CHANGAN

CS95
PLATINUM
3 ROWS
7 SEATER 4WD

THE ALL-NEW 2025MY CS95

HIGH-PERFORMANCE INTELLIGENT 7 SEATER FAMILY SUV

Starting from
OMR 9990*
Excluding VAT

LIMITED STOCK AVAILBLE

2.0L Turbo Engine, 224 hp | 8 Speed AT

Manufacturer's Warranty - 6 YEARS / 250,000 KMS*

*Terms and Conditions Apply



Images shown are for illustrative purpose only. Specification may vary as per the model variant. To know more, please visit the CHANGAN AUTO Showroom.

C.R. No: 1232361

Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment LLC

Showrooms:
Qurum 94641010, Mawaleh 97888180, Nizwa 96628940
Sohar 95351200, Salalah 96629050, Ibri 96628930,
Barka 96629010, Sur 96628920

800 50800
9662 8909
changanoman
www.changanoman.com

MUSCAT DAILY

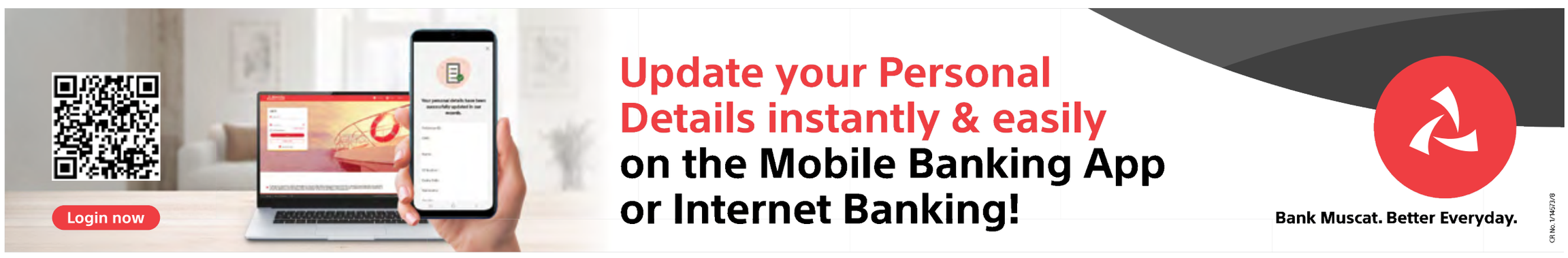
AN APEX MEDIA PUBLICATION

ISSN 2075-1575

@muscat_daily
@muscatdaily
@muscatdailyonline
@Muscat Daily

MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2025

Email: muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om To subscribe, call toll free no: 80076000 www.muscatdaily.com



MoL enforces hiring rule for foreign firms

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Labour (MoL) has begun enforcing a directive requiring foreign investment firms in Oman to employ at least one Omani national, in line with efforts to regulate the labour market and boost local workforce participation.

The decision, issued on May 5 this year, applies to all commercial establishments operating in the sultanate for more than a year. Developed jointly with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the plan outlines conditions and deadlines for compliance.

Firms with at least one year since registration must submit an operational plan to hire an Omani within three months. This can be through direct hiring or a phased plan leading to recruitment. Companies that fail to comply will face a ban, with a three-month grace period from official notification to make adjustments.



The goal is to create a balanced business environment that supports national talent and ensures fair contribution by all economic players

Businesses with more than 10 staff must also submit an employment plan within three months and will be notified via the ministry's digital system. Failure to comply will lead to an automatic freeze on new licences through the system.

Smaller establishments with fewer than 10 employees have six months to employ an Omani national. These will be reviewed to assess local value addition. If their contribution is verified, they may be temporarily exempted. Otherwise, a ban will be enforced through the same system.

Omani entrepreneurs and full-time local business owners have up to a year from notification to meet the requirement. They will undergo a case review within six months to measure their economic impact. Owners without a Riyada Card, the national SME ID, are urged to register with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority to access exemptions and facilities.

'The goal is to create a balanced business environment that supports national talent and ensures fair contribution by all economic players,' the ministry said.

The measure is part of broader policies to advance Omanisation in the private sector by reducing reliance on expatriate workers and creating more jobs for citizens.

His Majesty, leaders discuss rising regional tensions

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik received phone calls on Sunday from German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to discuss rising regional tensions and the importance of joint international efforts to restore calm and maintain stability.

In his call with Chancellor Merz, His Majesty the Sultan reviewed the ongoing conflict affecting the region. Both leaders stressed the urgent need for stronger diplomatic action to prevent further deterioration and protect regional and global security.

The German Chancellor praised Oman's balanced foreign policy and its steady efforts to promote peace and dialogue. He commended Oman's role in bridging divides and supporting peaceful solutions, highlighting its contributions to global cooperation.

His Majesty, in turn, acknowledged Germany's work to uphold peace and stability, noting Berlin's commitment to dialogue and respect among nations.

In a separate call, His Majesty spoke with President Erdoğan on the latest developments following Israeli attacks on Iran. The two leaders discussed the risks of further escalation and the need to prevent wider instability.

Both sides agreed on prioritising diplomacy and compliance with international law, calling for a return to negotiations as the best way to resolve disputes.

The calls reflect Oman's ongoing diplomatic engagement and commitment to peace, dialogue and regional cooperation.

In this regard, Sayyid Badr al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, has intensified talks with counterparts in several countries to support de-escalation through constructive diplomacy. He called for stronger political and diplomatic pressure to end what he described as an illegal act of aggression and reaffirmed Oman's stand on peaceful resolution.



CAA ramps up air services for Dhofar Khareef



Iran ready to end attacks if Israel stops assault



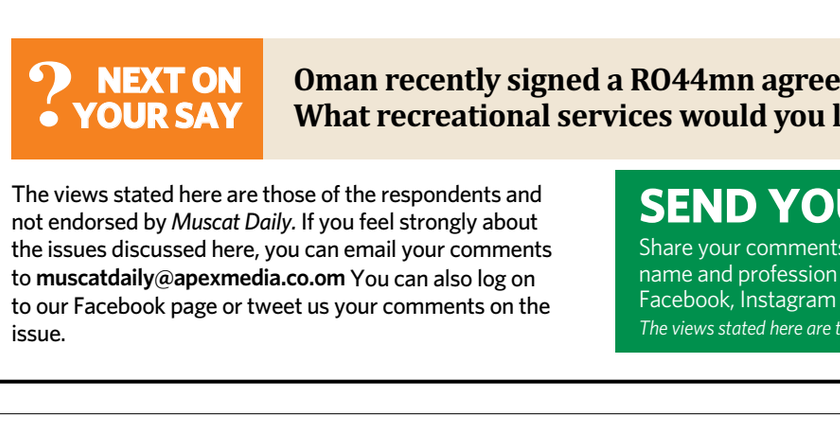
Fear of flying: Take the guesswork out of booking



YOUR SAY

Keeping cool for final exams





As temperatures soar across Oman in June, parents, students and educators are increasingly questioning the timing of final exams in government schools. Many argue that extreme heat affects students' health, focus and performance. When is it best to hold the final exams in Omani government schools? Here is what *Muscat Daily* readers said -

Amal al Zadjali
Home Maker

Yes, I support holding exams earlier. June heat is unbearable for children, especially in those schools which do not have full air conditioning. Final exams should be completed by mid-May. This would also give students a longer, more relaxing summer break to recover and prepare for the next academic year.

Khalfan al Busaidi
Private Company Employee

Shifting exams to early May is a practical step. Many students lose focus in June due to extreme temperatures. Earlier exams can improve performance and well-being. Finishing by mid-May would make more sense.

Mohammed al Rawahi
Consultant

It's time we consider the impact of climate on academic planning. Exams in early May would be ideal. Students, especially young ones, struggle in June. Heat stress can affect their cognitive performance. An earlier academic calendar aligns better with Oman's weather patterns and ensures better student welfare.

Fatma al Hinai
Student

I remember how tough it was to take exams in June - it's physically draining. Moving final exams to May or even to late April is better for students' health and concentration. Schools can use June for enrichment programmes instead, without the pressure of testing in such heat.

Reena Nair
Private Company Employee

In this region, June is extremely challenging for school children. Yes, moving exams to May would reduce health risks. Final exams could be scheduled in the first two weeks of May. After that, schools can focus on review sessions or creative projects that don't require intense concentration in the heat.

Arjun Mehta
Sales Executive

I absolutely support rescheduling. Children get exhausted by June and can't give their best during exams. It would be wise to conduct finals by early to mid-May. Planning the academic year accordingly would protect students and also ease the burden on teachers and families.

? NEXT ON YOUR SAY

Oman recently signed a RO44mn agreement to develop nature reserves. What recreational services would you like to see added to the reserves?

The views stated here are those of the respondents and not endorsed by *Muscat Daily*. If you feel strongly about the issues discussed here, you can email your comments to **muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om** You can also log on to our Facebook page or tweet us your comments on the issue.

SEND YOUR COMMENTS

Share your comments in not more than 50 words along with your full name and profession before next Sunday, 10am, via WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram or **muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om**

The views stated here are those of the respondents and not endorsed by Muscat Daily.

SEND US ON OUR NEW WHATSAPP NO 91953774

RAM launches programme to empower public sector HR leaders



Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Royal Academy of Management (RAM) has launched a strategic programme aimed at empowering national competencies and advancing human resources capabilities across the public sector.

Developed in partnership with Integrated Business Solutions (IBS), the two-month programme - the Future of Human Capital Management - has been designed for HR development managers and focuses on building high-performing, supportive organisational environments through strategic workforce planning, talent management, leadership development and effective communication.

The initiative forms part of RAM's broader mission to support Oman's Vision 2040 by investing in human capital and promoting institutional excellence.

"This programme marks a pivotal step towards achieving Vision 2040 by equipping HR leaders with advanced leadership capabilities," said Abla al Buali, programme supervisor. "We aim to develop dynamic and innovative workplaces that contribute directly to organisational performance and the national development agenda. Participants will engage with global best practices and practical tools that will help them become strategic partners in delivering meaningful and lasting results."

The curriculum blends theoretical foundations with practical application through interactive workshops, real-world case studies, and hands-on activities.

Participants will also have opportunities to engage with leading local and international experts in the field of human capital management, and build lasting professional networks through peer learning.

Key focus areas include strategic HR planning, change management, talent development, and the integration of AI in HR practices. The programme will explore methods to attract and retain top talent, design effective training and succession planning frameworks, and apply AI-driven tools to enhance employee performance and evaluate training outcomes.

It also places strong emphasis on leadership and communication, helping participants to strengthen interpersonal skills, resolve workplace conflict, and build results-driven, positive organisational cultures.



SalamAir suspends flights to Iran, Iraq and Azerbaijan until June 20

Muscat - SalamAir has announced the temporary suspension of all flights to and from Iran, Iraq, and Azerbaijan, effective immediately, citing ongoing developments in the region.

In an official statement, the airline confirmed that the suspension will remain in place until at least June 20.

SalamAir said it is closely monitoring the situation and will resume operations as soon as conditions permit.

'Passengers travelling through Muscat with final destinations in Iran, Iraq, or Azerbaijan will not be accepted for travel from their original departure points until further notice,' the airline stated.

All affected passengers will be contacted by the airline to explore alternative travel options. Travellers have been advised to update their contact details by visiting the 'Manage Booking' section on the SalamAir website to receive timely updates on flight changes.

For assistance, passengers may contact SalamAir's 24/7 customer service by calling +968-24272222 or emailing customercare@salamair.com

FOR SALE

Built up 4 closed sheds, with 12 rooms Labour accommodation and one building with two office rooms , one meeting room , plus pray room and open yard with total area of 21,488 sq mt and with 3073.95 sq mt built up area located in Buraimi Industrial Area (Modon) in Sultanat of Oman.

For Sale, please contact us on
0097156-6060331 With whatsapp service.
Email: ismail@mulkholdings.com

CAA ramps up air services for khareef

Our Correspondent
Salalah



The civil aviation sector has confirmed full readiness to provide safe and smooth travel to Dhofar governorate during the 2025 khareef season, as tourist numbers are expected to rise from within and outside the sultanate.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), Oman Airports, Oman Air and SalamAir are coordinating efforts to increase domestic flights and strengthen the operational efficiency of Muscat and Salalah airports. 'The goal is to ensure steady air traffic and maintain high standards of safety and service,' CAA stated.

The authority said these measures reflect a unified approach to deliver a sustainable aviation system. The sector remains a key partner in supporting tourism and driving economic growth by providing modern infrastructure and reliable air services.

Ahead of the season, the authority has reviewed emergency plans, confirmed the readiness of air traffic control and weather services, and reinforced coordination with all aviation partners.

Oman Air will step up operations from early July, with up to 12 daily flights at peak times. SalamAir will increase services from late June through early September, reaching up to eight daily flights in July and August. SalamAir will also operate a new direct route between Suhar and Salalah from mid-July, with one daily flight.

To meet the rising demand, Oman Air has added more than 70,000 seats for the season, a 16% increase compared to the last year. SalamAir has boosted capacity by over 58%, offering about 176,000 seats in total.

For Omani passengers, Oman Air will maintain fixed fares between July 1 and September 15, starting at RO32 one-way and RO54 return. SalamAir fares start at RO30 one-way and RO48 return.

Oman Airports said both Muscat and Salalah airports are ready to handle the expected rush. Measures have been put in place to streamline passenger services from booking to arrival, in line with global best practices.

Salalah Airport will offer the 'Travel Easier' service from July 15 to September 15, allowing passengers to check in and drop off luggage between 12 and 6 hours before departure, daily from 8am to 8pm. For the first time, the airport will also introduce vehicle-based check-in, enabling passengers to complete check-in, receive boarding passes and drop off luggage without leaving their cars.

Muscat airport traffic falls; Salalah sees modest growth

Muscat - The total number of passengers passing through Oman's airports from January to April this year reached 4,701,055, marking a 4.1% drop compared to the same period last year when the figure stood at 4,901,855.

Data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information showed that Muscat International Airport handled 4,222,789 passengers by the end of April, down 4.7% from 4,428,726 a year ago. Flights through Muscat also declined by 8.6% to 29,731, from 32,520 in the same period of 2024.

In contrast, Salalah Airport recorded a 6.8% increase in passenger numbers,

reaching 458,394 by April, up from 429,181 last year. However, the total number of flights dipped slightly by 0.2% to 2,974.

Sohar Airport also saw sharp decline both in flight operations and the number of passengers reaching there by air. The number of flights in Suhar dropped by 62.5% to 72 from 192, while passenger numbers plummeted by 98.7% to just 307, compared to 23,842 last year.

Duqm Airport also reported a slight decrease. Flights fell 1.9% to 204, while passengers dropped 2.7% to 19,565, down from 20,106.

At Muscat International Airport, Indian nationals remained the largest group of travellers, with 182,628 passengers recorded till April this year. Omanis were the second most travellers with 101,087, followed by Pakistanis with 47,078 passengers.



Khareef draws new investors

Our Correspondent
Salalah

As Oman prepares for the annual khareef season in Dhofar, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) has confirmed full readiness for what is among the sultanate's most important economic and tourism periods.

With large numbers of local and international visitors expected, the ministry has rolled out a detailed plan to strengthen commercial oversight, boost investor confidence and safeguard consumer interests.

Mohammed bin Khalifa al Badrani, Director-General of the Directorate General of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in Dhofar, told *Muscat Daily* that inspections have been stepped up across markets, hotels, restaurants and other service providers to ensure they meet legal and professional standards.



In the first quarter of 2025 alone, 1,217 new investors were recorded

MOHAMMED AL BADRANI

Teams are monitoring operations to ensure compliance with consumer protection and health regulations. Checks were launched ahead of the season to verify that businesses are ready and meeting requirements.



The ministry, working with sector partners, has also held awareness workshops for business owners to improve service quality and raise awareness about consumer rights.

Badrani said Dhofar continues to see robust commercial growth. In the first quarter of 2025 alone, 1,217 new investors were recorded, with 88 commercial registrations issued. The construction sector led activity with 2,100 licences issued, compared to 1,274 during the same period in 2024.

To ensure smooth operations, the ministry is coordinating with Dhofar Municipality, Royal Oman Police, the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Consumer Protection Authority. Joint teams are monitoring fuel stations, verifying the supply and pricing of goods and ensuring businesses follow environmental and health rules.

Public awareness campaigns have been launched to encourage responsible consumer behaviour and discourage bad practices. A 24-hour hotline is in place to handle consumer queries and complaints.

Badrani stressed that the khareef plan supports wider economic goals for Dhofar. "The khareef season is a strategic platform to showcase Dhofar's economic potential," he said.

90% of dam project in Wadi al Ajm in Ibri complete

Our Correspondent
Ibri

Work on the Wadi al Ajm groundwater recharge dam in the wilayat of Ibri has reached 90% completion, according to the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries and Water Resources in Dhahirah governorate.



Implemented in cooperation with the local community, the project is part of a national plan to strengthen water security, replenish aquifers and reduce flood risks in areas prone to heavy rains.

The dam has been designed to store rainwater up to 28,000m^3, its total capacity. The dam is 93m in length and 8m in height. Its spillway is 69m long and 4m high, ensuring controlled water flow and effective storage.

Officials said the dam will support the sustainable management of groundwater resources, which are vital for agriculture and household use in the region.

"This project is an important step towards improving groundwater levels and ensuring reliable water supply for the wilayat," a ministry official said. "It also helps limit the effects of flash floods and supports the local environment."

The dam is expected to enhance vegetation cover in the surrounding area and contribute to better ecological balance over time.

RO4.57mn infrastructure push to spur South Batinah economy

Our Correspondent
Muscat

South Batinah governorate has launched a few infrastructure and service projects worth more than RO4.57mn as part of its plans to boost investment, tourism and job opportunities across its wilayats.

The projects, overseen by the South Batinah Governorate Development Committee under the Office of the Governor, cover Barka, Musannah, Wadi al Maawil, Al Awabi and Nakhal. Officials say the initiative supports the decentralisation goals set out in Oman's Tenth Five-Year Plan and Vision 2040.

"These projects aim to create an attractive and competitive environment for investment and sustainable growth," said Saud bin Said al Maawali, Deputy Head of the Municipal Council and chairman of the committee.



Saud al Maawali

Among the largest projects is the Musannah Waterfront Development, a 2km site in the Al Uwaid area, now 35% complete. The RO1.7mn project will include restaurants, shops, play areas, sports facilities and beach activities.

In Wadi al Maawil, a new commercial souq covering 16,000sqm is nearly finished. The RO319,000 project has 27 retail units, which is expected to boost local trade and tourism.

The Al Awabi Souq is more than 70% complete. Built at a cost of RO200,000, it will have 16 shops across 1,200sqm, supporting small businesses in the wilayat.

Nakhal's public park development is 70% complete. The RO452,000 project includes spaces for small and medium enterprises and productive families.

In Barka, work continues on a waterfront project in the Al Muraisi area, now 55% done. The 2km development, costing RO1.9mn, will feature tourism and investment zones, sports and leisure facilities, and services for tour operators.

"These projects upgrade infrastructure and support SMEs, jobseekers and entrepreneurs in the region," Maawali said. "We aim to align our development priorities with the needs of citizens and sustainable growth principles."

The initiatives are expected to raise the quality of life and strengthen the local economy of South Batinah, he said.

MCSY launches Boccia competition for athletes with disabilities

Our Correspondent
Suhar

The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth (MCSY) launched the fourth edition of the Boccia competition at the Suhar Sports Complex on Sunday. Running until June 18, the event brings together 126 athletes with moderate to severe physical disabilities from across the sultanate.

Khalifa bin Saeed bin Hassan al Mazrouei, Head of the Sports Activities Department for Persons with Disabilities at the ministry, said the competition aims to provide a supportive sports environment for participants to demonstrate their skills and build self-confidence. He added that the initiative forms part of the ministry's wider efforts to empower people with disabilities and promote their integration into society.

Mazrouei said the event plays an important role in supporting sports for people with disabilities and promoting the concept of inclusion. It also seeks to establish Boccia as a regular sporting activity in Oman. Boccia is a precision ball sport similar to bocce, and related to bowls and pétanque.

The competition helps channel participants' energy into sports and identifies talented athletes who may represent Oman in regional and international events.

The opening day included a refereeing training workshop to introduce the rules and basics of Boccia to students from Sohar University and school sports teachers.

EMDAD LOGISTICS SAOC
شركة إمداد اللوجستية ش.م.ع.م

TENDER NOTICE

The Internal Tender Committee of Emdad Logistics Company SAOC., hereby announces the following Tender:

Tender No.	Description	Last Date of receiving Specifications	Date of Bid Submission	Suppliers	Tender Fee OMR (Inclusive of VAT 5%)	Place of Submission
ITC/E/004/2025	Supply of Diesel and Jet A1 Aviation Fuel, 2 Years on need basis Agreement	22nd June 2025	29th June 2025	Only Specialized Companies	210/- Non-Refundable	Electronically by Email

Taking into consideration the following:

All specialized companies that wish to participate in the tender must deposit the tender amount into the bank account of the Company (details of the bank account are set out hereunder) and submit the original payment receipt of the tender along with a copy of the Commercial Registration Certificate and the contact details of the authorized individual (business card) to the address presented below:

From 07:00 – 15:00 (Sunday – Thursday)

Payment Information:

Account Name	Emdad Logistics Co SAOC
Account Number	018020025780
Bank Name	Sohar International Bank SAOG
Branch	Al Khoudh Branch
Bank ID Code	BSHROMRUXXX

Complete Tender documents should be submitted in sealed envelope with red wax with tender number and title and addressed to the "Chairman of Internal Tender Committee". The envelope should not make any reference to the bidder details.
All applicants are required to submit the Tender in the Tender box in the main office of Port of Duqm Company at or before 02:00 PM on the assigned date for submission of the Tender. Tenders submitted after the above-mentioned date and time shall not be considered.

* The company is not obliged to accept the lowest offer or any other offer without any justifiable reasons.
* The company reserve the right to issue the order either in part or full for the quoted items without any justifiable reasons.
*The company reserve the right to reject the tenders not complying with the tender documentation requirement.
For any clarification, please contact us through tenders@portofduqm.om

Emdad Logistics Company S.A.O.C.
PO Box: 2409, PC: 111, Sultanate of Oman,
Almashreq Building, 18 November Street, N. Azaiba
T: +968 25468666

SEND YOURREQUEST FOR

Birthday/ Anniversary wishes to wish@apexmedia.co.om with your resident card copy (It's free of cost)

MARKET WATCH

MSX30	4,503.74
Sensex	81,118.60

FOREX RATES

(RO1 equals)	
India	223.60
Pakistan	734.56
Bangladesh	318.91
Philippines	145.98
Sri Lanka	778.29

*Rates as on June 15
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Global energy investment to rise to $3.3tn in 2025: IEA

Global energy investment is set to increase in 2025 to a record $3.3tn despite headwinds from elevated geopolitical tensions and economic uncertainty, according to a new report released by International Energy Agency (IEA).

Investment in clean technologies is on course to hit a record $2.2tn this year, reflecting not only efforts to reduce emissions but also the growing influence of industrial policy, energy security concerns and the cost competitiveness of electricity-based solutions.

As per the report, investment in oil, natural gas and coal is set to reach $1.1tn, according to the International Energy Agency report.

Globally, spending on low-emissions power generation has almost doubled over the past five years, led by solar PV. Investment in solar, both utility-scale and rooftop, is expected to reach $450bn in 2025.

OETC gets ratings from Moody's and Fitch for sukuk, GMTN programmes

Our Correspondent
Muscat



Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) has received inaugural ratings from both Moody's Ratings and Fitch Ratings for its newly established sukuk and Global Medium-Term Note (GMTN) programmes, supporting the company's capital investment and debt refinancing strategy.

Moody's has assigned a (P)Ba1 rating to the backed senior unsecured trust certificate issuance programme (sukuk programme) of Al Jawaher Assets Company, a special purpose vehicle established by OETC. It has also assigned a (P)Ba1 rating to the senior unsecured GMTN issuance programme established under OETC. The outlook on both ratings is stable, according to Moody's.

Moody's stated that the (P)Ba1 rating on the sukuk programme is at the same level as OETC's Ba1 corporate family rating.

'This is because potential certificate holders (1) will be effectively exposed to OETC's senior unsecured credit risk; (2) will not have any preferential claim or recourse over the trust assets, or rights to cause any sale or disposition of the trust assets except as expressly provided under the transaction documents; and (3) will only have rights against OETC, ranking pari passu with other senior unsecured obligations as provided in the transaction documents,' Moody's said in a statement.

As part of its funding plans, OETC is expected to issue bonds and sukuk under newly established sukuk and GMTN programmes for general corporate purposes, including the refinancing of existing debt and funding of ongoing capital investments

MOODY'S RATINGS

'As such, a change in OETC's rating will be reflected in the ratings of the sukuk programme and any certificates issued under the programme. The sukuk structure will consist of Ijara assets (an asset sale and lease-back transaction). Our rating of the sukuk programme does not express an opinion on the structure's compliance with Shariah law,' the agency added.

In a similar vein, Moody's has also assigned a (P)Ba1 rating to the new GMTN programme. Bonds issued under the GMTN programme will rank pari passu with other senior unsecured obligations of OETC.

'As part of its funding plans, OETC is expected to issue bonds and sukuk under these newly established programmes for general corporate purposes, including the refinancing of existing debt and funding of ongoing capital investments,' Moody's added.

Moody's noted that OETC's ratings continue to be supported by: a stable and transparent regulatory framework for electricity transmission and the independence of the regulator; the cost-recovery mechanisms within the regulatory framework; the low business risk profile of electricity transmission activities; the company's monopoly position in Oman; and supportive shareholders.

The stable outlook reflects Moody's expectation of OETC's sustained operating performance over the next 12 to 18 months.

Meanwhile, Fitch Ratings has assigned a 'BB+' rating to OETC's sukuk trust certificate programme, issued through trustee Al Jawaher Assets Company. Fitch has also given a 'BB+' rating to the company's GMTN programme.

'The ratings reflect the programmes' final terms and are in line with OETC's Long-Term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) and senior unsecured rating. OETC is using the proceeds for general corporate purposes, including capital expenditure and debt refinancing,' Fitch said in a statement.

It added that the sukuk programme's rating is aligned with OETC's IDR. This reflects Fitch's view that a default on these senior unsecured obligations would constitute a default by OETC, in accordance with the agency's rating definitions.



Riyada explores opportunities for SMEs in energy sector

Muscat – The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (Riyada) organised a dialogue session on Sunday to explore opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the energy and minerals sectors.

The session, held in Muscat, focused on empowering SMEs through the presentation of innovative ideas, enhancing their operational efficiency, and encouraging partnerships between government bodies and the private sector.

Participants also discussed relevant policies, legislation, licensing procedures, and enabling factors that support SMEs in developing innovative solutions and partnerships within the energy and minerals sectors.

The dialogue session was attended by H E Eng Salim Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals; Halima Rashid al Zar'ai, Chairperson of Riyada; officials from relevant authorities; and Small and Medium Enterprises owners operating in the energy and minerals sectors.

ONA

Oil prices could top $90 as Israel-Iran conflict escalates Middle East tensions

Ines Ferré

Oil prices could climb well beyond Friday's 7% spike, with Wall Street analysts warning the commodity could top $90 a barrel if the Israel-Iran conflict broadens dramatically.

On Friday, West Texas Intermediate futures (WTI) and international benchmark Brent crude settled at $72.98 and $74.23 per barrel, respectively. Both pared overnight gains that saw prices spike more than 13%.

Goldman Sachs analysts estimate the conflict could temporarily knock out 1.75mn barrels per day of Iranian supply over six months, only partially offset by increased output from other producers inside the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies (OPEC+).

'We estimate that Brent jumps to a peak just over $90 per barrel but declines back to the $60s in 2026 as Iran supply recovers,' Goldman's Daan Struyven and his team wrote in a note published Friday morning.



Goldman Sachs analysts estimate the conflict could temporarily knock out 1.75mn barrels per day of Iranian oil supply over six months, only partially offset by increased output from other producers inside OPEC+

The next upside risk will depend on the scope of Iran's response to Israel's strike against its nuclear programme. A broader conflict involving regional producers or a closure of the Strait of Hormuz – through which roughly 20% of global oil flows – could push prices roughly 35% higher from current levels.

'Based on our prior analysis, we estimate that oil prices may exceed $100 per barrel in an extreme tail scenario of an extended disruption,' the Goldman team wrote.

Before the Israeli strikes, JPMorgan analysts had forecast Brent could spike as high as $120 in a worst-case scenario.

Still, both firms see the closure of the Strait of Hormuz as an unlikely scenario, and any upside price move short-lived.

'Our comfort zone remains with oil prices in the $60-65 range, as sustained gains could severely impact inflation, reversing months of cooling in US consumer prices,' JPMorgan's Natasha Kaneva wrote.

"The issue is that the consumer can't really afford that level of pricing. And so demand would come down significantly," Hedgeye Risk Management energy analyst Fernando Valle told Yahoo Finance. "Typically, it does not take long after these initial skirmishes before it reverses."

(Source: Yahoo Finance)

UAE achieves 4% GDP growth in 2024 amid strong non-oil expansion

Abu Dhabi, UAE – The UAE's real gross domestic product (GDP) reached AED1.776tn in 2024, marking a 4% increase compared to 2023.

Non-oil GDP grew by 5%, totalling AED1.342tn, while oil-related activities contributed AED434bn to the overall economy.

Abdulla bin Touq al Marri, UAE's Minister of Economy, emphasised that the latest GDP figures released by the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Centre (FCSC) reflect renewed and positive momentum in the national economy. They further underscore the new milestones achieved by the UAE in economic diversification and competitiveness, guided by the vision and directives of its wise leadership.

With non-oil sectors accounting for 75.5% of the UAE's GDP by the end of last year, Marri noted that these indicators reflect the sustained success of the nation's economic strategies, which are driving the transition towards an innovative, knowledge-based and sustainable economic model aligned with global trends and emerging technologies.



Marri said, "Under the leadership of President H H Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al Nahyan, and the guidance of H H Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, we continue to strengthen our national efforts to achieve the objectives of the 'We the UAE 2031' vision. With each milestone, we move closer to achieving the UAE's target of raising GDP to AED3tn by the next decade, while reinforcing its position as a global hub for the new economy, driven by sustainable development, international competitiveness, and forward-looking leadership."

The transport and storage sector emerged as the fastest-growing contributor to GDP in 2024, recording a year-on-year growth of 9.6%. This was primarily driven by the exceptional performance of UAE airports, which handled 147.8mn passengers – an increase of approximately 10%.

The building and construction sector followed with an 8.4% growth rate, supported by substantial investments in urban infrastructure. Financial and insurance activities expanded by 7%, while the hospitality sector, encompassing hotels and restaurants, rose by 5.7%. Meanwhile, the real estate sector recorded a 4.8% increase.

Regarding non-oil economic activities contributing most to GDP: the trade sector accounted for 16.8%; manufacturing contributed 13.5%; and financial and insurance activities represented 13.2%. Construction and building made up 11.7%, while real estate activities accounted for 7.8% of non-oil GDP.

WAM

What's big deal with rare earth elements?

Adam Baheej Adada

Rare earth elements are a group of 17 chemical elements that play an often small but irreplaceable role in many essential modern technological products.

Smartphones, flat-screen TVs, digital cameras and LEDs all rely on them but arguably one of their most important uses is in the making of what are known as permanent magnets.

These components can retain their magnetic properties for decades, and because they are so strong, they can be much smaller and lighter than any non-rare-earth alternatives currently available. As a result, they are critical to the construction of electric vehicles and wind turbines.

But the uses for rare earth elements, also known as REEs, do not stop there. They are also key to a huge range of defense technologies – from fighter jets to submarines and laser range finders.

This strategic importance, both for commerce and defense, is part of what makes them so valuable. Neodymium and praseodymium, the most important REEs for permanent magnets, currently go for around $62 per kilogram. Terbium can sell for a kilo price of up to $958.



Rare earth elements are shipped in containers of soil such as at Lianyungang port in China's Jiangsu province (DW)

Where do they come from?

The 17 elements are not as 'rare' as their collective name might imply. In fact, they're very common, with trace amounts being found all over the world.

The challenge comes in finding areas with high enough concentrations to make extraction financially viable. Right now, according to US Geological Survey data, 70% of the world's rare earth elements are mined in China, the vast majority coming from the Bayan Obi mine in the country's north.



What do EVs, fighter jets and digital cameras have in common? Rare earth elements that are wanted everywhere but only sourced in some places. This strategic importance, both for commerce and defense, is part of what makes rare earth elments so valuable

This single source is orders of magnitude larger than the next biggest deposits on the planet – such as Mount Weld in Australia and Kvanefjeld in Greenland – and contains large quantities of all the rare earth elements used to make magnets.

Once they're out of the ground, they undergo a highly specialised process of separation and refinement to turn them into usable compounds. This too, largely takes place in China, meaning the country doesn't only provide most of the world's rare earth metals, but most of its magnets too.

This monopoly becomes even more powerful with certain types of the 17 REEs, which are split into three groups: light, medium and heavy, roughly based on their atomic value.

The lighter elements are typically less valuable and easier to source, with the magnet ingredients Neodymium and Praseodymium being the exceptions. Between 80-100% of the EU's supply of elements from this group come from China.

And for the heavier elements, which are much less abundant and require an even more specialised separation process, Europe sources 100% from China.

What happens if China cuts off access?

China's monopoly has many Western nations concerned about future access. So, in recent years, the US and EU have responded by starting the process of building internal supplies of rare earth elements and other critical materials.

In 2024, the EU signed the Critical Raw Materials Act, which sets non-binding targets for the volume of critical materials the EU should produce itself by 2030. It also allows the bloc to designate 'strategic projects,' both within the EU and with close allies such as Norway, as a way of to ensure access to funding, boost public acceptance and fast track approvals and permits.

Meanwhile, the US defense department has been investing heavily in domestic companies since 2020 and has set a goal of creating an internal 'mine-to-magnet' supply chain by 2027.

The US and EU have both expressed interest in untapped sources of rare earth elements.

Ukraine and Greenland have become areas of key interest for US President Donald Trump. Both have very large potential deposits that are currently hard to get to, leaving the future of access to rare earth elements for Western countries uncertain.

DW



US dollar falls to 2-month low

Singapore – The United States dollar fell on Friday amid growing expectations that the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates.

Against a basket of currencies, the US dollar fell to its lowest since April 22 at 98.284 on Friday.

The dollar's sharp decline pushed the euro to a seven-week high early in the session, before the single European currency pared some gains, last trading at $1.1515.

Britain's Pound Sterling rose 0.34% to $1.3583, while the Japanese yen climbed 0.4% to 143.95 per dollar.

The US dollar also decreased 0.44% against the Swiss franc to 0.8169, the New Zealand dollar rose 0.1% to $0.6033, the Chinese yuan rose 0.2% in onshore trading to $7.1810, and the Australian dollar fell 0.12% to $0.6496.

The euro maintained strong gains on Friday after surging against most other currencies in the previous session.

The annual inflation rate in US is continuing to remain at modest level but still remains above the Federal Reserve's target of 2.5%.

ONA

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
TESTAMENTARY AND INTESTATE JURISDICTION
PETITION NO. 681 OF 2025

Petition for the Probate of the last Will and Testament of Dinkarrai Lavchand Vasa, who was residing at the time of his death at Flat No. B2 - 108, Chadda Cresent CHSL, Sector 17, Vashi Navi Mumbai - 400 703.

...DECEASED

Kanan Rupesh Shah ...PETITIONER

CITATION

To,

1. All Concerned
2. Ketan Dinkarrai Vasa
   Last known address at Muscat.

If you claim to have any interest in the estate of the abovenamed deceased, you are hereby cited to come and see the proceedings before the grant of Probate.

In case you intend to oppose the grant of Probate, you should file in the Office of the Prothonotary and Senior Master, Bombay High Court, a caveat within 14 days from the service of this citation upon you.

You are hereby informed that the free legal services from the State Legal Services Authority, High Court Legal Services Committees, District Legal Services Authorities and Taluka Legal Services Committees as per eligibility criteria are available to you in case you are eligible and desire to avail the free legal services, you may contact any of the above Legal Services Authorities / Committees.

Witness Shri Alok Aradhe Chief Justice at Bombay aforesaid this 3rd day of June, 2025.

SD/-
For Prothonotary and Senior Master

Sealed

SD/-
Sealer
The 4th day of June 2025

SD/-
Vinay Shingada
Advocate for the Petitioner,
1607, Jeevan Sapna CHSL,
M.G. Road, Kandivali West,
Mumbai - 400 067.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
TESTAMENTARY AND INTESTATE JURISDICTION
PETITION NO. 679 OF 2025

Petition for the Probate of the last Will & Codicil and Testament of Saroj Dinkarrai Vasa, who was residing at the time of her death at Flat No. B2 - 108, Chadda Cresent CHSL, Sector 17, Vashi Navi Mumbai - 400 703.

...DECEASED

Kanan Rupesh Shah ...PETITIONER

CITATION

To,

1. All Concerned
2. Ketan Dinkarrai Vasa
   Last known address at Muscat.

If you claim to have any interest in the estate of the abovenamed deceased, you are hereby cited to come and see the proceedings before the grant of Probate.

In case you intend to oppose the grant of Probate, you should file in the Office of the Prothonotary and Senior Master, Bombay High Court, a caveat within 14 days from the service of this citation upon you.

You are hereby informed that the free legal services from the State Legal Services Authority, High Court Legal Services Committees, District Legal Services Authorities and Taluka Legal Services Committees as per eligibility criteria are available to you in case you are eligible and desire to avail the free legal services, you may contact any of the above Legal Services Authorities / Committees.

Witness Shri Alok Aradhe Chief Justice at Bombay aforesaid this 3rd day of June, 2025.

SD/-
For Prothonotary and Senior Master

Sealed

SD/-
Sealer
The 4th day of June 2025

SD/-
Vinay Shingada
Advocate for the Petitioner,
1607, Jeevan Sapna CHSL,
M.G. Road, Kandivali West,
Mumbai - 400 067.



Shura committees discuss citizen employment issues

The Economic and Financial Committee and the Youth and Human Resources Committee of the Shura Council held a joint meeting with H E Khalid Rashid al Ghamari, undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour for Labour, to discuss the latest updates regarding the ministry's recent decision mandating private sector companies, whose commercial registrations are over one year old to employ at least one Omani citizen.

H E Ghamari presented the rationale and key objectives behind the decision, emphasising its aim to generate more job opportunities for Omani nationals and to regulate the labour market in a way that balances the interests of the private sector with the national priority of employment creation. He also shared statistics on the number of companies targeted by the decision and outlined the mechanisms in place to facilitate the replacement of expatriate workers with Omani employees, a press release said.

He clarified that the decision falls within the government's broader efforts to boost national employment and organise the labour market, taking into account the realities of different economic sectors. He affirmed the Ministry's openness to feedback and constructive suggestions that could enhance the effective implementation of the decision.

The meeting also explored the possibility of introducing the decision in a phased manner, focusing on selected sectors instead of applying it across the board, in order to ensure the desired outcomes are achieved without disrupting private sector performance or economic stability.

Members of the council raised a number of observations and inquiries reflecting public concerns, particularly regarding the readiness of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to comply with the new policy and its potential impact on their operations and sustainability.

The committee heads and members stressed the importance of institutional cooperation between state entities - chiefly the Shura Council and the Ministry of Labour - to ensure that labour market policies are well-studied, responsive to the needs of the economy, and aligned with the aspirations of Omani citizens.

The members highlighted the necessity of launching a comprehensive media campaign to clearly communicate the decision's objectives and implementation mechanisms to the public. They emphasized that such efforts would help alleviate public concerns and promote a better understanding and acceptance of the initiative among business owners and citizens alike.

The meeting concluded with both sides affirming the need for continued coordination and communication between the Shura Council and the Ministry of Labour to ensure optimal implementation of the decision, taking into consideration its economic, social, and developmental dimensions. The aim is to create a well-regulated, sustainable labour market that supports national economic growth and enhances Oman's competitiveness at the regional and global levels.

The meeting was held by Ahmed Saeed al Sharqi, chairman of the Economic and Financial Affairs Committee, HE Younis Ali al Mandhari, head of the Youth and Human Resources Committee, and esteemed members of both committees.

GC Coupons partners with Noon, Talabat

GC Coupons, the region's fastest-growing coupon and discount platform, announced strategic partnerships with leading e-commerce and retail giants Noon, Talabat, 6th Street, and Carrefour. These collaborations are designed to provide exclusive coupons that deliver unmatched savings to millions of consumers across the Middle East.

As online shopping continues to surge, customers are increasingly looking for verified and reliable discount codes that offer real value. GC Coupons has responded to this demand by securing exclusive promo codes that are not available on any other website.

Shoppers can now enjoy exclusive Noon Coupons, Talabat Coupons, 6th Street Promo Codes and Verified Carrefour Vouchers.

"We're excited to partner with some of the most trusted names in the e-commerce and retail landscape," said Yash Bhojwani, a spokesperson from GC Coupons. "Our goal is simple — to help users spend less and get more. These partnerships allow us to deliver that promise more powerfully than ever."

Saudi Arabia showcases its potential unicorns

Monsha'at, Saudi Arabia's Small and Medium Enterprises General Authority, led a group of five potential Saudi unicorns SMEs to participate in VivaTech 2025, Europe's leading technology and innovation exhibition.

Its participation was part of Saudi Unicorns - a Saudi Vision 2030 initiative - to help high-potential, fast-growing companies in promising sectors reach valuations of over US$1bn, a press release said. Held in Paris between June 11-14, the four-day innovation-focused event featured 13,500 startups, 3,200 investors, and over 165,000 attendees.

Now in its ninth year, the conference was a key opportunity for Monsha'at to expose high-potential Saudi startups to global best practices, industry insights, and strategic networks with leading global stakeholders, gain fresh perspectives, and acquire the skills and contacts they need to globally scale. It also allowed them to share Saudi Arabia's success story with leading tech investors, which aligns with the Saudi Unicorns initiative's commitment to driving growth and innovation in the Saudi startup space.

"Our participation at VivaTech 2025 was a tremendous opportunity to not only showcase several of the best young startups and concepts coming out of the Kingdom," said Saud Alsabhan, vice governor of Entrepreneurship.

Knowledge Oman gets Best Community Development Initiative Award for 2025

Knowledge Oman, the leading community knowledge sharing platform, has been awarded with the prestigious Best Community Development Initiative award at the International Business and Innovation Excellence 2025 event held recently at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Muscat.

Balqees al Hassani, who leads the platform for the past five years, collected the award on behalf of the team in a grand ceremony. The award represents the sixth achievement of both global and local recognition that Knowledge Oman has received since its inception in 2008 for its contributions to community development.

"I am honoured to receive this prestigious award on behalf of the team" said Hassani. "Being recognised for the projects and work we do for the community fuels our passion to continue to go bigger and do more for the betterment of the society."



The International Business and Innovation Excellence 2025 event brought together influential leaders, visionary, innovators and changemakers from across the globe. Knowledge Oman's recognition affirms its standing as a role model in community development, driven by innovation, volunteerism, and a clear national vision. Under Balqees's leadership, Knowledge Oman has expanded its footprint, empowering thousands of individuals through knowledge-driven programmes and community initiatives aligned with Oman Vision 2040.

The International Business and Innovation Excellence 2025 event brought together influential leaders, innovators and changemakers from across the globe

Founded in 2008, Knowledge Oman has become a pioneering platform that bridges academia, industry, and civil society. Its award-winning initiatives is addressing critical gaps in education, digital skills, youth empowerment, and inclusive development. The platform has received multiple awards since its inception in 2008 that includes the 'Best Community Leadership' in 2022, International Standard Web Technology Award 2009, Brand Leadership Award in 2010, Outstanding contribution to the cause of education in 2012, and the Golden Strategic Award for Culture in 2013.

National Finance supports child development welfare initiatives

As part of its commitment to supporting community initiatives and contributing to childhood development, National Finance, the Sultanate of Oman's leading finance company, announced the signing of a cooperation agreement with the Children First Association.

The agreement aims to support the association's efforts to promote children's rights and to create safe, stimulating, and educational, cultural, and health-focused environments for children in the country. The agreement was signed by Tariq Sulaiman al Farsi, CEO at National Finance, and HH Sayyida Dr Mona Fahad al Said, chairperson of the Children First Association, a press release said.

This partnership represents a significant step that reflects National Finance's commitment to supporting community welfare institutions and empowering children, who are the cornerstone for building a more prosperous future for the nation. Through this collaboration, National Finance company contributes to funding the association's awareness and development programmes, as well as supporting national events such as conferences and seminars related to childhood issues.

Through its programmes and initiatives, the association focuses on instilling the values of citizenship, strengthening national identity, and providing awareness and training support to children and caregivers in various health, psychological, and educational fields.



Tariq Sulaiman Al Farsi said, "We value this partnership, which goes beyond a strategic cooperation to become a solid investment in the future of the Sultanate of Oman. At National Finance Company, we believe in the importance of investing in people and society as part of our strategic direction, and supporting childhood and empowering children and those concerned with their welfare, both individuals and institutions, is a key part of preserving national identity and social connections, maintaining cohesion and protecting it from external influences."

Through its programmes and initiatives, the association focuses on instilling the values of citizenship

For its part, the Children First Association expressed its appreciation for this initiative, which strengthens its capacity to implement its 2025 plan. This plan includes launching digital awareness platforms, organising national conferences to develop skills and capabilities, and establishing sustainable institutional partnerships.

Dr Mona said, "Children First Association reaffirms its full commitment to designing and implementing programmes that support children's rights and enhance community and institutional awareness of their issues."



BYD offers 'hot deals' on electric vehicles

BYD presents its Hot Summer Deals on its futuristic range of vehicles for customers in Oman. New BYD customers can enjoy 3 years/60,000 km free service plans on the purchase of electric vehicles.

What's more, participate in the grand raffle for a chance to win an all-expenses-paid holiday to Turkiye. Plus, scratch and win exciting prizes including an iPhone 16 Pro Max, Apple Watch, Apple AirPods, and a free EV battery charger for the convenience of charging your BYD at home, a press release said.

BYD's dynamic lineup of EVs includes the Atto 3, Sealion 7, Seal and Han.

The BYD ATTO 3 is the perfect choice for those seeking an electric SUV with impressive performance and fuel efficiency. Powered by BYD's revolutionary Blade Battery, it delivers exceptional safety and high-performance output in a premium comfort setting.

Redefining the SUV segment, the recently launched Sealion 7 EV showcases the full power and vigour of BYD's revolutionary e-Platform 3.0 and Blade Battery technology. It delivers seamless power, precision handling, and exceptional efficiency—accelerating from 0 to 100 km/h in just 4.5 seconds. electric SUVs on the road.

Another ocean-inspired model, the BYD SEAL, is an all-wheel-drive, fully electric sedan that incorporates BYD's cutting-edge blade battery. Designed to be spacious, practical, safe, and comfortable, it also delivers an impressive range of 570 km on a full charge and acceleration from 0 to 100 km/h in just 3.8 seconds, the SEAL delivers both performance and efficiency.

Inspired by Chinese dragon, the all-electric BYD Han represents power and strength. This sleek, sporty sedan takes driving to new heights, reaching 0 to 100 km/h in just 3.9 seconds. Other sophisticated features include the multifunction dashboard, featuring the BYD Heart shift lever, a 12.3" LCD display, etc.

Meethaq solutions available at dedicated service booths

As part of its ongoing strategy to expand its offerings and ensure accessibility for all customer segments, Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat, has launched dedicated service booths at various commercial centers across the sultanate.



The initiative is designed to provide convenient access to Meethaq's Sharia compliant banking solutions and services for customers and visitors alike. By making these services readily available at key commercial locations, Meethaq aims to simplify the banking experience, allowing customers to seamlessly access products, services & solutions and enjoy a more enhanced and efficient banking experience, a press release said.

Meethaq will operate dedicated booths for three days at 5 selected commercial centres across various governorates of the sultanate, supported by Meethaq's expert staff, who will introduce customers and visitors to Sharia-compliant services and solutions.

Meethaq's team was available at the Mall of Oman in Muscat from June 12-14, and they will be available at Sur City Centre in Sharqiyah South from June 19-21, Sohar City Centre in North Batinah from June 26-28, Nizwa Grand Mall in Dakhliyah from July 3-7, and Salalah Grand Mall in Dhofar from July 10-12. All booths will be open during the morning and evening working hours of the respective centre.

These dedicated booths present an excellent opportunity for customers and visitors to avail Meethaq's various Sharia-compliant banking services and solutions with ease. These solutions will include account openings (including children and savings accounts), salary transfer requests, enrollment in Meethaq's savings plan and consultations on other financing products.

OOC receives International Billiards Federation president

Abdullah Mohammed Bamakhalef, Secretary General of the Oman Olympic Committee (OOC), received Mubarak Hamad al Khaterin, president of the International Billiards and Snooker Federation, on Sunday at the OOC headquarters, as part of his official visit to the Sultanate of Oman.



The meeting focused on exploring avenues of mutual cooperation between both parties, including opportunities to further develop the sport of billiards and snooker at both the national and international levels. Discussions highlighted the importance of keeping pace with the sport's global progress and enhancing its competitive presence, a press release said.

The two sides also exchanged views on supporting relevant programmes and initiatives, and emphasised the significance of establishing effective channels of communication between the OOC and the International Federation to support the sport's growth in line with global standards.

This meeting comes as part of the OOC's continued efforts to strengthen ties with international sports organisations and expand collaborative opportunities that align with its goals of advancing the sports sector in accordance with best international practices.

Khaterin toured the Oman Olympic Museum, located within the OOC premises, where he viewed exhibitions, archival documents, and models that chronicle the journey of sports in Oman and the nation's participation in Olympic, regional, and international events.

IKEA offers Filipino menu for I-day of Philippines

IKEA Oman celebrates Filipino National Day on June 12 with an exciting culinary offering.

From June 12 to 17, the IKEA Restaurant in Oman embarked on a vibrant journey of Filipino flavours, offering a specially curated menu of beloved traditional dishes, a press release said.

The IKEA Restaurant features a Filipino buffet spread showcasing beloved national dishes, with prices as low as RO750bz. Breakfast options include comforting Chicken Arroz Caldo, Filipino-style Spaghetti, and Rice Sticks Bihon Noodles. For mains, there is Tilapia Escabeche, Bistek Tagalog and Beef Kare Kare.

McLaren Automotive and McLaren Racing strike collaboration

McLaren Automotive and McLaren Racing are collaborating to offer a highly exclusive opportunity to deliver the exhilaration of driving an authentic Le Mans Hypercar – a sensation that few will ever experience – to a select few as part of the unique Project: Endurance customer partnership programme.



Those chosen for Project: Endurance participation will become part of McLaren's racing history – which includes the iconic 1995 victory in the 24 Hours of Le Mans, two Indy 500 wins, and triumphs in more than 190 Grands Prix – including Monaco – leading to nine Formula 1 Constructors' World Championships and the only manufacturer to achieve the Triple Crown, a press release said.

"I'm delighted to announce that McLaren Automotive is collaborating with our colleagues in McLaren Racing to introduce a bold, authentic Le Mans Hypercar customer ownership experience. In addition to owning the very latest LMDh race car - a driving sensation alone few will ever experience – customers will enjoy unique, wholly immersive access to the development and racing programme that will underpin our 2027 FIA World Endurance Championship contender. Together with the associated track driving programme curated for Project: Endurance, this incredible opportunity delivers a new dimension in McLaren customer partnership," Nick Collins, CEO, McLaren Group Holdings, said.

Like the WEC LMDh Hypercar run by McLaren United AS, Project: Endurance will be powered by a race-built V6 twin turbo hybrid powertrain driving the rear wheels, and built in partnership with renowned race car constructor, Dallara, which is also the exclusive partner to the NTT INDYCAR Series.

"McLaren Racing's return to the FIA World Endurance Championship marks the beginning of a new and exciting chapter for us. We have a rich history in the sport together with McLaren Automotive, having raced and won on our first attempt at Le Mans in 1995. This customer programme will offer buyers an incredible chance to own an authentic race car and get closer to the action on track," Zak Brown, CEO, McLaren Racing, added.

Taking the customer Le Mans Hypercar ownership experience to a new level, McLaren brings Project: Endurance purchasers to the very heart of an elite motorsport development and testing programme. Customers will have full behind-the-scenes access to the upcoming McLaren Racing LMDh programme, key team personnel and drivers – and become a part of McLaren Endurance Racing's story.

As well as owning the Project: Endurance car, the customers will be at the very centre of the development programme for the McLaren Hypercar that will challenge for victory in the 2027 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC).

Former French President Sarkozy stripped of national honour

Paris, France - Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who led France from 2007 to 2012, has had his Legion d'honneur (Legion of Honour) award revoked after his conviction on graft charges, according to a decree published on Sunday.

He has thus become the second French head of state to be stripped of the award after Philippe Petain, who headed the collaborationist Vichy regime during World War II and was convicted in August 1945 for high treason and conspiring with the Nazi occupiers.

The widely-expected decision to take the award back from Sarkozy came despite the opposition of current French President Emmanuel Macron, who said in April that he thought that it was important for 'former presidents to be respected'.



Why the award taken from Sarkozy?

The Legion d'honneur, France's highest order of both civil and military merit, was established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte.

Under its rules, recipients automatically lose the award if they are convicted of a crime or receive a prison sentence of at least one year.

Sarkozy, who has been dogged by legal problems since his heavy defeat in the 2012 French presidential election, has been convicted of graft. The conviction was upheld last year by an appeals court, which ordered him to wear an electronic ankle bracelet in place of a one-year jail sentence.

The 70-year-old former president, who had the electronic tag removed this month, was found guilty of trying to secure favours from a judge illegally.

Appeal underway

Sarkozy is currently appealing the conviction at the European Court of Human Rights while also being tried in a separate case on charges of accepting illegal campaign financing in an alleged pact with late Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi.

A verdict in the latter case is expected in September.

Sarkozy, who denies the charges, could face a seven-year prison term if prosecutors have their way.

His legal problems have not prevented him from continuing to have a political presence in right-wing politics in France, and he is also known to hold regular meetings with Macron.

During his time in office, Sarkozy worked closely with former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, particularly on problems associated with the eurozone crisis, earning the pair the sobriquet 'Merkozy'.

DW

Trump travel ban: US may expand restrictions to 36 more countries

Washington, D.C., US - The US administration under President Donald Trump is weighing a sweeping expansion of its travel ban, potentially restricting entry from 36 additional countries, according to a confidential US State Department memo.

Obtained by *The Washington Post*, the memo was signed by Secretary of State Marco Rubio and dated Saturday, outlining a 60-day deadline for the targeted nations to meet a set of US benchmarks - or face full or partial visa bans.

The list includes 25 African nations - among them key US partners such as Egypt, Ethiopia, and Djibouti - along with countries in Central Asia, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. Other nations named include Syria, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, and Vanuatu. According to the memo, countries under consideration either fail to produce reliable identity documents, have widespread fraud in civil records, or have a high number of visa overstays.

Additional reasons cited include the availability of citizenship through investment without residency, and claims of 'anti-semitic and anti-American activity in the United States'.

Countries can avoid sanctions by presenting an action plan by Wednesday at 8am (1200GMT), and potentially by agreeing to accept deported third-country nationals or entering a 'safe third country' agreement. This move follows a June 4 presidential proclamation that fully restricted travel from 13 countries, including Afghanistan, Iran, and Somalia, and partially restricted travel from seven others. The administration's latest proposal would mark a dramatic escalation in immigration policy.

The State Department declined to comment on internal deliberations, and the White House has not responded to media inquiries.

Democrats and civil rights groups were quick to condemn the proposal. Critics likened it to Trump's earlier travel bans, calling them discriminatory and citing the disproportionate number of African and Caribbean nations targeted.



The list includes 25 African nations - among them key US partners such as Egypt, Ethiopia, and Djibouti - along with countries in Central Asia, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. Other nations named include Syria, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan and Vanuatu

While former President Joe Biden revoked Trump's original travel bans during his term, Trump vowed to revive and expand them.

On Inauguration Day this year, the White House issued an executive order instructing agencies to identify countries with 'deficient vetting and screening' processes - laying the groundwork for this latest action.

Trump has publicly promised the policy would return 'bigger than before'.

Military parade

Meanwhile, Trump on Saturday attended a large-scale military parade in Washington, D.C., commemorating both his 79th birthday and the 250th anniversary of the founding of the US military - a celebration that drew criticism from various quarters.

The parade, held along Constitution Avenue, was attended by first lady Melania Trump, Vice President J D Vance, Secretary of Défense Pete Hegseth, and other senior officials.

While the event marked a milestone anniversary for the armed forces, it also stirred public backlash.

Critics questioned the optics and cost of the display - reportedly totalling US$45mn - and likened it to military parades in authoritarian regimes, raising concerns about democratic norms and the use of the military for political purposes.

Across the country, millions of Americans used the occasion of Trump's birthday to protest his administration's domestic and foreign policies.

Demonstrators in more than 2,000 cities and towns across all 50 states took part in coordinated rallies under the banner 'No Kings Day'. symbolically rejecting what they described as growing authoritarianism.

From a specially constructed viewing platform on the south lawn of the White House, Trump watched the parade, standing at times to salute the troops as they passed in chronological order, reflecting the history of the US military.

The parade featured 6,600 service members, 128 tanks and armoured vehicles, as well as other military equipment.

Overhead, aircraft and helicopters flew in formation, while the army's parachute team performed a precision jump, landing in the Washington Monument area.

Following more than two hours of military procession, Trump delivered a brief speech praising the US military, then accepted a ceremonial flag presented in his honour.

The parade concluded with a performance of Lee Greenwood's 'God Bless the USA' and a fireworks display.

Anadolu Agency



Benue state sees conflicts over land and water use

Nigeria: Gunmen kill at least 100 people in Benue

Abuja, Nigeria - Gunmen killed at least 100 people in the Yelewata village in Nigeria's Benue state late on Friday, Amnesty International Nigeria said.

"Many people are still missing...dozens injured and left without adequate medical care. Many families were locked up and burnt inside their bedrooms," the human rights organisation said in a social media post.

Police spokesperson Udeme Edet from Benue confirmed the attack but did not specify the death toll. It was not immediately clear who was responsible for the attack.

Governor of Benue state Hyacinth Alia sent a delegation to Yelewata to provide support to the relatives of the victims.

Visuals circulated on social media showed burnt houses and corpses.

Violence in the Middle Belt

Benue state lies in Nigeria's Middle Belt, in the centre of the Muslim-majority north and the Christian-majority south.

The region often sees violence over access to land and water resources between farmers and herders, worsened by ethnic and religious tensions. Violence in the region has claimed 500 lives since 2019, and displaced thousands of others, as per data by Nigerian geopolitical research consultancy SBM Intelligence.

Last month, gunmen believed to be herders killed at least 20 in the Gwer West district in Benue. In April, 40 were killed in in the nearby state of Plateau.

DW

Monument to Nazi crimes in Poland to be unveiled in Berlin

Berlin, Germany – Germany's complex relationship with its armed forces can be traced back in large part to the crimes committed by German troops during the Second World War - especially in eastern Europe and in Poland in particular.

On Monday, a new monument is set to be unveiled in central Berlin to commemorate the victims of the Nazi invasion and occupation of its neighbour between 1939 and 1945, during which an estimated six million Poles, around a fifth of the civilian population, were murdered.

The new monument will consist of a large boulder from the northeastern German state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, which borders Poland, on the site of the former Kroll Opera House.

The Opera House served as the seat of the German parliament for much of the Nazi period after the nearby Reichstag building was damaged in the 1933 Reichstag fire. As such, it was the location for dictator Adolf Hitler's declaration of war on Poland in September 1939.

Peter Oliver Loew, the director of the German-Polish Institute, told the Catholic news agency KNA that it is 'important to send a message, even if it's only a temporary location for now'.

In June 2024, the German government approved plans for a permanent monument and a 'German-Polish House', a precise timeline for which has not yet been set.

Nowadays, Germany and Poland are key allies at the heart of the European Union, but the memory of the German occupation of Poland remains a live issue, especially in Warsaw.

"I will fight for them from the very first day of my presidency," promised new Polish President Karol Nawrocki during his recent campaign, for instance.

DW

US: Politician and husband shot dead in Minnesota

Minnesota, US - Minnesota Governor Tim Walz said that US Democratic politician Melissa Hortman, a former state House Speaker, and her husband were killed in a politically motivated shooting.

"My good friend and colleague, Speaker Melissa and her husband, Mark were shot and killed early this morning in what appears to be a politically motivated assassination," Walz announced on Saturday.

A second lawmaker, State senator John Hoffman, and his wife Yvette were shot and wounded in a separate attack, the governor added.



US Democratic politician Melissa Hortman

He said that officials remained 'cautiously optimistic' that they would recover.

"This was an act of targeted political violence," Walz said. "Peaceful discourse is the foundation of our democracy. We don't settle our differences with violence or at gunpoint."

According to Walz, the gunman went to the Hortmans' home after shooting Hoffman and his wife multiple times.

Meanwhile, law enforcement authorities said the gunman was dressed as a police officer. He escaped after exchanging fire with police who went to the Hortmans' home.

A major search was underway for the suspect, who fled on foot after firing at police and abandoning a vehicle.

According to law enforcement officials, officers found a 'manifesto' in the vehicle. Both Hortman and Hoffman were mentioned in the suspect's writings alongside other legislators and officials.

US President Donald Trump said he had been briefed on the 'terrible shooting that took place in Minnesota, which appears to be a targeted attack against state lawmakers'.

"Such horrific violence will not be tolerated in the United States of America," he added in a statement.

DW

IRAN-ISRAEL CONFLICT

Israel, Iran launch fresh wave of airstrikes, missiles amid escalation

Tel Aviv/Tehran - Israel launched a fresh wave of airstrikes targeting Isfahan and Shiraz in central and southern Iran on Sunday, according to Iranian media.

The ISNA news agency reported that a facility linked to Iran's Defence Ministry was struck in Isfahan.

However, Israeli military spokesman Avichay Adraee claimed that Sunday's strike in Isfahan targeted a nuclear facility. There has been no comment from the Iranian side regarding the claim.

Thick smoke was also seen rising from Shiraz after Israeli strikes, but no information was yet available about the target of the attack.

Explosions were heard in several areas in the Iranian capital, Tehran, on Sunday amid reports of fresh Israeli airstrikes, local media reported.

Videos circulating on social media showed smoke rising from Mehrabad Airport.



Israeli warplanes attacked dozens of military and nuclear sites across Iran since Friday, the army said on Sunday

New wave of missile attack from Iran

Meanwhile, Israel reported a new wave of missile attacks from Iran on Sunday.

A military statement said that alerts were activated in several areas of the country after a salvo of missiles was fired from Iran.

"At this time, the Air Force is working to intercept and attack wherever necessary to eliminate the threat," it added.

According to the Israeli daily *Maariv*, nearly 50 missiles were launched toward Haifa and Tel Aviv

Strikes on military, nuclear sites

Israeli warplanes attacked dozens of military and nuclear sites across Iran since Friday, the army said on Sunday.

Military spokesman Avichae Adraee said more than 170 targets and 720 military infrastructure sites were hit in the past three days.

"About 50 fighter jets attacked infrastructure and targets linked to Iran's nuclear programme in Tehran," he added.

The Israeli spokesman said that fighter jets struck more than 80 targets in Tehran last night, including the headquarters of the Iranian Defence Ministry and the SPND nuclear project.

Evacuation order

Israel issued an evacuation order for Iranians living near weapons factories on Sunday ahead of a new wave of airstrikes.

"All individuals currently present or expected to be present in or around military weapons manufacturing facilities and their supporting institutions must immediately evacuate these areas and not return until further notice," Adraee said in a statement in Arabic and Persian on X.

"Being near these facilities puts your life at risk," he warned.

Israel launched coordinated airstrikes on multiple sites across Iran, including military and nuclear facilities, on Friday, prompting Tehran to launch retaliatory strikes within hours.

Israeli authorities said that at least 13 people were killed and more than 370 others injured in Iranian missile attacks since Friday.

Israel's oil refinery damaged

Israel reported damage on Sunday to an oil refinery in the northern city of Haifa after Iranian missile attacks.

Iranian missiles hit the Bazan oil refinery complex in Haifa overnight, causing damage to pipelines and transmission lines, Bazan Group, which operates the complex, said in a statement cited by the *Times of Israel* news portal.

The company said that oil refining activities continued, while other facilities halted operations.

10 killed in Israel

At least 10 people were killed and 250 others injured in overnight Iranian strikes on central and northern Israel, while 18 are still missing, local media reported on Sunday.

The Israeli Channel 12 reported that the number of deaths in Bat Yam and Rehovot in the south of Tel Aviv also rose to 6, while 18 are still missing under the rubble.

Iranian strikes damaged 61 buildings in Bat Yam, rendering 6 of them uninhabitable, the Bat Yam mayor said, adding that rescue and relief efforts are underway.

Meanwhile, the Yemeni Houthi group claimed that it targeted Israel with hypersonic ballistic missiles in coordination with the Iranian army on Sunday.

Houthi spokesperson Yahya Saree said the group hit 'sensitive Israeli enemy targets' in Yaffa, central Israel, with hypersonic ballistic missiles at various times in the last 24 hours.

Anadolu Agency

> *Explosions were heard in several areas in the Iranian capital, Tehran, amid reports of fresh Israeli airstrikes. Videos circulating on social media showed smoke rising from Mehrabad Airport*

Australia, South Korea call for restraint

Ankara, Turkey - Australia and South Korea on Sunday urged Israel and Iran to exercise restraint following fresh attacks against each other, according to local media reports.

Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong urged Israel and Iran to 'not escalate' a 'perilous' situation that could affect the wider Middle East.

Wong told ABC News that she spoke with her Iranian counterpart and also with the Israeli government through its ambassador, urging both to show restraint.

"I directly put to the Iranian foreign minister: 'We are saying to you, exercise restraint, return to diplomacy and dialogue', because continuing to escalate this has consequences for all peoples of the region, and I think that is a position that so many countries in the world are putting to not only the Iranians, but also to the Israelis," Wong said.



> *Australia's FM Penny Wong urged Israel and Iran to 'not escalate' a 'perilous' situation that could affect wider Middle East*

South Korea's president's office also called on Israel and Iran to show restraint, saying Seoul does not support any further escalation of military tension in the region. "We are opposed to military confrontation or escalation of tensions and have urged restraint by all involved parties," Yonhap News Agency reported, citing a presidential official statement.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump said on Sunday that Israel and Iran will have peace 'soon' and that many meetings are taking place to achieve this. "Iran and Israel should make a deal, and will make a deal," Trump said on Truth Social.

Iran says ready to end attacks if Israel stops assault on Tehran

Tehran, Iran - Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday that Iran is ready to halt its attacks on Israel if Tel Aviv ends its assault on Tehran.

Speaking to foreign ambassadors in Tehran, Araghchi emphasised that the war was 'imposed' on Tehran and that Iran was left with no choice but to respond. "Our defence is fully legitimate and will be carried out with strength, solely in response to aggression," he said.

"If the attacks cease, Iran's retaliatory actions will also end."

Tensions have sharply escalated between Iran and Israel following coordinated Israeli airstrikes on multiple sites across Tehran, including military and nuclear facilities, on Friday, prompting Iran to launch retaliatory strikes within hours.

On Saturday night, Iran initiated a second wave of its operation, dubbed True Promise III, targeting primarily economic and industrial facilities in the Israeli port city of Haifa. In parallel, Israeli strikes hit the defence ministry and oil depots in Tehran.



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (left) said the Israeli 'aggression' could not have occurred without support from the US

Iran said that 78 people were killed on the first day of the Israeli assault, and scores, including children, were killed on the second.

The flare-up in hostilities led to the suspension of indirect nuclear negotiations between Iran and the US, which had been mediated by Oman. The sixth round of talks had been scheduled for Sunday in Muscat.

US complicity

Araghchi said the Israeli 'aggression' could not have occurred without coordination and support from the US, citing that as a key reason for the breakdown in talks. He said Iran has 'solid and convincing evidence' that US forces and military bases in the region have supported Israeli strikes.

The Iranian minister cited statements made by US President Donald Trump, who said the attacks 'couldn't have happened without American equipment' and hinted at 'further stages to come', as further evidence of US complicity.

Regarding the US denial of involvement in the Israeli strike on Iran's Natanz nuclear facility in Isfahan province, Araghchi said Iran does not accept the claim due to 'contradictory evidence'.

Who are the high-ranking Iranian military leaders killed by Israel?

Istanbul, Turkey - Israel's June 13 deadly strikes on Iran targeted its nuclear and missile facilities as well as residential areas in several cities, resulting in the death of top military commanders and scientists.

Here's a list of the high-ranking Iranian military officers killed by Israel.

Mohammad Bagheri

Bagheri, the military chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces, was born as Mohammad-Hossein Afshordi in 1960 in Tehran.

He joined the intelligence unit of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), according to Iran's Press TV, and remained active within the IRGC during the Iran-Iraq War.

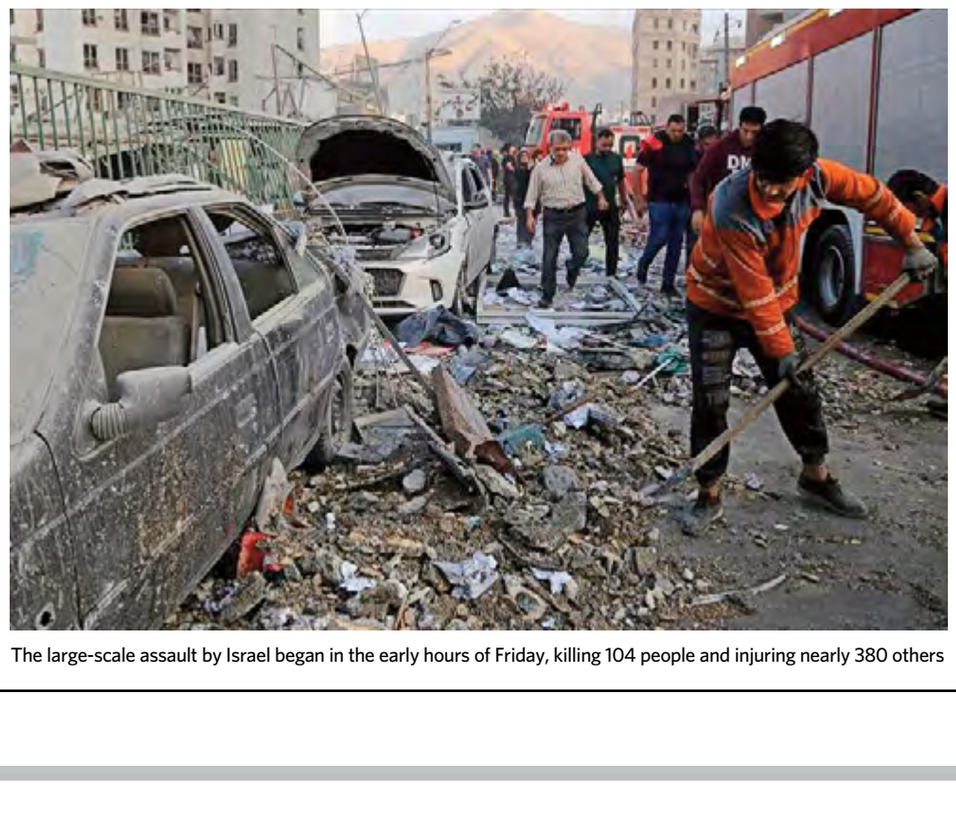
Between 2002 and 2014, he served as the deputy for intelligence and operations at the General Staff of the Armed Forces.

Bagheri was appointed the chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces by Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in 2016, succeeding Maj. Gen. Seyyed Hassan Firouzabadi. Bagheri was also sanctioned by the US in 2019.

Hossein Salami

Another key military leader killed by Israel is Hossein Salami, who served as the commander-in-chief of the IRGC.

Born in 1960, Salami joined the IRGC during the Iran-Iraq War in 1980. He served as deputy director of operations for the IRGC Joint Staff from 1997 to 2006, according to Iranian media. From 2006 to 2009, Salami served as the commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force, later on serving as the deputy commander of the IRGC General Staff till 2019. In April 2019, he assumed the position of the IRGC commander.



The large-scale assault by Israel began in the early hours of Friday, killing 104 people and injuring nearly 380 others

Gholam Ali Rashid

Maj. Gen. Gholam Ali Rashid, commander of Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, has also been killed in Israeli attacks. During the 1980s war, he emerged as one of the key military officers, according to local media.

Rashid began his military career as the deputy for intelligence and operations of the IRGC in Dezful and served as the deputy chief of staff for 17 years, from 1999 to 2016.

Before his death, he was serving as the commander of the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters and played a significant role in the operational command of the armed forces.

Amir Ali Hajizadeh

Among the deceased military officers is Amir Ali Hajizadeh, who served as the commander of the IRGC Aerospace Forces.

Instrumental in Iran's missile revolution, he joined the IRGC's Aerospace Division after the 1980s war.

Anadolu Agency

INDIA

One dead as landslide hits walkway to Kedarnath

Rudraprayag, Uttarakhand - One person was killed and two others sustained injuries after a landslide struck a walkway to Kedarnath near Jangalchatti in Uttarakhand's Rudraprayag district, prompting authorities to suspend the Kedarnath Yatra from Sonprayag until further notice.

According to a statement from the Rudraprayag Police, the landslide was triggered by continuous heavy rainfall, which caused large amounts of debris and stones to fall onto the trekking route, blocking and damaging the walkway to Kedarnath Dham.

Officials further noted that a yellow alert has been issued for the region, predicting continuous rainfall throughout the week and as a precaution and in view of the safety of the devotees, the footpath to the Kedarnath Dham from Sonprayag has been suspended.

Jangalchatti. According to the information received so far, one person has died and 2 people have been injured due to debris falling in the ravine," the statement from the Rudraprayag Police read.

"According to the weather forecast, a yellow alert for rain has been issued for the entire week. Due to the obstruction of the road in Jangalchatti and many places on the entire footpath which are landslide-affected areas, as a precaution and in view of the safety of the devotees, the footpath to Kedarnath Dham has been suspended from Sonprayag till further orders.

Only in the Jangalchatti area, passengers stranded in the landslide affected area are being sent down under police protection. The district police appeals to the pilgrims coming to Shri Kedarnath Dham to stay safe wherever they are and stay in hotels, etc., at nearby places," it further added.

According to a statement from the Rudraprayag Police, the landslide was triggered by continuous heavy rainfall, which caused large amounts of debris and stones to fall onto the trekking route

The Rudraprayag Police have also urged all devotees en route to Kedarnath Dham to stay put at nearby hotels and safe accommodations.

They also appealed to those planning the Chardham Yatra to monitor the weather forecasts and travel advisories before making their journey.

"The footpath was blocked due to debris falling in the ravine near Jangalchatti. The footpath to Kedarnath Dham has been suspended from Sonprayag till further orders. According to the information received some time ago, the footpath to Kedarnath Dham has been partially blocked due to debris falling in the ravine due to continuous heavy rain near

The Char Dham Yatra 2025 officially began on April 30 with the opening of the Gangotri and Yamunotri Dham on Akshaya Tritiya amid Vedic chants and rituals. The doors of Kedarnath Dham were opened on May 2, and those of Badrinath on May 4.

One of the most revered temples in the country, dedicated to the worship of Lord Shiva, Kedarnath draws countless devotees and visitors from across the country.

The high-altitude shrines remain shut for six months every year, opening in summer (April or May) and closing at the onset of winter (October or November).

ANI

Helicopter crash in Uttarakhand kills 7

New Delhi/Kolkata - A helicopter ferrying Hindu pilgrims from a shrine crashed on Sunday in the northern state of Uttarakhand, killing all seven on board including the pilot, local media reported.

"Very sad news has been received about a helicopter crash in Rudraprayag district," state Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said in a post on X.

He added that the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), local officials and rescue teams had started relief operations.

The helicopter took off around 5:20am local time (2350 GMT) and crashed soon during its 10-minute journey. Officials said the crash was followed by a fire which badly burnt the bodies.

The Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority said the helicopter had been traveling from Shri Kedarnath Dham to Guptkashi and added that one of the passengers was a 2-year-old girl. It dispatched a team to the crash site to investigate the reason behind the crash.

Locals who had gone to collect fodder for their cattle spotted the helicopter debris and



Rescue operation underway after a helicopter carrying seven people on board, on its way to Guptkashi, crashed near Gaurikund, in Rudraprayag on Sunday (ANI)

alerted the authorities, news magazine The Week reported.

District tourism official Rahul Chaubey told media it was very likely that the accident was caused due to bad weather.

The dead were Indians from the states of Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Helicopter safety in Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand is a popular tourist destination with its mountains and greenery. It is also a major pilgrimage destination for Hindus with several temples and holy sites. Kedarnath is one of the four most sacred Hindu temple shrines and is flocked by pilgrims during summer.

A cottage industry has emerged to fly wealthy pilgrims to Himalayan shrines while avoiding arduous trekking. The helicopter that crashed on Sunday belonged to a private firm called Aryan Aviation.

Helicopters are a convenient way to commute in the difficult terrain, but high-altitude flying and unpredictable weather make cause mishaps. In May, a helicopter on the way to Gangotri Dham in the state had crashed, killing six. Another helicopter had to make an emergency landing in June, where the pilot sustained injuries.

Air India Express develops snag

Meanwhile, Air India Express, a subsidiary of Air India, on Sunday confirmed that its flight from Kolkata to Uttar Pradesh's Hindon was delayed on Sunday after the aircraft developed a 'snag'.

An Air India Express spokesperson told ANI: "Our Kolkata-Hindon flight operated, with a delay, due to a snag on the originally assigned aircraft. Guests were offered complimentary rescheduling or cancellation with a full refund. We regret the inconvenience."

DW/ANI

British Navy's fighter jet makes emergency landing in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala - A United Kingdom (UK) Navy F-35 fighter jet made an emergency landing at Thiruvananthapuram International Airport on Saturday evening due to low fuel, according to sources.

The aircraft, which is part of the British Carrier Strike Group's aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales, is currently stationed at the airport.

Air Force officials have termed the emergency landing a routine diversion, stating it was fully aware of the situation, provided all necessary assistance, and is coordinating with relevant agencies. "This is a normal occurrence of diversion by an F-35. The IAF was fully aware and facilitated the aircraft for flight safety reasons. All assistance is being provided, and the IAF is coordinating with all relevant agencies," the IAF said in their statement.



A F-35 fighter jet of the UK Navy is seen at Thiruvananthapuram International Airport on Sunday (ANI)

More details about the incident are awaited.

The Indian Navy and the United Kingdom's Carrier Strike Group (UK CSG25) conducted a joint naval drill, commonly known as a Passage Exercise (PASSEX), in the western Arabian Sea earlier this week.

This marked the UK Strike Group's 'first major engagement' after entering the Indo-Pacific region.

"UK CSG25 joined the Indian Navy for an exercise in the western Arabian Sea," read a post from the UK Carrier Strike Group.

The Indian Navy had earlier stated: "INS Tabar, along with a submarine and P-8I aircraft of the Indian Navy, participated in a Passage Exercise in the North Arabian Sea on 09 and 10 June 2025 with HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Richmond from the UK Carrier Strike Group."

The two-day exercise included various naval activities such as coordinated anti-submarine operations, tactical manoeuvres, unified control of helicopters, and professional exchanges between naval officers.

"The multi-faceted naval exercise included unified control of integral helicopters, tactical manoeuvres, coordinated anti-submarine ops and professional exchange of officers," the statement read.

"The joint exercise underscores the deepening cooperation between the two navies and showcases shared commitment to maritime security and robust bilateral ties," the Navy added in its statement.

ANI

2 killed after bridge collapses into river near Pune

Pune, Maharashtra - At least two people died as an old iron bridge over the Indrayani river in Maharashtra's Pune district collapsed on Sunday afternoon, sweeping several people into the water and triggering a major rescue operation, authorities said.

Thirty-two people have been injured in the incident, with six reported to be in serious condition and currently undergoing treatment at a hospital, said Maharashtra chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said.

According to authorities, 10 to 15 people may be trapped in the debris of the bridge collapse that took place under the jurisdiction of Pimpri-Chinchwad Police station.

So far, five to six individuals have been rescued and rescue efforts are ongoing, with emergency teams deployed at the site.

Heavy rains had raised water levels. Local police, fire brigade, and NDRF teams rushed to the site and launched a rescue operation.

Further details are awaited, according to Pimpri-Chinchwad Police.

Fadnavis said: "There has been an incident of bridge collapse in Maval. I have spoken to the Divisional Commissioner, Tehsildar and Police Commissioner. Some people have been injured and taken to the hospital. Some people are also trapped. The NDRF team is reaching there.

"It is possible that some people have been swept away. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to talk about this now. I will give information about this only after getting complete information. Right now, the administration is trying its best to provide relief to the people."

The incident comes amid an orange alert by the MeT department for Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad, with heavy to very heavy rains expected in the ghat regions. The area had received heavy rains in the last two days.

Agencies

PM Modi begins three-nation visit to Cyprus, Canada, Croatia

New Delhi - Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday morning departed from New Delhi for Cyprus, marking the beginning of his three-nation diplomatic visit to Cyprus, Canada, and Croatia

The tour aims to deepen India's ties with these countries in areas such as trade, investment, technology, and security, and to attend the G7 Summit in Canada.

Ahead of his departure, Modi issued a statement outlining the purpose and key highlights of his tour. "Today, I will embark on a three-nation tour to the Republic of Cyprus, Canada and Croatia," Modi's departure statement read.

During the first leg of his visit, Modi will be in Cyprus on June 15-16. He is visiting the Mediterranean nation at the invitation of President Nikos Christodoulides.

"Cyprus is a close friend and an important partner in the Mediterranean region and the EU. The visit provides an opportunity to build upon the historical bonds and expand our ties in the areas of trade, investment, security, technology and promote people-to-people exchanges," the statement added.

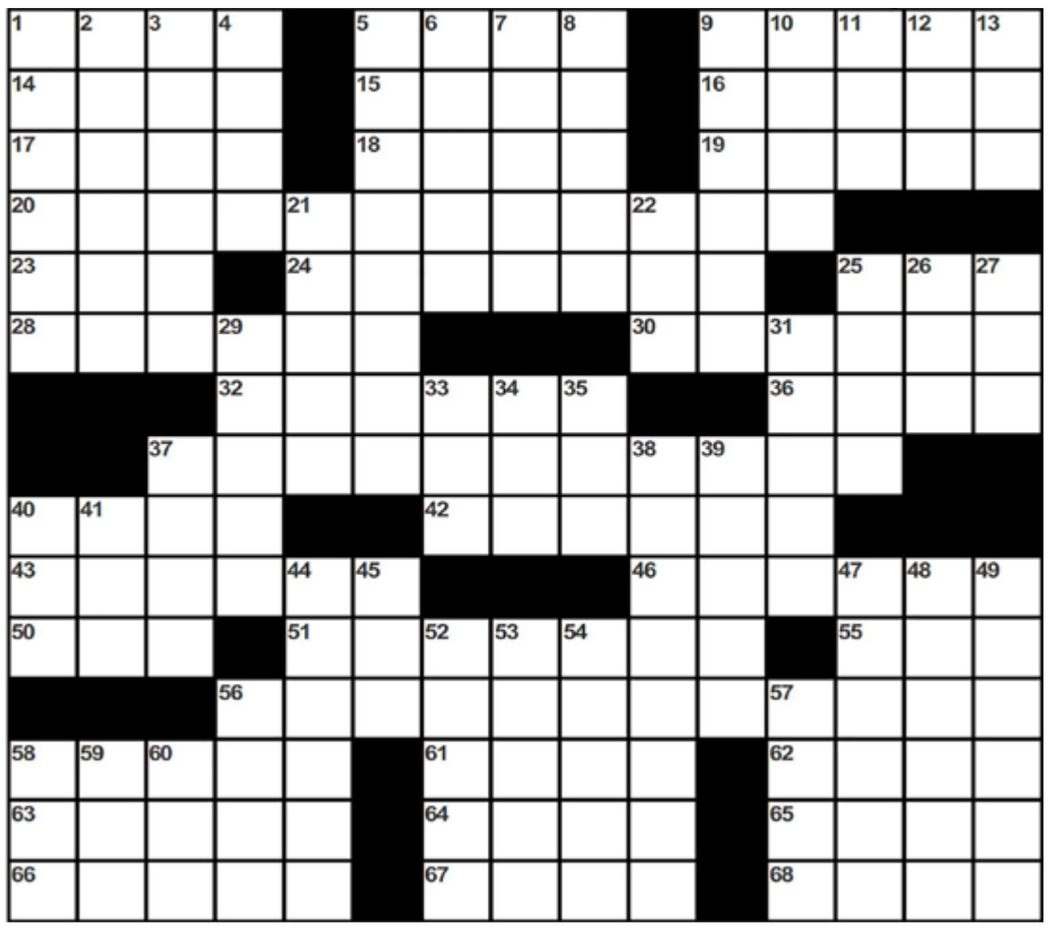
Following his visit to Cyprus, the PM will travel to Kananaskis, Canada, to attend the G7 Summit on June 16-17. He has been invited by Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney. This will be Modi's sixth consecutive participation in the G7 Summit.

"The Summit will provide space for exchange of views on pressing global issues and the priorities of the Global South. I also look forward to engaging with leaders from partner countries," he said.

On June 18, Modi will visit Croatia, where he will meet President Zoran Milanovic and Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic. This will be the first-ever visit to Croatia by an Indian Prime Minister.

ANI

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

I) Pine oozings
5) Lip care
9) Messing of TV
14) Part of an angler's arsenal
15) "Aida" air
16) Hunter with a belt of stars
17) Dumbbell metal
18) Jazz jobs
19) Foolish fellow
20) First-class rushing?
23) One of the four "Forest Cantons"
24) Telephone book entry
25) Rustic dads
28) Peppermint_ (candy purchase)
30) Part of a biblical plague
32) Infamous FBI sting
36) Unpleasant to the touch
37) Violent driver's part of the highway?

THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE

40) Jab in the ribs
42) Olympic skier McKinney
43) Norwegians' neighbors
46) Alphabetized
50)_ and outs
51) Pontiac muscle car
55) D.C. to NYC dir
56) Thirty-first president's legacy, to some?
58) Mount Moses climbed
61) "Permit Me Voyage" author James
62) Research paper abbr.
63) Grows together, like a fracture
64) Tehran's nation
65) It's often changed on the road
66) Smal l fjord
67) _ Linda, Calif.
68) Like this puzzle?

DOWN

I) Error
2) Winged goddess of the dawn
3) Toast to one's health
4) Email condition, sometimes
5) Furthest from formfitting
6) Sign of the spring equinox
7) It might be ambient
8) Kenyan native
9) Words before "It's still early"
10) Huron's neighbor
11) Garbage container
12) He played Opie
13) Word with "way" or "where"
21) Suspect's explanation
22) Longtime NBC show, initially
25) Purple-brown
26) Inquire
27) Dirty domicile
29) Made to pay a levy
31) Cuban product
33) Old PC display
34) Small battery
35) "That tastes good!"
37) _ out a living (gets by)
38) Rose Bowl city
39) Coffee attribute
40) Letters of tires
41) Have sole possession of
44) Bigheaded person
45) Sign of a Broadway hit
4 7) It may have a string attached
48) It turns over before it runs
49) Transferred
52) Be of service
53) Opposite of blanco
54) Nighttime vision
56) Source of some crime
57) Kunis of TV and film
58) Kind of lift or jump
59) Where there was no room
60) Zero or zip

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

A recent confrontation with someone close to you could have serious emotional fallout and lead you to question their loyalty. Take a walk or get some exercise to clear your head, and think about meditation or yoga to clear your mind and emotions so you can deal with this situation calmly. After all, a heart-to-heart talk can't help if you go into it feeling confused, cloudy, or upset.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

If you kept your emotions in a bank, you might be feeling just a touch overdrawn right now. Remember that while it's always nice to feel nostalgic, you're really not helping yourself by staying stuck in the past. In fact, you may be missing out on a wonderful opportunity by not being fully present. Not only is the present moment pretty awesome, but your future could be bright indeed if you can escape your memories.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Your restless mood pushes you to explore different paths and become acquainted with unusual folks you'd normally consider unsuitable. Actually, these seemingly different types could turn out to have far more in common with you than you think, especially once you move past the superficial differences and get to the heart of the matter. Throw out those outdated checklists and give these people an audition!

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Understanding almost always leads to compassion, especially when it comes to a loved one. It's not just a matter of trying to see things from their point of view. Instead, you need to drop all rigid notions of who's right and who's wrong and see their emotional, mental, and spiritual needs. If you try to understand someone deeply, you may find that your anger with them has fled.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Curb your appetite for attention and you may learn something extremely important about someone's agenda that had previously eluded you. It's amazing what you can discover when you listen carefully to other people! You know you deserve center stage, but it's just not possible to have it all the time, nor is it really desirable, as you can see when you think about it for a little while.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Break free from the pack and capture something (or someone) that is your heart's desire. Give it all you've got. Holding back comes across as hesitation or weakness and just confuses matters. A rare opportunity or vital turning point is waiting for you, so make sure you don't get caught up in anyone else's drama. Stick up for yourself and go for what's yours.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You have a chance to really change some financial agreement you don't like thanks to some particularly helpful financial energy. This is doubly true when it comes to negotiations or other social events. When you bring the full force of your grace and charm, things should go exceptionally well. Use your potent powers of persuasion to overcome any resistance you meet.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Some bright social energy is zipping through your life right now, giving you an extra dose of sex appeal. Not only does this enhance all first impressions but it also gives you the ability to think quickly on your feet. Your sparkling repartee is the envy of all. This may be a welcome change after a brief period of self-doubt. One of the biggest lessons you need to learn is that sexiness has everything to do with your mind and not nearly as much with your skin.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Do you feel like your home life is in need of some serious transformation? It's no wonder, with the mutable energy coursing through your life right now. You may decide a relationship needs a serious overhaul or, if you're single, you may radically rethink your approach to this whole romance thing. An obstacle may emerge during all this, but if you learn to roll with it, it should be a molehill instead of a mountain.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

You can be quite an attention grabber with your top-notch ideas, and right now, you're definitely on a roll. Spread the word and let people know exactly what kind of plans you've got for your company, family, or community. Your charm is at a peak, and you can convince even the most serious doubter. Gather your allies around you, because one of them makes a crucial connection on your behalf at just the right moment.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

A last-minute reprieve arrives, possibly in the form of a financial rescue or a deadline that suddenly gets pushed back. This gives you a way out of a confining situation, but it also makes you realize that it's time to make some major changes so you don't have to go through this again. Should you commit to something new? Your mental energy is pushing you to go for it.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You make faster progress today by hitching your wagon to a team rather than plodding along on your own. You may get plenty done alone, but you need a more social dynamic to really get ahead. Your group can help you hone a whole new set of skills that might impress the movers and shakers you thought were beyond you. You should discover that with enough effort and ambition, practically nothing is really beyond you.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. In which satirical comedy British television series was Captain Fantastic a recurring feature?

A. Twice a Fortnight (1967)
B. Q... (1969-82)
C. The Complete and Utter History of Britain (1969)
D. Do Not Adjust Your Set (1967-69)

02. Clusterball is a game involving aircraft, balls, magnetic ramps and a collection point, and is played on what?

A. A pond
B. An icefield
C. A screen
D. A tabletop

03. Developments, initially by researchers in the University of Manchester, in creating a graphene sieve are aimed at doing what?

A. Trapping carbon dioxide
B. Filtering and de-salinating water
C. Breaking apart methane molecules
D. Filtering sewage

Answers: 1. D 2. C 3. B

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

C	R	E	G
A	I	L	O
C	U	E	A
H	A	T	R

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

SOLUTION

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

MARK OF GREATNESS

Markram's match-winning century against the Aussies earns him place in South African folklore

London, England - South Africa's batting hero Aiden Markram has taken longer than expected to deliver on his promise, but a match-winning century against Australia in the World Test Championship final is being hailed as the biggest in the country's cricketing history.

The 30-year-old captained South Africa to success at the U-19 World Cup a decade ago but his senior career had only seen occasional glimpses of immense potential.

However, his 136 for South Africa in the second innings at Lord's took the country to their first major cricketing triumph after decades of failure and ensured Markram a place in South African sporting folklore.

Markram made his test debut at age 22, heartbreakingly run out on 97, and has since scored eight centuries and 13 fifties. But his average of 36.50 has been below expectations.

He came into the WTC final without a century in his last 16 test knocks and failed to get on the board in the first innings.

But when Markram returned to the crease on Friday, it was with an air of authority, albeit playing with circumspection and making use of the sudden change in conditions after two days of dominance by the bowlers.

"I haven't scored more important runs. It's weird how things worked out after a duck in the first innings. You need a bit of luck, spending time in the middle and finding runs. I'm glad things worked out," he told reporters as South Africa celebrated on Saturday.



South Africa's Aiden Markram celebrates his century against Australia in the World Test Championship final

> *I haven't scored more important runs. It's weird how things worked out after a duck in the first innings. You need a bit of luck, spending time in the middle and finding runs*
>
> **AIDEN MARKRAM**

His plan in the second innings was to absorb the pressure but maximise scoring off loose balls, he added.

There was also an early crisis to navigate when captain Temba Bavuma struggled with a hamstring strain as the pair began to put together what turned out to be a match-winning partnership.

But Markram insisted Bavuma stay on despite it slowing down the accumulation of runs.

"Aiden is unbelievable. People have questioned his place, but he has character. He played in true Aiden fashion," said Bavuma, whose 66-run contribution was also a factor.

Markram looked to be in tears after reaching three figures late on Friday. "Lord's is the place every test cricketer wants to play," he explained.

"To play a final here is incredibly special. It's one of the most special days."

Markram said he hoped the talk of chokers had been permanently put to bed.

"It would be great to not have to hear it again, that's for sure," he said. "In terms of it motivating you, I mean, there's always going to be external things that can motivate you, but it's not your sole purpose for playing. To have got the job done and to literally have got the job done and to get rid of that is quite a big thing for this team."

Australia captain Pat Cummins was gracious in his assessment of Markram's performance and South Africa overall after the frequent debates about their route to the final.

"A few of us have played alongside him as well in IPL and [he's] very well respected," he said. "He's a good man, Aidan. Unfortunately for us, he kind of made it look pretty easy out there and just built a big innings. We threw a fair bit at him, but [he] had an answer for everything."

"Everyone has a slightly different route to make the final, but they absolutely deserved to make the final and showed why I think they're very deserving champions."

I had sleepless nights but it gets better every day, says Sinner after French Open heartbreak

Halle, Germany - World number one Jannik Sinner wants to use the Halle Open as a chance to bounce back from sleepless nights after his agonising loss to rival Carlos Alcaraz in the French Open final this month.

In a thrilling showdown, Sinner took the first two sets and had three match points in the fourth set, but Spaniard Alcaraz persevered to grind out a 4-6 6-7(4) 6-4 7-6(3) 7-6(10-2) win in five hours and 29 minutes - the longest final at Roland Garros.

Asked if he had thought about the championship points he failed to convert, Sinner told reporters on Saturday: "Often. It happens. I don't know how it will look in the future.

"I think that it is not the most important thing, but I nevertheless try to forget the negative things and see what I can do here" in Halle.

"I think that for me to play another tournament is positive, because every match is a new beginning, and I must be mentally ready to give my all on the court. Therefore, it is great I can be here in Halle. Yes, I had already a few sleepless nights, but I think every day it gets better."



Jannik Sinner

The 23-year-old Italian is the reigning champion at Halle and will seek to defend his crown at the tournament, which starts on Monday, as he gears up for Wimbledon, which will be held from June 30 to July 13 at the All England Lawn Tennis Club.

"The first practice session was OK. I hadn't played since Paris, so my general feelings on the court were not so perfect," Sinner said.

"I think a good grass-court player can move well. The ball can bounce a bit funny because of the grass, and you have to serve intelligently.

"But in general, it is a surface on which I took a step forward last year and we will see how it goes this year."

Mertens triumphs in Den Bosch for second WTA Tour title of the year

's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands - Belgian third seed Elise Mertens beat Elena-Gabriela Ruse 6-3 7-6(4) in the final of the Libema Open in Den Bosch on Sunday to claim her second WTA Tour title of the year, adding to her victory in the Singapore Tennis Open in February.

The win earned Mertens her tenth WTA singles title and first on grass, though she has won the Wimbledon women's doubles title in 2021, while also extending her winning head-to-head record against Ruse to 4-0.

"It's been an incredible week," said Mertens, who had to dig deep to save 11 match points and overcome two-time winner Ekaterina Alexandrova in Saturday's semi-final.

"I mean, yesterday I had 11 match points against me. I managed to still win that match. It's tennis, anything can happen. So I'm very proud that I took that chance yesterday and today."

Mertens trailed 3-1 in the first set after being put under early pressure by the Romanian qualifier.



Elise Mertens celebrates with the trophy after winning the Libema Open in Den Bosch on Sunday

The Belgian recovered from her shaky start and saved two break points to secure a crucial hold in the fifth game, which turned the tide of the contest.

The set was brought back on serve at 3-3 after Ruse double-faulted twice, and Mertens quickly reeled off three more games to clinch the opener.

Burns clings to lead at US Open; Scott, Spaun in hot pursuit

Oakmont, US - Sam Burns moved closer to a major breakthrough as he held a one-shot lead over Australian Adam Scott, who turned back the clock to enter the mix, and J.J. Spaun after the third round of the U.S. Open on Saturday at Oakmont Country Club.

Burns and Spaun took turns trading or sharing the lead for much of the day but it was the former who finished in front with a one-under-par 69 that brought him to four under on the week at the major that is considered golf's toughest test.

A five-time winner on the PGA Tour who lost in a playoff last week in Canada, Burns was inconsistent off the tee but managed to lean on other aspects of his game to move into the driver's seat at Oakmont.

"When I got out of position I feel like I did a good job of getting myself back in the fairway, having a wedge or short iron in my hand and giving myself a chance for par," said Burns.

"I was able to convert some of those and kind of kept the momentum going. So that was kind of key to the round today."



Sam Burns

Burns dropped into a three-way share of the lead with Spaun and Scott after missing a six-foot par putt at 16 but never wavered and delivered a bounce-back birdie at 17 after stuffing his approach seven inches from the hole for a tap-in birdie.

Not to be outdone, playing partner Spaun birdied the same hole from 13 feet to end his string of 12 consecutive pars and grab a share of the lead before an errant tee shot at the last led to a closing bogey for a 69.

"I'm just happy I'm still within shouting distance going into tomorrow," said Spaun.

Scott, the 2013 Masters champion who is playing his 96th consecutive major, missed several birdie putts but converted three on the back nine for 67, equalling the low round of the day and will play in Sunday's final pairing with Burns.

For Scott, whose lone major came at the 2013 Masters, a win on Sunday would set the record for longest time between a player winning his first and second majors, something that is not lost on the 44-year-old Australian.

"Everyone out here has got their journey, you know. Putting ourselves in these positions doesn't just happen by fluke. It's not easy to do it," said Scott.

World number 14 Viktor Hovland (70) was alone in fourth place and three shots off the pace.

LIV Golf's Carlos Ortiz was enjoying a rather stress-free trip around the notoriously treacherous Oakmont layout until a closing bogey, but still signed for a 67 that left him at even par on the week and alone in fifth place.

GOALLESS BUT GRIPPING



Lionel Messi of Inter Miami in action against Al Ahly in the Club World Cup opener on Saturday

Messi falls just short in Club World Cup opener against Egypt's Al Ahly

Miami, US - Lionel Messi drew vast crowds and showed flashes of his brilliance when his Inter Miami side were held to a goalless draw by African giants Al Ahly as the revamped Club World Cup got off to a festive start on Saturday.

Fans showed up en masse for the Group A clash at the Hard Rock Stadium, home to the Miami Dolphins, but Messi could not fully deliver, his best chance coming through a last-second attempt that was deflected onto the crossbar.

Inter Miami next face FC Porto on Thursday in Atlanta while Al Ahly, who benefited from raucous, massive support, will take on Palmeiras in New York, where more of their fans are expected to turn up.

No incidents were reported at the game after around 1,000 protesters gathered in the morning near US President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate, about 70 miles (110 km) north of Miami, waving placards and chanting slogans as part of coordinated nationwide "No Kings" demonstrations.

In Miami, 60,927 fans almost filled the 65,000-capacity stadium for Inter Miami's clash with Al Ahly, dismissing, at least on the night, concerns about the attractiveness of the tournament featuring 32 teams for the first time, a year before the World Cup in the U.S.

Inter Miami, whose home attendances average 20,663 in their 21,550-seat Chase Stadium, have been a major road draw in 2025, regularly attracting record crowds across the country since Messi's arrival in 2023.

Adan De La Rosa travelled from Mexico just to see Messi play. "There's a lot of excitement to see Messi, it's the same for everyone," he said.

Al Ahly, backed by dozens of thousands of fans, got off to a strong start but wasted two early chances and Oscar Ustari parried away Trezeguet's poorly taken penalty kick after Zizo was fouled in the box by Telasco Segovia.

Messi threatened at times after spending some time on the ground after being hit on the knee, but Miami could feel lucky not to be behind at halftime.

Miami, however, stepped up a gear after the break, and Messi came close when his nicely curled 25-metre free kick kissed the post and hit the side netting.

With six minutes left, the World Cup winner scooped a perfect cross for Fafa Picault, whose header was tipped over the bar by Mohamed Elshenawy.

He came an inch close in the dying second when his curled strike from outside the box was tipped onto the bar by Elshenawy.

Inter's Iranian player Taremi stranded in his home country

Miami, US - Inter Milan forward Mehdi Taremi has been left stranded in Iran after failing to get a flight out of the country amid its conflict with Israel, a club source said, with Italian media reporting the 32-year-old will miss the Club World Cup.

Mehdi Taremi

Iranian airspace was closed after Israel launched attacks on targets in Iran on Friday.

Taremi played in Iran's 3-0 win over North Korea in a 2026 World Cup qualifier at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran last week.

Inter begin their Club World Cup campaign on Tuesday, taking on Mexico's Monterrey followed by games against Urawa Red Diamonds and River Plate.

'I hope Bayern can go all the way'

Cincinnati, US - Franck Ribery was among the many football lovers who eagerly counted down the hours until the FIFA Club World Cup 2025 kicked off on Saturday evening. One of France's finest footballing talents, the former attacker—capped 81 times by his country—was thrilled that the wait was finally over, as the 32-team club football extravaganza got underway.

Action-packed group-stage matches will come thick and fast, meaning that the former flanker will not have long to wait before seeing his beloved Bayern Münich in action. The Bundesliga heavyweights are set to open their campaign against Auckland City at Cincinnati's TQL Stadium. Drawn in a formidable-looking Group C, the Bavarians will then pit their wits against Argentina's Boca Juniors before facing off against Portuguese powerhouses Benfica.

"I think it's a tough group," Ribery told FIFA. "Bayern are probably the favourites, but it's a bit like the [UEFA] Champions League in that there's no such thing as an easy match. If you're not fully focused and go into any game thinking it'll be a walk in the park, you're asking for trouble."



Franck Ribery won nine Bundesliga titles, six German Cups and a Champions League title with Bayern Munich

It will come as no surprise that Ribery will be one of Bayern's chief cheerleaders at the event. Although his glittering career featured notable spells at Metz, Fiorentina and Olympique de Marseille, amongst others, the most glorious chapter of the former French international's journey was undoubtedly written at the German club.

He served the Bavarian outfit with distinction for 12 years, chalking up over 400 appearances and giving every last ounce in his quest for silverware. The pint-sized ace won it all, with his trophy haul including nine Bundesliga titles, six German Cups and the Champions League crown in 2013.

> *If you're not fully focused and go into any game thinking it'll be a walk in the park, you're asking for trouble*
>
> **FRANCK RIBERY**

The icing on Ribery's cake came on the global stage with the triumph secured in the tournament now known as the FIFA Intercontinental Cup in an unforgettable campaign on Moroccan soil. "I'll never forget 2013. It was the best year of my life," confided the ex-Bayern stalwart. "We had a blast in Marrakech. We won the trophy [courtesy of a 2-0 win in the final against Morocco's Raja Casablanca], and I was named player of the tournament. That meant a lot to me."

Some 12 years on, an entirely different prospect awaits the serial silverware snarers in the shape of the Club World Cup that Ribery would have relished the opportunity to have graced in his playing days.



Lionel Messi

Messi's influence on show in opener

Miami, US - Although he did not score, Lionel Messi again proved his worth with Inter Miami, showing some brilliance and avoiding injury as they got off to a decent start in the Club World Cup with a goalless draw against African giants Al Ahly from Egypt on Saturday.

Messi draws massive crowds to stadiums, and attendance will be a key measure of the revamped Club World Cup's success or failure. On Saturday, almost 61,000 fans filled the Hard Rock Stadium, making for a festive atmosphere and giving the tournament a satisfying start.

Javier Mascherano, Inter Miami coach said: "We were very nervous and anxious in the first half, which is normal given the context. In the second half, we were more patient. We played all over the pitch, created chances and could have scored to win the game. But it's a 90-minute match, and let's not forget we struggled in that first half.

"It's clear that when we find Leo (Messi) in the right positions and give him good passes, we have more options and chances. In the first half, we kept trying to find him with the first ball, but they were ready for us.

"When we were more patient, we were able to find Leo. And we all know what he can do when he finds space."

Al Ahly coach Jose Riveiro said they were the better team in the first half. "It was a very intense game, with nervousness and mistakes from both sides, but we controlled the scenario better in the first half, creating chances. But it's a pity we did not convert one of them.

"In the second half, Miami were getting better and after 60, 70 minutes it could have gone in either direction. We have to make sure next game we are a little bit better.

"We first made sure Messi was cut off from his providers, but then he appeared in those set pieces and second actions after set pieces."

Club football needs a global competition, says Infantino

Miami, US - The inaugural 32-team FIFA Club World Cup will inspire young people around the world, spark investment in club football and create more opportunities for players and clubs around the world, FIFA President Gianni Infantino has said in an interview with DAZN.

"I was coming from a context in Europe, where you have all these top clubs, you have great competitions, where you have players from all over the world, but as a football fan, (other non-European) clubs were never given a real stage to perform," the Infantino said, in relation to the thought process behind the FIFA Club World Cup, and the need for FIFA to provide that opportunity.

"In order to develop club football, which is 80 per cent of the football all over the world, we need to have global competition to give opportunities to all these clubs who are investing a lot in creating, developing talent."



Gianni Infantino

Although football is the number one sport in the world, Infantino said that the elite game is concentrated in very few clubs in very few countries. "What we want to achieve is that leads to globalised football, to make it truly, truly global, because when you scratch the surface. We say it's the number one sport in the world, and it is. But then the elite is very concentrated in very few clubs, in very few countries, and we want to give hope, opportunities to Mamelodi Sundowns from South Africa, Ulsan from Korea, Auckland City," he said.

Such a waste of time: Red Bull's Verstappen fed up with ban talks

Montreal, Canada - Max Verstappen showed his irritation with questions about penalty points and race bans after qualifying on the front row for Sunday's Canadian Grand Prix alongside old foe George Russell.

Mercedes' Russell took pole position for the second year in a row with Red Bull's Verstappen, who is chasing a fourth successive Canadian victory, second fastest.

The race will be the first since the Formula One rivals collided in Spain, an incident that left Verstappen one penalty point away from a mandatory ban.

Asked about "the penalty points thing" at a post-qualifying press conference, Verstappen - who is third in the championship with Russell fourth - did not hold back.

"I don't need to hear it again. It's really pissing me off. I mean, you were speaking about it on Thursday. It's such a waste of time. It's very childish," he said.

"So, that's why I also don't want to say too much because it's really annoying, this world that we live in."

Verstappen acknowledged after Spain that he made a mistake in driving into Russell, an incident stemming from frustration at having to hand back a place, but the topic has followed him to Canada.

With the pair lining up alongside each other, the paddock was full of discussion about what might happen on the short run down to the first corner in Sunday's race.

The pair could never be described as good friends, the bad blood between them laid bare at last year's Abu Dhabi season-ender when they publicly traded accusations of bullying and lying.

Russell joked on Saturday that he had fewer penalty points on his super-licence, and therefore more room to play with, but seriously did not expect any real advantage.

"I don't think any driver goes out looking to crash into somebody and get penalty points on your licence. Max is one of the best drivers," he said.

"There's no reason for him to race any differently, and I'm not sitting here thinking he's going to give us more room. If anything, probably the opposite to try and prove a point.

"Ultimately, we're all here to win. You're not going to do something that's going to jeopardise yourself from the race. It's a busy season as well. If you get a race ban, you get a race ban and spend some time at home."



Max Verstappen

MISSED OPPORTUNITY

Al Ahly players disappointed after goalless draw against Inter Miami



Inter Miami goalkeeper Oscar Ustari denies Al Ahly's Trézéguet from the penalty spot

Miami, US - Having had the honour of opening the first edition of the FIFA Club World Cup, African giants Al Ahly FC have reflected on a scoreless draw against Inter Miami that leaves them chasing a win next up against SE Palmeiras on 19 June.

At Miami's Hard Rock Stadium, both sides carved out plenty of goalscoring opportunities in what was, at times, an end-to-end affair. The Cairo-based outfit, who had the better of things in the first half, were awarded a penalty shortly before the break; however, Trezeguet's spot kick was saved and the hosts were spared a half-time deficit.

After the resumption, the tables turned, with the MLS side generating the better chances. However, everything they threw at Mohamed El Shenawy, the veteran keeper proved more than capable of stopping.

Palestinian striker Wessam Abou Ali, who had a goal ruled out for offside, expressed his disappointment with the result, claiming that Al Ahly's missed chances in the first half cost them a shot at bagging maximum points.

"I'm really disappointed we didn't take three points from the match. With all due respect to Inter Miami, who have a lot of great players, we could have scored three or four goals in the first half. Unfortunately, we didn't take our chances to get the win.

"Our fans were amazing," he added. "This is a really big club and with such a large number of fans here to support Al Ahly, that really gave us a boost during the match, which we could have won."

"As for our next match, against Palmeiras, we know they are going to be tough. We only took one point away today, but we wanted to get all three. We're going to work hard to prepare, and hopefully luck will be on our side in our next games."

New head coach, Jose Riveiro, taking charge of his first competitive match with the team, also rued the chances his team missed in the first half. Explaining their drop in performance after the break, he said, "We made some mistakes and missed some good chances today. If we'd been able to score some of them, the game would have been totally different."

"We were in control in the first half, but our performance dipped a bit in the second, when we had some issues in transition and misplaced a few passes. However, there are plenty of positives to take away from the match, as well as a few areas we know we can improve."

"This was my first official match in charge of the side, and obviously it's very different to playing in Egypt. I'm very happy to be here, representing Al Ahly. Hopefully, things will go our way in our next match."

One of the stars for the CAF outfit was veteran goalkeeper El Shenawy, who argued that it was a well-earned point in trying conditions.

Al Ahly's Ashour to miss rest of Club World Cup with broken collarbone

Miami, US - Al Ahly midfielder Emam Ashour will miss the remainder of the 2025 Club World Cup after scans confirmed he had suffered a broken collarbone, the Egyptian club announced on Sunday.

Ashour left the opening match of the revamped competition against Inter Miami, which ended in a goalless draw, in tears after injuring his shoulder early in the match.



Al Ahly's Emam Ashour suffered a broken collarbone and was substituted in the 14th minute of their match against Inter Miami

"Medical examinations on Emam Ashour in a Miami hospital showed he sustained a broken collarbone, and he will miss the remaining matches in the Club World Cup," Al Ahly doctor Ahmed Gaballah said via the club's account on X.

Ashour, who had previously suffered a serious shoulder injury while playing for the Egyptian national team in 2024, initially fell early in the game and received treatment on the sidelines before returning briefly and missing a one-on-one chance.

However, the 27-year-old Egyptian Premier League top scorer was unable to continue and asked to be substituted in the 14th minute, being replaced by Ahmed Sayed (Zizo).

CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED

CA with 15 yrs experience in Oman, familiar with ERP, financial management, IFRSs, taxation, budgeting, fund management and audits, looking for suitable placement. Can join soon with D/L. Contact: 0096896543236 / omanca968@gmail.com

Hospitality professional with 30-plus years of experience in managing multi-unit restaurant operations. Excells in team leadership & driving profitability. Seeking opportunities in Q S R & dynamic organisations. Contact - 92810566 stephenreddy2018@gmail.com

MEP Design Engineer with experience in Design Softwares and Calculations. Available on own visa
Contact: 99506977

Indian male accountant, 9 years of experience in accounts & finance, looking for a suitable position. Contact - 94713034 rajithv999@gmail.com

WE ARE HIRING!

Project Manager – Building Construction

Seeking a skilled Project Manager to lead major building construction projects in Oman.

REQUIREMENTS:

- 10+ years' experience in building construction within Oman
- Successfully handled projects worth R.O. 10 million+
- B.E. in Civil Engineering from a reputed institution
- Strong leadership, planning & communication skills

Ready for a new challenge?

Email your CV, Cover Letter, and Experience Certificate to: **gmpositionmuscat@gmail.com.**



- Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
- Choose from a wide range of brands & models
- PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
- Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 | Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

أوربت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

عيادة فصول السنة للطب الهندي التقليدي
ALL SEASON AYURVEDA CLINIC

Zaher Building ,1st Floor, Flat 8A,
Al Khuwair Service Road ,near Al Zawawi
Mosque & Burger-king Tel:24475280,
GSM: 95371664 , 92504980 ,
Website:www.siddhayur.com

The most efficient and authentic Ayurvedic Treatment & Medicine, Yoga, Kalari, Panchakarma, Massage, Dhara etc... Rehabilitation, Beauty therpay & post Delivery Care



FOR RENT



- ❑ State of the Art warehouse and office in Misfah
- ❑ Centrally located with ease of access to Muscat - Nizwa Sohar

OFFICE
700 sq mts of office space, centralized air conditioning ready to use.

WAREHOUSE
- ❑ 3000++ pallets space available on monthly/ per pallet rental bases.
- ❑ loading/unloading bays, with state of the art racking and centrally air conditioning @21 degree



CONTACT NO: 9 3 8 9 3 5 9 6

BIRTHDAY WISHES



SMITHA VINOD
16 June

Happy birthday Amma and welcome to Oman in this beautiful summer
From : Vishal & Sarin

SEND YOURREQUEST FOR
Birthday/ Anniversary wishes to
wish@apexmedia.co.om
with your resident card copy (It's free of cost)

EUROSTAR



RAIL RENAISSANCE

NEW EUROSTAR SERVICES WILL WHISK PASSENGERS FROM THE UK TO CITIES IN GERMANY AND SWITZERLAND



Europe's rail renaissance is showing no signs of slowing as high-speed rail operator Eurostar reveals ambitious plans to expand its network.

The company says it will introduce direct train connections from London to Germany and Switzerland, in what it calls the dawn of a 'new golden age of international sustainable travel'.

The operator is also enhancing its existing offering by increasing services on popular routes.

Eurostar's proposed expansion includes establishing direct rail links between London St Pancras International and two key European destinations: Frankfurt in Germany and Geneva in Switzerland.

The company plans to invest approximately €2bn to acquire a substantial fleet of up to 50 new trains for the routes. These new services are expected to begin operating during the early 2030s and aim to rival air travel for the same trips.

And journey times make the rail alternative attractive. Passengers travelling between London and Frankfurt can expect to arrive in approximately five hours, while those heading to Geneva will make the journey in around five hours and 20 minutes.

Eurostar has not yet released details on intermediate stops and whether passengers will have the flexibility to get on and off at various points along the route.

The new services are particularly aimed at business travel, with Eurostar's Chief Executive, Gwendoline Cazenave, highlighting that the destinations are "big financial hubs".

Frankfurt and Geneva are also tourist hotspots, filled with culture, striking architecture and international events.

Dates for the launch remain approximate as there are still several logistical challenges to implementing these new routes.

These include expanding passenger facilities at destination stations, establishing new border control checkpoints, and securing track access agreements.

Despite these hurdles, Cazenave remains optimistic about the project's success, citing strong commitment from Eurostar, passenger demand, and government support.

Eurostar's expanded fleet will also enable it to increase frequency on popular routes. This includes boosting daily return services between London and Paris from 17 to 20.

The company has also confirmed plans to introduce a fourth daily return service between St Pancras and Amsterdam beginning on 9 September, with a fifth service added from mid-December.

Currently, Eurostar operates services connecting London to Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, and seasonal routes to the French Alps during the winter sports season. It also runs train links within Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands.

euronews.com







FEAR OF FLYING



SKY'S THE LIMIT

With aviation incidents frequently in the news, concerns about the safety of flying have been on the rise. If you are wondering just how safe your next flight might be, there's a handy piece of research that will take the guesswork out of your booking

AirlineRatings, an airline review site, has recently released its annual rankings of the world's safest airlines. It lists out the top 25 carriers based on a multitude of factors to give passengers more confidence when they fly.

For 2025, the world's safest airline was Air New Zealand for the second year in a row. The Kiwi airline often vies with its antipodean neighbour Qantas for the top spot, taking the crown in 2024 and 2022.

The first 11 places in the safest airlines ranking for 2025 are dominated by Asia-Pacific and Middle East airlines. But European airlines put in a good show too, taking seven of the top 25 places on the list.

Safest airlines in Europe in 2025

Turkish Airlines, straddling the market between Europe and Asia, is considered the safest airline in Europe. It came 13th in the global rankings, earning a seven-star rating on the platform. Despite operating to more destinations than any other airline in the world, Turkish hasn't had a fatal accident since 2009.

TAP Portugal snagged 14th place in the rankings, making it the second-safest airline in Europe. It hasn't lost a passenger since 1977 and regularly runs fear of flying courses in partnership with the Unidade de Cuidados Integrados de Saúde (UCS).

A flurry of European carriers made up the bottom half of the list. In order, they were SAS (16th), British Airways (17th), Iberia (18th), Finnair (19th) and the Lufthansa Group, which also includes SWISS (20th).

Safest low-cost airlines in Europe

AirlineRatings assesses low-cost carriers separately from their full-service counterparts, and European airlines put in a great showing in the 2025 ranking.

Top of the list is behemoth low-cost airline Ryanair, which claimed 3rd place in the global ranking and was the safest budget airline in Europe. In its 40-year history, the airline has never had a fatal accident. Following closely behind was easyJet, a UK-headquartered airline. Like Ryanair, it hasn't had a fatal accident in its 30 years of operations.

Further down the list in 7th place globally, Wizz Air secured its place as the third safest low-cost airline in Europe - it has never lost a passenger and has a fleet of new Airbus aircraft averaging under five years old.

Also appearing in the top 25 safest low-cost airlines in the world were Norwegian (12th), Vueling (13th), Jet2 (14th), Eurowings (20th) and airBaltic just scraping in at 25th position. Neither Jet2 nor airBaltic were in the top 25 in previous lists.

Airline safety assessment

AirlineRatings grades airlines based on multiple data points, and complements its findings with consultations with pilots and aviation experts.

Primarily, the publication studies specific attributes of each airline to determine their safety. These include the age of its aircraft, the number of planes it operates, the pilot training it provides and the rate of incidents reported.

Interestingly, AirlineRatings considers airline profitability, which may seem an unusual attribute to link to safety. However, airlines doing less well financially may be less inclined to invest in training, maintenance and improvements, theoretically lowering their ability to remain safe.

The ranking also considers whether the airline is from a country that has passed the ICAO country audit, known as the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP). This audit allows ICAO to assess the implementation of safety oversight in the nation and compliance with best practices.

Finally, it considers whether the airline has passed the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA), a global industry standard for airline operational safety auditing.

euronews.com

Azra Aleem
Pakistani



The recent unfortunate incident on an Indian flight has left many travellers feeling unsettled. While air travel remains one of the safest modes of transport, it's important to recognise that risks exist in every form of travel, be it land or air. Sometimes, despite all precautions, incidents occur due to circumstances beyond human control.

My brother, who works at the Islamabad airport, often shares insights from his experience. He mentioned that it takes around five to six hours for an aircraft engine to fully cool down between flights. However, in today's fast-paced world, that window is shrinking.

Cherry Briosos
Filipino



After the recent flight incident in India, I admit I feel scared to fly. It's shaken my confidence in air travel, though I still hold onto my faith and trust in God. Accidents, unfortunately, can happen anywhere - on land, sea or in the air. But something about being thousands of feet above ground makes the sense of helplessness much stronger. In the event of an in-flight emergency, there's limited space, time, and control, which adds to the fear. I believe, we need to be more prepared as passengers, and engineers and airline staff should be extra cautious during inspections.

Nandhini N
Indian



Travelling frequently with children and family members - especially for education - means that news of air travel tragedies can be deeply unsettling. Incidents like these bring an immediate wave of anxiety and fear, reminding us just how vulnerable we can feel at 35,000 feet. The recent loss of so many lives is truly heartbreaking, and our thoughts go out to the families affected.

For those of us who travel often, clear and transparent communication from airlines is essential.

Mohammad al Obaidani
Omani

I travel frequently to Thailand, and I always feel a bit anxious when flying over the Punjab region, as the area tends to be quite windy and turbulent. That part of the journey is particularly unsettling, and after hearing about such incidents, my concerns have only grown. I strongly believe there should be more engineers present during takeoff procedures, ensuring that all systems are in perfect working order.

Ali Ahmed al Barwani
Omani



It's heartbreaking, and my thoughts and prayers are with all those who lost someone dear in last week's incident. I hope, we never have to witness such a tragedy again. As someone who travels frequently and has worked closely in crisis management and response and strategic planning, I understand that such incidents shake public confidence. Personally, I am not scared to fly—aviation continues to be among the safest modes of transportation. But this tragedy does serve as a strong reminder that safety must never become routine or taken for granted.

Maggie Jeans
Britain



I wouldn't say I'm scared to fly, but I do believe that when your time comes, it comes, whether by destiny or 'karma'. Air travel today just doesn't carry the charm it once had. There was a time when flying was an event in itself - we looked forward to the journey, dressed up for it, and enjoyed every part of the experience. Now, it feels overcrowded, rushed, and far less pleasant.

Sadly, tragedies like the recent Dreamliner crash in India are difficult to prevent entirely. Take-off and landing remain the most vulnerable parts of any flight and I've been on flights where passengers burst into applause upon landing - it's a moment of collective relief!

(Inputs: Anirban Ray)



Oman Hospitality Champions is a great platform to not only showcase and reward the excellent talent in the world of Omani Hospitality but also to provide inspiration for those new to the industry as well as those considering Hospitality as a career. I'm already excited to see who the nominees and winners are for 2025.

Glenn Nobbs, Cluster General Manager
Grand Millennium Muscat | Studio M Muscat

Get nominated for an award at Hospitality Champions 2025

Go to **champions.nhioman.com** For details call: **98246267**

MUSCAT DAILY
www.muscatdaily.com

Executive Chairman & Editor-in-Chief
Saleh Zakwani
Apex Press and Publishing.
Printed at Apex Printing Press, Jiffnain

PO Box 2616, Ruwi 112, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: +968 24799388.
Toll Free No. 80076000

EDITORIAL
Mohammad Najmuz Zafar
Tel: +968 24799388
muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om

ADVERTISING
Ayesha Patel
Mobile: +968 99104346
ayesha.patel@apexmedia.co.om

EVENTS
Sajir CP
Mobile: +968 99474314
sajir@apexmedia.co.om

SUBSCRIPTION
Toll Free No. 80076000
customercare@apexmedia.co.om
Annual subscription offer: RO24

DISTRIBUTION
Shamshad Khan
Mobile: +968 99104345
shamshad@apexmedia.co.om