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Key SDG milestones achieved

Oman has recorded notable progress in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman has recorded a notable progress in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the country's population now surpassing 5.3mn, according to new data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

As of June 2025, Oman's total population stands at 5,303,578, comprising 3,006,387 Omani nationals (56.69%) and 2,297,191 expatriates (43.31%).

The demographic update was released alongside the SDG Statistical Report - May 2025, which confirms that Oman has eradicated extreme poverty, with zero per cent of the population living below the international poverty threshold of US\$1.25 per day - five years ahead of the 2030 deadline.

The report indicates continued economic improvement,

Poverty eradication
Zero per cent below international poverty line (\$1.25/day)

Average monthly household income
RO1,174

Per capita income
RO234

Primary school completion
95.6%

Adult literacy
97.9%

Reduced disaster deaths
0.06 per 100,000 population



with the average monthly household income at RO1,174 and per capita income at RO234.

Health indicators show sustained improvement, with maternal mortality at 17.1 per 100,000 live births and under-five mortality at 11 per 1,000, both meeting global standards.

In education, the primary school completion rate has reached 95.6%, while adult literacy is recorded at 97.9%.

However, the report highlights a gender gap in post-basic education, where 74% of females complete this level compared to 50.4% of males.

In the area of renewable energy,

clean sources now account for 4% of total consumption, following the operational launch of the Ibri solar power plant - a marked increase from zero in 2020.

Oman has also fully implemented its disaster risk and climate mitigation strategies in line with the Sendai Framework.

Disaster-related deaths have declined to 0.06 per 100,000 population, and all wastewater in the country is now treated.

The report positions Oman as a regional example of integrating economic development with social equity and environmental responsibility, reinforcing its commitment to Vision 2040.

Iran, US to resume talks in Muscat on Sunday

Tehran, Iran - Muscat is set to host a fresh round of indirect negotiations between Iran and the United States on Sunday, with Oman once again playing the role of mediator.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei confirmed the upcoming talks, stating that both sides would meet in Muscat for the sixth time, with Omani mediation continuing under the guidance of Foreign Minister H E Sayyid Badr al-Busaidi. Three previous rounds were held in Muscat and two in Rome.

Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister

for Political Affairs, Majid Takht-e-Ravanchi, said Tehran was in the final stages of preparing its written response to a US proposal concerning Iran's nuclear programme.

"We are preparing the response, which has not yet been finalised," Takht-e-Ravanchi told the state-run Islamic Republic News Agency. "Good work has been made on it, and we believe that the response we will provide will be reasonable. We hope it will be completed in the coming days and handed over to Oman's Foreign Minister so he can convey it to the Americans."



09
UK, Canada & allies sanction 2 far-right Israeli ministers



10
Several killed in shooting at school in Austria

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‘Safek Akhdar’ campaign unveiled to attract GCC tourists to Dhofar

Our Correspondent
Salalah

Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) has launched its Khareef Dhofar 2025 promotional campaign titled ‘Safek Akhdar’ or ‘Make Your Summer Green’ - in Kuwait City, as part of its wider efforts to introduce citizens of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to Oman’s most iconic tourist season.

The initiative is designed to highlight the unique tourism offerings of Dhofar governorate during the khareef season, a three-month period that transforms the region into a lush green landscape, offering respite from the sweltering summer temperatures across the Gulf.

Through the campaign, the ministry aims to showcase the exceptional experiences Dhofar has to offer - from its moderate climate and dramatic natural scenery to its deep-rooted cultural heritage. The effort aligns with the ministry’s broader strategy to boost inbound tourism from regional markets.

In a statement, the ministry affirmed its full readiness for the Khareef Dhofar 2025, which will officially begin on June 21 and continue until September 21. Preparations include the rollout of a series of promotional pro-



grammes, alongside close coordination with relevant entities to ensure a seamless and enriching experience for visitors.

Dhofar governorate currently boasts 83 licensed hotel establishments, offering a total of 6,537 rooms - all fully prepared to accommodate the anticipated influx of tourists.

The upcoming season is expected to feature a rich lineup of cultural, entertainment and recreational activities, spread across both existing and newly developed sites to meet the interests of various tourist segments.

The campaign’s timing is especially strategic, as summer

temperatures in many neighbouring countries regularly exceed 40°C. In contrast, Dhofar’s cooler climate and vibrant green landscapes offer a refreshing escape - making it one of the Gulf’s most sought-after seasonal destinations.

Part of a broader promotional strategy, the ‘Make Your Sum-

gement, and participation in key regional travel exhibitions.

Several new and existing venues are being primed to host events during the season. Atin Square, envisioned as a hub for international events, will feature a shopping area, open-air theatre, gaming zones, and lighting and laser shows. Awqad Park will

Through the campaign, the ministry aims to showcase the exceptional experiences Dhofar has to offer - from its moderate climate and dramatic natural scenery to its deep-rooted cultural heritage

mer Green’ campaign supports the ministry’s long-term vision to promote Oman’s diverse tourism offerings - spanning nature, heritage and adventure - across both regional and international markets. These efforts are expected to drive sustained growth in visitor numbers in the years ahead, particularly amid rising interest in sustainable tourism and destinations with a unique environmental and cultural identity.

In parallel with the ministry’s efforts, Dhofar Municipality has also launched targeted marketing campaigns across Gulf markets. These include media advertisements, social media en-

offer family-friendly entertainment, while Salalah Public Park will cater to sports activities. Al Marooj Theatre will host performances by both local and international artistes.

Activities will also extend to other wilayats of Dhofar, incorporating a mix of cultural, sporting and commercial events to further enhance the overall visitor experience.

The 2024 khareef season received over 1mn visitors, marking a 9% increase compared to the previous year - a strong indicator of growing regional interest in Dhofar as a premier seasonal destination.



3,000 wild trees pruned to prepare for khareef season

Our Correspondent
Salalah

Environment Authority (EA) has launched a major tree-pruning initiative in Dhofar governorate ahead of the khareef season, aiming to improve ecosystem health and preserve native vegetation across the region.

The project involves the selective trimming of around 3,000 wild trees, primarily Arabian Combretum and wild fig, in the wilayats of Salalah, Taqah, Mirbat, Rakhiout and Dalkout. The work, which ran through the month of May, will continue through June as well. May-June is a period considered optimal for promoting healthy tree growth and maintaining environmental balance.

Field teams have started operations at multiple natural sites, with early observations pointing to improved growth and branch density.

An official from the authority said over 5,000 trees were pruned in 2023 and 2024 under a broader programme aimed at protecting native flora from pest damage and degradation.

“These efforts are part of a long-term strategy to preserve the governorate’s rich biodiversity and align with the goals of Oman Vision 2040, which emphasises sustainable environmental management and the protection of natural resources,” he said.

The initiative supports Dhofar’s reputation as one of Oman’s key ecotourism destinations.



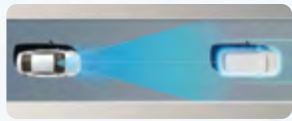
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Khasab records heaviest rainfall in 4 days

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The wilayat of Khasab in Musandam recorded 141mm of rainfall - the highest in the country between June 6 and 9, according to the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries and Water Resources.

Rainfall monitoring stations registered scattered showers across several governorates. Following Khasab, Suhar recorded 41mm, Rustaq 33mm, Al Awabi 28mm, Jabal Akhdar 26mm and Khabourah 20mm of rainfall during those four days.

Other measurements included 18mm in Ibbi, 14mm in Dima Wa al Taien, 10mm in Nizwa, and 7mm in Bahla. Mah-

dah recorded 5mm, while 4mm was registered in both Nakhal and Amerat. Al Hamra received 3mm, and 2mm was recorded in Al Qabil and Izki.

Minimal rainfall of 1mm was reported in Saham, Buraimi, Ibra, Bidiyah and Mudhaibi.

On Monday, the wilayats of Rustaq and Al Awabi in South

Batinah witnessed moderate to heavy rainfall.

In Rustaq, showers extended across the city centre and nearby villages including Aini, Al Rumaniah, Tawi Thani, Al Ghashb and Hayy al Amjad. Rainfall also reached wadis in Al Sahtan, Bani Ghafir, Bani Hani and Bani Awf.

In Al Awabi, rain fell over the city centre and villages such as Al Sadd, Al Sallan, Al Wulajja, Tawi al Seeh and Al Mahdouth. Several villages in Wadi Bani Kharous, including Al Hajir, Satal, Thuqab, Shuwah, Sunaiba, Al Hajar, Misfat and Al Mahsanah, also received rainfall.

The downpour led to the flow of wadis and streams in affected areas.

Exercise caution when visiting haj-retuned pilgrims: MoH

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has urged the public to exercise caution when visiting pilgrims returning from haj, particularly those showing signs of respiratory illness such as fever, coughing, or shortness of

breath.

In a statement on Tuesday, MoH stressed the importance of avoiding physical contact - including hugging, handshakes, and kissing - during visits to safeguard both visitors and returnees from the potential spread of infectious diseases.

The ministry underlined the

importance of personal hygiene practices, such as frequent handwashing with soap and water, and the use of alcohol-based hand sanitisers. Citizens and residents were advised not to share personal items, especially utensils, with others.

These measures come as part of the ministry’s ongoing

efforts to limit the transmission of respiratory infections and ensure public health, particularly in light of the return of pilgrims from the holy sites in Saudi Arabia. MoH, which is monitoring the health situation closely, urged anyone experiencing respiratory symptoms to seek medical advice promptly.

Municipality launches global design contest for landmark civic building

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Muscat Municipality has launched the Muscat Municipality Design Competition 2025, during a site visit by Ahmed al Humaidi, Chairman of Muscat Municipality.

The visit marked the formal start of the international architecture competition, which is now open to leading studios from around the world.

The selected site, located next to the Mall of Oman, covers more than 8,000sqm and has been designated for a multi-functional civic building. The project aims to reflect Muscat's evolving urban identity, balancing modernity with the city's architectural heritage. Situated between the Oman Sea and the Hajar Moun-



tains, the location is intended to serve as a symbolic and functional space within the capital.

"Muscat is expecting a growing number of tourists in the near future, and the city is doing everything to welcome them in a

and reflects the values we hold as a society. We aim to create spaces that foster civic pride, set new benchmarks in sustainability and contribute meaningfully to Muscat's future as a global destination."



This competition represents a commitment to shaping how Muscat is experienced, through architecture that enhances our urban landscape, honours our heritage and reflects the values we hold as a society

AHMED AL HUMAIDI

sustainable way and to the highest standards of quality and beauty," said Humaidi. "This competition represents a commitment to shaping how Muscat is experienced, through architecture that enhances our urban landscape, honours our heritage

The international competition calls on architecture studios to design a sustainable civic structure rooted in Omani identity. Five shortlisted studios will soon be selected to present their concepts to a jury composed of local and international experts. Final

jury presentations are scheduled for early July, after which three finalists will be chosen. The winning design will be announced following the final deliberations.

The Muscat Municipality Design Competition 2025 is in-

Hotels post strong growth in revenues, guests: NCSI



Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's three- to five-star hotel sector posted a strong growth in revenues, guest numbers and occupancy rates in the first four months of 2025, reflecting a continued rebound in the country's tourism and hospitality industry.

According to the latest figures released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), total revenues of three- to five-star hotels rose 17.3% year-on-year to RO109.213mn by the end of April this year, compared to RO93.094mn during the same period in 2024.

The increase in revenue was

supported by a notable rise in the number of guests, which climbed 8.6% to reach 831,751 by the end of April this year, up from 766,153 guests recorded in the corresponding period of 2024.

Occupancy rates also saw a significant jump, rising to 61.1% in April 2025 from 53.4% in April 2024 - an increase of 14.4%. NCSI statistics showed strong growth in visitor numbers from several key markets. The number of guests from Oceania registered the highest year-on-year increase of 57.8%, reaching 18,124 visitors. Guests from Africa followed closely with a 57.6% rise to 5,993.

European tourists continued to represent a major share, rising

19.9% to 314,535 guests. Arrivals from the Americas grew by 19.1% to 28,843, while GCC nationals increased by 12.6% to 53,642. Asian guest numbers rose 5.4% to 114,426.

In contrast, domestic tourism showed a slight decline. The number of Omani guests dropped marginally by 0.7% to 238,895. Guests from other Arab countries also declined by 2.3% to 32,072.

The robust growth in international guest numbers and hotel revenues highlights the continued recovery of Oman's hospitality sector and the growing appeal of the sultanate as a regional and global travel destination.

Dakhliyah governorate records 415,000 tourists visiting in 2024

Our Correspondent
Nizwa

The Governorate of Dakhliyah welcomed more than 415,000 visitors in 2024, marking a growth of over 32% compared to the previous year, according to data released by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.

Home to iconic heritage sites such as Nizwa Fort, Jabreen Castle and the Unesco World Heritage site of Bahla Fort, the governorate continues to solidify its position as one of the country's key cultural tourism hubs.

Fakhriya bint Khamis al Ghasaniyah, Director of the Department of Tourism Product Development and Experiences at the ministry, confirmed that 2025 will see the rollout of an ambitious tourism development plan focused on diversifying tourism offerings and enriching visitor experiences. The ministry, in coordination with governors' offices across the sultanate, is implementing a series of qualitative projects as part of its wider



tourism strategy.

"These projects aim to enhance the quality of the tourism product and broaden the range of experiences available to visitors, positioning Oman as a well-rounded and integrated tourist destination," said Fakhriya.

She added that the ministry remains committed to promoting

cultural tourism as a cornerstone of its diversification strategy, with a strong focus on preserving and celebrating national identity.

In line with this, the ministry has launched the Omani Food and Culinary Tourism programme, which includes initiatives such as documenting traditional Omani cuisine and de-

veloping culinary tourism itineraries. These experiences feature guided visits to traditional kitchens and restaurants serving authentic local dishes.

"The culinary programme not only highlights Omani gastronomy as a unique tourism attraction but also boosts the local economy," Fakhriya said.

ASMED to hold session to boost SME involvement in energy, minerals

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy and Minerals will host a dialogue session on June 15, under the theme 'Enhancing Opportunities for Small and Medium Enterprises in the Energy and Minerals Sector'.

The session is part of ASMED's ongoing efforts to empower small and medium enterprises and highlight emerging opportunities in strategic sectors. The energy and minerals sector, in particular, is seen as vital to Oman's long-term economic growth and diversification agenda.

The event will bring together stakeholders from both the public and private sectors to explore ways to strengthen SME participation in the energy and minerals industries. Dis-



Discussions will focus on unlocking investment opportunities, addressing key challenges, and formulating policies

cussions will focus on unlocking investment opportunities, addressing key challenges, and formulating policies that foster an enabling business environment for entrepreneurs and SME owners.

ASMED stated that the dialogue session will reflect the

national direction to enhance SME contribution to the GDP and to create new opportunities for innovative ventures in line with Oman Vision 2040. The vision places strong emphasis on the role of SMEs as engines of sustainable growth and diversification in the sultanate's economy.

The authority also noted that the session will support the development of practical solutions and collaborative frameworks that allow SMEs to better access the energy and minerals sector. It aims to enhance competitiveness, strengthen partnerships, and create a more attractive and dynamic business ecosystem for local entrepreneurs.

ASMED has invited SME owners and aspiring entrepreneurs from across the sultanate to take part in the session. Registration is open through the following link: <https://bit.ly/446qcil>



RNO'S SHABAB OMAN DOCKS AT ITALIAN PORT OF GENOA

Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) sail ship *Shabab Oman II* docked at the Port of Genoa, Italy, on Tuesday as part of its 7th international voyage to Europe. During the voyage, themed 'Glories of the Seas', the vessel will drop anchor at a number of ports (ONA)

Families flock to Amerat Park for summer activities

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Amerat summer events, currently taking place at Al Amerat Park, continue to draw large numbers of families and visitors of all ages. The festival, which began on May 25, is scheduled to run until June 14, offering a range of cultural and recreational activities.

The event is organised under the supervision of the Office of the Wali of Al Amerat, with participation from government and community bodies. It aims to engage families, children and youth through programmes catering to



a wide array of interests.

Dedicated spaces have been set up to showcase products from productive families and

home-based businesses. The event also includes performances of traditional folk arts, children's games and stalls serv-

ing authentic Omani cuisine.

Educational and entertainment activities such as a reptiles exhibit, equestrian and camel shows, a classic car display, and daily competitions with prizes are among the highlights drawing steady crowds.

The initiative is intended to strengthen cultural and social interaction, support small-scale entrepreneurs, and promote domestic tourism.

Organised during the school summer holidays, it seeks to encourage greater community involvement while celebrating the cultural diversity of the wilayat.



National Gas buys 80% stake in Samahram Gas

Our Correspondent
Muscat

National Gas Company, Oman's leading liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) marketing firm, has announced the successful acquisition of an 80% stake in Samahram Gas Company, which is a key player in the refilling and distribution of LPG in the Dhofar Governorate.

In a disclosure to the Muscat Stock Exchange, National Gas confirmed that the transaction was finalised on June 4, 2025, following all regulatory approvals and compliance with applicable laws.

'This strategic acquisition aligns with our long-term growth objectives and is expected to significantly strengthen our footprint in Oman's LPG market,' National Gas said in its disclosure.

The company added that the investment is anticipated to deliver solid returns and contribute positively to both revenue and net income at the group level.

'We remain committed to delivering value to our shareholders through strategic investments and market expansion initiatives,' the company noted.

Samahram Gas has established itself as a significant operator in southern Oman, and the deal is seen as part of National Gas's broader strategy to consolidate its presence in the domestic LPG sector.

Samahram Gas' core business are LPG filling cylinders, LPG central gas system installation, operations and LPG bulk supply. The company offers a one-stop-shop for LPG needs for all its clients.

Bank credit in Oman grows 9% to RO33.6bn in April

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's banking sector recorded robust credit growth of 9.0% during the first four months of 2025, while deposits surged by over 9.3% year-on-year, according to the latest data from the Central Bank of Oman (CBO).

Total outstanding credit extended by the banking sector – comprising both conventional and Islamic banks – rose by nine per cent to RO33.6bn as of the end of April 2025, compared to the same period in the previous year, the CBO stated in its monthly statistical bulletin.

Of the total credit extended, loans to the private sector grew by 7.0%, reaching RO27.8bn. Non-financial corporations received the largest share of private sector credit, accounting for approximately 46.6% of the total, followed by the household sector at 44.0%. Financial corporations held a 5.6% share, while other sectors made up the remaining 3.7%.

In the conventional banking segment, total credit grew by 7.9% year-on-year as of April 2025. Credit extended to the private sector by conventional banks increased by 5.2% to RO21.3bn, while their invest-



Deposits across Oman's banking sector grew significantly by 9.3%, reaching RO32.8bn at the end of April 2025. Private sector deposits increased by 7.1% to RO21.5bn

ments in securities rose by 2.1% to RO5.8bn, according to CBO figures.

Investments in government development bonds by conventional banks rose by 6.2% year-on-year to RO2bn in April 2025, while investments in foreign securities increased by 3.7% to RO2.1bn over the same period.

Deposits surge 9.3%

Deposits across Oman's banking sector grew significantly by 9.3%, reaching RO32.8bn at the

end of April 2025.

Private sector deposits increased by 7.1% to RO21.5bn. Within this category, household deposits contributed the largest share, accounting for 50.3% of the total, followed by non-financial corporations at 30.4%, financial corporations at 17.0%, and other sectors at 2.3%.

Conventional banks saw aggregate deposits rise by 6.1% year-on-year to RO25.7bn by the end of April 2025. Government deposits with conventional banks

increased by 6.2% to RO5.8bn, while deposits from public enterprises grew by 11.4% to RO2.2bn. Private sector deposits, which represent 65.2% of total deposits at conventional banks, rose by 4.5% to reach RO16.8bn.

According to the CBO, the weighted average interest rate on Omani rial deposits with conventional banks rose slightly from 2.580% in April 2024 to 2.594% at the end of April 2025. Meanwhile, the weighted average lending rate for the Omani

rial decreased from 5.604% to 5.555% over the same period.

The overnight Omani rial domestic interbank lending rate declined to 4.392% in April 2025, down from 5.212% a year earlier. This decrease is attributed to the reduction in the average repo rate for liquidity injections by the CBO, which fell to 5.0% from 6.0%, in line with the monetary policy direction of the US Federal Reserve.

Islamic banking grows by 18%

Oman's Islamic banking sector continues to maintain its strong growth trajectory in 2025, with double-digit increases in both credit and deposits.

The total assets of Islamic banks and windows grew by 18.1% year-on-year, reaching RO8.9bn by the end of April 2025. Islamic assets now represent approximately 19.6% of the total assets within Oman's banking system.

Islamic banking entities provided financing totalling RO7.2bn by the end of April this year, reflecting a 13.5% increase compared to the previous year. Total deposits held by Islamic banks and windows also surged by 22.6%, reaching RO7.1bn in April 2025.

UAE's Fuze signs MoU with Oman's Mamun to facilitate trade finance via stablecoins

Abu Dhabi, UAE – UAE-based regulated digital assets infrastructure provider, Fuze, has signed a strategic memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Mamun, a Sharia-compliant alternative finance and investment platform headquartered in Oman and expanding across the UAE and wider GCC markets.

The agreement will enable both regional and international retail and institutional investors to participate in short-term, Sharia-compliant financing of trade-driven businesses using USDT (Tether's US dollar-pegged stablecoin). These businesses will then be able to access fiat financing in local currency to pay suppliers and support both domestic and cross-border trade. This aims to help enterprises tap into new sources of finance from a broader pool of investors, according to a press release.

The trade credit gap in the MENA region stands at an estimated \$250bn, with the global figure exceeding \$1tn. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are particularly affected, often underserved or ex-



Mo Ali Yusuf



Mohammed al-Tamami

The agreement will enable both regional and international retail and institutional investors to participate in short-term, Sharia-compliant financing of trade-driven businesses using stablecoins

cluded by traditional financial institutions. Meanwhile, the MENA region alone is home to over 40mn crypto investors, with an estimated holding value of \$300bn – yet they have limited access to low-entry, high-yield, Sharia-compliant trade finance opportunities.

The partnership marks one of the region's first efforts to bridge regulated digital asset infrastructure with traditional private credit markets. Under this collaboration, Fuze will provide the digital asset rails – including on/off ramp solutions, custody and conversion – while Mamun

will originate Sharia-compliant trade finance opportunities. The agreement will allow for swift and compliant settlements in SME trade financing and address pain points associated with the movement of capital across borders.

In a press release, Mo Ali Yusuf, CEO of Fuze, said, "The alignment between Fuze and Mamun highlights a growing trend – the use of stablecoins like USDT not just for trading or remittance, but as a tool for working capital and liquidity in real-world finance."

Mohammed al-Tamami, Chief Commercial Officer at Mamun, added, "Bringing stablecoins into Sharia-compliant private credit opens new avenues for cross-border trade finance. At Mamun, we're not just innovating – we're aligning digital asset infrastructure with the capital needs of the real economy. This collaboration with Fuze allows us to better serve both investors and businesses."

Mamun is an alternative finance and investment platform based in Oman, focused on

transforming short-term trade finance into an investable asset class. Serving investors from over 45 countries, Mamun has facilitated nearly \$10mn in Sharia-compliant trade financing since its launch in Q3 2023, and is targeting \$20mn in 2025 alone.

Mamun's investor base includes retail participants, high-net-worth individuals, and family offices. Its microservices architecture also powers systems at Oman Housing Bank and three major telecommunications providers, demonstrating its capability to scale embedded finance infrastructure across multiple sectors.

Fuze is the MENA region's first regulated digital assets infrastructure provider of its kind, offering financial institutions and enterprises cutting-edge tools to integrate digital asset services securely and efficiently. Through a solutions-based approach, Fuze enables financial services providers to strategise, implement, and launch secure, regulated, world-class products across wealth management and payments.



CBO issues treasury bills worth RO44mn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) on Tuesday announced the issuance of government treasury bills worth RO44.370mn. The treasury bills were issued with a maturity period of 91 days.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO44.370mn, with the average accepted price reaching RO98.953 per RO100, and the minimum accepted price standing at RO98.930. The average discount rate and average yield were 4.1988% and 4.2433%, respectively.

The interest rate on repo operations with the Central Bank of Oman is 5.00%, while the dis-

count rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility stands at 5.50%.

Treasury bills are short-term, highly secure financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance. They provide licensed commercial banks with the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman acts as the issue manager and offers the added advantage of liquidity through discounting and repurchase (repo) facilities.

In addition, treasury bills support the development of the local money market by establishing a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. The government may also resort to this instrument when necessary to finance recurrent expenditure.

Global energy investments set to hit record high of \$3.3tn in 2025: IEA

Paris, France – The International Energy Agency (IEA) reported that the global energy investment is set to increase 2% in 2025 to an all-time high of \$3.3tn despite headwinds from elevated geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainty.

The clean energy technologies are expected to attract twice as much capital as fossil fuels, according to the agency's World Energy Investment 2025 report.

"Investment in clean technologies – renewables, nuclear, grids, storage, low-emissions fuels, efficiency, and electrifica-

tion – is on course to hit a record \$2.2tn this year, reflecting not only efforts to reduce emissions but also the growing influence of industrial policy, energy security concerns, and the cost competitiveness of electricity-based solutions," the report said.

Meanwhile, investments in oil, natural gas, and coal are expected to reach \$1.1bn. Clean energy investments, which are expected to reach a record high this year, will account for two-thirds of the total amount of investment.

"Today's investment trends

clearly show a new Age of Electricity is drawing nearer. A decade ago, investments in fossil fuels were 30% higher than those in electricity generation, grids, and storage. This year, electricity investments are set to be some 50% higher than the total amount being spent bringing oil, natural gas, and coal to market," the report



stressed.

Over the last five years, global investment in low-emissions power production has nearly quadrupled, driven mostly by solar PV (photovoltaics).

Utility-scale and rooftop solar energy investments are predicted to total \$450bn in 2025, making them the biggest item in the global en-

ergy investment inventory. Additionally, investments in battery storage are growing quickly, surpassing \$65bn this year.

On the other hand, grid investments, which now stand at \$400bn annually, are falling behind expenditure on electrification and generation, which is concerning for the security of power.

By the early 2030s, grid investment would need to catch up to generating spending in order to maintain electrical security. Long licensing processes and constrained transformer and

cable supply chains are impeding development.

As the biggest energy investor in the world, China keeps solidifying its position. Over the past ten years, China's contribution to global energy spending has increased from 25% to 33%.

Investments in a variety of technologies, including solar, wind, hydropower, nuclear, batteries, and electric cars, are helping to sustain this development.

India and China are still investing in coal-fired power plants. The capacity of authorized new coal plants in China, which started building about 100 gigawatts of new coal plants last year, is at its highest level since 2015.

Commenting on the report, IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol said, "Amid the geopolitical and economic uncertainties that are clouding the outlook for the energy world, we see energy security coming through as a key driver of the growth in global investment this year to a record \$3.3tn as countries and companies seek to insulate themselves from a wide range of risks."

Anadolu Agency

What Trump-Musk feud means for Tesla, SpaceX

Tesla CEO Elon Musk spent some \$300mn on Donald Trump's campaign, gaining unprecedented access to the Republican president's administration. What does their public row mean for Musk's business empire?

Nik Martin

Once a vocal critic of Donald Trump during his 2016 United States election campaign, Elon Musk, the billionaire CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, pivoted from his Democratic Party roots to embrace Trump's policies during the Republican's second term. Frustrated by Obama-era regulations stifling his ventures, Musk embraced Trump's agenda of tax cuts and deregulation. Their bond grew from mutual respect to a robust political alliance, which saw Musk last year back Trump's reelection campaign to the tune of nearly \$300bn. When Trump returned to the White House in January, the world's richest man took on an

advisory role in the administration, leading the controversial Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). Tasked with slashing public spending, Musk's role stirred controversy, impacting Tesla's stock price and auto sales. After months of pressure from investors, Musk agreed last month to scale back his work in Trump's government. **What sparked the public feud?** On Thursday, wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the "The Dogefather," Musk was given an initially cordial farewell by the president in the Oval Office. But Trump could not contain his frustration at Musk's earlier criticism of his administration's



The Trump-Musk spat spilled from the Oval Office to social media

sweeping tax and spending bill, which the Tesla founder called fiscally reckless and a "disgusting abomination." After Musk then accused the US president of alleged ties to child sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, the news conference ended with Trump threatening to revoke Musk's government contracts, which could cost his business empire billions of dollars. Over the next few hours, the row spilled over to social media, where both men repeated their White House remarks, prompting the SpaceX owner to an-

nounce an immediate decommissioning of its Dragon spacecraft, before appearing to back down. **How did markets react to Trump-Musk fallout?** Tesla stock lost about \$150bn in market value on Thursday – the largest single-day decline in its history. The stock closed down over 14%. However, news outlet Politico reported Friday that the two men were scheduled to speak later in the day in the hope of defusing

the situation, which caused a sharp reversal in the stock's fortunes. Tesla stock was up 5% in pre-market trade. However, a White House official said later Friday that Trump had no plans for any call, adding that he may get rid of his Tesla bought in March in a show of support against Musk in the face of anti-Tesla protests. Tesla shares have been on a wild rollercoaster ride this year after a strong performance around the US election. Having peaked at \$428 in January, shares in the electric vehi-

clemaker plummeted by almost half in March as investors reacted negatively to Musk's involvement in the Trump administration. Tesla stock then rallied when Trump paused his unprecedented tariffs on the rest of the world and after US regulators eased rules on self-driving vehicles. **What's at stake for Musk's empire?** The public spat, as well as Trump's budget plans, have left the fortunes of Musk's companies hanging in the balance. Tesla, Musk's most profitable firm, could be severely impacted by Trump's plans to cut a subsidy on new electric vehicles that is worth up to \$7,500 for buyers. Despite Musk's aggressive criticism and lobbying by Tesla, Trump plans to eliminate the credit by the end of the year, seven years before it was due to expire. News agency Bloomberg cited JP Morgan analysts as saying that the cut would reduce Tesla's full-year profit by \$1.2bn. Cuts to state-level credits could further impact the EV maker's bottom line this financial year. It could, however, encourage EV buyers to bring forward their plans and spur demand for

Tesla's vehicles in the short term. Tesla is already being impacted by Trump's tariffs as the firm relies on Chinese parts for its Cybercab robotaxi and Semi electric truck. However, it is unclear whether Trump can unilaterally make good on his threat to tear up federal contracts with Musk's firms like SpaceX. Since 2000, SpaceX has received more than \$22bn in contracts from the US Defense Department and space agency NASA. If Trump were to terminate the contracts, it would have a huge financial impact on SpaceX and disrupt the US government's space ambitions. SpaceX's Crew Dragon is currently the only US spacecraft certified to carry crew to the International Space Station (ISS). Any ending of Pentagon contracts involving Musk's Starlink satellite internet service would also be a lose-lose for both Musk and the government. Starlink provides broadband services to rural areas. Terminals are also deployed on US military bases, ships, aircraft, and armored vehicles. The satellite internet service is often used for disaster response. DW

Hopes for Fed rate cuts are fading

Diccon Hyatt

These days, waiting for the US Federal Reserve to lower its benchmark interest rate is a bit like waiting for Godot: the arrival date for the long-anticipated monetary policy move keeps getting pushed into the future. Financial markets scaled back their expectations for rate cuts again last week after a report on job growth showed the labour market staying unexpectedly healthy in May. The labour market's resilience takes some pressure off the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates to boost the economy and prevent a severe increase in unemployment. On Monday, investors seemed sure that the jobs report indicated the central bank would not cut the federal funds rate soon, according to the CME Group's FedWatch tool, which forecasts rate movements based on fed funds futures trading data. Investors were pricing in an 83% chance the Fed's policy committee would hold its rates steady in the June and July meetings. That's up from 76% a week ago and 40% a month ago. Fed officials themselves have indicated they're in no hurry to chop interest rates, which would put downward pressure on interest rates on all kinds of loans. In contrast, President Donald Trump has repeatedly demanded the Fed cut rates: he's asked officials to lower rates by an entire percentage point, rather than their usual quarter-point increments, and criticised the central bank for not cutting rates sooner. The outlook for interest rates has changed dramatically since late 2024 when Fed officials



went on a rate-cutting spree, lowering the key fed funds rate a percentage point over three meetings. In January, the Fed declined to cut rates again, leaving them high enough to be deemed "restrictive." This means borrowing costs are high enough to drag on the economy and downwardly affect inflation. Fed officials have held off on more rate cuts out of fear that the tariffs Trump has imposed this year could push up prices and set off a fresh round of inflation. Since then, expectations for when rate cuts could resume have been on a roller coaster ride as financial markets and fore-

casters try to predict the outcome of the trade war: if tariffs drag down the job market enough to threaten a wave of mass layoffs, the Fed could step in and cut rates to help the economy. But if inflation remains above the Fed's target of a 2% annual rate, the Fed could keep rates higher for longer to force it down. Some economists predict the Fed will be forced to cut sooner rather than later. Economists at Pantheon Macroeconomics, for instance, downplayed the significance of the healthy job growth figures in May, noting that recent jobs reports have been heavily revised downward. The Bureau

of Labor Statistics regularly revises its monthly jobs reports as new survey data comes in. The May jobs report downwardly revised job growth for the previous two months by 95,000, for instance. "Mr. Trump's criticism of the Fed's current stasis will likely be proven right," economists led by Samuel Tombs, chief US economist at Pantheon, wrote in a commentary. Pantheon expects the Fed to make three quarter-point cuts before the end of the year as the job market unravels. At the other end of the spectrum are forecasters at Deutsche Bank, who expect the Fed to hold off on rate cuts until December and make just one cut in 2025. DB's economists, using a proprietary AI tool, said speeches by Fed officials have become more "hawkish" lately, suggesting policymakers are more concerned with fighting inflation than they are with saving jobs. (Source: Investopedia.com)

President Donald Trump has repeatedly demanded the Fed cut rates: he has asked officials to lower rates by an entire percentage point, rather than their usual quarter-point increments

Japan PM aims for GDP to reach \$7tn in 2040

Tokyo, Japan – Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said Monday that Japan should aim to boost its economy to 1,000tn yen (\$7tn) in nominal terms in 2040, instructing his ruling party executives to include it in a pledge for this summer's election. The size compares with a nominal gross domestic product of around 600tn yen in 2024, which met a target set about a decade ago. Japan, however, had lost its status as the world's third-



Japanese PM Shigeru Ishiba

largest economy to Germany the previous year. Ishiba said that while giving priority to ensuring that wage

growth consistently outpaces inflation, his Liberal Democratic Party will seek to achieve an over 50% increase in average income in the same time frame. The goals were set as the country's major political parties are looking at ways to woo voters with their campaign pledges for the House of Councillors, or upper house, election, with opposition parties calling for reducing the consumption tax. Kyodo News

CONDOLENCES



Apex Press and Publishing would like to express condolences to Laiju Joseph on the sad demise of his mother **Sosamma Joseph**

May her soul rest in eternal peace

Russia posts \$43.2bn budget deficit amid falling oil prices

Moscow, Russia – Russia's budget posted a deficit of 3.4tn rubles (some \$43.2bn) in the first five months of the year due to falling oil prices, according to official figures released Tuesday. Russia's Finance Ministry said the country's budget rev-

enues rose 3.1% from the same period last year, reaching 14.7tn rubles in the first five months of the year. But budget expenditures climbed 20.7% to 18.1tn rubles during the same period, it said, resulting in a budget deficit of 3.4tn rubles.

A ministry statement noted that non-oil and gas revenues amounted to 10.5tn rubles, while oil and gas revenues reached 4.2tn rubles. The statement indicated that the budget deficit was 1.5% of GDP, citing various expenditures in January and

falling oil and natural gas prices as the main reasons for the deficit. Budget expenditures in Russia have risen significantly in recent years, particularly due to defense spending amid the ongoing Ukraine war. Anadolu Agency

MoE signs pact to enhance health promotion in schools

The Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and Al Jisr Charitable Foundation signed a cooperation agreement to support the Health Promoting Schools Initiative at Al Jisr Charitable Foundation's headquarters in Muscat.

The agreement aims to provide a safe and health-promoting educational environment for schools, enabling students to enhance their academic achievement, acquire necessary life skills, and integrate into society, a press release said.

The agreement was signed on behalf of the Ministry of Education by Prof Abdullah bin Khamis Ambosaidi, Undersecretary for Education on behalf of the Ministry of Health by Sulaiman bin Nasser al Hajji, Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs, and on behalf of the Al Jisr Charitable Foundation by Dina al Khalili, director general of the Foundation.

Dr Ambosaidi said, "This initiative, which will be implemented over the next five years, is of great importance in promoting a healthy environment for students, as it is a key tool that positively reflects on their academic achievement. The total number of schools participating in this initiative since its launch has reached 566 from various educational directorates in the



This initiative stems from a strategic partnership to achieve the common good of society and promote health in the school environment, in particular

governorates, in which the various initiative programmes are implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Al Jisr Charitable Foundation."

Hajji added, "This initiative

stems from a strategic partnership to achieve the common good of society and promote health in the school environment, in particular, by improving the learning environment for stu-

dents, enhancing their academic achievement, protecting them from diseases, reducing their absence from school, enhancing their mental health, and building lasting healthy habits for these students, so that they are more able to focus, pay attention, and learn."

Regarding the community partnership between Al Jisr Charitable Foundation and the government sector, Dina said, "This strategic partnership em-

bodies the convergence of healthcare and educational efforts and achieves our shared vision of providing a healthy school environment that enhances students' academic achievement and develops their necessary life skills. We appreciate the role of the Ministries of Education and Health for their trust and cooperation in this initiative, and we affirm our commitment to achieving a sustainable impact for students and society."

Bank Muscat hosts workshop to foster ties with MoL

In a demonstration of its commitment to fostering strategic partnerships with government entities, Bank Muscat recently organised a workshop aimed at enhancing collaboration with the Ministry of Labour.

The event took place at the Bank's headquarters in Airport Heights and was attended by a number of employees, a press release said. The workshop focused on the plans and strategies for effective internal audits, emphasising the Bank's role in economic development by showcasing the diverse banking services and facilities it offers.

This initiative is part of various training courses facilitated by the bank in partnership with various governmental organisations, aimed to help to upskill staff in public sector in contemporary skills and competencies, share best practices and build banking services expertise in public sector.

Over the course of two days, the workshop featured visual presentations and knowledge sharing on several topics related to administrative and financial development, delivered by employees from different departments. Attendees actively engaged in discussions, sharing ideas and suggestions to foster business growth.

In his opening remarks, Said bin Salim al Aufi, general man-

ager of Human Resources and Administration at Bank Muscat, expressed his enthusiasm for the collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, emphasising its role in enhancing employee efficiency in administrative and financial disciplines.

Al Aufi highlighted the importance of human resources, noting that employees are essential to the success and advancement of any organisation. He extended gratitude to all partners from governmental agencies and reaffirmed the bank's commitment to supporting these initiatives in alignment with national development goals.

Wafa Ibrahim al Ajmi, assistant general manager of Transaction & Government Banking at Bank Muscat, acknowledged the longstanding relationships between the bank and its governmental partners. She remarked on the bank's leadership in adopting advanced digital solutions that transform the banking landscape, underscoring the bank's dedication to staying abreast of technological advancements both locally and internationally. She emphasised the importance of strengthening partnerships with these institutions to enhance customer experience, streamline operations, and improve overall efficiency.



Oman Flour Mills uses AI-powered hiring solutions

Oman Flour Mills (OFM), a leading food manufacturing company in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced a strategic partnership with Elevatus, a global provider of AI-powered recruitment solutions.

This partnership aligns with the company's ongoing efforts to enhance and modernise its hiring processes in line with its innovative vision to boost operational efficiency and candidate experience, a press release said.

The partnership aims to streamline recruitment by automating every stage of the process, from job posting to hiring and onboarding. Via Elevatus' all-in-one platform, Oman Flour Mills' HR team will be able to manage operations more efficiently and accurately, accelerating the hiring cycle and improving selection quality.

Safia Adam, HR director at Oman Flour Mills, stated, "Our partnership with Elevatus marks a major step toward building a future-ready recruitment process. By eliminating manual bottlenecks and embracing smart automation, we're not only improving internal efficiency but also ensuring a professional and engaging experience for every candidate." She added that using Elevatus tools will allow the company to send timely, personalised updates to applicants, boosting transparency and enhancing engagement throughout



Safia Adam the hiring journey.

Safia further affirmed that this initiative is part of a broader strategy to drive innovation in HR management, as the company works toward building an attractive work environment that appeals to top Omani talent. "By improving the candidate experience, we aim to strengthen our reputation as one of the best employers in the food sector," she said. "This partnership is a clear example of how modern technology can optimise administrative processes and support our ambitious business goals."

Nadin Zureikat, chief revenue officer at Elevatus, expressed gratitude in the partnership, noting that Oman Flour Mills is one of the most iconic food manufacturing companies in the Sultanate of Oman. She confirmed that the Elevatus platform will empower the company to attract, assess, and hire top talent with ease, while delivering a world-class candidate experience.

Mercedes-Benz offers complimentary vehicle health check for summer

Wipro Limited, a leading AI-powered technology services and consulting company, announced the relocation of its Middle East regional headquarters from Al Khobar to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Mercedes-Benz Oman invites customers to help their vehicle's star shine again with a complimentary 16-point vehicle health check.

Available at Service Centres in Muscat, Salalah, and Sohar, the offer will run from June 17 to 19 and June 24 to 26, a press release said.

The health check includes inspection of the engine oil level, potential oil leaks, engine air filter, coolant fluid level and coolant system, vehicle undercarriage, brake fluid level and condition, windscreen wipers, front and rear brake pads, A/C temperature and filters, suspension and steering components, and bodywork. It also features a



full electronic diagnostic test, topped off with a complimentary car wash, vacuum, and tire shine.

The offer is valid for all models registered before June 1, 2022.

Using StarView by Mercedes-Benz Oman, the entire health check is recorded and shared with customers through a personalized video, delivered via email and SMS, along with a detailed estimate. This ensures total transparency and a seamless service experience.

Wipro strengthens Middle East presence with HQ in Riyadh

Wipro Limited, a leading AI-powered technology services and consulting company, announced the relocation of its Middle East regional headquarters from Al Khobar to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The new office in Riyadh was inaugurated in a ceremony attended by the Wipro executive team, employees, and customers. This is the latest addition to Wipro's growing presence in the region, which includes offices in Riyadh, Al Khobar, Jeddah, and Jubail, a press release said.

"The inauguration of Wipro's new regional headquarters in Riyadh marks a significant milestone that contributes to accelerating the growth of the Kingdom's digital economy," said Mohammed al Robayan, deputy minister for Technology at the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT). "This also underscores the attractiveness of Saudi Arabia's digital business



environment. We value the company's investment in developing national competencies, in line with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030 and enhancing the Kingdom's position as a global technology hub."

In addition to this new office opening, Wipro recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University (PMU) to establish a Center of Excellence (CoE) in Riyadh. This partnership aims to upskill local talent by providing academic training in advanced technologies, hands-on experience, and access to

Wipro's resources. The CoE will focus on equipping young Saudi nationals with future-ready skills, creating a talent pool that can add value to organizations and the kingdom.

"The establishment of our new regional headquarters in Riyadh reaffirms our commitment to supporting the dynamic business landscape in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," said Vinay Firaque, CEO - Asia Pacific, India, Middle East & Africa (APMEA), Wipro Limited. "This strategic move, combined with our ongoing involvement in supporting the goals of the Kingdom, aligns with our vision of driving sustained growth and a future-ready workforce in the region. This commitment is strengthened by the recent appointment of Mohamed Mousa as our new Managing Director for Wipro Middle East out of our Riyadh headquarters, which will further advance our decades-long presence in the Middle East."

Sharjah Chamber to honour Sharjah Excellence Awardees

The Sharjah Excellence Award (SEA)'s Board of Trustees has announced that the closing ceremony to honour the winners of the award's 2024 edition will take place on June 25.

The award is organised by the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) under the patronage of Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed bin Sultan al Qasimi, Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler of Sharjah. The board also commended the notable growth in participation for this year's edition of the award, a press release said.

The announcement was made during the regular meeting of SEA's Board of Trustees, chaired by Abdallah Sultan al Owais, chairman of SCCI and chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Sharjah Excel-



lence Award.

The meeting was attended by Hamad Ali al Mahmoud, chairman of the Sharjah Economic Development Department (SEDD), Khalid Jasim al Midfa, chairman of the Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA),

Waleed AbdelRahman BuKhatir, second vice chairman of SCCI, Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed al Shehhi, SCCI's board member, Najla Ahmed al Midfa, vice chairperson of the Sharjah Entrepreneurship Centre (Sheraa), Mohammad Ahmed Amin al Awadi, director general of SCCI,

Dr Salah Taher al Haj, deputy chancellor of the University of Sharjah for Community Affairs, and Lalu Samuel, managing director of Pierlite Middle East Sharjah.

During the meeting, SEA's Board of Trustees approved an extension of the registration

deadline for the award's 2025 edition to January 31, 2026. Discussions included key proposals, most notably the potential launch of a new category titled Best Service Entity. The Board underscored the importance of collaboration with prominent excellence awards across the UAE.

Atlantis invites guests to experience 'A World Away'

Atlantis, The Palm, unveils 'A World Away', a visually striking and emotionally resonant brand campaign developed entirely in-house by the Atlantis Dubai team, in collaboration with an award-winning, globally recognised film crew.

Created to reshape perceptions, spark imagination, and reignite global awareness, the campaign positions Atlantis, The Palm, as far more than a holiday destination. It is a world rich with energy, wonder, and emotion where guests are invited to leave the ordinary behind and step into the extraordinary. Whether it's a guest overcoming their fears on the iconic waterslide Leap of Faith, or a quiet moment spent face-to-face with marine life, every experience becomes a fulfilled dream, a press release said.

For the first time in Atlantis history, a campaign of this scale is conceived, produced, and executed entirely by the in-house brand and marketing teams—ensuring the final product is creatively ambitious, deeply authentic, and true to the spirit of the resort. To bring the story to life, the Atlantis team collaborates with Bruce Macdonald, winner of the New York Film Festival and International Film Talent Awards, whose cinematic direction anchors the emotional depth of the campaign.

He is joined by Simon Duggan, the acclaimed Director of Photography behind The Great Gatsby and Hacksaw Ridge, and a two-time AACTA Award winner for Best Cinematography.



The visual narrative is further enhanced by London-based photographer Jonathan Stokes, known for his work with National Geographic Traveler; FPV drone expert André Larsen, one of the world's top talents in aerial filming; and underwater cinematographer Mike Rall, founder of Base Films and a recognised leader in his field.

Filming takes place across several of Atlantis, The Palm's, most iconic locations, including the grand main lobby, the awe-inspiring Underwater Suite, the renowned Lost Chambers

Aquarium, world-class culinary venues under the most Michelin-awarded destination in the region, and the record-breaking Aquaventure World.

Visually, A World Away is defined by a distinctive 80/20 composition principle—80% of each frame showcases the vast, dreamlike environment of Atlantis, while 20% highlights authentic human connection. This deliberate balance amplifies both the scale of the resort and the emotional impact of the experience that guests are invited to partake in.

BankDhofar unveils 'Laha' for women



BankDhofar, Oman's second-largest bank by branch network, has introduced 'Laha', a unique motor insurance product created exclusively for women. This launch underscores BankDhofar's commitment to innovation, inclusivity, and customer-centric financial services.

Developed in partnership with Dhofar Insurance, one of the largest insurance providers in the sultanate, Laha delivers comprehensive coverage, exclusive lifestyle benefits, and round-the-clock support. Positioned as both premium and cost-effective, Laha redefines the insurance experience for women drivers in Oman, a press release said.

At the core of Laha is a focus on safety, confidence, and convenience. The plan includes 24x7 emergency roadside assistance covering situations such as flat tyres, battery issues, vehicle lockouts, and mechanical breakdowns. It also features accident recovery and vehicle towage up to 100km and pro-

vides RO55 as compensation in lieu. In the event of medical emergencies, policyholders can benefit from ambulance services, including fast access to Aster Clinic or equivalent discounts.

Beyond standard coverage, Laha offers additional protections that reflect the lifestyle needs of modern drivers. These include compensation of up to RO200 for mobile phone damage, as well as coverage for personal items such as handbags and child seats. Terms & Conditions apply.

Laha joins a growing portfolio of bancassurance solutions from BankDhofar, which are designed to provide comprehensive protection against a range of risks—from road accidents and theft to fire and natural disasters. BankDhofar is widely regarded for its competitive premiums, reliable claims process, and customer-first approach. Its motor insurance offerings include both Third Party Liability and Comprehensive Insurance plans.

SWF Global lauds OIA's efforts towards backing foreign investments



A new report by the SWF Global commends Oman Investment Authority (OIA) for strengthening Oman's global ties through targeted foreign investments, joint funds, and reinvesting dividend proceeds and returns into national projects.

This approach sets OIA apart from its peers, as it adopts a unique philosophy centred on the 'Omani Angle' making it a foundational principle in its investment decision-making. SWF Global is a specialised organisation focused on tracking activities of state-owned investment organisations, including sovereign wealth funds, central banks, and pension funds worldwide, a press release said.

The report highlighted OIA's success in building an extensive network of strategic relationships by promoting the concept of economic diplomacy with various countries across the Middle East, Asia, North Africa, Europe, and the Americas over the past five years. Among the most recent strategic partnerships is the signing of a joint fund agreement with Algeria worth USD 300mn, targeting investments in vital sectors such as mining, food security, and pharmaceuticals.

Additionally, OIA partnered with Turkey's OYAK Fund to es-

The report highlights OIA's task in building an extensive network of strategic relationships via economic diplomacy

tablish a joint investment fund valued at USD 500mn and launched a joint fund with Uzbekistan, which focuses on establishing a university in Tashkent in collaboration with Arizona State University of USA. Furthermore, OIA has invested in the Vietnam-Oman Investment Company, which has allocated nearly USD 400 million to projects in solar energy, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and food.

The report also noted that OIA's focus is not limited to establishing strategic partnerships through joint investment funds alone, but also extends to direct investments in global companies, which primarily aim to localize advanced global technologies in the Sultanate of Oman, in addition to generating returns that are later reinvested into local projects.



Kaldi 850 opens 23rd Store at Al Mabellah

Kaldi 850 announces the opening of its newest Drive-Thru store today at the Oman Oil Gas Station in Al Mabellah Twin, marking a significant milestone as the brand's 23rd location across the sultanate.

Opening on the auspicious occasion of Eid Al Adha, the new branch reflects Kaldi 850's continued commitment to bringing premium coffee experiences closer to customers in convenient, accessible formats, a press release said.

The Al Mabellah Twin store, strategically located within the busy Oman Oil Gas Station, offers a seamless drive-thru service designed to cater to the on-the-go lifestyle of coffee lovers in the area.

"This opening not only strengthens our footprint in Oman but also aligns with our mission to make premium coffee more accessible," said Paul Biswajit, general manager, at Kaldi 850. "We're honoured to open our doors on a day of celebration, and we invite the community to enjoy a cup of coffee crafted with passion and precision."

With the launch of its 23rd store, Kaldi 850 continues to solidify its position as one of Oman's leading specialty coffee brands.

Audi Oman unveils new line-up

Audi Oman, represented by Premium Motors, recently staged a landmark event that set a new benchmark in the sultanate's premium automotive scene.

Held under the esteemed patronage of His Excellency Sheikh Sabaa bin Hamdan bin Sabaa al Saadia, the secretary general of the Higher Committee for National Day Celebrations, this exclusive event marked a significant milestone in Audi's journey in the region, a press release said.

The grand reveal at the Premium Motors showroom featured the highly anticipated unveilings of the new Audi A5, Audi A6 Avant, and the all-electric Audi A6 e-tron. In addition, several other models, including the Audi Q6 e-tron, Audi Q7, Audi Q8, and the high-performance Audi S8, were prominently displayed for attendees to explore. Four classic Audi models were also on display, of-



fering a nostalgic nod to the brand's storied heritage while celebrating its forward-looking vision.

By launching both advanced internal combustion engine and fully electric vehicles simultaneously, Audi demonstrates its strategic commitment to meeting the evolving preferences of Omani drivers. This dual approach reflects Audi's broader mission to lead in both performance and sustainability. This

event was more than just a product launch; it was a celebration of Audi's evolving identity and its rich local legacy.

Attended by Audi owners, VIPs, media representatives, and influential personalities, the showcase underscored the brand's commitment to delivering both performance and sustainability. Guests enjoyed live band performances that added vibrant energy to the evening, along with interactive activa-

tions and brand experiences that brought Audi's innovation and lifestyle ethos to life. These thoughtful touches elevated the occasion, turning it into a celebration of both technology and community.

The newly unveiled Audi A5 stands out with its sharp, athletic design and refined character, making it an ideal choice for drivers who seek both performance and sophistication. Inside, a digital-first cabin features the Audi Virtual Cockpit and an intuitive MMI touch interface for a seamless driving experience.

The new Audi A6 Avant brings a perfect blend of executive elegance and everyday practicality. Known for its dynamic handling, advanced driver assistance systems, and generous cargo capacity, it caters to families and professionals who require both comfort and utility without compromise.

The Green Planet observes World Environment Day

The Green Planet Dubai, the region's only indoor biodome home to over 3,000 plants and animals, teamed up with Odyssey Nursery, a sustainability-focused early years institution from Kids First Group, to launch an inspiring initiative that places children at the heart of the climate conversation, to mark World Environment Day on June 5.

Visitors to The Green Planet Dubai were welcomed by a special installation of artwork created by Odyssey Nursery children, inspired by their reflections on rainforest conservation and environmental responsibility. Displayed inside the biodome, the exhibit invited guests to listen to the children's



voices and explore the philosophies behind their creations between June 5 and 8.

This meaningful partnership celebrated the power of creative,

sensory-led education and gives young children a platform to express their vision for a greener future. Through a series of curated workshops held across

Odyssey branches, children explored rainforest conservation, endangered species, and eco-responsibility using natural and recycled materials. Their artwork and reflections have been transformed into an emotional and visually impactful installation, now proudly displayed inside the biodome.

Spread across four immersive levels, The Green Planet Dubai offers a journey through the world's most fascinating ecosystems, from the forest floor to the canopy. This summer, the rainforest is brought to life not only by its free-roaming animals, sloths, toucans, and reptiles, but also by the powerful voices of Dubai's youngest environmental advocates.

Trump deploying more troops to LA, says California governor

Washington, D.C., US - California Governor Gavin Newsom said on Monday that US President Donald Trump will deploy an additional 2,000 National Guard troops in response to immigration protests in Los Angeles. "I was just informed Trump is deploying another 2,000 Guard troops to LA," Newsom said on X.

On Saturday, Trump signed a memo invoking his authority to deploy a minimum of 2,000 National Guard troops to Los Angeles after confrontations between immigration officials and protesters.

"The first 2,000? Given no food or water. Only approx. 300 are deployed - the rest are sitting, unused, in federal buildings without orders.

"This isn't about public safety. It's about stroking a dangerous President's ego. This is Reckless. Pointless. And Disrespectful to our troops," Newsom said.

US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) said on Monday that it will send 700 Marines to Los Angeles to help the National Guard respond to immigration protests.

"Due to increased threats to federal law enforcement officers and federal buildings, approximately 700 active-duty US Marines from Camp Pendleton are being deployed to Los Angeles to restore order," said Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth.

Newsom on Monday announced a lawsuit against Trump, saying that the president's deployment of the National Guard was 'illegal' and violated state sovereignty. "We are suing Donald Trump. This is a manufactured crisis," he wrote on X. "He is creating fear and terror to take over a state militia and violate the US constitution."



Trump has signed a memo invoking his authority to deploy a minimum of 2,000 National Guard troops to Los Angeles

Mexican president denounces acts of violence

Mexico City, Mexico - Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum condemned the violence in California over the weekend as people protested against the Trump administration's immigration crackdown.

During a press conference on Monday, Sheinbaum addressed the riots that took place in Los Angeles, where people took to the streets and even set fire to police cars.

"We do not agree with violent actions as a form of protest. The burning of patrol cars seems more an act of provocation than of resistance," she said.

Sheinbaum stressed that Mexicans living in the United States 'are hardworking, honest men and women' and called on them not to engage in any violent acts.

"We condemn violence wherever it comes from and we call on the Mexican community to act peacefully and not to fall into provocations," she said.

Sheinbaum added that Mexico should be thankful to the city of Los Angeles for welcoming hundreds of thousands of Mexicans.

Mexico's Foreign Ministry said 42 Mexican nationals were detained during last weekend's raids by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in Los Angeles.

The 37 men and five women were reportedly detained by immigration officers in a Home Depot parking lot and at a textile factory.

Mexican Foreign Secretary Juan Ramon de la Fuente said the detainees were transferred to detention centres in Santa Ana, San Bernardino and Calexico due to disturbances near the initial facility.

Anadolu Agency

The protests began last Friday after Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents raided local businesses and detained hundreds of people suspected of living in the US illegally. The Trump administration said the ICE raids will continue as part of the president's plan to crack down on illegal immigration.

A 'test case'

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass criticised the Trump administration on Monday for using the city as a 'test case'.

"If you remember at the beginning of this administration, we were told that (immigration) raids would be to look for violent criminals, people who have warrants," Bass told reporters.

"But I don't know how you go from a drug dealer to a Home Depot, to people's workplaces where they're just trying to make a living," she said.

"These are not the people that we were told were going to be detained, and it makes me feel like our city is actually a test case - a test case for what happens

Frederick Forsyth, 'Day of the Jackal' author, dies aged 86

London, UK - Frederick Forsyth, the British author of *The Day of the Jackal* and other bestselling thrillers, has died after a brief illness, his literary agent said on Monday. He was 86.

Jonathan Lloyd, his agent, said Forsyth died at home early on Monday surrounded by his family. "We mourn the passing of one of the world's greatest thriller writers," Lloyd said.

Forsyth published more than 25 books, also including *The*



Odessa File and *The Dogs of War*, and sold 75mn copies around the world, he said.

Forsyth's most famous work was about a fictional assassination attempt on former French President Charles de Gaulle by right-wing extremists 35 days after falling on hard times.

The Jackal went on to be made into a hit film starring Edward Fox as the assassin. A Netflix remake, with Eddie Redmayne in the lead role, was

released last year.

Forsyth attributed much of this success to 'luck', recalling how a bullet narrowly missed him while he was covering the bloody Nigerian civil war between 1967 and 1970.

"I have had the most spectacular luck all through my life," he told British newspaper *The Times* last November in an interview. "Right place, right time, right person, right contact, right promotion - and even just turning my head away when that bullet went past," he said.

Forsyth was a former journalist and pilot and saw many of his novels were also turned into films. "After serving as one of the youngest ever RAF pilots, he turned to journalism, using his gift for languages in German, French and Russian to become a foreign correspondent in Biafra (in Nigeria)," Lloyd explained in announcing Forsyth's death.

DW

Canada boosts defence spending to hit NATO's 2% target early

Ottawa, Canada - Canada will meet NATO's defence spending threshold of 2% this fiscal year, Prime Minister Mark Carney confirmed on Monday.

Carney added that Canada will achieve NATO's spending target of 2% of gross domestic product five years earlier than his Liberal party had previously planned.

"I am announcing today that Canada will achieve NATO's 2% target this year - half a decade ahead of schedule," Carney said during a speech at the University of Toronto. "Now is the time to act with urgency, force, and determination."

The increased spending will see new submarines, aircraft, ships, armed vehicles and artillery, as well as new radar, drones and sensors to monitor the sea floor and the Arctic purchased and a boost in pay for the armed forces.



PM Mark Carney said Canada should no longer send three quarters of its defense capital spending to the US

"Our military infrastructure and equipment have aged, hindering our military preparedness," he added.

"Only one of our four submarines is seaworthy. Less than half of our maritime fleet and

land vehicles are operational. More broadly we are too reliant on the US."

Reliance on US to be reduced

During his speech Carney said

that the world was becoming a 'darker' place, meaning that Canada needed to reduce its security dependence on the United States.

Since taking office in mid-March, Carney has delivered a

The increased spending will see new submarines, aircraft, ships, armed vehicles and artillery, radar, drones and sensors to monitor the sea floor and the Arctic purchased and a boost in pay for the armed forces

series of stark warnings about what he terms the changing nature of US global leadership under President Donald Trump.

"In a darker, more competitive world, Canadian leadership will be defined not just by the strength of our values, but also by the value of our strength," Carney said.

"The United States is beginning to monetise its hegemony: charging for access to its markets and reducing its (relative) contributions to our collective security. We should no longer send three quarters of our defence capital spending to Amer-

ica." Carney framed the announcement as a move designed 'to protect Canadians, not to satisfy NATO accountants'.

In April, NATO announced that 22 of its 32 members hit the 2% spending target. European countries have ramped up their military budgets since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, and NATO has set 2% as a bottom line for spending.

Canada has also been in discussions with the European Union to join an EU drive to break its security dependency on the United States.

DW



Italian PM Giorgia Meloni

Italy: Low voter turnout sinks reforms

Rome, Italy - Italian citizenship and labour reform referendums look likely to fail due to low voter turnout.

As two-day voting wound down in Europe's fourth-largest economy only about 30% of Italy's 51mn eligible voters had turned out to cast ballots in five referendums championed by centre-left opposition groups as well as the country's labour unions.

Referendums require 50% plus one voter participation to be legally binding in Italy. The result is seen as a major victory for Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who vehemently opposed the measures.

Meloni arrived at a Rome polling station on Sunday - when turnout was 22% - to declare that she would not cast a vote. Meloni then once-again encouraged her supporters to likewise boycott the ballot.

The referendums

Four of the referendums centred on workplace protections including better protections against firing, increased severance pay, unemployment benefits, the end of fixed-term contracts and better workplace accident compensation.

A fifth referendum addressed whether voters wanted to ease citizenship laws in the country, allowing non-EU immigrants to apply for Italian passports after five rather than the current 10 years.

At the moment, the rule would apply to roughly 2.5mn non-EU immigrants.

Arguments for easing citizenship requirements were driven by the demographic fact of Italy's dwindling birth rates and calls for better integrating foreign workers in an effort to boost the country's economy.

Data compiled by the polling organisation YouTrend said voter turnout was higher in the country's industrialised north than the agricultural south, as well in cities and in areas where left-leaning parties preformed best in Italy's most recent general and EU elections.

"The opposition wanted to turn this into a referendum on the Meloni government," said Cabinet undersecretary and Meloni ally Giovanbattista Fazzolari. "The response is very clear: The government emerges from this stronger and the opposition weaker."

Speaking of the vote's failure, YouTrend's Lorenzo Pregliasco said: "Whether just above 30% or just below, this is a low figure... below the expectations and targets set by the promoters."

DW

57 Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes across Gaza

Gaza City/Ankara - Israeli attacks across Gaza since early Tuesday killed 57 Palestinians and wounded over 200, including 19 fatalities near an Israeli-backed aid distribution site, according to medics.

A medical source told Anadolu that 19 Palestinians lost their lives and over 200 others were injured when Israeli forces opened fire at civilians who gathered to receive aid from an Israeli-backed aid distribution point near the Netzarim Corridor area, south of Gaza City.

Witnesses said Israeli quadcopter drones also opened fire towards the aid-seekers near the site. Another medical source said 12 more people were killed in Israeli airstrikes in Jabalia town in northern Gaza.

Four family members died when a displaced persons' tent in Khan Younis, southern Gaza, was bombed by the Israeli army, while other strikes targeted homes and Red Crescent facilities in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza, resulting in three more fatalities.

Nine others, including two women, were killed in separate Israeli strikes in the same city, medics said.

A medical source at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital said that eight more people, including women and children, were killed, and several others were injured in Israeli shelling of a home in Deir al-Balah.

Two Palestinians died of wounds they sustained in earlier Israeli strikes in the same city, the sources added.

The attacks came as Israeli drones dropped smoke bombs over the eastern areas of Gaza City, the official news agency



19 Palestinians lost their lives when Israeli forces opened fire at civilians who gathered to receive aid from an Israeli-backed aid distribution point

Three Palestinian paramedics were killed by an Israeli tank shell while attempting to evacuate injured civilians in Gaza City, the Interior Ministry said

Wafa said.

Paramedics killed
Three Palestinian paramedics

were killed by an Israeli tank shell while attempting to evacuate injured civilians in Gaza City, the Interior Ministry said on Tuesday.

A ministry statement said an Israeli tank directly fired on the paramedics as they were evacuating civilians injured in an Israeli strike on a house in Al-Tuffah neighbourhood in eastern Gaza City on Monday night.

A second ambulance team trying to recover the bodies of the paramedics also came under fire from Israeli drones and military vehicles, the statement said.

The ministry called for an international investigation into Is-

raeli attacks on paramedics and for protection for first responders.

The Palestinian group Hamas, for its part, condemned the deadly attack as a 'complex war crime that is added to the black record of the Israeli occupation'.

At least 54,981 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip since October 2023, the Health Ministry said on Tuesday.

A ministry statement said that 54 bodies were brought to hospitals in the last 24 hours, while 305 people were injured, taking the total number of injuries in the Israeli onslaught to 126,920.

Four wounded in West Bank

Israeli army forces shot and wounded four Palestinians, including two critically, on Tuesday during a military raid in the West Bank city of Nablus, local media said.

The injuries occurred when Israeli forces raided the old city of Nablus, triggering clashes with angry residents, the official news agency Wafa reported.

Wafa said Israeli forces blocked ambulances and medics from reaching the site to evacuate those injured.

Anadolu Agency

Israel deports Swedish activist after Gaza aid ship seized

Istanbul, Turkey - Israel said on Tuesday that it had deported Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, who was detained on an aid ship bound for the blockaded Gaza Strip.

The Madleen vessel was boarded by Israeli forces early on Monday before it could reach the Gaza shore and was towed to Ashdod Port.

The vessel had 12 foreign activists onboard, including Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg.

"Greta Thunberg just departed Israel on a flight to Sweden (via France)," the Israeli Foreign Ministry said on its official X account.

Israeli human rights organisation Adalah said that some of the activists have agreed to be deported to their home countries.

Israel's public broadcaster KAN reported that four activists will be deported on Tuesday, while the other eight will be transferred to a detention centre due to their refusal to sign deportation documents.

Carrying an amount of aid, the British-flagged ship aimed to break a crippling blockade imposed by Israel on Gaza.

As Israel has continued to close all Gaza's border crossings to humanitarian aid since early March, aid agencies have warned about the risk of famine among Gaza's 2.4mn inhabitants.



ited Correspondents at the United Nations (ACANU) media briefing in Geneva. "We have individuals that are so fed up right now that they're riding large convoys across countries in buses to try and break the siege. These are civilians because governments aren't doing their job."

"We have a boat that was yesterday, a flotilla that was intercepted, and everyone on it again, trying to break the siege again from the Gaza border, not even entering Israel, was intercepted and arrested or deported, unarmed and carrying aid. This is frightening," Haj-Hassan said.

She criticised the international community for its inaction in the face of what she described as clear and urgent needs.

"There's so many levels of what needs to happen that's not happening, from peace-keeping forces to arms embargo to breaking the siege - none of these things are happening," she said.

Calling for an unambiguous global stance, she added: "At the very start, we need to be very, very clear with our words. There needs to be widespread condemnation, action, and then accountability, and we're seeing none of those things. Maybe a little bit of a shift in the way people are speaking about things in the last two weeks. But that's not enough."

Emphasising the importance of public pressure and mass mobilisation, Haj-Hassan said:

"I think there's always power in numbers. I think if it wasn't a Freedom Flotilla, if it was 2,000 freedom flotillas, it would have been a very different outcome."

Gaza Medic Voices, which Haj-Hassan co-founded, is administered by an international team of medics and surgeons who have all worked in or visited Gaza.

Anadolu Agency

UK, Canada and allies sanction two far-right Israeli ministers

London, UK - The United Kingdom, Canada and other allies announced sanctions on Tuesday on two headline Israeli government ministers for repeatedly inciting violence against Palestinians, in a joint move that comes amid growing Western condemnation of Israel's actions in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich will face a travel ban and an asset



Bezalel Smotrich (left) and Itamar Ben Gvir

freeze, the UK government said. Ben Gvir and Smotrich both lead far-right political parties

that help keep Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's fragile government coalition afloat.

Both men have faced criticism for their inflammatory comments about the occupied West Bank as well as their positions on the war in Gaza.

The sanctions are being jointly implemented by Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Norway and the UK, according to a joint statement by the five countries' foreign ministers.

"We are steadfastly committed to the two-state solution which is the only way to guarantee security and dignity for Is-

raelis and Palestinians and ensure long term stability in the region, but it is imperilled by extremist settler violence and settlement expansion," the joint statement said.

"Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich have incited extremist violence and serious abuses of Palestinian human rights. Extremist rhetoric advocating the forced displacement of Palestinians and the creation of new Israeli settlements is appalling and dangerous," it added.

Kyiv comes under 'massive' Russian drone attack; 2 people killed

Kyiv/Moscow - Kyiv came under a large-scale drone assault for the second consecutive day overnight on Tuesday, with explosions and gunfire echoing across the city as air defences engaged incoming drones, Ukrainian authorities have said.

"Stay in shelters! The massive attack on the capital continues," Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko posted on Telegram.

Timur Tkachenko, head of Kyiv's military administration, said on Telegram that Russian 'drones are simultaneously attacking several districts of the city'.

Emergency services responded to at least four districts after midnight.

Witnesses, including journalists from the French AFP and Reuters news agencies, reported hearing dozens of blasts and gunfire.

Several residential buildings and cars were damaged, and debris fell near a school. Four people were injured and taken to the hospital.

The strikes come just a day after Russia launched its largest drone barrage of the war, in what Moscow claims is in retaliation for recent Ukrainian attacks inside Russia.

The Ukrainian military urged people to seek bomb shelters.

'One of largest air assaults'

Russia launched 315 drones and seven missiles at Ukraine overnight, in one of the largest air assaults since the start of the war, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Tuesday.

Ukraine's Air Force reported that 284 drones and all seven missiles were intercepted. "The main direction of the attack - the capital of Ukraine, the city of Kyiv!" it said on Telegram.

Kyiv and the port city of Odesa were targeted by the Russian strikes.

Zelenskyy posted on X that drone attack included '250 Shaheds, and 7 missiles, 2 of which were North Korean-made ballis-



A man looks on near a building on fire at the site of a Russian drone strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv on Tuesday

tic missiles'.

"Russian missile and Shahed strikes drown out the efforts of the United States and others around the world to force Russia into peace," he said.

Meanwhile, two people were killed and at least nine wounded after a 'massive' Russian drone attack struck Ukraine's southern

port city of Odesa overnight on Tuesday, Ukrainian authorities said. The strikes hit a maternity hospital and an emergency medical facility, as well as residential buildings, said regional governor Oleh Kiper.

"A 59-year-old man was killed," Kiper posted on Telegram, adding that medics were

treating four people wounded in the attacks.

The governor also said that residential buildings in the centre of Odesa were destroyed and damaged. The hospital patients and staff were evacuated before the Russian strikes. Photos shared by Kiper showed shattered windows and damaged

building facades.

3rd round of Russia-US talks

Meanwhile, the third round of Russian-US consultations will take place in the near future, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov announced on Tuesday.

While no specific date has been set, there are strong indications that the event will occur 'very soon', Ryabkov told reporters in Russia's resort city of Sochi. "The third round of bilateral consultations on irritants is imminent. Though it's premature to specify a date, I hope the round will take place very soon," he said.

According to him, despite some progress a broad range of issues remains on the agenda, 'varying in difficulty, though none of them are simple in relation to the US'.

After Donald Trump became the US president, Moscow and Washington held two meetings in Istanbul - on February 27 and April 10 - to normalise the functioning of diplomatic missions and improve bilateral relations.

In the last consultation, the parties agreed to simplify the movement regime for diplomats and address the issue of confiscated Russian diplomatic properties in the US.

Agencies

WFP urges international community to step up support for Sudan

Geneva, Switzerland - The World Food Programme (WFP) on Tuesday called on the international community to urgently boost support for Sudan, where a civil war continues since 2023, warning that famine is looming in several areas and basic humanitarian operations are on the brink due to severe funding shortfalls.

Speaking at a UN press briefing in Geneva, Laurent Bukera, WFP's Sudan representative and country director, said 'this is the moment to stand with the Sudanese people as they rebuild

their lives, communities, and hope after two years of devastating conflict'.

Bukera, who recently returned from Khartoum, said the WFP has opened a new office in Omdurman to re-establish its presence near affected communities.

"The needs are immense," he said, describing widespread destruction, a cholera outbreak, and areas that now resemble a 'ghost city'.

Over the past six months, the WFP has reached nearly one million people in Khartoum with



food and nutrition aid, he said. However, Bukera warned that 'several areas in the south of the city are at high risk of famine', and the momentum must be maintained.

Across Sudan, according to the country director, the WFP now reaches four million people monthly - nearly four times more than at the beginning of 2024 - with an aim to reach seven million - as access has expanded.

Still, operations are being severely constrained, he said.

"Oil and pulses have been removed from the food basket due to a lack of resources," Bukera said, adding that over US\$500mn is urgently needed over the next six months for emergency food and cash assistance.

He also condemned escalating attacks on humanitarian personnel, including a deadly strike last week on a WFP-UNICEF convoy near El Fasher.

"These attacks must stop immediately," he said. 'Above all, the only solution is peace.'

Anadolu Agency

Several killed in shooting at a school in Austrian city of Graz

Suspected shooter is said to be a 22-year-old former student of the school

Graz, Austria - Multiple people have been killed in an attack at a school in the southern Austrian city of Graz, according to authorities.

Police said that there had been 'several deaths' after an operation was launched after reports of gunshots in Dreierschützengasse street. The operation began at 10am local time (0800 UTC).

Police said in a later statement that the school had been successfully evacuated.

"The situation is secure," police said. "No further danger is expected."

The suspected perpetrator's motive was initially unclear.

Police said that a helicopter had been deployed as part of the operation.

Graz has around 300,000 inhabitants and is the capital of Styria state.

What did Graz's mayor say?

Graz mayor Elke Kahr said that ten people were killed in the shooting, including the suspected perpetrator, according to Austria's APA news agency. Among the dead were at least



Austrian police said they launched an operation after reports of gunshots

one adult and several children. Several people were also reportedly injured.

Media reported that the suspected shooter was thought to be have been a 22-year-old former student of the school.

The ORF public broadcaster cited police as saying that both students and teachers were among the casualties.

The Kronen Zeitung daily said that number of injured in the attack was in the 'double digits'.

Police said they believed that the shooter had acted alone.

A 'national tragedy'

Chancellor Christian Stocker extended his condolences to the victims and their loved ones in a post on X.

The school shooting in Graz 'is a national tragedy that has shocked our whole country', Stocker said. "There are no words for the pain and grief that we are all ... feeling."

President Alexander van der Bellen said that the attack had hit Austria 'right in the heart'.

"Austria is in mourning," he said. "And in this hour, we are standing together."

The mayor of Graz said that 10 people were killed in a shooting incident at a school, including the alleged perpetrator. Austrian police said the school was evacuated after they responded to reports of gun fire

Meanwhile, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen also expressed her condolences in an X post. "My thoughts are with the victims, their families and friends," she said. "Schools are a symbol for youth, hope and the future. It is hard to bear when schools become places of death and violence."

EU top diplomat Kaja Kallas said she was 'deeply shocked by

the news of the school shooting in Austria'.

"Every child should feel safe at school and be able to learn free from fear and violence."

How strict are Austria's gun laws?

Austria has nearly 30 civilian firearms per 100 people, according to the Small Arms Survey research project.

The Alpine country has banned automatic weapons and pump action guns, while revolvers, pistols and semi-automatic weapons are allowed with a permit.

Rifles and shotguns are permitted with a firearms license, a valid hunting licence or for members of shooting clubs.

In 2020, four were killed and 22 injured in a shooting in the centre of Vienna.

The attack was carried out by a sympathiser of the Islamic State (IS) group.

DW

French school stabbing: Student kills educational assistant

Paris, France - A French school employee was stabbed to death by a 15-year-old student during a bag check, the gendarmerie said on Tuesday.

A police officer assisting with the checks was also slightly injured in the incident, which occurred at a school in Nogent, north-eastern France. "While watching over our children in Nogent, an educational assistant lost her life, the victim of a senseless wave of violence," French President Emmanuel Macron wrote on social media.

"The nation is in mourning and the government is mobilised to reduce crime," he added.

The 31-year-old teaching assistant was stabbed multiple times as classes began. The suspected attacker was subdued by gendarmes, according to education officials. The student, who had no criminal record, was taken into custody.

Education Minister Elisabeth Borne was en route to Nogent 'to support the entire school community and the police'.

Although fatal school attacks remain rare in France, but growing concerns over violence have led the Education Ministry to implement bag checks at some schools this year.

Over a two-month period this spring, a total of 186 knives were confiscated during these checks, and 32 individuals were detained, the Interior Ministry reported on Tuesday.

DW

FIRE AND WATER



India Coast Guard ships *Samudra Prahari* and *Sachet* conduct firefighting operations and boundary cooling after Singapore-flagged container ship *MV WAN HAI 503*, reported an internal container explosion and a resultant major fire onboard, in Kochi, India on Tuesday. According to the Indian Coast Guard, four crew members were reported missing, and five others sustained injuries (ANI)

EU, India launch first-ever strategic dialogue to boost cooperation

Brussels, Belgium - The EU and India took a step forward in strengthening their partnership on cyber security, defense, and space during the inaugural EU-India Strategic Dialogue held in Brussels on Tuesday.

Speaking at a news conference with Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said the two sides are 'natural partners', jointly representing a quarter of the world's population and GDP.

"By working together, we have great potential to make a global impact," she said, adding that the dialogue sets the foundation for closer cooperation on key issues such as cybersecurity, defense, and space.

Kallas stressed the EU's support for continued talks between India and Pakistan to ease re-



S Jaishankar and Kaja Kallas at a joint press conference in Brussels

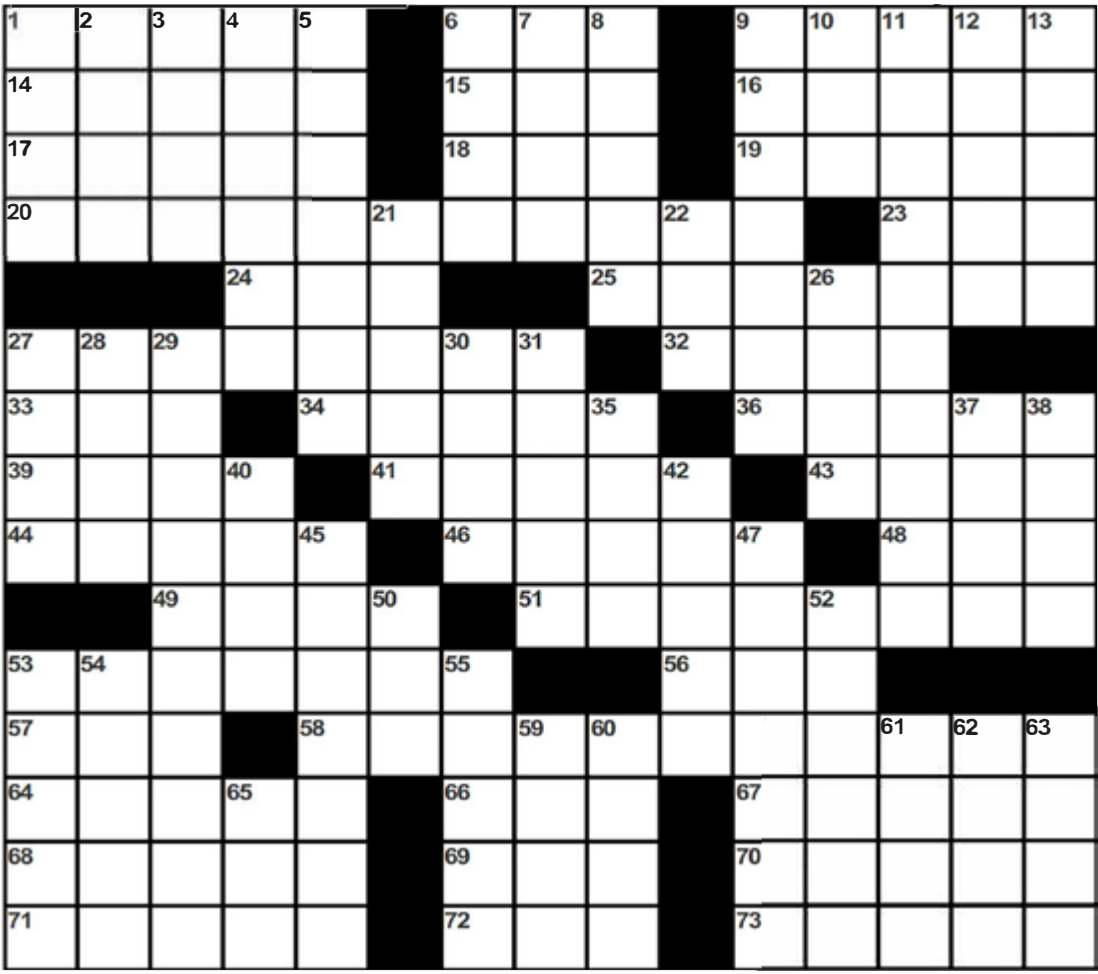
gional tensions, saying: "No one stands to gain from renewed conflicts in the region."

On space cooperation, she noted that the EU and India already share Earth observation satellite data. A new formal dialogue on space issues, including satellite navigation and security, will begin with a first session scheduled for autumn.

In response to an Anadolu question about a civilian aid flotilla seized by Israeli forces, which included 9 EU citizens, among them MEP Rima Hassan, Kallas emphasised the importance of advancing international maritime law and stated that protecting EU citizens is 'the responsibility of EU member states'.

Anadolu Agency

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Smelting byproducts
 - 6) Bawling sound
 - 9) Emulated a crow
 - 14) Part of the zodiac
 - 15)_ mode
 - 16) Cronelike
 - 17) Commonplace
 - 18) Potok's "My Name is Asher "
 - 19) Championship fight prize
 - 20) It can part
 - 23) Do a seamstress's job
 - 24) "At Seventeen" singer Janis
 - 25) Alligator kin
 - 27) Bone-connecting tissue
 - 32) What an actor holds
 - 33) Be mistaken
 - 34) Overpamper
 - 36) Gabbana's partner in fashion
 - 39) Early boat builder
 - 41) Deuce toppers
 - 43) James Brown had it
 - 44) Chronological record
 - 46) Mystical emanations
 - 48) What your wife may be called
 - 49) " ... of _ I sing"
 - 51) Easily perceived

- 53) Call a spade a club?
- 56) Actor Mineo
- 57) Key on a keyboard
- 58) Weapon of mass destruction
- 64) Near
- 66) California airport, informally
- 67) Noted peninsula
- 68) Brer Rabbit Uncle
- 69) Santa follower
- 70) Make immune, as to violence (var.)
- 71) Circle in space?
- 72) Scottish hat
- 73) Four-time All Star AI

- DOWN**
- 1) Speak indistinctly
 - 2) "Mona_ "
 - 3) Adjoin
 - 4) "Ars_ artis"
 - 5) Islamic salutations
 - 6) New York street
 - 7) "Smart" guy
 - 8) Bad thing to wreak
 - 9) Type of seat
 - 10) "The Phantom Menace" boy
 - 11) How the capable do things?
 - 12) Burstyn or Barkin
 - 13) Judges to be

- 21) Liable to bungle
- 22) "You are here" posting
- 26) Bellows like Bessie
- 27) Legendary Home
- 28) Get the wrinkles out
- 29) Memorial in New York's Riverside Park
- 30) "You've Got Mail" director Ephron
- 31) Hog, as a phone
- 35) Vega's constellation
- 37) Hair ringlet
- 38) " ... or_!"
- 40) German nuclear physicist Otto
- 42) Condiment for tacos
- 45) Having the least fat
- 47) Less dense
- 50) Down Under bird
- 52) Deficiency in pigmentation
- 53) Prefix meaning "large"
- 54) More sickly
- 55) Acclaim
- 59) Turner of "Peyton Place"
- 60) Course concluder, often
- 61) Heavy burden
- 62) Barnyard mama
- 63) "Tres _!"
- 65) _ generis (unique)

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You should be feeling somewhat carefree today, as something in your life has recently expanded, maybe your job, living situation, sense of understanding, or circle of friends. It seems to be leaking over into all other areas of your life and letting you see just how lovely the world can be. Take advantage of this pioneering spirit and set out to explore something that's always intrigued you.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Sometimes all you need is one little spark and then suddenly it's as if everything is illuminated. The answer to a torturous problem you've had at work might bring with it unexpected and welcome gifts, such as a whole new perspective on what's been going on in your relationships and your private life. This realization should give you the power to change things around here for the better.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Your energy is largely focused on if not devoted to the concept of love right now. Love really is all you need, especially when it arrives in such an amazing package. Someone has recently entered (or is just about to enter) your life, and you feel like they may actually be too good to be true. Stop pinching yourself and just open your eyes. This really is happening to you, and you don't want to miss it.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Are you dealing with some tough cookie with a long history of treating people poorly? Authority figures have their crankiness turned all the way up right now. Whoever it is, remember that you aren't responsible for their bad mood. You need to be the soul of politeness and just step out of the way of whatever they're slinging. You may get through the day swimmingly if you keep that as your standard operating procedure.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

You need to shake up your usual routine in a big way. You have a sweet life and an organized schedule, of course, but things might be just a little too calm lately. Use your long-dormant instincts. There's a whole world of options for you to exercise. Maybe it's time to go salsa dancing, scuba diving, or even just try that new place for lunch.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

It's quite tempting to do something that feels good in the moment, but you need to consider the consequences of what is sure to happen later, not to mention how you might feel following your actions. If you know regret is in your future if you don't stop yourself, then why do it? Refuse to jump into this hole. Treat yourself with the respect you deserve. Aren't you worth the best care around?

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

On today's agenda, you need to add mending fences, loving your neighbor, and all the rest of that caring, sharing business. Think of yourself as a karmic diplomat, spreading good energy and love through the rest of the world. You don't have to lay it on with a trowel or break your back to spread the love. Just let your soul shine through in everything you do now. You're an ambassador of goodwill without even trying!

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Don't get so focused on earthly rewards that you lose sight of the truly meaningful things in life. Professional achievement, financial success, and the admiration of your colleagues are all wonderful things and well worth working for. Still, there are other possibly more important things to address like taking care of your spirit, loving your people, and helping those who can't help themselves.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Don't talk yourself into something just because someone close thinks it's best for you, especially if your heart is sending you a completely different message. Listen carefully to those instincts, and don't push them aside even if there's no logical reason for what you're feeling. You're no robot, and you need to be sure to follow your heart when it's most important, like right now.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Learn to quietly (but firmly) close the door to rooms that you aren't coming back to. Let the past stay where it belongs. You're on the brink of something new, and there's just no need to drag the carcasses of dead and buried situations into it. Let yourself start fresh, and try to see all the possibilities of this brand-new moment. If you're embarking on a new relationship, it's crucial to stay present in the moment.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

If you start to feel a little hot under the collar because of something a colleague tells you, you know what to do, right? Just remove the collar. It may not be so easy to remove the boss or coworker! Dealing with jerks is a fact of life, and not everyone you meet is sweetness and light. Your job right now is to find some way to deal with them that helps you keep cool at the same time.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Don't push yourself so hard. It's not worth the stress you're putting on your mind or body. Do what you can, and don't hesitate to put forth all your energy, but once it's done, let it go. Just sit back and let the Universe do its job rather than try to be in charge of the whole process. Not only should you have a lot more fun that way, but you might also end up with something a lot nicer than you could have imagined on your own.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. The girth goes on which part of the horse?

- A. Across the nose
- B. Around the ribs
- C. Under the tail
- D. Around the neck

02. In snooker, what is the name of the shot where a ball goes into a pocket after hitting the opposite cushion?

- A. Jump shot
- B. Plant
- C. Cannon
- D. Double

03. 03. Kerkyra is what the locals call what island?

- A. Corsica
- B. Corfu
- C. Crete
- D. Cos

Answers: 1.B 2.D 3.B

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

O	E	P	D
N	I	Y	G
G	S	I	N
A	Y	L	I

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

RED-BALL RUMBLE

Australia start as favourites in World Test Championship final against South Africa

London, England - Australia will have to dust off the cobwebs but are still fancied to successfully defend their World Test Championship crown against equally ring-rusty South Africa in the final at Lord's, starting on Wednesday.

The five-day clash comes on the heels of a plethora of limited-overs cricket over the last five months, and both teams have been scrambling to prepare for a high-profile return to the red-ball game.

Australia have not played a test since beating Sri Lanka in Galle in February when they made sure of a top-two finish in the standings from results for the 2023-25 WTC cycle.

South Africa were assured of top place when they won their last test against Pakistan at home in January to book a first-ever finals appearance.

It came on the back of a run of seven successive wins, but the fact they did not play against the Aussies or England has seen their achievement dismissed as too easy.

Former England captain Michael Vaughan said they reached the final "on the back of beating pretty much nobody,"



Australian captain Pat Cummins (L) and his South African counterpart Temba Bavuma pose with the mace ahead of the World Test Championship final at Lord's

which was a result of the lop-sided test schedule where Australia, England, and India dominate and South Africa elect to play more financially lucrative limited-overs internationals.

But an upset win for South Africa could change that.

"It's the biggest thing in this

team's existence. It's the biggest thing for South African cricket at the moment," said their coach Shukri Conrad.

Australia have been warming up with training sessions at Beckenham in Kent as they grapple with selection choices.

They must pick between Scott Boland or Josh Hazlewood

to join skipper Pat Cummins, left-armers Mitchell Starc and spinner Nathan Lyon in the attack.

The top batting order is likely to be changed with Cameron Green set to return for his first test in more than a year. He will likely bat third with Marnus Labuschagne opening alongside

Usman Khawaja, while Steve Smith will come in at No. 4.

South Africa's planned four-day warm-up scrimmage with Zimbabwe at Arundel last week was largely washed out but did hint at Wiaan Mulder moving up the order to No.3 in a batting lineup that has been inconsistent over the last two years.

Their hopes rest instead on a fiery bowling attack where Kagiso Rabada features after serving a one-month ban for recreational drug use.

Australia won the last WTC final by beating India at The Oval two years ago. New Zealand were the inaugural winners in 2021.

Return of Hazlewood a big boost for Australia

London, England - Marnus Labuschagne will open the batting for Australia and Josh Hazlewood has been selected in the bowling lineup for the World Test Championship final against South Africa at Lord's, captain Pat Cummins said on the eve of the game on Tuesday.

Labuschagne has been moved up the order to accommodate the return of Cameron Green, who underwent back surgery in October and was ruled out of the home season, while Hazlewood is fit again after a calf injury to replace of Scott Boland.

"Cam Green has been coming back in great form in the last few weeks and we thought he deserved a spot in the batting lineup. We thought three probably suits



Josh Hazlewood

him best," Cummins told a press conference. "For Marnus moving one spot up, it's not too different to batting at three. He's done well here in England in the past."

Leaving out Boland, who had been one of the heroes of Australia's 3-1 test series win over India this year, had been a difficult decision.

"There are some guys where you genuinely say, you've done nothing wrong, don't change a thing and that's Scotty. He is just really unfortunate to miss out.

An element of selection criteria was to reward those who had contributed to defending champions Australia winning 13 of 19 tests in the two-year WTC cycle and reaching yet another final.

"I think our selectors have probably shown you that they're happy and they'd rather give someone an extra little run than pull the pin too early. I think it's partly rewarding those guys that got us here."



Lionel Scaloni with Lionel Messi

Argentina can play in the same way with or without Messi, says Scaloni

Buenos Aires, Argentina - Argentina have learned to cope with Lionel Messi's absences and no longer need to rejig the line-up when the Inter Miami forward is not available, manager Lionel Scaloni said ahead of Wednesday's World Cup qualifier against Colombia.

Since making his senior debut in 2005, Messi has scored 112 goals in 192 appearances for Argentina, winning the World Cup in 2022, two Copa America titles and a gold medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Messi has scored 112 goals for Argentina, winning the World Cup in 2022, two Copa America titles and a gold medal at 2008 Beijing Olympics

The 37-year-old captain missed Argentina's 1-0 win over Uruguay and 4-1 thrashing of ri-

vals Brazil in March due to injury, with Scaloni's side securing their place at the 2026 World Cup during that international break.

He returned to the squad for this month's World Cup qualifiers and made a substitute appearance in Argentina's 1-0 win over Chile last week.

"The team is now in a moment where it can play in the same way with Leo (Messi) or without Leo, which used to be more complex in the past as we had to change some players," Scaloni told reporters ahead of

the match in Buenos Aires.

"But now we don't have this necessity and the team works in the same way, that's good."

While Argentina have already qualified for the World Cup in North America, Colombia are in the sixth and final automatic qualification spot and will be looking to put some distance between themselves and seventh-placed Venezuela with a win.

Colombia beat Argentina 2-1 when the sides last met in the World Cup qualifiers in September.

Imola axed from 2026 F1 calendar

Paris, France - Formula One will have two races in Spain next season with Madrid's new street circuit making its debut in September and Italy's Imola dropping off the 24-round calendar, F1 and the governing FIA announced on Tuesday.

Melbourne's Australian Grand Prix will again be the season-opener on March 8 with China's Shanghai circuit hosting round two a week later, as the sport enters a new engine era with Cadillac also arriving as an 11th team.

Japan will be round three as a standalone event on March 29.

Monaco will be the first European round on June 7, swapping dates with Canada, whose race in Montreal moves to May 24 and follows Miami on May 3.

Canada, which clashes with the 24 Hours of Le Mans endurance race this year, is now set to overlap instead with the Indianapolis 500. Barcelona's Circuit de Catalunya, which is entering the final year of its current contract and will no longer be designated the Spanish Grand Prix, is



The F1 season will end in Abu Dhabi on December 6

scheduled for June 14.

Madrid's Madring, a part-street layout around the city's IFEMA exhibition centre, will be the last race in Europe on September 13 and the weekend after the Italian Grand Prix at Monza. The Dutch Grand Prix at Zandvoort, due to drop off the calendar after 2026, will be held on August 23 as a sprint weekend.

The season will end in Abu Dhabi on December 6, immediately after Qatar.

"We are excited to welcome

Madrid to the calendar, and to see huge automotive brands like Audi, Cadillac and Ford join the Formula One grid," said Formula One Chief Executive Stefano Domenicali in a statement.

Swiss-based Sauber will become the Audi works team in 2026 while Ford are partnering with Red Bull. Formula One will also have 100% sustainable fuel.

Bahrain and Saudi Arabia will again be held on successive weekends in April due to Ramadan taking place in February and March.

Dortmund sign Jobe Bellingham from Sunderland

Sunderland, England - Sunderland's Jobe Bellingham has completed a permanent transfer to Borussia Dortmund, the clubs said on Tuesday as the English midfielder follows in the footsteps of his elder brother Jude by signing for the Bundesliga team.

Financial details were not disclosed by the newly-promoted Premier League club but British media said Dortmund would pay an initial fee of 33 million euros (\$37.70 million) for Jobe, who will play in this month's Club World Cup.

Sunderland said it was a club-record fee and that a sell-on clause was also included within the agreement while Dortmund said the England Under-21 international had signed a five-year deal.

The reported fee would make 19-year-old Jobe the second-most expensive signing made by Dortmund after they recruited Ousmane Dembele for 35 million euros in 2016.

Jobe leaves Sunderland after a two-year spell which culmi-



Jobe Bellingham

I'm very happy to be a Borussia Dortmund player now... And I'm very happy that I'll be wearing the black and yellow jersey at the FIFA Club World Cup

JOBE BELLINGHAM

nated with the club, who finished fourth in the second-tier Championship, gaining promotion to the top flight with a play-off final victory over Sheffield United.

"It's time for me to say farewell to all the loyal people of Sunderland, who have powered me through two incredible years in red and white," Jobe said.

"Your support, on so many occasions, has completely blown me away, especially in the times of adversity, which we pulled through together."

In a separate statement, he said: "I'm very happy to be a Borussia Dortmund player now and to fight for titles together with this great club... And I'm very happy that I'll be wearing the black and yellow jersey at the FIFA Club World Cup."

Jude Bellingham played for Dortmund for three seasons before making a 103 million euros switch to Real Madrid, where the England international won the LaLiga and Champions League titles in his first season.

I haven't been able to get the best out of these players, says Spalletti

Reggio Emilia, Italy - Luciano Spalletti took charge of Italy one last time on Monday, and while his side sent him off with a win, the sacked manager accepted that he isn't leaving the team in a great place for his replacement and has failed to improve them.

Spalletti paid the ultimate price for a 3-0 drubbing in Norway on Friday as Italy's World Cup qualifying campaign was already compromised in their opening game, and an uninspired 2-0 home win over Moldova was not how he wished to bow out.

"I'm disappointed with the result," Spalletti said at his final press conference.

"I don't give back to those who come after me a great national team because we didn't play a great match tonight either. I was given the opportunity to work, I tried, I made mistakes and I even tried some experiments.

"I try to learn everything in whatever I approach, I'm not convinced I'm the smartest one. I haven't been able to get the best out of these players and I have to take note of that."

Spalletti announced his own dismissal on the eve of the Moldova match, which

comes after less than two years in the role and included a disappointing Euro 2024 campaign. While he never thought of resigning, he conceded he has failed to improve things.

"If you agree to coach the national team like I did, then you have to find the solution. You can't hide behind the fact that you have few players, you start to find alibis," Spalletti said.

"I did badly and in some ways it is right that I go home. But I didn't resign, because I think I can do better.

But, if I am told that I am no longer the one, then I sign the resolution (of the contract). "I left the national team as when I found it, just as it is."

Italy have yet to name his replacement, with Claudio Ranieri reported to be the first choice, and Spalletti was asked if he had any advice for his eventual successor.

"I tried to shake things up when I arrived but then maybe it was worse from what we saw," he said.

"You realise whether you did right or wrong only later, I tried some things and worked hard.

"I wish all the best to the federation and to the new coach who will arrive."



Luciano Spalletti

De Bruyne to the fore

Ace midfielder's late strike helps Belgium hold off fighting Wales

Brussels, Belgium - Kevin De Bruyne came to Belgium's rescue with a winner two minutes from time as they scraped a 4-3 home victory over Wales in their World Cup qualifier on Monday after seeing their early lead evaporate as the visitors launched an unlikely fightback.

Belgium had been 3-0 up inside the first half hour, but Wales battled back to level the game before the Belgian talisman handed his side a potentially precious win in the Group J qualifiers for the 2026 finals in North America. It was a controversial encounter with two penalties and several lengthy interventions by VAR.

Belgium's record goalscorer Romelu Lukaku got things going with a 15th minute penalty, followed by goals in the 19th minute for captain Youri Tielemans and Jeremy Doku in the 27th minute.

Wales pulled a goal back from a Harry Wilson spotkick on the stroke of halftime and then turned the game around with second half strikes from Sorba Thomas and Brennan Johnson.

De Bruyne, however, brought the home team much relief with a back post finish in the 88th minute as he ghosted in unmarked to get onto the end of a



Belgium's Kevin De Bruyne celebrates after scoring the winner against Wales in their World Cup qualifier on Monday

Belgium had been 3-0 up inside the first half hour, but Wales battled back to level the game before De Bruyne handed his side a potentially precious win in the Group J qualifiers for the 2026 finals

Tielemans long cross from the other side of the field.

It was De Bruyne who got things going early on with a point-blank strike that struck Johnson on the arm and, after a

lengthy VAR check, led to Belgium taking the lead as Lukaku slotted home his 89th goal for Belgium. Four minutes later, a sweeping move from the right flank to the left was started when

De Bruyne stole away possession and quickly led to the second home goal, finished by Tielemans slamming home a square pass from Maxim De Cuyper.

Doku then added the third with a fine individual effort. He was walking with the ball at his feet, teasing the visiting defenders on the right side of the attack before quickly cutting inside and unleashing a left-footed drive that Wales goalkeeper Karl Darlow got a hand to but could not keep out.

A shell-shocked Wales were handed a lifeline in stoppage time at the end of the first half when home goalkeeper Matz Sels was adjudged to have fouled Chris Mepham as he attempted to punch away a setpiece and Wilson converted the resultant spot-kick.

Wilson then played a sublime cross-field pass to find Thomas on the left and he had ample time to finish to offer his side some hope as the score went to 3-2 in the 61st minute.

Italy labour to victory against Moldova in sacked Spalletti's farewell match

Rome, Italy - Sacked Italy manager Luciano Spalletti bowed out with a victory after his side laboured to an uninspired 2-0 home win over Moldova in their World Cup qualification match on Monday thanks to goals from Giacomo Raspadori and Andrea Cambiaso.

Spalletti announced his own dismissal on Sunday following Italy's 3-0 loss in Norway in their opening group game on Friday, but took charge for one final time where again the performance showed why a change of leadership was required.

Norway, who won 1-0 in Estonia with Erling Haaland netting the winner, top Group I on 12 points from four games, with Israel on six points after three matches while Italy are third with three points from their two games.

"I asked the guys to let me go out with a victory," Spalletti told Sky Sport shortly before kickoff.

While his players duly obliged, it was perhaps a fitting end to Spalletti's time on the bench as another lacklustre showing failed to light up a far from full Stadio Citta del Tricolore.

With Italy's slow, predictable build-up play failing to break through the visitors' rearguard, the hosts were given an early



Italy's Andrea Cambiaso scores against Moldova in their World Cup qualification match on Monday

wake-up call when Ion Nicolescu found the net only for his goal to be ruled out for offside.

Italy's first threat came when defender Luca Ranieri, making his international debut, hit the crossbar with a header, and they found the breakthrough five minutes before the break.

A headed clearance fell to Raspadori in the box who struck first time into the bottom corner but Moldova almost levelled before halftime when Oleg Reabciuk's shot from distance was

parried away by Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Artur Ioniță's follow-up effort went wide of the far post and Daniel Dumbravanu's header from a corner was cleared off the line by Federico Dimarco as Italy hung onto their lead.

Italy doubled their lead five minutes into the second half when substitute Riccardo Orsolini sent a low cross into the area which Davide Frattesi knocked on to Cambiaso who fired past keeper Cristian Avram.

The two-goal cushion failed to inspire Italy. Frattesi was sent through on goal from a ball over the top by Alessandro Bastoni but he sent his shot straight at the keeper and Moldova continued to create chances of their own.

"We struggled again tonight," Spalletti told Rai Sport.

"When you are the coach of the national team you cannot have alibis because he chooses the players and if they don't do well he can change them."

Inter appoint Chivu as manager

Milan, Italy - Inter Milan appointed Cristian Chivu as coach on Monday in place of Simone Inzaghi who left following the Italian side's 5-0 Champions League final loss to Paris St Germain, with their former player signing a two-year deal.

Romanian Chivu, who left Parma after less than four months in charge, played as a defender for Inter for seven years and was part of Jose Mourinho's treble-winning side in 2010 before ending his playing career at the Serie A club in 2014.

"In February 2025, Cristian was given his first opportunity to coach a senior side at Parma... He led the Emilians to safety, with the team picking up 16 points from 13 matches under his guidance," Inter said in a statement.

"Now, Cristian Chivu is beginning the third chapter of his Nerazzurri story. And he's doing so with the values that have always guided him: dedication, sacrifice and a tireless work ethic."

Chivu's second Inter chapter started in 2018 when he returned, moving up through the ranks to manage the youth team and winning the league title in his first season in charge.

Although Chivu lacks the experience that Inzaghi brought to the role, the 44-year-old made an immediate impact at Parma by shoring up a defence which had been leaking goals, with his side



Cristian Chivu

conceding only 13 compared to 27 in the previous 13 games.

Parma performed better against the bigger sides under Chivu, beating Juventus, Bologna and Atalanta while earning draws against Inter, Lazio and Napoli.

Chivu's Parma also did Inter a huge favour on the penultimate matchday with a 0-0 draw against Napoli, but Inzaghi's side failed to take advantage, conceding a late penalty in a 2-2 draw with Lazio, and

Napoli went on to become champions.

Inzaghi, who led Inter to the Scudetto in the previous campaign, ended last season trophyless, losing to neighbours AC Milan in the Coppa Italia semi-final, and the campaign ended with the humiliating loss to PSG in Munich. Three days after that defeat, Inzaghi left Inter after four years at the helm, and joined Saudi Arabian side Al Hilal.

Ranieri turns down Italy job to stay on at Roma in senior role

Milan, Italy - Claudio Ranieri said on Tuesday he has turned down the vacant Italy manager's job, after the four-times world champions sacked Luciano Spalletti, and will stay on with AS Roma as their senior advisor.

Former Napoli coach Spalletti, 66, announced his own dismissal on Sunday following Italy's 3-0 drubbing by Norway in their opening World Cup qualifier on Friday.

Ranieri, who recently retired for a second time after his spell

at Roma last season, said he was honoured to have been offered the job by Italian Football Federation President Gabriele Gravina.

"I thank President Gravina for the opportunity, a great honour, but I have reflected and decided

to remain available to Roma in my new position totally," he told Italian news agency ANSA.

"The Friedkins (Roma owners) gave me their full support and backing for whatever decision I had made regarding the national team but the decision is

mine alone."

Ranieri helped Roma finish fifth in Serie A last season to qualify for the Europa League. The 73-year-old Italian has been replaced by former Atalanta manager Gian Piero Gasperini at Roma.



Claudio Ranieri

Gaza war ‘hurts my whole body’

Manchester, England - Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola received an honorary doctorate from the University of Manchester on Monday and used his acceptance speech to address the war in Gaza.

The war erupted after Hamas-led militants took 251 hostages and killed 1,200 people, most of them civilians, in the October 7, 2023 attack. Israel's military campaign has since killed more than 54,000 Palestinians, most of them civilians, according to health authorities in Gaza.

"It's so painful what we see in Gaza. It hurts my whole body," Guardiola said. "It's not about ideology. It's not about whether I'm right, or you're wrong. It's just about the love of life, about the care of your neighbour."

"Maybe we think that we see the boys and girls of four years old being killed by the bomb or being killed at the hospital because it's not a hospital anymore. It's not our business."

"But be careful. The next four-



Pep Guardiola received an honorary doctorate from the University of Manchester

or five-year-old kids will be ours. Sorry, but I see my kids, Maria, Marius and Valentina. When I see every morning since the nightmare started the infants in Gaza, and I'm so scared."

Guardiola was recognised for his contribution to the city, including guiding his team to six Premier League titles in nine years with the club, along with his charitable work through his Guardiola Sala Foundation.

He was presented with his honorary degree by the University's Chancellor Nazir Afzal.

'A DREAM COME TRUE'

Algeria's Ait Nouri says he is 'excited about working with and learning from Guardiola' after signing a five-year deal with Man City

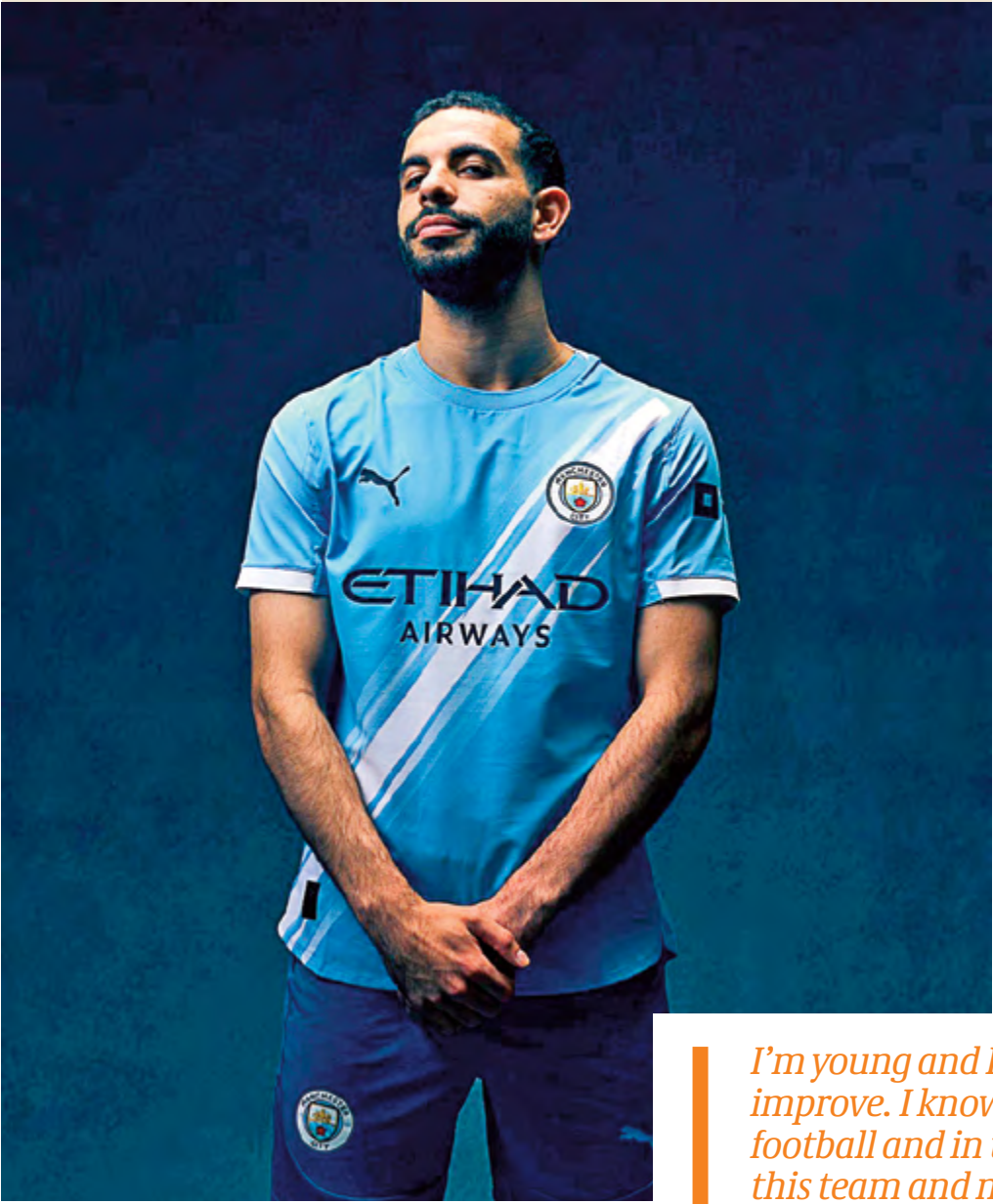
Manchester, England - Algeria defender Rayan Ait Nouri has joined Manchester City from Wolverhampton Wanderers on a five-year deal ahead of this month's Club World Cup, City announced on Monday.

Financial details were not disclosed but British media reported City paid a fee of around 33.7 million pounds (\$45.69 million) to sign the 24-year-old, who had one year left on his Wolves contract.

Ait-Nouri initially joined Wolves on loan from Ligue 1 side Angers in 2020, before making the move permanent the following year. He leaves Wolves after five seasons, having made 157 appearances with 12 goals and 19 assists.

"I am incredibly happy and honoured to have joined Manchester City. City are one of the biggest clubs in the world and the chance to play for the club is a dream come true," Ait-Nouri said. "I am also so excited about working with and learning from Pep [Guardiola] and his coaching team and getting to train and play alongside such a world-class group of players."

"I'm young and I came here to improve a lot. I need to learn and improve my football for sure - it's



Rayan Ait Nouri

why I chose this big challenge. I know I can improve my football and being in these kind of conditions with this team and this manager, for sure I will improve my football."

Ait-Nouri showed his quality at both ends of the pitch this past season. Only Fulham's Antonee Robinson made more assists

among defenders. He also ranked fourth in both goals and chances created among defenders.

City's director of football Hugo Viana said the club had their eye on Ait-Nouri for "quite some time".

"He already has extensive Premier League experience and

I'm young and I came here to improve. I know I can improve my football and in these conditions with this team and manager, for sure I will improve my football

RAYAN AIT NOURI

has also demonstrated his quality at international level with Algeria," Viana said.

Wolves are now without two of their key players from last season, after Brazil forward Matheus Cunha's transfer to Manchester United on June 1.

City finished third in the 2024-25 Premier League season and only secured a Champions League berth on the final day of the campaign.

Guardiola's side are next in action at the Club World Cup in the United States. They face Wydad AC in their opening game on June 18, before taking on Al-Ain and Juventus in their other Group G fixtures.

Chelsea sign Sarr from Strasbourg

French defender Mamadou Sarr has joined Chelsea from Ligue 1 side Strasbourg on an eight-year contract, the Premier League club said on Monday.

Financial details of the deal were not disclosed, but British media reported that Chelsea signed Sarr in a deal worth around 14 million euros (\$16 million).

The 19-year-old centre back, son of former Senegal international Pape Sarr, made 28 appearances for Strasbourg after joining them from Olympique Ly-

Iraq submit request to host World Cup qualifiers

Basra, Iraq - The Iraqi Football Association (IFA) has submitted an official request to host one of the two groups in the fourth round of Asian qualifiers for next year's World Cup in North America.

Iraq are third in the third round Group B with 12 points before their final match against Jordan in Amman on Tuesday and will finish third or fourth in the

group. "We had sent a letter to International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) calling for the highest levels of transparency and fairness in the process of selecting the host country or countries for the fourth round of the Asian qualifiers," IFA said in a statement on Facebook.

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TATI

TATI, in partnership with NSL, will be conducting The Lifting Equipment Inspection (LEI) training at our facility in Berka, tentative start 27th July 2025 with Module 1.

The NSL LEI program consists of 8 Main Modules and 2 Bolt-On Modules as below

Module 1: General Lifting Equipment (Accessories)

Module 2: Winches & Power Hoist

Module 3: Pedestal & Mobile Cranes

Module 4: Overhead Travelling Cranes, Runway Beams & Swing Jibs

Module 5: Forklift Trucks & Stackers

Module 6: Containers, Baskets & Other Cargo Carrying Units

Bolt-On 1: Lorry Loaders (HIAB)

Bolt-On 2: MEWPS

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Denim – a fabric that has formed the backbone of the fashion world for decades and yet never loses its appeal...

At GANG, everything revolves around this versatile companion. But how does the German fashion label with Italian roots manage to constantly breathe new life into this material?

Under the creative direction of Yvonne Weitzl, GANG doesn't just design jeans, it celebrates denim in its purest form: authentic, timeless, and innovative all at once.

A fabric that lives

What makes denim so special is its ability to change with every movement, every wear – almost like a second skin that tells its own story. From unwashed 'raw denim' to elaborately treated vintage washes, the fabric displays a unique range. GANG works with this interplay between authenticity and individuality in every collection, making the jeans a reflection of their wearers and allowing them to develop a unique patina over time.

To preserve this special aura, the right interplay of material selection and processing is crucial. The washes

UNDER THE CREATIVE DIRECTION OF **YVONNE WEITL**, GANG DOESN'T JUST DESIGN JEANS, IT CELEBRATES DENIM IN ITS PUREST FORM - AUTHENTIC, TIMELESS, AND INNOVATIVE



typical of GANG form the foundation of each collection and lend the jeans depth and character through distinctive abrasion effects or subtle shading. The goal is to translate the fabric's strength and vibrancy into a tangible product experience in every collection, an approach that consistently runs through the entire design process, from the initial idea to the final implementation.

Intuition and teamwork

The design process at GANG thrives on intuition and intensive collaboration. Numerous ideas flow together, are collected, tested, and further developed. Existing designs often serve as a starting point for new interpretations,

resulting in innovative denim collections that are both fashionable and functional.

Achieving the perfect fit is an art in itself. "A perfect pair of jeans is one you put on and immediately feel comfortable in," explains Yvonne Weitzl. The creative process begins with an idea, which is further developed within the team and refined continuously until it is ready for production. Close collaboration and constant exchange are crucial to the success of the collections.

Denim in transition

Like many fashion brands, GANG faces the challenge of producing in an environmentally friendly way. "We already pay attention to the

durability of our materials and their need for less intensive processing when selecting fabrics," says Weitzl. The label relies on technologies such as ozone washing to save water and energy and reduce the use of chemicals.

"Denim is timeless and continues to captivate people. Our challenge is to permanently combine this fascination with sustainable production without losing the authenticity of the fabric," she asserts.

In addition to its trend-oriented collections, GANG also offers an 'Essentials' line with timeless classics that are in demand year-round. Whether skinny, bootcut, or relaxed fit, the Essentials cover a wide range of styles suitable for everyday wear as well as special occasions.

The creative force

Yvonne Weitzl is no stranger to the fashion world. Her passion for design began in sportswear, where she worked for a snowboard and outdoor apparel line, among others. But it was ultimately denim that captivated her. This enthusiasm and her flair for innovative designs eventually led her to GANG.

In her role as Head of Design, Weitzl combines her experience with a clear vision that strongly emphasises teamwork and collaborative creativity. Instead of merely reacting to current fashion trends, the design team at GANG focuses on authenticity and longevity.

The collections are created in close collaboration, with every voice and every thought making an important contribution. Weitzl is particularly proud of the collective passion of her team, which continuously works to reinterpret denim while preserving the essence of the material.

Open to the challenges of the fashion world, the design team at GANG strives to ensure that every pair of jeans makes the power and vibrancy of denim tangible while also effecting positive change.

(Courtesy: fashionunited.com)



A perfect pair of jeans is one you put on and immediately feel comfortable in

YVONNE WEITL





Cynthia Erivo



Cole Escola



Julia Knitel

smock featured an embellished neckline and wide circular sleeves and was finished with a sculptural braided up-do by hair technician Tish Celestine.

Tony Awards co-presenter Sarah Paulson arrived at the ceremony in a haute couture Schiaparelli two-toned gown. The black velvet bodice featured a high-neckline and scooped at the hips before blooming into a buttery satin skirt embellished with sequins and embroidery. Daniel Roseberry, creative director of the French luxury house said he wanted the collection to be “baroque” and “extravagant,” when it was unveiled in January.

Oh, Mary! star Cole Escola arrived in a powder blue dress (and curly wig) paying homage to Broadway legend Bernadette Peters.

Designed by up-and-coming US label Wiederhoeft, the gown's low neckline, lace-up corset and glass-bead detailing evoked the iconic, medal-strewn look Peters wore to accept her Best Actress award at the 1999 Tonys (it was also her costume in Annie Get Your Gun). But there were several subtle differences, too — not least the halterneck, which framed a sheer panel showing off Escola's well-groomed chest hair.

The first Asian American actor to be nominated for the Best Actor in a Play award, Daniel Dae Kim used the spotlight to celebrate his

Korean roots. The Lost star put a modern spin on traditional Korean clothing in a ‘couture Hanbok’ by LA-based brand, Meehee Hanbok (paired with black Christian Louboutin boots).

Like Yellow Face, the Broadway production for which Kim was nominated, the look offered a commentary on race in America. Speaking to Associated Press on the red carpet, the actor said he was making a ‘little statement’, adding, “Now that the definition of ‘American’ is under attack, I thought it would be nice to say that no matter what we look like or how we dress, we can all still be loyal, proud Americans.”

cnn.com



Sarah Snook

HERE ARE SOME STANDOUT LOOKS FROM THE 78TH TONY AWARDS 2025 HELD LAST SUNDAY WHEN CELEBRITIES SASHAYED ON THE RED CARPET IN OFF-THE-BEATEN-TRACK OUTFITS

EVENING OF EMBROIDERY AND

Embellishments



Ariana DeBose

It may be off-season in Hollywood, but Broadway's biggest names were on hand to deliver plenty of glamour at the 78th Annual Tony Awards.

Braving the rain, stars of the big stage arrived at New York's historic Radio City Music Hall on Sunday in a series of silver, cream, ivory and champagne-coloured embellished gowns, along with fittingly theatrical statement suiting.

US theatre is having a moment - The 2024-25 Broadway season was the highest-grossing (US\$1.89bn in revenue) and best-attended (14.7 million theatre-goers) in history, according to the Broadway League. Theatre's boundaries with TV and film have also become increasingly porous, with George Clooney and Succession star Sarah Snook among this year's high-profile Tony Award nominees.

The event's red carpet has, in turn, become a major moment for stylists and fashion designers.

Finally liberated from the emerald green of her ‘Wicked’ method-

dressing marathon, Cynthia Erivo looked resplendent in a champagne embellished gown straight from Schiaparelli's Spring 2025 couture runway. The stand-out feature was a dramatic yet delicately embroidered bodice that sat so far off-the-shoulder it appeared to float around her.

The British actor and singer did, thankfully, retain one element of her wicked witch era - delightfully long nails, which this time featured floral flourishes from nail technician Shea Osei.

Erivo went on to host the ceremony in an embroidered kimono by Saudi couturier Ashi Studio — but not before she performed the night's opening number in a crystal-embroidered ruby gown by The Gap's new high-end atelier, Gap Studio.

Orange is the New Black breakout star Danielle Brooks co-presented the ceremony this year, walking the red carpet in a mocha-hued haute couture dress by Stephane Rolland. The taffeta



Danielle Brooks