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IMF commends ‘strong momentum’ of structural reforms in Oman

Our Correspondent
Muscat

International Monetary Fund (IMF) has commended Oman for its ongoing implementation of structural reforms and continued economic growth, despite a contraction in hydrocarbon output resulting from OPEC+ oil production cuts.

An IMF staff team, led by César Serra, visited Muscat from May 21 to 29 to review economic and financial developments, assess outlook and discuss the country’s policy priorities.

“The momentum of structural reforms remains strong, supporting Oman’s ability to navigate a challenging external environment and accelerate economic diversification,” Serra said in a statement released at the end of the IMF mission.

IMF noted that Oman’s economy continues to expand, driven by sustained investment in logistics, manufacturing, renewable



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Oman’s economy continues to expand, driven by sustained investment in logistics, manufacturing, renewable energy and tourism, while inflation remains low

”

energy and tourism, while inflation remains low.

“Despite a contraction in hydrocarbon output due to ongoing OPEC+ oil production cuts, real GDP growth strengthened to 1.7% in 2024, up from 1.2% in 2023, supported by robust non-hydrocarbon activity, particularly in manufacturing and services,” Serra said.

According to IMF, Oman’s economy is expected to expand

at a faster pace over the medium term, with overall GDP growth projected at 2.4% in 2025 and 3.7% in 2026.

“This improved performance is expected to be driven by the gradual phasing out of OPEC+ production limits and continued strong non-hydrocarbon growth, underpinned by sustained investments in key sectors,” Serra said.

However, he added that

lower oil prices are likely to weigh on Oman’s fiscal and external positions. “Following a fiscal surplus of 3.3% of GDP in 2024, the surplus is projected to narrow to an average of 0.5% of GDP during 2025-2026, before improving over the medium term. This recovery will be supported by resumption of oil production and continuation of fiscal reforms.”

IMF acknowledged further re-

ductions in Oman’s public debt, which declined to 35.5% of GDP in 2024, down from 37.5% in 2023, as the government continued to allocate part of its fiscal surplus towards debt repayment. State-owned enterprise (SOE) debt was also reduced to around 31% of GDP, supported by steady progress on the SOE reform agenda led by Oman Investment Authority.

“Structural reforms are progressing well,” Serra said. “Oman Tax Authority is making steady progress with its Tax Administration Modernisation Programme, Central Bank of Oman is further refining its liquidity management framework and the financial sector reform agenda continues with several initiatives aimed at expanding access to finance.”

He noted that SOE reforms are yielding tangible improvements in governance, profitability and risk management.

Continued on Page 02

Hot air balloon rides in Bidiyah soon

Our Correspondent
Muscat

An Omani firm has completed a hot air balloon trial in Cappadocia, Turkey ahead of plans to introduce rides in North Sharqiyah. The first commercial flights will take place in Bidiyah, offering views of the desert and surrounding terrain.

Led by Oman Balloons in co-operation with Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, the project is part of efforts to diversify Oman’s tourism offerings and enhance its appeal on regional and international tourism maps.

Salim bin Sultan al Abri, founder of Oman Balloons, informed *Muscat Daily* that the company partnered with a Turkish manufacturer that makes certified hot air balloons. “The balloon was successfully tested,



and we used the initial operation to promote tourism in Oman,” he said.

Certified by Civil Aviation Authority, the hot air balloon is designed for Omani weather conditions and can carry up to 20 passengers. It will be operated by a certified pilot and assistant.

On the occasion of Eid al Adha, there will be no edition of Muscat Daily from June 5 to June 9

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MoSD launches summer support programme for children with autism

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), through the National Autism Centre, has launched a summer programme aimed at supporting children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) by combining rehabilitation and recreational activities. The initiative, which began on Tuesday, provides a structured and supportive environment to help children develop essential life skills during the summer break.

An official from the ministry told *Muscat Daily* that the programme is designed to enhance behavioural, social, academic and



functional skills through practical experiences tailored to each child's individual needs.

"It ensures each child receives the maximum benefit based on

their unique potential," the official said. The programme supplements ongoing rehabilitation services provided throughout the year and places a strong emphasis

on communication and language development. Individual and group sessions incorporate alternative communication methods and assistive technology

to help children express themselves more effectively.

Improving social interaction is a key focus, with group activities encouraging cooperation and peer engagement. Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) strategies are employed to reinforce positive behaviour, while academic support is offered through reading, writing and arithmetic sessions. Sports and art activities are also included to aid the development of motor skills.

The programme is being held in two phases at the National Autism Centre: The first from June 3 to 19, and the second from June 22 to July 3. Each day is divided into two sessions - 8.30am

to 10.30am and 11am to 1pm - aligned with the children's energy levels and abilities.

"Through this programme, we aim to offer an integrated setting that supports children with autism during the summer. It thoughtfully blends rehabilitation, education and fun, boosting their self-confidence and enhancing core skills," the official added.

The sessions are supervised by a multidisciplinary team comprising behavioural therapists, speech and language specialists, and occupational therapists, ensuring a comprehensive approach that encourages active participation and sustained motivation.

MAFWR moves to boost honey industry

Muscat - The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) held a high-level meeting in Muscat on Tuesday to discuss the development of Oman's beekeeping sector and ways to increase the added value of locally produced honey.

The session was chaired by H E Dr Ahmed bin Nasser al Bakri, Undersecretary for Agricultural Resources in MAFWR, and attended by beekeepers, officials from honey export and import companies, and representatives from the ministry.

Participants reviewed key economic indicators, identified sector challenges, and discussed proposals to improve production and raise the quality of Omani honey for better competitiveness in both domestic and international markets.

H E Bakri described the beekeeping sector as an important part of national food security and a potential contributor to economic diversification. He called for stronger collaboration between the public and private sectors to ensure sustainability and implement best practices in honey production and marketing.

Omani honey, particularly Sidr and Samr varieties, is valued for its quality, attributed to the country's biodiversity and unique flora in the region.

Oman, Turkey announce R05mn venture to boost marine industry

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Musandam International Investment Company, in partnership with Turkish investors, has signed binding commercial terms and a shareholders' agreement to establish the Musandam Drydock and Marine Industries Company.

The venture, based in Musandam governorate, will see an initial investment of over R05mn in its first phase.

The signing ceremony was attended by H E Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, and Sayyid Ibrahim bin Said al Busaidi, Governor of Musandam.

The company will offer a range of marine services including construction and maintenance of fish farming cages, coastal and commercial fishing vessels, marine tugs, service vessels, and transport vessels up to 35 metres in length.

The facility is intended to cater to Oman's domestic market as well as regional demand.

The project aims to enhance industrial integration in the marine and fisheries sector, supporting national goals for food



security and sustainable economic growth.

It forms part of Musandam International Investment Company's wider strategy to build an integrated local ecosystem and promote development in Musandam, aligned with Oman Vision 2040.

IMF commends strong momentum

Continued from Page 01

IMF expects the direct impact of global trade tensions on Oman to be limited. However, lower oil prices and the risk of slower growth among key trading partners may weigh on the economic outlook.

"Risks to the outlook are tilted to the downside. While the direct effects of global trade tensions are likely to be limited - given Oman's modest exports to the United States - indirect effects could be more pronounced. On the upside, accelerated reform implementation under Oman Vision 2040 would strengthen the country's outlook," Serra said.

Commenting on the banking sector, he added, "It remains sound, supported by strong asset quality, healthy capital and liquidity buffers, and sustained profitability. Banks maintain a positive net foreign asset position, while private sector credit growth remains strong, supported by an expanding deposit base."

JABAL

صندوق جبل للاستثمار العقاري
JABAL REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT FUND

The Chairman's Report
For the Period ending March 31, 2025

On behalf of the Fund Management Body, I am pleased to present the financial results of Jabal Real Estate Investment Fund for the period ending March 31, 2025.

Below is a summary of the financial results:

In OMR	Q1 2025	2024
Rental income	321,118	460,059
Interest income	79,080	88,564
Other income	1,771	41,289
Total Income	401,969	589,912
(excl. fair value change)		
Fair value change	272,790	
Operating costs	50,639	31,693
Management, custodian and other fees	81,587	73,146
Other expenses, incl. Allowances for credit losses	28,597	15,551
Total Expenses	160,823	120,390
Profit	241,146	742,312
Profit per unit	0.0014	0.0043
Assets	17,976,964	18,022,897
Liabilities	66,786	89,385
NAV	17,910,178	17,933,512
NAV per unit	0.103	0.103

Fund Performance

Q1 2025 is the first full operating quarter of Jabal Real Estate Investment Fund; both anchor properties were in the portfolio the entire period, initially collected money were fully invested (subject to reserve). The Fund was registered and listed on 10 July 2024; the constitutive general meeting (CGM) of the Fund was held on 1 September 2024. Therefore, the Fund was fully operating only 4 months within 2024, while the rights transfer on one of the properties happened only in end of October 2024.

Rental income of the Fund for Q1 2025 year amounted to 321,118 OMR, which corresponds to accrued rent payments for Barka Warehouse and rent payments for Sama building. The rent is in line with the initially expected results for the properties and in line with the rent in 2024: average monthly revenue for Barka warehouse - around 75,000 OMR, for Sama building - around 29,000 OMR.

Overall, payment discipline of tenants is acceptable, with some minor delays. Only a few tenants in Sama building are delaying payments and the Fund has formed allowance for expected credit losses for these tenants. Worth noting that due to success in negotiations with one tenant and agreement on settlement plan for overdues, the Fund released partially the allowance for credit losses recognized in 2024 (recognized as other revenue in Q1 2025 - total amount 1,771 OMR). The Fund keeps cash on call account, bearing interest income. Additionally, in December 2024 the Fund has invested into a 3-month promissory note issued by a private company owned by government fund of Oman. Accrued interest income for Q1 2025 amounted to 79,080 OMR.

Operating expenses directly related to the properties amounted around 16% of rental revenue (in 2024 - only 7%), the increase is mostly caused by increase in property management fees which are calculated based on actual cash collections of rent. Since part of rent for Q4 2024 was collected for the properties and in line with the rent in 2024: average monthly revenue for Barka warehouse - around 75,000 OMR, for Sama building - around 29,000 OMR.

Worth noting that the substantial increase in other expenses (20,993 OMR in Q1 2025 compared to 9,625 OMR for 4 months in 2024) is mostly caused by payment of annual regulatory fees (around 15,000 OMR).

Total profit for Q1 2025 amounted to 241,146 OMR.

Market performance and outlook

The Oman real estate market continues a steady growth. There is a positive outlook on the market driven by favorable economic conditions, government initiatives, population growth as well as large infrastructure projects. In 2024 the value of real estate transactions increased by 28% compared to 2023.

Among the key driving factors of Oman real estate market there are improving economic conditions, including credit rating upgrade. All three rating agencies either upgraded Oman's ratings or improved its outlook in 2023 - 2024. In 2024 S&P improved the credit rating to investment grade with stable outlook. Fitch affirmed rating at BB+ but upgraded outlook to positive, similar to Moody's (current sovereign rating are Ba1 with positive outlook).

Statement of comprehensive income
For the period ending 31 March 2025

	01-01-2025 to 31-03-2025 RO	01-09-2024 to 31-12-2024 RO
Income		
Rental revenues	321,118	460,059
Interest income	79,080	88,564
Other income	1,771	41,289
Fair value changes in investment properties	-	272,790
Total income	401,969	862,702
Expenses		
Management fees	12,500	16,610
Custodian and administration fees	2,967	4,336
Performance fees	66,120	52,200
Operating fee	50,639	31,693
Other expenses	20,993	9,625
Allowance for expected credit loss	7,604	5,926
Total expenses	160,823	120,390
Profit and total comprehensive income		
And increase in net assets attributable to the unit holders for the period.	241,146	742,312
Profit per unit	0.0014	0.0043

Statement of Financial Position
As at 31 March 2025

	31-03-2025 RO	31-12-2024 RO
ASSETS		
Investment properties	13,240,000	13,240,000
Money market investment		
Rental income accrued	122,493	207,137
Other receivables	10,932	11,712
Cash and cash equivalents	803,539	764,048
Total assets	17,976,964	18,022,897
LIABILITIES		
Accruals and other payables	66,786	89,385
Total liabilities	66,786	89,385
Net assets attributable to the unitholders	17,910,178	17,933,512
Total liabilities and net assets attributable to the unitholders	17,976,964	18,022,897
Net assets value per unit attributable to the unitholders	0.103	0.103

Call to make premarital screening compulsory gains momentum

Our Correspondent
Ibri

Ministry of Health held a seminar in Ibri, Dhahirah on Tuesday highlighting the vital role of premarital medical screening in building healthy families and raising community awareness.

Held under the theme 'Premarital Medical Screening: A Step Towards Building a Healthy Family and an Informed Society', the seminar formed part of National Premarital Screening Programme to promote awareness on premarital testing.

It was organised by the Directorate General of Health Services in Dhahirah and held under the patronage of Najib bin Ali al Rawas, Governor of Dhahirah.

The seminar underscored the need to intensify awareness campaigns targeting youth and those preparing for marriage, and called for making premarital screening a mandatory requirement.

Participants also recommended the establishment of dedicated counseling sessions to help prospective couples understand and manage test results in a scientific and compassionate manner. Emphasis was placed on upholding confidentiality and pri-



Premarital screening is a cornerstone to preventing hereditary diseases, and a proactive step that can spare families long-term suffering

DR AHMED AL KALBANI

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Intensify awareness campaigns targeting youth and engaged couples
- Establish dedicated counselling sessions for couples to understand test results
- Ensure confidentiality and ethical handling of results
- Offer psychological and social support for couples with incompatible results
- Integrate screening topics into school curricula (Grades 10-12) and universities

vacy of test results, and on preventing any misuse of such information.

The seminar further called for

stronger collaboration between health, educational, media and religious institutions to support and promote a culture of pre-

marital testing.

Among the recommendations was the need to provide psychological and social support for couples whose test results are incompatible, especially in cases where health issues could impact marriage plans.

Inclusion of premarital screening topics in school curricula from Grades 10 to 12 and at the university level was also proposed to promote early awareness, foster scientific research, and reduce the incidence of genetic diseases.

These initiatives align with Oman Vision 2040 objectives for public health and quality of life, focusing on prevention and community wellbeing.

Dr Ahmed bin Saeed al Kalbani, Director General of

Health Services in Dhahirah, described premarital screening as a cornerstone to preventing hereditary diseases, and a proactive step that can spare families long-term suffering.

The seminar featured several presentations by specialists on the medical, social and legal aspects of screening.

Prof Dr Salam bin Salem al Kindi, Senior Consultant of Hematology at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, reviewed key genetic diseases covered by the National Premarital Screening Programme.

Dr Sarah bint Nasser al Waili, Director of Primary Healthcare Department, outlined the objectives and implementation mechanisms of the National Premarital Screening Programme.



Oman presents plaque to WTO HQ in Geneva

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman has gifted a commemorative plaque to World Trade Organization (WTO) to mark the visit of H H Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said to its headquarters in Geneva on June 21, 2023.

Created by Omani artist Salem bin Khamis al Salami, the plaque is a symbolic representation of Oman's civilisational heritage, natural diversity and its future development vision. It was created under the supervision of Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in collaboration with Omani Society for Arts, which is affiliated to Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth.

Presentation of the plaque reflects Oman's approach to cultural diplomacy and its growing engagement with international institutions. H E Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, said, "This initiative reflects Oman's commitment to promoting cultural exchange and building international partnerships through the

arts." He also praised H H Sayyid Bilarab's role in promoting art as a means of global communication.

H E Sayyid Said bin Sultan al Busaidi, Undersecretary for Culture in Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, described the gift as a "cultural and civilisational statement" aligned with Oman Vision 2040.

H E Idris bin Abdulrahman al Khanjari, Oman's Permanent Representative to United Nations and other international organisations in Geneva, emphasised the diplomatic significance of the gesture. The plaque is now displayed in WTO's Salle des Pas Perdus, a space reserved for artwork that celebrate dialogue and multilateral cooperation.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of WTO, said, "A nice ceremony to unveil the beautiful painting gifted by Oman to WTO. The occasion also marked Oman's 25th year of accession to WTO. We appreciate Oman for this wonderful gift. Congratulations and many thanks to H H Sayyid Bilarab who took special interest in this project, to the artist, to the ambassador and the team for the hard work."

Oman, Mexico mark 50 years of diplomatic ties

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman and Mexico marked the 50th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations on Tuesday by unveiling a commemorative logo to highlight the depth of their partnership.

H E Sheikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Undersecretary for Political Affairs in Foreign Ministry, said the bilateral ties - formally established on July 31, 1985 - have fostered cooperation in political, economic and cultural spheres. He expressed Oman's interest in further developing relations with Mexico across multiple sectors.

"We share values rooted in mutual respect and understanding, which have laid the foundation for a lasting and fruitful



partnership," H E Harthy said.

H E Anibal Gómez Toledo, Ambassador of Mexico to Oman, described the relations as distinguished and reiterated his gov-

ernment's commitment to expanding cooperation in broader and more diverse areas.

He praised Oman's diplomatic efforts in promoting peace and

stability and its role in resolving international issues. He said Oman has become a model for conflict resolution through dialogue and tolerance.

The ambassador also appreciated Oman's role in securing the release of crew members from the Galaxy Leader vessel, including Mexican nationals, and ensuring their safe return.

H E Toledo said the 50th anniversary offers a timely opportunity to define new goals for bilateral cooperation, including enhancing trade, promoting tourism, launching academic exchanges and expanding scientific research initiatives.

In a joint statement, both countries noted the importance of regular political consultations and cultural exchanges in strengthening mutual understanding. They reaffirmed their determination to expand cooperation based on shared interests and the long-term benefit of both peoples.

Over 51,000 students register for higher education programmes

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A total of 51,027 students have registered for the 2025/2026 academic year through the Unified Admissions Centre of Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, marking completion of the first phase of the admissions process.

According to the ministry, the figure includes 25,706 male and 25,321 female students.

The applications are for a wide range of opportunities, including government higher education institutions, internal and private sector scholarships, as well as scholarships and grants from abroad.

The next phase - the Modify Your Choices window - is set to begin following announcement of the General Education Diploma results in July. During this period, students can review and rearrange their academic choices based on their final grades in consultation with their families.

To assist students in making informed decisions, the centre



will release the results of a pilot screening in the first week of July. This preliminary screening will be based on first-semester performance and current programme preferences.

Describing the Modify Your Choices phase as a cornerstone of the admission process, Unified Admissions Centre noted that registration at this stage is considered final for participation in the first round of screening. This will be followed by interviews, admission tests and medical ex-

amination, depending on programme requirements.

A new procedure introduced this year includes a separate registration mechanism for private-funded study programmes at Sultan Qaboos University and for specialisation programmes at private universities. A dedicated guide for these programmes will be issued and registration will open once the first round of screening is complete allowing students to prioritise government-funded options first.

Oman to observe World Oceans Day with focus on marine conservation

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman will join countries around the world in observing World Oceans Day on June 8 with a focus on protecting marine ecosystems and raising awareness on oceans' role in sustaining life.

This year's theme - Wonder: Sustaining What Sustains Us - highlights the significance of oceans in maintaining ecological balance and supporting global livelihoods.

Led by Environment Authority, Oman's participation includes a range of activities aimed at promoting marine conservation. These include beach clean-ups, ocean waste removal campaigns and educational initiatives designed to engage local communities.

Oman has launched several long-term marine protection projects. One of the key efforts is the annual Marine Pollutant Monitoring Project, which tracks levels of contaminants such as heavy metals and hydrocarbons along the sultanate's coastline, from



This year's theme - Wonder: Sustaining What Sustains Us - highlights the significance of oceans in maintaining ecological balance and supporting global livelihoods

Musandam to Dhofar. Monitoring is focused on areas near industrial zones and ports which are considered environmentally sensitive.

Environment Authority is also conducting targeted conservation programmes for rare marine species. A notable initiative is the

study of loggerhead turtle nesting on Masirah Island, carried out in collaboration with international partners. The research aims to identify factors affecting nesting success and develop sustainable beach management practices.

Another major effort is the Arabian Sea Humpback Whale

Tracking Project, which monitors one of the world's rarest whale populations. The data gathered supports development of conservation strategies for the endangered species.

Oman's broader environmental policy includes development of a National Biodiversity Strategy and regular field surveys to assess the status of flora and fauna, with particular attention to endangered species.

The authority enforces environmental legislation, including the Environmental Protection and Pollution Control Law and the Natural Reserves Law, and oversees compliance with rules regulating the discharge of liquid waste into the marine environment.

'These efforts reflect Oman's commitment to environmental stewardship and the sustainable use of marine resources,' the authority stated. The initiatives are aligned with the goals of Oman Vision 2040, which prioritises ecological sustainability alongside national development.

MARKET WATCH	
MSX30	4,553.153
Sensex	80,737.51
FOREX RATES (RO1 equals)	
India	222.53
Pakistan	734.05
Bangladesh	317.65
Philippines	144.72
Sri Lanka	777.96

*Rates as on June 03
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Oil prices edge lower over demand worries

Oil prices decreased on Tuesday amid growing concerns that US President Donald Trump's protectionist trade policies could stoke inflation and dampen oil demand in the world's largest consumer.

International benchmark Brent crude decreased by around 0.45%, trading at \$64.64 per barrel at 0711 GMT, down from \$64.93 at the previous session's close. Similarly, US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) fell by about 0.45%, settling at \$62.21 per barrel, compared to \$62.49 in the prior session.

Trump announced a major increase on Friday in tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, doubling the rate from 25% to 50%, in what he described as a move to further protect American industry.

Experts warn that such measures could fuel inflationary pressures and slow economic growth.

Sohar Freezone signs deal for new ferrochrome plant

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Sohar Freezone has signed a land lease agreement with Matrix Alloys, a leader in low-carbon ferrochrome production, to build a new state-of-the-art, environmentally friendly ferrochrome plant. This initiative strengthens Oman's role as a regional hub for sustainable industrial development and supports the goals of Oman's 2050 Net Zero commitment to reduce carbon emissions and diversify the economy.

The project, with an investment of \$10mn, will occupy 2.2 hectares within Sohar Freezone and aims to produce 20,000 tonnes annually of micro-carbon and low-carbon ferrochrome. The facility will meet stringent purity and sustainability standards demanded by key markets including Europe, Japan, South Korea, and India. The first phase is expected to be operational by 2026.

Utilising an electric-based production process that avoids coal and heavy-oil pollution, the plant will significantly reduce its environmental footprint and operate with zero waste gas or wastewater emissions. Furthermore, it seamlessly fits into Oman Vision 2040, promoting sustainable industrialisation and encouraging foreign investment to drive long-term economic



The project will be established by Matrix Alloys with an investment of \$10mn. The plant will occupy 2.2 hectares within Sohar Freezone and aims to produce 20,000 tonnes of micro-carbon and low-carbon ferrochrome annually

growth and environmental stewardship

In a press statement, Bailin Yi, Chairman of Matrix Alloys, said, "Launching our first international

ferroalloy plant in Sohar Freezone offers us a strategic location with excellent infrastructure, market access, and competitive, stable, and low-cost energy essential for the energy-intensive smelting processes. We are committed to delivering premium low-carbon ferrochrome products that support global stainless-steel producers and promote a cleaner industrial future."

Mohammed al Shizawi, Acting CEO of Sohar Freezone, said, "This agreement underscores the trust that international investors place in Sohar Port and Freezone's integrated industrial ecosystem. Matrix Alloys is bringing advanced, sustainable manufacturing capabilities to our ferroalloy cluster, aligning perfectly with our vision to attract clean technology investments

and strengthen Sohar Freezone's position as a competitive gateway for global trade."

Matrix Alloys will benefit from Sohar Freezone's proximity to raw material suppliers and customers, as well as direct port access, and a supportive regulatory environment that reduces operational costs. The plant also plans to secure ISO 14001 and ISO 14067 certifications to ensure full carbon emission traceability and compliance with international standards such as CBAM, EcoLeaf, and K-ETS.

As Sohar Freezone approaches full capacity in its initial development phase, this agreement marks a significant milestone in expanding Oman's green industrial base and attracting technology-driven industries to the region.

Good news expected soon on India-Oman FTA: Indian minister

Our Correspondent
Muscat

India and Oman are close to finalising a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), with some 'good news' expected very soon regarding the signing of the deal, according to India's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal.

As reported by several Indian media outlets on Monday, Goyal stated that negotiations between India and Oman on the proposed free trade agreement are progressing towards a conclusion. The talks gained renewed momentum following Goyal's visit to Muscat in January this year.

The negotiations for the agreement, officially known as the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), formally commenced in November 2023.

"I think you will see some good news very soon on the Oman FTA," Goyal told reporters during his official visit to France, when asked whether the agreement could be concluded this year, according to PTI.

Goyal was in France to hold discussions with French leaders and businesses aimed at enhancing trade and investment ties. He was also scheduled to attend a mini-ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) on Tuesday.

Oman is India's third-largest export destination among the



Piyush Goyal

GCC countries. India already has a similar agreement in place with another GCC member, the United Arab Emirates, which came into effect in May 2022.

India's key imports from Oman include petroleum products and urea, which together account for over 70% of total imports. Other significant imports from Oman comprise polymers of propylene and ethylene, petcoke, gypsum, chemicals, and iron and steel.

Speaking about such FTAs, Goyal remarked that these agreements not only promote trade in goods and services, but also strengthen supply chains and instill confidence among businesses on both sides through stable policies and predictability, according to the PTI report.

"So, in a way, it's a big message when you conclude an FTA," he added.

CBO issues treasury bills worth more than RO50mn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) on Tuesday announced the issuance of three government treasury bill tenders, with a total value of RO50.5mn. The treasury bills were issued in three different maturities: 91 days, 182 days and 364 days.

In the first tender, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO2mn, with a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price was RO98.935 per RO100, and the minimum accepted price was also RO98.935. The average discount rate and average yield were 4.2717% and 4.3176%, respectively.

In the second tender, treasury bills worth RO28.5mn were allotted, with a maturity period of 182 days. The average accepted price was RO97.850 per RO100, and the minimum accepted price was also RO97.850. The average discount rate and average yield were 4.3118% and 4.4065%, respectively.

Meanwhile, in the third tender, the allotted treasury bills totalled RO20mn, with a maturity



period of 364 days. The average accepted price was RO95.780 per RO100, while the minimum accepted price was RO95.760. The average discount rate and average yield stood at 4.3159% and 4.4180%, respectively.

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

Treasury bills are short-term, highly secure financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance. They provide licensed

commercial banks with the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman acts as the issue manager and offers the added advantage of liquidity through discounting and repurchase (repo) facilities.

In addition, treasury bills support the development of the local money market by establishing a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. The government may also resort to this instrument when necessary to finance recurrent expenditure.

Bank Muscat successfully manages RO100mn sovereign sukuk issuance

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Bank Muscat on Tuesday announced that it successfully managed the ninth issuance of the sovereign sukuk launched by Oman Sovereign Sukuk Company, with a total value of RO100mn. The sukuk carries a seven-year maturity and offers an annual profit rate of 4.65%.

Bank Muscat was appointed as the official issue manager and collecting bank for the subscription, in collaboration with other local financial institutions. This mandate reinforces the bank's leadership in executing major investment transactions within the sultanate and across GCC capital markets, Bank Muscat said in a press statement.

Oman Sovereign Sukuk Company had opened the subscription window from May 27 to June 1, 2025, with the sukuk settlement scheduled for June 4, 2025. The sukuk was priced within a competitive yield range, with an average yield of 4.625%, a minimum yield of 4.57%, and a maximum yield of 4.64%, reflecting strong investor confidence and market stability.



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dence and market stability.

The sukuk payouts will be made semi-annually on June 4 and December 4 each year until maturity on June 4, 2032. The issuance witnessed participation from all categories of investors, retail as well as institutional. The sukuk is structured in accordance with Sharia-compliant principles and is fully tradable on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) at prevailing market prices. All allocation details and investor records will be maintained and administered by Muscat Clearing and Depository Company, as the central registrar and depository for the sukuk.

Khalifa Abdullah al Hatmi, Deputy General Manager, Investment Banking and Capital Markets at Bank Muscat, said, "The bank's appointment as the official issue manager for the sukuk issuance is a testament to the company's trust in Bank Muscat's capabilities and leadership in managing major invest-

ment transactions for a range of corporate and institutional clients. The bank has extensive experience in structuring and executing large-scale capital market deals, both on debt as well as equity side, and its specialised team is well-equipped to navigate evolving market dynamics and complexities. Bank Muscat is committed to supporting the growth of local financial markets by offering a comprehensive suite of banking and financial solutions tailored to institutional and retail customers alike."

The selection of Bank Muscat as the issue manager underscores its strong local, regional, and international reputation among individuals, corporates, and financial institutions. Demonstrating its role as a key player in advancing the sultanate's financial landscape, the bank continues to build on its market-leading position by delivering innovative financing and advisory solutions. These include corporate and project finance, debt restructuring, public offerings, equity-linked instruments, private placements, and mergers and acquisitions.

Oxford Business Group report assesses Oman's shift towards sustainable economy

Muscat - Oman's strides in economic diversification, sustainability and private sector expansion under Vision 2040 form the core of The Report: Oman 2025, the latest research publication by global advisory and research firm Oxford Business Group (OBG).

The report charts the country's progress in reducing its reliance on hydrocarbons, with non-oil sectors now contributing over two-thirds of GDP. Key areas of growth include manufacturing, logistics, tourism and

green energy. The launch of the \$5.2bn Future Fund Oman is positioned as a major development aimed at attracting targeted foreign direct investment, particularly in high-growth industries.

A dedicated chapter on Trade and Investment - underscores Oman's efforts to expand its global trade footprint and enhance its appeal to international investors. The report examines new initiatives designed to streamline business



procedures, including the establishment of the Invest in Oman lounge, which serves as a one-stop facility to support incoming investment. It also presents data

on rising FDI inflows, robust export performance and sector-specific momentum in areas such as green energy, manufacturing and logistics. Oman's ex-

panding network of trade agreements and its increasing engagement in multilateral trade forums are assessed, with particular focus on strategic partnerships, including deepening commercial ties with the US, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and other key regional players.

Strategic infrastructure developments, such as the expansion of broadband access and transport networks, are also covered in detail, alongside the role of multiple free trade economic zones such as Sohar,

Salalah and Al Mazunah and SEZAD, the special economic zone to Duqm, in strengthening Oman's regional trade position. The report explores fiscal and regulatory reforms introduced to improve the business environment, from the implementation of VAT to labour law amendments.

Digital transformation efforts are given significant attention, with insights into the country's strategy to bridge the digital divide and leverage technology to drive competitiveness. The pub-

lication also includes an overview of ongoing banking sector consolidation, the growth of Islamic finance and the measures being taken to ensure monetary stability.

Dana Carmen Agarbicean, OBG's Country Director for Oman, said the findings reinforce the importance of collaboration across public and private sectors in delivering economic transformation. "Our coverage reflects a deepening confidence in Oman's development trajectory.

Global energy transition investments hit \$2tn

A new report by KPMG, based on a survey of 1,400 senior energy transition investors across 36 countries and 11 industries, revealed that investment in clean energy assets is rising. It surpassed \$2tn in 2024 from \$1.2tn in 2020.

According to the report, 72% of investors believe that investments in energy transition assets are rising, despite high interest rates and geopolitical volatility. This confidence isn't limited to one sector. Around 64% have invested in energy efficiency technologies (including electrification), followed by renewables (56%), storage and grids (54%), and transport infrastructure (51%).

Investors also flagged three major concerns: regulatory and policy uncertainty, market volatility, and performance risk of emerging technologies.

Meanwhile, partnerships across various industries and between public and private sectors are becoming a critical strategy – 94% of investors now prioritise finding partners to help share risk and pool expertise.

"It's encouraging to see that energy transition investment is shifting away from fossil fuels toward sustainable energy," says Donatas Karčiauskas, CEO of Exergio, a company specialising in AI-powered energy optimisation. "But what worries me is the im-



East Asia, North America, and Europe continue to dominate energy transition investment, with 54% of investors active in East Asia and 52% investing in both North America and Europe. About 20% of investors mentioned the Middle East & North Africa and Southeast Asia as possible destinations for investment

balance: only 15% of clean energy funding reaches emerging markets, even though they represent two-thirds of the world's population. If we don't close that gap, we risk missing both global climate targets – like net-zero emissions by 2050 – and critical development goals, such as expanding energy access and building more resilient infrastructure."

East Asia, North America, and Europe continue to dominate en-

ergy transition investment, with 54% of investors active in East Asia and 52% investing in both North America and Europe.

However, there are signs of growing interest elsewhere. About 20% of investors mentioned the Middle East & North Africa and Southeast Asia as possible destinations for investment.

The report also highlights persistent challenges in many devel-

oping markets, such as regulatory uncertainty, political instability, and lack of investment-grade infrastructure – factors that can stall long-term commitments despite strong potential returns.

In these environments, solutions like AI-driven predictive maintenance systems, which require less capital investment, require less capital, shorter timelines, and have lower risk, could be especially impactful –

yet they remain underused, according to Karčiauskas.

"Where capital is directed matters, but the nature of the technology we're backing is even more. Far too often, investments go toward large, multi-year infrastructure projects. Unfortunately, digital retrofits and AI-based energy tools, which can show measurable savings in a matter of months, get overlooked. These aren't future con-

cepts. They're off-the-shelf solutions that are already working. We just need more investors to recognize their value," Karčiauskas said.

The report shows that most clean energy capital still flows into infrastructure like solar farms, wind parks, storage facilities, and transport (including electrification). However, the path to decarbonisation doesn't always require expensive solu-

tions, according to Karčiauskas.

"Most buildings don't need to be rebuilt, but re-tuned. Investors are spending billions on long-term infrastructure, while proven digital solutions like predictive maintenance, digital twins, and advanced BMS are still under-used. A simple audit can expose where buildings are wasting energy, and optimization tools can fix it almost immediately. There's no need to wait for perfect policy or perfect technology – the solutions already exist," elaborated Karčiauskas.

Exergio also shared a few case studies in different building types. At a shopping center, its AI-based solution cut electricity use by 29% and heating demand by 36%. Similar results were achieved in a business complex by utilising real-time HVAC control. The building reduced energy waste by 44% in cooling and ventilation systems.

"Over the next five years, I believe energy efficiency will no longer be a secondary goal. It will become the main lever for achieving both climate and economic targets. We'll see increasing pressure not just to build sustainably, but to make existing buildings operate more intelligently through digital tools. That shift will require a new mindset; one that prioritizes smart optimization over building more," concluded Karčiauskas.

OECD cuts global growth forecast to 2.9% for 2025 amid trade tensions

Paris, France – The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on Tuesday downgraded its global economic growth forecast to 2.9% for both 2025 and 2026, down from 3.1% in its previous outlook, citing rising trade barriers, tighter financial conditions, and mounting policy uncertainty.

"The slowdown is concentrated in the United States, Canada, Mexico and China, with other economies expected to see smaller downward adjustments," the OECD said in its latest Economic Outlook report.

It stated that the global economic environment is becoming increasingly challenging with substantial increases in trade barriers, tighter financial conditions, weakened business and consumer confidence, and elevated policy uncertainty posing risks to the gross domestic product (GDP) growth.

"If these trends continue, they could substantially dampen economic prospects. Rising trade costs – particularly in countries implementing new tariffs – are likely to fuel inflation, although this may be partly offset by softer commodity prices," the report said.

Key concerns for the future include further escalations or sudden shifts in trade policies,



The slowdown is concentrated in the United States, Canada, Mexico and China, with other economies expected to see smaller downward adjustments

more cautious behavior from consumers and businesses, and continued repricing of risk in financial markets.

The report said that inflation may stay elevated for longer than expected, especially if inflation expectations continue to rise.

However, if the trade barriers are lifted as soon as possible, it may boost economic growth and help ease inflationary pressures.

The US economy, which grew by 2.8% last year, is expected to

grow by 1.6% this year and 1.5% in 2026. OECD had estimated the US economy to grow 2.2% this year and 1.6% next year in its previous forecast.

In the Eurozone, growth is expected to increase from 0.8% in 2024 to 1% this year and 1.2% in 2026, the same as the previous report.

The Chinese economy is projected to slow from 5% growth in 2024 to 4.7% this year and 4.3% next year, down from the previous projections of 4.8% for

2025 and 4.4% next year.

Türkiye's economy is estimated to expand by 2.9% in 2025 and 3.1% in 2026, also down from the previous estimate of 3.1% for this year and 3.9% for 2026. The annual inflation in Türkiye is expected to ease to 31.4% this year and to 18.5% next year.

OECD said that central banks should remain vigilant, given heightened uncertainty and the potential for initial increases in trade costs to push up wage and price pressures more generally.

"Provided inflation expectations remain well anchored, and trade tensions do not intensify further, policy rate reductions should continue in economies in which inflation is projected to moderate and aggregate demand growth is subdued," the agency said.

Faced with multiple spending pressures, governments need to ensure long-term debt sustainability and maintain the ability to react to future shocks. "Stronger efforts to contain and reallocate spending and optimise revenues, set within credible medium-term country-specific adjustment paths, will be important for debt burdens to remain manageable and to conserve the fiscal space required to address longer-term spending challenges."

Eurozone inflation falls below ECB's 2% target in May

Piero Cingari

Inflation in the euro area cooled more than expected in May, bolstering expectations that the European Central Bank (ECB) will announce another interest rate cut at its meeting on Thursday.

Annual consumer price growth slowed to 1.9% in May, down from 2.2% in April, according to a flash estimate from Eurostat. The figure came in below economists' forecast of 2%, and marks the first time inflation has dipped below the ECB's 2% target since September 2024.

The decline in headline inflation suggests that business uncertainty, partly driven by renewed global trade tensions and soft consumer demand, is weighing on pricing power

across sectors.

Core inflation, which strips out volatile food and energy prices, also showed signs of easing. It slowed to 2.4% in May, from 2.7% in April, falling below expectations of 2.5%. On a monthly basis, core prices rose by just 0.1%.

Among the main inflation components, food, alcohol and tobacco remained the strongest driver, rising 3.3% year-on-year, up from 3.0% in April. Services inflation, which had been particularly resilient, dropped sharply from 4.0% to 3.2%, contributing significantly to the broader deceleration.

Non-energy industrial goods recorded a stable 0.6% annual increase, while energy prices continued their downward tra-

jectory, declining by 3.6% compared to a year ago.

On a monthly basis, overall inflation was flat, after a 0.6% rise in April, signalling a clear slowdown in momentum.

The highest annual rates were recorded in Estonia (4.6%), Slovakia and Croatia (both 4.3%). France registered the lowest inflation, at just 0.6%, suggesting a stark divergence in price pressures among euro area members.

Monthly inflation was highest in Portugal and Croatia, where prices rose 0.7% and 0.6%, respectively. By contrast, deflationary readings were observed in Belgium, Spain, France, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Austria and Slovenia.

(Source: Euronews.com)

Steel stocks in Europe down as US firms gain on Trump's tariff plans

Indrabati Lahiri

Major European steel giants saw their share prices falter on Tuesday afternoon, as investors continue to weigh the impact of US President Donald Trump's plan to double steel and aluminium tariffs from 25% to 50%, with the latter set to take effect from June 4.

The announcement has escalated trade tensions and drawn significant criticism from worldwide trade partners. Trump, meanwhile, claims the move will make the US steel industry even stronger.

He said in a post on his social media platform Truth Social:

"Our steel and aluminum industries are coming back like never before. This will be yet another BIG jolt of great news for our wonderful steel and aluminum workers. MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"

German steel company Thyssenkrupp's share price declined 0.5% on Tuesday afternoon on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange. Salzgitter AG's share price also declined on the exchange, by 0.4%.

Following the trend, Arcelor-Mittal SA's stock dipped 1.1% on

the Euronext Amsterdam exchange on Tuesday afternoon, while Austrian steel company Voestalpine AG's share price declined 0.8% on the Vienna Stock Exchange.

On the other side of the Atlantic, however, major US steel companies such as Cleveland-Cliffs, Nucor, and Steel Dynamics saw their share prices surge on Monday.

Cleveland-Cliffs' share price closed 23.2% higher, whereas Nucor's share price jumped 10.1%. Steel Dynamics' share price also closed higher, up

10.3% on Monday.

The unpredictability of recent US tariffs continues to pose considerable risks to US businesses, despite Trump's reassurances that tariffs will benefit the economy. This is mainly because several US companies with international operations could be forced to scramble to find alternative foreign suppliers and customers.

It is also remaining unclear how long steel and aluminium tariffs could stay at the 50% level proposed, as Trump continues to negotiate other tariffs with various countries.

(Source: Euronews.com)



Tender Announcement

Al Morooj Dairy Company seeks a tender no: AMDC/TD/2025/06-002 for the following services

Tender No	Description of Services	Tender Fee (OMR)	Last Date for Tender Purchasing	Last Date for Submission of Tender
AMDC/TD/2025/06-002	Supplying the manpower services (Loading/unloading & general Cleaning) to 3 Milk Collection Centers	50 / OM-Rnonrefundable	15.06.2025	11.7.2025

- Interested vendors may obtain the tender documents via through email- tender@almoroojdairy.om after the payment of the non-refundable tender fee.
- The tender enclosed in a sealed envelope to be addressed to Chairman and should be submitted the company office address: **ALMASRAT building in front of Central Market fourth floor**

Al Morooj Dairy Company reserve all the rights to accept, reject any or all the offers, extend the tender closing date, modify tender documents or cancel the tender without assigning any reason(s)

New World Autos unveils all-new Chery Tiggo 9 SUV at special event in Oman

In a spectacular evening that combined elegance with innovation, New World Autos, the distributor of Chery vehicles in Oman, unveiled the all-new Chery Tiggo 9 at a special event held at Hotel InterContinental, Muscat.

Present at the occasion were distinguished guests from both public and private sectors.

The exciting launch event celebrated the arrival of a vehicle that blends cutting-edge technology, bold design and refined luxury. The Tiggo 9 is a statement of Chery's growing global presence and its ambitious vision for vehicle enthusiasts in Oman.

Speaking at the event, a spokesperson from New World Autos highlighted that the Tiggo 9 is designed for those who demand more from their SUV in terms of technology, elegance and versatility. The vehicle reflects Chery's unwavering commitment to delivering intelligent, driver-focused solutions supported by its inspiring global R&D excellence.

Inspired by the powerful gaze



of a tiger, the Tiggo 9's distinctive front fascia and bold grille exude strength and clarity. The SUV's dynamic silhouette is matched by 20-inch alloy

wheels, a panoramic sunroof and intelligent LED lighting, delivering an unmistakable road presence.

The Tiggo 9 is equipped with a 2.0-litre turbocharged engine,

finely tuned to offer a harmonious blend of power and efficiency.

Paired with an advanced 8-speed automatic transmission

and all-wheel drive capability, it delivers a smooth, confident and exhilarating driving experience across Oman's diverse terrain.

Inside, the Tiggo 9 offers a

sanctuary of calm and sophistication. Its seven-seat configuration caters to modern families and adventurers alike, while the multi-layer noise reduction cabin, ventilated leather seats, front seat massage, driver headrest speakers and multi-zone climate control elevate passenger comfort to new levels. A 15.6-inch digital display with AR navigation and voice control headlines its tech-forward interior, bringing convenience and luxury together in perfect balance.

Safety takes center stage in the Tiggo 9 SUV, which is engineered with a comprehensive suite of advanced safety technologies to offer peace of mind on every journey. From its robust body structure designed to absorb and deflect impact forces, to intelligent driver monitoring system features such as Adaptive Cruise Control, Lane Keeping Assist, Blind Spot Monitoring, and Automatic Emergency Braking, the Tiggo 9 is built to protect.

Equipped with multiple airbags, a 540-degree surround

view camera and an intelligent auto parking assist system, the Tiggo 9 ensures drivers and passengers are safeguarded with confidence, no matter the terrain or traffic conditions.

As part of its customer-first approach, New World Autos has invested in modern showrooms, dedicated service centres and professional support team committed to ensuring a world-class ownership experience.

The entire Chery range, including the all-new Tiggo 9, is now available for viewing and test drives at Chery showrooms in Wattayah, Al Hail, Sohar and Salalah.

The launch of the Tiggo 9 is not just the arrival of a new model. It marks a transformative moment in Oman's SUV landscape. With its sophisticated design, advanced features and powerful performance, the Tiggo 9 is poised to redefine expectations and lead the road ahead.

In Oman, Chery vehicles are distributed by New World Autos with showrooms at Wattayah, Al Hail, Sohar and Salalah.

NBO streamlines Eid note booking through its app

The National Bank of Oman (NBO) has launched an exclusive limited-time new feature on its NBO app, that allowed customers to pre-book their Eid notes and enjoy a seamless and timely experience without the need to wait in long queues.

The exclusive service has enabled customers to choose from a range of denominations; 100 baisa, 500 baisa, RO1, RO5, and RO10 - and receive a reference number upon booking to track requests and collect the notes conveniently from their preferred branch, including Central Business District (CBD), Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), Ghala, and Barka. Additionally, customers were able to monitor the status and cancel requests directly through the app.

Commenting on the initiative Dr Ali Salim al Shekaili, Assistant General Manager and Head of Digital and E-Channels at NBO, said: "Eid is a spiritual time for connection, giving and joy - values that resonate with our customer service. Through this new feature, we emphasised the simplicity and speed of digital bank-



ing by enabling customers to pre-book Eidiya notes from the NBO app, removing barriers, reducing queues and enhancing their banking experience. Moreover, our Eid Note Dispensing Machines contributed to our digital banking capabilities, reinforcing our dedication to seamless and customer-centric service."

In addition to the NBO app bookings, NBO's Eid Note Dispensing Machines are available

at five different branches, including NBO's head office in Athaiba, Sohar, New Salalah, Bahla and Ibra, until June 5, providing NBO Debit cardholders with quick, in-person access to 100 baisa and 500 baisa notes.

This service forms part of NBO's broader digital transformation journey. From self-service innovations and secure mobile features to real-time status tracking and automation.

Shangri-La Muscat brings BAB's Brunch in seaside dining on 20th anniversary

As Shangri-La Muscat celebrates 20 years of heartfelt hospitality in Oman this 2024, the resort introduces a fresh weekend ritual to mark the occasion: BAB's Brunch at Bait al Bahr - a relaxed yet refined dining experience that captures the spirit of the sea, the warmth of the sun, and the serenity of coastal dining.

Launching this summer, BAB's Brunch is served every Saturday from 1pm to 4pm, inviting guests to unwind with spectacular cuisine and majestic panoramic views of the beach, all from the elegant indoor temperature-controlled setting of Bait al Bahr. Perched along the resort's iconic lazy river, the venue offers one of Muscat's most breathtaking dining locations - where gentle waves and ocean breezes frame every bite.

For the first time, Bait al Bahr opens during the day to welcome brunch lovers with a shared-style concept comprising of a selection of appetisers, followed by live-grilled premium cuts (beef, lamb chops, chicken), and the freshest seafood - including lobster, king prawns, octopus, and



This new offering brings together the spirit of coastal dining with the warmth of Omani hospitality - reimagined in a setting that blends a relaxed atmosphere with an elegant brunch

seasonal fish - are all served directly to the table, encouraging convivial dining and memorable moments alongside live entertainment.

To complement this indulgent Saturday afternoon, free-flow beverages are included, and other premium options are also available. BAB's Brunch starts

from RO30 net per person, with complimentary beach and pool access included for brunch guests.

Bait al Bahr commonly known as BAB has long stood at the heart of Muscat's vibrant community, and this new offering brings together the spirit of coastal dining with the warmth of Omani hospitality - reimagined in a setting that blends a relaxed atmosphere with an elegant brunch.

Joyful graduation for Al Amal ASaed KG students

Al Amal ASaed private School in the wilayat of Nizwa celebrated the graduation of 97 students from the kindergarten and pre-school levels in a joyful event held at the 'Across Ages Museum' in the wilayat of Manah, in Dakhliyah governorate.

The celebration reflected the pride and excitement of the young graduates as they marked the completion of their early educational journey.

The event aimed to encourage and support students as they transition confidently into the next educational stage, while fostering a sense of achievement and belonging within the school community. It also served as an opportunity to honour their efforts throughout the academic year and strengthen ties between the school, parents, and the broader community.

The 'Across Ages Museum' was chosen as the venue for its



rich educational and historical setting, which provides children with an engaging and simplified introduction to Oman's heritage. The museum also offers suitable facilities for hosting public events and celebrations.

The programme featured a variety of activities, including

welcoming performances and educational songs, the honouring of outstanding students, the distribution of graduation gifts and certificates, and memorable photo sessions in a festive atmosphere.

Jumana Juma al Azri the school principal, emphasised the

importance of cultural field trips as a valuable part of the learning process. Such experiences expand children's knowledge, foster a love for learning, and strengthen their connection to their national identity. They also help develop students' social skills by providing learning experiences outside the traditional classroom environment.

The ceremony concluded on a high note, with families and staff expressing their appreciation for the well-organised event and the inspiring venue that marked a memorable milestone in their children's educational journey.

College of Arts and Social Sciences joins Dakhliyah Schools

As part of its strategy to strengthen its institutional presence and reinforce its position among national higher education institutions, the College of Arts and Social Sciences at Sultan Qaboos University has organised an extensive coordination meeting with career guidance and student counselling specialists from schools in Dakhliyah governorate.

The meeting, held on May 21, was attended by several officials from the Governorate's Directorate General of Education. This initiative aligns with one of the key pillars of SQU's strategic plan, enhancing integration between higher education and general education

institutions to build flexible learning pathways that respond to national development priorities.

It also resonates with the core principles of the Oman Vision 2040, which emphasises the importance of aligning educational outcomes with labour market needs and empowering students to make informed academic and career decisions. During the meeting, the college presented a comprehensive overview of its academic mission, departments, and diverse specialisations, which combine academic knowledge with practical skills to meet the aspirations of General Education Diploma graduates.

Oman Sail, bp Oman launch second SailFree programme

Oman Sail in partnership with bp Oman have launched the second edition of SailFree, the region's first para sailing programme designed to empower people with disabilities through the sport of sailing.

The programme will be delivered in three phases to support 100 young people with disabilities at Oman Sail's Musannah Sailing School and Al Mouj Sailing School, with 20 advancing to form the 15-18 national youth sailing team.

Khamis al Anbouri, Oman Sail's Acting Commercial Director, said, "We are very pleased to renew SailFree for a second edition and provide more opportunities for young people with disabilities. The programme has proven that sailing can have a long-term positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities and unlock valuable life skills through learning, teamwork and participation.

"We are looking forward to introducing 100 young people to the sport and showing that sailing is a sport for all."

Ibrahim al Hinaï, Social investment manager at bp Oman, Kuwait, and Qatar, commented: "The achievements of the Sail-



The programme will be delivered in three phases to support 100 young people with disabilities at Oman Sail's Musannah Sailing School and Al Mouj Sailing School, with 20 advancing to form the 15-18 national youth sailing team

Free programme is remarkable, whereby the first edition of this programme, launched in 2019,

benefitted 110 people with disabilities and formed the first parasailing national team con-

sisting of 25 exceptional members that competed in approximately ten international and

local competitions representing Oman.

"We are incredibly proud to continue investing in the community by supporting such a valuable initiative."

SailFree has provided the framework for people with no prior sailing experience to learn, develop and compete interna-

tionally and the SailFree team is currently in training ahead of regattas at home and abroad. Beginning with the UK Hansa Class Championship from June 13 to 15 in Weymouth, UK, then returning to Oman for the Oman Sailing Championship from August 17 to 21 and Musannah Race Week from October 16 to 22.

OPAZ engages with community via 'Tajawob' platform

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) engaged with several suggestions, complaints, reports and inquiries submitted via the national platform 'Tajawob' until the end of May.

A total of 44 requests were received, including 12 suggestions, 10 complaints, 20 inquiries and 2 reports, reflecting a growing interaction aimed at enhancing public participation tools.

Dr Ahmed bin Saif al Mamari, Acting Director of Customer Services Department at OPAZ, confirmed that all requests received via the platform have been given due attention since its launch in late February. Complaints were handled within record timeframes, with the shortest response time recorded at under ten minutes and the longest at two days.

Most inquiries focused on investment procedures, company registration and investor visas. Complaints, meanwhile, were referred to the relevant departments for resolution.

He stated that the received suggestions were diverse, including the development of incubators in industrial cities, enhancement of the tourism front in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), and the renaming of certain industrial cities under the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn).

All suggestions have been referred to the relevant departments within the Authority and the zones it supervises for study and evaluation.

Bank Muscat arranges Eidiya transfer through app

In line with its commitment to keeping pace with the latest developments in the banking sector, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, is offering Eidiya transfer feature through mobile banking.

This convenient and swift method allows customers to easily send Eidiya to family and friends, enhancing the joy of the celebration. With this exclusive feature, customers can send Eidiya quickly and securely, with-

out the need to add or wait for the beneficiary registration period in the app.

They can simply scan the QR code and send the Eidiya instantly. Bank Muscat added an instant QR code creation for customers and their kids where they can transfer Eidiya by scanning multiple codes and send in one go. Customers can generate the QR code by selecting 'Eidiya QR' to view their account's QR Code to download or share with others. Parents or guardians can



view their children's Eidiya QR Codes by selecting 'Accounts', then select 'Minor', then 'Eidiya QR'. To transfer Eidiya using QR code, customers can choose 'Transfers' > select 'Within Bank Muscat' > select 'Eidiya QR Pay' > scan the Eidiya QR Code > select the account they want to transfer from and the amount. They can add more QR Codes if they wish to transfer to multiple beneficiaries (maximum 10) by selecting 'More QR Codes' and select the amount they wish to

transfer.

Bank Muscat takes pride in its recent achievements, particularly in digital transformation and raising community awareness about digital banking channels for various transactions. These electronic banking options have become essential for a large number of customers. To meet the growing needs of its customers, Bank Muscat has expanded its range of online services available through mobile and internet banking.



Mercedes-Benz offers complimentary vehicle health check

Mercedes-Benz Oman invites customers to help their vehicle's star shine again with a complimentary 16-point vehicle health check. Available at Service Centres in Muscat, Salalah, and Sohar, the offer will run from June 17 to 19 and from June 24 to 26. This no-cost inspection helps keep your Mercedes-Benz in top condition.

The health check includes inspection of the engine oil level, potential oil leaks, engine air filter, coolant fluid level and coolant system, vehicle undercarriage, brake fluid level and condition, windscreen wipers, front and rear brake pads, A/C temperature and filters, suspension and steering components, and bodywork. It also features a full electronic diagnostic test, topped off with a complimentary

Using StarView by Mercedes-Benz Oman, the entire health check is recorded and shared with customers through a personalised video

car wash, vacuum, and tire shine.

This offer is valid for all models registered before 1st June 2022.

Using StarView by Mercedes-Benz Oman, the entire health check is recorded and shared with customers through a personalised video, delivered via email and SMS, along with a detailed estimate.

Fajr initiative honours young souls for devotion

In a deeply moving and spiritually uplifting ceremony, the Fajr Initiative Award Ceremony, unfolded at the Jami'a Nur al Din Salimi, Al Khuwair as a radiant tribute to the innocence, discipline, and dedication of young hearts who embraced the divine call of Fajr prayer for 30 consecutive days.

The chief guest of this event Sheikh Ismail al Oufi, along with guests of honour Sheikh Ahmed al Muqbali and Maulana Shamsad, graced the occasion, reinforcing the significance of instilling steadfastness in faith among the youth.

This heart-warming event, attended by an overwhelming number of parents, well-wishers, and community leaders, was not just a celebration - it was a continuation of the legacy established at Noor Masjid, where the Fajr Initiative first took root.

The movement, which began as a small effort to encourage children in their spiritual discipline, has flourished into a beacon of inspiration, expanding its reach and deepening its impact across communities.

What made this evening truly extraordinary was the way the entire programme was lovingly orchestrated by children and youth, making it a genuine expression of youthful devotion. The gathering was beautifully hosted and managed by young participants, whose words flowed with sincerity and rever-



Fajr initiative, which began as a small effort to encourage children in their spiritual discipline, has flourished into a beacon of inspiration, expanding its reach

ence, setting the tone for an evening of spiritual enlightenment.

The atmosphere was profoundly serene as the Quran was recited by tender-hearted young boys, whose angelic voices carried divine verses through every corner of the masjid, enveloping the audience in the tranquillity of

remembrance.

With radiant smiles and glowing hearts, young champions stepped forward one by one to receive their awards, graciously distributed by esteemed guests. Sheikh Ismail al Oufi and Sheikh Ahmed al Muqbali reminded everyone that these children were not just prize-winners, but torch-

bearers of our faith.

Their consistency in answering the early morning call of prayer became a source of pride for their families and a beacon of guidance for their peers.

The participation of hundreds of supportive parents alongside the cheerful presence of Imams, reflected a shared commitment to nurturing spiritual discipline in the next generation.

The Fajr Initiative Volunteer Team, with hearts full of gratitude, extended special thanks to the families, volunteers, and mosque workers who stood beside these young ones through-

out their sacred journey.

In the final moments, two youngest voices, Abdulrahman and Ashar, rose to the stage to deliver the vote of thanks.

Their pure words, delivered with unmatched sincerity and innocence, moved many to tears. It was a reminder that when young hearts speak, the heavens listen.

As the event concluded with heartfelt prayers for peace, unity, and guidance, a gentle call echoed from the hearts of those present - to take this initiative beyond one masjid, one community, and one city.

‘Cancelling Harvard biological threat grant poses security risk’

Washington, D.C., US - Cancelling a US\$12mn grant for biological threat research at Harvard University could endanger US national security, a Defence Department official warned the Trump administration, according to court filings made public on Monday.

The disclosure, reported on Monday by CNN, is part of Harvard’s lawsuit challenging what it claims was an unlawful and politically motivated freeze of over US\$2.4bn in federal research funding by the Trump White House. The funding freeze affected more than 950 active research projects.

An official from the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) said in internal documents that ‘Harvard is currently the top performing team on the ... programme’, which supports the Pentagon in tracking biological threats. The official added that ‘inadequate knowledge of the biological threat landscape poses grave and immediate harm to national security’. Despite these warnings, the administration terminated the grant and broader funding without justification, Harvard’s legal team argued.

The government ‘rushed to terminate Harvard’s funding...



Harvard University

solely to inflict maximum punishment upon Harvard’, the filing stated, adding that agencies received direct orders from the White House to cancel grants with little to no review or due process. The cuts included not just the DARPA project, but also major public health initiatives such as an US\$88mn paediatric HIV/AIDS study, a US\$7mn breast cancer prevention grant, and US\$10mn in antibiotic resistance research.

Harvard Vice Provost for Research John Shaw warned in a sworn statement that the sudden loss of funding would leave sensitive equipment unused, spoil perishable samples, and threaten long-running scientific progress. He emphasised that the university could not offset the loss, even with its large endowment.

Harvard’s attorneys also challenged the justification for the funding freeze, stating that agencies failed to properly investigate allegations of anti-semitism cited as a basis for the cuts. Internal records show the White House directed multiple agencies to use identical language to terminate Harvard’s grants without individual review or legal basis.

Anadolu Agency



Mongolian Prime Minister Luvsannamsrain Oyun-Erdene

Mongolian premier resigns after losing confidence vote

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia - Mongolian Prime Minister Luvsannamsrain Oyun-Erdene resigned on Tuesday after failing to secure enough support in a confidence vote, a parliamentary statement said. It comes after weeks of public protests against allegations of corruption.

Oyun-Erdene received just 44 votes in the 126-seat parliament, well below the 64 needed to remain in office.

Following the declaration of the results, Oyun-Erdene said: “It was an honour to serve my country and people in times of difficulties, including pandemics, wars, and tariffs.” He will remain a caretaker role until a successor is appointed within 30 days.

Political crisis brews

Prior to the vote, Oyun-Erdene has warned that the confidence motion could cause instability and posed a threat to democracy in the country. “If governance becomes unstable, the economic situation deteriorates, and political parties cannot come to consensus. It could lead the public to lose faith in parliamentary rule and potentially put our democratic parliamentary system at risk of collapse,” he said.

Formerly communist Mongolia adopted democracy after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Last month, Oyun-Erdene’s Mongolian People’s Party (MPP) expelled the Democratic Party (DP) from the ruling coalition after some of its younger lawmakers backed calls for the prime minister’s resignation.

Protests against corruption

The prime minister’s resignation follows days of youth-led protests in capital Ulaanbaatar calling for his ouster over inequality, corruption, and rising living costs, with citizens demanding reform and accountability. Reports of lavish spending by Oyun-Erdene’s son fuelled the protesters.

The protesters have said the country’s mineral riches have benefited businesses and the wealthy, while many Mongolians still live in poverty.

In a statement to AFP last month, the prime minister’s office said it ‘vehemently’ denied the allegations, labelling them as a ‘smear’.

DW

Poland election: PM Tusk to ask for a vote of confidence

Warsaw, Poland - Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk announced on Monday his intention to request a government confidence vote in parliament, after his candidate, Rafal Trzaskowski, lost a presidential election on Sunday.

“The first test will be a vote of confidence, which I will ask in the parliament soon,” Tusk said in a televised speech.

“I want everyone to see, including our opponents, at home and abroad, that we are ready for this situation, that we understand the gravity of the moment, but that we do not intend to take a single step back,” he added.

The victory of nationalist opposition candidate Karol Nawrocki in Sunday’s presidential election was a significant setback for the centrist government’s efforts to strengthen Warsaw’s pro-European orientation.

According to the National Election Commission, Nawrocki won with 50.89% of the vote. A Eurosceptic historian, he was supported by the nationalist conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party.

Liberal Warsaw mayor Rafal Trzaskowski, backed by the ruling Civic Coalition (KO), and Tusk, received 49.11%. He conceded defeat and offered his congratulations to Nawrocki.

Conservative shift in Poland

Although Nawrocki ran as an independent, he was backed by the right-wing opposition Law and Justice (PiS) party, which is closely aligned with outgoing President Andrzej Duda.



Donald Tusk (right) suffered a setback after Rafal Trzaskowski (left) lost the runoff election

Poland’s Prime Minister Donald Tusk said he will request a vote of confidence in the near future. His centrist government suffered a setback after conservative nationalist Karol Nawrocki won the presidential election

Prime Minister Tusk’s governing coalition has sought to reverse the previous PiS government’s judicial reforms, which the European Union said undermined democracy and the rights of women and minorities.

However, Duda blocked those efforts, and Nawrocki is expected to maintain this position. Supporters of Nawrocki view him as a champion of conservative values, including his strong anti-abortion stance.

During the campaign, Nawrocki vowed to defend Poland’s sovereignty and criticised what he described as excessive interference from Brussels.

Having received backing from US President Donald Trump, who hosted him at the White House in early May, he is more sympathetic toward the United States. He has pledged continued support for Ukraine’s defence against Russia but opposes its accession to NATO.

In the Polish political system, the prime minister, who is chosen by parliament, holds most day-to-day power.

However, the president’s role is not merely ceremonial. The head of state can influence foreign policy and veto legislation.

DW

WORLD ROBOT CARNIVAL IN WUHAN



Visitors interact with a robotic dog during the world robot carnival in Wuhan, central China’s Hubei Province, on Monday (Xinhua)

Kenyan and Ugandan activists allege sexual torture in Tanzania

Nairobi, Kenya - Human rights defenders Boniface Mwangi from Kenya and Uganda’s Agather Atuhaire have said that they were beaten and sexually assaulted by Tanzanian security officers while in custody.

Mwangi and Atuhaire made the allegations at a joint press conference in Kenya’s capital, Nairobi, on Monday. Both had separately spoken of their brutal treatment in the days after their release.

The two had travelled to Tanzania attend the first court appearance on May 19, 2025, of Tanzanian opposition leader Tundu Lissu, who faces treason charges.

They were abducted from their hotel room and allege they were interrogated and tortured by security officers before being



dumped several days later near the borders of their countries.

Speaking at the press conference, they said they had both filed a complaint against the Tanzanian authorities.

Mwangi, a photojournalist and prominent campaigner against corruption and police brutality in Kenya, broke down in tears as he recounted the brutal beatings and the sexual assault.

Atuhaire said she too had been blindfolded, tied up and assaulted. “The only thing I desire is justice,” the award-winning journalist said. “It is what has enabled me to hold on in this situation.”

Although she came from Uganda, a country she described as ‘very dictatorial’, she never imagined that she ‘would find a worse foreign country, a worse government’.

DW

102 Palestinian aid-seekers killed by Israeli forces in Gaza in 8 days: Hamas

Gaza City/Istanbul - At least 102 Palestinian civilians were killed and 490 injured while seeking humanitarian aid from Israeli-designated centres in the Gaza Strip in eight days, Hamas said on Tuesday.

Israeli forces opened fire early on Tuesday on civilians awaiting humanitarian aid at a distribution point in Rafah in southern Gaza, leaving 27 people dead and more than 90 people injured.

"The mechanism that degrades human dignity turned food-seeking into a deadly risk that could cost one's life," Hamas said in a statement.

The group appealed to the UN to intervene to stop the 'killing mechanism' and to open humanitarian corridors under international oversight, without Israeli control.

Israel has crafted a plan to establish four aid distribution points in southern and central Gaza, which Israeli media say aims to evacuate Palestinians from northern Gaza into the south.

According to Israel's Army Radio, Israel's aid distribution plan seeks to turn the territory's north into a 'completely depopulated area'.

The mechanism was opposed by the international community and the UN, which came as an alternative attempt by Israel to bypass the aid distribution through UN channels.



Israel has crafted a plan to establish four aid distribution points in southern and central Gaza, which Israeli media say aims to evacuate Palestinians from northern Gaza into the south

The UN human rights chief called the string of attacks near food aid sites 'unconscionable', warning that the militarised nature of assistance mechanism may be putting civilians at further risk

Unconscionable, says UN rights chief
The UN human rights chief on Tuesday called the string of deadly attacks near food aid sites

in Gaza 'unconscionable', warning that the militarised nature of Israel's humanitarian assistance mechanism may be putting civilians at further risk and potentially

violating international law.
"For a third day running, people were killed around an aid distribution site run by the 'Gaza Humanitarian Foundation'. This

morning, we have received information that dozens more people were killed and injured," Volker Turk said in a statement.
"Deadly attacks on distraught civilians trying to access the paltry amounts of food aid in Gaza, are unconscionable," he added.
Turk called for 'a prompt and impartial investigation into each of these attacks, and those re-

sponsible held to account', stressing that 'attacks directed against civilians constitute a grave breach of international law, and a war crime'.
He warned that Palestinians are being pushed toward a horrifying choice: "Die from starvation or risk being killed while trying to access the meagre food that is being made available

through Israel's militarised humanitarian assistance mechanism." This militarised system 'endangers lives and violates international standards' on aid distribution, as the UN has repeatedly warned, the human rights chief stressed.
He said the 'wilful impediment of access to food and other life-sustaining relief supplies for civilians may constitute a war crime'.
He pointed to broader patterns of violence, forced displacement, and threats, saying: "The threat of starvation, together with 20 months of killing of civilians and destruction on a massive scale, repeated forced displacements, intolerable, dehumanising rhetoric and threats by Israel's leadership to empty the Strip of its population, also constitute elements of the most serious crimes under international law."
Citing a 2024 ruling by the International Court of Justice, Turk reminded that the court found a 'real and imminent risk of irreparable prejudice to the rights of Palestinians in Gaza under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide'.
The ICJ had issued binding orders for Israel to cooperate fully with the UN to ensure the unhindered and large-scale delivery of essential aid, including food, water, fuel, shelter, medical supplies, and other necessities.

Gaza: Israel kills 35 Palestinians

Gaza City, Palestine - The Israeli army killed at least 35 more Palestinians in deadly attacks across the war-devastated Gaza Strip on Tuesday, including a strike against civilians waiting to get aid in the southern city of Rafah, the Health Ministry said.

A ministry statement said that an Israeli strike targeting civilians awaiting humanitarian aid at an Israeli-designated aid distribution site in Rafah left 27 Palestinians dead and more than 90 people injured.

It said the fatalities occurred in the Al-Alam area of Rafah, where displaced Palestinians had gathered to receive assistance, noting that the toll is preliminary, as many of the injured are in critical condition.

This marks the latest deadly Israeli attack targeting Palestinians who were trying to get aid



through the Israeli-introduced aid mechanism that came into force on May 27.
The Israeli army confirmed the attack, claiming that it targeted 'suspects advancing towards forces'.
Six more Palestinians were killed, including two children, when Israeli warplanes struck homes and tents for displaced

civilians in the southern city of Khan Younis, the official news agency Wafa said, citing medics.
Two more people were killed and others injured in an Israeli strike on a group of civilians in Jabalia town in northern Gaza, Wafa said.
At least 54,510 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's genocidal war since October 2023,

the Health Ministry said on Tuesday.
A ministry statement said 40 bodies were brought to hospitals in the last 24 hours, while 208 people were injured, taking the number of injuries to 124,901 in the Israeli onslaught.
Meanwhile, a senior Israeli military officer said on Tuesday that more than 10,000 Israeli soldiers have been killed or injured since the start of Israel's war on the Gaza Strip, according to Israel's Yedioth Ahronoth daily.
"We have a shortage of more than 10,000 soldiers who have been killed or injured and a few thousand who repeatedly enter the cycle of post-traumatic stress disorder," the unnamed officer was quoted as saying. The officer did not provide specific details or a breakdown of the figure.
Anadolu Agency

HEAVY RAINS CONTINUE IN INDIA'S NORTHEAST



A view of submerged houses amid floods following heavy rainfall, at Hiloikhunda village in Assam, India on Tuesday. The flood situation continues to remain grim, with the death toll rising to 11 (ANI)

South Korea: Exit polls predict victory for Lee

Seoul, South Korea - South Korea on Tuesday voted in a snap election to pick a new leader, months after President Yoon Suk Yeol was removed from office for declaring martial law.

Exit polls showed Lee Jae-myung, representing the main opposition Democratic Party, garnering over 50% support, Yonhap News reported.

Counting of votes is going on, while official results will take hours, and the new president is likely to be confirmed early on Wednesday, local time.

Polling stations opened at 6am local time (2100GMT Monday) and closed at 8pm (1100GMT).

The new president will serve a one-time five-year term.

Nearly 29,000 police officers were deployed across the coun-



Lee Jae-myung

try, where people cast their ballots at around 14,295 polling stations.
As of 8pm local time (1100GMT), voter turnout had reached over 77.8%, including early and overseas ballots, surpassing the 77.1% recorded in the 2022 presidential election, according to the Daily Korea JoongAng.
Anadolu Agency

European leaders warn of growing threats from Russia

Brussels, Belgium - Leaders of NATO's eastern and northern member states and the alliance's chief called on Monday for increased defence spending and stronger deterrence measures in response to growing threats from Russia ahead of this month's NATO summit in The Hague.

Speaking at the Bucharest Nine (B9) and Nordic Countries Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte described the current security climate as 'the most dangerous in decades'.
"We are not at war, but we are not at peace either, so we must continue to strengthen our deterrence and defence, and that means pivoting towards a full warfighting readiness - providing significantly more forces that are well-trained, well-equipped and supported with logistics, sustainment and ammunition," he said.
Rutte said he expects allies to



Last year's NATO summit was held in the US

demonstrate a firm commitment to collective defence at the upcoming summit by boosting defence industrial production and increasing investment.
He also underscored NATO's continued support for Ukraine, calling a strong and sovereign Ukraine essential for Euro-Atlantic security.

In response to a question about concerns over the United States' long-term military posture in Europe, Rutte said Washington remains committed to NATO and Article 5, the alliance's collective defence clause.
He noted that it is natural for the US to also focus on the Indo-Pacific but assured that a robust

American presence would remain in Europe.
Lithuanian President Gitanas Nauseda said his country would spend 4% of its GDP on defence this year and more than 5% annually from 2026 to 2030.
Nauseda also called for continued deliveries of long-range artillery and advanced air defence

systems to strengthen Ukraine's position on the battlefield and at any future negotiations.
"I am pleased that all participants agreed that we need a stronger NATO, a stronger transatlantic link, and increased defence production," said Romania's new president, Nicusor Dan.
Anadolu Agency

Dutch govt collapses after PVV pulls out

PWV head Geert Wilders pulled his party out, citing differences with his partners over immigration policy

Amsterdam, The Netherlands - The Dutch coalition government led by Prime Minister Dick Schoof fell apart on Tuesday after Geert Wilders, the head of the far-right PVV (Party for Freedom), pulled his party out, citing differences with his partners over immigration policy.

"No signature for our asylum plans. No adjustment of the coalition agreement. The PVV is leaving the coalition," said Wilders on X, formerly Twitter.

He said he had informed Schoof that all ministers from his party would quit the government.

The PVV entered its first coalition government six months after a surprise victory in the Netherlands' November 2023 parliamentary elections; striking a deal with the conservative People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), the centrist New Social Contract (NSC) and the populist Farmer-Citizen Movement (BBB).

The endeavour was shaky from the start, however, with politicians voicing aversion to working with firebrand Wilders and doubts about his willingness to abide by the country's constitution.

Wilders had been frustrated with what he saw as the slow pace of introducing the 'strictest-ever immigration policy' that he



Party for Freedom (PVV) head Geert Wilders is a leading figure of the far-right in Europe

had agreed with coalition partners after his election win in November 2023.

The government crisis comes just weeks before the Netherlands - the eurozone's fifth-largest economy - is due to host world leaders for a NATO summit. As a result of the collapse, NATO spending increases will likely be in limbo when the al-

liance's boss, former Prime Minister Mark Rutte, convenes the confab in his home country.

Though the remaining coalition partners could carry on as a minority government, a snap election is the likely consequence of Wilders' move.

Frans Timmermans, leader of opposition Labor/Green bloc, said: "I see no other way to form

a stable government."

Coalition partners blasted Wilders for his lack of seriousness. "There is a war on our continent. Instead of meeting the challenge, Wilders is showing he is not willing to take responsibility," said Dilan Yesilgoz, leader of the conservative VVD.

"It is irresponsible to take down the government at this

point," railed Nicolien van Vroonhoven, leader of the centrist NSC.

What did Wilders want?

Wilders had already indicated in late May that he was ready to bring about the fall of the coalition if his 10-point plan to curb immigration was not put into ac-

tion within a few weeks.

The plan included border closures for asylum-seekers, tougher border controls and deporting dual nationals convicted of a crime.

"Close the borders for asylum-seekers and family reunifications. No more asylum centres opened. Close them," was how he summarised the scheme.

The PVV called for military deployment to protect the country's borders, with Wilders demanding Syrian refugees be repatriated.

However, the plans were deemed unviable or even illegal by several political experts.

Some observers suggest Wilders created the current crisis as a means to topple the

Wilders had been frustrated with what he saw as the slow pace of introducing the immigration policy that he had agreed with coalition partners

government.

New elections in the Netherlands would be yet another contest likely viewed as a measure of just how mad voters are over immigration and cost of living issues.

Although the PVV racked up some 23% of the vote last November, it is currently polling around 20% - on par with Labor/Green. DW

Germany's Friedrich Merz defends migration plans after legal setback

Berlin, Germany - German Chancellor Friedrich Merz on Tuesday said his country would continue to reject asylum seekers at the borders despite a court ruling that called this decision unlawful.

"Until the situation at the external borders is significantly improved with the help of new European rules, we will have to maintain controls at the internal borders," Merz said at a conference in Berlin.

"Yesterday, we saw a preliminary ruling from the Berlin Administrative Court, which may further restrict the scope for manoeuvre. But the scope is still there. We know that we can still reject applications," he added.

Merz emphasised that his government will adhere to EU law.

"We will, of course, do so within the framework of existing European law. And we will do so, also to protect public safety and order in our country and to protect cities and municipalities from being overwhelmed. This is



German Chancellor Friedrich Merz

a task we continue to face," the chancellor said.

The Berlin Administrative Court said in an emergency ruling on Monday that the rejection of asylum seekers at border controls on German territory is unlawful.

Asylum seekers may not be turned away without following the so-called Dublin procedure,

the court argued.

The present case involved two men and a woman from Somalia who were traveling by train from Poland to Germany. On May 9, they were checked by the Federal Police at Frankfurt (Oder) train station. After applying for asylum, they were returned to Poland the same day.

According to the court, the

Federal Police justified the rejection by citing entry from a safe third country.

The concerned individuals appealed against this decision in summary proceedings before the administrative court, while the court said the decisions were final.

According to an unnamed court spokeswoman, this is the first court decision regarding the new regulations introduced by Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt, who ordered an intensification of border controls just hours after taking office in early May.

As part of the new centre-right-wing coalition agreement between the Christian Democratic Union and its sister party, the Christian Social Union, and their junior partner, the Social Democratic Party, it was agreed that 'in coordination with our European neighbours, we will also reject asylum seekers at our common borders'.

Anadolu Agency



Over 200 prisoners escape Pakistan jail after earthquake

Islamabad, Pakistan - Over 200 prisoners escaped from a jail in the southern port city of Karachi after an earthquake damaged the prison walls, the provincial chief minister said on Tuesday.

The incident occurred late on Monday night when prisoners escaped through a damaged wall in Malir prison, which was affected by multiple low-intensity tremors in the area since Sunday, southern Sindh province Chief

Minister Murad Ali Shah said.

"The prisoners were brought out of the barracks due to aftershocks, which was wrong," Shah told reporters in Karachi, adding that the prisoners also snatched rifles from the prison security personnel, and during the firing, one prisoner was killed. Some policemen were also injured, he said.

He added that around 216 prisoners fled, while 80 to 82

have been recaptured so far.

Calling the incident 'alarming', he said: "There are over 6,000 prisoners in Malir jail, and the jail administration brought them out of barracks, and some of them fled in a mob."

He warned that all prisoners who escaped should immediately surrender, otherwise they would face cases under anti-terrorism law.

Anadolu Agency

Heavy rains damage Rohingya homes

Dhaka, Bangladesh - Heavy monsoon rains in Cox's Bazar on Bangladesh's southeastern coast have damaged over 1,400 Rohingya homes.

In just two days, 53 landslides were reported across 33 refugee camps. One refugee was killed as a wall collapsed, while lightning strikes reportedly injured 11, the UNHCR said late on Monday.

The heavy monsoon rains 'highlight once again the critical needs of Rohingya refugees', it added.

Anadolu Agency

Desperation grows due to aid delays in flood-hit central Nigeria

Abuja, Nigeria - Aishatu Bello, a retired teacher who lost everything in the floods, expressed anger towards the authorities and the slow speed at which relief is coming.

"I have lived all my life here. The situation now, hunger. No home to sleep. There's no shelter," Bello told DW. "We are squatting at a neighbour's house. So it's a problem. We are homeless. We need assistance from the government."

Other people are concerned about how they will rebuild their lives. Markets were destroyed and many businesses lost essential equipment in the flood.

"I don't know what will happen next. I'm a family man. My fear is where to start again. That's what we don't know. We have never received anything from (the) government," Isaac



The death toll following the major flooding in Niger State has continued to climb

Abel, a printing company worker who has lived in Mokwa town for 13 years, told DW.

On Sunday, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) announced it

had started the process of providing relief packages to people affected.

NEMA said that roads and bridges were also affected by the floods, which has impacted the

local economy and traffic.

On Friday, the Nigerian Red Cross released a statement saying the floods had caused 'significant loss of life and widespread distress'.

There are now fears of a disease outbreak in the affected areas, according to Hussaini from Humanity First.

"Some dead bodies are yet to be discovered. Up to now, the search is still going on," he said.

Flood grant promises under scrutiny

Niger State Governor Mohammed Umaru Bago has come under fire after appealing to Nigerians on X for donations to help flood victims.

Questions have been raised about why the state government is seeking public donations just six months after Bago announced a US\$10mn World Bank grant would fund flood prevention in Mokwa.

During a tour in December, Bago assured journalists that the funds would be used to address

flooding in the area.

But the same communities that were supposed to benefit from the grant have now been devastated.

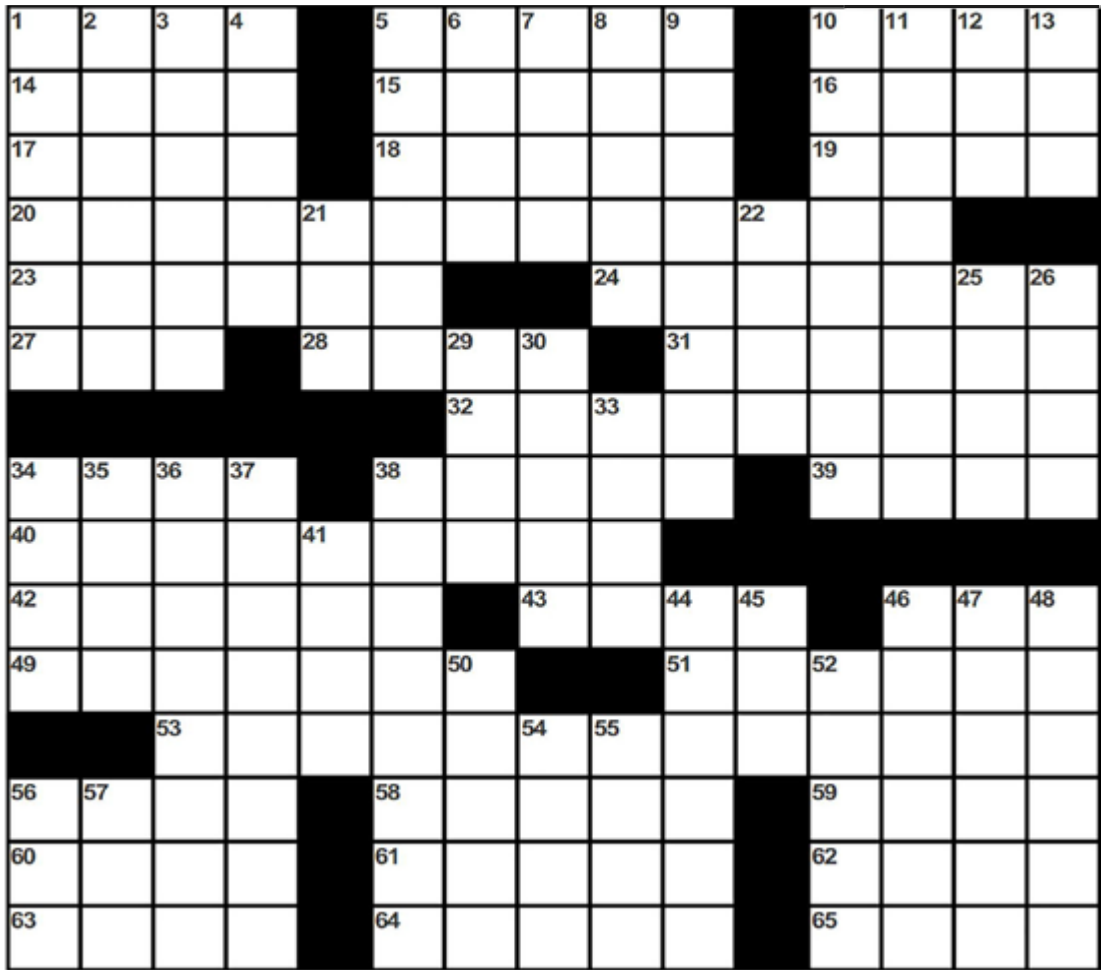
Residents have expressed frustration over the lack of tangible results from the much-publicised World Bank assistance.

"Our people are in danger; they need help from the government. We lost so much," said Tanko Bala, leader of Mokwa's Hausa community.

Initial reports had pointed to a dam breach in Niger state leading to the current flooding affecting Mokwa town and surroundings.

However, the authorities have dismissed the dam breach claims saying flooding was worsened by erosion in the affected areas. DW

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1) Force or effort
5) Happen again
10) Hit one's high point
14) "Young Frankenstein" assistant
15) Jagged, as a leaf's edge
16) Links org. for women
17) Bound to happen
18) Kind of hug or therapy
19) "You there!" at sea
20) Vegas resort
23) Paris-based world org.
24) NFL tackle, center or guard
27) _Gabriel, Calif.
28) Small tree branch
31) Cheese producer?
32) Frat event
34) Nos. on sunscreen bottles
38) Shopping complexes
39) Cold war news service
40) Rex Stout character
42) Noah's landing place
43) Highway hauler
46) 300 in old Rome
49) Brand of household cleaner
51) "C'est magnifique!"
53) Ben-Hur, notably

56) End in_ (require overtime)
58) Perfume the church
59) Past 12 but not 20
60) Civil-rights leader
61) Col. Hannibal Smith and squad
62) _ Major ("Big Bear" constellation)
63) Geraint's loyal lady
64) Laughs heartily
65) Minute segment of a min.
DOWN
1) Track-and-field event
2) Large lizard
3) Name for an Irish lass, sometimes
4) Hair unit
5) What mown lawns do
6) Blows it
7) Cage for chicks
8) Bar order (with "the")
9) Close copies
10) Table-saver
11) Items of short-lived use
12) " ... long, long ..."
13) Mary_ (cosmetics name)
21) Make a scene?

22) Take_ (snooze)
25) They may be fine
26) Senate vetoes
29) Romance tang.
30) Plays a round
33) Great merriment
34) Become unhinged
35) "Frasier" actress
Gilpin
36) First emperor of Austria
37) Poor loser
38) Model T, e.g.
41) "Fuzzy Wuzzy_bear ..."
44) Old web gateways
45) Super ending?
46) Spelunkers
47) John of "Fawltly Towers"
48) Carson's mind-reader
50) Be untruthful with
52) Like Disneyland at night
54) Super's apartment number, probably
55) Anagram for "rats"
56) "_ we having fun yet?"
57) 20 short hundred-weight

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
You are rarely surprised by the unexpected behavior of others, as you've come to realize that anyone is capable of anything. A family member suddenly announces that they're about to take off in a wild new direction of some kind, and while you may be taken off guard a bit, you're still likely to encourage them to go for it. They should be incredibly grateful for the support.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
Look down at your plate before you go back to the buffet for a second helping. Do you still have perfect-ly good food in front of you? Well, don't waste it. The same applies to certain opportunities you're pon-dering. On the work front, a coworker could use a little help on a project, and it's in your best interests to fill them in on what you know.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
Don't get too comfortable, and don't make any plans that can't be changed on the fly. You're just not in the mood to carve anything in stone today, so just for now why not make sure everything is flexible, includ-ing the companions you're spending your time with over the next couple of days? After all, cooperating with the Universe is at least half the battle as far as you're concerned.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
You've got to raid your bank account a bit in order to take care of a pressing financial issue for a friend. This doesn't mean you don't have your own matters to attend to, obviously, just that once again you're putting their problems first. If you feel that they deserve it, by all means help out. If you're likely to just end up blaming yourself for enabling them, make this the last time.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
Look down at your plate before you go back to the buffet for a second helping. Do you still have perfect-ly good food in front of you? Well, don't waste it. The same applies to certain opportunities you're pon-dering. On the work front, a coworker could use a little help on a project, and it's in your best interests to fill them in on what you know.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
Everyone who knows and loves you expects your absence every now and then, even when you've made plans, when duty calls. It does so today, and your job is to do the right thing and make a call of your own: an apologetic, polite call to the person you've got to disappoint, letting them know that you're just as sad about all this as they are.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
You know exactly what you really want. It's something you've been wishing to have for a long time. You've likely been saving pennies, working overtime, depriving yourself of the most basic daily pleas-ures, and flipping through random websites to find a hot deal. Today is a great day for you to find it, so make sure you have the cash on hand and you can do some in-person comparison shopping.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
It's time for you to get away, and you know it. In fact, you've known for some time now. You've never been fond of doing anything alone, though, especially when it involves recreation. Before you think about making reservations (which need to be for at least two), you really should spend some time deciding which entertaining companion(s) to invite along for the adventure.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
People do see you as quirky, erratic, and highly unpredictable, and you're more than a little bit proud of owning those labels. You're even more so right now, but that doesn't mean those closest to you are quite as delighted, even though they have to admit that those qualities are the reasons they adore you. Be nice if you have to cancel some plans suddenly!



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
You're feeling especially chatty and friendly, which means you're much more easily tempted than usual to let a hot secret slide. If it's your own and you don't mind the world knowing, go for it. Sharing a confi-dence can be a great way to bond. If it's shared or someone else's, think twice before you have at it. Why risk a current relationship to entice a new one?



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
Someone close has told you something you were beyond hoping you'd ever hear, and you're much happi-er than you appear. Now that the Universe has provided the last thing on earth you'd ever have expected, it's polite to return the favor by doing something equally wonderful and unexpected for someone who needs it. What goes around comes around, and today's good deeds are sure to be well rewarded in the fu-ture.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
Those closest to you don't ordinarily expect you to say or do highly erratic things. You put their feelings right at the top of your priority list, and you almost never do anything that could hurt them or make them feel unimportant. Right now, however, the Universe throws something in your direction that is just too good to refuse, even if it means acting totally out of character. Go for it!

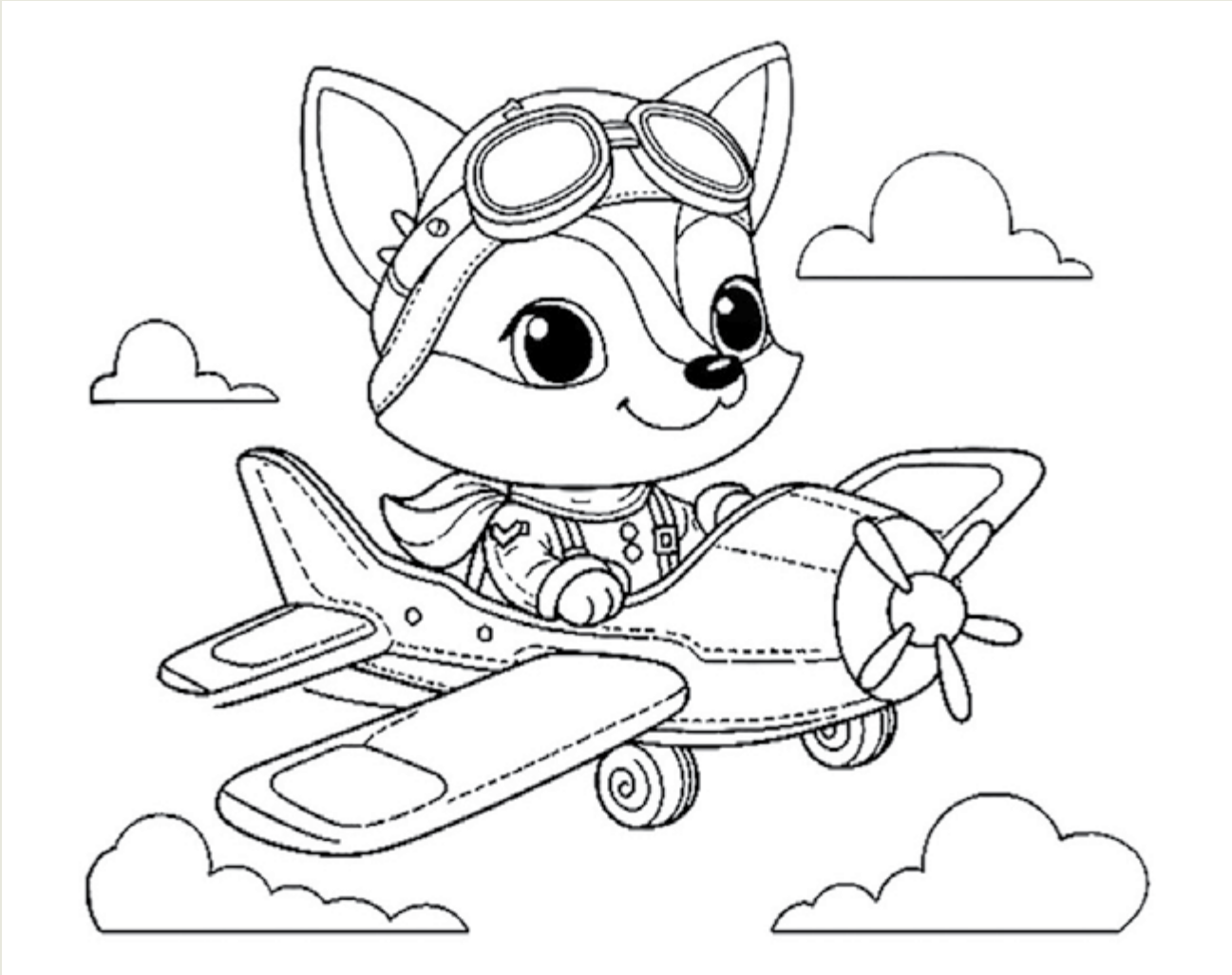


TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Tennis player, Naomi Osaka, started playing in but then withdrew from which major tennis tournament citing mental health issues?
- A. 2021 Wimbledon
B. 2020 US Open
C. 2021 French Open
D. 2021 Miami Open
02. Which of these is a type of sheep?
- A. Bolero
B. Merino
C. Matador
D. Gaucho
03. In which long-running comic series did the eponymous hero experience two dream sequences where he married each of his girlfriends, Veronica and Betty?
- A. The Phantom
B. Archie
C. Tarzan
D. Batman

Answers: 1. C 2. B 3. B

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

S	Z	C	N
T	T	I	L
A	S	T	R
A	P	I	E

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

'WE HAVE REWRITTEN THE HISTORY BOOKS'

Luis Enrique on PSG's Champions League glory, the importance of proper rest and the Club World Cup

Paris, France - Paris Saint-Germain and FC Inter Milan were the last two sides standing in Europe's top-tier club competition, with the French giants cruising to a dominant win in the UEFA Champions League final.

The two continental heavyweights have now put that blockbuster bout behind them and have swiftly turned their attentions to the forthcoming FIFA Club World Cup 2025.

In a sit-down with FIFA, the mastermind behind PSG's historic European success, Luis Enrique, spoke about how his triumphant troops head into the inaugural edition of the FIFA Club World Cup with high hopes.

FIFA: What are your thoughts ahead of the Club World Cup, and what are you most looking forward to about the competition?

Luis Enrique: It's a new competition and an exciting one because of what's at stake. The Club World Cup is our first-ever opportunity to compete against 31 other teams to prove who's the best in the world, so it promises to be fascinating.

The tournament itself is a really attractive prospect. We have to strike the balance between managing the physical and mental fatigue we're experiencing now at the end of a long season and harnessing the motivation that comes with being involved in the competition.

The tournament will showcase different cultures and styles of football. Is that something that makes it particularly special?

Definitely. Most top South American players ply their trade in Europe, and I'd hazard to say that the same goes for the best African and Asian players. Europe is home to the most competitive leagues or, rather, it's where you tend to find the top players. That's clearly going to have an impact on how the Club World Cup plays out. I think that the competition has the potential to become a real benchmark in the future, which is a really exciting prospect.

I've had the chance to represent my country as both a player and a coach at the FIFA World

Cup and, this time around, we'll be flying the flag for France in this club competition. I think the tournament has strong appeal, and I'm sure it's going to be very enjoyable.

What do you think PSG are capable of achieving at the tournament? What's your goal?

Our aim is always the same in every competition: to give ourselves the best possible chance of winning. I believe we're a role-model club in world football, and having rewritten the history books by lifting the biggest prize in the European game, the [UEFA] Champions League, our goal now in this inaugural edition of the Club World Cup is obviously to get as far as possible, go all the way to the final and be in with a chance of winning it.

This season, you've watched and come up against the best players and teams in Europe. Who are your favourites for the Club World Cup?

On paper, the European teams are the sides to beat. I've no doubt that if the South American

players were playing in Brazil, Argentina or Uruguay, the teams from the Americas would stand more of a chance and maybe the African teams would too.

But it's clear that us European teams are at an advantage in that sense because we have the best players from Europe and also the pick of the bunch from Africa, the Americas and Asia. I think the European teams are really the favourites for the Club World Cup crown, but football has a habit of throwing up surprises, especially in short tournaments like this one.

How are you planning to keep your players fresh to ensure they're firing on all cylinders?

By giving them time off. If you want your players to perform to their best, give them a break. After Christmas, we gave the lads what was quite possibly a longer break than any other European team - nine or ten days - by juggling things around and coming up with clever workarounds so they could rest properly and come back feeling refreshed and raring to get down to work.



Paris Saint-Germain manager Luis Enrique celebrates with his players after their Champions League triumph



Lamine Yamal, who dazzled in Spain's Euro 2024 triumph, was in breathtaking form for Barcelona as well

Yamal downplays Ballon d'Or stakes in Spain vs France clash

Barcelona, Spain - Spain's Barcelona striker Lamine Yamal has said the Ballon d'Or award won't be decided by performances on Thursday when he and France's Paris St Germain forward Ousmane Dembele take part in the Nations League Final Four.

Spain and France meet in Stuttgart for a place in the final, with the winners facing either Germany or Portugal who play in the other semi on Wednesday.

Yamal and Dembele have been crucial for club and country this season and the prestigious golden ball trophy could end up with one of them in September during the ceremony in Paris.

But the Barca striker challenged a journalist who asked whether Thursday's clash would be decisive for the voting.

"If you had to give the Ballon d'Or, who would you give it to - the best player of the year or the one who wins on Thursday?" Yamal told Spanish broadcaster Cadena COPE on Monday.

"I'm confident we'll win on Thursday, but whether we win or not, I'd vote for the player of the year because if something happens to me or Dembele on Thurs-

day, who do you vote for? One who plays on Sunday? I would give it to the best player of the year, and I'd keep it for myself."

The competition is tough between the duo, with Dembele winning a Ligue 1, French Cup and Champions League treble, while the 17-year-old Yamal won LaLiga, the Spanish Cup and Spanish Super Cup.

If you had to give the Ballon d'Or, who would you give it to - the best player of the year or the one who wins on Thursday?

LAMINE YAMAL



Dembele has scored 35 goals in all competitions for club and country this season, while Yamal has netted 19.

The nominees for the 2025 edition of the Ballon d'Or award, which covers August 1-July 31, will be announced at the start of August, with the ceremony taking place on September 22.

Big money, big questions as expanded FIFA Club World Cup set to kick off in the US

FIFA's billion-dollar gamble to revolutionise club football begins on June 15 with plenty of cash up for grabs but questionable enthusiasm as 32 teams prepare to contest the expanded Club World Cup in 12 stadiums across the United States.

The tournament - designed as a glittering showcase ahead of the 2026 World Cup - has had to contend with the prospect of empty seats along with controversial qualification rules and player welfare concerns after an exhausting European season.

Lionel Messi's Inter Miami face Saudi Arabia's Al Ahly in the opening fixture on June 15 at Miami's Hard Rock Stadium, with tickets still widely available days before kickoff.

A glance at FIFA's website shows lots of tickets available, including for the July 13 final at New Jersey's MetLife Stadium.

Messi's presence underscores the tournament's contentious foundations. Inter Miami gained entry by topping Major League Soccer's regular season stand-



The Club World Cup will feature 32 teams vying for honours in 12 stadiums across the United States

ings, despite losing in the first round of the playoffs - a decision critics say shows FIFA's desperation to have the Argentina great at their inaugural showpiece.

FIFA's decision to give the host

nation a spot and award it to Inter Miami underlined the opaque nature of the qualifying criteria for the tournament, which won't feature Liverpool, Barcelona or Napoli who have all just been

crowned champions of three of the most prestigious leagues in Europe.

Apart from the winners of each confederation's premier club competitions, teams quali-

fied according to a ranking based on their performances over a four-year period.

Nailing down a last-gasp \$1 billion TV rights deal with sports streaming platform DAZN six months before the tournament means a total of \$2 billion in expected revenues.

That led FIFA to announce a total prize pot of \$1 billion, with the winning club to receive up to \$125 million.

That figure represents 25% more than Paris St Germain earned from their entire 17-match Champions League campaign.

But this largesse has not quelled concerns about player welfare, with the global players union FIFPro taking legal action against FIFA over a tournament that further compresses the precious recovery time between gruelling seasons.

Furthermore there is still concern over the playing surfaces after last season's Copa America, when many headlines focused on the sub-par conditions and smaller pitch dimensions.

Champions League winner Dembele gets hero's welcome at French Open

Paris, France - Paris St Germain forward Ousmane Dembele got a roaring welcome usually reserved for tennis champions when he carried the freshly-won Champions League trophy onto centre court on Monday.

The French soccer club beat Inter Milan 5-0 in the showcase match in Munich on Saturday to clinch the trophy for the first time before the players and staff got a heroes' welcome in the French capital on Sunday.

The festivities for Dembele, who was voted the Champions League Player of the Season, con-

tinued on Monday when he carried the shiny trophy onto Court Philippe Chatrier in front of more than 10,000 people.

He was wearing a white T-shirt with the word "triumph" written on it.

Organisers could not have timed the brief ceremony better, with Europe's most prestigious soccer club trophy arriving minutes after world number 361 and wild card Lois Boisson of France stunned third-seeded American Jessica Pegula in three sets to reach the last eight in the upset of the tournament.



Ousmane Dembele flaunts the Champions League trophy at Court Philippe Chatrier on Sunday

"Ici c'est Paris, (This is Paris)" shouted Dembele as the normally more reserved afternoon tennis crowd erupted with cheers.

"Exceptional, it was a magic moment in Munich. We played an exceptional season and were rewarded with our first European Cup," France international Dembele told the crowd.

"The individual titles are fine but it is the collective titles that matter. We will try to win as many titles as possible."

Novak Djokovic, the 24-times Grand Slam champion and three-

times winner in Paris, was on court later for a straight sets win over Briton Cameron Norrie and he was quick to congratulate the Paris club, having joined in PSG's Sunday festivities.

"An incredible season for PSG so congratulations to all Parisians," the Serb said after his 100th career win on the Roland Garros clay.

"It was amazing to be there yesterday.

PSG are only the second French side to win the European Cup after Olympique de Marseille in 1993.



Oman players during a training session in Muscat

Oman take on Jordan in Word Cup qualifier

Muscat, Oman - Oman will take on Jordan in their ninth match of the third round of FIFA World Cup Group B qualifiers in Muscat on Thursday.

Oman sit in fourth place on 10 points in the group, but a victory over the Jordanians will keep Rashid Jaber's outfit in contention for a first World Cup ticket.

South Korea are in pole position in Group B on 16 points and a draw with Iraq in Graham Arnold's first game as head coach of the Gulf nation will take Hong Myung-bo and his team into the World Cup. Jordan could also advance with a win over Oman.

Japan and Iran have already

taken two of the confederation's increased allocation of eight guaranteed spots in the United States, Canada and Mexico as the top two finishers in each of Asia's three preliminary groups advance automatically.

Uzbekistan sit second in Group A three points behind Iran, who play Qatar in Doha, and lead the third-placed United Arab Emirates by four points ahead of the final two matches in the third phase of qualifiers.

The nations finishing in third and fourth will progress to a further round of preliminaries for the pair of remaining slots while those in fifth and sixth will be eliminated.

100 AND COUNTING

Djokovic dismantles Norrie to reach a century of wins at the French Open

Paris, France - Three-time champion Novak Djokovic reached a century of wins at the French Open in a straight sets victory against Cameron Norrie on Monday and top seed Jannik Sinner produced another masterclass to also blaze into the quarterfinals.

Men's fifth seed Jack Draper bowed out though, as did women's third seed Jessica Pegula who was stunned by world France's world number 361 Lois Boisson.

Serbian Djokovic, the sixth seed, looked serene in outclassing Britain's Norrie 6-2 6-3 6-2 to edge closer to a record-breaking 25th Grand Slam title.

Djokovic became the second man to win 100 matches at the Paris Grand Slam after retired 14-times champion Rafael Nadal (112), to set up a last-eight clash against Alexander Zverev.

"It's a number which is very good and nice, but a 101st win is even better," Djokovic, who won the Olympic gold medal last year in Paris to complete his trophy cabinet, told the appreciative crowd in fluent French.

"It's not finished for me here the tournament and I feel very good and good to make history



Novak Djokovic was in total control against Cameron Norrie on Monday

here. I hope there will be another win here in two days."

His German opponent in the last eight spent even less time on the court, third seed Zverev punching his ticket when Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor retired midway through the second set with an abdominal injury.

Zverev has reached his seventh French Open quarter-final in the last eight years and is still looking to secure a maiden Grand Slam title.

"From now on I have the toughest draw in the tournament," Zverev said. "I'm looking forward to the battles ahead, and I'm looking forward to playing the best in the world."

Sinner sublime

World number one Sinner lit up the night session with a sublime display to beat Andrey Rublev 6-1 6-3 6-4 and stretch his winning streak in Grand Slam play to 18 matches.

Italian Sinner, the US and Australian Open champion, has won all 12 sets he has played this year on Parisian clay and looks in ominous form as he closes on a first French Open title.

While Djokovic, Sinner and Zverev were all smiles, Britain's dark horse Draper was heading for home after succumbing to a mesmeric display by Kazakh Alexander Bublik, who a few months ago questioned his future having dropped down the pecking order.



Mirra Andreeva with Daria Kasatkina

‘When she threw her wristband at me, it was funny’

Paris, France - Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva will hang on to the sweat-soaked wristband that Australia's Daria Kasatkina jokingly threw towards her at the net as a souvenir of their entertaining French Open clash on Monday.

The prodigious 18-year-old underlined her credentials as a Roland Garros title contender by outwitting her frequent practice partner and 17th seed Kasatkina 6-3 7-5 to storm into the quarter-finals for a second straight year.

Last year's semi-finalist approached the net to shake the hand of the Russian-born Kasatkina after the match and was met with a soggy wristband flying in her direction instead.

"She's a great person and a great player. I had a feeling that after the match she's going to

do something like this, and I knew that if I would lose I would also do something funny," sixth seed Andreeva told reporters.

"When she threw her wristband at me, it was funny. It was a nice gesture from her.

"After that, we exchanged kind words, and she told me congratulations. Of course, I said it was a good match. I kept the wristband so it's going to be in my bag for now."

Andreeva joked in her on-court interview that she practised with Kasatkina only because she "hated" her and later said that a changed mindset helped her avenge a three-set defeat by the 28-year-old in the Ningbo final last year.

"When I first played Dasha, it was much more difficult for me to stay focused and not to be nice on the court," she said.

Sabalenka battles past Zheng to reach French Open semis

Paris, France - World number one Aryna Sabalenka recovered from a slow start to systematically dismantle Paris Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen in a 7-6(3) 6-3 victory on Tuesday that sent her into the French Open semi-finals.

Sabalenka suffered her first loss to Zheng in seven career meetings in the Rome quarter-finals last month and she went behind early in the opening set at a half-full Court Philippe Chatrier.

"It was a true battle and I had no idea how I could break her back and get back into the first set. I didn't start well and I'm glad

It was a true battle and I had no idea how I could break her back and get back into the first set. I didn't start well and I'm glad I found my rhythm and won

ARYNA SABALENKA

I found my rhythm and won," said Sabalenka, who took a step closer to her maiden French Open title.

"I think we're all here for one reason. Everyone wants that beautiful trophy. I'm glad I have another opportunity to do better than last time. I really hope that by the end of the claycourt sea-

son I'm really proud of myself."

Four-times champion Iga Swiatek of Poland swept aside Ukraine's Elina Svitolina 6-1 7-5 to earn a semi-final spot and stay in the hunt for a record-breaking victory in Paris.

The 24-year-old, who accepted a one-month doping ban

late last year, is looking to become the first woman in the professional era since 1968 to win four consecutive titles in Paris.

Although she failed to win a title going into the French Open this season, she looks to have rediscovered her remarkable clay-court form in Paris. She will next play Sabalenka in a mouth-watering semifinal.

"Against Aryna it is always a challenge. I have to do the work, be brave with my shots and go for it. She is having a great season."

Aryna Sabalenka celebrates a point against Qinwen Zheng



Keys downs Baptiste to set up Gauff meeting

Paris, France - Madison Keys fought off a late challenge from fellow American Hailey Baptiste to book her spot in the French Open quarterfinals with a 6-3 7-5 victory at Roland Garros on Monday.

The seventh-seeded Keys countered through the opening set before Baptiste broke for 3-1 in the second, pushing the Australian Open champion to the limit on Court Suzanne Lenglen.

Baptiste eventually cracked, allowing her opponent and friend to set up a meeting with second seed Coco Gauff in the next round, ensuring an American presence in the semi-finals.

"Hailey is such an amazing player, it was such a tough second set. Today I just had to kind of make as many balls as possible," said Keys.

The 30-year-old could count on the support of new U.S. Billie Jean King Cup captain and former coach Lindsay Davenport plus 2017 U.S. Open champion



Madison Keys

Hailey is such an amazing player, it was such a tough second set. Today I just had to kind of make as many balls as possible

MADISON KEYS

Sloane Stephens, who is sidelined through injury and was also watching from the stands.

"We've a lot of really great players constantly helping us, inspiring us and if we have any questions they're of great help. It's great being friends with such amazing players," she added.

Keys, who only has one clay court title to her name, will face an expert on the red surface in Gauff and knows she will have to take risks to reach the last four in Paris for the second time after making the semis in 2018.

Iyer’s rise fuelled by subtle tweaks in his stance

Ahmedabad, India - Since his last-minute inclusion in February in the first match of the home ODI series against England, Shreyas Iyer has been playing match-winning, as well as impact innings both for India and, in the past two months, in IPL 2025 where he is captain of Punjab Kings. The latest example of that came on Sunday evening in Ahmedabad where Iyer batted like a man possessed: his undefeated 87 helped PBKS make only their second IPL final, and the first since 2014. It was a remarkable effort as Iyer responded under pressure to bring down five-time champions Mumbai Indians.

Iyer was the second-highest run-scorer in both the England ODIs as well as the Champions Trophy, and is now sixth among the leading run-makers in IPL 2025. His success is not by accident.

About a week prior to the first ODI against England, played in Nagpur on February 6, Iyer had a three-day session in his hometown Mumbai with former India batter Pravin Amre, who has been his long-term coach since when he was 12 years old. The primary focus, Amre said, was to tinker with the basic setup in Iyer's stance and how he could be more balanced to respond to any type of delivery.

"His issue was his base. His back (right) leg was collapsing in his trigger movement," Amre told ESPNcricinfo in April.

As a result of the leg collaps-



Shreyas Iyer

ing, Amre pointed out, the head followed automatically, and Iyer lost his balance. What would also end up happening was his right heel would be dragging outside leg stump and with his head falling away, Iyer was vulnerable to all threats including failing to play the short delivery well.

Amre ensured Iyer that the purpose was not to "disturb" his overall technique, but it was to "add" something that would enhance his batting.

"I had to undo that (the setup). The word I used was correction. I told him I'm correcting you to get you in better position, so that you get a better feel with the bat while playing the strokes."

It was about a year ago when Iyer moved from a side-on to a more open stance. Amre said that has allowed him to watch the ball better and with the tweaked stance he worked out with Amre, it now allows Iyer to stand tall and respond confidently.

KRUNAL SHOW HELPS BENGALURU WIN TITLE

Spinner’s miserly spell in final against Punjab helps Kohli and Co end 18-year wait



Krunal Pandya celebrates with Virat Kohli after taking a Punjab Kings wicket in the IPL final in Ahmedabad, India, on Tuesday. Krunal took the wickets of Prabhsimran Singh and Josh Inglis, giving away just 17 runs in four overs, to stifle Punjab and hand Royal Challengers Bengaluru a six-run win

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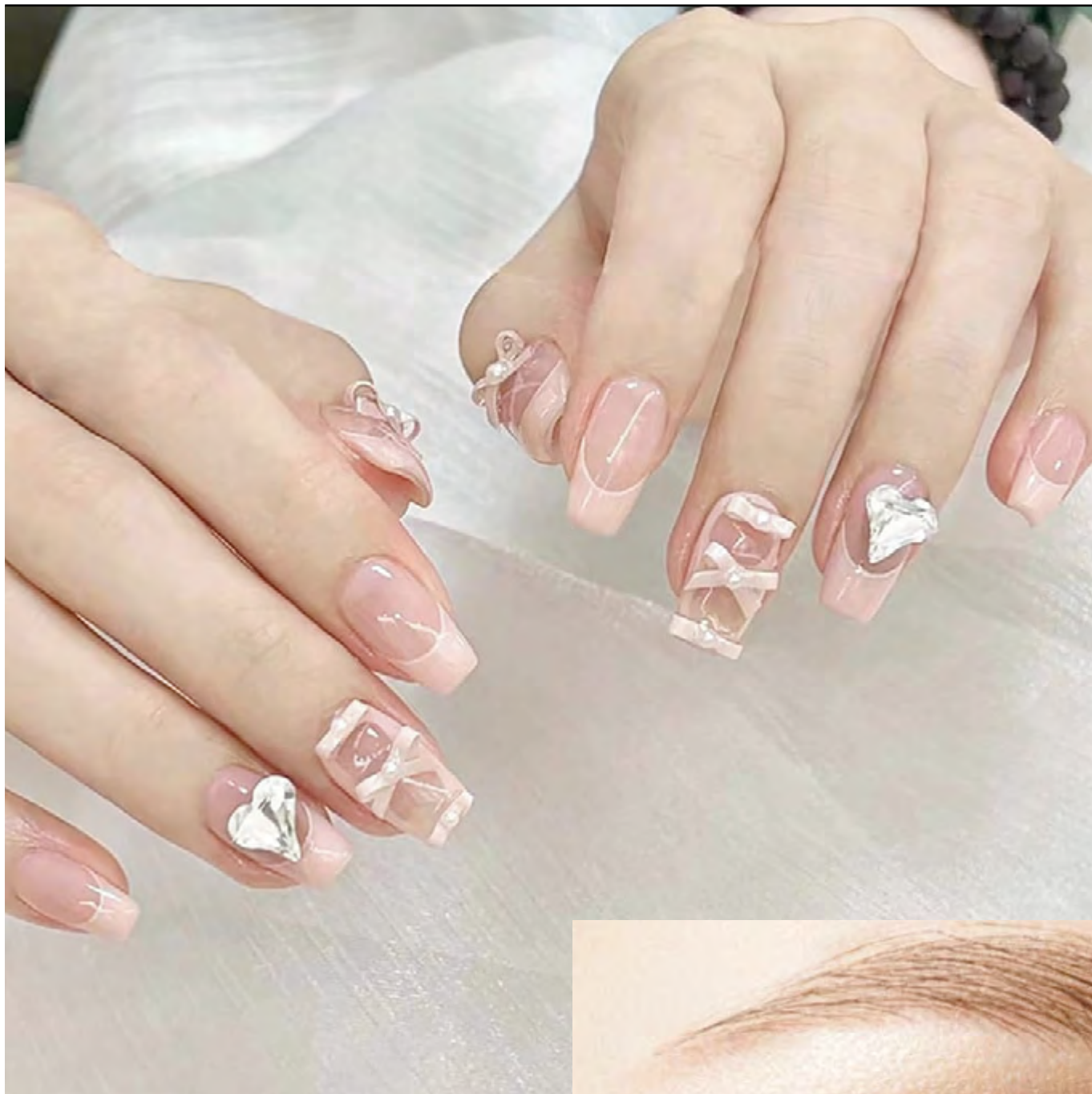
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If you look around any party hall these days, and notice the most beautiful lady present, chances are she has cleverly enhanced her facial features with some of the latest, easily available, artificial facets of modern make-up.

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lours in most cities around the globe. As for add-ons and extensions, you can simply get them off the shelf and use them as DIY aspects of your makeup at home.

FALSE LASHES

False eyelashes add instant glamour even to the most-subtle makeup look. If you're ready to experiment with some new lash styles, you may find yourself a little confused. There are so many different types of false eyelashes sold in stores and promoted at salons.

The most recent addition to the world of false eyelashes is DIY eyelash extensions. This is an option that stays in place for 5-10 days, rather than just one night. DIY extensions are designed in segments, with an invisible strip at their base.

Unlike other types of false lashes, DIY extensions offer multi-day wear. They're great for people who want fuller lashes for multiple days in a row (or all the time). They're a budget-friendly alternative to professional lash extensions and come in very dramatic styles.

DIY eyelashes come with strong-hold glue. Instead of applying it to the extensions, you first apply it to your own lashes, almost like mascara. Then, with a pair of tweezers, you bring the first segment of extensions and attach them to your natural lashes.

Strip lashes are the most well-known type of false eyelashes. Their design is simple and intuitive. They have a long, rounded



band at the base, with a row of lashes attached to it. Strip lashes are great for beginners because they're easy to apply, at least compared to other types of lashes. One can apply a layer of black eyeliner to hide the lash band.

FAKE EYEBROWS

False brows are a great solution for ladies wanting a more defined brow shape. Whether you are suffering from alopecia, undergoing chemotherapy treatment, or have simply over-plucked your eyebrows, false brows can give you your beautiful eyebrows back.

Choosing the right shape of eyebrow can be particularly important for individuals with any type of hair loss, as it can help enhance facial features and create a natural-looking frame for the eyes. Consider this:

- ▶ If you have a round face, consider angular or high-arched eyebrows to add definition.
- ▶ If you have a square face, softly rounded or gently arched eyebrows can help soften the angles.
- ▶ If you have an oval face, you have the flexibility to experiment with various eyebrow shapes, from gently arched to softly angled.
- ▶ If you have a heart-shaped face, softly rounded or gently curved eyebrows can complement your features.

trying to completely change it. Enhance what you have by tweezing or filling in sparse areas as needed.

They're available in all colours to match your hair or wig colour, and they're seriously the perfect solution to give you back beautiful brows, quickly. All you need to do is use a thin layer of brow glue, and apply to your face, ensuring that your skin is clean and dry.

ARTIFICIAL NAILS

Artificial nails can lengthen short nails, making your fingers look long and slender. They can also be hard on your nails. Gel, acrylic, and silk nails are widely used. Most people choose gels or acrylics when they're committing for a longer time. Silks are most often used for a shorter time to strengthen nail tips or repair nail trauma, rather than making nails longer.

Acrylic nails - Your nail technician will mix a liquid with a powder and brush the mixture onto your nails. They'll usually cover your entire nail, though sometimes they'll just add tips or a flexible form that they can sculpt to extend your nails.

The product hardens as it is exposed to the air. You may notice a strong odour during the application process, but it isn't harmful, provided the room has good ventilation. When you decide to have your acrylics removed, your nail technician will remove them quite easily, with no forcing or prying.

Gel nails - Unlike toothpaste-thick gel products of the past, today's gels have a similar consistency to nail polish. They are brushed onto your nails, nail tips, or nail appliques to extend length. After your nail technician applies each coat, you must put your nails under ultraviolet (UV) light for up to two minutes to 'cure' or harden the product. You can remove most gel nails by soaking them in nail polish remover.

Silk nails -These fabric wraps are glued in place to strengthen weak nails or help a cracked nail grow out. Some wraps are made of silk, but others are made of linen, paper, or fiberglass. Your nail technician will fit the material to your nail's shape, hold it in place, then brush on glue.

Silks are intended to be temporary, and the adhesives will loosen within two or three weeks, or sooner if you wash dishes by hand without gloves. Your nail technician can remove or reapply them at your follow-up visit.



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Miss World 2025, the 72nd edition of the Miss World pageant, held at the HITEX Exhibition Centre in Hyderabad, Telangana, India, on 31 May, saw *Opal Suchata Chuangsri*, of Thailand, bag the coveted crown, marking the country's crowning glory for the first time in the history of the pageant

In an unforgettable evening that brought the world together in celebration of beauty, social and environmental service, and global sisterhood, Hyderabad, Telangana, witnessed history as Opal Suchata, from Thailand, was crowned the 72nd Miss World at the glittering grand finale held at the HITEX Exhibition Centre.

In a dazzling ceremony, Opal Suchata was crowned by Krystyna Pyszková from Czechia, the 71st Miss World, who gracefully passed on the title to her successor. The coronation moment was met with thunderous applause as the newly crowned 72nd Miss World 2025 stood radiant, embodying the values of compassion, confidence, and a strong sense of purpose.

The moment marked the powerful conclusion of a month-long journey across Telangana, one that saw 108 contestants from around the world participate in immersive cultural experiences, philanthropic challenges, and purpose-driven initiatives.

With Telangana hosting the 72nd Miss World Festival for the first time, and India for the 3rd time (after 1996 and 2024), the event transformed Hyderabad into a global stage of unity and elegance, showcasing the state's warmth, rich heritage, and growing stature as a cultural and international hub. The grand finale was a spectacular culmination of dreams, diversity, and dedication, an evening that celebrated womanhood in its most empowering form.

It was a celebration of beauty beyond appearances, emphasising intelligence, advocacy, and social impact. Co-hosted by Stephanie del Valle, Miss World 2016, and Indian television presenter Sachin Kumbhar, the finale was infused with glam-

our and emotion. The crowd was also mesmerised by energetic performances by Bollywood stars Jacqueline Fernandez and Ishaan Khatter, adding a lively Indian flair to the global event.

One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation of the Miss World Humanitarian Award to actor and humanitarian Sonu Sood, honoured for his unwavering commitment to humanitarian work. His efforts have touched millions across India and the world, making him a fitting recipient of the distinguished award.

Philanthropist and entrepreneur Sudha Reddy,

who earlier hosted the 'Beauty With a Purpose' Gala Dinner', attended as a special guest and was named Global Ambassador for Beauty With a Purpose. The evening also saw the presence of Miss World 2017 Manushi Chhillar, who inspired many with her words and journey.

The competition began with the introduction of all 108 delegates, followed by the announcement of the Top 40 quarterfinalists - ten from each continental region - Africa, Americas and Caribbean, Europe, and Asia and Oceania. From these 40 quarterfinalists, the competition was narrowed down to a Top 20, then to the Top 8, followed by the announcement of the four continental winners.

The final four then faced the jury one last time, answering a thought-provoking question that tested their vision, eloquence, and values. Their responses played a key role in determining the ultimate winner.

Chairwoman of the Miss World Organisation, Julia Morley CBE, who presided over the jury, praised the finalists for their depth, grace, and clarity of thought. Speaking after the crowning, she



This moment is not just a personal victory, it is a shared dream of every young girl who wants to be seen, heard, and create change. I am honoured to represent this legacy and use my time as Miss World to make a real difference

Opal Suchata



said, "Tonight, the world saw not just beauty, but brilliance, courage, and a call for change. Opal has shown us that she is more than a winner - she is a woman of purpose, with a voice that the world is ready to hear."

The 1st runner-up was Miss Ethiopia, Hasset Dereje (Miss World Africa), the 2nd runner-up was Miss Poland, Maja Klajda (Miss World Europe), while the 3rd runner-up was Miss Martinique, Aurélie Joachim (Miss World Caribbean).

Miss World Asia was Krishnah Marie Gravez from the Philippines while Jessica Pedroso from Brazil was Miss World Americas and Jasmine Stringer From Australia was Miss World Oceania.

The background of the advertisement is a photograph of a dining table. It features several dark, rustic-style ceramic plates and bowls. Two gold-colored utensils, a butter knife and a spoon, are placed on one of the plates. A large, semi-transparent white circle is positioned in the upper half of the image, serving as a backdrop for the text.

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