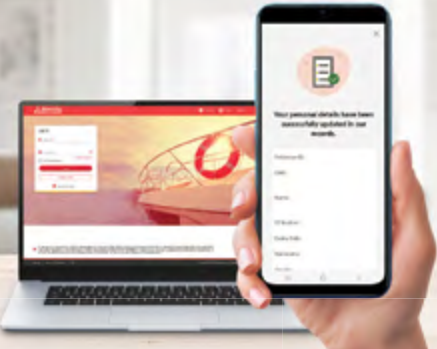




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Oman Post releases commemorative piece honouring Al Busaid dynasty

Oman Post has unveiled a special art piece to commemorate the 280th anniversary of the Al Busaid dynasty's reign. In a statement, Oman Post said the artwork features seven Al Busaid sultans standing side by side in a symbolic scene that bridges Oman's rich past with its present. Set against the backdrop of Old Muscat, the piece highlights iconic landmarks such as Al Jalali and Al Mirani forts, along with a traditional dhow - symbols of the sultanate's maritime legacy and historical influence across the Indian Ocean. A limited number of prints are available for purchase at the Oman Post Stamps & Collectibles shop in Opera Galleria

Oman 4th among developing economies in digital FDI

Our Correspondent Muscat

Oman ranked fourth globally among developing economies in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) for greenfield projects in information and communications technology infrastructure between 2020 and 2024, according to the *World Investment Report 2025* released by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

The report highlights Oman's growing role as a regional hub for digital infrastructure, innovation and emerging technologies. The sultanate's ranking reflects its success in attracting substantial digital-related investment, surpassing several advanced economies.

Government Communication Centre stated that Oman attracted foreign investment worth US\$1.7bn in digital infrastructure

Oman attracted foreign investment worth US\$1.7bn in digital infrastructure projects between 2020 and 2024, according to the World Investment Report 2025

projects during this period. The volume of new investments in the digital economy nearly tripled, driven by implementation of the National Digital Economy Programme and broader national efforts to transform Oman into a knowledge-based economy.

Mexico tops the list in the category with US\$5.2bn in investment, followed by

Nigeria (US\$4.3bn), Malaysia (US\$2.2bn), and Brazil (US\$1.6bn) ranked fifth.

The achievement underscores the sultanate's strategic vision under Oman Vision 2040 to diversify the economy and enhance its attractiveness as a destination for technology-driven investment. It also reflects the effectiveness of national policies

aimed at improving digital readiness and fostering a competitive, innovation-led investment environment.

In 2024, Oman launched the National Programme for Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Digital Technologies, which will run through to 2026. The programme aims to boost the ICT sector's role in the economy and

align national capabilities with global advancements in AI.

Key components of the programme include introduction of AI and data analysis in school curricula to build essential digital skills among youth, and development of a national open data platform to support entrepreneurs, investors and policy-makers.

A national research centre for AI will also be established to advance academic and scientific research, while an AI studio will offer sector-specific solutions for professionals and institutions.

The programme targets a rise in Oman's position in the global Government Readiness Index for AI and aims to increase the digital economy's contribution to GDP from 2% in 2021 to 10% by 2040. These efforts underline Oman's commitment to building a resilient, tech-driven economy.

Over 1,300 complaints filed in 2024 for financial violations

Our Correspondent Muscat

State Audit Institution (SAI) registered 1,378 public complaints and reports in 2024 concerning financial and administrative violations, abuse of authority and breaches in public tendering processes. According to its annual report, 90% of these were reviewed and acted upon, reflecting growing public engagement and SAI's oversight capabilities.

The findings were presented by Sheikh Ghosn Hilal al Alawi, Chairman of SAI, to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq. Based on the Basic Law of the State and the State Audit Law, the report was also submitted to the Council of Ministers, the State Council and Majlis A'Shura.

The report highlights SAI's efforts to uphold transparency, combat corruption and ensure the integrity of public finance. In 2024, SAI conducted 225 oversight missions, resulting in 172 formal reports. These were sent to relevant ministries and government bodies, many of which made recommendations or took corrective steps. Several cases involving suspected criminal violations were referred to the Public Prosecution.

The SAI report documents financial mismanagement and administrative shortcomings across a range of sectors. These include failures in public procurement, inefficiencies in project execution and non-compliance with financial regulations. Key areas audited include tax assessment and collection, public investments, and spending in sectors such as energy, water, environment, food security, aviation and sanitation.

The audit body also reviewed the final state account for the

SAI's complaint and reporting system was recognised by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as a regional model

year and evaluated the administrative and financial performance of directorates under its jurisdiction. It provided legal opinion on draft laws and regulatory frameworks proposed by government entities, aiming to close loopholes and enhance fiscal governance.

To foster a culture of accountability, SAI organised 187 outreach activities throughout the year. These included awareness campaigns, media engagement and training sessions targeting public sector employees and civil society. The aim was to promote ethical practices, highlight consequences of mismanagement and improve understanding of the audit process.

SAI's complaint and reporting system was recognised by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as a regional model for public engagement in accountability. It allows citizens to report violations anonymously and track follow-up action.

The report was prepared following international audit protocols and technical guidelines, ensuring clarity, accuracy and transparency. SAI affirmed its continued commitment to serving as a key partner in achieving the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

RO3mn pact to build visitor centre in Qalhat

Our Correspondent Muscat

Ministry of Heritage and Tourism signed an agreement on Monday worth RO3mn with Oman LNG Development Foundation to finance the establishment of a visitor centre at the ancient city of Qalhat.

The initiative forms part of the ministry's strategy to develop and promote Unesco World Heritage sites across the sultanate.

To be constructed on a 5,000sqm site, the centre will feature two museum halls to showcase archaeological finds,

along with administrative offices, a gift shop, café, outdoor event space, internal walkways linking the centre to the heritage site, shaded seating areas and parking facilities.

The agreement was signed by H E Salim bin Mohammed al

Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, and Dr Amer bin Nasser al Matani, CEO of Oman LNG Development Foundation.

Located in South Sharqiyah, Qalhat is one of Oman's oldest known cities and maritime hubs.

Strategically located overlooking the Sea of Oman, its port once served as an important hub in ancient trade routes connecting India, Yemen and other parts of the world. The city was also a key centre for exporting Arabian horses.

Commenting on the agreement, Khalifa al Farsi, Director of the Ancient City of Qalhat Department, described the visitor centre as a major addition to both Qalhat and Sur.

Qalhat was officially inscribed on the Unesco World Heritage List in 2018, underscoring its historical and cultural significance.

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National Museum launches summer initiative focused on heritage, cultural identity

Our Correspondent
Muscat

National Museum of Oman has launched its annual summer initiative - Our Summer: Heritage and Identity - aimed at enhancing awareness of national identity and strengthening the connection of youngsters with Omani cultural heritage.

Organised by the museum's Learning Centre, the initiative seeks to instil a sense of national identity among young people and enhance their appreciation of Oman's cultural legacy through interactive and educational activities.

The programme targets three age groups - children between six and 11 years, school students aged 12 to 16, and college and university students. Throughout the month of July, participants will engage in a series of creative and artistic workshops inspired by the museum's permanent collections. The activities aim to nurture creative thinking, promote cultural awareness and encourage a deeper connection with na-



tional heritage.

Speaking at the launch, Amina bint Abdullah al Abriyah, Head of the Learning Centre, noted that the programme is part of the centre's ongoing efforts to support cultural education. She emphasised the importance of presenting heritage in an innovative and engaging manner that combines artistic expression with historical learning. "This initiative reflects our commitment to shaping a generation that understands and values its identity through both imagination and exploration," she said.

As part of its wider community outreach, National Museum is also participating in a programme called 'Our Summer: Leadership and Creativity' in North Batinah.

Held in collaboration with North Batinah Governor's Office, the initiative runs from July 6 to 10 and features workshops conducted in Suhar, Liwa, Shinas, Saham, Khabourah and Suwaiq. Expected to benefit around 240 participants, the activities cover various themes such as traditional Omani architecture, maritime history and



visual arts.

The Muscat-based phase of the programme for children aged six to 11 is being held at the National Museum headquarters from July 6 to 10.

Activities for school students aged 12 to 16 will take place from July 13 to 17, followed by sessions for college and university students from July 20 to 24 at the Learning Centre's dedicated space in Al Mouj Muscat, with a total of 260 individuals expected to take part.

The Learning Centre at National Museum, the first of its

kind in the sultanate, has been designed to meet the highest international standards. It offers a range of specialised programmes that cater to schools, higher education institutions, families, individuals with disabilities, and the wider community. It also hosts the museum's acclaimed children's literature series.

Through such initiatives, the museum continues to enhance its role as a vital educational and cultural institution, supporting national efforts to preserve identity and celebrate Oman's enduring heritage.



Muscat to stage tribute to art legend Raja Ravi Varma

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Muscat is set to host a unique stage production celebrating the life and work of iconic Indian painter Raja Ravi Varma, known for his Renaissance-style depictions of Indian mythology.

Titled *Katha Parayum Chithrangal* (A Unique Story of Colours and Canvases), the show promises a cinematic experience combining light, sound, dance and drama.

Scheduled to be held at Al Falaj Hotel Grand Hall, the Malayalam version will be staged on August 22, followed by a Hindi rendition, *Bolti Tasveerein - Rangon aur Canvas ke Zariye Khulti Kahani*, on August 23.

Directed by Sunil Kumar Krishnan Nair, the 165-minute performance involves over 117 actors and technicians with rehearsals having commenced nearly six months ago.

"This is not just a perfor-

mance; it is an emotion, a tribute to a man whose brush transformed still life into motion and emotion," said Nair. "We aim to introduce Raja Ravi Varma's genius to the younger generation and revive his artistic spirit in a contemporary way. To my knowledge, Oman has never seen a live drama show of this scale. We're telling stories through colour, canvas and soul - just as Ravi Varma did."

The production includes sets by stage designer Sujathan Master and music by composer Rony Raphael. A painting competition is also being organised as part of the show to encourage cultural dialogue and artistic expression open to artists of all nationalities in Oman.

Artists from India will oversee makeup, costume and lighting, underlining the show's scale and ambition in presenting a multidimensional tribute to one of India's most celebrated painters.

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Dima Wa al Taien records 81mm rain in 5 days

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The wilayat of Dima wa al Taien in North Sharqiyah recorded the highest rainfall in Oman over a five-day period, according to Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR).

From July 2 to 6, weather stations of MAFWR registered 81mm of rainfall in Dima wa al Taien, followed by 56mm in Nakhal, 41mm in Al Hamra, 32mm in Samail, 30mm in Rustaq, 28mm in Jabal Akhdar and 22mm in Yanqul.

Rain was recorded in several other wilayats, including 18mm in Ibra, 16mm in Izki, 15mm in Ibbi,



14mm in Mudhaibi, 12mm in Al Awabi, 11mm in Rakhout and 10mm in Buraimi. The wilayats of Al Qabil and Mirbat each recorded 7mm.

Moderate to heavy rains on Sunday, resulting in several wadis overflowing in many parts of the

sultanate.

In South Batinah, rain in a number of villages - including Wadi al Sahtan and Wadi Bani Awf in Rustaq, Wadi Bani Kharus in Al Awabi and Wadi Mistal in Nakhal - resulted in wadis and mountain streams flowing.

In North Sharqiyah, besides Dima wa al Taien, the wilayats of Ibra and Mudhaibi recorded rain of varying intensity, accompanied by active winds and hail in some areas. In Ibra, heavy rain was concentrated in the northern villages along the eastern Hajar mountain range. Mudhaibi witnessed rain in its central and southern parts, also accompanied by strong winds and hail, leading to overflowing wadis.

In Dima wa al Taien along the eastern Hajar, rain of varying intensity was reported in villages such as Mas, Al Sibil, Naqsi and parts of Mahlah, besides the surrounding areas of Dima, which led to overflowing wadis across the wilayat.

Nationwide TRA crackdown on illegal wireless networks

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has conducted a series of field inspections in co-ordination with relevant authorities targeting unauthorised wireless networks that redistribute Internet services without official licences.

The move is part of ongoing

efforts to safeguard the security and stability of the sultanate's telecommunications infrastructure and to maintain the quality of services provided to users.

In a statement, TRA said the inspections were launched following detection of several violations that pose risks to information security and integrity of communications net-

works. It noted that illegal networks cause technical interference, disrupt service quality and speed in neighbouring areas, and expose users' personal data to risks such as misuse and hacking.

The authority confirmed that it is taking firm action, including removal of unauthorised equipment and initiating legal proceedings against violators in

collaboration with other agencies.

TRA urged individuals and institutions to comply with telecom regulations and refrain from setting up or using unlicensed communication networks. It reaffirmed its commitment to continue inspection drives to ensure a safe and reliable telecommunications environment in the sultanate.

CPA warns against used, expired tyres

Replacing tyres recommended every three to four years regardless of appearance due to gradual degradation

Our Correspondent
Muscat

With temperatures rising across the sultanate, authorities are warning against the use of used and expired tyres, citing their role in serious traffic accidents, particularly on long-distance routes and high-speed roads.

Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) reported violations at 53 tyre outlets, leading to confiscation of more than 1,000 tyres, many of which were found to be used or past their expiry dates. As part of a nationwide inspection campaign this year, CPA carried out 1,756 visits.

Reaffirming its commitment to public safety, CPA urged consumers not to purchase used tyres and encouraged the public to report any shops violating regulations.

Salim al Rawahi, a mechanic in Seeb, said worn-out tyres are a major safety concern. "These tyres may look fine from the outside, but internal defects often go unnoticed until it's too late - especially in summer heat," he said. "We've seen multiple tyre



blowouts on highways that pose danger to both drivers and other road users."

In some interior areas of Oman, summer temperatures can exceed 45°C, accelerating tyre degradation, particularly in retreaded or second-hand products.

Truck driver Abdullah al Balushi recalled a tyre burst while on a trip to Salalah. "I was lucky. I managed to stop safely, but it could have ended badly. Since then, I only use new tyres," he said.

Saeed al Riyami, a government employee from Nizwa, warned against used tyres. "The savings from used tyres aren't worth the risk. A blowout could cost lives, not just money," he said.

The Directorate General of

Traffic at Royal Oman Police confirmed that defective tyres remain a recurring factor in accidents. It advised motorists to regularly inspect tyre condition, manufacturing dates, tread depth and visible wear, and conduct checks at authorised service centres.

Officials also recommend replacing tyres every three to four years regardless of appearance, due to gradual degradation caused by heat and humidity.

In an effort to tighten regulation, CPA has increased the fine for violations involving unsafe tyre sales. The penalty has doubled from RO500 to RO1,000 under recent amendments to consumer protection laws, reflecting the serious risks posed by non-compliance.

MoSD's 'Our Safe Home' initiative promotes family stability, security

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Through its Directorate General in Dakhliyah, Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) launched an initiative called 'Our Safe Home' on Monday aimed at reinforcing family security and fostering a society based on mutual respect, understanding and compassion.

The initiative seeks to strengthen family cohesion, encourage open dialogue among household members, and promote shared values that support psychological and social development. Authorities view these as critical to maintaining stability in households and the wider community.

As part of the initiative, three specialised workshops were organised focusing on mental health, family relationships and parenting in the digital age.

Dr Hilal bin Salem al Abri, a guidance and counselling specialist at Sultan Qaboos University, led the first session titled 'How to be Successful Amidst the Crowds and Comparisons'. Aimed at youth aged 13 to 28, the



As part of 'Our Safe Home', three workshops were organised focusing on mental health, family relationships and parenting in the digital age

workshop addressed the psychological effects of social comparisons and offered tools to enhance self-awareness and

mental well-being.

The second workshop - Red Light - was conducted by Dr Kafala bint Hamoud al Omairi, Head of Marriage Counselling Team in Dakhliyah. It focused on recognising early warning signs in relationships, particularly during engagement and the initial phase of marriage. Participants were introduced to techniques for emotional regulation and community-based support strategies.

In the final session - Digital Upbringing in a Fast-Paced World - Dr Nahla bint Rashid al Shabibiyyah of Ministry of En-

dowments and Religious Affairs highlighted the challenges of raising children in the digital era. The session outlined differences between traditional and digital parenting and provided strategies for maintaining a healthy balance between online and offline life.

The 'Our Safe Home' initiative was part of Ministry of Social Development's broader efforts to promote social resilience and enhance family communication, contributing to the development of a more cohesive and supportive society.

Sea cucumber fishing ban until 2030

Our Correspondent
Muscat

H E Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, has issued Ministerial Decision No 167/2025 extending the ban on fishing, possession and trade of sea cucumbers in the sultanate for a period of five years, starting July 5, 2025.

The decision is based on the Living Aquatic Resources Law enacted via Royal Decree No 20/2019 and builds on executive regulations outlined in Ministerial Decision No 4/94, as well as Decision No 121/2022, which imposed a three-year ban from June 2022. The extended ban strictly prohibits all activities related to sea cucumbers, including fishing,



buying, selling, transporting, storing and exporting.

The ministry has continued to ban fishing of sea cucumbers for the last several years. A one-year ban was enforced in March 2021, following a two-year ban covering 2019 and 2020. A similar ban was also imposed in 2018.

A study conducted by Khalfan al Rashdi and Dr Michel Claereboudt of Sultan Qaboos University found more than 21 Holothurian (sea cucumber) species in the shallow waters of

Oman. Of these, only *Holothuria scabra* is harvested commercially, with individual specimens valued at around RO15. These are typically found on the western side of Masirah Island and in Mahout Bay - areas known for their extensive seagrass beds and sheltered lagoons.

The study noted that the first recorded commercial exploitation of *Holothuria scabra* in Oman dates back over a decade. However, like in many parts of the world, the population has declined rapidly due to overfishing.

The researchers reported, 'Overfishing evidences include a sharp decrease in population density, critically reduced to fewer than one individual per hectare - a trend observed in Oman and globally.'

OHRC forum on business practices, human rights

Muscat - Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) will host a forum titled 'Business Practices and Human Rights' on Tuesday aimed at fostering a human rights-based approach within the business landscape.

The two-day forum is designed to promote a culture of respect for human rights across economic sectors, while strengthening institutional collaboration to ensure sustainable and equitable development.

The initiative aligns with the Basic Statute of the State, which upholds protection of human dignity, justice, equality and fundamental freedoms. It also reflects OHRC's core mission to advance human rights awareness, provide expert counsel and oversee the implementation of relevant international conventions.

Topics on the agenda include national legislation, public policy, institutional best practices and corporate accountability, besides strategies to confront emerging human rights challenges in the business sector.

The forum will also showcase successful models from both Oman and abroad, and working papers and presentations by judicial bodies and UN entities.

Tender Announcement

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Omantel, du announce activation of Oman-UAE submarine cable

Muscat - Omantel, the leading provider of integrated telecommunication services in the sultanate and a regional leading telecom and technology provider in the Middle East, has announced the activation of a fibre optic submarine cable system to enhance the connectivity between the UAE and Oman.

Omantel, together with du - the leading telecom and digital services provider in the UAE - will activate the 275km long Oman Emirates Gateway (OEG), officials informed.

The cutting-edge project connects three strategic international data centers: Equinix MC1 in Barka, datamena DX1 in Dubai, and Equinix SN1 in Salalah Oman.

OEG is set to redefine the digital landscape of the region by providing a seamless express connection and supporting the area's evolution into a global telecommunications hub. This initiative boosts the operational efficiency of existing networks and systems while enhancing speed, expanding connectivity, and elevating customer experiences with advanced commercial offerings.

Samy al Ghassany, Chief Technology and Digital Officer at Omantel, said that the full activation

of the OEG marks a pivotal milestone in our journey towards digital transformation in Oman and beyond.

"We are proud to contribute to the region's content enrichment and to establish a robust, high-capacity corridor that will empower businesses across Oman and the UAE. This achievement goes beyond mere connectivity; it propels the entire region towards innovation, growth, and global competitiveness," he added.

Karim Benkirane, Chief Commercial Officer of du, said, "The Oman Emirates Gateway is far more than just an optical cable; it is a bridge towards future-proofing the digital infrastructure of the region. This project will be a cornerstone for hyperscalers, content providers, and international carriers, empowering them to enhance their presence and operational capability to meet the growing demands of the digital era."

The activated system delivers transformative benefits such as comprehensive resilience through dual routes (terrestrial and subsea) guaranteeing unmatched reliability and optimal network performance. The state-of-the-art system infrastructure



is designed to support emerging technologies, ensuring long-term sustainability and scalability.

It will provide faster cloud access, in addition to a direct connection to key data centers, providing global access to facilities

Both entities are setting the stage for an unparalleled expansion by connecting international data centres

tate international business growth in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

The activation of OEG is an important development for du and Omantel, reinforcing their positions as leading wholesale players in the telecommunications industry. The partnership reflects a shared commitment to driving progressive change and attracting hyperscalers and global players to the region, improving the overall quality of connectivity and customer experience. The benefits of the OEG project extend beyond enhanced network capabilities, by serving as a crucial driver for economic growth and technological innovation in both the UAE and Oman.



UAE imposes sanctions of AED4.1mn on three exchange houses

Abu Dhabi, UAE - The Central Bank of the UAE (CBUAE) imposed varying financial sanctions amounting to AED4.1mn on three exchange houses, pursuant to Article 14 of the Federal Decree Law on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism and Illegal Organisations and its amendments.

The financial sanction has been imposed after assessing the findings of examination conducted by the CBUAE, which revealed that the three exchange houses failed to comply with AML/CFT policies and procedures. The CBUAE, through its supervisory and regulatory mandates, endeavours to ensure that all exchange houses, their owners, and staff abide by the UAE laws, regulations and standards established by the CBUAE to maintain transparency and integrity of the financial transactions and safeguard the UAE financial system.

Green Economy Summit to explore role of technology

Dubai, UAE - The World Green Economy Summit (WGES), held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, has consolidated its position as a catalyst for global climate action and a strategic platform to empower societies most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

This is achieved by addressing viable, practical solutions to enhance climate security.

Organised by the Dubai Supreme Council of Energy, Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) and the World Green Economy Organisation (WGEO), the 11th edition of the summit will take place on 1-2 October 2025 at the Dubai World Trade Centre under the theme 'Innovating for Impact: Accelerating the Future of the Green Economy'. This year, the summit will explore the role of modern technologies in supporting developing societies and enhancing their ability to adapt to climate



challenges.

The 'Technology and Innovation' pillar will highlight the use of disruptive Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT), in optimising renewable energy integration, enhancing predictive analytics and improving the monitoring of carbon emissions.

The summit will also address energy storage solutions and the importance of public-private col-

laboration in developing and deploying green technologies, while showcasing smart projects that support long-term sustainability goals.

Saeed Mohammed al Tayer, Vice Chairman of the Dubai Supreme Council of Energy, MD and CEO of DEWA, and Chairman of WGEO, emphasised that organising WGES in Dubai reflects the UAE's leading role in advancing global climate action by providing a platform for dis-

cussing innovative solutions that accelerate the transition towards a green economy. "Climate change represents a major threat to developing societies, which often lack the infrastructure and resources to cope with extreme weather conditions. Ensuring climate security for these societies requires integrating efforts and leveraging Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies in a just and inclusive manner."

WAM

GCC, Japan advance FTA talks to strengthen ties

Tokyo, Japan - Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary-General Jassem Albudaiwi met today with Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan Kato Akiyoshi in Tokyo, during his official visit to Japan.

The two officials reviewed several topics related to investment and trade. They also discussed the latest developments in the second round of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, along with ways to advance the talks and strengthen the economic partnership to serve mutual interests.

Both sides affirmed that the FTA between the GCC and Japan would represent a strategic step forward. They stated that it would help open broader horizons for trade exchange, strengthen economic ties, and establish cooperation on a solid and exceptional foundation, thereby promoting mutual interests and supporting both sides' aspirations for a sustainable economic partnership.

The secretary-general pre-



The FTA between the GCC and Japan would help open broader horizons for trade exchange, strengthen economic ties, and establish cooperation on a solid foundation

sented several economic indicators and statistics for the GCC countries. He noted the outstanding economic performance of the council states and the sustainable growth and development they are witnessing across various sectors. "This performance has contributed to bolstering the GCC states' regional and international standing, making them a focus for many countries seeking to strengthen their economic and trade relations."

Global markets expect less tariff uncertainties, geopolitical tensions

Istanbul, Türkiye - Global markets expect a reduction in tariff uncertainties and geopolitical tensions in the second half of the year, with an increased shift towards more risky-assets, an expert told Anadolu Agency.

Much of the uncertainties were caused by the US' protectionist trade in the first six months of the year, as well as central banks' changing forecasts and geopolitical tensions.

Investor risk appetite was damaged by US President Donald Trump's trade policies and the Fed's easing cycle, followed by tensions in the Middle East and tariff negotiations between China and the US.

Investors opted for safe haven assets, such as gold, whose ounce price saw its historic high at US\$3,500 in this period, but easing tensions and Washington's newfound willingness to compromise on tariffs generate some optimism in global markets, as we enter the second half of the year.

Tonguc Erbas, general manager of Türkiye-based financial services firm Ahlatci Portfoy, said that the US has the largest gold reserves and the high gold prices show the reserve value in terms of debt, which is why Trump took swift action with demands.

"He took steps on tariffs, he



had demands on geographical regions, and he very quickly withdrew after high tension - we saw a similar approach to the Israel-Iran conflict," he said.

Erbas said the US' recent policies have been aimed at weaken-

ing the US dollar in global markets, seeing its fastest decline in the first six months of the year compared to the last 50 years.

"I think the US will reach a middle ground agreement on tariffs with countries and I think

they have a medium-term plan to eliminate geopolitical risks."

Erbas stated that Trump may not want to attempt replacing the Fed chair yet despite expecting a rate cut. "I think the Fed will cut rates in September and there will be two rate cuts this year," he said. "The Fed wants to monitor the impact of tariffs, so the Fed may resume rate cuts with the expectation that Trump will continue a more moderate strategy on tariffs."

He noted that the US 10-Year Bond could fall below 4% again at the end of this year, reaching 3.85% with these developments.

Erbas highlighted that silver will be more promising in the

second half of the year.

"If major central banks cut their rates and growth increases, unlike the flat movement in the past years, silver can both become a safe haven alternative and a product with a price advantage," he said. "Gold may remain flat for a while and oil and oil-based products or investments may remain within a price band until the end of the year."

He emphasised that markets are through almost all the negative developments that could occur in the first half of the year and they will be in a better place towards the end of the year.

Erbas mentioned that Türkiye's Central Bank will an-

nounce its rate decision on July 24, expecting a 350-basis-point cut, but the bank "does not want to surprise the market, so it may cut 250 basis points instead", and the year-end interest rate is expected to be around 35%.

He added that the cooling of the global economy poses a difficult situation for balancing amid downward revisions of year-end growth estimates. "Higher growth rate revisions in global markets may come to the fore if tariffs and the Fed's policy become clearer in the next month or two but I don't think a global slowdown will affect Türkiye significantly," he said.

Anadolu Agency

BRICS seeks to create more stable global economic architecture: Lavrov

Istanbul, Türkiye - Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Sunday that the BRICS bloc of developing economies seeks to create “a more stable global economic architecture”.

Lavrov’s remarks came at the BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, according to the Russian



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov

BRICS stands as an engine of transformation, which seeks to create a more stable global economic architecture based on the principles of universality and transparency

Foreign Ministry.

He noted that regional organisations like the African Union, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) are gaining influence and efforts are underway to build a new world economic framework based on equality, multilateralism and non-discrimination.

“Nowadays, BRICS stands as an engine of such transformation, which seeks to create a more stable global economic architecture based on the principles of universality, transparency, non-discrimination and equal access to available opportunities and instruments,”

the Russian Minister said.

“Multipolarity is not a choice but rather an objective reality which succeeds the outdated neoliberal model that actually builds on neocolonial practices,” he added.

Lavrov said that confidence in the US dollar “as a formerly reli-

able payment instrument was undermined,” adding that today, developing countries are spending on debt servicing more than they are investing in their development.

“The situation is going out of control even in developed states. The US has seen a record level of

sovereign debt, which reached \$37 trillion, and it continues to grow,” he added.

He said, “BRICS countries account for more than 40% of global GDP based on purchasing power parity, and together with partner countries, this figure is at 45% or US\$93tn,” adding that

BRICS also accounts for more than 20% of global trade and nearly half of the world’s population.

“The continued use of the IMF and World Bank with a view to preserve neocolonial practices is unacceptable,” he added.

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US President Donald Trump

Nations aligning with BRICS will face 10% more tariff: Trump

Istanbul, Türkiye - US President Donald Trump warned late on Sunday that any country that aligns itself “with the anti-American policies” of the BRICS economic bloc will face an additional 10% tariff.

“There will be no exceptions to this policy,” he wrote on his Truth Social platform.

In another post, he said that US tariff letters and/or agreements with various countries across the world “will be delivered starting 12:00 P.M. (Eastern) (1600GMT), Monday, July 7th.”

In late January, Trump said “there is no chance that BRICS (countries) will replace the US

dollar in international trade, or anywhere else.”

“We are going to require a commitment from these seemingly hostile Countries that they will neither create a new BRICS Currency, nor back any other Currency to replace the mighty US Dollar or, they will face 100% Tariffs,” he added.

BRICS members have discussed shifting from the dollar in recent years, with discussions intensifying after the US imposed sanctions on Russia in 2022 following the start of its ‘special military operation’ in Ukraine.

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Saudi Arabia participates in UNCITRAL session in Vienna

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - The United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) has opened its 58th annual session in Vienna, Austria, with the presence of Saudi Arabia, SPA reported.

The kingdom was represented by an official delegation from the National Competitiveness Centre and the ministries of foreign affairs, justice, commerce, investment, and transport and logistics services, as well as the Board of Grievances and the Bankruptcy Commission.

UNCITRAL seeks to remove obstacles to international commercial transactions created by national cross-border trade laws by drafting unified international conventions and model laws, encouraging member states to incorporate them into domestic legislation, and assisting in national law reform projects.

At the session’s opening, held from July 7 to 23 at United Nations Headquarters in Vienna, the president and vice presidents were elected, after which delegates reviewed the draft ‘International Convention on Negotiable Cargo Documents’.

Produced by Working Group VI, the draft convention regulates the legal instruments governing international carriage of goods, covering both paper and electronic bills of lading and the associated rights and obligations.

The kingdom has been a member of UNCITRAL during the 2022–2028 term and participates in its annual meetings through a working team headed by the National Competitiveness Centre and comprising several relevant government entities.

SPA

EU to stockpile minerals amid geopolitical risks

Brussels, Belgium - The European Union (EU) plans to stockpile critical minerals as a precaution against potential supply disruptions due to geopolitical tension, the Financial Times reported on Saturday, citing a draft document by the European Commission.

“The EU faces an increasingly complex and deteriorating risk landscape marked by rising geopolitical tensions, including conflict, the mounting impacts of climate change, environmental degradation, and hybrid and cyber threats,” the newspaper quoted the draft as saying.

Member states should coordinate backup supplies of food, medicines and even nuclear fuel, the EU executive said.

It would also accelerate work on EU-level stockpiles of items such as cable repair modules “to ensure prompt recovery from energy or optical cable disruptions” and commodities such as



rare earths and permanent magnets, which are crucial for energy and defence systems.

In a report commissioned by the EU in October, former Finnish president Sauli Niinisto said that security should be considered a “public good” and called for a preparedness mindset.

On stockpiling, he said that Brussels should “define targets to ensure minimum levels of preparedness in different crisis scenarios, including in the event of an armed aggression or the large-scale disruption of global supply chains”.

The EU in March also advised households to stockpile essential supplies to survive at least 72 hours of crisis.

WAM

ADX sees 99.5% surge in foreign net investment in H1

Abu Dhabi, UAE - Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX) demonstrated significant growth across its key indicators in the first half of 2025, compared to the same period in 2024.

According to ADX data, foreign net investment saw a remarkable 99.5% increase, surging from approximately AED6.84bn in H1 2024 to over AED13.6bn in H1 2025.

Total trading value also rose substantially, by 33.5%, reaching around AED179.5bn in the first half of 2025, up from



AED134.4bn in the corresponding period last year. The average daily trading value climbed by 31.4%, from nearly AED1.1bn to approximately AED1.45bn.

WAM

Middle Eastern region emerges as global sports powerhouse: Kearney

Dubai, UAE - The Middle East is fast becoming one of the most influential players in global sports, according to global management consultancy Kearney’s latest report, From passion to profit: unlocking value in sports.

With the region experiencing a rapid and sustained growth rate across key segments, it is emerging as a major force in the global sports industry, driving innovation and investment that are reshaping the sector’s future.

With the global sports market expected to reach over US\$600bn by 2030, the region is driving a transformation fuelled by strategic investment, forward-looking policy, and technology-enabled innovation. Saudi Arabia, in particular, is emerging as a global benchmark, combining world-class hosting with systemic reform and sector-wide development.

The momentum is visible across multiple fronts. On the global stage, the region has solidified its reputation as a premier destination for high-profile events: hosting everything from the FIFA World Cup in Qatar and the Bahrain Grand Prix to the Dubai Tennis Championships and soon, the Olympic Esports Games in Saudi Arabia. These events are not just about spectacle; they signal a strategic effort to position the region at the heart of global sporting calendars.

Behind the scenes, infrastructure investment is accelerating. Governments across the

Middle East are committing billions to develop next-generation stadiums, elite training academies, and integrated digital platforms. Saudi Arabia has allocated significant budgets toward sports infrastructure as part of its Vision 2030 agenda, while the UAE and Qatar continue to grow their ecosystems for high-performance sports and global talent attraction.

Following an announcement

Global sports market to exceed US\$600bn by 2030, with the Middle East playing a pivotal role fuelled by strategic investment

by Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed, Crown Prince of Dubai, Dubai will host the inaugural World Sports Summit in December, further reinforcing the region’s growing influence on the global sports stage.

The region is also pushing hard into digital-native sectors, with esports emerging as a focal point. Saudi Arabia’s US\$38bn investment to become a global hub for gaming is emblematic of a wider regional effort to tap into younger demographics through streaming, immersive content, and competitive gaming platforms. This youth-centric focus is being mirrored in broader fan

engagement strategies across the ME.

Women’s participation is another key area of growth. New professional women’s football leagues in the UAE, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia are expanding access and visibility, while initiatives across schools and communities are driving higher levels of inclusion.

In Saudi Arabia alone, female participation in sport has increased by 150% since the launch of Vision 2030, an indicator of how deeply sports are being woven into the region’s social fabric.

Kearney’s report highlights five key growth levers that organisations can use capture a greater share of future growth:

- Commercial excellence:** Maximising revenue across media rights, sponsorship, matchday, merchandise, and talent monetisation
- Fan engagement and insights:** using data to understand fan behaviour, personalise content, and increase loyalty and spend
- Platform expansion:** building or partnering with streaming and digital platforms to deliver richer, more monetisable fan experiences
- Technology-driven innovation:** applying tech across advertising, ticketing, content, and performance to unlock new revenue streams and efficiencies
- Operational efficiency:** adopting business best practices to reduce costs, streamline operations, and professionalise structures.

BYD Sealion 7 available now with BYD's Hot Summer Deals

Enjoy BYD's Hot Summer Deals and benefit from its incredible offer to own an all-electric Sealion 7 SUV. Become a new customer and enjoy 3-year/60,000 km of stress-free service plan.

Also, get the chance to participate in the grand raffle for a chance to win an all-expenses-paid, 3 Nights 4 Days holiday to Türkiye for four adults, a press release said.

Furthermore, all customers are entitled to 'scratch and win' exciting prizes including an iPhone 16 Pro Max, Apple Watch, and Apple AirPods. EV customers also get a free EV battery charger for the home. The offer ends on July 16.

Designed as part of BYD's ocean-inspired series, the bold yet sleek SUV exudes dynamism and efficiency, ensuring an alluring road presence.

Inside, the stunning cabin is a seamless fusion of luxury and



technology. Premium leather upholstery, a panoramic sunroof and customisable ambient lighting create an inviting atmosphere, while a spacious, ergonomically designed interior ensures supreme comfort for passengers. At the heart of the dashboard is the rotating 15.6-inch infotainment screen, serving as a digital command centre that offers seamless connectivity and entertainment for all.

The Sealion 7 EV is equipped with intelligent driving assistance systems, Intelligent Adaptive Cruise Control and a high-resolution digital instrument cluster elevate the driving experience to a new level of sophistication.

Powered by BYD's revolutionary Blade Battery, the Sealion 7 EV offers an extended electric range, making it ideal for both urban commutes and long-distance journeys. Its fast-charging capabilities ensure quick charging time.

Dubai real estate growth remains balanced

Dubai's real estate market has seen exceptional growth in recent years, driven by economic momentum, global appeal, and long-term urban planning.

Amid rising demand and expanding developments, concerns about market correction are natural. Yet, Dubai's strategic foundations and regulatory foresight position it to navigate fluctuations with resilience, a press release said.

Market corrections are a natural phase in any maturing economy, often triggered by excess supply or a drop in demand following rapid price increases. Yet, in Dubai's case, even with rising prices in certain areas, the market remains relatively balanced. One clear indicator of Dubai's market balance is that average property prices remain lower than those in global cities such as London, New York, and Hong Kong. This points to potential for sustainable growth, rather than a temporary bubble.

Learning from its past, Dubai has meticulously crafted a robust and shock-resistant real estate system. A key factor is the diversification of demand sources. Dubai's market is no longer reliant on buyers from a single region; it now draws investment from all corners of the world - the GCC, Europe, Asia, Russia, and Africa. This broad base of demand provides a stable platform, insulating the market from fluctuations in any single source and boosting its overall resilience.

Muzn Islamic offers housing finance for Sarooj Oasis Project

NBO Muzn Islamic Banking has announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Sarooj Development Company to provide Shari'ah-compliant home financing solutions for eligible customers purchasing properties developed under Sarooj Oasis Project, an integrated mixed-use development project located in Sultan Haitham City.

Held at NBO's head office, the MoU was signed by Abdullah Zahran al Hinai, CEO of NBO, Mohammed Yahya al Jabri, assistant general manager of Global Transaction Banking at NBO and Sulaiman Khamis al



Qasmi, deputy CEO of Sarooj Development Company.

Commenting on the partnership, Salima Obaid Issa al Marzoqi, assistant general manager

and chief Islamic banking officer at NBO, said, "This MOU comes as a part of our broader commitment to empower individuals through providing ethical finan-

cial solutions and supporting the national development goals. At Muzn Islamic Banking, we are proud to be a trusted partner in Oman's housing journey, ensur-

ADNEC Group provides large, air-conditioned spaces where individuals and families can practice 11 different sports across 15 different courts and fitness areas

ing citizens have access to home ownership opportunities that align with their values and aspirations."

Qasmi added, "At Sarooj De-

velopment Company, we are committed to shape integrated communities that offer real value to Omani individuals. This agreement with NBO Muzn Islamic Banking represents more than just financial facilitation - it reflects our responsibility to ensure that home ownership is accessible, sustainable and aligned with Oman's long-term urban development goals. We are proud to help deliver a project that supports both personal aspirations and national priorities."

This agreement allows eligible Omani nationals to access financing through Muzn Islamic Banking.

Omran Group concludes 'Future Investment Pioneers' programme

Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran) has successfully concluded the 'Future Investment Pioneers' programme, a pioneering initiative aimed at equipping a select group of Omani students with the skills and knowledge needed to understand investment dynamics in the tourism sector.

By nurturing their entrepreneurial mindset and innovative thinking, the programme supports the broader vision of building a national talent pool capable of shaping the future of Oman's tourism industry.

The 12-week programme brought together 16 students from six leading academic institutions, including Sultan Qaboos University, and offered them a rich learning experience through interactive workshops, mentorship sessions, and hands-on activities.

Participants developed practical skills in product development, entrepreneurial thinking, and professional communication, while also exploring key topics such as investment analysing and attraction, mechanisms of entering strategic partnerships, tourism product innovation, and return on investment analysis from an investor's perspective.

Mundher al Moosawi, director of Business Development at Omran Group, said, "This programme reflects our commitment to nurturing future tourism leaders by offering a comprehen-



The programme brought together 16 students from six leading academic institutions, including Sultan Qaboos University, and offered them a rich learning experience through interactive workshops

sive experience that blends practical learning with investment thinking. We strive to inspire and empower youth to actively contribute to the sector's sustainable growth and position Oman as a promising investment destination."

The programme concluded with a thought-provoking panel discussion that brought together experts from tourism, investment, and academia to explore

opportunities for innovation in the sector, the importance of aligning education with market needs, and the critical role of young investors in shaping Oman's economic future.

As part of the closing ceremony, the winners of the programme's accompanying competitions were honoured in recognition of student projects that stood out for their spirit of innovation and healthy competi-

tion. The winning participants received an integrated package of incentives, including hands-on training opportunities at leading tourism institutions, a specialised mentorship programme, and the chance to present their project ideas to a group of investors — opening real prospects for turning their concepts into viable investment ventures.

This initiative provided a unique opportunity for students to design investment-ready tourism projects and engage directly with industry leaders. It falls under the 'Educate' and 'Attract' pillars of Omran Group's broader #IAMTourism strategy, which aims to ignite passion for tourism, entrepreneurship, and innovation among the youth.

Celebrate mindful travel at Six Senses Ziggy Bay

Tucked between the towering Hajar Mountains and the Musandam coastline, Six Senses Ziggy Bay stands as a secluded sanctuary where mindful travel and meaningful experiences take centre stage.

This summer, through its exclusive Escape offer, featuring 15% off stays and a complimentary daily buffet breakfast, the resort invites travellers to embrace a slower, more intentional pace and immerse themselves in nature, adventure, and authentic Omani culture. Whether creating cherished memories with loved ones or seeking space to reset solo, guests can enjoy a thoughtfully curated programme designed to inspire, restore, and connect.

For the month of July, one complimentary return transfer from Dubai is available with a minimum two-night stay, making the journey as seamless as the stay. Just a two-hour scenic drive from Dubai, the 82-villa resort blends barefoot luxury with Omani charm and presents a variety of activities that celebrate culture, creativity, and conservation.

In collaboration with the Dibba Women Association, this cultural immersion invites guests to experience the traditions and talents of Omani women. From tactile date palm weaving and pottery decorating to henna painting, coffee grinding, and spice blending, each activity of-



fers an intimate insight into daily life and craftsmanship. All proceeds support the association's development projects, including facilities for local children.

At Six Senses Ziggy Bay, the Earth Lab is a creative hub where sustainability meets hands-on learning through engaging workshops that celebrate reuse and mindful living. Take part in candle making, transforming leftover wax into beautifully scented, personalised candles; soap making,

where natural ingredients are used to craft eco-friendly, fragrant bars; and the fascinating glass workshop, which gives discarded bottles a second life as handcrafted glassware and art pieces.

Each experience blends creativity with environmental purpose, offering a meaningful connection to the resort's commitment to sustainability, innovation, and the beauty of giving materials a renewed purpose.



Ahmad al Harthy receives BMW M5 Touring

Al Jenaibi International Automobiles marks a new milestone, handing over Oman's first-ever BMW M5 Touring to racing champion and BMW Oman brand ambassador Ahmad Al Harthy.

Finished in the breathtaking shade M Isle of Man Green metallic, this high-performance machine joins Ahmad's incredible journey of passion, performance, and pride, a press release said.

Ahmad is fresh off a podium finish at the legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans – the world's biggest endurance race - with BMW M Motor-

Finished in the breathtaking shade M Isle of Man Green metallic, this high-performance machine joins Ahmad's incredible journey of passion and pride

sport and Team WRT. His continued success, boosted by his ongoing collaboration with BMW, continues to raise the sultanate's profile in the world of international racing.

Hongqi H6 offers new benchmark in luxury

The all-new Hongqi H6, launched in February 2025, is a bold statement in luxury, innovation, and region-specific performance, combining cutting-edge technology with the refined elegance Hongqi is renowned for.

This premium sedan is meticulously tailored for discerning customers who demand more – from comfort and safety to power and design, a press release said.

The Hongqi H6 impresses with its striking design, featuring a prominent grille, split LED headlights, and a streamlined fastback silhouette that commands attention. Its elegant exterior is matched by an opulent cabin, crafted with NAPPA leather seats, microfiber accents, and 253-colour ambient lighting that transforms every drive into a luxurious escape.

Built for the region, the H6 is equipped with a high-efficiency air conditioning system engineered for the Middle Eastern climate, along with an infotainment system that supports Arabic and seamless smartphone connectivity through Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. The spacious interior, comparable to larger C-segment vehicles, ensures superior comfort on longer drives.

Under the hood, the H6 fea-



Built for the region, the H6 is equipped with a high-efficiency air conditioning system engineered for the Middle Eastern climate, along with an infotainment system that supports Arabic

tures a next-generation 2.0T engine available in both high and low-power variants, paired with an 8-speed automatic transmission. The high-power variant accelerates from 0-100 km/h in just 6.8 seconds, delivering exhilarating performance while maintaining fuel efficiency at 17.9 km/lt.

On the safety front, the H6 leads with a 5-star C-NCAP rating, thanks to over 68% high-strength steel construction, 9

airbags, and 23 precision sensors that support its intelligent safety suite. To complete the experience, a Dynaudio premium sound system offers immersive audio, turning every journey into a refined acoustic experience.

Mohsin Hani al Bahrani, CEO of MHD ACERE, commented, "With the introduction of the Hongqi H6, we are bringing a new standard of luxury and performance to Oman. It is a vehicle that not only reflects sophistication and power, but also caters to the specific needs of our market – from its advanced air conditioning system to Arabic-language support in the infotainment.

OOC prepares for Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh

As part of its preparations for the 6th Islamic Solidarity Games, Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) commenced a series of coordination meetings on Monday with several sports federations and committees. These meetings will continue for three consecutive days at OOC headquarters, a press release said.

The aim of the meetings is to discuss the technical and administrative aspects of Oman's participation in the Games, which will be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from November 7 to 21. The event will feature athletes from 57 member states of the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation.

These meetings reflect OOC commitment to strengthening coordination with sports federations and committees to ensure effective participation in the Games - one of the most prominent multi-sport events in the Islamic world. The Games provide an ideal platform for fair competition and for showcasing national talents across various sports.

The discussions will cover aspects related to selecting the sports in which Oman will participate, based on established technical criteria. They will also review timelines, logistical requirements, and the technical



preparation needs of national teams in alignment with this important regional sporting event.

The Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation recently announced that the sixth edition of the Games will be hosted in Riyadh, featuring 24 sports. This will be organised in coordination with the host committee and the national Olympic committees, with an emphasis on selecting appropriate dates to avoid conflicts with major championships and Islamic events. This scheduling aims to enhance athletes' opportunities to perform at their best as they prepare for the upcoming Olympic Games in Los Angeles in 2028.

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Sheraton Oman Hotel appoints new manager

Sheraton Oman Hotel announced the appointment of Rejin Thomas as its new hotel manager, effective immediately.

A seasoned hospitality leader, Rejin brings a rich background shaped by over a decade of experience with globally respected brands including IHG Hotels and Resorts and Marriott International, a press release said.

Rejin's career is marked by a deep commitment to connection, collaboration, and commercial excellence. Since beginning his Oman journey with IHG in 2015, he has served in pivotal roles across the country, most recently leading the key commercial strategies for InterContinental Muscat. Prior to this, Rejin played an instrumental role in developing international partnerships, championing leisure travel markets, and representing the brand on the global stage during his tenure in Salalah.

Rejin's roots with Marriott International run deep. His earlier



Rejin Thomas

career included serving as Multi-Property Director of Sales and Marketing for Kochi Marriott Hotels, as well as Director of Sales and Marketing for the Hyderabad Marriott Hotel and Convention Centre and Courtyard by Marriott Hyderabad. These experiences laid a strong foundation in brand stewardship, team

empowerment, and delivering meaningful guest experiences.

Now returning to the Marriott family, Rejin joins Sheraton Oman Hotel at a pivotal moment as the brand continues to evolve its vision of hospitality, where inviting spaces, purposeful journeys, and the power of community are at the heart of everything.

Whitewill expands operations to Oman buoyed by growing demand

Whitewill, the international luxury real estate agency, has officially expanded its footprint into Oman, marking a strategic milestone in the agency's regional growth.

This positions the firm to meet the increasing demand from investors and end-users seeking opportunities in one of the Gulf's most promising emerging real estate markets, a press release said.

The decision to enter Oman comes as the country undergoes a period of accelerated economic diversification, supported by the government's Vision 2040 strategy. With a stable economy, increasing foreign investment, and progressive policies allowing foreign nationals to acquire freehold property, Oman has rapidly



Svetlana Politova

gained attention among global investors.

Whitewill began building its Omani operations in 2023, and by 2024, investor demand had grown so significantly that the firm established a dedicated office and team of brokers in Muscat.

"At Whitewill, we are proud to



be at the forefront of introducing Oman's promising real estate market to global investors," said Svetlana Politova, CEO of

Whitewill Real Estate in Oman and Abu Dhabi. "Our focus on Muscat and Salalah reflects a deep understanding of what

drives long-term value, combining solid economic fundamentals with exceptional lifestyle and tourism offerings. By partnering

with the most reputable developers and establishing a local presence, we ensure our clients gain exclusive access to Oman's

best projects. Looking ahead, we are committed to helping shape the future of real estate in Oman, creating investment opportunities that respect its heritage while meeting modern expectations."

Whitewill is already operational in Muscat and Salalah, the only regions in Oman where Integrated Tourism Complex (ITC) zones permit full freehold ownership for foreign investors. Muscat, with its modern infrastructure, administrative significance, and international connectivity, appeals to long-term investors seeking capital growth. Salalah, known for its lush green landscapes and year-round appeal to Gulf and European tourists, offers an attractive option for investors.

Donald Trump slams Elon Musk's plan to launch new political party

Washington, D.C., US - President Donald Trump on Sunday blasted multibillionaire CEO Elon Musk's launch of a new US political party called the America Party.

Musk, the Tesla and SpaceX CEO, and until recently a close adviser to Trump, announced the creation of the America Party in a series of posts late on Saturday.

"When it comes to bankrupting our country with waste & graft, we live in a one-party system, not a democracy. Today, the America Party is formed to give you back your freedom," he posted on X, the social media platform he owns.

On Sunday, Trump said it was 'ridiculous' to start a third party.

"The Democrats have lost their way, but it's always been a two-party system," Trump said, adding, "and I think starting a third party just adds to confusion. It really seems to have been developed, but three parties have never worked'.

Musk's bitter falling out with Tump

Musk first floated the idea of forming a new political party after a public and bitter falling-out with Trump.

Musk spent hundreds of millions of dollars to support Trump's re-election and led the so-called Department of Government Efficiency or DOGE in the Trump administration,



Elon Musk floated the idea of forming a new political party after a public and bitter falling-out with Donald Trump

which aimed to cut government spending, before their disagreements spilled into the open.

He revived the idea of a new political party this week as US lawmakers approved Trump's sweeping tax and spending bill.

Musk was among the legislation's most vocal critics and has pledged to establish a new party to oppose Republicans

The US president described the plan by Musk, who was until recently his adviser, to create a new political party as 'ridiculous'

who supported the bill.

Third-party challenges

On Friday, he posted a poll asking whether users 'want independence from the two-party (some would say uniparty) system', drawing over 1.2mn responses, with more than 60% in favour of a new party.

A truly competitive third party could disrupt over a century of Democratic and Republican dominance at all levels of the government.

But Elon Musk would not be the first person trying to establish a party to challenge their dominance.

Former President Theodore Roosevelt came the closest in

1912, after splitting from the Republican party. He ran as Progressive Party candidate and won 27% of the popular vote and 88 electoral votes.

More recently, Ross Perot, another billionaire, won 19% of the popular vote but no electoral votes in the 1992 presidential campaign as an independent and later formed

the Reform Party.

Musk's billions meet ballot reality

Musk has already indicated that he is not aiming for an all-out win. Instead, his America Party would focus on flipping a couple of House and Senate seats by applying, 'extremely concentrated force at a precise location on the battlefield'.

He believes that by targeting key races, the America Party could hold decisive votes on contentious legislation.

A massive campaign war chest could give Musk an edge.

Parties spend billions of dollars to get their candidates elected. According to donations watchdog OpenSecrets, nearly US\$16bn was spent across the 2024 presidential and congressional races.

Musk himself was the biggest donor in the 2023-24 election cycle. He gave more than US\$291mn to Republicans across all races.

However, money is not the only factor that matters.

In April, Musk provided million-dollar checks to some voters in Wisconsin ahead of an election for the state's Supreme Court.

Voters chose Democratic-backed Susan Crawford, who defeated conservative Brad Schimel for a State Supreme Court seat, despite US\$25mn in spending from Musk.

DW

GREENPEACE AGAINST DEEP-SEA MINING



Greenpeace activists deployed a massive 10-metre octopus model outside Germany's parliament on Monday, demanding an immediate halt to deep-sea mining plans (Anadolu Agency)

South Korea develops new anthrax vaccine

Seoul, South Korea - South Korea on Monday said it has developed the world's first recombinant protein-based anthrax vaccine 'with fewer side effects'.

The development is seen as a major step toward self-sufficiency that could also open export markets for the new vaccine developed by the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA), partnered with private firm GC Biopharma Corp., Seoul-based Yonhap News reported.

Unlike conventional versions, it eliminates the risk of exposure to toxins produced by Bacillus anthracis, a high-risk pathogen considered a potential bioterrorism agent.

The new vaccine, Barythrax Inj., received regulatory approval from the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety in April.

The approval permits Seoul

to produce its own supply for the first time, ending its reliance on imports.

According to Kim Gab-jung, director general of the KDCA's department of disease diagnosis and analysis, the achievement would help reduce vaccine import costs and enable faster, more stable responses in the event of na-

tional emergencies such as bioterrorism.

"Beyond infectious disease preparedness, the vaccine's development represents a major contribution to strengthening the country's overall public health security," Kim said.

Until now, South Korea had relied on imports of Biothrax, the US-made anthrax vaccine.

South Korea has not logged any anthrax cases since it was designated a notifiable disease in 2000.

Anadolu Agency

DOJ, FBI say Epstein had no 'client list', committed suicide

Washington, D.C., US - The US Department of Justice (DOJ) and the FBI have determined there is no evidence that convicted sex offender and disgraced financier Jeffrey Epstein blackmailed influential individuals, maintained a 'client list' or was murdered, a media report said on Sunday.

This came in a memo detailing the findings which was obtained by Axios, the US news website said in its report. The Trump administration is releasing both raw and 'enhanced' versions of a video that it says shows no one entered the area of the Manhattan prison where Epstein was held the night he died in 2019.

The two-page memo claims that the video backs the medical examiner's conclusion that Epstein committed suicide.

The findings represent the first time President Donald Trump's administration has officially disputed conspiracy theories about Epstein's activities and death - theories that had been pushed by the FBI's top two officials before Trump appointed them.

Kash Patel (now the FBI's di-

rector) and Dan Bongino (now its deputy director), both social media influencers and activists, were among the Make America Great Again (MAGA) figures who questioned the official account of Epstein's death.

They have since stated that Epstein committed suicide. However, it remains a widely held belief online, particularly among right-wing circles, that Epstein's crimes involved government officials, celebrities and business leaders - and that someone killed him to cover it up.

The memo says that no other individuals involved in the Epstein case will face charges.

The memo states that investigators carefully reviewed footage of Epstein's Manhattan prison cell from about 10.40pm on August 9, 2019, when he was locked in, until around 6.30am the following day, when he was found unresponsive. The administration said the footage, which was reviewed by Axios but not independently verified, showed no one entering the area.

Anadolu Agency

Columbia University in discussions with Trump admin

New York, US - New York City-based Columbia University's board of trustees met on Sunday to discuss the terms of a potential agreement with the Trump administration to restore at least part of the institution's federal funding, said people familiar with the matter.

According to two of the sources, recent versions of a potential agreement between the university and the administration have not included a consent decree, *The Wall Street Journal* reported. The government task force initially aimed to place the university under a consent decree as a way to ensure the university complied with federal guidelines related to combating antisemitism on campus, which would have assigned a federal judge to oversee Columbia's compliance.

More recent discussions, however, have considered appointing a monitor or external observer with less authority than a federal judge, the newspaper added. People familiar with the negotiations say the terms being discussed include restoring at



least a portion of Columbia's federal funding, but the exact details are still being finalised and the deal could still fall through.

For months, the Ivy League university has been engaged in a standoff with the Trump administration over the fate of its federal funding and institutional autonomy.

In March, the administration revoked US\$400mn in federal grants and contracts, citing Columbia's failure to protect

Jewish students from antisemitic harassment following pro-Palestinian protests on campus.

In May, a government investigation concluded that Columbia had violated its students' civil rights and issued a formal notice of violation to the university. This step can precede either a Justice Department lawsuit seeking a consent decree or a voluntary resolution agreement with the school.

Previously, the university

People familiar with the talks say the terms being discussed include restoring at least a portion of Columbia's federal funding, but the exact details are still being finalised and the deal still fall through

agreed to an earlier set of demands from the Trump administration such as restricting the use of masks during protests, granting campus police expanded authority to arrest students and appointing a senior vice provost with broad oversight of the department of Middle East, South

Asian and African Studies.

However, these concessions merely initiated formal negotiations and did not lead to the restoration of the university's federal funding.

A Columbia spokesperson declined to comment on the latest negotiations but referenced a June 12 statement from acting President Claire Shipman, who emphasised the importance of restoring the university's re-

search partnership with the government. "Our red lines remain the same," Shipman said, adding that "we must maintain our autonomy and independent governance. We decide who teaches at our institution, what they teach and which students we admit."

Anadolu Agency

EU: There is no evidence for Hamas stealing aid in Gaza

Brussels/Istanbul - The European Commission on Monday said it has no evidence that Hamas is stealing humanitarian aid in Gaza, and described the humanitarian situation in the enclave as 'catastrophic'.

Speaking at the midday briefing, Commission spokesperson Eva Hrnčirova responded to a question regarding allegations that the Palestinian group is diverting aid intended for civilians. "We don't have any reports of Hamas stealing the aid," she said, stressing the EU's commitment to independent and neutral humanitarian principles.

"Obviously, we don't hide that the situation in Gaza is catastrophic and very, very complex," Hrnčirova added. "Nevertheless, we have a system that is in place. We have an infrastructure how to deliver aid in Gaza, and this is a system that should immediately be used to help people in Gaza who are starving."

Hrnčirova underlined that the EU continues to rely on established international humanitarian organisations to deliver aid. "We do not cooperate with Global Humanitarian Foundation because we think that humanitarian aid can never be privatised, politicised, or to become a tool of a conflict," she added.

The Commission continues to call on Israeli authorities to grant access to its aid partners in Gaza.

The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation is a highly controversial Israel-backed US mechanism operating in the Gaza Strip since May 27, where hundreds of aid-



Hundreds of aid-seeking Palestinians have been killed at or near its aid-distribution sites by the Israeli army in two months

seeking Palestinians have been killed at or near its aid-distribution sites by the Israeli army in two months, according to UN officials. The UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) and over 170 NGOs, including Oxfam, Amnesty International, and Doctors Without Borders (MSF), signed a joint statement that calls for an end to 'the deadly Israeli distribution scheme, including the so-called Gaza Humanitarian Foundation', and a return to UN-led coordination mechanisms.

'No stalemate in ceasefire talks'
Israel, meanwhile, has denied re-

ports claiming a stalemate in ceasefire negotiations in the Qatari capital and reported progress in the talks, according to an official statement.

According to Channel 12 on Monday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said in a statement that progress has been made during the indirect negotiations between the Israeli team and Hamas in Doha.

The talks are taking place in a 'positive atmosphere', the statement added.

The Israeli army told the political echelon on Monday that 'achieving war goals is currently impossible' under ongoing cease-

fire talks and 'the priority should be on returning hostages', according to army radio.

At least 10 killed in Gaza

At least 10 people were killed and several others injured in a series of Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip since early Monday, according to medical sources.

Six people, one of them a toddler, were killed and 15 others injured in a strike that targeted a clinic-turned-shelter in the Al-Rimal neighbourhood of Gaza City, a medical source told Anadolu.

In the southern Gaza City, the

Israeli army struck a residential apartment in the Tel al-Hawa neighbourhood, resulting in the death of a Palestinian and injuring several others, medical sources and witnesses said.

A medical source from Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital said three people were killed and others injured when the Israeli army targeted a house in the al-Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza Strip.

Four others sustained critical injuries after the Israeli army hit a tent sheltering displaced Palestinians in Deir al-Balah, the source added.

Anadolu Agency



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov

Russia condemns Israeli-US strikes against Iran

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov condemned Israeli-US strikes against Iran during a meeting on Sunday with his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

"The Russian side reaffirmed its condemnation of the unprovoked military strikes by Israel and the United States on Iranian territory, carried out in violation of the UN Charter and international law, including the bombing of the country's nuclear energy infrastructure facilities under IAEA guarantees," Tass news agency reported on Sunday, citing a statement from the Russian Foreign Ministry.

Lavrov expressed Moscow's readiness to support Iran in finding 'mutually acceptable solutions, including within the framework of specific initiatives previously proposed by Russian President Vladimir Putin'.

A conflict between Israel and Iran erupted on June 13, when Israel launched airstrikes on Iranian military, nuclear and civilian sites, killing at least 935 people. The Iranian Health Ministry said 5,332 people were injured.

Tehran launched retaliatory missile and drone strikes, killing at least 29 people and wounding more than 3,400, according to figures released by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The conflict ended with a US-sponsored ceasefire that took effect on June 24.

The Russian foreign minister also held separate talks with his Brazilian counterpart Mauro Vieira and his Indian counterpart Subrahmanyam Jaishankar on the margins of the BRICS Summit.

Lavrov and Vieira held talks on global matters and 'discussed the schedule of upcoming Russian-Brazilian contacts at various levels and aligned their positions on the main areas of cooperation between Moscow and Brasilia at key multilateral platforms, including preparations for the 30th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework

Convention on Climate Change', Tass cited the Russian Foreign Ministry as saying.

Meanwhile, during their meeting, Lavrov and Jaishankar reaffirmed their countries' commitment to developing a privileged strategic partnership and also exchanged views on international issues, Tass said, citing the ministry.

The two also discussed the schedule of upcoming Russian-Indian engagements and particular emphasis was placed on enhancing cooperation within BRICS, taking into account India's upcoming presidency in 2026 and the 'positive results' of Brazil's current leadership, it added.

Iran 'at height of readiness'

Meanwhile, an adviser to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said on Monday that Iran

Russia's FM Sergey Lavrov condemned Israeli-US strikes against Iran during a meeting with Iranian FM Abbas Araghchi on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro

still possesses sufficient military capability to strike Israel daily for two years.

"Our armed forces are at the height of their readiness," Major General Ebrahim Jabbari told the semi-official Mehr news agency. "Currently, the warehouses, underground missile bases, and facilities we have are so enormous that we have yet to demonstrate the majority of our defence capabilities and effective missiles," he said.

"In case of a war with Israel and the US, our facilities will not run out even if we launch missiles at them every day for two years."

Anadolu Agency

12 Turkish soldiers die of methane gas poisoning in Iraq

Istanbul, Turkey - Turkey said on Monday that a dozen soldiers had died of methane gas poisoning after being exposed to the substance while searching a cave in northern Iraq for a soldier shot dead by Kurdish fighters three years ago.

The Defence Ministry gave an initial death toll of eight, but later raised it.

"Four others of our heroic comrades in arms, affected by methane gas, have died ... bringing the total number of victims to 12," the ministry said on X.

Methane is a colourless, odourless, flammable gas that can cause asphyxiation in sufficient concentration.

What else did Turkey say?

"During a search operation in a cave ... previously known to have been used as a hospital... 19 of our personnel were ex-



The Turkish military maintains a presence in northern Iraq

posed to methane gas," the ministry said on Sunday.

It said other soldiers also exposed to the gas in the cave had been taken to the hospital for treatment.

The ministry said the incident took place in the 'Claw-Lock Operation region' - a

reference to an operation launched against the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, in northern Iraq in April 2022 to clear militants holed up in caves along the border.

It said the soldier whose body was being looked for had been killed by 'terrorist gunfire'.

Long-running conflict with PKK

Turkey and the PKK have waged a 40-year conflict that has often spilled over into Iraq and Syria, with an estimated 40,000 people losing their lives. The cave where the incident occurred is located at an altitude of 852 metres

and had previously been used by the PKK as a field hospital.

Recovery teams have been searching the area for the past three years. Turkey is currently in talks with the PKK on ending the conflict after the group agreed to halt its armed struggle.

DW

Libyan PM Dbeibeh says government determined to eliminate militias

Tripoli, Libya - Libyan Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh said his government is continuing with its security plan and will not back down from eliminating militias and armed formations.

Armed formations that are not affiliated with the national defence and interior ministries emerged in Libya after 2011 due to the effects of security conditions, Dbeibeh said in an interview with Libya's al-Ahrar TV channel which was published on Monday.

"We are continuing our security plan. We will not back down from eliminating militias and armed formations. Who-

ever does not want war to be declared against them must abide by the state, its institutions and laws," he said.

He said they had hoped these formations would join state institutions, but it did not happen.

"What these armed groups are doing is a coup against the state, not the government," he said.

"We have seized some of the planes that these formations use in illegal activities. The number of these formations does not exceed two or three, and they operate entirely as organised criminal gangs.



Libyan Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh

"The weapons in the hands of these formations are more than the weapons in the hands

of the state and have been used to blackmail official institutions," Dbeibeh added.

We will not back down from eliminating militias and armed formations. Whoever does not want war to be declared against them must abide by the state, its institutions and laws

ABDUL HAMID DBEIBEH

Noting that the chief prosecutor has issued around 125 arrest warrants for suspects from the Rada militia group currently in the vicinity of Mitiga Airport, he highlighted that their fight against armed formations other than the military and police will continue.

Dbeibeh said the government's policy is clear and that all ports and airports will be affiliated with the relevant state institutions.

"The time has come to take back the state, and we will not leave any airport, port or prison outside the state's control."

Asked about Libya's relations with Turkey, Dbeibeh said they are 'very good', with also 'very good' mutual trade.

"We have very good political relations that are in line with the interests of Libya," he said.

Dbeibeh added that he respected the views of anti-government protesters in Tripoli but they would not allow anyone to block roads and burn garbage. Following the killing of Abdelghani 'Ghneiwa' al-Kikli, the commander of the Stability Support Unit in Tripoli, on May 12, heavy clashes erupted in the Libyan capital.

Anadolu Agency

Death toll from flash floods in US state of Texas rises to 82

Texas/Istanbul - The death toll from flash floods in the US state of Texas has risen to 82, including 28 children, according to a media report late on Sunday.

The tally includes 68 deaths in Kerr County, six deaths in Travis County, three deaths in Burnet County, two deaths each in Kendall and Williamson counties and one death in Tom Green County.

Airborne rescue teams in Texas have been working non-stop since the deadly floods to search for survivors in the Hill Country region, one person involved in the effort told CNN.

Earlier Sunday, President Donald Trump said he plans to visit Texas later this week.

"Probably on Friday. We wanted to leave a little time. I would've done it today, but we'd just be in their way - probably Friday," he told reporters in Morristown, New Jersey.

Ahead of his announcement of a potential visit, Trump said he signed a major disaster declaration for Kerr County 'to ensure that our Brave First Responders immediately have the resources they need'.

Deadly storms lash northern Italy

One person was killed and dozens of others were injured as violent storms swept across northern Italy over the weekend, triggering widespread flooding, landslides, and transport disruptions. One woman was killed in



Milan after being struck by a falling tree, while firefighters responded to thousands of calls across multiple regions, Italian news agency Rai reported on Monday.

Authorities issued an orange-level weather alert for Lombardy, Veneto, and Friuli Venezia Giulia on Sunday, warning of intense thunderstorms, strong winds, and the risk of

flash floods. A yellow alert remains in place for several other regions, including Campania, Lazio, Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, Liguria, and Trentino-Alto Adige.

In Lombardy, firefighters carried out more than 500 interventions since Saturday afternoon, mainly in the provinces of Bergamo, Brescia, Milan, and Varese.

Operations included the removal of dangerous trees, response to water damage, and securing unstable structures.

Typhoon Danas hit Taiwan

At least two people were killed and more than 330 injured as Typhoon Danas hit Taiwan, local media reported on Monday, citing the Central Emergency Operation Centre.

The typhoon made landfall in Budai Township of Chiayi County in southern Taiwan late on Sunday before weakening to a tropical storm early on Monday, according to Focus Taiwan News. It brought heavy storms, winds and torrential rain in the region, triggering evacuation of some 3,483 people.

The deaths were reported in Tainan, where one patient died after a power outage caused by the storm, and another was killed by a falling tree.

According to the emergency centre, some 2,270 storm-related incidents were reported across the affected region.

Agencies

China calls on BRICS to be vanguard in advancing global governance reform

Rio de Janeiro/Beijing - Chinese Premier Li Qiang urged BRICS countries on Sunday to strive to become the vanguard in advancing the reform of global governance by upholding 'independence and self-reliance' and focusing on development and economic growth, state media reported.

Addressing the plenary session of 'Peace and Security and Reform of Global Governance' of the 17th BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, he called on the economic bloc to safeguard world peace and tranquillity and promote the peaceful settlement of disputes, said Xinhua News Agency.

Leaders of BRICS countries attended the meeting, which was presided over by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Li said that at present, changes unseen in a century are unfolding at an accelerated pace, international rules and order are being severely challenged, and the authority and efficacy of multilateral institutions continue to wane.

The leaders of countries participating in the meeting said that in an increasingly turbulent world where unilateralism and protectionism are on the rise, BRICS countries should enhance solidarity and coordination, defend



The leaders of countries participating in the meeting said in an increasingly turbulent world where unilateralism and protectionism are on the rise, BRICS countries should enhance solidarity and coordination, and defend purposes and principles of UN Charter

the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, uphold and practice multilateralism and make greater contribution to promoting common development, improving global governance, and fostering lasting peace and prosperity in the world, the report said.

Li said that as the leading force of the Global South, BRICS countries should 'uphold independence and self-reliance, demonstrate a sense of responsibility and play a greater role in building consensus and synergies'.

He called on the bloc to 'hold fast to morality and justice and seek fundamental solutions based on the merits of each issue'.

BRICS countries should also focus on development and bolster the drivers of economic growth, he said, adding they should actively spearhead development cooperation and tap into the growth potential of emerging sectors.

China stands ready to join hands with other BRICS countries to promote global governance in a 'more just, equitable, efficient and orderly direction, working collectively to build a better world', Li said.

Later, the meeting adopted the Rio de Janeiro Declaration of the 17th BRICS Summit.

'Normal defence ties with Pakistan'

China on Monday said its defence and military cooperation with Pakistan was 'normal', urging regional stability in South Asia.

"China and Pakistan are traditional, good neighbours, and co-operation on defence and military is normal cooperation (that) does not target any third country," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning told a live-streamed news conference in Beijing.

She was responding to questions on ties between Islamabad and Beijing in the wake of the latest hostilities between India and Pakistan, which fired missiles across the border in May.

"The judgement varies from person to person," Mao replied when pressed by a reporter about China's ties with Pakistan.

As neighbours, the spokeswoman said, India and Pakistan 'cannot be moved away', and 'we support the two countries for dialogue and consultation to properly handle their differences and disagreements, and jointly maintain the peace and stability of the region'.

"China will continue to play a constructive role to this end."

On improving ties with New Delhi, Mao said: "China-India relationship is in a critical moment of improvement... of development. We would like to work with India to promote the steady and sound growth of the China-India relationship."

Separately, Mao said Beijing had lodged a protest with New Delhi over the issue of the Dalai Lama.

"The 14th Dalai Lama is a political exile, who has long engaged in anti-China separatist activities and attempted to separate Xizang from China under the cover of religion," said Mao.

China refers to Tibet as Xizang.

India should 'appreciate the great sensitivity of Xizang-related issues... honour the commitment it has made to China on issues related to Xizang... act prudently, and stop using this issue to meddle in China's internal issues. China has protested against India over the issue,' said the spokeswoman.

Anadolu Agency

India: Bridge washed away in Uttarkashi

Uttarkashi, India - A bridge at Ojri on the national highway leading to Yamunotri in Uttarakhand's Uttarkashi district was washed away due to heavy rainfall in the region on Monday, officials said.

The incident, which occurred on Monday morning, has disrupted road connectivity to Yamunotri, Uttarkashi Police said, adding that restoration work is underway.

Meanwhile, heavy rains lashed parts of Rudraprayag district on Monday morning.

Earlier, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) had issued an alert on Sunday for heavy rainfall in Uttarakhand for the next four days. Heavy rainfall is expected in districts including Uttarkashi, Tehri, Bageshwar, Dehradun, and Rudraprayag.

Heavy rainfall in Rudraprayag and adjacent areas of Uttarakhand has increased the water flow in the Alaknanda River.



However, even after the heavy rainfall and increased water flow, the river is still flowing below the danger mark.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami conducted an aerial survey of the disaster-affected Silai Band and Ojri Band stretches along the Yamunotri road in Uttarkashi district on Sunday. The recent heavy rains had caused sections of the national highway to be washed away, disrupting connectivity to the pilgrimage site.

Last week, the Yamunotri National Highway was blocked at two points between Silai Band and Ojri, severely affecting local travel and pilgrimage traffic. Uttarkashi Police said: "The Yamunotri National Highway is blocked at two places between Silai Band and Ojri. It may take time to restore the route."

ANI

SA police clash over murder probes

Johannesburg, SA - South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's focus at the BRICS summit in Brazil was jolted back home on Sunday after a top police officer made allegations implicating the country's police minister.

Provincial Commissioner Lieutenant General Nhlanhla Mkhwanazi accused Police Minister Senzo Mchunu and other senior officials of interfering in investigations into political assassinations to shield politically connected people.

Mkhwanazi, who oversees police operations in KwaZulu-Natal province and previously served as acting national police commissioner, also accused other officials of obstructing police work against organised crime.

Mchunu has denied the allegations as 'insinuations made without evidence or due processes', the AFP news agency reported.

Ramaphosa described the matter as one of 'grave national security concern' and said it



was 'receiving the highest priority attention'.

"It is vital that the integrity of the country's security services is safeguarded and that the rule of law is affirmed," the president said in a statement late on Sunday.

Ramaphosa urged to act

Politicians across the political spectrum have called on the president to take action.

The Democratic Alliance (DA), the second-largest party in Ramaphosa's governing coalition, has called for an urgent debate in Parliament on corruption in the South African Police Service (SAPS).

"Our country will never win against violent crime, and our streets will never be safe, until the SAPS has robust integrity management inside and out," said the DA's Ian Cameron, who also chairs Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Police.

Another lawmaker on the committee, David Skosana of the uMkhonto weSizwe party, urged Mkhwanazi to lay charges against Mchunu within 24

Police Minister Senzo Mchunu and other senior officials are accused of interfering in investigations into political assassinations to shield politically connected people

hours.

The Economic Freedom Fighters called for the immediate suspension of Mchunu and Deputy National Police Commissioner for Crime Detection Lt. Gen. Shadrack Sibiya, who has also been implicated.

The Inkatha Freedom Party, whose deputy chief whip in Parliament, Khethamabala Sithole, was shot dead in what appeared to be a political killing in May, wants the president to appoint an independent commission of inquiry.

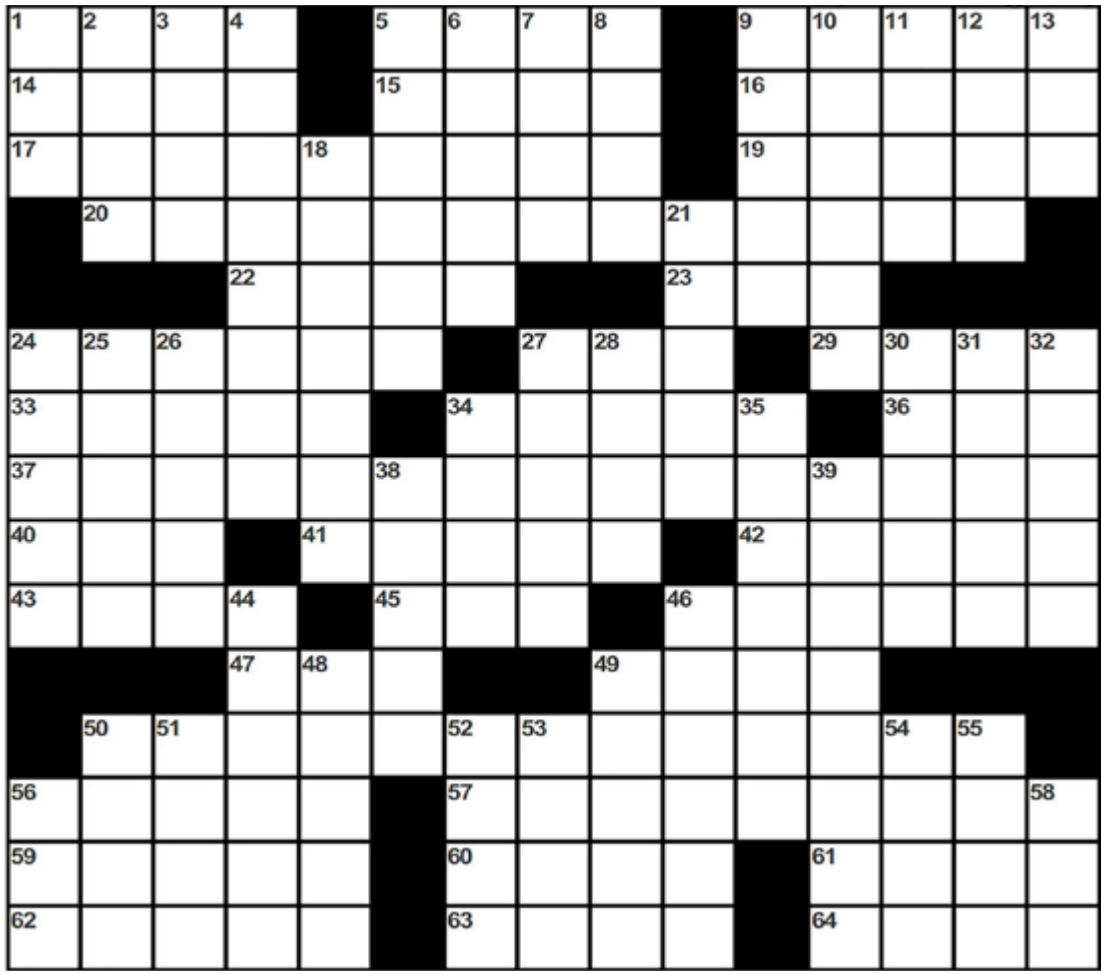
"The collective integrity of the SAPS has been alleged to be wholly compromised, and the country has every reason to be worried," the party said.

South Africa has one of the highest crime rates in the world.

A report released last year by the Switzerland-based Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime documented a 108% increase in targeted killings, particularly political killings at the local municipal level, over the past decade.

DW

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Hint to a boring speaker
 - 5) Admitting customers
 - 9) Small container for liquids
 - 14) Non-clashing shade
 - 15) Amusement park attraction
 - 16) Fish trickers
 - 17) Profound transformation
 - 19) Chilean range
 - 20) Organizational offshoot
 - 22) "Cogito _ sum"
 - 23) British mil. flyers
 - 24) This direction
 - 27) Doctor's due
 - 29) Cooling-off time?
 - 33) Doughboy's ally
 - 34) Begot
 - 36) Floral neckpiece
 - 37) Grammarian's no-no
 - 40) Before, back and forth
 - 41) Maternally related
 - 42) Non-P.C. spin doctors
 - 43) Miss Universe's wrap
 - 45) "This tastes awful!"
 - 46) Skiers' surfaces
 - 47) First word of the Lord's

- Prayer
- 49) Spin like_
 - 50) "I do," for the divorced
 - 56) Glittery headpiece
 - 57) Beating at Indy
 - 59) Assumed name
 - 60) Affording no hope
 - 61) Bit of physics
 - 62) Touch up roots
 - 63) Calls, in poker
 - 64) "... we forget ... "
- DOWN**
- 1) "Affinnative"
 - 2) Bullets in poker
 - 3) Sandwich bread alternative
 - 4) Spherical cellular bodies
 - 5) Tree-dwelling primates
 - 6) Type of bean or horse
 - 7) Advantage
 - 8) Not once, poetically
 - 9) Santa_ Calif.
 - 10) Election decider, at times
 - 11) Language of Lahore
 - 12) Slip through the cracks
 - 13) Big dictionary section
 - 14) Bewhiskered
 - 21) Wet behind the ears
 - 24) Altar locales
 - 25) Dried coconut meat
 - 26) Gets one's dander up
 - 27) Liquor purchase
 - 28) Buffalo's water
 - 30) Walk with_ (hobble)
 - 31) Flood control
 - 32) Property securities
 - 34) Hosiery annoyance
 - 35) Graduation handout
 - 38) Become accustomed (to)
 - 39) Like rain forests
 - 44) Shout of encouragement
 - 46) They may brew at sea
 - 48) Tsar's edict
 - 49) "The Sopranos" restaurateur
 - 50) Digestive juice
 - 51) Kitchen foray
 - 52) Egg drinks
 - 53) Without admixtures
 - 54) Something to build on
 - 55) "The Dukes of Hazard" spin-off
 - 56) What a steamroller flattens
 - 58) It's eight hrs. later than PST

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Your instincts steer you in the right direction today because you don't hesitate or question your judgment. In fact, your trust in your intuition can lead you to some big wins right now, so get involved in competitions you find in any realm. Whether it's an impromptu race up the stairs at work or a big new home project, your skills and talents are honed to a winning edge.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Your energy puts you front and center, just where you want to be. Soak up the warmth of the spotlight and get ready to rock your audience with your best moves. Don't worry if you're unprepared. You know you're at your best when you improvise. It's not like you're at a loss when entertaining a crowd, especially with the extra dose of charisma and charm that you've got now.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Adventure is calling, and you always answer in the affirmative. You've got the itch to get out of the house, so if you can, take a little road trip today, even just to a new neighborhood, or maybe even a simple meal from a new-to-you culture can be enough to satisfy your wanderlust. If you've got time, start researching that trip abroad you've been meaning to take.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

It's too easy (and tempting) to get involved in battles of wits today, but be careful not to let it descend to the level of playground fighting. Consider whether there's really any point to debating or if it's really just a way for two people to shout opinions past each other. If you feel absolutely obnoxious, work it out down at the gym. The exercise should do you lots of good.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Give in to that whim. Your organized self loves your schedule, but it's essential for you to leave room for serendipity or that well-planned timetable could start to feel like a prison. If someone wants to take you across town for a quick shopping spree, say yes. If your mate wants to go for a bike ride, say yes. If you want to go outdoors and walk barefoot, definitely say yes!

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

If someone is intent on getting all they can and then some out of you, remind them politely but firmly that you can only give so much and that you are tapped out for now. You're totally within your rights to insist that they back off and give you more room to breathe. Though it's true that you're totally capable of dealing with multitasking, enough is enough for now.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

When you're hanging around with the right people, things start moving faster than you'd have thought possible. The old saying about great minds thinking alike is true, of course, but it gets better: great minds can bring dreams to life just because they think alike. Plant those ideas even if they're only sprouts. With the people you've got, they should mature sooner than you expect.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

It'd be nice if your bank account were as full as your calendar because invitations are coming at an alarm-ing rate! The pleasure of your company is required by seemingly everyone you know, and maybe a few people who don't know you yet, but are dying to meet you. Whatever you've got on the schedule, you should have fun. It's also a great time to head outdoors with your friends if that can be managed.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Someone's got definite ideas how things need to be, and they could be holding everything in stasis for now. Could it be you? While you usually are pretty easygoing and a proponent of radical change, today's odd personal energy may have you wagging your finger, holding your ground and refusing to budge. Loosen up a bit, and get back to your standard operating procedures.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Did you really just spout off that shocking one-liner in the middle of the workday? What made you decide to wear that bright red outfit outdoors? Surely you're joking. You're not actually taking off on a spontaneous road trip, are you? It may all be true because you're feeling daring and quite unlike your usual reserved self. Even better, you're determined to enjoy it!

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

A work situation could get pretty serious if you keep bringing up your authority issues. While your concerns are valid and definitely need to be addressed, it's best to save them for a while until a time when you can get along better with those in power and they aren't so sensitive. Not only do you save yourself a ton of trouble, you might even see some positive change.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Are your colleagues snooping around looking for clues or distraction? Politely tell them to buzz off so you can concentrate on your workload. You have a say in how you're treated, of course, so you don't have to let them make big demands of you as if they can shed their responsibilities. If they just don't stop hovering, you need to get up and take a walk until it's safe to come back.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Where is the 2.5-acre (10,000 m2) landscaped area dedicated to the memory of musician John Lennon, called "Strawberry Fields"?

A. Next to the airport, Liverpool
B. Central Park, New York City
C. Hyde Park, London
D. Candlestick Park, San Francisco

02. What is the engineering term for the slope of a structure, slightly out of the vertical?

A. Batter
B. Slide
C. Fletch
D. Strom

03. The Gregorian calendar was named after what public figure at the time?

A. King of France
B. Britain's Astronomer Royal
C. Pope
D. Holy Roman Emperor

Answers: 1. B 2. A 3. C

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

M	S	R	L
P	P	S	O
P	E	L	R
I	A	A	R

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

SOLUTION

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

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

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

RIGHT ROAD TO GLORY

Hakimi’s impact on offence and defence on the right wing drives PSG’s title charge

Atlanta, US - In front of almost 70,000 fans in Atlanta, time was ticking down on the FIFA Club World Cup quarter-final showdown between Paris Saint-Germain and Bayern Münch. PSG were clinging to the narrowest of leads, but the red cards shown to Willian Pachó and Lucas Hernandez had breathed new life into Bayern’s hopes of forcing a dramatic equaliser. Time, however, was not on their side – the clock was ticking down mercilessly.

artful, but just as decisive. Faced by Konrad Laimer and with Serge Gnabry closing in, he squared the ball to Ousmane Dembele, who hammered home a right-footed strike to shatter any remaining Bavarian belief. “After beating my man, I looked up to cross. I spotted Ousmane and gave it to him because I knew he would make the difference,” Hakimi explained after the match.

The versatile Moroccan has been one of the shining lights for

While disciplined in his defensive duties, the Atlas Lion is at his most dangerous when given licence to surge forward into the spaces created by PSG’s constant rotation

In the fifth minute of second-half stoppage time, the German side threw bodies forward. Achraf Hakimi was cornered near the touchline, surrounded by red shirts. The obvious move would have been to run down the clock, shield the ball, play safe. But Hakimi did not do the obvious. Marked by the tireless Harry Kane, he lowered his head and burst forward, leaving Dayot Upamecano and Thomas Müller grasping at air.

There was a kind of poetry in the way he glided past them, the three already in his rear-view mirror. What followed was less

the European champions, who now stand just two matches from parlaying continental success into global glory. Starting at right-back, Hakimi’s presence is felt across the entire attacking line in Luis Enrique’s fluid system.

While disciplined in his defensive duties, the Atlas Lion is at his most dangerous when given licence to surge forward into the spaces created by PSG’s constant rotation. Whether on the inside or hugging the touchline, he can play the role of winger, full-back, wing-back and even the furthest man forward, ghosting into the box to become the focal point of



Achraf Hakimi’s attacking intelligence and defensive discipline makes him one the best in his position

the attack.

This tactical versatility adds another layer to Enrique’s structure. “Today, Hakimi played more in his natural position,” the Spanish coach explained. “There was no time for him to drift into other areas with the opposition pressing us. When we attack, we look to occupy as many spaces as possible, and mobility is one of our biggest strengths. In that sense, Haki interprets the role perfectly.”

“The coach gives me a lot of freedom, which suits me,” Hakimi told FIFA after the match at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium. “Thanks to him, I’ve improved a lot. He’s helped me reach a level of play I never imagined. It’s made a big difference.”

The full-back’s attacking influence has been a hallmark of a glittering 2024-25 campaign. He scored four goals and provided eight assists in Ligue 1 and registered another four goals and five assists in the Champions League.

The 26-year-old’s contributions have not slowed at the Club World Cup, where he found the net in the 2-0 win over Seattle Sounders that secured the side’s place in the play-off stage, scored one of the four against Inter Miami and now has an assist for that Dembele settler in the last eight. In total, he has racked up 11 goals and 15 assists since the start of the 2024-25 campaign.

Hakimi, who was also instrumental in Morocco’s historic run to the semi-finals at the Qatar World Cup, knows his way around the penalty area. “When I was a kid, I started out as a striker,” he said. “Those aren’t skills you forget.”

A massive lesson: Pochettino takes positives despite final defeat

Houston, US - The United States came up short in the CONCACAF Gold Cup final on Sunday with a 2-1 loss to Mexico but will take valuable lessons from the tournament as they build towards next year’s World Cup, coach Mauricio Pochettino said.

Pochettino told reporters that while it had been a painful night for his side the



Mauricio Pochettino

ment had been excellent preparation for the 2026 World Cup, which the U.S. will co-host with Mexico and Canada.

“It was a massive lesson for us. It was an amazing tournament to realize in the way that we wanted to grow,” he added.

“This is the way that I think we are going to find the way to compete better and better, and be very competitive and be in the place that we wanted to be.

“When you lose a trophy or you lose a game it’s really, really painful.”

Chelsea’s Palmer puts cold spell behind him

Philadelphia, US - Enzo Maresca has used the FIFA Club World Cup to explore new ideas and tinker with his lineup. The Chelsea FC coach’s experimentation has made Cole Palmer his most prominent guinea pig.

In Palmer’s first three tournament games, Maresca started him in three different positions as the No 10, right-sided winger and then left-sided winger. The Blues talisman returned to a central role as an attacking midfielder in the quarter-final against Palmeiras.

Part of the reason for Palmer’s changing role was Maresca’s desire to get midfielders Moisés Caicedo, Enzo Fernandez and Romeo Lavia on the pitch together, a goal that Maresca achieved in the last 16 against SL Benfica. In his coach’s search for different solutions, Palmer has found his footing in the Chelsea attack.



Cole Palmer

The 23-year-old England international’s influence is being felt again, most notably on the scoresheet.

He recorded his first assist of the Club World Cup in the Blues’ 4-1 extra-time victory against Benfica, and he scored his first goal of the tournament in the a 2-1 win against Palmeiras.

Being moved from one side of the pitch to the other by Maresca seems to have restored Palmer’s confidence and lifted him out of the doldrums that plagued his second campaign at Stamford Bridge.

“Cole can play both sides,” Maresca explained the day before the Blues booked their semi-final spot against Fluminense FC and former Chelsea captain Thiago Silva. “He was playing against Benfica in the left pocket. He used to play in the right pocket. He just changed right and left.”

Mexico edge US to win Gold Cup title

Houston, US - Mexico defeated the United States 2-1 at NRG Stadium in Houston, Texas on Sunday to successfully defend their CONCACAF Gold Cup crown and capture their 10th title in a pulsating final that delivered drama from start to finish.

The U.S. went ahead just four minutes in when Sebastian Berhalter’s free-kick found Chris Richards, whose powerful header struck the underside of the crossbar and cannoned straight down, with the referee confirming the goal was good.

Mexico found the equaliser through Raul Jimenez in the 27th minute after the striker converted from close range.

He then dedicated the goal to the late Diogo Jota, his former Wolverhampton Wanderers teammate, by holding up a Mexico shirt with the Portuguese forward’s name on it.

“We came from behind and are leaving with the title,”



Mexico players celebrate with the CONCACAF Gold Cup trophy

Jimenez said. “It’s great and really important to clinch the crown a summer before the World Cup. It’s something we’ve been trying to do since the tournament began.”

Despite Mexico’s first-half dominance they struggled to capitalise on numerous golden opportunities.

The U.S. created chances through the slick combination play of Malik Tillman and Berhalter but could not breach Mexico’s resolute defence again.

Alex Freeman came closest when his header struck Mexico goalkeeper Luis Malagon in the face and Diego Luna blazed the rebound over the crossbar.

Coach Renato turns Fluminense into Club World Cup challengers

New York, US - Brazilian football’s ultimate showman Renato Portaluppi has transformed Club World Cup underdogs Fluminense from relegation battlers to giant-killers in three months, setting up a blockbuster semi-final with Chelsea on Tuesday.

The charismatic 62-year-old, known as Renato Gaúcho, has helped them defy the odds to knock out Champions League runners-up Inter Milan in the last 16 and Al-Hilal in the quarter-finals with his trademark extravagant guidance from the touchline. Renato was one of Brazilian soccer’s most popular and polarising figures before taking over a Fluminense team that had barely avoided relegation in the Brazilian league last year.

Now his standing has grown

stronger after guiding one of the tournament’s biggest underdogs this far.

The former striker, who scored almost 200 goals in a career spanning two decades, has never been short of confidence or controversy. A textbook egomaniac, Renato once declared that he was “better than Cristiano Ronaldo.”

His playing heroics included scoring with his belly one of the

most iconic goals in the country’s history - the winner that gave Fluminense the 1995 Rio de Janeiro championship in a breathtaking 3-2 derby victory over Romario’s Flamengo.

The next morning, he graced the front page of Brazil’s most popular newspaper wearing a crown with a sceptre in one hand and a ball in the other under the headline ‘King of Rio.’

A decade earlier, he was the



Renato Gaúcho

hero of his childhood club Gremio, guiding them to their first Copa Libertadores and Intercontinental Cup titles as a young player.

From humble beginnings, he bought a house for each of his 11 siblings with the bonus he received. Over 30 years later, Renato became the first Brazilian to adorn his living room with a Libertadores trophy as a player and another as a coach, guiding Gremio to the South American title in 2017 after winning the Brazilian Cup the previous year, and ending a 15-year title drought for his beloved club.

But Renato’s career has been marked by dramatic ups and downs due to his strong personality and emotional outbursts.

He was famously excluded

from Brazil’s World Cup squad in 1986 for allegedly leaving the training camp to go partying, and was later kicked out of Botafogo after organising a barbecue at his home for the opposition Flamengo squad after a humiliating defeat in the final of the Brazilian championship.

A coach since 2000, Renato is an exceptional motivator, which is arguably why he has experienced great success in knockout tournaments but has never claimed the Brazilian league, the big trophy that he has yet to win.

Portaluppi has been a great opponent of the latest trend towards having foreign coaches in Brazilian soccer, arguing that the clubs have more patience with outsiders, giving them more time to work.



Aryna Sabalenka

Sabalenka battles past Mertens to reach quarterfinals; Norrie wins thriller

London, England - Women's top seed Aryna Sabalenka survived tough test to reach the Wimbledon quarterfinals and Cameron Norrie kept alive British singles hopes after surviving a five-set thriller on Sunday.

Sabalenka ruined home favourite Emma Raducanu's dream in the previous round but had the Centre Court crowd cheering her on as she beat Elise Mertens 6-4 7-6(4) in a high-quality duel.

Spaniard Alcaraz defeated Russian 14th seed Andrey Rublev 6-7(5) 6-3 6-4 6-4, and will take on Norrie for a place in the semi-finals after the unseeded Briton soaked up 46 aces from towering Chilean Nicolas Jarry to win a feisty Court One battle 6-3 7-6(4) 6-7(7) 6-7(5) 6-3.

Sabalenka is eyeing her first title on the London lawns after missing last year's tournament with injury and the victory im-

proved her win-loss record against Belgian Mertens to 11-2 and she said the growing adoration of the crowd made a big difference after fans were on the other side of the fence when she met Raducanu on Friday.

"I definitely felt the support. It was so amazing playing and feeling the support.

"I didn't have to pretend that they were cheering for me because they were really cheering for me," said Sabalenka, who will face the 37-year-old German Laura Siegemund in the quarter-finals.

Siegemund, the second-oldest player to start in the women's draw this year, swatted aside plucky Argentine lucky loser Solana Sierra with a 6-3 6-2 victory in a Court Two match interrupted by the heavy showers that prompted organisers to shut the roofs for the day's play on Centre Court and Court One.



Carlos Alcaraz hits a return to Andrey Rublev during their round-of-16 match at Wimbledon on Sunday

Reigning champion quells Rublev's challenge to reach Wimbledon quarters

London, England - Carlos Alcaraz came through a ferocious fourth-round firefight against a red-hot Andrey Rublev to win 6-7(5) 6-3 6-4 6-4 and keep his bid for a third successive Wimbledon title on track on Sunday.

The Spanish second seed stuttered in his opening three rounds but found his best form to eventually subdue an inspired opponent who once again came up short against the very best.

Rublev rocked Alcaraz by roaring into a 4-1 lead only to be pegged back but the Russian produced some astonishing tennis to snatch the tiebreak and move

Andrey is one of the most powerful players we have on Tour and is so aggressive with the ball. It's really difficult to face him, he forces you to the limit on each point

CARLOS ALCARAZ

ahead.

Alcaraz never looked ruffled though and levelled the match after Rublev double-faulted on a break point. Rublev continued throwing everything in his arsenal at the champion in the third set but paid for not taking some early

"Andrey is one of the most powerful players we have on Tour and is so aggressive with the ball. It's really difficult to face him, he forces you to the limit on each point," Alcaraz, bidding to become only the fourth man to win back-to-back French Open and Wimbledon titles multiple times, said on court.

"Really happy with the way I moved and played intelligent and smart tactically. A really good match all round."

With so many seeds having fallen early, this was the first match between top-20 players in the men's singles this year and it

did not disappoint as the quality scaled rare heights.

Rublev, 27, has barely been outside of the top 10 since 2022 but has never got close to winning a Grand Slam, losing all 10 quarter-finals that he has contested.

The 14th seed must have sighed when he saw Alcaraz in his way in the fourth round, but he came out in positive fashion, off-loading rockets at the five-time Grand Slam champion.

With the roof closed after earlier thunderstorms the noise of the ball striking strings sounded like rifle shots.

Wimbledon line-calling system comes under fire

London, England - Wimbledon's automated line-calling technology came under fire on Sunday after an embarrassing malfunction robbed Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova of a point during her last-16 victory over Britain's Sonay Kartal on Centre Court.

Russian Pavlyuchenkova had reached game point at 4-4 in the opening set when Kartal hit a shot that looked clearly long but there was no call and Pavlyuchenkova stopped play.

An automated voice call of "STOP STOP" rang out and confusion reigned as umpire Nico Helwerth sought advice from tournament organisers via telephone.

Television replays showed that Kartal's shot was clearly out, yet Helwerth ruled that because the Hawk-Eye technology had not tracked the ball, the point needed to be replayed.



Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova was unhappy with umpire Nico Helwerth after she was asked to replay a point

the game from me".

The 34-year-old quickly recovered and showed the resilience that has marked her long career by reaching the quarter-finals with a 7-6(3) 6-4 win.

But the main talking point

was Wimbledon's automated line-calling system that has replaced human judges this year.

Tournament officials later said the problem had been caused by operator error and that the umpire had followed the correct protocols, although Pavlyuchenkova felt that he should have intervened to correct an obvious mistake.

"We were waiting for a decision as the system was down, but I was expecting to hear if they said the ball was in or out," Pavlyuchenkova said.

"Instead they just said, replay the point. It was tricky especially as it was a very crucial moment in the match.

"I expected a different decision. I just thought also the chair umpire could take the initiative. That's why he's there sitting on the chair."

Fritz reaches Wimbledon quarterfinals after Thompson retires with thigh injury

London, England - American fifth seed Taylor Fritz had little trouble in reaching his third Wimbledon quarter-final after his Australian opponent Jordan Thompson retired with a thigh injury at 6-1 3-0 down in their fourth-round meeting on Sunday.

Thompson, who came to the All England Club with a back issue, called for a medical timeout midway through the second set due to an apparent right thigh problem and after three more points decided to call it a day.

Fritz raced through the first set, hardly breaking sweat against his exhausted opponent who had played five-set matches in the first and second rounds and four sets in the previous round.

As the rain began hammering down on the Court One roof, so Fritz began raining down his serve, clinching the first set off the back of three aces. The American is ace king at Wimbledon so far with 79, 14 ahead of the next best - Chilean Nicolas



Taylor Fritz (L) with Jordan Thompson

Jarry.

Fritz broke Thompson easily in the opening game of the second and it was clear the Australian was struggling with his movement. The medical timeout after Fritz clinched another break only delayed the inevitable as the

match was soon brought to a premature end.

"Not the way I wanted to go through, I was excited to play Jordan today, I was excited to play good tennis," Fritz said. "It's sad ... he's been battling out here, playing five-setters, I respect him

Not the way I wanted to go through, I was excited to play Jordan today, I was excited to play good tennis...I respect him for coming out

TAYLOR FRITZ

for coming out ... I feel bad for him and I hope he gets better."

The 27-year-old Fritz, who reached his maiden Grand Slam final last year at the U.S. Open, continues chasing America's dream of a first male winner at Wimbledon since Pete Sampras in 2000 when he next faces 17th-seeded Russian Karen Khachanov.

Fritz has never gone beyond the quarter-finals at Wimbledon but is the dominant player on grass this season having won titles in Stuttgart and Eastbourne.

South Africa's Mulder hits fifth-highest Test score in Zimbabwe Test

Bulawayo, Zimbabwe - South Africa's stand-in captain Wiaan Mulder scored the fifth highest Test score of 367 not out against Zimbabwe on Monday but then declared his side's innings despite being only 34 runs away from the record for the most runs in a Test innings.

Mulder, leading the side for the first time as a depleted team take on their neighbours in a two-test series at Bulawayo's Queens Sports Club, hit 53 boundaries (49 fours and four sixes) in his knock to see

South Africa to 626-5 at lunch on the second day of the second Test.

With plenty of time still left in the test, it was expected he would bat into the second session to chase down Brian Lara's 21-year-old record of 400 not out for the West Indies against England in Antigua but Mulder turned down the chance and declared at lunch, to put Zimbabwe into bat.

The 27-year-old all-rounder had come in at No. 3 with South Africa on 24-2 after being put



Wiaan Mulder celebrates his triple century

into bat on the opening day on Sunday and was 264 not out at the close as he rallied his side to finish the day on 465-4.

He had a fortunate break when on 247 he was bowled, only for a no ball to be called as Tanaka Chivanga had overstepped.

But the rest of Mulder's impressive innings was chanceless as he brought up his 300 in Monday's morning session, off 297 balls for the second fastest triple century in Test cricket.

He then passed Hashim

Amla's record Test score for a South African of 311 not out against England at the Oval in 2012 and got to 350 in 324 balls before going to lunch 367 not out.

It put him fifth in the all-time list, ahead of the likes of fellow triple centurions Gary Sobers and Donald Bradman, and behind Lara (400 not out and 375), Australian Matthew Hayden (380) and Sri Lanka's Mahela Jayawardene, who hit 374 against South Africa in Colombo in 2006.

'If the ball is doing something, you enjoy playing'

India captain Gill says 'the game loses its essence' without help for bowlers

Edgbaston, England - Shubman Gill feels the combination of flat pitches and the quick-to-go-soft Dukes ball is taking away from the essence of Test cricket in England.

After India managed to take 20 wickets - 15 of them in bursts with three new balls - to level the series 1-1, he was asked what he thought of these conditions that happen to have coincided with the Bazball era in England.

"It gets very difficult for the bowlers," Gill said. "Even more than the [pitch], the ball is going soft and out of shape very quickly. I don't know what it is - weather, [pitches] or whatever - but it gets very difficult for the bowlers to get wickets in these conditions. As a team, when you know it is difficult to get wickets and runs



Shubman Gill and his team were in total command in Edgbaston, but the Indian captain feels the bowlers are struggling in England with flat pitches and the quick-to-go-soft Dukes ball

are coming easily, a lot of things are out of your control.

"I think there should be a little help at least. If the ball is doing something, you enjoy playing. If you know there is only 20 overs of any help and then you have to spend the rest of the day on the defensive, thinking how to stop runs, then the game loses its

vious Test.

"Sometimes, especially when you are the captain, I think you need to lead by example so that whenever there is another player in that situation, you can command to that player," Gill said after scoring 269 and 161 at Edgbaston. "This is what the team requires right now and you always

India's batting somewhere near its ruthless best, Gill joked he didn't expect England to roll out such a flat track again. That was when he was asked whether he missed Kuldeep Yadav's wristspin during those dreadful middle overs. He said it wasn't easy for him to leave out a bowler of the quality of Kuldeep, but he felt he needed a bit of the batting depth that Washington Sundar could - and did - provide.

India are not used to playing such long Test matches. The tracks at home aid spin, and when India play away, they are handed green seamers. When asked what he had learnt from these rare back-to-back Tests that practically went to the last session, Gill said India were pleased most of the time was spent by them batting.

"Definitely helped us in a massive way," Gill said. "I would say [there are] not many Test matches when we play in India [that] go for five days. But, luckily, most of the days when we are playing here, we are batting and not fielding, so that's good for us."

I think if you put the team ahead of you, you will always walk in the right direction or walk on the right path and that's what I wanted to do in this match

SHUBMAN GILL

essence."

Gill, though, joked that he didn't mind the relief as a batter after having had a baptism in spicier conditions around the world. In the first Test at Headingley, in pretty much similar conditions, India left runs out in the middle through some casual batting from the lower order. Gill took it upon himself to lead by example after having holed out on 147 in the first innings of the pre-

have to put the team first rather than your personal desires. Or sometimes you want to try some things, but I think if you put the team ahead of you, you will always walk in the right direction or walk on the right path and that's what I wanted to do in this match.

"If a good ball gets me out, it gets me out, but as long as I'm there, I want to play as long as possible."

Having seen the might of

England got toss wrong and was second best, says McCullum

Birmingham, England - England were second-best in all departments in a heavy test loss to India at Edgbaston after they misread the pitch and made the wrong decision at the toss, coach Brendon McCullum said after his team lost by 336 runs on Sunday.

England opted to bowl first but the decision backfired as India, led by skipper Shubman Gill's 269, put 587 runs on the board and followed up with 427 in the

second innings before they declared.

In response, Ben Stokes's side were reduced to 84-5 in the first innings and 83-5 in the second, with the hosts always playing catch-up.

"We ran second for five days, I thought India played exceptionally well. Shubman Gill was at an elite level and played brilliantly on this pitch. We weren't quite able to play how we wanted to on it



Brendon McCullum

and they thoroughly deserved to win," McCullum told the BBC.

"As the game unfolded, we probably looked back on that toss and said did we miss an opportunity there and it's probably fair. We didn't expect that the wicket would play quite as it did and hence we probably got it slightly wrong.

"But we did have them 200-5 and we weren't able to capitalise on that position. When you win

the toss and bowl, you're not anticipating the opposition's going to score 580 and then from that point we're behind the game."

England had sensed an opportunity to go 2-0 up in the series when India rested Jasprit Bumrah to keep him fit for the third Test at Lord's starting on Thursday.

Akash Deep stepped up, however, to take 10 wickets in the match, including six in the second innings.

Australia thrash West Indies in second Test

Grenada - Australia overwhelmed the West Indies by 133 runs in the second Test in Grenada on Sunday to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series with one match remaining.

The touring side dominated after a promising morning for the hosts during which Shamar Joseph gave West Indies hope with a superb four-wicket haul to dismiss Australia for 243.

Set 277 for victory on a deteriorating track, however, the West Indies slumped to 143 all out.

"We never really got those partnerships going," skipper Roston Chase said. "The new ball was the biggest challenge - we lost too many wickets. If we could avoid a few wickets in the first 10-15 overs, we would have a better chance."

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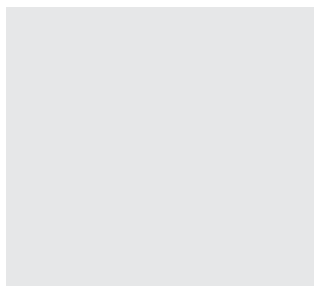
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WEEKEND WARRIOR

Joint mechanics and identity



Dr Biswajit Dutta Baruah
Consultant orthopaedic surgeon,
KIMS Oman

The Friday afternoon clinic was winding down when Ahmed walked in, favouring his right leg. At forty-five, he still carried himself with the confidence of someone used to being in control - bank manager by weekday, team captain by weekend. But today, something in his posture suggested that control was slipping.

"Doctor, I twisted my knee last Friday during football," he began, settling carefully into the chair. "It's been a week, and it's still swollen. I need to know when I can get back on the field."

I examined the joint - moderate swelling, some instability, likely a meniscal tear based on the mechanism of injury. "Let's get an MRI to see exactly what we're dealing with," I suggested. "But tell me, how long have you been playing?"

"Fifteen years with the same group," Ahmed replied, his voice carrying a note of pride. "Every Friday, rain or shine. We've got a tournament coming up in six weeks."

As we discussed his symptoms, I noticed something. Every question about recovery time was followed by a glance at his watch, as if he was calculating not just healing duration

but something more urgent.

"Ahmed, can I ask what concerns you most about this injury?"

He paused, then said, "My teammates are younger now. Some are in their twenties. I'm already the oldest regular player." His fingers drummed against his knee. "If I'm out for months, they might realize they don't need the old guy slowing them down."

There it was - the question behind the question. This wasn't just about joint mechanics; it was about identity, belonging, and the fear of becoming invisible.

"Tell me about these Friday games," I prompted. "What do they mean to you?"

Ahmed's expression softened. "It's

the one place where I'm not 'Mr. Ahmed from the bank.' I'm just... me. The guy who can still nutmeg players half his age, who knows exactly where to place a free kick." He shook his head. "My colleagues my age do talk about their blood pressure and their cholesterol. On the field, I forget I'm forty-five."

I nodded, understanding now why the standard medical timeline wouldn't satisfy him. "Have you talked to your teammates about the injury?"

"They keep asking when I'll be back. I keep saying 'soon,'" he admitted. "But what if 'soon' turns into 'never'? What if this is how it starts - one injury that becomes the beginning of the end?"

The MRI results came back showing a complex meniscal tear - repairable, but requiring arthroscopic surgery and several months of rehabilitation. When I explained this to Ahmed, his face fell.

"So, the tournament..."
"Is probably off the table," I confirmed gently. "But Ahmed, let me ask you something. What would happen if you told your teammates the truth about your recovery timeline?"

He looked puzzled. "What do you mean?"

"What if instead of trying to rush back to prove you belong, you stayed involved in other ways? Coaching younger players, helping with strategy, sharing your experience?"

"I... I hadn't thought about that." "Your value to that team isn't just your physical ability," I continued. "Fifteen years of experience, leadership, understanding the game - those don't disappear with an injury."

Over the following weeks, as Ahmed progressed through surgery and early rehabilitation, something unexpected happened. He started attending games as a coach, analysing plays, and mentoring younger players. When he finally returned to the field four months later, his role had evolved.

"You know what's interesting?" he told me during a follow-up visit. "I thought losing my physical edge would make me irrelevant. Instead, I discovered aspects of the game I'd never paid attention to. And the younger players, they actually seek out my advice now."

"How does that feel?"
"Different. But good different. I'm still part of the team, just in a way I didn't expect."

This conversation stayed with me

because it highlighted something we often miss in medicine - patients frequently ask about physical recovery when they're really asking about identity preservation. Ahmed's real fear wasn't about pain or limited mobility - it was about becoming obsolete, losing his place in a community that defined him.

As healthcare providers, we're trained to fix bodies, but we also need to listen for the deeper questions about belonging, purpose, and self-worth. Sometimes, the most therapeutic intervention isn't surgical technique but helping patients reimagine their identity beyond their physical limitations.

Ahmed taught me that true healing often involves not just returning to who we were, but discovering who we might become. The weekend warrior doesn't have to retire - sometimes, he just needs to redefine what victory looks like.

Patients facing activity-limiting injuries, remember, your worth isn't measured only by what your body can do, but by who you are and what you contribute. Recovery could mean returning to the field, it could also mean finding new ways to stay in the game.

EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION

Understanding neurodiversity in children

The British Business Forum recently hosted a charity golf event raising awareness for neurodiversity. The event attracted over 200 participants and was supported by the team at the Oman Autism Society



What is neurodiversity? Simply put, it is thinking differently which, in turn, can significantly change the way in which we see, feel, and understand the world.

Examples of neurodiversity include Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and

Specific Learning Disabilities, explain Mitul Patel (British Business Forum) and Dr Maryam Akhzami (Oman Autism Society).

The understanding of neurodiversity in children has recently made significant steps forward, they point out. Within Oman, educational institutions are receiving greater demand for

neurodiverse services for children. As a result, we now see facilities such as sensory rooms becoming more common place as well as some schools offering fully bespoke programmes.

For neurodiverse children, accessing a standard educational curriculum can create challenges. These challenges are highlighted when a child is

'dysregulated', which means there is something they need which is preventing them from engaging with their learning. Simpler examples of such needs could include vestibular stimulation which could be jumping on a trampoline or scenery play which would include engaging the senses.

Signs of neurodiversity may in-

clude, but are not limited to, social integration challenges, sensory needs - such as the need to taste and smell objects, and repetitive behaviours. These may be coupled with learning delays, such as speech or motor skills.

Early intervention with a specific diagnosis is crucial for determining the type of support needed. A chal-



Dr Maryam Akhzami



Mitul Patel

lenge faced in the diagnosis process is the reluctance of parents to undergo formal assessments for their children, perhaps, due to the stigma surrounding neurodiversity. Parents may think their child is just 'shy' or believe that they will outgrow their differences and 'catch up' over time.

Such an approach may be compounding the problem as without the right educational resources tailored to their unique needs, neurodiverse children may struggle in a traditional educational setting. This approach may not only hinder their academic development but also potentially their social development as feelings of being misunderstood may develop, leading to social anxiety.

Neurodiversity is not limited to children. It is estimated that 15-20% of the adult population may be neurodiverse.

The Oman Autism Society's dedicated team has been raising awareness on neurodiversity. Through their hard work, they have been driving change and improving the quality of life for many.

(For more details:
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HEAT EXHAUSTION

ARE YOU UNDER THE WEATHER?

It's time to go out to the park or lake and make the most of the bright sunny weather. But at some point, enough is enough and our bodies need a break.

If you spend too much time in the sun, you can get heat exhaustion. And those who work hard in the heat can even suffer heat stroke which often happens without a warning.

The terms heat exhaustion and heat stroke are often confused. Rather than two distinct things, you can see them more as two different degrees of severity relating to your body getting hotter. How does it happen and how do you recognise each? Here are some tips for a safe summer:

What is heat exhaustion?

A lot of sun or the extreme temperatures of heat waves can make your body overheat and lead to heat exhaustion. Heat exhaustion is a heat-related illness, like heat rash, heat cramps or heat stroke. Although less severe than heat stroke, if not properly managed, it can lead to the more serious variant.

A headache is usually the first sign of heat exhaustion. You are hot, your face is red, you sweat a lot, you move more slowly, and you're likely to experience fatigue, nausea and vomiting. You might also feel dizzy or even faint.

What you might not expect: The skin of someone with heat exhaustion is usually not hot, but rather cool.

Signs of heat exhaustion include: cramps or a heat rash, extreme sweating, getting red in the face, and moving more slowly than normal. Signs of heat exhaustion include cramps or a heat rash, extreme sweating, getting red in the face, and moving more slowly than normal

What to do?

First of all, those suffering from heat exhaustion should immediately be taken out of the sun, to a cool place or into the shade, and drink water as quickly as possible. Cold, damp cloths can help cool the body.

In addition, someone with heat exhaustion should drink plenty of fluids to bring hydration levels back to normal. Cold water or sports drinks replenish lost salts, but avoid alcohol and caffeine. These can dehydrate you even more, on top of excessive sweating, which, according to experts, can cause additional fluid loss of up to 2 litres on very hot days.

It's important to know that in severe cases, severe vomiting, confusion or even unconsciousness can occur. If that happens, you should see a doctor, if only to rule out heat stroke.

What is heat stroke?

Heat stroke is more dangerous than heat exhaustion and may occur, for example, when you engage in physical activities in a hot environment or when heat exhaustion is not properly treated.

When it's extremely hot outside, the body absorbs more heat than it can release. The body temperature can rise to 41°C (105.8°F) within 10 to 15 minutes. This acute overheating leads to an inflammatory response throughout the body.

The body's temperature regulation system fails and sweat production, for example, stops. Sweating is how your body helps cool itself, so without it your body temperature starts rising.

Heat stroke is life-threatening. Symptoms include impaired consciousness, headache, dizziness and drowsiness.

Seizures, vomiting, diarrhoea and low blood pressure may also occur. Heat stroke develops within one to six hours and can cause death in less than 24 hours unless properly treated.

In the elderly, chronically ill and children, heat stroke usually occurs because of a combination of high temperatures and severe fluid and electrolyte deficiencies. In healthy adults, too much physical activity in hot sunny weather, such as sports or working outdoors, is what usually causes heat stroke.

What to do?

At the first signs of heat stroke, emergency services should be alerted immediately. The affected person should be taken out of the sun and heat and into a cool or shady place.

Their body should be cooled down as quickly as possible with cold water, ice baths or soaked clothes, and the affected person should be given fluids if possible. Excess clothing should be removed.

If unconscious but breathing normally, the person should be placed in a stable horizontal position until emergency personnel arrive. Regular breathing and consciousness must be checked regularly. If the person is not breathing normally, resuscitation efforts must be started.

Avoiding heat exhaustion and heat stroke

In extremely high temperatures, our body's heat regulation system quickly reaches its limits. In addition, older people often drink too little water. As a result, the body cannot produce enough sweat, which makes it difficult for the body to cool down on its own.

The best way to avoid heat exhaustion or even heat stroke is obvious:

- Don't get too much sun and especially avoid it around midday
- Protect your head with a light-coloured hat
- Avoid exposure to extreme heat if possible and drink plenty of fluids.
- Adults need at least half a litre of water extra on hot days.

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