

Dubai crown prince named UAE defence minister

Dubai ruler Shaikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum on Sunday announced that he appointed the emirate's crown prince, as defence minister of the United Arab Emirates in a cabinet reshuffle. "Shaikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum has joined the government of the UAE as Deputy Prime Minister and has been appointed Minister of Defence," Shaikh Mohammed wrote on X. **DETAILS ON P7**

SUNRISE - 05:29 AM
PRAYER TIMINGS
FAJR - 04:04 AM
DHUHR - 12:18 PM
ASR - 03:38 PM
MAGHRIB - 07:01 PM
ISHA - 08:22 PM



P11

ALCARAZ OVERPOWERS DJOKOVIC TO RETAIN WIMBLEDON TITLE



P13

OMAN TO ALLOW DIRECT NATURAL GAS MONETISATION AND MARKETING: AL AUFI



P18

UNUSUAL RAINFALL BRINGS WINTER FLOWERS TO CHILE'S ATACAMA DESERT



MUSCAT

SAYYID BADR, HAMAS LEADER DISCUSS CEASEFIRE EFFORTS

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, received a phone call from Ismail Haniyeh, Head of the Political Bureau of Hamas, on Saturday evening. The two sides discussed the recent Israeli air strikes targeting civilians in the Al Mawasi area of Khan Younis in southern Gaza, which have resulted in the deaths and injuries of hundreds, including women, children and the elderly. **DETAILS ON P2**

TRANSPORT MINISTRY TO ENHANCE EMPLOYMENT

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology is implementing several initiatives to enhance employment opportunities in two distinct sectors: "the transport and logistics sector" and "the communications and information technology sector". Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, affirmed that the Ministry would announce some jobs intended to be allocated entirely to Omanis from January 2025 to the end of 2027, after liaising with the Ministry of Labour. **DETAILS ON P13**

RAMALLAH

ABBAS PINS MERIT MEDAL ON OMANI OFFICIAL

President Mahmoud Abbas of the State of Palestine on Sunday pinned the Medal of Merit and Distinction on Salim bin Habib al Omairi, Chargé d'Affairs of the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Palestine. This took place when the President of Palestine received the Chargé d'Affaires at the presidential headquarters in Ramallah, to bid him farewell at the end of his tour of duty. **SEE ALSO P2**



DHOFAR TURNS GREEN

SALALAH: Dhofar Governorate has been getting continuous rains since the start of the Khareef season which has led to a drop in temperatures to less than 28 degrees Celsius, in addition to the formation of fog on the mountainous heights. The Sultanate of Oman is currently affected by varying eastern waves, leading to rain and thunderstorms. "This climatic condition increases the amount of rainfall and is a reason for the increase in the rains for this season of the year. One of the results that Dhofar Governorate is currently witnessing due to this climatic condition is an increase in the amount of rains of varying intensity, in contrast to the usual rains at this time of year," Ahmed bin Salim Ghawas, Director of the Meteorology Department at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation in Dhofar Governorate, said. – **ONA**

MoL extends job security allowance by one year

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
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The Ministry of Labour, in collaboration with the Social Protection Fund, has announced a one-year extension of the job security allowance for all beneficiaries who have completed six months of entitlement. However, the allowance will be gradually reduced over this period. According to the ministry, the reductions will be implemented as follows: A 30 per cent

reduction in the total allowance during the first four months, 50 per cent reduction in the second four months, and a 70 per cent reduction in the final four months. Despite these reductions, the allowance will not fall below 115 Omani Riyals, the minimum amount specified in Article (119) of the Social Protection Law. To continue receiving the job security allowance after the extension, beneficiaries must adhere to the ministry's requirements, including

demonstrating seriousness in job searching and accepting suitable job offers as per the ministry's standards. Previously, the ministry emphasised the importance of beneficiaries activating their job search status at least once a month to remain eligible for the allowance, as mandated by Article (88) of the Executive Regulations of the Social Protection Law. The job security system was created to support those who have lost their jobs.

Oman affirms support for Palestinians

NEW YORK: The Sultanate of Oman has affirmed its continuous, steadfast support for the relief of the Palestinian people until such time they obtain their full, inalienable rights, foremost of which is their right to live in dignity and their right to establish their own independent state with Al Quds A'Sharqiyah (East Jerusalem) as its capital.

This was unveiled in a statement delivered by Dr Mohammed bin Awadh al Hassan, the Sultanate of Oman's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN), before an international conference aimed at backing the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

At the conference held at the UN headquarters in New York, Oman explained that the conditions of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip became humanly unacceptable. It urged the international community to engage in prompt action to implement resolutions of international legitimacy and protect the Palestinian people. "In the history of the United Nations, the world has never witnessed the murder of 200 international employees amid



Dr Mohammed bin Awadh al Hassan

inaction by international community in the face of such systematic crimes targeting international relief workers," Al Hassan observed. Meanwhile, The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has strongly condemned the brutal bombardment by the Israeli occupation forces on the Al Mawasi area in the city of Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip. GCC Secretary-General, Jasem bin Mohammed al Budaiwi, stressed that the shelling is evidence of the series of systematic and ongoing Israeli crimes against the brotherly Palestinian people, adding that the Israeli occupation forces, through their crimes against the defenceless Palestinian people, no longer recognise any principles, laws or treaties, whether at the legal, humanitarian or moral level. — **ONA**

Trump survives assassination attempt in a shocking incident

BUTLER, UNITED STATES: Donald Trump was hit in the ear in an assassination attempt by a gunman at a campaign rally, in a chaotic and shocking incident set to supercharge political tensions ahead of the polarising US presidential election. The 78-year-old former president was rushed off stage with blood streaked across his face after the shooting in Butler, Pennsylvania, while the shooter and a bystander were killed and two spectators critically injured. The Republican candidate raised a defiant fist to the crowd as he was bundled away to safety, and said afterwards: "I was shot with a bullet that pierced the upper part of my right ear." President Joe Biden, who is set to face Trump in November's deeply polarised election, said the incident was "sick" and added that there was "no place in America for



Republican candidate Donald Trump is seen with blood on his face surrounded by secret service agents as he is taken off the stage at a campaign event at Butler Farm Show Inc. in Butler, Pennsylvania. – **AFP**

this kind of violence." The FBI has identified the gunman, who was shot dead, as 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks of Bethel Park, Pennsylvania, according to a statement cited by US media early on Sunday. His motive remains unknown. The US Secret Service said

OMAN CONDEMNS SHOOTING AT FORMER US PRESIDENT

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has expressed its condemnation of the shooting incident on Donald Trump, former president of the United States of America, which occurred during his election campaign rally in Pennsylvania. In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on Sunday, Oman affirmed its firm stance in rejecting all forms of violence, regardless of the motives. Oman wished Trump a speedy recovery.

on Sunday. His motive remains unknown. The US Secret Service said

earlier that the shooter "fired multiple shots toward the stage from an elevated position outside the rally" before being "neutralised" by agents. A video published by US outlet TMZ shows the alleged assailant lying on his belly on a sloping rooftop and aiming a rifle. A quick succession of gunshots is heard followed by screams from off-camera Trump supporters attending the rally. "The guy has longer brown hair... and as you can see, he's carefully trying pinpoint a target from afar before pulling the trigger," TMZ reported. Crooks lived about 40 miles (65 kilometres) from the rally venue. The FBI confirmed in a press conference that the shooting was being treated as "an assassination attempt against our former president, Donald Trump." — **AFP**



SAYYID BADR, HAMAS LEADER DISCUSS CEASEFIRE EFFORTS

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamoud al Busaidy, Oman's Foreign Minister, received a phone call from Ismail Haniyeh, Head of the Political Bureau of Hamas, on Saturday evening.

The two sides discussed the recent Israeli airstrikes targeting civilians in the Al Mawasi area of Khan Yunis in southern Gaza, which have resulted in the deaths and injuries of hundreds, including women, children, and the elderly.

The conversation also addressed ongoing negotiations between the Gaza cease-fire mediators, including United Nations, Qatar, and Egypt, aimed to facilitate the exchange of prisoners and detainees.

Sayyid Badr reiterated the Sultanate of Oman's firm support for the Palestinian cause, urging the international community to take decisive action against the ongoing Israeli violations



Sayyid Badr



Ismail Haniyeh

and crimes. He emphasised the necessity for immediate international intervention to protect civilians and provide essential humanitarian and relief aid.

On his part, Ismail Haniyeh expressed his gratitude for Oman's steadfast support of the Palestinian cause. He highlighted the importance of continuous communication and constructive dialogue to strengthen international efforts to implement

relevant resolutions. Haniyeh also confirmed that the Hamas leadership has approved the United States' proposed ceasefire draft and responded positively to the mediation efforts by Qatar and Egypt. This call reflects Oman's active role in seeking a peaceful resolution to the ongoing conflict and underscores the critical need for international collaboration to address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.



ABBAS PINS CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRS WITH MERIT MEDAL

RAMALLAH: President Mahmoud Abbas of the State of Palestine on Sunday pinned the Medal of Merit and Distinction on Salim bin Habib al Omairi, Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Palestine. This took place when the President of Palestine received the Chargé d'Affaires at the presidential headquarters in Ramallah, to bid him farewell at the end of his tour of duty. The medal was awarded to Al Omairi in recognition of his distinguished role in strengthening fraternal relations and cooperation between the two countries. It also comes in appreciation for his efforts in supporting the Palestinian people and their just cause to gain freedom and independence. — ONA

Projects vie for top three positions in governorates

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, JULY 14

In a move towards decentralisation to achieve the vision of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Oman aims to accelerate project completion, streamline transactions, and leverage the unique resources of its eleven governorates.

Each governorate has been granted a substantial amount to develop various projects, resulting in a flurry of activity as agreements are signed and initiatives are launched.

Governors have been empowered with greater authority, working closely with municipal councils and other key figures to develop comprehensive plans that consider social, economic, and

In Al Batinah North Governorate the projects include, a heritage centre, fort, and market development project, costing over RO 9 million

developmental dimensions.

These plans focus on utilising local resources, creating employment opportunities for youth, and fostering economic growth through integrated projects.

Three development projects are to lead through a competition from among the projects in the governorates, in its second edition.

In Al Batinah North Governorate the projects include, a heritage centre, fort, and market development project, costing over RO 9 million.

In Al Dakhiliyah the projects are the Grand Canyon project, with an estimated cost of more than RO 7 million.

Al Dhahirah Governorate has the Ibri Overlook project worth over RO 10 million.

Other notable projects are Musandam Governorate's Dolphin Bay development, valued at over RO 10 million; Al Buraimi Governorate's Al Abilah Park worth over RO 6 million; Muscat Governorate's Najm Identity Development Project worth over RO 6.5 and North al Sharqiyah's Wednesday Market Project valued over RO 5 million.

There are projects for Al Sharqiyah South named Ras al Hadd façade development project, valued at over RO 5.8 million; Al Batinah South, Pearl of Al Batinah Project, (over RO 10 million); Al Wusta, Haima Oasis project (RO 10 million); and Dhofar Governorate, Space and Science Oasis project (over RO 9.5 million).

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning has supported these initiatives by publishing them on its electronic platform, highlighting them as leading development projects.

These projects compete for the best development project in the second edition of the governorates' competition, aiming to enhance investment opportunities and drive further development across Oman.

Training programme on risk management from July 28

MUSCAT: The National Academy for Training and Development (NATD) is organising a training programme on the fundamentals of risk management at the Novotel Muscat Airport Hotel starting from July 28.

The 3-day training programme targets employees specialising in risk management, compliance, auditing as well as operations. The interactive programme will provide practical training on the basics of risk management while explaining the main concepts and tools and their practical applications.

Ali bin Mustafa al Lawati, founder of the NATD, pointed out that taking effective risk-based decisions is essential for

institutions and companies to enhance their flexibility, improve their performance and maintain their competitive advantage. Al Lawati said that the participants will acquire the skills of effectively integrating risk considerations into strategic, operational, and financial decision-making processes within an interactive environment.

The participants in the programme will provide practical knowledge of the main risk management concepts and tools and their practical applications. The participants will learn how to integrate risk considerations in a smooth and effective manner into strategic, operational, and financial decision-making processes.

FRENCH EMBASSY HOLDS RECEPTION



MUSCAT: The Embassy of the French Republic hosted a reception on the occasion of the National Day, at Crowne Plaza Muscat hotel, on Sunday. The reception was attended by a number of government officials, heads of diplomatic missions. — ONA

Ibri Outlook, a model of sustainable development

IBRI: Al Dhahirah Governorate has made a wide stride in terms of the upcoming development projects one of the most important of which is the Ibri Overlook project in the Al Sulayf area in the Wilayat of Ibri which won the award for the best proposed development project among the top three winning projects in the competition announced by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning.

Najib bin Ali al Rawas, Governor of Al Dhahirah, said that the Ibri Overlook project's winning of this award comes as a translation of the continuous efforts made by the governorate to achieve sustainable development as part of a wider strategy that aims to develop governorates and align their programmes with the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

The project will have



significant social and economic impacts on the local communities and economy. The project will have positive social-economic impacts by creating job opportunities, stimulating economic growth, enhancing infrastructure and enriching the overall quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

The Ibri Overlook project will place the city of Ibri as a local and international commercial and entertainment destination.

The environmental impact of the project was taken into account during the design stages of the project by applying technologies that achieve a balance between quality and sustainability such as the use of renewable energy, smart infrastructure, green construction and sustainable transportation, the governor said.

The project has a total area of 2 million square metres with an investment value of RO 183 million. — ONA



The programmes include a package of radio, TV shows, news and press reports as well as dedicated social media content

Dhofar Khareef media coverage begins today

ASMAHAN AL BARAKA
SALALAH, JULY 14

The Ministry of Information (MoI) today begins broadcasting its varied media programmes associated with the Dhofar Khareef Tourism Season 2024. The programmes include a package of radio and television shows, news and press reports as well as dedicated social media content all of which are taking new innovative shape this year.

Dr Mohammed bin Said al Shasha'i, Director-General of Media in Dhofar Governorate, said that all preparations and arrangements have been completed to launch the comprehensive media coverage for Dhofar Khareef Season 2024, noting that the media coverage plan for this year's season aims to monitor the tourism events and incorporating them into the Omani culture, the characteristics of the place and the cultural and civilisational richness.

Al Shasha'i added that the Sultanate of Oman TV has completed its preparations to launch the 'People and Khareef' programme which won the gold award at the GCC Radio and Television Festival which was held in the Kingdom of Bahrain in 2023. He noted that media professionals from the Sultanate of Oman and the GCC countries will take part in the programme to convey the events of the Dhofar Khareef season and its tourist, heritage and cultural sites



to the world.

'The Khareef Nights Show' will make a comeback after a long hiatus as Oman Cultural Channel will be monitoring all activities and events held in various venues. In addition, 'Athir Al Khareef' Radio programme will have a daily live broadcast of all the activities and events of Dhofar Khareef. The programme will broadcast from 5 am to 7 pm.

'The Khareef and Youth' radio programme broadcast by Al Shabab Radio will follow the events and activities in a manner that suits different tastes and age groups. It is a daily live programme that moves from one location to another within Dhofar Governorate allowing the listeners to express their opinions for two hours from 2 pm to 4 pm. Since the astronomical beginning of Dhofar season on June 21, the Oman News Agency and Oman newspaper began diverse media coverage of the Dhofar Khareef events, the official said.

In addition, the Ain platform will also be closely covering the events and activities taking place at different venues of Dhofar Khareef through its radio and television programmes on its social media accounts.

An 'Eye on Khareef' programme in its third season, a tourism-oriented programme that narrates stories in an innovative way to reflect the history and culture of Dhofar Governorate in an exciting way.

Kuwaiti media delegation arrives for Dhofar Khareef festival

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, JULY 14

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MoHT) has launched an extensive promotional campaign to highlight Oman's natural beauty and unique attractions. This initiative, timed with the start of the Dhofar Khareef Season, aims to boost tourism during one of the country's most celebrated periods.

As part of the campaign, the MoHT invited a high-level media delegation from Kuwait on a week-long visit that also underscored the strong cultural and tourism bonds between the two nations.

Over the next seven days, the Kuwaiti media delegation will be immersed in Dhofar's most renowned sites, including Al Hosn Popular Souq — one of Dhofar's oldest markets, which offers visitors a chance to purchase antiques, souvenirs, and traditional Omani spices such as frankincense and myrrh, showcasing Omani heritage.

The team will also stop over at Salalah famed 'Coconut Kiosks', renowned for their fresh coconuts and a variety of seasonal fruits, including custard fruit,



A high-level media delegation from Kuwait is on a week-long visit to Salalah

highlighting Dhofar's agricultural bounty.

Elsewhere in Salalah, the tourists will pause at various places along Salalah's waterfront, which offers stunning sea views complemented by numerous restaurants and cafes, allowing visitors to enjoy meals with a refreshing sea breeze.

At Haffa Beach Market, the media team has the opportunity to check out traditional shops and various dining options along its pedestrian walkway. Shatti Viewpoint, another stopover, is a favourite among photographers as it offers breathtaking vistas of the sea and surrounding mountains.

Other attractions lined up for the visitors include Al Mughsail Beach, celebrated for its



combination of sea and mountain views, natural water fountains, and a scenic walkway leading to the Al Muqayyam Cave; Itiin Mountain, which is ideal for hiking and camping enthusiasts; and Aftilqout, with its temperate climate, scenic views of the ocean, hills, and rocky outcrops, Aftilqout is a haven for nature and adventure lovers.

Away from Salalah, the travel itinerary of the media team takes them to Wadi Darbat with its waterfalls, lakes, and lush vegetation that provide a serene and picturesque setting. At Mirbat, they will check out the historic town known for its traditional architecture, ancient forts, and beautiful coastal views, offering a glimpse into Oman's

rich cultural past. The tour ends with a trip to Jabal Samhan with its dramatic landscapes. Home to the Arabian leopard, this mountain is a prime destination for hiking and wildlife enthusiasts.

Aside from the touristic activities, the delegation will also engage with local officials and journalists, as well as tour companies and travel outfits. The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism's promotional campaign for Dhofar Khareef reflects a strategic vision to elevate Oman's status as a premier global tourist destination.

By targeting Gulf Arab countries, particularly Kuwait, the campaign seeks to leverage regional connections and cultural affinities to boost tourism.

Through this initiative, Oman hopes to not only enhance its tourism sector but also foster a deeper appreciation of its natural and cultural heritage. As the world becomes more aware of the unique experiences offered by Dhofar Khareef, Oman stands to attract a diverse and growing number of tourists, ensuring that its rich traditions and stunning landscapes continue to be celebrated and enjoyed by visitors from around the world.

Drive safely: Caution advised in foggy conditions

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The Dhofar Governorate, renowned for its khareef season rains, has been experiencing continuous drizzle, leading to persistent fog on the mountain highlands.

The Oman Meteorological Authority has issued a warning about the low level of horizontal visibility due to rain, fog, and rising dust. Therefore, visitors to the Dhofar, both domestic and international, must exercise caution when driving in foggy conditions.

The fog significantly reduces horizontal visibility throughout Dhofar, necessitating heightened vigilance and precautionary measures by drivers.

The Royal Oman Police (ROP) is prepared to assist visitors with security, traffic management, and awareness efforts. Patrols are strategically positioned along the mountain road to the Wilayat of



Salalah to ensure swift response and immediate handling of any incidents.

The police station serves as a key point for visitors, where officers manage traffic and offer guidance to prevent accidents. The mountainous and fog-covered terrain, compounded by Khareef rains, demands careful driving. Drivers should slow down, maintain a safe distance between vehicles, and use their headlights to

navigate the foggy conditions.

Additionally, attention must be paid to animals crossing the roads in this pastoral area.

Lieutenant Colonel Tariq bin Awad al Shanfari, of the ROP in Dhofar Governorate, highlighted the police force's readiness for this year's khareef season. He stated, "We are utilising modern technology, and the Royal Oman Police stands out in implementing our plans, supported by skilled

technicians and educated personnel. We have successfully streamlined many complex procedures."

Drivers are also reminded not to use mobile phones for photography while driving. The environmental and natural conditions require complete focus on the road. Those wishing to document their experiences on social media should pull over to a safe spot before taking photos.

National Museum inaugurates exhibition at Kremlin Museums

MUSCAT: The National Museum on July 11, inaugurated the exhibition and events of 'Oman Day' under the title 'The Splendour of Silver: Treasures from the Omani Court' at the Kremlin Museums in Moscow.

The event was held under the auspices of Olga Lyubimova, Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation. The exhibition celebrates the manifestations of Omani silver as a historically leading industry, showcasing a curated collection of items belonging to the Sultans of Oman in Muscat and Zanzibar. The exhibition will run until September 29.

The opening ceremony was

attended by Her Highness Dr Mona bint Fahd al Said, Assistant Vice-Chancellor for International Cooperation at Sultan Qaboos University and Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the National Museum; Jamal bin Hassan al Mousawi, Secretary-General of the National Museum; Hamood bin Salim al Towaiya, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Russian Federation; Sergei Ivanov, Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for Environmental Protection, Ecology, and Transport; Vladimir Osintsev, Deputy Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation; Dr Elena Gagarina, Director-



The National Museum inaugurated the exhibition and events of 'Oman Day' under the title 'The Splendour of Silver: Treasures from the Omani Court'.

General of the Kremlin Museums in Moscow.

The exhibition is divided into five main sections namely the Omani khanjar, the Culture of Scent, the Art of Silversmithing, Traditional Fashionwear, and the Nobility Fashionwear of

prominent Omani figures in East Africa at that time.

Her Highness Dr Mona bint Fahd al Said: "Both countries have deep historical roots, emerging from ancient civilisations. Oman is the offspring of a vast empire that connected continents — Asia

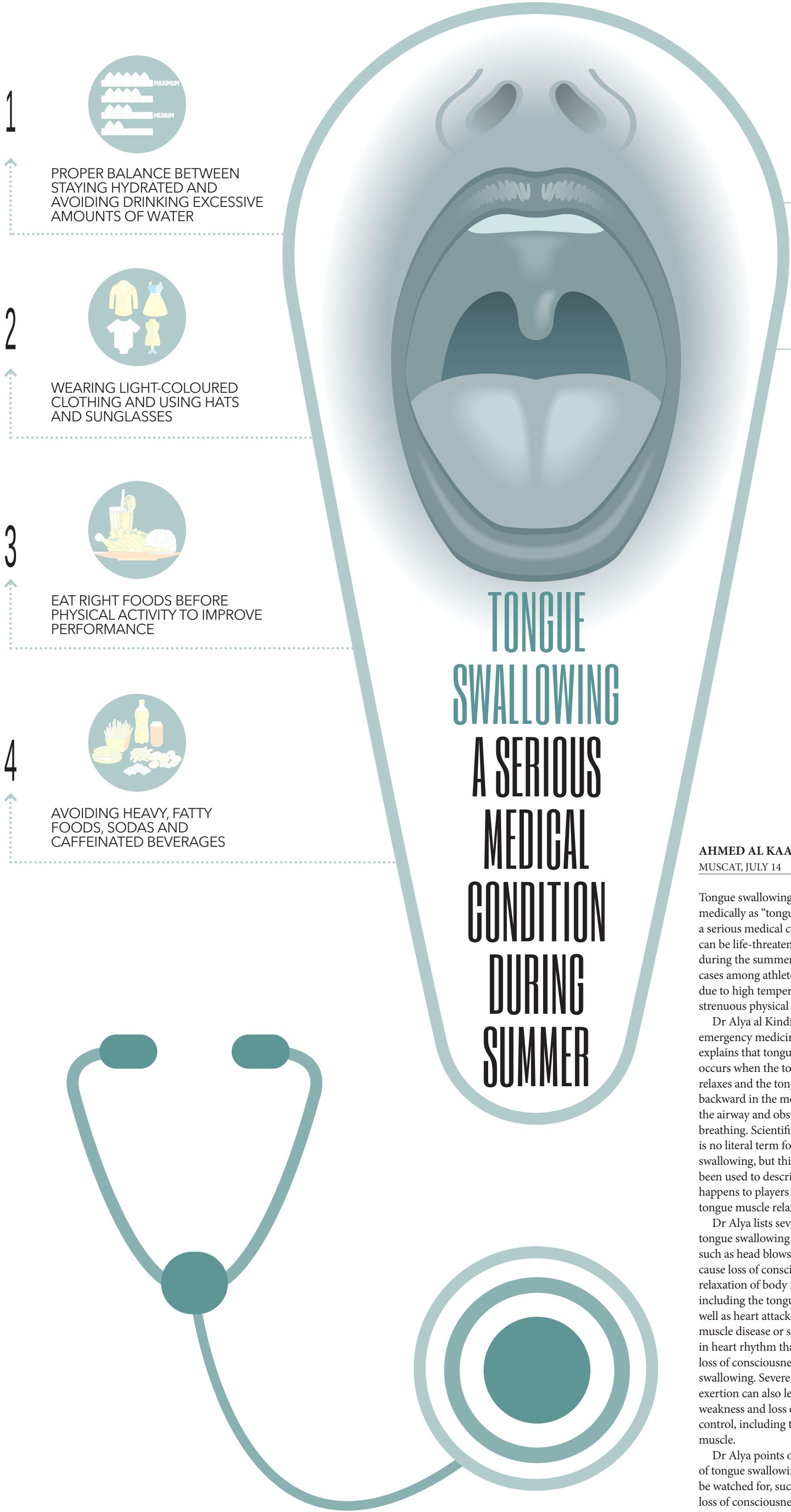
with parts of Africa, alongside India, Somalia, North Africa, and the fringes of Baluchistan and Makran. Russia is the cradle of the Eurasian civilisation that never saw the sun set."

Jamal bin Hassan al Mousawi, said, "This is the first museum exhibition of its kind for Oman in Moscow, organised within the framework of cultural diplomacy pursued by the National Museum and extending the close cooperation between the National Museum and the museums of the Russian Federation."

Hamood bin Salim al Towaiya, remarked: "The friendly relations between Oman and the Russian Federation are positively evolving

on various levels. Since culture is the key to bringing peoples closer, the 'Oman Day' exhibition and events at the Kremlin Museums in Moscow reflect the rich Omani historical legacy and enhance Russian citizens' understanding of the distinguished cultural role of the Sultanate of Oman."

Dr Elena Gagarina, Director General of the Moscow Kremlin Museums, said: "The exhibition also showcases traditional works by Omani craftsmen, including exquisite silverware, silver-adorned items, weapons, traditional national costumes, exceptional accessories, and a collection of belongings of notable figures in Omani history."



Severe physical exertion can also lead to muscle weakness and loss of muscle control, including the tongue muscle

DR ALYA AL KINDI
Emergency medicine specialist

On the relationship between this phenomenon and the summer season, Dr Alya indicates that playing in the summer indirectly increases the risk of exposure to cases of tongue swallowing due to multiple factors related to the environment and high physical exertion.

High temperatures can lead to heat stress or heatstroke, which increases the risk of losing consciousness and thus swallowing the tongue. Dehydration caused by high temperatures can lead to low salt levels which cause muscle weakness, and loss of muscle control, including the tongue muscle. Drinking large amounts of water can also lead to water poisoning or hyponatremia, causing muscle weakness and coma that can lead to tongue swallowing.

Dr Alya advises achieving a proper balance between staying hydrated and avoiding drinking excessive amounts of water to ensure good performance and overall health during exercise. She also recommends wearing appropriate clothing for breathability and comfort, such as nylon fabrics, and avoiding cotton fabrics.

Wearing light-coloured clothing and using hats and sunglasses also helps reduce the effects of heat. Dr Alya stresses the importance of eating the right foods before physical activity to improve performance and provide the necessary energy, pointing to complex carbohydrates and healthy fats in avocados and nuts, and avoiding heavy, fatty foods, sodas and caffeinated beverages.

Dr Alya stated that the first aid that can be provided to a player with dehydration and tongue swallowing before the arrival of an ambulance is to ensure breathing by making sure the person can breathe clearly by opening the airway: Head Tilt-Chin Lift, by placing one hand on the person's forehead and gently press to move the head back and using the fingers of the other hand, gently to lift the chin up to keep the mouth open and the airway unobstructed. Then put the person in the recovery position on his lateral side to prevent choking from vomit or saliva.

Dr Alya concluded her talk by emphasising the importance of calling emergency services immediately for professional medical assistance. She stressed the need to be cautious when dealing with injured patients properly and starting CPR if a person is not responding and not breathing till receiving professional medical care.

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, JULY 14

Tongue swallowing, also known medically as “tongue flaccid”, is a serious medical condition that can be life-threatening, especially during the summer months when cases among athletes increase due to high temperatures and strenuous physical exertion.

Dr Alya al Kindi, an emergency medicine specialist, explains that tongue swallowing occurs when the tongue muscle relaxes and the tongue moves backward in the mouth, blocking the airway and obstructing breathing. Scientifically, there is no literal term for tongue swallowing, but this term has been used to describe what happens to players in cases of tongue muscle relaxation.

Dr Alya lists several causes of tongue swallowing in athletes, such as head blows or falls that cause loss of consciousness and relaxation of body muscles, including the tongue muscle, as well as heart attacks due to heart muscle disease or sudden changes in heart rhythm that can lead to loss of consciousness and tongue swallowing. Severe physical exertion can also lead to muscle weakness and loss of muscle control, including the tongue muscle.

Dr Alya points out the signs of tongue swallowing that should be watched for, such as sudden loss of consciousness, signs of confusion or disorientation due to lack of oxygen, difficulty breathing or sudden cessation of breathing, and snoring sounds from the throat due to airway obstruction.



TACKLING HIGH ELECTRICITY BILLS WITH SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, JULY 14

As summer temperatures soar, rising electricity bills have become a pressing concern for Omanis. Many have so far expressed their frustrations over the financial strain.

The surge in energy consumption, particularly for air conditioning amid the scorching heat, has exacerbated worries about household expenses across the country.

Mohammed al Amri on X asked if it is reasonable for a two-bedroom apartment with a majlis, kitchen, housing parents and two children, to exceed RO 200.

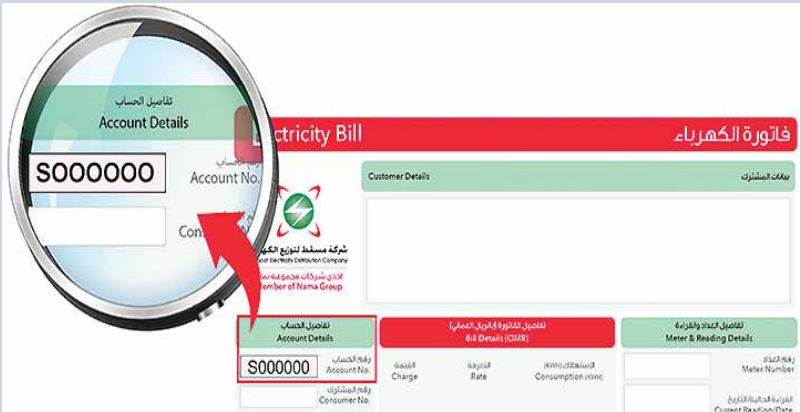
His question reflects broader

concerns within the community about the affordability and transparency of electricity costs, highlighting the need for effective measures to manage and stabilise utility expenses for Omani households.

Electricity costs in Dhofar have also risen significantly, despite the good weather there.

This suggests factors other than just temperature are driving up prices. Residents like Mohammed bin Ali are questioning whether the high prices are justified, especially with the weather not being extreme during the heat. They wonder if prices will also rise during the khareef season.

In response to these widespread concerns, the



THE GOVERNMENT IS LOOKING INTO NEW IDEAS LIKE DISTRICT COOLING SYSTEMS TO CUT ENERGY USE IN CITIES

Ministry of Energy and Minerals has announced a subsidy programme aimed at easing the burden on citizens. Starting from June through August 2024, the government will implement measures to reduce electricity bills by up to 20 per cent during the peak summer period.

This initiative is intended to provide immediate relief to households grappling with higher utility costs.

While some see the subsidy as necessary, others doubt its long-term impact on making electricity more affordable. Many people are pushing for sustainable energy practices and want the government to invest more in energy efficiency and renewable energy sources.

Additionally, the government is looking into new ideas like district cooling systems to cut energy use in cities.

District cooling involves making and sending cold water to buildings through underground pipes. This method could save up to 50 per cent compared to usual ways of cooling. The ministry has initiated plans to introduce district cooling infrastructure in Sultan Haitham City, with project implementation scheduled to begin in early 2025 and conclude by late 2026.

This initiative underscores Oman's commitment to integrating sustainable practices into urban development while ensuring economic resilience and environmental sustainability.

RAM launches programme for new govt staff

MUSCAT: To promote sustainable development by nurturing local expertise, the Royal Academy of Management (RAM) has launched the Elmam programme.

This initiative is designed to equip new employees in the government sector with essential skills and knowledge, enhancing efficiency and effectiveness. Developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Ejada Development as an educational partner, the programme aims to cultivate qualified national talents adept at transferring and applying knowledge effectively.

Dr Fathiya bint Abdullah al Rashdiah, Vice-President for Programme Affairs at the Royal Academy of Management, emphasised that the Elmam programme for eligible new government employees is pivotal to the Academy's comprehensive initiatives.



RAM launches Elmam programme designed to equip new employees in the government sector with essential skills and knowledge

This initiative reflects His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's profound commitment to nurturing and empowering Omani cadres.

The Academy remains committed to integrating modern knowledge, tools and technologies into Oman's social and economic advancement, aiming to enhance operational efficiency, productivity and transparency across all sectors.

Dr Fathiya further

practical experience, will participate in the programme.

Divided into five cohorts, they will engage with comprehensive content covering ethics, the fundamentals of government work, innovation, digital transformation, modern government management and national trends.

The goal is to prepare these employees with the knowledge and skills necessary to enhance functional and administrative performance in the government sector.

The five-day programme consists of five main themes, primarily covering national trends, 'Oman Vision 2040', and national programmes.

Finally, the programme delves into modern government management, focusing on artificial intelligence, digital transformation, cybersecurity, performance indicators, goal setting and institutional innovation.



3-day crafts Expo to showcase innovation and tradition

3-day crafts Expo to showcase innovation and tradition

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
@Afrahalbalushia

The Oman Crafts Exhibition will be launched today at the Scientific College of Design in Muscat Governorate. The exhibition will run from July 15 to 17 with a vision to develop and market entrepreneurs' products to meet market demands.

Halima bint Rashid al Zariyah, Chairperson of Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority, will inaugurate the event that will feature approximately 20 entrepreneurs and craftsmen from various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

There will be a completion and the winners will be announced on July 28.

For the first time, the exhibition will host an introductory session on the "Innovative Tourism Craft Product" competition.

This competition is open to all college and university students, as well as individuals interested in the craft sector.

Participants can enter as individuals or groups. The

presented products must be new, innovative and touristic, not available on the market, and include a five-minute demonstration with no more than five presentation slides.

Roaa al Zadjali, Director of the Craft Industries Department, explained that participants will be evaluated on several criteria, including the excellence and innovation of their ideas, manufacturing precision, design aesthetics, consumer usefulness, suitability for daily use, and adherence to Omani traditions with a modern touch.

The use of environment friendly materials and sustainable manufacturing techniques is essential, and the marketing plan must be clear and feasible.

The exhibition aims to support entrepreneurs and craftsmen by enhancing their skills and knowledge, enabling them to work on their projects efficiently and effectively.

It also seeks to create marketing opportunities, introduce innovative craft products, and establish mechanisms to develop and protect traditional crafts.

574 STUDENTS TO TAKE PART IN AL SHARQIYAH SOUTH SUMMER PROGRAMME

MUSCAT: The 2024 Summer Programme, titled 'Summer of Ambitions and Values,' commenced on Sunday at Al Sharqiyah South Education Department.

Running from July 14 to July 25, the programme aims to engage 574 students from the governorate, ranging from seventh to twelfth grade, across four summer centres.

At the Lubaba Summer Centre in the Wilayat of Sur, students participated in a variety of training workshops, including pencil drawing, using



The programme is on till July 25 and aims to engage 574 students from the governorate

environmental materials for artistic creations, musical skills, paper pulp painting, and the

scientific method for problem-solving.

Al Wafi Summer Centre in the

Wilayat of Al Kamil W'al Wafi offered workshops on intelligence applications, computer programmes and theatre decor.

Meanwhile, Al Rafaa Summer Centre in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan provided sessions on innovation, artificial intelligence, photography basics and debates.

Ramlat Umm Al Muminin Summer Centre in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali focused on reading text analysis, Internet applications, debates and colour fusion.

— ONA

Online recruitment for Nepali workforce begins tomorrow

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

From July 16, tomorrow, all recruitments of Nepali citizens shall be made using the digital platform and no paper documentation of the procedures will be entertained, according to the diplomatic office in Muscat.

The recruiting companies willing to take Nepali workforce need to first register their companies at the e-portal (<https://demand.nepalconsular.gov.np>), and once it is approved by the embassy, they could create demand for recruiting Nepali workers.

Launching the e-portal for Institutional Demand Attestation in Oman, Dornath Aryal, Nepal Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, said that the e-portal for job recruitment is aimed at a transparent and easy process of the same without any hassle.

He pointed out that the other processes related to recruitment of Nepali workers will also be



made online gradually and expressed hopes that such moves will assist in establishing cordial long-term relationship between the embassy and the valued recruiters in Oman.

He further highlighted the priorities of the Government of Nepal to diversify the trading partners of Nepal and promote the vast opportunities of the foreign investment in Nepal and urged the businesspersons to consider expanding transactions with Nepali counterparts for

better outreach.

Detailing the various facets of the e-portal, Nabin Jha, IT Officer, Department of Consular Services, explained the steps to be followed for company registration and demand letter attestation.

The Company Registration of the recruiters in Oman commenced from July 3, 2024 and all the institutional demands will be attested only through the e-portal from July 16, 2024 and physical demand letters will not

be accepted. The guests were provided with a printed manual of the demand attestation and Nepal's trade and investment opportunities related document.

Bishesh Kumar Sah, Second Secretary, further explained that the e-portal will replace the manual work with the digital platform for completing the process of recruiting Nepali workers and no manual documentation for recruiting the Nepali workforce shall be entertained from tomorrow.



Hamas says pulling out of truce talks after Israeli strike

GAZA: A Hamas official on Sunday said the group is pulling out of Gaza truce talks, following an Israeli strike that targeted the group's commander Mohammed Deif, who was "fine" despite the attack according to another Hamas figure.

Israel staged a huge bombing raid on a camp for displaced people in southern Gaza on Saturday that it said was an attempt to kill Deif.

A senior official from the Palestinian group, which has been fighting a nine-month-long war with Israel in the Gaza Strip, said that Hamas movement was withdrawing from ceasefire talks because of Israeli "massacres" and the country's attitude in negotiations.

The health ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip said at least 92 people had been killed, more than half of them women and children, and 300 wounded in a strike on the Al Mawasi camp.

Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas's political chief, told international mediators of the "decision to halt negotiations due to the occupation's (Israel) lack of seriousness, continued policy of procrastination and obstruction, and the ongoing massacres against unarmed civilians", the official said. Talks mediated by Qatar and Egypt, with US support, have for months tried but failed to bring a halt to the war in the Gaza Strip.

Al-Mawasi, where the health ministry said dozens had been killed, had in May been declared a safe humanitarian zone by the Israeli military and civilians ordered to evacuate to it. However, there have been multiple deadly incidents there blamed on Israeli strikes.



A Palestinian man looks at damaged tents at the site of Israeli bombardment on the Al Mawasi displacement camp. – AFP

Hamas movement was withdrawing from ceasefire talks because of Israeli "massacres" and the country's attitude in negotiations

Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, described the area as "a sandy 14-square-kilometre (5.4-square-mile) agricultural land, where people are left out in the open with little to no buildings or roads".

"The claim that people in Gaza can move to 'safe' or 'humanitarian' zones is false", said Lazzarini on social media site X.

Separately on Sunday, rescuers said at least eight people were killed in three separate strikes on different parts of Gaza City.

The Israeli military meanwhile said operations were continuing throughout the territory, including in Gaza City and Rafah.

October 7 attack resulted in the deaths of 1,195 people, according to a tally based on Israeli figures.

The Palestinian groups also seized 251 captives, 116 of whom remain in Gaza, including 42 the military says are dead. Israel responded with a military offensive that has killed at least 38,443 people in Gaza, mostly civilians, according to a toll from the Gaza health ministry.

The deaths in the camp in Al-Mawasi drew condemnation from governments across the region, with Egypt's foreign ministry saying such "crimes... cannot be accepted under any justification whatsoever". — AFP

Syrian state media says Israeli raid kills a soldier

DAMASCUS: A Syrian soldier was killed early on Sunday and three others injured in Israeli strikes on several positions in and around Damascus, Syrian state media said.

The Israeli army, meanwhile, said it had targeted a Syrian military command centre as well as targets and infrastructure belonging to the Syrian army and air defence in response to two drones launched towards Israel from Syrian territory.

The statement was a rare acknowledgement by the Israeli military of action in Syria, where it has launched hundreds of strikes since the country's civil war erupted in 2011, which have mainly targeted army positions and Iran-backed fighters.

"A soldier was killed and three others injured following an aerial aggression launched by the Israeli enemy after midnight" on Sunday, Syria's state news agency SANA reported.

The strike "was launched

from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights targeting several military positions in the southern region and a residential building in the Kafr Sousa district of Damascus", it added.

It said that aerial defence systems had intercepted and downed a number of missiles "despite their intensity". The news agency published a photo showing a fire in what appeared to be a crater caused by the blast.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights meanwhile said a Syrian pro-government fighter had been killed and six others injured in Israeli strikes targeting a building in Kafr Sousa and a military headquarters south of Damascus.

The building in Kafr Sousa, which hosted fighters from the so-called "axis of resistance" — armed factions opposed to the US and Israel — was destroyed.

— AFP



Charred cars lie in a parking lot in the aftermath of an Israeli strike in the neighbourhood of Kafr Sousse in Damascus. – AFP

At least 17 Palestinians killed in Gaza

CAIRO: At least 17 Palestinians were killed and 50 were wounded in Israeli strikes on Gaza City in the early hours of Sunday morning, civil emergency and health officials said.

The fatalities resulted from at least four separate Israeli airstrikes on four houses in different areas of the city. Residents and Palestinian health officials said the Israeli military had stepped up aerial and ground shelling.

On Saturday an Israeli airstrike killed at least 90 Palestinians in a designated humanitarian zone in Gaza, the enclave's health ministry said. The attack was the deadliest in Gaza for weeks.

Israel said the attack targeted Palestinian Hamas military chief Mohammed Deif but it was uncertain whether he had been killed. Hamas said that Israeli claims it had targeted leaders of the group were false and were aimed at justifying the attack.

The Israeli military said that Rafa Salama, Hamas' Khan Younis brigade commander, was killed in an air strike on Saturday that also targeted the head of the group's armed wing.

The military said Salama was one of Deif's closest associates and was involved in planning October 7 attack. His death, "significantly impedes Hamas' military capabilities", the military said. Hamas has not confirmed Salama's fate.

Several Palestinians were killed or wounded on Sunday in an Israeli airstrike that hit a school in central Gaza, health officials said.



Palestinians queue to fill containers with water in Khan Younis city. – AFP

The Gaza government media office has so far put the death toll at 12 people killed, adding that the school was housing displaced people.

Meanwhile, Britain's new foreign secretary, David Lammy, will press for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and the release of captives during a trip to Israel and occupied Palestinian territories on Sunday, the foreign office said.

Lammy will meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and make the case for a "credible and irreversible pathway towards a two-state solution", the foreign office said in a statement.

"The death and destruction in Gaza is intolerable. This war must end now, with an immediate ceasefire, complied with by both sides," Lammy said. He will raise with Netanyahu the issue of 680 tonnes of British aid that is waiting to enter Gaza, the foreign office said.

Lammy's Labour Party has said long-term peace and security in the Middle East would be an immediate focus.

It has committed to recognising a Palestinian state as a contribution to a renewed peace process which results in a two-state solution. — Reuters



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In brief

■ DUBAI



DUBAI CROWN PRINCE NAMED UAE DEFENCE MINISTER

Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum on Sunday announced he appointed the emirate's crown prince, as defence minister of the United Arab Emirates in a cabinet reshuffle. "Shaikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum has joined the government of the UAE as Deputy Prime Minister and has been appointed Minister of Defence," Shaikh Mohammed wrote on X.

Shaikh Abdullah bin Zayed al Nahyan, the foreign minister, was also appointed as a deputy prime minister in the cabinet shuffle. The cabinet reshuffle also saw a number of other ministers changed. — AFP

■ NAIROBI



POLICE SAY EIGHT BODIES FOUND IN NAIROBI DUMPSITE

Eight female bodies have been recovered so far from a dumpsite in a Nairobi slum, Kenyan police said, adding that they were pursuing possible links to cults, serial killers or rogue medical practitioners.

The gruesome discoveries of mutilated and dismembered bodies dumped in plastic bags in a rubbish tip in Mukuru in the south of the Kenyan capital have horrified and angered the nation.

Kenya's police chief Douglas Kanja said the first six corpses were found, revealing that all were female. "They were severely dismembered in different states of decomposition and left in sacks," Kanja said. — AFP

■ KATHMANDU



NEPAL RETRIEVES MORE BODIES FROM DEADLY LANDSLIDE

Nepali search teams retrieved more bodies on Sunday of the roughly 50 people missing after a landslide triggered by torrential rains swept two buses into a fast-flowing river.

Over 300 officers, including divers, were scouring the river for passengers and the two buses themselves, said Kumar Neupane, police spokesperson.

Other teams on boats were using sensor equipment. Grieving relatives waited on the banks in shock.

The force of landslide in central Chitwan district pushed the vehicles and down a steep embankment, at least 30 metres from the road. — AFP

Trump urges unity after assassination attempt



Former US president and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks during a campaign event at Butler Farm Show Inc. in Butler, Pennsylvania. — AFP

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump said on Sunday it was divine intervention that helped him survive an assassination attempt during a campaign rally in Pennsylvania, and called on Americans to unite.

"It was God alone who prevented the unthinkable from happening," the former US president and White House hopeful said on social media, urging fellow Americans to unite in "not allowing Evil to Win."

Trump was hit in the ear in an assassination attempt by a gunman at a campaign rally on Saturday, in a chaotic and shocking incident set to supercharge political tensions ahead of the US presidential election.

President Joe Biden, who is set to face Trump in November's deeply polarised presidential election, said there was "no place in America for this kind of violence."

"In this moment, it is more important than ever that we stand United, and show our True Character as Americans, remaining Strong and Determined, and not allowing Evil to Win," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform on Sunday morning, confirming that he would attend the Republican National Convention, which

It is more important than ever that we stand United and show our True Character as Americans, remaining Strong and Determined and not allowing Evil to Win

DONALD TRUMP

US former president

begins on Monday in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

World leaders and governments reacted with shock to the wounding of Donald Trump in an assassination attempt against the former US president at an election rally.

Presidents and prime ministers globally spoke out against political violence and expressed their support for those affected by the Saturday shooting, which killed one bystander and left two other spectators critically wounded.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said she was "deeply shocked" by the attack. "Political violence has no place in a democracy," she

said.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called the shooting "despicable" and said "such acts of violence threaten democracy."

In neighbouring France, President Emmanuel Macron called the assassination a "tragedy for our democracies." "France shares the shock and indignation of the American people," said Macron.

China's Xi Jinping expressed his "compassion and sympathy" for Trump, with a foreign ministry spokesman saying Beijing was "closely following" the incident.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was "deeply concerned by the attack on my friend." "Violence has no place in politics and democracies," said Modi.

The US Secret Service on Sunday denied claims that it had refused additional protection for Donald Trump ahead of his Pennsylvania campaign rally, where he was shot in the ear in an assassination attempt.

Secret Service spokesman Anthony Guglielmi said on social media platform X that the assertions were "absolutely false," adding that the agency had "added protective resources & technology & capabilities as part of the increased campaign travel tempo." — AFP

Zelensky says more aid coming from Nato summit

KYIV: Further military assistance to Ukraine is on the way, President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Sunday following his return to the country from last week's Nato summit in Washington.

Concrete agreements had been struck aimed at boosting Ukraine's defence capacities, including weapons for troops and support for the country's armaments industry, he posted on X. Zelensky mentioned Patriot and other air defence systems, but did not provide details.

Russian forces had launched more than 700 glide bombs, 170 aerial drones of various types and almost 80 missiles at Ukrainian targets over the past week alone, he said.

He expressed his gratitude to all those helping to deliver defence systems to Ukraine, while calling for yet more air defence systems.

Zelensky published a video of the destruction and deaths caused to back up his call.

He also announced further security agreements with the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Ireland, where he stopped off on his return trip.

Zelensky has recently signed agreements of this kind with Poland, Luxembourg and Romania.

Following meetings with US

President Joe Biden and other US politicians, Zelensky plans to meet regional leaders in Ukraine to boost cooperation. "Healthcare, shelters, defence industries, etc.

The United States is ready to help at all these levels," he said. And he repeated his condemnation of the attempted assassination of former president Donald Trump at an election campaign rally.

"A heinous crime. One that can only be condemned. And which shows how serious the global challenges to democracy are right now," Zelensky said, while adding that he was confident the US would overcome them.

Meanwhile, Russia on Sunday said it had captured another village in south-eastern Ukraine as it continues to make battlefield gains in the conflict that is now into its third year.

"Units from the Vostok troops captured the village of Urozhaine" in the Donetsk region, the Russian defence ministry announced in its daily report.

The village was one of the few that Ukraine won back during its 2023 offensive.

Russia has been slowly taking territory in eastern Ukraine since that failed Ukrainian counter-offensive, as Kyiv's troops struggle with shortages of munitions and manpower. — Agencies



A police officer walks near damaged cars at the site of a Russian missile strike, Kharkiv region, Ukraine. — AFP

China, Russia conduct joint Pacific military patrol

BEIJING: China and Russia conducted a joint naval patrol in the northern and western Pacific, Beijing's defence ministry said on Sunday, adding that the exercise was not "targeted" at any other nation. The two countries have drawn closer in recent years and tout their friendship as having "no limits".

Beijing has further strengthened its diplomatic, economic and military ties with Moscow since the start of the Russian attack of Ukraine in February 2022.

China, which has never condemned the attack, maintains it is a neutral party to the conflict. But Western leaders have criticised it for giving political and economic support to Russia, including trade in goods that have both civilian and military uses.

"According to the annual plan and the consensus between China and Russia, naval vessels



The Russian corvette Gromkiy enters the port of Zhanjiang during the Joint Sea-2024 China-Russia naval exercise, in China. — Reuters

of China and Russia recently carried out their fourth joint maritime patrol in the western and northern Pacific Ocean," the Chinese defence ministry said on Sunday. "This operation is not targeted at any third party and has nothing to do with the current international and regional situation," it added.

No details were provided on the Pacific manoeuvres, including

the ships' routes, their exact locations or the nature of the forces involved.

On Friday, China said it was also conducting drills with Russia — known as Joint Sea-2024 — along its southern coast.

This came after Nato leaders declared Beijing had "become a decisive enabler" of Moscow's war in Ukraine, and after Japan warned of a growing threat from

Beijing's strong ties with Moscow. Beijing has rejected the criticisms.

The drills in the waters and airspace around Zhanjiang, a city in southern Guangdong province, are "to demonstrate the resolve and capabilities of the two sides in jointly addressing maritime security threats and preserving global and regional peace and stability", the ministry said.

The Russian defence ministry

The drills in the waters and airspace around Zhanjiang are to demonstrate the resolve and capabilities of the two sides in jointly addressing maritime security

said on Saturday that two of its warships had arrived in Zhanjiang to take part in the joint naval drills, with an initial phase taking place from Monday to Wednesday.

China and Russia hold joint military exercises regularly but their level of interoperability is greatly inferior to that of Nato, the European Union Institute for Security Studies said in a report in early July.

In 2023, ships from the two countries took part in a naval exercise off the US state of Alaska.

— AFP

How storytelling thrives in a digital age



Sandhya Rao Mehta

The writer is Associate Professor, Department of English and Translation, SQU

THE recent award of a gold medal to Omani storyteller Thamana Al Jandal at the Morocco storytelling festival is an encouraging sign of the survival of an ancient tradition.

As the festival organisers said, the storytellers “all gather here to share a single language, the language of noble human values which are peace, love and security”.

Oral storytelling is perhaps the most ancient of arts. It could have started with just a small community, eager to capture everyday life in imaginative detail. As the art progressed, it faced various historical challenges like the printed book and, now, the digital screen.

What could account for the continuing popularity of oral storytelling today? An important reason is that humans still value personal contact — there is joy in sharing stories in real time, of catching the teller’s emotions, of seeing how the story changes with each teller.

Stories told by humans to each other also help to bond and form relationships, and with it,

communities. There is nothing like a child snuggling next to a grandparent to hear stories of magic, treasures, action and emotions. These are the best memories of childhood.

Oral stories exist in every part of the world. Known by different names, they perform the same function of distilling the community’s desires and fears in an imaginative way.

But the world of technology is never far behind. Just as other inventions like the printing press heralded the doom of oral stories, our digital world offers further challenges.

The same child who cuddled next to his grandparent is now more frequently seen with a digital device which can be controlled on demand.

As we all know and accept, technology is what we make of it.

In this sense, there are many ways in which digital devices can actually be used today to archive the stories of disappearing communities, even protect the original voices of the storytellers for posterity.

There are two main purposes to storytelling — entertainment and education. It is a powerful way

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of conveying morals, manners and information. So there is a certain immediacy to a story when told by a human being, especially when accompanied by music, chanting, rhythm or a background chorus.

Digital storytelling can add to traditional elements by making stories more colourful and, of course, accessible at all times. But it cannot reproduce the human factor — the soothing voice of a narrator or the animated voice conveying action.

Nor can it recreate interaction between the teller, the tale and the audience.

Oral stories are sources of history, shared beliefs and challenges overcome. They tell the story of resilience, for how else has the story stood the test of time? They bind communities together and remind us of what is important in our world — not the homogeneity that social media feeds us but the traditions and cultures that change at every geographical mile.

But they also point to what we share as human beings — a curiosity to know more and the hope that the world will be a better place. Oral stories reinforce that belief.

Small nation with influence beyond its borders

A small landlocked African nation playing in the big league: with military might, image branding and political influence, Rwanda under President Paul Kagame has become a major strategic player with tentacles spread far and wide.

De facto leader since the 1994 genocide and running for a fourth term as president in elections on Monday, the iron-fisted Kagame has established a sphere of influence far outweighing Rwanda’s size to develop the country and entrench his own power base.

Unlike many other African nations, “Rwanda is pursuing a real foreign policy strategy”, says Paul-Simon Handy, East Africa director at the Institute for Security Studies.

This strategy is similar to “smart power”, says Handy, combining hard power — the use of military and economic means for influence — and soft power. The Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) is one of the pillars of this policy, though its role is contradictory.

The Democratic Republic of Congo has for years accused its neighbour of fomenting instability in the east and supporting armed groups, including the Tutsi-led M23, deploying troops and allegedly seeking to plunder its mineral wealth. A recent UN experts report said 3,000-4,000 Rwandan soldiers are fighting alongside M23 rebels and that Kigali had “de facto control” of the group’s operations.

Questioned repeatedly on the issue, Kagame has not explicitly denied the presence of Rwandan forces in DRC, instead pointing to the “persecution” of the Tutsi minority and the risk of instability on Rwanda’s border.

“By nature, Rwanda’s security posture has always been defensive, not offensive. We only act when trouble is brought on us,” he said this month. Its murky role in the DRC has however cost Kigali some financial support from the West, which since 2012-2013 has cut development aid and investment.

At the same time, Kagame has established his army as the “policeman of Africa”.

Since 2024, the RDF has taken part in numerous UN peacekeeping missions. With 5,894 men deployed as of March 31, Rwanda is the fourth largest contributor, with forces in South Sudan and the Central African Republic.

“By participating in and leading peacekeeping and unilateral military missions, Rwanda has significantly enhanced its global image and strategic relevance beyond its historical association with the 1994 genocide,” said Federico Donelli, assistant professor of international relations at the University of Trieste. — AFP



James Oliphant

The writer is the national Political Correspondent, Reuters



Gram Slattery

The writer is the national political reporter at Reuters

Attack on Trump could spark further US political violence

I n a country already on edge, the assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump has enraged his supporters, paused the Democratic campaign and raised fears of further political violence in the run-up to November’s election.

Trump’s Republican allies painted him as a hero on Saturday, seizing on the image of him with his ear bloodied and fist raised, appearing to mouth the words “Fight! Fight! Fight!”

Whereas Trump has regularly used violent language with his followers, advisers and allies of the former president flipped the script on his Democratic opponent President Joe Biden, saying it was the demonisation of the Republican presidential candidate that led to the assassination attempt.

“Today is not just some isolated incident. The central premise of the Biden campaign is that President Donald Trump is an authoritarian fascist who must be stopped at all costs. That rhetoric led directly to President Trump’s attempted assassination,” US Senator J D Vance of Ohio, a top candidate to be Trump’s running mate, said on X.

Biden moved quickly to try to defuse the situation, denouncing the attack as unacceptable political violence and pulling election ads attacking Trump. “There’s no place in America for this kind of violence. It’s sick,” Biden told reporters.

The motivation of the shooter is not yet known. The suspect, 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks of Bethel Park, Pennsylvania, was a registered Republican, according to state voter records. He previously made a \$15 donation to a political action committee that raises money for left-leaning and Democratic politicians.

In the short term, the attack will likely boost Trump’s appearances in Milwaukee this week at the Republican National Convention as he accepts his party’s presidential nomination, fortifying the sense of grievance and estrangement his supporters already feel towards the nation’s political class.

Within hours of the shooting, Trump’s campaign sent out a text



Republican presidential candidate and former US President Donald Trump is assisted by US Secret Service personnel after he was shot in the right ear during a campaign rally at the Butler Farm Show in Butler, Pennsylvania. — Reuters

THE ATTACK WILL LIKELY BOOST
TRUMP’S APPEARANCES IN
MILWAUKEE AT THE REPUBLICAN
NATIONAL CONVENTION
AS HE ACCEPTS HIS PARTY’S
PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION

asking voters to contribute to the campaign. “They’re not after me, they’re after you,” the message read.

Billionaires Elon Musk and Bill Ackman also swiftly endorsed Trump. “I fully endorse President Trump and hope for his rapid recovery,” Musk said on X, the social media site he owns.

Chris LaCivita, the co-manager of Trump’s campaign, said on X that “for years and even today, leftist activists, Democrat donors and now even Joe Biden have made disgusting remarks and descriptions of shooting Donald Trump ... it’s high time they be held accountable for it ... the best way is through the ballot box.”

LaCivita was apparently referring to recent remarks by Biden made in the context of asking his supporters to focus on beating Trump rather than his own performance. “So, we’re done

talking about the debate, it’s time to put Trump in a bullseye,” said Biden, who has always condemned any political violence.

The US is grappling with the biggest and most sustained increase in political violence since the 1970s.

Of 14 fatal political attacks since supporters of Trump stormed the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, in which the perpetrator or suspect had a clear partisan leaning, 13 were right-wing assailants. One was on the left.

Despite being a former president, Trump has campaigned as an outsider insurgent, complaining that he has long been targeted by the federal “deep state” and Biden’s administration to prevent him from reclaiming power.

He has typically employed violent, degrading and even apocalyptic rhetoric while doing so, warning of a “bloodbath” if he is not elected and saying immigrants in the United States illegally are “poisoning the blood of our country”.

Some Republicans were already agitated by his continued stoking of the fire.

“If the country wasn’t a powder keg before, it is now,” said Chip Felkel, a Republican operative in South Carolina who has opposed Trump.

Brad Bannon, a Democratic strategist, said the shooting could benefit Trump politically because it feeds into his campaign narrative that the country is off-track. — Reuters

Time to flock and fly away

Summer has aggressively started burning and chasing us all here and there! Thus, it is the time break to flock with family and friends and fly away to escape the heat. This is the perfect time for a long break and to have rest.

Everyone needs to get a refreshing break and summer is the most preferred season for many as schools are closed. It is a good time to break out from a hectic work and a busy daily life.

It is the right time for almost everyone to evade the scorching weather at this time of the year. It is the much-awaited holiday season, mostly for families as it coincides with the school holidays when parents can enjoy the break with their children. In fact, it is an ideal holiday time for everyone! Getting the whole family flocking together during a long summer break is never a bad idea at all. It would certainly be very relaxing and refreshing for each one in the family.

It is essential for every human being that a break is highly needed every now and then; no matter how busy people are. We all need to be away from everyday's life hustle and bustle and break our daily routine, which sometimes makes us just like an automated machine. Though, machines undergo a regular maintenance process and breakdown even.

A short break would always be a creditable advantage for us to refresh our memories, recharge our body's power and stimulate spirits and interests.

Generally, summer season brings bright and longer days that mirror the different aspects of nature's beauty. Basically, each part of the world is distinguished with special natural, historical and cultural characteristics as well as other merits that make summer more enjoyable there.

For this reason, there would be no excuse for people, but to enjoy summer in one way or another, so they could cool down themselves.



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An author, columnist, creative writer, translator and a communications professional

WHAT MATTERS IS THAT ONE SHOULD LIVE THE MOMENT, ENJOY LIFE AND TAKE THE EXPERIENCE

Summer always offers a wide range of enjoyment options for people to meet their desires and amuse themselves in.

Accordingly, people's plans to enjoy the holiday season differ based on their interests and budgets as two key factors to sufficiently make their plans. Some might be more interested in enjoying their time with the family through a special touring and exploring agenda.

They prefer to tour around the different tourist destinations within the country itself. Those are more directed to internal tourism, which could be their interest to enjoy their holiday the easy way.

On the other hand, budget might not be a problem for others who would never enjoy their summer holiday without taking off overseas. Such people prefer to spend their vacation exploring a different part of the planet. For them, being away from the homeland is more refreshing as well as bringing a real thrill of enjoying the holiday. It is true as one sometimes needs to think out of the box; one needs to get out of the place to have a better refreshed mind and spirit.

As people are different in the way they think and behave, they are different in the way they enjoy life too. What matters is that one should live the moment, enjoy life and take the experience. As Mahatma Gandhi advised, "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever".

In order to enjoy life, one should have a balance between life's necessities and having a break. It is as important for us as maintenance for machines. You never know that health breakdown might happen to you due to excessive hard work, life stress and work pressure.

Just give yourself a break and experience the difference in your feelings, spirit and memory. There is nothing worth risking your life and health for.

Switch off your button for some time and have a recharging summer break!

OLYMPIC TORCH BEARER



Torch bearer Colonel Thibaut Vallette, chief squire of the Cadre noir of Saumur and gold medalist in the team event at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, holds the Olympic flame during the annual Bastille Day military parade on the Avenue Foch, in Paris. – Reuters

French far right hopes polishing its act will deliver victory

After a shock defeat in France's legislative elections, Marine Le Pen's National Rally (RN) will double down on weeding out problematic candidates to counter successful efforts by mainstream parties to block the far right from power.

Polls had suggested the RN would secure the most seats in the snap two-round election, which French President Emmanuel Macron called after Le Pen's party was the clear victor of June's European parliamentary vote. Yet the RN ultimately placed third, with its hopes of forming France's first far-right government since World War II thwarted by centrist and left-wing parties who withdrew about 200 third-placed candidates to unify the anti-RN vote. The strategy, known as the "republican front", is a feature of French political life and has been used for decades to block the RN from power.

RN officials and lawmakers who spoke believe the party can overcome this electoral barricade if it professionalises further, following a path laid out by Le Pen after she lost the 2017 presidential election to Macron. That means greater screening of potential candidates and tougher party discipline to avoid costly gaffes, they said.

In the run-up to the vote, media reports unveiled an RN candidate who



Elizabeth Pineau

The writer is a political journalist with Reuters



Tassilo Hummel

The writer is a Reuters News Correspondent in France

had been photographed in a Nazi cap, and another who sought to defend against the party's history of racism and anti-Semitism by saying she had a Jewish eye doctor and Muslim dentist. After the vote, a newly elected RN lawmaker was ejected from the party's parliamentary group for saying French Arabs had no place in government.

"We have to avoid these casting errors that cost us dearly and clearly hurt us," said Julien Masson, an RN official in Brittany.

Heads have already begun to roll, with Gilles Pennelle, a member of the European Parliament, stepping down from his role as the RN executive in charge of overseeing candidate lists.

"He was blamed for the candidates who were not good, who were not up to the level," Masson said. Pennelle did not respond to requests for comment.

Two RN lawmakers said there would be more media training to avoid a repeat of embarrassing interviews in which candidates appeared amateurish.

RN lawmaker Jean-Philippe Tanguy said the party was judged by an unfair standard, but acknowledged it needed to do

better.

"You always have to improve," he said, adding that Le Pen's 28-year-old protege Jordan Bardella would soon announce proposals to address "organisational problems."

Christophe Gervasi, who conducts private polling for the RN, said that as well as inexperienced and ill-disciplined recruits, the party's tendency to be vague and inconsistent on policy proposals had dented its credibility.

The party pledges to cut immigration, reduce fuel costs and be tougher on crime, common

themes among populist far-right parties, but has dropped previous positions questioning EU and Nato membership.

Gervasi said it would be no easy task for the RN to overcome the republican front.

"There are endemic structural weaknesses that persist," he said. "The system is defending itself against the RN's accession to power."

Patrick Weil, a historian of the far right, said he doubted that an RN deep-clean would be enough for it to bulldoze the republican

front. Much would depend on how the future government pans out and who stands in the 2027 election, in which Le Pen is likely to make her fourth attempt at the presidency.

"If someone popular runs, Marine le Pen will be beaten. If someone very unpopular runs, she will be elected," he said.

Adélaïde Zulfikarpasic, of BVA Xsight pollsters, said the surprising solidity of the republican front, which many had predicted to crumble in this election, underlined lingering discomfort with the far right.

"The RN is undoubtedly still a little scary," she said. "Its demonisation is not over."

Sunday's result was not a complete disaster for the RN, which nearly doubled its seats in the National Assembly. The party scooped up nearly a third of the popular vote, a record high for the RN in parliamentary elections.

The party can now watch from the opposition benches as centrist and leftist parties with no tradition of coalition-building guide France through a period of political instability. That could benefit the RN ahead of a 2027 election.

— Reuters



French far-right leader Marine Le Pen, member of parliament of the Rassemblement National (National Rally - RN) party, is surrounded by journalists at the National Assembly in Paris after the second round of the early French parliamentary elections, France. – Reuters

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AL BALUSHI, AL ALAWI, AL KHATRI, AL ADAWI TO REPRESENT OMAN IN PARIS OLYMPICS

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, JULY 14

The Oman Olympic committee confirmed four athletes including sprinters Ali al Balushi, Mazoon al Alawi, shooter Said al Khatri and swimmer Issa al Adawi to represent Sultanate of Oman in the forthcoming 33rd edition of the Summer Olympic Games (Paris 2024) which begins on July 26 and runs until August 11.

Ali bin Anwar al Balushi, the 22 year-old sprinter, will make his Olympic debut at Paris 2024 Olympics after he secured slot through ranking 49th in the world classification at the 100m event which gave him the direct ticket to the Olympics.

The flag bearer of the last Olympic Games in Tokyo 2020 Swimmer Issa bin Hamed al Adawi, 25 years-old, will attend the Paris Olympic Games for his second successive time. While shooter Said bin Ali al Khatri, 39 years-old, will make his debut too in Paris Olympic Games as he will compete in shooting competitions.

The women athlete representation in Oman's delegation will be through sprinter Mazoon bin Khalfan al Alawi, 27 years-old, who will register her third attendance in row at Olympic Games after she took part at Rio Olympic Games in 2016 and Tokyo Games in 2020.

This participation at Paris Olympic Games will mark Oman's 11th times presence in the summer Olympic Games since first historic participation in 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

Oman athletes hopes are still very high to clinch their historic Olympic medal through various young potential athletes. The Sultanate of Oman's best participation is back to 1988 Seoul Olympics as the legend's sprinter



Mohammed al Malki had reached to semifinals of the 400m event before he ended in the eighth place.

In the previous attendance of Oman's delegation at 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, swimmer Issa had ended in the sixth place with a timing of 51:81 in the 100m freestyle event while Sprinter Mazoon al Alawi had completed the 100m race event in the sixth

position with a timing of 12:35 seconds. Then, Oman's sprinter Barakat al Harthy advanced to Round one of the men's 100m race event in Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. He had led the preliminary heat two group and clocked 10:27 seconds as his seasonal best record. In the round One qualification heat five of men's 100m race event, Barkat had clocked 10:31 seconds.

Weightlifter Amer al Khanjari had finished as runner up in weightlifting competition at men's 81 kg — group B event and in tenth place in the overall order of the category. The 23 years-old had managed to register his best personal record in his debut in Tokyo 2020 Olympics as he had lifted a total 317 kg with four kg extra than his previous record in Egypt.



Shooter Hamed al Khatri had registered a total of 1148 (382- kneeling, 392-prone, 374-standing) to finish 35th place among the 39 world ranking shooters in the men's 50m rifle 3 positions qualifications event.

The official Sultanate of Oman's delegation to Paris Olympics will be led by Shaikh Khalid bin Mohammed al Zubair, OOC chairman, Taha al Kishry OOC

Secretary-General and besides some officials from the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and OOC.

Oman's chef-de-mission will be Ali al Busafi while Amir al Zeidi will accompany as physiotherapist. The OOC will unveil further details on Oman's participation at the Olympic Games in Paris on Thursday through a press meet at the OOC headquarters.

Oman Hockey Association concludes Junior Hockey5s League

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, JULY 14

Al Nasr B team secured the first place in the Junior Hockey5s League 2024 after defeating Al Nasr team A with a score of 2-0 in the final match held at the hockey field of Sultan Qaboos Complex in Salalah.

In the second group Ahli Sidab team clinched the first place after defeating Seeb team with a score of 5-0 in the final match held at the hockey field in Al Amerat.

Sohar team won the first place in the group C by overcoming Al Nahda team with a score of 6-3 in the final match held at the hockey field of Sohar Sports Complex.

The tournament featured 12 clubs namely Ahli Sidab, Seeb, Al Rustaq, Saham, Al Nahda, Al Salam, Al Nasr, Salalah, Dhofar, Majees, Sohar, and Niwza.

The league targeted players born in 2006-2007 and was divided into three geographical



groups. The group A Clubs from Dhofar Governorate, while group B clubs from Muscat and Al Dakhiliyah Governorates, while Group C included clubs from the Governorates of North and South Al Batinah and Al Buraimi. The clubs competed in a single round-robin system.

Hamad al Rowahi from Al Nasr A was the winner of the top scorer award for group A, the best goalkeeper award went for player Bassam al Saadi from Al Nasr A team, Awadh al Rawahi from Al Nasr A team was crowned best player.



In Group B, the player Saad al Fazari from Ahli Sidab team won the top scorer award, while Issa al Raisi from Seeb team



won the best goalkeeper award, Rashid al Alawi from Ahli Sidab team won the best Player award. As for Group 3, Abbas al Nofli

from Sohar team won the top scorer award, Asim al Amri from Al Nahda team won the best goalkeeper award, and Nasser al Nofli from Sohar team won the best player award.

In the final match between Ahli Sidab and Seeb, Ahli Sidab took an early lead in the second minute with a powerful shot from Meitham al Wahaibi. Seeb players attempted to push forward in search of an equalizer, but Ahli Sidab's solid defense held them at bay.

The match continued with both teams exchanging attacks,

but Ahli Sidab managed to extend their lead with another goal from Meitham al Wahaibi from a free kick in the seventh minute.

As Seeb's performance declined, Saad scored the third goal for Ahli Sidab before the end of the first half, which ended with a score of 3-0.

In the second half, Ahli Sidab's pressure continued, and Rashid Al Alawi added the fourth goal in the fifth minute of the half.

Seeb players continued to struggle to pose any real threat to the opponent's goal, and Meitham Al Wahaibi returned to score his third personal goal and the fifth goal for his team after a well-coordinated tactical move.

Despite Seeb's attempts to reduce the deficit, Ahli Sidab's strong defensive organisation prevented them from doing so.

The match ended with a convincing and well-deserved 5-0 victory for Ahli Sidab, crowning them as the champions of the Junior Hockey5s League.

SIXTH ROW START
ON INTERLAGOS
FOR AL HARTHY

BRAZIL: Omani racing driver Ahmad al Harthy to begin the fifth round of the FIA World Endurance Championship in Brazil from the sixth row of the LMGT3 class grid, having been achingly close to progressing into the all-important Hyperpole session – missing out by a mere 0.1 seconds.

Marking his first ever visit to the Interlagos Circuit, Al Harthy got down to work during the opening free practice sessions on Friday, 12th July, and after a third practice period on Saturday, 13th July, he had the task of qualifying the Team WRT-run No.46 BMW M4.

Posting the sixth fastest time in LMGT3 on his first flying lap of Saturday afternoon's session, Al Harthy then improved to fifth the next time around as times started to tumble around the famous 4.3-kilometre track.

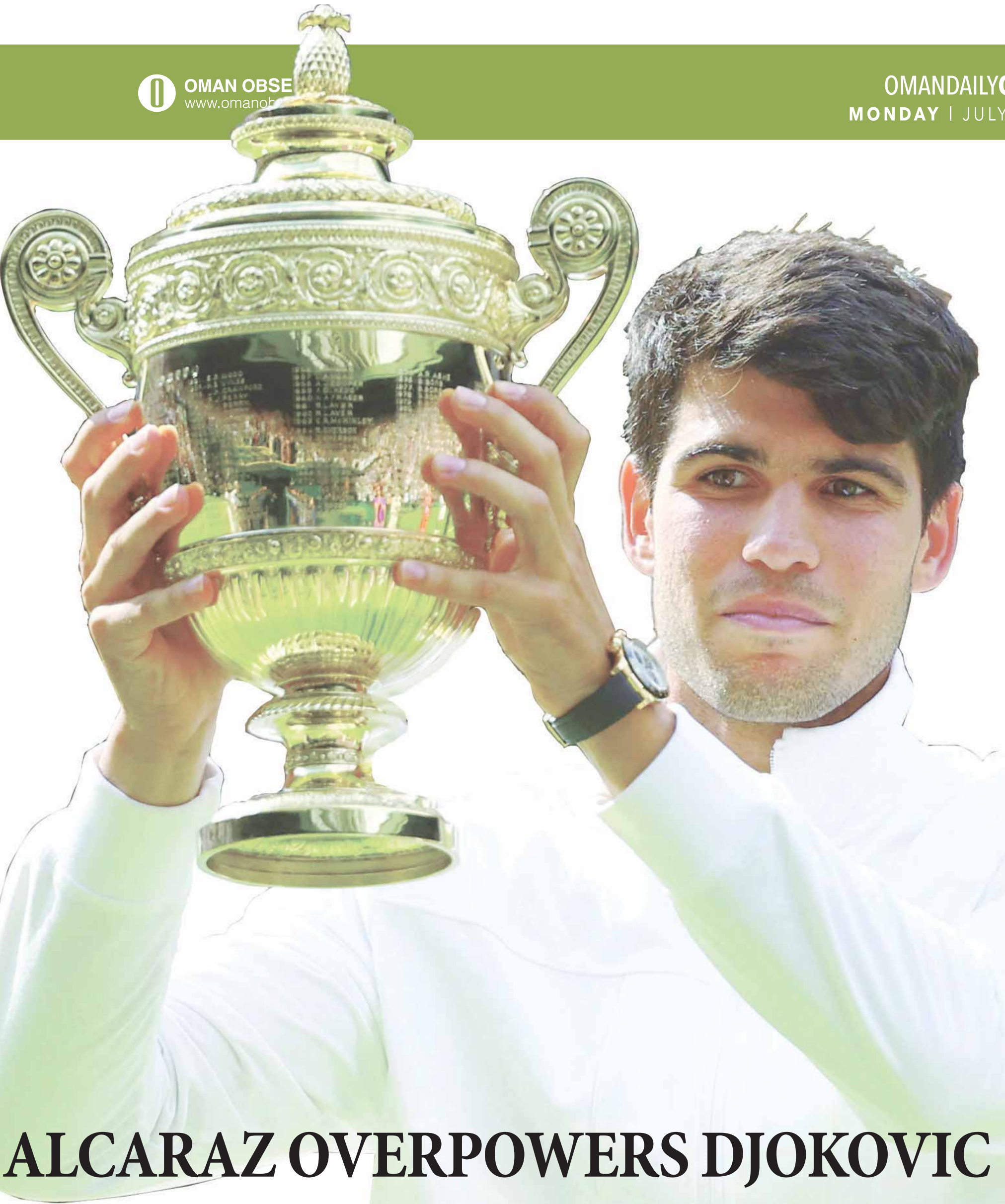
Continuing to shave time off his previous best, into the closing stages of the session the Omani was 0.9 seconds away from the quickest of all but then found another two tenths of a second on his final lap to be right on the cusp of progression into the top 10 Hyperpole shoot-out.

In the end, though, he just missed out by little more than 0.1 seconds with a fastest time of 1m36.163 seconds (250.18 km/h), meaning 12th on the grid for the Rolex 6 Hours of Sao Paulo in the car he shares with star team-mates Maxime Martin and Valentino Rossi.

After two FIA WEC races which haven't borne fruit for the No.46 squad, in Belgium and France, the aim for today's six-hour contest in Brazil is to deliver consistency – and hopefully enjoy Team WRT's usual reliability as well – in order to capture some much-needed points in the LMGT3 Championship.

Al Harthy, backed as always by his prestigious partners OQ, Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Omantel and BMW Oman, goes into today's encounter ninth in the LMGT3 standings with Martin and Rossi – only six points away from the top four.

AHMAD AL HARTHY:
“It was a tough qualifying to be honest. We always want to get into Hyperpole but, unfortunately, with a very short lap the gaps between everyone were very tight and we didn't have the pace to get through. Hopefully we will have a strong race, we've worked hard on the set-up as we always do and we're all looking forward to it.
“It will be a long six-hour race. As I mentioned with the lap being short, and with such a huge grid of cars, there is going to be a lot of action for sure. We need to run our own race, stick to our plan and then hopefully we can come through to a strong finish and good result.”



ALCARAZ OVERPOWERS DJOKOVIC
TO RETAIN WIMBLEDON TITLE

LIST OF WIMBLEDON MEN'S SINGLES CHAMPIONS

- 2024 Alcaraz (Spain) beat Djokovic (Serbia) 6-2 6-2 7-6(4)
- 2023 Alcaraz (Spain) beat Djokovic (Serbia) 1-6 7-6(6) 6-1 3-6 6-4
- 2022 Djokovic (Serbia) beat Nick Kyrgios (Australia) 4-6 6-3 6-4 7-6(3)
- 2021 Djokovic (Serbia) beat Matteo Berrettini (Italy) 6-7(4) 6-4 6-4 6-3
- 2020 Tournament cancelled due to Covid-19 pandemic
- 2019 Djokovic (Serbia) beat Roger Federer (Switzerland) 7-6(5) 1-6 7-6(4) 4-6 13-12(3)
- 2018 Djokovic (Serbia) beat Kevin Anderson (South Africa) 6-2 6-2 7-6(3)
- 2017 Federer (Switzerland) beat Marin Cilic (Croatia) 6-3 6-1 6-4
- 2016 Andy Murray (Britain) beat Milos Raonic (Canada) 6-4 7-6(3) 7-6(2)
- 2015 Djokovic (Serbia) beat Federer (Switzerland) 7-6(1) 6-7(10) 6-4 6-3
- 2014 Djokovic (Serbia) beat Federer (Switzerland) 6-7(7) 6-4 7-6(4) 5-7 6-4
- 2013 Murray (Britain) beat Djokovic (Serbia) 6-4 7-5 6-4
- 2012 Federer (Switzerland) beat Murray (Britain) 4-6 7-5 6-3 6-4
- 2011 Djokovic (Serbia) beat Rafael Nadal (Spain) 6-4 6-1 1-6 6-3
- 2010 Nadal (Spain) beat Tomas Berdych (Czech Republic) 6-3 7-5 6-4
- 2009 Federer (Switzerland) beat Andy Roddick (US) 5-7 7-6(6) 7-6(5) 3-6 16-14
- 2008 Nadal (Spain) beat Federer (Switzerland) 6-4 6-4 6-7(5) 6-7(8) 9-7
- 2007 Federer (Switzerland) beat Nadal (Spain) 7-6(7) 4-6 7-6(3) 2-6 6-2
- 2006 Federer (Switzerland) beat Nadal (Spain) 6-0 7-6(5) 6-7(2) 6-3
- 2005 Federer (Switzerland) beat Roddick (US) 6-2 7-6(2) 6-4
- 2004 Federer (Switzerland) beat Roddick (US) 4-6 7-5 7-6(3) 6-4
- 2003 Federer (Switzerland) beat Mark Philippoussis (Australia) 7-6(5) 6-2 7-6(3)
- 2002 Lleyton Hewitt (Australia) beat David Nalbandian (Argentina) 6-1 6-3 6-2
- 2001 Goran Ivanisevic (Croatia) beat Pat Rafter (Australia) 6-3 3-6 6-3 2-6 9-7
- 2000 Pete Sampras (US) beat Rafter (Australia) 6-7(10) 7-6(5) 6-4 6-2
- 1999 Sampras (US) beat Andre Agassi (US) 6-3 6-4 7-5
- 1998 Sampras (US) beat Ivanisevic (Croatia) 6-7(2) 7-6(9) 6-4 3-6 6-2
- 1997 Sampras (US) beat Cedric Pioline (France) 6-4 6-2 6-4
- 1996 Richard Krajicek (Netherlands) beat Mal Washington (US) 6-3 6-4 6-3
- 1995 Sampras (US) beat Boris Becker (Germany) 6-7(5) 6-2 6-4 6-2
- 1994 Sampras (US) beat Ivanisevic (Croatia) 7-6(2) 7-6(5) 6-0
- 1993 Sampras (US) beat Jim Courier (US) 7-6(3) 7-6(6) 3-6 6-3
- 1992 Agassi (US) beat Ivanisevic (Croatia) 6-7(8) 6-4 6-4 1-6 6-4
- 1991 Michael Stich (Germany) beat Becker (Germany) 6-4 7-6(4) 6-4
- 1990 Stefan Edberg (Sweden) beat Becker (Germany) 6-2 6-2 3-6 3-6 6-4
- 1989 Becker (Germany) beat Edberg (Sweden) 6-0 7-6(1) 6-4
- 1988 Edberg (Sweden) beat Becker (Germany) 4-6 7-6(2) 6-4 6-2
- 1987 Pat Cash (Australia) beat Ivan Lendl (Czechoslovakia) 7-6(5) 6-2 7-5
- 1986 Becker (Germany) beat Lendl (Czechoslovakia) 6-4 6-3 7-5
- 1985 Becker (Germany) beat Kevin Curren (US) 6-3 6-7(4) 7-6(3) 6-4
- 1984 McEnroe (US) beat Jimmy Connors (US) 6-1 6-1 6-2
- 1983 McEnroe (US) beat Chris Lewis (New Zealand) 6-2 6-2 6-2
- 1982 Connors (US) beat McEnroe (US) 3-6 6-3 6-7(2) 7-6(5) 6-4

— Reuters

LONDON: Carlos Alcaraz overpowered seven-time champion Novak Djokovic in straight sets to retain his Wimbledon title on Sunday in a brutal statement that the new era of men's tennis has arrived.

The Spanish third seed produced a performance combining awesome power with delicate touch to win 6-2, 6-2, 7-6 (7/4), collecting the fourth Grand Slam of his young career.

Alcaraz equals the Open Era record for most Grand Slams won at the age 21 or under, joining Boris Becker, Bjorn Borg and Mats Wilander.

And he is just the sixth man to win the French Open and Wimbledon back to back.

Djokovic, 37, who had knee surgery just weeks ago, was aiming to win a 25th Grand Slam -- which would have been a record in the men's and women's game.

But he had no answers in the Centre Court sunshine as the electric Alcaraz pounded him from the back of the court and treated the crowd to an array of his trademark drop shots.

Alcaraz seized the initiative in a first game of breathtaking quality lasting 14 minutes, taking advantage of his fifth break point.

The Spaniard settled quickly into his routine on serve and went up a double break when Djokovic double-faulted in the fifth game.

The shell-shocked Serbian, playing in his 10th Wimbledon final, held serve to love to close the gap to 5-2 but dumped the ball into the net to hand the Spaniard the first set.

Alcaraz was immediately on the front foot in the second set, forcing a break in the first game and fending off pressure on his own serve to take a 2-0 lead.

A Djokovic backhand into the net in the seventh game handed Alcaraz another break point and a double fault put the defending champion 5-2 up and on the cusp of a two-set lead.

The Centre Court crowd, including Catherine, Princess of Wales, looked on in disbelief as their hopes for a titanic tussle evaporated.

Djokovic fended off another of clutch of break points early in the third set to stay alive and showed signs that he was finding his range.

But the Spaniard carved out three break points in the ninth game, arrowing a passing shot past his stranded opponent to move 5-4 ahead.

Alcaraz stepped up to serve for the championship but squandered three match points, missing a straightforward drive volley as Djokovic broke for the first time in the match.

But he recovered his composure quickly as the set went to a tie-break.

Djokovic went wide with a forehand to give Alcaraz a 5-3 lead and the Spaniard won the title with his fourth championship point.

The result means Djokovic has still not beaten a top-ten player this year and has yet to win a title.

The Serbian will now turn his attention to the Paris Olympics as he seeks to win gold for the first time.

— AFP



UEFA
EURO2024
GERMANY



Spain fans walk to the stadium ahead of the final match Final - Spain v England - Berlin, Germany. – Reuters



Mexico fans are pictured inside the stadium. – Reuters



Spain fans walk to the stadium. – Reuters



Young Spain fan holds up a sign for Dani Carvajal inside the stadium. – Reuters



England fans gather at Breitscheidplatz ahead of the match. – Reuters



England fans get their faces painted at Breitscheidplatz. – Reuters



An England fan has her face painted. – Reuters



England fans pose for a picture. – Reuters



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Development of new SEZs, industrial zones makes headway across Oman



Phase 1 design of the Integrated Economic Zone in Al Dhahirah.

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, JULY 14

As many as eight clusters, earmarked by the Omani government for development into Special Economic Zones, Free Zones and Industrial Cities, are currently in various stages of design and early development around the Sultanate of Oman, according to the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ).

Strategically distributed around the country, these clusters represent a key part of the government's drive to spur investments in manufacturing, industrial and economic activities in line with a broader thrust to diversify the national economy.

According to details shared by OPAZ, the biggest of these clusters — the Integrated Economic Zone in Al Dhahirah Governorate (EZAD) — is making significant headway in its early development at a site located not far from the Omani-Saudi border crossing in the Wilayat of Ibri.

Overseeing the master-planning and development of the landmark project is an Omani-Saudi executive committee.

Phase 1, covering a mere 20 km2 site of the massive zone, will include a land port set on a 6.5 km2 area operated and managed by Asyad Group.

A tender for the design and construction supervision of Phase 1 garnered a total of nine joint bids from Omani and Saudi firms.

In March, OPAZ said it had selected one of the bidders for the design consultancy contract.

In the Governorate of Al Buraimi, OPAZ has announced the completion of a detailed plan for Phase 1 of Al Rawdah Economic Zone. Participating from the UAE side in the project is Mahdha Development Company, the investment arm of Dubai International Ports.

Following the signing of an initial framework agreement with a strategic partner last November, Mahdha

Development Company has been granted the right to use and develop an area of 11 km2 in addition to an area of 3 km2 for future expansion, according to OPAZ.

Adding to OPAZ's portfolio of investment clusters are Airport Free Zone developments planned at Muscat International Airport, as well as Sohar and Salalah Airports.

OPAZ says it has signed a concession agreement with Asyad Group, the end-to-end logistics services provider of Oman, granting it the right to manage and operate the free zone at Muscat International Airport.

"The operator will develop plans for operation and development of the free zone, and regulations and controls for the land use and planning. It will also comply with OPAZ regulations, decisions, rules and laws, and provide all services and facilities at the zone," said OPAZ. In addition to these economic zones and free zones, at least five industrial cities are being prepped for development at different locations around Oman.

Topping the list is Mahas Industrial City, a 21.5 million m2 cluster in Musandam Governorate. Basic infrastructure, including roads, drainage, lighting and water supply networks, are being implemented.

In Muscat Governorate, the modest-sized Al Wadi Al Kabir Industrial City is the subject of a significant upgrade. As part of this exercise, OPAZ subsidiary — the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) — is overseeing the implementation of several studies to support the cluster's rehabilitation and further development.

Finally, preliminary design and consultancy services are currently underway in support of industrial cities planned at Thamrait (Dhofar Governorate), Al Mudhaibi (Al Sharqiyah North Governorate) and Seeh Sarya (Al Dakhiliyah Governorate).

MoTCIT launches initiatives to boost job opportunities for Omanis

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MoTCIT) is spearheading multiple initiatives aimed at boosting job opportunities for Omanis in the transport, logistics, communications and information technology sectors.

These efforts are part of a broader strategy to regulate the labour market and achieve the goals outlined in Oman Vision 2040.

Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, announced that from January 2025 to the end of 2027, specific jobs across various sectors will be exclusively allocated to Omanis.

This move aims to enhance coordination with the Ministry of Labour.

In a statement to the Oman News Agency, Al Maawali detailed the ministry's annual Omanisation targets leading up to 2040. In 2024, the ministry aims to achieve 20 per cent Omanisation in the transport and logistics sector and 31 per cent in the communications and information technology sector.

These targets will be reviewed and adjusted annually. The ministry's long-term goal is to Omanise professional roles in these sectors through a series of policies and initiatives.

Key policies include the restriction of certain professions to Omanis, the establishment of



Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali
Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology

minimum employment levels proportional to sector growth, and the governance of work permits. Additional measures include oversight, professional level tests, job titles, wage support, and extensive training and qualification programmes.

Al Maawali emphasised that these initiatives aim to replace expatriate-held positions with qualified Omani professionals.

The first phase targets Omanisation percentages between 20 per cent and 50 per cent in the transport and logistics sector, with a goal of reaching 100 per cent by 2040.

This phase will cover maritime, air and land transport fields, including administrative, specialised, and support roles, identified through workforce data analysis.

For the communications and information technology sector, the initiative aims for Omanisation percentages between 50 per cent and 100 per cent by 2026, focusing

on quality jobs.

The ministry is also promoting self-employment opportunities in these sectors by linking licensed activities to the self-employment registry.

Furthermore, starting in 2025, the ministry will ensure that companies assigned projects worth over RO 3 million contribute to local added value, enhancing the integration of the work system in collaboration with sector partners.

These comprehensive initiatives reflect the ministry's commitment to creating sustainable employment opportunities for Omanis and advancing the nation's economic and social development goals.

Oman to allow direct natural gas monetisation and marketing: Al Aufi

HIBBA AL KINDI
MUSCAT, JULY 14

Energy companies investing in Oman's hydrocarbon sector can now directly monetise and market their value-added natural gas production instead of solely relying on the state-owned Integrated Gas Company (IGC) for the offtake of this output, according to Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals

Speaking to *Al Shabiba* earlier this week, the minister shared the following, "We have started to adopt a new marketing approach by giving field developers the opportunity to engage in what is called 'monetisation' or marketing gas by attracting new projects.

"The current situation is that



The new policy will allow field developers to attract investments in added-value projects even if the price of natural gas as fuel or feedstock is higher than prevailing domestic trends.

the Integrated Gas Company is responsible for purchasing gas for the Sultanate of Oman and selling gas to existing projects. This creates a challenge because

they have a price ceiling that cannot be exceeded due to market conditions."

Al Aufi added: "Therefore, we are allowing companies with

the capacity to develop fields to operate, even though the cost of gas is high, as they attract industries that can adapt to higher prices. Additionally, these companies are committed to supplying gas independently from the Integrated Gas Company and any government obligations."

Established in December 2022, the Integrated Gas Company was set up to facilitate gas sales and purchase agreements on behalf of the government.

This is in addition to taking over the Ministry of Energy and Minerals' role as the sole shipper of gas through OQGN's (OQ Gas Networks) transmission network.

Natural gas is an important source of revenue for the Omani government in the form of LNG exports.

TURN TO PAGE 15

OQ8 empowers Oman’s future workforce with UK Summer Leadership Programme

MUSCAT: Duqm Refinery and Petrochemical Industries Company (OQ8) has announced the launch of the 5th edition of its highly anticipated Summer Leadership Programme in the United Kingdom.

With an ambition to empower Oman’s future workforce, the programme aims to inspire students’ leadership with special skills development. This year, 22 outstanding students from Al Wusta and other governorates have been chosen to embark on this transformative journey on July 7.

OQ8’s ambitious programme, held in partnership with the Ministry of Education and in collaboration with the prestigious Oxford University and Takatuf Oman, aims to empower and inspire Omani youth for the future workforce.

The main objective of the programme is to enhance their skills and broaden their cultural horizons, preparing them to meet the demands of the future.

Jasim al Ajmi, Vice-President of Corporate Affairs at OQ8, stated, “We are committed to creating a positive impact on the lives of young people from Al Wusta community and Oman at large.

“The OQ8 Summer Leadership Programme is one of our most successful and impactful initiatives to date. It provides



students with the opportunity to improve their leadership skills and foster personal growth and cultural understanding.

“Our holistic approach ensures that these outstanding students not only excel academically, but also develop the necessary life skills to be self-reliant and independent in the future.”

The OQ8 Summer Leadership Programme offers a comprehensive one-month curriculum that includes intensive English language courses, leadership skills development and cultural immersion activities.

The students will also visit historical and cultural attractions in the UK, facilitating their understanding of new cultures and enhancing their global awareness.

To prepare the students for this enriching experience, a one-week induction programme was

conducted in Muscat.

This induction familiarised the students with British culture and provided guidance on how to maximise the benefits of the courses offered in the UK.

“The OQ8 Summer Leadership Programme in Oxford, UK, continues its successful run, sponsored by OQ8 and implemented by Takatuf Oman,” said Dawood bin Suleiman al Shabibi, Head of International Relations Department at the Ministry of Education.

“Based on specific criteria, the Ministry of Education selected outstanding tenth-grade students from different governorates.

“After announcing the final list of accepted students, the ministry ensured smooth implementation by accompanying the students and overseeing all necessary procedures. “The programme concluded with a detailed analysis

of Oman. Subsequent editions enrolled 20 students in 2023 and 22 students in 2024.

To date, a total of 102 students have benefited from this prestigious programme, selected based on their academic performance in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, and are either in the 10th or 11th grade.

Speaking about the impact of last year’s programme, students gave an insight into the benefits.

“I am proud to have been given this opportunity and chosen to be part of this programme. I am confident that the programme will contribute to building my character and self-confidence, as well as honing my skills in many areas, especially in learning English,” said Ghadif al Hadhrami, a student from Muscat Governorate.

“Joining this programme was good news for all my family members, as they heard about the success of the initiative in its previous editions and its contribution to building the capabilities of Omani youth.

“I look forward to continuing my education through this opportunity, which I am sure will be a significant milestone in my academic journey,” added Jumanah al Maqbali, a student from Al Batinah North Governorate.

Beat the heat this summer in Salalah with Ooredoo’s tourist plans



MUSCAT: Come rain in Dhofar or shine in the rest of Oman; Ooredoo is always ready to upgrade your world. Are you planning to head to Salalah to cool down this summer?

Well, Ooredoo is here to make your trip even more memorable, as the telco is offering customers some fantastic Tourist Plans, starting this June. There’s something for everyone with plans that fit every need and some awesome savings! Think of loads of data, calls to the top 104 international destinations, local calls and more.

The RO 5 package’s benefits are valid for ten days. Now giving 8 GB instead of 6 GB, 50 local plus 50 international minutes and 50 SMS (local and international.

Meanwhile, the RO 10 package, valid for 15 days, covers 18 GB instead of 15 GB of data and 100 local plus 100 international minutes and 100 SMS.

Last not least, Ooredoo introduces the all-new RO 20 package, valid for 20 days, which includes unlimited data, unlimited local calls and an amazing 200 minutes of international calls. It also includes 200 SMS, since that’s still a quick and easy way to connect with people!

So Hala bil Khareef with Ooredoo’s new Tourist Plans and enjoy no hassle, hidden extras, or unpleasant surprises.

And that’s not all, as the plans go hand in hand with Ooredoo’s recent 5G coverage network boost, which will keep customers connected like never before. Available to tourist customers, the plans are easy to buy, activate and are available at Salalah Airport, border locations and Ooredoo stores.

TRAVEL SAFE WITH BANKDHOFAR’S TRAVEL INSURANCE

MUSCAT: BankDhofar is pleased to announce a strategic collaboration with Dhofar Insurance to introduce a comprehensive travel insurance policy designed to provide travellers with peace of mind and robust coverage during their journeys.

With a promise of instant issuance, this product is introduced to meet the increased demand during the travel season and is a reflection of the bank’s commitment to offer customer-centric solutions.

The travel insurance policy offers a wide range of benefits to ensure customers are well-



protected while travelling, such as: Emergency Medical Evacuation, with up to \$1 million coverage for emergency

Loss of Passport, as the travel insurance provides a coverage of up to \$300 to assist in the replacement of a lost passport, reducing the inconvenience and stress associated with such incidents.

Medical Expenses during Hospitalisation; with up to \$1 million coverage for medical expenses incurred during hospitalisation, providing financial support for unexpected medical emergencies abroad.

Also the insurance offers trip cancellation service with a coverage of up to \$2,000 per flight for trip cancellations, offering compensation for non-

refundable expenses in case of unforeseen circumstances.

This travel insurance policy is available to all BankDhofar’s customers, providing them with an added layer of security and convenience.

Whether travelling for business or leisure, our customers can now enjoy their trips with the assurance that they are covered in case of emergencies or disruptions. With a steadfast focus on technological advancements and customer empowerment, BankDhofar continues to lead the way in transforming Oman’s banking sector.

Bank Muscat holds seminar for Najahi business banking customers in Salalah

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, organised a seminar for entrepreneurs titled “Marketing Your Business in a Rapidly Changing World” presented by Hashar al Mandhari, CEO, Alamah Marketing.

The seminar was attended by a number of Bank Muscat officials and Najahi Business Banking customers in Dhofar Governorate.

On this occasion, Taya Bait Sabaea, Deputy General Manager, Interior Regions, Bank Muscat, said: “We are pleased to see the continuous efforts made to enhance the Bank’s pioneering role by working to implement various initiatives to support this sector.

“Such initiatives aim to achieve long-term results in

enhancing inclusion and financial awareness, developing SMEs and empowering youth.

“Bank Muscat is committed to continue supporting this sector by providing the best possible services, facilities, advisory and training programmes and initiatives.

“I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Bank’s valued customers for their continuous trust in the programmes and services designed for SMEs.”

During the event, Hashar al Mandhari, CEO, Alamah Marketing, delivered a workshop titled “Marketing Your Business in a Rapidly Changing World”.

It covered a variety of themes, including the concept of marketing



and its significance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the prospects for SMEs in the digital sphere, and the significance of digital applications and the utilisation of marketing trends for these businesses.

Additionally, he provided a few instances of small businesses that saw success in digital marketing. Bank Muscat realises the importance of SMEs and works to enhance its role in supporting the sector.

One step taken in this regard is the inauguration of Najahi Business Banking in 2014 to support micro businesses by providing a suite of financing options.

The products and services

provided are designed to help these enterprises grow and thrive in their business, thus creating a positive impact on the community.

By providing tailor-made financial and non-financial solutions as well as handholding small businesses in their entrepreneurial journey, Bank Muscat’s Najahi Business Banking is helping many Omani nationals, especially the youth, to establish themselves as a strong economic force that contributes substantially to the economy.

Entrepreneurs can visit their nearest Najahi centre, call 24790000 or visit https://www.bankmuscat.com/en/Business/Business_segements/Pages/Najahi-Home-Page.aspx for more information regarding Najahi products and services.



OPAZ unveils centralised investor service platform

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, JULY 14

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has launched the Central Platform for Investor Services, a ground-breaking project designed to streamline access to government and operational e-services within Oman's economic, free, and industrial zones.

This platform aims to integrate seamlessly with other national government service platforms, enhancing the overall service experience for investors.

This initiative marks a significant step in advancing Oman's digital infrastructure, aligning with sustainable development goals, and positioning Oman's economic zones as reliable and sustainable investment destinations.

Mahmoud bin Hamoud al Rawahi, Director General of Planning and Information Technology, elaborated on the platform's benefits: "This platform will serve as a centralised one-stop shop where investors can access



This platform aims to integrate seamlessly with other national government service platforms, enhancing the overall service experience for investors.

all necessary services."

It will generate centralised statistics, track KPIs, and integrate various e-service channels and systems, simplifying the connection between government and operational services within OPAZ-supervised zones.

Furthermore, the platform will streamline the oversight and management of services, reduce administrative and financial costs, and safeguard investor data by functioning as a comprehensive investor portfolio.

Al Rawahi emphasised that

the platform will enhance service efficiency, reducing the time and effort required for investors to obtain necessary data and apply for services. This aligns with OPAZ's digital transformation strategy and commitment to improving investor services.



Mahmoud bin Hamoud al Rawahi

Transparency in service requirements and expedited procedures will further elevate the quality of services provided to investors in OPAZ-supervised zones. Since its inception in September 2020, OPAZ has implemented several initiatives to improve services for investors.

Key among these is the establishment of the Digital Transformation Committee. A comprehensive study has identified and documented the government and operational services available to investors in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, free zones, and industrial cities. This includes defining service

requirements, standardising forms, and reviewing fees and tariffs.

OPAZ has also introduced an e-service for investor land selection, allowing investors to choose from over 800 business activities based on project type and land requirements.

Additionally, OPAZ has empowered its zones to issue work permits and investor residence visas, established a toll-free investor call centre (1919), and coordinated with military and civil bodies to integrate with the customs exemption system.

Services have been categorised and documented through the Oman Digital Portal, and collaboration with the Directorate General of Customs has led to the development of import and export requirements for dual-use goods and other products.

This centralised platform represents a major leap forward in Oman's efforts to create a more efficient, transparent, and investor-friendly environment within its economic zones.

Nama announces 60 per cent implementation of Manah 1 and 2 solar power projects



MANAH: Nama Power and Water Procurement Company announced that it achieved 60 per cent implementation of Manah 1 and Manah 2 solar energy projects in the wilayat of Manah, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate.

The electricity generation projects, whose lump sum cost stands at about \$800 million, constitute a major milestone in the Sultanate of Oman's drive to cut down the carbon footprint and limit demand for natural gas.

Ahmed bin Salim al Abri, Acting CEO of Nama Power and Water Procurement Company, said that the production capacity of Manah 1 and Manah 2 solar energy projects touches 1,000

megawatts, mainly through the use of solar photovoltaic technology.

The projects cover a total area of 14.5 million square metres and comprise more than two million square metres.

The total length of their cables extends more than 3,000 km. The projects will supply power to more than 120,000 residential units.

Commercial operation of Manah 1 project is expected to commence during the first quarter of 2025, while Manah 2 project is expected to begin commercial operation in the second quarter of the same year.— **ONA**

Real estate trading value in Oman tops RO 1.237 billion



The traded value of sales contracts amounted to RO 457.200 million.

MUSCAT: The total value of real estate trading in the Sultanate of Oman recorded an increase of 1.3 per cent, reaching by the end of May 2024 a value of RO 1.237 billion, compared to the same period in 2023, which amounted to RO 1.220 billion.

Preliminary statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information indicated that the fees collected for all legal transactions amounted to RO 27.200 million, a decrease of 5.7 per cent compared to the end of May 2023.

THE TRADED VALUE OF SALES CONTRACTS AMOUNTED TO RO 457,200 MILLION FOR 28,023 CONTRACTS SOLD WITH A DECREASE IN VALUE OF 2.3 PER CENT AND AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF CONTRACTS BY 0.7 PER CENT

The traded value of sales contracts amounted to RO 457.200 million for 28,023 contracts sold with a decrease in value of 2.3 per cent and an increase in the number of contracts by 0.7 per cent.

Statistics showed that the

traded value of mortgage contracts increased by 3.5 per cent, recording RO 774,500 million for 8,596 contracts, while the number of swap contracts reached 583 contracts, worth RO 5,200 million.

The number of properties issued by the end of last May amounted to about 94,194 properties, a decrease of 5.7 per cent, while the number of properties issued to citizens of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries reached 528 properties, an increase of 2.3 per cent.— **ONA**

Oman to allow direct natural gas monetisation and marketing: Al Aufi

FROM PAGE 13

According to the Ministry of Finance, net gas revenues amounted to RO 1.868 billion in 2023, representing a sharp drop of 47 per cent from 2022 RO 3.548 billion.

The decline is attributable to the deduction of gas purchase and transport expenses from total revenue collected from Integrated Gas Company, the Ministry has noted.

Oman LNG reported a 21 per cent decline in revenues from \$5.774 billion in 2022 to \$4.9 billion in 2023, despite an aggressive spot market and contract optimisation strategy that contributed over \$1 billion in the company's earnings.

Of the 173 cargoes of LNG delivered during 2023, 6% constituted spot sales, while the balance 94% comprised shipments based on long-term contracts. A further 31 cargoes of natural gas liquids (NGLs), a byproduct of LNG production, were delivered to domestic off-takers during the year.

Trump-victory trades to swell after shooting, investors say

SINGAPORE: Saturday's shooting at US former President Donald Trump's election rally raises his odds of winning back the White House, and trades betting on his victory will increase this coming week, investors said on Sunday.

Trump was shot in the ear during the rally in Pennsylvania on Saturday in what the authorities were treating as an assassination attempt.

Trump, his face spattered with blood, pumped his fist moments after the attack and his campaign said he was fine after the incident.

Before the shooting, markets had reacted to the prospect of a Trump presidency by pushing the dollar higher and positioning for a steeper US Treasury yield curve, and those trades could strengthen in the coming week, said Rong Ren Goh, a portfolio manager in the fixed income team at Eastspring Investments in Singapore.

The first shooting of a US president or major party candidate since a 1981 assassination attempt on Republican President Ronald Reagan could upend the November 5 rematch between



People inside the Fiserv Forum, watch the news on television after hearing that Donald Trump was evacuated from the stage of his rally in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. — **Reuters**

Republican Trump and President Joe Biden, a Democrat, which has been tight in opinion polls.

"From memory, Reagan went up 22 points in the polls after his assassination attempt. The election is likely to be a landslide. This probably reduces uncertainty," said Nick Ferres, CEO at Vantage Point Asset Management.

World leaders and US politicians condemned the shooting, while some industry executives, including Tesla chief Elon Musk, declared their support for Trump.

Since a shaky performance against Trump in a presidential debate two weeks ago, Biden has faced growing doubts from donors, supporters and fellow Democrats about his ability to beat Trump and keep up with the demands of the job.

Immigration and economy have been the main issues for US voters, they see Trump as the better candidate for the economy, even as Biden's White House seeks to benefit from a solid economy with inflation slowing and unemployment low. — **Reuters**

RAS technology: The future of aquaculture



DR MOHAMED AL WAHAIBI

The author is a research assistant at the Centre of Excellence in Marine Biotechnology at Sultan Qaboos University

IMPLEMENTING RECIRCULATING AQUACULTURE SYSTEMS (RAS) IN OMAN OFFERS EFFICIENT WATER USE, PRECISE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL AND THE POTENTIAL FOR SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE.

A recirculating aquaculture system (RAS) is an almost completely closed circuit designed to continuously purify and reuse culture water.

It's a technology that recycles water after it undergoes filtration to remove suspended matter and metabolites. This method enables high-density fish farming while using minimal land and water resources.

Mechanical and biological filtration systems are used to remove or convert waste products such as solid waste, ammonium, and CO2 into non-toxic forms.

The purified water is then saturated with oxygen and returned to the fish tanks, significantly reducing water and energy requirements.

Although it is impossible to design a fully closed system, as non-degradable waste products must be removed and evaporated water replaced, RAS can

reuse 90 per cent or more of the culture water.

RAS technology allows for the intensive culture of various aquatic species, including fish, shrimps and clams, in controlled environments.

Unlike traditional aquaculture methods that rely on open ponds and raceways, RAS typically involves rearing fish in indoor or outdoor tanks, providing greater control over environmental conditions. This method maximises land and water use efficiency, making it ideal for areas with limited resources.

New water is usually added to the system only to compensate for losses due to splash out, evaporation and waste flushing, ensuring that no more than 10 per cent of the total water volume is replaced daily.

By integrating filters, RAS technology effectively manages waste and sustains high-density fish populations, supporting sustainable and environmentally friendly aquaculture practices.

ADVANTAGES OF RAS:

Recirculating aquaculture systems offer significant advantages for modern fish farming. They efficiently recycle water, requiring minimal daily intake for cleaning filters and replacing evaporated water, which is beneficial in water-scarce areas and urban environments.

It also allows for high stocking densities in smaller spaces, including repurposed urban structures like warehouses for farming operations, making them suitable for areas where space is limited.

However, for an efficient RAS system, certain infrastructure, feed quality and staffing constraints must be met:

1. Continuous electricity supply is essential, as RAS operations rely heavily on powered equipment for water circulation, filtration and environmental control.

2. Access to a reliable water source, preferably from a borehole, ensures consistent water

quality essential for fish health and system efficiency.

3. High-quality fish feed is crucial, preferably high in protein and fat content with excellent digestibility, to support the optimal growth and health of the fish.

4. Technical expertise is required among staff to manage and maintain RAS components in a medium-tech environment, ensuring proper operation and troubleshooting capabilities.

With proper planning, infrastructure and species selection tailored to local conditions, RAS can be effectively implemented in Oman to support sustainable aquaculture practices.

However, there are some factors that need to be considered for implementing RAS in Oman due to its hot desert climate:

Temperature control: RAS needs careful management due to high water temperatures, requiring additional cooling systems for fish.

Water quality: Coastal areas

offer seawater access suitable for marine RAS, while inland areas need reliable groundwater or effective filtration.

Electricity and infrastructure: Reliable power is crucial for RAS operations, powering pumps, filtration and environmental controls.

Species suitability: Choosing heat-tolerant species like tilapia is key for RAS success in Oman's conditions.

Implementing Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) in Oman offers efficient water use, precise environmental control and the potential for sustainable aquaculture.

Challenges might include managing high temperatures, ensuring reliable electricity and selecting suitable species like heat-tolerant fish.

However, with proper planning and infrastructure, RAS can support sustainable aquaculture practices in Oman, maximising productivity while minimising environmental impact.

The irrationality of EU tariffs on Chinese EVs



DANIEL GROS

The author is the director of the Institute for European Policy-Making at Bocconi University

Climate change is, by all accounts, accelerating. Not only are summers getting hotter; extreme weather is becoming increasingly frequent, exemplified by the tropical downpours that have wrought havoc across Europe and the powerful hurricanes hitting the Caribbean and the United States ever-earlier in the year.

And yet the European Union, which has long positioned itself as a leader in the fight against climate change, appears to be letting myopic thinking trump sound economic logic.

The EU has shown that it is willing to act on climate change, even when doing so is politically difficult. But in some areas, it is getting in its own way. Consider the ban on sales of new carbon-dioxide-emitting cars after 2035.

It is a bold step, which would reduce emissions by rapidly expanding the market share of electric vehicles (EVs). But it has also been highly controversial, not least because EVs currently cost much more than conventional internal combustion vehicles.

That need not be the case: China is producing EVs that could cost Europeans half as much as those currently on offer in the EU.

Yet, far from welcoming low-cost EVs from China, the EU, in defiance of common sense, recently imposed high tariffs — ranging from 17 per cent to 38 per cent — on them.

The official rationale is that the green transition “cannot be based on unfair imports at the expense of EU industry”.

But if we apply the concept of “revealed preferences” — economists’ way of saying that actions speak louder than words — the decision to impose such high tariffs on Chinese EVs reveals that, for the European Commission, preserving jobs and profits in the automotive industry is more important than fighting climate change.

The EU is hardly alone. In



Visitors view models from BYD, a Chinese automobile manufacturer. – Reuters

fact, the EU tariffs look modest compared to the 100 per cent tariff that US President Joe Biden recently announced — a levy that will practically exclude Chinese EVs from the US market. Other countries with significant domestic automotive industries — such as Turkiye and Brazil — have also imposed substantial tariffs, and Canada is considering one as well.

Given the EU's large EV surplus, it is hard to see how the import of Chinese EVs threatens Europe's automotive industry.

More important, given the global, existential nature of the climate threat, a race to develop green technologies should be desirable, with all countries supporting green industries, including the EV sector.

But the benefits of such support — from faster technological development to lower prices — will largely disappear if every country defends itself against imports of goods developed with the help of green subsidies.

The standard argument for tariff protection is that new

industries need time to develop and achieve economies of scale before they are exposed to unbridled global competition. But this “infant industry” argument cannot plausibly be applied to the automotive industry, which has been around for over a century.

Moreover, there is a big difference between a generalised tariff applied to all imports, and a discriminatory one, applied only to imports from a particular country.

The problem with the latter is that it results in so-called trade diversion: when imports from the target country are made less competitive, imports from third countries will increase. And, because the target-country imports now cost more, third countries can raise their prices without sacrificing competitiveness.

When European consumers pay higher prices for Chinese EVs, owing to tariffs, the money stays in Europe, effectively going into the EU's coffers.

The same is true when European consumers pay

higher prices for European-made EVs, only in this case, it is European producers who reap the benefits, in the form of increased profits. But when European consumers buy more EVs from third countries, their money goes abroad. Anti-subsidy tariffs, which are discriminatory by nature, thus carry a high economic cost.

That cost would not be a major cause for concern if the EU had no, or few, alternative sources of EV imports.

But while China is the single most important source of EV imports for the EU, it accounts for slightly less than half of the total.

Last year, when EU leaders were fretting about a “surge” in Chinese EV imports, and even launched an investigation into them, China's share of European EV imports actually fell, compared with 2022, with the EU importing more EVs from other countries — including Japan, South Korea and the United Kingdom — than from China.

Unfortunately, World Trade

Organization rules do not prohibit anti-subsidy tariffs, even if the actor imposing them has its own subsidies in place. Nor do they ensure that green goods are exempt from trade defence measures, despite the universally shared benefits that, by bolstering the fight against climate change, competitive green markets would bring.

The much-heralded 2014 effort to implement such exemptions — in the form of an Environmental Goods Agreement — failed in the negotiation phase.

Conflicts between trading partners over same industry subsidies are not new. For decades, the EU complained about US subsidies for Boeing, and the US about European subsidies for Airbus. Eventually, both sides agreed essentially to respect the right of the other to subsidise its aircraft sector.

With both sides proclaiming their commitment to fighting climate change, the EU and China should pursue a similar agreement on EVs.

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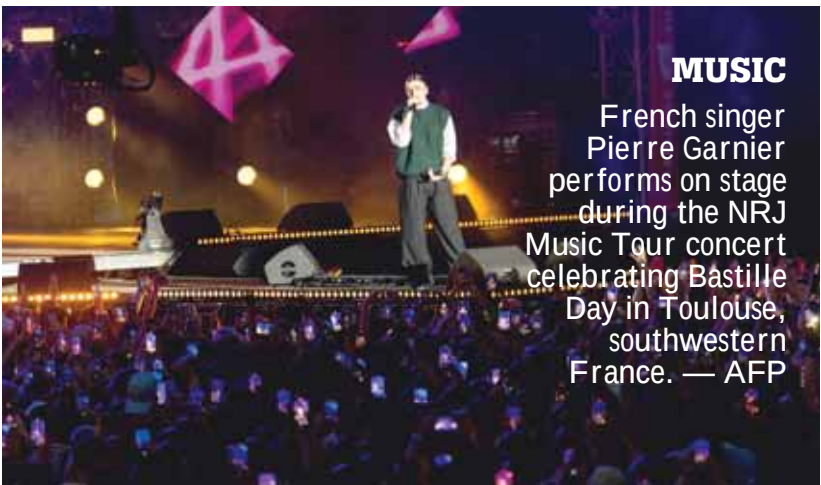
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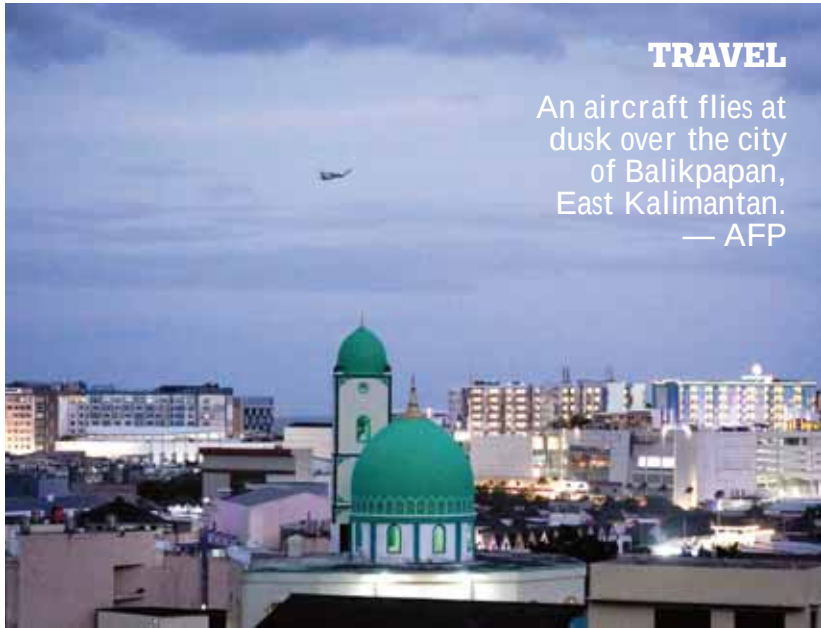
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MUSIC

French singer Pierre Garnier performs on stage during the NRJ Music Tour concert celebrating Bastille Day in Toulouse, southwestern France. — AFP



TRAVEL

An aircraft flies at dusk over the city of Balikpapan, East Kalimantan. — AFP

FASHION

Palestinian-US swimmer Valerie Rose Tarazi attends the send-off ceremony for the Palestine delegation to the upcoming Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Ramallah city in the occupied West Bank. — AFP



CULTURE

Hornbill feathers are seen on the headgear of a musician playing the sape, a traditional instrument of the Dayak ethnic group in Kalimantan. — AFP



PHOTOGRAPHY

A woman poses as she arrives for the Florida Supercon at the Miami Beach Convention Center. The three-day festival celebrates the best in anime, animation, cosplay, gaming, comics, music, and more. — AFP



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Unusual rainfall brings winter flowers to Chile's Atacama desert

Large swaths of the Atacama desert, the driest on the planet, have been covered with purple and white flowers after unusual rainfall patterns in northern Chile. Normally, such a desert bloom occurs every few years in the southern springtime — if and when conditions are just right — blanketing thousands of square kilometres. But the flowers are making an appearance now in winter, something that hasn't happened since 2015, experts say. Cesar Pizarro, head of biodiversity conservation at the National Forestry Corporation, said that 11-12 millimetres (nearly half an inch) of rainfall in April "plus low cloud cover that has been very intense in the area and that wets these surfaces every night, helped activate these plants." While the famed spring flowering desert spreads over 15,000 square kilometres (5,800 square miles), this winter efflorescence is covering only a few hundred square kilometres. When the bloom is at its peak, more than 200 plant species blossom. Recent weather conditions appear to have mainly suited the "pata de guanaco," a purple flower that barely requires water and prefers sandy sites. Scientists have not yet determined whether this phenomenon, also recorded in the winter of 2015, "is directly related to climate change or not, or to the El Nino or La Nina phenomena," said Pizarro. — AFP





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Radiohead guitarist Jonny Greenwood in 'intensive care'

Radiohead guitarist Jonny Greenwood is in "intensive care" following a significant illness. The 52-year-old British musician, keyboardist, and composer was touring as part of The Smile with fellow Radiohead singer Thom Yorke as well as Sons of Kemet drummer Tom Skinner before being forced to cancel the supergroup's European leg on Friday. A statement from The Smile said Oxford-born Greenwood had been "seriously ill" and would "soon return home," but added doctors had advised he needed rest. The band has confirmed all ticket holders will be refunded at the point of purchase. A statement posted by The Smile on X, said: "A few days ago, Jonny became seriously ill from an infection that needed emergency hospital treatment, some of it in inten-

sive care. "Mercifully he is now out of danger and will soon return home. "We have been instructed by the medical team in charge of Jonny's care to cancel all engagements until he has had time to make a full recovery. "To that end, the smile tour of Europe in August is cancelled. "Refunds for headline shows will be available from your Ticket provider. "We all wish Jonny a speedy recovery." The band has released two UK top 10 albums in A Light For Attracting Attention and Wall Of Eyes. The Smile's sound has been compared to Radiohead, but with more of an influence from Krautrock, a form of German experimental music and jazz. The band was set to play venues in Switzerland, Sweden, Germany and Poland next month. — dpa



MUSIC

Dozens injured in bull run at Pamplona's San Fermín festival

THE RENOWNED SAN Fermín festival drew to a close in the northern Spanish city of Pamplona on Sunday, with seven more people receiving injuries during the traditional running of the bulls. The eighth and final bull run of the festival, which begins every year on July 7, saw seven people suffer minor injuries such as bruises and concussions, the TV station RTVE reported. In total, 36 runners were hospitalised in this year's festival, including an Australian and a US citizen.

The final bull run started at 8 am (0600 GMT) with fireworks being set off before six bulls were released into the streets, filled with thousands of spectators running towards the bullring more than 800 meters away. The festivities can prove fatal when runners are caught on the bulls' deadly horns. Since 1924, 16 fatalities have been recorded at the festival, with the last coming in 2009. Most injuries during the event occur when runners collide when trying to avoid the bulls. The La Vanguardia newspaper described the "emotion of

the running of the bulls, where you really pray and run like never before." The bull runs the central act of the annual festival in honour of the city's saint, San Fermín. Despite heavy criticism from animal rights activists, the festival - which first took place in 1591 - continues to attract tens of thousands of tourists from Spain and all over the world. Activists say that the runs, as well as Spain's traditional bullfighting, is an act of cruelty for the animals, who are forced to flee in panic through crowds. — dpa



The fascinating history of Omani currency



Shaandar Ali Shah Bukhari

THE STORY OF SHAANDAR ALI SHAH BUKHARI'S PERSONAL COLLECTION, INCLUDING ANTIQUES AND MEMORABILIA, ADDS A UNIQUE AND HUMANISING TOUCH TO THE NARRATIVE, ILLUSTRATING THE ENDURING FASCINATION WITH NUMISMATICS



Shaddad al Musalmy
@shadadm

Collecting coins was once considered the hobby of kings, but over time this has spread around the world among common people. People who collect or study old coins or bills are referred to as numismatics. Numismatics is the study of coins and related units. It is one of the oldest hobbies in the world.

Emperor Caesar Augustus, born in 63 BC, was an avid collector of coins from around the world that were in use during his era. He used to gift them to rulers of other countries to facilitate trade.

Similarly, in the Sultanate of Oman, there is a numismatist, in Syed Shaandar Ali Shah Bukhari.

An old resident, it all started at a very young age when Bukhari used to collect posters from the magazine, stickers from Suntop tetra packs, and an old coin gifted by his late father, Syedzada Sakhawat Ali Shah Bukhari.

"My father saw an interest in antiques in me and would gift me them from time to time, including an old oil lamp from over 50 years ago when he first landed in Oman," Shaandar said.

Shaandar still has it as his prized possession which reminds him of their humble beginnings.

He also has an antique timepiece from the early 1900s, some memorabilia of his grandfather from his participation in WWII, and the first edition of the Oman Arabic newspaper from 1972.

"Watching these precious items is like a trip down memory lane," Shaandar says.

Here is Shaandar's personal collection and antique history of Omani Currency.

DIRHAM FROM Umayyad Era - 784 Years Old

Oman itself had the distinction of possessing the oldest Islamic coin mint in the Arabian Peninsula. These coins were used in coastal regions, especially around Sohar, and were minted in Damascus (modern-day Syria). They are made of Silver from 40-129 AH/661-746 CE (Umayyad Caliphate).

Maria Theresa Thaler - 244 Years Old

Also known as Thaler, this coin was mainly used for international trade as it was widely recognised. It has been minted since 1741, and the ones commonly found here, which I also have, are dated 1780.

Rial Coin - 147 Years Old

Issued by Sultan Barghash bin Said al Busaidy and minted in Brussels, Kingdom of Belgium, this coin was made of Silver in 1299

AH/1881 CE. It was used in Zanzibar, which was part of Oman since 1698.

1/4 Anna - 130 Years Old

The 1/4 Anna coin held immense significance in Oman's political and financial history. It dates back to 1898, more than 130 years ago. It was minted in Muscat during the reign of Sultan Faisal bin Turki, Sultan of Muscat and Oman during the period 1888-1913.

Half-Rial Saidi - 78 Years Old

This half-rial coin was in use during the era of Sultan Said bin Taimour, from the time it was the Sultanate Saidia and Sultan of Muscat and Oman.

Rial Saidi - 67 Years Old

This 1 rial coin was in use during the era of Sultan Said bin Taimour, from the time it was the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman.

BILLS

This 100 Baisa bill was in use during the era of Sultan Said bin Taimour, from the time it was the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman. This was before the formation of the Central Bank and was signed by C J Pelly, the then Secretary for Financial Affairs of Oman Currency Authority.

Half Rial Bill - Approx Over 50 Years Old

This half-rial bill was among the first bills in use during the era of the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos. This was before the formation of the Central Bank and was signed by Mahmood Mohammad Murad, the Chairman of the Oman Currency Board.

Hundred Baisa Bill - 48 Years Old

This hundred baisa bill was among the first bills in use during the era of the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos. It was from the era when the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos took over. This was in use after the formation of the Central Bank and was signed by Tariq bin Taimour, the Chairman of the Central Bank of Oman.

Hundred Baisa Bill - 48 Years Old

This hundred baisa bill was from the era of the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos and was signed by the late HM Sultan Qaboos himself.

Five-Rial Bill - Currently in Use

This five-rial bill is currently in use and is from the era of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. It is signed by HH Sayyid Taimour bin Asaad al Said, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Central Bank of Oman.

