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H M, Pezeshkian praise growing cooperation

Welcome increasing economic, people-to-people engagement

Muscat – His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian of the Islamic Republic of Iran have affirmed their support for a greater role of the private sector in both countries, expressing hope that increased commercial activity would lead to higher levels of investment and trade.

The two leaders also noted the depth of political consultation and coordination between Muscat and Tehran, highlighting their alignment on several bilateral and regional matters.

A joint communiqué issued following President Pezeshkian’s official two-day visit to Oman underlined the historical and cultural ties between the two nations. The visit was aimed at strengthening relations and reaffirming mutual respect between their leaderships and peoples.

During official talks at Al Alam Palace, the leaders reviewed prospects for cooperation in economic, investment and other fields. They expressed satisfaction with efforts and called for continued collaboration through regular meetings of joint committees.

The two leaders welcomed the signing of several agreements covering investment promotion and protection, legal and judicial cooperation, a preferential trade



pact, a framework for broader cooperation, and multiple memoranda of understanding.

They also noted the growing collaboration between Oman Post and National Post of Iran, which has led to the release of a joint postage stamp symbolising cultural diplomacy and strong people-to-people ties.

On regional issues, His Majesty the Sultan and President Pezeshkian discussed the situation in Gaza, calling for a full and permanent ceasefire. They condemned the targeting of civilians and urged an end to what they termed genocide committed by Israeli forces in Gaza and other Palestinian territories.

The two leaders called on the international community to fulfil its humanitarian responsibilities by providing relief to Gaza’s civilian population. They rejected any moves to displace or persecute Palestinians.

The president commended Oman’s diplomatic efforts in facilitating indirect talks between Iran and the United States on the nuclear file. His Majesty the Sultan expressed hope that these discussions would yield an agreement that contributes to regional security and stability. Both sides reaffirmed the importance of continuing to work together in regional and international forums to promote peace and security globally.

President Pezeshkian conveyed his thanks to His Majesty the Sultan, the government and the people of Oman for their hospitality and extended an invitation for an official visit to Iran, which was accepted by His Majesty.



SAYYID FAHD, PEZESHKIAN REVIEW COMMON GOALS

President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian of the Islamic Republic of Iran received H H Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Council of Ministers, on Wednesday. Their meeting reviewed aspects of bilateral cooperation across various fields, as well as ways of achieving goals of common interest in a manner that serves both the Omani and Iranian peoples. The meeting was attended by H E Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, and H E Ibrahim Ahmed al Mu’aini, Ambassador of Oman to Iran, besides officials of the Iranian government

\$30bn trade target as bilateral ties deepen

Muscat - Oman and Iran are targeting a sharp increase in bilateral trade, aiming to grow the current volume of US\$2bn to US\$30bn within three years. The announcement was made during a high-level business meeting held at Al Alam Palace in Muscat, attended by Iranian President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian and Omani and Iranian business leaders.

President Pezeshkian called for stronger links between economic corridors and ports in both countries to develop trade and investment cooperation with the aim of increasing the trade volume. He said Iran is ready to work with Oman across economic, scientific and cultural sectors, and emphasised the importance of facilitating financial transfers to support business operations.

"We are committed to building partnerships across multiple sectors and ensuring that the benefits are mutual," he said, adding that Iran remains focused on promoting security and stability



ity in the region while supporting the broader Muslim community.

Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, said Oman is working to diversify its economy under the guidance of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. He encouraged the Iranian delegation to explore opportunities in sectors such as renewable energy, tourism, logistics, food security and industry.

"Trade between Oman and Iran grew by over 50% last year, and the number of Iranian com-

panies operating in Oman rose 70%," the minister said. He cited the opening of an Iranian biopharmaceutical factory, a petrochemical plant and other industrial projects in Oman as examples of growing cooperation. He also highlighted the Sarooj Complex as a key Omani investment in Iran.

Faisal bin Abdullah al Rowas, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), said formation of the Omani-Iranian Joint Business Council has helped boost trade exchange and address challenges faced by busi-

ness leaders in both countries. "This meeting under the patronage of the leadership sends a clear signal of support for the private sector’s role in building durable economic ties," he said.

Rowas underlined OCCI’s focus on key sectors, including maritime transport, renewable energy and logistics. He reaffirmed the chamber’s commitment to supporting partnerships between the private sectors in both countries.

Samad Hassanzadeh, President of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and

Agriculture, urged business leaders to use the preferential trade agreement between the two nations to build stronger ties.

He called for a clear roadmap and regular meetings to keep the momentum going.

Mohammed Abdulhussein Baqer, Omani Co-Chair of the Omani-Iranian Joint Business Council, said it is working on a series of strategic initiatives to raise trade and investment flows. These include setting up permanent sea and air routes, launching an exchange company to support financial transfers and developing an online platform to connect exporters, importers and investors from both sides.

Jamal Razeqi Jahromi, Iranian Co-Chair of the joint council, said the current trade volume does not reflect the historical relations between Oman and Iran. He urged business leaders to take advantage of the agreements signed during President Pezeshkian’s visit to expand cooperation.

National strategy to tackle hazardous chemicals unveiled

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A national strategy was launched on Wednesday to ensure safe and integrated management of hazardous chemicals, marking a significant step towards achieving sustainable development goals under Oman Vision 2040.

The strategy was unveiled at an international workshop - Safe Management of Hazardous Chemicals - held in Muscat organised by Environment Authority (EA) in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme and Global Environment Facility. The two-day event was inaugurated by Sayyid Saud bin Hilal al Busaidi, Governor of Muscat.

"The national strategy aims to promote the sound management of chemicals at all stages by ef-



fectively utilising global practices, the results of studies and research, and supporting the efforts of the international community to control the circulation of chemicals," said Mohammed bin Majid al Kasbi, Director of Chemicals and Waste Management Department at EA.

He said the strategy is designed

to balance economic growth, social welfare and environmental protection - the three pillars of sustainable development.

The strategy outlines a framework for managing chemicals throughout their lifecycle, from production and handling to transport, storage, processing and disposal. It also addresses

environmental and health risks associated with pollution and emissions to protect both people and ecosystems.

Beyond regulation, the strategy focuses on building national capacity, enhancing emergency preparedness and strengthening international cooperation. It calls for a unified chemical manage-

ment system backed by clear policies, legal instruments and enforcement mechanisms.

The workshop has brought together experts from various sectors to explore chemical safety as a core component of environmental sustainability. A total of 18 working papers will be presented, covering areas such as mercury management, hazardous waste treatment technologies, the link between plastics and persistent organic pollutants, and the role of customs in monitoring chemical imports.

Participants will also review emergency response protocols and the environmental impact of mercury use in agriculture.

Dr Mohammed bin Saif al Kalbani, Director General of Environmental Affairs at EA, said the event aligns with ongoing efforts

to foster collaboration among public and private sectors and international partners.

"This workshop complements the efforts of the authority in promoting and developing the sound management of hazardous chemicals through the exchange of expertise between relevant entities in the public and private sectors, as well as the international community, to preserve human health and the environment," Kalbani said.

He added that the sultanate has launched the Comprehensive Initial Assessment Report on Mercury and its Compounds in Oman after joining the Minamata Convention, a global agreement to reduce mercury pollution. The report tracks mercury across its lifecycle and helps the country meet international obligations.


02
Omani brand Seven Fries opens outlet in Iraq


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Aks - Platform launched to showcase Omani films

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Omani brand Seven Fries expands globally with first outlet in Iraq

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Omani fast-food brand Seven Fries has marked a major milestone in its growth journey with the inauguration of its first international branch in Erbil, in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The outlet was officially opened on Tuesday by Eng Hamoud bin Salem al Saadi, Second Deputy Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) and Chairman of the Commercial Excellence Center Committee.

The launch marks a significant achievement under OCCI's Commercial Excellence Programme, which supports the regional and international expansion of Omani businesses.

Speaking at the event, Saadi emphasised the role of the OCCI's Franchise Programme in empowering Omani brands to compete beyond national borders. "The programme has suc-



cessfully enabled several companies to sign franchise agreements, boosting their competitiveness and facilitating expansion both locally and internationally," he said.

He added that the establishment of the Franchise Center

We are now preparing to enter new markets in the North Africa region and the US

ISSA AL AGHBARI

under OCCI is a strategic step to ensure the programme's sustainability, providing specialised support to businesses and entrepreneurs and strengthening the overall franchising ecosystem in Oman.

Issa bin Saleh al Aghbari, founder of Seven Fries, expressed pride in the brand's

growing international footprint. Launched in 2021 in Seeb in Muscat, Seven Fries has quickly emerged as a flagship Omani brand in the franchising space.

"From the beginning, Seven Fries has been focused on delivering premium-quality fresh potato products. Our franchise model is designed to share this success with partners around the world," Aghbari said. "We are now preparing to enter new markets, particularly in the North Africa region and the United States." The brand has already secured franchise agreements in Iraq, Pakistan, and an exclusive contract in India.

Aghbari revealed ambitious expansion plans, including the launch of up to 300 branches in India. He also highlighted increasing interest from investors in the United States and other global markets, positioning Seven Fries as a new ambassador for Omani entrepreneurship on the world stage.



Manah beekeepers harvest 3 tonnes of honey this season

Our Correspondent
Manah

The wilayat of Manah in Dakhliyah has recorded a honey yield of around three tonnes this season, mainly comprising the Sidr and Samr varieties.

More than 100 beekeepers operate approximately 1,400 beehives in the wilayat, contributing to a growing sector that supports both local livelihoods and the wider economy.

Mohammed Harib al Bahlani, Director of the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources in Manah, said the profession plays a key role in meeting domestic demand and promoting Omani honey through festivals and trade events within and outside the sultanate.

Bahlani said the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources is backing the sector through a national programme that supports honeybee breeding and expansion. The initiative includes training, technical support, and the provision of modern tools to ensure sustain-

able honey production.

"This season saw a marked increase in Samr honey due to better pasture conditions and the absence of pests and diseases," Bahlani said. "The result is higher availability and lower prices for consumers."

The department also organises awareness programmes for students and practical training for beekeepers, covering hive management, bee propagation and queen rearing.

Veteran beekeeper Nasser bin Hamoud al Busaidi, who has been harvesting honey for over four decades, recalled collecting honey from valleys and mountains in his early days. "Today, I maintain a permanent apiary in the wilayat and sell honey through social media, which provides a steady income," he said. "I also plan to raise Harmal honey bees soon."

He acknowledged the challenges of transporting hives during extreme heat or drought, but said this season was productive due to abundant Samr blossoms and favourable dry conditions.

Nearly 2,700 pilgrims cross Rub al Khali border for haj

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Rub al Khali border crossing between Oman and Saudi Arabia has seen the passage of 80 buses with 2,696 pilgrims travelling to perform haj in the last few days. This is part of the coordinated efforts that the authorities

have taken to streamline the grouping and departure process.

Officials said the arrangements reflect the efficiency of coordination between entities such as the Royal Oman Police and the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs to ease travel procedures and reduce waiting time at the border.

The measures were designed to ensure smooth transit for pilgrims arriving from different governorates.

Ibrahim bin Mubarak al Harthi of the Endowments and Religious Affairs Department in Dhahirah said the grouping of pilgrims is being done in two phases. The first one focuses on

the compliance of requirements notified by the Omani Haj Mission and its Saudi counterpart, while the second one deals with passport verification and entry permits to Saudi Arabia.

Several pilgrims expressed satisfaction with the arrangements at the crossing, citing the swift processing and organised

procedures by the authorities.

To support the journey, the Royal Oman Police (ROP), in co-operation with the Royal Army of Oman (ROA), the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) and the Ibri Charity Team, set up a service station between Ibri and the border to provide various assistances.

Telegraph Island development project in Musandam reaches 50% completion

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The development of the historic Maqlab Island, also known as Telegraph Island, in Musandam has reached 50% completion, Musandam Municipality announced.

The project aligns with the governorate's efforts to achieve comprehensive economic development and enhance sustainable tourism.

Ahmed Mohammed al Shehhi, Director of the Projects Department at Musandam Municipality, said the initiative aims to revive the island's historical significance, boost eco-tourism, create employment opportunities, and preserve the local environment and biodiversity - particularly its coral reefs.

"The Telegraph Island project is a unique opportunity to bridge the past with the present by investing in heritage for tourism and cultural development. It seeks to balance preservation



The initiative aims to revive the island's historical significance, boost eco-tourism, create employment opportunities, and preserve the local environment and biodiversity - particularly its coral reefs

AHMED MOHAMMED AL SHEHHI

with renewal, transforming the island into a regional and international attraction that narrates

a long-forgotten chapter of maritime communications," Shehhi said.

He explained that the development includes a 731sqm multi-use hall, a 130sqm service building, an 8m long and 2.5m wide marine landing platform with a floating system, a guard room with full amenities, an electricity generator building with fuel tanks, and a mountain walkway providing access to all island facilities. Two photo platforms overlooking key landmarks will also be constructed.

Telegraph Island holds a significant place in regional history for being the first site of modern communications line in the Middle East. Named after the submarine cable that once stretched from Mumbai to Basra, the island served as a transmission station in 1864, marking the dawn of modern communication in the region. Located in Khor Sham, wilayat Khasab, the island's rugged topography, strategic location among marine creeks, and rich heritage continue to attract tourists and adventure seekers alike.

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EA reports 24 turtle, marine mammal strandings in 2024

Our Correspondent
Muscat

At least 24 marine mammals and turtles were found dead along Oman's coastline in 2024, according to Environment Authority (EA).

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, EA marine environment specialist Aida al Jabri said most of the carcasses were reported in Duqm in Al Wusta, Masirah and Jalan Bani Bu Ali in South Sharqiyah, Shinas in North Batinah, and Salalah in Dhofar.

She cited remoteness and limited access to many coastal areas - especially in Al Wusta - as key challenges in monitoring and documenting such incidents.

"We rely heavily on the efforts and field surveys conducted by environmental supervisors operating in those areas," Aida said.

Some animals are believed to have died after becoming entangled in fishing nets or sustaining injuries. However, many carcasses were either decomposed or showed no visible trauma, suggesting natural causes.

EA is mandated to respond only to strandings involving marine mammals and turtles. Among the cases documented last year were five whales - including a humpback, dwarf sperm and false killer whale - and five dolphins - rhesus and spinner dolphins. Fourteen turtles, mainly loggerheads, green and leatherbacks, were also reported.

Whale strandings, while uncommon, are considered envi-

(Supplied photos)



It is crucial to avoid disturbing marine wildlife and to maintain a safe distance, whether at sea or along the shore. Cooperation between communities and authorities is essential to protect Oman's marine biodiversity

AIDA AL JABRI

ronmentally hazardous. "If not addressed promptly, a decomposing whale carcass can create serious issues, including foul odour and environmental contamination," Aida said.

Referring to the largest stranding recorded in Oman - a sperm whale that washed ashore

North Batinah in 2016 - she informed that the response included a joint operation with other agencies to assess the site, collect samples and dispose of the carcass using appropriate methods.

Aida highlighted the logistical challenges in responding to such

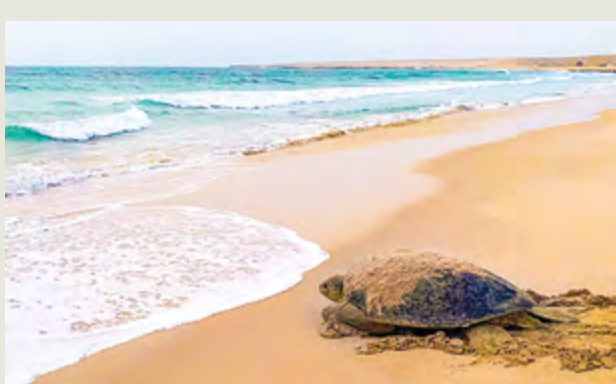
incidents, including the need to transport heavy equipment to remote sites, operating under unstable weather conditions, and conducting post-mortem examination of large marine animals.

She also advised against public interference. "There have been instances where individuals

approached stranded whales or shared images online without understanding the potential environmental or health hazards."

Aida urged the public, particularly fishermen and beachgoers, not to approach or interfere with stranded marine animals and to report sightings immediately to the authority.

"It is crucial to avoid disturbing marine wildlife and to maintain a safe distance, whether at sea or along the shore," she said, adding that cooperation between communities and authorities is essential to protect Oman's marine biodiversity.



S Sharqiyah invites bids for sustainable tourism projects

Our Correspondent
Sur

South Sharqiyah has announced several tourism and development projects across its wilayats, inviting qualified companies and investors to take part in the bidding process. This is part of a broader strategy to enhance tourism infrastructure and stimulate local economic growth.

Tenders issued by South Sharqiyah Governor's Office cover a range of infrastructure works aimed at improving public amenities and boosting visitor appeal. A key project includes construction of a waterfront in the Al Bar area of Sur, planned as a recreational hub to make use of the wilayat's coastal location along the Sea of Oman.

Proposals are sought for a pedestrian walkway and public park in Jalan Bani Bu Hassan intended to create green spaces for residents and tourists. The project will support the goal of improving quality of life while promoting environmentally friendly leisure options.

The Ras al Hadd waterfront, known for its ecological significance, is also part of the governorate's tender announcement. Home to endangered green turtles and pristine beaches, the area is being positioned as a potential site for sustainable tourism and conservation-linked investment.

"These projects reflect our commitment to harnessing the governorate's natural and cultural assets in a way that benefits both residents and visitors," said an official at the Governor's Office. "We are focused on sustainable, high-impact developments that support Oman Vision 2040 objectives, especially in terms of regional growth, private sector engagement and job creation."

According to the official, the developments are part of a long-term plan to promote South Sharqiyah's environmental and cultural features, encourage private sector participation and generate employment for local communities.

The deadline for submitting bids is June 11.

ROP urges parents to protect children in cyberspace

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Royal Oman Police (ROP) has underscored the vital role parents play in safeguarding children from online threats, urging active parental involvement and the use of parental control tools to ensure a safer digital environment for young Internet users.

An advisory released under the theme 'Our Children's Safety in the Internet Space' outlines practical measures for parents and guardians to protect children online. ROP described parental supervision as a 'safe fortress' for



children navigating the Internet.

Key recommendations include selecting appropriate content, helping children identify and avoid harmful or misleading material, limiting screen time, and

educating them on how to handle potential online dangers.

The advisory also stresses the importance of monitoring children's online behaviour and being alert to any changes in their digital interactions. This vigilance enables parents to better understand their children's needs and challenges in today's rapidly evolving digital world.

The advisory concluded with a clear call to action, emphasising that protecting children online is a shared responsibility requiring everyone to stay vigilant and proactive in ensuring their safety.

Power, water cut prohibition in effect during exams, holidays: APSR

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR) has reiterated guidelines aimed at safeguarding the uninterrupted provision of essential electricity and water services under specific circumstances.

According to the directive, electricity services must not be disconnected between 5pm and 7am. The restriction also applies on the last working day preceding weekends or official holidays. In addition, disconnections are strictly prohibited during the General Education Diploma examinations in accordance with official schedules issued by the competent educational authority.

Similar provisions apply to the water sector. Water supply



services must not be suspended between 5pm and 7am or on the final working day before a weekend or public holiday.

APSR also emphasised the fact that disconnection of neither electricity nor water services is permitted during Ramadan, ensuring uninter-

rupted access to essential utilities throughout the month.

These measures are part of APSR's broader commitment to protecting consumer rights and ensuring reliable access to essential services, particularly during sensitive or high-impact periods.

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*Rates as on May 28
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Oil prices fall as market awaits OPEC+ meeting

Oil prices decreased on Wednesday ahead of two OPEC+ meetings scheduled this week, however, the US' decision to prohibit Chevron from operating in Venezuela raised supply concerns, limiting price falls.

International benchmark Brent crude declined by around 0.3%, trading at \$63.58 per barrel at 0837 GMT, down from \$63.75 at the previous session's close. Similarly, US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) fell by about 0.2%, settling at \$60.76 per barrel, compared to \$60.89 in the prior session.

The slight decline in prices was influenced by expectations that eight member countries of the OPEC+ group will increase production during Saturday's meeting. This scenario is deepening concerns over a potential supply surplus in markets where weak demand remains a prevailing worry.

Ishraq Fund launched to drive sharia-compliant investments

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ishraq Endowment Fund on Wednesday officially commenced operations, marking the beginning of a new phase aimed at revitalising the investment role of waqf (endowment) in Oman.

This innovative, Sharia-compliant endowment investment fund represents a significant advancement in enhancing waqf investments in the sultanate. It contributes to embedding sustainable development principles and maximising the social impact of investments – both key pillars of Oman Vision 2040.

In a statement to Oman News Agency, Dr Ahmed Ali al Ka'abi, Chairman of the Ishraq Endowment Fund's Board of Directors, said that the operational launch represents a major milestone in the fund's journey. He emphasised that the next phase will involve activating investments in line with a strategic vision carefully crafted by the board.

He added that the fund is moving from the establishment phase to active operations by initiating investments in Sharia-compliant public markets. The goal is to generate sustainable financial returns that support charitable initiatives and social projects.

"The fund offers diverse opportunities for investors – both individuals and institutions –



through a range of subscription categories, including perpetual endowments, temporary endowments, and investing subscribers."

Khalid Awadh al Balushi, CEO of Oman National Investments Development Company (Tan-

mia) and Investment Manager of the Ishraq Endowment Fund, noted that this initiative continues Tanmia's pioneering role in establishing and managing high-

quality investment funds. He described the fund as a practical embodiment of socially impactful investment and a strategic step forward in enhancing the waqf sector's contribution to the national economy.

Balushi added that the Ishraq Endowment Fund provides sustainable, Sharia-compliant investment opportunities that deliver tangible, positive societal outcomes, aligning with national priorities on sustainability and community partnership. Tanmia will draw upon its extensive expertise in fund management to ensure that the fund meets its objectives and achieves the desired returns.

Ishraq Endowment Fund introduces an innovative model that combines financial returns with social impact

Fitch affirms OETC rating at BB+ with stable outlook

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC), a member of the Nama Group, has maintained its high credit rating of 'BB+' with a stable outlook from Fitch Ratings, one of the world's leading credit rating agencies. This rating reflects the company's robust financial performance, institutional stability, operational efficiency, and effective risk management.

The reaffirmation of OETC's rating underscores the confidence of international financial institutions in the company's financial position and enhances its ability to secure competitive financing for future projects – particularly those supporting Oman's energy transition and aligned with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Ali al Reesi, Chief Financial Officer at OETC, said, "The renewal of our credit rating by one of the world's most prestigious credit rating agencies is a significant achievement. It reflects our commitment to sound governance, prudent financial management, and

strategic planning rooted in resource efficiency. This rating also strengthens investor confidence and confirms our readiness to adapt to market developments and the evolving needs of the energy sector."

Reesi added that the company continues to invest in the development of the electricity transmission infrastructure, enhance operational efficiency and technical readiness, and adopt best practices in financial management and sustainability – ensuring long-term institutional excellence.

OETC is the sole entity responsible for the transmission and control of electricity across the sultanate's network. Electricity is transmitted from production stations to distribution load centres across the governorates. The transmission network operates at a voltage of 132kV and above, covering most governorates in both northern and southern Oman. In addition, OETC manages the interconnection lines between Oman and the GCC Interconnection Network, which operates at a voltage of 220kV.



Omantel advances Net Zero plan with emission cuts and renewables

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As climate action becomes increasingly urgent across industries, Omantel is stepping forward with a clear commitment to sustainability. The company has formally adopted a Net Zero target for 2050 and set an ambitious near-term goal to reduce Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by 2030, using 2023 as the baseline year.

This commitment reflects Omantel's broader sustainability vision and its role as a national digital enabler, supporting Oman's transition towards a low-carbon future. Rather than treating Net Zero as a distant aspiration, Omantel said it is taking measurable steps today to reshape its environmental impact.

"Our responsibility extends



beyond digital infrastructure. It includes contributing to a more sustainable future for Oman. This target reflects both our ambition and the action we are taking to achieve it," Lujaina Saif al Kharusi, Vice President of Governance, Regulatory Affairs and Compliance at Omantel, said in a press statement.

A major step in this journey was reached in 2024, when Omantel redeemed 40,000 In-

ternational Renewable Energy Certificates (I-RECs) sourced from the Dhofar Wind IPP through Nama Power and Water Procurement (Nama PWP). This clean electricity, equivalent to 40,000 MWh, led to a 12.38% reduction in the company's market-based Scope 2 emissions and prevented more than 88,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent from entering the atmosphere.

Investcorp announces sale of Citykart

Manama, Bahrain – Investcorp, a leading global alternative investment firm, on Tuesday announced the sale of its entire stake in Citykart, one of India's fastest-growing value retailers focused on Tier-2 and Tier-3 towns, to TPG NewQuest and A91 Partners. It represents the fifth full exit from the firm's India Consumer Growth Portfolio (ICGP) and the sixth liquidity event for the India franchise in the past 32 months.

The operating scale-up has seen the store network expand dramatically from 37 to 137 stores. This leads to an estimated revenue of about \$102mn for financial year 2025, according to a press release.

This growth is mirrored by a matching growth in EBITDA, with sustained industry leading margins. It has consistently delivered profitability while building core functions,



Partnering with Citykart team to triple the store base, steer the business through the pandemic and still outperform our underwriting is immensely satisfying

YUSEF AL YUSEF

strengthening governance, and attracting strong talent across leadership and mid-manage-

ment levels.

Gaurav Sharma, Partner & Head of India Investments at Investcorp, said, "Citykart was the very first deal we executed after formally entering India in 2019, and it epitomises our strategy of backing category-defining, founder-led businesses in high-growth segments. Today's outcome underscores our ability to generate attractive risk-adjusted returns while supporting India's consumption story."

Yusef al Yusef, Global Head of Distribution at Investcorp, said, "Partnering with the Citykart team to triple the store base, steer the business through the pandemic and still outperform our underwriting is immensely satisfying."

"We thank all stakeholders and are confident that TPG NewQuest and A91 will help Citykart accelerate its next growth phase."

Minister of Commerce holds meeting with Governor of Central Bank of Iran

Muscat – H E Qais Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, met on Wednesday with Mohammad Farzin, Governor of the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The meeting took place within the framework of the official visit of President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian of the Islamic Republic of Iran, aimed at strengthening economic and financial relations between the two countries.

Discussions centred on enhancing bilateral cooperation in trade and investment, as well as facilitating financial transfers and trade procedures between Oman and Iran. These efforts



seek to support shared economic objectives, increase trade exchange, and streamline commercial transactions between private sector entities in both countries.

The meeting reaffirmed both sides' commitment to continued

coordination and collaboration in areas of mutual interest, further solidifying bilateral ties and supporting sustainable economic growth.

The meeting was attended by Dr Saleh Said Masan, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Com-

merce, Industry, and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry, Mousa Farhang, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Sultanate of Oman, along with several officials from both sides.

ONA

Sohar International hosts Goldman Sachs' James Ashley at Viewpoints Forum

Muscat – Sohar International hosted a compelling session of its signature Viewpoints Forum at the Mandarin Oriental, Muscat, on May 22. Attended by industry leaders, financial professionals, and decision-makers, both in person and online, the event provided timely insights into global market trends under the theme 'Politics, Policy & Prices – Impact on Markets: A Walkthrough.'

The forum featured James Ashley, Managing Director, Head of International Market Strategy, and Head of Strategic Advisory Solutions at Goldman Sachs Asset Management. Ashley delivered a comprehensive analysis of how geopolitical developments, policy shifts, and economic indicators influence global markets, offering attendees valuable perspectives drawn from his strategic expertise. Moderating the discussion was Sarah Cocker, acclaimed financial journalist and former CNBC Squawk Box an-



chor. Her dynamic and thoughtful facilitation enriched the conversation and brought clarity to complex global issues.

Commenting on the event, Abdulwahid Mohamed al Murschidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, said, "Knowledge, when paired with access and perspective, becomes a powerful driver of opportunity. Our aim through initiatives like these is not only to exchange insights, but to ignite critical thinking, challenge convention, and equip our

stakeholders to navigate an increasingly complex investment landscape with confidence. This forum reflects a broader commitment to strategic foresight and the kind of dialogue that drives long-term value. In an era where global and regional markets are more interconnected than ever, the need for nuanced, context-driven understanding is paramount."

Welcoming an elite audience of over 100 distinguished high-net worth clients, the event pro-

vided a powerful platform for insightful dialogue on shifting market dynamics and long-term investment strategies.

Reinforcing its position as a catalyst for knowledge and a proponent of progressive thought leadership, Sohar International thoughtfully curated an environment that encouraged the exchange of diverse viewpoints and forward-thinking perspectives. A dynamic open-floor Q&A session further enriched the conversation, offering physical and digital attendees the opportunity to engage directly with industry experts and delve into issues of both personal and professional significance. Through this high-level engagement, the bank reaffirmed its dedication to equipping stakeholders with contextual intelligence and nurturing a culture of informed decision-making – one that aligns seamlessly with the sultanate's broader economic aspirations.

Euro may replace dollar as reserve currency

Istanbul, Turkey - The euro has the potential to replace the US dollar as the global reserve currency, but "the lack of unity within the euro-zone" and the depth of the American capital markets remain major obstacles toward that goal, experts told Anadolu.

European Central Bank (ECB) President Christine Lagarde said in a recent statement that the euro has the potential to be an alternative to the dollar, as the euro can play a bigger role in a world shaped by trade protectionism.

Jane Foley, head of FX strategy at Rabobank, stated that Lagarde's statement was in line with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's after the elections when he called for gaining greater independence from the US.

"The lack of fiscal unity within the eurozone and the sheer depth of US capital markets remain as significant constraints on the EUR replacing the USD as global reserve currency; however, that doesn't mean that the EUR and other currencies such as the CNY will not chip away at the USD's crown," she said.

Anadolu Agency

EU, UK push for lowering Russian oil price cap amid US reticence

Arthur Sullivan

The European Union and the UK are pushing for a lowering of the oil price cap - a key economic sanction against Russia.

The price cap is currently set at \$60 per barrel of oil and has been in place since December 2022. Its provisions mean shipping and insurances services from G7 group of advanced economies and EU nations, which dominate global shipping, are not provided for the transit of Russian oil unless the oil is being sold at or below the level of the cap.

The EU is currently working on an 18th package of sanctions against Russia, having released its 17th package earlier this week. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has confirmed that the EU and Britain were hoping to convince its G7 partners to lower the oil price cap for the next package.

European Commission spokesperson Olof Gill told DW that discussions on the price cap were ongoing with G7 partners and confirmed that any lowering of the cap would require unanimity among EU member states. The EU has not publicly revealed what level it believes the cap should be changed to, but various reports have suggested \$50 per barrel.

Brent crude, a global benchmark, has been trading at close to \$65 per barrel recently, while Russian oil has traded between \$55 and \$59 in April and May, just below the cap.

The idea behind lowering the



The current price cap on Russian oil is set at \$60

cap is to reduce the amount of money Moscow makes from its legitimate sales of seaborne crude oil.

US hesitation is 'frustrating'

G7 finance ministers met in Canada last week (May 20-22), where discussions on the lowering of the cap took place. They released a statement condemning Russia's "continued brutal war" and said if efforts to achieve a ceasefire failed, they would explore "further ramping up sanctions."

However, news agency Reuters quoted an unnamed European official at the talks as saying the US is "not convinced" about lowering the price cap and

The idea behind lowering the price cap is to reduce the amount of money Moscow makes from its legitimate sales of crude oil. Oil price has fallen sharply throughout 2025, and Brent crude itself is now only a few dollars above the price cap of \$60

that falling oil prices are already hurting Russia.

Since the start of the war in 2022, there has been uncertainty

over oil sanctions in both the EU and US over the prospect of disrupting supply and driving up energy prices for their own consumers.

Yuliia Pavvytska, manager of the sanctions programme at the Kyiv School of Economics, told DW that ongoing hesitation on sanctions from the Trump administration was "frustrating." But she commended both the EU and UK for continuing to take action. She believes the Russian economy is especially vulnerable at present, and that now is the time for more decisive action.

"The cumulative imbalances caused by sanctions and the war, coupled with falling oil prices, are now reaching a critical point," she said. "This is why we believe our

partners should seize the moment and intensify sanctions efforts to exploit Russia's growing vulnerabilities."

A major focus of recent sanctions packages has been on dealing with Russia's so-called shadow fleet - hundreds of aging tankers bought by Moscow to evade the price cap. The ships are typically bought through third parties and then transport oil around the world using opaque or illegitimate insurance schemes.

The Biden administration began sanctioning individual tankers, with the EU and UK joining. Now, more than 700 tankers have been sanctioned, but the US has not sanctioned any since Donald Trump returned as US president.

Recent data shows the sanctioning of tankers has forced Russia to use its mainstream fleet more and more, which means legal obligations to comply with the price cap. Experts have said that increases the urgency of the need to lower it.

"A lot more Russian oil is being transported on G7 insurance," Vaibhav Raghunandan from the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air told DW. "So it does seem like the correct time to react to that by lowering the cap."

However, he and others who have been monitoring the sanctions picture closely over the past few years have said the biggest issue with the price cap is not the price itself but rather enforcement.

Pavvytska underlined that the whole point is to reduce the amount of revenue Moscow gets from its oil, to "reduce its capacity to finance the war in Ukraine." She firmly believes that the falling oil price, which represents a big change from the strong prices which prevailed in 2023 and for much of 2024, gives Ukraine's allies a clear opportunity to seriously dent Russia's economy.

In her opinion, lowering of the price cap as well as options to restrict the export of Russian oil altogether must be considered. With the global market now on a "strong downward trend," the sanctions coalition would have an "opportunity to take more decisive steps," including measures that would restrict the supply of Russian oil.

DW

EU almost on track to reach 2030 climate goal

Brussels, Belgium - The European Union is nearly on track to reach its main climate target for this decade, with countries' existing CO2-cutting plans set to bring the bloc within one percentage point of the goal, the European Commission said on Wednesday.

The EU is on course to reduce its net greenhouse gas emissions by 54% by 2030, compared with 1990 levels, very close to its 55% target, the Commission said in an analysis of existing policies in the EU and its member countries.

"Emissions are down 37%

since 1990, while the economy has grown nearly 70% - proving climate action and growth go hand in hand. Now we must build on this momentum," said the

EU's Climate Chief Wopke Hoekstra.

Brussels also pointed to disparities between member states and highlighted the problems of protecting forests and carbon storage.

The commission singled out Belgium, Estonia and Poland, which have not submitted their energy and climate plans, urging them to "do so without delay".

WAM



Global energy storage set to grow 9-fold by 2040, driven by new battery systems

Murat Temizer

The global energy storage sector is undergoing a rapid transformation, with total installed capacity expected to surpass 4 terawatts by 2040, up from just under 0.5 terawatts in 2024.

According to Rystad Energy's Energy Storage Outlook 2025, this nine-fold increase will be powered primarily by battery energy storage systems (BESS), as renewables continue to reshape the global electricity mix.

Last year marked a new record for BESS growth, with nearly 200 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of capacity added globally - an 80% increase from the previous year.

China led the expansion, contributing more than half of the new additions, while the US, Australia, the UK, and Germany followed.



The report emphasises that the rise of intermittent renewable sources like solar and wind has amplified the need for flexible storage solutions.

BESS is increasingly seen as a key tool for integrating renewable generation into power grids, mitigating price volatility, and ensuring system reliability.

With the average cost of

BESS projects dropping below \$300 per kilowatt-hour in 2024, storing electricity has become significantly more affordable.

The levelised storage cost can now fall as low as \$60 per megawatt-hour, enabling operators to benefit from intraday power price spreads through arbitrage.

Rystad Energy also highlights the growing role of storage in managing negative electricity prices, which surged in several markets in 2024 due to solar oversupply and low demand.

In this context, battery systems help absorb excess generation and shift renewable power to meet evening peak demand.

Global battery storage capacity is on track to surpass 4 terawatts by 2040, transforming electricity markets and enabling deeper integration of solar and wind power

California's example is cited as a leading case of successful integration, where utility-scale BESS now routinely covers more than 10% of evening and nighttime electricity needs. The state's battery storage capacity has surpassed 12 gigawatts, supporting a broader shift to solar-powered grids.

Anadolu Agency

Major investment banks raise China growth forecasts

Beijing, China - Leading financial institutions, including Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan and Morgan Stanley, have recently raised their forecasts concerning China's GDP growth in 2025, given that China's pro-growth policies are helping the economy maintain its growth momentum.

Goldman Sachs released a research report on May 13, in which it decided to raise its forecast for China's GDP growth in 2025 by 0.6 percentage points, elevating it from 4% to 4.6%.

"We are raising our forecasts for China's 2025 export value growth to zero from -5% previously," said Shan Hui, chief China economist at Goldman Sachs. Accordingly, within the GDP



breakdown by the expenditure approach, Goldman Sachs raised the net export contribution to China's GDP growth prediction from -0.5 percentage points to 0.1 percentage points.

Nomura, meanwhile, also increased China's GDP growth forecast in a report released on May 19. According to the report, the easing of trade tensions between China and the US is a ma-

terial positive for China's economy, especially for Q2 2025, as exporters might try to front-load their shipments before the 90-day tariff pause ends. In addition, retail sales in China produced a robust performance in Q1 with the support of its expanded trade-in program.

Notably, China's National Bureau of Statistics revealed that retail sales of consumer goods, a major indicator of the country's consumption strength, had expanded 5.1% year on year in China in April.

JP Morgan revised China's GDP growth forecast to 4.8% year on year from 4.1%. Zhu Haibin, chief China economist at JP Morgan, cited a slew of pro-

growth measures as major contributors to sound economic growth amid trade headwinds.

"Since the end of September last year, China has witnessed the most profound and extensive policy adjustment in recent years," Zhu said, adding that China has proposed a raft of more proactive fiscal policy measures this year, including setting the deficit-to-GDP ratio at around 4% and issuing more government bonds to shore up the economy.

Morgan Stanley raised China's GDP growth forecast by 0.3 percentage points to 4.5%, citing improving household and public consumption in China in 2025.

Xinhua

وزارة التجارة والصناعة وترويج الاستثمار
دائرة الملكية الفكرية
إعلان

تعلن دائرة الملكية الفكرية عن طلب تسجيل العلامة التجارية المقبولة وفقا لاحكام قانون (نظام) العلامات التجارية لدول مجلس التعاون لدول الخليج العربية الصادر بالمرسوم السلطاني رقم 33 / 2017

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Majlish A'Shura's committee reviews Cultural Heritage Law



The Legislative and Legal Committee of the Majlish A'Shura held its 17th meeting as part of the second annual session of the Tenth Term (2023-27). The meeting was chaired by H E Dr Ahmed Ali al Saadi, head of the committee, and in the presence of their excellencies members of the committee. During the session, the committee reviewed the draft amendments to the Cultural Heritage Law, which had been referred by the Media, Tourism, and Culture Committee. The re-

The meeting was chaired by H E Dr Ahmed Ali al Saadi, head of the committee, and in the presence of their excellencies members of the committee... It reviewed the draft amendments to the Cultural Heritage Law

ferring committee had previously conducted an in-depth study of the law's articles and provisions, emphasising the importance of aligning the legislation with regional and international developments in heritage protection,

especially as the Sultanate of Oman continues to expand its efforts to register archaeological sites and cultural landmarks on the World Heritage List. The committee also discussed the draft Law on Combating Cy-

bercrime, which was referred to the council by the government. The proposed legislation is part of the national response to the growing challenges in the cyber domain and seeks to keep pace with rapid technological transformations that pose new threats to individuals and institutions across the sultanate. The head of the committee emphasised the importance of the proposed law in enhancing the legislative framework for cybersecurity. He highlighted the need for the law to include effec-

tive tools to combat cybercrime while maintaining a balance between protecting society and safeguarding individual rights, taking into account future technological developments that may impact the law's implementation. The committee is currently conducting a comprehensive legal review of both draft laws, in coordination with the relevant authorities, in preparation for submitting detailed reports to the council for further discussion in upcoming sessions.



Oxy Oman takes interactive screens initiative

As part of its commitment to advancing education in the sultanate, Oxy Oman announced a collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE) aimed at equipping schools near two Oxy concession areas with interactive screens. With Oxy Oman's support, the project will provide 60 interactive screens to be distributed across schools in Dhahirah and Al Wusta governorates. This initiative will significantly enrich the classroom experience for teachers and students by fostering digital engagement, in alignment with national education objectives. The programme was unveiled at an event at the MoE's building in Muscat. Thamer Dawood, Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility and Communications at Oxy Oman, and H E Majid bin Said al Bahri,

Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs in the MoE signed the sponsorship agreement. This project is linked to the MoE's Digital Curriculum project, which is being implemented across schools in the sultanate. The initiative involves converting traditional textbooks into digital interactive books, supporting a more dynamic and accessible learning experience for students. "We are proud to collaborate with the Ministry of Education on this initiative," said Steven Lauer, President and General Manager of Oxy Oman. "By supporting the integration of interactive technology in classrooms, we aim to empower both students and educators with tools that inspire innovation, participation, and academic growth."

be'ah and Sohar University conclude National Research Project on Food Waste

The Oman Environmental Services Holding Company (be'ah) has announced the successful completion of a national joint research project with Sohar University titled 'Awareness Study on Food Waste in the Sultanate of Oman'. The initiative, executed through the EJAAD platform for academia - industry collaboration, aims to enhance public awareness and reduce food waste in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Oman Vision 2040. Launched in November 2024 under the leadership of Professor Rakesh Belwal from the Faculty of Business at Sohar University, the project focused on developing and implementing a scientifically validated Household Food Waste Awareness (HFWA) scale, based on comprehensive fieldwork conducted across Oman's governorates.



The research process involved designing and testing awareness scale using advanced analytical tools, in addition to conducting extensive surveys and focus group discussions with citizens, students, and employees. The resulting database provides a solid foundation for future environmental education initiatives and policy recommendations. The project was formally concluded with a closing ceremony held at be'ah's headquarters in

Muscat, where key findings were presented and the research team was honoured. The event was attended by senior representatives from both be'ah and Sohar University. Professor Belwal emphasised the project's dual contribution to knowledge production and the training of national talent, highlighting the involvement of 20 student research assistants from Sohar University who gained valuable field and analytical ex-

perience. Dr Hamdan al Fazari, Vice Chancellor of Sohar University, praised the team's efforts and reaffirmed the university's commitment to impactful, application-driven research that serves national priorities. Dr Farah al Barwani, Senior Manager of Research and Development at be'ah, described the project as a powerful example of the company's strategic commitment to waste reduction.

Hedera Africa Hackathon launches with \$1mn prize pool

The Hashgraph Association, a Swiss non-profit organisation driving global adoption of Hedera-powered solutions by funding innovation, training, certification, and venture building programmes, in collaboration with Exponential Science Foundation, a not-for-profit foundation accelerating responsible tech adoption, via research, education, and innovation activities, announced the launch of the Hedera Africa Hackathon 2025 to enable the next generation of Web developers and empower economic inclusion in Africa with a digital future for all. This biggest Web3 Hackathon initiative combines online participation with onsite events in over 20 African cities, with a goal of attracting over 10,000 participants across more than 15 countries on the African continent. Developers, students, and entrepreneurs are invited to collab-



orate to build decentralized solutions on Hedera across industries such as Finance, Healthcare, Telecoms, Sustainability, Agriculture, and Manufacturing, while leveraging the convergence of other deep technologies such as AI, IoT, Robotics, and Quantum Computing, with a prize pool of more than US\$1mn on offer for the winning teams and projects. With global participation officially open from August 1 to September 30, the hackathon

tasks applicants to develop blockchain/distributed ledger technology (DLT)-based, scalable solutions tailored to the continent's most urgent challenges and needs. All solutions will be built on the Hedera network - the world's most energy-efficient and cost-effective DLT, which offers cost predictability, the highest levels of security, and the ability to support reliable, scalable, and enterprise-grade applications.

Indian Science Forum holds Science Fiesta 2025 on Artificial Intelligence

Students and teachers from as far as Jalan, Khasab, Sur, Ibri, Rustaq, Salalah and other schools in Muscat and nearby areas arrived at the campus of the National University for Science and Technology to compete in various fields for the Science Fiesta 2025 organised by the Indian Science Forum. The annual Science Fiesta, held on May 23 and 24, was a resounding success, bringing together bright young minds from across Oman for a dynamic celebration of science, technology, and innovation. Indian School Al Ghubra was declared as the overall champion, the first Runner-Up was Indian School Bousher and the second Runner-Up was Indian School Mabela. The theme this year was 'AI - Mind Meets Machine'. All competitions were centred around



this concept, with topics related to Artificial Intelligence featured in events such as debates, poster making, Digital Symposium, Exhibition etc. More than 5,000 students had registered for the Shastra

Pratibha Contest, and the top performers from each grade, the 'Sastra Pratibha's, were honoured during the event for their outstanding achievements. Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Science and Technology Achievement

Award was presented by H E G V Srinivas, Indian Ambassador to Oman, to Dr Monojit Choudhury, Professor at Mohamed Bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI), Abu Dhabi. Dr Choudhury was also

the Keynote Speaker. His research work has been at the intersection of natural language processing (NLP) and various branches of cognitive and social sciences. He has drawn inspiration from and contributed to the

fields of historical and evolutionary linguistics, sociolinguistics, ethics, culture studies, and ethnography. Science Fiesta 2025 is dedicated to 70th year of India-Oman diplomatic relations. In

this regard, Renowned Omani technologist, thought leader, and community influencer Tariq Hilal al Barwani was honoured with the prestigious Jayakar Award. Named after Dr A S G Jayakar, a distinguished Indian scholar and visionary, the Jayakar Award recognises individuals who have made outstanding contributions to science, education, and social development. Barwani's impactful work in technology, youth empowerment, and cross-cultural engagement earned him this year's accolade. "This award is not just a recognition of past achievements, but a call to continue building, inspiring, and transforming lives," said Barwani. "I dedicate this honour to every young dreamer who believes in the power of knowledge, resilience, and service to society."

Over 50,000 children killed or injured in Israel's deadly war on Gaza: UNICEF

At least 1,309 children have been killed since Israel resumed its air assaults on Gaza on March 18

Gaza City/Ankara - More than 50,000 children have been killed or injured in Israel's deadly war on Gaza since October 2023, the UN children's fund said on Wednesday.

"The children of Gaza need protection. They need food, water, and medicine. They need a ceasefire. But more than anything, they need immediate, collective action to stop this once and for all," UNICEF's Middle East Director Edouard Beigbeder said in a statement.

He said at least 1,309 children have been killed and 3,738 others injured since Israel resumed its air assaults on Gaza on March 18.

"How many more dead girls and boys will it take? What level of horror must be livestreamed before the international community fully steps up, uses its influence, and takes bold, decisive action to force the end of this ruthless killing of children?"

On Friday, Palestinian doctor Alaa Najjar, a physician at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, lost nine of her 10 children, and her husband, also a doctor, is in critical condition as a result of an Israeli airstrike on their home.

And on Monday, at least 31 people, including 18 children, were burned to death in an Israeli strike on a school-turned-shelter in Gaza City.

"These children - lives that should never be reduced to numbers - are now part of a long, harrowing list of unimaginable



horrors: the grave violations against children, the blockade of aid, the starvation, the constant forced displacement, and the destruction of hospitals, water systems, schools, and homes. In essence, the destruction of life itself in the Gaza Strip," Beigbeder said.

60 children dead from malnutrition

At least 60 children have died from malnutrition in Gaza caused by Israel's ongoing blockade, the Health Ministry said on Wednesday, as Tel Aviv's war entered its 600th day.

In a statement, the ministry

warned of a deepening humanitarian and health catastrophe, with 22 of Gaza's 38 hospitals out of service due to Israeli strikes and the near-total collapse of the healthcare system.

According to the statement, 47% of essential medications and 65% of medical supplies are

now unavailable.

Since the war began on October 7, 2023, 477 patients have died while awaiting permission to leave Gaza for treatment abroad. Additionally, 41% of kidney failure patients have died due to lack of treatment and insufficient care, the ministry said.

Hospital bed occupancy has exceeded 106%, while only 50 of 104 operating rooms remain functional, it added.

Regarding infrastructure, the ministry said 25 of 34 oxygen stations have been destroyed, leaving only nine partially operational. All seven MRI machines in Gaza have been destroyed, rendering the territory entirely without this critical diagnostic service.

Only 49 of 110 hospital generators remain in operation and ur-

raeli airstrike targeting a home in the Al-Saftawi neighbourhood of northern Gaza City.

Another six Palestinians lost their lives in a similar airstrike on a residence in Deir al-Balah, in central Gaza, while two more were reportedly killed in Abasan, a town east of Khan Younis in the southern part of the enclave.

At least 54,084 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's genocidal war since October 2023, the Health Ministry said on Wednesday.

At least 16 Palestinians were killed on Wednesday morning in a series of deadly Israeli airstrikes across the Gaza Strip. Eight were killed in the Al-Saftawi neighbourhood of northern Gaza City

gently require maintenance and fuel to stay running, the statement said.

The ministry accused Israel of deliberately targeting hospitals and health centres, raiding facilities and arresting medical personnel, patients, and displaced civilians sheltering inside.

16 more killed

Meanwhile, at least 16 Palestinians were killed on Wednesday morning in a series of deadly Israeli airstrikes across the Gaza Strip.

According to the official Palestinian news agency Wafa, eight people were killed in an Is-

A ministry statement said that 28 bodies were brought to hospitals in the last 24 hours, while 179 people were injured, taking the number of injuries to 123,308 in the Israeli onslaught.

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

The Israeli army resumed its attacks on the Gaza Strip on March 18 and has since killed 3,924 people and injured over 11,200 others, shattering a ceasefire and prisoner exchange agreement that took hold in January.

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Pope Leo XIV

Pope Leo calls for ceasefire in Gaza, peace in Ukraine

Vatican City - Pope Leo XIV called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and peace in Ukraine during Wednesday's Papal Audience.

Pope Leo 'forcefully' appealed for a 'ceasefire now' in Gaza and reiterated the need to 'fully respect' humanitarian law, according to Vatican News.

"From the Gaza Strip, we hear rising ever more insistently to the heavens the cries of mothers and fathers who clutch the lifeless bodies of their children and who are continually forced to move about in search of a little food and water and safer shelter from bombardments," Pope said.

Pope Leo also called for peace in Ukraine, underlining that his thoughts often turn to 'the Ukrainian people affected by new serious attacks against civilians and infrastructure'.

He reaffirmed his appeal 'to stop the war and to support every initiative for dialogue and peace'.

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EU lifts economic sanctions on Syria

Istanbul, Turkey - The European Council on Wednesday announced the lifting of economic sanctions on Syria, enacting the recent political agreement decided on May 20.

"The Council has adopted legal acts lifting all economic restrictive measures on Syria, with the exception of those based on security grounds," the council said in a press release.

Underlining that the adoption formalised the political decision announced on May 20, the council noted that they aim to support the Syrian people 'in reuniting and rebuilding a new, inclusive, pluralistic and peaceful Syria'.

"As part of the same approach, the Council has also removed 24 entities from the EU list of those subject to the

freezing of funds and economic resources," it said.

The council also extended the listings of individuals and entities linked to the overthrown Bashar Assad regime until June 1, 2026, based on its 'call for accountability and its support to a peaceful transition'.

It has imposed new restrictive measures under the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime, sanctioning two individuals and three entities for 'severe human rights violations'.

"The Council will continue monitoring developments on the ground and stands ready to introduce further restrictive measures against human rights violators and those fuelling instability in Syria," the statement added.

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Yemen: Israel strikes Sanaa airport

Jerusalem - Israeli warplanes carried out a new wave of airstrikes on Sanaa airport in the Yemeni capital on Wednesday, Defence Minister Israel Katz said.

Katz claimed in a statement that the attacks destroyed what he said 'the last aircraft remaining in Houthi use as part of Operation Golden Ornament'.

"The ports in Yemen will continue to be hit hard, and Sanaa airport will be destroyed again and again," Katz warned.

The Houthi-run Al-Masirah TV confirmed that four Israeli airstrikes targeted the airport's runway and a plane for the country's flag carrier Yemenia Airways. "The Zionist (Israeli) enemy targeted and completely destroyed the last operational Yemenia Airways plane at the Sanaa International Airport," Khaled Al-Shayef, director of Sanaa airport, said in a statement on X.

Wednesday's attacks were the 10th wave of Israeli airstrikes



on Yemen since October 2023, and the fourth since March when Israel resumed its genocidal war on Gaza.

The Houthis have intensified missile and drone strikes on Israel since Tel Aviv resumed its military attacks on Gaza in March.

Since November 2023, the Houthis have also targeted commercial shipping in the Red Sea,

Gulf of Aden, and Arabian Sea in support of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, where over 54,000 people have been killed in the ongoing Israeli offensive.

Meanwhile, one person was killed in an Israeli drone strike in southern Lebanon, in the latest violation of a ceasefire agreement, the Lebanese Health Ministry said on Wednesday.

The ministry's Emergency

Operations Centre said the victim lost his life when a drone fired two missiles into his motorbike in the town of Yater on Tuesday night.

The state news agency NNA confirmed the attack, saying Israeli reconnaissance planes were flying over the town.

No details were provided about the identity of the victim.

Anadolu Agency

Seven dead, baby missing after migrant ship flips at Spanish port

Oviedo, Spain - At least seven women and girls died and a baby went missing after a migrant boat capsized while disembarking at the port of the Spanish island of El Hierro on Wednesday, Canary Islands emergency services said.

Among the confirmed dead are three minors - two five-year-old girls and a 16-year-old girl.

An estimated 150 people were traveling from Africa aboard the vessel, which capsized just five metres (16 feet) from the dock.

"We know that this moment is the most delicate part of the rescue," said Anselmo Pestana,



the Spanish government's delegate in the Canary Islands. "Usually, they even escort the boat all the way to the port to avoid mak-

ing the transfer at sea. This moment is very important."

He said initial reports suggested too many passengers

stood up at once, causing the boat to overturn.

"A tragic moment because, as I imagine, they must have come

after a very hard and very long journey, given the state of the sea," he said, adding that the sea has been 'very rough' in recent days.

"Many of them arrive in a state of stiffness, of tremendous exhaustion, which also makes it very difficult to pull them out of the water if the rescue is not immediate ... It's likely they sank very quickly because they don't even have the ability to move that any human being would normally have under normal circumstances," he added.

Emergency services said they were also treating a three-year-old boy and a five-year-old girl

for severe non-fatal drowning. They will be transferred by helicopter to a nearby hospital.

Another four children are being taken to the hospital with shortness of breath, according to emergency services.

This is the first migrant vessel in around two weeks to have reached the small Canary Island of El Hierro.

In 2024, nearly 47,000 migrants made the treacherous journey by sea from northwest Africa to Spain's Canary Islands. A report by NGO Walking Borders in December said nearly 10,000 more died trying.

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US to halt new student visa appointments

Washington, D.C., US - US Secretary of State Marco Rubio has ordered new appointments for students visas to be halted in an internal State Department communication.

In the cable, first reported by magazine Politico, Rubio said that the department sought to issue updated guidance on social media vetting of student and exchange visitor applicants.

Consular sections were advised to halt scheduling these types of visa appointments.

"The Department is conducting a review of existing operations and processes for screening and vetting of student and exchange visitor (F, M, J) visa applicants, and based on that review, plans to issue guidance on expanded social media vetting for all such applicants," the Reuters news agency quoted text from the cable.

Trump administration officials have said that student visa and green card holders are subject to deportation over pro-Palestinian activism or support. A Turkish Tufts University student was held for over six weeks in an immigration detention centre in Louisiana after co-authoring an opinion piece criticising her school's response to Israel's war in Gaza.

She was released from cus-



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio

tody after being granted bail by a federal judge.

Last week a judge blocked the White House's bid to halt Harvard's ability to enroll foreign students after the school sued the Trump administration.

Harvard called the revocation a 'blatant violation' of the US Constitution.

Meanwhile, the students at Harvard University rallied on Tuesday after Donald Trump's administration said it is seeking to cancel all remaining financial contracts with the university.

Doubling down its effort to curtail the university's autonomy,

the Trump administration has asked the federal agencies to cut contracts worth US\$100mn at Harvard.

Hundreds of students gathered to protest against Trump

'Safeguard rights of students'

Beijing, China - China on Wednesday urged the US to safeguard the 'legitimate rights' of all international students following a pause in visa processing by Washington, state media reported.

"China upholds that normal education cooperation and academic exchanges should not be disrupted," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said during a news conference in Beijing.

"We urge the US to effectively safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of all international students, including Chinese students overseas," she added.

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administration's actions against the university which has refused to give up control of curriculum, admissions and research.

'Trump = traitor', read one student placard. The crowd chanted 'who belongs in class today, let them stay' in reference to Harvard's international students whose status Trump has upended by revoking the university's accreditation to the country's Student and Exchange Visitor programme.

The termination of the remaining contracts would mark the end of business ties between the government and a university that is the country's oldest and a research powerhouse. The US government has already cancelled more than US\$2.6bn in federal research grants for the Ivy League university.

NPR sues Trump

Meanwhile, National Public Radio and three of its local stations are suing President Donald Trump, arguing that his executive order cutting funding to the 246-station network violates free speech.

The American public broadcasting organisation, along with local stations Colorado Public Radio, Aspen Public Radio and KSUT Public Radio, want Trump's order blocked and declared unconstitutional.

Earlier this month, Trump ordered the withdrawal of funding for NPR and for the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS).

DW

S Korea sees rise in childbirths

Seoul, South Korea - The number of babies born in South Korea rose for the ninth straight month in March, according to data from Statistics Korea cited by Seoul-based Yonhap News on Wednesday.

A total of 21,041 births were recorded in March, a 6.8% increase from the 19,694 births logged in the same month last year. This marks the first year-over-year rise in March births in a decade.

The upward trend began in July 2024 and continued into the first quarter of 2025, which saw 65,022 newborns - a 7.4% increase from the same period last year. It was the largest year-on-year increase for any first quarter since records began in 1981, and the highest first-quarter total in three years, after 68,339 births were reported in early 2022.



Officials say the increase follows government efforts to counter the country's persistently low birth rate. Measures include marriage incentives and expanded childcare subsidies.

Last year marked the first annual rise in births in nearly a decade. Despite the rebound, deaths still outnumbered births in March. A total of 31,141 people died - up 0.2% from the previous year - leading to a natural population decline of 10,100 for the month. South Korea has reported more deaths than births every quarter since late 2019.

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Temperatures to soar in next 5 yrs

Geneva, Switzerland - The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) has issued a warning in its latest Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update for 2025-2029, predicting that global temperatures will continue to soar over the next five years.

The report highlights an 80% likelihood that at least one year between 2025 and 2029 will surpass the warmest year on record (currently 2024), with temperatures expected to be 1.2°C to 1.9°C higher than the pre-industrial average. The forecast also suggests a 70% chance that the five-year average warming will exceed 1.5°C.

In a press release on Wednesday, the WMO said: "The World Meteorological Organization Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update (2025-2029) projects that global temperatures are



expected to continue at or near record levels in the next five years, increasing climate risks and impacts on societies and sustainable development."

It added: "The report forecasts that the annually averaged global mean near-surface temperature for each year between 2025 and 2029 is predicted to be between 1.2°C and 1.9°C higher than the average over the years 1850-1900. There is an 80% chance that at least one year between 2025 and 2029 will be warmer than the warmest year on record (currently 2024). And there is an 86% chance that at least one year will be more than 1.5°C above the pre-industrial level."

ANI

Germany to stop subsidiary protection status for refugees' family members

Berlin, Germany - "Before I came to Germany, I didn't know it would be so difficult. I just didn't know. You know, we're men, and we men are not used to raising children," said Mohammed. He fled the civil war in Syria in 2014 with his wife, two daughters and two sons to Iraqi Kurdistan.

Life was so difficult for the family there that his wife, two daughters and one son returned to Syria. Mohammed, who did not wish to give his family name, made the decision to make the dangerous journey to Germany through Libya and across the Mediterranean to Italy together with his son, who suffers from cerebral atrophy, in the hope of getting medical treatment and one day being reunited with the rest of the family in Germany.

But two and a half years after arriving in the country, Mohammed still lives alone with his 9-year-old severely disabled son and has no idea when, or if, his wife and two daughters will be able to join him. His second son died after returning to Syria, a loss made all the more painful by the separation.

Housed in shared accommodation at refugee centres, a friend eventually offered Mohammed a

place to stay in what he describes as a broken-down house. He said they struggle to make ends meet on social welfare.

Mohammed was granted subsidiary protection status by the German authorities. The classification is for people who do not meet the specific criteria for refugee status under the Geneva Convention but who face a risk of serious harm in their country of origin, including the death penalty, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, or indiscriminate violence in the context of an armed conflict.

There are currently around 351,400 people with subsidiary protection status living in Germany, the majority from Syria. They receive a residence permit, it was initially for one year, in 2024 this initial period was extended to three years. They have the right to live and work in Germany and access social benefits. But while asylum-seekers and recognised refugees have the right to reunification with spouses and children under the age of 18 under German and EU law, those with subsidiary protection status do not.

Now, the new coalition government of the conservative



Over 300,000 people with subsidiary protection status live in Germany, the majority from Syria

Christian Democrats (CDU), its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU) and the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) plan to suspend family reunification for those with subsidiary protection status for at least the next two years.

On Wednesday, May 28, the German Cabinet approved the restrictions on family reunification. The draft bill must still be passed in the Bundestag, Germany's lower house of parliament, to come into effect.

Interior Minister Alexander

Dobrindt said: "The country's ability to integrate had simply reached a breaking point," adding that cities and municipalities across the country were at their limit.

Subsidiary protection status

The issue of family reunification for people with subsidiary protection status has been a subject of much political debate in Germany. In 2015, the government led by former Chancellor Angela Merkel granted spouses,

children or parents of beneficiaries of subsidiary protection the right to reunification. But this right was suspended in 2016 after just one year.

Since 2018, the families of people granted subsidiary protection have been able to be reunited. However, the German government limits the number of visas it issues to a maximum of 1,000 per month. That has caused a lot of uncertainty for people like Mohammed and his family in Syria, who must contend with long waiting lists,

lengthy bureaucratic procedures and a limited number of visas.

In 2024, Germany issued around 120,000 visas for the purpose of family reunification, according to Foreign Office figures requested by Mediendienst

The new coalition government is planning to suspend family reunification for those with protection status for at least the next two years

Integration, an information service run by the Council for Migration, a nationwide association of migration researchers. Around 10%, some 12,000 visas, were issued to relatives of people with subsidiary protection in Germany.

Families separated

Critics, such as human rights NGO Pro Asyl, have said separation from family can place a

huge psychological strain on those affected, which can have consequences for integration and also irregular immigration. Without any legal route to reunite with children, parents or spouses, some people take the risk of using irregular, often unsafe routes to reach their loved ones in Germany.

Legal experts say that even if the EU Family Reunification Directive does not apply to people with subsidiary protection because it was adopted before the status of subsidiary protection was defined, legislators are still bound by Article Six of Germany's Basic Law and the right to family life enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights.

However, one important restriction has been introduced by the Federal Constitutional Court in Germany and accepted by the European Court of Human Rights. "If there is an alternative of family life in another country, especially in the country of origin, then there is no automatic right of family reunification in Germany," said Thomas Gross, an expert on German and EU law at the University of Osnabrück.

DW

China to trial visa-free policy for Saudi, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain

Beijing, China - China will trial a policy granting ordinary passport holders from Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain visa-free entry into China up to 30 days from June 9, 2025, to June 8, 2026, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said on Wednesday.

At a daily press briefing, Mao elaborated on China's recent announcement of a unilateral visa-free policy for the four Gulf countries on a trial basis.

Nationals from these four

countries traveling to China for business, sightseeing, visiting relatives or friends, exchanges or transit for up to 30 days will not be required to obtain a visa for entry, Mao said.

"With the United Arab Emirates and Qatar that have implemented reciprocal visa-free policies with China since 2018, China now grants visa-free treatment to all GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries. We welcome more friends from the GCC countries to embark on



Tourists take boats to tour the Slender West Lake scenic spot in Yangzhou, east China's Jiangsu Province

an impromptu trip to China," Mao said.

Meanwhile, China's National Immigration Administration (NIA) has projected a daily average of 2.15mn cross-border trips nationwide during the upcoming Dragon Boat Festival break, an increase of 12.2 per cent compared with the holiday period last year.

The peak of cross-border travel is anticipated on June 1.

Dragon Boat Festival, also known as Duanwu Festival, falls

on the fifth day of the fifth month in the Chinese lunar calendar.

This year, it was celebrated on May 31, and the holiday runs from May 31 to June 2. Major aviation hubs are expected to see a steady increase in passenger traffic, with Shanghai Pudong International Airport projecting 100,000 daily border crossings.

During the Dragon Boat Festival holiday, multiple dragon boat races and related events will be held in Guangdong Province, Hong Kong and

Macao.

Coinciding with Children's Day on June 1 and the weekend, the holiday is expected to spur a surge in outbound travel from the Chinese mainland and home visits by Hong Kong and Macao residents. Land border checkpoints connecting Hong Kong and Macao are expected to see a notable increase in traffic.

Luohu Port in Shenzhen City is expected to handle a daily average of 230,000 crossings.

Xinhua

S Korea: Foreign policy battles wait for president to be elected in June

Seoul, South Korea - With South Koreans due to vote for a new president in the first week of June, analysts warn that the winner of the vote will immediately face challenges in the international arena from friends and rivals alike.

Seoul is already under pressure on trade and security issues from the US administration of President Donald Trump, its most important ally against the recalcitrant regime in North Korea.

At the same time, South Korea aims to keep essential trade ties with US rival China. Furthermore, its relations with another regional player - Japan - could show cracks depending on the outcome of the vote.

Most recent polls put Democratic Party (DP) candidate Lee Jae-Myung in favour with 49.2% of voters, significantly ahead of his People Power Party (PPP) rival Kim Moon-soo, at 36.8%. The PPP party's image has been tarnished by now-impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol who is on trial over his attempt to impose martial law in December.

Kim has been narrowing the gap, however, and a third party, the conservative New Reform Party, currently boasts 10.3% support, possibly giving it a say in the make-up of the new gov-



Democratic Party candidate Lee Jae-myung has a wide lead in polls

ernment. "The winner is going to face a lot of big issues very quickly," said Choo Jae-woo, a professor of foreign policy at Kyung Hee University in Seoul.

"My feeling is that the incoming president will have to first of all engage with Trump and hope to take the rest of his policies from there," he told DW. "For

Korea, the most serious worry is the tariffs on exports to the US and the changing role of the military alliance, including the US forces in Korea."

Dealing with an 'incoherent' US

Seoul is in talks with Washington on trade and there have

been suggestions that a deal could be within reach, although it is not clear whether all tariffs will be lifted.

The question of US troops stationed in South Korea is even more delicate, with reports in recent weeks suggesting that the Pentagon is considering withdrawing more than 4,000

troops from the present 28,000 stationed.

The US has played down the reports - but Trump has repeatedly threatened to pull troops out unless Seoul paid more for their presence.

Removing any troops from the peninsula would hand a strategic win for both North

Korea and China, Choo said.

Dan Pinkston, a professor of international relations at the Seoul campus of Troy University, said Seoul is struggling to manage the "incoherent" decisions that are emerging from Washington on trade and security matters.

efforts to communicate with Kim Jong Un. During Yoon's tenure, Pyongyang forged an alliance with Russia that saw North Korean troops deploy in Russia and Ukraine. Moscow allegedly returned the favour by giving North Korea fuel and military technology that was previ-

Whoever comes in has to find a way to manage those relationships with the US and return to some sort of predictability or stability as they are all over the place at the moment and that makes planning and moving forward impossible

DAN PINKSTON

"Whoever comes in has to find a way to manage those relationships with the US and return to some sort of predictability or stability as they are all over the place at the moment and that makes planning and moving forward impossible," he said.

The threat from the North

North Korea will also be a major concern for a new administration, after President Yoon's government decided to effectively ignore Pyongyang and halt most

ously beyond its reach due to UN sanctions.

Bolstered by the alliance with Moscow, Kim Jong Un has now severed all communications with the South and constructed additional defences on the already heavily fortified border.

"If Lee wins, I am sure he will try to reset ties with the North, but it takes two to tango, and I think it is very unlikely that Kim will do anything to reciprocate," said Pinkston. "Those bridges have been burned. Lee will try, but it will be very difficult."

DW

Trump appeals to top court for third-country deportations

Washington, D.C., US - US President Donald Trump has appealed to the Supreme Court to reinstate his administration's policy allowing migrants to be deported to third-party countries, including conflict-ridden South Sudan, CNN reported on Tuesday.

The request is the latest attempt to revive a contentious immigration measure that enables deportations not only to an individual's country of origin but also to nations where they may face risks of persecution or torture - without prior notice or access to legal recourse.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) introduced the rule shortly after Trump assumed office. It authorises immigration authorities to remove individuals to countries with which they have no legal or familial ties.

The president's legal team argues that this approach is vital to addressing what it describes as a growing crisis of il-



US President Donald Trump

legal immigration at the southern border.

The appeal follows a ruling in March by US District Judge Brian Murphy, who blocked the administration from transferring detainees to South Sudan without proper legal procedure.

The judge ordered that migrants must receive written notice and be allowed to present evidence of credible fear of harm in the destination country.

Anadolu Agency

Poland: Candidates neck and neck in presidential poll

Warsaw, Poland - Just four days out from the decisive second round of Poland's presidential election, it is still all to play for: Candidates Rafal Trzaskowski and Karol Nawrocki are neck and neck.

The most recent opinion poll published by IBRIS on Monday put liberal-conservative, pro-European candidate Rafal Trzaskowski at 45.7% and his national-conservative, Euroskeptic rival, Karol Nawrocki, at 44.9%, with 7.8% still undecided.

A different institute put both candidates at 47% on Friday, May 23.

This means that the two rival camps in this election - the centre-left ruling coalition headed by Prime Minister Donald Tusk of the Civic Platform (PO) party and the national-conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party led by Jaroslaw Kaczynski - are now fighting tooth and nail for every undecided voter.

In the first round of the presidential election on May 18, Trzaskowski got 31.36% of the vote ahead of Nawrocki's 29.54% - a much tighter margin than anticipated.

Trzaskowski's 'March of Patriots'

In an attempt to win over new



Supporters of Warsaw mayor and presidential candidate Rafal Trzaskowski during a campaign event in Warsaw

voters, Trzaskowski, who has been mayor of the capital Warsaw since 2018, invited Poles to take part in the 'March of Patriots' in the capital on Sunday.

The leaders of all parties in Tusk's ruling coalition gave him their backing at the huge rally.

"Rafal, win this election for us and change Poland," said Szymon Holownia, speaker of the Polish parliament and member of the Christian Democratic Poland 2050 party.

"We are choosing between a brown and a colourful Poland," said Magdalena Biejat of the New Left party and called on Poles to vote for Trzaskowski.

Both Holownia and Biejat were knocked out in the first round of the presidential election.

The gloves are off

The prime minister himself demonstrated that the tone in this election campaign has become rougher.

In a reference to Nawrocki's past, Tusk warned that 'common gangsters' were reaching for power.

Nawrocki, a former boxer who once earned a living as a bouncer, had contacts in the underworld and the ultras scene.

It was recently reported that he once took part in an arranged

mass brawl between militant fans of two rival soccer clubs.

Candidate Trzaskowski also cautioned against putting Poland in the hands of a 'muscle man'.

Support from Romania's Dan

Guest of honour at Sunday's 'March of Patriots' was Romania's President-elect Nicusor Dan.

"A week ago, Romania was the winner; in a week's time, Poland will be the winner," he said in Polish to loud applause.

Dan offered Trzaskowski close cooperation between the two countries inside the EU.

At the end of the rally, Trzaskowski pledged that he would 'drive' the government to swift reforms. He also said that Poland now needs a 'new moonshot', adding that it was his intention that Poland would overtake the strongest countries in Europe.

After the parliamentary election in October 2023, many voters turned away from the pro-European government led by Donald Tusk because he was unable to implement most of his election promises. The outgoing national-conservative president, Andrzej Duda, has blocked corresponding laws.

According to Warsaw's city authorities, about 140,000 people took part in the Trzaskowski rally. His team put the figure at half a million.

Nawrocki's 'March for Poland', which was intended to be a rival event to Trzaskowski's rally, took place at the same time and just a few hundred metres away.

The motto of the march, which saw Nawrocki, Kaczynski and other PiS politicians marching through the streets of the capital, was 'Poland first'.

Karol Nawrocki is a historian who has been head of Poland's Institute of National Remembrance since July 2021.

DW



Ons Jabeur lost to Magdalena Frech in straight sets

I don’t think they want to treat their daughters like this: Jabeur slams French Open organisers

Paris, France - Tunisian player Ons Jabeur slammed French Open organisers and broadcaster Amazon on Tuesday for sidelining women’s matches from the coveted night sessions, with none featured at the claycourt Grand Slam in almost two years.

The last women’s singles match to be played under the lights of Court Philippe Chatrier was a fourth-round encounter between Aryna Sabalenka and Sloane Stephens on June 4, 2023.

The French Open has one evening match, this year starting not before 2015 local time (1815GMT) and in France is exclusively broadcast by Amazon’s Prime service.

“In Europe, in general, it’s unfortunate for women’s sports in general,” Jabeur said after losing her first-round match at Roland Garros.

“Not for tennis but for in general,” Jabeur said after losing her first-round match at Roland Garros.

“I hope whoever is making the decision, I don’t think they have daughters, because I don’t

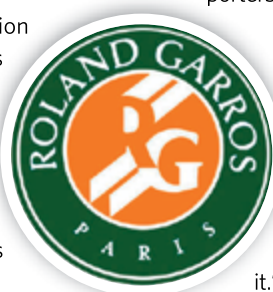
think they want to treat their daughters like this.

“It’s a bit ironic. They don’t show women’s sport, they don’t show women’s tennis, and then they ask the question, yeah, but mostly they (viewers) watch men. Of course they watch men more because you show men more. Everything goes together.”

French federation President Gilles Moretton defended the tournament’s choices, saying on Monday the ‘best match’ was scheduled at night.

“Sometimes ... for the night session, we need to put the better match, we think could be for the spectators,” Moretton told a press conference on Monday.

“Maybe we will have a few, I have no idea, a few female matches on the night sessions. We’ll see. Depends on the schedule, who is playing who, which will be the best match.”



MAGICIAN MONFILS STAGES ESCAPE ACT

Crowd favourite comes back from two sets down to beat Dellien

Paris, France - Gael Monfils thrilled the Roland Garros crowd with his 12th five-set victory at the French Open on Tuesday before revealing that he does not enjoy having to dig himself out of deep holes at Grand Slams.

The 4-6 3-6 6-1 7-6(4) 6-1 opening-round victory over Hugo Dellien was the third time the 38-year-old had come from two sets down to win a match at a major, but he bridled when it was suggested he played better when apparently down and out.

“No, not stronger. I don’t like such a situation,” Monfils told reporters.

“These are not situations that I like. Even less now. I can tell you because I’m not necessarily stronger. I always manage, but that’s it.”

Tuesday’s clash on Court Philippe-Chatrier was a classic of its type, with Monfils looking uncertain to even make it through the opening set after clattering into the courtside wall during the fifth point.

A medical timeout to treat hand, knee and back injuries got him back on court but he still soon found himself two sets down to the Bolivian world num-



Gael Monfils celebrates his win against Hugo Dellien on Tuesday

These are not situations that I like. Even less now. I can tell you because I’m not necessarily stronger.

GAEL MONFILS

ber 90 and it was time to unleash the Monfils magic.

“It’s difficult to express. It’s really magic,” Monfils explained.

“It’s strange, but there’s this point which was incredible for the match, this passing shot. I tried something. I thought I was going to lose the point. I thought this

was over. I hit a winner. I had to dare. That is magic. You go for it and, boom, you succeed.”

Monfils, whose best finish at his home Grand Slam was a run to the semi-finals in 2008, registered his 40th win at Roland Garros with Tuesday’s victory to match Yannick Noah’s record for a Frenchman.

“I won 40 times here?” said Monfils, who next faces fifth seed Jack Draper. “It means I’ve played for a long time, that’s probably the reason why.”

Mensik wins

Jakub Mensik said he tried to compose himself like his mentor Novak Djokovic would to handle the partisan French Open crowd after the talented Czech teenager downed local hope Alexandre Muller in a tense clash on Tuesday.

Mensik sealed a 7-5 6-7(5) 7-5 6-3 victory on a raucous and sometimes hostile Court 14 to book his place in the second round and said he benefited from the experience.

He turned up the heat on a cold day at Roland Garros after winning the third set, celebrating exuberantly before pretending to conduct the crowd as jeers rained down on him, similar to how Djokovic has done in the past.

“It’s such a great experience. Everyone was telling me that at Roland Garros, the atmosphere, the French people are special. I experienced that. I’m glad for that experience,” 19-year-old Mensik told reporters.

Djokovic off to flying start in bid for 25th Slam title

Paris, France - Novak Djokovic braved strong winds and light rain but found little resistance from American Mackenzie McDonald, cruising into the French Open second round on Tuesday to start his bid for a record 25th Grand Slam crown.

The sixth-seed Serbian, fresh from his title win in Geneva last week - the 100th of his career - pummelled McDonald into submission with a dominant 6-3 6-3 6-3 win on the same court he claimed singles gold at the Paris Olympics last year.

“It is great to return here a year later. I don’t know how many future Grand slams I have left in my hands but this is spe-



Novak Djokovic celebrates after his win against Mackenzie McDonald

cial,” Djokovic said in a post-match interview. “I feel good and here even better because I can relive the Olympic Games here. Today it was a solid match throughout all three sets.

“I know I can play at a better level than today but I am satisfied. There is the chance to make further history and that is the biggest motivation to work, improve and be here.”

Djokovic, who looks to have found his form after splitting with coach Andy Murray a few weeks ago, broke the American at 2-2 and, after a 10-minute interruption due to wind and rain, raced into a 5-2 lead.

He was unfazed by another

interruption to close the roof over the Philippe Chatrier court, wrapping up the first set on his serve.

Another break at the start of the second set put the 38-year-old firmly in the driving seat, leaving the 98th-ranked American with a mountain to climb.

Djokovic was equally dominant in the third with another early break, sealing the win on his first match point when McDonald sank a backhand return into the net.

Djokovic is now a record-extending 21-0 in first rounds at the French Open and has not lost a single set in an opener in Paris since 2010.

Olympic champion Zheng marches into third round

Paris, France - China’s Zheng Qinwen powered past Colombia’s Emiliana Arango to reach the third round of the French Open on Wednesday as the Olympic champion again showed her liking for Parisian clay.

The 22-year-old swept to the Olympic title at Roland Garros last August and her 6-2 6-3 victory over Arango underlined why she is being tipped to win her first Grand Slam.

On cool and drizzly Court Suzanne Lenglen, eighth seed Zheng had too much firepower for her tricky 85th-ranked opponent, breaking serve at will during an impressive performance.

It was not all perfect though, with Zheng dropping serve in the opening game of the match and then twice in succession early in the second set as Arango began to extend the rallies and test the patience of her opponent.

But Zheng, the only Chinese player in the second round, remained focused to reach round three at the French Open for the third time in four appearances.

“It’s not easy to play her, she put every ball back,” Zheng said on court.

Unseeded Borges shocks Ruud in second round

Paris, France - Norway’s Casper Ruud, the French Open runner-up in 2022 and 2023, crashed out of the tournament in the second round on Wednesday after losing 2-6 6-4 6-1 6-0 to the unseeded Nuno Borges of Portugal.

Ruud, a clay court specialist, looked to be cruising to an easy win when he bagged the first set 6-2 in 41 minutes.

The 28-year-old Borges, however, roared back, cutting down on errors and sharply increasing his points won on his first and second serve while breaking the seventh seed once.

The world number 41 then steamrolled through the third set courtesy of two back-to-back breaks early on that put him 4-0 up.



Casper Ruud

Lorenzo Musetti continued his renaissance when he eased into the third round with a 6-4 6-0 6-4 win against Daniel Galan

To make matters worse Ruud took a brief medical time-out after the third set with what looked like a calf muscle injury.

He returned but Borges broke him twice more to finish off the 26-year-old world number eight with a bagel.

Borges will play Alexei Popyrin in round three after the Aus-

tralian eased past Alejandro Tabilo of Chile in straight sets.

Earlier, Italian Lorenzo Musetti continued his renaissance when he eased into the third round with a no-nonsense 6-4 6-0 6-4 victory against Colombian lucky loser Daniel Galan.

The eighth-seeded Musetti’s main trouble was intermittent rain on court Simonne Mathieu as he set up a meeting with Argentine Mariano Navone or Reilly Opelka of the U.S.

“It was a solid performance from the beginning until the end. I had some ups and downs during the first and the third set. Definitely I cannot complain about the level that I’m showing,” Musetti, who reached the final at

the Monte Carlo Masters and the last four in Madrid and Rome in the three big claycourt tournaments before Roland Garros, told reporters.

“The conditions today were not easy but I managed to find a way to show my tennis and my game. I think we made a great, great match.” Musetti said things had started clicking into place after the Monte Carlo Masters last month.

“After the final in Monte Carlo there was I think a boost of confidence, of something inside that I needed to have. That was probably the results, the thing that I achieved in Monte Carlo,” said the world number seven, who has never made it past the fourth round at Roland Garros.

OMAN FALL SHORT AFTER BRAVE FIGHT

Hosts USA edge past Duleep Mendis’ men by nine runs in ICC World Cup League 2 at Lauderhill

Muscat - Oman narrowly missed out on a perfect tour finish after falling just nine runs short against hosts USA in a high-oc-tane match of the ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup League 2 tri-series at Central Broward Re-gional Park in Lauderhill, USA, on Tuesday.

Despite the narrow loss, Duleep Mendis’ men can take pride in a hugely successful cam-paign, winning three out of four matches to consolidate their overall third place in the League 2 standings with 24 points — just behind leaders USA (28) and second-placed Netherlands (26). All three teams have played 20 games each.

Scotland are fourth with 20 points from 16 games, followed by Canada (20 from 20), Namibia (14 from 20), UAE (6 from 16), and Nepal (6 from 12).

On Tuesday, chasing a formidable target of 294 after the hosts posted 293/8, Oman staged a spirited fight led by a blistering 72 off 51 balls from all-rounder Sufyan Mehmood. However, USA held their nerve in the closing overs to clinch a nail-biting victory, restricting Oman to 284/9.

Mehmood’s late counterat-tack, featuring five boundaries and three sixes, nearly pulled off a sensational heist. He was well supported by Vinayak Shukla (46 off 37) and Ham-



Sufyan Mehmood hit a blazing 72 off 51 balls, but Oman’s fightback fell tantalisingly short

mad Mirza (50 off 52). But wickets fell at regular intervals, and Mehmood’s dismissal in the 48th over at 273 proved pivotal.

Earlier, USA rode on a steady team performance to post a strong total. Saiteja Mukkamalla top-scored with a fluent 73 off 79 deliveries, while Harmeet Singh was named Player of the Match for his all-round contribu-tion — 33 off 36 balls and a cru-

der Singh (42) provided a solid platform.

The middle-order trio of Mirza, Shukla and Mehmood re-vived the chase, and with 21 needed off the last two overs and two wickets in hand, Oman still had a shot. But Jasdeep Singh (3/64) and Harmeet Singh en-sured USA finished on top.

Although Oman missed out on a perfect four-win record, the team captained by Jatinder, re-

Despite the narrow loss, Oman can take pride in a hugely successful campaign, winning three out of four matches to consolidate their overall third place in the League 2 standings with 24 points

cial bowling spell of 3/69.

Key contributions also came from openers Smit Patel (41) and Shayan Jahangir (37), with San-jay Krishnamurthi providing a late flourish through a rapid un-beaten 40 off 27 balls.

Oman’s bowlers shared the workload, with Mehmood (3/58), Aamir Kaleem (2/43), and Shakeel Ahmed (2/52) among the wickets. Despite dis-ciplined efforts, the USA batters paced their innings well, accel-erating at the death to push the total just beyond reach.

In response, Oman lost Aamir Kaleem early but skipper Jatin-

turn home with their heads held high. The tour was a strong statement of their consistency and growing strength in the 50-over format.

BRIEF SCORES

USA 293/8 (Smit Patel 41, Shayan Jahangir 37, Saiteja Mukkamalla 73, Sanjay Krishna-murthi 40*, Harmeet Singh 33; Sufyan Mehmood 3/58, Shakeel Ahmed 2/52, Aamir Kaleem 2/43) beat Oman 284/9 (Jatin-der Singh 42, Hammad Mirza 50, Vinayak Shukla 46, Sufyan Mehmood 72; Jasdeep Singh 3/64, Harmeet Singh 3/69).

Inter to wear golden yellow in Champions League final against PSG

Milan, Italy - Inter Milan will dress for the occasion by wearing their third, golden yellow kit in Saturday’s Champions League final when they face Paris St Ger-main in Munich.

Inter have played in six Champions League/Euro-pean Cup finals to date, the first in 1964, and have never used their third kit in the showpiece match so far.

Since the Parisians are designated as the home team in the final, they will



Inter Milan have won both the matches they played in yellow, their third jersey, this season

wear their first-choice kit - navy blue shorts and shirts with a white and red stripe in the centre - so Inter can-not play in their classic black and blue striped jerseys.

The Italians, however, did not opt for their second strip -white shirts with blue de-tails - choosing to wear the third kit instead, a golden yellow shirt with black de-tails and black shorts.



Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez

Messi partners friend Suarez in Uruguayan club venture

Florida, US - From their glory days at Barcelona to reuniting at Inter Miami, Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez have now brought their enduring partnership into a new chapter, co-founding De-portivo LSM, a club set to com-pete in professional Uruguayan football.

Formerly known as Deportivo LS, the club was founded by Suarez in 2018 in Uruguay’s Ciu-dad de la Costa with a focus on developing local talent and giving back to the community through job opportunities and social ini-tiatives.

On Tuesday, Suarez an-nounced the rebranding of his club, adding an ‘M’ in honour of the Argentine captain, who has officially joined the project as a partner.

The team are now set to take their next step by entering pro-fessional competition in the

Uruguayan fourth division.

“Deportivo LS, a family pro-ject, is a family dream that started in 2018. We have grown a lot with more than three thou-sand members and infrastruc-ture,” Suarez said in a video on his Instagram account.

“That’s why I made the de-cision for Deportivo LS to be part of the AUF (Uruguayan FA) structure, both at youth and pro-fessional level.

“This project is the perfect place to continue sharing our vi-sion of football. So I invited my friend to join Deportivo LSM’s professional project,” added the 38-year-old striker, referring to Messi.

According to media reports, the South American pair will jointly oversee operations while appointing a sports manager with experience in the local foot-ball scene.

Judge in Maradona’s homicide trial stands down amid scandal

Buenos Aires, Argentina -

One of the three Argentine judges presiding in the trial of seven members of Diego Maradona’s medical team charged with negligent homicide in the soccer star’s 2020 death stepped down from the case on Tuesday amid accusations of ethical breaches, leaving the future of the proceed-ings uncertain.

Judge Julieta Makintach stood down from the case after video surfaced in re-cent days showing her ap-parently being interviewed by a camera crew as part of a documentary in the cor-ridors of the Buenos Aires courthouse and in her of-fice. Court rules forbid such interviews involving a judge mid-trial.

Maradona’s trial was ad-journed until Thursday to decide next steps.

The trial began on March 11 in the South American country where the World Cup winner is a revered fig-ure. The defendants have denied the charges of “sim-ple homicide with eventual intent” in Maradona’s treat-ment. If convicted, they could face prison sentences of between eight and 25 years.

“This is a judicial tragedy,” Fernando Bur-lando, a lawyer for Maradona’s eldest daugh-ters, Dalma and Gianinna, told reporters on Tuesday, referring to the judge’s be-havior.

Yamal extends Barca contract until 2031

Barcelona, Spain - Barcelona’s teenage sensation Lamine Yamal has signed a contract extension that will keep him at the Spanish champions until 2031, the club announced on Tuesday.

The 17-year-old forward, whose deal was due to expire in 2026, enjoyed a stellar season, helping Barca win LaLiga and the Copa del Rey, with 18 goals and 25 assists in 55 matches.

Local media have reported that the exciting Spanish interna-tional could become the Barcelona squad’s highest-paid player if he meets certain perfor-mance-related clauses.

Yamal was earning a base salary last season of around 3m a year but that’s set to rise mas-sively with his new deal which is said to come into effect now and now when he turns 18 this sum-mer.

The teenager’s new base salary is now set at around 30m a year before tax, but he does have the potential to earn more



Lamine Yamal could become Barcelona’s highest-paid player if he meets certain performance-related clauses

than that through “performance-related bonuses and signing bonuses.”

Media reports suggest that Yamal’s total salary (including all bonuses and signing-on extras)

will be around 40m a year be-fore tax which will indeed make him Barca’s top earner.

Robert Lewandowski is cur-rently the highest-paid player in the squad and will earn around

36m next season as he goes into the last year of his contract.

Having displayed such enter-taining football this season, Yamal is a leading contender for this year’s Ballon d’Or.

Arsenal should have won more under Arteta: Henry

London, England - Arsenal should have some silverware to show for their efforts over the past three seasons, according to the club’s record goalscorer and former captain Thierry Henry.

Former midfielder Mikel Arteta has turned Arsenal back into a force since taking charge in 2019 but has delivered just one major trophy during his reign, the FA Cup in 2020.

Arsenal have finished as Pre-mier League runners-up three times in succession, twice push-ing Manchester City hard but this time finishing a distant sec-ond to Liverpool.

They exited the Champions League semi-finals, having reached the quarter-finals the season before, and were



Thierry Henry (L) with Mikel Arteta

knocked out in the semi-finals of the League Cup.

“I’m not saying that I’m disap-pointed with Arsenal, but it’s normal that people are raising

questions now about what the team is doing,” Henry, 47, told the Stick to Football podcast.

“I understand that at the very beginning you arrive and it’s not

your team. You need at the very least three or four transfer win-dows to change everything that you want to.

“It takes time and you have to give a manager time to be able to implement what he wants to do. For the last three years Arse-nal have been in a situation where they should have at least brought one cup or (reached) a final.”

Arsenal’s north London rivals Tottenham Hotspur ended their 17-year wait for a trophy by win-ning the Europa League last week, while Newcastle United snapped a decades-long drought by winning the League Cup. Crystal Palace won the first major trophy in their history by triumphing in the FA Cup.

JITESH UNLEASHED

Stand-in captain’s stunning knock floors Lucknow as Bengaluru make Qualifier 1

Lucknow, India - Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) stormed into Qualifier 1 of IPL 2025 as stand-in captain Jitesh Sharma’s 85 not out off 33 balls helped them pull off the third-highest successful chase in the tournament’s history.

Rishabh Pant’s unbeaten 118 off 61 balls had powered Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) to 227 for 3, but RCB chased it down with eight balls and six wickets to spare. They will now face table-toppers Punjab Kings (PBKS) in New Chandigarh on Thursday.

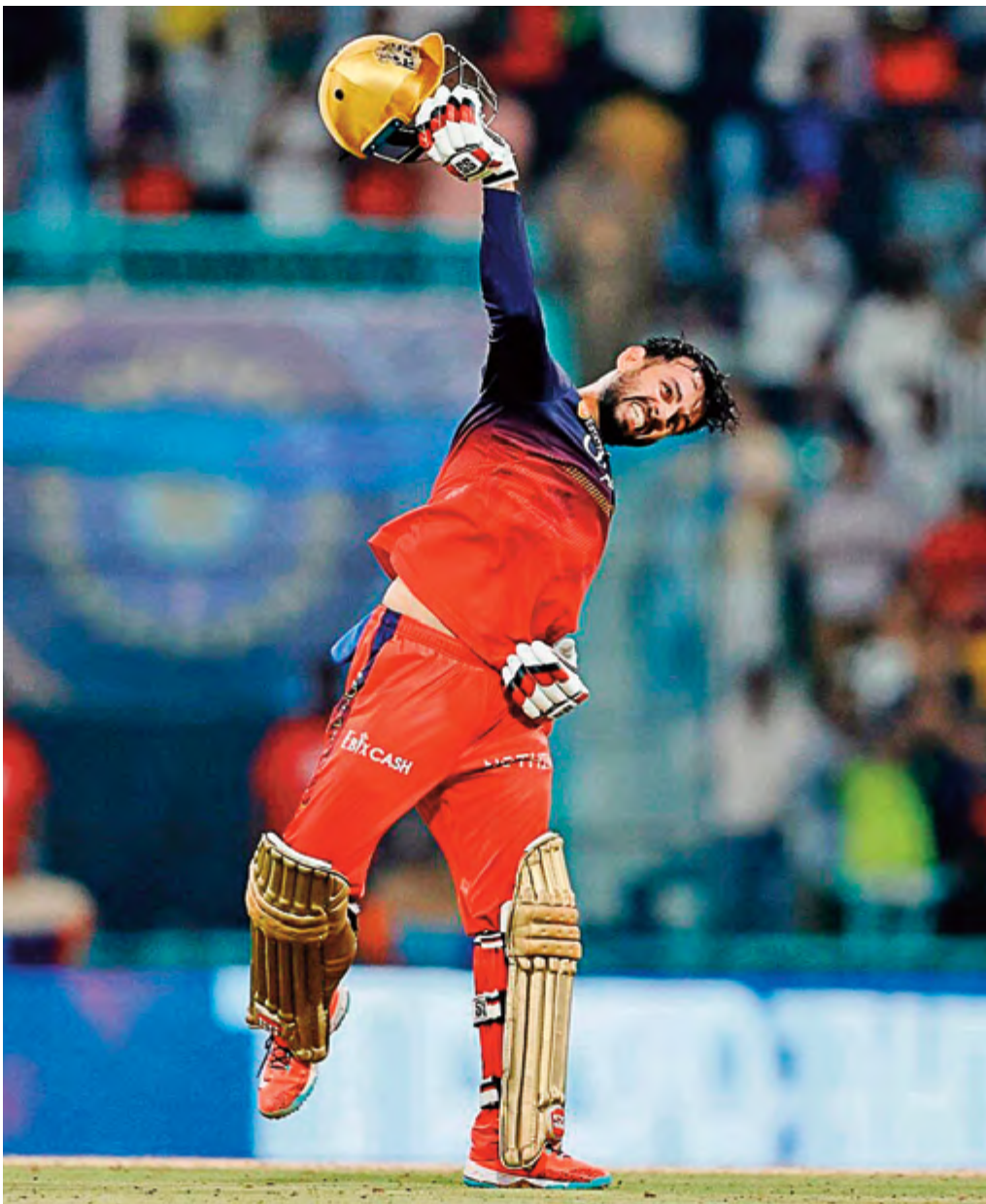
Virat Kohli and Phil Salt gave RCB a start of 61 in 5.4 overs. Salt began the first over with a four; Kohli ended it with a four. Salt began the second over with a four; Kohli ended it with four fours. After four overs, RCB had raced to 50 for no loss. Akash Singh broke through with Salt’s wicket, but Kohli carried on. He chipped Shahbaz Ahmed over his head for a four before hitting Akash on the up through the covers to raise his fifty off 27 balls.

Having conceded 22 in his first over, Will O’Rourke returned

to bowl the eighth over of the innings. Rajat Patidar, who was in as Impact Player once again, picked him over deep square-leg for a six. Two balls later, Kohli hit him over extra cover for four. But O’Rourke had the last laugh as Patidar slashed his fifth ball straight to Abdul Samad at backward point. Off the next, he had Liam Livingstone lbw with a full delivery. Kohli fell soon after his fifty, slicing Avesh Khan to long-off.

Jitesh started with a boundary off the first ball, but Akash conceded only seven in the 13th over to increase RCB’s troubles - they needed 89 from seven. Mayank Agarwal had got off to a brisk start and was on 27 off 15 at that point. But Jitesh decided to take matters into his own hands and hit O’Rourke for a six and a four in a 17-run over.

When Shahbaz came on for the 15th over, Jitesh took him apart. He hit him for two fours and a six before Agarwal ended the over with a boundary off his own. That over went for 21 and tilted the balance in RCB’s favour. Now they needed only 51



Jitesh Sharma celebrates after leading Royal Challengers Bengaluru to victory against Lucknow Super Giants

from five overs.

Jitesh hit two more fours off Avesh in the next before having a slice of luck. With 39 required from four overs, he tried a reverse sweep off Digvesh Rathi only to be caught at backward point. It was a low catch and the on-field umpires wanted the TV umpire to have a look. But even before that, the TV umpire found Rathi’s back foot touching the return crease. Jitesh heaved the free hit that followed over deep

last three overs, Jitesh smashed O’Rourke for two fours and two sixes and then completed the formalities with a slog-swept six off Ayush Badoni in the penultimate over.

Earlier, RCB opted to bowl after winning the toss but their decision not to bowl Bhuvneshwar Kumar until the fifth over was baffling, especially after Nuwan Thushara had found swing in the opening over and had shattered Matthew Breet-

Rishabh Pant’s unbeaten 118 off 61 balls had powered Lucknow Super Giants to 227 for 3, but RCB chased it down with eight balls and six wickets to spare. They will now face Punjab Kings on Thursday

midwicket to bring up his fifty off 22 balls. It was his first-ever IPL fifty.

The drama didn’t end there. As Rathi ran in for the last ball of the over, he aborted and broke the stumps at the non-striker’s end. Jitesh was out of his crease at that point. However, the TV umpire ruled it not out, saying Rathi had completed his “delivery stride” before effecting the run out. In the meantime, Pant had withdrawn the appeal.

With 28 required from the

zke’s off stump with an awayswinging, low full toss in the third. This was the first time since 2015 that Bhuvneshwar did not share the new ball in an IPL game. By the time he came on, the swing had died.

Batting at No. 3, Pant played a scintillating knock that featured 11 fours, eight sixes and every Pant idiosyncrasy, including a one-handed six, a sideways tumble after failing to reach a wide delivery, and a frontflip to celebrate his hundred.

Pant fined INR 30 lakh for third slow over-rate offence

Lucknow, India - Rishabh Pant, the Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) captain, has been fined for his team’s slow over-rate during Tuesday’s IPL 2025 match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) held in Lucknow.

As it was LSG third offence of the season - the first and second were on April 5 and April 26 respectively - under the IPL’s code of conduct relating to over-rate offences, Pant was fined INR 30 lakh. The other members of the playing XII were each fined either INR 12 lakh or 50% of their respective match fees, whichever is lower.

Despite this being Pant’s third offence, he will not be suspended, as was the case till IPL 2024. The rule was

amended ahead of IPL 2025, although Mumbai Indians (MI) captain Hardik Pandya missed his team’s season opener because his suspension had carried forward from last season.

On Tuesday, Pant’s unbeaten 118 off 61 balls had steered LSG to 227 for 3 after they were asked to bat, but RCB chased it down with eight balls and six wickets to spare, thanks to Virat Kohli’s 54 and Jitesh Sharma’s unbeaten 85.

LSG finished the season with six wins and 12 points from 14 games and were seventh on the ten-team points table. RCB, meanwhile, have qualified for Qualifier 1 with 19 points from the league phase.

We haven’t played ‘40 overs of good cricket’

Lucknow, India - Rishabh Pant was focused on capitalising on his good start, which he hadn’t been able to do successfully in the previous matches in IPL 2025, on his way to 118 not out off 61 balls against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in the last league match of the season. But, despite putting up 227, Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) went on to lose the match, which Pant said was a result of them not being able to play “40 overs of good cricket”.

“Definitely, I was feeling well with each and every match”, Pant said on the broadcast after the match. “But sometimes, it just doesn’t come off. But today, I made sure that if I’m starting well, I should make a big one, like all the experienced players do; learning from the best always - whenever you get a start, try to make it [as] big as possible.”

Pant has had an underwhelming season with the bat,



Rishabh Pant hit eight sixes and 11 fours in his 61-ball 118, but still ended up on the losing side

coming into the game with just 151 runs in 12 innings. He said he made a conscious choice to hit straight, something he was unable to do earlier in the season.

“I was trying to play the field,

how they were going to bowl on this wicket, so definitely that [hitting straight] was something I kept in mind,” he said. “Just playing through the line, just looking for the gaps, kept it very

simple, and played every ball with the same intensity throughout the innings.”

LSG’s inexperienced bowling attack was taken down, with Will O’Rourke and Shahbaz

Ahmed going for 113 runs in seven overs. Unforced errors in the field and a back-foot no-ball from Digvesh Rathi, which offered a life to Player-of-the-Match Jitesh Sharma, all added up and took away the advantage that LSG carried into the chase.

“Eventually, you have to play 40 overs of good cricket, 20 overs will definitely not save you in a T20 game, and that’s been our story,” Pant said. “There were lot of injury concerns before the tournament, you can see that that is something that hurt us going through the season.”

LSG finished seventh on the points table with six wins in 14 games. Pant did note positives with the ball but conceded that they let games slip.

“There have been some special bowling performances also,” he said. “Digvesh Rathi is one of them, Avesh [Khan] bowled some crucial overs. Akash Singh and Akash Deep also did.”

Iyer’s revived Punjab take on high-flying Bengaluru in playoff showdown

Mohali, India - Shreyas Iyer’s inspiring leadership will face its toughest test yet when Punjab Kings host an equally upbeat Royal Challengers Bengaluru in Qualifier 1 of the Indian Premier League here on Thursday.

Having earned the cushion of a top-two finish, one can expect both teams to have a no holds barred approach knowing they will get another shot at reaching the final even if they come up short on the opening night of the play-offs.

Punjab Kings find themselves in unfamiliar territory having made the play-offs for the first time since 2014 but they are not carrying the baggage of the past in the Iyer-Ricky Ponting (head

coach) era.

RCB, on the other hand, are way too familiar with heartbreaks of the knock-out stages and like every season, are hoping to end their title drought. In their own words, the job is only half done for both title contenders.

The Iyer-Ponting partnership has resulted in a stellar turnaround for Punjab Kings, who have finally cracked the consistency code after more than a decade of under-performance.

The combination has managed to get the best out of the players making them a well-oiled unit.

The opening duo of Prabhsimran Singh and rookie Priyansh Arya has laid the platform for the



Punjab Kings are a transformed side under the leadership of Shreyas Iyer

TODAY’S MATCH

QUALIFIER 1

6 PM



PUNJAB KINGS

VS

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE

likes of Iyer and Josh Inglis to build.

Finisher Shashank Singh continues to improve his game with each passing season and more recently, Australian import Mar-

cus Stoinis finding his range with the bat makes the batting look more formidable.

The concerns lie in the bowling department, especially after the departure of South African Marco Jansen, who has returned home for national duty.

Jansen bowled the crucial overs both in the powerplay and death and the team will certainly miss him on Thursday night. Kyle Jamieson showed promise in his debut for the franchise but will need to bowl better upfront to make an impact. Batting all-rounder Azmatullah Omarzai could take Jansen’s spot.

Leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal, who missed the last two games due to a finger injury, is

expected to return for the big game and bowl alongside the ever accurate Harpreet Brar.

Arshdeep Singh has been the standout pacer for his longtime franchise, delivering in all phases of the game.

RCB too had injury concerns going into the business end of the tournament but they have been allayed to a good extent.

Pacer Josh Hazlewood is expected to regain full fitness and Tim David too would be available for selection, lending more balance to the side. RCB have been branded as a top heavy outfit for years but that appears to be changing with the likes of Jitesh Sharma realising their potential in the middle-order.



14

GET YOUR GOAT
Spicy, succulent, simply yum... enjoy goat delicacies like they're best relished



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IN TOWN
Landmark flagpole inauguration at Al Khuwayr and Indian Science Forum



16

ENTERTAINMENT
A peek into tinsel town, in Hollywood and Bollywood

'AKS' IN OSAKA

Oman’s film industry gets a global boost with the launch of ‘Aks’ - a major milestone in the evolution of Omani cinema and a strategic step to promote independent productions - in Osaka

Celluloid platform

Mohammed Taha

In a landmark move to support the sultanate’s cultural and creative industries, Omani director Fahad Ramadan al Maimani has launched ‘Aks’, the first Gulf platform dedicated exclusively to showcasing Omani films. The announcement was made on May 23, 2025, at the Omani Pavilion during Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan.

Aks is a pioneering initiative that aims to strengthen Oman’s presence on the regional and global cultural map. More than just a digital platform, it represents a promising cultural project that heralds a new era for independent digital filmmaking in the region.

Speaking to Muscat Daily from Japan, Maimani described Aks as an independent cultural and cinematic platform created to stimulate the artistic movement in Oman and enhance the visibility of independent cinema. The platform, he explained, provides a modern digital space where filmmakers can share their stories with both, local and international, audiences.

Maimani said he deliberately chose to unveil Aks during Expo 2025 in Osaka because of the event’s global scale and multicultural reach.

“Expo 2025 brings together countries and cultures from across the world under one roof. It’s the perfect stage to announce a platform like Aks which is built on the values of cultural dialogue, creativity, and innovation,” he said. “By launching at the Expo, we wanted to signal that Omani cinema is ready to step onto the world stage.”

He further highlighted that Aks was developed to overcome persistent challenges faced by independent filmmakers, chief among them weak distribution networks and limited audience access.

He emphasised that Aks is part of a broader global movement that positions culture not only as a form of soft power but also as an economic opportunity and a developmental responsibility.

“The platform’s vision goes beyond traditional exhibition,” he added. “It seeks to redefine the relationship between audiences and cinema, between ideas and sound, and between image and belonging.”

Explaining the name, Maimani said Aks is inspired by the visual language of photography and filmmaking, drawing from icons and symbols commonly found in cameras, editing software, and film equipment. This visual connection, he noted, gives the platform a strong identity while evoking a sense of creativity and belonging in the audiovisual space.

FAHAD RAMADAN AL MAIMANI

Currently, Aks features a digital library with a curated selection of short narrative and documentary films, including White Gold, Never Dive Alone, ROPE, Loss, The Art of Life, Rhythm, Athar Fatima, and Color.

Maimani revealed that the platform will soon expand with the launch of a smart application that promises a unique and immersive viewing experience. The app - also named Aks - will be available on Apple Store and Google Play before the end of the year, offering audiences in Oman and beyond easy access to the country’s growing body of cinematic work.

He described the launch of Aks as a major milestone in the evolution of Omani cinema and a strategic step toward enabling independent productions to assume a more influential role in both the Gulf and global cultural arenas. The platform, he said, seeks to empower filmmakers from all of Oman’s governorates while building a comprehensive digital archive of local film productions.

In addition to promoting Omani voices, Aks is also designed to support the creative economy and attract investment into the sultanate’s burgeoning film industry.

(Audiences can access the platform and explore its growing collection of Omani films by visiting: www.aksoman.om)

cook-up



Indian Hariyali Goat Chops

- Ingredients
- 8-10 meaty goat ribs

2tbsp yoghurt

4-6 green chillies

1 cup coriander leaves

½ cup mint leaves

2tsp ginger garlic paste

Juice of half lemon

2tsp garam masala

½ tsp turmeric powder

1tsp salt

1tsp crushed black pepper

2tbsp oil

Method

Blend all the marination ingredients, except oil and coat the goat ribs well on all sides with the marinade. Place in a polythene bag, pour in the remaining marinade and let it sit in the refrigerator for two hours.
To cook remove the marinated ribs, drizzle oil, and cook on high flame on a grilling pan or charcoal grill for 8-10 minutes on each side, until corners get charred. You can also cook in an air-fryer for 15-20 minutes till well done. Serve piping hot with lemon wedges.



Get your goat

It's that time of the year to relish goat (mutton) in its best form - as a spicy curry, flavoured with aromatic spices and yoghurt, and served on a bed of steamed rice

Lahori Goat Qorma

- Ingredients
- 750g goat meat

¾ cup oil

2 medium onions - sliced

4tbsp ginger-garlic paste

1 cup yogurt - whipped

½ tsp kewra essence

1¼ cup water

2 pieces mace - crushed

¼ piece nutmeg - grated

Whole spices

6 whole cloves

5 green cardamom

4cm piece cinnamon stick

10 black peppercorns

2 black cardamoms

1tsp cumin seeds

Powdered Spices

2 tbsp coriander powder

2½tsp red chilli powder

½tsp turmeric powder

1½tsp kosher salt

For garnish

2cm piece ginger - julienned

¼tsp garam masala powder

Method

In a mortar and pestle, add mace and nutmeg and crush it to a powder. Take a large pot and heat oil. Add onions and sauté it until it's brown. Remove in a bowl and set aside. Now, to the oil, add whole spices and mix. Then add the ginger and garlic paste and let it cook for 30 seconds. Add the meat and mix for 5 minutes, followed by yogurt and again mix well for 2 minutes. Then close the lid and cook on slow fire for 30 minutes. Then add salt with powdered spices, except Garam Masala powder. Next add crushed mace and nutmeg and let it cook for 5 minutes.
Add some water for gravy. Then take the browned onion and crush it with hands, sprinkle it over the Qorma, and let it cook for 2 minutes. Add kewra essence and give it a mix. Cover the pot with aluminium foil and let it cook for 10-15 minutes on low flame. Open the lid and sprinkle some garam masala powder and julienned ginger.

Jamaican Goat Curry

- Ingredients
- 1 kg goat meat

1 inch ginger - grated

2-3 cloves garlic – grated

½ cup yogurt

1½tbsp cumin powder

1tbsp red chilli powder

2tsp turmeric powder

Salt to taste

2tbsp oil or ghee

1 large onion - sliced

1tsp garam masala

ger, garlic, cumin powder, chilli powder, salt, and turmeric powder, and mix well. Add the goat meat to this, mix well and let it marinate for at least 30 minutes.
Heat ghee/oil in a large pot and add the sliced onions. Fry till lightly golden. Next, add the marinated meat and 1½ cup of water. Mix well and cover with lid. Cook for 1 hour on slow fire or pressure cook for 20 minutes. Garnish with garam masala and mix well.



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take a break

IN TOWN

Landmark flagpole



A special ceremony was held to inaugurate the tallest flagpole in Oman at the ministries district last Friday

Photos: V K Shafier

Indian Science Forum



'Indian Science Forum' was held at the National University of Science and Technology last weekend



Photos: V K Shafier

BOGGLER

L	A	D	A
E	P	O	F
E	O	R	R
S	O	C	B

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

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

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

TRIVIA QUIZ - FOR TEENS

1. Which is the longest commercial aircraft in the world?



- A. Airbus A340-600
- B. Airbus A350-1000
- C. Boeing 747-8
- D. Boeing 777-300

2. This fermented soybean dish is a staple for most Japanese people...

- A. Natto
- B. Tempura
- C. Sushi
- D. Yakitori

3. What is the current conversion of one Omani rial against the US dollar?

- A. 2.6
- B. 3.5
- C. 2.2
- D. 3.6

Answers
3. A
2. A
1. C

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

After all the crazy activity of the last few days, everything starts to come together for you. You're probably heaving a sigh of relief, though you're not usually crazy about downtime. Today's triumph should taste even sweeter after the tough love you've been dealing with lately. You know that whatever you learn through troubles serves you best in the long run.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Sharing resources, including ideas and emotional strength, can help you make further progress (more than you thought possible) at a time like this. Call on your friends and pool your thoughts, or just ask for their opinions on your latest plans and projects. It's an especially great plan if you've been confused about some personal issue for a while now.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

With so much going on right now, the best and easiest thing for you to do is to stay put. No matter how much you want to snap into action and let loose with a flurry of phone calls and messages, try to restrain yourself. Slow down and spend the day meditating or maybe going for a long walk and thinking deep thoughts.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

You can see beyond seeming coincidences and synchronicities straight to the true meaning of today's events. Pay close attention to what your instincts are telling you, especially when they come from your dreams. New information is coming your way from all directions, but not from traditionally reliable sources. Open your mind even further and learn to follow your gut.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Your flair for the dramatic should come in handy today when it comes to telling your story and getting people to see their common interests. You've got something special that makes your words just a bit more compelling than what people are used to hearing. In fact, you're having so much fun that you want to find a way to keep it up.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

You and someone close are working at cross-purposes today. You know exactly how you want them to be, and it's mighty frustrating that they seem to be falling short. On the other hand, they just think you're more critical than caring whenever the two of you manage to see each other. Give a little.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

A surprising new opportunity pops up and lets you re-think your current surroundings. It may turn your schedule upside down, but if you embrace the change as a means to toss out old habits, you should make serious progress. It's easy to just say you don't have time to think things through, but why not take this chance to prove yourself?



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Creativity is foremost in your heart and soul right now, so make sure you carve out some time to spend on your own. Give in to the impulse to doodle, take a long walk, indulge in some yoga, or just space out, whatever it takes to refresh your perspective and stimulate the right side of your brain! You're quite good at making all the pieces come together in some new, cool way.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Have some faith that larger forces are at work in your life. It might be hard for you to place your trust in the Universe when it feels like you need to go for something (or someone) more tangible, but be assured that it's all coming together behind the scenes. The right answer should appear at just the right time.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

You may question how you can best help the people around you today, but don't give in to despair. You always look for ways to benefit those less fortunate, whether you want to contribute to your community in a new way or just take your current involvement up a notch. Look into all of your options so that you can make a real difference.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Someone close poses an offbeat but fascinating question, and you want to follow that detour for as long as you can. It's not really a problem as long as you make sure that all your tasks and duties for the day are cleared away first. If so, feel free to wander as far as your feet can take you. You should learn far more than you would have otherwise.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Change may not come easily to you (or to anyone, really), but on days like today you're so inspired that shifts in attitude and circumstances all seem to flow with childlike ease. You're all about discovery and transformation as you explore your mind and your life. overhaul? Whatever requires a makeover, you can fix it up now.

entertainment

Mukul Dev passes away at 54

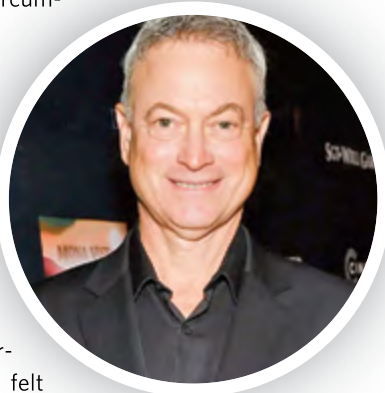


Bollywood actor Mukul Dev passed away last Friday at just 54. It was reported that he died due to health complications after a week-long illness. It was said that he was admitted to a hospital last week and was undergoing treatment in the ICU. Meanwhile, a video of him is becoming increasingly viral on social media, in which it is difficult to recognise Mukul - he is seen running in a park, seemingly overweight, his hair long, and wearing a black kurta. Surprised fans say he looked very stressed.

GARY SINISE OPEN TO HOLLYWOOD COMEBACK

Gary Sinise would make a Hollywood comeback — if the opportunity was right. During an interview with Fox News Digital, the actor said that he would return to the film and television business if the circumstances aligned.

"I can't leave home for the amount of time that I used to go and shoot a movie or something like that, but if the right thing came along — under the right circumstances and it felt right and the timing was good and it didn't take me away from home too much — I would absolutely consider it," Sinise said.



HOLLYWOOD FILMS BREATHE THE FRESH LIFE INTO INDIAN BOX OFFICE

Hollywood has revitalised the Indian box office after a slow period, with films like *Mission Impossible*, *Final Destination*, and *Lilo & Stitch* collectively earning Rs124.79 crore. While the success of these blockbusters is being attributed to loyal fan bases, compelling scripts, and the appeal of final chapters; Bollywood's performance continues to remain disappointing. In comparison, barring outliers like *Chhaava* - which had an extended run after releasing on February 14 to collect Rs716.6 crore - and *Raid 2* (Rs163.2 crore), most Hindi films have flopped or underperformed at the box office in the past two months, data from box office research firm Sacnilk showed.



MILEY REVEALS HOW SHE CAUGHT AN INFECTION ON SETS

Miley Cyrus recently detailed how a glamorous music video shoot on the Hollywood Walk of Fame led her to the hospital. The 'Wrecking Ball' singer shared she had been rolling around on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for her music video. "I caught something," she remarked. "My leg began to disintegrate... around the kneecap area. And then the doctor goes, 'Do you have any idea why you would have such a brutal infection on your kneecap?'" Cyrus pointed out the fact that her doctor had probably seen the worst in a hospital. However, she said the surgeon was completely grossed out by her infection. "I had to tell him," she said. "To have a surgeon look at you and say, 'Yuck...' They open up cadavers. They see inside the guts of humans and they're looking at me, telling me I'm disgusting. And they do brain operations!"



HBO'S 'HARRY POTTER' TV SERIES CASTS NEW KIDS

The young cast for the upcoming *Harry Potter* television series has been revealed by HBO and includes a trio of newcomers. Dominic McLaughlin plays Harry, Arabella Stanton takes on the role of Hermione Granger, and Alastair Stout is Ron Weasley, red hair and all. The long-awaited show is expected to begin production this summer. No release date has been announced.



Britney TO SOON LAUNCH HER JEWELLERY LINE

Britney Spears is one step closer to debuting her first-ever jewellery line because TMZ has learned she's officially filed a trademark for the brand. Britney's team filed the official paperwork with the US Patent and Trademark Office on Tuesday. The documents say the filing has met all the minimum require-

ments and is now awaiting review. The main motivation behind securing the trademark was to prevent others from jumping on the name before Britney could bring her own vision to life. We're told while there's no official launch date just yet, Britney and her team are hoping the line will be ready to launch soon.



BOLLYWOOD MOVIE REVIEW:
BHUL CHUK MAAF
Genre: Family drama
Starring: Rajkummar Rao, Wamika Gabbi

Bhul Chuk Maaf is a Hindi language fantasy romantic comedy film written and directed by Karan Sharma, and produced by Dinesh Vijan under Maddock Films, in association with Amazon MGM Studios in its Indian film debut. The story is set in Varanasi and shows two lovers Titli Mishra and



Ranjan Tiwari who are eager to marry but Titli's father Brijmohan has a condition for Ranjan to have a government job to marry Titli. In pursuit of this, Ranjan makes a vow to do a good deed if he gets a government job and gets a job illegally. On the eve of his wedding, Ranjan wakes up to find that he is living the same day again and is stuck in a time-loop. Later, it's revealed that this is because of his unfulfilled vow and Ranjan realises that he must do a good deed in order to stop the time loop. In his unsuccessful attempts to do good he finally gives up on life but things take a different turn. While the film ambitiously attempts to weave in commentary on societal pressure, youth unemploy-

ment, and the cultural fixation on government jobs, these themes seem to fall flat due to a loose script. What begins as a romantic roller-coaster, crash-lands as a confusing tale with no clear message. Rajkummar and Wamiqa, who have a string of creditable work behind them have surprisingly failed to deliver. Rajkummar's constant irritable nature seems inexplicable while the film itself comes across as loud, peppered with wry humour that doesn't quite descend well with audiences. If you have a good impression of Rajkummar till now, let it stay. You can, indeed, skip this damp squib.

Rating ★★☆☆☆

The background of the advertisement is a photograph of a dining table. It features several dark, rustic-style ceramic plates and bowls. Two gold-colored utensils, a butter knife and a spoon, are placed on one of the plates. A large white circle is superimposed on the upper half of the image, containing the brand name and sale information.

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