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SHORTTAKES



The discussions explored mechanisms for activating the private sector from both sides. - ONA

JOINT OMAN-TÜRKIYE COUNCIL DISCUSSES COOPERATION

MUSCAT: The Joint Oman-Türkiye Business Council held a meeting on Tuesday on the sidelines of the Oman Expo and International Forum. The meeting was organised by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed strengthening economic and investment cooperation between the two countries. The discussions explored mechanisms for activating and linking the private sector from both the Omani and Turkish sides, as well as ways to revitalise the council’s activities through the holding of periodic meetings, whether in person or online.

The meeting also highlighted the significance of the Oman Expo and International Forum and its role in enhancing networking opportunities and building commercial and investment partnerships between private sector institutions in both nations.

The meeting was chaired on the Omani side by Shaikh Salem bin Abdullah al Rawas, while the Turkish side was led by Yunus Ata. — ONA

ADJUDICATION OF HOLY QURAN RECITATION BEGINS



The adjudication process continues until February 12. — ONA

SALALAH: The Directorate General of Education in Dhofar Governorate began the assessment of competitors who contest Holy Quran Recitation Competitions of School-Year 2025-2026.

The adjudication process continues until February 12.

The competitions form part of efforts made by the Ministry of Education to instil Islamic values in students and encourage them to memorise the Holy Quran, in addition to grooming a generation that is committed to its religious values and national identity. — ONA

HISN AL ZAIN NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECT IN BIDBID INAUGURATED

YOUSEF AL HABSI
BIDBID, FEB 3

Dr Khalfan bin Said al Shueili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning (MoHUP), inaugurated the execution of the integrated Hisn Al Zain residential neighbourhood project in the Wilayat of Bidbid on Tuesday. Developed by Zain Property Development, the Hisn Al Zain project is part of national efforts to develop integrated residential communities.

The launching ceremony was attended by a number of officials and representatives of government bodies, as well as residents of the Wilayat of Bidbid.

The Hisn Al Zain project is one of the integrated residential projects of Sorouh Initiative. It offers a



modern residential neighbourhood with integrated architectural specifications and a high quality of life in accordance with the principles of sustainable urban development. The project spans an area exceeding 286,000 square metres and consists of 639 diverse residential units, including 418 detached villas and

221 townhouses with varying sizes and high-quality specifications that meet the needs of Omani families. Mishal bin Mohammed al Raisi, CEO of Zain Property Development, said that the launch of the model villas is part of the company's strategy to enhance transparency with clients and enable them to

witness the quality of construction firsthand. He stressed the company's commitment to developing integrated residential projects that contribute to supporting the real estate sector and providing sustainable housing options that meet citizens’ needs.

The Hisn Al Zain project embodies the company's commitment to supporting the ministry’s efforts in developing integrated residential communities and enhancing housing stability and quality of life, serving both citizens and investors.

The event included a raffle for three Chery iCAR V23 cars for buyers in the project’s first phase to foster the company’s relationship with clientele and encourage investment in the project.

SPF norms on injuries enhance workplace safety

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, FEB 3

THE Social Protection Fund (SPF) on Monday announced the Regulation on Work-related Injuries and Occupational Diseases, approved by the SPF’s board.

This insurance scheme forms part of the Social Protection Law, aiming to safeguard workers’ rights, enhance occupational safety standards, and strengthen partnership among employees, employers and the SPF.

SPF clarified that the provisions of the Work-Related Injuries and Occupational Diseases Insurance scheme apply mandatorily to all Omani workers including temporary contracts, trainees, and part-timers, in addition to retired working employees. The scheme will also apply to self-employed Omanis.

Regarding non-Omani workers, the SPF stated that coverage will be applied in accordance with categories and conditions to be specified by a Board decision. Employers are required to pay monthly contributions amounting to 1 per cent of insured contribution wage.



SHAMSA BINT HAMDAN AL TAMIMI
Director of Medical Affairs at the SPF

While work-related injuries are typically caused by accidents and may result in disability or death, occupational diseases arise from prolonged and repeated exposure to hazardous factors in the workplace

Shamsa bint Hamdan al Tamimi, Director of Medical Affairs at the SPF, said that a work-related injury is defined as any injury sustained during work or while performing job-related duties. Injuries resulting from work-related exhaustion or physical strain are likewise classified as work-related injuries under the regulation.

Al Tamimi clarified that the regulation distinguishes between work-related injuries and occupational diseases. While work-related injuries are typically caused by accidents and may result in disability or death, occupational diseases arise from prolonged and repeated exposure to hazardous factors in the workplace.

She cited prolonged exposure to high noise levels in industrial environments, which may lead to hearing impairment, as an example of an occupational disease.

She highlighted that the regulation takes into account psychological as well as physical health. Certain work-related psychological conditions resulting from excessive stress or exhaustion may be recognised as work-related injuries, subject to investigation and verification of a causal link between the condition, the work environment, and job performance.



Such cases rely on certified medical reports and may include serious conditions such as heart or cerebral arterial blockages resulting from prolonged work-related stress and irregular working hours that contravene labour regulations.

With regard to reporting procedures, Al Tamimi said that employers are primarily responsible for reporting work-related injuries within five days of their occurrence. Occupational diseases must be reported within 14 days from the date the employer becomes aware of, or suspects, the disease.

She outlined four main benefits provided under the insurance scheme.

The first is the work-related interruption allowance, a daily benefit paid at 100 per cent of the insured's contribution wage during the first six months following the injury, and at 75 per cent thereafter if the interruption from work continues beyond six months.

Agreement signed to establish ground station for satellite images

MUSCAT: Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), represented by its Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems Research Centre, and the Second Chinese Institute of Oceanography signed a joint scientific cooperation agreement to establish a specialised ground station for receiving satellite imagery, primarily focused on ocean monitoring.

The signing ceremony was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Dr Fahd bin Al Julanda al Said, Vice-Chancellor of SQU, in the presence of Prof Zihua Mao, representing the Chinese institute.

In this context, Dr Yaseen Ahmed al Mulla, Director of the Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems Research Centre at Sultan Qaboos University and Project Manager of the Satellite Image Receiving Ground Station, spoke about the station and its importance, stating that satellite image receiving ground stations have become an essential part of the scientific infrastructure of any country seeking to enhance its capabilities in various fields such as the environment, climate and natural resource management. He explained that these stations are not merely



The signing ceremony was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Dr Fahd bin Al Julanda al Said, Vice-Chancellor of SQU, in the presence of Prof Zihua Mao, representing the Chinese institute. — ONA

antennas that receive images from space, but rather advanced centres for transforming space data into practical knowledge that supports national decision-making.

He pointed out that in a world that increasingly relies on geographic information, with precise spatial and temporal data, countries capable of receiving data directly have become more independent and faster in responding to natural and economic challenges.

According to Dr Yaseen, the importance of ground stations lies in their ability to provide countries with immediate access to satellite

data without the need to wait for processing or distribution through external servers. This allows scientists, researchers, and operators to analyse data in real time, develop more accurate local models, and produce information tailored to the country's specific needs.

Dr Yaseen explained that the project to establish a ground station to receive satellite images is at this stage more specialised in the oceans, as these satellites provide continuous measurements of sea surface temperature, biological productivity, ocean current movement, sediment spread and water quality. — ONA

SHORT TAKES



The two sides reviewed the existing bilateral relations between the two countries. — ONA

OMAN, SLOVAKIA HOLD POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Slovakia hold the first round of political consultations on Tuesday in Muscat. The Omani side was led by Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Political Affairs, while the Slovak side was led by Marek Eštok, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. During the consultations, the two sides reviewed the existing bilateral relations between the two countries and discussed ways to enhance cooperation in various fields, including investment, culture, tourism and the opening of direct air routes. The meeting also touched upon several regional and international issues of mutual interest. The session was attended by Lenka Miháliková, Ambassador of Slovakia to the Sultanate of Oman, and a number of officials from both sides. — ONA

OMAN, EU HOLD JOINT HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE



Both sides affirmed their commitment to strengthening joint cooperation. — ONA

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and the European Union held a joint dialogue on human rights in Muscat, with the participation of a number of specialised authorities. During the session, both sides affirmed their commitment to strengthening joint cooperation in the field of human rights in alignment with international standards and the promotion of the principles of justice and equality. The Omani side was chaired by Saleh bin Yahya al Maskari, Head of the Global Affairs Department at the Foreign Ministry, while the European side was chaired by Anna Maria, Head of the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq Division at the European External Action Service (EEAS). — ONA

AL BASHAYER FESTIVAL PROMOTES CULTURAL HERITAGE



The festival will support traditional business households and SMEs. — ONA

ADAM: The 9th Al Bashayer Camel Racing Festival, which kicked off recently, will include events that reflect the Sultanate of Oman's cultural heritage and enhance integration among cultural, sporting and marketing activities. The festival will support traditional business households and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), in addition to establishing an integrated platform for marketing traditional products and attracting tourists and visitors from Oman and abroad. Ahmed bin Nasser al Junaibi, Head of the committee tasked with cultural, heritage, marketing and sports events that accompany Al Bashayer Camel Racing Festival, said that camel races constitute a historical symbol for Omani people and a major component in Omani people's culture, economy and social life. — ONA

SUPREME JUDICIARY COUNCIL REVIEWS REPORT ON PROGRESS OF WORK

MUSCAT: The Supreme Judiciary Council on Tuesday held its first meeting in 2026 under the chairmanship of Sayyid Mohammed bin Sultan al Busaidy, Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Judiciary Council. At the outset of the meeting, the Council valued efforts made during the past year, including the smooth functioning of the judicial system, promptitude in the settlement of legal cases, the stability of judicial rulings and accelerated digital transition featuring the expansion of electronic services extended to



The Council valued efforts made during the past year, including the smooth functioning of the judicial system. — ONA

members of the public at the courts, the Public Prosecution Department and the offices of the Notary Public. The Council members also reviewed a report on the progress of work at the Investment and Commerce Court, which started its duties recently. — ONA

Restoration of heritage sites catalyses investments, jobs



A Ministry of Heritage and Tourism presentation said landmarks were offered for investment 47 times over the period, while six sites remain under process.

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, FEB 3

OMAN is stepping up efforts to turn heritage landmarks into economic assets, with ministry figures showing 28 historic sites were brought into operation through investment deals between 2021 and 2025. A Ministry of Heritage and Tourism presentation said landmarks were offered for investment 47 times over the period, while six sites remain under process. The programme has also generated employment. The presentation reported more than 348 direct jobs at the sites awarded for investment, alongside 666 indirect jobs linked to services such as

guiding, maintenance, transport, retail and hospitality. The same slide pack cited an investment value of more than RO 3 million. Alongside commercial activation, restoration activity has accelerated to prepare assets for sustainable use. The total number of restored forts, castles and historic landmarks rose to 441 in 2025 from 336 in 2024, a 24% increase, according to the ministry figures. The presentation also noted the completion of more than 100 restoration and maintenance projects from 2021 to 2025, with 27 projects planned for 2026. Officials frame heritage investment as part of wider diversification under Oman's Vision 2040, aiming to convert cultural assets into year-round attractions rather than occasional visits. Analysts recommend tracking performance through visitor

volumes, length of stay in surrounding areas and local spending, alongside job quality and training outcomes. They also call for clearer public reporting on site revenues and reinvestment in upkeep, so operating concessions translate into durable, community-level gains. The approach reflects a shift from viewing heritage purely as conservation work to treating it as an investable public asset, provided conservation standards are maintained. Stakeholders say contracts should specify limits on alterations, crowd management and maintenance obligations, while ensuring local businesses can participate through subcontracting and event programming. Better signposting, ticketing and integrated tour routes could further lift returns, they added.

Women in non-traditional sectors no longer exception

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, FEB 3

The presence of young Omani women in non-traditional sectors is no longer an exception or merely a social indicator of equality, but has become a firmly established national path supported by strategic plans that place the knowledge-based economy, innovation, advanced technologies and sustainability at the heart of their priorities. Zainab bint Ali al Saadi, Director of the Health, Safety and Environment Department at the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, says that the specialised training in the energy and minerals sector, and then in the field of health, safety and environment, have contributed to building a solid knowledge and professional



Young Omani talents stand out in specialised sectors.

base, which helped to understand the nature of the sector and its regulatory and operational requirements, and enabled the acquisition of the skills necessary to work efficiently within one of the most demanding sectors in the

work environment. Iman bint Mohammed al Rawahi, Director of the Electronic Information Security Department in the Governorate of Muscat, said, "Scientific knowledge and technical skills formed the basic foundation for the launch of my career in the field of cybersecurity, as the journey began by building a solid knowledge base in information technology, which included understanding operating systems, networks and databases, in addition to programming and systems analysis. This scientific foundation enabled me to understand the modern digital architecture and the nature of the interaction of its components, which is an essential element in understanding cyber threats

and methods of reducing their risks, especially in light of the rapid digital transformation that institutions are witnessing today." Eng Ibtisam bint Khamis al Halwani, Head of the Chemicals Management Department at the Department of Chemicals and Waste Management at the Environment Authority, said that the scientific and applied foundations that shaped her path in chemical engineering are multiple. She combined an understanding of all the solid scientific foundations related to the field of chemical engineering, and an inclination and interest in some fields and study materials such as mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology, and fields of applied chemistry.

SPOTLIGHT

The recent rise in child delinquency and harassment cases in Oman emphasises the urgent need to reactivate religious and cultural protection systems, not just strengthen legal responses.



CALL FOR ATTENTION

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

KABEER
YOUSUF

ONE of the key highlights of the report from the Public Prosecution for the year elucidated the nature of crimes in the country and the judicial progress in addressing them. The report cited theft, physical assault/aggression, cases involving violence like slapping, beating and fighting, insulting dignity/verbal assault, bullying, name-calling, swearing, cybercrimes/misuse of technology including hacking, online bullying, and using the Internet for improper activities, traffic violations including dangerous driving, vandalism, drug/substance abuse, exposing minors to delinquency, misconduct/harassment, and running away or rebellious behaviour as widely seen crimes among the youth. Experts define delinquency as conduct or behaviour that is not in accord with accepted behaviour or societal norms. Undesirable behaviour is affected by the same factors as desirable behaviour. The recent rise in child delinquency and harassment cases in Oman emphasises the urgent need to reactivate religious and cultural protection systems, not just strengthen legal responses. Omani society is historically rooted in Islamic ethics and communal responsibility, where values like modesty, respect for others, accountability and the sanctity of childhood are central. When these values weaken, children become more vulnerable. Dr Mahmoud al Rahbi, Head of Samayil Hospital, stated that the real task is to protect children from such crimes. The best way is to prevent them early, intervene quickly, rehabilitate humanely and support continuously. “Rehabilitation shouldn’t just be punishment but diversion programmes such as

community service, training, supervised activities, educational and vocational support for struggling students, mentorship, and role models for at-risk youth, and addressing root causes like family conflict, abuse, neglect, academic failure, and peer pressure,” Dr Mahmoud said. Dr Benny Panakkan, Medical Director of Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals, was of the view that parents foster open communication. “To address rising child delinquency in Oman, parents should foster open communication and actively monitor their child’s online activity. Physical punishment should not be an option for correcting unacceptable behaviour; positive discipline should be used,” he said. Dr Abood al Sawafi, an educationist and scholar, believes that remedial measures should focus on value-based prevention rooted in Islam and Omani culture. “International child-protection frameworks consistently confirm that societies with strong family cohesion and ethical grounding experience lower rates of juvenile delinquency,” he said. Psychiatry emphasises that a child’s individual temperament should be protected and professional help, sometimes even medicine, can assist with this. Dr Vijay Naresh, Psychiatrist at NMC Specialty Hospital, states that factors at home include parenting styles, over-permissiveness, inconsistency in discipline and the quality of relationships. Factors outside the home include peers, school and neighbourhood. “There is a growing need to recognise, advocate, educate and rehabilitate offenders. Parents should also seek counselling if there are marital issues or frequent quarrels in the family to help prevent crimes,” advocates Dr Dilip Kumar Singvi, Specialist in Internal Medicine at Burjeel Hospital.

SHORT TAKES



A total of 565 students were admitted.

UTAS-AL MUSANNAH WELCOMES NEW STUDENTS FOR SPRING SEMESTER

AL MUSANNAH: The University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS), Al Musannah Branch, welcomed its newly admitted students for the Spring Semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. A total of 565 students were admitted across the College of Engineering and Technology, College of Computing and Information Sciences, and College of Economics and Business Administration. The programme commenced with an introductory meeting that included an address by the University Vice-Chancellor, Dr Said bin Hamed al Rubaii, who expressed pride in the enrolment of a new cohort of students, describing them as the cornerstone of community development. He urged the students to demonstrate commitment in carrying the mission of nation-building. Dr Nasser bin Salem al Baimani, Assistant Vice-Chancellor of UTAS-Al Musannah, also welcomed the new students, encouraging them to make optimal use of their years of study by developing their skills and fostering innovation and creativity throughout their academic journey. The programme featured comprehensive introductions to the University, its mission and objectives, as well as its colleges and departments. Students were also familiarised with available facilities and services, in addition to the academic and administrative systems at the University. Furthermore, the programme included a series of orientation sessions introducing the General Foundation Program, the services of the Admission and Registration Center and Student Affairs, the Information Systems and Educational Technologies Center, and the Research and Innovation Sector. An overview of the University's electronic services was also provided.

Sohar University draws global students for Arabic

SIHAM AL SAIDI
SUHAR, FEB 3

AS GLOBAL interest in the Arabic language grows, Oman is steadily emerging as a preferred destination for non-native speakers seeking an authentic and high-quality Arabic learning experience. Blending cultural depth, academic credibility and social stability, Sohar University offers an environment where language learning extends beyond the classroom into everyday cultural life. At the centre of this momentum is the Arabic Language Center for Non-Native Speakers at Sohar University, which operates under a clear educational vision of promoting the Arabic language and strengthening its global presence as a key destination for international learners. The centre follows a comprehensive teaching approach that balances linguistic authenticity with modern methods, while taking into account the diverse cultural and language backgrounds of its students. The programme focuses on developing the four core language skills — listening, speaking, reading and writing — through modern curricula that emphasise communication, gradual progression and the integration of language into real-life and cultural contexts. Advanced educational technologies are widely used, supported by continuous teacher training and regular curriculum updates aligned with international standards in Arabic language instruction. “We believe that the Arabic language is a bridge for civilisational dialogue and a vital tool for understanding culture and identity,” said Sheikha al Maamari from the Arabic Language Centre



Sheikha al Maamari



Gabriel Ochen



Mai-Shin-Nan



Sohar University plays a key role in positioning the country as a welcoming gateway for learning Arabic.

for Non-Native Speakers. “Our goal is to provide flexible and inclusive learning opportunities that meet the aspirations of learners from around the world while maintaining global educational standards.” Sohar University’s growing reputation, both locally and internationally, further strengthens Oman’s position as an academic destination. This standing is reflected in its diverse academic programmes, modern teaching methodologies and well-equipped learning facilities that support excellence and continuous development. Students say the experience goes beyond textbooks. Gabriel Ochen, a student from Uganda majoring in Arabic for Non-Native Speakers, described his time at the university as transformative. He said the structured curriculum and immersive environment significantly enhanced both his language proficiency and cultural understanding. “The programme goes beyond language competence,” he noted. “It equips students with skills for academic, professional and cross-cultural communication, while student activities and cultural initiatives enrich the overall learning experience.” Jana Pun, a student from Hong Kong who has completed four levels of Arabic studies, shared a similar view.

As a native Chinese speaker, she described Arabic as initially challenging, particularly in pronunciation, yet deeply rewarding. “Arabic feels like music,” she said, adding that its rhythm and beauty made the learning journey enjoyable. She highlighted cultural immersion through university-organised field trips to Omani heritage sites and historical landmarks, which gave international students a deeper understanding of local traditions through direct community interaction. Other international students echoed the sentiment. Mai-Shin-Nan said studying Arabic at Sohar University allowed him to apply the language beyond the classroom. “Our teachers are very supportive and ensure we learn well,” he said. “We also had opportunities to speak with local Omanis, learn about the country’s rich history and culture, and take part in events across Sohar and other cities. It helped me understand why Oman is held in such high regard.” As Oman continues to invest in education, culture and international academic partnerships, institutions such as Sohar University are playing a key role in positioning the country as a welcoming gateway for learning Arabic — one that blends language, identity and global engagement in a uniquely Omani context.

وزارة الصحة
Ministry of Health

Announcement

The Ministry of Health (Al Buraimi Hospital) invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tender:

Tender Ref.	Description	Last Date for Collection of Bidding Document	Last Date for Submission of Tenders	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non Refundable)
401/2026	Agreement of supply of Chemicals for Water Treatment & Analysis at (Al Buraimi Hospital)	Before 2 PM On 10/03/2026	Before 10 AM On 15/03/2026	Specialized companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority	• 10 R.O Small & Medium Enterprises

Please note the following:

- Companies wishing to participate in the Tender can purchase the tender documents electronically through the website ([etendering.tenderboard.gov.om](#)), provided that they are registered in the system.
- Companies must submit their bids electronically via the above-mentioned website, provided that a **Bid Commitment Declaration**, and bids received without the required Declaration will not be considered.
- The ministry is not obligated to accept the lowest bid or any other bid.
- For inquiries related to the above tender, please contact through the website of the Esnad system for electronic tendering: ([etendering.tenderboard.gov.om](#))

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وزارة النقل والاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات
Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology

إعلان مناقصة
Tender Notice

The Internal Tenders Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology invites for the Following Tenders:

TENDER NUMBER	TENDER NAME	DATE OF PUBLISHING	LAST DATE TO PURCHASE TENDER DOCUMENT	SUBMISSION DATE	COMPANIES WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS TENDER	DOCUMENT PRICE
19/2026/ MTCIT	TECHNOLOGY DESIGN AND SETUP SAS FOR DIGITAL INNOVATION IN INNOVATION PARK MUSCAT	2-2-2026	16-2-2026	16-3-2026	LOCAL COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE PROJECTS, TENDERS AND LOCAL CONTENT AUTHORITY (ALL GRADES)	(25/- ر.ع) TWENTY-FIVE OMANI RIAL FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL COMPANIES (10/- ر.ع) TEN OMANI RIAL (FOR SME) NON-REFUNDABLE
18/2026/ MTCIT	RENEWING LICENSES FOR ORACLE DATABASE HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE (ExaData)	2-2-2026	9-2-2026	19-2-2026	LOCAL COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE PROJECTS, TENDERS AND LOCAL CONTENT AUTHORITY (ALL GRADES)	(25/- ر.ع) TWENTY-FIVE OMANI RIAL FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL COMPANIES (10/- ر.ع) TEN OMANI RIAL (FOR SME) NON-REFUNDABLE

Interested Companies registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: [https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om](#) against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of documents. Tenders should be submitted online on given website

CORRESPONDANCE:

- Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at e-Tendering System. ([https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om](#))
- E-Tendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the e-Tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number:
Tel: +968 24402200, e-mail : e-mail: [etenderhd@ptlc.gov.om](#)

INTERNAL TENDERS COMMITTEE

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WORLD

SHORT TAKES



The UN health agency estimated 239 million people would need urgent humanitarian assistance this year and the money would keep essential health services going.

WHO appeals for \$1 bn for world’s worst health crises in 2026

GENEVA: The World Health Organization on Tuesday appealed for \$1 billion to tackle health crises this year across the world’s 36 most severe emergencies, including in Gaza, Sudan, Haiti and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The UN health agency estimated 239 million people would need urgent humanitarian assistance this year and the money would keep essential health services going.

WHO health emergencies chief Chikwe Ihekweazu told reporters in Geneva: “A quarter of a billion people are living through humanitarian crises that strip away the most basic protections: safety, shelter and access to health care.

“In these settings, health needs are surging, whether due to injuries, disease outbreaks, malnutrition or untreated chronic diseases,” he warned.

“Yet access to care is shrinking.”

The agency’s emergency request was significantly lower than in recent years, given the global funding crunch for aid operations.

Washington, traditionally the UN health agency’s biggest donor, has slashed foreign aid spending under President Donald Trump, who on his first day back in office in January 2025 handed the WHO his country’s one-year withdrawal notice.

Last year, WHO had appealed for \$1.5 billion but Ihekweazu said that only \$900 million was ultimately made available. — AFP

France summons billionaire Musk to quiz on X deepfakes

PARIS: French authorities summoned billionaire Elon Musk to a “voluntary interview” and searched the local offices of his social media network X on Tuesday in a probe into alleged political interference and deepfakes, prosecutors said.

The operation comes as both Britain and the European Union have opened separate probes into the generation of deepfakes of women and children by Musk’s AI chatbot Grok.

The French investigation, which began in January 2025 over allegations X’s algorithm was used to interfere in French politics, now also includes a probe into Grok’s dissemination of Holocaust denials and deepfakes.

“Summons for voluntary interviews on April 20, 2026, in Paris have been sent to Mr Elon Musk and Ms Linda Yaccarino, in their capacity as de facto and de jure managers of the X platform at the time of the events,” the Paris prosecutor’s office said.

Yaccarino resigned as CEO of X in July last year after two years at the helm of the company. — AFP



ELON MUSK

MIDDLE EAST NEEDS LONG-TERM SOLUTION: UAE PRESIDENT ADVISER

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates urged Iran and the United States on Tuesday to use the resumption of nuclear talks this week to resolve a standoff that has led to mutual threats of air strikes, emphasising that the Middle East does not need another war.

Iran and the United States will discuss Iran’s nuclear programme on Friday in Türkiye, Iranian and US officials said on Monday.

“I think that the region has gone through various calamitous

confrontations,” the UAE president’s adviser Anwar Gargash told a panel at the World Governments Summit in Dubai.

“I don’t think we need another one, but I would like to see direct Iranian-American negotiations leading to understandings so that we don’t have these issues every other day.”

Iran should rebuild its relationship with Washington to reach a wider geo-strategic deal which could help Tehran repair its

economy ravaged by US sanctions, Gargash said. Gulf Arab states are worried that Iran will carry out its threat to target US bases on their territory should Trump attack the Islamic Republic again.

In June, the United States struck Iranian nuclear targets, joining in at the close of a 12-day Israeli bombing campaign. Since then, Tehran has said its uranium enrichment work - which it says is for peaceful, not military purposes - has stopped. — Reuters

Sudan army breaks RSF’s siege of key southern city

A paramilitary drone attack on the southern Sudan city of Kadugli killed eight civilians including three children on Tuesday, hours after the army broke a punishing siege on the city.

The South Kordofan state capital Kadugli, where the United Nations confirmed a famine last year, had been under siege for much of Sudan’s nearly three-year war between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. Army chief Abdel Fattah al Burhan on Tuesday congratulated the people of Kadugli on the army’s advance, the latest reversal of a paramilitary offensive through the crucial Kordofan region.

Hours later, an RSF drone attack rocked the city, where civilians who had endured months of famine had begun to celebrate, a military source said.



Displaced people queue to receive meals at Thobo Camp, in Engpung County. — Reuters

All but one were shot down by army defences, with a single drone striking a health centre and killing eight civilians, a medical source in the city said.

Asked to confirm the army victory, an RSF source said the paramilitary “remained nearby and will continue to besiege” both Kadugli and Dilling, where the army broke a similar siege late last month.

State broadcaster Sudan TV aired footage of people in Kadugli celebrating and flashing victory signs as military personnel passed by atop army vehicles.

“This is a great day, people welcomed the army, women ululated, even the children celebrated,” Issa Tih, a resident of

The South Kordofan state capital Kadugli, where the United Nations confirmed a famine last year, had been under siege for much of Sudan’s nearly three-year war between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces

Kadugli, said.

“We lived through incredibly hard times,” he added.

The blockade was enforced by RSF fighters and their allies, a faction of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North led by Abdelaziz al Hilu.

As famine closed in, around 80 per cent of Kadugli’s population, about 147,000 people, were forced to flee the city, the UN said last week.

The wider Kordofan region is currently the war’s fiercest battleground, where hundreds of thousands face starvation.

After seizing the army’s last Darfur foothold of El Fasher in October, the RSF pushed deeper into Kordofan in an attempt to retake Sudan’s central corridor.

They had intensified their siege

on Kadugli and the nearby town of Dilling, where the army recently pushed through paramilitary lines.

According to an army source, troops advancing from Dilling along the volatile 100-kilometre corridor defeated RSF and SPLM-N units following “fierce battles”.

An RSF source said that army forces “infiltrated Dilling and Kadugli through rugged areas where forces were not present”.

Since the conflict erupted in April 2023, it has killed tens of thousands, displaced 11 million people and driven multiple regions into hunger and famine.

It has also split the country in two, with the army holding Sudan’s north and east while the RSF and its allies dominate the west and parts of the south. — AFP



TOWARDS SYRIAN UNITY

An aerial photograph shows Syrian government forces driving along a road as they enter the Kurdish-majority city of Qamishli on Tuesday. Syrian government forces started entering Qamishli under an integration deal agreed with the Kurds last week, state media reported. The move comes after security personnel entered the mixed Kurdish-Arab city of Hasakeh and the countryside around the Kurdish town of Kobane a day earlier, as part of the comprehensive agreement to gradually integrate Kurdish forces and institutions into the state. — AFP

WARMER TIES

President Erdogan visits Saudi Arabia



RIYADH: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived in Riyadh on Tuesday, Saudi media said, his first visit to the kingdom in over two years as Saudi Arabia moves closer to its rival-turned-ally. Ties between Türkiye and Saudi Arabia have steadily recovered in recent years, with the countries cooperating on a range of diplomatic issues. This includes support for Gaza and backing Syria’s new government in the wake of the overthrow of Bashar al Assad in 2024.

TAINTED TIES

Mandelson to quit House of Lords



LONDON: Britain’s former US ambassador, Peter Mandelson, is set to quit the House of Lords, parliament’s upper chamber, following new revelations about his links to Jeffrey Epstein, the Financial Times reported on Tuesday, citing people familiar with the situation. UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said on Tuesday that ex-ambassador to the US, Peter Mandelson, had “let his country down” over his conduct surrounding Jeffrey Epstein, his office said.

TÜRKIYE TALKS

US envoy Witkoff meets Netanyahu



TEL AVIV: US envoy Steve Witkoff held talks with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday, an Israeli official said, during a visit that followed the reopening of Gaza’s Rafah crossing with Egypt. The official said that the meeting was taking place in Jerusalem, but declined to provide details on the agenda. It came as the United States was expected to hold talks with Israel’s arch-foe Iran later this week.

Artemis II mission to the Moon delayed until March

Washington: US space agency NASA is delaying its launch of the Artemis mission to the Moon until February after reporting issues during a test, administrator Jared Isaacman said on Tuesday.

“With the conclusion of the wet dress rehearsal today, we are moving off the February launch window and targeting March for the earliest possible launch of Artemis II,” Isaacman wrote on X.

The mission is aiming to send humans close to the Moon for the first time since 1972, paving the way for future landings. The current launch window extends until April.

Various issues were recorded during Tuesday’s

dress rehearsal at Cape Canaveral in Florida, which is referred to as a “wet” rehearsal as it involved loading some 2.6 million litres of liquid propellant into the tanks. The issues included a “liquid hydrogen leak at a core stage interface during tanking,” Isaacman said.

Other factors included “intermittent ground audio dropouts, and cold-weather impacts to some cameras.” In addition to the launch teams on site, the control centre in Houston and other NASA centres were also involved in the test. The crew — US astronauts Christina Koch, Victor Glover and Reid Wiseman and Canada’s Jeremy Hansen — had been



The Space Launch System (SLS), with the Orion crew capsule, stands at launch complex 39B during the Wet Dress Rehearsal, a full-scale countdown and propellant load, for the Artemis II mission to the Moon at Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, on Tuesday. — Reuters

in preparatory quarantine in Texas for days.

Due to the delayed launch, they are now to be released from quarantine, according to NASA. “Safety remains our top priority, for our astronauts, our workforce, our systems, and the public,” Isaacman said. “We will only launch when we believe we are ready to undertake this historic mission.”

The mission is the second in the multibillion-dollar Artemis moon program, following an uncrewed flight in 2022, and the first to carry astronauts around the moon in a 10-day journey to the farthest humans have ever ventured in space.

The leak took place in an interface “used to route the cryogenic propellant into the rocket’s core stage,” NASA said, adding that it would release the astronauts, quarantined since January 21 for the anticipated launch.

Beyond the leak, Isaacman said other factors also contributed to the delay, including “intermittent ground audio dropouts, and cold-weather impacts to some cameras.” NASA will plan to conduct dress rehearsal for Artemis II prior to a potential March launch. The available days to launch next month are March 6, 7, 8, 9, and 11. Should another dress rehearsal prove unsuccessful, the launch will be delayed to April. — Agencies

Russia resumes strikes on Ukraine amid harsh winter

RUSSIA HAS resumed its attacks on Ukraine’s energy sector ahead of a new round of negotiations, with President Volodymyr Zelensky accusing Moscow of exploiting the bitter cold to “terrorise people.” Russia deliberately targeted energy facilities in the overnight onslaught, Zelensky wrote on Tuesday, adding that nine people were injured.

The Russian military launched more than 70 missiles of various types, including cruise missiles, as well as around 450 combat drones, he said.

The attacks hit the north-eastern regions of Kharkiv and Sumy, the capital Kyiv and its surrounding area, as well as the south-eastern region of Dnipropetrovsk, the southern region of Odessa and the western region of Vinnytsia, authorities said.

Energy Minister Denys Shmyhal described the attacks as an “attempted winter genocide,” saying the strikes had targeted exclusively civilian facilities.

Hundreds of thousands of families, including children, had been deliberately left without heating in extreme winter conditions, he said.

Ukraine is experiencing severe cold, with temperatures in some areas dropping into double-digit sub-zero levels. In Kiev, the temperature was forecast to hit minus 20 degrees Celsius on Tuesday.

Utility company DTEK said the latest wave of attacks was the biggest on the energy sector since the start of the year. Facilities for power generation and electricity distribution were hit, including heating and thermal power plants in Kiev, Kharkiv and Dnipro.

In the capital, two districts were largely without heating after infrastructure was damaged, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said, with heating cut in 1,170 buildings. Residential buildings were damaged and several fires broke out.

Russian forces also targeted the surrounding Kyiv region. Regional Governor Mykola Kalashnyk reported three people injured and damage to residential buildings.

More than 50,000 residents in the southern Odessa region were left without electricity, regional Governor Oleh Kiper said. Residential buildings, warehouses, administrative buildings and cars were damaged.

In Kharkiv, Mayor Ihor Terekhov said heating fluid would have to be drained from the system serving 820 buildings to prevent it from freezing because a power plant was knocked out.

Russia confirms strikes Russia’s Defence Ministry confirmed the overnight attacks, saying it targeted companies in the military-industrial complex and energy facilities used by them.

The strikes were described as a response to Ukrainian attacks on civilian targets in Russia. The claims could not be independently verified.

The attacks came shortly before a new



Residents react at the site of the apartment building hit by a Russian drone strike in Kharkiv, Ukraine on Tuesday. — Reuters

round of negotiations on ending the war in Ukraine. According to officials in Moscow and Kiev, direct talks between Russian and Ukrainian negotiators, mediated by the United States, are due to take place on Wednesday and Thursday in Abu Dhabi.

US President Donald Trump said last week he had asked Russian President Vladimir Putin for a limited ceasefire and that Moscow had agreed. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed this, but said it only applied until last Sunday.

The latest attacks on civilian targets and especially on energy facilities indicate that the limited pause in strikes is now over.

Russia has demanded, among other conditions for ending the war, that Ukraine abandon its bid to join NATO and withdraw its forces from Ukrainian territories that Moscow has so far failed to capture.

Meanwhile, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte arrived in Ukraine in a show of continued support. Zelensky posted images on social media showing the two men placing candles at a memorial for fallen soldiers in Independence Square in Kyiv. Zelensky said he would also discuss possible aid packages from Ukraine’s partners with Rutte in light of the Russian attacks.

Rutte addressed Ukraine’s parliament during his visit, pledging to maintain pressure on Russia and continue supporting Ukraine. “I know that the winter is cold, but the spring will come,” Rutte said. — dpa

وزارة الصحة
Ministry of Health

Announcement

The Ministry of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders:

Tender Ref.	Description	Last date for Collection of Tender Document	Bid Submission Closing Date on/ before 10:00 am Wednesday	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non-Refundable) Per sel
227/2026/ MOH/ HQ-24	Supply of Pharmaceutical (Cardiology) for the Royal Hospital	05-02-2026	25-02-2026	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
330/2026/ MOH/ HQ-29	Provision of Cleaning and Pest Control Services to Directorate General of Professional Development Building at Al-Wattayah	09-02-2026	04-03-2026	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
343/2026/ MOH/ HQ-30	Supply & Installation of Servers for Various Health Facilities	12-02-2026	11-03-2026	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board Excellent, First & Second	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
362/2026/ MOH/ HQ-31	Supply & Installation of Medical Equipment (Neurosurgery & Ophthalmology) for Mizwa Hospital Hospital in Ad Dhakhiliyah Governorate	10-02-2026	04-03-2026	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
364/2026/ MOH/ HQ-32	Supply of Pharmaceuticals	12-02-2026	25-02-2026	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 29 • LO: 145
365/2026/ MOH/ HQ-33	Provision of Cleaning, and Pest Control Services for the Directorate General of Health Services Governorate of Muscat, Department of Laboratories and Medical Fitness Examination Buildings	12-02-2026	11-03-2026	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
395/2026/ MOH/ HQ-34	Supply of Rigid Gas Permeable Contact Lenses	19-02-2026	11-03-2026	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
402/2026/ MOH/ HQ-35	Supply & Installation of Medical Equipment (Fixed) for New Hospital in Samal at Al Dakhiliyah Hospital	05-02-2026	11-02-2026	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
404/2026/ MOH/ HQ-36	Supply of Non-Printed Bags for Pharmacy at the Royal Hospital	12-02-2026	11-03-2026	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
405/2026/ MOH/ HQ-37	Supply and Installation of Furniture in Mudhaili Health Center at North Al Sharqiyah Governorate	05-02-2026	11-02-2026	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board Excellent & First	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
453/2026/ MOH/ HQ-38	Remaining Construction Work for the Rehabilitation and Upgrading of Madha Hospital at Musandam Governorate	12-2-2026	04-03-2026	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board Excellent & First	• SME: 29/500 • LO: 295
456/2026/ MOH/ HQ-39	Provision of Cloud Infrastructure Services for National System for Revenue Cycle Management and Exchange of Health and Financial Information Project	16-02-2026	11-03-2026	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board Excellent, First & Second	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
458/2026/ MOH/ HQ-40	Replacement of Endoscopic Imaging System for Sohar Hospital at North Batina Governorate	16-02-2026	04-03-2026	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
462/2026/ MOH/ HQ-41	Supply & Installation of Electrophoresis Equipment for Suwaiq Hospital at North Batinah Governorate and Khasab Hospital at Musandam Governorate	12-02-2026	25-02-2026	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
495/2026/ MOH/ HQ-43	Supply and Installation of Medical Equipment for Heart and Lung Transplantation at Royal Hospital	16-02-2026	04-03-2026	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 35
496/2026/ MOH/ HQ-44	Supply & Installation of an Ultrasound Machine for Al Mussanah Polyclinic at South Batinah Governorate	12-02-2026	18-02-2026	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 25

Tenders should be submitted on line on <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.

Ministry 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: 24402200, Email id etenderhd@ita.gov.om

OPINION

It’s not the length of your life that matters, but the depth



HYESHA BARRETT

The writer is a Parent Coach and Master Life Coach

THERE is a quiet tension many of us carry deep inside. We work hard, check the boxes, climb the ladders, and somewhere along the way, something begins to feel flat. Life looks full on paper, yet internally it can feel strangely empty.

This is not a rejection of ambition nor purpose. It is an invitation to shift from living primarily as human doings, to living as human beings. After spending time with Anand Chulani and sitting with his gentle reminder that we are meant to be before we are meant to do, I felt the truth of it not just in my mind but in my body, where real wisdom tends to land.

When life becomes mostly about output, we move quickly from one task to the next without feeling the texture of our own experience. We manage time, yet forget to tend to the inner world that gives life meaning. The nervous system stays switched on, scanning, solving, performing. Few moments are left for stillness. Presence and fulfilment are not rewards for productivity: they are the soil from which sustainable wellbeing grows.

Our culture celebrates busyness and visible success, while our emotional and intuitive landscapes quietly go unattended. We learn to optimise everything, except our

inner lives. Over time, this imbalance shows up as fatigue, irritability, disconnection, or the subtle ache that says something important is missing. Many people describe it as feeling like they are watching their life, rather than living it.

Shifting from doing to being does not mean abandoning ambition. It means anchoring your actions in presence, so that what you build reflects who you truly are. Human beings are wired for connection, emotional depth and embodied living. When everything becomes functional and transactional, we lose access to that richness.

The return to being can start simply and gently. Slow your breath and lengthen the exhale, so the body receives the signal that it is safe. Move your body without performance or goals, and notice sensation rather than appearance.

Build small pauses into your day where nothing needs fixing nor achieving. Even sixty seconds of stillness can soften the constant internal rush.

There are also less talked about practices that are surprisingly powerful. Internal dialogue mapping is one. Notice the voice that constantly pushes you to do more or achieve more. Listen to what it is afraid of. Often, there is an old story underneath about worth or safety. Awareness loosens the grip of

Living as a human being means allowing rest without guilt, feeling without resistance and choosing with intention. It means remembering that your value is inherent, not earned through exhaustion.

those unconscious drivers and creates choice.

Emotional micro check-ins are another. Pause throughout the day and gently ask, “What am I feeling right now, and where do I feel it in my body?” Naming emotions reduces their intensity and helps the nervous system settle. These small moments reconnect the mind and heart, so life feels lived rather than managed.

Play is equally transformative and frequently underestimated. Unstructured activities such as painting with no agenda, dancing without skill, playing with children or animals awakens curiosity and creativity. It brings you back into your body, away from the thinking mind, back to the simple joy of being alive; something children know instinctively and adults often forget.

Presence is not about forcing calm or escaping responsibility. When your actions come from a grounded place, they carry more clarity and less strain. Doing becomes an expression of who you are, not proof of your worth.

Living as a human being means allowing rest without guilt, feeling without resistance and choosing with intention. It means remembering that your value is inherent, not earned through exhaustion. Life is not only about what you accomplish, but about how deeply you live it.

FACED WITH TRUMP, POPE LEO OPTS FOR INDIRECT DIPLOMACY

CLÉMENT MELKI

Faced with a highly polarised US political landscape, Leo XIV, the first American pope, has opted for discreet and indirect criticism while also keeping channels of communication open.

Since he was elected in May, the Chicago-born pontiff has taken a clear stand against some decisions by US President Donald Trump’s administration. He has denounced the “inhuman” treatment of migrants, urged dialogue in Venezuela and lamented a “diplomacy of force”. But, in recent weeks, Leo has favoured restraint.

He has made no reference to a possible US intervention in Iran, nor to Trump’s designs on Greenland, nor to the volatile situation in Minneapolis after two protesters were shot by federal agents. His weekly statements carefully avoid these subjects, while his Tuesday evening comments to the press outside his Castel Gandolfo country residence have become increasingly rare.

He briefly broke his silence on Sunday to voice “great concern” about rising tensions between Cuba and the United States, calling on all sides to “avoid violence”.

“Leo is very cautious. He knows his voice is universal. As an American, he is somewhat the natural opponent of Trumpism,” a Vatican source said on condition of anonymity. “On the United States, he’s walking on eggshells. “He understands that the American Church is also targeted by ICE, people are afraid,” the source said, referring to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency currently in the spotlight for its immigration crackdown. But despite increasing concerns about the Trump administration’s actions, the pope prefers to rely on the American Catholic hierarchy rather than wade into the fray himself.

Last week, Archbishop Paul Coakley, president of the US bishops’ conference, reacted forcefully to the “killing” of Renee Good and Alex Pretti in Minneapolis, denouncing “failures in our society to respect the dignity of every human life”.

Bishop Anthony Taylor (Little Rock, Arkansas) pointed to “obvious parallels” between the United States now and Germany.

“We are doomed to repeat failures of the past if we are not willing to remember them and learn from them,” he wrote. The same approach applies on the international stage: in a joint statement, three leading cardinals — Blase Cupich (Chicago), Robert McElroy (Washington) and Joseph Tobin (Newark) — condemned America’s interventionist drift, the erosion of the multilateral framework and the risks to world peace.— AFP

The Texas message: We’re neighbours, not enemies

ONE of the biggest political lessons I learned covering the Middle East for four-plus decades is that there is only one good thing about extremists: They don’t know when to stop. As a result, they eventually go too far and drive themselves over a cliff.

That lesson came to my mind when I was reading about how a Texas Democrat, Taylor Rehmet, trounced his Republican opponent in a state legislative special election on Saturday, prevailing in a historically conservative district around Fort Worth, which President Donald Trump won by more than 17 percentage points in 2024.

What struck me most was this paragraph in the Times story by our Texas bureau chief, J David Goodman, about the result: Rehmet, “a machinist at a Lockheed Martin fighter jet plant in Fort Worth, said in an interview with The New York Times during the campaign that he did not like party labels and believed that voters were ‘really tired of the partisanship.’ He made his support for public education, including vocational programmes, central to his campaign.” I think many Americans are growing both exhausted and frightened by Trump’s scorched-earth, hyperpartisan, fire-ready-aim approach to the presidency, in which he’s been treating Democrats not as political opponents but as “traitors,” wiping out Democrats from previously bipartisan boards, slapping his name on the Kennedy Center ahead of JFK’s and lately even accusing president Barack Obama of “treason” — to name just a few of his inflammatory, divisive actions.

I think a lot of Americans are tired of being pitted against their neighbours and hunger to be brought together for a common purpose; they want common-sense solutions and to



THOMAS L FRIEDMAN

The writer is reporter, author and NYT columnist

I still believe that many Americans want to strengthen the public institutions and shared common interests that bind us, not to rename them all “Trump.” They want to see one another as neighbours again, not the enemy next door.

preserve our most cherished public institutions.

When I got there, I participated in a roundtable with students, an interview with campus and local journalists and a dinner with donors and faculty, and then I gave a talk, “An Examination of American Life.” After I finished my formal lecture, I was interviewed onstage by Prof Chris Childers, the dean of the university’s College of Arts and Sciences.

During the Q&A with Childers, he asked me a question — I don’t remember exactly what it was, but I do remember my answer, and the audience’s reaction. My answer was, to the best of my recollection: “President Trump says his favourite word is ‘tariffs.’ My favourite word is ‘public’ — public schools, public service, public parks, public universities, public libraries, public health, public transportation, public places. ...” Of all the things that I said that night, that line got the loudest applause. And that is why I was not at all surprised at what happened in that special election in Fort Worth. I believe the most underappreciated political aspiration in America today is the hunger of many Americans — not all, but many — to be pulled together and not pulled apart.

I still believe that many Americans want to strengthen the public institutions and shared common interests that bind us, not to rename them all “Trump.” They want to see one another as neighbours again, not the enemy next door.

But — attention — progressive Democrats and the universities they dominate need to heed that message, too. They have not been blameless in generating our divides. As the Brown University economist Glenn Loury wisely observed in a recent essay: “For years, identity politics was treated — rightly — as a pathology of the left. It displaced the individual

as the bearer of moral and political claims, and instead proposed group membership, defined by race and gender, as the proper grounds for justice.” Well, guess what happened, Loury added: The “Right’s response to progressive identity politics has not chiefly taken the form of repudiation. It has taken the form of adoption... What we are witnessing is not merely a backlash. It’s a convergence.” We no longer debate whether identity should be the battlefield, only which identities deserve protection or priority. We never talk about how our “shared citizenship could survive our grievances and differences.” This is our collective race to the bottom. It is our collective race away from our national project — of making, out of many, one — and into a zero-sum national brawl over “Whose country is this, anyway?” And it is taking our great nation over a cliff. I am convinced that many Americans of all races, creeds and colours want it stopped before it really does tip into civil war.

You know where I go for relief? Ever since I covered the Marines in Beirut in 1982, whenever I’ve gotten depressed about America’s fate and future, I try to take a trip with the US military. It’s an incredibly diverse organisation, but everyone answers to — and embraces — just one identity: “American.” There is some secret sauce there that needs to be shared with the rest of the country.

I know where it starts. Whatever policies Democrats and Republicans choose to run on in the midterms — affordability, lower taxes, abundance or free buses — both parties would do the country a huge favour if they adopted the last words that Renee Good said to the ICE agents before one of them shot and killed the Minneapolis mom as she hastily tried to leave a protest scene: “I’m not mad at you.”

Only verified professionals need apply for a job!



SAMUEL KUTTY

The writer is a freelance journalist and author who worked in Oman and India

IN TODAY’S competitive global job market, having the right qualifications is essential for career advancement. However, simply holding a diploma or certificate is often insufficient, particularly when seeking opportunities abroad.

Certificate authentication — the process of verifying the legitimacy of your academic and professional credentials — plays a vital role in ensuring that your qualifications are recognised and valued internationally.

Many countries enforce strict regulations regarding the recognition of foreign qualifications. In certain cases, such as for healthcare professionals, engineers, and teachers, certificate authentication is a mandatory legal requirement for obtaining a work visa or professional license.

The Sultanate of Oman is one country that has tightened pre-entry requirements for foreign workers under its professional accreditation system, requiring them to verify their academic and professional qualifications before entering.

The move is expected to address the growing problem of falsified credentials and improve the calibre of professional foreign workers in the country, while also warning of strict penalties for forged certificates.

“The measures are aimed at regulating the labour market, curbing credential fraud, and raising workforce quality across key sectors,” local media quoted Zaher bin Abdullah

al Sheikh, Director of the Department of Professional Standards at the Ministry of Labour.

Under the new system, expatriate workers seeking employment in regulated professions — including engineering, logistics, and accounting — must have their qualifications assessed and approved by accredited sectoral skills units before arrival. A work practice license is issued only after verification, and entry permits are granted solely once the license has been approved.

Accordingly, work permits will only be granted to individuals who fulfil the nation’s professional requirements. This significant measure demonstrates the nation’s dedication and commitment to enhancing transparency and reducing fraud, ensuring that only genuinely qualified professionals contribute to the country’s workforce.

The move follows the detection of cases involving the forgery of professional classification certificates and work practice licenses. “This is a clear violation of Omani law. Both employers and workers are responsible for obtaining licenses exclusively from authorised bodies and for verifying their authenticity,” the ministry said.

There is zero tolerance for fraud under the new regulations. The Omani government has made it clear: if you are caught with fake documents, you will face serious consequences. Foreign workers using forged qualifications risk deportation, heavy fines,

There is zero tolerance for fraud under the new regulations. The Omani government has made it clear to foreign workers: if you are caught with fake documents, you will face serious consequences like deportation, heavy fines, or even prosecution

or even prosecution. It is not only the workers who are affected — employers who knowingly hire individuals with fake credentials face the same severe penalties, including fines, legal action, and potential loss of their business licenses.

The new regulations are seen as part of a broader initiative to increase citizen participation in the workforce. By tightening restrictions on foreign workers, the government is emphasising that Omanis have priority when it comes to employment opportunities.

Having said that, they are not shutting out skilled foreigners — these individuals still have a place, especially when there are not enough locals for certain roles. The real goal is to rely less on foreign labour and develop a workforce that can sustain itself in the long run.

Foreign workers remain crucial to the Omani economy, without a doubt. However, the country aims to increase the number of Omanis securing these jobs.

These changes are intended to create a fairer labour market, providing more opportunities for locals while allowing foreign professionals to fill roles where their expertise is genuinely required.

The new entry rules require you to have your qualifications verified and approved before you even consider applying for a job in Oman. While this may slow the process down slightly, it ultimately ensures that only the most qualified candidates are admitted.

FINLAND BUILDING ICEBREAKERS FOR US AMID RISING ARCTIC TENSIONS

ANNA KORMAN

Finland is building a new fleet of icebreakers for the US but President Donald Trump’s plans for Greenland, which he covets, and tense US-EU ties have raised concerns over the deal.

Sixty per cent of the world’s icebreakers are Finnish-made and 80 per cent are designed by Finnish companies, according to Arctia, the state-owned firm which manages the country’s icebreaker fleet.

Jukka Viitanen, Sustainability and Communications Director of Arctia, said that Finland’s expertise was born from necessity.

It is the only country in the world where all ports can freeze in winter, Viitanen said.

“We need to export and import stuff to be able to maintain people living in this country. That is why we need icebreaking,” he said.

Nations such as China, Russia and the United States are scrambling to secure a foothold in the Arctic for strategic reasons and to access huge reserves of natural resources.

Many are now looking to enhance their icebreaker fleet. In October, Trump and Helsinki announced that the United States coast guard will procure 11 icebreakers. The US coast guard currently operates three ageing vessels. Four vessels will be built in Finnish shipyards, and the remaining seven in the United States.

“It is not possible to sail through the Arctic Sea without icebreakers and many big nations have interests in the Arctic right now,” Viitanen said.

The US order — estimated at \$6.1 billion according to media reports — is a welcome boost for Finland, where unemployment is at a record high and the economy is in the doldrums.

But Trump’s desire to acquire strategically-located Greenland has now raised “more and more” suspicions about the deal, Sanna Kopra, an Arctic geopolitics and security professor at the University of Lapland, said.

Trump’s long-standing territorial designs on Greenland, an autonomous Danish territory, have triggered the most serious crisis in the history of US-led military alliance Nato.

The US president last week backed off threats of using force to seize Greenland and began talks with Copenhagen and Nuuk. “But if Trump changes his mind about taking control over Greenland and the politics of the United States turns increasingly imperialistic, of course it raises questions about how wise it is to proceed,” Kopra said.

If Trump again starts talking about seizing Greenland, “the question of cancelling these deals could become a very important political issue,” Kopra noted. Charly Saloniuss-Pasternak, an expert in geopolitics and the CEO of Finnish think-tank Nordic West Office, meanwhile doubted Trump’s threats would endanger the deal. — AFP

Canadian PM’s warning to a world losing its rules



OMAN AL YAHYAI

The writer is a multilingual writer and media professional based in Paris. She specialises in human rights and immigration



Canada’s Prime Minister Mark Carney speaks during Question Period in the House of Commons on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. — Reuters file photo

AT THIS year’s World Economic Forum in Davos, Canada’s Prime Minister Mark Carney delivered what many commentators have called one of the most compelling speeches of the gathering, a diagnosis of the current state of the world and a blunt critique of how international law and the global order are being treated by powerful nations. Carney’s message was simple but urgent: the rules-based international system, long taken for granted, is eroding under the weight of unilateral power, selective compliance and coercive economic policies.

Carney explained that the original purpose of international law and global institutions like the United Nations or the World Trade Organisation was to establish a set of shared rules that all countries, large and small, would respect. In theory, these rules constrain aggression, settle disputes and ensure that no state, however powerful, can act with impunity. But in practice, Carney warned, the reality is very different. He noted that “great powers have begun using economic integration as weapons, tariffs as leverage, financial infrastructure as coercion, supply chains as vulnerabilities to be exploited.”

That line struck a chord because it captures a harsh truth: powerful nations increasingly use their market size, control over financial systems and access to trade networks to bend other countries to their will, often with little accountability.

Tariffs against allies, financial sanctions on those who resist political demands, and coercive economic policies are now standard tools of statecraft. Carney’s critique implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, is aimed at the US under President Donald Trump, whose recent trade wars with Europe and threats of steep tariffs on Canada have rattled global markets and strained diplomatic ties.

Carney went further: “You cannot live within the lie of mutual benefit through integration, when integration becomes the

Carney’s message was simple but urgent... the rules-based international system, long taken for granted, is eroding under the weight of unilateral power, selective compliance and coercive economic policies

source of your subordination.” In other words, the promise that international economic integration benefits all parties equally has become a misleading story. When interconnected systems are weaponised, they no longer serve mutual security or prosperity, they become mechanisms of dominance.

This critique resonates with ongoing concerns about how international law is applied selectively. For example, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faces an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court for alleged war crimes related to Gaza, yet the lack of enforcement illustrates how powerful leaders can evade consequences that would apply to less influential figures. Under the current framework, enforcement of international legal judgements often depends on the political will of states, particularly those with the power to arrest or detain, rather than on universal justice. The result is a system where law exists, but is unevenly enforced.

Carney did not mention the United States or Trump by name, but the implications seem clear. In a global landscape where the US imposes tariffs as political tools and pursues controversial strategies, from economic coercion to overseas interventions, the global rules-based

order increasingly appears optional for the powerful and mandatory for the weak. Indeed, Carney’s speech was interpreted by many as a rebuke of US behaviour, as well as a broader call for nations to reassess how they engage with global institutions.

One of the most impactful parts of Carney’s address was his warning that middle powers, countries that are neither global hegemon nor minor players, must rethink how they protect their own interests. He stressed that if middle powers do not strengthen their collective position, they risk being controlled by the interests of stronger powers. In stark terms, he declared: “A world of fortresses will be poorer, more fragile and less sustainable.”

This warning about isolationism and defensive walls is not abstract. It comes at a time when powerful nations appear increasingly willing to prioritise unilateral advantage over collective security. The collapse of predictable international law invites fragmentation, where alliances form based on transactional benefit rather than shared principles of justice and cooperation.

The reaction to Carney’s address underlines its significance. He received a rare standing ovation in Davos, unusual for a forum accustomed to cautious diplomacy.

SPORTS

TOUGHTEST



Majees will rely on their team chemistry, fighting spirit and domestic form.

SEEB, MAJEES TARGET STRONG START AT WEST ASIA TOURNEY

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, FEB 3

Oman’s Majees Club and Seeb Club are set to begin their campaign in the West Asia Men’s Club Volleyball Championship, hosted by Kuwait from February 2 to 14, with the participation of several of the region’s top clubs. The tournament is expected to be one of the most competitive editions in recent years, given the close technical levels and the presence of teams boasting strong continental experience.

Majees, who finished third in the Oman First Division League, open their campaign with a tough test against Qatar’s Al Rayyan Club on Wednesday at 3 pm. The match is seen as a real examination of the team’s capabilities against one of the tournament favourites, as Al Rayyan bring significant international experience along with a squad of seasoned professionals. Majees will rely on their team chemistry, fighting spirit and domestic form as they aim to match the high tempo and secure a positive result.

The team continues its journey on Thursday with a decisive clash against Iraq’s Gas Al Janoob Club at 5 pm. The match carries major importance in qualification calculations, with victory likely to boost their chances of progressing to the next stage amid the expected balance in competition.

Meanwhile, Seeb, reigning Oman league champions, begin their campaign against Bahrain’s Dar Kulaib Club on Thursday at 3 pm in what promises to be a high-level encounter between two experienced sides. Seeb will look to build on their domestic title momentum and reaffirm their regional presence.

SEEB VS AL ITTIHAD

Seeb’s second match comes against Saudi Arabia’s Al Ittihad Club on Saturday evening, before concluding the group stage against hosts Burgan Club on Sunday. The latter fixture could prove decisive in determining qualification spots, particularly with the home advantage favouring the Kuwaiti side.

Players from both teams expressed confidence ahead of the tournament.

Seeb’s Ismail al Haidi described the championship as an important challenge and stressed the squad’s competitive mindset and determination to deliver strong performances.

Majees player Hamad Khamis al Maamari added that the team is not participating merely to compete, but to make a mark that reflects the growth of Omani volleyball, emphasising that team spirit will be their greatest weapon on court.

On the officiating front, Oman will also be represented by international referees Sultan al Kalbani and Faisal al Jalboobi, underlining continued Asian confidence in Omani refereeing standards and their growing presence at regional competitions.



Thrilling start to 5th West Asia Para Games in Muscat



The Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher is hosting the athletics events, wheelchair basketball and badminton matches. — Saleh al Sharji

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, FEB 3

THE COMPETITIONS of the fifth West Asia Para Games (Muscat 2026) got underway on Tuesday morning. The athletics track at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher hosted the athletics events, while wheelchair basketball matches were played in the complex’s basketball arena. Al Amal Sports Hall staged the goalball fixtures, and the main hall at the complex saw the start of the badminton competitions on the opening day of the Games.

GOALBALL RESULTS

The goalball events for the visually impaired opened at a high level, confirming the readiness of the participating teams.

Saudi Arabia recorded a big win over Syria, 10–0, while Oman’s national team defeated the UAE by a wide margin of 11–1. Iraq also overcame Yemen 10–0, and Qatar edged Bahrain 8–5. These results highlighted the intensity of competition and the teams’ desire to make the best possible start to the tournament.

ATHLETICS RESULTS

The morning session of the athletics competitions produced notable performances and strong showings from the participating athletes. In the men’s shot put, Iraq’s Ghara Naish claimed first place, with the UAE’s Mohammed al Kaabi taking second and Iraq’s Kovan Abdulrahim finishing third.

In the women’s discus throw, the

UAE athletes dominated the podium, as Maryam al Zwaidi secured first place, followed by her teammate Maryam al Matrooshi in second, while Bahrain’s Maryam al Humaidi came third.

In the men’s discus throw for wheelchair athletes, Saudi Arabia’s Salam Haider won first place after a strong contest, Syria’s Waseem Rizk finished second and Bahrain’s Yousif Nader was placed third.

In the men’s 400m, Saudi Arabia continued its strong presence with sprinter Ali al Nakhli winning first place, his compatriot Thamer al Zahrani taking second, and Oman’s Haitham al Zadjali earning third after a highly competitive race. The men’s 400m wheelchair race was also fiercely contested, with Saudi Arabia’s Abdulrahman al Qurashi taking gold, fellow Saudi Fahd al Turki finishing second, and Bahrain’s Ahmed Noah taking third place.

BADMINTON RESULTS

In the morning badminton session, Iraq’s Imad Adel Abduh Hassan scored a clear victory over Jordan’s Musab al Tawwalbeh in straight games (21–9, 21–8). Saudi player Younis al Subhi defeated Lebanon’s Rida Rizk (21–13, 21–17), while Iraq’s Karar Hussein continued his country’s strong showing by beating Bahrain’s Nabeel al Dosari (21–7, 21–9).

Saudi player Mahdi al Makinah edged Iraq’s Hassan Wathiq Badr in an exciting three-game match (21–18, 12–21, 21–16). Another Saudi, Mohammed al Ali, overcame Bahrain’s Ahmed Abu Sitar (21–7, 21–18), and Bahrain’s Elyas al Yasi defeated Oman’s Haitham al Darmaki in two straight games (21–16, 21–16).

WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

The morning session featured two wheelchair basketball games, the first of which brought together Oman’s national team and the UAE. The Emirati side managed to secure a victory 54–47. The first quarter ended with the UAE leading 11–9, and they widened the gap in the second quarter, which ended 19–10 in their favour. Oman fought back in the third and fourth quarters, winning both 14–12, 14–12, but the overall score still tilted towards the Emiratis when the final buzzer sounded.

For his part, Oman wheelchair basketball head coach Hamood al Amiri said that facing the UAE was technically expected to be challenging, especially as it was the team’s first official game in the tournament. He explained that nerves and tension affected some players at the start of the game, contributing to a large number of missed easy chances under the basket, around forty points, by his estimate, which could have changed the outcome of the match.

Al Amiri added that the UAE team enjoys an advantage in terms of competitive exposure, as it has a regular league, unlike Oman’s team, which represents a single club without a local competition structure. This, he said, gives Emirati players greater on-court experience. He confirmed that the Omani players’ performance improved gradually as the game went on and they gained more contact and rhythm, noting that the coaching staff is counting on this upward curve in the upcoming matches, and expressing his hope that the team will appear in a stronger form in its next outings at the Games.

INJURYRECOVERY



Australia's Josh Hazlewood celebrates with Pat Cummins after taking the wicket of England's Adil Rashid during the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 in Ahmedabad, India. — Reuters

AUSTRALIA'S HAZLEWOOD UNLIKELY TO BE FIT FOR HALF OF WORLD CUP

MELBOURNE: Australia fast bowler Josh Hazlewood may not return to action until halfway through the T20 World Cup, injured teammate Pat Cummins said on Tuesday.

Hazlewood, arguably the squad's most important bowler, has struggled with hamstring and Achilles injuries, and missed the entire five-Test Ashes series against England.

Australia head coach Andrew McDonald said in mid-January that Hazlewood was on track to be fit for the squad's World Cup opener against Ireland on February 11 but Cummins' update was less optimistic.

"I caught up with Joshy a couple of days ago and he's working so hard. I really feel for Joshy, he's had a few setbacks, (he's) one of the hardest trainers," Cummins told Australian broadcaster Nine Network.

"He's doing everything he can. I don't think he will be there for the start of the tournament, but he's trying his best to be there about halfway through."

With Mitchell Starc having retired from the format and Cummins sidelined with back problems, Australia head into the February 7-March 8 World Cup undermanned and in poor form following a 111-run humiliation by Pakistan, which completed a 3-0 series whitewash.

Cummins said players' late arrival to Pakistan after the domestic Big Bash League had not helped.

"It wasn't the series we were hoping for," he said.

"It's always better when you're winning, but they'll shake that one off pretty quickly."

Cummins, who played only one Test of the Ashes due to lumbar bone stress, said he had run out of time to be fit for the World Cup squad.

"We wanted to give the back a little rest to make sure it's right for what's going to be a big rest of the year," he said. "Minor setback, I should be right to go in a few weeks."

Cummins will hope to lead Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League which starts on March 26. — Reuters



India aim for back-to-back T20 World Cup triumphs

HOLDERS INDIA will enter the T20 World Cup as firm favourites on home soil, but coach Gautam Gambhir faces intense scrutiny under the weight of expectation from a billion-plus fans.

India, led by Suryakumar Yadav, will begin their campaign against the United States at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium on Saturday.

It will round off the opening day of the tournament's 10th edition, which has been marred by a chaotic build-up.

Bangladesh last month refused to play in India, citing security concerns, and were kicked out to be replaced by Scotland.

This week the Pakistan government followed up by barring its team from playing against India in Group A on February 15 in Colombo as a protest at Bangladesh's treatment.

The boycott has robbed the group stage of the biggest rivalry and money-spinning spectacle, but leaves India in pole position to top the group.

Pakistan should also progress to the Super Eights in second place, barring a slip-up against the Netherlands, Namibia or the USA, who make up the five-team group.

Top-ranked India reinforced their credentials as tournament favourites with a recent 4-1 win over New Zealand — their ninth successive T20 bilateral series triumph.



But home defeats in other formats have put Gambhir's high-profile job on the line.

India were beaten 2-0 by South Africa in a Test series last year and New Zealand won an ODI series 2-1. Gambhir, 44, replaced Rahul Dravid as coach after the T20 World Cup triumph in 2024 and has lost 10 out of 19 Tests.

SWASHBUCKLING SHARMA

Indian media suggested the former batsman and World Cup-winner may lose his job if India fail in the 20-team tournament.

"He should stay away from social media till the World Cup and focus on the team," India batsman Ajinkya Rahane told website cricbuzz.

It will be India's first T20 World Cup since the retirements of then captain Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli following the final victory in Barbados in 2024.

India first won the title under Mahendra Singh Dhoni in Johannesburg in 2007 but will

have to defy history to win again, with no team having previously gone back-to-back.

Abhishek Sharma has replaced Rohit in the role of fearless opener, with the swashbuckling batsman scoring at a punishing strike rate of more than 194.

The 25-year-old left-hander is in form. He smashed India's second fastest 50, off 14 balls, against New Zealand.

Captain Suryakumar ended a batting slump with three half-centuries in the same series while Ishan Kishan's comeback has added muscle to the batting order.

Batting great Sunil Gavaskar told broadcaster JioStar that India were full of confidence.

"Even if there is a small stumble, this team knows it can recover, regroup, and continue marching towards victory," said the former India captain.

The bowling attack, led by Jasprit Bumrah, has new talent in the shape of medium-pacer Harshit Rana.

Bumrah, Rana and Arshdeep Singh form the seam attack, with Hardik Pandya and Shivam Dube as the all-rounders.

"It's a luxury that we have a handful of bowlers that can bowl in every situation," bowling coach Morne Morkel said.

"Part of the thinking ... was to look at different sorts of combinations. We don't want teams to have set plans against us."

Spinner Washington Sundar and batsman Tilak Varma are recovering from injury, but both are expected to be fit. — AFP

Beach handball preparation plan for Asia, world events ready

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, FEB 3

The National Teams and Coaches Committee of the Oman Handball Association (OHA) held a meeting on Tuesday, chaired by Moosa bin Khamis al Balushi, OHA Chairman and Head of the Committee, with the attendance of committee members and the technical staff of the national men's beach handball team, led by national coach Hamoud al Hassani and his assistant Jaber al Balushi.

The meeting focused on discussing and approving the preparation plan for the national team ahead

of its participation in the sixth Asian Beach Games, scheduled to take place in Sanya, China, from April 22 to 30. The committee reviewed the proposed schedule of domestic training camps, in addition to a proposed external training camp in Thailand, as well as approving a series of friendly matches against the Iranian national team to be held in Muscat.

This Asian participation represents an important milestone in the team's journey, as it seeks to build on the major achievements recorded in recent years, most notably winning the 10th Asian Beach Handball Championship hosted by



The National Teams and Coaches Committee of the Oman Handball Association during a meeting.

Oman in May 2025, as well as claiming the title of the Gulf Beach Games held in Muscat last April. The national team continues to benefit from a strong squad and accumulated experience at both continental and international levels.

The national team is set to officially begin its preparation phase on March 22, following the conclusion of the First Division Handball League. The programme will include intensive training sessions and technical and physical programmes aimed at enhancing players' readiness and strengthening team cohesion ahead of the Asian competitions.

Following its return from Sanya, the team will continue its preparations for the IHF Beach Handball World Championships for men and women, scheduled to be held in Croatia in June, as part of a comprehensive preparation plan designed to maintain the team's upward performance trajectory across major international events.

Oman's national beach handball team qualified for the World Championships for the ninth time in its history after securing the title of the 10th Asian Beach Handball Championship held in Oman in May 2025, alongside Iran, which finished as runners-up in the same tournament.

SPORTS

NBA LEAGUE



Houston Rockets' Alperen Sengun (28) shoots the ball while Indiana Pacers' Jay Huff (32) defends at Gainbridge Fieldhouse. — [Imagn Images](#)

SENGUN POWERS
ROCKETS PAST
PACERS, BALL SHINES

LOS ANGELES: Alperen Sengun finished with 39 points and 16 rebounds as the Houston Rockets bagged their third consecutive victory with a 118-114 defeat of the Indiana Pacers on Monday.

Turkish player Sengun, who was one of the most notable omissions from this month's NBA All-Star Game, dominated at both ends of the court as the Rockets squeezed home. Jabari Smith Jr backed Sengun with 19 points while Amen Thompson added 16 points as Houston improved to 31-17 to remain fourth in the Western Conference.

Elsewhere, the Minnesota Timberwolves (31-20) saw their four-game unbeaten streak halted by the Memphis Grizzlies in a 137-128 defeat.

Memphis, missing the injured Ja Morant, improved to 19-29 thanks to 30 points from Jaren Jackson Jr Seven Memphis players finished in double figures, with Ty Jerome scoring 19 points and Jaylen Wells 18 points. Cam Spencer and Vince Williams added 16 points each.

The Charlotte Hornets edged closer to the playoff places with a 102-95 victory over the New Orleans Pelicans, extending their win streak to seven games. LaMelo Ball was the hero for Charlotte, recovering from an accidental clash of heads with Hornets head coach Charles Lee to finish with 24 points, eight rebounds and five assists.

Ball needed treatment for a gash near his eye after colliding with Lee as he scrambled to grab a loose pass in the first quarter.

He returned soon afterwards to help Charlotte climb out of a 22-point hole as the Hornets improved to 23-28, just one place behind 10th-placed Atlanta in the Eastern Conference.

Rising Charlotte star Kon Knueppel finished with 17 points, including four three-pointers, while Brandon Miller and Grant Williams had 16 points each. — [AFP](#)

Seeb, Shabab share spoils
in JL's four-goal thriller

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, FEB 3

THRILLING 2-2 draw stole the spotlight in the headline clash of Round 12 of the Jindal Football League, as leaders Seeb Club and closest challengers Al Shabab Club shared the spoils in an entertaining contest at Seeb Stadium. The match was packed with drama and momentum swings until the final moments, keeping the title race wide open as the round continued.

Seeb began aggressively, pressing forward and making full use of home advantage and crowd support. The midfield duo of Arshad al Alawi and Abdullah Fawaz were particularly lively, while the full-backs pushed high to supply crosses. However, Shabab's disciplined defensive setup and the outstanding performance of international goalkeeper Ibrahim al Mukhaini denied the hosts an early breakthrough.

At the other end, Shabab relied on quick counterattacks and organised transitions. Their approach paid off in the 25th minute when Hatim al Roushdi capitalised on a defensive error, broke clear of goalkeeper Ahmed al Rawahi and calmly slotted the ball home to give his side a 1-0 lead at half-time.

Seeb responded strongly after the break, with their coach introducing attacking substitutes Zaher al Aghbari and Omar al Fazari, which completely shifted the momentum. The equaliser arrived in the 53rd minute when Omar al Maliki rose highest to head in a well-delivered corner.

The pressure continued, and Seeb earned a penalty in the 71st minute. Abdullah Fawaz converted confidently to put the hosts ahead 2-1.

Shabab refused to back down and pushed forward in search of a response. Their persistence paid off in the 88th minute when Yaseen al Shiyadi fired in a low strike to level the score, sparking celebrations among the players and technical staff. Both sides chased a late winner, but the final whistle confirmed a share of the points.

With the result, Seeb moved to 32 points to maintain top spot, while Shabab climbed to 26 points in second place, benefiting from Al Nahda's slip.



Seeb and Al Shabab players fight for the ball during the Jindal League. — [Abdulwahid al Hamadani](#)



Dhofar players celebrate a goal against Ibri.

AL SHUKAILI STRIKE SINKS AL NAHDA

Bahla Club edged Al Nahda Club 1-0 at the Al Buraimi Sports Complex, with Abdulsalam al Shukaili scoring the decisive goal. The defeat left Al Nahda third on 22 points, while Bahla advanced to sixth with 19 points.

Meanwhile, Dhofar Club dominated Ibri Club with a convincing 3-0 victory at Al Saada Sports Complex. Abdullah Zaher struck twice, with Adil al Qara adding the third. The win lifted Dhofar to 12 points in ninth place, while Ibri remained on seven points in 13th.

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OIA unveils projects worth **ﷵ935m**

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, FEB 3

OMAN Investment Authority (OIA) continues to translate national priorities into tangible investments that support economic diversification and promote local content, launching four major industrial projects during the initial month of Oman's 11th Five-Year Development Plan. Focused on manufacturing industries, tourism and the digital economy, the projects strengthen OIA's strategic footprint in manufacturing industries, one of the key drivers of Oman Vision 2040, through global partnerships and investments implemented by its subsidiaries that enhance local supply chain and contribute to localising technologies.

One of the most prominent projects is the fully financed United Solar project, supported by Future Fund Oman (FFO), to establish a state-of-the-art polysilicon production facility in Sohar Free Zone, the company's largest plant outside China. With a total investment of **ﷵ700 million** (\$1.8 billion), this project is among the region's largest industrial renewable energy investments.

A joint financing agreement was signed between United Solar

*One of the most prominent projects is the fully financed United Solar project, supported by Future Fund Oman (FFO), to establish a state-of-the-art polysilicon production facility in Sohar Free Zone, the company's largest plant outside the People's Republic of China. With a total investment of **ﷵ700 million** (\$1.8 billion), this project is among the region's largest industrial renewable energy investments.*



A tripartite agreement was signed between Asyad Drydock, Oman LNG and Svitzer to manufacture the first integrated marine tugboat within Oman

Polysilicon Company (a subsidiary of United Solar Holding), the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and a consortium of regional and local banks. In the maritime manufacturing sector, ASYAD Group has launched a project to manufacture the first fully built tugboat in Oman. The project is being executed under a tripartite agreement between ASYAD Drydock, Oman LNG and global maritime leader Svitzer.

Hisham bin Ahmed al Sheedi, Chief Investment Officer — Economic Diversification Investments at

OIA, stated: “These projects mark a new chapter in OIA's continuous efforts over the past five years to grow and transform OIA's National Development Fund (NDF). Through these initiatives, we aim to maximise the synergies among OIA's subsidiaries, deepen local content, create new job opportunities and localise advanced technologies, all contributing to Oman Vision 2040 economic pillar”.

In support of the petrochemical sector and high-value manufacturing industries, OQ Group, in collaboration

with Sohar Free Zone, has initiated a landmark project to localise advanced technologies. OQ Refineries and Petrochemical Industries (OQ RPI) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Germany's MAK Group to establish an integrated industrial complex producing Purified Terephthalic Acid (PTA) and Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET), key materials used in the packaging industry, especially for consumer goods like water bottles and food containers. The project aims to establish an integrated plant in the Sohar Free Zone, with an annual production capacity of 700,000 tonnes of PTA and PET annually; and 425,000 tonnes of para-xylene (PX) as a key input. The project total investment value exceeds **ﷵ192 million** (\$500 million) and is expected to create around 700 direct jobs, in addition to indirect employment through local supply chains.

OQ Base Industries (OQ BI) has also launched a new project in Salalah Free Zone in partnership with India's Deepak. The project will establish a facility to produce specialized chemicals used in pharmaceuticals and fertilizers. It will use ammonia as a raw material to produce sodium nitrate and sodium nitrite, with a production capacity of up to 70,000 tonnes per year.

Total refinery output of Oman increases by 12.5%

MUSCAT: The total production of refineries in the Sultanate of Oman recorded a 12.5 per cent increase by the end of December 2025, reaching 84,739,200 barrels compared to the end of December 2024, according to preliminary statistics issued by the NCSI.

The statistics showed that motor fuel production during

the month of December 2025 witnessed a slight decrease of 0.1 per cent, totalling 2,846,000 barrels compared to 2,848,600 barrels in November 2025. Specifically, the production of regular motor fuel (M-91) rose by 19.3 per cent to reach 16,775,600 barrels by the end of December 2025, compared to 14,058,800 barrels during the

same period in 2024. Its sales also recorded an increase of 1.1 per cent, reaching 14,292,900 barrels compared to 14,140,100 barrels in the corresponding period of 2024, while its exports decreased by 10.4 per cent to stand at 2,299,100 barrels compared to 2,566,500 barrels by the end of December 2024.

— ONA

LEO DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCES STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH ROVE

MUSCAT: For the first time in Oman, LEO Development announced strategic Partnership with Rove – the Emaar Properties and Dubai Holding JV - to bring lifestyle hospitality to Oman.

The collaboration marks the debut of Rove in the Sultanate of Oman, with a pipeline of projects planned across Muscat and other strategic ITC, free and Special economic zones in Oman

The first project, Rove Home Muscat Expressway, will feature one- and two-bedroom apartments and lofts, located in a well-connected area of the capital.

The project was announced In the presence of Qais bin Mohammed bin Moosa al Yousef, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones; Viktor Serenkov, Chairman of Leo Development, Shaikh Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, OCCI Chairman; Munir al Muniri, Deputy President for Operations at the Oman Investment Authority; and Dubai Holding, represented by its Chief Operating Officer Paul Bridger and Omar Al Banna, Head of Government Relations.

The collaboration lays the foundation for the development of multiple Rove



projects across Oman, supporting the long-term regional growth ambitions of both partners and reinforcing Oman's position as an emerging destination for contemporary lifestyle hospitality.

The partnership is anchored by the signing of Rove Home Muscat Expressway, the brand's first branded residential development in Oman. The project represents a significant milestone for LEO Development as it brings an internationally recognized lifestyle brand to the Omani market.

Born in Dubai, Rove is a joint venture between Emaar Properties and Dubai Holding, and has recorded strong regional growth, with over 8,000 keys open or under development.

An award-winning leader in contemporary travel, Rove manages a diverse portfolio of hotels and branded living spaces. Every property is positioned for maximum connectivity and crafted for those

who seek efficiency and sustainability alongside a vibrant, local personality - all without the usual complications.

Rove Home Muscat Expressway, the first of several planned developments, will be located in a central and well-connected area near Muscat Hills, with direct access to major road networks. The site offers proximity to Muscat's primary business districts, urban destinations, the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC), and Muscat International Airport.

The project will comprise fully furnished one- and two-bedroom apartments and lofts, supported by a curated range of lifestyle amenities including a lap pool with jacuzzi, roof garden, retail and co-working spaces designed for modern urban living, in addition to the brand's signature Rove Café.

Commenting on the announcement, Serenkov, Chairman of LEO Development, said: “We are proud to announce our partnership with

Rove, bringing a fresh and highly relevant approach to branded residential living in Oman. This collaboration reflects a shared vision to respond to evolving lifestyle expectations and deliver developments defined by intention, cultural sensitivity, and long-term value. Rove Home Muscat Expressway is the first step in a broader pipeline that we believe will redefine urban living in the Sultanate.

Paul Bridger, Chief Operating Officer at Rove Hotels, added: “We are incredibly proud to partner with LEO Development to bring Rove to Oman. LEO's deep understanding of the local market, combined with Rove's lifestyle-led design philosophy, creates a powerful platform for long-term growth. This project signals our commitment to Oman's future and sets the stage for multiple developments across the country.”

As part of the long-term partnership, LEO Development and Rove are aligned on expanding the Rove portfolio across city hubs, leisure destinations, ITCs and free zones in Oman, reinforcing the Sultanate's position as an emerging destination for contemporary lifestyle hospitality in the GCC.

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, FEB 3

Oman Investment Authority (OIA) is increasingly channelling capital into high-potential non-energy sectors — from logistics and manufacturing to tourism and digital industries — in support of the Sultanate of Oman's economic diversification and Oman Vision 2040 priorities.

According to Mulham bin Basheer al Jarf, OIA's Deputy President for Investments, Oman Vision 2040 priorities now shape the Authority's capital deployment and help define the most dynamic opportunities for both domestic and international investors.

“We are putting more emphasis on non-energy sectors”, Al Jarf said. “Companies such as (integrated energy group) OQ and others are now self-sustaining and no longer require capital support, which allows us to use profits from energy-related assets to fund investments in sectors such as logistics, tourism and manufacturing. We are progressively shifting the weight of our investments to match Oman Vision 2040

priorities”.

Speaking to The Energy Year, a UK-based business news portal, Al Jarf said the Omani sovereign wealth fund continues to invest in sectors prioritised under Oman Vision 2040. The list includes logistics, healthcare, mining,

aquaculture, tourism and manufacturing, as well as enabling sectors such as financial services and activities that support domestic supply chains.

Investor interest, he noted, is currently led by green hydrogen and the wider energy-transition space, with renewables and clean power attracting significant momentum. He added that, beyond energy, sectors such as steel, petrochemicals, tourism and real estate are also drawing strong attention, as they combine strategic importance with solid growth prospects, making them appealing to both local and international

investors.

To help guide investment strategies in these areas, the Authority is building sector-specific teams to enable a dynamic approach to capital allocation.

“For instance, if we IPO a company and realise a profit, we may redeploy those proceeds either to strengthen the same sector or to accelerate growth in others. But the key objective is always complementarity. We never aim to compete with the private sector — our role is to enable, support and co-invest alongside private players”, Al Jarf stressed.

Al Jarf also cited the Authority's interest in exploring emerging fields, notably fintech, AI, digitalisation and superconductors in partnership with international players. “These sectors represent new frontiers and we are keen to engage with partners who bring expertise and value”, he noted. Besides supporting Oman's economic development, the OIA also oversees a sizable portfolio of international investments through its Future Generations Fund. Spanning more than 50 countries.



MULHAM BIN BASHEER AL JARF
OIA's Deputy President for Investments

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During this limited-time promotion, Chery is extending significant cash-only savings across its flagship sedan and SUV lineup. The refined Arrizo 8 Comfort is now available from RO 6,300, while the feature-rich Tiggo 8 Pro starts from RO 6,980.

For drivers seeking premium mobility at an unmatched value, the luxurious Tiggo 9 is offered at an exclusive RO 8,738. These prices provide exceptional, direct value, making it a rare moment to upgrade to a technologically advanced Chery at an irresistible entry point.

Chery vehicles featured in this Flash Sale are engineered using the brand’s advanced hard core vehicle architecture, designed to deliver outstanding stability, durability and dynamic performance. The Arrizo 8 Comfort impresses with its elegant styling, upscale cabin, dual 12 inch screens and responsive 2.0T & 1.6T turbocharged engine. Meanwhile, the versatile Tiggo SUV range offers spacious seating, enhanced comfort and modern convenience features, crowned by the Tiggo 9’s premium interior, 15.6 inch HD central display and intelligent interactive technologies.

Safety continues to be at the heart of Chery’s engineering philosophy. All models included in the Flash Sale come equipped with Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), such as Adaptive Cruise Control, Blind Spot Monitoring and a 540 degree panoramic camera system, ensuring heightened confidence and protection on Oman’s roads.

With a blend of intelligent safety, refined craftsmanship and fuel efficient powertrains, Chery reinforces its commitment to delivering exceptional value and long term reliability in the Sultanate of Oman’s automotive market.

Customers are encouraged to visit their nearest Chery showroom early, as stock is strictly limited and available on a first come, first served basis.

This exclusive 3 day event is the final chance to secure select premium variants at special cash-only prices before the promotion concludes on February 5, 2026.

Chery’s global momentum continues to be reinforced by strong performance in international quality and brand rankings. Chery Automobile ranked first among Chinese automotive brands in the JD Power 2023 China Initial Quality StudySM (IQS), reflecting the brand’s consistent focus on manufacturing quality, reliability and customer satisfaction.

Experience adventure and capability with Kia Tasman

MUSCAT: The Kia Tasman stands as a bold new addition to the pickup segment in Oman, built for those who believe that the true journey starts when the regular road reaches its limit.

Reliable International Automotive, the exclusive distributor for Kia in Oman, provides this powerful vehicle under the theme: “Dive into a new dimension”.

Designed to master the diverse and challenging landscapes found across Oman, the Tasman is a symbol of Kia’s vision for adventure, strength and innovation. Built for Powerful Performance

The Kia Tasman features a robust body-on-frame structure, providing the durability needed for demanding driving conditions.

Powered by a 2.5-litre turbocharged engine delivering 277



hp and 43 kg m torque, the Tasman provides the necessary power for difficult climbs and heavy-duty tasks.

With a 3,500 kg towing capacity, it is perfectly balanced for both rugged work and personal exploration across Oman.

Mastery of Every Terrain

As a capable force in any environment, the Tasman is equipped with a 4WD system and specialised off-road modes including Desert and Rock.

With a high ground clearance of up to 252 mm, the vehicle also includes a dedicated X-Trek mode for better control over

difficult obstacles. To ensure driver confidence, the Surround View Monitor and Rear-View Camera make it easier to navigate challenging paths with absolute control.

Inside, the Tasman redefines the pickup cabin by combining practicality with contemporary refinement.

The interior features an integrated panoramic digital display, combining a 12.3-inch infotainment system and a digital cluster. Premium features such as wireless smartphone charging, dual-zone automatic climate control and artificial leather seats ensure every journey is comfortable, no matter where the journey leads.

Adventure in the Tasman is supported by Kia’s advanced driver assistance systems to make every trip safer.

Sohar Int’l sponsors Salut
Heritage Race in Bahla

SOHAR International has successfully concluded its participation as the Main Sponsor of the Salut Heritage Race, held in the village of Bisya in the Wilayat of Bahla, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, amidst historic and archaeological landmarks that reflect the depth of Oman’s rich heritage.

The race offered a distinctive sporting experience that brought together competitive spirit, cultural authenticity and natural beauty.

Sohar International’s sponsorship of the event reflects its ongoing commitment to supporting community and sports initiatives, promoting healthy lifestyles and showcasing the heritage and tourism assets across the Sultanate of Oman’s governorates — reinforcing the Bank’s vision of advancing sustainable development and active community engagement.

The Salut Heritage Race marked the conclusion of Bahla Winter Festival 2026, attracting broad participation with 1,150 male and female runners across various age groups, alongside strong public attendance estimated at approximately 4,000 spectators.

The event stood out as a sports and tourism showcase that harmoniously blended athletic competition with the historical significance of the location.

Commenting on the sponsorship, Abdulwahid bin Mohamed al Murshidi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, said: “Sohar International’s sponsorship of the Salut Heritage Race forms part of a broader strategic vision grounded in the belief that sustainable development is closely linked to empowering local communities, activating place-based economies and fostering experiences that connect people with identity and heritage.

Through supporting such initiatives, we aim to contribute to an integrated ecosystem



Sohar International’s sponsorship of the event reflects its ongoing commitment to supporting community and sports initiatives, promoting healthy lifestyles and showcasing the heritage and tourism assets across the Sultanate of Oman’s governorates.

that stimulates local economic activity, promotes cultural tourism and creates long-term value for Oman’s governorates — reflecting the role of the financial sector as an active partner in both social and economic growth”.

The race featured multiple distances designed to accommodate different age groups and abilities, including 1 km for children aged 6–8, 3 km for ages 9–12, as well as 5 km and 10 km races for older participants.

This inclusive format enabled wide community participation and reflected a strong family-oriented and community-driven spirit.

Organised under the supervision of Himam Adventure, the race routes for the 1 km and 3 km distances were set within the Salut Centre, while the 5 km and 10 km

races commenced from the centre, passing through the village of Bisya and ascending the adjacent mountain, before concluding at the Salut Centre — offering participants a course that highlighted the area’s natural landscapes and archaeological character.

The event was supported by four government entities and five sponsoring companies, in addition to the participation of 23 productive families through the accompanying exhibition.

This contributed to supporting community initiatives, promoting handicrafts and home-based businesses and adding a comprehensive economic and social dimension to the event. Through its diverse sponsorships, Sohar International continues to play an active role in supporting cultural, sports and community events across the Sultanate of Oman.

Kareena unveils ‘Heart to Heart’ jewellery collection

Ushering in the season of Love, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 5th largest jewellery retailer globally with over 420 showrooms across 14 countries has launched their ‘Heart to Heart’ jewellery collection.

The collection was unveiled by Bollywood icon and brand ambassador of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Kareena Kapoor Khan, in the presence of Abdul Salam K P, Vice Chairman of Malabar Group; Shamlal Ahamed, MD-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Nishad A K, Malabar Group Executive Director; Abdul Majeed, Director of Malabar Group; Faisal A K, Head of Manufacturing at Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Ameer



The collection was unveiled by Bollywood icon and brand ambassador of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Kareena Kapoor Khan.

CMC, Director of Finance & Admin at Malabar Gold & Diamonds; Shaji Kakkodi, Malabar Group

Chief Digital Officer, other senior management team members, customers and well-wishers.

The thoughtfully curated Heart-to-Heart collection from Malabar Gold & Diamonds features over 225 heart-inspired designs, with prices starting at RO 110 making it an ideal choice for meaningful gifting this season.

Adding to the delight, customers will receive a complimentary branded Calvin Klein or Anne Klein watch with every purchase of diamond jewellery from the collection. The limited-edition range and offers are available at all Malabar Gold & Diamonds showrooms until February 15.

Designed to suit varied tastes and gifting needs, the collection showcases a wide selection of

lightweight and elegant necklaces, pendants, bangles, bracelets, earrings and rings.

Crafted in responsibly sourced natural diamonds and 18K gold, the Heart-to-Heart collection reflects the brand’s commitment to quality, ethics and thoughtful design — ensuring something special for every customer.

“Jewellery has always been one of the most meaningful ways to express love and emotion. As we step into the season of love, Malabar Gold & Diamonds is proud to introduce the Heart-to-Heart collection, officially launched by Kareena Kapoor, whose timeless elegance perfectly mirrors the spirit of the collection.

SHORTTAKES



A man reads the latest edition of The Times of India newspaper, with the story on US tariffs on Indian imports slashed to 18%, in New Delhi. — Reuters

INDIA GAINS RELIEF AS TRUMP CUTS TARIFFS

NEW DELHI: US President Donald Trump’s move to slash tariffs on Indian imports sparked a relief rally across Indian markets on Tuesday, lifting sentiment among exporters and policymakers even as details of the agreement remained scarce.

Trump announced a trade deal with India on Monday to cut tariffs on Indian goods to 18% from 50% in exchange for New Delhi halting purchases of Russian oil and lowering trade barriers.

However, Trump’s social media post announcing the agreement was not followed by any detailed statement from either the White House or the Indian government.

An Indian government official said India has agreed to buy more petroleum, defence goods and aircraft from the United States, while partially opening its tightly guarded agriculture sector under the deal. New Delhi has also lowered tariffs on imported cars to address Washington’s immediate demands, the official said.

Trump said India would buy more American goods, with purchases rising to more than \$500 billion, including energy, coal, technology and agricultural products, though he did not specify a timeframe.

“India’s tariff agreement with the US removes its earlier disadvantage versus peers”, said Neelkanth Mishra, chief economist at Axis Bank.

He said the deal would benefit sectors such as gems and jewellery, leather, plastics, ceramics, auto components and non-technology foreign investment. Among Asian peers, US tariffs on goods from Indonesia stand at 19%, while rates for Vietnam and Bangladesh are 20%.

India’s exports to the United States rose 15.88% year on year to \$85.5 billion during January–November, while imports stood at \$46.08 billion, Indian government data showed. — Reuters

Oil slides down on US-Iran de-escalation, firm dollar



An oil pumpjack at Lake Maracaibo in Cabimas, Venezuela, January 27, 2026. — Reuters

OIL prices edged lower on Tuesday, falling for a second session, as markets weighed the possibility of a de-escalation in US-Iran tensions, while a firmer US dollar added pressure.

Brent crude futures fell 15 cents to \$66.15 a barrel by 10:16 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate crude slipped 8 cents to \$62.06 a barrel. Earlier in the session, Brent and WTI touched their lowest levels in a week at \$65.19 and \$61.12 a barrel, respectively.

Oil prices slumped more than 4% on Monday after US President Donald Trump said Iran was “seriously talking” with Washington, signalling a possible easing of tensions with the OPEC member.

Iran and the United States are expected to resume nuclear talks on Friday in Türkiye, officials from both sides said. Trump warned that with large US warships heading towards Iran, “bad things could happen” if a deal was not reached.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said talks with Washington should be pursued to secure Iran’s national interests, provided “threats and unreasonable expectations” are avoided.

“The volatile price action seen over the past four weeks has been driven by geopolitical risk premiums linked to the current US administration’s expansionary foreign policy, especially the ‘on-off’ threats towards Iran”, said Kelvin Wong, senior market analyst at OANDA.

Adding further pressure, the US dollar index hovered near its highest level in more than a week, making dollar-denominated crude more expensive for holders of other currencies. Investors also assessed global supply conditions. Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said Russia has sufficient fuel volumes and is even running a surplus, adding that the domestic oil products market stabilised last autumn.

On Monday, Trump announced a trade deal with India that cuts US tariffs on Indian goods to 18% from 50% in exchange for New Delhi halting purchases of Russian oil and lowering trade barriers.

“If this happens, it could lead to an increase in the amount of Russian oil floating at sea”, ING analysts said in a note.

Trump said India had agreed to buy oil from the United States and possibly Venezuela.

Analysts expect prices to remain volatile in the near term. “Prices are likely to stay choppy and range-bound, reacting to headlines and macroeconomic cues rather than forming a decisive trend, with risks skewed to the downside”, said Priyanka Sachdeva, senior market analyst at Phillip Nova. — Reuters

SpaceX acquires xAI in record-setting \$1.25 trillion agreement

WASHINGTON: Elon Musk said on Monday that SpaceX has acquired his artificial-intelligence startup xAI in a record-setting deal, unifying his AI and space ambitions by combining the rocket-and-satellite company with the maker of the Grok chatbot.

The transaction values SpaceX at \$1 trillion and xAI at \$250 billion, according to a person familiar with the matter, making it the largest merger-and-acquisition deal ever recorded.

The deal, first reported by Reuters last week, represents one of the most ambitious tie-ups in the technology sector, combining a space-and-defense contractor with a fast-growing AI developer whose costs are largely driven by chips, data



SpaceX’s logo and an Elon Musk photo are seen in this illustration created. — Reuters

centres and energy. The acquisition could also bolster SpaceX’s data-centre ambitions as Musk competes with rivals including Alphabet’s

Google, Meta, Amazon-backed Anthropic and OpenAI.

Under the terms of the deal, investors in xAI will receive 0.1433 shares of SpaceX for every share of xAI, the person said. Some xAI executives may opt to receive cash instead of SpaceX stock at \$75.46 per share.

“This marks not just the next chapter, but the next book in SpaceX and xAI’s mission: scaling to make a sentient sun to understand the universe and extend the light of consciousness to the stars”, Musk said in a statement.

The acquisition surpasses the previous record for the world’s largest M&A deal, set in 2000 when Vodafone acquired Germany’s Mannesmann for \$203 billion, according to data from LSEG.

The combined company is expected to price shares at about \$527 each, another person familiar with the matter said. SpaceX was last valued at \$800 billion in a recent insider share sale, while xAI was valued at \$230 billion in November, according to the Wall Street Journal.

The merger comes as SpaceX prepares for a potential public offering later this year that could value the company at more than \$1.5 trillion, two people familiar with the matter said.

SpaceX, xAI and Musk did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The deal further consolidates Musk’s business empire, which already includes electric-vehicle

maker Tesla, brain-chip firm Neuralink and tunnel company the Boring Company. Musk has previously merged his ventures, including folding social media platform X into xAI last year and using Tesla stock to acquire SolarCity in 2016.

The agreement may draw scrutiny from regulators and investors over governance, valuation and conflicts of interest, given Musk’s overlapping leadership roles and the potential sharing of engineers, technology and contracts across companies.

SpaceX holds billions of dollars in US federal contracts with Nasa, the Department of Defence and intelligence agencies, which may review the transaction for national-security and other risks. — Reuters

COMMODITIES

Gold rebounds sharply after selloff



Gold surged more than 5% on Tuesday, heading for its biggest daily gain since 2008, as investors stepped in after a steep two-day selloff. Spot gold rose to \$4,921 an ounce, while silver jumped over 9%, rebounding from recent one-month lows. Analysts said the market had become oversold and bargain buying drove the recovery.

ENERGY

Germany buys stake in TenneT for \$3.9 bn



Germany has agreed to buy a 25.1% stake in Dutch grid operator TenneT’s German business for €3.3 billion (\$3.9 billion), strengthening Berlin’s control over critical energy infrastructure and helping finance major grid expansion.

The acquisition, conducted through state-backed lender KfW, follows earlier sales of stakes a remaining 28.9% share.

AUTO

Toyota supplier Denso cuts profit forecast



Japan’s auto parts supplier Denso, a major Toyota partner, cut its full-year operating profit forecast by 17.8% to \$3.44 billion, citing rising US tariffs and higher material and fixed costs. Despite the cut, revenue and profit are still expected to hit record highs. Denso said it plans to buy back up to nearly 10% of its shares, worth up to 450 billion yen.

OPINION

Dollar steady, oil slides and gold rebounds



VIJAY VALECHA

The writer is Chief Investment Officer, Century Financial

THE US Dollar Index is slightly lower in early Asian trading, near 97.50 (-0.15%), after rising in the last two sessions. However, the short-term outlook is positive, supported by high US Treasury yields. The 10-year yield is steady at around 4.28% after a strong move up in the previous session. Moreover, the DXY has recovered from its July and September lows near 96.37, lending a more constructive tone and reinforcing the near-term rebound.

The US dollar continues to receive support from indicators of economic resilience. Recent data showed manufacturing activity bounced back, with the ISM Manufacturing PMI rising to 52.6, beating expectations and moving back into the expansionary territory.

Market sentiment for the dollar has improved after President Trump nominated Kevin Warsh as the next Fed Chair, which many see as a sign of a more disciplined monetary policy. Safe-haven demand is steady as precious metals remain volatile.

The euro is still under pressure, held back by the strong dollar and expectations that the ECB will keep policy on hold. The Japanese yen is weakening amidst fiscal worries ahead of elections and talk of allowing a weaker currency, which reduces the likelihood of intervention. Overall, better economic data and strong yields suggest the US Dollar Index has a slightly bullish outlook for the day and any dips may attract buyers.

On the charts, DXY could find support near the last session's low at 97.031, with resistance at the 20-day SMA at 98.111. For EURUSD, resistance is at the 9-day SMA at 1.187 and support is at 1.175.

CRUDE OIL

Brent crude fell towards \$65.74 per barrel on Tuesday, and WTI fell towards \$61.60 per barrel, with both contracts under pressure amidst easing geopolitical tensions and signs of an oversupplied market. Risk sentiment improved yesterday after the US and Iran confirmed the resumption of nuclear-related talks, lowering fears of supply disruption.

Meanwhile, OPEC+ reiterated its commitment to keeping output steady through March, supporting expectations that supply will remain abundant while seasonal demand is still weak. With the geopolitical risk premium having disappeared, investors have refocused on fundamentals, which currently indicate excess barrels in the market and a deterioration in macroeconomic sentiment. On a related note, the Brent-WTI spread has decreased to \$4.10, but it is still above the historical mean of 3.488. Since seaborne benchmarks shed more of the war premium than WTI, the spread has narrowed from late January highs of \$5.48, as Brent shed more. Technically, Brent is consolidating losses after a 4.9% drop from the \$70.50 resistance level following US-Iranian diplomatic de-escalation. It is trading near \$65.74, with technical supports at \$64.78 and \$63.99 and resistance at \$66.57 and \$67.55.

WTI is searching for a short-term bottom near \$61.63 following a nearly 5% pullback. It faces resistance at \$62.63 and at the previous high, with support at \$60.61

GOLD AND SILVER

Gold rose on Tuesday, gaining back some

OPEC+ reiterated its commitment to keeping output steady through March, supporting expectations that supply will remain abundant while seasonal demand is still weak.

losses after the abrupt unwinding of a record-breaking rally that had driven prices down 13% in just two days. Silver also advanced.

Spot gold climbed as much as 5% after falling 4.8% in the previous session to extend a slump on Friday that was the steepest in more than a decade. Silver rose as much as 9%, clearing the \$85 level and erasing the previous day's loss.

Gold's 3-day plunge was very much a correction waiting to happen, but the fundamental drivers for its multi-year advance still remain strong. Given the unlikelihood of a rapid tightening cycle of monetary policy globally and lingering geopolitical concerns, higher prices for precious metals look likely.

Silver investors will want to see a stop in ETF outflows before deciding if it is safe to enter again. An important observation is that while prices rocketed higher in January, ETF holdings actually shrank that month.

The mismatch was one of the factors (along with others, including lofty RSI readings) that had flagged a correction was incoming. Silver-backed ETF holdings shrank by 168 tonnes on Monday, the least since mid-November.

That was the eighth day of net outflows. While there are other important sources of demand for silver — including industrial users, as well as China-based traders — the ETF flows are key for setting prices. And right now, the flows need to stabilise for the white metal to stage a sustained rebound.

From a technical perspective, gold is still trading below the 9 SMA on the daily chart.

LIQUIDITY DRIES UP, RISK REPRICED

Global markets enter February shaped by a sharp and lasting reset in monetary expectations. The nomination of Kevin Warsh as Federal Reserve Chair has accelerated a transition away from speculative excess towards a disciplined repricing of risk.

January marked the beginning of what markets now recognise as a period of “hawkish institutionalism”, with policy credibility and balance-sheet discipline back at the centre of US monetary strategy.

The most visible impact of this shift was the historic volatility in precious metals.



MOHANAD YAKOUT

Senior Markets Analyst, Scope Markets

Silver's sudden 30% intraday collapse and gold's retreat below the \$5,000 level reflect the rapid unwinding of the long-standing “debasement trade”.

For years, investors positioned for a dovish Federal Reserve that would rely on inflation and balance-sheet expansion to manage the \$38 trillion US debt burden. That assumption has now been decisively challenged.

Under Warsh's leadership, the Fed has signalled a clear preference for balance-sheet reduction through Quantitative Tightening rather than relying solely on interest-rate adjustments. This stance has reinforced the idea of a scarcer, higher-quality dollar. As a result, the liquidity premium that had driven non-yielding assets sharply higher has been removed. Margin increases and forced liquidations amplified the move, exposing the extent of leverage that had accumulated in precious-metal markets disconnected from real yields.

At the same time, the US dollar has strengthened as scarcity and policy credibility return as core themes. A firmer dollar has weighed on global equities and commodities, reinforcing a more cautious market tone.

In energy markets, oil prices remain capped despite geopolitical tensions, as investors focus on an IEA-projected surplus of nearly four million barrels per day and the absence of meaningful supply constraints.

Equity markets globally continue to struggle to hold record levels as the equity risk premium adjusts to tighter financial conditions and reduced liquidity support. Volatility reflects this change in regime. The VIX rose roughly 18% through January and continues to target the 20 level, signalling the return of a structural volatility premium.

Oman presses ahead with economic diversification

ECONOMIC diversification remains to be the top priority for many countries irrespective of whether they are least developed, developing or developed. It signifies a move from the traditional agricultural, oil and mining sectors to service or knowledge sector.

It is a process of structural transformation involving creation of new comparative advantages by building new capabilities to foster economic development. IMF opined that diversification is an essential pillar for fostering sustainable growth and improving living standards.

Oman initiated economic diversification strategy way back in the year 2000 when it joined WTO. Since then, Oman has actively engaged in integrating Oman's economy with the world economy to achieve economic diversification and sustainable growth.

It is even imperative in the 11th Five-Year Development Plan (2026-2030) where it aims 37.4 per cent share of revenue growth from non-oil sectors. Several forms of national level endeavors paved the way for well diversifying economic growth. It was not ad hoc; instead, it was a gradual or phased process of effort foreseeing a future payoff.

A multi-pronged approach is being followed by Oman to embark on the journey of economic diversification. Investment diversification and sectoral diversification are the two key diversification approaches followed by Oman.

Investment diversification engages in creating more conducive environment for private sector investment thereby diminishing the state's role in the economy's growth trajectory. To boost investment in private sector, several policy initiatives have been undertaken by Oman such as 100 per cent foreign ownership, tax incentives, establishment of global financial centre, tax incentives, future fund of Oman and golden residency of Oman.



DR NIRANJAN SHETTY

The writer is with the College of Banking and Financial Studies

To boost investment in private sector, several policy initiatives have been undertaken by Oman such as 100 per cent foreign ownership, tax incentives, establishment of global financial centre, tax incentives, future fund of Oman and golden residency of Oman.

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The 11th plan is optimistic to set FDI inflows equivalent to 11 per cent of GDP, targeting inflation of 2 per cent and raising private sector's contribution to GDP at current prices to 56 per cent, with private investment accounting for 21 per cent of GDP.

Sectoral growth focuses on selected non-oil sectors as the prime engines of growth and gradually shifting to a low-carbon economy from heavy reliance on oil and natural gas.

While manufacturing industries, tourism and the digital economy are three promising sectors; mining, food security, renewable energy, transport and logistics, education and health are considered supporting and enabling sectors in the 11th plan.

The plan expects creating a whooping 300,000 jobs across the public and private sectors with specific targets set to achieve in three promising sectors mentioned above. Acceleration of diversification stems from conceiving multiple actions and programmes and their effective implementation, monitoring and control.

Taking remedial or corrective actions whenever required and appropriately aligning the projects and policies to national priorities are essential part of this journey.

Special economic zones such as Sohar, Duqm, building business hubs like Al Irfan city, creating startup incubators, building industrial free zones, entering MoUs and engaging partnerships with international institutions such as World Bank, International Financial Corporation and other participating countries are the cornerstones of the diversification move.

The latest examples being CEPA with India, FTA with US and Oman's participation in the GSFTA (Gulf-Singapore).

The nexus between leadership

and national plans and programmes such as vision 2020, Oman Vision 2040, five-year development plans, TANFEEDH programme for bracing the economic diversity.

This is in association with Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU), ‘Tanweea’ launch in 2022, timely budget allocations, establishment of Implementation Follow-up Unit for Oman Vision 2040 under Royal Decree 100/2020, announcement of Economic Stimulus Plan, reduction in license fees and land rents in industrial areas, incentives to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) have played tremendous role in achieving diversification strategy in Oman.

However, continuous investment in digital infrastructure to lever technology and consultation with diverse stakeholders such as industrialists, academicians and citizens remains to be the essentials of successful diversification stories.

Further, the lessons from the experiences of other countries may fuel the zeal for diversification in Oman.

For example, in the year 2024, IMF explored the impact of industrial policies on economic diversification based on the case studies of six countries namely, Costa Rica, Gabon, Georgia, India, Senegal and Vietnam.

Costa Rica accentuated a strategic shift in its policies for more export orientated and liberalised trade practices, focused on developing human capital and promulgating specific institutions to combat market failures and entice foreign investment in the domestic market.

Gabon attracted FDI to reduce dependency on oil but failed to broaden the revenue base. This has created some challenges to Gabon.

In the case of Georgia, it reaped good payoff for its market-friendly approaches by improving governance and policies. However, it needs to stay focused on structural reform.

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ART/LIFE



BETWEEN DARK AND LIGHT > 20

ON SECOND THOUGHT

THE EVOLUTION OF THE LOCAL DESIGN MARKET



Yeru Ebuén
The writer is a luxury media strategist and a creative director

Each year, the Interior Design & Furnishing Expo quietly reinforces its position as one of the Sultanate of Oman's most relevant platforms for design, furnishing and creative exchange.

Now taking place from February 2 to 4 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, the exhibition has grown into more than a trade fair, it has become a barometer of how tastes, priorities and ambitions in Oman are evolving.

What IDF consistently does well is reflect the realities of the market. For homeowners planning a build or renovation and for entrepreneurs exploring new ventures in hospitality, retail, or workspace design, the exhibition presents a clear message: options in Oman are no longer narrow or predictable. The range of materials, finishes, furniture and services on display continues to widen, mirroring a maturing consumer base that is better informed and more design-conscious.

One of the most notable developments in recent editions is the growing role of art. Art is no longer positioned as a finishing touch or visual add-on, but as a fundamental component of interior design. This year, the presence and calibre of artists and artisans signal a shift in how spaces are being imagined, where artwork contributes to atmosphere, narrative and identity rather than simply filling walls. The increasing quality and confidence of artistic participation speaks volumes about how art has become integral to contemporary interiors, from private homes to commercial environments.

The exhibition's steady improvement also lies in its balance between local and international participation. While IDF remains a strong showcase for suppliers, designers and artists operating within Oman, it is also becoming increasingly outward-looking. The visible rise in international exhibitor, particularly exporters offering more accessible, cost-effective solutions, reflects a growing demand for variety and value. Buyers are clearly looking for flexible options that align with real budgets, without compromising on design integrity. This mix is important. It challenges the long-held perception that sourcing for interiors in Oman is limited or requires looking abroad. At the same time, it places locally based talent and businesses in direct dialogue with global players, raising standards and expectations on both sides. Like many expos, IDF draws inspiration from established global platforms. However, its strength lies in how those ideas are translated to suit the regional context. Rather than replicating international trends wholesale, the exhibition adapts them to local needs, climate considerations and cultural preferences. That relevance is precisely what makes it valuable to buyers and professionals alike.

Looking ahead, there is room for further growth. Greater emphasis on sustainability, material sourcing and long-term design thinking would deepen the exhibition's impact. Increased visibility for emerging local artists and designers would also strengthen the platform.

Year after year, IDF Oman demonstrates that design in Oman is no longer just about products, it is about perspective. And that evolution is what keeps the exhibition relevant, credible and increasingly essential.

QUICK FEATURES



MEMORABILIA

A gallery assistant poses with 'Clara Oswald Anti-Cyber Gun' prop from the popular long-running British series "Doctor Who", at memorabilia auction house Propstore in Rickmansworth.

— AFP



ENTERTAINMENT

French actress Frederique Bel poses during a photocall before the screening of the movie 'Wuthering Heights' at the Grand Rex theatre in Paris.

— AFP



LIFESTYLE

A man walks past a horse sculpture, ahead of the Lunar New Year, at a spring festival event in Hanoi.

— AFP

INSTA PICKS



Architectoral magnificence in Omani mosques



The night watchman of Salalah forests

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NEIL YOUNG GIFTS MUSIC TO GREENLAND RESIDENTS FOR STRESS RELIEF



Veteran rock legend Neil Young has given Greenland residents free access to his catalogue, saying he hoped the gesture offered stress relief to people unsettled by threats from US President Donald Trump. The announcement framed the move as a symbolic act of solidarity rather than a commercial promotion and it was shared with fans through Young’s official website and channels. “This is an offer of peace and love”, the dual US-Canadian musician wrote, using language that echoed themes long associated with his music and public persona. Young explained that the decision was motivated by concern for everyday people rather than political point-scoring or publicity. “I hope my music and music films will ease some of the unwanted stress and threats you are experiencing from our unpopular and hopefully temporary government”, Young added, directly addressing residents of Greenland and acknowledging the anxiety caused by recent political rhetoric. His message struck a supportive tone, positioning music as a source of comfort. The comments followed a period of tension sparked

by Trump’s remarks about taking Greenland, a mineral-rich autonomous territory that is part of the Kingdom of Denmark. After strong pushback from European leaders and officials, Trump later backed down from the idea, but the episode drew attention and criticism. Young said that “all the music I have made during the last 62 years is yours to hear”, emphasising the scale and openness of the offer. The gesture covers his full body of work, including albums and music films spanning more than six decades. Access is granted to anyone with a cellphone number using Greenland’s country code, making the offer straightforward and available. Young noted that the access is renewable and will remain valid “as long as you are in Greenland”, reinforcing the connection to place rather than nationality. Young has long been a vocal critic of Trump and his policies. When Trump was elected to his first term in 2016, Young released the song “Already Great”, a response to the “Make America Great Again” slogan that underscored his opposition and activism continued. — AFP



COUNTDOWN TO OPENING DAY FOR BRUSSELS’ NEW ART MUSEUM



BRUSSELS’ Kanal-Pompidou museum — a major new arts complex built around a modernist former Citroen showroom — unveiled its inaugural programme, 300 days before it is set to open to the public. Billed as the largest new arts development in Europe, the museum will host 10 modern and contemporary exhibitions across five floors for its launch planned November 28 — thanks in part to loans from key partner the Pompidou Centre in Paris. Director-general Yves Goldstein told reporters it would be “a kind of patchwork of the questions a 21st-century museum should be taking on” — with a keynote inaugural exhibition about trade and migration entitled “Truly immense journey”. Located on the bank of the Brussels canal, the museum aims to bridge what is generally viewed as

a dividing line between the Belgian capital’s prosperous southern districts and poorer, post-industrial neighbourhoods to the north. “The dream is to attract people who never go to museums”, Goldstein said, as well as give the EU’s capital a modern and contemporary art museum, which it lacked until now despite its “thriving and dynamic arts scene”. The size of six football pitches — making it almost as large as its Paris namesake — the complex will house a performance hall, a children’s play area, a bakery, a brasserie with canal-side terrace, a fine-dining restaurant and a rooftop with panoramic views of Brussels, as well as an architectural archive. A key feature is its use of the former Citroen garage, an emblematic example of 1930s architecture used by the carmaker as a vast showroom and acquired by

museum developers in 2015. According to spokesperson David Salomonowicz, the Kanal project represents an investment of 230 million euros, of which 80 to 90 per cent has already been spent on construction works. But a question mark hangs over its operational budget, with key backer the Brussels-Capital region bogged down in a political crisis ever since elections in mid-2024. Coalition talks to form a regional government remain deadlocked, with a caretaker government in charge of current affairs and no parliamentary majority to pass a budget. Kanal estimates it will need 30 million euros annually to operate the site, from staging exhibitions to staff costs, but it is far from clear whether that will get a political sign off — and developers are currently seeking additional private partners. — AFP

FEATURES



IDRIS AL BALUSHI

JAWAHER al Maqbali does not rush to explain her work. Like her art, it unfolds slowly, deliberately, inviting rather than insisting. An Omani artist and author, she occupies a rare creative space where expression is not about performance or display, but about listening. To the self. To the unseen. To what lives quietly beneath language.

Her journey began, as many do, with a love for art itself. Drawing, creating, expressing. Yet when she stepped into the role of an art teacher, spending five years guiding others through technique and form, something deeper revealed itself. Teaching showed her that art is never only about skill. It is a mirror. A doorway into inner worlds people often struggle to name, emotions, memories and stories carried silently for years.

Over time, Jawaher felt the limitations of staying within a single role. Technique alone was not enough. She wanted to understand what art was touching beneath the surface. Writing entered her life not as a career move, but as a necessity, a way to make sense of her own inner questions. Gradually, art and writing merged, becoming tools of self exploration rather than expression for an audience. From that shift, Jawaher emerged not only as an artist, but as an author whose work prioritises meaning over visibility.

This philosophy became the foundation of Starlight Family, a platform she created after witnessing how many people carry unspoken emotions without any tools to process them. Through structured art journaling and writing practices, participants are guided to externalise



Despite wearing many titles, artist, author, content creator, mentor, Jawaher does not compartmentalise her roles. They all emerge from the same source. She simply follows what feels aligned at each stage of her life



what is buried inside, beliefs, fears, emotional patterns, without the pressure of explanation. The work happens on paper, through the hand, bypassing the defences of logic and language. What emerges is clarity, emotional release and a deeper understanding of the self.

Her book, *Between Dark and Light: 40 Days of Pure Contemplations in Life*, was born from a deeply personal period of inner questioning. It is not a guidebook, nor a manual for improvement. Instead, it acts as a quiet companion for those existing in the in between, between certainty and doubt, heaviness and light. The pages invite readers to pause, observe and listen inwardly, offering space rather than answers.

Jawaher’s workshops follow a similar rhythm. Each one is designed with an emotional and psychological flow, gently guiding participants through writing and expressive art to uncover hidden beliefs and release emotional weight. Her aim is not to “fix” anyone, but to help people leave feeling lighter, clearer and more honest with themselves.

Living abroad in Canada with her husband, who is also an artist, further reshaped her creative lens. Removed from familiar structures and cultural comforts, Jawaher faced a period of deep self confrontation. The experience stripped away illusion and softened her attachment to decoration. Her work grew quieter, more grounded, and more truthful.

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Art journaling and art therapy remain central to her practice because of their honesty. When words or logic fail, she believes, the hand reveals what the mind hides. She has witnessed moments where a single realisation, often rooted in a childhood belief, can fundamentally shift how someone relates to themselves and the world. Those moments, she says, are when the work has done its job.

Moving between cultures has also deepened her empathy. While expressions may differ, Jawaher has learned that inner struggles are universal. Storytelling, whether visual or written, plays a crucial role in creating safety, allowing people to recognise themselves without feeling exposed.

Looking ahead, she stands at an exciting threshold. Jawaher al Maqbali is currently writing a novel she hopes will encourage people, especially Omani women, to go searching for life and to truly live it through its small, real details. Alongside this, she continues to develop courses rooted in drawing and writing, designed to guide people towards clarity, inner peace and reconciliation with themselves.

Her advice to young creatives is simple, yet radical in a world obsessed with visibility, don’t rush. Depth, integrity and self trust matter more than being seen.

Like her work, Jawaher al Maqbali’s presence lingers quietly, between dark and light, where real transformation begins.