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Pharmacist jobs in hospitals and commercial centres Omanised

Our Correspondent Muscat

Ministry of Health (MoH) has issued a directive mandating Omanisation of pharmacy jobs in commercial complexes and hospital-affiliated in-house pharmacies.

A circular (No 167/2025) dated July 13, issued by the Drug Safety Centre under MoH, instructed that professional licences of non-Omani pharmacists and assistant pharmacists in these establishments will not be renewed. The directive takes immediate effect.

Signed by Ibrahim Nasser al Rashdi, Director General of Drug Safety Centre, the circular forms part of broader national efforts to enhance employment opportunities for qualified Omani professionals in the pharmaceutical field.

‘All concerned entities are urged to take the necessary steps to implement this directive in a timely manner,’ the circular said.



Mandatory certification for finance jobs from Sept 1

Our Correspondent Muscat

Ministry of Labour (MoL) has announced that a professional classification certificate will be mandatory for all individuals employed in accounting, finance and auditing roles in Oman, effective

September 1, 2025. According to the ministry, the move is aimed at enhancing professional standards and workforce quality. ‘This new requirement will apply to both new hires and current employees in the sector,’ MoL stated.

The certificate must be ob-

tained from the Sector Skill Unit for accounting, finance and auditing, and submitted as part of the application for new work permits or renewals. Work permits will not be issued or renewed after the effective date without the approved certification.

‘The move is part of broader

The circular has been sent to all pharmacies operating in commercial complexes and those affiliated with hospitals.

The decision follows the Health Sector Employment Governance Committee’s discussions in January with Majlis A’Shura’s Youth and Human Resources Committee on key initiatives aimed at advancing employment of Omanis in the health sector, focusing on complete Omanisation of the pharmacy profession in the private sector.

Salalah ITC project to redefine agritourism

Our Correspondent Salalah

Salalah is set to host a major agritourism destination with the launch of Janaen Salalah, an integrated tourism complex (ITC) project blending agriculture, hospitality and recreation in a single development.

Led by Omran Group through its subsidiary Agritourism Development Company, the project is located in the Arzat area and aims to position Oman as a regional leader in sustainable agritourism.

Janaen Salalah has been granted ITC status by Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, allowing foreign ownership and expanding its appeal to international investors. Spanning over 5.5mn sqm, the project will feature 250 residential units, a 128-key five-star hotel, processing facilities for coconuts and papayas, and areas dedicated to eco-recreation, education and wellness.

The project received a boost following a field visit on Tuesday by H H Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, and



H E Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. The officials reviewed the site’s progress, with the visit marked by ceremonial planting of the first coconut trees - a symbolic step towards realising the project’s agricultural goals.

According to Omran, several key milestones under Phase 1 have been achieved. These include completion of the concept masterplan, feasibility studies confirming the project’s viability and appointment of an experienced agriculture contractor. Initial plantation works have already begun.

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Families flock abroad as summer travel surges

Our Correspondent
Muscat

With schools closed for the summer and temperatures rising across the sultanate, a growing number of Omani and expatriate families are heading overseas for vacations.

Travel agencies in Muscat have reported a marked increase in international bookings in recent weeks, with destinations such as Turkey, Thailand, Malaysia, United Kingdom and several European cities proving popular. For many, these trips combine leisure with cultural experiences or long-postponed family reunions.

Muscat International Airport has seen a steady rise in passenger traffic since early May. Officials said weekends are witnessing peak volumes. They urged travellers to ensure their documents are in order and arrive early.

A spokesperson of Oman Airports confirmed the increased passenger numbers and stated that teams are working to ensure smooth operations and minimise delays.

According to local travel consultants, bookings have gone up



significantly compared to last year. Families are planning earlier and choosing destinations that are family-friendly, have cultural appeal and straightforward visa procedures.

Travel advisor Ahlam al-Busaidi noted that Turkey, the UK

and Southeast Asia are among the top choices for Omani families this year.

Expatriate residents are taking advantage of the summer break to visit home. Many are combining holidays with family visits after long separations.

Suresh Nair, an Indian expatriate travelling to Kerala with his wife and children, said he was excited to meet relatives after nearly three years. "My children are looking forward to seeing their grandparents," he said.

Despite the enthusiasm, tick-

eting agents have noted concerns over rising airfares and accommodation costs. In some sectors, ticket prices have gone up by as much as 30%.

Travel advisor Fatma al-Lawati asked families to book early and consider flexible dates. "It's important to check passport validity, visa requirements and ensure that all travel documents are in order," she said.

Authorities and travel consultants urged travellers to arrive at the airport at least three hours prior to departure and stay informed about visa and health guidelines at their destinations.

Through its Travel Health Service, Ministry of Health has issued guidelines to support families travelling with children. The advisory recommends packing suitable clothing for the destination and preparing children in advance, especially for long flights or drives. If a child experiences ear pain during flight, breastfeeding, eating or chewing gum may help relieve the discomfort. The ministry also advises maintaining regular sleep cycles to ensure children get adequate rest during travel.



New tourism roles created to boost local talent in hospitality

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) has approved 73 new professional designations for the hotels and resorts sector in coordination with Ministry of Labour. The move is aimed at supporting the regulation and development of Oman's growing tourism industry and improving the labour market's capacity to integrate national talent.

The designations have been added to the Unified Gulf Guide for Professional Classification and Description. These are categorised based on economic ac-

tivities within the tourism sector, including hotels, resorts, rest houses, chalets, heritage inns and guest houses.

The new titles are expected to give employers and operators in the hospitality sector more precise tools for defining their human resource needs, supporting better workforce planning and institutional performance.

Officials said the initiative is part of an ongoing effort to coordinate labour market readiness with tourism development goals. It also supports Oman Vision 2040, which identifies tourism as a key pillar in the sultanate's economic diversification strategy.

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Musannah farmer finds sweet success with mango plantation

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In the heart of one of Oman's key agricultural wilayats, a quiet transformation is taking root. Farmer Hamoud al Mahrizi made a bold decision to shift away from water-intensive fodder grass to grow something more sustainable and profitable - mangoes - on his ten-acre plot of land in Musannah.

For many years, Mahrizi relied on growing fodder to sustain his farm. But with increasing water scarcity and the impact of climate change, he recognised the need for change. After seeking expert agricultural advice and running a series of trials, he planted 300 mango seedlings of premium varieties including alphonso, fajri and namdeok mai.

Mahrizi's didn't just invest in seeds and fertiliser, but techniques too. Adopting drip irrigation and nurturing the soil with care, he focused on long-term sustainability. The turnaround was evident. In just three years, the orchard began to bear fruit and profits tripled. More importantly, his water consumption



Smart agriculture begins with one step. Take that step now

dropped by more than half.

"The beginning was not easy," Mahrizi said, adding, "The farm was originally suited for fodder cultivation. But it had limited fi-

nancial returns and consumed a lot of water, so I turned to growing mangoes. The trial period continued for three years, during which time I was able to grow 35 varieties of mango trees from countries such as Egypt, Thailand and India. It was in this period that I was able to identify varieties suitable for Oman's natural conditions."

Mahrizi has expanded his farm, planting approximately 16,000 mango trees on 30 acres

using commercial and intensive farming methods. "Total yield has increased to about 15 tonnes of mangoes," he informed.

He noted that the commonly held belief that mangoes only thrive in tropical climates is inaccurate. "Through experience, I found that some varieties are better suited to the environment and climate of Oman. The fruits are good for export. I started my project after reviewing Egypt's mango production model. Some years ago, Egypt ranked 90th among mango-producing countries. Today, it is among the leaders."

He is optimistic about the future. "I want to be one of the biggest mango producers in the sultanate," he revealed, adding that mango farming reaps good financial returns. While the crop requires a manageable amount of water, there is strong demand in the local market.

Mahrizi's mango trees stand as a symbol of what is possible with commitment to sustainable farming. His message to fellow farmers is simple: "Smart agriculture begins with one step. Take that step now."

National drive launched to equip youth with entrepreneurial skills

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In an effort to empower young Omanis with skills suited to the sultanate's economic priorities, the Youth Centre has launched a set of targeted national programmes across all governorates in partnership with Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development.

Focusing on citizens aged 15 to 34, the initiative is designed to foster entrepreneurship and build sector-specific capabilities in agriculture, maritime industries, logistics, technology and traditional crafts. The rollout of these programmes reflects the government's aim to nurture a new generation of entrepreneurs who are aligned with Oman Vision 2040.

Each governorate hosts programmes tailored to its local context. In agriculturally rich areas, the Agricultural Entrepreneurship Programme trains youth in modern farming techniques, agribusiness models and investment opportunities within the sector.



Similarly, the Maritime Entrepreneurship Programme is being deployed in coastal governorates to encourage business ventures that tap into Oman's strategic maritime assets.

In the logistics field, young participants are being introduced to key elements of supply chain operations, warehousing and e-commerce under the Logistics Entrepreneurship Programme. It also highlights the growing role of

Youth incubator launched in Jalan Bani bu Ali

Sur - Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth launched the 2025 Youth Initiatives Incubator in Jalan Bani Bu Ali, South Sharqiyah on Tuesday as part of its continued focus on youth-led community initiatives.

The incubator targets young social entrepreneurs from across

Oman leading non-profit projects designed to benefit local communities. It includes structured training sessions on project design, planning, resource mobilisation, partnership building and measuring social impact.

Participants will be exposed to new development frame-

works and tools aimed at enhancing their leadership skills and improving execution of their initiatives. The incubator will feature a mix of hands-on training, simulation events and field visits to promote collaboration and knowledge exchange among youth leaders.

According to the ministry, the incubator will play a key role in ensuring the long-term sustainability of youth-led community efforts and support the broader objectives of Vision 2040, which positions young people as central to Oman's national development agenda.

Oman as a regional logistics hub.

The Entrepreneurial Technology Programme is equipping youth with the tools to convert digital skills into tech-based enterprises, covering aspects such as innovation, coding and scalability of tech solutions.

The Crafts Leadership Programme focuses on helping youth in creative fields build sustainable businesses that preserve Oman's cultural heritage. Participants are trained in branding, commercial viability and market alignment.

To cultivate early awareness of self-employment, a separate programme has been launched in cooperation with Ministry of Education for school students aged 15 to 17. It promotes entrepreneurship and independent thinking at a formative stage.

In response to growing market demand, a Design and Packaging Programme has also been introduced. It trains youth in product design, branding and packaging based on current consumer trends and export requirements.

Basic Services Sector sets 2025 priorities for crisis response

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Basic Services Sector of National Committee for Emergency Management (NCEM) convened its first meeting of 2025 on Tuesday to discuss a series of measures to strengthen joint response capabilities and ensure uninterrupted delivery of essential services during emergencies.

Chaired by Mansour Talib al Hinai, Chairman of Authority for Public Services Regulation and Head of the Basic Services Sec-

tor, the meeting was attended by representatives of authorities responsible for roads, electricity, telecommunications, water and sanitation, energy, fuel and waste management.

Participants discussed key challenges related to handling emergency scenarios and emphasised the need for coordinated planning, clear responsibilities and improved readiness across service providers.

Executive decisions were issued aligned with NCEM's vision

of 'integration of efforts and performance effectiveness' aimed at ensuring swift and coordinated response during national crises.

The meeting highlighted the importance of ensuring continuity in supply and procurement chains, especially for essential goods such as bread and meat. Members underlined the need to provide sufficient resources to activate emergency and media response plans and prevent potential shortages.

RO36mn boost for Dhofar road network

Our Correspondent
Salalah

Dhofar Municipality is pressing ahead with a package of infrastructure projects aimed at upgrading internal and dual carriageways across the governorate. More than 300km of roads are being constructed and paved, at a total cost exceeding RO36mn, in line with Oman Vision 2040 priorities of sustainable development.

Covering several wilayats, the projects fall under the Sustainable Governorates and Cities Development Programme and



Ahmed bin Mohsen al Ghassani

are designed to ease mobility, improve safety, and support urban and economic expansion by enhancing the quality of road services for citizens, residents and visitors.

According to officials, construction and paving works have been completed or are ongoing in Salalah, Taqah, Mirbat, Sadah, Shaleem and Hallaniyat Islands, Thumrait, Muqshin, Al Mazyouna, Rakhyut and Dalkhut. The projects follow technical and safety standards, with emphasis on long-term infrastructure sustainability.

Ahmed bin Mohsen al Ghassani, Chairman of Dhofar Municipality, said Salalah alone is seeing the development of 161km of internal roads, including in plains and mountainous areas, at a cost exceeding RO9mn. He

confirmed the municipality is also working on dualisation of 9km of Sultan Qaboos Street, currently 22% complete, at a cost of RO16.3mn.

In Thumrait, the municipality will pave 40km of internal roads and begin dualisation of a 4.5km stretch of Thumrait Street, which will include decorative lighting. The combined value of the two projects is estimated at over RO3mn.

In Taqah, work has started on 32km of internal roads at a cost of approximately RO1.7mn, while Mirbat will see 20km of roads paved at a cost of RO995,000.

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Bank Muscat posts net profit of RO125.82mn

Muscat - Bank Muscat, the flagship financial institution in the Sultanate of Oman, announced its preliminary unaudited results for the six months ending on June 30.

The bank posted a net profit of RO125.82mn for the period compared to RO 112.12mn reported during the same period in 2024, an increase of 12.2%.

According to the report, net interest income from conventional banking and net income from Islamic financing stood at RO206.44mn for the six-month period ended June 30 compared to RO190.63mn for the same period in 2024, an increase of

The bank announced its preliminary unaudited results for the first six months of the year, assuring that the full results along with the complete set of unaudited financial statements will be released

8.3%.

Non-interest income was RO81.83mn for the six-month period ended June 30 as compared to RO75.27mn for the same period in 2024, an increase of 8.7% mainly due to growth in business volumes and higher investment income.

Operating expenses for the

same six-month period was RO108.08mn as compared to RO102.13mn for the same period in 2024, an increase of 5.8%.

Net impairment losses on financial assets for the same period was RO30.16mn as against RO29.96mn for the same period in 2024.

Net loans and advances in-

cluding Islamic financing receivables increased by 5.1% to RO10,727mn as against RO10,208mn as on for the first six months of last year.

Customer deposits including Islamic Customer deposits increased by 3.3% to RO9,879mn as against RO9,563mn as on June 30, 2024.

While releasing the report, the bank stated that the full results for those six-months along with the complete set of unaudited financial statements will be released following the approval of the Board of Directors of the bank at its meeting scheduled later this month.

Sohar International, Liva sign RO63mn loan deal

Muscat - In line with its commitment to enabling strategic partnerships that support sustainable business growth, Sohar International has signed a consolidated loan agreement with Liva Group, a leading multi-line insurance provider operating across the GCC.

The RO63mn facility reflects Sohar International's growing role as a trusted financial partner for regional corporates seeking to optimise capital structures and scale with resilience. The signing ceremony took place at Sohar International's Waterfront Office and was attended by Abdulwahid Mohamed al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, and Martin Rueegg, Chief Executive Officer of Liva Group.

Commenting on the strategic partnership, Abdulwahid Mohamed al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, stated: "At Sohar International, we are focused on fostering strategic partnerships that create long-term value. Our agreement with Liva Group is a testament to our commitment to supporting ambitious, high-performing organizations with customised financial solutions that drive sustainable growth.

"This facility not only enhances Liva's financial flexibility but also reflects our shared commitment for regional progress, innovation, and long-term value creation. We are proud to partner with Liva on its journey to scale, diversify, and lead with



purpose."

The facility consolidates Liva's existing borrowings into a single, streamlined structure - reducing financing costs, enhancing cash flow management, and increasing agility in capital deployment across the Group's operations. The agreement also provides a robust financial framework aligned with Liva's long-term growth strategy, particularly as it expands its presence across key regional markets.

Martin Rueegg, Chief Executive Officer of Liva Group, added that this agreement is about more than refinancing; it represents a proactive step in strengthening our capital efficiency and readiness for the future.

"Sohar International stood out as a strategic partner that understands our operational landscape and shares our ambitions around regional integration, digital innovation, and customer-centric growth."

This partnership further

strengthens Sohar International's growing regional presence and aligns with its aspirations to support clients expanding into high-growth markets such as Saudi Arabia - where both institutions share ambitious strategic goals. This partnership further strengthens Sohar International's growing regional presence and aligns with its aspirations to support clients expanding into high-growth markets such as Saudi Arabia.

This collaboration sets the stage for broader financial engagement, including the delivery of advanced, tailored banking solutions that support Liva Group's evolving priorities across its core markets.

By forging such strategic alliances, Sohar International reaffirms its position as a trusted partner of choice - empowering clients to unlock growth opportunities, accelerate regional expansion, and contribute meaningfully to the economic transformation of the wider region.

MSX drops 14 points

Muscat - Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) 30 Index today closed at 4,612.52 points, marking a drop of 14 points (0.30%) from the previous session's close of 4,626.57 points.

Trading value increased to RO24,204,384, reflecting a 129.6% surge compared to the last session's RO10,541,670. The MSX report indicated that market value saw a decrease of 0.081%, settling at approximately RO28.47bn.

Non-Omani investors recorded purchases worth RO1,599,000 (6.61%) of total trading volume, while sales by foreign investors reached RO1,790,000 (7.39%). Net foreign investment decreased by RO191,000 (0.79%).

ONA

EU trade ministers discuss €72bn retaliatory tariffs on US

Brussels, Belgium - Caught off guard while preparing to sign an agreement in principle with the US on tariffs, the EU is gearing up for retaliation in case negotiations fail following the new US threats over the weekend.

EU Trade Commissioner Maroš Šefčovic presented EU trade ministers gathered in Brussels for an extraordinary meeting on Monday a list of €72bn worth of US products to be included in a retaliatory tariff drive, as Washington's pressure ramped up over the weekend with the threat of 30% tariffs on EU imports starting on August 1.

"We must be prepared for all outcomes, including if necessary, well-considered proportionate measures to restore balance in our transatlantic relationship," Šefčovic said, adding: "Today the Commission is sharing with the member states the proposal for the second list of goods, accounting of some €72bn worth of US Imports. They will now



have a chance to discuss it."

The list proposed by the Commission, which has been reduced to €72bn from €95bn following consultations with EU industries and member states, still needs to be formally adopted by the

member states. It targets a wide range of products, including US-made aeroplanes and bourbon.

Last Saturday, after weeks of negotiations, US President Donald Trump published on Truth Social a letter sent to the Euro-

pean Commission threatening to impose 30% tariffs on EU imports if no deal is reached by August 1.

Last week, negotiations appeared to have entered the final stretch, with the EU having reluctantly agreed to a baseline tariff of 10% on its imports. Sector-specific exemptions were still being negotiated, with the EU having secured 0% on aircraft and spirits, and some US tariffs just above 10% on agricultural products.

"We were very very close to an agreement in principle," Danish foreign affairs minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen regretted.

The US currently imposes tariffs of 50% on EU steel and aluminium, 25% on cars, and 10% on all EU imports.

According to an EU diplomat, EU retaliation could also include export controls on aluminium scrap, which the US needs.

But while the EU is flexing its muscles, it continues to prioritise negotiation. "We remain convinced that our transatlantic relationship deserves a negotiated solution, one that leads to renewed stability and cooperation," Maroš Šefčovic said before announcing he had a call planned

with his US counterparts on Monday late afternoon.

On Saturday, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced a delay in the implementation of an initial retaliatory measure targeting €21bn worth of US products, which had been suspended until Tuesday.

According to the same EU diplomat, a meeting of EU ambassadors had originally decided to postpone it until the end of the year, but Trump's new announcements have made these countermeasures more urgent. They have therefore been postponed until August 1.

Behind the show of unity displayed on Monday by member states, diplomats are however well aware that complications will arise once a deal with the US is on the table.

"Let's be realistic, we will all have different interpretations," an official from a member state told Euronews.

Euronews

US inflation accelerates to 2.7% as President Trump's tariffs start to bite

Washington DC, US - Inflation rose last month to its highest level since February as President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs are pushing up the cost of a range of goods, including furniture, clothing, and large appliances.

Consumer prices rose 2.7% in June from a year earlier, the US Labor Department said on Tuesday, up from an annual increase of 2.4% in May. On a monthly basis, prices climbed 0.3% from May to June, after rising just 0.1% the previous month.

Worsening inflation poses a political challenge for President Donald Trump, who promised during last year's presidential campaign to immediately lower costs. The sharp inflation spike of

2022-23 was the worst in four decades and soured most Americans on former President Joe Biden's handling of the economy. Higher inflation will also likely heighten the Federal Reserve's reluctance to cut its short-term interest rate, as Trump is loudly demanding.

Trump has often insisted in comments on social media that there is "no inflation" and that as a result, the central bank should swiftly reduce its key interest rate from its current level of 4.3% to around 3%.

Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core inflation increased 2.9% in June from a year earlier, up from 2.8% in May. On a monthly basis, it picked up 0.2% from May to



June. Economists closely watch core prices because they typically provide a better sense of where inflation is headed.

"While US inflation remains on the benign side of things compared to recent history, today's figures perhaps mask darker

signs that may just push the US one step closer to a stagflationary environment," Lindsay James, investment strategist at

Quilter, said, adding that inflation as well as core inflation are both "moving away from the Federal Reserve's 2% target".

What became more expensive?

The uptick in inflation was driven by a range of higher prices. The cost of gas rose 1% just from May to June, while grocery prices increased 0.35%. Appliance prices jumped for the third straight month.

Trump has imposed sweeping duties of 10% on all imports, plus 50% levies on steel and aluminium, 30% on goods from China, and 25% on imported cars. Just last week, the president threatened to hit the European Union with a new 30%

tariff starting August 1.

The acceleration in inflation could provide a respite of sorts for Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, who has come under increasingly heavy fire from the White House for not cutting the benchmark interest rate.

Powell and other Fed officials have emphasised that they want to see how the economy evolves as the tariffs take effect before cutting their key short-term rate. The Fed chair has said that the duties could both push up prices and slow the economy, a tricky combination for the central bank since higher costs would typically lead the Fed to hike rates while a weaker economy often spurs it to reduce them.

Euronews

Germany's economic sentiment hits highest level since early 2022

Berlin, Germany - Germany's economic sentiment hit a 3-year high in July, with the ZEW index rising to 52.7 amid hopes of a US-EU trade resolution and German stimulus. The eurozone's outlook also improved, while markets stayed cautious after new US tariff threats.

Germany's economic sentiment climbed to its highest level in over three years in July, fuelling hopes that Europe's largest economy may be on a firmer path to recovery.

The ZEW Indicator of Economic Sentiment, which gauges investor expectations for the German economy, rose to 52.7 points this month, up from 47.5 in June and well above economist expectations of 50.3.

This marks the strongest reading since February 2022, shortly before Russia's invasion of Ukraine disrupted global trade and energy flows.

"After the strong improvements of the past two months, the positive sentiment among respondents is becoming more firmly established," said ZEW President Professor Achim Wambach. "Despite ongoing uncertainty due to global trade conflicts, nearly two-thirds of the experts expect the German economy to improve."



Germany's ZEW Current Conditions index rose to -59.5 in July this year, its highest level since June 2023, up from -72 the previous month and outperforming expectations of -66

Germany's ZEW Current Conditions index rose to -59.5 in July this year, its highest level

since June 2023, up from -72 the previous month and outperforming expectations of -66.

Wambach pointed to hopes of a speedy resolution to the US-EU tariff standoff, alongside the

German government's proposed emergency investment programme, as key drivers of optimism. The upbeat sentiment was particularly notable in expectations for mechanical engineering, metal production and the electrical engineering sector.

The positive sentiment extended to the broader eurozone. The ZEW sentiment index for the single-currency bloc rose modestly to 36.1 in July, up 0.8 points from June.

The assessment of current conditions in the eurozone also

improved, though it remained in negative territory at minus 24.2, a 6.5-point gain from the previous month.

Markets steady

Financial markets reacted with caution. The euro gained 0.2% against the US dollar to \$1.1680, on track to snap a four-day losing streak. Bund yields dropped 3 basis points to 2.69%, after hitting on Monday their highest levels since early April.

Still, investor nerves were apparent after US President Donald Trump announced a new 30% tariff on European Union imports from 1 August. The European Commission has pledged to intensify negotiations to avert a trade-war escalation.

Germany's DAX index was unchanged at 24,200 points, consolidating after three consecutive sessions of losses. The broader Euro STOXX 50 rose 0.3%, supported by strength in industrial and automotive names. Among top gainers, ASML Holding advanced 2.4%, followed by BASF (1.92%), Mercedes-Benz (1.74%), Volkswagen (1.45%) and BMW (1.44%). On the downside, L'Oréal fell 1.35%, Orange slipped 1.23% and Telefonía declined 0.91%.
Euronews

China economy grows at 5.2% despite trade war

Beijing, China - China achieved GDP growth for the last quarter above the official 5% target, although strong exports to markets aside from the US masked weak domestic consumption.

China's economy slowed in the last quarter as President Donald Trump's trade war escalated, but it still expanded at a robust 5.2% pace, the government said Tuesday.

That compares with 5.4% annual growth in January to March. The government said Tuesday that in quarterly terms, the world's second largest economy expanded by 1.1%.

In the first half of the year, the Chinese economy grew at a 5.3% annual pace, the official data shows. However, some analysts said actual growth may



have been significantly slower. Zichun Huang of Capital Economics noted that investments in fixed assets such as factory

equipment rose only 2.8% in the first half of the year, implying 2.9% annual growth in May and a mere 0.5% increase in June.

Capital Economics' activity proxy shows growth in China's gross domestic product, or GDP, at less than 4% year-on-year in

April and May, she said, forecasting annual growth of 3.5% for full-year 2025.

"The economic outlook for the rest of the year remains challenging," Huang wrote in a report. She added though that "political pressure to meet annual growth targets, even if only on paper, means that published GDP growth will be much higher."

A key factor was strong exports. On Monday, China reported that its exports accelerated in June, rising 5.8% from a year earlier, up from a 4.8% increase in May. A reprieve on painfully high tariffs on Chinese exports to the United States prompted a rush of orders by companies and consumers as the two sides resumed trade talks.
Euronews

Nvidia to sell H20 chips to China again

New York, US - US tech giant Nvidia will start selling its H20 AI chip in China again after the Trump administration relaxed export restrictions.

The White House gave assurances that it would grant licenses for the product in the Chinese market, the firm said on Tuesday in a blog post.

The move is a U-turn for the government, which in April banned sales of the chip to China, linked to concerns that the technology could be used for military purposes. At the time, Nvidia said it had been told that the export control would stay in place for the 'indefinite future'.

Nvidia claimed in May that it had taken a US\$4.5bn (€3.8bn) inventory cost hit in the April quarter because of the restrictions and added that it had missed out on an additional US\$2.5bn (€2.1bn) in sales. The announcement temporarily sent its share price plunging.

The H20 chip was specifically designed for the Chinese market, in line with restrictions introduced by former president Joe Biden in 2023. When in office, Trump overhauled the Biden-era curbs but imposed restrictions on Nvidia's H20 AI chip.

On Tuesday, Nvidia also announced a new China-specific AI chip it said was 'fully compliant'



with export rules. Tuesday's announcement comes after Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang has spent months lobbying in both the US and China.

Huang argued that Trump's restrictions were a "failure" in the sense that they were boosting China's AI capabilities, notably as the market could no longer rely on American products.

Exports of the chip do, however, help Chinese AI companies like DeepSeek, that use Nvidia chips to create their products.

The breakthrough comes as relations between Washington and Beijing have thawed in recent weeks. Earlier this year, the Trump administration threatened a 145% duty on Chinese goods sent to the US, and Beijing responded with a 125% retaliatory tariff. The two sides decided to lower these taxes in May, and then agreed on a trade framework last month.
Euronews

DEWA receives award for digital transformation

Dubai, UAE - Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) has won the '3G Championship Award for Digital Transformation 2025' in recognition of the remarkable achievements of its Internal Audit Department.

The accolade, which was announced at the Global Good Governance Awards organised by UK financial services firm Cambridge IFA, follows a rigorous auditing process conducted by Cambridge IFA, which verified DEWA's compliance with the highest international standards



in governance and digital transformation. The award was announced during the 10th annual awards ceremony held in Brunei Darussalam.

Saeed Mohammed al Tayar, MD and CEO of DEWA, received the award at DEWA's head office. "The award reflects our commitment to the highest standards of transparency, integrity and institutional governance, as well as to developing internal audit methodologies using advanced analysis tools," Tayar said.

Nissan is closing flagship Oppama plant in Japan to cut costs globally

Tokyo, Japan - The factory in Oppama, Japan, employs approximately 2,400 people, who will lose their jobs in March 2028. Car production will move to another Nissan plant in southwestern Japan.

Vehicle production at the Oppama plant in Kanagawa

Prefecture, south of Tokyo, will be halted at the end of the 2027 fiscal year, in March 2028, the Japanese automaker said on Tuesday in a statement.

After that, all models that had been made or scheduled for production at Oppama will be made at Nissan Motor Kyushu,

in Fukuoka Prefecture. The Oppama plant has been a prized symbol for Nissan Motor Corp., which rolled out its Leaf electric car there in 2010, ahead of key rivals.

"This transfer is expected to significantly reduce manufacturing costs in Japan, strengthen

plant competitiveness, improve product profitability, and support Nissan's long-term growth," said the statement, adding that the related costs are going to be disclosed during the upcoming first quarter financial announcement at the end of July.

The plant's closure was ex-

pected, as the carmaker has said repeatedly that it is restructuring its operations to boost its profitability, including by consolidating production sites.

Nissan, based in the port city of Yokohama, says the tariff policies of President Donald Trump have hurt its bottom line.

Earlier this year, Nissan said it was slashing about 15% of its global workforce, or about 20,000 employees, which would include a 9,000 head-count reduction announced late last year, with some in China.

The company has been racking up losses, hurt by slipping

vehicle sales in China and elsewhere, huge restructuring costs and ballooning inventories.

Earlier this year, Nissan said it's reducing the number of its auto plants to 10 from 17 to "create a leaner, more resilient business".
Euronews

Sailing camp begins at Ras Al Hadd

Sailors from Oman's national teams will spend the summer undergoing technical and tactical training in Ras Al Hadd under the guidance of specialist coaches.

Starting June 29 and running through August 22, the Optimist, ILCA 4, 29er, ILCA 6 and ILCA 7 teams will work on their skills, improve their fitness and conditioning and train on and off the water in preparation for upcoming competitions, including the Oman National Sailing Championships and Mussanah Race Week, a press release said.

In total, 32 sailors are part of the camp across six training blocks spanning eight weeks. The camp is led by Oman Sail's head coach - Performance, Hashim al Rashdi, and Marwa al Khaifi, female team leader.

The 13-strong Optimist team will be accompanied by coach Sultan al Zadjali and Development coach Hassan al Rahbi. Fifteen sailors representing the ILCA 4, ILCA 6 and 7 teams will be led by Coach Ahmed al Wahabi, and four sailors from the 29er team will be coached by Ahmed al Hasani.

Abdulaziz al Shiedi, Oman Sail's acting director of Sailing, said, "Ras Al Hadd is the ideal venue for our sailors to learn from each other in a supportive environment where sailing is the



Abdulaziz al Shiedi



Hashim al Rashdi

top priority for us all. The group has made significant progress in the past year and we're looking to build on that by incorporating new challenges, new opportunities and different conditions to support the growth of all of our teams."



There are several important competitions on the horizon and we need to ensure we're prepared as best we can be. That means being in peak physical and mental condition

HASHIM AL RASHDI

Rashdi added, "There are several important competitions on the horizon and we need to ensure we're prepared as best we can be. That means being in peak physical and mental condition, gaining experience of the most likely scenarios they will face on

the water and ensure all of our teams have the solutions to potential challenges at their disposal. Ras Al Hadd has proved to be an excellent venue in the past and we are all looking forward to another chance to sail here."

The Oman National Sailing

Championships (August 18-22) will be followed by the 14th Musanah Race Week from October 15-21 where Optimist, ILCA 4, ILCA 6, ILCA 7, and the para inclusive RS Venture Connect class sailors from around the world head to Oman.

SOHAR port launches 3rd edition of Maseer programme for youth

SOHAR Port and Freezone has officially launched the third edition of its flagship summer initiative, Maseer, a transformative programme dedicated to equipping Omani youth in grades 5 to 11, with future-ready skills through immersive, learning experiences.

In collaboration with Kidsity, a national leader in youth education, this year's programme will engage learners from the Wilayats of Suhar and Liwa throughout July and August, a press release said.

Building on previous successes, Maseer offers seven dynamic workshops covering key emerging fields, including, Artificial Intelligence and Cloud Data, Cybersecurity, 3D CAD Design, Smart Cities Development, Arduino Programming, Renewable Energy, and English Language Learning. These expert-led sessions provide participants with hands-on, practical knowledge that aligns seamlessly with



Oman Vision 2040 and SOHAR's strategic role as a gateway to global innovation.

This year also introduces Maseer Future City, an immersive metaverse experience that allows students to explore a futuristic digital environment inspired by smart cities. Through AI-powered learning, gamified challenges, and interactive zones, the platform equips participants with future-ready skills in a fun, accessible, and engaging

way — further supporting Oman Vision 2040's focus on digital transformation.

"Maseer reflects our belief that investing in young people is one of the most powerful ways to support national development," said Mohamed al Shizawi, acting CEO, SOHAR Freezone. "The programme exemplifies our commitment to advancing social welfare and socio-economic growth by fostering a culture of innovation and knowledge-shar-

ing. By providing access to advanced knowledge and practical learning, we are helping students build the skills, confidence, and mindset needed to thrive in competitive global industries."

"Maseer represents an inspiring journey that goes beyond traditional education by integrating cutting-edge technology and interactive learning," said Abdulmajeed Albalushi, Managing Director of Kidsity Center Suhar. "We are proud to partner with SOHAR Port and Freezone to offer Omani youth a unique opportunity to develop future skills, creativity, and confidence that will prepare them to thrive in tomorrow's digital world."

Focusing on innovation, leadership, and digital fluency, Maseer complements SOHAR's broader corporate social responsibility mission. The programme nurtures curiosity, critical thinking, and collaboration, encouraging students to apply learning through interactive projects.



Mercedes-Benz Oman offers value on pre-owned cars

Mercedes-Benz Oman introduced its latest range of Certified Pre-Owned vehicles, delivering exceptional value without compromising on luxury, performance, or assurance.

Each model in this curated collection is rigorously inspected and certified to meet the brand's uncompromising standards, ensuring customers enjoy the confidence and quality expected of the Mercedes-Benz brand.

Available models begin with the Mercedes-Benz A-Class 200 Sedan Special Edition 2025,

which features a Night Black exterior and ARTICO man-made leather/Microcut microfibre interior options in Bahia Brown. This automotive luxury for everyday model combines superior sportiness with luxury-class comfort. At RO18,995 including VAT, it has a negligible mileage of 6,065km.

The 2024 Mercedes-Benz CLA 200 Coupé Special Edition is progressive, expressive, and beautiful, right down to the last detail. Featuring a Mountain Grey elegant coupé silhouette

exterior and a leather two-tone Red Pepper/Black interior, the CLA 200 is only 10,207 kilometres driven and costs RO18,995, including VAT.

Mercedes-Benz GLA 200 Special Edition 2024 combines innovative dynamics with timeless elegance and the typical off-road character of an SUV. Priced at RO18,995, including VAT, this 7,176km mileage car features a Polar White exterior and an ARTICO man-made leather/MICROCUT microfibre Black interior.

Abu Dhabi Chamber launches initiative for entrepreneurs' SMEs

As part of the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry's efforts to deepen engagement with entrepreneurs' small enterprises, identify their needs, and shape more responsive trade policies that support their growth, the Chamber's Al Ain branch launched an initiative targeting enterprises in the retail, tourism, and agricultural sectors.

This initiative reflects the chamber's commitment to strengthening its active presence across the emirate, a press release said.

The initiative is designed to foster direct engagement with enterprise owners, offering a closer look at the

opportunities and challenges they encounter in their day-to-day operations. This hands-on approach will help generate actionable insights for a more targeted, data-driven decisions, ultimately enhancing the impact of support provided to strengthen and scale small enterprises.

The first phase involved field visits to a range of businesses across Al Ain region. The initiative was met with positive feedback from business owners, who welcomed the Chamber's initiative and commended the effort as a meaningful step towards understanding and addressing their real-world needs.

52 UAE school teams win 2025 ADNOC Yas finals

More than 1,400 students from across the UAE competed in the 2025 ADNOC Yas in Schools National Finals – the country's largest youth STEM event – held at Yas Marina Circuit's Yas Conference Centre.

Over the course of a high-energy week, 310 teams from 113 schools took part in five national competitions - F1 in Schools, Formula Ethara, 4x4 in Schools, Test Driver, and Ethara Go, a press release said.

Designed to mirror real-world challenges, the event saw students build and race model cars, deliver technical portfolios, and present sustainability and business strategies to expert judges. Livestreamed to a growing audience, this year's finals drew over 31,000 online views – a 41% increase from 2024 – across six shows and 46 hours of coverage.

Ethara Go saw a 56% increase in team registrations year-on-year, while Test Driver



grew from 54 to 64 teams – with over half of participants coming from Dubai. The growing momentum highlights the programme's role in building real-world skills and national pride among students across the country.

Among the standout winners,

HYPERNIX from Private International English School were crowned F1 in Schools Professional Champions and will now represent the UAE at the 2026 STEM Racing World Finals. Apex Racers from Jumeirah College secured Rookie Champion and Verbal Presentation awards,

while MENA Racing dominated the Fastest Car and Engineering categories.

In other divisions, Project Nova from Dubai College won the 4x4 in Schools national title, and ERA Racing from Royal Grammar School Guildford Dubai topped Formula Ethara.

Ali Al Beshr, general manager of Yas Marina Circuit, said, "The National Finals have become a launchpad for young talent in the UAE. Every year, we see students

Designed to mirror real-world challenges, the event saw students build and race model cars, and deliver technical portfolios

push the boundaries of what's possible and now, they're taking that momentum to the world stage. Watching this year's champions prepare to represent the UAE at the 2026 STEM Racing World Finals is a powerful reminder of what this programme is building toward."



Suzuki Oman launches summer campaign

Moosa Abdul Rahman Hassan and Co, the exclusive distributor of Suzuki vehicles in Oman, has unveiled its highly anticipated summer campaign under the theme 'Begin Your Summer Journey with the Perfect Drive', showcasing unbeatable car prices across Suzuki's popular

model line-up. This limited-time campaign invites customers to explore a range of Suzuki models, including Swift, Baleno, Jimny, Ertiga, and Grand Vitara, all equipped to deliver performance, comfort, and unmatched value, a press release said.

Whether it's the adventurous Jimny, the spacious Ertiga, the bold Baleno, the premium Grand Vitara, or the agile new Swift, this campaign emphasises the versatility of Suzuki's portfolio for every kind of summer journey

The prices includes free first-year insurance and registration, 2 years/40,000km free service, and 5 years unlimited mileage warranty. Suzuki Oman ensures that every customer finds a vehicle that meets both, lifestyle needs and budget expectations.

Whether it's the adventurous Jimny, the spacious Ertiga, the bold Baleno, the premium Grand Vitara, or the agile new Swift, this campaign emphasises the versatility of Suzuki's portfolio for every kind of summer journey. "We understand that summer is a time for travel, exploration,

and new memories," said Muhammad Faisal Nawaz, head of Marketing and CRM at Suzuki Oman. "With this campaign, we're not just offering great cars, but complete peace of mind with value-packed benefits that let customers focus on the road ahead."

Kia Carens - an MPV for start-ups

The Kia Carens is a bold and spacious multi-purpose vehicle, packed with class-leading features that ensure practicality and maximum output for small and upcoming business owners, designed to put their worries at bay. With its SUV-inspired styling and innovative features, the Kia Carens offers exceptional utility for small and medium-sized businesses alike. It's a versatile option for a wide range of enterprises, pertaining to supplies and deliveries of trading material such as Bakery, Laundry, Coffee shop goods, etc. Carens is an ideal go-getter for SME's and Souq shop owners who need ferrying of their items from purchase to delivery, a press release said. Designed with comfort in mind, the Carens brings much needed functionality to the 7-seater MPV category. Its rear two seat rows can be folded to provide ample that cargo space perfect for deliveries or picking up essentials for bakery, laundry, etc establishments.



At the same time, the Carens seamlessly transforms into the perfect family vehicle to carry 7 persons, combining conveniences, comfort, and safety for all passengers of all sizes, equipped with steering audio

controls, rear view camera, smart key, roof AC vents and remote engine start, making it one of the most unique MPVs in its segment. From smart connectivity to flexible seating, the Carens is

loaded with thoughtful additions, including a dashboard pop out cup holders and tray, the Carens truly redefines automotive practicality. Inside the cabin, it boasts a range of useful connectivity features: an 8-inch Audio Dis-

play system with Android Auto, Apple CarPlay and Bluetooth, USB and type C Charging points and Auto Cruise Control functions, offering the driver enhanced control of the vehicle. Equipped with, Anti-lock Braking

The Carens seamlessly transforms into the perfect family vehicle to carry 7 persons, combining conveniences, comfort, and safety for all passengers

System (ABS), Rear parking Assist System and downhill brake control that make every family journey smooth and pleasurable. With its extensive list of convenience features, the Kia Carens is setting a new benchmark in the B2B mobility space. and is already trusted by small to medium-sized business owners.



Rolls Royce offers new bespoke masterpieces

Rolls Royce marks the third anniversary of its Dubai office by offering bespoke masterpieces, the designs of which reflect bold personal stories and regional cultural inspiration. These masterpieces include first-time innovations, showcasing bespoke craftsmanship at its finest by its lead designer and Bespoke Client Experience Manager, a press release said. "The Private Office Dubai has transformed the way we engage with our clients in the region. As the first Private Office established outside of The Home of Rolls-Royce in the United Kingdom, it offers direct access to our world-class bespoke capabilities. It stands as a centre of creativity and craftsmanship, enabling a deeply immersive and highly personal commissioning experience. Over the past three years, the Private Office together with

the dedicated lead designer and Bespoke Client Experience Manager have brought to life truly extraordinary designs that speak not only to the individuality of our clients but also to the bold spirit and cultural richness of the Middle East," James Crichton, regional director, Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Middle East and Africa, said. "To celebrate the third anniversary of the Private Office Dubai, we are delighted to reveal a selection of extraordinary Bespoke masterpieces — each a reflection of personal vision and narrative. These commissions are the result of close, collaborative relationships with our clients, and the trust they place in us to bring their most ambitious ideas to life. At the Private Office Dubai we are transforming these visions into reality, continually."

Ajman NuVentures launches 'Pay as You Go'

Ajman NuVentures Centre Free Zone (ANCFZ), the UAE's most innovative business setup destination, has unveiled Pay as You Go, a flexible, an investor-friendly solution designed to eliminate high startup costs and empower entrepreneurs to launch and grow their businesses at their own pace. With ease and control in your hands, just cover the business license fee to kick off the process. You can add the remaining ser-



vices later, at your own pace and according to your business requirements, with no extra charges for amendments, a press release said. In a market where affordability, adaptability, and simplicity matter more than ever, the Pay as You Go model offers a path to entrepreneurship. Investors can now establish their companies with minimal initial cost and only pay for additional services—such as visa processing, legal docu-

mentation, or office upgrades, when they're actually needed. "Ajman NuVentures is re-defining the business setup experience," said Rishi Somaiya, CEO of Ajman NuVentures Centre Free Zone. "With Pay as You Go, we're enabling founders to avoid upfront financial burdens, giving them the freedom to scale strategically. It reinforces our goal of giving entrepreneurs the autonomy they need to build and grow their

ventures. Ajman NuVentures Centre Free Zone sets itself apart by delivering two-hour business license issuance, 24-hour visa processing, and an all-inclusive digital portal where ANCFZ specialists handle all setup and administrative tasks on the client's behalf. Entrepreneurs are empowered to focus on business growth while ANCFZ manages the complex processes traditionally associated with business.

GMC launches 'Elevate Your Summer Drives' summer campaign

GMC Oman, represented by Moosa Abdul Rahman Hassan and Co, has launched its latest nationwide summer campaign under the theme 'Elevate Your Summer Drives with Unbeatable GMC Drive'. This seasonal campaign underscores GMC's legacy of power, refinement, and premium features, while delivering exceptional value to customers across the sultanate, a press release said. The campaign includes a wide line-up of GMC's most sought-after models - the robust Sierra, the commanding



Yukon, and the sophisticated Acadia. Each model is known for its advanced technology, signature GMC styling, and engineer-

ing designed for Oman's diverse driving terrain — from highways to mountain passes. As part of the campaign, the

starting prices across the GMC range now come inclusive of first-year registration, first-year insurance, 3 years/60,000km

scheduled service, and 5 years unlimited mileage warranty. These benefits are designed to provide complete ownership confidence, allowing customers to focus on what truly matters — enjoying every journey with peace of mind. Whether it's a weekend getaway or a long-distance drive across Oman's breath-taking landscapes, GMC vehicles are engineered to deliver performance without compromise.

The GMC Sierra SLT Crew Cab 5.3ltr, starting at RO27,799, continues to set the standard for rugged utility and premium comfort. With a bold presence, trailering capabilities, and interior sophistication, the Sierra is built for both work and leisure. For families, the GMC Yukon lineup offers both style and substance. The Yukon SLE 5.3ltr begins at RO24,899, while the off-road ready Yukon AT4 starts at RO30,899.

Texas flood: Rescue operations hindered by heavy rain forecast

Texas, US - Search and rescue operations in Texas were hampered by rain forecasts for the second day in a row after the devastating July 4 floods killed at least 131 people.

Most rescue crews were held off or ordered to stop amid worries of more heavy rain and the possibility of more flooding.

Meanwhile, authorities lowered the tally of people unaccounted for to 101, with 97 still missing in Kerrville and four more in neighbouring counties.

Officials have begun draining nearby reservoirs in a bid to locate submerged vehicles and victims.

No one rescued alive since July 4

The floods, which swept through the Guadalupe River basin after over a foot of rain fell in less than an hour, have left entire trailers



Search for victims had been going on along the Guadalupe River

buried or missing.

Most of those killed were children at Camp Mystic, an all-girls Christian summer retreat.

Authorities say no one has been rescued alive since July 4, when the flooding caught residents and tourists off guard before dawn.

Kerr County Judge Rob Kelly said on Monday that it has been difficult to know how many tourists were in the area when the flooding occurred.

“We don’t know how many of them there are,” Kelly said.

Authorities face flak and threats

As the disaster has also raised questions about readiness, Governor Abbott has called for a special legislative session later this month to investigate the emergency response and preparedness measures leading up to the flood.

Kerr County lacked a flash-flood warning sirens, and officials are now facing mounting criticism and even threats.

The high death toll, in one of the deadliest floods in the US in decades, has sparked concerns over the lack of warning sirens in Kerr County and staffing shortages at the National Weather Service after staffing cuts under the Trump administration.

DW

China: Xi meets FMs, heads of foreign delegations attending SCO meeting

Beijing, China - Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday met in Beijing with foreign ministers and heads of standing bodies of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) who are in China to attend the Meeting of the Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of SCO Member States.

He noted that over the past 24 years since its founding, the SCO has always upheld ‘the Shanghai Spirit, grown into a mature and robust organisation, and demonstrated strong vitality’.

China has always prioritised the SCO in its neighbourhood diplomacy, and is committed to making the organisation more substantive and stronger, safeguarding regional security and stability, promoting the development and prosperity of member states and building a closer community with a shared future, Xi said.

He added that since China assumed the rotating presidency last July, it has actively carried out activities and advanced cooperation, with all parties taking solid steps to jointly build a better home for the SCO.

With the SCO summit set to take place this year in China’s Tianjin, Xi expressed his hope to meet the leaders of other member states at the event to discuss the future development of the SCO.

He stressed that in the face of a turbulent and changing international landscape, the SCO must stay focused, remain confident, act efficiently and play a more proactive role in injecting greater stability and positive energy into the world.



Chinese President Xi Jinping meets with foreign ministers and heads of standing bodies of the SCO, who are in China to attend an SCO meeting, in Beijing on Tuesday (Xinhua)

Chinese President Xi Jinping, while addressing the delegations, stressed that in the face of a turbulent and changing international landscape, the SCO must stay focused, remain confident, act efficiently and play a more proactive role in injecting greater stability and positive energy into the world

ident, act efficiently and play a more proactive role in injecting greater stability and positive energy into the world.

Xi meets Russian FM

Xi Jinping said on Tuesday that China and Russia should bolster mutual support within multilateral frameworks, safeguard their development and security inter-

ests, unite the countries of the Global South, and push the international order toward a more just and equitable direction.

Xi made the remarks during his meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Beijing, calling on both sides to support each other in steering the development direction of the SCO, injecting new momentum

into the SCO, and making the strategic platform more substantive and stronger.

Xi asked Lavrov to convey his cordial greetings to Russian President Vladimir Putin. Calling on both sides to follow through on the important understandings reached with Putin, Xi said China and Russia should advance their comprehensive

strategic partnership of coordination.

The SCO, jointly established by countries including China and Russia as a comprehensive regional cooperation mechanism, plays a vital role in safeguarding peace, stability, and development across Eurasia, Xi noted.

Lavrov conveyed President Putin’s sincere greetings to President Xi, adding that under the strategic leadership of the two heads of state, Russia-China comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination has developed in depth.

Russia places great importance on its relationship with China and looks forward to maintaining high-level exchanges with China in this significant year that marks the 80th anniversary of the victory in the World Anti-Fascist War, said Lavrov.

He added that Russia will work with China to strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation in various fields, maintain communication and coordination in international and regional affairs, and promote regional and global peace and stability.

Russia supports China’s work as the rotating chair of the SCO to jointly ensure the success of the SCO summit in Tianjin, said Lavrov.

Xinhua

Beyonce’s unreleased music stolen from rental car

Atlanta, US - Police in the southeastern US city of Atlanta have issued a warrant for an unnamed suspect after computer drives containing unreleased music by pop star Beyonce along with plans related to her concerts were stolen on July 8 from a rental car used by her choreographer.

The theft came two days before Beyonce kicked off the Atlanta leg of her ‘Cowboy Carter’ tour, named for her 2024 album of the same name.

Beyonce’s choreographer, Christopher Grant, told police that when he returned to his rental car last Tuesday, he found that its rear window had been smashed and all the luggage in the vehicle stolen.

In his report, he said the computer drives had ‘contained water marked music, some unreleased music, footage plans for the show, and past and future set list (sic)’. He said other items were also missing, such as an Apple MacBook, headphones and several items of luxury clothing.

Police have searched an area where signals from the MacBook and headphones were detected, but no items were reported to have been recovered.

DW

US: Democrats push for release of Epstein files

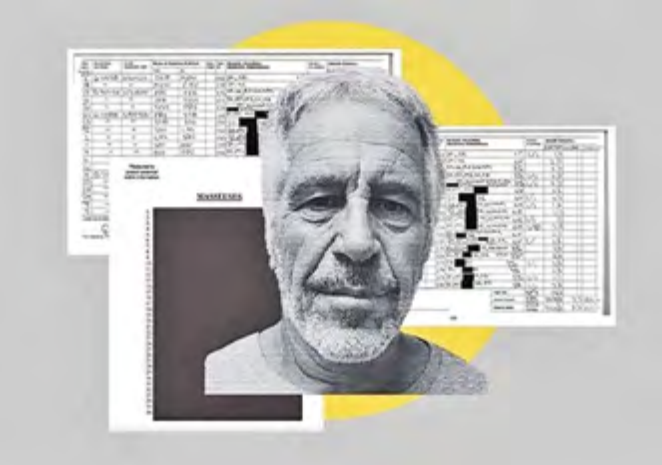
Washington, D.C., US - Some US House Democrats urged the Trump administration on Monday to release all files associated with the late financier and convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

“The American people deserve to know the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth as it relates to this whole sordid Jeffrey Epstein matter,” House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries told reporters on Capitol Hill.

Jeffries accused President Donald Trump, his Attorney General Pam Bondi and ‘MAGA extremists’ of ‘fanning the flames’ around the Epstein case for years.

“Now the chickens are coming home to roost...What, if anything, is the Trump administration and the Department of Justice hiding? What are you hiding?”

“If you are not hiding anything, prove that to the American people, and if you are trying to hide something, as many of Donald Trump’s MAGA supporters apparently believe, then Congress should actually work hard to try



to uncover the truth for the American people,” Jeffries added.

He said there are two options available: either Trump and Bondi ‘intentionally lied’ about the Epstein files for years, or they are ‘engaging in a cover-up’.

“So it’s Congress’s responsibility, in a bipartisan way, to ask the questions and try to get answers on behalf of the American people,” he added.

Rep. Ro Khanna said on Monday that he introduced an amendment demanding the full release of the Epstein files.

“Representatives should have

to vote tomorrow either to stand with ordinary Americans and release the files or side with the rich and powerful. Whose side are you on?” he said.

Rep. Marc Veasey said he also introduced a resolution demanding that Trump and Bondi release all the Epstein files.

“No Republican signed on to cosponsor. Thank you for your attention to this matter,” Veasey said.

Epstein, a wealthy financier accused of sex trafficking and related crimes, died by suicide in a New York City jail in 2019.

Anadolu Agency

US Supreme Court clears way for Trump to resume Education Department layoffs

Washington, D.C., US - The US Supreme Court allowed President Donald Trump to move forward on Monday with efforts to dismantle the Department of Education, overturning a lower court ruling that had blocked mass layoffs and other efforts to gut the agency.

The decision allows the administration, for now, to move forward with mass firings that eliminated nearly half of the agency’s workforce in March, along with other measures like transferring control of the federal student loan portfolio.

The Supreme Court’s majority offered no explanation for its decision, while the three liberal justices dissented, with Justice Sonia Sotomayor authoring the dissenting opinion.

“The Department is responsible for providing critical funding and services to millions of students and scores of schools across the country. Lifting the District Court’s injunction will unleash untold harm, delaying or denying educational opportunities and leaving students to suffer from discrimination, sexual assault, and other civil rights viola-



The Supreme Court’s majority offered no explanation for its decision, while the three liberal justices dissented

tions without the federal resources Congress intended,” Sotomayor wrote. “The majority is either wilfully blind to the implications of its ruling or naive. But either way, the threat to our Constitution’s separation of powers is grave,” she added.

Trump said the Supreme Court handed a ‘major victory’ to parents and students across the country. “Now, with this GREAT Supreme Court Decision, our Secretary of Education, Linda McMahon, may begin this very important process. The Federal Government has been running our Education System into the ground, but we are going to turn it all around by giving the Power back to the PEOPLE,” Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform. America’s students will be ‘the best, brightest, and most Highly Educated anywhere in the World’, he added.

Education Secretary Linda McMahon welcomed the ruling,

saying the department will move forward with its workforce reduction and continue its efforts to shift educational authority back to the states.

“Today, the Supreme Court again confirmed the obvious: the President of the United States, as the head of the Executive Branch, has the ultimate authority to make decisions about staffing levels, administrative organisation and day-to-day operations of federal agencies,” she said.

Gaza: 12 more killed in Israeli strikes

Hamas, on Tuesday, said that a Palestinian lawmaker was assassinated by the Israeli army in Gaza City

Gaza City/Istanbul - At least 12 Palestinians were killed and several others injured on Tuesday in new Israeli strikes in the Gaza Strip, medical sources said.

Five people lost their lives when Israeli fighter jets hit a house in Al-Zarqa neighbourhood, northeast of Gaza City, a medical source said.

One more Palestinian was killed in another strike targeting the Zeitoun neighbourhood in southeastern Gaza city.

A Palestinian woman was killed and several people were injured in an Israeli strike that targeted a tent sheltering displaced people in the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood in the same city.

Five civilians were killed, and several people remained missing after fighter jets struck a house in the Shati refugee camp, west of Gaza City.

Additionally, several civilians, including children, were killed and injured in another Israeli attack that targeted tents sheltering displaced families in the Al-Rimal neighbourhood in Gaza City.

Palestinian lawmaker killed, says Hamas

Hamas, meanwhile, on Tuesday said that a Palestinian lawmaker was assassinated by the Israeli army in Gaza City.

Mohammad Faraj al-Ghoul, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and a Hamas figure, was killed in a strike targeting him in the city, the group said in a statement.

Ghoul also served as a justice minister in the former govern-



The Israeli army renewed on Tuesday its 'immediate' evacuation warning for neighbourhoods in Gaza City and the northern governorate, amid its ongoing genocidal war in the enclave

ment of late Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh from 2007 to 2012.

Evacuation orders

The Israeli army renewed on Tuesday its 'immediate' evacuation warning for neighbourhoods

in Gaza City and the northern governorate, amid its ongoing genocidal war in the enclave.

In a statement, army spokesperson Avichay Adraee warned Palestinians to evacuate areas in Gaza City and the north-

ern governorate that had been repeatedly ordered to evacuate throughout June.

The Gaza City areas mentioned in the army's statement include the neighbourhoods of East Zeitoun, the Old City, Turkman, Al-Jadida, Al-Daraj, Al-Sabra, and Al-Tuffah.

As for the northern governorate, the statement lists Jabalia town, Jabalia camp, and Jabalia al-Nazla, as well as the neighbourhoods of Al-Rawdah, Al-Nahda, Al-Zuhur, Al-Noor, Al-Salam, and Tal al-Zaatar.

The army ordered Palestinians in those areas to move to the western area of Al-Mawasi.

The Israeli army classifies Al-Mawasi area as a 'humanitarian safe zone', yet it has committed deadly attacks there by bombing the fragile tents sheltering displaced people, resulting in hundreds of deaths and injuries among those displaced there.

The army's statement noted that it is operating in these areas 'with increasing force to destroy the enemy and hostile organisations, with fighting extending

westward toward the city centre'.

According to last week's report by the UN humanitarian office, since March 18, the Israeli army has issued about 54 displacement orders, affecting around 297sqkm - about 81% of the Gaza Strip - with evacuation orders.

The report added: "With no safe place to go, many people have sought refuge in overcrowded displacement sites, makeshift shelters, damaged buildings, streets and open areas. People have been confined to

ever-shrinking spaces."

"As of 9 July, 86 per cent of the Gaza Strip is within Israeli-militarised zones or placed under displacement orders (they largely overlap) since 18 March," it said.

More Palestinians held in West Bank

The Israeli army rounded up at least 35 Palestinians, including children, in military raids in the occupied West Bank, prisoners' affairs groups said on Tuesday.

Children and former prisoners were among the detainees in the raids that targeted Nablus, Salfit, Qalqilya, Jenin, Tulkarem, Hebron and Bethlehem in the occupied territory, the Commission of Detainees Affairs and the Palestinian Prisoner Society said in a joint statement.

Since October 2023, over 18,000 Palestinians have been detained by the Israeli army in the West Bank, according to Palestinian figures. The figure, however, does not include thousands of Palestinians who were arrested by the Israeli army in Gaza since October 2023.

Rights groups estimate the number of Palestinians held by Israel at around 10,800 people, including 50 women, 450 children, and 3,629 held without trial or charge under Israel's notorious policy of administrative detention. Since the start of Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip, at least 998 Palestinians have been killed and more than 7,000 injured in the West Bank by Israeli forces and illegal settlers.

Anadolu Agency

Syria: Israeli warplanes launch strikes in Suwayda

Damascus, Syria - Israeli warplanes launched airstrikes targeting Syrian forces in southern Syria's Suwayda governorate on Tuesday.

Syria's state news agency SANA reported multiple strikes by the Israeli army in the Druze-majority area, but did not provide any details about casualties.

Israel's Army Radio also reported a strike on a Syrian tank after entering Suwayda city.

A military statement said that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu instructed the army to strike Syrian forces and military vehicles in Suwayda.

The army 'struck several armoured fighting vehicles consisting of tanks, APCs, and MLRS, as well as access roads, in order to disrupt the convoys' arrival to the area," the statement said.

Early on Tuesday, Syrian Defence Minister Murhaf Abu Qasra announced a full ceasefire



in Suwayda following negotiations with local community leaders. According to SANA, the Syrian army has begun withdrawing heavy military equipment from Suwayda, preparing for the handover of the city's neighbourhoods to internal security forces responsible for maintaining law and order.

On Monday, more than 30

people were killed and nearly 100 others injured in clashes between armed Bedouin tribal fighters and Druze militias in Suwayda, the Syrian Interior Ministry said.

"To all units operating within Suwayda city, we announce a complete ceasefire following an agreement with the city's elders and dignitaries," the defence minister said on X.

Yemen drone case: Constitutional Court rules Germany not responsible

Berlin, Germany - The German Federal Constitutional Court ruled on Tuesday that Germany did not violate international law by failing to strictly monitor or prevent US drone attacks carried out with the help of signals from the Ramstein air base.

The ruling comes after two Yemenis who say they had family members killed in a US drone attack in their home country more than 10 years go invoked the right to life and physical integrity enshrined in the German constitution in a complaint to the court.

What did the court say?

The court did state that Germany had a certain obligation to protect basic human rights even of foreigners living abroad.

However, it said it had been unable to establish that the US had employed unjustifiable criteria in its differentiation between



Transport planes and tankers are parked on the apron of the Ramstein air base

military targets and civilians in its attack.

The court also ruled that any such attack would have to have a sufficient connection to German state authority for the obligation to hold, something that it said could not be claimed in this case.

The case against Ramstein air base

The two Yemeni men bringing

the case, Ahmed and Khalid bin Ali Jaber, said they lost some of their relatives in a US drone strike on the village of Khashamir in 2012 that occurred during a wedding meal of a male family member.

They argued that Germany held partial responsibility for the attack, as the drone mission used signals relayed from the Ramstein base, situated near the

city of Kaiserslautern in the southwest.

The two men were supported in their case by the Berlin-based European Centre for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR), which has said: "Without the data that flows through Ramstein, the US cannot fly its combat drones in Yemen." DW

Angola: Mass anti-government protests in capital Luanda over rising prices

Luanda, Angola - Anti-government protests in the Angolan capital Luanda on July 12 were met with a harsh crackdown, resulting in injuries and arrests.

"We recorded several injuries, some serious and requiring medical attention," Adilson Manuel, an activist and one of the organisers, told DW.

"In addition to the injured, there were also arrests. One protester remains in police custody without clear reason. He is currently held at the Nova Vida police station and will be handed over to the Public Prosecutor's Office for questioning."

The protests began peacefully in Sao Paulo Square, a neighbourhood in Luanda. Hundreds of cit-

izens - activists, civil society members, taxi drivers, vendors, students, and opposition party members - joined a march organised by a social movement against the government decree that raised fuel prices.

Chants filled the air, including the national anthem and improvised songs such as 'First Angolan, second Angolan, always Angolan'. Protesters carried signs with slogans like 'MPLA drank all the oil', 'We're tired of eating from the trash', and 'The country is good, but the MPLA is no good'. The MPLA, or People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola party, has governed Angola continuously since independence 50 years ago.



Activists are calling for a stay-at-home strike as they prepare for the next protest over rising fuel and transport prices

Angolans pushed to the limit

Taxi fares increased to 300

kwanzas per trip (US\$0.33), and urban bus fares rose to 200 kwanzas on July 7. It followed a

fuel price increase from 300 to 400 kwanzas per litre three days earlier, in the country that is one

of Africa's largest oil producers.

However, for many Angolans, rising fuel prices are not the only critical issue. Just weeks ago, students and pupils mobilised to protest government policies.

A new youth movement called the 'Movimento dos Estudantes Angolanos' (MEA) organised protests and strikes, accusing President Joao Lourenco's government of ignoring youth concerns.

Instead of addressing their needs, the government recently raised university tuition fees.

Schools lack basic necessities such as chairs, desks, and toilets.

The young protesters warned: "Either the government

changes the situation, or it will be overthrown."

Broader discontent with ruling party

Also during the latest protests over fuel prices, many voiced frustrations against Lourenco and the ruling MPLA party. Protesters marching to Largo da Maianga, near the National Assembly, were blocked by police at Primeiro de Maio and Largo da Independencia squares.

"Please help us. We are hungry, the whole country is hungry, but our president is not paying attention to this situation," Agostinho Kipanda, one of the protesters, told a DW reporter. DW

'Unhappy' Trump 'not done' with Putin

Washington, D.C./Moscow - US President Donald Trump has said he is 'not done' with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

The remarks, made during an interview with the BBC that was published on Tuesday, came hours after he had said he was 'very unhappy' with Russia during a meeting with NATO chief Mark Rutte.

Since returning to the White House in January, Trump, who had previously pledged to end the war in Ukraine in a day, has tried to bring about peace talks and a ceasefire.

But his attempts have fallen on deaf ears in Moscow, with Russia escalating its air strikes on Ukraine last week after Trump and Putin had spoken on the phone.

During the interview with the BBC, Trump was asked if he was done with the Russian leader.

"I'm disappointed in him, but I'm not done with him. But I'm disappointed in him," Trump said.

Asked how he would convince Putin to 'stop the bloodshed', Trump said 'we're working on it'.

"We'll have a great conversation. I'll say: 'That's good, I'll think we're close to getting it done', and then he'll knock down a building in Kyiv," the US president said.

Amid his growing frustration over the lack of progress with peace talks, Trump on Monday said he was sending new weapons for Ukraine and threatened tariffs and sanctions on Russia and any countries that trade with it unless Moscow



Asked how he would convince Putin to 'stop the bloodshed', Trump said 'we're working on it'

'Volodymyr, can you hit Moscow?'

London, UK - US President Donald Trump has encouraged Kiev to escalate deep strikes into Russian territory, even asking Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy whether Moscow could be targeted if long-range weapons were supplied, the *Financial Times* reported on Tuesday.

"Volodymyr, can you hit Moscow? ... Can you hit St Pe-

tersburg, too?" Trump asked during the call on July 4, and Zelenskyy replied: "Absolutely. We can if you give us the weapons," the *Financial Times* reported, citing two people familiar with the conversation.

The phone talk took place just one day after Trump spoke with Russian President Vladimir Putin, a conversation the US president reportedly described as 'bad'.

According to the report released by the *Financial Times*, although it remains uncertain whether the United States will move forward with supplying the requested weapons, sources familiar with the matter said Trump appeared eager to explore more aggressive military options to pressure Moscow into negotiations.

Xinhua

agrees to a peace deal within 50 days. The assertive posture is a major policy shift from Trump, who has previously suggested that Ukraine was responsible for starting the war, echoing Russia's narrative.

He also tried to walk back pro-Ukraine policies favoured by Trump's predecessor Joe Biden, including supporting Kyiv's membership in NATO and insisting that Russia withdraw its forces from Ukrainian territory.

Russia 'needs time to respond'

Meanwhile, Russia has said it

needs time to respond to Trump's 50-day deadline to end the war in Ukraine or face more sanctions.

Speaking to reporters in Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Trump's statement is 'very serious'. "We certainly need time to analyse what was said in Washington."

Peskov insisted that Russia, which has rejected previous US ceasefire proposals, is willing to negotiate.

Russia is 'waiting for proposals from the Ukrainian side on the timing of the third round of direct Russian-Ukrainian negotiations',

"It seems that such a decision made in Washington and in NATO countries and directly in Brussels will be perceived by Kyiv not as a signal for peace but for the continuation of the war," he said.

Russia downs over 50 drones

An overnight Ukrainian drone attack on the Russian southwestern regions of Lipetsk and Voronezh has left several people injured and damaged homes and other buildings, Russian authorities said on Tuesday.

Russia's Defence Ministry said

Russia has said it needs time to respond to Trump's 50-day deadline to end the war in Ukraine, adding the US President's remarks would likely encourage Kyiv and hinder attempts to bring about a ceasefire

Peskov said.

Russia and Ukraine have held two rounds of direct talks in recent months, but those meetings in Turkey have failed to yield a peace deal.

Ukraine has accused Russia of making unrealistic demands, including abandoning its ambitions to join NATO and agreeing to giving up territory in eastern Ukraine that has been occupied by Russian forces for years.

The Kremlin spokesman also said Trump's remarks on Monday would likely encourage Kyiv and hinder attempts to bring about a ceasefire.

on Telegram that a total of 55 Ukrainian drones were downed overnight over five Russian regions, as well as the Black Sea.

Regional governor Alexander Gusev said 12 drones were destroyed over the Voronezh border region, where 'several people sustained minor injuries due to debris from a downed UAV (unmanned aerial vehicles)'.

Several apartments in residential buildings in Voronezh, which is the administrative centre of the region of the same name, were damaged, as were houses in the city's suburbs, Gusev said.

DW

Execution of Indian nurse in Yemen postponed: Sources

Sanaa, Yemen- The execution of 37-year-old nurse from Kerala, Nimisha Priya, which was scheduled for July 16, Wednesday, in Yemen has been postponed, following 'concerted efforts' by the Government of India, sources told ANI on Tuesday, citing local authorities.

According to the sources, the postponement provides additional time for her family to negotiate a mutually agreeable solution amidst ongoing diplomatic efforts by Indian officials as they maintained regular communication with Yemeni jail authorities and the prosecutor's office while navigating the sensitivities of the situation to secure this reprieve.

"In the case of Ms Nimisha Priya, it has been learnt that the local authorities in Yemen have postponed the execution scheduled for July 16, 2025," the sources stated.

"Government of India, which has since the beginning of the case been rendering all possible assistance in the matter, has made concerted efforts in recent days to seek more time for the family of Ms Nimisha Priya to reach a mutually agreeable solution with the other party. Despite the sensitivities involved, Indian officials have been in regular touch with the local jail authorities and the prosecutor's office, leading to securing this postponement," it added.

The 37-year-old nurse from Kerala was set to be executed on July 16 after a trial court in Yemen convicted her of killing a Yemeni national, a decision that the country's Supreme Judicial Council upheld in November 2023.

Earlier on Monday, while giving the Union Government's submission on the case in the Supreme Court the Attorney



Nimisha Priya

General of India (AGI) stated that the Indian government is making every possible effort to help Priya.

He further informed the Court that talks are ongoing with Yemeni authorities, including the public prosecutor handling Priya's case, to secure a suspension of the execution order until negotiations can be pursued.

The postponement provides additional time for Nimisha Priya's family to negotiate a mutually agreeable solution amidst ongoing diplomatic efforts by India

However, the AGI also admitted that the Indian government's ability to intervene is limited, describing it as 'a very complex issue', adding, 'there's no way we can know what's happening (in Yemen)'.

"There's nothing much that we can do... It's not like any other part of the world (where possible negotiations can be carried out)," the AGI stated.

ANI

India: Rains claim 105 lives in Himachal

Shimla, India - The cumulative loss report released by the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) of Himachal Pradesh on Tuesday revealed that the landslides, flash floods, cloudbursts, electrocution, and fatal falls triggered by relentless rainfall were the leading causes of the 61 rain-related fatalities across districts.

Giving a break-up of rain-related deaths, the report revealed Mandi had 17 deaths, Kangra 14, Kullu 4, and Hamirpur and Chamba had 7 and 3, respectively. Remaining deaths occurred in Bilaspur, Shimla, Sirmaur, Una and Kinnaur, and Lahaul-Spiti.

The rains in Himachal Pradesh have claimed a total of 105 lives from June 20 to July 14. This comes along with 44 deaths owing to road accidents, according to the SDMA. "A total of 61 deaths have occurred due to natural causes such as land-



slides, flash floods, and lightning, while 44 people have died in separate road accidents during the same period," the SDMA report confirmed.

In addition to this, road accident fatalities included, seven deaths in Kullu, 6 in Chamba and Solan and five in Kinnaur, while Bilaspur, Kangra, Shimla, and

Mandi recorded 3-4 deaths each.

The SDMA report further highlighted widespread damage to public infrastructure, including

roads, water schemes, and power lines. The total monetary loss reported across sectors has exceeded Rs 78 crore. Mandi district alone has reported damages worth over Rs 10 crore.

The monsoon has also caused a total of 293 houses to be thoroughly damaged, and 91 partially damaged and over 22,000 animal losses, including 21,500 poultry birds.

Besides that, the region also faced significant crop loss in agricultural and horticultural belts. Emergency response teams remain on high alert across the state, and restoration efforts are underway, particularly in severely affected districts like Mandi, Kullu, and Kangra.

The SDMA report has further pointed out widespread damage to public infrastructure, including roads, water schemes, and power lines.

ANI

The Dragon has landed: Ax-4 mission back on earth

Houston, US - SpaceX's Dragon spacecraft *Grace* successfully landed in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of California on Tuesday, marking the safe return of the Axiom-4 (Ax-4) crew, including pilot Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, the first Indian to visit the International Space Station (ISS).

The splashdown, confirmed by SpaceX, concludes a nearly 19-day mission aboard the ISS, fulfilling a significant milestone in Indo-US space cooperation.

"Splashdown of Dragon confirmed - welcome back to Earth, @AstroPeggy, Shux, @astro_slawosz, and Tibi!" SpaceX said in a post on X.

Earlier, SpaceX stated that set for a splashdown on earth off the coast of California in as



India's Shubhanshu Shukla being assisted out of the Dragon spacecraft onto the recovery vehicle on Tuesday (Axiom Space/ANI)

the nosecone of SpaceX's Dragon spacecraft *Grace* has been closed and secured for reentry.

SpaceX made the announcement of the mission in a post on X, as the mission

marks the final stages of the crew's return from the International Space Station (ISS) after almost 20 days in space.

The re-entry was done following the completion of the deorbit burn and the jettisoning

of the trunk, as confirmed by SpaceX.

"Dragon's nosecone is closed and secured for reentry. Splashdown in ~26 minutes," SpaceX stated in a post on X.

"Dragon's deorbit burn is complete and the trunk has been jettisoned," stated another post.

The crew returned to earth in approximately 22.5 hours from the ISS. Earlier, on Monday, the Ax-4 successfully undocked and was making their way back to Earth, as observed by Axiom Space and NASA.

In an informative blog about the mission updates, NASA informed that the SpaceX Dragon spacecraft undocked at 7:15am EDT (4:45pm IST) from the space-facing port of the International Space Sta-

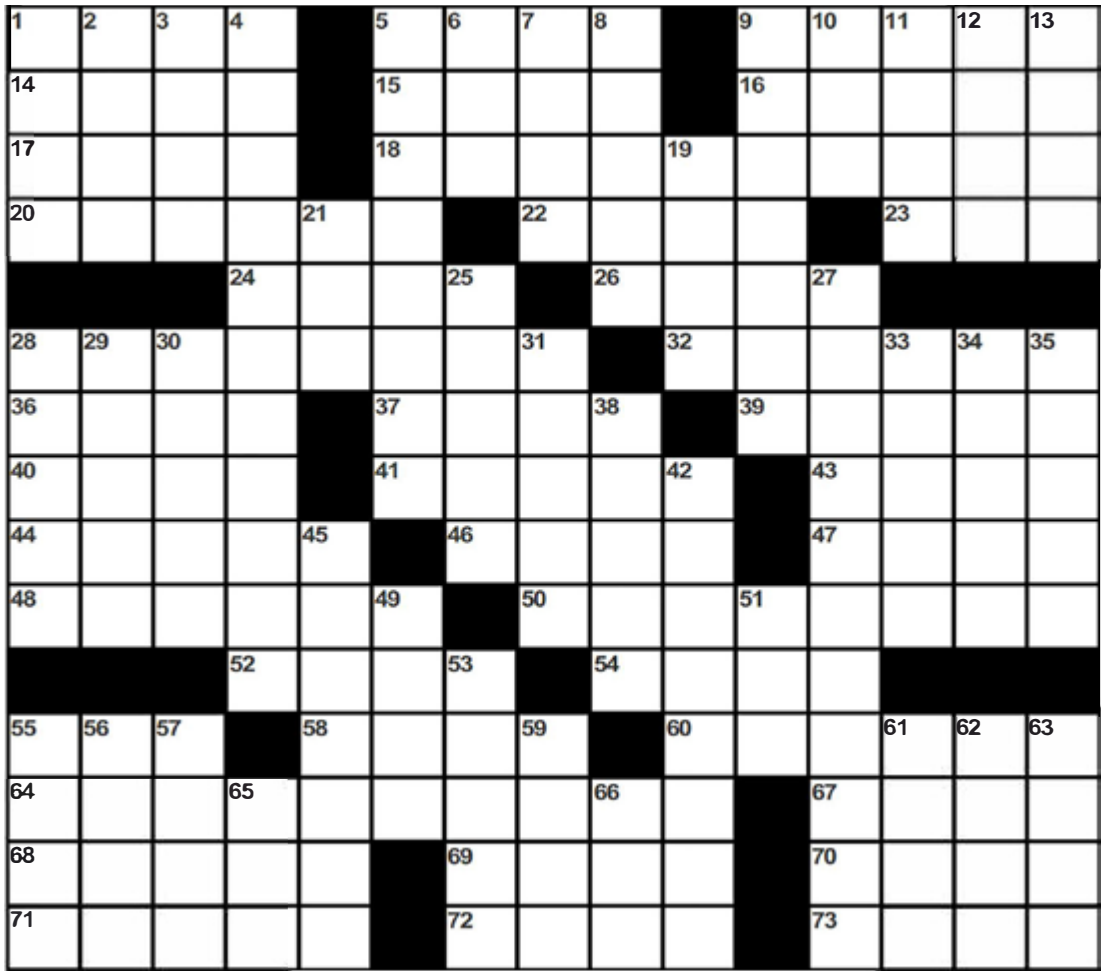
tion's Harmony module, completing the fourth private astronaut mission to the orbiting laboratory, Axiom Mission 4.

Axiom Space, in its live session on X, noted that the Axiom-4 mission saw over 60 scientific studies and more than 20 outreach events.

The Ax-4 crew, comprising Commander Peggy Whitson, Pilot Shubhanshu Shukla of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), European Space Agency (ESA) project astronaut Slawosz 'Suave' Uznanski-Wisniewski of Poland, and Hungarian to Orbit (HUNOR) astronaut Tibor Kapu, had been actively engaged in research and outreach activities aboard the ISS as part of the mission during the past 18-days.

ANI

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Chicken parts
 - 5) One of the woodwinds
 - 9) Minuscule amounts
 - 14) Chinese nurse
 - 15) Eurasia's _ Mountains
 - 16) Work together, as organisms
 - 17) " Venus de _ "
 - 18) Bad words to hear on date night
 - 20) Shrimplike crus-taceans
 - 22) Cut coverer
 - 23) Use a needle and thread
 - 24) Harm severely
 - 26) Like pork and
 - 20-Across, to some
 - 28) Marvelous
 - 32) Broom Hilda types
 - 36) NFL players, e.g.
 - 37) Business bigwig, briefly
 - 39) Better than good
 - 40) Prison outbreak
 - 41) Poison ivy relative
 - 43) Cat in una casa
 - 44) Jordan's capital
 - 46) A little, in music
 - 47) 007 A's alma mater
 - 48) Personal preferences
 - 50) Voice between bass and tenor
 - 52) Audio effect
 - 54) Embryo, once
 - 55) Wood-shaping tool (Var.)
 - 58) Laotian dollars
 - 60) Break out
 - 64) "I don't want any part of that"
 - 67) Close by
 - 68) Dullsville's atmo-sphere
 - 69) What stainless steel doesn't do
 - 70) Horse feed
 - 71) Parisian's river
 - 72) Away from the wind, nautically
 - 73) Redwood, for one
- DOWN**
- 1) "Aladdin" discovery
 - 2) Arabian bigwig
 - 3) Splashy party
 - 4) What Missouri is (with "The")
 - 5) Exteriors
 - 6) Lingerie part
 - 7) Deciduous hardwoods
 - 8) Put in office
 - 9) Hazard in frozen waters
 - 10) "I'm impressed!"
 - 11) Artsy town near Santa Fe
 - 12) High point
 - 13) " Little of this, little of that" dish
 - 19) Cleo's love
 - 21) Palindromic Bobbsey twin
 - 25) Snafu, basically
 - 27) Alaska's state flower
 - 28) "Jack_ could eat no fat"
 - 29)_ donna
 - 30) Hovers menacingly
 - 31) Discharge, as from the RAF
 - 33) Cool, once
 - 34) Employ, as dinner plates
 - 35) Pebble
 - 38) Chocolate source
 - 42) Chevy muscle car
 - 45) Bit of business attire
 - 49) Thin wedge of wood
 - 51) Periodic table suffix
 - 53) Musical drama
 - 55) Airborne war heroes
 - 56) Finished
 - 57) Pueblo builder
 - 59) Kind of food or mate
 - 61) Bring up, as young
 - 62) Entrance through a fence
 - 63) Gaelic language
 - 65) Convent figure
 - 66) Function

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
When it comes to love, there's just no way you can answer anyone's questions without getting into trouble of some kind. Just smile sweetly, give them that one look you know always works, and tell them you need time to think things through to give it all the brainpower it deserves. Don't be hasty. You don't have all the data you need.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
Now and then you get the feeling that absolutely nothing you do is going to go right no matter how hard you try or how much recon you do in advance. This is definitely one of those times, so remember not to be too tough on yourself. It's not just you! Lots of people are going through the same thing, or worse. Like all things, this will pass.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
If you've been looking for love, you may suddenly be in the running for a big project. If you've been hop-ing for (and working toward) major progress at work, a new love could pop up out of nowhere. If you want to grapple with a big family issue, your career could take off in a brand-new direction. All this means is that though you don't always get what you want, you sometimes get what you need.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
After spending too long waiting on some flare-up between family members to resolve one way or another (preferably for the better, of course), you're finally ready to make your big announcement. It's all good, and you may be in the right, but for time being, only for a day or so, really, don't say anything to anyone if you can help it.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
While the rest of us worry about what to do next regarding the latest series of messes the Universe has made, you're having a far easier time. That is unless you consider the fact that you're having a hard time deciding whether you want to be by yourself or just alone with one loved one who really gets you. There are worse problems to have, though!

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
You hate being told what to do with your money. It's easily high on your list of don'ts. Just now, though, you've got to deal with it like a grown-up, because someone who cares is just about to tell you that the deal you think is all kinds of perfect may not be what you think it is. You're bright, so you can wait. Just don't pound your head all the way through the wall while you're waiting!

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
There are many aspects of your life that are somewhat hard for you to deal with now. Relatives and neighbors, anything that involves travel or technology, and anything that could get you lost are all red-flagged. They're just unlikely to go well for you, sadly. Sit tight, stay home, ignore the phone, and post-pone any big decisions for a day or two.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
After too much time spent trying everything from drum signals to ESP to messaging your friends, you had almost given up on actually reaching someone. Just as soon as you make that decision, though, the Universe gives way, and suddenly there they are! As soon as you get over the shock, you may actually recall what was so important that you just had to talk to them about it so long ago.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
If you're in the mood to meet lots of people, do it! There could be many opportunities to expand your so-cial circle today, and if you're ready for some engaging small talk, you're in luck. Don't be surprised if a random encounter turns out to be a reunion. People have connections to you that you aren't aware of yet. Enjoy the recognition. It truly is a small world after all.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
Financial issues have never been at the top of your list of things you find simple to deal with, with romance, of course, coming in a close second. That's extra true right now, and especially so if you are the dead center. If someone brings you a document and claims it must be signed immediately, put them off for a bit, and then find out what the rush is all about. There's something crucial you need to know in the fine print.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
Today, you need some help to get where you're going. You're great on your own, of course, better than most, and well known for doing amazing work independently. It's just that for now your personal energy responds better to teamwork. Any brainstorming session is bound to be incredibly inspired. If you can fit some social time into your busy schedule, so much the better. You make everyone feel just right.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
You're known for your easygoing nature and general willingness to cooperate. Don't let your reputation keep you from letting at least one person who's in your way know that you're not going to take it any more. Right now, you need to assert yourself and let the whole world know that though you can be a sweetheart sometimes, you do have your limits, and you've just reached one.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Which of these cities is the furthest from London?
A. Brussels
B. Athens
C. Paris
D. Rome

02. Which chemist, engineer, and armaments manufacturer in-vented dynamite and a detonator for it and then founded a long-standing series of world prizes for, among other things, promot-ing peace?
A. Alfred North Whitehead
B. Alfred Russel Wallace
C. Alfred, Lord Tennyson
D. Alfred Nobel

03. The following people died from what cause: Eva Braun, Wallace Carothers, Odilo Globoc-nik, Joseph Goebbels, Hermann Göring, Heinrich Himmler, Gün-ther von Kluge, Erwin Rommel, Alan Turing and the residents of Jonestown?
A. Asphyxiation
B. Gunshot wounds
C. Cyanide poisoning
D. Strychnine poisoning

Answers: 1. B 2. D 3. C

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

E	A	R	B
E	U	R	Y
L	S	E	K
Y	P	E	M

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.

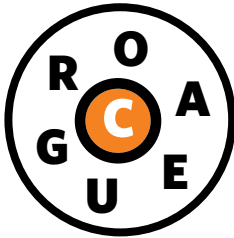
SOLUTION
20-25 words: Excellent,
15-20 words: Very good,
10-15 words: Good,
5-10 words: Average

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

MARESCA MASTERCLASS



Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca celebrates with the Club World Cup trophy

East Rutherford, US - Chelsea FC faced long odds against Paris Saint-Germain in the FIFA Club World Cup final, and despite a defiant Reece James predicting victory, the Blues were always going to need more than bold words to be crowned world champions.

Luckily for Chelsea, head coach Enzo Maresca devised a blueprint to beat the UEFA Champions League holders, and his young but talented side executed it to perfection in their 3-0 victory at MetLife Stadium in New York New Jersey.

Of course, a resurgent Cole Palmer was always going to be a crucial factor, but here's a closer look at three other components of Maresca's game plan that allowed the Blues to lift the trophy.

Chelsea neutralised PSG's forwards

It took organisation and concen-

tration for Chelsea to stare down and disarm arguably the best attack in club football, and the Blues banded together to summon the necessary qualities to stymie PSG's attack.

Chelsea used an aggressive counter-press when they lost possession high and dropped into a back five when PSG came forward. The Blues never let Desire Doue, Ousmane Dembele and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia breathe, and they blunted the force of the opposition attack by defending in numbers to close space and decrease the Parisians' usual lightning pace out wide.

Doue and Kvaratskhelia didn't have the regular runway they typically enjoy to apply pressure in the final third. Also, right-back Achraf Hakimi and left-back Nuno Mendes never came close to having the same influential presence that made them dan-

gerous wide threats throughout the tournament.

"The idea was to go man-to-man because if you leave spaces to PSG, they will kill you," Maresca said. "So we tried to be very aggressive and suffocate them early on."

Caicedo, James mute PSG midfield

Maresca said Chelsea won the match in the first 10 minutes with their intense tempo. Without question, their ability to take away the ball, keep it and actually look comfortable in possession against PSG's press was a stunning development right from the start.

Just as crucial was the Blues midfield's ability to prevent PSG from mounting waves of pressure like they had managed in 4-0 blowouts of Atlético Madrid, Inter Miami and Real Madrid.

While Doue had early mo-

ments of looking dangerous - an 18th-minute shot from the top of the box that was kept out by Sanchez's strong left hand - and Chelsea's press was vulnerable on the left flank, the Blues were able to establish their dominance in midfield, where Moises Caicedo and Reece James imposed their will with physical play.

Maresca wisely deployed James, the team captain and usual first-choice right back, in the middle of the pitch to form a partnership with Caicedo that proved to be too much of an obstacle for PSG to navigate.

Blues played long to bypass PSG press

With the midfield muddled and space compressed by high lines, the team that could best take advantage of balls over the top

would have a decided advantage. Chelsea hit pay dirt with two long balls to score two early goals and take control of the final.

Both Caicedo and Sanchez signalled the Blues' attacking intent early on with long balls over the PSG press.

Levi Colwill



Obviously everyone was doubting us. We didn't mind, we just used that as extra motivation and we worked through the trouble out there. I thought we were spot on today, especially the gaffer. We had a good game plan and we executed it

COLE PALMER, CHELSEA



We knew if we executed the game plan we'd win. We showed that. Every man on the pitch had their role. We had to be hungry and fight for every ball, be clinical when we needed to. We did that. I think it's a really special group

LIAM DELAP, CHELSEA

Club World Cup will be bigger than Champions League, says Colwill

Chelsea defender Levi Colwill said the Club World Cup will be bigger than the Champions League after his side beat European champions Paris St Germain 3-0 in the final in New Jersey on Sunday.

The quadrennial competition will return in 2029, which will be the second edition under the expanded format with 32 teams.

"This is the biggest trophy I've ever won. I think the Club World Cup will be bigger than the Champions League and we were the first team to win it," the 22-year-

old Colwill said.

"I've really enjoyed it, playing games every four or five days. Playing to sold-out stadiums, playing against different teams who you would never normally get a chance to play."

The England international said Chelsea would carry the momentum forward having beaten a phenomenal PSG side who had conceded only one goal in the tournament before the final.

"I said at the start of this tournament that our plan is to win it and people looked at me as if I was crazy. So I'm going to say the exact same thing now going into the Premier League and Champions League," Colwill said.

Chelsea have won the Champions League twice, in 2012 and 2021.

Modric honoured to wear number 14 shirt at Milan

Milan, Italy - Croatia captain Luka Modric, who left Real Madrid after 13 years at the LaLiga club, has completed his move to AC Milan on a one-year deal with an option to extend until June 2027, the Serie A side said on Monday.

The midfielder's arrival was confirmed by newly-appointed Milan coach Massimiliano Allegri earlier this month.

"Very happy to be here to start a new chapter in my career," said Modric, who turns 40 in September, in an Instagram video shared by Milan.

Milan said Modric will wear



Luka Modric

Modric announced in May that he would leave Real after the Club World Cup. He has made 597 appearances for them, winning 28 trophies including four LaLiga and six Champions League titles

the number 14 shirt, which he previously wore during his four years at English side Tottenham Hotspur to honour Dutch great Johan Cruyff.

"It's an immense honour for them to compare me to (Cruyff)... I wore the no. 14 at Tottenham in honour of him, and

appearances for the Spanish club, winning 28 trophies including four LaLiga and six Champions League titles.

He played his last game for Real on Wednesday, coming on as a second-half substitute during a 4-0 loss to Paris St Germain in the Club World Cup semi-finals.

"It's a bitter end... he's a legend of world football and of Real Madrid. He'll be remembered for many more good things than for the 25 minutes he played today," Real Madrid manager Xabi Alonso said after the match.

Modric, considered Croatia's

greatest player of all time, has represented the country a record 188 times, scoring 28 goals. He won the Golden Ball at World Cup 2018, where he led Croatia to the final for the first time.

He won the Ballon d'Or in December that year, becoming the first player other than Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo to win the prestigious annual award since 2007.

Modric's arrival reinforces a Milan midfield that also features Youssouf Fofana, Yunus Musah and Ruben Loftus-Cheek, with Samuele Ricci joining from Torino earlier this month.

Al Nassr appoint Jesus as coach

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - Al Nassr appointed Portuguese Jorge Jesus as coach on Monday, two months after he left their bitter Saudi Pro-League rivals Al Hilal.

The 70-year-old won the domestic treble in his second stint with Riyadh-based Al-Hilal in the 2023-2024 season, but left the club in May after they lost in the AFC Champions League elite semi-finals to Saudi Arabian side Al

Ahli. "It's official Mr. Jorge Jesus is the new coach of Al Nassr" the Saudi club posted on X.

The former Copa Libertadores winner with Brazil's Flamengo, who replaces Italian Stefano Pioli, has signed a one-year contract with Al Nassr.

Nine-time Saudi champions Al Nassr have extended the contract of 40-year-old five-time Ballon d'Or winner Cristiano Ronaldo until 2027.



Jorge Jesus

Former Liverpool captain Henderson joins Brentford

London, England - England and ex-Liverpool midfielder Jordan Henderson has signed a two-year deal with Brentford, the Premier League club said on Tuesday, following his departure from Dutch club AFC Ajax.

Ajax confirmed the termination of Henderson's contract, initially set to run until June next year, with immediate effect on Thursday.

The 35-year-old will strengthen Brentford's options in midfield following their former captain Christian Norgaard's

move to Arsenal.

"I'm delighted that I'm here, I'm very excited to get started and get going... it was clear for me that I wanted to come here and it was an easy decision in the end," Henderson said in a statement.

"I'll try my best to pass on my experiences, especially to the younger players. But, at the same time, I still need to perform and do my job on the pitch.

"It's a given that I'll help everybody around me but, even at my age, you can still learn a lot, you can still improve, and you can still



Jordan Henderson

get better, which is what I want to do at this club."

Henderson returns to the Premier League after a two-year absence, having left Liverpool in 2023 for Saudi Pro League club Al Ettifaq, a stint that lasted only six months.

He later joined Ajax, making 57 appearances and scoring once during his time with the club.

In March, he earned a surprise recall to the England squad under new manager Thomas Tuchel after being excluded from Euro 2024 contention.

A few heads should roll for this, says former West Indies captain Hooper

Kingston, Jamaica - Cricket West Indies must take responsibility for the team's woeful results after they were bundled out for the second-lowest total in Test history in the third match against Australia on Monday, former all-rounder Carl Hooper said.

Chasing 204 for victory in the day-night Test at Sabina Park, West Indies lasted only 14.3 overs before being dismissed for 27 as Australia sealed a 3-0 series sweep. It was the lowest score since New Zealand managed 26 against England in 1955.

Seven West Indies batters registered ducks in the innings, a record for the Test format.

"Cricket West Indies, I really think a few heads should roll for this because they've made some decisions and this is the result of those decisions," a dismayed Hooper told ABC Sport.

"They've made some wholesale changes, massive changes, that I think wasn't needed.

"To make wholesale changes

and then get results like this, Cricket West Indies have got to hold up their hands and be held accountable," said Hooper, who played 102 tests between 1987-2002.

Former Twenty20 captain Carlos Brathwaite was shocked by their failure to put up any resistance with the bat.

"Abysmal comes to mind," said Brathwaite, who hit four sixes in a row in the 2016 World Cup final against England to power West Indies to the title.

West Indies were the leading lights of Test cricket in the 1970s and 1980s but have gone through a period of decline and currently rank eighth of 12 teams in the world rankings.

They have struggled to field a consistent Test team in recent years with several frontline players often prioritising lucrative franchise cricket over the longest format.

West Indies will next face a trial by spin when they tour India for two tests in October.



Carl Hooper

STARC RAVING MAD!



Mitchell Starc celebrates after casting Jayden Seales of the West Indies on Monday

Fast bowler takes five wickets in 15 balls as Australia bowl out Windies for 27 runs to win third Test

Kingston, Jamaica - Mitchell Starc delivered the fastest five-wicket haul in test history on Monday as Australia crushed the West Indies by 176 runs in the third Test in Kingston, Jamaica to complete a 3-0 series sweep.

In his 100th test, Starc took 15 balls to wreck the West Indies top order and leave the home side's run chase in tatters, before returning for his sixth wicket after Scott Boland became Australia's 10th bowler to take a Test hat-trick.

West Indies were bowled out for 27, the second-lowest total in Test history after New Zealand's 26 against England in 1955.

Starc shattered the previous record for a "five-for" by four balls, surpassing Ernie Toshack (1947), Stuart Broad (2015) and Boland (2021), who needed 19 deliveries to achieve the feat.

"You talk about 100 Tests and

skill and fitness ... but I think today showed the real Mitchell Starc - what he can bring to a team. Which is, out of nowhere, tear an opposition apart and win a game for you," said Australia captain Pat Cummins.

The drama began on the first delivery of West Indies' second innings, when Starc enticed John Campbell to nick an outswinger to wicketkeeper Josh Inglis. Debutant Kevlon Anderson

You talk about 100 Tests and skill and fitness ... but today showed the real Mitchell Starc - what he can bring to a team. Which is, out of nowhere, tear an opposition apart

PAT CUMMINS, AUSTRALIA CAPTAIN

shouldered arms to a ball that jagged back and struck his pad four balls later, before Brandon King edged on to his stumps as the hosts found themselves three wickets down with no runs on the board.

Starc, named player-of-the-match and series, then trapped Mikyle Louis lbw to become the fourth Australian to reach 400 Test wickets alongside Shane Warne, Glenn McGrath and

Nathan Lyon. Two balls later, he trapped Shai Hope lbw and finished with figures of 6-9.

At tea, the West Indies stood at a precarious 22-6, needing 182 runs for victory and staring down the barrel of cricket's ultimate embarrassment, with five runs needed to avoid the lowest-ever total.

And the drama was far from over.



Ben Stokes was named the player of the match for his all-round show

'I was cooked, but nothing was stopping me'

London, England - England captain Ben Stokes was named player of the match after taking five wickets in his team's dramatic 22-run victory over India in the third test at Lord's as well as scoring 44 and 33 and running out the dangerous Rishabh Pant in a splendid all-round performance.

Stokes, 34, underwent a successful operation on as torn hamstring in December followed by a rigorous physical fitness programme during which he lost 10 kilograms in weight.

On Sunday he showed he was back to his best with the ball, knocking nightwatchman Akash Deep's off stump out of the ground as England captured three wickets in the final 30 minutes with India chasing 193 to take a 2-1 lead in the series.

He resumed the attack from the Nursery End in Monday's morning session, bounding in for 80 minutes and capturing the key wicket of KL Rahul with a delivery which swung in late to trap the Indian opener for 39 after winning a review when his impassioned appeal was turned down.

The television review showed the ball would have crashed into the leg stump and he continued to bowl at speeds consistently in excess of 85 miles an hour before handing the ball to Chris Woakes for

the final 20 minutes of the morning session.

An obdurate ninth-wicket stand between Ravindra Jadeja and Jasprit Bumrah, cheered vociferously by the Indian supporters in a packed Lord's, frustrated England for most of the afternoon before Stokes had Bumrah caught skying a hook to mid-on.

He finished with three for 46 from 24 overs, the most bowled by any England bowler, and switched his fielders constantly before racing to em-

But if bowling for your country to a Test match win doesn't get you excited, I don't know what does

BEN STOKES

brace his team mates when last man Mohammed Siraj played the ball on to his stumps.

"I've taken myself to some pretty dark places," Stoke said after the match. "But if bowling for your country to a test match win doesn't get you excited, I don't know what does. I was cooked yesterday but nothing was stopping me. I'm an all-rounder, I get four opportunities to influence the game."

Australia's Konstas faces uncertain future after forgettable series against Windies

Kingston, Jamaica - Amid the back slaps and banter in a victorious Australian dressing room, teen opener Sam Konstas's celebrations may feel bittersweet at the end of his forgettable test series in the West Indies.

Australia completed a 3-0 whitewash of the West Indies on Monday with a 176-run rout in the pink-ball test in Kingston.

But Konstas can claim little credit.

A five-ball duck in the second innings at Sabina Park saw the 19-year-old, who has been touted as the "future of Australian batting", finish with 50 runs from his six innings at an average of 8.33.

Only Jayden Seales, the West Indies fast bowler and tailender, had fewer runs among players who competed in all three matches.

With England's Jofra Archer and the first Ashes test looming



Sam Konstas scored just 50 runs from his six innings

in four months, alarm bells are ringing in Australia.

"The prospect of Konstas facing Jofra Archer with the first ball of the Ashes on November 21 - potentially delivered at 155km/h - doesn't feel like a fair fight," the Sydney Morning Herald said.

Konstas also grassed two slips catches off Mitchell Starc's bowling on the final day at Sabina Park as Australia bowled out the hosts for 27, the second-lowest test innings score after New Zealand's 26 against England in 1955.

Last December, Konstas took the cricket world by storm when he scored 60 on debut at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Boxing Day, repeatedly ramping India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah.

He has not passed 25 runs in an innings since, holding an average of 16.30 from five tests.

Australia have discarded

plenty of players for lesser batting crimes but selectors are desperate for Konstas to make the grade and fill the void at opener which has lingered since David Warner's retirement.

The West Indies pitches were surprisingly tough and Konstas was not alone in his struggles. His opening partner Usman Khawaja also had a poor series, averaging 19.50, while Travis Head was the top performer with a modest average of 37.33.

Australia captain Pat Cummins was loath to criticise his batting teammates in the conditions.

"It's really hard to judge, I think," he told reporters.

"There'll be a few of the guys who of course wish they could have done better and if they had another crack at it maybe did a few things differently.

"No doubt it was tough."

Heat of the battle made Lord's Test more thrilling, says Gill



Shubman Gill had a heated argument with Zak Crawley and Ben Duckett on the fourth evening of the Test

Ben Duckett after taking his wicket.

Siraj was fined 15% of his match fee for his aggressive behaviour.

"You're giving everything, mentally, physically. There would be times when there would be a little bit of heat from both sides.

"But I think that's what makes it so exciting, more challenging," Gill told a news conference.

"But the next time we play each other, there won't be (any bad blood).

"At the end of the day, there's a lot of admiration within the two teams. Both the teams try their best to win."

Pant 'should be fit for fourth Test'

Gill also gave a positive update on Rishabh Pant, who injured the index finger of his left hand during England's first innings.

"Rishabh went for scans and there is no major injury there," said Gill.

"I think he should be fine for the next Test match."

SOLID SHOW IN SAO PAULO

Points return for Al Harthy and Team WRT at Interlagos

Muscat - Oman's Ahmad al Harthy and his teammates - Valentino Rossi and Kelvin van der Linde - delivered a gritty and determined performance to secure a hard-earned top-10 finish at the Rolex 6 Hours of Sao Paulo on Sunday, as the FIA World Endurance Championship entered its second half.

Contesting an uphill battle all weekend at Interlagos, the Team WRT trio and the squad maximised the performance available to them with the No.46 BMW M4 LMGT3 after overcoming a difficult qualifying on Saturday.

"I think it was a very strong race for us, we managed to make up so many positions throughout the six hours and to finish with a championship point makes all of the effort worth it," said Al Harthy.

"We know we're not the most competitive car at the moment but hopefully things can change quickly for Austin.

"We executed a perfect race, I would say one of the best exe-



Ahmad al Harthy was proud of their hard-earned top-10 result after a challenging weekend

cuted in terms of teams, so that's a very proud thing for us, and we all drove perfectly as well. Now we have a bit of time to analyse all of the data and hopefully have a more competitive car when we arrive at the Circuit of the Americas for the next round of the championship."

Al Harthy took the start of the race, but after maintaining posi-

tion initially, he was elbowed down to 17th place. Battling back with strong focus, he was back inside the top 15 with less than 20 minutes of the race elapsed and close behind the sister BMW. Both WRT cars gained two spots each shortly after and Al Harthy then made his first pit-stop from 13th before the end of hour one.

Van der Linde took over and

when the action settled he was in 12th position, as the team's strategy began to unfold. Climbing through to fifth with one hour and 45 minutes completed, before the end of hour two OQ Group, Sohar International, Omantel, Oman LNG, BMW Oman, Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and Experience Oman-supported Al Harthy returned to

I think it was a very strong race for us, we managed to make up so many positions throughout the six hours and to finish with a championship point makes all of the effort worth it

AHMAD AL HARTHY

the driving seat.

Holding sixth position initially, and driving well around the 4.3-kilometre counterclockwise Interlagos track, he concluded his second run nicely inside the top eight as the differing strategies of



the teams played out. Van der Linde took over later in hour three with the car in 10th place when he emerged, and the South African reeled off a series of great passes.

With three hours and 45 min-

utes in the book van der Linde had moved up into third and at the next stop Rossi climbed into the BMW for his first miles of the race. When the race order settled once more he held sixth place and after the team's fifth pit-stop, with just under 90 minutes to go, Rossi remained behind the wheel and emerged eighth in LMGT3.

Yates wins Tour de France 10th stage, Healy takes yellow jersey

Mont-Dore, France - Ben Healy rode himself into the ground in a nail-biting finale to become the first Irishman in 38 years to wear the yellow jersey at the Tour de France, as Britain's Simon Yates claimed victory in stage 10 on Monday with a perfectly timed attack.

Giro d'Italia champion Yates emerged from the day's break-away to secure his third career Tour stage win, pulling away on the final climb to beat Thymen Arensman of the Netherlands and Healy, who finished second



Simon Yates celebrates after winning the 10th stage of Tour de France

and third, respectively.

Heading into the first rest day, Healy leads defending champion Tadej Pogacar by 29 seconds in the general classification, after the Slovenian eased off on the final ascent.

"It was insanely tough, it was a battle against myself really. I just had to dig deep. My teammates put in so much work today, Harry (Sweeny) and Alex (Baudin), I really, really wanted to pay them back and I'm happy I could do that in the end," Healy, who won stage six last week, told

reporters.

"I kind of gambled a bit. I had the stage win in the bank and how often do you get the opportunity to put yourself into yellow so I felt I had to take that and really go for it."

Belgian Remco Evenepoel sits third, one minute further back, after losing six seconds in the closing kilometres when Pogacar briefly surged in an attempt to test Jonas Vingegaard, widely seen as his main rival for the overall title.

Vingegaard stayed locked

onto Pogacar's wheel and remains 1:17 behind the UAE Team Emirates leader.

As Pogacar approached the finish, Healy smiled while watching the Slovenian on the giant screen.

With Pogacar visibly backing off, the EF Education-EasyPost rider crossed the line to become the first Irishman to lead the Tour since Stephen Roche won the race in 1987.

Healy had looked one of the strongest riders in the breakaway on the 165.3-km hilly route from

Ennezat, but Yates timed his move to perfection, attacking solo on the final climb to seal a tactical victory.

While Yates rode cleverly to win the stage, the Visma-Lease a Bike team strategy was somehow puzzling as the Briton is expected to ride in support of his leader, Vingegaard.

"The plan was to be in a breakaway in case someone (from the team) would attack from behind, but the gap became too big," Yates explained, six years after winning his last Tour stage.

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For her couture show, eponymous designer Iris van Herpen grew a dress out of bioluminescent algae

PARIS COUTURE SHOWS



THE PARIS COUTURE SHOWS DISPLAYED AN ARRAY OF UNIQUE DESIGNS MEANT FOR ONLY 1 PER CENT OF FASHION BUFFS WHO THRIVE ON MAKING A STATEMENT WITH EVERY PUBLIC APPEARANCE



Spectacular gowns in soft colours - pinks, yellow, orange and baby blue, featured in Giambattista Valli's couture show

After a week's pause following the men's fashion shows, celebrities, editors and influencers were back in Paris for Haute Couture — where bespoke collections are shown and eventually sold to the world's wealthiest customers.

The official fall 2025 schedule felt lighter than usual, with absences from major labels like Valentino (the brand only stages a couture show once a year) and Dior (whose new creative director, Jonathan Anderson, was only appointed a month ago).

Many houses are also awaiting official runway debuts from their new designers in September — among these include Chanel, Gucci, Balenciaga, Loewe, and Bottega Veneta. However, there were some bright spots.

(he will present his first collection this fall).

Traditionally held under the glass nave of the Grand Palais, this season, guests were requested to enter through a side entrance into a quieter wing of the building.

Here, the brand recreated founder Gabrielle 'Coco' Chanel's original couture salons, featuring plush cream carpeting, quilted seating, mirrored walls, and softly lit interiors.

A golden wheat stalk and a name tag were placed on each seat — including one for Lorde, who was seated alongside Gracie Abrams, Naomi Campbell, and Caroline de Monaco.

The collection drew from Coco Chanel's lifelong affair with British cul-



Lorde and Gracie Abrams at Chanel's Fall 2025 Haute Couture show in Paris

ture — especially the Scottish Highlands, where she first discovered tweed during her decade-long romance with Hugh Grosvenor, the second Duke of Westminster.

Standout looks included a chartreuse tweed blouson paired with a baby-blue satin draped skirt; a black satin halter-neck gown cinched with a utility belt complete with flap pockets; and a double-breasted tweed coat layered over a tiered pleated skirt trimmed with lace.

"There was something incredibly graceful and airy... like a fairy tale... coupled with very structured shoulders," Caroline de Maigret, a model and longtime muse of the brand, told CNN after the show. "It was a powerful

yet graceful woman — and it was almost goth sometimes."

Balenciaga: A curtain call

Designer Demna (who only goes by his first name) staged his final collection for Balenciaga, ahead of his departure for Gucci.

To mark the end of his ten-year tenure at the house, a plethora of famous faces turned up to show their support. That included Naomi Watts, Nicole Kidman, Alexis Stone (channeling Morticia Addams, complete with 'Thing' on their shoulder), Patrick Schwarzenegger, Katy Perry, recently wedded Lauren Sánchez Bezos — even Demna's successor, Pierpaolo Piccioli.

Balenciaga's couture collection felt

like a natural continuation of exiting designer Demna's work.

On the runway, Kim Kardashian appeared in a white silk gown inspired by the one worn by Elizabeth Taylor in the 1958 film 'Cat on a Hot Tin Roof', and paired with earrings once owned by Taylor herself. Also walking the show was French actress Isabelle Huppert, a longtime ambassador of the brand.

Inspired by the dress codes of 'La Bourgeoisie', as Demna stated in the show notes, the collection featured polka-dot coat dresses with exaggerated satin lapels; a sculpted black leather gown with an hourglass silhouette; and a houndstooth ensemble referencing founder Cristóbal Balenciaga's 1967 design, which was worn by his muse Danielle Slavic.

Waxed floral prints — a nod to Demna's grandmother's tablecloths as well as his early work at Vetements, the edgy label he co-founded — reappeared in the form of a belted, floor-length skirt-suit.

Giambattista Valli: an Italian in Paris

Italian fashion designer Giambattista Valli combined two milestones in one day. After being named Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres at a medal ceremony held at his headquarters, he presented his latest couture collection featuring voluminous sorbet dresses with intricately embroidered flowers and 'colours you want to smell and eat', the designer told CNN during the presentation, which he opted for this season instead of a runway show. France's Minister of Culture, Rachida Dati, was in attendance.

Of the award, Valli said, "It's an extraordinary recognition." He added, "It's beautiful to be honoured by a country that is half my life — a country that gave me a volume to my voice, that taught me so much."

(Courtesy: cnn.com)

Margiela: A new chapter

Glenn Martens' first outing as the creative director of Maison Margiela was a formidable debut. True to Margiela's love for upcycling and reinvention, repurposed materials were given new life, including leather jackets distressed to a cracked, decaying finish.

A bodycon dress was stitched from prints of moulding and wallpapers, with raw, fraying edges and paired with a papier-mâché-style mask. Several silhouettes were encased in rigid, transparent plastic shells, and veiled, sometimes with bejeweled faces.

The show had a gothic atmosphere. Walls were clad in peeling photocopies of aristocratic moldings, a trompe-l'œil effect that also appeared on the clothes.

Chanel's anglomania

Chanel presented its last collection designed by its in-house studio, which has been responsible for the French luxury house's designs following the departure of its creative director Virginie Viard in June 2024 and ahead of her successor Mathieu Blazy's arrival



One of Robert Wun's most memorable looks was a celestial embroidered gown

Culture of Labubu

DEAR DOLL

When 17-year-old Sharifa (name changed) went to purchase a 'Labubu' from a shop in Oman along with her friends, their hearts beat fast in unison as the mystery box containing her much-sought-after treasure was handed out to her...

The teenagers closed their eyes, held each other's hands, and chanted a childish mantra together as Sharifa opened the box to unveil her luck... Seconds later a dramatic chorus of shrill cries made heads turn as they discovered that the box contained a Lychee Berry Labubu in a vibrant pink hue - a hot favourite among young girls,

The digital world, they say, is full of different choices and instant surprises (even shocks), and it now brings on a new trend called Labubu - a fanciful 'Monster' elves doll - that seems to be getting widespread attention from people worldwide.

Labubu is not just a doll, it has become a phenomenon among members of varied cultures the world over, as well as in Oman, where people have started buying it for various reasons, especially getting hooked on to the mystery of every purchase that is delivered with an element of suspense. Every buyer keeps his/her fingers crossed, hoping to be landed with a rare (priceless!) Labubu.

This doll - fashioned from vinyl and viral among social media users - has been created by a Hong Kong-Belgian designer Kasing Lung. Sold by Pop Mart in China, this doll comes in a playful shape. Yet, from what it seems, it's features - a furry body, wide eyes, pointed ears, sharp teeth - makes it look both playful as well as evil.

Aside from Labubu herself, there are other characters of the 'Monster' elves series - Mokoko, Pato, Spooky, and many more - but Labubu is the most popular.

Labubu began as a character designed by Kasing Lung, who grew up in the Netherlands and later settled in Belgium. It was part of Lung's 'Monster' series,

IF YOU'VE NOT HEARD OF LABUBU, YOU MUST BE EITHER A BORING PROFESSIONAL OR SOMEONE FROM ANOTHER PLANET...AS THIS SENSATIONAL TOY OR TRINKET HAS NOW GOT PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND CULTURES IN ITS SWAY. AND THIS IS NOT A CHEAP FAD!



These mystery boxes feature an addictive behaviour, similar to treasure hunting. Doll collectors — people who are considered obsessed with collecting the limited editions from different doll industries — buy those editions as soon

as they are released, or even book them before release. The doll prices range from RO10 to RO35 and some editions become even more expensive because of their rarity.

The obsession with Labubu's escalated when social media influencers started making videos about getting the blind boxes, unboxing them, and sharing their reactions to what they got, and so on. The doll comes in different sizes; people may attach it to their bags, cars, or use it in different accessories. And, it is not just a toy for children, people of all ages seem to be lured by the doll, regardless of culture.

In Muscat, too many youth - girls and boys are, indeed, enamoured by this toy which they tag onto school bags, handbags, bicycles, car dashboards as well as take them along wherever they go. Surprisingly, adults, too, have been taken up by this doll.

Noah al Wahaibi, a youth in Muscat, said, "My mom wanted the doll and she used to keep talking about it. I wanted to make her happy, so I bought her one. And, she is now over the moon."

Fifteen-year-old Thuraya al Rawahi, also said she bought the doll for its shape and to use it as a trinket. There are many other youngsters who have bought it just out of curiosity to follow a trend and be considered 'in' with the times.

Radhia al Ajami, another young fan of the doll, said, "I bought it because I like it and because it's trendy. I tag it on my bag, often in my car, too."

Ali Hassan, from YOYOSO, in Mall of Oman, asserted, "People of different backgrounds come to buy it. Mostly, kids



Photos: V K Shafeer

and girls are passionate about it because it's trendy, and we display it on our shop window to catch the attention of customers.

He further said, "When people buy it, they often sing its song with joy. We didn't have the doll at first, but we procured more stocks when inquiries for it began to soar. Currently, we have more than 200 dolls in the shop, and more in our warehouse."

Zen, an employee at Mievic - a shop in Muscat that specialises in selling everything related to women (which has showcased this doll prominently) - said, "Everyone is buying the doll. We sell around 30-50 dolls daily. People buy it because of the trend to possess one. They are also delighted to experience the suspense on purchase (to check out the type and colour of the one they get) as all sealed boxes have an element of mystery and no one knows what's in."

This worldwide trend - from buyers looking for hidden 'treasures' (as rare editions can be traded for high sums) in their purchase, to retailers looking to make hay while the Sun shines - has made Labubu not just a cultural phenomenon but also a commercial success and a household name.

(Contributed by: Asma al Balushi)



Most rare Labubu

The most rare and coveted Labubu figure is the human-sized, mint green Labubu, which sold for over US\$150,000 at a Beijing auction in June 2025. This 131cm tall figure is considered a unique art sculpture and is the only one of its kind. Here's why it's so special:

SIZE AND UNIQUENESS
Its massive size (131cm) and the fact that it's the only one of its kind make it incredibly rare.

HIGH VALUE
The US\$150,000+ price tag at auction solidifies its status as the most valuable Labubu figure.

ARTISTIC MERIT
Collectors see it as a true art sculpture, not just a toy, due to its intricate craftsmanship and design.

CELEBRITY RECOGNITION
The popularity of Labubu, including this particular figure, has been boosted by celebrities like Lisa from Blackpink and Dua Lipa.

AUCTION SUCCESS
The figure was the top lot at Yongle International Auction's, which was dedicated to Labubu toys. While other Labubu figures are also rare, especially those from secret editions, this human-sized mint green one stands out as the most exceptional.

