

O M A N  
عمان  
D A I L Y

Observer

VOL. 44, NO. 228  
PAGES 20 BAISAS 200

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INBRIEF

HM SENDS MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT OF BULGARIA



President Rumen Radev with Yousef al Jabri

**SOFIA:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a written message to President Rumen Radev of the Republic of Bulgaria dealing with bilateral relations between the two friendly countries and ways to enhance them.

The message was delivered by Yousef bin Ahmed al Jabri, the Sultanate of Oman’s Non-resident Ambassador to Bulgaria when the Bulgarian President received him at the Presidential Palace in Sofia. During the meeting, President Rumen Radev commended the Sultanate of Oman’s efforts of mediation, its contribution to finding solutions to tensions through dialogue and diplomatic means and its commitment to the realisation of fair and lasting peace in the Middle East and the world at large.

IAEA: IRAN COULD BE ENRICHING URANIUM WITHIN MONTHS



RAFAEL GROSSI  
Chief of IAEA

**GENEVA:** Iran could be producing enriched uranium in a few months, the head of the UN nuclear watchdog Rafael Grossi was quoted as saying on Sunday, raising doubts about how effective US strikes to destroy Tehran’s nuclear programme have been. US officials have stated that their strikes obliterated key nuclear sites in Iran, although US President Donald Trump said on Friday he would consider bombing Iran again if Tehran is enriching uranium to worrisome levels.

“The capacities they have are there. They can have, you know, in a matter of months, I would say, a few cascades of centrifuges spinning and producing enriched uranium, or less than that.”

“Frankly speaking, one cannot claim that everything has disappeared and there is nothing there,” he added, according to the transcript of an interview on “Face the Nation” with Margaret Brennan due to air on Sunday. Saying it wanted to remove any chance of Tehran developing nuclear weapons, Israel launched attacks on Iran earlier this month, igniting a 12-day air war that the US eventually joined. Iran says its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes only. Grossi, who heads the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, said the strikes on sites in Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan had significantly set back Iran’s ability to convert and enrich uranium. — Reuters



HM HEADS TO UK FOR PRIVATE VISIT

**MUSCAT:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik left Muscat on Sunday for United Kingdom (UK) on a private visit lasting several days. May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan in his journeys and grant him good health and well-being. — ONA

3rd phase of plastic ban starts tomorrow

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH  
@lakshmioman

It is time to think of alternate materials as the third phase of the ban on plastic shopping bags comes into force on Tuesday. If the regulations are violated, with fines ranging from RO 50 to 1,000, this could be doubled if the violations are repeated.

But will shoppers use reusable bags? Could it be a lifestyle change in consumer habits?

The Environment Authority, in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the Public Authority for Consumer Protection, and Muscat Municipality, has been implementing a series of awareness campaigns in line with the imminent start of the implementation of the third phase of the timetable set by Resolution No (8/2024). These campaigns aim to raise awareness among the public and the merchants about the new measures.

The campaigns also included the distribution of environmentally-friendly bags as a practical alternative as part of the final preparations for implementing the resolution in line with its implementation phases.

The public has been responding with keen



The campaigns included the distribution of environmentally friendly bags

interest in social media.

Yousef al Badi expressed, “Hand in hand towards a clean, plastic-free environment.” Sulaiman bin Salim was quick to respond with this thought: “We hope to add a ban on the plastic tablecloths used for serving food and banquets and replace them with environmentally friendly paper.”

Fahd al Nasri reflected, “This is how the desired goals are achieved through solidarity and cooperation between all government sectors, especially the sectors responsible for the municipal sector and also consumer protection, to achieve the same goal.”

Said al Abdali noted that environmental awareness is a crucial factor in consolidating environmental concepts and driving positive change.

Awareness and the cooperation of the concerned parties reflect the seriousness of implementation and advanced awareness of the dangers of plastic bags to the environment.

But rolls and rolls of one-time-use plastic sheets are used at homes and restaurants during meal times, as it is convenient to dispose of.

Phase One was implemented on July 1, 2024, targeting single-use plastic bags thinner than 50 micrometres. Phase 1 was aimed at pharmacies, hospitals and clinics.

The second phase began on January 1, 2025, and it included textile shops, tailoring shops, mobile shops, watch shops, retailers, etc. The third phase moves closer to the Oman Vision 2040 sustainable goals.

This device designed by Omani students cuts car emissions by 50%

**MUSCAT:** Students Omar bin Issa al Barmani and Tamim bin Yousef al Maamari, guided by their supervisor Majid bin Khalfan al Muqbali, have designed AEROCARBON — a low-cost, eco-friendly device that filters vehicle exhaust using fragments of barodite rock. The innovative filter works by triggering a chemical reaction between carbon dioxide, humidity, and the rock, converting the harmful gas into calcite, effectively reducing

carbon emissions at the source.

The student team from Naeem bin Masoud Basic Education School in Al Batinah North Governorate won first place in the environmental category at ITEX 2025, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The invention underwent rigorous testing at Sultan Qaboos University, which confirmed its effectiveness in significantly cutting exhaust emissions. The compact system includes a car exhaust filter, circular



Omar bin Issa al Barmani and Tamim bin Yousef al Maamari

mesh, Arduino board, screen and carbon emission sensor — making it both practical and scalable.

It was also honoured with a special award from Saudi Arabia’s Tuwaiq Academy, further cementing its regional significance.

Al Barmani said: “The AeroCarbon device reduces carbon dioxide emissions from vehicle exhausts by installing a special filter containing braudtite rock fragments which

convert carbon dioxide into calcite, an indicator of carbon dioxide absorption from vehicle exhaust. The development of the invention went through several steps, procedures and practical experiments. These included testing the sample before and after the experiment in a specialised laboratory at Sultan Qaboos University. The results proved the device reduced carbon dioxide emissions from the atmosphere.” — ONA

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SHORT TAKES



The coastal areas are also witnessing intensive efforts to provide diverse tourism services. — ONA

SUMMER TOURIST SEASON BEGINS IN JAALAN BANI BU ALI

**JAALAN BANI BU ALI:** The coastal areas of the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali in Al Sharqiyah South Governorate witnessed increased tourist activities during the holiday.

The coastal areas saw relatively cool weather, clear air and dense fog, making them a favourite choice for many families, young people, and camping and surfing enthusiasts. A number of recreational activities at Al Ashkhara Beach, Asilah Tourist Park and the seafront of Al Haddah, attracted crowds of tourists, visitors and adventure and marine entertainment seekers from within and outside the Sultanate of Oman.

Occupancy rates in hotels and tourist resorts reached more than 90 per cent. Al Sharqiyah South Governorate has 152 tourist facilities. Marine tourism is a top destination attracting tourists and visitors, especially during the summer, with the start of the summer tourist season, which begins in early July and continues until the end of August.

The coastal areas are also witnessing intensive efforts by relevant authorities to enhance natural resources and provide diverse tourism services and activities, coinciding with the third edition of Al Ashkhara Atmosphere Forum, which runs from July 16 to August 9, 2025. — ONA

ADDICTION TREATMENT CENTRE TO OPEN TODAY

**MUSCAT:** The Ministry of Health today celebrates the opening of a new Addition Treatment Centre in Muscat Governorate under the auspices of Sayyid Saud bin Hilal al Busaidy, Governor of Muscat. This centre specialises in addiction treatment and rehabilitation according to the latest international standards and technologies in this field. The move reflects the Ministry of Health’s commitment to developing health services and strengthening the specialised care system. The new centre is part of a national drive to provide an integrated therapeutic environment with medical, psychological and social aspects, contributing to the reintegration of recovering addicts into society and enabling them to resume their lives in a healthy and safe manner. — ONA

Oman showcases cultural heritage at Chechen University

**MOSCOW:** A special corner dedicated to Omani publications was inaugurated at the Chechen State Pedagogical University, as part of ongoing cultural cooperation between Oman’s National Museum and the university. The event also marked the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Russian Federation.

The Omani Publications Corner aims to empower non-Arabic-speaking students specialising in Omani studies, providing them with rich knowledge of Oman’s cultural and intellectual heritage. This initiative seeks to build bridges of understanding and strengthen academic and research cooperation between the two friendly nations. The collection features diverse cultural and educational books covering literature, language, history, science, media, arts, Islamic studies, geography and the environment.

In parallel, the National Museum,



Specialised workshops introduced traditional Russian handicrafts, arts to Omani students

through its Learning Center, organised a cultural programme in Muscat with the participation of 180 students from schools in the governorate.

The programme aimed to introduce Omani students to Russian literature, showcasing literary and artistic works that highlight the depth of Russian language and culture, broadening students’ cultural and intellectual horizons.

Highlights included artistic performances and short plays inspired by the works of Anton Chekhov, one of the world’s most celebrated playwrights whose works have been translated into over 100 languages. Students also enjoyed a special poetry and music performance titled ‘Yesenin’s Poetry: A Message from the Russian World to All Humanity,’ honouring the poet Sergei Yesenin and emphasising universal human values that continue to resonate globally. — ONA

Palestinian cause remains central issue for Arabs

**THE** COUNCIL OF OMAN participated in the fifth general session of the first session of the fourth legislative term of the Arab Parliament, held at the League of Arab States headquarters in Cairo, under the chairmanship of Mohammed bin Ahmed al Yamahi, Speaker of the Arab Parliament.

Opening the session, Al Yamahi in his speech appealed to the global conscience and international institutions, particularly the UN Security Council. “Enough of the silence and double standards. The time has come for a global awakening of conscience to end this open massacre and restore to the Palestinian people their right to life, dignity and freedom,” he declared.

Al Yamahi expressed hope that achieving a permanent ceasefire between Iran and the occupying entity would mark a return to regional calm and stability and refocus global attention, in an ethical and responsible manner, on the suffering of the Palestinian people. He reaffirmed that the Palestinian cause remains the central issue for the Arab



The Omani delegation to the Arab Parliament included Shaikh Said bin Hamad al Saadi, Deputy Chairman of Majlis Ash’shura and Deputy of the Arab Parliament. — ONA

Parliament, describing it as a cornerstone of security and stability in the region and beyond.

During the session, MP Saad al Otaibi, nominated by the Saudi Shura Council, was elected as the First Deputy Speaker of the Arab Parliament to fill a vacant position.

Members also reviewed reports from several standing committees, including those on Foreign Affairs, Political and National Security Affairs, Economic and Financial Affairs, Legislative and Human Rights Affairs, and Social, Educational, Cultural, Women and Youth Affairs, as well as the Palestine Committee.

The plenary and committee meetings covered a wide range of pressing topics, such as the situation in the Palestinian territories, regional political and economic developments, legal and human rights issues

and social and cultural matters. Discussions also included an Arab vision for strengthening parliamentary and preventive diplomacy, preparations for a conference to support the blue economy in the Arab world, a draft law to combat illegal immigration, a guiding document on empowering social entrepreneurship and productive families, and a vision for advancing e-learning in the region.

The Council of Oman had previously taken part in meetings of the Arab Parliament’s standing committees and attended a training seminar titled ‘Parliaments and Artificial Intelligence: Applications and Practical Challenges,’ held on the sidelines of the main sessions.

The Omani delegation to the Arab Parliament included Shaikh Said bin Hamad al Saadi, Deputy Chairman of Majlis Ash’shura and Deputy of the Arab Parliament; Shaikh Dr Talib bin Hilal al Hosni, Member of the Majlis Ash’shura; and Hamid bin Ali al Nasser, Member of the Majlis Ash’shura. — ONA

Workshop highlights best practices in integrated fish farming

**MUSCAT:** A regional workshop titled ‘Development of Integrated Freshwater Aquaculture’ was held in Muscat, focusing on best practices and modern technologies in integrated fish farming. The event is held under the auspices of Eng Yaqoub bin Khalfan al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources for Fisheries. The two-day seminar discussed the requirements for integrated fish farming, Oman’s experiences, and advanced technologies such as elevator and biofloc systems, including maintaining fish quality, technical practices before and after harvesting, boosting production, and managing diseases in aquaculture farms.

Dr Issa bin Mohammed al Farsi, Director of the Aquaculture Development Department at the ministry, in his speech emphasised that aquaculture is a key pillar supporting fish production in Oman. The sector has strong



Aquaculture is a key pillar supporting fish production in Oman

potential to attract local and international investments and meet the needs of small-scale farmers and producers.

He highlighted that fish farming significantly contributes to food security and rural development in the Sultanate of Oman. In 2007, Oman, in collaboration with FAO,

developed a national strategy for sustainable aquaculture development, followed by a sector vision with the World Bank in 2015 aligned with ‘Oman Vision 2040’.

Dr Al Farsi explained that integrated aquaculture combines traditional farming with fish farming, maximising land and water use to improve farmers’ economic returns. As of 2024, Oman has 24 licenced integrated fish farms, producing 498 tonnes of tilapia valued at approximately RO 746,000.

Organised by the ministry in cooperation with FAO, this seminar implements decisions from the first 2025 meeting of the Aquaculture Committee. The workshop aims to equip farmers with optimal integrated farm management techniques, improve production and quality in freshwater aquaculture, promote best harvesting and marketing practices, and facilitate knowledge sharing among participants. — ONA

SHORT TAKES



INDIAN EMBASSY ANNOUNCES NEW SERVICE CENTRES

**MUSCAT:** The Embassy of India in Muscat has announced that, effective July 1, its Consular, Passport and Visa services will be handled by a new service provider, SGIVS Global Services LLC.

Initially, all consular services will continue to be offered from the Embassy premises located on Jamiat Al Dowal Al Arabiya Street in the Diplomatic Area of Al Khuwair.

However, in a move aimed at enhancing accessibility and improving service delivery, SGIVS Global Services LLC will establish 11 new dedicated application centres across the Sultanate of Oman.

The upcoming centres are planned for the following locations Muscat, Salalah, Suhar, Ibri, Sur, Nizwa, Al Duqm, Ibra, Khasab, Al Buraimi and Barka.

Full operations at these centres are expected to commence by August 15. The Embassy has cautioned applicants to anticipate potential disruptions during this transitional period and urged all individuals seeking services to plan accordingly.

For updates and further information, applicants are advised to consult the Embassy’s official website and its social media platforms.

Governorates see cloudy weather

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH  
MUSCAT, JUNE 29

The aerial image on Sunday showed the continued flow of clouds over most of the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, with chances of scattered rain. It began in the early morning with the presence of cumulus clouds over parts of Al Dhahirah and Al Buraimi governorates and their continued movement southwest.

Low clouds are expected to accumulate over the coasts and mountains of Dhofar Governorate, with chances of scattered rain and intermittent drizzle.

Partly cloudy over coastal areas of Dhofar Governorate with a chance of drizzle and high and medium clouds advection over the rest of the governorates with a chance of convective clouds formation and isolated rain occasionally thundershowers associated with fresh downdraft over parts of the Al Hajar Mountains.

The Met Office also warned that there is a chance of dust rising over the desert and open areas of Al Dhahirah, Al Wusta and Dhofar governorates and

chance of early morning low level clouds or fog over the coastal areas of the Arabian Sea and over parts of the Oman Sea.

Along the Arabian Sea coasts, winds will be southerly to southwesterly moderate to fresh and along Oman Sea coasts it is expected to be northerly to northeasterly light to moderate and over Al Dhahirah and Al Buraimi wind will be northerly to northwesterly light to moderate and occasionally fresh over desert and open areas, and over the rest of the governorates it will be variable light wind changing to southwesterly to westerly light to moderate occasionally fresh over deserts and open areas.

The sea condition is tough along the coasts of Arabian Sea with a maximum wave height of 3–5 metres and slight to moderate along the rest of the coastal areas with a maximum wave height ranging between 0.5-1.5 metres. The lowest temperature recorded in Oman was in Qairoon Hariti with 25 degrees Celsius and the maximum was recorded in Ibri with a high of 46 degrees Celsius.

Preserving a rare Omani treasure in the ‘Al Fans’ fruit

TEXT & PHOTO BY YAHYA AL SALMANI

The jackfruit, locally known as ‘Al Fans,’ is a seasonal staple and is a rare gem. Classified as a rare species in Oman the ‘Al Fans’ tree is an evergreen giant, reaching up to 10 metres in height, with egg-shaped leaves. Its large, edible fruits grow close to the trunk and main branches.

This fruit can be found in areas such as the wilayats of Al Awabi and Wadi Al Maawil in Al Batinah South Governorate and more recently in Dhofar Governorate, where farmer Ahmed al Kathiri introduced nine jackfruit varieties from Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. Since 2017, he has successfully harvested and sold tonnes of jackfruit in local markets.

In Al Awabi and Wadi Al Maawil, some trees are believed to be over 200 years old. Historical accounts mention a single tree in each of the villages of ‘Afi’ and ‘Al Alia’, which locals claim were brought from Zanzibar in the 17th century and planted near the ‘falaj’ irrigation system.

The fruits typically ripen and are ready to eat from early June. Villagers have expressed



strong interest in replanting and preserving this rare tree, noting that only a few remain today. Sadly, parts of these trees have started to dry out and gradually disappear. Villagers are urging authorities to conduct scientific surveys to support efforts to propagate and conserve the species.

Agricultural sources explain that jackfruit (Artocarpus heterophyllus) originated in the In Al Alia village, a lone tree stands beside the ‘falaj’ canal, and its harvest is traditionally sold at auction. The proceeds from these sales are used to maintain the village’s historic mosque, linking the fruit to both cultural and community preservation.

Oman emerges investor friendly destination

BALQEES AL ORAIMI  
MUSCAT, JUNE 29

In a rapidly evolving regional economic landscape, Oman has emerged as one of the Gulf’s most promising and investor-friendly destinations. Anchored by Oman Vision 2040, a stable business environment, and a suite of progressive investment laws, Oman continues to attract robust foreign direct investment (FDI) across a range of strategic sectors.

According to the latest data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), total FDI in Oman soared to RO 30.1 billion by the end of 2024, up sharply from RO 22.9 billion in 2023. This growth has been fuelled by opportunities in manufacturing, logistics, finance, real estate and green energy — alongside the traditional oil and gas sector.

The Foreign Capital Investment Law, enacted in 2019, has opened the door to a more competitive investment environment. It allows full foreign ownership across most sectors and removes minimum capital requirements, significantly simplifying company formation for international investors.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion emphasises that this legal framework provides strong investor protections and has greatly reduced registration times, supported by the unified digital platform “Invest in Oman,” which streamlines licensing and government approvals.



Oman offers a suite of incentives, including tax exemptions of up to 25 years in free zones, customs exemptions, free repatriation of profits and capital.

Oman offers a suite of incentives, including tax exemptions of up to 25 years in free zones, customs exemptions, free repatriation of profits and capital, and long-term residency visas (5 to 10 years) for eligible investors and their families.

While hydrocarbons still account for around 79 per cent of total FDI, there is notable diversification into non-oil sectors. Manufacturing attracted RO 2.1 billion, financial services RO 1.3 billion, and real estate nearly RO 1 billion.

“We chose Oman because of its stability, strategic location, and skilled workforce,” says Sanjay Menon, an Indian entrepreneur

operating a light industrial facility in the Salalah Free Zone.

Free zones and economic areas have become major investment engines. The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) has attracted over RO 6 billion in committed investments across hydrogen, petrochemicals, logistics, and tourism. Meanwhile, Sohar Industrial Port has secured more than \$30 billion in cumulative investment, drawing strong interest from European, Chinese and GCC investors.

With three world-class ports (Salalah, Sohar and Duqm), four international airports, and an expanding highway and railway network, Oman is strategically positioned as a logistics and re-export hub. The World Bank ranks Salalah Port among the most efficient globally, while Duqm is quickly developing into a fully integrated industrial and trade city.

Oman’s location offers unique logistical advantages and enhanced security, key factors valued by global supply chains.

Oman is also leading in digital facilitation. The ‘Invest in Oman’ portal functions as a one-stop platform for business registration, site selection, licensing and scheduling meetings with government agencies. It supports both English and Arabic and provides tailored advisory services for foreign investors.

Since its launch, the portal has issued more than 1.2 million electronic documents and over a million automatic licences, underscoring Oman’s push towards digital governance and transparency.

# Tender Announcement

No. 14/2025/OPAZ

الهيئة العامة للمناطق الاقتصادية الخاصة والمناطق الحرة  
Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones  
Sultanate of Oman  
سلطنة عمان

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) invites specialized companies with proven expertise to participate in the following tender via the official electronic tendering platform (Esnad)

**Construction Works for Surface Water Drainage Channels in the Special Economic Zone in Al-Rawda in Al Buraimi Governorate - Phase 1**

|                                                                |                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Participation and purchase of tender documents                 | Through the electronic attrition platform<br><a href="https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om">https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om</a> |
| Start Date of Sale of Tender Documents                         | Monday 30th June 2025 09:00 AM)                                                                                                        |
| End Date of Sale of Tender Documents                           | Tuesday 29th July 2025 15:00 (PM)                                                                                                      |
| Date of field visit to the project site (for all bidders)      | Wednesday 30th July 2025<br>10:00 am at Shell station in Al-Rawda, Wilayat Mahdah                                                      |
| Tender Closing Date (Last Submission Date) and opening of bids | Monday 18th August 2025 (PM, Muscat Time 12:00)                                                                                        |
| Tender documents fee                                           | OMR 3,000<br>(Three Thousand Omani Rials only)                                                                                         |

- Tender Board can obtain the above tender specifications and conditions via the following link: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>
- International companies wishing to compete must register with the General Secretariat of the Oman Tender Board website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>
- Companies interested to participate in this Tender shall submit their bids electronically via the designated e-tendering platform (Esnad), duly signed and stamped, along with an electronic copy of the original bid guarantee. The Esnad platform will authenticate the submitted document. The bid guarantee must be issued by a local bank, amounting to no less than 1% of the total bid value, valid for a period of 180 days from the bid submission date, and addressed to His Excellency the Chairman of the Tender Committee at the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones.
- The Authority is not obliged to accept the lowest prices or any bid whatsoever and reserves the right to accept or reject any offer without giving reasons.

**For help and inquiries, you can contact us via the number below:**

Phone : +968 24402200  
or via email: [etenderhd@gstb.gov.om](mailto:etenderhd@gstb.gov.om)

**Public Authority for Regions Special Economic and Free Zones**

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SPOTLIGHT



# PROTECT YOURSELF FROM FRAUD

KABEER YOUSUF  
@kabiyousef

**HAVE** YOU EVER taken an extra SIM card - maybe for a special offer, a second device, or to give someone else - and then forgotten about it? Did you cancel it properly? If not, you could unknowingly be opening the door to fraud and identity theft.

The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has warned residents about the dangers of misusing SIM cards registered under their names, highlighting the growing threat of SIM swapping and cloning. Fraudsters can hijack your phone number, gain access to calls and SMS messages and potentially compromise your financial and personal accounts, leading to significant losses.

“A SIM card is personal property and shouldn’t be shared or handed over lightly. The subscriber is solely responsible for all activities linked to the card,” the ROP emphasised in a recent statement.

Fraudsters misuse SIM cards in two major ways. First, they may convince someone to hand over a SIM, sometimes in exchange for payment, and then use it for illegal activities. Second, through SIM swapping, criminals use stolen personal information to trick a mobile service provider into issuing a replacement SIM. Once they have control, they can intercept security codes for bank accounts and other sensitive platforms. “SIM stands for Subscriber Identity Module - it literally carries your identity,” says Rekha Prem, a social media influencer and social worker. “If your SIM is lost, misused, or hacked, you’re the one held accountable. Even a small oversight can lead to major headaches, so always cancel unused SIMs.”

Azeez Hadad, Director of Branding and Communications at Ooredoo, reiterated: “The individual is solely responsible for any SIM card issued in their name, whether active or inactive. It is crucial to protect your identity and take utmost care.” He added that telecom companies continue to run awareness campaigns to educate users.

**How to protect yourself:**

- Never share personal or financial information online or over unsolicited calls, e-mails, or texts.
- Set up a PIN or password with your mobile provider to help prevent unauthorised SIM swaps.
- Use strong passwords, enable two-factor or biometric authentication and download apps only from official stores.
- Regularly monitor your bank accounts and credit reports for unusual activity; report suspicious incidents immediately to the ROP.

SHORT TAKES



People inspect the damage after an Israeli strike on Nabatiyeh in southern Lebanon. — AFP

ISRAEL CARRIES ON SOUTH LEBANON ATTACKS, KILLS 3

BEIRUT: Israeli strikes killed three people in southern Lebanon despite a ceasefire in force there, authorities said, with Lebanese Hezbollah suggesting its patience for the “ongoing aggression” was wearing thin. The Lebanese health ministry said an “Israeli enemy” drone strike on a car in Kunin, south Lebanon, killed one man and wounded another person.

The attacks came a day after Lebanon blamed Israel for strikes that killed a woman and wounded 25 others. Lebanon’s state-run National News Agency reported that the woman was killed in an Israeli drone strike on an apartment in the city of Nabatiyeh.

Israel has repeatedly bombed its northern neighbour despite the November ceasefire aimed at ending over a year of hostilities with Hezbollah. The group’s leader, Naim Qassem, said in a televised speech on Saturday that the “ongoing aggression” by Israel “must not be allowed to continue”. “The (Lebanese) state must exert pressure, and it must fulfil all of its duties,” he said, insisting Hezbollah had held up its end of the ceasefire bargain. “Do you imagine we will remain silent forever? No. Everything has its limits.” — AFP

STRIKE SHUTS DOWN BANGLADESH’S BIGGEST PORT, HALTING OPERATIONS

DHAKA: Operations at Bangladesh’s biggest port were suspended on Sunday as a strike by customs officials brought shipping activity to a halt. The shutdown at Chittagong Port is part of an ongoing dispute between tax authority employees and the government, which is trying to overhaul the body.

“The port typically handles around 7,000 to 8,000 containers daily... But since this morning, there has been no movement in offloading or onboarding of goods,” said

Mohammed Omar Faruq, secretary of the Chittagong Port Authority. “This is having a huge impact on the country’s economic situation,” he added.

Staff at the National Board of Revenue (NBR) have been striking on and off for weeks over plans to split the authority into two separate bodies. Bangladesh’s interim leader, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus, urged them to end the walkout. “We hope NBR’s staff will report back to work setting

aside their unlawful programme that goes against the national interest of the country,” his office said in a statement. “Otherwise for the sake of the people of this country and safeguarding the economy the government will be left with no option but to act firmly,” the statement added.

NBR staff were prevented from entering their offices on Sunday after a government order sought to stop them from protesting within their building premises. — AFP

Israeli forces kill 23 in Gaza, including children

GAZA’S civil defence agency said Israeli air strikes and gunfire killed at least 23 people including three children in the war-stricken Palestinian territory on Sunday. Civil defence spokesman Mahmud Bassal said that 16 people died in air strikes at five locations around the Gaza Strip, and another from Israeli fire near an aid distribution centre. The Israeli military said that it was not able to comment on the reported incidents but said it was fighting “to dismantle Hamas military capabilities” in a campaign launched in 2023 against the Palestinian group whose attack on Israel triggered the war.

Restrictions on media in Gaza and difficulties in accessing many areas mean AFP is unable to independently verify the tolls and details provided by rescuers. Bassal said two children were killed in an air strike on their home in Gaza City’s Zeitun neighbourhood in the early morning, and “the house was completely destroyed.” A member of the family, Abdel Rahman Azzam, 45, said that he was at home and “heard a huge explosion at my relative’s house”.

“I rushed out in panic and saw the house destroyed and on fire,” he added. “We evacuated more than 20 injured people, including two martyrs -- two children from the family. The screams of children and women were non-stop,” Azzam said. “They bombed the house with a



Smoke billows after an Israeli strike on Gaza City. — AFP

A drone strike on a tent housing displaced people near the southern city of Khan Yunis killed five people including a child. Other casualties included a young man killed by Israeli fire while waiting for aid near a humanitarian distribution centre in the southern city of Rafah

missile without any prior warning. This is a horrific crime. We sleep without knowing if we will wake up.”

Elsewhere, Bassal said a drone strike on a tent housing displaced people near the southern city of Khan Yunis killed five people including a child.

He said that other casualties included a young man killed “by Israeli fire while waiting for aid” near a humanitarian distribution centre in the southern city of Rafah.

The Israeli military issued an evacuation order on Sunday for parts of Gaza City and nearby areas in the territory’s north, warning of imminent action there. The military

“will operate with intense force in these areas, and these military operations will intensify and expand... to destroy the capabilities of the terrorist organisations”, military spokesman Avichay Adraee said in a statement posted on X. He told residents to “evacuate immediately south” to Al Mawasi area on the coast. The civil defence agency later said an Israeli air strike hit a house in Gaza City, killing three people.

Israel launched its offensive in October 2023 in response to Hamas attack, which resulted in the deaths of 1,219 people, mostly civilians, according to Israeli official figures. — AFP

COOLING TO FACE HEAT

An Iraqi boy cools off as he stands in front of ‘water spray fans’ placed on the road side as temperatures soar in Al Sinak street, central Baghdad, amid rising temperatures. — AFP



5.3 magnitude quake hits central Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: A magnitude-5.3 earthquake struck central Pakistan on Sunday morning, according to the United States Geological Survey. There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage from the shallow quake, which USGS reported had occurred around 3:30 am with the epicentre around 60 kilometres north-northeast of Barkhan, a city in Pakistan’s mountainous Balochistan province.

Pakistan straddles the boundary where the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates meet, making the country susceptible to earthquakes. The region can be challenging to navigate during crisis situations. — AFP

## Ministry of Health

### Announcement

The Ministry of Health - Directorate General of Health Service AL Dhahira Governorate of Health - invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tender: -

| Tender Ref.              | Description                                                                                          | Last Date for Collection of Tender Document | Bid Submission / Closing Date       | Eligibility                                                                       | Tender Fee (Non-Refundable) Per set                                          |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2415/2025/ MOH/ DGHSDH-2 | Provision of Loading and Unloading Services for various healthy facilities at Al Dhahira Governorate | Wednesday 09/ JUL /2025                     | Before 9 am on Monday 04/ AUG /2025 | Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>SME:10 R.O</li><li>LO:25 R.O</li></ul> |

- Tenders should be submitted online on <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.
- The DGHHS is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.
- For any clarification, you may contact via Telephone: 24402244, Email id: [etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om](mailto:etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om).

## TENDER NOTICE

The Ministry of Economy Announces the following tender:

| Tender No. | Tender Title                                      | Document Fees in Omani Riyals | Last Date For Tender Submission |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2025/4     | Develop/Supply and Implementation of ERP Solution | LO: 25<br>SME: 10<br>RE: 25   | 7/8/2025                        |

First

- All specialized and interested companies that are registered with the Tender tender from the following website: [www.etendering.tenderboard.gov.om](http://www.etendering.tenderboard.gov.om)
- The bidders must submit their offers electronically via the website.

Second

- Tenders that does not meet the above conditions shall not be considered. The ministry shall have the right to reject any tender, and shall not be obliged to award the tender for the lowest bid without giving reasons.

For inquiries regarding tenders, please contact through the website of the electronic tendering system; <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>

For inquiries regarding the technical support of the electronic tendering system, please contact via e-mail and phone :

[etenderhd@mtc.gov.om](mailto:etenderhd@mtc.gov.om)  
 + 96824402200

WORLD

SHORT TAKES



A police officer stands in front of the wreckage of an Air India aircraft, in Ahmedabad. — Reuters

INDIA CRASH PROBE  
LOOKING AT ALL  
ANGLES: MINISTER

**NEW DELHI:** An Indian aviation minister on Sunday said investigators were probing “all angles” behind an Air India crash when asked by media about possible sabotage. All but one of the 242 people on board the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner were killed when it crashed in the western city of Ahmedabad. Authorities have identified 19 others who died on the ground, but a police source said after the crash that the toll was 38.

India’s minister of state for civil aviation, Murlidhar Mohol, said the investigation was looking at “all angles” when asked specifically about possible “sabotage”, in an interview with Indian news channel NDTV. “It has never happened before that both engines have shut off together,” Mohol said earlier.

The minister added that until the investigation report is published, it would be premature to comment on the cause. The team appointed to investigate the crash started extracting data from the plane’s cockpit voice and flight data recorders this week, in an attempt to reconstruct the sequence of events leading to the disaster. Air India has said that the plane was “well-maintained” and that the pilots were accomplished flyers. — AFP



South Korean President Lee Jae Myung delivers a speech at the National Assembly in Seoul. — Reuters

South Korea’s Lee  
names new officials

**SEOUL:** South Korea needs to take measures to support its economy in the short term as it continues tariff talks with the US, its likely new finance minister Koo Yun-cheol said on Sunday after being nominated for the role by President Lee Jae Myung. Koo, a former vice-finance minister, still needs to go through parliament hearings before being confirmed as finance minister.

Other ministerial appointments were also announced by the president’s office on Sunday. “We need to take pre-emptive measures and prepare for situations such as the current tariff negotiations with the United States,” Koo told a press conference.

Among other ministerial positions, Kim Jung-kwan, president of power plant builder Doosan Enerbility and a veteran bureaucrat in economics, energy and public policy, was nominated to be industry minister. The former head of South Korea’s disease control agency, Jeong Eun-kyeong, was nominated for health minister. She was highly praised for her response to the Covid-19 pandemic, becoming one of Time Magazine’s 100 most influential people of 2020. — Reuters

ROAD TRAGEDY

Fatal bus crash blaze kills 38 in Tanzania



A collision between a bus and minibus in Tanzania has killed 38 people after both vehicles were set on fire by the crash. The accident in Sabasaba occurred after one of the bus’s tyres punctured, causing the driver to lose control. “A total of 38 people died in the crash, including two women,” a presidency statement said, adding that 28 others were wounded. “However, due to the extent of the burns, 36 bodies remain unidentified,” the presidency said. — AFP

GRAFT  
CASE PILES  
PRESSURE ON  
TURKIYE’S  
MAIN  
OPPOSITION

**ANKARA:** A court hearing that could upend the leadership of Turkiye’s main opposition CHP is the latest bid to hobble the party behind a wave of spring protests that shook the government, analysts say. The hearing, which takes place on Monday at an Ankara court, could render null and void the result of a leadership primary within the Republican People’s Party (CHP) in November 2023 on grounds of alleged fraud — thereby overturning the election of leader Ozgur Ozel. The outcome could see several

CHP figures — including jailed Istanbul mayor Ekrem Imamoglu — facing up to three years in prison and a political ban for graft, Turkish media reported. And if the election result is cancelled, the party leadership would almost certainly revert to 76-year-old Kilicdaroglu. “This is a bid to reshape the CHP and create an opposition that is controlled by a government which is becoming more and more authoritarian,” Berk Esen, a political science expert at Istanbul’s Sabanci University, said. “This will provoke a split within the party,

putting a weak, defeated leader in charge whom the voters don’t want any more,” he said. Kilicdaroglu has already said he would be willing to take on the party leadership again if the court overturned the primary result, sparking uproar within the CHP. “It would be out of the question to not recognise such a verdict. Would it be better if a trustee was appointed to lead the party?” he said, also voicing his disapproval of the mass protests called by the CHP following Imamoglu’s arrest and jailing in March. — AFP

Iran voices ‘serious doubts’  
over Israel commitment

**IRAN** on Sunday said it was not convinced Israel would abide by a ceasefire that ended their 12-day war this week. The most serious escalation to date between the arch-foes erupted on June 13, when Israel launched a bombing campaign in Iran that killed top military commanders and scientists linked to its disputed nuclear programme.

Israel said its aim was to keep the Islamic republic from developing a nuclear weapon -- an ambition Tehran has consistently denied, insisting it has the right to develop nuclear power for civilian purposes like energy. The fighting derailed nuclear talks between Iran and the United States.



Protesters hold placards showing children killed, during a demonstration in support of Iran, in Madrid. — AFP

“We did not start the war, but we have responded to the aggressor with all our power,” Iran’s armed forces chief of staff, Abdolrahim Mousavi, was quoted as saying by state television, referring to Israel. “We have serious doubts over the enemy’s compliance with its commitments including the ceasefire, we are ready to respond with force” if attacked again, he added, six days into the ceasefire announced by US President Donald Trump.

In a letter to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres published on Sunday, Iran demanded that the United Nations recognise Israel and the United States as being to blame for this month’s war. “We officially request hereby that the Security Council recognise the

Israeli regime and the United States as the initiators of the act of aggression and acknowledge their subsequent responsibility, including the payment of compensation and reparations,” Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi wrote in the letter.

The United States joined Israel in its campaign during the war, carrying out strikes on three key facilities used for Iran’s atomic programme. Trump has threatened further strikes should Iran enrich uranium to levels capable of manufacturing nuclear weapons.

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Iran had enriched uranium to 60 per cent in 2021, well above the 3.67 per cent limit set by a 2015 agreement from

which the United States unilaterally withdrew in 2018. To make a weapon, Iran would need to enrich uranium up to 90 per cent. Israel has maintained ambiguity about its own atomic arsenal, neither officially confirming nor denying it exists, but the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has estimated it has 90 nuclear warheads.

An Israeli strike on Tehran’s Evin prison during the war killed at least 71 people, Iran’s judiciary said on Sunday. The strike on Monday destroyed part of the administrative building at Evin, a large, heavily fortified complex in the north of Tehran, which rights groups say holds political prisoners and foreign nationals.

According to judiciary spokesman Asghar Jahangir, the victims at Evin included administrative staff, guards, prisoners and visiting relatives as well as people living nearby. French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said on Monday that detained French nationals Cecile Kohler and Jacques Paris, held at Evin for three years, were not believed to have been harmed by the Israeli strike, which he described as “unacceptable”.

On Tuesday, a day after the strike, the judiciary said that the Iranian prison authority had transferred inmates out of Evin prison, without specifying their number or identifying them. The inmates at Evin have included Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi as well as several French nationals and other foreigners. — AFP

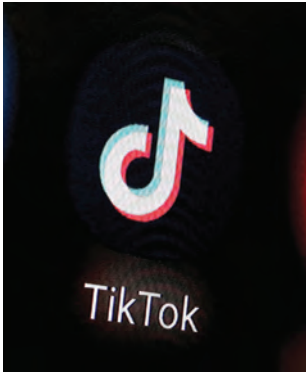


140,000 ATTEND SERBIA PROTEST RALLY

**BELGRADE:** A crowd of around 140,000 protesters gathered in Belgrade calling for early elections, according to independent protest monitor Archive of Public Gatherings. The number was significantly higher than an earlier estimate from police of 36,000. “Around 140,000 people were present during the commemorative silence at today’s protest in Slavija, organised by students in the blockade,” the group said in a post on X. Clashes between police and protesters erupted in Belgrade following a rally that drew tens of thousands calling for the populist government to hold early elections. Journalists witnessed police deploy tear gas and stun grenades as protesters threw flares and projectiles at lines of riot police. — AFP

SALE PROGRESS

Trump finds people to buy TikTok



US President Donald Trump said on Sunday that he had found a buyer for the TikTok short-video app, which he described as a group of “very wealthy people” whose identities he will reveal in about two weeks. He said the deal he is developing would probably need China’s approval to move forward. The president earlier this month had extended to September 17 a deadline for China-based ByteDance to divest the US assets of TikTok. — Reuters

WEATHER ALERT

Storm Barry threatens heavy rain in Mexico



The US National Hurricane Center said that an Atlantic depression has intensified into tropical storm Barry, expected to bring heavy rainfall over eastern Mexico. The tropical storm, packing maximum sustained winds of 40 miles per hour, according to the NHC, is located about 90 miles east-southeast of Tuxpan, a city and municipality located in the state of Veracruz. It is possible that the storm will slightly intensify before it reaches the coast of eastern Mexico. — Reuters

SHORT TAKES



A woman protects herself from the sun with a hand fan, on a hot summer day in Venice. — AFP

BATHS, CLIMATE SHELTERS AS EUROPE HEATWAVE INTENSIFIES

ROME: Authorities across Southern Europe urged people to seek shelter on Sunday and protect the most vulnerable as punishing temperatures from Spain to Portugal, Italy and France climbed higher in the summer’s first major heatwave. Ambulances stood on standby near tourist hotspots and regions issued fire warnings as experts warned that such heatwaves, intensified by climate change, would become more frequent.

Peaks of 43 degrees Celsius were expected in areas of southern Spain and Portugal, while nearly all of France is sweltering in heat expected to last for several days. In Italy, 21 cities were on high alert for extreme heat, including Milan, Naples, Venice, Florence and Rome.

Hospital emergency departments across Italy have reported an uptick in heatstroke cases, according to Mario Guarino, vice-president of the Italian Society of Emergency Medicine. “We’ve seen around a 10 per cent increase, mainly in cities that not only have very high temperatures but also a higher humidity rate. It is mainly elderly people, cancer patients or homeless people, presenting with dehydration, heat stroke, fatigue,” he said.

— AFP



COLOMBIA APPROVES PENSION REFORM

Colombia’s lower house approved, for the second time, a pension reform supported by leftist President Gustavo Petro, after the constitutional court ordered a repetition of the ballot because of procedural irregularities. The court’s June decision did not rule on the bill’s constitutionality but required the lower house to vote again on the version approved by the Senate, saying there was not enough debate held ahead of the first vote in June 2024. The bill was backed by 97 lawmakers, while one voted against it. — Reuters

FRANCE IMPOSES SMOKING BAN ON BEACHES AND PARKS

PARIS: Anyone who lights up on a beach or in a public park in France will be breaking the law from Sunday under new rules aimed at protecting children from the dangers of passive smoking. Bus shelters and areas in the immediate vicinity of libraries, swimming pools and schools will also be affected by the ban, which is coming into force one day after its publication in the official government gazette on Saturday.

The rule is being imposed one week before the beginning of the school holidays in France in a clear

bid to immediately protect children from smoke on the beach.

However, to the disappointment of some anti-tobacco activists, the ban does not cover the terraces of bars and restaurants where many French still happily light up.

They are also unhappy that the ban does not apply to electronic cigarettes.

The rules had initially been expected to come into force on Tuesday after a previous announcement by the health ministry but the publication in the official gazette means this has now

been brought forward to Sunday. People should also not smoke within a 10 metres radius of schools, swimming pools, libraries and other places that hurt minors.

The health ministry said it would announce the minimum distance for smoking in these areas in the coming days as well as reveal the sign used to designate such areas. Violators of the ban could face a fine of 135 euros up to a maximum of 700 euros.

However the health ministry is expecting an initial grace period as the new rules are explained. — AFP

Zelensky calls US as pilot killed in Russian attack



A service member Ukrainian Armed Forces sits inside an armoured personnel carrier, in Donetsk region. — Reuters

A Ukrainian F-16 fighter pilot died in a crash while repelling a Russian air attack that involved hundreds of drones, cruise and ballistic missiles, authorities said on Sunday, as Moscow intensifies night-time air barrages in the fourth year of war. President Volodymyr Zelensky called for more support from Washington and Western allies to bolster Ukraine’s air defences after the attack, which damaged homes and infrastructure across the country and injured at least 12 people, according to local authorities.

In Kyiv, families huddled in metro stations for shelter after air raid sirens rung out. Machine-gun fire and explosions were heard across the capital and in the western city of Lviv, where such attacks are less common. The governor of the Lviv region, bordering Poland, said the raid targeted critical infrastructure. Ukraine has now lost three F-16s since it began operating the U.S.-made jets last year. Kyiv has not revealed the size

of its F-16 fleet, but they have become a central and heavily used part of Ukraine’s defences.

The pilot flew the damaged jet away from a settlement but did not have time to eject before it crashed, the Ukrainian Air Force said. “The pilot used all of his onboard weapons and shot down seven air targets. While shooting down the last one, his aircraft was damaged and began to lose altitude,” the Air Force said on Telegram.

The Ukrainian military said in total Russia launched 477 drones and 60 missiles of various types to Ukraine overnight. Ukrainian forces destroyed 211 of the drones and 38 missiles, it said, while 225 more drones were either lost due to electronic warfare or were decoys that carried no explosives. “Moscow will not stop as long as it has the capability to launch massive strikes,” Zelensky said on X. He said Russia had launched around 114 missiles, 1,270 drones, and 1,100 glide bombs just in the past week. Russia’s state-run RIA Novosti

news agency said one person was killed by a Ukrainian drone in the Russian-controlled part of Ukraine’s Luhansk region. Both Ukraine and Russia say they do not attack civilian targets.

Ukraine says recent attacks highlight the need for further support from Washington, which under President Donald Trump has not committed to new military aid for Ukraine. Trump said he was considering a Ukrainian request for more Patriot missile batteries after he met Zelensky at a NATO summit last Wednesday.

“This war must be brought to an end - pressure on the aggressor is needed, and so is protection,” Zelensky said in his X post on Sunday after the attack. “Ukraine needs to strengthen its air defence — the thing that best protects lives.” He said Ukraine was ready to buy the American air defence systems and it counts on “leadership, political will, and the support of the United States, Europe, and all our partners.”

— Reuters

US Senate opens debate on Trump’s controversial spending bill

WASHINGTON: US senators debated into the early hours of Sunday Donald Trump’s “big beautiful” spending bill, a hugely divisive proposal that would deliver key parts of the US president’s domestic agenda while making massive cuts to social welfare programmes. Trump is hoping to seal his legacy with the “One Big Beautiful Bill,” which would extend his expiring first-term tax cuts at a cost of \$4.5 trillion and beef up border security. But Republicans eyeing 2026 midterm congressional elections are divided over the package, which would strip health care from millions of the poorest Americans and add more than \$3 trillion to the country’s debt.

The Senate formally opened

debate on the bill late on Saturday, after Republican holdouts delayed what should have been a procedural vote — drawing Trump’s ire on social media. Senators narrowly passed the motion to begin debate, 51-49, hours after the vote was first called, with Vice-President JD Vance joining negotiations with holdouts from his own party. Ultimately, two Republican senators joined 47 Democrats in voting “nay” on opening debate.

Trump has pushed his party to get the bill passed and on his desk for him to sign into law by July 4, the United States’ independence day. “Tonight we saw a GREAT VICTORY in the Senate,” Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform after the vote to begin debate. “Republicans



US Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) speaks to the media, on Capitol Hill in Washington. — Reuters

must remember that they are fighting against a very evil, corrupt and, in many ways, incompetent (Policywise!) group of people, who would rather see our Country ‘go down in flames’ than do the right thing,” he said in an earlier post.

Democrats are bitterly opposed to the legislation and Trump’s agenda, and have vowed to hold up the debate. They began by insisting that the entirety of the bill be read aloud to the chamber before the debate commences. The bill is roughly 1,000 pages long and will take an estimated 15 hours to read. “Republicans won’t tell America what’s in the bill,” said Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer. “So Democrats are forcing it to be read start to finish on the floor.

We will be here all night if that’s what it takes to read it.” If passed in the Senate, the bill would go back to the House for approval, where Republicans can only afford to lose a handful of votes — and are facing stiff opposition from within their own ranks.

On Saturday, former Trump advisor Elon Musk — with whom the president had a public falling out this month over his criticism of the bill — called the current proposal “utterly insane and destructive.” “It gives handouts to industries of the past while severely damaging industries of the future,” said Musk, who is the world’s richest person, and owns electric vehicle company Tesla and space flight firm SpaceX, among others. — AFP

OPINION

AI reduces human capacity to think, says research



**SANDHYA RAO MEHTA**

*The writer is Associate Professor, Sultan Qaboos University*

IT WAS ONLY a matter of time, but it did come too soon. A study by MIT’s Research Lab recently conducted a study on 54 individuals who were between 18 and 39 years old. Each was asked to write a couple of essays in the style of the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test), a common exam in the United States.

Some randomly selected subjects were asked to write without access to the Internet, others using only the Google search engine, and the rest using OpenAI’s ChatGPT. The researchers used EEG to record brain activity across 32 regions of the brain.

Unsurprisingly, they found that those who were using GhatGPT got lazier as the study went on, using cut-and-paste tactics more often.

Those who had limited access to the Internet were more engaged with the essay, thought about it more, deliberated on the ideas and even took ownership of the arguments presented. Those who used ChatGPT almost stopped caring for the ideas they were generating by the end of the study.

When asked to re-write their essay, this group did not remember most of the ideas which they had previously used.

This is a preliminary study with few participants but the head researcher, Nataliya Kosmyrna, went ahead to share the findings. According to her, “Developing brains are at their highest risk”. She meant that the younger the learners are, the more dangerous the implications of continuous use of Artificial Intelligence.

The findings seem intuitive after all. Continuously using generative AI to do all our tasks, from answering all our queries on trivia to planning out budgeted holidays, can only make us think less.

It is not only that we are resorting to the easiest option but that these choices are making our capacity to make any choice seem redundant. This could be the end of critical thinking as we know it.

Arguments against this scenario have already filled the research space. The most common argument is that everything depends on how we use AI – whether is it

Beyond making us ‘lazier’, using generative AI has already indicated social implications like making people lonelier

used as a supplement to just help with our work but not replace it, or even show us alternatives from which we could choose.

But there are also other concerns. Beyond making us ‘lazier’, using generative AI has already indicated other social implications. For one, it is making people lonelier. There is very little use for companionship if the screen is fulfilling most of our needs, especially for youngsters who are already comfortable growing up with screens of different sizes.

So common is the use of AI for personal needs that it is also replacing counselling, whether academic or personal, for students. Although this may sound like a good option, as it makes counselling free and always available, it does not give advice on individual situations and priorities. Depending on AI for life decisions may take more time.

We cannot wish AI away, but we can learn more about it and its judicious use. Too much of it coming too soon may harm us more than we may know.

AI A GAME-CHANGER FOR RESEARCHERS AND INNOVATORS



**HAJER AL BALUSHI**

*The writer is a student of Sultan Qaboos University*

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, in all fields, is vitally important for finding answers to solutions and for living on this planet a better experience.

While research is an intellectually rewarding experience, it can sometimes be a tedious and time-consuming process.

AI has many applications that can provide assistance to researchers, in all fields, and at all stages of the research process, from identifying research gaps to preparing the slides for presentations. This article will discuss some of these research-oriented applications. One of these AI applications is Consensus, which helps in the literature review as it offers quick answers to research-related questions by reviewing existing relevant studies and articles and drafting research outlines.

A similar tool is Elicit, which serves the same purpose, but is a more comprehensive and advanced application. Another research assistant is NotebookLM, which helps with immediate summarisation and note-taking. It also serves as a personalised assistant, allowing users to upload their own sources and ask questions to receive simple explanations.

Johnson (2024) states, “Within seconds, NotebookLM becomes a virtual research assistant, capable of answering questions or tracking down references based entirely on the source materials you’ve supplied.”

The most well-known AI-powered tool is ChatGPT. It is a significant tool for researchers since it is used for many purposes, such as drafting and editing academic writings, scanning and summarising articles, and responding to different questions that researchers ask for.

Another application is Gemini, which is great for multi-modal processing, real-time research, analysing articles and academic papers, and could be used for scripting too. The Visily application is also helpful in data analysis and helps users prototype digital tools and present visual ideas (AI tools); researchers may also use it for quick and creative designs.

Another very useful tool is Research Rabbit, in which researchers can discover various research papers and find connections between different authors and their works. James Cook University maintains that Research Rabbit is a “citation-based literature mapping tool,” which also helps in organising the collections of papers based on the researchers’ interests.

How students use break to enhance well-being

SUMMER BREAK offers students essential recovery time from academic stress, supporting their mental health and emotional well-being. Burnout is common during the academic year due to sustained cognitive demands; breaks can help reduce stress and improve mood. Consequently, summer break plays a pivotal role in promoting psychological recovery among students by providing a reprieve from the persistent cognitive and emotional pressures of the academic year.

Structured summer programmes, particularly those designed for school-aged children (5-18 years old), have been examined for their impact on non-academic outcomes, including mental, socioemotional, and cognitive well-being.

A narrative synthesis of existing studies reveals consistent trends indicating improvements in general mental health, self-concept, socioemotional functioning, and cognitive abilities during participation in such programmes.

Although many of the reviewed studies are limited by small sample sizes and methodological biases, their findings collectively suggest that summer interventions can serve as effective preventive strategies for mental health challenges in youth (Eglitis et al, 2024).

Accordingly, it is crucial to provide students with guidance on utilising their summer break in ways that promote personal well-being. A set of studies has proposed the following strategies namely Psychological and emotional rejuvenation: Summer break provides students with essential recovery time from academic stress, thereby supporting their mental health and emotional well-being. Burnout is common during the academic year due to sustained cognitive demands, and breaks can reduce stress and improve mood.

According to Fritz et al (2013), detachment from academic stressors



It is crucial to provide students with guidance on utilising their summer break in ways that promote personal well-being



**DR ZAINAB AL AJMI**

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Summer break serves not merely as a pause from academic responsibilities but as a vital opportunity for psychological recovery and personal growth

and engagement in restorative activities during breaks improve vitality and reduce emotional exhaustion.

Physical health and outdoor activities: Many students engage in sports, hiking, swimming, and recreational travel during summer, which contributes to both physical and psychological health. Physical activity is a well-documented enhancer of overall well-being. In this regard, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends physical activity as a means to manage anxiety and depression.

**BUILDING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS**

Summer break allows students to reconnect with family and friends, fostering stronger social bonds, key components of psychological well-being. According to the American Psychological Association (APA), social connection is one of the strongest predictors of happiness and reduced anxiety.

Engaging in purposeful activities: Students often use the summer for volunteering, internships, and

personal projects (e.g., learning a language, pursuing art or music), all of which contribute to self-esteem and a sense of purpose.

A longitudinal study by Scales et al (2011) found that youth who engage in structured, purposeful summer activities report higher levels of life satisfaction and academic motivation.

To conclude, summer break serves not merely as a pause from academic responsibilities but as a vital opportunity for psychological recovery, physical rejuvenation, social reconnection, and personal growth. Research emphasises that students who engage in purposeful and restorative activities during this period - such as physical exercise, volunteering, and time spent with family and peers - experience improved mental health and greater academic motivation upon returning to school.

Therefore, educators and parents need to guide students toward meaningful summer experiences that contribute to their overall development and readiness for the upcoming academic year.

## When the moon turns the page



ABDULAZIZ AL JAHDHAMI

The writer is author, translator and a communications professional

SOME YEARS arrive like parades — loud, bright, bustling with fireworks and clock towers. But the New Hijri Year arrives not with noise and celebration, but with reflection and the sacred stillness of faith. It comes like a whisper through the air; no countdown, just a small crescent in the dark sky, quietly turning the page of time.

As the sky dims and the first slight curve of Muharram appears, a quiet moment washes over the hearts of millions. It is not marked by fireworks or fanfare, but with something deeper: a pause, a prayer, a promise.

The Islamic calendar is lunar. It does not chase the sun, but follows the moon, measuring time in silver arcs and silent revolutions. It begins not with conquest, but with migration — not with celebration, but with sacrifice. Its first breath was drawn on the sands between Mecca and Madinah, in the exhausted, but faithful steps of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and his companions, who left behind maltreatment not in fear, but in faith.

The Prophet’s migration (Hijrah) was more than just a change in location. It was a movement of the soul: from oppression to liberation, from fear to trust, from survival to

purpose. As the clock resets, we are called not merely to celebrate, but to transform.

The first month of the Islamic year, Muharram, is cloaked in stillness and sacredness. It is one of the four months honoured by Allah, where peace is not only encouraged, but divinely prescribed. The battlefield of anger, hatred and injustice is laid to rest. Even the word “Muharram” means “forbidden” — a divine signpost reminding us to choose restraint over reaction, mercy over revenge.

The arrival of the Hijri New Year is a time to pause and reassess one’s spiritual path. Muslims around the world use this time to reconnect with Allah, seek forgiveness and set intentions for self-improvement in the year ahead. It is a reminder that time is a blessing — and every new year, a sacred opportunity for growth, gratitude and service.

The New Hijri Year is more than a date on a calendar; it is a divine invitation. In Islam, time is not something to spend; it is something to honour. Like a traveller in the desert cherishing every drop of water, the believer treats each moment as a trust from Allah. This occasion reminds us that every heart has its own journey to take in the year ahead.

Welcoming the New Hijri Year is not merely a commemoration of a historical event; it is a living tradition — one that emphasises spiritual resilience, community and hope

And so, each year, the New Hijri Year calls on us not just to remember history, but to live its spirit. It asks: What must we leave behind? And what must we move towards? What did we do with the year that passed? What did we nurture? Whom did we help? Which wounds did we heal — and which did we ignore? For Muslims, welcoming the New Hijri Year is not merely a commemoration of a historical event; it is a living tradition — one that emphasises spiritual resilience, community and hope. In a fast-paced world, the Islamic New Year offers a sacred pause to reflect, recalibrate and realign with higher values.

Let the New Hijri Year be a garden for your soul. Plant seeds of new intentions and water them with prayer. Uproot the weeds of regret and resentment. Watch as something beautiful grows — not instantly, but with patience and purpose.

Start again, not because the past year failed, but because every sunrise is a mercy, and every new moon a reminder that it is never too late to return, to apologise, to restart. The New Hijri Year doesn’t just begin on a calendar page; it begins in you. Each of us journeys from one chapter of our soul to the next: from ego to surrender, from noise to stillness, from shadows to light.

## MOROCCO’S ATLANTIC GAMBIT: LINKING RESTIVE SAHEL TO OCEAN

ANOUK RIONDET

A PLANNED TRADE corridor linking the landlocked Sahel to the Atlantic is at the heart of an ambitious Moroccan project to tackle instability and consolidate its grip on disputed Western Sahara.

The “Atlantic Initiative” promises ocean access to Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger through a new \$1.3-billion port in the former Spanish colony claimed by the pro-independence Polisario Front but largely controlled by Morocco.

But the project remains fraught with challenges at a time when military coups in the Sahel states have brought new leaderships to power intent on overturning longstanding political alignments following years of violence.

The Moroccan initiative aims to “substantially transform the economy of these countries” and “the region”, said King Mohammed VI when announcing it in late 2023.

The “Dakhla Atlantic” port, scheduled for completion at El Argoub by 2028, also serves Rabat’s goal of cementing its grip on Western Sahara after the US recognised its sovereignty over the territory in 2020.

Morocco’s regional rival Algeria backs the Polisario but has seen its relations with Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger fray in recent months after the downing a Malian drone.

Military coups over the past five years have seen the three Sahel states pivot towards Russia in a bid to restore their sovereignty and control over natural resources after decades within the sphere of influence of their former colonial ruler France. French troops were forced to abandon their bases in the three countries, ending their role in the fight against extremists who have found sanctuary in the vast semi-arid region.

After both the African Union and West African bloc ECOWAS imposed economic sanctions on the new juntas, Morocco emerged as an early ally.

The Sahel countries established a bloc of their own — the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) — in September 2023 but have remained dependent on the ports of ECOWAS countries like Benin, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Togo.

Rising tensions with the West African bloc could restrict their access to those ports, boosting the appeal of the alternative trade outlet being offered by Rabat.

Its initiative has won the backing of key actors including the US, France and the Gulf Arab states, who could provide financial support.

Abdelmalek Alaoui, head of the Moroccan Institute for Strategic Intelligence, said it could cost as much as \$1 billion to build a land corridor through Mauritania, Mali and Niger all the way to Chad.

And even if the construction work is completed, insecurity is likely to pose a persistent threat to the corridor’s viability, he said. — AFP

# Trump’s obfuscating on obliterating

DONALD TRUMP has finally met his match. The Iranian Supreme Leader lies just as boldly, with just as much bombast, as the American Supreme Leader. On Thursday, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei put out a video hailing Iran’s victory over Israel and the United States.

Trump was shocked, shocked at this blatant lie. “As a man of great faith, he is not supposed to lie,” the president marvelled on Truth Social.

Then Trump went on to his usual authoritarian etiquette lesson, complaining that the proper response by Khamenei to getting hit with 14 30,000-pound bombs should have been: “THANK YOU, PRESIDENT TRUMP!” Trump said that he deserved gratitude because he knew where Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was hiding and stopped Israeli and US forces from killing him. He said that he made Israel recall a group of planes headed for Tehran that were, perhaps, looking for “the final knockout!” “I wish the leadership of Iran would realize,” he tut-tutted, “that you often get more with HONEY than you do with VINEGAR. PEACE!!!” Half an hour later, Mr Honey put out a typically vinegary post abruptly cutting off “ALL” trade talks with Canada.

Before Trump did it, with an assist from the Supreme Court on Friday, it was Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld who worked to erode checks and balances and Hoover all the power into the executive branch.

With the malleable George W Bush in the Oval, Cheney and Rumsfeld were able to create an alternate universe where they were never wrong — because they conjured up information to prove they were right.

The two malevolent regents had a fever about getting rid of Saddam, so they hyped up intelligence, redirecting Americans’ vengeful emotions about Osama bin Laden and 9/11 into that pet project. Tony Blair scaremongered that it would take only 45 minutes for Saddam to send his WMDs westward.

But there were no WMDs. When it comes to the Middle East, presidents can’t resist



US President Donald Trump

indulging in a gasconade. Unlike Iraq, Iran was actually making progress on its nuclear programme. Trump did not need to warp intelligence to justify his decision. But he did anyway, to satisfy his unquenchable ego.

He bragged that the strikes had “OBLITERATED” Iran’s nuclear capabilities.

“I just don’t think the president was telling the truth,” Sen Chris Murphy, D-Conn, told reporters. He believes Iran still has “significant remaining capability.” When CNN’s Natasha Bertrand and her colleagues broke the story that a preliminary classified US report suggested that the strikes had set back Iran by only a few months, Trump, Pete Hegseth and Karoline Leavitt smeared her and The New York Times, which confirmed her scoop, as inaccurate, unpatriotic and disrespectful to our military.

On Friday afternoon, CNN revealed that the military did not even use bunker-buster bombs on

one of Iran’s largest nuclear targets because it was too deep.

Though Trump likes to hug the flag — and just raised two huge ones on the White House North and South Lawns — he ignores a basic tenet of patriotism: It is patriotic to tell the public the truth on life-or-death matters, and for the press to challenge power. It is unpatriotic to mislead the public in order to control it and suppress dissent, or as a way of puffing up your own ego.

Although he was dubbed the “Daddy” of NATO in The Hague on Wednesday, Trump clearly has daddy issues. (Pass the tissues!) He did not get the affirmation from his father that could have prevented this vainglorious vamping.

For Trump, it was not enough for the strikes to damage Iran’s nuclear

capabilities; they had to “obliterate” them. It could not simply be an impressive mission; it had to be, as Hegseth said, “the most complex and secretive military operation in history.” (Move over, D-Day and crossing the Delaware.) The president was so eager to magnify the mission that he eerily compared it to Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Trump has always believed in “truthful hyperbole”, as he called it in “The Art of the Deal”. But now

it’s untruthful hyperbole. He has falsely claimed that an election was stolen and falsely claimed that \$1.7 trillion in cuts to the social safety net in his Big, Unpopular Bill “won’t affect anybody; it is just fraud, waste and abuse.”

“So many Americans still have questions about the 2020 election,” a reporter told Trump at the news conference on Friday, wondering if he would appoint someone at the Justice Department to investigate judges “for the political persecution of you, your family and your supporters during the Biden administration?” Trump beamed.

Trump ignores a basic tenet of patriotism: It is patriotic to tell the public the truth on life-or-death matters, and for the press to challenge power. It is unpatriotic to mislead the public in order to control it and suppress dissent, or as a way of puffing up your own ego



MAUREEN DOWD

The writer is an American columnist for The New York Times and an author

# SPORTS

SHORTTAKES



The “Sports Summer Days” programme officially kicked off on Sunday and will run until August 30

## MOCSY ORGANISES “SPORTS SUMMER DAYS” PROGRAMME

ADIL AL BALUSHI  
MUSCAT, JUNE 29

The “Sports Summer Days” programme officially kicked off on Sunday at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Muscat, running until August 30. This vibrant initiative, replacing summer sports programme in the last years, organised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MoCSY), will engage youth and families members during the summer break, features a diverse lineup of athletic activities and is all set to become a key part of the summer calendar in the Sultanate of Oman. With a mission to utilise free time positively of the youth, promote healthy lifestyles, and nurture athletic talents, the summer programme will provide a rich blend of popular and emerging sports.

The participants will have the opportunity to enjoy and train in disciplines including Swimming, Football, Gymnastics, Aquatics (Women’s sessions), Teqball and Table Tennis. The targeted participants are from 7-16 years category. The registration was closed on June 26 after all the seats were occupied. From Monday (June 30) to July end, another programme will be available at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex. Badminton and martial arts will be provided as part of the “Sports Summer Days” programme. The initiative is designed to serve as more than just a recreational outlet. It aims to develop technical skills, encourage physical fitness, and provide a fun, educational environment where children and young adults can build discipline, teamwork, and sportsmanship. The officials at the Ministry will aim to attract the targeted age groups and provide specialised sessions tailored to different abilities and interests. Women’s participation is a key focus with dedicated aquatic programmes encouraging greater inclusion. The programme also align with Oman’s broader national objectives of youth engagement, community building, and sports development. The programme will make the most of leisure time, discovering talents and fostering a love for physical activity.

# Oman team gears up for volleyball championship

AHMED AL KAABI  
MUSCAT, JUNE 29

THE OMAN national men’s volleyball team continues its intensive training programme in preparation for the West Asian Championship, set to take place in Manama, Bahrain from July 17-24, 2025. The coaching staff is working to ensure peak physical and technical readiness ahead of this key regional competition.

As part of the preparation phase, Engineer Ibrahim bin Abdullah al Muqbali, President of the Oman Volleyball Association (OVA), visited the team’s current training camp at Sohar Sports Complex. During the visit, he met with the players, coaching, and administrative staff, praising their efforts and emphasising the need to intensify preparations in the coming period.

In a statement, assistant coach Hamid al Muqbali expressed gratitude for the association’s support, noting that preparations began immediately after the conclusion of the local league. The comprehensive programme, supervised directly by the association president, includes the appointment of Iranian coach Mohammad Vakili former coach of Al Salam Club and a highly experienced figure who previously led Iran’s youth team to a world championship title.

The technical staff also includes Iranian specialists in physical conditioning and analytics, as well as local professionals serving as assistant coach, fitness trainer, and physiotherapist.

Al Muqbali explained that the first stage of preparation included selecting an extended squad of 22 players based on performance in a competitive and professionally enriched local season. The squad later participated in domestic camps in Sohar and Muscat and played two successful friendlies in Dubai against the UAE youth team, winning both matches without dropping a set. The squad was then trimmed to 14 players, in accordance with official competition regulations.

The team began its overseas training camp in Egypt on June 21, where it has so far played and won two friendly matches against Egypt’s youth team as part of an intensive tactical and technical development plan.



The team will continue friendly match schedule in Egypt before returning to Oman

**FOCUS ON PHYSICAL AND TACTICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Al Muqbali emphasised that the current camp focuses on several key areas: modern strength building techniques to enhance muscular endurance, improvement of individual skills, addressing weaknesses, and developing team harmony and tactical execution. He highlighted that Coach Mohammad Vakili’s previous experience in Oman has allowed him to quickly understand the local players’ capabilities and design an effective training approach.

As for the squad composition, Al Muqbali noted a significant rejuvenation of the team, with the promotion of young talents such as Hamad al Maamari (Al Salam), Abdulbasit al Balushi (Sohar), Adam al Jaradi, and Abdullah al Shibli. He stated that the current squad’s average age positions it as one of the most promising teams among Gulf nations in terms of readiness and future potential.

**FRIENDLY MATCHES PLANNED WITH SAUDI ARABIA**

The team will continue its friendly match schedule in Egypt before returning to Oman, where it will host the Saudi national team from July 1 to 9. Four friendly matches are scheduled during that period, which will serve as the final phase of preparation before heading to Bahrain for the championship. Regarding the training structure in Cairo, Al Muqbali explained that mornings are dedicated to correcting errors and implementing tactical plans, followed by fitness sessions in specialised gyms.

Evening sessions are reserved for friendly matches.

He concluded by praising the training environment at the Hassan Mostafa Sports Complex in Cairo, which offers modern facilities, including gyms, recovery amenities and multiple training halls in one location maximising the benefits of the training camp.

# McLaren’s Lando Norris wins Austrian Grand Prix

**SPIELBERG, AUSTRIA:** Lando Norris resisted vigorous attacks from team-mate and championship leader Oscar Piastri to claim a masterful McLaren 1-2 in Sunday’s Austrian Grand Prix.

In torrid heat at the Red Bull Ring, the 25-year-old Briton came home 2.695 seconds clear of the 24-year-old Australian to trim his lead in the title race by 15 points

It was Norris’s first win in Austria, his third win this year and the seventh of his career. It was McLaren’s first win in Austria since David Coulthard triumphed in 2001.

The McLaren pair battled throughout the race to provide thrilling racing for the packed crowd and put behind them their collision in Canada two weeks earlier. Charles Leclerc was third ahead of his Ferrari team-mate seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton, their best result of the year, with George Russell finishing fifth for Mercedes.

“It was a tough race,” said Norris.

Liam Lawson came in a career-

**NORRIS WINS FROM POLE, PIASTRI SECOND**

**AUSTRALIAN’S POINTS LEAD CUT TO 15**

**NORRIS’S THIRD WIN OF THE SEASON**

**LECLERC THIRD AND HAMILTON FOURTH**

best sixth for RB on a desultory day for the senior Red Bull team after four-time champion Max Verstappen retired on the opening lap after being hit by Mercedes’ teenage rookie Kimi Antonelli. He is now 61 points behind Piastri. Two-time champion Fernando Alonso was seventh ahead of Gabriel Bortoleto and his Sauber team-mate Nico Hulkenberg, the future Audi outfit showing their huge potential, with Esteban Ocon finishing 10th for Haas.

**FRANTIC PRELUDE**

After a frantic prelude, during which Carlos Sainz’s Williams



McLaren’s Lando Norris celebrates on the podium with a trophy. — Reuters

failed to leave the grid and then caught fire in the pit lane, the race was delayed for 10 minutes - before delivering immediate drama at the second attempt.

Norris made a clean start while, behind him, Piastri passed Leclerc on the outside of Turn One before Antonelli locked up and lost control at Turn Three and hit Verstappen’s Red Bull.

A safety car was deployed as both drivers retired on lap one ending, for the defending champion a run of 31 races in the points.

“I got hit,” said the Dutchman on team radio. The teenage rookie apologised. “I locked the rear. Sorry about that,” he told Mercedes. The race resumed after a two-minute slowdown and Norris was forced immediately to defend as Piastri, looking sharp, attacked as also did Russell on Hamilton for fourth. Both were thwarted by defensive driving. By lap 12, the McLaren duo were four seconds clear and delivering a show of their own. Unhindered by any embarrassing hangovers

from their collision in Montreal, they raced side by side and wheel to wheel, but each time the Australian attacked, the Briton hung on. In scorching heat of 32 degrees (air) and 55 (track), it was a perfect advertisement for the historic venue in the Styrian Alps which had secured a 16-year contract extension to 2041 before the race. Norris pitted, taking hards, after surviving another Piastri lunge, at turn four, on lap 20. Piastri then followed suit, emerging fourth until Leclerc pitted. After the leaders out on track also changed tyres Norris led Piastri by 6.5 seconds. Red Bull’s misery intensified on lap 30 when Yuki Tsunoda hit Colapinto, sending both to the pits for repairs.

The Japanese rejoined 16th and last of the runners with a new front wing before being handed a 10-second penalty. As the field settled Norris led Piastri by 3.2s. Russell began the second round of stops on lap 46, followed by the rest of the leaders, leaving Norris to complete a near-perfect day in the Styrian mountains. — AFP

SHORTTAKES



Saudi Arabia defender Ali Majrashi (26) and Mexico forward Alexis Vega (10) battle for the ball. — Reuters

MEXICO INTO SEMIS OF GOLD CUP WITH SHUTOUT OF SAUDI ARABIA

Alexis Vega's strike just after the break and a late own goal by Abdullah Madu secured a 2-0 victory for Mexico over Saudi Arabia in the CONCACAF Gold Cup quarterfinals in Glendale, Arizona, on Saturday, setting up a clash with Honduras in the last four. Honduras, who knocked out Panama in a penalty shootout earlier in the day, will face defending champions Mexico in the semifinals in Santa Clara on Wednesday.

"I'm really happy with the team's work," said Vega, who scored for Mexico for the first time since 2022. "We will give everything to recuperate, get ready and try to reach another grand final."

Fulham forward Raul Jimenez's quick through ball set up Vega's sprint into the box, and although keeper Nawaf Al Aqidi blocked the first attempt, the Toluca striker found the target from the rebound, putting the 12-time champions ahead in the 49th minute. Tournament debutants Saudi Arabia's hopes of making a comeback were put to bed in the 81st minute, with Matteo Chavez's cross from the left taking a deflection off defender Madu and finding the net, doubling Mexico's lead. Saudi Arabia, who were invited to play in the tournament by the North American soccer governing body and reached the quarterfinals after finishing second in Group D, did well to contain heavy favourites Mexico's attack in the first half.

VEGA'S HEROICS

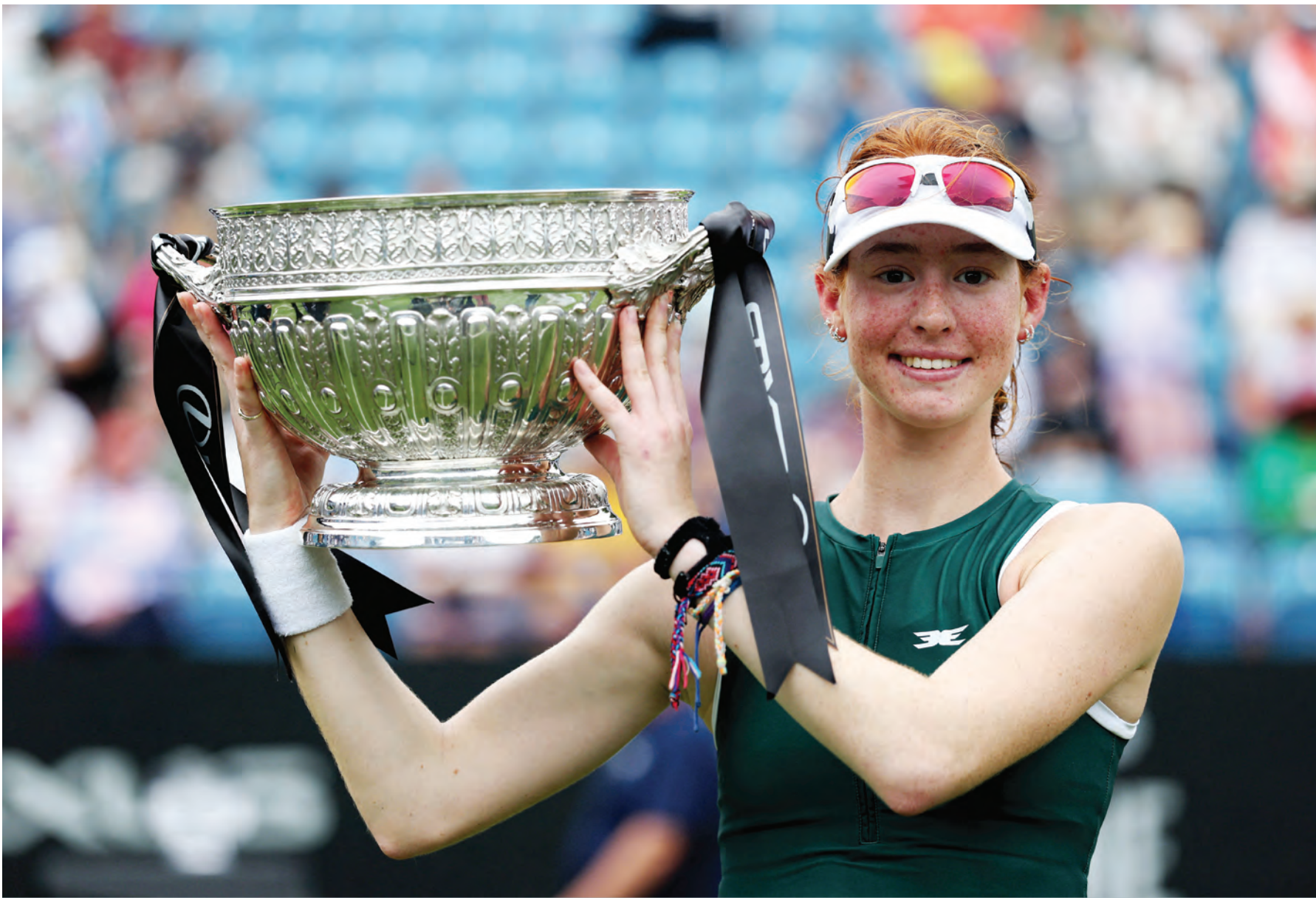
Vega's diagonal shot from the left in the 13th minute was just too high for Marcel Ruiz, and Ali Majrashi's acrobatic overhead clearance stopped Roberto Alvarado's left-footed kick from reaching Raul Jimenez in the box two minutes later.

Majrashi almost put Saudi Arabia ahead in the 20th minute when he capitalised on a defensive error to run up to the Mexico box unguarded, but his shot missed the near post.

Vega, who created the biggest chances for Mexico, delivered a corner kick to an unmarked Edson Alvarez in the box, but Al Aqidi's quick save denied the Mexico captain just before the half-hour mark.

Midfielder Gilberto Mora, who became the youngest to play for Mexico as he made his international debut at 16, found Vega with a short cross from the left just before half time but the striker shot wide.

Mexico, who had only one shot on target in the first half, looked for an early breakthrough after the break as Ruiz cleared the Saudi defensive line to receive Vega's through ball but hit the crossbar from close range. The groans of the Mexico supporters turned to cheers when Vega finally broke the deadlock a minute later. — Reuters



Australia's Maya Joint poses with the trophy. — Reuters

Joint wins Eastbourne title to end Eala's history bid

AUSTRALIAN

teenager Maya Joint saved four match points to clinch the WTA title at Eastbourne with a dramatic victory over Alexandra Eala that ended the Filipina's history bid on Saturday.

Joint survived a tense clash lasting two hours and 26 minutes, emerging with a 6-4, 1-6, 7-6 (12/10) win to seal her second WTA Tour title.

In the youngest Eastbourne final since 1981, world number 51 Joint staved off the four championship points in a gripping final-set tie-break. She finally wrapped up the title by drilling a backhand winner before collapsing to the turf in delight.

"I'm very happy right now, feeling very relieved as well. It was a very difficult match, I'm proud of myself for coming back and staying in the match," Joint said.

"I'm glad I was able to find a way back. Alex played really well today. She definitely tested me and after

“I’m very happy right now, feeling very relieved as well. It was a very difficult match, I’m proud of myself for coming back and staying in the match

MAYA JOINT

the first set she got very aggressive.

"What an amazing crowd, you guys came and supported me every day so thank you."

Having also defeated former Wimbledon runner-up Ons Jabeur and 2021 US Open champion Emma Raducanu at Eastbourne over the last week, Joint has underlined her status as one of the rising stars of the women's tour.

After winning on clay in Rabat in May, the 19-year-old has proved she can thrive on grass as well ahead of the start of Wimbledon on Monday.

Joint was unable to make it two trophies in one day as she and partner Hsieh Su-wei were beaten 6-4, 7-5 by Marie Bouzkova and Anna Danilina in the doubles final.

It was a painful defeat for Eala, who was so close to becoming the first player from the Philippines to win a WTA Tour title.

The 20-year-old wiped away tears of frustration during the on-court trophy presentation.

Eala had become the first Filipina to reach a WTA final after beating Varvara Gracheva in the last four at Eastbourne on Friday. "I want to congratulate Maya for a great match

and great tournament," Eala said.

"This is my first WTA final, it's a big deal for me and for my country too because it's historic. I guess that's also why I'm so emotional.

"Wimbledon is next week so hopefully I'll forget about this match soon."

Eala's run to the final has made the world number 74 one to watch in the coming months.

After progressing through qualifying to make the main draw, Eala beat Lucia Bronzetti, former French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko, Nottingham Open finalist Dayana Yastremska and France's Gracheva.

She had burst onto the scene with three shock victories over Grand Slam winners Ostapenko, Madison Keys and Iga Swiatek to reach the Miami Open semifinals in March.

Eala is due to face reigning champion Barbora Krejcikova in the Wimbledon first round on Centre Court on Tuesday.

But Krejcikova is struggling with a thigh injury that forced her to pull out of the Eastbourne quarterfinals on Thursday, putting the Czech's title defence in doubt. — AFP

Marquez wins Dutch Grand Prix, brother Alex crashes out

ASSEN, Netherlands: Marc Marquez extended his lead in the world championship standings winning the Dutch MotoGP on Sunday in a race where his closest pursuer and younger brother Alex Marquez suffered a left hand fracture.

Marc Marquez came home on his Ducati ahead of Marco Bezzecchi (Aprilia) with the winner's team-mate Francesco Bagnaia third.

Marc Marquez's victory — at the circuit known as the 'Cathedral of Speed' celebrating its 100th anniversary — brought him level with legend Giacomo Agostini on 68 elite wins, still 21 adrift of Valentino Rossi.

Marquez leads Alex by 68 points with Bagnaia 126 adrift after 10 of the 22 race season.



Marc Marquez celebrates on the podium after winning the Grand Prix of Netherlands. — Reuters

Bagnaia got a superb start shooting straight past pole sitter Fabio Quartararo, the Frenchman's hopes of delivering Yamaha a victory on their 70th anniversary receding rapidly as he dropped down the field.

At least he remained in the race, Japan's Ai Ogura's participation ended on the first lap as he was taken out by Miguel Oliveira.

Marc Marquez moved into second on the second lap with British MotoGP winner Bezzecchi gliding into third.

Marquez passed his teammate on the fifth lap but a lap later his sibling Alex Marquez caught a cropper as tussling with Pedro Acosta he came to grief. Alex Marquez jumped back to his feet but was gingerly holding

his wrist as he was biked back to the pitlane and was taken to the medical centre for a check-up.

An attritional race claimed two more riders as Joan Mir and Fermin Aldeguer suffered heavy crashes — both consoling each other.

Bagnaia's hopes of a fourth successive Assen win — Australian icon Mick Doohan won five in a row 1994-98 — was over by the 11th lap, as he dropped to fourth, passed by Bezzecchi and Acosta.

Bezzecchi then turned his attention on Marquez's Ducati, ramping up the pressure on the leader.

Marquez, though, responded like the champion he is in setting the fastest race lap at the halfway mark of the 26 lap race. — AFP



Botafogo's Kaio Pantaleao in action with Palmeiras' Luighi. — Reuters

# CHELSEA, PALMEIRAS BOOK CWC QUARTERS SPOT

**CHELSEA** beat Benfica in a game which went on for close to five hours at the Club World Cup on Saturday to set up a quarterfinal showdown with Brazilian side Palmeiras at the tournament in the United States.

The London club were grateful to extra-time goals by Christopher Nkunku, Pedro Neto and Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall to give them a 4-1 victory over Benfica.

Their late burst of scoring settled a last-16 tie which took four hours, 39 minutes to complete at Charlotte's Bank of America Stadium in North Carolina after a near two-hour weather delay.

Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca was left satisfied with his team's victory but slammed the delay that turned the tie into a near five-hour marathon.

"I think it's a joke, it's not football," Maresca said.

"For 85 minutes we were in control of the game. We created enough chances to win the game. Then after the break, the game changed — for me personally, it's not football."

Earlier, Chelsea had been seemingly poised for victory after Reece James' opportunistic second-half free-kick had left them 1-0 up with four minutes of regulation time remaining.

But just as Chelsea began to think about their quarterfinal assignment, the arrival of a storm over Charlotte triggered local safety protocols which required the game to be halted.

It marked the sixth occasion during the Club World Cup that a game has been disrupted by a weather warning.

When play resumed just under two hours later, a revitalised Benfica grabbed an injury-time equaliser after Chelsea substitute Malo Gusto was adjudged to have handled in the penalty area following an intervention by the Video Assistant Referee.

Benfica's Argentine veteran Angel Di Maria stepped up to roll in an ice-cold penalty, sending the game into extra time.

An end-to-end first half of extra time saw Benfica, reduced to 10 men following Gianluca Prestianni's second yellow card at the end of regulation, threaten to take the lead as they chased an improbable victory.

But instead it was Nkunku who fired Chelsea back in front, the French international bundling in from close range after Moises Caicedo's low shot squirted underneath Benfica goalkeeper Antoliy Trubin. As the game opened up, Benfica were increasingly vulnerable on the counter-attack and Chelsea pounced.

Neto made it 3-1 with a nerveless finish after going clean through on goal in the 114th minute, and three minutes later Dewsbury-Hall completed the rout to send Chelsea through to the last eight.

They will now return to Philadelphia, where they played two games in the group stage, to play Palmeiras in the quarterfinals on Friday. — AFP

# BUSINESS

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## LOGISTICS CENTRE



Total accumulated investments in the city had surpassed RO 767 million by end-2024.

## Rusayl Industrial City attracts RO 49 million investment in 2024



**ENG FAHAD  
BIN NASSER AL  
ABROUI**

Acting CEO of Rusayl Industrial City

**MUSCAT:** Rusayl Industrial City, part of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), signed 17 new contracts in 2024 for projects covering over 235,000 square metres, with total investments exceeding RO

49 million. The projects span industrial, logistics and service sectors.

Eng Fahad bin Nasser al Abroui, Acting CEO of Rusayl Industrial City Company, stated that total accumulated investments in the city had surpassed RO 767 million by end-2024.

The industrial city, spanning roughly 11 million square metres, hosts diverse sectors including chemicals, electrical goods, construction materials, fibre optic cables, food, textiles, stationery, dyes, filtration systems and furniture.

Al Abroui noted ongoing key projects, including the infrastructure works for the Madayn Pioneering Complex, developed in partnership with the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development, across more than 60,000 square metres.

This initiative aims to create a fully serviced SMEs zone, with subdivided workshops of 500 square metres each.

Additionally, a consultancy project is underway to address stormwater drainage challenges, including new roadworks to improve access to leased plots and other urban enhancements. Further initiatives include the redesign of the commercial area to house more retail units catering to investors and visitors.

Among the upcoming projects is the establishment of an integrated facility to support food security, in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

Another planned project will focus on reusing treated wastewater for cooling and industrial purposes. Al Abroui also confirmed that beautification work on the city's main entrance will be completed by year-end.

Since its inception in 1983, Rusayl Industrial City has served as a key enabler of Oman's economic diversification strategy. Its "Masar" one-stop service centre simplifies investor procedures by streamlining approvals, permits, and licences — creating an integrated, investor-friendly environment aligned with Oman Vision 2040. — ONA

# Oman launches lantern-fish development pilot

CONRAD PRABHU  
MUSCAT, JUNE 29

## FISHERIES

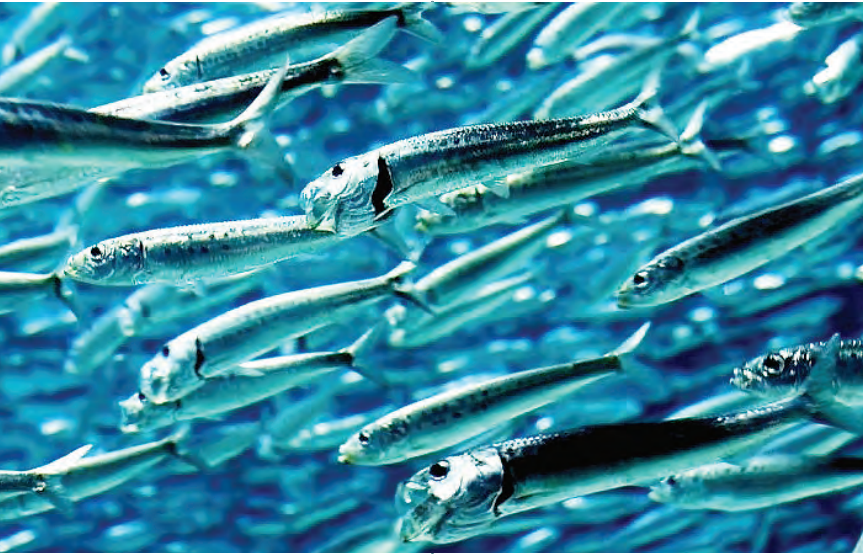
Development Oman (FDO), the government's investment arm for the fisheries sector and a subsidiary of Oman Investment Authority (OIA), has launched a key initiative to tap into Oman's vast stocks of lantern-fish – a sustainable and largely unexploited marine resource with significant commercial potential across a range of industries.

Lantern-fish, known locally as Al Fanar, are known not only for their suitability in fishmeal and fish oil production, but also for their applications in pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and nutritional supplements.

This first-of-its-kind project marks Oman's formal entry into lantern-fish development and harvesting.

FDO – which manages a diverse portfolio of businesses spanning shrimp farming, aquaculture, pelagic fishing, fisheries vessel operations, large-scale fish processing and port management – is now extending its scope to include the commercial exploration of lantern-fish.

In this regard, it has signed a strategic partnership with



This first-of-its-kind project marks Oman's formal entry into lantern-fish development and harvesting.

an international entity to carry out experimental fishing operations targeting lantern-fish.

According to OIA's recently released 2024 Annual Report, this collaboration aims to "enable Oman to optimally utilise this vital biological resource," laying the groundwork for sustainable exploitation that aligns with the country's long-term food security and economic diversification goals.

The initiative builds on extensive research and survey work undertaken over the years by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, Sultan Qaboos University, and

the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The most recent of these surveys was launched by the ministry in October 2023 – a multiphase study to assess lantern-fish stock volumes in the Sea of Oman and the Arabian Sea.

Findings from earlier studies have already revealed significant lantern-fish biomass. One such survey conducted between 1985 and 1991 estimated the biomass at 4.5 million tonnes annually in the Sea of Oman alone – underscoring the resource's vast potential if harvested sustainably.

The skinnycheek lantern-fish (*Benthosema pterotum*),

a member of the Myctophidae family, is the species under focus.

These fish typically inhabit offshore waters near the continental shelf, particularly in areas deeper than 100 metres. During the day, they gather in two distinct vertical layers, with dense schools found between 80–130 metres. At night, they migrate to shallower depths of 30–70 metres, forming a more dispersed layer closer to the surface.

Supporting this initiative are a number of national programmes and entities, including the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, the National Investment and Export Development Programme, and the National Employment Programme.

These stakeholders are helping to assess how lantern-fish development can contribute to economic growth, job creation and food security.

Potential downstream opportunities include the extraction of bioactive compounds for pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, the production of fish oil and nutritional supplements, and manufacturing of sustainable fishmeal to support Oman's growing aquaculture and animal feed sectors.

## Oman, FAO sign pact to establish office in Muscat

**ROME:** The Sultanate of Oman and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations signed an agreement in Rome to open a permanent FAO Representation in Muscat.

This step strengthens Oman's participation in global discussions on food, climate and water, enhances technical cooperation and supports the implementation of joint initiatives in agriculture, fisheries and natural resource management.

The agreement was signed by Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, on behalf of Oman, and by FAO Director-General Dr Qu Dongyu, with the presence of HH Sayyid Nizar bin al Julanda al Said, Oman's Ambassador to Italy, and officials from both parties.

Dr Al Habsi said the agreement affirms FAO's pivotal role in shaping international agricultural, livestock, food security and



The agreement was signed by Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, on behalf of Oman, and by FAO Director-General Dr Qu Dongyu.

rural development policies.

He expressed hope that the partnership would increase project inflows and leverage FAO's expertise to implement national strategies and enhance coordination across sectors under the ministry's purview.

Dr Thaer Yassin, Head of FAO's mission in Oman,

described the agreement as a strategic step that will strengthen the organisation's ability to assist member states in building sustainable, inclusive and resilient food systems.

He stressed that a permanent office will expand the scope of technical cooperation and promote

knowledge exchange at both national and regional levels. Since 2012, FAO has implemented a range of agricultural and fisheries projects in Oman with a focus on sustainability and climate adaptation.

Between 2022 and 2024, its project portfolio in the Sultanate of Oman grew by 83%, reflecting deepening trust and collaborative ties with government bodies, academia and the private sector.

Oman is now positioned as a strategic partner in FAO's regional drive to transform food systems across the Gulf. The agreement underscores the country's rising international profile and its commitment to sustainable agriculture, food security and rural development.

It also supports progress towards multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in ending hunger, climate action and land conservation. — ONA

ADVERTORIALS

REMARKABLEFEAT



Mitsubishi Oman secured a total of five prestigious awards, each highlighting a core strength of the company’s operations.

MITSUBISHI MOTORS OMAN AWARDED ‘BEST DISTRIBUTOR OF THE YEAR’

MUSCAT: General Automotive Company (GAC), the official distributor for Mitsubishi Motors in Oman and part of The Zubair Corporation, has been awarded ‘Best Distributor of the Year’ by Mitsubishi Motors Middle East and Africa (MMMEA).

The award reflects GAC’s exceptional performance across all key business areas and reinforces its position as one of the most accomplished Mitsubishi distributors in the entire Middle East and Africa region.

In a landmark achievement, Mitsubishi Oman secured a total of five prestigious awards, each highlighting a core strength of the company’s operations.

The title of “Distributor of the Year” is awarded to the top-performing distributor in the Middle East and Africa region, based on a holistic evaluation of performance in Sales, Marketing, Customer experience, After-sales and overall business growth. This award stands as a testament to Mitsubishi Oman’s consistent excellence, strategic development and unwavering customer-centric approach.

In addition, Mitsubishi Oman received the prestigious “Best in After-Sales” award, distinguishing itself as the only winner in the entire Middle East and Africa region. This recognition highlights the company’s operational strengths, including exceptional workshop standards, technical expertise, parts availability and proactive service outreach. These factors all contribute to high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Mitsubishi Oman was also honoured with the award for “Best Customer Experience”, which recognises organisations that excel at creating seamless, customer-centric touchpoints, from digital platforms to showroom interactions and after-sales support, ensuring an elevated ownership journey.

Further, the “Platinum Award for Sales and Marketing Excellence” was presented to Mitsubishi Oman as recognition for its innovative campaigns, effective branding and data-driven retail strategies that have significantly contributed to Mitsubishi’s market presence and consumer appeal in Oman.

Finally, the “Platinum Award for After-Sales Excellence” affirms Mitsubishi Oman’s leadership in customer care and technical service delivery. It acknowledges the company’s ongoing commitment to providing world-class customer experience, support and timely service, long after the vehicle is sold.

This is the 4th consecutive year that Mitsubishi Oman has won the much-valued Platinum Award in After-Sales Excellence, becoming the only distributor to have achieved this remarkable feat.

LuLu Exchange supports youth football in Oman

MUSCAT: LuLu Exchange shines a spotlight on tomorrow’s champions by providing official jerseys to Al Itifaq Sport Academy, inspiring young athletes to dream big and pursue their passion for football with pride and purpose.

The jersey handover ceremony was held at Al Itifaq Sport Academy in Yiti, Muscat and was attended by Lathish Vichitran, General Manager of LuLu Exchange, Mohammed al Kiyumi, Head of HR and other senior staff members.

Al Itifaq Sport Academy is committed to nurturing the next generation of sports leaders by offering high-quality football training and instilling values of discipline, teamwork and ambition in young athletes across the community.

The academy focuses on developing both athletic abilities and life skills, with health and fitness as its foundation.

The General Manager of Lulu Exchange, Lathish Vichitran, said,



The jersey handover ceremony was held at Al Itifaq Sport Academy in Yiti.

“We are proud to collaborate with Al Itifaq Sports Academy, an institution that plays such an important role in shaping the future of young athletes. Our contribution of official jerseys aims to motivate these young talents and help them shine in the world of football.

We remain committed to supporting initiatives that foster discipline, teamwork and holistic growth among the youth”.

Mohammed al Kiyumi, Head of HR, Lulu Exchange, added,

“These jerseys are a symbol of pride, belonging and the spirit of teamwork.

We believe this gesture will motivate these young athletes to play with passion, stand by each other and pursue their biggest dreams both on and off the field”.

Saud al Wahibi, Academy Manager of Al Itifaq Sport Academy, expressed gratitude, stating, “This partnership is an incredible boost for our academy and its young athletes”.

THAWANI PAY AND OMINVEST UNVEIL ‘OMINVEST PLUS’

MUSCAT: In alignment with its strategic vision to invest in the well-being of its human capital and foster meaningful private-sector partnerships, Thawani Pay has signed a strategic agreement with Oman International Development & Investment Company (Ominvest) to launch the “Ominvest Plus” initiative — an exclusive discount and offers platform tailored for Ominvest employees and their families.

The agreement was signed by Majid al Amri, Founder and CEO of Thawani Pay and Abdulaziz al Balushi, Group CEO of Ominvest, marking a significant step forward in employee-focused benefits under Thawani’s “Sama” corporate offers platform. The “Ominvest Plus” platform unlocks a curated selection of offers across diverse lifestyle categories, including restaurants, hotels,



The agreement was signed by Majid al Amri, Founder and CEO of Thawani Pay and Abdulaziz al Balushi, Group CEO of Ominvest.

wellness services and automotive care. Designed to provide exceptional convenience, the card

enables users to redeem unlimited offers through the Thawani app, with the flexibility to complete transactions via the app or through other preferred payment methods. The platform will be available exclusively to Ominvest employees and their families, ensuring a seamless and rewarding experience integrated into their everyday lives.

Majid al Amri, CEO of Thawani Pay said: “At Thawani, our mission is to lead the fintech sector by delivering smart, simple and secure payment services, today’s launch of the ‘Ominvest Plus’ exemplifies this commitment.

By bringing exclusive lifestyle benefits directly to Ominvest employees and their families through our Sama platform, we’re not only enhancing convenience but also redefining how fintech innovations can uplift human capital.”

Oman’s first open banking platform launched

IN a landmark move underscoring its commitment to driving digital innovation and financial inclusion, Sohar International has announced the official launch of its Open Banking platform — making it the first bank in the Sultanate of Oman to introduce a fully integrated Open Banking solution.

This strategic advancement enhances the bank's digital ecosystem and reflects its role as a catalyst for technology-driven progress within Oman's financial sector.

Open banking gives businesses greater visibility and control over their financial information, helping them manage cash flow, plan more accurately and make informed decisions. The platform also enables faster, more efficient financial transactions, reducing complexity and improving daily



Open banking gives businesses greater visibility and control over their financial information.

business operations. “This launch reflects our strong alignment with the Central Bank of Oman's forward-

looking regulatory framework,” said Abdulwahid Mohamed al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International.

“Through Open Banking, we are not only meeting compliance requirements but also enabling the development of industry-specific financial and non-financial services. These capabilities empower businesses to streamline their operations, drive innovation and contribute meaningfully to national priorities such as financial inclusion, private sector growth and digital advancement under Oman Vision 2040”.

By providing secure and compliant access to banking services through open APIs, Sohar International's Open Banking platform allows fintech companies, corporates and government entities to build tailored financial solutions with greater agility.

The platform aims to lower integration costs, shorten time-to-market and allow for more customer-centric services to emerge.

MG HS CONTINUES TO IMPRESS AS THE BENCHMARK FOR STYLE

MUSCAT: The MG HS is steadily carving its space in Oman’s mid-size SUV segment, with growing attention from customers who seek the perfect blend of dynamic styling, safety and comfort.

Launched earlier this year, the HS has quickly become the go-to choice for younger drivers and families looking for a vehicle that keeps up with their active lifestyle while turning heads wherever it goes.

Praised for its commanding design and immersive tech, the MG HS continues to win hearts with features like dual 12.3-inch HD screens, BOSE premium sound and intelligent driver assistance systems that make every journey safer and more enjoyable. Its five-star Euro NCAP safety rating and Level 2 ADAS underline MG’s ongoing commitment to advanced engineering and occupant protection.

The MG HS comes in two performance-driven engine options — A 1.5L turbo engine paired with a 7-speed dual clutch transmission, offering a spirited 173hp & A 2.0L turbocharged variant



The MG HS comes in two performance-driven engine options.

with a 9-speed automatic, pushing 231hp for those who want more punch.

This performance, when combined with features like 360-degree cameras, six airbags and superior NVH control, delivers a driving experience that’s equal parts smooth and exhilarating.

Inside, the MG HS continues to impress. The

‘suaricle’ steering wheel, panoramic roof and premium finishes elevate every drive. Add to that the wireless charging, dual-zone AC and connected smartphone ecosystem and it’s clear why the MG HS is redefining what a mid-size SUV can offer.

What sets the HS apart is how it balances boldness and practicality. Whether you’re heading to the office, on a weekend escape, or managing school runs the MG HS adapts with ease. The electronic tailgate, up to 1,397L cargo capacity, and driver memory settings make it ready for any lifestyle.

Mohsin Hani al Bahrani, CEO, MHD ACERE remarked, “The MG HS represents the evolution of what today’s SUV buyers truly want — bold design, intelligent features and uncompromising safety. At MHD, we are proud to bring this dynamic vehicle to Oman, offering a driving experience that speaks to a new generation of customers who demand both performance and practicality in their everyday journeys”.

BUSINESS

SEANEIGHBOURS



The event brought together representatives from chambers of commerce, business leaders; and shipping and logistics experts from across the Arab world and Greece.

Oman showcases logistics hub potential at Arab-Greek maritime forum

ATHENS: The Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) took part in the 2nd Arab-Greek Maritime Conference held in Athens, Greece, under the theme “Cooperation between Neighbours of the Sea”.

Organised by the Arab-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce and Development, the event brought together representatives from chambers of commerce, business leaders; and shipping and logistics experts from across the Arab world and Greece.

The conference aimed to spotlight the significance of enhancing trade and maritime ties among coastal nations and fostering economic and investment partnerships, especially in the context of rapid shifts in global supply chains and the growing strategic role of ports and industrial zones in national economies.

Saif bin Nasser al Taiwani, OCCI board member and Chairman of its Al Dakhiliyah Governorate branch, highlighted Oman’s strategic geographical position and investor-friendly legal framework.

He affirmed the government’s efforts to develop port infrastructure and connect maritime gateways to economic and industrial zones, positioning Oman as a regional logistics and trade hub.

He pointed out that Omani ports such as Sohar, Salalah and Duqm offer integrated industrial environments supporting manufacturing, logistics and warehousing industries. These facilities present broad opportunities for investment and partnerships in the blue economy.

He emphasised the Chamber’s commitment to advancing initiatives that stimulate trade, transportation and investment across free zones and port areas. — ONA

World economy faces ‘pivotal moment’, central bank body BIS says

LONDON: Trade tensions and fractious geopolitics risk exposing deep fault lines in the global financial system, central bank umbrella body the Bank for International Settlements, said in its latest assessment of the state of the world economy.

Outgoing head of the BIS, often dubbed the central bankers’ central bank, Agustín Carstens, said the US-driven trade war and other policy shifts were fraying the long-established economic order.

He said the global economy was at a “pivotal moment”, entering a “new era of heightened uncertainty and unpredictability”, which was testing public trust in institutions, including central banks.

The bank’s report is published just over a week before US President Donald Trump’s trade tariff deadline of July 9 and comes after six months of intense geopolitical upheaval. When asked about Trump’s criticisms of US Federal Reserve Jerome Powell, which have



Agustín Carstens speaks at the World Bank-International Monetary Fund Spring Meeting in Washington, DC. — Reuters

included Trump labelling the Fed chair as “stupid”, he was not overly critical.

“It is to be expected at certain points in time that there will be friction,” former Mexican

central bank governor Carstens told reporters, referring to the relationship between governments and central banks. “It is almost by design”.

DOLLAR DROP

The BIS’ annual report, published on Sunday, is viewed as an important gauge of central bankers’ thinking given the Switzerland-based forum’s regular meetings of top policymakers.

Rising protectionism and trade fragmentation were “particularly concerning” as they were exacerbating the already decades-long decline in economic and productivity growth, Carstens said.

There is also evidence that the world economy is becoming less resilient to shocks, with population ageing, climate change, geopolitics and supply chain issues all contributing to a more volatile environment.

The post-Covid spike in inflation seems to have had a lasting impact on the public’s

perception about price moves too, a study in the report showed.

High and rising public debt levels are increasing the financial system’s vulnerability to interest rates and reducing governments’ ability to spend their way out of crises.

“This trend cannot continue,” Carstens said referring to the rising debt levels and he said that higher military spending could push the debt up further.

Hyun Song Shin, the BIS’s main economic adviser, also flagged the sharp fall in the dollar. It is down 10 per cent since the start of the year and on track to be its biggest H1 drop since the free-floating exchange rate era began in the early 1970s.

He said there was no evidence that this was the start of a “great rotation” away from US assets as some economists have suggested, but acknowledged that it was still too early to know given sovereign funds and central banks move slowly. — Reuters

FX BOOST

China rolls over \$3.4 bn of loans to Pakistan



China has rolled over \$3.4 billion in loans to Islamabad, which together with other recent commercial and multilateral lending will boost Pakistan’s foreign exchange reserves to \$14 billion, a source said on Sunday.

Beijing rolled over \$2.1 billion, which has been in Pakistan’s central bank’s reserves for the last three years and refinanced another \$1.3 billion commercial loan. — Reuters

STRATEGIC HARM

Senate bill would destroy jobs and harm US



Billionaire Elon Musk on Saturday criticised the latest version of President Donald Trump’s tax and spending bill released by the US Senate, calling it “utterly insane and destructive,” weeks after the world’s richest person and its most powerful ended a feud.

“The latest Senate draft bill will destroy millions of jobs in America and cause immense strategic harm to our country!” Musk wrote on X. — Reuters

CASH INJECTION

Volkswagen to increase stake in Rivian



German car giant Volkswagen is set to increase its stake in electric vehicle maker Rivian with a planned second payment of \$1 billion due this Monday, after the US-based company recently achieved key financial targets in early May.

The payment will increase Volkswagen’s stake in the company, which stands at 8.6% after an initial \$1 billion investment last year. — dpa

OPINION

IMF warns UK spending set to hit 53 per cent of GDP



ANDY JALIL

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The writer is our foreign correspondent based in the UK

THE International Monetary Fund has warned that the British state will swell to more than half the total size of the UK economy under the government’s current plans. The IMF sounded the alarm on “tough policy decisions” needed to meet rising spending. Total public expenditure is projected to grow by eight percentage points over the next 25 years based on current policies, the UN-run agency said, citing growing spending on health care and pensions amidst an ageing British population. That would take state spending from the 45 per cent share of GDP estimated by the Office for Budget Responsibility for 2025 to as much as 53 per cent by 2050, the highest level seen since the 1940s, with the brief exception of the 2020 coronavirus lockdown when parts of the economy were temporarily shuttered. The IMF said further tax rises would be needed to meet the increased expenditure, because “there is limited space to finance this spending through extra borrowing, given high debt and elevated borrowing costs”. The fund also warned Chancellor Rachel Reeves not to breach her already precarious fiscal headroom rules or risk a market backlash that could wreck Labour’s (government’s) budget plans. Any additional spending would need to

be covered by tax rises or cuts elsewhere, the IMF said, urging the government “to stay the course and deliver the planned deficit reduction over the next five years to stabilise net debt and reduce vulnerability to gilt market pressures”. The economic agency projected UK growth to rise 1.2 per cent in 2025 and 1.4 per cent in 2026, but cautioned that market shocks and global trade tensions would derail Britain’s growth prospects by as much as 0.3 per cent. “Materialisation of these risks could result in market pressures, put debt on an upward path and make it harder to meet the fiscal rules, given limited headroom,” the IMF said. The warning comes amidst reports Reeves is plotting to reverse previous cuts in winter fuel allowances and child benefit caps, moves which would add billions to the size of the government’s budget and intensify concerns of further tax rises ahead. Mel Stride MP, shadow (Conservative) Chancellor of the Exchequer, said: “Rachel Reeves has already fiddled her fiscal targets to allow her to borrow hundreds of billions more over this parliament. “She has loosened the rules and then constantly teetered on the brink of breaking them. In a context where the Chancellor’s credibility is already in tatters, changing the goalposts a second time would run real risks

Total public expenditure is projected to grow by eight percentage points over the next 25 years based on current policies, the UN-run agency said, citing growing spending on health care and pensions amidst an ageing British population.

with market confidence.” On another issue — the boss of EnQuest has slammed the windfall tax on oil and gas firms as doing “irreversible damage” to the industry and “driving job losses across the sector”. Amjad Bseisu, London-listed EnQuest’s chief executive, called for the North Sea tax to be scrapped in an operations update after claiming it makes the UK a less attractive place to invest. The UK Energy Profits Levy was introduced in May 2022 and applies to oil and gas companies operating in the North Sea. It is designed to tax the extra profits these companies made due to surging energy prices after Russia’s war on Ukraine. Initially, the rate was 25 per cent but it later jumped to 35 per cent in January 2023. The tax has been extended by Chancellor Reeves to run until March 2030, but has a “price floor” mechanism, which allows it to end early if prices fall significantly. London-listed company Harbour Energy also slammed the government’s “punitive fiscal position” last month. Bseisu argued: “The recent stepdown in commodity prices has further amplified calls for UK government to remove the Energy Profits Levy and return the North Sea to a position of global competitiveness”.

AKZONOBEL SALE  
FLAGS INDIA’S  
FOREIGN CAPITAL  
ANGST

SHRITAMA BOSE

WHAT’S good for Indian tycoons is not always good for India. Dutch paint maker AkzoNobel is selling a controlling stake in its local unit to the domestic JSW Group. The deal fits into its goal to focus its global portfolio amidst a hypercompetitive market — but it also deepens India’s capital outflow woes. The \$12 billion maker of the Dulux paint brand on Friday said it would offload up to a 75% stake in Akzo Nobel India to privately held JSW Paints for \$1.1 billion. It will retain full control over its local powder coatings business and research unit. The proceeds from the sale will be used to cut debt and buy back shares of the parent. The transaction comes at an opportune time for AkzoNobel, which decided last October to concentrate on coatings in key geographies. It eases the company away from a market shaken up by the entry last year of local tycoon KM Birla’s Grasim Industries, whose discounts to grab market share are hurting the margins of incumbents. It makes financial sense too, valuing Akzo Nobel India at 22 times EBITDA, more than twice the multiple at which the parent’s Amsterdam-listed shares trade. Inspired by these sorts of punchy valuations, multinationals in India have been paring stakes in local units. British American Tobacco sold shares in ITC to raise \$1.5 billion last month and US appliance maker Whirlpool plans to slash its stake in its Indian business to 20% from 51%. Less benign reasons underpin other transactions. Germany’s Siemens sold 90% in its loss-making wind turbine division to TPG amidst cutthroat competition. Swiss drugmaker Novartis is looking for a buyer for its Indian operations, which it says are relatively small compared to other geographies. The slate of assets on offer bodes well for Indian founders looking to grow through acquisitions. But it undermines India’s vaunted position as a haven for global capital. Net foreign direct investment during the eight months to the end of November 2024 dropped to \$500 million from \$8.5 billion in the same period of 2023, per data from the Reserve Bank of India. Blame it on repatriations by global firms, which stood at \$44.5 billion for the 12 months ended March 2024, having risen every year since March 2020. Strong valuations aren’t exactly bad news. But if they wind up making India look less of a magnet for global capital, they’re not uniformly good news either. — Reuters

The connection: Supply chains and geopolitics

OVER the decades, the supply chains have become a highly integrated web of interconnections driven by globalisation. However, the global supply chain landscape is experiencing constant reorientation and stress in recent years due to the increasing strain of disruptions. The key events that have impacted the supply chain from all fronts are the Covid-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, the Israel-Palestine war, China-US Trade War 1 and Trade War 2, which were initiated by sweeping tariffs introduced by the trump administration in his current second term. Now, the US bombing of three of Iran’s nuclear facilities and the retaliatory response of Iran bombing the US air base in Doha, Qatar, has put the entire Middle East and the world in a state of heightened uncertainty and could trigger a significant disruption of supply chains and a probable spike in oil prices.

Energy analysts fear a specter of panic buying in the international energy market if the situation escalates further. To get a perspective, the Strait of Hormuz is the world’s most strategic and critical chokepoint, a narrow stretch of water with Iran to the north and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman to the south linking the Arabian Gulf to the Sea of Oman and the Arabian Sea. It is a vital vein for the passage of Oil and gas shipments. The Strait of Hormuz is critical as 20% of the world’s oil and a third of liquefied petroleum Gas (LNG) pass through this narrow strait. The Strait handles 20.3 million barrels of oil daily, making it crucial for global trade and supply. The Middle East region is experiencing protracted uncertainty that could affect the global energy markets. The recent US attack on key Iranian enrichment facilities to destroy Iran’s nuclear ambitions could affect the movement of ships in this region. The Strait of Hormuz is also a primary export route of Qatari LNG,



This handout natural-colour image acquired with MODIS on NASA’s Terra satellite taken on February 5, 2025 shows the Sea of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz. — AFP



DR MYTHILI KOLLURU

The writer is an assistant professor at the marketing and management department of the College of Banking and Financial Studies in Muscat.

with a fifth of the global LNG supply passing through this strait last year. If Iran stops the movement of ships through this Strait, it would be economic suicide for the world. While they have not done it, they are taking actions to interfere with energy shipments by jamming the GPS signals of tankers in this region. According to maritime intelligence reports, 23% of the region’s vessels, approximately 1600 ships, have experienced signal jamming. Many shipping giants have temporarily issued standby instructions to their vessels or rerouted them in anticipation and fear of further geopolitical escalations. The closure or any restrictions to this trade route will have far-reaching implications for the world. It could also strain diplomatic relationships, increase energy prices, sharply raise inflationary pressures and cause shipment delays. Over the years, the US has been worried about the vulnerability of the Strait of Hormuz and has

gradually reduced its dependency on Middle East oil. It has grown to become one of the world’s largest oil-producing nations. Now, the US imports only 10-11% of its oil requirement from Iraq and Saudi Arabia in the Middle East. However, 84% of Hormuz’s shipped oil goes to Asia. The strait is 21 miles wide at its narrowest point, with shipping lanes only 2 miles across. A blockade could halt 20% of global oil instantly. Businesses exploring diversifying logistic pathways face significant operational, economic and geopolitical hurdles. The Strait of Hormuz remains irreplaceable for bulk shipments; it is, in fact, the most viable option for global trade shipments. Given the geopolitical escalations, trade wars, regional instability and unpredictability of political decisions, the Strait of Hormuz is more than a strategic trade gateway; it has become a geopolitical weapon, magnifying its significance for sustainable international trade and global supply chains.



# ART/LIFE



A R T

## IN THIS EXHIBIT, SIX FEMALE ARTISTS TURN EMOTION INTO SHELTER > 20

EXHIBIT

### Swiss museum reaches deal to keep Gauguin work swept up in WWII



A PAINTING by French post-Impressionist master Paul Gauguin whose Jewish owner sold it under duress after fleeing Nazi Germany will remain in a Swiss museum under a deal announced on Tuesday.

The 1884 painting, “The Street”, is part of the vast art collection of the late German-Swiss arms tycoon Emil Buehrle, which has ignited controversy over accusations he acquired many of the pieces in questionable circumstances during World War II.

The painting’s previous owner, German Jewish businessman Richard Semmel, sold it at auction in Geneva in 1937 to support himself and his wife after being forced to flee Nazi persecution, said the Buehrle Foundation, which now has custody over the late tycoon’s collection.

Buehrle, who died in 1956, left a vast collection of hundreds of pieces including works by Picasso, Van Gogh, Monet, Renoir, Cezanne, Rembrandt and Degas.

But his foundation and the museum housing the collection, Zurich’s renowned Kunsthaus, have faced claims that many of the paintings were looted during the Holocaust or acquired from Jews forced to sell them under duress.

The Kunsthaus hired experts to trace the works’ origins and last year announced it was removing five paintings over concerns about Nazi looting, including “The Street”.

But it has now reached a deal with Semmel’s heirs to continue displaying the painting, the foundation said.

The parties “agreed on a settlement due to Semmel’s life circumstances and his emigration as a result of Nazi persecution”, it said in a statement.

“The painting will remain in the Emil Buehrle Collection and can continue to be exhibited at the Kunsthaus Zurich.

Details of the agreement were not released.

Semmel’s heirs are the granddaughters of a woman named Grete Gross, an old acquaintance from Berlin who cared for him in his later years until his death, childless and impoverished, in New York in 1950. — AFP

### Q U I C K F E A T U R E S



ENTERTAINMENT

Dancers from Akram Khan Dance Company perform during the Generale of “Thikra, Night of Remembering”, as part of the Montpellier Danse Festival. — AFP



LIFESTYLE

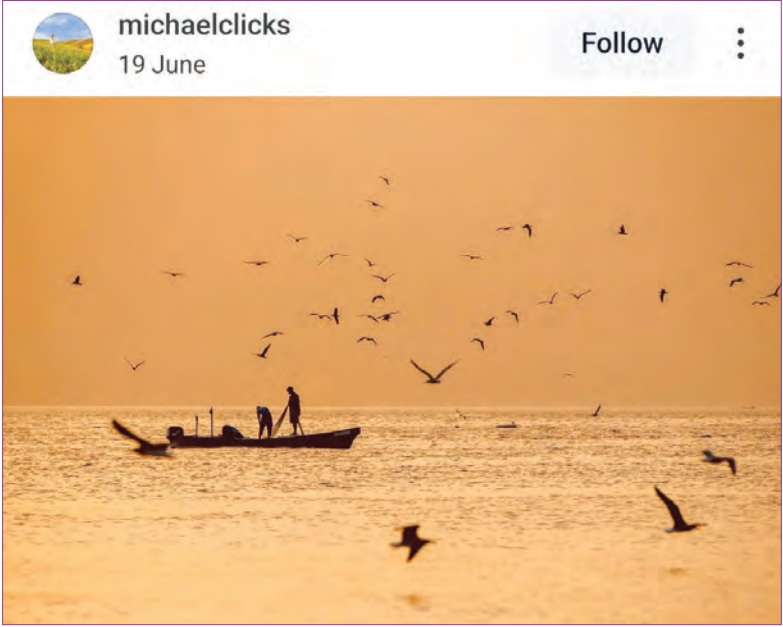
Palestinian-British chef, food-writer and restaurateur Sami Tamimi poses for a portrait before tasting a dish from his new cookbook during an interview with Reuters at his home in London, Britain. — Reuters



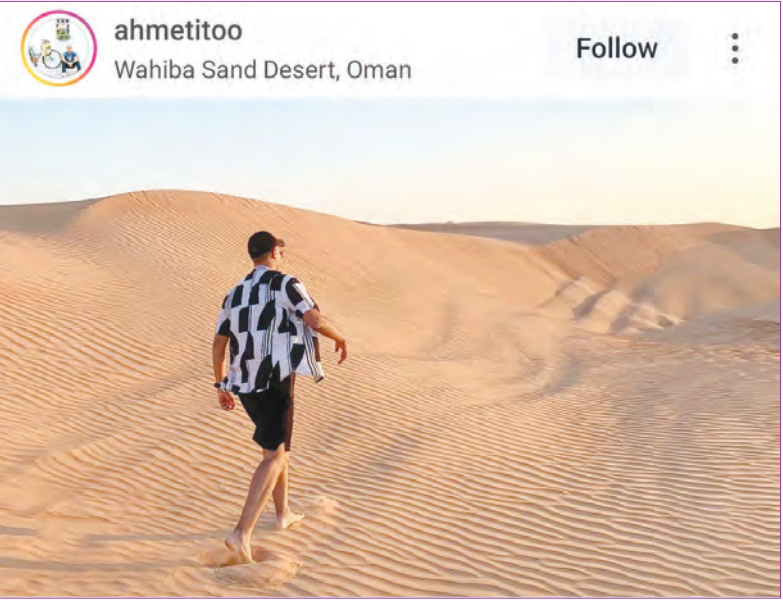
LAUNCHING

Contemporary art gallery owner and dealer Yvon Lambert poses during a photo session at his bookstore in Paris. — AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



Wake Up To This View



Beauty of Remote Places

SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

We select photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. To be selected, follow us on Instagram and every time you upload or share your photos, make sure to tag us and use #OmanObserver and #BeAnObserver.

Peru gas workers find a thousand-year-old mummy



PERUVIAN gas workers this week found a thousand-year-old mummy while installing pipes in Lima, their company said, confirming the latest discovery of a pre-Hispanic tomb in the capital.

The workers found the trunk of a huarango tree (a species native to coastal Peru), “which served as a tomb marker in the past,” at a depth of 50 centimetres (20 inches), archaeologist Jesus Bahamonde, scientific coordinator of Calidda gas company, told reporters.

The mummy of a boy aged between 10 and 15, was found at a depth of 1.2 metres, he added.

“The burial and the objects correspond to a style that developed between 1000 and 1200,” he said.

The remains discovered on Monday were found “in a sitting position, with the arms and legs bent,” according to Bahamonde.

They were found in a shroud

which also contained calabash gourds.

Ceramic objects, including plates, bottles and jugs decorated with geometric figures and figures of fishermen, were found next to the mummy. The tomb and artefacts belong to the pre-Inca Chancay culture, which lived in the Lima area between the 11th and 15th centuries.

They were discovered while gas workers were removing earth from an avenue in the Puente Piedra district of northern Lima.

In Peru, utility companies must hire archaeologists when drilling the earth, because of the possibility of hitting upon heritage sites. Calidda has made more than 2,200 archaeological finds since 2004.

Lima is home to over 500 archaeological sites, including dozens of “huacas” as ancient cemeteries are known in the Indigenous Quechua language. — AFP



With a primitive canoe, scientists replicate prehistoric seafaring

OUR SPECIES

arose in Africa roughly 300,000 years ago and later trekked worldwide, eventually reaching some of Earth's most remote places. In doing so, our ancestors surmounted geographic barriers including treacherous ocean expanses. But how did they do that with only rudimentary technology available to them?

Scientists now have undertaken an experimental voyage across a stretch of the East China Sea, paddling from Ushibi in eastern Taiwan to Japan's Yonaguni Island in a dugout canoe to demonstrate how such a trip may have been accomplished some 30,000 years ago as people spread to various Pacific Islands.

The researchers simulated methods Paleolithic people would have used and employed replicas of tools from that prehistoric time period such as an axe and a cutting implement called an adze in fashioning the 25-foot-long (7.5-metre) canoe, named Sugime, from a Japanese cedar tree chopped down at Japan's Noto Peninsula.

A crew of four men and one woman paddled the canoe on a voyage lasting more than 45 hours, travelling roughly 140 miles (225 km) across the open sea and battling one of the world's strongest ocean currents, the Kuroshio. The crew endured extreme fatigue and took a break for several hours while the canoe drifted at sea, but managed to complete a safe crossing to Yonaguni.

Just as prehistoric people would have, the voyagers navigated by the sun and stars, as well as the direction of the ocean swells, though for safety's sake they were accompanied by two escort craft. Yonaguni is part of the Ryukyu chain of islands stretching from Kyushu, the southernmost of Japan's four main islands, down to Taiwan.

The researchers previously failed with attempted crossings using reed rafts and then bamboo rafts, finding that they were too slow, insufficiently durable and unable to overcome the strong ocean current.

“Through the project with many failures, we have learned the difficulties of crossing the ocean and this experience gave us a deep respect for our Paleolithic ancestors,” said University of Tokyo anthropologist Yousuke Kaifu, lead author of the study published on



Wednesday in the journal Science Advances.

“We found that the Paleolithic people could cross the sea with the strong ocean current if they had dugout canoes and were skillful, experienced paddlers and navigators. They had to face the risk

of being drifted by the strong ocean current and the possibility that they would never be able to come back to their homeland,” added Kaifu, who was aboard one of the escort boats.

Archeological evidence indicates that people approximately 30,000 years ago first crossed from Taiwan to some of the Ryukyu islands, which include Okinawa. But scientists had puzzled over how they could do this with the rudimentary technology of the time — no maps, no metal tools and only primitive vessels. And the Kuroshio current, comparable in strength to the Gulf Stream off Mexico, presented a particular challenge.

The research was in the vein of the famous 1947 Kon-Tiki expedition in which Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl carried out a much longer journey by raft from South America across the Pacific to the Polynesian islands. Heyerdahl aimed to show how prehistoric people from the Americas could have colonised Polynesia.

“His theory is now countered by a series of pieces of evidence, but it was a great trial at the time. Compared to the time of the Kon-Tiki, we have more archeological and other evidence to build realistic models” of prehistoric voyages, Kaifu said.

The researchers in a companion study published in the same journal used simulations of sea conditions between Taiwan and Yonaguni 30,000 years ago to examine whether such a crossing was attainable at a time when the Kuroshio was even more powerful than today.

“As our paleo-ocean model simulation showed, crossing the Kuroshio was possible in ancient times, so I believe they achieved it,” said physical oceanographer and study lead author Yu-Lin Chang of the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology.

“However, ocean conditions were highly variable. Thus, ancient people may have encountered unpredictable weather conditions during their journey, which could have led to failure,” Chang added.

— Reuters

FEATURES



IN THIS EXHIBIT,  
SIX FEMALE  
ARTISTS TURN  
EMOTION INTO  
SHELTER

BY YERU EBUEN

**THE FIRST** thing that strikes you when you walk into H1 Art Gallery is how quiet the space feels — not silent, but hushed, like you’ve just stepped into someone’s thoughts. The walls hum with the soft voices of six women who’ve never met before this exhibition, yet feel deeply connected by what they’ve chosen to show. “We End Up Building Nests” doesn’t come at you loudly — it invites you in, gently. And if you stay long enough, you begin to see what they’re really saying.

At one end, ceramic vessels by Helena Dragunova seem like they’ve been unearthed from memory. There’s something honest about the way she mixes textiles with clay — her “Bustan” series doesn’t feel designed as much as remembered. The muted fabrics tucked around the forms, the earthy finish, the restraint — it all brings to mind not just Oman’s landscapes, but a kind of emotional terrain. You get the sense she’s making peace with something.

A few steps away, you spot what looks like old paper glowing from inside. That’s Farah Asqul’s lightbox collage, a work stitched from the past and lit for the present. It’s deeply nostalgic, yet not sentimental. It demands you look closer — past the printed words, into the scraps and brushstrokes layered like skin. Her decades-long project using an antique book is about memory, sure, but



it’s also about how we process ourselves through fragments.

Then there’s thread sewn into paper — minimal, precise, almost too quiet. Haneen al Moosawi’s stitched pieces don’t ask much of the viewer at first, but they linger. They speak to the slow, silent kind of growth — the kind no one sees, but which shapes everything. Her lines are like emotional fault lines, tracking the body’s language before the brain catches up.

Every piece in this exhibition has a quiet strength to it. Take Nada al Kharousi’s work, which brings photography, poetry and deep vulnerability together. Her images don’t hide behind perfection. They’re raw and a bit wild, as if she’s saying, “Here’s what healing looks like — it’s not always pretty, but it’s real.” Her message is clear: you’re allowed to feel everything.

Across the room, Rozita Nosrati’s paintings feel rooted — literally. Trees she passed daily are turned into reflections of belonging, of patience, of watching the world change around you. She paints not just what she sees, but what stays with her. The longer you look, the more you recognise the feeling of familiarity with a place that’s still foreign.

Finally, Sara Riaz Khan’s abstract works echo with stories from the women in her life. The form of a traditional shirt becomes armour, the fabric of legacy, turned into powerful visual shields. You don’t need to know her ancestors to feel the weight of the women she honours.

Holding all of this together is Mays al Moosawi, the curator, whose own artistic journey shapes the tone of the show. Mays grew up between Oman and Iraq, surrounded by creativity and eventually found her way to Chelsea College of Arts in London. Her work is deeply introspective, often exploring the emotional inheritance passed down from the women in her family. This exhibit, in many ways, feels like a continuation of that exploration — only this time, she’s invited others into the process. Her recent solo show in Dubai taught her the value of cohesion and narrative; and you can feel that here. Each artist is distinct, but there’s an unspoken rhythm to how the pieces are placed, how the stories echo one another without repeating.

What makes “We End Up Building Nests” special isn’t just the art — it’s the feeling that these women are building something bigger than themselves. Through different mediums — clay, paper, thread, fabric, paint — they’re mapping out spaces of care, questioning, reflection. Their works are not loud proclamations. They’re gentle invitations. Each piece offers a kind of refuge, a safe place to land. A nest.

The exhibition runs until July 14, 2025 at H1 Art Gallery in Jawharat Al Shati, Al Qurum. Whether you’re an art lover or just someone looking to feel something quietly powerful, this is worth a visit. You may just walk away carrying a piece of someone’s story — and maybe even seeing your own a little differently.