

Oman, Belgium **pledge** stronger ties

The two nations commit to enhancing cooperation in key economic sectors during His Majesty's visit to Belgium

Muscat - The Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Belgium affirmed their intention to boost bilateral cooperation in key economic sectors including maritime activities and cooperation between ports, energy transformation and green hydrogen production.

This was stated in a joint communique issued on the occasion of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's state visit to Belgium. It reads as follows:

'His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik undertook a state visit to the Kingdom of Belgium at the invitation of King Philippe Leopold Louis Marie, King of the Belgians, from December 2-4, marking a significant milestone in the enduring friendship and cooperation between Oman and Belgium.

'The visit highlights the strong and longstanding ties between the two nations, rooted in mutual respect, shared values, and a commitment to peace and prosperity, as affirmed during the official visit of the King and the



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and King Philippe underscored their intention to strengthen bilateral ties

Queen of the Belgians to Oman in February 2022.

'Oman and Belgium underscore their intention to strengthen bilateral cooperation across key economic sectors.

Acknowledging the potential for growth, both countries continue exploration for opportunities for collaboration in fields such as maritime activities and cooperation between ports, energy trans-

sition and green hydrogen, trade, and service industries, as well as life sciences, technological innovation and aerospace.

'Oman and Belgium look forward to enhancing bilateral co-

operation in investments and the creation of joint investment opportunities. Both countries are currently negotiating with the intention to reach a mutually profitable extension of the Port of Duqm concession, to further anchor their economies ties. They pledge to facilitate dialogue, promote investor-friendly policies and explore avenues for growth across the aforementioned key mutually beneficial sectors.

'In the spirit of advancing knowledge and innovation, Oman and Belgium are committed to deepening academic cooperation and fostering greater cultural exchange. Both nations recognise the value of collaborative research, mutually beneficial exchange programmes and joint initiatives that will build stronger ties between their people.

'Oman and Belgium reaffirmed their dedication to fostering peace and stability in the conflict zones in the world. Recognising the critical importance of dialogue and diplomacy, both nations expressed a shared commitment to constructive engagement in addressing regional and international challenges.

'Oman and Belgium look forward to build upon this fruitful relationship, united in their commitment to a peaceful, prosperous, sustainable and interconnected future for all.

'The Sultanate of Oman wishes to convey warm thanks to the Kingdom of Belgium for their matchless hospitality.'

ONA



His Majesty visits Port of Antwerp

Antwerp, Belgium - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, accompanied by King Philippe Leopold Louis Marie, King of the Belgians, visited the Port of Antwerp-Bruges on Wednesday, as part of His Majesty's state visit to the Kingdom of Belgium.

Upon his arrival at the facility, His Majesty the Sultan was received by the Governor and Mayor of Antwerp, the CEO of the port and Belgian officials.

During the visit, His Majesty was briefed on the importance of the port, its strategic location and future plans.

The meeting touched on areas of cooperation in renewable energy, green hydrogen and liquefied natural gas transportation sectors, as well as ways of consolidating partnership in the ports and logistics sector.

After that, a photo His Majesty the Sultan, the King, the

official delegation from both sides, and a number of officials and CEOs was taken.

At the end of the visit, the administration of Antwerp port presented His Majesty the Sultan with a commemorative gift. On his turn, His Majesty presented them with a ship model as a commemorative gift.

Oman and Belgium also signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to further strengthen their collaboration in green hydrogen. The MoU, signed between Hydrogen Oman (Hydrom) and the Belgian Hydrogen Council, sets the stage for enhanced cooperation across the hydrogen value chain.

Later, His Majesty the Sultan, accompanied by King Philippe and Queen Mathilde Marie Christine Ghislaine, visited Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel in the Wallonia region.



DISCOVER
BRILIANCE

At the

Joyalukkas
DIAMOND
FEST



Buy diamond jewellery worth
OMR 500 & ABOVE
GET 1 GM
22 KT GOLD COIN





Buy diamond jewellery worth
OMR 300 & ABOVE
GET 0.5 MG
22 KT GOLD COIN



100%VALUE
ON OLD GOLD EXCHANGE

100%VALUE
ON DIAMOND EXCHANGE

Offer valid from 05th Dec 2024 to 4th Jan. 2025

 joyalukkas.com

Joyalukkas
World's favourite jeweller

Ruwi Main Shop, Opp. Ruwi Old Police Station,
Muscat. Tel: 2470 3417

Muscat City Centre.
Tel : 2455 8034

Sohar Souk, Al Hambar Street,
Sohar. Tel : 2684 0162

Ground Floor, Gold Souk, Oman Avenues Mall,
Baushar. Tel : 2459 1851

13th MIJEX showcases global jewellery trends

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The 13th Muscat International Jewellery Exhibition (MIJEX) opened on Tuesday at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC), bringing together more than 50 exhibitors from 10 countries.

The event, a key highlight in the GCC's luxury goods calendar, runs until December 7 and showcases an extensive range of jewellery, including gemstones, pearls, diamonds, and gold ornaments, as well as contemporary and classic designs.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Lujaina Mohsin Haider Darwish, former member of the State Council, in the presence of dignitaries, industry leaders, and jewellery enthusiasts. Organised



by OCEC in collaboration with VEGA Inter Trade Exhibitions, the event underscores Oman's growing role as a hub for high-end craftsmanship and trade in the region.

Eng Said al Shanfari, CEO of OCEC, highlighted the exhibition's significance. "MIJEX brings together some of the finest jewellery collections from across the Middle East and beyond, offering visitors an unparalleled opportunity to experience and acquire exquisite designs. Beyond luxury goods, this event creates a vibrant platform for designers, brands, and enthusiasts to connect, exchange ideas, and celebrate creativity," he said.

This year's event is sponsored by Amaar Jewels, a luxury brand specialising in lab-grown diamonds with a strong presence in Kuwait and the UAE. The company announced plans to expand its footprint by opening a branch in Oman.

"MIJEX is more than an exhibition," said Akavut Tangsiluksonwong, Managing Director of VEGA Inter Trade Exhibitions. "It's a gateway for exhibitors to connect with discerning buyers and traders, strengthen their brand presence, and tap into the growing demand for premium jewellery in the region."

Building on the success of last year's edition, which drew over 5,000 visitors from across the GCC, the 2024 event is expected to attract even greater interest. Visitors can explore a unique blend of artistry and craftsmanship while engaging with some of the most prominent jewellery designers and brands.

Platform launched to streamline military recruitment process

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Labour, in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence and military and security agencies, launched a new recruitment system, Tazamun, on Wednesday. The initiative aims to enhance efficiency in employment processes and support Oman's national workforce goals.

The launch event, held under the patronage of H E Dr Mahad bin Saeed Baowain, Minister of Labour, was attended by Dr Mohammed Nasser al Zaabi, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Defence, senior officers of the Sultan's Armed Forces, and officials from military and security agencies.

Speaking at the event, H E Khalid bin Salem al Ghamari, Un-



dersecretary for Labour, emphasised the importance of integrating modern technology into recruitment systems. "This initiative is part of a broader national effort, in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence and other security agencies, to streamline and optimise employment processes as a key national priority," he said.

The Tazamun system was presented during the ceremony, highlighting its role in organising and facilitating recruitment to address national needs. Yahya bin Mohammed al Battashi, Director of the Department of

Other Units Affairs at the Ministry of Labour, explained its functions. "The system's adoption of advanced technologies aims to ensure consistency, improve performance, and meet the objectives of the Ministry of Defence and related agencies," he said.

Down Syndrome Association celebrates a decade of service

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Down Syndrome Association marked its 10th anniversary on Tuesday with a celebratory event at the Civil Aviation Club in Muscat.

Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Hamad al Jabri, Chairman of the Association's Board of Directors, said that the event celebrates a decade of the association's commitment to supporting and empowering individuals with Down syndrome while promoting their integration into society.

The event featured a variety of recreational activities under the theme 'Fun Corners'. These included a zip line, horse riding, games, competitions, and gift distributions, creating a vibrant, festival-like atmosphere.

A short visual presentation narrated the association's journey since its establishment, and the event concluded with a ceremony honouring its founders.

Jabri informed that the association, as a non-profit charitable organisation, is dedicated to serving individuals with Down syndrome across Oman. It currently



supports over 400 children and young people with the syndrome, along with 300 family members and supporters.

The association has established an integrated center equipped with state-of-the-art facilities for education, rehabilitation, and training, with the goal of fully integrating individuals with Down syndrome into society and raising awareness about their potential and capabilities.

A wide range of sports programmes are offered by the association, including horse riding, sailing, karate, basketball, football, swimming, snowboarding, and golf. Members have participated in numerous local and international competitions, earning multiple medals.

Additionally, the association provides Quranic lessons, including intonation and memorisation, and encourages participation in events organised by schools, universities, and other entities.

Jabri reiterated the association's dedication to enhancing the status of individuals with Down syndrome, encouraging their active involvement in various aspects of life, and showcasing the unique talents that set them apart.

Powerful, not precious.

NEW
Bose QuietComfort Earbuds

BOSE

OHI ELECTRONICS
For further enquiries, please contact,
Tel: +968 92311039 / +968 99347243

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Internal Tenders Committee of the Ministry of Labour announces the following tenders:

Tender No.	Tender Description	Last date for electronic purchasing	Last date of tender submission
39/2024	Cloud hosting for the Ajada system	Thursday 12/12/2024 2:00 PM	Sunday 22/12/2024 10:00 AM
40/2024	Adding surveillance cameras to the Ministry's headquarters building	Monday 23/12/2024 2:00 PM	Sunday 12/1/2025 10:00 AM

- Specialized establishments can obtain tender documents electronically via the link below starting from Wednesday 4/12/2024 at 8:00 AM
<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om/>
- Bids are submitted electronically.
- Tender envelopes will be opened at 11:00 AM according to the date specified for submitting bids for each tender.

(The Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest price or any tender)

labour_OMAN

Terms And Condition Applies



Enjoy discounts on VOX Cinemas tickets

With Al Rifaa Privilege Account

Visit your nearest branch today



الأعمال المصرفية الحصرية
PRIVILEGE BANKING



Scan to learn more



Al Rifaa



bankdhoofar

Muscat students develop app to aid pet rescue, adoption



Our Correspondent
Muscat

A group of British School Muscat students, led by Saniya Dsouza, has developed a groundbreaking app called Whiskers & Wings to simplify pet rescue and rehoming. A passionate animal lover, Saniya was inspired by a personal experience with a stray dog. The initiative has already garnered interest from veterinary clinics in Oman.

"It all began when I came across a stray dog during a walk. After weeks of trying to find her a home without success, we ended up adopting her," Saniya shared. "That experience made me wonder - what if there was an easier way to connect rescuers, pet owners, and adopters? That's how Whiskers & Wings was born, with that very dog as our mascot."

The app features a Missing Animals page, enabling users to

post details about lost pets. "This page broadcasts information to people in the area, reaching a wider audience than traditional flyers," Saniya explained.

Another vital feature is the Reports page, where users can report stray animals by entering the location, urgency level, and specific details. This information helps rescue groups respond effectively.

Additionally, the Meet Your Best Friend page allows users to browse profiles of adoptable animals and submit adoption or foster requests via a Google form.

"As a student, managing the development of Whiskers & Wings has been no easy feat," Saniya admitted. "It's challenging, but when you're passionate about something, you find the time- whether it's just an hour or more."

The app officially launched on November 28 and is expected to

make a significant impact among pet lovers in Oman. Several veterinary clinics have expressed interest in using the platform. "Our future plans include launching a clothing line for pets to support the mission, integrating AI for enhanced functionality, and expanding our international team. The goal is to create a more connected community dedicated to animal welfare," Saniya said.

For now, Saniya and her team, including Eliesha Reji and Najam Usman, are working hard to bring their vision to life. "This is just the beginning," she added. Through innovation and compassion, Whiskers & Wings aims to transform pet rescue and adoption into a seamless, impactful experience.

The app can be downloaded from:
<https://apps.apple.com/om/app/whiskers-and-wings/id6736480789>



RECALL

RECALL DATE: 5TH DEC, 2024

MAZDA CX-60

BRAND OF COMMODITY	YEAR OF PRODUCTION	NUMBER OF AFFECTED COMMODITIES
MAZDA CX60	2023 / 2024	55

RECALL CONSEQUENCE

Inoperable defroster and seat belt warning light

When the hybrid system is powered on or the engine is started, multiple warning messages may be displayed in the instrument cluster

RECALL ACTION

Reprogram the related control module with modified software

TO CHECK THE SERIAL NUMBERS OF THE AFFECTED COMMODITIES, PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITE FOR RECALLS & WARNINGS: [HTTP://RECALL.PACP.GOV.OM](http://RECALL.PACP.GOV.OM)



24229100

‘Muscat Eat’ food festival from today

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The new edition of ‘Muscat Eat’ food festival will be held from December 5 to 7 at the Oman Automobile Association in Seeb, Muscat.

In a statement, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism said, "The festival will include a host of entertainment activities, events and will involve the participation of SMEs, which will present various local and international cuisines."

In reference to the ministry's efforts to develop culinary tourism and arts, an



official at the ministry informed that MHT recently launched a programme called Omani Culinary Arts Forum as part of the implementation of the Oman Tourism Strategy.

Omani cuisine has been recognised as a valuable tourism product that provides authentic and innovative experiences. The forum aims to support food tourism and culinary arts, create diverse job opportunities, promote entrepreneurship and local content linked to supply chains. It also showcases local culinary arts as a living embodiment of Omani culture and heritage.

ROP introduces EVs to patrol fleet

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Royal Oman Police has incorporated new electric vehicles (EVs) into its traffic and security patrol fleet, highlighting its dedication to sustainable development and clean energy adoption.

The initiative underscores ROP's commitment to balancing security needs with environmental protection, it said in a statement. "By utilising advanced, environmentally friendly technologies and systems, the force is integrating clean energy into its daily operations and promoting the shift toward carbon-free transportation."

Currently, there are six car dealerships in Oman actively working to import EVs, contributing to the growing availability of these vehicles in the country. Oman has also launched 18 initiatives to bolster green mobility in recent times.



إعلان مناقصة
Tender Notice

The Internal Tenders Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology invites for the Following Tender:

TENDER NUMBER	TENDER NAME	DATE OF PUBLISHING	LAST DATE TO PURCHASE TENDER DOCUMENT	SUBMISSION DATE	COMPANIES WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS TENDER	DOCUMENT PRICE
MTCIT/ 284/2024	Consultancy services for Supervision of Alshasar - Baithnah - Alhashman Asphalt Road in Dhofar Governorate	05-12-2024	19-12-2024	09-01-2025	Experienced Companies and Registered with the Secretariat General of Tender Board (First& Second Class)	(93/900) Ninty Three Omani Rials And Nine Hundred Baisa (Local, Regional) (10/-) Ten Omani Rial For Sme Non-Refundable

Interested Companies registered with the Secretariat General of Tender Board may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of documents. Tenders should be submitted online on given website

CORRESPONDANCE:

1. Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at e-Tendering System. (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)

2. E-Tendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the e-Tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number:
Tel: +968 24402200 e-mail: etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om

INTERNAL TENDERS COMMITTEE

 @mtcitoman www.mtcit.gov.om

OQBI IPO oversubscribed 2.1 times, raises RO188mn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

OQ Base Industries (OQBI), Oman's sole integrated producer of methanol, ammonia, and LPG products, has successfully completed its initial public offering (IPO), raising RO188mn after setting the final offer price at 111bz per share, the upper end of its price range.

The offering, which attracted strong interest from local, regional, and international investors, was oversubscribed by 2.1 times, with total demand

reaching RO387mn. This included binding commitments from four prominent anchor investors, who collectively subscribed to 30% of the offering.

The IPO saw robust participation across both institutional and retail investor categories. Demand from institutional investors in Category I amounted to RO236mn, while retail investors in Category II placed orders for RO95mn. The Category I offer was oversubscribed by 4.2 times, while the Category II offer was oversubscribed by 1.3 times, according to a statement issued by



OQBI. Anchor investors category raised over RO56mn. Anchor investors included notable regional entities such as Falcon Investments, a subsidiary of the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), the Kuwait-based Gulf Investment

Corporation (GIC), the Saudi Omani Investment Company (SOIC), and the Omani Social Protection Fund.

OQBI's Chief Executive Officer, Khalid Khalfan al Asmi, expressed his satisfaction with the outcome. He said, "We are pleased that investors have acknowledged the strength of our business and our clear strategy for growth. This strong endorsement reinforces us as we move into the next phase of our journey as a publicly listed company on the MSX."

Ali al Lawati, Chairman at

OQBI, said, "The successful completion of the bookbuilding process and the strong demand emphasise the confidence investors have in OQBI's strategic vision and growth potential. This milestone marks a significant step forward in OQBI's mission to drive sustainable growth in an evolving market. We are excited to embark on our journey as a publicly listed company, further committed to delivering excellence and innovation in the industries we serve."

The OQBI IPO received support from 35,700 individual in-

vestors for the Category II. The Financial Services Authority (FSA) has approved the allocation ratios for the shares. Oman-based investors in the Category I offering will receive 19.95% of their demand, while international investors will receive a discretionary allocation. Investors in the Category II offering (small retail investors) will receive 100% of their demand up to 30,000 shares and then 29.269% of their demand above this level. Investors in Category II offering (large retail) will receive 72.817% of their demand.



RECALL

MAZDA CX-60
&
MAZDA CX-90

RECALL DATE: 5TH DEC, 2024

BRAND OF COMMODITY	YEAR OF PRODUCTION	NUMBER OF AFFECTED COMMODITIES
MAZDA CX60 & CX90	2023 / 2024	84

RECALL CONSEQUENCE

Engine May Stall at Idle from Software Errors.
Engine may not restart while idling from auto engine stop (i-stop).
Inoperable defroster and seat belt warning light.
When the hybrid system is powered on or the engine is started, multiple warning messages may be displayed in the instrument cluster. Furthermore, the engine warning light may be illuminated.

RECALL ACTION

Reprogram the related control modules with modified software

TO CHECK THE SERIAL NUMBERS OF THE AFFECTED COMMODITIES, PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITE FOR RECALLS & WARNINGS: [HTTP://RECALL.PACP.GOV.OM](http://RECALL.PACP.GOV.OM)



Sultanate of Oman
Consumer Protection Authority



خط المستهلك
Consumer line
80079009
80077997



Towell Auto Centre LLC
YOUR TRUSTED PARTNER
24229100

Oman, Belgium strengthen green hydrogen partnership with new landmark MoU

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As part of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's state visit to Belgium, Oman and Belgium signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to further strengthen their collaboration in green hydrogen. The MoU, signed between Hydrogen Oman (Hydrom) and the Belgian Hydrogen Council (BHC), sets the stage for enhanced cooperation across the hydrogen value chain, reflecting the shared commitment of both nations to advance the global hydrogen economy.

Held in the presence of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the signing ceremony brought together business leaders, policymakers, and industry representatives from both nations to underscore joint efforts to align policies, promote knowledge exchange and technological advancements, as well as explore opportunities across hydrogen production, infrastructure, transportation, and utilization.

"This MoU represents a defining moment in the partnership between Oman and Belgium, advancing our shared ambition to shape the future of the global hydrogen economy," said H E Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Oman's Minister of Energy and Minerals and Chairman of Hydrom.

"Oman's potential capacity as a hub for green hydrogen production, combined with Belgium's role as a promising hydrogen-based industrial hub and strategic connection point to European markets, will strengthen energy security and create a seamless hydrogen supply chain. Together, we aim to accelerate the world's transition



This MoU represents a defining moment in the partnership between Oman and Belgium, advancing our shared ambition to shape the future of the global hydrogen economy

H E SALIM BIN
NASSER AL AUFİ

to clean energy by fostering innovation and building the infrastructure needed to connect producers and markets worldwide," he said.

The MoU builds on 46 years of strong bilateral relations between Oman and Belgium, underpinned by key milestones in the green energy sector. These include the signing in 2023 of a 47-year Project Development Agreement between Hydrom and the Hyport Duqm project, an international alliance between Oman's OQ Alternative Energy and Belgium's DEME, aimed at producing and exporting green hydrogen. This was further supported by the 2023 declaration of intent between the Ministry of Energy and Minerals in Oman and the Ministry of Energy in Belgium to advance hydrogen certification and trade frameworks.

Tom Hautekiet, Chairman of the Belgian Hydrogen Council,

said, "This agreement represents a significant step forward in strengthening our cooperation with Oman, a key partner in the global hydrogen supply chain. By leveraging Oman's competitive renewable energy resources and Belgium's strategic position as a hydrogen hub for Europe, we are creating a powerful platform for innovation, investment, and growth in the hydrogen economy. Together, we aim to build a sustainable energy future, unlocking new opportunities for our industries, researchers, and policymakers."

The first joint milestone under the MoU will focus on key areas of collaboration including knowledge sharing, technology development, and infrastructure planning for hydrogen production, shipping, and terminal facilities. It will also expand on pathways to broader cooperation with other European countries as a part of the MoU promise to address legislative challenges and explore new opportunities for research and development.

Under the visionary leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Oman continues to strengthen its position as a pioneer in hydrogen innovation. His Majesty's engagement with business leaders during the signing highlights the sultanate's commitment to fostering international partnerships that drive sustainable development and advance technological progress. Hydrom's role as the national orchestrator of Oman's green hydrogen strategy is central to this vision, enabling transformative projects and infrastructural development that position the nation as the global hydrogen hub of tomorrow.



حفل زفاف أحلامك ومكاننا الكبير!
دعونا نجعل يوم زفافك كل ما تخيلته!

Your Dream Wedding & our Grand Venue!

Let us make your wedding day everything you've imagined!

What we offer:

Beautiful Indoor Ballroom
Customized Wedding Packages
Gourmet Catering by Expert Chefs
Personalized Service & Attention to Details
Honeymoon Suite for One Night with In-room Breakfast
& so much more!

For Bookings & Enquires

 +968 71708941

 Mohammed.Shafeek@intercityhotel.com

GCC-Jordan Investment Conference focuses on economic integration

Dead Sea, Jordan - The sessions and discussions of the first GCC-Jordanian Investment Conference, held on Wednesday at the Dead Sea in Jordan, centred on the importance of enhancing investment partnerships and economic integration between GCC states and Jordan.

The meeting highlighted key areas such as information and communications technology, as well as high-value industries and services. It also reviewed success stories and promising investment opportunities on both sides.

Faisal Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) and Chairman of the

Faisal Abdullah al Rawas

GCC Federation of Chambers, said in his speech that the conference reflects both sides' commitment to maintaining steady growth in economic relations, particularly following the signing of economic part-

nership agreements aimed at liberalising trade in goods and services.

Rawas noted that the volume of GCC-Jordanian investments was estimated at approximately \$62bn in 2023. These investments span various sectors, including tourism, food security, education, healthcare, industry, and manufacturing.

He also pointed out that commercial exchange between the two sides was valued at around \$9.7bn, with petroleum and mineral products being the most significant exports from the GCC. In contrast, Jordanian exports primarily consist of pharmaceutical and food products. ONA

GCC economies set for 4% growth in 2025 despite global headwinds: ICAEW

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The economies of the GCC region are set to more than double their growth rate, from 1.9% in 2024 to 4% in 2025, according to the latest ICAEW Economic Insight report, prepared by Oxford Economics.

This growth acceleration comes despite the extension of OPEC+ oil production cuts, positioning the region to significantly outperform global GDP growth, which is projected to rise modestly from 2.7% in 2024 to 2.8% in 2025.

The report highlights a strong recovery in the GCC's energy sector, with growth forecast at 4.2% in 2025, driven by the gradual unwinding of oil production cuts. Meanwhile, non-energy sectors are expected to maintain robust performance, with consistent growth of nearly 4% in both 2024 and 2025.

According to the ICAEW report, the UAE economy is projected to grow from 3.7% in 2024 to 4.5% in 2025. However, non-energy sector growth is expected to moderate slightly, from 4.5% to 4.3%, as key sectors face capacity constraints. The country's success in attracting foreign di-



Saudi Arabia's economy is projected to grow by 4.4% in 2025

GCC inflation is expected to rise moderately from 1.8% in 2024 to 2.3% in 2025, remaining well-controlled across the region

rect investment (FDI) is evident, with \$16bn of greenfield FDI flows, cementing its position as a global leader in FDI relative to GDP. Tourism remains a key growth driver, with Dubai's visitor arrivals increasing 6.3% year-on-year in the first nine months of 2024.

Saudi Arabia's economy is projected to accelerate from 1.4%

growth in 2024 to 4.4% in 2025, supported by a 5.8% expansion in the non-energy sector. The kingdom has shown signs of recovery, with GDP growing 2.8% year-on-year in Q3 2024, following four consecutive quarters of decline. A major part of the country's diversification efforts is the tourism sector, bolstered by a \$800bn investment programme over the

next decade and major events such as Expo 2030 and the FIFA World Cup 2034.

Despite the challenges posed by lower oil revenues, the GCC region is maintaining an overall budget surplus, with Qatar and the UAE standing out for their fiscal strength. Saudi Arabia, although facing projected budget deficits, benefits from low gov-

ernment debt levels, providing the flexibility needed to pursue strategic investments. The UAE's projected budget surplus of 4.1% in 2025 underscores its strong fiscal management.

The ICAEW report also noted that GCC inflation is expected to rise moderately from 1.8% in 2024 to 2.3% in 2025, remaining well-controlled across the region. In response to recent rate cuts by the US Federal Reserve, totalling 75 basis points in September and November 2024, GCC central banks have followed suit, with further reductions likely to stimulate investment in real estate and the private sector.

In a press statement, Scott Livermore, Economic Advisor at ICAEW and Chief Economist and Managing Director at Oxford Economics Middle East, said, "The GCC's projected 4% growth in 2025 underscores the success of the region's diversification efforts amidst global challenges. As the region continues to expand its tourism, real estate and financial sectors, managing capacity constraints in these high-growth areas, as well as navigating global uncertainties, will be crucial for sustaining momentum and ensuring long-term economic stability."

OECD projects 3.3% global growth for 2025-2026

Paris, France – The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) projected global GDP growth to reach 3.3% in 2025, maintaining this momentum into 2026, the organisation announced on Wednesday.

OECD economies are expected to see modest growth of 1.9% in both years, below pre-pandemic averages, according to the December Economic Outlook.

Non-OECD countries are poised for steady expansion, with emerging Asia making a significant contribution to global economic activity.

Growth forecasts highlight regional contrasts. The US GDP is expected to rise by 2.8% in 2025 before slowing to 2.4% in 2026, while the euro area benefits from income recovery and tight labor markets, with growth projected at 1.3% in 2025 and 1.5% in 2026.

Headline inflation has been declining in most countries throughout 2024, driven by falling food, energy, and goods prices, the report noted. However, inflation in services remains resilient, hovering around 4% in the median OECD economy as of September, according to OECD.

Anadolu Agency

Oman's former energy minister honoured with GPCA Legacy Award

Muscat – Dr Mohamed Hamed al Rumhy, Oman's former Minister of Oil & Gas (1997 – 2020) and Minister of Energy and Minerals (2020 – 2022), was recognised with the 6th GPCA Legacy Award 'Al-Rowad' in a special award ceremony on December 2, 2024 during the 18th Annual GPCA Forum at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Dr Rumhy was awarded for his tremendous contribution to developing and significantly growing the downstream petrochemical and chemical sector in Oman. During a star-studded award ceremony Dr Rumhy was presented with a special trophy by Eng Abdulrahman al-Fageeh, Chairman of Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association (GPCA), and Dr Abdulwahab al-Sadoun, Secretary General of GPCA.

Dr Rumhy delivered a moving acceptance speech following a special recognition video that narrated his lifetime achievements and included special tributes from regional and global leaders.

In his role as Minister of Oil & Gas, and subsequently Minister of Energy and Minerals, Dr Rumhy was instrumental in securing natural gas feedstock,



which fueled Oman's downstream journey in the early 2000s. Dr Rumhy played a pioneering role in developing Oman's LNG sector, including modernising and constructing new facilities to strengthen its position on the global market. He grew Oman's petrochemical industry in the areas of methane-based operations, olefins, polyolefins and aromatics.

Dr Rumhy was the driving force behind the consolidation and integration of Oman's downstream and upstream industry, including the creation of OQ Group in 2019, a mammoth national consolidation effort that involved the integration of nine

Omani companies into one big conglomerate with operations spanning the entire value chain. During his 25-year legacy, Dr Rumhy enacted a series of strategic reforms which maximised efficiency, encouraged investment and modernised Oman's sector to align with global standards. He left a lasting legacy which inspired generations and helped to build Oman into the powerhouse it is today.

Now in its 6th edition, the GPCA Legacy Award takes place on an annual basis and honours individuals, who have made extraordinary contributions to foster and strengthen the chemical industry in one or more of the GCC states.

Allied Ondock Container Services starts operations at Sohar Port and Freezone

Suham – Sohar Port and Freezone on Wednesday announced the inauguration of Allied Ondock Container Services' operations, alongside the signing of an expansion agreement valued at approximately \$2.6mn.

The new container depot initially covers three hectares, with the contract for this development signed in June 2023. Allied Ondock has also signed a contract for an expansion of an additional two hectares. This development aims to enhance operational efficiency and capacity, meeting the rising demand for advanced container depot services in the region.

Allied Ondock, a subsidiary of the Singapore-based Allied Container Group, aims to optimise logistics operations by offering a range of services, including container depot, repair, inspection, and washing/cleaning facilities. The additional plot will expand the company's warehousing capacity.

Allied Ondock will facilitate the transfer of containers from Hutchison Ports Sohar, unloading cargo in their warehouse before returning the empty containers for further dispatch. This initiative addresses the rising demand for container depot services in the region, supporting over 20 shipping lines that call weekly. The collaboration strengthens Sohar Port's integrated logistics capabilities,



Allied Ondock will facilitate the transfer of containers from Hutchison Ports Sohar, unloading cargo in their warehouse before returning the empty containers for further dispatch

reinforcing its position as a leading global logistics hub.

"The inauguration of Allied Ondock's operations marks a transformative step for Oman's economy," said Emile Hoogsteden, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar Port. "By enhancing our logistics capabilities, we are not only connecting businesses to global markets but positioning Oman as a key player in international trade. This partnership will drive economic diversification, strengthen our role as a vital logistics hub, and ultimately benefit the wider community, supporting Oman's Vision 2040.

This initiative complements Sohar Port's impressive growth, with container volumes increas-

ing by 21% in Q3 2024 compared to Q3 2023. This growth is further supported by the introduction of an innovative land-bridge solution that strengthens the port's global logistics capabilities.

The integration of Allied Containers' advanced technologies and expertise is expected to significantly enhance Sohar Port's operational capacity, reduce turnaround times, and elevate service excellence.

"This strategic partnership allows us to introduce our advanced container handling solutions to a key logistics hub in the Middle East," said Lim Kian Chin, Owner of Allied Ondock Container Services Group. "By

enhancing our services at Sohar Port, we are not only contributing to its growth but also providing a competitive edge for its tenants. This superior service will empower shipping lines at Sohar to optimise their operations and improve efficiency."

"By leveraging the strategic location of the port and the global network of Allied Ondock Group's services, this agreement represents a significant addition to our offerings, enhancing our position as a competitive and integrated logistics hub. Moreover, the presence of an expert service operator at Sohar Port will strengthen its advantages and streamline container handling operations," Chin added.

US strengthens export controls for Chinese semiconductor companies

Washington, US – The US has expanded its list of Chinese technology companies that are subject to export controls.

The 140 companies newly included in the so-called "entity list" are nearly all based in China and include those that make equipment used for computer chips, chipmaking tools, and software. But some are Chinese-owned businesses in Japan, South Korea, and Singapore.

The revised rules also limit

exports of high-bandwidth memory chips to China. Such chips are needed to process massive amounts of data in advanced applications such as artificial intelligence.

The US Bureau of Industry and Security said in a statement that the rules would impair China's ability to produce semiconductors that "can be used in the next generation of advanced weapon systems and in artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced computing, which have signifi-



cant military applications".

China's Commerce Ministry protested and said it would act to protect its "rights and interests," without giving any details.

"This is a typical act of economic coercion and non-market practice," the ministry said in a statement.

Gina Raimondo, the US commerce secretary, said the move was intended to impair China's ability to use advanced technologies that "pose a risk to our national security".

The addition of the companies to the "entity list" means that export licenses will likely be denied for any US company trying to do business with them.

The US has said the list is meant to stop companies from leveraging American technology to produce advanced semiconductors.

China has accused the US of pursuing "technology hegemony," as Washington steps up pressure on Chinese tech giant Huawei and other Chinese

manufacturers of advanced technology by blocking access to American suppliers.

Pressure from Washington has spurred China to step up its efforts to develop its own advanced computer chips and other technologies, providing billions in subsidies and investments for the industry.

Chinese manufacturers have made quick progress even though they remain years behind in some areas.

(Source: Euronews.com)

RAM empowers 50 Omani youth

The Royal Academy of Management has successfully concluded the Future Leaders Programme (FLP), a key initiative aligned with the strategic objectives of Oman Vision 2040. The programme was designed to support the nation's sustainable development goals and to foster the growth of leadership capabilities among young Omanis.

It aims to equip them with the skills necessary to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving world. This initiative reflects the vision of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, to cultivate a new generation of dynamic national leaders, fully equipped with the innovative capabilities and skills essential for shaping Oman's future.

Implemented in collaboration with Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) Qatar, GLOBIS, Matterz, KAOSPILOT, FLP programme focused on cultivating a culture of institutional innovation among participants, equipping them to effectively navigate rapid changes and foster Omani talent and competencies. It also aimed at strengthening leadership skills, empowering participants to develop effective leadership capabilities, strategic thinking, and problem-solving abilities.

Additionally, the programme emphasised the importance of innovation and driving positive change within the workplace, ensuring participants were well-prepared to contribute to the



evolving needs of their industries and communities.

Hilal al Riyami, Director of the Future Leaders Programme, explained that the programme is a reflection of the academy's vision to cultivate young national leaders who possess the ability to innovate and make a meaningful, positive impact in their communities. The programme specifically targeted 50 young Omanis from diverse public and private institutions, offering them valuable insights through a variety of modules, which included three in-person sessions and three talent labs.

These sessions focused on enhancing leadership capabilities, exploring successful international case studies, and fostering business acumen. The overarching goal of all these units was to equip participants with future-ready skills and empower them to apply global best



practices in their respective fields.

He further mentioned that the programme featured a visit to Japan, where participants had the opportunity to explore different educational and entrepreneurial institutions and engage with young Japanese leaders to exchange ideas and experiences.

During the visit, key topics were explored, such as rapid technological advancements, strategies for effective change management, nurturing creativity and innovation in the workplace, and implementing sustainable leadership practices. The trip aimed to expand the participants' perspectives, broaden their understanding of

global experiences and cultures, and inspire them with fresh insights and innovative ideas that could be implemented in both their professional and personal lives.

Maryam al Toubi, one of the participants in FLP programme, described her experience as an extraordinary and transformative journey, offering her the chance to discover new horizons while navigating professional challenges.

Through the programme's comprehensive educational modules and inspiring talent labs, she gained valuable insights and practical tools that significantly strengthened her leadership abilities and sharpened her strategic vision.

She added, "This programme was much more than just an educational experience; it was a profound journey of self-discovery, where every challenge became an opportunity, and inspiration was transformed into knowledge and actionable expertise."

"It has empowered me to move forward with renewed confidence, poised to make a meaningful, positive impact in my field, while equipping me with a deeper understanding of the critical importance of crafting innovative solutions to fulfil our national priorities."

Mohammed al Hanai also reflected on how the experience marked a transformative milestone in both his professional

and personal journey. He described the programme as far more than just a training sessions or theoretical lectures; it was a dynamic, all-encompassing journey that presented both challenges and opportunities, ultimately reshaping his approach to leadership and work strategies. Over the course of six months of intensive, hands-on learning, the programme masterfully blended strategic insight with tangible, real-world application.

He further added, "The core focus of the programme was on transformational leadership, where we were equipped with the tools to tackle challenges from a holistic standpoint, aligning everyday decisions with a

sustainable vision for the future.

"It was not merely an educational experience but a living, breathing laboratory, where I had the chance to test my adaptability to evolving environments and develop innovative solutions to meet contemporary demands.

"One of the standout features of the programme was the innovation labs and the interactive dialogue spaces, which offered me an invaluable opportunity to collaborate with leaders from diverse sectors, exchanging ideas and perspectives that will shape my approach to leadership moving forward."

The programme offered participants a unique opportunity to collaborate with renowned experts and specialists in leadership and management, both from within Oman and internationally. This experience not only broadened their perspectives but also strengthened their professional networks, empowering them to create a lasting, positive impact in their careers and communities.

FLP Programme underscores the Royal Academy of Management's dedication to developing leadership excellence within Oman's public and private sectors. By empowering professionals with cutting-edge innovation and management expertise, the Academy continues to contribute to the nation's development goals and inspiring the next generation of transformative leaders.

Bank Muscat opens branch in Jabal Akhdar

Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, inaugurated its first branch in the wilayat of Jabal Akhdar in Dakhliyah governorate.

The opening of the new branch came in line with the bank's strategic initiative to expand its branch network and enable customers to benefit from the banking services and facilities offered, wherever they are.

The new branch is designed to elevate the banking experience by integrating modern safety, security, and technological solutions. This inauguration underscores the bank's commitment to providing high-quality services in a comfortable environment, allowing customers to process their transactions efficiently and securely.

Jabal Akhdar branch is an addition to the 20 branches already operating in Dakhliyah governorate. Bank Muscat currently takes immense pride in its expansive network of branches reaching a total of 186. Furthermore, the bank owns more than 900 ATMs, CDMs, and multi-use machines distributed across the sultanate.

Strategically located amidst key commercial hubs, Jabal Akhdar branch offers a comprehensive range of banking services tailored to meet diverse customer needs, including a variety of personal, housing, and auto financing options, as well as the ability to request debit, credit, and prepaid cards, and open accounts, benefit from safety deposit lockers, as well as, financial services via ATMs, CDMs, including withdrawals, check deposits and bill pay-

ments.

Besides, the branch caters to the needs of people with disabilities, offering accessible facilities and self-service banking devices.

On this occasion, a number of customers in the wilayat of Jabal Akhdar commended this step taken by the bank, considering that the new branch will represent a vital addition to enhance customer accessibility to banking services.

Ahmed Hamed al Nabhani, Municipal Council Member in Jabal Akhdar, said, "The opening of Jabal Akhdar branch is regarded as a crucial step towards improving banking services for the community. Jabal Akhdar has grown in prominence due to its economic and commercial activity and ability to attract investment, since the wilayat is a popular tourist destination for visitors from all over the world duo to its unique tourist resorts and moderate climate."

On his part, Faisal Musabeh al Saqri, a customer, said: "We appreciate this initiative from Bank Muscat. This new branch will help customers save time and effort while enjoying the various banking services provided. Bank Muscat has a large network of branches that cater to the needs of customers across Oman."

"Jabal Akhdar is undergoing continual growth, with new tourist facilities being developed to keep up with its growing popularity year after year. The local community and visitors will now be able to benefit from the financing options and excellent service that will definitely be offered by this new branch," Saqri added.



Mitsubishi ASX preferred model for woman taxi driver

An inspiring Omani female driver has chosen the Mitsubishi ASX as her trusted vehicle brand. As the first female taxi driver to operate a Mitsubishi ASX, R A is distinguished by her pioneering spirit and exemplary choice of vehicle. "The Mitsubishi ASX is my preferred model, known for its reliability, ample legroom, high-performance engine, fuel efficiency, and generous cargo space, making it ideal for my professional needs," she said.

The Mitsubishi ASX seamlessly combines CUV versatility, enhanced safety features, attractive styling, and exceptional value

into one affordable package. Available from General Automotive Company (GAC), the official Mitsubishi distributor in Oman.

Unmatched Versatility and Features make the Mitsubishi ASX a standout in the lineup, offering class-leading features, a powerful yet fuel-efficient engine, a proven four-wheel-drive system, and advanced technologies, all wrapped in a bold new design. This competitive and affordably priced vehicle is perfect for those seeking both style and performance. Sleek and sporty design the ASX showcases Mitsubishi's Dynamic Shield design, featuring

a new front bumper, hood, and fenders for a bold, rugged look. Sophisticated LED headlights, a redesigned rear bumper fascia, and T-shaped rear combination taillights enhance its sporty aesthetic, ensuring the ASX stands out from the crowd.

State-of-the-art Interior and Technology Inside, the ASX is equipped with high-quality materials, a second-generation 8.0-inch Smartphone-link Display Audio (SDA) unit, a rear-view camera, LED headlights with LED Daytime running lights, and an electronically controlled 4WD system.

Asyad showcases logistics solutions to enhance food security



Asyad Group highlights its leadership in bolstering local food security through integrated logistics solutions that simplify the import and export of food products.

Asyad Logistics ensures efficient storage of food products with precise thermal control systems for both refrigerated and dry storage solutions through its state-of-the-art facilities.

Asyad Lines delivers seamless and efficient transportation of diverse food products and ensuring quality from origin to market.

Sohar, Salalah, and Suwaiq Ports play pivotal roles in enhancing regional and global supply chains through advanced

logistics infrastructure and extensive storage facilities.

Asyad Group, the global integrated logistics services provider, is participating in the 6th edition of Oman AgroFood 2024, organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Water Resources from Monday to Wednesday at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

This participation reaffirms Asyad's commitment to enhancing Oman's food security through innovative logistics solutions designed to strengthen food supply chains and facilitate access to regional and international markets.

Omani filmmakers explore new horizons in workshop

A two-day filmmaking workshop aimed at enhancing the skills and business acumen of Omani filmmakers concluded at 803 Studio in Al Khuwair on Saturday.

Organised by SKT Oman, a leading supplier of high-end cameras and equipment, the event attracted nearly 100 participants, including journalists, advertising professionals, and independent filmmakers.

The workshop was led by Timothy Fare-Matthews, a Sony Middle East and Africa Alpha Ambassador and filmmaker based in Dubai and the UK. Fare-Matthews, who heads First and



Ten Productions, provided practical training with Sony Cinema Line cameras such as the FX3,

FX30, and FX6. The sessions also catered to users of Canon, Nikon, and Blackmagic cameras.

Highlighting the core of filmmaking, Fare-Matthews said, "A camera is just a tool; it's your

training and vision that make the difference. I urge participants to dedicate 300 hours to mastering camera work, lighting, editing, and scripting. Once you've refined your skills, find a niche that reflects your style and passion."

The workshop covered technical fundamentals in its first session, including frame rates, LUTs, SLOG3, Native ISO, and autofocus techniques, with live demonstrations. The latter half focused on marketing and career development.

Fare-Matthews emphasised the need for excellence in every project.

Situation in Syria ‘extremely fluid’: UN

The UN’s special envoy for Syria told the Security Council that armed groups now control the territory

Washington, D.C./Damascus - The UN’s special envoy for Syria warned on Tuesday that the war-torn nation is in a new ‘extremely fluid and dangerous’ period as armed groups continue to claim territory from regime forces.

Geir Pedersen told the Security Council that armed groups now control territory containing about seven million people as they advance in the northwest, taking the key regional hub of Aleppo and moving towards Hama.

“Syrian government forces have since regrouped and established defensive lines in Hama, repelling some fighters. But as I speak to you this afternoon, these are being severely tested, with HTS and armed opposition groups gaining ground today, advancing very close to Hama - a major city of some one million people,” said Pedersen.

He was referring to Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, a UN-designated terrorist group that grew out of Al-Qaeda’s Syrian affiliate but broke with it in 2017.

Pedersen said ‘pro-government’ airstrikes have intensified in recent days, hitting civilian and military targets and resulting in Syrian casualties. HTS and other armed groups have also launched rocket and drone attacks that have resulted in civilian casualties, he added,



Clashes broke out on November 27 between Assad regime forces and anti-regime armed groups in the western countryside of Aleppo in northern Syria

We must de-escalate and ensure a cooperative approach to countering listed terrorist groups... But de-escalation needs a credible political horizon

GEIR PEDERSEN

pointing in particular to Hama and Aleppo.

“We need de-escalation and we need calm. I appeal to all parties to their obligations under international law to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure and allow safe passage for Syri-

ans fleeing violence. But Mr President, this alone does not suffice. Further military escalation risks mass displacement and civilian casualties,” said Pedersen.

“We must de-escalate and ensure a cooperative approach

to countering listed terrorist groups. But - and this is my second core message - de-escalation needs to be accompanied by a credible political horizon for the Syrian people,” he added.

Clashes broke out on November 27 between Assad regime

forces and anti-regime armed groups in the western countryside of Aleppo in northern Syria, marking a re-escalation of the fighting after a period of relative calm in the conflict that has gripped Syria for nearly 14 years.

Russia, a key backer of the Syrian regime, lashed out at the anti-regime offensive, saying it has resulted in the deaths of at least 30 civilians.

“We categorically condemn this coordinated attack by HTS terrorists who control Idlib, destabilising the already fraught situation on Syrian soil,” Vasily Nebenzya, Moscow’s UN envoy, told the council.

“The enemy will be defeated, regardless of what external support is being provided to them, and there is such external support. According to reports and information that is available, support for terrorists is being provided by Americans and their allies to varying degrees,” he added.

Robert Wood, the US representative at the council’s meeting, flatly denied any American involvement in the ongoing hostilities, saying Washington ‘had nothing to do with’ the anti-regime offensive. He maintained that the council must demand ‘that all parties cease brutal aerial attacks and adhere to international law’.

Anadolu Agency

OCHA’s global overview says 305mn require humanitarian assistance in 2025

Geneva, Switzerland - The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said on Wednesday that an estimated 305mn people around the world will require humanitarian assistance in 2025, launching its Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) for next year.

The appeal seeks US\$47bn to provide life-saving aid in 33 countries and nine refugee-hosting regions, OCHA said in a statement.

“In a world on fire, the most vulnerable - children, women, people with disabilities and the poor - are paying the heaviest price,” said Tom Fletcher, the under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator.

“We must reset the world’s relationship with people in direct need,” Fletcher said, adding that a new level of global solidarity as well as ‘bold political action’ is needed to not only fully fund these appeals but also to uphold international law.

Armed conflicts have led to



the forced displacement of nearly 123mn people worldwide, while climate-induced disasters are exacerbating the crisis, ravaging communities, disrupting food systems and triggering mass displacement, according to the GHO. Meanwhile, prolonged conflicts are intensifying in brutality, with widespread violations of international humanitarian law hampering aid

efforts.

The GHO outlined plans to assist 190mn of the world’s most vulnerable people, collaborating with over 1,500 humanitarian partners.

However, funding shortages threaten critical aid delivery, the overview underlined. By November 2024, only 43% of the nearly US\$50bn appeal for the year had been met, under-

scoring a widening gap between needs and resources.

“The consequences of underfunding are devastating,” OCHA said. In 2024, food assistance in Syria was slashed by 80%, protection services in Myanmar were cut, and essential water and sanitation aid in cholera-affected Yemen diminished, the overview showed.

Anadolu Agency

Lebanon: New violations of ceasefire deal reported

Beirut, Lebanon - Lebanese media reported on Wednesday five new Israeli violations of a fragile ceasefire deal between Beirut and Tel Aviv.

Lebanon’s official National News Agency (NNA) said an Israeli artillery shell hit the Marjayoun Plain area in southern Lebanon. Israeli army forces also blew up several buildings in the town of Kham and struck Kfarkela town with artillery shells, NNA said.

Israeli warplanes were also seen flying over the capital Beirut and over southern areas at a low altitude, according to an Anadolu reporter. Lebanon has reported over 120 violations of the ceasefire since the deal came into force last week in the hope of ending 14 months of fighting between the Israeli army and Hezbollah.

According to an Anadolu tally based on Health Ministry figures, at least 14 people were killed and 13 others injured in Israeli attacks since last week.

Under the terms of the ceasefire, Israel is to withdraw its



An Israeli artillery shell hit the Marjayoun Plain area in southern Lebanon. Israeli warplanes were also seen flying over the capital Beirut and over southern areas at a low altitude

forces south of the Blue Line de facto border in a phased manner while the Lebanese army deploys its forces in southern Lebanon within a maximum of 60 days.

Implementation of the agreement is to be overseen by the US and France, but details on enforcement mechanisms remain unclear. Nearly 4,000 people have been killed and more than 16,500 injured in Israeli attacks in Lebanon and over one million others have been displaced since October 2023.

Anadolu Agency

Introducing strict penalties, Iran parliament approves hijab, chastity bill

Tehran, Iran - The Iranian parliament has approved the so-called hijab and chastity bill, which mandates women to wear hijabs and introduces strict penalties on those who do not.

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, women in Iran have been required to cover their hair in public. Increasing numbers choose not to wear hijabs, especially since the 2022 death in police custody of Iranian-Kurdish woman Jina Mahsa Amini.

The 22-year-old had been arrested by Iran’s morality police for allegedly violating the country’s strict dress code.

Amini’s death sparked widespread protests, largely led by women and schoolgirls, calling for political change. It also in-

spired the ‘Women, Life, Freedom’ movement, which challenged authorities’ enforcement of the hijab mandate.

The hijab and chastity bill was drafted by the Iranian judiciary on the instructions of former President Ebrahim Raisi in response to the increasing reluctance of many women to wear the hijab.

What does the new law say?

Iranian media reports say the legislation imposes fines equivalent to up to 20 months of the average salary for women who improperly wear a hijab or forgo it altogether in public or on social media. Fines must be paid within 10 days, failing which violators will face restrictions on access to



government services, such as the issuance or renewal of passports, driver’s licenses and exit permits.

Mary Mohammadi, a US-based Iranian political analyst, told DW that the law aims to hinder woman by making their

struggle too costly.

“It seeks to prevent the advancement of women’s demands, bolster the morale of the regime’s ideological supporters, exhaust the psyche of society by creating all-encompassing con-

flicts in daily life and weaken the revolutionary potential led by women,” she said.

The legislation requires institutions to provide CCTV footage to help police identify people opposing the compulsory hijab.

Noncompliance will result in fines or the dismissal of the institutions’ officials. It also criminalises the design or promotion of items such as clothing, statues and toys deemed to encourage ‘nudity’ or lack of veiling.

The Industry, Mines and Trade Ministry has been tasked with monitoring clothing producers and suppliers to ensure garments comply with hijab legislation.

Pezeshkian’s hijab dilemma

The law was passed by lawmakers four months into Iranian President Massoud Pezeshkian’s term. Pezeshkian, who is widely viewed as aligned with the reformist movement that advocates for greater freedoms and

better relations with the West, criticised the strict enforcement of hijab regulations during his election campaign.

Many of Pezeshkian’s supporters had hoped that his administration would ease the rules surrounding compulsory hijabs. However, critics argue that compulsory hijab enforcement lies beyond the government’s direct control.

“In a broader view, the disagreement over its implementation between the hard-liners in the Islamic Parliament and the so-called reformist Pezeshkian in the administration is a staged display of internal regime conflicts over the mandatory hijab law,” Mohammadi said.

DW

Namibia elects Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah as first woman president

Windhoek, Namibia - Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah of the ruling SWAPO party won Namibia's presidential elections outright in the first round with 57% of the vote, results published by the electoral commission on Tuesday showed.

Clearing half the total votes cast meant no second-round runoff was necessary.

"The Namibian nation has voted for peace and stability," Nandi-Ndaitwah said after being declared president-elect.

The commission put the second-placed finisher, Panduleni Itula from the Independent Patriots for Change (IPC) party, on 26%. He and the IPC have said they will contest the 'deeply flawed' results.

It put turnout among almost 1.5mn registered voters at 77%.

SWAPO in charge in Namibia

The 72-year-old current vice president Nandi-Ndaitwah was considered the favourite before the vote, representing the party that has dominated Namibian politics since the former German colony's independence from South Africa in 1990.

After years in various leadership roles, including that of foreign minister, she's already well-known both at home and abroad.



The 72-year-old current vice president Nandi-Ndaitwah was considered the favourite before the vote

However, SWAPO's levels of support had fallen in recent years - particularly amid frustrations at high levels of unemployment, inequality, and government corruption - leading to a

more competitive campaign than usual.

The results published on Tuesday represent the weakest performance from SWAPO since gaining independence.

Voting delays

Namibians also voted in a new parliament during the November 27 elections.

SWAPO, the South West Africa People's Organization, won as many as 51 of the 96 elected seats and will return to government, while the IPC won 20 seats and will become the official opposition.

The vote was marred by technical problems and ballot paper shortages, leading to delayed results as voting was extended in some places.

The IPC alleged this was a deliberate attempt to frustrate voters and had already said it would not accept the results, whatever they showed, with Itula saying last week there was a 'multitude of irregularities'.

The election was being closely watched in Berlin as Germany and Namibia work on the new Hyphen Project that foresees Germany importing large quantities of hydrogen from 2028, and on a contentious colonial-era reconciliation accord.

DW

South Korean party accuses President Yoon of 'treason'

South Korea's Democratic Party announced plans to seek the president's impeachment

Seoul, South Korea - South Korea's Democratic Party accused President Yoon Suk Yeol of treason on Wednesday and announced plans to seek his impeachment over his recent declaration of martial law.

"Yoon Suk Yeol's administration is accountable for its unconstitutional and illegal declaration of martial law as an act of treason," said party spokesman Cho Seung-rae.

The party will also file charges against Defence Minister Kim Yong-hyun, who is accused of being the one who proposed the martial law declaration to the president, Interior Minister Lee Sang-min and other officials, calling for immediate investigations and justice.

"Law enforcement agencies must immediately launch an investigation into this act of treason," he added.

SC to review the declaration

South Korea's top judge said on Wednesday that the Supreme Court will review the procedures that were followed in President Yoon's declaration of martial law.

"The judiciary will ensure its role as the ultimate protector of citizens' rights and freedoms and will work to alleviate any concerns about judicial indepen-



President Yoon Suk Yeol imposed martial law effective late on Tuesday for the first time in 45 years

The party will also file charges against Defence Minister Kim Yong-hyun, who is accused of being the one who proposed the martial law declaration to the president, Interior Minister Lee Sang-min and other officials, calling for immediate investigations and justice

dence and integrity," The Korea Herald quoted Chief Justice Cho Hee-dae as saying.

Responding to a reporter's question about whether the sudden declaration of martial law could be grounds for impeachment, Cho said: "I will address that in due course."

"As the judiciary's role is to

safeguard citizens' freedoms and rights through fair adjudication, (the Supreme Court) will do its utmost to ensure that nothing is omitted in fulfilling this duty," he added.

However, he did not share further details on when the Supreme Court is expected to hear the case.

Calls for resignation

South Korea's leading labour union, the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, has launched an indefinite general strike, calling for the immediate resignation of President Yoon, according to The Korea Herald.

Additionally, media representatives convened to reiter-

ate their firm opposition to the martial law decree. A group of journalists and officials from a coalition of eight major news media organisations held an emergency press conference, issuing a series of forceful statements that demanded Yoon's immediate resignation and arrest.

Yoon imposed martial law effective late on Tuesday for the first time in 45 years. But 190 lawmakers in the 300-seat parliament voted down his move, making it obligatory on him to comply with their motion.

A Cabinet meeting presided over by Prime Minister Han Duck-soo passed the resolution after Yoon backtracked from his decision to impose martial law, which had been rejected by most lawmakers.

Meanwhile, Yoon's senior presidential staff collectively submitted their resignations following his martial law declaration on Tuesday.

The Presidential Office announced the mass resignation of the chief of staff and senior secretaries to reporters on Wednesday morning, Yonhap news agency reported.

Senior officials, including those at the level of chief presidential secretary and above, reportedly met under the leadership of Chief of Staff Chung Jin-suk and unanimously agreed to step down.

Besides, the entire Cabinet of South Korea on Wednesday offered to resign after Yoon's failed attempt to impose martial law in the country, local media reported. According to KBS broadcaster, the Cabinet offered to resign after senior presidential staff collectively submitted their resignations.

Anadolu Agency

Biden says 'US is all in on Africa' at Angola visit

Luanda, Angola - Joe Biden pledged greater American investment in the African continent during a visit to Angola on Tuesday. It was the first visit to Angola by a US president.

Saying the United States 'is all in on Africa', Biden promoted billions of dollars in commitments to Angola during his trip and he visited a slavery museum, where he sought to acknowledge the human trafficking that once linked the two nations.

In particular, Biden pledged more investment in the Lobito Corridor railway project.

The project is a rail link between Lobito on Angola's Atlantic coast, the Copperbelt in Zambia, and the cobalt mines in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It would connect resource rich central Africa with an Atlantic port.

Angolan President Joao Lourenco said Biden's visit was a key turning point in US-Angola relations, which date back to the Cold War.



US President Joe Biden

Angola seeks foreign investment

Biden's trip has been seen as an attempt by the US to counter China's influence in Africa.

"We don't think, because we're bigger and more powerful, that we're smarter. We don't think we have all the answers," Biden told the Angolan president during a briefing with reporters ahead of a closed meeting.

Lourenco said Angola wanted to work with the US to attract foreign investment and improve defence and security ties.

He praised Biden's 'vision and leadership' on the Lobito Corridor, saying it would 'always be remembered'. The Lobito Corridor is part of the American Partnership for Global Infrastructure and

Investment (PGI), which many see this as a reaction to China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Biden also pledged more humanitarian support for Africa. "I'm announcing over US\$1bn of new humanitarian support for Africans displaced from homes by historic droughts," Biden said in Angola.

According to a statement from the US Agency for International Development, the money would 'address food insecurity and other urgent needs of refugees, internally displaced persons, and affected communities in 31 African countries'.

Later on Tuesday, Biden toured Angola's National Slavery Museum, which was once the headquarters of the Capela da Casa Grande.

The structure was a 17th century temple where slaves were baptised before they were forced onto ships that took them to America in chains.

Biden delivered remarks at the museum, recalling on slavery as 'our nation's original sin, one that haunted America'.

The US president met briefly with Wanda Tucker, a descendant of William Tucker, who was the first enslaved child born in the US, the White House said.

DW

Trump considering Florida governor DeSantis for defence chief post: Report

Washington, D.C., US - President-elect Donald Trump is considering dropping Pete Hegseth, his first pick for defence secretary, in favour of nominating Florida Governor Ron DeSantis instead, according to US media reports.

Hegseth, a former Fox News host, has raised concerns among Republican lawmakers over allegations of sexual misconduct, financial mismanagement at veterans' charities, repeated instances of public drunkenness, and infidelity.

Citing a person familiar with the discussions, The Wall Street Journal reported that the president-elect raised DeSantis's name during conversations with

the guests at his resort in Florida, Mar-a-Lago.

The discussions are in their early stages, it said.

DeSantis, a former presidential candidate who criticised Trump before dropping out and endorsing his rival's bid to return to the White House, is not the only candidate to possibly replace Hegseth in Trump's future cabinet.

Other possibilities being discussed include Elbridge Colby, a former Pentagon official and ally of Vice President-elect J D Vance, as well as Republican Senator Joni Ernst, sources familiar with the matter said.

Trump and DeSantis attended a memorial service on Tuesday



honouring fallen law enforcement officers in Palm Beach County, Florida, said the Journal. The proposal was recently

brought to DeSantis, according to a source familiar with the discussions.

The New Yorker magazine re-

Ron DeSantis, an ex-presidential candidate who criticised Donald Trump before dropping out, is not the only candidate to possibly replace Pete Hegseth in Trump's future cabinet

ported that Hegseth was accused of personal misconduct, including the revelation that he had secretly paid a financial set-

tlement to a woman who accused him of raping her in 2017.

The magazine also presented information it said raised questions of Hegseth's suitability to run the world's largest and most powerful military force. Documents showed that Hegseth was forced to step down by the two veteran nonprofit advocacy groups he ran due to multiple allegations, including financial mismanagement, sexual impropriety, and personal misconduct.

Democratic Senator Richard Blumenthal, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, described the report of Hegseth's drinking as alarming and disqualifying, telling the

New Yorker that the committee would carefully review Hegseth's nomination.

Breaking with precedent, Trump bypassed normal FBI background checks for Hegseth and Matt Gaetz - who withdrew from consideration for attorney general last month - as well as other cabinet nominees, checks which could potentially have raised red flags about their behaviour before their names were announced. Critics say Trump's cabinet picks show adherence to a radical agenda as well as giving a free pass to accused sex offenders and people clearly unfit for the position they were nominated for.

Anadolu Agency

INDIA

BJP's Fadnavis to be Maharashtra CM

The BJP leader said the Governor has invited the Mahayuti alliance to form the next government

Mumbai, Maharashtra - Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Devendra Fadnavis said on Wednesday that Maharashtra Governor C P Radhakrishnan has invited the Mahayuti alliance to form the next government and the oath taking ceremony will take place tomorrow.

Fadnavis said the Mahayuti leaders met the Governor and handed over letters of support.

Fadnavis along with Shiv Sena chief Eknath Shinde and NCP chief Ajit Pawar on Wednesday met Governor C P Radhakrishnan to stake claim to form the Mahayuti government. BJP's central observers for the state, Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Vijay Rupani were also present at the meet.

It comes after BJP unanimously chose Fadnavis as leader of Maharashtra BJP legislative party earlier in the day.

"We have met the Governor and handed over the letters of support to stake claim to form the government in the state. Our alliance partners Shiv Sena and NCP have requested the Governor that I should be sworn in as Mahayuti CM... Governor accepted all the requests and invited us for the oath ceremony tomorrow at 5.30pm..." Fadnavis told reporters here.

He vowed that Mahayuti leaders will work together for Maharashtra and said that the cabinet expansion will be decided in next meetings.

"The posts of CM and



Mahayuti leaders meet Maharashtra Governor C P Radhakrishnan to stake claim to form the government in Maharashtra, at Raj Bhawan in Mumbai on Wednesday (ANI)

Deputy Chief Minister are just technical posts. We all will work together for Maharashtra. Other

ministers will be decided in upcoming meetings..." the BJP leader said.

Devendra Fadnavis also said that Eknath Shinde has given a letter recommending his name

for the post of CM. "Eknath Shinde in his capacity as President of Shiv Sena and

head of Shiv Sena's legislature party, has given a letter recommending my name for the post

Shiv Sena and NCP have requested the Governor that I should be sworn in as Mahayuti CM... Governor accepted and invited us for the oath ceremony tomorrow at 5.30pm

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS

of chief minister of Maharashtra. Along with this, Nationalist Congress Party president and legislature party leader Ajit Pawar has also given a similar letter... Independent MLAs who are with us, all have submitted a letter to the Governor..." he added.

The Maharashtra Assembly Election 2024 witnessed a decisive victory for the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance, securing a landslide win with 235 seats out of 288. The results marked a significant milestone for the BJP, which emerged as the single-largest party with 132 seats.

The Shiv Sena and NCP also made notable gains, with 57 and 41 seats, respectively.

On Tuesday, leaders of the BJP, Shiv Sena, and NCP's Mahayuti alliance visited Mumbai's Azad Maidan to oversee preparations for the oath-taking ceremony of the new Chief Minister.

Several Yuti alliance leaders including BJP leader Girish Mahajan, Gulab Rao Patil and Sanjay Shirsat, visited the sports ground. The event is expected to be attended by senior NDA leaders and PM Narendra Modi. ANI

ISRO's PROBA-3 satellite mission launch rescheduled

Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh - The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has rescheduled the anticipated launch of the PSLV-C59/PROBA-3 satellite mission to December 5 at 4:12pm, following the detection of an anomaly on Wednesday.

The launch was originally scheduled for Wednesday at 4:08pm from the first launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

"Due to an anomaly detected in PROBA-3 spacecraft, PSLV-C59/PROBA-3 launch has been rescheduled to tomorrow at 16:12 hours," ISRO announced in a post on X.

The PSLV-C59 is a joint initiative between ISRO and NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), while the PROBA-3 mission is an 'In-Orbit Demonstration (IOD) mission' by the European Space Agency (ESA).

According to ESA, the mission aims to demonstrate formation flying in a large-scale science experiment. The two satellites will form an approximately 150-metre-long solar coronagraph to study the Sun's faint corona, closer to the solar rim than ever before. In addition to its scientific significance, the mission will serve as a benchmark for precise positioning of the two

spacecraft, facilitated by various new technologies.

PROBA-3 will function as an orbital laboratory, showcasing capabilities such as acquisition, proximity operations, and formation flying. It will validate innovative metrology sensors and control algorithms, paving the way for novel mission control techniques. The two satellites will maintain a fixed configuration in space, aligned with the Sun, enabling the Occulter Spacecraft (OSC) to block the Sun's bright disk while the Coronagraph Spacecraft (CSC) observes the faint solar corona for extended scientific study. ANI

Rahul Gandhi slams BJP after police stopped him on his way to Sambhal

New Delhi - Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, criticised the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) after being stopped at the Ghazipur border in Ghaziabad on his way to violence-hit Sambhal.

The Congress MP stated that visiting Sambhal was his constitutional duty and described the restrictions placed on him as unconstitutional.

In a post on X, Rahul Gandhi wrote in Hindi: "The police stopped us from going to Sambhal. As the Leader of the Opposition, it is my right and duty to go there. Yet I was stopped. I am willing to go alone, but even that was not allowed. This is against the Constitution. Why is the BJP afraid? Why is it using the police



Rahul Gandhi displays a copy of The Constitution of India to the media after being stopped by Police at the Ghazipur border on Wednesday (ANI)

to conceal its failures? Why is it suppressing the message of truth and brotherhood?"

The Congress leader also

shared a video showing his interaction with a police officer.

Earlier today, Rahul Gandhi, along with Wayanad MP

Priyanka Gandhi and other Congress leaders, was stopped by the police at the Ghazipur border while attempting to proceed to Sambhal. They eventually returned to Delhi.

"We are trying to go to Sambhal, but the police are refusing to allow us. As Leader of the Opposition, it is my right to visit, yet they are stopping me. I am ready to go alone or even under police escort, but they have rejected that as well. They claim we can return in a few days, but this violates the rights of the Leader of the Opposition and the Constitution. Denying this right reflects the state of 'New India'. We will continue to fight," Rahul Gandhi said. ANI

Angela Merkel to testify on pullout of Afghanistan

Berlin, Germany - On Thursday, Former German Chancellor Angela Merkel is scheduled to testify before the Bundestag's inquiry committee on Afghanistan about why her government was taken completely by surprise when the radical Islamist Taliban suddenly seized power in August 2021 and why the evacuation of both German citizens and local Afghan personnel was at times chaotic.

It looks into decision-making procedures and actions of the German government, and intelligence services including the interaction with foreign actors.

The Bundestag inquiry committee was set up in July 2022 and will have to present its final report before this legislative period ends in 2025. Two of Angela Merkel's former cabinet mem-



Former German Chancellor Angela Merkel

bers, Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and Development Minister Gerd Müller, were among the last to be questioned.

'We misjudged the situation'

Just before the Islamists marched unopposed into the Afghan capital, Maas, of the So-

cial Democratic Party (SPD), had claimed such a scenario was very unlikely.

On August 16, 2021, Germany's chief diplomat had to acknowledge something that could not be sugar-coated: "All of us - the German government, the intelligence services, the international community - we all misjudged the situation."

Now, three years later, the inquiry committee asked Maas for his assessment of the German government's policy in Afghanistan. "The cooperation within the government was very transparent and thorough," Maas said.

He admitted that on some specific factual issues, there were different interpretations.

"But everyone tried to make the best of the situation," the for-

mer foreign minister stressed. In his view, the issuing of visas for local Afghan personnel could have been handled better, as they were afraid of Taliban revenge. "It may have been possible to get a lot of people out earlier if an agreement had been reached more quickly," Maas surmised.

The SPD chairman of the committee of inquiry, Jörg Nünberger, found this account plausible. Nünberger told DW that this fatal misjudgement was made at all levels of the German government that were involved in the Afghanistan mission.

Information from the Federal Intelligence Service (BND) resulted in an incorrect assessment of the Taliban's military capabilities, he said. DW

Pakistan: High court approves interim bail of Imran Khan's wife

Islamabad, Pakistan - The Peshawar High Court has approved the interim bail of former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi, until December 23. The decision was made after the court heard her request for corridor bail in multiple cases, *The Express Tribune* reported.

Justice Waqar Ahmed conducted the hearing in the court. During the hearing, lawyer Alam Khan Adeen Zai appeared on behalf of Bushra Bibi. During the proceeding, Adeen Zai said that his client had requested for corridor bail in 27 cases due to the multiple charges filed against her.

The Additional Attorney General requested the court to ensure that Bushra Bibi appears before the relevant courts as per the legal requirements, according to *The Express Tribune* report.

Justice Ahmed said that the interim bail of Bushra Bibi was approved to facilitate her appearance in the respective courts and added that she should appear in the court hearings as scheduled.

During the hearing, Bushra Bibi's lawyer requested more time, citing the need for her to appear in more than 50 cases. However, the judge rejected the request for giving more time. ANI

TELLA TALE IN GERMAN CUP

Nigerian forward scores winner as Leverkusen stun 10-man Bayern

Munich, Germany - Holders Bayer Leverkusen scored against the run of play through Nathan Tella in the second half to beat 10-man hosts Bayern Munich 1-0 on Tuesday and advance to the German Cup quarterfinals.

It was the first defeat this season in the league or domestic Cup for Bundesliga leaders Bayern, who had keeper Manuel Neuer sent off with a straight red card in the 17th minute, the first dismissal in the 38-year-old's long career.

The defeat means the Bavarians have now failed to get past the quarter-final stage in the German Cup since they last won the competition in 2020.

Leverkusen's Xabi Alonso has won all nine of his German Cup matches as a coach while his team has now gone five matches against Bayern without defeat.

"It was not our best game with the ball or even with an extra man but we applied our plan," said Leverkusen defender Jonathan Tah.

"It was not immediately easy to adapt to having an extra man. We did not use it in the first half. We were too hectic and wanted to score quickly."

"We did not do it perfectly today but we were effective and then Nathan headed in the winner."



Bayer Leverkusen's Nathan Tella wheels away in celebration after scoring against Bayern Munich

Both teams were missing their leading strikers with Leverkusen without Victor Boniface and Bundesliga top scorer Harry Kane sidelined for weeks after picking up an injury in Bayern's draw at Borussia Dortmund last week.

In a pulsating start both sides battled for control until Bayern's Neuer bodychecked Jeremie Frimpong outside the box to get

I was hoping he would be in an offside position. I can't change it now. It was a mistake and I have to accept it.

MANUEL NEUER

his marching orders with a straight red card.

"I tried to get to the ball but didn't get there in time," Neuer said. "I was hoping he would be in an offside position. I can't change it now. It was a mistake and I have to accept it."

The hosts had to shift things around with reserve keeper Daniel Peretz coming on for Leroy Sane but they still had the better chances in the first half through Kingsley Coman, Konrad Laimer and Leon Goretzka.



Vincent Kompany was delighted by Bayern Munich's character

Kompany happy with 'special performance' despite defeat

Munich, Germany - Bayern Munich's German Cup hopes were ended with Tuesday's 1-0 loss to visitors Bayer Leverkusen in the round of 16 but the team's energy showed great promise, said coach Vincent Kompany.

The Bavarians suffered their first defeat of the season in the league and domestic cup and had keeper Manuel Neuer sent off in the 17th minute with a straight red card.

But they still had the better chances in the first half despite being a man down with Kingsley Coman, Leon Goretzka and Konrad Laimer all spurning opportunities.

Leverkusen struck against the run of play with substitute Nathan Tella's header in the 69th minute to dash Bayern's hopes.

"Fact is we lost and we won't win the Cup this season. But with experience we know this was also a special performance from us," Kompany told a press conference.

"If this feeling remains we will win many games but this Cup we cannot win it any more," he said.

Kompany is in his first season in charge and his team tops the Bundesliga standings with a four-point advantage over second-placed Eintracht Frankfurt.

Bayern have also improved in the Champions League after a rocky start this season.

"It is bitter for us. We won't have a good evening," Kompany said. "But if this energy remains then we will win many more games. This team can grow further and we will get our moments."



Ruud van Nistelrooy

'Lots of things to work on but happy with three points'

Leicester, England - Ruud van Nistelrooy was happy to get his tenure as Leicester City manager off to a flying start with a 3-1 win over West Ham United on Tuesday but he said they have a lot of work to do if they are to hold their own in the Premier League.

The Dutchman was appointed by Leicester on Friday to replace the sacked Steve Cooper.

Van Nistelrooy left Manchester United after a four-game spell as interim manager following Erik ten Haag's dismissal, having previously served as his compatriot's assistant.

"The third day working at the club, it's been very busy getting to know everyone," the 48-year-

old told reporters after Leicester's first win in six league matches.

"Everybody was involved with that and helping, it was busy and long days but worth it.

"We know the level in the Premier League and we know every game we play that everything has to be right. We have to train and develop our defence, our counter attack, our possession.

"Lots of things to work on but very happy with the three points," the former Manchester United and Real Madrid striker added.

Leicester are 15th in the 20-team table with 13 points from 14 matches.

Leicester beat West Ham to give Van Nistelrooy winning start

Leicester, England - Leicester City manager Ruud van Nistelrooy got off to a winning start in his first game in charge as they beat West Ham United 3-1 in the Premier League on Tuesday.

Veteran striker Jamie Vardy, 20-year-old Bilal El Khannouss and substitute Patson Daka scored as Leicester took their chances while a dominant West Ham were guilty of spurning several good opportunities, only getting a late consolation goal from Niclas Füllkrug.

Van Nistelrooy was appointed on Friday to replace Steve Cooper after the Foxes made a poor start to the season and although he did not have much time with his new charges, his arrival injected some much-needed good fortune into the club. The win moved Leicester from a point above the relegation places to 15th, while West Ham are one place above them in the standings.

The 37-year-old Vardy beat the offside trap to score after 98 seconds although it took more than two minutes for a VAR check to confirm his run had been perfectly timed. Leicester's



Leicester City's Bilal El Khannouss celebrates after scoring against West Ham United in the Premier League on Tuesday

second came on the hour mark as El Khannouss steered home a perfectly weighted pass inside from Kasey McAteer after a long ball to the left from Facundo Bu-

onanotte stretched the West Ham defence.

Bobby De Cordova-Reid found the net in the 81st minute but his effort was chalked off for offside

after a VAR check but in the 90th minute Daka was released on the left and finished with a powerful strike.

For the rest it was a match that the Hammers dominated, spurning several clear-cut chances before they bagged a late consolation goal, with the result piling the pressure on under fire manager Julen Lopetegui.

Danny Ings, making his first start of the season, saw his 13th minute header deflect off Leicester fullback James Justin and onto the base of the post.

In the 69th minute, Leicester's Conor Coady cleared off the line as he was falling back into his own net, keeping out substitute Crysencio Summerville's effort with the tip of his toe.

There was also a let off for Leicester goalkeeper Mads Hermansen in the 58th minute when he came out to punch the ball but missed, allowing it to trickle into the net only for the referee to award a free kick for a push by Tomas Soucek.

West Ham finally found the net four minutes into stoppage time with Füllkrug's header on his return from injury.



Lionel Messi

Messi leads MLS Best XI

New York, US - Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi and defender Jordi Alba represented the Supporters' Shield winners on the 2024 MLS Best XI announced Tuesday.

The Leagues Cup champion Columbus Crew also had two selections with forward Cucho Hernandez and MLS Defender of the Year Steven Moreira.

The Best XI is voted on by media members, MLS players and club technical staffs.

The 2024 squad includes players from eight countries and nine teams and features seven first-time honorees.

- Goalkeeper**
Kristijan Kahlina (Charlotte FC)
- Defenders**
Jordi Alba (Inter Miami CF)
Yeimar Gómez Andrade (Seattle Sounders FC)
Steven Moreira (Columbus Crew)
- Midfielders**
Luciano Acosta (FC Cincinnati)
Evander (Portland Timbers)
Riqui Puig (LA Galaxy)
- Forwards**
Christian Benteke (D.C. United)
Denis Bouanga (LAFC)
Cucho Hernández (Columbus Crew)
Lionel Messi (Inter Miami CF)

Mateta goal helps Palace edge Ipswich

Ipswich, England - Crystal Palace eked out a 1-0 victory at Ipswich Town, with Jean-Philippe Mateta capitalising on a slip from his marker to score the winner just before the hour mark in Tuesday's Premier League clash.

The French striker broke free in the 59th minute, as Ipswich's Jacob Greaves lost his footing, before lifting the ball over keeper Arijanet Muric. Palace are 16th in the table with 12 points, while Ip-

swich are second-to-bottom with nine points.

It was a first away win of the league campaign for Palace, while the hosts are still waiting for their first victory at Portman Road since winning promotion.

"Very pleased with the result. It was not about performing brilliantly. We expected a big fight and it was a big fight," Palace manager Oliver Glasner told Match of The Day.

"I told the players we had to expect a big fight today and it was a big fight, especially at the end. We expected them to play man to man, big pressure.

"We're pleased with our defensive performance, we didn't allow them a chance from open play, just one from a set piece in the first half and one in the second half."

As the largely uneventful first half drew to a close, Palace began

to take control, pressing Ipswich back after what had been an even contest.

Palace's Eberechi Eze nearly made the breakthrough just before halftime, firing his shot under pressure at Muric's legs.

The hosts created an opportunity minutes later when Jack Clarke connected with a corner at the near the post, but Palace goalkeeper Dean Henderson kept out his header.



Crystal Palace's Jean-Philippe Mateta celebrates his goal



Soufiane Rahimi scored the equaliser for Al Ain in the match against Pakhtakor

Al Ain battle to draw with Pakhtakor in Asian Champions League

Tashkent, Uzbekistan - Al Ain maintained their slender hopes of reaching the knockout rounds of the Asian Champions League Elite on Tuesday after the title holders fought back to draw 1-1 with Pakhtakor, while Al Hilal downed Qatar's Al Gharafa to move to the top of the standings.

The club from the United Arab Emirates have endured a dismal campaign in defence of the title they won in May and picked up only their second point from six matches with the draw against Maksim Shatskikh's side in Tashkent.

That keeps Leonardo Jardim's team in 11th place in the 12-team league but, crucially, the Emiratis are only three points outside the eight qualification spots for teams from west Asia in the last 16 with two games left.

The remaining league phase matches will be played in February with the Round of 16 to be held in March. The quarter-finals, semi-finals and final will be

Al Ain were forced to see out the last 35 minutes plus stoppage time with 10 men when Yahia Nader was sent off for a reckless challenge on Doniyor Abdumannopov

held on a centralised basis in Saudi Arabia in April and May.

Iran's Esteghlal occupy the final qualifying berth with five points from their six games while Saudi Arabian trio Al Ahli, Al Hilal, Al Nassr plus Qatar's Al Sadd have already guaranteed their progress to the next round.

Otabek Jurakuziyev struck six minutes into the game at JAR Stadium to heap further pressure on the champions, the striker heading in from close range after goalkeeper Khalid Eisa had parried Diyor Holmatov's initial shot into his path.

Jurakuziyev should have added a second late in the first half only to see Eisa save with his feet, and the hosts were to rue that miss four minutes after the interval when Soufiane Rahimi raced behind the defence to equalise. Al Ain were forced to see out the last 35 minutes plus stoppage time with 10 men when Yahia Nader was sent off for a reckless challenge on Doniyor Abdumannopov but it was the visitors who looked more likely to score. Rahimi and Kodjo Laba were both denied as Pakhtakor held on.

Al Hilal, who confirmed their qualification for the knockout rounds after last week's draw with Al Sadd, moved ahead of Al Ahli and into pole position on goal-difference when as Jorge Jesus' side defeated Al Gharafa 3-0 in Riyadh.

Barca back to winning ways

Raphinha hits double as Flick's men thrash Mallorca in Laliga

Mallorca, Spain - Barcelona captain Raphinha scored twice as they returned to winning ways in LaLiga for the first time in a month with a 5-1 victory at Mallorca on Tuesday, with the visitors netting four times in the second half.

Barca manager Hansi Flick decided to rest LaLiga top-scorer Robert Lewandowski, who started all 20 previous matches in all competitions, while Lamine Yamal returned to the starting team after almost a month out with an ankle injury.

Without Yamal, Barca had seemed to hit a brick wall, picking

under the goalkeeper's legs. Barca created a few chances in the first half and Mallorca striker Vedat Muriqi levelled the scoring from a quick counter.

Yet Barca came out flying in the second-half and Raphinha, who almost scored from a free kick minutes earlier, restored their lead from the penalty spot in the 56th minute after Lamine Yamal was fouled inside the box.

Yamal crossed to Raphinha to extend Barca's lead with a tap-in in the 74th minute and substitutes Frenkie De Jong and Pau Victor added to the goal-feast with late strikes from inside the

We knew how important it was to win again. In the last three games something has been missing. It wasn't our best game, but winning was the most important thing.

RAPHINHA

up only one point in their previous three matches, but with the 17-year-old back in the line-up, they were firing once again.

Barca top the standings on 37 points, four ahead of second-placed Real Madrid who have two games in hand.

Barca took an early lead with Ferran Torres scoring following a comical mistake by the hosts' defence in the 12th minute. Johan Mojica fired an attempted clearance against a teammate, with the ball finding Torres, who was perfectly placed to strike home

box to wrap up an easy win. "We knew how important it was to win again," Raphinha told Movistar Plus. "In the last three games something has been missing. Today we were good, it wasn't our best game, but winning was the most important thing.

"I am living my best moment professionally but I don't want to stop there. I want to do much more for this club, which I am very fond of. I will give everything I can on the pitch so we can maintain momentum moving forward."



Barcelona's Raphinha celebrates his goal against Mallorca on Tuesday

Yamal's return inspired Barcelona, says Flick

Mallorca, Spain - The return of teenage sensation Lamine Yamal to Barcelona's starting line-up following an injury layoff inspired the team to their 5-1 thrashing of Mallorca, manager Hansi Flick said on Tuesday.

During Yamal's four-week absence with an ankle injury leaders Barcelona picked up only one point in three La Liga matches, allowing the chasing pack led by Real Madrid to close the gap at the top to just one point.

The emphatic win on Tuesday at Mallorca finally ended their three-match winless streak and Flick was quick to flag up the impact Yamal has on the side.

"Today (Yamal) was very important for us, he always generates positive things for the team," Flick told Movistar Plus.

"He could have scored one or two goals today, he played very well.

"Of course I am happy with



Lamine Yamal's presence made a big difference for Barcelona

the team performance. In the first half we had a lot of chances and we scored, but they equalised in a counter attack but we kept going. The entire team is happy with how things went tonight."

Flick did not even need his star striker Robert Lewandowski to show up against Mallorca. The Polish striker, who is the top-scorer in LaLiga with 15 goals, was handed a rest day after starting all 20 of Barcelona's previous matches in all competitions.

Lewandowski's replacement Ferran Torres pounced on some sloppy defending by Mallorca to give the visitors an early lead with a clever strike.

"Lewandowski needed to rest, we had to look after him," Flick said.

"And Ferran (Torres) had a very good game and scored the first goal, it's very important for him too. Whenever we need him, he's always there."



Kento Inoue scored a brace for Yokohama F Marinos while Anderson Lopes (L) was also on target

Marinos move to top in Asian Champions League east zone

Hong Kong - Yokohama F Marinos moved top of the Asian Champions League Elite standings with a 4-0 win over Central Coast Mariners on Tuesday as Vissel Kobe and Gwangju FC squandered the opportunity to book their spots in the last 16.

Kobe, who were in first place going into Tuesday's matches, slipped to a 3-1 loss at Pohang Steelers while Gwangju FC were held to a 1-1 draw after 10-man Shanghai Port equalised through Oscar's late penalty to earn a point. Johor Darul Ta'zim (JDT), meanwhile, shared a 0-0 draw with Thailand's Buriram United in Johor.

Marinos cruised to victory over the Australian champions in Gosford, with Kento Inoue netting twice inside the first half hour to put John Hutchison's side in control.

Inoue scored in the sixth

minute, cutting in from the left to bend his shot around goalkeeper Dylan Peraic-Cullen and the winger doubled the lead 24 minutes later with a cool finish. Anderson Lopes's deflected strike added a third for the J-League outfit in the 36th before Jun Amano's curling free kick 20 minutes from time sealed the victory.

The win takes Marinos to 13 points ahead of Kobe and Gwangju on goal difference.

The first eight finishers in the league phase from east and west Asia advance to the knockout stage, with the round of 16 to be in March.

In Shanghai, Heo Yool put Gwangju in front seven minutes before the interval and Port were reduced to 10 men when Wei Zhen was sent off after a seemingly innocuous off-the-ball clash with Shin Chang-moo 10 minutes into the second half.

Milan crush Sassuolo to march into Coppa Italia quarters

MILAN, Italy - AC Milan made light work of Serie B side Sassuolo with a 6-1 thrashing at the San Siro to reach the quarter-finals of the Coppa Italia on Tuesday, where Samuel Chukwueze scored two first-half goals.

Milan will face the winner of the last 16 tie between AS Roma and Sampdoria.

The game was already over as a contest by the 23rd minute after Chukwueze's brace along with goals from Tijjani Reijnders and Rafael Leao handed Milan a 4-0 lead. Milan added a fifth through Davide Calabria 11 minutes after the interval and after Sassuolo found a consolation goal with Samuele Mulattieri scoring three minutes later, Tammy Abraham rounded off the win in the 61st minute.

Chukwueze opened the scor-



AC Milan's Rafael Leao celebrates after scoring against Sassuolo

ing in the 12th minute when a Reijnders ball over the top put him through one-on-one with the keeper and after his first effort hit the upright he tapped in the rebound.

Reijnders drilled a shot home

from outside the area five minutes later and Chukwueze netted his second in the 21st minute, curling a shot beyond the reach of the keeper after a Tammy Abraham lay-off.

Two minutes later, a no-look

pass from Ruben Loftus-Cheek found Leao in the area and he struck a powerful shot low into the far corner.

Milan manager Paulo Fonseca's starting side had eight changes from the team which beat Empoli 3-0 at the weekend, and at the start of the second half he sent on four substitutes.

One of those replacements, Christian Pulisic, sent a lofted cross into the box which came off the post and Calabria reacted quickest to convert when the ball came back out.

Mulattieri's shot squirmed under Milan keeper Lorenzo Torriani, another half-time substitute, to finally give Sassuolo something to cheer about, but Abraham finished off the rout, tucking his finish past Sassuolo keeper Giacomo Satalino.

'We've come a long way and there's still a long way to go'

Saudi Arabia's 2034 World Cup bid chief emphasises human rights reforms

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - Hammad Albalawi, head of Saudi Arabia's 2034 World Cup bid, stated that the country has made significant progress in human rights while aiming to attract "more fans than ever" to the 48-team showpiece event.

Saudi Arabia is the sole bidder for the 2034 World Cup, with FIFA set to vote on it next week amid concerns about the country's human rights record.

Albalawi said that the strides in human rights, especially in labour laws, are part of Saudi Arabia's commitment to transforming its social and economic landscape under Vision 2030.

"We have come a long way and there's still a long way to go. Our principle is to develop something that is right for us. Our journey started in 2016, not because of the World Cup bid," Albalawi told Reuters.

"We've launched initiatives granting employees the freedom to move between employers.



Hammad Albalawi says positive strides in human rights are part of Saudi Arabia's commitment to transforming its social and economic landscape

Only a month and a half ago, the government announced a new insurance policy... These are substantive examples, not because we're bidding for the World Cup, but because this is part of Vision 2030

HAMMAD ALBALAWI

Documents of these employees are now uploaded into government systems, ensuring they have rights within their contracts.

"Only a month and a half ago, the government announced a new government insurance policy... These are substantive examples, not because we're

said last month that FIFA must halt the process to pick Saudi Arabia as hosts of the 2034 tournament unless major human rights reforms are announced before the vote.

Albalawi said the World Cup will be held in a safe and family-friendly environment where visitors will enjoy both inside and outside the stadium regardless of the sale of alcohol, which was banned at the 2022 World Cup in neighbouring Qatar.

"I think today what you see in Saudi Arabia is an environment that is family friendly, safe and secure – something that people can actually enjoy on and off the pitch," he said.

"We've had over 100 global sporting events that already have taken place in Saudi Arabia. No alcohol was served in those tournaments. Yet, we had three million sports fans come in and enjoy those tournaments that have come and come again."

Albalawi also pointed to the rapid development of Saudi women's football and its infrastructure as an example of the country's development and social changes.

"Three years ago, there were zero girls playing football in school because the facilities weren't there," he said. "Today, the facilities are there and in two years after the facilities were built, we have over 80,000 girls playing football."

World Cup 2034 in Saudi unlikely to clash with Winter Games: IOC

Lausanne, Switzerland - The 2034 football World Cup, which is expected to be held in Saudi Arabia and possibly in the cooler months, is unlikely to clash with the Salt Lake City winter Olympics, the International Olympic Committee said.

Saudi Arabia is the lone bidder for 2034 World Cup with global football body FIFA to vote on it next week.

FIFA has said the Saudi bid did not stipulate a proposed window for the World Cup but they would collaborate with stakeholders to "determine the optimal timing" for the tournament given the country's hot climate.

The IOC, however, has no concerns over a potential clash with the Salt Lake City winter Games to be held from February 10-26, 2034.

"This is going to be for sports fans a

r e a l



Christophe Dubi

History-making Dania Akeel wins FIA Middle East Baja Cup

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia - Saudi Arabian driver Dania Akeel secured a sensational victory in the FIA Middle East Baja Cup to secure the overall title at last weekend's three-day Dubai International Baja.

Akeel tackled the four rounds of the prestigious regional Baja series with two different co-drivers and three car preparation companies to amass enough points to win the overall championship and also secure success in the flagship Ultimate category.

Akeel recorded consistent performances at each of the four rounds in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan and Dubai and finished on the FIA Middle East Baja Cup podium at each event.

The Jeddah-based driver secured points with an Overdrive Racing Toyota Hilux at the open-



Dania Akeel celebrates FIA Middle East Baja success with co-driver Stephane Duple

ing two Bajas and even led the Qatar event after day one.

She then switched to the SSV category for the final two rounds to record a valuable finish in the Aqaba-based Jordan Baja with a Santag Racing Can-Am Maverick XRS Turbo RR and then a sensational victory at the final round in Dubai with the South Racing Can-Am Team. The success marked for the first by a female driver in the history of Middle East motorsport, as Akeel continues to break boundaries.

Akeel said: "The FIA Middle East Baja Cup developed into a very exciting season. Initially, I did not plan to do the whole championship. I took part in the Ha'il Baja as part of the Saudi Championship and I registered for the FIA Middle East Baja Cup to see how the points would look.

"We had a good result in Ha'il and then we had the opportunity to race with a Toyota and the Overdrive team in the Ultimate category at the Qatar Baja. After that event, we saw that we had taken the lead in the Ultimate class in the Middle East Cup and were in second place in the overall classification.

"With this position, I decided to do the Jordan Baja, because there was only a seven-point gap between myself and the leader of the overall. He was racing in the SSV class and I decided to race in the same class because we needed to close the gap with the leader. After that event, we finished in first place in the Middle East SSV class and we closed the gap to the leader to just two points before the final event in Dubai."

feast during a period of three or four months where you will have these two events," Olympic Games Executive Director Christophe Dubi told a press conference.

"I think the risk of having those two (events) in parallel is immensely limited. With these two in different countries and continents, from all standpoints, including a commercial one, we have virtually no risk," he said. "A lot of sports consumption on any platform or any channel, we don't see at this stage any major issue. On the contrary it is a lot of sport in this time frame."

Due to the Saudi Arabia's desert climate, the 2034 World Cup is very likely to be pushed to a winter slot - just as FIFA did with the 2022 edition in Qatar.

This is not how I wanted things to end, says Ocon after Alpine exit

Esteban Ocon said his departure from Alpine ahead of Formula One's Abu Dhabi season-ender this weekend was not how he had wanted his time at the Renault-owned team to end.

Alpine have replaced the Frenchman with Australian reserve Jack Doohan who will be making his race debut at Yas Marina on Sunday.

Ocon is joining Haas next season and the switch was presented by Alpine as freeing Ocon to test for the U.S.-owned team next week.

"To the hundreds of hard-working men and women at Enstone and Viry, I apologise that I will not be able to come see you in person and have a proper farewell," the Frenchman said on Instagram, recognising it had not been an easy year.



Esteban Ocon

"As you know, the plan was always to race one last time this weekend and personally say goodbye to you all next week. I was looking forward to both of those things.

"This is not how I wanted things to end. That said, the world of F1 is small and I am sure

I will see many of you again soon.

"I would also like to wish nothing but great things to my friend Jack as he takes this next big step in his career at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix."

Alpine are fighting for sixth place in the championship, the team five points clear of Haas.

Bradman 'baggy green' cap worn against India fetches \$311,000

Melbourne, Australia - A sun-faded and insect-damaged Test cap worn by Don Bradman has sold for A\$479,700 (\$311,000) in a record for a cap worn by the Australian cricket icon.

Bradman wore the "baggy green" cap during India's first tour of Australia as an independent country in 1947-48, scoring 715 runs in six innings at an average of 178.75.

During the five-Test series, Bradman also became Australia's first player to notch 100 first class centuries as he led the hosts to a 4-0 win.

At the end of the tour, Bradman gave the cap to the Indian team manager Pankaj "Peter" Gupta who passed it on to



Don Bradman wore the baggy green cap during India's first tour of Australia as an independent country in 1947-48

wicketkeeper PK Sen.

It was bought by the previous owner in 2003 and had been on loan to the Bradman Museum in the cricketer's home-town of Bowral since 2010.

Put up for auction with an estimated value of A\$300,000-A\$400,000, it sold to an Australian bidder, Sydney auction house Bonhams said.

Bradman's first test cap

worn in 1928 sold for A\$450,000 in 2020, nearly a year after Australia's spin bowling great Shane Warne sold his baggy green for more than A\$1 million to aid bushfire relief efforts.

Revered as the game's greatest batsman and one of Australia's best captains, Bradman retired after 52 Tests with a stratospheric batting average of 99.94, nearly 40 better than any other player with a minimum of 20 innings.

The sale of the latest cap has coincided with India's ongoing, five-Test tour of Australia, with the visitors leading 1-0 ahead of the second match starting at Adelaide Oval on Friday.



14

FOR WEIGHT-LOSS
You can reach healthy eating goals with high-protein breakfast



15

IN TOWN
Thai Embassy celebrated their country's National Day on Tuesday



16

ENTERTAINMENT
A peek into tinsel town, in Hollywood and Bollywood



OMAN'S LOST VILLAGE

DRONE CAPTURES STUNNING AERIAL VIEW OF BURIED VILLAGE WADI AL MURR

Mohammed Taha

Once a thriving village, Wadi Al Murr, located in Jalaan Bani Bu Ali in South Sharqiyah, has reemerged as a subject of fascination for visitors and photographers. Lying buried beneath desert sands for more than three decades, Omani photographer Haitham bin Nasser Darwish al Azri used a drone to capture rare aerial images of the village, offering a haunting glimpse into this forgotten settlement.

Haitham's drone photography captures more than just sand-covered ruins - it tells a story of loss, resilience, and the enduring connection of people to their homeland. With proper attention, Wadi Al Murr could shift from being a forgotten village to a beacon of cultural heritage and sustainable tourism.

Engulfed by shifting sands 34 years ago, Wadi Al Murr was abandoned when encroaching dunes rendered living conditions extremely difficult. The village, locally known as 'the buried village', saw its residents migrating to neigh-



The village's abandonment marks a poignant chapter in Oman's history, where environmental forces reshaped human settlements

Haitham al Azri

bouring towns and cities after sandstorms completely covered the entrances and exits of their homes.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Haitham reflected on the area's unique allure, noting how the moving sands have begun to uncover portions of the buried structures. Features like the village

mosque's mihrab and parts of the traditional Omani-style dwellings, renowned for their sturdy construction, have started to emerge, revealing the craftsmanship of the past.

"Wadi Al Murr was home to approximately 50 families, with most residents relying on pastoral activities for their livelihoods. The

village's abandonment marks a poignant chapter in Oman's history, where environmental forces reshaped human settlements," he narrated.

Despite its desolation, former residents still visit the site, reliving memories of their ancestral homes and a way of life lost to the sands.

A vision for revitalisation

Haitham emphasised the village's potential as a unique tourist destination, suggesting the government to develop the area by adding infrastructure like paved roads, lighting, and restrooms to attract visitors. Located roughly halfway between the Niyabat of Al Ashkhara in the south and the Niyabat of Ras al Hadd in the north, Wadi Al Murr could serve as a valuable cultural and historical landmark.

Haitham shared his experience of overcoming challenges while photographing the village, "Between 1pm and 6pm, I worked to capture the essence of the village through photography. The task was far from easy - I had to contend with strong winds and swirling sand. Despite these difficulties, determination and patience kept me going. Using a drone, I successfully took around 30 photos from different parts of the village. Operating a drone itself is a challenge; it demands rigorous training, hard work, and unwavering focus to achieve the desired results.

"The buried village offers a glimpse into Oman's rich architectural heritage and resilience," said Haitham. "Developing it as a tourist attraction would not only preserve its history but also create a source of income and pride for the region. I hope the government invest in the site's potential."



cook-up

How to make a high-protein veggie sandwich



1. Start with whole-grain bread

Start with whole-grain bread, whether it be whole-wheat sandwich bread, multigrain bread or a whole-wheat English muffin. This will ensure your meal has carbohydrates - your body's preferred source of energy. We recommend picking whole-grain bread because it's higher in fibre than white bread, and getting plenty of fibre in your meals is important for preventing blood sugar spikes. Whole grains are also higher in protein, which is another key nutrient for balancing blood sugars. It's also an easy way to boost the total protein, vitamin and mineral content of your meal.

2. Add a spread

A tasty spread can be the secret sauce (pun intended) that transforms a sandwich from good to great. Some tasty spread ideas include mayonnaise, pesto, aioli, oil and vinegar, hummus, avocado and mustard. Most of these sandwich spreads are a source of dietary fat, which can help your body absorb vitamins A, D, E and K from the other ingredients. Plus, it's an opportunity to add heart-healthy unsaturated fats to your day to help manage cholesterol.

3. Use a vegetarian protein

Next it's time to add the star of the show: Protein. Pick a vegetarian protein source like low-fat cheese, eggs, beans, tofu or tempeh. There are lots of ways to enjoy these protein sources so you won't get bored. Mash white beans, make an egg or chickpea salad, cook up smoky tempeh bacon, or mix and match reduced-fat cheeses. And there's no need to pick just one vegetarian protein! Feel free to add multiple kinds to up the total protein content of your sandwich.

4. Pile on the vegetables

Finally, make sure to finish off your sandwich with plenty of vegetables. For most sandwiches, you'll want to add veggies like cucumbers, lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, broccoli, onions or carrots. If you're making a hot sandwich, then sautéed mushrooms, onions, peppers or zucchini would also work well. Either way, this final step will add more fibre, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants to your sandwich.

BREAKFAST RECIPES

Protein increases satiety and decreases hunger, which can help calorie intake and aid in weight management. These high-protein recipes are packed with flavour and nutritious ingredients to help you reach your healthy eating goals right in the morning.



High-protein cinnamon-roll oatmeal

Ingredients

- 2 cups nonfat milk
- 1 cup old-fashioned rolled oats
- 4 teaspoons pure maple syrup, divided
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt
- 2 tablespoons nonfat plain strained (Greek-style) yogurt

Method

Step 1: Place 2 cups milk in a medium saucepan; bring to a gentle boil over medium heat. Stir in 1 cup oats; reduce heat to maintain a gentle simmer and cook, stirring frequently, until the oats have softened and thickened, 7 to 9 minutes. Remove from heat. Step 2: Add 3 teaspoons maple

syrup, 1 teaspoon each cinnamon and vanilla and a pinch of salt to the oats. Divide the oatmeal between 2 bowls. Step 3: Stir 2 tablespoons yogurt and the remaining 1 teaspoon maple syrup together in a small bowl. Drizzle over the top of the oatmeal.



Egg, Tomato & Feta

Ingredients

- ¼ cup diced cucumber
- ¼ cup diced tomato
- 1 tablespoon crumbled feta cheese
- ¾ teaspoon za'atar, divided
- 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 large eggs
- 1 (5-inch) whole-wheat pita, halved

Method

Step 1: Combine ¼ cup each cucumber and tomato, 1 tablespoon feta and ½ teaspoon za'atar in a small bowl; toss to coat. Step 2: Heat 1 teaspoon oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Break 2 eggs, one at a time, into the skillet. Cover and cook until the whites are set, about 2 minutes. Uncover and cook until the whites are completely set and the edges are crisp, about 2 minutes 30 seconds. Sprinkle the eggs with the remaining ¼ teaspoon za'atar; place each inside a pita half. Divide the cucumber-tomato mixture between the pitas.

CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED

An experienced sales person having experience in Sanitaryware/ Tiles projects and showroom. Looking for a job. Contact No: 79443928 Email: Venugopalbandiyo005@gmail.com

SEND YOUR REQUEST FOR

Birthday/ Anniversary wishes to wish@apexmedia.co.om with your resident card copy (It's free of cost)

عيادة فصول السنة للطب الهندي التقليدي
ALL SEASON AYURVEDA CLINIC

The most efficient and authentic Ayurvedic Treatment & Medicine, Yoga, Kalari, Panchakarma, Massage, Dhara etc... Rehabilitation, Beauty therapy & post Delivery Care

Zaher Building ,1st Floor, Flat 8A, Al Khuwair Service Road ,near Al Zawawi Mosque & Burger-king Tel:24475280, GSM: 95371664 , 92504980 , Website:www.siddhayur.com

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 | Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

أوربت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

- Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
- Choose from a wide range of brands & models
- PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
- Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

take a break

IN TOWN

THAILAND NATIONAL DAY



Dignitaries join the Thai Embassy officials to celebrate the National Day of Thailand at Grand Millennium Muscat Hotel on Tuesday

Photos: V K Shafer

BBF UNITES PEOPLE IN FIRE AND SAFETY



British Business Forum Oman organised Unity in Fire and Safety at Grand Hayatt Muscat on Sunday

Photos: V K Shafer

BOGGLER

I	M	N	L
G	R	I	D
F	U	A	P
U	N	N	A

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

LEVEL EASY:

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

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

TRIVIA QUIZ - FOR TEENS

1. Eggs are rich in

A. Calcium
B. Vitamins
C. Carbohydrate
D. Protein

2. Which is the lowest layer in the earth's atmosphere?

A. Stratosphere
B. Troposphere
C. Mesosphere
D. Exosphere

3. Which is the world's largest forest?



A. Amazon Rainforest
B. Congo Rainforest
C. Daintree Rainforest
D. Kinabalu National Park

Answers
3. A
2. B
1. D

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
Who's in control here, you or someone further up the chain of command? Be honest with yourself and use your wisdom rather than your ego when going about your duties. Share your responsibilities and you'll get the added benefit of some fun companionship as well as easing your load. Right now, charm will serve you better than toughness.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
Hard work yields pleasing results and proves that momentum is the key to your success. Once you get going, you may find yourself exceeding expectations long before you're ready to quit. This is a great time to start a new health program or an art project. Once you get underway, people around you are bound to take notice.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
Duty calls repeatedly today, while you just want to answer the siren song of fun and games. Your day improves when you find a playmate who shares your desire to escape. The secret to success is to follow your impulses creatively: Do a routine chore slightly differently, or wear something special to make your day perk up. A little rebellion is a good thing.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
Be on the lookout for obstacles in business and romantic partnerships. Excess activity on oft-travelled ground stirs up many issues. Be cautious about starting something new. You may want to wait until people feel they're back on their feet. Be careful in dealings with colleagues and loved ones, and take time off if feelings run high. Try to figure out your priorities and be understanding of the needs of others.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
It's a great time to meet and impress new people. You radiate confidence, attracting potential partners like flies to honey. In love and art, you are nearly unstoppable. Use your magic touch to bargain for something you've been wanting or to ask a question you've been avoiding. Even though everyone pays attention to you, don't overextend yourself.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
There's a saying: "to make money, you have to spend money." If you want to get in the game, you must come up with the admission fee. At least this money will be helping you toward a greater goal. Buy the things you need to get what you want or to send you where you want to go.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
You begin to live your dreams. What others only imagine, you dare to do. The usual barriers in business and romance open for you like swinging doors. In fact, mixing business with pleasure may be a very real possibility. Throughout the day you have the delicious feeling that approving eyes are watching every move you make.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
Your train of smooth and steady progress gets derailed by indecision. It may be difficult to make a choice when you consider how much is at stake. Not to worry. You have time to find the answer. Reassess the situation on your own, since advice from others may only cloud the situation.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
You could receive a delightful complication via an archer named Cupid. New romances blossom or old ones heat up again, or maybe both. Someone special finds you irresistible. With this new excitement may come hard decisions. Be honest and kind about what you want and what you are feeling, and you will be rewarded.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
It's in your best interests to finish old business before starting new. Accept help as it is offered and use it as needed. Sharing the reward is a small price to pay for closure. Compromise will bring much-needed peace and harmony into your life. Conflicts with those in authority may leave you unsatisfied.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
Be intellectual and explore the world. You'll find it rewarding. Take some time out and get to know a new acquaintance, culture, or topic of study. Figuring out what makes other people tick gives you unexpected insight about your own situation. You are very open to new information and ideas, so let your curiosity be your guide.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
You understand the nature of secrets, even when they're difficult and inconvenient. If someone shares something with you, don't worry about giving advice. Just listen. Be careful about your newfound knowledge. In this case, discretion is definitely the better part of valor. Keeping the faith will put someone important in your debt. Your integrity will open the door to more confessions.

entertainment



Eminem's mother Debbie Nelson dies at 69

Debbie Nelson, the single mother of rapper Eminem whose rocky relationship with her son was known widely through his hit song lyrics, has died. She was 69.

Eminem's longtime representative Dennis Dennehy confirmed Nelson's death in an email on Tuesday. He did not provide a cause of death, although Nelson had battled lung cancer.

Nelson's fraught relationship with her son, whose real name is Marshall Mathers III, has been no secret since the Detroit rapper became a star.

Eminem has disparaged his mother in songs such as the 2002 single *Cleaning Out My Closet*. Eminem sings *Witnessin' your mama poppin' prescription pills in the kitchen. ... My whole life I was made to believe I was sick when I wasn't*. She attempted to set the record straight by providing readers details about the rapper's early life.

TIMOTHÉE CHALAMET OFFERED TO PAY LOOK-ALIKE CONTEST FINE

Timothée Chalamet offered to pay the US\$500 fee incurred in October by YouTuber Anthony Po, the organizer of a viral Chalamet look-alike contest in New York City, but Po turned down the offer.

Po's Timothée Chalamet look-alike contest took the internet by storm on October 27, with several thousand people descending upon downtown Manhattan for the event - even Chalamet himself made an appearance. The competition went viral and spawned offshoots around the world searching for the doppelgängers of actors like Glen Powell, Harry Styles and Paul Mescal.

Chalamet's contest went particularly viral for its civil unrest - the NYPD arrested four attendees in their attempt to break up the event (Po had not sought a permit) and fined Po US\$500.



TOM BERGERON, YVETTE NICOLE BROWN SET FOR MPTF TELETHON

Tom Bergeron and Yvette Nicole Brown are ready to say Lights, Camera, Take Action!

The two are back on board to host and produce MPTF's fundraising telethon as it returns for a third straight year to help Hollywood crew members in need of assistance. The two-hour telecast - set to air live on KTLA in Los Angeles from 7-9 p.m. on December 8 - will feature stories, songs and celebrity guests in a quest to raise emergency funds for entertainment workers.

The inaugural telecast garnered more than US\$850,000, while last year's raised more than US\$750,000. The MPTF team has set a goal of US\$750,000 for the December outing.

"I can truly say the industry is in a unique and challenging position right now as we find our footing for the future, and it's up to all of us to band together and help those who might be hurting along the way," Brown said in a statement, referencing a business that is still adjusting to a new normal after historic strikes and a global pandemic.

Byeon Woo Seok locks down new K-drama with IU

KRR SH
Nisha's

OMG, you guys, I'm just losing it! Byeon Woo Seok is starring in a new K-drama with IU! Like, IU was so amazing as Hae Soo in 2016 epic drama *Moon Lovers: Scarlet Heart Ryeo*, I've been her biggest fan. And now, she's going to be acting with my Byeon Oppa in *Wife of a 21st Century Prince*!

This is the drama of my dreams!

The show is set in a modern-day kingdom, and I just know Byeon Woo Seok is going to slay as the most handsome and charming prince ever. I can already picture him in a royal suit, looking all serious but with that perfect smile that makes me melt! And IU is the perfect co-star - she's so talented and elegant. But, like, I'm also super jealous because she gets to act with him.

The drama airs in late 2025, which feels like forever away, but I'm already counting down the days. This could totally be as epic as *Scarlet Heart Ryeo* - maybe even better! Byeon Oppa, Fighting!



Elton John loses his eyesight

Elton John says he struggled to watch his new musical because he has lost his eyesight after contracting an infection. The singer-songwriter attended the opening night of *The Devil Wears Prada* in London on Sunday and told the audience that "I haven't been able to come to many of the previews because, as you know, I have lost my eyesight."

"So it's hard for me to see it, but I love to hear it and, boy, it sounded good tonight," he said.

John (77) disclosed in September that an infection had left him "with only limited vision in one eye." He wrote on Instagram that "I am healing, but it's an extremely slow process, and it will take some time before sight returns to the impacted eye."

John wrote the score for *The Devil Wears Prada*, a stage musical based on the 2006 movie about a young journalist navigating the glamour and egos of a glossy fashion magazine. The production at London's Dominion Theatre stars Vanessa Williams as the fearsome editor Miranda Priestly, played by Meryl Streep in the film.



WHATS ON



Genre: Genre: Action
Starring: Allu Arjun, Rashmika Mandanna, Fahadh Faasil
Language: Hindi

PUSHPA 2: THE RULE
The clash is on as Pushpa and Bhanwar Singh continue their rivalry in this epic conclusion to the two-part action drama.



KEVIN SPACEY TOURS GAZA BORDER

Disgraced American actor Kevin Spacey was seen visiting Israel's Gaza border on Sunday.

Spacey was seen in photos with Libby Alon, chief international news editor for Now14Israel, posted on Monday. Multiple outlets reported he was there to visit a friend's daughter, who is serving in the Israeli army.

The House of Cards actor was joined by pro-Israel British journalist Douglas Murray, who makes regular trips to the country.

Spacey has kept a relatively low profile since he was first accused of sexual misconduct and abuse by multiple men in 2017. In June, said that the Baltimore house he had been living in was being foreclosed.

"My house has been sold off, so I have to go back to Baltimore and put all my things in storage," he said admitted, tearing up. "So the answer to the question is, "I'm not quite sure where I'm going to live now."

A haute-horror feast of history, folklore, religion, fairy tales and mythology



HOLLYWOOD MOVIE REVIEW:
NOSFERATU
Genre: horror Starring: Bill Skarsgård, Nicholas Hoult, Lily-Rose Depp, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Emma Corrin, Ralph Ineson, Simon McBurney, and Willem Dafoe.

Bill Skarsgard has the cape, the fangs and the scary manicure. But it's Robert Eggers who brings the evil intent to Nosferatu, which unfolds as if under a malignant spell, a movie possessed. Exciting, repulsive and beautiful in equal measure, this feels like something the writer-

director has been working toward since his unsettling 2016 debut feature, *The Witch*. Steeped in dense atmosphere and macabre poetry, Christmas counterprogramming doesn't get much darker than this exquisitely crafted fever dream.

Over four distinctive features, Eggers has built a freaky body of

work drawing from history, folklore, religion, fairy tales and mythology. It was only a matter of time before Eggers sunk his teeth into Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. He approaches the vampire legend through the inky shadows of F W Murnau's 1922 silent masterpiece, which he acknowledges as a formative influence, with maybe a sideways nod here and there to the 1979 Werner Herzog remake and even to Francis Ford Coppola's baroque 1992 retelling. Eggers' *Nosferatu*, however, is its own mesmeric creation, a superlative match of



director and material.

Focus Features has given Eggers free rein and what looks like considerable resources to execute his vision. It's a Gothic horror nightmare heaving with sumptuous visual detail, groaning under the weight of portentous dread, writhing with both convulsive violence and sweaty eroticism and leavened by sly hints of fiendish camp. Be warned, though, that if you're squeamish about rats, the plague-infested third act will have you covering your eyes.

In a transfixing performance,

Lily-Rose Depp plays Ellen, introduced in an early 19th century prologue as an emotionally isolated teenager at a low point in her young life. Sleepless in bed, she prays for solace: "Come to me. A guardian angel. A spirit of comfort. A spirit of any celestial sphere. Hear my call." As much as Skarsgard's fearsome Orlok, the movie belongs to Depp, whose performance is a revelation. Their scenes together are electric, bristling with a conflicting rush of revulsion and desire.

Rating ★★★★★

IDdesign

KARE

ANNUAL

Sale

25-75%
OFF



★ ★ ★ Celebrating the National Day Vibes ★ ★ ★