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ON No. 1/463/18

BRIEF

US, IRAN TO HOLD
FOURTH ROUND OF
TALKS IN MUSCAT
TODAY

Muscat - Iran and the United States will hold their fourth round of indirect talks in Muscat on Sunday, Oman's Foreign Minister H E Sayyid Badr al Busaidi announced on Friday.

"After coordination with both Iran and the US, the fourth round of negotiations is set to take place on Sunday, May 11 in Muscat," Sayyid Badr wrote on his X account.

In remarks carried by Iranian state media on Friday, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was quoted saying, "The negotiations are moving forward, and naturally, the further we go, the more consultations and reviews are needed."

He added, "The delegations require more time to examine the issues that are raised. But what is important is that we are on a forward-moving path and gradually entering into the details."

US President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff, who will attend the talks in Oman, was quoted by Breitbart News saying the Iranians had stated that they do not want a nuclear weapon and that the US will "take them at their word" on this point.

"If that's how they feel, then their enrichment facilities have to be dismantled. They cannot have centrifuges."

Qurum park, beach to get sustainable makeover

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A comprehensive masterplan for redevelopment of Qurum Beach and Qurum Park has been unveiled aiming to transform these iconic areas into sustainable, accessible and community-centric spaces.

Led by Amsterdam-based VMX Architects, the initiative involves master planning of Qurum Park and Qurum Beach as well as envisioning Qurum as a mixed-use urban district, combining residential spaces with commercial zones and green landscapes.

According to VMX Architects, the redevelopment will occur in phases. "Currently, we are updating the Qurum Park design to meet the requirements set by both the municipality and Governor of Muscat," a spokesperson for VMX Architects said.

The official further stated that the current priority is focused on Qurum Beach Road, "for which we have already developed a master plan. This represents the first phase of the broader initiative, with Qurum Park and its connection to the beach over the mangroves slated for the second phase".

Qurum Beach, including its



Plan envisions Qurum as a mixed-use urban district, combining residential spaces with commercial zones and green landscapes

prominent Love Road, sits between the mangroves and the sea. The masterplan envisions transforming the area into a vibrant public space that promotes interaction with nature. Currently, Beach Road is dominated by cars and lacks shaded areas and green spaces, making it less inviting.

The proposed changes include shifting the road behind existing businesses to create a car-free zone. This space will connect

restaurants and cafes directly to the beach, improving pedestrian safety and accessibility. The plan also incorporates viewing towers, sport facilities, parking structures, and pathways linking the beach with the surrounding nature reserve.

Qurum Park is set for upgrades as well. It will feature new sports facilities, including cricket, tennis, basketball and athletics grounds, as well as expanded play areas for children, teenagers

and adults. Other highlights include gardens, a boating lake, splash pad and performance spaces.

The masterplan introduces a network of pathways to connect the park's currently fragmented zones, transforming underutilised areas into functional spaces.

The nearby Qurum Nature Reserve, home to one of the largest

mangrove forests in the Sea of Oman, will remain a focal point of ecological preservation with minimal interventions to protect its natural beauty. Proposed features include eco-friendly facilities such as bird-watching hides, an eco-resort, water sports amenities and immersive mangrove walks.

The proposal envisions Qurum as a mixed-use urban district, combining residential spaces with commercial zones and green landscapes. With over 75,000sqm of new wild planting, a 7.5km pathway network and enhanced public spaces, Qurum is poised to become a hub for residents and visitors alike.

India and Pakistan announce ceasefire

New Delhi/Islamabad - After days of strikes and counter-strikes, India and Pakistan have agreed to a 'full and immediate' ceasefire.

Officials from Islamabad and New Delhi confirmed the development minutes after US President Donald Trump posted the announcement on his Truth Social network.

"After a long night of talks mediated by the US, I am pleased to announce that India and Pakistan have agreed to a full and immediate ceasefire," Trump posted.

Oman welcomed the ceasefire, stressing the importance of regional security and stability.

Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said both sides would "stop all firing and military action on land, air and sea" with effect from Saturday 1130 GMT.

In a statement on X, Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said,

"Pakistan and India have agreed to a ceasefire with immediate effect. Pakistan has always strived for peace and security in the region, without compromising on its sovereignty and territorial integrity!"

An Indian source told AFP that the ceasefire has been worked out bilaterally, "directly between the two countries".

Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said India and Pakistan had reached an understanding and that New Delhi would maintain a firm line against terrorism. "India has consistently maintained a firm and uncompromising stance against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It will continue to do so."

Violations were reported from both sides within hours of the ceasefire announcement.

See also [Page 10](#)



03

SQU team wins ME round of global geoscience contest Imperial Barrel Award



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Oman participates in Venice Biennale of Architecture for first time

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- Front Office (Junior)
- Front Office (Senior)
- HR Assistant

- Hygiene Officer
- IT Person
- Kitchen Assistant
- Laundry
- Lifelong Achievement
- Marketing
- Pastry Chef

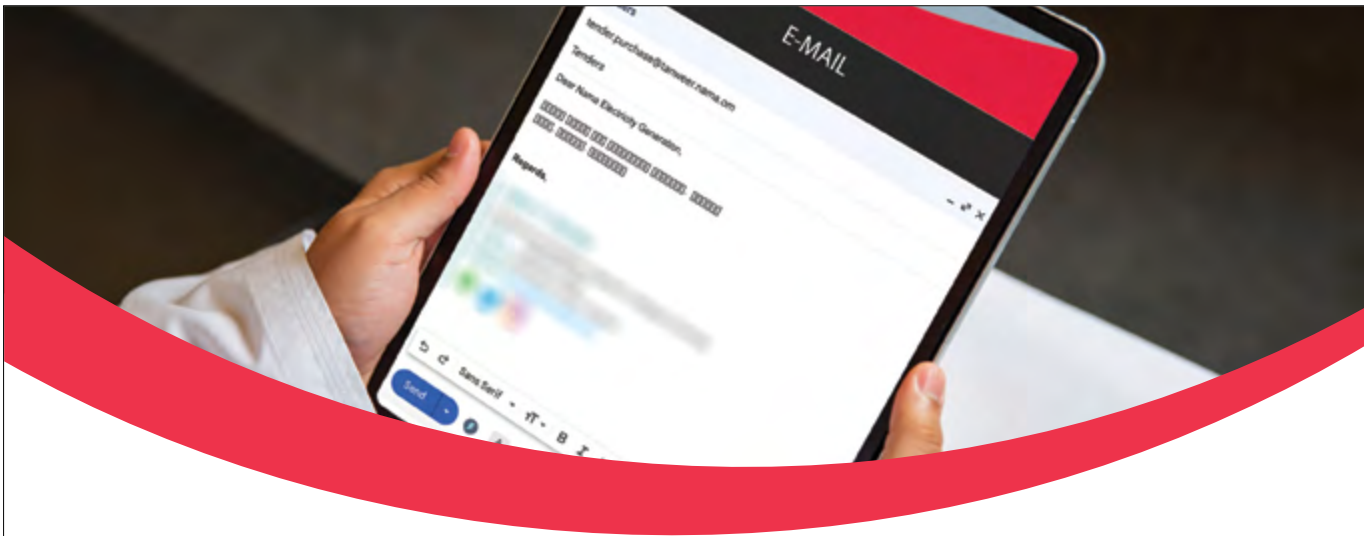
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- Security
- Spa/Fitness
- Training and Development
- Unsung Hero
- Young Hotelier of the Year



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TENDER

Nama Electricity Generation Company (S.A.O.C) invites the specialized companies to participate and submit their best offer for the following tender:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Tender Fee (OMR)	Grade	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Last Date for Proposal Submission
NEGC/02/2025	Selling of Electrical & Mechanical Scrap Materials at Masirah Closed Power Station	105/- (including VAT)	Specialist Companies	18 - 05 - 2025	01 - 06 - 2025

- Collection of Tender:** Interested and specialized companies and establishments registered with Nama Electricity Generation Company (Rural Areas Electricity Company) and Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents from Nama Electricity Generation Company, Procurement & IVC Section, at Wilayat Al Seeb, Airport Heights, or via email: (tender.purchase@ngce.nama.om) during the working hours between 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. The interested party shall deposit the tender fees (non-refundable) to the company account (0423010783090017 - Bank Muscat).
- Bank Guarantee:**
 - 1- Each bid should enclose a temporary insurance in the form of a bank guarantee from one of the banks operating in the Sultanate of Oman, covering (1%) of the total bid value and valid for a period of (90) days from the last date of submission and addressed to Nama Electricity Generation Company (S.A.O.C)- excluding Riyadh card holders from this Bid Bond. Bids that do not include the required temporary insurance will not be considered.
 - 2- The awarded bidder shall enclose (5% performance bond) a bank guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for value of (5%) from the total quotation value and addressed to Rural Area Electricity Company, within 10 Days from the LOA.
- The buyer must transfer all the materials and clean the location within five months from the date of client notification for taking the materials. If the buyer does not transfer the materials purchased within the specified period, the company will confiscate them, and the buyer is not entitled to claim compensation for them.
- Offers Submission:** Bids should be submitted in three separate envelopes (Pre-Qualification, Technical & Financial) with red wax addressed to the Chairman of Minor Tender Committee, Nama Electricity Generation Company (S.A.O.C) marked with tender number and name. No indication or any reference to bidders' identity is permitted on the envelope.
- Submission Location:** Bids should be dropped in the tender box at the main office of Nama Electricity Generation Company (S.A.O.C), at Wilayat Al Seeb, Airport Heights, no later than 12:00 PM on the last date of submission.
- Nama Electricity Generation Company is not required to provide an explanation for the non-acceptance of the lowest bid or any other submissions.
- Site Visit:** To be scheduled for bidders after the procurement period ends.
- Location Map link:** <https://maps.app.goo.gl/fZjGjMWDBmnG7bCi7>



Nama Electricity Generation
Business Tower, Muscat Hills, Airport Heights
P.O Box 1166, Post Code 113, Sultanate of Oman
Phone Number: +968 91766576



Omani jiu-jitsu duo wins gold, silver medals in UAE



Our Correspondent
Muscat

Omani brothers Abdullah and Mohammed al Farsi added to their growing list of international achievements by securing two medals in the third round of the Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Jiu-Jitsu Championship in Abu Dhabi, held from May 2 to 4.

Competing in the professional categories, Mohammed won gold in the purple belt division, while Abdullah claimed silver in the black belt division. The latest victories bring their combined medal count to 198 - 147 for Abdullah and 51 for Mohammed.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Abdullah said, "These victories are not just medals; they are steps towards putting Oman firmly on the global jiu-jitsu map and strengthening our standing in international martial arts competitions."

He noted that the champi-

These victories are not just medals; they are steps towards putting Oman firmly on the global jiu-jitsu map and strengthening our standing in international martial arts competitions

ABDULLAH AL FARSI

onship had broader significance beyond the sport. "The tournament reflects the values of social cohesion, instils a sporting culture in society, and contributes to building strong generations grounded in self-confidence, belonging, and responsibility."

Abdullah described the Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Jiu-Jitsu Championship as "a

well-structured tournament with a competitive ranking system that supports the development of athletes."

Acknowledging the tough competition, he added, "We were well-prepared. Despite the high level of competition, we overcame it with patience and willpower."

He said such results have wider national impact. "These successes inspire young athletes, boost national confidence, and encourage more players to pursue international careers. They also enhance the reputation of Omani jiu-jitsu schools."

The event attracted strong attendance from families and fans, underlining its status as a key sporting and cultural platform. "We will continue to promote this sport among youth and society, and remain committed to participating in international championships to raise the sultanate's flag high," Abdullah said.

Oman bags five Gulf Smart Investor awards



Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman made an impression at the Gulf Smart Investor Award 2025, clinching five awards across several creative categories during a ceremony held in Riyadh on Thursday.

Organised by Gulf securities market regulators under the umbrella of the GCC Secretariat General, the third edition of the awards recognised 44 winners from across the region. The event was held under the patronage of Jassim bin Mohammed al Budaiwi, GCC Secretary-

General.

The award celebrates creativity and innovation in four artistic fields - video production, drawing, photography, and writing - across three participant groups: individuals, university students, and school students.

Oman's strong showing included a first-place finish in the individual writing category, awarded to Marwa Farouk Mohammed Radwan, underscoring the nation's literary talent on a regional stage.

In the university category, Sarah bint Hamad al Maamari secured third place in photogra-

phy, while Al Mohannad bin Mohammed al Riyami also got the same place in video production.

Young talents from Oman also impressed in the school-level categories. Juhaina bint Sulaiman al Rashidi was second in drawing, while Saleh bin Khalid al Qatiti occupied the same place in the video category.

The awards aim to foster financial literacy and creative expressions among youth and individuals in the Gulf region, while spotlighting excellence in content that reflects smart investment principles and awareness.

Oman, South Africa discuss holding joint economic forum in Muscat

Muscat - H E Sheikh Khalifa Ali al Harthy, Undersecretary for Political Affairs in the Foreign Ministry, received Anna Thandi Moraka, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, on Thursday.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral cooperation between Oman and South Africa in several areas. They

looked into prospects for holding a joint economic forum in Muscat, in addition to enhancing tourism cooperation by facilitating procedures and encouraging initiatives related to tourism.

The two sides also exchanged views on regional issues. H E Harthy expressed his appreciation for South Africa's strong opposition to the genocide being suffered by the Palestinians as a

result of the Israeli war. For her part, Anna commended the effective role undertaken by Oman in resolving regional issues through peaceful means.

The meeting was attended by Saleh Mohammed al Saqri, Head of the East Africa Department at the Foreign Ministry; H E David Mogobo, Ambassador of South Africa to Oman, and other officials from the two countries.



Tender Announcement

Oman National engineering and Investment Company S.A.O.G would like to Announces the Following Tender
Construction of Proposed G+4 Multi Storied Car Park Building & Other Commercial Development at KOM, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

Tender No.	Tender Title	Tender Document Fee	Deadline for Obtaining the Documents	Last date to submit tender queries	Last date to Submit the Offers
41090-2025	Construction of Proposed G+4 Multi Storied Car Park Building & other Commercial Development at KOM, Muscat	RO 500/- Non refundable	22/05/2025	01/06/2025	10/06/2025

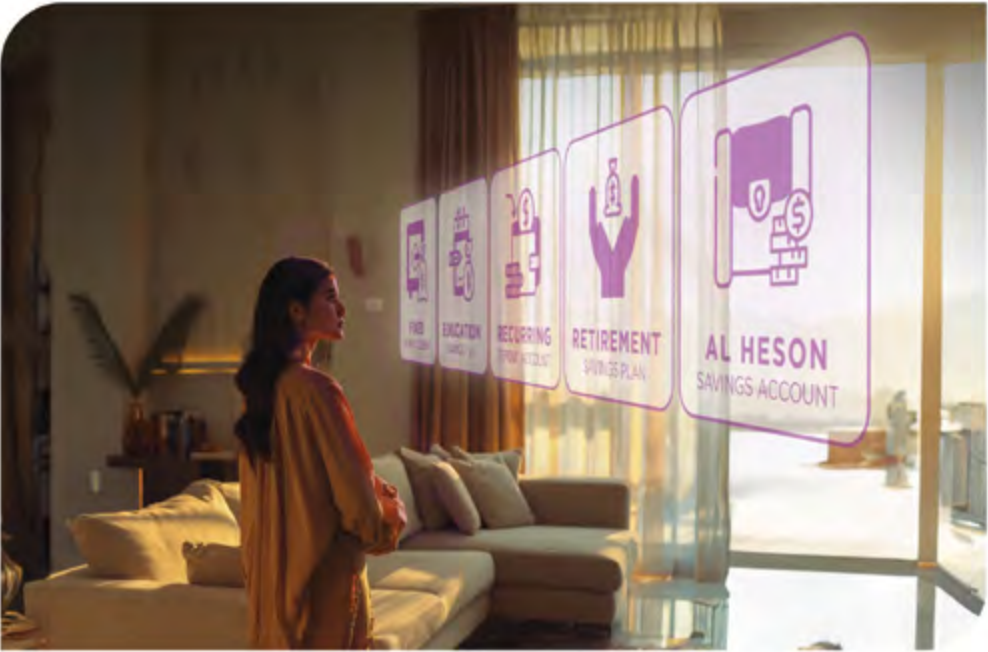
Bank Name and Account

Bank Muscat (0423011147900013)

Condition:

- Tender Collection:** Companies and institutions classified as Grade One or above, with proven experience in the field and a valid commercial registration, are invited to participate in this tender. Eligible bidders may obtain the tender documents from the Procurement Department by sending a copy of the bank payment receipt to mohd.zahid@oneic.com.om, starting from the date of this announcement and during official working hours from **08:00 AM to 05:00 PM**.
- Bank Guarantee:** All participating companies are required to produced bid bond with their offers form a licensed and approved bank operating in the Sultanate of Oman, with a value equivalent to **(1%)** of the total bid amount. The guarantee must be addressed to Oman National Engineering & Investment Co. SAOG and must be valid for a minimum of (120) days from the final closing date for bid submission
- Submitting Offers:** Offers must be submitted as per the indicated procedure in prime documents at tender box in **ONEIC's Head office, 2nd Floor procurement department, AL-Khuwair**.
- Deadline for Submission of Offers:** The final deadline for receiving offers is before **1:00 PM** on the last date for bid submission.
- Offers submitted after the specified deadline or those that do not meet the required conditions will not be considered.
- The documents must be stamped and signed by the authorized person only.
- Oman National Engineering & Investment Co. SAOG reserves the right to accept or reject any offer, as well as the right to cancel the tender without providing any reasons.
- Oman National Engineering & Investment Co. SAOG reserves the right to add or omit certain works included in the tender if deemed necessary.
- Oman National Engineering & Investment Co. SAOG is not obligated to accept the lowest or any other offer without providing reasons.
- For inquiries and clarifications regarding the tender, you can contact via email at mohd.zahid@oneic.com.om or contact at phone number **24396429**.

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New book chronicles five decades of Omani cinema

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Filmmaker and Oman Film Society (OFS) board member Mohammad al Kindi has released a book - titled *Tahwalet Cinema Omaniya 1970-2020* (History of Cinema in Oman) - documenting the evolution of the sultanate's film industry over five decades.

The 279-page book is the first of its kind to trace the journey of Omani cinema, starting from the 1970s with special focus on the transformative years under the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said. It provides a detailed account of how passionate filmmakers, often with limited resources,

shaped a distinct art form.

Reflecting on the book's significance, Kindi said, "This book is an ode to the makers who lit the cinematic flame in Oman. Their stories are not just about making films, but about building a movement, often against the odds. The book doesn't stop at filmmakers, also paying tribute to journalists, theatre personalities and business leaders who played vital roles in supporting the growth of the medium."

The book profiles key figures of the Omani film industry, including pioneering cameramen Taghlib al Barwani and Mohammad Zubair, OFS founding members Haitham al Tai and Khalid al



Zadjali, veteran journalist Sheikh Hamood Siyabi, and the late actor-director Salim Bahwan.

One section of the book covers the history of OFS, from its early days as a gathering of film

enthusiasts to its current status as an influential institution headquartered in Seeb. It also touches on the impact of film fests, such as Muscat International Film Festival

was preparing a lecture for a book festival in France in 2019. "While researching for my speech, I uncovered fascinating stories of filmmakers across

volume covering the period starting from 2020.

The book is currently available for purchase through Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and

The book doesn't stop at filmmakers, also paying tribute to journalists, theatre personalities and business leaders who played vital roles in supporting the growth of the medium

MOHAMMAD AL KINDI

Oman. That's when I knew this had to become a book," he said.

Over the next five years, Kindi travelled across Oman, collecting stories and archives for the project. He plans to release a second

can also be accessed at the OFS library. Kindi recently showcased his book at the WAVES Summit in Mumbai, where he was invited as a guest by the Indian Embassy in Oman.



SQU team wins Middle East round of global geoscience contest

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A team from Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) has won the Middle East edition of the Imperial Barrel Award (IBA), a global geoscience competition organised by American Association of Petroleum Geologists. Following the win, the team will represent the region at the IBA global finals this month, competing against universities from five continents.

The team includes Anas Rashid al Maamari, Maather Ibrahim al Rawahi, Zainab Ali al Mahdali and Ayman Mohammed al Ghafri from College of Science, with Qasim Yousef Abbas Ibrahim from College of Engineering. The group was men-

tored by Dr Mohammed Farfour, Associate Professor in the Department of Earth Sciences at College of Science.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Ghafri described IBA as "a prestigious international competition held annually to simulate real-world decision-making processes within oil and gas companies". He informed that participants work in teams, analysing geological and geophysical data to identify potential drilling sites.

"Our team was united by a strong spirit of cooperation and task integration, allowing us to draw on diverse expertise and maximise knowledge exchange," Ghafri said. "This synergy enabled us to deliver a comprehensive project that included a

detailed analysis of rock and reservoir properties, an accurate estimation of hydrocarbon resources, and a strategic exploration plan."

The final round of the regional competition was held at Abu Dhabi Energy Center. The SQU team was chosen winner after presenting its findings to a panel of industry experts. Competing teams included those from Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait and the UAE.

"Our determination and confidence in our project helped overcome the intense competition," Ghafri said. "We're proud to have reached this stage of the Imperial Barrel Award programme and hope to win the first place at the global finals this month."

2 dams to enhance Salalah's flood defence

Salalah - Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources will inaugurate two major dams in Salalah this week as part of ongoing efforts to enhance flood protection in Dhofar.

The Wadi Annar Dam, with storage capacity of approximately 16mn m³, will be inaugurated on Sunday. Built at a cost of RO23mn, it forms a key component of the flood protection system in Salalah aimed at mitigating the impact of seasonal flash floods.

The second project - Wadi Adawnib Dam - will be officially opened on Monday. It is the largest dam in Salalah's flood protection network and the second largest in Oman with storage



capacity of 83mn m³. The dam spans 386m in length, 70m high and includes an 80m concrete side spillway. Its watershed area

covers 217sqkm. The RO24mn project is designed to reduce the risk of recurring flooding in the area and enhance water security.



إعلان مناقصة Tender Announcement

تدعو شركة ميناء صحر والمنطقة الحرة الشركات المختصة للمشاركة في المناقصة أدناه
SOHAR Port and Freezone invites specialised companies to the following tender

No رقم	Tender Ref الرقم المرجعي	Title العنوان	Tender Fee OMR الرسوم
1	SIPC/2025/095	Provision of 360-Degree Feedback Assessment Services	26.25
2	SIPC/2025/096	Provision Of Interpersonal Development Training Programs	26.25
3	SIPC/2025-087	Sampling Of Seawater, Sediment and Rock Oyster In SOHAR Port	26.25
4	SIPC/2025/079	Development of SOHAR Port and Freezone ESG Report	26.25
5	SIPC/2025/002	Purchase of Company Pool Cars	52.50

◆ The above-mentioned tender fees including the VAT 5%.

◆ Tenderers can request to receive the electronic tender documents from 9:00 am Sunday, 11/05/2025 until 4:00 pm on Sunday 25/05/2025.

◆ Deadline for submission of bids is 11 June 2025.

◆ Tenderers to follow the below procedures and steps to obtain the electronic tender documents:

◆ Step 1: Interested Tenderers should remit the stated tender fees as per the below bank details:

◆ تشمل رسوم المناقصة المذكورة أعلاه ضريبة القيمة المضافة ومقرها 5%.

◆ بإمكان مقدمي العطاءات طلب استلام وثائق المناقصة إلكترونياً ابتداء من يوم الأحد 11/05/2025م (الساعة 9 صبحاً) وحتى يوم الأحد الموافق 25/05/2025م (الساعة 4 مساءً).

◆ آخر موعد لتقديم العطاءات بتاريخ 11 يونيو 2025م.

◆ على مقدمي العطاءات اتباع الإجراءات والخطوات التالية للحصول على مستندات المناقصة إلكترونياً.

◆ الخطوة الأولى: يجب على مقدمي العطاءات سداد رسوم المناقصة وفقاً للتفاصيل المبينة أدناه:

SOHAR Industrial Port Co شركة ميناء صحر الصناعي	Account Name اسم الحساب
3101-007970-500	Account Number رقم الحساب
Oman Arab bank SAOC - Main Br بنك عمان العربي ش.م.ع.م - الفرع الرئيسي	Bank Name اسم البنك
OMABOMRXXXX	SWIT رمز السوفليت كود

Note: Bank transfers is the only mode of payment accepted
ملاحظة: التحويل البنكي هي الطريقة الوحيدة المقبولة للدفع

◆ Step 2:
Tenderers to send the following documents:

- A request for the electronic tender documents.
- A scanned copy of bank transfer
- The firm's commercial registration documents
- All shall be communicated to the following e-mail address:
sipc.procurement@soharportandfreezone.com

◆ الخطوة الثانية:
يتعين على مقدمي العطاءات تقديم المستندات التالية:

- طلب الحصول على نسخة إلكترونية من مستندات المناقصة
- نسخة من إكمال التحويل البنكي
- أوراق السجل التجاري للشركة
- على أن يتم إرسالها إلى:
sipc.procurement@soharportandfreezone.com

◆ Step 3:
Tenderers will receive the electronic Tender Document by e-mail.

- SOHAR reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reasons.
- All SMEs, holders of Rijadah Card, are requested to provide their Rijadah Card along with the required documents to exempt them from the tender fees.
- For any clarification regarding the tenders please send an e-mail to:
sipc.procurement@soharportandfreezone.com

◆ سوف يستلم مقدمي العطاءات نسخة إلكترونية من مستندات المناقصة عبر البريد الإلكتروني.

- يحق لشركة ميناء صحر والمنطقة الحرة قبول أو رفض أي مورد بدون الإفصاح عن الأسباب.
- يتوجب على حاملي بطاقة ريادة من المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة تقديم بطاقة ريادة إلى جانب مستندات الشركة.
- في حال وجود أي أسئلة أو استفسارات تتعلق بالمناقصة الرجاء التواصل معنا عبر البريد الإلكتروني.

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Oman-British Society symposium explores innovation, trade ties and Vision 2040 goals

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Oman-British Society (OBS) hosted a symposium on Thursday to explore the future of economic development, legal frameworks, and innovation in the sultanate. Titled ‘Unlocking Oman’s Future: Law, Trade, and Innovation in Action’, the event brought together economists, academics, policymakers, and business leaders to discuss strategies for fostering sustainable economic growth in Oman.

Key topics included legal reforms, trade facilitation, technological innovation, and renewable energy, with particular emphasis on the emerging green hydrogen sector.

Speaking at the opening of symposium, Saleh Zakwani, Chairman of the Oman-British Society, reaffirmed the Society’s longstanding role in strengthening the deep-rooted relationship between Oman and the United Kingdom. He noted that the Oman-British Society, founded in 1991, has consistently worked to deepen bilateral ties, particularly in trade, investment, and partnership development.

Zakwani underscored OBS’s focus on enhancing commercial and industrial cooperation and broadening collaboration in education, culture, tourism, and sports between the UK and Oman. “To advance these goals, the Society hosts meetings, seminars, lectures, and discussion forums, all aimed at nurturing friendship, trust, and mutual understanding between Oman and the UK,” he said.

He added that the Society’s influence is amplified by the calibre of its members, who are able to raise issues of public interest with decision-makers, thereby helping to facilitate greater trade and investment.

Haifa al Khaifi, Secretary General of the Oman-British Society, said, “It was an honour for the OBS to host this pivotal gathering, which brought together



It was an honour for the Oman-British Society to host this pivotal gathering, which brought together thought leaders and innovators to explore how law, trade, and innovation can unlock Oman’s vast potential

HAIFA AL KHAIFI

thought leaders and innovators to explore how law, trade, and innovation can unlock Oman’s vast potential. The event underscored the deep-rooted Omani-British partnership, with the UK now accounting for 51% of total foreign direct investment into Oman – a

testament to our enduring trust and shared vision.”

She added that from green hydrogen to smart cities, Oman is charting a resilient, diversified future under Vision 2040. “I am proud to witness this momentum and remain committed to

fostering meaningful connections that will shape a prosperous, collaborative future for Oman and its longstanding partners.”

The symposium provided a comprehensive overview of Oman’s steady transition to-

wards a diversified, resilient, and investor-friendly economy in line with Vision 2040.

During the event, Mohammed al Hinaï, a seasoned economic adviser specialising in trade, investment strategy, and economic development, spoke to

Muscat Daily on the enduring strength of Omani-British relations. “Our cooperation spans sectors such as technology, energy, and mineral resources. British companies have long invested in Oman, and this trend continues to grow,” he said.

Hinaï emphasised the UK’s position as a European technology hub, a role that benefits Omani companies by supporting their growth in both financial and technological domains. He described such symposiums as essential for reviewing progress and stimulating dialogue in key fields such as trade, innovation, and green energy.

Several speakers at the event highlighted the importance of innovation-driven policy, legal modernisation, and creating an enabling environment for startups and foreign investors. The role of academic and research institutions in supporting Oman’s shift towards a knowledge-based economy also emerged as a key theme.

In a detailed presentation, Alkesh Joshi, EY Oman Tax

Leader and EY MENA Sustainability Tax Leader, outlined the country’s progress towards Vision 2040 goals, citing advances in diversification, fiscal stability, and investment attractiveness. He opened his address by stressing the importance of measuring Vision 2040 implementation through performance indicators. Joshi also pointed to Oman’s improved global rankings.

Highlighting Oman’s demographic strengths, Joshi remarked that 73% of the country’s 5.2mn population fall within the 15-50 age group, offering a vibrant talent pool and consumer base. On the macroeconomic front, he said Oman’s GDP performance remains competitive within the GCC, while public debt management has improved markedly.

The Oman-British Society symposium concluded with a panel discussion focusing on policy recommendations and collaborative efforts between Oman and the UK to accelerate economic diversification under Oman Vision 2040.

Shinas Port’s RO77mn development work set to begin by end of this year

Our Correspondent
Muscat

QS Maritime, the operator of Oman’s Shinas Port, is set to commence development work at the port before the end of this year, with investments exceeding RO77mn. The project is expected to take between five and seven years to complete.

In a statement to the Oman News Agency, Eng Abdul Baqi al Kindi, CEO of QS Maritime, said the contract would be awarded to a company specialising in port and marine development. The first phase will involve expanding the port’s existing basin to the south, along with the construction of a new breakwater on the northern side. These developments aim to accommodate larger vessels and improve the port’s operational efficiency.

He added that the port’s area has been expanded to approximately 1.8mn sqm, in preparation for promising projects, including the construction of fuel storage tanks, factories, and a range of warehouses targeting both re-export and the local market.

Kindi revealed that the sea route between Shinas Port and Bandar Abbas Port in Iran will



Shinas Port saw significant growth in commercial activity during the first quarter of 2025. The passenger terminal at the port is ready, with security inspection preparations nearing completion

ENG ABDUL BAQI AL KINDI

commence operations in the final quarter of this year. The company investing in the pas-

senger service will operate two weekly trips using ferries with a capacity of 200 passengers and their vehicles.

He confirmed that the passenger terminal at the port is ready, with security inspection preparations nearing completion. He noted that Shinas Port saw significant growth in commercial activity during the first quarter of 2025. The number of visiting ships rose to 306, compared to 119 in the same period of 2024. The volume of imported and exported livestock also increased, reaching 25,944, up from 9,057 in the first quarter of the previous year.

He further explained that total

cargo handled through the port exceeded 186,000 tonnes, surpassing the combined total for the previous two years. The goods included building materials such as cement and iron, foodstuffs, general cargo, as well as livestock and camels.

Regarding transshipment operations, Kindi said 42 were carried out in the first quarter of this year, with a total volume exceeding 173,000 tonnes. These comprised 40 liquid cargo operations and two bunkering operations. This exceeds the total transshipment volume for 2024, reinforcing Shinas Port’s role as a growing logistics hub along the Sea of Oman.

Sohar Industrial City attracts RO87mn new projects in 2024

Suhar – Sohar Industrial City, affiliated with the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), received approximately 62 investment applications in 2024. Of these, 38 projects have been localised, with investments exceeding RO87mn.

These projects cover an area of more than 476,000 sqm, bringing the total volume of investment in the industrial city to RO2.3bn.

Eng Abdullah bin Ahmed al Mayasi, Director General of Sohar Industrial City, stated that the Ladayn Plastic Industries Complex has successfully localised 16 projects, with total investments surpassing RO31mn. The utilised area has reached approximately 13% of the total allocated space.

He added, in a statement to the Oman News Agency, that one project within the Ladayn complex has commenced production, while two others are currently under construction.

The most prominent of these is the Multi-Sand Metal Company, which specialises in manufacturing plastic strips, sheets, and plates. This project, with an investment of RO9mn, spans 30,000 sqm and is expected to



begin production early in the third quarter of this year.

Mayasi explained that the project aims to develop an integrated zone for the production of semi-finished and fully finished plastic products with high added value. The zone will cover an area of 1mn sqm and will contribute to building a diversified and competitive economy.

He also highlighted that an initial area of 771,849 sqm has been allocated for the Integrated Aluminium Economic Cluster project in Sohar Industrial City.

This project aims to establish a group of downstream indus-

tries that rely on primary aluminium products. It leverages the economic advantages surrounding the industrial city, creating an ideal environment for attracting investment, developing new downstream industries, and enhancing local added value in the aluminium sector.

The aluminium industry is one of the most significant industrial sectors in Oman. It plays a vital role in diversifying the national economy, generating employment opportunities, and reinforcing Oman’s position as a global hub for the aluminium industry. ONA

Tariff war: US, UK reach historic trade deal

Eleanor Butler and Evelyn Dom

The US and the UK on Thursday announced a trade deal, the first agreement secured with the Trump administration after it announced a raft of tariffs on foreign goods in early April.

"The final details are being written up," US President Donald Trump told reporters. "In the coming weeks, we'll have it all very conclusive."

The rapidly-negotiated deal is

not a wide-ranging trade pact but it instead focuses on specific sectors, easing trade barriers on agricultural, automobile, aluminium and steel products.

Although Trump is referring to the breakthrough as a "full and comprehensive" deal, experts stress that this exaggerates the scope of the agreement. For a full-trade deal to be brokered, Congress must first give its approval.

Both President Donald Trump and UK Prime Minister Keir



A file photo shows UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and US President Donald Trump

Starmer emphasised the strong relationship between their two countries, bonded by shared values, culture and a common language. "It's a real tribute to the history that we have of working so closely together," Starmer said in a call with the US President on Thursday.

Trump referred to the UK as "truly one of our great allies". Thursday's deal is based on olive branches from both sides.

One concession from the US is the removal of a 25% levy on

steel and aluminium from the UK, which Trump imposed on all foreign imports of these metals on 12 March.

The UK doesn't send a huge amount of steel and aluminium to the US, although it does send many products that contain them, which are also affected by the levy.

The US market buys 9% of UK steel exports by value and 7% by volume, according to UK Steel.

President Trump also said on Thursday that the US would be

increasing its beef and ethanol exports to the UK, which will be fast-tracked through customs. These imports have historically been limited due concerns over added growth hormones.

"The deal includes billions of dollars of increased market access for American exports, especially in agriculture, dramatically increasing access for American beef, ethanol, and virtually all of the products produced by our great farmers," Trump said.

(Source: Euronews.com)

Trump calls Powell 'fool' as Fed keeps key rate unchanged



Washington, US - US President Donald Trump criticised Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell again Friday, a day after the central bank left the interest rate constant due to economic uncertainty created by tariffs.

"'Too Late' Jerome Powell is a FOOL, who doesn't have a clue," Trump wrote on Truth Social.

"Other than that, I like him very much! Oil and Energy way down, almost all costs (groceries and "eggs") down, virtually NO INFLATION, Tariff Money Pouring Into the US - THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF "TOO LATE!" ENJOY!" he added.

The Fed on Wednesday decided not to cut the policy rate, keeping it in the range of 4.25% to 4.5%. The decision came after uncertainty caused by tariffs and Trump's repeated criticisms of Powell, accusing him of failing to act swiftly as economic risks mount.

Trump repeatedly demanded that the Fed cut interest rates, citing moves by European central banks and warning that delays could stall the US economy.

He wrote on April 7 on social

media that now is "a PERFECT time to cut rates," but Powell "is always late." Ten days later, he posted: "Jerome Powell of the Fed, who is always TOO LATE AND WRONG, yesterday issued a report which was another, and typical, complete 'mess!'"

He added that "termination cannot come fast enough!" referring to Powell.

US Federal Reserve on Wednesday decided not to cut the policy rate, keeping it in the range of 4.25% to 4.5%

Trump claimed on April 21 that Powell's reluctance to cut rates could lead to a slowdown in the US economy.

Powell responded to Trump's repeated critiques and desire for rate cuts, stating that it would not have any effect on the Fed's work "at all," in a press briefing Wednesday after the Fed's decision.

Anadolu Agency

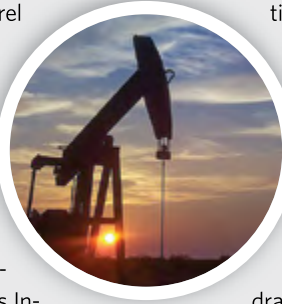
Oil prices rose 4% last week amid US inventory drop, trade talks

London, UK - Oil prices posted weekly gains, driven by a drop in US crude inventories, renewed optimism surrounding US-China trade talks, and expectations of sustained global demand despite rising output from major oil producers.

The international benchmark Brent crude traded at \$63.75 per barrel on Friday, marking an increase of around 4% from previous week's closing price of \$61.31.

Similarly, the American benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) was trading at \$60.69 per barrel, up approximately 4.4% from previous Friday's closing level of \$58.10.

The increase came despite initial pressure from an announcement by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies, known as OPEC+, to boost production levels in



June. The eight-member countries plan to raise output by 411,000 barrels per day (bpd) compared to May as part of a phased plan to unwind voluntary cuts.

Markets responded with a short-lived price drop early in the week, reflecting concerns over a potential supply glut.

However, investor sentiment shifted after bargain buying and favorable macroeconomic signals helped prices recover.

Additionally, a drawdown in US crude inventories helped ease supply concerns. According to data released Thursday by the US Energy Information Administration (EIA), US commercial crude oil inventories fell by 2mn barrels to 438.4mn barrels last week, indicating healthy demand in the world's largest oil consumer.

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A'Sharqiya Investments Holding Co. (SAOG)

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Chairman's Report for the Quarter ended March 31, 2025

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it gives me great pleasure to present the unaudited consolidated financial statements of A'Sharqiya Investment Holding Company (SAOG) and its subsidiary – Qalhat Real Estate Investments & Services SPC. (QREIS) - for the three-month period ended March 31, 2025.

Overview of Operations and Financial Performance

A summary of the company's operating performance for the three-month period ending March 31, 2025, in comparison to the corresponding period in 2024 and the full year ended 2024 is presented below:

(RO in '000)				
Quarter ended March 31, 2025	March 31 2025	March 31 2024	Increase & Decrease %	Dec 31st 2024
Total Operating Income	577	487	18.5	1,353
Profit after Tax (PAT)	366	301	21.4	628
Total Assets	18,291	18,482	(1.04)	18,724
Shareholder's Equity	14,563	14,841	(1.88)	14,873

It may be noted from above; the company's operations during the three-month period ended March 31, 2025, generated an income of RO 576,900 as compared to RO 486,778 for the corresponding period in 2024. Profit before tax recorded an increase of 21.4% at RO 397,937 as against RO 319,946 for the same period in the last year. The profit after tax arising from the company's operations during this period aggregated to RO 365,957 as compared to RO 301,344 generated during the comparable period in 2024 reflecting an increase of 21.4%.

During this quarter, the company, through its Subsidiary QRIES, has renewed the lease agreement of its residential complex for a further period of five years (2025-2029) with OLING, as a continuation to its long-standing relationship with OLING in providing a premium residential facility in Sur.

The total assets of the company as at March 31, 2025, was RO 18,290,546 as compared to RO 18,482,324 as at March 31, 2024, reflecting a decrease of 1.04%. Shareholder Equity also decreased by 1.88% to RO 14,562,864, from RO 14,841,500 in the same period last year. The break-up value of the company's equity share works out to Baizas 162 on March 31, 2025, as compared to Baizas 165 on March 31, 2024.

Investment and future Outlook

The first quarter of 2025 saw the global economy continuing its slow but steady recovery from the inflationary shocks amid lingering challenges from 2024. Major economies like the United States and the Eurozone reported moderate GDP growth, aided by easing inflation and resilient labor markets. However, global interest rates remained elevated, as central banks like the U.S. Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank maintained a cautious stance to ensure inflation stays within target ranges. Energy prices, particularly oil and gas, saw moderate volatility driven by geopolitical tensions and OPEC+ production decisions. Brent crude remained within the \$70-\$80 per barrel range, supporting oil-exporting countries in maintaining robust fiscal positions. However, volatility and concerns over future demand led to cautious budget spending, with continued emphasis on economic diversification. It is truly encouraging to see the tireless efforts of the government to diversify its sources of income, with the aim of building a flexible and diversified economy that does not rely solely on oil.

The company positioned its portfolio in Q1 2025 on a conservative stance, with the Middle East and GCC economies being on a cautiously optimistic path, buoyed by stable oil revenues and diversified growth efforts, but still facing external challenges from high global interest rates and geopolitical uncertainties.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq for his able leadership and for his continued support to the private sector in the country. I also thank the shareholders for their continued support and for the confidence reposed on the company. My appreciation also goes to the company's management and staff for their contributions and commitment to the company.

Mohammed Ali Mohammed Al Fannah
Chairman
May 07, 2025

UN-AUDITED SEPARATE CONSOLIDATED CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 202

	31 March 2025		31 March 2024		31 December 2024	
	Parent RO	Group RO	Parent RO	Group RO	Parent RO	Group RO
ASSETS						
Non-current assets						
Property and equipment	920	267,001	937	266,925	1,107	256,211
Lease receivables	-	3,418,661	-	2,985,533	-	3,558,537
Investment in subsidiary	250,000	-	250,000	-	250,000	-
Financial assets at FVOCI	7,821,910	7,821,910	8,171,727	8,171,727	8,050,105	8,050,105
Investments in Perpetual Bonds	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Deferred tax assets	23,067	23,067	39,463	39,463	23,067	23,067
Financial assets at FVTPL	608,864	608,864	443,398	443,398	557,564	557,564
Amortised cost of Bonds	3,200,910	3,200,910	2,946,067	2,946,067	3,200,342	3,200,342
Total	12,055,671	15,490,413	12,001,592	15,003,113	12,232,185	15,795,826

Current assets						
Lease receivables	-	35,477	-	932,266	-	29,890
Prepayments/Other receivables	376,297	581,134	510,123	850,313	231,214	316,774
Term Deposit	-	1,000,000	-	1,000,000	-	1,950,000
Bank balances and cash	186,352	1,183,522	235,499	696,632	585,452	631,534
Total	562,649	2,800,133	745,622	3,479,211	816,666	2,928,198
Total assets	12,618,320	18,290,546	12,747,214	18,482,324	13,048,851	18,724,024

EQUITY						
Capital and reserves						
Share capital	9,000,000	9,000,000	9,000,000	9,000,000	9,000,000	9,000,000
Legal reserve	1,809,193	1,892,527	1,676,610	1,759,944	1,785,650	1,868,984
Fair value reserve	611,365	611,365	990,134	990,134	835,653	835,653
Retained earnings	943,433	3,058,972	340,417	3,091,422	1,183,406	3,168,416
Equity attributable to equity holders of parent	12,363,991	14,562,864	12,007,161	14,841,500	12,804,709	14,873,053
Total equity	12,363,991	14,562,864	12,007,161	14,841,500	12,804,709	14,873,053

LIABILITIES						
Non-current liabilities						
Finance lease payable	-	3,349,160	-	3,259,502	-	3,489,037
Total	164,683	195,767	162,214	199,864	157,801	196,894
Total	164,683	3,544,927	162,214	3,459,366	157,801	3,685,931

Current liabilities						
Finance lease payable	-	35,477	-	29,891	-	29,890
Due to subsidiary	-	-	500,000	-	-	-
Accruals and other payables	33,772	37,819	36,141	61,691	39,412	57,670
Provision for taxation	55,874	109,459	41,698	89,876	46,929	77,480
Total	89,646	182,755	577,839	181,458	86,341	165,040
Total liabilities	254,329	3,727,682	740,053	3,640,824	244,142	3,850,971
Total equity and liabilities	12,618,320	18,290,546	12,747,214	18,482,324	13,048,851	18,724,024

Net assets per share	0.137	0.162	0.133	0.165	0.142	0.165
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UN-AUDITED SEPARATE AND CONSOLIDATED CONDENSED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THREE MONTHS PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	31 March 2025		31 March 2024	
	Parent RO	Group RO	Parent RO	Group RO
INCOME				
Finance income on lease receivables	-	87,608	-	78,466
Lease rent income	-	119,681	-	-
Dividend income	292,732	292,732	294,105	294,105
Maintenance services income	-	-	-	10,243
Unrealised gain/(Loss) on assets at FVTPL	3,457	3,457	(12,895)	(12,895)
Realised gain on disposal of asset at FVTPL	-	-	14,713	14,713
Management charges Income	15,000	-	15,000	-
Interest income from Bonds	47,115	47,115	50,221	50,221
Other income	5,492	26,307	30,953	51,925
Operating income	363,796	576,900	392,097	486,778
EXPENSES				
Interest & finance expenses	(3,567)	(3,567)	(2,823)	(2,823)
Staff cost	(74,842)	(84,474)	(79,479)	(79,479)
Finance cost on lease payable	-	(44,099)	-	(44,966)
Depreciation	(187)	(3,910)	(881)	(4,509)
General administrative expenses	(40,827)	(42,913)	(34,994)	(35,055)
Operating expenses	(119,423)	(178,963)	(118,177)	(166,832)
Profit before taxation	244,373	397,937	273,920	319,946
Taxation	(8,945)	(31,980)	(11,698)	(18,602)
Profit for the period	235,428	365,957	262,222	301,344
Other comprehensive income:				
Net change in fair value of FVOCI financial assets	(225,636)	(225,636)	375,005	375,005
Deferred tax Adjustment for the period	-	-	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the period	9,792	140,321	637,227	676,349
Total comprehensive income attributable to :				
Equity holders of parent	9,792	140,321	637,227	676,349
Non-controlling interests	-	-	-	-
Total	9,792	140,321	637,227	676,349
Profit attributable to :				
Equity holders of parent	235,428	365,957	262,222	301,344
Non-controlling interests	-	-	-	-
Total	235,428	365,957	262,222	301,344
Earnings per share	0.003	0.004	0.003	0.003

Note: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who requests them in Arabic or English as requested, within 7 days of receipt of the request.

Indian Schools embark on AI, financial literacy to future-proof learning trends

The Chairman of the Board of Directors, Indian Schools Oman, Syed Ahmad Salman, unveiled a series of transformative initiatives aimed at aligning the Indian schooling system in Oman with emerging global educational trends.

These measures reflect a visionary enhancement in curriculum and infrastructure, designed to equip students and educators with future-ready skills and resources, Salman said in a press briefing on Saturday.

As part of its strategic agenda for the 2025-27 term, the board has approved the introduction of Financial Literacy and AI (Artificial Intelligence) as part of the learning framework for students from Class 5 onwards.

A comprehensive Financial Literacy programme is being rolled out across all Indian Schools in Oman from this week onwards. This initiative is designed to foster early awareness of financial principles, empowering students with the knowledge to manage personal and household finances effectively while



sparkling interest in finance as a professional pathway.

The AI curriculum, which will be implemented immediately after the summer break, aims to provide students with foundational exposure to machine learning, algorithms, and responsible use of AI tools - setting a precedent for technology-led education within the region.

Salman pointed out that the integration of AI into the curricu-

lum marks a significant milestone. "Our objective is not only to familiarise students with emerging technologies but also to nurture critical thinking, innovation, and digital fluency from a young age."

The chairman further emphasised that the board's renewed commitment to infrastructure development across schools. An infrastructural audit is currently underway to ensure equity in ac-

cess to facilities for all students, regardless of location. Major projects are in progress at Indian School Muscat (Jibroo campus), Indian School Darsait, Indian School Seeb, Indian School Sur, and Indian School Salalah, with more schools lined up for development.

In response to growing community demand, the board has also initiated feasibility studies to establish new Indian Schools in

Barka and Sinaw, reaffirming its goal of expanding access to quality education in the regions.

Recognising that the quality of education is intrinsically linked to the capabilities of its educators, the board has commenced a Training Needs Assessment survey among teaching staff to identify key areas for Professional Development (PD). A structured PD roadmap will be formulated based on these in-

sights to enhance instructional quality across the network.

In a first-of-its-kind move, this nascent board has also consented for the establishment of a Sports Academy under the supervision of the Sports Committee. The academy will nurture and train students with sporting potential and ambition, offering them structured pathways to pursue careers in sports and allied fields.

Salman concluded by reiterating the Board's student-centric vision: "Every initiative taken by this Board is directed towards the holistic development of our students - preparing them as global citizens, critical thinkers, and confident individuals in a rapidly evolving world." He called upon the parent community and all stakeholders to extend their wholehearted support in embracing these progressive changes.

UTAS holds final round of Oman IoT & AI Challenge

The University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Musannah hosted the final round of the Oman IoT & AI Challenge 2025 at the university's theatre.

The challenge aims to inspire innovation and strengthen the technical skills of young people and entrepreneurs in Oman. It also reflects Oman's commitment to encouraging innovation and technology as key pillars of its digital future by creating a competitive environment that promotes research and entrepreneurship.

In his speech, Dr Nasser al Baimani, AVC of the university, emphasised the importance of IoT and AI in developing young minds and inspiring creativity.

Baimani highlighted that the challenge is not only a test of technical skills but also an opportunity to empower participants to transform their ideas into real projects that contribute to sustainable development.

He also stressed the university's role in enhancing students' skills by enabling them to develop smart solutions that address current challenges and support digital transformation.

The final round brought together the top projects and startups from the semi-final stage, selected through strict criteria focused on technical excellence and added value.

Participants underwent a thorough evaluation, where projects were filtered based on quality, innovation, and practical application.

The most outstanding teams advanced to the final, with winners set to represent Oman in the Arab IoT & AI Challenge - giving them a chance to compete regionally and raise the standard of innovation and excellence.



Al Jisr Foundation, PVA celebrate, honour graduates

The Positive Vision Association (PVA), Oman's first non-profit organisation dedicated to supporting individuals living with HIV/AIDS and those affected by substance abuse, in collaboration with Al Jisr Foundation, honoured the achievements of participants in the national Peer Education and Training of Trainers Programme.

PVA and Al Jisr Foundation, another non-profit organisation focused on sustainable social development, held a graduation and recognition ceremony on May 4, at Active Oman Centre, Oman Automobile Association (OAA), a release stated.

Over the past eight months, participants underwent comprehensive training in peer-to-peer education and community leadership, equipping them to promote awareness, challenge stigma, and foster healthier, more inclusive communities across Oman.

Nashia Yahya Nasib, President of Positive Vision Association, stated, "These graduates represent a new generation of community leaders who have dedicated themselves to breaking the stigma, spreading knowledge, and building a more inclusive, determined, and transformative future in Oman. Their impact will resonate across generations."

Dina Fawzi al Khalili, General Manager of Al Jisr Foundation, commented, "Empowering youth through peer education is one of the most powerful tools for social change. We are proud of our partnership with Positive Vision Association in supporting this

distinguished group of young individuals who represent the future of public health and social awareness in Oman."

The ceremony featured keynote speeches, including guest of honour Omani racing champion Ahmed al Harthy, as well as moving testimonies from an individual living with HIV and a recovered substance abuse survivor. A graduate representative presented the group's 2025 action plan to expand peer education initiatives across Oman.

Graduates received certificates of completion, and appreciation awards were presented to Al Jisr Foundation, Oman Automobile Association, and Ahmed Al Harthy

Graduates received certificates of completion, and appreciation awards were presented to Al Jisr Foundation, Oman Automobile Association, and Ahmed Al Harthy for their invaluable support. The event was attended by key stakeholders, including members of the board and partners of Positive Vision Association.

Suleiman al Rawahi, General Manager of Oman Automobile Association, stated, "We are proud to support initiatives that empower youth, promote health awareness, and develop the community."

The Sultan's School witnesses 250 alumni in annual gathering

The Sultan's School hosted a high-profile event titled 'Vision 2040: A Ministerial Perspective' at its auditorium, organised by The Sultan's School Alumni Association on Wednesday.

The event witnessed the participation of almost 250 attendees, comprising alumni from the class of 1981 through to 2024, in what promised to be a powerful evening of reflection, vision-sharing, and national purpose.

Speaking during the event, Ramez Sharabati, Chair of the TSS Alumni Board said, "This is not an annual gathering but one of several curated initiatives by The Sultan's School Alumni Board aimed at engaging the alumni community through topical and transformative discussions throughout the year."

"Oman Vision 2040 is more than a roadmap - it is our collective responsibility. As alumni of The Sultan's School, it's an hon-



our to return and share our role in shaping the future of Oman."

He added that the event underlines the alumni association's commitment to meaningful engagement and national development.

The panel also saw three distinguished speakers, two of whom are alumni and current ministers: H E Qais bin Mohammed al Yusef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and H E Dr

Khalfan bin Saeed al Shueili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning. They were joined by H E Dr Munther bin Hilal al Busaidi, Vice-Chairman of the Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit.

Oman Arab Bank supports Omani achievements at Special Olympics

Oman Arab Bank (OAB) is pleased to be part of the Special Olympics World Winter Games - Turin 2025, supporting the participation of Special Olympics Oman in this global event that celebrates strength, determination, and excellence.

This cooperation comes within the bank's steadfast commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility and supporting members of the community. It aims to empower the Omani champions as they represent Oman and achieve accomplishments on the international stage.

This stems from the bank's belief that sports have the potential to enable individuals to overcome challenges, and it is proud to have been part of their inspiring journey.

This year's Games saw six determined champions from Oman representing the Sultanate in snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and short track speed skating. Together, they brought



home an impressive total of seven medals, including gold, silver, and bronze - a proud moment for the Sultanate of Oman and a testament to the spirit of perseverance.

Commenting on OAB's support for the Special Olympics, Sulaiman al Harthi, CEO of Oman Arab Bank, said, "At Oman Arab Bank, we believe in the power of inclusion and the

importance of creating spaces where every individual can thrive. Supporting the Special Olympics is not just about sport - it's about values. It's about determination, equality, and celebrating the human spirit. We are incredibly proud of our Omani athletes and honoured to play a role in their journey."

OAB's support contributed to enabling the Omani team's participation in the Special Olympics World Winter Games by providing the necessary resources, reflecting the bank's ongoing commitment to supporting Special Olympics programmes in the sultanate.

The Special Olympics World Winter Games Turin 2025 brought together thousands of athletes from across the globe in a shared vision of unity and possibility. Oman Arab Bank is proud to have stood behind Oman's champions, reinforcing its promise to support initiatives that make a lasting impact.

MSX hosts 5th Chairman's Dialogue featuring General The Lord Richards

The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) successfully hosted the fifth edition of its flagship Chairman's Dialogue, further reinforcing its commitment to fostering high-level discourse that connects Oman with global thought leaders and strategic thinkers.

Held virtually under the theme 'The Future of Strategy', the session featured a keynote conversation between MSX Chairman Mohammed Mahfoodh al Ardhi and General The Lord Richards; Baron Richards of Herstmonceux and former Chief of the Defence Staff of the United Kingdom and one of the world's foremost experts on leadership, strategy, and international security.

The event drew over 710 registered attendees, including government officials, business leaders, academics, students, and representatives from Oman's public and private sectors - underscoring the growing relevance of the Chairman's Dialogue as a platform for cross-sectoral learning and strategic engagement.

"At MSX, we believe that progress comes not just from numbers and markets but from ideas and dialogue," said Ardhi. "The Chairman's Dialogue is our contribution to the intellectual and strategic growth of Oman. We want to connect our business community, our youth, and our leaders with the world's most



L-R: General The Lord Richards and MSX Chairman Mohammed Mahfoodh al Ardhi

experienced minds."

Established as a recurring initiative by MSX, the Chairman's Dialogue aims to bridge local audiences with global perspectives - bringing leading international voices to the Omani stage to share insights on leadership, policy, economics, sustainability,

and security. The event serves as an educational and networking opportunity that benefits attendees across generations and sectors, fostering a culture of informed decision-making and strategic foresight.

The fifth edition of the dialogue focused on the evolution of strategic thinking in today's complex geopolitical climate. It explored the fragmentation of global leadership, the growing dominance of short-term decision-making, and the urgent need to restore coherent long-term strategy in today's complex geopolitical environment.

Lord Richards spoke about his experiences leading international coalitions and how strategic drift often sets in when political leaders fail to maintain focus and unity. Drawing from his experience, Lord Richards emphasised how unclear or inconsistent strategies can undermine even the most well-resourced missions. "Short-term wins mean little without long-term planning," Lord Richards stated. "Strategic clarity must come from the top - when that is missing, institutions falter, and trust erodes."

Attendees gained a deeper understanding of how the national strategy must balance ends, ways, and means - and that the 'means' or available capacity is often the most decisive factor.

Muscat Governorate reviews efforts for employment in health sector

H E Sayyid Saud bin Hilal bin Hamad al Busaidi, Governor of Muscat, met on Wednesday with Dr Fatima bint Mohammed al Ajmi, CEO of the Oman Medical Specialty Board and Head of the Employment Governance Committee in health sector, attended by several officials from both entities.

During this meeting, several topics regarding the aspects of governance and employment of job seekers in the health sector in Muscat Governorate were discussed. As well as, enhancing co-operation between Muscat Governorate and the Employment Governance Committee in health sector, contributing to promoting effective initiatives that offer employment and Omanisation in the health sector in Muscat Governorate according to the Oman Vision targets. It promotes decentralisation in the governorates.

During the meeting, the Employment Governance Committee in health sector, which is



H E Sayyid Saud al Busaidi

involved in measuring the requirement of medical and health cadres, identifying the required labour market numbers, and developing and implementing initiatives to achieve the continuous employment indicators and ensure stability in the health sector, was introduced.

The remarkable priority initiatives in the employment field target dentists, medical coders and pharmacists and seeks to rehabilitate some graduates of health academic institutions to similar specialisations through developing their skills.



Valvoline ties up with Muscat International Automobiles in Oman

Muscat International Automobiles (MIA), a prominent name in Oman's automotive distribution sector, is pleased to announce its official partnership with Valvoline Global Operations (VGO), a globally recognised leader in high-performance lubricants and automotive solutions.

This collaboration represents a major step forward in bringing premium vehicle care products to customers across the sultanate. The launch event, held at the esteemed Crowne Plaza Hotel Muscat, brought together key industry stakeholders, automotive experts, and media representatives to witness the beginning of a promising collaboration.

With over 150 years of heritage and innovation, Valvoline is

globally recognised for its premium motor oils, lubricants, and automotive service, trusted by millions across 140 countries.

A senior official from Muscat International Automobiles said, "We are proud to bring Valvoline's legacy of excellence to Oman. This partnership aligns with our vision to provide only the highest quality automotive solutions to our customers. Valvoline's cutting-edge technology and proven performance will significantly enhance the driving experience and longevity of vehicles across the sultanate."

Valvoline's product range in Oman will include a full suite of engine oils along with transmission fluids, coolants, among others.

اس ام ان باور القابضة ش.م.ع.ع SMN POWER HOLDING SAOG				
Unaudited Consolidated Financial Statements For the three-month period ended 31st March 2025				
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT				
Dear Shareholders, On behalf of the Board of Directors ("the Board") of SMN Power Holding SAOG ("the Company"), I have the pleasure to present the Board of Directors' Report for the three-month period ended 31st March 2025.				
Corporate Governance The Company has complied with the Code of Corporate Governance and applicable circulars issued from time to time by the Financial Services Authority (FSA).				
Company's Operations The Company continued its excellent performance in Health, Safety and the Environment ("HSE") as providing a safe working environment is a key priority. The Board is pleased to share that during the Quarter 1 ("Q1") of 2025, the HSE performance was excellent with no Lost Time Accident ("LTA") in line with previous years. In Q1 2025, a total of 5,884 LTA-free days were recorded at the Al Rusail Power Company SAOC ("Al Rusail"), while SMN Barka Power Company SAOC ("SMN Barka") achieved 6,360 days without any LTA.				
The commercial performance of both plants, SMN Barka and Al Rusail, is measured by their reliability, which is the ability to deliver the declared capacity as per the contract. In Q1 2025, the reliability at SMN Barka Plant was 90.99% (98.67% in Q1 2024) for power which was mainly due to the steam turbine no. 2 incident and 81.01% (98.67% in Q1 2024) for water which was mainly due to the poor seawater quality. The reliability at Al Rusail Power Plant was 99.5% (99.8% in 2024) for the same period.				
The Company produced an aggregate net power volume of 383.15 GWh (530.9 GWh in Q1 2024) and a total volume of 7,653,638.54 m³ of potable water was delivered (9,134,147.94 m³ in Q1 2024).				
All necessary maintenance activities for key equipment were performed in accordance with Original Equipment Manufacturers' recommendations, while applying the best industry standards and practices for health & safety and maintenance, during the year.				
Financial Results Total Revenues in Q1 2025 amounted to RO 9.6 million (RO 15.6 for the same period Q1 2024), representing a decrease of RO 6 million compared to 2024. Total Revenues include fixed revenues (Fixed Capacity Fees) and variable revenues (Fuel Charge and Variable Operating & Maintenance Charge). The Company generated a consolidated net loss of RO 0.9 million during Q1 2025 compared to a net profit of RO 2.5 million for the same period of 2024 representing a decrease in net profit of RO 3.46 million.				
The change in financial results highlighted above is mainly due to the following variances compared to the same period in 2024:				
- Revenue (Decreased by RO 6 million): The Company recorded lower capacity charges amounting to RO 5.5 million mainly due to commencement of the new contract for SMN Barka and Al Rusail plants at competitive tariffs as well as RO 0.5 million lower variable revenues due to lower load factors. In addition, there is the seasonality weighted factor which affects the revenue of the Company. The seasonality factor is a percentage that is applied to the revenue which varies for the Winter months (October to March) and summer months (April to September). As a result, revenue generated from the capacity charges is lower in the October to March periods and fully compensated for by higher revenue from the capacity charges in the April to September periods.				
- Direct costs (Decreased by RO 0.5 million): Similarly, this is mainly due to lower variable costs from lower load factors for both SMN Barka and Al Rusail.				
- General and Administrative expenses (Decreased by RO 0.5 million): This is mainly due to savings achieved in Q1 2025 including the savings on Power 2024 and Barka Water 2024 tender-related costs.				
- Finance costs and Finance Income (Decreased by RO 0.1 million): This is mainly due to lower interest costs following the scheduled repayments of the term loan facilities for the SMN Barka.				
- Other income (Increased RO 0.7 million): This is mainly due to interest income earned and the accrued income for the insurance claim pertaining to the Steam Turbine 2 incident.				
The reduction in Non-Current Assets is driven by the depreciation of the plant (fixed assets).				
Future Outlook - The Company will continue its focus on HSE and maintain excellent reliability at both plants.				
- As advised previously, Al Rusail, Gas Turbines 1 – 6, which were installed between 1984 to 1986, have retired from operation since 1st October 2021 as disclosed on Muscat Stock Exchange ("MSX"). The decommissioning and dismantling process for these units has been initiated and is ongoing. The dismantling of these units is expected to be completed by the end of 2025.				
- SMN Barka and Al Rusail are participating in the spot market, however, such participation has no material impact on the Company's revenue as both SMN Barka and Al Rusail have a Power PA, and revenues are not impacted by participation in the spot market.				
- In terms of the dividend distribution and as disclosed on MSX, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Company that was held on 26th March 2025, has approved the distribution of a total dividend of OMR 14.56 million to shareholders (Baiza 73 per share) which has been fully paid in April 2025. The Company should be able to make future dividend distributions subject to the availability of cash, fulfillment of loan covenants in addition to satisfying the relevant requirements of the Commercial Companies Law and other applicable legislation due to successful refinancing of its outstanding debt and removal of any cash sweep restrictions.				
- Furthermore, the Company has already received a dividend income of OMR 3 million from Al Rusail which will be available for distribution after satisfying the relevant requirements of the Commercial Companies Law and other applicable legislation.				
As Chairman of the Board, I would like to thank our Shareholders, not only for their confidence, but also for their continued support and for the expertise they bring to the Company. The Board of Directors expresses its gratitude to Nama Power and Water Procurement Company (PWP), Integrated Gas Company (IGC), APSR, FSA and other governmental and non-governmental bodies for their guidance and support.				
Finally, on behalf of the Board, I would like to extend our deep appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and His Government for their continued support and encouragement to the private sector by creating an environment allowing us to contribute effectively to the growth of the Sultanate of Oman.				
Dr. Abdullah Al Yahya'e'y Chairman of the Board				
SMN POWER HOLDING SAOG, P.O. Box 121, Postal Code 134, Sultanate of Oman, Qurum Building, Building No.1022, 1st Floor, Office No.15, Way No. 1013, Al Qurum – Muscat. Tel. +968 2493 5800, Fax: 2493 5830, E-mail: info@smnpower.com, www.smnpower.com				
Statement of financial position as at 31st March 2025 (Unaudited)				
	Parent Company		Consolidated	
	31 March 2025	31 December 2024	31 March 2025	31 December 2024
	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000
ASSETS				
Non-current assets				
Property, plant and equipment	-	-	83,465	85,388
Right-of-use-assets	-	-	385	392
Investment in subsidiaries	27,405	27,405	-	-
Derivative financial instruments	-	-	177	421
Deferred tax asset	-	-	148	115
	27,405	27,405	84,175	86,316
Current assets				
Inventories	-	-	1,720	1,720
Trade and other receivables	3,182	27	6,963	5,498
Due from related parties	14	23	212	139
Derivative financial instruments	-	-	88	215
Fixed term cash deposits	-	-	3,735	3,186
Cash and cash equivalents	14,680	14,693	21,792	24,480
	17,876	14,743	34,510	35,238
	45,281	42,148	118,685	121,554
TOTAL ASSETS				
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
Equity				
Share capital	19,964	19,964	19,964	19,964
Statutory reserve	6,655	6,655	6,691	6,691
Retained earnings	3,988	15,427	12,808	28,322
Hedging reserve	-	-	225	541
Net equity	30,607	42,046	39,688	55,518
Non-current liabilities				
Term loan	-	-	34,390	34,373
Lease liabilities	-	-	549	553
Provision for end of service benefits	-	-	72	69
Provision for site restoration	-	-	1,998	1,971
Deferred tax liability	-	-	9,440	9,626
	-	-	46,449	46,592
Current liabilities				
Term loan	-	-	4,711	4,711
Provision for repair and maintenance	-	-	750	750
Lease liabilities	-	-	17	15
Trade and other payables	14,631	88	24,247	10,909
Due to related parties	-	-	1,344	1,556
Current tax payable	43	14	1,479	1,503
	14,674	102	32,548	19,444
	14,674	102	78,997	66,036
Total liabilities				
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	45,281	42,148	118,685	121,554
Net assets per share (RO)	0.153	0.211	0.198	0.275
Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the period ended 31st March 2025 (Unaudited)				
	Parent Company		Consolidated	
	31 March 2025	31 March 2024	31 March 2025	31 March 2024
	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000
Revenue	-	-	9,592	15,597
Direct costs	-	-	(10,936)	(11,439)
GROSS (LOSS) / PROFIT	-	-	(1,364)	4,158
General and administrative				
- expenses	(61)	(68)	(181)	(636)
Reversal of expected credit				
- losses	-	-	13	11
(LOSS) / PROFIT FROM OPERATIONS	(61)	(68)	(1,532)	3,533
Finance costs	-	-	(702)	(762)
Finance income	-	-	310	203
Dividend income	3,000	3,000	-	-
Other income	223	68	797	144
PROFIT / (LOSS) BEFORE TAX	3,162	3,000	(1,127)	3,118
Income tax (expense) / income	(28)	-	186	(598)
PROFIT / (LOSS) FOR THE YEAR	3,134	3,000	(941)	2,520
<i>Other comprehensive income</i> <i>Items that may be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods:</i>				
Fair value of cash flow hedge - net	-	-	(316)	(51)
Other comprehensive income				
- for the year, net of tax	-	-	(316)	(51)
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE				
- INCOME / (LOSS)				
- FOR THE YEAR	3,134	3,000	(1,257)	2,469
Basic and diluted earnings				
- per share (RO)	0.016	0.015	(0.005)	0.013

US: Trump signs order for self-deportation of illegal immigrants

Washington, D.C., US - US President Donald Trump has signed an executive order on Friday which will allow people who have entered into the US illegally to get free flights out of the US.

Calling it the 'first-ever self-deportation programme for illegal aliens', the US President said the order incentivises illegal immigrants to leave America.

His remarks were shared through a video message posted on the official page of the White House.

In the video message, Donald Trump said: "Today I signed an executive order to launch the first-ever self-deportation programme for illegal aliens. We are making it as easy as possible for illegal aliens to leave America. Any illegal alien can simply show up at an airport and receive a free flight out of our country. We have also launched a phone app called CBP Home where illegals can book a free flight to any foreign country. As long as it's not here, you can go anywhere you want.



US President Donald Trump

We're also adding a very important exit bonus for illegals to further incentivise their self-deportation. This deportation bonus will save American taxpayers billions and billions of dollars."

Taking a dig at former US President Joe Biden, Trump slammed him for his policies on immigration. "What Biden did to this country can never be explained, will never, ever be accepted. Eventually, when the illegals are gone, it will save us trillions of dollars."

Coming back to the issue of illegal immigrants, the US President said that they would face severe consequences such as 'punishments including significant jail time, enormous financial penalties, confiscation of all property, garnishment of all wages, imprisonment and incarceration, and sudden deportation in a place and manner solely of our discretion', if they continue to stay in India.

Trump said: "So to all illegal aliens, book your free flight right now. We want you out of

America, but if you're really good, we're going to try and help you get back in."

Earlier the White House, in an article titled 'Week 16 wins', several actions taken by the US President against illegal immigrants were highlighted.

These include plans to house America's most ruthless, violent criminals at Alcatraz prison and establishing a 'Project Homecoming' to encourage illegal immigrants to voluntarily depart the US.

ANI

Zelenskyy hosts European leaders showing solidarity against Russia

The visit comes at an unpredictable diplomatic moment in Russia's war against Ukraine

Kyiv, Ukraine - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is hosting the leaders of France, Germany, Poland in Kyiv.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk are on their first joint visit to Ukraine.

The visit comes at an unpredictable diplomatic moment in Russia's more than three-year-long war against Ukraine when US President Donald Trump is pushing for a quick peace agreement.

Trump called for a 30-day ceasefire and Zelenskyy said he would be ready to implement it immediately.

"We reiterate our backing for the President Trump's calls for a peace deal and call on Russia to stop obstructing efforts to secure an enduring peace," the European leaders said in a joint statement.



"We will continue to increase our support for Ukraine. Until Russia agrees to an enduring ceasefire, we will ratchet up pressure on Russia's war machine," they said.

Kyiv expects new German supplies

Ukraine's ambassador to Germany on Saturday said he expects Chancellor Friedrich Merz

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk were on their first joint visit to Ukraine

to announce new arms shipments to Kyiv.

"We very much hope that we will enter into these negotiations from a position of strength. I sense that the Ger-

man-Ukrainian partnership with the new federal government, will be raised to a whole new level," Oleksii Makeiev told reporters.

The new German government under Merz wants to keep arms deals with Kyiv under wraps, sources told the German news agency.

Makeiev also said that Kyiv was ready for a ceasefire.

Merz warns Russia of more sanctions

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz warned Russia will face more sanctions if it refuses a 30-day ceasefire, in an interview published on Saturday in the *Bild* newspaper.

If Russian President Vladimir Putin does not agree to the truce, 'there will be a massive hardening of sanctions and the massive

aid to Ukraine will continue - politically, of course, but also financially and militarily', Merz said to the daily newspaper.

"We agree with the US government, with (US President) Donald Trump. We are demanding a 30-day ceasefire so that peace negotiations can be prepared during this period," he said.

"The ball is now in Putin's court. Putin must respond to this offer."

Kremlin supports 30-day ceasefire

Russia supports the implementation of a 30-day ceasefire in the Ukraine conflict, but only with due consideration of 'nuances' in the more than three-year-old war, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said late on Friday.

"This theme was long put forward by the Ukrainian side. And as soon as it was advanced by the (US administration of Donald Trump), it was supported by President (Vladimir) Putin with the reservation that it is very difficult to discuss this in detail if no answers are found to a large number of nuances around the notion of a ceasefire," Peskov said.

Russia has previously said that the introduction of a long-term ceasefire depends on the establishment of mechanisms to monitor and maintain such a move.

DW

Philippines midterm elections on Monday: Youth want dynasties out

Manila, The Philippines - Celestil, 24, lives in Davao City, located on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao, the stronghold of former President Rodrigo Duterte.

Since she was born, a member of the Duterte family has always been the city's mayor.

First, it was the former president who was mayor for over 20 years, followed by his daughter, Sara, who is now the country's vice president, and then one of his sons.

Celestil, who requested only her first name be used, told DW about her first encounter with the former president Duterte as a 5-year-old.

"He helped one of our neighbours who was deaf and had multiple children. I saw how he spoke to the family and helped improve their living conditions."

Every Sunday, Celestil watched his TV programme and felt like she 'was listening to a trustworthy leader'.



High stakes for the Duterte family

If all of the Dutertes in the upcoming polls win, there will be seven members of their family holding public office, she said, referring to midterm elections in the Philippines on Monday where voters will cast their ballots to decide half the Senate's seats and thousands of local posts.

The vote will also likely determine the political future of

Duterte's daughter and incumbent Vice President Sara, who was impeached in February.

The 12 senators elected on Monday, and 12 others already in office, will serve as jurors in an impeachment trial - tentatively set for July - that could see her permanently barred from public office. Her father, meanwhile, has been arrested and transferred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to face charges over his

deadly drug war. Despite being in detention in The Hague, his name is on the ballot for mayor of Davao City.

Celestil said she will not vote for any of the Dutertes running for office. She is frustrated that the pattern in Davao is one she has seen at the national level, making political office seem like a family reunion.

"I will not vote for anyone from a political dynasty. They do not

demonstrate leadership that represents the specific needs of every Filipino, in areas like education, the health care system. To me, it is merely an expansion of their own wealth," said Celestil.

A report series by the Philippine Centre for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ), revealed that at least 71 of the country's 82 provincial governments are led by members of political dynasties. Eighteen of these political dynasties are considered 'obese', with at least five family members in each dynasty seeking different elected positions next year.

PCIJ noted that the filing of candidacies last year looked like a parade of political dynasties, but more alarming was the candidates' attitude towards it.

"Families used to be defensive about being a political dynasty. Now, they are flaunting it, calling themselves legacy brands like Colgate," said Carmela Fonbuena, executive director of PCIJ.

DW

Mexican president sues Google for 'Gulf of Mexico' name change

Mexico City, Mexico - Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said on Friday her government filed a lawsuit against Google for changing the 'Gulf of Mexico' to the 'Gulf of America' on its US-based maps.

Sheinbaum said at her media briefing at the National Palace in Mexico City that the government previously warned Google about the issue, but those concerns were not addressed.

"Google has already been sued. A preliminary ruling has been issued, and we are currently awaiting the outcome," she said.

Sheinbaum emphasised that Mexico does not object to the 'Gulf of America' being used for the portion of the Gulf adjacent to US shores.

"However, Google cannot label the entire Gulf that way. This is an international issue. Our request is that Google apply the name 'Gulf of America' only to the areas corresponding to US territory, and use 'Gulf of Mexico'



Claudia Sheinbaum

for the regions bordering Mexico and Cuba," she said.

Sheinbaum added that the topic had not come up in phone conversations with US President Donald Trump.

Trump previously signed an executive order on January 20 directing the renaming of the Gulf of Mexico to the 'Gulf of America'.

Google announced on February 11 that it had implemented the name change on its map platform.

Anadolu Agency

India, Pakistan agree to observe ceasefire

New Delhi/Islamabad - India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri announced on Saturday that New Delhi and Islamabad have agreed to observe a ceasefire and stop military actions.

Misri confirmed that Pakistan's Director General of Military Operations contacted his Indian counterpart and the two sides agreed to halt all military actions - on land, at sea, and in the air - effective from 1700 hours IST.

Misri noted that instructions have been issued to enforce the ceasefire, with another round of DGMO-level talks scheduled for May 12 at noon.

Misri's announcement came after US President Donald Trump's announcement that both nations had agreed to a 'full and immediate ceasefire'.

Claiming that US mediation played a key role, Trump praised the leadership of both countries for choosing 'common sense and great intelligence' to de-escalate the crisis.

Sharing a post on social media platform Truth Social, Trump wrote: "After a long night of talks mediated by the United States, I am pleased to announce that India and Pakistan have agreed to a full and immediate ceasefire. Congratulations to both Countries on using Common Sense and Great Intelligence. Thank you for your attention to this matter!"

Pakistan's Foreign Ministry also confirmed the ceasefire. "Pakistan and India have agreed to a ceasefire with immediate effect," Pakistan's Deputy Prime



Officials from Islamabad and New Delhi confirmed the development minutes after US President Donald Trump posted the announcement on his Truth Social network, as the conflict appeared to be escalating

weapons, loitering munitions and fighter jets to target civilian areas and military infrastructure.

"Pakistan military also resorted to air intrusions using drones and firing of heavy calibre weapons along the LoC. Along the international border and the LoC, air intrusions and several harassment attacks were also attempted from Srinagar till Naliya at more than 26 locations," Wing Commander Vyomika Singh told media during the briefing.

"There were also several high-speed missile attacks noticed subsequently after 0140 hours (local time) in the night at several air bases in Punjab," said the commander.

Singh, admitted that Indian forces carried out precision airstrikes on Pakistan Air Force bases.

Reports said debris of missiles, drones and other munitions was recovered from several areas of Rajasthan, Punjab, Gujarat and the Indian-controlled Kashmir.

Residents in Srinagar and Jammu in the Indian-controlled Kashmir said they heard loud explosions during the night and early on Saturday morning.

Agencies

Minister & Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on X. "Pakistan has always strived for peace and security in the region, without compromising on its sovereignty and territorial integrity!"

'Ceasefire came after 48 hours of talks'

US Secretary of State Marco

Rubio said India and Pakistan had chosen a 'path of peace' as the two countries agreed to a ceasefire. "Over the past 48 hours, Vice President Vance and I have engaged with senior Indian and Pakistani officials, including Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Shehbaz Sharif, External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jais-

hankar, Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir, and National Security Advisors Ajit Doval and Asim Malik. I am pleased to announce the Governments of India and Pakistan have agreed to an immediate ceasefire and to start talks on a broad set of issues at a neutral site," Rubio posted on X.

Meanwhile, Pakistan has fully

reopened its airspace for all types of flights, the country's airports authority has said. "All airports across the country are now available for regular flight operations," a statement read.

Drones and missiles

Earlier on Saturday, Militaries of India and Pakistan targeted each

other with drones and missiles as the situation escalated between the two neighbours.

The Indian government, in its media briefing, blamed Pakistan for 'continued provocations' along India's western border and on Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir, by using unmanned combat aerial vehicles, long-range

THE REMAINS OF A CONFLICT



People gather near the remains of a drone debris found in an open field at Rehal Village, Bishnah, in Jammu on Saturday. The Indian army on Saturday reported fresh Pakistani attacks along the border, before the ceasefire was announced (ANI)

Spain: Curbs lifted after toxic smoke confined thousands

Madrid, Spain - An order was lifted on Saturday that had confined some 160,000 people in Spain's northeastern Catalonia region after a fire at an industrial estate caused a toxic cloud of chlorine, the regional government said.

"The fire in Vilanova i la Geltrú is stabilised," the Catalan fire services posted on X. "We maintain 24 units on site. The fire has not affected the adjacent warehouses and we continue to work on extinguishing the fire."

The blaze at a swimming pool cleaning products firm started at 2:20am local time (0020 GMT) in Vilanova i la Geltru, a town 48km (30 miles) south of Barcelona.

Authorities had told people in the affected zone to stay home, before later lifting the sanction.

"If you are in the zone that is affected, do not leave your home or your place of work," the Civil



Protection service posted on X earlier on Saturday.

'No casualties' had been reported, the fire service said on social media, adding that it had deployed a large number of units in order to manage the situation.

'Toxic levels'

The fire service said it was 'monitoring the blaze... for its toxic levels'. "It is very difficult for chlorine

to catch fire but when it does so it is very hard to put it out," warehouse owner Jorge Vinuales Alonso told the radio station Rac1. He added that the cause of the blaze might have been a lithium battery. Vilanova mayor Juan Luis Ruiz Lopez had earlier said that authorities would lift the emergency measure once the 'toxic cloud' started 'to dissipate'.

DW

Who's the next Bolsonaro? Brazil's far right faces a reckoning

Brasília, Brazil - Jair Bolsonaro, once Brazil's most powerful man, seems headed for political oblivion, banned from office and soon to face trial on some of the most serious criminal charges in the country's democratic history.

It started with his failed bid for re-election in October 2022, when he narrowly lost the presidential election runoff to his left-wing rival, incumbent President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Bolsonaro never publicly acknowledged the defeat and his voters never accepted it, culminating in thousands of his supporters storming government buildings in the capital, Brasília, in January 2023.

Along with several co-accused, Bolsonaro now faces charges that include leading an

armed criminal organisation, attempting a coup, and allegedly plotting to assassinate Lula.

The 70-year-old former army captain rejects the allegations as a politically motivated move to block his return to power. Last June, he was barred from running for office until 2030 for abuse of power and misuse of public media to spread doubts over the credibility of Brazil's electoral system.

With the former far-right president's political prospects bleak at best, Brazil's right wing - particularly the Bolsonaroistas - finds itself forced to identify and cultivate new leadership.

Approximately 30% of Brazil's electorate identifies politically with the right and about 10% specifically support Bol-



Brazil's former president Jair Bolsonaro

sonaro himself, explains Giovanna Semeraro, a professor at the University of Santo Amaro in Sao Paulo.

"Bolsonaro is a big political actor for the right wing of Brazilian politics, and all of the other

political right-wing forces are trying to understand how to behave," she told Anadolu.

"Everybody is talking about who's going to be the next Bolsonaro ... but there is still no certainty about it."

Who could replace Bolsonaro?

Despite his legal woes, Bolsonaro's influence will likely continue to dominate Brazil's right-wing politics, as among the frontrunners to take over from the ex-president are his wife Michelle and son Eduardo.

Michelle has taken a leading role in Bolsonaro's far-right Liberal Party and is positioning herself as a candidate for the October 2026 presidential election. A November 2024 poll had her as the leading conservative alternative to Lula, highlighting her potential appeal among Bolsonaro's base.

Similarly, Eduardo is perceived by many supporters as a natural heir to his father. In March, he took a leave of ab-

sence from his congressional role to relocate to the US, saying he intends to seek political asylum there.

He has been using his time there to drum up international support for Bolsonaro's movement, positioning himself as a key liaison between Brazil's far-right and figures in US President Donald Trump's circle.

Outside of the family, Tarcisio de Freitas, governor of Brazil's biggest state Sao Paulo, is another top candidate. A poll last month showed him overtaking Michelle by a slight margin as the strongest right-wing contender for 2026.

"These three have been proposed, and they are currently being probed, as successors," Fabiano Belloube, a writer and

analyst focused on Latin American affairs, told Anadolu.

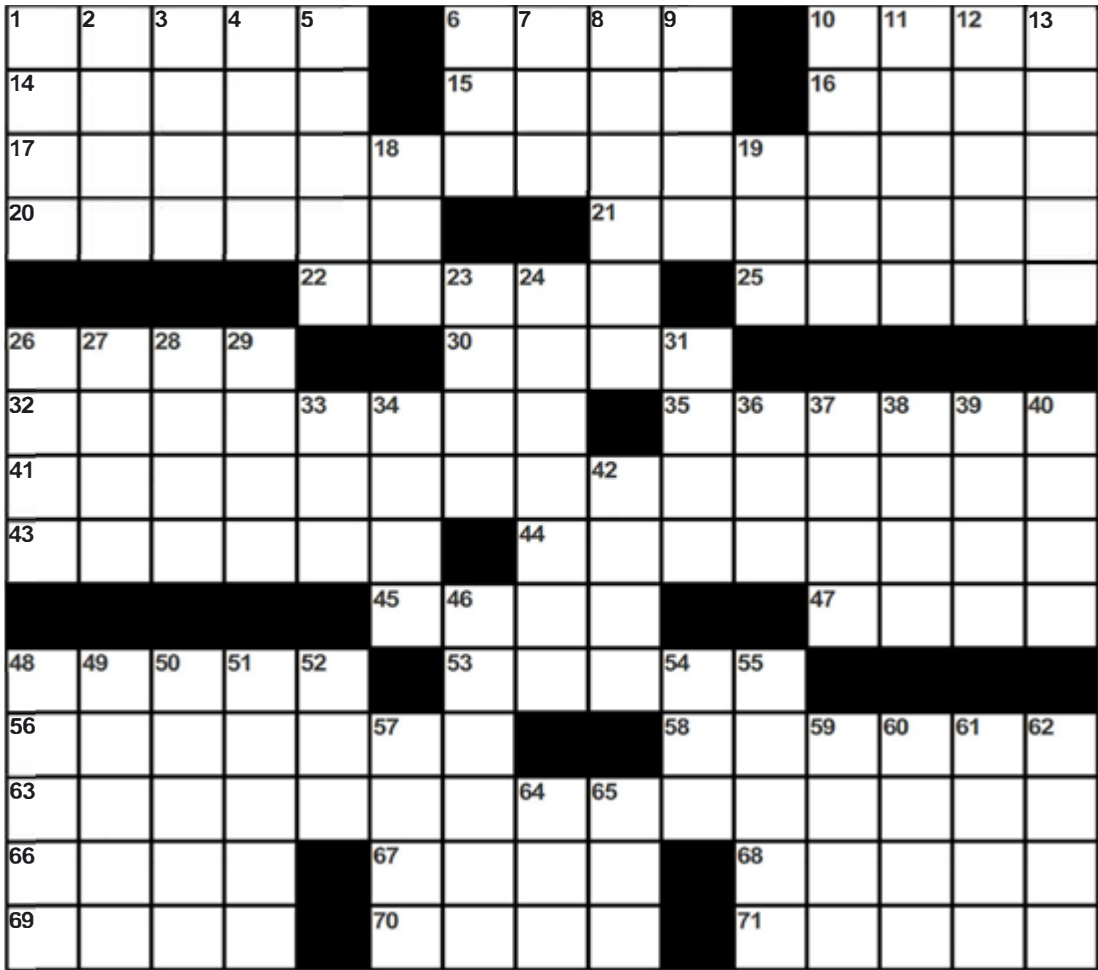
"However, none of them has yet managed to achieve the same bond with Bolsonaroistas as Bolsonaro himself."

Other figures in the run are Goias Governor Ronaldo Caiado and Parana Governor Ratinho Junior, who presents himself as a moderate option amid the polarized extremes represented by Lula and Bolsonaro.

Belloube pointed out the uncertainty regarding the direction the Brazilian right will take ahead of the 2026 elections, specifically over whether it gravitates towards a more extreme or a moderate conservative candidate.

Anadolu Agency

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Open a pill bottle
 - 6) Peke squeaks
 - 10) Celebratory poems
 - 14) La_ University (Philadelphia school)
 - 15) Unglazed pot with a wide mouth
 - 16) "... Las Vegas" (Presley film)
 - 17) What "helps the medicine go down," in song
 - 20) Take off the books
 - 21) Obscuring, in a way
 - 22) "Filthy" dough
 - 25) Uptight
 - 26) Cannabis product
 - 30) Oregano, e.g.
 - 32) Walled off
 - 35) _-Lorraine (region of France)
 - 41) Shortened weapon
 - 43) Waterfall phenomenon
 - 44) Received a varsity award
 - 45) Surgery aftermath
 - 47) Type of media
 - 48) One in deep thought
 - 53) Government operative
 - 56) Remove, as a bracelet
 - 58) Win, at an auction
 - 63) Nondrinking period
 - 66) A little over 2 pounds
 - 67) Unstable subatomic particle
 - 68) Ball charmer
 - 69) No longer hidden
 - 70) "Can I get you any-thing ?"
 - 71) Hurdles for graduate students
- DOWN**
- 1) Superpower no more
 - 2) Neck section
 - 3) Horse hooves sound
 - 4) Moisturizer ingredient
 - 5) Colony type
 - 6) Not me or them
 - 7) Sick
 - 8) Sandpiper relative
 - 9) Umpire's scream, sometimes
 - 10) Developing egg
 - 11) Cook's exhortation
 - 12) The "Good Times" family
 - 13) Nickname for a non-com
 - 18) Winter malady
 - 19) Take a seat
 - 23) Culinary guru
 - 52) It signals danger
 - 26) Sound like a snake
 - 27) Hairy twin in the Bible
 - 28) Freshly cut, as a lawn
 - 29) Academy freshman
 - 31) Bangkok buck
 - 33) "And now, without further_... "
 - 34) AAA offerings
 - 36) Auctioneer's batch
 - 37) Part of a flower
 - 38) City in India
 - 39) Billiard sticks
 - 40) Make-meet connector
 - 42) Dried up
 - 46) Bottle top capacity
 - 48) Some cologne scents
 - 49) Get the knots out
 - 50) It might go from 1 to 10
 - 51) "Rocket Man" singer
 - 52) "Norma_" (1979 movie)
 - 54) San Francisco hill
 - 55) Prefix with "jet" or "prop"
 - 57) Unnamed quantity
 - 59) Stadium seating level
 - 60) Famed gymnastics coach Karolyi
 - 61) "...just have to do"
 - 62) Changes color
 - 64) This puzzle's theme
 - 65)_two punch



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
Your recent interest in beautifying your home isn't an accident. You may have made some new friends, one of whom you find especially interesting. Whether you've admitted it to yourself yet or not, all that pattering means you're preparing to have them over and you want to make a good impression. Devote yourself to the project in earnest and start thinking of ways to phrase the invitation.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
You like to play with friends and strangers, and you make no apologies for your love of the good times. In the midst of all your recent fun, however, you may have made plans for tonight, plans you can't (or don't want to) keep. It's a dilemma, since your reputation as a party animal may be on the line, but if you're just not up for it, you should bow out. Keeping them hungry for more is the best way to handle an audience.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
To you, nothing exceeds like excess. If one is good, then two is better, and a thousand or more would probably be just terrific! At the moment, this trait is making itself known in your personal relationships. If you're already involved, your lavish extravagance is quite flattering. If you're single, be sure not to endanger a friendship or a new relationship by pushing the envelope too far too fast.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. What is the name for the open areas of country in South Africa?
A. Plains
B. Pampas
C. Steppes
D. Veldt



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
You're in the middle of a personal renaissance, but someone you love is calling in need of advice that only you can give. You're as solid as a rock, and your advice is always firmly grounded in reality. That wonderfully soothing voice doesn't hurt either. You don't need anyone to tell you to do what you can. It's a given that you will. You may, however, need to be reminded to save a bit of energy for yourself.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
You're in the mood to stay home all day, but weirdly, you also feel restless, and you definitely don't want to turn in early! An impromptu party at your place might be the best of both worlds. Is there someone you'd like to get to know better, someone you don't feel comfortable being completely alone with just yet? A group situation is the perfect icebreaker, so have the whole gang over for pizza.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
You've had quite a week full of highs and lows, and that's just not like you! You like to see yourself as an emotional rock, never letting anything as trivial as a passing feeling get between you and your objectives. Now that your emotions are surfacing you're having quite a time getting used to them. Fortunately, your partner or best friend is most definitely in the mood for helping out.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
You've got a big decision to make, and you need to make it soon. It may have you thinking some uncharacteristically serious thoughts about what you think is really important, for starters. Family and long-term friendships undoubtedly emerge at the top of your list, and you likely base your choices on their feelings. While you're in this frame of mind, why not let them know what you're thinking? We all need to know that we matter to someone.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
It's time for a day off. Talking your boss into giving it to you should take surprisingly little effort too! While you've got their ear, you may also want to mention an item that's been on your professional wish list for a while: a better schedule. If it all works out, you may be able to find a way to work from home more often or permanently. You can pull it off faster than you imagine.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
Your emotions are running high right now, so unfortunately, pushing your buttons is a lot easier than usual. On the other hand, anyone who tries to put one over on you at work has your coworkers to contend with. Since you usually treat them like family, getting past them isn't easy. By the same token, if one of them needs something, you're more than happy to oblige.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
After days of mulling things over and shuffling around your house whenever time has allowed, you're ready to get your show back on the road. You've been quiet for long enough! It's time for you to speak your mind and simply let all those feelings out. They're your specialty, so you have an edge when it comes to letting loose and letting others know how you really feel.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
You're thinking big thoughts about big issues like politics, religion, and education. When you're in this kind of mood, you need to spend as much time as you can with those who share your feelings and opinions. If you can't get the whole crew together at your place immediately, you can certainly make plans with them. Besides, your mate might want to hear those ideas privately before you share them with the rest of the world.



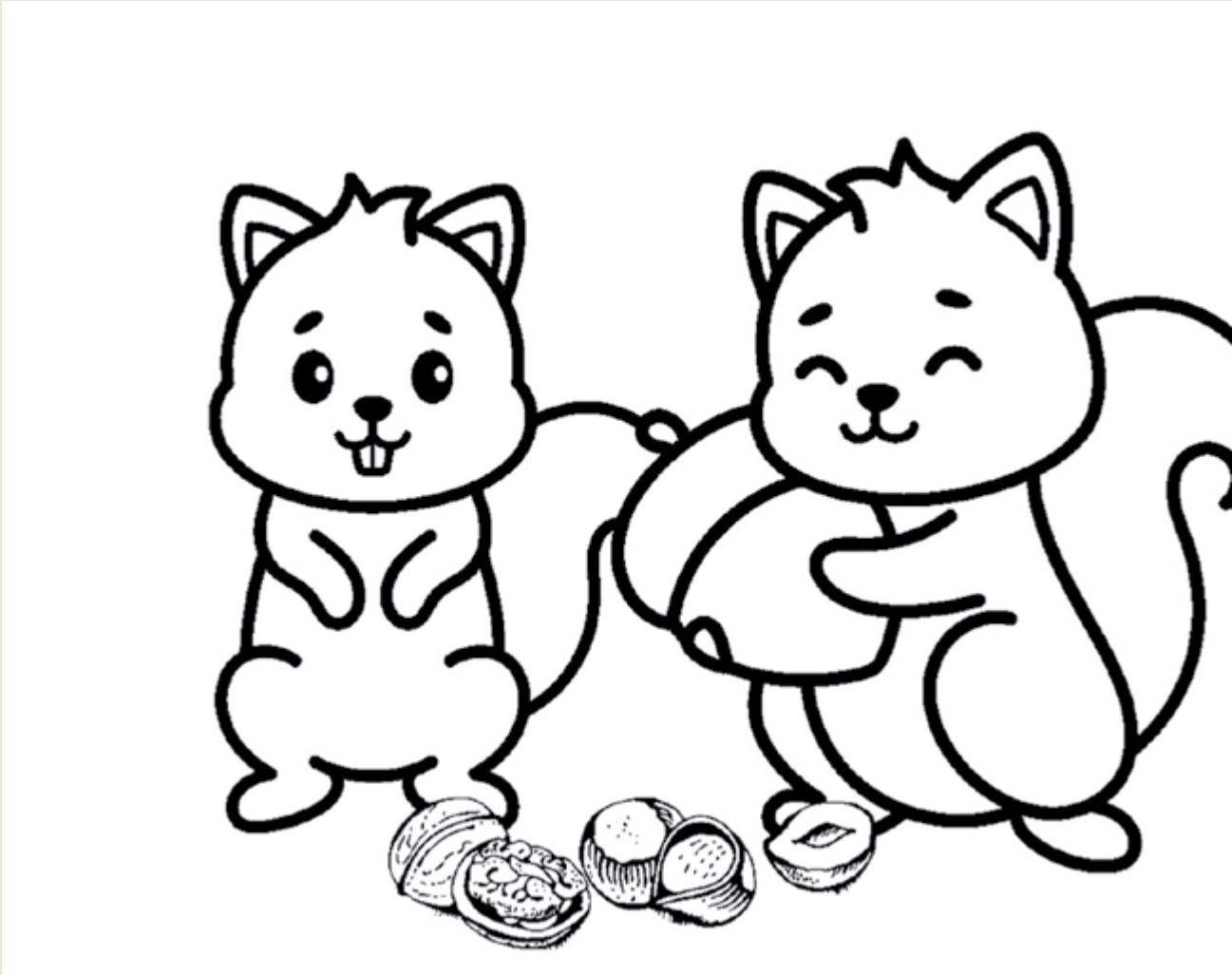
PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
Ever since you told your people you were off duty for a while, it's been spookily quiet around your place. The good news is that you're starting to relax. Take it a step further and plan some actual recreation. This could be a seriously romantic day, but only if you decide to make it so. Call the one person you know wants to work on that project with you.

02. According to the Bible, who is the father of Ham, Shem and Japheth?
A. Noah
B. Abraham
C. Aaron
D. John the Baptist

03. How many volunteer hours were estimated to have supported the 2012 Summer Olympics?
A. 7 million
B. 12 million
C. 8 million
D. 1.7 million

Answers: 1.D 2.A 3.C

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

N	G	O	I
I	R	I	U
O	S	O	T
D	N	W	S

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

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

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

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

SAINTS FRUSTRATE CITY

Southampton hold Haaland and Co goalless to avoid unwanted record

Southampton, England - Southampton salvaged a point in a surprising 0-0 Premier League draw with Manchester City on Saturday that meant they avoided being the joint-worst team in Premier League history.

Rock bottom and relegated Southampton had looked poised to equal Derby County's season-low tally of 11 points in 2007-08, but the draw moved them to 12 which had their fans at a sun-drenched St Mary's Stadium singing in celebration.

Pep Guardiola's City remained third in the table on 65 points with two games remaining in their bid for Champions League qualification, although Newcastle United and Chelsea are only two points behind and Nottingham Forest trail by four with all three teams having a game in hand.

City's prolific striker Erling Haaland played for the first time in six weeks and the visitors dominated with 26 shots to the home side's two, but Southampton defended in numbers, particularly in the dying minutes, to deny them.

Omar Marmoush hammered a shot off the crossbar in added time, City's best chance of the match.

Fulham's hopes of European football next season are fading



Erling Haaland played for the first time in six weeks but Southampton managed to keep Manchester City silent to earn an invaluable point

fast after they slipped to a fourth defeat in five games with a 3-1 loss to Everton at Craven Cottage on Saturday as the visitors came from behind to win.

Fulham stay 11th in the table with 51 points from their 36 games, four points behind eighth-placed Brentford, while Everton climb one spot to 13th with 42.

Raul Jimenez gave Fulham a deserved lead in the first half with a powerful header before Vitaliy Mykolenko's deflected shot from the edge of the box levelled the score on the stroke of halftime.

Two goals in three minutes from Michael Keane and Beto, who profited from an error by goalkeeper Bernd Leno, turned

Pep Guardiola's City remained third in the table on 65 points with two games remaining in their bid for Champions League qualification, although Newcastle United and Chelsea are only two points behind

the game in Everton's favour and dealt their host's European dreams a heavy blow.

The hosts took the lead with Jimenez's first goal in eight games as Emile Smith Rowe crossed from the left and the

striker rose above Mykolenko to head past keeper Jordan Pickford.

Harry Wilson flashed a shot just wide for Fulham, while at the other end Jack Harrison fired straight at Leno with a good

chance from the edge of the area. Wilson forced another good save from Pickford low to his left, but Everton drew level on the stroke of halftime.

Leno's punch from a corner was weak and Mykolenko's shot from the edge of the box took a wicked deflection off Andreas Pereira and flew into the net.



We need to adapt to early kickoff at Newcastle: Maresca

London, England - Chelsea's noon kickoff at Newcastle United in the Premier League on Sunday is not ideal after their midweek Conference League game but the team will adapt and prepare, Enzo Maresca said.

Chelsea beat Swedish side Djurgarden on Thursday to reach the Conference League final but will have fewer than 72 hours to turn their attention back to the Premier League top-five race when they travel to Tyneside.

"It's a 12 p.m. kickoff and we played on Thursday night, so it's not the ideal situation... But we need to play the game," Maresca said.

"So we need to adapt immediately, prepare for the game in the best way and hopefully we can continue our good moment."

Arsenal 'best in Champions League' but has gone backwards in England, says Arteta

London, England - Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta has doubled down on his claim that his side were the best in the Champions League this season, despite losing to Paris St Germain in the semi-finals, but recognised on Friday they had taken a step back domestically.

Speaking ahead of second-placed Arsenal's trip to Premier League champions Liverpool on Sunday, the Spaniard stood by his midweek assertion that he had not seen a better team in Europe's top club competition.

"100%," Arteta told reporters on Friday. "I've watched it back, seen all the stats. We had the best stats and best goal difference in the semi-final so it is very clear. But it's not about the winning probability or what you've merited, it's actually making it happen and making it count.

"When you look at the important stats that normally give you the best platform to win football matches, it's crystal clear who



Arsenal's Champions League adventure ended in a 3-1 aggregate defeat to Paris St Germain in the semifinals

With the points that we have created, it's clear that we haven't done as good as last season, that's obvious

MIKEL ARTETA

was better."

Arteta said Arsenal had stepped up in the Champions League and Wednesday's second leg semi-final defeat was "one of the saddest, but one of the proudest moments that I have had as an Arsenal manager for many obvious reasons."

The Gunners are 15 points behind Liverpool and only three clear of third-placed Manchester City and four ahead of Newcastle United and Chelsea in the Premier league. Nottingham Forest and Aston Villa are also still battling for top-five placings with three matches remaining.

"In the Premier League we've done a step backwards. With the points that we have created, it's clear that we haven't done as good as last season, that's obvious," said Arteta, who felt Arsenal could have won two titles in different circumstances.

They have registered more than 80 points in each of the two seasons before this one, a tally greater than some championship-winning sides have managed in the Premier League era. They are currently on 67 to Liverpool's 82.

Arteta said Liverpool fully deserved a guard of honour from Arsenal's players at Anfield and it would serve as further motivation for the next campaign.

"If somebody's better, you have to approve and accept and try to reach that level," he said.

The Spaniard said Arsenal intended to finish on a high and "make sure that we make ourselves proud at least to compete and end in the manner that we deserve."



Carlo Ancelotti (L) with Hansi Flick

Barcelona eye redemption, but Real Madrid stand in the way

Barcelona, Spain - Barcelona's players have discussed last week's Champions League elimination and are ready to put their disappointment behind them as they prepare to face LaLiga title rivals Real Madrid, manager Hansi Flick said on Saturday.

Barca, who suffered a 4-3 Champions League semi-final defeat by Inter Milan on Tuesday, lead the Spanish top-flight by four points over second-placed Real.

With four matches left in the season, a home win on Sunday would move Flick's side one victory away from their 28th Spanish league title.

"We're doing well. After the defeat in Milan, everyone knows it's not easy... but we're doing things right. We've talked about what we want to do in these two weeks," Flick told reporters.

"There are four more games to go. El Clasico is important, we

have to show how well we can play. We have to show confidence. The players are doing very well... We've been talking about what they are thinking, what they are feeling.

"We had to talk about it as a group. Everyone knows that in a Clasico you have to give 100%. You have to be active, intense, dominant. Real Madrid is a very good team, and we need the fans."

Meanwhile, Real will need to play a complete game to defeat leaders Barcelona, said their manager Carlo Ancelotti.

"In this type of game you have to do things well. Barcelona are used to keeping the opponent in their own area, but no team is perfect," he said.

"It's a game where there's a lot at stake and to win you have to manage everything well, defend well, attack well. We have to play a complete game."

Iraq appoint former Socceroos boss Arnold as new coach

Baghdad, Iraq - Former Australia boss Graham Arnold has been confirmed as the new head coach of Iraq by the country's football federation ahead of next month's World Cup qualifiers against South Korea and Jordan.

Arnold's appointment was announced on social media on Friday by the Iraq Football Association, which published photographs of the 61-year-old being welcomed in Baghdad by officials from the national body.

"We are delighted to announce Graham Arnold as the

new head coach of the Iraq national team," the federation said in a post on Instagram. "Welcome to the Lions of Mesopotamia!"

Arnold replaces Jesus Casas at the helm after the Spaniard's departure in the wake of a 2-1 loss to Palestine in March during the third round of Asia's qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup.

That result left the Iraqis in third place in the standings in Group B, four points adrift of leaders South Korea and one be-

hind the Jordanians.

The first two finishers in each of Asia's three qualifying groups advance automatically for the World Cup while the teams in third and fourth progress to another round of preliminaries.

Arnold's first game in charge will be in Basra on June 5 against the Koreans before he takes his

new team to Amman to face Jordan five days later. Iraq are attempting to qualify for the World Cup for the first time since 1986.

The appointment sees Arnold return to international management more than seven months after standing down as Australia head coach.

Arnold, who led the

Australians to the knockout rounds of the 2022 World Cup during a six-year spell in charge, quit after an uninspired start to the current phase of qualifying when his side lost to Bahrain and drew with Indonesia in September.

He was replaced by Tony Popovic, the former Western Sydney Wanderers coach who has taken the Socceroos to second place in Group C of Asia's qualifiers ahead of games against Japan and Saudi Arabia in June.



Graham Arnold



AC Milan's Santiago Gimenez scores against Bologna on Friday

Gimenez hits brace as Milan fight back to beat Bologna

Milan, Italy - Santiago Gimenez and Christian Pulisic powered AC Milan to a crucial 3-1 home win over Bologna on Friday, a victory that not only kept their slim top-four hopes flickering but also set the stage for a tantalising Coppa Italia final clash on Wednesday.

The result lifted Milan to eighth on 60 points, three behind Juventus in fourth, who will face sixth-placed Lazio,

head-first into the back of a Bologna player. The English defender looked visibly dazed and was forced off shortly after, seemingly struggling with a potential head injury.

The hosts had the momentum in the first half, with both Pulisic and Luka Jovic carving out chances, but they could not find the breakthrough. Bologna remained dangerous on the counter, yet the sides

The match acted as a thrilling dress rehearsal for Wednesday's Coppa Italia final, where the two sides - AC Milan and Bologna - will face off once more at the iconic Stadio Olimpico in Rome

also on 63 points, on Saturday. Bologna sit seventh with 62 points.

The match acted as a thrilling dress rehearsal for Wednesday's Coppa Italia final, where the two sides will face off once more at the iconic Stadio Olimpico in Rome.

With the win, Milan have earned 22 points from losing positions this season — only Atletico Madrid have a higher total, with 23, across the big five European leagues.

Milan were dealt an early scare when defender Fikayo Tomori took a nasty knock in the opening minutes, crashing

went into the break goalless.

Riccardo Orsolini took charge four minutes after the break, cutting in from the right and drilling a low shot into the corner to put Bologna in front.

Gimenez brought Milan level in the 73rd minute, latching onto a diverted cross from Pulisic and, left unmarked in the box, he slotted home with calm precision.

Pulisic then completed the turnaround for Milan with 11 minutes remaining, capitalising on a blocked shot that fell into his path while Gimenez scored Milan's third in stoppage time.

NEXT STOP MADRID?

Alonso to bid farewell to Leverkusen amid Real reunion speculation

Leverkusen, Germany - Bayer Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso will leave his role at the end of the season, with the Spaniard saying on Friday the time was right after a fruitful three-year spell, as media reports link him to the Real Madrid job for next term.

Alonso took charge of Leverkusen in October 2022 and guided them to the double last season as they lifted their first Bundesliga title, without losing a game, while they also won the German Cup and reached the Europa League final.

Alonso had a contract until 2026 but the club said they had granted his wish to terminate his deal at the end of the season.

"We can let you know that this week the club and I, we have agreed that these two games are going to be my last two games as Bayer Leverkusen coach," Alonso told reporters.

Leverkusen, who will finish the season as runners-up to Bayern Munich, host Borussia Dortmund on Sunday in what will be Alonso's final home game before ending the Bundesliga campaign at Mainz 05 on May 17.

"We've been talking during this week and now it's the right moment to announce it," Alonso



Xabi Alonso guided Bayer Leverkusen to the double last season as they lifted their first Bundesliga title without losing a game

added of his departure.

"Now that we have clarity it's the right moment to say that for sure it's a moment with mixed emotions, that it's the moment to announce it and to know it."

Vincent Kompany's Bayern Munich reclaimed the Bundesliga title from Leverkusen with two games left to play, with Alonso's side currently eight points adrift

of the Bavarians.

Looking back at his time with Leverkusen, Alonso said the first season was the most difficult campaign as he came in with the club lying in the relegation zone before he propelled the side to a top-six finish to qualify for the Europa League.

"The second season was a historic season, it was a dream season with great nights, great games and we made history," he added.

"This season has been the most challenging one. When we had to fulfil expectations, when we were playing in the Champions League, where we were playing to try to give our best and when we don't make a final we are disappointed."

Leverkusen lost 5-0 on aggregate to Bayern in the Champions League last 16 and 2-1 to Arminia Bielefeld in the German Cup.

"There has been development in the club, in the players and in myself. I have learned so many things and I have improved as a coach, as someone that needs to have more resources for myself, for the future."

Conceicao demands more from Milan players in Coppa Italia final

Milan, Italy - AC Milan manager Sergio Conceicao urged his players to learn quickly from Friday's see-saw performance, warning that improvement is needed ahead of the Coppa Italia final despite a convincing win against Bologna in Serie A on Friday.

Milan's 3-1 victory at home offered a decent dress rehearsal for next Wednesday's final, where they will meet Bologna again at the iconic Stadio Olimpico in Rome, though the Portuguese manager was not entirely satisfied with his side.

"From tomorrow, we will start preparing for the Coppa Italia. We have to learn from what we did and did not do, as there were negatives and positives tonight," Conceicao told Sky Sport Italia.

"I expect differences to both teams, but this is a final, sometimes the side that doesn't play the best football ends up winning," he added.

With a Coppa Italia win, Milan will have two trophies this season, having also lifted the Supercoppa in January, but Conceicao did not want to speculate if a win would secure his future.

"I am accustomed to certain things. This is not the moment to



Sergio Conceicao

From tomorrow, we will start preparing for the Coppa Italia. We have to learn from what we did and did not do

SERGIO CONCEICAO

talk about me. At the right moment, I will speak," he said.

Bologna coach Vincenzo Italiano was unhappy with the final part of the match, where his side collapsed against an aggressive Milan who scored all three goals in the last minutes.

"We were in control of the game, had chances to score a second goal, but there was a 15-minute blackout that I cannot explain," Italiano told Sky Sport Italia. "It was the worst 15 minutes I'd seen from my team in a long while, but otherwise we played with character and could've added more goals."

"We will analyse this, because on Wednesday we need a different approach from those who came off the bench, as I liked the way we started."



Gianni Infantino

FIFA approves 48-team women's World Cup from 2031 edition

Zurich, Switzerland - The women's World Cup will be expanded from 32 to 48 teams from the 2031 edition onwards after world football's governing body FIFA said its Council approved the proposal on Friday.

The 48-team World Cup will adopt a 12-group format, increasing the total number of matches from 64 to 104. The 2027 women's World Cup, which will be held in Brazil, will have 32 teams. The 2023 edition in Australia and New Zealand was the first to have 32 teams, up from 24 in the 2019 tournament hosted by France.

"This is not just about having 16 more teams playing in the Women's World Cup but taking the next steps in relation to the women's game in general," FIFA President Gianni Infantino said.

Chopra's javelin meet postponed due to India-Pakistan conflict

Bengaluru, India - India's Olympic gold medallist Neeraj Chopra has postponed an eponymous javelin event in the southern Indian city of Bengaluru this month after his country and neighbour Pakistan extended their worst fighting in nearly three decades.

The Neeraj Chopra Classic on May 24, a World Athletics Gold category meet, was set to feature a host of international names in-

cluding Anderson Peters, Julius Yego, Thomas Roehler and Curtis Thompson.

Chopra's move came after cricket-mad India and Pakistan suspended their elite Twenty20 leagues on Friday in the wake of the ongoing conflict between the nuclear-armed neighbours.

"This decision has been made after careful thought and consultation, with the wellbeing of ath-

letes, stakeholders, and the broader community as the top priority," Chopra's team announced on social media on Friday.

"We believe in the unifying power of sport. But, in this critical moment, standing firm with the nation matters most. All our gratitude and thoughts at this point are only with our Armed Forces, who are at the forefront for our

nation."

Chopra said late last month it was "completely out of the question" that rival and Paris Olympics gold medallist Arshad Nadeem of Pakistan would attend the meet following a deadly Islamist militant attack in Indian Kashmir.

The two countries have clashed since India struck multiple locations in Pakistan on

Wednesday that it said were "terrorist camps" in retaliation for the attack in Kashmir, in which it said Islamabad was involved.

Pakistan denied the accusation but both countries have exchanged cross-border firing and shelling and sent drones and missiles into each other's airspace since then, with dozens of people dying in the violence.



Neeraj Chopra

CONFLICT HALTS CRICKET

India suspends IPL for a week, PSL postponed

New Delhi, India - IPL 2025 has been suspended "with immediate effect for one week," the BCCI said in a statement on Friday. The decision was taken in the wake of the cross-border tensions between India and Pakistan.

"Further updates regarding the new schedule and venues of the tournament will be announced in due course after a comprehensive assessment of the situation in consultation with relevant authorities and stakeholders," board secretary Devajit Saikia said in the statement. "The decision was taken by the IPL Governing Council after due consultation with all key stakeholders following the representations from most of the franchisees, who conveyed the concern and sentiments of their players, and also the views of the broadcaster, sponsors and fans; while the BCCI reposes full faith in the strength and preparedness of our armed forces, the Board considered it prudent to act in the collective interest of all stake-



Spectators gather outside the Lucknow stadium on Friday

holders."

The decision to suspend the IPL was taken after senior BCCI officials got on a call, Saikia and IPL chairman Arun Dhimal among the participants. All the franchises were informed about the suspension before the statement was issued at 2.40pm IST. It is understood that the partici-

pants on the call agreed unanimously that it was not appropriate to continue the IPL in the current environment.

The teams have already started disbanding, with players and support staff understood to be taking the next available flights out of and within India with help from their respective franchises

and players associations in the case of the overseas contingent.

The development came a day after the IPL decided to abandon Thursday's match between Punjab Kings (PBKS) and Delhi Capitals (DC) midway into the first innings. With the airport in Dharamsala and the ones in nearby areas shut, the players

Further updates regarding the new schedule and venues will be announced in due course after a comprehensive assessment of the situation in consultation with relevant authorities and stakeholders

and support staff of PBKS and DC travelled from Dharamsala to Jalandhar by bus and then took a train to Delhi.

IPL 2025 is currently 58 games old, including the abandonment in Dharamsala. There

are 12 games left to play in the group stage, followed by the playoffs. If the IPL can't resume soon, with India's five-Test series in England starting on June 20, the next possible window might only be in September, when India don't have a bilateral series lined up, though it is the window for the men's Asia Cup.

The conflict took its toll on the other side of the border as well with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) initially deciding to move the last eight PSL games to the United Arab Emirates.

However, later on Friday, the PCB said it had postponed the matches on the advice of Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, adding that cricket "must take a respectful pause" amid the

conflict. "The PCB recognises the efforts and support of its partners, franchises, participating players, broadcasters, sponsors, and organizers in having ensured the smooth conduct of the tournament thus far," it said.

Overseas players begin to leave IPL

Mumbai, India - Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad have been shortlisted to host the 16 remaining IPL 2025 matches if the tournament resumes in May after being suspended on Friday. IPL has reportedly chosen the three southern Indian cities as part of a likely plan in case it gets the nod from the Indian government to resume the tournament.

On Friday, the BCCI suspended the IPL for a week because of the cross-border tensions between India and Pakistan over the past few days. It could not be confirmed if the BCCI has decided on a cut-off date to decide whether to resume the IPL if it were to take place in May.

Despite the proactive step in keeping the three venues ready, BCCI officials acknowledged the difficulty of resuming the IPL quickly in the current environment. Franchise officials were informally informed of this on Friday, and several team officials indicated that the remainder of the season could be played later in the year.

Oman cricket team in the US for ICC CWC League 2 Series

Muscat - Fuelled by weeks of intense preparation and a steely determination to keep their World Cup qualification hopes alive, the Oman national cricket team touched down in the United States on Friday ahead of the crucial ICC Cricket World Cup League 2 (CWC L2) tri-series, which begins on May 17 at Broward Stadium in Florida.

The tri-series will see Oman take on hosts USA and fellow contenders Canada in what is shaping up to be a pivotal leg of the League 2 campaign. Oman

currently are fourth in the standings with 18 points, behind USA (22 points from 16 matches), Netherlands (22 from 17), and Canada (20), making this Florida series a must-perform tour for the Men in Red.

Arriving a week in advance, Oman will begin their pre-series schedule with two warm-up matches against Minor League Cricket sides on May 11 and 13 in Orlando, giving them time to adapt to American conditions and fine-tune combinations.

Head coach Duleep Mendis



Oman will take on hosts USA and Canada in the tri-series

believes the team is ready, citing the high-quality preparations back home, including a fiercely contested four-match series against Kerala that ended 2-2 and a three-match face-off with Karnataka, which Oman lost 0-3 but drew vital lessons from.

OMAN SQUAD: Jatinder Singh (captain), Vinayak Shukla (vice-captain), Aamir Kaleem, Pruthvi Machhi, Hamad Mirza, Mohammad Nadeem, Sufyan Mehmood, Sha-keel Ahmed, Jay Odedra, Samay

Shrivastava, Hassnain Ali Shah, Muhammad Imran, Mujib Ali, Muzahir Raza, Aryan Bisht.

OMAN TOUR SCHEDULE (FLORIDA, USA):

May 11: Warm-up match vs Minor League team, Orlando, May 13: Warm-up match vs Minor League team, Orlando, May 17: Travel to Fort Lauderdale, May 19: Oman vs Canada, May 21: Oman vs USA, May 23: Oman vs Canada, May 25: Oman vs USA, May 26: Rest day, May 27: Oman vs USA.

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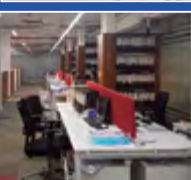
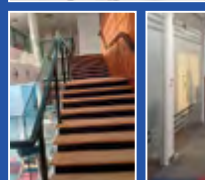
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VENICE BIENNALE OF ARCHITECTURE 2025

OMAN PARTICIPATES IN THE 19TH VENICE BIENNALE OF ARCHITECTURE 2025 FOR THE FIRST TIME WITH ITS PAVILION TITLED 'ATHAR' THAT PROVIDES A VIBRANT SPACE FOR SOCIALISING ON THE LINES OF THE OMANI 'SABLA'



The Sultanate of Oman's pavilion at the 19th Venice Biennale of Architecture 2025 opened over the weekend offering visitors stunning insights into its architectural identity, rooted in authenticity yet aligned with modern concepts of sustainability and innovation.

The Omani pavilion, titled 'Athar', under the theme 'Integrating Human and Artificial Intelligence Technologies in Architecture', was inaugurated by H H Sayyid Nizar Al Julanda al Said, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Italian Republic. Athar, in Arabic, means virtuous or pious, and is connected to the rich religious history of the Arab world.

Sayyid Said bin Sultan al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture (Commissioner General of the Sultanate of Oman pavilion at the Venice Biennale of Architecture 2025), said in a speech at the opening ceremony that the Sultanate of Oman's participation in the event provides an opportunity to showcase the features of the Omani architectural identity, rooted in authenticity and open to the concepts of modernisation, sustainability and innovation.

"It is not just a design participation, but rather an integrated experience that portrays the life of the Omani society, through narrative and visual concepts blended with architectural creativity," Sayyid Said explained. He pointed out that this will be Oman's first participation in the architectural extravaganza and, accordingly, it constitutes a milestone in Oman's cultural and architectural presence in the international arena.

"We have sought to make our presence a true expression of the spirit of the Omani land, incarnating the country's deep connection to nature, its adherence to authentic values and its aspirations for a future based on respect and renewed vision," Sayyid Said added.



The Sablah is used not as a symbol but as a methodology. It's open circulation, shared presence, and inherent hospitality are translated into architectural strategies for a new kind of civic space

MAJEDA AL HINAI

Omani 'sabla'

"The overall vision of our participation in the event is based on the 'Omani sabla', a typical manifestation of space for communication, decision-making, and dialogue," Sayyid Said explained. (Sabla is a traditional social gathering place for Omani citizens during social occasions.) The Omani sabla, he added, constitutes a fundamental pillar of social life and an inspiring model for present and future architecture.

The Omani pavilion was curated by architect Majida al Hanai, who crafted a design experience that blends Omani craftsmanship, spatial narrative and material innovation, much in line with the biennale's theme.

By reimagining the sabla within a contemporary architectural vision, the pavilion highlights the role of the sabla as an adaptable model that connects past and present, reflecting authentic Omani values of hospitality, dialogue, and community spirit.

Oman's pavilion at Venice Architecture Biennale will be open throughout of the Biennale's period from 10 May to 23 November 2025.

Architecture of Athar

Athar comprises a sinuous form shaped from bands of folded raw aluminium stitched together into a silhouette that ambiguously presents itself as a host and a threshold while remaining uncontained by fixed boundaries. As it twists and contorts, the structure forms an unbound shelter and a surface that produces moments of compression and openness.

Without a formal interior or exterior, the structure offers no single point of entry or prescribed use, inviting visitors to pass through, gather, or remain. A directional sound installation overhead, referred to by the team as a 'sound shower', diffuses fragments of daily life, including Arabic conversations, rhythmic chanting, and motion. Encircling its base and in contrast with its sleek materiality are a series of natural benches woven from palm fronds.

FLUID FOYER

The curator of Oman's pavilion, Majeda al Hinai is an architect, designer and educator, whose multidisciplinary practice bridges architecture, art and technology. She holds degrees from SCI-arc and The University of Nottingham. Her work explores themes of collective identity, emphasising the dynamic relationship between people and space.

Co-founder of Brash Collective, a Los Angeles-based design agency, Majeda divides her time between Los Angeles and Muscat continuing to shape innovative, human-centred spaces on a global scale through her independent and collaborative work

"I wanted to create a space that could be redefined and reshaped over time, much like the conversations, meetings, and encounters that naturally unfold within a traditional Sablah," says

Majeda.

The result is a 10x10m pavilion with no clear boundaries between inside and out. Movable seating crafted from palm fronds are organic to the touch and encourage gatherings and public talks, turning the space into an evolving narrative rather than a static installation.

It's minimalist without being cold. Earth-toned without leaning too nostalgic. And above all, it's a living tribute to the Omani ethos of hospitality, dialogue, and quiet strength.

Backed by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the project ties into Oman Vision 2040, a strategy that champions sustainability and cultural identity in equal measure. Majeda was assisted by a creative team comprising Jalila al Mamari, Abdullah al Rashdi, William Virgil, Ben Elmer, and Ian Fennimore.



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