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DHOFAR GEARS UP FOR KHAREEF

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Dhofar governorate is preparing for the 2025 khareef season with a series of new tourism projects aimed at improving visitor experience and increasing regional appeal.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) is set to open the Dhofar Private Museum and a new three-star hotel in Mirbat offering 84 rooms.

Additionally, 216 luxury hotel apartments will be inaugurated in Salalah. These additions will raise the number of licensed tourism establishments in the governorate to 100, with a combined capacity exceeding 8,000 rooms.

A tourism information centre is also scheduled to open at the Al Haffa Beach Market in Salalah to support visitors.

Khalid bin Abdullah al Abri, Director General of Heritage and Tourism in Dhofar, said the khareef season remains one of the most important periods for domestic and regional tourism, drawing large numbers from across Oman and the wider Gulf region due to the governorate's unique monsoon climate.



KEY OFFERINGS

New three-star hotel in Mirbat with 84 rooms

216 new luxury hotel apartments in Salalah

Dhofar Private Museum set to open

New tourism information centre at Al Haffa Beach

Hotel room capacity exceeds 8,000 rooms

Promotional campaigns were also launched in Saudi Arabia in collaboration with flynas, flyadeal, Oman Airports and tourism firms.

In Kuwait, the ministry unveiled a series of khareef travel packages during Eid al Adha in coordination with Kuwait Airways and Jazeera Airways, which will operate direct seasonal flights to Salalah.

Abri said the ministry continues to work with the private sector, particularly small and medium enterprises, to position Khareef Dhofar 2025 as a distinctive and sustainable destination. He noted that marketing plans are guided by performance metrics aimed at increasing arrivals and spreading visitor activity across the entire season.

The 2024 khareef season attracted over 1,048,000 visitors, marking a 9% rise compared to the 2023 total of approximately 962,000.

Population estimated to reach 5.5mn in 2025: UN

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's population is estimated to reach 5.5mn in 2025, with a predominantly youthful demographic, presenting an opportunity for the sultanate's socio-economic development, according to a new report from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) released on Tuesday.

As of June 2025, Oman's total population stands at 5,303,578, comprising 3,006,387 Omani nationals (56.69%) and 2,297,191 expatriates (43.31%), as per the data released on Tuesday by National Center for Statistics and Information.

The State of the World Population 2025 Report released by the UNFPA revealed that 24% of Oman's population is under the age of 15, while 21% falls within

POPULATION STATISTICS		
Age 0-14		24%
Age 10-19		13%
Age 10-24		21%
Age 15-64		73%
Age 65 and older		3%
Doubling time	20yrs	
Fertility rate	2.5	

the 10-24 age bracket. The working-age group (15-64 years) constitutes 73% of the population, suggesting a strong potential for economic productivity.

Interestingly, only 3% of the population is aged 65 years and older, indicating a relatively low dependency burden from the elderly as compared to many other countries.

Oman's total fertility rate stands at 2.5 children per woman, close to the replacement level, while life expectancy is 79 years for men and 82 for women - a sign of strong health outcomes across the board.

As per the report, Oman has achieved full coverage in skilled birth attendance, with maternal mortality rates impressively low at 13 per 100,000 live births.

The sultanate's adolescent birth rate is low, at five births per 1,000 girls aged 15-19, and child marriage before age 18 is rare, with a prevalence of just 4%.

In education, Oman has made strides in gender parity, with equal enrolment rates for boys and girls across primary and secondary levels. Net enrolment stands at 89% for primary, 86% for lower secondary, and 76% for upper secondary education.



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Samba boys dance into World Cup 2026



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New high for Oman: Balloon tourism takes off

Oman keeps World Cup hopes alive with draw against Palestine

Muscat - Oman kept their 2026 FIFA World Cup hopes alive after a tense 1-1 draw against Palestine on Tuesday. This draw secured them a spot in the fourth round of Asian qualifiers.

The result, achieved in the final Group B fixture, saw Oman claim the final playoff berth from the group, finishing with 11 points.

The national team will now join Indonesia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq and Saudi Arabia in the continental playoff round scheduled for October.

Oman coach Rashad Jaber expressed relief after the match. "I thank God for this draw that helped us remain in the contest. I also thank the players for their efforts. We will do our best to qualify for the World Cup," he said.

According to former Al Suwaiqi goalkeeper and sports analyst Ali al Shiyadi, the six teams will be placed into two groups of three, with matches played in a single-round format. "The winners of each group will secure direct qualification, while the two second-placed teams will play off for a place in the global playoff, slated for March 2026."

The official draw for the playoff stage will take place on July 17, and Oman could be grouped with either Qatar or Saudi Arabia, alongside one of UAE or Iraq.

The squad received praise on social media for their determination and for navigating a challenging qualification campaign under pressure.

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Oman reaffirms global ocean protection pledge at UN Ocean Conference in France

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Reaffirming its steadfast commitment to ocean conservation and marine sustainability, Oman is taking part in the third United Nations Ocean Conference, currently underway in Nice, France.

Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority, is representing Oman at the high-level event, which runs until Friday. The conclave brings together world leaders, policymakers, and environmental experts to accelerate global efforts to protect the world's oceans under the Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Life Below Water). The five-day conference features



tures 10 parallel Ocean Action Panels (OAPs) and plenary sessions focusing on key themes including marine and coastal ecosystems, ocean science and

capacity building, finance and climate action, alongside exhibitions, side events, and cultural, educational and scientific activities.

In his address to the conference, Amri spotlighted Oman's pioneering efforts to safeguard marine biodiversity and ecosystems. He recalled that Oman was

among the first countries to legislate protection of the marine environment, having enacted its first such law 53 years ago.

"Oman has declared marine

nature reserves spanning more than 90,000sqkm to protect endangered species such as humpback whales, sea turtles and coral reefs," he said. He also noted the nationwide ban on plastic shopping bags and the country's ambitious target of achieving net-zero pollution by 2050.

Among Oman's flagship initiatives, Amri highlighted the 'Oman Blue Carbon' project, which aims to plant 100mn mangrove trees to boost carbon sequestration and enhance coastal resilience. These sustained efforts, he said, have positioned Oman among the world's leading nations in marine protection stringency and biodiversity conservation.

He also underlined Oman's growing leadership on the global environmental stage, citing its re-

cent election as President of the United Nations Environment Assembly during its seventh session.

Amri reiterated Oman's unwavering support for SDG 14 and international marine agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity Beyond National Jurisdictions (BBNJ). He emphasised the role of oceans as a major regulator of the global carbon cycle and called for renewed international cooperation to preserve ocean health and marine life for future generations.

The sultanate also delivered a national statement during the opening session of the conference, reaffirming its support for the Nice Plan of Action and shared global commitments to protect 'Life Below Water'.



Charity carnival in North Al Hail to support children with disabilities

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Association for Children with Disabilities will organise a charity carnival at the Village complex, North Al Hail, from June 25 to 29.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Khadija bint Nasser al Saati, chairperson of board of directors of the association, said, "The five-day carnival, open daily from 4pm to 10pm, aims to raise funds to support children with disabilities. The event also seeks to raise public awareness about the importance of integrating children with disabilities into the mainstream society."

The carnival will feature theatrical performances, interactive entertainment, and booths showcasing hand-made products by productivity families, she informed, adding that all proceeds will go towards rehabilitation and training programmes for children registered with the association.

"This carnival is a bright image of cohesion and humanitarian support in the sultanate," said Khadija. "It has become a symbol of solidarity and reflects our society's collective support for children with disabilities and their role in our communities."

According to Khadija, the association currently serves around 450 children aged between 4 and 13 across several wilayats including Bausher, Seeb, Barka, Musannah, Saham, Yanqul, Dhank and Jaalan Bani Bu Ali. The children live with various conditions including intellectual disabilities, physical impairments, hearing loss, and autism spectrum disorder.

"The association works to



The carnival aims to raise funds to support children with disabilities. It seeks to raise public awareness about the importance of integrating them into the mainstream society

KHADIJA AL SAATI

empower children socially, culturally, psychologically and professionally. It also collaborates with local and international stakeholders to strengthen support systems and improve services."

In addition to care and training, the organisation leads national projects focused on disability prevention, research and the development of specialised services to address the needs of children with disabilities.

Organisers hope the carnival will not only offer entertainment but also deepen public understanding and support for a more inclusive society.

Khadija called on government bodies, private companies, and media outlets to support the initiative. "This carnival is not just about fun; it carries a deeper message - one of love, inclusion, and hope for every child with disability," she said.

Checks on key travel routes begin ahead of khareef

Our Correspondent
Adam

Ahead of the annual khareef season in Dhofar, authorities in Dakhliyah governorate have intensified inspections to ensure service facilities on key travel routes are ready to accommodate the expected influx of visitors.

The Directorate of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion in Dakhliyah carried out inspections at 36 fuel and service stations located along the main roads leading to Dhofar. The field campaign is part of broader efforts to verify compliance with commercial regulations and ensure essential services are in place for domestic

and regional travellers heading to Salalah during the monsoon season.

Running from June to September, the khareef season draws large numbers of tourists from across Oman and neighbouring GCC states. The rise in traffic along the internal roads - particularly through Adam, Haima and Thumrait - has prompted officials to focus on preparedness.

Inspections covered the availability of fuel, cleanliness of facilities, operational status of rest areas, and quality of food and beverages. Inspectors also checked for valid commercial licences, adherence to pricing rules, and the presence of consumer protection measures.



A spokesperson for the directorate said the campaign forms part of a proactive strategy to support domestic tourism and ensure service standards are met. "We aim to ensure that all facilities are operating in line with regulatory requirements and are fully equipped to serve the public efficiently and safely," the official said.

The directorate has called on business owners and service providers along the Dhofar route to maintain operational readiness and continue cooperating with inspection teams.

The effort, officials said, is crucial in upholding Oman's image as a reliable and visitor-friendly destination during the khareef season.

MoE launches summer science initiative for school students

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Education (MoE), through the Directorate General of Education in Dakhliyah, has launched a summer programme at the Science and Technology Centre targeting more than 600 students across the governorate.

The initiative, aligned with the 2024-25 academic year, aims to instil a culture of innovation and scientific inquiry among school students while making effective use of the summer break. Running until June 26, the programme is being held at multiple science and technology laboratories throughout the governorate.

Officials said the objective is to expose students to applied scientific practices and modern



technologies in engaging learning environments. The sessions are designed to strengthen foundational skills in programming and artificial intel-

ligence, with an emphasis on creativity, critical thinking and research-based problem-solving.

Ali bin Khalifa al Hinaï, head of the Innovation and Scientific

Olympiad Department at the Dakhliyah Education Directorate, said the programme includes a range of scientific themes such as nanotechnology, cybersecu-

Training tracks have been developed for students preparing to represent Oman in international scientific competitions, focusing on AI and robotics

urity, robotics engineering, renewable energy and 3D printing. Students will also attend workshops on scientific research methods and digital marketing.

Special training tracks have been developed for students preparing to represent Oman in international scientific competitions, focusing on artificial intelligence and robotics. Hinaï said these efforts are part of a broader strategy to equip students with future-ready skills and promote excellence in scientific fields.

MoL signs MoU for 923 training, employment opportunities



Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Labour on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Safety and Security Services company to provide 923 training opportunities linked to employment, with a total funding of RO1,207,300.

The agreement was signed by H E Sayyid Salim bin Musallam al Busaidi, Undersecretary for Human Resources Development in MoL, and Saeed bin

Sulaiman al Asmi, CEO of the Safety and Security Services.

The MoU aims to enhance the skills and employability of Omani jobseekers by identifying suitable professions, determining the skills and experiences required for these roles, and developing training programmes accordingly.

It also includes mechanisms to monitor the performance of trainees, evaluate the effectiveness of the programme, and ensure the quality of job

execution.

As part of the agreement, periodic reports will be prepared to assess the progress of the initiative and challenges will be reviewed with the aim of proposing developmental solutions.

The programme will focus on training and qualifying national cadres in the fields of safety, security and fisheries control, equipping them with the necessary competencies to perform their duties effectively.

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Omani filmmakers win top honours at Tunisian film fest

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Two Omani filmmakers have won top awards at the International Environmental Film Festival of Gabes in Tunisia, marking a significant achievement for Oman's growing film industry.

Mohammed al Darwish received the Pomegranate Golden Award for Best Picture for his documentary *Beta Carotene*, which explores Oman's unique natural landscapes and the role of marine bacteria in the formation of mysterious inland lakes.

The 12-minute film, combining live-action footage with animation, was selected from among over 145 submissions, with only 15 films making to the final competition.

"It took longer than expected because I wanted to undertake research and travel for the film," said Darwish. "I have always loved documentaries. I shot the scenes slowly and often took breaks. I wanted to create something distinct."

Darwish used a combination of cameras, including Canon 5D, Blackmagic, and GoPro, along with 11 different types of lenses - ranging from zoom to wide and prime. He also deployed drones for aerial shots.

Post-production involved



Mohammed al Darwish received the Pomegranate Golden Award for Beta Carotene, while Abdullah al Raisi won the Silver Award for Wetlands

editing and colour grading using Adobe Premiere and DaVinci Resolve. The film was produced by the Oman Film Society, with support from assistant director and editor Hussain al Balushi, and

scriptwriter Mohammed bin Khalifa al Rasbi.

Abdullah al Raisi won the Pomegranate Silver Award for Best Film for his documentary Wetlands, which focuses on environmental themes. "Winning this award motivates me and hopefully others to take risks, embrace innovation, and use cinema to tell our stories in new ways," said Raisi.

The Pomegranate Bronze Award was presented to Sardinelles une responsabilité from Tunisia, while I Will Not Leave Her from Yemen won the Best Production award.

The annual festival in Gabes highlights environmental cinema and this year's edition featured entries from around the world, reinforcing the region's increasing recognition in global filmmaking.

Oman, Greece sign MoU for organising joint exhibitions

Athens, Greece - Oman and Greece are deepening their trade and business ties through exhibitions, following the signing of a new memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) and TIF-Hellexpo, Greece's national exhibition organiser.

The memorandum was signed in Greece on Tuesday by Said Salim al Shanfari, CEO of OCEC, and Dr Kyriakos Pozrikidis, CEO of TIF-HELEXPO, in the presence of TIF-HELEXPO President Tasos Tzikas and senior consultant Michail Michail.

The MoU sets a general framework between the two parties in the fields of exhibitions, trade promotion, business networking, and institutional cooperation, as TIF-HELEXPO and OCEC recognise the historical ties between Greece and Oman, their shared commitment to commercial and economic development, the value of cooperation in enhancing competitiveness, and the impor-



tance of developing international relations in order to leverage opportunities in both countries.

Specifically, under the memorandum, TIF-HELEXPO will be able to organise and lead business and institutional missions to events under the auspices of OCEC, while OCEC will have the equivalent opportunity in sectoral exhibitions organised by TIF-HELEXPO.

At the same time, each party will support the participation of national exhibitors and official delegations in each other's exhibitions.

TIF-HELEXPO and OCEC will exchange know-how and best

practices, as well as information, knowledge and experience related to the organisation and development of exhibitions and other business events.

They will jointly organise business meetings, B2B networking events, and thematic seminars to highlight the market opportunities of each country.

The two parties will also facilitate meetings among government bodies, chambers of commerce, professional associations, and private sector entities, while also exploring investment opportunities through events and matchmaking programmes.

Ibri, Yanqul building four community-funded dams

Our Correspondent
Ibri

The Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) is constructing new water storage dams in the wilayats of Ibri and Yanqul in Dhahirah governorate, as part of a national push to enhance water security and improve sustainable resource management in rural areas.

The ministry is overseeing the projects, which fall under a wider strategy to safeguard long-term water availability, particularly in

regions reliant on traditional sources such as aflaj and wells.

In a notable approach, the projects are being implemented through a joint funding model that involves both government and citizen contributions. The ministry is providing technical supervision and covering 20% of the construction costs, while the remaining 80% is funded by local residents. The model reflects growing public



participation in resource management and a shared understanding of the need to secure water supplies amid changing climate conditions.

In Ibri, construction is underway on three dams located in Wadi al Ajam, Wadi Jail and Wadi Mallah. In Yanqul, work is progressing on the Wadi Haqalat dam.

According to the ministry, completion rates currently range from 20% to 90%, depending on terrain, availability of materials,

and site access.

The dams have been designed to raise groundwater levels, improve the recharge of aflaj and wells, and reduce the impact of drought during the periods of low rainfall. Officials said the projects support the goals of Oman's national water strategy, which seeks to ensure water security across all governorates.

The ministry stated that the community-based model reinforces Oman's development vision by involving citizens directly in safeguarding natural resources.

Tender Announcement

ET13/2025/OPAZ

الهيئة العامة للمناطق الاقتصادية الخاصة والمناطق الحرة
Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones
Sultanate of Oman
سلطنة عمان

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) invites the reputable and experienced Omani and Saudi companies (JV) for the following tender; through an E-Tendering Portal (Esnad).

Construction of the Administrative and Commercial Buildings Complex within the Economic Zone at Al Dhahirah (EZAD Square) – IP4

Place of Buying and Collecting the Softcopy of Tender Documents:	Through E-Tendering System https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om
Start of Tender Document Sale (Date):	Wednesday 11 th June 2025 (10:00AM)
End of Tender Documents Sale (Date):	Thursday 26 th June 2025 (12:00PM)
Site showround / Visit (for all bidders):	Monday 30 th June 2025 10:00 am at Oppsite Ibri Wali office
Tender Closing (Submission) and Opening of Technical Bids Date:	Monday 11 th August 2025 (12:00 PM, Muscat Time)
Cost of Tender Documents:	OMR. 3,000 (Three Thousand Omani Rial only)

- All specialized and interested companies that are registered with the Tender Board participate and get the specification and conditions of the above tender from the following website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>
- Bidders should submit their bids online on the given website Signed and Sealed. The Bidders shall submit Tender Bond electronically through the e-tendering system, which will verify the validity of the submitted bond and this Bid bond shall be issued from Local Bank in the Sultanate of Oman or it's accredited branches in Saudi Arabia of (2%) of the Tender Value, valid for (180) days from the Proposals submission date, addressed to H. E. THE CHAIRMAN, OPAZ Tender COMMITTEE (OTC).
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FOREX RATES (ROI equals)	
India	222.10
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Bangladesh	317.81
Philippines	145.30
Sri Lanka	777.36

*Rates as on June 11

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Oil prices edge up on US-China trade hopes

Oil prices rose on Wednesday due to positive statements regarding trade negotiations between the US and China.

International benchmark Brent crude increased by around 0.19%, trading at \$66.35 per barrel at 0700 GMT, up from \$66.22 at the previous session's close.

Similarly, US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) increased by about 0.15%, settling at \$63.95 per barrel, compared to \$63.85 in the prior session.

US Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick and China's International Trade Representative Li Qinggang announced that the two countries had agreed on a framework based on the Geneva trade agreement.

These statements raised expectations of an agreement between the world's two largest oil consumers, creating limited upward momentum in oil prices.

However, market participants remain cautious due to frequently changing policies, as they want to see a concrete agreement.

IMF lauds CBO for high transparency standards

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has published a report on the transparency of the Central Bank of Oman (CBO), based on the IMF's best practices for central bank transparency (CBT).

Released on Tuesday, the IMR report outlines the findings of a voluntary assessment carried out to review the CBO's transparency and disclosure practices. The assessment focused on five key areas defined by the IMF: governance, transparency of policies, operations, outcomes, and official relations of central banks. The evaluation aims to enhance the CBO's independence, strengthen engagement with relevant stakeholders, and encourage knowledge-sharing and intellectual exchange with peer institutions.

The IMF concluded that the CBO attaches considerable importance to transparency in its operations, aligning its practices with international standards. This reflects the CBO's commitment to reinforcing its position as a vital public institution through a robust transparency framework.

Oman is the first country in the GCC and the second among Arab nations to undergo this voluntary review by the IMF. This underscores the CBO's dedication to achieving the highest international standards in central banking practices.

During its visit, the IMF team held extensive meetings with stakeholders from the CBO as well as representatives from government bodies, the private sec-



The IMF commended CBO's transparency in monetary policy and noted that the bank maintains open communication regarding its monetary policy framework and financial system stability

tor, and civil society organisations. These discussions helped assess the CBO's governance structures and transparency measures, promoting constructive dialogue to support more effective monetary and banking policy outcomes.

The report's key findings include evidence of strong governance and a sound legal framework. The CBO benefits from a clear legal structure and broad institutional powers that enhance decision-making and accountability.

The report also commended the CBO's transparency in monetary policy. The IMF report noted that the bank maintains open communication regarding its monetary policy framework and financial system stability, including regular publications and

coordination with other financial institutions in Oman.

Additionally, the IMF highlighted the CBO's development of effective financial stability tools, particularly its focus on improving Emergency Liquidity Assistance (ELA) mechanisms and macro-financial stability frameworks. These efforts are contributing to greater transparency in managing financial system risks.

The report further noted the CBO's ongoing initiatives to enhance stakeholder communication. This includes making key policy decisions accessible and understandable to the public via its website and social media platforms.

Moreover, the CBO was praised for its work to strengthen its anti-money laundering and

countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) framework. The review encouraged the CBO to continue enhancing transparency in its supervisory and oversight responsibilities in this area.

The IMF's Central Bank Transparency Code, introduced in 2020, reflects the expanding responsibilities of central banks and the growing need for them to clarify the purpose, nature, and methods of their operations. This enhanced transparency fosters greater public understanding of central bank roles, bolsters institutional independence, and strengthens the impact of monetary and financial policies.

In response to the IMF's recommendations, the CBO has committed to further strengthening transparency in alignment with Oman Vision 2040 and global best practices, while respecting the national legal and regulatory context. The mission offered a valuable opportunity for self-assessment, complementing the CBO's ongoing efforts to modernise its legal and institutional frameworks.

Tender launched for commercial complex at EZAD Square

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) announced on Wednesday the launch of a tender for the construction of an administrative and commercial buildings complex in the Economic Zone at Al Dhahirah (EZAD) Square.

The authority has invited experienced Omani-Saudi consortiums to submit bids via the electronic tendering platform 'Isnad'. The deadline for purchasing tender documents is June 26, with a site visit scheduled for June 30. The final date for submitting bids is August 11, 2025.

The tender includes the development of the main square within the Al Dhahirah Integrated Economic Zone, encompassing a business centre, an administrative building, a commercial centre, as well as a hotel and a health centre.

The scope of work comprises the execution of civil works, electrical and mechanical systems, and steel structures for the buildings. It also includes external works such as the construction of internal roads, sewage networks, water and irrigation systems, and landscaping.

The total land area allocated for the complex is approximately 50,000 square metres, with the first phase covering a built-up area of around 17,000 square metres, and the potential to expand to 38,000 square metres.

Eng Ibrahim Yousuf al Zadjali, Project Manager of EZAD, affirmed that smart city principles have been integrated into the design of the facilities. The buildings have also been designed in accordance with the requirements for obtaining LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) green building certification, which will be implemented by the consortium awarded the tender.

The Al Dhahirah Integrated Economic Zone is located 20 kilometres from the Empty Quarter border crossing between Oman and Saudi Arabia, and spans a total area of 388 square kilometres.



United Finance's bond issue oversubscribed

Our Correspondent
Muscat

United Finance Company on Wednesday announced the successful completion of its privately placed, senior unsecured bond issuance, which was oversubscribed by 71%.

Strong investor demand enabled the company to increase the offer from the originally targeted RO10mn to a final issue size of RO15mn.

The bonds carry a fixed coupon of 7% per annum, payable semi-annually, and will be listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX). Ahlibank acted as issue manager and collection bank, while Al Busaidy, Mansoor Jamal & Co served as legal adviser.

Nasser al Rashdi, Chief Executive Officer of United Finance,

said, "The overwhelming response to this offering reflects investors' confidence in United Finance's financial strength and strategic direction. The additional capital enhances our balance sheet flexibility as we execute our growth roadmap and continue to deliver innovative, customer-centric financial solutions."

The proceeds will support United Finance's ongoing transformation initiatives, digital expansion, and selective portfolio growth - all aligned with prudent risk management and long-term shareholder value creation. With a strengthened capital base, the company is poised to capture emerging opportunities across its target segments while maintaining robust liquidity and capital adequacy ratios.



US, China strike deal on trade framework

Malek Fouda

The United States and China have agreed in principle on a framework to implement a deal they reached to resolve their trade disputes last month, according to Chinese state media. The announcement came after the conclusion of two days of discussions in London on Tuesday.

The agreement was disrupted by a number of disputes in the weeks that followed, leading to a phone call last week between US President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, aimed at easing tensions.

Li Chenggang, who serves as a vice minister of commerce and represents China in international trade, stated that both parties have reached a preliminary agreement on a framework to execute the deal established between the two leaders, as well as during discussions held in May in Geneva.

Further details, including plans for a potential next round of talks,



Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, pose for a group photo with delegations before meeting to discuss trade in London on Monday

The London talks are the latest in the two countries' joint efforts to find a middle ground to resolve a trade dispute which threatens to plunge the world into recession and economic instability

were not immediately available.

Li and Wang Wentao, China's commerce minister, were part of the delegation led by Vice Premier He Lifeng. They met with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Trade Representative Jamieson Greer at Lancaster House, a 200-year-old mansion near Buckingham Palace.

The two parties aimed to capitalise on discussions held in

Geneva last month, which resulted in a 90-day pause on the majority of tariffs levied against one another which exceeded 100% during a growing trade conflict that had raised concerns about a potential recession.

Since the Geneva talks, Washington and Beijing have engaged in heated exchanges regarding advanced semiconductors that power artificial intelligence, the issuance of visas for Chinese students attending

US universities, and rare earth minerals vital for carmakers and various other sectors.

Last week, Trump and Jinping held a lengthy phone call in a bid to restore relations. The call was later followed by an announcement that trade discussions would resume in London.

China, the largest producer of rare earths globally, has indicated a potential relaxation of the export restrictions imposed on these materials in April, causing concern among automakers worldwide who depend on them.

In response, Beijing urged Washington to lift restrictions on China's access to the technology necessary for the production of advanced semiconductors.

Trump said that he wants to "open up China," the world's largest producer of goods, to US products.

"If we don't open up China, maybe we won't do anything," Trump said at the White House. "But we want to open up China." (Source: Euronews.com)

ICAEW highlights GCC's regulatory gains as global investor confidence grows

Dubai, UAE - As global markets face rising uncertainty, the UAE is gaining ground as a trusted destination for long-term investment. Its transparent regulatory environment, backed by consistent legal reform and a clear economic vision, is reinforcing the country's credibility with global investors.

These developments were the focus of a recent panel discussion hosted by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) Cor-



porate Finance Faculty in Dubai. The event brought together economists, senior policymakers and finance professionals to examine how regulatory transformation across the GCC is helping shape a more resilient and investable regional economy.

The panellists included: H E Dr Tariq bin Hendi, CEO and Board Member, Astra Tech and CEO of Botim; Simon Williams, Chief Economist for Central and Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa, HSBC; Raed Safadi, Part-

ner and Chief Economist, Whiteshield; and Salmaan Khawaja, Partner and Head of Financial Advisory at Grant Thornton, who moderated the discussion.

Panellists discussed how recent updates to company law, residency frameworks and broader legal policies have created a more accessible and predictable investment climate. These changes, combined with large-scale infrastructure investment, are drawing capital into

priority sectors such as technology, clean energy and healthcare.

Speakers also explored the region's strategic investment in digital infrastructure, from high-capacity data centres to AI platforms. These initiatives are supported by regulatory models that encourage innovation while maintaining national oversight, reinforcing the UAE's position as a strategic bridge between East and West.

Hanadi Khalife, Head of

ICAEW Middle East, said, "At a time of global uncertainty, the UAE and wider GCC are entering a golden moment. A clear and well-structured regulatory environment has significantly raised the region's global credibility. It is continuing to draw inward investment while putting in place the financial foundations required for sustainable, region-wide growth. ICAEW is proud to support finance professionals who are helping to shape this next chapter."





Kia offers ‘welcome bonus’ for buyers

It's the welcoming season at Kia! Kia owners are offered a welcome bonus worth RO500 on the purchase of any Kia vehicle, including stress free car service up to 100,000km with first-year insurance, and registration. Plus, all Kia customers get a chance to win iPhone 15 (256 GB) in the raffle, a press release said.

Furthermore, those who step into the era of electric mobility and buy Kia's futuristic range of electric vehicles, can reap more

The Telluride, boasts a powerful, high-performance 3.8ltr GDI V6 engine. This eight-seater SUV offers unmatched utility, space, performance, and safety

benefits this summer season. Buy the EV9 or EV6 and get an exclusive bonus of up to RO 3,000 with free service up to 105,000km and free insurance. Kia's dynamic range of SUVs

and sedans are available at showrooms across Oman and the offer ends on July 16.

To make each family moment memorable, experience the spacious, high-tech, and stunning

Kia Telluride built to cater to larger families seeking weekend getaways to the desert or a mountain retreat to enjoy the cool, fresh air.

The Telluride, boasts a powerful, high-performance 3.8ltr GDI V6 engine. This 8-seater SUV offers unmatched utility, space, and performance. Kia places great emphasis on passenger safety. The Telluride is equipped with front and rear seat airbags, side and curtain

airbags, electronic stability Program (ESP), anti-lock braking system (ABS), Electric Parking Brake (EPB) with Auto hold, and a driver's knee airbag, among other advanced safety technologies, making it a perfect all-rounder in the SUV league.

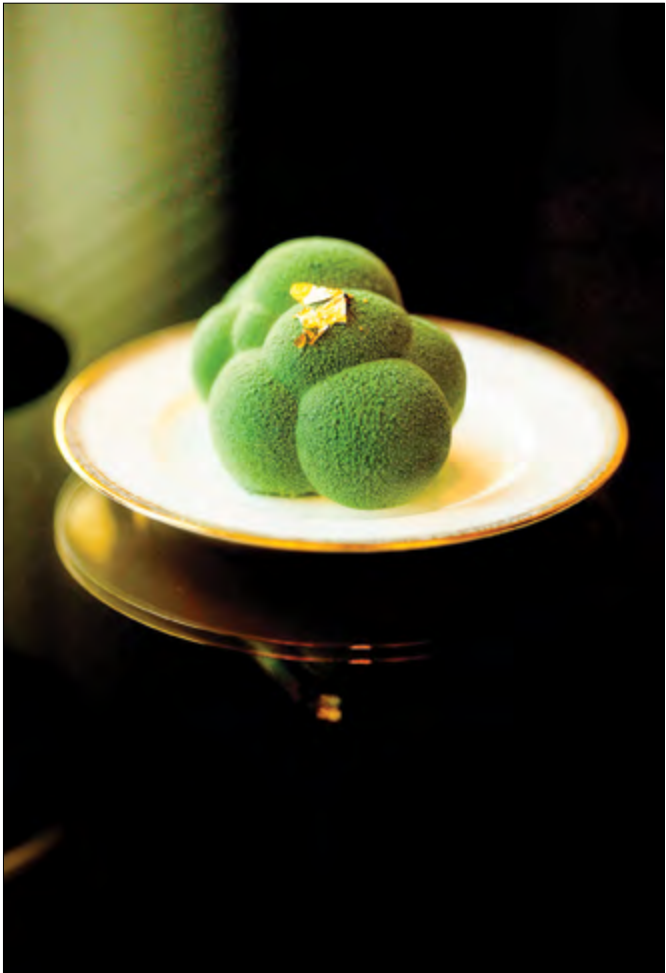
Designed for a new era of innovation and sustainability, the EV9 is Kia's all-electric SUV. With an impressive driving range of up to 500 km on a full charge, and fast-charging capa-

bility that delivers an 80% charge in just 24 minutes, it's built for those who live life at a full charge. Compared to gasoline-powered vehicles, EVs have fewer moving parts, reducing maintenance needs. The EV9 also comes with a battery warranty of 160,000 km or 8 years, and includes a free AC charging unit with installation for all customers along with the RO 3,000 welcome bonus as part of the summer offer.

The brand-new Kia Sportage L comes with the 'Make Space for Adventure' concept. The Kia Sorento offers a compelling blend of sophistication and versatility for large families, urban drivers, and adventure seekers alike.

Reliable International Automotive (RIA), Kia's distributor in Oman, ensures a rewarding ownership experience with excellent product attributes and unmatched facilities.

Mandarin Oriental celebrates its first anniversary in Oman



Mandarin Oriental, Muscat celebrates its first anniversary, marking a year of refined elegance, heartfelt hospitality, and immersive experiences.

Since opening on June 3, 2024, in the heart of Shatti Al Qurum, the hotel has enchanted guests with its tasteful design, exquisite dining concepts, world-class Spa and legendary service that reflects the country's authentic charm and rich traditions.

To mark the milestone, the hotel will partner with Amouage, the Omani High Perfumery House, to create a signature Cloud Cake, available exclusively at The Mandarin Cakeshop for a limited time only.

The Cloud Cake is inspired by Purpose Eau de Parfum, a unique

earthy fragrance with notes of Frankincense, Bergamot, Rose, Saffron and Sand Vetiver. It is often referred to as the Scent of Muscat and it is one of the House's most-loved fragrances.

The dessert evokes an array of sensations; where the depth of frankincense meets the sweetness of mango, the tanginess of passionfruit, and the creamy smoothness of coconut, all resting on a crisp biscuit base.

Paired with a miniature of Amouage's Purpose Eau de Parfum, guests are left with a lasting impression that lingers long after. There is also the option to complement the Cloud Cake with a special mocktail blend infused with notes of saffron, spices and dried black lemon.

Ford offers exclusive benefits with its new Raptor Range

Arabian Car Marketing Company, the distributor for Ford vehicles in Oman, recently unveiled an exciting summer campaign that is set to raise the bar of excitement for off-road adventurers and performance enthusiasts alike.

Customers purchasing any of the Raptor models such as the Ford Ranger Raptor, F-150 Raptor, or the Bronco Raptor (4-Door), will receive exceptional value-added benefits, making this the perfect time to own one of the world's most iconic high-performance off-road vehicles.

The benefits include 5 years/100,000km free service, a 5-year/100,000km manufacturer's warranty, free registration, free 3M Paint Protection Film Application, and a Free Accessory Package. The summer



campaign will last until July 23.

Sharing his thoughts about the exciting summer campaign, a spokesperson from Arabian Car Marketing Company said, "The Ford Raptor range is built for those who are not satisfied with just chasing adventure, but to dominate it. Every Raptor is engineered to go further, faster and stay aggressive. This summer, we are thrilled to make the Raptor experience even more rewarding for our customers in Oman. Whether it is the dunes, the wadis, or the highways, the Raptor stands apart and so will its owners."

In Oman the Raptor range includes the Ranger Raptor, the F-150 Raptor and the Bronco Raptor.

The Ford Ranger Raptor is a bold expression of off-road performance. Powered by a 3.0L twin-turbo EcoBoost V6 engine producing up to 392 horsepower and 583 Nm of torque and paired to a 10-speed automatic transmission, it delivers power with precision.

The legendary F-150 Raptor

brings raw power with its 3.5L EcoBoost V6 engine producing 450 horsepower and 691 Nm of torque, paired with a 10-speed automatic transmission.

The Bronco Raptor 4-Door redefines rugged capability with an aggressive stance and a 3.0L EcoBoost twin-turbo V6 delivering 418 horsepower and 596 Nm of torque.

OABC to host networking evening with Vodafone Oman

The Oman American Business Council (OABC) is proud to announce its upcoming Speed Networking Evening, set for June 17 at The Diplomatic Club.

This signature event, widely regarded as one of OABC's most effective and enjoyable formats, brings together Oman's business leaders, corporate executives, and SME founders for a structured, high-energy evening of meaningful connection, a press release said.

This year's event is sponsored by Vodafone Oman and held in partnership with Riyada, Oman's Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development. Riyada will be inviting a select group of Omani SMEs to attend, creating a unique opportunity for direct engagement between corporates and local businesses.



Mohammed al Alawi, head of Enterprise at Vodafone Oman, said, "This event is a chance to build real partnerships. By sup-

porting SMEs and promoting ICV, we're not only contributing to the national economy, we're also helping our clients create

stronger, more sustainable supply chains."

The evening will begin with a fast-paced speed networking ses-

sion where participants engage in brief, one-on-one introductions to quickly expand their network. Following the structured portion, guests can continue conversations over canapés and refreshments in an open setting.

"Speed Networking is a long-standing favourite among our members," said Rebecca Olson, CEO of OABC. "This year, we're proud to go beyond business cards - bringing large companies and local SMEs together in a way that directly supports Oman's ICV goals. Our partnership with Riyada ensures that the right entrepreneurs are in the room."

In a special highlight, Vodafone Oman will unveil an exclusive new offer designed specifically for OABC members, providing long-term value and support beyond the event.

Curfew in Los Angeles: Police carry out ‘mass arrests’ of demonstrators

Los Angeles, US - The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) said that it was engaging in ‘mass arrests’ as demonstrators continue to congregate in downtown LA.

“Multiple groups continue to congregate on 1st St between Spring and Alameda. Those groups are being addressed and mass arrests are being initiated,” the LAPD said in a post on the platform X.

“Curfew is in effect,” it stressed.

The CNN broadcaster reported that 10 to 20 people were seen being detained by police in in downtown LA.

What is partial curfew in LA?

Los Angeles has been under a partial curfew since Mayor Karen Bass announced a ‘local emergency’ in the city late on Tuesday.

It applies to a 1-square-mile area in downtown LA.

“I have declared a local emergency and issued a curfew for downtown Los Angeles to stop the vandalism, to stop the looting,” she said.

The curfew began at 8pm local time on Tuesday (0300 UTC on Wednesday) and is set to end at 6am local time on Wednesday.

‘We don’t feel safe’

DW interviewed protesters who



LA police are seen enforcing a curfew in the city’s downtown amid anti-ICE protests

took to the streets of LA in opposition to raids by Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE).

“It’s a basic human right. They are arresting people who are working, they are arresting people at graduating,” one woman told DW.

“That’s sad and it’s heartbreaking. We don’t feel safe,” she said.

Another protester told DW that Los Angeles required immigrant labour, pointing to reconstruction efforts following wildfires that gripped the city ear-

lier this year.

“We need immigrant workers in this city really badly,” she said.

“We’ve just gone through devastating fires,” she said, adding that the city had lost many thousands of structures to the fires.

DW Correspondent Benjamin Alvarez Gruber said that there was a ‘heavy police presence’ on the scene in Los Angeles.

“There is a lot of police movement, we see smaller groups and also several helicopters flying over the city,” he said.

He said that non-lethal ammunition, including tear gas, had been used to disperse protesters in front of the Federal Building in LA.

He said that cars were being told to turn back and not enter the city’s downtown area.

Alvarez said that Marines, hundreds of which had been deployed by Trump, had not yet been spotted in downtown LA.

Anti-ICE protests

Protests against raids by ICE that began in Los Angeles last week have spread to several other US cities.

Major demonstrations have been seen in the Texas cities of Austin and Dallas, as well as Chicago in the Midwest and Atlanta in the southeast.

In the country’s most populous city, New York, thousands took to the streets on Tuesday to protest the raids.

Local media reported that cities in southern Texas were to hold anti-ICE demonstrations on Wednesday and Saturday.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott said the state would deploy the National Guard to ‘ensure peace and order’ amid the protests.

“Texas National Guard will be deployed to locations across the state to ensure peace & order,” Abbott said in a post on X.

“Peaceful protest is legal.

Harming a person or property is illegal & will lead to arrest,” the governor said.

Protests against ICE arrests that first started in Los Angeles, California, began to spread to other states over the weekend. DW

Austria mourns in aftermath of school shooting

Graz, Austria - Austrian police found a non-functional home-made bomb and a farewell letter at the home of a 21-year-old gunman who killed 10 people in a mass shooting at a high school in Graz before taking his own life, authorities said on Wednesday.

About a dozen people were injured in the attack, some seriously. The suspect, armed with a shotgun and pistol, opened fire on Tuesday at Dreierschützengasse high school.

He was a former student of the same school although he did not complete his studies, authorities said.

Investigators look for motive

A minute of silence was observed at 10am local time on Wednesday for one of Austria’s deadliest



Austria is observing three days of national mourning

attacks post-World War II.

According to Franz Ruf, the public security director at Austria’s Interior Ministry, the shooter’s letter bid farewell to his parents.

“But no motive can be inferred from the farewell letter,” Ruf said, adding that investigations are

ongoing.

The police are also looking into whether the victims were targeted or chosen at random.

Austria is observing three days of national mourning with vigils being held in Graz, where locals lit candles and laid flowers in the city’s main square in honour of

the victims. Many lined up to donate blood for the survivors.

What are Austria’s gun laws?

Meanwhile, the shooter’s use of legally owned firearms has sparked renewed debate over Austria’s gun laws.

Austria has nearly 30 civilian firearms per 100 people, according to the Small Arms Survey research project.

The Alpine country has banned automatic weapons and pump action guns, while revolvers, pistols and semi-automatic weapons are allowed with a permit.

Rifles and shotguns are permitted with a firearms license, a valid hunting licence or for members of shooting clubs.

DW

HIDING FROM SCORCHING SUN



Labourers take shelter under an abandoned train coach to get protection from the scorching sun amid rising mercury, in Prayagraj, India on Wednesday (ANI)

Axiom-4 mission to International Space Station delayed after ‘leak’

Ankara, Turkey - The Axiom-4 mission carrying four crew members including one from India to the International Space Station (ISS) was postponed again due to a technical snag, the Indian space agency and SpaceX said on Wednesday.

“As part of launch vehicle preparation to validate the performance of the booster stage of the Falcon 9 launch vehicle, seven second of hot test was carried out on the launch pad. It is understood that LOX leakage was detected in the propulsion bay during the test,” V Narayanan, chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) said in a statement.

“Based on the discussion on this topic by ISRO team with the experts of Axiom and SpaceX it has been decided to correct the leak and carry out necessary validation test before clearing for the launch. Hence the launch of



Axiom O4 slated for June 11 is postponed.”

Elon Musk’s SpaceX also said it is ‘standing down’ from Falcon 9’s launch of Axiom Space’s Axiom Mission 4 to the International Space Station from Launch Complex at NASA’s Kennedy Space Center in Florida on Wednesday to ‘allow additional time for SpaceX teams to repair

the LOx leak identified during post static fire booster inspections’. “Once complete - and pending range availability - we will share a new launch date,” the agency said.

According to Space X, the crew in the mission will conduct more than 60 scientific experiments and demonstrations.

Anadolu Agency

Kenyan president admits blogger’s death at hands of police, calls it unacceptable

Nairobi, Kenya - Kenyan President William Ruto on Wednesday condemned the death of blogger and schoolteacher Albert Ojwang while in police custody and ordered an investigation.

In his official statement, Ruto expressed condolences to the deceased’s family, describing the incident as ‘heartbreaking and unacceptable’, and pledging a swift, transparent, and credible investigation into the matter.

Ojwang, 31, a teacher and popular X influencer, was arrested on Saturday in Homa Bay allegedly for posts critical of Deputy Inspector General Eliud Kipkoech Lagat. He was transferred to Nairobi on the same day and died in custody at Central Police Station.

A postmortem examination revealed blunt-force trauma and neck compression, contradicting previous police claims that Ojwang’s injuries were self-in-



Kenyan President William Ruto

flicted. “I take this moment to extend my heartfelt condolences to Mr Meshack Ojwang and his family for the cruel loss of their beloved son,” the president said.

“This tragic occurrence, at the hands of the police, is heartbreaking and unacceptable. I strongly condemn the actions and omissions, including any negligence or

outright criminality, that may have contributed to his untimely death,” he added.

Misconduct and criminality within police ranks must be confronted firmly, the president said, ordering the police to cooperate with the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA), which is already investigating

This tragic occurrence, at the hands of the police, is heartbreaking and unacceptable. I strongly condemn the actions

WILLIAM RUTO

Ojwang’s death.

Rights organisations, including Amnesty International Kenya, the Bloggers Association of Kenya (BAKE), Vocal Africa, and the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), have urged thorough, independent probes into Ojwang’s death.

Police fired tear gas to break up a protest in Nairobi on Monday, where demonstrators had gathered to demand justice.

Anadolu Agency

70 southern white rhinos translocated from South Africa to Rwanda

Kigali, Rwanda - At least 70 southern white rhinos have been translocated to Akagera National Park in Rwanda from South Africa for purposes of ensuring the survival of the special and threatened animals, officials announced Tuesday.

The translocation, done by African Parks in collaboration with the Rwanda Development Board, was completed in two phases, each comprising 35 rhinos, and spaced three days



apart, according to a statement.

The move, part of African Parks' Rhino Rewild Initiative and facilitated by The Howard G Buffett Foundation, aims to bolster Akagera's white rhino population so that it can contribute more meaningfully to regional conservation efforts and reinforce Rwanda's growing role in global rhino conservation efforts.

Speaking at a news briefing in the capital Kigali, Jean-Guy Afrika, chief executive officer of the Rwanda Development Board, said the historic translocation reflects Rwanda's growing contribution to global conservation efforts.

"Our commitment to protecting endangered species is closely tied to our vision for sustainable tourism, where thriving wildlife and well-managed protected areas like Akagera National Park create long-term value for both visitors and com-

munities," he said.

Peter Fearnhead, the chief executive of African Parks, said the arrival of the rhinos to Akagera is just the beginning of a multi-faceted, long-term and complex conservation intervention.

"There are numerous risks that still remain, but with the safe arrival of all 70 animals and with a dedicated Akagera park management team, they have a real opportunity to thrive. The coming months of intensive monitoring will be critical to ensuring the long-term adaptation of these rhinos to their new home," he said.

The Rhino Rewild Initiative is aimed at rewilding over 2,000 rhinos to safe, well-managed protected areas across the continent to ensure the establishment of several viable populations of southern white rhinos, according to the officials.

Anadolu Agency

Elon Musk says he 'regrets' posts about Donald Trump

Washington, D.C., US - Tech billionaire Elon Musk has expressed regret over his recent remarks about US President Donald Trump, stating that some of his posts last week 'went too far'.

Taking to his official handle on X (formerly Twitter), Musk posted: "I regret some of my posts about President @realDonaldTrump last week. They went too far."

Meanwhile, Trump warned Musk of 'serious consequences' if he funds Democratic candidates running against Republicans backing the GOP's budget bill, escalating tensions between the two influential figures.

Speaking to NBC News in a phone interview on Saturday, Trump said: "If he does, he'll have to pay the consequences for that." However, he refused to elaborate on what those consequences might be.

He added: "He'll have to pay very serious consequences if he does that." Trump further clarified he had no desire to repair ties with Musk after their public fallout. When asked whether he wished to reconnect with Musk, Trump responded: "No."

When asked if his relationship with Musk was over, Trump replied: "I would assume so, yeah."

Trump made it clear he had no plans to speak with Musk anytime soon, stating, "I'm too busy doing other things," and added, "I have no intention of speaking to him," NBC News reported.

He accused Musk of being 'disrespectful to the office of the President', saying: "I think it's a very bad thing, because he's very disrespectful. You could not disrespect the office of the President." Musk had targeted Trump in a series of posts



Musk had targeted Trump in a series of posts shared on X, including a now-deleted post, where he referenced Trump's past association with a late sex offender

Elon Musk had previously served for 130 days as a 'special government employee' leading the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). Since his exit, he has been critical of Donald Trump's spending bill

shared on X last Thursday, including a now-deleted post, where he referenced Trump's past association with late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

On Saturday, Trump responded by saying: "That's called 'old news', that's been old news, that has been talked about for years." He added, "Even Epstein's lawyer said I had nothing to do with it. It's old news."

Elon Musk had previously served for 130 days as a 'special government employee' leading the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). Since his exit, he has been critical of Trump's spending bill.

Responding to Musk's criticism, Trump told reporters on Thursday: "I'm very disappointed because Elon knew the inner workings of this bill. I'm very dis-

appointed in Elon. I've helped Elon a lot."

In the days following this, Musk launched a series of attacks on Trump via X, including a now-deleted post that supported a call for Trump's impeachment. Another post warned that Trump's tariff agenda could trigger a recession later this year.

In retaliation, Trump shared several posts on his social media platform, Truth Social. One post read: "I don't mind Elon turning against me, but he should have done so months ago," implying Musk had been aware of the bill's contents before its passage.

Trump also threatened to cancel government contracts with Musk's companies. In a Truth Social post, he wrote: "The easiest way to save money in our Budget, Billions and Billions of Dollars, is to terminate Elon's Governmental Subsidies and Contracts. I was always surprised that Biden didn't do it."

On Saturday, Trump clarified that he had not yet acted on the suggestion to cancel federal contracts with Musk's companies, saying, "I'd be allowed to do that", but admitted, "I haven't given it any thought". Musk had been a major financial backer of Trump during last year's elections, reportedly spending over a quarter of a billion dollars to support him in swing states, NBC News reported.

ANI



Harvard may receive grants 'if they revise certain policies'

Washington, D.C., US - The US secretary of education has said institutions such as Harvard University could receive grants if they revise certain policies while public universities in the state of California may face possible cuts in federal funding.

"It would be my goal that if colleges and universities are abiding by the laws of the United States and doing what we expect of them, that they can expect taxpayer-funded programmes," Linda McMahon said in an interview with Bloomberg News on Tuesday.

She added that the Trump administration was 'making progress in some of the discussions' with Harvard, despite the ongoing legal disputes. The administration has halted over US\$2.6bn in federal research funding to Harvard and sought to cancel its federal contracts, citing efforts to combat antisemitism on campus.

Harvard filed two lawsuits challenging the funding cuts and the US Department of Homeland Security's decision to revoke its international student admission license.

McMahon warned that the accreditation status of other universities may also face review. "We're looking at accreditation in general for colleges and universities, because there has been some complaint about that," she said. "It's like a real monopoly in some areas," she added.

"In California, I think we saw pretty flagrant violations

If colleges and universities are abiding by the laws of the US and doing what we expect of them, they can expect taxpayer-funded programmes

LINDA MCMAHON

of Title IX, and that is why this focus that was put on them," McMahon also told CNN on Tuesday, referring to the 1972 civil rights law that prohibits educational institutions receiving federal funding from discrimination based on sex.

Malta jails two men for life for role in murder of investigative journalist

Valletta, Malta - A court in Malta on Tuesday sentenced two men to life imprisonment for aiding and abetting the 2017 murder of investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia.

According to investigators, the two men supplied the car bomb used in the fatal car bombing, which shocked the nation and the international community.

The murder of Daphne Galizia

The Valletta court handed down the sentences on Tuesday, days after a jury found the men guilty.

The two defendants were convicted on Friday after jurors reached an 8-1 verdict, concluding that they had supplied explosive materials in exchange for money. The trial had lasted more than six weeks. Both men had pleaded not guilty.



Daphne Galizia was known for her extensive reporting on corruption

The investigation revealed that the assassination was carried out by three men. Two brothers were convicted and sentenced to 40 years in prison in 2022, while another accomplice received a 15-year sentence in 2021 after confessing and providing key information.

The bomb, containing around 500 grams of gelatin explosives,

was designed to be detonated by mobile phone.

The attackers planted the device under the driver's seat of Caruana Galizia's car and triggered it remotely. Sentencing was delivered after legal submissions on punishment.

Caruana Galizia's sister, Corinne Vella, said the family lawyers had asked 'for the court to consider the devastating impact of Daphne's brutal murder both on our family and on society'. Caruana Galizia was a prominent journalist in Malta, known for her extensive reporting on corruption and misconduct involving political and business figures.

Her death triggered widespread protests on the island. At the time of her death, she was facing over 40 libel cases.

DW

ALL SET FOR MASS PRODUCTION



The first mass-produced AG600 aircraft is seen at AVIC General Huanan Aircraft Industry Co., Ltd. in Zhuhai, south China's Guangdong Province. China's domestically developed AG600 'Kunlong' amphibious aircraft has officially entered mass production after receiving the production certificate from the Civil Aviation Administration of China on Wednesday (Xinhua)

Over 2,700 Gaza children diagnosed with acute malnutrition: UN agency

Istanbul, Turkey - More than 2,700 Palestinian children were diagnosed with acute malnutrition in Gaza amid a crippling Israeli siege on the enclave, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) said on Wednesday.

“The crisis has reached unprecedented levels of despair as people continue to go hungry across Gaza,” UNRWA said in a statement.

“Over 2,700 children under 5 diagnosed with acute malnutrition in late May,” it added.

The UN agency said that only one medical centre remained partially operating in northern Gaza amid severe shortages of fuel stocks.

“Humanitarian access must be urgently restored,” UNRWA said. As Israel has continued to close all Gaza’s border crossings to humanitarian aid since early March, the aid agencies have warned about the risk of famine among Gaza’s 2.4mn inhabitants.

Activists in Israeli custody

Meanwhile, eight international activists from the Gaza-bound aid ship Madleen remain in Israeli custody, a rights group said on Wednesday.

“The Madleen volunteers’ continued custodial detention is completely unlawful,” Israeli human rights organisation and legal centre Adalah said in a statement.

“The volunteers must be released immediately and safely returned, either to the Madleen to resume their humanitarian mission to Gaza or to their countries of origin.”

Israeli forces seized the British-flagged vessel in international waters early on Monday and detained its 12-strong crew.



Crisis has reached unprecedented levels of despair as people continue to go hungry across Gaza. Over 2,700 children under 5 diagnosed with acute malnutrition in late May

UNRWA

The ship had set sail from Sicily, Italy, on June 6, for Gaza in an attempt to break an Israeli naval blockade on the enclave.

The Israeli authorities deported four activists on Tuesday, including Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, to their home countries, while eight others remain in detention.

Adalah said that the eight activists were accused of illegal entry into Israel.

“They neither sought to enter Israel nor intended to enter Israeli territorial waters,” it added. “Their planned route was from Sicily to international waters and then directly into the internationally recognised territorial waters

of the State of Palestine, into Gaza.”

It identified the activists in Israeli custody as Suayb Ordu from Türkiye, Mark van Rennes from the Netherlands, Rima Hassan, Pascal Maurieras, Yanis Mhamdi and Reva Viard from France, Thiago Avila from Brazil, and Yasemin Acar from Germany.

Adalah accused the Israeli Detention Review Tribunal of enabling the authorities ‘to extend detention arbitrarily, potentially for one month, until July 8, 2025, without any further judicial oversight’ by setting a follow-up custody review for the activists on July 8, ‘in clear violation of international law’.

Meanwhile, activists traveling in the Gaza-bound Maghreb Resistance Convoy called on Tuesday for an immediate end to Israel’s blockade of the enclave, urging Arab governments to speak out against the Israeli genocide against Palestinians.

The convoy - made up of roughly 2,000 activists from Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania and Libya - is part of a larger international campaign to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza and raise pressure on Israel to lift the blockade.

It departed Tunisia’s capital on Monday, beginning a land journey toward the Gaza Strip to break Israel’s siege of the Palestinian territory, and arrived in Libya on Tuesday.

It will spend the night in the Libyan city of Zawiya and is expected to continue east to Misrata before heading toward Egypt.

“This initiative was launched in coordination with other groups around the world working to break the blockade on Gaza by sea, air and land,” Haifa Mansura, a Tunisian activist and one of the convoy’s organisers, told Anadolu.

Anadolu Agency

Gaza: 25 more Palestinians killed in Israeli attacks

Gaza City, Palestine - The Israeli army on Wednesday killed 25 more Palestinians near an Israeli-backed aid distribution point in the central Gaza Strip, as Israel’s genocidal war continued in the besieged Palestinian enclave, medical sources told Anadolu.

Eyewitnesses also confirmed to Anadolu that the Israeli army opened heavy fire toward people waiting to get aid near the Netzarim Corridor area in the south of Gaza City.

On Tuesday, the Gaza local authorities’ media office said the Israeli army has killed over

fensive against Gaza since October 2023, killing nearly 55,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children.

2 killed in Nablus

Israeli army withdrew from the northern West Bank city of Nablus on Wednesday after nearly 28 hours of a military operation that resulted in the death of two people and injuries to dozens.

Witnesses told Anadolu that the army pulled out from Nablus after killing two civilians, injuring more than 80, and damaging several houses



160 Palestinians seeking to get aid from the Israeli-backed aid distribution points in Gaza since its launch of the mechanism on May 27.

The Israeli mechanism has been widely rejected and criticised by the international community, including the UN.

The Israeli army also killed four more Palestinians in a drone strike on a tent for displaced people in the Al-Mawasi area of Khan Younis, the southern Gaza Strip.

The Israeli army, rejecting international calls for a ceasefire, has pursued a brutal of-

and shops. The Palestinian Health Ministry said it was informed by the General Authority of Civil Affairs - the official Palestinian liaison with Israel - that brothers Nidal Ameira, 40, and Khaled Ameira, 35, were killed by Israeli gunfire in Nablus during an Israeli raid.

The Israeli army raided the city from several directions, besieging the Old City of Nablus. Several houses and shops were searched in the area, and a number of Palestinians were detained, witnesses added.



A heat wave in cold-adapted regions like Greenland and Iceland has unique impacts

Greenland ice melted 17 times faster in May

Geneva, Switzerland - Greenland’s ice sheet melted 17 times faster than average during the heat wave in May, the scientific network World Weather Attribution (WWA) reported on Wednesday.

“Temperatures over Iceland as observed this May are record-breaking, more than 13 degrees Celsius hotter than the 1991-2020 average May daily maximum temperatures,” the WWA said. According to the meteorological institute, 84% of weather

stations across the country recorded record-breaking temperatures in May.

In eastern Greenland, the hottest day during the heatwave was 3.9 degrees Celsius warmer than in the preindustrial climate, the WWA noted.

The network added that only once every 100 years could record temperatures like those observed in Iceland and Greenland this May occur again.

A heat wave in cold-adapted regions like Greenland and Ice-

land has unique impacts. “In Greenland and Iceland, infrastructure is built for cold weather, meaning during a heat wave, ice melt can lead to flooding and damage roads and infrastructure,” the WWA explained.

On May 15, temperatures in Iceland surpassed 26 degrees Celsius, a highly unusual event for the region. In Iceland, bituminous bleeding on roads created hazardous driving conditions, while in Greenland, warmer temperatures caused sea ice to break up,

threatening communities dependent on it for hunting, fishing, and travel.

WWA’s analysis highlights the influence of climate change, concluding that the extreme heat was about 3°C hotter and 40 times more likely due to global warming.

While climate models tend to underestimate the temperature increase, projections suggest that with global warming reaching 2.6°C, such events could become twice as likely and even hotter.

Haiti faces record displacement as violence escalates: UN

Geneva, Switzerland - The number of internally displaced people in Haiti has reached nearly 1.3mn, marking a 24% increase since December 2024, according to the statement of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), released on Wednesday.

This is the highest number of people displaced by violence ever recorded in the country.

“Behind these numbers are so many individual people whose suffering is immeasurable: children, mothers, (and) the elderly, many of them forced to flee their homes multiple times, often with nothing, and now living in conditions that are neither safe nor sustainable,” said IOM Director General Amy Pope.

“We need to act urgently. The strength of the Haitian people is humbling, but resilience cannot be their only refuge. This crisis cannot become the new normal.”

While Port-au-Prince remains the epicentre, violence has rapidly spread to other regions.



In the Centre and Artibonite departments, armed attacks have displaced tens of thousands. In Petite Rivière, Artibonite, over 92,000 people are now displaced.

In the Centre department, clashes in towns like Mirebalais and Saut-d’Eau have pushed the number of displaced from around 68,000 to more than

147,000 in just a few months.

“Many now face life without access to health care, schools, and clean water, leaving already vulnerable families struggling to survive,” the IOM said.

The number of spontaneous displacement sites has surged from 142 to 246 since December. The Centre department, which previously hosted none,

now has 85 such sites.

Despite this, 83% of displaced people are staying with host families, placing immense pressure on local communities.

In response, IOM has distributed over three million litres of clean water, provided essential items to more than 20,000 people, and delivered health and mental health support to thou-

sands more.

“Humanitarian assistance is essential, but alone it is not enough,” said Pope.

“Sustainable solutions must address the root causes of displacement, improve access to essential services, and create viable alternatives to gang violence for youth,” she added.

Anadolu Agency

Iran: Fire kills 3 at petrochemical plant

Tehran, Iran - At least three people were killed and ten others injured in a major fire on Wednesday at a petrochemical plant in southern Iran, local media said.

The incident occurred around 11.03am local time (0733 GMT) at the Kavian Methanol Petrochemical Plant in Bushehr province, officials said.

The fire originated in the plant’s methanol storage tank, emergency and medical services in Bushehr confirmed, warning that the casualty toll could rise as rescue operations continue.

Dr Seyed Hossein Mousavi, head of the province’s pre-hospital emergency department, told state-run news agency IRNA that the fire was extensive and that the injured have been transferred to hospitals

across the region.

The cause of the fire remains unknown, with preliminary investigations underway.

Located in Bandar-e Deyr, Bushehr, the Kavian Petrochemical Plant was established in 2012 and is one of Iran’s key ethylene producers.

Its Phase II unit is the largest ethylene supplier in the Middle East, with an annual production capacity exceeding one million tonnes.

The plant is part of the wider Bushehr petrochemical hub, responsible for nearly 80% of Iran’s petrochemical exports, according to local officials. The fire comes just weeks after a devastating explosion at Shahid Rajaei Port in southern Iran, which killed at least 70 people and injured over 1,000.

Anadolu Agency

BIG STAKES, BIGGER AMBITIONS

Al Hilal lead Asian challenge at revamped Club World Cup

Hong Kong - Al Hilal will be the standard bearers for Asian football at the revamped Club World Cup after appointing Simone Inzaghi to coach a squad bristling with playing talent from Saudi Arabia and around the world.

Ruben Neves, Joao Cancelo, Aleksandar Mitrovic and Sergej Milinkovic-Savic have all joined Saudi captain Salem al Dawsari at the Riyadh-based club since it received major investment from the nation's Public Investment Fund.

Former Inter Milan coach Inzaghi takes over a squad that fell short of their lofty standards by failing to win a fifth Asian Champions League title in May, a misstep that cost Jorge Jesus the chance to lead the team to the Club World Cup.

While Al Hilal head to the tournament with ambitions of making a big impact in a group also featuring Real Madrid, Pachuca and Red Bull Salzburg, the expectations for Asia's three other clubs are likely to be more modest.

Emirati side Al Ain won the 2024 Asian Champions League to secure their berth but have endured a dismal 13 months since, and the defence of their continental title ended in ignominy with no wins from eight matches.



With big names like Ruben Neves, Joao Cancelo, Aleksandar Mitrovic, Sergej Milinkovic-Savic and Salem al Dawsari in their ranks, and Simone Inzaghi at the helm, Al Hilal would be hoping to challenge the top guns of world football

Hernan Crespo, who had led the club to their second Asian title, paid the price in November but his replacement Leonardo Jardim lasted only two months before Serbian Vladimir Ivic was drafted in to try to stop the rot.

Togolese striker Kodjo Laba, who was top scorer in the UAE Pro League last season, and Moroccan winger Soufiane Rahimi

will be Al-Ain's biggest attacking threats when they take on Manchester City, Juventus and Wydad in the group stage.

At least one Asian team will go into the competition in decent form with Japanese outfit Urawa Red Diamonds showing improved domestic performances under Maciej Skorza.

The Pole led Urawa to the

Asian Champions League title in 2023, five months after replacing Ricardo Rodriguez, only to leave at the end of that season for personal reasons. He returned in late 2024 and has developed a side that are contenders to win the J.League for the first time since their sole title in 2006.

Former Japan midfielder Genki Haraguchi has returned to Urawa

after a decade in Germany to lead the club's resurgence alongside the experienced Takahiro Sekine, who was instrumental in the club's Asian Champions League wins in 2017 and 2022.

Hermoso left out of Spain squad for Women's Euro 2025

Madrid, Spain - Jenni Hermoso has been left out of the Spain squad for the Women's European Championship, with coach Montse Tome saying there was too much competition for places in her position.

The 35-year-old forward played a key role in Spain's World Cup victory in 2023 and is the country's leading goalscorer but has featured less frequently for the side in recent months.

Hermoso was also at the centre of a scandal involving former Spanish Football Federation President Luis Rubiales, who was found guilty of sexual assault for kissing the player without her consent after Spain's World Cup win in Sydney.

Rubiales

We've valued her season in Tigres, we've spoken with the manager in different times, and we did what we had to do

MONTSE TOME, SPAIN COACH

said the kiss was consensual.

Hermoso, who plays club football for Mexico's Tigres, was last called up to the Spain squad for friendlies against Italy and Canada in October and was part of the squad for last year's Paris Olympics.

"I spoke with Jenni (Hermoso) already in the beginning of the year, we had a conversation," Tome told reporters on Tuesday.

"We've done with her what we've done with everyone else. We've valued her season in Tigres, we've spoken with the manager in different times, and we did what we had to do, to assess what we need from the players."

Tome said Patri Gujjarro, Maite Zubieta, Alexia Putellas, Aitana Bonmati, Vicky Lopez, Mariona Caldentey and Claudia Pina were all capable of playing in Hermoso's position.

"It's difficult to make it to the final list of 23 players," she added.

Spain are in Group B of the tournament in Germany, alongside Portugal, Belgium and Italy. They take on Portugal in their campaign opener on July 3.

Jenni Hermoso



Rabada takes five wickets as Proteas dismiss Aussies for 212

London, England - Kagiso Rabada became the second bowler to pick a five-wicket haul in a World Test Championship (WTC) final during the WTC summit clash against Australia at Lord's in London on Wednesday.

Rabada finished with figures of 5/51 in 15.4 overs as Australia was bowled out for 212 after South Africa elected to bowl on the opening day. The only other bowler to have a fiver under his belt in a WTC Final contest is Kiwi pacer Kylie Jamieson, who picked 5/31 against India in Southampton in 2021.

The 30-year-old pacer made early inroads by nabbing Usman Khawaja and Cameron Green in the seventh over of the match. He then cleaned up Australia's tail



Kagiso Rabada took five wickets for 51 runs in 15.4 overs to torment Australia

after the tea break by dismissing skipper Pat Cummins, Beau Webster and Mitchell Starc in quick succession as the defending champion lost its last five wickets for just 20 runs.

During his inspired spell, Rabada also surpassed legendary pacer Allan Donald's tally of 330 Test wickets to become South Africa's fourth-highest wicket-taker in the longest format.

With 332 wickets, Rabada is only behind Dale Steyn, Shaun Pollock and Makhaya Ntini on the list for most Test scalps by a South African.

Earlier, Steve Smith led an Australia fightback to put the defending champions on 190-5 at tea after a stuttering start.

Smith scored 66 before being

dismissed by part-time spinner Aiden Markram and featured in a 79-run fifth wicket partnership with Beau Webster as Australia steadied their innings after South Africa had taken four wickets before lunch.

Smith was playing for the first time since March and showed no signs of being rusty in a busy innings, continuing his form at Lord's where he had previously scored a double century.

But he will be disappointed with the manner of his dismissal, attempting to slog Markram and getting a healthy edge to Marco Jansen at slip with the tall bowler juggling the ball twice before holding the catch. It was the only wicket South Africa took in the session.

Rinderknech upsets Shapovalov in Stuttgart first round

Stuttgart, Germany - Frenchman Arthur Rinderknech knocked off Canada's Denis Shapovalov 6-4, 2-6, 6-0 in Stuttgart on Tuesday in the first round of the BOSS Open at Stuttgart, Germany.

Shapovalov, seeded fifth in the event, was undone by nine double faults, while his opponent fired nine aces. Rinderknech committed just 18 unforced errors to Shapovalov's 28 while prevailing in 1 hour, 43 minutes.

The only seeded player to win on Tuesday was No. 7 American Alex Michelsen, who downed France's Gael Monfils 6-4, 4-6, 6-3.

Other winners were Germany's Justin Engel, Hungary's Marton Fucsovics, American Learner Tien and France's



Arthur Rinderknech

Shapovalov, seeded fifth in the event, was undone by nine double faults, while his opponent fired nine aces. Rinderknech committed 18 unforced errors to Shapovalov's 28 while prevailing in 1hr, 43mts

Quentin Halys, Pierre-Hugues Herbert and Corentin Moutet.

At the Libema Open in 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands, Americans Mackenzie McDonald and Reilly Opelka each earned three-set victories.

McDonald cruised past Italy's Mattia Bellucci 6-1, 6-7 (4), 6-3, while Opelka rallied to defeat the Netherlands' own Jesper de Jong 6-7 (5), 7-6 (5), 6-2.

Also on Tuesday, Finland's

Otto Virtanen defeated Argentina's Tomas Martin Etcheverry 7-6 (6), 7-5, and in a battle of Belgium, Zizou Bergs downed Alexander Blockx 6-3, 1-6, 7-6 (3).

Sramkova stuns Krejcikova

Solovakia's Rebecca Sramkova won 78.1 percent of her first-serve points while posting a 6-4, 6-3 upset of No. 7 seed Barbora

Krejcikova of the Czech Republic in the first round of the HSBC Championships in London on Tuesday.

Sramkova's solid win at the Queen's Club earns her a match against wild card Emma Raducanu of Great Britain. Raducanu converted 4 of 5 break points in her 6-1, 6-2 victory over Spanish qualifier Cristian Bucsa.

No. 5 Russian Diana Shnaider rolled to a 6-4, 6-1 victory over Magdalena Frech of Poland, and No. 6 Czech Karolina Muchova beat Australia's Maddison Inglis 7-6 (5), 3-6, 6-4.

McCartney Kessler beat Brit Francesca Jones 6-2, 6-4 while Brits Katie Boulter and Heather Watson also notched up victories.

Lindblad, 17, gets F1 super license

London, England - The FIA has granted a Formula 1 super license to Red Bull Junior racer Arvid Lindblad prior to his 18th birthday.

The move comes following a request from his team for Lindblad, who will turn 18 on Aug. 8.

Eighteen is the age traditionally required to hold a super license, however adjustments were made to the FIA International



Arvid Lindblad

Sporting Code last year. The following line was added to the code:

"At the sole discretion of the FIA, a driver judged to have recently and consistently demonstrated outstanding ability and maturity in single-seater formula car competition may be granted a super license at the age of 17 years old."

The FIA announced Lindblad's new status following a meeting of the World Motor Sport Council in Macau, China.

SAMBA BOYS DANCE INTO WORLD CUP

Vinícius goal helps Ancelotti’s Brazil beat Paraguay and qualify for the finals

Sao Paulo, Brazil - Brazil and Ecuador secured their spots at the 2026 World Cup on Tuesday, taking the second and third of South America’s six automatic qualifying berths after champions Argentina booked their ticket in March.

Brazil beat Paraguay 1-0 while Ecuador drew 0-0 with Peru as both teams climbed to 25 points with two matches to play, beyond the reach of Venezuela in seventh place.

Uruguay (24 points),

Júnior on the stroke of half-time made it a winning home debut for Brazil’s coach, Carlo Ancelotti. “It is for you,” Vinícius told Ancelotti, his former Madrid manager, as he celebrated.

“I’m very happy with today’s result,” Vinícius said. “We needed to win at home for our fans too and qualify for the World Cup, which was our goal. Now [Ancelotti] will have more time to work, to see what he can improve. Today wasn’t one of our best games, but the important

We needed to win at home for our fans too and qualify for the World Cup, which was our goal. Now [Ancelotti] will have more time to work, to see what he can improve

VINÍCIUS JÚNIOR



Brazil’s Vinícius Júnior celebrates after scoring against Paraguay in their World Cup qualifier on Tuesday

Paraguay (24) and Colombia (22) occupy the remaining three automatic qualification positions ahead of the final two fixtures in September. Venezuela (18) would earn a playoff spot against a team from another confederation by finishing seventh.

In São Paulo, a goal from the Real Madrid forward Vinícius

thing in qualifying is to win.”

Vinícius, Gabriel Martinelli, Raphinha and Matheus Cunha started. Ancelotti said the team had been balanced despite having four forwards and that Cunha’s role, as a playmaker, was the one that could be Neymar’s if the veteran fully recovers fitness.

“It’s no problem to play with

three or four up front,” Ancelotti said. “We need 10 players to run, to sacrifice. Rodrygo did this many times, I know him well. And Neymar will also do it.”

Brazil extended their record as the only team to play in every edition of the World Cup, with the five-times winners set to make their 23rd appearance in next

year’s tournament in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Ecuador qualified for their second straight World Cup by avoiding defeat in Peru. The visitors were penned in their own half for the final 20 minutes after midfielder Alan Franco was shown a second yellow card.

The draw all but ended Peru’s

hopes of qualifying, leaving them with 12 points, six behind Venezuela.

Earlier on Tuesday, Uruguay took a step closer to securing a spot with a 2-0 home victory over Venezuela at the Estadio Centenario, a victory which also snapped a four-match winless run in South American qualifiers.

Uruguay dominated much of the first half but struggled to break down a well-organised Venezuelan defence until Rodrigo Aguirre put the hosts ahead in the 42nd minute, heading in at the far post from a Maxi Araujo corner.

Georgian De Arrascaeta doubled Uruguay’s lead just two min-

utes into the second half, firing a superb shot into the top-left corner to seal a win that secures Marcelo Bielsa’s side of at least an inter-confederation playoff berth. Uruguay need only one point from their final two matches against Peru and Chile to make sure of a place at the finals.



Finland’s Joel Pohjanpalo celebrates his goal against Poland on Tuesday

Finland beat Poland to go top of group

Helsinki, Finland - Goals from Joel Pohjanpalo and Benjamin Kallman earned Finland a 2-1 home win over Poland in Helsinki on Tuesday to send the hosts top of their World Cup qualifying group.

The home side took a 31st-minute lead when Polish keeper Lukasz Skorupski was dispossessed by Finland forward Pohjanpalo. Skorupski then fouled Robin Lod and Pohjanpalo converted the resulting penalty.

Finland doubled their advantage in the 64th minute when Oliver Antman’s squared ball across the area was fired home by substitute Kallman but Jakub Kiwior bundled the ball into the net five minutes later to pull one back for Poland.

A serious medical emergency in the stands led to a long suspension of play in the 80th minute but Poland were unable to find another goal and Finland, looking to qualify for their first World Cup, held on to take all three points.

Poland’s preparation had been overshadowed by Robert Lewandowski’s decision not to play under current coach Michal Probiez after he was stripped of the captaincy, with Piotr Zieliński, currently injured, taking over.

Finland are on seven points after four games in Group G, one point ahead of the Netherlands who hammered Malta 8-0, but the Dutch have two games in hand. Poland are third, also on six points with three games played.

Gareca steps down as coach after Chile miss third straight World Cup

Santiago, Chile - Ricardo Gareca confirmed he has stepped down as Chile head coach after their hopes of reaching the 2026 World Cup ended with a 2-0 away loss to Bolivia on Tuesday.

“We made a decision, with the coaching staff (...) with the entire delegation. We told them that we want to ease the situation,” said Gareca during a brief press conference after the match in El Alto, where he did not take questions.

“The results never went



Ricardo Gareca

with us, at any time. We did not produce results, Chile is in a situation that no one would have wished for.”

The defeat left Chile bottom of the South American table with only 10 points and two games remaining in the qualifying round.

“La Roja” will miss out on the World Cup for the third time in a row, after failing to qualify for Russia 2018 and Qatar 2022 following a historic era that saw them win the Copa America in 2015 and 2016. Under Argentine manager Gareca, who was appointed in 2024, Chile only managed one win in 13 official games.

Senegal beat ‘not good enough’ England in friendly

Nottingham, England - Senegal became the first African team to beat England in 22 games on Tuesday, winning 3-1 in a friendly at the City Ground thanks to goals from Ismaila Sarr, Habib Diarra and Cheikh Sabaly.

Senegal stretched their unbeaten streak to 24 games, while England’s loss, which included a disallowed late goal from Jude Bellingham for a handball in the build-up, was their first defeat in four games under new manager Thomas Tuchel.

“Not good enough,” captain Harry Kane told ITV. “We had moments, but with and without the ball things aren’t clicking, we’re not finding the right tempo. We’ve lost that aggressive nature that we had.”

England -- with 10 changes from Saturday’s 1-0 lacklustre World Cup qualifying win over Andorra -- took the lead when Kane struck in the seventh minute after Senegal goalkeeper Edouard Mendy saved Anthony



Senegal players celebrate their win against England

Gordon’s shot but spilled the ball into the striker’s path.

The hosts conceded for the first time under Tuchel when Sarr caught Kyle Walker napping to poke in Nicolas Jackson’s cross in the 40th minute. The visitors doubled their lead in the 62nd

when Diarra latched onto a ball over the top then fired through goalkeeper Dean Henderson’s legs. Sabaly struck deep into stoppage time.

“We’re not going to panic but we know we need to be better,” Kane said. “New ideas, there’s

new players coming into the team that don’t have experience at international level.

“It’s a mixture of things but no excuses. We need to find it quick, the World Cup is going to come around really fast so every camp is really important right now.”

Depay equals record as Netherlands hammer Malta

Groningen, Netherlands - Memphis Depay scored twice to equal the Netherlands’ goal-scoring record as the Dutch hammered Malta 8-0 on Tuesday for a second successive World Cup qualifying victory.

Depay converted a ninth-minute penalty and fired home a powerful shot seven minutes later to match Robin van Persie’s record of 50 goals for the Dutch national team. Both achieved the tally in 102 appearances.

Substitute Donyell Malen also scored a double with captain Virgil van Dijk, Xavi Simons, Noa Lang and Micky van de Ven adding the other goals as the Dutch won a second Group G qualifier after beating Finland in Helsinki on Saturday.



Memphis Depay, on 50 goals, is now level with Robin van Persie as the all-time top scorer for the Netherlands

Depay’s opener at the Euroborg stadium came after Justin Kluivert was clipped in the penalty area, followed swiftly by his 50th goal for his country.

That proved a much more impressive effort as the ball was pulled back from the byline for Depay to thrash it home from the edge of the area.

Van Dijk made it 3-0 after 20 minutes with an impressive shot from the edge of the area not dissimilar to Depay’s effort while Simons slid home the ball from an acute angle for the fourth in the 61st minute after the Dutch had squandered a plethora of chances. But they made up for that with four goals in the last 16 minutes as substitute Malen took over the running of the game.

THE DREAM LIVES ON

Oman reach fourth phase of qualifiers after Al Sabhi's last-gasp penalty earns draw against Palestine

Amman, Jordan – Oman kept their hopes of a place at the World Cup finals alive with a last-gasp 1-1 draw against Palestine in Jordan.

Issam al Sabhi's penalty seven minutes into stoppage time earned Oman a draw that gave them fourth place in Group B, keeping their hopes alive at the expense of Palestine.

Oman will feature in a fourth phase of qualifiers in October alongside Indonesia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

A header by Oday Kharoub gave Palestine a 49th-minute lead and a second yellow card for Oman's Harib al Saadi had put Ihab Abu Jazar's side in control until the dying minutes, when Muhsen al Ghassani was brought down in the area.

Al Sabhi stepped up to send goalkeeper Rami Hamada the wrong way to seal fourth place in the group for Oman and eliminate the heartbroken Palestini-



Oman's Issam al Sabhi (R) celebrates with Hussein al Shahri after scoring against Palestine on Tuesday

ans.

Palestine, a point behind Oman going into the match, signalled their intent as early as the fourth minute when Michel Termanini hit the bar with a powerful header that left Oman captain and keeper Faiyz al Rusheidi rooted.

Both Ahmad Taha and Oday Kharoub then tried their luck with long-range shots, with Aberdeen striker Oday Dabbagh making a spirited run towards goal in the 19th minute before losing the ball.

Oman's first attempt at breaking the deadlock came in the

28th minute, when Rabia al Alawi ran down the right from his own half and took on three defenders in the 18-yard box before ballooning his shot.

Both sides began running out of steam towards the end of the half, with Oman leaving the pitch with an edge in possession de-

Oday Kharoub gave Palestine a 49th-minute lead and a second yellow for Oman's Harib al Saadi had put Ihab Abu Jazar's side in control, until Muhsen al Ghassani was brought down in the area

spite only having two shots at goal compared to their opponents' nine.

Palestine again started the stronger side, and their efforts paid off in the 49th minute when

Kharoub headed home at the near post off a corner by Adamhamza Kayed, who had come on after the break.

Oman were dealt another blow in the 73rd minute when

Harib Al Saadi received a second yellow card for a foul on Hamed Hamdan.

Wessam Abou Ali had two chances in the last 10 minutes to double Palestine's lead, but saw his first shot saved by Al Rusheidi and his second go just past the right post.



Australia's Connor Metcalfe scores against Saudi Arabia in their World Cup qualifier in Jeddah on Tuesday

Australia edge Saudis to seal World Cup spot

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia - Australia sealed qualification for the World Cup with a 2-1 win over Saudi Arabia in Jeddah on Tuesday.

The Socceroos only had to avoid a five-goal defeat to confirm their appearance at a sixth consecutive finals, and goals from Connor Metcalfe and Mitch Duke earned the Australians a come-from-behind win to brush aside the Saudis.

Abdulrahman Al Obud had given the home side a glimmer of hope when he netted from close range in the 19th minute, but Metcalfe equalised with three minutes left in the half to extinguish Saudi dreams.

Duke then put the visitors in front in the 48th minute when he glanced Martin Boyle's free kick past Nawaf al Aqidi before Mat Ryan, making his 100th appearance for his country, saved a late penalty to deny Salem al Dawsari an equaliser.

The win confirms the Australians as the second-place finishers in Group C behind Japan, who crushed Indonesia 6-0 to win the group

Iran confirmed themselves as Group A winners with a 3-0 win over North Korea that came after Kye Tam was sent off for the visitors with 24 minutes remaining in Tehran.

Botafogo sign Argentine Correa ahead of Club World Cup

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - Botafogo have signed Argentine forward Joaquin Correa on a deal until the end of 2027 after his contract with Inter Milan expired, the Brazilian Serie A team announced on Tuesday ahead of the Club World Cup.

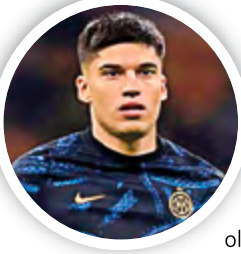
"The player arrives on a free after finalising his contract with the Nerazzurri," Botafogo said in a statement.

"Correa, who will wear the number 30 shirt, will join the Botafogo delegation in the United States for the FIFA Club World Cup," added the statement.

The Brazilian club are in Group B at the tournament, which kicks off this weekend, and will face Atletico Madrid, Paris St Germain and Seattle Sounders in the group phase.

The 30-year-old striker, who made his debut in 2012 with Estudiantes de La Plata, previously played for Sampdoria, Sevilla, Lazio, Olympique de Marseille and Inter, where he played last season.

Correa won the 2021 Copa America with Argentina.



Joaquin Correa

Man City sign Reijnders from Milan ahead of Club World Cup

Manchester, England - Manchester City confirmed the signing of midfielder Tijani Reijnders from AC Milan on a five-year contract on Wednesday and said the Netherlands international will be available for this month's Club World Cup.

Financial details were not released but a City team source has put the transfer fee at 55 million euros (\$62.85 million).

"City are one of the biggest teams in the world, with the best coach, world-class players and outstanding facilities. Under Pep Guardiola, City have won so many titles, and I want to help keep that going with a lot more success in the coming years," Reijnders said in a statement.

"It is also a dream come true to play in the Premier League. This league has seen many of the best Dutch players perform through the years and it's an inspiration to follow in their footsteps."

The 26-year-old, who has been capped 23 times, joined Milan in 2023 on a five-year contract before extending it until 2030 in March. He made 104 appearances for the club in all com-



Tijani Reijnders

petitions, winning the Italian Super Cup and was named Serie A's best midfielder last season.

On Tuesday, Man City announced the signing of attacking midfielder Rayan Cherki from Olympique Lyonnais on a five-year contract.

Financial details of the deal were not disclosed but British media reported that City paid around 40 million euros (\$45.70

million) for the 21-year-old Frenchman. Cherki had his best season for Lyon in 2024-25, scoring 12 goals and providing 20 assists in all competitions.

"This is a dream for me. Honestly, to be joining a club like Manchester City and have the opportunity to make the next step in my career here is something very, very special," Cherki said in a statement.



Kieran Tierney

Arsenal' Tierney joins Celtic on five-year deal

Glasgow, Scotland - Celtic have signed Scotland left back Kieran Tierney from Arsenal on a five-year contract, the Scottish champions said on Tuesday.

The 28-year-old, who made his senior debut at Celtic in 2015, will be back at the club after six years. He made 170 appearances for the Scottish club, scoring eight goals before joining Arsenal in 2019.

"Everybody's known for a few months and just to be here with the Celtic strip on again just feels amazing," Tierney said. "... When you move away from home, you grow up, you learn different things. I was in Spain (with Real Sociedad on loan) for a year, learning a different language and playing in a different league, so I'm definitely a different person."

Tudor to stay as Juventus coach, says new general manager Comolli

Turin, Italy - Igor Will remain in charge of Juventus next season after Damien Comolli, the club's new general manager, said on Tuesday that they had faith in the Croatian coach who was handed the reins less than three months ago.

Tudor arrived in March after Juve sacked Thiago Motta, with the club having been knocked

out of all the cup competitions and sitting outside the top four in Serie A.

Juve lost only one more league game and finished fourth to qualify for the Champions League, but the 47-year-old warned his future must be decided before their Club World Cup campaign kicks off next week.

"I want to confirm that Tudor will be our coach for next season. I have already made this clear to him and we are working together," Comolli told reporters.

"We are a great club and there is a lot of speculation, but I want to reiterate that Tudor will remain our coach."

Comolli, previously with French club Toulouse, is no

stranger to Tudor's work.

"When he was at (Olympique) Marseille he beat us twice. We even laughed about it," Comolli added.

"The intensity, the physical and mental stamina that his Marseille had, impressed me. He did an exceptional job at Marseille."

Comolli said he plans to hire a sporting director for transfers

and a technical director to establish a clear structure at the club who have not won the Scudetto since the 2019-20 season when they lifted the trophy for the ninth year in a row.

He also confirmed Randal Kolo Muani, who is on loan from Paris St Germain, would play in the Club World Cup even though his contract ends this month.

"We have not reached an agreement for next season, but I am optimistic that we can reach one, because PSG has not closed the door and Kolo Muani wants to stay with us," Comolli said.

Comolli also said he wants to speak to Dusan Vlahovic with the Serbian striker reportedly unsettled at Juve. Vlahovic was Juve's top scorer in each of the

last three seasons.

"I want to understand what he wants to do. He is a top player and something this season didn't work," he said.

"He is a top player and we also have to understand his intentions from a contractual point of view. When I understand all these things, I will be able to decide".



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OFFBEAT OKRA
Spicy, crispy, crunchy or tossed with seafood, okra can be really scrumptious



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IN TOWN
Italian National Day and Independence Day of the Philippines



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ENTERTAINMENT
A peek into tinsel town, in Hollywood and Bollywood

OMAN BALLOONS

NEW HIGH FOR OMAN

Mohammed Taha

In a bold step towards placing Oman on the global hot air balloon tourism map, Oman Balloons has successfully completed a trial flight in Cappadocia, Turkey, ahead of its plans to launch commercial balloon rides in North Sharqiyah later this year.

The first flights, operated by balloon A4O-OHS, will take off from Bidiyah, offering breathtaking views of the desert and surrounding terrain.

"This marks the beginning of Oman's journey to becoming a major hot air balloon destination in the region," said Salim Sultan al Abri, founder and CEO of Oman Balloons, in an exclusive interview with Muscat Daily. "We established the company in 2023 and signed an agreement with Turkish manufacturer Pasha Balloons to become their exclusive agent in the Gulf."

Oman Balloons completed its maiden flight over Cappadocia's famed landscape on June 3. The company plans to officially launch the service in Oman in October, operating from Stars Gate Camp in the Al Wasit area of Wilayat Bidiyah.

According to Abri, the balloon has been certified by the Civil Aviation Authority and is equipped to handle Oman's unique weather conditions. It can accommodate up to 20 passengers, will be piloted by a certified balloonist, and accompanied by an onboard assistant.

Abri emphasised that the sultanate's diverse terrain -

including golden sand dunes, majestic mountains, ancient forts, and lush valleys makes it an ideal destination for balloon tourism.

"Floating silently over Oman's natural and historical landmarks at sunrise offers a serene and unforgettable experience," he said.

The project, launched in cooperation with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, is part of broader efforts to diversify Oman's tourism offerings and enhance the country's appeal on the regional and global travel map.

Beyond tourism, the initiative is expected

BALLOON TOURISM TAKES OFF IN OMAN AS THE SULTANATE DIVERSIFIES ITS TRAVEL OFFERINGS TO SOON BECOME THE REGION'S LATEST BALLOONING DESTINATION

to deliver both economic and social benefits.

"Each balloon creates 12 direct jobs, not to mention the indirect opportunities in hospitality, transport, and support services," Abri disclosed. "As we expand our fleet, we also plan to introduce new technologies and inspire Omani youth to explore this modern and exciting industry."

Abri highlighted that hot air ballooning is widely considered one of the safest forms of aviation. "It offers a unique and tranquil way to experience the world from above.

operate in a controlled environment, typically avoiding high-speed manoeuvres and complex navigation. Flights are conducted in calm, clear weather with light winds, both at ground level and aloft. Pilots monitor weather forecasts closely before, during, and after flights to ensure a safe and smooth experience," he explained.

"As with all aviation activities, safety is paramount," Abri stressed. "We've worked closely with certified professionals and regulatory authorities to ensure our ballooning operations in Oman meet the highest safety standards."

The company has ambitious plans, including establishing a hot air balloon maintenance facility in Oman to serve the wider Gulf region and, eventually, setting up a local factory to manufacture balloons with Omani expertise.

"The road was not easy," says Abri. "But through persistence, vision, and lessons learned from our visits to the United States and Turkey, we have developed a product tailored to Oman's environment."

Expressing gratitude to the Civil Aviation Authority for supporting the training of personnel and raising awareness about ballooning regulations, and to the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for sponsoring the launch event in Turkey, Abri held out a message for young Omanis - "Believe in your ideas and study your projects carefully. Believing in your own capabilities is the first step to success."



We've worked closely with certified professionals and regulatory authorities to ensure our ballooning operations in Oman meet the highest safety standards

SALIM SULTAN AL ABRI



cook-up

OFFBEAT Okra

Sometimes, it is good to skip protein and have a light meal with vegetables prepared in interesting ways to pep up your appetite. Okra, for instance, can brighten up your plate

Fried Okra

Ingredients
3 cups vegetable oil
400g small to medium fresh okra
350ml club soda,
¾ cup all-purpose flour
¾ cup fine or medium grind yellow cornmeal
1¼tsp kosher salt, ½ tsp garlic powder
¼ to ½ tsp cayenne pepper, ¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper
Lemon wedges - for serving, Remoulade - for serving

Method
Fill a large heavy-bottomed, high-sided skillet with 3 cups oil and heat the oil over medium-high heat to 180° C. Meanwhile, fit a wire rack onto a baking sheet. To, prepare the okra and batter, pat dry the okra with paper towels first. You can leave them whole for frying, or you can trim the stem ends and cut crosswise into 1/2-inch rounds instead.
Place 350ml cold club soda, all-purpose flour, cornmeal, kosher salt, garlic powder, cayenne pepper, and black pepper in a medium bowl and whisk until smooth. Add the okra to the batter and toss with a fork until they are fully coated. Using the fork, pick up the okra one at a time, tap off any excess batter from the fork, and add to the oil. Fry, flipping once, until golden-brown all over, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Use a slotted spoon to transfer to the rack. Squeeze immediately with lemon wedges and remoulade.
For okra rounds, place them into the batter and using a slotted spoon, pick up a few rounds and transfer into the hot oil. Repeat until the skillet is full but not crowded. Fry until golden brown and transfer to the wire rack or plate. Serve with lemon wedges and remoulade.



Sauteed Lady's Fingers

Ingredients
200g tender okra (ladies' finger)
1tbsp oil
2-3tbsp water
1tsp salt, adjust to taste
1tsp ground red chilli
2tsp ground coriander
¼tsp ground turmeric
2tsp lemon juice – for garnish

Method
Prepare the okra and spices. Clean the okra and make slits on each of the ridges of the okra. These slits will help the spices and oil to seep through. To a bowl, add the spices and about 2tbsp of water. Mix to make a paste. Keep aside.
Now, saute the okra - Add 1tbsp oil to the skillet on medium heat. Add the spice paste when the oil is warm and fry for a minute.
Add the okra, turn the heat to medium-high, add 1tbsp of water, and toss well so that the spices coat the okra. Cover and cook for 4-5 minutes. The water will help build the steam. Take the lid off and while doing so, allow the water that is collected under the lid to drip into the skillet. The okra should be nearly cooked and have a good shine on them by now. Toss gently, cover, and saute for 3-4 minutes or until the okra is cooked and still holds its shape. Take the skillet off the heat, add the lemon juice, toss well. The dish is ready to be served.



VEG DELIGHT



Okra with Roasted Shrimps

Ingredients
400g peeled and deveined shrimp (tails on)
2tbsp dried oregano, ½tbsp smoked paprika
Salt and black pepper, to taste
¼ cup olive oil
400g small okra - trimmed
200g cherry tomatoes
Lemon wedges - for serving

Method
Heat the oven to 200° C and line a sheet pan with aluminum foil. In a medium bowl, combine the shrimp, oregano, smoked paprika, a few pinches of salt and 2tbsp of olive oil. Mix well and set aside.
Add the okra and tomatoes to the pan, season with salt and several cracks of black pepper, then drizzle the remaining 2tbsp of oil over top. Mix well, spread evenly, then place on the top rack of the oven. Roast until the okra is softened and the tomatoes are soft and have released their juices - about 15 minutes.
Take the pan out of the oven, put the tomatoes and okra in a large bowl, then spread the shrimp evenly on the same pan and toss to coat in the pan juices. Return the pan to the oven and roast until the shrimp are cooked through - 4 to 5 minutes.
Remove the shrimp from the oven, then toss with the okra and tomatoes, along with any pan juices. Taste for salt. Serve on a large platter and finish with a squeeze of lemon.

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Indian male accountant, 9 years of experience in accounts & finance, looking for a suitable position.

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Module 2: Winches & Power Hoist
Module 3: Pedestal & Mobile Cranes
Module 4: Overhead Travelling Cranes, Runway Beams & Swing Jibs
Module 5: Forklift Trucks & Stackers
Module 6: Containers, Baskets & Other Cargo Carrying Units
Bolt-On 1: Lorry Loaders (HIAB)
Bolt-On 2: MEWPS

For more information regarding course fees, training schedule, and registration, please reach out to:

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Email: rasheedm@tatioman.com
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take a break

IN TOWN

Italian National Day



Embassy of Italy hosted a reception to mark its National Day last week



Philippines Independence Day



Embassy of the Philippines hosted a reception to mark its 127th Independence Day



BOGGLER

T	A	Y	T
X	L	B	A
E	I	E	C
O	E	D	Z

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

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

TRIVIA QUIZ - FOR TEENS

1. Which is the shortest palm tree?

A. Bottle Palm
B. Pygmy Date Palm
C. Jelly Palm
D. Saw Palmetto



2. Who invented the pressure cooker?

A. Denis Papin
B. John H Kinsman
C. Arthur Leslie Large
D. Thomas Ahearn

3. What is Kootan?

A. A fibre sourced from palm trees to make ropes in Oman
B. A clay burner used to burn incense in Omani villages
C. A handwoven cotton vest worn by Omani fishermen
D. A traditional Omani dish made with rice and dried fish

Answers
1. B
2. A
3. D

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

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

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
You're famous for your love of the unexpected, so when something big and crazy comes along like it has lately, you're excited about it, which adds to the end result. You've probably been quite happy living on the edge for a few days, but now you're probably ready to call it a day.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
Logic is all well and good, but your passions are compelling in their own right too. Don't be too quick to dismiss them as not being informative when it comes to making today's big decision. Instead, take both left- and right-brain data into account, and never discount any gut feelings you may have about the issue. It's quite easy to believe your eyes, but for now, listen to your heart.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
You're a clever, witty person, and it takes a lot to confuse you. Today's events, though, might throw you off your game, especially if you feel the need to ask someone for advice. Don't feel bad about it, and don't let anyone give you a look or a comment that makes you feel weird. Everyone is entitled to be surprised every now and then!



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
You're great at keeping secrets. You know exactly how to keep quiet, how to manage yourself under stress, and how to put on your poker face and keep it there for as long as necessary. All of that comes in handy now when surprising news arrives yet again! The best part of all this is that you've been waiting for the other shoe to drop.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
No one thinks of you as a slacker. You work as hard as you possibly can, and you don't ever take the easy way out. Now that the chance to make a little extra money has come along, there's no reason to pretend you haven't been working toward that raise, bonus, or promotion all along. Talk directly to the powers that be and let them know what you've been doing and for how long.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
Someone you've been close with for a long time, someone who's always acted like a good friend and nothing more, has recently had a lot more than friendship in mind. In fact, they've probably had these feelings for as long as you've known each other. It's hard to get your mind around it, but if you think about all the little signals you've been ignoring, you should see it.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
Relationships are what you're best at, so when someone you know shakes things up in a big way by doing something that's totally out of character, it leaves you wondering who they really are and what they're really doing. That's no fun, but it's happening now, and you have to call on every bit of your normally uncanny intuition.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
You have to go for it in a big way today. Ask for that promotion or pursue that new client with all the persuasive zeal you can muster, which is a lot! Your enthusiasm may be so infectious that you inadvertently inspire a group of supporters who are swept away by your can-do spirit. Still, it's important to sort out who's genuinely loyal.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
Are you feeling stuck and wondering how you got here? This probably isn't the destination you had in mind when you first set out, so look around and observe the situation. Most importantly, observe yourself as you relate to the situation. The Universe doesn't leave anything to chance, so if you're here, there's a good reason for it.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
You're an expert at keeping plans in motion, and at avoiding anything that could come between the start and the completion of those plans. At the moment, though, someone close has opted to be difficult and deliberately wander from your arrangement. That doesn't mean you need to count them out of your life forever, but for now at least you've got to put them on temporary suspension.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
If you're sweet on someone, the feeling is almost certainly mutual. An unexpected interruption might break up the party, so much that you have no way of predicting what could possibly come next for you two. There's something exciting about not knowing what the one might do next, especially for someone as famously fond of excitement as you. Buckle up and enjoy the ride!



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
You've been privy to top-secret info lately, and also on the receiving end of several monologues you never wanted to hear in the first place. The good news is that you're well equipped to handle it all and handle it well. The bad news can't touch you as long as you keep on moving. Just do what you do best, which is keep quiet, smile, and let the Universe know that you're ready for whatever comes next.

entertainment



Apink gals now in WITH US loop

The latest buzz is that WITH US Entertainment will be exclusively managing Apink members Park Chorong, Yoon Bomi, Kim Namjoo, and Oh Hayoung following discussions with Choi Creative Lab. The agency emphasised its commitment to fully supporting the diverse activities of all four members. Park Chorong, Yoon Bomi, Kim Namjoo, and Oh Hayoung are not only members of Apink but also actively pursuing careers as actresses and solo artists. And this year marks Apink's 14th anniversary, and the group successfully held an Asia tour, proving their enduring popularity, especially the 'Be Myself' gal (Park Chorong).

WITH US Entertainment is also home to the 5th-generation boy group 'The Wind' (comprising Kim Heesoo, Choi Hanbin, Park Hayuchan, An Chanwon, Jang Hyounjoon, and Thanatorn) and fans are eager to see how the agency will support Apink's future endeavours - individually as well as a group.



TYLER PERRY CALLS OUT HOLLYWOOD STUDIOS AT BET AWARDS



Tyler Perry threw some subtle shade towards Hollywood studios at the 2025 BET Awards. Before Ledisi took the stage to perform 'BLKWVN', the Sistas creator took time to share a short story about himself and his son walking along the beach, when his child said to him, "I'm walking in your footsteps," to which he responded, "I said, 'No, let's walk together.' We walked to the end of the beach and then he looked back and he

saw all the footprints that he had left."

"I say that to you tonight because I wanna talk to you about this thing that is happening in this country and I want you to pay attention to it. Don't miss this," Perry said. "They are removing our books from libraries, they are removing our stories and our history, they are removing our names from government buildings. It's as if someone wants to erase our footprints."



Christian Slater OPENS UP ABOUT 'WEIRD' REALITY OF FAME

Christian Slater received his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame after five decades in the business. The 55-year-old *Heathers* star reflected on his many years in the entertainment business while accepting his star on the Walk of Fame, telling Fox News Digital fame "is always weird."

"It's tricky. There's cameras everywhere, you're really a lot more under the microscope than you were, so it's got its fair share of challenges to deal with," he explained. "Fame is always weird. It's always a weird thing, and right now it feels like a nice level. I mean, this is humbling. It gives me the opportunity to be thrilled and also walk all over myself, so I think it's great."



Disney+ names Angela Jain content chief for EMEA

The Walt Disney Co has named Angela Jain head of content, Disney+ EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa), a newly created role. She will join the entertainment giant in September from ITV Studios, where she has most recently served as director of unscripted, UK and was known for, among other things, relaunching *Love Island* for ITV in 2015.

"The newly created role comes on the heels of Disney's recent earnings call, where the company emphasised the importance of international markets and its investment in local originals that complement its global slate as key pillars for growing its streaming business," Disney said.

REGINA HALL, ICE SPICE JOIN NEW 'SPONGEBOB' MOVIE

That pineapple under the sea is getting pretty crowded.

Paramount Animation and Nickelodeon Animation on Tuesday unveiled new cast additions for their upcoming *The SpongeBob Movie: Search for SquarePants* movie, with Regina Hall, Sherry Cola, Arturo Castro, George Lopez and Ice Spice joining the ensemble. The four-time Grammy-nominated, multi-platinum-selling rapper will also contribute an original song to the film.

They join returning cast members Tom Kenny (*SpongeBob SquarePants*), Clancy Brown (Mr. Krabs), Rodger Bumpass (*Squidward*), Bill Fagerbakke (Patrick), Carolyn Lawrence (Sandy), Mr. Lawrence (Plankton) and Mark Hamill (*Flying Dutchman*) in the feature directed Derek Drymon and written by Pam Brady and Matt Lieberman.



BOLLYWOOD MOVIE REVIEW:
THUG LIFE (Tamil/Hindi)
Genre: Action drama
Starring: Kamal Haasan, Silambarasan TR, Trisha, Aishwarya Lekshmi, Ashok Selvan

Thug Life is a 2025 Indian Tamil-language gangster action drama film directed by Mani Ratnam, who co-wrote the script with Kamal Haasan. Produced by Raaj Kamal Films International and Madras Talkies, Thug Life marks the reunion of Haasan and Ratnam after their previous collabo-



Mafia kingpin on a mission

ration, Nayakan (1987).

The film follows Rangaraaya Sakthivel, a feared mafia kingpin in New Delhi, who seeks redemption and revenge after being betrayed by his brother, Rangaraaya Manickam, and the one he raised, Amar.

The film received mixed-to-negative reviews from critics, who praised the cinematography and staging, but the generic story and dragged screenplay received criticism. Despite being projected to underperform at the box office, it has emerged as one of the highest-grossing Tamil films of 2025.

The story revolves around Rangaraya Sakthiraju (Kamal Haasan) and Manikyam (Nassar) - powerful gangsters in New Delhi. During a shootout in his younger days, Sakthiraju discovers a child, Amar (Simbu), and raises him as his own. Years later,

Sakthiraju ends up in jail, and Amar takes control of the empire.

An unfortunate incident, however, turns Amar against his mentor. Consumed by revenge, he allies with rival gang members to bring Sakthiraju down. What caused the fallout between the two? Will Sakthiraju survive? What's Amar's past and what happens to his family? The film attempts to answer these questions.

Kamal Haasan delivers an okay performance - his dialogues, especially in confrontational scenes with Simbu and Nassar, are well-written and occasionally laced with dark humour. Also, his appearance in multiple age phases, particularly the younger look, is a visual treat for fans.

A good watch.

Rating ★★★★★

The background of the advertisement is a photograph of a dining table. It features several dark, rustic-style ceramic plates and bowls. In the foreground, a gold-colored butter knife and a gold-colored spoon are placed diagonally across a dark plate. The lighting is soft, creating a warm and elegant atmosphere. A large white circle is positioned in the upper left quadrant, serving as a backdrop for the main text.

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