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'Israel's attack threat to regional stability'

Our Correspondent Muscat

Israel's unilateral attack on Iran is "illegal, unjustifiable and a grave threat to regional stability", H E Sayyid Badr al Busaidi, Foreign Minister has said.

"I condemn it and urge the global community to come together to reject Israeli aggression and support de-escalation and diplomacy with one voice," he wrote on X.

H E Sayyid Badr also had a series of phone calls with his counterparts across the region and the globe on Saturday, as part of ongoing diplomatic efforts to contain the dangerous military escalation and tensions in the region triggered by Israel's direct attacks on Iranian territory since the early hours of Friday morning, the Foreign Ministry stated.

During the calls, H E Sayyid Badr emphasised the importance of halting the aggression and deterring the aggressor through peaceful means, based on international law and justice, in order to prevent further bloodshed, destruction, and loss of life, and to safeguard the security, stability,



Aftermath of an Israeli strike on a building in Tehran

and the interests of the region and its peoples.

Oman condemns

Earlier on Friday, the Foreign Ministry expressed the Sultanate of Oman's strong condemnation of the brutal military aggression

launched by Israel against the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which targeted sovereign facilities and caused casualties.

'Oman considers this action a dangerous and reckless escalation that constitutes a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter

and the principles of international law. It also represents unacceptable and ongoing aggressive behaviour that undermines the foundations of stability in the region,' the Foreign Ministry said.

This attack comes at a highly sensitive time, as international ef-

Oman confirms cancellation of US-Iran talks in Muscat today

Muscat - Oman's Foreign Minister on Saturday confirmed the cancellation of talks between Iran and the US, which were to be held in Muscat on Sunday.

"The Iran-US talks scheduled to be held in Muscat this Sunday will now not take place. Diplomacy and dialogue remain the only pathway to lasting peace," H E Sayyid Badr al Busiadi wrote on X.

Earlier during the day, Iran had said that the dialogue with the US over Tehran's nuclear programme is 'meaningless' after Israel's biggest-ever mili-



H E Sayyid Badr al Busiadi

tary strike against it.

"The other side (the US) acted in a way that makes dialogue meaningless. You cannot claim to negotiate and at the same time divide work by allowing the Zionist regime (Israel) to target Iran's territory," Iran's state media on Saturday

quoted foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei as saying. "We hold the US administration responsible for the consequences of this reckless and illegal action by the Israeli regime," he noted.

While speaking to Kaja Kallas, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, on Saturday, Abbas Araghchi, Foreign Minister of Iran, said that the continuation of indirect Iran-US talks amid "Israel's savagery is unjustifiable". He considered the Israeli aggression to be the result of direct US support.

forts to resume nuclear negotiations between Iran and the United States were intensifying. 'This clearly reveals a deliberate intent to obstruct the diplomatic process and ignite a wider conflict that will have dire consequences for regional and

international peace.'

While Oman held Israel responsible for the escalation and its repercussions, it called on the international community to take a clear and firm stance to halt this dangerous approach, 'which threatens to preclude diplomatic

solutions and to undermine the security and stability of the region'. The Foreign Ministry reiterated Oman's firm position that security is not built through aggression, but rather through dialogue and peaceful means.

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Events, avenues announced for Dhofar Khareef 2025

Our Correspondent
Salalah

Dhofar Municipality has announced details of the Dhofar Khareef 2025 season, which will begin on June 21 and continue until September 20, with new events and upgraded facilities aimed at attracting more visitors.

Dr Ahmed bin Mohsen al Ghassani, Chairman of Dhofar Municipality, said the season will showcase Dhofar as an integrated tourist and cultural destination. Activities will be spread across five main locations: Ittin Square, Al Saada area, Awqad Park, Ittin Plain and Salalah Public Park. Each site will feature distinct events designed to reflect the region's natural and cultural diversity. The municipality confirmed that the venues have been prepared in cooperation with supporting institutions to ensure high standards and varied content.

Alongside the main sites, several other venues will host public and cultural activities, including the frankincense market, the 'Al Gharf' event at a Salalah farm, events at Raysut Beach, and artistic murals on Al Nahda Tower using modern visual displays.

Additional events are planned



The season will feature major sporting events such as the Salalah International Cycling Tour, the Drag Racing Championship, the Salalah Marathon and the Dhofar Khareef Traditional Weapons Competition

DR AHMED BIN MOHSEN AL GHASSANI



in the wilayats of Taqah, Mirbat and Sadah, as well as at Al Hafa Beach Market and Samharam Village in Salalah.

The season will also feature

major sporting events such as the Salalah International Cycling Tour, the Dhofar International Drag Racing Championship, the Salalah Marathon and the Dho-

far Khareef Traditional Weapons Competition. "These aim to attract wider participation and position Dhofar as a destination for quality sports tourism."

Cultural activities include theatrical performances and seminars at Al Murooj Theatre in Salalah, with contributions from local and international writers and thinkers. Dhofar Municipality also plans to allocate dedicated space during the khareef season for small and medium enterprises, allowing entrepreneurs to present their products and promote local heritage as part of the visitor experience.

Dhofar builds new centre to boost Najd agriculture

Our Correspondent
Salalah

Oman Agriculture Development Company has started construction of an integrated centre for the collection, sorting and marketing of agricultural products in the Al Najd area of Dhofar governorate.

Developed in cooperation with the Najd Agricultural Development Office at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR), the facility aims to strengthen agricultural logistics and support farmers in the region.

The centre will provide services including collection from local farms, cold storage, sorting, packaging and processing. These are expected to help improve product quality, minimise waste and open new market opportunities within and beyond Oman.

Covering 4,300sqm, the centre will have an annual capacity of 50,000 tonnes. It will be the first of its kind in Al Najd, which is known for its large plains and suitable climate for growing fruits, vegetables and fodder.

The project is part of efforts to boost Oman's food security and support small and medium-scale farmers who face challenges related to storage, transport and market access. According to of-



ficials, the projected is expected to get completed by the end of the second quarter of 2026.

The initiative aligns with national strategies to develop rural economies, strengthen local food supply chains and modernise the agri-logistics network.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, in partnership with MAFWR, has announced plans to build three agricultural cities, each with an investment of RO1bn.

The cities will be located in Saham in North Batinah, Dhahira and Al Najd. Each will cover about 50sqkm and is designed to boost food production and create jobs. Work on the Saham and Najd sites began in 2024 after final designs were approved.

The projects are expected to benefit over 43,000 people annually, add 2% to Oman's GDP.

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Oman Human Rights Commission begins work to formualte first national strategy

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Oman Human Rights Commission will launch a series of workshops on Sunday, as part of efforts to develop the sultanate's first National Human Rights Strategy.

The opening ceremony, to be held at the JW Marriott Hotel in Muscat, will take place under the patronage of H E Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed al Saidi, Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs, and will be attended by a number of senior officials, legal experts, and representatives from more than 55 entities spanning government, the private sector and civil society.

Organised by the commission, the workshops form a critical phase in the development of a comprehensive strategy that reflects an accurate and realistic assessment of the human rights landscape in Oman.

The initiative is being undertaken in accordance with Article (11) of the commission's System, issued by Royal Decree No 57/2022, which mandates the commission to prepare and oversee the implementation of a national human rights strategy in coordination with relevant stakeholders.

Running till July 3, the workshops will examine the legal, regulatory and procedural frameworks related to human

rights in Oman. They have been designed to identify key challenges and opportunities, and set actionable and measurable objectives to be achieved in both the short and long term.

Participants will be divided into four working groups, each focusing on one of the main categories of human rights: Civil and political rights; economic and social rights; environmental and cultural rights; and the right to participate in public life.

In addition, there will be a dedicated theme addressing the rights and needs of priority groups, including women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

The commission emphasised

the importance of inclusive engagement, bringing together all key actors from official bodies, academic institutions, the private sector, and civil society organisations.

The workshops will adopt a structured methodology aimed at conducting an objective assessment of the current situation and generating specific and measurable goals supported by qualitative and quantitative indicators.

These efforts are aligned with Oman Vision 2040, with the commission working closely with the Vision Implementation Follow-Up Unit to ensure the strategy complements the country's wider development objectives.

Oman, Uzbekistan ink deals to expand air links, trade

Tashkent, Uzbekistan - Oman and Uzbekistan have signed agreements to expand air transport rights and strengthen logistical cooperation, aiming to boost trade and investment ties between the two countries.

The accords were reached during the fifth session of the

Omani-Uzbek Joint Committee held in Tashkent on Friday. Both sides agreed to increase operating rights for airlines, support the re-export of Uzbek products through Omani ports, and enhance cooperation in scientific research and innovation. They also pledged to facilitate ex-

changes between their chambers of commerce and business delegations.

The Omani delegation was led by H E Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, accompanied by H E Wafa bint Jabr al Busaidi, Ambassador

of Oman to Uzbekistan. The Uzbek side was headed by Laziz Kudratov, Minister of Investment, Industry and Trade. Talks covered ways to deepen economic and trade relations and expand collaboration in sectors such as energy, agriculture, higher education, tourism and culture.

Strength and support: Bonds beyond words

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As Oman and the world celebrate Father's Day on Sunday (June 15), families in the sultanate and across the region are taking time to honour the quiet strength and enduring support of fathers - men whose roles, though often understated, shape generations.

While the day is traditionally marked on the third Sunday of June in many countries, others observe it on dates of local significance - such as May 8 in South Korea, December 5 in Thailand and March 19 in Italy, which coincides with the feast of Saint Joseph, the patron saint of fathers.

In Oman, Father's Day is not celebrated officially, but it is steadily gaining recognition, particularly among younger Omanis and social media users. The occasion reflects a broader global movement to appreciate the emotional and guiding roles that fathers play in everyday life.

To understand how Omanis view this growing tradition, *Muscat Daily* spoke with residents from across the social spectrum.

"My father taught me to stand tall in life," said Fatma al Kindi, a teacher and mother of three. "He worked quietly behind the scenes, never asking for recognition. On Father's Day, I make sure to tell him how much that means to me."

For 29-year-old marketing executive Mohammed Said, the



FATHER'S DAY

My father taught me to stand tall in life. He worked quietly behind the scenes, never asking for recognition. On Father's Day, I make sure to tell him how much that means to me

FATMA AL KINDI

day carries a deeper, more personal significance. "My dad passed away three years ago," he said.

"On this Father's Day, we want you to know how much we admire and love you. Your strength, wisdom and unwaver-

Fathers are more hands-on now. Whether helping with homework or guiding their children through career choices, fathers are building deeper, more visible relationships

DR AISHA AL MAAWALI

ing support have shaped us into the men we are today. You were our greatest role model - teaching us what it means to work hard, care deeply and face challenges with courage."

Social workers and family counsellors say the role of fa-

thers in Oman is gradually shifting. Traditionally seen as primary providers, today's fathers are more involved in the emotional and developmental aspects of their children's lives.

"Fathers are more hands-on now," said Dr Aisha al Maawali, a sociologist. "Whether helping with homework or guiding their children through career choices, fathers are building deeper, more visible relationships. Celebrations like Father's Day help acknowledge and encourage this bond."

Retailers in Muscat - including gift shops, florists and cafés - have responded with special packages for the occasion. But for many, simple expressions of love resonate the most.

"Last year, my daughter wrote me a letter," said Ali al Balushi, a taxi driver. "She's studying abroad. Her words made me cry. That meant more to me than any gift."

For 21-year-old Samer al Nabahani, the day is also a time to recognise those who step into fatherly roles.

"It's a moment to honour stepfathers, grandfathers, uncles, older brothers and mentors - people whose influence can be just as powerful."

"As Oman continues to evolve, the core values of family, love and guidance remain central. And this Sunday, whether through a phone call, a shared meal or a heartfelt note, many will find a moment to simply say: Thank you, Dad," said Nabahani.



Nakhal to develop walkway linking fort and hot spring

Our Correspondent
Nakhal

The wilayat of Nakhal is all set to launch a major tourism project with the construction of a 3km pedestrian walkway linking the iconic Nakhal Fort to the popular Ain al Thawarah hot spring.

The project, which will pass through scenic landscapes dotted with natural springs, aflaj (ancient irrigation channels), and traditional agricultural villages along Wadi Nakhal, is expected to become a key tourist attraction and a prominent landmark in the wilayat.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Sheikh Khalifa bin Saleh al Busaidi, wali of Nakhal, said the walkway will enhance the tourism experience and showcase the natural and cultural heritage of the area. "The project will be implemented in phases. The first phase will cover one kilometre, with subsequent phases to follow," he said.

The total cost of the project, including service facilities, is expected to exceed RO1mn. The



walkway will be paved with stone or interlocking tiles and equipped with lighting and public amenities.

Sheikh Busaidi also revealed plans to empower farm owners along the route to establish private tourism ventures in coordination with the relevant authorities. These could include eco-lodges, cafés, and the use of electric carts to transport visitors

between Nakhal Fort and Ain al Thawarah.

"This initiative will help reduce congestion at the park while creating job opportunities for local residents," he added.

The main committee overseeing the project recently held its first meeting, where it approved the work plan and formed sub-executive committees to begin implementation.

Forum on consumer rights, e-shopping tomorrow

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Consumer Protection Authority (CPA), in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), on Monday will be holding a forum on the consumers' rights when it comes to e-shopping.

Titled 'E-Shopping: Between Consumer Rights and Supplier Responsibilities', the forum will be held under the patronage of Omar bin Hamdan al Ismaili, Chairman of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, with the participation of representatives from various government and private entities involved in the e-commerce sector. It comes as part of the CPA's continued efforts to promote a secure and informed consumer culture within the digital space.

It also aligns with the authority's ongoing awareness campaign 'Safe Shopping', which aims to educate consumers about their rights in digital transactions and to foster fair commercial practices, particularly in light of the rapid expansion of the e-commerce landscape in Oman.



The forum will explore several critical topics that reflect the realities of online shopping, including the rights of e-consumers and the legal protections afforded to them, the responsibilities and obligations of licensed e-commerce providers, and the national legislation regulating the growing sector.

It will also address challenges such as commercial fraud and online scams, which pose risks to consumer confidence in digital transactions. Additionally, the forum will highlight the role of government institutions in supervising and regulating the e-commerce environment to ensure it remains safe, transparent and trustworthy.

Speaking ahead of the event, an official at CPA stated that this forum represents a strategic platform to bring together stakeholders from across sectors to discuss the evolving challenges and opportunities within the digital marketplace.

"By reinforcing collaboration between public and private institutions, we aim to create a regulatory environment that safeguards consumer rights while supporting the sustainable growth of e-commerce in Oman."

The official added that the event underscores the importance of dialogue, cooperation, and proactive policy in shaping a resilient digital economy.

Oman feted for global water science efforts

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman has been recognised for its outstanding contributions to the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) and its six-decade-long efforts to advance water sciences, at a ceremony held at the Unesco headquarters in Paris, France, last week.

The honour underscores the

efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, through the Omani National Committee for the IHP, in promoting international cooperation and fostering strategic partnerships in the field of water resource management.

Oman's proactive engagement with global water initiatives reflects its broader vision for the sustainable and integrated de-

velopment of natural resources, especially water. The recognition serves as a testament to the country's leadership and commitment to environmental stewardship on both regional and international platforms.

Sulaiman Khalfan al Mabsali, Deputy Permanent Representative of Oman to Unesco, received the commemorative shield on behalf of the sultanate.

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Oman's industrial exports rise 8.6% to over RO1.6bn in Q1

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's industrial exports rose sharply by 8.6% during the first quarter of 2025, reaching RO1.618bn, compared to RO1.49bn during the same period in 2024, according to the latest statistics released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The NCSI data indicated that Omani industrial exports have experienced significant expansion across several regional markets, reflecting the growing presence of Oman's industrial sector on the regional trade map. Saudi Arabia recorded a robust 28.3% increase in its imports of Omani industrial products, reaching RO259mn – highlighting the strong economic ties between the two countries and the increasing demand for Omani goods in the Saudi market.

In a statement to the Oman News Agency, Mazin bin Humaid al Siyabi, Assistant Director General of the Directorate General of Industry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, explained that the rapid growth in Omani industrial exports in recent months represents tangible evidence of the success of the ministry's industrial policies.

"These policies focus on diversifying export markets, improving production efficiency,



enhancing the competitiveness of Omani products, achieving economic diversification goals, and building a resilient industrial base capable of adapting to global changes," he said.

Commenting on the growing

omy, Trade and Industry Committee, an offshoot of the Omani-Saudi Coordination Council, has been committed, since its inception, to addressing trade-related challenges, standardising customs procedures,

Nasra added that Saudi Arabia has become Oman's second-largest trading partner in the Gulf, amid rising aspirations for deeper industrial and commercial integration in the near future. She noted that Oman

engagement between industrial sector officials in both countries. This has been reflected in a series of meetings, mutual visits, specialised workshops, and networking events for investors and entrepreneurs. He added that these initiatives have directly contributed to expanding areas of industrial cooperation, particularly in priority sectors such as manufacturing, advanced technologies, and supply chains.

He pointed out that this new dynamism in industrial relations reflects the alignment of strategic visions between Oman and Saudi Arabia, adding that the shared emphasis on developing the industrial sector as a cornerstone of economic diversification is a promising strategy – one whose results are already evident in the growth of Omani industrial exports to Saudi Arabia and other regional markets.

welcomes increased Saudi investment, particularly in special economic zones and free zones, which offer advanced infrastructure and competitive investment incentives. This is in line with the alignment of the strategic objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and Saudi Vision 2030.

Siyabi highlighted that recent months have seen increased momentum in coordination and

facilitating land transit at border crossings, and electronically linking the trade systems of both countries. "These efforts have significantly contributed to improving the flow of goods and services and boosting commercial traffic through the Rub' al Khali border crossing, which has become one of the key emerging arteries of trade between the two nations."

trade between Oman and Saudi Arabia, Nasra bint Sultan al Habshi, Director General of Trade at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, stated that the rise in trade between the two countries is a direct result of sustained bilateral cooperation and reflects the increasing economic integration across various sectors.

She explained that the Econ-

Saudi Arabia recorded a robust 28.3% increase in its imports of Omani industrial products, reaching RO259mn in Q1 2025 – highlighting the strong economic ties between the two countries and the increasing demand for Omani goods in the Saudi market



Credit Oman, Saudi Exim Bank sign MoU to boost trade

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Saudi Export-Import Bank (Saudi Exim) and Credit Oman have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to promote bilateral trade and investment between the two countries, according to a report by the Saudi Press Agency.

Saudi Exim participated as a sponsor of the TXF Global 2025 conference, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, from June 10 to 12. The bank's involvement aimed to enhance its role in global trade and to establish strategic partnerships that support the growth and competitiveness of Saudi Arabia's non-oil exports in international markets.

On the sidelines of the conference, the CEO of Saudi Exim Bank, Eng Saad bin Abdulaziz al Khalb, and the CEO of Credit Oman, Khalil bin Ahmed al Harthy, signed the MoU to foster cooperation in supporting joint projects, facilitating exports, and exchanging expertise. The agreement aims to con-

tribute to the empowerment of non-oil exports and to strengthen economic and trade ties between the two nations.

Khalb also took part in a panel discussion during the conference alongside a distinguished group of leaders, decision-makers, and export credit experts, where they explored ways to enhance international trade cooperation. He affirmed that Saudi Exim is a reliable partner in the global trade ecosystem, highlighting that the bank's establishment is aligned with the kingdom's broader economic transformation.

He noted that since its inception, Saudi Exim Bank has provided credit facilities totalling \$22bn. He also emphasised that its A+ credit rating from Fitch Ratings will have a significant impact on its operations, as well as those of its clients and partners, both domestically and internationally.

Khalb added that the bank's strategy is centred on building strategic pathways for local exporters.



Madayn attracts RO164mn in food sector investments

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Total investment in the food sector within Oman's industrial cities under the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) has now exceeded RO164mn, marking a major milestone in supporting national food security and economic diversification.

Madayn currently hosts 98 food industry projects across its various industrial cities, occupying over 1.5mn square metres and providing employment for more than 3,600 workers. This achievement reflects Madayn's ongoing efforts, in cooperation with relevant bodies – chiefly the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources – to enhance local and foreign investment opportunities and attract high-quality projects that align with the sultanate's food security goals under Oman Vision 2040.

In a press statement, Khalid al Salehi, Director General of Marketing and Commercial Affairs at Madayn, said that 13 new food industry projects had been successfully localised during 2025, attracting invest-

ments exceeding RO14mn. These projects will cover more than 224,000 square metres and involve activities such as the production of vegetable oils, flour, tuna, bottled water, food packaging, and logistics services.

Salehi added that further efforts are under way to localise additional projects in this sector

13 new food industry projects had been successfully localised so far this year, attracting investments exceeding RO14mn

throughout 2025, with several contracts currently under review.

As part of its strategic focus on the food industry, Madayn continues to allocate dedicated plots within its industrial cities. Moreover, agricultural zones have been designated in Madayn's new industrial cities in Al Mudhaibi, Thumrait, and Al Suwaiqi to support integrated agri-industrial development.

Among Madayn's key initiatives to support the sector is the Madayn Agriculture project, launched in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. The initiative aims to establish greenhouses in selected industrial cities to promote local food production, foster entrepreneurship, enhance food security, and improve the trade balance by boosting exports and reducing imports.

In a step towards international collaboration, Madayn has also signed a memorandum of understanding with a South Korean company to develop a specialised food industry project in the Sultanate. The project will focus on establishing smart farms for cultivating Korean fruits, alongside launching a café centred around produce from the farms.

Salehi emphasised that Madayn has recently intensified its promotional efforts to attract investment in the food sector, both domestically and internationally, through targeted marketing campaigns and participation in specialised exhibitions.

ahlibank leads RO100mn sovereign sukuk issuance with 2.6 times oversubscription

Muscat – Demonstrating its growing leadership in Oman's capital markets, ahlibank, together with its Islamic window, ahli islamic, has successfully led the issuance of a RO100mn sovereign sukuk for the Government of Oman, in collaboration with other local institutions.

The transaction, which closed on June 4, 2025, was significantly oversubscribed by 2.6 times, with the final order book reaching RO260mn, according to a press release.

Through a well-executed investor engagement strategy, ahlibank was able to tighten the average yield to 4.625%, lower than the initially set profit rate of 4.65%, thereby securing optimal pricing and outcomes for the Ministry of Finance.

This transaction marks a major milestone for ahlibank as



it represents the bank's first sovereign sukuk issuance mandate from the Ministry of Finance. Executed in under two weeks, the issuance highlights ahlibank's strong institutional relationships and its ability to mobilise the market swiftly and efficiently.

The sukuk attracted robust demand from a diverse investor base, including retail investors, conventional and Islamic banks,

insurance companies, and pension funds. The strong investor response underscores the market's confidence in the Government of Oman's fiscal discipline, prudent economic policies, and stable macroeconomic framework.

Led by ahlibank's corporate finance expertise, this issuance reinforces the bank's strategic role in supporting the government's funding objectives and

contributing to the ongoing development of Oman's capital markets.

Hanaa al Kharusi, Senior General Manager, Wholesale Banking at ahlibank, said, "We are pleased to have partnered with the Ministry of Finance on this landmark issuance, which reflects our deep market expertise and strong execution capabilities. This successful transaction further solidifies ahlibank's position as a trusted adviser in the Islamic capital markets and underscores our strategic focus on supporting national funding objectives. It also reinforces our commitment to building long-term partnerships with key government entities, paving the way for future collaborations that contribute to the continued development of Oman's financial sector."

GCMA holds investment conference in Muscat

Muscat – The Gulf Capital Market Association (GCMA) on Thursday held a conference in Muscat to review major investment challenges and opportunities in regional capital markets and ways to develop a more attractive investment environment.

The conference was organised by the Gulf Capital Market Association in cooperation with MSX. The event was attended by 150 participants, including senior executives from financial institutions, asset managers, representatives of investment funds and analysts from Oman and abroad.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr Said Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy. The confer-



ence laid emphasis on the importance of economic diversification, means of enhancing financial stability and the role of institutional reforms in supporting sustainable development.

Panel discussions at the con-

ference discussed developments in regional credit ratings, corporate financing mechanisms (through debt instruments, notably in the small and medium enterprises sector) and opportunities for integration

among GCC financial markets.

The conference also underscored the growing role of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) in developing investment tools and expanding the base of investors, in addition to the importance of regulatory coordination among markets.

Haitham Salim al Salmi, CEO of Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX), explained that MSX is undergoing a phase of accelerated growth driven by strategic listings and regulatory developments. He added that market capitalisation of MSX stood at RO28.4bn, supported by five major listings since 2023. This, he observed, affirms the growing depth of MSX, as well as investor confidence.

ONA

Oil prices jump, stock markets slump as Iran-Israel tensions shake global economy

Nik Martin

The economic fallout of Israel's attack on Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile facilities in the early hours of Friday was swift. Oil prices spiked and investors shifted out of stocks and into safe-haven assets, including government bonds and gold.

Crude oil futures jumped by as much as 13% as traders bet that Israel's attack would not be a one-off. The Brent global benchmark for oil prices surged more than 10% to \$75.15 per barrel, hitting its highest price in almost five months.

A war of words between the two foes fueled fears of a protracted conflict, with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowing that the military operation would "continue for as many days as it takes to remove this threat," referring to Tehran developing nuclear weapons.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, meanwhile, warned that Israel must expect "harsh punishment" for its strikes.

Stock markets around the world declined on Friday with European and Middle Eastern markets hit the hardest. The S&P 500 and Nasdaq opened about one percentage point lower later Friday, as traders continued to pour into less-risky investments. In Europe, the travel and leisure sector was hit hard, energy stocks rallied, along with defense giants.

"The effects of the attack have cascaded across global markets, with a strong risk-off move for several asset classes," wrote Deutsche Bank analysts in a research note.

The analysts said the strikes had spurred "significant fears about an escalation and a wider regional conflict."

What is immediate economic impact?

Israel and Iran have closed their



Israel's attack on Iran has jolted financial markets, as fears grow of a regional conflict that could disrupt oil supplies. The tensions come at a time of heightened uncertainty, driven by Trump's tariff policies

airspace, along with Iraq and Jordan. Several airlines canceled flights to the region, as fears rose that the conflict could bring down a plane.

Globally, six commercial aircraft have been shot down unintentionally since 2001, with three near-misses in that time, according to aviation risk consultancy Osprey Flight Solutions.

Rerouting flights, however, is a costly exercise, as it increases journey times and planes require additional fuel. Fears of further retaliatory attacks by Iran have forced Israeli airlines to relocate

at supermarkets and empty shelves for some foods. Israeli media outlet Ynet cited supermarket chain Carrefour reporting a 300% increase in footfall on Friday.

What is biggest economic threat?

An all-out war between Israel and Iran could disrupt energy markets and trade routes in the region, which would have ripple effects globally.

The Middle East is a major global oil-producing region, home to some of the world's largest oil reserves and producers.

Iran is the third-largest oil producer in the region, behind Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Despite international sanctions on its oil exports, the Islamic Republic still delivers significant amounts of crude to China and India.

Barclays analyst Amarpreet Singh warned in a research note that in a worst-case scenario, "the conflict could expand to

other key oil and gas producers in the region, and shipping."

All eyes are now on the Strait of Hormuz, a narrow waterway between Iran, the United Arab Emirates and Oman, a key choke point for the global oil trade. If it were to be closed, as Iran has threatened several times, oil tankers would be stranded and oil prices could spike even higher.

About a fifth of the world's total oil consumption passes through the strait – around 18-19mn barrels per day, according to the US Energy Information Administration (EIA).

The price of oil affects the prices consumers pay for everything from fuel to food.

How could a longer conflict impact global economy?

The Israel-Iran tensions are escalating at a time of heightened uncertainty in financial markets, driven by US President Donald Trump's on, off, on-again tariff policies.

The threat of steep levies on imports to the United States has already disrupted global trade and rattled investors. These tariffs have spiked costs for consumers and businesses, slowing economic activity worldwide.

A prolonged conflict between Israel and Iran could worsen these pressures as every 10% increase in the price of oil adds about 0.4% to consumer prices over the subsequent year, a 2019 analysis by FXStreet found.

A multi-front conflict involving Iran-backed groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon or the Houthis in Yemen could paralyze shipping and tourism.

The Houthis began attacking commercial vessels in the Red Sea in late 2023, another critical area for global trade.

The attacks caused an increase in shipping rates and prompted global shipping giants to reroute vessels around the Horn of Africa, which added time and huge costs to journeys.

Disruptions to regional gas supplies, including Israel's Tamar field or Gulf exports of liquefied natural gas (LNG), would also add pressure to European and Asian energy markets.

Israel's economy is already strained by the ongoing Gaza conflict, and a broader war with Iran could potentially push costs to \$120bn or 20% of GDP, according to Israeli economist Yacov Sheinin.

Iran remains in economic crisis due to international sanctions over its nuclear program, which have limited its oil exports. The Iranian rial remains weak and inflation is stubbornly high at around 40%. Any further disruption to oil exports would ripple globally.

While analysts recently lowered the odds of a downturn, the combination of Trump's tariffs and a lasting Middle East war would significantly raise the risk of a global recession.

DW

UK GDP contracts sharply in April; rate cut bets rise

London, UK – Britain's economic recovery suffered a setback in April, with gross domestic product (GDP) shrinking by 0.3% on a monthly basis, marking the steepest contraction since October 2023, according to data released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on Thursday.

The contraction, which exceeded market expectations of a 0.1% fall, has renewed concerns over the UK economy's resilience and intensified pressure on both Downing Street and the Bank of England (BoE)'s policy stance.

The April downturn followed a modest 0.2% expansion in March and comes amid a broader backdrop of weakening labour market data and fading consumer momentum.

The services sector, which accounts for around 80% of UK economic output, was the primary drag in April, declining by 0.4%.

Within services, the professional, scientific and technical activities subsector posted a significant fall of 2.4%. This contraction was driven mainly by a 10.2% plunge in legal activities, attributed in part to the impact of changes to Stamp Duty Land Tax thresholds in England and Northern Ireland.

The tax change prompted homebuyers to bring forward



UK economy shrank 0.3% in April, the sharpest drop since October 2023, led by declines in services and manufacturing

purchases to March, resulting in a sharp drop in related services, such as conveyancing and estate agency work, in April.

Advertising and market research also contributed negatively to GDP, with output down 3.4%, while growth in scientific research and development (up 6.7%) provided a partial offset.

The wholesale and retail trade and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles subsector also weighed on GDP, declining by 1.2% in April after a 0.9% expansion in March.

Production output fell by 0.6% in April, with manufacturing production sliding 0.9% - adding to a 0.8% fall in the pre-

vious month. Overall industrial production contracted by 0.6%, coming in weaker than the 0.5% decline expected by analysts.

Despite a rebound in construction output, which rose 0.9% month-on-month, it was not enough to counterbalance the broader economic dip.

Despite the mounting economic headwinds, the BoE is widely expected to leave interest rates unchanged at 4.25% at its upcoming meeting next week.

However, traders have increased their bets on a rate cut in August, anticipating a 0.25 percentage point reduction as the economy shows further signs of cooling.

(Source: Euronews.com)

President Trump says he would set unilateral tariff rates within weeks

Eleanor Butler

US President Donald Trump told reporters on Thursday that he would send letters to trading partners in the next week or two, outlining unilateral tariff rates.

"We're going to be sending letters out in about a week and a half, two weeks, to countries, telling them what the deal is," Trump said at the John F Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington.

"At a certain point, we're just going to send letters out. And I think you understand that, saying this is the deal, you can take it or leave it," he added.

This would put Trump ahead of his tariff deadline, as the president previously paused so-called "reciprocal" duties for 90 days until July 8. The higher rates are set to kick in on July 9.

Trump told reporters at the Kennedy Center that a delay to the deadline is unlikely, although US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent previously suggested there may be some flexibility.

"It is highly likely that those countries – or trading blocs as is the case with the EU – who are negotiating in good faith, we will roll the date forward to continue the good-faith negotiations," Bessent told the House Ways and Means Committee. "If someone is not negotiating, then we will not."



US President Donald Trump

The US has thus far only managed to secure a trade framework with the UK, as well as clinching a tariff deal with China. Trump was nonetheless upbeat about negotiations. "We're rocking in terms of deals," he said. "We're dealing with quite a few countries and they all want to make a deal with us."

Following talks in London, Trump said that magnets and rare earths would be supplied up front by China and that the US would allow Chinese students into its colleges and universities.

The president added that a 55% tariff would be applied to Chinese imports. A White House official, who was not authorised

Trump previously paused so-called 'reciprocal' tariffs for 90 days until July 8. He has said that a delay to the deadline is unlikely, although US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent previously suggested there may be some flexibility

to discuss the terms publicly, said the 55% was not an increase on the previous 30% tariff on China

because Trump was including other pre-existing import taxes. Specifically, the president was tallying up his 10% baseline tariff, the 20% fentanyl trafficking levy and a 25% pre-existing tariff on China.

In May, the US agreed upon a trade framework with the UK, which allows US goods to be fast-tracked through customs and reduces trade barriers on a number of products. The framework lowers US duties on British steel, aluminum and cars, although there are some knots to work out, meaning the specifics of the deal could arrive later than the 9 July deadline.

(Source: Euronews.com)

Shura Economic Committee hosts OCCI

The Economic and Financial Committee of the Shura Council hosted Dr Adham Turki al Said, chairman of the Economic Committee at the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), and a number of specialists from the Chamber.

The meeting was part of the Committee's ongoing study of a proposal concerning the competitiveness and attractiveness of Oman's business environment, aimed at supporting economic development efforts and enhancing the investment climate in alignment with Oman Vision 2040, a press release said.

The meeting took place during the Committee's 13th session of the second annual convening (2024-2025) of the Council's



tenth term, chaired by Ahmed Said al Sharqi, head of the Committee, with the attendance of other committee members.

Discussions revolved around the readiness of Oman's business and investment environment, and the key factors affecting its competitiveness and

attractiveness. The Committee also reviewed OCCI's views on the Foreign Capital Investment Law (50/2019) post-implementation, as well as the adequacy of current incentives and facilities provided to overcome obstacles facing investors.

The meeting explored the role

Discussions were held around the readiness of Oman's business and investment environment, and key factors

of the Chamber in assessing Oman's business climate, highlighting recent studies and their findings on the competitiveness and appeal of Oman as an investment destination. Key challenges were addressed, along with potential solutions and recommendations aimed at en-

hancing Oman's global business standing.

The members stressed the importance of improving the innovation and entrepreneurship environment by supporting start-ups and facilitating their expansion into international markets. They also emphasised the need

for effective international promotion of Oman's investment opportunities through organised marketing campaigns, and underlined the strategic importance of economic diversification, particularly by empowering sectors such as tourism and the digital economy.

NBO Muzn opens new branch in Musannah

As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance accessibility and bring Islamic banking services closer to customers, NBO Muzn Islamic Banking has opened a new branch in Al Musannah.

This latest expansion reflects Muzn's commitment to offering Shari'a-compliant financial solutions while reinforcing its presence across the sultanate, a press release said.

Salima al Marzooqi, chief Islamic Banking officer at NBO, said, "Opening an Islamic banking branch in Musannah marks another milestone in our journey to make Islamic banking accessible across the Sultanate of Oman. Musannah branch provides outstanding Islamic banking services to the customers by offering tailored financial solutions that align with their values while ensuring convenience and high service standards."

Designed to cater to the diverse financial needs of individu-



als and businesses, the Musannah branch provides a full suite of Islamic banking products and services. From everyday banking solutions to specialised financing

and investment opportunities, the branch is equipped to support customers with modern and efficient services in the welcoming environment.

As part of its customer-first approach, Muzn is committed to combining physical branch accessibility with seamless digital solutions. The bank continues to

enhance its online and mobile banking capabilities, ensuring customers have secure and convenient access to their financial needs.



Lincoln Nautilus offers summer benefits galore

Luxury vehicle enthusiasts can now own the luxury Lincoln Nautilus for a rare price of RO19,999 and also avail exclusive summer campaign benefits such as 5 years/100,000km service (whichever is earlier), 5 years/100,000 km manufacturer's warranty, free registration, free 3M paint protection film and free accessory package. The offer ends on July 23.

Sharing his thoughts on the new Nautilus, a spokesperson from Arabian Car Marketing Company said, "To make a vehicle of this calibre available at such a rare price is our way of giving customers the opportunity to own not just a premium SUV, but a true expression of luxury, design and technology."

With its confident stance and refined elegance, the Lincoln Nautilus turns every arrival into a statement. From its contemporary silhouette and signature grille to the sculpted rear fascia and elegant full-width light bar, the Nautilus is a study in sophistication.

A newly designed spoiler adds both flair and aerodynamic efficiency, while the reserve trim ups the ante with stunning 21" bright machined aluminium wheels, highlight-

ing prestige from every angle.

Inside, the Nautilus is an oasis of serenity. Ambient lighting, acoustic side glass and high-end materials create a tranquil, immersive experience.

The redesigned steering wheel is wrapped in premium Wollsdorf leather, with precision European stitching that elevates the touch-points of every drive. At the heart of the cabin sits a high-definition 11.1-inch LCD Capacitive Touchscreen, offering intuitive control over infotainment and navigation systems.

The Nautilus is not just about luxury, it is built to perform. A 2ltr turbocharged engine delivers an impressive 250hp and 380Nm of torque, perfectly paired with an 8-speed automatic transmission and Lincoln's intelligent all-wheel-drive system. Adaptive suspension and AWD disconnect ensure a composed and responsive ride, while Auto Start-Stop technology adds to its efficiency.

Equipped with Lincoln Co-Pilot360, the Nautilus brings intelligent safety to the forefront. From BLIS with Cross-Traffic Alert to Pre-Collision Assist with Pedestrian Detection and Lane-Keeping.

OAB's Tumouhi initiative hits the road June 17

Oman Arab Bank (OAB) has announced the launch of its SME Development Training Roadshow, a dynamic two-day programme set to take place in Nizwa from June 17 to 18 under the patronage of Sheikh Dr Faisal bin Ali bin Rashid al Zidi, Wali of Manah.

Held under the umbrella of the bank's Tumouhi initiative, the roadshow is tailored to equip small and medium enterprise (SME) owners with essential business skills, financial knowledge, and networking opportunities to fuel their growth. Most notably, this is the third workshop after the Muscat and Sohar events, with the bank's aim to continue to cover all regions in the Sultanate of Oman, a press release said.

The workshop will be hosted at the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry Hall in Nizwa and is open to SME owners and



We believe SMEs are the backbone of our economy. Through the Tumouhi initiative, we are committed to empowering entrepreneurs with the skills and tools they need to thrive

SULAIMAN AL HARTHI

aspiring entrepreneurs across the sultanate. With a comprehensive agenda covering financial literacy, strategic planning, human resources, and marketing, participants will gain hands-on insights to help scale their ventures.

Commenting on the initiative, Sulaiman al Harthi, CEO of Oman Arab Bank, said, "At Oman Arab Bank, we believe SMEs are the backbone of our economy. Through the Tumouhi initiative, we are committed to empowering entrepreneurs with the skills and tools they need to thrive. The roadshow ascends being a mere training program. Truly, it is a platform for inspiration, connection, and sustainable growth."

The Tumouhi SME Roadshow reflects OAB's broader commitment to national economic development through targeted support for small businesses. The initiative also aligns with Oman Vision 2040 by fostering a resilient private sector powered by innovation, inclusion, and enterprise. Interested participants can register via the official OAB website. Seats are limited and early registration is encouraged.

Six Senses Ziggy Bay summer 'Escape' offers fun along the coastline

Just a 2.5-hour scenic drive from Dubai, Six Senses Ziggy Bay invites guests to dive into a summer of slow living and marine discovery.

With its new 'Escape' offer now available, featuring 15% off stays and daily breakfast, there's never been a better time to uncover the hidden treasures of the Musandam Peninsula, one of the region's most captivating marine destinations, a press release said.

From the moment guests

step onto its soft, powdery beach, the call of the sea becomes irresistible. Days here unfold to the rhythm of the waves, whether snorkelling vibrant coral reefs, paddleboarding across transparent waters, or diving beneath the surface for a closer look at the aquatic life thriving in this plankton-rich sanctuary.

The bay's marine biodiversity is remarkable, with healthy hard and soft coral gardens teeming with curious reef fish, rays, tur-



tles, and even the occasional whale shark. For those eager to explore these pristine waters up close, the resort's expert dive partner, Extra Divers, offers a full suite of experiences, from beginner-friendly try dives and open water certifications to advanced excursions into the more remote dive sites along the Musandam coast.

Above the surface, Ziggy Bay's signature dhow cruises offer a timeless way to explore the raw beauty of the Omani

coastline. Drift through the calm waters of Haffa, Sanna't, Lima, Charia, and Hamra, where dramatic cliffs meet secluded coves and the horizon stretches endlessly. Guests can set sail at sunset, sip chilled refreshments, and watch the sky turn gold over the Hajar Mountains, a moment of stillness that lingers long after the sun dips below the sea.

Enjoy kayaking through the bay, floating over shallow reefs, or venturing deeper with scuba diving, etc.



Mitsubishi floats summer offers with unbeatable value

General Automotive Company (GAC), the official distributor of Mitsubishi Motors in Oman, is making summer driving more rewarding with its exclusive Summer Campaign, offering unbeatable value across the Mitsubishi lineup, a press release said.

With low EMI options, now is the perfect time to upgrade your ride. The Montero Sport delivers exceptional comfort and control, powered by a 3ltr V6 petrol engine and 8-speed automatic

Along with special financing, customers can enjoy free insurance and registration, lumar window tint, a RO50 gift voucher, and Mitsubishi's 6-year unlimited km warranty

transmission. Advanced safety features such as Forward Collision Mitigation and 7 SRS airbags provide peace of mind, while luxury touches like a sunroof and plush leather seats elevate the driving experience. EMI

starts from RO165 with free service up to 5 years or 100,000km.

For those seeking city-friendly versatility, the ASX offers a compact yet spacious design with an advanced 4WD system for superior grip. Enhanced safety fea-

tures, LED lighting, and keyless entry ensure a secure and effortless drive. EMI starts from RO89, with free service for 5 years or 100,000km.

The L200, available in Double CAB and Single CAB variants, combines rugged capability with modern comfort. Featuring a 2.4ltr petrol engine, Active Stability and Traction Control, and a heavy-duty suspension, it ensures optimal performance in any condition. Spacious interiors, keyless entry, and high-grade

fabric seats make every journey more convenient.

Along with special financing, customers can enjoy free insurance and registration, lumar window tint, a RO50 gift voucher, and Mitsubishi's 6-year unlimited kilometre warranty, providing long-term peace of mind.

"This summer, savings take centre stage as we bring customers unbeatable value on the Mitsubishi range," said Manoj Ranade, General Manager of GAC.

ROP, Bank Muscat combat financial electronic fraud



Bank Muscat and the Royal Oman Police (ROP) continue the successful awareness campaign aimed at educating the community about the risks of electronic financial fraud and effective prevention strategies.

Recently, three awareness videos were launched across various media and social media platforms, delivering crucial messages about emerging types of fraud that utilise suspicious websites, links, and electronic transactions. The campaign emphasises the importance of safeguarding personal information, particularly the risks associated with sharing PIN numbers during these transactions.

The first video warns against suspicious websites that exploit users' personal data, urging caution when interacting with digital platforms that masquerade as legitimate services. The second video addresses the dangers of fake links promising jobs or products, which can lead to data theft. While the

third video focuses on the importance of not sharing financial data or bank account credentials, highlighting the need for vigilance in the face of rising cybercrime.

This collaboration between ROP and Bank Muscat reflects a commitment to enhancing community safety by equipping individuals and businesses with the knowledge to recognise fraudulent schemes. The campaign aims to inform the public about various fraud types and the ever-evolving tactics used by fraudsters, while also providing practical advice on how to protect their financial information.

It emphasises the necessity for users to verify the credibility of any website, link, or platform before disclosing sensitive personal or financial information, to prevent falling victim to fraud and identity theft. Bank Muscat is dedicated to strengthening partnerships with various institutions, including the ROP and the Ministry of Transport, Communications and IT.



Sohar International named 'Middle East Best Employer Brand'

Reaffirming its position as a distinguished employer of choice in the region, Sohar International was recently awarded the prestigious 'Middle East Best Employer Brand' award, an accolade conferred by the World HRD Congress in association with the Employer Branding Institute.

Known for its rigorous and multi-tiered selection process—comprising expert recommendations, independent research, and jury evaluation by global industry leaders—the Employer Branding Awards celebrates organisations that exemplify excellence in talent strategy and forward-thinking people practices. Sohar International's recognition underscores its steadfast commitment to fostering a performance-driven, inclusive culture—anchored in the belief that human capital is central to long-term value creation and institutional growth.

Representing the bank at the ceremony, Mahira Saleh al Raisi, chief people officer at Sohar International, attended the event and received the award on behalf of the bank—

further highlighting the leadership's active role in driving the bank's people agenda forward.

Mahira stated, "Our people are integral to every milestone we achieve and every transformation we lead. At Sohar International, we believe that sustained performance stems from an environment where talent is nurtured, ideas are valued, and purpose is shared. We approach human capital with the same clarity and ambition that drives our business strategy—ensuring our people grow as the organisation evolves."

"From fostering inclusive leadership to building next-generation capabilities, our focus on empowering individuals at every level is a strategic imperative that supports our broader goals of being a resilient and future-forward institution. This recognition reaffirms that the investment we place in our people is both meaningful and measurable."

Sohar International's selection for the award was based on its ability to deliver impact-driven HR practices aligned with the bank's overarching transformation agenda.

KFSHRC advances smart hospital transformation

King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre (KFSHRC) continues to redefine global healthcare through its Smart Hospital initiative, leveraging AI, simulation, and immersive technologies across its departments.

These technologies have supported KFSHRC to enhance workforce training, clinical care, and operational efficiency, a press release said.

The Academic and Training Affairs (ATA) division is leading this transformation, deploying next-generation tools such as simulation labs, e-learning, and virtual reality (VR) to deliver hands-on, immersive training. These technologies allow healthcare professionals to rehearse complex procedures from emergency care to surgical planning, strengthening clinical preparedness and patient safety.

The Patient Flow and Capacity Command Centre enhances operational efficiency by applying AI to forecast demand, man-



Across departments such as Radiology, Pathology, Genomics, and Oncology, AI enhances diagnosis and interpretation

age resources, and monitor patient flow in real time. Since its launch, the Centre has completed over 170,000 interventions, cutting bed wait times from 32 to 6 hours and reducing emergency delays by 14%.

In 2024 alone, the hospital received over 46,000 new patients and processed more than 79,000 referrals. Smart tools,

such as the Noor robot, enhance the patient experience by providing real-time assistance and improving access to services.

Across departments such as Radiology, Pathology, Genomics, and Oncology, AI enhances diagnosis, interpretation, early interventions and personalised care for complex diseases. Driving these

innovations is KFSHRC's Centre for Healthcare Intelligence (CHI), which has developed over 20 AI applications in medical imaging, clinical decision support, and operations.

In partnership with the Saudi Commission for Health Specialties, CHI also leads national AI training programmes to build future-ready digital health talent.

Oman Air launches major baggage campaign until November 30

Oman Air has launched a major new baggage campaign, giving travellers even more reason to plan ahead and travel smart. Until November 30, guests can enjoy up to 50% off pre-booked baggage and up to 25% off seat selection across the airline's entire network.

The offer is available exclusively for bookings made through Oman Air's official website at www.omanair.com or the mobile app, a press release said.

Leading the market with a generous 7kg free cabin baggage allowance on all flights and a wide range of fare choices, Oman Air continues to provide guests with more flexibility, con-



venience and value. The airline's pre-booked baggage/seats help avoid last-minute airport fees.

The campaign follows the recent introduction of Oman Air's new range of fare bundles designed to cater to suit different

travel needs, whether flying light or packing a little extra. Economy Class options include Super Saver, Comfort and Flex, while Business Class offers Comfort Flex, and the premium Business Studio bundle.

Saudi summer visas beckon new visitors

As summer unfolds across Saudi, the country is alive with cultural festivals, coastal escapes, and international headline events like the Esports World Cup. Whether you're looking to explore ancient heritage sites, cool off in the mountains, or catch the global gaming action in Riyadh, this season promises one of the most exciting times to visit.

Great news for travellers - e-visa applications will resume on June 10. Visitors from eligible countries can apply online with ease, making it simpler than ever to plan a trip to

Saudi this summer. Those holding valid Schengen, UK, or US visit visas—or who are residents of the EU, UK, or US—are also eligible for visa-on-arrival at Saudi entry points.

With vibrant cultural celebrations, family-friendly festivals, and major international events on the calendar, Saudi is ready to welcome visitors from around the world. Whether you're planning a spontaneous escape or a long-awaited holiday, there's something for everyone to enjoy this summer.

How the LA protests may boost appetite for authoritarianism

Los Angeles, US - "These are not protesters, they are troublemakers and insurrectionists," posted US President Donald Trump on his own Truth Social platform. Elon Musk, Trump's former right-hand, DOGE-man, seconded the post by screenshotting and reposting it on his platform, X.

This has been the conservative narrative since people in Los Angeles began protesting against the Trump Administration's immigration policy in early June. Some say Trump is manufacturing a crisis for political gain, and psychology studies suggest it may well work.

Misinformation to sway people's thinking

Trump has compared images of burning cars, and demonstrators waving Mexican flags, to a 'foreign invasion'. He has deployed the National Guard against protestors - the first time a US President has bypassed state governments to do so since 1965.

Police have hit journalists with rubber bullets - either directly or indirectly. Such drama, say psychologists, can feed a narrative of a state of emergency.

But is it true? Critics have said Trump is manufacturing a crisis around the LA immigration protests for political gain.

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, for example, described a series of raids on homes and vehicles as a provocation by the White House.



Critics have accused President Donald Trump of manufacturing a crisis around the protests in Los Angeles

Psychological research suggests far-right narratives about social breakdown could lead to more support for US President Trump and authoritarianism, not less

California Governor Gavin Newsom called Trump's actions a step toward authoritarianism and a 'brazen abuse of power'.

Rather than turning people away from Trump, leading psychology research suggests this authoritarianism may increase his popularity - at least among voters who feel threatened by the idea of social breakdown.

Order, control and certainty

Research has found that people who perceive society is unstable and chaotic are more likely to be receptive to authoritarian leaders who promise order, control, and certainty.

One study among German and US participants found that a sense of societal instability can

create feelings of moral ambiguity, alienation and disconnection and 'a sense that one cannot influence the political process', said the study's lead author Jasper Neerdaels, a social psychologist at Katholieke Universiteit in Leuven, Belgium.

"Submitting to (sic) authoritarian leadership may mean giving up freedom, but it also promises psychological relief from (the) uncertainty. Authoritarian regimes provide clear hierarchies, social rules, and the guidance of a strong leader," Neerdaels told DW.

Another study published in May 2025 suggested that people

were more likely to favour dominant, authoritarian leaders during times of conflict.

The researchers analysed data from 25 countries and found that the presence of inter-group conflict increases people's preferences for dominant leaders. "We (found) that participants who tend to see the world as more conflict-ridden also express stronger preferences for dominant leaders," said the study's lead author Lasse Laustsen from Aarhus University in Denmark.

In their analysis, they argued that humans evolved psychological systems to prioritise strong

leadership when faced with external threats.

Boosting Trump's support

The situation around the current protests in LA appears to be in line with current psychology research: "There is evidence that the Trump administration and its supporters are exploiting these protests to create the perception that US society is falling apart," said Neerdaels.

"This makes sense because (a) perception of society breaking down can increase support for authoritarianism (and) the desire for a strong leader, who

takes vigorous action," he said.

Polling data suggests that Trump's popularity among US voters is higher now than it was before the LA protests. RealClear Polling, which presents an average of 15 different pollsters, shows Trump's favourability at 47.3% on June 10, up from 45.1% at the end of April. "The strategy of spreading narratives to increase the perception that society is breaking down is popular among far-right/authoritarian leaders across the world, also in Germany," said Neerdaels.

Reducing sense of fear

Psychological research does provide clues about how to reduce support for authoritarianism - by addressing the uncertainty caused by perceived social breakdown. Studies suggest that reducing people's sense of fear and insecurity can help counteract appetite for authoritarianism.

What also helps is better communication on the meaning and purpose of politics, said Neerdaels. For example, clarifying why political actions are taken, explaining policies, and highlighting the values that guide political decisions. "Perhaps counterintuitively, when politicians openly express their own feelings of uncertainty, it might help people acknowledge and cope with their own uncertainty and thus decrease their desire for a strong leader," said Neerdaels.

DW

BRIDGING THE MOUNTAINS



A view of the Huajiang Grand Canyon Bridge in southwest China's Guizhou Province. Roughly twice the height of the Eiffel Tower and world's largest span bridge to be built in a mountainous area, it is expected to open to traffic this year (Xinhua)

Germany tackles explosive wartime legacy at sea

Berlin, Germany - An estimated 1.6mn metric tonnes of conventional munitions lie in Germany's coastal waters alone. The vast majority is located in the North Sea; the rest in the Baltic. There are also thought to be several thousand tonnes of chemical weapons.

Most have lain largely forgotten for 80 years or more. While headline-grabbing bomb discoveries on dry land close down entire neighbourhoods and transport networks, as in the western German city of Cologne in early June, the threat is much more insidious at sea.

Growing fears over contamination have prompted action. Now, a large mobile platform is planned that will autonomously retrieve old weapons from the seabed and dispose of them. The trailblazing project was pre-



With autonomous underwater vehicles like these, GEOMAR can make photographic charts of the seabed

sented to the international community at the UN Ocean Conference in the French city of Nice in June.

"Up to now, recovery operations were only carried out in the event of imminent danger, if, for example, an undetonated bomb was at risk of exploding," said Sebastian Unger, marine conservation director at Germany's

Environment Ministry (BMUKN).

"Now, it is about finally tackling this problem for reasons of environmental and marine conservation, but also to ultimately reduce human health risks," added the ministry expert, talking to DW from the event.

German mines and explosives discarded by Allied bombers on

Unexploded WWII bombs are still regularly found across Germany. But hundreds of thousands of tonnes of wartime munitions also lurk off its shores

their way back to Britain are among the WWII combat weapons strewn across the ocean floor. But most of the explosives in Germany's North Sea and Baltic waters ended up there after the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945.

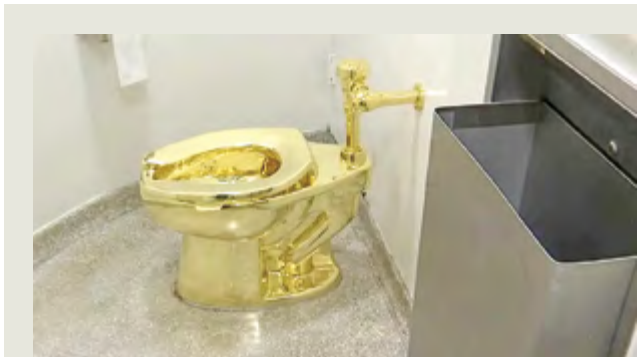
British troops tipped the armaments that they found in weapons factories and ware-

houses into the sea. It was seen as a quick fix in the process to denazify and demilitarize Germany.

In recent years, it has become apparent that they are decomposing. One visible sign of their decay is lumps of white phosphorus or an explosive mixture containing TNT occasionally washing ashore. The substances look frighteningly similar to prize amber or minerals and visitors and beachcombers have been injured.

Toxicological tests carried out on mussels in the dumping site over the last decade have revealed traces of carcinogenic chemicals contained in the munitions. Examination of samples gathered since the 1980s also show a steady rise from 2002 onwards.

DW



The fully functioning toilet has never been recovered

UK: Two jailed over gold toilet theft from Blenheim Palace

London, UK - An Oxford court on Friday handed jail sentences to two members of a gang that in 2019 stole a £4.75mn (US\$6.4mn) art work in the form of a gold toilet from Blenheim Palace, the birthplace of famous British wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

The toilet, entitled 'America' and created by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan as a commentary on ostentatious consumerism, had been on display for a just few days at the stately home when a five-strong gang smashed its way into the palace, ripping out the fully functioning appliance.

The toilet, which was split up or melted down and sold on soon after it was stolen and has never been recovered, weighed approximately 98kg (216 pounds) and was made from gold worth about US\$3.81mn.

One of the men, James Sheen, 40, received a four-year sentence that will run consecutively to the 19 years and 4-month sentence he is currently serving for attacks on cash machines, a museum

burglary and fraud.

He is believed to have wielded the sledgehammer used to remove the toilet from its fastenings.

The other, Michael Jones, 39, received a 27-month sentence, with the judge saying he could not be sure he was part of the gang that carried out the burglary, though he was found guilty of having carried out reconnaissance at the stately home preceding the crime.

That reconnaissance included trying out the facility a day before the theft, an experience he described to the court as 'splendid.'

Other members of the gang have already been sentenced for their roles in the theft.

Golden toilet once offered to Trump

The toilet had previously been on display at The Guggenheim Museum in New York, and had been offered to US President Donald Trump as a loan during his first term of office, an offer the White House declined, having rather requested a Van Gogh painting.

DW

IRAN-ISRAEL CONFLICT

Israel threatens to ‘burn Tehran’ if Iran continues to launch missiles

Tel Aviv/Tehran - Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz threatened on Saturday to ‘burn Tehran’ if Iran continues launching missiles at Israeli territory.

Katz’s remarks came during a high-level security assessment attended by Israel Defence Forces Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir, Mossad Director David Barnea, and other senior military officials, according to the Israeli newspaper *The Times of Israel*.

“The Iranian dictator is turning the citizens of Iran into hostages and creating a reality in which they, especially the residents of Tehran, will pay a heavy price for the criminal attack on Israeli civilians,” Katz claimed, referring to Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.

“If Khamenei continues to fire missiles at the Israeli home front, Tehran will burn,” he warned.

Earlier, Eyal Zamir and Air Force Commander Tomer Bar said that ‘the path to Iran is paved’, announcing new airstrikes on Iran’s capital Tehran.

During a security assessment amid ongoing hostilities with Iran, they both declared that ‘the path to Iran is paved’, according to the Israeli newspaper *Yedioth Ahronoth*.

According to plans, Israeli Air Force planes will strike targets in Tehran, they added.



Israeli soldiers inspect a site hit by a missile fired from Iran in the Israeli city of Ramat Gan near Tel Aviv on Saturday

An Israeli airstrike targeted a residential building in Tehran on Friday, killing 60 people, including 20 children, according to Iran’s state-run media on Saturday. “60 people, including 20 children, were killed in an Israeli strike on a residential building in Tehran’s Shahid Chamran Township,” Iranian Press TV reported.

In the early hours of Friday, Israeli forces attacked Iran, hitting nuclear and missile facilities and killing over 104 people, including top military commanders and scientists, and injuring

nearly 380 people.

According to reports, Iran responded with ballistic missiles targeting several areas across Israel, killing three people and injuring over 170 others.

No radiation leak, says Iran

Meanwhile, Iran said on Saturday that Israel’s attack on the Fordow nuclear facility near the city of Qom caused only minor damage and did not result in any nuclear contamination.

Speaking to the Iranian Stu-

dents News Agency (ISNA), Iran’s Atomic Energy Organization spokesperson Behrouz Kamalvandi provided updates on the status of the country’s nuclear sites following the attack.

“There is no significant damage in the targeted areas at Fordow. We had anticipated such a scenario and had already moved a substantial amount of equipment and materials offsite,” he said.

“As a result, there was no large-scale damage, and there is absolutely no concern regarding radioactive contamination.”

There is no significant damage in targeted areas at Fordow (nuclear facility). We had already moved a substantial amount of equipment and materials offsite

BEHROUZ KAMALVANDI

Kamalvandi also confirmed that no casualties occurred at any nuclear facility across the country.

“There have been past incidents where our nuclear industry was harmed, but we rebuilt it each time - even stronger than

before.”

Iran also closed its airspace ‘until further notice’ amid ongoing Israeli attacks, the country’s state-run media reported early on Saturday.

“Based on the aviation announcement issued by the Civil

Pope Leo calls for reason, dialogue

Vatican City - Pope Leo XIV has called on both Israel and Iran to show a sense of responsibility in their actions as the conflict between the two countries escalates.

“The situation in Iran and Israel has seriously deteriorated at such a delicate moment. I wish to forcefully renew an appeal for responsibility and reason,” the pope said in a statement.

“The commitment to build a safer world free from the nuclear threat must be pursued through a respectful meeting and sincere dialogue,” he said. “No one should ever threaten the existence of the other.” DW

Aviation Authority, until further notice, flights will not be operated at all airports in the country in order to protect the safety of passengers,” according to the official Iranian news agency IRNA.

Anadolu Agency

Iran vows to continue military strikes until Israel feels regret for its actions

Tehran/Ankara - Iran will continue its military operations until Israel regrets its actions, the spokesperson for Iran’s Armed Forces General Staff, Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi, said on Saturday.

Speaking to Iranian state television, Shekarchi commented on Israel’s recent attack against Iran and Tehran’s subsequent response. Referring to a statement made by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei the previous day, Shekarchi said: “We will continue our operations until the criminal Zionist regime feels regret.”

The attacks killed Iran’s chief of staff and the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

9 scientists killed

Three more Iranian nuclear sci-



Rescue teams working outside a building that was struck by an Israeli airstrike, in Tehran on Saturday

entists were reported killed in Israeli military attacks on Iran, according to a report on Saturday by state-run Press TV, following a wave of tit-for-tat strikes between the two rivals.

The outlet identified the scientists as Ali Bakaei Karimi, Mansour Asgari, and Saeed Borji.

On Friday, the semi-official Tasnim news agency reported that six nuclear scientists were killed in Israeli strikes on Iran.

The agency identified the assassinated scientists as Abdulhamid Minouchehr, Ahmadreza Zolfaghari, Seyyed Amirhossein Faqhi, Motabrizadeh, Mohammed Mehdi Tehrani, and

Fereydoun Abbasi.

At least 3 killed in Israel

The death toll from Iran’s retaliatory strikes on Israel rose to three, with 172 others injured, according to Israeli media reports. A woman, who was injured in the first wave of missile strikes from Iran, succumbed to her injuries, according to Israel’s public broadcaster KAN.

Another two Israelis who were injured in a later missile strike in central Israel have been pronounced dead, the broadcaster reported.

The number of Israelis injured in Iranian attacks rose to 172. They have been admitted to hospitals, the report said, adding that most of the wounded were in mild condition.

Anadolu Agency

3rd Israeli fighter jet shot down in Iran: IRNA

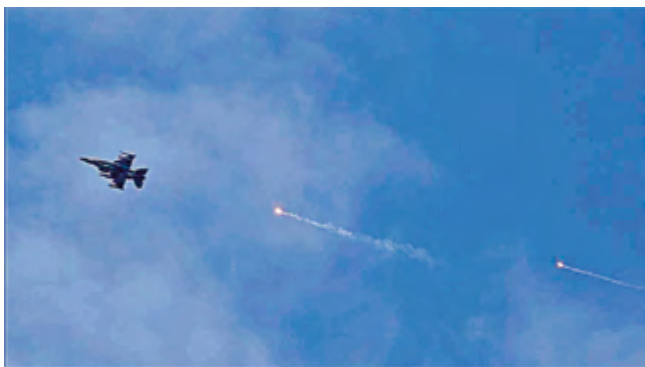
Tehran, Iran - Iran’s air defences have shot down a third Israeli F-35 fighter, state news agency IRNA reported on Saturday, a claim dismissed by the Israeli army.

The jet’s pilot ejected, and army commandos arrested the pilot, the agency also said in a post on X. Israeli army spokesperson Lt. Col. Avichay Adraee denied the reports on X, describing the claims as lies.

On Friday, Tasnim news agency reported the army shot down two Israeli fighter jets involved in airstrikes on Iranian territory, and also taking an Israeli woman pilot into custody.

Adraee had denied those reports as well, calling them ‘completely baseless’ and accusing Iranian media of fabricating information.

Meanwhile, Iran is also considering closing the strategic Strait of Hormuz in response to Israeli military attacks, a lawmaker said on Saturday.



The state-run Press TV quoted Iranian parliamentarian Esmail Kowsari as saying Tehran is weighing the move, which could have significant consequences for global oil supplies. “Iran is considering blocking the Hormuz Strait in the Persian Gulf, which sees more than 17mn barrels of oil pass through it every day,” Kowsari was cited as saying.

‘No damages’ to Mehrabad Airport

Iran reported on Saturday that

no damage was inflicted on the runways of Mehrabad Airport during the overnight Israeli airstrike.

According to Iran’s official news agency IRNA, the attack targeted an area behind the airport’s vehicle equipment building and the hangars used for fighter jets at the capital Tehran’s Mehrabad Airport.

The report stated that the airport’s runways, main terminals, and key facilities were unaffected by the strike.

Anadolu Agency

Where do Donald Trump and the United States stand?

Washington, D.C., US - US President Donald Trump claims his country was not involved with Israel’s attacks on Iran. At the same time, he threatens that if Tehran doesn’t reach a nuclear deal with the US, attacks on Iran ‘will only get worse’.

The US government’s political line after Israel’s attack on Iran is clear: Washington had no part in it.

“Israel took unilateral action against Iran,” US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a statement shared by the White House. “We are not involved in strikes against Iran and our top priority is protecting American forces in the region. Israel advised us that they believe this action was necessary for its

self-defence ... Let me be clear: Iran should not target US interests or personnel.”

The White House social media team posted the statement on social media platform X roughly an hour after the start of Israel’s attacks on Iran early on Friday morning. Later, on Friday evening, Iran launched retaliatory attacks on Israel.

Before that, on Thursday, the US State Department posted a warning on X about the complex security situation in the Middle East: “We remind US citizens in Israel and the broader region of the continued need for caution and encourage them to monitor the news for breaking developments.”

The US was informed about



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and President Donald Trump have both spoken about the conflict

the attack in advance. But were they really not actively involved in any way?

“Everything we know so far about the logistics, for example about the hidden drones in Iran,

suggests that Israel carried out the attack alone,” Sascha Lohmann, senior associate and part of the America regional research group at the German Institute for International and

Security Affairs, said in an interview with DW. “But we cannot completely rule out the possibility that the US helped.”

The deployment of 200 military jets that flew to Iran and

back for example raises the question of whether the US military provided support with air-to-air refuelling, according to Lohmann.

Israel’s attacks early on Friday morning were mainly directed against military facilities and sites involved in Iran’s nuclear programme, such as the Natanz nuclear facility, where uranium is enriched, among other things.

Attacks on Iran ‘will only get worse’

After Israel’s attack on Iran’s nuclear infrastructure, Trump was quoted by Fox News reporter Bret Baier as saying that ‘Iran cannot have a nuclear bomb’.

“We hope to get back to

the negotiating table,” Trump said according to the right-leaning TV channel. “We’ll see.”

Trump used much harsher language on his social media platform Truth Social. He wrote in a post that he had given Iran many chances to reach a nuclear deal with him.

If that doesn’t happen, Trump says he warned Iranian leadership that they’re facing an attack that’s much worse than anything they could imagine.

“The United States makes the best and most lethal military equipment anywhere in the world by far,” Trump wrote. “Israel has a lot of it, with much more to come - and they know how to use it.” DW

Deadly crash: India orders extended scrutiny of Boeing 787 series planes

Currently, there are 34 Boeing Dreamliner 787 series aircrafts in Indian fleet

New Delhi, India - India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued an order to extend the scrutiny of the Boeing Dreamliner 787 series planes present in the country's aircraft fleet, said Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu on Saturday.

Naidu further stated that around eight Boeing 787 Series aircraft have already been scrutinised and inspected with immediate urgency.

Addressing a press conference here, the minister said: "We have very strict safety standards in the country...When the incident happened, we also felt that there is a need to do an extended surveillance of the Boeing 787 Series. DGCA has also given an order to do the extended surveillance for the Boeing 787 planes. There are 34 in our Indian aircraft fleet today. I believe that 8 have already been inspected, and with immediate urgency, all of them are going to be done."

"Furthermore, as the investigation is going to proceed and the report is going to come, whatever necessary steps need to be taken, we are going to ensure that without any hesitation, we are going



Members of various rescue and probe teams inspect the wreckage of the Air India flight, in Ahmedabad, India on Saturday (ANI)

to improve every necessary thing that is going to come our way to improve the safety," he added.

The minister further informed that Air India has been instructed to facilitate the process of assisting the families of the passengers in whatever way is required. The DNA testing is also happening on one side so that the bodies can be identified and given to the respective families. The government of Gujarat is coordinating with that. Once the DNA testing is confirmed, the bodies are being given to the respective families, and we are hoping that the process also gets

Thursday's crash claimed the lives of 241 of 242 people on board the plane that was operating Air India flight AI-171 from Ahmedabad to London Gatwick. Lives were also lost on the ground as the plane crashed into a medical college hostel

finished as soon as possible, but the documentation and the procedure need to be followed. We are ensuring that there is no lapse in the process or the protocol that needs to be followed..."

On June 12, the AI-171 Boeing Dreamliner 787-8 aeroplane bound for London's Gatwick had crashed shortly after it took off from the Ahmedabad Interna-

tional Airport. The airlines said only one out of the 242 people on board the aircraft survived the crash.

"The last two days have been very difficult, especially for the ministry and everyone else. The incident that happened in Ahmedabad has shaken the entire nation. My deepest condolences to the family members who have lost their loved ones in the incident. I have also personally lost my father to a road accident, so to a certain extent, I can understand the pain and anguish the family members are feeling."

"It was a moment of shock right after we got to know about the incident, but even in that disbelief, I personally rushed to the site to oversee what needed to be done. Once we rushed to the site, the government of Gujarat had already been working on the ground trying to rescue," he added.

ANI

Russia, Ukraine conduct another prisoner swap

Istanbul, Turkey - Russia and Ukraine carried out another prisoner exchange, the fourth in a week, returning captured military personnel to their respective countries, according to the Russian Defence Ministry and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The Russian ministry announced that its servicemen were brought back from Ukrainian territory as part of the exchange deal, while captured Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel were handed over in return.

"We continue to take our people from Russian captivity. This is the fourth exchange in a week," Zelenskyy confirmed on Telegram.

He said the returnees included soldiers from the armed forces, the National Guard, the State Border Service, and the State Special Transport Service, noting that many had been detained since 2022.

"We must release everyone and we are working precisely for this, so as not to leave anyone to the enemy. Thank you to everyone who helps," Zelenskyy added.

Ukraine has conducted frequent prisoner swaps with Russia throughout the war, with some exchanges occurring through mediation by countries like the UAE, Türkiye, and Qatar.

Anadolu Agency

France 'determined' to recognise state of Palestine: FM

Paris, France - French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot reiterated on Friday the country's determination to recognise the state of Palestine.

France would 'uphold the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination by recognising the State of Palestine', Barrot said during his speech at the civil society event, 'Paris Call for the Two-State Solution, Peace and Regional Security', hosted by the Paris Peace Forum.

"I say it again here: whatever the recent developments in the region, France is determined to

do so."

Barrot warned that it is time to bring a political solution to the Palestinians and that they will focus on it during the upcoming UN-backed conference on the two-state solution, co-organised by France and Saudi Arabia in New York later this month.

"This political solution involves the creation of a viable Palestinian state with renewed governance, strong security guarantees for both Israelis and Palestinians," he said.

Barrot urged for 'courage' and 'strong mobilisation' from the in-



French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot

ternational community toward to 'path of peace', reiterating the need for 'an immediate ceasefire, the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, and the massive and unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza'.

"The two-state solution, to which we remain firmly committed - a condition for peace and security in the region, and a requirement under international law - is now facing existential threats: the multiplication of unilateral measures on the ground, the acceleration of settlement expansion and the prospect of an-

nexation, the deepening of hatred, and the collapse of the peace process," he stressed.

Barrot said 'too many' civilians were paying the price of the war in Gaza 'that has gone on for far too long'. "We owe them our compassion, and every minute should be dedicated to achieving a ceasefire," he said.

15 more killed in Gaza

Meanwhile, at least 15 more Palestinians were killed and dozens wounded on Saturday when Israeli forces opened fire on

a crowd of civilians waiting for food aid near a distribution centre in the central Gaza Strip, according to medical sources and witnesses. The victims were among a large group of people gathered near the US-Israeli aid distribution centres near the Netzarim corridor in the central part of the enclave, medical sources told Anadolu.

Meanwhile, witnesses reported that Israeli military vehicles and drones fired indiscriminately at the crowd near the distribution site.

Anadolu Agency

Trump loses appeal in E Jean Carroll case

Washington, D.C., US - A US federal appeals court on Friday rejected President Donald Trump's request for a full rehearing in a civil case filed by writer E Jean Carroll, upholding a US\$5mn jury verdict that found him liable for sexual abuse and defamation.

The decision by the 2nd US Circuit Court of Appeals left intact a 2023 ruling by a New York jury, which found Trump responsible for attacking Carroll in a Manhattan department store dressing room in the 1990s and later defaming her in public statements.

Trump, 78, had sought a review by the full 13-judge panel after a three-judge subset upheld the verdict earlier this year. The court did not provide a reason for the rejection. Two Trump-appointed judges, Steven Menashi and Michael Park, dissented, saying the outcome



'sanctioned striking departures from precedent', according to BBC.

Carroll, now 81, first went public with the allegations in 2019 and filed the lawsuit under New York's Adult Survivors Act. In a 2022 post on Truth Social, Trump denied the claims, calling them a 'hoax' and stating Carroll was 'not my type'.

He has consistently denied any wrongdoing and may now petition the US Supreme Court as a final legal step.

Anadolu Agency

Indian Navy intervenes to keep vessel on fire off coast

Kochi, India - The Indian Navy successfully undertook the aerial insertion of the salvage team on-board the distressed vessel MV Wan Hai 503, which has been on fire since June 9.

In a post on X, the Indian Navy said: "The salvage team, which embarked the Seaking helicopter at @IN_Garuda, #Kochi, was winched down the vessel on #13Jun 25, amidst challenging weather and sea conditions and fire onboard."

The salvage team connected the tow with the Salvage Tug Offshore Warrior, after which the salvage team was successfully extracted by naval helicopter. Towing operations of the vessel have commenced.

INS Sharda and OSV MV Triton Liberty are actively engaged with the India Coast Guard and other maritime agencies to augment the salvage operation, the Indian Navy said.

"This swift insertion and extraction of the salvage team by



Smoke billow out from Singaporean Vessel MV Wan Hai 503, off Kochi, India on Friday (ANI)

the Indian Navy has significantly augmented the ongoing salvage efforts," it added.

Earlier in the day, in a significant development in the salvage operations of MV Wan Hai 503, the vessel's tow was successfully transferred from Indian Coast Guard (ICG) ships to the ocean-going tug Offshore Warrior. This

shift was essential to progress the operation, as ICG vessels have limited bollard pull - a term denoting the towing capacity of a ship, said ICG.

For the past few days, ICG ships had been maintaining the vessel's position away from the coast. However, sudden deterioration in weather conditions, ac-

companied by strong westerly winds, caused the vessel to drift rapidly towards the shoreline.

The adverse weather restricted aerial operations and delayed the embarkation of the salvage team members onto the vessel, said ICG. Despite these challenges, around 5pm on Friday, a Navy Sea King helicopter

successfully launched from Kochi with the salvage team and winched them onboard the distressed vessel under extremely difficult conditions.

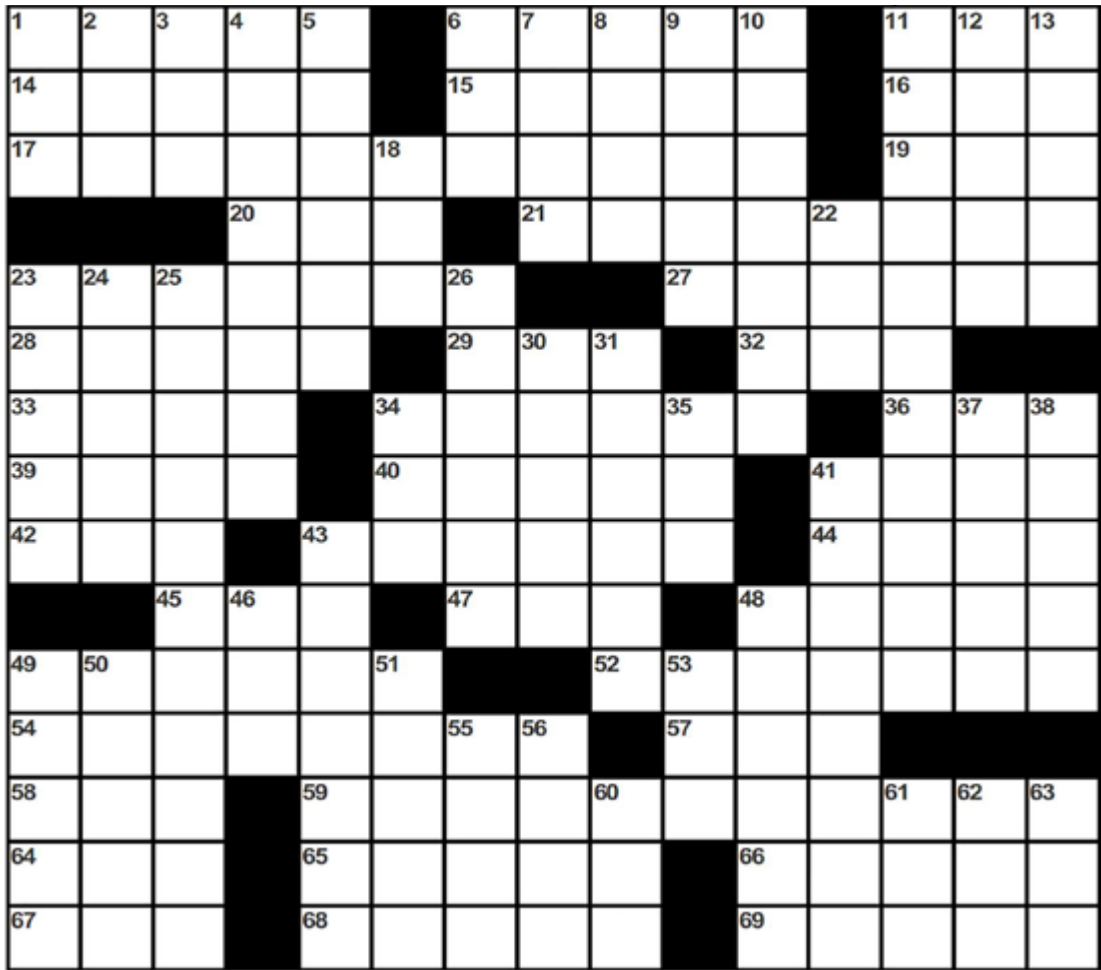
Subsequently, a 600-metre tow rope was connected to the ocean-going tug approximately 20 nautical miles off Kochi. This crucial joint operation involving the Indian Coast Guard, Indian Navy, and Indian Air Force enabled the salvors to take over the vessel from the ICG and continue the firefighting and salvage work.

The vessel is currently being towed westward at a speed of approximately 1.8 knots and is now nearly 35 nautical miles off the coast.

Three Indian Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Vessels are escorting the vessel while also continuing essential firefighting efforts. At the time of this report, only thick smoke and a few remaining hotspots are visible onboard Wan Hai 503.

ANI

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1) Official language of India
6) Obviously surprised
11) Sound like a lovebird
14) Chipmunk tidbit
15) "Bad, bad" Brown of song
16) Sound from the stands
17) Prosecuting pooch?
19) Letters heard in a crime drama
20) Bleat of a sheep
21) Command to a pooch
23) Using an unspoken language
27) Williams with a racket
28) Hollowed out, as an apple
29) Like a cat of the '40s
32) "Carry On Wayward_"
33) Elevator inventor
34) Swampland
36) Competed in a I OK
39) Butter units
40) River in Missouri
41) Like a skinny-dipper
42) Boston time zone
43) Word with "gin" or "candy"
44) Declare assertively
45) Affinative vote

47) Ground layer
48) Gallup finding
49) Fire stirrers
52) Consecrates with oil
54) Land once known as Serendip
57) Mentally quick
58) Command to a collie
59) Uncouth steed?
64) Hue holiday
65) End of MGM's motto
66) Per_ (yearly)
67) Foxlike
68) Lid swellings
69) Locker room groups

DOWN
1) Computer in "200 I"
2) Decorate with frosting
3) Holiday concoction
4) Lack of excitement
5) Like marquetry
6) Beer's cousin
7) First, reverse or neutral
8) Jason's ship
9) Surveys of public opinion
10) Like spuds with no buds
11) Fearful Baltimore foot-baller?
12) Like many an old bucket

13) Tara resident
18) Put an embargo on
22) Spanish gold
23) Breadth
24) Small amounts
25) Starkly realistic feline?
26) Haunted house inhab- itants
30) Muse of poetry
31) Asian temple
34) Comment from Elsie or Elmer
35) D.C. figure, briefly
37) "Looks_ everything"
38) Hardly hipsters
41) Opera baddie, usually
43) Andres Galarra's hometown
46) Sniggler's catch
48) Chapeau for Lincoln
49) Sibillant attention-get- ters
50) Bay window
51) Charger's noise
53) How a wee lassie might say "no"
55) Pop singer Perry
56) Musical India
60) Viper's warning
61) Genetics lab study
62) Altogether number
63) Mama has a couple

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
You may have been planning to spend the day relaxing, but when the stars makes a decision, it's hard to argue. Right now that decision involves getting your affairs in order. There are no two ways about it. Cancel your engagements for the afternoon, at least, but if you start now, you may make it back to the world of fun in time for dinner.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
You definitely cherish the things and people closest to you. Your pride is so fierce, in fact, that you may get a little too caught up in it from time to time. Right now, as your own pride is running on high, it's easy to see how you'd defend the people, things, and ideals you love with fierceness. Issuing a warning might be nice, but only if you think it's merited.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
Authority figures don't reach their positions through their sweet and accommodating nature. They have to interview brutally, assign tasks that are next to impossible, and then unapologetically dismiss anyone who doesn't measure up. You're due for something special right about now. You may either be scrutinized just as carefully by a higher-up or have to be the one doing the scrutinizing.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
Someone you've been carrying a torch for may finally let you know that the feelings are more than mutual. They may even have been lugging around a brighter flame than you have. It's hard to believe, given the depth of your feelings, but anything is possible right now. Take full advantage of all the good energy the cosmos is flowing your way.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
For a while now you've been torn between keeping quiet and telling the entire world what's going on. At long last, probably much longer than it should have been, it's time for you to let the truth be known. Fortunately, you're too discreet to mention it to anyone who's basically just a human megaphone. One good friend you know you can trust is all you need.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
If you live with anyone (friends, family, spouse, lover), get them out of the house for a bit. You're on a clean-and-purge mission to sort, scour, and organize everything you own. Anyone who gets in your way could inadvertently be dealt with too harshly, bruised, or even maimed as you fly by with the vacuum. Give them money for the movies, and tell them when it's safe to return.

- 01. Cape Enniberg in the Faroe Islands and Thor Peak in Canada are known for their what?**
- A. Lava lakes
 - B. Tabletop plateaus
 - C. Abundant tropical growth
 - D. Sheer high cliffs



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
You're so sociable that it's hard to catch a glimpse of you alone, and you're usually found with more than one person. You just prefer groups. The more the merrier, as they say. At the moment, though, you're in quite a contrary mood and much more likely to insist on staying in and either cooking for two or cleaning up to please yourself. It's okay. We all like to hide out from time to time, and now it's your turn.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
You love others' company so much that you really aren't fond of being alone unless it's absolutely necessary. Oddly enough, though, right now there's no one you'd rather spend time with than yourself. There's nothing wrong with that, of course! Everyone feels the urge to retreat now and then. Be as considerate as you can. Let one good friend know you're okay so they can pass the word along.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
You're neither cold nor impersonal, and you're probably quite tired of others thinking you are before getting to know you. You're actually just picky, and there's nothing wrong with that. Once you find someone who measures up to your standards, someone who's entertaining, independent and brainy, you're quite devoted. Someone who answers your description may be on the way shortly. If you're already attached, prepare for a brand-new BFF.

- 02. What is the language system known as "ablaut"?**
- A. Inflection which indicates tense or person
 - B. An accent over a vowel which changes the sound
 - C. A vowel change that changes the meaning of a word without sub. tantially changing it otherwise
 - D. Using extended synonyms



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
Trading insults isn't something you enjoy, fortunately! You're much fonder of just being nice, even at times when no one else seems able to manage it. Right now, though, it's going to be quite a challenge for even you to scale back the heated rhetoric, even if it means the difference between a knockdown, drag-out argument and keeping the peace.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
You're a born investigator, with equal elements of detective and researcher. Those qualities come into play every time you meet someone new, but they really start to pay off when you consider adding someone to that small and precious list of people you call friends. Someone new fascinates you so much now that you actually consider opening the ranks for them. Take your time, get to know them carefully, and don't make any offers until you're sure.

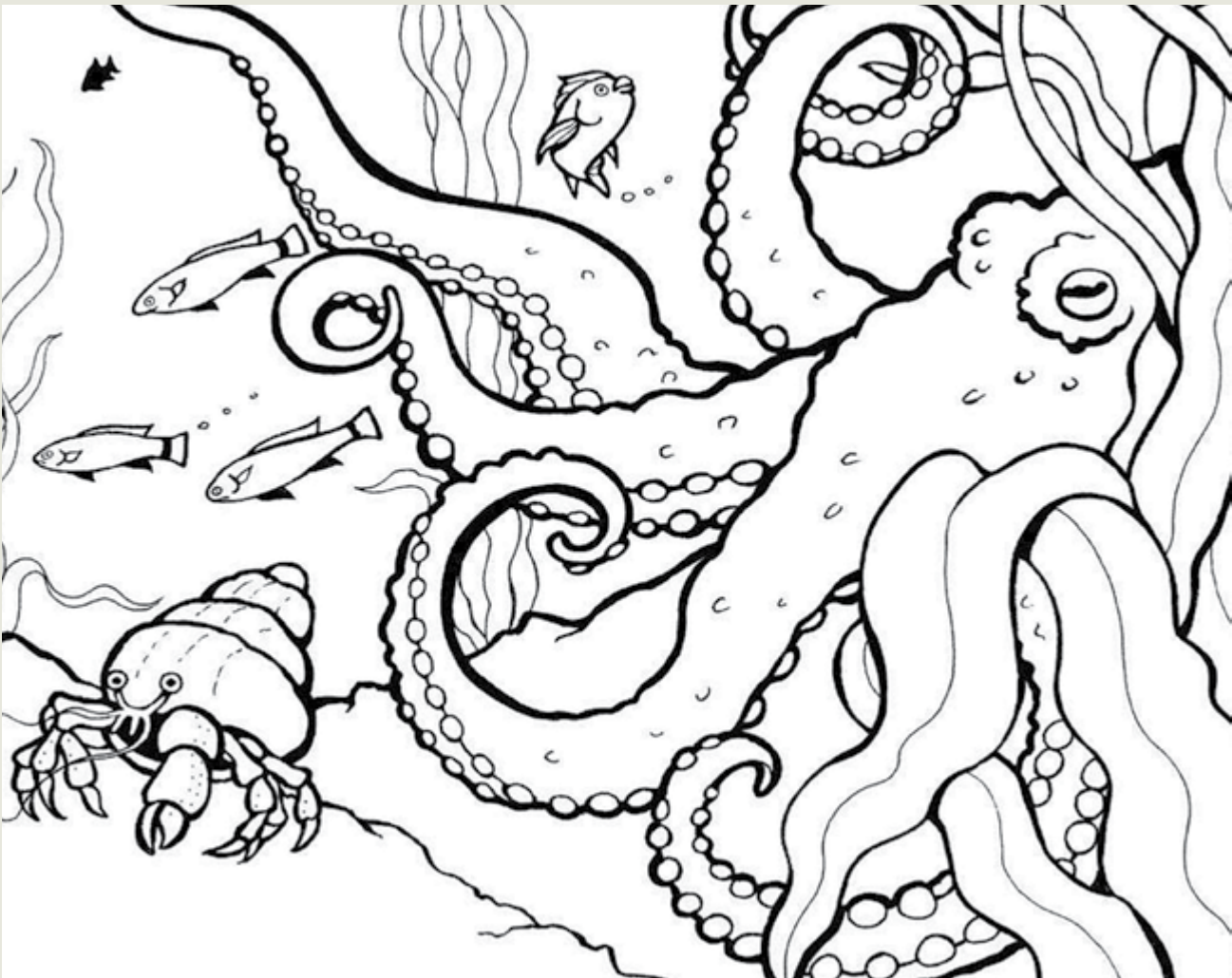


PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
If you're still shopping for a soul mate, try to relax. Over the next few days you should have quite a few opportunities to meet the right person, and you don't have to look far to find them! Dress the part, no matter where you're going, even the drugstore or the subway. Your only real assignment is to pay attention to anyone interesting, because you never know where love can strike.

- 03. Who played "One Punch Mickey" in the 2005 film "Snatch"?**
- A. Charlie Sheen
 - B. Robbie Williams
 - C. Johnny Depp
 - D. Brad Pitt

Answers: 1.D 2.C 3.D

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

L	L	O	E
E	C	A	S
R	L	T	A
A	R	E	C

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

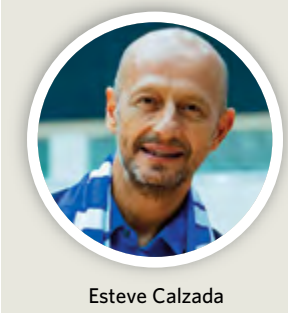
‘It’s been difficult for us to find our bearings’ this transfer window, says Al Hilal CEO

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - Al Hilal CEO Esteve Calzada said they were confident in their Club World Cup squad’s strength despite failing to secure any big names in the tournament’s build-up, adding that talks with several targets collapsed due to excessive financial demands.

The Riyadh-based club, backed by Saudi Arabia’s Public Investment Fund, parted ways with marquee signing Neymar earlier this year, but still boasts prominent players including Ruben Neves, Joao Cancelo, Aleksandar Mitrovic and Sergej Milinkovic-Savic.

However, unlike Real Madrid who bolstered their squad with Trent Alexander-Arnold and Manchester City, who added Tijjani Reijnders and Rayan Cherki, Al Hilal made no major European acquisitions during the tournament’s designated transfer window.

The club’s most notable



addition ahead of Wednesday’s opening match against Real Madrid in Miami was Italian manager Simone Inzaghi, appointed earlier this month.

“This is the first time we’ve faced this transfer window... It’s been difficult for us to find our bearings, including finding the right coach (Inzaghi) who could take charge of the team for the tournament,” Calzada told Spanish daily *Marca*.

“We operate with a budget that we have to meet, and it’s true that sometimes some players or agents don’t understand that... There’s been a lot of activity, but in the end we haven’t made any deals.”

Asked about the challenges they faced in the mini transfer window, given the club’s reputation for big spending, the CEO said players were demanding too much money. “Firstly, because we have a lot of confidence in our team, and secondly, because the circumstances haven’t been right, including the fact that some people have gone crazy with the fees they’re asking for; they think we can reach any figure,” he added.

MISSION REDEMPTION

Man City stars Lewis and Gundogan ready for title tilt

Manchester, England - By their exceedingly high standards, Manchester City had a difficult season. Their trip to the FA Cup final ended in defeat, they ceded their Premier League crown for the first time since 2020, and were knocked out of the UEFA Champions League before the round of 16. But the inaugural FIFA Club World Cup offers the Mancunians a chance to lay down a marker as the planet’s best.

Manchester City stars Rico Lewis and Ilkay Gundogan are excited for it, especially with new competitions being a rarity in football. “I think you’ve got to take it as an opportunity to go and be part of history,” said Lewis to FIFA.

City’s young jack-of-all-trades has always enjoyed coming to the USA for pre-season, but with real competition on the line, the stakes are much higher this time.

Gundogan feels similarly. “I think it’s a great opportunity to get to meet and play teams from all around the world that you normally would not get the chance to play against,” Gundogan told the Philadelphia Inquirer. “And then at the end of the day, also, you play for a trophy. So it’s an interesting tournament, and it’s an opportunity to leave a mark straight away as the season starts.”

However, the German midfielder maestro is under no illusion that this is just going to be a fun

summer experience; he and the rest of the City squad are coming to the US to win.

“If you play this kind of competition, you want to get as far as possible, play as good as possible, you know, and obviously win,” said the UEFA Champions League-winning midfielder.

Off the pitch, the Club World Cup will also allow players to get a taste of life in the USA and connect with their wider fan base. Lewis, who has toured the country several times, says City will do their utmost to put on a good spectacle.

“We know what it’s like in America with the fans and how excited they are and how they enjoy watching us.”

He is also looking forward to a change in weather, trading the frequent rain of Manchester for the sun-soaked beaches of Boca Raton, where the club has made its base camp. Lewis admits the heat and humidity will make life on the pitch “very tough,” but that there are no concerns about how the conditions will affect City’s high-pressing game. He also believes the team is in good condition following the end of the Premier League season, and have the calibre of player and coach to adequately adapt to the environment.

“I feel like in the last couple of months towards the end of the season, we played some really good football again,” said Gundogan. “I think if we had played



Rico Lewis (L) and Ilkay Gundogan



the same type of football we played for the last two and a half months, I think we would have ended up at least winning one or a couple of trophies.

“But we were not able to. So now the target is set for the start of this competition and then ob-

viously for the next season. So, yeah, I’m pretty excited about it because I know what this team is capable of and what we can achieve again. And every single competition, every single year, is a new opportunity to prove yourself.”

Boca defender Costa gets special United States visa for Club World Cup

Buenos Aires, Argentina - Boca Juniors defender Ayrtton Costa will be able to take part in the Club World Cup in the United States following a u-turn by U.S. immigration officials who had previously rejected his visa application, the Argentine club said on Friday.

“Ayrtton Costa has been granted a 26-day special visa,” a club spokesperson told Reuters.

Costa’s visa application was subject to a criminal complaint in his native Argentina, relating to an aggravated robbery in 2018, which he avoided trial for by accepting a probationary sentence in 2023.

However, U.S. officials previously ruled that he could not enter the country as he was still serving his sentence. The press office at the U.S. embassy in Argentina said they cannot discuss individual visa applications.

Boca Juniors will open the tournament in Miami on Monday against Benfica.



Ayrtton Costa

Expectations are different to the ones I had when I played for other teams, says Messi

Miami, US - Lionel Messi has won the UEFA Champions League, the Copa America and, of course, the FIFA World Cup, but that doesn’t mean he hasn’t grown tired of winning more trophies.

He is fascinated and motivated by the “amazing opportunity” to win the new 32-team FIFA Club World Cup, which kicks off 14 June when Messi and Inter Miami CF meet Al Ahly FC in the opening match at Miami’s Hard Rock Stadium.

“It’s an interesting competition. Having the chance to be part of it is exciting,” Messi told FIFA. “The expectations I have are different to the ones I had when I played for other teams, but I’m eager and I look forward to competing against the best (teams) and doing well.”

Messi took Major League Soccer (MLS) by storm after joining Inter Miami in 2023. He led the Herons to a league-record 74 points to win the MLS Supporters’ Shield, which secured the team’s Club World Cup qualification. The Argentinian has been in the USA long enough to know that American football fans will



Lionel Messi

It’s a great opportunity to watch the best players play out here in the US, and it’s an amazing opportunity to do this

LIONEL MESSI



watch the best players play out here in the US, and it’s an amazing opportunity to do this.”

The chance to see top clubs from South America and Europe vying for a title is special for everyone involved, according to Messi. “It’s a great opportunity to go up against them, and a really nice experience both for the players in the pitch and for the fans in the stands,” he said.

Juventus hand manager Tudor two-year contract extension ahead of Club World Cup

Turin, Italy - Juventus manager Igor Tudor’s contract has been renewed for two more years ahead of the start of their Club World Cup campaign, the Serie A club announced on Friday.

Damien Comolli, the club’s new general manager, said on Tuesday that they had faith in the Croatian coach who was handed the reins fewer than three months ago.

Tudor joined in March after the dismissal of Thiago Motta, with Juve eliminated from all cup competitions and outside Serie A’s top four. Under Tudor, they lost just one more league match, securing fourth spot to qualify for the Champions League.

“Tudor has committed to our club until June 30, 2027 - with an option on 2028 - and will also lead the men’s first team in the coming seasons, starting



Igor Tudor

with the first official competition to be staged in the United States, the Club World Cup,” the Turin outfit said in a statement.

Juventus face Emirati side Al-Ain in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday.

Filippo Inzaghi leaves Pisa job

Filippo Inzaghi has left his job as Pisa manager by mutual con-

sult, the Serie A club said on Friday, with the coach moving on just weeks after leading the Tuscan side to promotion from Italy’s second tier.

Inzaghi, older brother of Simone who recently left Inter Milan to manage Saudi club Al-Hilal, took Pisa back to the top flight after an absence of 34 years in his first season at the club.

The 51-year-old former Italy

striker began his managerial career at AC Milan where he ended his playing days, taking charge at the San Siro for one season before earning promotion from the third tier with Venezia.

Inzaghi, who also brought Benevento up to Serie A, is now widely expected to become manager of Serie B club Palermo, according to Italian media reports.

We called our gravel pitches Old Trafford: Cunha realises his childhood fantasy

Manchester, England - Manchester United's stadium will not feel entirely unfamiliar to Matheus Cunha when the Brazilian makes his home debut for his new team next season. It is almost like he has been playing at Old Trafford for years.

A day after United completed the signing of Cunha from Wolverhampton Wanderers, the dynamic forward said he grew up in the Brazilian beach city of Joao Pessoa dreaming of one day playing for the club.

"It is hard to find a way to explain this club to me," the 26-year-old said in an interview with United's in-house media. "My house didn't have the channel to watch the Premier League. My cousin's house didn't have the channel.

"Only in my grandma's house, we can watch the Premier League, so we organised to go every weekend. And for me, it was always a bit inside of me, this club. When I play with (my cousin) in the street, on the beach, on the gravel pitch, we called these pitches 'Old Trafford.' Imagine.

"So, wow, it's so hard to be here now, thinking about the past — it's very emotional for me."

Cunha scored 15 Premier League goals for Wolves last

season. He also helped Brazil qualify for the 2026 FIFA World Cup on Tuesday, setting up the only goal in a decisive 1-0 win at home to Paraguay.

His move to Manchester raised some eyebrows after United finished a woeful 15th in the Premier League and failed to qualify for any European football next season.

But he said the club and its former stars had left a lasting impression.



Markram's century helps South Africa beat Australia and win World Test Championship

London, England - South Africa won the World Test Championship on Saturday, completing a remarkable turnaround to beat Australia by five wickets as they successfully chased down an imposing 282-run target.

But it was an edgy finish as they took 27.4 overs to slowly score the 69 runs needed to secure success on the fourth day at Lord's after resuming at 213-2 overnight.

In so doing, South Africa completed a successful pursuit of the joint second-highest winning fourth-innings total in test history at the London venue.

It was a first major cricket triumph for South Africa, who had earned an unwanted reputation for failure when on the cusp of victory over the last decades in limited overs competitions.

This was their first appearance in the WTC final, with opener Aiden Markram delivering a heroic innings of 136 to ensure success.

Markram, who reached his century late in the third day, added 34 more runs on Satur-



South Africa players celebrate with the trophy after winning the World Test Championship on Saturday

It was a first major cricket triumph for South Africa, who had earned an unwanted reputation for failure when on the cusp of victory over the last decades in limited overs competitions

day, accumulating carefully before falling to a sharp catch by Travis Head with six runs needed to win.

Kyle Verreynne hit the winning run and was four not out at

the end along with David Bedingham, who scored an unbeaten 21.

"It was the most nervous I've ever been. I didn't want to come out and bat but when Aiden went out I had to," said Verreynne.

South Africa started the fourth day favourites to win but nervous, given a litany of past disasters, and would have been further on edge when captain Temba Bavuma was out in the third over of the morning.

A rising delivery from Australia skipper Pat Cummins took an edge and saw Bavuma depart, having added only one run to his overnight total of 65.

Australia made two unsuccessful reviews of not out decisions as they sought a further

breakthrough before Mitchell Starc clean bowled Tristan Stubbs for eight with 41 runs still needed.

Markram and Bedingham then diligently put together a 35-run partnership to see them to the brink of success, before the win was secured in the last over before lunch.

South Africa, who came into the contest as underdogs, won the toss on the opening day and gambled by putting Australia into bat.

Wirtz to become Liverpool's most expensive signing

Liverpool, England - Premier League champions Liverpool have agreed a fee of 136.3 million euros (\$156.75 million) to sign Germany's attacking midfielder Florian Wirtz from Bundesliga club Bayer Leverkusen, British media reported on Friday.

The Athletic reported that Wirtz is expected to sign a five-year contract, with the fee comprised of a 117.5 million euros upfront amount and a further 18.8 million in add-ons.

The fee would make Wirtz Liverpool's most-expensive signing ever ahead of Netherlands centre back and captain Virgil van Dijk, who joined for 75 million pounds in 2017.

With two years left on his Leverkusen contract, Wirtz was also the subject of interest from German champions Bayern Munich and Pep Guardiola's Manchester City.

The German international bagged 16 goals and recorded 15 assists in 45 appearances for Leverkusen last season as they finished second to Bayern.

Wirtz would become Liver-



Florian Wirtz

pool's second addition of the transfer window after they signed Dutch right back Jeremie Frimpong, who he was teammates with at Leverkusen.

Milner extends Brighton deal

James Milner agreed a one-year contract extension with Brighton & Hove Albion, as the 39-year-old eyes the all-time record for

But Milner, who will celebrate his 40th birthday in January, now has the chance to overhaul Gareth Barry's record of 653 Premier League games.

"I'm really pleased we will have James with us again this season," head coach Fabian Huerzeler said in a statement.

"Last season he wasn't able to help the team on the pitch as much as he would have liked,

Wirtz is expected to sign a five-year contract, with the fee comprised of a 117.5 million euros upfront amount and a further 18.8 million in add-ons. The fee would make Wirtz Liverpool's most expensive signing ever

appearances in the Premier League.

Milner, who made his Premier League bow as a 16-year-old for Leeds United in 2002, was restricted to just four league appearances in the 2024-25 campaign due to an injury in August, taking his overall tally to 638 Premier League games.

but around the squad his experience is invaluable, especially for the younger players.

"He's a great guy to have in our environment, who is always there for me and the team. I'm looking forward to working with him again."

Brighton finished eighth in the standings last season, missing out on European qualification.



Franco Mastantuono

Real sign Argentinian teenager Mastantuono on six-year deal

Madrid, Spain - Real Madrid have signed 17-year-old midfielder Franco Mastantuono from Argentine side River Plate on a six-year contract, the LaLiga club said on Friday.

The Spanish outfit had agreed to sign Mastantuono for about \$45 million last week and the talented teenager, who can also play on the wing, will be a Real Madrid player from August 14.

Having come through River Plate's youth system, Mastantuono was part of the first team in the 2024-25 season. In February last year, he became the

youngest scorer in River's history.

He also became the youngest at 17 to play an official match for Argentina when he featured in their World Cup qualifier against Chile last week. Mastantuono had been linked to top European clubs such as Manchester United and Paris St Germain after a stunning free kick in River Plate's Superclasico win over Boca Juniors in April put him on the map.

Mastantuono is Real's third close-season recruit after they signed Premier League defenders Dean Huijsen and Trent Alexander-Arnold.

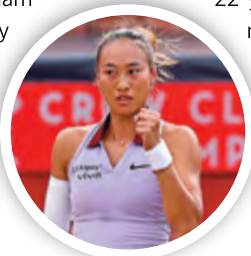
Zheng beats Raducanu at Queen's, Maria shocks Rybakina

London, England - Top seed Zheng Qinwen beat home favourite Emma Raducanu 6-2 6-4 to move into the semi-finals at the Queen's Club Championships on Friday while 37-year-old Tatjana Maria upset 2022 Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina to reach the last four.

In an entertaining battle, Zheng showed she could be a worthy contender heading into Wimbledon as she marched into her first semi-final on grass when she

converted her fourth match point. Zheng has won singles titles on clay and hardcourts but she is still adapting to grass, with the 22-year-old showing a marked improvement in her match with Raducanu after she changed her shoes midway through a game when the Briton was serving.

"I want to apologise for my shoes. I didn't want to fall two times, but I just didn't know how to run on grass," Zheng said sheepishly.



Zheng Qinwen

DeChambeau, Mickelson, Thomas miss US Open cut

Oakmont, US - Defending U.S. Open champion Bryson DeChambeau and record six-time runner-up Phil Mickelson were the high-profile players to miss the halfway cut at Oakmont Country Club on Friday.

DeChambeau, who was bidding to become the first repeat U.S. Open champion since Brooks Koepka in 2018, carded a seven-over-par 77 in the second round that left him at 10 over on the week and three shots outside the projected seven over cut line.

The big-hitting DeChambeau, a fan favorite who went close at the year's first two majors,



Bryson DeChambeau

looked to be in a decent spot after the opening round but made three consecutive bogeys late in his front nine on Friday and could not recover.

Mickelson, in the last year of a five-year exemption into the U.S. Open for winning the 2021 PGA Championship, finished eight over on the week in his latest bid to complete the career Grand Slam of golf's four majors.

Four of the top 10 players in the world ranking missed the cut, a group that in addition to DeChambeau included Justin Thomas, Ludvig Aberg and Sepp Straka.

Fuelled by passion, racing for a nation

Ahmad al Harthy's journey of pride and passion at Le Mans

Le Mans, France - As the world turns its eyes to the Circuit de la Sarthe this weekend, Oman's very own Ahmad al Harthy returns to the legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans for a third time - this year behind the wheel of the BMW M4 GT3 with Team WRT. With a Le Mans podium already under his belt and growing support from BMW Oman, BMW Middle East, and national partners, Al Harthy continues to fly the Omani flag high on the global motorsport stage. BMW Group Middle East caught up with him ahead of this year's race to talk preparation, passion, and national pride.

Q Ahmad (al Harthy), you're returning to Le Mans for the third time. What does this race mean to you personally, and how does it feel to represent Oman on one of motorsport's biggest stages?

Coming back here for the third time is very emotional. To be able to race and represent Oman, the GCC, and everyone from the Arab world is a very proud moment for me. Le Mans is something I've been following since childhood. To me, it's the greatest 24-hour race on the planet. More importantly, it's a place where I truly



Ahmad al Harthy says he has unfinished business at Le Mans after an unfortunate stint in 2024, 'which makes us even more determined and hungry'

enjoy racing and driving around, and I'm looking forward to this third experience.

Q From your first Le Mans podium in 2023 to now racing in the ultra-competitive LMGT3 category with BMW, how have you evolved as a driver - technically, physically and mentally?

Absolutely. It couldn't have started any better for me. Finishing on the podium in my first-ever 24-hour race was unbelievable, and I still get goosebumps when I think about it. The race was filled with so much emotion. Coming into 2024, my first race with BMW here was going well, but unfortun-

nately, the weather affected us. We feel we have unfinished business, which makes us even more determined and hungry.

Q Ahmad, what is the first thing you think of when you sit behind the wheel of your BMW M4 LMGT3, especially at Le Mans?

That's a tough question. The first thing is realising how blessed I am to share the track with some truly iconic names in motorsport. I often reflect on my early days in motorsport, and it fills me with emotions. I also get excited by the speed because it presents a massive challenge. You hear sounds and see things that you don't experience at any other

racetrack in the world. I have certain spiritual rituals that I perform for all race weekends, and it's the same in that sense.

This is my third 24-hour race, but I have competed at the "Road to Le Mans" in 2017 and 2019, and I was fortunate enough to stand on the podium three out of four attempts. I feel that this race has been very kind to me, and I hope to continue that streak in 2025.

Q Endurance racing is a team sport, what has the chemistry been like with your WRT teammates, including Valentino Rossi and Kelvin Van Der Linde, heading into this year's race?

You mentioned a very important point: teamwork. For us to win



Finishing on the podium in my first-ever 24-hour race was unbelievable, and I still get goosebumps when I think about it

AHMAD AL HARTHY

and achieve great results at any endurance weekend, it's all about teamwork. It involves everything from the pit crew to the engineering and support teams. The harmony we share at Team WRT is something unique compared to many other teams on the grid.

We spend a lot of time together; we are like a family away from home.

Q You've had strong backing from BMW Oman throughout your journey. How important has that local support been in helping you compete at the highest level of endurance racing?

When we first announced our move to BMW, it was an exciting

Al Harthy, Van Der Linde and Rossi to start third on LMGT3 grid

Le Mans, France - Oman's Ahmad Al Harthy and teammates Kelvin van der Linde and Valentino Rossi combined to deliver a superb performance throughout qualifying for the weekend's 24 Hours of Le Mans, the trio's No.46 BMW M4 LMGT3 set to line-up third on the grid for the biggest race of the year.

Al Harthy got things off to an outstanding start in the main qualifying session on Wednesday, 11th June, where he emerged quickest of all in the LMGT3 class to comfort-

ably progress the Team WRT entry into the first of two Hyperpole shoot-out sessions on Thursday, 12th June.

"I was delighted to have put our car on pole in the first qualifying, to do it in Le Mans was extra special. To be able to maximise everything we could from the car was a huge motivation. Then, into Hyperpole, and Kelvin did an outstanding job in session one, it was a strategic decision to put him in that session and to be pole again was amazing," said Al Harthy.

partnership. BMW's support on and off the racetrack means a lot to me. I'm proud to be an ambassador for the brand, and I've been a fan since I was young. Having a manufacturer support you from your home country is something I take great pride in. Now, over a year and a half into the BMW family, I'm starting to speak the same language.

Q What message would you like to share with young Arab and Omani athletes watching your journey — especially those dreaming of competing internationally?

In motorsports, there are no shortcuts. We would love to see more Arab drivers coming

through the ranks. We have some of the best circuits in the world, and it's time to develop these drivers correctly without taking shortcuts. To reach Le Mans, you must come through the ranks, and I hope my presence here creates a path for that. I want to motivate the younger generation to believe that they can be here and achieve their dreams.

Q You're inspiring a lot of people. We know it wasn't an easy journey for you to reach where you are now. We are so proud of you and wish you all the best of luck.

Thank you! I give it everything I have. I want to use this opportunity to thank my family.

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

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

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Email: rasheedm@tatioman.com
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Crown Jewel of NYC

THE CHRYSLER BUILDING, ONCE THE TALLEST BUILDING IN THE WORLD, WHICH TOWERED ABOVE NEW YORK CITY FOR NEARLY A CENTURY, IS NOW IN A POOR CONDITION AND UP FOR SALE

The Chrysler Building in New York City is for sale, and despite its iconic status, it could go for cheap.

While the building is still a staple of the city skyline, real estate experts say it has fallen into disrepair. According to the New York Times' Anna Kodé, tenants complain of faulty elevators, murky water fountains and pests.

"It's a tale of two buildings," Ruth Colp-Haber, a real estate broker who shows spaces in the building, told the Times last summer. "It's arguably the most famous building in the world. However, the windows are smaller than a Hudson Yards building. It doesn't have all the amenities that so many other trophy buildings have."

'A monument to me'

The Chrysler Building was commissioned by the car company founder Walter P Chrysler, who called it 'a monument to me'. Constructed between 1928 and 1930, it rose to a staggering 1,046 feet. It was briefly the tallest structure in the world—until the nearby Empire State Building took the title upon its completion in 1931.

The skyscraper was designed

by the architect William Van Alen in the Art Deco style, a design movement characterised by luxurious materials and geometric, stylised shapes. The building's iconic stainless steel spire, which appears in countless movies and TV shows, is an instantly recognisable New York landmark.

"With its eccentric steel helmet and grandiose lobby, a temple to the power of American industry, the Chrysler Building encapsulated the giddy excess of its time—an Art Deco exclamation point to mark the end of an optimistic decade," Smithsonian magazine's Michael Snyder wrote in 2023.

The land beneath the Chrysler Building is owned by the college Cooper Union, which charges rent to the owner. In 2008, the government of Abu Dhabi bought a 90 per cent stake in the building for US\$800mn. But in 2019, it sold to RFR, an American development company, and Signa, an Austrian real es-

tate company, for just US\$150mn.

Signa filed for insolvency in 2023, and an Austrian court ruled that it would need to sell its share of the building. Earlier this year, Cooper Union moved to evict RFR, which had stopped paying rent, according to Crain's New York Business' Aaron Elstein. Now, Cooper Union is working with the real estate firm Savills to manage the sale.

"Given the strength of the leasing market, and given where this sits in the market, we feel it's a great opportunity to reimagine what is the crown jewel of the New York City skyline," says David Heller, executive vice president at Savills, per the Commercial Observer's Lois Weiss.

But in recent years, "the Chrysler, the jewel of the city's skyline, has lost much of its shine," as per the Times. These days, architectural trends tend to favour 'bright and contemporary open-floor offices popularised by tech companies,' and

tourists have many towering skyscrapers to choose between.

However, some New Yorkers still feel a sense of awe when they walk into the building. Sophie Smith felt it when she got a job at the Creative Artists Agency soon after graduating college.

"Walking through the lobby every day was such a treat," she tells the Times. "Whenever we had guests to the office, we felt proud to work there."

Woody Heller, founder of Branton Realty Services, helped conduct several previous sales related to the Chrysler Building. As he tells the Commercial Observer, "the structure hasn't been actively marketed since the pandemic. Now, with the resurgence of the office market and notoriety of the building, in theory, if fixed up and rejuvenated, it could be able to lease."

Heller adds: "There aren't that many global icons in the world, and this is one of them, so there will be an enormous appetite for the building."

(Courtesy: smithsonianmag.com)





Defaced and discoloured

A receipt from the family showed that the painting entered the Sursock collection from an art dealer in Naples, where Gentileschi lived the later years of her life. At the time of the explosion, the artist's then-unknown masterpiece was hanging in front of a window, according to the Getty, which exploded through the canvas. The broken glass riddled it with holes and a wide, L-shaped tear through Hercules' knee.

"It was really severe. It's probably the worst damage I've ever seen," said Ulrich Birkmaier, the Getty Museum's senior conservator of painting.

Beyond the sudden violence to the painting and its frame, the artwork had already suffered flaking paint, cracks and cupping from humid conditions, Birkmaier said. He added that Gentileschi's vision had been further marred by discoloured varnish and overpainting from a previous restoration attempt centuries earlier.

When Birkmaier saw it for the first time in Beirut, one year after the explosion, he gathered debris that had collected behind its surface in case the miniscule paint fragments clinging to the glass could be puzzled back together in Los Angeles.

Hercules and Omphale

RESTORED AND RENEWED

ARTEMISIA GENTILESCHI'S 'HERCULES AND OMPHALE' HAS UNDERGONE YEARS OF CONSERVATION TREATMENTS AFTER BEING BADLY DAMAGED DURING THE 2020 EXPLOSION IN BEIRUT. IT WAS ONLY WIDELY ATTRIBUTED TO THE ITALIAN ARTIST IN THE WAKE OF THE BLAST

After a long-forgotten painting of Hercules and Omphale was punctured by glass and coated in debris during the 2020 explosion in Beirut, the monumental oil-on-canvas, painstakingly restored over more than three years, has gone on view at the Getty Center in Los Angeles.

In the wake of the tragedy, the painting, dated to the 1630s, was finally properly attributed to the great Artemisia Gentileschi, the 17th-century Italian Baroque painter who has become one of the few female artists of her era to be recognised today. Having passed only between three private collections over four centuries, the 'Artemisia's Strong Women: Rescuing a Masterpiece' exhibition marks the first time the painting has ever been on public display.

The canvas depicts the Greek mythological hero Hercules, who was enslaved by the Queen of Lydia, Omphale, and made to do tasks traditionally associated with women, such as weaving (in Gentileschi's composition he raises a spindle of wool) before they fall in love.

Gentileschi often gave her mythological and Biblical female figures a striking sense of agency, such as her most widely known scene of the widow Judith violently beheading Assyrian general Holofernes. In the newly attributed painting, she toys with subverted gender roles



Ulrich Birkmaier who led efforts to restore the work at the Getty Museum



It was really severe. It's probably the worst damage I've ever seen

ULRICH BIRKMAIER

as her lovelorn protagonists close the gap between them, their pearlescent skin adorned in sumptuous draped fabrics.

For decades, 'Hercules and Omphale' hung in the Sursock Palace, a private and opulent mid-19th century townhouse owned by Beirut's Sursock family for five generations. The explosion in the Lebanese capital, which killed more than 200 people and injured thousands, caused devastation to the building and its owners, with the matriarch of the family, 98-year-old Yvonne Sursock Cochrane, eventually succumbing to her injuries.

Though mended, cleaned, and carefully restored with analysis from X-rays and XRF mapping, the painting has been rehabilitated into its luminous and poetic intent, though, in Birkmaier's view, it will never look quite as it did.

"You'll always see some scars of the damage," he said.

Long road to rediscovery

If not for the explosion, 'Hercules and Omphale' may have continued to be an unidentified work, only considered a Gentileschi painting by a Lebanese art historian who had seen it decades earlier.

In the early 1990s, Gregory Buchakjian was a graduate student at Sorbonne University in Paris and writing his thesis the Sursock collection. It was then that he made the connection between 'Hercules and Omphale' and another painting 'Penitent Magdalene' to Gentileschi, but he didn't pursue publishing his research more widely, according to the arts publication Hyperallergic.

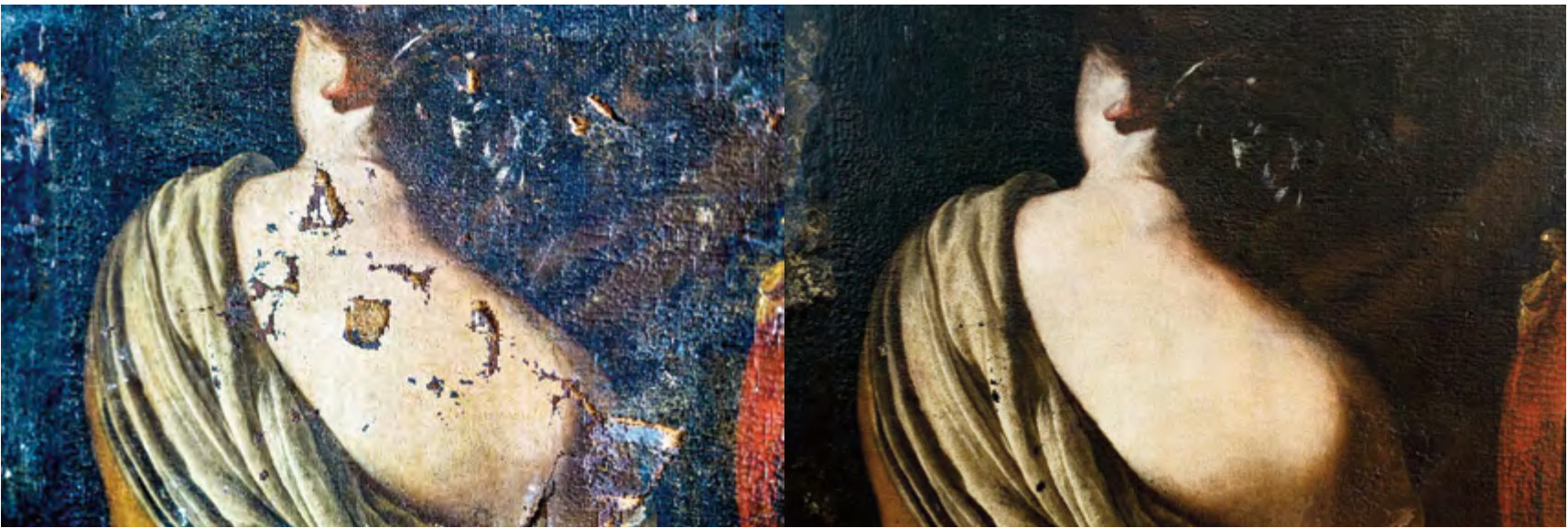
In an article for Apollo magazine in September 2020, Buchakjian attributed both paintings to the Italian artist, leading to wider acknowledgement of his research and consensus over her authorship.

Over the course of her career, Gentileschi, the daughter of the Mannerist painter Orazio Gentileschi, was commissioned by top artistic patrons — the Medici family in Italy as well as monarchs Philip IV of Spain and Charles I of England — before being lost to history following her death in 1653. Some 60 paintings or more exist today, though a few have been contested as copies or collaborations.

Restoring an old work doesn't mean making it like new, but maintaining the "decay from time" that occurs with a 400-year-old painting, Birkmaier said. As he and other specialists gradually worked on the painting, it began to reveal itself.

"You have this painting in pieces, and all you see is the damage and the discoloured varnish and the old restoration and the big holes, and then little by little, as you work on it... the image emerges again," he recalled. "It's a really interesting process of discovery. I wanted to do her justice."

(Courtesy: cnn.com)



An image of the damage of the draped figure on the left side of 'Hercules and Omphale', and the restored figure