, before taking on defending champions and rivals Pakistan and ending their group campaign against New Zealand.

"The Champions Trophy is a completely different challenge as compared to the 50-over World Cup because literally every game is a make-or-break, so you can't stop anywhere in this tournament," Gambhir said.



Rohit Sharma (R) with Virat Kohli

CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED

German National (Male, 31), multi-talented and fast learner, with technical background is looking for any suitable position to improve his intermediate English. Six years experience at ALDI, one of the largest supermarket chains in Germany as Replenishment Dispatcher for around 120 branches. Available in Muscat till Jan 30 with one year multiple-entry visa to Oman. Contact Number: 96756864

Senior Accountant BCOM, MBA-Finance | 11+ years experience (9 years in Oman) NOC & D/L available. Contact Number: 78109909 | shinsjohn@gmail.com

Indian male graduate with 14 years of Sales & Marketing experience looking for suitable position with valid D/L. Ready to join immediately. Contact : 95136784

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SHEHUO FESTIVAL

A group of friends pose with a large golden dragon puppet

Surreal disconnect

A photographer presents a fantastical portrait of rural China during the Lunar New Year

In photographer Zhang Xiao's images of the Shehuo festival, an ancient celebration still observed in parts of northern China during the Lunar New Year, rural life comes alive with something altogether more fantastical. Villagers dressed as cranes, roosters and mythical lions pose for portraits standing amid crops or in fallow farmland. Costumed performers parade past brick houses against hazy backdrops, the eyes of their masks seemingly lost in thought. In a harvested wheat field, a group of almost a dozen men line up to hold aloft a colourful dragon puppet. In his book *Community Fire*, Zhang said he wanted to capture the 'surreal disconnect' between people's everyday lives and the mythical personas they assumed. "Their characters seemed to come from the sky itself, and ... formed a huge theatrical stage that transcended the confines of reality, transporting a collective of sleepwalkers to a

dreamworld," he wrote. "I wandered among them and photographed them quietly, because I did not want to wake them up." Rooted in millennia-old agricultural practices of worshipping fire and the land, the folk rituals of Shehuo (often translated as 'earth and fire') traditionally entailed praying for good fortune and bounteous harvests, or to drive away demons. Festivities vary between regions but now typically see various performers, from stilt walkers to opera singers, parading through the streets or staging shows. Currently, celebrations coincide with the Lunar New Year, which started on Wednesday. As such, they have come to encompass many of the traditions — such as temple fairs and lion dances — practised around China during this period. (Lunar New Year celebrations usually last more than two weeks, with Shehuo festival taking place on the season's 15th and final day.) Shehuo celebrations have been recognised by the Chinese government in its UNESCO-style list of 'intangible cultural heritage'. But the festival's place in a rapidly urbanising country remains under threat, said Zhang, adding that most of the performers he encountered had migrated to cities and only returned to their villages for the holiday. "The significance of traditional customs can no longer meet the needs of modern lives," the photographer told CNN. "Today's young people are more concerned about the internet and



Shehuo performers reenact a battle between China's Eighth Route Army and Japanese forces

games. They are not even willing to try and understand traditional cultures. I think that's sad."

Death of a craft

Hoping to document the festival's disappearing traditions - and the costumes and props associated with them - Zhang spent over a decade photographing Shehuo events at villages in Shaanxi and Henan provinces. A selection of the images, which were shot between 2007 and 2019, also went on show in the US at Harvard University's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (and over 100 of them were published in *'Community Fire'*). As well as capturing rites, rituals and folklore, the photos speak to the proliferation of mass-produced paraphernalia that has transformed the festival since the turn of the 21st century. The rise of cheap goods and e-commerce has been a mixed blessing for these villages. Some of them - including Huozhuang, in Henan province, which features heavily in Zhang's project - have taken advantage of the opportunity. The photographer visited and documented several small family workshops that buy semi-complete products in large quantities online before hand-finishing them and selling them on platforms like Taobao for profit. "In some villages, virtually the entire population has been mobilised to produce and sell Shehuo props," the photographer writes in his book. But with economic opportunity comes a loss of traditional skills and customs. Materials like paper and bamboo have been replaced by cheap wire frames, plastic and synthetic fabrics, said Zhang, who grew up in a rural area of China's Shandong province but is now based in Chengdu, one of the country's largest metropolises in the southwest. A third-generation prop maker told Zhang, in the photographer's words, that 'he lamented the gradual disappearance of traditional crafts'. But most of the villagers the photographer encountered were indifferent to the loss of cultural heritage, he claimed. And while Zhang, as a documentarian, assumed the role of a 'quiet spectator' while on assignment, he nonetheless expressed regret at the festival's rapid commercialisation. (Courtesy: cnn.com)



Festival participants wearing a two-person lion dance costume in Huozhuang, a village in China's Henan province

Destination dining has never been more popular. According to The Luxury Travel Book, Google searches for 'fine dining' have surged by 49 per cent in the past year.

Famous for its star ratings, the Michelin Guide is a great place to turn to for reliable restaurant reviews with snappy summaries. Awarded from one to three stars, they honour top-notch food based on ingredients, technique, flavour, chef's personality, and consistency.

Luckily, Europe is home to some of the World's most coveted Michelin-starred restaurants. But which European cities have the most Michelin-starred restaurants? Here's where you should head for your next foodie trip.

Paris: Europe's gastro capital

Paris is home to 121 Michelin-starred restaurants and a total of 157 stars, making it Europe's undisputed capital of luxury dining.

The Michelin Guide, which began awarding stars to outstanding French restaurants in 1926, played a key role in solidifying the city's reputation for exceptional cuisine.

Some of the most sought-after dining spots include Le Cinq, a three-star restaurant in the Four Seasons Hotel George V, and Le Jules Verne, an emblematic restaurant on the second floor of the Eiffel Tower with sweeping views of Paris.

For exquisite Italian dishes, reserve a spot at Il Carpaccio, the only Michelin-starred Italian restaurant in Paris - it's famous for Fettuccine with black truffles.

London: dine like a king

London currently has 80 Michelin-starred restaurants, making it a top contender for European destination dining. According to Michelin, the first guide to the British Isles was published in 1911 and, like the original French edition, included practical driving information for motorists.

It ran for five editions, pausing during World War I before resuming from 1922 to 1930 under the title 'Great Britain'. The modern 'Great Britain and Ireland' guide, which shifted from a drivers' handbook to a dedicated restaurant and hotel guide, was published in 1974.

For dining in style, Sketch in London is one of the most beautiful Michelin-starred restaurants in Europe. Its lavish pink decor and modern artwork complement generous tasting and a la carte menus created by the three-Michelin-starred French master chef Pierre Gagnaire.

For an intimate dining experience, cosy up at Pétrus by Gordon Ramsay in Knightsbridge. Centred around a glass-walled wine store, the small venue offers a la carte and a kitchen table' where you can witness expert chefs at work.

Barcelona: A dining scene beyond tapas

The 2025 Michelin Guide highlights



The view from Paris Ciel Bleu

Barcelona's thriving dining scene, listing 29 restaurants with 39 Michelin stars between them. Several new stars were dished out, with Fishology, MAE Barcelona, Prodigy, and Teatro Kitchen & Bar joining the city's elite culinary ranks.

Disfrutar in Barcelona is making serious waves with its bold, avant-garde take on Mediterranean cuisine. Known for its playful presentations and daring flavour combinations, this boundary-pushing restaurant delivers a dining experience that's as inventive as it is unforgettable - firmly cementing its place on the global foodie radar.

Amsterdam: A rising culinary star

Amsterdam, famous for its canals and historic architecture, is also making a name for itself on the culinary map.

The Netherlands is home to 501 restaurants, including 122 Michelin-starred gems, with Amsterdam claiming 23 of them - a mix of one and two-starred spots that showcase the city's growing gastronomic scene.

For dining with a view, bag a spot at Ciel Bleu. Perched atop the Okura Hotel, it offers epic views of the Amsterdam skyline and sky.

Arjan Speelman's cuisine is a creative blend of classic and global flavours, with each dish a delightful surprise. A quirky touch is that an herb is brought with each course, previewing what's to come next.

Lisbon: Portugal's creative cooking capital

Portugal's Nata-filled capital has more to offer than custard tarts, with 17 restaurants awarded Michelin stars, including two restaurants with two stars.

Contemporary dining spot 100 Maneiras features tasting menus lovingly crafted by Chef Ljubomir Stanisic. Originally from Sarajevo (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Stanisic arrived in Portugal as a teenager after the war, healing his soul through the art of cooking. His unique menus blend innovative cuisine with heartfelt nods to his roots.

Copenhagen: Home of the best restaurant in the world

Despite a population of just 5.95 million, Denmark punches above its weight food-wise. Its capital, Copenhagen, boasts 13 Michelin-starred restaurants, including Noma, which has three Michelin stars, and Alchemist, which has two Michelin stars.

Noma in Copenhagen, renowned for revolutionising Nordic cuisine, has been awarded Best Restaurant in the World numerous times.

This culinary legend, led by chef Rene Redzepi, continues to push the boundaries of fine dining. It focuses on ultra-local and foraged ingredients, inventive techniques, and ever-changing seasonal menus, attracting die-hard foodies worldwide.

(Courtesy: euronews.com)

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