

H M issues 4 Royal Decrees

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued four Royal Decrees on Monday, reading as follows:

Royal Decree No 23/2025 ratifies an agreement of cooperation in the field of maritime transport and ports between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, signed in Rabat on July 4, 2023.

Article 1 ratifies the aforementioned agreement in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

Article 2 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No 24/2025 ratifies an agreement between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Cyprus on avoidance of double taxation and prevention of evasion with respect to taxes on income, signed in Muscat on December 8, 2024.

Article 1 ratifies the aforementioned agreement in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

Article 2 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No 25/2025 ratifies an agreement between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Republic of Tanzania on elimination of double taxation on income tax and prevention of tax evasion signed in Muscat on December 15, 2024.

Article 1 ratifies the aforementioned agreement in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

Article 2 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No 26/2025 ratifies an agreement on air transport between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Djibouti, signed in Muscat on January 6, 2025.

Article 1 ratifies the aforementioned agreement in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

Article 2 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

ONA

Fencers win historic bronze in Asian contest

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Oman national women's fencing team has claimed a historic bronze medal at the 2025 Cadets and Juniors Asian Fencing Championship, marking a major milestone for the sultanate's women in sports. The victory is momentous as Oman beat the world champions Japan to win the bronze.

Held in Kuwait from February 19-28, the championship featured athletes from 28 countries.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, team coach Hisham Karshoud described the achievement as the "first of its kind in the history of women's sports in Oman", highlighting the progress made in supporting female athletes.

The team - comprising Israa bint Saif al Siyabi, Jana Mohammed al Sharji and Salma b



THIS VICTORY OVER WORLD CHAMPIONS JAPAN IS A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT FOR WOMEN'S FENCING IN THE COUNTRY

Hisham Karshoud

Saeed al Dughaisi - faced top-ranked Asian teams. According to Karshoud, the event was "like a mini world championship" due to participation of elite teams. He called Oman's victory over Japan a "great achievement" for women's fencing in the country.

The bronze medal is not only Oman's first in the sport but also the first-ever Arab medal in this category at the Asian Fencing Championship.

Karshoud praised his team's technical skills, saying the win would boost their confidence and motivation to compete in higher-level international tournaments, including the World Championships and potentially the Olympics.

He credited the fencers' families for their support and acknowledged the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth's provision of essential resources and

international exposure. The team's success followed a five-day training camp in Kuwait, which focused on physical and mental preparation.

In the women's category, South Korea won gold, China silver and Hong Kong and Oman were declared joint winners for bronze.

Looking ahead, Karshoud expressed optimism about the future of women's fencing in Oman. He believes this achievement will encourage more young girls to take up the sport and contribute to Oman's growing presence on the global stage. The team is now preparing for the World Championships in China, scheduled for April 5-17.

"I encourage Omani girls to take up fencing, it's a sport that builds strength and self-confidence," Karshoud added.

Fisheries sector gets R051mn investment boost; 2 pacts inked

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) has signed two major agreements worth over R051mn aimed at supporting the fisheries sector. These initiatives are part of the government's ongoing efforts to diversify the economy and enhance the sector's contribution to the GDP.

The first agreement, valued at approximately R028mn, involves a contract with Khimji Ramdas Construction and Archimedes Marine Engineering and Contracting to develop a multi-purpose fishing port in Masirah. This comprehensive development is set to support the fisheries sector while promoting tourism and commercial activities.

Key features of the Masirah fishing port project will include 4,172m of breakwater, increased port basin depth by 5m, creation of 1,100m sandy beach, and in-

A R028mn contract will see development of a multi-purpose fishing port in Masirah. The second agreement is for an investment of R023.5mn in a white shrimp farming project in Shinas, North Batinah



stallation of 13 floating berths. These upgrades are expected to improve facilities for fishermen, enhance maritime and logistical transport between Masirah and other wilayats, and promote economic diversification. The project will also provide essential amenities for visitors, including berths for Royal Oman Police.

According to Yaqoub bin

Khalfan al Busaidi, Undersecretary for Fisheries in MAFWR, the agreement supports the government's broader economic diversification plan. "Development of the port aligns with the goal of attracting investment, stimulating tourism, and creating a favourable environment for Omani fishermen, including facilities for fish landing, marketing

and vessel maintenance."

In 2023, Masirah produced 25,000 tonnes of fish valued at R023.2mn. The island is home to around 2,345 fishermen, with approximately 804 fishing boats and 38 artisanal vessels.

White shrimp aquaculture

In the second agreement, the

ministry signed a usufruct contact with National Phoenix Company for a white shrimp farming project in Shinas, North Batinah.

Covering an area of 15 hectares, the project is an important step towards enhancing food security and diversifying income sources in line with Oman Vision 2040.

The white shrimp aquaculture venture, with expected annual production of 7,500 tonnes, is set to become one of the largest fish farming projects in the country. With total investment of R023.5mn, it aims to stimulate the local economy by creating direct job opportunities for Omani youth and supporting growth of the aquaculture sector.

Additionally, the Shinas project will facilitate transfer of advanced technology and expertise, further developing the skills of the workforce in North Batinah.

Sayyid Badr, Rubio discuss boosting ties in phone call

Muscat - Foreign Minister H E Sayyid Badr al Busaidi held a pho-ne discussion with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Monday.

They discussed the historical ties and friendly relations between Oman and the USA, as well as the shared commitment to strengthening cooperation in political, economic and cultural fields. They highlighted the importance of continuing ongoing strategic dialogue between the two countries and of following up on partnership, trade and knowledge exchange programmes.

They exchanged views on regional and international developments, expressing their shared interest and support for efforts to achieve just peace, de-escalation and peaceful solutions through constructive dialogue.

"A good call with @SecRubio. Agreed together to continue developing our strategic and long-standing relationship, which will continue to remain unaffected by regional tension," H E Sayyid Badr posted on X following the call.

Sheer Driving **Pleasure**

RAMADAN READY WITH BMW.
EXPLORE OUR GENEROUS OFFER AND GET
A CHANCE TO WIN ONE OF THREE BRAND-NEW BMWs.

Discover the grandest of journeys with The 7 and X7. Cruise through the season now with your new BMW and embrace thrilling benefits that come along:

- BMW Service for 5 years/100,000 km*
- BMW Warranty for 5 years/200,000 km*
- BMW Roadside Assistance for 5 years/200,000 km*
- Complimentary 1st year Insurance**
- Complimentary 1st year Registration
- Complimentary services from AutoSpa
- Complimentary BMW Lifestyle Gift
- A chance to win one of three brand-new BMWs***

*Whichever comes first.
**Terms and Conditions apply.
***The draw will happen at the end of March, April and May.

Turn every Ramadan drive into an unforgettable adventure with BMW. Book now by calling 80050008 or visit our BMW Qurum showroom.

Al Jenaibi International Automobiles
Toll-free 800 50008
www.bmw-oman.com



Fajr	Duhr	Asr	Maghrib	Isha
5.11am	12.24pm	3.45pm	6.16pm	7.26pm



MOL GUIDELINES ISSUED TO ENSURE WORKER SAFETY DURING RAMADAN

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Labour (MoL) has issued a set of guidelines to safeguard the health and well-being of workers during Ramadan while maintaining workplace productivity. The directives outline responsibilities of both employers and employees to ensure a safe working environment throughout the holy month.

Employers are required to provide flexible working hours and avoid long shifts, particularly for physically demanding jobs. For outdoor labour, working hours should be reduced to prevent fatigue.

Employers must also monitor workers for signs of exhaustion and ensure first aid and emergency response measures are in place.

Workplace safety education is encouraged to reduce risk of accidents, while stress management measures should be implemented to support employees' mental and physical well-being. Travel should be minimised to prevent unnecessary strain, and cold water stations should be made available. The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) must also be enforced, MoL stated.

Employees, in turn, are advised to take care of their health by getting sufficient sleep and consuming nutrient-rich foods at suhoor to sustain energy levels.

They should avoid sugary and caffeinated drinks at iftar to prevent dehydration and fatigue, MoL added.

'Hydration is essential, and workers are encouraged to drink adequate water during non-fasting hours. PPE must be worn as required, and those with chronic health conditions or specific medical needs should inform their supervisors to facilitate necessary adjustments.'

Employees must also adhere to all workplace safety protocols to ensure a secure working environment.

Muscat shines with festive decorations



(V K Shafeer)

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Muscat Municipality has adorned the city with colourful Ramadan decorations, adding a festive atmosphere to several iconic locations across the capital. From Muttrah Souq to the entrance of Seeb, the city is celebrating the holy month with displays that reflect cultural pride and the spirit of the occasion.

Key landmarks, including Muttrah Gate, Royal Opera House Muscat and Sultan Qaboos Street, have been illuminated with bright displays and sculptures. These decorations celebrate Ramadan and add a festive touch.

Sulaiman al Balushi, a resident of Muttrah, was awestruck by the lights adorning Muttrah



Gate. "It even has 'Ramadan Mubarak' written on it. This is the first time we've seen such a display; it's really adding to the festivities. The blue lights shining on the gate beautifully highlight the area's cultural and historical significance," he said.

Balushi believes the decorations will encourage more visitors and boost local shopping and tourism during Ramadan.

Salem al Hosni, a taxi driver, shared his excitement over the decorations near Royal Opera House Muscat. "I like the installations in front of Opera House. These reflect our Islamic heritage and carry the message of Ramadan, adding a lively touch to the area, especially when lit up in the evening," he remarked.

In Seeb, there is a buzz among residents about crescent-shaped sculptures at key locations, including at the entrance of the wilayat and

I like the installations in front of Opera House. These reflect our Islamic heritage and carry the message of Ramadan, adding a lively touch to the area, especially when lit up in the evening

SALEM AL HOSNI

mosque near Seeb Market. "These create a unique atmosphere and make you feel the spirit of Ramadan," he said.

Mohammed al Nabhani, another Seeb resident, highlighted the broader impact of the decorations. "These decorations beautify the city and add to the Ramadan celebrations, while re-



(Muscat Daily)

flecting the hospitality and warmth that Oman is known for and fostering a sense of community and togetherness."

Festive lights have also been placed along Sultan Qaboos Street in Bausher, Ghala, Azaiba and near Muscat International Airport, further enhancing the city's celebratory ambiance.

Nabhani believes these efforts could boost tourism while supporting local businesses in the process.

Ramadan decorations in Muscat are enriching the city's cultural landscape and providing an unforgettable experience for both residents and tourists during the holy month.

Urgent call for blood, platelet donations

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Department of Blood Bank Services (DBBS) has issued an urgent appeal for blood and platelet donations during Ramadan, emphasising the critical need to support patients across the sultanate.

'Central Blood Bank in Bausher urges you to donate blood and platelets during Ramadan. Our goal is to provide more than 2,900 blood units and 270 platelet units to meet the urgent needs of patients. Join us in saving lives and offering hope to

those in need,' DBBS stated.

With limited time available for donations during fasting hours, Central Blood Bank has called of potential donors to come after ift-ar. Donors are advised to drink plenty of fluids before and after donating to ensure their health is not compromised.

Ahmed bin Hamad al Kharusi, a frequent blood donor with record 177 donations, spoke to Muscat Daily about the situa-

tion. "Muscat governorate needs around 120 blood units daily and more than 6,000 blood units monthly. The situation is urgent. We call on donors to step forward and help save lives."

Kharusi added that while blood donation campaigns are often organised in mosques and markets, during Ramadan the number of donors decreases as Muslims can only donate after breaking

their fast. "There are a number of patients requiring blood transfusions, including those with genetic blood diseases like sickle cell anaemia and thalassemia, cancer patients, victims of traffic accidents, and individuals undergoing major surgeries."

DBBS is organising over 20 blood donation campaigns in mosques and malls across Muscat during Ramadan to ensure steady supply.

Blood can be donated daily at the blood bank from 7.30pm to 11.30pm and in the morning, Sunday to Thursday, from 8am to 12.30pm.



EARLY BIRD OFFER

Iftar Buffet

BUY 3, PAY FOR 2

Valid for the first 10 days of Ramadan only

Book early to unlock special savings and indulge in an exquisite Iftar at Al Tanoor

Buy 3 Iftar buffets and get the 3rd one free

Offer available exclusively for the first 10 days of Ramadan

OMR 29 net per person

Offer is not combinable with other discounts or loyalty programs

Al Tanoor | From Maghrib time until 10:30pm

24776565 79269247



THE DIFFERENCE...
Our History
with you

Banking that is proudly human



Model agritourism project starts in Balad Sayt

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources has launched a project called 'Agricultural Ecotourism in Aflaj Systems' in Balad Sayt, a village in the wilayat of Rustaq, South Batinah, in collaboration with Zubair Enterprises Development Centre and the Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO).

The project aims to revitalise rural areas and position these as contributors to Oman's economic future. It is also expected to serve as a model for similar initiatives, supporting tourism while promoting sustainability and cultural preservation.

FAO stated that the pilot programme in Balad Sayt is the first of its kind in Oman. Its success could lead to expansion of agricultural tourism across the coun-



The project will foster innovation in agricultural tourism and raise awareness about sustainable farming practices. This, in turn, will contribute to building a robust and sustainable local economy

ALI SHAKER

try, including the use of electronic marketing strategies for such sites.

Dr Thaer Yaseen, interim FAO Representative in Oman, informed that Balad Sayt was se-

lected from among three locations due to the presence of aflaj, which play a key role in the area's

agriculture and economy. "The village meets the standards of the Globally Important Agricul-

tural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) programme, setting the stage for its protection and recognition globally."

He added, "This project is not only important for the local com-

economy. It will also provide opportunities for farmers to develop certified products that can positively impact their livelihoods.

Ali Shaker, Head of ESG and Sustainability at Zubair Corporation and project supervisor, said the project will foster innovation in agricultural tourism and raise awareness about sustainable farming practices. "This, in turn, will contribute to building a robust and sustainable local economy."

Located in the Al Hajar mountains, Balad Sayt has a distinct agricultural heritage. The village is home to about 650 people from 80 families who rely on farming and livestock. The village has 2,800 date palms of 14 different varieties spread across 8.8 hectares of terraced fields. Its agricultural land consists of 385 fields divided into six terraced systems covering 4.6 hectares.



Over 56,000 visit tourist landmarks in S Batinah

Our Correspondent
Rustaq

South Batinah witnessed a 15.8% increase in visitors to its tourist and historical landmarks in 2024, welcoming 56,203 tourists compared to 48,493 in 2023, according to Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.

November recorded the highest footfall with 10,962 visitors, accounting for 19.5% of the total annual visitors. February followed with 8,436 visitors, while January saw 7,839.

Wakan village, a top attraction in Wadi Mistal, recorded a 4.1% rise in visitors to 36,759 in 2024 compared to 35,302 in 2023. February was its peak month, drawing 6,499 visitors, coinciding with the village's famous apricot blossom season.

The increase in visitor numbers has fueled expansion of tourist facilities in the gover-



South Batinah's blend of history and adventure continues to attract visitors seeking unique cultural and outdoor experiences

DR AL MOATSEM AL HILALI

norate. By the end of 2024, South Batinah had 162 licensed establishments, including resorts, hotels, guesthouses and heritage lodges. Guesthouses made up 57.5% of these - 95 in total - followed by 42 green

lodges and 11 hotels.

The governorate is home to 495 registered archaeological and historical sites, including castles, forts, old mosques and ancient neighbourhoods. Rustaq leads in historical sites, with 250 landmarks (50.5% of the total), followed by Nakhal (92 sites) and Al Awabi (62 sites).

A total of 47 historical sites have been restored, including two castles, seven forts, 11 towers and 25 mosques.

Dr Al Moatsem al Hilali, Director of Heritage and Tourism in South Batinah, highlighted its diverse tourism offerings, from island excursions in Sawadi Beach and diving in Daymaniyat Islands to adventure trails in Wadi Bani Awf, Balad Sayt and Wakan. "South Batinah's blend of history and adventure continues to attract visitors seeking unique cultural and outdoor experiences."

EA marks March 3 World Wildlife Day with awareness campaign

Our Correspondent
Dhahirah

Environment Authority (EA) in Dhahirah organised an educational campaign on Monday to mark World Wildlife Day, observed annually on March 3, aimed at raising awareness on wildlife conservation and the role of wild species in maintaining ecological balance.

The event highlighted the urgent need to protect wildlife from habitat destruction, poaching and climate change. This year, the day coincided with the anniversary of the 1973 adoption of the Convention on International



Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora to preserve biodiversity.

Specialists from Yanqul Monitoring Unit conducted an educa-

tional session for students in the wilayat, explaining EA's role in wildlife protection. Discussions covered key initiatives such as establishment of reserves and

enforcement of regulations to safeguard natural resources.

Valid bin Suleiman al Farsi, a specialist from the Yanqul Monitoring Unit, delivered a lecture on the latest techniques used in wildlife monitoring. He shared insights into ongoing projects, surveys and field studies assessing species diversity and population trends in the governorate.

Yasser bin Hamoud al Hinai, Head of Environmental Control Department in Dhahirah, emphasised the significance of World Wildlife Day in promoting awareness. "It is important for us to preserve biodiversity for the well-being of future generations."

Study finds optimal water release from reservoirs

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A research study on Wadi Dayqah Dam has found that activating multiple reservoir outlets can significantly improve water quality by reducing pollutant concentration. Led by Dr Mohammad Reza Nikoo, Associate Professor at Sultan Qaboos University, the study recommends strategic water release methods to enhance operational stability and adapt to climate change impacts.

The findings indicate that water released from low and mid-level outlets is more vulnerable to pollutants than that from surface outlets. By optimising withdrawal strategies - releasing smaller volumes from lower outlets and larger volumes from upper outlets - reservoirs can



Adopting optimised water release methods will improve water quality and enhance resilience in arid regions like Oman

DR MOHAMMAD REZA NIKOO

maintain water quality while ensuring efficient distribution.

The research combined multi-objective optimisation (NSGA-

II), the CE-QUAL-W2 model and Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) to simulate and refine selective water withdrawal strate-

gies. A Robust Decision-Making (RDM) framework was used to identify vulnerable outlets and determine optimal release ratios under various climate scenarios.

Nikoo emphasised the importance of flexible water management strategies to address climate-related challenges. "Adopting optimised water release methods will improve water quality and enhance resilience in arid regions like Oman," he said.

The study, conducted with a research team including Nafiseh Bahrami, Prof Kaveh Madani, Dr Ghazi al Rawas, Dr Sadegh Vanda and Prof Rouzbeh Nazari, was published in the *Journal of Hydrology* in 2024.

The research won Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation's National Research Award in 2024.

MARKET WATCH

MSX30	4,425.02
Sensex	74,602.12

FOREX RATES
(RO1 equals)

India	226.4
Pakistan	728.63
Bangladesh	314.89
Philippines	150.15
Sri Lanka	765.27

*Rates as on March 03

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Turkish economy grows 3.2% in 2024

The Turkish economy grew 3.2% in 2024, above the market forecast of 3.1%, according to data released Friday by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat).

Gross domestic product (GDP) at current prices soared 63.5% to \$1.3tn in 2024 compared to the previous year, a TurkStat statement said.

GDP per capita stood at \$15,463 at current prices last year.

In the fourth quarter of 2024, the Turkish economy expanded 3% year-on-year, slightly exceeding economists' expectations

Economists participating in an Anadolu survey on Thursday predicted that GDP in Türkiye would rise 2.98% in the October-December period.

The annual growth figure accelerated from 2.2% in the third quarter and 2.4% in the second quarter.

MSX continues bearish trend as main index declines by 2.4% in February

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The benchmark index of the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) has continued its downward trajectory in 2025, declining by 2.4% in February to close the month at 4,435.9 points. This followed a 0.7% drop in January, reflecting a continued bearish trend.

Throughout February, the MSX30 Index traded within a narrow, declining range, primarily due to a lack of significant market catalysts, according to a research report released by Kamco Investment.

Sectoral performance on the MSX was mixed, with two out of the three sector indices on the exchange recording losses during the month, while the third reported a gain. The Financial Index fell by 1.1%, closing the month at 7,739.7 points. This decline was largely driven by losses in shares of major companies within the sector, including National Bank of Oman (-4.8%) and Sohar International Bank (-3.6%).

The Services Index also declined during the month, falling by 3.5% to close at 1,632.9 points. In contrast, the Industrial Index posted a notable monthly



Trading activity on the Muscat Stock Exchange saw strong gains in February. Total value traded on the exchange surged by 204.5%, reaching RO217mn against RO71.3mn in January

gain of 7.8%, closing in February 2025 at 5,832.22 points.

In terms of company performance, Al Jazeera Steel Products topped the gainers list with a share price gain of 25.4%, followed by Oman Cement and Construction Materials Industries, which recorded monthly share price gains of 24.0% and 20.6%, respectively.

On the decliners' side, Oman Cables Industry led the chart with a share price fall of 11.6%, followed by Ooredoo Oman and Muscat Gases, which saw share price drops of 10.3% and 10.0%, respectively.

Trading activity rises

Trading activity on the MSX saw strong gains in February. The total volume of shares traded on the exchange increased by 166.4%, rising to 1.1bn shares in February compared to 424.8mn shares in January.

Similarly, the total value traded on the exchange increased by 204.5%, reaching RO217mn against RO71.3mn in January. OQ Exploration & Production topped the monthly

value traded chart with trades amounting to RO13.8mn, followed by OQ Base Industries and Bank Muscat, with total values traded of RO5.2mn and RO4.2mn, respectively.

In terms of monthly volume traded, Ahlibank topped the list with 828mn shares, followed by OQ Base Industries and OQ Exploration & Production with volumes of 51.3mn shares and 43.6mn shares, respectively.

GCC markets

According to Kamco Investment's report, after witnessing healthy gains at the start of the month, the GCC MSCI Index closed February with a marginal decline, led by a fall in large-cap stocks.

The decline occurred despite positive performance recorded by three out of the seven exchanges in the region.

'The decline reflected a fall in key global markets, including the US, driven by factors such as an economic slowdown, the geopolitical standoff between Russia and Ukraine, elevated valuations, and the uncertainty surrounding trade wars. Crude oil also had an uneventful month, declining by 4.7% due to increasing supply,' the report said.

Sohar International and Sohar Islamic win IPO Deal of the Year 2024 Award

Muscat - Reaffirming its leadership in capital markets, Sohar International along with its Islamic window, Sohar Islamic, has been honored with the prestigious 'IPO Deal of the Year 2024' award at the Islamic Finance News (IFN) Awards.

The recognition highlights the bank's instrumental role in managing the region's largest initial public offering (IPO), which raised a record RO1.657bn, and was oversubscribed nearly three times, as well as Sohar Islamic's contribution as one of the designated collecting banks.

The award ceremony took place at Address Sky View, Dubai, with Fahad al Zedjali, Executive Vice President and Head of Islamic Banking, and Dr Al Mutasim al Mutairi, Vice President and Head of Investment Islamic Banking, representing Sohar International.

This accolade reinforces



Sohar International's position as a market leader, recognised for its strategic expertise and excellence in executing complex capital market transactions. With a commitment to driving capital market growth, the bank continues to introduce comprehensive financial solutions that unlock new investment opportunities,

deals that elevate the nation's economic trajectory. The success of Oman's largest IPO underscores our expertise in structuring, managing, and delivering complex capital market solutions with precision and agility. Our role in this monumental transaction aligns with the national agenda of economic diversification, expanding investment opportunities, and unlocking avenues for sustained growth."

As the Issue Manager of Oman's largest-ever IPO, Sohar International played a pivotal role in structuring and executing a transaction that raised a record RO780mn, setting a new benchmark for capital market excellence. This landmark IPO not only attracted overwhelming investor interest but also served as a catalyst for advancing Oman's regulatory framework, aligning capital market mechanisms with international best practices.

Oil prices fall amid US tariffs, Russia-Ukraine peace efforts

London, UK - Oil prices decreased on Monday as US tariffs raised demand concerns, while Russia-Ukraine peace efforts eased geopolitical risks.

The international benchmark Brent crude decreased by 0.37%, trading at \$72.69 per barrel in morning trade in London, down from \$72.96 at the close of the previous session. The US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) declined by 0.34%, settling at \$69.53 per barrel, compared to its prior session close of \$69.77.

A tense Oval Office meeting between US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Friday led to the cancellation of a planned joint press conference. The failure to finalise a rare earth agreement further deepened uncertainties in US-Ukraine relations.



However, Zelenskyy secured strong support from European leaders over the weekend at a UK-hosted Ukraine summit.

"There is clear support from Europe. Even greater unity, even stronger readiness for cooperation," Zelenskyy said in a late video address on Sunday after a summit with European leaders in London.

Zelenskyy said there will be many other meetings and joint efforts in the coming days and

weeks.

If peace talks gain momentum, easing geopolitical risks and balancing oversupply concerns are expected to keep oil prices under downward pressure.

Trump had also confirmed that tariffs on Mexico and Canada would take effect on March 4, with a 10% additional tariff on Chinese imports.

Analysts warn that these tariffs could slow economic growth, weaken energy demand, and fuel inflation, potentially triggering a trade war that might later push oil prices higher.

Meanwhile, rising economic activity in China, the world's largest crude oil importer, limits downward pressure on prices. Official data shows that China's manufacturing sector grew at its fastest pace in three months in February.

Anadolu Agency

FORESIGHT

As the world grapples with environmental and social challenges, regenerative leadership has emerged as a holistic approach to sustainability. This paradigm is gaining traction globally, including Oman, where sustainability and innovation are increasingly valued. However, it is crucial to delve beyond the superficial level of this concept and explore its transformative potential within organisations.

What is regenerative leadership?

Regenerative leadership involves a fundamental shift in organisational practices, focusing on both internal and external sustainability. Internally, it emphasises employee well-being, fairness in resource use, and fostering a collaborative environment that encourages mutual dependence among stakeholders. Externally, it aims to re-



SYED ADIL ABBAS

Abbas, an MBA graduate from Cardiff Metropolitan University (UK), is currently based in Muscat, and has over 20 years of international experience working with the public and private sectors in the Middle East, Far East, Africa and India.

vitalise ecosystems by adopting circular economy models and ensuring responsible resource management throughout the value chain.

Implementation challenges

Implementing regenerative leadership requires more than just inspirational courses or superficial changes; it demands systemic transformation over time. Organisations must be willing to make difficult choices that align with long-term sustainability goals rather than short-term gains. Common pit-

falls include treating regenerative approaches as quick fixes or underestimating the depth of cultural change required.

EMBRACING REGENERATIVE LEADERSHIP

Key elements for success:

- Courage: Business leaders must be courageous enough to challenge traditional growth paradigms and explore new di-

mensions of value creation.

- Analysis: Comprehensive assessments are necessary to understand an organisation's ecological footprint and social impact.
- Time: Transformation takes time; continuous dialogue among stakeholders is essential for lasting change.

The Omani context

In Oman, companies like Veolia have already demonstrated significant strides in sustainability through innovative projects such as solar-powered desalination plants. These initiatives

not only reduce environmental impact but also contribute to economic growth by providing sustainable solutions across various sectors like water management and renewable energy.

Initiatives like the National Initiative to Plant 10 Million Trees aim to restore biodiversity, combat desertification, and enhance green spaces across the sultanate. Additionally, Oman Sustainability Week (OSW) serves as a pivotal platform for fostering strategic sustainability initiatives and collaboration between public and private sectors.

These efforts align with Oman's goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and fostering circular economic growth, aligning with Vision 2040. By integrating regenerative principles into national strategies, Oman can enhance its resilience against global challenges while contributing positively to environmental conservation.

Embracing regenerative leadership

offers Omani businesses a unique opportunity to align sustainability with long-term economic viability and responsible resource management thereby thriving in an evolving global landscape. However, this transformation requires collective support - from employees to investors - to build a culture that values the interdependence of human well-being and natural ecosystems.

Ultimately, regenerative leadership is not just a trend - it is a path toward systemic renewal, benefiting both society and the environment. For Oman, where natural resources play a pivotal role in economic stability, adopting this approach can inspire sustainable success for generations to come.

The views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Muscat Daily or Apex Press & Publishing

Why China's Temu and Shein are big regulatory headache for US, EU

Nik Martin

Every day, millions of cheap products bought online are mailed directly to consumers in the United States, European Union and elsewhere, from China. But unlike most imports, they are allowed to circumvent customs procedures.

In just three short years, Temu has grown into a major rival to Amazon and other Western online shopping platforms, offering up to ten million products from clothes to toys, electronics to beauty treatments, at ultra-low prices.

In the first nine months of 2024, Temu achieved revenues of \$40.3bn, a nearly 80% increase on the same period in the previous year. A YouGov poll published in March last year found that nearly nine in ten Americans are aware of Temu, while a quarter say they would buy through the Chinese platform again.

Another platform, Shein, which specialises in fast fashion aimed at younger age groups, achieved a ten-year headstart on Temu's direct-to-consumer model. It cut out middlemen fashion retailers to overtake brands like H&M and Zara in sales. Last year, Shein reached \$38bn in sales, a 19% year-on-year increase, according to British business newspaper Financial Times.

Exploiting customs loophole

The Chinese platforms are taking advantage of a little-known trade



In just three short years, Temu has grown into a major rival to Amazon and other Western online shopping platforms, offering up to ten million products from clothes to toys, electronics to beauty treatments, at ultra-low prices

rule called de minimis, which allows products worth less than \$800 in the United States or \$157 in the EU to be shipped duty-free with minimal customs checks.

"All these products arrive from China as individual parcels, so it's impossible for customs authorities to open and check them all," Agustin Reyna, director general of the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), told DW.

The rise of Temu and Shein

has Western regulators concerned on many fronts. First, the Chinese platforms are exploiting a loophole that was not designed for large-scale e-commerce. De minimis was created so as not to burden customs agencies with the handling of small gifts and personal items sent across borders.

Second, many of the products for sale on Chinese platforms don't meet safety or environmental standards. Toy Industries of Europe (TIE), a Brussels-based

industry body, tested 19 toys bought from Temu at the end of 2023 and found that none were fully compliant with EU safety rules on toys. All but one was found to pose a real risk to children.

Third is the unfair advantage that Chinese retailers get by exploiting the loophole. By mailing products directly from China to consumers worldwide, the Chinese platforms avoid the huge warehousing costs that other major retailers like Amazon must invest in. With the likes of Temu and Shein eating into their market share, Western manufacturers and retailers are crying foul, while governments complain about lost tax revenue.

"Temu and Shein can produce on a massive scale and benefit from Chinese state subsidies, which enables them to absorb

the shipping costs," Reyna explained. "These perks make their products much cheaper than from European companies."

Now both Washington and Brussels are clamping down on the de minimis rule, alongside other measures – including tariffs – reining in China's economic might. But on both sides of the Atlantic, policymakers are finding it easier said than done.

EU proposes new fees

The European Commission said earlier this month it would propose a new handling fee for e-commerce imports sent directly to consumers to offset the cost of the increased red tape, which is expected to be extensive.

"You are going to have to hire thousands and thousands of more customs officers if you want to scrap the exemption,"

Riedenstein warned. "It's going to cost the US and the EU to punish Beijing for taking advantage of these legal loopholes."

Brussels also wants to make the likes of Temu and Shein liable for the sale of dangerous products on their platforms and has suggested that checks could be made before products are shipped from China to ensure compliance.

Christoph Busch says this is necessary because "from a contract law perspective, Temu is currently not the seller, it's just an intermediary."

"The seller sits somewhere in China, and the buyer is a consumer in the US or EU," the director of the European Legal Studies Institute at Germany's University of Osnabrück, told DW.

(Source: Euronews.com)

China's factory activity sees fastest expansion in three months

Beijing, China – Factory activity among smaller-sized producers in China in February expanded at its fastest pace in three months, according to a private-sector survey released by Caixin data on Monday.

According to China Central Television (CCTV), the Caixin Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for February increased to 50.8, indicating five consecutive months of expansion.

Data from the Caixin survey suggest the improvement was led by both manufacturing capacity and new orders, as factories sped up production to meet pent-up demand during the Spring Festival holiday.

The Caixin survey covers mostly mid-small sized factories in the private sector. Its upward trend has aligned with China's official PMI data over the past few months.

In February, China's non-manufacturing business activity index reached 50.4 percent, up 0.2 percentage points from January, according to the data released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on Saturday. A reading above 50 indicates expansion, while a reading below 50 reflects contraction.

Xinhua

ECB to cut rates further this week

Tina Teng

The European Central Bank (ECB) is widely expected to lower interest rates further on Thursday as economic concerns outweigh stubborn inflation. The cut will bring its key benchmark rate, the deposit facility, down to 2.5% following a full percentage reduction last year and a 0.25% cut in January.

The rate decision comes in a week when 25% tariffs on Canada and Mexico are set to take effect, and US President Donald Trump has decided to add an additional 10% levy on Chinese goods, bringing the total import duty to 20%. These tariffs will heavily impact the European economy due to its wide exposure to global markets.

Trump has also threatened to impose 25% tariffs on EU imports, sparking concerns of a further growth slowdown after the eurozone's economy stagnated in the final quarter of 2024.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contracted in Europe's two largest economies, Germany and France, in the final quarter of 2024. Germany's economy shrank for the second consecutive year in 2024. Europe's largest economy was hit hardest by the Russia-Ukraine war, with



The expected cut will bring ECB's key benchmark rate, the deposit facility, down to 2.5% following a full percentage reduction last year and a 0.25% cut in January

soaring energy prices weighing on its manufacturing sector. Germany's automakers, already under pressure, would be partic-

ularly affected by Trump's tariffs.

EU's inflation data in focus
The March flash Consumer Price Index (CPI), due this week, will be a critical economic indicator shaping the ECB's rate decision. Inflation in the eurozone rose for the fourth consecutive month to 2.5% in January, as cold weather increased energy demand and lifted prices. Despite this, ECB President Christine Lagarde stated that inflation was on track to reach the 2% target level in the medium term. She also warned that the eurozone's economy "is set to remain weak in the near term."

Annual inflation is expected to ease to 2.3% in February, as energy prices retreated due to milder weather conditions.

Core CPI, excluding volatile items such as energy and food, is forecast to be 2.6% in February, down from 2.7% in January. Both figures are likely to further support the case for another ECB rate cut. According to a Reuters consensus forecast, the central bank is expected to reduce interest rates by a further 50 basis points after this week's widely anticipated cut, bringing the deposit rate down to 2% by year-end.

(Source: Euronews.com)

South Korea's exports rebound to \$52.6bn in Feb

Seoul, South Korea – South Korea's exports increased 1% last month from a year earlier, rebounding from a decrease the previous month, thanks to an increase in overseas sales of computers and automobiles, data showed Saturday.

Outbound shipments came to \$52.6bn last month, compared

with \$52.1bn a year ago, according to data compiled by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy, and published by Yonhap. Imports rose 0.2% on-year to \$48.3bn, resulting in a trade surplus of \$4.3bn.

Exports returned to growth just a month after they decreased in January due to a fewer

number of business days.

The ministry said the rise in exports came on the back of the robust performance of automobiles and computers, which includes solid-state drives (SSDs).

Automobile exports jumped 17.8% on-year to \$6.1bn last month, snapping their three-month losing streak. In particular,

overseas sales of hybrid cars soared 74.3% to \$1.3bn.

Exports of computers, including SSDs, advanced 28.5% to \$800mn to extend their on-year gains to the 14th consecutive month, and exports of wireless communication equipment surged 42.3% to \$1.5bn.

WAM



The National Detergent Co. S.A.O.G.

P.O.Box 3104, Ruwi, Postal Code 112, Sultanate of oman

INVITATION TO ATTEND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Board of Directors of The National Detergent Co. SAOG takes pleasure in inviting the shareholders to attend the Company's 45th Annual General Meeting to be held on Sunday 23/03/2025 at 05:00 PM via the electronic platform which can be accessed through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.om). If the quorum of the meeting is not complete, a second Annual General Meeting will be held on 29/03/2025 to discuss the following agenda:

1. To consider and approve the Directors' Report for the year ended 31 December 2024.
2. To consider and approve the Corporate Governance Report for the year ended 31 December 2024.
3. To consider Auditors' Report, approve and adopt the Company's financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024.
4. To consider and approve the proposed final cash dividend to the shareholders Bzs. 50 per share, recommended by the Board, for the year ending 31 December 2024.
5. To approve the Directors' sitting fees paid for the year ended 31 December 2024, and to determine the sitting fee for the next year 2025.
6. To approve the Directors' Remuneration for the year ended 31 December 2024.
7. To disclose and approve the contracts and transactions entered by the Company with related parties during the financial year ended 31 December 2024 (in line with the list sent to the shareholders along with the notice).
8. To approve contribution as part of the social responsibilities for the financial year ended 31/12/2024.
9. To consider and approve a proposal to donate an amount of RO. 15,000 (Rial Omani Fifteen Thousand only) towards social responsibilities for the financial year ending 31/12/2025
10. To elect new Board members in accordance with the rules and conditions prescribed for the joint stock companies. Those wishing to stand as a candidate for election must complete the prescribed form available on mcd website and hand over to the company via email address given below or hand delivered to head office latest by 16th March 2025. No application will be accepted after this date.
11. To appoint Statutory Auditors for the financial year ending 31 December 2025 and fix their remuneration.

Under the statute of the company, shareholders have the right to appoint, in writing, a proxy to attend the meeting and vote on his/her behalf, wherever necessary.

In case of enquiry, please contact
Mr. Nasser Al Rawahi, Tel: 24493824-92869333
nmn@endcoman.com

Chairman of the
Board of Directors

Auditors

Legal Advisor

SEND YOUR REQUEST FOR

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



1st batch of Bank Muscat's EAGLEs graduates

Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman and the winner of the Best Place To Work Award 2024, recently celebrated the graduation of the first batch of the EAGLEs programme, announcing the launch of its second edition at a glittering event.

The EAGLEs programme was launched last year with an aim to provide employees a unique platform to engage with the bank's leadership and hone their skills.

In the inaugural edition, 70 employees from different branches covering all regions of Oman, participated in various projects designed to help them gain new skills and experiences and use them wisely to enhance customer experience, the bank stated. During the graduation ceremony, the bank announced the launch of the second edition of EAGLEs scheduled during the second quarter of 2025. To ensure ongoing development of employees, the new batch is specifically designed to allow more employees to develop their capabilities, improve their performance, enhance creativity and enable them to develop their leadership skills.

In his opening speech, Ahmed Faqir al Bulushi, Deputy CEO - Banking, Bank Muscat, said that the launch of EAGLEs program serves as a suitable platform for communication, fostering values of Engagement, Alignment, Growth, Learning and Evolution. "This programme has been designed to contribute in achieving the bank's vision 'To Serve You Better, Everyday' by fostering a strong institutional culture that supports the values of creativity and collaboration," he said, noting that it "encourages each one of us to pursue very high customer service standards in serving our valued customers".

"Investing in such programmes is a key element for the success of any organisation. They serve as effective platforms enabling participants to share ideas, embrace transparency and learn from one another," he asserted, expressing gratitude to all participants for their contributions and wished them all the best in their careers.

Abdulnasir al Raisi, General Manager - Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said: "Supporting employees is one of the fundamental pillars that Bank Muscat is committed to upholding and providing an environment that fosters growth and development is a collective responsibility. Investing in training programmes not only enhances our individual opportunities but also contributes to building a strong and sustainable economy. Teamwork is a cornerstone upon which we build our vision and values. By sharing knowledge and ideas, we harness collective strength, empowering ourselves to overcome obstacles and achieve our common goals."

A number of participants in the first batch of EAGLEs expressed their happiness to join the programme. Manar Arif al Balushi, from Treasury & Capital Market Department, said that during the programme, all resources were available to support the learning journey of all participants. "The topics we covered were both enriching and beneficial, for example, the design thinking workshop helped us enhance our perspectives based on our daily lives, enabling us to find solutions to overcome challenges through innovative thinking."

He said that he participated in several training programmes at the bank and EAGLEs played a significant role. "There was substantial support and engaging discussions during the various workshops, along with ongoing follow-up to listen to employee feedback and work on improvements. These programmes empower us to develop ourselves and those around us."

According to Salim Shames al Hajri of Bidiya branch, EAGLEs is a great initiative launched by the management to reinforce values of participation, learning and development. "This programme enabled us to explore topics like project management and understand the challenges we face. It also fostered a connection with management, providing insights into global banking and the bank's future vision," he said.

"During the course of the programme, my perspective on customer service has changed as there is a growing importance of meeting customer needs. The bank's training programmes open new opportunities for employees, introducing concepts that support their growth and development within the organisation."

On her part, Mahra Abdulrahman al Zadjali, from Liwa Branch - North Batinah, added that participating in EAGLEs programme was transformative, and equipped them to tackle challenges and generate new ideas.

"Managing a team taught me the importance of initiative." She underlined that the programme fostered direct communication with the bank's management, "allowing us to share and refine our ideas". She said, "My experience in various training programmes introduced by the bank has been enriching, helping us discover our strengths and motivating us to continually develop our careers."

KO, NUST sign MoU to empower students

Knowledge Oman (KO), the leading community-knowledge sharing platform, and the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to equip students with essential future-ready skills needed to thrive in the evolving job market.

In the presence of the senior academic staff along with Knowledge Oman team, the Vice-Chancellor of NU, Dr Ali al Bimani, and Knowledge Oman Founder, Tariq al Barwani, signed the strategic partnership agreement that aims to bridge the gap between academia and industry by providing students with practical learning experiences, industry insights, and opportunities for professional growth.

"We are committed to providing our students with an education that extends beyond textbooks. Partnering with Knowledge Oman enables us to offer real-world insights and hands-on training that will equip our students with future-ready skills. This initiative will strengthen our students' capabilities and enhance their employability in the ever-changing job market" said Professor Vallavaraj, Dean of the College of Advanced Technology

As part of the agreement, Knowledge Oman will organise a series of seminars, community engagement initiatives, and expert-led presentations to deliver hands-on sessions that align with the latest industry demands. These initiatives will ensure that students not only gain theoretical knowledge but also develop the skills necessary to succeed in a competitive workforce.

"At Knowledge Oman, our mission has always been to empower the next generation with knowledge and skills that drive innovation and success. Through this collaboration, we are excited to bring industry experts, practical sessions, and community initiatives to students, ensuring they are well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the future," said Balqees al Hassani, Knowledge Oman President.

The MoU marks the beginning of a series of initiatives designed to foster collaboration between students, industry professionals, and academic leaders.



Nama Water appoints Issam al Ismaili as CCO

Nama Water Services has appointed Issam Munir al Ismaili as Chief Commercial Officer (CCO). This strategic move aims to bolster the company's commercial performance, expand its reach within an increasingly competitive market, and improve customer experience.

This appointment reflects the company's commitment to recruiting top Omani talents in key operational areas. The company fosters a stimulating, forward-thinking work environment, embodying its slogan 'Stepping Ahead'. This approach supports the company's continuous innovation, development, and sustainability vision.

With over 18 years of experience, Essam al Ismaili is a seasoned leader in business strategy, digital transformation, and high-impact initiatives. His career spans diverse sectors and prestigious organisations both within and outside of Oman, including Awasr Company, Onsor Company, Ooredoo Oman, the Digital Cooperation Organization (Saudi Arabia), and Du (UAE).

These roles have honed his strategic planning, market expansion, and customer relationship management skills. His expertise in business and technology positions him to play a key role in Nama Water Services' commercial and technological advancement. He will collaborate with the existing team to drive an ambitious, forward-looking vision focused on innovation and performance enhancement.

Commenting on this, Qais Saud al Zakwani, CEO of Nama Water Services, said that the appointment of Issam al Ismaili as Chief Commercial Officer represents a significant step that reflects the commitment to strengthening the competencies of the company's commercial team to enhance performance further to achieve the highest levels of customer satisfaction.



Issam Munir al Ismaili

OAB launches 'Goodness' promotion for Visa credit card holders

In celebration of the arrival of the blessed month of Ramadan and its ongoing commitment to providing innovative offers that enhance customer experiences during this holy month, Oman Arab Bank has launched the exclusive '#Ramadan_Goodness' promotion for Visa credit card holders, in collaboration with Lulu Hypermarket chain.

This offer will be available on weekends (Friday and Saturday) from February 21 to March 15. During this period, bank customers holding Visa credit cards will enjoy an instant discount of 20% on food products, with a maximum discount of RO5 per transaction.

This new promotional offer provides a unique opportunity for the bank's Visa credit cardholders to enjoy a discount on their Ramadan shopping needs, either at Lulu Hypermarket branches or through online shopping, making the shopping experience more convenient and affordable.

Commenting on the campaign, Jumaa al Faliti, Deputy Head of Retail Banking, stated: "This offer has been crafted to provide tangible added value for our esteemed customers, in celebration of the forthcoming holy month of Ramadan. May Allah bestow goodness and blessings upon all. As food and fresh produce purchases rise during this season, we aimed to gift our customers up to 20% off their purchases at the renowned Lulu stores."

Ignite the spirit of Ramadan with BYD's exciting offer: World Auto

'BYD is thrilled to continue its journey in Oman by bringing innovative vehicles and futuristic experiences to its customers. This Ramadan, fuel your journey with BYD Oman's exclusive offers introducing unbeatable prices and incredible benefits on its all-electric and hybrid vehicles,' stated World Auto Business LLC, which is the distributor of BYD in Oman.

The company announced that one can experience the best of BYD's innovations and invest in an all-electric vehicle with stress free service perks up to five years or 100,000km on all-electric vehicles and five years or 50,000km on a plug-in hybrid vehicle (PHEV).

'Get additional perks like free EV and PHEV chargers, first-year free insurance, and unlock unbeatable value for money before the offer ends on April 24,' it added.

World Auto promised that one can pick up his or her perfect BYD vehicle and get the best value for money. 'Get unbeatable prices and drive home the plug-in hybrid QIN Plus Classic starting at RO6,790 or Atto3 EV classic and Song Plus Comfort PHEV, now priced at RO9,990. Plus, get an exciting chance to enter the Raffle Draw to win the BYD Qin Plus Classic.'

The BYD Qin Plus DM-i is a cutting-edge plug-in hybrid vehicle (PHEV) powered by a 1.5-litre gasoline engine and an electric motor. Thanks to BYD's innovative DM-i Super Hybrid Technology, it offers a 100 km electric range and ultra-low fuel consumption. With a combined range of up to 1,000km, it's setting new standards in efficiency and performance.

The BYD ATTO 3, is the perfect choice for those seeking an electric SUV with impressive performance and fuel-efficiency. Powered by BYD's revolutionary Blade Battery, it delivers exceptional safety, high performance output in premium comfort setting. The gym-themed cockpit is designed to deliver an immersive driving experience with a 5-inch LCD dashboard, the exemplary 12.8-inch rotatable screen, rhythmic interactive ambient lighting and ergonomic seats.

Additionally, the BYD Song Plus Comfort is a plug-in hybrid SUV featuring BYD's Super DM technology, that delivers impressive ultra-low fuel consumption, and remarkable response handling.



Škoda expands in ME with store in Oman

Škoda Auto has officially entered the Omani market, take yet another step in the brand's strategic expansion across the Middle East. With this expansion, Škoda's plans to further broaden its market presence outside of its European home market, a release stated.

The launch features a fully digital and state-of-the-art showroom in Muscat, developed in partnership with Premium Motors, part of the Alfardan Group. The Czech automaker will offer a full range of its ICE models within the next months including spacious sedans and a broad SUV portfolio ranging from the compact Kushaq to the all-to the all-new 7-seater Kodiaq, also available with all-wheel drive.

Škoda's entry into Oman is a pivotal component of its broader Middle Eastern growth strategy. As demand for European automotive brands rises in the region, Škoda is committed to providing high-quality vehicles tailored to local preferences.

The brand's strategic expansion in Oman is designed to further broadening its market presence outside of its European home market. In the future, Škoda aims to reach 10,000 annual deliveries in the Middle East and thus establish the brand as a strong player in the regional automotive market.

Lukas Honzak, Managing Director of Škoda Middle East, commented: "We are thrilled to bring Škoda to Oman, a market



The brand's strategic expansion in Oman is designed to further broadening its market presence outside of its European home market. Škoda aims to reach 10,000 annual deliveries in ME

with a strong appreciation for quality, reliability, and advanced technology. This launch, in partnership with Alfardan Group and Premium Motors, is a significant milestone for Škoda's growth in the Middle East. We look forward to introducing Omani customers to our range of vehicles, each designed to enhance the driving experience with comfort,

safety, and efficiency." Škoda Auto has partnered with Premium Motors, a member of the Alfardan Group. The strategic partnership brings Škoda's great value-for-money proposition, high quality and functionality as well as the brand's simply clever features to Omani customers. The first Škoda showroom, located in

Muscat, is a cutting-edge facility that offers a fully digital, customer-oriented experience, including an interactive digital configurator and an immersive digital wall display. A motorsport corner within the showroom celebrates Škoda's dynamic racing legacy. The new facility in Muscat will also feature an exclusive Škoda service centre with 8 work

bays that ensures comprehensive aftersales support. The brand plans to open three more showrooms and service centres across Oman by 2029, further solidifying its presence in the market.

The grand opening event was among others attended by H E Khalfan Bin Said al Shueili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning; Omar Hussein Alfardan, President of Alfardan Group; Dr Ma'n Alhamawi, CEO of Alfardan Automotive; Hussein Omar Alfardan, CMO of Alfardan Automotive; Christian Nehme, Gen-

eral Manager of Premium Motors, distinguished guests from Volkswagen Group Middle East as well as Omani national rally champion Abdullah al Rawahi, including his Škoda Fabia.

"We are extremely proud to add Škoda to our growing portfolio of European car brands that Premium Motors represents in Oman," said Christian Nehme, General Manager of Premium Motors. "This showroom offers an entirely new level of customer experience. Every aspect of the space is thoughtfully integrated,

from digital screens to the seamless coordination between our sales advisors and service team, to create a comfortable experience for our customers and deliver exceptional service. We are excited to bring this unique concept to Oman."

Oman's economy is poised for growth, driven by diversification efforts and a favourable business environment. With its population of around 4.5mn people and currently around 300 vehicles per 1,000 inhabitants, the country is already the 5th strongest automotive market in the region.

The automotive market in Oman is experiencing increased demand for high-quality, technologically advanced and practical vehicles offering value for money, making it an ideal time for Škoda to enter. With a focus on customer satisfaction and a commitment to innovation, Škoda aims to capitalise on this growth potential.

Škoda's initial offering in Oman includes a full range of its ICE sedans from Europe, including the latest performance model, the new Octavia RS. The Czech automaker is also offering a diverse SUV portfolio, from the compact Kushaq to the ICE flagship 7-seater Kodiaq, which is also available as 4x4. These models are now available to order, providing Omani customers with a variety of options to suit their driving needs and preferences. Škoda also intends to offer electric vehicles in the Middle East in the future.



Oman Air ropes in Mazoon Dairy

Oman Air has signed a major new agreement with Mazoon Dairy, making the flagship dairy company of the sultanate the airline's primary supplier of high-quality dairy products, including milk, yoghurt, laban, and cheese.

During the signing ceremony, Captain Nasser al Salmi, Oman Air's Chief Operating Officer, said, "As part of our commitment to In-Country Value (ICV), we are proud to support Oman's food industry and contribute to Mazoon Dairy's mission to enhance local self-sufficiency. This partnership underscores our

dedication to procuring locally made products and strengthening domestic suppliers, ensuring that we continue to provide our guests with the highest quality food and beverages sourced from within Oman."

Ali al Buali, Chief Executive Officer at Mazoon Dairy, added, "We are proud to partner with Oman Air as their official dairy provider. This agreement represents a milestone in our growth journey, expanding our reach on a global scale, while supporting our broader vision for national economic development. Today,

we offer a diverse range of high-quality products, adhering to the highest industry standards and best practices. We look forward to meeting the expectations of the national carrier by delivering premium products on board."

The initiative is part of Oman Air's broader strategy to contribute to ICV by prioritising local sourcing and fostering partnerships with homegrown businesses. In 2024, the airline collaborated with 323 local Omani companies, including 44 Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

Lulu announces winners of first two draws of Ramadan campaign

Lulu Hypermarket announced the first two set of winners of its ongoing Ramadan Dream Drive promotion.

The first draw was held on February 19, and the second draw was held on February 27. The promotion, which started on February 12, will run till April 12 at all Lulu stores in Oman.

Saud Suleiman al Wahaibi and Divyesh Parandy were the lucky grand prize winners of the Nissan Pathfinder cars in the first two draws. Many other winners of various attractive prizes were also announced during these draws. As part of the Dream Drive promotion, customers get a chance to win 8 Nissan Pathfinder-S 4WD as Grand prize during the entire promotional period.

Apart from the Grand prize, other prizes include 40 gifts from Ikon, including smart TVs, cook-



ing ranges, refrigerators, washers and air fryers.

"We have announced the first two sets of winners of our Ramadan Shop and Win promotion. The first two draws were held in two consecutive weeks. We congratulate both the grand prize winners and all other winners of the first and second

draws," said Shabeer K A, Regional Director - Lulu Hypermarkets, Oman. "I believe this is the perfect time to shop with us, as there are six more draws left for our shoppers to win big during Ramadan," he added.

In addition to the amazing prizes, Lulu has lined up several other offers and deals to enhance

customer experience and to make shopping a memorable and fun-filled experience during Ramadan.

There will also be huge discounts and exclusive offers on all essential commodities, including fresh foods, beverages, frozen foods and other grocery items during the promotional period.

Al Wathbah Ramadhan Souq to open Thursday

The SMEs Development Authority and Bank Muscat are pleased to announce the inauguration of Al Wathbah Ramadhan Souq, taking place from Thursday to Saturday, at the bank's headquarters in Airport Heights.

Marking the 11th edition this year, the souq will feature the participation of approximately 150 entrepreneurs and home business owners. This initiative reflects the bank ongoing commitment to enhancing social responsibility and supporting the development of the business sector.

Al Wathbah Ramadhan Souq provides a platform for entrepreneurs and home businesses to showcase their diverse range of products to the public, thereby opening new marketing



avenues and fostering collaboration and experience-sharing among participants.

Attendees can expect to find a variety of local products, including fashion items, health and beauty products, home décor, accessories, culinary delights, heritage tools, perfumes, and a wide array of supplies in preparation for Eid al Fitr. The souq will be open to the general public from 8pm to midnight.

Ramadan spirit spreads in iftar at Mysk Al Mouj Hotel

As the holy month of Ramadan continues, Mysk Al Mouj Hotel is offering a truly unique and indulgent experience for guests with its exclusive 'Arabesque' iftar buffet.

Celebrating the spirit of Ramadan, the hotel invites both locals and visitors to break their fast in an extraordinary setting that combines traditional Omani dishes, international flavors, and a touch of elegance that's perfect for both families, individuals and groups.

Meenu Singh, Hotel Manager at Mysk Al Mouj Hotel, said, "We are delighted to offer our guests the chance to experience the essence of Ramadan with our 'Arabesque' Iftar. It's a celebration of tradition, culture, and community, bringing together the flavors of Oman with international delights in a truly special



setting. Whether you're joining us for a family gathering, a corporate event, or a peaceful evening by the marina, we aim to create an unforgettable Ramadan experience for everyone."

The Arabesque iftar buffet, available throughout the month of Ramadan, offers an unparal-

leled feast that honors the rich culinary heritage of Oman, complemented by an impressive array of international cuisine. Guests can expect a variety of authentic Omani dishes such as whole lamb shuwa, whole lamb ouzi, grilled beef steak, alongside other Middle Eastern delicacies,

carefully prepared to deliver an exceptional dining experience. But the buffet doesn't stop there - the spread also features international favourites, ensuring that every guest, no matter their preference, finds something to enjoy.

What sets Mysk Al Mouj apart is its dedication to creating an unforgettable atmosphere. The outdoor seating area, overlooking the scenic Al Mouj Marina, offers a serene and refreshing environment, allowing guests to enjoy their meal under the stars while feeling the cool evening breeze. For those who prefer indoor comfort, the elegant interiors of the hotel offer a luxurious and welcoming setting that's equally inviting.

Corporate groups looking to host iftar gatherings are in for a treat as well. The hotel's facilities are perfectly suited for large

groups, with ample space and modern amenities that cater to corporate events and team gatherings. 'Whether you're hosting a team-building dinner, a client event, or a celebration with colleagues, the Arabesque iftar offers a blend of convenience and elegance that's hard to match,' a release stated.

The hotel has also thoughtfully designed the experience to cater to families and smaller groups who want a more intimate setting. With spacious tables and a relaxed ambience, Mysk Al Mouj ensures that every guest feels comfortable.

In addition to the exceptional food and atmosphere, the Arabesque iftar also features a live oud performance, adding a layer of cultural richness and setting a tranquil mood for the evening.

US carrier docks in South Korea after North Korea’s missile tests

Seoul, South Korea - A US aircraft carrier and its strike group - several battleships accompanying it and assisting its operation - have reached South Korea's port of Busan on Sunday.

The South Korean military said USS Carl Vinson was in Busan as a show of Washington's 'ironclad' commitment to its alliance with Seoul, echoing the statement posted by the carrier group on social media.

The nuclear-powered vessel last visited Busan in November 2023.

Another US aircraft carrier, USS Theodore Roosevelt, was deployed to the harbour in June 2024 for joint military exercises.

The latest visit comes just days after North Korea's dictator Kim Jong Un supervised a test of strategic cruise missiles. Kim has also ordered the North's military to be full ready to use its nuclear arsenal, according to state-controlled media.

Shows of US military force around South Korea tend to provoke outrage in the North, with Pyongyang often staging rocket tests in response.

But the aircraft deployment is also an important signal of US reassurance to South Korea. In



The nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Carl Vinson last visited Busan in 2023

recent months, President Donald Trump has made statements questioning their current military alliance, which has the US deploying around 28,500 soldiers stationed in the Asian

country, and Seoul depending on the US 'nuclear umbrella' for deterrence.

In October last year, before the election, Trump called for ramping up South Korea's payments to the US for the American troops. He described South Korea as a 'money machine' and said they would be paying 'US\$10bn a year' to Washington for protection. Seoul is currently paying around US\$1bn.

Since his inauguration in January, Trump has stated he would reach out to Kim Jong Un, calling him a 'smart guy' and saying they 'got along'. Also, Trump's ongoing row with Ukraine has raised questions about the US's commitment to its allies in Asia against China.

Talking to DW's Julian Ryall, Seoul-based international relations professor Dan Pinkston said South Korea was so far trying to 'stay out of the spotlight'.

"They seem to be hoping that Trump is too focused on his trade war with Canada, Mexico and China," he said last month. "South Korea is hoping to be overlooked for as long as possible, although they know their turn will come." DW

Zelensky may need to resign: US House Speaker Johnson

US House Speaker Mike Johnson said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who had a tense meeting with President Donald Trump and Vice President J D Vance on Friday, needs to 'come to his senses' and show gratitude or 'someone else needs to lead the country'.



US House Speaker Mike Johnson

Washington, D.C., US - US House Speaker Mike Johnson said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who had a tense meeting with President Donald Trump and Vice President J D Vance on Friday, needs to 'come to his senses' and show gratitude or 'someone else needs to lead the country'.

"President Trump is trying to get these two parties to a point of peace," Johnson said in a Sunday interview on NBC News.

He stressed that Trump has made it clear if Zelensky is ready for peace, a deal can be negotiated. But, he added, what Zelensky did in the White House was a 'signal to us that he's not ready for that yet'.

Johnson said Zelensky 'berated and interrupted his host, instead of expressing gratitude for the extraordinary help that the US has provided his country'.

He said the mineral rights deal that was supposed to signed between the US and Ukraine, benefits everyone, providing access to rare earth minerals and security for Ukraine. He said it established an economic partnership, ensuring US defence of its interests.

Friday's White House meeting devolved into confrontation when Zelensky expressed doubt

There hasn't been a single day when we haven't felt grateful... our resilience in Ukraine is built upon what our partners do for us and for their own security

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY

that Washington's dialogue with Moscow could result in peace in Ukraine.

Trump and Vance then criticised Zelensky that he was not

grateful enough to the US.

"You're gambling with World War III," Trump said. "And what you're doing is very disrespectful to the country - this country."

US Republican Senator Lindsey Graham has also said that the Ukrainian leader 'either needs to resign or send somebody over that we can do business with'.

'Europe is united'

Meanwhile, Zelensky said Europe is united over the need for real peace and security guarantees for Kyiv.

"There is clear support from Europe. Even greater unity, even stronger readiness for coopera-

tion," Zelensky said in a late video address on Sunday after a summit with European leaders in London.

"Everyone is united on the main point - for peace to be real, real security guarantees are needed. And this is the position of all of our Europe - of the entire continent, the United Kingdom, the European Union, Norway and Turkey."

Zelensky said there will be many other meetings and joint efforts in the coming days and weeks.

"There will be diplomacy for peace. And for the sake of all of us standing together - Ukraine, the whole of Europe, and necessarily America," he added.

He said Europe will shape its common positions in the near future, which will then be presented to partners in the US.

On US support so far, he said: "There hasn't been a single day when we haven't felt grateful. Because this is gratitude for the preservation of our independence: our resilience in Ukraine is built upon what our partners do for us and for their own security."

"Robust and lasting peace, and the right agreement on the end of the war are truly our shared priority," he added.

The summit hosted by UK Premier Keir Starmer and attended by many European leaders came after a public argument between Zelensky and Donald Trump and his Vice President J D Vance at the White House.

A signing ceremony for a minerals deal, and press conference were then cancelled and Zelensky left the White House.

Anadolu Agency



Wildfires: State of emergency in South Carolina

South Carolina, US - Governor Henry McMaster declared a State of Emergency on Sunday as a series of wildfires raged across the US state of South Carolina.

Firefighters are actively working to control the blazes, NBC News reported.

A video shared on social media captured an orange sky as a wildfire raged through Carolina Forest in the Myrtle Beach area. Another video showed smoke and debris filling the air from a fire burning in a backyard in the nearby Red Hill area.

McMaster said that more than 175 wildfires are currently burning across South Carolina in several counties including Horry, Spartanburg, Union, Oconee and Pickens, affecting a total of 4,200 acres.

"This State of Emergency ensures that our first responders, who are working tirelessly and risking their lives to protect our communities from these wildfires, have the resources they need," McMaster noted in a statement.

"Dangerous wildfire conditions require that a statewide burning ban remain in effect until further notice. Those who violate

this ban will be subject to criminal prosecution," he added.

The South Carolina Forestry Commission said that Horry County is receiving assistance from state partners, including aircraft to drop water on the fires.

Around 410 personnel and at least 128 fire apparatuses are involved in the response. Evacuations have been carried out in eight neighbourhoods, and approximately 135 residents are taking shelter at the Carolina Forest Recreation Center in Horry County, according to the Red Cross of South Carolina.

"Personnel will continue to staff this incident until the fire is contained," said the South Carolina Forestry Commission.

No injuries or structural damage have been reported so far, according to officials. A video captured from a plane provided a bird's-eye view of one of the fires.

Evacuations have been ordered for several neighbourhoods in the Myrtle Beach area including Spring Lake, Waterford and Avalon and will remain in effect due to ongoing fire and weather conditions.

Anadolu Agency

Austria's three-way coalition government gets final vote of approval

Vienna, Austria - Austria's liberal NEOS party on Sunday approved a deal that paves the way for a three-way coalition government led by the centre-right under Christian Stocker who is set to become chancellor next week.

Members of NEOS, the smallest partner in the alliance, agreed to work with Stocker's conservative Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) and the centre-left Social Democratic Party (SPÖ), who have already approved the deal.

Austria has faced months of political uncertainty, following parliamentary elections in September, which saw the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) come first, but later fail to form a government after tense negotiations.

What did NEOS members agree?

Roughly 2,000 NEOS party

members voted for the plan during a hybrid meeting in Vienna with more than 94% in favour of the 200-page coalition agreement.

Under party rules, two-thirds of members had to approve the plan.

If NEOS had failed to back the proposal, the ÖVP and SPÖ would have just a one-seat majority in the lower house of parliament, known as the National Council.

NEOS has never been in national government before.

Ahead of the vote, NEOS leader Beate Meinel-Reisinger called on members to 'make history' and support what she sees as a move supporting liberal democracy.

"Thank you! Work begins tomorrow!" she told members after the vote, referring to the swearing-in of the new coalition,



which can now take place on Monday.

NEOS is due to head the Foreign and Education Ministries in the new government.

The party's priorities include cutting state spending and red tape, along with pension reform.

The new government plans tighter migration rules, austerity

Ahead of the vote, NEOS leader and future FM Beate Meinel-Reisinger called on members to 'make history' and support what she sees as a move supporting liberal democracy

measures to tackle the budget deficit and a cap on rent increases. FPÖ leader Herbert Kickl last week called the tie-up a coalition of 'losers' and called for a snap election.

Coalition talks took months

Austria has endured the longest wait since World War Two to

form a new government - more than five months.

Despite the FPÖ winning an unprecedented victory, with around 29% support, Austria's president first gave the conservative ÖVP the mandate to form a government amid unwillingness from other parties to grant the far-right party the chancellorship.

After the ÖVP's first attempt failed in January, FPÖ leader Herbert Kickl was given the mandate to form a coalition.

However, talks with the conservatives broke down several weeks later.

Pressure from Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen led the ÖVP, SPÖ and Neos to try again and the trio reached a coalition deal on Thursday.

Neighbour Germany faces a similar battle to agree on a new coalition following parliamen-

tary elections last Sunday.

After coming out top, centre-right leader Friedrich Merz is due to begin talks with Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats next week over the formation of a coalition.

Coalition talks often take weeks or months to finalise, which can lead to political paralysis.

Merz has said he wants to have a ruling coalition in place within two months, due to the economic issues currently facing Germany as well as the uncertainty caused by US President Donald Trump's re-election.

German political parties have refused to work with the far-right. The Alternative for Germany (AfD) party came second in last Sunday's vote with a record share of over 20%.

DW

Israel plans escalation in Gaza Strip

Jerusalem - Israel plans to implement an escalatory strategy against the Gaza Strip within a week, including cutting off electricity, assassinations and displacing Palestinians from northern to southern Gaza, Israeli sources said on Sunday.

Israel's public broadcaster KAN, citing unnamed informed sources, reported that the plan - dubbed 'Hell' - will include the complete cutoff of electricity, mass displacement and a full-scale military offensive.

The sources described it as an unprecedented escalation compared to recent weeks and months.

The *Israel Hayom* daily added that the plan also involves cutting water supplies and carrying out targeted assassinations to pressure Hamas into accepting a new US proposal.

Earlier on Sunday, Israel said it agreed to a temporary ceasefire in Gaza during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan and the Jewish holiday of Passover following a proposal from US President Donald Trump's Special Envoy to the Middle East, Steve Witkoff, after the expiry of the first phase of the ceasefire.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed that Hamas had rejected the temporary ceasefire proposal and he then ordered a halt to humanitarian aid deliveries to Gaza starting on Sunday.

Israel has effectively turned Gaza into the world's largest open-air prison, maintaining an 18-year blockade and forcing nearly two million of its 2.3mn



An Israeli daily reported that the plan also involves cutting water supplies and carrying out targeted assassinations to pressure Hamas into accepting a new US proposal

agreed to move forward to the second phase of the deal to bring an end to the war in Gaza.

The agreement, originally designed to unfold in three phases, was disrupted when Netanyahu refused to enter negotiations for the second stage, seeking to secure the release of more Israeli

Israel's public broadcaster KAN, citing unnamed informed sources, reported that the plan - dubbed 'Hell' - will include the complete cutoff of electricity, mass displacement and a full-scale military offensive

prisoners while avoiding commitments such as ending the genocide and withdrawing from Gaza.

The ceasefire agreement has halted Israel's genocidal war on Gaza, which has killed more than 48,380 people, mostly women and children, and left the enclave in ruins.

Netanyahu said on Sunday that the Palestinian group Hamas has 'put forward positions for a permanent ceasefire that are totally unacceptable' while warning it of 'further steps' if it continues holding Israeli hostages.

Anadolu Agency

2 Gazans killed by Israeli army fire

Gaza City, Palestine - Two Palestinians were killed and three others injured by Israeli army fire in southern Gaza on Monday, in the latest violation of a ceasefire and prisoner exchange agreement, medics said.

A medical source said two people lost their lives in a drone strike in central Rafah city in the southern Gaza Strip.

Three more people were injured when a missile attack in western Khan Younis in southern Gaza, medics said.

The Israeli army escalated its attacks across Gaza since Sunday, shortly after the expiry of the first phase of the Gaza ceasefire agreement.

Four Palestinians were killed in similar Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip on Sunday

residents into displacement amid dire shortages of food, water and medicine due to restrictions.

Hamas has called on mediators to ensure Israel adheres to the ceasefire agreement and urged immediate negotiations for the second phase. The group condemned Israel's aid blockade as 'cheap blackmail, a war crime, and a blatant coup against the ceasefire agreement'.

Israel estimates that 59

hostages are still being held in Gaza, with at least 20 of them alive, and they are expected to be set free in the second phase of the ceasefire, which would require Israel to fully withdraw its forces from Gaza and end the war permanently.

The first six-week phase of the ceasefire agreement, which took effect on January 19, officially ended at midnight on Saturday. However, Israel has not

Iran's deputy president resigns after legal row

Tehran, Iran - After a long-running legal row over his appointment, Iran's deputy president for strategic affairs, Javad Zarif, announced his resignation on Monday.

In a detailed post on X, the former top diplomat said he had worked with dedication in President Masoud Pezeshkian's government over the past nine months but endured 'the most vile insults, slanders, and threats directed at myself and my family' over the past six months.

He described this period as 'the most bitter' of his 40-year political career, referencing the controversy surrounding his appointment as the country's vice president.

Many of his critics argued that his appointment violated the Constitution, as his children - born in the US - are natural-born citizens of the US.

"Over the past four decades, I



Iran's deputy president Javad Zarif

have endured countless insults and accusations for my small role in advancing national interests, from ending the imposed war to bringing the nuclear case to completion, and I have remained silent in the face of a flood of lies and distortions to protect the country's interests," he wrote in his resignation letter.

Zarif, who served as foreign minister for eight years under President Hassan Rouhani and

played a key role in the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, said he was invited by the judiciary chief, who pointed to the country's current state and advised him to return to academia 'to prevent further pressure on the government'.

"I hope that with my departure, obstacles to the people's will and the government's success will be removed," Zarif said.

The former top diplomat had been under intense pressure from conservative political circles, which urged parliament to remove him from his government post.

Notably, Zarif, who had campaigned for Pezeshkian during the elections, also led the committee responsible for selecting candidates for various ministries and government departments.

There had been speculation about his resignation in the past too but he always dismissed them.

Calm returns to Syria's Jaramana suburb

Damascus, Syria - Calm has been restored to the densely populated suburb of Jaramana near the Syrian capital Damascus as of late Sunday, local sources told Anadolu.

The end of tensions came after talks between security forces under the country's Interior Ministry and local leaders.

Tahir Mohammad Omar, the police chief of the Damascus countryside, inspected the police station where members of the General Security Forces and local armed militias called the Jaramana Shield Brigade were being held.

Musab al-Shami, a security official from Damascus's outer agricultural region of Eastern Ghouta, told Anadolu reporters at the Jaramana police station that the events started with the killing of Ahmed Al-Khatib, an employee of the Defence Ministry.

Saying that the tension increased after some people attacked the police station, Shami said that as a result of an agree-



ment with the people and their notables, security and police forces returned to their posts.

"In the coming days, our cooperation with the people of Jaramana will strengthen," he added.

Stressing that those who act outside the law will be brought to justice, Shami expressed gratitude to the Jaramana people for their contributions and support in

ensuring security.

Images taken by an Anadolu team in the district centre confirmed that life had returned to normal.

Tensions began on Friday evening when a dispute resulted in the killing of a member of the Syrian security forces and the wounding of another by an armed militia linked to the former

regime at a checkpoint.

Jaramana, located approximately 60km (37.2 miles) from the Israeli border, is a diverse area home to Druze, Christians and Sunni and Shia Muslims.

Bashar al-Assad, Syria's leader for nearly 25 years, fled to Russia on December 8, ending the Baath Party's regime, which had been in power since 1963.

Only 15 mobile homes entered Gaza out of 60,000 needed: Media office

Gaza City, Palestine - The Gaza Government Media Office reported on Sunday that there is a severe shortage of shelter supplies for displaced residents.

The number of trucks entering Gaza during the first phase of a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas represented only 75% of what was expected, Salama Maarouf, the head of the office, told Anadolu.

"The humanitarian crisis is worsening," he added.

Maarouf said that Gaza requires 200,000 tents, but the number delivered falls well below half of that total. Additionally, only 15 mobile homes have entered the enclave, far from the 60,000 needed to accommodate displaced families. He pointed

out that the shortages extend beyond tents and temporary housing. The enclave also faces critical shortages in other shelter-related items including generators, batteries, solar power systems and heavy machinery.

He confirmed that Gaza has identified a need for 500 vehicles to support relief and reconstruction efforts but reported that only nine bulldozers had entered the territory as part of the first phase of the agreement.

The Israeli government halted the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza early Sunday, hours after the first phase of the Gaza ceasefire agreement expired.

Meanwhile, Arab nations condemned Israel's decision on Sunday to block humanitarian aid



from entering Gaza, calling it a blatant violation of the ceasefire agreement and international law.

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and Qatar released statements criticising the move. Earlier, Is-

raeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office announced that 'as of this morning, the entry of all goods and supplies to the Gaza Strip will be halted'.

Netanyahu's stance drew

sharp criticism from the families of hostages, politicians and regional governments.

Yair Golan, the leader of the Democrats Party, accused Netanyahu's government of evading

negotiations on the second phase of the agreement.

The Saudi Foreign Ministry said 'the Kingdom condemns and denounces the decision by the Israeli occupation government to halt humanitarian aid to Gaza, using it as a tool of blackmail and collective punishment'.

The statement emphasised that the decision constitutes a 'flagrant violation of international law and a direct assault on the principles of international humanitarian law amid the ongoing humanitarian crisis faced by the Palestinian people'.

Egypt also condemned Israel's blocking of humanitarian aid, calling it a 'flagrant violation' of the ceasefire agreement.

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry

said in a statement that it 'strongly condemns the Israeli government's decision to block humanitarian aid and close crossings used for relief efforts'.

The ministry asserted that 'these actions blatantly violate the ceasefire agreement, international humanitarian law, the Fourth Geneva Convention, and all religious principles'.

The Fourth Geneva Convention, adopted in August 1949, provides humanitarian protections for civilians in war zones.

Egypt stressed that 'there is no justification, condition, or rationale that permits the use of starvation and siege as a weapon against innocent civilians, particularly during Ramadan'.

Anadolu Agency

US suspends cyber operations against Russia; sparks concern

A media report cited US officials who confirmed that Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth ordered the temporary halt

Washington, D.C., US - The US has temporarily suspended offensive cyber and information operations against Russia, a decision reportedly tied to President Donald Trump's diplomatic efforts to negotiate a resolution to the ongoing war in Ukraine with Russian President Vladimir Putin, according to *The Washington Post*.

The report, published on Sunday, cites both current and former US officials who confirmed that Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth ordered the halt, which is expected to remain in effect for the duration of the negotiations. The sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to the



sensitive nature of the matter, emphasised that the pause is not permanent.

The move has sparked concern, as it coincides with a significant shift in US foreign policy under Trump, suggesting a possible realignment with Russia on the Ukraine conflict. Experts caution that even a temporary halt in cyber operations could undermine US national security efforts.

"Russia continues to be among the top cyber threats to

the United States," said James A Lewis, a former US diplomat and cyber negotiator.

"Turning off cyber operations to avoid blowing up the talks may be a prudent tactical step. But if we take our foot off the gas pedal and they take advantage of it, we could put national security at risk."

The Pentagon has refrained from commenting on specifics, though a defence official said: "There is no greater priority to

Secretary Hegseth than the safety of the warfighter in all operations, including the cyber domain."

Security concerns

The suspension of cyber operations is described as a strategic manoeuvre rather than an act of war, temporarily halting efforts such as exposing malware or blocking Russian hackers from launching cyberattacks.

Retired Lt. Gen. Charlie

'Tuna' Moore, former deputy commander of US Cyber Command, noted that such pauses are common during high-stakes negotiations. "It's fairly common to pause anything that could potentially derail the talks," Moore explained.

Despite the operational halt, US cyber espionage targeting Russia continues, with the National Security Agency (NSA) maintaining surveillance.

case of Russia, experts warn that pausing cyber operations could leave vulnerabilities unaddressed.

"What's the risk of stopping? You lose track of your adversary," a former senior defence official cautioned.

Congressman Bennie G Thompson, ranking member of the House Homeland Security Committee, criticised the pause, calling it 'an inexplicable dereliction

The decision is reportedly tied to President Trump's diplomatic efforts to negotiate a resolution to the ongoing war in Ukraine with Russian President Vladimir Putin

"The reason you don't stop espionage is you want to know if they're lying to you," a former senior military official explained.

"The reason you don't stop planning is if the talks don't work out, you want to have options you can use against them."

The decision comes amid broader discussions within the US government about adopting a more aggressive cyber strategy against adversaries such as China and Iran. However, in the

tion of duty that puts American critical infrastructure at risk'.

He called for congressional hearings to examine the potential national security implications of the decision.

The suspension of cyber operations against Russia reflects a broader shift in US policy under the Trump administration, which has displayed increasing scepticism about Russian cyber threats and interference.

Anadolu Agency

Japan's worst wildfires rage unabated

Tokyo, Japan - Japan's worst wildfires in more than three decades raged unabated as firefighters backed by military helicopters continued to struggle to contain the blazes, which are burning thousands of hectares of land every day, local media reported on Monday.

Firefighters have been battling the fires in the forest around the northeastern city of Ofunato since last Wednesday, public broadcaster NHK reported.

The multiple blazes have so far burned around 2,100 hectares. Over the past 24 hours, another 3,000 hectares has been burned.

Backed by helicopters of Japan's Self-Defence Forces, firefighters are battling the blazes from the air and the ground as smoke blows towards residential areas.

At least one person has been killed while more than 80 buildings have been damaged.

Anadolu Agency

Indian PM goes on lion safari to mark World Wildlife Day

Gir Somnath, India - Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday took a lion safari in Gir National Park in Gujarat on the occasion of World Wildlife Day.

Modi was seen donning a safari outfit and holding a camera to capture glimpses of Gir's Asiatic lions.

The Prime Minister also extended wishes on World Wildlife Day and said: "Today, on World Wildlife Day, let's reiterate our commitment to protect and preserve the incredible biodiversity of our planet. Every species plays a vital role - let's safeguard their future for generations to come. We also take pride in India's contributions towards preserving and protecting wildlife."

Currently, Asiatic lions inhabit approximately 30,000sqkm across 53 talukas in nine districts of Gujarat. The state government has undertaken numerous initiatives to conserve these majestic creatures and protect other wildlife species. Additionally, as part of



Indian PM Narendra Modi visits Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary on World Wildlife Day, on Monday (ANI)

a national project, a National Referral Centre for Wildlife is being established on over 20.24 hectares of land at New Pipalya in the Junagadh district.

Moreover, according to a release, a high-tech monitoring centre for wildlife tracking and a state-of-the-art hospital have also been set up in Sasan to strengthen conservation efforts.

The Gujarat government has

taken various measures for the conservation of Asiatic lions. In 2024, 237 beat guards (162 men and 75 women) were recruited in Gir to patrol protected areas and safeguard lion habitats.

For the protection of Asiatic lions in Sasan Gir and the overall development of the Gir region, Modi, the then Chief Minister of Gujarat, played a pivotal role, the release said. In 2007, he person-

Currently, Asiatic lions inhabit approximately 30,000sqkm across 53 talukas in nine districts of Gujarat

ally visited the Gir forest to assess the ground realities and gather insights. Following this, he spearheaded transformative initiatives aimed at the holistic development of the Gir region, the conservation of lions, and the preservation of its rich biodiversity, the release stated.

Modi introduced the concept of Bruhad Gir, expanding the conservation focus beyond Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary to cover a 30,000sqkm area from Barda to Botad, where Asiatic lions are found. With the development of Greater Gir, he also ensured the welfare and progress of local communities, the statement added.

ANI



Pakistan, Afghan forces trade fire at key border crossing

Karachi, Pakistan - At least one person was killed and another injured after Pakistani and Afghan border forces traded fire at a key border crossing that remains closed for over a week, a security official said on Monday.

The latest exchange of fire took place at Torkham border, one of the two main trade corridors between the two neighbours, which was shut by Pakistan late last month due to a dispute over the construction of a new checkpoint on the Afghan side.

The injured received a bullet shot, while another person died because of a stampede caused by heavy firing, a Pakistani security official told Anadolu on the condition of anonymity.

Closure of Torkham crossing that connects Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province to Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province has led to a daily loss of US\$3mn to the trade between the two countries, according to the official.

Torkham is one of the 18 crossings between the two

neighbours, which have been locked in a border dispute for decades, leading to frequent closure of land connections.

Some 10,000 people, mainly Afghans, use the crossing daily to seek medical treatment and earn a livelihood in Pakistan's border areas.

Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have been sour since November 2023, after Islamabad launched a crackdown against illegal foreigners, mostly Afghan refugees.

Anadolu Agency

ZAMBO CARNIVAL IN LEBANON



Revellers attend a parade of the traditional Zambo carnival in Tripoli, Lebanon, on Sunday (Xinhua)

Gambia: A park offering diverse wildlife

Banjul, Gambia - Bijilo Forest Park, located in the West African country of Gambia, is renowned for its diverse wildlife, particularly its monkey population.

Covering 51 hectares (126 acres), the park is home to green monkeys, patas monkeys, and the rare red colobus monkeys. It also hosts over 100 bird species, various reptiles, and butterflies.

Visitors can explore the ecosystem through the park's walking trails, offering a close-up view of its rich biodiversity.

However, authorities warn that increasing urbanisation and human activities are threatening the park's natural environment. To counteract these challenges, conservation projects are being developed to protect the area.

The Gambian government, along with environmental organ-



Bijilo Forest Park, also known as the 'Monkey Park' attracts attention with its rich natural life in the West African country of Gambia

isations, aims to sustainably harness Bijilo's ecotourism potential. As one of the country's key nature reserves, Bijilo Forest Park remains a unique destination for wildlife enthusiasts. Suleiman Abdullah, director of Bijilo Forest Park, emphasised its status as a

publicly owned national reserve.

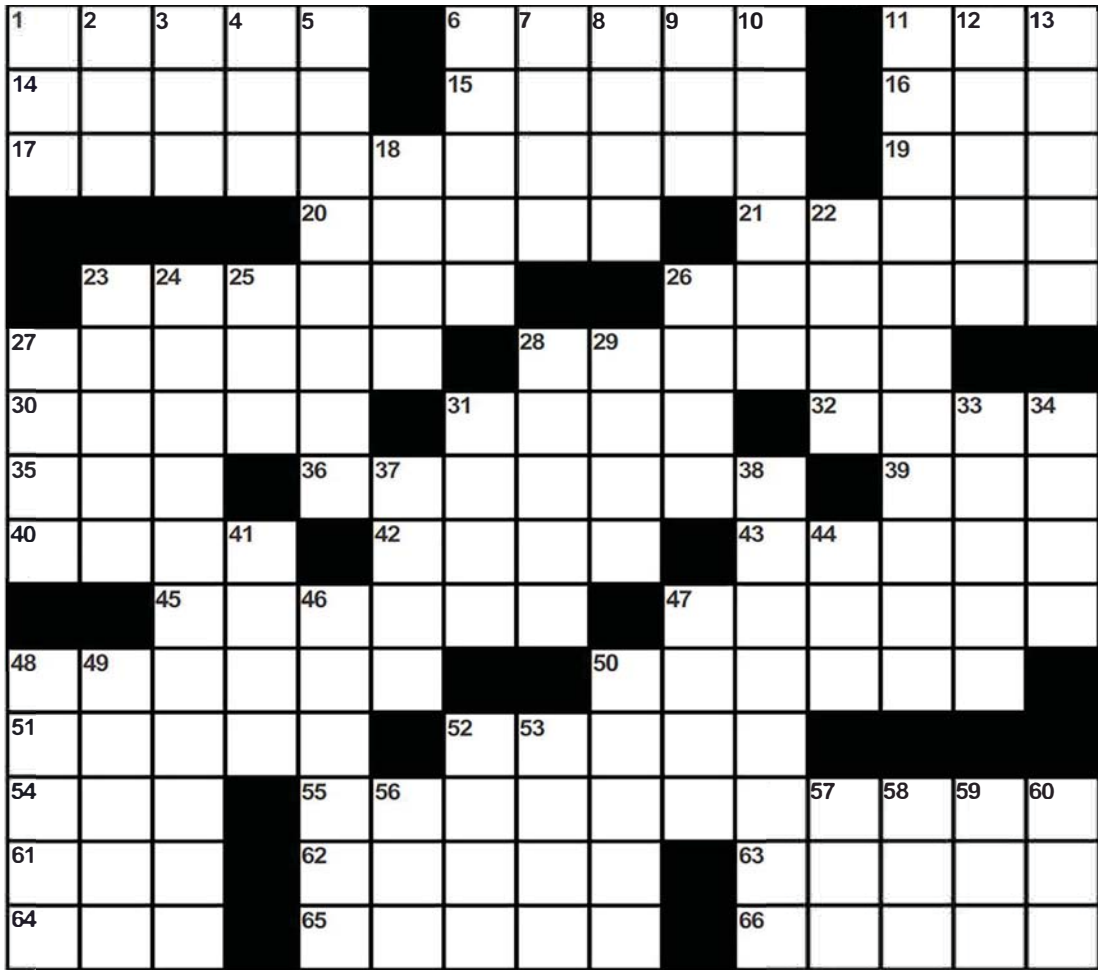
Managed by the Environment Ministry's Forest Department, Bijilo was designated a national park in 1952, prior to Gambia's independence from the UK.

According to Abdullah, the park remained largely unpro-

tected until 1991, when Gambia began focusing on tourism development. That year, it was officially opened to visitors through a forestry initiative between Gambia and Germany, known as the Gambian-German Forestry Project. "This project obviously was in The Gambia between 1980 to 2004, proposedly to support, upgrade and develop 66 national parks in The Gambia. In the whole Gambia, we have 66 national parks, including this park," Abdullah said

He noted that at the time, many of these parks had suffered extensive damage due to bushfires and uncontrolled logging. Some local residents were cutting down trees for firewood, charcoal production, and furniture making, leading to severe environmental degradation.

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Getting on
 - 6) Say "L'il," e.g.
 - 11) Branch
 - 14) Low point
 - 15) Arc lamp gas
 - 16) Babe in the woods
 - 17) Teen years
 - 19) Type of wrestling
 - 20) Decorative jugs
 - 21) France's major river
 - 23) Of the flesh
 - 26) Country on Lake Victoria
 - 27) Curiosity
 - 28) Ancient manuscripts
 - 30) Comanche clan
 - 31) Actor's goal
 - 32) Bygone despot
 - 35) Actor Arnold
 - 36) Compatibility device
 - 39) Cry's partner
 - 40) Future indicator
 - 42) Unpleasant burden
 - 43) All excited
 - 45) Charioteer constellation
 - 47) Kind of column
 - 48) Soaked to the gills
 - 50) Pang
 - 51) Double-reed instru-

- ments
 - 52) In front of
 - 54) Casbah headgear
 - 55) Arm of the Mediterranean
 - 61) British beverage
 - 62) Meat cuts
 - 63) Rose protection
 - 64) Confession component
 - 65) Related maternally
 - 66) Deviated from a course, as a ship
- DOWN**
- 1) Santa __, Calif.
 - 2) Wander (with "about")
 - 3) Words said at an altar
 - 4) Not even one
 - 5) Chinese restaurant offering
 - 6) Go great guns
 - 7) Goatish glance
 - 8) Not-final resting places
 - 9) One of the Seven Dwarfs
 - 10) Pep
 - 11) Reprimanding
 - 12) Three minutes, in boxing
 - 13) Euripides drama
 - 18) Go to and fro
 - 22) Male red deer

- 23) Kind of drive
- 24) Cheap
- 25) Barbecue offering
- 26) "What've you been _?"
- 27) "Laura" director Pre-minger
- 28) New Guinea
- 29) Crafts' counterparts
- 31) Sudden sharp pain
- 33) Surrounding glows
- 34) Casting need
- 37) Bump off
- 38) Quickness
- 41) In one's birthday suit
- 44) Bad thing to see after hearing

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You've never had a taste for wastefulness, lavishness, or excessiveness, well, not unless it's called for. The point is right now and for the next few days, you could be in the mood to do whatever it takes to make your dear ones feel special. And the more emotionally starved you feel they've been, the more willing you'll be to go out of your way to make them feel better.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

You don't like to hold back when you have something to say. In fact, it's so completely out of character that when you do, your friends start asking what the heck is wrong with you! They're due to start asking that question soon, because every time a certain subject comes up, you've refused to discuss it openly. Why put them through this? Give up the goods.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

It's finally time to unwind, and not a moment too soon either. You've had it with being proper, dutiful and responsible, and you're about to self-medicate. You're prescribing the only remedy that you know will definitely work: putting some serious distance between you and your job and anyone who wants you to take charge of anything more complicated than curling up on the couch.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

A private matter you've been doing your best to keep under control has just shown the first signs of getting away from you. Does that mean you'll be totally unable to keep the situation where you want it to be? It might, and that's not a comforting thought for you. But if you let go and let the Universe drive, you might be surprised by how well the whole thing turns out.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

It's long past time for you to stop worrying about everyone else's feelings but your own. It's officially time for you to renew your interest in yourself. Schedule a nice, long talk with a loved one, someone you know you can trust absolutely. There's probably quite a long list of people who fit that description, but you shouldn't have a problem finding someone to pour your heart out to. Anyone who knows you would consider it an honor!



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Sensitive? You? No way. Well, maybe a little. It started when you realized you were sniffing at sappy commercials. You'd never admit to it, of course, but if you're going to be spending any time with that certain someone, you might want to think about it ahead of time. Forget about being the alpha person. Let them know you have a great big heart. If one thing's clear, it's that you have nothing else to prove.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

You've never been famous for your willpower, self-restraint, or frugality, especially when it comes to surprising dear ones. Well, you're planning one of those moments now, and you're going to have to decide whether to respect your budget or follow your heart. It's easy to see which would naturally take over, but at least try to find a happy middle ground.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You're sharp and funny, and you learned a long time ago to listen to your instincts to build on those qualities. At the moment, your built-in radar is telling you that something big is coming up, but not to worry. It isn't going to be at all unpleasant. In fact, you'll probably end up being delighted with what the Universe has in store for you. In the meantime, grant an audience to someone who's asked to speak with you in private.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

New orders are coming down from above, and while you're not exactly happy about them, you still have to live with them. Temporarily, at least. If you've been thinking about finding some new way to earn your living, this could be the excuse you're looking for. On the other hand, if you like your current spot, don't just resign yourself to all this. You can work things out eventually with just a little extra effort and some of your legendary charm!



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Don't even think about bowing out of that wonderful adventure a good friend has offered. You know you've earned this, and you know you want to go and play, and it's about time. Why deny yourself? Get out there and have some fun. You can get back to making peace, restoring balance to troubled situations, and negotiating treaties tomorrow. For now, promise to enjoy yourself.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You're not usually thin-skinned, so even you may be surprised at how easily your feelings are hurt right now, even though you know darned well that those comments weren't meant to be hurtful. Does this mean you'll automatically overreact even if someone is just kidding? Not necessarily, but you might want to practice counting to ten, especially if they could still be a bit cranky.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You insist on depth, intensity, and passion in all your encounters, and anyone who wastes your time with meaningless chitchat doesn't rate a second conversation. At the moment, though, you amaze even yourself with how much you enjoy chatting with almost anyone on pretty much any topic. You're feeling lighthearted and easy with your emotions, and it feels good.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Who, in 2004, riding the prototype KTM 250-SXF four stroke, won the MX2 World Championship?

A. Marc DeReuver
B. Antonio Cairoli
C. Tyla Rattray
D. Ben Townley

2. In probability theory, a stochastic process is what kind?

A. A guess, still to be proven
B. Random
C. Slow-moving
D. Interrupted

3. Drakensberg is a name for an escarpment in what area?

A. The Swiss Alps
B. Southern Africa
C. The Balkans
D. The Maghreb

Answers: 1.D 2.B 3.B

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

E	T	E	T
A	Y	D	R
W	M	H	I
B	A	I	E

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

SOLUTION

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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



LENO THE HERO

Goalkeeper saves two penalties in shootout as Fulham upset holders Man United in FA Cup

Fulham goalkeeper Bernd Leno is mobbed by his celebrating teammates after their shootout win against Manchester United on Sunday

Manchester, England - Fulham keeper Bernd Leno saved two penalties as they beat FA Cup holders Manchester United 4-3 in a shootout to secure their spot in the quarter-finals after Sunday's dramatic fifth-round tie at Old Trafford ended 1-1 after extra time.

The match went to penalties after United's Bruno Fernandes grabbed a second-half leveller following Calvin Bassey's opener for Fulham in stoppage time at the end of the first half.

After a goalless extra time, Leno saved Victor Lindelof's penalty, leaving United's Joshua

Zirkzee needing to bury his to keep their hopes alive. Yet he fired his effort straight at Leno sparking wild Fulham celebrations.

Raul Jimenez, Sander Berge, Willian and Antonee Robinson converted their penalties for Fulham, who will face Crystal Palace in the quarter-finals.

Fulham caught United's defence flat-footed from Andreas Pereira's corner to strike first blood seconds before halftime, with Rodrigo Muniz nodding on for Bassey to head home in his first FA Cup appearance.

Fernandes levelled in the 71st

minute when Diogo Dalot cut it back from the left-hand side and United's skipper unleashed a left-footed shot from just inside the 18-yard box that sailed past two Fulham defenders and goalkeeper Leno on its way into the far corner to send the game into extra time.

"Unbelievable," a smiling Leno told the BBC. "I think we deserved to win after 90 minutes. Of course, penalties, it is sometimes a lottery and luckily we won. The goalie coach told me information, but my feeling is more important."

"I went the wrong way three times, but credit to our penalty

Of course, penalties, it is sometimes a lottery and luckily we won. The goalie coach told me information, but my feeling is more important

BERND LENO

takers - it is not easy. Brilliant job from all of us."

Thirteen-times FA Cup winners United defeated Manch-

ester City last year and lost to City in the 2023 final.

But Ruben Amorim's men have struggled mightily this season, languishing 14th in the Premier League, five places below Fulham.

"I think we have the best chances in the game," Amorim said. "In the end, the penalties can go both ways and today wasn't our way."

"The goal is to win the Premier League," he added. I know that we are losing games but the goal is to win the Premier League again. I don't know how long it will take. We have a goal and we

continue forward no matter what."

Both sides squandered chances at winning goals in the breathless affair at Old Trafford. United keeper Andre Onana dived to push away a shot from Emile Smith Rowe late in normal time.

United then had several terrific chances to seal the victory seconds before the whistle sounded. Leno came out to save a point-blank shot from Alejandro Garnacho and then 17-year-old Chido Obi first stabbed the ball just wide of the net and then forced Leno to make a diving save.

Fulham boss Marco Silva said his team deserved to win in normal time.

"I think we were the best team on the pitch. Our team was on the ball dominating the ball," he said. "We deserve to be in the next stage."

Fulham reached their only FA Cup final in 1975 when they were beaten 2-0 by West Ham United. Leno said he would like to see his team get back to Wembley for the final.

"Two years ago we lost here in the quarter-final (to Manchester United) and we're in the quarter-final again," he said. "



Newcastle United's Anthony Gordon was shown a red card for violently shoving Brighton and Hove Albion's Jan Paul van Hecke in the face

Gordon red card a big blow for Newcastle

Newcastle, England - Newcastle United winger Anthony Gordon looks set to miss the League Cup final against Liverpool after being shown a red card for violent conduct against Brighton and Hove Albion on Sunday.

The hosts were beaten 2-1 in extra time in the FA Cup fifth round and their misery was complete with Gordon dismissed for shoving Brighton defender Jan Paul van Hecke in the face.

A dismissal for violent conduct is likely to lead to a three-game ban which would rule England international Gordon out of the Wembley showpiece on March 16. Manager Eddie Howe said Newcastle are likely to appeal the red card decision.

"There's a lot to unpack but it's desperately disappointing to go out. The red card looked harsh, but we will have to analyse it properly. I have not seen a replay of it so I am going on my original view -- I thought it looked harsh."

"If we analyse the incident and

there are grounds for appeal, we will do that without hesitation. Knowing the player as I do, I know there was no malice intended."

"Anthony didn't mean any harm. I have only seen him briefly (since the game ended) and he was very disappointed."

Losing Gordon would be a huge blow for Newcastle in the final as they seek to win their first major trophy since 1955.

"If he is missing from the final, that will be a big blow to us - but when someone suffers misfortune in football, it's someone else's opportunity and that's what we have a squad for," Howe said.

Newcastle will also be concerned that top scorer Alexander Isak and fullback Kieran Trippier both failed to last the game because of injury worries.



Lazio beat 10-man Milan

Milan, Italy - An added time penalty earned Lazio a 2-1 win over AC Milan at the San Siro on Sunday, where the hosts had equalised despite going down to 10-men and endured a hostile atmosphere from their own fans protesting the club owners.

Milan are ninth in the standings on 41 points, having been overtaken by AS Roma who beat Como 2-1 earlier on Sunday, while Lazio moved into fourth place on 50 points, one ahead of Juventus who host Hellas Verona on Monday.

Boulaye Dia was sent through by Nicolo Rovella one-on-one with the keeper but Mike Maignan was quick off his line and spread himself well to save with his foot.

A pullback from the by-line by Nuno Tavares was almost put into his own net by Milan defender

Strahinja Pavlovic and Gustav Isaksen's shot went just wide of the upright and Lazio took lead in the 28th minute.

Lazio's Pedro celebrates after scoring against AC Milan at the San Siro on Sunday

Welbeck winner takes Brighton into FA Cup quarterfinals

Newcastle, England - Danny Welbeck scored deep into extra time to send Brighton & Hove Albion into the FA Cup quarter-finals with a dramatic 2-1 victory over Newcastle United on Sunday after both teams were reduced to 10 men.

Newcastle's Alexander Isak and Brighton's Yankubah Minteh scored in the first half before Welbeck struck the winner in the 114th minute with an exquisite finish from a tight angle.

"It was a very emotional game," Brighton manager Fabian Hurzeler told the BBC. "Lots of ups and downs. The key was we stayed together, we stayed calm, we tried to find solutions."

Isak opened the scoring in the 22nd minute when he planted his penalty, awarded after Minteh fouled Tino Livramento, beyond the reach of goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen into the far corner.

It was Isak's 22nd goal in all competitions this season.



Brighton & Hove Albion's Danny Welbeck scores against Newcastle United on Sunday

It was a very emotional game. Lots of ups and downs. The key was we stayed together, we stayed calm

FABIAN HURZELER

Minteh atoned for his mistake when he sprinted on to a threaded pass from Joao Pedro to equalise in the 44th minute.

Newcastle's Anthony Gordon and Brighton's Tariq Lamptey

were sent off in the closing stages of normal time. Gordon was shown a red card for his shove to the head of Jan Paul van Hecke while Brighton were reduced to 10 players in the 91st minute

when Lamptey earned a second yellow card for a lunging tackle on Jacob Murphy.

Newcastle, six-times FA Cup winners, had two goals chalked off for offside in regulation time. Isak thought he had doubled the lead in the 32nd minute and Fabian Schar celebrated what he thought was the winning goal deep into stoppage-time before that was also ruled out.

Players feel the tension around the club, says Conceicao

Milan, Italy - AC Milan coach Sergio Conceicao described the pressure of fan protests as unprecedented in his career after Sunday's 2-1 Serie A home defeat to Lazio.

The hosts, who suffered a third consecutive defeat in Serie A, endured a hostile atmosphere from their own fans, who protested against the club's owners, with the Curva Sud stand empty for the first 15 minutes.

"We discussed the atmo-



AC Milan players look dejected after their defeat to Lazio on Sunday

sphere and this is the first time I've experienced this in my career. Mistakes weigh heavier under such conditions," Conceicao told DAZN.

Matters worsened when Mattia Zaccagni put Lazio ahead in the first half, and despite Samuel Chukwueze's late equaliser after a Strahinja Pavlovic red card, Pedro netted a penalty for the visitors in the 98th minute after Mike Maignan's foul on Gustav Isaksen.

Attack is Barcelona’s first choice, says Flick after big win

Barcelona, Spain - Barcelona manager Hansi Flick said he was delighted with the hunger and mentality shown by his players as they thrashed 10-man Real Sociedad 4-0 on Sunday to return to the top of the LaLiga standings.

Goals from Gerard Martin, Marc Casado, Ronald Araujo and Robert Lewandowski in a dominant display moved them into first place with 57 points

from 26 games, one ahead of Atletico Madrid and three ahead of rivals Real Madrid.

"It's the style we want to play. Our first thought is always about the offence. We want to pass all-ways. We are attacking well, everyone is hungry to score goals," Flick told reporters.

"It's good to have this. Today we were in the right positions, it helps us a lot because we have a lot of chances to pass through

the last line. We are happy, but more happy about three points than scoring many goals."

Flick also dispelled any doubts over the fitness of Gavi after the midfielder was left out of the lineup, saying: "We thought about starting with Gavi today, but yesterday he felt a little bit ill."

"He said yesterday he had a fever and we had to take care of that. It was not necessary to



bring him in, so we started another player."

Halfway through the second half and minutes after Araujo had given Barcelona a 3-0 lead, Flick made a triple substitution to preserve his players for their Champions League last-16 first-leg clash with Benfica on Wednesday.

The German manager said the changes had helped Barcelona ahead of their meet-

ing with the Portuguese side, who last played on February 26.

"There are a lot of things that helped us a lot today. The red card was one of those, but also how we played. We were very dominant after this red card and this is how we want to play," Flick said.

"Of course, the substitution was very important for us because they can rest a little bit more."



Dylan Naidoo is all smiles after winning the South African Open

Naidoo’s SA Open triumph honours Sewgolum’s legacy

Durban, South Africa - Dylan Naidoo’s victory in the South African Open on Sunday was the first win by a player of Indian heritage in the tournament and achieved on the course where one of the uglier incidents in apartheid sport played out decades earlier.

The 27-year-old Naidoo took the biggest prize in South African golf in a playoff against Laurie Canter of England at the Durban Country Club, where another South African golfer of Indian ethnicity once had to collect his prize in the rain because racial laws meant he was not allowed in the club house.

Sewsunker ‘Papaw’ Sewgolum won the Natal Open on the same course 62 years ago after overcoming a series of humiliations.

He had learnt the sport as caddy at the club, one of the country’s most famous courses, after being given a set of second-hand clubs and allowed to play on a Monday along with the other caddies. Such was his obvious talent that a benefactor sponsored him to play in Europe, where he got an entry to The British Open and won the 1959 Dutch Open. He was prohibited from playing professionally in South Africa, however, where apartheid laws allowed no mixing of race groups in sporting arenas.

After pressure from members, he was allowed to enter the 1963 Natal Open at the Durban Coun-

try Club under strict conditions, forced to change in a minivan and eat his meals with the Black caddies as he was not allowed into the clubhouse, which was for white people only. When he won against the odds, the prize giving ceremony that should have taken place inside because of the poor weather was conducted outside in the rain.

Sewgolum, who died aged 48 in 1978 from ill-health, was a sporting hero among South Africa’s large Indian population, who were treated as second-class citizens in the apartheid era.

Indians first arrived as labourers during the late 1800s and Durban is one the largest ethnically Indian-populated cities outside of India.

Naidoo enjoyed huge support. "This is a special moment for me, it's special for everybody here in Durban - it's overwhelming I said yesterday it felt like I was Tiger Woods. There were so many people following me and that gave me energy. I can't thank everyone enough for coming out."

Naidoo’s triumph was made more poignant by the fact he is a graduate of a development programme which carries Sewgolum’s name and is aimed at helping young golfers from disadvantaged communities.



Emma Navarro of the US celebrates after winning the Merida Open on Sunday



Barcelona's Ronald Araujo celebrates with teammates after scoring against Real Sociedad on Sunday

Catalan side crush 10-man Sociedad to reclaim top spot in LaLiga

Barcelona, Spain - Barcelona returned to the top of the LaLiga table and wrested back control of the title race with a comfortable 4-0 home victory over 10-man Real Sociedad on Sunday.

Barcelona’s sixth straight league win moved them into first place with 57 points from 26 games, one ahead of Atletico Madrid. Defending champions Real Madrid are third with 54 points after a 2-1 defeat at Real Betis on Saturday.

"We're happy about the way we played. It was important to win today, to go first in the table. We're happy and we feel that we're working really well," said Ronald Araujo, who scored a goal and bagged an assist.

Sociedad attempted to catch Barca off guard straight after the whistle and thought they had taken the lead through Sergio Gomez’s deflected strike, only for the VAR to disallow the third-minute goal for offside.

The visitors’ early momentum then evaporated after they went down to 10 men when defender Aritz Elustondo bundled over Barcelona’s Dani Olmo in the 17th minute and was shown a red

card as the last man. It did not take long for Barcelona to make their advantage count.

Hansi Flick’s side opened the

scoring in the 25th minute with a fine team effort that started with Lamine Yamal dribbling past two players before squaring for Olmo,

whose chipped pass was volleyed home by Gerard Martin for his first professional goal.

Three minutes later, Marc

Casado matched the achievement when Olmo’s long-range shot deflected off of him and into the net. Barcelona kept up the pressure after the interval and created chance after chance, adding a third goal in the 56th minute when a rebound from goalkeeper Alex Remiro’s save was headed in by Araujo.

With a sizeable lead in hand, Flick made a triple substitution to preserve his players for their Champions League last-16 first-leg clash with Portuguese side Benfica on Wednesday.

We're happy about the way we played. It was important to win today, to go first in the table. We're happy and we feel that we're working really well

RONALD ARAUJO

Navarro thrashes Arango to win Merida Open title

Merida, Mexico - Top seed Emma Navarro made light work of Colombian qualifier Emiliana Arango with a crushing 6-0 6-0 victory in the final of the Merida Open on Sunday as the American claimed her second career title.

World number 10 Navarro, who won the WTA 250 Hobart International last year, needed

just 55 minutes to lift her first WTA 500 trophy, wrapping up a dominant run in the tournament in which she didn’t a set.

With a strong serve and powerful groundstrokes, Navarro never allowed Arango to reach a break point, while the U.S. Open semi-finalist won 71 percent of points on return.

The 23-year-old became only the fifth player this century to win a WTA final with a 6-0 6-0 score-

line, and the first since Iga Swiatek’s victory over Karolina Pliskova in the 2021 Italian Open.

Arango, who will reach a career-high singles world ranking of 80 on Monday, could not find her stride following a nearly three-hour semi-final battle against fellow qualifier Daria Saville late on Saturday.

The Colombian world number 133 reached Sunday’s final on the back of an 11-match

winning streak, including last week’s winning run at the WTA 125 Cancun Open, but had to play three sets in each of her last three matches.

Pegula wins in Austin
Top-seeded Jessica Pegula defeated fellow American and No. 5 seed McCartney Kessler 7-5, 6-2 on Sunday to win the ATX Open final in Austin, Texas and record the seventh singles title of her career.

Dream start to my new journey, says Marquez after winning Thailand GP

Buriram, Thailand - Six-times MotoGP champion Marc Marquez continued his perfect start with factory Ducati as he completed a weekend double at the season-opening Thailand Grand Prix on Sunday, finishing ahead of his younger brother Alex.

Pole-sitter and sprint winner Marc Marquez made an electric start in hot and humid conditions

at the Buriram International Circuit but Alex, who had qualified second on the grid, took the lead on the seventh of the 26 laps.

Marc snatched back the lead with three laps remaining, however, to win the opening race of the MotoGP season for the first time since 2014.

Twice MotoGP champion Francesco Bagnaia, Marquez’s

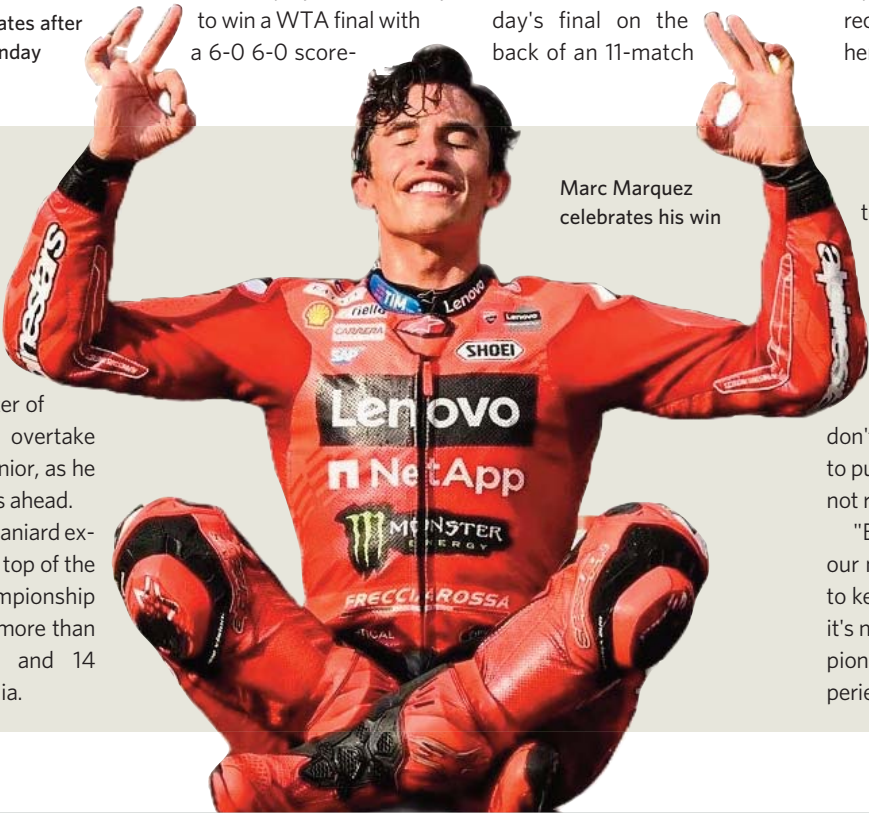
new teammate, came in third to complete an all-Ducati podium.

"Yesterday, I was happy. Today, I'm super happy," Marquez told reporters. "I mean, this is a dream! It's a dream start my new journey with Ducati like this in Thailand where I won my last four championships, to be here with my brother — incredible."

Marquez had looked domi-

nant all weekend and it seemed only a matter of time that he would overtake Alex, four years his junior, as he finished 1.732 seconds ahead.

The 32-year-old Spaniard extended his lead at the top of the MotoGP world championship with 37 points, eight more than second-placed Alex and 14 ahead of Italian Bagnaia.



Marc Marquez celebrates his win

Marquez now has 112 MotoGP podiums, equalling compatriot Dani Pedrosa.

"I thought he (Marquez) was trying not to use a lot of rear tyre. I was using everything, I was using all the energy because when you don't have it, literally, you need to push a bit more, and you cannot really save tyre," Alex said.

"But in the end second was our maximum target today. So, to keep Pecco (Bagnaia) behind it's not easy, he's a world champion, and you have another experience."

'HE HAS GOT SOMETHING DIFFERENT'

Captain Rohit says Chakravarthy gives India a 'good selection headache'

Dubai, UAE - Spinner Varun Chakravarthy emerged from the dugout to produce a match-winning display against New Zealand in his Champions Trophy debut on Sunday while also leaving India with a "happy headache" ahead of the tournament's knockout stage.

Chakravarthy is considered a 'mystery spinner' for his bag of tricks that include off-break, leg-break, googly and the 'carrom ball' that he pushes with his knuckle.



Varun Chakravarthy

We don't know which pitch is going to be played in the semifinal. But whatever happens, we have to adapt and see what is happening

ROHIT SHARMA

He was the player-of-the-series when India beat England 4-1 in a T20 series last month but has been warming the bench during the Champions Trophy being behind Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel and Ravindra Jadeja in India's spin pecking order.

Having already secured their semi-final place, India replaced seamer Harshit Rana and picked Chakravarthy, whose 5-42 in only his second ODI secured their 44-run win.

"He has got something different about him, there's no doubt about it," India captain Rohit Sharma said.

"So we just wanted to try and see what he can offer, and we saw he has a lot to offer."

India, who topped Group A with their third consecutive win, will face Australia in the first semi-final on Tuesday and Rohit sounded unsure about the makeup of his spin attack for the match.

"We got to think about what we want to do in the next game, but obviously (it's) a good headache to have. "Varun was class today. If he gets it right, it's very difficult to read him."

'This is not our home'

Rohit dismissed suggestions that India have had an unfair advantage by being allowed to

play all their Champions Trophy matches in Dubai.

"There are four or five surfaces that are being used and every surface has a different nature," the opener said ahead of Tuesday's semi-final against Australia. "The pitches look the same, but when you play on it, it has played in a different way. So, you can't go thinking 'we played

like this yesterday, and today we'll play like this'.

"We don't know which pitch is going to be played in the semi-final. But whatever happens, we have to adapt and see what is happening.

"This is not our home, this is Dubai. We don't play so many matches here. This is new for us too."



Adam Zampa

Australia's Zampa doesn't need to be at his best to contribute

Dubai, UAE - Australia spinner Adam Zampa says he is below his best at the Champions Trophy but will still be ready to take big wickets in the semi-final against India on Tuesday.

Zampa took 2-48 in the washed-out group match against Afghanistan and 2-64 in the five-wicket win over England in Lahore to help Australia reach the last four of the ODI tournament.

The veteran legspinner may be key to Australia's hopes of victory in Dubai, where India, who refused to play in co-hosting nation Pakistan, won their three group matches on spin-friendly wickets.

"Personally, I don't think I'm bowling quite at my best but I like to think the beauty about me, when I'm not quite at my best and not feeling that great out there, is my ability to still con-

But as I said, the ability to still do a job for the team and get those big wickets is still there, which to me is really important

ADAM ZAMPA

tribute and take those big wickets," Zampa said. "So, yeah, (I am) obviously working on some stuff at the moment to hopefully get back to my best.

"But as I said, the ability to still do a job for the team and get those big wickets is still there, which to me is really important."

The Australia squad flew from Lahore to Dubai on Saturday despite knowing they might need to

fly back to Pakistan for the second semi-final depending on the result of the India-New Zealand group match.

India duly beat New Zealand by 44 runs on Sunday to ensure Australia's early trip to Dubai was worth it. South Africa, however, were forced to travel back to Pakistan for the second semi-final against New Zealand in Lahore on Wednesday.

The International Cricket Council has come under fire over the scheduling but Zampa was not complaining.

"Obviously we had a bit of a hectic schedule playing a couple of games in Pakistan, back and forth in between cities," he said.

"It's kind of nice to get here. We've got a great facility here at the ICC Academy, changes it up a little bit as well, so yeah, the boys are feeling OK about it."

ISWK Women win Women's League title

Muscat - ISWK Women defeated ISC MKW (Indian Social Club - Mangalorean Konkani Wing) in the final to win the Oman Cricket's (OC) Women's League.

ISWK Women scored 146 for 2 in their 20 overs with Jayadhanya Gunasekar making 69 off 63 balls and Disha Kumar scoring a run-a-ball 43.

ISC MKW managed to close in but couldn't finish well as Suhaani Dadhwal, who scored 62 off 52 balls but got out in the 16th over. ISC MKW's innings ended on 136, falling short by 10 runs.

The season witnessed remarkable participation, competitive spirit, and showcased the immense talent of women cricketers across the nation with eight teams - ISC MKW, ISWK



ISWK Women players celebrate with the trophy

Women's, Muscat Women's, OCA Women's, Pakistan Women's, Womens Cricket Sohar, SLSM Women, and Team Ghubra - divided into two groups, competing for the title.

ISWK Women, Pakistan Women, ISC MKW, and

Women's Cricket Sohar reached the semifinals with ISWK Women and ISC MKW making the title clash.

Oman Cricket's Board Advisor Varun Khimji, and Chief Development Officer Duleep Mendis distributed the prizes.

CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED

Indian, MBA, 20yrs of experience in Sales (FMCG/Retail). Previously held Supervisory/Managerial positions. Having D/L, seeks suitable placement.
Contact- Sultan: 95548480

Indian male, MBA, having experience in Oman and GCC in Project and Dealer Market Sales, Business Development in building materials, including Cables & Accessories in construction industry, with valid D/L, looking for a suitable job. Ready to join immediately
Contact : 78099493

FOR RENT

Room for rent in Darsait with bathroom and kitchen, electricity and water is free. The room comes with a sea view. Rent RO95
Contact- 99315986

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

CLASSIFIED LISTINGS

MUSCAT DAILY offers a variety of classified listings for individuals and establishments: Situations Vacant/Wanted, Accommodation Wanted or Available, Sale of Household Items, Cars for Sale or Wanted, Matrimonial Alliances, etc

Please email your listing to dailyclassifieds@apexmedia.co.om or call: 99104346

CLASSIFIED LISTINGS

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
therpay & 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

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



Eco-Conscious Fashion

The fashion industry, once synonymous with glamour and indulgence, is undergoing a profound transformation. For decades, the relentless pursuit of ever-changing trends fuelled mass production and excessive consumption, leaving a significant environmental footprint. However, a growing movement towards sustainable fashion is reshaping the industry, driven by a confluence of factors: Increasing consumer awareness, stricter environmental regulations, and groundbreaking innovations in materials and production.

Historically, the industry operated on a linear model of production - design, manufacture, consume, and dispose - leading to excessive textile waste. Fast fashion, in particular, has exacerbated this issue, with millions of garments ending up in landfills annually. However, sustainability advocates and forward-thinking brands are working to disrupt this unsustainable model by integrating responsible production and consumption practices into their operations.

Consumer-driven shift

Consumers today are more conscious than ever of the social and environmental implications of their purchasing decisions. Transparency and ethical responsibility are no longer optional for brands; they have become critical demands. The rise of social media has amplified this shift, enabling consumers to hold brands accountable, share information, and support companies that prioritise sustainability.

Social media influencers and activists are playing a pivotal role in educating consumers about the impact of fast fashion. Viral campaigns have exposed unethical labour practices, excessive water consumption, and pollution caused by textile production, prompting many shoppers to reconsider their choices. Additionally, younger generations, particularly Gen Z and millennials, are leading the charge in advocating for eco-conscious fashion, prioritising ethical sourcing and sustainable materials over fast fashion bargains.

The industry is adopting circular fashion through recycling, resale and rental models to cut waste

Embracing sustainability

The industry is responding to this demand by integrating sustainable materials, ethical production methods, and circular economy principles into its business models. Brands are increasingly using organic cotton, recycled polyester, and biodegradable fabrics to reduce their environmental impact. Additionally, ethical sourcing and fair labour practices are being prioritised to ensure social sustainability.

A circular approach is also gaining traction, focusing on minimising waste and extending the life cycle of garments. Brands are adopting innovative design techniques that encourage repair, reuse, and recycling. Companies such as Stella McCartney, Reformation, and Patagonia are leading the charge, demonstrating that style and sustainability can co-exist. Moreover, platforms like Rent the Runway and ThredUp are revolutionising fashion consumption by promoting rental and resale models, thereby reducing waste and resource depletion.

Many major brands are also adopting take-back schemes and resale initiatives, allowing consumers to return used clothing for recycling or resale. These models not only divert textiles from landfills but also create a more circular economy where materials are continuously reused. Technological advancements, such as AI-driven material sorting and fabric regeneration, are further helping the industry transition to a more sustainable model.

Challenges and opportunities

Despite the progress, the path to a fully sustainable fashion industry is not without obstacles. One of the biggest challenges is the higher cost of sustainable materials and production methods, which can make ethical fashion less accessible to certain consumers. Additionally, the lack of standardised sustainability certifications and labelling creates confusion, making it difficult for consumers to distinguish genuinely sustainable brands from those engaging in greenwashing.

The carbon footprint of textile production remains a con-

cern, as the industry is one of the largest contributors to global emissions. Addressing this issue requires innovation in fabric production, such as the development of plant-based alternatives and lab-grown textiles. Water pollution from dyeing processes is another significant challenge, leading brands to explore eco-friendly dyeing methods that reduce water and chemical usage.

However, these challenges present opportunities for growth and innovation. As consumer demand for sustainable fashion continues to rise, brands have the incentive to invest in research and development to make eco-friendly products more affordable and scalable. Collaboration between brands, suppliers, and regulatory bodies can also drive systemic change, establishing clear standards and promoting transparency across the industry. Additionally, governments are introducing policies and incentives to encourage sustainability, from extended producer responsibility (EPR) laws to tax benefits for sustainable businesses.

The future

The future of fashion is inextricably linked to sustainability. With growing awareness, technological advancements, and regulatory support, the industry is steadily moving towards a more responsible and eco-conscious future. Brands that embrace sustainable practices are not only mitigating their environmental impact but also building long-term consumer trust and loyalty.

Consumers, too, play a crucial role in shaping this transformation. By making informed choices, supporting ethical brands, and demanding transparency, they can drive the industry towards more sustainable practices. The rise of the slow fashion movement encourages consumers to buy less but invest in higher-quality, timeless pieces that last longer, reducing waste and excessive consumption.

As the momentum for sustainability grows, the fashion industry will continue to evolve, innovating new solutions to reduce its environmental footprint while maintaining its creative and cultural essence. The shift towards sustainable fashion is no longer just a trend - it is an imperative for the industry's survival and the planet's well-being.

97TH ACADEMY AWARDS

Anora takes home top honours at OSCARS 2025



The film wins 5 Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Actress, Best Director, Best Original Screenplay and Best Film Editing

Anora took home the biggest award of the night at the 2025 Academy Awards on Sunday, winning Best Picture, and also had bragging rights for Best Actress, Best Director, Best Original Screenplay and Best Film Editing Oscars.

Mikey Madison won the Best Actress Oscar for her role in the romantic comedy-drama. The film follows the beleaguered marriage between Madison's character, Anora (Ani), an escort living in a Russian-American neighbourhood in New York, and her husband who is the son of a Russian oligarch.

Sean Baker took home the Best Director Academy Award for *Anora*.

Adrian Brody won the Oscar for Best Actor in the 1940s and 1950s period drama *The Brutalist*. Brody plays a Hungarian-Jewish Holocaust survivor who immigrates to the US, where he struggles to achieve the American dream, until a wealthy client changes his life.

The *Brutalist* also won Academy Awards for Best Cinematography and Best Original Score.

Kieran Culkin won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actor for his role in the comedy-drama *A Real Pain*. Culkin plays Benji, a mismatched cousin to the film's creator and lead actor Jesse Eisenberg, who goes on a Jewish heritage tour through Poland to learn about their family history in honour of their late grandmother.

Zoe Saldana became the first American of Dominican descent to win an Oscar, as she took home the golden statuette for Best Supporting Actress for her role in *Emilia Perez*. She plays Rita Castro, a down-on-her-luck lawyer who is hired by a Mexican drug lord to help facilitate gender-affirming surgery.

That drug lord becomes Emilia Perez, played by Best Actress nominee, Karla Sofia Gascon, who became the first openly transgender actor nominated for an Academy Award.

"My grandmother came to this country in 1961. I am a proud child of immigrant parents, with dreams and dignity and hard-working hands," said Saldana in her acceptance speech. "I am the first American of Dominican origin to accept an Academy Award, and I know I will not be the last."

Emilia Perez also won the Best Original Song Oscar for *El Mal*, and Saldana beat out fan-favourite Ariana Grande who was also up for the Best Supporting Actress award for her role as Galinda, the good witch, in the Broadway-adapted musical *Wicked*.

Wicked did, however, pick up Academy Awards for Best Costume Design and Best Production Design.

Conclave won the Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay.

The Substance won the Academy Award for Best Makeup and Hairstyling.

Dune: Part Two took home Oscars for Best Sound and Best Visual Effects.

No Other Land won the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. The film was produced by a Palestinian-Israeli collective and follows the story of a Palestinian activist who befriends an Israeli journalist to help him in his plight for justice during the ongoing conflict in the region.

There was some political turmoil during the Best Film Editing presentation as actress Daryl Hannah said 'Slava Ukraini', which means 'Glory to Ukraine'.

While Hannah's comment received applause from the audience, critics took to social media to call her out for what they called unnecessary politicisation of the Oscars.

Anadolu Agency



L-R: Samantha Quan, Sean Baker and Alex Coco pose in the press room with their Oscars for Anora





CS35 PLUS



This Ramadan is all about peace of mind



EMI OMR107* for 6 years



1.4L Turbo Engine, 156 hp, 7-speed DCT

Terms and Conditions Apply

RAMADAN OFFERS

FREE SERVICE 4 YEARS / 75,000 KMS*

FREE INSURANCE*

FREE REGISTRATION*

VAT (5%) INCLUSIVE IN VEHICLE PRICE

SUPER WARRANTY 6 YEARS OR 250,000 KMS*

Ramadan Showroom timings: Morning : 9am to 1.30pm and Evening: 8pm to 11.30pm

Offer valid from 20th February to 20th April 2025 on all models purchased through the CHANGAN Showroom Retail Offer. *Whichever is earlier. Periodic Maintenance Service only. Offer includes only 10,000 kms service intervals. The periodic maintenance service will be between 3 years / 55,000 kms to 4 years / 75,000kms and varies from model to model. @For 1st year, Oman & UAE only. **Super Warranty - 6 Years / 250,000 Kms - Applicable Alvin, EADO Plus, CS35 Plus, CS75 Plus, CS85 Coupe & CS95 only. Whichever is earlier. *Easing Monthly Installment is calculated based on 20% down payment for 6 years loan tenure. Subject to credit approvals from banks only. Applicable on vehicles purchased for personal use. Images shown are for illustrative purpose only. Specification may vary as per the model variant. To know more, please visit the CHANGAN Showroom.

Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment LLC

Showrooms:
Qurum 94641010, Mawaleh 97888180, Nizwa 96628940
Sohar 95351200, Salalah 96629050, Ibbi 96628930,
Barka 96629010, Sur 96628920

800 50800
9662 8909
@changanoman
www.changanoman.com

Experience the Spirit of *Ramadan* with JAC

*MANUFACTURER'S WARRANTY
6 YEARS or 200,000 KM
(WHICHEVER COMES FIRST)

****FREE AAA**
ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE
6 YEARS



JS3 PRO
1.6 SUV - COMFORT AT
STARTING FROM
RO 4,399



JZ 1.5 TURBO
SUPERB - AT
STARTING FROM
RO 5,477



JS6 COMFORT - AT
STARTING FROM
RO 6,466



T8 2.0T PU-DC 4X2
MT COMFORT
STARTING FROM
RO 5,199



JS4 1.5 TURBO
PRESTIGE - AT
STARTING FROM
RO 5,644

JAC MOTORS | JAC
Experience the new



Towell Auto Centre LLC
YOUR TRUSTED PARTNER

71453300
www.jacoman.com

Visit the showroom and view it to believe it.

• Al Hail • Wattayah • Barka • Sohar • Nizwa • Sur • Salalah

This offer is valid from February 17, 2025, to April 16, 2025. **AAA roadside assistance is valid for the first six years from the date of retail purchase. *Manufacturer Warranty 6 years or 200,000 KM (Whichever is earlier) for Passenger Cars & 5 Years / 250,000 KM (whichever is earlier) for JAC Truck. Please note that the vehicles depicted are for illustrative purposes only, and their specifications/colour etc., are subject to change without prior notice. For more detailed information, kindly visit your nearest JAC showroom. This offer is exclusive to private vehicle purchases and does not apply to fleet, Ministry, Taxi, Rental, or commercial car acquisitions. Offer valid as per stock availability. Terms & conditions apply.

SCAN HERE
FOR HAPPINESS

