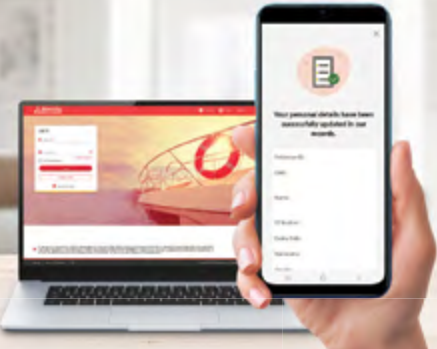




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Tourism sector attracts RO2.59bn in investments



Eco-tourist camp near Ras al Shajar Nature Reserve
3 resorts and luxury camp in Al Hamra
2 hotels in Jabal Akhdar
5-star resort in Sa'al, Nizwa
3-star resort in Musannah
Luxury tourist camp in Al Raka, Bidiyah

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) has attracted investments worth RO2.59bn in the tourism sector during the period 2021-25, reinforcing Oman's goal of becoming a leading tourism destination in the region.

Amira bint Iqbal al Lawati, Director General of Tourism Development at the ministry, said the investments are part of a national programme that aims to secure RO3bn in private sector funding for tourism by the end of 2025.

As part of this strategy, the ministry has increased the signing of usufruct contracts for tourism-related land in different governorates, allowing long-term



use by investors. These agreements are seen as a key tool to drive investment and improve the quality of tourism services across the sultanate.

Amira noted that these efforts align with Oman's Tenth Five-Year Plan (2021-25) and wider sustainable development goals.

The investments are part of a national programme that aims to secure RO3bn in private sector funding for tourism by the end of 2025

AMIRA BINT IQBAL AL LAWATI

From January 2024 to the end of May 2025, the ministry signed 45 usufruct contracts, including 14 this year alone.

In Muscat, a luxury tourist camp will open in Quraiyat near Ras al Shajar Nature Reserve, promoting eco-tourism in an area known for its diverse landscape

and wildlife.

Dakhliyah will see multiple projects, including a luxury camp in Al Hamra; two three-star hotels in Jabal Akhdar's Sayh Qatnah and Al Shayf; a five-star resort in Sa'al, Nizwa; and three more resorts in Al Hamra ranging from three to four stars.

In South Batinah, a three-star resort has been planned in Al Awid, Musannah, to be developed alongside other facilities to attract visitors.

North Sharqiyah will have a luxury camp in Al Raka, Bidiyah, making use of the desert landscape for adventure tourism. A three-star hotel is also planned for Sinaw.

In Dhofar, a resthouse will be built in Rakhyut, complementing

services along Mughsail Beach, a popular site in the governorate.

A resthouse has also been planned in Wadi al Jizzi, Buraimi, designed to integrate with the area's natural surroundings.

Amira said the ministry's approach includes expanding accommodation and promoting eco-tourism, mountain tourism and adventure tourism, to attract both local and international visitors and support long-term economic growth.

She underlined the importance of small and medium enterprises in the tourism value chain. "By creating jobs and supporting entrepreneurship, the ministry aims to ensure the benefits of tourism reach local communities," she said.

H M, Iranian President discuss de-escalation amid Israeli attacks

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik made a phone call to Dr Masoud Pezeshkian, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on Monday.

During the conversation, His Majesty the Sultan extended condolences and sympathies to the Iranian President for the victims of the Israeli attacks on his country, condemning the damage inflicted on infrastructure and facilities, and wishing the injured a speedy recovery.

His Majesty the Sultan emphasised the importance of de-escalation from both sides and a return to negotiations, dialogue, and understanding to halt the spectre of ongoing conflict and its catastrophic repercussions, safeguarding lives and resources.

His Majesty the Sultan further reaffirmed the commitment of his government to actively contribute through all political and diplomatic means to resolving this crisis, preventing its escalation, and establishing fair and just settlements that restore normalcy.

For his part, the Iranian President expressed appreciation for the earnest efforts undertaken by the government of the Sultanate of Oman under the leadership of His Majesty the Sultan to bridge perspectives and resolve conflicts through peaceful means, reinforcing the pillars of security and peace, and fostering stability and prosperity for all nations.

He affirmed that while his country faces heinous Israeli aggression, it backs diplomatic solutions through dialogue and negotiation, adheres to international law and respect for state sovereignty, and calls on the international community to stand with justice and the right of nations to self-defence.

02



Family businesses in GCC driving economic growth

09



Israel claims control of Tehran's airspace

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INTERVIEW

SHEIKHA HIND SUHAIL BAHWAN, CHAIRPERSON OF THE FAMILY BUSINESS COUNCIL GULF

Family businesses in GCC driving economic growth, diversification

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Family Business Council Gulf (FBCG) is a not-for-profit organisation aiming to strengthen family business governance and ensuring their continuity over generations. The council seeks to identify and address issues unique to the GCC region through research, education, capacity development and networking among peers. In an exclusive interview with *Muscat Daily*, Sheikha Hind Suhail Bahwan, Chairperson of the FBCG, discusses the critical role family businesses play in the economic landscape of the GCC countries. She offers insights into the council's efforts to strengthen governance, support generational transitions and foster sustainability in family enterprises. Sheikha Hind also outlines the key challenges and priorities shaping the future of family businesses across the region.

What are the main focus areas and top priorities of the FBCG?
The Family Business Council Gulf was established in 2013 with a mission to promote the sustainability and success of family enterprises across generations. Our focus is on enhancing the contribution of family businesses to the economic and social development of the region, while also reinforcing their significance as essential pillars of economic resilience, innovation and regional identity.

How do you assess the FBCG's impact since its formation? What initiatives are currently underway to support family enterprises across the GCC?
The Family Business Council Gulf has made a significant impact across various areas. Firstly, we have successfully created a strong identity and community for GCC families, fostering meaningful friendships and, in many cases, productive business partnerships. We prioritise next-generation training, having trained over 300 future leaders who are poised to inherit or take ownership of family

businesses. Additionally, FBCG has made considerable progress in raising awareness about the importance of good governance and succession planning within the family business ecosystem. In the UAE, we played a pivotal role in collaborating with authorities to develop a comprehensive legal framework that regulates the ownership and governance of family businesses in the country. FBCG hopes to be able to play a role in replicating this framework in other jurisdictions across the region.

What are the most common issues that member families bring to the council for support?
Each family business is unique. In the absence of regulatory frameworks, FBCG would typically be approached for guidance during situations where there are: Challenging family business leadership successions, the unexpected passing of a founder or major shareholder, financial disputes amongst family members, disputes over fair allocation of inheritance, agreeing fair allocation of dividends, divestment or liquidation of assets, agreement on how business decisions are to be taken, who has the casting vote, disagreements over the strategic direction of the family business and tension between a professional management board and the family members. As you can see the issues are wide and can be complex and these issues are further amplified during periods of economic downturn.

In your view, how do family enterprises in the GCC contribute to national visions such as Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 or Oman Vision 2040?
Family businesses have been instrumental in the development of the GCC region, with estimates suggesting that their contribution to private sector GDP ranges from 60% to 80%, depending on the specific country. These enterprises are also key employers within the private sector



Family businesses have been instrumental in the development of the GCC region. These enterprises are key employers within the private sector and are major contributors and investors in private capital for strategic initiatives that promote economic diversification

and are major contributors and investors in private capital for strategic initiatives that promote economic diversification, particularly in sectors such as real estate, retail, hospitality, manufacturing, mobility, technology, fintech and energy.

What are the main challenges facing family businesses in the GCC today? And what are the biggest gaps you have identified in current practices that the FBCG is working to address?
The challenges faced by family busi-

nesses are diverse, but from the perspective of the Family Business Council Gulf, we can categorise them into three main areas. Firstly, the professionalisation of family businesses is crucial. This includes separating ownership from management, establishing a professional board of directors, creating a clear business strategy, implementing disciplined business planning and developing robust governance structures, with a strong emphasis on detailed succession planning. Secondly, a common challenge is the ability of the second or third generation to take on leadership roles. This may stem from a gap in business knowledge or a desire to pursue different career paths. Lastly, a third challenge – one that is not unique to family businesses – is the lack of constructive dialogue and communication. This can create unnecessary tensions that negatively impact relationship dynamics and adversely affect the effectiveness of the business.

According to the council's research, only 33% of Gulf family businesses have a documented succession plan. Why is this figure so low and what initiatives is the FBCG undertaking to encourage and improve succession planning?
There are multiple reasons most of which I have mentioned previously. Whilst we have made good progress, there is still a long way to go and that is why the FBCG places a tremendous emphasis on training the family business 'next gens' through structured programmes and peer exposure. Additionally, we need to build on the work undertaken in the UAE and work with relevant GCC authorities to implement regulatory frameworks to address the governance, ownership and inheritance of family businesses.

In your view, how can next-generation leaders be better prepared to take over? What advice would you offer to families struggling with leadership transitions?

Leadership transitions in family businesses are critical moments – and preparation is everything. It starts with open communication: Within the family, with trusted advisors, and with others who've navigated similar paths. Expose the next generation early. Even if they don't join management, they should understand the business, embrace family values, and grow into responsible owners who can carry the founder's vision forward. Building a talent pipeline is just as important. At the FBCG, we offer programmes like Pathfinder and Launch360 to help young family members discover their strengths and prepare for future roles from an early age. To families facing transition: start early, invest in development, and keep the conversation going. The future depends on it.

How do you view the role of women in family businesses? Are women sufficiently represented in leadership roles within family enterprises across the GCC?
When we launched the Family Business Council Gulf, female representation in our membership was below 5%. Today, that number has risen to over 25%, and we are proud to have two female board members. Here in GCC, we are fortunate to have established and successful female role models, such as Muna Almoayyed from Bahrain, Lubna al Olayan from Saudi Arabia, H E Raja al Gurg from the UAE, and many more.

How does the FBCG support families during major transitions such as IPOs, mergers, or divestments?
FBCG can facilitate knowledge sharing and connect family businesses with others, both regionally and globally, that have experienced similar journeys. We can also introduce family businesses to a trusted network of advisors who can assist with transactions. Furthermore, if needed, we can provide customised support and expertise tailored to the specific nature of each family need and aspiration.

CPA hosts forum to strengthen consumer safety in e-commerce

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Consumer Protection Authority (CPA), in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), hosted a forum on Monday aimed at strengthening consumer protection in the sultanate's growing e-commerce sector.

The event, titled 'E-commerce: Consumer Rights and Supplier Obligations', was held under the patronage of Omar bin Hamdan al Ismaili, Chairman of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority.

The forum brought together stakeholders from government institutions, the private sector and civil society to address key challenges facing digital commerce, including consumer rights, supplier obligations and legal frameworks governing the sector. Discussions also covered the risks of electronic fraud and the role of regulatory institutions in ensuring a secure online shopping environment.

Mozna bint Rashid al Maamari, Director of Communications and Media at CPA, said the



The goal is to develop Oman's e-commerce ecosystem by raising awareness and ensuring a safer digital marketplace

forum served as "an open dialogue platform bringing together consumers, suppliers, regulatory bodies and others interested in the digital economy".

"The goal is to develop Oman's e-commerce ecosystem by raising awareness and ensuring a safer digital marketplace," she said. "This gathering supports a future-oriented vision that promotes a robust digital economy, empowering consumers to make informed and safe purchasing decisions."

The day's programme was divided into two discussion sessions. The first included a presentation by Azza al Kindi from MoCIIP on the regulation of e-commerce in Oman. This was followed by a talk by Khalid al Siyabi from CPA on safe digital shopping practices, and a presentation from the Central Bank of Oman's Hajar bint Qambar al Ajmi on financial consumer protection.

In the second session, Arwa bint Obaid al Zaabi from the Ministry of Economy, spoke about digital fraud from a behavioural economics perspective. This was followed by remarks from Hilal al Alawi of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority on postal services and e-commerce, and a presentation by Rashid al Alawi from the Ministry of Transport and Communications on postal sector policy.

The event concluded with an open discussion among attendees.

The forum coincided with CPA's ongoing awareness campaign 'For Safe Shopping', which seeks to encourage secure online purchasing habits. The initiative aligns with Oman Vision 2040.

46 Omani workers reinstated

Muscat - A total of 46 Omani workers were reinstated to their jobs in May following the intervention of the General Federation of Oman Workers (GFW), according to its latest monthly report.

The reinstatements were facilitated through labour dispute committees and followed extensive negotiations and consultations led by the federation as part of its support services for the month.

The GFW said it dealt with 14 worker support cases, including both individual grievances and collective disputes. Of these, eight were resolved amicably, one was referred to court, and five remain under process.

In addition to dispute resolution, the federation responded to 69 legal consultations covering key labour issues such as wages, leave entitlements, working hours, and contract termination.

The committee reviewing private sector applications to reduce workforce due to economic challenges evaluated several cases – leading to the reinstatement of 46 workers and approval of two temporary wage reduction requests.



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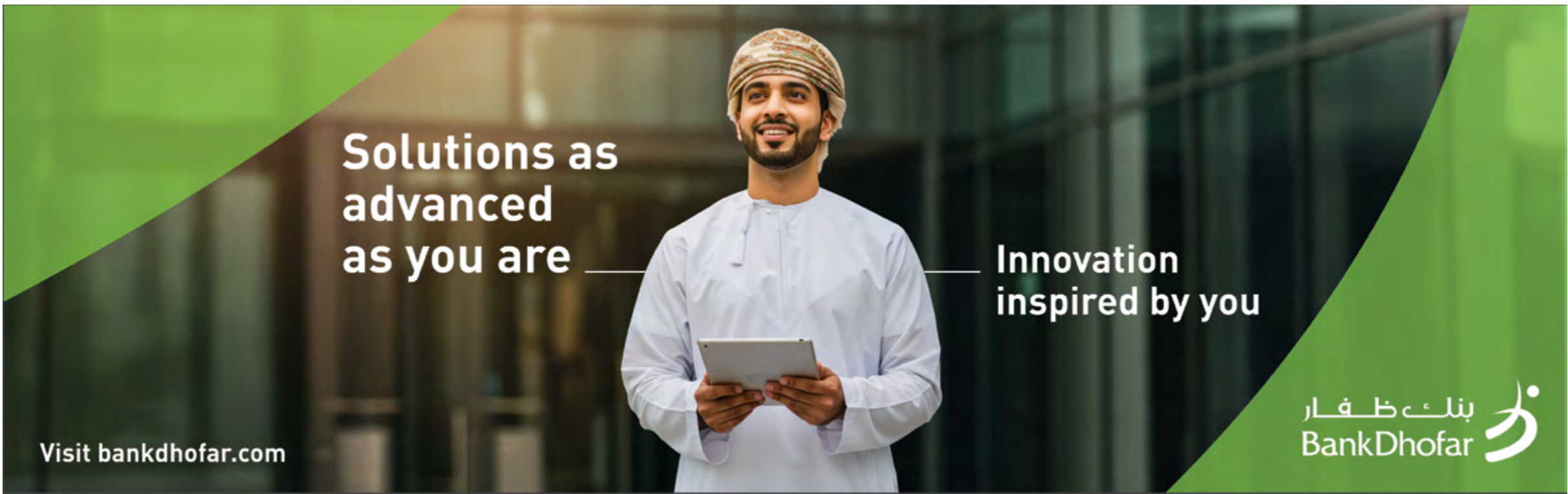
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MoH launches nationwide campaign to raise heart health awareness

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Health (MoH) has launched a nationwide campaign aimed at raising awareness of heart disease and encouraging early detection. The initiative, titled 'Heart of the Nation: One Pulse, One Goal', is being led by the National Center for Cardiac Medicine and Surgery.

The campaign will run across all governorates and will include community-based activities designed to educate both citizens and residents about cardiovascular health, risk factors and treatment options.

Dr Najeeb bin Zahran al Rawahi, Director of the National Centre for Cardiac Medicine and Surgery, said scientific sessions



This campaign reflects our commitment to delivering treatment that meets the highest global standards

DR NAJEEB AL RAWAHI

will be organised alongside the public campaign. These will tar-



get cardiologists and healthcare professionals to share the latest

developments in heart disease treatment and improve the pa-

tient referral process.

"This campaign reinforces the

centre's leadership in cardiac care and reflects our commitment to delivering treatment that meets the highest global standards," Dr Rawahi said.

Since its opening in 2015, the centre has performed 9,168 heart surgeries, including open-heart operations and interventional catheterisation. Dr Rawahi noted that success rates range between 93% and 96%, consistent with international norms.

Between 2015 and the end of 2024, the centre also carried out 49,846 adult cardiac catheterisations and 7,823 paediatric procedures, achieving success rates of between 97% to 99%.

"These numbers speak to the dedication and expertise of our medical and technical teams," he added.

To meet the increasing demand, the centre is expanding its facilities. Operating rooms and catheterisation laboratories are being upgraded with advanced medical technology, and additional catheterisation units are being introduced to shorten waiting times.

Plans are also in place to broaden the network of specialised outpatient clinics. New units will include services for genetic heart conditions and severe heart failure. Existing services are also being enhanced.

Dr Rawahi said the centre is committed to advancing cardiac research through collaboration with local and international institutions, aiming to support innovation and improve the overall quality of care provided.



MoSD, Unicef unveil national Child Protection Guide

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) office in Oman, launched the Child Protection Guide on Monday as part of its efforts to strengthen unified national mechanisms for child protection across the sultanate.

The launch event, held under the patronage of H E Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, was attended by representatives from government bodies, civil society organisations and international partners.

Designed as a practical reference in line with the best international practices, the guide targets frontline workers such as social specialists, educators and healthcare providers. It aims to unify terminology, streamline referral procedures, and enhance coordination among stakeholders to ensure a swift and effective response to child protection cases.

Speaking at the event, Maani



It empowers professionals to respond more effectively to cases of abuse and exploitation. It supports the implementation of the national child protection framework

MAANI AL BUSAIDI

bint Abdullah al Busaidi, Director General of Family Development at the ministry, described the guide as a key milestone in integrating national child protection

efforts. "It empowers professionals to respond more effectively to cases of abuse, neglect and exploitation and supports the implementation of the national child protection framework in alignment with Oman Vision 2040 and the Child Law," she said.

Unicef representative to Oman, Sumaira Chowdhury, said the guide symbolises a strong partnership between Unicef and the government of Oman. "It reflects a shared commitment to take humane and effective action to protect children from harm and build robust, integrated protection systems throughout the country," she noted.

The guide is the result of close cooperation between the ministry and Unicef and complements existing initiatives to build the capacities of child protection workers, enhance the national case management system, and raise public awareness around children's rights. To ensure effective implementation, the ministry, in coordination with Unicef, will roll out a series of 'training of trainers' workshops across various governorates.

Dhahirah produces over 41 tonnes of honey in 2024

Muscat - Dhahirah governorate produced more than 41 tonnes of honey in 2024, with the market value of this output exceeding RO615,000, according to data released by the Directorate General of Agricultural Fisheries and Water Resources in Dhahirah.

Official statistics show that the number of registered beekeepers in the governorate reached 992 by the end of last year, collectively managing 23,680 beehives across various wilayats.

Dhahirah is widely regarded to have a favourable environment for beekeeping and honey production, thanks to its diverse vegetation and abundant sidr and samar trees, which support the production of high-quality honey varieties.

Local products include sidr honey, samar honey, honey in comb, bee pollen, and a range of medicinal bee-derived products.

Shura seeks fairer funding for private college students



Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Education, Scientific Research and Innovation Committee of the Majlis A'Shura met specialists from the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation on Monday to discuss the criteria for financial support provided to domestic scholarship students at private higher education institutions.

The meeting, chaired by Jamal Ahmed al Abri, head of the committee, followed directives from His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to ensure fair support for

Omani students across the higher education system.

Discussions focused on how eligibility rules are set and the need to revise current regulations. Committee members stressed that students enrolled in private institutions should receive financial allocations comparable to those studying in public institutions.

Members raised public concerns about what many see as an unfair funding system, pointing out that some families with children in private colleges are excluded from support due to criteria that do not always reflect their financial reality.

Ministry officials said eligibility is determined by factors such as household income, family size and the distance between home and campus. They acknowledged receiving several complaints from parents and community members calling for a review of the system.

During the session, the committee also reviewed a report from its recent meeting with the Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education, which covered school evaluation policies. Members further examined the Ministry of Education's 2024 annual report.

Future Foresight Forum seeks to boost Oman's growth

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The 'Future Foresight Forum', a special event organised jointly by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) and the Ministry of Labour to give a fillip to the sultanate's growth, opened on Monday in Muscat.

The three-day event, held under the patronage of Hamoud bin Salim al Saadi, Second Deputy Chairman of OCCI and head of its South Batinah branch, has brought together specialists



and experts from eight countries to help institutions anticipate economic and technological shifts by promoting strategic foresight, strengthening national skills and preparing the private

sector to respond to emerging challenges. It seeks to foster innovation, attract investment and build partnerships between government and business.

In the opening session, Abdul-

lah al Saidi, CEO of Global Development Academy for Training, said the forum comes at a time of significant economic and geopolitical shifts, requiring organisations to adopt forward-looking strategies. "We need to shift from reaction to anticipation, by adopting an institutional approach based on innovation and strategic analysis," he said.

Dr Abdul Salam Yahya, Economic Expert at OCCI, highlighted the need for a long-term economic vision to maintain stability amid global uncertainty.

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Pakistan	736.17
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Philippines	146.42
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*Rates as on June 16

Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Oman's total crude oil exports reach 100mn barrels by April

Oman's total oil exports by the end of April 2025 decreased by 3.4% to 100,032,400 barrels, compared to 103,549,100 barrels during the same period in 2024.

Preliminary statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicate that the average price of crude oil decreased by 5.2% to \$75.9 per barrel by the end of April 2025, compared to \$80 during the same period last year.

Statistics showed that average daily production declined to 986,700 barrels per day, compared to 997,100 barrels per day last year. Total oil production decreased by 1.9%, reaching approximately 118,402,400 barrels by the end of last April, compared to 120,651,200 barrels during the same period in year 2024.

MoCIIP signs agreements to boost industrial sector growth

Our Correspondent
Muscat

In a major step towards enhancing industrial competitiveness and empowering national talent, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) on Monday signed a series of strategic agreements with key government bodies and private sector partners.

The signing ceremony, held under the patronage of H E Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion, was attended by H E Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy; H E Dr Saleh bin Said Masan, Undersecretary for Commerce and Industry; H E Mohammed bin Sulaiman al Kindi, Governor of North Al Batinah; and several senior officials and private sector executives.

H E Dr Masan described the agreements as a significant milestone in strengthening Oman's industrial capabilities. He reaffirmed the ministry's commitment to investing in human capital, calling it a cornerstone of a sustainable, knowledge-based economy. "These agreements support the goals of the Industrial Strategy 2040, which aims to establish a diversified and technology-driven industrial sector," he said.

Among the key agreements was a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between MoCIIP, the Office of the Governor of North Al Batinah, and Jin-



Among the key agreements was a memorandum of understanding between MoCIIP, the Office of the Governor of North Al Batinah, and Jindal Shadeed Iron & Steel to establish a dedicated industrial training center in the governorate

dal Shadeed Iron & Steel to establish a dedicated industrial training center in the governorate. The center will offer specialised training to equip Omani youth with skills tailored to market demands, enhancing their employability in the industrial sector.

In another important development, a funding agreement was signed with Daleel Petroleum to support the development of Tasnee, a digital platform designed

to connect industrial procurement with local products. The platform aims to improve supply chain efficiency and increase in-country value (ICV) by promoting local sourcing.

MoCIIP also announced the launch of new industrial training programmes in partnership with Oman Cables Industry Company. Additionally, a cooperation agreement was signed with Al Alamia for Retail, providing 300 opportunities for training, quali-

fication, and employment. Of these, 100 are direct jobs tied to training programmes, while 200 are training-to-employment opportunities for Omani youth.

"This initiative directly supports our efforts to strengthen national workforce participation and foster economic empowerment," said Nasra bint Saif al Habsi, Director General of Commerce at MoCIIP.

Eng Khalid bin Salim al Qassabi, Director General of Industry

at MoCIIP, noted that these initiatives mark a pivotal phase in industrial development. "Our aim is to align educational outcomes with market requirements by equipping graduates with the technical skills and specialised knowledge needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving global economy," he said.

The new agreements reflect Oman's strategic vision of building a resilient, competitive industrial sector based on national competencies and robust public-private partnerships. They also support broader efforts to integrate Omanis into the workforce while advancing innovation and sustainable growth.

CBO issues RO39mn treasury bills

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) on Monday announced the issuance of two government treasury bill tenders, with a total value of RO39.3mn. The treasury bills were issued in two different maturities: 91 days and 182 days.

In the first tender, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO37.3mn, with a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price was RO98.962 per RO100, while the minimum accepted price was RO98.930. The average discount rate and average yield stood at 4.1654% and 4.2091%, respectively.

In the second tender, treasury bills worth RO2mn were allotted, with a maturity period of 182 days. The average accepted price was RO97.848 per RO100, and the minimum accepted price was RO97.845. The average discount rate and average yield were 4.3168% and 4.4118%, respectively.

The interest rate on repo operations with the CBO is 5.00%, while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility stands at 5.50%.

Treasury bills are short-term, highly secure financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance.

OPAZ issues consultancy tender for mining cluster in Shaleem, Halaniyat

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has announced a consultancy tender for the preparation of a master plan, detailed design, and supervision services for the first phase of an integrated mining economic cluster project in the Wilayat of Shaleem and the Halaniyat Islands, located in the Dhofar Governorate.

OPAZ has invited specialised consultancy firms, registered with the Secretariat General of the Tender Board under the 'Excellent' and 'First' categories, to submit their proposals. The deadline for purchasing tender documents is set for June 25, while the final date for submitting bids is July 9.

During its third meeting of 2024, the OPAZ Board of Directors reviewed the executive pro-



cedures following the Ministry of Economy's study on the development of integrated industrial clusters. These include: the industrial minerals cluster in Shaleem; cooling chains and food industries in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD); aluminium-based industries in the Sohar Free Zone;

and strategies to link these clusters to the broader national industrial strategy.

The integrated mining economic cluster in Shaleem and the Halaniyat Islands is strategically located along regional maritime trade routes and is rich in natural resources, including minerals, fisheries, and renewable energy

sources. It also boasts tourism assets and oil and gas concessions.

The project, to be overseen by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), is expected to stimulate investment in the mining sector and its associated industries, enhance value addition, and support other sectors such as logistics, energy, food security, and tourism.

The cluster aims to boost economic growth across multiple sectors, improve intersectoral connectivity, expand production and export capacity, and increase the sector's contribution to GDP.

The Wilayat of Shaleem and the Halaniyat Islands are considered promising areas for mineral development, due to their strategic location along key maritime corridors and their rich geological resources, including gypsum, limestone, and dolomite ores.

OQ first company in Oman to integrate UNSPSC standards across procurement systems

Muscat - OQ, the sultanate's global energy investment group, has reached a significant milestone in procurement transformation by becoming the first company in Oman to integrate the United Nations Standard Products and Services Code (UNSPSC) across both its material master and vendor management systems within the Tawreed platform.

The UNSPSC is a globally recognised taxonomy developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with international institutions. Its adoption enables the standardised classification of products and services, helping organisations to improve data quality, reduce procurement errors, and optimise financial decision-making.

This pioneering move repre-



sents a key step in modernising procurement operations, strengthening data governance, and enhancing supplier lifecycle management. By embedding UNSPSC into its SAP system and supplier records, OQ has established a unified classification framework that improves spend transparency, streamlines sourcing, and advances digital integration across its procurement ecosystem.

"The integration of the UN-

SPSC system represents a strategic transformation in the way we manage procurement at OQ," said Sabrina al Bakri, Chief Financial Officer of OQ. "It reflects our ongoing commitment to innovation and institutional excellence, while enhancing the efficiency of our internal operations. By adopting this global classification framework, we are strengthening governance, improving data accuracy, and reinforcing transparency."

Oil prices continue to rise as Israel-Iran tensions stoke supply fears

London, UK - Oil prices extended their upward trend Monday, rebounding from an earlier dip, as escalating tensions between Israel and Iran fueled concerns over supply security in the Middle East.

International benchmark Brent crude increased by around 0.25%, trading at \$73.86 per barrel at 0700 GMT, up from \$73.7 at the previous session's close. Similarly, US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) increased by about 0.54%, settling at \$71.99 per barrel, compared to \$71.60 in the prior session.

Prices hit a five-month high on

Friday as rising tensions between Israel and Iran raised concerns over supply disruptions in the oil-rich region.

The price of Brent oil rose by over 11% week-on-week on Monday, related to the ongoing Iran-Israel armed conflict. While it stood at \$66.2 on June 9, it reached \$73.7 on Monday, up by 11.3%.

The escalating tensions between Israel and Iran are heightening concerns about the security of the oil supply in the Middle East, including possible disruptions to regional supplies, as well as in the Strait of Hormuz, which is critical to global energy



trade.

Israel launched large-scale attacks Friday, targeting nuclear facilities and top military command centers in several Iranian cities, prompting a response from Iran with ballistic missile strikes.

Neither side took steps to de-escalate over the weekend, fueling fears that the conflict could intensify further.

The escalating hostilities have reinforced expectations of potential disruptions to regional oil supplies and heightened concerns over the security of the Strait of Hormuz, a vital chokepoint for global energy trade.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump said Sunday there is "a good chance" there will be a deal between Israel and Iran despite ongoing military confrontations. "I hope there is going to be a deal," he told reporters, expressing optimism for a diplomatic resolution.

Trump acknowledged the complexity of the situation, however, saying, "I think it's time for a deal. We will see what happens, but sometimes they have to fight it out." Later, during a Sunday press briefing before departing for the G7 summit in Canada, Trump said, Anadolu Agency

Israel-Iran conflict: How vital is the Strait of Hormuz for global energy markets?

Piero Cingari

The flare-up of tensions between Israel and Iran has reignited concerns over the security of the Strait of Hormuz, a vital artery for the global energy market. This narrow stretch of water, just 29 nautical miles wide at its tightest point, funnels nearly a third of the world's seaborne oil and a fifth of global LNG.

The US Energy Information Administration (EIA) calls it the "world's most important oil chokepoint," underlining the strategic importance of the passage that links the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea.

Why is Strait of Hormuz crucial for global energy market?

Following Israeli attacks on Iran, Iranian officials have raised the spectre of closing the Strait – triggering a sharp surge in crude prices.

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), around 20mn barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil and refined products passed through the Strait of Hormuz in 2023, representing nearly 30% of total global oil trade.

Most of this volume – around 70% – was bound for Asia, with China, India and Japan among the largest recipients.



While alternative pipeline infrastructure exists, it is limited. The IEA estimates that only 4.2mn bpd of crude oil can be rerouted via overland routes, such as Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline to the Red Sea and the UAE's Abu Dhabi Crude Oil Pipeline to Fujairah. This capacity represents barely one quarter of the typical daily volume transiting the Strait.

"Any prolonged crisis in the Strait of Hormuz would not only disrupt shipments from key Gulf

Tensions between Israel and Iran have raised fears of disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, a vital route for global oil and LNG supplies. Experts warn that even the threat of closure could rattle markets and push energy prices sharply higher

producers – Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, Iraq and Qatar – but also make inaccessible the majority of the world's spare production capacity, which is concentrated in the Persian Gulf," the IEA warned in a report.

LNG markets are even more exposed to potential disruptions. All LNG exports from Qatar—the

world's second-largest LNG exporter – and the UAE must pass through the Strait. The IEA reports that 90 billion cubic metres (bcm) of LNG transited the Strait in the first ten months of 2023, equal to 20% of global LNG trade.

With no viable alternative routes for LNG exports from Qatar or the UAE, any maritime closure would severely tighten global supply. Around 80% of these LNG volumes are destined for Asia, while Europe receives

roughly 20%, meaning disruptions would exacerbate competition between regions, especially in a tight market.

"The sheer volume of oil passing through the Strait and the scarcity of alternative routes means even brief disruptions would have significant consequences for the global market," the IEA stated.

How far could oil rise?
While a full closure remains a

low-probability scenario, analysts agree that the threat alone is enough to inject volatility into energy markets.

Crude oil prices surged by 13% last week amid escalating tensions between Israel and Iran. Although prices have since eased slightly after reports confirmed that Iranian energy infrastructure remained untouched by Israeli strikes, the risk of further escalation—and potential disruption to global energy flows – remains elevated.

In response, Wall Street analysts have been quick to assess the possible fallout from any interruption of oil and gas shipments through the Persian Gulf, particularly the Strait of Hormuz.

Goldman Sachs warned that an extreme risk scenario involving a prolonged closure of the Strait could push prices well above \$100 per barrel.

The investment bank estimates that Iran currently produces around 3.6mn barrels per day of crude oil and 0.8mn bpd of condensates, with total seaborne exports averaging 2.1mn bpd so far this year – most of it heading to China.

ING's head of commodities strategy, Warren Patterson, indicates that the market has begun pricing in a substantially higher geopolitical risk premium in light of recent developments.

(Source: Euronews.com)

Investors and Trump await Fed's verdict on 2025 interest rate cuts

Jennifer Schonberger

The US Federal Reserve is widely expected to leave interest rates unchanged at its meeting this week, but investors will be watching for something more telling – whether policymakers at the central bank remain committed to two rate cuts this year.

The Fed's latest round of economic projections, due on Wednesday, will feature the much-analysed "dot plot" – a quarterly-updated chart that shows where each Fed official believes interest rates are heading.

The previous dot plot, published in March, showed a consensus among Fed officials for two rate cuts in 2025, with some already accounting for the uncertainty surrounding President Trump's economic policies. The same prediction was made last December.

Many Fed watchers anticipate that central bank officials will maintain their current stance as they weigh multiple unknowns. The latest twist came late last week, as Israeli airstrikes across Iran raised fears that a prolonged conflict could drive up oil prices and fuel inflation this summer.

"This meeting will be all about the dot plot," said former Kansas City Fed President Esther George. Given how fluid the situation is, she expects officials "will be reluctant to signal changes from where they were earlier."

Wilmington Trust's chief economist, Luke Tilley, agrees.

"I don't think the dots will shift significantly, and I don't believe the narrative will change much either. At present, it's two cuts, and I expect that will largely remain."

The Fed and its chair, Jerome Powell, are under intense political pressure to speed up any potential rate cuts, as President Trump continues to publicly crit-



The Federal Reserve and its chair, Jerome Powell, are under intense political pressure to speed up any potential rate cuts, as President Donald Trump continues to publicly criticise Powell for not easing monetary policy sooner

icise Powell for not easing monetary policy sooner.

Last Thursday, Trump said he "may have to force something" in his ongoing push for the Fed to cut rates by a full percentage point. However, he added that he would not dismiss Powell before his term ends in 2026 – a move that would almost certainly be challenged in court.

Trump also called Powell a "numbskull," continuing a string of personal attacks in recent months.

The former president has pointed to declining inflation as justification for rate cuts. But Powell and many of his colleagues have made clear that they are more concerned about potential inflationary pressures from Trump's tariffs than they are about any rise in unemployment – balancing both sides of their dual mandate.

Gregory Daco, chief economist at EY-Parthenon, expects Powell to highlight the risk of persistent inflation due to tariffs and acknowledge that tough trade-offs may emerge if inflation remains elevated while growth and employment weaken.

He said Powell will likely emphasise that with inflation still above the Fed's 2% target and the labour market appearing consistent with full employment, the threshold for rate cuts remains high.

"Chair Powell will likely strike a tone of cautious patience, reiterating that policy remains data-dependent and that the Fed is prepared to recalibrate policy over time," said Daco.

Signs of easing price pressure
Recent inflation data has shown

more moderate increases in prices, even as new tariffs have been implemented – a trend highlighted last week by Trump and US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, who told lawmakers: "There is no tariff inflation."

Bessent's remarks came a day after a report revealed that the "core" Consumer Price Index – which excludes volatile food and energy prices – rose 2.8% in May compared to the year before, the same as in April.

The Fed's preferred inflation gauge, the "core" Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) index, rose 2.5% in April, down from 2.7% in March. The Fed is aiming to reduce that figure to 2%.

"There hasn't been a whole lot of inflation pressure other than the shelter index, which continues to drift down," said Tilley.

Fed analysts note that the jobs market is cooling gradually, but not collapsing, with the unemployment rate holding at 4.2% and wages still growing at nearly 4% year-on-year.

As a result, the labour market isn't providing Powell and the Fed with a strong case for an immediate rate cut. Investors are currently betting that the first rate reduction will come no earlier than September.

"The real question is what's going to happen in the second half of the year, and will those trends continue?" said former Cleveland Fed President Loretta Mester.

"There's still a lot of uncertainty, and that's why the Fed is on hold until we get more clarity – not just on the magnitude and scope of the tariffs, but also their impact on inflation," she added.

Mester said maintaining the current federal funds rate doesn't carry a high cost, especially if it buys the Fed more time to assess the economic outlook over the summer.

(Source: Yahoo Finance)

China's economy maintains recovery momentum in May

Beijing, China – China's economy continued its recovery trend in May amid robust macroeconomic policies despite mounting external uncertainties, official data showed on Monday.

According to a report by China Daily, data released by the National Bureau of Statistics shows that China's industrial added value above designated size increased by 5.8% year-on-year in May.

Retail sales, a key measure of consumer spending, grew by 6.4% year-on-year in May versus a 5.1% rise in April.

Fixed-asset investment – a gauge of expenditures on items including infrastructure, property, machinery and equipment – rose by 3.7% during the January-



May period compared to a year ago, while in the first four months, it grew by 4%.

The surveyed urban unemployment rate came in at 5% in May, down from 5.1% in April, according to the NBS.

The NBS noted that China's

broader economy maintained steady growth in May, backed by supportive macroeconomic policies, pointing to the strong resilience and vitality.

Meanwhile, the NBS warned of mounting external uncertainties, saying the foundation for sustained recovery is yet to be consolidated.

In the next step, the NBS said the country should unwaveringly manage its affairs well, adding that higher priority should be given to expanding domestic demand and strengthening domestic economic circulation. The key focus should also be placed on stabilising employment and promoting high-quality development.

WAM

Eurozone posts \$11.4bn trade surplus in April, well below expectations

Istanbul, Turkey – The eurozone posted a 9.9bn euro (\$11.4bn) foreign trade surplus in April, the region's statistical bureau Eurostat said.

The figure significantly fell from a 37.3bn euro surplus in the previous month, and came well below market forecasts of a 18.2bn euro surplus.

"This decrease was mainly driven by a substantial reduction in the surplus of the chemicals sector, which fell from 42.8bn to 22.1bn euro," Eurostat said in a statement.

The eurozone's exports to the rest of the world fell 1.4% year-on-year in April to 243bn euro, while imports ticked up 0.1% to 233.1bn euro. Meanwhile, the EU saw a foreign trade surplus of 7.4bn euro in April.

The US continued to be the largest recipient of EU exports due to tariffs, with 47.6bn, up 3.8% on an annual basis.



On the other hand, EU exports to China fell 15.9% in the same period to 16.3bn euro in April.

China was the largest importer to the EU in April, accounting for 44.4bn, up 8.4% year-on-year. Meanwhile, imports from Türkiye jumped 5.1%

in April to reach 9.1bn.

The eurozone/euro area, or EA20, represents member states that use the bloc's single currency, the euro, while the EU27 includes all of its member countries.

Anadolu Agency

Abu Dhabi reinforces leadership in healthcare innovation in region

A high-level delegation led by the Department of Health (DoH) Abu Dhabi embarked on a strategic mission to the United States from June 14 to 21. The visit reaffirms Abu Dhabi's global leadership in healthcare innovation and reflects its broader vision for healthcare transformation - driven by innovation, investment, and a deep commitment to global collaboration.

The delegation is slated to visit key US cities including Boston, Washington DC and Philadelphia, in parallel with Abu Dhabi's participation at BIO International Convention 2025, one of the world's foremost biotechnology events. The visit will spotlight the Emirate's achievements in AI, digital health, genomics, and clinical research and showcase Abu Dhabi's Health, Endurance, Longevity and Medicine (HELM) Life Science Cluster, while promoting long-term strategic partnerships with government entities, research institutions, and global innovators.

Dr Noura Khamis al Ghaithi, undersecretary of the Department of Health - Abu Dhabi, stated, "This mission reflects our commitment to shaping the future of health through collaboration, innovation, and shared purpose. Our vision is to build a health system that predicts, prevents, acts to restore, and acts to cure, therefore ensuring better outcomes for our communities and beyond. This can only be achieved through meaningful partnerships and a shared am-



bition to improve lives. We are proud to join our partners in the United States to explore new opportunities that advance healthcare, both in the UAE and globally."

The delegation will conduct over 20 strategic meetings and visits with public and private sector leaders across the U.S., aimed at knowledge exchange, investment opportunities, and

the signing of new agreements that accelerate the adoption of advanced health solutions.

Representing Abu Dhabi's innovation ecosystem, the delegation includes key stakeholders such as the Abu Dhabi Investment Office, Mubadala BIO, M42, Masdar City, KEZAD, PureHealth, and Etihad Cargo.

Abu Dhabi continues to lead

the region in genomics through the Emirati Genome Programme, which has successfully sequenced over 800,000 samples, creating one of the most advanced national genomic databases. The Emirate is also home to more than 90 licensed research centers and 30+ ongoing clinical trials in areas such as oncology, rare diseases, and chronic conditions.

Advanced data platforms such as Malaffi, which securely store over 5 million patient records—enable AI-powered insights and real-world evidence, while national initiatives like the Golden Visa programme are cultivating a global workforce and have granted over 2,000 long-term visas for researchers and healthcare professionals from around the world.



Oman Air bags two APEX 2025 Awards for food and service

Oman Air has been named the winner of two prestigious titles at the Apex 2025 Awards, securing Best Food & Beverage and Best Cabin Service in the Middle East.

The dual recognition highlights the airline's unwavering dedication to delivering a guest-centric journey that blends authentic Omani hospitality with world-class service standards, a press release said.

As part of its ongoing drive to elevate the travel experience, Oman Air has recently introduced a series of on-board service enhancements. Among the latest culinary offerings is 'Roqaa Omania', a thoughtfully curated Omani-themed menu, and its bespoke dessert featuring the Omani rock rose in partnership with Oman's renowned fragrance house, Amouage. Combined with exceptional cabin service, every element of the journey is designed to delight guests with the distinctive warmth and charm of Omani hospitality.

"These two awards are a powerful endorsement of our continual efforts to redefine the passenger journey through a blend of heartfelt Omani hospitality, culinary artistry, and exceptional service," said Con Korfiatis, CEO of Oman Air. "From our cabin crew to our products and catering teams, our people play ensure guests enjoy a seamless and memorable journey, and this is evident time and again in the awards we receive. We are honoured to be acknowledged by our guests; their feedback inspires us to raise the bar at every touchpoint."

In partnership with Triplt from Concur, the APEX Awards are the only airline ratings based entirely on travellers' feedback. For the 2025 honours, passengers rated over one million PNR-verified flights across 600+ airlines using a five-star scale, evaluating seat comfort, cabin service, food and beverage, entertainment, and Wi-Fi, all in under 15 seconds via a single-screen interface.

Dhofar Islamic's Mastercard World offers privileges

Dhofar Islamic Banking, the Islamic window of BankDhofar, invites customers to apply for the Dhofar Islamic MasterCard World credit card and experience a world of exceptional privileges.

Designed exclusively for priority banking customers, the Dhofar Islamic MasterCard World credit card offers customers exceptional benefits that suit their exclusive lifestyles. This underscores the bank's commitment to providing distinguished banking solutions that meet customers' aspirations, enhance their financial flexibility and enrich their lifestyles within as well as outside the Sultanate of Oman, a press release said.

The Dhofar Islamic MasterCard World credit card allows customers to enjoy an enhanced spending experience as it unlocks a comprehensive suite of rewards, travel benefits and lifestyle offerings that can be availed both locally and internationally. Additionally, cardholders enjoy 1.5% value back on all international purchases and 1% value back on purchases made within Oman, earning consistent rewards with every transaction.

Another key benefit of the Dhofar Islamic Mastercard World card is the 12 complimentary accesses to over 1,200 airport lounges in more than 450 cities across over 135 countries, facilitated through the convenient Mastercard Travel Pass app.

The first lounge visit is complimentary without any spend condition while subse-



quent visits are unlocked after a USD1 equivalent international transaction, providing extended complimentary access for three calendar months from the date of the last qualifying transaction. The complimentary lounge access is highly popular as it allows customers to enriching their travel experience.

Beyond lounge access, the card unlocks a world of travel and lifestyle benefits which include a 10% discount on any international roundtrip airfare from Cleartrip using the code MCWORLD, up to two complimentary items at Costa Coffee in Dubai's Airport via the Mastercard Travel Pass App and the 'Priceless Cities' collection offering thousands of unique experiences and offers in over 40 cities globally, spanning dining, travel, and entertainment.

Additional travel advantages comprise a 15% discount on IHG Hotels & Resorts across Europe, Maldives, India, the Middle East, and Africa.

Bestune B70 combines elegance, comfort and performance in two distinct variants

The Bestune B70 sedan offers a stylish and smart solution for drivers looking to balance everyday practicality with comfort and performance.

Available in two distinct variants, the Comfort, priced at RO7150, and the Limousine, offered at RO9100, the B70 is crafted to meet a wide range of expectations, from refined daily drives to executive-level comfort, a press release said.

The Comfort variant is powered by a 1.5ltr turbocharged engine that delivers 158 hp and 258 Nm of torque, paired with a 7-speed dual-clutch transmission for smooth, efficient performance. Its elegant silhouette is complemented by LED headlamps, daytime running lights, 18-inch alloy wheels, and a panoramic sunroof, giving it a



premium edge. Inside, the cabin feels well-appointed with leather seats, a 6-way power-adjustable driver's seat, and dual-zone automatic climate control.

Convenience and tech features include keyless entry, push-button start, cruise control, and a six speaker audio system. The Comfort variant also comes

equipped with an extensive list of safety features such as ABS, EBD, Brake Assist, Electronic Stability Control, and front and side airbags, along with a rear-

view camera, enhancing safety and ease for everyday use.

The Limousine variant raises the bar with a host of upgrades that cater to drivers who seek greater refinement and presence. Under the bonnet is a 2.0ltr turbocharged engine delivering 215 horsepower and 340Nm of torque, paired with a 6-speed automatic transmission for confident acceleration and control.

Its exterior styling includes 19-inch alloy wheels, puddle lamps, intelligent high-beam control, rhythmic LED rear lights, and a sporty square tailpipe. Inside, the Limousine transforms the cabin into an executive space with ambient lighting featuring a starry sky headliner, heated front seats, and a seat courtesy function.

OAB revolutionises payments with Soft POS solution

In a bold stride toward digital innovation and financial inclusion, Oman Arab Bank (OAB) has unveiled its cutting-edge Soft POS (Point of Sale) solution, transforming ordinary smartphones into secure, contactless payment terminals.

This game-changing product is reshaping how small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Oman conduct business—streamlining operations, boosting mobility, and reducing overhead, a press release said.

Designed with the needs of entrepreneurs, mobile vendors, and growing SMEs in mind, OAB's Soft POS system eliminates the cost and complexity of traditional POS devices. By simply downloading the 'OAB Mobile Pay' app on any



NFC-enabled Android smartphone, merchants can start accepting card payments instantly - no cables, no paper, and no extra equipment.

The system supports contact-

less payments via debit and credit cards, mobile wallets, and smart devices. It also offers digital receipts, real-time inventory management, tax tools, and liquidity tracking - all from the palm

of the merchant's hand. Most merchants are up and running within 24 hours of applying.

Juma al Fulaiti, deputy head of

The new system supports contactless payments via debit/credit cards, mobile wallets, and smart devices

Retail Banking in Oman Arab Bank, stated, "Our Soft POS solution reflects OAB's deep commitment to SME empowerment and financial accessibility. We believe in giving businesses the needed digital tools to thrive. So, by reducing the barriers to cash-

less commerce, we're helping Oman's entrepreneurs grow with agility and confidence."

The technology was also on display at the Muscat International Book Fair 2025, where it facilitated a totally cashless experience, showcasing its scalability and ease of use during high-traffic events.

As part of its broader digital banking strategy, Oman Arab Bank continues to bridge the gap between innovation and inclusion. And with the Soft POS platform, OAB is not only meeting the market's evolving needs but also enabling a smarter, faster, and more inclusive financial ecosystem, empowering a nation with intuitive solutions that drive forward customers, and enables them to persevere.

Muscat Governor reviews ministry plans under Oman Vision 2040

Within the framework of coordinating meetings to strengthen cooperation and integration between governors and heads of government unit, H E Sayyid Saud bin Hilal al Busaidi, Governor of Muscat, met on Monday with H E Dr Mohammed bin Said al Mamari, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs.

The Walis in Muscat Governorate, the ministry's undersecretary, and several officials from both entities attended this meeting, a press release said.

During the meeting, the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs reviewed the ministry's 2025 plan and fields of cooperation and integration with Muscat Governorate regarding the Endowments and Religious Affairs sectors. They also discussed the Ministry's detailed plans and E-services to support the government's efforts to achieve the Oman Vision 2040 objectives.

During the meeting, the ministry's projects in Muscat Governorate within the ministry's Five-Year Plan (2021-



2025) and upcoming implementing efforts and plans were introduced, besides, participating in the governorates' development, through exchanging viewpoints and promoting institutional work.

They briefed on several initiatives and projects associated with mosques, Quranic schools, endowments, Islamic counselling and guideline. Additionally, they briefed about the ministry's efforts to improve the public services offered to citizens and

residents, focusing on digital transformation and simplifying procedures through various electronic platforms.

The ministry held a mini exhibition displaying the achievements of its sectors, indicators, programmes and publications. The Governor of Muscat and attendees were introduced to the ministry's strategic directives, electronic and community services, as well as its role in promoting national values, coexistence and tolerance.

Bank Muscat hosts Global Financial Markets seminar



Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, recently hosted a seminar on Global Financial Markets for its corporate and institutional customers in Sohar.

The seminar witnessed the engaging participation by a number of decision-makers and financial professionals representing a range of industries. The event was organised as a part of a series of events held to raise awareness and explore

the trends around latest developments in financial markets and their impacts on the day to day business of the customers, a press release said.

The seminar focused on a variety of subjects connected to the most recent changes in the global financial markets to support customers by providing access to expert insights helping them make informed financial decisions in a dynamic global economy's performance in the

coming years. By continuing to conduct such events, Bank Muscat aims to shed light on numerous themes concerning the world economy, its prospects, and global financial markets. It is also an opportunity to engage with customers in fruitful discussions.

In line with the continuous development in the banking industry, Bank Muscat always strives to serve the needs of customers by consistently improving its

products and services. It makes every effort to give them the best possible experience. With an ever-expanding customer base in all governorates, the bank has been successful in maintaining people's trust for more than four decades.

Bank Muscat provides a comprehensive suite of treasury and financial markets products and services on a 24x7 basis. It ensures global coverage, spanning East Asian and early New York

time zones on all international and GCC working days. The bank offers top-notch products and services to a diverse customer base, addressing foreign exchange needs and providing hedging solutions for interest rates, foreign exchange, and commodity price risks. The bank stands out as one of the few regional Banks offering commodity hedging solutions. The bank will continue to implement its customer-centric vision.

Mysk Al Mouj offers summer staycations

As the warmth of summer begins to embrace the Omani coast, Mysk Al Mouj Muscat invites guests to slow down, breathe deeply, and immerse themselves in an extraordinary seasonal experience with its signature summer offering - Mysk Sunkissed Escapes.

Designed for both relaxation and indulgence, Mysk Sunkissed Escapes captures the essence of a perfect staycation - blending luxury, leisure, and a touch of sunset magic. Whether you're a resident of Muscat seeking a serene getaway without leaving the city or a traveller looking to experience the unique charm of Oman's vibrant hospitality, this offer promises a refreshing escape like no other, a press release said.

This summer, guests can enjoy the luxury of time with early check-in starting from 10am and a generous late check-out until 6pm. This allows for a truly unhurried stay

- perfect for those who want to make the most of every moment without feeling rushed. "We wanted to create something that feels like a genuine pause from the daily hustle," says Meenu Singh, Hotel Manager at Mysk Al Mouj. "Our summer staycation package is all about slowing down and savouring the sunshine, the flavours, and the ambience."

Food lovers will rejoice with 25% savings on all dining experiences throughout their stay. From delightful breakfasts to elegant evening meals, every bite becomes an opportunity to indulge in Mysk's culinary excellence. And for those looking to restore mind and body, the package also includes 25% off on all wellness treatments - a perfect way to cool down and rejuvenate during the hot summer months.

Guests can soak in the summer ambience with pool access till 2am

Atlantis Dubai reintroduces its Aquaventure After Dark offering

Dubai's most thrilling moonlight waterpark event, Aquaventure After Dark, is set to make a triumphant return for one unforgettable night at the Guinness World Records-holding Aquaventure World.

Taking place from 8pm until midnight on June 28, this one-night-only celebration, aptly titled 'The Reunion', is set to be a night of celebration and reconnection for long-time fans and new visitors alike, a press release said.

Guests can look forward to access to over 105 rides, slides, and attractions, including the famous Leap of Faith, the Odyssey of Terror the world's tallest waterslide of its kind, and the exciting Surf's Up wave rider. With three towers' worth of action-packed fun and top DJs spinning the summer's best hits, adrenaline lovers are in for a



night of non-stop excitement.

Live music, restaurants and retail outlets will be at the heart of Aquaventure After Dark, turning this nighttime waterpark bash into an unforgettable festival experience. Get ready to

party all night with top DJs including Bliss, Keza, Mr Shef Codes, and Taya Kruzz spinning the hottest beats. Partygoers will slide, dance, and vibe their way through the night, from one thrilling adventure to the next.

ICAEW panel backs GCC's regulatory gains

As global markets face rising uncertainty, the UAE is gaining ground as a trusted destination for long-term investment. Its transparent regulatory environment, backed by consistent legal reform and a clear economic vision, is reinforcing the country's credibility with global investors.

These developments were the focus of a recent panel discussion hosted by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) Corporate Finance Faculty in Dubai. The event brought together economists, senior policymakers and finance professionals to examine how regulatory transformation across the GCC is helping shape a more resilient and investable regional economy, a press release said.

The panellists included Dr Tariq Bin Hendi, CEO and Board Member, Astra Tech and CEO, Botim, Simon Williams, chief economist for Central and East-



ern Europe, Middle East and Africa, HSBC, Raed Safadi, partner and chief economist, Whiteshield, and Salmaan Khawaja, partner and head of Financial Advisory at Grant Thornton, who moderated the discussion.

Panellists discussed how recent updates to company law, residency frameworks and broader legal policies have cre-

ated a more accessible and predictable investment climate. These changes, combined with large-scale infrastructure investment, are drawing capital into priority sectors such as technology, clean energy and health-care.

Speakers also explored the region's strategic investment in digital infrastructure, from high-capacity data centres to AI plat-

forms. These initiatives are supported by regulatory models that encourage innovation while maintaining national oversight. Hanadi Khalife, head of ICAEW Middle East, said, "At a time of global uncertainty, the UAE and wider GCC are entering a golden moment. A clear and well-structured regulatory environment has significantly raised the region's global credibility."

Arms race: Risk of nuclear war grows

Berlin, Germany - There are nine nuclear-armed states in the world and nearly all of them continued with intensive nuclear modernisation programmes in 2024, upgrading existing weapons and adding newer versions.

That is one of the key findings of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) Yearbook 2025, an annual assessment of the state of armaments, disarmament and international security.

In the mid-1980s, nuclear warheads, bombs and shells worldwide numbered around 64,000. Today, the figure stands at an estimated 12,241. That trend now looks set to be reversed, according to the latest assessment. "The most worrying single thing that we see in the nuclear arsenals at the moment is that the long-term reduction in the numbers of nuclear warheads is coming to an end," SIPRI Director Dan Smith told DW.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the end of the Cold War, the dismantling of retired warheads - warheads removed from the nuclear stockpile - has outpaced the deployment of new ones.

While it is common practice for nuclear-armed states to modernise and upgrade their nuclear capabilities, Smith says there has been an intensification of this process since late in former US President Barack Obama's final term, with more investment in new generations of missiles and carriers.

"Already for several years before then, the security horizon worldwide had been darkening and the nuclear-armed states were already starting to introduce these processes of what we would call this 'intense' process of modernisation, so not just a little bit of tinkering, but some real steep changes," Smith said.



The long-term reduction in the numbers of nuclear warheads is coming to an end, according to SIPRI's latest assessment

SIPRI researchers conclude that of the world's estimated 12,241 nuclear warheads in January 2025, about 9,614 were in military stockpiles: either placed on missiles or located on bases with operational forces, or in central storage that could potentially be deployed.

An estimated 3,912 of those warheads were deployed with missiles and aircraft, with around 2,100 of those kept in a state of high operational alert on ballistic missiles. Nearly all of those belonged to Russia or the US, but China may also now keep some warheads on missiles, according to the assessment.

Among the world's nuclear-armed states - the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel - Russia

and the US possess 90% of all nuclear weapons.

SIPRI analysts now warn that more and more states are considering developing or hosting nuclear weapons, with revitalised national debates about nuclear status and strategy.

This includes new nuclear sharing arrangements: Russia claims to have deployed nuclear weapons on Belarusian territory, while several European NATO member states have signalled willingness to host US nuclear weapons.

Security deteriorating
In 2007, Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered a speech at the Munich Security Conference in which he railed against the US-dominated world order, NATO's eastward expansion and

disarmament.

But just two years later in 2009, Obama announced the goal of total nuclear disarmament in Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic. "The existence of thousands of nuclear weapons is the most dangerous legacy of the Cold War," he said.

He went on to say that the US would 'take concrete steps towards a world without nuclear weapons' and negotiate a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) with Russia. That treaty was signed, and came into force in 2011.

But in the wake of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Biden administration published its 2022 Nuclear Posture Review which identified the modernisation of the US nuclear arsenal as a top

priority.

In February 2023, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a bill halting Russia's participation in the New START treaty.

"The tide of insecurity has been building slowly since 2007-08, through 2014, onto this moment when the waves start crashing down in February 2022," Smith said. "I think that is when maybe many ordinary citizens woke up to this deterioration which was more than a decade old by that time."

The bottom line is: the world's nuclear arsenals are being enlarged and upgraded. SIPRI estimates that China now has at least 600 nuclear warheads and that its nuclear arsenal is growing faster than any other country's.

India is also believed to have slightly expanded its nuclear ar-

senal in 2024, while Pakistan continued to develop new delivery systems and accumulate fissile material - a key component of nuclear weapons.

Israel, which on June 13 launched strikes targeting Iranian nuclear facilities, killing military leaders and nuclear scientists, maintains a policy of deliberate ambiguity over its own nuclear capabilities. However, it is believed to be in the process of modernising its own nuclear arsenal, as well as upgrading a plutonium production reactor site in the Negev desert.

AI and space technologies

In his introduction to the SIPRI Yearbook 2025, Smith warns of the prospect of a new nuclear arms race that carries 'much

more risk and uncertainty' than during the Cold War era - largely due to the rise of artificial intelligence and new technologies in the fields of cyber capabilities and space assets.

"The coming nuclear arms race is going to be as much about AI, cyberspace and outer space as it is about missiles in bunkers or on submarines or bombs on aircrafts. It's going to be as much about the software as about the hardware," Smith said.

This complicates the question of how to control and monitor nuclear weapons and stockpiles when the competition between

A dangerous new nuclear arms race is emerging at the same time as arms control is severely weakened, according to latest SIPRI assessment

nuclear-armed states used to be more or less about numbers.

There are long-term discussions about AI in relation to what are commonly called 'killer robots' (Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems), and the use of automated and semi-automated drones since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine - but not so much in relation to nuclear weapons.

Artificial intelligence allows for a large amount of information to be processed extremely quickly and in theory this should help decision makers to react more quickly. However, if something goes wrong within the software or a system totally reliant on LLMs, machine learning and AI, a small technical glitch could potentially lead to a nuclear strike.
DW

Floods kill five in West Virginia

Virginia, US - Five people, including a 3-year-old child, were killed and three others remain missing after sudden downpours triggered flash floods in the US state of West Virginia, local media reported on Sunday.

Between 2.5 and 4 inches (6.35 to 10.16cm) of rain fell in less than 30 minutes late on Saturday in parts of Wheeling and Ohio County, overwhelming waterways and infrastructure, according to CBS News.

Vehicles were swept into creeks, residents sought safety in trees, and a mobile home caught fire.

"It happened so quickly and so fast," said Lou Vargo, Ohio County's emergency management director. "I've never seen anything like this in my 35 years."

Governor Patrick Morrisey



said the state is working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and has declared a state of emergency in Ohio and Marion Counties.

As of Sunday afternoon, 2,500 homes were without power.

Natural gas leaks delayed restoration efforts.

In Fairmont, about 100 miles (161km) away, flooding caused a

partial collapse of an apartment building.

Residents were evacuated to Fairmont State University's campus. More storms were expected, and the National Guard was mobilised to assist.

Authorities are using drones, dogs, and teams to search submerged vehicles and debris.

Anadolu Agency

UK: MI6 appoints first woman chief

London, UK - United Kingdom Prime Minister has announced the appointment of the first ever woman Chief of the country's Secret Intelligence Service (MI6).

Blaise Metreweli CMG will be the 18th Chief in the organisation's history and the first woman to hold the role a statement from the UK government said on Monday.

This is the first time in the foreign intelligence service's 116-year history that the MI6 has got a woman head.

Metreweli, 47, who joined the Secret Intelligence Service in 1999, will take over from Sir Richard Moore later this year.

She is currently responsible for technology and innovation at the service and said she was 'proud and honoured' to have been asked to lead.



Blaise Metreweli

Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer called the appointment 'historic' at a time 'when the work of our intelligence services has never been more vital'.

"The United Kingdom is facing threats on an unprecedented scale - be it aggressors who send

their spy ships to our waters or hackers whose sophisticated cyber plots seek to disrupt our public services," Starmer said.

MI6 is tasked with gathering intelligence overseas to improve the UK's security, with its core aims being to stop terrorism, disrupt the activities of hostile states and bolster cyber-security.

Commonly referred to as 'C', the MI6 Chief has operational responsibility for MI6, and is the only publicly named member of the organisation. They are accountable to the Foreign Secretary.

She is currently Director General 'Q', responsible for technology and innovation division in MI6, and has previously held a Director-level role in MI5.

"MI6 plays a vital role - with

MI5 and GCHQ - in keeping the British people safe and promoting UK interests overseas," she said.

Outgoing Chief, Sir Richard Moore, said: "I am absolutely delighted by this historic appointment of my colleague, Blaise Metreweli to succeed me as 'C'. Blaise is a highly accomplished intelligence officer and leader, and one of our foremost thinkers on technology. I am excited to welcome her as the first female head of MI6."

Metreweli is a career intelligence officer, having joined the Service as a case officer in 1999. She has spent most of her career in operational roles in West Asia and Europe. She studied Anthropology at Pembroke College, Cambridge.
ANI

US police arrest 'shooter' of Minnesota lawmakers after two-day hunt

Minnesota, US - A man suspected of killing a lawmaker in Minnesota and wounding another was taken into custody on Sunday evening, police said.

The arrest concludes the nearly two-day manhunt that put the midwestern state on edge.

"After a two-day manhunt, two sleepless nights, law enforcement have apprehended Vance Boelter," Governor Tim Walz said at a press conference after the arrest. "One man's unthinkable actions have altered the state of Minnesota."

"A moment in this country where we watch violence erupt, this cannot be the norm. It cannot



be the way that we deal with our political differences. Now is the time for us to recommit to the core values of this country, and

each and every one of us can do it," he said. Walz has previously called the shooting a 'politically motivated assassination'.

Police said that a man, posing as a police officer, shot and killed former Democratic House Speaker Melissa Hortman and

her husband, Mark, in their Brooklyn Park home early on Saturday in the northern Minneapolis suburbs.

Before the arrest, authorities had said they had found a car, hat and other items belonging to the suspected shooter. The man had fled on foot early on Saturday when officers confronted him at Hortman's home.

Police say this was the same person who shot and injured Senator John Hoffman, also a Democrat, and his wife at their home nine miles (14km) away.

Hoffman was undergoing surgery after being hit with nine bullets, according to a text mes-

sage his wife sent to Democrat Senator Amy Klobuchar.

"We are both incredibly lucky to be alive," his wife, Yvette Hoffman, said in the message that was shared on social media.

The shooter

Friends and family of the suspected shooter said he was deeply religious and went to campaign rallies for US President Donald Trump.

In the car, officials found fliers for a local 'No Kings' rally scheduled for Saturday and a notebook with name of other lawmakers. This list also included names of abortion rights activists and

healthcare officials, the Associated Press reported citing unnamed police officials.

Both Hortman and Hoffman have defended abortion rights in the state legislature.

Drew Evans, Superintendent of the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, had earlier said that the suspect was not believed to have made any public threats before the attacks.

As for the motivation of the shootings, he said: "We often want easy answers for complex problems. Those answers will come as we complete the full picture of our investigation."
DW



Israeli army kills 27 more Palestinians in fresh Gaza attacks

Gaza City, Palestine - At least 27 more Palestinians were killed, many of them people seeking to get humanitarian aid, in fresh Israeli attacks in the war-torn Gaza Strip on Monday, the Health Ministry said.

A ministry statement said 20 people lost their lives and over 200 others were injured when Israeli forces opened fire on hundreds of people waiting near aid distribution points in central and southern Gaza.

The ministry said that 50 of the injured are in critical condition.

Two fishermen were also killed, and three others went missing after Israeli forces shelled fishing boats off the shore of Gaza City, a medical source told Anadolu.

Two more Palestinians were killed, and three others were wounded in two separate Israeli attacks in the same city, the source added.

An Israeli strike killed three more people in the Shejaiya neighbourhood of Gaza City, according to the Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital.

Gaza death toll tops 55,400
At least 55,432 Palestinians

have been killed in Israel's genocidal war in the Gaza Strip since October 2023, the Health Ministry said on Monday.

A ministry statement said that 68 bodies were brought to hospitals in the last 24 hours, while 182 people were injured, taking the total number of injuries in the Israeli onslaught to 128,923.

"Many victims are still trapped under the rubble and on the roads as rescuers are unable to reach them," the ministry added.

The Israeli army resumed its assaults on the Gaza Strip on March 18 and has since killed 5,139 people and injured nearly 16,882 others, shattering a ceasefire and prisoner exchange agreement that took hold in January.

Last November, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza.

Israel also faces a genocide case at the International Court of Justice for its war on the enclave.

Anadolu Agency

Israel stages new strikes on Iran, claims control of Tehran's airspace

Tel Aviv/Tehran - Israel launched a new series of strikes on central Iran on Monday, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claiming full control of airspace over Tehran.

"The Israeli Air Force has full control over the skies of Tehran," Netanyahu said in statements at Tel Nof Airbase in Rehovot in central Israel. Israeli Channel 12 said that the army was attacking dozens of targets in central Iran, without giving any details.

A military statement said that several trucks allegedly carrying weapons, including surface-to-air missile launchers, were targeted on their way to Tehran from western Iran since Monday morning. "We struck the trucks, neutralising the weapons and launchers," the army said.

Regional tensions have escalated since Friday, when Israel launched coordinated airstrikes on multiple sites across Iran, including military and nuclear facilities, prompting Tehran to launch retaliatory strikes.

Israeli authorities said that at least 24 people have been killed and hundreds injured in Iranian missile attacks since Friday.

Death toll rises in Israel

At least five people were killed and 103 injured in Iranian missile strikes targeting Israel early on Monday, according to Israeli media reports.

The death toll in Israel as a result of Iran's latest attacks has risen to five after the bodies of two people were found in Bnei Brak and Petah Tikva, east of Tel Aviv, Israeli Channel 12 reported.

Yedioth Ahronoth reported that 103 injured people were hospitalised, with two of them report-



Israeli Channel 12 said that the army was attacking dozens of targets in central Iran, without giving any details

The death toll in Israel as a result of Iran's latest attacks has risen to five after the bodies of two people were found in Bnei Brak and Petah Tikva

edly in serious condition and seven in moderate condition.

Channel 12 reported direct hits on structures in the Gush Dan area, with several emergency teams responding to the scene.

It said the strikes damaged a number of buildings in central Is-

rael, with fires at impact sites.

Some 16 fire and rescue teams are operating at several locations in the Dan and Central districts to locate and rescue trapped people, said Israel's fire service, according to Channel 12.

Israeli police confirmed that weapons debris fell in at least two places in Tel Aviv District, causing property damage, with no immediate reports of casualties.

Similar incidents occurred in the coastal district, resulting in additional material and infrastructure damage.

Meanwhile, the public broadcaster KAN reported that the Israeli military detected hostile aircraft in the Milvot area and on the northern coast, and drones

were intercepted in Eilat in the south and Rosh Hanikra in the north, according to Channel 12.

The Israeli military said early on Monday that it detected missile launches from Iran, prompting the activation of defence systems and nationwide alerts.

Residents were ordered to enter protected areas upon receiving alerts and remain there until further notice, following the Home Front Command's instructions. A military spokesman confirmed that alerts were triggered in several areas following the detection of the missiles.

Israel's *Yediot Aharonot* daily later reported that explosions were heard in northern and central Israel. Amid these develop-

ments, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said they used a new method in this latest wave, which disrupted Israel's defence mechanisms and caused them to target each other.

At least 224 people have been killed and more than 1,000 wounded since Israel launched attacks on Iran, Iran's Health Ministry announced early on Monday.

"224 Iranian citizens were martyred and more than a thousand others were injured as a result of the attacks launched by the Israeli entity on sites inside the country during the past three days," the semi-official Mehr News Agency quoted the ministry as saying.

Iran-Israel conflict: Turkish, Russian presidents urge diplomacy

Istanbul, Turkey - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the escalating conflict between Iran and Israel, as well as bilateral ties and regional issues in a phone call on Monday, according to Türkiye's Communications Directorate.

During the phone call, Erdogan warned that the cycle of violence sparked by Israeli attacks on Iran threatens the security of the entire region, the directorate said in a statement. Erdogan said the Netanyahu



government's disregard for law poses clear threat to international system, adding that the region cannot tolerate another war, the statement added.

From the very beginning, Ankara has prioritised diplomatic initiatives to stop the attacks, Erdogan noted, emphasising that the only way to resolve issues with Iran is through diplomacy, and that negotiations must resume without delay.

Erdogan also stressed the importance of not allowing Is-

rael's attacks against Iran to overshadow the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

Putin also expressed the urgency of ending the conflict and opening space for diplomacy.

Meanwhile, Iran on Monday said that authorities will decide whether to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

"On important issues such as how to deal with the NPT, a decision must be made by the relevant authorities," Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil

Baqaei said, in his response to a question about a possible withdrawal from the NPT.

Baqaei stressed that Iran considers any weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, contrary to religious teachings and beliefs.

The Iranian parliament earlier denied reports about withdrawal from the NPT, stressing that it does not have any plans to issue any resolutions regarding the issue, according to local media.

Anadolu Agency

EU urged to exert 'real pressure' on Israel to stop 'carnage' in Gaza

Istanbul, Turkey - Doctors Without Borders (MSF) on Monday called on the EU to exert 'real pressure' on Israel to stop what it described as the 'carnage' in Gaza.

"Our message to the leaders is simple. We urge you to use all political, economic and diplomatic tools to exert real pressure on Israel to stop the carnage in Gaza and to allow unhindered humanitarian aid," MSF Secretary General Christopher Lockyear said in a news conference, reading an open letter addressed to the European leaders.

Calling the situation in Gaza 'evidence of a profound failure of moral and political responsibility', Lockyear urged Europe and other countries to show solidarity 'rooted in action and accountability'.

"How many more children, women and men must be killed or pulled from the rubble before you acted? European leaders, will you continue to remain complicit through your inaction? Will



you continue issuing empty statements of concern over the situation in Gaza while sending the arms that are killing and maiming the children that we are treating every day?" he said.

Lockyear said that MSF teams on the ground describe the situation in Gaza as 'worse than hell

on earth', as homes, hospitals, markets, water networks, roads, and power lines have been demolished by Israeli forces.

He said these are 'not isolated' attacks but rather part of 'systematic disregard for international humanitarian law'.

He added that Gaza's only re-

maining lifeline - humanitarian assistance - is being 'weaponised' and rerouted to serve military and political goals, stressing that aid is a 'legal obligation' and 'not a bargaining chip'.

"Israel is systematically destroying the conditions neces-

sary for Palestinian life in Gaza, this catastrophe is deliberately brought by human decisions, prolonged and enabled by an international community that has yet to summon the courage and decisiveness to stop it," he said.

Omar Ebeid, an MSF emergency coordinator who left Gaza 10 days ago, described the scene

as an 'assault on the senses', citing 'violent' sounds, 'persistent' drones, and the smell of sewage in most areas.

"Fresh water, is not readily accessible, and the water network has fallen apart and the sewage systems do not work properly," Ebeid said, pointing out that third of the Pales-

tinian population has been displaced at least once since the breakdown of the ceasefire.

MSF Medical Doctor Virginia Moneti also warned that they are running out of medical supplies, underlining that 'there is no way' they can respond to the needs.

"In the last two months, we have seen at least three of our

Our message to the leaders is simple. We urge you to use all political, economic and diplomatic tools to exert real pressure on Israel to stop the carnage in Gaza and to allow unhindered humanitarian aid

CHRISTOPHER LOCKYEAR

staff that have to be admitted to the hospital, and they become patients themselves," Moneti said. "This is not sustainable. This is not human. So, we really call for action. Now, we need humanitarian aid to enter Gaza. Now, we need this to stop."

Anadolu Agency

Pakistan: Blast kills 2, injures 11

Islamabad, Pakistan - Two people were killed and 11 others injured on Monday when a bomb planted in a motorcycle exploded in southwestern Pakistan, local newspaper *Dawn* reported, citing officials.

Local Deputy Commissioner Abdullah Khosa told *Dawn* that an explosive device hidden on a motorcycle parked in a market in the Barkhan district of Balochistan province exploded, killing two people and injuring 11 others.

Four of the injured are in serious condition and have been immediately transported to a hospital, Khosa said, noting that the blast also damaged nearby shops, buildings, and a car.

Following the explosion, an emergency was declared in all Barkhan hospitals. Police and security personnel arrived on the scene to launch an investigation into the incident.

Security forces have cordoned off the area and launched a search for the suspects. A similar attack took place in March in Balochistan's Khuzdar district, where an improvised explosive device attached to a motorcycle detonated remotely after being parked next to a car, killing four people and injuring five others.

Separatist groups have been fighting for the 'liberation' of Balochistan, which they claim was forcibly incorporated into Pakistan.

United Nations warns of worsening hunger in 13 hotspots

Geneva, Switzerland - Hunger is set to worsen in 13 countries and territories over the coming months, with five facing an immediate risk of starvation, according to a new Hunger Hotspots report released on Monday by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

The agencies warned that people in Sudan, Palestine, South Sudan, Haiti, and Mali face 'extreme hunger and risk of starvation and death in the coming months unless there is urgent humanitarian action'.

"These are communities already facing famine, at risk of famine or confronted with catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity," the report said, citing escalating conflict, economic shocks, and natural disasters as key drivers, compounded by access constraints and funding shortfalls.

"This report makes it very clear: hunger today is not a distant threat - it is a daily emergency for millions," said FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu. "We must act now, and act together, to save lives and safeguard livelihoods."

WFP Executive Director Cindy McCain, for her part, warned: "This report is a red alert. We know where hunger is rising and we know who is at risk. We have the tools and experience to respond, but without funding and access, we cannot save lives."

The report also highlighted worsening conditions in Gaza, where the entire population of 2.1mn faces crisis or worse levels of food insecurity, and in Sudan, where 637,000 people are facing catastrophic hunger.

In addition to the five worst-hit countries, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, and Nigeria are flagged as hotspots of very high concern, according to the report. Others include Burkina Faso, Chad, Somalia, and Syria.

"Pre-emptive interventions save lives, reduce food gaps, and protect assets and livelihoods," the report stressed.

Anadolu Agency



India, Cyprus to develop roadmap to provide direction to cooperation: Modi

Nicosia, Cyprus - Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday that India and Cyprus will develop a strong roadmap to provide strategic direction to co-operation between the two countries.

He lauded the support of Cyprus for India becoming a permanent member of the Security Council and the country's continued support in India's fight against terrorism.

"After two decades, an Indian Prime Minister has visited Cyprus. This is an opportunity to write a new chapter in the India-Cyprus partnership. President Nikos Christodoulides and I held bilateral talks. Cyprus's Vision 2035 and India's Viksit Bharat 2047 have similarities. That is why we will be working together towards our shared growth. Over the next five years, we will develop a robust roadmap to provide strategic direction to our cooperation," Modi said during the joint press statement with the Cyprus President.

"To further strengthen defence and security cooperation, emphasis will be laid on defence industry under the bilateral Defence Cooperation Programme. A separate dialogue will be initiated on cyber and maritime security," he added.

He thanked the Cyprus President for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to him.

"The affection shown by the



Indian PM Narendra Modi and Cyprus President Nikos Christodoulides at the Historic Centre of Nicosia, in Nicosia, Cyprus on Monday (ANI)

President and the people of Cyprus since I set foot on the soil of Cyprus yesterday has touched my heart. Just a while ago, I was honoured with Cyprus' highest civilian award. This award is not just mine but it is the award of 140 crore Indians. This is a stamp of unbreakable friendship between India and Cyprus. For this, I once again express my heartfelt gratitude," he said.

"We are grateful for Cyprus' continued support in India's fight against cross-border terrorism. To prevent terrorism, drugs and arms trafficking, a mechanism for real-time information exchange between our agencies will be developed," he added.

The Indian PM and the Cyprus President held delegation-level talks earlier. Modi said that India and the European Union are working to concluding a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) by the end of this year.

"I had a discussion with President Nikos Christodoulides on the economic relations between our two countries. I noticed a sense of excitement and synergy within the business community regarding this.

"India and the European Union are working to concluding a Free Trade Agreement by the end of this year. Earlier this year, the India-Cyprus-Greece Business and Investment Council was launched. These initiatives will further strengthen business ties among our countries."

He called Cyprus a 'favourite destination' for Indian tourists and said emphasis will be laid on creating direct air connectivity for them.

"We are excited to see the

braced the honour as a renewed commitment to strengthening and diversifying the partnership between India and Cyprus. He emphasised that the award was a symbol of the unwavering commitment of the two countries to peace, security, sovereignty, territorial integrity and prosperity," Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a press release.

Modi expressed gratitude to

To further strengthen defence and security cooperation, emphasis will be laid on defence industry under the bilateral Defence Cooperation Programme. A separate dialogue will be initiated on cyber and maritime security

NARENDRA MODI

spread of yoga and Ayurveda in Cyprus," he said.

Modi was awarded the Grand Cross of the Order of Makarios III - the highest merit honour awarded in Cyprus, by President Nikos Christodoulides at the Presidential Palace in Nicosia.

The Order of Makarios III, is named after Makarios III, the first president of Cyprus, and is conferred upon heads of state and other people of significant status in recognition of meritorious service to the nation.

"The prime minister em-

President Christodoulides, the government and people of Cyprus for the honour. He stated that honour symbolises their unwavering commitment to peace, security, sovereignty, territorial integrity and prosperity of people of two nations.

Modi had arrived in Cyprus on Sunday afternoon, marking the first visit by an Indian PM to the island nation in over two decades. He was received by the Cypriot President at Larnaca International Airport.

ANI



Jailed Istanbul mayor in court over prosecutor 'threat'

Istanbul, Turkey - Ekrem Imamoglu, the imprisoned mayor of Istanbul and leading rival to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, appeared in court on Monday on charges of threatening and insulting a top judicial official.

Prosecutors have charged the 54-year-old mayor with threatening, insulting, and targeting a public official - serious allegations in Turkey's increasingly politicised judiciary.

The case against Imamoglu

The case centres on comments Imamoglu allegedly made about Istanbul's chief public prosecutor, Akin Gurlek, questioning his integrity.

Imamoglu faces more than seven years in prison and a political ban for allegedly 'targeting, threatening and insulting persons working in the fight against terrorism'.

Monday's hearing was held inside Istanbul's Silivri prison, where Imamoglu has been detained since late March after his arrest in a separate corruption investigation.

That earlier case, which authorities claim involves financial misconduct, triggered Turkey's largest street protests in over a decade. Police arrested hundreds of people in response.

The numerous cases could result in prison sentences and a political ban.

Anadolu Agency

South Korea's President Lee embarks on 1st foreign trip

Seoul, South Korea - South Korea's newly elected President Lee Jae-myung on Monday embarked on his first overseas trip to attend the G7 summit in Canada, Seoul-based Yonhap News reported.

Lee is visiting Canada to attend an expanded G7 summit session as a guest and hold meetings with leaders of major economies during his three-day trip, which marks his debut on the global stage just two weeks after taking office.

"Through the occasion, President Lee aims to build rapport with global leaders and lay the groundwork for achieving tangible results on key issues, including trade," presidential spokesperson Kang Yu-jung told reporters.

Lee is also aiming to hold a trilateral meeting with US President Donald Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru on the sidelines of the summit.

Ishiba has already arrived in Alberta for his first in-person G7 meeting, Tokyo-based Kyodo News reported. He is seeking a high-stakes, tariff-focused bilateral meeting with Trump during the two-day summit, which begins on Monday in Kananaskis.

The gathering comes amid a series of global challenges, including fallout from Trump's tariff policies and rising tensions in the Middle East following Israel's strikes on Iran just days ahead of the summit.

One of the early arrivals was Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who met with



Lee is visiting Canada to attend an expanded G7 summit session as a guest and hold meetings with leaders of major economies

host Prime Minister Mark Carney before the summit began. The two leaders discussed trade, security, and critical minerals, among other topics.

"Australia and Canada know we're stronger when we work together. That's how we create opportunity and support security in the world," Albanese said.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is also attending the summit as a guest.

The G7 comprises the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the US, along with the EU.

This year's summit is being held in Alberta, Canada, on Monday and Tuesday, and also marks the 50th anniversary of the group's first meeting.

Anadolu Agency

Delhi bound Air India Dreamliner diverted back to Hong Kong

New Delhi, India - An Air India flight, which was supposed to land in Delhi, was diverted back to Hong Kong after the pilot suspected a technical issue mid-air, sources said on Monday.

The AI 315 flight, a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, had departed from Hong Kong to Delhi. According to the flight tracking site, Flight Radar 24, the air India flight was supposed to reach Delhi by 12.20pm. Sources said that the passengers have been disembarked safely and the plane is undergoing a safety check.

"The pilot suspected some technical issue in the flight and, as a precautionary measure, the flight returned to its origin. Passengers have been disembarked and the flight is going through the check," the source said. This incident comes up just days after the tragic Air India AI 171, also a Dreamliner 787-8, on June 12 in Ahmedabad, killing 241 people.

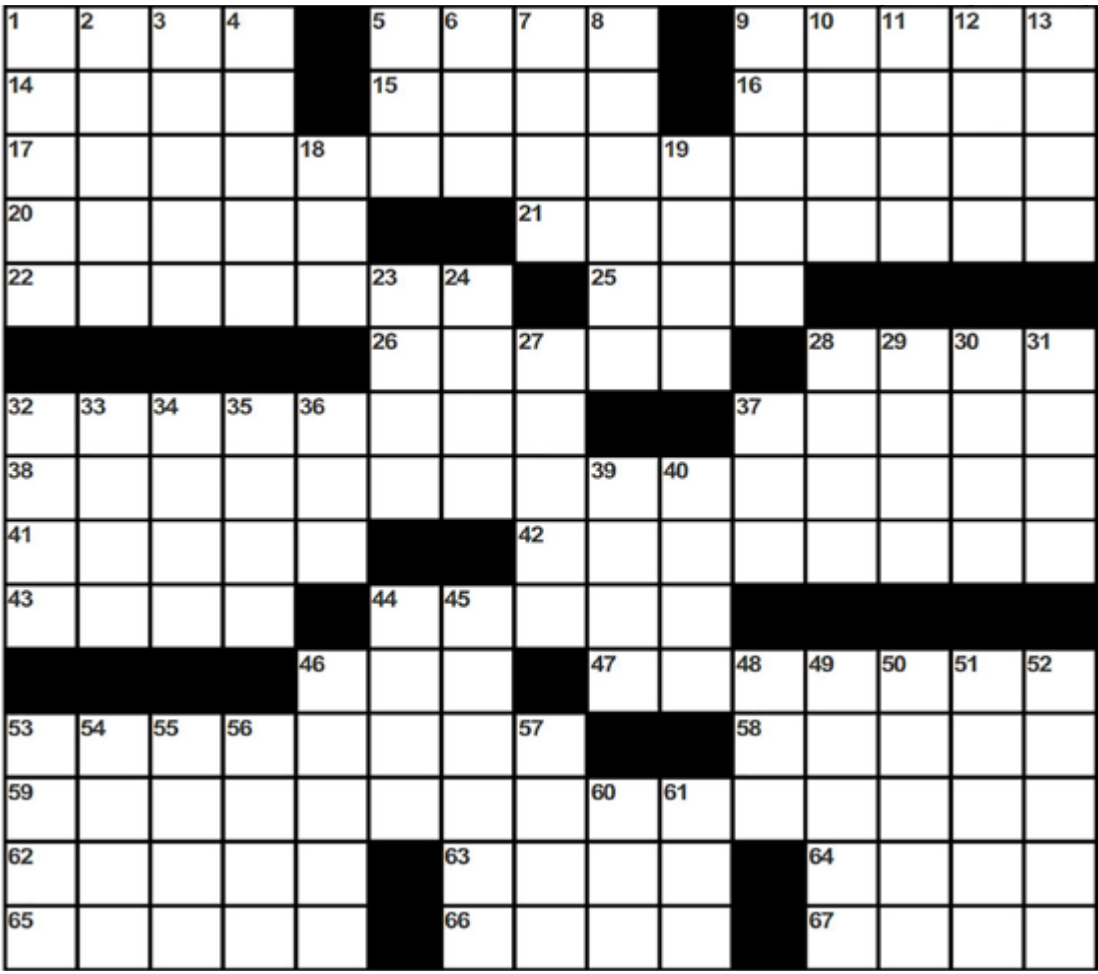
Following the crash, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has also ordered enhanced safety checks on Air India's Boeing 787-8 and 787-9 fleet. The airline has stated that inspections on nine out of its 33 Dreamliner aircraft had been completed, with the remaining 24 on track to be inspected within the timeline provided by the regulator.

The Air India Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner was en route to London from Ahmedabad when it crashed shortly after takeoff. There were 242 people on board, including 230 passengers and 12 crew members. Out of all the people, there was a lone survivor, Vishwash Kumar Ramesh, a British national of Indian origin, who got minor sustained injuries and had been undergoing treatment.

A high-level meeting on civil aviation security, chaired by Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, is set to take place on June 17 in the wake of the recent Air India plane crash.

ANI

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1) Ewe youth
 - 5) "Joy of Cooking" author Rombauer
 - 9) Stay on the same topic too long
 - 14) Caspian Sea feeder
 - 15) Goat-legged deity
 - 16) Some math measurements
 - 17) "Don't worry"
 - 20) Words with prayers
 - 21) Leaders of the band?
 - 22) Wise guy's delivery
 - 25) Inquire
 - 26) Cholesterol-rich egg parts
 - 28) "Family Guy" creator Macfarlane
 - 32) Jungle creature
 - 37) Eagle haven
 - 38) "I don't care"
 - 41) Gumption
 - 42) Opposite of horizontal
 - 43) Nautical direction
 - 44) Writer Asimov
 - 46) Hidden means of support?
 - 47) Grassland
 - 53) Notions department?
 - 58) Lady of Troy
 - 59) What to leave when

- going all-out?
- 62) Brownish photograph tint
 - 63)_gin fizz
 - 64) Pew area
 - 65) Meeting for lovers
 - 66) Have a disposition
 - 67) Acom, for one
- DOWN**
- 1) Circular religious receptacles
 - 2) Appetite stimulus
 - 3) Sprayer in self-defense
 - 4) "That's all, folks!" voice
 - 5) "Weather permitting" and others
 - 6) Charlotte of "The Facts of Life"
 - 7) Misplay, as a grounder
 - 8) Arctic attire
 - 9) Didn't pass the bar?
 - 10) Disney's first name
 - 11) Hard yellow cheese
 - 12) Change in Roma, once
 - 13) Trace the shape of
 - 18) Where many things are "made"
 - 19) "Friends" friend
 - 23) In_ (working in harmony)
 - 24) A la_ (pie choice)
 - 27) Cocoon dweller

- 28) Interstate hauler
- 29) Clapton of rock
- 30) Louise of "Gilligan's Island"
- 31) Foot part
- 32) I, in "The King and I"
- 33) Holiday tune
- 34) It could be a lot
- 35) Shoreline indentation
- 36) Bill that wasn't re-designed
- 37) Back of the boat
- 39) One kind of tide
- 40) Whale type
- 44) Unwrinkle
- 45) Like the best advice
- 46) Make swell
- 48) Moo_ pork
- 49) Aquatic birds
- 50) Arm bones
- 51) "Superman" actor Christopher
- 52) Halted
- 53) "Meet Me_ Louis" (film)
- 54) Person of action
- 55) To see at a distance
- 56) "The Adventures of Milo and..."
- 57) Christmas season
- 60) Persona_ grata
- 61) "Cheers" star Danson

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19
Are you feeling stuck in the moment? How did you get here, anyway? This probably isn't the destination you had in mind when you set out, so take a look around and observe the situation. Most importantly, observe yourself as you relate to the situation. The Universe doesn't leave anything to chance, so if you're here, there's a good reason for it. Take advantage of this opportunity to focus on developing your strengths.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
Challenges to authority make you feel powerful, but they could end up in endless bickering over what turn out to be trivial issues. Pursue a higher purpose and make sure you see petty gripes for what they are. You're happier in the long run, and this attitude leaves you with lots of energy for the things that really matter. Your attitude could lead you to an opportunity to increase goodwill with the powers in your life.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
You're dealing with romantic or financial debts, on either side of the IOU line, but it's important that you settle your differences before long, or you could experience a real psychic (and financial) drain. Seek out whatever is really going on rather than trying to duck out. Your energy guarantees that dealing with it all bravely is rewarding, while avoiding it results in the past coming back to haunt you.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
You can get an image overhaul today by getting a clear look at yourself. Why get a total physical makeover when all you really need is a little boost to your self-esteem? It's easier on your wallet, of course, but the effects are also more lasting and satisfying. Most importantly, don't let mere sentiment cloud your judgment, especially when you're throwing out ideas and preconceived notions that just don't fit you anymore.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
Make sure to retain some mercy today, especially if you're dealing with someone who needs understanding. More importantly, don't just say you're ready to forgive and forget if that's not true yet. There's nothing wrong with being angry as long as you're honest and considerate about expressing it. Pretending things are okay when they're not just gets you in trouble in the long run!



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
You're dealing with romantic or financial debts, on either side of the IOU line, but it's important that you settle your differences before long, or you could experience a real psychic (and financial) drain. Seek out whatever is really going on rather than trying to duck out. Your energy guarantees that dealing with it all bravely is rewarding, while avoiding it results in the past coming back to haunt you.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
Your energy is working behind the scenes to ensure that your career and love life are each building positive alliances, so it's time to get serious and ask for your due. If you're single, it's time to ask yourself what it is you really need from a relationship (as opposed to what you think you want). All this should pay off in more ways than one.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
It's far too easy right now to be bamboozled by someone's personal style, so try to make sure it doesn't hit you where you live. Be especially vigilant if some enticing offer includes a large investment on your part. You weren't born yesterday, so you ought to be able to ignore any pressure and make up your own mind on your own time, preferably after lots of research.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
Logic is all well and good, but your passions are compelling in their own right too. Don't be too quick to dismiss them as not being informative when it comes to making today's big decision. Instead, take both left- and right-brain data into account, and never discount any gut feelings you may have about the issue. It's quite easy to believe your eyes, but for now it's better to listen to your heart.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
It's time you were ruthlessly true to yourself and your real desires. Stop making compromises when it comes to complex work or relationship matters! Some problem seems terribly complex, but it's actually pretty simple. It may not have an easy solution, but if you take the hard path, you should feel a lot better very quickly. Resolve to just hang in there.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
Pay attention to anything unexpected, because what at first seems like crazy ideas could become quite plausible (and even profitable) today. If you pass up this chance, you might see it go to a rival who is totally willing capitalize on it, though not half as well as you could. Don't worry about commitment or risk. All you have to do open yourself to possibilities. Never say never!



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
If you're feeling unusually shy, it's no big surprise. Certain subtle energies are emphasizing modest, humble virtues rather than a more outspoken and brash style. Don't worry, because you're as competent and on top of things as ever, even if you don't really feel like it. This reversal may lead you to blame, but resist the urge. Focus on staying level-headed instead!



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Who in 2011 won the unofficial event he has hosted, the Chevron World Challenge, his first professional golf tournament win since 2009?

- A. Hunter Maan
- B. Tiger Woods
- C. Julien Foret
- D. David Oakley

02. Where is the mouth of the Yangtze River?

- A. The Bocca Tigris
- B. Dongying
- C. Shanghai
- D. Hangzhou

03. The annual Roskilde Festival, first held in 1971, takes place in what country?

- A. Spain
- B. Denmark
- C. UK
- D. Japan

Answers: 1.B 2.C 3.B

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

I	U	T	A
D	R	R	O
I	E	G	Y
I	V	E	L

Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game values 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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

STATEMENT OF INTENT

European champions PSG thrash Atletico to kick off Club World Cup campaign in style

Los Angeles, US - Champions League winners Paris St Germain crushed fellow European heavy-weights Atletico Madrid 4-0 at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena on Sunday to get their Club World Cup campaign off to a winning start.

PSG landed the first blow in the Group B clash when Fabian Ruiz fired home from distance in the 19th minute as they showed no signs of rust in their first match since trouncing Inter Milan 5-0 to win their first Champions League title last month.

PSG doubled their advantage just before halftime when an Antoine Griezmann miss led to a counter-attack that ended with Vitinha firing home under sunny skies in Southern California.

The LaLiga side appeared to have pulled one back when Julian Alvarez found the net in the 57th minute but it was overturned after a VAR review determined Koke had fouled Desire Doue in the buildup to the strike, with Atletico coach Diego Simeone sarcastically applauding the decision from the sideline.

The Spanish side's nightmare continued when defender Clement Lenglet was sent off



Paris St Germain's Vitinha celebrates after scoring against Atletico Madrid in their Club World Cup opener in Pasadena on Sunday

after receiving a second yellow card and Alexander Sorloth inexplicably missed what should have been a tap-in, instead sending it over the bar.

Substitute Senny Mayulu added a third goal for PSG in the 87th minute to end any hopes of an Atletico comeback, while Lee

Kang-in fired home a stoppage-time penalty to round off the scoring.

PSG will be back at the Rose Bowl on Thursday to face Brazilian team Botafogo while Atletico will travel north to Seattle to take on MLS side the Seattle Sounders.

"The hardest thing to do in football is to maintain the level, not just going high and low," Vitinha, who was named man of the match, said. "That's what I tried to do. Very good performance by the team and a very good start to this competition."

PSG were without Frenchman

and Ballon d'Or favourite Ousmane Dembele, who suffered an injury while playing for France in the UEFA Nations League earlier this month, but they hardly needed him on Sunday.

They had 74% possession and 11 shots on target compared to Atletico Madrid's one.

The hardest thing to do in football is to maintain the level, not just going high and low. That's what I tried to do. Very good performance by the team and a very good start

VITINHA

The historic Rose Bowl in Pasadena was rocking thanks to the 80,000 fans who turned out amid the hot midday sun one year before the U.S. will co-host the World Cup along with Mex-

ico and Canada.

"It was a different environment but it feels good to see so many people in the USA here to watch soccer, or to watch football, as I say," Vitinha added.

It is difficult to play in these conditions, says Luis Enrique

Los Angeles, US - Paris St Germain picked up right where they left off in their first match since winning the Champions League last month, turning what was billed as a blockbuster into a 4-0 rout of Atletico Madrid in their Club World Cup opener.

The sun-soaked midday match, timed to accommodate fans watching in Europe, drew 80,619 people to the Rose Bowl in Pasadena on a day when the toasty conditions led to water breaks in both halves.

"It's the best scheduled time for the European countries, but it's difficult to play in these conditions," PSG coach Luis Enrique said after the Group B clash.

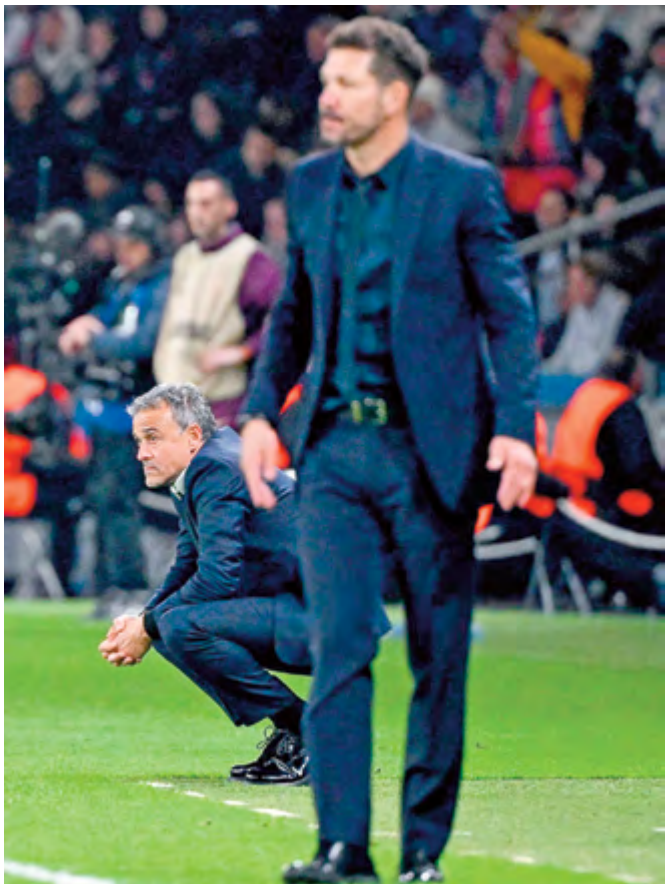
Enrique was encouraged to see the massive turnout, which set an attendance record for PSG and Atletico Madrid this season, according to FIFA.

"It's really great to feel that love in another part of the world," Enrique said.

"We are happy and we want to continue in that way."

No team has been able to push PSG off course lately.

They have outscored their opponents 12-0 over their past three matches including their 5-0 romp over Inter Milan in the Champions League final.



Luis Enrique with Atletico Madrid manager Diego Simeone

Beating fellow European powerhouse Atletico Madrid in such convincing fashion on Sunday solidifies PSG's status as one of the favourites to triumph in the 32-team Club World Cup.

Despite being without injured

Ballon d'Or favourite Ousmane Dembele, the young team earned the win behind a balanced attack and saw goals from four different players - Fabian Ruiz, Vitinha, Senny Mayulu and Lee Kang-in.



Botafogo's Jair Cunha celebrates his goal against Seattle Sounders

Botafogo hold off Seattle's late charge for winning start

Seattle, US - Brazilian and South American champions Botafogo survived a late onslaught to beat MLS side Seattle Sounders 2-1 in their Group B opener of the Club World Cup at Lumen Field on Sunday.

First-half headers from Jair Cunha and Igor Jesus gave the visitors a deserved lead but a second-half deflected effort from Cristian Roldan handed the hosts a lifeline. Despite coming under late pressure, Botafogo held firm to secure the three points, with goalkeeper John making a brilliant save deep in added time to deny Seattle an equaliser.

Botafogo captain Marlon Freitas said it was not his side's best performance.

"The important thing here was the result, the effort, but we know we didn't play well," he told TV Globo.



Jamal Musiala scores from the penalty spot in Bayern Munich's demolition of Auckland City

Bayern demolish Auckland City in Club World Cup mismatch

Cincinnati, US - Bayern Munich began their Club World Cup campaign in emphatic fashion with a ruthless 10-0 demolition of Auckland City on Sunday, as Jamal Musiala marked his return from injury with a brilliant second-half hat-trick in a commanding team display.

Kingsley Coman opened the scoring in the sixth minute, heading home at the far post after a Joshua Kimmich corner.

The Bundesliga champions then took full control with a three-goal burst in as many minutes, as Sacha Boey smashed in a low shot from a Coman pass in the 18th minute for his first goal for Bayern,

Michael Olise added a third with a simple tap-in moments later and Coman netted his second in the 21st minute.

Thomas Mueller then made it 5-0 just before the break, volleying in from close range after an Olise assist, and the French winger grabbed his second with a superb curling effort from outside the box. With a dominant lead at halftime, Bayern coach Vincent Kompany made several changes, including handing a senior debut to 17-year-old Lennart Karl.

"I wanted to give Karl his opportunity, he showed lots of quality, it was great for him and great for Bayern," Kompany

told reporters.

"We have a strong basis from last season and we can still give young players an opportunity to succeed, he may play an important role in the next rounds."

Substitute Musiala curled a trademark finish into the far corner in the 67th minute, before calmly converting a penalty he earned six minutes later and pouncing on a defensive blunder to score his third in the 84th. Mueller also completed his double by sealing the rout in the 89th minute, as Bayern recorded the biggest win in the history of men's Club World Cups.

Goalkeeper Ramos shines as Porto hold Palmeiras goalless

New Jersey, US - Palmeiras and Porto played out a 0-0 draw in their Group A opener of the Club World Cup at the MetLife Stadium on Sunday, with Porto's stand-in goalkeeper Claudio Ramos delivering a stellar performance to frustrate the Brazilian side.

Ramos, deputising for injured captain Diego Costa, produced a

string of saves to deny Palmeiras, who dominated the contest but were unable to find a breakthrough.

The substitute keeper's heroics ensured Porto left with a valuable point as all four teams in Group A remain level after Lionel Messi's Inter Miami and Egypt's Al Ahly also drew 0-0 on Saturday.

Palmeiras nearly grabbed a winner in the dying moments when Murilo's header struck the post, adding to their growing frustration.

Speaking to DAZN after the match, Palmeiras manager Abel Ferreira praised his side's efforts but rued missed opportunities.

Ramos' standout moment came in first-half stoppage time

when he made three successive saves.

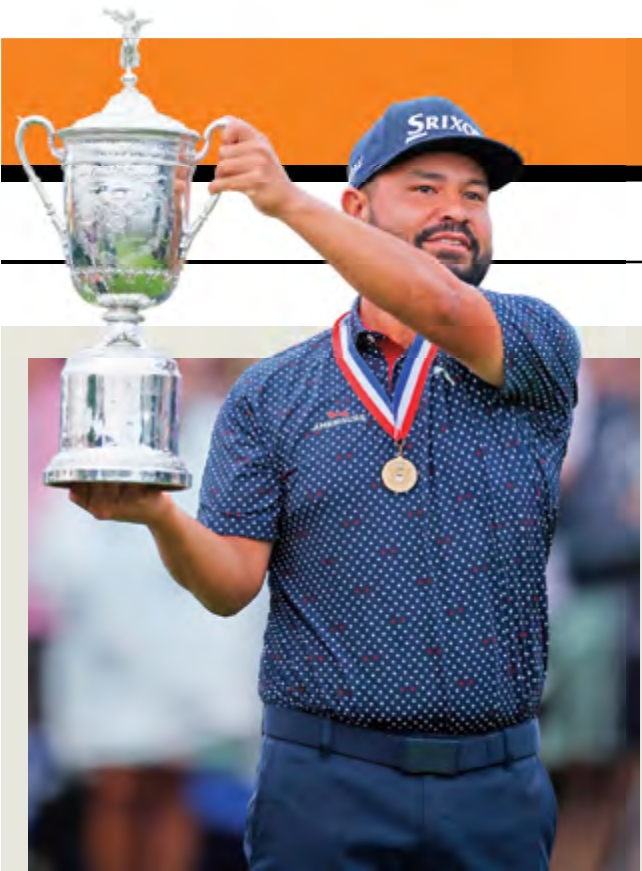
Estevao and Mauricio were denied from close range before Richard Rios' follow-up shot was cleared off the line by a defender. The 32-year-old keeper stepped up admirably after Costa was sidelined with a leg muscle injury sustained in training last week.

Palmeiras, led by their young attacking duo of Vitor Roque and Estevao, soon to be joining Premier League's Chelsea, were the more threatening side throughout the match, excelling in quick transitions and displaying incisive build-up play.

However, Porto's defence held firm, with Ramos and his backline soaking up pressure.



Porto goalkeeper Claudio Ramos was in top form against Palmeiras



JJ Spaun celebrates with the US Open trophy

Spaun completes US Open fairytale with stunning birdie putt

Oakmont, US - JJ Spaun drained an incredible 64-foot birdie putt that snaked across a sodden 18th green to win the US Open by two shots from Robert MacIntyre on Sunday as the Californian claimed his first major after a chaotic final round at Oakmont Country Club.

Spaun needed only a par at the closing hole to avoid a Monday playoff but went one better, sinking the huge putt in the rain to win the year's third major and erase the disappointment from his close call at The Players Championship in March.

"Just to finish it off like that is just a dream," said Spaun, who closed with a two-over-par 72 that left him at one under for the week.

"To have my own moment like that at this championship, I'll never forget this moment for the rest of my life."

When the clinching putt dropped, Spaun tossed his putter, delivered a fist pump, hugged his caddie and then walked off the green with his two young daughters in tow on Father's Day to celebrate a career-defining win.

"It was so cool to just have my whole family there on Father's Day," said Spaun. "It's just incredible. I have no words to describe the moment and them being able to see me as the winner."

Spaun reached the driveable par-four 17th hole level with Scotland's MacIntyre, who was already in the clubhouse after a two-under 68, and delivered the shot of his

life - a 309-yard strike that settled 17 feet from the cup.

The 34-year-old American sent his eagle putt past the hole but made the comeback and then went on to secure the win in style at the 18th, where he said he did not look at the scoreboard so as not to alter his plan.

"I knew based off of, like, what the crowd was saying that I felt like if I two-putted I would probably win, but I didn't want to look," said Spaun. "I didn't want to do anything dumb trying to pro-

To have my own moment like that at this championship, I'll never forget this moment for the rest of my life

JJ SPAUN

text a three-putt or something."

The triumph comes three months after Spaun lost in a playoff to world number two Rory McIlroy at The Players Championship, a defeat which was hard to take but left him knowing he could mix it with the game's elite.

Viktor Hovland (73) finished three shots back in third place, while Cameron Young (70) and LIV Golf players Tyrrell Hatton (72) and Carlos Ortiz (73) finished a further shot back in a share of fourth place.

RUSSELL REIGNS IN MONTREAL

McLaren's Piastri stretches lead despite colliding with teammate Norris

Montreal, Canada - George Russell celebrated Mercedes' first win of the Formula One season in Canada on Sunday while McLaren's Oscar Piastri went 22 points clear in the championship after teammate Lando Norris smashed into him and retired.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen, who had hoped to win for a record fourth year in a row at Montreal's Circuit Gilles Villeneuve, had to settle for second after a challenge fizzed out behind the safety car.

Russell's 18-year-old rookie teammate Kimi Antonelli finished third for his first F1 podium and the first by an Italian since 2009.

Piastri was fourth, with the safety car leading the final lap before peeling off to clear the way for Russell to take the chequered flag.



George Russell of Mercedes celebrates on the podium after winning the Canadian Grand Prix on Sunday

"Well done team. That made up for last year," said Russell, who also started on pole in 2024 but finished third. His last win before Sunday was in Las Vegas in November.

"It's amazing to be back on the top step. I felt last year was a victory lost and probably got the victory today due to the incredible pole lap yesterday."

Piastri now has 198 points ahead of Norris on 176, with Verstappen on 155 with Russell on 136.

In the constructors' standings Mercedes moved up to second, ahead of Ferrari and 175 points behind McLaren.

An uneventful afternoon erupted in headline drama when Norris hit the rear of Piastri's car three laps from the end - a clash long predicted in the title battle between the pair - while trying to overtake.

The Briton, whose broken car stopped by the side of the track, was quick to blame himself when it all went wrong after they had earlier gone side by side.

"I'm sorry. All my bad. All my fault. Stupid from me," Norris said over the team radio.

Piastri pitted as the safety car was deployed and rejoined with a tyre advantage over Antonelli that he could not use as the racing never resumed.

"Glad I didn't ruin his race. In the end apologies to the team," Norris told Sky Sports television.

Sweden's Duplantis sets new pole vault world record

Stockholm, Sweden - Sweden's Armand Duplantis soared 6.28 metres to break the world pole vault record at the Diamond League event in Stockholm on Sunday, the 12th time he has set a new world-best mark. The American-born double Olympic champion improved on his previous record, set in February, by one centimetre on his first attempt, making the most of the perfect conditions to delight the home crowd.

Having promised fans ahead of the competition that he would try to break the record, Duplantis encouraged the crowd to get behind him from the moment his name was announced at the Swedish capital's Olympic stadium and they responded by wildly clapping and cheering his every attempt as he cruised through the competition.

Kurtis Marschall did his best to challenge the hometown favourite, but the Australian could only manage a best effort of 5.90 before making three un-



Armand Duplantis cleared 6.28 metres to set a new world pole vault record at the Diamond League meet in Stockholm on Sunday

Every time I broke the world record, I felt it in my first jump that 'this could be the day', but today it felt a little tougher. It didn't feel that natural from the beginning

ARMAND DUPLANTIS

successful attempts to clear the six-metre mark.

That left the field clear for Duplantis as the bar was raised to 6.28 for his world record attempt, and once again, the 25-year-old made it look easy.

He powered through his run-up before planting his pole and soaring to another world record as the stadium, built for the 1912 Olympics, exploded in jubilation. Duplantis sprinted from the landing mat, tearing off his singlet to celebrate his first world record set on Swedish soil with his partner and family.

"This was one of my biggest goals and dreams, to set a world record here at Stadion. It's like the Olympics and Stadion,

they're the same level for me. I really wanted to do it, I had my whole family here, from both sides, it's magic, it's magic," he said.

"Every time I broke the world record, I felt it in my first jump that 'this could be the day', but today it felt a little tougher. It didn't feel that natural from the beginning, it didn't feel great in my legs, but I only needed one (try)," an emotional Duplantis added.

In the women's 400m hurdles, Dutch athlete Femke Bol blazed away over the last 100 metres to win in a season-best time for her of 52.11 seconds, eight-tenths of a second ahead of American Dalilah Muhammad, who came second.

Gattuso replaces Spalletti as head coach of Italy

Rome, Italy - Former AC Milan and Napoli manager Gennaro Gattuso has been appointed Italy national team coach, the Italian football federation (FIGC) said on Sunday.

Gattuso replaces Luciano Spalletti, who was sacked last week following a heavy defeat by Norway in a World Cup qualifier. The former midfielder will be formally introduced as coach on Thursday at Rome's Parco dei Principi Hotel.

"Gattuso is a symbol of Italian football - the blue jersey is like a second skin for him. His motivations, his professionalism and his experience will be fundamental to best face the upcoming commitments of the National Team," FIGC President Gabriele Gravina said in a statement.

"Aware of the importance of the objective we want to achieve,

I thank him for the availability and total dedication with which he has received this challenge, sharing the FIGC project for the overall development of our football, in which the blue jersey plays a strategic central role."

Spalletti departed after a stint of under two years, overseeing his final match, a 2-0 victory against Moldova, just a day after revealing he had been dismissed following Italy's 3-0 defeat by Norway in their opening World Cup qualifier.

Gattuso, who won the Coppa Italia with Napoli in 2020, is tasked with getting four-times World Champions Italy to next year's World Cup, after they missed out on the last two editions of the tournament.

An FIGC source said the 47-year-old has been given a one-year contract.



Gennaro Gattuso

London, England - German qualifier Tatjana Maria capped an incredible week in London as she defeated American eighth seed Amanda Anisimova 6-3 6-4 on Sunday to become the first woman to win a title at Queen's Club in over half a century.

The victory marked the end of an extraordinary nine-day stretch for the mother-of-two, ranked 86 in the world, having stunned second seed and Australian Open champion Madison Keys in the previous round.

The 37-year-old becomes the oldest player to claim a WTA title since Serena Williams in Auckland 2020. She dropped only one set en route to the title and her dream run also included victories



Tatjana Maria kisses the trophy after winning the Queen's Club Championship in London on Sunday

over Kazakh fourth seed Elena Rybakina and Czech sixth seed Karolina Muchova.

Maria dominated Anisimova with big serves and earned an early break in the first set. She won 12 points in a row as she raced to a 4-1 lead and then held off a brief Anisimova fightback to close out the set.

Maria carried her momentum into the second as she again surged into a 4-1 lead. Her seventh ace of the match helped her move up 5-3, and she served out the match two games later to clinch her first title in over two years.

"A dream come true. (When) I came here, I was never thinking I could hold the trophy at the end.

Fritz champion

Taylor Fritz claimed his first title of the year with a 6-3 7-6(0) win over top seed Alexander Zverev in the Stuttgart Open final on Sunday, extending his winning streak against the German to five matches.

Fritz, who knocked out Zverev in the fourth round of Wimbledon last year, won the opening set 6-3 in 30 minutes without facing a break point. The American second seed broke for a 5-3 lead after Zverev double-faulted twice and missed a volley at the net.

The second set stayed on serve, with Zverev saving the only break point at 5-5 before Fritz pulled away in a one-sided tiebreak to seal victory.

FAULT IN THEIR CHARGE

Electrical issues spark heartbreaking halt to Al Harthy and Team WRT's Le Mans 24HRS victory challenge

Le Mans, France - Faultless driving, top strategy and a very quick BMW M4 LMGT3 were not enough to deliver what looked likely to be a bid for a dream victory at this year's 24 Hours of Le Mans for Ahmad al Harthy and Team WRT - electrical problems in the early hours of Sunday, forcing retirement.

Oman's Al Harthy and teammates Valentino Rossi and Kelvin van der Linde had delivered an incredible performance throughout the first half of the twice-round-the-clock encounter at the eight-plus-mile Circuit de la Sarthe in France, with LMGT3 silverware well within their grasp.

Sadly, though, and for the second year in succession, the 24 Hours of Le Mans ended in misfortune for Al Harthy and Team WRT, having led the class or been inside the top two for the most part since lights-out at 16.00 local time on Saturday.

"Being in the first two positions for the majority of the nine to 10 hours we were racing definitely got us thinking of the possibility of an amazing result," said Al Harthy.

"I think how we were able to push the entire time showed we would have been competitive at the end of the race. Unfortunately, though, an electrical issue forced us to retire the car.

"This is what we know about racing, especially at the highest level like Le Mans, and we accept it. Things like this make you appreciate the achievements when you get them. The entire team did an amazing job right throughout the week at Le Mans, across all sessions, and the performance we showed in qualifying was a



Oman's Ahmad al Harthy and teammates Valentino Rossi and Kelvin van der Linde were in the first two positions for the majority of the first nine to 10 hours before electrical issues forced them to retire



I think how we were able to push the entire time showed we would have been competitive at the end of the race. Unfortunately, an electrical issue forced us to retire the car

AHMAD AL HARTHY

real highlight personally. We showed in the race what we're capable of, so now we look to bounce back in Brazil. Thank you to everyone for the amazing sup-

port." After qualifying an excellent third on the grid for the biggest race of the season, round four of the FIA World Endurance Cham-

pionship, the team chose to begin the 24 Hours with van der Linde, and he very quickly climbed into second in LMGT3 close behind the leader. Van der Linde remained in touch in the No. 46 BMW M4, and after the initial pit stops, the South African was back up to second.

Oman's Al Harthy climbed behind the wheel for his first miles of the race in hour two and was within less than four seconds of the LMGT3 lead with one hour and 45 minutes elapsed. After another stop, Al Harthy moved up into the lead and he then began to build his advantage, driving faultlessly.

Just over three hours into the race the Omani, who is supported by prestigious partners OQ Group, Sohar International, Omantel, Oman LNG, BMW Oman, Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and Experience Oman, led by around 25 seconds.

Half an hour later, the lead was up to roughly 60 seconds, before

handing over to Rossi for his first stint of the race. Holding second place initially, the Italian was every bit as competitive as his two teammates and he soon moved the No.46 BMW back into first place in LMGT3.

One quarter of the way through the race, 22.00 local time, van der Linde was back behind the wheel and held an advantage of 14 seconds at that stage. Just before 23.00, with 100 racing laps in the book, he remained at the front with a buffer of half-a-minute over the nearest rival. The entire race strategy from Team WRT was working like clockwork as midnight neared.

Around three hours later, though, the squad's tremendous challenge for a dream victory at the 24 Hours of Le Mans came to an end when the car ground to a halt, seemingly with no power. After being recovered back to the pits, it was discovered that electrical problems were the cause.



(From left) Robert Kubica, Yifei Ye, and Phil Hanson of Ferrari celebrate after winning the 24 Hours of Le Mans on Sunday

Kubica wins at Le Mans with Ferrari customer team

Le Mans, France - Ferrari won the 24 Hours of Le Mans for the third year in a row on Sunday with Poland's Robert Kubica taking the chequered flag for the customer AF Corse team on a stirring afternoon at the Sarthe circuit.

The ex-Formula One driver's yellow 83 car, shared with Yifei Ye - China's first winner - and Britain's Phil Hanson, crossed the line after 387 laps in the 93rd edition of the French endurance race.

The number 6 Porsche Penske shared by France's Kevin Estre, Belgian Laurens Vanthoor and Australian Matt Campbell finished second and 14.084 seconds behind. The red 51 factory Ferrari of 2023 winners Alessandro Pier Guidi, Antonio Giovinazzi and James Calado completed the podium with last year's winners Antonio Fuoco, Nicklas Nielsen and Miguel Molina fourth in the number 50 car.

"I finally managed to win it and in Hypercar," said Kubica of his fifth attempt, his first three in the second tier LMP2 category, to become Poland's first overall winner since Le Mans was first staged in 1923.

"Great job from everyone... it has not been a smooth one but we deserved it. We have been fast, only a few mistakes which we couldn't avoid but that's Le Mans.

"Happy for Ferrari: Three years in a row with three different

crews, different cars. Congratulations to them, it's amazing."

Ye, who joined Hanson in riding the car into the pit lane, said winning was a dream come true.

"I have to pinch myself, I'm still dreaming," he said.

AF Corse were the first customer team to win Le Mans since ADT Champion Racing triumphed with an Audi R8 in 2005, giving Denmark's Tom Kristensen a record seventh win.

Great job from everyone... We have been fast, only a few mistakes which we couldn't avoid but that's Le Mans

ROBERT KUBICA

The Dane would go on to win nine times in total.

Kubica's triumph came on the same weekend as the Canadian Grand Prix at the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve, scene of his only Formula One win with BMW Sauber in 2008 after a huge crash at the same track in 2007.

It also capped an astonishing racing redemption story for the 40-year-old whose Formula One career ended after a near-fatal rally crash in Italy in 2011 that partially severed his right forearm.

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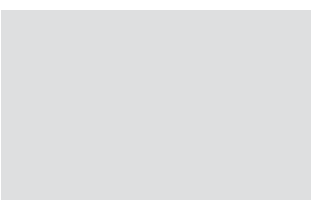
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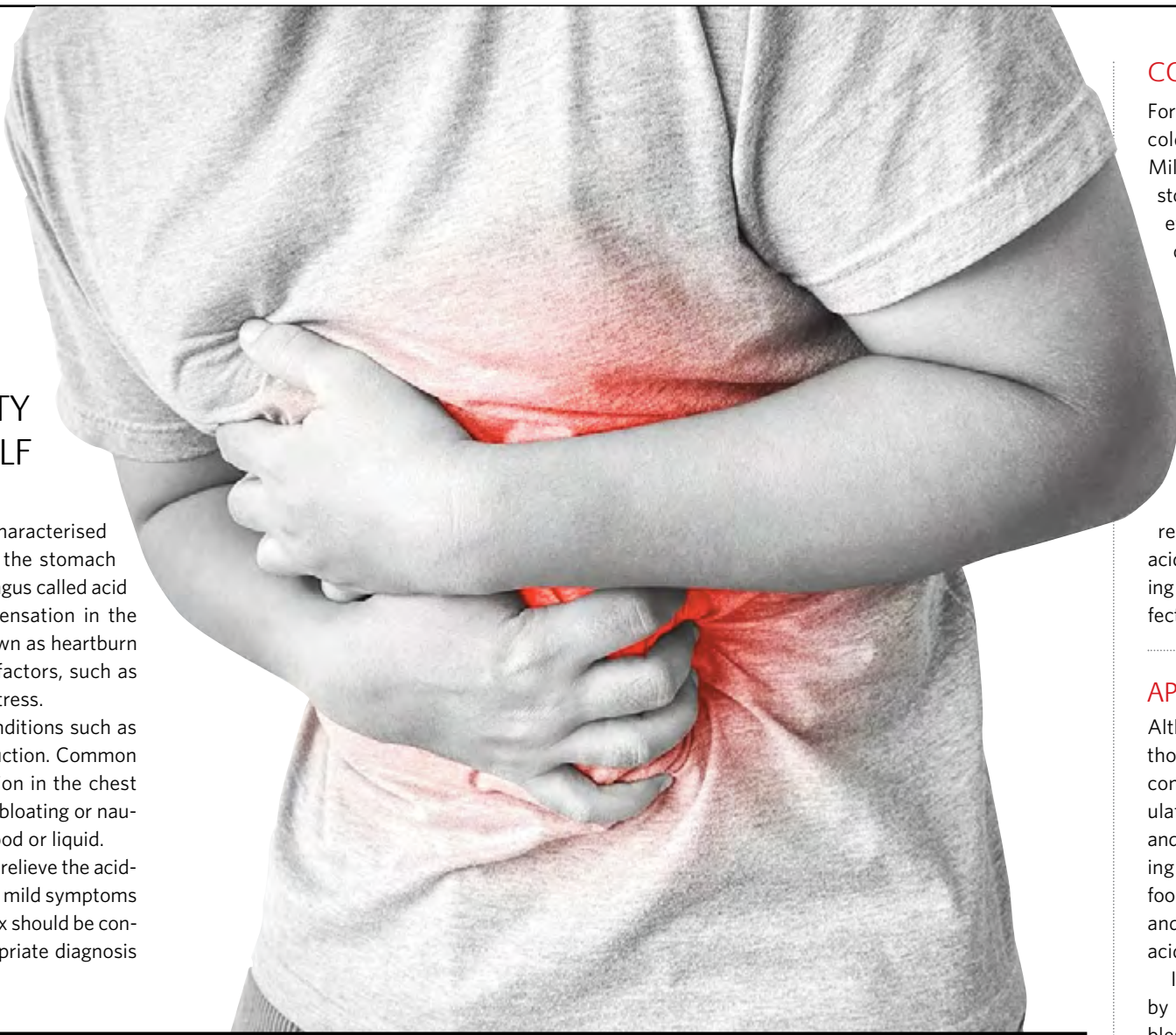
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ACIDITY CAUSES A BURNING SENSATION IN THE THROAT OR CHEST, COMMONLY KNOWN AS HEARTBURN, AND IS MANIFEST WITH SOUR BELCHES. HOWEVER, EASY REMEDIES TO CURB ACIDITY LIE IN ONE'S KITCHEN ITSELF

Acidity is a medical condition characterised by excess acid production by the stomach glands. It rises into the oesophagus called acid reflux, leading to a burning sensation in the throat or chest commonly known as heartburn and often caused by lifestyle factors, such as overeating, consuming spicy or fatty foods, or stress.

Acidity can also be triggered by medical conditions such as gastritis or an imbalance in stomach acid production. Common symptoms of acidity include a burning sensation in the chest (heartburn), a sour or bitter taste in the mouth, bloating or nausea, difficulty swallowing and regurgitation of food or liquid.

Here are some natural remedies that can help relieve the acidity. While these natural options may help relieve mild symptoms of acidity, persistent or severe cases of acid reflux should be consulted with a healthcare professional for appropriate diagnosis and treatment.



COLD MILK

For rapid relief from acidity symptoms, a glass of cold milk can be an effective remedy. Milk's ability to neutralise stomach acid is key to its efficacy. Containing calcium carbonate, a natural antacid, milk helps reduce the production of excess stomach acid.

Cold milk provides immediate relief from heartburn and acid reflux by effectively absorbing excess stomach acid, offering a soothing effect on the irritated lining.



APPLE CIDER VINEGAR

Although acidic in nature, apple cider vinegar is thought to help balance stomach acid levels. It contains acetic acid, which can stimulate the production of bile and digestive juices, helping the body digest food more efficiently and preventing acid reflux.

It can be taken by mixing 1-2 tablespoons with a glass of warm water before meals. Diluting it before taking it is essential to prevent throat or stomach lining irritation.



ACIDITY

THE FIRE WITHIN



TULSI LEAVES

Tulsi leaves, revered as holy basil, offer a wealth of medicinal benefits, notably their ability to combat acidity and regulate stomach acid levels. These leaves are brimming with potent compounds like eugenol and carminatives, renowned for their anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties.

Eugenol effectively soothes inflammation within the gastrointestinal tract, while carminatives aid digestion and prevent excessive gas buildup in the stomach. By incorporating tulsi leaves into your daily routine, you can effectively soothe the stomach lining, diminish acid reflux, and discomfort associated with heartburn.



ALOE VERA JUICE

Aloe vera (Aloe barbadensis miller) has a soothing effect on the digestive system, helping to control acid production and reducing inflammation in the stomach. Aloe vera contains compounds that reduce irritation in the stomach and oesophagus. It helps heal the stomach lining and reduce the burning sensation associated with acidity.

Consume approximately 1/4 cup of aloe vera juice, preferably before meals, to soothe the digestive tract and decrease acidity. These methods are considered effective home remedies for bad acid reflux.



BANANAS

Bananas (Musa paradisiaca Linn) are naturally alkaline and can help neutralise stomach acid. They contain potassium and natural antacids that can help coat the stomach lining, reducing the burning sensation of acidity. Additionally, bananas stimulate mucus production, protecting the stomach lining from acid damage.

To incorporate bananas as a home remedy for severe gas and acidity, try eating a ripe banana daily, either on its own or with meals. This simple addition to your diet can help naturally balance stomach acid levels and promote healthy digestion.



GINGER

Ginger (Zingiber officinale) is a well-known home remedy for acidity and gas problems. Its traditional uses include reducing intestinal gas and flatulence, soothing the stomach lining, and decreasing acid production. The active compound in ginger, gingerol, has natural anti-inflammatory properties that promote digestion and reduce the amount of acid produced in the stomach, thereby alleviating discomfort associated with acidity.

One can consume ginger by adding small slices to hot water, drinking ginger tea, or even chewing raw ginger. For best results, drink ginger tea after meals to help neutralise stomach acid and support healthy digestion.



NUTRITION & YOU



Fennel seeds - digestive aid and more

the Middle East, and parts of Asia. In Indian kitchens, they are used not only for their medicinal value but for their distinct sweetness, that adds unique flavour to the recipe.

Nutritional profile

Fennel seeds are the dried seeds of the *Foeniculum vulgare* plant and are a rich source of dietary fibre, essential minerals, and powerful plant compounds. A tablespoon of fennel seeds (about 6g) provides small amounts of fibre, calcium, magnesium, iron and some essential oils. Though the amounts are small but capable of giving health benefits related to digestion, heart health and anti-inflammation.

Health benefits of fennel seeds

- Aids digestion - The most popular use of fennel seeds is for digestion. The oils in the seeds relax gastrointestinal muscles and stimulate enzymes, relieving bloating, gas, and



indigestion. An infusion or decoction of fennel seeds is seen helpful in the digestion of fatty food.

- Supports weight and metabolism - Studies do indicate that consuming

and phenolic compounds found in fennel seeds help in neutralising free radicals and protect against cellular damage. This way it plays an important role in preventing various diseases.

- Acts as a natural diuretic - Fennel seeds work as an effective diuretic, which in turn can help to relieve hypertension.
- Postpartum and lactation support - Traditionally, fennel seeds were included in postpartum diets to aid digestion, relieve colic in babies (through breast milk), and possibly enhance milk supply. Some studies have indicated that it increases prolactin, the key hormone in milk production.

Ways of using fennel seeds

Fennel seeds have a naturally sweet, mildly licorice-like taste with a warm, refreshing aroma. Its subtle sweetness makes it a soothing and pleasant ingredient in both savoury dishes and herbal infusions. Some of the easy

ways of using these seeds are:

- Chew raw or roasted seeds, particularly after meals to freshen breath and support digestion
- Fennel water (Infused Detox Water), helps with bloating, water retention, and works as a gentle detox
- Fennel tea- by simply adding to your daily tea, it helps in calming the stomach
- Fennel-spiced buttermilk, works perfect as a cooling digestive drink in summer
- Fennel in stir-fry veggies or curries, adds aroma and aids digestion

To conclude, fennel seeds are a simple, sweet kitchen ingredient, but with a great impact on health. Whether you chew it after meals, or brew into soothing teas, or add to light meals, it works quietly to support digestion, reduce inflammation, and balance your system naturally. Make these gentle seeds a regular part of your daily routine and experience calmness and sweetness.

(Vandana Chawla is an Online Nutrition Expert and a Registered Nutritionist-UKVRN)

STRENGTH TRAINING

CHEST EXERCISES

CHEST EXERCISES ARE AN IMPORTANT WAY TO BUILD UPPER BODY STRENGTH. STRENGTHENING THE MUSCLES MAKING UP THE CHEST CAN HELP YOU ACHIEVE A STRONG, SCULPTED PHYSIQUE. BUT BUILDING THE CHEST MUSCLES OFFERS A MYRIAD OF BENEFITS BEYOND LOOKING TONED

Your chest muscles — pectoralis major and pectoralis minor — allow you to rotate your shoulders and bring them in and forward. They also stabilise your shoulders, which allows you to move your arms up, down, in, and out.

Strengthening chest muscles are important for everyday activities such as pushing open a door, pushing a grocery cart, or lifting a child up from the floor. They're also crucial for performing sports such as swimming, baseball, or tennis.

Like the back muscles, strong chest muscles are important for good posture. And building up your chest muscles can help improve shoulder stability and reduce your risk of shoulder injury.

Chest exercises, whether performed with body weight, free weights, or resistance bands, are a form of strength training. Strength training is exercise that builds muscles using resistance.

Strength training not only makes you stronger, but offers a wide range of other health benefits, including increasing your metabolic rate, curbing muscle loss and building new muscle, slowing bone loss, improving insulin sensitivity and easing joint pain.

The exercises below can help strengthen your chest muscles. When you are training for strength, aim for eight to 12 repetitions or "reps." If you cannot do all the reps at first, just do what you can, and then gradually increase reps as you improve. Beginners can start with one set of reps.

Chest Punches

Starting position: Place the exercise band around your back and under your armpits. Hold an end in each hand by your shoulders.

Movement: With control, punch your right arm out in front of you on a slight diagonal across your body. Slowly bring it back to the starting position. Repeat with your left arm. That's one rep.

Wood Chop

Starting position: Stand with your feet about shoulder-width apart and hold a dumbbell with both hands. Hinge forward at your hips and bend your knees to sit back into a slight squat. Rotate your torso to the right and extend your arms to hold the dumbbell on the outside of your right knee.

Movement: Straighten your legs to stand up as you rotate your torso to the left and raise the weight diagonally across your body and up to the left, above your shoulder, while keeping your arms extended.

In a chopping motion, slowly bring the dumbbell down and across your body toward the outside of your right knee. This is one rep. Finish all reps, then repeat on the other side. This completes one set.

Chest Press

Starting position: Stand tall with your feet about shoulder-width apart. Place a band across your upper back and under your arms. Hold each end with your arms bent, elbows pointing out and your hands by your armpits, palms down.

Movement: Extend your arms straight out in front of you at chest height, stretching the band. Slowly bend your arms and return to the starting position, resisting the pull of the band.

Kneeling Push-ups

Starting position: Begin on the floor on all fours with your hands

slightly more than shoulder-width apart. Walk your hands forward and lower your hips so your body is at a 45° angle to the floor and forms a straight line from head to knees.

Movement: Bend your elbows out to the sides and slowly lower your upper body toward the floor until your elbows are bent about 90°. Press against the floor and straighten your arms to return to the starting position.

Squat and Overhead Toss

Starting position: Stand tall with your feet about shoulder-width apart, toes pointed out slightly. Hold a medicine ball with both hands at chest height, arms bent.

Movement: Bend your hips and knees, and squat down. Don't let your knees move farther forward than your toes. Press into your heels to stand back up. As you rise, toss the ball overhead and catch it, bringing it back to chest height.

PEER POWER

Youth transform awareness on AIDS in Oman

Across Oman, youth are taking the lead in raising awareness about HIV/AIDS and the dangers of drugs and psychotropic substances through a unique, community-rooted approach.

Positive Vision Association (PVA), in collaboration with Al Jisr Foundation, has launched a peer education programme that includes both peer-to-peer educators and a dedicated Training of Trainers (ToT) component.

This multi-level model equips young participants with communication, health literacy, and leadership skills. Graduates of the ToT programme go on to train their peers, while peer educators deliver awareness sessions in schools and local communities, creating a ripple effect of knowledge, empathy, and action.

The first cohort of peer educators has already completed their training and begun actively engaging with their communities. Their efforts aim not only to spread accurate information, but also to challenge stigma and build safer, more informed environments for their generation. Simultaneously, PVA is training a second cohort, ensuring the momentum continues and more

youth are empowered to lead.

Peer-led interventions are internationally recognised as an effective tool in public health education. In Oman, such programmes are especially crucial, where sensitivity around HIV/AIDS and drug use can often prevent open discussion.

According to the Ministry of Health, 2,879 people were known to be living with HIV in Oman by the end of 2015. A study in the Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal found that 4.6% of secondary school students had experimented with drugs, reinforcing the urgent need for youth-focused education.

Through this ongoing initiative, PVA is cultivating a generation of informed leaders who can connect with their peers and communities through trust, shared experience, and credible information. The peer education programme is not only a response to pressing health issues; it is a long-term investment in youth leadership and social responsibility.

(Watch out for this monthly column on the first Tuesday of every month for an inspirational read on the subject.)



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(Courtesy: health.harvard.edu)

