



HONOURABLE
LADY HOSTS
EGYPTIAN
FIRST LADY

Honourable Lady Sayyida Ahad bint Abdullah bin Hamed al Busaidi, spouse of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, met Intisar el Sisi, wife of the President of Egypt, at Al Alam Palace on Saturday. During the meeting, the two discussed topics of mutual interest concerning women and explored ways of strengthening cooperation between Oman and Egypt. As part of her visit, the Egyptian First Lady toured National Museum, where she was introduced to Oman's rich cultural heritage. Following the visit, she was hosted by the Honourable Lady for a special luncheon at Al Alam Palace. The Egyptian First Lady arrived in Muscat on Friday evening and was received by the Honourable Lady at Royal Airport (ONA)

Unesco nod for Shabab Oman, henna customs

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The sultanate has achieved a cultural milestone with the inclusion of the training ship *Shabab Oman* in Unesco's Register of Good Safeguarding Practices. Oman has also succeeded in registering 'Henna: Rituals, aesthetic and social practices' on Unesco's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, in collaboration with other Arab states.

Shabab Oman's sail training programme aims to promote peace and foster cultural dialogue, introducing Oman's intangible heritage to the world. Since its launch, the ship has embarked on 18 voyages, visiting over 55 countries. The programme offers a platform for young people of all genders to participate in voyages and coordinate cultural events on board in partnership with practitioners of arts, literature and traditional crafts.

The official registration was announced during Oman's participation in the 19th session of the Intergovernmental Commit-



(R) Brig Gen Ali al Hosni receives the Unesco certification for Shabab Oman

Shabab Oman promotes peace and fosters cultural dialogue. Since its launch, it has embarked on 18 voyages, visiting over 55 countries

tee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, held in Asuncion, Paraguay. The Omani delegation was led by H E Sayyid Said bin Sultan al Busaidi, Under-

secretary for Culture in the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, and included representatives of Royal Navy of Oman and Omani National Commission for Education, Culture and Science.

The Unesco Expert Evaluation Committee praised *Shabab Oman's* efforts, acknowledging the ship's role in advancing the International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Officials noted that its inclusion in the Register of Good Safeguarding Practices is a testament to Oman's commit-

ment to preserving its cultural identity and promoting international peace.

Registration of henna traditions alongside other Arab countries highlights the cultural and social significance of the practice in Oman. Henna is deeply rooted in Omani customs and is linked to celebrations, beauty, health and its fragrant appeal. The traditional dye is also known for its therapeutic uses and symbolic role in marking special occasions.

Over the years, the sultanate has successfully registered a total of 15 elements on Unesco's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. These include four national elements unique to Oman - Al Bar'ah (2010), Al Azi (2012), Al Ardha al Khail Wa al Jamal (2018) and Khanjar (2022) - as well as ten joint Arab elements such as Al Taghroud (2012), Al Ayala (2014), Al Razfa (2015) and the cultural spaces of councils (2015).

Other elements on the list include Arabic coffee, the palm tree, camel races, Arabic calligraphy and harees.



Oman Air denies mass layoff claims, highlights progress in Omanisation

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Air has denied claims circulating on social media that it has terminated 1,000 employees as part of its restructuring process. In an official statement, the national carrier clarified that no Omani employee has been dismissed. However, it acknowledged a surplus of 365 employees and said it is working with relevant authorities to find alternative solutions for them.

To support those affected, Oman Air has offered severance packages to employees who could not be placed in roles within the new organisational structure. The airline stated that sufficient notice of at least four weeks was provided to allow em-



ployees to make an informed decision without affecting their rights or employment benefits.

Oman Air has been undergoing a transformation programme since last year aimed at improving financial stability, enhancing operational efficiency and ensuring long-term sustainability. This process has involved measures such as rationalising costs, optimising the route network and fleet, and renegotiating key contracts. A review of the company's organisational structure was also

carried out to determine the required workforce size, skills and competencies.

The airline stressed the need for international expertise to lead the transformation process, but it committed to replacing these positions with national talent by the end of the transformation period, expected in late 2027.

In a move to align its structure with aviation industry standards, Oman Air introduced a phased restructuring process over the past 18 months. During the first phase, the company offered severance packages exclusively for Omani employees, which some staff accepted. The restructuring process prioritised Omanis for available roles, leading to the termination of 426 expatriate employees.

Oman crowned 2024 Socca World Cup Champions after thrilling penalty shootout

Muscat - In a keenly contested final of the Socca World Cup, Oman emerged champions defeating defending champions Kazakhstan in a dramatic penalty shootout on Saturday at Oman Automobile Association in Seeb.

The victory marked an im-

portant achievement for Oman considering it was the first time the tournament was hosted in the Middle East. The match ended in a 1-1 draw at full time, leading to a tense penalty shootout where Oman scored twice, while Kazakhstan managed only one goal.

Oman defeated Romania 4-1 in the semi-finals for a spot in the finals.

Forty teams clubbed into six groups - including US, Canada, Germany, Poland, France, England, Mexico, Argentina and South Africa - took part in the six-a-side football tournament.

H M issues Royal Decree transferring vocational training sector to MoL

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued **Royal Decree No 61/2024** on the vocational training sector on Thursday.

Article 1 transfers to the Ministry of Labour (MoL) all the specialisations related to vocational training from the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI), as follows:

1. Providing technical and vocational training and linking it to the needs of the labour market.
2. Developing training curricula in accordance with approved professional criteria and levels, in addition to granting qualifications and encouraging on-the-

job training.

Article 2 states that 'allocations, origins, rights, obligations and assets of the vocational training sector in MoHERI' will be transferred to MoL.

Article 3 stipulates that 'employees of the vocational training sector in MoHERI' will be transferred to MoL, along with their financial grades.

Article 4 states that 'Annex No 2 attached to Royal Decree No 89/2020 on establishing the MoL, defining its specialisations and endorsing its organisational structure' will be replaced with the annex attached to this decree.

Article 5 cancels Clause No 14

of Annex No 1 attached to the aforementioned Royal Decree No 89/2020. It also stipulates that the 'vocational training sector' will be cancelled from Annex No 2 attached to Royal Decree No 98/2020 on amending the name of the Ministry of Higher Education as Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, defining its specialisations and endorsing its organisational structure. It also cancels all that contradicts this decree or contravenes its provisions.

Article 6 states that this decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

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EA initiative to improve livelihoods of 455,000

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Environment Authority (EA) has announced an initiative called ‘Pasture Resting’ aimed at addressing desertification and overgrazing in Dhofar. The project seeks to restore natural vegetation, support biodiversity and promote sustainable land management in the governorate.

The project is expected to directly improve livelihoods of 455,000 people in Dhofar and indirectly benefit 5.1mn people across Oman. It also aims to generate approximately 1,500 green jobs and enhance living conditions of around 1,100 livestock breeders in targeted areas. Plans are in place to restore 10,000 hectares of degraded land, establish an economic zone and introduce a sustainable grazing system.

The project was unveiled during Oman’s participation in COP16 - Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification - underway in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia till December 13. It reflects Oman’s commitment to sustainable environmental practices and green economic development.



Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Amri, Chairman of EA and head of Oman’s delegation at the conference, outlined the project’s key objectives. Set within the time-frame of 2025 to 2030, it aims to preserve vegetation in the western parts of Dhofar, particularly Dalkout and Rakhyut, through the application of nature-based solutions.

“The project aims to develop sustainable partnerships to protect Dhofar’s natural vegetation and reduce the impact of overgrazing,” Amri said. It is being implemented in collaboration

with Global Green Growth Institute, the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and several local and international partners.

One of the key objectives of the Pasture Resting project is to support livestock breeders by creating economic opportunities for them and facilitate marketing of milk, meat, fertilisers and agricultural produce. Beneficiaries will also be introduced to modern water-saving and soil-preservation techniques. Strategic support for the project will come from partners such as

the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, Dhofar Governor’s Office, Oman Investment Authority, Dhofar University and international funding agencies.

Private sector firms, particularly those under Oman Food Investment Holding Company (Nitaj), will play a significant role in implementing the project which is aligned with EA’s 2020-2030 strategy and Oman Vision 2040. It is also part of the country’s efforts to restore ecosystems, support green economic growth and achieve net-zero

Carnival brings joy, inclusivity for children with disabilities

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Happiness Village Carnival, an event dedicated to children with disabilities and their families, was held on Friday under the patronage of H H Dr Fahad bin Julanda al Said, Vice-Chancellor of Sultan Qaboos University. The event celebrated International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Organised by H H Sayyida Hujaija bint Jaifer in collaboration with Civil Aviation Club, the carnival provided a safe, fun and inclusive space for children with disabilities. It featured several interactive educational and recreational activities that showcased the abilities and talents of children with disabilities while offering their families an opportunity to connect and share experiences.

Around 2,000 children from government and private rehabilitation centres, as well as children from various associations and expatriate communities, including Indian and Pakistani schools, attended the event.

A wide variety of activities were organised to engage and entertain children. Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority participated with a fire truck and ambulance, offering hands-on educational activities. Other activities included science labs, arts



(Supplied photo)

and crafts, board games and virtual reality games.

Children also enjoyed rides in luxury cars and on bicycles and horses. Magic shows presented by UAE magician Moein al Bastaki drew large crowds, while circus performances, face painting, henna art and a petting zoo brought added excitement. A dog show and appearances by cartoon characters kept young attendees engaged throughout the day. Several leading Omani small and medium enterprises engaged in children’s entertainment provided recreational activities free of charge. Food and beverages were also made available to all attendees at no cost.

Speaking at the event, H H Sayyida Hujaija expressed her gratitude to strategic partners and private sector sponsors. “This event enhances inclusion and empowerment for people with disabilities,” she said. “It

also allows individuals with disabilities to showcase their creativity and talents. The carnival serves as a platform for parents to interact, sharing their experiences, ideas and stories about common disability issues.”

Highlighting the importance of such events, Sumaira Chowdhury, Unicef Representative in the sultanate, said, “Unicef Oman is honoured to participate in the Happiness Village Carnival, a remarkable initiative by H H Sayyida Hujaija to celebrate International Day of Persons with Disabilities.”

“This event exemplifies the power of inclusivity, engagement and community mobilisation in creating opportunities for children of all abilities to thrive. Together, we reaffirm our commitment to ensuring every child in Oman can reach their full potential in a nurturing and caring environment.”

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Parking and low-speed manoeuvring are essential skills for any safe and responsible driver. Choosing a safe, legal and convenient parking spot is the first priority. Then, focus on these key principles:

- Observation ● Control ● Accuracy

Observation and blind spots

Before starting a parking manoeuvre, check all around for potential dangers. Mistakes at low speeds are unlikely to be fatal but can still result in pedestrian injuries or damage to property, leading to unnecessary hassle and expense.

Blind spots are a significant risk. Never rely solely on mirrors. Too many drivers reverse while still looking forward, neglecting their mirrors or glancing only briefly. If it’s wrong to drive forwards while looking backwards, the reverse is also true: avoid reversing while looking forwards.

Reversing can be particularly challenging as vehicles are designed for forward travel. Turning to look out of the rear window reveals limited visibility, making it easy to miss a small child or obstacle. To compensate, lower the windows and listen for sounds that could indicate unseen danger.

Parallel parking

Reversing is often necessary when parallel parking, especially in tight spaces. Steering with the rear wheels allows greater precision,



enabling the vehicle to fit into spaces only one and a half times its length. Attempting the same manoeuvre forwards would typically require a space twice as long.

Parking bays

When using marked bays, the safest option is to reverse in or, where possible, drive forward through one bay into the next. Driving forwards into a single bay may seem easier, but it often means reversing out later into the ‘live area,’ where moving vehicles and pedestrians are harder to spot.

Reversing into a bay, by contrast, positions the car to exit forwards into this hazardous zone with maximum visibility.

While some drivers claim boot access requires forward parking, safety should always come first.

Additional safety

Parking with the car facing outwards also enhances child safety. Children remain behind the barrier of the car doors, protected from hazards. Forward parking, on the other hand, places a door between you and your child, increasing the risk they might enter a dangerous area before you can stop them.

In car parks designed for forward parking - usually where bays are set at an angle to the driving lanes - follow the intended layout. However, whenever possible, apply the best practice of reversing into spaces.

General tips

- Go Slow: Keep manoeuvring speeds extremely low to reduce risks.
- Check Thoroughly: If unsure what’s behind, get out and look or ask for assistance.
- Prioritise Safety Over Convenience: Always consider what offers the safest outcome for you and those around you.

Drivers who park conscientiously not only protect themselves but also demonstrate respect for other road users. Responsible parking starts with good habits - do you practise them?

The views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Muscat Daily

Demand for imported used cars rises

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The demand for imported used cars is growing in Oman driven by budget-conscious buyers and young people seeking affordable alternatives to new vehicles. While lower prices and unique features make these cars attractive, industry experts are urging buyers to exercise caution to avoid potential risks such as hidden mechanical issues and unclear maintenance histories.

"Buyers can save significantly by opting for a quality used car instead of a new one," said Rashid al Sharji, owner of a used car showroom. "For example, a well-maintained, sparingly used car may cost around RO5,000, compared to about RO12,000 for a brand-new one from a dealership." He noted that used cars are not subject to the steep depreciation that affects new cars soon after purchase, making these a more cost-effective option.

Sharji observed that the used car market is becoming especially popular among young Omanis, many of whom have also taken up car trading as a hobby or side business. With the



(V K Shafeer)

A well-maintained, sparingly used car may cost around RO5,000, compared to about RO12,000 for a brand-new one from a dealership

RASHID AL SHARJI

support of reputable online platforms that provide vehicle history reports and images, the buying process has become more accessible. However, he stressed the need for thorough inspections,

particularly of safety and security features, before making a purchase.

Anwar al Abri, owner of another used car showroom, said Oman's used car market has

changed in the last five years. "We've seen an increase in the number of showrooms, more foot traffic and higher sales volumes," he stated. The increased demand has prompted some used car showrooms to offer relatively new vehicles at competitive prices, along with services typically provided by dealerships. "This shift reflects the growing appetite for used vehicles and the dynamic nature of the market."

A key reason behind the rising interest in imported used cars is enhanced features in these. Nasser al Hosni, director of a transport company, highlighted the appeal of cars imported from the US, known for their comfort-oriented specifications. "Many imported cars, especially older American models, come with features like massage-enabled seats, offering luxury at a fraction of the cost of a new car," said

Hosni. But he cautioned that buyers should be on the lookout for structural defects such as bent chassis, which can compromise safety. "Engaging an expert to inspect the vehicle can help buyers avoid costly mistakes."

Badr al Siyabi, a private sector employee, described imported used cars as a practical option for employees with modest incomes. "These cars often come with luxury specifications that provide

comfort and style, which many people aspire to but may not be able to afford in a brand-new car," he explained.

The growing market for imported used cars is also affecting local car prices. According to Sultan al Rawahy, an oil equipment technician and safety expert, used cars imported from the US, Japan and neighbouring Gulf countries are influencing pricing trends in Oman. "These vehicles often come with detailed maintenance and accident history reports, which build buyer confidence. Their advanced technological and safety features also make them appealing," Rawahy informed.

However, he urged caution for those looking for off-road vehicles, recommending Gulf-manufactured four-wheel drives as better suited to the region's terrain and climate.

A notable financial advantage of buying a used car, particularly from a private seller, is reduction in VAT. New cars attract a 5% VAT on the total value but it is lower in used cars, which appeals to budget-conscious buyers. A vehicle sold by an individual is not subject to VAT.

Ahmed al Amri wins Red Bull Car Park Drift world title



(Supplied photo)

(On podium, L to R) Haitham al Hadidi, Ahmed al Amri and Hisham al Khatib

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's Ahmed al Amri claimed the top spot in the Red Bull Car Park Drift 2024 World Finals held at Muscat Drift Circuit on Friday. Organised by Oman Automobile Association, the event drew top drifters from around the world.

The competition's closing ceremony was held under the patronage of H H Sayyid Fahr bin Fatik al Said.

Haitham al Hadidi, also representing Oman, claimed second place, while Egypt's Hisham al Khatib and Lebanon's Mohammed Shihab finished third and fourth, respectively.

Soon after winning, Amri thanked his supporters. "I am grateful to my fans and my family, who stood by me from the very beginning," he said in a social media post. "I cannot describe my feelings after achieving this global accomplishment for my beloved country and fans. I promised you to achieve it on our land, and

thank God we achieved it."

The Red Bull Car Park Drift competition, known for its precision driving and adrenaline-filled atmosphere, has become one of the most highly anticipated motorsport events in the Middle East. Amri's win adds to Oman's growing reputation as a regional hub for motorsport excellence.

Rare bird-shaped pottery from 3rd millennium BC found in Dhank

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT), in collaboration with a team from Sapienza University of Rome, has unearthed a rare bird-shaped pottery sculpture dating back to the 3rd millennium BC (around 4,000 year ago) in the wilyat of Dhank in Dhahirah.

The ministry informed that ongoing archaeological excavations at Al Haseen Fort in Al Shukur village are part of the second season of exploration. The work is focused on structures within the fort's walls dating back to the 1st

millennium BC, as well as buildings and a tower constructed from local stones and clay that belong to the 3rd millennium BC.

Excavations have uncovered numerous fragments of pottery, beads and the exceptional bird-shaped pottery sculpture - an unprecedented find that sheds light on the historical importance of the site. The MHT and Italian joint mission aims to continue work until mid-December, seeking further evidence to enhance understanding of human settlement and historical activity in the region.

In addition to its archaeological

significance, Dhank is known for its scenic wadis, which are popular tourist attractions. Wadi al Fateh is celebrated for its striking rock formations, grottoes and historical structures, including castles and forts, along its banks.

Another notable site is Wadi Qumeirah, 70km from the centre of Dhank, featuring an ancient cemetery from the pre-Islamic era, a historic copper mine and a pathway connecting farms in Qumeirah village. These elements make Dhank a unique blend of historical and natural attractions.

MoHERI to announce winners of 2024 National Research Award on Monday

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI) will host the Annual Researchers Forum - Innovation and Entrepreneurship - on Monday when winners of the 2024 National Research Award will be announced.

To be held under the patronage of Dr Khamis bin Saif al Jabri, Head of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-Up Unit, the event will take place at Oman Across Ages Museum in Manah and attended by several dignitaries and representatives of public and private sector higher education institutions and research organisations.

H E Dr Saif bin Abdullah al



Hadabi, Undersecretary in MoHERI, informed that the forum is a key scientific event providing a platform for researchers to present their work, share knowledge and engage in discussions with

the academic and scientific communities.

Winners of the 2024 National Research Award will be in two categories: Best Published Scientific Research for PhD holders

and equivalent, and Best Published Scientific Research for emerging researchers. The award covers six research sectors - education, information systems, health, energy, culture and humanities, and environment.

H E Hadabi also informed that 247 participants applied for the award this year - 167 in the doctoral category and 107 in the emerging researchers category.

The forum will also witness the signing of contracts for strategic research projects and efficiency-based funding for higher education institutions. Additionally, two discussion sessions will focus on supporting innovation and entrepreneurship, besides showcasing winning research projects and innovations.

Applus+
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Changes to
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Applus+, a global leader in testing, inspection, and certification services, is proud to announce that all operations across Oman will now operate under the unified **Applus+** brand. As part of this transition, the "Velosi," brand will be discontinued. This strategic move reflects our commitment to delivering clarity, consistency, and strength under one globally recognized identity.

Our goal with this name change is to provide our clients and partners with a sense of continuity and trust," said Renukamurthy, country manager at **Applus+ in Oman**. "Though our name has evolved, our mission remains steadfast. We are here to support our clients through every challenge with the same level of dedication, expertise, and innovative spirit they expect from **Applus+**."

This name change does not impact our unwavering core values, contractual obligations, or relationships. Our logo continues to symbolize stability, assurance, and the exceptional service we deliver across diverse industries.

For further information, please contact
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Oman's trade surplus widens to over RO6bn in first 9 months of 2024

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's trade balance recorded a surplus of RO6.063bn in the first nine months of 2024, a rise of 8% from the RO5.611bn surplus achieved in the same period of 2023, according to preliminary data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The data shows that Oman's exports reached RO18.241bn from January to September 2024, marking a 10% increase from RO16.590bn during the same period in 2023.

Meanwhile, imports into Oman grew by 10.9%, amounting to RO12.178bn, up from RO10.979bn in the first nine months of 2023.

Oil exports drive growth

The rise in total export value was largely driven by Oman's oil and gas sector, with oil and gas exports surging 21.5% to RO12.406bn in the first three quarters of 2024, compared with RO10.213bn in the same period last year.

Crude oil exports, the largest contributor to the sultanate's energy revenues, amounted to RO7.610bn, up 7.6% year-on-



Total value of Oman's merchandise exports reached RO18.241bn in the first nine months of 2024, marking a 10% increase from RO16.590bn during the same period in 2023. Imports into Oman grew by 10.9%, amounting to RO12.178bn, up from RO10.979bn in the first nine months of 2023

year. Refined oil exports saw a sharp increase of 151.6%, reaching RO2.975bn, while liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports contracted by 7% to RO1.822bn.

Decline in non-oil exports

Oman's non-oil exports, however, experienced a 14.1% decline, dropping to RO4.534bn by

the end of September 2024, compared to RO5.276bn in the same period of 2023.

Among non-oil exports, mineral products remained the

mal products also fell by 16.1%, reaching RO246mn.

Oman's re-exports, on the other hand, exhibited robust growth, rising by 18.1% to RO1.3bn in the first nine months of 2024, up from RO1.1bn during the same period in 2023.

UAE as top trading partner

The United Arab Emirates remained Oman's largest trading partner, particularly in non-oil exports, which reached RO737mn, a 14.1% increase over the previous year. The UAE also led in re-exports, accounting for RO445mn. In addition, it was the largest exporter to Oman, with total exports valued at RO2.922bn.

Saudi Arabia ranked second in non-oil exports to Oman with a value of RO602mn, followed by South Korea with RO515mn. Iran emerged as the second-largest destination for Oman's re-exports, valued at RO247mn, followed by Kuwait with RO99mn.

On the import side, China remained Oman's second-largest source of imports, with goods valued at RO1.294bn, just ahead of Kuwait, which exported RO1.230bn worth of goods to Oman.

OQ Group looks to launch more IPOs: Report

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's integrated energy group, OQ, is considering to launch more initial public offerings (IPOs) of its units in the coming years, according to a Bloomberg report.

OQ's next stock offering is likely to take place by the end of 2025 or in 2026, Ali al-Lawati, Chief People and Technology Officer, said in an interview with Bloomberg in Muscat on Thursday. He did not reveal which units might be involved, the Bloomberg report added.

OQ Group's subsidiary, OQ Base Industries (OQBI), raised \$489mn (RO 188 million) in its IPO last week, following the successful \$2bn IPO by OQ Exploration and Production (OQEP) in October. The group also sold stakes in OQ Gas Networks and Abraj Energy Services through previous IPOs.

"Funds from these sales have helped OQ reduce its debt from \$13bn in 2021 to \$7bn," al-Lawati said, as reported by Bloomberg. He added that OQ plans to continue reducing its debt as it lists more of its subsidiaries on the local stock exchange.

OPEC+ delays oil output increase to April 2025, extends cuts into 2026

Tsvetana Paraskova

Under previous plans, OPEC+ was set to begin unwinding cuts in January 2025, with an initial 180,000 bpd increase in production, and gradually return all supply by end of next year

The OPEC+ producers who are reducing output by 2.2mn barrels per day (bpd) have decided to delay the beginning of the gradual easing of the cuts to April 2025, OPEC+ delegates told Argus on Thursday as the ministers were holding their online video conference.

The alliance has also decided to extend the collective group cut by one year until the end of 2026, Amena Bakr, Senior Research Analyst at Energy Intelligence, reported while the meeting was ongoing, citing delegates.

There are also a lot of discussions about the importance of compliance, according to Bakr.

Under the previous OPEC+ plans, the group was set to



Under previous plans, OPEC+ was set to begin unwinding cuts in January 2025, with an initial 180,000 bpd increase in production, and gradually return all supply by end of next year

begin unwinding the cuts in January 2025, with an initial 180,000 bpd increase in production, and gradually return all the supply by the end of next year.

Now the alliance is not only pushing back the beginning of the supply additions by three months, but it is also giving another year for the full unwinding of the restrictions.

The three-month delay to the supply additions was largely expected by the market and probably already priced in.

But the additional year in which the OPEC+ producers will be restricted by some form of production cuts could be interpreted as OPEC and OPEC+'s acknowledgment that weaker-than-expected demand growth can't absorb all the supply returning in 2025.

Oil prices turned negative, following various reports of a three-month delay to the unwinding of the cuts and the additional year of restrictions until the end of 2026.

(Source: Oilprice.com)

GCC chemical industry braces for new era as it navigates future of growth

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The chemical and petrochemical industry in the Arabian Gulf must successfully navigate the future of growth as it enters a new era of feedstock transformation, circularity and the materials transition. This was the underlying message during the 18th Annual Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association (GPCA) Forum, which took place from December 2-5 at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre in Muscat.

Held under the theme 'Industry's Next Chapter: Driving Sustainable Advancement for Global Progress', the forum, hosted by OQ, opened its doors on December 2, welcoming esteemed dignitaries, industry leaders, government officials, technology providers, and the youth.

In his address at the event, Eng Abdulrahman al-Fageeh, Chairman of GPCA, highlighted that the single most impactful thing we can do now and in the future is to inspire young people to pursue meaningful careers in chemicals.

He was followed on stage by H E Shaikh Dr Ali Masoud al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic



Zones and Free Zones, who delivered a Ministerial address. H E Sunaidy said, "Hosting the 18th Annual GPCA Forum in Oman is both an honour and a responsibility to rise to the critical moment facing our industries, our societies and our planet. We are gathering in Muscat so that we can discuss and shape the future of our chemical and petrochemical industries by adopting sustainability for improving competitiveness. Achieving these critical goals demands bold, transparent and honest action from all stakeholders. It requires technology, investment and unwavering commitment from governments, industries and

firms alike."

Dr Abdulwahab al Sadoun, Secretary General of GPCA, said, "The chemical and petrochemical industry has a unique opportunity to reaffirm its role in the global landscape by creating new value, advancing the circular economy and capitalizing on the materials transformation. The chemical industry remains one of the most attractive sectors globally, with continued growth expectations in the long term. The GCC is well positioned to be an active player in future industry growth. I invite delegates to make the most of their time at the 18th Annual GPCA Forum

here in Oman, have meaningful conversations and collaborate through key partnerships."

The Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association (GPCA) was established in 2006 to represent the downstream hydrocarbon industry in the Arabian Gulf. The association voices the common interests of more than 250 member companies from the chemical and allied industries, accounting for over 95% of chemical output in the GCC. The industry makes up the second largest manufacturing sector in the region, producing over \$108bn worth of products every year.

OQEP conducts emergency management exercise in Block 60

Muscat – OQ Exploration and Production (OQEP) has conducted an emergency management Exercise in its Block 60 concession area - Bisat Field. The exercise was implemented by the Emergency and Crisis Management Team in collaboration with strategic partners from relevant governmental authorities and both local and international service providers

The exercise was conducted to evaluate the company's emergency and crisis systems, as

well as the efficiency of communication and coordination among all relevant stakeholders and responders during large-scale emergencies. The exercise is a key part of the company's commitment to maintaining a high level of readiness and ensuring the safety and security of all employees and contractors, and company assets.

The exercise featured a complex scenario with multiple elements to test response procedures, escalation processes



and communication protocols. This simulation was of an oil well blowout (loss of well control) with potential escalations including gas leaks, oil spills, etc.

Several entities participated in the exercise, including the Ministry of Energy and Minerals the Royal Oman Police, the Oil and Gas Installations Security, the Directorate General of Police Aviation, the Public Authority for Civil Defense and Ambulance, the Ministry of Health, the Directorate General of Health Services

in Al Dakhiliyah, the Environment Authority, and external entities such as Wild Well Control (USA) (WWC), among others, including contractors and service providers. These entities contributed expertise in well control and medical emergency response and coordinated with third parties and internal teams as needed.

OQEP conducted similar scale exercises in its Block 60 concession in 2022 and in its Block 8 offshore concession area in

Musandam in 2023 in close collaboration with relevant Government authorities, showcasing the company's commitment to maintaining best practices in health, safety, security, environment and emergency preparedness.

These large-scale initiatives are held annually and provide a valuable opportunity for OQEP to evaluate and improve its emergency response procedures and communication protocols across all its operationally diverse assets.

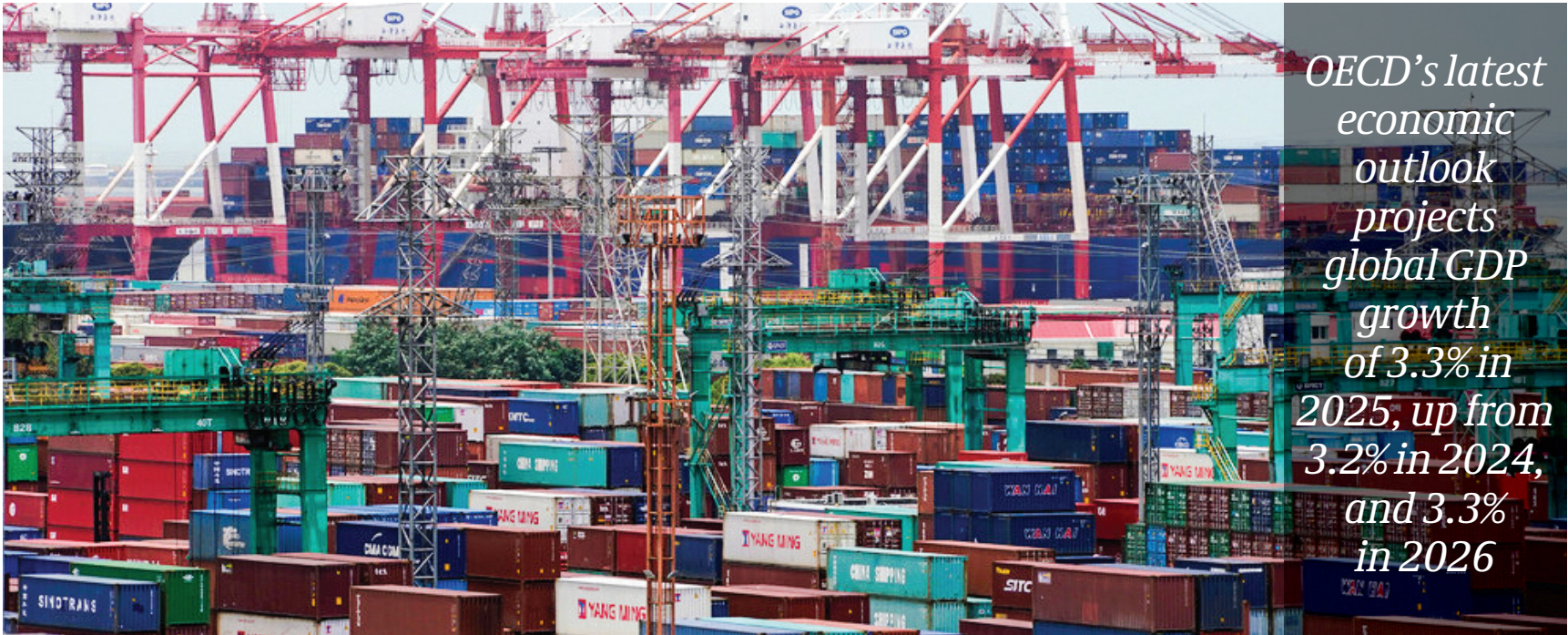
Global growth to remain resilient in 2025 despite significant risks: OECD

Paris, France – The global economy is projected to remain resilient despite significant challenges, according to the OECD’s latest Economic Outlook. The outlook projects global GDP growth of 3.3% in 2025, up from 3.2% in 2024, and 3.3% in 2026.

Inflation in the OECD is expected to ease further, from 5.4% in 2024 to 3.8% in 2025 and 3.0% in 2026, supported by the still restrictive stance of monetary policy in most countries. Headline inflation has already returned to central bank targets in nearly half of the advanced economies and close to 60% of emerging market economies.

Labour markets have gradually eased, yet unemployment remains low by historical standards. Strong nominal wage gains and continued disinflation have bolstered real household incomes. However, private consumption growth remains subdued in most countries, reflecting weak consumer confidence. Global trade volumes are recovering, with a projected increase of 3.6% in 2024.

Growth prospects vary significantly across regions. GDP growth in the United States is



OECD’s latest economic outlook projects global GDP growth of 3.3% in 2025, up from 3.2% in 2024, and 3.3% in 2026

projected to be 2.8% in 2025, before slowing to 2.4% in 2026. In the euro area, the recovery in real household incomes, tight labour markets and reductions in policy interest rates continue to drive growth. Euro area GDP growth is projected at 1.3% in 2025 and 1.5% in 2026. Growth in Japan is projected to expand by 1.5% in 2025 but then decline to 0.6% in 2026. China is expected to continue to slow, with GDP growth of 4.7% in 2025

and 4.4% in 2026.

“The global economy has proved resilient. Inflation has declined further towards central bank targets, while growth has remained stable,” OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann said in a press release.

“Significant challenges remain. Geopolitical tensions pose short-term risks, public debt ratios are high and medium-term growth prospects are too weak. Policy action needs to safeguard

macroeconomic stability – through monetary policy easing that is carefully calibrated to ensure inflationary pressures are durably contained and through fiscal policy that rebuilds fiscal space to preserve room to meet future spending pressures. To boost productivity and the foundations for growth, we must enhance education and skills development efforts, undo overly stringent constraints to business investment and successfully

tackle the structural increase in labour shortages.”

The outlook highlights persistent uncertainty. An intensification of the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East could disrupt energy markets and hit confidence and growth. Rising trade tensions might risk hampering trade growth. Adverse surprises related to growth prospects, or the path of disinflation could trigger disruptive corrections in financial markets. Growth could also sur-

prise on the upside. Improvements in consumer confidence, for example if purchasing power recovers quicker than anticipated, could boost spending. An early resolution to major geopolitical conflicts could also improve sentiment, and lower energy prices.

To navigate these challenges, the outlook emphasises the need to durably reduce inflation, address rising fiscal pressures and tackle labour shortages to allevi-

ate structural impediments to higher trend growth.

Central bank policy rate reductions should continue in advanced economies except Japan. The timing and extent of reductions should be carefully judged and remain data-dependent, ensuring that underlying inflationary pressures are fully contained.

Decisive fiscal action is needed to ensure the sustainability of public finances, and provide the necessary resources for governments to tackle future shocks and future spending pressures. Stronger near-term efforts to contain spending growth, optimise revenues and enhance credible medium-term adjustment paths need to be the cornerstone of efforts to stabilise debt burdens.

“Structural reforms are essential to lay the foundations for stronger, sustainable growth,” OECD Chief Economist Alvaro Pereira said. “Labour shortages are already a challenge for firms in many countries, and population ageing will only exacerbate this. Policy action needs to ensure that skills evolve with demands on labour markets and that labour force participation, especially of older workers and women, rises.”

US economy adds 227,000 new jobs in November

Labour force participation rate fell to 62.5% in November, down from 62.6% in October, as per data

Josha Schafer

The US economy added more jobs than forecast in November while the unemployment rate ticked higher as the labour market rebounded from a month negatively impacted by severe weather and labour strikes.

Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics released Friday showed 227,000 new jobs were created in November, just above the 220,000 expected by economists. The unemployment rate increased to 4.2%.

Hurricanes and a strike by Boeing (BA) workers weighed heavily on the October report, which was revised to show there were 36,000 jobs created last month. The unemployment rate



stood at 4.1% in October.

Job growth for September was also revised higher on Friday, with revisions now indicating the US economy added 56,000 more jobs than initially reported over those two months.

RSM chief economist Joe Brusuelas told Yahoo Finance that Friday’s report reflects a “remarkably calm labor market” that is at full employment after accounting for October’s distortions.

Wage growth, an important measure for gauging inflation pressures, rose 0.4% in November, in line with October’s increase and higher than the 0.3% rise economists had expected. Compared to the prior year, wages rose 4% in November,

more than 3.9% that had been forecast. Meanwhile, the labour force participation rate fell to 62.5% in November, down from 62.6% in October.

In its release, the BLS noted employment in the transportation equipment manufacturing industry rose by 32,000, “reflecting the return of workers who were on strike.” Temporary help services employment rose modestly in November but also marked a turnaround from a loss of over 33,000 jobs in this industry the prior month.

The report comes as investors look for clues on whether or not the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates for the third time this year at its December 18 meeting. (Source: Yahoo Finance)

Total value of Russia’s natural resources estimated at \$100tn

Moscow, Russia – The total value of Russia’s natural resources has reached \$100tn, which is almost twice as much as in the United States, and the unique resource base ensures the reliability of Russian supplies to foreign partners in the long term, said Igor Sechin, Executive Secretary of the Presidential Commission on Fuel and Energy Development Strategy and Head of Rosneft, APA reported citing Pravda.

“Having a huge and diverse resource base, Russia occupies a special place in the world,” Sechin said.

“The total value of our country’s natural resources is \$100tn, which is almost twice as much as the same indicator in the United States,” he added. “This imposes a huge responsibility on our country,” Sechin said, speaking at the Verona Eurasian Economic Forum.

WAM

Eurozone GDP touches 2-year high on increased spending

Indrabati Lahiri

The Eurozone quarter-on-quarter GDP growth rate inched up in the third quarter of the year, boosted by increased government and household spending, as well as higher inventories.

The third estimate for the quarter-on-quarter Eurozone gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate for the third quarter was released on Friday. GDP growth came in at 0.4% in Q3 2024, according to Eurostat, in line with analyst estimates, and above a 0.2% increase in the second quarter of the year.

It was also the most robust growth seen in the last two years.

The boost was mainly because of a rise in household spending, while inventories and higher government spending also contributed to it. However, net trade capped Eurozone GDP growth gains slightly, with imports inching up 0.2%, but exports falling 1.5%.

On a year-on-year basis, the Eurozone GDP growth rate came in at 0.9% in the third quarter, also in line with market estimates, as well as above the second quarter’s 0.5%.



Kyle Chapman, FX markets analyst at Ballinger Group, said, “The stronger-than-expected growth in the third quarter appears to be one of the major reasons why policymakers have been leaning towards a 25bps rate cut rather than 50bps.

“There is a tension between looking back and looking forward here that the ECB will need to weigh next week- growth ultimately wasn’t as bad as expected over the past few months, but the soft PMIs and the political uncertainty in France and Germany suggest that things could get significantly worse over the coming quarters.

“It is also worth noting that the growth surprise was warped by volatility in the data from Ire-

land, where the quarter-on-quarter expansion was a huge 3.5%.”

Germany avoids recession

Coming to the biggest economies in Europe, German GDP grew 0.1%, missing analyst expectations of 0.2%. However, the country has still managed to sidestep a recession.

That is despite Germany continuing to face a slew of issues such as falling competitiveness, slowing economic growth, a drop in consumer sentiment and more economic and political uncertainty. Higher energy prices and stronger competition from Chinese manufacturers have also contributed to this.

The Netherlands’ economy decreased to 0.8% in Q3 2024, down from the previous quarter’s 1.1%, mainly because of lower export growth, labour market tightness and falling labour productivity.

Similarly, dropping net exports also impacted the Italian economy in the third quarter of the year, along with a slumping manufacturing industry and weakening business and consumer confidence. (Source: Euronews.com)

Bitcoin tops \$100,000 as big rally sparked by Trump election win rolls on

New York, US – Bitcoin has topped the \$100,000 mark as a massive rally in the world’s most popular cryptocurrency sparked by the election of Donald Trump rolls on.

The milestone comes hours after the President-elect signalled a lighter regulatory approach to the crypto industry by saying he intends to nominate cryptocurrency advocate Paul Atkins to be the next chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Bitcoin has soared to unprecedented heights since Trump won the election on November 5. The cryptocur-

rency has climbed dramatically from \$69,374 on Election Day and rose as high as \$103,713 Wednesday, according to CoinDesk. Just two years ago, bitcoin dropped below \$17,000 following the collapse of crypto exchange FTX.

How long bitcoin will stay above the \$100,000 mark is uncertain. It fell back to just under \$102,000 early on Thursday. As with everything in the volatile cryptoverse, the future is impossible to predict. And while some are bullish on future gains, other experts continue to warn of investment risks.

A lot of the recent action has



to do with the outcome of the US presidential election.

Trump, who was once a crypto skeptic, has pledged to

make the US “the crypto capital of the planet” and create a “strategic reserve” of bitcoin. His campaign accepted dona-

tions in cryptocurrency and he courted fans at a bitcoin conference in July. He also launched World Liberty Financial, a new venture with family members to trade cryptocurrencies.

Crypto industry players have welcomed Trump’s victory, in hopes that he would be able to push through legislative and regulatory changes that they’ve long lobbied for- which, generally speaking, aim for an increased sense of legitimacy without too much red tape.

Trump made a move in that direction Wednesday when he said he intends to nominate

Paul Atkins to chair the Securities and Exchange Commission. Atkins was an SEC commissioner during the presidency of George W. Bush. In the years since leaving the agency, Atkins has made the case against too much market regulation. He joined the Token Alliance, a cryptocurrency advocacy organization, in 2017.

Under current chair Gary Gensler, the SEC has cracked down on the crypto industry, penalizing a number of companies for violating securities laws. But he’s also faced criticism from industry players in the process, like the chief legal

officer of Robinhood, who described Gensler’s approach toward crypto as “rigid” and “hostile.” Gensler will step down when Trump takes office.

One crypto-friendly move the SEC did make under Gensler was the approval in January of spot bitcoin ETFs, or exchange trade funds, which allow investors to have a stake in bitcoin without directly buying it. The Spot ETFs were the dominant driver of bitcoin’s price before the election- but, like much of the crypto’s recent momentum, saw record inflows postelection. (Source: Euronews.com)

Yiti to showcase sustainable living model in Shanghai LPS

The Sustainable City – Yiti is set to showcase its leadership in sustainable living at the Luxury Property Show (LPS) in Shanghai, one of China’s premier events for luxury real estate.

This participation marks the latest in a series of appearances at international and regional real estate exhibitions, reinforcing its position as a global model for net-zero living. The Sustainable City – Yiti redefines the future of sustainable urban living. As the world’s first net-zero community aligned with the UN’s 2050 sustainability targets, it integrates cutting-edge solutions such as 100% renewable energy, comprehensive water recycling, and waste diversion from landfills.

Following its participation in prominent real estate events across the UAE, Saudi, France, Germany, Greece, India, and Russia, The Sustainable City – Yiti continues to receive strong global interest, reflecting a growing demand for innovative and environmentally responsible community models. The rapid sell-out of Phase 1 underscores



the appeal of its approach, while Phase 2 is already experiencing high demand.

“Our participation in LPS Shanghai is an exciting opportunity

to share our innovative sustainability solutions with the Chinese market. With growing Chinese investment interest in Oman and the region, we look

forward to demonstrating how The Sustainable City – Yiti combines environmental responsibility with economic benefits, providing a thriving and self-sufficient

community that aligns with global sustainability goals,” said Mahmoud Shehadeh, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer at The Sustainable City – Yiti.

Developed as a collaborative venture between Diamond Developers, a subsidiary of SEE Holding, and Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran), The Sustainable City – Yiti is setting a benchmark for sustainable community development in the region. Situated along Oman’s coastline near Muscat, it is poised to become the largest operational sustainable community in the area, with a vision to achieve the world’s first net-zero-emission city status by 2040. The project is anchored on six key pillars of sustainability – food, energy, water, products, mobility, and waste – and operates on 100% renewable energy. Additionally, it implements complete water recycling, ensures full waste diversion from landfills, and achieves 80% self-sufficiency in food production.

Construction of The Sustainable City – Yiti is progressing steadily, with full completion targeted for 2026. Following LPS Shanghai, the project will continue to expand its international presence.



Why the right age matters for your child’s smile

Orthodontic treatment plays a vital role in the alignment and development of a child’s teeth and jaw. Early intervention can prevent future complications and improve overall dental health. But when is the ideal time to visit an orthodontist, and what common orthodontic issues should parents be aware of?

The American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) recommends that children have their first orthodontic evaluation by the age of seven.

At this age, a child’s teeth and jaws are still developing, which allows for early detection of any potential issues and timely intervention. By age seven, most children have a mix of baby teeth and permanent teeth, and an orthodontist can identify subtle problems with jaw growth and emerging teeth. Early evaluations can help plan treatments that may reduce the need for more invasive procedures in the future.

While many children will not need immediate treatment, a consultation at this stage provides a clear roadmap for future care and ensures that any developing problems are monitored.

Several common orthodontic issues can arise during childhood. Crowding of teeth occurs when there isn’t enough space in the jaw, causing teeth to overlap and making it difficult to clean them properly, increasing the risk of cavities and gum disease.

An overbite, where the upper front teeth overlap the lower front teeth excessively, can lead to tooth wear, jaw pain, and an increased risk of injury to protruding teeth. On the other hand, an underbite occurs when the lower teeth extend past the upper teeth, often due to an overdeveloped lower jaw or underdeveloped upper jaw, affecting chewing and speech. Crossbite, which happens when one or more upper teeth sit inside the lower teeth, can lead to uneven jaw growth, teeth wear, and facial asymmetry if untreated.



Sohar International ‘Bank of the Year’ by Banker Magazine

Sohar International, Oman’s best bank, has been honoured with the esteemed title of ‘Bank of the Year 2024 – Oman’ by *The Banker magazine*, a prestigious UK based publication by the *Financial Times*.

This recognition highlights the bank’s forward-thinking strategy, exceptional growth, and significant contributions to advancing both national and regional economic goals. It reflects Sohar International’s dedication to transforming Oman’s financial landscape through innovation, strategic growth, and active participation in pivotal national projects.

By driving economic diversification in line with Oman Vision 2040, the bank continues to strengthen its position as a key enabler of sustainable development.

At the award ceremony, held in London on December 4, global financial leaders gathered to celebrate excellence in the banking industry. Sohar International was proudly represented by Aziz al Jahdhami, Chief Priority Banking Officer, and Omar Baccouche, Executive Vice President of Global Banking, who accepted the award on behalf of the bank’s leadership and dedicated team.

Bank Muscat completes lighting project for Al Tadamun team

In line with its ongoing achievements and successes in the field of social responsibility, Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, continues to develop national teams and support the Omani youth.

Recently, the bank celebrated the completion of the lighting project for Al Tadamun Sports Team in the wilayat of Jalan Bani Bu Hassan in South Sharqiya governorate, as part of its Green Sports programme. This initiative is designed to support local sports teams and enhance Oman’s sports infrastructure.

The celebration event was held under the patronage of Dr Aamir Nassir al Mataani, Member of State Council, in the presence of Badr Mohammed al Hajri, Assistant Regional Manager – Bank Muscat Branches in North Sharqiya governorate, as well as Qais Hamad al Rajhi, Head of Al Tadamun Sports Team.

A number of distinguished guests and team members also attended the event.



During the inauguration ceremony, Badr Mohammed al Hajri expressed his happiness about the successful execution of the lighting project for Al Tadamun Sports Team as part of the ‘Green Sports’ programme.

Hajri congratulated the team for the successful completion of the project which will contribute to the development of the main infrastructure of the team.

The field will represent a suitable venue for the team to organise events and different cultural

and sports activities contributing to the enhancement of their sports skills.

Furthermore, a large segment of the Omani youth with different age groups are keen to join the events related to the sports and social arenas. Bank Muscat will remain committed to serving the youth through its CSR programme ‘Green Sports’ to keep pace with the developments that contribute to the growth of the sports teams all over the sultanate.

Speaking on the occasion, Qais Hamad al Rajhi said, “I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bank Muscat for the continuous support to enhancing the ‘Green Sports’ programme. This programme represents a major social initiative for developing the youth’s talents and sports teams in the Sultanate. The fields of local sports teams constitute strategic and convenient areas to organise various sports and cultural events and sports activities.

UTAS to celebrate graduation of 767 students tomorrow

The University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Al-Mussanah and the Rustaq College of Education are set to celebrate the graduation of a new cohort of students (2024).

The ceremony will take place on Monday, at Al-Rustaq Sports Complex in South Batinah governorate to graduate 767 students – 526 graduates from the UTAS Al-Mussanah and 241 graduates from the Rustaq College of Education.

The event will be held under the patronage of Sheikh Dr Ali Masoud al Sunaidy, Chairman of the General Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, in the presence of Dr Said al Rubaie, UTAS Vice Chancellor, along with esteemed members of the State Council, distinguished officials from South and North Batinah governorates, and the families of the graduates.



The event will celebrate graduates from the Colleges of Engineering and Technology, Economics and Business Administration, Computing and Information Sciences, and Education in Science, Mathematics, and English

Dr Hamoud al Wardi, Dean of Rustaq College of Education, highlighted that the event will celebrate graduates from the Colleges of Engineering and Technology, Economics and Business Administration, Computing and Information Sciences,

as well as Education in Science, Mathematics, and English.

The graduates include holders of Bachelor’s, Advanced Diploma, and Diploma degrees, who are well-prepared to enter the job market with competence after years of academic develop-

ment.

The main organising committee, along with the sub-committees, has confirmed the completion of final preparations for this significant event. After several meetings, all arrangements and details have been fi-

nalized, including the program schedule and media coverage plans. Both UTAS Al-Mussanah and Rustaq College of Education are committed to ensuring the success of this ceremony, which celebrates the students’ hard work and dedication to contribute to the nation’s development and growth.

Dr. Nasser Al-Bimani, Assistant Vice Chancellor of UTAS Al-Mussanah, emphasized that this year’s ceremony is distinctive as it brings together graduates from UTAS Al-Mussanah and the Rustaq College of Education.

The organising of this event reflects a unified effort to present a celebration that matches the significance of this joyful occasion. UTAS Al-Mussanah and Rustaq College of Education are proud of their 767 graduates, equipped with advanced skills to contribute effectively the foundations of Oman’s renaissance.



SQU, University Medical City collaborate with Novartis to address ASCV Disease

The Medical Research Center at Sultan Qaboos University and the Sultan Qaboos University Hospital - located within the University Medical City - announced the completion of a fully localised, secure, and AI-powered technical dashboard.

This innovative platform - set up in collaboration with Novartis Pharma and Beinex Information technology Consulting - has been designed to analyse big data related to atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease (ASCVD), which is one of the leading causes of cardiovascular diseases in Oman.

In May 2023, the Medical Research Center at Sultan Qaboos University and the Sultan Qaboos University Hospital had signed a memorandum of understanding with Novartis. This agreement underscored a shared commitment to tackling ASCVD. The partnership focuses on identifying patients affected by or at risk of ASCVD, assessing the disease burden using big data, advanced analytics, and innovative technologies, raising public awareness about ASCVD through educational programs and initiatives, and facilitating access to advanced cholesterol-lowering treatments for high-risk patients to prevent arterial and vascular blockages.

Professor Khalid bin Humaid al Rasadi, Director of the Medical Research Center at Sultan Qaboos University and project supervisor, stated that this collaboration between Sultan Qaboos University, the University Medical City, and Novartis marks a turning point in enabling us to better identify high-risk ASCVD patients, provide personalised care, and enhance prevention strategies.

"This initiative aligns with global best practices and demonstrates the power of combining clinical expertise with innovative technology to improve cardiovascular health in Oman," Mohammed Mubaslat, Therapy Area Head of Cardio-renal metabolism at Novartis Gulf, commented: "Globally, cardiovascular diseases pose a significant burden on patients and healthcare systems. Through this partnership, we are taking proactive steps to address ASCVD in Oman, leveraging the power of data and the latest innovations to achieve meaningful outcomes for patients and the medical community while optimising the use of available national resources."

Sultan Qaboos University, the University Medical City, and Novartis look forward to celebrating the achievements of this collaboration at the 20th International Atherosclerosis Society Conference, held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center from December 4 to 6.

OOC holds diverse activities on Olympic Day

Oman Olympic Committee (OOC), represented by Oman Sports and Active Society Committee, organised the Olympic Day in Muscat on Tuesday, with the participation of more than 300 school students from various age groups.

The events took place at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bousher and Muscat Grand Mall, attracting a large turnout and significant interaction from participants who expressed notable enthusiasm for the various activities offered.

The event featured a wide range of sports activities, including swimming, football, volleyball, basketball, tennis, table tennis, athletics, and weightlifting.

Additionally, it included a drawing and coloring competition, a cultural contest among the participating students, and several other specially designed activities aimed at encouraging participants to discover their athletic talents in an inspiring and supportive environment.

The activities enjoyed considerable participation, reflecting the importance of such events in promoting physical activity and integrating it into daily life.

The event was sponsored by Muscat Grand Mall and Aster al Raffah Hospital as the medical partner. The activities emphasised the Olympic values of fair play, respect for others, and balance between mind and body. The initiative aimed to highlight the importance of sports not only as a competitive tool but also as a means of personal and social development.

Dodge Durango R/T ultimate family SUV

The Dodge Durango R/T is the ultimate SUV for families who crave for the perfect combination of power, comfort, and versatility. Whether it's for everyday commuting or long weekend trips, the Durango R/T brings sheer strength and remarkable performance while ensuring your family's safety and convenience.

This SUV is powered by a 5.7L HEMI V8 engine that generates a commanding 360 horsepower and 390 lb.-ft. of torque. With an eight-speed automatic transmission and available all-wheel drive, this SUV delivers smooth acceleration and outstanding towing capacity.

It can go from 0 to 60 mph in just 6.2 seconds, showcasing its performance-oriented speed and sheer power. Whether navigating urban streets, towing a trailer, or venturing off the beaten path, this SUV has the strength and precision to handle it all.

With seating for up to seven passengers, the Durango R/T sets the standard for family-friendly SUVs. It features multiple seating configurations and offers up to 85.1 cubic feet of cargo space, ensuring ample room for both passengers and



gear. The luxurious leather-trimmed seating, ventilated and heated front seats, and foldable third-row offer exceptional comfort, while the Harman Kardon® audio system with 19 speakers keeps everyone entertained throughout the journey.

Equipped with the Uconnect 5 NAV system and a 10.1-inch touchscreen display, the Durango R/T ensures that navigation and media controls are always at your fingertips. It also features Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, and wireless charging, allowing you and your passengers to stay connected while on the move.

The Durango R/T is equipped with advanced safety features designed to protect your family, including:

- Full-Speed Forward Collision Warning Plus
- Blind Spot and Cross Path Detection
- Lane Departure Warning Plus
- Adaptive Cruise Control with Stop
- ParkSense Front and Rear Park Assist

Omantel celebrates historic launch of Oman's 1st rocket

Omantel joins the nation in celebrating the successful launch of Oman's first experimental rocket launch, Duqm-1.

This landmark event, executed at Etlaq Spaceport - one of Omantel's strategic investments - in collaboration with the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology, marks a significant achievement in the sultanate's journey into space exploration and cutting-edge technology.

The launch took place in Duqm in Al Wusta, positioning Oman as the first Arab nation to inaugurate a space vehicle launch from its own land. This pivotal moment is part of the National Space Programme, aimed at leveraging Oman's geographical advantages to propel space science and technology.

The initiative focuses on localizing space expertise, fostering public-private partnerships, and attracting investments, thereby contributing to economic diversification and creating job opportunities. Omantel is a key investor in Etlaq, a subsidiary of the National Aerospace Services Company (NASCOM). This strategic investment reflects Omantel's



commitment to advancing technology and innovation, aligning with its vision to lead in emerging technologies and space solutions as part of its ambitious strategy, underscoring the company's transformation into a comprehensive technology provider.

Talal bin Said al Mamari, CEO of Omantel, expressed his excitement, while congratulating the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology on the successful launch of Oman's first experimental rocket.

"This milestone signifies a remarkable advancement in the Sultanate's communications and information technology sector, setting the stage for a future driven by innovation and strategic geographical advantages."

He emphasised that this achievement aligns with Omantel's vision and strategic commitment to innovation. "The successful launch of Duqm-1 highlights Omantel's dedication to advancing beyond traditional telecommunications into cutting-edge technological systems. Our goal is to develop a seamless digital ecosystem that connects all segments of society, fostering collaboration, innovation, and sustainable growth, ultimately contributing to a brighter future for Oman."

Talal al Mamari also praised the collaborative efforts, stating, "We take immense pride in Etlaq's achievements both locally and regionally. As a strategic partner in this pioneering space venture, Omantel is committed to driving technological advancement and national innovation by delivering smarter technological solutions across various sectors."

ISM marks 49th annual day with grandeur and enthusiasm

Indian School Muscat (ISM) celebrated its 49th annual day with grandeur and enthusiasm at the school's new multi-purpose hall. The event was a vibrant showcase of cultural diversity, emotions, and a testament to the school's achievements over the past year.

As ISM embarks on its milestone 50th year, this annual day not only commemorated the successes of the past but also set the stage for exciting future endeavours, reflecting the school's enduring commitment to fostering academic excellence and holistic development in its students.



A distinguished gathering that included chief guest Dr Khadija Ali Mohammed al Salami, Director General of Private Schools, Ministry of Education, Sultanate of Oman; guest of honour Dr Sivakumar Manickam, Chairman of the Board of Directors for Indian Schools in Oman; Mohamed Salim Habib al Hamadani, foreign schools specialist; along with Syed Salman, vice chairman; Nidheesh Kumar, finance director; Vinobha M P, education advisor and senior principal and other esteemed directors of the Board of Directors of Indian Schools in Oman, vice president of the Indian School Muscat Management Committee, convenor, treasurer, co-convenor, and all other distinguished members of the Indian School Muscat Management Committee and a host of other dignitaries, parents, grandparents, students and special guests formed the audience and graced the occasion.

The atmosphere was electric with excitement as Principal Rakesh Joshi, senior vice-principal (administration), vice-principals, assistant vice-principals of various sections, heads of departments, teachers, student council members, and students rounded up to host the mega event.

DRC on alert over mysterious illness

So far, authorities in Democratic Republic of Congo have confirmed nearly 80 deaths out of 376 cases

Kinshasa, DR Congo - Health authorities in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are investigating the outbreak of a disease that has killed dozens of people.

"We don't know if we are dealing with a viral disease or a bacterial disease," Dieudonne Mwamba, director general of the National Public Health Institute, said during an online press briefing by the AU's health watchdog, Africa CDC.

So far, authorities have confirmed nearly 80 deaths out of 376 reported cases, with the first infections recorded at the end of October.

Children at high risk of infection

The unknown disease is currently concentrated in the Panzi district in the Kwango province, located about 435 miles (700km) from the capital, Kinshasa. Panzi district is remote, with difficult-to-access roads and nearly non-existent health infrastructure. Authorities have dispatched a medical research team, including epidemiologists, to the site to assess the situation and take samples to Kikwit for analysis.

According to the Health Min-



The unknown illness comes as the DRC is still battling an mpox outbreak

ister Samuel-Roger Kamba, people present symptoms of fever, cough, runny nose, headache and body aches.

"This is a syndrome that resembles a flu syndrome with res-

piratory distress for some children and for some people who have died," the minister said.

He said 40% of cases had occurred in children younger than 5, most of whom were 'already

fragile due to malnutrition'.

There is also an abnormal drop in haemoglobin levels in the blood, according to provincial Health Minister Apollinaire Yumba.

He advised the population to abstain from all contact with corpses to avoid contamination and, at the same time, appealed to national and international authorities to send medical sup-

plies. According to an anonymous source within the World Health Organization, the WHO has also sent a team.

Measures to contain the illness

The health minister said the seasonal flu period ran from October to March, peaking in December, which is something to consider when dealing with the mysterious disease.

"Is it a severe seasonal flu with people on the table who are fragile because of malnutrition, be-

mented measures to prevent the epidemic from spreading.

"Among these measures, for example, immigration officials have been asked to limit the movement of people and to register the entry and exit of people from surrounding villages, as well as to apply the barrier measures previously used during the coronavirus period. Wearing masks is also required," he said.

Mpox is still a threat

DR Congo is already plagued by the Mpox epidemic, with more than 47,000 suspected cases and over 1,000 suspected deaths from the disease in the Central African country, according to the World Health Organization.

Dieudonne Mwamba, director general of the National Public Health Institute, said officials were on 'maximum alert' and would need to confirm whether the unknown disease is a respiratory infection.

"We must note also that, in the Panzi health zone, there was a large typhoid epidemic two years ago and that the malnutrition rates in this health zone are at around 40%. These are vulnerability factors," he further said. DW

The unknown disease is currently concentrated in the Panzi district in the Kwango province, located about 700km from the capital, Kinshasa

Military junta in Burkina Faso dissolves government

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso - The military junta in Burkina Faso dismissed Prime Minister Apollinaire Joachim Kyelem de Tambela on Friday and dissolved the government.

"The prime minister's official functions are terminated," read a decree issued by the junta's leader, interim President Ibrahim Traore.

He said government ministers will remain in office until a new government is formed.

No reasons were given for the dismissal. Tambela was named as premier in October 2022 after the coup that brought Traore to power. The prime minister had served at the head of three successive governments, surviving each reshuffle.

Military rule in Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso is one of several countries in the Sahel region of West Africa where the military has recently taken power. The military took advantage of popu-



PM Apollinaire Kyelem de Tambela was fired by the military junta

lar discontent with previous democratically-elected governments over security issues.

The current junta seized power in September 2022 with the overthrow of the military government of Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba, about eight months after it staged a coup to remove democratically-elected President Roch Marc Kabore.

But since its inception, the junta has struggled to end Burk-

ina Faso's security challenges, as about half of the country's territory remains outside government control. In May, it extended the military rule for another five years.

Like coup-hit Niger and Mali, Burkina Faso has severed ties with longtime Western and regional partners, including former colonial ruler France and ECOWAS, which it left earlier this year.

DW

Ghana votes for 'economic upswing'

Accra, Ghana - Ghana has kicked off a presidential and parliamentary election on Saturday as the West African country hopes for an economic upswing after the worst financial crisis it has seen in a generation.

Twelve candidates have thrown their hats in the ring to succeed President Nana Akufo-Addo, who is stepping down next month after serving his two legally allowed terms.

However, a close electoral contest primarily pits Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia - who is the chosen successor of Akufo-Addo's New Patriotic Party (NPP) - against former President John Mahama of the National Democratic Congress (NDC).

Voting began Saturday at 7am local (same UTC/GMT) and closes at 5pm, with some provisional legislative results expected to roll out later at night and on Sunday. The outcome of the presidential election is expected by Tuesday.

Battlelines drawn over economic woes

Opinion polls show Mahama -



A close electoral contest pits Vice President Mahamudu Bawumia against former President John Mahama

Twelve candidates have thrown their hats in the ring to succeed President Nana Akufo-Addo, who is stepping down next month

who held the presidency from 2012 to 2016 - on course for a potential comeback. Mahama said

he would 'reset' Ghana and introduce a '24-hour economy', stretching industrial hours to create jobs and more production.

He said he sees Bawumia as a continuation of policies that led to the country's economic troubles. Mahama has also vowed to renegotiate the terms of a US\$3bn International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout secured in 2023 to restructure Ghana's debts.

Meanwhile, the NPP is vying for an unprecedented third term

under Bawumia.

The former central banker - who led Akufo-Addo's economic management team - has tried to distance himself from the flak over the government's handling of the economy.

Bawumia has stressed Ghana's gradual recovery from the crisis, with economic growth surging by 6.9% year-on-year in the second quarter of 2024, making it the fastest rate in five years.

DW

State of emergency in Peru

Lima, Peru - Peru on Friday declared a state of emergency in six districts of the coastal Callao region due to escalating violence by criminal gangs.

Official Peruvian daily *El Peruano* said the government took action after a rise in theft, threats, extortion, and racketeering in the region, which lies some 10km (6.2 miles) west of Lima, the capital.

The state of emergency will be in effect for 60 days.

Officials said security operations will be carried out to disrupt activities of criminal groups and restore order with the support of the police and armed forces.

Anadolu Agency

France: Economic and political crisis set to worsen?

Paris, France - The collapse of the French government, following the National Assembly's vote to oust Prime Minister Michel Barnier, has raised significant concerns about the nation's political and economic trajectory.

Barnier, who served as prime minister for only three months, resigned after a majority of lawmakers backed a no-confidence motion against him.

The fallout has left France grappling with uncertainty over its leadership and the 2025 budget, highlighting the challenges ahead in navigating political divisions and economic pressures.

Political instability and divisions

France now finds itself in a state of political upheaval, with a fractured National Assembly and no possibility of parliamentary elections until July 2025 due to constitutional constraints.



President Emmanuel Macron, who is in power until 2027, has said he will select a new prime minister 'in the coming days' to form a government of 'general interest'. This announcement fol-

lows months of political instability, exacerbated by Macron's centrist bloc's failure to secure dominance and the far-right National Rally (RN) winning the European Parliament elections

earlier this year.

In response, Macron called for snap parliamentary elections in late June. However, these elections failed to produce a clear majority, as no party managed to

secure the 289 seats required for absolute control in the National Assembly.

Alexander Seale, a French political analyst, predicts turbulent months ahead. "The next five to six months will be quite tense because it all depends if the far-left and the far-right like this new prime minister," he explained.

Macron, he said, faces the challenge of selecting a premier who can navigate the deeply divided political spectrum.

"He will have to propose a new budget and also deal with these divided parties in the National Assembly. He has to work with the far right, with the far left, and also with Macron's party," Seale added.

The president has been meeting with heads of political parties and other key figures, though notably excluding far-left La France Insoumise and the Greens. Potential names going around for

the next prime minister include Defence Minister Sebastien Lecornu and Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau, said Seale, while cautioning that Macron could opt for a surprise pick from outside established circles.

France's political crisis comes against the backdrop of a deepening fiscal crisis.

The no-confidence vote against Barnier followed his decision to use discretionary powers to pass a controversial social security budget bill without a parliamentary vote.

Macron has emphasised that the next government's priority will be addressing the budget crisis, and it would propose a 'special law' by mid-December to ensure public service continuity.

Barnier's proposed plan aimed to reduce France's public deficit from an estimated 6.1% this year to 5% by 2025.

Anadolu Agency

Syria: Local armed groups in control

Ankara, Turkey - Forces of the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad withdrew from the provincial centre of the Al-Hasakah province and Qamishli district in the country's northeast, east of the Euphrates River, leaving them under the occupation of the armed group s PKK and YPG, local sources said on Saturday.

The regime army on Friday withdrew some of its forces stationed in the Deir ez-Zor province in the country's east bordering Iraq and handed over the provincial centre to the PKK/YPG groups. The move follows over a week of dramatic developments in the country, with forces opposed to Assad making gains at the expense of regime forces.

In another setback for the Assad regime, the centre of southern Syria's Suwayda province has come under the control of the Syrian opposition, local sources said on Saturday.

Local armed groups in Suwayda, where most of the population follows the Druze faith, issued a 24-hour ultimatum to regime forces on Friday to leave the area and prevent bloodshed.

According to local sources, representatives from local armed groups met with regime officials and demanded that regime forces withdraw from the province.

While emphasising their desire to avoid armed conflict, the groups set a 24-hour deadline for



The regime army on Friday withdrew some of its forces stationed in the Deir ez-Zor province in the country's east bordering Iraq and handed over the provincial centre to the PKK/YPG groups

regime forces to comply.

The local armed groups reportedly have no direct ties to other opposition factions.

Suwayda has seen ongoing anti-regime protests for over a year, with many demonstrators waving the opposition's 'revolu-

tion flag'.

Developments in Syria

Renewed fighting between regime forces and anti-regime groups broke out November 27 in rural areas west of the major city

of Aleppo. By November 30, opposition forces had taken control of most of Aleppo's city centre and established dominance across the Idlib province.

On December 1, the opposition Syrian National Army launched Operation Dawn of

Freedom against the terrorist group PKK/YPG in the Tel Rifaat district of Aleppo's countryside, liberating the area from terror elements. Anti-regime forces captured Hama on Thursday and continued to advance on Friday, seizing the Rastan and Talbiseh

districts in the Homs province.

Meeting to discuss Syria

Turkey's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, meanwhile, met with his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi in Doha on Saturday to

discuss developments in Syria, according to diplomatic sources.

The two ministers, attending the 22nd edition of the Doha Forum, had a 'constructive and extensive' meeting focused on the latest developments in Syria, the sources said. The discussions also served as a preliminary assessment ahead of the Astana Format Foreign Ministers' Meeting, scheduled for Saturday.

The Astana Format meetings, involving Turkey, Iran, and Russia, aim to address the ongoing crisis and facilitate a resolution to the protracted Syrian conflict.

'Volatile' situation

The US urged its nationals on Friday to 'immediately' leave Syria, citing escalating fighting between rebels and regime forces that have intensified the 'volatile' security situation.

"The security situation continues to be volatile and unpredictable with active clashes between armed groups throughout the country," the State Department said in a security alert for US citizens. "The Department urges US citizens to depart Syria now while commercial options remain available."

It added that Americans who choose not to leave or are unable to should prepare 'contingency plans' for emergency situations and be prepared to shelter in place for extended periods.

Agencies

Lebanese man freed after 40 years in prison

Beirut, Lebanon - The Committee of Families of Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon announced on Friday that a Lebanese man, who had been detained in Syria for decades, has been identified.

In a statement, the committee said: "News from military opposition sources has sparked both hope and anxiety among the families of the missing, particularly those believed to still be held in Syrian prisons since the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990)."

"We have been unable to verify the identities of those released from Hama Prison, except for one individual, Ali Hassan Al-Ali from Akkar Governorate, northern Lebanon, whose name appears on our lists," it added.

The committee further highlighted the likelihood that other Lebanese detainees could also



be among those released.

During Syria's 29-year presence in Lebanon (1976-2005), many Lebanese were arrested and transferred to Syrian prisons for reasons such as 'opposition to Syrian control' or 'suspected collaboration with hostile entities'. Numerous others disappeared under unclear circumstances.

The committee urged the Lebanese government to take

swift measures by setting up an emergency committee to confirm the identities of the freed individuals, engage with relevant Syrian parties, and facilitate the safe return of detainees to their families.

It also pointed out that its lists include not only Lebanese nationals but also individuals of other nationalities who vanished in Lebanon.

Anadolu Agency

From AI fakes to cyberattacks: Threats to German elections

Berlin, Germany - Germany is bracing for digital threats in the run-up to the general election.

With the country expected to elect a new parliament on February 23, authorities and researchers are raising concerns about the potential impact of hack-and-leak operations and disinformation campaigns aimed at swaying public opinion or sowing division ahead of the vote.

In a recent analysis, Germany's domestic intelligence agency warned of 'attempts by foreign states to exert influence'. This warning was echoed by Claudia Plattner, the president of Germany's cybersecurity agency, the Federal Office for Information Security (BSI), who told reporters that 'there are forces inside and outside Germany that have an interest in attacking the election process and disrupting the democratic order'.

The snap election, held under a compressed timeline, not only poses logistical challenges for authorities - it also comes at a time of heightened political tensions.

"There are various issues, from the economy to the geopolitical situation, that are dividing society," Josef Lentsch, the CEO of the Political Tech Summit conference, which will take place in Berlin at the end of January, told DW.

"Populists and extremists are particularly good at exploiting these social divides," he said.

A threat from outside and within

Cyberattacks on prominent individuals and organisations may pose a significant threat to the election, experts say. Once obtained, sensitive data can be used in coordinated 'hack-and-leak' operations, in which stolen material - often altered or taken out of context - is released to



Germany is bracing itself for digital threats

undermine the credibility of political candidates or parties.

"Against the backdrop of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, Russia probably has the greatest and most obvious interest in influencing the election in its own favour," Germany's domestic intelligence agency, the Federal Office for the Protection of the

trusted entities."

Both extremist fringe actors and parties such as the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) have spent years building this 'alternative digital infrastructure', Lentsch said. "As a result, they now have almost a decade's head start over other actors, such as the established parties."

had run a campaign involving thousands of social media accounts on platforms such as TikTok and Telegram to promote Georgescu.

"Romania is an EU country. What happened there can happen elsewhere, including in Germany," Lentsch said.

In Germany, no party has built a larger 'digital infrastructure' to push its narratives than the AfD, Katja Munoz, a research fellow at the Centre for Geopolitics, Geoeconomics and Technology at the Berlin-based think tank German Council on Foreign Relations, told DW.

Within this network, multiple social media accounts interact with each other to prompt the platforms' algorithms to amplify the reach of posts, Munoz said. "It's an orchestrated move to push the same narrative."

At the same time, new so-called generative AI programmes allow parties and individuals to create posts - from text to images and even video - much faster than before. Officials from across the political spectrum have begun using the technology to create illustrations for social media posts, for example.

DW

Gaza: 26 killed in Israeli strikes

Gaza City, Palestine - At least 26 Palestinians were killed and over 60 others injured on Saturday in Israeli shelling that targeted homes in the central Gaza Strip.

In a statement, the Al-Awda Hospital said Israeli shelling targeted several homes in the Nuseirat refugee camp, killing 26 Palestinians and injuring more than 60 others.

Israel launched a genocidal war on the Gaza Strip in October 2023, killing over 44,600 people so far, most of them women and children, and injuring nearly 106,000

Last month, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza. Israel also faces a genocide case at the International Court of Justice for its deadly



war on Gaza.

Meanwhile, the bodies of seven Palestinians were recovered from the rubble on Saturday, raising the death toll from an Israeli airstrike on a home in the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza to 24.

Medical sources told Anadolu that the bodies of seven Palestinians were pulled from the debris of a house belonging to the Al-Nadi family, which was hit by

Israeli forces on Friday night.

Initially, 17 Palestinians were killed, and more than 50 others, mostly women and children, were injured in the attack, according to medical sources speaking to Anadolu.

Besides, four Palestinians, including a young girl, were killed and others were injured on Saturday in Israeli airstrikes across various parts of besieged Gaza.

Anadolu Agency

Biden weighs pre-emptive pardons for critics targeted by Trump

Washington, D.C., US - US President Joe Biden is reportedly considering issuing broad pre-emptive pardons for prominent critics of President-elect Donald Trump from both political parties, aiming to protect them from potential legal actions or reprisals under the incoming administration, according to local media.

Trump has repeatedly vowed to seek revenge against his political enemies once in office, and Kash Patel, his nominee to head the FBI, wrote a book with a list of 60 so-called 'Deep State' figures he could use government resources to target, though without credible

accusations.

Sources familiar with the discussions said Biden has deliberated the idea with senior White House officials, though no formal recommendations or specific names have been finalised, CBS News reported.

The potential list of beneficiaries includes figures who were central to contentious moments during Trump's first term and have been publicly lambasted by the incoming president.

They include Dr Anthony Fauci, who managed the nation's COVID-19 response and served as Biden's top science adviser, and retired General Mark A Milley, former Joint

Chiefs of Staff chairman, who has called Trump a 'fascist' and provided information on the events surrounding the January 6 Capitol insurrection.

Others under consideration for pardons reportedly include California Senator-elect Adam Schiff, and other Democratic and Republican lawmakers involved in Trump's impeachment proceedings, including former Republican Congresswoman Liz Cheney, a vocal Trump critic who opposed his reelection bid.

Democrats are reportedly divided over the issue, with some saying issuing pardons would imply the figures had done



US President Joe Biden

something wrong in the face of no credible accusations. Others, however, point to Trump's vow to use the government to go after his enemies, saying he could damage their reputations and force them to pay lawyers for years to fight off baseless charges.

Meanwhile, the White House on Friday defended President Joe Biden's decision to pardon his son.

"The fact is, when you think about how the president got to this decision, circumstances have changed," spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters. "Republicans said they weren't going to let up... Re-

cently announced Trump appointees for law enforcement have said on the campaign that they were out for retribution. And I think we should believe their words, right?" she said.

"As you all know, there was a sentencing coming up, and the president said this in his statement: that Hunter and his family had been through enough. Enough is enough."

Hunter Biden was found guilty of federal gun charges stemming from his possession of a firearm while addicted to drugs in 2018. In September of that year, he pleaded guilty to federal tax charges.

Anadolu Agency



Romania: Police raid houses after top court annuls ballot

Bucharest, Romania - Prosecutors in Romania on Saturday raided three houses in the central city of Brasov, a day after the country's top court declared a first-round presidential ballot invalid amid allegations that the far-right, pro-Kremlin winner might have benefited from Russian interference.

The court's ruling came after declassified documents indicated that the electoral process was tainted by vote manipulation, campaign irregularities and non-transparent funding.

The move by the court means a second-round vote planned for Sunday will not take place as planned. A new date for fresh presidential elections will be set by the government that forms after last weekend's parliamentary elections, won by the ruling Social Democrats amid major gains by far-right parties.

Prosecutors said the searches formed part of a probe into illegal campaign funding and other violations of the law.

"The searches target the possible involvement of an individual

in the illegal financing of the electoral campaign of a candidate for the Presidency of Romania, through the use of sums of money ... (that) could come from the commission of crimes, being subsequently introduced into a money laundering process," prosecutors said in a statement.

Although they did not name the individual, the declassified documents centred on the campaign by Calin Georgescu, who won the November 24 first-round vote despite preelection surveys giving him just single-digit support.

The investigations will also look into violations of the law prohibiting organisations and symbols of a fascist, racist or xenophobic nature, the statement added. The documents, prepared by Romania's intelligence agency, spoke of 'an aggressive promotional campaign, in violation of electoral legislation, and an exploitation of algorithms to increase the popularity of Calin Georgescu at an accelerated pace'.

DW

South Korea: Bid to impeach Yoon fails after PPP walkout

To pass, the impeachment motion needed the support of at least eight lawmakers from PPP

Seoul, South Korea - South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on Saturday survived an impeachment motion over his failed attempt earlier this week to impose martial law.

The impeachment motion to oust him from office was submitted by six opposition parties, including the main opposition Democratic Party, but it failed when parliament failed to reach a minimum quorum of 200 lawmakers.

To pass, the impeachment motion needed the support of at least eight lawmakers from Yoon's People Power Party (PPP) to reach the minimum threshold of 200 in the 300-seat parliament. In the end, there were only three.

Without the required quorum, the impeachment motion was scrapped.

Currently, the opposition parties enjoy the support of 192 lawmakers including the assembly speaker. However, of the 190 lawmakers who voted down Yoon's martial law decree during an emergency parliament session overnight Tuesday, 18 were from the PPP.



The impeachment motion to oust Yoon Suk Yeol from office was submitted by six opposition parties, including the main opposition Democratic Party

Earlier, ruling PPP lawmakers left parliament ahead of the impeachment vote after taking part in a separate vote rejecting a probe into first lady Kim Keon Hee.

The opposition motion on Kim fell short by two votes, with 198 lawmakers supporting the measure, including six from the ruling party. However, it failed to meet the required 200-vote threshold for approval.

The opposition bloc protested and hurled slogans when the ruling PPP lawmakers left parliament

following the vote on Kim.

Parliament Speaker Woo Won-shik called on the ruling party lawmakers to return to the session and cast their votes for the impeachment motion but to no avail.

Yoon, 63, apologised to the nation for his failed attempt earlier this week to implement martial law and said he would not try to repeat such a step.

Yoon was elected in 2022 for a five-year term which is set to end in 2027.

He imposed martial law late

on Tuesday but it was lifted within six hours.

Separately, acting Defence Minister Kim Seon-ho met with top commanders and told them to maintain emergency readiness ahead of the impeachment vote.

Large groups of South Koreans on Saturday gathered in front of the parliament ahead of the vote demanding Yoon's removal from office.

Civic groups, labour groups, and college students held a series of impeachment rallies in

various areas in the capital Seoul near parliament, broadcaster KBS reported.

One person was detained by police over trying to set himself on fire.

"I feel terrible that it has come to this today," protester An Juncheol told the AFP news agency. "What the ruling party lawmakers did today - walking away from the vote - is nothing more than an attempt to cement their power and status, with no regard for the people."

Agencies

SUB-ZERO TEMPERATURES IN KASHMIR VALLEY



Snow-covered mountains and a frozen waterfall are seen in the Kashmir valley which experienced sub-zero temperatures, at Tangmarg in Baramulla, Jammu and Kashmir, India, on Saturday (ANI)

Rare warning as storm hits UK

London, UK - A powerful storm made landfall in the UK on Saturday following a rare red warning, leaving thousands without power and disrupting travel and sports events.

Around three million people in Wales and southwestern England were warned by the government to stay indoors as Storm Darragh has already hit parts of the country.

The message warned people of life-threatening danger due to 'flying debris, falling trees and large waves around coastal areas'. It followed a rare red warning, the most serious type, by Britain's Meteorological Office, earlier on Friday for wind.

According to the National Grid, more than 55,000 customers are now without power across southwestern England, southern Wales, and the West Midlands.



Around three million people in Wales and southwestern England were warned by the government to stay indoors in the wake of Storm Darragh

Mentioning an emergency cellphone alert sent to millions of people, it said this would be the largest ever use of the system outside a test scenario.

Several flights and train services have been delayed over the strong wind, with hundreds of cancellations and some aborted landings at Heathrow Airport in London, with others diverted to

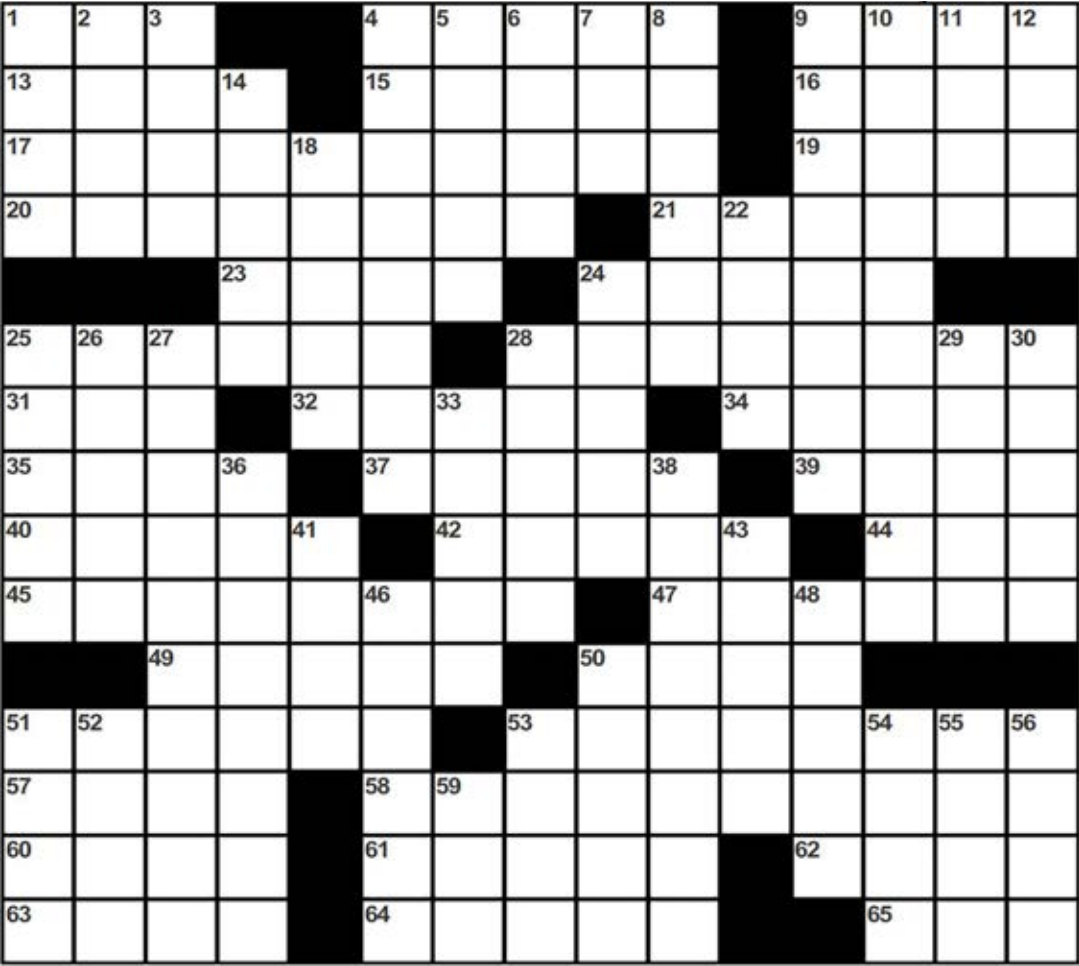
Germany.

Also Saturday's Merseyside derby between Everton and Liverpool was called off due to severe weather from the storm.

On X, Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the government is working with local leaders and agencies on the ground to keep people safe.

Anadolu Agency

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Cup or can material
- 4) Having a strong resem-
blance
- 9) Milo's movie pal
- 13) "Isn't that_much?"
- 15) Grandma with the
great use of color
- 16) "Tomb Raider" heroine
- 17) Try to escape
- 19) Big name in office
equipment, once
- 20) Word with "cooker"
or "point"
- 21) Cook up
- 23) Bathroom decoration
- 24) With great force
- 25) Spanish hotel
- 28) The Flintstones' era
- 31) With
- 34-Across, a place in
Michigan
- 32) Home of a biblical
witch
- 34) See
- 31-Across
- 35) Some men of the fa-
milia
- 37) Bulbous plant
- WHY
- 39) River flowing into the
Moselle
- 40) Worked for AAA

- 42) Everest locale
- 44) USN title
- 45) Certain rays
- 47) Kind of tape
- 49) Home and Olin
- 50) Night vision?
- 51) Rain forest growths
- 53) Repeated over and
over
- 57) "Puppy Love" singer
Paul
- 58) Certain gambling bet
- 60) Kind of tea
- 61)_ in the sky (slangy
satellite)
- 62) Sword type
- 63) Job for Sherlock
- 64) They publish lists
- 65) Nile reptile
- DOWN**
- 1) Pack down
- 2) Construction beam
- 3) Big name in sneakers
- 4) Moving about
- 5) Peter of"The Maltese
Falcon"
- 6) "That makes sense"
- 7) Mauna _ (Hawaiian
volcano)
- 8) Kind of pie?
- 9) Knighted thespian Lau-
rence and kin
- 10) Amazed
- 11) Something to strike
while hot
- 12) Film maker Gus Van _
- 14) Seed covering
- 18) Comment to the audi-
ence
- 22) Wendy's pet in "Peter
Pan"
- 24) "Take_down memory
lane"
- 25) Pop singer LaBelle
- 26) Kind of ring
- 27) They come down to
Earth
- 28) Cobbled
- 29) Lose it
- 30) Miscalculation
- 33) Sandy expanses
- 36) Sing to a lover
- 38) Dressmaking guides
- 41) "Great" dog
- 43) They make whoppers
- 46) Spoke hoarsely
- 48) Old, rickety vehicle
- 50) Lager holder
- 51) Not of the cloth
- 52) Native operu
- 53) Popular furniture store
- 54) Snack in Madrid
- 55)_ out a living
- 56) Bottomless, seemingly
- 59) "_ Como Va" (Santana
hit)

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

If you've been waiting for a time when things would free up a bit in your life, congratulations. It's here! The rough road you've been traveling on is going to get decidedly smoother and sunnier. Take a deep breath and enjoy the fact that no one is looking over your shoulder any more and no one is tapping their feet waiting for you. The strings that were attached to you have been clipped, and you're now free to roam on your own. Enjoy yourself!



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Okay, that's it. You've done all you can do for that particular family member or dear friend who insists on seeking you out for everything from a hangnail to car trouble. Enough is enough. It's now officially time to step back, ignore their phone calls, and devote more time to you. You have far better things to do with your time than listening to yet another sob story.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER21

You finally have all the resources and energy you need to push things out of the planning stage and into the action stage. What are you waiting for? This is a very good time to initiate projects, especially those that involve legal documents or proceedings. If you're starting a new business relationship, finalize the details today. Everyone has the same goals in mind and is ready to formalize matters so that everyone can start moving forward.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Today, just putting your new ideas to work is almost more important than the quality of the ideas. It's all about newness and innovation right now. Don't be afraid to take a few chances. No one is watching you, and there will be no evaluations given, so you have nothing to lose. You have free rein to feel your way around today and explore new places. Step out of your comfort zone. It is much too small.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Someone who's usually dependable could be acting flighty today, and you won't have time to figure out why. Leave them behind and move on with your day without them. They can't be relied on, and you need to focus on getting stuff done. There are many mysteries to solve, and you need to find the time to explore all the nooks and crannies where the answers might be hidden. Get going early in the day while you have the energy you'll need.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

This is the time to drop your inhibitions and reservations and be willing to experiment. If given a choice between something old and something new, it's always more exciting to pick the latter. In the past, you've been too worried about precautions and what-ifs to let yourself go and experience all that life has to offer, but something inside of you is telling you to go for it now. Fun is what you make it. Of course.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Be on the lookout for someone who is all talk and no action. As charming and put together as they may be, they're hiding something and it's up to you to help them come clean about the truth. They're busy talking in order to keep you from asking the penetrating questions that will force them to tear down their walls. You can help them understand that you aren't a threat to them by supporting their ideas. Encourage them to start taking action on their plans.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Trying to talk you into or out of anything you are remotely focused on just won't work. You'll get mad, you'll become more determined than you already were, and you won't appreciate it, which the chatty party will learn in no uncertain terms immediately. If you're dealing with someone who's just too naive to see the warning signs, step away. Why injure an innocent civilian? Even if they are on the pushy side.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

You've never been one to worry about what someone thinks of what you say or do. So when the urge strikes to do something totally unusual and extremely unexpected, your last thought definitely won't be wondering what the neighbors will say. Good for you. There's just one thing, though. If you can possibly hold off until later tonight, you'll have a far more receptive audience than if you act this afternoon. Even impetuous you can wait a few hours, right?



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Turn your thoughts to figuring out where you fit in your community and how you want that role to change. Do you need to get involved with more groups? Being a joiner can help you feel more valuable, and teach you important skills for working with people you don't necessarily get along with. It's also a great training ground for working on your leadership skills. Find out how you can get more involved in your neighborhood, local politics.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You're a magnet, pure and simple, and you know it. You always have. So when that magnetism pulls someone toward you who isn't quite what you had in mind, back off and be honest. You have little time at your disposal, and you won't want to spend it on mercy dates, especially when there are so many wonderful folks who've also had a taste of your charisma.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

There's nothing wrong with making room for other people's opinions, but you should guard yourself against being taken advantage of or being led astray. After all, your mind isn't made up, which makes it easier for someone to influence you. Listen intently to what other people have to say about the topic, and then do your own research to either confirm or disprove their theories. Your perspective on certain issues may change.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Grand Central Terminal, Park Avenue, New York is the world's

- A.largest railway station
- B.highest railway station
- C.longest railway station
- D.None of the above

02. Entomology is the science that studies

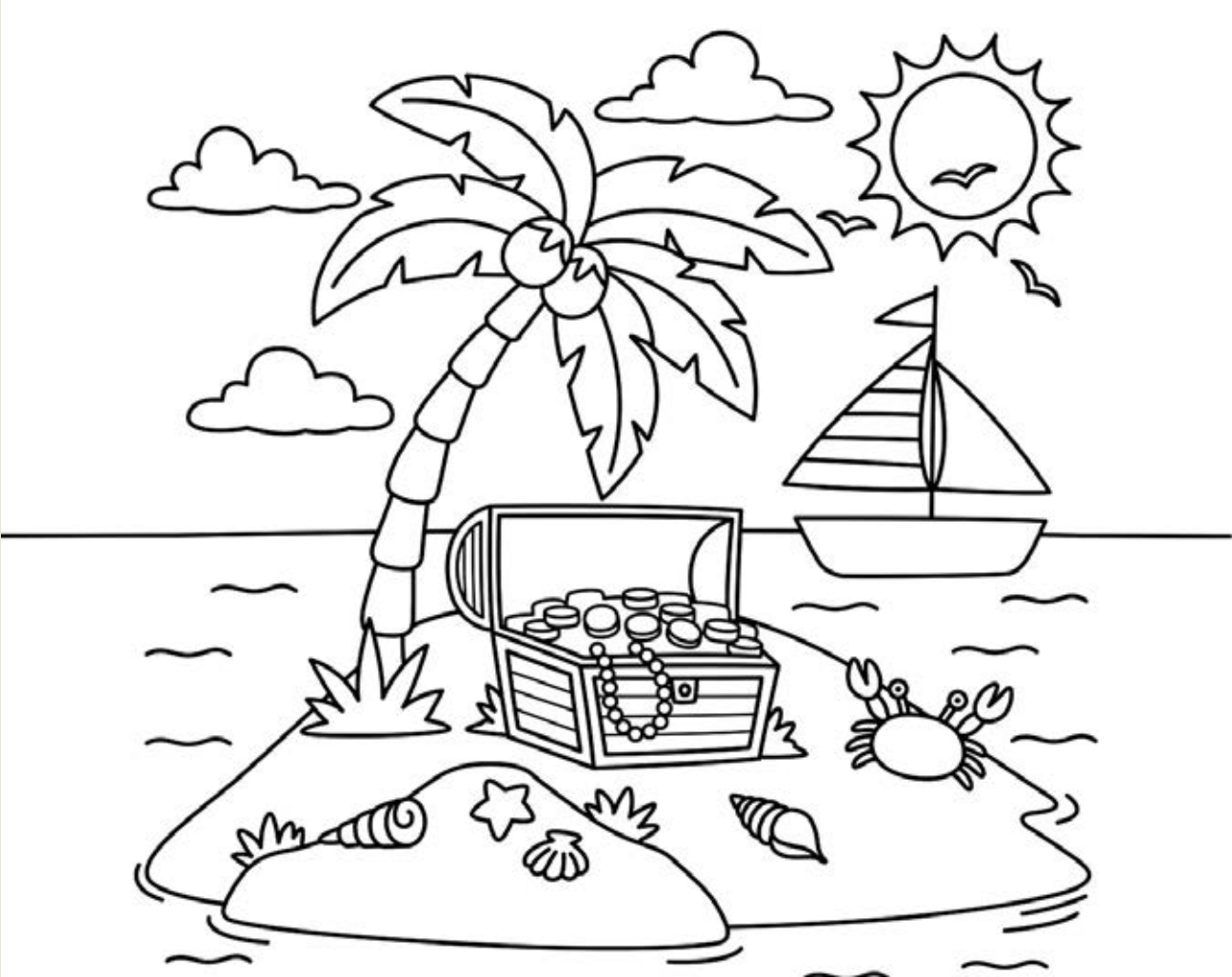
- A.Behavior of human beings
- B.Insects
- C.The origin and history of technical and scientific terms
- D.The formation of rocks

03. Eritrea, which became the 182nd member of the UN in 1993, is in the continent of

- A.Asia
- B.Africa
- C.Europe
- D.Australia

Answers: 1.A 2.B 3.B

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

G	O	S	U
N	A	W	E
N	U	D	M
G	O	M	L

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

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

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

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

NO MOURTROUBLE

Guardiola says ‘six titles’ gesture at Liverpool match was a joke after Mourinho’s response



Jose Mourinho

Manchester, England - Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola said he was only joking when he referred to winning twice as many Premier League titles as Jose Mourinho, after the former Chelsea boss said that he, unlike Guardiola, had won his titles fairly.

The Spaniard also said City were innocent until proven guilty, responding to Mourinho’s allusions to their alleged violations of Premier League financial rules from 2009 to 2018, which the club has always denied.

Guardiola, who held up six fingers to Liverpool fans on Sunday, a gesture similar to Mourinho holding up three fingers in 2018 before getting sacked by Manchester United, had made the comment when asked if he could suffer a fate similar to the Portuguese.

“I hope not in my case... He won three, I won six... but we are the same like that,” Guardiola answered.

Mourinho responded to Guardiola’s comment on Friday, ahead of his team Fenerbahce’s clash with Besiktas.

“Guardiola said something about me... he won six trophies and I won three, but I won fairly and cleanly,” Turkish outlet Hurriyet quoted Mourinho as saying on Friday, ahead of his team Fenerbahce’s clash with Besiktas.

“If I lost, I want to congratulate my opponent because he was better than me. I don’t want to win by dealing with 150 court cases.”

City did not immediately respond to a request for comment about Mourinho’s statement.

Guardiola, speaking to reporters later on Friday, said he had no bad intentions when making the comment about Mourinho.

“If I have offended him, I am so sorry. But it was a joke. The fact is he has three and I have six, it is a fact. But the intention was completely fine,” he said.

“I think both with our teams - he with Chelsea, myself with Man City - we can sit in the table with Sir Alex Ferguson, Arsene Wenger, right? For the many, many titles we’ve won. And I’m pretty sure sooner or later they will congratulate us.”

Guardiola said there were many people around the world who wanted to see City at the bottom. “We are innocent until proven as guilty. After that we’ll see what happens, but it is what it is,” he added.

Mourinho has taken shots at City before, saying in October that he was hoping he could add a fourth Premier League medal to his cabinet if City are stripped of their titles and United, who finished second in 2017-18, are awarded the Premier League trophy.

Chelsea, where Mourinho won his three English top-flight titles in 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2014-15, are being investigated by the Premier League for potential financial rule breaches between 2012 and 2019.



Pep Guardiola

If I have offended him, I am so sorry. But it was a joke. The fact is he has three and I have six, it is a fact. But the intention was completely fine.

PEP GUARDIOLA



Guardiola unsure about De Bruyne contract situation



Enzo Maresca

Free-scoring Chelsea still have a lot to improve, says Maresca

London, England - Chelsea are scoring goals for fun but still have many areas to work on if they hope to match up to the likes of Manchester City, Arsenal and Liverpool, manager Enzo Maresca said on Friday ahead of a Premier League meeting with Tottenham Hotspur.

Chelsea, who are second in the standings, thrashed Southampton 5-1 on Wednesday and have scored a league-leading 31 goals in 14 games.

They have found the net 57 times in 22 matches across all competitions this season, their best-ever goals-per-game (2.6) ratio in a campaign.

However, they rank joint-sixth in the league for clean sheets, having only shut out their opponents three times.

“I don’t think we are there and ready to compete with Arsenal, Liverpool and City. We have to do many more things good, not just score goals. Avoid conceding goals,” Maresca told reporters.

Manchester, England - Manchester City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne’s future at the club is still uncertain with coach Pep Guardiola remaining coy on whether the Belgian will sign an extension to his expiring contract.

The 33-year-old De Bruyne scored a goal and set up another as City won for the first time in eight games on Wednesday in a 3-0 Premier League victory over Nottingham Forest. However, his contract expires next year and British media reports have recently linked him with a move away from the Etihad.

“I’m not involved in (contract discussions),” Guardiola told reporters on Friday. “I would like to have him 23-years-old and sign a contract for 10 years, this is what I’d like, we’ll see.

“There are players (for who) the impact on the legacy of this club will be eternal, will be forever. Of course it is not easy (to



Kevin De Bruyne

replace them), but as a club, we have to find in the moment, if its going to happen, we have to find the best way.”

The biggest issue around De Bruyne is his fitness, as Wednesday marked his first start in more than two months due to an abdominal injury. City’s poor form has seen the champions tumble down to fourth in the Premier League standings, nine points behind leaders Liverpool and two behind Chelsea and Arsenal ahead of Saturday’s fixtures.

One of the positives to come out of Wednesday’s win was the performance of Jack Grealish in a central midfield role. He recorded a pass accuracy rate of 98 per cent on the night.

“He has attributes to play there,” Guardiola said.

However, the manager added that Grealish and all the players were struggling with fitness amid an intense schedule.

Everton-Liverpool match postponed

Liverpool, England - The Premier League clash between Everton and Liverpool has been postponed due to adverse weather conditions, hosts Everton said on Saturday.

The Merseyside derby, scheduled later on Saturday at Goodison Park, is the first English top-flight football match to be postponed over storm Darragh.

The decision to postpone was taken following a safety advisory group meeting attended by officials from both clubs as well as representatives from Merseyside police and Liverpool city council, Everton said in a statement.

“Due to the risk to safety in the local area due to strong

wind gusts, and an amber severe wind warning that remains in place until 6am on Sunday, today’s fixture should be postponed on safety grounds,” the statement added.

Merseyside police on Friday had advised residents to avoid any non-essential travel until weather conditions improved.

“We appreciate this will be deeply disappointing for supporters, but the safety of fans, staff and players is of paramount importance,” league leaders Liverpool said in a statement.

“Information relating to a rearranged date for the fixture, including ticketing, will be announced in due course.”

Information relating to a rearranged date for the fixture, including ticketing, will be announced in due course

‘Corner kings’ Arsenal want to be kings of everything: Arteta

London, England - Arsenal have been labelled the “corner kings” thanks to their set-piece dominance, and manager Mikel Arteta said on Friday that their goal is to extend that success to all the aspects of the game.

The north London outfit have scored 22 goals from corners, the most in Europe’s top five leagues from the start of the 2023-24 season.

They continued their exploits on Wednesday when defenders Jurrien Timber and William Saliba scored from corners to give them a 2-0 victory over 13th-

placed Manchester United at the Emirates Stadium.

“Well we want to be the kings of everything, on set pieces, the best in the world, on high press the best in the world, attacking in open spaces, the best in the world,” Arteta told reporters on the eve of Sunday’s Premier League clash at Fulham. “Best atmosphere and stadium, the best at everything. Before it was we didn’t score enough, we didn’t challenge, we didn’t win big games for 20 years. We want to be the best at everything.

“The best academy, the best



William Saliba (L) and Jurrien Timber both scored from corners to help Arsenal beat Manchester United

individual development for players. We want to be the best of the best. Recruit the best players, the best coaches, that’s the aim.”

Arteta remained tight-lipped about the availability of defenders Gabriel Magalhaes and Riccardo Calafiori. The pair had missed the United game through injury. “It’s match day minus two, so we have to modify a few players, we have another training session tomorrow so we will see how everybody is for Sunday,” the Spaniard said.

“Tomorrow is the next session, it’s too difficult to say some-

thing (on Gabriel). (Calafiori) the same, it’s difficult to say.”

Arteta said Arsenal are bracing themselves for a big challenge against Fulham, who are sixth in the league table with 22 points from 14 matches. Arsenal are third with 28 points, the same as second-placed Chelsea, who have a better goal difference.

“We experienced it last year (against Fulham). We lost five points against them. I was being very complimentary about them, about the coach and what they do. It’s always a really tough place to go,” Arteta said.



Atalanta's Ademola Lookman celebrates after scoring against AC Milan

LOOKING FORMIDABLE

Ademola Lookman's late goal takes Atalanta to top with win against Milan

Bergamo, Italy - A late strike from Ademola Lookman secured Atalanta a hard-fought 2-1 win over AC Milan on Friday, lifting the hosts to the top of Serie A.

Three minutes before fulltime, a corner sailed across the box and an unmarked Lookman headed in the winner for Atalanta.

The result propelled the hosts

to the top of the standings with 34 points, two ahead of Napoli who will play Lazio at home on Sunday. Milan are seventh with 22 points.

The win meant Atalanta matched their record nine-match winning streak in Serie A, equalling the run they achieved from February to July 2020.

As a sign of things to come, both Atalanta and Milan started aggressively, with chances created within the first minutes.

Christian Pulisic's angled shot was saved in the opening seconds by Atalanta keeper Marco Carnesecchi, and moments later, Mario Pasalic missed a close-range opportunity for the hosts, sending the ball soaring over the bar.

Milan thought they had taken the lead in the seventh minute, as

Alvaro Morata found the net, but his celebration was cut short by the offside flag.

Former Milan player Charles De Ketelaere leapt his marker to head Atalanta into the lead after 12 minutes, finishing off a perfectly delivered corner.

Ten minutes later, Milan replied when Rafael Leao sent a cross into the box to Morata, who swept it home from close range to equalise. Milan faced an injury concern just before the break when Pulisic limped off the pitch after what looked like an unfortunate slip following contact with an Atalanta player.

After receiving treatment from the medical staff, the pain proved too much for him to continue and he was substituted, helped off the field by two members of the medical team.

Sky Sport Italia said later he was suffering from a calf muscle issue, which will require further testing.

The second half was evenly contested, with both sides creating several chances, and Milan goalkeeper Mike Maignan made a save in stoppage time to deny Atalanta a third goal.

"It's a very important game against a strong team that is doing well in the league. We performed well, three big points and we continue like this," Lookman said.



Lautaro Martinez

Dimarco stars as Inter cruise past Parma

Milan, Italy - Inter Milan eased to a 3-1 win at home against Parma in Friday's Serie A clash, with Federico Dimarco, Nicolò Barella, and Marcus Thuram all finding the back of the net.

The win kept third-placed Inter on the heels of leaders Napoli, who are just one point ahead with 32 points. Parma are in 12th place with 15 points.

Inter were in action for the first time since their Serie A match against Fiorentina was abandoned last Sunday after midfielder Edoardo Bove collapsed on the pitch and had to be taken to hospital.

On Friday, Dimarco impressed with a deft heel touch to flick the ball past a defender and into the box and then fired in from a tight angle to break the deadlock five minutes before the interval.

The hosts doubled their lead in the 53th minute when Barella latched onto a perfectly timed pass from midfield that slipped behind the Parma defence, giving him ample time to slot the ball into the net.

Parma keeper Zion Suzuki saved his side going further behind when his quick reflex save denied Martinez from scoring with a header.

An unmarked Thuram sealed Inter's win in the 66th minute, volleying a flicked-on corner into



Inter Milan's Federico Dimarco celebrates his goal against Parma

I'm working with my teammates and I'm following the teachings of Lautaro (Martinez) and (Marko) Arnautovic

MARCUS THURAM

the net for their third goal against the team from his city of birth.

"Things are going well but I still have a lot to learn. I'm work-

ing with my teammates and I'm following the teachings of Lautaro (Martinez) and (Marko) Arnautovic who are helping me improve," Thuram told DAZN.

"This team (Parma) has a place in my father's heart and for me playing against the yellow and blues is a bit strange but I'm happy to have scored and won this match."

Parma pulled one back in the 81st minute when Inter defender Matteo Darmian attempted to intercept a through ball but accidentally sent it into his own net.

'Goals will come' for Martinez, says Inzaghi

Milan, Italy - Inter Milan coach Simone Inzaghi praised Lautaro Martinez's overall performance in the win over Parma even though the Argentine striker was left frustrated after a penalty decision was overturned while another goal was disallowed.

Inter comfortably secured a 3-1 home win against Parma, with an own goal by Matteo Darmian being their only blemish.

The Inter captain, however, was clearly frustrated with the

end was a great signal. As a former striker, I understand the pressure of scoring but he needs to stay calm and keep helping the team like this," Inzaghi told reporters.

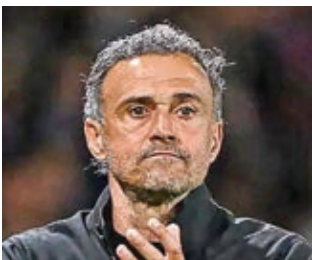
"The goals will come, they always do for him."

Despite his side's impressive performance, Inzaghi admitted that the conceded goal should not have happened.

"I'm very satisfied with what the lads achieved. We showed aggression and focus against a team that has been playing really well. I'm very happy," Inzaghi said.

"The only downside was the goal we conceded, it wasn't deserved. If I had to pick one thing to criticise, it would be that. But overall, I'm very happy with the team's performance."

When asked about Inter's squad depth, Inzaghi acknowledged the demanding schedule was taking a toll.



Luis Enrique

I've nothing to complain about my team: Luis Enrique

Auxerre, France - Paris St Germain coach Luis Enrique said he would never criticise his players for their lack of precision in front of goal, choosing instead to focus on the positives after his side drew 0-0 at Auxerre on Friday.

"It's clear that the result does not reflect what happened on the pitch, but we were up against the second-best team at home. We have created many chances to score," Enrique told reporters.

"The unfinished business is scoring goals, which is what wins games, but I have nothing to complain about my team, we have tried until the end, all we have to do is keep on trying."

Messi named MLS Most Valuable Player

Miami, US - Lionel Messi was named the 2024 Landon Donovan MLS Most Valuable Player following a campaign in which he captained Inter Miami to their first-ever Supporters' Shield as top club in the regular season.

In his first full MLS season after joining Miami in July 2023, Messi had 20 goals and 16 assists in 19 matches while his club set a league record with a 74-point campaign before a stunning first-round elimination from the playoffs.

"I would have liked to receive this award in another situation, being able to play the final (on) Saturday," Messi said in comments provided by MLS from MVP ceremony. "We had a big dream of being MLS champions this year. It didn't happen, but next year we'll come back



Lionel Messi with his family after winning the 2024 Landon Donovan MLS Most Valuable Player award

stronger to try again."

For Messi, the MVP award is yet another accolade in an illustrious career that includes a World Cup winner's medal and a record eight Ballon d'Or awards as the world's best soccer player.

The 37-year-old Argentine is the first player in Inter Miami history to earn the MLS's highest individual honour, which was renamed in 2015 after former MVP Donovan, who played a key role in establishing the league. The Miami captain also joined Mexico's Carlos Vela in 2019 (LAFC, 34 goals, 15 assists) and Italy's Sebastian Giovinco in 2015 (Toronto FC, 22 goals, 16 assists) as the only players in MLS history with at least 20 goals and 15 assists in a season.

Auxerre hold PSG to goalless draw

Auxerre, France - Ligue 1 leaders Paris St Germain were held to a 0-0 draw at Auxerre on Friday as the visitors dropped further points after their second straight stalemate.

Coming off a disappointing 1-1 home draw with Nantes, PSG looked dominant from the outset but struggled to find a way through a solid Auxerre defence.

PSG remain atop the standings with 34 points, eight points ahead of second-placed Marseille, who face St Etienne on Sunday. Auxerre sit eighth with 20 points, just outside the European places on goal difference.

"I'm pleased with my team's performance. Not with the result, but we have to keep going and think positive," PSG manager Luis Enrique told DAZN.

PSG's Goncalo Ramos came closest to breaking the deadlock in the first half with a header that was brilliantly saved by goal-



PSG dominated the match but found it tough to crack Auxerre defence

keeper Donovan Leon.

Leon continued his impressive form after the break, making several key saves to keep PSG at bay, while Vitinha hit the woodwork in another missed opportunity for the visitors in the 69th minute.

Auxerre, who have lost only once at home this season, had their best chance a minute later, but PSG keeper Gianluigi Don-

narumma made a fine save to deny Hamed Traore.

Leon came to the rescue again to deny Randal Kolo Muani a last-gasp winner, pulling off his 11th save of the match.

"We only missed a goal. We were in front of goal a lot, but we didn't manage to score and we've come away with a point," PSG defender Nuno Mendes said.



Australia's Travis Head celebrates his century against India on Saturday

BIG HEADACHE IN ADELAIDE

India in trouble as Head's century and sharp bowling put Australia in driver's seat

Adelaide, Australia - Australia rode Travis Head's blistering 140 to post 337 and reduced India to 128-5 to stay on course for a series-levelling victory in the day-night second Test on Saturday.

Head smashed a swash-buckling hundred to fetch Australia a first innings lead of 157 at his home ground the Adelaide Oval. Australia's pace battery further consolidated their position by blowing away the top half of India's batting order with the pink ball.

Rishabh Pant led India's fightback with an entertaining 28 not out with Nitish Kumar Reddy on 15 at the other side and 29 in the arrears.

Earlier, after Australia resumed on 86-1, Jasprit Bumrah (4-61) ensured the tourists did not have to wait long for a breakthrough.

Opener Nathan McSweeney, playing only his second

test, added just one run to his overnight score before edging Bumrah behind for 39.

The crafty seamer also dismissed Steve Smith for two, strangling the out-of-form batter down the leg side with wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant taking a diving catch. Marnus Labuschagne (64) kept his head down and collected runs without courting risks en route to only his second half-century in his last 11 Test innings.

Head, coming in at the other end, was more assertive and hit off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin over the mid-off ropes for his second boundary.

Reddy broke their 65-run stand when Labuschagne cut him to gully where Yashasvi Jaiswal took a sharp catch.

Head could not be contained, though, and the left-hander continued to play his shots on his way to a 63-ball fifty.

Mitchell Marsh fell caught behind to Ashwin even though replays showed no bat-ball contact and the batter did not challenge the decision.

Head took a single off Ashwin to bring up his hundred before gesturing to his wife, daughter and newborn son in the stands.

Siraj (4-98) finally stopped the batting carnage, bowling him with a yorker.

"When they've got the quality of quicks that they've got, I guess you've got to target something," Head said, explaining why he targeted Ashwin, India's lone spinner.

"I felt like I navigated through his spells really, really well, and was able to get the quicks back at certain stages into that new ball."

India did not start well in their second innings when they came out to bat.

Pat Cummins dismissed KL Rahul (seven) caught behind with a steeping delivery.

Scott Boland struck with his first ball, dismissing Yashasvi Jaiswal, also caught behind, for 24 just when the batter was looking dangerous.

HE Khalid Hashil al Muslahi

Stage all set for Oman Golf Trophy Grand Final

Muscat - The Oman Golf Trophy, to be held at three of Oman's most prestigious golf courses - Ghala Golf Club, La Vie Club and Al Mouj Golf - will see national priorities converge when international players, guests and local golfers compete, network, experience Oman's hospitality, and further understand the opportunities available across the nation. More than 80 players will compete at the Oman Golf Trophy Grand Final, including the 48 winners from qualification events in Italy, Austria, Germany, India, South Africa, Japan and France which saw a total of 5,500 players take part.

The competition begins at 8 am on Monday at Ghala Golf Club.

HE Khalid Hashil al Muslahi, Foreign Ministry Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs, said: "The Grand Final, held on three of Oman's most stunning and technically challenging golf courses, brings together the best of international and local talent with the aim of uniting players and guests in a celebration of excellence, sportsmanship, and camaraderie as we look to leverage Oman's global appeal to support long-term national goals."

"We look forward to hosting this diverse group of players, guests and stakeholders."

SA in charge against Sri Lanka

Gqeberha, South Africa - Seamer Dane Paterson took a career-best 5-71 as South Africa bowled Sri Lanka out for 328 on the third day of the second Test at St George's Park on Saturday before increasing their lead to 106 with nine wickets in hand at tea.

South Africa are 76 for one with opener Aiden Markram 39 not out and first innings centurion Ryan Rickelton on 12 as they look to build their advantage in a must-win game for both sides in their bid to reach next year's World Test Championship (WTC) final at Lord's.

Tony de Zorzi is the only wicket to fall in the home side's second innings when he was bowled between bat and pad by Sri Lanka's left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya for 19.

The visitors were earlier bowled out after losing seven wickets for 67 runs on Saturday as South Africa utilised the new ball well, led by 35-year-old Paterson in his sixth Test.

Sri Lanka started the day on 242 for three in their first innings and made South Africa toil in the field for 10 overs before the home side removed Angelo Mathews for 44 just before the new ball was available. Mathews was caught by wicketkeeper Kyle Verreynne off the bowling of Marco Jansen (2-100), before the lanky seamer had Kamindu Mendis (48) snaffled at second slip by Aiden Markram.



Oman will start their campaign against hosts UAE on December 14

Oman ready to defend Gulf Cup Twenty20 title in Dubai

Muscat - The Oman national cricket team is gearing up to defend their Gulf Cup T20 title as the tournament returns from December 13 to 21 in Dubai, UAE.

Six teams - Oman, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia - will battle it out at the ICC Academy Ground, with the final scheduled at the iconic Dubai International Stadium.

Oman's coach, Duleep Mendis, exuded confidence ahead of the team's departure for the UAE on December 11. Reflecting on Oman's recent achievements, he said: "The boys are full of confidence and have shown they can do well. We had a successful run in the Cricket World Cup League 2, which, although a 50-over tournament, has added to our momentum. The recent win over the Netherlands in the T20 has further boosted the team's morale."

With a new-look squad, Mendis expressed satisfaction with the team's readiness. "I'm hopeful that the boys will perform well and bring the trophy back. They've performed admirably recently, and I believe they're ready for the challenge," he added.

Under the leadership of experienced skipper Jatinder Singh, Oman will begin their campaign against hosts UAE on December 14.

This will be followed by matches against Qatar (December 15), Kuwait (December 17), Bahrain (December 18), and Saudi Arabia (December 19). The single round-robin format promises intense competition, culminating in the final on December 21.

Oman's victory in the inaugural Gulf Cup T20 last year remains a significant milestone, where they defeated the UAE in a thrilling final. The team is eager to replicate that success and defend their title.

The Gulf Cup T20 provides a platform for cricketing nations in the region to showcase their talent and grow the sport. For Oman, it is an opportunity to solidify their reputation as a formidable cricketing side, especially after their international successes in recent years.

Oman squad: Jatinder Singh (captain), Aamir Kaleem, Ashish Odedera, Hammad Mirza, Mohammad Nadeem, Sufyan Mehmood, Mehran Khan, Sha-keel Ahmed, Jay Odedera, Muzahir Raza, Karan Sonavale, Samay Shrivastava, Wasim Ali, and Vinayak Shukla.

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NAME CHANGE

I, **SHINO JAMES MATHEW** (holder of Indian Passport **S5864367** daughter of **PARAYIRIKUNNATHIL MATHAI VARGHESE** having permanent residence in **KERALA ,INDIA** (complete postal address in **India**), and presently residing **SHINO NIVAS ,OONNUKAL P.O. CHENNEERKARA ,PATHANAMTHITTA DISTRICT , KERALA 689647, C/o. JAMES MATHEW ,P.O BOX 1217,PC 114.MUSCAT, OMAN.** (complete postal address in Oman) intend to change my name from (old name) **SHINO JAMES MATHEW** to (new name) **SHINO VARGHESE** for all practical purpose. Any objection towards my name change may please be communicated to Embassy of India, Muscat, Diplomatic Quarters, Al Khuwair, PO Box No: 1727, Postal Code 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman.

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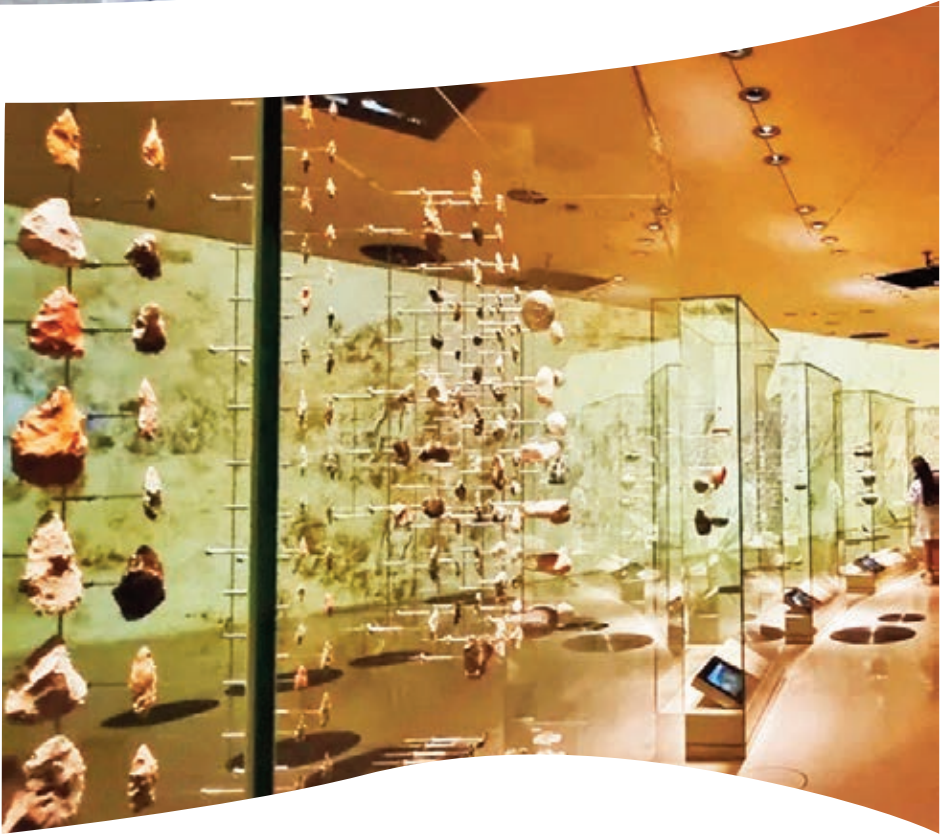
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HOW QATAR PROMOTES HERITAGE AND ART



MUSEUMS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN PRESERVING AND PROMOTING CULTURE IN CREATIVE WAYS. THE SPECTACULAR NATIONAL MUSEUM OF QATAR TAKES DESIGN AND THE NARRATIVE OF HERITAGE TO ANOTHER LEVEL

Museum is part of a network of heritage sites, festivals, public art installations, and collaborative programmes run by Qatar Museums, the nation's premier institution for art and culture. It also partners with organisations and artists across the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia.

The crystal formation called desert rose, found in Qatar's arid regions, was the source of inspiration for the museum's designer, French architect Jean Nouvel.

The museum was built around Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim al Thani's original palace, which served as the seat of the government for 25 years. Immersing in the museum's numerous galleries is like walking through a time tunnel, with surround sound, exhibits and movies by award-winning directors. For example, the first gallery on Qatar's geological formation features an art film directed by

Christophe Cheysson. It brings to life extinct life forms such as a species of armoured fish.

Another film, directed by Jacques Perrin and Christophe Cheysson, captures the diversity of Qatar's flora and fauna. It brings out the interconnections and fragility of the region's ecosystems. Many of the displays are interactive, and are a delight for children to play with and thereby engage with the gallery's themes.

Visitors can get a better grasp of the excavation techniques used to retrieve and preserve ancient artefacts. The habitat film by Jananne al Ani depicts an aerial journey across the Qatari landscape, tracing patterns of human occupation and archaeology. They range from the hunter-gatherer lifestyle to early urban settlements.

The gallery focus then shifts to habitat and culture as connections to ancient trade routes picked up. Some of the artefacts were recovered from a 10th-century shipwreck. Abderahmane Sissako's film *Life in Al Barr* (desert life) showcases daily rituals of family life in harsh climates. It brings to life the deep connection between humans, animals and seasonal change.

Children get to visualise activities like milking a goat and making Arabic coffee. They also appreciate how much water it can take for a simple activity like having a bath.

Sissako's next film captures life on the coast, showing young visitors what it is like to row a dhow, cook on the boat, and even hunt for pearls. Set in the old coastal city of Al



Zubarah, it shows the heritage site's courtyards, markets and mosques. Pearls were harvested for centuries in the waters of Qatar, and celebrations marked the return of pearl divers at the end of the harvest season.

These rituals are captured in narrative exhibits along with the costumes, jewellery and musical instruments involved. A gallery on the beginning of modern Qatar captures the turbulence of engagement with the Portuguese, Ottomans and British. An art film by Peter Webber depicts a visualisation of the battle before unification, along with maps and weapons of the time.

The narrative shifts gears, almost literally, with exhibits relating to the early period of the oil industry and the dawn of the automobile era. This includes personal possessions like radios, televisions, telephones, stamps, and currency.

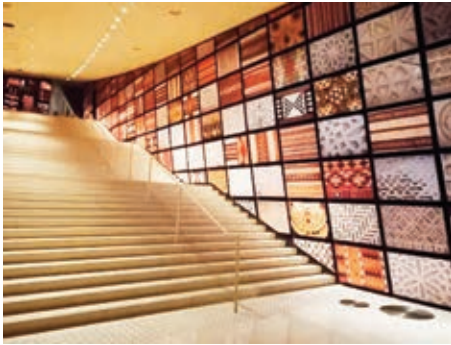
The discovery and exploitation of oil and liquid natural gas was a major turning point in Qatar's development, as captured in a film directed by Doug Aitken. This spurred unprecedented development from the 1970s onwards, well conveyed in a city model of the phases of Doha's growth. The museum also has an ongoing exhibition by Art Mill Museum, titled *MANZAR: Art and Architecture from Pakistan 1940s to Today*. It reflects movements and developments across India and Bangladesh as well.

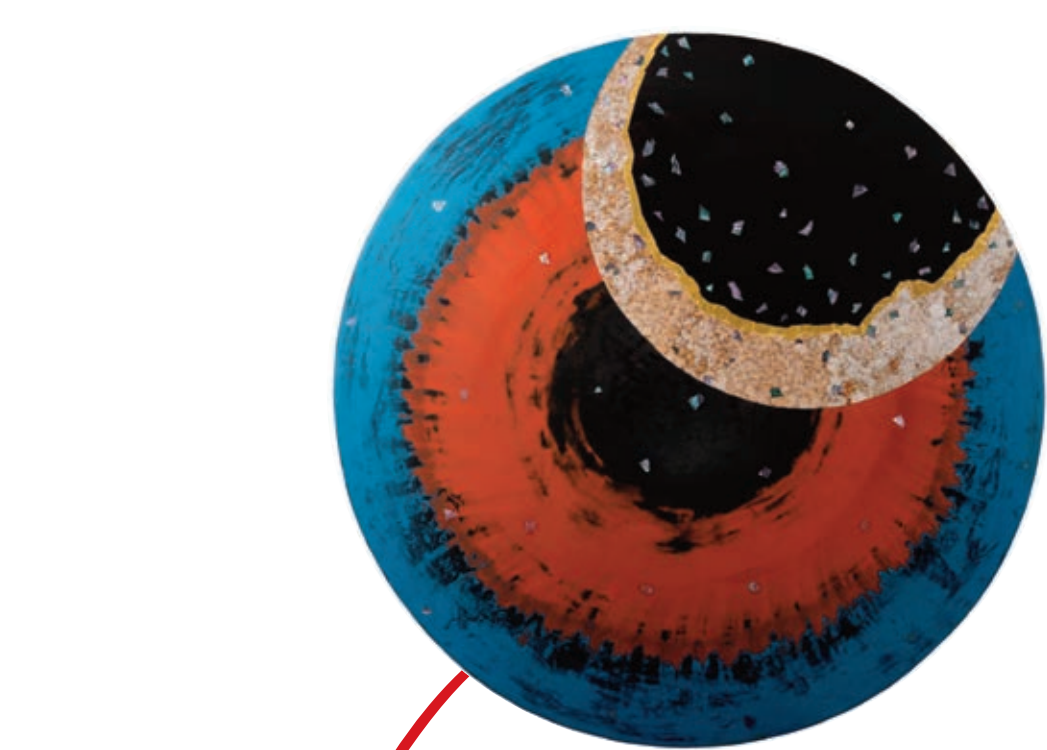
The curation of the exhibition traces how artists and architects have forged diverse per-



sonal and political languages. Through good years and conflict, artists have shown how creativity can withstand trials and tribulations. The museum also focuses on recent regional developments, such as the blockade imposed on Qatar in 2017 by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt. The tensions over perceived differences in foreign policy were resolved to some extent when the blockade was lifted in 2021.

Qataris pride themselves on the resilience they displayed to overcome the crisis. In addition to exhibits in this museum, Qatar Museums promotes art in public spaces through large installations by a range of international artists. They include Salman al Malek, Faye Toogood, Mohammed al Ateeq, Jeff Koons, Olafur Eliasson, Shezad Dawood, Ahmed al Bahrani, Isa Genzken, Katharina Fritsch, and Faraj Daham. Now what have you done today to pause in your busy schedule and harness your creative side for a better world?





Flowers from the same garden



Oh Myung Hee

A poetic meditation on the cycles of life, the perpetual rebirth of nature, and the enduring hope that unites us all



Anirban Ray

A first-time solo exhibition in Oman by noted Korean artist Oh Myung Hee explores the themes of interconnectedness, cultural memory, and shared humanity, in celebration of the cycles of life, resilience, and the universal experiences of people.

The exhibition opened at the Bait Muzna Gallery, in collaboration with Metamorphosis Art Projects London last Tuesday.

The month-long exhibition 'We Are All Flowers from the Same Garden' is being held under the patronage of H H Dr Sayyida Mona bint Fahad al Said.

It is a poetic meditation on the cycles of life, the perpetual rebirth of nature, and the enduring hope that unites us all.

The artist reflects on collective memory, family, and the interconnectedness of all living beings. Her exploration of the Tree of Life symbolises the unity of existence, while her pieces exude a quiet yet powerful hope and joy that speaks to the human spirit's resilience.

Oh Myung Hee, a celebrated figure in the global art world, is known for her evocative three-dimensional works, videos, and multimedia installations that combine traditional Korean materials such as mother-of-pearl, eggshell, and lacquer with contemporary themes.

Her work has been exhibited internationally, including The Nairobi National Museum in Kenya, Saatchi Gallery London, the 59th Venice Biennale, and Museum San,

Wonju Korea.

Now, she brings her visionary art to Oman, marking a significant moment in cross-cultural exchange between South Korea and the Middle East.

"To me art is a journey to explore the true essence of life. Art has the power to show the beauty that grows even in tough times and that shines in darkness. This is my first ever solo exhibition in Oman and I am thankful to everyone," says Oh Myung Hee.

This exhibition is particularly timely

In bringing her art to Oman, we're not just showcasing creativity; we're celebrating the universal language that connects us all

Laila al Bellucci



as it celebrates 50 years of diplomatic relations between South Korea and Oman. H E Kiejoo Kim, Ambassador of South Korea, inaugurated the exhibition.

The gallery's founder H H Dr Sayyida Mona bint Fahad al Said explained that the exhibition sought to foster greater cultural understanding between the two nations. Through Oh Myung Hee's art, the exhibition aims to build bridges between South Korean and Omani audiences, highlighting shared values, heritage, and the collective human experience.

"We are honoured to present Oh Myung Hee's works at Bait Muzna Gallery. This exhibition serves as a powerful reminder that despite our differences, we are all connected through our shared humanity."

Oh Myung Hee will lead workshops at Bait Muzna Gallery, offering visitors the chance to explore traditional Korean art techniques, including the use of mother-of-pearl and lacquer. These workshops will provide a unique hands-on experience, allowing participants to engage more deeply with the artist's work and process.

According to Laila al Bellucci, director of Bait Muzna Gallery, Professor Oh Myung Hee's art in Oman is more than an exhibition - it's a bridge between cultures.

"Her work, a fusion of Korean tradition and contemporary innovation, has sparked incredible enthusiasm, captivating audiences and sparking conversations that cross borders. In bringing her art to Oman, we're not just showcasing creativity; we're celebrating the universal language that connects us all."



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