

1,000MW solar plants launched

Our Correspondent
Muscat

H H Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said inaugurated the Manah 1 and Manah 2 solar power plants on Monday.

Located in Manah, Dakhliyah spread over an area of 14.5mn sqm, the two facilities are the largest solar power plants in Oman with combined production capacity of 1,000 megawatts.

Equipped with over 2mn bifacial photovoltaic solar panels, the plants use about 1,800 robots for automated dry cleaning, ensuring efficient electricity generation without water usage, aligning with sustainability objectives.

The plants aim to increase Oman's renewable energy share from 6.6% to 11%, while reducing annual carbon dioxide emissions by 1.4mn tonnes. Collectively, the two plants will generate enough electricity to power approximately 120,000 homes, contributing significantly to the sultanate's net-zero emissions target by 2050.

H E Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, called the projects a "strategic step" in Oman's transition to clean energy. "Manah 1 and Manah 2 are testament to Oman's commitment to achieving its ambitious renewable energy targets," he said. By 2030, Oman aims to increase renewable energy's share to 30%, with further plans to achieve 60%-70% by 2040 and 100% by 2050. H E Aufi added that the



(Supplied photo)

Manah 1 and Manah 2 are testament to Oman's commitment to achieving its ambitious renewable energy targets

H E SALIM AL AUFi

ministry remains dedicated to enhancing energy security, attracting investment and driving sustainable development.

Dr Mansour bin Taleb al Hinai, Chairman of Authority for Public Services Regulation, highlighted the alignment of these projects with Oman Vision 2040. "The authority ensures that renewable energy projects meet stringent economic and technical standards, contributing to a sustainable energy future."

Hinai also stressed the importance of increasing community awareness about renewable en-

ergy and encouraging private sector investments.

Ahmed bin Salem al Abri, CEO of Nama Power and Water Procurement Company, reiterated its commitment to advancing renewable energy and achieving Oman's net-zero goals. He noted that the sultanate aims to expand its renewable energy capacity by 8GW by 2030.

The Manah 1 and Manah 2 plants were developed through public-private partnerships. Manah 1 was implemented by Wadi Noor Solar Power Company, a consortium of France's EDF Renewables and Korea Western Power Co Ltd. Manah 2 was executed by Sembcorp Jinko Shine, a collaboration between Singapore's Sembcorp Utilities and China's Jinko Power Technology.

The inauguration ceremony in Muscat was attended by several dignitaries, including high-ranking officials and representatives of the project developers.



Resurrecting Gaza

46,913 KILLED

110,750 WOUNDED

1.9MN OR 90% DISPLACED

68% OF FARMLAND (103SQKM) DAMAGED

80% TO 90% OF IRRIGATION SYSTEMS DECIMATED

ABOUT 1,190KM OF ROADS DESTROYED

90% OF SCHOOLS DESTROYED

HALF THE HOSPITALS NOT FUNCTIONING

170,800 BUILDINGS DAMAGED OR DESTROYED

83% OF MOSQUES DAMAGED OR DESTROYED



Cairo, Egypt - As the Gaza Strip lies in ruins from Israel's military offensive, the task of rebuilding the Palestinian enclave will be one of the most formidable reconstruction efforts in modern history.

Billions of dollars and decades of efforts will be needed, experts have opined, to rebuild Gaza after the devastation inflicted by Israel since October 2023.

Relentless Israeli airstrikes and bombardments have decimated Gaza's infrastructure, leaving its 2.3mn residents facing catastrophic suffering and destruction.

Israeli forces have killed or wounded more than 157,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children, and reduced to rubble thousands of homes, schools and hospitals.

Following the recent ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas, global attention has now turned towards the daunting challenge of reconstructing Gaza.



Scale of destruction

Covering just 360sqkm, the Gaza Strip has endured destruction reminiscent of the world's most devastating wartime events.

UN Satellite Centre, in collaboration with the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, found that 'approximately 68% of permanent crop fields in the Gaza Strip exhibited a significant decline in health and density in September 2024'.

An assessment by the UN Conference on Trade and Development in early 2024 found that 'between 80% to 96% of Gaza's agricultural assets had been decimated, including irrigation systems, livestock farms, orchards, machinery and storage facilities'.

Costs and time

In September, the Arab States Regional Bureau of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) projected the total reconstruction cost at over US\$40bn. The initial recovery phase alone - restoring basic services and infrastructure - is expected to cost US\$2bn-US\$3bn and take three to five years.

The UNDP predicts that housing reconstruction alone would take until 2040. This estimate does not account for rebuilding hospitals, schools, power plants and water systems. Experts agree that Gaza's reconstruction will be severely hindered by the Israeli blockade, which restricts the entry of essential construction materials.

The safety of returning residents poses another challenge. The UN Mine Action Service estimates that 7,500 tonnes of unexploded ordnance remain scattered across Gaza, clearing which could take up to 14 years.

Agencies

TRUMP SWORN IN AS 47TH US PRESIDENT



Donald Trump was sworn in as President of the United States on Monday. In his inaugural address, he said, "The golden age of America begins right now. From this day forward, our country will flourish and be respected again all over the world. We will be the envy of every nation." Echoing a promise he made on the 2024 election campaign trail, Trump added that he will "put America first"

Oman marks 50 years of global meteorological cooperation

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) unveiled a logo on Monday to commemorate 50 years of Oman's membership in World Meteorological Organization (WMO), highlighting the sultanate's enduring commitment to advancing meteorology and climate science through international cooperation.

On the occasion, Naif bin Ali al Abri, Chairman of CAA, emphasised the importance of this milestone. "Over the past 50 years, Oman has witnessed major progress in meteorological and climate services, which has



played a crucial role in supporting sustainable development."

The logo launch coincided with the 11th meeting of the WMO-CGMS Virtual Laboratory Management Group (VLMG-11) being held in Muscat from Janu-

ary 20 to 23. The event has brought together over 35 representatives from WMO, satellite agencies and centres of excellence. Discussions on Monday centred on enhancing international collaboration in satellite technology,

Centre of Excellence in Muscat trained over 500 participants from 27 countries in 2024, offering ten programmes in areas such as climate science, oceanography and data services

advancing training programmes and exploring new opportunities in satellite applications.

The Centre of Excellence in Muscat specialises in satellite data applications for meteorology and climate science. It pro-

vides training for users and researchers from countries in Northwest Asia, Middle East and North Africa. Supported by the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT), the centre has been an integral part of WMO's global training network for two decades.

The Muscat centre trained over 500 participants from 27 countries in 2024, offering ten programmes in areas such as climate science, oceanography and data services. It has also developed strong partnerships with local institutions, including Sultan Qaboos University, Royal Navy of Oman and National Space Pro-

gramme, while collaborating with centres in Morocco and Kenya.

Oman's WMO membership has significantly boosted its meteorological infrastructure, improving accuracy of weather forecasting and enhancing public awareness of climate change. These efforts have also enabled the sultanate to actively contribute to global initiatives aimed at adapting to and mitigating climate change impacts.

By fostering collaborations and sharing knowledge, Oman remains committed to addressing the challenges of climate change while supporting regional and international progress in meteorology and climate science.



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Mashreq offers tailored corporate banking solutions in Oman



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Pickleball makes official debut in sultanate with Oman Open 2025

Oman-Turkey knowledge forum focuses on research ties

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation on Monday launched a special dialogue forum in partnership with the Turkish Embassy in Muscat, to strengthen academic, research, and innovation ties between Oman and Turkey.

H E Dr Rahma Ibrahim al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation, inaugurated the Omani-Turkish Knowledge Dialogue, describing it as a significant step in reinforcing the historical relationship between the two nations.

She noted that the forum was a direct outcome of high-level discussions held earlier between officials from Oman and Turkey.

The agenda of the three-day forum features a diverse range of topics, including language, translation, literature, historical ties, innovations in aviation, airport management, medical tourism, and medical technologies.

H E Dr Rahma stressed the importance of reviewing the contributions of Turkish higher education institutions and research centres while facilitating bilateral meetings to enhance collaboration.

In her address, the minister highlighted Oman's efforts to improve the global ranking of its universities by promoting scientific publishing, attracting international students, and creating joint academic programmes with Turkish institutions. She also praised student exchange initiatives such as 'Erasmus Plus', which have strengthened ties between the two countries.

H E Dr Rahma revealed several key developments, including Oman's funding of 16 academic chairs at leading international universities. Among these is the establish-

ment of the 'Oman Chair for Contemporary Omani Studies' at Marmara University in Turkey. She also noted regulatory reforms in Oman's higher education sector, which have increased the number of Turkish universities recommended for Omani students.

The forum highlighted the growing cooperation between higher education institutions in both nations, including the signing of memoranda of understanding. These agreements have paved the way for student exchanges and joint research projects.



Oman is continuously improving the global ranking of its universities by promoting scientific publishing, attracting international students

H E DR RAHMA
AL MAHROUQI

Throughout the event, discussion sessions explored themes such as literature, language and translation, Turkish-Omani historical relations, Islamic architecture, and the value of student exchange programmes. These sessions aim to deepen cultural and academic understanding between the two countries.

The forum has drawn participation from 17 Turkish universities, several Turkish research and cultural centres, and Omani private higher education institutions and government bodies. The opening day featured discussions on enhancing student exchanges.

Bahla Winter Festival from Thursday, to showcase heritage and adventure

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The inaugural edition of the Bahla Winter Festival is all set to open on Thursday, promising a vibrant celebration of culture, heritage, and tourism in the Dakhliyah governorate.

Highlighting the rich traditions and natural beauty of Bahla and its surrounding areas, the festival aims to captivate residents and visitors alike. With activities ranging from cultural showcases to outdoor adventures, the event promises an immersive experience that brings the region's historical treasures to life.

An official from the Office of the Governor of Dakhliyah said the festival is designed to leverage the unique tourism and heritage assets of the region, including its historic sites and natural landmarks.

"This festival - to run until February 15- is a product of our commitment to social responsibility," the official stated.

"It reflects our efforts to promote the rich heritage and tourism potential of Bahla and neighbouring areas."

The festival will take place across multiple venues, including Naseem Park, Strawberry Farm, Harat al Bilad, Bahla Fort, Jabreen



With activities ranging from cultural showcases to outdoor adventures, the event promises an immersive experience that brings the region's historical treasures to life

Fort, Salout Fort, Misfat al Abriyeen, and Al Safa Heritage House in Hamra.

Each location will host a variety of activities and performances. A main stage equipped with advanced lighting, sound systems, and large screens will feature musical performances, concerts, and live shows.

Among the highlights is the International Circus, offering two thrilling two-hour shows featuring fire displays, acrobatics, live

entertainment, and animal performances.

For sports enthusiasts, the Bilad Sayt Marathon will provide a scenic race through mountains, valleys, and heritage villages, allowing participants to connect with the area's natural beauty.

Adventure seekers can also enjoy the Mountain Trail Adventures, a biking experience through rugged terrains and local villages. Participants will have the opportunity to engage with

the community and learn about the area's culture and history.

The festival will include a Heritage Forum, where visitors can explore traditional Omani life through interactive displays on local customs, archery, horse riding, and Omani literature. Workshops on first aid and self-defence will add an educational element to the festivities.

Adding a touch of international flair, a Russian Carnival will feature mobile performances by a professional troupe, entertaining festival-goers with creativity and humour.

A Consumer Exhibition will showcase over 50 small and medium enterprises, offering handmade products, Omani food items, and back-to-school essen-

tials. Food lovers can enjoy a wide selection of local and international cuisines available at food carts, cafes, and mobile stalls throughout the festival grounds.

"Our primary goal is to ensure that everyone enjoys the festival's offerings, from cultural displays to thrilling activities," the official added, emphasising the organisers' dedication to providing a seamless experience for all attendees.

With its diverse range of events and activities, the Bahla Winter Festival 2025 promises to be a landmark event, celebrating the region's heritage while offering exciting adventures and entertainment for visitors of all ages.

Sayyid Badr receives UAE's Federal National Council speaker

Muscat - H E Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, received Saqr Ghobash, Speaker of the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), in his office on Monday.

During his meeting, H E Sayyid Badr underscored the depth of the fraternal and historic relations between Oman and the UAE. These relations, he added, are based on close cooperation and joint coordination across various fields.

The two sides reviewed ways to enhance the partnership between the two countries, under-



lining the importance of exchanging legislative expertise to promote integration and advance bilateral cooperation. They also exchanged views on several regional and international issues of common interest.

The guest lauded the role of Oman in promoting regional and international peace efforts. He also reaffirmed the UAE's keenness to strengthening cooperation between the two countries in line with the shared aspirations.

The meeting was attended by several officials from both sides.

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Oman Design Week to kick off today

Muscat - Oman Design Week, a landmark event celebrating creativity and sustainability, will officially open at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre on Tuesday.

Held under the patronage of H H Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, the event will run until January 25, shining a spotlight on Omani talent and innovative design practices. Organised by Omran Group in partnership with the Oman Design Association, Oman Design Week is a key initiative under the 'CreaTourism' programme, which aims to empower local talent and integrate creative expression into Oman's cultural and tourism offerings.

The event features an exciting lineup of interactive exhibitions, large-scale art installations crafted from recycled materials, and hands-on workshops that connect participants with designers and artists. By blending Oman's rich cultural heritage with contemporary design and sustainable practices, Oman Design Week underscores the country's ambition to position itself as a hub for creativity and innovation in the region.

International conference in Muscat highlights role of nurses in healthcare

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The first-ever International Nursing Conference to be organised by any private hospital was held on Monday at Crowne Plaza Hotel in Muscat.

The one-day conference - organised by Burjeel Holdings - gathered nearly 300 nurses and medical professionals from private and government healthcare institutions across Oman.

Centred on the theme of 'Patient Safety and Quality Care', the conference highlighted the vital role nurses play in providing high-quality healthcare services.

The event featured nine keynote addresses and four expert panel discussions, with distinguished speakers from Oman and India. Topics covered in-

cluded occupational therapy, prevention strategies, leadership in nursing, and managing medical emergencies.

Anish Memon, Regional Manager Operations at Burjeel Holdings, underscored the importance of nurses in the healthcare system. "Nurses are the backbone of the medical fraternity, and their contribution is invaluable. This conference marks a significant step in enhancing their knowledge and professional growth. We are committed to making this an annual event to ensure continuous learning and skill development," he said.

The conference also served as a platform for education and collaboration among nursing professionals.

Bindhu Varghese, Regional

Nursing Director at Burjeel Holdings, emphasised the importance of ongoing education for nurses. "Nurses are the soldiers of healthcare. They not only support doctors but also implement medical practices with precision and care," she stated.

Bindhu added that events like these help nurses refine their skills, foster collaboration, and uphold the standards of patient care and safety. "By encouraging knowledge-sharing, we aim to strengthen the legacy of excellence in healthcare across the country," she said.

Burjeel Holdings announced plans to make the conference an annual initiative, reflecting its commitment to advancing professional development and enhancing the healthcare sector in Oman.

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Oman Broadband, Singapore firm to drive smart city growth

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Broadband Company and Singapore's ST Engineering have joined hands to advance smart city initiatives in the sultanate in alignment with the digital transformation goals of Vision 2040. The collaboration aims to develop cutting-edge digital infrastructure, improve residents' quality of life and enhance sustainability in urban development. Oman Broadband will provide advanced fibre optic infrastructure to support projects, while ST Engineering's Urban Solutions arm will offer expertise in smart mobility, utilities and city operations. Together, the two plan to implement integrated solutions to improve urban efficiencies and foster sustainable growth. Describing the partnership as



a pivotal step in Oman's digital transformation journey, Sultan bin Ahmed al Wahaibi, CEO of Oman Broadband, said, "This co-operation is a significant step towards developing digital infrastructure in Oman. By sharing technology and knowledge, we aim to achieve qualitative leaps in smart cities and innovative technical solutions." He added that Oman Broad-

band seeks to establish strong ties with global technology leaders like ST Engineering to create an integrated digital system that benefits various sectors. "The focus is on infrastructure and while helping position Oman as a regional hub for technology and innovation. Highlighting the importance of the partnership, Chew Men Leong, President of Urban Solu-

Oman Broadband Company and Singapore's ST Engineering will collaborate to develop cutting-edge digital infrastructure, improve residents' quality of life and enhance sustainability in urban development

smart solutions to enhance city efficiency and improve services for residents." The collaboration will also prioritise developing smart systems for managing energy, data and digital infrastructure. Wahaibi added that empowering Omani talent is a key component of the collaboration, tions at ST Engineering, said, "It reflects our commitment to harnessing digital technology to address complex urban challenges. We look forward to driving transformative smart city initiatives in Oman, promoting sustainable development and improving residents' quality of life."

Oman, Singapore celebrate 40 years of ties with special stamp

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman and Singapore marked four decades of diplomatic relations on Sunday with a celebration that underscored their enduring friendship and shared heritage. The centrepiece of the event was unveiling of a joint commemorative stamp - 'Muscat Street'. The stamp depicts an Omani street in Singapore, symbolising the historical and cultural connections between the two nations. K Shanmugam, Singapore's Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law, highlighted the importance of the milestone during his address. "There has always been strong support from both sides, and Singapore is pleased to celebrate this milestone with Oman. We also extend our heartfelt congratulations to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on the occasion of the Accession Day," he said. He noted that the diplomatic relations, rooted in the rich maritime histories of both nations, have evolved into collaboration in emerging technologies and economic partnerships. "The ties between Oman and Singapore have strengthened over the years through cooperation in various sectors."

Strategic dialogue
The 2nd Oman-Singapore



OCCI to host business forum on Wednesday

Muscat - Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) will host the Oman-Singapore Business Forum on Wednesday in Muscat. The event aims to foster deeper economic and trade relations between the two countries, focusing on strategic sectors such as oil and gas, renewable energy, logistics, technology, infrastructure and urban planning. The forum will present a valuable platform for investors, producers, exporters, importers, wholesale companies and government entities to explore trade and economic cooperation opportunities. It will also provide insights into potential joint ventures, initiatives and projects that could drive sustainable economic growth. Additionally, the forum will feature bilateral meetings between Omani and Singaporean business leaders, facilitating partnerships in the key sectors and opening new avenues for collaboration between the public and private sectors.

Strategic Dialogue was held in Muscat also on Sunday. Discussions focused on advanced technology, clean and renewable energy, food and water security, the digital economy, maritime security and cybersecurity. The Omani delegation was chaired by Sayyid Badr al-Busaidi, Foreign Minister, and Maj Gen Idris bin Abdulrahman al-Kindi, Secretary-General of National Security Council. The Singaporean delegation was led by Shanmugam and Dr Mohamad Maliki Osman, Second Minister for Foreign Affairs. The dialogue followed up on outcomes of His Majesty Sultan Haitham's visit to Singapore in December 2023, which marked a new phase of bilateral cooperation between the two countries. Both delegations commended the achievements of

past years and affirmed their commitment to furthering these gains and expanding prospects for mutual collaboration. The two delegations emphasised the importance of innovation and supporting joint projects, particularly in green hydrogen and solar energy, while exploring promising opportunities in artificial intelligence and sustainable smart city applications.

leaps in smart cities and innovative technical solutions." He added that Oman Broad-

Port Sultan Qaboos exceeds cruise ships target in 2024 by 41%

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Port Sultan Qaboos registered an important milestone in 2024 welcoming 190 cruise ships and exceeding its target of 134 vessels by 41%. The achievement underscores the port's growing role in Oman's expanding cruise tourism sector. Ahmed al Sawai, Director of Oman Vision 2040 Office at Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT), shared the figures during an interview with Oman TV. He highlighted ongoing efforts to enhance the port's capacity and appeal, led by Omran Group, which oversees its development. "Port Sultan Qaboos is one of three key ports in the sultanate that is actively working to attract tourists from around the world," he said, emphasising the strategic role of maritime tourism in Oman's broader tourism agenda.



A study commissioned by MHT has reinforced the significance of cruise tourism in boosting Oman's global tourism appeal. The ministry is implementing a short-term plan that involves leveraging 13 ports across the country to attract a higher number of international visitors. Looking ahead, Sawai highlighted developments in Muscat governorate, where 97 tourism projects have been launched under the government's 2021-2025 Five-Year Plan. Among these, 34 hotel projects have been completed, while 30 others are under construction. Sawai informed that the developments include eight integrated tourist complexes designed to offer a mix of accommodation, entertainment and leisure services, further contributing to the national economy.

Oman and Austria discuss economic cooperation

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, hosted a high-level Austrian delegation led by Andreas Reichhardt, Deputy Minister of Finance, in Muscat on Monday. The visit marks an important step in strengthening economic ties between Oman and Austria, focusing on collaborative opportunities in various strategic sectors. During the meeting, both sides explored investment opportunities in key sectors, including technology, clean energy, mining, vocational training and tourism. They also discussed ways to enhance trade exchange and economic cooperation, aiming to expand the economic base of both nations and strengthen bilateral relations to serve mutual interests. Rawas stressed the importance of furthering economic ties between the two countries, highlighting the diverse investment opportunities and incentives offered by Oman to open new avenues for collaboration between the public and private sectors in both countries.

MARKET WATCH

MSX30	4,616.88
Sensex	77,073.44

FOREX RATES
(RO1 equals)

India	224.61
Pakistan	723.56
Bangladesh	316.77
Philippines	151.90
Sri Lanka	771.535

Rates as on January 20

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS



Bitcoin hits historic high of \$109,000

The price of Bitcoin exceeded \$109,000 on Monday, hitting all-time high.

During the last 24 hours, the price of the largest cryptocurrency saw a low of \$99,400 and a high of \$109,110.

It was at \$70,000 level before the US elections in November 2024, and gained around 55% since Donald Trump's presidential election victory.

After Donald Trump's win in November 2024 elections, the market expects positive developments for cryptocurrencies, as he pledged that the US will be the "crypto capital" of the planet.

The market size of Bitcoin has recently been at \$21.14trn, according to Coinmarketcap figures, with a 24-hour trade volume of \$111.5bn.

Mashreq expands into Oman with tailored corporate banking solutions

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Mashreq, one of the leading financial institutions in the Middle East and North Africa region, has announced its entry into Oman, aiming to strengthen its position with a range of personalised financial services tailored to the sultanate's evolving corporate and public sectors.

This strategic move, which was unveiled at a press conference at the National Museum in Muscat on Monday, underscores Mashreq's commitment to contributing to Oman's Vision 2040, with ambitions to drive economic diversification and enhance Oman's standing in the global financial landscape.

Mashreq's entry into Oman will introduce a comprehensive suite of banking services, including treasury, global transaction banking, and sustainable finance. Through its innovative approach and robust operational structure, the bank aims to unlock value in critical sectors such as tourism, logistics, manufacturing, and renewable energy, in line with Oman's economic objectives.

According to Ahmed Abde-laal, Group CEO of Mashreq, Oman's strategic location and dynamic economic landscape make it essential to Mashreq's international growth ambitions. He said, "Our goal is to support Oman's economic objectives through tailored financial solutions that not only enhance re-



gional integration but also reinforce Oman's influence in the global financial ecosystem. Our commitment is to high-growth markets, leveraging trade, investment, and corporate banking opportunities while delivering an exceptional client experience based on convenience, accessibility, and ESG-driven initiatives."

Speaking at the press confer-

ence, Tarek el Nahas, Group Head of International Banking at Mashreq, said the bank's entry into the sultanate aligns perfectly with Oman's Vision 2040 and reflects their commitment to unlocking unprecedented value through corporate banking, sustainable finance, and digital innovation.

"Mashreq is deeply commit-

ted to pushing the boundaries of innovation within Oman's financial ecosystem. We are driven by the opportunity to contribute to key sectors, including tourism, logistics, manufacturing, and renewable energy. Innovation is at the heart of our mission. From digital onboarding to AI-driven analytics, Mashreq is dedicated to introducing cutting-edge solu-

tions that redefine banking in Oman," he said.

Nahas added, "Our expansive international footprint grants our clients access to some of the most strategically vital markets in the region. By combining global reach with deep local expertise, we navigate regulatory landscapes with agility, offering solutions that drive financial efficiency and resilience. This approach empowers clients to optimise their cross-border operations, capturing opportunities essential to long-term success in today's competitive market."

transformation, and a governmental focus on economic diversification and stability, as part of the ambitious national growth strategies of Vision 2040.

"We are inspired by this progress and see it as an opportunity to empower Omani businesses and government entities with cutting-edge financial solutions that drive economic value and long-term impact. By leveraging advanced digital platforms, artificial intelligence, and fintech collaboration, Mashreq will redefine banking experiences in Oman, ensuring they are not only

Mashreq's entry into Oman will introduce a comprehensive suite of banking services, including treasury, global transaction banking, and sustainable finance

Through advanced technology, Mashreq aims to support the next generation's entrepreneurial spirit, drive smart city development, and contribute to a competitive, knowledge-driven economy in Oman, Nahas said, adding, "Here in Oman, we envision a future where businesses can thrive, entrepreneurs can innovate, and financial resilience is accessible to all."

AlSalt Mohammed al Kharusi, Mashreq's Country Head for Oman, noted that the banking sector in Oman is poised for growth in 2025, supported by strong fundamentals, digital

efficient but also tailored to our clients' aspirations," Kharusi said.

Kharusi further said that Mashreq's expansion into Oman reinforces the bank's dedication to being a strategic partner in Oman's economic development.

"Our focus is on fostering a resilient generation of entrepreneurial talent and supporting the growth of a dynamic, knowledge-driven economy. We are fully committed to supporting Oman's national priorities, advancing growth, and contributing to a sustainable, prosperous future for generations to come," he added.

CBO issues treasury bills worth RO28mn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO), on behalf of the Ministry of Finance, announced on Monday the issuance of two tenders of government treasury bills worth a total of RO27.8mn.

In the first tender, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO0.3mn, with a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price was RO99.700 for every RO100, while the minimum accepted price was also RO99.700 per RO100. The average discount rate and average yield were 3.9107% and 3.9224%, respectively.

In the second tender, the value of the allotted treasury bills totalled RO27.5mn, with a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price was RO98.950 for every RO100, and the minimum accepted price was RO98.950 per RO100. The average dis-

count rate and average yield were 4.2115% and 4.2562%, respectively.

The interest rate on the repo operations with the CBO is 5.00%, while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with the central bank is 5.5%.

Treasury bills are short-term, highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, providing licensed commercial banks with an opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The CBO acts as the Issue Manager and offers the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase (repo) facilities.

Furthermore, treasury bills help promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may resort to this instrument whenever necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures.



Sohar Port and Freezone attracts \$4bn worth of new investment projects in 2024

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Total investments at Sohar Port and Freezone (SOHAR) reached an impressive \$30bn, with 2024 alone contributing over \$4bn in new projects.

Sohar Port and Freezone celebrated its 2024 performance on Sunday during the annual Business Reception, held under the theme 'Connecting Commerce, Creating Opportunities'. The event highlighted SOHAR's role as a cornerstone of Oman's economic development, directly contributing to the country's diversification goals under Oman Vision 2040.

Among the major agreements signed last year were a \$1.35bn polysilicon production facility – the largest of its kind in the Middle East – a \$1.6bn LNG bunkering project utilising solar energy, and a \$600mn agreement to establish Oman's first iron ore concentration plant. These projects highlight SOHAR's leadership in advancing innovation, renewable energy, and industrial development.

Operational performance also



Sohar Port's operational performance demonstrated resilience and growth, with over 3,000 vessel calls recorded in 2024. General cargo throughput increased by 77% compared to previous year and container volumes grew by 15%

demonstrated resilience and growth, with over 3,000 vessel calls recorded in 2024. General cargo throughput increased by 77% compared to the previous year, container volumes grew by 15%, and ship-to-ship operations rose by 19%.

Sohar Freezone saw significant achievements as well, with land occupancy reaching 85%, reflecting robust demand from both existing and prospective

tenants.

Commenting on SOHAR's accomplishments, CEO Emile Hoogsteden said, "Sohar Port and Freezone has become a catalyst for Oman's economic transformation and a model of innovation and sustainability. As we celebrate two decades of growth, we take pride in how SOHAR has built an integrated industrial and logistics ecosystem that attracts forward-think-

ing investments and drives global competitiveness. Moving forward, we will continue to align our efforts with Oman Vision 2040, fostering sustainable development and exploring new opportunities to propel Oman's position on the global stage."

Sohar Freezone's strategic growth was further emphasised by Acting CEO Mohammed al Shizawi, who stated, "Sohar Freezone has established itself as

a critical enabler for businesses seeking to thrive in a dynamic and interconnected environment. In 2024, we signed nine agreements covering 130 hectares of land and attracting \$1.8bn in investments, reflecting strong demand and trust in our ecosystem. Our investments in infrastructure, technology, and incentives ensure that all tenants, whether new or established, can unlock their full potential while contributing to Oman's economic development. The strong demand for land and facilities is a testament to the confidence businesses place in SOHAR Freezone as a hub for innovation and growth."

In 2024, SOHAR reinforced its sustainability commitment by joining the Alliance for Industry Decarbonisation and continuing the dialogue of the SOHAR Net Zero Alliance, bringing together 12 companies to collaborate on achieving net-zero targets. Other initiatives included expanding the use of biofuels and hydrogen to reduce maritime emissions and partnering with Metcore to enhance fuel accuracy and sustainability.

NOTICE

It is hereby announced that the Annual General Body Meeting of Indian Social Club, Sohar for the year 2024 followed by election 2025/2026 will take place on Friday 28th February 2025 from 5 P.M. onwards, at ISC Sohar Premises. Details are available on the website www.iscsohar.com as well as the Club Notice Board. For further information, please contact the undersigned.

Mr. Ravindran Ramabadrana

General Secretary

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Arab deputy finance ministers discuss fiscal policies, public finance

Abu Dhabi, UAE – Arab deputy finance ministers met on Monday in Abu Dhabi to discuss fiscal policies, digital transformation in public finance, as well as the adoption of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards, and the impact of financial policies on economic growth in the region. The discussions also touched on energy subsidy reforms in Arab countries, focusing on challenges and lessons learnt.

Organised by the Arab Monetary Fund, the meeting was attended by Fahad M Alturki, Chairman of the Arab Monetary Fund, as well as deputy finance ministers, experts from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The two-day meeting featured seven sessions on regional financial and economic issues. It will

wrap up on Tuesday with a session discussing the agenda for the 16th Arab Finance Ministers Council meeting.

Alturki opened the meeting with a speech emphasising the importance of this annual gathering in strengthening Arab cooperation and facilitating the exchange of experiences among members in financial policies.

He highlighted that these meetings provide an ideal plat-

form for addressing shared challenges faced by the Arab region amidst global economic changes. He stressed that exchanging expertise among Arab countries reinforce their ability to confront these challenges through collaborative and well-thought-out solutions.

He added, "Promoting cooperation among Arab countries will not only help achieve economic integration but also drive sustain-

able growth across the region. Through such meetings, we can boost our collaboration to improve financial policies, advance digital transformation initiatives, and strengthen governance within financial institutions.

The meeting featured a series of sessions addressing significant topics for the Arab region, including financial and economic policy experiences from various Arab countries.



Billionaires' wealth grew by \$2tn in 2024, says Oxfam

Istanbul, Turkey – The wealth of world billionaires increased by \$2tn in 2024 alone, or over \$5.7bn every day, three times faster than the previous year, according to a report published by anti-poverty organisation Oxfam International on Monday.

Meanwhile, the World Bank statistics showed that the number of people living in poverty, who are living on less than \$6.85 a day, has barely changed since 1990.

In 2024, the number of billionaires rose to 2,769, up from 2,565 in the previous year as their combined wealth increased from \$13tn to \$15tn in just a year.

The wealth of the world's 10 richest men grew on average by almost \$100mn a day – even if they lost 99% of their wealth overnight, they would remain billionaires – according to the report.

Oxfam predicted that the world would see at least five trillionaires a decade from now.

"The capture of our global economy by a privileged few has

reached heights once considered unimaginable. The failure to stop billionaires is now spawning soon-to-be trillionaires. Not only has the rate of billionaire wealth accumulation accelerated – by three times – but so too has their power," said Oxfam International Executive Director Amitabh Behar.

Large sums of money continue to go from the Global South to the nations in the Global North and their wealthiest inhabitants, perpetuating the wealth extraction dynamic that Oxfam's study refers to as "modern-day colonialism."

Many of the super-rich, particularly in Europe, owe part of their wealth to historical colonialism and the exploitation of poorer countries.

The Oxfam report suggests three ways for governments to reduce inequality and end extreme wealth: radically reducing inequality to end poverty, taxing the richest and abolishing tax havens, and ending the flow of wealth from South to North.

Anadolu Agency

Trump's trade policies may dampen rate cut prospects

Washington, US – Uncertainties over US President Donald Trump's economic policies dampen short-term rate cut prospects, despite the US inflation showing easing signs.

The US Consumer Price Index (CPI) climbed 2.9% on an annual basis and 0.4% month-on-month in December 2024, in line with market expectations, according to data released on Wednesday.

Market estimates show that Fed is certain to keep its policy rate unchanged at this year's first meeting, and it may go for its first rate cut of 2025 in June

The core CPI annual rate, excluding energy and food prices, fell to 3.2% in December 2024, down from 3.3% in the last three months and below estimates, while the monthly rate rose 0.2%, easing from 0.3% in the previous four months.

Since Trump's victory in November of last year, investors were relieved by the slowdown in core inflation and the best performance of the US stock market.

The US Producer Price Index (PPI) also came in below expectations at 3.3% on an annual basis and 0.2% month-on-month, data released on Tuesday showed.

The US Producer Price Index (PPI) also fell short of expecta-

US President Donald Trump



tions, coming in at 3.3% on an annual basis and 0.2% month-on-month, data released on Tuesday showed.

Bonds have been on an upward trend since last week due to concern over inflationary pres-

sure, but they fell following PPI and CPI data releases. The US 10-Year Futures declined 13 basis points to 4.65%.

Market estimates show that the Fed is certain to keep its policy rate unchanged at this year's

first meeting, and the bank may go for its first rate cut of 2025 in June.

Analysts say promising signs of inflation will not suffice to change the course of the Fed's rate cuts.

Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, told Anadolu that inflation continues to decline slowly and has returned to the Fed's target, except for the increase in shelter costs, while the biggest threat to inflation is Trump's promised tariffs and deportation policies, noting that a rate cut is not expected until later in the year, possibly in September.

Padhraic Garvey, regional head of research for the Americas at ING Financial Markets, told Anadolu that the better-than-expected monthly rates in core PPI and CPI for the two consecutive months have been positive, while the annual inflation is still high.

Garvey estimated that three 25-basis-point rate cuts may be on the horizon for this year, the first of which is more likely to be in June rather than March.

He noted that the rise in trade-weighted US dollars and bonds will dampen further growth of inflationary pressures, estimating that the Fed may find more room to cut rates in the second half of the year.

Steven Kamin, senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), told Anadolu that the inflation data has been encouraging, though a single-month slowdown may not be enough to make a notable change in the course of inflation, given the recent strong labor statistics.

Anadolu Agency

Eurozone inflation rises to 2.4% in December as energy costs edge up

Indrabati Lahiri

The year-on-year eurozone inflation figure for December has confirmed preliminary estimates coming in at 2.4%, according to Eurostat. That was the third consecutive month of growth and, in contrast with November's 2.2%, the highest figure since July.

December's figure was mainly because of base effects, as annual rates are no longer factoring in the fall in energy prices seen last year.

Energy costs inched up 0.1% in December, up from -2% in the previous month, making it the first positive figure since July. Services inflation also edged up to 4% in December, up from 3.9% in November.

On the other hand, alcohol, food and tobacco inflation dropped marginally, as rising prices for processed food, as well as tobacco and alcohol, was offset slightly by the falling prices of non-processed foods.

German inflation rose to 2.8% in December, up from 2.4% in November, while French inflation inched up to 1.8%, from 1.7% in the previous month. Italian inflation dropped to 1.4% in Decem-



Rising services prices in Eurozone were behind the boost in the December inflation figure, although they were offset by a fall in food, alcohol and tobacco prices

ber, down from 1.5% on the previous month.

The Eurozone annual core inflation rate came up to 2.7% in December, which was the same as the previous three months, while also being in line with analyst estimates. Core inflation excludes alcohol, tobacco, food and energy prices, because of their volatility.

German inflation has mainly been increasing because of higher food and services prices. In addition, energy prices have

been slower to come down, making inflation worse.

France has been hit by many of the same economic factors as Germany, with rising electricity tariffs also contributing to the problem. Ongoing supply chain issues and sluggish consumer and business confidence have made market conditions more difficult.

Italy's drop in inflation is mainly due to a fall in industrial goods' and services prices.

(Source: Euronews.com)

China announces new discovery of gold sources

Beijing, China – China has made significant breakthroughs in gold exploration, adding a remarkable 168 metric tonnes of new gold resources discovered from Inner Mongolia autonomous region, Gansu province and Heilongjiang province, the China Geological Survey (CGS) announced on Sunday.

According to China Daily, the CGS, a division of the Ministry of Natural Resources, has announced significant break-



throughs in mining activities. Notable findings include 102.4 tonnes from the Anbali North mining area in Gansu Province, 41.3 tonnes from the Hadamengou mining area in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, and 24.3 tonnes from the Baoxinggou mining area in Heilongjiang Province.

Funded by the central government, the gold exploration identified 47 target areas and submitted 35 recommended

areas since 2021, according to the CGS.

The CGS added that the newly identified areas have expanded the scope of gold exploration and deepened the understanding of national gold deposit patterns.

The breakthroughs in gold exploration will guide local enterprises in their future exploration, leading to significant regional economic and social development.

WAM

TikTok restores service after going dark in US, credits Trump's 'clarity'

Daniel Howley and Alexis Keenan

TikTok is back online in the US after the social media app went dark early Sunday when a new law banning the app took effect at midnight.

The Chinese-owned service welcomed users back after a 12-hour shutdown, with many Americans now able to access the app, according to a CNN report. In an alert, it said, "As a result of President Trump's efforts, TikTok is back in the US."

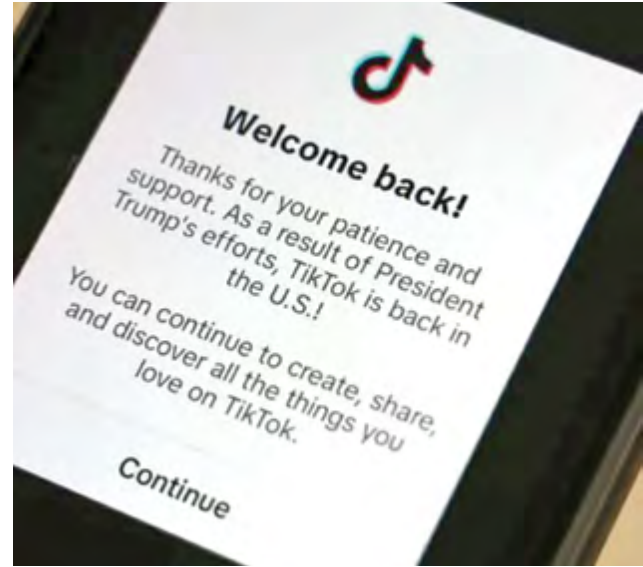
Beginning late Saturday, US TikTok users were shown a message saying the app wasn't available, citing the new law, scheduled to come in at midnight.

In a post on X Sunday afternoon, TikTok said it was process of restoring access to its US audience, and credited incoming

"In agreement with our service providers, TikTok is in the process of restoring service. We thank President Trump for providing the necessary clarity and assurance to our service providers that they will face no penalties providing TikTok to over 170mn Americans and allowing over 7mn small businesses to thrive."

In a social media post on Sunday, Trump asked tech companies to "not let TikTok stay dark" and reiterated his plan to issue a reprieve once he takes office.

"I will issue an executive order on Monday to extend the period of time before the law's prohibitions take effect, so that



we can make a deal to protect our national security," Trump posted. "The order will also confirm that there will be no liability for any company that helped keep TikTok from going dark before my order."

In a post on X Sunday afternoon, TikTok said it was process of restoring access to its US audience, and credited incoming

Trump also said he would like to see TikTok become a joint venture with 50% American ownership. TikTok's statement followed roughly two hours later.

The alert also mentioned Trump by name saying, "We

are fortunate that President Trump has indicated that he will work with us on a solution to reinstate TikTok once he takes office."

On its website earlier, TikTok told users they could still login to download their data. As of Sunday afternoon, that message had been updated to read: "We're working hard to resolve this issue. Thank you for your patience."

The latest notification said, "You can continue to create, share, and discover all the things you love on TikTok."

Still, many on Capitol Hill – not to mention outside experts – questioned whether Trump will have the authority to make good on these promises.

Some of Trump's closest political allies are also the most outspoken critics of TikTok, and have so far stood by the law that they passed last April with strong bipartisan margins.

(Source: Yahoo Finance)

Registration opens for ‘Green Sports’

Completing a 14-year journey in supporting Omani youth through local sports teams, Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in Oman, has launched the 2025 edition of its flagship CSR programme, Green Sports, on January 19.

The bank has invited all local sports teams to apply for the programme well before the deadline on February 15.

This year too, 20 sports teams from different governorates will be provided support in one of the four categories available to them, the bank informed.

The Green Sports programme continues to thrive each year, bolstered by the successes from previous editions and the positive turnout shown by local sports teams. The scope of support includes greening of football fields with natural or synthetic turf, floodlights and water desalination equipment in areas facing problems of water salinity. These support areas focus on empowering youth by enhancing sports infrastructure and nurturing their skills, along with fostering cultural and social development for the community.

All teams who are interested to participate in this year’s edition can submit their applications digitally.

All applicants should be able to showcase their positive im-



pact and contributions to the local community, the bank stated.

On this occasion, Talib Saif al Makhmari, Head, Community & Media Relations, Bank Muscat, said: “Corporate social responsi-

bility programmes form an essential pillar of Bank Muscat’s strategy of working continuously for the benefit of society. The launch of the 14th edition of the programme stands as a testament to its significance for local

sports teams and serves as clear evidence of the ongoing achievements made by the programme in empowering youth. We would like to encourage all teams who would like to apply for the support to submit their applications

through the specified link ahead of the deadline, and we wish them all the best of luck.”

The landmark Green Sports Programme is one of Bank Muscat’s CSR initiatives, which draws from the values of leadership and

partnership so as to create a positive impact on Omani society. The programme aims to develop and provide a sustainable infrastructure for sports fields in Oman. The facilities developed as part of the programme are

Bank Muscat has invited local sports teams to apply for its flagship CSR programme - Green Sports - before February 15. This year too 20 teams will get support from the bank

often used as a venue for other social activities by local communities, leading to stronger social bonding and positive behaviour among young people. It is a matter of great encouragement that Bank Muscat’s Green Sports programme has so far benefitted 203 teams with over 70,000 team members across the sultanate since its launch in 2012.

Local sports teams play a vital role in engaging young people of all ages. Recently, several new sports fields have been upgraded with new natural or synthetic turf, floodlights and water desalination equipment. Going forward, the Bank will enhance collaboration with all stakeholders to maximise the programme’s long-term benefits and optimise green spaces for community development.

Kaldi 850 opens new store in Sur

Kaldi 850, the renowned premium coffee brand celebrated for its premium coffee blends and exceptional customer experiences, has announced the grand opening of its 21st flagship drive-thru store, strategically located in Al Bar, Sur.

The new store signifies a significant milestone in Kaldi 850’s mission to bring its expertly crafted coffee closer to communities across Oman. The Al Bar location, designed with state-of-the-art features, offers a seamless drive-thru service, catering to the on-the-go lifestyle of its customers while maintaining the cozy ambiance that Kaldi 850 is known for.

Paul Biswajit, General Manager, of Kaldi 850, shared his excitement, saying “We are thrilled to open our latest flagship store in the vibrant Sur community. This expansion underscores our commitment to providing exceptional coffee experiences and meeting the growing demand for convenience and quality. We



look forward to welcoming coffee enthusiasts in Sur and beyond.”

To celebrate the grand opening, Kaldi 850 is offering exclusive promotions and giveaways for the first week. Customers visiting the Al Bar drive-thru can enjoy complimentary tastings of new menu items and special dis-

counts on Kaldi 850 merchandise.

Kaldi 850 invited the Sur community and coffee lovers across Oman to experience its newest flagship store and discover the exceptional flavours that have made it a beloved name in speciality coffee.

Abraj deploys hydraulic fracturing fleet for PDO

Abraj Energy Services, Oman’s leading oil and gas services provider, has announced the deployment of its second hydraulic fracturing fleet at Central Oman Gas Fields for Petroleum Development Oman (PDO).

This significant milestone underscores Abraj’s role as a premier provider of advanced hydraulic fracturing and well stimulation services, further enhancing Oman’s energy infrastructure.

Building on the success of its first fleet, deployed in 2019, the new fleet highlights Abraj’s commitment to supporting PDO’s operational excellence and sustainability goals. Hydraulic fracturing is a key technique for optimising well performance in tight and complex reservoirs. Leveraging state-of-the-art technologies, Abraj ensures efficient resource recovery while contributing to the long-term sustainability of Oman’s energy sector.

“The launch of our second fracturing fleet marks an impor-



New fleet strengthens Abraj’s position as a leader in hydraulic fracturing and well stimulation, driving innovation and productivity in Oman’s energy sector

tant milestone in our partnership with PDO,” said Zahran al Kindi, Chief Operating Officer of Abraj Energy Services. “Our proven capabilities in delivering advanced hydraulic fracturing

and stimulation services support Oman to maximize its energy resources while ensuring operational efficiency and sustainability.”

Sultan Makhmari, Senior Con-

tract Holder, PDO said, “The deployment of Abraj Energy Services second hydraulic fracturing fleet marks an important step in enhancing our operational capabilities, this collaboration demonstrates our shared commitment to deploying advanced technologies and practices that align with our sustainability and operational efficiency goals. Together, we are ensuring the continued optimization of Oman’s valuable energy resources.”

ROHM presents heritage and cultural traditions in Folk Music Festival

Affirming the enduring power of folk music, Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) hosted Folk Music Festival on January 16 and 17, a vibrant two-night celebration of global musical heritage.

The festival brought together extraordinary bands from Bulgaria, South Korea, and India, alongside a leading Omani folk group, to share their unique traditions with audiences in a magnificent display of culture, music, and choreography.

The Folk Music Festival highlighted ROHM’s ongoing commitment to bridging cultures through music and the arts. As an institution, ROHM continues to serve as a platform for artistic collaboration, promoting cultural understanding, and celebrating the richness of traditional musical expressions. As such, the Folk Music Festival has become an annual event and a beloved tradition, reinforcing ROHM’s role as a significant cultural beacon in the region and globally.



The audience experienced the technical mastery, creativity, and beauty of folk music in harmony at the outdoor maiden of Royal

Opera House of Musical Arts. The South Korean ensemble presented traditional Korean percussion, played on distinct

instruments, alongside the celebrated Korean fan dance. With bright pink fans and dresses, the dancers’ graceful movements

brought to life a piece inspired by Asian traditions, enchanting the audience.

The Bulgarian ensemble of-

fered dances from all ethnographical regions of Bulgaria, showcasing the country’s diverse rhythms and colourful traditions.

The Indian performing group recognized for their performances at India’s prestigious cultural venues and international folk festivals, gave a dynamic and colourful exploration of India’s vast folk music heritage.

Finally, the Omani group played a vital role in connecting the deep roots of tradition with the distinctive present of Oman, offering a powerful reflection of Oman’s own musical heritage.

Designed to be a celebration of cultural expression, the Folk Music Festival was an event where all ages came together, to immerse themselves in the enchanting world of folk music. Each performance is a testament to the deep connection between music and cultural identity, and a reminder of the power of music to unite and inspire.

ROHM’s annual Folk Music Festival continues to deepen cultural understanding and harmony through the universal language of music.

Madayn opens Al Mazunah economic exhibition; over 100 companies take part

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates 'Madayn' has inaugurated Al Mazunah Economic Exhibition and Forum in Al Mazunah Free Zone in Dhofar governorate on Sunday, bringing together over 100 local and global companies.

The inaugural event was held under the auspices of H H Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, and in the presence of Dr Ali bin Masoud al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), along with their excellencies, officials from public and private sectors, and investors from within Oman and abroad.

Organised by Madayn in co-operation with OPAZ and Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) in Dhofar, the event runs until Thursday and aims to strengthen trade relations between Oman and Yemen. It also serves as an ideal platform for companies to explore investment opportunities, build strategic partnerships, and expand their presence in regional markets.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Ahmed bin Khamis al Kasbi, Director General of Al Mazunah Free Zone, highlighted the event's significance as a premier platform to showcase the free zone's vast potential. Established as Oman's first free zone, Al Mazunah Free Zone serves as a gateway to Yemeni and regional markets. "Al Mazunah Free Zone has witnessed substantial

progress in infrastructure and electronic services in recent years, making the free zone a preferred destination for investors," Kasbi said, adding: "The free zone offers comprehensive facilities, including roads, electricity, water and telecom networks, in addition to warehousing and transport facilities. Its strategic location near Yemen's border positions the free zone as a key hub for regional trade and economic activity."

Additionally, Kasbi emphasised that the free zone's advanced electronic systems are designed to streamline operations, such as the 'Eddah System' for effective customs operations and logistics solutions, electronic gates for smooth movement of goods and individuals, and a one-stop service centre for integrated government and administrative services.

Additionally, the free zone features a dry port offering integrated customs and handling services, which eventually boost its logistics efficiency and trade movement. To encourage investment environment, OPAZ and Madayn have introduced key incentives that reaffirm the government's commitment to support investors, attract new investments and promote sustainable economic growth.

Kasbi hailed the key role played by the Royal Oman Police in implementing advanced systems to streamline security and administrative procedures, and recognised the constant cooperation of various government



into the Authority's commitment to the functions of 'planning and development', 'regulation and supervision', in addition to efforts undertaken in marketing, attracting investments, and operational acceleration through forging strategic partnerships.

Al Mazunah Economic Exhibition and Forum provides a significant opportunity for businesses to showcase their services and products, build strategic partnerships, and explore regional market opportunities. The event has attracted companies across var-

Al Mazunah Free Zone has witnessed substantial progress in infrastructure and electronic services in recent years, making the free zone a preferred destination for investors

AHMED AL KASBI



bodies to achieve a supportive business environment.

He further noted that the key incentives include exempting investors from accumulated debts by 30%, and a 50% reduction in rental costs for existing and new investors. These incentives aim at increasing the free zone's competitiveness and investment appeal.

On his part, Said Zabanoot, Director of Investor Services in

Al Mazunah Free Zone, said that this event comes along the lines of the free zone's vision to enhance the sultanate's competitiveness in attracting regional and global investments.

Moreover, Hilal al Rashdi, Investors Relations' Specialist at OPAZ, detailed the authority's overseeing of 22 economic and free zones spanning over 2,200sqkm.

Rashdi also provided insights

ious sectors, including logistics, automotive, manufacturing, import-export, food supply, and SMEs.

Notably, Yemeni traders and visitors can participate in the exhibition without requiring entry visas, needing only an electronic permit. This initiative reinforces the free zone's commitment to fostering trade collaboration and economic integration between the sultanate and Yemen.



MoE holds preparatory workshop for implementing 2024 projects

The Ministry of Education (MoE), represented by the Directorate-General of Projects and Services, implemented a preparatory workshop for the launch of the 2024 projects' implementation.

The projects include construction of 43 new school buildings in various governorates; in order to improve the educational infrastructure and provide a distinguished educational environment for school students.

The workshop included a number of working papers, the first of which came under the title: distribution of engineering teams to project packages. The second paper talked about the specifications, plans, and new developments in terms of framing opportunities, challenges, preparations, plans, specifications, and financial expenditures.

The third paper focused on ensuring the quality of implementation and supervision, by framing opportunities and challenges, alignment with the daily, weekly, and monthly report, the mechanism for verifying observations, supervision visits, appointing a design chief, an implementation chief, and a substitute for each in the event of their absence.

Health ministry opens Hay Asalam Polyclinic in S Mabela

The Ministry of Health on Monday marked the official opening of Hay Asalam Polyclinic in South Mabela, a significant milestone in the ongoing efforts to enhance healthcare services in Oman.

The opening ceremony was patronised by Badr Salem al Maamari, Secretary General of the Tender Board, in the presence of H E Suleiman Nasser al Hajj, Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs in MoH.

Dr Sameera al Maimani, Acting Director General of Health Services in Muscat Governorate, delivered a speech marking the occasion, highlighting the significant strides in Oman's healthcare sector.

She noted that the healthcare sector in the Sultanate of Oman is experiencing rapid development, and the opening of Hay Asalam Polyclinic underscores "our commitment to providing high-quality healthcare services that cater to the needs of both citizens and residents alike".



Dr Sameera emphasised that this new facility will serve as a model of excellence in healthcare, reinforcing Muscat's position as a leading health destination.

She explained that these projects contribute to alleviating the health burdens, enhance disease prevention, and promote early detection, which in turn reduces healthcare costs and improves

the quality of life.

The project's implementation phases and the services it will provide to the community were showcased during the ceremony, along with the key health projects in the Muscat Governorate.

At the end of the ceremony, the patron of the event and the attendees toured the polyclinic's departments, where they were briefed on its diverse services.

Hay Asalam Polyclinic, which took 14 months to complete and executed at a cost of RO650,000, offers a comprehensive range of healthcare services, including specialized primary care for chronic diseases and, hypertension, diabetes, asthma, maternal care, and family planning.

Furthermore, the facility has specialised clinics in behavioural medicine including adults and paediatrics psychiatry, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), neuropsychiatry, and psychotherapy.

The project further includes a laboratory, a pharmacy, two examination rooms, a meeting and training hall, a computer server room, and communication facilities.

The newly opened facility has 19 beds, with the capacity for expansion, allocated across departments of male, female, maternity and postnatal care, as well as observation.



Al Maha Rent-A-Car empowers and awards 11 Omani drivers

Al Maha Rent-A-Car on Thursday felicitated 11 Omani drivers, who successfully completed a 12-week English language course.

Conducted by British Training Services, the English language programme involved two hours of daily training and aimed to enhance the communication skills of the participants that enabled them to be equipped with both personal and professional growth.

"This achievement reflects our commitment to investing in

our people," said Gijo George, General Manager of Al Maha Rent-A-Car. "By equipping our team with essential skills, we are not only enhancing their capabilities but also contributing to Oman's vision of progress and prosperity," he stressed.

George underlined that this initiative aligns with the visionary guidance of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, emphasising the development of Oman's workforce to thrive in a globalised world.

AR Roshni Blasters lift trophy in GPS Day & Night Tournament

The GPS Presents Day & Night Tournament concluded in spectacular fashion, with AR Roshni Blasters clinching a thrilling 30-run victory against HCC in the final. The tournament, which featured 14 competitive teams, was a resounding success, showcasing exciting cricket and stellar individual performances throughout.

AR Roshni Blasters, after being put in to bat by HCC, posted a modest total of 91 runs. The innings was rescued by Umer Aslam's blistering cameo of 24 runs off just five balls, including four towering sixes. His knock



came at a crucial juncture when the team was struggling to maintain momentum. Waseem Jamar provided a steady

contribution with 35 runs at the top of the order.

Defending the total, AR Roshni Blasters' bowlers rose to the oc-

casion. Tahir Khalil delivered a stunning spell, taking 4 wickets for just 9 runs in his two overs, while Umair Ahmad chipped in

with two wickets. Umer Aslam further shone in the field, taking two vital catches, one of which was a spectacular effort that stunned the crowd.

HCC struggled against the disciplined bowling and were bowled out for just 61 runs, handing AR Roshni Blasters a well-earned victory. The tournament featured 14 teams battling it out in an intense competition filled with high-octane matches. The format ensured excitement in every game, and the final under the floodlights provided the perfect climax to the event.

The GPS Presents Day & Night

Tournament was not just about cricket - it was a celebration of community spirit. Thousands of fans turned up to support their favourite teams, creating an electrifying atmosphere at the GPS Riders Ground. The organizers, sponsors, and local authorities were commended for their efforts in making the event a grand success.

The success of this year's tournament has set a high bar for future editions. With AR Roshni Blasters etching their name in glory, the anticipation for next year's competition is already building.

Trump vows to act with ‘historic speed’

President-elect Trump pledged to act quickly to fix problems from the outgoing Biden administration

Washington, D.C., US - US President-elect Donald Trump pledged to act quickly after his swearing-in ceremony on Monday to fix problems from the outgoing Biden administration.

“That’s what we’re going to do, take back our country tomorrow at noon. The curtain closes on four long years of American decline and we begin a brand new day of American strength and prosperity, dignity and pride, bringing it all back once and for all,” Trump said on Sunday at a rally in Washington, D.C. on the eve of his inauguration as the 47th president of the US.

Trump and Vice President-elect J D Vance participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia before addressing the rally.

“We’re going to end the reign of a failed and corrupt political establishment in Washington, a failed administration,” he added.

Trump also promised to fight for Americans for the next four years.

“This is the greatest political movement in American history, and 75 days ago, we achieved the most epic political victory our country has ever seen,” he said.

Border security

Trump said his new administration will inherit ‘disasters’ at home and abroad, including inflation, high interest rates and a ‘catastrophic’ border crisis.

“Starting tomorrow, I will act



US President-elect Donald Trump also promised to fight for Americans for the next four years

Trump promises to declassify JFK documents

Washington, D.C., US - US President-elect Donald Trump promised on Sunday that he would declassify documents related to the assassinations of former President John F Kennedy and civil rights activist Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

“As the first step toward restoring transparency and accountability to government, we will also reverse the over-clas-

sification of government documents,” Trump told his supporters at the Capital One Arena in Washington, D.C.

“And in the coming days, we are going to make public remaining records relating to the assassinations of President John F Kennedy, his brother Robert Kennedy, as well as Dr Martin Luther King Jr,” he added.

Trump had previously also called for fully declassifying information related to JFK’s assassination, which happened in 1963.

In Sunday’s speech, he reiterated this commitment, stating that he would fulfill this promise once he took office.

Both Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr were assassinated in 1968.

with historic speed and strength and fix every single crisis facing our country,” he said.

On border security, Trump said that in his inaugural address on Monday, he will outline border security measures which ‘will be the most aggressive, sweeping effort to restore our borders the world has ever seen’.

“You’re going to see executive orders that are going to make (you) extremely happy, lots of them...We have to set our country on the proper course,” he said.

“By the time the sun sets to-

morrow evening, the invasion of our borders will have come to a halt, and all the illegal border trespassers will in some form or another be on their way back home.”

He also promised to remove members of the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua from the US, saying: “These are rough people, and they’re getting the hell out of our country.”

Trump stressed that the new

hostages have just been released...We’ve achieved more without being president than they’ve achieved in four years with being president,” he said.

Trump also reiterated his wish to end the ongoing war in Ukraine, stop the chaos in the Middle East, and prevent World War Three from happening.

California wildfires

Trump sent his love to everyone

Trump also reiterated his wish to end the ongoing war in Ukraine, stop the chaos in the Middle East, and prevent World War Three from happening

administration will ‘quickly’ reestablish control of the US’s sovereign territory and borders.

“We will expel every single illegal alien gang member and migrant criminal operating on American soil and remove the savage gang trend from the United States,” he said.

Gaza ceasefire deal

Turning to the ceasefire deal between Israel and the Palestinian resistance group Hamas, Trump said an ‘epic’ ceasefire agreement was reached as a first step toward lasting peace in the Middle East.

“And this agreement could only have happened as a result of our historic victory in November,” he added.

“I’m glad to report that the first

affected by the ‘terrible’ wildfires raging in California and announced that he will be visiting there soon to see the damage.

“We’re praying for you all. We love you all. We’re going to be there very soon. I’m going to go out there on Friday to see it and to get it moving back,” he said.

At least 25 people are confirmed dead as the Los Angeles wildfires continue to cause massive destruction in the US state of California, and forecasts for more heavy winds are expected to fuel the blazes in the days to come.

The two raging fires in the Eaton and Palisades areas have charred more than 40,000 acres of land, destroying over 12,300 homes, business, churches and schools.

Anadolu Agency



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz

Germany: Scholz calls for ‘stable ties’ with US

Berlin, Germany - German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Monday called for ‘stable ties’ with the US ahead of President-elect Donald Trump’s inauguration amid Berlin’s accusations that Trump advisor Elon Musk is trying to interfere in Germany’s upcoming general elections.

“The transatlantic relations are of utmost importance for Germany and for Europe. And NATO is the guarantor of our security. That’s why we need stable relations with the USA,” Scholz told the daily *Rheinische Post* newspaper.

The chancellor pointed out that he had already spoken to Trump on the phone twice.

“Those were very friendly and good conversations. Our advisors have also met several times. So, we’re not starting from scratch with the new administration,” he added.

Referring to Trump’s recent territorial claims towards Greenland, Canada and the Panama Canal, Scholz said that Europeans stand for rules that have long been agreed upon internationally.

“One rule is: Borders must not be moved by force,” the

German chancellor reiterated.

Scholz’s remarks came only a day after Andreas Michaelis, Germany’s ambassador to the US, expressed fears of a fundamental change in the US political system under Trump.

“Trump is pursuing an agenda of maximum disruption,” Michaelis warned in a confidential document.

Relations between Berlin and Washington have been strained as Musk, who is set to serve as an advisor to the incoming president, reiterated his strong support for the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party ahead of the February 23 general elections in Germany.

“If you are unhappy with the situation, you must vote for change. And that is why I’m really strongly recommending that people vote for AfD. That’s why that’s my strong recommendation. And I think this is simply the sensible move,” Musk said in an online talk on X with AfD leader Alice Weidel.

“In fact, I, as I’ve said publicly, I think only AfD can save Germany,” he added.

Anadolu Agency

South Korea dismisses 4 military commanders

Seoul, South Korea - South Korean authorities on Monday dismissed at least four senior military commanders from their positions over last month’s short-lived martial law decree by impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol, Yonhap news reported.

Lt. Gen. Yeo In-hyung, head of the Defence Counterintelligence Command; Maj. Gen. Moon Sang-ho, head of the Defence Intelligence Command; Lt. Gen. Lee Jin-woo, head of the Capital Defence Command; and Lt. Gen. Kwak Jong-keun, chief of the Army Special Warfare Command, were dismissed from their positions, according to Defence Ministry.

They are suspected of taking part in martial law operations on December 3, 2024 and the decision was taken in view of the ongoing legal review of possible



Police raided the presidential office on Monday to secure documents related to Yoon’s declaration of martial law

disciplinary measures for Army Chief of Staff Gen. Park An-su, who served as the martial law commander. Authorities are expected to officially notify the four commanders of the decision on Tuesday, when it takes effect.

Earlier, South Korean police

raided the presidential office on Monday to secure documents related to Yoon’s declaration of martial law.

The impeached president, meanwhile, was moved to a solitary cell at the Seoul Detention Centre after his formal arrest.

Yoon was transferred to the 12sqm cell at the detention centre in Uiwang, south of Seoul, on Sunday after the Seoul Western District Court issued a warrant for his formal arrest, according to Shin Yong-hae, commissioner general of the Korea Correctional

At least four senior commanders were dismissed from their positions over last month’s short-lived martial law decree

Service.

His cell, which is known to usually hold five or six people, is similar in size to those where past presidents have been detained, Shin told lawmakers. Yoon is the country’s first sitting president to be formally arrested after a Seoul court issued a warrant on Sunday to detain him for an extended period over his botched martial law bid last month.

Anadolu Agency

China executes man for car rampage that killed 35

Beijing, China - China has executed the man who killed 35 people by driving his car into a crowd at a sports centre in November, marking the deadliest public attack in the country in a decade, CNN reported, citing state media reports on Monday.

Fan Weiqiu, 62, was executed shortly after being sentenced to death by a court in Zhuhai, China, a southern city where the attack occurred. This execution came just over three weeks after the verdict, CNN reported.

The car rampage in Zhuhai took place on November 11, when Fan, enraged by his failed marriage and perceived unfair divorce settlement, drove his off-road vehicle into a crowd of people exercising at the Zhuhai Sports Centre. Police later found Fan in the car, attempting to harm himself with a knife, and took him to a hospital.

The court deemed Fan’s ac-



tions extremely cruel and his motives vile, noting that the consequences were severe and had caused significant harm to society. This incident resulted in the highest death toll from a public attack in China since 2014, when a series of assaults occurred in Xinjiang.

The attack prompted Chinese

President Xi Jinping to call for harsh penalties, labelling the attack as ‘extremely vicious’, as reported by CNN. News of the executions was met with widespread approval on social media platforms like Weibo, where related hashtags gained millions of views and became trending topics.

According to CNN, in recent months, China has experienced a rise in violent incidents targeting random individuals, including children. These attacks have raised concerns as the country’s economic growth slows, unsettling a population used to low levels of violent crime and widespread surveillance. In re-

sponse, authorities have increased security measures and called for swift, severe punishment for offenders to discourage future incidents, CNN reported.

On the same day, another man was executed in Wuxi, an eastern city in China for killing eight people in a stabbing spree on a college campus in November. Xu Jiajin, 21, was a recent graduate of the vocational college and was reportedly motivated by frustration over failing exams, not receiving a graduation certificate, and dissatisfaction with his internship compensation.

Although China does not provide detailed information on the number of executions, it is believed to have the highest execution rate in the world, with thousands of people executed and sentenced to death each year, according to CNN, citing Amnesty International.

ANI

GAZA CEASEFIRE

Israel releases 90 Palestinian prisoners

Ramallah, Palestine - Israel released 90 Palestinian detainees early on Monday from Ofer Military Prison in the occupied West Bank as part of a prisoner exchange agreement with Hamas.

Palestinians gathered in the town of Beitunia, near Ramallah, in the occupied West Bank to welcome them

Israeli soldiers intervened by firing tear gas and sound bombs intermittently at the crowd, who were using fire to stay warm due to the cold.

As the time neared 1am, a large number of Israeli military jeeps and bulldozers raided Beitunia.

After firing tear gas and sound bombs, Israeli military jeeps began to drive the Palestinians away from the area.

Shortly after the raid on Beitunia, a bus carrying Palestinian detainees under the protection of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) departed from Ofer Military Prison.

It proceeded from Beitunia towards Manara Square in Ramallah, where the Palestinian detainees were handed over.

Missing detainee causes delay
The Palestinian Prisoners' Media Office issued a state-



The 90 Palestinian detainees released included 69 women, eight male minors and 12 men sentenced for relatively minor offenses

ment indicating that during the inspection of the released prisoners' names, it was discovered that one female detainee was missing.

As a result, technical teams communicated with mediators and the Red Cross to put pressure on Israeli forces to adhere to the agreed-upon prisoner list.

Shortly after, the detainees were able to proceed on their journey.

Israel's Channel 12 later reported that the issue was resolved and that the detainees had departed.

The 90 Palestinian detainees released included 69 women, eight male minors and 12 men

sentenced for relatively minor offenses.

Israeli media reported that 78 of the Palestinians released from Ofer Military Prison were from the occupied West Bank, while 12 were from occupied East Jerusalem.

Palestinians gathered in Beitunia, and from a hill over-

looking Ofer Military Prison, they waited for the convoy carrying the released Palestinian detainees to begin moving.

Activity in front of the prison only increased the excitement of the waiting crowd.

In addition, the Israeli army used drones to launch tear gas canisters at Palestinians who

Israeli media reported that 78 of the Palestinians released from Ofer Military Prison were from the occupied West Bank, while 12 were from occupied East Jerusalem

between Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas, 90 Palestinian detainees were released in exchange for three Israeli women detainees who had been freed the previous day.

The military wing of Hamas, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, delivered the three Israeli women detainees to a Red Cross team in the evening, marking the first phase of the ceasefire and prisoner swap agreement.

Aid trucks enter Gaza

Meanwhile, some 634 trucks loaded with humanitarian aid entered the Gaza Strip under a ceasefire deal since Sunday, a Palestinian source said on Monday.

"Some 310 aid trucks reached northern Gaza, including fuel, medical supplies, food supplies, vegetables and fruits, while 324 trucks arrived in southern Gaza," the source with Gaza's Interior Ministry told Anadolu.

Anadolu Agency

Hamas accuses Israel of barbarity

Istanbul, Turkey - Palestinian resistance group Hamas said on Monday that the health condition of freed Palestinian prisoners reflected Israel's 'barbarity and fascism'.

"Images of the three female captives showed that they were in full physical and psychological health, in contrast to our prisoners whose appearance showed signs of neglect and exhaustion," Hamas said in a statement. "This vividly illustrates the vast difference between the values and ethics of the resistance and the barbarity and fascism of the occupation," it added.

Footage showed the freed Israeli captives in clean and tidy clothing and carrying 'gift bags', while signs of abuse and torture appeared on the faces of Palestinian women released from Israeli prisons.

"We congratulate our people, our nation, and freedom advocates worldwide on the liberation of the first group of our prisoners from the (Israeli) occupation prisons," Hamas said. "The joyous scenes of our



The appearance of prisoners showed signs of neglect and exhaustion, Hamas said in a statement

people raising victory signs while welcoming their freed prisoners reaffirm popular support for the resistance and underscore its deeply rooted place in their hearts.

"The massive turnout of our people to greet the freed prisoners, despite the repressive measures of the occupation, is a declaration of defiance and an expression of their thirst for

freedom and the liberation of land and holy sites," it added.

The ceasefire and prisoner exchange deal took effect on Sunday, suspending Israel's genocidal war on the Gaza Strip.

The 3-phase deal includes a prisoner exchange and sustained calm, aiming for a permanent truce and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

Nearly 47,000 Palestinians

have been killed, mostly women and children, and over 110,700 others injured in Israel's genocidal war on Gaza, according to local health authorities.

The Israeli war has left more than 11,000 people missing, with widespread destruction and a humanitarian crisis that has claimed the lives of many elderly people and children.

Anadolu Agency

Israeli forces kill Palestinian teen during West Bank raid

Ramallah, Palestine - Israeli soldiers killed a Palestinian teenager and wounded two others during a raid late on Sunday in the West Bank.

The Palestinian Ministry of Health announced in a brief statement that 14-year-old Ahmad Rashid Rushdi Jazar was shot to death in the town of Sebastia northwest of Nablus.

In the southern West Bank, the Palestine Red Crescent Society said its teams transported two injured people to the hospital. One was a 17-year-old boy with a gunshot wound to the hand and the other was an 11-year-old child injured during clashes in the town of Idhna.

Eyewitnesses told Anadolu that the Israeli army raided the town for about two hours before withdrawing. Clashes erupted during the raid, with the use of live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas.

Over the past few years, the Israeli military has conducted



regular raids in the West Bank, which have escalated with the beginning of the war on Gaza on October 7, 2023. Palestinians have also been violently attacked by illegal Israeli settlers.

At least 859 Palestinians have since been killed and over 6,700 injured by Israeli army fire in the occupied territory, according to the Health Ministry.

In July 2024, the International Court of Justice declared Israel's decades-long occupation of Palestinian land illegal and demanded the evacuation of all settlements in the West

Bank and East Jerusalem.

Israeli soldier killed

Meanwhile, an Israeli soldier was killed and four others were injured in an 'operational activity' in the northern West Bank, the army said on Monday.

A military statement said that one of the injured soldiers was in serious condition.

The army said the casualties occurred during an 'operational activity' in the Menashe Brigade zone, without specifying the nature of the activity.

Anadolu Agency

Rebuilding Gaza: Enormous costs and complex challenges ahead

Istanbul, Turkey - As the Gaza Strip lies in ruins from Israel's ongoing military offensive, the task of rebuilding the Palestinian enclave will be one of the most formidable reconstruction efforts in modern history.

Since October 7, 2023, relentless Israeli airstrikes and bombardments have decimated Gaza's infrastructure, leaving its 2.3mn residents facing catastrophic suffering and destruction. Israeli forces have killed or wounded more than 157,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children, and reduced to rubble thousands of homes, schools, and hospitals.

Now, following a recently brokered ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas, global attention turns toward

the daunting challenge of reconstructing Gaza.

The agreement's third phase prioritises rebuilding Gaza under the supervision of several countries and organisations, and experts caution that the road ahead is fraught with complex obstacles - from the logistical nightmare of debris removal to the enormous financial burden of reconstruction.

Scale of destruction

Covering just 360sqkm (139 square miles), the Gaza Strip has endured destruction reminiscent of the world's most devastating wartime events, such as the bombing of Dresden in World War II or the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A damage assessment



This file photo shows residents inspecting around the rubble of the building in Rafah, Gaza on December 22, 2023

from the United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT) in September reported that two-thirds of all structures in Gaza had sustained damage.

"Those 66% of damaged buildings in the Gaza Strip account for 163,778 structures in total. This includes 52,564 structures that have been de-

stroyed, 18,913 severely damaged, 35,591 possibly damaged structures, and 56,710 moderately affected," read the report.

The UNOSAT assessment in

The agreement's third phase prioritises rebuilding Gaza under the supervision of several countries

September had Gaza governorate as the worst affected region, with 46,370 structures impacted, while Gaza City had 36,611 structures damaged, including 8,578 totally destroyed.

A previous UN report in April 2024 estimated that around 370,000 housing units had been damaged by Israeli bombardment, with 79,000 completely destroyed.

Balakrishnan Rajagopal, the UN special rapporteur on housing, has separately said that more than 60-70% of Gaza's housing stock has been obliterated. In northern Gaza, this figure skyrockets to 82%.

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)-led Shelter Cluster reports that nine out of ten homes in Gaza have been damaged or completely destroyed, alongside critical infrastructure like hospitals, schools, and water facilities. UNOSAT, in collaboration with the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), also found that 'approximately 68% of the permanent crop fields in the Gaza Strip exhibited a significant decline in health and density in September 2024'.

Anadolu Agency

INDIA

RG Kar rape, murder case: Sanjay Roy gets life term

Kolkata, West Bengal - The Sealdah Civil and Criminal Court has sentenced life imprisonment to the accused Sanjay Roy in the RG Kar rape and murder case on Monday. Along with this, the court has also slapped a fine of Rs 50,000 on him.

During the hearing of the case, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) sought 'capital punishment' for the accused.

Explaining the penalties of the section, the court said to Sanjay Roy: "I told you the previous day the charges you were convicted against and the charges that have been proven against you."

When asked about his charges, Roy claimed that he has not done anything and is being 'falsely implicated'.

"I have not done anything, neither rape nor murder. I am being falsely implicated. You have seen everything. I am innocent. I already told you that I was tortured. They made me sign whatever they wanted," he said.

The lawyer of the accused argued that even if the case is 'rarest of rare', there should be scope for reformation. He said: "The court has to show why the convict is not worth reformation or rehabilitation... The public prosecutor has to present evidence and give reasons why the person is not worth reformation and should be completely eliminated from society..."

However, the victim's family



Sanjay Roy, a civic volunteer at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, was the accused in the crime

lawyer said: "I want the death sentence as maximum punishment..." The father of the victim had demanded harshest punishment to the accused. He said their fight will continue on the streets and in the courts.

"On Saturday, the judge said that the harshest punishment would be given (to the accused).

We have full faith in the judge. Our fight will continue in the courts and streets," the father of the deceased doctor told ANI.

Meanwhile, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said that her government has cooperated with the investigation in the RG Kar rape and murder case and they always

wanted the victim to get justice.

Banerjee said this moment before Sealdah Civil and Criminal Court began hearing in the RG Kar rape and murder case.

"We have cooperated with the investigation...we had demanded justice but judiciary had to run its course so that's why it took this much time but we al-

ways wanted the victim to get justice," CM Mamata Banerjee said.

On Saturday, Sealdah Civil and Criminal Court pronounced Sanjay Roy guilty in the rape and murder case of a trainee doctor. The court said sections 64,66, 103/1 of BNS have been framed against the accused.

"There is a complaint against the accused that he went to RG Kar Medical College and Hospital and went to the seminar

The father of the victim had demanded harshest punishment to the accused. He said their fight will continue on the streets and in the courts

room, assaulted and murdered the lady doctor taking rest there," the court said.

The case, which involves the rape and murder of a trainee doctor whose body was found on August 9 in the hospital's seminar room, sparked widespread protests. After the incident, Sanjay Roy, a civic volunteer at the hospital, was arrested in connection with the crime.

ANI



'Daredevils' in action at Kartavya Path in New Delhi on Monday (ANI)

Daredevils set new world record for highest human pyramid

New Delhi - The Motorcycle Rider Display Team 'Daredevils' of the Indian Army, achieved an extraordinary feat on Monday at Kartavya Path, New Delhi, by creating a World Record for the highest human pyramid on moving motorcycles.

The formation, measuring an impressive 20.4 feet and comprising 40 men on 7 motorcycles, covered a distance of two kilometres on Kartavya Path from Vijay Chowk to India gate.

The Motorcycle Rider Display Team, known as the 'Daredevils' is from the Corps of Signals, which has a long history of accolades, and earned international acclaim for its outstanding performances.

With this latest achievement, the team now boasts an incredible 33 World Records, including entries in the Guinness Book of World Records, Asia Book of Records, and Limca Book of Records.

The Daredevils were flagged in at India Chowk by the Signals Fraternity, including the Head of the Arm of the Corps of Signals, Lieutenant General K V Kumar, amidst cheers and motivation to boost morale for the contingent and to celebrate their tremendous feat. Since its inception in 1935, the Daredevils have conducted over 1,600 motorcycle displays across India, captivating audiences during prestigious events.

ANI



Rehearsal, ahead of the Republic Day parade, was in full swing at Kartavya Path in New Delhi on Monday (ANI)

Republic Day parade: ALH not participating this year

New Delhi - Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh on Monday clarified that the indigenously designed and developed Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) will not be participating in this year's Republic Day flypast.

"The ALH will not be participating in the parade but a variety of other 39 aircraft will be taking part and 12 different formations will be displayed," Singh told in a press conference here.

After a crash of an ALH belonging to the Coast Guard in Gujarat's Porbandar on January 5, the armed forces grounded the entire fleet of the twin-engine choppers. The fleet contains around 330 ALH choppers. Three Coast Guard personnel lost their lives in the crash.

The defence secretary said that more and more wider participation of society and culture would be brought in this year's

Republic Day parade. "The military and martial character of the parade is being maintained but wider and wider participation of society and culture would be brought in," he said.

Meanwhile, MI-17 V-5 choppers, All Terrain Vehicles of different types, Pinaka multi-barrel rocket launcher systems and Apache attack helicopters took part in the rehearsals for the Republic Day parade on Monday at Kartavya Path.

In view of the enhanced security arrangements ahead of Republic Day on January 26, the security checks for passengers have been further intensified by CISF across the Metro stations till January 27.

Meanwhile, in line with the objective to increase 'Jan Bhagidari' in events of national importance, approximately 10,000 special guests have been invited

to witness the 76th Republic Day Parade at Kartavya Path. These architects of 'Swarnim Bharat', with diverse backgrounds, include best performers in various fields and those who have made best use of the schemes of the government.

Sarpanches, whose villages have achieved targets in selected government initiatives have been invited. A national-level competition was announced by Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances among panchayats. Panchayats which have achieved targets in at least six flagship schemes were selected as special guests.

PM-JANMAN mission participants, Tribal artisans/Van Dhan Vikas Yojna members, ASHA workers, MyBharat volunteers have also been invited.

ANI

Jaishankar to attend Trump's inauguration

New Delhi - External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will represent Prime Minister Narendra Modi as his Special Envoy at the inaugural function of President Donald Trump in Washington, D.C.

The External Affairs Minister is carrying a letter from the Prime Minister for President Trump, sources said.

They said that the general

practice has been to send Special Envoys of the Prime Minister to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Heads of State and Government.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh attended the swearing-in ceremony of the President of Nigeria in May 2023 and the then Minister of Earth Sciences Kiren Rijiju attended the swearing-in ceremony of the

President of Maldives in November 2023.

Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari attended the swearing-in ceremony of the new President of Iran in July 2024.

Minister of State for External Minister Pabitra Margherita attended the swearing in ceremony of the President of Indonesia and of

the President of Mexico in October last year. The then Minister for External Affairs Raj Kumar Ranjan Singh had attended the swearing in ceremony of the President of the Philippines in June 2022.

The stage is set for a grand ceremony leading up to the US President-elect's swearing-in on Monday.

ANI

Girlfriend sentenced to death in Sharon Raj murder case in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala - S S Greeshma, the accused in the high-profile Sharon Raj murder case, has been sentenced to death by the Neyyattinkara Additional Sessions Court on Monday. The court gave capital punishment to the accused who had poisoned her boyfriend Sharon Raj, a 23-year-old man, with pesticide-laced ayurvedic decoction.

The 3rd accused, Greeshma's uncle Nirmalakumaran Nair, has been sentenced to three years of rigorous imprisonment.

While pronouncing the quantum of punishment, the court observed: "The act of inviting Sharon over under the pretext of sexual intimacy and subsequently committing the crime cannot be ignored. It is the State's responsibility to ensure punishment for criminal acts. Evidence such as Sharon recording a video of the suspicious juice, despite Greeshma asking him not to record, indicates that he suspected something was



wrong."

The court further observed that Greeshma betrayed the trust of her boyfriend Sharon, manipulating him emotionally. She has no evidence to support claims of mental pressure from Sharon, the court said, adding, 'Greeshma's defence that Sharon had physically abused her also lacks any proof. On the contrary, Sharon had never blamed her in any messages or

communications. While Sharon remained committed to the accused, she was simultaneously in contact with her fiancé'.

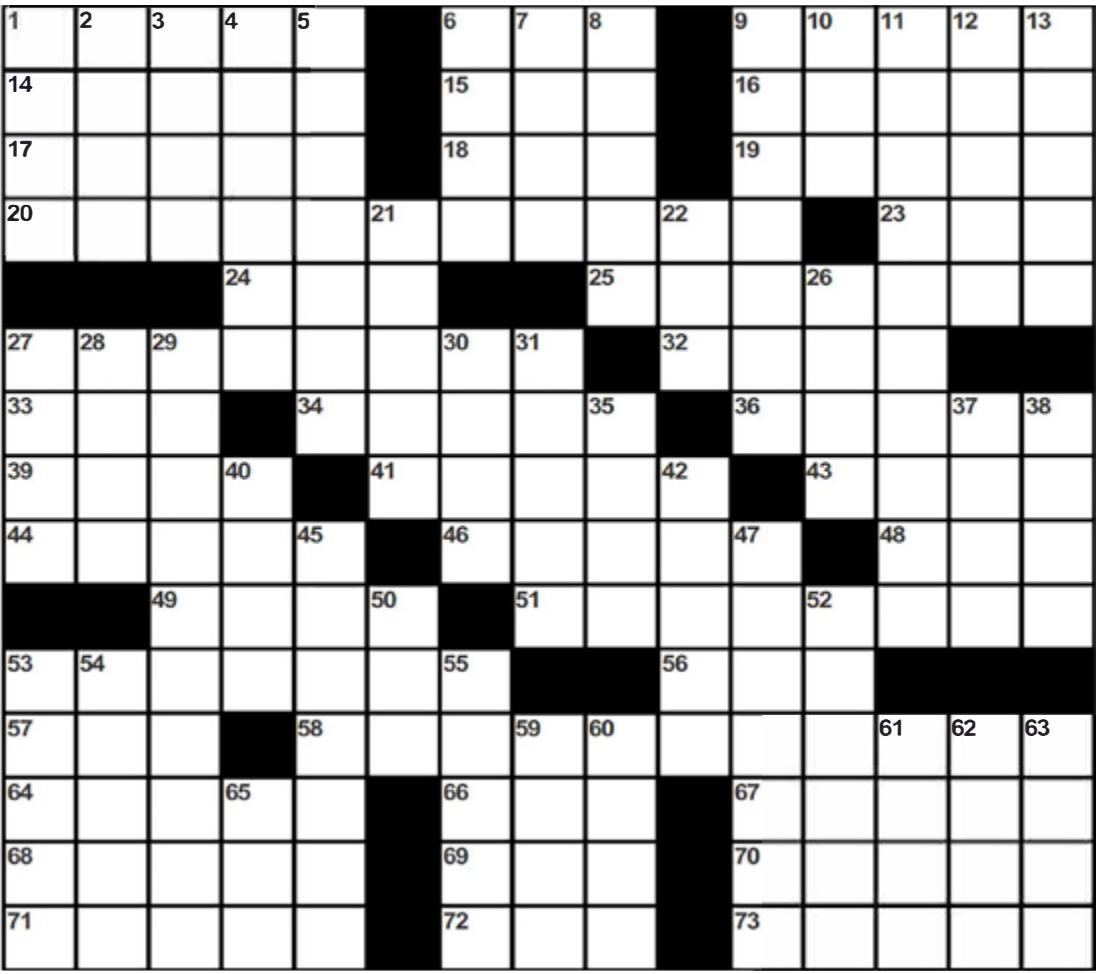
"It is evident that the crime was premeditated and carried out without provocation. Greeshma's cunning attempts to cover up her crime were unsuccessful. Her argument of youthful age cannot be considered in light of the severity of the crime. The evidence suggests

that Sharon was unaware of Greeshma's plan to murder him," the court observed.

Greeshma faced multiple charges under the Indian Penal Code (IPC). She has been booked under sections 302 (Murder), 364 (Abduction with intent to commit murder), 328 (Administering poison with intent to harm life), and 203 (Obstruction of justice by providing false information) of the IPC.

The case dates back to October 14, 2022, when Greeshma allegedly poisoned her boyfriend, by mixing poison in herbal medicine at her residence. Sharon passed away 11 days later

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Major airline
 - 6) Major broadcaster
 - 9) An encouraging word
 - 14) Type of manual
 - 15) Fond du_, Wisc.
 - 16) Downy duck
 - 17) Supernatural life forces
 - 18) Opposite of hence
 - 19) Cathedral topper
 - 20) Method of pairing off for safety
 - 23) Lennon's wife
 - 24) " he drove out of sight"
 - 25) Locks
 - 27) Make a connection with
 - 32) Splashy party
 - 33) Make public
 - 34) Impressionist's specialty
 - 36) Easy wins
 - 39) It's in the eye of the beholder
 - 41) "When I Need You" singer Leo
 - 43) Ballpoint pen inventor
 - 44) Swarms, as with life
 - 46) "I'll_ a good word for you"
 - 48) Baby's first word, maybe
 - 49) Musician's jotting
- DOWN**
- 1) Asinine
 - 2) Biblical birthright seller
 - 3) Advance
 - 4) Business person
 - 5) Nineveh was its capital
 - 6) Kind of court
 - 7) Grocery store staples
 - 8) Patton portrayer
 - 9) Sully
 - 10) Tear violently
 - 11) "Goodbye, friend"
 - 12) "From the Earth to the Moon" author
 - Jules
 - 13) Cookies nearly 2
- inches in diameter
- 21) Oozes
 - 22) .000000 l joule
 - 26) Messy dresser
 - 27) Angler's supply
 - 28) Leprechaun's land
 - 29) Amity
 - 30) It's a tide
 - 31) Become free of moisture
 - 35) Abominable snowman
 - 37) Figurehead's place
 - 38) Sometime today
 - 40) L.A. or Houston problem
 - 42) Become ready to pick
 - 45) Asterisked
 - 47) Notorious London prison
 - 50) Australian bird
 - 52) Takes exception to
 - 53) Legislate
 - 54) In a high-minded way
 - 55) "Come in!"
 - 59) Off-limits thing
 - 60)_-European
 - 61) "I smell_!" ("Something's fishy here!")
 - 62) Not wild at all
 - 63) "Will there be anything_?"
 - 65) "_ moment, please"

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Your greatest strength is usually your independent spirit, but today the greatest strength lies in numbers. Try not to go it alone. Get your friends or coworkers to help you and you'll feel back in control in no time. Things could start happening more quickly than you'd planned, so having a team will help you feel more confident about how the day will go. You'll end up being the MVP of any team you're on.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

If you're worried about a friend, your concern might be unwarranted. Don't act on your feelings just yet. You can't get involved with something you're unsure of, especially when it involves people you care about. Just hang back and keep an eye out for new developments. Your compassion might be well intentioned, but it could be interpreted as meddling or even annoying.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

If you're going to be working with contracts or other types of legal documents today, make sure you have the time you need to concentrate on them. You'll need to read all the fine print very carefully, because there could be an unpleasant surprise waiting there for you. It's not a huge problem, but it is something that could cause a bigger time drain than you can handle now.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- 01. A species of elk is named after which of these US presidents?**
- A. John Kennedy
 - B. Theodore Roosevelt
 - C. Jimmy Carter
 - D. Abraham Lincoln



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

For the next month or two, you'll become more deeply involved with a group of people you've been seeing a lot of lately. These individuals will become increasingly dear to you and you to them. The chances are good you'll share either a spiritual, artistic, or musical connection. The chances are even better that one of them will appeal to you for a lot more than platonic reasons.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Someone could give you an awful lot of attention today, but you might not be comfortable with it. If so, your best tactic is to try to ignore them. You can't try to fake it, but there is also no need to hurt their feelings or embarrass them with overcomplicated apologies. Instead, just carry on with normal relations and sooner or later they'll get the picture that you aren't interested.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

You're certainly aware of the power of words, but you're about to receive a crash course on just how powerful they can really be. For the moment, you'll begin to realize just how important each and every word you utter really is to one person in particular. Take this very seriously. And if you're not interested in them, don't pretend you are, not even if you think it might be fun to flirt a little.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Finding a new way to organize your stuff is easy today. You have all the creativity you need to see things in a new way, and you have the time to figure out a better way to put things together. If things at work or school have been confusing lately, you can figure out how to make them make sense again. You're coming out of the clouds, and while it might have taken longer than you wished, it is happening.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Taking all the credit for something you did all by yourself isn't bragging; it's justified! You can't be humble just because you're afraid that by accepting praise you'll be making it too obvious that someone who should have helped you didn't. How other people react to your growing positive publicity is their issue. It's nothing you should take responsibility for. If they have a hang-up.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

You've been thinking about making a change for a while now. You haven't mentioned it to anyone, but you've been mulling it over and doing a bit of investigating in private. It may soon be time to tell the world about what you're planning, especially if you've already decided to make a major move. If your announcement leaves your dear ones speechless, keep in mind that while you've grown used to the idea.

- 02. Tableland, large flat elevated areas sitting above cliffs, is sometimes called what?**
- A. Flatlands
 - B. Plains
 - C. Mesa
 - D. Plateau



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Your eyes might have good vision right now, but what about your heart? Take some time to think about what you really want emotionally in your love life, career, and personal development. Are you neglecting two of these areas in favor of the third? Balance is necessary in order to be contented, so it's wise to perform an internal audit every once in a while. The Universe is waiting for you to tell it what you want for yourself so it can help put you on that path.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

You deserve to indulge in a bit of silly distraction. You've been itching for some fun shenanigans for a while but haven't had the time or opportunity until today. Let your mischievous side come out to play for a little while, and you'll soon be able to cook up some interesting capers. As long as you're not hurting anyone's feelings, you have a green light for practical jokes and even a little teasing. Try to get others in on the fun.



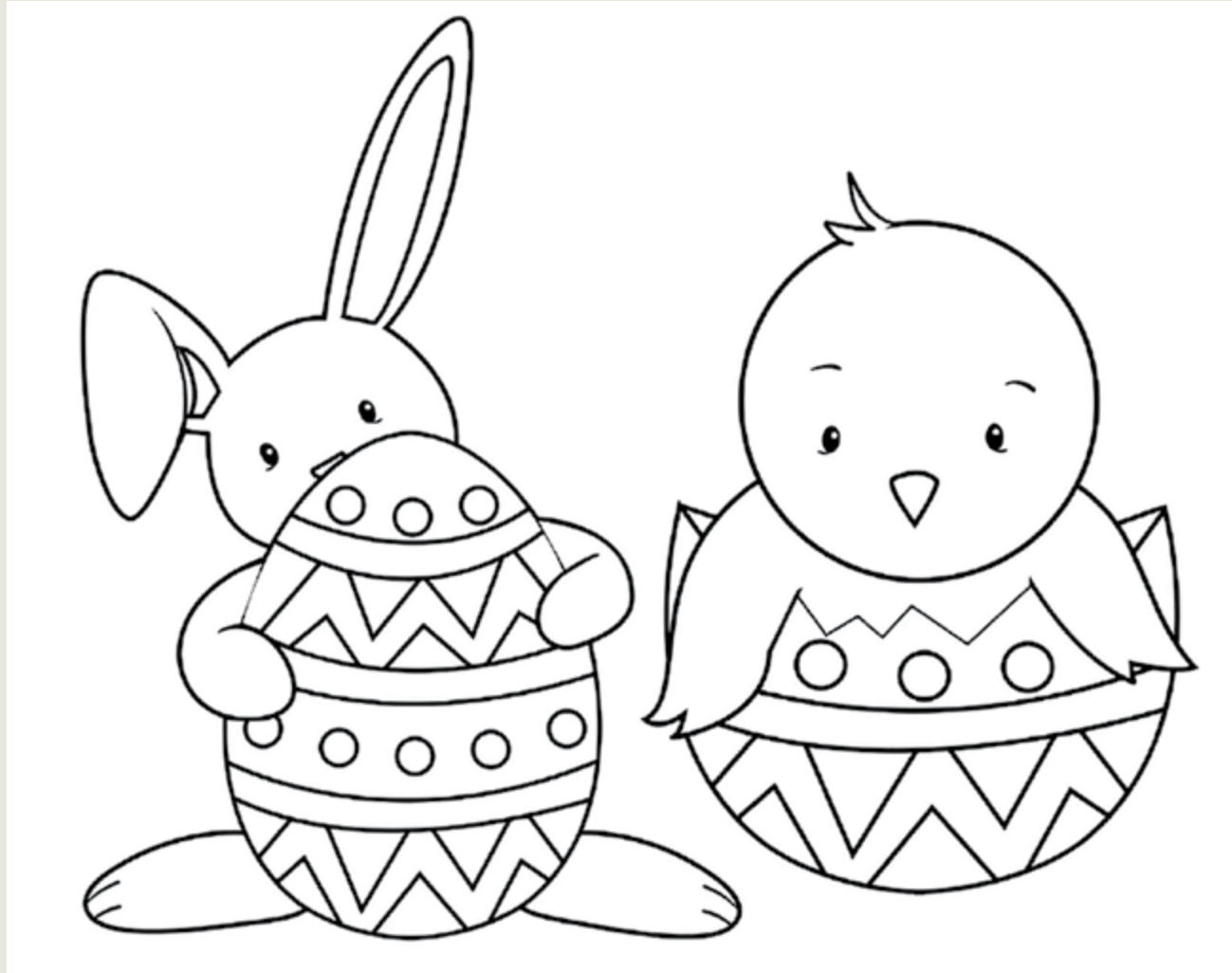
PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Like most people, you still have some unresolved feelings about a person from your past. But unlike most people, you're ready to look at these issues squarely. They've been holding you back and you know it. This is a big and healthy step for you to be taking, so if you need more time, take it. Let friends know that you're working through some stuff so they won't worry if you start to pull back from the social scene.

- 03. Who does the character Sancho Panza accompany?**
- A. Don Quixote
 - B. The Lone Ranger
 - C. Calamity Jane
 - D. James Bond

Answers: 1.B 2.C 3.A

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

P	L	P	Y
A	R	I	L
O	N	I	L
A	O	T	T

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

SOLUTION

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

Return to normalcy

Man City back in top four after thrashing Ipswich

Ipswich, England - Manchester City's Phil Foden scored twice and created another goal in an outstanding first-half display as they hammered Ipswich Town 6-0 at Portman Road on Sunday to roar back into the Premier League's top four.

The comprehensive win moved City to 38 points and into fourth position on goal difference ahead of Newcastle United, but they are still 12 points behind leaders Liverpool, who have a game in hand, and six behind Arsenal and Nottingham Forest.

Ipswich, who remain 18th on 16 points, had a couple of good early chances but City shook off the shackles of recent poor performances with a superb display of attacking football, and once they got the first goal, there was no way back for their hosts.

It came in the 27th minute as Jeremy Doku combined with Kevin De Bruyne, and he in turn worked the ball on for Foden to take a touch before drilling it home to break the deadlock.

That trio tormented the Ipswich defence as Mateo Kovacic doubled the lead three minutes later. Doku was again involved down the left, feeding the ball for Foden to set up Kovacic, and the Croat needed no second invitation to fire into the net from the edge of the box.

City continued to attack down the left and their perseverance paid off in the 42nd minute as



Phil Foden and Mateo Kovacic were both on target for Manchester City in their big win against Ipswich Town on Sunday

Foden added his second, his shot squirming under the body of Ipswich keeper Christian Walton and across the line.

There was no let-up after the break as Doku scored four minutes into the second half before setting up Erling Haaland, who signed a lucrative 10-year contract in midweek, to make it 5-0.

Substitute James McAtee

completed the rout in the 69th minute with a looping header, much to the delight of coach Pep Guardiola, whose side look to be back to something resembling their best.

Foden was left in no doubt as to how well his side had played in brushing aside Ipswich.

"Probably the best this season, in terms of all-round play. Keep-

Probably the best this season, in terms of all-round play. Keeping possession at important times and we defended well. One of our best performances this year.

PHIL FODEN

ing possession at important times and we defended well. One of our best performances this year," he told Sky Sports. "We are building momentum, keeping players fit is important. I put it down to people being in better shape and the

team is bonding better."

City may be back, but Foden is not making any wild predictions about reining in Liverpool.

"You never know what can happen. The aim is to stay in the top four," he said.

‘We are back to doing things that define this team’

Ipswich, England - Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola said his side were back to their old selves following a 6-0 demolition of Ipswich Town on Sunday that moved them into the Premier League top four.

City put their struggles over the last two months behind them as Phil Foden scored twice and set up another goal and Erling Haaland also got on the scoresheet in a much-needed win that moved them up to fourth on 38 points.

"We are really pleased, we are back to doing things that define this team for the last 10 years. Really pleased for the three points and to climb into qualification for the Champions League for next season," a beaming Guardiola told Sky Sports.

After some less-than-convincing efforts either side of Christmas, City finally found their groove against Ipswich, and the Spanish coach was impressed with how his side played.

"Much better, maybe not our best, but closer with the consistency we have in our game ... everyone with the ball was clever, quicker, faster, everyone is related. You cannot be quick, wise and good if

Pep Guardiola



you are not connected defensively," Guardiola said.

For Ipswich, who remain in 18th place in the table on 16 points, the drubbing was a valuable footballing lesson.

"We didn't execute our gameplan how we wanted to. You can never write them off. It was always going to be tough, and we wanted to give a good account of ourselves - we probably didn't do that," defender Dara O'Shea said.

"We need to regroup, look back on our mistakes and go again. The main thing is to learn from it, and we cannot get too down on it. There is massive belief in this group and the club."



Ruben Amorim

‘We are the worst team in the history of Man United’

Manchester, England - Manchester United manager Ruben Amorim labelled his side possibly the worst in the club's history after a 10th Premier League defeat of the season at home by Brighton & Hove Albion on Sunday.

United's 3-1 defeat leaves them in 13th place in the standings and on course for their lowest finish in the Premier League.

Brighton cruised to victory and United have now managed 11 points from a possible 33 since Amorim joined from Sporting in November. It is the first time since 1989-90 that they have lost 10 of their first 22 games of the league season.

"Imagine what this is (like) for a fan of Manchester United. Imagine what this is (like) for me," Amorim told Sky Sports.

"We are getting a new coach that is losing more than the last coach (Erik ten Hag). I have full knowledge of that.

"(But) I am not going to change, no matter what. I know we can succeed, but we need to survive this moment. Because I'm not naive and I know that we need to survive now.

"We are being the worst team, maybe, in the history of Manchester United. I know that you want headlines, but I'm saying that because we have to acknowledge that and to change that. Here you go, your headlines."

The 20-times English champions are as close to the relegation zone as the top eight with 26 points from 22 games. Their worst finish in the Premier League era was last season when they ended in eighth.

I haven't lost belief, says Postecoglou

Liverpool, England - Under-pressure manager Ange Postecoglou remained confident that he can turn around Tottenham Hotspur's season despite a 3-2 loss at struggling Everton on Sunday.

Postecoglou's injury-hit side crumbled in the first half conceding three goals, and a late rally failed to salvage what would have been a flattering point.

It was Tottenham's 12th defeat in the Premier League this season, only the sixth time Spurs have lost as many as 12 games from their first 22 matches and the first since 1997-98.

With Tottenham down in 15th place and closer to the relegation zone than the top half, Australian Postecoglou appears to be on increasingly thin ice with the club



Ange Postecoglou

reportedly linked to several possible replacements.

He again lamented injuries after defeat at Everton, saying he only had 11 fit players to start the game after suffering another blow in the build-up with striker Dominic Solanke ruled out with an injury picked up in training.

Asked whether his faith in his team was wavering, the 59-year-old said: "No it doesn't. If you look at the situation we're in, it will eventually dissipate. I certainly hope and believe it will.

"We'll give ourselves the opportunity to get consistency in performance and results. I certainly haven't lost belief or determination to turn it around and the players showed in the second half that they haven't either."

Calvert-Lewin 'played like a proper number nine'

Liverpool, England - Everton coach David Moyes labelled Dominic Calvert-Lewin a "proper number nine" after the England striker inspired his side to a vital 3-2 Premier League victory over Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday.

In front of England manager Thomas Tuchel watching on from the Goodison Park stands, Calvert-Lewin ran sorry Spurs ragged all afternoon, scoring the opener, his first in 17 matches in all competitions.

The strike moved the 27-year-old to third in Everton's Premier League all-time top goalscorers list, behind Romelu Lukaku and Duncan Ferguson, finding form at the right time as Moyes, starting his second spell in charge of the Merseyside club, attempts to stave off relegation.

"If we use Dominic as an ex-



Dominic Calvert-Lewin

The whole team looked a different outfit today. We played well, passed it around well. We gave it away a lot, which we need to eradicate.

DAVID MOYES

ample, I think he had three chances in midweek," Moyes said. "Today he had the same, got his goal and could have had more. If a striker is getting his chances then it is a good thing. The goal will give him great confidence.

"People keep telling me he has not been getting many chances.

Well, he has had his chances in the last two games, he has his goal.

"The biggest thing today is he played like a proper number nine at times today. He made the centre halves worried, he was a threat, he was challenging, winning a good percentage of his aerial duels. He got involved in everything, a lot of really good things today."

The victory almost turned sour in the second half, as two late Spurs goals threatened to deny Moyes his first win since returning to Goodison, but they held out for a vital three points.

"The whole team looked a different outfit today," Moyes added. "We played really well, passed it around very well. We gave it away a lot, which we need to eradicate."



Carlo Ancelotti

‘Mbappe is the best centre forward in world’

Madrid, Spain - Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti was delighted with Kylian Mbappe’s performance as the Frenchman scored twice in a 4-1 win over visitors Las Palmas on Sunday that lifted the defending champions to the top of the LaLiga standings.

The Italian coach said that he was never in doubt that the 26-year-old forward was going to find his form despite a slow start in the Spanish capital after arriving from Paris St Germain, playing in a more centralised role up front.

“(Mbappe is) the best centre forward in the world, there should be no doubts as to whether he could play in that position,” Ancelotti said on Sunday. “He is a great striker who is very good playing in the centre, rather than on the wing, because that way he can make the most of his unique runs, with speed and technique.”

Following a tough week in which they were booed by home fans after a 5-2 loss to Barcelona in the Spanish Super Cup and an extra-time 5-2 win over Celta Vigo in Copa del Rey, Real conceded 25 seconds after kick-off against Las Palmas. However, guided by an inspired Mbappe, they managed to fight back. “In times of difficulty, it is necessary to be self-critical and positive in order to move forward,” Ancelotti said. “There is criticism and criticism. The booing at the Santiago Bernabeu hurt, because the fans are not happy, but it motivates. It was an useful wake-up call for the team, who have put in a good performance.

“Football is like that, but I’m still a bit confused because I’ve heard that we play very bad football but here we are, LaLiga leaders.”

TOP GUN FIRES AGAIN

Mbappe hits brace as Real thrash Las Palmas to lead LaLiga standings

Madrid, Spain - Kylian Mbappe was in inspired form, scoring twice to guide Real Madrid to a comeback 4-1 win over visitors Las Palmas on Sunday that lifted the champions to the top of the LaLiga standings.

Real leapfrogged Atletico Madrid, who were stunned 1-0 at lowly Leganes on Saturday, to sit top on 46 points, two ahead of their local rivals in second, with

It was an important win for us because we took advantage of what happened to Atletico and Barcelona on Saturday, we wanted to win and we won

KYLIAN MBAPPE

third-placed Barcelona trailing by seven points after they were held to a 1-1 draw by Getafe.

Carlo Ancelotti’s side were shocked as Las Palmas took the lead 25 seconds after kickoff when Fabio Silva stroked home a Sandro cross from close range, but Real piled on the pressure and Mbappe equalised from the penalty spot in the 18th minute, after Rodrygo was fouled inside the box.

Missing Vinicius Jr for the first



Real Madrid’s Kylian Mbappe celebrates his goal against Las Palmas on Sunday

of two league games due to suspension after his red card against Valencia, Mbappe took the responsibility of providing Real’s attacking impetus, playing one of his best all-round games since arriving in the Spanish capital from Paris St Germain last year.

Mbappe was seemingly everywhere on the pitch and linked well with Jude Bellingham and Rodrygo, forcing Las Palmas goalkeeper Jasper Cillessen to work hard to keep Real at bay.

Mbappe ran past three defenders and fired a bullet shot from the edge of the box that Cillessen brilliantly kept out, but Lucas Vazquez brought down the rebound and put it on a plate for Brahim Diaz to tap into the empty net for Real’s second goal in the 33rd minute.

Mbappe extended their advantage three minutes later with a fine first-time effort into the top corner from a cross by Rodrygo, who scored the fourth on a quick counter-attack in the 57th minute.

Las Palmas were reduced to 10 men when substitute Benito Ramirez received a straight red card for a studs-up tackle on Lucas Vazquez in the 64th minute. Despite Real taking their foot off the gas, they still had three efforts by Mbappe, Bellingham and Federico Valverde ruled out by the VAR for offsidess in the build up.

“It was an important win for us because we took advantage of what happened to Atletico and Barcelona on Saturday, we wanted to win and we won,” Mbappe said. “To concede an early goal is difficult but the team’s reaction was brilliant.”

Inter beat Empoli to keep pace with Napoli

Milan, Italy - Inter Milan beat Empoli 3-1 at home on Sunday to keep pace with Napoli at the top of the Serie A table.

Lautaro Martinez opened the scoring with a curling shot after 55 minutes, Denzel Dumfries added a second with a powerful header from a corner in the 79th, and Marcus Thuram sealed the win 10 minutes later after Empoli had reduced the deficit.

Inter are second in the table with 47 points, three behind leaders Napoli but with a game in hand. Empoli are 14th with 20 points.

The hosts controlled the first half, carving out several opportunities to break the deadlock, but their lack of precision in their finishing kept the game goalless at the break.

Martinez sparked early ex-



Inter Milan’s Denzel Dumfries scores against Empoli on Sunday

citement for Inter with a bicycle kick from a free kick, but Empoli keeper Devis Vaszquez reacted brilliantly to save his effort.

Martinez went close to

putting Inter ahead five minutes before halftime, when a bouncing ball slipped past the Empoli defence, but his half-volley from close range clipped the post.

Inter’s Argentine captain got his goal after 55 minutes, receiving a pass outside the box before unleashing a precise curling shot that grazed the fingertips of Vaszquez, at full stretch, as it went into the net. Dumfries doubled the lead with a powerful header from a corner that bounced into the ground and up into the top corner.

Inter, who had assistant Massimiliano Farris in the dugout with coach Simone Inzaghi banned from the touchline after accumulating yellow cards, took their foot off the pedal after Dumfries’ goal.

Empoli briefly threatened a comeback when Sebastiano Esposito, on loan from Inter, pulled one back in the 84th minute, controlling a cross and finishing from close range.



Dele Alli

Former Spurs star Alli signs with Serie A side Como

Como, Italy - Former Tottenham Hotspur and Everton midfielder Dele Alli has signed an 18-month deal with promoted Serie A side Como, with an option to extend for an additional year, the Italian club said.

The 28-year-old former England international has 194 Premier League appearances, having scored 51 goals and 34 assists. He joined Everton in January 2022 after eight years at Spurs but only managed 13 outings due to recurrent injuries. Alli last played for the Merseysiders in August 2022 as his injury issues continued. He was also loaned out to Turkish side Besiktas for a season after which he focused on recovery.

“The club believes in Dele’s potential and is committed to helping him rediscover his best

The focus will be on providing Dele with a supportive environment where he can integrate into the squad

CESC FABREGAS

form. His experience and leadership qualities will undoubtedly benefit the squad,” Como manager Cesc Fabregas said in a statement.

“The club recognises his exceptional talent and is excited to bring him into the team. The focus will be on providing Dele with a supportive environment where he can gradually integrate into the squad.”

‘Besiktas project seems a little bit like Man United’

Istanbul, Turkey - New Besiktas manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said Sunday he took the Turkish Super Lig club’s job offer because it reminded him of his last managerial stint at Manchester United.

The 51-year-old Norwegian has agreed to a deal until the end of next season, with an option to extend for another year. It is his first managerial role since being sacked by United in 2021.

Solskjaer took over as Manchester United’s caretaker manager in December 2018, with the team sixth in the standings, replacing Jose Mourinho (now Fenerbahce manager) for the remainder of the season.

The Norwegian earned a three-year deal after a run of 10 wins out of 13 league games. He guided United to third and second-place Premier League finishes and a Europa League final.



Ole Gunnar Solskjaer

However, a poor run of form led to his departure in November 2021 with United in seventh place in the league standings. “I’ve been outside football for a little while, as a boss,” Solskjaer told reporters.

“But I’ve been working in UEFA and I’ve been following football as well as this club... This project seems a little bit like Manchester United for me. We were sixth, then we become third and then second. And this is step

by step.

“And of course we’re here to win, so hopefully we can make it faster. But we have to be realistic. And yes, I had many offers, but as I said before, it had to be the right offer worth me moving away

from my perfect life.”

Besiktas, who have won the Turkish Super Lig title 16 times, are currently sixth in the standings. They have been without a permanent head coach since Giovanni van Bronckhorst left in November.

“You need to feel that heart-beat racing again, because (you ask) ‘do you have the energy?’ and the project that the President and the board have been talking to me about it was the right thing I needed now,” he added.

“I’ve been following United (since I left) and it’s difficult when it goes down. You need to just turn the boat and hopefully we can turn the boat quickly here.”

Solskjaer praised the club’s young talent like Semih Kilicsoy (19-years-old) and Mustafa Hekimoglu (17). “A little bit unfair to compare with Erling Haaland,” he added.



Gael Monfils (L) with Ben Shelton after the match

I was already close to the limit, says Monfils

Melbourne, Australia - Veteran Gael Monfils has rolled back the years in recent weeks with a string of incredible performances, but the Frenchman said he had exceeded his limit after retiring hurt from his fourth-round Australian Open match against Ben Shelton on Monday.

Monfils, 38, became the oldest ATP title-winner ever with his victory in the Auckland Classic, before dumping fourth seed Taylor Fritz out of the Australian Open last week.

However, his matches at Melbourne Park have been far from straightforward, with a total of over 12 hours spent on court and his first-round meeting with Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard lasting five sets.

"At the end of the day, it's been a very long tour for me, playing a lot of matches, spending a lot of hours," Monfils told reporters after retiring while trailing 7-6(3) 6-7(3) 7-6(2) 1-0.

"Of course, some days are tougher. Today was one where I think I was already very close to the limit, and I think I passed it, unfortunately...

"When you win, win, win, win, oh, to lose is not easy. I had a great week in Auckland. I won Auckland. I was running to take the flight. The next morning I was in practice already. Then practice again. Then play four hours al-

most against Giovanni."

Monfils embraced Shelton at the net after making the decision to retire and was given a standing ovation by the crowd at the Margaret Court Arena, which was conducted by the 22-year-old American.

"I love Ben. I love him. This kid is amazing. He's full of energy. He's a great guy, great kid. Of course, it's always too bad to play someone that you love, but we put the fighting spirit," Monfils said.

"That's why I still want to make it tough for him, but at the end, of course, now I'm rooting for him. He's a guy that I really appreciate spending time with him, talking with him, sharing anything. We laugh. He's just an amazing kid."

Monfils was cheered on during the match by wife and Ukrainian 28th seed Elina Svitolina, who defeated Veronika Kudermetova 6-4 6-1 in the women's singles earlier on Monday.

The Frenchman said Svitolina was likely more stressed than he was, adding: "It's more stressful because you're not in control, you want to help, and you can just help with talking, but it's different."

"Because when you play yourself, you really want to help sometimes."

INNER STRENGTH SHINES THROUGH

Sinner battles illness to reach Australian Open quarters

Melbourne, Australia - Jannik Sinner battled through illness and reached the quarterfinals of the Australian Open on Monday but the physical demands of Grand Slam tennis proved too much for French veteran Gael Monfils and American teenager Learner Tien.

Iga Swiatek was in excellent shape as she continued her bid for a maiden title at Melbourne Park and sixth major by downing lucky loser Eva Lys 6-0 6-1, but Elena Rybakina could not shake off a back problem and fell 6-3 1-6 6-3 to Madison Keys.

Monfils, 38, was forced to retire with his own back issue while



Jannik Sinner serves to Holger Rune during their round of 16 match on Monday

I wasn't feeling really well. I think we saw that today, I was struggling physically. Came here as late as possible. I knew that it was going to be very, very difficult today.

JANNIK SINNER

trailing American young gun Ben Shelton 7-6(3) 6-7(3) 7-6(2) 1-0, ending an inspired run at the year's first Grand Slam after his Auckland triumph.

The stifling heat did not help defending champion Sinner when he started struggling physically in the second set of his

fourth-round clash with Dane Holger Rune on a steamy afternoon at Rod Laver Arena.

The top seed did not want to go into detail on what was ailing him but admitted to having dizzy spells before a lengthy medical timeout in the third set that proved a turning point in his 6-3 3-6 6-3 6-2 victory.

"I wasn't feeling really well," said 23-year-old Sinner, who equalled the Italian record set by Nicky Pietrangeli by reaching his 10th Grand Slam quarter-final.

"I think we saw that today, I was struggling physically. Came here as late as possible. I knew that it was going to be very, very difficult today."

Sinner will next face local hopeful Alex de Minaur who defeated American Alex Michelsen.

Unseeded Lorenzo Sonego made it two Italians in the quarterfinals when he defeated hobbling 19-year-old American qualifier Tien 6-3 6-2 3-6 6-1.

Keys will next play a familiar foe in Elina Svitolina, who brought a "little light" to war-torn Ukraine by beating Russian Veronika Kudermetova 6-4 6-1 in the opening singles match.

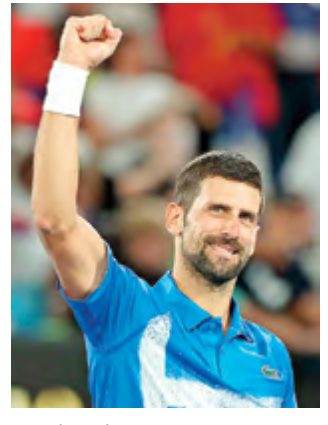
The 30-year-old Ukrainian was 4-1 down in the first set but rallied for a comfortable victory before writing the message "the Spirit of Ukraine" on the camera before she left the court.

"I was extremely motivated to win today, so that people in Ukraine wake up to good news," said Svitolina, who moved to 7-0 against Russian players since the 2022 invasion of her homeland.

Alcaraz clash 'reminds me of my match-ups versus Nadal'

Melbourne, Australia - The Australian Open quarter-finals begin on Tuesday and fans are expected to pack Rod Laver Arena when 10-times champion Novak Djokovic meets Carlos Alcaraz, who is bidding to complete a career Grand Slam.

Women's top seeds Coco Gauff and defending champion Aryna Sabalenka are also in action while men's second seed Alexander Zverev completes the lineup at the famous stadium.



Novak Djokovic

When Djokovic was listed as the seventh seed at Melbourne Park this year, he was on a collision course with Alcaraz when the draw was made and the mouth-watering clash will come to pass as they meet for the eighth time, with the Serbian leading 4-3.

Alcaraz triumphed in straight sets in the Wimbledon final last year but Djokovic took revenge less than a month later when he claimed the Olympic gold medal

on the Spaniard's favourite surface at Roland Garros.

"This is not the right player to play in a quarter-final, I guess," a Alcaraz said after match against Jack Draper. "He almost broke every record in tennis. I'm trying not to think about that when I'm in the match. I'm just trying (to think) that I'm able to beat him."

Djokovic's aura of invincibility at the Australian Open has seen cracks with the 37-year-old dropping two sets in the early rounds

while Alcaraz has come through largely unscathed in shorter matches, dropping just one set.

For Djokovic, Alcaraz is a younger version of his long-time Spanish rival Rafa Nadal, who he beat in the marathon 2012 final lasting five hours and 53 minutes - the longest on record at the Melbourne slam.

"(He) reminds me of my match-ups versus Nadal in terms of the intensity and the energy on the court," Djokovic said.

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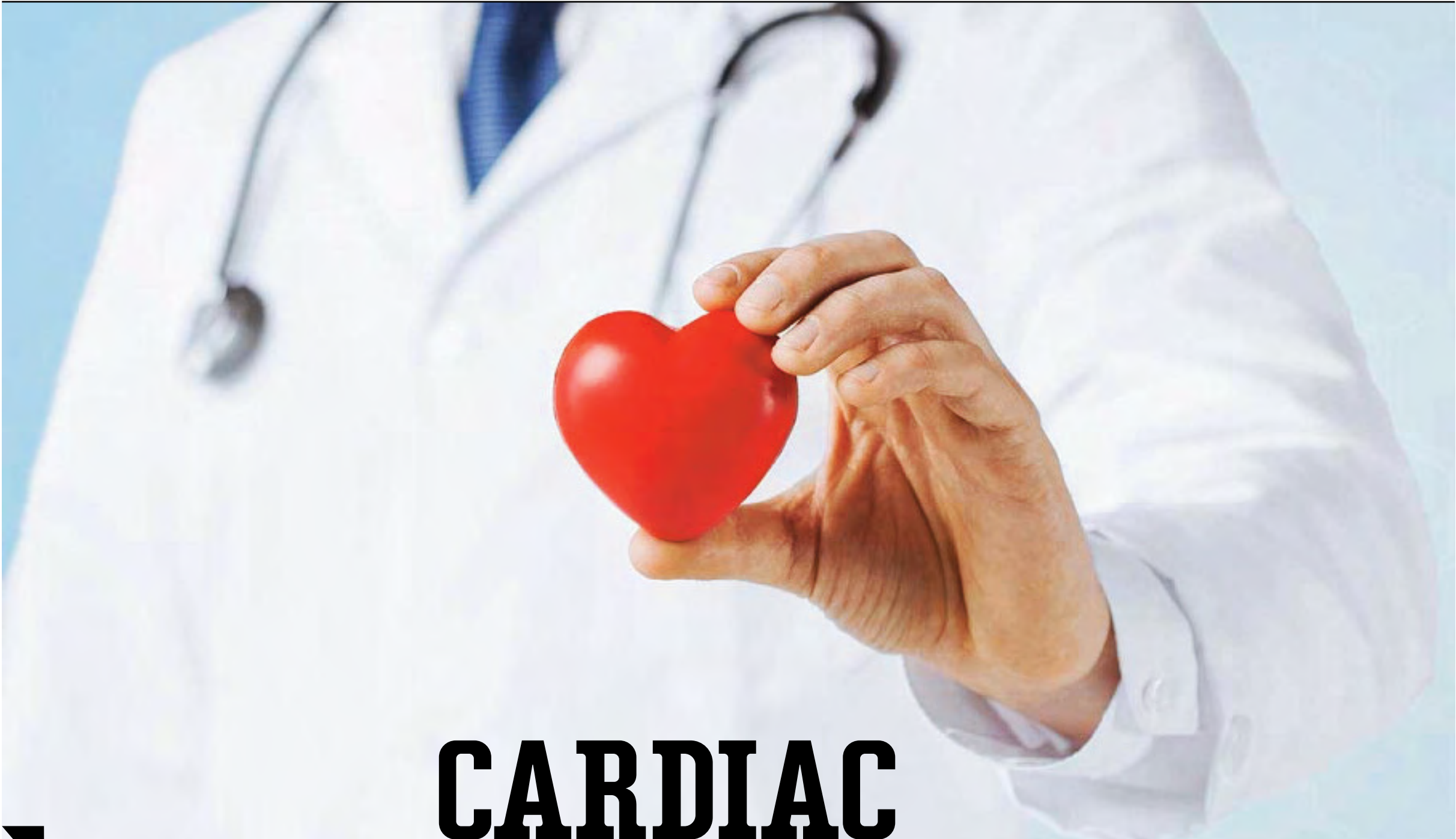


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HEART HEALTH

CARDIAC GAME CHANGERS

Recent innovations in cardiac care
are saving countless lives

A heart valve made from animal tissue gets delivered through a catheter from a patient's groin to their heart, replacing the patient's own faulty valve. A class of drugs designed to reduce diabetes is found to reduce cardiac failure as well. A medication that mimics a hormone instructs the body to carry out biological functions that protect the heart.

These are just some of the recent innovations in cardiac care that are saving countless lives.

"The number of advances that have happened in the last 20 years is just extraordinary," says Steven E Nissen, MD, chief academic officer of the Heart, Vascular, and Thoracic Institute at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio. "Some are game changers with a huge public health impact."

Here are for advances that doctors and researchers say have a significant impact on patient lives:

Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement

Aortic valve stenosis (AVS) occurs when the opening of the aortic valve (through which blood passes from the main pumping chamber, the left ventricle, to the aorta and out to the body) is narrowed, reducing blood flow from the heart to the aorta. It can cause chest pain, fainting, and fatal heart failure. Each year, as many as 300,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with AVS, according to the Frankel Cardiovascular Center at University of Michigan Health.

For many years, the treatment for the most severe cases was open-heart surgery to repair or replace the damaged valve. Because the disease often develops as people grow into old age, many of those patients are not good candidates for such major surgery because of the risks of complications.

Transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) provides a minimally invasive alternative to major surgery by delivering a replacement valve into the heart through a catheter. The doctors make a small incision in the groin or chest, insert the catheter into an artery, and with the help of imaging technology such as X-rays, guide the replacement valve through the artery to the site of the damaged valve.

The replacement valve (often made of cow or pig heart tissue) is compressed in the catheter and expands into place after delivery.

French cardiologist Alain Cribier is credited with performing the first successful TAVR, in 2002, in France, while the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) first approved the procedure in 2011 for certain patients at the highest risk from major surgery. The treatment is now commonly used in lieu of open-heart surgery.

SGLT2 inhibitors

In the early 2000s, clinical trials demonstrated the power of a class of drugs to lower blood sugar in patients with type 2 diabetes. The drugs inhibit the ability of a protein (SGLT2) to make the body reabsorb glucose into the kidneys — which, in people with diabetes, drives their glucose levels too high. Over time, doctors and researchers found that the drugs, called SGLT2 inhibitors, also provided protections against heart failure and the worsening of kidney disease by lowering blood pressure, reduc-

ing plasma volume (which reduces the workload on the heart), and lowering sympathetic nervous system activity.

Academic medical centres have played key roles in developing, refining, and studying SGLT2 inhibitors. A meta-analysis of five randomised controlled trials found that the inhibitors "significantly reduce the risk of mortality and worsening heart failure and improve patient symptoms and overall health status when added to standard therapy for heart failure.

Mitral valve clips

In mitral regurgitation, the flaps of the mitral valve, which controls the flow of blood from the left atrium to the left ventricle, do not close properly. This can cause blood to leak back into the heart in the wrong direction. While many people do not feel symptoms for years, as the condition progresses it often causes escalating health problems, including shortness of breath, swelling of hands and feet, symptoms of shock (such as loss of consciousness), atrial fibrillation, and heart failure.

Mitral regurgitation affects an estimated 1.7% of the US population, with the prevalence rising to about 9.3% in those over age 75. For many years, people with severe cases of mitral regurgitation had to decide whether to risk open-heart surgery to repair or replace the valve, or live with a defect that might kill them.

MitraClip provides a less invasive option. Doctors guide a catheter through a vein in the patient's leg to reach the heart. Through the catheter they deliver a small clip — made of cobalt-chromium with a polyester cover — that attaches to the valve to help it close more completely. The procedure takes 1-3 hours.

"You can put a clip on the mitral valve and reduce the amount of leakage substantially for people that are just too ill to be able to undergo surgery," Nissen says. "That's a pretty big innovation."

GLP-1 agonists

Drugs such as Ozempic and Wegovy, which are widely used to treat diabetes and obesity, have recently been found to reduce heart attack and stroke.

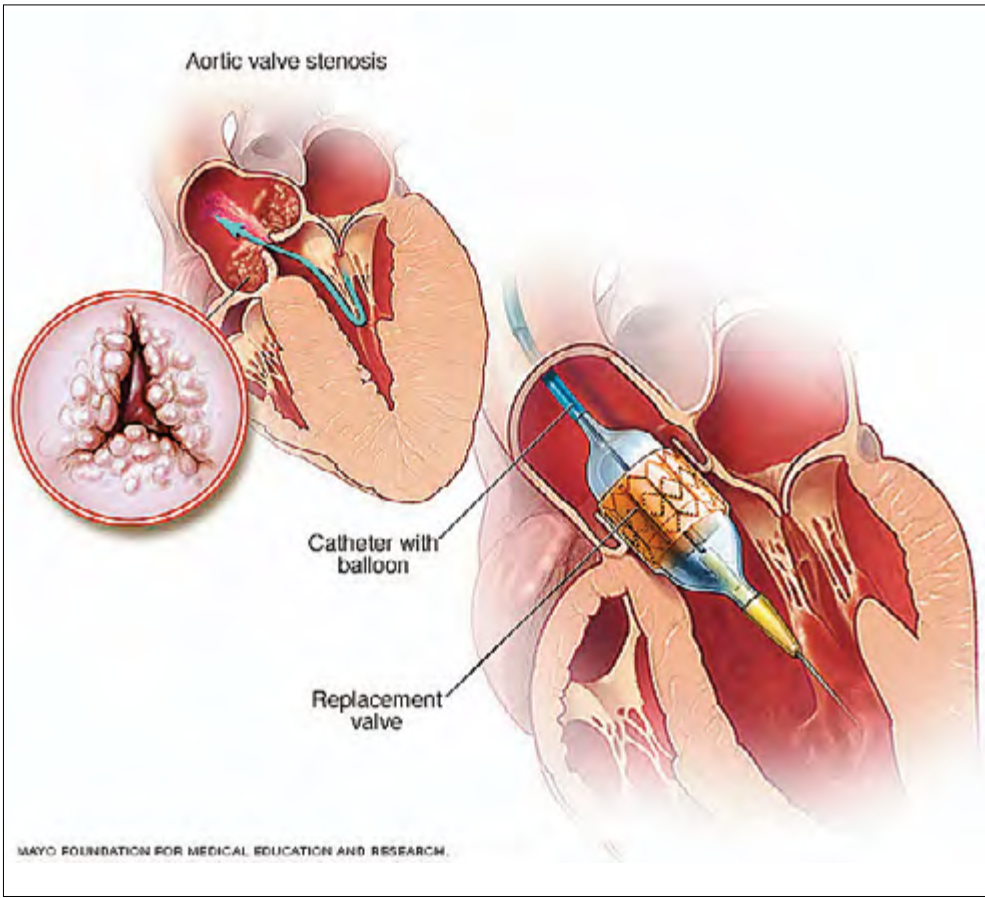
The drugs mimic the intestinal hormone (GLP-1) that triggers the release of insulin (which lowers glucose levels), keeping blood sugar down, slowing digestion, and increasing how full a person feels after eating.

Studies have shown that patients who took the drugs for diabetes also experienced significant reductions in adverse cardiac events. Research at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center has included the effect of GLP-1 agonists on glucose control and weight loss, while research at the University of Vermont Medical Center has included cardiovascular outcomes.

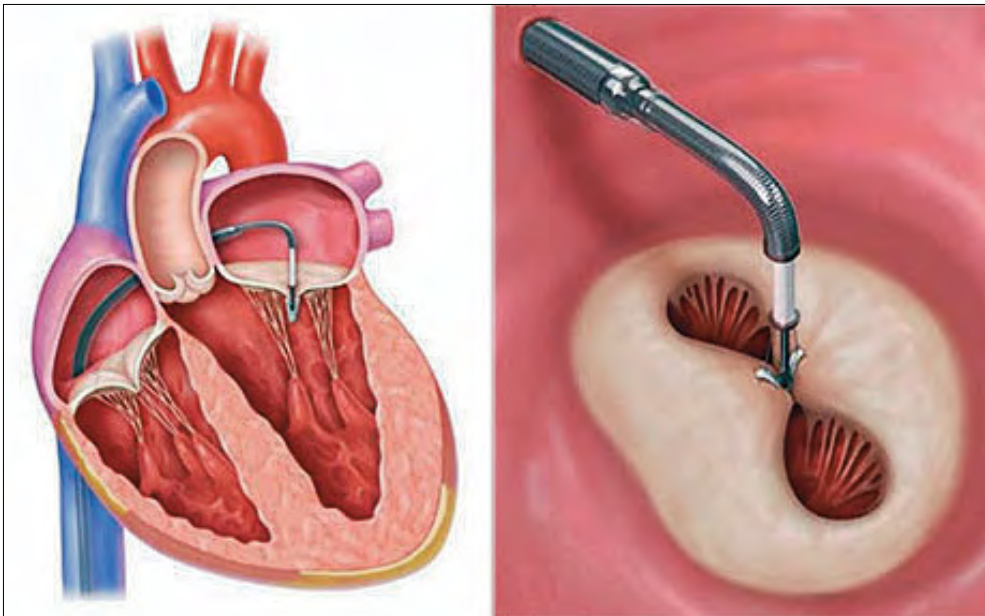
In addition to reducing such cardiovascular risk factors as glucose levels, weight, lipid levels, and hypertension, the drugs also stimulate production of nitric oxide (which expands blood vessels and increases blood flow), reduce oxidative stress (thus stabilising antioxidant levels), and help to reduce inflammation.

(Courtesy: aamc.org)

TRANSCATHETER AORTIC VALVE REPLACEMENT (TAVR)



MITRAL VALVE CLIPS



JUST HAVE A BALL!

PICKLEBALL



PICKLEBALL, ONE OF THE FASTEST-GROWING, FUN SPORTS IN THE WORLD, HAS OFFICIALLY MADE AN APPEARANCE IN OMAN

Hubert Vaz

Come slice, chop, drive or drop...or simply send a 'falafel' into the 'kitchen'!

No, we're not talking about cuisine, though the name does suggest some spice - Pickleball! That's the new sport, already a rage around the world, and now taking a peek into Oman's social circuit among white (and not-so-white) collars who want to unwind and let off some tension after a busy week at the daily grind.

With its induction into the Global Pickleball Federation on January 12, Oman has joined the global wave of this dynamic sport. The inaugural Oman Open 2025, held last weekend at The American International School of Muscat (TAISM), heralded this new initiative.

The unique mixed doubles tournament offered an evening of fun, competition, and camaraderie as pickleball enthusiasts from across the region gathered to mark a new chapter in Oman's sports landscape.

Pickleball is an exciting blend of tennis, badminton, and ping-pong, played on a smaller court with paddles and a

lightweight plastic ball. Known for its accessibility and social nature, the sport has captured the hearts of millions worldwide. From its humble beginnings as a backyard game in the United States, pickleball has grown into a global phenomenon, attracting players of all ages and skill levels.

Global growth of Pickleball

Over the last decade, pickleball has witnessed explosive growth, fueled by its versatility and sense of community. With the establishment of the Global Pickleball Federation, the sport has gained a stronger international presence, connecting players and nations through tournaments and events.

Oman's recent induction into the federation now highlights the country's commitment to embracing emerging sports and fostering cultural exchange through play, albeit through baby steps.

Oman Open 2025

The inaugural Oman Open 2025 was a landmark event, featuring a mixed doubles tournament catering to players of varying skill levels - Intermediate Pool (12 competitive teams showcased their

skill and strategy) and Beginner Pool (7 enthusiastic teams dove into the action for the love of the game).

Set against the backdrop of the American International School of Muscat, the tournament reflected Oman's growing pickleball community and its emerging place on the global stage.

The tournament ably supported by local and international sponsors, including Hassan Shaban (Empower Dataworks & Wenatchee Valley Pickleball Club), Ali Daud (McDonald's), Samir Messaoudi (Sheraton Oman) and Drew Geoghagan (Global Sports Partners) who shared the enthusiasm for pickleball and its ability to unite people from all walks of life.

"Getting Oman inducted into the Global Pickleball Federation was a major milestone and a testament to the dedication of our entire team," said Jeff Nelson, Chairman of Oman Pickleball. "We had to build a board, lay the groundwork, and show the Federation that Oman is ready to embrace this incredible sport. To see the inaugural Oman Open happen was beyond exciting - it's the beginning of something truly special for the sultanate and the region."



'Come, fall in love with Pickleball'

In a chat with Muscat Daily, Jeff Nelson provides insights into the prospects of Pickleball in Oman:

Who took the initiative to introduce Pickleball in Oman?

I fell in love with the sport when I started playing in the USA and wanted to continue playing here in Oman. When I learned that there was little to no pickleball here, I decided to start my own group. It began with a small group and has grown to well over 100 people. Everyone that has played the sport just once seems to fall in love with it quickly - just look at Andre Agassi. The game is easy to learn and fun to play.

What type of court is needed to play this game?

The playing surface needs to be hard enough to allow the ball to bounce.

Is the Oman outfit a registered sporting body?

Oman Pickleball is not yet registered with the Ministry of Sport. I would love to get it registered. I spent a great deal of time this summer getting Oman Pickleball registered with the Global Pickleball Federation. They recently approved Oman Pickleball and we are excited to expand the sport to anyone interested in learning more.

What were the pre-requisites to attest the Oman outfit with the international organisation?

The prerequisites were to develop a board, which currently consists of three members - president: Jeff Nelson, secretary: Drew Geoghagan and treasurer: Kelly Rauk. We have our logo, bylaws and our own Instagram account @omanpickleball.

Was last week's event just a demonstration or a proper tournament?

Last week's event was a proper tournament with players that were new (less than 6 months experience) and intermediate players (more than 6 months experience) to the sport.

What is the initial plan to grow the sport and facilitate it in Oman?

The initial plan to grow the sport was me literally knocking on doors at a few indoor sport locations to set up courts to teach and to play. I offered to introduce the sport to a couple of local schools but they were tied up with other after-school activities. The only indoor location available was ACE PADEL where I have enjoyed playing quite often.

We really need a larger indoor location with about 8 to 10 courts to offer coaching and instruction. We meet regularly at TAISM for open play and coaching for anyone new to the sport. We'd love for more people to join our Instagram page and can also host a clinic for anyone looking to learn more. Going forward, there will be additional tournaments and spectators are welcome to come watch for free.



Is this sport open to all age groups, ethnicities - what should interested persons do to join?

Pickleball is open to all people, ethnicities and ages. We have many local individuals in the pickleball community already and more are welcome.

(Those interested, can join the Instagram group or contact Jeff Nelson on 9759 0215.)



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