

OMAN

دولة عمان

DAILY

Observer

SUNRISE 05:22 AM

PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR 03:54 AM

DHUHR 12:15 PM

ASR 03:32 PM

MAGHRIB 07:02 PM

ISHA 08:25 PM

11

DUCKETT TON STEERS ENGLAND TO EXHILARATING INDIA WIN

INBRIEF

HM GREETSPRESIDENTS OF CROATIA, SLOVENIA AND MOZAMBIQUE

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Zoran Milanovic of Croatia on his country’s National Day. His Majesty the Sultan has also sent a cable of greetings to President Dr Natasa Pirc Musar of Slovenia on her country’s Independence Anniversary.

His Majesty has also sent a similar cable of greetings to President Daniel Chapo of Mozambique on his country’s Independence Day.

In the cables, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of success to them in achieving further progress and aspirations for their countries. His Majesty also wished the cooperation and partnership relations between Oman and their respective countries further progress and prosperity, in a manner that serves mutual interests and benefits.

UN CONDEMNS ‘WEAPONISATION OF FOOD’ IN GAZA



A Palestinian boy waits next to a queue at a food distribution point in Nuseirat, in the central Gaza Strip. — AFP

The United Nations on Tuesday condemned what it said was Israel’s “weaponisation of food” in Gaza and called it a war crime, urging its military to “stop shooting at people trying to get food”.

The head of the UN agency supporting Palestinian refugees also called a new US- and Israel-backed food-distribution system in the Gaza Strip an “abomination”. The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation began handing out food in Gaza on May 26 after Israel completely cut off supplies into the occupied Palestinian territory for more than two months, sparking warnings of mass famine.

The UN and major aid groups have refused to cooperate with the GHF — an officially private effort with opaque funding — over concerns it was designed to cater to Israeli military objectives. “Israel’s militarised humanitarian assistance mechanism is in contradiction with international standards on aid distribution,” said UN human rights office spokesman. — AFP

ROYAL DECREE RENAMES TENDER BOARD

THE AUTHORITY OF PROJECTS, TENDERS AND LOCAL CONTENT SHALL REPORT TO COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

THE AUTHORITY TO HAVE CHAIRMAN TO BE APPOINTED BY ROYAL DECREE

PUBLIC UTILITY STATUS TO THE SULTAN FAISAL BIN TURKI ROAD PROJECT (DIBBA-LIMA-KHASAB) IN MUSANDAM

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Tuesday issued two Royal Decrees reading as follows: Royal Decree No 57/2025 amends the name of the “Secretariat General of the Tender Board” to the “Authority of Projects, Tenders and Local Content”, defines its competencies and approves its organisational structure.

Article 1 amends the name of the “Secretariat General of the Tender Board” to the “Authority of Projects, Tenders and Local Content”, accords it a legal personality, fiscal and administrative autonomy. The Authority shall report to the Council of Ministers.

Article 2 states that the “Authority of Projects, Tenders and Local Content” shall have a Chairman, with a Special Grade, who shall be appointed by Royal Decree.

Article 3 states that the Chairman of the “Authority of Projects, Tenders and Local Content” shall undertake the management of all administrative and financial affairs of the Authority, represent it before other parties and before the judiciary and shall have the powers of “Head of Unit” as stipulated in laws and Royal Decrees that are applicable to the units of the State’s Administrative Apparatus.



Article 4 states that the “Authority of Projects, Tenders and Local Content” shall assist the Tender Board and the executive committee formed to follow up the implementation of local content policies as

they (the Tender Board and the committee) exercise their prescribed competencies by conducting all technical and administrative tasks and providing necessary logistic services.

Article 5 determines the competencies of the “Authority of Projects, Tenders and Local Content” in accordance with Annex No 1 attached to this decree.

Article 6 states that the organisational structure of the “Authority of Projects, Tenders and Local Content” shall be approved in accordance with Annex No 2 attached to this decree.

Article 7 stipulates that the provisions of this decree shall not supersede any competencies ascribed to the Tender Board in laws and Royal Decrees.

Article 8 replaces the two phrases the “Secretariat General of the Tender Board” and the “Secretary General of the Tender Board”, wherever they might occur in laws and Royal Decrees with the two phrases the “Authority of Projects, Tenders and Local Content” and “Chairman of the “Authority of Projects, Tenders and Local Content”. Article 9 cancels Royal Decree No 84/2020 on the Secretariat General of the Tender Board and Royal Decree No 73/2023 on transferring powers related to the revision of contracts from the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs to the Secretariat General of the Tender Board, as well as all that contradicts this decree or contravenes its provisions. TURN TO P4

HM expresses solidarity with Qatar, gets call from Iran

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik held a phone call with Shaikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, Emir of Qatar, on Tuesday.

During the telephone conversation, His Majesty the Sultan expressed the Sultanate of Oman’s full solidarity with the State of Qatar, commending its wisdom in containing the repercussions of recent escalation. His Majesty reaffirmed Oman’s categorical rejection of any actions threatening the security of states in the region or compromising their sovereignty and

His Majesty the Sultan and the King of the Netherlands welcomed ceasefire between Iran and Israel stability.

For his part, the Emir of Qatar expressed his pride over the distinguished fraternal relations with the Sultanate of Oman, appreciating the resolute stance articulated by His Majesty the Sultan and valuing Oman’s pivotal, wise role in addressing regional challenges through dialogue and peaceful diplomatic means.

His Majesty the Sultan also received a telephone call from President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian of Iran.

The telephone call addressed concerning regional escalations amid recent developments and accompanying military tensions, with both leaders stressing the importance of maintaining regional security and stability.

The two leaders emphasised the necessity for all parties to exercise restraint, prioritise wisdom and dialogue, and work earnestly to halt

the cycle of military escalation. This approach aims to spare the region further tensions and create space for diplomatic solutions.

For his part, President Pezeshkian expressed his deep appreciation for the Sultanate of Oman’s balanced positions and its role in backing regional security and de-escalation efforts. He reaffirmed Iran’s commitment to cooperation in preventing further escalation. His Majesty the Sultan made a telephone call with King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands. TURN TO P4

Israel-Iran ceasefire holds after Trump ticks off both sides

WASHINGTON/TEHRAN/TEL AVIV: A ceasefire between Iran and Israel following 12 days of warfare remains “in effect,” US President Donald Trump posted on Tuesday, while accusing both sides of violations.

“ISRAEL is not going to attack Iran. All planes will turn around and head home, while doing a friendly ‘Plane Wave’ to Iran. Nobody will be hurt, the ceasefire is in effect!” Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

Trump had just accused

both Iran and Israel of violating the newly agreed ceasefire, in comments to journalists in Washington before his departure to attend a Nato summit in The Hague.

Earlier, Trump had urged Israel to refrain from responding to alleged Iranian attacks, posting on Truth Social: “DO NOT DROP THOSE BOMBS... BRING YOUR PILOTS HOME, NOW!”

He said that any more attacks after the agreed ceasefire would be a major violation.



Iranians wave flags and hold a portrait of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as they celebrate a ceasefire between Iran and Israel, in Tehran. — AFP

Trump announced the ceasefire overnight, and both Iran and Israel later confirmed it. Soon afterwards however, the two sides traded accusations of further attacks being carried out. Israel had broken the ceasefire three times and attacked various locations in Iran. Earlier statements from the Israeli military said that Tehran had fired at least one missile at northern Israel, with Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz vowing strong counter-attacks.

Iran denied firing rockets

at Israel after the ceasefire took effect, according to the Tasnim news agency. Drawing a line under attacks. Trump announced the ceasefire late on Monday, specifying that it would be introduced in stages over the following hours.

“It has been fully agreed by and between Israel and Iran that there will be a Complete and Total CEASEFIRE,” the US president said. Iran and Israel continued exchanging fire right up until the ceasefire, with casualties reported on both sides. SEE ALSO P6 & 7

OMAN

SHORT TAKES



The project aims to enhance the cultural and intellectual landscape in Bahla. — ONA

PACT INKED TO CONSTRUCT BAHLA CULTURAL CENTRE BUILDING

BAHLA: Sohar Aluminium signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Tuesday with the Bahla Cultural Centre for Science and Innovation to construct the Centre’s building, as part of the company’s ongoing commitment to corporate social responsibility and support for sustainable impact projects.

The agreement was signed by Jameel Mohammed Shakeel, Communications and Social Responsibility Manager at Sohar Aluminium, on behalf of the company, and by Hilal bin Said al Yahyai, Chairman of the Centre’s Founding Committee, representing Bahla Cultural Centre for Science and Innovation.

Under this agreement, Sohar Aluminium will contribute to financing the construction of the building, which will span an area of 2,000 square metres. The two-storey facility will include multiple halls for meetings and exhibitions, a library and amenities to support community activities. The project aims to enhance the cultural and intellectual landscape in the Wilayat of Bahla, located in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate. — ONA

OCCI AT LONDON ARAB-BRITISH ECONOMIC SUMMIT



The Arab-British Economic Summit was themed ‘Friendship Through Trade’

LONDON: Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) on Monday took part in the 4th Arab-British Economic Summit 2025, held in London. The summit, which took the theme ‘Friendship Through Trade’, was organised by the Arab British Chamber in cooperation with the Union of Arab Chambers.

The summit highlighted the importance of consolidating the strategic partnership between Arab countries and the United Kingdom, action to expand cooperation into different commercial sectors to enrich British and Arab markets and promote sustainable tourism, e-commerce and franchises. It also touched on means of activating the sectors of banking and financial services.

The summit saw the participation of high-level government officials, CEOs, intellectuals and decision-makers from Arab countries and the United Kingdom. The participants exchanged ideas and discussed emerging opportunities for trade and investment in new technology-based industries. — ONA

OMANI DELEGATION VISITS NASA’S KENNEDY SPACE CENTER



FLORIDA: An Omani delegation shortlisted for Nasa’s Space Apps Challenge “Ibra 2024” visited the Kennedy Space Center in Florida as part of their sixth-day scientific tour in the United States.

The teams met with retired US astronaut Colonel Woody Spring, who shared his extensive experience in space missions, advanced training and complex extravehicular activities.

Dr Fatma al Harthy, Deputy Chair of Nasa’s Space Apps Challenge - Ibra, noted that Omani youth can still participate in this extraordinary experience through the next hackathon edition,

scheduled for October 4-5, 2025 at the university branch in Ibra.

She emphasised that Nasa’s challenge serves as a platform to transform ideas into innovations benefiting humanity, offering Omani youth opportunities to represent their nation globally and pursue their aerospace ambitions.

The delegation conducted scientific experiments at the Gateway: Deep Space Launch Complex, where participants engaged in interactive simulated missions to Mars, Saturn, and TRAPPIST-1 through immersive audiovisual experiences.

— ONA

Marriage Support Fund to strengthen social stability

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, JUNE 24

AS OMAN continues to navigate social and economic changes, the newly introduced Marriage Support Fund stands out as a promising initiative aimed at empowering young citizens and fostering stable, sustainable family life.

For many Omani youth, the prospect of marriage has been increasingly delayed due to financial strain and rising cultural expectations. “I postponed my wedding for over two years because I simply couldn’t afford it,” said Yousuf al Harthy, a private sector employee. “When the fund was announced, it felt happy,” he added.

Fatma al Balushi, a recent graduate and still hunting for the job, stated “It’s not just about money. Society needs to shift its view that weddings must be lavish. Modesty should be embraced.” Some suggested widening the fund’s scope. “Why not support widows or divorced individuals who wish to remarry — under clear criteria?” asked Said al Kalbani.

Dr Mohammed bin Mubarak al Aarimi, President of the Oman Journalists



The Marriage Support Fund holds the potential to be a game-changing instrument in Oman’s social development.

Association, sees the fund as not merely a financial solution but as a comprehensive national strategy with long-term impact across social, economic, cultural and legislative domains.

Dr Al Aarimi believes the fund addresses several key challenges that have emerged in recent years, including rising marriage costs, delayed marital age and evolving family structures. He noted that by offering

direct financial support, the fund alleviates some of the economic pressures facing youth — especially those from low- and middle-income backgrounds — enabling them to move forward with marriage more confidently.

He believes that the initiative can help shift public perception towards early marriage, provided it is coupled with adequate educational and counselling programmes. He emphasises that while financial incentives are important, proper mental and emotional preparedness is equally essential for marital success.

He notes that the financial burden of marriage often creates significant stress and anxiety among young people. A fund like this not only eases that burden, but also sends a message of social support and community solidarity — boosting mental well-being and reinforcing a sense of inclusion.

The Marriage Support Fund holds the potential to be a game-changing instrument in Oman’s social development. Its future, however, hinges on transparent execution, sustained public awareness and alignment with Oman’s deeper cultural values.

Dhofar Municipal Council discusses development projects and service

SALALAH: The Municipal Council of Dhofar Governorate discussed on Tuesday a number of developmental, service, housing and environmental projects, as well as means to enhance them across the various wilayats of the governorate.

The council also reviewed the readiness of relevant authorities for the Khareef Dhofar (monsoon season) 2025.

During its sixth meeting this year, chaired by HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar and Chairman of the Council, the council was briefed on the efforts of the Directorate-General of Housing and Urban Planning in the governorate. This followed a field visit



The council also reviewed the readiness of relevant authorities for the Khareef Dhofar 2025. — ONA

to the directorate to review the services provided and operational mechanisms, in addition to tours of several sites, including Al Shorouq neighbourhood and Al Dahariz area, to assess future visions and plans for the “Future City” project.

In line with efforts to achieve a qualitative leap in tourism and service guidance in Dhofar,

the council discussed several proposals to digitise directional signs in the governorate. This initiative aims to improve the experience of visitors and tourists by providing information about tourist attractions, landmarks and service facilities.

Dhofar Municipality presented a visual presentation on the “Green Belt” project, which aims to combat desertification, improve air quality and enhance vegetation cover in Dhofar. This strategic environmental initiative is being implemented gradually by the municipality, starting from urban and industrial areas, based on available resources. — ONA

Khareef Dhofar begins with natural beauty, rich array of events

STAFF REPORTER
SALALAH, JUNE 24

Astronomically, the khareef (monsoon) season in Dhofar began on Saturday, the most anticipated annual event that affects its coastal regions from Dhalkout in the west to Mirbat in the east. Triggered by seasonal monsoon winds and clouds arriving from the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean, the season will continue until September 20.

The season includes cultural, recreational and tourism activities for all age groups, with a strong emphasis on Omani identity and heritage to create an authentic atmosphere.

HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, affirmed that the governorate welcomes the monsoon every year on June 21 with divine beauty and unique weather conditions.

“We all unite to prepare the



conditions, events and facilities necessary to make Khareef Dhofar 2025 exceptional and successful across 90 days of joy and natural splendour,” he stated.

As part of a new promotional approach, the Office of the Governor of Dhofar has launched the campaign “Esh Jabak?” an Arabic phrase meaning “What brought you here?” This campaign emerges from a deeper understanding of visitor behaviour,

market trends and the global move towards meaningful, personal experiences. It celebrates the diverse reasons that make Dhofar a multi-faceted destination — each visit sparked by a different story.

The campaign highlights Dhofar’s timeless natural beauty, adventure opportunities in caves and mountains, the warmth and generosity of its people, a vibrant calendar of events and the luxury offered by local resorts and hotels.

SHORT TAKES



The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Sayyid Saud bin Hilal al Busaidy, Governor of Muscat.

MUSCAT MUNICIPAL COUNCIL REVIEWS EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

MUSCAT: The Muscat Governorate Municipal Council held a meeting under the chairmanship of Sayyid Saud bin Hilal al Busaidy, Governor of Muscat, on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the council reviewed a statement from Khazaen Economic City regarding the used car market.

In its statement, Khazaen Economic City affirmed that the used car market is a practical solution to the problem of random distribution of showrooms, noting that the project will regulate the market thus enabling entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises to function within a conducive commercial environment. The project will also reduce the costs for sellers and consumers, provide qualitative benefits to consumers, improve operational efficiency and attract local and international investments.

The Muscat Municipal Council also reviewed the statement of the National Employment Programme, a strategic initiative aimed at providing job opportunities for citizens.

The council approved the minutes of its previous meeting and the recommendations regarding the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning’s statement on the Greater Muscat Structure Plan. The council stressed the importance of ongoing institutional partnerships between relevant entities in the implementation of major strategic projects particularly those related to smart and sustainable city objectives.

The council reviewed the Social Affairs Committee’s recommendations regarding the Oman Down Syndrome Association.

SUMMER QURAN PROGRAMME KICKS OFF IN SHINAS



SHINAS: The annual summer Quran memorisation programme has commenced in the Wilayat of Shinas, organised by the Qurraa School for Quran Memorisation in cooperation with the Department of Awqaf and Religious Affairs in Al Batinah North Governorate.

As many as 209 students from various age groups are participating in the programme, ranging from preparatory and kindergarten levels up to the 12th grade. — ONA

OMAN, ALGERIA DISCUSS COOPERATION IN SOCIAL CARE

ALGIERS: Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, on Tuesday conferred with Dr Soraya Mouloudji, Minister of National Solidarity, Family and Women’s Affairs of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, as part of her visit to the country.

The two ministers reviewed social development experiences and initiatives. They discussed ways to enhance cooperation and exchange expertise in the fields of childhood, care of the elderly

and women’s rights, among other areas of social care.

Dr Laila visited the “Childhood Relief Foundation” in El Biar area, where she learned about mechanisms of care and welfare provided to children of unknown parents and those deprived of family care.

The minister took note of the experience of the Dely Ibrahim nursing home. She was briefed about the programmes of health psychological care provided by

the institutions to the elderly, in addition to the overall Algerian experience in the field of social development.

Dr Laila underlined the importance of consolidating Arab cooperation in the fields of social care and empowerment of vulnerable segments of societies. She also commended Algeria’s experience in comprehensive development and lauded institutional efforts to provide a safe haven for needy children. — ONA

Drug abuse one of dangerous challenges

THE SULTANATE OF OMAN is joining nations worldwide in observing the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on June 26, held this year under the theme ‘Breaking the Chains: Prevention, Treatment and Recovery for All.’

The occasion aims to intensify awareness campaigns about the dangers of narcotics and psychotropic substances, emphasise addicts’ right to rehabilitation, strengthen community cooperation and enhance international collaboration in combating drug abuse. It also serves as an opportunity for nations to review anti-drug policies, assess challenges and develop appropriate solutions.

Colonel Said bin Salim al Maawali, Assistant Director-General of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Control at the Royal Oman Police (ROP), stated that drugs and psychotropic substances represent one of the most dangerous challenges facing modern societies due to their devastating consequences.

He noted that the drug trade is a major funding source for transnational criminal organisations. Global indicators show over 275 million drug addicts worldwide, with the World Health Organization estimating more than 500,000 annual deaths linked to drug abuse — necessitating unified policies, shared expertise, and heightened cultural and educational awareness.

Colonel Al Maawali emphasised that international cooperation is vital in



Oman is joining nations worldwide in observing the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on June 26. - ONA

combating drug smuggling and trafficking, as criminal networks employ sophisticated cross-border methods. Information exchange, joint policing operations, harmonised legislation and expertise sharing are crucial to dismantling these networks.

The ROP’s General Directorate for Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Control has adopted an integrated approach — supported by police, security, military and civil entities — to counter drug trafficking. Efforts have successfully

uncovered international syndicates smuggling narcotics through land, sea and air borders, as well as via social media platforms used to lure youth into drug use.

He explained that the departments concerned in Oman provide rehabilitation opportunities for addicts under Article 51 of the Anti-Narcotics Law, which exempts self-referred or family-reported addicts from prosecution. Post-treatment reintegration programmes ensure confidentiality under Article 52, with penalties for breaches.

Colonel Al Maawali said that crystal meth poses a significant global threat due to its low cost, ease of production and severe health impacts, including fatal outcomes. Traffickers exploit victims — particularly youth — through financial incentives, blackmail, fake friendships, emotional manipulation, and even virtual reality platforms and celebrity endorsements promoting false cultural narratives about drug use.

The Directorate prioritises prevention through social media campaigns, conferences and seminars. Innovative tools like virtual reality (VR) and smart applications are being introduced to enhance public education and counselling services, he pointed out. Colonel Al Maawali stressed families’ role in monitoring children and urged community cooperation with security forces to report drug-related activities, encourage treatment-seeking and foster a drug-free society for national stability. — ONA

OFS celebrates 23rd anniversary

KABEER YOUSUF
[@kabiyousef](#)

The Oman Film Society (OFS) celebrated its 23rd anniversary under the auspices of Sayyid Khalid bin Hamad al Busaidy, and was attended by a number of film-makers, media professionals, and those interested in cultural and artistic affairs.

The event featured the launch of films that received support under the 2024 support and production fund programme at a special ceremony.

Mohammed bin Abdullah al Ajmi, Chairman of the Oman Film Society, expressed pride in the society’s achievements since its inception. He emphasised that the society was created to be a home for artists and a platform for film-

The event featured the launch of films that received support under the 2024 support and production fund programme at a special ceremony.



makers in the Sultanate of Oman. Al Ajmi highlighted the efforts of the Society’s former presidents, acknowledging their contributions to solidifying the Society’s position as a significant cultural institution.

He commended the Society for winning the “Youth Excellence Award for Digital Media 2024” in the civil society institutions category.

The event featured a special screening of two films that received

support in 2024 under the “Support and Production Fund” namely “Illusion” by director Issa al Subhi and “The Unknown” by directors Mohammed and Yousef al Busaidy. This event is part of the Oman Film Society’s initiatives to promote local film production, support young talent and establish cinema as a soft power that reflects the community’s identity and conveys its message to the world.

Why do we have so many vacant residential units?

VINOD NAIR
MUSCAT, JUNE 24

With several new housing projects being announced frequently, many apartments in the capital remain sparsely occupied.

Khalil al Zadjali, head of Cavendish Maxwell Oman, in an interview with the Observer, stated that of the 38,000 residential units added to Oman’s market in 2024, around 15,500 were apartments in Muscat.

“With new units coming online,

tenants often upgrade to newer, more modern apartments, leaving older units vacant and listed for rent, leading to a high number of “to let” signboards in the city. It takes time for both new and existing units to be rented out, which can increase the apparent vacancy rate, even though overall occupancy remains high,” he explained.

The overall occupancy rate of over 80 per cent is an average across the residential sector and does not reflect differences between locations,



With new units coming online, tenants often upgrade to newer, more modern apartments, leaving older units vacant.

building ages and property types.

Al Zadjali added, “If demand remains strong for newer or better-located developments, some areas and older buildings may experience higher vacancy rates. This dynamic turnover and ongoing addition of new supply can make vacancies more visible, even in a generally healthy market.” There is a growing demand for apartments in new downtown areas emerging across Oman. These developments offer a modern lifestyle with easy access to amenities, making

them attractive to both Omanis and expatriates seeking urban living experiences.

Regarding the demand for business properties, Al Zadjali noted, “Demand remains steady, especially in urban centres and newly developed commercial districts. Government initiatives under Oman Vision 2040 aim to diversify the economy and attract international investment, leading to interest in modern office spaces, retail outlets and commercial properties.”

OMAN

DECREE RENAMES
TENDER BOARD

FROM PI
Article 10 says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.
Royal Decree No 58/2025 ascribing the public utility status to the Sultan Faisal bin Turki Road Project (Dibba-Lima-Khasab) in the Governorate of Musandam.
Article 1 states that the Sultan Faisal bin Turki Road Project (Dibba-Lima-Khasab) in the Governorate of Musandam, as defined in the memo and the diagram attached to this decree, is henceforth deemed a public utility project.
Article 2 instructs the departments concerned to expropriate, through direct implementation, the properties and land necessary for the aforementioned project, along with the installations therein, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Utility Expropriation Law promulgated by Royal Decree No 71/2023.
Article 3 says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. — ONA

HM EXPRESSES
SOLIDARITY WITH
QATAR, GETS CALL
FROM IRAN

FROM PI
During the telephonic conversation, His Majesty the Sultan and King Willem-Alexander exchanged views about the developments of the escalation between Iran and Israel and the serious ensuing outcomes, including the expansion of the attacks to Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar.
His Majesty the Sultan and the King of the Netherlands also welcomed the ceasefire agreement between Iran and Israel.
They underscored the importance of consolidating this de-escalation and stressed the need to intensify regional and international efforts to end the conflict and engage in dialogue and peaceful negotiations in order to protect lives, resources and the interests of peoples, in addition to enhancing security and stability in the region and the world at large. — ONA

SHORT TAKES

COUNCIL DISCUSSES
DIVERSIFICATION OF
NATIONAL INCOME

MUSCAT: The State Council Office on Tuesday held its 6th meeting of the 2nd regular sitting during the eighth term. The meeting was chaired by Shaikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council.
The State Council Office hosted members of the special committee formed to study “Mechanism for diversifying sources of income in the Sultanate of Oman.”
The committee was entrusted with identifying the challenges posed to financial sustainability and diversification of sources of income, with the aim of finding solutions and achieving the desired progress in income diversification and financial sustainability. The committee was also tasked to submit proposals to support the stability of public finance in the 11th Five-Year Plan, including legislation and governance. — ONA

OQX MARKS
GRADUATION OF
FIRST COHORT

MUSCAT: OQX, the research, development and innovation arm of OQ Group, has celebrated a major milestone with the graduation of the first cohort from its business accelerator programme.
Thirteen start-ups took the stage to present their innovative solutions to a panel of energy and entrepreneurship experts from the Sultanate of Oman and abroad, marking a significant step in OQ’s mission to drive technology-led economic growth.
Spanning sustainable energy, clean tech, artificial intelligence (AI) and energy asset optimisation, the showcased ventures reflected a bold vision for a smarter, greener future. The event drew interest from investors across Oman, Europe, Asia and South America, offering a platform for cross-border collaboration and shared investment potential.

OMANI
PUBLICATIONS
CORNER
LAUNCHED
AT RUSSIAN
VARSITY

MOSCOW: The Omani Publications Corner was inaugurated at the Chechen State Pedagogical University, on Tuesday. The move comes within the context of cultural cooperation between the National Museum and the university. The initiative is part of the celebrations marking the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Russian Federation. The Omani Publications Corner aims to empower non-Arabic speaking students specialising in Omani studies and provide them



The section aims to empower non-Arabic speaking students specialising in Omani studies.

with knowledge related to the cultural and intellectual aspects of the Sultanate of Oman.
This will contribute to building bridges of mutual understanding and rapprochement between the two friendly countries and encourage further academic and research cooperation. The corner includes a diverse collection of books and cultural and educational publications in the fields of literature and language, history, science, media, arts, Islamic sciences, geography and the environment.

Shura discusses heritage
and cybercrime draft laws

THE MAJLIS ASH’SHURA on Tuesday concluded discussions on two draft laws, namely amendments to certain provisions of the Cultural Heritage Law and the Cybercrime Law, referring them to the State Council to complete their legislative cycle.
This took place during the Council’s 12th regular session of the second annual convening (2024–2025) of its 10th term (2023–2027), chaired by Tahir bin Mabkhout al Junaibi, Deputy Chairman of the Majlis Ash’shura.
At the outset of the session, Abdullah bin Hamad al Harthy, Head of the Majlis Ash’shura’s Media, Tourism and Culture Committee and its rapporteur for this session, presented the committee’s report on the proposed amendments to the Cultural Heritage Law.
Meanwhile, Dr Talal bin Said al Mahrouqi, Deputy Head of the Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee, provided clarifications on the legal drafting and the compatibility of the draft’s provisions with relevant existing laws.
The members discussed the proposed amendments, with several offering observations and suggestions regarding the committee’s recommendations. They emphasised the importance of updating legislation related to cultural heritage preservation to keep pace with developments.
The Majlis Ash’shura also reviewed the Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee’s report on the Cybercrime Law.
Dr Ahmed bin Said al Saadi, Head of Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee, elaborated on the draft’s key provisions



and amendments deemed necessary to modernise the legislative framework in light of expanding digital and technological advancements.
The session included interventions from members, who submitted their observations and proposals on certain provisions.
Following discussions, the Majlis Ash’shura approved the committee’s report on the Cybercrime Law, paving the way for the completion of legislative procedures.
Additionally, the session discussed and approved the report of the Public Services and Utilities Committee on the draft air services agreement between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and

the Kingdom of the Netherlands related to Curaçao.
The committee’s report noted that this agreement represents a significant step towards enhancing bilateral cooperation in civil aviation, opening new prospects for air transport, facilitating passenger and cargo movement and encouraging mutual investments in aviation and related services. This aligns with Oman’s aspirations to strengthen its position as a regional and global logistics hub.
It is worth noting that the Majlis Ash’shura will hold its 13th regular session tomorrow (Wednesday), dedicated to discussing the statement of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion. — ONA

Authority for Projects, Tenders and Local
Content: New phase in development



ENGINEER BADR
BIN SALEM AL
MAAMARI

MUSCAT: Amending the name of the Secretariat-General of the Tender Board to the Authority for Projects, Tenders and Local Content, in accordance to the Royal Decree No. 57/2025, represents an important step to build on the achievements made and ensuring their sustainability by complementing work to create an integrated system to enhance the efficiency of government spending related to government projects and procurement and promote local content.
The Authority’s mandate includes proposing policies related to increasing the efficiency of government spending and promoting local content related to government projects and procurement, national policies and strategies related to local content development as well as laying down plans, programmes, and initiatives for promoting local content in the Sultanate of Oman and setting local content targets in all sectors at the national level.
Among the Authority’s powers is developing frameworks and methodologies to enhance the efficiency of planning and implementing government projects with the aim of ensuring their quality, expediting implementation, reducing change orders and adhering to approved budgets.



The Authority will monitor and manage the implementation of government projects in coordination with relevant authorities. It will also organise technical processes and procedures related to tender management to achieve transparency, equal opportunities, equity and freedom of competition. It will also provide unified procurement services including strategic analytical studies of government procurement needs based on quantum economics. It will also review local content requirements in contracts, purchases, and tenders subject to the Tenders Law and follow up on these requirements in coordination with relevant authorities. It will also conduct a legal review of draft contracts and change orders before they are signed and implemented by any unit of the state administrative apparatus and other public legal entities.
The amendments include the addition of purviews related to proposing policies to increase the efficiency of government spending and enhance local content related to government projects and purchases, national

policies and strategies related to local content development, and responsibilities related to the national local content system, which includes managing, organising, and monitoring local content in all sectors at the national level. The name of the Directorate-General of Local Content will be changed to the National Office for Local Content in the organisational structure, and the responsibility for managing the execution of government projects will be added in coordination with relevant authorities.
Engineer Badr bin Salem al Maamari, Chairman of the Authority for Projects, Tenders and Local Content, said: “The amendment represents a qualitative shift in the governance of public projects and procurement as well as a strategic shift towards managing this vital system according to an integrated institutional approach with a significant developmental and economic dimension.” Al Maamari pointed out that the change in the name builds on the achievements made and ensures their sustainability through comprehensive governance of projects and procurement, based on the priorities of Oman Vision 2040 and its strategic objectives related to economic diversification, financial sustainability, private sector empowerment and enhancing spending efficiency.
The Chairman of the Authority for Projects, Tenders and Local Content explained that the approval of the National Local Content Policy represented a pivotal milestone in the comprehensive development process. — ONA

SHORT TAKES



South Korea's ousted President arrives at the Seoul Central District Court. — Reuters

SOUTH KOREA SEEKS ARREST WARRANT FOR EX-PRESIDENT YOON

SEOUL: South Korea's special prosecutor asked a court on Tuesday to issue an arrest warrant for former President Yoon Suk Yeol, an investigator said, as a probe intensified over the ousted leader's botched bid to impose martial law. The new warrant is on a charge of obstruction, a senior member of the special prosecutor's team of investigators said. Yoon had refused to respond to summons for questioning as required under criminal procedures and investigators would "not get dragged around" by him, Park Ji-young, a deputy to the special prosecutor, told a televised briefing on YTN TV. Lawyers representing Yoon said in a statement they had not been served a proper summons after the special prosecutor was appointed and that the former president would respond once it was served in a legal manner. The special prosecutor was appointed just days after liberal President Lee Jae-myung took office on June 4 after winning the snap election called after Yoon's ouster in April and has launched a team of more than 200 prosecutors and investigators to take over ongoing investigations against Yoon. Yoon is fighting the charges against him that include masterminding insurrection, which is punishable by death or life in prison, claiming he had declared martial law on December 3 to sound the alarm over the threat to democracy posed by the then-opposition Democratic Party. — Reuters

THAI PARTY PLANS NO CONFIDENCE VOTE AGAINST EMBATTLED PM

BANGKOK: Thailand's Bhumjaithai party, which left the ruling coalition last week, said on Tuesday it would seek a parliamentary no confidence vote against Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra and her cabinet, in another blow to the embattled premier. Next week's planned motion will be the first parliamentary test for Paetongtarn, 38, since coming under intense public pressure over her handling of an escalating border row with neighbouring Cambodia, which left

the ruling alliance led by her Pheu Thai party hanging on to power by a thread. Paetongtarn is also facing judicial scrutiny after a group of senators petitioned the Constitutional Court and a national anti-graft body with a wide remit to investigate her conduct. Decisions from either bodies could lead to her removal. Alongside, anti-government groups are planning a street protest starting on Saturday, demanding her to resign.

Bhumjaithai withdrew its support for the government last Wednesday citing the risk of a loss of Thai sovereignty and integrity from the leak of a phone conversation between Paetongtarn and Cambodia's former premier Hun Sen. During the call, Paetongtarn kowtowed before the veteran Cambodian politician and criticised a Thai army commander, a red line in a country where the military has significant clout. She has apologised over the leak. — Reuters

Israel kills scores in further Gaza bloodshed

ISRAELI

forces killed at least 40 Palestinians in Gaza and ordered new evacuations on Tuesday, local medics and residents said, in further bloodshed shortly after Israel and Iran agreed to a ceasefire in their air war. The Israel-Iran deal announced by US President Donald Trump raised hopes among Palestinians of an end to over 20 months of war in Gaza that has widely demolished the territory and displaced most residents, with malnutrition widespread.

"Enough! The whole universe has let us down. Hezbollah reached a deal without Gaza, and now Iran has done the same," said Adel Farouk, 62, from Gaza City. "We hope Gaza is next," he said via a chat app, speaking before two explosions rang out in Tehran, with Trump accusing both sides of violating the deal, though voicing particular unhappiness with Israel, rebuking it with an obscenity in an extraordinary outburst of frustration. In Gaza, deadly violence continued with little respite. Marwan Abu Naser, of the Al Awda Hospital in Nuseirat in central Gaza, said it had received 19 dead and 146 injured from crowds



An injured boy and other mourners react during the funeral of Palestinians, in Gaza. — Reuters

Palestinians said they wished the Israel-Iran ceasefire had applied to Gaza. Adding to their frustration, the Israeli military dropped leaflets over several areas in north Gaza ordering residents to leave their homes and head towards the south

who tried to reach a nearby aid distribution centre of the US-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. Abu Naser said that the casualties resulted from gunfire. Israel's military said that a gathering overnight was identified adjacent to forces operating in Gaza's central Netzarim Corridor, and it was reviewing reports of casualties. Responding to a request for comment, the GHF said in an e-mail that there has been no incident near their aid site, which it added was located several kilometres south of

the Netzarim Corridor. UN aid trucks entering Gaza also use area roads and Palestinians have in the past few days reported killings of people by Israeli fire as they waited at roadsides to grab bags of flour from the trucks. Israel has been channelling much of the aid it lets into Gaza through the GHF, which operates a handful of distribution sites in areas guarded by Israeli forces. The United Nations rejects the GHF delivery system as inadequate, dangerous, and a violation of humanitarian impartiality rules. Israel says it is needed to prevent the Hamas militants it is fighting from diverting aid deliveries. The Palestinian group denies doing so. Philippe Lazzarini, head of the United Nations' Palestinian aid agency UNRWA, told reporters in Berlin on Tuesday that the new mechanism was an "abomination" and "a death trap". Separately, 10 other people were killed by an Israeli air strike on a house in the Sabra neighbourhood of Gaza City, while 11 were killed by Israeli gunfire in the southern city of Khan Yunis, medics said, raising the day's toll to at least 40. Israel says militants use built-up residential areas for operating cover. Hamas denies this. — Reuters

Russian strikes kill 11 people in Ukraine region under pressure

KYIV: Russian missiles on Tuesday crashed into schools, hospitals and kindergartens in central Ukraine, killing at least 11 and wounding dozens more in a region coming under mounting pressure. The attacks came as President Volodymyr Zelensky arrived in the Netherlands to meet with allies on the sidelines of the Nato defence alliance summit. He is expected to meet with US President Donald Trump to discuss more sanctions on Russia and arms procurement, a senior Ukrainian source said. Emergency services in the Dnipropetrovsk region, now threatened by Russian battlefield advances, published photos of rescuers helping civilians covered in blood after the attack. "This is not a fight where it's hard to choose a side. Standing with Ukraine means defending life," Zelensky said after the attack. Ukraine's foreign minister said the strikes amounted to a "rejection of peace" from Russia, which has rejected US and Ukrainian ceasefire proposals. "It is a matter of credibility for allies to step up pressure on Moscow," Andriy Sybiga said. Ukrainian police said 11 residents of Dnipro were killed and two more were left dead in the nearby town of Samar. More than 100 people were wounded, according to a statement. Police added that an administrative building, shops, educational facilities and a children's hospital were damaged. Russian forces, which attacked Ukraine just over three years ago, recently claimed to have reached the border of the central industrial Dnipropetrovsk region, to gain a foothold there for the first time of the war. The attacks on Dnipro city, the region's capital, came just hours after deadly overnight drone attacks.



Rescuers clear debris a day after a Russian missile strike, in Kyiv. — AFP

Three people including a toddler were killed earlier in the northeastern Sumy region that borders Russia during the barrage, local officials said. Oleg Grygorov, head of the Sumy region's military administration, said a five-year-old boy was pulled from the rubble of a destroyed house. "The strike took the lives of people from different families. They all lived on the same street. They went to sleep in their homes but the Russian drones interrupted their sleep — forever," he said. One man died next to his spouse in a Ukrainian drone strike on Russia's western border region of Belgorod, the region's governor said, adding that the woman survived the attack. Another drone had targeted a residential building in Moscow overnight, wounding two people, including a pregnant woman, the local authorities said. — AFP



TENDER

Manah Power Company (MPC) invites the specialized companies to participate and submit their best offers for the tender below:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Tender Fees (OMR)	Last Date for Collection of Tender Document	Last Date for Proposal Submission
MPC/2025/02	Call of Outsourcing Agreement Support Service for MPC	50/- (excluding VAT)	30 June 2025	21 July 2025

- Bids shall be submitted in a single envelope and sealed with red wax addressed to the "Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee" and the envelope shall be marked with the tender name and number. No indication or reference about the bidder is permitted on the envelope.
- Bidders are required to submit the original hard copy of their bid to the Manah Power Company office located in Manah.
- Three separate envelopes shall be included inside the single sealed envelope, and each of these three envelopes must be marked with the tenderer name and number as per the below:
 - Commercial Proposal
 - Technical Proposal
 - Bid Bond
- Each bid should be accompanied by bid bond, in the form of a bank guarantee from one of the banks operating in the Sultanate of Oman, covering (1%) of the total bid value and valid for a period of (90) days from the last date for submission of offers, addressed to the Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee of MPC.
- Interested party must deposit the tender fee (Non-Refundable) to the following account:

Bank Name: Bank Muscat
Account Name: Manah Power Company LLC
Account No: 0423011069510017
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person's name and the company details.
- The company is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.

Manah Power Company - Member of Nama Group -
Manah IZZ, Sultanate of Oman
E-Mail: Mithun.Rajappan@holding.nama.om
Phone Number: +968 93382832

Trump raps Israel for hits on Iran after ceasefire



Qatar's PM Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani speaks during a press conference, in Doha. — AFP

Qatar-Iran ties scarred but should recover after salvo

DOHA: Qatar's prime minister said on Tuesday relations with Iran have been scarred by an Iranian missile volley at a US air base in the Gulf Arab state, but that he hoped ties would eventually "come back to normal". Iran responded to US participation in Israel's air war against Iran by firing missiles on Monday at the Al Udeid Air Base, but no one was hurt after Tehran gave advance warning, and a ceasefire was announced hours later by Washington.

Qatar, situated just across the Gulf from Iran, has often acted as a mediator in regional conflicts, including between Iran and the United States and between Israel and Hamas in the continuing Gaza war.

"What happened will definitely have its scar on the relationship (with Iran), but I hope by the time everyone learns the lesson that this kind of neighbourhood relationship should not be violated and should not be undermined," Qatar's prime minister, Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al Thani, told a press conference with his Lebanese counterpart in Doha. "The partnership between Qatar and the US is just growing stronger... and I hope the good relationship with Iran comes back to normal as soon as possible," he said.

Al Thani added that Qatar had liaised with Iran at Washington's request to help facilitate the ceasefire. "We hope the ceasefire will continue as agreed upon, and we urge both the US and Iran

to return to the negotiating table with the aim of reaching a comprehensive diplomatic solution, something that Qatar has consistently sought," he said. He added that Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian expressed regret in a phone call with Qatar's ruling Emir Shaikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani that Tehran's target in retaliating for US air strikes was a military base in Qatar.

Operations at two of the world's busiest airports in Doha and Dubai slowed to a crawl on Tuesday as thousands of travellers queued for hours, facing long delays and flight cancellations after the temporary closure of airspace a day earlier.

Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait shut their airspace late on Monday after Iran's strike on a US military base in Qatar's capital Doha, forcing airlines to cancel or reroute hundreds of flights and creating a backlog of stranded passengers.

Lines were so long that arguments broke out as some passengers jumped queues, according to a witness. Around 250 flights were cancelled at Hamad airport, while another 238 were delayed, according to flight tracking website FlightRadar24. Qatar Airways said it was "making progress in restoring its schedule" with possible disruptions until June 26.

Air India said on Tuesday it would resume those flights as soon as airspace reopened, while other carriers such as flydubai warned that delays would persist due to airspace congestion. — Reuters



A woman looks at an ambulance burned by Israeli attacks on a street, in Tehran. — Reuters



Emergency personnel work amid debris at an impacted residential site, in Be'er Sheva. — Reuters

PRESIDENT

Donald Trump sharply rebuked Israel on Tuesday for its military response following a ceasefire deal, and accused both Israel and Iran of violating the agreement just hours after he announced it. "I didn't like the fact that Israel unloaded right after we made the deal. They didn't have to unload and I didn't like the fact that the retaliation was very strong," Trump told reporters on Tuesday. "In all fairness, Israel unloaded a lot, and now I hear Israel just went out because they felt it was violated by one rocket that didn't land anywhere. That's not what we want," Trump said.

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz had said he had ordered the military to mount new strikes on targets in Tehran in response to what he said were Iranian missiles fired in a "blatant violation" of the ceasefire. Iran denied launching any missiles and said Israel's attacks had continued for an hour and a half beyond the time the ceasefire was meant to start.

Trump had announced the ceasefire earlier on Tuesday with a post on Truth Social: "THE CEASEFIRE IS NOW IN EFFECT. PLEASE DO

NOT VIOLATE IT!" Later in the day, Trump told reporters Israel launched its strikes almost immediately after the agreement was reached. "Israel, as soon as we made the deal, they came out and they dropped a load of bombs, the likes of which I've never seen before. The biggest load that we've seen. I'm not happy with Israel," he said.

Iran and Israel, he added, had been fighting "so long and so hard that they don't know what the fuck they're doing." Asked whether he wanted a regime change in Iran, Trump said he did not. "No. If there was, there was but no, I don't want it. I'd like to see everything calm down as quickly as possible," he said.

"Regime change takes chaos and ideally we don't want to see so much chaos. So we'll see how it goes."

Explosions rang out in Tehran despite Trump saying Israel had called airstrikes off at his command to preserve an hours-old ceasefire. Two witnesses reached by telephone in the Iranian capital said they heard two loud explosions. Israeli army radio said Israel had struck an Iranian radar site near Tehran. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Israel had carried out no further strikes after Netanyahu spoke to Trump.



Iranians celebrate a ceasefire between Iran and Israel at Enghlab Square in the capital Tehran. — AFP



People wait at a buss station, after US President Donald Trump announced a ceasefire, in Haifa. — Reuters

- ◆ Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said that it will respect a ceasefire announced by US President Donald Trump provided that Israel also upholds its terms
- ◆ French President Emmanuel Macron cautioned that the situation surrounding the Israel-Iran conflict remained "unstable" despite ceasefire declaration
- ◆ Iran said at least 610 people had been killed and over 4,700 wounded since the start of the war with Israel on June 13
- ◆ Iran's government said it had "taken the necessary measures" to ensure the continuation of its nuclear programme after strikes targeted its facilities
- ◆ China supports Iran's commitment to safeguarding national sovereignty and security, and hopes a "real ceasefire" can be achieved on that basis

Strike on Tehran's prison represents breach of international law, says UN

TEHRAN: An air strike on Iran's Evin Prison containing political prisoners on Monday represents a grave violation of international humanitarian law, the UN human rights office said. "Evin Prison is not a military objective, and targeting it constitutes a grave breach of international humanitarian law," UN human rights spokesperson Thameen Al Kheetan told reporters in Geneva on Tuesday, without naming Israel. He said that his office has received reports of fires inside the facility and an unspecified number of injuries.

Iran's prison authority has transferred prisoners out of Evin prison after it was hit by Israeli strikes, the judiciary said on Tuesday. The prison

authority "transferred the inmates who were serving their sentences in this prison (Evin) to other facilities within Tehran province... to safeguard the rights of the prisoners and to provide space for emergency response teams," the judiciary's Mizan Online website said.

Iranian media reported that the process of transferring the prisoners had been completed, but did not specify how many inmates were moved. Media also reported that authorities on Tuesday defused two unexploded missiles that landed near the prison during an Israeli strike the day before. "Two unexploded missiles that had been fired yesterday and landed in the vicinity of Evin prison were defused and safely transferred to

a secure location," Tasnim news agency reported, citing a police spokesman.

Earlier, judiciary spokesman Asghar Jahangir said multiple people were killed and wounded in the strike on the prison on Monday, state TV reported. "Due to this destruction, a number of our fellow citizens, including administrative and judicial staff, visiting civilians, family members of inmates and the inmates themselves, were injured, and we have had martyrs in this incident," he said. The strike destroyed part of the administrative building at Evin, a large, heavily fortified complex in the north of Tehran, which rights groups say holds political prisoners and foreign nationals. — Agencies



Israeli emergency services search for casualties in the rubble of a building, in Beersheba. — AFP



A security guard stands on a street, during early hours of ceasefire, in Tehran. — Reuters

OPINION

The stories we tell ourselves hold such influence



HYESHA BARRETT

The author is life coach based in Muscat

THERE'S an old veracity echoed in the teachings of the Stoics: “People are not disturbed by things, but by the view they take of them.” Ascribed to Epictetus, these words carry a quiet gravity. They do not ask to control the uncontrollable, but to gently question the lens through which we experience the world.

Life unfolds as a series of events — some expected, others less so. A conversation ends abruptly. An opportunity doesn't transpire. A plan fails. On their own, these events are neutral. It is the interpretation we assign to them that stirs our emotional waters. The meaning we give, becomes the burden we carry.

A child may run freely into the rain, laughing. An adult might peer out at the same sky with dread. The difference lies not in the rain, but the story built around it.

Through countless conversations with individuals navigating stress, self-doubt and transition, one theme appears repeatedly.

Beneath the surface of distress, there is often a tightly held narrative: “I'm not good enough”, “They don't care about me”, “This always happens to me.” These interpretations feel like truths, but often they are old reverberations, shaped by past experiences, fears and protective beliefs.

When we begin to gently examine these narratives, something begins to shift. The facts remain, but the emotional charge softens. The human mind instinctively seeks meaning, often at a great speed. It stitches together conclusions before we've had a chance to breathe. A delay becomes rejection. A mistake becomes a failure. Silence becomes abandonment. Without awareness, we begin to live not in the present, but in the shadow of the story we have created meaning around.

However, what if the story isn't the only story? What if the disturbance lies not in what happened, but in what we believe it means? Not to bypass emotion nor dismiss hardship, this is an invitation to reclaim inner agency. If perspective holds the weight, then perspective can also offer release.

We may not be able to choose every circumstance, but we can choose how we relate to it. In that choice lies a quiet kind of freedom.

A reframed thought is not a dismissal of reality – it is a clearer view of it. It creates a pause before the spiral, a breath before the reaction. It asks quietly, “Could this mean something else”? A helpful practice is to pause at the moment of emotional intensity and gently ask: “What am I believing about this right now?” Further wondering: “Is it the only possible interpretation?” So often, it is not the moment itself, but our internal commentary that creates the most distress. Once this becomes visible, space opens. Not to change the past, but to meet the present with greater wisdom.

We may not be able to choose every circumstance, but we can choose how we relate to it. In that choice lies a quiet kind of freedom.

So today, consider the lens through which you are viewing your experiences. Clean it if you must. Shift it if you can. Let your view be kinder than your fears, and truer than your old stories. Peace is not found in the absence of problems, but in the presence of perspective.

UN CONDEMNS ‘WEAPONISATION OF FOOD’ IN GAZA

NINA LARSON AND SEBASTIEN ASH

The United Nations on Tuesday condemned what it said was Israel's “weaponisation of food” in Gaza and called it a war crime, urging its military to “stop shooting at people trying to get food”.

The head of the UN agency supporting Palestinian refugees also called a new US- and Israel-backed food-distribution system in the Gaza Strip an “abomination”. The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation began handing out food in Gaza on May 26 after Israel completely cut off supplies into the occupied Palestinian territory for more than two months, sparking warnings of mass famine.

The UN and major aid groups have refused to cooperate with the GHF — an officially private effort with opaque funding — over concerns it was designed to cater to Israeli military objectives.

“Israel's militarised humanitarian assistance mechanism is in contradiction with international standards on aid distribution,” said UN human rights office spokesman Thameen al Kheetan.

“The weaponisation of food for civilians, in addition to restricting or preventing their access to life-sustaining services, constitutes a war crime.” He stressed that only a court could make a legal determination on whether war crimes have been committed. Kheetan pointed to reports that “over 410 Palestinians have been killed as a result, (while) at least 93 others have also been reportedly killed by the Israeli army while attempting to approach the very few aid convoys of the UN and other humanitarian organisations”.

He said those figures came from the health ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip and from other sources, including NGOs. Kheetan said the UN human rights office was in the process of verifying the figures — and in both cases, further people may have been killed from other sources of fire — something his office cannot confirm. “At least 3,000 Palestinians have been injured in these incidents,” he added.

“Each of these killings must be promptly and impartially investigated, and those responsible must be held to account.” Kheetan cautioned that the system “endangers civilians and contributes to the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza”.

Meanwhile Philippe Lazzarini, the head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees UNRWA, slammed GHF as “an abomination that humiliates and degrades desperate people”. “It is a death trap costing more lives than it saves,” he told a press conference in Berlin. Israel has accused UNRWA of providing cover for Hamas and earlier this year banned the agency from operating on Israeli soil or contacting officials.

“There is no other alternative to address the challenges of spreading hunger in the Gaza Strip.” GHF said on Monday it had distributed roughly 680,000 food boxes so far. — AFP

Calls for assassination defy international law

IN the current tense international climate, speaking openly about the assassination of state leaders is becoming more common. This raises serious concerns about international law, ethics and peace.

Recent comments made by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US President Donald Trump about Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei have shocked many. What used to be unacceptable is now being spoken of as a possible solution. This shows how some leaders are moving away from diplomacy and leaning towards threats and violence.

In an interview with ABC News, Netanyahu was asked if Israel might target Khamenei. He replied that Israel was “doing what we need to do,” which many understood as a suggestion that such an action is being considered. He also said that Iran is working towards nuclear weapons and described the Iranian regime as similar to “Hitler's nuclear team.” Netanyahu added, “They chant ‘Death to America.’ So we're doing something that is in the service of mankind, of humanity, and it's a battle of good against evil”.

Trump, known for his strong position on Iran, also made alarming remarks. In 2020, he reportedly refused an Israeli request to assassinate Khamenei, fearing it would start a war. But recently, he said the United States knows where Khamenei is and is “holding off killing him — for now”. He also claimed that Iran had made two attempts to assassinate him using proxies. In February, Trump warned that if Iran killed him, they would be “obliterated.” He said, “Not because of me. If they did that, they would be obliterated. That would be the end. I've left instructions: if they do it, they get obliterated. There won't be anything left”.

Iran strongly denied these claims. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi called them a “fabricated scenario” made to destroy the chance of better relations between



A woman sits at Hafteh-tir Square in Tehran on Monday. — AFP



BADR AL DHAFRI

The writer is head of proofreading and translation at Oman Daily Observer

Iran and the United States”.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Esmaeil Baghaei, described the accusations as part of a ‘repulsive’ Israeli campaign to spread fear about Iran. President Masoud Pezeshkian also said Iran never tried to assassinate Trump, calling the claims part of a plan by enemy countries.

These statements have caused serious reactions around the world. Russian President Vladimir Putin was one of the leaders who responded publicly. Speaking after Trump's comments, Putin said, “This is not how responsible nations behave. Threatening the life of another country's leader crosses a red line in international conduct.” He also warned that such talk “creates a precedent that

can destabilise relations globally and permanently close the door to peaceful solutions”.

Putin's words show how dangerous this kind of language can be. Under international law, including the UN Charter, countries are not allowed to use force or interfere in each other's politics. Talking openly about killing foreign leaders breaks these rules. It also encourages other countries to do the same, creating a very dangerous world where violence becomes normal.

The Middle East is already a region filled with wars, tension, and political disputes. If a state leader were to be assassinated, it could easily lead to revenge attacks and a wider war. This would likely involve more countries, and the cost to human life and regional security would be very high.

These threats also damage any chance of diplomacy. When world leaders speak about killing each other, it becomes nearly impossible to talk, negotiate or build trust. Instead of solving problems, this kind of talk creates new ones.

Political assassinations are not just wrong — they are extremely risky. Leaders must protect their countries, but that does not give them the right to break international law or threaten peace. Even when there are serious disagreements, countries must adhere to the law and resolve issues through diplomatic means.

History has shown how killing leaders can lead to terrible consequences. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914, for example, helped trigger the First World War. The world should not repeat such mistakes.

If leaders truly care about peace and security, they must choose the path of law and dialogue. Netanyahu and Trump's comments should be taken as a warning. The international community must speak clearly: political killings are unacceptable.

How can we have a drug-free world?



SAMUEL KUTTY

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

DRUG abuse and trafficking are pervasive issues that affect millions of people worldwide. The consequences are far-reaching and multifaceted, impacting health, security and socio-economic conditions.

It affects all segments of society, including the rich and poor, the educated and uneducated, as well as urban and rural populations. In addition, it harms the user's brain and body, sometimes permanently. Among the younger generation, drug abuse has reached alarming levels in many parts of the world.

Many studies indicate that adolescence is a critical risk period for the initiation of substance use, with usage often peaking among individuals aged 18 to 25 years.

Recognising the urgency of addressing this issue, the United Nations designated June 26 each year as The International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. This day is dedicated to tackling the growing concerns surrounding drug abuse and to enhancing action and cooperation in the pursuit of a world free from this problem.

This year's theme is "Breaking the Chains: Prevention, Treatment and Recovery for All!" This emphasises community support, healthcare access and the need for global solidarity in addressing drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

It also reflects a growing global consensus that prevention, rather than punishment, is the most effective and sustainable approach

to addressing substance abuse, particularly among youth.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the emergence of new synthetic opioids, coupled with unprecedented levels of drug supply and demand, has exacerbated the global drug crisis. This situation has led to increased rates of substance use disorders and significant environmental damage.

"High supply of illegal drugs and the increasingly sophisticated trafficking networks are exacerbating global crises and presenting challenges for health services and law enforcement, the UN agency notes in its report. According to its 2024 statistics, there are nearly 300 million drug users worldwide, reflecting a 22-per cent rise in drug use over the past decade. Only 10 per cent of this increase can be attributed to global population growth. By 2030, the number of people using drugs worldwide is projected to rise by an additional 11 per cent, based solely on population growth.

"Although an estimated 64 million people worldwide suffer from drug use disorders, only one in eleven is receiving treatment. Women have less access to treatment than men, with only one in eighteen women with drug use disorders receiving treatment compared to one in seven men," reveals the UNODC in its report.

In its report, the World Health Organization (WHO) highlights that 2.6 million deaths each year are attributable to alcohol consumption, accounting for 4.7 per cent of all deaths, while

The immediate need is to consider how to sensitise drug addicts to the dangers of drug use, the importance of its reporting, and the necessity of developing resistance to prevailing peer and social pressures

the use of psychoactive drugs contributes to an additional 0.6 million deaths. Notably, 2 million of the alcohol-related deaths and 0.4 million of the drug-related deaths occurred among men. "Substance use significantly harms individual health, elevating the risk of chronic diseases and mental health conditions, and tragically resulting in millions of preventable deaths each year. It imposes a substantial burden on families and communities, increasing the likelihood of accidents, injuries and violence," stated Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General.

So, the immediate need is to consider how to sensitise drug addicts to the dangers of drug use, the importance of its reporting and the necessity of developing resistance to prevailing peer and social pressures.

Of course, stopping drug trafficking requires long-term coordinated action to address supply and demand and prevent organised criminal groups from exploiting vulnerabilities.

Stakeholders, including local government bodies, health institutions, security agencies and the media, should decentralise prevention efforts and support ongoing advocacy at the community level.

Additionally, parents, teachers, religious leaders, traditional rulers and the private sector should collaborate to protect young people from the allure of drugs. Early drug use significantly increases the likelihood of addiction. Therefore, preventing early use can greatly reduce these risks.

Iran's strikes on Qatari soil paved way to Israel truce

CALLUM PATON

Iran's unprecedented strikes on a US base in Qatar were carefully calculated to provide an exit from hostilities with Washington and set up a truce with Israel, according to analysts and an official.

Monday's missile launches were signalled well in advance, minimising the risk of injury and giving every opportunity to shoot down the projectiles -- resulting in a fireworks display of booms and flashes above Doha.

They followed heavy US strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities at the weekend, a sudden escalation that raised concerns about how Tehran, after more than a week of exchanges with Israel, would respond.

In the event, Qatar held the answer in the form of Al Udeid, the Middle East's biggest US base and headquarters of its regional command.

Targeting a United States base, rather than inciting fury, triggered a calm reaction from President Donald Trump, who thanked Iran for giving "early notice".

Qatar condemned the strikes -- Iran's first on a Gulf country's territory -- but its prime minister said the response would be diplomatic and legal, rather than military.

Hours after the attack, Trump announced a ceasefire that both Israel and Iran later said they would accept. A source with knowledge of the talks said Doha had spoken to Tehran and "persuaded" it to stop fighting.

Chatham House geopolitics specialist Neil Quilliam said the attack was "clearly limited" and "intended to satisfy Iran's population that its leadership responded forcibly to the US air strikes on Saturday".

Iran had promised to inflict "serious, unpredictable consequences" on the US for joining its ally Israel's campaign against the Islamic republic with strikes on three nuclear sites.

The Gulf states, which host a number of US military sites, had been preparing for days for a possible strike by Iran.

A week before Qatar was targetted, Bahrain, home to the US Navy's Fifth Fleet, tested its civil defence sirens.

In the hours before the attack, the US embassy in Qatar advised Americans there not to go out, with some other Western embassies echoing the warning.

Shortly before the strikes, air traffic was suspended over Qatar "as part of a set of precautionary measures", the country's foreign ministry said. Ali Vaez, senior advisor at the International Crisis Group said Iran's action against Qatar was "symbolic" and "calibrated and telegraphed in a way that would not result in any American casualties, so that there is an off-ramp for both sides". —AFP

Only diplomacy can end the Iran nuclear threat

NEITHER

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu nor US President

Donald Trump has shown himself to be a prudent and levelheaded actor on the world stage. Both regularly indulge reckless impulses and approach statecraft as a matter of political opportunism. Nonetheless, the joint military campaign they have launched against Iran is reasoned and reasonable. Israel was justified in attacking Iran's nuclear installations, and the US was right to join the fight, using its bunker-buster bombs to hit Fordow, as well as two other nuclear facilities.

But now that Israel and the US have demonstrated their overwhelming military power, they should set their sights on a diplomatic, not a military, endgame. Air strikes may be able to take out Iran's existing nuclear facilities, but they also give Iran an even greater incentive to rebuild those facilities in pursuit of a nuclear deterrent.

Prior to the start of Israel's military campaign on June 13, Iran had been stockpiling near-weapons-grade uranium. In May, the International Atomic Energy Agency determined that it would take only three weeks for the Fordow plant to turn the current stockpile into enough weapons-grade uranium for nine nuclear weapons. While Iran would need additional time to master the process of building such weapons, the fact that highly enriched uranium has no civilian uses -- combined with evidence of Iran's past efforts to build nuclear weapons -- was cause for not just grave concern but military action.

Before Israel's initial strikes on Iran, this grave concern had led both the Biden and Trump administrations to try to neutralise the looming Iranian nuclear threat at the negotiating table. But it refused to make a deal.

Iran has also been quite transparent about its malign strategic intentions. It has spent



A man looks at missiles at Holy Defence Museum in Tehran



CHARLES A KUPCHAN

a Professor at Georgetown University and Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, served on the National Security Council under US Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama

years building up its military. Iran's own military capabilities pose a direct and active threat to US interests in the region -- including US bases and troops, international shipping and the flow of oil and gas.

But while Israel and the US have sound reasons for seeking to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities, military force alone will not bring about a lasting resolution. Iran's nuclear programme may end up being only partly damaged, and even if it has been set back substantially, it can still be reconstituted, perhaps more stealthily. Moreover, if Iran has no diplomatic off-ramp, and if its regime fears for its survival, it will likely expand the war out of desperation, potentially leading to a region-wide conflict. It is too soon to tell whether Iran's Monday attack against US bases in the region is more of a symbolic response or a deliberate effort to quickly escalate.

Now that the US has entered the war, it should try again to arrive at a diplomatic endgame. Iran has strong incentives to make a deal and accept stringent constraints on its nuclear programme, as well as intrusive inspections. With Israel and the US effectively controlling the country's airspace, Iran's ability to fight back

will diminish by the day. Simply put, Iran's hand is uniquely weak, making this the perfect moment to extract concessions at the negotiating table.

Trump also has strong incentives to return to diplomacy. Although he decided to enter the war, he faces strong pushback from the broad cadre of neo-isolationists in his own political base. Even if Israel wants to continue the campaign (perhaps aiming to bring down the Iranian regime), Trump has no interest in another Middle East quagmire. His game is to show strength, and then to be the dealmaker who brings peace to the Middle East.

Aiming at regime change may be tempting, but taking down the Islamic Republic by force would be a cardinal mistake. It is impossible to predict what kind of government would come next, let alone to contain the regional spillover that might accompany political chaos in Iran. Given the unstable neighbourhood, regime collapse in Iran could easily radiate sectarian and ethnic violence far afield.

The US has already learned this lesson the hard way. Its interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria cost trillions of dollars and produced little good. Whatever happens in Iran, one thing is certain: Trump should not, and will not, engage in any nation-building. If Iran falls apart, the Trump administration is certainly not coming to the country's rescue.

After almost a half-century, the regime may be nearing its end. But if it does fall, change needs to come from within, not be imposed from outside. The best way to facilitate this objective is to end the war at the negotiating table. Then, it would be up to Iran's citizens to remove a leadership that has failed on every front. This outcome -- though far from assured -- might then produce a moderate government that could clear the way for the broader regional peace that Trump is so hungry to claim credit for.

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SPORTS

SHORT TAKES



KREJCIKOVA BATTLES PAST DART AT WINDY EASTBOURNE

Barbora Krejčíková saved two match points on the way to a 6-3 6-7(4) 7-5 victory over Briton Harriet Dart at the Eastbourne Open on Tuesday, only her second singles win of the grass season before her Wimbledon title defence begins this month.

Czech Krejčíková, who only returned to action last month after a back injury had kept her out of action since November, needed two hours and 40 minutes to secure the win.

In windy conditions at the Devonshire Park Lawn Tennis Club, Krejčíková committed five double faults in the opening set and twice lost serve, but built up momentum after a couple of rain-enforced breaks to overpower Dart.

Krejčíková continued to struggle with the wind in the second set and was involved in a heated exchange with the umpire after earning a time violation for taking too long on serve, with Dart taking advantage of her opponent's vulnerability.

The 124th-ranked Dart broke to level the set at 6-6 and sailed through the tiebreaker as Krejčíková's second serve faltered.

Dart also had the upper hand in the decider after breaking early and earning two match points, but the Wimbledon champion raised her level with her back against the wall and brought the set back on serve.

A deflated Dart let out a frustrated scream after losing her advantage and crumbled in her final service game as she was broken to love. — Reuters

Oman Football Association to elect chairman today



This year's election will be conducted for the first time via a Fifa-approved

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, JUNE 24

THE OMAN FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION (OFA) will elect a new chairman and board for the 2025–2029 term on Wednesday. This election will mark a pivotal moment for the future of Oman's football with the incoming board expected to lead strategic efforts on both domestic and international events.

The new chairman of OFA and his members will have major responsibilities in the coming period including the national team which are currently in a crucial phase. Red Warriors will aim to secure a historic qualification spot in the AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to 26 Playoffs which will take place in coming October. In addition, the national team is scheduled to compete in the Arab Cup and CIS Asian event. At the youth level, the Olympic team will prepare for the AFC U-23 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2026 Qualifiers which is an important milestone in Oman's football development pathway.

On the domestic front, the new board will be tasked with advancing and enhancing the local competitions including the prestigious His Majesty's

Cup, the Omantel League, and youth leagues such as the U-15, U-17, and U-19 categories in addition to the OFA Cup and other grassroots development initiatives.

Running for the chairmanship post are Sayyid Sulaiman bin Hamood al Busaidy and Dr Jassim bin Mohammed al Shukaili. Both candidates worked previously in the football career at OFA and the domestic clubs. The candidates who are competing for the vice chairman are Sayyid Musallam bin Salim al Busaidy, Qutaiba bin Said al Ghailani, and Nasr bin Hamood al Wahaibi.

For the board membership seats, twelve candidates are contesting from which only three will be selected. These include Hassan bin Abdullah al Ajmi, Said bin Ali al Busaidy, Ali bin Ahmed al Kathiri, Ali bin Abdullah al Raisi, Abdullah bin Salim al Shanfari, Mohammed bin Ali al Maqbali, Abdullah bin Ali al Kamzari, Nasser bin Salim al Haddabi, Abdullah bin Ali al Rashdi, Nasser bin Suleiman al Alawi, Abdullah bin Mohsin al Jabri and Ibrahim bin Murad al Balushi. Mohammed bin Khamis al Orami secured the reserved seat representing the Players committee.

In the category of the women's seat, the candidates are Fatma bint Ibrahim al Fazariyah and Hajar bint Khamis al Muzainiyah.

This year's election marks a significant advancement in the OFA's governance practices as voting will be conducted for the first time via a Fifa-approved electronic and digital system.

A dedicated team of technical experts will be on-site to manage the system and ensure a smooth, transparent, and secure voting process. As the association moves toward a new era of leadership, the OFA Chairman Salim al Wahaibi shared a farewell message as he is leaving his post after two consecutive terms.

“After a journey that spanned two consecutive terms since 2016, I hereby announce my departure as chairman of OFA. I have had the honour of serving Omani football from a position of responsibility, navigating an administrative journey filled with challenges and ambitions. I step down from this position, but not from the love, pride, or deep connection I hold for this institution, which will always remain close to my heart.

“I sincerely wish the very best to whoever takes on the responsibility next, and I hope they build upon what has been achieved with a renewed spirit, fresh vision and commitment to realising all that we aspire to for Oman, its football, and its supporters,” Al Wahaibi said.

OHA holds meeting with sports clubs representatives

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, JUNE 24

As part of its ongoing efforts to promote hockey in the Sultanate of Oman, the Technical Committee of the Oman Hockey Association (OHA) held an extensive meeting with representatives of sports clubs, attended by Dr Marwan al Jumaa, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Association, to discuss ways to develop local competitions and enhance both technical and organisational participation.

The meeting addressed several key topics, including increasing the number of clubs participating in hockey competitions to expand the game's reach across the Sultanate of Oman's governorates and raise the level of competitiveness among teams. Attendees also

discussed the mechanisms for including foreign players and referees in competitions, considering it an important step toward elevating the technical level and providing more opportunities for international experience.

The meeting also touched on the latest updates to the game's rules issued by the International Hockey Federation, which will be implemented starting next season. Attendees emphasised the importance of raising awareness of these changes among teams and administrators to ensure effective application. During the meeting, the Association also announced the organisation of a Level 3 coaching course to qualify national talent and enable them to lead teams professionally.

Among the proposals discussed was the organisation of public



The meeting was attended by Marwan al Jumaa, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Association

and entertainment events alongside His Majesty the Sultan's Cup for Hockey to enhance the community aspect of the championship and encourage public attendance and engagement.

In this context,

Abdulrahman al Balushi, Board Member of the Association and Chairman of the Technical Committee, stated that the meeting focused especially on the HM Cup, which is the oldest and most prestigious competition in Omani

hockey history. This year marks the tournament's 55th anniversary, granting it special importance on the national sports calendar.

Al Balushi noted that the meeting discussed the need to increase the number of clubs participating in the tournament and encourage them to sign foreign players to raise the competition's technical and promotional level, ensuring broader regional and international exposure. He also emphasised the importance of involving international referees and organising an international refereeing course with both local and foreign participants to enhance the competency of national officiating staff.

Additionally, Al Balushi stressed the importance of media and marketing campaigns for the tournament, calling for intensified promotional efforts across various

media channels and digital platforms to match the tournament's status and attract audiences for positive engagement.

He also highlighted plans to hold accompanying fan events at the hockey field in the Wilayat of Al Amerat to create a festive atmosphere befitting the occasion and to attract a larger number of spectators and hockey enthusiasts.

In conclusion, Al Balushi praised the positive response from the participating clubs, which expressed their full readiness to cooperate with the Association in implementing the proposed ideas and initiatives. He affirmed that such consensus would contribute to developing competitions and strengthening hockey's presence on the sports scene in the Sultanate of Oman.

SHORTTAKES



The teams and officials line up during a minutes silence for former India player Dilip Doshi before the start of play. — Reuters

FORMER INDIA SPINNER DOSHI DIES AGED 77

NEW DELHI: India spin great Dilip Doshi has died aged 77, with former cricketers praising a man they said had been a “gentleman to the core”.
Doshi died in London on Monday, Indian media reported. The left-arm spinner was already in his thirties when he made his Test debut in 1979, and finished with 114 wickets in 33 matches.
Doshi also played 15 one-day internationals for India between 1980 and 1982.
India batting great Sachin Tendulkar said Doshi was a “warm-hearted soul”, adding that he “will miss those cricketing conversations”.
Former India all-rounder Ravi Shastri, himself a left-arm spinner, said Doshi was “a gentleman to the core and a fine, fine bowler”.
The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) also paid tribute to the former spinner. Before play started on the fifth and final day of the first Test between England and India at Headingley on Tuesday, the teams lined up on the outfield to observe a minute’s silence in memory of Doshi, with players and officials wearing black armbands as a mark of respect. A bespectacled Doshi carried forward the Indian spin legacy started by the famous quartet of Bishan Singh Bedi, Erapalli Prasanna, Srinivas Venkataraghavan and Bhagwath Chandrasekhar. Doshi, an effective bowler even on the most placid pitches, also played English county cricket, including a long stint with Nottinghamshire. — AFP



Dilip Doshi

Ole Werner appointed RB Leipzig coach

LEIPZIG, GERMANY: Ole Werner has been appointed RB Leipzig coach on a two-year contract until 2027, ending the Bundesliga club’s difficult search for a new boss after a poor season by their standard.
The deal was announced on Tuesday after Leipzig reached an agreement with the 37-year-old’s previous club Werder Bremen, where he spent four years but was on gardening leave.
“Ole is a young, up-and-coming and highly ambitious head coach who will take the next step in his development with us,” Leipzig’s managing director for sport Marcel Schäfer said.
“Ole has a clear footballing philosophy. He likes to play structured possession-based football,

encourages quick transitions after winning the ball, while he also wants his teams to be strong pressers,tactically flexible and to play in a bold, committed and combative manner.”
Leipzig finished seventh in the past Bundesliga season, missing a place in Europe for the first time since being promoted to the topflight in 2016.
Marco Rose was axed as coach in March and Zsolt Löw acted as caretaker for the remaining matches. Former Liverpool maestro Jürgen Klopp is now head of global soccer at Red Bull and would have been involved in Werner’s appointment. Werner’s appointment came after other candidates such as Cesc Fábregas (Como), Oliver



Ole Werner

Glasner (Crystal Palace), Roger Schmidt(formerly Benfica) and Sandro Wagner (now Augsburg) were not available. Werner said after the season that he would not renew his contract in Bremen beyond 2026, which prompted the club to part ways with him immediately. They appointed second-tier Elversberg coach Horst Steffen having finished eighth last term under Werner.
“I am really pleased to now be head coach of RB Leipzig. During our very detailed discussions, it was immediately clear that both sides share the same ideas about how we want to play and work,” said Werner, who coached Holstein Kiel before Bremen. “RB Leipzig stands for a bold, attacking style of play with a clear identity as well as professional

and ambitious thinking.
“The club have big goals and high expectations and this is exactly the kind of environment that convinced me and one to which I want to contribute.”
Werner joins Leipzig just as there is uncertainty over the futures two of their leading lights. Arsenal have been heavily linked in the media with Slovenia striker Benjamin Sesko, while playmaker Xavi Simons also wants to move, reports say. Leipzig are also yet to announce what they will do with the coach’s namesake Timo Werner, who has returned to his parent club after a poor loan spell at Tottenham Hotspur.
Coach Werner will be presented at an official press conference in the”near future.” — dpa



Ben Duckett celebrates his century. — Reuters

Brilliant Duckett ton steers England to India win

A SUPERB CENTURY from Ben Duckett helped steer England to a sensational five-wicket win in the first test against India after a thrilling day five on Tuesday, the hosts reaching a target of 371 -- the 10th highest successful run chase in test history. Having turned the match on its head at Headingley after India had been 430-3 in their first innings, England appeared to be cruising to a dramatic win as openers Duckett and Zak Crawley eased their side to lunch on 117-0 in their second innings.
Duckett continued his imperious form with another four through the covers to reach his sixth test hundred, before Crawley fell for 65, their 188-run partnership the second highest England opening fourth-innings stand in tests.
Two wickets in two balls -- Duckett and Harry Brook -- dragged India back into the enthralling contest and when Ben Stokes fell for 33 attempting an ambitious reverse sweep, England’s hopes of victory lay precariously in the balance.
Joe Root’s unbeaten 53 calmed the nerves around his home ground, with the former skipper and Jamie Smith, who hit a six to seal victory, seeing England home as India,

having scored five centuries in the match, somehow contrived to start the five-test series in defeat.
Resuming day five on 21-0, uncharacteristically for a team renowned for their ultra-aggressive batting, Crawley and Duckett took 99 balls to bring up their 50 partnership -- the longest it has taken the pair to do so for England -- before upping the ante.
There was slight concern for England when first-innings centurion Ollie Pope quickly followed Crawley back to the pavilion midway through the afternoon session, the number three becoming Prasidh Krishna’s next victim in back-to-back overs.
Duckett continued to accumulate runs quickly, however, before attempting one big shot too many to fall to Shardul Thakur for 149 -- the second-highest test fourth-innings score by an English opener.
The contribution of Duckett, in such a pressurised situation, cannot be underestimated -- it is 15 years since an England opener last scored a fourth-innings hundred: Alastair Cook at Mirpur in 2010.
Nerves set in around the ground when Brook departed for a golden duck, two in

two balls for Thakur, with further scares forthcoming as England looked edgy.
Stokes was left shaking his head at the way he fell to Ravindra Jadeja shortly after tea, but Root and Smith both dug in, stopped offering up chances and got the runs required, with Smith rounding off a remarkable victory in style.
Plenty of dropped catches and two batting collapses ultimately cost India. From 430-3 in the first innings, they lost their final seven wickets for just 41 runs, with the tail crumbling again in the second innings, 31 runs accumulated for the fall of the final six wickets.
It is the first time in history a team has managed five centuries in one test and not emerged victorious, but also the first time those five centurions have been joined by six batsmen who fell for ducks - three in each innings - in the same match.
For England, at the start of a crucial period with the Ashes to come later this year, their summer could not have got off to a more promising start, with their aggressive approach, even if it has been toned down and refined, achieving their second highest run chase in their test history. — Reuters



Paris St Germain's Willian Pacheco in action with Seattle Sounders' Obed Vargas. — Reuters

PSG, Miami advance to last 16, Atletico exit CWC

LIONEL Messi faces a reunion with his former club Paris Saint-Germain after his Inter Miami side reached the last 16 of the Club World Cup with a 2-2 draw with Palmeiras.

The Brazilian side fought back from two goals down to draw at Hard Rock Stadium, a result which secured both teams a place in the knock-out stages.

Goals from Tadeo Allende and Luis Suarez had Miami on course for a second surprise victory in the tournament after their win over Porto.

But the Brazilian side struck twice in the last 10 minutes through Paulinho and Mauricio to make sure of their place in the next round.

Few expected Miami to make it out of the group but they now face the European champions while Palmeiras will have an all-Brazilian

encounter with Botafogo.

For Messi, who celebrates his 38th birthday on Tuesday, the tie in Atlanta will see him face his former club PSG for the first time since leaving them to join Miami in 2023.

“It’s a historic night for the MLS because we are into the best 16 teams in the world and all the MLS have to be proud of Inter Miami,” said Miami coach Javier Mascherano.

The result meant that Egyptian club Al Ahly and Porto were both eliminated despite producing a highly entertaining 4-4 draw at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey.

There were six Argentines in the Miami starting line-up which took the field in front of a large Brazilian contingent in the 60,914 crowd.

The travelling fans were on their feet in the opening minutes when Gustavo Gomez powered a header goalwards from a corner but Oscar

Ustari was down well to save.

Miami grabbed the lead in the 16th minute when Suarez brilliantly chested a long ball into the path of the on-rushing Allende who showed pace to break clear of the Brazilian defence and then composure to fire past Weverton.

GREAT GAME

Palmeiras’s tactics of sitting off Miami were not working with Messi dropping deep and linking up with Sergio Busquets and Federico Redondo as the Major League Soccer side enjoyed plenty of possession.

The only chance for Palmeiras before the break came when Facundo Torres found himself in a promising position after some sloppy Miami defending but he screwed his shot wide.

Messi’s first real effort on goal came four minutes after the restart when he eked out just enough room

on the edge of the box for a low shot but Weverton was down well.

Allende threatened again when he broke down the right and flashed a shot just wide of the post and Messi drove a bouncing ball narrowly over the bar as Miami pushed for a second goal.

That came in the 65th minute with the 38-year-old former Barcelona striker Suarez rolling back the years as he dribbled past two defenders and then blasted into the top corner.

Top spot in the group mattered to Miami as it would have avoided the clash with PSG but it was not to be as Palmeiras earned themselves a crucial point with their late revival.

Substitute Paulinho fired home in the 80th minute after a lovely reverse pass from Allan Andrade.

Then, with three minutes left on the clock, Maxi Falcon’s header fell straight to Mauricio who pounced on the opportunity, rifling into the far

corner to make it 2-2.

“It was a great game from us, it’s difficult to play against one of the best teams in South America,” said Mascherano.

“Maybe at the end we had the game in our hands so the feeling is strange but before the start of the tournament if someone told me we were going to have this kind of performance against these kind of teams I would have signed for it.”

Abel Ferreira, the Palmeiras head coach, was highly critical of his team’s opening 45 minutes but pleased with their reaction.

“I told them at half-time that it was impossible to do worse than what we did in the first half. We were unable to contain our opponents or put pressure on them up front. But our spirit of fighting until the end was particularly important in the second half, and we were rewarded for that,” he said. — AFP

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LEADINGSOURCE



The US accounted for more than RO 2.8 billion in new investments.

OMAN SEES SURGE IN US INVESTMENT

NASRULAH AL AJMI
MUSCAT, JUNE 24

THE United States of America emerged as the leading source of foreign direct investment into Oman in early 2025, with American inflows rising by 57.7% as investor confidence in the Sultanate’s economic direction strengthened.

According to the latest bulletin released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), the US accounted for more than RO 2.8 billion in new investments, overtaking the United Kingdom, which maintained a strong position with a 21% increase in FDI, reaching RO 2.7 billion. Switzerland also stood out, recording a 101.9% jump in investments, while regional interest from Qatar rose sharply by 65.3%.

The rise in US investments is being interpreted by analysts as a long-term vote of confidence in Oman’s energy reforms and industrial policies.

The Sultanate’s push to enhance economic diversification, coupled with regulatory clarity and enhanced investor protections, has made Oman an increasingly attractive destination for global capital.

The total value of FDI inflows reached RO 30.6 billion, up from RO 25.4 billion in Q1 2024. This significant increase of over RO 5 billion highlights growing international investor interest in Oman.

By contrast, the same period last year saw more modest growth of around 8%, with capital inflows concentrated largely in traditional energy sectors.

The 2025 figures reflect not only larger volumes but also a broader diversification of investor countries and sectors, indicating a structural shift in Oman’s FDI landscape.

Much of the 2025 growth was driven by heightened activity in strategic sectors including oil and gas exploration, manufacturing, and financial intermediation. The oil and gas sector alone attracted over RO 4.8 billion, a 24.2% increase, while manufacturing investments grew by 27.5%.

In addition to hydrocarbons, the manufacturing sector saw significant gains, particularly in chemicals, base metals, and plastics. The government’s localisation strategies and focus on value-added production appear to be drawing sustained interest from foreign investors seeking regional manufacturing hubs.

Economic experts attribute the FDI uptick to a combination of favourable reforms, improved investment climate, and Oman’s strategic geographic position. Efforts under Oman Vision 2040, aimed at reducing dependency on oil, enhancing the private sector’s role, and boosting global trade connectivity, are translating into measurable economic inflows.

Further supporting the investment momentum are bilateral partnerships, tax incentives in economic zones, and infrastructure upgrades across ports, logistics corridors and energy systems.

The outlook for FDI in Oman remains optimistic. As global investors look to diversify their portfolios in a volatile geopolitical environment, Oman’s political stability, economic reforms, and improving credit profile continue to offer a reliable gateway into the wider Middle East and Indian Ocean regions.

Copper prospect unveiled in Oman’s Block 8

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, JUNE 24

A UK-based mining firm currently leading the exploration of mineral resources in Block 8 in Oman’s North Al Batinah Governorate has announced the discovery of a promising new copper prospect, with rock sampling returning copper concentrations as high as 7.84%.

Power Arabia Ltd, majority-owned by Power Metal Resources PLC — a London-listed exploration company with a global project portfolio — described the newly identified Al Maidar Prospect as a “high prospectivity target.” This new discovery, along with the previously identified Al Mansur Prospect, underscores the Block’s potential to host significant copper mineralization, company officials said.

The Block is currently held by a joint venture between Australian exploration company Alara Resources Ltd and Oman-based Awtad Copper LLC. However, in October last year, Power Metal Resources signed a provisional agreement with the JV to acquire a 12.5% stake in Block 8.

Under the terms of the



Location of Block 8 mining concession.

deal, Power Metal committed to investing approximately \$740,000 in exploration activities to earn this stake.

“Exploration work, including rock chip sampling, mapping, and in-fill gravimetric geophysical surveying, has focused on two high-priority prospects — the Al Maidar and Al Mansur Prospects — both of which have the potential to host significant mineralization,” Power Metal Resources said in a statement.

Sean Wade, CEO of Power Metal Resources, commented: “These results further underpin our confidence that

these two key prospects have the potential to host significant mineralisation, whilst also demonstrating the wider potential for Block 8 to deliver value to stakeholders and shareholders.”

Atmavireshwar Sthapak, Managing Director of Alara Resources, added: “We are pleased with the encouraging results from recent exploration activities undertaken by our partners in the Block 8 exploration licence.

The Al Mansur Prospect, originally discovered by Alara in 2012–13, continues to demonstrate strong potential

and has now progressed to the drill-testing stage.

The discovery of the new Al Maidar Prospect by Power Metal further highlights the broader potential of Block 8 to host additional copper mineralisation.

Alara is committed to advancing the exploration of Block 8 and intends to increase its stake in the joint venture through continued investment alongside Power Metal.”

According to Power Metal, rock chip sampling from the Al Maidar Prospect yielded copper concentrations of 7.84%, 4.7%, 2.8%, and 2.7%, showing a strong correlation with an associated structural feature.

A full technical report has been submitted to the Ministry of Energy and Minerals in support of the project’s licence renewal process.

Copper mining and processing is now a significant activity within Oman’s rapidly growing mining sector.

Leading players in this field include Minerals Development Oman — the mining investment arm of the Oman Investment Authority — and its subsidiaries Mawarid Mining and Mazoon Mining; Oman Mining Company; Green Tech Mining Services; and Al Hadeetha Resources, among others.

Forum strengthens Oman and Algeria economic ties

ALGIERS: Oman and Algeria reaffirmed their growing economic partnership during the Omani-Algerian Businessmen Forum held in Algiers on Tuesday, under the theme “Algerian-Omani Economic Partnerships: Pioneering Areas and Promising Prospects.”

The forum took place as part of Oman’s participation as Guest of Honour at the 56th Algiers International Fair.

The event brought together key officials and business leaders from both countries to explore avenues for trade, investment, and industrial collaboration.

It underscored the shared commitment of Oman and Algeria to deepen their economic integration and capitalise on emerging opportunities in sectors ranging from manufacturing to logistics and urban development.

Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Oman’s Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, highlighted the significance of the forum in reinforcing bilateral relations.



The forum took place as part of Oman’s participation as Guest of Honour.

“The participation of business leaders from both countries reflects our shared desire to enhance cooperation, expand trade, and explore new investment opportunities,” he said. Al Yousef emphasised Oman’s efforts to diversify imports, promote Omani exports, and foster investment integration with Algeria.

He noted that both governments are working to provide the necessary incentives, facilities, and enablers to empower the private sector to drive

sustainable economic growth.

“Our aim is to build a competitive economy that can keep pace with global changes, while ensuring the sustainability of national development,” Al Yousef added. He also expressed hope that Oman’s role as Guest of Honor at the fair would further strengthen trade and investment ties between the two nations.

Tayeb Zitouni, Algeria’s Minister of Internal Trade and National Market Control, praised the strong historical

and brotherly relations between the two countries, which he said have reached a new strategic level in recent years.

He pointed to recent high-level state visits — including the Algerian President’s trip to Oman in October 2024 and His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq’s visit to Algeria in May 2025 — as pivotal moments that deepened bilateral understanding and commitment.

Zitouni highlighted key joint initiatives, such as the \$2.4 billion fertiliser production complex in Arzew and the establishment of the Algerian-Omani Investment Fund. He also mentioned new opportunities under study in automotive, energy, agriculture, and pharmaceuticals.

“There is strong potential to expand cooperation in vital sectors like tourism, services, and cultural and traditional industries,” Zitouni said.

He called on stakeholders to redouble efforts to strengthen trade channels and maximise their complementary resources. — ONA

ADVERTORIALS

EFFECTIVEPLATFORM



Dr Ahmed al Shaqsi, General Manager of Strategy and Sustainability at Nama Electricity.

IEEE POWERTALKS TO HIGHLIGHT ENERGY TRANSFORMATION IN OMAN

HIBBA AL KINDI
MUSCAT, JUNE 24

The fourth edition of the IEEE PowerTalks conference, set to take place during October 13-14, 2025, will spotlight the acceleration of energy transformation in Oman. This year’s conference is hosted Nama Electricity Distribution Company (NEDC), in partnership with the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), and Raya Services, with the support of the Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR).

Some of the key topics include power market updates, sustainable energies and storage, distribution systems, energy conservation and efficiency, asset management, optimisation and digitalisation.

It aims to bring together specialists, experts, and decision-makers from inside and outside the Sultanate of Oman to discuss the future of the sector, exchange knowledge, and showcase successful experiences across multiple fields, including renewable energy, energy mix, distribution network development, energy efficiency, and digital transformation.”

Dr Al Shaqsi further added: “The conference comes at a time when Oman and the region are witnessing rapid developments in the energy sector, necessitating cooperation among all concerned parties. We hope the conference will serve as an effective platform for dialogue and partnership-building, contributing to a sustainable future in support of Oman Vision 2040.”

The two-day conference will include six technical sessions, four technical master classes, executive level panel discussions and an accompanying exhibition and showcase.

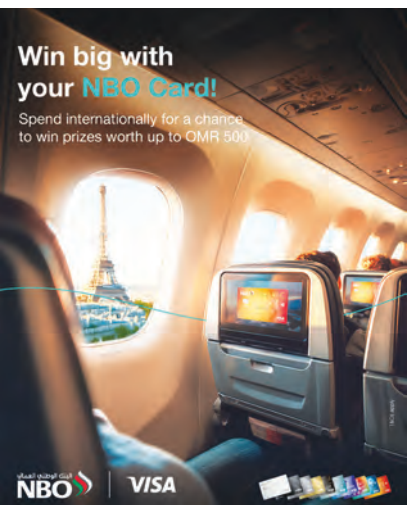
Some of the key topics include power market updates, sustainable energies and storage, distribution systems, energy conservation and efficiency, asset management, optimisation and digitalisation.

The conference will also spotlight regulatory and policy changes in Oman’s power sector, trends in Oman’s Energy Mix and diversification strategies, regional power market developments and cross-border trade and the Economic Impact of Oman’s energy transition.

Sharing details about the event, Dr Ahmed al Shaqsi, General Manager of Strategy and Sustainability at Nama Electricity, said: “This conference is held under the theme: Mechanisms for Accelerating Transformation in the Energy and Electricity Sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

NBO launches summer rewards campaign for international card spending

MUSCAT: The National Bank of Oman (NBO) has announced launching an exclusive summer campaign targeting Debit, Credit, or Badeel Travel Prepaid Cardholders on international transactions. Running until September 14, 2025, the campaign enables customers to maximise spending while earning rewards with every swipe. Applicable to all international point-of-sale and e-commerce purchases, it rewards top monthly spenders with NBO Rewards points. Each month, 30 high-spending



customers will receive RO 50 worth of NBO Reward Points, with 18 Debit Cardholders, 10 Credit Cardholders, and 2 Badeel Prepaid Travel Cardholders. Upon the campaign’s closure, the top 10 overall spenders will receive a grand prize of RO 100 in the form of NBO Reward Points each. In addition, 3 highest spenders will receive a travel voucher worth RO 500 to a destination of their choice. The campaign is open to all retail National Bank of Oman cardholders, including staff.

Own a Toyota Hilux and get a chance to win

THE powerful and exhilarating Toyota Hilux is now available with free service from 3 years / 30,000 kms up to 10 years / 100,000 kms (whichever is earlier), 1 year insurance and scratch & win prizes.

In addition, they gain entry into a raffle draw to win 1 of 16 iPhone 16 Pro Max and a chance to win one of five international holiday packages to Istanbul for two adults (4 nights, 5 days) in the grand raffle draw. (Terms & Conditions apply. Benefits vary by model, variant, model year and manufacturing year.

Customers are encouraged to visit any Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom for full details.) The campaign that began on June 1 will last until July 31, 2025.

For those who live for the thrill of the journey, the Hilux Adventure is built to deliver. A mighty 4.0-liter V6 engine generates 235 HP and 38.3 kg-m of torque, delivering powerful, pulse-raising performance. With an Auto Disconnect Differential



For those who live for the thrill of the journey, the Hilux is built to deliver.

that ensures seamless traction, the Hilux Adventure turns every drive into an exhilarating experience. This bold, high-performance machine is engineered by Toyota to stir your spirit and command the road. Prefer a different pace? The Hilux 4X4 offers a dependable 2.7-liter petrol engine with 164 HP, available with both a 5-speed manual and a 6-speed automatic

transmission that combines power with versatility to match your driving style. Tough meets stylish in the Hilux. Its assertive exterior features a sculpted SUV-like front bumper, sleek fog lamps, sporty alloy wheels and eye-catching side stripes, all contributing to its bold and unmistakable presence. Whether powering through the workweek or embarking on weekend getaways, the Hilux is a

perfect companion. It effortlessly shifts between being a rugged workhorse and a refined family vehicle, thanks to its spacious cabin, smart technology and robust engineering. Inside, the Hilux reflects Toyota’s “Tough and Emotional” design language. The cabin draws SUV-style inspiration with refined detailing and premium finishes. Comfort is thoughtfully enhanced with features such as an automatic air conditioning system with rear vents, an 8-inch touchscreen navigation system and a multi-information display (MID) that keeps essential driving data at the fingertips. Toyota’s unwavering commitment to safety is evident in the Hilux. A suite of advanced safety technologies ensures peace of mind on every journey, including Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Brake-force Distribution (EBD), Brake Assist (BA), Vehicle Stability Control (VSC), Hill-start Assist Control (HAC), Trailer Sway Control and SRS airbags for both driver and front passenger.

National Finance introduces device e-financing via Thawani Store

MUSCAT: Driven by its commitment to delivering seamless and customer-centric financing solutions, National Finance, the Sultanate of Oman’s leading finance company, has recently launched a new e-financing service for mobile phones and electronic devices via the Thawani Store, a newly introduced digital marketplace integrated within the Thawani mobile application.

This strategic initiative is the result of a collaboration with digital payments platform Thawani. The launch marks a key milestone in National Finance’s ongoing



mission to offer simple, affordable, and accessible financing solutions that empower customers to enhance their lifestyles with confidence and

financial ease. In commemoration of the launch, a special promotional offer was introduced, featuring discounts of up to 15% on mobile phones, available from June 22 to 28, giving customers an added incentive to explore the new financing experience. Through this collaboration, National Finance will provide flexible monthly installment plans via e-financing for a wide range of smart phones and electronic devices available on the Thawani Store, making cutting-edge technology more accessible and affordable for a

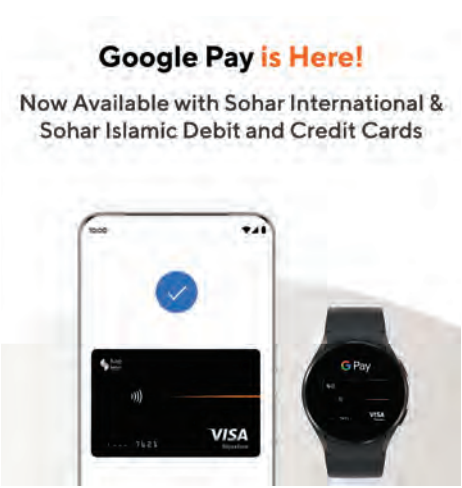
wider audience. Customers can take advantage of financing tenures of up to 24 months, making monthly payments more affordable and manageable. Adding to the convenience, devices purchased through the Thawani store are delivered directly to customers’ doorsteps, enhancing ease and enriching the overall digital shopping experience. In its initial phase, the Thawani Store will feature a curated range of mobile devices, with National Finance’s financing options seamlessly embedded within the app’s checkout process.

Sohar International & Sohar Islamic launch Google Pay

MUSCAT: Reinforcing its position as a leading digital bank in Oman, Sohar International and its Islamic banking window – Sohar Islamic, have announced the launch of Google Pay, introducing yet another secure and contactless payment solution to their growing suite of digital offerings.

The service is now available to all Sohar International and Sohar Islamic customers, enabling fast, seamless, and secure transactions through Android smartphones and Wear OS devices—across point-of-sale terminals, online platforms, and supported mobile applications worldwide.

The introduction of Google Pay marks a significant step forward in



the bank’s digital transformation journey, reflecting its ongoing commitment to adopting globally trusted technologies that deliver

enhanced value to customers. This launch is not just an addition to Sohar International and Sohar Islamic’s payment ecosystem—it is a testament to the bank’s strategic focus on innovation, security, and customer-centric banking experiences. As Sohar International continues to evolve its digital capabilities, the bank remains steadfast in offering intuitive, future-ready solutions that meet the growing expectations of today’s tech-savvy customers. Google Pay allows customers to simply and securely link their Sohar International or Sohar Islamic debit, credit, or prepaid cards via the Google Wallet app. Once added and verified,

customers can complete transactions by holding their Android device near a compatible payment terminal or making purchases online and within apps—eliminating the need to repeatedly enter card details. Engineered with advanced security architecture, Google Pay ensures that sensitive card information is never shared with merchants. Instead, it utilizes a virtual account number that is device-specific and supported by a dynamic security code for each transaction. This robust security framework offers an additional layer of protection, aligning with the bank’s uncompromising commitment to

safeguarding customer data and financial integrity. Available in over 60 countries, Google Pay provides a fast, simple, and secure payment experience—underscoring Sohar International’s vision to integrate global best practices into its service delivery. The bank encourages customers to leverage this new payment solution for greater convenience and efficiency in everyday financial transactions. The integration of Google Pay reflects Sohar International and Sohar Islamic’s proactive approach to building a more inclusive, agile, and digitally empowered banking environment for its diverse customer base.

BUSINESS

ENHANCINGSTRENGTH



Sulaiman al Harthi, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Arab Bank, unveiling plans for a major capital increase on Tuesday.

OAB unveils capital boost to power SME growth and digital innovation

FAISAL AL AJMI
MUSCAT, JUNE 24

OMAN Arab Bank (OAB) plans to increase its authorised capital to RO 500 million, up from RO 200 million presently, and increase its paid-in capital by RO 50 million by way of a shareholder-underwritten rights issue, subject to regulatory approvals.

The capital boost is designed to increase the Bank's capital adequacy, enable enhanced lending to priority economic sectors, and spur digital innovation, with enhanced financial strength and long-term growth flexibility.

Sulaiman al Harthi, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Arab Bank, stated, "This move is expected to significantly strengthen the bank's capacity to contribute to national economic growth. It will enhance the bank's ability to finance large, medium, and small-scale projects, while also improving its overall financial standing and credit rating.

These improvements will better position the bank to attract funding from international lending institutions and potentially support future capital increases," he remarked.

This strategic move will assist in strengthening the Bank's level of capital adequacy and set the stage for increased retail and corporate borrowing. It will also allow the Bank to have more room to invest in digital banking technology, further advancing its vision of growth through innovation.

The capital boost will be particularly heartening for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which form the backbone of Oman's private sector. With its enhanced lending capability, Oman Arab Bank will be better placed to provide expert finance solutions, larger credit facilities, and targeted support to SMEs—sectors that traditionally face funding constraints.

The Bank's stronger position will also enable the launch of more nimble financing offerings and digital banking services that can streamline operations and improve financial inclusion for growing businesses. With its empowerment of SMEs, the Bank not only speeds up entrepreneurship and job creation but also makes a direct contribution to Oman's broader economic diversification goals under Oman Vision 2040.

The growth of paid-in capital will be brought about by way of a rights issue, whereby existing shareholders, being the record date to be determined, have a choice of subscribing on a pro-rata basis. The authorized capital increase is designed to provide longer-term flexibility so that the Bank can seize future equity issuance opportunities in response to evolving market conditions.

Such endeavours further enhance Oman Arab Bank's vision-driven approach for supporting Oman's economic aspirations with financial caution and preparedness to expand. Oman Arab Bank's planned capital increase is a bold step based on financial solidity, innovation, and national development.

ALLEVIATING WORRIES

Oil extends losses on proposed ceasefire



Oil prices extended losses to hit a two-week low on Tuesday after Israel agreed to US President Donald Trump's proposal for a ceasefire with Iran, alleviating worries over supply disruptions in the Middle East.

Brent crude futures were down \$2.48, or 3.5 per cent, at \$67.84 a barrel by 0927 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate crude fell \$2.37, also 3.5 per cent, to \$65.94. — Reuters

Block 50 seen to grow with updated reserves

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, JUNE 24

MASIRAH Oil Ltd, with its primary owner Rex International Holding Ltd (87.5%), is set to unlock further value from its Yumna Field in Block 50 Offshore Oman, following a comprehensive independent reserves estimation report by Exceed Torridon Ltd (XCD).

The summary report, issued on June 23, 2025, highlights updated reserves figures as of December 31, 2024, and outlines an ambitious development strategy that includes several new wells aimed at enhancing recovery and extending the field's life.

The Yumna Field, the first discovery in Oman's Block 50, has been a significant asset for Masirah Oil since its initial discovery in 2013 and the spudding of the first development well, Yumna-1, in December 2019.

The field has shown robust performance, with production transferred to a Mobile Offshore Production Unit (MOPU) in April 2020, and subsequent wells, Yumna-2, Yumna-3, Yumna-4, and Yumna-5, contributing to its output.

According to the XCD report, which was prepared in line with the Petroleum Resource Management System (PRMS) standards, the Yumna Field



The Yumna Field, the first discovery in Oman's Block 50, has been a significant asset for Masirah Oil since its initial discovery in 2013.

had produced approximately 9 million stock tank barrels (MMstb) by December 31, 2024. The updated assessment reveals significant changes in the remaining reserves, attributed to continued production, improved terms, and further optimization of the depletion plan.

For the "Base 2P" category, the current report estimates gross attributable reserves to the license at 6.0 MMstb, a notable increase from the previous report's 3.7 MMstb. This 27% change underscores the positive impact of ongoing field optimization.

Similarly, the "High 3P" category shows an increase to 7.0 MMstb from 4.1 MMstb, representing a 34% change. The "Low 1P" reserves also saw a slight increase to 0.5 MMstb

from 0.4 MMstb. These figures are based on new assumptions for economic cut-off, with the economic limit for 1P, 2P, and 3P reserves set at December 2025, November 2030, and June 2031, respectively.

A key factor in the updated reserves is the continuous refinement of the reservoir model. XCD provided Masirah Oil with an updated static and dynamic reservoir model in late 2023, which informed the drilling of the Yumna-5 well.

The field exceeded initial production forecasts, prompting a further model update in October 2024 to better reflect the production trends. The report notes that this updated forecast has been accurate. The forward plan for the Yumna Field is focused on continued

production optimization from the existing wells and the phased introduction of new development wells.

Yumna-6 is slated to begin in the second half of 2025 as a sidetrack from the existing Yumna-2 well, targeting reserves in the northwest.

Following this, a new well, Yumna-7, will be a step-out to the northeast, and Yumna-8, featuring a horizontal completion, will target reserves in the far northern part of the field, north of Yumna-2 and Yumna-6. These three wells (Yumna-6, Yumna-7, and Yumna-8) are included in the 2P development plan.

Beyond these, the 3P scenario includes the drilling of Yumna-9, Yumna-10, and Yumna-11, further expanding the field's drainage.

The technical review within the report indicates a positive development of the estimated in-place resource. Well data, including from the recently drilled Yumna-5, has identified additional reserves and reduced uncertainty in the volume estimations between 2020 and 2024.

The field continues to experience a strong water drive from a very large aquifer, and based on production data, a recovery factor of approximately 45% is considered appropriate.

The reservoir properties observed in Yumna-5 align with predictions, with effective sweep and residual oil saturations in the lowermost part of the reservoir.

2nd Taqah Agricultural Forum to promote food security and rural development

QASIM AL MAASHANI
TAQAH, JUNE 24

THE Wilayat of Taqah in Dhofar Governorate hosted the second edition of the Agricultural Forum on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, bringing together farmers, agricultural experts, government officials, and private sector partners to promote sustainable agriculture and support national food security efforts.

The two-day forum, organised by the Office of the Wali of Taqah in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, aims to strengthen local farming practices, improve productivity, and expand rural economic opportunities.

In his opening remarks, the Wali of Taqah affirmed that hosting the forum reflects the region's commitment to advancing sustainable agriculture as a cornerstone of food security and economic resilience.

The Office of the Wali described the event as a platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and practical solutions to agricultural challenges,



Farmers displayed a wide variety of high-quality products. Picture: Ali Said al Awaid

particularly in light of climate change and economic transitions.

The Wali's Office also praised the collaborative efforts of farmers, government institutions, and private stakeholders, calling for sustained coordination and strategic planning to develop productive projects that enhance rural livelihoods and ensure national food security.

Experts participating in the forum highlighted Dhofar's unique

environmental advantage—its annual monsoon season, known locally as Khareef. The seasonal rains, which transform the Dhofar landscape from June to September, offer a valuable opportunity to revive traditional farming cycles and expand crop production.

"Historically, families in the Dhofar highlands have relied on Khareef as the beginning of their agricultural year," said one agricultural expert. "It provided rain-fed soil conditions ideal for growing crops and supporting livestock. Revitalising this seasonal pattern using modern techniques could enhance food security in a climate-resilient way."

One local farmer from the rural highlands of Dhofar spoke about the untapped potential of mountain agriculture.

"The highlands are fertile and suitable for cultivation, but they require effort and sustained support," he said.

"Agricultural knowledge plays a major role in improving yields. We hope the government will allocate more land in mountainous areas to help farmers expand cultivation and increase productivity."

MOVING AWAY

Central banks eye gold, euro and yuan



The custodians of trillions of dollars of global central bank reserves are eyeing a move away from the greenback into gold, the euro and China's yuan as the splintering of world trade and geopolitical upheaval spark a rethink of financial flows.

According to a report by OMFIF, one in three central banks managing a combined \$5 trillion plan to increase exposure to gold. — Reuters

ALTERNATIVE SERVICE

Google compelled to change search rankings



Britain's competition regulator said it may force Google to rank businesses more fairly in search results and offer alternative services to consumers, marking the first use of expanded powers to oversee the world's biggest tech companies.

The Competition and Markets Authority is proposing to designate Alphabet-owned Google with "strategic market status", it said. — Reuters

OPINION

Oman leading hydrogen liquefaction for a decarbonised future



DR MUHAMMAD
ABDUL QYYUM
m.qyyum@squ.edu.om
maqyyum@gmail.com

The writer is
Assistant Professor
in the Department
of Petroleum and
Chemical Engineering
at Sultan Qaboos
University.

AS global energy systems shift toward decarbonisation, hydrogen has emerged as a central pillar of clean energy strategies.

While production technologies have advanced significantly, the success of large-scale hydrogen economies now depends on the less discussed but critical challenge of liquefaction for long-distance transport.

Although technically complex and energy-intensive, liquefaction enables low-carbon value chains and international hydrogen trade.

Oman, with its geographic advantage, policy momentum, and industrial ambition, is uniquely positioned to lead in this midstream segment. Its strategy offers a model for how emerging economies can contribute meaningfully to global clean energy trade and net-zero goals.

Much attention has focused on Oman's strategic ports and its role in the emerging Oman-Europe hydrogen corridor. However, hydrogen liquefaction should not be viewed solely as an export enabler.

It is the foundation of a broader national strategy that can decarbonise domestic industries, generate high-value employment, and support long-term economic diversification in line with Vision 2040 and climate commitments.

By establishing liquefaction hubs in Duqm and Suhar, Oman can support both exports

and local industries that require low-carbon hydrogen.

These include green steel production, ammonia and fertiliser manufacturing, and future mobility sectors such as hydrogen-powered heavy transport. Each of these offers major emissions reduction potential and benefits from co-located hydrogen supply and shared infrastructure.

This effort creates an opportunity to build a highly skilled Omani workforce. Hydrogen liquefaction demands expertise in cryogenics, thermodynamics, materials engineering, and automation. Dedicated national training and certification programs can prepare engineers, operators, and technicians for emerging clean energy sectors.

Embedding Omanisation targets within hydrogen infrastructure projects ensures that economic and social value is retained locally.

These initiatives can generate quality jobs across core engineering disciplines such as mechanical, chemical, electrical, and process engineering.

In parallel, they open multidisciplinary career paths in automation, data analytics, environmental compliance, and industrial safety.

Public-private partnerships between universities, government, and industry will be essential to develop this talent pipeline, particularly in areas such as cryogenic maintenance, instrumentation, and safety

Oman, with its geographic advantage, policy momentum and industrial ambition, is uniquely positioned to lead in this midstream segment. Its strategy offers a model for how emerging economies can contribute meaningfully to global clean energy trade and Net-Zero goals.

systems.

Oman's ability to co-develop hydrogen and carbon infrastructure presents a strategic advantage. Hydrogen from renewables and natural gas with carbon capture can be paired with CO₂ pipelines and geological storage, forming integrated hydrogen-carbon clusters.

This expands market opportunities and supports compliance with frameworks such as the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

To position Oman as a preferred destination for long-term investment and technology, it is essential to adopt a predictable and investor-oriented risk mitigation approach.

This includes phased development of liquefaction capacity, starting with pilot projects and scaling up.

Streamlined permitting, policy clarity, and in-country value incentives will enhance investor confidence and position hydrogen liquefaction as a bankable, climate-aligned asset class.

While global attention often centers on export corridors, Oman has the opportunity to lead by developing infrastructure that strengthens domestic industries and cultivates national talent.

Hydrogen liquefaction is not only a technical process; it is a strategic enabler of a resilient, knowledge-based economy capable of sustaining long-term growth in the global decarbonisation era.

MARKETS' GULF COMPOSURE FITS A WIDER PATTERN

GEORGE HAY

INVESTORS don't seem that bothered about the United States' dramatic intervention in Israel's war with Iran. Despite President Donald Trump's decision to bomb three of the Islamic Republic's nuclear facilities over the weekend, asset prices hardly budged.

History does suggest geopolitical flashpoints aren't always long-term headaches for investors – but the data doesn't conclusively prove they've made the right call.

On Monday morning, the STOXX 600 declined 0.1%, meaning the European equity benchmark is only down around 2.5% since Israeli attacks on June 13. German and Saudi 10-year bond yields rose marginally.

The US S&P 500 was also due to drop only 0.1% on opening, according to futures prices collected by LSEG. And Brent oil contracts for August delivery rose just 0.6% to trade at \$77 a barrel, admittedly above the \$66 level seen earlier this month, but hardly pricing in major disruptions.

This all seems highly premature. While Trump called on Sunday for peace following what could reasonably be seen as an act of war, he continues to post on social media about the possibility of Iranian regime change.

Iran's parliament has already approved actions to block the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20% of the world's daily oil supply passes. As such, markets should be braced for further escalation, not less. One explanation might be that investors know that geopolitical storms are often just squalls.

A JPMorgan study of 36 different political and martial flashpoints between Germany's invasion of France in 1940 and Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 found that the S&P 500 returned 0.3% in the three months afterwards, against 1.3% over the same period in calmer times.

But over six months the returns were the same. Oil-related shocks are, admittedly, different. The 1990 Gulf War saw the S&P 500 drop 20% in the two months after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August, although it recovered these losses by February 1991. But after the five-month Arab oil embargo in 1973, the S&P was still lower five years later.

Investors' sangfroid may reflect confidence that Trump's attacks are a run-of-the-mill geopolitical squall. More likely, they see the latest crisis as a potential oil shock, but one that the US can easily contain. There's some logic in that: even if Iran tries to block Hormuz, a move its Supreme National Security Council still needs to approve, the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain might stop it.

Meanwhile, restricting oil exports would hurt Tehran too. Yet the geopolitical received wisdom could easily be wrong, especially if a cornered Iranian regime starts to fear that Trump and Israel will push to replace it, and resorts to drastic measures. — Reuters

Sustainable logistics and the rise of youthpreneurs

AS Oman advances towards its Vision 2040 goals, sustainability is no longer a peripheral concern; it is central to the nation's economic transformation.

Among the sectors leading this transition is logistics, historically one of Oman's strongest economic pillars.

What's especially promising is how this shift is being led, not by legacy institutions alone, but by a dynamic and motivated group of youth entrepreneurs, Omani “youthpreneurs” who are blending sustainability with logistics innovation.

Oman's geographic position as a trade gateway to the Gulf, Africa and Asia provides a natural advantage in the logistics sector. But what sets the current momentum apart is the integration of environmentally responsible practices into the logistics ecosystem.

Green logistics, minimising environmental impact through sustainable warehousing, smart transportation and circular supply chain models, is no longer aspirational. It's becoming operational.

Government agencies like Riyada, the Public Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development, and the National Youth Commission (NYC) are playing a pivotal role in accelerating this shift. Their support isn't limited to financial assistance.

Through strategic collaborations, such as the MoU between NYC and the Oman Logistics Centre (OLC), Oman is enabling youth to lead in R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship in sustainable logistics.

This partnership focuses on building an ecosystem where youth can co-create smart solutions for real-world challenges, such as reducing emissions in last-mile delivery, digitising warehouse operations and using AI for supply chain optimisation.

One tangible example of this commitment is the Asyad Group's Innovation Lab, which recently launched the Asyad Accelerator in collaboration with Omantel.

The programme targets start-



Youth-led logistics start-ups are gaining recognition, and there's a noticeable shift in employment trends as more Omani graduates opt to work or start businesses in logistics and supply chain management.



DR UMAIR
WAQAS

The writer is Assistant Professor – Supply Chain Management and Logistics at the College of Commerce and Business Administration, Dhofar University

ups working on digital and green logistics solutions.

Omani youth-led ventures are using this platform to develop tech-based solutions for route optimisation, reducing empty truck runs and leveraging IoT devices for temperature-controlled freight, critical for Oman's growing food and pharmaceutical sectors.

Moreover, the Badir Youth Entrepreneurship Programme, jointly supported by Riyada and NYC, has introduced business development modules that specifically highlight sustainable business practices in logistics.

Young entrepreneurs are not only learning about freight handling and supply chain planning, but also exploring how to apply ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) principles in their business models.

The role of higher education institutions in nurturing sustainable logistics leadership cannot be overstated. Universities and colleges across Oman are increasingly integrating sustainability, digitalisation and logistics strategy into their curricula.

These institutions are equipping students with the tools to understand not only the operational aspects of logistics, but also its environmental implications. By embedding modules

on green supply chain practices, smart transportation systems and circular economy principles, these programmes prepare graduates to think holistically and act responsibly.

Collaboration between academia and industry further amplifies these efforts. Many universities have signed agreements with logistics service providers to offer hands-on training, internships and joint research.

Through these partnerships, students gain practical exposure to warehouse automation, packaging optimisation and carbon footprint reduction, ensuring that graduates are ready to contribute to a sustainable logistics ecosystem from day one.

Oman's Logistics Sector Skills Unit (LSSU) also acts as a bridge between academia, vocational training centres and the logistics industry. By identifying skill gaps and forecasting labour market needs, the LSSU helps educational institutions tailor their programmes to meet emerging demands, particularly in sustainable logistics technologies.

The results of these efforts are starting to show. Youth-led logistics start-ups are gaining recognition, and there's a noticeable shift in employment trends as more Omani graduates opt to work or start businesses in logistics and supply chain management.

Their focus is not just on profitability but also on resilience, environmental responsibility and alignment with global standards.

In conclusion, the rise of Omani youthpreneurs in the logistics space is not only a testament to their ambition and creativity, but also a reflection of Oman's broader policy vision.

By investing in youth, embedding sustainability into education and fostering public-private collaboration, Oman is laying the groundwork for a future where logistics is not just fast and efficient but also green and inclusive.

The momentum is real, and with continued support, Omani youth are poised to redefine what sustainable logistics looks like, not just in Oman but across the GCC.

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INDIAN Male, 4 years of experience in web development in a product based company. Looking for a suitable position as software developer. Contact: + 968-99226403 [suhail23599@gmail.com](#)

INDIAN Male / CPA, CMA, CA Finalist & BCOM/ 10+ years of Experience/ Currently Working as Finance Manager, Looking for Senior Management Roles in Finance. Contact: 78611653. Email: [jobcpacma@gmail.com](#)

INDIAN male 14 years experience light/ heavy driver. Looking for suitable opening currently in Oman. Contact: 77050986/ 91280205, email: [kokkadmou@gmail.com](#)

INDIAN male MBA, 20 years experience in Oman & GCC in Project sales/ Dealer market in All construction materials including Cables & Accessories having D/L looking for the post of Sales Manager/Assistant Manager. Contact: 00968 78099493

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PUBLIC NOTICE OF TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP
Pursuant to Articles 44, 52 & 53 of the Oman Commercial Law (Royal Decree 55/1990) and in line with Royal Decree 18/2019 (Commercial Companies Law), the former owner:
Hilal bin Hamad bin Salim Al-Touqi (Civil No. 14936509)
hereby gives formal notice that he has sold and transferred all shares, assets and liabilities of
GOLDEN JEED TRAD SPC – Commercial Registration No. 1001971 – to the new sole proprietor:
Mr. Sakhr Mohammed Mohammed Ahsan (Civil No. 139354591).
With effect from the date of this publication, Mr. Ahsan assumes exclusive responsibility for the management of the company and for all existing and future obligations of the business. The former owner is fully discharged from any liability whatsoever.
All government entities, creditors, suppliers and clients are requested to direct all correspondence, claims and payments to:
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Tel.: (+968) 98079633
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This notice constitutes the final legal notification, and any statutory objection periods shall run from the date of its publication.

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Contact: 78002582. Email: [engineer4planning@gmail.com](#)

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ART/LIFE



ENTERTAINMENT

Oasis: from clash to cash



FIFTEEN YEARS after their explosive split, British music legends Liam and Noel Gallagher are reuniting for an Oasis tour that promises not only Britpop nostalgia but also staggering revenues.

While Liam has insisted that money is “way down the list” of reasons for the feuding brothers’ reunion, British press reports have suggested that each sibling could pocket around £50 million (\$67 million).

Matt Grimes, a music industry expert at Birmingham City University, offered a slightly more conservative estimate of around £40 million per Gallagher for the 17 UK dates alone.

Oasis, whose hits include “Wonderwall” and “Don’t Look Back in Anger”, kick off the reunion tour on July 4 in Cardiff before playing several dates in their home city of Manchester the following week.

Almost 1.4 million tickets have been sold for the UK shows, generating an estimated £240 million, according to Barclays bank.

And that’s just the beginning.

Merchandise sales, from T-shirts and puzzles to baby clothes and tableware, plus six pop-up shops across the UK and Ireland could push total revenue to around £400 million, Grimes said.

The 24 concerts outside the UK, including in Buenos Aires, Chicago, Sydney, Tokyo and Toronto, will drive revenues even higher.

- COMEBACK TOUR -

Still, the money from the return of Oasis is dwarfed by Taylor Swift’s record-breaking Eras Tour, which grossed \$2.2 billion from ticket sales alone across 149 shows worldwide.

It was “a much bigger logistical event or sets of events than Oasis are proposing”, Grimes said. There was a chaotic scramble for prized Oasis tickets when they went on sale in August last year. But fans were left outraged by exorbitant ticket costs that saw sudden price hikes — known as dynamic pricing — based on overwhelming demand, in some cases from £150 to £350.

Ticketmaster, one of the official sales websites, said the pricing decision was made by the “tour organiser”.

Oasis pointed the finger at their promoter. The Gallagher brothers’ promotional plan, however, was minimal: two posts on social media — one to tease, the other to confirm.

“The fact that they announced a reunion after many, many years of ‘will they, won’t they’ is enough to make the press interested,” Chris Anderton, professor of cultural economics at the University of Southampton, said. — AFP

QUICK FEATURES



LIFESTYLE

A general view of a limited edition of a Labubu figure called Labubu Pilot in Beijing, ahead of an auction by the Yongle Auction house. — AFP



FASHION

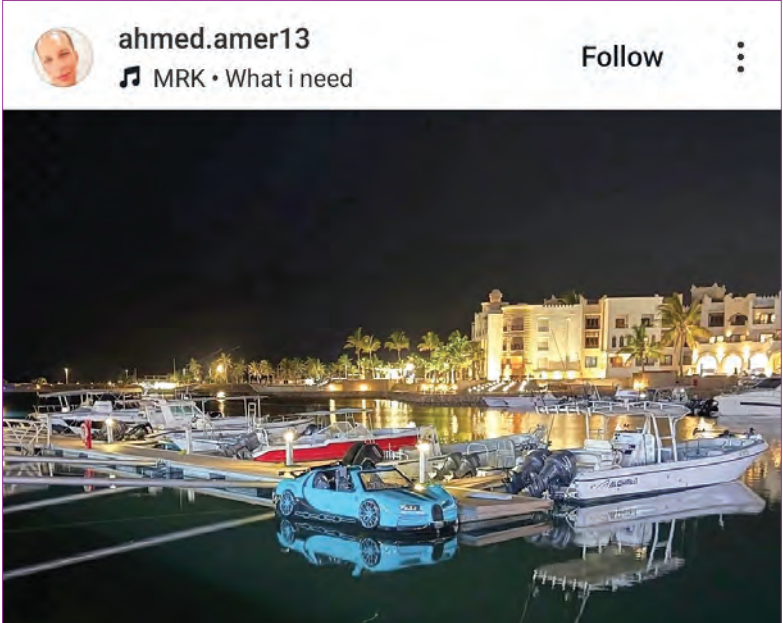
A model walks the runway during the Giorgio Armani collection show at Milan’s Fashion Week Menswear Spring/Summer 2026 in Milan. — AFP



FILM

French singer Bilal Hassani (R) reacts to the movie mascot Dolores as he poses on the red carpet for the premiere of the film “Jurassic World Rebirth” at the Le Grand Rex in Paris. — AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



Views at Night



Beauty of Remote Places

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Italian ‘sphere within sphere’ sculptor Arnaldo Pomodoro dies at 98



ITALIAN sculptor Arnaldo Pomodoro has died at his home in Milan on the eve of his 99th birthday, his foundation and the Italian Culture Ministry reported on Monday. Pomodoro was known for his abstract “sphere within sphere” sculptures, which can be seen at UN headquarters in New York and the Vatican Museums, among other prominent locations. While many are to be found in the United States and Italy, Dublin, Rotterdam, Warsaw, Tel Aviv, Jeddah, Tehran, and various Japanese cities, including Hiroshima, also host the sculptures. Pomodoro first came to international attention with a 3.5-metre work for the

Montreal Expo in 1967. “His open and wounded ‘spheres’ still tell us today of the fragility and complexity of humanity and the world,” the Italian Culture Ministry said. Pomodoro was born in Morciano di Romagna in 1926, a small town in Emilia-Romagna in northern Italy. He started out aiming to become an architect or set builder — interests revealed in his later work. He combined technical precision with geometric form, frequently using gold and bronze as his materials. Following studies in art, Pomodoro and his brother Giò moved to Milan, where he gained international renown. — dpa



Malaysia’s Dayaks mark rice harvest end with colourful parade



DRESSED in colourful costumes, some sporting feathered headgear and traditional swords, several thousand of Malaysia’s ethnic Dayak people paraded in the streets of Sarawak state on Borneo island on Saturday to celebrate the ending of the rice harvest season. The Gawai Dayak 2025 Parade in state capital Kuching is the only annual gathering by representatives of around 11 of Sarawak’s main Dayak groups — which participants said helps to keep alive a unique part of the Southeast Asian nation’s culture. Marchers gathered from early Saturday under the blistering tropical sun, many of them travelling long distances by bus to walk in the parade along the banks of the Sarawak River to join a festivities that connect communities. “This gathering is something that

is very important to me,” said Joel Zacchaeus Anak Ebi, sporting the traditional Iban headgear worn by one of Borneo’s best-known tribes. People “must know and realise that Sarawak has traditions and cultures that must be preserved,” he said ahead of the march, which was also attended by Sarawak Premier Abang Johari Tun Openg. “A day like this brings our people together, especially the younger people, who can easily lose touch with their roots when they move away from Sarawak,” said Dayak village elder Ngindang Rambo, 61. Watching the parade, Masha Timosha, 34, a tour guide from Russia, said she was amazed by the costumes and atmosphere. “This is just very impressive. I even have my own Sarawakian costume but I didn’t put it on,” she said. Malaysia’s Dayak people are mainly riverine and hill-dwelling, made up of dozens of ethnic groups,

each with their own distinct dialect, customs, laws and practices. Dayak communities however have become increasingly under threat from encroaching palm oil forestry and industrial logging, human rights groups and Indigenous groups have said. Many Indigenous communities in Sarawak face challenges in accessing basic services, Human Rights Watch said in a statement last month, including access to running water, electricity and land titles. Local groups and international observers have also called on the government to “urgently legislate Indigenous customs and traditions through which Indigenous people have acquired rights to their lands, territories and resources,” the Sarawak Dayak Iban Association (Sadia) said last year. Rainforest-clad Borneo is the world’s third-largest island and is shared between Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei. — AFP

FEATURES



JABAL SAMHAN NATURE RESERVE
— Drenched in dramatic views

The highest mountain in Dhofar, Jabal Samhan (left), offers vistas that are hard to beat, with layered limestone cliffs and deep canyons. Covering an area of 4,500 square kilometres, it’s a crucial habitat for some of the last remaining Arabian leopards. Though elusive, these big cats symbolise the success of local conservation efforts. Visitors can also see Nubian ibex, Arabian gazelles and the Arabian wolf. The viewpoint at Jabal Samhan provides panoramic views over the coastal plain — perfect for photography. Reaching the reserve is easiest from Salalah, but remember, access requires prior permission. It’s best to visit during the khareef (monsoon), when the landscape transforms into a lush haven. The reserve’s wild beauty and chance to glimpse rare creatures make it truly special.



AL WUSTA WILDLIFE RESERVE
— Witness the revival of the Arabian oryx

Once declared a Unesco World Heritage Site, Al Wusta (previously the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary) is a shining example of wildlife comeback. It’s now home to a thriving herd of around 750 Arabian oryx, a species once considered extinct in the wild. The reserve spans over 2,800 square kilometres of plains, rugged slopes and sand dunes. You can also see species like the Nubian ibex, striped hyena and Arabian wolf here. To explore the reserve, visitors need a 4WD and a permit from Muscat’s Office for Conservation of the Environment. Guided tours are recommended to spot animals and learn about conservation efforts. What makes this place so remarkable is the successful reintroduction of the oryx and the ongoing commitment to restoring Oman’s natural heritage.



AL SALEEL NATIONAL PARK
— Home to the Arabian gazelle

This 220-square-kilometre reserve is renowned for its efforts to protect the Arabian gazelle, a vulnerable species that makes up a significant part of the park’s population. You’ll find acacia and gum trees covering the plains, while Egyptian eagles and vultures soar overhead. The park is a birdwatcher’s paradise, with over 30 species of birds and several reptiles, including the Egyptian ultramarine. Reaching Al Saleel is

straightforward; it’s less than an hour from Sur, making it an ideal stop for those travelling along the coast or heading into the desert. Activities include safaris — where you can spot wildlife in their natural habitat — and birdwatching. What makes this park truly special is its dedication to conserving indigenous species, especially the Arabian gazelle. Before visiting, check if you need a permit, as regulations can change.



RAS AL HADD
— Turtle-watching paradise

One of Oman’s most famous natural attractions, Ras Al Hadd is where visitors flock to witness the nesting of sea turtles. Between May and September, green, loggerhead and hawksbill turtles come ashore to lay their eggs on the beaches of Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve. Guided tours in the evening and early morning let guests watch these incredible animals in their natural nesting behaviour. The hatchlings emerge after about 55 days and make an incredible dash to the sea. To ensure safety, tours must be booked in advance, and flash photography isn’t permitted to protect the turtles. The beach’s remote beauty, combined with the chance to see one of nature’s most remarkable reproductive rituals, makes Ras Al Jinz a must-visit for eco-travellers.



DHOFAR LAGOONS (KHORS)
— Rich in birdlife and history

In the monsoon season, Dhofar Governorate blossoms with greenery, and its lagoons burst into life. The khors — or lagoons — along the coastline host countless birds, from flamingoes to herons, making it a haven for birdwatchers. Khor Rori, part of a Unesco World Heritage Site, is also home to archaeological ruins from the ancient frankincense trade, including the fortified city of Sumhuram. These wetlands are not only teeming with wildlife but also rich in history, offering a glimpse into Oman’s ancient past. Visiting during the khareef from June to September ensures lush scenery and vibrant birdlife. Combine your trip with a visit to the Museum of the Frankincense Land to deepen your understanding of the governorate’s fascinating heritage.

Oman’s parks and landscapes are a testament to its commitment to preserving nature and culture. Each offers a unique experience — whether it’s spotting rare wildlife, enjoying breathtaking vistas, or exploring ancient trade routes. To get the most out of your visit, plan your trip during the cooler months from October to April when the weather is most pleasant and wildlife sightings are at their peak. Remember to respect local guidelines, especially around sensitive habitats like turtle nesting beaches or wildlife reserves. Whether you’re seeking adventure, relaxation, or a bit of both, Oman’s natural parks promise an unforgettable journey into some of the most stunning landscapes in the Middle East.

FIVE NATURAL
PARKS IN OMAN
YOU HAVE TO VISIT
FOR STUNNING
VIEWS AND
WILDLIFE

BY YERU EBUEN

WAKING UP early and sitting atop a cliff watching the sea turtles lay their eggs is a memory you won’t forget any time soon. Seeing a gazelle or an oryx for the first time is so remarkable that it feels like one of those moments you’ll always cherish. Oman’s natural parks are like pages from an adventure story, full of life and history. They invite you to step outside the city and into a world where pristine landscapes and vibrant wildlife share their stories — stories that make Oman truly unforgettable for every traveller.

From rugged mountains to unspoilt beaches, Oman offers a diverse range of scenery that will leave any visitor in awe. With so much to see and do, here are five of the most incredible parks that highlight Oman’s rich wildlife and stunning vistas. Each one provides a unique experience, whether it’s spotting rare animals, enjoying breathtaking views, or exploring the country’s ancient history. Here’s a closer look at what awaits when you visit these natural marvels.