



Oman ascends 20 places in Corruption Perceptions Index

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman has made a notable improvement in the 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) published by Berlin-based Transparency International, climbing 20 places to rank 50th globally out of 180 countries. In the Arab world, Oman secured fourth place, up from seventh in 2023, with its score rising from 43 to 55.

The CPI is a widely regarded measure of perceived corruption in the public sector, assessing countries on a scale from 0 (highest perceived corruption) to 100 (lowest perceived corruption).

Dr Hamyar bin Nasser al Mahrooqi, Director of the Awareness and Integrity Promotion Department at the State Audit Institution (SAI), attributed Oman's progress to its efforts to safeguard public funds,

GCC rankings

UAE	23
Qatar	38
Saudi Arabia	38
Oman	50
Bahrain	53
Kuwait	65

improve transparency, and promote integrity.

"Oman's achievement of fourth place in the Arab world enhances its positive reputation and underscores its status as a favourable environment for work and investment," said Dr Mahrooqi. He highlighted that the CPI is a reliable international indicator based on rigorous procedures covering 180 countries globally.

Within the GCC, the UAE ranked highest at 23rd, followed by Qatar and Saudi Arabia

(38th), Bahrain (53rd), and Kuwait (65th).

Globally, Denmark retained the top spot, followed by Finland and Singapore. At the other end of the index, South Sudan ranked 180th, with Somalia, Venezuela, Syria, and Libya among the lowest performers.

Transparency International noted that corruption remains a global challenge, with over two-thirds of countries scoring below 50 and the global average stuck at 43. The report emphasised that persistent corruption levels are a critical obstacle to achieving effective governance and climate action.

Oman's rise in the index reflects the collaborative efforts of SAI, the National Competitiveness Office, and other stakeholders to enhance transparency and accountability. Dr Mahrooqi explained that these initiatives include improving supervision, raising institutional and public

awareness, and aligning efforts with Oman Vision 2040.

SAI's community-focused programmes, outlined in its annual media plan, aim to promote the importance of integrity in public office and the protection of public funds. Additionally, the institution issues a community summary alongside its annual report submitted to His Majesty the Sultan.

Efforts are ongoing to engage with international organisations and expand the number of institutions assessing Oman's performance. These measures aim to identify areas for improvement, address any shortcomings, and demonstrate Oman's commitment to fostering a transparent and competitive work environment.

The substantial improvement in Oman's score indicates its growing emphasis on tackling corruption and aligning with global standards.



OLAV KOOIJ SPRINTS TO SECOND WIN ON STAGE 4

Olav Kooij (Visma-Lease A Bike) sped to his second stage win of the week at the 2025 Tour of Oman, beating Giacomo Nizzolo (Q36.5) to the finish line on stage 4 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center in Muscat on Tuesday. Orluis Aular (Movistar) came in third, however David Gaudu (Groupama-FDJ) remains the overall leader with one race to go

MTCIT wins award for dual-combustion truck



Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman has been recognised with the Excellence and Creativity Award for its 'Dual Combustion Truck for Carbon Reduction' project at the 26th Gulf Engineering Forum, held in Bahrain under the theme 'Challenges of Energy Transformation'.

The award-winning project, developed by Blue Ice Oman - a company providing turnkey hydrogen solutions, focuses on reducing carbon emissions and promoting sustainable mobility.

The dual-combustion technology integrates hydrogen and diesel fuel in truck engines, effectively cutting emissions by 50%. This initiative is part of Oman's broader net-zero strategy, which

The dual-combustion technology integrates hydrogen and diesel fuel in truck engines, effectively cutting emissions by 50%

targets zero emissions by 2050.

Eng Abdullah Ali al Busaidi, Director General of Oman Logistics Centre at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT), said, "This award reflects the ministry's ongoing efforts to achieve the goals of the net-zero programme and reduce carbon emissions."

He highlighted the ministry's

collaboration with the private sector to develop advanced combustion technologies. "We are committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector by promoting electric vehicles, environmentally friendly trucks, biofuels, hydrogen, and sustainable public transportation," he added.

The Gulf Engineering Forum, running until February 13, has brought together experts, researchers, and academics from the fields of energy, environment, and industry to address challenges in energy transformation. The forum features workshops and discussions on renewable energy, decarbonisation, clean energy technologies, and innovative solutions for reducing emissions.

Task force seizes 2,357kg of hashish off Oman coast

Muscat - A New Zealand-led naval task force in the Middle East has made its first drug bust of the year off the coast of Oman.

Working as a part of Combined Task Force (CTF) 150, the United States Coast Guard cutter *Emlen Tunnell* was last week patrolling off the coast of Oman when crew observed a suspicious dhow transiting a well-known drug smuggling route.

The boarding team conducted a search of the vessel and discovered 2,357kg of hashish on board.

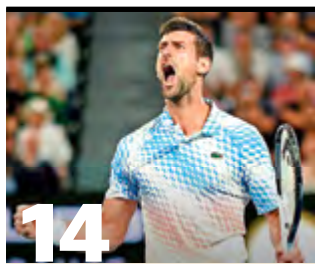
The Royal New Zealand Navy's Commodore Rodger Ward is the Commander of CTF 150, a role he took up in January.

"Our command is a small cog in a system focused on interdicting illicit trafficking on the high seas. This is a team effort and this bust would not have been possible without the support of the 47 nations which make up the Combined Maritime Force (CMF)," Commodore Ward stated in press release issued by the New Zealand Defence Force.

"We are very pleased to have achieved our first successful bust after only a few weeks in command. Every bust we make reduces the flow of finances to terrorist organisations. This is why we're here, to contribute to maritime security," he added.



03
1.5mn Omanis benefit from Social Protection Fund



14
Djokovic aiming for 100th title in Doha

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Al Rifaa

1.5mn benefit from Social Protection Fund

Our Correspondent
Muscat

More than 1.5mn people have directly benefited from the Social Protection Fund (SPF) till January this year.

The Social Protection Law, which came into effect on January 1, 2024, introduced direct cash benefits for eligible segments of society through SPF to provide a comprehensive social safety net for citizens across various stages of life.

These benefits, fully funded by the state's public treasury, cover persons with disabilities, children, the elderly, orphans and widows.

Its aim is to ensure decent living standards and sustainable well-being for citizens, in alignment with Oman Vision 2040.

Till January 2025, the implementation of the childhood benefit supported approximately 1.237mn Omani children, from birth to 18 years of age.

The elderly benefit, designed to support senior citizens, covered 171,212 individuals, while the



benefit for persons with disabilities was extended to 42,912 beneficiaries. Additionally, 16,338 beneficiaries received the orphan and widow benefit, showcasing the system's wide-reaching support for vulnerable groups, an official commented.

The 'family income support

benefit' has been crucial in assisting low-income groups. By providing financial assistance to bridge the gap between actual and targeted income, this support ensures that citizens in need are adequately helped.

To date, over 42,688 beneficiaries have received family in-

come support, bringing the total number of recipients of the social protection benefit to 1.5mn.

The SPF also manages social insurance programmes, funded through contributions from both employers and workers. These programmes cover various contingencies, including elderly, disability, and death insurance, work injury and occupational disease insurance, job security insurance, maternity leave, sick leave, and savings systems.

By January, the number of active insured persons in both the private and government sectors reached 590,000.

Furthermore, the number of Omani retirees receiving pensions under the insurance scheme reached 124,750.

SPF continues to expand its partnerships, collaborating with 12 government institutions in 2024 to extend its social safety nets further. This expansion of the protection umbrella marks a key step toward creating a more inclusive social support system to cover a broader range of citizens.

Subscriptions for postpaid mobile surge to 2.39mn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's telecommunications sector witnessed noteworthy changes in mobile subscription patterns till the end of 2024, with a major rise in postpaid subscriptions and a slight decline in prepaid users.

Data from the National Center for Statistics and Information (NCSI) revealed a 33.9% surge in postpaid mobile subscriptions, which reached 2,391,951 by December 2024.

In contrast, prepaid subscriptions fell by 1.6% to 5,114,919, comprising 3,889,244 from first-class licensed operators and 1,225,675 from resellers.

Despite the dip in prepaid users, the total number of mobile subscriptions rose by 7.5% year-on-year, reaching 7,506,870.

These figures underscore a growing preference for postpaid services among consumers in Oman.

Active mobile broadband subscriptions also saw a rise, reaching 6,455,261, while fixed Internet subscriptions grew by 2% to 574,730.

Fixed broadband connections



(above 256 kbps) rose to 573,028, while low-speed internet subscriptions, including telephone-based and leased lines, stood at 1,702.

The fixed-line sector experienced a sharp decline, with subscriptions dropping by 24.8% to 435,596. Traditional analogue fixed-line subscriptions - both prepaid and postpaid- fell by 20.9% to 66,834.

However, fixed-line subscriptions using Internet Protocol (IP) technology rose by 7.4%, reaching 318,478.

Meanwhile, subscriptions to digital network channels for integrated services dipped slightly by

0.2% to 49,634. Public telephone subscriptions saw a dramatic drop of 98.1%, with just 127 users recorded, while fixed wireless subscriptions declined by 25.6% to 523.

Muscat governorate led in the number of fixed analogue telephone lines, accounting for 49.63%, followed by North Batinah with 11.46% and Dhofar with 10.03%. The remaining governorates collectively made up 28.88%. The data reflects evolving consumer preferences and the rising demand for broadband and postpaid services, highlighting the shifting dynamics of Oman's telecom landscape.



Public-private partnership to boost dental healthcare

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Health, through the Directorate General of Health Services in Muscat, has launched the Basmat Shifa (Smile of Healing) project, a public-private partnership initiative to enhance oral and dental healthcare in Oman.

The project involves the establishment of a dedicated facility housing eight specialised oral and dental clinics. It is funded by private institutions as part of a community partnership through the Health Endowment Foundation (Athar), the Seeb Zakat Committee, and the Al Seeb Charity Team.

The initiative was inaugurated by Ahmed bin Ali al Shehhi, wali of Seeb.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Samira Musa al Maimani, Direc-

tor General of Health Services in Muscat, noted that this project aims to improve access to specialised dental care, enhance the quality of services, and reduce waiting times through an up-graded appointment system and electronic services.

Dr Samira added that the initiative focuses on ensuring a sustainable supply of medical resources, optimising their utilisation, and creating a modern healthcare environment to improve patient satisfaction and minimise complaints.

Hilal bin Hamad al Sarmi, Executive Director of the Health Endowment Foundation, stated that the project's total cost is estimated at RO150,000.

"The design and technical drawings are complete, and construction is scheduled to begin in March, with completion expected by early 2026," he said.

MHT extends deadline for Samail Castle management bids

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) announced extension of deadline for submission of bids for the management, operation, and development of Samail Castle in the Dakhliyah governorate.

Spread over 10,000sqm, Samail Castle, built in the 17th century on a rocky hill, will be handed over to the private sector for its development and management.

In an official statement, the ministry stated, 'The deadline for submitting competitive bids for the management, operation, and development of Samail Castle has been extended to March 6, 2025.'

An MHT official stated, "To support the national economy and leverage the country's historical landmarks, the ministry has issued a tender for the management and enhancement of Samail Castle."

The ministry official added that interested companies must submit proposals that encompass commercial and cultural marketing strategies, the hosting of artistic and cultural events, and the introduction of activities aimed at revitalising the castle.



Ministry of Health
SULTANATE OF OMAN
MINISTRY OF HEALTH

(Auction No.1/2024)Re-call-1)

Notice:

The Ministry of Health would like to invite Renting a canteen on the campus of the General Directorate of Projects and Engineering Services at the Ministry's Headquarters in Al Khuwair, to prepare hot and light meals Bidding is for medium and small enterprises and Riyada cardholders. Interested Companies and establishments may collect the documents and specifications of this Auction from the Directorate of Purchase & Tenders at General Directorate of Financial Affairs at Ministry's Headquarters in Al Khuwair. The fee for the documents is 10 O.R. and can be collected during official working hours (8:30 AM - 12:30 PM) until Thursday, February 20, 2025, when purchasing the bidding documents; they must bring proof that the company is registered with the Tender Board of the category of medium and small companies (SME) or holders of a valid Riyada card.

The offers must be enclosed in sealed envelopes duly signed and stamped in the original form shall be addressed to H.E. the Chairperson of the Tender Committee, clearly stating the title: "Auction No.1/2024) Re-call-1 for Renting a canteen on the campus of the General Directorate of Projects and Engineering Services at the Ministry's Headquarters in Al Khuwair, The offers must be valid for 90 days .Envelopes shall not bear any sign that refers to bidder's name or identity.

The Offers shall be deposited at the Purchase and Tender Department in Directorate of Financial Affairs by 10: 00 am on Wednesday, March 12,2025. Offers submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

The Ministry reserves the right to reject any bids without providing reasons.

MARKET WATCH	
MSX30	4,522.48
Sensex	76,293.60
FOREX RATES	
(RO1 equals)	
India	225.23
Pakistan	726.28
Bangladesh	315.43
Philippines	151.11
Sri Lanka	771.45

*Rates as on February 11
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Oil prices rise amid Russian supply concerns



Oil prices increased on Tuesday as Russia's production remained below OPEC+ quotas, while sanctions and export bans further tightened global supply.

The international benchmark Brent crude rose by 0.5%, trading at \$76.21 per barrel, up from \$75.81 at the close of the previous session. The US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) increased by 0.5%, reaching \$72.55 per barrel, compared to its prior session close of \$72.19.

Oil prices gained about 2% in the previous session, driven by signs of tightening supply.

NBO signs financing deal with Dar Global for AIDA project

Our Correspondent
Muscat

National Bank of Oman (NBO) has signed a credit facilities agreement with Dar Global to support the development of AIDA Integrated Tourism Project in Yiti, Muscat. Abdullah al Hinai, Chief Executive Officer of NBO, and Ziad el Chaar, Chief Executive Officer of Dar Global signed the agreement at a ceremony held at the NBO's head-office.

The agreement complements business growth through tailored financial solutions for this state-of-art project, highlighting NBO's efforts in strengthening Oman's real estate and tourism sectors in alignment with Vision 2040. Additionally, the credit facilities agreement provides partial financing for the development of 'AIDA Oceana', a landmark project that is an integral part of the Yiti Master Development Plan.

In a press statement, Ghadeer Iqbal al Lawati, Assistant General Manager - Head of Project Finance & Syndication at NBO, said, "We are proud to partner with Dar Global on this transformative project which not only re-defines the concept of luxury tourism and community living in Oman but also contributes to the sultanate's economic diversifica-



tion goals. The AIDA project represents an important milestone in Oman Vision 2040, and our financial support underscores NBO's focus on promoting sustainable development and new investment opportunities in the

real estate and tourism sectors."

Chaar said, "The AIDA Oceana project is set to be one of the most exclusive luxury destinations in the region, integrating world-class residences and leisure experiences. Perched

atop hilltops 100 meters above Muscat shores, AIDA is a mixed-use development project comprised of residences, amenities, and outdoor landscapes. This partnership with NBO strengthens our ability to deliver a world-

class development that will attract global investors and visitors to Oman."

AIDA Oceana is a high-ended community featuring a Trump Golf Course and luxury residences branded by Trump. With 3,500 residential units including high-end villas, townhouses, and hospitality experiences, the project is poised to elevate luxury living in Oman

With 3,500 residential units including high-end villas, townhouses, and hospitality experiences, AIDA Oceana project is poised to elevate luxury living in Oman while boosting tourism and real estate sectors

Omani tech firms sign RO9mn deals in Saudi

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - Oman-based technology companies participating in the LEAP 2025 conference in Riyadh signed four new cooperation agreements with international companies on Tuesday, totaling approximately RO4.3mn.

The first two days of the LEAP 2025 conference had already witnessed the signing of agreements worth RO4.5mn. With these latest deals, the total value of agreements signed by Omani companies since the start of their participation in the conference is now approaching RO9mn.

Mohsin bin Salim al Araiimi, Head of the Investment Promotion Department at the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology, said, "The success of Omani companies in signing agreements worth nearly RO9mn reflects the growth of Oman's emerging technology firms, their competitive capabilities, and the excellence of the digital services and solutions they innovate and provide to regional markets."

He added, "It also highlights the success of Oman's participation in this exhibition, which aims to support the expansion of Omani technology companies into international markets and attract foreign digital investments to the sultanate."

Research shows GCC's potential to boost GDP by \$2.8tn over next decade

Dubai, UAE - The World Governments Summit unveiled the second edition of the Productivity Potential Index (PPI), created in collaboration with Strategy& Middle East, part of the PwC network.

With its innovative framework, the PPI redefines how productivity is measured, integrating dimensions critical for our age such as environmental sustainability, wellbeing, innovation, and institutional quality. The report estimates the untapped potential of GCC economies, showing how improving their weakest productivity determinants could accelerate regional GDP growth from 3.5% to 6.0%, adding \$2.8tn to the region's GDP over the next decade.

Regionally, Saudi Arabia leads among the GCC countries with the PPI score of \$69.3 per hour worked, followed by Kuwait (\$60.8), Qatar (\$57.2), and Bahrain (\$56.9).

Notably, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE rank among the global Top 10 in the 'physical capital' pillar, adding \$22-24 per hour worked to their productivity potential. Physical capital refers to reliable infrastructure, well-maintained equipment, and ap-



Chadi Moujaes



Dima Sayess

Productivity Potential Index report reveals that by addressing their weakest productivity determinants, GCC countries could accelerate regional GDP growth from 3.5% to 6.0% over the next decade

propriately applied technologies that all contribute to better productivity. GCC's success demonstrates how targeted policies and investments in manufacturing, logistics and internet infrastructure can drive rapid growth across sectors.

Game-changer for productivity

Productivity has long been the engine of modern economies, influencing global competitive-

ness, quality of life, and long-term prosperity. Yet traditional measures often fall short, failing to capture the complexity of 21st-century challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, social transformation, and aging populations. These outdated tools also look backward, analyzing past performance rather than identifying future opportunities.

The Potential Productivity Index is a forward-looking, transformative tool that enables na-

tions to understand their true productivity potential and pinpoint the drivers that can unlock it. The PPI expands traditional metrics - human capital, physical capital, and innovation - to include social capital, natural capital, and institutional quality, offering leaders a modern lens through which to tackle today's challenges.

Dima Sayess, partner at Strategy& Middle East and director of the Ideation Center, emphasised the transformative potential of the findings, saying, "Our analysis shows that non-traditional measures of productivity are shaping the direction of change regionally and globally. Social trust, the quality of institutions and environmental indicators all play a role in driving, or hindering, economic growth. Understanding these mechanisms can enable policymakers to develop effective and targeted solutions."

"The Productivity Potential Index offers policymakers critical insights and a practical tool to identify and focus on the areas with the greatest potential to boost productivity, and subsequently their economic growth," said Chadi Moujaes, partner with Strategy& Middle East.

OPEC chief says \$640bn annual investment needed to meet oil demand growth

Dubai, UAE - OPEC Secretary-General Haitham al Ghaiss said that investment needs in the oil sector will remain substantial to reliably meet the expected growth in oil demand, with cumulative investment requirements estimated at \$17.4tn between 2024 and 2050, or approximately \$640bn annually.

In statements to the Emirates News Agency (WAM) during the World Governments Summit (WGS) 2025, Ghaiss highlighted that the exploration and production sectors will absorb the largest share of investments in the oil sector, with total investment needs in these areas estimated at \$14.2tn, or around \$525bn annually.

Additionally, investment needs in refining, manufacturing, transportation, and storage are expected to reach approximately \$1.9tn and \$1.3tn, respectively, over the same period.

He explained that OPEC's priorities include supporting and ensuring global oil market stability to secure reliable, cost-effective, and regular petroleum supplies for consumers, a steady income for producers, and a fair return on capital for investors in the petroleum industry.

The Secretary-General emphasised OPEC's commitment to securing the future of energy across all types and sources to address energy poverty and promote prosperity for inclusive economic growth under the "all-peoples, all-fuels and all-technologies" approach.

Ghaiss noted that these goals are essential for developing the economies of many countries, particularly developing nations



Haitham al Ghaiss

that are the main drivers of oil demand. To achieve these objectives, investment in all types of energy, including the oil industry, must be encouraged.

According to OPEC's estimates, global oil demand is expected to exceed 120.1mn barrels per day by the end 2050, an increase of 18mn barrels per day from 2023 figures

According to OPEC's World Oil Outlook 2024, global oil demand is expected to exceed 120.1mn barrels per day by the end 2050, an increase of 18mn barrels per day from 2023.

Due to population growth, urbanisation, and economic expansion, developing countries are expected to see oil demand

growth of about 28mn barrels per day, while developed countries will experience a decline in demand by about 10mn barrels per day.

Ghaiss pointed out that the global oil demand growth forecast for 2025 remains at 1.4mn barrels per day. Demand in OECD member countries is expected to grow by 0.1mn barrels per day, while non-OECD countries are expected to see a growth of 1.3mn barrels per day.

Regarding OPEC's role in maintaining global oil market stability, Ghaiss said the organisation has long recognised the importance of dialogue between producers and consumers in all areas of energy.

He added that key international issues related to energy, such as market stability, supply and demand security, economic prospects, and environmental concerns, directly impact the balance of global energy markets, particularly the oil and gas industry.

WAM

EU to mobilise €200bn for AI investment

Paris, France - Europe will mobilise 200bn euro for investment in artificial intelligence, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced at the AI Action Summit in Paris on Tuesday.

Of this, 20bn euro will be earmarked for AI gigafactories, which, according to the Commission, is needed to allow for "collaborative development" the most complex AI models.

The announcement comes on the heels of French President Emmanuel Macron's announcement on Sunday of a 109bn euro investment plan for AI projects in



France in the coming years. Macron said the investment is "the equivalent for France of what the US has announced with 'Stargate'," referring to OpenAI's \$500bn programme.

Von der Leyen said that she wants "AI to be a force for good

and for growth".

"We are doing this through our own European approach - based on openness, cooperation and excellent talent. But our approach still needs to be supercharged. This is why, together with our member states and with our partners, we will mobilise unprecedented capital through InvestAI for European AI gigafactories," she added.

Last month, newly installed US President Donald Trump announced a joint venture, with Stargate, OpenAI, Oracle and Softbank, to invest billions of dollars in AI infrastructure in the

country. The joint venture team will set up a separate company, deploying \$100bn immediately and increasing it up to \$500bn over the coming four years.

The Commission announced seven initial AI factories in December and will soon announce the next five. The gigafactories will have around 100,000 last-generation AI chips, around four times more than the AI factories currently being set up. The aim is that companies, including smaller ones, can access large-scale computing power for future development.

(Source: Euronews.com)



'Nature's Flow' exhibition opens at Bait Al Zubair

Gallery Sarah, at Bait Al Zubair Foundation, inaugurated an exhibition titled 'Nature's Flow' on February 10.

The exhibition showcases the works of Dr Zakia bint Qahtan al Busaidi, a physician, psychotherapist, and visual artist who believes in a holistic approach to well-being and the significant role art plays in enhancing mental health and mindfulness.

Dr Zakia began exploring this art form from this perspective 12 years ago and has since become deeply passionate about it. Throughout this journey, she has used art as a medium for well-being and balance while promoting it among her clients and the wider community.

The exhibition features more than twenty paintings, through which the artist expresses human emotions experienced in various places using fluid colours. Her preferred medium is acrylic paint, and her favoured

artistic style is impressionistic flow painting, where colours blend seamlessly on the canvas to reflect aspects of human emotion.

Dr Zakia said, "In this exhibition, I express flow in different forms—water, air, and even the delicate movements that take thousands of years to shape pebbles. Flow is a natural and constant state in all its forms—the movement of water, air, space, and energy around us. In psychology, flow is a mental state in which one is fully immersed in engagement and joy.

"Personally, this is what I experience when I am in nature or engaged in the creative process. Through this exhibition, I invite you to share this feeling of flow that bridges nature and art."

Dr Zakia will be conducting a series of accompanying art workshops throughout the exhibition, which will run until the end of March.

Sohar Islamic supports Baghdad International Fair

Sohar Islamic—the Islamic banking window of Sohar International—recently extended its support to the 48th Baghdad International Fair 2025 as a Participating Partner.

The prestigious event was held in Baghdad from February 1 to 7, under the patronage of Iraq's Prime Minister, Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani, a press release said.

The event also saw the participation of H E Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, along with 22 leading Omani companies spanning diverse sectors. As a key participant, Sohar Islamic had a dedicated exhibition stall, showcasing its innovative banking solutions designed to support cross-border transactions, facilitate investor services, and attract international investment.

Bringing together high-level government officials, corporate leaders, and industry pioneers from around the world, the fair served as a dynamic platform for economic engagement, investment opportunities, and impactful collaborations. The bank's presence underscored its strategic goal of expanding its regional footprint and reinforcing its role as a trusted financial partner for businesses and investors engaged in international trade.

Commenting on Sohar Islamic's involvement in the event, Abdul Wahid Mohamed al Mur-



shidi, acting CEO of Sohar International, stated, "As global markets evolve, financial institutions must support investors by offering tailored solutions that facilitate international trade. Our presence at the Baghdad International Fair reflects our commitment to bridging financial markets and enhancing trade relations. By participating in high-profile events like these, we not only showcase our capabilities but reaffirm our role in driving investment, promoting Oman's position as an economic hub, and strengthening financial ties

across borders."

Sohar Islamic showcased several strategic offerings at the fair, including tailored B2B banking services designed to simplify transactions for businesses operating between Oman and Iraq. By offering bespoke account-opening services for investors, the bank aims to streamline financial operations, making it easier for businesses to engage in international trade.

This initiative is designed to reduce transaction complexities, provide secure, Sharia-compliant banking solutions, and support

the growth of businesses seeking to expand their reach in international markets. Through these services, Sohar Islamic aims to contribute to a more efficient and interconnected business environment for investors and companies operating across borders.

Sohar Islamic's engagement with Omani companies at the fair further strengthens its commitment to empowering domestic businesses with necessary financial infrastructure to expand into new markets.

As international investors explore opportunities within Oman

and the broader GCC region, Sohar Islamic's participation in the fair further solidifies its growing reputation as a trusted financial institution.

By showcasing its expertise in corporate banking, trade finance, and investment solutions, the bank aims to attract foreign investors seeking Sharia-compliant financial services. The event also serves as a platform for engaging with key stakeholders, establishing strategic partnerships, and positioning Sohar Islamic as a reliable partner for foreign direct investment into Oman.



MoE launches Roznamah Electronic Programme

The Ministry of Education launched the electronic programme 'Roznamah' with the aim of enhancing the efficiency of planning and organising educational events and activities.

This programme comes within the framework of keeping pace with national aspirations for digital transformation and achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040. The inauguration ceremony was patronised by Dr Said bin Saif al Ameri, head of the office of the minister, in the presence of a number of advisors, and directors general, a press release said.

Dr Ameri stressed the importance of launching this programme, which is a qualitative leap in the mechanism of managing events. It also comes in response to an urgent need for an integrated system that allows the registration and monitoring of educational events of all kinds in an interactive digital environment that facilitates access to information and ensures coordi-

nation of efforts between various educational divisions and entities, which enhances the effectiveness of organisation and planning and contributes to improving the performance of educational activities and events to avoid duplication of work.

He urged those in charge to enter data on a regular basis to ensure its continued effectiveness and achieve the desired goals.

Abdulaziz al Nabhani and Aisha al Mukhaini reviewed the details and contents of the program and touched on the stages of its establishment from its first idea until the actual launch stage, as it went through three different stages. The first stage was the study and analysis stage, through which the need to establish this programme was determined, and the requirements of users from the educational directorates in the governorates and relevant authorities were collected.

The second stage was the de-

sign and planning stage, in which the general vision of the programme was developed, its basic objectives were determined, and its technical structure was designed, ensuring ease of use, integration with existing systems, and preparing a clear roadmap for implementing the project according to a well-studied timetable.

The third stage was the development and experimentation stage, during which the programme was implemented since the beginning of last year 2024, at the level of the directorates of the Ministry's General Diwan, and then involving the educational directorates in the governorates with the aim of testing the programme and evaluating its performance, and addressing technical and educational observations.

The launching ceremony included a visual presentation given by Fatima al Awisi, director of Information Systems Department at the Ministry.

ISB student wins gold at Ambassador's Cup

Evann Thomas George, a Grade 7 student of Indian School Bousher (ISB) captured first place in the Under-13 Boys Freestyle swimming event at the prestigious Ambassador's Cup held on February 9.

Evann's impressive performance earned him the top spot on the podium, besting competitors from across the Indian schools in Muscat. The Ambassador's Cup, organised by ISB under the aegis of the Board of Directors, Indian Schools in Oman, is a highly regarded athletic competition fostering sportsmanship and talent development amongst young students, a press release said.

This victory highlights



Evann's dedication and skill in the pool, as well as the strong aquatics programme at Indian

School Bousher. The Ambassador's Cup provides a platform for young ath-

This victory highlights Evann's dedication and skill in the pool, as well as the strong aquatics programme at Indian School Bousher

letes to showcase their abilities and promotes healthy competition among the Indian schools in Oman. Evann's gold medal win is a testament to his hard work and the support of his coaches, family, and school.

4th edition of Monday Market launched with 68 student projects

Organised by the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Group, H H Sayyid Fahd bin Al Julanda al Said, presided over the launch of the 4th edition of the Monday Market, featuring 68 student projects.

The event took place on Monday evening at the open amphitheatre parking area, a press release said.

The Monday Market operates under the umbrella of the Innovation and Technology Transfer Centre and comprises five components, one of which is dedicated to supporting student projects and individuals interested in entrepreneurship. The initiative aims to provide a supportive environment that enables students to showcase and promote their projects while preparing them for participation in the labour market.

The event also encourages



students to embrace entrepreneurship and contributes to building a diversified and integrated economy by establishing a modern market with innovative, interactive, educational, and

entertaining features.

The event, held from February 10 to 12, includes various interactive and technological activities, with the participation of companies from diverse fields. Accom-

panying the market are additional attractions, such as live shows, competitions, and games, all of which foster an atmosphere of interaction and creativity between participants and visitors.

Moosa Group unveils all-new GMC Canyon, GMC Acadia

Moosa Group announces the arrival of the all-new GMC Canyon and GMC Acadia, two of the most anticipated models in the GMC line-up.

With their unmatched capabilities, cutting-edge technology, and striking design, these vehicles redefine the standards of premium midsize trucks and SUVs in the region, a press release said.

Speaking at the launch event, Ziad Haddad, CEO of Moosa Group, stated, “We are excited to introduce the all-new GMC Canyon and GMC Acadia to our customers in Oman. These models showcase GMC’s commitment to innovation, performance, and luxury. The Canyon AT4X brings a new level of off-road capability, while the Acadia redefines premium SUV versatility. At Moosa Group, we continue to bring the best automotive experiences to our valued customers.”

GMC has unveiled the highly anticipated GMC Canyon midsize truck, available exclusively in the AT4X trim across the region. This marks a significant addition to their premium line-up, offering off-road enthusiasts a truck that is built from the ground up to conquer any terrain.

Smaller yet just as rugged as the renowned Sierra, the Canyon AT4X is designed for extreme off-road performance. It introduces segment-first features such as Baja Mode for highspeed



These models showcase GMC’s commitment to innovation, performance, and luxury. The Canyon AT4X brings a new level of off-road capability, Acadia redefines premium SUV versatility

ZIAN HADDAD

off-road driving, front and rear Electronic Locking Differentials for superior traction, Multimatic DSSV Shocks for exceptional

control and comfort, besides others.

The Canyon’s advanced technology suite includes a customisable 11.3-inch infotainment touchscreen, 11-inch digital instrument cluster, and Bose seven-speaker audio system, ensuring a premium driving experience.

The all-new GMC Acadia redefines the premium midsize SUV category with its bold design, enhanced technology, and spacious interior. It is longer, wider, and taller than its predecessor, offering increased passenger and cargo space for an elevated driving experience.

UTAS Mussanah to launch Oman ‘IoT & AI Challenge 2025’

The University of Technology and Applied Sciences - Mussanah is set to launch the ‘Oman IoT and AI Challenge 2025’ today (February 12).

This event brings together innovators and pioneers in the fields of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT) across the Sultanate of Oman. The competition emphasises the university’s commitment to promoting technological innovation, supporting entrepreneurship, and preparing young minds for regional and international competitions, a press release said.

The semi-final round will take place on Wednesday at the UTAS Mussanah campus, under the patronage of H E Dr Juma bin Khalifa al Busaidi, member of the State Council. The university students and entrepreneurs will present their innovative projects to a specialised judging panel.

The competition will conclude with the grand finale in May at Barceló Resort in the Wilayat of Mussanah, where the finalist teams will compete for the titles of Best Graduation Project and Best Startup in AI and IoT.

Oman Post, Nama Dhofar Services ink partnership

Oman Post, the national postal operator, signed an agreement with Nama Dhofar Services to enhance service accessibility through Oman Post branches for customers in the Governorate of Dhofar.

The agreement was signed by Sheikh Ibrahim bin Sultan al Hosni, acting CEO of Oman Post, and Eng Ali Issa Shamas CEO of Nama Dhofar Services, at Oman Post headquarters, in the presence of members of the executive management, a press release said.

This strategic partnership aims to enhance customer convenience by expanding service delivery channels for Nama Dhofar subscribers. By integrating services provided by Nama Dhofar Services into Oman Post branches, subscribers will have



greater flexibility and accessibility to complete various transactions related to water, electricity, and sewage services.

“Oman Post is dedicated to establishing itself as a comprehensive service provider for customers, offering a diverse portfolio of essential services within a single point of access,” stated Sayyid Nasr bin Badr al Busaidi, postmaster at Oman Post. “This strategic

partnership with Nama Dhofar exemplifies our unwavering commitment to serving the community and delivering convenient, readily accessible solutions to our esteemed customers.”

Eng Ali Issa Shamas, CEO of Nama Dhofar Services, said, “We are delighted to partner with Oman Post to expand our service reach and enhance customer satisfaction.



Richard Fish clinches Assarain Golf Classic crown at 29th edition

Richard Fish of Oman overcame a stiff competition from a strong field to emerge champion at the Assarain Golf Classic.

The 29th edition of the Assarain Golf Classic was held at the Ghala Golf Club on February 7 and 8, with the participation of around 130 golfers, a press release said.

A delighted Fish said, “The Assarain Golf Classic is a fantastic tournament and it feels great to win a competition of this stature. I would like to thank my playing partners over the last few days. It was a pleasure to be in this event and again I would like to thank the sponsor Assarain Group of Companies.”

Ahmed al Farsi, general manager of Ghala Golf Club, who managed the event, said, “The atmosphere was electric from the first day. I was truly amazed by the participation and overall feel of the 2025 Assarain Golf Classic. We were oversubscribed and had to have a cut off for players.”

شركة الكروم العمانية
Oman Chromite Company

P.O. Box: 346, PC 321, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: 26845115, Fax: 26845155

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024

Charmain report

Dear Esteemed Shareholders,

On behalf of myself and my fellow members of the Board of Directors of Oman chromite (SAOG), I am pleased to present to you the company's activities and performance for the financial year ended December 31, 2024. During this year, the company achieved several significant milestones, including obtaining a concession right for a large mining area covering 1,438 km². Additionally, the company recorded profits amounting to approximately 30% of the paid-up capital, and the company's net assets increased from OMR 5.9 million to OMR 6.7 million.

Despite these encouraging financial results, they remain lower compared to the previous year, 2023. The underlying reasons for this decline are detailed in the report.

1. Exploration and Production

Exploration:

The company's acquisition of an exploration and mining concession for Area 11-A, located in northern Oman with an area of 1,438 km², represents one of the most significant achievements in its history. This area is expected to help address previous challenges such as the lack of available sites and the depletion of ore reserves in the company's old mines. Exploration activities have already commenced; however, it is too early to determine the start date for production. Shareholders will be regularly updated on the exploration results in accordance with applicable governance regulations.

Production:

By the grace of Allah, the company successfully produced 70,817 tons in 2024, reflecting a 19% increase compared to the previous year. On the other hand, production costs have risen due to aging mines and deeper mining operations, in addition to temporary production stoppages caused by torrential floods affecting the company's operational areas during the first half of the year.

2. Marketing

In 2024, the company managed to sell nearly the same quantity as its production for the year, with total sales amounting to approximately 74,780 tons. Comparatively, sales decreased by 13.88% from the previous year, when sales totaled 86,840 tons. This decline is attributed to capitalizing on the high prices in 2023 and the availability of large stockpiles due to accumulated production from previous years.

3. Revenues and Profits

Sales revenue for 2024 amounted to OMR 4.9 million, compared to OMR 5.9 million in the previous year, reflecting a 20% decline. The primary reason for this drop is the decrease in sales volume and the significant decline in selling prices during the last quarter of the year.

Net profit for 2024 was OMR 1,001,305, compared to OMR 1,631,775 in the previous year. The decline in net profit is mainly due to the drop in sales revenue and the rise in production costs.

4. Other Investments

The company benefited from its investments by achieving good returns from the Low Carbon Ferrochrome Plant project, in which it holds a 20% stake, in addition to bank deposits maintained with banks operating in Oman.

Low Carbon Ferrochrome Plant: The plant commenced operations in 2024, generating profits of OMR 93,187 for the company. It is expected that returns from this project will increase in 2025 following the commissioning of the second production line, which started operations in January 2025.

Bank Deposits: Total interest from bank deposits in 2024 amounted to OMR 158,774, compared to OMR 129,680 in 2023. The increase in deposit interest is attributed to the growth in deposit amounts and higher interest rates during the year.

5. Contributions to the Local Community

The company is committed to continuous engagement with the local community through the offices of the honorable governors and walis, as well as through direct communication and support for residents in the company's operational areas. In compliance with the Mineral Wealth Law, 1% of 2024 sales revenue, amounting to OMR 42,938, was allocated to support the local community.

Appreciation and Gratitude

At this juncture, we can only beseech the Almighty to bestow upon His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq – may Allah preserve him – good health, well-being, and a long life, and to grant our beloved country further progress and prosperity. We also deeply appreciate the government's ongoing efforts in supporting all sectors in Oman, including the mining sector, which remains a key pillar of Oman Vision 2040.

Finally, we extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to our esteemed shareholders for their trust and continuous support, to the honorable Board members for their efforts and constructive cooperation, and to the company's executive management and all employees for their dedicated efforts throughout the 2024 financial year and in previous years. We look forward, with Allah's will, to continuing the development of the company and enhancing its capabilities and financial performance in the future.

Peace, mercy and blessings of God be upon you.

Humaid Bin Masoud Al-Muqbali

Chairman of the Board of Directors

Statement of Financial Position as on 31 December 2024

	2024 R.O.	2023 R.O.
ASSETS		
Non-Current Assets		
Plant and equipment	1,039,800	870,163
Right-of-use assets	16,879	-
Intangible assets	1,042,145	560,051
Guarantee deposits	252,000	152,000
Investment in associates	533,996	440,809
Term deposits	2,350,000	2,750,000
Total Non-Current Assets	5,234,820	4,773,023
Current Assets		
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	5,572	5,037
Inventories	1,640,575	1,416,768
Trade and other receivables	1,027,421	257,979
Related Party Receivable	18,582	6,825
Loan to associate	115,452	115,452
Term deposits	-	250,000
Cash and bank balances	55,049	822,469
Total Current Assets	2,862,651	2,874,530
TOTAL ASSETS	8,097,471	7,647,553
EQUITY & LIABILITIES		
Equity		
Share Capital	3,300,000	3,000,000
Legal Reserve	1,100,000	1,000,000
Optional Reserve	114,279	114,148
Retained Earnings	2,115,025	1,813,851
Total Equity	6,629,304	5,927,999
Non-Current Liabilities		
Employees' end of service benefits	47,061	51,020
Lease Liability on right-of-use assets-Non Current Portion	5,202	-
Deferred tax liability	78,400	59,857
Total Non-Current Liabilities	130,663	110,877
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	1,183,865	1,249,380
Lease Liability on right-of-use assets-Current Portion	11,969	-
Income tax payable	141,670	359,297
Total Current Liabilities	1,337,504	1,608,677
Total Liabilities	1,468,167	1,719,554
TOTAL EQUITY & LIABILITIES	8,097,471	7,647,553
Net assets per share	2.009	1.976

Statement of Comprehensive income for the year
Ended 31 December 2024

	2024 R.O.	2023 R.O.
Revenue	4,907,428	5,985,630
Less: Cost of Revenue	(2,694,365)	(2,615,556)
Gross Profit	2,213,063	3,370,074
Other Income	1,953	654
Salaries and other related staff costs	(426,996)	(438,427)
Selling and distribution expenses	(514,091)	(695,338)
General & Administrative Overheads	(356,652)	(332,754)
Finance Charges	(8,256)	(8,277)
Profit from operations	909,021	1,895,932
Share of profit/(loss) of an associate	85,702	(59,191)
Fair value gain on investment in associate	7,485	-
Unrealised fair value gain on investments at fair value through profit or loss	535	1,744
Interest income	158,775	129,680
Profit for the year before taxation	1,161,518	1,968,165
Tax Expenses	(160,213)	(336,390)
Profit and total comprehensive income for the year	1,001,305	1,631,775
Basic earnings per share	0.303	0.544

SA's G20 leadership gets EU support

Johannesburg, SA - European Council President Antonio Costa expressed the European Union's full support on Monday for South Africa's leadership of the G20 during a phone call with President Cyril Ramaphosa.

"I highlighted the EU's commitment to deepen ties with South Africa, as a reliable and predictable partner," Costa said in remarks posted on X.

He said he looks forward to the South Africa -EU bilateral summit on March 13.

"I expressed the EU's full support to South Africa's leadership of the G20 and its ambition to strengthen multilateral cooperation and the Pact for the Future to address the most pressing global issues," he added.

Ramaphosa said in a separate statement that he welcomes the engagement with Costa and his encouragement on the formation of South Africa's Government of National Unity (GNU) as a demonstration of the country's strong commitment to democracy and the rule of law.

Last June, Ramaphosa's African National Congress (ANC) party, together with nine others, agreed to form a GNU after the ANC did not secure a two thirds majority in May parliamentary elections.

Ramaphosa said South Africa



South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said he looks forward to the South Africa -EU bilateral summit on March 13

and the EU share the same values of democracy, human rights, dignity and equality.

He also said he is looking forward to the South Africa-EU Summit to consolidate their strong bilateral partnership and

discuss regional developments as well as continental and global issues. "I also look forward to working together with the leadership of the EU in ensuring a successful G20 in line with our chosen theme and in tackling the

most pressing global challenges," he added.

South Africa officially assumed the one-year rotational G20 presidency last December, becoming the first African country to lead the group of powerful

nations.

US to skip summit

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said last week that he will not attend the G20 summit this month in Johannesburg, citing

concerns over South Africa's policies. Rubio's statement came days after US President Donald Trump threatened to cut foreign aid to South Africa over allegations of land confiscation and the mistreatment of 'certain classes

of people'. Days later, Trump signed an executive order freezing funds to Pretoria over its land expropriation law and the country's role in the genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice.

The UN Secretary General's Deputy Spokesman, Farhan Haq, told reporters on Monday that

I look forward to working together with the leadership of EU in ensuring a successful G20 in line with our chosen theme and in tackling the most pressing global challenges

CYRIL RAMAPHOSA

'the secretary general believes that the G20 is an important group in terms of dealing with international crises. He has worked very well with them and he encourages all efforts to strengthen the work of this group and he doesn't want anything detrimental to disrupt the group's work. It's important that it be able to work in a unified manner as much as possible,' he said.

Arizona: 2 private jets collide in Scottsdale runway, 1 killed

Arizona, US - Two private jets collided on Scottsdale Airport's runway in the southwestern US state of Arizona on Monday, killing at least one person and injuring others, officials said.

"A Learjet 35A veered off the runway after landing and crashed into a Gulfstream 200 business jet on the ramp at Scottsdale Municipal Airport in Arizona around 2:45pm local time on Monday, February 10 (2145 UTC)," according to the US Federal Aviation Administration.

At least four people were injured in the crash, according to Scottsdale Fire Department Captain Dave Folio.

The FAA added that the number of people on board the colliding jets was unknown.

Of the injured people, two were taken to trauma centres and one person whose condition is stable was taken to a hospital, Folio said.

He added that one of the passengers remained trapped in one



Scottsdale airport is a popular hub for jets frequenting the Phoenix area, particularly during big sporting events

of the jets, adding that 'we're doing everything we can to extricate and save the one soul that's still on board'.

The reason why the plane veered off has yet to be confirmed. The FAA said that it is investigating the cause behind the crash. "The FAA is temporarily pausing flights into the airport,"

the administration, which has launched an investigation into the collision, added.

Scottsdale airport is a popular hub for jets frequenting the Phoenix area, particularly during big sporting events.

The crash in Scottsdale adds to a series of major plane crashes that occurred in the US in the

past two weeks. Late in January a passenger jet collided with US Army Black Hawk helicopter in Washington, D.C. midair, killing 67 people. Days later, a medical jet crashed in Philadelphia, killing seven people and last week, a plane crashed in Alaska killing 10 people.

DW

First deportation flights to Venezuela depart from US

Bogota, Colombia - Two planes carrying Venezuelan migrants deported by the US departed from Fort Bliss military base in El Paso, Texas on Monday bound for Venezuela, the government of President Nicolas Maduro confirmed.

The Conviasa Airlines planes were dispatched to the US to repatriate the first group of deported Venezuelans.

"The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela informs its people and the world that two planes are currently en route to Venezuelan territory... which were sent to the US as part of the 'Vuelta a la Patria' (Return to the Homeland) plan to repatriate Venezuelan migrant compatriots," said a statement from the Venezuelan government.

The White House also confirmed the beginning of repatriation flights, noting that US special envoy Richard Grenell was overseeing the process, according to a post on X. The Venezuelan government said that some people



on board the planes may have links to 'criminal activities' or may be associated with the Tren de Aragua criminal gang.

"As appropriate, these individuals will undergo a rigorous investigation upon their arrival in Venezuelan territory and will be subject to the penalties prescribed by our justice system," the Venezuelan government statement added.

These are the first such flights in a year, following an agreement reached by both administrations during Grenell's visit to the capi-

tal Caracas on January 31.

During his visit, Grenell met with President Maduro and returned to the US with six American citizens who had been detained by the Venezuelan government. On Friday, border czar Tom Homan confirmed that deportation flights from the US to Venezuela would begin 'within the next 30 days'. Trump had announced that Venezuela had offered to provide transportation for the return of deported individuals.

Anadolu Agency

FBI discovers around 2,400 secret JFK records

Houston, US - The FBI discovered about 2,400 records tied to US President John F Kennedy's 1963 assassination, according to a report by Axios on Monday.

The still-secret records are contained in 14,000 pages of documents the FBI found in a review prompted by President Donald Trump's January 23 executive order to release all of JFK's assassination records. The records were never provided through a task force that was supposed to review and disclose the documents, Axios reported.

Conspiracy theories about Kennedy's November 22, 1963 assassination at Dealey Plaza in Dallas, Texas have been talked about for 61 years, fuelled by the government's reluctance to release all of the documents.

The existence of the new JFK documents was disclosed to the White House on Friday, and a further review of those records



The FBI discovered about 2,400 records tied to JFK's 1963 assassination

could reveal more information as to what happened in one of the most scrutinised tragedies in American history. The release of the new documents could also change the federal procedures for vetting and releasing information related to government events.

"This is huge. It shows the FBI is taking this seriously," assassi-

nation expert Jefferson Morley told Axios.

Morley is also the vice president of the nonpartisan Mary Ferrell Foundation, the nation's largest source of online records of Kennedy's killing.

"The FBI is finally saying, 'Let's respond to the president's order', instead of keeping the secrecy going," added Morley.

Under the 1992 JFK Records Act, assassination records were supposed to be handed over to the JFK Assassination Records Review Board and then to the National Archives, which were to

The still-secret records are contained in 14,000 pages of documents the FBI found in a review prompted by President Donald Trump's January 23 executive order to release all of JFK's assassination records

be fully disclosed in 2017 during Trump's first term in the White House. However, the Axios report revealed that the newly discovered records had not been submitted or vetted by either of those entities.

At the advice of the CIA in 2017, Trump delayed disclosure of the records that the government had identified. President

Joe Biden then ordered a limited release of the records, which continued to promote the public's view of the government's shroud of secrecy.

Experts say that the remaining

records to be disclosed are unlikely to definitively prove whether Lee Harvey Oswald was the sole gunman who pulled the trigger or if he was part of a broader conspiracy to assassinate Kennedy, but it could put to rest the cover-up of documents that critics have blamed on the government for more than a half century.

North Korea warns US over nuclear submarine in South

Seoul, South Korea - North Korea on Tuesday condemned the arrival of a US Navy nuclear submarine in South Korea, saying that it will use 'any defence means' to protect itself, according to the state-run media.

In a statement, the Defence Ministry called the deployment a 'concentrated expression of the US' unchangeable madness toward North Korea'. "We express grave concern over the dangerous hostile military actions of the United States that could push the acute military standoff on the Korean Peninsula into an actual armed conflict," the statement said, urging Wash-

ington to halt 'provocative acts that lead to further instability'.

This came a day after the USS Alexandria, a Los Angeles-class attack submarine, arrived in the South Korean port city of Busan for resupply and crew rest. It marked the first US nuclear submarine visit to the peninsula this year.

Pyeongyang said its armed forces are closely monitoring US military movements and are prepared to take any necessary measures to safeguard national security.

"We will not back down an inch from our confrontation with this tyrannical enemy," the statement said.

Anadolu Agency

Israel begins to build new settlement in occupied West Bank amid escalation

Nahal Hilt settlement is being built on Palestinian land in the village of Battir in Bethlehem in the southern West Bank

Ramallah/Ankara - Israel began to build a new settlement in the West Bank amid military escalation in the occupied territory, a Palestinian official said on Tuesday.

The Nahal Hilt settlement is being built on Palestinian land in the village of Battir in Bethlehem in the southern West Bank, said Moayad Shaaban, who heads the Colonization and Wall Resistance Commission.

"Israel approved the construction of the new settlement in response to global recognition of the Palestinian state last year," he added in a statement.

In response to Israel's genocidal war on Gaza, Spain, Ireland, and Norway recognised the Palestinian state in May last year, a move that infuriated Tel Aviv.

Shaaban said the new Israeli settlement practically separates the Bethlehem area from Jerusalem.

"It is part of Israel's gradual plan for Greater Jerusalem, which threatens the entire geo-

graphical continuity between the northern and southern West Bank," he added.

In July 2024, the International Court of Justice declared Israel's decades-long occupation of Palestinian land illegal and demanded the evacuation of all existing settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The settlement building came as the Israeli army escalated its onslaught on Palestinian areas in the West Bank, where more than 30 Palestinians have been killed and thousands displaced by Israeli raids in the occupied territory since January 21.

The Israeli escalation follows a ceasefire and prisoner exchange deal in Gaza on January 19, after more than 15 months of Israeli bombardment which has killed nearly 48,200 Palestinians and devastated the enclave.

Since the war began on October 7, 2023, Israeli forces and settlers have killed at least 910 Palestinians across the occupied West Bank, according to the Health Ministry.



The settlement building came as the Israeli army escalated onslaught on Palestinian areas in the West Bank, where more than 30 Palestinians have been killed and thousands displaced by Israeli raids in the occupied territory since January 21

Demolition continues

Meanwhile, Israeli army forces demolished a Palestinian home near the West Bank city of Ramallah on Tuesday, in the latest home demolitions in the occupied territory.

According to witnesses, mil-

itary bulldozers razed the structure in the village of Deir Ibtzi, west of Ramallah city, citing the lack of a building permit.

According to official figures, the Israeli army demolished 126 Palestinian structures in January, including 74 inhabited homes and 29 agricultural facil-

ities in the West Bank.

Israel widely uses the pretext of a lack of construction permits to demolish Palestinian homes, especially in Area C in the occupied West Bank, which constitutes around 60% of its space.

Under the 1995 Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, was divided into three portions - Area A, B, and C.

Area C is under Israel's administrative and security control until a final status agreement is reached with the Palestinians.

Erdogan's call

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Tuesday said that Israel must end its occupation of Palestinian lands and compensate for the damage it has caused.

"At the core of the problem is Israel's insistence on its policy of occupation, invasion and massacre. Just like in the previous ones, we saw that Israel did not keep its promises in the latest ceasefire agreement," Erdogan said at a joint news conference with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim during his visit to Malaysia.

Anadolu Agency

Gaza death toll passes 48,200 as more bodies found in rubble

Gaza City/Jerusalem - Palestinian medics and rescue teams retrieved eight more bodies from the rubble in the Gaza Strip, pushing the overall death toll from Israel's genocidal war since October 2023 to 48,219, the Health Ministry said on Tuesday.

A ministry statement said that the toll also included three Palestinians killed by Israeli fire in the last 24 hours. According to the ministry, 10 injured people were also admitted to hospitals, taking the number of the injured to 111,665 in the Israeli onslaught.

"Many victims are still trapped under the rubble and on the roads as rescuers are unable to reach them," the ministry said.

Meanwhile, Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid on Tuesday held Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responsible for delaying the release of captives from the Gaza Strip.

On Monday, the Palestinian resistance group Hamas said that it would delay the next hostage release in response to Israeli 'violations' of the Gaza



ceasefire and prisoner exchange agreement. "Hamas' position came in response to Netanyahu, who constantly says he does not want to move to the next phase of the agreement," Lapid told local radio 103FM.

Negotiations for the second phase were scheduled to start last week, but Netanyahu refused to send his negotiators to Qatar until he met with US President Donald Trump.

According to the Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronot, Netanyahu and Trump agreed on the guidelines of the second phase of the Gaza deal, including the expulsion of Hamas leadership from Gaza, the dismantling of the group's armed wing, and the release of all captives from Gaza.

Israel's security cabinet is set to meet on Tuesday to discuss the fate of the Gaza ceasefire agreement with Hamas. Lapid

called for 'a single-stage prisoner swap' instead of 'small doses', warning that the current method 'means killing the hostages'.

"Netanyahu and his government are working to derail the agreement to save time," the opposition leader said.

Israel estimates that 76 Israelis are still held in Gaza, but does not know how many of them are dead or alive.

Anadolu Agency

DRC: Over 110,000 displaced people left Goma, says UN

Geneva, Switzerland - The UN humanitarian office on Tuesday said that the agency's field reporting indicates that more than 110,000 displaced people have left sites in Goma, the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

They started to move to villages in the Masisi, Rutshuru and Nyiragongo territories where there is no fighting, spokesperson Jens Laerke told a UN briefing in Geneva. "However, partners remain concerned by the 72-hour ultimatum given by M23 representatives two days ago to displaced people living in sites and collective centres in Goma to leave and return to their villages," Laerke said.

"We reiterate that all returns must be voluntary and take place under safe, informed and dignified conditions in accordance with international humanitarian law," he added. He stressed that humanitarian partners are also alarmed about the ongoing but unplanned dismantling of sites for internally displaced people.



This situation leads to the loss of humanitarian infrastructure at the sites, including water facilities, health centres, and cholera treatment centres, resulting in 'significant losses of humanitarian investments and reduced response capacities', he added.

Impact of Yemen aid pause

Laerke, in response to Anadolu's question, said that the agency is assessing the impact of a pause in humanitarian operations in Yemen following the detention of UN staff members.

"We are looking into, as we

speak, what the impact of this recent stop in particular will have on our operations in Yemen," he said. When asked about the volume of aid delivered to affected areas before the pause, Laerke said he did not have exact figures.

"Of course, that is something we would look at. We would need that for comparison to see what has happened to estimate the impact," he added.

The UN on Monday announced a temporary pause to all its operations in Yemen's Sa'ada governorate after the detention of UN personnel by Houthis.

Anadolu Agency

SA: Afrikaners worried about US-triggered escalation of racial tensions

Cape Town/Istanbul - White South Africans are worried that the US government's recent decision to halt financial aid to their country over alleged 'land confiscation from white farmers' could escalate racial tensions in the country.

Whites, who make up 8% of South Africa's population of over 63mn, are already one of the most advantaged socio-economic groups in the country.

Most of the white community is made up of the Afrikaner ethnic group, the descendants of Dutch farmers who came here centuries ago during the colonial period.

White farmers currently own

approximately three-quarters of South Africa's land, and the distribution of land to Black farmers has been among the top priorities of governments for the last 30 years.

Afrikaners living in Cape Town commented on the US decision to stop financial aid to South Africa and to start working on granting refugee status to whites.

South African Lalie Kotze told Anadolu that 'as Afrikaner people, we are indigenous to this land. I think we should stay in South Africa and work for the future of this country'.

Kotze said the US decision could escalate racial tensions,



Most of the white community is made up of the Afrikaner ethnic group, the descendants of Dutch farmers

Whites, who make up 8% of SA's population, are already one of the most advantaged socio-economic groups in the country

and this could harm South Africans, especially the white community, adding that President 'Donald Trump should deal with the bigger problems facing America, economic concerns and inflation'.

Kotze said that South Africa is working to overcome the traumas of the apartheid regime in the country's history and that the new law on land expropriation addresses historical injustices and promotes equality among South Africans.

South African Johan de Villiers said: "Frankly, I find this decision by the US about our country meaningless and absurd. No one's land is being seized. I don't think such a thing is likely to happen in the future. Trump's decision thousands of kilometres away, about South Africa, which he has no idea about, does nothing more than damage our social cohesion."

World must pull together resources and talent for AI: Indian PM

Paris, France – Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Artificial Intelligence Summit in Paris on Tuesday and said that AI can help transform millions of lives by improving health, agriculture and education.

Stating that AI can help create a world in which the journey to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) becomes ‘easier and faster’ he called on the world to pull together resources and talent for AI.

In his address at the AI Action

Summit, Modi said: “To do this, we must pull together resources and talent. We must develop open-source systems that enhance trust and transparency.”

“We must build quality data sets free from biases. We must democratise technology and create people-centric applications. We must address concerns related to cyber security, disinformation and deepfakes.

“We must also ensure that technology is rooted in local ecosystems for it to be effective and useful. Loss of jobs is AI’s



Indian PM Narendra Modi with French President Emmanuel Macron at the AI Action Summit, at the Grand Palais in Paris on Tuesday (ANI)

most feared disruption, but history has shown that work does not disappear due to technology, its nature changes and new types of jobs are created. We need to invest in skilling and re-skilling our people for an AI-driven future,” he said.

Co-chairing the summit with French President Emmanuel Macron, Modi said AI is ‘already reshaping our polity, our economy, our security and even our society’. “AI is writing the code for humanity in this century. But it is very different from other

technology milestones in human history. AI is developing at an unprecedented scale and speed and being adapted and deployed even faster. There is also a deep interdependence across borders.” Modi said that the world must think deeply and discuss openly about innovation and governance and emphasised that governance is also about ensuring access to all, particularly in the Global South.

“There is a need for collective global efforts to establish governance and standards that upload

our shared values, address risks, and build trust.

“But governance is not just about managing rifts and rivalries. It is also about promoting innovation and deploying it for the global good. So, we must think deeply and discuss openly about innovation and governance. Governance is also about ensuring access to all, especially in the Global South. It is where the capabilities are most lacking be it compute, power, talent, or data for the financial resources.” ANI



Several Indians claim to have been lured to Russia under false pretenses, and forced into active combat

Russia-Ukraine war: Indian recruits share ‘frightening’ ordeal

New Delhi, India - Azad Yousuf Kumar, 32, from south Kashmir’s Pulwama district, told DW that in December 2023, while looking for employment opportunities abroad, he came across a YouTube channel advertising lucrative security positions in Russia, with promising salaries.

Azad said that he was enticed by the prospects and claims to have paid the company behind the now-deleted channel around 130,000 rupees (US\$1,486) for travel and processing fees. He said that he was willing to do so, given that, despite being a commerce graduate, he hadn’t found work locally.

Azad explained that, at the time, he had no idea he would eventually become stranded along the Russia-Ukraine border with a dozen other Indians, and end up fighting in Russia’s war in Ukraine for several months. “I endured near-death experiences, including being injured during combat training, all while becoming contracted to the Russian army to fight in the Ukraine war,” Azad told DW from his residence in Indian-administered Kashmir.

Azad’s ordeal in Luhansk

Azad told DW that he faced the brutal realities of war when he ended up stationed in Ukraine’s war-torn city of Luhansk. He claimed that he and others dug trenches amid artillery fire and incoming shells - which, he said, often landed a close distance from their positions.

“Just a couple of weeks into training, I suffered a gunshot wound to my foot due to unfamiliarity of holding the weapon, leading to over two weeks of hospitalisation,” Azad said.

“When I came back home after nine months, it was a miracle. I had fallen prey to a massive employment scam as had many other boys from India. Yes, there are flashes of my frightening stay there ... but my young daughter now provides

me solace.”

Last month, India’s government admitted that 126 Indian nationals have served in the Russian Army. At least 12 Indian nationals have died while fighting and 16 others are missing. So far, 96 people have returned to India having been discharged from the Russian armed forces, it said.

“We have also reiterated our demand for the early discharge of the remaining Indian nationals,” said the foreign ministry official spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal.

Like Azad, several other young men from south India said that they too ended up in Russia after coming across the

When I came back home after nine months, it was a miracle. I had fallen prey to an employment scam as had many other boys from India

AZAD YOUSUF KUMAR

video offer.

Grateful to be alive

Syed Ilyas Hussaini, a 23-year-old from India’s southwestern state of Karnataka, along with his friends Abdul Nayeem and Mohammed Sameer Ahmed, said they were lured by the promise of lucrative security guard positions in Russia. They reportedly being assured monthly salaries of between 70,000-100,000 rupees.

“I was initially employed in a catering company as a worker at the Dubai airport but returned home to India and told my father, Syed Nawaj Ali, of a new job in Russia,” Hussaini told DW.

But instead of the promised security jobs, they claim to have been coerced into joining a private military company and deployed to the Russia-Ukraine border along with people from

Nepal and Cuba.

“My friends and I were coerced into signing contracts written in Russian, a language which I did not understand, and soon found ourselves conscripted into the Russian army,” Hussaini told DW.

“Our passports and mobiles were taken away and once we were forced to wear army fatigues, it dawned on us that we were cheated and feared the worst. It was torture and our commander treated us badly,” he added.

“We feared we would never get out alive and when a colleague, Hemil Mangukiya from Surat in Gujarat was killed in a drone attack while digging a trench, I thought I would die too,” said Hussaini.

In March last year, Hussaini described how he managed to get hold of a mobile phone and, together with other Indian nationals, recorded a video message highlighting the dire situation they were facing.

“It went viral and that is when the government and politicians woke up to our plight, and then it was months before we were sent back to Moscow and came back home in September,” claimed Hussaini. The video has since been deleted.

In July, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s two-day visit to Moscow, Russia promised to discharge any Indians who had been falsely induced to join its army and then forced into active combat in Ukraine, according to Reuters, which cited an Indian official.

The decision, which was not formally announced by Russia, had come after Modi’s meeting with President Vladimir Putin.

Many youths said they were lured into Russia under false pretences and claimed to have ended up in the ongoing war zone simply because they were desperate for work and the risk of going abroad appeared better than staying in India with little to no job prospects.

DW

Yunus condemns mob attack at Bangladesh book fair, orders probe

A group of students had attacked a stall at the book fair in Dhaka over the display of book by Taslima Nasreen

Dhaka, Bangladesh - Chief Adviser of the Interim Government in Bangladesh, Muhammad Yunus, strongly denounced the mob attack on the Amar Ekushey Book Fair in Dhaka, and said that the attack shows ‘contempt’ for both the ‘rights of Bangladeshi citizens and for the laws of our country’.

This comes after a group of madrasa students on Monday had attacked a stall at the Amar Ekushey Book Fair in Dhaka over the display of book written by Taslima Nasreen, who is in exile in India as per police and eyewitness’ accounts.

“The Chief Adviser strongly condemns the mob attack on a bookstall at Ekushey Book Fair. The attack shows contempt for both the rights of Bangladeshi citizens and for the laws of our country,” the Chief Advisor’s office said in a statement.

“Such violence betrays the open-minded spirit of this great Bangladeshi cultural fixture, which commemorates the language martyrs who lost their lives on February 21, 1952 in defence of their mother tongue. Today, the Ekushey Boimela (Ekushey Book Fair) is a daily meeting place for our writers and readers,” the statement added.



Chief Adviser of the Interim Government in Bangladesh, Muhammad Yunus

Such violence betrays open-minded spirit of this great cultural fixture, which commemorates language martyrs who lost their lives on in defence of their mother tongue

MUHAMMAD YUNUS’ OFFICE

The interim government has instructed police and the Bangla Academy to probe the incident and has directed security agencies to take ‘strong measures’ to stop ‘any incidents of mob violence’ in the country.

“The Interim Government has ordered police and the Bangla Academy to investigate the incident and bring the culprits to book. Police have been ordered to step up security in the fair and make sure no untoward incidents take place in this very important space. The government has also ordered the concerned security agencies to take strong measures to stop any incidents of mob violence in the country,” the Chief Advisor’s office said in

a statement.

According to police and eyewitnesses, the incident took place at the book stall of Sabyasachi Publication, the publisher of Nasreen.

“A group of agitators came to Sabyasachi Prakashani and started shouting first why Taslima Nasreen’s book was kept in the stall. Later Publisher Shatabdi Bhava was attacked by the people. They threw away Taslima’s book,” a witness had said. “Later, the situation came under control after police picked up publisher Shatabdi Bhava and the agitators from the spot,” they added.

“Additional police were sent after receiving information about

the disturbance at the book fair. The panic was there due to tensions between some students of the Qaumi Madrasa and the publisher of Sabyasachi Prokashoni,” police official Masud Alam told ANI over the phone. “We brought both parties to the police station. We are trying to find out the reason of the tensions. The situation is completely under control,” he added.

Purported videos of the attack has gone viral on social media. Taslima Nasreen shared one such video on X.

“Today, militant religious extremists attacked the stall of the publisher Sabyasachi at Bangladesh’s book fair. Their ‘crime’ was publishing my book,” Taslima Nasreen wrote on X.

“The book fair authorities and the police from the local station ordered the removal of my book. Even after it was removed, the extremists attacked, vandalised the stall, and shut it down,” she added. ANI

Trump’s special envoy to visit Ukraine

Washington, D.C. US - US President Donald Trump confirmed on Monday that his special envoy for Ukraine and Russia, Keith Kellogg, will visit Ukraine soon.

“Yes,” Trump told reporters in the Oval Office when asked whether Kellogg is going to visit Ukraine this week.

“General Kellogg is an excellent guy,” he added.

Trump also said he will ‘probably’ talk to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky this week.

“He wants to make a deal...I think they both (Zelensky and Russian President Vladimir Putin) want to make a deal. It’s got to be done,” he said.

Trump reiterated that the Russia-Ukraine war would have



never started if he were president. Asked whether he is trying to set up a meeting with Putin, he said: “Well, I can’t tell you what I’m talking about, but we are talking as a group. Also, I think he’d like to make a deal, but it takes

two to tango.”

Trump was asked whether he could provide more clarity on whether he has spoken to Putin.

“I don’t want to talk about it. No, I don’t want to talk about it. It’s not going to help you to know,

but we would like to get a deal done, if possible only because, in my case, (to) save lives,” he said.

Meanwhile, Russia on Tuesday said its forces had captured the settlement of Yasenove in Ukraine’s Donetsk region.

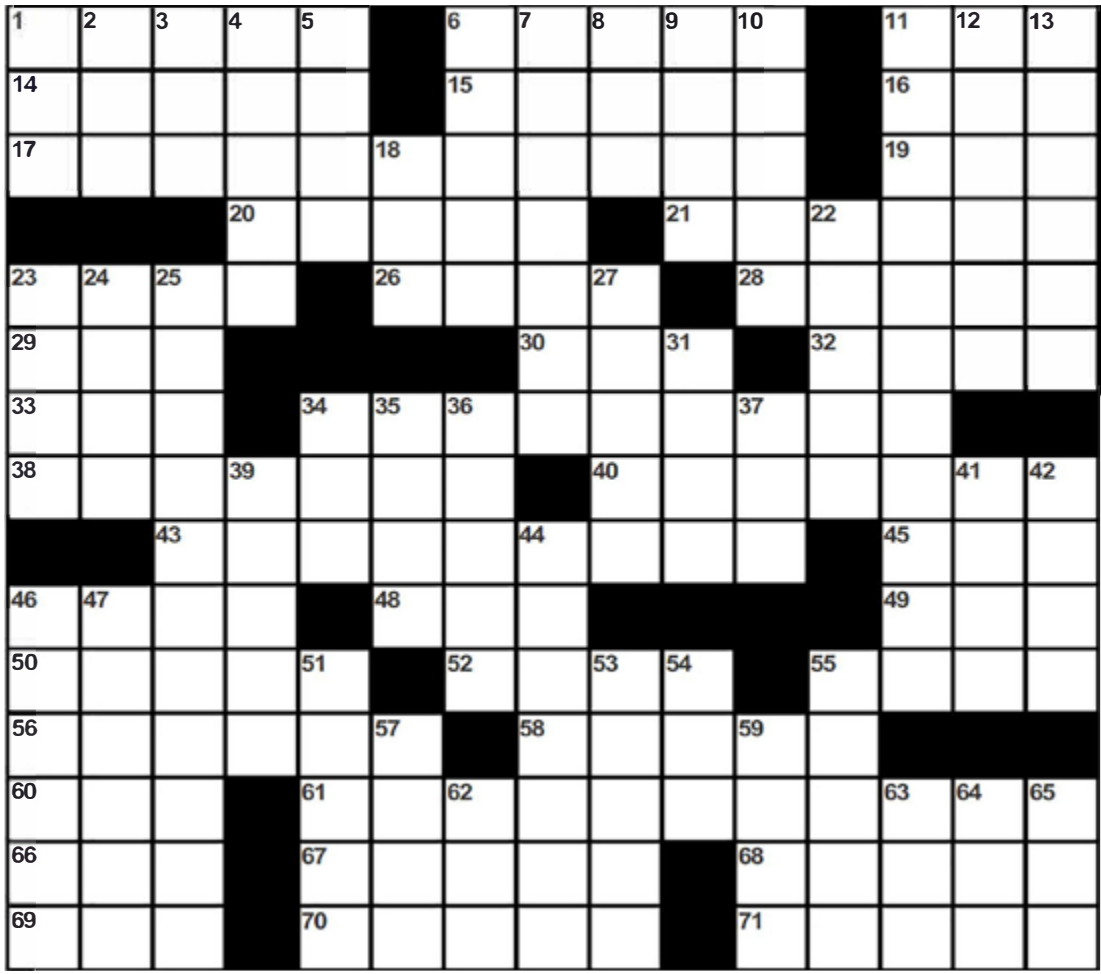
According to the Defence Ministry, the village fell under Russian control following an operation by the Tsent (Centre) group of forces.

The ministry added that Russian troops continued their offensive, making rapid advances in certain areas.

It also said that forces launched a coordinated strike overnight using precision weapons and drones.

Anadolu Agency

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Attendance counter
6) Kind of metabolism
11) Moll's leg
14) Dog tag datum
15) "All kidding _ ..."
16) "... to Billie Joe"
17) Messed up a tail
19) "Terrible twos" cries
20) Absolute
21) Directs, as a vehicle
23) Karate blow
26) Concrete section
28) Less chancy
29) Bucharest bill
30) "Spy vs. Spy" magazine
32) Chuck
33) The max.
34) One in a congregation
38) Showing a lot of feeling
40) Crowd disperser
43) Seers
45) Cummerbund kin
46) Something to fall back on?
48) Ornamental flower, for short
49) "... the ramparts ..."
50) Odd-numbered page

- 52) Astronaut's insignia
55) Annexes
56) In installments
58) Rubbernecker
60) Flowery chain
61) It leaves one classless?
66) Conceit
67) Squirrel away
68) Skater, before hitting the ice
69) 100th of a yen
70) Anxious
71) A lot

DOWN

- 1) Costa del _
2) A quarter of eight
3) Election winners
4) Subside, as rainfall
5) Former attachment to "while"
6) Breakfast item
7) Hindu retreats
8) Be in session
9) Tumults
10) Some boxing punches
11) Not coming back
12) More than likes
13) Gentlemen (Abbr.)
18) "Really... nothing"
22) Cafeteria customer
23) Part of the crossword

- 24) Bridge site
25) Not playing
27) Thai money
31) Losing proposition?
34) Humor
35) Egg
36) Any "Seinfeld," now
37) Speaker systems, for short
39) _-frutti
41) Horizontal at night
42) Formal-sounding letter opener
44) Printer components
46) Working class members
47) Go back on a promise
51) Cornhusker State metropolis
53) "Grease" player
54) Appropriate
55) "He's_ nowhere man" (Beatles lyric)
57) Black, in poetry
59) Congers
62) Created a lap
63) Diamonds, to a gangster
64) Take after a tailor
65) Title bestowed in church?

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

It's not like you to talk a lot. You pride yourself on using only as many words as you need to get your point across, no more and no less. So when your loved ones ask you what's up, don't be offended. They're just wondering who you are and what you've done with their friend. Oh, enjoy it. It's good to keep them guessing. Then blame it on the coffee and keep chatting. They'll be only too happy to listen.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

You still haven't settled down, have you? Do you feel as if you're operating your mouth without engaging your brain first? Try your best to get it under control. If it doesn't work, though, don't worry about it. The entire world is going to be quite chatty today, so you're certainly not alone. For once, in fact, you'll blend right in. Some people may even wonder why you're so quiet.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

You could spend the next 48 hours worrying about what one of your closest (but craziest) companions will do next, but why would you want to? Remember that you can love someone just as much as you want, but you can't live their life for them. Relax, and forget about sorting out someone else's drama. If you need to take a little break from this friend, there's no time like the present.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

The cosmos is absolutely insisting you entertain someone special, someone so special they're downright unique, at your place. It's not as if you're going to argue either, unless this special person asks you over to their place instead. In which case, you won't argue, and you shouldn't. In short, privacy is the name of the game. Big shock, huh?



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

You're a sensitive creature with antennae that never fail you. Thus, your internal radar will come in handy today, given the unpredictable, mixed bag of energies bombarding you. One never knows what you'll do or what the rest of the world will do, but your intuition should give you some hints just before it happens. Better keep a chaperone nearby. You'll be picking up all kinds of signals, even those you'd rather not tune in to.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Part of you really and truly wants to keep quiet about what you're feeling, especially if it concerns a touchy subject. But a much more insistent part of you just won't have it and is determined to let it all out. You're currently involved in a heated internal battle, and while neither side has officially won, deep down you know who to bet on. Your feelings are written all over your face.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

You're not quite sure what's gotten into you, but you think you like it. You're still as fun-loving and fond of risks as you ever were, but now you're also looking for a safety net just in case. That's certainly not like you, is it? Maybe there's a certain person in the picture? Someone you don't want to offend or frighten away. Well, not to worry. Just be a little extra cautious today.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You're in the mood for just the facts, nothing more, nothing less, and certainly nothing else. So heaven help anyone who decides to embellish those facts or bombard you with unnecessary details to manipulate you. You know all about subtlety. You wrote the book on it, and you know when you're being worked. You'll recognize the signs immediately, and you won't hesitate to spell them out.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

You're still having a fine old time, and aren't anywhere near ready to call it quits. You're probably running on just a few hours of sleep too, but you'd never know it. You're excited and enthusiastic, feeling as if you have a solid eight hours of snooze time under your belt. Good for you. Consider it a gift from the Universe and enjoy it while it lasts, preferably in the company of some equally energetic pals.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

You're as flexible as you can be right now, so having to multitask over the next few days shouldn't be a huge problem for you. The good news is that all the lovely things you'll be juggling may include hanging out with someone irresistible you cross paths with under quite serendipitous circumstances. Don't ask too many questions. Just enjoy this reunion or connection for what it is.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You've kept quiet about that attraction you've been feeling for a long time, but you sure can't do it much longer. You really need to talk with someone about this, and your best friend or favorite sibling will be only too happy to listen. Better get it off your chest now, and map out a battle plan for when they make their move, because they're about to do just that. And soon.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Today's cosmic package includes more than just a touch of passion. We're talking major-league fireworks, in fact. But remember that passion can go both ways. If you're happy, you'll be emphatically happy, and anyone who comes into contact with you will feel it right away. If you're angry, though, just warn any bystanders to duck. You wouldn't want anyone who's truly innocent to get caught in the line of fire, right? At least give them a warning.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Donald Trump addressed a crowd on 6 January 2021 down the road from the US Capitol in Washington, D.C. What was the overall drift of what he said?

- A. Keep warm in the winter cold
B. A description of the Capitol building's architecture
C. The presidential election in 2020 had been stolen from him and "the American people"
D. Take the vaccine against the COVID-19 virus as soon as possible

02. There is a "famed Tahiti Beach" on the ...

- A. French Riviera, in Saint Tropez, France
B. Gold Coast of Queensland, Australia
C. Abu Dhabi, a T-shaped island jutting into the Persian Gulf
D. Devon, on Britain's south coast

03. When was the first modern Olympic Games scheduled to be held in an Asian country?

- A. 1972
B. 1964
C. 1940
D. 1914

Answers: 1. C 2. A 3. C

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

O	E	P	D
N	I	Y	G
G	S	I	N
A	Y	L	I

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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



The 5-1 thumping of Manchester City earlier this month will be a shot in the arm for Arsenal in their Premier League title challenge

Liverpool are six points ahead of Arsenal, but their lead is not as big as it looks

London, England - Despite relentless Liverpool continuing to keep their composure as the title race intensifies, Arsenal's hopes of catching them are growing ever stronger.

For the first time this season, you could feel it in the atmosphere at Emirates Stadium after Arsenal's 5-1 statement victory against Manchester City. A genuine belief from Arsenal supporters that a surge of good form is possible and, with it, a serious shot at a first Premier League title since 2003/04.

Liverpool have commanded the table for most of the season, so much so that many pundits believe it's impossible to catch Arne Slot's side. They are wrong.

Liverpool's six-point gap is smaller than it looks - particularly with a showdown between the two sides to come.

"You feel it will take a calamitous mistake from Liverpool for it to happen," said Ian Wright, after the win over Man City.

"But Arsenal just have to keep beating teams and if it does happen, then they have to be ready to take the chance."

Yes, Arsenal need to keep winning games. But it wouldn't take anything "calamitous" for the leaders to slip.

Six points is a small gap, even with Liverpool having a game in hand. That happens to be a trip to Goodison Park on Wednesday night - a tough prospect now that

Everton have won three matches in a row under David Moyes.

If Liverpool drop any points there, it will give Arsenal a chance, not least because the two title rivals meet at Anfield in early May. Mikel Arteta's side only need to get within three points of the current leaders to have the title - technically - in their own hands.

So, a couple of unexpected draws from Liverpool - a minor dip, nothing more - can put Arsenal back within touching distance.

Win over City could spark a surge

It was only one match, and Man City aren't the force they once were this season, but the swag in Arsenal's performance last time out hints at something big coming.

They attacked with verve and with purpose, thanks in no small part to the injection of energy from young players Myles Lewis-

Skelly and Ethan Nwaneri.

There were no new signings for Arsenal in January, to Arteta's disappointment, but these two teenagers seem to have kicked the team into a whole new gear. Both of them were on the score-sheet against City.

If they can play with such charisma - such free-flowing football, even without the injured Bukayo Saka and Gabriel Martinelli, who, according to reports is out for a month - then perhaps Arteta's side can repeat the form they showed in the second half of last season.

They won 12, drew one and only lost one of their final 14 matches in 2023/24. If they repeat that trick - and with a fully-fit defence, why not? Arsenal would end on 87 points.

Over-reliance on Salah?

For Liverpool to get 87 points means them picking up 31 points

THE TOP TWO						
Team	Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goal difference	Points
Liverpool	23	17	5	1	35	56
Arsenal	24	14	8	2	27	50

from 15 games, not including a defeat by Arsenal - we'll take it as read that needs to happen.

That translates to 10 wins, one draw and three defeats. It's a high number of losses but far from impossible, especially considering Liverpool still have to travel to the Etihad Stadium, Villa Park and Stamford Bridge in their remaining matches.

It looks unlikely now, but only because teams on winning streaks always have that air of invincibility. It's an air that can disappear in a flash, just as confident players can suddenly look tired, dazed and confused as soon as results turn.

That could happen to Liverpool for one main reason: their

dependence on Mohamed Salah.

The Egyptian has scored or assisted 34 of his team's 56 Premier League goals this season

An injury would obviously have enormous consequences, but so too would simple tiredness.

There is every chance Salah's form will continue, of course, but there is hope for Arsenal.

Arsenal will have fewer matches in all competitions than Liverpool, have already had their bad spell and look reinvigorated and ready to utilise their experience of previous run-ins under Arteta.



Arne Slot

'We have to show a different side of us tomorrow'

Liverpool, England - Liverpool are ready for their 122nd and final battle at local rival Everton's Goodison Park, manager Arne Slot said on Tuesday.

Everton will bid farewell to Goodison Park, first opened in 1892, at the end of this season and move to the new Bramley-Moore Dock stadium.

"I think it's an extra reason why the atmosphere will be even better than all the ones before. I

haven't been to one before but people tell me at Goodison Park, as at Anfield, it is always a fantastic atmosphere," Slot

said. "We have to show a different side of us tomorrow because (losing at Plymouth) was not acceptable and not just that but the performance was far from what Liverpool standards are as well."

Man City next up for Plymouth in FA Cup

London, England - FA Cup giant-killers Plymouth Argyle drew Premier League champions Manchester City on Monday as the second tier side's fifth round reward for a shock defeat of Liverpool at the weekend.

Holders Manchester United will host Fulham at Old Trafford in one of at least three all-Premier League clashes, with League Cup finalists Newcastle United at home to top tier rivals Brighton & Hove Albion.

Bournemouth will host Wolverhampton Wanderers in another all top flight encounter.

Struggling Plymouth caused one of the great upsets of the FA Cup on Sunday when they beat a second-string Liverpool 1-0, ending the Premier League leaders' hopes of a quartet of trophies this season.



Plymouth defeated Liverpool 1-0 on Sunday in one of the great upsets of the FA Cup

The Pilgrims are bottom of the Championship but City, who reached the fifth round with a 2-

1 win at third tier Leyton Orient on Saturday after going behind early on, have been misfiring

this season.

There will be a fourth all-Premier League clash if Notting-

ham Forest avoid trouble at League One (third tier) Exeter City on Tuesday, with Ipswich Town awaiting the winners.

Aston Villa, who ended Tottenham Hotspur's hopes on Sunday, host second tier Cardiff City. The fifth round matches will be played on the weekend of March 1 and 2.

LAST 16 DRAW:

Preston North End v Burnley
Aston Villa v Cardiff City
Doncaster Rovers or Crystal Palace v Millwall
Manchester United v Fulham
Newcastle United v Brighton & Hove Albion
Bournemouth v Wolverhampton Wanderers
Manchester City v Plymouth Argyle
Exeter City or Nottingham Forest v Ipswich Town



Daniel Munoz (L) and Justin Devenny (C) were on target in Crystal Palace's 2-0 win over Doncaster in the FA Cup

Palace beat Doncaster Rovers to reach FA Cup fifth round

Doncaster, England - Crystal Palace took their place in the fifth round of the FA Cup after beating fourth tier Doncaster Rovers 2-0 on Monday to escape the fate of London-based Premier League rivals.

Arsenal, Tottenham Hotspur, Chelsea, West Ham United and Brentford have all gone out, with Palace now joining Fulham in the last 16.

Colombian defender Daniel Munoz put the visitors in front in the 31st minute, tapping in the rebound after Jean-Philippe Mateta hit the post from a Daichi Kamada free kick on a wet night in South Yorkshire.

Justin Devenny added a second in the 55th, looping the ball over goalkeeper Teddy Sharm-Lowe.

The capital's involvement in the cup will be further reduced in the fifth round, with Palace hosting Championship (second tier) side Millwall next.

Fulham, who beat third tier Wigan Athletic in the previous round, must meanwhile travel to reigning champions Manchester United.

Doncaster, third in League Two and chasing automatic promotion, were the lowest-ranked remaining side - 58 places below Palace in the league.

Gonzalez brace helps Malaysia's JDT edge Central Coast Mariners

Gosford, Australia - Alvaro Gonzalez scored twice in the second half as Johor Darul Ta'zim secured a 2-1 win over 10-man Central Coast Mariners in Gosford on Tuesday to move the Malaysian side closer to a berth in the knockout rounds of the AFC Champions League.

The Spaniard netted in the 64th and 79th minutes to earn JDT their first away win in the competition after Mariners goalkeeper Dylan Peraic-Cullen had been sent off in first half injury time and Alou Kuol cancelled out Gonzalez's opener.

Victory moves JDT onto 11 points from seven matches and the Malaysia Super League



Alvaro Gonzalez of Johor Darul Ta'zim celebrates after scoring against Central Coast Mariners on Tuesday

champions could secure a place in the last 16 depending on results elsewhere during the current round of fixtures.

JDT claimed the win after a slow-burning first half that burst into life in time added on with Peraic-Cullen sent off for bringing down Arif Aiman outside the penalty area.

The Malaysia international was released into space on the right by Jonathan Viera, prompting Peraic-Cullen to race off his line and haul down Arif as the winger stepped inside leaving referee Ko Hyung-jin with little option but to show the red card.

Heberty hit the post with the

resulting free-kick and Bergson put the ball in the net in the aftermath but his close-range strike was ruled out for offside following a VAR review.

Mariners' resistance was broken in the 64th minute when Natxo Insa fed Arif down the right, whose cutback from the bye line found Gonzalez unmarked and he steered his low shot past Pavlesic.

The Australians, second best for much of the game, pulled level within five minutes however. A foul on Kuol set up Mikael Doka to deliver a free-kick deep into the JDT penalty area and, after Brian Kaltak headed back across goal, Kuol pounced.

INSTANT REDEMPTION

Inter take revenge on Fiorentina to put pressure on leaders Napoli

Milan, Italy - Inter Milan secured a 2-1 home win over Fiorentina on Monday, with substitute Marko Arnautovic's second-half header keeping them within striking distance of Serie A leaders Napoli.

The win was a blessing for second-placed Inter, who now have 54 points and have narrowed the gap with Napoli to just one point.

Inter hosted Fiorentina just four days after their previous Serie A clash - the second-shortest gap in league history. Fiorentina completed a 3-0 victory in last Thursday's match, which had been suspended in the 17th minute on December 1 after Fiorentina midfielder Edoardo Bove suffered a cardiac arrest and collapsed on the pitch.

Inter controlled much of the match and pressed forward early, creating several chances, with Carlos Augusto and Lautaro Martinez both rattling the woodwork within minutes of each other.

While Inter's attacking prowess was on full display, their momentum briefly stalled when striker Marcus Thuram, who was seen limping for several minutes, was forced off and replaced by Arnautovic.

"We make a lot of sacrifices and we have to show it on the pitch, today we took three important points and we are closer to Napoli but the season is still



Inter Milan's Marko Arnautovic scores against Fiorentina on Monday

long," Arnautovic told DAZN.

Despite dominating the action, Inter only broke the deadlock thanks to an own goal from Fiorentina's Marin Pongracic, who headed the ball into his own net from a corner in the 28th minute.

The visitors managed to level the score a minute before the break, with Rolando Mandragora converting from the penalty spot after Matteo Darmian handled a cross.

Arnautovic headed Inter back

into the lead with a close-range finish off a cross from Augusto, just seven minutes after the restart, securing all three points.

Augusto admitted that the win was important following the poor performance in the previous match at Fiorentina.

"There was anger because in Florence we weren't ourselves, it's normal to be criticised, today we showed our strength again," he said.

Meanwhile, Fiorentina manager Raffaele Palladino was left

We make a lot of sacrifices and we have to show it on the pitch, today we took three important points and we are closer to Napoli but the season is still long

MARKO ARNAUTOVIC

frustrated with the way Inter scored their first goal.

The manager believed that the entire ball had gone out of play at the byline, hence a goal-kick should have been awarded. But the referee let the action continue, which ended up with Inter winning a corner that led to Marin Pongracic scoring the own

goal that handed Inter the lead.

"I never talk about referees, I don't judge them, and I've promised myself never to judge a refereeing error. But of course, we were a bit angry about Inter's goal," Palladino said.

"If we have a tool that is there to help referees make fewer mistakes, we can't fail to intervene on

an objective error. The ball went out by about 20cm. These are decisive details."

Palladino added he was proud of the two matches his side had played in the last four days against Inter despite Monday's loss.

"I think they produced a masterpiece on Thursday, and it wasn't easy," he said.

"They've increased our confidence and self-awareness. But we must not change our mentality. We remain a humble team that knows how to defend and adapt."

We were faster and more balanced: Inzaghi

Milan, Italy - Inter Milan manager Simone Inzaghi commended his side for their maturity and impressive mental resilience after they avenged last week's defeat by Fiorentina with a 2-1 victory in the re-match on Monday.

Inter managed to turn around their poor performance in last Thursday's 3-0 loss to secure an important win at home, with Inzaghi praising the players' ability to learn from past mistakes.

"The players were excellent; we were supported by the fans, and together we won a decisive match for our journey. We approached both halves well, as a mature team," he said.

"We faced Fiorentina as we did on Thursday, and it required patience to move the ball. However, we were faster, better at second balls, and more balanced."

Inzaghi added that the team's mental reset following their recent defeat was key, noting how they quickly bounced back after the lacklustre performance.



Simone Inzaghi



Thomas Bach

Saudi Arabia to host inaugural Olympic Esports Games in 2027

Berlin, Germany - The first Olympic Esports Games will be held in two years in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the International Olympic Committee said on Tuesday, as part of a 12-year-deal with the country signed last year.

With its traditional audience base gradually ageing, the governing body is trying to connect with a younger generation of potential Olympics fans. In 2021, it developed the Olympic virtual series, a pilot venture in Esports before signing the deal with Saudi Arabia last year for hosting the Olympic Esports Games.

"There is now a very clear roadmap to the historic first-ever Olympic Esports Games," IOC President Thomas Bach said in a statement.

"With the road to the Olympic Esports Games starting this year, the Games are becoming a reality."

A six-member committee has been set up to define which games will be part of the first edition of the Esports Olympics.

Feyenoord sack manager Priske ahead of Champions League clash against Milan

Rotterdam, Netherlands - Feyenoord have parted ways with manager Brian Priske, the Dutch club said on Monday, with the side fifth in the Eredivisie standings despite a win at the weekend, and with a Champions League tie with AC Milan two days away.

Priske signed a three-year contract in June last year when he replaced Arne Slot, who left to take charge at English side Liverpool, but has been under pressure in recent weeks after a string of poor results.

Saturday's 3-0 victory over Sparta Rotterdam was their first win in five league games, but they remain 12 points behind leaders Ajax Amsterdam. They were also knocked out of the KNVB Cup, a trophy they won last season, by PSV Eindhoven last week.

"The club cites the inconsistent results and a lack of chemistry as the main reasons," a Feyenoord statement said.



Brian Priske

Priske signed a three-year contract in June last year when he replaced Arne Slot but has been under pressure in recent weeks

"Although Feyenoord achieved some impressive results with Brian, especially in the Champions League, the first team's performance has been far too inconsistent in recent months, and unfortunately, we see too little structural progress."

Feyenoord's 3-0 win over Bayern Munich in the Champions League last month did temporarily restore Priske's standing within the club. However, they lost 6-1 to Lille in the final game, which meant they finished 19th in the league phase standings.

Marcelinho announced as coach of two Brazilian clubs

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - Coaching one football club is usually considered a full-on and demanding job but Marcelinho Paraíba will be dealing with double the stress after being appointed as coach of two Brazilian sides - Carioca A2 side Americano-RJ and Nacional de Patos - within 24 hours over the weekend.

The unusual move caused a stir on Brazilian social media, with people wondering if it was a mistake.

However, both announce-



Marcelinho Paraíba

ments were legitimate. Nacional de Patos are in the final stretch of the first phase of the Paraibano championship in the northeastern state of Brazil and are fighting to avoid relegation.

"I am here to tell you how happy I am to be in charge of Americano in the Carioca Second Division in 2025. We're going in search of our goal to access the elite of Carioca football," Marcelinho said in a video on his Instagram account and later posted the Nacional de Patos announcement.



Rodrygo

I am really happy here: Rodrygo wants to stay at Real Madrid

Madrid, Spain - Real Madrid forward Rodrygo said he is grateful for the interest from other clubs but wants to stay with the LaLiga side for many years to come.

Rodrygo has scored 12 goals and provided eight assists in 31 games for Real across all competitions this season and the 24-year-old Brazilian was reportedly the recipient of lucrative mid-season offers from clubs in the Saudi Arabian league.

"The terms of the offers (from Saudi), that's more of my father's job, who is my agent, and the club. I do not know much about the details. I am very grateful that there is interest from other clubs," Rodrygo told reporters on Monday ahead of their match against Man City.

"I am really happy here. I have been here for a long time. I always say, playing with this shirt

in the Champions League is most special."

Man City boss Guardiola is a big admirer of Rodrygo and has spoken highly of the forward in the past. Responding to the praise from the Spanish tactician, the Real Madrid ace said: "Happy, because he is a great coach in the history of football. But I hope everything goes well for Madrid tomorrow."

Talking about manager Carlo Ancelotti's insistence on his attackers contributing more defensively, Rodrygo noted:

"The coach spoke to us, yes, and we know how important we are. Those at the back, if they see that we run a lot, they get infected.

"We understood that. And you could see, for example, that the second half of the derby was better than the first."



Otto Virtanen (L) with Sebastian Korda after their first-round match in Marseille, France, on Monday

Virtanen stuns Sebastian Korda in Marseille opener

Marseille, France - Finland's Otto Virtanen brought down No. 5 seed Sebastian Korda 6-7 (3), 7-6 (4), 6-4 in the first round of the Open 13 Provence on Monday in Marseille, France.

Virtanen, 23, had never beaten an opponent ranked top-30 in the world before defeating the American in two hours and 32 minutes. Virtanen fired 19 aces, saved 6 of 8 break points and broke Korda in the first game of the third set to take control.

No. 7 seed Lorenzo Sonego of Italy fared better than Korda, but he also needed three sets before beating Dutch opponent Botic van de Zandschulp 6-1, 3-6, 6-3. Serbia's Hamad Medjedovic moved past Belgium's Raphael Collignon 6-3, 6-4.

Thiago Seyboth Wild of Brazil rallied past Argentina's Facundo Diaz Acosta, 3-6, 6-2, 6-3, in first-round action in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Dusan Lajovic of Serbia beat Spaniard Roberto Carballes Baena 7-6 (8), 7-5,

while Serbian qualifier Laslo Djere swept Frenchman Alexandre Muller 6-3, 6-3. The final match scheduled for Monday night pitted Argentine countrymen Mariano Navone and Francisco Comesaña.

No. 7 seed Miomir Kecmanovic of Serbia won 32 of 37 first-service points (86.5 percent) and defeated Croatia's Borna Gojo 6-4, 6-4 in the opening round in Florida.

Great Britain's Cameron Norrie, unseeded this week but ranked as highly as No. 8 in his career, also advanced in straight sets with a 7-5, 6-4 victory over American qualifier Zachary Svajda. Lucky loser Ethan Quinn took down qualifier Tristan Boyer 6-2, 6-7 (5), 7-6 (2) in an all-American battle in three hours and 12 minutes.

No. 6 seed Brandon Nakashima of the United States pulled away from Japanese qualifier James Trotter 7-6 (2), 6-1, and U.S. qualifier Michael Mmoh downed Kazakhstan's Alexander Shevchenko 7-5, 7-6 (5).

BURNING DESIRE

Djokovic aiming for 100th title in Doha as 'injury is almost 100 per cent healed'

Novak Djokovic has almost fully recovered from the injury that ended his Australian Open campaign and has set his sights on lifting a 100th singles title at this month's Qatar Open.

The 24-times Grand Slam champion retired due to a hamstring injury in his semi-final against Alexander Zverev last month.

The world number seven was booed by the crowd at Melbourne Park and responded by posting a photo of an MRI scan taken of his left hamstring with the caption: "Thought I'd leave this here for all the sports injury 'experts' out there."

He also withdrew from Serbia's Davis Cup first-round qualifying tie, in which they lost to Denmark.



Novak Djokovic

I have the green light from the medical team to be able to train, to be able to prepare. The tournament in Doha is scheduled for a week now, so I am sticking to the schedule

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

"There is no more rupture in the muscle, the injury is almost 100 per cent healed ...," Djokovic, 37, told Montenegrin daily newspaper Vijesti in an interview published on Monday.

"I have the green light from

the medical team to be able to train, to be able to prepare. The tournament in Doha is scheduled for a week now, so I am sticking to the schedule. Thank God, I managed to recover quickly.

"I have had a few more in-

juries lately than I did in the first 15 years of my career. That probably comes with age, but my body still listens to me, the flame and desire for achievement and new achievements still burns in me."

At the February 17-22 Qatar Open, Djokovic will be hoping to become only the third man to win 100 singles titles on the tour in the professional era after Jimmy Connors (109) and former rival Roger Federer (103).

The Serbian, whose 99th title came in August with his victory

at the Paris Olympics, came closest to winning his 100th at the Shanghai Masters where he was beaten by world number one Jannik Sinner in the final in October.

"I hope that the 100th trophy can come already in Doha, I've been chasing it for a long time, since October last year, but about that - it will come when it's supposed to come," said the 37-year-old, who won the title in Doha in 2016 and 2017.

"I know it will come, we'll see when and where."

New format and increased prize money for US Open mixed doubles

New York, US - The US Open mixed doubles competition will now be played before the singles main draw, the United States Tennis Association (USTA) said on Tuesday as it announced an overhaul of the category's format and an increase in prize money.

The US Open will also extend its main singles draw to 15 days, starting a day earlier on Sunday August 24 for the tournament's first weekend start in the Open Era.

The mixed doubles competition will be staged from August 19-20 and feature a \$1 million winners' prize - a significant increase on the \$200,000 pocketed by winners Sara Errani and



Jessica Pegula is 'excited to play the 2025 US Open mixed doubles'

Andrea Vavassori last year.

"We'll be scheduling mixed doubles on the centre stage and

enabling more fans worldwide to enjoy the thrill of watching their favourite stars compete for this

coveted Grand Slam Championship title," USTA chief Lew Sherr said in a statement.

"By giving the competition its own spotlight, we're elevating mixed doubles to put an even greater focus on the incredible talent we have across the sport."

The competition's format has also been overhauled, with 16 teams participating - half the 32 that competed last year.

Eight teams will earn direct entry via their combined singles ranking. The other eight will be wild-card entries.

Early matches will be best-of-three sets played to four games, with a tiebreak at 4-4 and a 10-

point match tiebreak instead of a third set, while the final will be a best-of-three set match to six games.

All matches will be played in Arthur Ashe Stadium or Louis Armstrong Stadium - the main show courts at Flushing Meadows.

"As a player who enjoys competing in doubles, I'm excited for the opportunity to play the 2025 U.S. Open mixed doubles Championship during the first week," world number five Jessica Pegula said in a statement.

"I appreciate the importance of innovation and exploring new ways to engage more fans and grow our sport."

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NEW YORK FASHION WEEK



Looking to longevity
Backstage, shortly before presenting his new codes of 'opulent American sportswear', Hudson spoke to the challenges facing American designers. "I don't think there's a lack of talent. I think it's a lack of support," he said, pointing to a shift in focus towards European fashion weeks. "There's a lot of great designers here, and I just feel like they're being ignored. We have to open up our eyes and see what we have at home."
At Christopher John Rogers' long-awaited return to the New York schedule after a five-year hiatus — a vibrant showing of colour-blocked, striped halter dresses and tasseled button-downs and pants — the designer alluded to the difficulties in maintaining an independent label.
"We haven't been immune to the recent challenges of the industry and are grateful as a brand to be here now presenting this body of work," he said in the show notes.
Elena Velez often looks to the complexity of womanhood for her shows; this time she turned to the nautical folklore of sirens, sailors and mermaids. Models were drenched in water

Amid a wider industry reshuffling, several major labels and cult mainstays — including Proenza Schouler, Area and Helmut Lang — are absent from the schedule following the departure of their creative directors.
Some heritage brands like Tommy Hilfiger and Ralph Lauren skipped the season entirely, while others showed overseas or across state lines. (Willy Chavarria, one of New York's most prominent designers, opted to show during Paris' menswear week; Bode, though still officially on the schedule, debuted its collection in New Orleans as part of the football- and fashion-centric GQ Bowl.)
A pared-down week in New York has nonetheless seen doses of theatricality, including Marc Jacobs' off-schedule procession of doll-like models in exaggerated silhouettes and Christian Siriano's automotive-inspired gowns and flashy clubwear. But understated collections focused on wearability have been par for the course, from Eckhaus Latta's 'anti-snobbish' showing of leather bombers, cargo pants and casual asymmetrical dresses to Veronica Leoni's highly anticipated first collection for Calvin Klein.
In the latter brand's first runway show since creative director Raf Simons' departure in 2018, Leoni seemed to issue a return-to-work order, with sleek business casual attire made weightless through wide tailoring and billowing silk.
"I really tried to explore beauty in the most authentic, clean, fresh and pure way," she told reporters, including CNN, backstage. "We (were) inspired by the archive, but didn't get into any nostalgia. We tried not to get stuck looking too much into the past."
Klein, now 82, was in attendance at his name's label's comeback. So, too, were Calvin Klein models past and present, including Kate Moss, Christy Turlington, FKA Twigs and Kendall

FALL-WINTER 2025 RUNWAYS

WHAT IS THE STATE OF AMERICAN FASHION RIGHT NOW? IT'S A QUESTION AT LEAST PARTLY ANSWERED BY NEW YORK FASHION WEEK, WHICH CONCLUDED TUESDAY, WHERE BRANDS INCLUDING CALVIN KLEIN AND THOM BROWNE SHOWED THEIR LATEST COLLECTIONS IN A SEASON MARKED BY MAJOR DEBUTS, RETURNS AND DECISIVE SHAKE-UPS FOR AMERICAN DESIGNERS



Alexander Skarsgard, Kate Moss, Christy Turlington and Grace Burns sit front row at Calvin Klein



Jenner, the last of whom walked the show in an ankle-length pinstripe coat dress.
Elsewhere, Ella Emhoff, Dove Cameron, actor Cole Sprouse and Japanese Break-fast singer Michelle Zauner showed up for Collina Strada, while Katie Holmes, Whoopi Goldberg and Julianne Hough sat front row at Christian Siriano. Actress and singer Keke Palmer made appearances at both Brandon Maxwell and Sergio Hudson.
before hitting the runway.
Ahead of Elena Velez's runway, where mermaid and siren archetypes served as muses in netting, leather and wet, ruffled gowns, the Wisconsin-born designer called fashion 'a longevity game'.
"It's one of those industries where you have to claw your way into people's realities, and you have to impose yourself in this space to be taken seriously," she told CNN over a phone call.
In past seasons, Velez has done so through dramatic presentations — including a literal mud pit fight club — and atypical partnerships, including one with OnlyFans. In keeping with this season's lost-at-sea mood, she said, fittingly: "There's no plan B — I'll sink with my ship."
Courtesy: cnn.com



Marc Jacobs' collection



Winnie Harlow and Coco Rocha were among the models walking for Christian Siriano



Models for Collina Strada

HOME DÉCOR

STYLISE *Your space*

As one constantly updates one's clothing collections, the same principle also applies to your living space. Style trends are present in all areas - fashion, food, home decor, etc. Is your home 'in' ?



Dumping old heavy drapes and switching to flowy, light, breathable curtains that uplift your mood, or replacing the boring tea-table in your parlour with a fancy centerpiece that sits well with the seating, can bring in a fresh element of style within your home and make the same interiors feel different.

This doesn't mean significant financial investments but small things that are not costly but will give your home a more refreshing look.. Take a look at some tips:

Greenery

If you like to grow ornamental plants in the yard, on the terrace, or in the living room, Zamiculcas might be the perfect choice for you to give the whole house a greener and fresher appeal. Zamiculcas is a very popular and interesting potted plant that should be a supplement to your greenery. It has beautifully shaped leaves that are an ideal decorative detail, and in addition, the plant in your home will literally refresh the space and purify the air.

Generally, any plant will do the trick, as they are an amazing decorative detail for any space, no matter if it is the living room, bathroom, or kitchen.

Pieces of art

Nothing gives your home a more unique and artistic look than hanging pieces of

art all around the house. There is no rule on whether something is 'too much' or not when it comes to this decor detail. Numerous celebrities and famous people are known for their obsession with art and unique pieces, and some even go as far as decorating the whole house with art pieces.

Art is generally valuable on its own as it is an expression of someone's thoughts and ideas, and the connotation it leaves depends on the one looking at it. Don't just leave your walls blank and each of your rooms com-



pletely empty. Make sure every little corner of the house has something that makes it look outstanding and unique.

Mirrors

The mania with mirrors is widely present, and this is because they give the impression of spaciousness with their reflections. So, no matter the size of the room, the mirror will visually expand it.

The bathroom, bedroom, or hallway are no longer the only rooms with mirrors now it can be the living room or any other. In addition, the mirror over the entire wall is a modern detail, and with this simple change, you will improve the look of the interior drastically.

Carpets

It seems counter-intuitive, however, sometimes less is more, and therefore



ditching the old carpets might be just the needed trick to make your house look fresh and new. If you happen to have beautiful wooden floors with astonishing patterns, the right thing to do



might be to let these floors speak for themselves and give them a chance to shine and be seen. Ditch your carpets and instead coat the floors, thereby creating a unique and more rustic look.

Conversely, if you do not have carpets in your living room, may be, introducing one might add a new dimension to the overall look.

Drapes

Another interesting idea is to get curtains. Although your blinds provide you

house's walls.

You can also rearrange the furniture and change the placement, making it look more spacious than usual and creating more room for additional pieces like a rocking chair or maybe an arm-chair.

Wallpapers

Wallpapers are often a forgotten and overlooked decor detail that can be an outstanding addition to your whole home. The designs and the many patterns make them unique and astonishing in every manner. They have long been the de facto decor detail in most homes, until a few decades ago, when the traditional wallpapers were replaced by simple paint. Though a nice paint job would also do the trick, classical and high wallpapers are the ways to go if you plan on giving your whole house a completely new look.

Inputs: amazingarchitecture.com



Muscat International Automobiles Launches ROX Brand in Oman : Introducing the Range Extended Electric SUV



Muscat, Oman – February 12, 2025 – In a momentous event at the luxurious Al Bustan Palace Hotel, Muscat International Automobiles unveiled the revolutionary ROX Motors, setting a new benchmark in automotive excellence. The exclusive gathering of industry leaders, media representatives, and distinguished guests celebrated the arrival of this cutting-edge innovation, a true game-changer for Oman’s automotive landscape.

The launch event captivated attendees with a dynamic showcase of the ROX 01, New Generation All-Terrain Luxury SUV –a fusion of cutting-edge technology, unparalleled performance, and futuristic design. Engineered for power, efficiency, and sustainability, this ground breaking vehicle is set to redefine the driving experience for modern motorists.

ROX 01- New Generation All-Terrain Luxury SUV

The Full-size Range Extended EV SUV ROX 01 impresses with its dimensions, which emphasize its status as a powerful and comfortable SUV. With a length of 5295 mm, a width of 1980 mm and a height of 1869 mm, the car provides a spacious interior and excellent maneuverability on the road. The wheelbase of 3010 mm contributes to stability and smoothness of the ride, the ground clearance of the vehicle is 205 mm which is especially important when overcoming difficult routes, crossing wadis and other all-terrain conditions. It has 22.2° Approach angle, 19.7° Longitudinal angle and 25.1° Departure angle which is especially important for overcoming difficult routes. These parameters make the ROX 01 an excellent choice for both long distance and everyday urban driving.

Design History ROX 01

The design of the car was developed by the famous Italian studio Pininfarina, for ultra luxury sports models. At the same time, the aesthetics of the Celestial Empire are also visible in the details: the inspiration for the design of the head and rear optics, as well as the front LED head light was the

Chinese character 石 (stone), symbolizing strength and durability.

Range Extended EV System

The ROX 01 is equipped with a sequential range extended system that combines high power and environmental friendliness. Under the hood is a 1.5-liter turbocharged engine that works in tandem with two electric motors. The internal combustion engine in this bundle acts as a generator. WLTC driving range 880 kms.

The CATL 56.01 kWh Lithium Battery with heat insulation and flame retardant design offers WLTC driving range 235 kms. The overall system allows the car to develop an impressive torque of 740 Nm and accelerate to 100 kilometers per hour in just 5.5 seconds. Despite such dynamics, the hybrid system allows for impressive efficiency - the ROX 01’s range reaches 1,115 kilometers as per WLTC standard.

ROX 01 vehicle warranty is 5 years / 150,000Kms and battery warranty is 8 years / 240,000 kms, whichever is earlier respectively.

ROX 01 Smart Driving Systems

The ROX 01 body is made of high-strength steel and aircraft type aluminum, which makes it lightweight and at the same time super-strong. The ROX 01 built with 87% high-strength steel to protect the shell of the vehicle. As a result, the ROX 01 showed excellent results in crash tests, including side impacts, impacts to the front pillars and roofload.

ROX 01 has various modes to select and drive in different challenging terrains and adopt to sand, rock, mud, snow and wade.

The car is equipped with advanced safety systems includes Adaptive Cruise Control, Lane Centering Assistance, Rear Cross Traffic Alert, Blind Spot Monitoring with 6 cameras, 5 Millimeter Radars and 12 Ultrasonic Radars, which provides perfect visibility in all conditions, including night driving.

ROX 01

The Next-Generation All-Terrain Luxury SUV



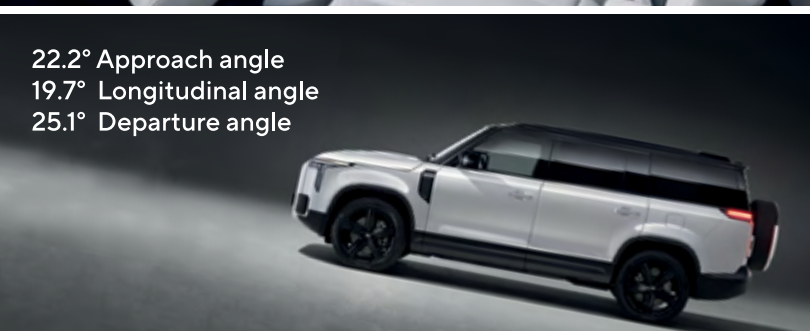
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*Whichever is earlier

Modern technologies for maximum comfort and protection

The ROX 01 interior is made of premium Nappa leather seats and other expensive materials. ROX 01 seats are built with zero gravity seats with lumbar & back relaxation support system, 8-point massage with heating, ventilation function provides relaxation and comfort throughout the trip. The spacious interior with a total glazing area of more than 6.5m² fills the interior with light and creates a feeling of spaciousness, making the trip more memorable for the driver and all passengers.

The ROX 01 also features modern multimedia systems with 3 HD display screens, 14-speaker audio system for surround sound, 2 wireless charging stations. For those who like to stay connected, the car offers Carbitlink application and Apple CarPlay.

During the event, Spokesperson of Muscat International Automobiles, emphasized the brand’s unwavering commitment to innovation and excellence. “The ROX Motor 01 is more than just a car—it’s a movement. With ground breaking engineering and state-of-the-art craftsmanship, we are shaping the future of mobility in Oman.”

Additionally, Chief Executive Officer Mr. Jarvis Yan, Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of ROX Motor and Mr. David Wu, Chief Strategy Officer of ROX Motor shared their visionary perspectives on the brand’s expansion and the future of smart automotive technology in the region.

About ROX Motor

Founded in 2021, ROX Motor is a global luxury new energy vehicle company with a vision to become the world’s leading outdoor lifestyle brand. In August 2023, the company unveiled its first product, the ROX 01, an Extended Range Electric Vehicle. This luxury all-terrain SUV integrates three core values: everyday comfort, unparalleled all-terrain performance, and the thrill of outdoor adventure.

By December of the same year,

deliveries of the ROX 01 began, offering users a refined, versatile outdoor lifestyle experience—perfect for the city, the open road, adventure, and camping. In April 2024, ROX Motor showcased the ROX 01 at the Abu Dhabi International Motor Show, marking the official launch of its global expansion strategy—grounded in China but driven by a global vision.

By the end of 2024, ROX Motor had successfully entered over 20 international markets, including key regions in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia, with total overseas orders and deliveries surpassing 10,000 units. In the UAE, the ROX 01 has already secured a top-three position in the luxury all-terrain SUV segment, earning considerable acclaim and a loyal customer base among local consumers.

For more information, please visit the official ROX Motor website: <https://www.roxmotor.com/en>.

About Muscat International Automobiles

Muscat International Automobiles, an associate of Bahwan Services and Trading, is a leading name in the region. Backed by the renowned Bahwan Group, the company offers a wide range of brands including passenger car to luxury and commercial vehicles and equipment, providing top-quality products and exceptional customer service. With a strong market presence and a commitment to excellence, Muscat International Automobiles continues to be a trusted choice for automotive solutions in Oman.

With the launch of the ROX Motors, Muscat International Automobiles cements its position as a trailblazer in Oman’s automotive industry. The 3S facility, i.e., ROX showroom, service and parts center situated Al Azaiba. Apart from the above customers can avail the after-sales service across oman in Bahwan (BAT) Service Centers.

For more information, call ROX Oman Toll free number 800 500 11 or Whatsapp 9662 8901 or visit ROX-Oman.com.

