

H M receives message from Kuwait Emir

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik granted an audience to Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud al Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior in the State of Kuwait, at Al Barakah Palace on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the guest conveyed a message to His Majesty the Sultan from Sheikh Mishal al Ahmed al Jaber al Sabah, Emir of Kuwait.

The message deals with enhancing the distinguished relations between the two countries to serve joint interests.

The meeting also reviewed areas of military and security co-operation between the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Kuwait, and ways of promoting these in a manner that maintains stability and security in the two countries and the region.



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik meets Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud al Sabah in Barakah Palace on Tuesday (ONA)

The meeting was attended by H H Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Sayyid Hamoud

bin Faisal al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, Dr Mohammed bin Nasir al Hajri, Ambassador of Kuwait to Oman, and Maj Gen

Hamed Manahi al Mutairi, Assistant Undersecretary for Criminal Security Affairs in the Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior.

H M issues Royal Decree to establish Promising Startups Index on MSX

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

Royal Decree No 18/2025 promulgates the establishment of an index for promising startups.

Article 1 states that a sub-index to be named 'Promising Startups Index' will be established at Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX).

Article 2 stipulates that Financial Services Authority will undertake the tasks of supervision and audit of the companies listed in the Promising Startups Index.

Article 3 states that the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Financial Services Authority will issue the regulations and decisions necessary for implementa-

tion of provisions of this decree, as well as incentives granted to companies listed in the Promising Startups Index through coordination with departments concerned.

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

Royal Decree No 19/2025 ratifies an agreement between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Government of the Republic of Maldives on mutual visa waiver for holders of diplomatic, special, service and official passports, signed in Muscat on December 11, 2024.

Article 1 ratifies the aforesaid agreement as per the version at-

tached to this decree.

Article 2 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No 20/2025 ratifies an agreement between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Government of Mongolia on mutual visa waiver for holders of diplomatic, official, special and service passports, signed in Muscat on December 9, 2024.

Article 1 ratifies the aforesaid agreement as per the version attached to this decree.

Article 2 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

ONA

22.5% rise in crime: Public Prosecution

Our Correspondent Muscat

The Public Prosecution recorded a 22.5% increase in cases in 2024 compared to the previous year, with a total of 46,359 cases handled. These include 43,957 misdemeanours, 2,281 felonies, and 121 violations and administrative complaints, according to Public Prosecutor Nasr bin Khamis al Sawai.

Speaking during the annual Public Prosecution conference on Tuesday, held under the theme 'Sense of Procedural Fairness', Sawai noted that despite the increase in cases, resolution rate improved to 97.9%. The number of defendants rose to 58,858, marking a 23.5% increase from 2023. Among these, 89.2% were male, 1.8% minors and 46.8% foreign nationals.

Muscat governorate reported the highest number of cases - 20,852 - followed by North Batinah - 7,500 - and Dhofar - 4,457.



73 public prosecutors specialising in juvenile cases have been appointed across various governorates

NASR BIN KHAMIS AL SAWAI



Most cases were referred by Royal Oman Police (32,856), while 5,757 cases were submitted through the Public Prosecution's electronic services portal and 4,142 came from Ministry of Labour.

Labour law violations were the

most common transgressions in 2024, with 12,407 cases, followed by cheque-related offences (9,699), violation of foreign residency laws (9,154), fraud (5,343), and theft and extortion (4,002).

The number of court rulings is-

sued in 2024 was 21,414, a 20.1% increase from 2023. Of these, 17,547 rulings were executed, reflecting a 13% rise year-on-year. The number of cases handled electronically grew 24%, with 45,538 cases processed. Additionally, 261,650 judicial or-

ders were issued and 83,305 investigations conducted.

Dr Rashid bin Obaid al Kaabi, Assistant Public Prosecutor, reported an increase in crimes against children last year, with 1,325 cases, including harassment, indecent assault and vari-

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

TOTAL CASES 46,359

Highest number of cases Muscat - 20,852

Most common crime Labour law violations - 12,407

Public fund misuse RO16.8mn recovered

Crimes against Children 1,325

addressed, with rulings in 25% of these. Fines amounted to RO1.43mn, while recovered and confiscated funds totalled RO15.4mn, bringing the overall amount to RO16.8mn. The total number of public fund and money laundering cases in 2024 was 192, including 33 felonies and 159 misdemeanours. Additionally, 132 cases of cheque-related crimes and fraud were reported.

Social media monitoring

Sawai announced the appointment of 73 public prosecutors specialising in juvenile cases across various governorates, with plans to increase this number in the near future.

He also highlighted efforts to monitor social media platforms to protect national unity. "Rulings have been issued against individuals undermining national unity on social media," he said, adding that much of the content on these platforms is fabricated.

Sayyid Fahd appreciates efforts in safeguarding labour rights

Our Correspondent Muscat

H H Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Council of Ministers, met Luc Triangle, Secretary-General of International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), on Tuesday during his visit to Oman. Triangle attended the symposium 'Towards a More Sustainable Social Dialogue' organised by General Federation of Oman Workers (GFW).

During the meeting, H H Sayyid Fahd acknowledged ITUC's efforts in fostering cooperation among trade unions globally. He reaffirmed Oman's collaboration with ITUC through GFW, highlighting its role in safeguarding workers' interests, enhancing productivity, developing professional skills and improving workers' capabilities.

H H Sayyid Fahd emphasised the sultanate's commitment to supporting the three key stake-



H H Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud al Said meets Luc Triangle on Tuesday (ONA)

holders in the labour ecosystem - the government, represented by Ministry of Labour; business owners, represented by Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and workers, represented by GFW. He noted that these efforts align with the objectives of Oman's Labour Law, which seeks to improve work environments and conditions across various sectors.

The discussions also explored avenues for strengthening coop-

eration between Oman and ITUC, particularly in exchanging expertise to protect workers' rights and support the country's sustainable development goals.

Triangle appreciated the well-organised symposium, noting that Oman stands out as a leading country in regulating trade union operations and safeguarding workers' rights. He highlighted the country's proactive approach to fostering dialogue among labour stakeholders.

Talks held to open Omani consulate in Kurdistan Region

Our Correspondent Muscat

H E Qais Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, led a high-level delegation to Kurdistan Region, a semi-autonomous federal region of the Republic of Iraq, on Monday.

H E Yousef met Kurdistan Region Prime Minister Masrour Barzani, when the two discussed expanding diplomatic and economic ties, with both sides highlighting the importance of opening an Omani consulate in Erbil in the near future, according to a statement from the Kurdistan Regional Government.

The meeting underscored the need to enhance cooperation in key sectors, including trade, industry and investment. The commerce minister reaffirmed Oman's commitment to strengthening relations with the Kurdistan Region.

Barzani reiterated the Kurdistan Region's eagerness to develop a strong partnership with Oman, emphasising the mutual benefits of deeper economic and diplomatic engagement, according to a report in Kurdistan24, a news channel based in Erbil.

Over 135,000 companies exist only on paper: Labour Minister

Our Correspondent Muscat

H E Dr Mahad bin Saeed bin Ali Baowain, Minister of Labour, revealed that over 135,000 registered companies in Oman exist only as commercial records without any business activity. Speaking to Oman TV, he noted that out of more than 400,000 registered firms in the sultanate, only about 265,000 have active employees and operations.

Addressing employment challenges, H E Baowain highlighted the Ministry of Labour's efforts between 2021 and 2023 to retain jobs for Omani nationals. Through negotiations with companies, the ministry successfully pre-



served 50,000 to 60,000 jobs despite economic fluctuations.

On demand for public sector jobs, the minister said the government receives 12,000 to 16,000 applications annually from job-seekers wanting employment in the public sector. This, he remarked, reflects the pressure on

authorities to create more opportunities to meet aspirations of the national workforce.

H E Baowain pointed to a disconnect between education outcomes and labour market requirements as a key challenge. To bridge this gap, the ministry is focusing on specialised training

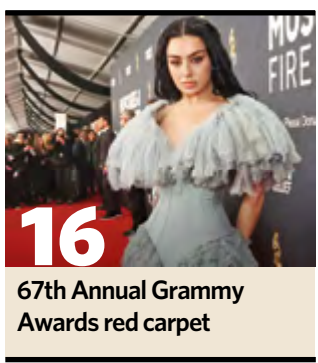
The government receives 12,000 to 16,000 applications annually from jobseekers wanting employment in the public sector

H E DR MAHAD BAOWAIN

programmes and job replacement initiatives to align skills with market demands. He also touched on the impact of expatriates in low-skilled jobs, which continues to affect labour market dynamics. Efforts are underway to address these issues and create a more balanced workforce.

Regarding wage transparency, the minister highlighted the mandatory implementation of the Wage Protection System, which became compulsory mid-2023. The system ensures private sector salaries are transferred through regulated channels. Non-compliance has already led to fines, and stricter penalties will soon be enforced based on the number of employees whose wages are not processed through the system.

H E Baowain concluded by emphasising the ministry's commitment to labour market reforms aimed at promoting job security for Omanis, improving transparency and creating a resilient employment environment.





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Mwasalat tests electric bus on select routes in Muscat

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman National Transport Company - Mwasalat - has started testing an advanced electric bus manufactured by MAN on select routes across Muscat in a step towards sustainable urban mobility.

This pilot programme aims to assess the bus's operational efficiency, performance and adaptability to Oman's urban transit needs.

First introduced during kha-reef 2024, electric buses are a component of Oman's strategy to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Its introduction underscores Mwasalat's commitment to environmental sustainability and its



(Supplied photo)

proactive efforts to reduce carbon emissions through actionable green initiatives.

Designed with capacity for 28 passengers, the e-bus can reach speeds of 70kmph to 130kmph, making it ideal for city routes.

The trial aligns with global trends in sustainable transport,

as discussed at the 2024 World Transport and Public Transport Union Conference, where electric mobility and green innovations took centre stage. Mwasalat's move positions Oman at the forefront of eco-friendly public transport solutions in the region.

SQU student shines on global stage with prestigious research award

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Abdullah bin Mohammed al Lawati, a final-year student of College of Medicine and Health Sciences at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), has earned global recognition by winning the International Best Researcher Award in the field of medicine at the Asia International Research Awards 2025.

Founded in Tokyo in 2010, the award is a prestigious global platform that recognises multidisciplinary research on cancer with the potential to create significant societal impact.

Competing against over 500 researchers from around the world, Lawati's groundbreaking



This award is not only a personal achievement but a testament to the support of my teachers and the innovative environment at SQU

ABDULLAH AL LAWATI

work stood out for its scientific innovation and academic excellence.

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

In addition to this remarkable achievement, Lawati has pub-

lished 22 scientific papers in high-impact international journals focused on critical areas such as cancer research, artificial intelligence and public health policies. His impressive academic portfolio has earned him numerous accolades at international conferences in countries including Canada, Bulgaria, India and the UAE, showcasing his ability to translate research into practical, real-world solutions.

Lawati also brought pride to Oman with his award-winning presentation at the 2024 Canadian Society for Pharmaceutical Sciences and Controlled Release Society Symposium, hosted by University of Alberta. He secured first place for the best scientific poster among 102 entries for his study titled 'Prescription Patterns and Economic Analysis of Anti-cancer Medications for Breast Cancer Patients: Insights from a Three-Year Study at an Oncology Unit in the Sultanate of Oman'. The symposium attracted 400 delegates from countries such as Japan, Thailand, Australia, Brazil and the USA, with participation from top institutions like the University of Toronto, McGill University and University of Manitoba.

Second edition of Wadi Madha Carnival opens in Musandam



(Supplied photo)

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Musandam opened the second edition of Wadi Madha Carnival in the Al Nakhil area of Madha, running till February 27, 2025 on Monday.

Held under the patronage of Sayyid Ibrahim bin Saeed al Busaidi, Governor of Musandam, the opening was attended by several dignitaries, including walis and officials from the governorate.

Part of the broader Musandam Winter Season activities, the carnival aims to revive the governorate's rich agricultural and natural heritage, promote rural tourism, and support the local community through diverse commercial and cultural activities.

According to an official from Musandam Governor's Office, the carnival will stimulate agricultural and environmental tourism in Madha, renowned for its stunning natural landscapes that blend mountains, farms and traditional aflaj irrigation systems.

The carnival also aims to position Madha as an attractive, family-friendly tourist destina-

tion by offering a range of unique experiences and showcasing key tourist attractions.

The concept of the carnival revolves around utilising Madha's scenic farms and winter season. Local farms are rented and transformed with aesthetic touches to host a variety of activities. This year, 11

Part of the broader Musandam Winter Season activities, the carnival aims to revive the governorate's rich agricultural and natural heritage, promote rural tourism and support the local community

farms are participating, each offering different attractions such as the adventure activities (climbing walls, zip lines, low-hanging rope courses, trampolines and art workshops) and science activities at the Engineering Village featuring electronics workshops and a miniature robotics race track in-

spired by Musandam's landmarks. Madha Safari has a zoo and electric bike adventures. Artisan Families Market showcases local goods with marketing support through social media platforms, while Food Court and Theatre Show provide space for local cuisine and live performances.

The carnival also serves as a platform for local entrepreneurs to develop home-based projects and enhance their marketing strategies. Youth involvement is a key focus with 35 young organisers trained and employed in roles such as sales, public relations, marketing, and health and safety.

A standout feature this year is a collaboration with be'ah as part of the 'Oman Deserves' campaign to promote sustainability and environmental awareness over a three-day period.

According to the official, the carnival is expected to catalyse investment, tourism growth and community development as it showcases Musandam's potential as a dynamic destination that blends tradition with innovation, creating opportunities for the local community while engaging visitors.



UBHAR GCC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024

The Chairman's Report

On behalf of the Fund Management Body Members, I am pleased to present the financial results of Ubhar GCC Fund for the period ended December 31, 2024.

A summary of financial results is as follows:

Figure 1:	For the period ending December 31, 2024 (OMR)	For the period ending December 31, 2023 (OMR)
Total Income	136,934	866,811
Total Expenses	(214,431)	(282,725)
Profit (Loss) for the period	(77,497)	584,086
Profit (Loss) per Unit	(0.016)	0.118

Fund Performance:

For the period ended December 31, 2024, the performance of Ubhar GCC Fund is as follows:

Figure 2:	December 31, 2024	December 31, 2023
Net Asset Value (OMR)	5,333,773	5,713,659
Number of Outstanding Units	4,929,207	4,938,977
Net Asset Value per Unit	1.082	1.157
UBGCC Fund Performance for the period	(1.36) %	11.35%
Benchmark Performance for the period	2.02%	6.19%

Ubhar GCC Fund has reported a decline of 1.36% with a NAV of RO 1.082 per unit as of December 31, 2024. This compares with an increase in the benchmark Index S&P GCC Composite index of 2.02% resulting in an underperformance of 3.38%. Markets were under pressure owing to geopolitical concerns in the region.

Market Performance

Figure A: Index Returns

Index	YTD (December 31, 2024)
Dubai Financial Market	27.1%
Boursa Kuwait	8.0%
S&P GCC Index	2.02%
Muscat Stock Exchange	1.4%
Bahrain Bourse	0.7%
Saudi Stock Exchange (Tadawul)	0.6%
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 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 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

Ubhar GCC Fund

February 2nd, 2025

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

	31 Dec 2024 RO	31 Dec 2023 RO
INCOME		
Dividend income	170,413	171,070
Net realized (loss) / gain on investments at fair value through profit or loss	(4,065)	358,652
Fair value changes in investments at fair value through profit or loss (net)	(32,086)	336,634
Interest income	2,672	455
	136,934	866,811
Expenses		
Brokerage commission	103,534	157,579
Management fee	82,032	81,086
Administration and custodian service fee	14,002	14,000
General and administration	12,112	12,693
Fund Management Body fees	2,751	5,000
Performance fee	-	12,367
	214,431	282,725
Net (loss) / profit and total comprehensive income for the period / year	(77,497)	584,086
Net (loss) / profit per unit	(0.016)	0.118

Statement of financial position As 31 December 2024

	31 Dec 2024 RO	31 Dec 2023 RO
ASSETS		
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	4,861,995	5,668,851
Cash and cash equivalents	502,014	90,514
Receivables	2,276	1,063
Total assets	5,366,285	5,760,428
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Accruals and other payables	32,512	46,769
Total liabilities	32,512	46,769
Total net assets attributable to the Unitholders	5,333,773	5,713,659
Net asset value per unit	1.082	1.157

For more information please contact:
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1,000km Muscat-Salalah trek to mark Accession Day

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A group of 22 men and a woman is undertaking a 1,000km trek to mark the fifth anniversary of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's Accession Day. The ambitious mission, which began on January 15 from Seeb Club, is expected to conclude in Salalah on February 7.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily* from Thumrait in Dhofar, Badour al Salhi, the only woman in the group, said, "The idea for this extraordinary expedition was started by a Salalah Club member through social media and quickly gained momentum among adventure enthusiasts across the country. It reflects the unity and shared spirit of Omanis."

The trek spans diverse terrains, including rugged mountains and vast desert stretches, giving participants an opportunity to experience Oman's rich natural beauty.

Badour informed that the group has already covered over 800km, passing through several wilayats known for their historical castles and forts, which highlight Oman's heritage.

Each day's journey begins at 7am and ends at 8pm, with participants walking 40km to 60km daily. Along the way, they are ac-



It is a celebration of Oman's heritage, a tribute to His Majesty, and a testament to the resilience and unity of Omani people

BADOUR AL SALHI

companied by traditional songs, waving Omani flags and portraits of His Majesty Sultan Haitham. "This trek is not just a physical journey," Badour explained. "It is a celebration of Oman's heritage, a tribute to His Majesty, and a testament to the resilience and unity of the Omani people."

The group has faced significant challenges, including changing weather conditions from intense heat, strong desert winds

and cold nights. However, their support for each other, determination and short rest stops for refreshments and dates have kept them going.

"Our goal is to honour His Majesty, promote a sports culture, and showcase Oman's natural beauty while walking in the footsteps of our ancestors," Badour said.

Inspired by the success of this expedition, the group is already

planning a new challenge. "Next, we aim to march from Seeb Club to Musandam, covering the entire stretch of Oman," Badour revealed. "It will be a testament to our enduring spirit and love for our country."

Encouraging others, she added, "I urge everyone, especially young girls, to engage in sports and believe in themselves. You can achieve anything you set your mind to."



Fair social representation in public policymaking sought

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A two-day forum - 'Towards a More Sustainable Social Dialogue' - organised by General Federation of Oman Workers, in collaboration with Ministry of Labour and Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, concluded on Tuesday.

The event brought together representatives from government, employers and workers bodies to discuss the current state of social dialogue in Oman and strategies to enhance its effectiveness and sustainability.

Discussions emphasised the importance of social dialogue in promoting decent work, improving labour market competitiveness and driving economic growth. Participants highlighted the fact that effective dialogue not only balances the interests of government, employers and workers but also plays a critical

role in shaping policies that support sustainable development.

While progress has been made under the new Labour Law - such as establishment of committees to resolve labour disputes and encourage dialogue - the forum shed light on challenges limiting the full activation of social dialogue in Oman. Key issues identified included the absence of a dedicated office to support the Joint Dialogue Committee, insufficient specialised staff, and gaps in governance mechanisms to follow up on decisions and recommendations.

Additionally, participants noted legislative and procedural hurdles that restrict the efficiency of existing dialogue structures. The lack of a national framework to ensure fair representation in public and economic policymaking was also cited as a concern.

The forum concluded with

several recommendations aimed at overcoming these challenges.

These included establishing a dedicated office for the Joint Dialogue Committee, expanding its mandate to influence broader labour market policies, and ensuring diverse representation in dialogue processes. Strengthening the capacity of dialogue committees, addressing legislative gaps, and developing long-term solutions for economic and public policy issues were also emphasised.

Participants further suggested the ratification of key international labour conventions and the adoption of best practices from leading nations to enhance Oman's social dialogue framework. The forum ended with a shared commitment among stakeholders to work towards a more inclusive and sustainable model of social dialogue, aligned with Oman Vision 2040 and the nation's development goals.



Govt support for turmeric farming boosts production

Our Correspondent
Salalah

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) has reiterated its ongoing efforts to promote turmeric farming in Dhofar following recent discussions on social media, highlighting its initiatives to support local farmers and enhance production.

In the last three years, turmeric cultivation in Dhofar has seen notable growth with total production of 136 tonnes. In collaboration with Nakheel Oman Development Company, MAFWR has facilitated purchase of the entire turmeric crop from farmers, ensuring market stability and fair returns. Additionally, farmers have received modern irrigation tools, high-quality turmeric seeds and packaging materials under the ministry's support programme.

MAFWR recently launched a turmeric farming project focused on expanding cultivation to new areas.

During the first phase of MAFWR's efforts, 60 farmers from 12 villages in Salalah, Taqah, Dhalkhut and Rakhyyut cultivated turmeric in over half a hectare of land, producing six tonnes of organic turmeric. The second phase has since expanded to include 55 farmers from 25 villages, increasing cultivation to 1.6 hectares.

Ironman 70.3 Muscat to host over 1,100 athletes on Feb 7-8

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ironman 70.3 Oman Muscat triathlon is set to take place on February 7 and 8 with more than 1,100 participants from Oman and abroad. The event will begin with an opening ceremony on the evening of February 6 at Shatti al Qurum from where the race will be flagged off.

The weekend promises to be

action-packed, featuring not only the main race but also the Ironwoman and Ironkids races on February 7. These events aim to foster greater community engagement and encourage participation among women and children.

Mohamed Obaidani, CEO and Founder of Triathlon Middle East, expressed his excitement about the event, calling it a milestone for Oman's sporting calendar. "This event has been a long time



in the making, and we are finally set to host what promises to be a magnificent Ironman 70.3 Oman Muscat. I encourage sports fans and families in Muscat to visit the Ironman Race Village and Expo this weekend to witness the action. I wish all athletes the very best for their race day performance," he said.

Obaidani also emphasised the significance of the triathlon in showcasing Oman's potential as

a hub for international sporting events. "This globally recognised triathlon further enhances the country's reputation as a premier destination for regional and international sporting events, as well as outdoor and adventure tourism. It also showcases the rich cultural beauty and modern infrastructure of Muscat. To all athletes coming to Oman for the first time, I welcome you to our beautiful capital city," he added.

عُمان: بين صدى التراث ونداء التقدم

إلا أن أسأل: هل هذا هو الطريق الذي يجب أن تسلكه عُمان؟ وهل نحن مستعدون لنفع الثمن الذي يصاحب مثل هذا الصعود السريع؟ وهل يمكن أن نحافظ على هويتنا في عالم سريع التغير؟

الحقيقة، كما أؤمن، هي أن عُمان تنف عند مفترق طرق فريدة، نحن أمة تتمتع بغنى ثقافي وجمال طبيعي – نحمل هدايا يتوق العالم لرؤيتها، لكن هذه الهدايا هشة وتتطلب عناية دقيقة. الطريق إلى الأمام ليس في التخلي عن التقدم، ولا في تقييده بلا حساب، بل في البحث عن التوازن، ليس أن نسال فقط: "ماذا يمكن أن نكسب؟" ولكن أيضاً: "ماذا يجب أن نحمي؟" الجواب ليس سهلاً، خاصة مع مقارنتنا بجارتنا الجميلة وقصة نجاحها المبهرة. ولكن ما يناسبهم قد لا يناسبنا، والطريق أمامنا يتطلب رؤية شجاعة أكبر من العمل بصمت واستحياء. إنه يتطلب منا أن نعلو فوق الانتقاد، وأن نأخذ بعين الاعتبار الإرث الذي ستركه لمن سيأتي بعننا. وبرغم بطء النمو، أؤمن بأننا قادرون على مواجهة هذا التحدي من خلال التعلم من الآخرين – سواء من نجاحاتهم أو أخطائهم – يمكننا صياغة صناعة سياحية مستدامة تقلل أكثر من مجرد توليد الثروة. يمكننا أن نحقق صناعة تغني شعبنا، وتحافظ على هويتنا، ونقف دليلاً على حكمة عُمان وصمودها.

وأخيراً، أسأل نفسي وأسألكم: أي مستقبل سنختار؟ هل نعطي الأولوية للكاسب المالية السريعة، أم نكرم القيم المعينة والدائمة التي تعبر عن كياننا؟ الإجابة، كما أرى، لا تكمن في صنع استراتيجيات كبرى، بل في إرادة مجاعية لشعب عازم على حماية ما هو أهم. نفعه.



كاسحراً، لكنها مثقلة أيضاً. تحت سطوح هذا التقدم، كنت أرى أسئلة عديدة تلوح في الأفق: هل نسعى نحو الرخاء بأي ثمن؟ أم نرعى نمو القطاع بحذر مع حماية تلك الخيوط الرقيقة من ثقافتنا وبيئتنا التي تُعرِّفنا كوننا أمة؟ أسئلة كهذه أصبحت أكثر إلحاحاً مع رياح العولمة التي تدخل من أبواب منصبات مثل: (التفكك)، وغيرها والتي تؤثر على هويتنا بطرق خفية.

لاحقاً، أخذتني مسيرتي الأكاديمية إلى أصاقل هذه المعضلة عن طريق رسالة الدكتوراة، وسافرت إلى جنوب شرق آسيا وأوروبا ودرست أبحاثاً من أمريكا اللاتينية – مناطق واجهت التحديت ذاتها التي تخطر في بالي. هناك رأيت نتائج التنمية السياحية غير المنضبطة: مدن نابضة بالحياة، لكنها تحمل ندوباً بدأت تظهر على تقاليدها وجمالها الطبيعي. في المقابل، تأملت جارتنا المزدهرة دبي – مدينة اتقنت فن التحول السريع لتصبح رمزاً عالمياً للحداثة. ومع كل بريق من نجاحها، لا يسعني خلق



Association for Early Intervention for Children with Disabilities

Announcement: Invitation to attend the 2025 General Assembly meeting

The Board of Directors of the Association of Early Intervention for Children with Disabilities is pleased to invite its distinguished members to attend the annual general assembly meeting, which is scheduled to be held on Saturday, 22/3/2025 at 11:00 AM at the Association of Early Intervention Ghala Height and through the online platform (Zoom).

Agenda of the meeting

1. Board of Directors administrative report of 2024 and work plan for the year 2025.
2. Balance sheet and closing account for the ending fiscal year and draft work of New Year budget 2025.
3. Discuss the Auditor report.
4. Appointing a financial controller and determining his remuneration, without prejudice to the provisions of the International Financial Supervision Law.
5. Any other matters.

Kindly note the last day to nominate for membership in the Board of Directors and renewal of membership is Saturday, March 1, 2025. Any application received after the above date will not be considered.

Note: all the above reports will be available at the association's office and in the electronic media for the members review and information. If there are any inquiries, please send us by Whatsap (72727785).

MARKET WATCH	
MSX30	4,586.90
Sensex	78,583.81
FOREX RATES (RO1 equals)	
India	226.04
Pakistan	724.56
Bangladesh	316.65
Philippines	151.10
Sri Lanka	777.88
*Rates as on February 04 Source: xe.com	

BRIEFS

Oil prices fall amid US-China trade war

Oil prices retreated on Tuesday as US President Donald Trump paused for a month a decision on steep tariffs on Mexico and Canada, the United States' biggest foreign oil suppliers. However, Trump did not change his decision China tariffs. China on Monday imposed retaliatory tariffs on some American goods.

Brent futures fell 41 cents, or 0.5%, to \$75.55 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude declined 75 cents, or 1%, to trade at \$72.41.

Both Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said they had agreed to bolster border enforcement efforts in response to Trump's demand.

That would pause for 30 days tariffs of 25%, with a 10% tariff on energy imports from Canada, that had been set to take effect today.

Oman launches new bidding round for 3 oil & gas blocks

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's Ministry of Energy and Minerals has announced the launch of a new bidding round for the exploration and development of three onshore oil and gas blocks.

The bidding round, unveiled on Tuesday via the ministry's official LinkedIn page, is being conducted in collaboration with OQ Exploration and Production Company (OQEP) and Scotia-bank.

The blocks on offer – 36, 43A, and 66 – are located across Oman's diverse geological basins, offering considerable potential for investors to tap into the sultanate's substantial hydrocarbon reserves.

'The Ministry of Energy and Minerals invites investors to participate in a competitive bidding process for oil and gas exploration in Blocks 36, 43A, and 66,' the ministry said.

In a regulatory filing with the Muscat Stock Exchange, OQEP noted, 'This announcement is part of the ongoing cooperation framework between OQEP and the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, designed to attract new investments into Oman's exploration and production sector. OQEP expresses its deepest appreciation to the ministry for its continued trust



The announcement is part of the ongoing cooperation framework between OQEP and the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, designed to attract new investments into Oman's exploration and production sector

and partnership.'

The awarding of these blocks will be subject to the Ministry of Energy and Minerals' established procedures, which include the signing of Concession Agreements and subsequent ratification through Royal Decrees.

Block 66, situated on the eastern flank of the Rub Al Khali Basin, spans an area of 4,898 sqkm. Block 43A, covering 6,920 sqkm, is located in the onshore Buraimi region. The largest of the three, Block 36, is positioned in the Ghudun Basin, part of the expansive Rub Al

Khali Basin, and encompasses an area of 18,557 sqkm.

Oman's oil and gas sector remains the largest sector for foreign direct investment (FDI), accounting for 79.1% of the country's total FDI stock. Total FDI in the oil and gas sector stood at RO21.112bn as of the end of September 2024. New foreign investments in the sector reached RO3.439bn during the first three quarters of 2024, underscoring the industry's pivotal role in Oman's economy.

Oman's total oil production declined by 5.1% in 2024, falling to 363.29mn barrels from 382.77mn barrels recorded in the corresponding period of the previous year. The daily average production also registered a 5.4% decrease, averaging 992,600 barrels per day compared to 1.05mn barrels per day in 2023.

CBO issues RO23mn treasury bills

Muscat - The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) this week announced two tenders of government treasury bills worth a total RO23mn

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO0.6mn, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached RO99.700 for every RO100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO99.700 per RO100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 3.9107% and 3.9224%, respectively.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO22.4mn, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached RO98.950 for every RO100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO98.950 per RO100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.2115% and 4.2562%, respectively.

The interest rate on the repo operations with CBO is 5.00% while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with the central bank is 5.50%.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (repo).

Development Bank backs Duqm Now

Muscat - Development Bank will support a new business initiative aimed at accelerating Oman's sustainable development. Launching Wednesday and organised by the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), Duqm Now will bring the business community together with industry leaders, policymakers and experts to showcase opportunities in key sectors aligned with Oman Vision 2040.

Taking place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Duqm, the inaugural Duqm Now event entitled 'Up and Down the Green Stream' will explore renewable energy prospects for Oman's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), highlighting developments in solar, wind and green hydrogen projects.

Commenting on SEZAD's Duqm Now series, Hussain al Lawati, CEO of Development Bank said, "We are delighted to support this initiative and look forward to the opportuni-



Development Bank remains strongly committed to funding SME ambitions, with our lending growing from RO23.6mn in 2023 to RO38.9mn in 2024, a remarkable 64.8% increase

HUSSAIN AL LAWATI

ties it will unlock, particularly for SMEs eager to harness the potential of SEZAD. Development Bank remains strongly committed to funding SME ambitions, with our lending growing from RO23.6mn in 2023 to RO38.9mn in 2024 – a remarkable 64.8% increase."

Lawati added, "Given that sustainable development is at the heart of Development

Bank's strategy, I am especially pleased to see this first session will focus on the possibilities of renewable energy. This sector is not only of immense importance to our economy but also to the achievement of Oman's 2050 Net Zero target. With these factors very much in mind, Development Bank is already working to secure sustainable financing for green

projects by collaborating with international institutions such as the Green Climate Fund."

Duqm Now 'Up and Down the Green Stream' will feature a panel of prominent industry figures, including Musab al Farsi, CEO, Nafath Renewable Energy; Dr Khalil al Hanashi, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Energy & Minerals; and Dr Firas al Abduwani, Director General, Renewable Energy & Hydrogen, Ministry of Energy & Minerals. The evening's discussion will be moderated by Dr Mohammed al Mugheiry, Petroleum Engineering Commercialisation Manager, PDO.

The Duqm Now programme will roll out across 2025 with four focused sessions covering renewable energy, manufacturing-education partnerships, circular economy practices and sustainable petrochemical production. Each event is designed to generate practical solutions for participating organizations.

Saudi signs deal to export green hydrogen to Europe

Berlin, Germany - Saudi Arabia will export 200,000 tonnes of green hydrogen to Europe annually by 2030 under a memorandum of understanding signed with Germany.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier is currently visiting Saudi Arabia as part of a regional tour that also includes Jordan and Türkiye.

In a statement, the Saudi Energy Ministry said the agreement was signed between the Saudi ACWA Power and Germany's SEFE Energy Company on Monday evening.

Under the MoU, the partners will establish a hydrogen bridge between Saudi Arabia and Germany, with an initial target of supplying 200,000 tonnes of green hydrogen annually by 2030.

"This MoU with SEFE marks a significant milestone in accelerating the green hydrogen econ-



omy in Europe," ACWA Power's CEO Marco Arcelli said.

"By combining ACWA Power's proven expertise in green hydrogen production with SEFE's extensive market knowledge, we are forming a strong partnership to deliver substantial quantities of green hydrogen to Germany and beyond, making a meaningful contribution to global decarbonisation efforts."

Earlier, Germany signed hy-

drogen import agreements with Brazil and Norway as part of its ongoing search for new energy sources following the Russia-Ukraine War.

Hydrogen is considered the optimal energy to reduce carbon and greenhouse gas emissions and is used for the operation of large industrial machinery, heavy vehicles, and heating systems.

Anadolu Agency

OPEC+ says won't change oil production plans despite Trump pressure

Tsvetana Paraskova

Despite pressure from US President Donald Trump and a recent rise in oil prices, the OPEC+ group has said it won't change its current plan to begin gradually unwinding the cuts from April.

The Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC), the OPEC+ panel reviewing policy and markets and potentially recommending actions to the group's ministers to take, made its decision during its Monday meeting.

No changes had been expected after anonymous delegates to Reuters ahead of the

JMMC meeting.

The JMMC, the panel that takes stock of oil market developments and proposes courses of action to the ministers of the OPEC+ group, doesn't take decisions on production levels – these are taken by the OPEC+ ministerial meetings.

At the previous ministerial gathering in December, the alliance decided to delay the start of the easing of the 2.2mn barrels per day (bpd) cuts to April 2025, from January 2025. The group also extended the period in which it would unwind all these cuts into the following year, until September 2026.



OPEC+ reiterated the importance of compliance with the cuts and the timely compensation for those producers who haven't adhered to their assigned quotas.

Ahead of the JMMC meeting on Monday, the oil market saw several turbulent weeks in which oil prices jumped after the previ-

ous US Administration slapped aggressive sanctions on Russian oil trade. Prices fell two weeks later after the new administration, President Trump specifically, called on OPEC to lower the price of oil.

"I'm also going to ask Saudi Arabia and OPEC to bring down the cost of oil," President Trump

said in an address to the World Economic Forum, four days into his second term in office.

On Monday, global financial markets sunk while oil prices rose after President Trump announced 25% tariffs on all imports from Mexico and Canada, except for Canadian energy, for which the levy would be 10%. China will also be taxed with an additional 10% on all its exports to the US.

However, Trump paused tariffs on Canada and Mexico for one month after discussions with the leaders of these two countries.

(Source: Oilprice.com)

At the previous ministerial gathering in December, OPEC+ decided to delay the start of the easing of the 2.2mn barrels per day cuts to April 2025, from January 2025

China slaps retaliatory tariffs on US goods

China will impose an additional 15% tariff on imported coal and LNG originating from the US, while crude oil, agricultural machinery, and pickup trucks will be subject to additional tariffs of 10%



Beijing, China – China will impose additional tariffs on certain US products starting from February 10, the country's Customs Tariff Commission of the State Council said on Tuesday.

On February 1, the US government announced it would impose an additional 10% tariff on goods imported from China.

The move is in accordance with the basic principles of international law, and with Chinese laws and regulations such as the tariff law, the foreign trade law and the customs law, according

to a statement from the commission.

An additional 15% tariff will be imposed on imported coal and liquefied natural gas (LNG) originating from the United States, as per the statement.

Crude oil, agricultural machinery, automobiles with large displacement, and pickup trucks will be subject to additional tariffs of 10%, the statement said.

Lists of specific products that will be subject to additional tariffs can be found in the attached documents.

For these products, corresponding tariffs will be added to the current tariff rates. Current bonded policies as well as tax reduction and exemption policies will not change, and the latest tariffs to be imposed will not be reduced or exempted, according to the statement.

China files complaint with WTO

China has filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization (WTO)'s dispute settlement mechanism against the US decision to impose an additional 10% tariff on goods from China, the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) said Tuesday.

The move is to safeguard China's legitimate rights and interests, an MOC spokesperson said in response to media inquiries.

The US imposition of additional tariffs on Chinese products has seriously violated the WTO rules, and this egregious act is typical of unilateralism and trade protectionism, said the spokesperson.

The spokesperson said the US move severely undermines the rules-based multilateral trading system, erodes the foundation of China-US economic and trade cooperation, and disrupts the stability of global industrial and supply chains.

The United States has repeatedly put unilateralism above multilateralism, incurring strong condemnation from the majority of the WTO members. "China firmly opposes the US actions, and urges the US side to immediately rectify its wrongdoings," the spokesperson said.

As a staunch supporter and significant contributor to the multilateral trading system, China stands ready to work with other WTO members to address the challenges posed by unilateralism and trade protectionism to the multilateral trading system, added the spokesperson.

Trump delays Canada, Mexico tariffs by one month

Washington, US - A looming trade war between the US and its neighbouring trading partners took a step back Tuesday when President Donald Trump said tariffs against Canada and Mexico won't go into effect for another month.

Hours before 25% tariffs on Canada were set to take effect, the country's prime minister said the US and its northern neighbour have reached an agreement to delay the import taxes.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau wrote on social media platform X that his country will "launch a Canada-US Joint Strike Force to combat organised crime, fentanyl and money laundering." In exchange, the proposed tariffs will be delayed for 30 days, he wrote.

President Donald Trump confirmed the deal later in a post on Truth Social. "I am very pleased with this initial outcome, and the Tariffs announced on Saturday will be paused for a 30 day period to



US President Donald Trump

see whether or not a final Economic deal with Canada can be structured," Trump wrote.

This change in course comes hours after President Trump struck a similar deal with Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum.

Trump and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum announced the delay on social media two days after Trump ordered 25% tariffs against goods from Mexico and Canada, and a 10% tariff against Chinese products, which were set to go into effect Tuesday.

(Source: Investopedia)

US-China trade war likely to benefit India

New Delhi, India – The trade war between the US and China is going to benefit India, government sources told ANI.

According to government sources, India is not going to be immune from higher tariffs. There may be some products from India on which the US might take some action but despite this India's exports to US will increase.

Trump, who recently took office, imposed tariffs on goods imported from China, Mexico, and Canada over the weekend. Later on Monday, the US President postponed the tariffs on Mexico and Canada by a month under ongoing negotiation on terms.

The new additional 10% tariff on imports from China is made effective from Tuesday. China retaliated and imposed 15% tariff on coal and LNG and 10% on crude imports from US. But Sources told ANI that irrespective of what is happening to India in the future, India is likely to gain out of this US and China trade war.

"We have discussed this with Indian exporters also and got positive feedback about the mood and the sentiment about the export orders they are looking significant rise in export value," one of the sources said.



The government official told ANI that India had benefitted during the trade war between the US and China in the previous regime of Donald Trump's presidency.

"Then, our exports to US was around \$57bn. It went up to \$73bn. If you see historically, India's exports to the US, during the 1-2 years of the trade war

time, India saw a significant jump in our exports to the US," one of the sources said.

After the US government announced a 10% tariff on all Chinese goods exported to America, China too imposed additional tariffs on various US goods, including a 15% tariff on coal and liquefied natural gas, and a 10% tariff on crude oil starting from February 10.

China further said that a 15% tariff will be imposed on coal and liquefied natural gas. A 10% tariff will be imposed on crude oil, agricultural machinery, large-displacement cars and pickup trucks.

China's decision comes as retaliatory action after Donald Trump imposed a 10% tariff on goods from China, citing concerns over illegal immigration and the smuggling of drugs, including fentanyl.

ANI

EU ready for 'negotiations' with Trump on trade tariffs

Brussels, Belgium – The European Union is ready to engage in "tough negotiations" with Donald Trump to prevent a trade war between the two sides of the Atlantic, EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said on Tuesday, a day after Canada and Mexico struck last-minute deals with the White House to temporarily avoid the painful imposition of 25% tariffs.

Trump warned on Sunday that tariffs against the bloc would "definitely happen" and be introduced "pretty soon," putting officials and diplomats in Brussels on high alert.

"We will be ready for tough negotiations where needed and to find solutions where possible, to work out any grievances and to set the foundations for a stronger partnership. We will be open and pragmatic in how to achieve that," the European Commission president told the annual gathering of EU Ambassadors in Brussels.

"But we will make it equally clear that we will always protect



Ursula von der Leyen

our own interests – however and whenever that is needed. This will always be the European way."

"The European Union has abused the United States for years, and they can't do that," Trump recently told journalists.

The EU has had a long-standing surplus in goods with the US, worth 155.8bn euro in 2023.

Pharmaceutical products and vehicles were the most valuable exports. But in services, the flows are the opposite: the EU has a recurrent and considerable deficit with the US, worth 104bn euro in 2023.

Trump has focused his complaints on goods, without taking services into account.

(Source: Euronews.com)

AI race: Bill Gates issues key reminder to Nvidia bulls

Brian Sozzi

Staying on top in the AI chip race won't be easy for market darling Nvidia and its founder Jensen Huang, reminds one fellow tech billionaire.

"The fact that Jensen doesn't even make his own chips – that everyone has Taiwan Semiconductor (TSM) available – is all the more credit to him at the design level, the way they have done things is pretty fantastic. I would say I wouldn't want to be Jensen necessarily because wow, other people are working on the same things," Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates told Brian Sozzi on Yahoo Finance's Opening Bid podcast.

Added Gates, "But so far he has stayed way ahead and Microsoft is an incredible customer



Bill Gates

and is always wanting to get as many of his chips as they possibly can. At the same time other big tech companies are working on their own AI chips."

Competition for Nvidia is sprouting up, as Gates correctly points out.

With giants like Amazon announcing an \$8bn partnership with Anthropic to enter the AI chip space and Google dropping

a supercomputer with an AI chip called Willow, it's evident Big Tech companies want in on the action. Further, Broadcom and Marvell have released advanced custom chips.

At the same time, the long-term demand for Nvidia's powerful AI chips is being questioned arguably for the first time.

DeepSeek is a Chinese company that has busted onto the tech landscape seemingly out of nowhere.

It surprised markets and those trading hot AI names like Nvidia and AMD (AMD) after unveiling RI, its AI model that gave a ChatGPT-esque performance at a cheaper price tag. RI costs a reported \$5.6 million to build a base model, compared to the hundreds of millions of dollars incurred at US-based companies such as OpenAI and Anthropic.

Fears mounted instantly that US companies are overspending on AI infrastructure, which includes Nvidia chips.

"So what this [news] basically does is two things. One, it says there's still a lot of innovation left and many companies can aspire to train these models. But, two, it also raises the really interesting question of do you need to spend billions of dollars in order to train cutting-edge, world-class models? I think the jury is still out there for things like that, but it's basically upended our assumptions about where AI is going," Snowflake CEO Sridhar Ramaswamy told me on Opening Bid podcast.

(Source: Yahoo Finance)

Invitation to attend the 8th General Assembly meeting.

The founding board of the Nepalese Community Social Club in Oman is pleased to invite its members and all Nepalese to attend the schedule General Assembly meeting.

With reference to Ministerial Circular No: 242476840 the General Assembly has been scheduled for Friday 28th Feb 2025 in City Center Hotel at Muscat at 11.30 AM.

Agenda of Discussions:

- Activity Report for tenure 2023-2025.
- Financial Reports 2023-2025.
- Election of New Board Members-2025-2027
- Draft Road Map for Tenure -2025-2027.

Notes: The Last day of submission for Board candidate is 13th Feb 2025.

For details and Queries please contact below:

Non-Resident Nepali Social Club Oman
President: 98451839
General Secretary: 96748373
FB Page: <https://www.facebook.com/NRNSC>.

دعوة لحضور اجتماع الجمعية العمومية الثامن

يسر المجلس التأسيسي للنادي الاجتماعي النيبالي في سلطنة عمان دعوة أعضائه وجميع النيباليين لحضور اجتماع الجمعية العامة.

بالإشارة إلى الرسالة الوزارية رقم 242476840 تم تحديد موعد انعقاد اجتماع الجمعية العمومية في يوم الجمعة الموافق 28 فبراير 2025م في فندق سيتي سنتر مسقط وذلك في الساعة 11:30 صباحا.

جدول أعمال المناقشات:

- تقرير النشاط للفترة 2023-2025.
- التقارير المالية 2023-2025.
- انتخاب أعضاء مجلس الإدارة الجديد - 2025-2027
- مسودة خارطة الطريق للفترة 2025-2027.

ملاحظات: آخر يوم لتقديم مرشح مجلس الإدارة هو 13 فبراير - 2025

لزيد من التفاصيل والاستفسارات ، يرجى الاتصال أتناه:

النادي الاجتماعي للنيباليه المقيمه في سلطنة عمان الرئيس: 98451839 ، السكرتير العام: 96748373 صفحة الفيسبوك: <https://www.facebook.com/NRNSC>



International Conference on AI ethics held

An International Conference on Artificial Intelligence: Applications, Innovation and Ethics, organised by the Chair of Artificial Intelligence at the Communications and Information Research Center at Sultan Qaboos University in cooperation with the Omani National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, and Sultan Qaboos University, is being held this week.

The three-day conference is under the patronage of H E Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Commu-

nications, and Information Technology, in the presence of H H Sayyid Dr Fahd bin Al Jolanda bin Majid al Said, chancellor of Sultan Qaboos University, Dr Mahmoud bin Abdullah al Abri, Secretary of the Omani National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, and more than 80 researchers from various Arab and foreign countries in this field.

The conference aims to raise awareness, spread the use and development of new technologies and applications of artificial intelligence, innovation using artificial intelligence and the ethics of artificial intelligence. The conference also discusses



the applications of artificial intelligence in the fields of education, medicine, industry, digital economy, and energy, with the

searchers of great importance to professionals, faculty members, the government sector, industrial partners, researchers,

The conference aims to raise awareness, spread the use and development of new technologies and applications as well as innovation and ethics of using AI

use of artificial intelligence to predict and monitor tsunamis and earthquakes, in addition to discussing the ethics of artificial intelligence.

It includes 15 sessions during which 90 working papers are presented by over 80 re-

students, and those interested in this field. The event also provides an opportunity to communicate with different international groups of artificial intelligence users, and benefit from the insightful lectures presented at the conference.

Lynk & Co 06 to hit the roads in Oman

Lynk and Co in Oman is redefining the future of mobility, standing apart as a globally inspired brand that thrives on personalisation, openness and connectivity.

With a philosophy rooted in innovation and forward-thinking, Lynk & Co combines European design, cutting-edge technology, global manufacturing and international sales to create cars that speak to a bold, modern lifestyle, a press release said.

Over the years, Lynk and Co has introduced a versatile lineup of cars that have captured the imagination of car enthusiasts worldwide. From the smart and premium SUV Lynk and Co 01 to the racing-inspired Lynk and Co 03 and 03+, the adventurous Lynk and Co 05 AWD SUV, and the luxurious seven-seater Lynk and Co 09, each model is a masterpiece that blends value,



safety, technology, performance, and design. This dynamic range has cemented Lynk and Co as a brand built for those who demand the extraordinary.

Now, Lynk and Co is ready to take the next leap with the upcoming 06 - a sporty, edgy SUV that is set to innovate driving experiences. This exciting new

model boasts dynamic control for a thrilling drive, a trendsetting exterior that turns heads, and powerful performance that delivers on every front. The 06 offers a more comprehensive, comfortable and richer experience, seamlessly blending advanced technology with its bold design.

Middle eastern musician begins 2025 world tour

Renowned Lebanese-Armenian musician, pianist, and composer, Guy Manoukian, whose career spans over 30 years has announced he will bring his talents to stages across the globe with his 2025 World Tour.

Produced by Live Nation, the tour will traverse major cities across North America and Europe, with performances in Mexico City, Los Angeles, Detroit, Toronto, Montreal, Brooklyn, and Paris, a press release said.

This groundbreaking event marks the global tour debut of Middle Eastern artist, Guy Manoukian, presented by Live Nation. Manoukian's exceptional talent for blending global melodies with con-



temporary arrangements has earned him a reputation as one of the world's most innovative musicians. Having performed on some of the most renowned stages such as the Sydney Opera House, London Palladium, Dubai Opera, and Olympia in Paris, this tour extends his groundbreaking artistry to new heights.



Abu Dhabi centre leads regional breast cancer study

The Fatima bint Mubarak Center at Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi, part of the M42 group, becomes the first centre in the GCC region to participate in a groundbreaking global therapeutic clinical trial aimed at reducing the recurrence of breast cancer.

Funded by AstraZeneca, the trial is evaluating a new anti-estrogen medication that could potentially become the next standard of care for breast cancer patients, contingent on successful study results and regulatory approvals, a press release said.

The trial focuses on a drug from the family of Selective Estrogen Receptor Degradator (SERD), which is designed to block estrogen receptors more effectively than current medications. The study aims to compare this new drug to existing hormone therapies to determine its effectiveness in reducing cancer recurrence.

According to the World Health Organization, breast cancer is the second most common cancer worldwide and the leading cause of cancer-related mortality in women. In the UAE, breast cancer was the leading cause of cancer death in 2019, accounting for approximately 11.6% of cancer deaths annually, as reported by the Ministry of Health and Prevention.

As the first dedicated cancer center of its kind in the UAE, the Fatima bint Mubarak Center has transformed cancer care in the region through state-of-the-art innovations and advanced technologies, underscoring its commitment to providing compassionate and comprehensive care. By conducting ongoing research and pioneering clinical trials, the cancer center is actively studying the regional population to address and reduce health inequities. This approach not only enhances personalized care but also contributes to a deeper understanding of the unique health challenges in the region, paving the way for more equitable healthcare outcomes for all.

Emphasizing the significance of such trials, Dr Stephen Grobmyer, Institute Chair of the Oncology Institute at Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi, said, "Clinical trials are less common in the GCC region, which raises health equity concerns. Our participation in this breast cancer trial reflects our commitment to offering patients cutting-edge treatments while contributing to global understanding of how these treatments work across diverse populations. Therapeutic clinical trials are considered to be the gold standard in oncology.



Grand Millennium floats 'Moonlit Retreat' for V-day

Grand Millennium Muscat is inviting couples to escape the ordinary and indulge in a dreamy Valentine's Day staycation.

Nestled amidst the vibrant city, the hotel offers a haven of tranquillity and luxury, perfect for creating unforgettable memories, a press release said.

Designed as an ultimate staycation experience, the hotel's 'Moonlit Retreat' is set to captivate senses and create unforget-

table memories for guests. Whether one is seeking a luxurious escape in an elegant suite or a cozy deluxe room, the hotel's exclusive Valentine's offers promise an enchanting getaway, complete with lavish pampering, gourmet dining, and serene relaxation.

As the evening sets in, guests can indulge in a moonlit dining experience at Arayik Pool side, besides a luxurious stay.

Rise Studios announces filming of 'Love Conquers All' movie

Rise Studios, a Dubai-based entertainment company driving investment into content from regional markets, has announced its latest feature film, Love Conquers All is in production.

Written by filmmaker Danielle Arbid, the film features a cast led by celebrated Palestinian actress Hiam Abbass and rising talent Amine Benrachid, a press release said.

Love Conquers All tells the moving story of Suzanne, a sixty-something widow in Beirut, and Osmane, a young Sudanese migrant. Their love, forged amidst societal judgment and chaos, explores themes of resilience, cultural divides, and the transformative power of human connection. Co-produced by Rise Studios, Easy Riders Films, and



About Productions, the film tackles pressing issues such as migration, identity, and defying societal norms—all delivered with bold storytelling and a stylish cinematic approach.

The film is being produced by Omar El Kadi and Nadia Turincev on behalf of the Parisian firm Easy Riders Films, Georges

Schoucair for the Lebanese production house About Productions and co-produced by Ziad Srouji for Rise Studios. Pre-purchased by ART for the Middle East, the feature film also enjoys support from the Hubert Bals + Europe Fund, the Image de la Francophonie Fund, and the Red Sea Souk Jury Special Mention.

Knowledge Oman joins TEDx to support 'Voice of Change'

Knowledge Oman, a leading community-knowledge sharing platform in the sultanate, in collaboration with TEDx talk, an independently organised event of the world-renowned TED series, is all set to inspire change via a themed event titled 'Voice of Change'.

The event is scheduled to take place on April 19 at Bait Al Zubair. It will be supported by Orbit Events Management, a press release said.

A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Knowledge Oman Founder, Tariq Hilal al Barwani, and Nasser al Kindy, Orbit Leading projects director, representing licence holders of the TEDx Al Qurum, in the presence of Balqees al Hasani, Knowledge Oman president, and G Ramesh, Orbit Leading Projects CEO. The partnership underscores a shared vision of fostering intellectual growth, innovation, and dialogue within Oman's vibrant community.

"We are thrilled to bring TEDx Al Qurum to life with the support of Knowledge Oman and Orbit Events Management. This partnership exemplifies the spirit of



collaboration that drives change, and we look forward to inspiring our audience to think, dream, and act differently," said Ramesh, the curator of TEDx Al Qurum.

Barwani added, "Stirring up

the youth and guiding them on the path of self-discovery is one of Knowledge Oman's main aims. We therefore are honoured to support and also work closely with TEDx Al Qurum's to make 'Voice of Change' of a reality."

TEDx Al Qurum promises to be a platform where minds meet, ideas converge, and voices spark the change the world needs. The theme 'Voice of Change' reflects the event's mission to amplify

ideas that challenge norms, inspire action, and encourage transformation across all facets of life.

The carefully curated lineup of speakers will address diverse topics, ranging from technology

and sustainability to personal development and societal progress. Over 10 elite local and international speakers from diverse backgrounds will share their perspectives on creating meaningful change in society.

Sohar International sponsors Al Bashair Festival

Sohar International serves as the Strategic Sponsor for the 8th Al Bashair Festival 2025, a premier camel racing event set to take place from February 10 to 15 in Adam, in Dakhliyah region.

This sponsorship reflects the bank's commitment to preserving Oman's rich heritage while fostering economic diversification and strengthening synergies between the private and public sectors, a press release said.

As a key contributor to national progress, Sohar International continues to champion initiatives that drive cultural, social, and economic value. The Al Bashair Festival, a cornerstone of Oman's cultural calendar, not only celebrates tradition but also stimulates tourism, entrepreneurship, and local business growth. Through this collaboration, Sohar International reinforces its role as an enabler of sustainable development.

Dhofar Islamic's Youth Account empowers youth

Dhofar Islamic Youth Account is designed to meet the unique financial needs of Omani youth to help them achieve their various ambitions and dreams to reach financial independence and build responsible future leaders.

This youth-oriented account is a testament to Dhofar Islamic's commitment to empowering youth through flexible and convenient banking solutions that enable them to achieve financial independence from an early age, as it is specifically designed to meet the needs of youth between the ages of 18 and 23, a press release said.

The Youth Account is a Shari'a compliant savings account (based on Mudarabah principles) specially crafted to cater to the unique needs of youth aged between 18 and 23 years. It comes with no minimum balance requirement and allows free fund transfers through mobile payment service ensuring that young account holders can enjoy their banking experience without any extra fees. This innovative youth-centric account is a testament to Dhofar Islamic's commitment to empowering the youth with convenient and flexible banking solutions that enable financial independence from an



The Youth Account is a Shari'a compliant savings account (based on Mudarabah principles) crafted for youth aged 18-23 years

early age.

Amor Said al Amri, DGM and head of Retail Banking - Dhofar Islamic said, "Our Youth Account is designed to empower the young generation to learn essential money management skills, take control of their finances and build a strong finan-

cial foundation for their future. We are committed to providing them with the tools they need to start their career and achieve their financial goals."

Dhofar Islamic is one of the leading Islamic windows in Oman setting the standard for the best customer experience within the banking industry in the Sultanate of Oman by adopting best international banking practices. It is also committed to following the best international practices in the Islamic banking sector. Therefore, Dhofar Islamic is keen to meet the aspirations of its valued customers by providing offers and services that are compatible with Islamic Sharia.

Social Development Committee meets

The Social Development Committee in Muscat held its first meeting in 2025 headed by Ali bin Said al Saidi, Wali of Muscat and chairman of the committee.

During the meeting, the new committee membership for the period from 2025 to 2028 and the committee's specialisations and roles to enhance social and voluntary work were reviewed. Additionally, the regulations of the social development committees and voluntary teams were discussed.

The Muscat Charity Team reviewed its work and achievements during 2024. They highlighted the implemented voluntary initiatives and pro-



grammes for the wilayat's service, discussed the assistance requests received from the Department of Social Development, and took appropriate recommendations to support these

requests.

The Social Development Committee is specialised to propose social projects that benefit the wilayat according to its priorities and submit them to the

Ministry of Social Development. It also supports and organises voluntary work and encourages projects that achieve continuous income to individuals and families with low income.

GEMS, EON tie up to push AI in classrooms

GEMS Education has announced a partnership with EON Reality, a company specialising in AI-assisted Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality-based knowledge transfer. The collaboration will see EON Reality's innovative platform introduced into classrooms across all GEMS schools.

As part of the initiative, GEMS students will be able to access the millions of assets available on the EON Reality platform. In ad-



dition, over 5,000 students and teachers will work together to create new educational content using Extended Reality (XR) software, a press release said.

This content will be accessible to all GEMS schools on multiple devices, including laptops, tablets, and virtual reality (VR) headsets, allowing for flexible and interactive learning experiences. The partnership reflects GEMS' commitment to leveraging latest technologies.

OETC hosts CIGRE International Steering Committee meeting

As part of its commitment to strengthening collaborative relations with various institutions, experts, and specialists in the energy and electricity sector worldwide, and providing platforms for knowledge and experience exchange, Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) and GCC CIGRE recently hosted the Steering Committee Meetings of the International Council for Large Electric Systems (CIGRE) and the GCC Regional Committee for Large Electric System (GCC CIGRE).

The meetings took place from February 3 to 5, and was at-



tended by chairmen, CEOs, and representatives from various Omani authorities and institutions, alongside more than 20 members of the CIGRE International Steering Committee from different countries, a press release said.

The visit programme included a series of meetings with key sector officials and stakeholders, as well as field visits to Omani factories, Grid Stations, and specialised centres. A key session held at OETC provided an overview of Oman's and GCC's electricity sector, its developments, structure, and the company's role within the sector.

Additionally, the visit featured a tour in the OETC's specialised centres, to gain insights into Oman's experience in managing the electricity sector and to learn from global best practices.

Eng Ahmed Abdullah al Rahbi, Corporate Affairs' general manager at OETC and Oman's representative in GCC CIGRE, emphasised the significance of such meetings and periodic engagements with global institutions, experts, and specialists to ensure that Oman remains up-to-date with sector advancements and innovations in various areas while applying the best industry practices.

Trump places Rubio in charge of USAID

Washington, D.C., US - US president Donald Trump appointed Secretary of State Marco Rubio as acting administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), confirming the de-facto takeover of the humanitarian agency by the State Department.

The news came hours after American tech billionaire Elon Musk charged with overhauling the federal government, said President Donald Trump had signed off on shutting the agency down. Democrats say that it is not legal for the president to shutter a federal agency without consulting Congress.

The US State Department shared a post on X, stating that a review of USAID foreign assistance activities is underway, with the possibility of reorganisation.

This move is aimed at ensuring USAID's activities align with the core national interests of the United States and the 'America First' agenda.

According to the Department of State, USAID has strayed from its original mission of advancing American interests abroad, with significant portions of its funding not aligned with US national interests. To address this, President Donald Trump has appointed Secretary Marco Rubio as Acting Administrator of USAID.

"The United States Agency for International Development



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said he has been put in charge of USAID, claiming he would stop its 'insubordination' to President Trump's agenda

(USAID) has long strayed from its original mission of responsibly advancing American interests abroad, and it is now abundantly clear that significant portions of USAID funding are not aligned with the core national interests of the United States," US State Department wrote on X.

"As an interim step toward

gaining control and better understanding over the agency's activity, President Donald Trump appointed Secretary Marco Rubio as Acting Administrator. Secretary Rubio has also now notified Congress that a review of USAID's foreign assistance activities is underway with an eye towards potential reorganisation," it added.

Further the post said: "As we evaluate USAID and ensure it is in alignment with an America First agenda and the efforts of the State Department, we will continue to protect the American people's interests and ensure their tax dollars are not wasted."

Democrats blocked

Meanwhile, a group of Senate and House Democrats were blocked from entering the headquarters of USAID on Monday as they protested efforts by Trump administration to dismantle it.

The lawmakers, led by Senator Chris Van Hollen of Maryland, were denied entry by

Trump plans to defund Education Department

Washington, D.C., US - US President Donald Trump is planning an executive order to defund and dismantle the Education Department, aiming for its eventual closure, fulfilling a longtime conservative goal, according to local media.

About 20 staff members from Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency - a new advisory committee, not a Cabinet division like education - have joined the Education Department to cut costs and trim staff, according to *The Washington Post*.

Conservatives strongly criticised the Education Department under former President Joe Biden, especially over student loan forgiveness and expanded LGBTQ protections. Some Republicans have

suggested it would be better to wait until Trump's nominee for education secretary, Linda McMahon, has her Senate confirmation hearings. Her confirmation has been delayed as the government ethics office reviews her paperwork, according to a Senate aide.

The executive order will not shut down the department, as only Congress can do that. While legislation to eliminate it is possible, it would require 60 Senate votes, including support from at least seven Democrats, who generally support the department.

US conservatives have long argued that education should be a local responsibility, also claiming that liberals try to use federal mandates to promote left-wing ideas.

security officials at the building in Washington, D.C. "Trying to shut down the Agency for International Development by executive order is plain illegal," Van Hollen said in front of the USAID building. "This is a clear violation of our law," Representative Ilhan Omar echoed the concern.

"We are witnessing a constitutional crisis. We talked about

Trump wanting to be a dictator on day one - and here we are. This is what the beginning of a dictatorship looks like," she said.

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said he has been put in charge of USAID, claiming he would stop its 'insubordination' to President Donald Trump's agenda.

Agencies



UK launches AI breast cancer screening trial

London, UK - Nearly 700,000 women in the UK will participate in a large-scale National Health Service (NHS) trial to assess artificial intelligence (AI) in breast cancer screening, local media reported on Tuesday.

It is aiming to improve diagnosis speed and ease pressure on radiologists, BBC reported.

The £11mn (US\$13.75mn) early detection using Information Technology in Health (Edith) trial, set to begin in April, will test five AI platforms across 30 sites. Women already scheduled for routine screenings will be invited to take part.

Currently, two radiologists review mammograms for accuracy. The AI system could allow one specialist to complete the process, helping to reduce waiting times.

With over two million mammograms conducted annually, the technology could significantly impact NHS workload.

Lucy Chappell, the Department of Health and Social Care's chief scientific adviser, described the study as a 'significant step forward' in lever-

aging technology to enhance patient care.

Meanwhile, Health Secretary Wes Streeting emphasised the urgency of addressing the country's cancer survival rates and committed to unveiling a comprehensive national cancer plan.

The £11mn (US\$13.75mn) early detection using Information Technology in Health (Edith) trial, set to begin in April, will test five AI platforms across 30 sites

However, the Royal College of Radiologists warned of a 30% shortage in radiologists, emphasising that AI alone will not resolve capacity issues.

The government has also launched a public call for evidence to shape its forthcoming national cancer strategy.

Anadolu Agency

DRC: Rebel alliance announces ceasefire

Kinshasa, DR Congo - The alliance of rebel groups that captured the Democratic Republic of the Congo's strategic eastern city of Goma have declared a ceasefire in the region for humanitarian reasons.

The pause in the rebels' fight with the Congolese army - slated to begin on Tuesday - comes after hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced and amid mounting calls for a safe passage of aid.

Rebel alliance includes M23

The group called the Congo River Alliance also includes the Rwanda-backed M23 rebels, who were reported to be gaining territory in other eastern parts of the country while advancing on South Kivu's provincial capital, Bukavu.

However, the rebel alliance said in its statement on Monday that it had no intention of seizing Bukavu.

"It must be made clear that we have no intention of capturing Bukavu or other areas. However,



UN agencies said that at least 900 people have been killed in last week's fighting in Goma

we reiterate our commitment to protecting and defending the civilian population and our positions," M23 rebel spokesperson Lawrence Kanyuka said.

There was no immediate statement from Congo's government.

Last week, Congo River Alliance leader Corneille Nangaa said the militias would march 'all the way to Kinshasa'.

Hundreds dead in Goma

On Monday, UN agencies said that at least 900 people were killed in last week's fighting in Goma.

The figure was presented by the UN's humanitarian affairs agency (OCHA), citing the World Health Organization (WHO).

The M23 rebel group captured

Goma, which is Congo's largest city in the east and a major hub for humanitarian operations, on January 27. According to UN experts, the M23 rebels are backed by nearly 4,000 soldiers from neighbouring Rwanda.

The escalation ignited fears of regional wars like those between 1996 and 2003, that left millions dead, mostly from hunger and disease.

Long-running conflict

The roots of the conflict in Congo lie in part in decades-long ethnic strife.

M23 says it is defending the ethnic Tutsis in the country against ethnic Hutu militias like the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), which was founded by Hutus who fled to Congo from Rwanda after taking part in the 1994 genocide of 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Rwanda alleges that the FDLR is 'fully integrated' into the Congolese military but Congo denies the charges.

Kinshasa in turn accuses Rwanda of using M23 to take control of mineral-rich areas in eastern Congo. Authorities in Congo have previously said that they are open to dialogue to find a solution for the long-running conflict, but the talks must be done within the framework of earlier peace agreements.

Rwanda and the rebel alliance accuse Congo of faltering on previous peace deals.

DW

US troops at Guantanamo to build detention centre

Washington, D.C., US - US troops arrived at the scandal-plagued US naval facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba over the weekend to set up a migrant detention centre ordered by President Donald Trump, the Pentagon confirmed on Monday.

"At the direction of the President of the United States to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Defence, US military service members arrived at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay this weekend where they joined service members already at the base supporting illegal alien holding operations led by DHS," it said.

Over 150 troops from both the Marines and Army are now on-site to assist with the construction of a facility that Trump wants to be able to hold some 30,000 undocumented migrants.



That is a significant hike from the 780 detainees held there during the height of the US War on Terror. Guantanamo is home to the infamous military prison where prisoners have been held, and often subject to torture, for years in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terror attacks on the

US homeland.

Trump on Wednesday directed the Pentagon to establish a new facility to hold 'the worst criminal illegal aliens threatening the American people'.

"Some of them are so bad we don't even trust the countries to hold them, because we don't

want them coming back," he said.

The move adds another expensive last-minute task for the military, as officials are also trying to fulfil a separate order from Trump to deploy more troops to the southern border.

Meanwhile, people gathered on Monday in Los Angeles for a

second consecutive day in protest of Trump's immigration policies.

Waving Mexican and El Salvadoran flags, they carried banners that said 'Immigration Built This Nation', 'No I.C.E.', 'Abolish I.C.E.' and 'I did not serve this country for you to belittle my people'.

From his first day in office on January 20, Trump signed executive orders aimed at expelling large numbers of immigrants, including measures to end birthright citizenship. In the weeks that followed, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) intensified its daily raids.

The raids have created an atmosphere of fear, with authorities reportedly targeting immigrants in everyday settings.

Anadolu Agency

Netanyahu in US: What he seeks and will Trump deliver for Israel?

The meeting comes at a crucial time, as Netanyahu struggles to keep his fragile coalition together

Istanbul, Turkey - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is set to become the first foreign leader to meet with US President Donald Trump on Tuesday, a visit that comes amid ongoing uncertainty over the Gaza ceasefire and Israel's escalating violence in the West Bank.

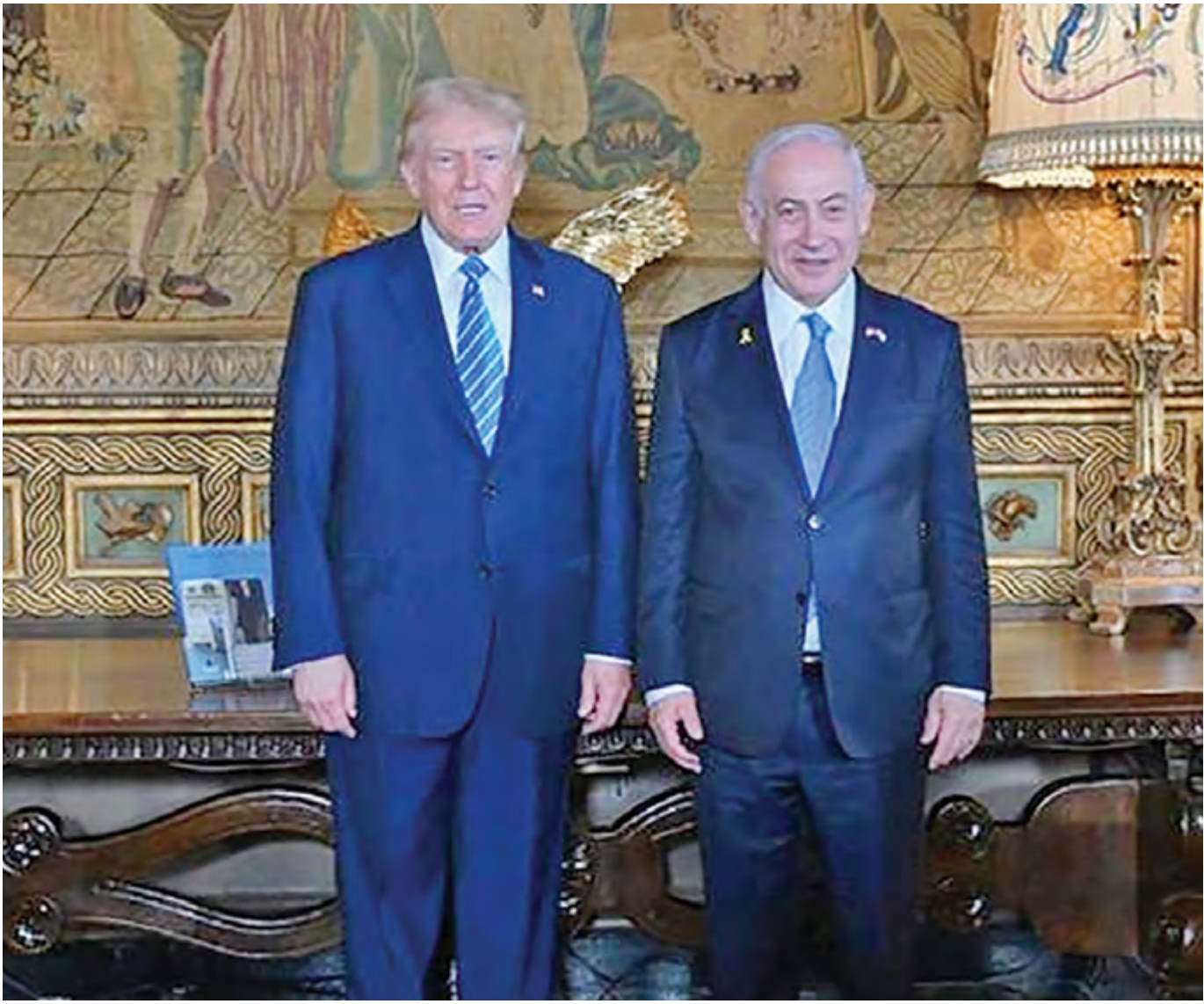
While Trump and Netanyahu, the latter accused by the International Criminal Court (ICC) of war crimes in Gaza, have long shared a close relationship, experts suggest that the dynamics between them may be shifting.

Mairav Zonszein, a senior analyst on Israel with the International Crisis Group, pointed out that Netanyahu's political standing has weakened considerably since the last time he met Trump.

"This is Trump's second term, and this is Netanyahu coming in after having lost a lot of popularity within Israel and coming in as a weaker leader - somebody who promised to destroy Hamas, and now we see that he's been kind of forced by Trump to enter a ceasefire deal without having achieved those war objectives," Zonszein told Anadolu.

With Gaza a major point of discussion, the analyst emphasised that Trump 'wants to get Gaza off of his plate and move on to other things'.

The meeting comes at a crucial time, Zonszein added, as Netanyahu struggles to keep his fragile coalition together by making promises that he cannot deliver, which could create tensions in his talks with Trump. "There's going to be tensions on that level, and I think they also have obviously different ideas of how to move forward on certain issues, whether it's in Gaza or on Iran."



However, she added that Netanyahu is likely to try to align himself with Trump's priorities as much as possible.

Ahron Bregman, a political scientist and former Israeli military officer, expects the meeting to be outwardly friendly but tense behind the scenes. "What we will see in Washington when Trump and Netanyahu meet is a lot of smiles and handshaking. Behind the

scenes, however, it will be brutal," he said. "Netanyahu never counted on Biden, but he is wary of Trump, as the president is unpredictable. They don't see eye to eye. Netanyahu wants the Gaza war to continue, while Trump wants a deal with Saudi Arabia. For an agreement with the Saudis, Trump needs to end the Gaza war."

Will Israel resume Gaza war?

One of the most pressing issues on the agenda will be the status of the ceasefire in Gaza and whether Israel will resume its deadly war, which has killed or wounded around 160,000 Palestinians and left the enclave in complete ruins. Before departing for the US, Netanyahu delayed sending his negotiating team to Qatar for talks on the second phase of the ceasefire agreement, choosing to wait until after his meeting with Trump, according to Israeli media reports.

Analysts believe that Trump will exert heavy pressure on Netanyahu to advance the ceasefire process, which will lead to the release of more Israeli hostages while also paving the way for an Israeli military withdrawal from Gaza and end to the war. Zonszein reiterated that Trump is eager to move past the conflict in Gaza and focus on other regional and domestic issues, including Israel-Saudi Arabia normalisation.

"Trump put a lot of political capital behind the ceasefire deal, so he clearly wants it to happen," she explained.

However, she pointed out that Trump has also suggested controversial ideas, such as transferring Palestinians from Gaza - an idea that aligns with the Israeli far-right's objectives.

"So, what Trump wants is to end the war and remove Hamas from power," she said. "Netanyahu can probably live with that - if there's actually a way to get Hamas out of power in Gaza, which I think is highly unrealistic."

Despite Trump's pressure, Netanyahu has actively worked against the ceasefire, as his political survival depends on continuing the war, said the expert.

"The question is how much Trump is going to push him, and what he can bring back to his coalition members, specifically the finance minister (Bezalel Smotrich)," Zonszein added.

Another major topic expected to be discussed behind closed doors is Israeli settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank and the possibility of annexation.

Bank since the minute that the Gaza ceasefire went into effect, and this government in Israel has a very clear agenda of annexing the West Bank."

She also noted that several key figures in Trump's administration - such as Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee and UN Ambassador Elise Stefanik - are strong supporters of Israeli settlements and annexation. "The question is how much that will play a role in Trump's bigger plan with Saudi normalisation," she said.

"Because there's no way

What we will see in Washington when Trump and Netanyahu meet is a lot of smiles and handshaking. Behind the scenes, it will be brutal

AHRON BREGMAN

Netanyahu's government has aggressively increased settlement activity and violence against Palestinians in the West Bank, while also openly expressing its ambition to annex parts of the territory.

Trump, as recently as Monday, left the door open to the possibility of Israel annexing more West Bank territory.

Responding to a question by reporters in the Oval Office, he said: "Well, I'm not going to talk about that. It certainly is a small country in terms of land."

"Actually, it's a pretty small piece of land, and it's amazing that they've been able to do what they've been able to do. When you think about it, it's a lot of good smart brain power, but it is a very small piece of land, no question about it."

Zonszein believes the issue will be addressed during the meeting, though it may not take centre stage.

"It'll be discussed in some way, obviously," she said.

"Israel has really increased its violence and raids in the West

Trump can move on Saudi normalisation while giving Israel the West Bank. That's just not going to work."

While she believes West Bank annexation is not currently a priority for Trump, she warned that Israel has already been annexing the territory in practice.

Finally, Trump and Netanyahu are expected to discuss the future governance of Gaza.

According to Bregman, both leaders will emphasise the need to remove Hamas from power, but their strategies will differ.

"Trump will want to see Hamas toppled not by direct war, but by promoting his idea of transferring Gazans from the Strip to other places, something which will never work," he said.

"Trump will also suggest introducing elements from the Palestinian Authority (PA) to the Strip, something which Netanyahu is already implementing, though he won't admit it. He has agreed to Abu Mazen's (Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas) people operating the Rafah crossing."

Anadolu Agency

UK recalls 120,000 military armour plates

London, UK - Britain's Defence Ministry has reportedly issued an emergency recall of 120,000 body armour plates used by the military due to potentially dangerous cracks, *The Guardian* reported.

Microscopic cracks were discovered in aging enhanced combat body armour (ECBA), which was supposed to be replaced in 2023, the daily reported.

However, the previous government reportedly delayed the replacements to cut costs. Armed Forces Minister Luke Pollard ordered the urgent replacement of the lightweight armour in a letter sent to military chiefs last week.

The gear is still widely used by the navy and by army personnel in low-threat environments.

Ruling Labour Party officials have accused the Conservatives of leaving troops vulnerable with 'defective body armour', comparing the situation to shortages of protective equipment for healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Hamas accuses Israel of delaying aid into Gaza

Gaza City, Palestine - Palestinian resistance group Hamas accused Israel on Tuesday of procrastinating on allowing access to humanitarian aid into Gaza under a ceasefire agreement.

Group spokesman Hazem Qassem said Israel deliberately delays and obstructs the entry of the most urgent needs, especially tents, prefabricated houses, fuel and heavy equipment for removing rubble.

"What has been accomplished in this regard is well below the agreed minimum, which means a lack of clear commitment regarding the relief and humanitarian aspects," he added. Hamas called on mediators and guarantors of the Gaza ceasefire 'to intervene and address the imbalance in implementing the humanitarian protocol of the deal'.

Israel 'left behind massive destruction, especially in northern Gaza, where the occupation destroyed all aspects of life there... which makes relief a central track in the ceasefire agreement', Qassem said.

According to Gaza's government media office, the 15-month Israeli onslaught destroyed 88% of Gaza's infrastructure.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian government formed a 'working committee' on Tuesday to oversee the Gaza Strip following Israel's genocidal war.

"The Palestinian government, led by President Mahmoud Abbas, has decided to form a

working committee to manage the affairs of the Gaza Strip," Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa told a Cabinet meeting.

"The government...is working to accelerate the delivery of humanitarian aid, open roads, remove rubble, and provide suitable gatherings to shelter those whose homes were destroyed, in preparation for comprehensive reconstruction," he added.

Besides, Jordan's foreign minister said on Tuesday that an Arab ministerial meeting held last week sent a message that Arabs are ready to work with the US to achieve peace in the Middle East based on the two-state solution.

Anadolu Agency

Trump wants Ukraine's rare earth minerals in exchange for military aid

Washington, D.C., US - President Donald Trump said on Monday that Ukraine should provide the US with its rare earth minerals in exchange for Washington's continued support in the war against Russia.

Speaking to reporters in the Oval Office, Trump said Washington and Kyiv are engaged in ongoing talks over the matter, adding: "We're actually working some deals right now, so we have some guarantees and some other things to keep that whole situation going."

Trump complained that the US is providing Ukraine with more economic and military aid than Europe and suggested Kyiv is open to his proposal.

"We're telling Ukraine they have very valuable rare earth. We want what we put up to go in terms of a guarantee. We want a guarantee. We're handing them money hand over fist," he said. "I want to have security of rare earth. We're putting in hundreds of billions of dollars. They have great rare earth, and I want security of the rare earth. And they're willing to do it."

Trump has repeatedly vowed to end Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine and has blamed both Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky for the conflict, which is slated to enter its



Trump has repeatedly vowed to end Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine

fourth year later this month.

Ukraine is sitting on massive reserves of critical rare earth minerals. It holds about 5% of

Ukraine is sitting on massive reserves of critical rare earth minerals. It holds about 5% of the world's total of mineral resources

the world's total of mineral resources, according to a 2024 World Economic Forum report.

In addition to having one of the largest confirmed reserves of lithium, Ukraine boasts semiconductor-grade neon gas that is critical for chip production, beryllium, uranium, zirconium, ap-

atite, iron ore and manganese.

Meanwhile, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has criticised Donald Trump's proposal to exchange military aid for Ukraine's rare earth minerals, calling such an approach 'selfish' and 'self-centred'.

Speaking at a news conference in Brussels late on Monday, at the end of a EU leaders' summit, Scholz said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's 'Victory plan' includes detailed proposals on how Ukraine's raw materials can be used for post-war rebuilding efforts.

"We should use the country's resources to finance everything that is needed after the war. It would be very selfish and very self-centred to say: We are using the money to fund defence support now," Scholz said.

Anadolu Agency

Indian PM Modi to visit White House next week: Report

Washington, D.C., US - Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to visit the White House next week at the invitation of US President Donald Trump, Reuters reported citing a White House official.

The invitation comes days after a recent phone call between the two leaders on January 27, where both the leaders emphasised their commitment to advance the US-India strategic partnership and the Indo-Pacific Quad partnership.

During the call on January 27, Trump spoke about immigration and stressed the importance of India buying more American-made security equipment and fair bilateral trading ties.

“The two leaders discussed expanding and deepening cooperation. They also discussed a range of regional issues, including security in the Indo-Pacific, the Middle East, and Europe,” the White House statement following the call read.

“The President emphasised the importance of India increasing its procurement of American-made security equipment and moving toward a fair bilateral trading relationship,” it added.

The leaders also discussed plans for PM Modi’s visit to the White House, and Indo-Pacific Quad partnership, with India hosting Quad Leaders for the first time later this year.



This file photo shows Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi shaking hand with US President Donald Trump during the joint press statement, at Hyderabad House in New Delhi, India on February 25, 2020 (ANI)

“The leaders discussed plans for Prime Minister Modi to visit the White House, underscoring the strength of the friendship and strategic ties between our nations. Both leaders emphasised their commitment to advance the US-India strategic partnership and the Indo-Pacific Quad partnership, with India hosting Quad Leaders for the first time later this year,” the statement read.

The two countries have a significant trade relationship, with bilateral trade exceeding US\$118bn in 2023-24 with India posting a trade surplus of US\$32bn, as per Reuters.

India, a strategic partner of the United States in its efforts to counter China, is keen to enhance trade relations with the US and make it easier for its citizens to get skilled worker visas.

PM Modi was one of the first leaders to congratulate Trump on his re-election. He also held a telephone conversation with him on November 6, congratulating him on his re-election as the President of the United States of America as well as the Republican Party’s success in the Congressional elections.

Modi and Trump share warm and friendly ties. The bonhomie between the two leaders had seen the coming together of India and the US on various global issues.

ANI

US deports over 200 Indian nationals by military aircraft

New Delhi, India - A US military aircraft is bringing back more than 200 Indians deported from the US, according to a media report on Tuesday.

Local broadcaster NDTV, citing sources, reported that a US C-17 military aircraft is returning the Indian nationals and that ‘each deported Indian national is verified, indicating New Delhi’s involvement in the deportation process’.

“This is likely the first of many such flights that will bring illegal Indian immigrants in the US back,” the report said.

The Indian Foreign Ministry has yet to issue a statement on the matter.

Since US President Donald Trump took office, the US has conducted several military flights - to Guatemala, Honduras, and Ecuador - to return illegal immigrants to their respective countries.

The US president has said that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured him that India ‘will do what’s right’ regarding the deportation of illegal Indian migrants.

Last month, the Indian Foreign Ministry said the South Asian nation ‘is firmly opposed to illegal migration, especially as it is linked to other forms of organised crime’.

“As part of India-US migration and mobility cooperation,



both sides are engaged in a process to deter illegal migration, while also creating more avenues for legal migration from India to the US,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Randhir Jaiswal said on January 31.

However, he added that the Indian government ‘would need to do the required verification, including nationality of the concerned individuals before they are deported to India’.

Additionally, the Pentagon has begun providing flights to

A local broadcaster, citing sources, reported that a US C-17 military aircraft is returning the Indian nationals and that each deported Indian national is verified, indicating New Delhi’s involvement in the process

deport over 5,000 immigrants held in US facilities in El Paso, Texas, and San Diego, California. Military flights are a costly way to transport migrants. According to Reuters, a military deportation flight to Guatemala last week likely cost at least US\$4,675 per migrant, Reuters reported.

White House Press Secretary had announced on January 24 that ‘the largest massive deportation operation in history is well underway’.

Sharing a post on X, Karoline Leavitt said: “The Trump Administration also deported hundreds of illegal immigrant criminals via military aircraft. The largest massive deportation operation in history is well underway. Promises made. Promises kept.”

In another post, she said: “The Trump Administration arrested 538 illegal immigrant criminals including a suspected terrorist, four members of the Tren de Aragua gang, and several illegals convicted of sex crimes against minors. Deportation flights have begun. President Trump is sending a strong and clear message to the entire world: if you illegally enter the United States of America, you will face severe consequences.”

Agencies

At least 5 shot at Swedish school

Stockholm, Sweden - Swedish police are responding to a shooting incident at a school in Orebro city, about 200km (125 miles) west of Stockholm, police said on Tuesday, adding that at least five people were shot.

Police said the incident ‘involves threats of lethal force’, advising the public to stay away from the school and the hospital.

“This is currently seen as attempted murder, arson and aggravated weapons offense,” the police statement read.

Ambulances, rescue services and police forces were at the site of the shooting, a spokesperson for local rescue services said. The severity of the injuries sustained by the shooting victims was unclear.

Police denied in an update that any of its officers were shot.

“The reports of violence in Orebro are very serious. The police are on site and the operation is in full swing,” Justice Minister Gunnar Strömmer told Swedish news agency TT, adding that the government was in close contact with the police and was closely following developments.

DW

At least 44 killed in attack by rebel faction in Sudan

Khartoum, Sudan - At least 44 civilians were killed and 28 wounded in an attack by a faction of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu on Kadugli, the capital of South Kordofan state in southern Sudan, authorities announced on Monday.

The SPLM-N has been fighting the Sudanese army in South Kordofan and Blue Nile since 2011, demanding special status for the two regions.

According to a Sudanese government spokesperson, SPLM-N forces shelled Kadugli with artillery fire on Monday morning, causing casualties among civilians, including women and children. Among the dead was Imam Nizar Mohamed Tom, a preacher at the historic Kadugli Old Mosque.

South Kordofan Governor



Mohamed Ibrahim Abdel Karim condemned the attack, describing it as ‘a brutal aggression against civilians’.

He said the Sudanese army responded effectively, inflicting heavy losses on the rebels in terms of personnel, vehicles and equipment, while also seizing weapons and ammunition.

Sudanese military commander Faisal Mukhtar of the 14th Infantry Division said the armed forces had regained control of

the situation in Kadugli.

The SPLM-N is yet to comment on the attack.

This escalation in South Kordofan comes as the Sudanese army expands its control in Khartoum and Al Jazirah states, where it has been engaged in a brutal conflict with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since April 2023. The war has resulted in more than 20,000 deaths and displaced nearly 14mn people.

Anadolu Agency

South Korea fears being sidelined by revival of Trump-Kim relations

Seoul, South Korea - There is growing concern in South Korea that US President Donald Trump intends to bypass Seoul and reach out unilaterally to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, in a similar fashion to the US leader’s actions during his first administration.

South Korea was quietly alarmed during Donald Trump’s first term when he held three rounds of talks with Kim, exchanged 27 ‘love letters’ and, in June 2018, unexpectedly announced the complete suspension of joint US-South Korean military exercises during a summit in Singapore.

“He wrote me beautiful letters, and they’re great letters,” Trump said in September 2018. “We fell in love.”

Shortly after being inaugurated for a second term, Trump told a Fox News interview on



Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un met three times during Trump’s first term

January 23 that he would be willing to reach out to Kim, saying they both ‘got along’, while calling the North Korean dictator a ‘smart guy’.

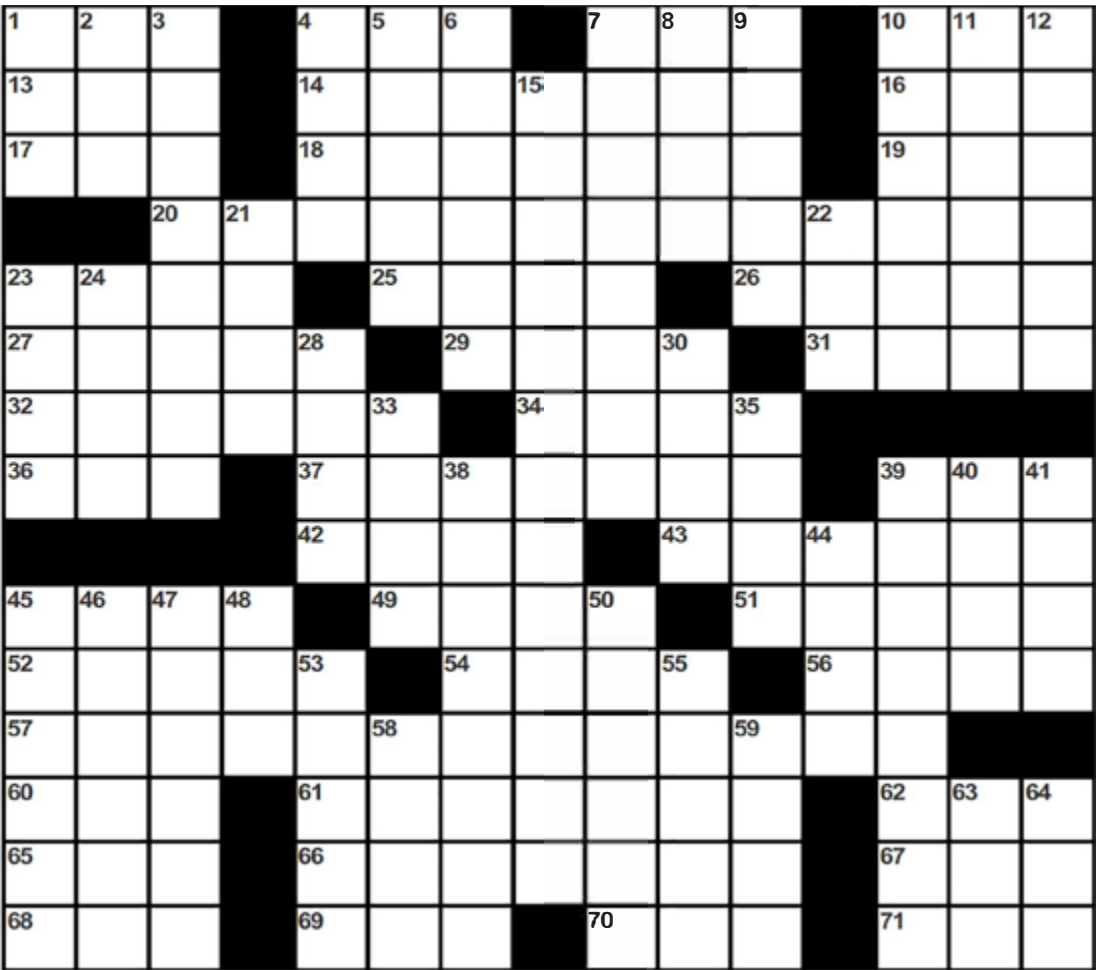
Although the Trump administration has not yet outlined any specific policy proposals on North Korea, there is once again alarm in Seoul that the US president might make another unilateral concession or a deal that benefits the US but not its regional allies.

After Trump’s Fox interview, Lee Jae-Myung, the head of the opposition Democratic Party, said bilateral US-North Korea talks without Seoul’s input could imperil the South.

“If US-North Korean dialogue resumes, there is a high possibility that our Republic of Korea will be sidelined and this is a significant concern,” Lee told a press conference in Seoul.

DW

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1) "Brian's Song" star James
5) Comes out of one's skin
10) Self-congratulatory
14) Radius' comrade-in-arms?
15) Youngest-ever Oscar winner
16) Folkestone farewell
17) "B 5!" "C 11!"?
19) Took_ (snoozed)
20) Downed
21) Typing type
22) Considers carefully
24) "Emma" author Austen
25) Hersey's bell town
26) Place or site
29) Transverse beam
32) Itsy-bitsy bits
33) "In_ tnlst"
34) Recipe word
35) Cravings
36) Emulate "Old Blue Eyes"
37) Kid's "seat" on Santa
38) Alternative to .net
39) Less extroverted
40) TV's "Cosmos" creator
41) Author's explanation
43) Yuletide songs

44) Backup sounds
45) Random sampling
46) "Monkey Trial" teacher
48) Seafood choice
49) Josh
52) Door section
53) John Wayne character, larger-than-life?
56) More than suggest
57) Recording studio alert
58) Water sport
59) Some antique autos
60) Family men
61) Bud holder
DOWN
1) Island south of Florida
2) Dismounted
3) Archer or Heche
4) Endless faultfinder
5) Home of the John Deere headquarters
6) Like beverages at barbecues
7) A 1 Capp character
8) Fielder's choice?
9) Trooper's warning
10) Wood-surface applications
11) Tropical fruit dance?
12) Great Salt Lake state

13) Adjusts, as a spark plug
18) Multicolored gems
23) "_ on Down the Road"
24) Traffic tangles
25) Eagerness
26)_ the land (how things stand)
27) Alamogordo's county
28) Kinshasa drum?
29) Australian bush call
30) Just right
31) Wonderlands
33) Southern breakfast dish
36) Auto despair site?
37) Marx or Benz
39) Pirate's knife
40) Town of many trials and hunts
42) Plains homes
43) Plays with crayons
45) Lectors
46) Tim Duncan, for one
47) Kind of package
48) Cold spell
49) Nautical mile
50) Not going anywhere
51) Condemn
54) "Put_ Happy Face"
55) Photo_ (media events)

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
It's a wonderful day for you to talk, listen, and laugh. Make yourself comfortable in a room full of people you love, and you'll be as happy as you can be. You can sit and chat with these people for hours, sharing funny stories and giving folks an update on what's been going on. What you hear won't surprise you too much, but just catching up and sitting in the same room together will be thoroughly enjoyable.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
Your goals and abilities might not match up today, but you shouldn't let that frustrate you. It's good enough that you want to help lots of different people, and you'll definitely get points for at least trying. However, a mix of poor scheduling, absentminded key players, and just bad luck will be formidable obstacles that you won't be able to overcome. It's wisest to wait a while until you have the tools you need or your schedule is less insane.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
You're feeling even more curious than you already are and more than willing to investigate all your options. You'll be eager for new information and new experiences. There may be a stumbling block or two along the way, but you learned a long time ago to treat stumbling blocks as simple bumps in the road. Besides, if anyone out there knows exactly how to navigate obstacles using shortcuts, it's you.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
Even though you'll want to get along, it may not be entirely possible at this moment. An emotional tug-of-war seems imminent. The good news is you're confident enough to stop tugging when you realize someone could get hurt, someone who's not nearly as well armed as you are, for example. On one of your bad days, that could be just about anyone. And this is a good day.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
If you have too many ambitions, you run the risk of having too many disappointments. Pare down your long list of things to do before a milestone in your life so you aren't setting yourself up for feelings of inadequacy. Just take each day as it comes. Work on your important goals when you can, but let go of outlandish predictions and unrealistic retirement fantasies. Instead of dreaming about the future.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
A lot of people are clamoring for the spotlight now, and you have a real opportunity to stand center stage. Don't assume that a quiet, conservative approach will get less attention than a loud, outrageous one. Sometimes it's the quietest music that moves us the most. Just go with the strategy that feels right for you. Don't let other people intimidate you into trying something you aren't totally comfortable with.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
A very small change in your eating habits could yield some surprisingly dramatic results in your energy level, in the way your clothes fit, or even your wallet. Restrictions can be pretty difficult until you get used to them, so compensate for limitations by indulging in over-the-top antics in other areas of your life. Restore a comfortable balance by being more outgoing.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
Hurry up and wait. One step forward and two steps back. That's how you're feeling today, and even though you can be patient if you try really hard, you're not feeling especially tolerant right now. The good news is once you're over this irritating hump, once you're done spinning your wheels, you'll be out of a rut and able to see things clearly. And with any luck, this particular situation shouldn't come around again.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
When circumstances require that you make a drastic decision, make what you think is the right choice, not what you think will be the most popular choice. Be proud of your ideals, and don't second-guess yourself. So what if you aren't completely in agreement with your peers? Your opinions are your own, and your goals in life should be too. Don't be influenced by anyone, even people who seem more knowledgeable.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
If anyone has a right to be impatient with roadblocks, it's you. You always try your best to keep things running smoothly and, for the most part, you do a fine job. But some things even you can't fix, and you're about to encounter one of them: the immovable will of someone who doesn't understand the concept of bending. Don't be impatient with them.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
When it comes to plans, don't be put off if you run into a snag in yours. For the next couple of days, getting where you want to be could be tough, and getting in touch with someone you're trying to reach could be even tougher. That doesn't mean you should give up. Your perseverance is the stuff of legend, and anyone who would deliberately avoid you would obviously have to be a glutton for punishment.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
The Universe seems to be deliberately tossing obstacles between you and the object of your affection. Whether it's a thousand miles, an ex who just won't let go, or someone's responsibility to family, don't let it get to you. You've been up against worse challenges. Nothing is insurmountable if you really want to be together. Find a way around the roadblocks. It will make a great story to tell your grandkids.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. The Oregon Treaty of 1846, which divided "the Oregon Country" along the 49th parallel, gave the USA land which later became parts of Montana and Wyoming, and the states of Washington, Oregon and which other?

- A. Iowa
- B. Maine
- C. Idaho
- D. Nebraska

02. What is the name of the Jamaican netball team?

- A. The Proteas
- B. The Partridge Family
- C. The Moonlighters
- D. The Sunshine Girls

03. Where is the largest waterfall in the world by depth and water volume?

- A. Venezuela
- B. The Denmark Strait
- C. Republic of Congo
- D. Laos

Answers: 1. C 2. D 3. B

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

S	R	U	S
E	R	E	B
N	O	V	I
R	E	I	Y

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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



Tottenham sign Frenchman Tel on loan from Bayern

London, England - Tottenham Hotspur have signed French forward Mathys Tel from Bayern Munich on a loan deal until the end of this season, the Premier League club said on Monday.

Tel joined Bayern from Stade Rennes in 2022 on a four-year deal and extended his contract to 2029 in March last year and has scored 16 goals in 83 appearances for the German club, but has struggled to find a place in the starting side.

The 19-year-old has started two Bundesliga games this season, and came on as a substitute in six league matches. He has failed to score this campaign.

According to media reports, Tottenham have an option to make the deal permanent at the end of the season.

Spurs are 14th in the Premier League standings, and their next game is a League Cup semi-final second leg tie

at Liverpool on Thursday, with Spurs 1-0 up from the first leg.

Ange Postecoglou's side have been severely hampered by injuries this season, with Guglielmo Vicario, Cristian Romero, Destiny Udogie, James Maddison, Wilson Odobert, Brennan Johnson, Timo Werner and Dominic Solanke all currently sidelined.

Brighton & Hove Albion signed Paraguayan midfielder Diego Gomez from Inter Miami for 12 million pounds and also spent 20 million pounds on Greek defender Stefanos Tzimas, who will stay at Nuremberg for the rest of the season.

Of teams involved in the Premier League relegation battle, Wolverhampton Wanderers strengthened their defence with Emmanuel Agbadou joining from Reims and Burkina Faso international Nasser Djiga signing on Deadline Day from Red Star Belgrade.

NICO TIME

Manchester City complete deadline day signing of Porto midfielder Gonzalez



Nico Gonzalez

Manchester, England - Manchester City have signed Spanish midfielder Nico Gonzalez from Primeira Liga side Porto on a four-and-a-half-year contract, the Premier League club announced on Monday.

City have paid 60 million euros (\$62.06 million) for the 23-year-old, a club source said.

A product of the Barcelona youth academy, Gonzalez made 37 appearances for the LaLiga giants before moving to Porto in 2023. He played 68 times for Porto, scoring nine goals and assists each. He was also an under-21 international.

"It was a difficult transfer to complete because his performances have been outstanding, and he has been such an important part of what FC Porto are doing this season," City Director of Football Txiki Begiristain said in a statement. "We are happy we have managed to get this done before the window closed."

Premier League champions City, who lost Ballon d'Or winner Rodri to a anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury in September, are fifth in the English top-flight table.

Having suffered a 5-1 thrashing at rivals Arsenal in the Premier League on Sunday, City trail leaders Liverpool, who have a game in hand, by 15 points and next face English third-tier club Leyton Orient in the FA Cup fourth round on Saturday.

City topped the spending charts in the January transfer window with the signing of Gonzalez. City's spending was the second-biggest outlay ever worldwide by a club in the January window behind Chelsea's 274 million pounds in 2023.

Defender Abdulkadir Khusanov joined from Lens for 33 million pounds, Egypt forward Omar Marmoush arrived from Eintracht Frankfurt for 59 million pounds while defender Vitor Reis was signed from Palmeiras for 29 million pounds.



Marco Asensio

Villa sign PSG's Asensio on loan

Birmingham, England - Aston Villa have signed Spanish attacking midfielder Marco Asensio on loan from Paris St Germain until the end of the season, the Premier League club said on Monday.

Asensio joined PSG as a free agent in July 2023 after over eight years with Real Madrid where he won three Champions Leagues and three LaLiga titles, and in his first season with the French club won the domestic double.

The 29-year-old, who has made 38 appearances for Spain, has scored two goals this season in 16 games for PSG, but Asensio has played just 18 minutes in the last eight league games for Luis Enrique's side.

Asensio said working with Villa manager Unai Emery was a factor in his decision to move to the Premier League.

"I'm looking forward to being able to contribute to this club, to add to this team with eagerness and with lots of excitement," he told Villa's website.

"Unai is a coach that I've known for a while. He's had a great career, he's a top coach, he's been key in me being able to come here because of his idea of how he wants to play football. I love it, it suits me perfectly."

Villa, who are eighth in the Premier League standings and qualified for the last 16 of the Champions League, host Tottenham Hotspur in the fourth round of the FA Cup on Sunday.

England striker Marcus Rashford arrived at Villa on loan from Manchester United on Sunday.

Villa also signed centre back Axel Disasi on loan from Chelsea for the rest of the season. Villa are set to pay a loan fee of around 5 million pounds (\$6.21 million) plus the 26-year-old's wages, Sky Sports reported without citing sources.

Disasi has made 61 appearances for Chelsea since arriving from Monaco in 2023. He has been capped five times by France since his international debut at the 2022 World Cup.



Chelsea's Pedro Neto celebrates his goal against West Ham United

Chelsea climb to fourth with victory against West Ham

London, England - Chelsea recovered to beat their former manager Graham Potter's side West Ham United 2-1 with a second-half strike from substitute Pedro Neto and an own goal by Aaron Wan-Bissaka lifting them to fourth place in the Premier League on Monday.

The result took Chelsea two points above fifth-placed Manchester City and Newcastle United in sixth and within four points of Nottingham Forest, who are third.

Jarrod Bowen, in his first game back after a month out with a foot fracture, put the Hammers ahead when he pounced on a back pass by defender Levi Colwill three minutes before half-time and fired a left-foot shot past Filip Jorgensen in Chelsea's goal.

The goal lived up to the game after a messy first half, with Chelsea's Enzo Fernandez, Cole Palmer, Noni Madueke and

Jadon Sanchez all missing good chances.

West Ham goalkeeper Alphonse Areola ensured West Ham went into the break in the lead when he tipped a spinning Palmer free kick over the bar three minutes after the opener.

Chelsea coach Enzo Maresca, criticised recently for failing to make timely substitutions, sent

ricocheted shot from teammate Fernandez. After a lengthy VAR check for offside, the goal was given.

Palmer created the winner 10 minutes later, with his cross deflected by Aaron Wan-Bissaka into his own net to the despair of West Ham boss Potter on his return to Stamford Bridge.

Chelsea pushed for a third

The result took Chelsea two points above fifth-placed Manchester City and Newcastle United in sixth and within four points of Nottingham Forest, who are third.

on Neto for Sancho and Marc Guiu for Nicolas Jackson seven minutes into the second half and the hosts looked brighter for the changes.

Portugal winger Neto snatched the 64th-minute equaliser after latching onto a

goal with chances for Palmer and Fernandez but West Ham finished strongly and Jorgensen, selected ahead of mistake-prone Robert Sanchez, kept out efforts by Mohammed Kudus and Konstantinos Mavropanos in the dying minutes.

Neuer extends Bayern stay

Munich, Germany - Bayern Munich goalkeeper and captain Manuel Neuer has signed a contract extension that will keep him at the Allianz Arena until June next year, the Bundesliga club announced on Monday.

Neuer, who turns 39 next month, moved to Bayern from fellow German side Schalke in 2011 and has since made 547 appearances while keeping 258 clean-sheets for the Bavarians.

Having announced his retirement from international duty in August last year after playing 124 times and winning the 2014 World Cup with Germany, Neuer's previous Bayern contract was set to expire at the end of the current season.

Next campaign will mark his 15th season at Bayern. He has won the Bundesliga 11 times, five German Cups and six DFL-Supercups with Bayern.

"Neuer is the best goalkeeper



Manuel Neuer

of his generation and a Bayern icon," Max Eberl, board member for sport, said in a statement. "When you talk about goalkeeping in our time, you talk about Manuel Neuer - and that's

around the world.

"He's an absolute role model, both on and off the pitch. We're delighted that this unique and successful relationship will continue."

Rashford excited by Champions League return with Aston Villa

Birmingham, England - Striker Marcus Rashford believes he can help Aston Villa enjoy a deep run in the Champions League after on Sunday joining on loan from Manchester United for the rest of the season.

Rashford, capped 60 times by England, has endured a troubled season at United and has not played since mid-December but says he is ready to help Villa in multiple competitions.

Unai Emery's side have qualified automatically for the Champions League last 16, host Tottenham Hotspur in the FA Cup fourth round next weekend



Marcus Rashford

and are eighth in the Premier League.

Asked about a return to Europe's elite club competition, Rashford said: "Obviously, (it's) the biggest competition for a club to be involved in.

"I'm sure it will be a new experience for me, playing for Villa in the Champions League. It's always going to be a great moment, but the aims remain the same, to try and do our best to win it," he told Villa's website.

"I've played a fair amount of games in the Champions League, so I feel like I'm experienced and know how to handle those types of situations."

AL AIN UNALIGNED

Holders crash out of Asian Champions League after defeat to Al Rayyan

Al Ain, UAE - Holders Al Ain slumped out of the Asian Champions League Elite on Monday as the side from the United Arab Emirates lost 2-1 to Qatar's Al Rayyan to end their hopes of a place in the last 16 with one round of group games remaining. Second-half goals from Mahmoud Trezeguet and Roger Guedes saw Al-Rayyan fight back from going behind to Alejandro Romero's 42nd minute opener for the home side, who needed to win to harbour any remaining chance of reaching the knockout phase. The loss was Al Ain's fifth in seven games and, after Iraq's Al-Shorta drew 1-1 with Esteghlal of Iran in Tehran, the reigning champions sit bottom of the 12-team table on two points. Sides finishing in the top eight in the league phase in both west and east Asia progress to March's knockout rounds. Al Ain's elimination comes nine months after the club claimed the continental crown for the second time, defeating Japan's Yokohama F Marinos over two legs in the final in May. But the defence of their title has been shambolic and Al Ain lost in front of their own fans at the Hazza bin Zayed Stadium after taking the lead on the counter attack through Romero's



Al Ain's Khalid al Hashemi cuts a forlorn figure as Al Rayyan's Rôger Guedes celebrates with Thiago Mendes after scoring the winner in their AFC Champions League match on Monday

curling first-time strike into the top corner. Trezeguet levelled five minutes into the second half when he controlled Murad Najji Hussein's cross from the right before slotting beyond goalkeeper

Khaled Eisa. Guedes then took advantage of Al Ain's slack defending 15 minutes from time, the Brazilian given the space to allow Adam Bareiro's throw to roll onto his left foot and slot home.

"We played a completely balanced match but made clear defensive mistakes, which resulted in two goals for the opponents," said Al Ain coach Leonardo Jardim, who took over from Hernan Crespo in November 2024.

"I will not talk about my future with the team, but only about Al Ain. Since I came, the team has been the same, its level has not improved in the Champions League, but the negative results

continued, and the improvement was only in the league matches. "I bear responsibility for the decline in results in the past period, of course, and today's loss against Al Rayyan of Qatar." The win took Al Rayyan up to eight points with head coach Artur Jorge impressed by the recovery shown by his side as he eyes a spot in the last 16. "The match was worth three points, and we faced a difficult team, who are the Asian champions," said Jorge. "We entered the first half in a bad way but in the second half, we returned to our level and the result was a fair indication of what the team presented during the match in general. "We have taken a big step towards qualification. We aspire to win the next match against Esteghlal of Iran and qualify in the best possible position." Al Shorta's draw with Esteghlal, which came as Rewan Amin cancelled out Joel Kojo's fourth minute opener for the Iranian hosts, keeps the Iraqis' slim chances alive until Tuesday, when Persepolis take on Al Hilal and Al Gharafa play Pakhtakor. The league phase in west Asia

Since I came, the team has been the same, its level has not improved in the Champions League, but negative results continued, and the improvement was only in league matches

LEONARDO JARDIM

Jardim leaves Al Ain, joins Cruzeiro

Cruzeiro have appointed Leonardo Jardim as their new coach, the Brazilian side said on Tuesday, hours after the Portuguese left UAE Pro League club Al-Ain. The Brazilian Serie A team, who finished ninth in the standings last season, said that Jardim has signed a contract valid until the end of 2026. As Jardim leaves Al Ain, the club have already appointed former Watford and Maccabi Tel Aviv manager Vladimir Ivic to replace him. Ivic, who has signed a



Leonardo Jardim

contract for a year and a half, took charge at Watford in August 2020 in the English second-tier following relegation from the Premier League in the previous season, but was relieved of his duties four months later. Jardim, whose contract with Al Ain was due to expire at the end of the revamped Club World Cup in July this year, joined the club in November following spells in Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The move came a day after the holders' 2-1 defeat by Al Rayyan in the Asian Champions League Elite.



Al Ahli's Roberto Firmino scores against Al Sadd

Highflying Al Ahli rally to beat Al Sadd

Doha, Qatar - Al Ahli's excellent Champions League campaign continued after they came from behind to defeat Qatar's Al Sadd 3-1 at Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium on Monday. Both sides had already secured their respective spots in the next stage prior to the game with the victory taking Al Ahli to 19 points which ensures them a top four finish in the League Stage and a home tie in the second leg of the Round of 16. The home side got off to a dream start, with captain Akram Afif racing onto Youcef Atal's stunning through pass inside the opening minute and spotting Edouard Mendy off his line, proceeding to lob over the former Chelsea keeper to give Al Sadd the lead. Al Ahli, yet to be beaten in the League Stage, were not behind for long as their forward line combined to great effect in the 10th minute to draw them level. Feras Albrikan won the ball off

Boualem Khoukhi inside Al Sadd's penalty box, his cross was headed back across goal by Riyadh Mahrez for Roberto Firmino to produce a spectacular overhead kick that gave Meshaal Barsham no chance. Even though the furious pace to the match dissipated as the first half went on, it didn't stop Al Ahli from going ahead in the 39th minute as Roger Ibanez swept home from close range after Al Sadd failed to clear a Mahrez corner kick. Early in the second half, Firmino had the opportunity to get his second after Mahrez set him up with a cutback, however, the Brazilian dragged his attempt wide from the edge of the box. Al Ahli made sure of the points in the 81st minute when Ivan Toney managed to hook a pass to Mahrez despite being bundled over by Barsham, giving the Algerian the easiest of tasks of slotting home into an unguarded goal.

Ronaldo brace helps Al Nassr thrash Al Wasl

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - Cristiano Ronaldo kicked off his 40th birthday celebrations with a brace as Al Nassr eased to a 4-0 victory over Al Wasl in their AFC Champions League tie at the Al Awwal Park on Monday. The Riyadh-based side, who have already secured their knockout stage spot, bounced back in style after the Matchday Six defeat to Qatar's Al Sadd with Ronaldo's double coming after Ali Alhassan had given them the lead. Substitute Mohammed Al Fatil netted their fourth late in the game. Al Nassr showed their intent as early as the third minute when Ronaldo, who celebrates his birthday on Wednesday, sent an inviting cross into the box for the newly-signed Jhon Duran, who just failed to connect from inside the box. The five-time Ballon d'or winner gave the Emiratis a scare seven minutes later when he received the ball at the edge of the box from an Al Wasl turnover before rattling the crossbar. UAE's Al Wasl almost caught



Al Nassr's Cristiano Ronaldo scores against Al Wasl

Al Nassr, who have already secured their knockout stage spot, bounced back in style after the Matchday Six defeat to Qatar's Al Sadd

Al Nassr out moments later when a long ball from keeper Anas Zniti bounced into the path of Ali Saleh, leaving Bento to take evasive action to deny the forward. Al Nassr continued to drive forward and their high-pressing game was rewarded in the 25th minute after Alhassan unleashed a piledriver from 25 yards which sailed past Zniti and into the bottom corner of the net. The Saudi Pro League side could have doubled their tally three minutes later when Sultan Al Ghannam sent a perfect cross to Ali Lajami, whose header forced Zniti into a brilliant save.

'Players showed high standards against a strong team'

Doha, Qatar - Al Ahli Saudi showcased their title ambitions with a resounding 3-1 victory over Qatar's Al Sadd in their Champions League tie on Monday, leaving head coach Matthias Jaissle delighted. Despite falling behind to an Akram Afif lob early in the game, Al Ahli responded in style - drawing level through Roberto Firmino's overhead kick before goals from Roger Ibanez and Riyadh Mahrez ensured the Saudi

Pro League side maintained their unbeaten run. "We achieved a deserved victory and presented an excellent performance," said Jaissle. "The players were up to the level and showed high standards against a strong team. "We played a tactical match at the highest level, and the players were able to exploit the opportunities appropriately, underlining the team's efficiency in front of goal."



Matthias Jaissle

Al Sadd head coach Felix Sanchez cut a frustrated figure after watching his team relinquish an early lead. "We knew it would be a very tough match against a strong team with quality players. We started well and scored early but couldn't maintain our lead. We conceded avoidable goals, and everyone shares responsibility. We tried to come back but couldn't, while Al Ahli capitalised on their chances," said Sanchez.

"This is football - small details decide the game. We will work hard to bounce back." With qualification already secured, Al Sadd will look to regroup in their final against Pakhtakor, while Al Ahli face Al Gharafa. "We have already qualified, but we play to win. We have one final group match against Pakhtakor, and we will aim for victory to improve our standing."



Dimuth Karunaratne

Sri Lanka's Karunaratne to retire after second Test against Australia

Galle, Sri Lanka - Former Sri Lanka Test skipper Dimuth Karunaratne will retire from the format after his 100th match, the final Test of Sri Lanka's two-Test series against Australia in Galle on Thursday.

Karunaratne made his Test debut at the Galle international Stadium in 2012 against New Zealand. The 36-year-old opener has scored 7,172 runs with 16 centuries and 39 half centuries in 99 appearances. He has played 50 ODIs but has never featured in a Twenty20 International match.

"It was the right time to go, considering there are three or four younger players who could come in for the next World Test Championship cycle," Karunaratne told ESPN-cricinfo on Tuesday.

"After the first Test against Australia ended, I told Sri Lanka Cricket (Board) that the next Test would be my last. Playing 100 Tests is a tough thing to accomplish, especially when you're an opening batter and you're doing the dirty work for the team."

Karunaratne will become Sri Lanka's seventh cricketer to reach 100 Tests.

OMAN AIM FOR CLEAN SWEEP

Duleep Mendis' men host USA and Namibia in World Cup League 2 tri-series

Muscat - Oman are set to continue their quest for ICC Men's Cricket World Cup qualification with a highly anticipated tri-series at home, hosting the United States and Namibia from February 8-18 at the Oman Cricket Academy Ground.

Duleep Mendis-coached Oman will be looking to build on their momentum from a stunning clean sweep in November 2024 when they defeated both the Netherlands and the UAE, securing a 4-0 victory in the World Cup League 2 at home.

As the series kicks off, Oman are currently sitting in 5th place in the ICC World Cup League 2 standings with 14 points from 12 matches, having won six, lost four and two matches abandoned.

Their net run rate stands at -0.047, but their recent form has been strong, with four consecutive victories in their last five matches, including successive wins against the UAE and Netherlands in November.



Oman will be hoping to capitalise on their home advantage in the tri-series against the United States and Namibia

We did brilliantly in November beating fancied Netherlands and UAE twice... The boys have been training hard, and the focus was on fielding along with batting and bowling

DULEEP MENDIS

With the USA and Namibia coming to Muscat, Oman will look to capitalise on their home advantage and make a solid push up the standings.

Oman's last defeat was

against hosts Canada on September 26, 2024

Head coach Duleep Mendis has expressed confidence in the squad's preparations, with the team ready to take on table top-

pers USA (16 points) and Namibia (10 points) in the competition.

"We did brilliantly last time in November beating fancied Netherlands and UAE twice. The boys have prepared hard since December, and the domestic tournaments provided perfect pre-tournament exposure with the recent conclusion of the D50 and the introduction of two-day matches that helped them stay at the crease for longer periods," said Mendis.

"Hopefully, the boys will come out with another good show and keep us World Cup contention," he added.

Mendis also stressed the importance of hard work and focus in the lead-up to the series, especially on improving fielding skills alongside batting and bowling. The head coach is optimistic that this focus will result in another dominant display at home.

"The boys have been training hard, and the focus was on fielding along with batting and bowl-

OMAN SQUAD
Jatinder Singh (captain), Aamir Kaleem, Ashish Odedara, Hammad Mirza, Mohammad Nadeem, Suyan Mehmood, Shakeel Ahmed, Jay Odedra, Samay Shrivastava, Wasim Ali, Vinayak Shukla, Hashir Dafedar, Hassnain Ali Shah, Muhammad Imran, Siddharth Bukkapatnam.

FIXTURES
(All matches begin at 10 am)
February 8:
USA VS NAMIBIA
February 10:
OMAN VS NAMIBIA
February 12:
OMAN VS USA
February 14:
NAMIBIA VS USA
February 16:
OMAN VS NAMIBIA
February 18:
OMAN VS USA

ing," the former Sri Lankan great added. "We are ready for the challenge."

Captain Jatinder Singh, who has been in stellar form during the D50 tournament, will lead the 15-member team. His leadership has been a key factor in Oman's recent success.

Kudermetova saves match point to stun Samsonova in Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi, UAE - Veronika Kudermetova saved a match point before completing a rally to take down Russian countrywoman and fifth seed Liudmila Samsonova 5-7, 6-1, 7-6 (5) in nearly three hours in the first round of the Mubadala Abu Dhabi Open on Monday.

Kudermetova saved 11 of 16 break points while converting 6 of 9 chances to break Samsonova's serve. Down 5-4 in the third set, Kudermetova stayed



Veronika Kudermetova

alive by saving a match point and going on to win the 10th game, which flipped momentum in her favor.

She won the first four points of the tiebreaker en route to victory.

The other four matches Monday did not involve seeded players. New Zealand's Lulu Sun breezed past France's Caroline Garcia 6-1, 6-3, while Wakana Sonobe of Japan beat Yue Yuan of China 6-4, 6-3.

A pair of Americans also advanced in three sets. Ashlyn Krueger defeated countrywoman McCartney Kessler 6-3, 6-7 (4), 6-3, while Katie Volynets topped Great Britain's Sonay Kartal 3-6, 6-4, 6-4.

Meanwhile, No. 4 seed Anhelina Kalinina of Ukraine won 27 of 35 first-service points (77.1 percent) en route to a 6-2, 6-3 victory over Romanian Elena-Gabriela Ruse to open play in Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

American Caroline Dolehide also advanced with a 7-5, 2-6, 6-4 result against Ukraine's Daria Snigur.

The longest match of the day saw Bulgarian Viktoriya Tomova rally past Egypt's Mayar Sherif 3-6, 6-4, 6-1.

Marina Stakusic of Canada beat Romania's Sorana Cirstea 6-1, 1-6, 6-4, and Suzan Lamens of the Netherlands was a 7-6 (2), 7-6 (6) winner against Hungary's Anna Bondar.

CLASSIFIEDS

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WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

AMIT & INDU
FEBRUARY 3

Wishing a perfect pair a perfectly happy day. Here's to another year of being great together!

As Paris Men's Fashion Week kicked off — one day after the second inauguration of US President Donald Trump and amid the rising power of France's populist right — focusing on clothing might seem a touch frivolous.

Yet throughout the week, designers demonstrated their ability to engage with a larger societal landscape; by addressing concerns about inclusivity, protection and freedom, the Fall-Winter 2025 season provided a stage to escape as well as ideas to navigate the current climate.

From Willy Chavarria to EgonLab or Comme des Garçons Homme Plus, messages of unity and acceptance were sent down the runways.

When the "French population feels increasingly powerless in the face of the government, fashion's soft power, as an industry and an art, lies in its capacity to produce new discourses, images and impact other industries," Carole Boinet, director of French cultural publication Les Inrockuptibles, told CNN.

New take on workwear

On the runways, workwear came back with a bang, reimagined and fused with contemporary wardrobes.

As bearded models in plaid shirts, raw denim and lumberjack-inspired lines walked the Junya Watanabe runway, the figure of the hipster seemed to hail back to 2010, when the aesthetic permeated youth subcultures and became a global phenomenon.

But it was 'good old workwear originally crafted for forestry workers', as outlined in the show notes, that was on the Japanese designer's mind. With that, the collection reflected the season's running themes: the great outdoors and function in outerwear.

At Louis Vuitton, men's creative director Pharrell Williams teamed up with Nigo, the designer of LVMH fashion stablemate Kenzo and founder of Japanese fashion



Models walk Willy Chavarria's menswear Fall-Winter 2025 show

MAN

STYLE

WORKWEAR & VOICES

ion brand A Bathing Ape, to co-design a collection that merged workwear and sportswear. Inspired by the practical wardrobes of engineers, chefs and gardeners, the clothing — including a double-breasted indigo blue denim jacket, a striped box-cut ensemble and a baby pink sleeveless blouson — were elevated and practical.

Inspired by Maurice Sendak's 1963 children's book, "Where the Wild Things are," Sacai founder and designer Chitose Abe, who has built a global business with her penchant for hybrid materials and oversized silhouettes, played with 'ideas of living in nature, untamed and unrestricted by convention'.

She showed a collection of cocoon-shaped furry knitwear, some with exaggerated pockets, and also continued to create co-branded pieces with US workwear company Carhartt, which took the form of leather and puffer jackets in shades of dark brown and green.

A stage for protest

Throughout the week, designers used their platforms to make overt political and social statements. New York-based designer Willy Chavarria, a recent winner of the CFDA's Menswear Designer of the Year Award, brought his collection to Paris for the first time, to mark the tenth anniversary of his eponymous label. Shown in the baroque setting of the American Cathedral, his sculpted, reworked tailoring once again took inspiration from his Mexican-American background; they came in a palette of gold, plum and burgundy.

As Chavarria explained to CNN, resilience and resistance was at the heart of his collection, as he sought to put forward a message of human dignity and equality. He emphasised the importance of 'coming together to preserve rights as citizens, as immigrants, as women, all of us who are very much under attack right now.'

Florentin Glémarec and Kevin Nompex, the creative duo behind the Paris-based gender-fluid label EgonLab, incorporated playful Victorian nods as they presented garments that challenged traditional masculinity. Backstage, the designers explained their focus on disenfranchised communities.

"Minorities are systematically attacked by new politics around the world," they said, adding that amid what felt like "a modern witch hunt," they called for "minorities to unite and fight inequality."

Some designers took a more introspective approach, focusing on the narratives embedded in clothing and tailoring details that might go amiss on camera. Dior's collection referenced the H-line created by its founder Christian Dior for Fall-Winter 1954-1955 — a controversial silhouette at the time as its flattened shape appeared, for some, unfeminine.

In a cinematic setting, models descended with dramatic covered eyes, à la Stanley Kubrick's 1999 erotic psychological drama 'Eyes Wide Shut'. The collection also played with contrasting volumes from baggy male skirts to opera coats and dusted pink bows.

Bianca Saunders, the first Black British designer to win the prestigious ANDAM fashion prize, looked at the tension between constraint and movement, and suppleness.

(Courtesy: cnn.com)

FASHION MIXES WITH POLITICS AT PARIS MEN'S FASHION WEEK



Paris-based label EgonLab presented garments that challenged traditional masculinity



Music's BIGGEST NIGHT

HOTSTUFF

The 67th Annual Grammy Awards on February 2 marked a historic year for 'Music's Biggest Night', filled with exhilarating moments. From Beyonce's Cowboy Carter making history, winning her first Album of the Year award and becoming the first Black woman to ever take home a golden gramophone in the Best Country Album, to Kendrick Lamar's 'Not Like Us' sweeping in all five categories he was nominated in, the 2025 Grammys was, indeed, a monumental show.

Aside from notable award wins, electrifying performances from artists like Doechii and Chappell Roan rattled Crypto.com Arena and entirely transformed the energy in the room.

Given the 67th annual ceremony was all about celebrating some of the best records and performances of the year, it was only natural that the room was chockfull of A-listers—including household names like Beyoncé, Taylor Swift, Sabrina Carpenter, Charli XCX, and more (all of whom were nominated for the prestigious album of the year award).

The stars came dressed impeccably for the big night in music and for Los Angeles. Taylor Swift posed on the carpet in a mini Vivienne Westwood dress. On the other hand, Beyoncé smiled in custom Schiaparelli for the cameras while backstage after receiving the trophy for Country Album of the year.

The Grammy Awards are renowned for outlandish fashion. But on a night of tributes to first responders and victims of LA's recent wildfires, many guests struck a comparatively restrained note at the venue on Sunday.

The all-black trend seen at recent award ceremonies was embraced by everyone from Miley Cyrus (in a cut-out leather Saint Laurent dress) to Olivia Rodrigo (in a slinky halter neck Versace number). Lady Gaga set a somber tone in a dramatic long-sleeved ball gown by Vivienne Westwood, though some attendees took a more light-hearted approach, whether it was J Balvin's long silk Dior Men coat or the sailor hat Billie Eilish wore with her Prada suit.

Guests also showed their support for LA — which has hosted the Grammys more times than any other city in its 66-year history — by wearing blue heart pins. Brittany Howard, Jaden Smith and Jacob Collier were among those seen sporting the pins in support of MusiCares, a charity raising money for music industry professionals impacted by

THE 2025 GRAMMYS RED CARPET WAS HOST TO SOME OF THE MUSIC WORLD'S TOP TALENTS WHO SHOWED UP IN THE SEASON'S HOTTEST AND MUSICALLY HALLOWED OUTFITS



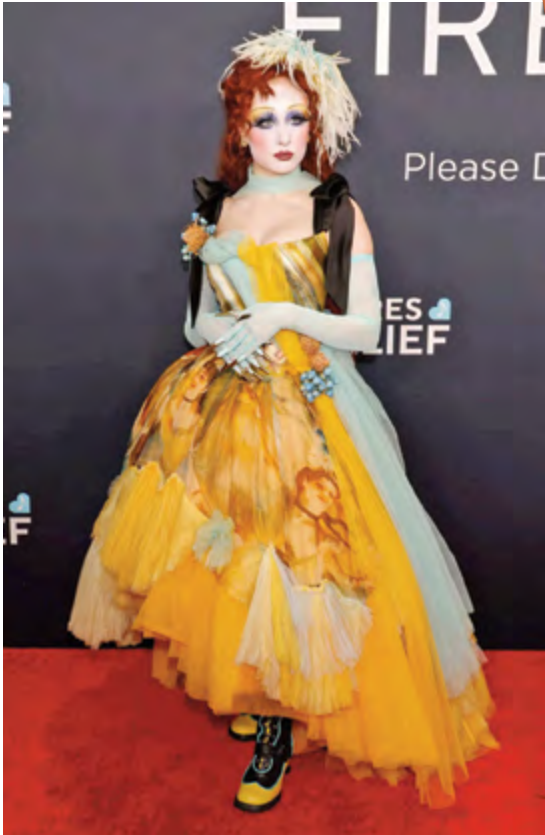
Charli XCX in Jean Paul Gaultier



Sabrina Carpenter in a custom JW Anderson gown



Taylor Swift in a custom Vivienne Westwood couture gown



Chappell Roan in Jean Paul Gaultier



Cardi B's in a Cavalli Couture gown



Miley Cyrus' in a Saint Laurent gown



Lady Gaga in a Vivienne Westwood gown

the fires. Elsewhere, several of the evening's most anticipated arrivals used feathers to add volume or definition to their outfits. Sabrina Carpenter wowed in a custom JW Anderson gown with elegant accents, while the beads and sequins of Cardi B's Roberto Cavalli Couture mer-

maid gown turned into an autumnal plume as it trailed to the floor. Meanwhile, Charli XCX and Chappell Roan, who were among the night's most nominated artists, achieved similarly eye-catching effects with ruffles and cascading tulle. It was perhaps no surprise that both gowns were by the same designer, Jean Paul

Gaultier, albeit from very different eras: Charli XCX's outfit was a custom look from the Spring-Summer 2025 runway, while Roan opted for an archive piece from Gaultier's Spring 2003 couture collection. Seen here are some of the event's best and boldest looks: (Courtesy: vogue.com, cnn.com, grammy.com)



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