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AI-driven strategy for road safety

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Royal Oman Police (ROP) is introducing new technology, including artificial intelligence-based monitoring, to improve road safety as the number of vehicles and urban expansion place growing pressure on the country's road network.

Brig Ali bin Salim al Falahi, Director General of Traffic at ROP, said smart traffic monitoring systems were launched recently and a study is underway of the experiences of other countries in the field of autonomous vehicles to develop a future regulatory framework that suits the Omani environment. "We are analysing the risks associated with new technologies, such as the safety of autonomous vehicles and legal responsibilities in case of accidents," he said.

Traffic signals are being upgraded to work with Intelligent Transport Systems, while automated monitoring is being enhanced with advanced cameras



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BRIG ALI BIN SALIM AL FALAHI

installed on main roads.

ROP works closely with the National Road Safety Committee to develop strategies and guidelines aimed at reducing

traffic accidents. Recommendations include development of a national strategy to reduce traffic accidents, nationwide awareness campaigns, school

traffic safety courses, and greater involvement of civil society and the private sector. "Our aim is to enhance traffic culture across all segments of

society," Brig Falahi said.

Despite a decline in accidents in recent years, challenges remain. Population growth, the rising number of vehicles and a lack of public transport continue to strain the road network, he added. "Poor driving habits such as speeding, mobile phone use, unsafe lane change and failure to keep safe distance are key contributors to accidents." Inadequate vehicle maintenance, he said, also causes breakdowns that can lead to collisions.

Brig Falahi informed that traffic safety institutes in governorates provide specialised training for different categories of drivers, including taxi drivers and heavy vehicle operators, besides rehabilitation programmes for traffic offenders. Trainers receive updates in cooperation with specialised agencies.

School bus drivers are trained under a preventive driving programme run jointly with Ministry of Education, with performance monitored to ensure compliance. "This has led to improved

driver performance and fewer violations," Brig Falahi informed.

ROP has also introduced school-based initiatives such as the 'Road Friends' programme, launched in the 2022/2023 academic year and now expanded to 33 schools. The programme aims to produce a generation aware of road safety rules, with students passing knowledge to peers and families.

Digital educational content on traffic safety is being designed for early childhood and primary school students. Awareness campaigns run throughout the year, including khareef in Dhofar, targeting both residents and visitors.

Brig Falahi said the decrease in accidents in recent years is due to better driver awareness, improved infrastructure and continuous public education. "Traffic safety is a shared responsibility that requires the commitment of individuals, society, and institutions to reduce accidents and protect lives and property."

Oman condemns Israeli plan for Gaza occupation

Muscat - Oman condemned and categorically rejected the Israeli government's decision to occupy the Gaza Strip. The Foreign Ministry criticised Israel's continued violations of international law, disregard for UN resolutions and infringement of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people without accountability.

Armenia-Azerbaijan accord

Additionally, the Foreign Ministry welcomed a peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan, expressing sincere appreciation for the peaceful efforts that led to this historic accord ending decades of conflict and division.



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Rashmi Dauria's solo show at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai

A NEW LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP BEGINS

Queiroz faces tough test with Oman's WC hopes on the line

Muscat - Portuguese coach Carlos Queiroz will lead Oman in the decisive fourth round of the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, with the national team aiming for its first-ever appearance in the tournament.

Oman will compete in Group A alongside Qatar and the UAE. The first match is scheduled for October 8 against hosts Qatar in Doha, followed by a face-off with the UAE at the same venue.

Queiroz, 71, has coached Portugal, Colombia, Iran and South Africa, in addition to stints with Real Madrid and as assistant to Sir Alex Ferguson at Manchester United. He led Iran to two World Cups and Egypt to the Africa Cup of Nations final in 2021.

Sports analyst Hilal bin Hamad al Mukhaini described Queiroz as a "big name in the world of coaching" with "extensive and diverse experience with international teams". He told ONA the appointment was an important step but stressed it must be backed by "hard work and sufficient time for the coach to implement his technical ideas".

Former Oman captain Fawzi Bashir said the appointment was a "successful decision" by Oman Football Association. "He is no stranger to the region, having worked with Gulf clubs and national teams. This gives him an advantage in understanding the nature of the Gulf player," he said.

Bashir added that the qualifying campaign would require "integrated work from the technical, administrative and medical staff, as well as from the fans", with the greatest responsibility on the



Having worked with Gulf clubs and national teams gives him an advantage in understanding the nature of the Gulf player

FAWZI BASHIR



Carlos Queiroz is a big name in the world of coaching with extensive and diverse experience with international teams

HILAL AL MUKHAINI

players.

Sports journalist Walid bin Zaher al Abri said the change was needed after recent below-par performances, including a 3-0 defeat to Kyrgyzstan. "When we talk about Queiroz, we're talking about a coach with a leadership personality and extensive experience."

Abri explained that Queiroz has the ability to bring a technical shift in the national team, but faces significant challenges, particularly in familiarising himself with the players. "This is complicated by the distinct environment of the Omani team compared to his previous assignments with Iran, Colombia and Egypt - teams

with strong leagues and many players active in Europe."

He added that the Omani league is comparatively underdeveloped and the national team has an older average age, both of which present further challenges for Queiroz to overcome.

According to football coach Nasser bin Mohammed al Hajri, the change came with "some risk" but was necessary. "In my opinion, he is the most suitable. He has sufficient technical experience and understands the game in the Gulf region," he said, adding that assistant coach Hamad al Azani's knowledge of the players would help bridge Queiroz's lack of direct familiarity.



RAM's leadership programme for startups to boost tech ventures

Muscat - Royal Academy of Management (RAM) has launched a programme called 'Startup Leadership' in partnership with Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development to boost Omani innovation and technology startups.

The programme aims to enhance strategic leadership skills among founders of startups, prepare startups for international expansion, attract investment, and provide access to regional and global experts and investors.

Fifteen participants will be selected from startup founders holding executive roles in Omani startups focused on innovation and technology. Eligible companies must have their headquarters or main activities in Oman, employ at least five people and demonstrate growth potential.

The programme features four modules covering strategic leadership, technical skills, tools and human capital man-

agement. It also includes international field visits, presentations on global best practices and practical projects.

By completion, participants are expected to develop a global expansion mindset, ac-

Fifteen participants will be selected from startup founders holding executive roles in Omani startups focused on innovation and technology

quire leadership and technical capabilities, formulate comprehensive expansion plans based on target market studies, and establish connections with international experts and investors.

Applications open on August 10 and close on August 23.



ICAI Oman Chapter Successfully Hosts CPE Session on "Understanding Sultanate of Oman's Personal Income Tax"

Muscat, Oman - The ICAI Oman Chapter conducted a highly successful Continuing Professional Education (CPE) session titled "Understanding Sultanate of Oman's Personal Income Tax" on Tuesday, 5 August 2025, at Intercity Hotel, Al Khuwair. The session drew over 250 members and special invitees, offering timely and valuable insights into the emerging personal income tax framework in Oman.

The event was graced by H.E. Godavarthi Venkata Srinivas, Ambassador of India to Oman, as Chief Guest. In his address, H.E. commended the ICAI Oman Chapter for taking a proactive approach to such a relevant and evolving subject. He also encouraged the chapter to actively contribute to the ongoing celebrations of 70 years of diplomatic relations between India and Oman, emphasizing the shared professional values and longstanding ties between the two nations.

Dr. Abdullah Masoud Al Harthy, Board Member of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) and Chairman of the CFO Mentoring Program Committee, and Mr. Mustafa Ahmed Salman from

OCCI were among the distinguished guests.

CA Unmesh Bhome, Chairperson of the ICAI Oman Chapter, delivered the welcome address, extending a warm reception to all dignitaries and attendees. He paid a heartfelt tribute to the late Padma Shri CA T.N. Manoharan, a revered figure in the accounting profession, who passed away on 30 July 2025. CA Bhome also spotlighted the Chapter's key initiatives including the Omani CFO Program, Student Internship Program, and Members Placement Program, underlining their significant role in building local talent and enhancing professional development.

The keynote address was delivered by CA Piyush Chhajed, Member of the ICAI Central Council, who emphasized the global impact of ICAI's international chapters in promoting professional excellence, capacity building, and knowledge dissemination.

Renowned tax experts CA Gaurav Kapoor, Partner at PwC Oman, and CA Asrujit Mandal, Partner at BDO Oman, led highly engaging sessions covering the proposed provisions under Oman's personal in-

come tax. Their presentations provided a deep dive into income chargeability, applicable tax rates, and implications for Indian professionals working in Oman. The speakers actively engaged with the audience, addressing numerous queries in an interactive and insightful dialogue.

The event concluded with a Vote of Thanks delivered by CA Sangeetha Sureshkumar, Vice Chairperson of the Chapter. She acknowledged the contributions of the esteemed dignitaries, expert speakers, enthusiastic members, and dedicated volunteers who helped make the event a resounding success.

A special note of appreciation was also extended to the College of Banking and Financial Studies (CBFS) for their continued support to ICAI Oman Chapter in its professional development initiatives.

The ICAI Oman Chapter reaffirms its commitment to supporting the development of Oman's financial and regulatory landscape through such impactful educational initiatives, strengthening its role as a thought leader and knowledge partner in the region.

Advertorial

Shabab Oman II wins friendship award

Muscat - Royal Navy of Oman's vessel *Shabab Oman II* has won the Sail Training International Friendship Award for the fifth time at Tall Ships Races 2025 in Esbjerg, Denmark.

Foreign Ministry said the award reflects Oman's role in fostering global understanding, with the ship serving as 'a bridge of communication between East and West'.

First presented in 2003, the Sail Training International Friendship Award is considered the principal award of the Tall Ships Races. It is decided through



a secret ballot of the entire race fleet and is given to the vessel that has contributed most to pro-

moting international friendship and understanding during the event.



Royal Oman Police

Directorate of Public Relations & Security Information

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Royal Oman Police's Public Relations and Security Media Department announces public online auction for a collection of seized vehicles from Al Dhahirah Governorate Police Headquarter. The auction will be held on the Royal Oman Police auction platform (www.rop.mzadcom.om) starting on **Sunday, August 17, 2025** and will run for one day only. Prospective buyers may inspect the listed vehicles between **August 12 and 14, 2025**, from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the vehicle impoundment yard at the Ibri Police Station, under Al Dhahirah Governorate Police Headquarter.

Auction Terms and Conditions:

- All participants must register on the auction platform: www.rop.mzadcom.om.
- A **non-refundable deposit of OMR 500** is required via the platform. This deposit will be forfeited if the winning bidder fails to complete payment or finalize the registration and transfer within the designated timeframe.
- A **brokerage fee of 2%** of the vehicle's value is applicable, **plus 5% VAT**.
- The full vehicle payment must be made via **electronic transfer within 48 working hours**.
- Vehicle registration and transfer must be completed within **3 days** of payment. A late fee of **OMR 5 per day** will apply beyond this period. The ROP assumes no responsibility for any loss or damage.
- The ROP and the auction platform are **not liable** for any discrepancies between vehicle images/descriptions and actual condition. No guarantees are made regarding the vehicles' functionality or technical soundness.
- For further details, please visit www.rop.mzadcom.om or contact **98886154**.

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National survey to gauge awareness of local content policies

Our Correspondent Muscat

The National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), in partnership with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority, is beginning two public opinion surveys from Sunday to assess community and institutional awareness of local content.

The surveys target two groups: The general public and employees in public and private sectors. The initiative supports Oman Vision 2040's goals to increase local value addition and strengthen the national economy.

Running until August 27, the surveys aim to evaluate knowledge of local content concepts and measure engagement with policies promoting national products and services. They will also examine factors influencing the preference for Omani goods and identify challenges faced by individuals and institutions in applying local content strategies.

The first survey involves men and women aged 18 and above, assessing awareness of local content principles such as employing Omani nationals, using local goods and services, transferring knowledge, and investing in national assets. It will also explore preferences for Omani products, sources of information on local content, and willingness to pay a premium for national products of equal quality.

The second survey targets Omani workers in supply, manu-



facturing, distribution and marketing sectors. It will investigate the extent to which their organisations implement local content policies, purchasing priorities, challenges in working with small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and benefits realised in organisational performance and sales.

Mahfouz bin Salem al Mashrafi, Director of the Public Opinion Measurement Department at NCSI, said, "These surveys are a crucial step in providing decision-makers with reliable data on the status and challenges of local content in Oman, at both individual and institutional levels."

He is of the opinion that the results will support economic empowerment, encourage national consumption, and enhance the role of SMEs in supply chains, aligning with Oman Vision 2040's aim to build a sustainable and diversified economy.

The findings are expected to deliver precise indicators to guide national initiatives, direct investments, and formulate policies that strengthen Oman's economy by relying on local human and institutional capabilities.

Omani students turn seafood waste into eco-friendly product

Our Correspondent Muscat

A group of 12 university students has developed a method to convert discarded shrimp and fish shells into chitosan - a biodegradable substance with diverse applications across several sectors.

The project, named Qeshour, aims to promote sustainable practices while providing eco-friendly alternatives to conventional materials. It reflects the growing engagement of Omani youth in scientific research and environmental innovation.

Chitosan, a fine white powder extracted from crustacean shells, is used in medicine, agriculture, water purification and the production of biodegradable plastics.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Anwar Ahmed al Bimani, CEO of Qeshour, said the team developed the substance using a series of chemical processes and precise drying techniques. "Although the procedure appears



We are seeking private sector partnerships to scale up production and bring chitosan-based products to the local market

ANWAR AHMED AL BIMANI

simple, we went through many experiments and refinements before achieving the right formula," he said.

The team faced challenges related to funding and access to specialised materials. Bimani credited perseverance, team-



work and family support for overcoming these difficulties. "We are seeking private sector partnerships to scale up production and bring chitosan-based products to the local market,

with plans to explore regional opportunities as well," he added.

The initiative coincides with the Oman Investment Authority's recent investment in US-based Tidal Vision, which

produces chitosan from crab and shrimp shells through an environmentally friendly, zero-waste process.

Chitosan has broad industrial uses, including in water treatment, textiles and fertilisers as a natural alternative to chemicals such as aluminium sulphate, activated carbon, pesticides and plastic films.

In the oil and gas sector, it can treat high-salinity water - a significant challenge given that operations produce around nine barrels of saline water for every barrel of oil. In agriculture, it offers potential for seed coating and biopesticides, contributing to greater sustainability.

In a message to youth, Bimani said, "Believe in your abilities, hold onto your dreams, work hard, and never give up. Every achievement begins with a single step and strong willpower."

He concluded by emphasising the urgency of sustainability. "It is no longer a choice - it is a responsibility we all share."

Passenger traffic at Oman's airports down 2.2% in H1 2025

Our Correspondent Muscat

Passenger traffic through Oman's airports - Muscat, Salalah, Suhar and Duqm - totalled 6,921,569 by the end of June 2025, down 2.2% from 7,074,913 in the same period last year, according to pre-

liminary data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Muscat International Airport handled 6,233,954 passengers in the first half of 2025, a 2.4% decrease from 6,384,874 in the corresponding period of 2024. The number of flights dropped

6.9% to 44,743, compared to 48,052 flights a year earlier.

Salalah Airport saw a 4.5% rise in passengers to 657,209, up from 628,951. Flights through the airport edged up 0.3% to 4,526.

Suhar Airport recorded a sharp decline in passenger num-

bers, falling to 336 from 31,203 in the same period of 2024. Flights dropped 68.7% to 84 from 268.

Duqm Airport registered a 0.6% drop in flights to 306. Passenger numbers rose slightly by 0.6% to 30,070 from 29,885.

In June 2025, Indian nationals

topped the list of arrivals and departures through Muscat International Airport with 79,424 arrivals and 113,759 departures. They were followed by Omanis with 62,476 arrivals and 72,617 departures and Pakistanis with 23,247 arrivals and 25,486 departures.

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Promotion available only in selected outlets in Oman. Images shown for illustrative purposes only.

TRA cuts royalty rate on mobile service, boosting telecom operators' profits

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has announced a decision to standardise the royalty rate for all telecommunications services – mobile and fixed services – at 10% of revenues, effective from the 2025 financial year.

The decision, which will reduce the royalty rate for mobile services from the current 12% to 10% of revenue, is expected to lower the royalty expenses of Oman's telecom operators and positively impact their earnings.

The TRA's decision applies to all Class I, Class II, and Class III telecom licence holders in the sultanate.

In a disclosure to the Muscat Stock Exchange, Oman Telecommunications Company (Omantel), the largest telecom service provider in the sultanate, said the TRA's decision reduces the royalty rate on mobile telecommunications services from 12% to 10%, while the rate for fixed telecommunications services remains unchanged at 10%.

'The decision will lead to a reduction in Omantel's royalty ex-



TRA's decision, which will reduce the royalty rate for mobile services from the current 12% to 10% of revenue, is expected to lower the royalty expenses of Oman's telecom operators and positively impact their earnings

penses and a positive impact of RO1.7mn (net of taxes) on net profit for the six months ending June 30, 2025,' Omantel said.

Omantel reaffirmed its commitment to complying with regulations and the regulatory framework. 'The company will continue to disclose transparently any material developments that may affect its financial po-

sition.'

Ooredoo Oman, officially known as Omani-Qatari Telecommunications Company, confirmed it has received notification from the TRA regarding the new royalty rate and anticipates an after-tax financial benefit of around RO2.5mn for the full year 2025. The company expressed its appreciation for the

TRA's efforts in standardising the rates.

'The standardisation of the royalty rate is expected to have a positive effect on the company's financial results, amounting to RO2.5mn after tax for the financial year 2025,' Ooredoo Oman said in a separate disclosure to the Muscat Stock Exchange.

Fitch affirms EDO rating at 'BB+' with positive outlook

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Global credit rating agency Fitch Ratings has affirmed Energy Development Oman's (EDO) long-term issuer default rating (IDR) at 'BB+', with a positive outlook.

In a statement, Fitch said that EDO's rating is constrained by that of the Government of Oman (BB+ with positive outlook), its sole shareholder, due to their close links. This is in line with Fitch's Government-Related Entities (GRE) rating criteria and Parent and Subsidiary Linkage (PSL) rating criteria.

The positive outlook on EDO reflects that on Oman's sovereign rating, the agency noted.

EDO's 'bbb+' standalone credit profile (SCP), according to Fitch, is supported by its large-scale oil and gas operations, strong and resilient cash flow generation – underpinned by contracted sale prices for gas – and a flexible royalty framework and dividend policy, as well as low leverage.

'The SCP is constrained by operations concentrated in a single country, a solely upstream-focused business model, and a mature reserve base with low proved reserve life compared with peers,' Fitch said.



Fitch acknowledged that the oil and gas sector is a major part of the Omani economy, with EDO's Block 6 concessions accounting for a significant share of the nation's oil and gas reserves. The company sells gas mainly in the domestic market and is one of the largest corporate employers in Oman.

'We expect EDO will maintain a strong financial profile until 2029 under our base-case oil and gas price deck, despite rising capital expenditure, and high royalties and tax payments to the government. Dividends are paid from excess cash flow after all debt servic-

ing obligations and working capital requirements are met, while maintaining minimum cash levels, which allows cash flow flexibility,' Fitch said.

The agency also noted that EDO continues to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from operations and flaring, alongside improving energy efficiency. 'PDO aims to expand its renewable power generation capacity to up to 30% of capacity in the medium term. EDO's and PDO's environmental targets are in line with Middle Eastern peers, but they lag behind those of large European peers such as TotalEnergies, bp or Eni.'

bp Oman appoints Najla al Jamali as president

Muscat – Global energy giant bp announced that Najla Zuhair al Jamali has been appointed as President of bp Oman. She joins bp from OQ where she served as Chief Executive of OQ Alternative Energy.

Najla started her global career as a reservoir engineer in Oman and brings over two decades of energy sector experience to bp. Her career spans upstream, downstream and commercial roles across companies including Shell, Schlumberger and Takamul Investment Company (as subsidiary of what was Oman Oil Company). Najla will be the first woman to serve as the President of bp Oman.

In a press statement, Nader Zaki, bp's regional president Middle East and North Africa said, "I am very pleased to welcome Najla to our team as President of bp Oman. Her wealth of experience will greatly benefit us as we continue to support the growth of the energy sector in Oman. This is a historic milestone for bp as Najla is the first female Omani country manager for bp in the country. I would also like to thank Yousuf al Ojaili for



Najla Zuhair al Jamali

his leadership and congratulate him on his retirement after a decade of excellence with our company and 39 years in the energy sector."

Commenting on her appointment as President of bp Oman, Najla said, "I'm excited to join bp Oman working with the team to continue supply one-third of Oman's gas and working with the Omani government and partners to explore potential for growing our operations in country."

Najla will join bp in September where she will assume full roles and responsibilities after a transition period with Yousuf al Ojaili who retires at the end of 2025.

Oman's manufacturing growth boosts ICV

Muscat – The manufacturing sector in Oman remains a key pillar of economic diversification, helping to reduce reliance on oil revenues, enhance In-Country Value (ICV), and create employment opportunities.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion is continuing to implement the Industrial Strategy 2040, which aims to increase the industrial sector's contribution to more than RO11.6bn by 2040 and attract industrial investments totalling RO40bn, with a focus on green industries and advanced technologies.

Economic indicators highlight the manufacturing sector's strong performance in recent periods. The sector recorded growth of 7.45% in 2024, reaching over RO3.6bn at constant prices and representing 9.4% of GDP.

This positive trend continued into 2025, with the sector growing by 5.4% in the first quarter compared to the same period in 2024, reflecting the resilience of industrial activity and the effectiveness of Oman's investment environment.

In foreign trade, Oman's non-oil commodity exports rose by



7.2% between January and May 2025 compared to the same period in 2024, reaching RO2.7bn. The United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and India topped the list of importers of Omani products, underscoring the growing competitiveness of national industries in regional and international markets.

In terms of employment, more than 57,000 Omani citizens were working in the industrial sector in 2024, reflecting efforts to empower national talent and increase Omanisation rates in line with national targets.

Sultanate's manufacturing sector recorded a growth of 7.45% in 2024, reaching over RO3.6bn at constant prices and representing 9.4% of GDP

Eng Khalid bin Salim al Qassabi, Director General of Industry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, said the sector's strong

performance reflects the success of government industrial policies, particularly the programmes and initiatives launched by the Ministry to support manufacturers, localise supply chains, and develop a system of incentives and enablers.

He noted that the industrial sector has become a hub for investment in innovation and modern industrial technologies, attracting both local and international investors.

In a statement to the Omani News Agency, Qassabi said the ministry is pressing ahead with

strategic projects linked to the Industrial Strategy 2040. These include the Local Content Plan in the Industrial Sector – Manufacturing, which aims to increase the share of local procurement in industrial projects, strengthen Omani supply chains, and develop small and medium-sized enterprises.

He highlighted several achievements in the first half of 2025, including the launch of the Advanced Automation Centre to support the transition to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the completion of 262 initiatives delivered to 14 partner entities under the Industrial Strategy 2040 implementation plan, the signing of cooperation agreements with international institutions such as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Gulf Organization for Industrial Consulting (GOIC), and the completion of strategic studies on national industrial development.

In addition, 20 factories were evaluated under the Smart Industry Readiness Index (SIRI), while 55 new factories were granted National Product Identity Certificates.

ONA

Trump threatens 100% tariff on computer chips unless made in US

Eleanor Butler

US President Donald Trump announced on Thursday that he would impose a 100% tariff on computer chips, sparing only companies that commit to manufacturing on US soil.

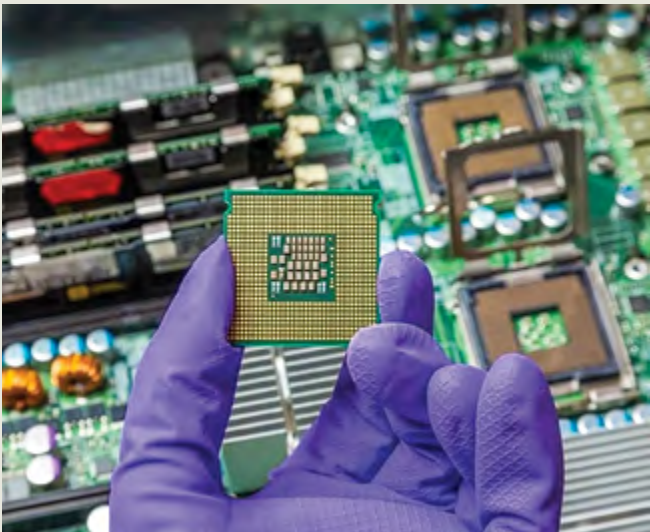
The move raises the prospect of higher prices for essential products reliant on processors, and it will place pressure on US technology firms, many of which depend heavily on Asia for chip supplies.

It follows more than three months after Trump granted

temporary exemptions for most electronics from his toughest tariffs.

The president made the announcement alongside Apple chief executive Tim Cook, who said the company would invest an additional \$100bn in domestic manufacturing. This is in addition to a previous commitment made in February, bringing Apple's total planned US investment to \$600bn.

The pledge comes after similar announcements from companies such as TSMC and Nvidia, which have promised to



increase spending in the US. Since Trump returned to the White House in January, major technology companies have collectively committed to investing about \$1.5tn in the country.

The key question now is whether the arrangement struck between Cook and Trump will be enough to shield the millions of iPhones produced in China and India from the tariffs already imposed by the administration, and reduce the likelihood that Apple will have to raise prices on the new models expected to launch next month.

Global demand for computer chips has been rising sharply, with sales up 19.6% in the year to June, according to the World Semiconductor Trade Statistics organisation.

Trump's tariff threat marks a sharp departure from the plans to revive US chip production developed during President Joe Biden's administration.

Since succeeding Biden, Trump has used tariffs as a tool to drive more domestic production. He is betting that the prospect of significantly higher chip costs will compel compa-

nies to establish factories in the US, despite the risk that such measures could squeeze corporate profits and push up consumer prices.

By contrast, the bipartisan CHIPS and Science Act, signed into law by Biden in 2022, allocated more than \$5bn to support new chip plants, fund research, and train workers. The package of funding, tax credits and other incentives aimed to attract private investment – an approach Trump has openly criticised.

(Source: Euronews.com)

What if India, China stop buying Russian oil amid US tariff threats?

Nik Martin

India and China have pushed back against US President Donald Trump's threats of secondary sanctions – penalties for doing business with a sanctioned country – over their continued purchases of Russia's oil, which is a key revenue stream for Moscow's war in Ukraine.

Both nations vowed to protect their energy security and economic sovereignty against what Beijing firmly called "coercion and pressure" from the United States. China became the biggest importer of Russian oil in 2022.

India, meanwhile, accused the West of hypocrisy, pointing out that the European Union continues to import Russian energy, despite having massively reduced its reliance on it since the war began.

New Delhi further noted that Washington had actively supported its oil purchases from Russia, which ramped up shortly after the Russian invasion, to help stabilise global oil prices.

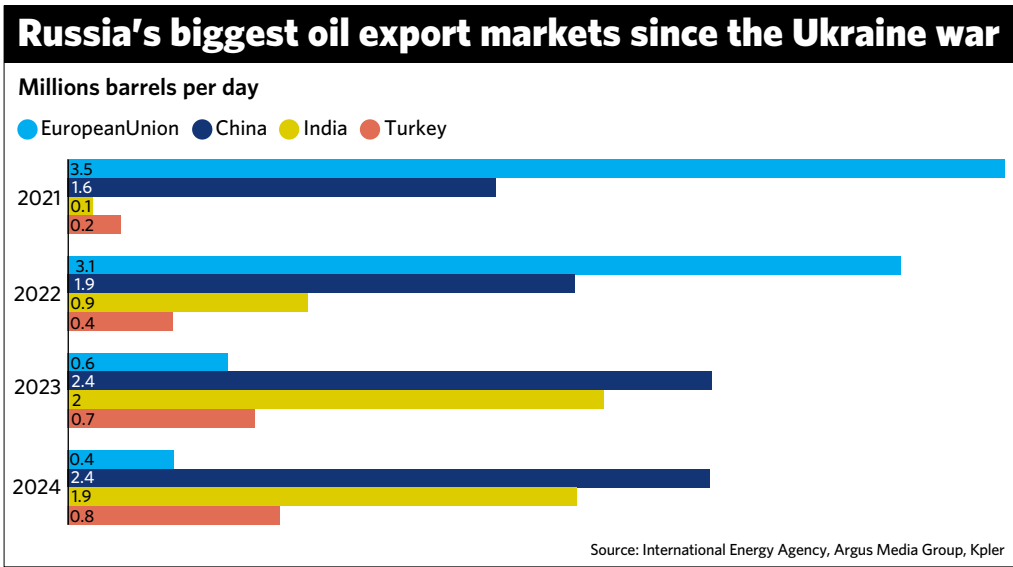
India's oil purchases from Russia grew nearly 19-fold from 2021 to 2024, from 0.1mn to 1.9mn barrels a day, while China's rose by 50% to 2.4mn barrels a day.

Petras Katinas, a Lithuania-based energy analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), told DW that India, Russia's second-largest oil buyer, had saved up to \$33bn in energy costs between 2022 and 2024 as Moscow offered large price cuts when the US and Europe cut their reliance on Russian oil and gas.

India's longtime policy of balancing ties with the US, Russia and China, without prioritising any side, had "underpinned" the decision to buy discounted Russian crude, with New Delhi "prioritising energy security and affordability," Katinas said.



China and India have replaced the EU as the largest importers of Russian oil



Trump's new sanctions threat roils markets

Having already imposed a 25% tariff on Indian imports, Trump issued an executive order on Wednesday, levying an additional 25% tariff on the same goods over India's purchases of Russian oil.

Oil prices rose nearly 1% on the news, while Indian media outlets reported that the new levy could spike the country's oil bill by up to \$11bn. New Delhi labeled the additional levy "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable."

Trump said the tariffs would take effect in 21 days, giving India and Russia time to negotiate with the administration on the import taxes. The president was also expected to announce wider secondary sanctions on other countries and entities with which Russia trades oil. The White House said that details would come on Friday, without providing further details.

Secondary sanctions would be another major blow to the Russian economy, already reeling from Western sanctions. With military spending now exceeding 6% of GDP and real inflation estimated by some analysts at 15-20% versus the official 9% figure, Russia is burning through cash, putting serious pressure on its budget and arms factories.

For global markets, new sanctions could trigger a seismic shock in energy prices and trade flows reminiscent of 2022, when the oil price surged and Russia bypassed Western sanctions by striking discounted energy deals with two of the world's largest economies.

"If India had not bought Russian crude [in 2022], it's anyone's guess what the oil price would have been – \$100, \$120, \$300 [per barrel]," Sumit Ritolia, a New Delhi-based oil analyst from trade research house Kpler, told DW. WTI crude hovered between \$85 and \$92 per barrel in the weeks before the invasion.

Trump's 25% "secondary tariff" could now leave India with no choice but to scale back at least some of its oil trade with Russia. Any additional sanctions would

only make matters worse.

Katinas said secondary sanctions "raise the stakes" significantly, "threatening Indian companies' access to the US financial system and exposing banks, refineries, and shipping firms to serious repercussions given their integration into global markets."

Oil price spike to stoke inflation

If Russia's five million barrels a day were suddenly removed from the oil market, analysts think oil prices could surge once again, as affected countries scramble to source other supplies. Even with oil cartel OPEC recently increasing output, replacing such a large volume would be exceptionally difficult in the short term, given limited spare capacity and logistical constraints.

"There is nowhere to get those five million [barrels] fast enough to prevent a spike in oil prices," Alexander Kolyandr, senior fellow at the Center for European Policy Analysis, told the UK's Independent newspaper.

Ritolia told DW it may take Indian firms up to a year to cut their reliance on Russian oil, if required.

Higher oil prices would trigger a sharp rise in inflation both in the US and worldwide. The US Federal Reserve has estimated that every \$10 increase in crude adds about 0.2 percentage points to US inflation. India's central bank reached a similar conclusion.

In a worst-case scenario, if prices were to climb from the current \$66 a barrel to \$110-\$120 per barrel, a roughly one percentage point inflation rise would drive up costs for consumers and businesses – especially in energy, transport, and food.

China spared while India suffers?

Katinas said China, whose total trade with the US is more than

four times the size of India's, "might be exempt" from the new US measures. With the world's two largest economies conducting over \$580bn of trade, China's sheer economic scale gives it bargaining power that India lacks.

China's chokehold on the supply of rare earth minerals – a persistent friction point in US-China relations – may serve as yet another lever Beijing is pulling to temper Trump's stance.

With India lacking comparable leverage, Trump earlier this week doubled down on New Delhi, saying the likely impact of his new sanctions on Russia and India would "take their dead economies down together."

Asked on Wednesday why he was singling out India over China, Trump told reporters: "It's only been eight hours. So let's see what happens. You're going to see a lot more...You're going to see so many secondary sanctions."

India's oil jackpot shrinks

India is, meanwhile, no longer reaping the same windfall from Russian oil as it did in 2022, when discounts ranged from \$15 to \$20 per barrel. That margin has now narrowed to around \$5, according to Kpler's Ritolia.

Eager to replenish its war chest, Russia is aggressively maximising energy revenues, buoyed by rising demand from Turkey – now its third-largest oil customer – and across Asia, where Russian crude is covertly rebranded and reexported to sidestep American sanctions.

Still, Indian refiners continue to buy. Imports hit an 11-month high in June at 2.08mn barrels per day, accounting for 44% of India's total crude intake – a sharp rebound driven by hedging to offset the geopolitical tensions and price competitiveness.

DW

Gold prices rise as report says Trump has placed tariffs on gold bars

Eleanor Butler

US gold futures hit a historic high on Friday after the Financial Times reported that the Trump administration had imposed tariffs on imports of one-kilo gold bars.

Futures traded on the Comex, the world's largest gold futures market, were up 0.9% at \$3,484.60 an ounce as of around 11am CEST. This came after the futures hit an all-time high of \$3,534.10.

The FT said it had seen a letter from the US Customs Border Protection agency, dated July 31, which stated that one-kilo and 100-ounce gold bars should be classified under a customs code subject to levies. Investors had previously expected these types of gold bars to be exempt from Trump's tariffs.

In April, Washington had excluded metals like gold, silver, and platinum from broad US import duties, reducing the price of Comex futures as investors ruled out a supply squeeze.

Before this, traders had been buying cheaper foreign gold and bringing it into the US, capitalising on the price difference between US futures and other benchmarks.

So far this year, gold Comex



futures have risen almost 34% as investors adapt to geopolitical uncertainty, viewing gold as a secure place to park their money.

In times of instability, gold is considered a safe-haven asset because its value is less volatile than other investments, even when currencies fall.

"Sustained by factors like its safe haven credentials and a weakening dollar in 2025 – this latest development will have gold bugs eyeing the \$4,000 level," said AJ Bell head of financial analysis Danni Hewson on Friday, referring to the FT report.

"The news is more bad news for Switzerland after being hit by a shock 39% export tariff to the US, given it is one of the biggest precious metal hubs globally,"

she added.

Gold is one of Switzerland's most significant exports to the US, and the country sent around \$61.5bn of gold to the US over the 12 months ending in June.

The tariff report comes as a fresh blow to Switzerland after the US administration announced a 39% levy on its exports last week.

Switzerland's President Karin Keller-Sutter and other top officials travelled to Washington on Tuesday to try to lower the tariff rate, among the highest imposed by the Trump administration.

The new rate is over 2.5 times higher than the one on European Union goods exported to the US and nearly four times higher than the one on British exports.

(Source: Euronews.com)

Bank Dhofar GCC Equity Fund (Shariah Compliant)	
Unaudited Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income for the period 01 April 2025 to 30 June 2025	
	30-Jun-25 (3 months) RO
Income	
Dividend income from financial assets at FVTPL	16,686
Realised loss on sale of financial assets at FVTPL	(51,667)
Unrealised fair value gain on financial assets at FVTPL	173,120
Foreign exchange loss	(6,389)
Profit from Wakala account	21,631
Total Income	153,382
Expenses:	
Management, performance, custodian and fund administration fees	(20,947)
General and administrative expenses	(25,045)
Total expenses	(45,992)
Net Profit for the period	107,390
Earnings per unit (Rial)	0.022
Unaudited Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2025	
	30-Jun-25 (Unaudited) RO
Assets	
Financial assets at FVTPL	3,832,957
Receivables	5,608
Cash and cash equivalents	2,114,849
Total Assets	5,953,414
Unitholders' Funds	
Fund capital	5,788,936
Retained earnings	134,622
Total Unitholders' funds	5,923,558
Liabilities:	
Accruals and other payables	29,856
	29,856
Total unitholders' funds and liabilities	5,953,414
Net Asset Value (NAV) per unit (Rial)	1.023
Note: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any Unitholder who requests them, in either Arabic or English, as requested, within 7 days of receipt of request. Fund Address P.O.Box:1507, Postal Code:112, Ruwi, Muscat Governorate, Sultanate of Oman Asset Management Department Email: assetmanagement@bankdhofar.com	

Bank Dhofar Money Market Fund	
Unaudited Statement of Comprehensive Income from 01 April 2025 to 30 June 2025	
	30-Jun-25 (3 months) RO
Income	
Investment income	445,615
Total Income	445,615
Expenses:	
Management fees	41,391
Administration and custody fees	8,278
Fund Management Body sitting fees	1,371
Foreign exchange loss	-
General and administrative expenses	4,538
Total expenses	55,578
Net Profit for the period	390,037
Earnings per unit (Rial)	0.012
Unaudited Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2025	
	30-Jun-25 RO
Assets	
Term deposits	21,258,344
Cash and cash equivalents	7,001,286
Accrued interest on term deposits	732,373
Total Assets	28,992,003
Liabilities:	
Accruals and other payables	60,611
Total Liabilities	60,611
Net Assets	28,931,392
Net units issued	27,351,946
Composition of net assets:	
Proceeds from issue of units, net of redemptions	27,351,946
Retained Earnings	1,579,446
Net Assets Value (NAV)	28,931,392
Net Asset Value (NAV) per unit (Rial)	1.058
Note: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any Unitholder who requests them, in either Arabic or English, as requested, within 7 days of receipt of request. Fund Address P.O.Box:1507, Postal Code:112, Ruwi, Muscat Governorate, Sultanate of Oman Asset Management Department Email: assetmanagement@bankdhofar.com	

PDO launches 2nd phase of ‘Dhiya’ solar energy project to cover 29 sites

As part of its continued commitment to energy efficiency and carbon emissions reduction, Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) has signed a memorandum of collaboration (MoC) with Sheikh Abdul-Hakeem Mohammed al Rashdi, Wali of Shalim and the Hallaniyat Islands, to launch the second phase of the ‘Dhiya’ solar energy initiative.

This phase aims to improve energy performance across public buildings within PDO’s southern concession area, in alignment with Oman Vision 2040 and the company’s long-term sustainability goals.

The project will see the installation of solar energy systems across 29 government sites in the wilayats of Al Jazir, Haima, and Shalim, with a total installed capacity of 1.1 megawatt (MW). The initiative is expected to generate annual savings of approximately RO160,000, while reducing dependency on diesel generators and promoting the use of clean, renewable energy in essential public services.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Rashdi stated: “This agreement reflects the community’s growing need for sustainable energy solutions to power public facilities. We highly value PDO’s contribution to local development. The Dhiya project is a leading example of how environmentally responsible infrastructure can reduce long-term operating costs while supporting vital sectors such as healthcare, education, water services, and community halls.”



economic success of the initial phase, which included six sites and a total capacity of 280 kilowatts, significantly reducing energy consumption and operational costs. This reflects the company’s firm commitment to sustainability and clean energy. Aghbari added that the project represents a model of public-private collaboration in advancing the national energy transition. The entire implementation is being carried out by local solar energy contractors, further supporting In-Country Value (ICV) and strengthening domestic capabilities in green technologies.

The systems deployed include high-efficiency photovoltaic panels (1.1 megawatt (MW)) and advanced inverters supplied by industry leaders such as Huawei and Sungrow. The installation will also feature wind-resistant mounting structures (tested for up to 160km per hour), along with real-time digital monitoring tools like Vecom, and locally manufactured cables and junction boxes produced in Oman.

The total investment for both phases of the Dhiya initiative amounts to nearly RO769,000, fully funded by PDO. ‘Dhiya’ stands as one of PDO’s flagship renewable energy projects, contributing to its broader strategy to achieve net-zero emissions (NZE) by 2050. It also forms part of a wider portfolio of initiatives that reaffirm PDO’s commitment to environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and the empowerment of local communities through sustainable, technology-driven solutions.

The project will see the installation of solar energy systems across 29 government sites in the wilayats of Al Jazir, Haima, and Shalim, with a total installed capacity of 1.1 megawatt

ISC to mark Independence Day of India

The Indian Social Club Oman is delighted to announce its 79th Independence Day celebrations, to be held on August 15, at the prestigious Al Bustan Palace Hotel’s Oman Auditorium.

The event will be honoured by the presence of H E G V Srinivas, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, who will attend as the Chief Guest, accompanied by distinguished dignitaries.

The event will begin at 7pm (doors open at 6.30pm). The entry will be strictly by invitation only.

The evening’s festivities will commence with a soul-stirring medley of patriotic songs, performed by ISC’s talented Open Mic singers, accompanied by a synchronized visual background performance. This immersive tribute to the motherland will set the tone for a memorable evening. This will be followed by a spectacular array of cultural dance performances presented by various linguistic wings, showcasing the vibrant and diverse cultural heritage of India.

Dusit expands in Saudi with new dusitD2 resort in Al Ahsa



Dusit International has signed a hotel management agreement with Al Ghadeer Group to operate dusitD2 Al Ahsa – a new upper-upscale resort in the heart of Al Ahsa Oasis, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula.

The signing ceremony, held under the esteemed patronage of HRH Prince Saud bin Talal bin Badr al Saud, Governor of Al Ahsa, was attended by notable dignitaries including Naif al Madi, Chief Business Officer of the Tourism Development Fund; Sheikh Bassem al Ghadeer,

Chairman of Al Ghadeer Group of Companies; and Gilles Cretalaz, Chief Operating Officer of Dusit International.

Located just 30 minutes by car from Al Ahsa International Airport and 90 minutes from Dammam, dusitD2 Al Ahsa is set amidst palm-fringed landscapes and dramatic mountain vistas. The resort will offer 120 spacious suites, ranging from one-bedroom to three-bedroom configurations, each with a private terrace and plunge pool, providing an elevated sense of privacy and relaxation.

Designed by Cairo-based El Ghoneimi Architects, the resort’s masterplan draws inspiration from the desert’s timeless beauty, the nearby mountains, and the life-giving symbolism of the palm tree. Guests will enjoy a comprehensive range of premium facilities, including a wellness centre with private treatment rooms, meditation areas, and dedicated spaces for yoga and holistic healing; an elegant 1,500sqm ballroom and expansive outdoor event lawn for weddings and large social or corporate gatherings.

Bank Muscat adopts innovation to enhance customer experience

As part of its ongoing commitment to customer-centric transformation, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in Oman, continues to lead the way in adopting cutting-edge innovations and technologies that enhance service excellence and streamline operations across all channels.

From AI-powered tools to automated workflows, the Bank is continuously raising the bar in delivering smarter, faster, and more intuitive customer experiences.

Bank Muscat remains committed to being a future-ready institution, combining the strength of its workforce with the power of technology to drive excellence, trust, and long-term value for customers. At the heart of this strategy is a vibrant internal culture of innovation, where employees are empowered to challenge the status quo and put forward ideas that solve real customer pain points.

Through dedicated innovation platforms and cross-functional collaboration, staff at all levels and across regions are encouraged to contribute to the bank’s goals of simplifying processes,



anticipating customer needs, and delivering meaningful experiences across every touchpoint.

Bank Muscat continues to expand a broad portfolio of innovative initiatives designed to elevate service delivery, enhance efficiency, and strengthen customer engagement. This includes investment in its mobile banking platform with new features rolled out regularly to provide comprehensive and intuitive banking services from the App.

Also, the Bank has introduced tokenised card services, Apple Pay, Samsung Pay, QR payments, and soft POS solutions aimed at delivering secure, con-

venient, and future-ready payment experiences.

Besides the comprehensive and intuitive banking services directly from the Mobile and Internet Banking, the Bank has a network of ATMs, CDMs, instant card issuance kiosks, and statement printing machines offer customers easy access to banking services, reducing wait times and enhancing convenience.

The bank is a leader when it comes to Corporate Ecosystems Integration. Through API-based solutions, the bank enabled corporate customers to integrate banking capabilities directly into their operational systems. The

bank is also utilising AI and robotic process automation across various functions to improve productivity, enhance decision-making, and support faster and more accurate service delivery.

As the leading financial institution, the bank is committed to continuously evolving its operations and services to meet the changing expectations of customers, businesses, and the wider economy. Looking ahead, the bank will continue to invest in the latest digital capabilities, and is exploring further initiatives in generative AI, predictive analytics, and omnichannel servicing.

Omantel launches AI initiative to help people with visual impairments

As part of its ongoing commitment to driving comprehensive and sustainable digital transformation in Oman, Omantel organised a specialised training workshop in Salalah, Dhofar Governorate, focused on artificial intelligence applications designed for people with visual impairments.

This initiative formed part of Omantel’s broader community programs aimed at achieving genuine digital inclusivity and ensuring equitable access to technology for all members of society. It was also one of the company’s key contributions to this year’s Khareef Dhofar activities. The initiative reflected Omantel’s belief that technology is not an end but a means to empower people and

expand their horizons. Its true value emerges when it serves those who need it most. People with visual impairments are an integral part of the community, and they deserve equal opportunities to benefit from today’s digital advancements.

The workshop introduced participants to the latest AI-powered tools such as ‘Aira’ and ‘Seeing AI’, which rely on computer vision and voice technologies to help users perceive their surroundings, read text, and navigate with confidence. Participants received hands-on training on using these tools in their daily lives, from browsing the internet and reading documents to recognising objects and currencies, as well as interacting with



digital services.

The programme received strong engagement from attendees, who expressed their appreciation for the initiative and highlighted its importance in breaking down digital barriers, strengthening independence, and enabling them to participate more actively in the digital community. This initiative is part of Omantel’s broader strategy to integrate smart solutions into community programmes by developing tailored initiatives that address the needs of underserved groups, and by creating innovative models that ensure everyone can participate in the digital transformation journey.

Over the years, Omantel has launched numerous technologi-

cal and social initiatives targeting diverse segments of society, including students, low-income families, and rural communities. These efforts reinforce its pioneering role in using AI not only as a tool for innovation but also as a driver of sustainable development.

Aligned with its strategic vision for comprehensive digital transformation, Omantel reaffirmed its commitment to continue developing similar initiatives targeting different groups, including people with disabilities, senior citizens, and school students in remote areas. The aim is to build an inclusive digital society where all individuals can benefit from modern technologies without barriers.

Grand Millennium Muscat beckons GCC visitors with exclusive summer offers

As temperatures continue to rise across the region, the hotel is rolling out the red carpet for GCC travellers to discover a cooler, more enriching kind of summer with its exclusive 'Hala Summer' offers and the exciting Hospitality Turtles Summer Camp.

Whether one is seeking relaxation, adventure, or meaningful family time, Grand Millennium Muscat has set the stage for a memorable seasonal escape, reaffirming Oman's growing reputation as a must-visit destination during the warmer months.

With enchanting landscapes of Muscat as the backdrop, the hotel is inviting both domestic visitors and regional travellers to discover the perfect fusion of indulgence, adventure, and relaxation, all under one roof. From private pool villas to thoughtfully designed experiences for children, Grand Millennium Muscat is redefining what it means to travel as a family.

Unlocking a wealth of benefits for guests, the hotel, as part of its 'Hala Summer' campaign, is extending a warm welcome to travellers with up to 20% off on stays, an additional 15% off for MyMillennium members, and a host of exclusive perks tailored for families, long-stay guests, and weekend wanderers.



Whether it's early check-in, late check-out, and free meals for children under 12, or complimentary upgrades, this summer offer, valid until September 30, delivers unbeatable value and comfort in equal measure.

Families will particularly appreciate that children under 12 stay and dine free (up to two

children with a paying adult), receive a welcome summer treat, and have access to the rooftop pool. For weekend stays on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday, guests receive a complimentary upgrade to the next room category.

Those planning longer escapes of four nights or more will

enjoy a complimentary drink or snack per adult, 50% off at Bahriyat Restaurant, 20% off laundry services, and 10% off airport transfers.

Grand Millennium Muscat is also showcasing its opulent Pool Villas as the pinnacle of summer indulgence. These elegant three and four-bedroom sanctuaries

boast private pools, spacious living and dining areas, direct access to the adjacent mall, and the option for bespoke culinary experiences.

Designed for both intimate escapes and joyful gatherings, they offer unparalleled comfort, world-class amenities, and personalised service, setting the

stage for a summer filled with luxury, laughter, and togetherness.

Beyond luxurious accommodations, Grand Millennium Muscat is also captivating young minds with the Hospitality Turtles Summer Camp. Running until August 21, this unique programme for children aged 5 to 10 offers a fun-filled, educational

new learnings.

Commenting on the hotel's summer escape venture, Glenn Nobbs, Cluster General Manager of Grand Millennium Muscat, stated: "The idea behind our summer campaign is simple. We want to give families - from within Oman and the region - the opportunity to relax and reconnect, while children enjoy mem-

With enchanting landscapes of Muscat as the backdrop, the hotel is inviting both domestic visitors and regional travellers to discover the perfect fusion of indulgence, adventure and relaxation

adventure.

With the summer heat driving activities indoors, the hotel has transformed into a vibrant learning playground where kids don't just play, they explore, discover, and even 'graduate' from hospitality. From pizza and pasta making to bed-making challenges, and behind-the-scenes looks into hotel security, basic engineering, and first aid, every day promises something new and exciting.

Each Turtle enrolling or joining for an entire week will receive a Hospitality Turtle T-shirt and a Certificate of Participation, recognizing their engagement and

orable, enriching experiences in a safe and playful environment."

Nobbs added, "Our private pool villas and Hospitality Turtles Summer Camp are designed to ensure that every member of the family has a perfect summer holiday, whether it's about rest, adventure, or learning something new."

Through its exclusive 'Hala Summer' offer and the engaging Hospitality Turtles Summer Camp, Grand Millennium Muscat is inviting visitors to discover the unexpected charms of Oman, where unique destinations meet world-class hospitality.

VIGO Rent A Car from KR Group offers unbeatable Khareef rates

With Khareef 2025 in full swing and visitor numbers on the rise, 'Vigo' Rent A Car (previously KR Rent A Car), KR Group's auto-leasing arm, is offering flexible and affordable car rental solutions designed to elevate every journey through Salalah and the southern Dhofar region.

With daily rates starting at just RO8, Vigo is redefining convenience this Khareef season. This limited-time offer is exclusively available for bookings made through our website or WhatsApp - making car rental easier than ever.

This year's offering is ideal for tourists, weekend explorers, and local residents seeking short-term rental solutions without the hassle of monthly commitments. Customers can rent a vehicle for as little as one day, enjoying complete freedom and value.

That's not all, Vigo is also offering a limited-time promotion, valid until August 15, wherein customers who rent a vehicle for five days or more will be eligible to enter a raffle draw for a



chance to win an iPhone 16 Pro.

Backed by a fleet of over 1,000 brand-new vehicles from top international automotive brands, 'Vigo' caters to a wide range of mobility needs, from compact city cars to spacious SUVs, all maintained to the highest safety and service standards.

Booking a vehicle has never been easier. Customers can browse and confirm rentals in real time through the company's official website. The user-friendly,

mobile-optimised platform provides instant availability, transparent pricing, and seamless confirmations, allowing travellers to plan their journeys with ease.

"Khareef is one of the most beautiful and vibrant times of the year in Oman, and we want to ensure that more people can explore its magic with reliable and cost-effective transportation," said Ashok Kulkarni, General Manager, 'Vigo' Rent A Car. "Our competitive pricing, diverse fleet,

and flexible rental periods are all geared towards making travel more accessible and enjoyable for everyone during this special season."

'Vigo's seasonal preparations are designed to meet the increase in travel demand during Khareef, offering customers dependable and comfortable vehicles to navigate Salalah's lush green mountains, coastal roads, and scenic landscapes with peace of mind.

Flynas begins regular flights between Moscow and Riyadh

Vnukovo International Airport proudly hosted the official inauguration of the first regular direct flight connecting Moscow and Riyadh, operated by Flynas, one of the leading airlines of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

This milestone marks a new chapter in connectivity between Moscow and Saudi Arabia, opening extensive opportunities for business, tourism, pilgrimage, and cultural exchange.

With Moscow now added to its international network, Flynas provides Saudi travellers with seamless access to Russia's vibrant capital. The new route also offers a comfortable travel option for pilgrims and leisure travellers heading to the Kingdom and the wider Middle East.

"Moscow is actively promoting its tourism potential in the Middle East, with a strong focus on Saudi Arabia as a key market. This remarkable growth highlights the impact of our efforts: in 2024, the number of visitors from the Kingdom grew 5.7 times compared to 2023, reach-



ing 52,400 guests. The Russian capital offers Middle Eastern travellers a unique blend of cultural heritage, modern leisure opportunities, and traditional hospitality. The launch of new direct flights marks an important new stage in our cooperation and will make Moscow even more accessible for visitors from Saudi Arabia," stated Evgeny Kozlov, Chairman of the Moscow City Tourism Committee.

The new Moscow-Riyadh connection is expected to boost tourism flows between Russia and Saudi Arabia, provide a convenient option for leisure travel

from Moscow to the Kingdom, and create new opportunities for trade and investment, further deepening bilateral relations.

The Moscow City Tourism Committee recently held a series of business meetings in Riyadh and Jeddah to strengthen tourism ties, explore joint cultural initiatives, and support alignment with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. These efforts underline Moscow's commitment to creating a welcoming, culturally rich, and friendly travel experience. Many hotels in Moscow now offer halal dining options, and prayer facilities.

Dhofar Foods to take part in Food Safety Exhibition in Salalah

Dhofar Foods & Investment (DFI), Oman's leading promoter of food security and sustainable agri-food development, will be participating in the upcoming Food Safety Exhibition taking place from August 10 to 17 in Salalah.

The exhibition will be held under the esteemed patronage of H H Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, and Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Water Resources, alongside the presence of several digni-

taries and key stakeholders in the field of food security. As Oman accelerates its journey toward self-sufficiency and sustainable development in line with Oman Vision 2040, DFI's presence at this prestigious event is a reflection of its pivotal role in shaping the nation's food landscape. With its deep roots in Dhofar and a diversified portfolio spanning dairy, beverages, agriculture, farms, poultry, edible oils, and animal feed, DFI is uniquely positioned to lead conversations on food resilience.

Bentley Emirates introduces Bentayga Atelier Edition

Bentley Emirates, part of the Al Habtoor Motors Prestige Division, proudly announces the arrival of the Bentayga Atelier Edition in the UAE. A rare, design-led interpretation of the iconic luxury SUV, the Atelier Edition celebrates Bentley's legacy of premium quality, bespoke craftsmanship, and extensive attention to detail.

Available in both Bentayga and Bentayga EWB variants, this limited-edition model introduces six distinctive colour specifications, five of which revive classic Mulliner shades including Light Onyx, Rubino, Porcelain, Quartzite and Light Emerald. These exclusive finishes make their return for the first time since their inception, offering a bold yet refined aesthetic that is



tailored to those with a taste for individual expression.

With its emphasis on craftsmanship and visual storytelling, the Bentayga Atelier Edition embodies the creative vision of the Bentley design team. Created to appeal to design-conscious

drivers, this edition blends heritage, innovation and exclusivity, reinforcing Bentley's commitment to delivering bespoke luxury experiences in the UAE market.

The Bentayga Atelier Edition is now available and can be in-

quired about at the Bentley Emirates showrooms in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Part of the renowned Al Habtoor Group and established in 1983, Al Habtoor Motors is the official dealer partner for Bugatti Automobiles S.A.S., sole authorized importer for Bentley Motors, Rimac Automobili, Pagani Automobili S.p.A. and Czingier Vehicles.

Working with luxury brand, Bugatti, for over a decade in the U.A.E, Al Habtoor Motors has been Bugatti's official dealer partner since 2006 and a Bugatti Service Partner of Excellence since 2013. Bugatti UAE is the brand's most successful dealer in the world and boasts the world's largest showroom which sprawls over 240 square meters.

For seven consecutive years (2011 - 2017), Al Habtoor Motors held the title for "Number 1 Dealer in the World" and again regained that title in 2019. In 2022, Bentley Emirates won 'Retailer of the Year' and 'Sales Retailer of the Year' at the Middle East and Africa Bentley Regional Dealer Conference. In 2023, Bentley Emirates won Retailer of the Year for Marketing and Marketing Manager of the Year, Bentley Abu Dhabi won Sales Dealer of the Year and Bentley Dubai won Pre-owned Retailer of the Year. In 2024, Bentley Emirates won Retailer of the Year for Marketing and the Winning Culture Award; Bentley Abu Dhabi won the Retailer of the Year in the Sales Category and the Sales Team Challenge Award.

Nagasaki mayor warns of nuclear war on 80th atomic bombing anniversary

Nagasaki, Japan - Nagasaki held a moment of silence at 11:02am (02:02 UTC/GMT) on Saturday to mark the moment the plutonium bomb named 'Fat Man' was dropped by a US bomber over the southern Japanese city 80 years ago.

In a message of peace to the world, twin bells from Urakami Cathedral also rang together for the first time since the bombing on August 9, 1945.

One of the bells had gone missing after the attack but was restored by volunteers.

Speaking at the ceremony, Nagasaki Mayor Shiro Suzuki said humanity faced an imminent 'existential crisis', warning that the world is plagued with a 'vicious cycle of confrontation and fragmentation', Japan's Kyodo News reported.

Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, in his speech, vowed to uphold Japan's decades-long commitment of not possessing, producing or permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons.

His government will work to lead global efforts to bring about 'a world without nuclear war and a world without nuclear weapons', Ishiba said.

Ishiba made no comment about Japan's refusal to sign or even participate in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear



The attacks on Japan remain the only two times atomic bombs have been used in wartime

Weapons.

Survivors and their families have repeatedly called for Japan to sign the UN treaty, which entered into force in 2021. Japan, as an American ally, says it needs US nuclear possession as deterrence.

Some 3,000 people, including

representatives from 94 countries and regions, attended the ceremony at Nagasaki Peace Park.

Russia, Israel invited to ceremony
Russia's ambassador to Japan was expected to attend the com-

memoration event, Japanese media report, as was Israel's ambassador. Russia and Israel, along with Belarus, were not invited to the 2024 ceremony.

The city decided to adopt a more inclusive approach this year, sending invitations to all nations with diplomatic missions

in Japan, according to Kyodo News.

Survivors and their families started paying tribute at the park, as well as at the nearby hypocentre park, hours before the official ceremony.

Earlier in the week, Hiroshima marked 80 years since the US

dropped an atomic bomb on it.

The attacks on Japan remain the only two times atomic bombs have been used in wartime.

Japan surrendered a few days later on August 15, 1945, ending World War II and the country's nearly half-century of aggression

across Asia.

By the end of 1945, it's estimated that the death toll from the uranium bomb detonated over Hiroshima was around 140,000 people. The explosion flattened more than two-thirds of the city.

A further 74,000 people were killed by the plutonium bomb dropped on Nagasaki.

In the years that followed, survivors faced side effects from the radiation, such as leukaemia or other cancers and chronic diseases.

Some 99,130 survivors of the two atomic bombs are still alive

Speaking at the ceremony, Nagasaki Mayor Shiro Suzuki said humanity faced an imminent 'existential crisis', warning that the world is plagued with a 'vicious cycle of confrontation and fragmentation'

in Japan, with their average age exceeding 86. Teruko Yokoyama, an 83-year-old member of a Nagasaki organisation supporting survivors, told the AFP news agency it was important to 'keep records of the atomic bombing damages of the survivors and their lifetime story'.
DW



Diggers were used to search for bodies after the 2024 disaster

One year after the disaster, Uganda still battling waste

Kampala, Uganda - Zannah Nansamba stands in front of her house in Kiteezi, a suburb of Uganda's capital Kampala, her one-year-old son in her arms. Flies buzz around her, the smell of garbage filling the air. Her flip-flops keep her feet just above the muddy dirt floor.

One year ago, on August 9, 2024, an avalanche of rubbish from the adjacent landfill almost buried Nansamba's family and her home.

The mother of two says she was extremely lucky: "I got up early that morning to do the housework," she recalls.

"When I heard a noise I went outside. I saw the trees and the rubbish coming." Her lips tremble as she recounts, "I grabbed my two children and we ran."

The 31-year-old points up at a huge mountain of waste - Kampala's municipal landfill - towering above her detached house. In 2024, tons of waste thundered down the slope and buried more than 70 houses. 34 bodies were recovered, and more than 20 people are still missing. More than 220 residents were left homeless. Later, officials said a methane explosion triggered the landslide.

That day completely

changed Nansamba's family's life. When she returned to see if her house was still standing, she found the building intact, but many others destroyed and the cows in the neighbouring meadow were all dead. "Some of the people lost their property, lost their lives," she tells DW. "Until now, we are living a mis-

One year ago, a landslide at Kampala's largest landfill killed at least 34 people. But there's still been no new safety measures or compensation

erable life. We had rental apartments down there, and I was able to pay my children's school fees with the income from those apartments."

Japanese help

Immediately after the disaster, the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) told residents living near the landslide to move because the landfill

could slide further. But families like Nansamba's, who live in this poor neighbourhood on the northern outskirts of Kampala, have no money to settle elsewhere.

Fear of another potential avalanche keeps her awake at night, Nansamba says. Her husband is undergoing psychiatric treatment.

"We are all traumatised," she tells DW.

Immediately after the landslide, the KCCA closed the landfill in Kiteezi, where all the waste from the two-million-strong metropolis has been piling up unsorted for over 27 years.

City spokesperson Daniel Nuweabine told DW the Japanese government recently provided US\$1mn in funding to secure the landfill, flying in machinery and Japanese engineers. Work included compressing about 500,000 tonnes of waste.

"This is a huge task. These are high-risk areas where methane gas is present in the ground and the pressure can open cracks and easily trigger further avalanches," says Nuweabine.
DW

US: Trump administration seeks \$1bn from California University

Washington, D.C., US - The Trump administration has demanded US\$1bn from the University of California (UCLA) to resolve allegations of discrimination and antisemitism on campus, offering to restore over US\$500mn in frozen federal grants in exchange.

Fox News reported that the proposed settlement, sent to the university on Friday, includes a US\$172mn claims fund for alleged victims of Title VII violations under the Civil Rights Act.

The Justice Department previously suspended US\$584mn in federal funding after determining UCLA violated the Equal Protection Clause and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. The university's President James Milliken responded in a statement to Fox News Digital, emphasising the financial strain the demand would place on public university system.



"Demanding US\$1bn from a publicly-funded, leading research institution is a misuse of tax dollars that will hurt the University's mission of serving students and the public," Milliken said.

He highlighted UCLA's efforts to combat antisemitism: "They have been committed to increas-

ing security, strengthening policies against hate, and engaging directly with Jewish voices to better inform their approach."

"If the Administration's mission is truly to protect the Jewish community, they would be supporting that work - not hamstringing it with these outlandish

demands that would only take away needed resources and services for students and faculty," Milliken added. California State Senator Ben Allen criticised the move, calling it 'harming the engines of American power, innovation, and, indeed, greatness'.
Anadolu Agency

Trump eyes military action against cartels

Washington, D.C., US - US President Donald Trump has directed the Pentagon to prepare military plans against Latin American drug cartels designated as terrorist organisations, US media reported on Friday.

The move follows the designation of Mexico's Sinaloa Cartel, Venezuela's Tren de Aragua, and six other Latin America-based groups as foreign terrorist organisations in February.

According to *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, potential measures under discussion include special forces operations, and intelligence support, in coordination with foreign partners.

Trump's 'war' against the cartels

In March, Trump vowed to 'wage war' on drug cartels, accusing them of flooding the



US President Donald Trump

United States with drugs such as fentanyl.

White House spokesperson Anna Kelly said in a statement that Trump's 'top priority is protecting the homeland', and hence the 'step to designate several cartels and gangs as foreign terrorist organisations', without confirming the reports.

On Thursday, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in an interview the designations allow the US to 'start treating

them as armed terrorist organisations, not simply drug dealing organisations'.

"It's no longer a law enforcement issue. It becomes a national security issue," Rubio said.

The Trump administration is also targeting Venezuelan gang, the Cartel of the Suns, accusing Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro of leading that cartel. Caracas dismissed the allegations as politically motivated.

Meanwhile, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said there would be 'no invasion' of her country and that the US military would not be allowed onto Mexican territory.

"We are cooperating, we are collaborating, but there will be no invasion," she said. "That is absolutely ruled out."

Sheinbaum also dismissed the US accusation of Maduro's links to the Sinaloa Cartel. She said Mexico had no such evidence, and that if Washington did, it should share it.

In March, the Mexican president rejected a proposal from Trump to send US troops to Mexico to help fight drug trafficking.

"Our territory is inviolable, our sovereignty is inviolable, our sovereignty is not for sale," Sheinbaum had told Trump.
DW

Five FMs condemn Israel's Gaza plans

Five foreign ministers have issued a statement condemning Israel's plans to take control of Gaza City

Lyon, France - Five foreign ministers have issued a joint statement condemning Israel's plans to further escalate the ongoing war in Gaza and take control of Gaza City.

Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand said in the statement that the plan, announced by the Israeli Security Cabinet on Friday, 'will aggravate the catastrophic humanitarian situation, endanger the lives of the hostages, and further risk the mass displacement of civilians'. "Any attempts at annexation or of settlement extension violate international law," the statement added.

The foreign ministers called for an immediate end to the war, emphasising that a 'worst-case scenario of a famine is unfolding'. They also called on Hamas to release the remaining hostages it holds 'without precondition' and ensure they are 'humanely treated and not subject to cruelty and humiliation'.

Dissent in Israel has also steadily grown as hostages have languished in captivity. Some families of the hostages and their supporters have staged large protests calling for a ceasefire with Hamas that would bring their loved ones home.

"All of Israel wants a comprehensive deal and an end to the war," Einav Zangauker, mother of hostage Matan Zangauker, said in a statement. "For the State of Israel to guarantee the security of its citizens, we must end this injustice that has been done to our loved ones for 22 months."



Palstinians collect humanitarian aid packages from the United Arab Emirates after they were airdropped into Deir al-Balah, in central Gaza Strip, on Saturday

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Security Cabinet went forward with the plan against the advice of military leaders, including Chief of the General Staff Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir, who warned on Thursday that the plan would endanger the lives of the hostages and further stretch the military.

The announcement came after Netanyahu also suggested more sweeping plans on Thurs-

day for Israel to take control of all of Gaza. Israel already controls around three-quarters of the territory. Hamas rejected Israel's plans. "Expanding of aggression against our Palestinian people will not be a walk in the park," the group said in a statement.

Stephanie Tremblay, the associate spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General, told the press on Friday that 'the Secretary General is gravely alarmed by the de-

cision of the Israeli government to take control of Gaza City'. The UN Security Council announced an emergency meeting on Israel's plans was rescheduled to Sunday after originally being scheduled to take place on Saturday.

International aid drops continue

International powers, including Israeli allies France, Britain and Canada, have stepped up criti-

cism of the war amid mounting shock over media reports showing starvation. Germany said it would not authorise the export of military equipment that could be used in Gaza until further notice.

Several countries have led co-ordinated efforts to carry out aid drops over Gaza, a last resort as Israel's blockade and military of-fensive have made it nearly im-possible to safely deliver aid, contributing to the territory's

slide toward famine. A new load of air dropped aid sent by Italy landed in Gaza on Saturday.

The UN and aid groups call such drops costly and dangerous for residents, and say they deliver far less aid than trucks.

Many food parcels dropped by air have splashed into the Mediterranean Sea or landed in so-called red zones from which Israel's military has ordered people to evacuate. In either case,

Palstinians risk their lives to get flour and other basic goods.

Palstinians also continue to be killed while seeking aid at four locations run by the controversial Gaza Humanitarian Foundation.

Witnesses and UN agencies have called the sites 'death traps', as hundreds of people have been reported killed while seeking aid, although the GHF continues to maintain that no violence has oc-curred. GHF said a new UN route

Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand said the plan 'will aggravate the catastrophic humanitarian situation and endanger the lives of the hostages

runs near two of its sites in south and has drawn large crowds of people who unload the convoys.

But the UN, partners, and Palstinians say far too little aid is coming in, with months of sup-plies piled up outside Gaza wait-ing for Israeli approval. And although the UN estimates that 500 to 600 trucks of aid are needed daily, the trucks entering are mostly stripped of supplies by desperate people and criminal groups before reaching ware-houses for distribution.

Euronews

Lebanese army warns against unrest

Beirut, Lebanon - Lebanon's Army Command issued a strong warning on Saturday against moves that could 'jeopardise national security' amid online calls for protests sparked by the gov-ernment's decision to place ex-clusive control of weapons in the hands of the state.

In an official statement from the Army's Guidance Direc-torate, the military highlighted the country's 'exceptional chal-lenges, including ongoing Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty and a fragile security environment'.

The statement noted that 'some individuals have used so-cial media platforms to call for demonstrations and circulate fabricated videos aimed at sow-ing discord among citizens'.

The army cautioned the public against 'engaging in actions with unpredictable consequences that could destabilise the country'.

While affirming its respect for the peaceful expression of opin-



ions, the army stressed it will 'not tolerate any breach of security, disruption of civil peace, road blockades, or attacks on public and private property'. The mili-tary called on all citizens and po-litical factions to 'act responsibly during this difficult period', em-phasising the importance of 'unity and solidarity to overcome the dangers facing Lebanon'.

The Lebanese government re-

cently endorsed a plan to cen-tralise control of all weapons under the state. However, Hezbollah has repeatedly re-jected calls for laying down its weapons before Israel's with-drawal from Lebanese territory.

Israel launched military op-erations in Lebanon on October 8, 2023, which escalated into a full-scale war by September 2024, killing more than 4,000 people

and injuring around 17,000.

A ceasefire was reached in November, but Israeli forces have conducted near-daily attacks in southern Lebanon, claiming to target activities of the Hezbollah group. Under the truce, Israel was supposed to fully withdraw from southern Lebanon by January 26, but the deadline was extended to February 18.

Anadolu Agency

Clear violation: Syria condemns terror group SDF's conference

Damascus, Syria - The Syrian government on Saturday strongly condemned a recent conference organised by the ter-rorist group the Syrian Demo-cratic Forces (SDF), calling it a 'serious blow' to the ongoing ne-gotiations and a 'clear violation' of the March 10 agreement.

A senior government source cited by the Syrian Arab News Agency SANA said the event held in northeastern Syria was 'not a unifying national frame-work' but rather a 'fragile coali-tion' of parties seeking to undermine Syria's unity and sovereignty.

Damascus accused the par-ticipants of 'harbouring sep-aratist agendas, relying on foreign backing, and evading commitments under the peace process', according to SANA.

The government condemned the hosting of 'separatist figures



involved in hostile acts', saying this amounted to 'an attempt to internationalise the Syrian issue, invite foreign intervention, and reimpose sanctions'.

It warned that proposals aired at the meeting, including calls for a new 'national army nucleus', revisions to the consti-tutional declaration, and changes to administrative di-visions, directly contradicted pro-visions of the March 10 deal,

which mandated the integration of all civil and military institu-tions in northeastern Syria into state structures.

Damascus also accused 'ex-tremist Kurdish factions' within the SDF of pursuing 'systematic demographic change against Arab Syrians' under instructions from Iraq's Qandil Mountains, where the PKK terror group op-erated from.

Anadolu Agency

At least 7 Palestinians killed in Gaza

Gaza City, Palestine - At least seven Palestinians were killed and dozens injured on Saturday as Israeli forces carried out multiple strikes across the Gaza Strip targeting civilians and aid seekers, according to medical sources.

Medical staff at Al-Awda Hospital reported receiving the bodies of five people and 33 others wounded fol-lowing an Israeli attack on a group of civilians north of the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza.

Anadolu Agency

Life-sized animal puppets complete 20,000km climate crisis journey

Back in April, a herd of towering, life-sized animal puppets - from elephants, giraffes, to antelopes and lions - set out from Kinshasa, in the Congo rainforest, on a hugely ambitious journey that would take them across two con-tinents and 20,000km.

Their migration - fictional but steeped in reality - was designed to mirror the flight of animals and people escaping the growing ef-fects of climate disaster and to bring the climate crisis into pub-lic spaces in a way that was emo-tionally visceral, not abstract.

As they moved north through Africa and into Europe, the trav-elling troupe 'adopted' new members - animals native to the countries they passed through - each one built from recycled ma-



Life size animal puppets from The Herds perform in London on June 27, 2025

terials such as cardboard and plywood.

Over the course of the jour-neyp, 1,000 people were trained as puppeteers, bringing the crea-tures to life in 56 public events across 11 countries.

The Herds has now finally reached the end of their long mi-gration: climbing Norway's Jostedalsgreen glacier, the largest in mainland Europe, be-fore pressing on to Nordkapp in the Arctic Circle to greet the sun-rise on 1 August.

The project was created by The Walk Productions, the team behind Little Amal, the 12ft pup-pet of a refugee girl who travelled through 15 countries in 2021 to raise awareness of the global refugee crisis.

When The Herds was first an-nounced, producer David Lan ex-plaind the ambition to approach climate change through emotion rather than data. "Through the-atre, we can engage with the major issues of the day," he told Euronews Culture.

"We're looking particularly for a way in which this very, central event in our lives, climate change, can be expressed not in scientific terms. What we think we might be able to do is allow people to engage emotionally with what is already happening all over." Artistic director Amir Nizar Zuabi, who also worked on The Walk, shared that the pro-ject's power lay in its attempt, not its guaranteed impact.

Euronews

India: 816 civilians rescued, air and ground operations continue in Dharali

Dharali, India - After the devastating flash-floods that hit Dharali and Harsil in Uttarakhand, 816 civilians have been rescued by the Indian Army, ITBP, NDRF, and SDRF till Saturday, according to a release.

The road access has also been opened till Limchigad, and the work on a 90-ft Bailey Bridge is in progress.

According to the release, Saturday's rescue air plan includes deployment of two Mi-17 and one Chinook from Dharasu for stores and personnel induction, with eight civil helicopters from Matli continuing civilian evacuation. Under 'Operation Dharali', the Indian Army has been victorious in its efforts to restore mobile and internet connectivity in Uttarakhand's Harsil.

The Army managed to repair an optical fibre cable, meant for

Army communication, which was damaged by flash floods.

Army signallers carried out the repair work amidst ongoing rescue-operations in Dharali, ensuring communication links for the area.

Indian Army canine teams have also been deployed to assist in search tasks in coordination with Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), Zevar radar, and reconnaissance radars as part of the ongoing Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADRF) operations.

The canine teams have been actively engaged in search operations for the past three days, significantly contributing to locating individuals and supporting overall rescue efforts in the challenging terrain.

A large number of supplies, rations and essential materials



NDRF personnel provide medical aid as they conduct rescue operations at Dharali, in Uttarkashi, India (ANI)

have been sent to the flood-affected areas in Uttarakhand's Uttarkashi, an official said earlier on Saturday.

At least five people have been reported dead, and 50 are still missing. The State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) has been actively involved in the rescue operations, utilising state-of-the-art equipment, including a victim-locating camera and a thermal imaging camera, the release said.

Meanwhile, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has made two important announcements for the rehabilitation and relief of the people affected by the disaster.

According to a release by the Chief Minister's Office, Dhami has announced that an immediate assistance of Rs 5 lakh each will be provided for the rehabi-

ilitation of those whose houses have been completely damaged or destroyed. Apart from this, the families of those who died in the disaster will also be given an assistance amount of Rs 5 lakh each.

The CM has announced the formation of a three-member committee for rehabilitation, overall revival, and strengthening of sustainable livelihood of the villagers affected by the disaster. This committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of the secretary, Revenue, which will submit its preliminary report to the government within a week.

This committee will prepare a blueprint of a long-term and effective policy for the future of Dharali village, so that the safety and livelihood of the local community can be ensured.

ANI

25 killed after bus overturns in Kenya

Nairobi, Kenya - At least 25 people were killed on Friday when a 51-seater bus transporting mourners overturned in western Kenya, according to police.

Nyanza Regional Traffic Commander Peter Maina told reporters that the victims were mourners returning from a funeral when the bus lost control and overturned at a known blackspot, marking one of the region's deadliest accidents in 2025.

The site, known as the Coptic Roundabout, is in Kisumu County, about 350km (217 miles) northwest of Nairobi.

Kenya has seen a rise in fatal road accidents this year, with police blaming speeding, reckless driving and poorly maintained vehicles for many of the tragedies.

The accident comes one day after a twin tragedy in Kenya's transport sector, when a light aircraft crashed into residential buildings in central Kenya, killing six. And a train in Naivasha also rammed a staff bus belonging to the Kenya Pipeline Company, killing eight workers.

Anadolu Agency

Putin, Trump to meet in Alaska on August 15 for bilateral talks

Washington, D.C., US - Russian President Vladimir Putin and his US counterpart Donald Trump are scheduled to meet in person for bilateral talks on August 15 to discuss how to end the war in Ukraine.

Before his election victory in November 2024, Trump announced he would end the war within the first 24 hours of his term. He is now about 200 days past his own deadline.

Trump said the meeting with Putin will help accelerate the peace process. Here's an overview of what's known so far.

Kremlin confirms meeting

The two leaders will meet next Friday in Alaska, a state in the northwest of the United States. The Kremlin has confirmed the meeting and has also invited Trump to Russia after the talks in Alaska.

Kremlin foreign policy advisor Yuri Ushakov described the choice of location for the meeting as 'logical'.

"Russia and the United States are close neighbours, bordering each other," Ushakov said. "It seems quite logical that our delegation should simply fly across the Bering Strait and that such an important and eagerly awaited



US President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin

The presidents of Russia and the US plan to meet next Friday in Alaska to discuss a possible end to the war in Ukraine. What do they want to achieve and what are the most contentious issues?

summit between the leaders of the two countries should be held in Alaska."

What does Trump want to achieve?

For the US president, who portrays himself as an accomplished dealmaker, taking a significant step toward peace would be of personal and reputational importance. His political ally, Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu, recently nominated Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize.

As for the actual conflict, Trump wants a ceasefire at the very least, and a long-term solution, at best.

Trump says he also wants to

arrange a three-way meeting with Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Neither the Russian nor the Ukrainian leader has agreed to this yet.

What does Putin want to achieve?

The Russian president wants to prevent the NATO military alliance from expanding further eastward. It's likely he will try to convince Trump to vote against Ukraine's NATO membership.

Another important point for him is preventing any possible NATO military presence on Ukrainian territory. Putin also wants a new, Russia-friendly government in Kyiv.

In addition, he has repeatedly demanded that certain territories captured by Russian troops dur-

ing the Ukraine war be permanently transferred to Russia. Putin likely expects Trump to provide assurances on this as well.

What are the negotiating points?

The biggest point of contention is military action. Russian attacks on military and civilian targets in Ukraine have resulted in many deaths and the destruction of Ukrainian infrastructure.

Ukraine is also striking back inside Russia and doing damage there too. However, there's an imbalance in terms of population and Ukraine is keen to end the war and, with it, the rising death toll among its own people. But at what cost? According to experts, Russia probably won't be willing to end the war without some concessions, a pivotal factor being Ukraine's potential NATO membership.

According to Kyiv, NATO membership would significantly reduce the likelihood of another Russian attack in the future because when one NATO member is attacked, the others should come to their aid. NATO includes the US and other nuclear-armed powers, the United Kingdom and France.

DW

Firefighters battle deadly blaze near Athens

Athens, Greece - More than 260 firefighters battled a wildfire near Greece's capital Athens on Saturday, as wind conditions raised alarms about the fire's potential to escalate.

The blaze, which has already left one person dead, broke out on Friday in Keratea, a rural area some 43km (27 miles) southeast of Athens. Two others died after being caught in the gale-force winds.

The wildfire, stoked by winds of up to 80km (50 miles) per hour, destroyed several homes and farmlands in Keratea, setting olive orchards alight.

Footage published by local media showed gutted houses.

Local officials ordered the evacuation of several homes in the area and an elderly care centre. Police went door to door late on Friday night to ensure that the homes had been evacuated.

The remains of an elderly man were found in a burned-out structure near Keratea.

"The fire has weakened, but there are still active pockets," a



Greece is experiencing more frequent wildfires due to climate change, say scientists

fire department spokesman told AFP news agency on Saturday.

Several other wildfires were reported across Greece, including regions around the historical site of Ancient Olympia and on the tourist island of Kefalonia.

Sustained strong winds could help spread fires

Winds of up to 74km (46 miles) an hour were forecast for Saturday, Greece's national weather service EMY said.

Strong coastal winds also

caused the deaths of two Vietnamese tourists, who were on a cruise ship group visiting a lunar-like, volcanic rock beach on the Cycladic island of Milos.

The 61-year-old woman fell into the sea at Sarakiniko beach, and a 65-year-old man tried to rescue her, according to the Greek coastguard. After ferry travel for tens of thousands of summer holidaymakers was disrupted by the severe weather, a temporary ban on ships leaving

or arriving at Athens ports was lifted on Saturday.

Turkey wildfires shut key waterway

In neighbouring Turkey, wildfires caused the Dardanelles Strait, a waterway linking the Aegean Sea with the Sea of Marmara, to be shut temporarily in both directions.

Hundreds of people were evacuated from areas close to the blazes in the northwestern

province of Canakkale.

Greece, Turkey other Mediterranean countries are known for hot and dry summers that scientists have dubbed 'a wildfire hot spot'.

The two neighbours have been enduring a summer heat-wave, with Silopi in southeastern Turkey recording the highest-ever recorded temperature of 50.5 degrees Celsius (123 degrees Fahrenheit) at the end of last month.

Much of the region around Athens has had barely a drop of rain in months.

Forecasters in Greece and Turkey say the risk of wildfire will remain high until October.

The fires have become more destructive in recent years due to climate change, scientists say, sparking calls for new ways of tackling the issue.

Authorities are under growing pressure to invest in artificial intelligence and satellite monitoring to spot fires before they spread.

DW

Fire extinguished in Spain's Cordoba

Cordoba, Spain - Firefighters have extinguished a massive blaze that was burning in the historic mosque-turned-cathedral in the southern Spanish city of Cordoba.

The 'rapid and magnificent intervention' of firefighters 'averted a catastrophe', Cordoba Mayor Jose Mara Bellido posted on X.

The fire is out, he said, adding that firefighters and police would remain on site overnight.

A spokesman for the cathedral confirmed to AFP news agency that the site had reopened to the public on Saturday morning.

Widely shared videos had shown flames and smoke billowing from inside the monument, which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984 and is a major tourist attraction.

The blaze broke out around 9pm local time (19:00 GMT) in one of the chapels in the Almanzor naves, according to Spain's El



Mundo newspaper.

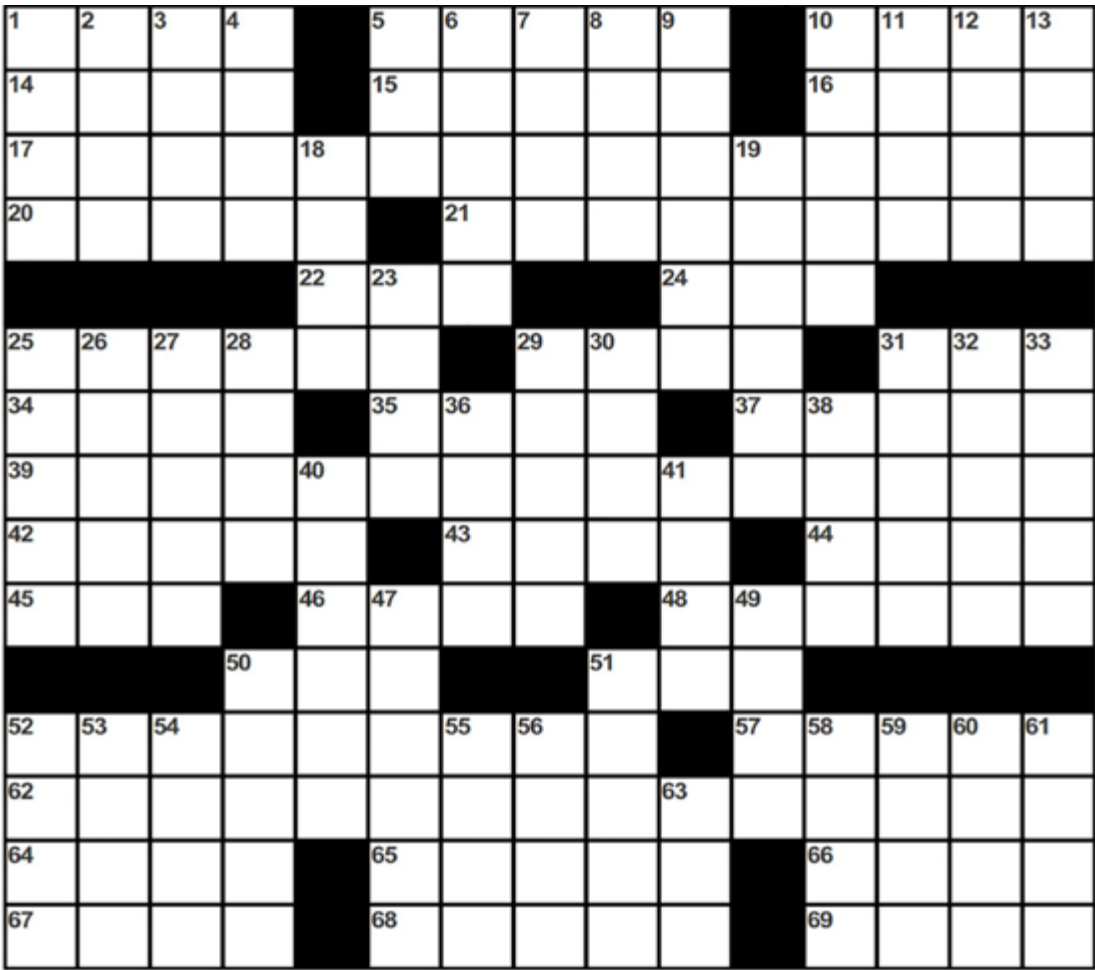
It may have been caused by a short circuit in an electric sweeper, El Mundo and local media reported without elaborating on why.

Three fire teams managed to control the fire and extinguished it within a short period.

After putting the fire out, firefighters continued to cool the monument's walls and roofs to prevent the fire from reigniting, El Mundo said.

DW

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Beach goers catch them
 - 5) Hair-raising place?
 - 10) Milky, iridescent gem
 - 14) Object of worship
 - 15) Hatchet man's oppo-site
 - 16) One of the sexes
 - 17) Bids adieu
 - 20) Hardly underplay on stage
 - 21) Engages in chit-chat
 - 22) Noisy bustle
 - 24) Madam of 2-Down
 - 25) Kind of chop
 - 29) Edible root of the taro
 - 31) Uncle of an entire country
 - 34) "Planet of the..."
 - 35) Like old recordings
 - 37) Lobe in the mouth
 - 39) What all drivers should be in
 - 42) DNA strand's shape
 - 43) Display intense anger
 - 44) Creative mental spark
 - 45) Equip for war
 - 46) 24-can unit
 - 48) Some pole bearers
 - 50) Put on TV
 - 51) Slop spot

- 52) Most vigorous and cheerful
 - 57) Accumulate
 - 62) Go "humph!"
 - 64) Japanese soup
 - 65) Brownish gray
 - 66) Like many horror films
 - 67) One-dish meal
 - 68) Exposed publicly
 - 69) Type of terrier
- DOWN**
- 1) "All_I" (court phrase)
 - 2) First mate?
 - 3) Toy that does tricks
 - 4) Coin opening
 - 5) That girl
 - 6) '50s TV "Kid"
 - 7) Jason's fabled craft
 - 8) Author Uris
 - 9) Shown to be true
 - 10) Game played with a deck of 40 cards
 - 11) Reduces debt
 - 12) On the safe side, at sea
 - 13) With a discount of
 - 18) Tidy
 - 19) Gobble up
 - 23) Audition tape
 - 25) Buckwheat porridge
 - 26) More fitting
 - 27) Coin of the_ (a coun-

- try's money)
- 28) Spumante lead-in
- 29) Follow as a conse-quence
- 30) Gloom partner
- 31) Glove material, some-times
- 32) Change to fit
- 33) "You_ well" ("Why not?")
- 36) Does in, gangland-style
- 38) A sundial hour
- 40) Cause enthusiasm
- 41) Better than good
- 47) Noble prefix with "crat"
- 49) Burmese currency
- 50) Cupid's projectile
- 51) Mining excavation
- 52) Does some tailoring
- 53) Departure
- 54) Church area
- 55) Son of Isaac, in Genesis
- 56) Cottontail's tail
- 58) Capacity units, these days
- 59) Run_ (go nuts)
- 60) Agile
- 61) Eyelid affliction
- 63) Flanders on "The Simpsons"

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
Unexpected roadblocks are still on the road ahead, but if you can make your way through today (which could be tricky if a loved one's jealousy or bitterness pops up) and tomorrow (because work trumps play), you should be looking at a smooth ride. Try to just grin and bear it. Let others be as grumpy as they need to be, but don't encourage the negative energy.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
Some jealousy can be a healthy thing for a relationship, but obsessing over it is both unnecessary and unhelpful. You've been watching out for your relationships for quite a while now, and it's most likely been paying off handsomely. Is there someone you want to spend time with soon, exclusive time, that is, who might want you to pay closer attention?



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
If you've been meaning to talk with a boss or client who's been uncommunicative recently, now is the time to go for it. It could be that you're just paranoid. They might not even know your name on sight! You should make headway with them, but you've got to act quickly. Ping them quietly and ask for a few minutes to chat. Politeness goes a long way today.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- 01. In the printing industry what is a proofreader asked to do?**
A. Correct a text's errors in typography, grammar, spelling, punctuation, syntax and formatting
B. Check a text for errors in grammar etc, consistency, continuity and fact, and for legal issues
C. Canvass a text with focus groups
D. Ensure that what is stated in a text is proven within the text
- 02. In the various Conventions for SOLAS, in 1914, 1929, 1948, 1960 and 1974, what does the second "S" stand for?**
A. Sports
B. Sea
C. Societies
D. Science
- 03. What was the first event to be competed in the modern Olympic Games?**
A. Weightlifting
B. Discus
C. 100m qualifying heat
D. Fencing
- Answers:** 1. A 2. B 3. C



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
That seemingly innocent flirty game you were just starting to enjoy comes crashing down around you today. Someone close (your mate, if you've got one) makes it abundantly clear that this isn't really what they thought they were getting themselves into. You may have had no untoward intentions, but the time has come to be respectful and call it quits with the cutie.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
You're quite willing to be patient most of the time, but right now you feel a little like Mt. Vesuvius having a bad hair day. Whether you decide to blow up or not, it's past time to let your family see just how much fire you can breathe. This little-known fact needs to be shared soon: you have a startling temper! It doesn't show up often, but when it does, warn others to move away.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
You might not travel much except for your job. Right now, though, you're only too happy to jump in a train, car, or plane taking you anywhere but here. You definitely need a change of climate, and a little time away from the job couldn't hurt either. You know what needs to be done, you think you can afford it, and you should take off soon. Invite someone along to help take the edge off!



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
After your recent behavior, those closest to you have almost no idea what to expect next, but that's exactly the way you like it! Today, just for a change of pace (and to keep them frosty), try a fast 180 and get a suspiciously concerned with tasks, chores, and careful attention to detail. That ought to teach them to think they've got you figured out!



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
A big surprise early this morning does more than just get you going with a smile. It should get your day (and the next few) started on the right note. If you think about recent events, you realize that you totally deserve a day like this one. Don't slam the snooze button. You can't miss a moment of the great day the cosmos is bringing you.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
You've been fighting for what's right and pushing for a better tomorrow, and you've enjoyed every minute of it. Now is the time to settle down, not that you mind all that much this once. You're running out of steam, you need to marshal your forces, and you're simply in the mood to chill. Even righteous scrappers like you sometimes need to rest!



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
Know how envy and resentment make it hard to get through a week? You may be stuck in a loop. It might not be exactly the same person or the same situation, but something just seems to feel eerily familiar. For now, though, you know just what to do. Don't feed it with your energy and it should go away quickly. If that doesn't work at first, be firmer, say bye for now, and say it like you mean it!



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
Someone close (maybe a family member) has just done something thoughtful for you -- though you may not hear about it for quite a while yet! Since you're perceptive to the point of being psychic, though, you may get an inkling that nudges you to leave them gifts or do what you can behind the scenes to return the favor before they know you're on them.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
Don't pack their belongings up quite yet. They've been driving you insane, and you certainly don't have to take any more of it, but if you give them a chance to redeem themselves, you may be quite surprised. Your history is important, so why not put some of that to good use? Remember the good times, and allow your memories to help you practice patience just one more time.

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

A	S	B	S
M	C	Y	D
G	E	L	R
N	U	T	O

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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



Marc-Andre ter Stegen

Goalkeeper Ter Stegen back as Barca captain

Barcelona, Spain - Barcelona have reinstated Marc-Andre ter Stegen as first-team captain after announcing on Friday that the goalkeeper has authorised the club to send his medical report to LaLiga.

The announcement comes after Ter Stegen hit back at suggestions he is to blame for Barcelona's inability to register new players, insisting that his back surgery and recovery timeline were fully approved by the club.

The German's three-month rehabilitation created an unexpected headache for Barcelona, who had asked him to sign a long-term medical leave that would allow them to clear 80% of his wages until mid-season and comply with LaLiga's Financial Fair Play rules, thereby allowing them to register new players.

But Ter Stegen's announcement on social media that he would be sidelined for only three months irked the club management as LaLiga rules require a player to remain out of action for at least four months to be considered a long-term injury.

The disagreement led to the 33-year-old being stripped of the club's captaincy on Thursday.

"The Club announces that the player Marc-Andre ter Stegen has signed the authorisation necessary for the Club to send La Liga the medical report relating to his surgery," Barcelona said in a statement.

"The disciplinary case has been closed and the player is captain of the first team once again with immediate effect."

Ter Stegen was adamant that club officials had always been kept in the loop about his treatment and rehabilitation.

"The decision to undergo surgery was made after consultation with medical professionals

and fully approved by the club," Ter Stegen said earlier on Friday in a statement on Instagram.

"Moreover, I announced publicly the minimum recovery timing that I shall need after that, which had been communicated to me by most reputed experts and always in coordination with the club."

Barca signed 24-year-old goalkeeper Joan Garcia from local rivals Espanyol last month while Marcus Rashford was

The announcement comes after Ter Stegen hit back at suggestions he is to blame for Barcelona's inability to register new players

signed on loan from Manchester United.

However, both players are yet to be registered with the new LaLiga season kicking off on August 15.

Despite Ter Stegen signing the authorisation, LaLiga's Medical Committee must still rule on his case, with their estimated recovery time for the goalkeeper determining whether Barcelona can use part of his salary to register new signings.

The controversy highlights Barcelona's financial struggles as they battle to register new signings once again.

Last season, the club approached Spain's National Sports Council to allow them to field Dani Olmo and Pau Victor until the end of the season after LaLiga said they did not have the capacity to register the two players based on their accounts.

XABI IN SEARCH OF THE X FACTOR

Real manager Alonso looks to fix flaws laid bare by PSG thrashing as new season looms

Madrid, Spain - The long-awaited arrival of coach Xabi Alonso was cheerfully celebrated by Real Madrid fans in May as the former club great came with high expectations following his trophy-laden stint at Bayer Leverkusen after Carlo Ancelotti headed to Brazil.

But Alonso's honeymoon period came to a jarring halt with a 4-0 thrashing by Paris St Germain in the Club World Cup semi-finals, leaving him scrambling to fix tactical blunders while figuring out how to stop Barcelona's attacking juggernaut ahead of their LaLiga opener at home to Osasuna on August 19.

The new coach had enjoyed a promising start to his tenure, taking his team unbeaten to the semis despite missing striker Kylian Mbappe for most of the tournament due to illness.

But the Spaniard's decision to abandon the five-man defence that had served Real so well until that point in the tournament proved disastrous against PSG's lethal transitions.

The tactical switch - made to accommodate a recovered



Real Madrid manager Xabi Alonso (R) with Kylian Mbappe

Mbappe alongside academy sensation Gonzalo up front - left Real totally exposed and taught Alonso a painful lesson less than a month after the 43-year-old was welcomed to Madrid.

Alonso initially impressed by fielding a five-man defence for the first time in over 25 years at Real, evoking memories of Vicente del Bosque's 2000 Champions League-winning side.

The system, featuring three centre backs and aggressive wing backs, marked a significant departure from the traditional 4-3-3 formation and appeared to address Real's defensive frailties from a disappointing, trophyless 2024-25 campaign.

Fixing those defensive problems was crucial after Real conceded 16 goals in four consecutive losses to Barca.

Now Alonso must decide whether to revert to the system that worked before the PSG debacle and during his Leverkusen stint, when he guided them to a first Bundesliga title in 2023-24.

He will have new weapons at his disposal, including Trent Alexander-Arnold from Liverpool and 20-year-old Spain centre-back Dean Huijsen, who arrived from Bournemouth.

The club also signed Spanish left-back Alvaro Carrera from Benfica for 50 million euros (\$58.20 million).

Another conundrum comes in attack, where Mbappe and Vinicius Jr have still to show their true potential playing together.

Fans protest as Vitesse Arnhem lose last bid to save professional status

Amsterdam, Netherlands - One of the Netherlands' oldest clubs, Vitesse Arnhem, lost a final bid to save their professional licence on Friday and were effectively kicked out of the league, sparking fan protests.

The Central Netherlands Court rejected the club's appeal to overturn a decision by the Dutch Football Association (KNVB) to revoke their professional licence.

Dutch media showed images of scuffles in Arnhem city centre as supporters gathered. One journalist was slapped, the Algemeen Dagblad newspaper reported, as anger was directed against media.

The court upheld the KNVB decision after the football association said the club had circumvented and undermined the licensing system for years and had spurned repeated opportunities to regularise their affairs, including debt reported to be around 14 million euros (\$16.3 million).

The club, established in 1892,



Fans protest after a court rejected Vitesse Arnhem's appeal to overturn a decision by the KNVB to revoke their professional licence

had been sanctioned last year and relegated to the Dutch second division because of financial irregularities, which the KNVB said included the absence of a bank account, the absence of a controlling accountant, and the fact that no conclusive budget could be provided.

Vitesse were the first Dutch club to have foreign owners in 2010 when Georgian business-

man Merab Jordania took over the club with Russian Valeriy Oyf becoming majority owner in 2018.

The club's financial fortunes changed drastically after sanctions that followed Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The decision means Saturday's scheduled match against Almere City has been cancelled and leaves the Dutch second di-

vision with 19 clubs.

In a statement, Vitesse said they were "devastated" by the verdict. "What the future holds is unclear," the statement said.

"The club is exploring options and continues to talk to stakeholders to safeguard football in Arnhem."

Vitesse, who were four-time runners-up in the Dutch league but never won the championship, will be forced to either continue as an amateur club or cease to exist.

The Dutch league has two divisions, but there is no mandatory promotion and relegation between the second tier of the professional competition and the amateur ranks.

"The worst-case scenario has come true," said Arnhem's Alderman for Sports Affairs Bob Roelofs. "This is a tragedy for the city, for the supporters, for Vitesse. The city has lost a large part of its DNA."

Barca coach Flick banned for next Champions League match

Barcelona, Spain - Barcelona manager Hansi Flick and his assistant Marcus Sorg have been fined 20,000 euros (\$23,320) each and banned for one match in UEFA club competitions for misconduct, the European soccer govern-

ing body's disciplinary committee said on Friday.

Flick had been furious at several refereeing decisions in his side's 4-3 semi-final loss to Inter Milan in May that stopped them reaching their first Champions League final in a decade.

The sanctions will take immediate effect, ruling both men out of the dugout for the start of this season's Champions League.



Hampton's bottle swap wrongfooted Spain keeper Coll in Euro shootout

Spain keeper Cata Coll was left without her tactical notes during the penalty shootout in last month's European Championship final, because England keeper Hannah Hampton had thrown the bottle they were written on into the stands.

Hampton replaced Coll's bottle with her own as the 24-year-old Chelsea keeper led England to their second conti-

mental title in a row, beating the world champions 3-1 in the shootout after a 1-1 draw in Basel.

"It wasn't hard. When she's in the goal it's on its own... you just pick it up," Hampton told TalkSport.

"I just put mine in there, chucked her one into the fans and she had an empty bottle. She was looking for where it is.

She was walking back and I was walking the other way. She was so confused.

"I was trying so hard not to burst out laughing."

Australia keeper Andrew Redmayne did the same to Peruvian counterpart Pedro Gallese during a qualifying play-off for the 2022 World Cup. Redmayne saved the final penalty as Australia won the

shootout 5-4.

Coll saved Beth Mead's re-taken penalty as Spain took the lead, before Hampton saved two spot-kicks and Spaniard Salma Paralluelo shot wide.

Hampton said she wrote down her notes on her arm to keep them safe.

"I never put it on a bottle because anyone can do that," she added.



Cata Coll (L) and Hannah Hampton before the penalty shootout in last month's European Championship final



Harry Kane (R) with Son Heung-min during their Tottenham days

We had that connection that we loved: Kane hails Son

Munich, Germany - Harry Kane paid tribute to his former Tottenham Hotspur teammate Son Heung-min, describing their partnership as “one of the best” in Premier League history following the South Korean’s departure from the club.

Son, who combined with Kane for 47 league goals to form a lethal partnership for the best part of a decade at Spurs, joined Los Angeles FC on a record-breaking Major League Soccer transfer on Wednesday.

“Massive congratulations to him and his career at Tottenham,” Bayern Munich striker Kane told reporters on Thursday.

“First and foremost, a great person. I’ve got to know him really well as a friend, and just how humble he is and how good a guy he is. I think as a player, you know, we had one of the best partnerships in Premier League history. We just had that connection that we loved.”

‘A good challenge for us’

Liverpool ready for Palace threat in season curtain-raiser

Liverpool, England - Liverpool coach Arne Slot said on Friday his side is relishing the challenge of facing Crystal Palace in the FA Community Shield, as the Premier League champions aim to begin the new season with silverware and prepare for their title defence.

Liverpool, who won the Premier League last season to secure a record-equalling 20th English title, face FA Cup winners Palace at Wembley on Sunday.

Liverpool are eyeing a 17th Community Shield title, with their latest coming in 2022.

“It’s nice if you can start the season by winning something. We have a chance at the beginning of the season. We face a difficult Crystal Palace side. They have shown how hard it is to win a one-off game with them,” Slot told reporters.

“Counter-attacks, set-pieces, long-balls to (Palace striker Jean-Philippe) Mateta and individual quality of their forwards. (Athletic) Bilbao, AC Milan and Yokohama already gave us good competition (in pre-season).

“Palace hit the ground running again, it is still the same team. A good challenge for us to start the season.”

Liverpool’s last trip to Wembley ended in a surprise 2-1



Liverpool players during a training session ahead of Sunday's FA Community Shield clash against Crystal Palace

League Cup final loss against Newcastle United in March, but Slot was not dwelling on that.

“Not looking back because it’s a different system Newcastle played,” the Dutchman said.

“But the way they played might be similar to how Palace play. They used every freekick to get the ball in our box. Palace are a threat at set-pieces. There are

maybe a few overlaps between the two sides.

“On Sunday, one goal will be worth a lot.”

Liverpool have signed Florian Wirtz, Hugo Ekitike, Jeremie Frimpong, Milos Kerkez, among others, in the transfer window so far, while Uruguayan forward Darwin Nunez has been linked with a move to Saudi side Al-

Hilal.

Slot was asked about Nunez’s future and if Liverpool will pursue Newcastle striker Alexander Isak as the 26-year-old’s replacement.

British media reported that Liverpool were interested in signing the Isak, who has three years left on his Newcastle contract.

Isak bagged 23 Premier

League goals last campaign, only behind Liverpool talisman and Golden Boot winner Mohamed Salah (29).

“You never talk about players that are not yours so I can talk to you about Hugo, who we have signed recently and has done really well until now,” Slot said.

“We are very happy with the squad we are having and there is

Injuries, transfers and UEFA appeal disrupt Palace ahead of Liverpool clash

London, England - Crystal Palace head into Sunday’s Community Shield versus Liverpool with a worry list ranging from injuries and lacklustre transfer business to their pending appeal against UEFA’s decision to demote them from the Europa League.

Manager Oliver Glasner guided Palace to a new height in May as they won their first major trophy, beating Manchester City to clinch the FA Cup. But joy at the South London side’s first appearance in the Community Shield has been dampened by their off-field issues.

Palace were dropped to UEFA’s third-tier Conference League last month in an alleged multi-club ownership breach because John Textor, president of



Crystal Palace claimed their place in the Europa League after winning the FA Cup in May, but they were demoted from the European competition after an alleged multi-club ownership breach

We have been quite passive in the transfer window. We have to add a few players to be ready for all the competitions. We definitely need two more players

OLIVER GLASNER, CRYSTAL PALACE MANAGER

Olympique Lyonnais majority owners Eagle Football Group, also had a controlling stake in Palace. Eagle sold their stake in Palace last month, and the English club appealed against the demotion at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), with the hearing set for this month.

“If you have to play in the Conference League, it feels like we have been punished,” Glasner told reporters on Friday.

“We hope that this verdict brings us back into the Europa League because, as I said, we haven’t done anything wrong.”

To add to Glasner’s worries ahead of Sunday’s clash at Wembley, striker Eddie Nketiah is out for eight weeks after suffering an injury during pre-season and midfielder Cheick Doucoure will not return for another two months.

“We have also had injuries to

(Matheus) Franca and (Caleb) Kporha too. So we are short of numbers. If we want to be competitive, we have to add players with good quality,” Glasner added.

But Palace have not been active enough to make up the numbers, the manager said.

“We have been quite passive in the transfer window. We have to add a few players to be ready for all the competitions,” he said.

“In a situation like this now, we definitely need two more players, one at the back and one in the attack.”

Eberechi Eze, who scored the FA Cup winner, has also been linked with a move away.

“He will play on Sunday, definitely,” Glasner said.

Chelsea defender Colwill suffers ACL injury in training

London, England - Chelsea centre back Levi Colwill suffered an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury in training on Thursday, with the 22-year-old expected to miss much of the new season.

The England international underwent successful surgery on the injury, Chelsea added. It typically takes some six to nine months for a player to recover from an ACL injury and return to action.

“The 22-year-old had reported back to Cobham for pre-season at the start of this week, before unfortunately sustaining the injury in training,” Chelsea said. “Medical assessments confirmed surgery would be the required course of action.

“Levi will now begin his recovery and be supported by the club’s medical department at Cobham during his rehabilitation phase.”



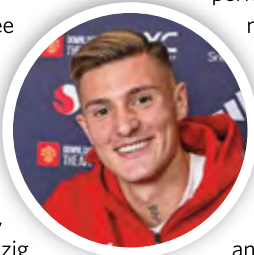
Levi Colwill

Manchester United sign striker Sesko from Leipzig

Manchester, England - Manchester United have signed Slovenia striker Benjamin Sesko from Germany’s RB Leipzig on a contract until 2030, the Premier League club said on Saturday.

The transfer fee is 76.5 million euros (\$89 million) with 8.5 million in bonuses. The 22-year-old Sesko, who joined Leipzig from Austrian club RB Salzburg in 2023, scored 39 goals in 87 appearances across all competitions for the German side.

“The history of Manchester United is obviously very special but what really excites me is the future,” Sesko said in a statement.



Benjamin Sesko

“When we discussed the project, it was clear that everything is in place for this team to continue to grow and compete for the biggest trophies again soon ... It is clearly the perfect place to reach my maximum level and fulfil all of my ambitions.

“I cannot wait to start learning from (manager) Ruben (Amorim) and connecting with my team-mates to achieve the success that we all know we are capable of together.”

United have also signed forwards Matheus Cunha and Bryan Mbeumo as well as left back Diego Leon for the new campaign which starts at home to Arsenal on August 17.

Ivorian Guessand joins Aston Villa

London, England - France-born Ivory Coast forward Evann Guessand has joined Aston Villa from Ligue 1 side Nice, the Premier League club said on Friday.

Villa did not disclose the duration of the 24-year-old’s contract or the transfer fee, but media reports said it was a five-year deal worth 35 million euros (\$40.71 million).

Guessand graduated from Nice’s youth system and made his senior debut in 2020. He went on loan to Swiss club Lausanne-Sport and French side Nantes before having his best season yet in 2024-25, scoring 12 goals in Ligue 1 as Nice finished fourth.

He also scored his first goal for Ivory Coast in March in a 1-0 win over Burundi in the World Cup qualifiers.

“When I heard (Villa) wanted me, I didn’t think twice. I’m ready



Evann Guessand

to give my all,” Guessand said in a video posted on social media by the English club.

Guessand’s arrival is Villa’s second first-team signing of the summer, following the acquisition of goalkeeper Marco Bizot from French club Brest.

Villa, who finished sixth last season, begin their league campaign with a home game against Newcastle United on August 16.

REBUILT CITY

Manchester City ready for new era without talisman De Bruyne

Manchester, England - Manchester City will embark on a new era this season in their first in 10 years without talisman Kevin De Bruyne as Pep Guardiola looks to make last term's third-place finish a distant memory and restore his revamped outfit to their former glory.

They face a tough task against champions Liverpool, Arsenal and Chelsea -- all big spenders in the transfer window -- but the anticipated return of Ballon d'Or winner Rodri and scoring machine Erling Haaland to top form give reason for optimism.

City were tipped last season to win a record-extending fifth consecutive Premier League title, but a mid-season nose-dive saw them fall well off the pace and miss a top-two spot for the first time since 2016-17.

They finished third behind Liverpool and Arsenal with their worst points total under Guardiola, their nine league losses were more than their two previous seasons combined, they crashed out of the Champions League and League Cup early and their FA Cup final loss to Crystal Palace



Man City have added Rayan Ait Nouri (pictured), Tijjani Reijnders, Rayan Cherki and James Trafford in the close season to their already strong lineup

meant no silverware for the first time in eight years.

Rodri was sidelined for most of the season after suffering a torn anterior cruciate ligament against Arsenal in September. Guardiola's men showed how much the Spaniard was missed when they went on a woeful run of nine defeats in 12 games across all competitions. After leading the Premier League in scoring for two successive seasons, Haaland's 31 goals across all competitions in 2024-25 remarkably constituted a drop in performance, although

he still showed his lethal scoring ability in what was considered an off-year for the Norwegian.

He will be keen to prove a point this season and put himself back in the running for the Golden Boot.

Guardiola began his rebuilding last term, splashing out 180 million pounds (\$241.72 million) on Omar Marmoush, Abdulkodir Khusanov, Nico Gonzalez and Vitor Reis. Marmoush had an almost immediate impact with a 13-minute hat-trick in a 4-0 win over Newcastle United in Febru-

ary. City's manager has further galvanised his squad by signing Dutch midfielder Tijjani Reijnders, Wolverhampton Wanderers defender Rayan Ait Nouri, winger Rayan Cherki and goalkeeper James Trafford in the close season to push City's spending for 2025 past the 300 million pounds mark.

Ait Nouri was brought in to reinforce the left-back position, while Reijnders and Cherki were signed in the hope that they could replace De Bruyne's creative spark in midfield.

While City boast one of the best strikers in the game in Haaland, the fight to support the 25-year-old runs deep with Marmoush, Phil Foden, Jeremy Doku, Savinho, Oscar Bobb and Cherki all in contention.

Guardiola said that while there is a lot of positivity in the squad, he did not expect this season to be smooth sailing.

"I'm pretty sure it'll be good, but it won't be a red carpet season, there'll always be problems, it's how you overcome those situations," the Spaniard said.



Victoria Mboko

Mboko stuns Osaka to win Canadian Open

Montreal, Canada - Canadian teenager Victoria Mboko staged a stunning comeback on Thursday to beat four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka 2-6 6-4 6-1 and secure her maiden WTA Tour title at the Canadian Open in Montreal.

The 18-year-old wild card rallied after dropping the first set to the Japanese former world number one, who had established a 3-0 lead, and held firm to cap a remarkable fortnight at home.

It was Mboko's fourth win over a Grand Slam champion in the tournament after the world number 85 defeated Sofia Kenin, Coco Gauff and Elena Rybakina en route to the final.

"These past two weeks have been insane," said Mboko, who began the year ranked number 333.

"Even getting the wild card to play here ... I was super happy to be playing in Montreal for the first time ever. I just remember feeling nervous, but really taking in the moment as much as I possibly could.

"When I won my first round, I was super happy and super content. I would have never thought that I would have made it to the final let alone win the tournament.

"I have so many emotions going through my head, I can't even express it.

Local favourite Mboko found her rhythm in the second set, breaking serve to establish a 5-2 lead as Osaka struggled with her returns, and she capitalised to level up the contest and force a decider.

The decisive moment

I was super happy to be playing in Montreal for the first time ever. I just remember feeling nervous

VICTORIA MBOKO

came in the third set, when Mboko took a 3-1 lead after saving four break points in a pivotal fourth game that gave her a firm grip on the match as she went on to claim the title after two hours and four minutes of play.

"I want to thank Naomi from an incredible match," Mboko said on court earlier.

"I've always looked up to her when I was very little. It's always great to play with such an amazing player like you.

"I couldn't be more grateful," she added.

OCA to open first Asian Games Virtual Museum in October

Kuwait City - The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) will launch the Asian Games Virtual Museum in October, creating the first comprehensive digital archive of Asia's premier sporting competition.

The museum spans seven decades of competition, available in dozens of languages including English, Arabic, Mandarin and Russian, ensuring fans across Asia can explore their sporting heritage whether

browsing on a phone or diving into full VR.

"This museum tells the stories that shaped Asian sport," said Husain Al-Musallam, OCA Director General. "Every medal ceremony, every record broken,

every moment of triumph - they all find a home here. It's how we honour our athletes and share their achievements with the world."

The platform features interactive timelines tracking the

Games' growth from 11 participating countries to the 45 OCA member nations. Users can search the archive by sport, country, or athlete, with content available in multiple Asian languages.

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ART HISTORY

HBO's hit period drama *The Gilded Age* has earned a loyal fanbase over the past three seasons, dramatising the rivalries and intrigues of a fictionalised New York high society of the 1880s, played by an all-star cast including Carrie Coon, Christine Baranski, and Morgan Spector.

Hundreds of intricate, opulent, and daring ensembles have waltzed across the screen these past three seasons; inventive and at times divisive. Peacock gown? Why not. Easter bonnet parade, you've got it. The woman behind these creative confections is the storied costume designer Kasia Walicka Majmone, whose many credits include *Moonrise Kingdom* (2012), *A Most Violent Year* (2014), and *Capote* (2005).

"When approaching *The Gilded Age* design, I knew that the biggest challenge would be making that material valid to the contemporary audience," said Walicka Maimone during a recent phone conversation. The designer decided to take an edited approach to Gilded Age fashions, one that is deeply inspired by history but not restricted to mere recreation.

"We had this amazing script and setting of New York City in the 1800s, an extraordinary time. I felt my job was to make that period as exciting for us as it was to the people of that age."

Art history on television

For Walicka Majmone, art history became a way to visualise the dynamism of the age in a way that felt fun and fresh. John Singer Sargent, the famed American expatriate portraitist of the era, particularly encouraged her approach to costuming.

"In one of the first meetings with the director, Michael Engler, we brought in Sargent's paintings. I thought: here's a man who already did his own filtering," she recalled. "Sargent was already presenting a heightened reality of the senses that appealed to a more universal sense of beauty and geometry of shape."

A comparison of a blonde woman in a light green evening gown with a velvet choker and floral brooch, next to a painting of a woman in a similar pale dress with dark flower accents and a matching choker.

Walicka Maimone decided to fill the design studio with paintings of the era (her team's reference library includes over 40,000 images). "Painters were the natural editors of what was beautiful and what was not from the period," she explained, "And if the painters could edit, we could do it."

Over the past seasons, art-loving viewers have recognized that many of the show's most fabulous costumes are inspired by - at times pretty directly - dresses found in the most dazzling portraits of the era. The major society painters of the period, Sargent, Giovanni Boldini, James Tissot, and many others earn nods.

In the finale of season one, Marian Brooks, the modern-minded niece of the well-to-do van Rhijn family, played by Louisa Jacobson, wears a pale-yellow gown with a deep plum blossom at the breast and a black velvet choker. The dress is directly inspired by John Singer Sargent's portrait of Madame Paul Poirson (1885), now in the collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts. Bertha Russell, the ambitious new-money wife of a railroad tycoon, played



‘THE GILDED AGE’ COSTUME DESIGNER KASIA WALICKA
- MAIMONE SHARES HER HISTORICAL INSPIRATIONS -
ON HOW ART SHAPED HER INVENTIVE AND LAVISH VISION
OF THE 1880S



Marian Brook, played by Louisa Jacobson and John Singer Sargent, *Portrait of Madame Paul Poirson* (1885)



Gladys Russell, played by Taissa Farmiga and Giovanni Boldini, Signorina Concha de Ossa (1888)



Bertha Russell played by Carrie Coon and Evening dress,
design by House of Worth (1898-1900)

minous white gown can be found in Giovanni Boldini's *Signorina Concha de Ossa* (1888).

Museum as Mood Board

Museum costume collections have also served as a major source of inspiration. Walicka Maimone's research was aided by the digitisation of many institutional collections. "During COVID, all the museums made their collections accessible digitally, so all of a sudden we had access to all these incredible collections of dresses that way you can see from every corner," she said.

The designer drew from the bold colour combinations and asymmetrical designs that were present during the era, but have often been overlooked. Wallicka Maimone believes viewers need to retrain their eyes to see the past in a more kaleidoscopic way.

"Some of those dresses survived in the original colour combinations, but some of them have faded," she said. "We are still programmed to think about periods in black and white because of photography. We think of much less colour, but there was an insanity of explosion of colour and colour combinations. This coincides with the creation of artificial dyes, too."

Expressions of 1880s

Many dresses in the show are directly inspired by gowns in museum holdings, such as an afternoon tea dress in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art that inspired one of the outfits for the character Peggy Scott (Denée Benton), who is a writer and abolitionist; or a House of Worth black and white gown, also in the collection of the Met, that was recreated for Bertha Russell.

And while Walicka Majmone took certain creative liberties, she remains true to others; "I did break a lot of rules. I did not break the rules of the silhouettes on the show."

The range of bustles, for instance, is in keeping with the varied stylistic expressions of the 1880s, known as the Second Bustle Era. "Some

women were almost completely abandoning the bustles, and some were keeping them," Walicka Maimone explained.

Anges van Rhijn, played by Christine Baranski, flaunts a more robust bustle - the style was probably in the 70s. Marian Brook, representing a new generation, adopts the smaller bustle styles emerging from Europe. Bertha Russell, meanwhile, walks a middle ground, she asserted.

The gowns' colour combinations and bustle sizes reflect the two worlds of the 'old money' of New York, embodied by the Astors and Livingstons, and the "new money" exemplified by the Russells and other Industrialist tycoons.

Site of experimentation

"Agnes is the old guard society, so her colours naturally fall into the vocabulary of jewel tones and golds, rich and very deeply patterned pieces, but classical form, and nothing that becomes too ostentatious. Bertha is the new guard. Her husband is designing new railroads across the country. He is at the forefront of the Industrial Revolution. For those characters, I looked to the idea of newness in that which is sparkling, shining silver, lighter colours, lighter palettes, more unexpected combinations," she said.

One of Walicka Majmańska's favourite characters to create costumes for was the ultra-wealthy Mrs Sylvia Chamberlain, based on the real-life collector Arrabella Huntington, who played a major role in season one.

Ultimately, Wallicka Maimone sees *The Gilded Age* costumes as a site of experimentation, an impressionistic vision of the era. "I learned from my research that when photography emerged, painters started painting differently, bringing about the rise of Impressionism. It's a moment of separation from reality that goes toward beautifying," she said, "I think my job is to combine both what we know of the 1880s Gilded Age with the impression that we can relate to."



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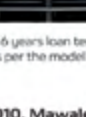
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SOLO EXHIBITION

‘Visions of the creator’

Veteran Indian artist in Oman, **Rashmi Dauria**, 75, whose work has been commonplace in most joint exhibitions held in Oman over the past four decades, will showcase her work in a solo exhibition titled ‘Visions of the Creator’ (August 11-17) at the historic Jehangir Art Gallery, in Mumbai (India), which has been closely associated with the development of contemporary Indian art. “Oman has been a significant part of my life and has impacted my journey immensely,” the artist who’s almost as old as this gallery (established in 1952), tell **Hubert Vaz** in a free-wheeling chat. Excerpts:

What is the name of your upcoming exhibition and when will it be held?

My exhibition is called ‘Visions of the Creator’ and will be held from August 11 to 17 at Jehangir Art Gallery in Mumbai.

How many works will be on display and why did you choose Jehangir Art Gallery in Mumbai?

Almost 45 paintings will be on display. I chose Jehangir Art Gallery in Mumbai because I have always wished to hold a solo show in India, and Jehangir Art Gallery is one of the most renowned galleries in Mumbai.

Since you have spent the last 40 years in Oman would it not be right to hold this exhibition first in Oman?

This is not my first solo exhibition. My first solo show was held in 2009 under the auspices of the Embassy of India, with the support of the then Indian Ambassador, Anil Wadhwa.

What is the theme of the exhibition?

Spirituality, the theme of the exhibition, has been taking deep root in my mind and heart for some time now. With my practice, expressing how this was manifest in my life is what I have shared in most of my artworks.

Are the exhibits divided into any broad categories?

No, there are no particular categories. The artworks portray a wide array of subjects depicting the rich Indian culture, so that art lovers can enjoy a wide range of cultural aspects.

Who is the curator of this exhibition?

I am the curator of my own exhibition. I selected works that mainly showcase Indian culture. There were no guidelines from the gallery. After being reviewed by the gallery, they determined that my artwork was of high quality and encouraged me to display my work.

Your works mostly depict vibrant facets of life and nature - do bright colours have a special place in your life?

Most definitely. I enjoy painting in bright colours as they bring joy and life to my paintings. When I begin working on a piece, I present the artwork as I feel it and most times that is depicted on the canvas with bright colours. It is completely spontaneous.

What are the different genres you have tried and which are you most comfortable with?

I work with a wide range of genres. It entirely depends on how I

am feeling at the moment I begin working on an artwork. I really enjoy making portraits. I work with several mediums like water colours, acrylics, and oil but I am most comfortable working with water colours.

Did you receive any formal training earlier in life?

I never had any formal training. From my childhood, I enjoyed painting so much that I spent days working on different artworks, so I would say most of the skills I developed came from practising my art and honing my own skills. As they say, practice makes perfect. My only arts related education was in Graphic Design. I had graduated from the JJ Institute of Applied Art in Mumbai with a diploma in Graphic designing. However Graphic Designing is very different from Fine Art.

Is there some genre of art that you are not comfortable with?

No, not really. I always try to experiment with different types of art and media. I like trying new things.

What role did Oman play in your long journey as an artist?

I have lived in Oman for over 40 years. In my early days I did a lot of graphic designing work for about 15 years but in my personal time I painted every day, which I continue to do till date. I have always been extremely inspired by Oman’s beauty, culture, and heritage and have drawn many parallels between the Omani and the Indian cultures.

I have numerous paintings with Omani themes like its nature, wadis, rural life, wildlife, structures, etc. I also have been commissioned multiple times to paint portraits of late His Majesty, the Sultan (former Sultan of Oman). Oman has been a significant part of my life and has impacted my journey immensely.

What is your opinion about ‘multimedia installations’ which you can see, hear, smell and touch nowadays?

Frankly speaking, I have not learnt computer graphics as a graphic designer and have limited knowledge of these art forms. However, it is exciting to see how art has transformed and continues to transform every day, as it should. These contemporary mediums are a new way for the younger generation to express themselves and it is wonderful to see.

The beauty of art is that it is a form of expression which changes with time. All art forms in their essence are forms of human expression and it’s only natural that, as we evolve, the way we express art will also evolve.

Do you think these new art forms will survive long?

I believe, art will keep evolving. The good thing is that expression of art has no boundaries and there is a place for every kind of art form. The beauty is in the diversity. As time changes, newer forms will come into existence. There is no limit to human expression and there is enough and more space for all types of art forms.

What is your message to budding artists in Oman and in India?

My message to all budding artists is - If you’re really interested in any art form, learn the basics properly first, then keep practising and expressing yourself.”

Do you have any unfulfilled ambitions?

No, I am very grateful that even today, at the age of 75, I am able to do what I love doing every single day.



All art forms are forms of human expression and it's only natural that as we evolve, the way we express art will also evolve

RASHMI DAURIA



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