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National project launched to combat diabetic retinopathy

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A national programme has been launched to improve the detection and management of diabetic retinopathy, a leading cause of blindness among diabetic patients. It integrates artificial intelligence (AI) technology to reduce the risk of vision loss and provide timely intervention for individuals with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.

As the third country globally to implement an AI-powered diabetic retinopathy screening programme, Oman is positioning itself at the forefront of healthcare innovation. The initiative aims to enhance diagnostic accuracy and expand early detection services.



The AI-powered programme is also expected to have an economic impact by reducing the long-term costs associated with treating advanced diabetic eye disease

H E DR SAEED BIN HAREB AL LAMKI

The programme was inaugurated by H E Saeed bin Hamood al Mawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, in the presence of key health officials on Monday.

H E Dr Saeed bin Hareb al Lamki, Undersecretary for Health Affairs in Ministry of Health, described the programme as part of a broader government strategy to inte-

grate advanced technologies into healthcare. "It will improve the screening process by accommodating more patients, reducing waiting time at eye clinics and expanding early detection services across healthcare institutions," he said. "This initiative aims to enhance the quality of life for diabetic patients by detecting diabetic retinopathy early and enabling

timely treatment."

Initially, 25 healthcare facilities across the sultanate will be equipped with advanced retinal imaging devices, strategically chosen to ensure accessibility for patients nationwide. "The programme is also expected to have an economic impact by reducing the long-term costs associated with treating advanced diabetic eye disease," H E Dr Lamki added.

With 15% of Oman's adult population affected by diabetes, the risk of diabetic retinopathy remains a major public health concern. The programme seeks to establish a nationwide framework for early detection and management, reducing the incidence of blindness and improving access to quality eye care.

AI technology will play a cru-

cial role in screening, using machine learning and computer vision to analyse retinal images and differentiate between healthy and affected retinas. This approach is expected to enable faster, more accurate diagnoses and ease the burden on healthcare professionals.

Future plans include expanding the programme to additional health centres and launching new screening initiatives for conditions such as glaucoma and keratoconus. Virtual health solutions and connected devices will also be introduced to reduce pressure on specialist clinics. A key long-term goal is development of a local AI engine trained on Omani retinal images, further strengthening the sultanate's healthcare capabilities.

H M issues two Royal Decrees

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

Royal Decree No 33/2025 conducts placements in the Diplomatic Corps.

Article 1 states that H H Sayyid Faisal bin Turki bin Mahmoud al Said, the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, its Permanent Representative to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and its Permanent Representative to the Digital Cooperation Organization in Riyadh.

Article 4 grants Thamir bin Fayez bin Khalfan al Alawi the title of ambassador and appoints him as the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain.

Article 5 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Republic of Brazil.

Article 3 appoints Sayyid Najib bin Hilal bin Saud al Buisaidi as the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, its Permanent Representative to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and its Permanent Representative to the Digital Cooperation Organization in Riyadh.

Article 4 grants Thamir bin Fayez bin Khalfan al Alawi the title of ambassador and appoints him as the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain.

Article 5 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Oman calls for global action against Islamophobia at UN

New York, USA - Oman has urged governments worldwide to enact legislation to prevent incitement to hatred, violation of holy books, and attacks on places of worship and Islamic symbols. The sultanate also called for the use of media and

social platforms to counter hate speech and promote coexistence and respect for religious and cultural diversity.

The call was made during an informal plenary session in New York on Saturday, marking the International Day to Combat Is-

lamophobia.

H E Omar bin Said al Kathiri, Oman's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, delivered the statement, warning that Islamophobia threatens not only Muslims but also universal human values and global efforts

towards peaceful coexistence.

"Oman firmly rejects all forms of hatred and discrimination," H E Kathiri said, stressing the country's belief that respecting religious and cultural diversity is essential for global peace and stability.

Referencing Oman's historical role in promoting peace, Kathiri highlighted the nation's maritime heritage, noting that Omani ships have undertaken voyages worldwide, spreading messages of peace, love and brotherhood.

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Gold price surge reflects on Zakat obligations

Our Correspondent
Muscat

One of the five pillars of Islam, zakat obligates Muslims to donate 2.5% of their qualifying wealth annually to those in need. This religious duty ensures fair distribution of wealth and fosters social solidarity within the community.

For many Muslim families, especially in Asian and Omani communities, gold serves not only as jewellery but also investment. With gold prices recently at an all-time high of US\$3,000 per ounce, up more than 35% since

March 2024, the value of gold holdings has sharply increased. This rise has led to a higher zakat due for many households, impacting their budgets.

Islamic scholar Hatim Abdul Salem stresses that the obligation to pay zakat is not affected by changes in asset values. The nisab, the minimum wealth threshold for zakat, is traditionally set at 85g of gold or 595g of silver. As long as a Muslim's wealth meets or exceeds this threshold over a lunar year, zakat is due, regardless of market fluctuations. "This principle under-

The rise in gold prices should not deter us from our duty. Zakat purifies our wealth and souls, and its calculation should remain consistent, regardless of market trends

AHMED AL HARTHY



(V K Shafeer)

scores the importance of fulfilling religious obligations without being affected by economic fluctuations," he said.

Community members echo this view, emphasising the spiritual significance of zakat. Ahmed al Harthy, a local businessman, said, "The rise in gold prices should not deter us from our duty. Zakat purifies our wealth and souls, and its calculation should remain consistent, regardless of market trends."

Salim Khan, a businessman based in Ruwi, agreed, adding, "Whether gold prices rise or fall,

our commitment to this pillar of Islam must remain unwavering. While it's important to be aware of market dynamics, these should not influence our religious obligations. Zakat is a fixed duty, and its fulfillment brings blessings beyond monetary value."

Marketing executive Zayed Malik offered his perspective, saying, "While gold price fluctuations can affect the monetary value of one's assets, these do not change the essential obligation of zakat. We must believe in our book - the Quran - and trust that everything has good logic."



ظفار للأغذية والاستثمار (ش م ع ع)

DHOFAR FOODS AND INVESTMENT (SAOG)

P.O. Box 1220 – PC 211 – Phone 23225381 – Fax 23225258

Chairman's Report

Dear Shareholders,
On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the annual report of your company along with the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Business Environment
Oman has been steadfast in its pursuit of a diversified economy. The government's focus on targeted sectoral development is supported by the lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic, emphasizing the importance of self-sufficiency, notably in food and medical supplies.

The retail sector has witnessed significant growth, fueled by factors including population growth, rising disposable incomes, increased tourist arrivals, and the emergence of e-commerce.

The government's food security initiatives continue to support local dairy, poultry, and agricultural industries, providing a strong foundation for long-term growth. However, the global economic environment, inflationary pressures, and fluctuations in commodity prices remain key challenges requiring strategic mitigation measures.

Key Highlights
During the year, the company continued domestic milk purchase scheme from Al Morooj Dairy company (SAOC).

New CCO was appointed as acting CEO until the appointment of a new CEO. New Chief Financial Officer, Head of Procurement and Head of Customer Service were appointed in 2024

The company received the full amount of feed subsidy pertaining to the years 2022 and 2023 under the government-extended feed subsidy programs for ruminant and poultry feeds.

Financial Performance
Parent Company
Revenue for the period stood at RO 37.23 million, reflecting a notable increase of 4% compared to RO 35.66 million in 2023. Our gross profit margin significantly improved to 21% compared to 18% in 2023, driven by both volume and price increases.

Operating profit margin decreased to 4% from 5% in 2023 due to increased distribution costs. Finance costs rose substantially, increasing by 22% year-on-year due to the funding of higher commodity purchases. Despite this, we remain focused on optimizing financial strategies to mitigate impacts and sustain growth.

Group Companies
The group, comprising three subsidiaries and one associate, achieved consolidated revenue of RO 87.4 million, a significant increase from RO 56.7 million in 2023. This 54% increase was primarily driven by revenue contributions from the recently acquired subsidiary

Despite revenue growth, the group reported a net loss before tax of RO 4.2 million. We continue to focus on enhancing operational efficiencies and optimizing subsidiary performance to achieve sustained profitability and growth.

One subsidiary in the poultry segment, maintained revenue at RO 9.0 million but reported a net loss of RO 3.3 million. The packaging subsidiary recorded revenue of RO 1.23 million, a slight decrease from RO 1.24 million in 2023, but remained profitable, reporting a profit of RO 27,495. The edible oil business contributed significantly to group revenue, totaling RO 44.5 million, but reported an after-tax loss of RO 836,334.

Operational Highlights
Your company has demonstrated significant improvements in operational efficiency, resulting in increased market share.

Procurement cost mitigation strategies have been implemented, with positive impacts expected to be visible in the next financial year.

To improve decision-making accuracy and controls, your company is in the process of upgrading its information system across the group with a centralized approach.

Leveraging synergies across business units has driven innovation, maximizing stakeholder value and strengthening our market position.

Market reach is increasing through cross-selling initiatives across the group, improving product positioning and revenue generation.

Sales and leaseback transactions were executed with DPC to settle their receivables.

Corporate Governance & Internal Control
The Board of Directors remains committed to high standards of corporate governance, ensuring sustainability and accountability towards shareholders, employees, consumers, and the community. The Board has constituted the Audit Committee and the Executive, Nomination, and Remuneration Committee to uphold these principles.

The company has adhered to all corporate governance regulations in Oman, with the Board taking proactive measures to ensure compliance with applicable rules and regulations. To enhance the internal audit process, the Board has outsourced the internal audit function to an external audit firm.

Human Resources
Your company supports the national recruitment policy of the government. In line with this, local nationals are currently working at various levels of management and constitute 41% of the workforce. The total workforce is 754. Graduate trainees' programs are in place to train the qualified young candidates and launching of new training programmes associated with Universities and learning academies. We continue to develop our staff to lay a solid foundation for our future growth with great emphasis being initiated to develop national talent.

Future Outlook
"Oman vision 2040" emphasizes diversification into non-oil sectors, logistics, and services, with increased importance on food security initiatives. Your company is well positioned in this segment and aligned with government initiatives. The domestic market remains highly price-sensitive, with price controls enforced by authorities. Volatile commodity and packaging material prices are closely monitored, with actions taken to mitigate pricing variances.

Additionally, ongoing digital transformation and sustainability initiatives in Oman present new opportunities for growth. Investments in renewable energy, waste reduction, and automation could enhance efficiency and long-term sustainability. Expanding export markets, particularly in the GCC, remains a strategic priority, as we seek to leverage our capabilities and diversify revenue streams.

Acknowledgements
I would like to thank my fellow board members and our shareholders, customers, lender, suppliers and employees for their continued support and commitment. I would also like to thank the FSA & MSX for their support and cooperation.

We wish further development, stability, progress, and prosperity for our beloved country under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq, and we wish him good health and longevity.

**Said Ahmed Safrar
Chairman**

Separate and consolidated statement of financial position as at 31 December 2024

	Parent Company		Group	
	31 Dec 2024	31 Dec 2023	31 Dec 2024	31 Dec 2023
	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000
ASSETS				
Non-current assets			(RESTATED)	
Property, plant and equipment	20,198	18,678	33,493	36,613
Right-of-use assets	845	685	1,496	1,403
Intangible assets	3	14	39	69
Investment in subsidiaries	17,582	15,541	-	-
Loan to a subsidiary	1,473	-	-	-
Investment in an associate	812	812	884	873
Investments at fair value through other comprehensive income	11,846	10,889	11,846	10,889
Investment properties	7,206	2,090	2,090	2,090
Biological assets	4,458	4,156	4,458	4,156
Deferred tax asset	-	96	-	101
Other non-current assets	-	-	70	70
Total non-current assets	64,423	52,961	54,376	56,264
Current assets				
Inventories and biological assets	10,053	8,249	16,960	15,688
Trade and other receivables	4,167	7,133	16,752	12,456
Current portion of loan to related party	144	-	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents	403	344	2,088	5,025
Total current assets	14,767	15,726	35,800	33,169
TOTAL ASSETS	79,190	68,687	90,176	89,433
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
Capital and reserves				
Share capital	17,431	17,431	17,431	17,431
Legal reserve	2,875	2,875	2,875	2,875
Voluntary reserve	3,712	3,712	3,712	3,712
Revaluation reserve	8,445	10,300	12,014	14,380
Investment fair value reserve	3,871	2,851	3,871	2,851
Retained earnings / (accumulated losses)	5,543	3,478	(968)	4,133
Equity attributable to shareholders of the Parent Company	41,877	40,647	38,935	41,662
Non-controlling interest	-	-	(159)	(77)
Total capital and reserves	41,877	40,647	38,776	41,585
Non-current liabilities				
Non-current portion of term loans	10,250	2,969	10,913	4,872
Employees' end-of-service benefits	812	639	1,429	1,346
Lease liabilities	571	380	922	1,163
Deferred tax liabilities	1,281	1,818	2,324	2,851
Total non-current liabilities	12,914	5,806	15,588	10,232
Current liabilities				
Bank borrowings	9,715	10,042	22,648	19,352
Current portion of term loans	2,180	1,236	2,356	1,661
Trade and other payables	12,189	10,611	10,085	16,044
Current portion of lease liabilities	315	345	710	373
Income tax payable	-	-	13	186
Total current liabilities	24,399	22,234	35,812	37,616
Total liabilities	37,313	28,040	51,400	47,848
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	79,190	68,687	90,176	89,433
Net assets per share	0.240	0.233	0.223	0.239

Separate and consolidated statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2024

	Parent Company		Group	
	Year ended 31 Dec 2024	Year ended 31 Dec 2023	Year ended 31 Dec 2024	Year ended 31 Dec 2023
	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000
Revenue	37,226	35,659	87,367	56,712
Direct costs	(29,295)	(29,326)	(76,016)	(49,878)
Gross profit	7,931	6,333	11,351	6,834
Selling and distribution expenses	(4,889)	(4,343)	(8,493)	(4,831)
General and administrative expenses	(2,316)	(1,496)	(5,168)	(3,114)
Directors' remuneration	(109)	(248)	(288)	(293)
Dividend income	107	217	107	217
Other income	648	1,416	888	1,580
Operating profit / (loss) for the year	1,372	1,879	(1,603)	393
Gain on remeasurement of investment in an associate	-	2,154	-	934
Share of profit from investment in an associate	-	-	11	182
Finance costs	(1,540)	(1,266)	(2,604)	(1,986)
(Loss) / profit before tax for the year	(168)	2,767	(4,196)	(477)
Income tax	114	-	21	65
Net (loss) / profit after tax for the year	(54)	2,767	(4,175)	(412)
Other comprehensive income for the year:				
Items that will not be re-classified subsequently to profit or loss	-	12,118	-	16,274
Revaluation of property, plant and equipment	-	(1,818)	-	(2,402)
Deferred tax on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	957	(908)	957	(908)
Movement in fair value reserve	957	9,392	957	12,964
Other comprehensive income for the year	957	9,392	957	12,964
Total other comprehensive income / (loss) for the year	903	12,159	(3,218)	12,552
Net (loss) / profit attributable to:				
Shareholders of the Parent Company	(54)	2,767	(4,093)	(315)
Non-controlling interest	-	-	(82)	(97)
	(54)	2,767	(4,175)	(412)
Total comprehensive income / (loss) attributable to:				
Shareholders of the Parent Company	903	12,159	(3,136)	12,535
Non-controlling interest	-	-	(82)	17
	903	12,159	(3,218)	12,552
(Loss) / earnings per share - basic and diluted (RO)	(0.000)	0.016	(0.023)	(0.002)

Ramadan Village in Nakhal fosters Omani values amid modern life

Our Correspondent
Nakhal

Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs launched the second edition of Ramadan Village in Nakhal, South Batinah last week under the theme 'Your Values are a Trust'. Running throughout the holy month, the event is designed to instil and preserve traditional Omani values, while raising awareness of their relevance in the face of modern-day challenges.

The Ramadan Village features a wide range of activities aimed at engaging and educating visitors. These include religious guidance programmes, heritage exhibitions and interactive community workshops. Its goal is to foster a deeper understanding of Omani culture and promote social harmony.

Dr Abdulrahman bin Mohammed al Siyabi, Director of Department of Endowments and Religious Affairs in South Batinah, highlighted the success of the first edition and emphasised that the second is built on that suc-

cess to strengthen the role of Omani values in society.

"This initiative is not just about preserving traditions but reinforcing the moral framework that sustains our society. Through community engagement and educational programmes, we aim to nurture a pure and resilient value system," Siyabi said.

A key feature of the opening ceremony was a thought-provoking dialogue session addressing the challenges of preserving cultural heritage in the face of globalisation. The discussion also underscored the important role of the Omani school curriculum in fostering national values, encouraging a sense of identity and active citizenship from an early age.

Additionally, Nakhal Zakat and Charity Committee launched a new endowment investment initiative aimed at supporting charitable work within the community. This initiative is expected to improve sustainability of endowment projects and provide enhanced support for social welfare programmes.

Municipality warns about uncovered iftar meals

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Muscat Municipality has issued a warning to the public regarding the practice of displaying uncovered iftar meals in coffee shops and restaurants during Ramadan.

'During Ramadan, some restaurants display uncovered iftar meals to attract customers. This practice can compromise food safety and endanger public health,' a statement said.

The municipality outlined several negative effects of displaying food without covers. Prolonged exposure to open air can lead to

contamination, making the food susceptible to harmful contaminants. Insects, such as flies, are attracted to uncovered food, increasing the risk of contamination, while rodents may also be drawn to such meals. Additionally, exposure to open air can cause food to dry out and alter taste and reduce quality.

The civic body reminded restaurants and food vendors that they must adhere to strict health regulations set by municipal authorities to maintain food quality and protect consumers' health. Violations of these regulations can result in penalties.

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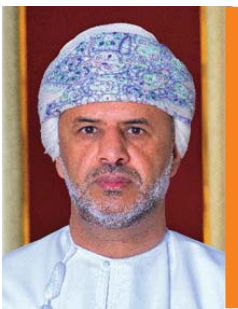
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Sultan Qaboos University introduces 'Afaq' programme to attract international students

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) has unveiled a new programme called 'Afaq', aimed at attracting both international and Omani undergraduate students. The initiative is part of the university's strategic efforts to improve its global ranking and align with Oman Vision 2040.

The programme is designed to offer educational opportunities to international students wishing to pursue studies at SQU, as well as to Omani stu-



The Afaq programme reflects a new vision for the university to establish itself as a world-class academic destination and broaden its educational offerings

H H SAYYID DR FAHAD
AL JULANDA AL SAID

dents who seek specialisations not available through the Unified Admission Center. This move aims to further diversify the student body and enhance the overall academic environment at the

university.

According to H H Sayyid Dr Fahad al Julanda al Said, Vice Chancellor of SQU, the programme is an important step in the university's broader efforts to



improve its international standing. "International student admission is a key indicator of a university's global ranking," he said. "This programme will help increase campus diversity, enriching both academic and cultural experiences for students."

A total of up to 300 students, both international and Omani, will be admitted under the programme each year. Importantly, these additional seats will not impact the number of places available to Omani students through the Unified Admission Center. The new seats will be spread

across various colleges and specialisations, excluding the College of Medicine and Health Sciences.

International students will be able to apply directly through the university's official website, while Omani applicants must register through the Unified Admission Center. All students accepted into the programme will be required to adhere to the same academic standards and regulations.

H E Dr Fahad added that the Afaq programme reflects a new vision for the university to establish itself as a world-class academic destination.

National Museum showcases masterpieces of Islamic era

Our Correspondent
Muscat

National Museum, in collaboration with the Sharjah Museums Authority, has launched an exhibition titled Masterpieces of Art from the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilisation. The exhibition, which opened on Monday, will run until May 3.

Held under the patronage of H E Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the National Museum, the event was attended by Sheikh Sultan bin Ahmed al Qasimi, Deputy Ruler of Sharjah.

The exhibition features 82 artefacts highlighting the achievements of Islamic civilisation and Muslim scholars. Several pieces are being displayed outside the United Arab Emirates for the first time. The collection is divided into three sections - Calligraphy Arts, Science and Innovation, and Harmony and Diversity - offering insights into the intellectual and cultural progress



These treasures of knowledge illustrate how Islam played a pivotal role in shaping a civilisation based on science, the advancement of knowledge

JAMAL AL MOOSAWI

of the Islamic world.

Jamal bin Hassan al Moosawi, Secretary-General of the National Museum, described the event as part of ongoing efforts to promote cultural exchange and knowledge. "This exhibition builds on the success of the 'Omani Civilisation: Origins and Development' exhibition held in 2023 at the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Antiquities, under the patronage of Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Muhammad al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah. It marks a significant

step in the collaboration between the National Museum and the Sharjah Museums Authority," he said.

Moosawi added that the exhibition showcases invaluable artefacts reflecting the scientific and intellectual achievements of the Islamic era. "These treasures of knowledge demonstrate the cultural and intellectual progress of the time, illustrating how Islam played a pivotal role in shaping a civilisation based on science and the advancement of knowledge.

GFW report highlights worker layoffs

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The General Federation of Oman Workers (GFW) has revealed in its latest report that 31 Omani workers were laid off from their jobs in February 2025. Additionally, the federation confirmed actions to prevent the termination of another 30 Omani workers during the same month.

In its commitment to safeguarding workers' rights, GFW provided 52 legal assistances in February. The federation also received 52 complaints from 51 establishments regarding employment terminations

throughout 2023.

These complaints primarily concerned unfair dismissals, but also included issues related to delayed payments, cessation of wages, poor working conditions, and non-compliance with safety and occupational health standards. Non-Omani workers were also among those dismissed by private sector establishments.

The report further highlighted the expansion of labour unions across Oman. As of February 2025, the number of labour unions in the sultanate reached 327, spanning 16 sectors. The majority of unions operate within the commerce and industry sec-

tor (99 unions or 30%), followed by the oil and gas sector (82 unions or 25%), and the construction and contracting sector (32 unions or 9.7%).

Additionally, a new sectoral worker union was established in February. These unions function as centralised organisations, coordinating and facilitating communication between the individual unions and the federation to enhance collective bargaining and support for workers' rights.

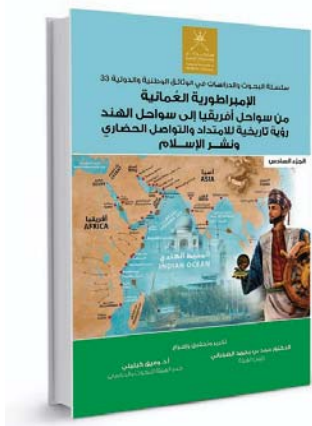
GFW continues to advocate for fair treatment, safe working environments, and the legal rights of workers in Oman.

New Omani encyclopedia explores ties with Africa, Asia

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The National Records and Archives Authority (NRAA) has released the sixth volume of the *Encyclopedia of the Omani Empire from the Coasts of Africa to the Coasts of India: A Historical and Political Vision of Cultural Expansion and Communication and the Spread of Islam*.

The 630-page volume contains 19 studies examining the Omani Empire's relations with countries along the African coast, the Indian Ocean, the Gulf,



and China between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. The research covers historical,

political, geographical, economic, social, and cultural aspects, highlighting Oman's influence in the region and its role in spreading Islamic civilisation.

Historically, Oman served as a key maritime and trade hub, connecting East Africa, the Indian Ocean, and the Gulf. Its strategic position made it an economic and political center, fostering lasting ties between Oman and the surrounding regions. The encyclopedia aims to document and reinforce these connections, promoting knowledge of Oman's role in shaping regional history.

"The publication, with its various volumes, aims to study in depth the relations of the Omani empire with countries bordering the coasts of Africa and neighbouring regions, the coasts of the Indian Ocean and the Gulf, and even China during the period from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. It also aims to reveal the elements of unity between its regions, the rich diversity of its societies, and the evolution of customs and traditions," said Dr Hamad bin Mohammed al Dhuyani, Chairman of NRAA.



ظفار للأغذية والاستثمار (ش م ع)
DHOFAH FOODS AND INVESTMENT (SAOG)

P.O. Box 1220 – PC 211 – Phone 23225381 – Fax 23225258

Notice and Invitation to Attend the Annual General Meeting

The Board of Directors of Dhofar Foods and Investment (SAOG) is pleased to invite the esteemed shareholders to attend the company's Annual General Meeting, scheduled to be held at 3:00 PM on Sunday, 30/03/2025, via the electronic platform for general meetings, which can be accessed through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.om). If the legal quorum for holding the meeting is not met, the second Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday, 2/04/2025, at 3:00 PM, through the same electronic platform, to discuss the following agenda:

Annual Ordinary General Meeting Agendas:

1. Approval of the Board of Directors' resolution to appoint BDO LLC as the external auditor for the financial year ending on 31/12/2024.
2. To consider and approve the Board of Directors' report on the company's activities and financial position for the fiscal year ending 31/12/2024. (Annex 1)
3. To consider and approve the Management Discussion & Analysis Report of the company for the fiscal year ending 31/12/2024. (Annex 2)
4. To consider the Auditor's Report and to approve the Financial Statements (Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Account) of the Company for the financial year ended 31 December 2024. (Annex 3)
5. To ratify the sitting fees paid to the board of directors and its subcommittees during the financial year ended 31 December 2024, and determine the sitting fees for the financial year 2025 as recorded in (Annex 4)
6. Briefing the General Assembly on the transactions conducted by the company with related parties during the fiscal year ending 31/12/2024. (Annex 5)
7. Review and approve transactions that the company will conduct with related parties during the fiscal year ending 31/12/2025. (Annex 6)
8. Review and approve the proposal to allocate RO 5,000 for corporate social responsibility initiatives during the fiscal year ending 31/12/2025.
9. Appoint an auditor for the fiscal year ending 31/12/2025 and determine their fees. (Annex 7)

In accordance with the company's Articles of Association and the regulations for holding general meetings using modern technology, as issued by the Financial Services Authority, please note the following:

1. Only a legal entity has the right to delegate a natural person to attend the General Meeting and vote on its behalf through electronic means, provided that this natural person has an investornumber with Muscat Clearing & Depository Company.
2. Voting on any agenda item begins no earlier than three days before the General Meeting date and remains open until the voting process concludes on the day of the meeting. If a shareholder's stock balance increases or decreases during this period, the previous votes will be canceled, and the shareholder must recast their vote on the day of the General Meeting.

For any inquiries, please contact the Company Secretary at 99750028 or Email: board.secretary@dcfoman.com

MARKET WATCH	
MSX30	4,379.46
Sensex	74,169.95
FOREX RATES (RO1 equals)	
India	225.43
Pakistan	727.09
Bangladesh	315.72
Philippines	148.77
Sri Lanka	770.15
*Rates as on March 17 Source: xe.com	

BRIEFS
China's economy shows mixed signals

China's economy delivered mixed signals in the first two months of this year, as retail sales and industrial output showed resilience, while unemployment and the housing market posed concerns.

Retail sales rose by 4% year-on-year in the January-February period, up from December's 3.7% growth and in line with estimates, according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics on Monday.

Industrial production grew at an annualised rate of 5.9% in the first two months of 2024, slightly down from December's 6.2% growth but surpassing market forecasts.

The value added of equipment-making and high-tech manufacturing sectors gained momentum in January-February, rising 10.6% and 9.1%, respectively.

Fixed asset investment, excluding rural households, reached 5.3tn yuan (\$727bn), marking a 4.1% rise compared to the previous year.

The data highlights continued efforts to strengthen infrastructure and industrial investment, even amid global uncertainties.

Financial Services Authority warns against unlicensed online platforms

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As part of the Financial Services Authority's (FSA) ongoing efforts to protect investors and ensure a safe investment environment, the FSA has warned individuals and institutions against engaging with unlicensed online platforms that promote their services via the internet and social media.

These online platforms, according to FSA, aim to attract investors by offering services related to securities such as digital currencies, financial instruments linked to commodities like gold and crude oil, crowdfunding platforms, and the promotion of shares in companies listed on regional or global stock exchanges.

The FSA has highlighted that these platforms, despite their apparent credibility, carry significant risks that could lead to financial loss and expose investors' money to potential harm.

In a statement, Majid Ahmed al Abri, FSA spokesman, stated that these platforms often rely on alluring marketing strategies to attract investors, such as promises of high and quick returns, and offering tempting deals like discounted fees or free trades in the initial months. Some platforms also provide financial rewards to new investors upon registration or when referring friends and acquaintances to join the platform.

He also pointed out that these platforms frequently promote



FSA cancels licences of Sharek and New Sphere

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Financial Services Authority (FSA) has issued two administrative decisions cancelling the licences of Sharek Investment and New Sphere, which were engaged in securities and crowdfunding

platform activities. The decisions revoke the companies' licences, and they will be deregistered from the register of companies operating in the securities sector, the FSA said in a statement.

The administrative penalties were imposed as these companies failed to commence oper-

ations since their establishment, in accordance with Article 123(a) of the Executive Regulation of the Capital Market Law, issued via Decision No. 1/2009. The review of licences granted to companies operating in the securities sector for crowdfunding activities took place in 2022, the first year of

Oman's crowdfunding market following the issuance of the crowdfunding regulation under Decision No. 153/2021.

According to the FSA, seven companies were licensed to carry out crowdfunding activities, but only five have actually begun providing funding facilities to emerging businesses.

fake success stories, where individuals claim to have made large profits, attempting to persuade others that they might miss out on a lucrative opportunity.

Abri stressed that public awareness is the first line of defence to prevent falling victim to these platforms. He therefore urged the public, including indi-

viduals and institutions, to exercise caution and resist the allure of false promises and tempting offers.

He advised them to avoid

dealing with any electronic platform involved in securities-related activities unless it is licensed by the FSA. He also emphasised that unlicensed plat-

forms do not provide legal protection for investors, leaving their money exposed to risks.

Furthermore, Abri stated that these platforms are often characterised by opaque financial operations, increasing the likelihood of illegal activities such as money laundering, which poses a threat to the country's financial and economic stability.

He added, "We call on everyone to be fully aware and verify the credibility of platforms before making any investment decisions."

The FSA recommends that anyone wishing to invest in activities related to securities via electronic platforms or companies ensures they are licensed and registered on the FSA's website or smartphone application, which allows them to view the list of authorised companies and entities permitted to conduct these activities.

The FSA reaffirmed its commitment to monitoring and addressing any irregularities in the financial market, taking appropriate legal actions to safeguard investors' rights and bolster confidence in the investment environment.

The authority encourages citizens and residents to report any suspicious platforms through its whistleblowing service, available on both its website and smartphone application. It stresses that collective cooperation and awareness are the best methods to combat these illegal activities and protect the national economy.

Oil prices rise on Red Sea tension

Muscat - Oil prices rose on Monday, driven by concerns over trade disruptions amid ongoing US strikes on Yemen, along with China's new economic stimulus measures, which fueled expectations for higher demand.

Brent crude price increased by around 0.67% on Tuesday trading at \$70.71 per barrel in morning trade in London, up from \$70.24 at the previous session's close. The US benchmark, West Texas Intermediate (WTI) rose by 0.73%, settling at \$67.40 per barrel, compared to its prior session close of \$66.91.

The US launched airstrikes on multiple Yemeni cities late on Saturday, killing at least 31 people, as US President Donald Trump ordered the 'strong and decisive' strikes against Houthi targets, warning that 'hell will



rain down' if the group continues attacks on Red Sea shipping.

On Sunday, the Houthi group announced that it had targeted a US aircraft carrier with ballistic missiles and drones in retaliation for the American aggression

against Yemen.

The Houthis have been attacking Israeli-linked ships in the Red Sea with missiles and drones since late 2023, disrupting global trade, in solidarity with the Gaza Strip.

The group halted its attacks when a ceasefire was declared in January between Israel and Hamas, but threatened to resume the attacks when Israel blocked all aid into Gaza on March 2.

The ongoing hostilities pose a risk to maritime trade security in the Red Sea, potentially tightening oil supplies.

Also, China, the world's largest crude oil importer, introduced a comprehensive plan to boost domestic consumption on Sunday, supporting economic recovery amid intensified US trade tariffs.

The country's latest plan highlights a strategic shift toward internal demand as the primary growth driver, fueling expectations of higher energy consumption and contributing to a rise in oil prices.

Agencies

Goldman Sachs cuts oil price outlook on oversupply fears

Irina Slav

Goldman Sachs commodity analysts cut the bank's price outlook for crude oil, basing the revision on expectations of slower US economic growth and additional OPEC+ supply.

"While the \$10 a barrel selloff since mid-January is larger than the change in our base case fundamentals, we reduce by \$5 our December 2025 forecast for Brent to \$71," Goldman Sachs said in a note, adding that "The medium-term risks to our forecast remain to the downside given potential further tariff escalation and potentially longer OPEC+ production increases."

It is worth noting that OPEC+ is unlikely to keep adding oil sup-



ply just because it said it would, regardless of what direction prices are moving in. Indeed, Russia's top OPEC+ official, Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said earlier this month the decision to add supply could be reversed as soon as May if prices slump.

OPEC+ said it would add some 138,000 bpd to its collective supply next month in a long-awaited wind-down of the 2022

production cuts that is in all likelihood temporary given how sensitive oil prices remain to any move by OPEC+.

As regards US growth, Goldman analysts believe this will be negatively affected by President Trump's tariff wars with trade partners. Many analysts argue that tariffs hurt economic growth by making goods and commodities costlier for the end consumer. As the most traded commodity in the world, crude oil demand is inevitably going to see an impact from the tariff exchange.

In addition to these, Goldman analysts also believe the oil market will remain oversupplied this year, adding to bearish drivers. (Source: Oilprice.com)

Dubai's DP World announces record revenue of \$20bn for 2024

Dubai, UAE - Dubai's DP World Limited has announced its financial results for the year ended December 31, 2024. On a reported basis, revenue grew by 9.7% to \$20bn, and adjusted EBITDA rose by 6.7% to \$5.5bn, with an adjusted EBITDA margin of 27.2%.

The revenue growth of 9.7% was mainly driven by improved performance from ports and terminals, along with contributions from new acquisitions and concessions. Ports and terminals revenue per TEU increased by 13.9% on a like-for-like basis, with strong growth from the Middle East and the Americas.

DP World's capacity exceeded 100mn TEU, thanks to selective infrastructure investment in key growth markets.

Capital expenditure of \$2.2bn (\$2.1bn in 2023) was invested across the existing portfolio. The capital expenditure budget for 2025 is approximately \$2.5bn, which will be invested mainly in Jebel Ali, Drydocks World, and Jebel Ali Freezone, Tuna Tekra (India), London Gateway (UK), Ndayane (Senegal), and Jeddah (Saudi Arabia).

Cash generated from operating activities increased by 18.9% to \$5.5bn in 2024 (\$4.6bn in 2023).

DP World Group Chairman and CEO Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem commented, "We are proud to report record revenue of \$20bn and record EBITDA of \$5.5bn for 2024, a remarkable achievement given the complex



The revenue growth of 9.7% was mainly driven by improved performance from ports terminals, along with contributions from new acquisitions and concessions

geopolitical landscape. These results demonstrate the benefits of our strategic focus on high-margin cargo, end-to-end integrated supply chain solutions, and disciplined cost optimisation."

He added that this strategy positions DP World for sustained

long-term growth and value creation. By enhancing efficiency, expanding capabilities, and deepening partnerships, DP World is building a resilient business, well-equipped to capitalise on new opportunities as global trade evolves.

"As part of our long-term strategy, we continue to invest in our portfolio through targeted bolt-on acquisitions, expand into new locations, and add high-value capabilities that align with our clients' evolving needs. We maintain a positive medium-term outlook, supported by strong industry fundamentals and DP World's ability to deliver sustainable, long-term returns," Sulayem stated.

WAM

Middle East set to lead global growth in gas production

Istanbul, Turkey - Global natural gas production is expected to reach 5.32tn cubic meters (tcm) by 2050 - an increase of 1.24tcm from 2023 levels - driven by growing international demand, according to a recent industry report.

The Gas Exporting Countries Forum's (GECF) 2050 Outlook report states that global natural gas production is projected to grow by 31% by 2050, compared to 2023.

According to the report, annual production is expected to grow by 1.6% until 2030, then slow to 1% in the 2030s and further decline to 0.6% in the 2040s. Regional natural gas production forecasts for the 2023-2050 period reveal diverse trends influenced by resource endowments and market dynamics.

The report states that the Middle East is expected to lead in absolute production growth during this period.

The Middle East is anticipated to add approximately 461bn cubic meters (bcm) to its production by 2050, supported by robust reserves, infrastructure expansion, and a strategic focus on low-carbon gas solutions.

Eurasia is expected to follow with an increase of 362bcm, driven primarily by advancements in Russia's production and gas utilization programs targeting Asian markets.

Meanwhile, Africa is projected to record the strongest growth momentum, expanding



Middle East is anticipated to add approximately 461 bn cubic meters to its gas production by 2050, supported by robust reserves, infrastructure expansion, and a strategic focus on low-carbon gas solutions

its role in global natural gas markets, the report says.

It adds that Africa's natural gas production is projected to grow by 250bcm, underscoring its rising prominence as a supplier, bolstered by increasing investments in LNG and pipeline infrastructure.

North America is forecast to contribute a relatively modest

107bcm to its production over the same period, while maintaining its position as the world's top producer.

In terms of total regional output, North America's production is expected to rise to 1.38tcm by 2050, retaining its leading position.

Asia Pacific and Latin America are expected to add 91bcm

and 87bcm, respectively, supported by domestic demand and infrastructure development.

In contrast, Europe's natural gas production is projected to decline by 119bcm, attributed to resource depletion and policy-driven shifts away from fossil fuels, the report states.

Eurasia's output is projected to reach 1.21tcm, while the Middle East is anticipated to hit 1.15tcm.

Natural gas production from conventional reservoirs is forecast to remain the cornerstone of global natural gas supply, driving production growth through 2050.

Conventional gas production

is expected to increase by over 1tcm, reaching 3.8tcm by 2050, with an average annual growth rate of 1% over the outlook period, report said.

'The regions propelling this growth are Africa, Eurasia, and the Middle East. Africa is expected to emerge as a key contributor, with its growing conventional gas production,' it said.

The report states that unconventional gas production is projected to increase by 231bcm, reaching 1.51tcm by 2050, but its share in global gas production is anticipated to decline to 28%, down from 31% in 2023.

Anadolu Agency



India's forex reserves rise to \$654bn

New Delhi, India - India's foreign exchange reserves had their highest weekly gains in over three years in the week ending March 7, according to the Reserve Bank of India.

Reserve Bank of India data showed that in the week under consideration, foreign exchange reserves rose by \$15.267bn to \$653.966bn. Forex reserves had slumped for about four months, recently hitting an 11-month low. Then followed the latest roller-coaster movement, with gains some weeks and declines the next.

Forex reserves started falling after touching an all-time high of \$704.89bn in September. They are now about 7% lower from their peak. The decline in reserves is most likely due to RBI intervention, aimed at preventing a sharp depreciation of the rupee. The Indian rupee is now at or near its all-time low against the US dollar.

The latest RBI data showed that India's foreign currency assets (FCA), the largest compo-

nent of forex reserves, stood at \$557.282bn. Gold reserves currently amount to \$74.325bn, according to RBI data.

Estimates suggest that India's foreign exchange reserves are sufficient to cover approximately 10-11 months of projected imports.

In 2023, India added around \$58bn to its foreign exchange reserves, contrasting with a cumulative decline of \$71bn in 2022. In 2024, the reserves rose by a little over \$20bn.

Foreign exchange reserves, or FX reserves, are assets held by a nation's central bank or monetary authority, primarily in reserve currencies such as the US dollar, with smaller portions in the euro, Japanese yen, and pound sterling.

The RBI often intervenes by managing liquidity, including selling dollars, to prevent steep Rupee depreciation. The RBI strategically buys dollars when the rupee is strong and sells when it weakens.

ANI



\$9.5tn is at risk in US-EU trade war: AmCham EU

Vahid Karaahmetovic

The escalating trade conflict between the US and Europe threatens a commercial relationship valued at \$9.5tn in two-way trade and investment, according to US businesses caught in the dispute.

The American Chamber of Commerce to the European Union (AmCham EU) warns that tariffs could impact not just goods directly taxed but also broader trans-Atlantic investments, which are significantly larger in value.

While trade in goods between the US and Europe, including the UK, reached \$1.3tn last year and trade in services exceeded \$750bn, affiliate sales of European companies in the US likely surpassed \$3.5tn, with US affiliate sales in Europe exceeding \$4tn, the group said in a new report.

"The damage to the trade flows in goods is bad enough," said AmCham EU Chief Executive Malte Lohan. "The real risk is that it starts contaminating some of the other links."

President Trump has focused

on the goods trade deficit with Europe, which stood at \$235.6bn last year, according to the Commerce Department.

He recently imposed 25% tariffs on global steel and aluminum imports and has threatened further levies on European cars, pharmaceuticals, and other goods. In response to the EU's

American Chamber of Commerce to the European Union warns that tariffs could impact not just goods directly taxed but also broader trans-Atlantic investments, which are significantly larger in value

countermeasures - including tariffs of up to 50% on US products such as whiskey - Trump threatened 200% tariffs on French Champagne and other European alcoholic beverages.

Industry leaders on both sides of the Atlantic warn that such tariffs could be highly damaging. European wine producers say a 200% tariff could effectively cut them off from the U.S. market.

Dan Hamilton, a fellow at Johns Hopkins University and a

co-author of the AmCham EU report, cautioned that the EU could retaliate by targeting US services, where the US has a trade surplus.

Tariffs could also disrupt supply chains by making it harder for European firms to send parts to their US affiliates or for American companies to export finished goods.

More US foreign direct investment goes to Europe than to the rest of the world combined, while European firms make up nearly two-thirds of global foreign direct investment in the US.

Hamilton warned that policy uncertainty could force companies to reconsider their trans-Atlantic investments.

"The ripple effects of conflict in the trade space will not be confined to trade," he said.

(Source: Investing.com)

Trump's tariffs loom over Fed decision

Jennifer Schonberger

The US Federal Reserve is widely expected to hold interest rates steady when it meets this week, but investors will be watching for something else - any sign that President Donald Trump's policies are changing the central bank's future expectations for the economy.

The Fed's latest round of projections released Wednesday will include the much-studied "dot plot," a chart updated quarterly that shows each Fed official's prediction about the direction of the central bank's benchmark interest rate.

The last dot plot, released in December, revealed a consensus among Fed officials for two cuts this year, revised down from four, as some were already factoring President Trump's expected economic policies into their projections.

Now that Trump is putting those policies into action, including an aggressive slate of tariffs, the question is whether central bank policymakers will tweak their outlook for economic growth and inflation - and thus the direction of rates.

"They could be more worried when they look at the growth trajectory of the economy and model out what they think those tariffs mean," former Kansas City Fed president Esther George told Yahoo Finance.

The markets are currently expecting three rate cuts this year, in summer and fall, due in part to concerns that Trump's policies would hold down economic growth. The US stock market dropped 10% from its high set last month, partly due to those concerns, before recovering some of those losses on Friday.

Some Fed watchers are also worried about the inflationary effects of tariffs, arguing that the



US Federal Reserve headquarters in Washington, DC

worst effects have not yet shown up in the data.

"In March and April, we're going to see a pretty big pickup in terms of inflation," RSM US economist Tuan Nguyen told Yahoo Finance. "That's going to be quite troubling for the market."

George said she thinks Fed officials will maintain their estimate of two rate cuts because tariffs could, in fact, push up inflation later this year.

"Even though the market is pricing in three rate cuts, I'm just looking at this landscape and saying the Fed has an inflation problem too," George said.

Luke Tilley, chief economist for Wilmington Trust, expects the Fed this week to retain its two-rate prediction, but he expects the central bank will end up cutting four times this year, starting in May.

He is in the camp that argues tariffs will lead to slower economic growth, offsetting any inflationary impact.

"We're in more of a growth

scare over the course of the year than we are an inflation scare," Tilley said.

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell made it clear in his last public comments before this week's meeting that the central bank still has time to assess how Trump's policies are affecting the economy - without adjusting rates one way or another.

The Fed kept its rates on hold last month following three consecutive cuts at the end of 2024.

"As we parse the incoming information, we are focused on separating the signal from the noise as the outlook evolves," Powell said in New York City on March 7.

"We do not need to be in a hurry and are well-positioned to wait for greater clarity."

The central bank leader added in a Q&A portion following his speech that "the cost of being cautious is very, very low. The economy is fine. It doesn't need us to do anything, really, so we can wait and we should wait."

Some recent economic data released for the month of February appear to support that view.

February's jobs report showed 151,000 jobs were added last month, more than the 125,000 jobs seen in January. The unemployment rate ticked up slightly to 4.1% from 4%.

Inflation also eased in February, according to the latest reading of the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

The data released last Wednesday from the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that "core" CPI - which strips out the more volatile costs of food and gas - rose 3.1% in February, down from 3.3% seen the month prior. This marked the lowest yearly increase in core CPI since April 2021.

A separate pricing measure known as the Producer Price Index (PPI) released last Thursday also showed that wholesale prices rose less than analysts expected in February.

(Source: Yahoo Finance)

MHD's TYREPLUS highlights essential road safety and tyre care measures

TYREPLUS, a division of MHD ACERE, urged drivers to adopt safe driving habits and prioritise vehicle maintenance to ensure a smooth and secure journey, especially during Ramadan. With changes in sleep schedules, fasting-related fatigue, and increased road congestion during iftar hours, TYREPLUS emphasised the importance of both driver awareness and vehicle preparedness - particularly tyre safety.

Road Safety Tips
Ramadan brings about a shift in daily routines, which can impact concentration and reaction times while driving. To help motorists stay safe, TYREPLUS shared essential driving safety tips for the month.

Avoid driving during iftar: Stop at least 10 minutes before iftar to break your fast safely and prevent distractions.

Follow road rules: Continue to follow all road rules and regulations just like you do during other times. As loss of sleep and poor focus is common during Ramadan, you must ensure to take extra caution while driving on road.



Practice defensive driving: Be mindful of other motorists who may be fasting and maintain a safe distance.

Plan your journey wisely: Start

early to avoid peak-hour traffic and reduce stress.

Ensure your vehicle is well-maintained: Regular servicing, including tyre checks, is crucial to

prevent unexpected breakdowns.

Role of tyre safety
With rising temperatures in Oman during Ramadan, tyre

safety becomes even more critical. Heat can cause tyre pressure fluctuations, increasing the risk of blowouts. TYREPLUS, a leading car care brand with nine

branches across Oman, encourages drivers to have their tyres checked regularly to ensure optimal performance.

"As families travel across Oman to celebrate Ramadan, road safety should be a top priority. Proper vehicle maintenance, particularly tyre safety, is essential in preventing accidents caused by fatigue and poor road conditions. At TYREPLUS, we remain committed to ensuring

TYREPLUS is a leading provider of tire and vehicle maintenance services, dedicated to ensuring the safety and satisfaction of our customers. With a network of outlets across Oman, we offer high-quality products and services to keep your vehicle running smoothly.

MHD ACERE, the local partner of TYREPLUS in Oman, operates one-stop-shop TYREPLUS outlets across the country, offer-

With fasting-related fatigue, and increased road congestion during iftar hours, TYREPLUS emphasised the importance of both driver awareness and vehicle preparedness - particularly tyre safety

every driver is equipped with high-quality tyres and reliable car care services," said Mohsin Hani al Bahrani, CEO of MHD ACERE.

This Ramadan, drive with confidence knowing your vehicle is in top condition. At TYREPLUS, we pride ourselves on being a One-Stop Solution for Car Care and recognise the critical importance of vehicle safety.

ing a wide range of car maintenance services.

Additionally, MHD ACERE manages two Michelin Truck Service Centres, fully staffed with manufacturer-trained technicians and aftersales personnel. With a dedicated network and round-the-clock support, MHD ACERE has established itself as a trusted name in the industry.



NBO, INJAZ Oman collaborate to empower youth

The National Bank of Oman (NBO) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with INJAZ Oman to empower Omani youth with essential financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills.

As part of this partnership, NBO will finance two flagship programmes, 'More Than Money' and 'The Company Program and Competition', designed to benefit 3,500 young Omanis across the sultanate.

The More Than Money Program aims to introduce school students to money management, earning income, and making informed financial decisions, ensuring they develop financial responsibility from an early age.

The Company Programme and Competition provides higher education students with hands-on experience in business planning, market research, product development, and financial management, culminating in a national and regional competition judged by industry experts.

Through these initiatives, INJAZ Oman aims to bridge the gap between academics and real-world application, equipping students with critical thinking and business skills.

This prepares the youth to become financially confident

leaders ready to drive Oman's economic growth.

NBO's partnership with INJAZ Oman reflects its dedication to providing young Omanis with essential knowledge and skills to succeed. By investing in these initiatives, the bank is fostering financial empowerment and preparing future leaders to contribute to Oman's economic growth.

NBO's sponsorship will enable the implementation of financial and business training workshops, mentorship sessions with industry professionals, and hands-on learning experiences.

The partnership aligns with NBO's broader mission to contribute to Oman's economic development by nurturing the next generation of financially responsible and innovative leaders.

In addition to this, and as part of its commitment to fostering innovation, NBO is running the NBO Fintech Accelerator, the first of its kind in the banking sector in Oman, to drive the growth of fintech solutions that support the country's economic growth, innovation, and diversification. This initiative nurtures startups and promotes sustainable business growth, aligning with Oman Vision 2040.

Oman's Most Trusted Brand Hyundai unveils exclusive Ramadan offers



Hyundai is excited to announce its much-anticipated Ramadan 2025 promotion, offering exclusive deals across its diverse vehicle lineup.

As Oman's Most Trusted Brand, with over 1 million voters participating in the prestigious survey, and recognised as a Top Seller in the country, Hyundai continues to deliver vehicles that cater to a wide range of family needs, from eco-conscious models to stylish, reliable, and affordable options.

This limited-time offer runs until April 16, providing the perfect opportunity for customers to

save while driving home a Hyundai that meets their specific lifestyle requirements.

Hyundai's diverse lineup ensures that there is a vehicle for every family and individual, whether you're looking for a practical family SUV, a stylish sedan, or a fuel-efficient, environmentally friendly model. With its commitment to delivering innovation, reliability, and value, Hyundai's vehicles are designed to provide the ultimate driving experience, no matter the use case or lifestyle.

As part of this special promotion, Hyundai is offering excep-

tional benefits such as - five years unlimited service package; insurance and registration included in price; exchange bonus up to RO500; 0% interest for two years on Creta MY24 and MY25 models (subject to credit approval). These exclusive Ramadan offers ensure that Hyundai customers not only find a vehicle that fits their needs but also enjoy added value, peace of mind, and an outstanding ownership experience.

"Hyundai is committed to making mobility more accessible, reliable, and rewarding for our customers," said a senior

Hyundai spokesperson.

"As Oman's Most Trusted Brand and Top Seller, we're proud to continue delivering on our promise of quality, safety, and innovation. Ramadan is a time of giving, and we're excited to offer exceptional deals that provide even more value to our customers' journeys. With this promotion, we aim to make owning a Hyundai more affordable without compromising on the advanced technology and superior reliability Hyundai is known for."

Customers are invited to visit Hyundai showrooms across Oman to explore the full range of

available models and take advantage of these limited-time Ramadan offers.

Test drives are available to help customers find the perfect Hyundai that suits their needs. For added convenience, Hyundai's digital platforms offer a seamless browsing experience, allowing customers to explore pricing, available offers, and book appointments online.

This Ramadan, take advantage of these exceptional offers and drive home a Hyundai built for modern lifestyles, offering unmatched value, reliability, and style.

KO, Techno support over 200 families during Ramadan

In the spirit of giving during the holy month of Ramadan, Knowledge Oman has partnered with Techno to distribute essential food items to over 200 families across six locations.

The initiative brought together Knowledge Oman team members, Techno employees, and volunteers from the National University of Science & Technology, demonstrating the power of collaboration and community service.

The six chosen locations are Mabela, Amerat, Dakhliyah, Samael, Nizwa and Saham.

Speaking on the partnership, Omar al Bahri, Techno Plastic Industry General Manager, said, "At Techno, we strongly believe



in corporate social responsibility and the impact it has on the communities. Partnering with Knowledge Oman has been a fulfilling experience, as together, we have been able to extend support to families in need.

"This initiative reflects our commitment to making a positive difference, especially during the sacred month of Ramadan."

Knowledge Oman Founder, Tariq Hilal al Barwani, highlighted the significance of giving back. "Giving without expecting anything in return especially in the month of Ramadan is a blessing. Through this initiative, we aim to uphold the values of solidarity and kindness that define our society."

He asserted that seeing volunteers from different backgrounds come together to support families in need is a testament to the strength of community-driven efforts.

"We are grateful to Techno and our volunteers for making this possible," he added.

The initiative not only provided essential food supplies but also reinforced the spirit of unity and generosity among all involved.

Knowledge Oman remains committed to fostering impactful collaborations that contribute to social well-being and looks forward to further initiatives that uplift communities across the sultanate.

Oman Sail's race management team selected to support Qatar regatta

Eight experienced members of Oman Sail's Race Management Team were invited by the Qatar Sailing and Rowing Federation (QSRF) to manage the recent Qatar International Optimist Regatta 2025.

Held at Rixos Gulf Hotel Doha beach, the event featured 52 young sailors from 12 countries from across the region, Europe, North Africa and Asia.

Assisting the organisers were Nawaf Yaqoob al Ghadani, Said Mohammed al Aurimi, Ali Salim al Harbi, Abid Yaqoob al Balushi, Muadh Gharib al Wahaibi, Al Mukhtar Abdul Karim al Mujini, Juma Zayid al Balushi and Abdul Aziz Salim al Shidi.

"We are immensely proud to have been invited by the QSRF to support the Qatar International Optimist Regatta 2025 and sailing community in Qatar," said Abdul Aziz Salim al Shidi, Oman Sail's Acting Director of Sailing.

According to him, these appointments show how highly skilled and trusted Omani officials are within the world of sailing. "This is another example of the high levels of professionalism, extensive experience, trust and confidence Oman Sail possesses to deliver top-tier organisation for world-class sailing events that meet international standards."

Rashid Majid al Sulaiti, President of QSRF and Chairman of the Organising Committee, added, "The Qatar International



Optimist Regatta 2025 was an exceptional event with impressive performances on every day. It cannot be understated how important good race management is to delivering an exciting and fair event, and the officials appointed allowed the races to flow and the sailors to shine.

"Conditions were excellent throughout and we are all very proud that the Qatar International Optimist Regatta continues to grow into a leading event in the class."

Oman Sail continues to strengthen ties with national federations, support the develop-

ment of sailing and contribute to elevating the standard of events across the region.

Abdulaziz Salim al Shidi was also selected as a Race Officer for the 2023 IODA Optimist Asian & Oceanian Championship in Abu Dhabi alongside Ali Salim al Harbi and Abid

Yaqoob al Balushi who assisted as mark layers during racing.

Three Oman Sail officials were also selected for the 1st Youth GCC Games - UAE 2024. Mohsen Ali al Busaidi as Technical Advisor for Sailing Races, Captain Saleh Saeed al Jabri as a member of the Sailing Race Jury,

and Ahmed Nasser al Qasmi and Ghalib Saif al Mamari to the Race Management Team.

Operating under Oman Tourism Development Company, Oman Sail is tasked with rekindling the country's maritime eminence, promote the sultanate around the world through sailing,



We are immensely proud to have been invited by the QSRF. These appointments show how highly skilled and trusted Omani officials are within the world of sailing

ABDULAZIZ AL SHIDI

contribute to the sustainable prosperity of the nation and provide long-term learning opportunities for the youth.

Since 2008, Oman Sail has built a solid foundation around Sailing, Tourism, Commerce, Health and Environment, all underpinned with competency-based development for its workforce. Committed to offering both men and women equal opportunities to learn, Oman Sail's programmes focus on nurturing young talent to develop the sailing champions of tomorrow.



First winner of Mazda Ramadan raffle announced

Mazda Oman proudly announces Ruqaiya Ahmed as the first winner of its Ramadan raffle, driving home a brand-new Mazda 6.

This exclusive campaign brings added excitement to the holy month, offering customers the opportunity to own a Mazda while also standing a chance to win another. With three more raffle draws remaining, anticipation continues to grow as more customers look forward to experiencing the joy of winning.

Beyond the thrill of the raffle, Mazda Oman is committed to enhancing the ownership experience, providing an exclusive four-year unlimited linjaz service package and three-year AAA roadside assistance for added peace of mind.

As the campaign unfolds, now is the perfect time to explore Mazda's exceptional lineup and take advantage of this limited-time opportunity.

Savills appoints Thea Rowe to boost cross-border retail

International real estate advisor Savills has strengthened its global cross-border retail expertise with the appointment of Thea Rowe.

Thea joins Savills from Bruce Gillingham Pollard, where she worked for over a decade across both leasing and tenant representation teams, with some of the UK's largest and most reputable landlords and leisure brands.

In her new role, Thea will be situated in Dubai, strengthening the global retail team's cross border advisory in the Middle East, and helping both new entrants and established names grow their presence within the market.

Speaking of luxury retail specifically, a recent report by Savills highlights that, while global luxury store openings have started to slow, the Middle East remains on an upward trajectory. The luxury goods



Thea Rowe joins the team in Dubai to capitalise on growing demand in the Middle East

market in the region is expected to double to 30 billion by 2030. Much of this growth is driven by the UAE and Saudi Arabia, two nations reshaping the global luxury narrative.

Toby Hall, Head of Commercial Agency at Savills Middle East, said, "Thea will be an excellent addition to the cross-border retail team from the key hub of Dubai, continuing to deliver a fully integrated and consistent service offering."

"Brands across categories are not only recognising the region's phenomenal economic growth, but also its growing appeal as an international tourist destination. Bringing her expertise within retail leasing, Thea is well positioned to drive forward our plans in the Middle East."

Thea Rowe, Associate Director at Savills, adds: "The Middle East offers a fast-paced and vibrant retail environment, which more recently, has opened up to increasingly more international operators. Working at Savills, I'm excited to bring some new entrants into the market, as well as advising some of the local operators as they continue to flourish here."



GMC unveils flagship Yukon at exclusive event in Muscat

Moosa Abdul Rahman Hassan & Co, the official dealer of GMC in Oman, announced the launch of the new GMC Yukon at an exclusive event held at Sheraton Hotel, Muscat.

The event brought together executives, media representatives, and esteemed dignitaries, highlighting the vehicle's importance in the Omani market.

The new GMC Yukon, the brand's flagship full-size SUV, is now available across all GMC showrooms in Oman. Designed to redefine power, luxury, and innovation, the Yukon boasts a bold exterior redesign, cutting-edge technology, and unmatched performance, making it the perfect choice for discerning SUV enthusiasts in the region.

Speaking at the launch event, Ziad Haddad, Acting CEO of Moosa Abdul Rahman Hassan & Co, highlighted the brand's vision for delivering automotive excellence. "The launch of the new GMC Yukon in Oman marks a pivotal moment in GMC's journey. With its commanding presence, ground-breaking technology, and outstanding performance, the Yukon remains a benchmark in the full-size SUV segment. Our goal is to provide

customers in Oman with vehicles that offer more than just power - they bring innovation, luxury, and an enhanced driving experience."

Haddad also acknowledged the long-standing partnership with Moosa Abdul Rahman Hassan & Co, reinforcing their role in delivering exceptional service and accessibility to GMC customers in Oman.

"Moosa Abdul Rahman Hassan & Co. has played a crucial role in strengthening GMC's presence in Oman, ensuring that our customers receive world-class service and unparalleled access to our premium lineup. This partnership reflects our shared commitment to delivering superior automotive solutions and customer satisfaction."

The new GMC Yukon line-up includes four distinct trims: Elevation, elevation premium, AT4, the first-ever AT4 Ultimate, and the Denali - each crafted to suit different driving preferences. Customers can choose between two powerful V8 engine options, including the 5.3L V8 delivering 355hp and the 6.2L V8 producing 420hp and 623Nm of torque, both paired with a 10-speed automatic transmission for seamless performance.

'A Tale of Giving' exhibition promotes charity work

The Commerce Group students from the College of Economics and Political Science have organised the 13th charity used books exhibition called 'A Tale of Giving' at Muscat City Centre in Al Mawaleh.

This exhibition is an annual event that seeks to promote the culture of reading and the spirit of giving among different generations by reviving used books to support charitable work. The sustainability of this event lies in the continued efforts of the students and the college administration, along with the financial support provided by the sponsoring bodies.

The exhibition also aims to involve university students in organising the exhibition, promoting their values of volunteer work, and achieving environmental sustainability by recycling books and turning them



into a source of support for charitable projects. The proceeds of the exhibition will be donated to the Zakat Committee in the wilayat of Seeb.

In addition to books in Arabic and English, the exhibition features a children's corner that offers educational and entertaining activities aimed at fostering a culture of reading among children and enhancing their imagination. These activities include reading and storytelling workshops, as well as entertainment competitions. It is noteworthy that last year's charity exhibition for used books successfully raised RO3,000, with a total of 1,973 books sold.

Ukraine: Trump to speak to Putin

Trump expressed hope that they would have ‘something to announce’ on the US ceasefire proposal

Washington, D.C., US - US President Donald Trump said on Sunday that he will speak to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Tuesday, CNN reported. He expressed hope that they would have ‘something to announce’ on the US ceasefire proposal for the war in Ukraine.

Speaking to reporters on board Air Force One while returning to the White House after his weekend at Mar-a-Lago, Trump said: “We’re doing pretty well, I think, with Russia. We’ll see if we have something to announce, maybe by Tuesday. I’ll be speaking to President Putin on Tuesday.”

“A lot of work’s been done over the weekend, we want to see if we can bring that war to an end,” Trump said. “Maybe we can, maybe we can’t, but I think we have a very good chance.”

He said: “I think we have a lot of it already discussed, very much, by both sides.”

He added that negotiations would include discussions around land and power plants and that ‘a lot of land is a lot different than it was before the war’. He said that the discussions have already included discussions on ‘dividing up certain assets’.

Last week, the Kremlin said



Trump’s announcement regarding talks with Putin comes after he said last week that Ukraine had accepted a US-proposed 30-day ceasefire

US President Donald Trump said that negotiations would include discussions around land and power plants, and said that ‘a lot of land is a lot different than it was before the war’

that US negotiators would visit Russia for further talks. However, it did not disclose details

regarding the participants, as reported by CNN. Trump’s announcement regarding talks

comes after he said last week that Ukraine had accepted a US-proposed 30-day ceasefire.

Notably, Ukraine expressed readiness to accept the US proposal to enact an ‘immediate, interim 30-day ceasefire’, which can be extended by mutual agreement of the parties, and which is subject to acceptance and concurrent implementation by Russia.

The US also agreed to immediately lift the pause on intelligence sharing and resume security assistance to Ukraine.

In response to Trump’s announcement, Putin said that Russia agreed with the proposal in theory. However, he set tough conditions and de-

manded concessions from Ukraine. He accused the current Ukrainian government of being part of the ‘root cause’ of the war.

On Friday, Putin announced that Russia is working to restore ties with the US after they were ‘practically reduced to zero, destroyed by the previous American administration’. Referring to ties with the Trump administration, he said: “Overall, the situation is starting to move.” He said: “Let’s see what comes out of this.”

Meanwhile, Moscow will demand guarantees that NATO countries will exclude Ukraine from membership and that Ukraine will remain neutral in any peace agreement, a Russian official said in an interview with the Russian media outlet Izvestia. “We will demand that ironclad security guarantees become part of this agreement,” Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko said.

“Part of these guarantees should be Ukraine’s neutral status, the refusal of NATO countries to accept it into the alliance,” he added.

Grushko also reiterated Russia’s opposition to the involvement of peacekeeping forces from NATO member states in Ukraine in any quality.

Agencies



US defies court order, deports Venezuelans

San Salvador, El Salvador - The US has deported more than 200 alleged members of a Venezuelan gang to El Salvador by invoking a rarely used wartime law.

The deportations took place despite a federal judge’s order temporarily banning the expulsions. “Today, the first 238 members of the Venezuelan criminal organisation, Tren de Aragua, arrived in our country,” Salvadorean President Nayib Bukele said on Sunday on X.

Bukele said the US had also sent 23 members of the Salvadorean gang MS-13.

His post included a video of several men in handcuffs being transferred from a plane to a heavily guarded convoy.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio also confirmed the deportations. “Hundreds of violent criminals were sent out of our country,” he said in a statement. “I want to express my sincere gratitude to President Nayib Bukele of El Salvador for playing a pivotal role in this transfer.”

On Friday, US President Donald Trump signed an order invoking the wartime Alien Enemies Act of 1798 to bypass normal immigration procedures and rapidly expel the migrants. The order applied to all Venezuelan Tren de Aragua members who are over 14 and not naturalised US citizens

or lawful permanent residents.

The wartime authority has only been invoked three times before - during the War of 1812, and World Wars I and II.

Late on Saturday, US District Judge James E Boasberg suspended the application of the law for 14 days. But by then, the Venezuelans were reportedly already on a flight to El Salvador.

On Friday, US President Trump signed an order invoking wartime Alien Enemies Act to bypass normal procedures and rapidly expel the migrants

The Trump administration has filed an appeal against Saturday’s court decision.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt denied that officials had refused to comply with the court order, as she said the deportees had already left the United States.

“A single judge in a single city cannot direct the movements of an aircraft carrier full of foreign alien terrorists who were physi-

cally expelled from US soil,” she wrote in a statement.

What did Venezuela say?

Venezuela’s government condemned Trump’s use of the ‘anachronistic law’, calling it ‘illegal and in violation of human rights, against our migrants’.

It described the step as evocative of ‘the darkest episodes in human history, from slavery to the horror of the Nazi concentration camps’.

Venezuela also called on the international community, especially the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), to oppose what it called a dangerous precedent.

Bukele said the alleged Tren de Aragua members had been taken to the country’s maximum security Terrorism Confinement Centre (CECOT). The facility is a notorious mega-prison southeast of the capital, San Salvador with capacity for 40,000 prisoners.

The Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua has been linked to kidnapping, extortion, organised crime and contract killings. It was not clear what charges the alleged members of the group would face in El Salvador, and whether children were among those who were deported.

DW

Stranded astronauts to return on Tuesday

Washington, D.C., US - NASA astronauts Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore, stranded at the International Space Station for over nine months, will return to Earth on Tuesday evening, NASA announced in a statement.

Williams and Wilmore are scheduled to travel back to Earth alongside Nick Hague and Roscosmos cosmonaut Aleksandr Gorbunov aboard a SpaceX Crew Dragon spacecraft.

NASA will provide live coverage of the agency’s SpaceX Crew-9 return to Earth from the International Space Station, beginning with Dragon spacecraft hatch closure preparations at 10:45pm EDT on Monday. NASA and SpaceX met on Sunday to assess weather and splashdown conditions off Florida’s coast for the return of the agency’s Crew-9 mission from the International Space Station.

“NASA and SpaceX met on Sunday to assess weather and splashdown conditions off Florida’s coast for the return of



NASA video shows astronauts greeting each other after the SpaceX capsule docked with the ISS on Sunday

the agency’s Crew-9 mission from the International Space Station. Mission managers are targeting an earlier Crew-9 return opportunity based on favourable conditions forecasted for the evening of Tuesday, March 18,” the NASA statement said.

According to the statement, the updated return target continues to allow the space station

crew members time to complete handover duties while providing operational flexibility before less-favourable weather conditions are expected later in the week.

Mission managers will continue monitoring weather conditions in the area, as Dragon’s undocking relies on several factors, including spacecraft readiness, recovery team readiness,

weather, sea states, and other factors. NASA and SpaceX will confirm the specific splashdown location closer to the Crew-9 return, according to the statement.

SpaceX Dragon spacecraft carrying NASA astronauts docked with International Space Station, Space X CEO Elon Musk had announced on Sunday.

ANI

UN chief to host informal talks on Cyprus

Geneva, Switzerland - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will convene an informal meeting in Geneva on Tuesday with the two Cypriot leaders and guarantor powers Greece, Turkey and the UK in an effort to address the longstanding Cyprus issue.

The meeting, set to take place at the UN Office in Geneva, aims to provide a platform for discussions on the way forward for the divided island.

The participants will first gather on Monday evening for a dinner hosted by Guterres for the heads of delegations. The attendees will include Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, Greek Foreign Minister Giorgos Gerapetritis and UK Minister of State for Europe, North America and Overseas Territories Stephen Doughty, along with Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) President Ersin Tatar and Greek Cypriot administra-



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

tion leader Nikos Christodoulides.

On Tuesday, the informal discussions will begin with an expanded-format meeting preceded by a family photo. The session will bring together all parties to exchange views and explore potential pathways toward a peaceful resolution of the Cyprus issue.

Tatar will hold a press briefing

following the meeting, but no press conference or press stake-out from Guterres is expected at this time.

The meeting follows an informal dinner Guterres hosted with Tatar and Christodoulides in New York last October, during which the decision was made to hold a broader informal gathering bringing together the two leaders, the foreign ministers of

the ‘motherlands’ and lower-level officials from the UK as the third guarantor state.

The two leaders have long expressed divergent views on the island’s future.

In a recent press briefing, Tatar emphasised that any new agreement for peace and stability in Cyprus can only be achieved through cooperation.

Referring to the 1974 Turkish Peace Operation in Cyprus, he said: ‘If something is to be done in Geneva for the continuation of peace, security and stability in the wake of 1974, a new agreement can only be reached with the cooperation of the two states.’

Cyprus has been embroiled in a decades-long dispute between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots despite repeated diplomatic efforts by the UN to reach a comprehensive settlement.

Anadolu Agency

Deadly storms, tornadoes sweep across US

Florida, US - Multiple tornadoes have lashed large parts of the southern and mid-western US, flattening homes and leaving at least 40 people dead, officials said.

The death toll could rise further as a cold front moves toward the East Coast, bringing fierce winds.

Tornado watches were in effect for parts of Florida, Georgia and five other states. More than 40 twisters have been recorded

Tornado watches were in effect for parts of Florida, Georgia and five other states until Sunday afternoon. Residents in high-risk areas were advised to shelter in buildings with underground protection.

More than 40 twisters have been recorded since the storms began on Friday.

At least 150,000 households were without power on Sunday, according to the website PowerOutage.

At least 12 dead in Missouri

Authorities said the most fatalities were recorded in Missouri, where at least 12 people were killed and dozens were injured.

The state's police reported that 'tornadoes, thunderstorms and large hail' brought down power lines and trees and caused extensive damage to properties. Eight people died in Kansas as more than 50 vehicles crashed into each other due to low visibility during a 'severe dust storm', local police said. Another four people were killed in similar dust storm-linked road accidents further down south in Texas.

At least two people died in Alabama, the state's governor said.

Tornadoes also hit Illinois and Mississippi, where six deaths were reported.

DW

US vows to continue strikes on Houthis until 'they end attacks'

US President Donald Trump, posting on social media, vowed to 'use overwhelming lethal force' to end the Houthi attacks

Washington, D.C., US - The United States will continue to strike Yemen's Houthi until they end attacks on international shipping, US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said on Sunday.

"I want to be very clear, this campaign is about freedom of navigation and restoring deterrence," Hegseth said in an interview for the Fox Business broadcaster. "The minute the Houthis say, 'We'll stop shooting at your ships, we'll stop shooting at your drones,' this campaign will end. But until then, it will be unrelenting," he added.

US President Donald Trump, posting on social media, also vowed to 'use overwhelming lethal force' to end the Houthi attacks. "To all Houthis, YOUR TIME IS UP, AND YOUR ATTACKS MUST STOP, STARTING TODAY. IF THEY DON'T, HELL WILL RAIN DOWN UPON YOU LIKE NOTHING YOU HAVE



The Houthis reported explosions in areas under their control on Saturday night and early Sunday. The Houthi-run Health Ministry said that the death toll had risen to 53, including women and children, with another 101 people wounded

EVER SEEN BEFORE!" he wrote. Trump added a warning to Iran, demanding that Tehran 'immediately' end its support for the rebel group.

Houthis claim to target US ships

The Houthis reported explosions in areas under their control on Saturday night and early on Sunday. The Houthi-run Health Ministry said early on Sunday that

the death toll had risen to 53, including women and children, with another 101 people wounded.

The Houthis claimed responsibility for a second attack on an American aircraft carrier group in 24 hours, saying it was a retaliation for the US strikes in Yemen.

A spokesperson for the group said that it had launched missiles and drones at the USS Harry S Truman and several of its war-

ships in the northern Red Sea.

After the Houthis claimed responsibility for the first attack, a US official told Reuters that F-16 and F-18 fighter jets shot down a total of 11 drones. The US military also tracked a Houthi missile that failed and splashed down in Yemen, the official added.

Earlier, the rebels vowed further escalation. Rebel leader Abdul Malik al-Houthi said that Houthi militants would target US

ships in the Red Sea as long as the US continues its attacks on Yemen.

"If they continue their aggression, we will continue the escalation," he said in a televised speech.

How did world react to strikes?

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for 'utmost restraint and a cessation of all military activities' in Yemen.

Guterres also warned new escalation could 'fuel cycles of retaliation that may further destabilise Yemen and the region, and pose grave risks to the already dire humanitarian situa-

tion in the country', his spokesperson said in a statement. Meanwhile, the head of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, General Hossein Salami, denied that his country was involved in the Houthi attacks, while Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, writing on X, urged the US to halt its airstrikes and said it cannot dictate Iran's foreign policy.

Russia also urged the US to stop the strikes. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov called US Secretary of State Marco Rubio to urge an 'immediate cessation of the use of force and the importance for all sides to engage in political dialogue', Moscow said.

DW

Pentagon deploys navy destroyer on US-Mexico border

Washington, D.C., US - The Pentagon has dispatched the USS Gravelly, a navy destroyer previously involved in Middle East combat, to enhance security at the US-Mexico border.

The USS Gravelly left Virginia's Naval Weapons Station Yorktown on Saturday, heading to the US Northern Command Area of Responsibility, according to a statement from the combatant command. The region includes the continental US, Alaska, Canada, Mexico, and the surrounding waters extending up to about 500 nautical miles.

The deployment is part of the Trump administration's efforts to secure the southern border.

"USS Gravelly's deployment will contribute to the US North-

ern Command southern border mission as part of the Department of Defence's coordinated effort in response to the Presidential Executive Order," General Gregory Guillot, commander of US Northern Command, said in a statement.

"Gravelly's sea-going capacity improves our ability to protect the United States' territorial integrity, sovereignty, and security," he added.

US defence officials stated on Saturday night that the destroyer will carry a small team of Coast Guard members, potentially enabling the vessel to assist in detaining migrants encountered at sea. At over 509 feet (155 metres) long, Gravelly is bigger than any vessel in the Coast Guard



fleet and is equipped with dozens of Tomahawk cruise missiles.

"The deployment of Gravelly

marks a vital enhancement to our nation's border security framework," Admiral Daryl Caudle,

commander of the US Naval Forces Northern Command, said in the statement.

JFK files

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump said more key files, including those related to convicted paedophile and disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein and the assassination of former President John F Kennedy, will be released soon. In an interview on Sunday on the Full Measure news programme, Trump said: "The Kennedy records are getting out. Those are the ones they really wanted to see the most."

Trump's comments came after US Attorney General Pam Bondi's revelation that she received a 'truckload' of unreleased Epstein documents from the FBI's Southern District of New York, though she did not specify when they would be made public.

Japan: PM Ishiba's Cabinet approval hits record low

Seoul, South Korea - Public support for Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's government has hit a new ebb after he handed out gift vouchers to over a dozen ruling party lawmakers, the latest polls showed.

Conducted by the local Asahi newspaper, the latest poll showed on Monday that the approval rating plummeted 14 percentage points to 26% from the previous survey done in February, the worst since Ishiba took office last October.

Also, public approval for Ishiba's Cabinet fell to a record low as per two separate polls conducted by the Yomiuri newspaper and the Mainichi newspaper over the weekend.

Ishiba found himself at the centre of a deepening controversy as he handed out gift



vouchers worth 100,000 yen (US\$673) each to 15 first-term lower house lawmakers of his ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) earlier this month.

The prime minister, for his part, said he used 'pocket money' to hand out gift certificates to the lawmakers before having dinner with them on March 3 as a 'show

of appreciation' for their hard work getting elected.

The premier contended that his act didn't violate a political fund law but apologised for his action, which caused 'distrust and anger among many people'.

All of the 15 lawmakers later returned the gift vouchers to Ishiba's office.

Israel: Bid to fire security chief ignites firestorm

Jerusalem - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's decision on Sunday to seek the dismissal of the head of Israel's internal security service has triggered a fierce political backlash, deepening divisions between the opposition and his ruling coalition.

"I have decided to propose to the government the dismissal of Shin Bet Director Ronen Bar," Netanyahu said in a video statement released by his office.

"At all times, and especially during an existential war like this, there must be complete trust between the prime minister and the head of Shin Bet.

"Unfortunately, the opposite is true - I no longer have that trust," he added.

The government will review the proposal on Wednesday, according to Israel's Channel 12.

Tensions between Netanyahu and the Shin Bet have escalated following the agency's internal



investigation into the October 7, 2023 attack on Israel by the Palestinian group Hamas. Netanyahu dismissed the report's findings, saying they failed to answer key questions.

The investigation's findings prompted opposition leaders Yair Lapid and Benny Gantz to demand an apology from Netanyahu, accusing him of deflect-

ing blame.

Lapid labelled Netanyahu's latest decision 'shameful' on X, accusing him of 'losing his nerve and eroding values'. He charged that the prime minister prioritises personal interests over national security, a jab at Netanyahu's efforts to cling to power.

"All his slander and attempts

to shift blame won't help - he's the primary one responsible for the October 7 disaster," Lapid said, vowing to challenge the move in the Supreme Court.

Several military and intelligence officials have resigned over the failures of October 7, but Netanyahu refuses accountability. Channel 12 reported that the government's legal adviser, Gali Baharav-Miara, requested a meeting with Netanyahu to discuss the dismissal.

Meanwhile, Yair Golan, head of the opposition Democrats party, called it a 'war on Israel' on X, alleging that Netanyahu aims to silence investigators probing his circle.

"As inquiries widen and expose shady ties, he grows hysterical, inciting, firing and threatening to neutralise law enforcers," Golan said, pledging force resistance.

Anadolu Agency

‘Great’ kapok tree: Gambia’s time-defying ‘sanctuary’ for spirits

Banjul, Gambia - The massive kapok tree, believed to be sacred in Gambia, stands in the Latrikunda German neighbourhood of Serekunda, reflecting nature’s grandeur with its sky-reaching branches for centuries.

This tree, recognised as one of Gambia’s most famous natural landmarks, is known locally as the ‘Great Tree’.

The 30-metre-tall kapok tree, with its vast trunk, forms one of the region’s largest natural canopies, defying the passage of time with its majestic presence.

The tree’s grandeur also attracts tourists, particularly nature photographers and travellers, who come to Latrikunda German to take photos beneath its shade.

While common in West Africa’s tropical forests, urbanisation led to a sharp decline in their numbers, according to experts. But this monumental tree has endured, becoming a re-



Kapok tree is recognised as Gambia’s famous natural landmark

gional symbol.

Local historians believe that the tree is at least 200 to 300 years old and once served as a social and cultural centre for Gambia’s communities.

It is said that in the past, travellers and merchants would rest in the shade of the tree, while village elders convened here to make important decisions.

Today, the Great Tree in Latrikunda German continues to be a vibrant centre where the local community gathers.

Small stalls set up in the tree’s shade have become a popular refuge for those seeking relief from the African sun, becoming an integral part of the region’s daily life. The roadside market stalls host vendors selling fruits and vegetables.

This spot has become a stop for passing vehicles, offering watermelons, bananas, mangoes and other tropical fruits. Street vendors also sell local food and drinks, catering to the daily needs of the community.

The Great Tree is not only a commercial space but also a cultural symbol for the local community.

Locals believe that the tree has a sacred quality.

In West Africa, particularly among the Manding, Wolof and Fulani communities, people believe that the kapok tree houses the spirits of ancestors.

Anadolu Agency



Indian PM Narendra Modi and New Zealand PM Christopher Luxon (ANI)

‘New Zealand lifting ties with India’: Luxon

New Delhi, India - New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon has said that New Zealand is lifting its ties with India and called the Indian government ‘incredibly generous and very welcoming’ to New Zealand.

Luxon stated that he has brought the biggest delegation that has ever accompanied a PM on his visit, which includes business leaders and a community delegation. He made these remarks while speaking to reporters and shared the clip of the video on X.

In the video shared on X, he said: “I think you’re seeing an Indian government that’s been incredibly generous and very very welcoming to New Zealand and it speaks to the way that they also want to deepen this relationship.”

“In the same way, we have brought the biggest delegation that’s ever accompanied a Prime Minister. We’ve brought a business delegation, We’ve brought a community delegation... because we actually want to make this as big as it possibly can be because the size of the prize is immense and actually what it’s

all about. It’s about actually getting cash back into Kiwi’s pockets and we do that by growing our economy and expanding our trade opportunities, that’s important,” he said

Luxon hailed the contribution of the Indian community in New Zealand for their contribution to the country while highlighting the areas where the ‘Indian Kiwis’ have made a mark.

Luxon noted that the Indian community is the third-largest ethnic group in New Zealand, the largest source of skilled migrants, and the second-largest source of international students.

He met community and business leaders who have accompanied him on his visit to India. Cricketers Ajaz Patel and Ross Taylor were also seen with the New Zealand PM.

Luxon arrived in New Delhi on Sunday for a five-day official visit to India.

Upon his arrival in Delhi, Luxon announced that New Zealand and India have agreed to launch negotiations on a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

ANI

India: ISRO gets approval for Chandrayaan-5 mission to moon

Chennai, India - ISRO chairman V Narayanan said that the Centre has recently accorded approval for the ambitious Chandrayaan-5 mission as part of building capability towards achieving the goal of an Indian landing on moon by 2040. He further detailed that the space agency has been tasked with realising the ambition of India’s Space Station by 2035.

At an event to felicitate him for taking over as the Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Narayanan talked about future projects of the space agency. “Many projects are there. Chandrayaan 4 has to land and collect samples. Chandrayaan 5 got approval three days ago and will have a 350kg rover. Japan and India have collaborated to work on the mission.”

ISRO has successfully executed three Chandrayaan missions, and the latest, Chandrayaan-3, resulted in a safe and soft landing on the moon. Union minister Jitendra Singh said last year that the Government approved the Chandrayaan 4 mission, which will demonstrate the capability of landing on the moon and the safe return to earth, including technologies for sample collection.

The Chandrayaan-5/ LuPEx mission is being planned to demonstrate the higher capacity lander, which is an important element for future landing missions, including human landings on the lunar surface.

Further, India has also announced that it will have its own Space Station, the ‘Bharatiya Antriksh Station’, by 2035.

The ISRO chairman said: “We have also planned to create a



ISRO chairman V Narayanan also said the space agency has been tasked with realising the ambition of India’s space station by 2035

The Chandrayaan 5/ LuPEx mission is being planned to demonstrate the higher capacity lander, which is an important element for future landing missions, including human landings on the lunar surface

Space Station for us and the Government is asking for a plan for Indians to be sent to moon in an Indian-made rocket and should be returned back.”

He said that when Chandrayaan 2 was not successful, ‘it was very troubling and it felt that all years of hard work seemed like a waste’.

“We have designed and

launched 131 satellites. We have given them to SAARC countries... we have achieved a feat that no other country has achieved in 34 days. There has been tremendous development during the last ten years. We have successfully sent 433 satellites from our Indian soil, achieving a record 90 per cent success rate. When Chandrayaan 2 did

not succeed at the last minute, it was very sad,” the ISRO chief said.

During the last ten years starting from January 2015 to December 2024, a total of 393 foreign satellites and three Indian customer satellites have been launched on commercial basis on-board ISRO’s PSLV, LVM3 and SSLV Launch Vehicles. India has also launched satellites of 34 countries so far, including those of developed countries since 2014 such as US, United Kingdom, Singapore, Canada, Israel among others.

At the Chennai event, ISRO chief Narayanan also spoke about the upcoming rocket launch pad in Kulasekarapattinam space port. “Kulasekarapattinam is the right choice and a good place...and the Prime Minister has mentioned many plans.”

Modi had remotely laid the foundation stone for India’s second spaceport at Kulasekarapattinam, a coastal village in Tamil Nadu’s Thoothukudi district on February 28, 2024.

The construction of the SSLV Launch Complex (SLC) facilities at Kulasekarapattinam commenced on March 5 this year with the ‘ground breaking ceremony’ for the realisation of three major facilities.

ANI

POPE IS STABLE, SAYS VATICAN



In this photo released by the Vatican, Pope Francis is seen praying inside Rome’s Gemelli Hospital on Sunday. The 88-year-old head of the Catholic Church, who was diagnosed with double pneumonia after being admitted on February 14, remains under medical supervision

North Korea blasts G7’s call for abandoning its nuclear arsenal

Seoul, South Korea - North Korea on Monday blasted a joint call by top diplomats of the G7 countries for Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear weapons, saying its nuclear status will not change regardless of whether the outside world recognises it or not.

Pyongyang said it would strengthen its nuclear forces in both terms of ‘quality and quantity’, the state-run Korean Central News Agency reported.

The G7 foreign ministers, following a meeting in Canada, issued a joint statement on Friday calling for North Korea to give up its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and condemning its military aid to support Russia’s war in Ukraine.

In a statement, North Korea’s Foreign Ministry denounced the G7 for taking issue with Pyongyang’s ‘just’ exercise of its sovereign rights, saying it is the



G7 that focuses on ‘illegal and malicious nuclear proliferation’ under the pretext of nuclear sharing or providing extended deterrence.

“The G7, which has turned into a nuclear criminal group gravely threatening global peace and security, should thoroughly abandon its anachronistic ambition for nuclear hegemony before talking about someone’s ‘denu-

clearisation’ and ‘dismantlement of nukes,’” the ministry said.

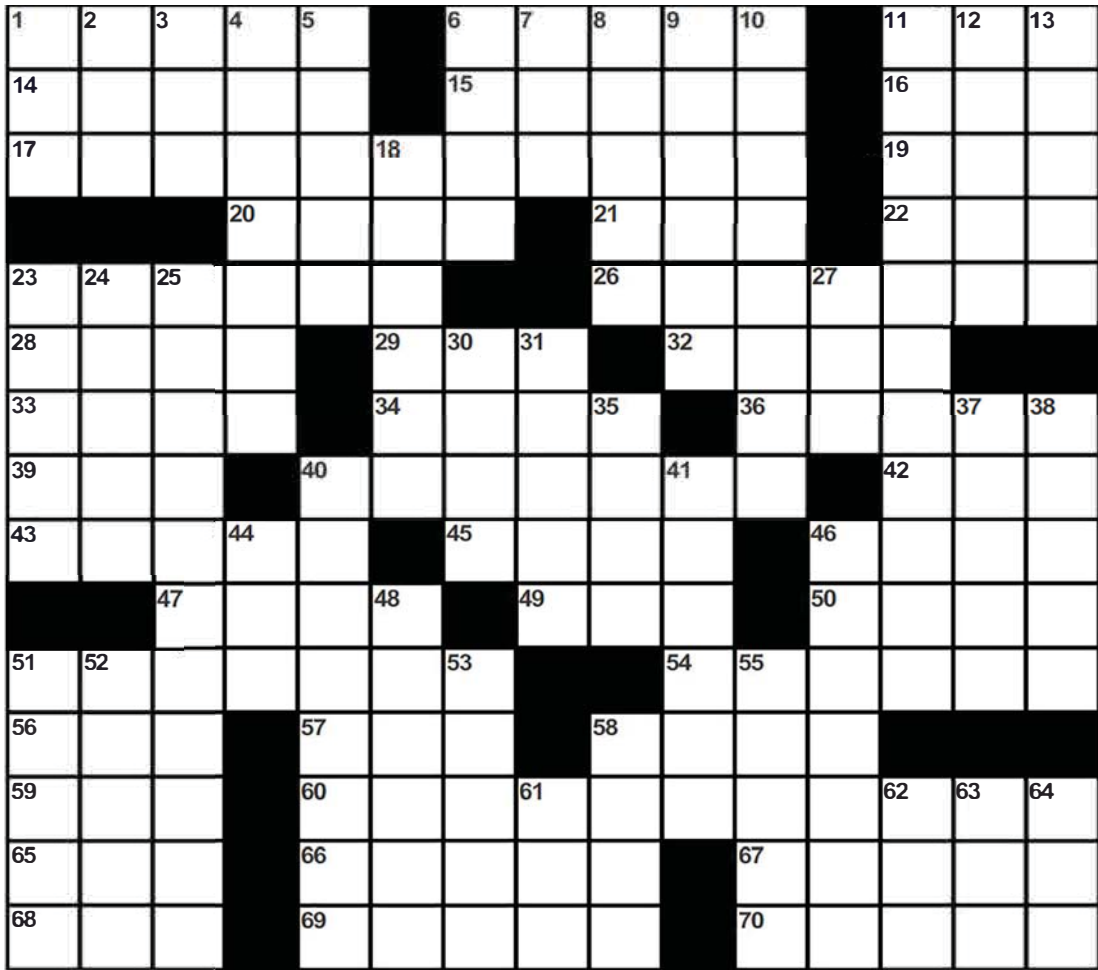
The country’s status as a nuclear state, stipulated by the constitution, will not change regardless of whether the outside world recognises it or not, it said.

The ministry said that North Korea ‘will steadily update and strengthen its nuclear armed forces both in quality and quantity in response to the nuclear threat from outside as stipulated in its Constitution and other domestic laws’.

Meanwhile, South Korean and US troops on Monday conducted joint drills on countering North Korea’s extensive network of underground military installations, Seoul’s army said. The four-day drills began at a training ground in Paju, about 30km (18.6 miles) north of Seoul.

Anadolu Agency

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Eye-related
 - 6) Harvest leavings
 - 11) Bake-sale org.
 - 14) Sports venue
 - 15) Part of a TV feed
 - 16) Charged item
 - 17) Be completely numb
 - 19) Quick on the uptake
 - 20) Puts on television
 - 21) Contents of some barrels
 - 22) Born, in bios
 - 23) Meeting notes
 - 26) Motor parts
 - 28) Used a firehouse pole
 - 29) ABC competitor
 - 32) Give vent to
 - 33) Droops
 - 34) "We should do it!"
 - 36) Feather in one's cap?
 - 39) Hearth residue
 - 40) Is a sign of
 - 42) Catch red-handed
 - 43) Basketmaking need
 - 45) Type of lens
 - 46) Art_
 - 47) Lift with effort

- 49) Chemist's hangout
- 50) Persia, now
- 51) Some envelopes
- 54) Kind of monkey
- 56) Tokyo, till 1868
- 57) Menu phrase
- 58) Burmese currency
- 59) Mental ability
- 60) What dead men do
- 65) Actor Majors
- 66) Take place as a result
- 67) Repulsive person
- 68) Prefix with "pend"
- 69) Oater transport
- 70) Many-headed monster of myth
- 12) Boozehound
- 13) Chips in
- 18) One with a vision
- 23) Allegro_ (very fast)
- 24) Drinking vessel
- 25) Parts of scores, often
- 27) " _ death do us part"
- 30) Auto pioneer Karl
- 31) "Cheers" chair
- 35) Ancient colonnade
- 37) Former Portuguese territory in China
- 38) Black hues, in old poems
- 40) Lets the air out
- 41) Mammal, before birth
- 44) Waikiki wear
- 46) Kind of supplement
- 48) Kind of show or scout
- 51) Baby's cries
- 52) Word on the way out?
- 53) Chip dip
- 55) Emerge from the egg
- 58) Place for a pad
- 61) Wheel nut
- 62) Acted as point man for
- 63) Suffix with "pamphlet"
- 64) Healthful retreat

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
Your mouth is going to get away from you again in a very big way. No, this isn't really becoming a habit. You're just totally out of control on a verbal level lately. The good news is that while you'll wonder who that person behind the curtain is, the one who's causing these strange and unusual things to fly out of your mouth, you'll also receive such a happy reaction from your dear ones that you might end up sending them a thank-you note.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
Here we go again. Off to the races, so to speak. You're going to be a salesperson's delight. If it's unusual, odd, or resembles something that no one else has, you'll be irresistibly attracted to it. Of course, since that's what your taste is like on a daily basis, this is a double whammy, and it's potent stuff. Oh, well. You've been good, right? And isn't it time to buy something for yourself, not for someone else, for the house, or for the dog? Sure it is.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
You could have a very intense kind of day, the kind that leaves you wondering just who you really are and what you're doing here. You can stop wondering for now, anyway. You're here to provide entertainment, intelligent conversation, and loads of fun for your peeps. Now get out of that state of the blues, and come on back to the people who love you most.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. What is the stage name of Londoner Susan Janet Ballion, who fronted the group "The Banshees" between 1976 and 1996?
A. Alison Apache
B. Siouxsie Sioux
C. Karen Komanche
D. Marjorie Mohawk

02. Which city in the Zou Department of The People's Republic of Benin was formerly the capital of the ancient kingdom of Dahomey?
A. Ouagadougou
B. Mogadishu
C. Abomey
D. Kampala

03. What was the medal count for the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) in the last Olympic Games in which it took part as a country, and before the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) was formed and stepped up drug-testing at the Games?
A. 39 gold and 113 total medals
B. 55 gold and 132 total medals
C. 48 gold and 100 total medals
D. 46 gold and 121 total medals

Answers: 1.B 2.C 3.B



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
Today, you start to sense that a healthy feeling of fulfillment has been missing from your life. You've been admirably shifting your energy around to many different people, career prospects, or self-improvement options, and this fluidity has kept you busy enough to distract you from what you're missing. But today you see something you want and wonder what you have to do to get it. The answer will arrive soon in an obvious (and attractive) package.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
You know you're perfectly capable of doing nearly anything, so when the action starts to pick up at a crazy pace, you're more than game to keep up with it, gladly, even if you have to work two jobs for a time. You may be doing more yawning than breathing for a while, so keep an extra pot of coffee brewing so your peers don't think you're out partying all night long.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
Your plans for the day may change early this morning, but it won't bother you much. Of course, you're nothing if not versatile. What's really going to surprise you is how little it will also bother those you're canceling with. But since the heavenly lineup on duty at the moment is perfect for inspiring one and all to be flexible, if not spontaneous, it really makes sense. Go with the flow. It's the only thing to do.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
You're entering a period of tremendous personal strength and self-discipline, and all the bad forces in your life are running for cover. It's the perfect time to tackle any trouble spots you may have. The time for procrastination is over. Better health, a bigger bank account, a more active social life, these are all possible with a few changes in your life. You know exactly what to do. Not only is failure not an option today, it's not even a possibility!



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
A sudden change may be on the agenda, and you're already in a highly emotional state of mind and mood, but you'll definitely get through it. You might even surprise yourself by just how easily you manage it. A dear one from afar could be the reason you're managing so well, but then again, they could also be the reason you're needing to manage. Do what you can to help, but don't forget your own needs in the process.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
A message from afar is due to reach you soon, and it could contain some quite unsettling news. This doesn't mean the news will be bad, only that it will be unexpected. If it's from someone you feel you haven't seen in much too long, don't be surprised if they've also come to that conclusion and they're about to bridge the gap. And if it's a former lover? Let them come to you.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
Most people do whatever they can to avoid stress in any of its many forms. Some folks, on the other hand, crave it, even thrive on it. You know someone who fits that bill, someone who just can't stand it when things aren't overdramatic. If you wake up feeling like they're trying to stir things up between you and someone close, listen to your instincts. You know how they operate. Try confronting this directly.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
With any luck, you're rested and relaxed, because that probably won't be the case today. A most electric, unconventional day awaits you, which might sound good to some folks but not to you. There's only one thing to do and that's find someone whose company you adore, and charm them into hiding out at your place. Hibernation can be a wonderful bonding experience, especially if you have all the right stuff like food and drink.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
To say that your companion for the day will be a bit erratic, impulsive, and maybe even reckless, that won't quite cover the enormity of the situation. Their behavior may in fact be so far off the wall that you'll react in an equally unpredictable style if you're not careful. Desperate people do desperate things, while bored, rash people provoke impulsive actions. Don't be roped in if you don't want to be.

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

T	S	P	C
L	E	E	E
A	I	E	R
G	U	A	S

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

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

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

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



Newcastle United players celebrate with the League Cup at Wembley Stadium on Sunday

YESTERDAY ONCE MORE!

Newcastle United beat Liverpool in League Cup final to end 70-year domestic trophy drought

London, England - Newcastle United ended a 70-year domestic trophy drought as they beat holders Liverpool 2-1 to win the League Cup with goals in each half by Dan Burn and Alexander Isak sparking a Geordie party at Wembley Stadium on Sunday.

Fittingly it was local hero Burn who sent his side on the way to a memorable victory as he thumped home a header in the 45th minute to reward Newcastle's dominant first-half display.

Roared on by a sea of fans clad in black and white, Newcastle took control of the showpiece final seven minutes after the break when Swedish forward Isak swept a shot past Liverpool

keeper Caoimhin Kelleher.

Premier League leaders Liverpool halved the deficit in stoppage time with substitute Federico Chiesa slotting in but the damage was done and the day belonged to Eddie Howe's Newcastle who won the club's first domestic trophy since 1955.

Newcastle suffered heartbreak two years ago in the League Cup final against Manchester United, their ninth straight loss at Wembley, but they were determined to write their names into folklore as they tapped into the energy from their supporters.

"It's all for these fans," Newcastle captain Bruno Guimaraes,

who arrived at the club after the 2021 Saudi Arabia-backed takeover, said before raising the trophy aloft.

"It's all for these fans. They deserve everything. When I first came here I said I wanted to put my name in history. We can now say we are the champions again."

Liverpool on the other hand looked flat and appeared to be suffering a Champions League hangover after being knocked out of Europe by Paris St Germain on penalties on Tuesday.

One statistic summed up the Reds' day - talisman Mohamed Salah, for the first time in his Liverpool career, having neither a shot nor creating a chance in a

match in which he played 90 minutes.

Barring a collapse, Liverpool will surely win the Premier League but manager Arne Slot's first Wembley final will not be one the Dutchman remembers fondly. "A disappointing result

and disappointing performance," he said. "The game went exactly how (Newcastle) wanted it to go. They deserved to win."

Newcastle looked the greater threat in a cagey opening half and Sandro Tonali flashed a shot past the post. Liverpool seemed intent on reaching halftime all square and looked like achieving that modest ambition until Burn, given a first England call-up this week, sent Newcastle's fans wild.

The towering centre back, who returned to the club of his youth in 2022, was marked by the diminutive Alexis Mac Allister for Kieran Trippier's corner and it was a no-contest as he planted an unstoppable header

beyond the diving Kelleher.

It was Burn's first goal of the season and Newcastle's first at Wembley for 25 years since Rob Lee scored in a losing FA Cup semi-final against Chelsea.

They did not have to wait long for their next goal and this time it came from a more likely source.

Seven minutes after the break Jacob Murphy headed a cross into the path of the Swede who quick as a flash swept a shot past Kelleher in front of the massed ranks of black and white.

Isak has now scored 23 goals this season and is the new cult hero in a city that has adored its centre forwards over the years from Jackie Milburn to Shearer.

Liverpool finally roused themselves and substitute Curtis Jones forced Newcastle keeper Nick Pope to beat away his fierce drive but it almost got worse for Slot's stunned side with Isak denied from close range by Kelleher. After such a long wait it was never going to be drama-free for Newcastle's fans, the vast majority of whom were not even born when they beat Manchester City in the 1955 FA Cup final.

Chiesa's neat goal, allowed by VAR after initially being ruled offside, ensured a tense stoppage time but the final whistle ended decades of despair and triggered Geordie celebrations in the capital.

PSG ease past Marseille

Paris, France - Paris St Germain took another big step towards the Ligue 1 crown with a 3-1 home win over second-placed Olympique de Marseille on Sunday to extend their lead at the top to 19 points.

PSG are unbeaten in the league and cruising towards the title with 68 points from 26 games and eight rounds remaining.

Ousmane Dembele broke the deadlock after 17 minutes, racing onto a through ball before slotting home and just before the break Nuno Mendes doubled the lead with a close-range finish.

Marseille got themselves back in the game six minutes into the second half when Adrien Rabiot capitalised on a poor pass out of defence and set up Amine Gouiri, who made no mistake.



Ousmane Dembele



Newcastle United captain Bruno Guimaraes celebrates with Joelinton after their victory

It's the best day of my life, says Newcastle's Guimaraes

London, England - Newcastle United captain Bruno Guimaraes said it was the best day of his life as they beat Liverpool 2-1 in the League Cup final on Sunday.

Newcastle, who last tasted domestic glory when they won the FA Cup in 1955, took the lead in the first half when centre back Dan Burn buried a header into the back of the net and doubled their advantage through striker Alexander Isak after the break.

"It's all for these fans. They deserve everything. When I first came here I said I wanted to put my name in history," Brazil midfielder Guimaraes said.

"We can now say we are the champions again..."

"I don't have any words. It's the best day of my life. For them (the fans) it's like the World Cup. People have grown up and not

seen us as champions. My first year as captain of this club and it's one of the best days. This is unbelievable.

"This is my second home. We are making history. Some day when I leave this club I want the fans to sing my name the way they do to (former Newcastle

before the Swede got his goal.

Newcastle boss Eddie Howe said he belived his players could pull off a result against the Premier League leaders.

"Emotional, very emotional. It is very unlike me. We knew what was at stake and just wanted to do everyone proud," he said.

The fans deserve everything. When I first came here I said I wanted to put my name in history. We can now say we are the champions again...

BRUNO GUIMARAES

captain Alan) Shearer. He texted me before the game. I'm so emotional today."

Burn put Newcastle ahead in the 45th minute with a bullet header. Newcastle then had an Isak effort disallowed by VAR for offside but it was only moments

'The game went exactly the way they wanted it to be'

London, England - It has taken Liverpool manager Arne Slot eight months to lose two games in a row and the Dutchman was in no mood to let Sunday's League Cup final defeat by Newcastle United turn a blip into a full-blown crisis.

The 2-1 loss at Wembley compounded a difficult week for Slot's Liverpool, who exited the Champions League in the last 16 to Paris St Germain in a crushing penalty shootout defeat on Tuesday. But a healthy 12-point lead atop the Premier League ensured Slot was not in panic mode.

"We are here, one of the biggest clubs in the world, Liverpool, but it's not for the first time in their history or in the last two seasons that they've lost two games. This is part of

playing football," he told reporters at Wembley.

"It was a tough week, but it was also a week where we extended our (Premier League) lead to 12 points from maybe 10. So it wasn't all negative but, yeah, the last two were definitely not the way we wanted it to be."

While the Liverpool manager was reluctant to admit his side were outplayed, he conceded they deserved to lose to Newcastle, who he said had succeeded in playing the game on their terms.

"I prefer to look at how the game went and this game went exactly the way they wanted it to be," he said. "A fight with a lot of duels and a lot of duels through the air. And if we play 10 times a game of football through the air against them, they win it nine times because they are a stronger team through the air than us."

A second straight Liverpool defeat has not only removed another chance of silverware but has left them wobbling at the business end of the season, traditionally when great teams come into their own.



Arne Slot

Fernandes on target as Man Utd beat Leicester

Leicester, England - Manchester United's Rasmus Hojlund and Alejandro Garnacho ended goal droughts and Bruno Fernandes scored again to earn a 3-0 win at struggling Leicester City in the Premier League on Sunday.

United went ahead in the 28th minute through Dane Hojlund's first goal since mid-December.

The beleaguered hosts never threatened an equaliser, and Garnacho ended the match as a contest in the 67th minute. Fernandes put the icing on the cake with a fine late third.



Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes celebrates his goal against Leicester City on Sunday

Inter blank Atalanta to extend lead at the top of Serie A

Bergamo, Italy - Inter Milan extended their lead atop Serie A to three points with a 2-0 win at third-placed title rivals Atalanta thanks to goals from Carlos Augusto and Lautaro Martinez on Sunday in a hard-fought clash that saw both sides finish with 10 men.

Inter moved to 64 points, ahead of Napoli who have 61 after their 0-0 draw at second-from-bottom Venezia earlier on Sunday, while Atalanta remain on 58 points.

The hosts were under pressure early on, with Inter's Marcus Thuram hitting the upright with just goalkeeper Marco Carnesecchi to beat as the visitors began on the front foot.

Atalanta found their way into the game and Inter keeper Yann Sommer had to be at full stretch to tip a Mario Pasalic header over the bar and Ederson fired wide from distance.

Before the break Ademola



Inter Milan's Carlos Augusto (R) celebrates with Alessandro Bastoni after scoring against Atalanta on Sunday

Lookman decided to go it alone for Atalanta but put his shot well wide of the target and the opening half ended goalless.

There was a break in play shortly after the interval with Inter about to take a corner. Hakan Calhanoglu's attention was attracted to medical problems for a fan in the away sector before the visitors took the lead when the action resumed.

Calhanoglu whipped the ball into the six-yard box and Carlos rose unmarked to head into the bottom corner, leaving Atalanta's Carnesecchi rooted to the spot and Inter ahead in the 54th minute. With the visitors failing to find a second goal, Atalanta always posed a threat but their chances received a hammer blow nine minutes from time when Ederson received two yellow cards in quick succession.

The Brazilian midfielder was booked for dissent and after he sarcastically applauded that decision the referee had no option but to send Ederson off.

Inter put the result beyond doubt with three minutes remaining after Martinez timed his run to perfection to get on the end of Nicolò Barella's pass before shooting past Carnesecchi.

Atalanta manager Gian Piero Gasperini was then given his marching orders and Inter should have had a third goal but substitute Davide Frattesi put his shot straight at Carnesecchi.

BARCA STAGE STUNNING COMEBACK

Torres scores double as Flick's men rally to beat Atletico Madrid

Madrid, Spain - Barcelona's Ferran Torres scored twice to help secure a late 4-2 comeback win at Atletico Madrid in a pulsating LaLiga clash on Sunday that took the Catalans back to the top of the table.

Barca have 60 points and a game in hand after last week's postponement of their home game with Osasuna. They are level on points with Real Madrid, who won 2-1 at Villarreal on Saturday.

"I am happy and proud of this team," Barcelona coach Hansi Flick told a press conference. "They never give up... It's a great three points and we are happy to be top."

Atletico remain third on 56 points from 28 games.

The hosts took the lead on the stroke of halftime through Julian Alvarez after Antoine Griezmann broke quickly and found Giuliano Simeone, who curled a precise pass for the Argentine to score his 11th league goal of the season.

Diego Simeone's side doubled their lead in the 70th minute through substitute Alexander Sorloth's brilliant close-range finish after he was set up by Conor Gallagher.

However, Barcelona responded almost immediately when Robert Lewandowski latched on to Inigo Martinez's cross to take the Poland striker's tally to a league-leading 22 goals this season.

The visitors equalised in the 78th minute when Torres headed home a delightful ball into the box from substitute Raphinha.

Lamine Yamal added a third in stoppage time when his long-range strike found the back of Jan Oblak's net, before Torres put the icing on the cake with his second of the night.

'We will fight until the end'

Atletico coach Diego Simeone said the loss was not down to bad luck but lack of consistency.

"We will fight until the end. There are 10 games left and we have to play and win every one of them," Simeone told DAZN.

"It's not down to luck," the coach said. "It's down to hard work. I wouldn't put it down to luck. We have to recognise the rival."

Simeone spoke about fatigue following Champions League defeat at the hands of Real Madrid as well as the health of forward Julian Alvarez, whose slip during that match's penalty

We have a strong starting lineup, but the players who come off the bench are performing brilliantly. They're training at a very high level, and that's what we need

HANSI FLICK, BARCELONA COACH

"It was very important to get the three points today," said Yamal. "At the end of the anger, of the impotence of seeing that we weren't comfortable, we showed our best side, we gave the best we had."

"It was clear to me that if I scored it would be in important games. Since the ball was on the other side of the pitch I could see Gallagher was moving away from me and as soon as it came to me I saw the opportunity and I saw the shot."

The teams will meet again in the Copa del Rey semi-finals after the first leg ended in a thrilling 4-4 draw, with the return taking place at the Metropolitano on April 2.

shootout caused him to touch the ball twice resulting in his goal being disallowed.

"A few days ago he had a bad stomach, yesterday he had a fever and this morning he had again stomach problems. I didn't want to play him, we talked, he was committed and I understood that he had given absolutely everything."

The coach also rued a missed opportunity to change tactics after his team went 2-0 up, indicating a few minutes during which he may have secured a more favourable outcome.

Ederson's sending off ruined end of game, says Gasperini

Bergamo, Italy - Atalanta manager Gian Piero Gasperini was incensed with the sending off of his side's midfielder Ederson's late in their 2-0 defeat at home to Serie A leaders Inter Milan on Sunday, saying it spoiled the game for everyone.

Atalanta were 1-0 down when Ederson was booked in the 81st minute for dissent and the player's sarcastic applause to that decision brought a second booking and they went on to lose.

"This ruined the end of the game and it's a shame, for the team but also for the opponents and for the people," Gasperini, who was also sent off, told DAZN.

"The referee exaggerated. Ederson is a fair player. It is true that he made a mistake with the applause but the referee ruined the match."

"There are episodes and words much worse than applause. After that, the game petered out and it's a shame. It was a good game between the first and third-placed sides. Ruining it is bad for everyone."

Inter's opening goal came from a corner immediately after the game resumed following an interruption while a supporter in the away sector received medical treatment and Gasperini was asked if this had an impact.

"In the first half we defended



very well on set pieces, then a fan was sick and the game was suspended, for both us and them," he said.

"These are certainly not lucky episodes and we should have been more careful. We often concede goals like this with Inter, obviously they are stronger than us."

The loss leaves Atalanta six points off the pace but Gasperini is not ready to throw in the towel and will look to continue their title challenge after the international break.

"There are nine games after the break. We have to find the strength to play them at our best," he said.

Last-gasp win helps Leverkusen keep Bundesliga title race alive



Bayer Leverkusen's Patrik Schick (L) celebrates with coach Xabi Alonso after scoring the winner against VfB Stuttgart on Sunday

Berlin, Germany - Reigning champions Bayer Leverkusen came from two goals down to snatch a 4-3 win at VfB Stuttgart with two late goals on Sunday and snap a three-game losing run in all competitions as they cut Bayern Munich's lead atop the Bundesliga to six points.

Patrik Schick headed the winner deep into second-half stoppage time to give the visitors the points after they had drawn level minutes earlier courtesy of Stuttgart midfielder Angelo Stiller's 88th-minute own goal.

Five days after their Champions League Round of 16 exit to Bayern following defeats in both legs, Leverkusen bounced back from last week's 2-0 home defeat by Werder Bremen.

The result lifted Leverkusen to 56 points in second place, cutting Bayern's lead after their 1-1 draw at Union Berlin on Saturday as the teams went into the international break.

"The late goal was a magic moment for us and the celebrations were very emotional," Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso said. "Compliments to my players who never gave up. We had the will until the very end to get those three points. This win is very good for us after the defeat this week in the Champions League."



Thiago Motta

Juventus keep faith with Motta despite heavy defeat

Florence, Italy - Juventus are keeping faith with manager Thiago Motta despite his side suffering a second successive heavy defeat, the club's football director Cristiano Giuntoli said.

After a 4-0 hammering to Atalanta, Juve lost 3-0 at Fiorentina which leaves Motta's side fifth in the Serie A standings.

"In these moments we must all stay united, we all come out of difficulties together," Giuntoli told Sky Sports. "We are very sorry, we have had a year with ups and downs but we had never played two games so below par, but we are convinced we can come out of this all together."

SIBLING REVELRY

Marc Marquez edges brother Alex in thriller to win Argentina GP

Termas De Rio Hondo, Argentina - Ducati's red-hot Marc Marquez won the Argentina Grand Prix on Sunday after trailing his brother Alex of Gresini Racing for much of the race as the pair finished in the top two yet again, while VR46 Racing's Franco Morbidelli was third.

Just as in the season-opening Grand Prix in Thailand, polesitter Marc had yet another perfect weekend, having also won Saturday's sprint, to stay top of the MotoGP riders' championship standings with a 16-point lead over Alex.

On his return to Argentina for the first time since 2019, Marc was virtually untouchable barring one error which allowed Alex to move up before the elder sibling ruthlessly snatched first place again and never looked back.

MotoGP did not have two brothers finishing first and second for 76 years but the Marquez brothers have now achieved the feat twice within a fortnight.

Victory also saw Marc record his 90th win across all classes to equal the late great Angel Nieto and the Spaniard wore a racing wreath with the words 'Gracias Angel', pointing up to the heavens.

"Super happy to equal Angel Nieto and this victory is for him and his family because he was an ace. Super important for the



Marc Marquez (R) and his brother Alex proved too good for the rest of the riders in Argentina

Spanish motorcycle world ... a pleasure to equal him," Marc said.

"Today the confidence was not super good with the rear, I had a few problems there. I saw

that Alex was pushing, he was controlling the race.

"I said, 'OK, P2 today will be OK'. But in the end, I started to feel better and better... And then with the used tyre, it was better.

It's difficult to attack your brother."

Marc and Alex had the perfect start off the line while Francesco Bagnaia moved up to third but Marco Bezzecchi - the last race

winner here in 2023 - crashed out on turn one when the Aprilia rider made contact with Yamaha's Fabio Quartararo.

Up front, Marc was finally overtaken this weekend when Alex set the fastest lap and moved up to first place on lap four when his brother went wide, while Morbidelli also slipped past a struggling Bagnaia to move up to third.

Alex led for much of the race as Marc seemed to bide his time and the elder brother could not make the first attempt to take back first place on lap 18 stick as the Gresini Racing rider immediately regained the lead.

But Alex was defending for his life with an increasingly aggressive Marc setting fastest laps and breathing down his neck before the factory Ducati rider eventually used the Gresini bike's slipstream to overtake with five laps left.

That was all Alex had in his locker as Marc sped away and cruised to the chequered flag while Morbidelli managed his rear soft tyre to perfection to keep Bagnaia at bay and take third - his first podium in 1,414 days.

"I have a connection with this place and it's wonderful to have this kind of performance today and this kind of podium today on this track. It was beautiful," Morbidelli said.



Mirra Andreeva celebrates with the trophy

Andreeva outguns Sabalenka to emerge as Indian Wells champion

Indian Wells, US - Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva fought back to overcome world number one Aryna Sabalenka 2-6 6-4 6-3 in the Indian Wells final on Sunday, winning a second WTA 1000-level event in a row to keep her charmed year on track.

The 17-year-old Andreeva, the youngest women's champion at the tournament since Serena Williams in 1999, found her form midway through the match and crumpled to the ground in celebration after closing it out with a forehand winner.

Top seed Sabalenka pulled herself out of a slump to bring some of her best tennis to the California desert and got off to a hot start on Sunday but her form unravelled as the match wore on and she was left to rue missed opportunities.

"I would like to thank myself for fighting until the end and for always believing in me and for never quitting," Andreeva said at the trophy ceremony.

"I was running like a rabbit today because Aryna, she's been sending bullets and it was really hard to just keep up."

Andreeva had lost to Sabalenka twice this year and it looked as though the pattern would continue as the top-seeded Belarusian mixed some nifty drop shots with her usual

forehand power to save four break points in the third game.

Sabalenka sent a backhand winner down the line to break in the fourth game and four games later a visibly frustrated Andreeva whacked a ball into the stands after sending a shot into the net as the Russian was broken again.

The teenager got a confidence boost in the second set, however, when she broke Sa-

I would like to thank myself for fighting until the end and for always believing in me and for never quitting

MIRRA ANDREEVA

balenka with a forehand winner in the third game and fended off two break points in the sixth.

After trading breaks to open the third set, Sabalenka's errors began to pile up and she fired into the net on break point in the third game to give the ninth seed the advantage.

"After the first set, I just realised, that, 'oh, well, what I do now, it doesn't work, so I have to change something,'" Andreeva told reporters.

Draper thrashes Rune to take Indian Wells title

Indian Wells, US - Britain's Jack Draper thrashed Denmark's Holger Rune 6-2 6-2 to collect the biggest title of his career at Indian Wells on Sunday with a place in the top 10 assured for the first time.

The 23-year-old Draper has suffered a lingering hip issue this year but looked fine as he zipped around the court with ease on Sunday, firing 21 winners to cap a superb week in the California desert.

Playing in his fourth Masters

1000 final, Rune had the benefit of experience but could never find his rhythm as he made seven winners against 18 unforced errors.

"I lost first round here last year so I didn't get to experience the tournament too much," Draper said. "I would say this is one of my favourite tournaments now."

Playing in his first 1000-level final, Draper bludgeoned his opponent with seven aces in the first set, having hit a forehand winner to break in the first game



Jack Draper gave Holger Rune no chance in the final

and outfoxed Rune at the net in the third to go up another break.

The Dane's frustrations boiled over early in the second set, where he shouted at his team before dropping serve in the first game. He handed Draper another break in the penultimate game with a backhand shot that he sent wide. Draper fired a booming forehand shot on match point and smiled towards the stands before kneeling on court with his fists thrust into the air in celebration, clinching it in just one hour

and nine minutes.

"Before the match, you know, you're thinking of all kinds of scenarios in your head, a lot of doubts," he said.

"And just what makes it even better is that, you know, just getting through those doubts and being able to play the final the way I did."

Rune made no excuses for his performance, telling the crowd: "It never feels nice not to be able to step over the line, but that's life sometimes."

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BEING VEGETARIAN

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Vegetarian diets have both, benefits as well as risks. While it might be good for diabetics, heart patients, or those with gastrointestinal disorders, it could lead to poor bone health for some

Experts for a French agency spent five years on a literature review and dietary intake recommendations for vegetarians. Here's what they have to say.

Vegetarian and vegan diets are associated with both health benefits and risks, which is why it's important for people thinking of eating plant-based foods to pay attention to balancing their meals, a group of experts has said in two new reports.

Experts from France's Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (Anses) said there's moderate evidence that suggests vegetarian diets are linked to a lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes compared with non-vegetarian diets.

There's also some weaker evidence that vegetarian diets could lead to a reduced risk of heart disease, ovulation disorders, certain cancers, eye problems, and gastrointestinal issues.

Some more tenuous evidence suggests, however, that plant-based diets could lead to a higher risk of bone fractures or congenital urethral malformations - though some experts posit there is not enough information on the possible link.



The two new reports - which include a wide-ranging scientific literature review and dietary recommendations - are the result of five years of work for Anses experts who said that vegetarian diets are becoming more popular in France.

"We know, that it's a diet that is increasingly popular, so, Anses first carried

out a systematic review of published studies to identify the link between vegetarian diets and health and established dietary benchmarks to enable vegetarians to optimise their nutritional intake," Perrine Nadaud, deputy head of the French agency's nutritional risk assessment unit, said.

'Less favourable' levels of vitamins

The scientific literature review included 131 studies on vegetarian diets' impact on health, while the dietary recommendations were created with an optimisation tool that considers nutrition, possible food contamination, and eating habits.

For associations based on weaker evidence, Nadaud said the experts were still able to come to a determination, but that "new studies published in the future could make us adjust this conclusion a bit."

The review also found that vegetarians had 'less favourable' levels of iron, iodine, vitamins B12 and D, and calcium-phosphate balance compared to non-vegetarians, with vegans also having a 'less favourable nutritional status for vitamin B2'.

Not getting enough of some of these vitamins, for instance, could put someone at a higher risk of bone fractures.

The UK's National Health Service (NHS) says that with good planning and an understanding of what makes up a healthy, balanced vegan diet, you can get all the nutrients your body needs. But they warn that, without proper planning, vegans could miss out on 'essential nutrients'.

Vegetarianism in France

An IFOP survey in 2021 found that the vegetarian population in France remained 'marginal' at around 2.2 per cent, but at least 8 per cent of people were attempting to limit how much meat they consumed. It noted that meat is part of the country's culinary culture.

Some of the main reasons those surveyed had for limiting their meat consumption include concern for animals and the impact of eating meat on the environment.

A study published in the journal Nature in 2023 found that eating less meat reduced a person's environmental impact on greenhouse gas emissions, land use, water use, and biodiversity.

What should vegetarians/vegans eat?

As part of its dietary recommendations, the French agency says that vegetarians and vegans should consume fruits, vegetables, legumes such as lentils, starchy carbohydrates or bread, nuts and seeds, brewer's yeast, dairy products, or a fortified vegan equivalent every day.

They noted that vegetarians can have a hard time meeting nutritional needs for certain Omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin D, and for vegans, it can be difficult to meet these needs for vitamin B12 and zinc in men.

"This is why we are developing these dietary guidelines: to help vegetarians improve their diets," said Nadaud.

Courtesy: euronews.com

VANDANA CHAWLA



NUTRITION & YOU



Dairy and dairy products are part of human diets for thousands of years. Not only considered as a comfort food by many, it also comes along with some essential nutrients like calcium, protein, and vitamins.

However, for people with diabetes or those at risk of developing it, the role of dairy in blood sugar management is always a major concern.

Is dairy good for diabetics?

Let's understand this by understanding its impact on blood glucose levels, or its contribution to insulin resistance. First, let's examine the nutritional profile of dairy.

Dairy products such as milk, yogurt, and cheese provide a balanced mix of macronutrients, like, high quality protein, fat, and carbohydrates, along with vital micronutrients like calcium, riboflavin, potassium, magnesium, and if fortified then vitamin D. These nutrients play a significant role in overall health, including bone health, muscle function, and various metabolic processes.

cesses.

For diabetics, though the nutritional profile is quite impressive, the major concerns comes from its macronutrients. The protein and fat content in dairy may help slow the absorption of carbohydrate present in milk, preventing rapid spikes in blood glucose levels. This effect is seen more when on full-fat milk than on low-fat.

Low-fat vs full-fat dairy

The most common concern is whether low-fat or full-fat dairy is more beneficial for metabolic health. For many many years, low-fat dairy

has been advised to people with diabetes to reduce saturated fat intake and lower the risk of heart disease. Recent research, however, suggests that full-fat dairy may have neutral or even beneficial effects on diabetes risk. However, there are mixed reports on the impact of full-fat dairy on insulin sensitivity. Hence, when going for full fat dairy, moderation is the key.

Probiotics in dairy

Fermented dairy products such as yogurt and kefir contain beneficial probiotics that support gut health. Latest research suggests that gut mi-

crobiota plays a crucial role in glucose metabolism and insulin function, both of which are beneficial for diabetes management.

Greek yogurt, in particular, is a good option for people with diabetes due to its high protein content and lower carbohydrate levels compared to regular yogurt. Home-made fresh dahi, a common food among Indians, is another great option for diabetics.

Concerns

While dairy offers many health benefits, there are also concerns related to its lactose content, insulin response, and individual sensitivities:

Lactose and blood sugar spikes

Lactose, the natural sugar found in milk, can contribute to blood glucose fluctuations. Though lactose has a lower glycaemic index than refined sugars, different individuals respond to this sugar in different ways.

Effect of dairy on insulin secretion

Dairy proteins, particularly whey and casein, can stimulate insulin release. While this may help lower blood glucose levels post-meal, excessive insulin stimulation over time could contribute to insulin resistance.

Diabetes-friendly diet

For those with diabetes who enjoy dairy, moderation and mindful selection are key. Here are some tips:

- Go for unsweetened dairy products - Choose plain yogurt, unflavoured milk, and natural cheese to avoid unnecessary sugars.
- Consider full-fat options with care and keep a check on its impact on your blood sugar spikes as individual variations are often seen.
- Prioritise fermented dairy - Yogurt and kefir with live probiotics can support gut health and improve glucose metabolism.
- Monitor portion sizes - Consume in moderation to prevent excessive calorie intake and potential weight gain.
- Combine dairy with fibre-rich foods - Combining dairy with fibre sources like nuts, seeds, and fruits can slow carbohydrate absorption and stabilise blood sugar levels.
- Cottage cheese or paneer - High in protein, these can be a great choice for diabetics

To conclude, Dairy can be a beneficial part of a diabetes-friendly diet when chosen wisely. While concerns about lactose, insulin response, and individual sensitivities exist, many dairy products, especially those high in protein and probiotics offer metabolic benefits. The focus should be on minimally processed, unsweetened options and always keep your doctor and nutritionist in loop when making changes in your diet.

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

YOGA during Ramadan

FASTING FATIGUE

Ramadan teaches us one important lesson - self-discipline; it also empowers us to restrain ourselves from the activities that harm us and focus our energy on those which will make us healthier and happier.

Yoga, too, does the same. It takes self-discipline to come to the mat day in and day out, but the results are almost immediate, from how your body feels to how deep your breath becomes, all the way to reaching a more peaceful state of mind.

That is why taking up yoga in Ramadan is recommended - not only will it make fasting easier for you, you'll also be able to cultivate your self-discipline through fasting and bring it to elevate the health of your body and soul with yoga.

During Ramadan, you can either practice yoga early in the morning or two hours before/after iftar. Before iftar, slow paced movements like Hatha Yoga are recommended, but if you would like something more fast paced with a higher intensity, Vinyasa, Aerial yoga, or Fit and Flex exercises are best.

PHYSICAL BENEFITS OF YOGA DURING RAMADAN

Enhanced blood circulation: Gentle yoga poses promote simple movement and stretching, which can help increase blood flow. This improved circulation delivers oxygen and essential nutrients to your cells more efficiently.

IMPROVED MUSCLE TONE: Routines can help maintain muscle and flexibility. Holding poses for short periods and practicing controlled movements can help prevent muscle loss.

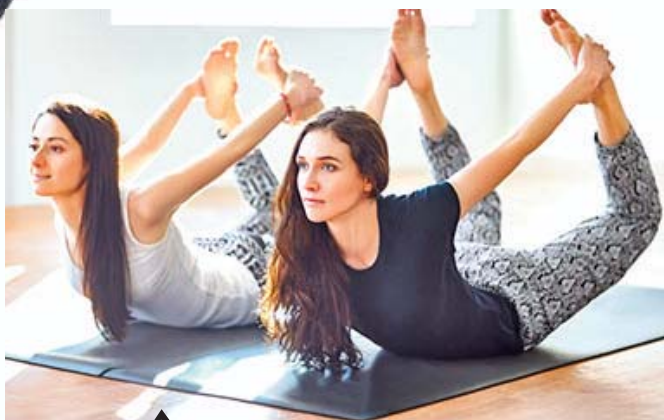
BOOSTED METABOLISM: Yoga can still elevate your heart rate and stimulate your metabolism. This slight increase in metabolic activity can help regulate blood sugar levels, a common concern during fasting.

REDUCED SORENESS: Stretching and mindful movements of yoga can help reduce muscle tension and stiffness.

IMPROVED SLEEP QUALITY: The relaxation techniques and mindful breathing exercises incorporated into yoga can help quiet the mind and promote deeper sleep

Practicing yoga helps your body release toxins from its cells, which, in turn, makes you feel more energetic and ready to tackle your day. But, if you combine yoga with fasting, you can easily get rid of 'fasting fatigue' and feel rejuvenated everyday

SUITABLE YOGA POSES



THE BOW POSE
Known as Dhanurasana, this pose resembles an archer's bow and is beneficial to relieving mild backache, fatigue and anxiety. It can also help with general weight loss, helps to correct posture and ensures efficient functioning of the abdominal organs.

CHILD'S POSE
It stretches the hips, thighs and ankles while calming an overactive mind and releasing stress and fatigue. It is great for relieving back and neck pain when done correctly.



WARRIOR 1 POSE
Virbhadrasana-I is very beneficial. Not only does it help to strengthen shoulders, arms, legs and back, it also improves focus, balance and stability. It energises the body by encouraging blood circulation and improved respiration.

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SAFE PRACTICE

Listen to your body: Pay close attention to your body's signals and modify poses as needed.

Hydrate adequately: Drink plenty of water between Iftar and Suhoor to stay hydrated.

Avoid overtraining: Refrain from intense workouts like Hot Yoga or Power Yoga which can cause exhaustion.

Practice in a cool environment: Choose a cool, shaded space for your yoga practice to prevent dehydration.

Rest and Recover: Prioritise rest and sleep during Ramadan.



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