

Royal Decree promulgates system of special economic zones

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Sunday issued two Royal Decrees. Royal Decree No (39/2026) on promulgating the system of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones. Article (1) states that the system of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones

and Free Zones attached to this decree shall be enforced. Article (2) stipulates that the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones shall issue the regulations and decisions necessary to implement the provisions

of the system attached to this decree. Till such time, the existing regulations and decisions shall continue to be enforced without prejudice to the provisions of this decree and the attached system. Article (3) cancels all that contradicts this decree and the attached system or

contravenes their provisions. Article (4) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from the day following its date of publication. Royal Decree No (40/2026) on ratifying the Instrument of Amendment

to the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation of 1986. Article (1) ratifies the Instrument of Amendment to the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation of 1986 in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

Article (2) stipulates that the competent authorities shall deposit the document of ratification of the aforementioned instrument in accordance with its provisions. Article (3) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. — ONA

SAYYID BADR, IRAN FM HOLD TALKS OVER PHONE

TEHRAN SAYS READY FOR REGIONAL DE-ESCALATION

OMAN URGES IRANIAN SIDE TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT

GCC MINISTERS CALL FOR HALT TO MILITARY ESCALATION

OIL TANKER ‘SKYLIGHT’ SUBJECTED TO AN ATTACK

THOUSANDS STRANDED AS CONFLICT SHUTS ME HUBS

NATO SAYS FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS IN REGION

IRANIAN LEADERS WANT TO TALK, TRUMP TELLS MAGAZINE

OMAN, IRAN CALL FOR TALKS TO EASE REGIONAL TENSIONS

HM holds phone calls with leaders

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik had telephone conversations on Sunday with Keir Starmer, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom; President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission. During these calls, perspectives were exchanged regarding the military escalation in the region and its profound implications for the nations of the region and the wider world. Emphasis was placed on the imperative of coalescing international efforts to cease the reciprocal bombardment and to revert to dialogue and mutual understanding, thereby

safeguarding the interests of states and the well-being of their peoples. Earlier in the day, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik had telephone calls with the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the King of the Kingdom of Jordan. During the calls, they discussed the developments of the military escalation currently witnessed in the region following the Israeli and US strikes on the Islamic Republic of Iran and its repercussions on security and stability in the region and the world. The leaders stressed the need for an immediate cessation of the exchange of bombardment, laying emphasis on reverting back to dialogue and diplomacy. — ONA

SAYYID

BADR BIN HAMAD AL BUSAIDY, Foreign Minister, received a telephone call from Dr Abbas Araghchi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, during which the latter conveyed his country’s appreciation for the constructive role of the Sultanate of Oman and its unwavering diplomatic endeavours aimed at defusing the current crisis and restoring the path of dialogue and negotiation. The Iranian minister also communicated the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which advocates for peace, noting that the Israeli-US attack upon his country had intensified the state of tension and alarm throughout the region, while reaffirming the Iranian side’s openness to any earnest efforts contributing to de-escalation and the return to stability.

For his part, Sayyid Badr underscored the Sultanate of Oman’s steadfast commitment to advocating for a ceasefire and a return to dialogue and negotiation as the means to resolve the ongoing conflict through diplomacy, in a manner that realises the legitimate aspirations of all parties, while urging the Iranian side to exercise restraint and to avoid anything that might undermine or perturb relations of good neighbourliness.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS Meanwhile, Sayyid Badr conducted extensive conversations with a number of foreign ministers of brotherly and friendly countries. The discussions focused on the rapidly evolving regional developments particularly in light of the Israeli-US war on the Islamic Republic of Iran and its

serious repercussions on the security and stability of several countries in the region. Sayyid Badr emphasised the Sultanate of Oman’s concern regarding the attacks targeting the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and several other brotherly Arab states. He noted that the continued military escalation does not contribute to resolving the ongoing conflict, stressing the need to address its root causes, halt military operations and contain the crisis and its impact on the region. Sayyid Badr held a telephone conversation with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, during which they discussed the current escalation and its repercussions on the security and stability of the region, as well as the international efforts being made to contain it. — ONA

SEE ALSO P5, 6 AND 7



A plume of smoke rises from the Zayed Port following a reported Iranian strike in Abu Dhabi on Sunday. — AFP

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SHORT TAKES

His Majesty greets
Chairman of Bosnian
Presidency

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq has sent a cable of greetings to Zeljko Komsic, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on his country’s Independence Day. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes to the Chairman and the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to achieve all their aspirations for progress, stability and growth. — ONA

12

RAMADHAN
1447 AH
MONDAY
MAR 2, 2026

PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR
05:13 AM

DHUHR
12:24 PM

ASR
03:45 PM

MAGHRIB
06:15 PM

ISHA
07:26 PM

1 2 3 4 5

6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15

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21 22 23 24 25

26 27 28 29 30

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E-NAVIGATIONAL CHARTS ISSUED



MUSCAT: Oman National Hydrographic Office of the Royal Navy of Oman has issued a package of electronic navigational chart layers in (S-101) format, representing the primary commercial ports of the Sultanate of Oman, aimed at enhancing navigational safety levels in Omani waters. — ONA

MUSCAT
MUNICIPALITY
CONDUCTS
SURVEY OF
CAR PARKS

MUSCAT: Muscat Municipality conducted a field survey of car parks as part of the Muscat Governorate Traffic Study 2025. The survey aimed at assessing the efficiency of car parks at various vital locations within the governorate to develop practical solutions that contribute to improving traffic flow and enhancing the quality of services provided to the community. The move is part of the



The survey aimed at assessing the efficiency of car parks at various vital locations.

municipality’s efforts to develop the urban transport system. Modern technologies, including drones, were utilised in the field survey to ensure high accuracy and to provide comprehensive data analysis. The total area surveyed using drones is approximately 1,252 square kilometres. The survey covered an area of up to 6 square kilometres in each location, with the survey repeated six times daily between 7:00 am and 9:00 pm.

‘Nidaa’ enhances emergency
response with SOS technology

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, MARCH 1

SINCE THE launch in 2022, the ‘Nidaa’ mobile application has significantly strengthened emergency response services across Oman. Introduced by the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA), the platform provides citizens and residents with a fast, reliable and accessible way to report emergencies and request urgent assistance. Aligned with Oman’s digital transformation strategy, the app allows users to trigger an emergency alert instantly through a single-tap SOS feature. Once activated, the system transmits precise location data directly to the Authority’s Operations Centre, enabling emergency teams to respond quickly and accurately. The silent SOS function is particularly crucial for individuals who are unable to speak during emergencies or for those with hearing impairments, offering an effective alternative to traditional phone calls. By integrating geolocation technology with real-time communication systems, the application helps reduce response



The Nidaa app stands as a practical example of how digital innovation can reinforce public safety



THE NIDAA APP

Beyond emergency alerts, ‘Nidaa’ app offers electronic services for institutions and the wider community

times and improve operational efficiency. Over the past three years, Nidaa has facilitated the reporting of a wide range of incidents, including traffic accidents, injuries, missing persons cases, fires, structural collapses and drowning emergencies. Officials note that consolidating emergency reporting into a unified digital platform has enhanced coordination and streamlined communication between the public and response teams. Beyond emergency alerts, the app offers electronic services for institutions and the wider community. These include submitting and updating evacuation plans, requesting approvals for emergency drills, and arranging

site safety services for government and private entities — measures that contribute to stronger preparedness and compliance with safety standards. Recognising Oman’s vibrant outdoor culture, the application also features a trip registration service for desert, marine and mountain excursions. Users can log trip details and participant information in advance, helping authorities respond swiftly should an emergency arise in remote areas. An integrated interactive map further enables users to locate the nearest CDAA centre or healthcare facility, strengthening public awareness during urgent situations. Highlighting its real-world impact, Capt Ibrahim bin Marhoon al Hinaï, Assistant Officer at the Emergency Management Centre, confirmed that the app has contributed to saving numerous lives. He cited a recent case in which a woman experiencing an epileptic episode sent an alert through the app, allowing responders to reach her promptly using the transmitted coordinates and provide immediate medical care. Officials emphasise that such cases demonstrate the critical role of digital solutions in situations where verbal communication may not be possible.

Omani values preserve nation’s social identity amid challenges

MUSCAT: The Omani character, a deeply rooted system of values, has long shaped the nation’s social identity and civilised image. In an era of rapid social and digital transformations, experts stress the growing need to reinforce these values in daily life and online spaces to safeguard national identity for future generations. Specialists said that consciously confronting the reality of Omani values and promoting their embodiment through practical models is essential to preserving these traditions among young people. Younis bin Mohammed al Sabri, a trainer in manners and citizenship, described Omani manners as a comprehensive ethical and behavioural system, formed over centuries and grounded

in Islamic and Arab heritage. “These values have shaped the Omani personality, regulated behaviour, and projected a civilised image of the homeland,” he said. He warned, however, that some traditional rules of conduct are visibly declining, particularly within family and social structures, with external symbols often replacing genuine practice. “Good manners and etiquette, when correctly defined and actively practiced, become pillars young people aspire to uphold. But if ignored in daily life, no discourse, however well-crafted, will convince the next generation of their importance,” he added. Al Sabri emphasised that a sincere commitment to these values strengthens social cohesion, economic stability,



Good manners and etiquette, when correctly defined and actively practiced, become pillars young people aspire to uphold.

cultural richness and national resilience, while reflecting Oman’s historical depth abroad. He also noted that growing negative behaviours require conscious attention and responsible solutions rooted in authentic Omani values, coupled with regulation of digital content and events.

Dr Younis bin Jamil al Numani, Director of the Culture Sector Department at the Omani National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, highlighted the challenges posed by globalisation and digital technology. “Rapid intellectual changes influence young people’s ideas and

behaviours, and some families are losing their role in consolidating customs related to gatherings, dress and conduct,” he said. He called for stronger social integration and the active involvement of educational and cultural institutions in preserving identity through curricula, extracurricular activities and community initiatives. Ghanima bint Sulaiman al Shukaili, a social guidance supervisor, affirmed that the family is the first school of values, and that alignment between home and school is crucial for fostering ethical behaviour. She emphasised that instilling values today requires daily experience rather than direct preaching, linking lessons to school life and modern tools such as digital content and interactive

learning. “Shifting from command-based language to approaches that promote self-confidence builds intrinsic motivation and transforms slogans into lived practices,” she noted. Dr Ruqaya bint Hamid al Wahaibi, Head of the English Department at the Vocational College in Saham, said digital platforms can amplify both conflict and understanding. “A society rooted in respect can manage disputes with awareness and balance,” she explained, citing classroom exercises that trained students to summarise opposing viewpoints before responding. She stressed that values must be ingrained through continuous practice and real-life initiatives, and that social media can positively document everyday behaviours. — ONA



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MOH 3347873/2025

SHORT TAKES



The waterfront project is valued at RO 841,000.

RAS SUQRA
WATERFRONT
PROJECT COMPLETED

AL JAZIR: Construction and field work for the Ras Suqra waterfront project in the Al Lakbi district of Al Jazir has been completed. Implemented by Al Wusta Municipality over an area of approximately 20,000 square metres, the project is valued at RO 841,000 and represents a significant development and tourism initiative in the governorate.

Eng Marwan bin Abdullah al Farsi, Assistant Director-General of Al Wusta Municipality, told ONA that the project follows an integrated vision combining aesthetics, service and environmental sustainability, in line with Al Wusta’s development goals.

The project features a miniature sea walkway with seating areas, a dedicated desalination plant, four shaded seating zones, green spaces, and a children’s play area designed to meet safety standards. Facilities also include two separate prayer rooms for men and women, as well as a rainwater drainage network to enhance infrastructure sustainability.

Extensive afforestation work along the waterfront adds environmental and aesthetic value, creating an attractive space for picnics, recreation and community gatherings.

The Ras Suqra project is expected to boost domestic recreational tourism, support social activities for residents and visitors, and enhance local investment opportunities in coastal services.

It is part of Al Wusta Municipality’s efforts to develop public facilities and create an integrated urban environment that aligns with the governorate’s sustainable development objectives. — ONA

MUDHAIBI LOCALISES
8 INDUSTRIES
WORTH RO 6 MILLION



The projects are set up on an area of over 28,000 square metres.

AL MUDHAIBI: Al Mudhaibi Industrial City, an affiliate of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates ‘Madayn’, succeeded in localising 8 industrial projects in 2025. The projects included the sectors of food security, plastics, disinfectants and cold storage facilities, in addition to converting industries, furniture and the production of electrical and electronic appliances.

The new projects, set up on an area of more than 28,000 square metres, have a total investment value exceeding RO 6 million. They bring to 13 the total number of projects localised in the industrial city.

The success of the projects, first announced two years ago, reflects the confidence of investors in opportunities provided by Al Mudhaibi Industrial City. It also highlights the economic advantages of Al Sharqiyah North Governorate. — ONA

PRIVATE
SECTOR TO
OPERATE
AL JALALI
FORT IN
MUSCAT

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism signed a contract with Jibal Al Hajar Company to manage, operate and optimise the use of Al Jalali Fort in the Wilayat of Muscat, Governorate of Muscat.

The step forms part of efforts to enhance partnership with the private sector in managing and operating heritage sites.

The contract was signed by Sayyid Ibrahim bin Said al Busaidy, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, and the Chairman of the Board of



Directors Jibal Al Hajar Company. The contract aimed to maximise gains from cultural heritage as a source of economic revenue.

Al Jalali Fort constitutes a prominent historical landmark in the Governorate of Muscat. Its civilisational value stems from Oman’s deep-rooted history and cultural legacy.

The project will contribute to the promotion of tourism by attracting visitors from Oman and abroad.

The contract represents a step forward in empowering the private sector and enhancing its role in operating heritage sites in line with best practices. — ONA

McCarthy calls for peace,
unity during Ramadhan

KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, MARCH 1

‘RAMADHAN is the month of peace, and peace should prevail on earth in our lives,’ said Abdul Raheem McCarthy, an Irish-American Islamic scholar, international lecturer, and former Imam who embraced Islam in 1994.

Speaking on the sidelines of the 9th edition of Taaruf, an event introducing Islam to non-Muslims organised by the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs in partnership with the Hidayah Endowment Foundation, McCarthy emphasised that the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) offers a model for living humbly, valuing others, and upholding deep-rooted principles.

“The life of our beloved Prophet was simple yet impactful. He lived humbly, rooted in values, and set an example for others,” McCarthy said.

This year’s event, themed ‘Message and Messenger,’ was held under the auspices of Basil bin Ahmed al Rawas, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Sports and Youth, at the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque. It attracted dignitaries, corporate representatives, and members of the public. The programme featured Quranic recitation,

This year’s event was themed ‘Message and Messenger,’ and held under the auspices of the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Sports and Youth



Irish-American Islamic scholar Abdul Raheem McCarthy speaking at the 9th edition of Taaruf.

religious chanting, and short films. McCarthy discussed the Prophet’s characteristics, the challenges he faced, and how he overcame them. A highlight of the event was an open-Iftar, allowing non-Muslims to break the fast alongside Muslims. The event also included dialogue sessions with new Muslim and non-Muslim participants, providing a platform for questions about Islam and Omani culture.

Other activities included a general knowledge competition on

Islam and Omani culture, as well as cultural exhibitions. Booths highlighted ‘My Omani Identity: Identity and Civilisation,’ Omani sweets, and a women’s booth where non-Muslim visitors could try on the hijab.

The annual Taaruf event is a key programme in Oman during Ramadhan, supporting the ‘People and Society’ pillar of Oman Vision 2040, which promotes pride in national identity, culture and citizenship.

Village sets benchmark for health partnership

AL RUSTAQ: Al Muqham village in the Wilayat of Al Rustaq has emerged as a leading national model for community initiatives promoting public health, thanks to an integrated partnership between government agencies and local residents.

This achievement is part of the Ministry of Health’s Healthy Villages Programme, which emphasises prevention, community empowerment, health sustainability and shared responsibility in improving quality of life.

Officials from the Directorate-General of Health Services in Al Batinah South Governorate highlighted that the region is a pioneer in this field, with eight healthy villages and membership in the regional Healthy Cities Network, including Barka, Al Rustaq and Al Musannah.

Launched in 2015, Al



Home to 429 residents across 79 families, the village has achieved remarkable health outcomes.

Muqham Health Village was organised under a village development committee, chaired by the Wali of Al Rustaq, with representatives from government sectors including the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Social Development, the Al Rustaq Municipality, Royal

Oman Police, the Ministry of Education and Al Rustaq Club. The committee oversees the village’s development to ensure institutional integration and project sustainability.

The village, home to 429 residents across 79 families, has achieved remarkable health outcomes, with most chronic

conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure and hereditary blood disorders being effectively monitored through home follow-up and awareness programmes.

Al Muqham has implemented numerous development and health projects, including a community sports hall in partnership with Al Jisr Charitable Foundation, replacement of cement water tanks with hygienic alternatives, relocation of animal pens and cemetery fencing with periodic cleaning campaigns. Awareness and training initiatives include early detection campaigns for chronic diseases and first aid. The village has hosted delegations from the World Health Organization, Red Crescent societies of GCC countries, and national academic institutions to share best practices. — ONA



- BRISK WALKING
 - GENTLE STRETCHING
 - MODIFIED BODYWEIGHT EXERCISES
 - DEEP BREATHING
- HYDRATION BETWEEN IFTAR AND SUHOOR
 - PROTEIN SOURCES (EGGS, LENTILS, YOGURT)
 - FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
 - LIMITING FRIED FOODS AND SWEETS

FIT THROUGH FASTING

AFRAH AL BALUSHI

IN RAMADHAN, many people who follow an active lifestyle often wonder whether fasting will slow down their physical progress. However, fasting does not mean giving up exercise altogether. Instead, it calls for a more mindful and balanced approach that respects both the spiritual significance and physical demands of the month.

In recent years, physical activity during Ramadhan has increasingly become part of daily routines for many families.

This shift reflects a growing awareness that staying active is essential for maintaining overall health. Traditionally, fasting was associated with rest and reduced movement.

Today, however, scientific research supports the benefits of light to moderate exercise during Ramadhan, particularly walking before or after Iftar, as an effective way to maintain physical and mental well-being.

Ramadhan presents a valuable opportunity to reset lifestyles and reinforce positive habits.

Regular physical activity, even at a reduced intensity, plays an important role in preserving muscle strength, boosting metabolism and enhancing mood.

Mohammed al Touqi notes that exercise during Ramadhan is no longer postponed until after the holy month. “Exercise has become part of the daily routine for many people and helps reduce feelings of lethargy in the

evenings,” he said.

Similarly, Salim al Balushi believes Ramadhan is an opportunity to readjust one’s lifestyle. He explained that moderate and structured exercise during fasting demonstrates a person’s commitment to maintaining health and fitness.

Such habits, he added, should not be limited to one month but sustained throughout the year to promote long-term well-being.

RIGHT TIME

Health experts emphasise that exercise during fasting can be safe and beneficial when done correctly. The key lies in choosing the right time and adjusting the intensity.

Many specialists recommend light activity about 45 to 60 minutes before Iftar, ensuring

“Exercise has become part of the daily routine for many people and helps reduce feelings of lethargy in the evenings

MOHAMMED AL TOUQI

that the workout remains gentle to avoid dehydration and exhaustion. Alternatively, exercising at least three hours after Iftar allows time for digestion and proper hydration.

Low-intensity activities are considered the safest option. These include brisk walking, gentle stretching exercises for the neck, shoulders and back, and light yoga to improve balance and relaxation.

Simple bodyweight exercises such as squats or wall push-ups can also be performed with fewer repetitions and longer rest periods. Deep breathing exercises may help relieve stress and improve focus throughout the day.

Hydration and balanced nutrition are equally important. Drinking sufficient water between Iftar and Suhoor

helps maintain energy levels and prevents dehydration.

Including protein sources such as eggs, lentils and yogurt supports muscle health, while fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals. Choosing complex carbohydrates at Suhoor ensures sustained energy during fasting hours, while limiting excessive fried foods and sweets helps maintain overall balance.

Ultimately, exercising during Ramadhan remains both possible and beneficial for most people when practised in moderation. By selecting appropriate activities, timing workouts wisely and listening carefully to the body’s signals, individuals can maintain their fitness while fully embracing the spiritual essence of the holy month.

Attacks on Musandam coast, Al Duqm condemned; GCC stands in solidarity

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, MARCH 1

THE Sultanate of Oman has strongly condemned the recent attacks targeting the commercial port of Al Duqm and the oil tanker Skylight off the coast of Musandam. The attacks have drawn widespread condemnation from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the international community.

The attack on Al Duqm on Sunday resulted in injuries to a foreign worker, while the oil tanker, was targeted near Musandam, injuring crew members, including Indian and Iranian nationals.

The Maritime Security Centre (MSC) announced that the oil tanker SKYLIGHT, flagged to the Republic of Palau, was subjected to an attack approximately five nautical miles north of the port of Khasab in the Governorate of Musandam.

The entire crew of twenty individuals — comprising fifteen Indian nationals and five Iranian nationals — has been safely evacuated.

Preliminary reports indicated that four crew members sustained injuries of varying degrees and have been transported to receive requisite medical care.

The Maritime Security emphasised that the rescue operations



The attack on Al Duqm on Sunday resulted in injuries to a foreign worker.

were conducted through coordination among various military, security, and civil units, reflecting the national preparedness to handle maritime incidents.

Oman has taken all necessary measures to ensure the safety of its citizens and the security of its territory. The GCC has expressed

solidarity with Oman, condemning the attacks as a threat to regional stability and security.

Jassim bin Mohamed al Budaiwi, Secretary-General of the GCC, expressed his strong condemnation and denunciation of the attacks that targeted the commercial port of Duqm in the Sultanate of Oman.

He emphasised the full solidarity of the GCC and its unified stance alongside the Sultanate of Oman in all measures it undertakes, reaffirming the Council's rejection of all forms of aggression targeting the security of its member states.

Oman continues to work with regional and international partners to address these threats and maintain regional peace and security.

The State of Kuwait expressed its strong condemnation and denunciation of the attacks that targeted the commercial port of Duqm, describing them as a blatant violation of international law and the United Nations Charter.

The Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs affirmed the State of Kuwait's full solidarity with the Sultanate of Oman and its support of all measures it undertakes.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) also expressed its condemnation and denunciation in the strongest terms of the targeting of the commercial Port of Duqm, affirming its full solidarity with the Sultanate of Oman. It reiterated that it places all of its capabilities at the disposal of the Sultanate of Oman to support all measures it undertakes.

Qatar described the attacks as targeting the Sultanate of Oman's active role in mediation efforts between the Islamic Republic of

Iran and the international community in a bid to defuse the crisis and enhance opportunities for constructive dialogue to address all outstanding issues. In its statement, the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed the State of Qatar's full solidarity with the Sultanate of Oman in all measures it undertakes.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) strongly condemned the Iranian attacks on the Sultanate of Oman, describing them as hostile acts, a dangerous escalation, a blatant violation of state sovereignty and a direct threat to the region's security and stability.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs affirmed that expanding the scope of attacks to include brotherly and friendly nations is unacceptable and condemned by all legal and political standards. It constitutes an unacceptable escalation that undermines de-escalation efforts and exacerbates tensions in the region.

Meanwhile, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, on Sunday held telephonic conversations with counterparts in Arab and friendly countries.

They urged the parties concerned to exercise restraint and revert back to dialogue and diplomacy as means of resolving the ongoing conflict.

OMAN AIR CANCELS FLIGHTS TO SEVERAL DESTINATIONS



MUSCAT: Oman Air has announced the cancellation of several flights due to ongoing regional airspace closures. In a statement issued on Sunday, the airline said that flights to and from Amman, Dubai, Bahrain, Doha, Dammam and Kuwait scheduled to depart on Sunday, March 1, and Monday, March 2, have been cancelled.

Flights to and from Moscow scheduled to depart on Sunday, March 1, were also cancelled. The airline confirmed that all other flights are operating as scheduled, although some delays may be expected. Oman Air stressed that the safety of its guests and crew remains its highest priority, adding that it is closely monitoring developments in coordination with the relevant authorities and will provide updates through its official channels.

Fishermen told to suspend activities in Musandam waters as precautionary measure

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, MARCH 1

The Royal Oman Police (ROP) issued on Sunday a precautionary advisory calling on fishermen and recreational boat owners in Musandam Governorate waters to refrain from venturing out to sea until further notice, citing potential risks from rapidly evolving regional developments. The directive is a temporary safety measure to protect lives and prevent exposure to any unforeseen dangers in Oman's maritime zones. The ROP emphasised that the advisory aims to ensure the well-being and safe navigation of all seafarers,



The directive is a temporary safety measure to protect lives and prevent exposure to any unforeseen dangers.

urging strict compliance with the instructions until authorities announce otherwise. Meanwhile, this advisory came amid the

escalating tensions between the United States and Iran, which have heightened fears of a broader conflict with regional implications.

Recently, the US and Iran have reached one of their most dangerous flashpoints in years, with both sides engaged in a military and political standoff.

US and allied forces launched coordinated military strikes targeting strategic sites in Iran. Iran responded with missile and drone strikes against US and allied positions in the Middle East, including Gulf states.

The situation has prompted several Gulf countries, including Oman, to call for restraint and de-escalation, underscoring the risks that any military escalation poses to regional security, maritime navigation and economic stability.



Taghleef Industries SAOC
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Invitation and Agenda of the Extraordinary General Meeting and the Annual Ordinary General Meeting of Taghleef Industries SAOC (the "Company")

The Board of Directors of Taghleef Industries SAOC is pleased to invite the shareholders to attend the Extraordinary General Meeting and the Annual Ordinary General Meeting to be held on Tuesday, 17th March 2026 at 3:00 pm via the electronic platform for general meetings which may be accessed through Muscat Clearing and Depository's website (www.mcd.gov.om). In the event that the quorum for convening the Annual General Meeting is not complete, the second general meeting will be convened at 11 am on Thursday, 19th March 2026 to discuss the following agenda:

First Meeting: Extraordinary General Meeting

- To consider and approve the amendments to the Articles of Association of the Company.

Second Meeting: Annual Ordinary General Meeting

- To consider and approve the Board of Directors' Report on the activities of the Company and its financial status for the financial year ended on 31 December 2025.
- To consider and approve the Board of Directors' Report on the organization and management of the Company for the financial year ended on 31 December 2025.
- To consider the Auditor's Report on the financial statements of the Company for the financial year ended on 31 December 2025.
- To notify the general assembly of the related party transactions entered into by the Company during the financial year ended on 31 December 2025.
- To consider and approve the related party transactions which will be entered into by the Company during the financial year ending on 31 December 2026.
- To consider and approve the nomination and election/appointment of the members of the Board of Directors of the Company (as applicable), in accordance with the Articles of Association of the Company and the applicable laws and regulations.
- To consider and approve the proposal to distribute cash dividends (by the date of AGM) for the financial year ended on 31 December 2025 at the rate of RO 0.300 for each share from retained earnings to the shareholders.
- To appoint Auditors for the Financial Year ended 31 December 2026 and specify their fees.

Pursuant to the Articles of Association of the Company and the Rules for Convening General Meetings of Closed Joint Stock Companies issued by the Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, we would like to bring your attention to the following:

- Only juristic persons shall have the right to appoint a proxy to attend the Annual Ordinary General Meeting and vote on their behalf via electronic means, provided that this natural person has an investor number in the Muscat Clearing and Depository Company.
- Voting on any of the items on the agenda shall commence no more than three days before the date of the general meeting and until the voting process ends on the day of the meeting. If a shareholder's balance is increased or decreased, the voting process will be cancelled, and the shareholder must cast his vote again on the day of the general meeting.

To prevent delay in starting the meeting, shareholders are requested to attend the meeting at least half an hour before the scheduled meeting time.

For any clarification regarding the matters mentioned in the above agenda, please contact **Mr. Khalid AlKharousi on 26650229 OR Mr. Zacharias Chacko on 26650268.**

Chairman



Plumes of smoke rise following reported explosions in Tehran. — AFP

IRANIAN top officials vowed on Sunday to avenge their slain supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and declared a new wave of strikes on US bases in the Gulf, defying US President Donald Trump's threat of an unprecedented escalation in force. As crowds gathered in Tehran, explosions rang out and the Israeli military announced that it was again striking targets in the heart of the city — as more blasts were heard in Jerusalem, Riyadh, Dubai, Doha and Manama.

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian declared Khamenei's killing a "declaration of war against Muslims" and warned: "Iran considers it its legitimate duty and right to avenge the perpetrators and masterminds of this historic crime." Ali Larijani, the powerful head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, declared: "The brave soldiers and the great nation of Iran will teach an unforgettable lesson to the international oppressors."

In a social media post that adopted Trump's style and rhetoric, he warned: "YESTERDAY IRAN FIRED MISSILES AT THE UNITED

Iran had already seen intense speculation on a successor to Khamenei, given his age. Upon his death, many observers expected greater power for the Revolutionary Guards, which are deeply entrenched in the Iranian economy. Pezeshkian and two other top officials would lead Iran in the transitional period following Khamenei's death, state television said on Sunday



Protestors hold portraits of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as they gather in Istanbul. — AFP

STATES AND ISRAEL, AND THEY DID HURT. TODAY WE WILL HIT THEM WITH A FORCE THAT THEY HAVE NEVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE." Meanwhile, blasts were heard in northern Tehran and smoke was seen emanating from a building, an AFP journalist reported. It was not immediately clear what the target was.

As crowds demanded revenge —

and Iran's army announced strikes targeting US bases in the Gulf and Iraqi Kurdistan — Trump threatened to unleash "force that has never been seen before" and urged Iran's people to rise up and seize power. Outrage at Saturday's wave of US and Israeli strikes against Iran, which killed 86-year old Khamanei and some other senior figures, spilled over into neighbouring

Iraq and Pakistan, where crowds attempted to storm US diplomatic missions. In the Pakistani megacity of Karachi, at least eight people were killed during pro-Iran protests at the US consulate, according to Muhammad Amin, a spokesman for the Edhi Foundation rescue service, who added that most had bullet wounds.

In Iran, the Red Crescent said strikes had left 201 people dead and injured hundreds more. Iran's judiciary confirmed that Ali Shamkhani, a top adviser to Khamenei, and the head of Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guards, General Mohammad Pakpour, were both killed.

Iran responded to the strikes with a flurry of missile and drone strikes across the Middle East, killing at least two people in Abu Dhabi and another in Tel Aviv, before following up with a new wave after state media confirmed Khamenei's death. Iran had already seen intense speculation on a successor to Khamenei, given his age. Upon his death, many observers expected greater power for the Revolutionary Guards, which are deeply entrenched in the Iranian economy. — AFP



Qatar Airways and Emirates Airways plane are parked at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport, Bali, Indonesia. — Reuters

MORE FLIGHTS CANCELLED OVER MIDEAST CONFLICT

PARIS: The biggest disruption to global air transport since the Covid pandemic continued on Sunday, with thousands of flights affected and busy Middle Eastern hubs including Dubai and Doha shuttered as Iran lashed out after US-Israeli strikes. Israel and Iran traded new attacks on Sunday, after Tehran hit both the Dubai International Airport — the world's busiest for international traffic — and Kuwait's main airport during its retaliatory strikes one day earlier.

Middle East and North Africa airlines Gulf carriers Emirates and Etihad cancelled 38 per cent and 30 per cent of their flights respectively, Cirium said. Qatar Airways suspended all flights from Doha.

It cancelled 41 per cent of total flights, according to aviation analytics company Cirium. Syria Air, the country's national carrier, cancelled all flights until further notice. Egypt's national airline, EgyptAir, announced the suspension of its flights to cities across the Middle East. — AFP



A mourner holds up a poster showing the image of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, in Tehran. — AFP

GLOBAL REACTION TO THE KILLING OF IRAN'S KHAMENEI

LONDON: Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed in US and Israeli strikes, state media confirmed as another wave of attacks hit the country on Sunday. Below is international reaction to his death:

EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER URSULA VON DER LEYEN

"With Khamenei gone, there is renewed hope for the people of Iran. We must ensure that the future is theirs to claim and shape. At the same time, this moment carries a real risk of instability that could push the region into a spiral of violence."

ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ANTONIO TAJANI

"For the moment, Iran is in a transitional phase, and it remains to be seen how long it will last and what impact the war will have. What is certain is that a leader who had guided Iran for decades is gone, and that is bound to have consequences — including the loss of Khamenei's personal authority over the population."

UN NUCLEAR AGENCY TO HOLD EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

VIENNA: The United Nations' nuclear agency will hold an extraordinary meeting on Iran on Monday in the wake of the US-Israeli strikes on the Islamic republic, aimed in part at Tehran's atomic programme. In a statement late on Saturday, the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said the meeting was at the request of Russia, a key ally of Tehran.

Iran had made the same request in a letter to IAEA chief Rafael Grossi on Saturday following the strikes, which led to the death of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. As a result, the agency will hold a "special session of the IAEA Board of Governors on matters related



The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) headquarters, in Vienna. — AFP

to military strikes of the United States and Israel against the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran", the IAEA said in a statement.

That extraordinary meeting will precede an already scheduled session of the board, which represents 35 countries. Following the strikes, the IAEA said it was "closely monitoring developments in the Middle East, and urges restraint to avoid any nuclear safety risks to people in the region".

The UN nuclear watchdog had also stressed on Friday the "utmost urgency" of its request to verify all nuclear material in Iran, according to a confidential report. — AFP

Fresh strikes heard across the region



A plume of smoke rises from the port of Jebel Ali following a reported Iranian strike in Dubai. — AFP



Motorists drive past a plume of smoke rising from a reported Iranian strike in the industrial district of Doha. — AFP

DUBAI: Iran launched strikes across the Gulf on Sunday after vowing to avenge slain supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, defying a threat from President Donald Trump to strike with unprecedented force. As crowds gathered in Tehran, with some grieving and others celebrating, explosions rang out and the Israeli military announced it was again striking targets in the heart of the capital. Iran's Revolutionary Guards announced a fresh "large-scale" attack on Sunday, and blasts were heard in Riyadh, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Doha, Manama, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, with Israeli rescue services reporting four people killed in the latest missile attack.

Pope Leo XIV urging both sides to end "the spiral of violence", while China condemned Khamenei's killing as a "serious violation of Iran's sovereignty". France, on the other hand, expressed satisfaction at the death of "a bloodthirsty dictator who oppressed his people, degraded women, young people and minorities".



A protester sets fire near a gate leading to the US Consulate during a violent protest in Lahore, Pakistan. — Reuters

Correspondents and residents heard fresh explosions across the Gulf cities of Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Doha and Manama on Sunday, as Iran pressed on with its retaliatory campaign for a second day. Journalists heard several blasts in Dubai, with Abu Dhabi residents reporting loud bangs. Sirens sounded in Manama, where correspondents also heard an explosion, while in the Qatari capital a journalist heard a blast faintly.

US defence systems intercepted at least two drones on Sunday over the city of Erbil in northern Iraq, as

sirens sounded from the American consulate, a journalist reported. Explosions were heard and smoke was visible in the sky, the journalist reported from near the consulate in Erbil.

Earlier on Sunday, Iran's army said it targeted US bases in Iraq's Kurdistan region. Blasts were heard in northern Tehran and smoke was seen emanating from a building. It was not immediately clear what the target was.

Furious Iraqi protesters tried on Sunday to storm a fortified zone housing the US embassy in Baghdad, as the threat of military escalation

loomed over the country. Baghdad, a key ally of Iran, has announced a three-day mourning period for the death of Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei, and Iraq's top Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani urged Iranians to remain united against the "aggressors".

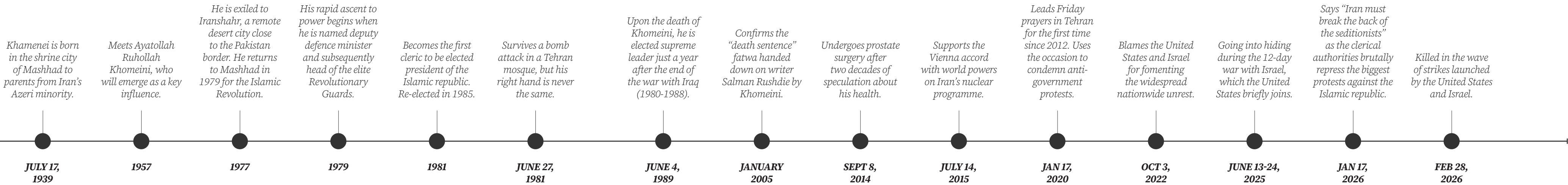
In Baghdad, hundreds of protesters, many masked and dressed in black, gathered early on Sunday, hoping to storm Baghdad's Green Zone to get to the US embassy. Residents in Riyadh heard loud explosions in the east of the Saudi capital on Sunday, as Iran presses on with a second day of retaliatory strikes across the Gulf. — AFP

Iran announced a fresh "large-scale" attack on Sunday, and blasts were heard in Riyadh, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Doha, Manama, and Tel Aviv, with Israeli rescue services reporting four people killed

IRAN'S SUPREME LEADER KHAMENEI IN DATES



AYATOLLAH ALI KHAMENEI had been Iran's hardline spiritual guide and top political authority since 1989, when he succeeded Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini as supreme leader. Here is a look at his life in key dates



OPINION

The hidden cost of digital life for adults



SANDHYA RAO MEHTA

The writer is an Associate Professor, Sultan Qaboos University

THERE is much talk about stopping children from being on social media until they turn 16. Australia has already implemented such a rule and the United Kingdom is looking into it as well. However, emerging data now shows that dependence on digital technology is increasing among adults as well. Approximately 37 per cent-58 per cent of adults who are 65 and older use social media, with numbers of self-reporting cases increasing each year. For those aged 60–64 years, usage is higher, with some studies showing 69 per cent–83 per cent engagement, possibly owing to having increased post-retirement time. This rising trend is concerning for a number of reasons. First, it is impacting an individual’s physical well-being as increased time online takes away from opportunities to walk, exercise or engage in other physical activities. It is also clearly impacting mental health, as there is an increased risk of depression, loneliness and low self-esteem, spurred by countless posts of supposedly

motivational success stories pushed by algorithms. Among even more senior adults, increased time spent on devices is also leading to eye strain, disturbed sleep and postural issues that are exacerbated with age. Perhaps most importantly, dependence on digital platforms sends wrong messages to children in a household. The longer parents spend time on their devices, the more children think that it is acceptable behaviour. By legitimising digital consumption, parents have already sent mixed messages to their children when they expect kids to read, study or otherwise engage in fruitful activities beyond the screen. Setting an example is the most important part of parenting, and making social media the centre of family interactions, as it is rapidly becoming, is counter-productive to establishing social and familial bonds. There is no doubt now that finding time away from digital devices is important. An important reason for increased dependence on digital platforms for adults is the reduced opportunities they may have

Mindful use of digital technologies is very helpful, and there has to be a sustainable approach which balances staying connected without becoming dependent on technology

for social interactions. This is true in large families where other members are busy with everyday routines, or in nuclear families where couples find themselves alone once the children have left. In both situations, a deliberate move away from excessive engagement with social media platforms needs to be implemented. This could be done in multiple ways, including joining physical clubs like reading groups, having exercise buddies, or finding a new hobby. It can also be done by actually observing digital-free days, keeping a no-phone zone in the house, or even using an alarm to quantify time spent. For the elderly, social media is definitely a useful way to stay connected to family and friends, bond with grandchildren who maybe far away, and even keep in touch with information and news. Mindful use of digital technologies is very helpful. What is required is to adopt a sustainable approach which balances staying connected without becoming dependent on technology.

VIETNAM AI LAW TAKES EFFECT, FIRST IN SE ASIA

TRAN THI MINH HA

A law regulating artificial intelligence went into effect in Vietnam, making it the first country in Southeast Asia with a comprehensive framework on the booming technology. Passed by the National Assembly in December, the law focuses on the risks posed by generative AI, requiring human oversight and control along the lines of the European Union’s landmark AI Act. Many nations are moving to address the dangers of chatbots and image generators - from misinformation to online abuse and copyright violations - but few have enacted legislation. The legislation, which is in force as of March 1, “paves the way for Vietnam to deeply integrate with international standards while maintaining digital sovereignty”, the government said in a December report. It requires companies to clearly label AI-generated content, such as deepfakes, that cannot readily be differentiated from reality. It also requires them to disclose to customers when they are interacting with an artificial rather than human agent. The law applies to developers as well as providers and deployers of the technology, whether they are Vietnamese organisations or foreign entities operating in the country. Vietnam has set ambitious double-digit growth targets for the next five years, with expansion of the digital economy a key part of its development strategy. AI and the data economy are “pillars” of a “more sustainable and smarter new development” model, Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh was quoted as saying. Under the law, the government will establish a national AI computing centre, improved data resources and large language models in Vietnamese. So far, only a handful of countries have implemented far-reaching regulatory frameworks on AI. The United States has opposed what Vice-President JD Vance called “excessive regulation”, warning it could stifle innovation in the key sector. In January, South Korea became the first country to have an AI law take full effect, while the European Union is gradually phasing in a set of rules that will become completely applicable in 2027. While Vietnam’s law is a regulatory milestone, analysts said its impact would depend on how the government enforces it and on what guidance it issues on implementation. The law is “not the final word” but rather a “decisive starting point”, Vietnam-based LNT & Partners law firm said in an analysis on its website.

— AFP

Social protection keeps life stable and secure

SOCIAL PROTECTION is often reduced to a single question about how much money the government gives. Many people judge it by the size of a payment, while overlooking the wider systems that quietly reduce worry, protect daily life and create stability long before cash is ever needed. People talk about prices, jobs, schools and health, but rarely stop to say, ‘This is social protection.’ Social protection sits quietly behind many of the things that help daily life run smoothly. It is there when worry does not turn into panic, when a temporary problem does not become a lasting one, and when people feel that life, even with its surprises, remains manageable. It shows itself in small, familiar moments. A pension arriving on time. A family staying calm during a period of lower income because support exists. A young person between jobs, feeling pressure, but not panic. This is not policy language. This is peace of mind. Social protection is not always visible, but its absence is felt immediately. That is why it matters more than we often realise. Across many societies, social protection has become more organised and reliable. Support is no longer scattered but shaped as a framework that follows people through different stages of life. Not everyone needs the same help at the same time, but people feel safer knowing it exists. At its centre is income security. Not luxury. Not comfort. Just stability. A pension that supports dignity in old age. Help for persons with disabilities and for widows and dependants that prevents short-term hardship from becoming permanent. Family income support fills gaps when salaries fall short. This is not dependence but balance. Work, health and education all play a quiet role in protection. Support does not begin only when a



Work, health and education all play a quiet role in protection.



DR KHALFAN BIN HAMED AL HARRASI

The writer is an academic and researcher

job is lost. It starts while people are still working, through wage linked insurance, shared contributions and protection against injury, illness, or sudden loss of income. Sick leave and time to manage family matters help people face real life without immediate fear. Health protection works in a similar way. Knowing that care is available eases pressure during difficult moments, whether through maternal care, child health services, long-term treatment, or mental health support. Education also protects. Free schooling, learning materials, transport support, and help for families under strain allow children to focus on learning instead of worrying. Education becomes a path forward, not a burden. There is also a quieter side of social protection. The kind people notice only when it disappears. Housing support that helps families stay settled. Utilities that remain manageable. Daily essentials that stay within reach. No money arrives in an envelope, yet households breathe easier. Public choices around fees, taxes and targeted relief can ease pressure on family budgets without drawing attention. Strong

public services do the same. Roads, transport, emergency response and sanitation may not sound exciting, but daily life depends on them. Family life sits at the heart of all this. Support for maternity, childcare and child protection reflects a simple truth. When families struggle, everything feels heavier. For persons with disabilities, protection means access. Access to healthcare, education, work and public spaces. Not sympathy or participation. Older people also need more than a pension slip. Community services, home support, healthcare access and legal safeguards send a clear message. Age does not reduce value. It increases it. Behind all of this is something less visible but very important. Systems people can understand. Legal safeguards. Consumer protections. When people trust the system, they seek help early. When help arrives early, problems stay smaller. In the end, social protection helps people feel steady. It gives families time to adjust, space to recover and confidence to move forward. When support is clear and trusted, people plan better, work with less fear and look ahead with more hope.

Ramadhan strengthens emotional and spiritual intelligence



ABDULAZIZ
AL JAHDHAMI

The writer is author, translator and communications professional

In a world defined by speed, constant connectivity and measurable performance, intelligence is often reduced to academic scores, technical expertise, or professional titles. Yet some of the most important forms of intelligence are invisible. Emotional and spiritual intelligence — the ability to understand oneself, manage emotions, empathise with others and live with purpose — shape not only personal well-being but also the health of communities.

Ramadhan, observed by millions each year, offers a powerful framework for cultivating both. Basically, Ramadhan is known as the month of fasting from dawn to sunset. However, beneath the physical discipline lies a deeper transformation. It is a structured period of reflection, restraint and renewal. Instead, it is a training period for the heart and mind alike.

Emotional intelligence begins with self-awareness. During fasting, the absence of physical comfort often brings emotions to the surface and hunger may test patience. Instead of reacting spontaneously, individuals are encouraged to pause, reflect and regulate their responses. Why am I frustrated? What is within my control? This daily self-examination builds mindfulness. In a culture of distraction, Ramadhan sharpens awareness of thoughts, habits and intentions.

Closely connected to self-awareness is self-regulation. Modern life promotes instant satisfaction: desires are satisfied immediately, messages answered without delay, instincts acted upon without hesitation. Ramadhan

interrupts this pattern. For hours each day, individuals consciously choose restraint — not only from food and drink, but from anger, gossip and negativity. This consistent practice strengthens discipline and emotional control.

Over time, the ability to delay satisfaction and manage stress becomes more natural, extending far beyond the fasting hours. Perhaps one of Ramadhan's most profound lessons is empathy. Experiencing hunger and thirst firsthand creates a tangible understanding of hardship. Compassion shifts from abstract awareness to lived experience.

As a result, acts of charity increase during Ramadhan. Families share meals and volunteers organise food distributions. Communities tend more to support those in need. Thus, emotional intelligence deepens when empathy transforms into action.

Ramadhan also strengthens social awareness and shared fasting fosters unity. Usually, families gather more frequently, and mosques fill with worshippers standing shoulder to shoulder, reinforcing equality and connection. Likewise, workplaces often adapt schedules, encouraging understanding and flexibility. When entire communities move within a shared spiritual rhythm, relationships grow stronger and more intentional.

Beyond emotional growth lies spiritual intelligence — the ability to align actions with deeper meaning and values. In fact, Ramadhan intensifies this alignment. Through prayer, reflection and reading of the Holy Quran, individuals can reassess their priorities.

Emotional intelligence begins with self-awareness. During fasting, the absence of physical comfort often brings emotions to the surface and hunger may test patience

Material pursuits temporarily decrease, making space for questions of purpose. What truly matters? What kind of character am I building? How do my daily actions reflect my beliefs? Many other questions come to mind, urging individuals to rearrange their significances, especially in Ramadhan.

This alignment nurtures resilience. Challenges feel lighter when anchored in faith and meaning and gratitude becomes thoughtful. A simple sip of water at sunset feels like a gift and the time spent with family becomes sacred.

The true success of Ramadhan is not measured by enduring hunger, but by sustaining self-growth. The patience practiced during fasting can reshape interactions and relations between people. The empathy cultivated through sacrifice can influence leadership and community engagement. The spiritual clarity gained through reflection can guide decisions long after the month concludes.

In a society that often prioritises external achievement, Ramadhan emphasises one's internal development. This sacred month reminds us that mastering oneself is the foundation of leading others, that empathy strengthens communities, and that purpose gives direction to ambition.

By nurturing emotional balance and spiritual depth, Ramadhan becomes more than a religious compliance. It becomes a quiet but powerful education — one that teaches discipline, compassion and meaning. In this kind of education, individuals do not simply fast, but they also evolve and grow.

COULD THE US-ISRAEL WAR ON IRAN DRAG ON?

DELPHINE TOUITOU AND DAPHNE BENOIT

The US-Israeli strikes launched on Iran on Saturday could become an extended operation, with strategic goals both multiple and complex - aiming to decapitate the Islamic republic and eviscerate its security capabilities.

In the 12-day war in June last year, the Israelis, backed by the Americans, carried out targeted strikes aimed at destroying key Iranian nuclear sites. This time, “we are embarking on an operation that is unfolding on a completely different scale, more complex and more complicated” than in June, Israel’s army chief Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir warned.

Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said US and Israeli installations involved in the operation were “legitimate targets” - before Iran’s state television announced a new wave of missiles had been fired at US bases in the Gulf.

“We are in a large-scale military campaign that, in my opinion, is going to last several days, or even several weeks,” said David Khalfa, co-founder of the Atlantic Middle East Forum research centre.

He described the attacks as a “multi-domain offensive” aimed “both at disrupting Iran’s chain of command, shaking the apparatus at its foundations, and provoking at the very least an internal transition”.

The joint US-Israeli strikes targeted Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei as well as the chief of staff and head of the Revolutionary Guards, Iran’s ideological army. On top of that, there have been strikes on Iran’s ballistic missile programme.

“This is an all-out decapitation campaign and an effort to wear down Iran’s capabilities,” Khalfa said. “It is a direct blow to the state’s security architecture and governing apparatus,” said Sanam Vakil, director of the Middle East and North Africa programme at British think tank Chatham House.

“This new stage of conflict is existential and clearly about regime survival. It is also unlikely to end quickly.”

Araghchi appeared to be dampening down an escalation by announcing on US television that he had explained to Gulf capitals that Tehran had “no intention of attacking them” but was targeting US bases on their soil “as an act of self-defence”.

Although there is currently no communication with Washington, “if the Americans want to talk to us, they know how they can contact me,” the Iranian minister said, adding he was “clearly interested in de-escalation”.

According to Khalfa, the Iranians are already “in horizontal escalation”. The danger is that Arab countries “might decide to allow the Americans to launch strikes from their bases, or even join the fray themselves because they consider that the regime has crossed red lines by attacking them on a massive scale,” said Khalfa. — AFP

Iran strike tests MAGA unity ahead of midterms

SOME of the most prominent voices within Donald Trump’s MAGA movement spoke out on Saturday against his attack on Iran, warning it could hurt Republicans in November’s midterm elections, but there was no immediate sign of outright rebellion among his supporters.

The conservative critics pointed to potential risks for Republicans after the president campaigned in 2024 on a promise to focus on the economy and not start wars. Public opinion polls show voters are increasingly disillusioned with Trump’s handling of the economy.

Jack Posobiec, a right-wing commentator and influencer, pointed to a warning last year from the late conservative activist Charlie Kirk before he was assassinated in September.

“Charlie Kirk told us all that the younger generation of Americans are far more interested in domestic policy than pursuing international conflicts and we can’t forget that in a midterm year,” Posobiec posted on X.

As a result, Trump’s attack on Iran is a huge election-year gamble that heightens the risks for Republicans as they try to stay in power in Congress in November.

Reagan Box, one of a dozen Republican candidates to replace former US Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene in Georgia, said while she is a Trump supporter and part of the MAGA base, she does not back the strikes on Iran.

“Every time we’ve tried to do a regime change, especially in the Middle East, we just destabilise it,” she added.

Israel said Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei had been killed in the operation.

Greene, once one of Trump’s fiercest loyalists who broke with him last year and quit Congress over what she said was his lack of focus on domestic issues, posted on X, “War with Iran does not lower inflation and make cost of living affordable.”



TIM REID

The writer is a Reuters national affairs reporter



NATHAN LAYNE

The writer is a Reuters reporter covering national affairs



US President Donald Trump gestures as he arrives at Palm Beach International Airport in West Palm Beach, Florida. — AFP file photo

Public opinion polls consistently show Americans’ top concern is the rising cost of living. Much of Trump’s first 13 months in office, however, has been dominated by foreign policy issues. Republican congressional leaders worry disgruntled voters could punish them in November.

The Hodgetwins, a popular conservative podcast duo who have generally backed Trump, blasted the strikes in a post to their 3.5 million followers on X as antithetical to his 2024 campaign.

“Freeing the people of Iran is not why I voted for Trump,” the post said.

Other MAGA influencers supported the bombing campaign. In a video address to the nation, Trump said he was seeking regime change and warned that some Americans might be killed in what he described as a war.

Trump’s supporters largely backed the capture in January of Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro as a swift, painless military win.

Michael Traugott, a political scientist and professor emeritus at the University of Michigan, said criticism has come mainly from the

“chattering class” of the MAGA base and not from Republican elected leaders. It was too early, however, to say how supporters will feel in the longer term.

He said a protracted conflict with Iran could prompt some core Trump supporters to drop their support.

“For the popular MAGA base, this is pretty much a direct violation of a major campaign promise to stay out of foreign engagements.”

The Republican National Committee released a statement supporting the Iran operation, while reaction in the US Congress largely broke down along party lines, with Republicans calling the attack necessary.

Mike Davis, head of the Article III Project, a pro-Trump legal advocacy group, said on Saturday the strikes were justified, citing a recent video message in which he said Khamenei warned Iran could sink US warships.

“That video right there is all the justification that the president needs to flatten the supreme leader’s home and take him out,” Davis told former Trump strategist Steve Bannon on his War Room podcast, which is popular with the MAGA base.

SPORTS

SHORT TAKES



Flavio Cobolli celebrates with the trophy after winning his final against Frances Tiafoe. — Reuters

COBOLLI DOWNS TIAFOE TO CLAIM MEXICAN OPEN

ACAPULCO, Mexico: Italy’s Flavio Cobolli defeated Frances Tiafoe of the United States in straight sets to claim the third ATP Tour title of his career at the Mexican Open in Acapulco on Saturday.

Cobolli, the world number 20, overcame a stubborn performance from Tiafoe to complete a 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 victory in two hours and nine minutes at the Arena GNP Seguros.

Cobolli had taken a hard-fought first set on a tie break after Tiafoe saved a set point on his own serve at 5-4 down. Cobolli dominated the tie break, racing into a 6/4 lead and taking the set after Tiafoe slashed a forehand wide.

Tiafoe was soon under pressure in the second set, suffering a break of serve to go 3-2 down before Cobolli held for a 4-2 lead. The Italian then looked poised to go ahead by a double break in the next game, having two break points only for Tiafoe to grimly hang on to hold serve.

Tiafoe appeared to gain confidence from that, and got the match back on level terms at 4-4 in the next game when a Cobolli forehand clipped the net and drifted long. Tiafoe’s fightback was short-lived though, and Cobolli broke back immediately in the next game to go 5-4 up before holding to complete victory. — AFP

DORTMUND CAPTAIN CAN OUT FOR SEASON WITH ACL TEAR



Borussia Dortmund’s Emre Can in action with Atalanta’s Nicola Zalewski during the Uefa Champions League - Play Off - Second Leg match at Bergamo, Italy. — Reuters

BERLIN: Borussia Dortmund captain Emre Can will miss the remainder of the season after scans confirmed he tore his ACL in Saturday’s 3-2 home loss to Bayern Munich.

Dortmund confirmed the injury in a statement on Sunday, saying Can “will be out for an extended period.”

Can clutched his left knee after tussling with Bayern’s Konrad Laimer just before half-time. The former Liverpool and Juventus midfielder played on for a few minutes but then signaled to the bench and was withdrawn.

Dortmund feared a serious knee injury after the match and sporting director Sebastian Kehl said Sunday the club’s worst fears were confirmed.

“Emre’s injury is extremely bitter. Not just for him, but for all of us.

“He is our captain, always puts the team first and is an important part of our club. Emre will receive all our support in the coming months so that he can make a full recovery.”

Can joined Dortmund from Juventus in 2020 and was promoted to captain ahead of the 2023-24 season but his current contract at the club expires in the summer.

The injury ends the 32-year-old’s hopes of making the Germany squad for the World Cup in the summer. Can has 48 Germany caps, scoring two goals, but had not played at an international level since September 2024. — AFP



Izki were crowned champions of the Under-17 Football League on Saturday.

Izki edge Al Khabourah to emerge U17 champions

RIYADH AL BALUSHI
@riyadhbalach

Izki were crowned champions of the Under-17 Football League on Saturday evening after securing a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Al Khabourah in the final held at Al Rustaq Sports Complex.

The decisive encounter was played in front of an enthusiastic crowd, reflecting the continued growth and competitiveness of youth football competitions in the Sultanate of Oman.

The final began at a high tempo, with Al Khabourah asserting early attacking pressure and pushing forward in search of an opening goal.

Utilising quick transitions and effective wing play, Al Khabourah created several dangerous opportunities in the opening stages. However, Izki’s goalkeeper delivered a standout performance, producing a series of crucial saves to keep his side level during critical moments of the first half.

As the match progressed, Izki gradually

regained composure, tightening their defensive organisation while relying on swift counter-attacks to trouble Al Khabourah’s backline, the contest became evenly balanced in midfield, characterised by tactical discipline and defensive caution from both teams.

The breakthrough came in the 43rd minute when Rakan al Jabri capitalised on a well constructed attacking move, finishing clinically to give Izki a 1-0 lead just before half-time. The goal shifted the momentum in Izki’s favour as they entered the break with a slender advantage.

In the second half, Izki returned with renewed confidence, maintaining pressure and benefiting psychologically from their late first half goal, Al Khabourah, meanwhile, appeared momentarily affected but soon responded through tactical adjustments by their coach, who introduced attacking substitutions to regain control and intensify pressure.

AL MUSANNAH FINISH THIRD
Al Khabourah improved steadily as

the match approached its closing stages, increasing their offensive presence and committing more players forward in pursuit of an equaliser. Five minutes of stoppage time were added, during which Al Khabourah launched persistent attacks.

Nevertheless, Izki disciplined defensive structure and composed game management ensured that the scoreline remained unchanged.

The final whistle confirmed Izki 1-0 triumph and their well-deserved coronation as Under-17 League champions, the title reflects the team’s consistent performances throughout the competition, highlighted by attacking efficiency and defensive solidity in decisive moments.

Earlier that day, in the third place playoff, Al Musannah secured the bronze medal with a 3-1 victory over Al Ittihad. Al Musannah’s goals came via an own goal, Ghith al Alawi and Mohammed al Maamari, while Majid Raddad Farajallah scored Al Ittihad’s lone goal, concluding the tournament on a competitive and spirited note.

Salalah storm past Saham to lead Youth League

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, MAR 1

Salalah Club imposed their rhythm from the opening moments and cruised to a dominant 87-10 victory over Saham Club in their preliminary-round clash of the 2025-2026 Youth Basketball League, held at the sub-hall of Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher on Saturday. With the win, Salalah moved to the top of the standings with seven points, while Saham remained on four points.

The contest was largely one-sided, as Salalah displayed clear tactical discipline, combining tight defensive pressure with effective floor coverage. The team quickly translated defence into offence through fast breaks, capitalising on steals and offensive rebounds to control all four quarters convincingly.

Leading the scoring for Salalah were Mishal Kafkaf, Qaisar al Balushi, Hadzik Zifdan and Mohab al Balushi, while Abdulmuqtader al Balushi and Moataz al Sulaimi



With the win, Salalah moved to the top of the standings with seven points, while Saham remained on four points. — Ammar al Musafir

stood out for Saham.

Salalah started aggressively by pressing the ball handler and closing driving lanes, forcing Saham into rushed attempts. The team converted turnovers into quick fast-break points and benefited from second-chance opportunities through offensive rebounds, ending the first quarter ahead 19-4.

In the second quarter, Salalah maintained their superiority through better

ball circulation and improved shot selection, relying heavily on drives to the basket and increasing its scoring efficiency. Meanwhile, their defence continued to limit Saham’s scoring opportunities. Saham struggled under pressure and managed only two points, while Salalah added 13 to head into half-time with a commanding 32-6 lead.

PRODUCTIVE QUARTER
The third quarter proved to

be Salalah’s most productive offensively. The tempo increased noticeably, with consecutive scores coming from fast breaks and decisive assists that created easy looks near the rim. Dominance on the boards ensured longer possession time for Salalah. The team poured in 34 points compared to Saham’s four, extending the lead to 66-10 by the end of the third quarter.

Salalah continued their pressure until the final buzzer, maintaining defensive solidity and completely shutting down Saham’s scoring attempts in the fourth quarter. Every turnover was converted into a structured attack or another fast break. Salalah added 21 more points, while Saham were held scoreless in the final period, sealing the emphatic 87-10 result.

The match was officiated by Thabit al Hinai as first referee, Hussein al Awimri as second referee, and Ghalib al Hasani as third referee. The score table officials were Huda al Hinai, Aisha al Balushi, and Musa al Siyabi.

ITALIAN SERIE A



AC Milan's Serbian defender #31 Strahinja Pavlovic (L) celebrates after scoring his team's first goal during the Italian Serie A match against US Cremonese in Cremona, northern Italy. — AFP

MILAN CONSOLIDATE TOP-FOUR CREDENTIALS WITH WIN AT CREMONESE

CREMONA, Italy: AC Milan moved closer to Champions League football next season after two late strikes gave them a 2-0 win at Cremonese on Sunday.

Strahinja Pavlovic put Milan ahead in the 90th minute with his shoulder before Rafael Leao's simple finish in stoppage time gave the away side a result which flattered a drab display in Cremona.

Milan, who have been without European football this season, have little realistic hope of winning the Serie A title as the seven-time European champions are 10 points behind league leaders Inter Milan.

Next weekend's Milan derby has little more than local pride riding on it with Inter speeding off into the distance with 11 games remaining in the league campaign.

Milan's stated aim for the season, however, was qualification for the Champions League and Massimiliano Allegri's team are on course for that objective.

"We have a huge goal to reach with teams behind us who continue collecting points," said Allegri to DAZN.

"You have Como, Atalanta still have to play, Napoli won in the end and there are also Roma and Juventus. All we can do is take it one step at a time."

Fifth-placed Como are nine points behind Milan, while Roma, seven points behind them in fourth, face Juventus in Sunday's headline fixture.

Atalanta can move to within two points of the Champions League spots with a win at Sassuolo, following their thrilling 4-3 aggregate triumph over Borussia Dortmund which made them the only Italian team in the last 16 of Europe's top club competition.

Jamie Vardy's Cremonese are sliding towards relegation to Serie B after a 13th straight match without a win, the promoted outfit sitting outside the drop zone on goal difference. — AFP

ITALIAN SERIE A RESULTS ON SUNDAY:
Cremonese 0 AC Milan 2 (Pavlovic 90, Leao 90+4)
Played Saturday
Como 3 (Douvikas 18, Rodriguez 35, Kempf 44) Lecce 1 (Coulibaly 13)
Inter Milan 2 (Dimarco 31, Calhanoglu 70-pen)
Genoa 0
Verona 1 (Akpa Akpro 64) Napoli 2 (Hojlund 2, Lukaku 90+5)
Friday
Parma 1 (Oristanio 83) Cagliari 1 (Folorunsho 63)



Barcelona's Spanish forward #10 Lamine Yamal celebrates scoring the opening goal with Barcelona's Spanish midfielder Fermin Lopez during the Spanish league match between FC Barcelona and Villarreal CF at Camp Nou Stadium in Barcelona. — AFP

Yamal nets hat-trick in Barca's Villarreal romp

BARCELONA'S teenage star Lamine Yamal scored the first hat-trick of his career in a 4-1 win over Villarreal on Saturday that took the Catalan giants four points clear at the top of La Liga.

The Spain international struck twice in the first half and, after Pape Gueye pulled one back for the visitors at Camp Nou, stroked in a third for Hansi Flick's side.

Robert Lewandowski rounded off Barca's triumph with a late tap-in as they extend their lead on Real Madrid, who host Getafe on Monday, and fourth-place Villarreal who now trail the champions by 13 points.

Atletico Madrid moved third, level on points with Villarreal, after Julian Alvarez snatched them a 1-0 win at bottom side Real Oviedo.

Barca star Yamal, who seems to have fully recovered from a groin issue which bothered him for several weeks earlier in the campaign as he struggled to hit top form, was at his effervescent best.

"It was a mix of everything. I wasn't feeling good about myself, plus the (groin issue) as well, I wasn't playing happy, and I think it showed," Yamal told Movistar.

"For about a week or so now I've been feeling much better. It was that desire to smile while I was playing that I hadn't felt for a long time, and now I'm happy. I'm happy playing and really content."

The winger became the youngest player to score a hat-trick in La Liga in the 21st century at 18 years and 230 days old.



Atletico Madrid's Argentine forward Julian Alvarez celebrates after scoring a goal against Real Oviedo at Carlos Tartiere Stadium in Oviedo. — AFP

Yamal has now equalled his tally of 18 goals last season across all competitions, becoming the team's top goalscorer and raising the one area of his game which called for improvement. "I think that (I've improved over time), what happens is that people want me at 16 years old to score 100 goals and I'd like that too, but it's very hard," continued Yamal, with the match ball tucked under his arm.

"So (I'm improving) bit by bit, but I'm very happy, when it's a goal, or two goals, to help the team."

Flick said Yamal had lacked some confidence earlier in the season.

"The opposition (have been) playing two or three players against him. You could feel he didn't have the confidence or the dynamic for these one-on-one situations," Flick told reporters.

THE YAMAL SHOW
Barca took the lead when Fermin Lopez won the ball high up the pitch and fed Yamal, who curled home after 28 minutes. Yamal's second followed nine minutes later, a stunning individual goal after he drove in from the right.

The teenager left Sergi Cardona and Alberto Moleiro for dead and then whipped a strike into the far top corner. Gueye turned home from close range after a corner and Ayoze Perez almost pulled Villarreal level before Yamal completed his hat-trick.

Substitute Pedri played the teenager in with an inch-perfect pass and he produced a clinical finish. "It's hard to stop such a brilliant player," said Villarreal coach Marcelino Garcia Toral of Yamal.

Lewandowski netted Barca's fourth after good work from Pedri and Jules Kounde, who had one of his best games of the season.

The Rojiblancos had that cup game in mind as they struggled at Oviedo, before Alvarez ended nearly a four-month league goal drought by slotting home in the 94th minute to snatch victory for Diego Simeone's side. Atletico needed some good saves from Jan Oblak to keep them level before improving in the final half-hour and eventually claiming victory. — AFP
Spanish La Liga results on Saturday:
Rayo Vallecano 1 (De Frutos 35) Athletic Bilbao 1 (I. Williams 47); Barcelona 4 (Yamal 28, 37, 69, Lewandowski 90+1) Villarreal 1 (Gueye 49); Mallorca 0 Real Sociedad 1 (Soler 36); Real Oviedo 0 Atletico Madrid 1 (Alvarez 90+4)

Manchester United climb to third, Fulham sink sorry Spurs

LONDON: Benjamin Sesko stretched his hot streak with the winning goal as Manchester United beat Crystal Palace 2-1 to go third in the Premier League, while Tottenham failed to dispel relegation fears after defeat at Fulham.

Sesko was handed his first start in seven games since Michael Carrick took charge at Old Trafford and rewarded his boss with another vital goal to edge United closer to a return to the Champions League.

Palace had taken an early lead at Old Trafford when Maxence Lacroix outmuscled Leny Yoro to guide in a header from Brennan Johnson's corner. But United hit back to remain unbeaten under Carrick and take their tally to 19 points from a possible 21. The game swung on one

incident as Lacroix was sent off and conceded a penalty for pulling back Matheus Cunha just before the hour mark. Bruno Fernandes confidently stroked the resulting spot-kick past former team-mate Dean Henderson.

Fernandes was then the creator for the second as his curling cross was powered in by Sesko.

The Slovenian has now scored seven times in his last eight appearances to quieten critics of his £74 million (\$100 million) price tag after a slow start to his career in England. Tottenham remain perilously poised just four points above the relegation zone as interim boss Igor Tudor again failed to halt their alarming slide after a 2-1 defeat at Craven Cottage. Harry Wilson and Alex Iwobi gave Fulham a deserved



Manchester United's Benjamin Sesko celebrates scoring their second goal during the English Premier League match against Crystal Palace at Old Trafford on Sunday. — Reuters

half-time lead as they moved up to ninth and back into contention for European football next season.

Richarlison headed in a late consolation for Tottenham, but they remain the only Premier League side without a win in 2026.

The one crumb of comfort for Spurs was defeat for relegation rivals Nottingham Forest, 2-1 at Brighton.

All three goals arrived in the first 15 minutes as Diego Gomez and Danny Welbeck netted for the Seagulls either side of Morgan Gibbs-White's reply.

Forest sit two points above the drop zone ahead of a daunting trip to Manchester City on Wednesday.

The Gunners' lead at the top of the table was reduced to two points after City battled to a 1-0 win at Leeds on

Saturday. Chelsea are also in need of the points after dropping to sixth in the table, with only the top five set to qualify for the Champions League. On Saturday, Liverpool beat West Ham 5-2 to climb into fifth. — AFP
EPL RESULTS ON SATURDAY:
Bournemouth 1 (Evanilson 64) Sunderland 1 (Mayenda 18); Burnley 3 (Kayode 45+3-og, Anthony 47, Flemming 60) Brentford 4 (Damsgaard 9, 90+3, Thiago 25, Schade 34); Liverpool 5 (Ekitike 5, Van Dijk 24, Mac Allister 43, Gakpo 70, Disasi 82-og) West Ham 2 (Soucek 49, Castellanos 75); Newcastle 2 (Ramsey 32, Murphy 82) Everton 3 (Branthwaite 19, Beto 34, Barry 83) Leeds 0 Man City 1 (Semenyo 45+2); Played Friday: Wolves 2 (Joao Gomes 61, Rodrigo Gomes 90+8) Aston Villa 0

SPORTS

Samson’s 97 puts India into WC semis

SANJU SAMSON’S sparkling unbeaten 97 kept alive India’s dream of retaining the T20 World Cup at home as they knocked out the West Indies with a five-wicket win in Kolkata on Sunday to set up a semifinal against England.

Samson hit 12 fours and four sixes in his superb 50-ball knock in the winner-takes-all final Super Eights match to thrill a capacity 67,000 fans at a pulsating Eden Gardens.

After the West Indies smacked 70 off the last five overs to score 195-4 after being asked to bat, India lost two early wickets but were always up with the required rate.

Samson, opening for the second match in succession, led the way.

When India slipped to 41-2 he was joined by captain Suryakumar Yadav (18) and the pair added 58 for the third wicket.

Tilak Varma was next to join Samson and scored 27 off 15 before departing in the 15th over with the score 141-4 and India still needing 55.

Samson stood firm and though Hardik Pandya fell for 17 India reached the target with four balls to spare to spark celebrations and fireworks.

Jason Holder and Rovman Powell earlier put on an unbroken stand of 76 for the fifth wicket to help the West Indies set the defending champions a target of 196 to stay alive.

The West Indies sprang a surprise



India’s Sanju Samson plays a shot during the 2026 ICC Men’s T20 Cricket World Cup Super Eights match between India and West Indies at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Sunday. — AFP

at the top of the order, promoting Test captain Roston Chase to open alongside T20 skipper Shai Hope.

That enabled them to bring in an extra spinner, Akeal Hosein, with regular opener Brandon King left out.

In their defeat to South Africa last week the West Indies slumped to 83-7 but the new-look opening partnership was more assured.

BREAKTHROUGH

Spinner Varun Chakravarthy got the first breakthrough, bowling Hope for a sluggish 32.

Shimron Hetmyer raced to 27 off 12 balls before falling to the faintest of edges off Jasprit Bumrah to make it 102-2.

After Chase fell for 40 and Sherfane Rutherford followed, Powell and Holder launched their brutal late assault.

Powell finished on 34 not out from 19 balls with two sixes and three fours while Holder was unbeaten on 37 off 22 balls with three sixes and two fours.

It could have been better for India but they dropped three regulation catches in a sloppy fielding display, including Chase when he had made just 15.

South Africa, the only unbeaten side in the tournament, beat Zimbabwe by five wickets earlier on Sunday and will face New Zealand in Kolkata in the first semifinal on Wednesday.

The final is in Ahmedabad next Sunday. — AFP

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BUSINESS

SHORTTAKES



A 3D printed oil pump jack is seen in front of displayed Opec logo in this picture. — Reuters

OPEC+ DEBATES OIL OUTPUT BOOST AS US WAR ON IRAN DISRUPTS SHIPMENTS

LONDON: Opec+ will consider a larger-than-expected oil output increase on Sunday, two Opec+ sources said after the US-Israeli war on Opec+ member Iran and Tehran's retaliation led to shipment disruptions in the Middle East.

Opec+ has a history of raising oil output to cushion disruptions but analysts said the group currently has very little spare capacity to meaningfully add to supply, except for its leader Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Riyadh has been raising oil production and exports in recent weeks in preparation for US strikes on Iran, sources said.

Oil, gas and other shipments from the Middle East via the Strait of Hormuz have come to a halt since Saturday after shipowners received a warning from Iran saying the area was closed for navigation. Opec+ will debate a production hike of 411,000 barrels per day or more at a meeting on Sunday, sources said, larger than the original expectations of 137,000 bpd.

Oil prices jumped on Friday to \$73 per barrel, the highest level since July, on fears of a wider conflict in the Middle East and supply disruptions through Hormuz, the world's most important oil route amounting to over 20% of global oil transit.

Middle East leaders have warned Washington that a war on Iran could lead to oil prices jumping to over \$100 per barrel, said veteran Opec analyst Helima Croft from RBC. Analysts from Barclays also said prices could rise to \$100.

Croft said the market impact from any large Opec output increase will be limited due to a lack of actual production capabilities outside Saudi Arabia. The meeting will involve only eight members of Opec+ — Saudi Arabia, Russia, the UAE, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Iraq, Algeria and Oman.

Opec+ groups the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies like Russia but most production changes in the past years have been done by the eight members. — Reuters

AI supercomputer to boost Oman's tech sovereignty

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, MARCH 1

THE latest Artificial Intelligence (AI) Readiness Report for the Sultanate of Oman by Unesco proposes the establishment of a National AI Supercomputer Centre as a cornerstone of the country's long-term ambition to harness AI for economic diversification, job creation and national development.

Central to the proposal is a dedicated High-Performance Computing (HPC) facility that would function as a national laboratory for advanced AI research, Large Language Model (LLM) training and data-intensive simulations across strategic sectors including energy and climate modelling.

The report positions the initiative as foundational to a broader National AI Infrastructure Strategy aimed at unifying Oman's currently fragmented data centre assets into a cohesive, sovereign ecosystem.

At present, Omani researchers and start-ups depend heavily on foreign cloud providers — a model the report describes as cost-prohibitive and strategically risky.

Beyond capital outflows, reliance on overseas infrastructure raises concerns around data sovereignty, particularly in relation to sensitive national datasets.

By building domestic high-performance computing capacity, Oman would retain data within its borders while lowering R&D barriers and strengthening technological sovereignty through localised, sustainable computing power.

The report also outlines a road map for positioning Oman as a Regional Data and AI Inference Hub, capitalising on its geostrategic location at the confluence of major global connectivity routes.

While the Sultanate of Oman currently serves largely as a transit corridor for international subsea

Central to the proposal is a dedicated High-Performance Computing (HPC) facility that would function as a national laboratory for advanced AI research, Large Language Model (LLM) training and data-intensive simulations across strategic sectors including energy and climate modelling. The report positions the initiative as foundational to a broader National AI Infrastructure Strategy aimed at unifying Oman's currently fragmented data centre assets into a cohesive, sovereign ecosystem.



A flagship AI supercomputer centre is seen as foundational to Oman's broader AI Infrastructure Strategy.

cable traffic, the report argues that significantly greater value can be captured by processing and hosting AI workloads domestically.

Leveraging its extensive subsea cable network, Oman could evolve into a net exporter of cloud and AI inference services serving markets across the GCC, East Africa and Central and South Asia.

By upgrading submarine cable capacity, strengthening interconnections and expanding edge data centres, the country would be able to deliver low-latency inference services capable of supporting high-performance digital workloads across neighbouring regions.

To support this transition, the report recommends incentivising the development of hyperscale data centres in close proximity to subsea cable landing stations. Such adjacency would enable near-zero-latency processing of large AI workloads for international clients, creating a competitive edge in real-time inference services. Further recommendations include upgrading terrestrial fibre networks to enhance cross-border

connectivity within the GCC, ensuring Omani data centres can operate as preferred hosting environments for regional AI applications.

Equally important, the report calls for the creation of a Digital Special Economic Zone (DSEZ) regulatory framework offering competitive tax incentives and optimised data transfer protocols.

This would encourage international firms to deploy and host AI models within Omani sovereign cloud infrastructure, reinforcing the country's ambitions to become a regional AI powerhouse.

Formally unveiled last month, the AI Readiness Assessment report is the result of a collaborative arrangement between Oman authorities, represented by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology and Unesco.

It reflects a joint effort to assess and advance Oman's preparedness for the ethical, inclusive and sustainable adoption of AI in alignment with Oman Vision 2040 and Unesco's global mandate on the ethics of AI.

Award-winning liquefied natural gas study cuts energy use

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, MARCH 1

A research breakthrough by Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) is expected to strengthen the commercial viability of small-scale and offshore liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects by reducing energy consumption and associated emissions — two of the sector's most significant cost drivers.

The study, led by Dr Muhammad Abdul Qyyum, Assistant Professor in the Department of Petroleum and Chemical Engineering at the College of Engineering, developed an advanced LNG production configuration integrating carbon dioxide (CO₂)-based precooling with a dual-phase expander refrigeration cycle.

The innovation secured top honours in the Energy and Industry field under the PhD category at the 12th National Research Award organised by the Research and Innovation Authority, highlighting its strategic



DR MUHAMMAD ABDUL QYYUM
Assistant Professor in the Department of Petroleum and Chemical Engineering at the College of Engineering

in remote and offshore environments where high power demand translates directly into elevated operating expenditure and indirect carbon emissions.

By employing CO₂ as a working refrigerant during the precooling stage, the proposed system enhances thermal integration and reduces overall specific energy

relevance to Oman's industrial and energy transition agenda. Small-scale and offshore LNG facilities are widely regarded as among the most energy-intensive segments of the natural gas value chain, particularly



The study developed an advanced LNG production configuration integrating carbon dioxide (CO₂)-based precooling with a dual-phase expander refrigeration cycle.

consumption, thereby lowering both operational costs and environmental impact.

According to the research findings, integrating CO₂-based precooling with an ethane-nitrogen refrigerant mixture significantly improves process efficiency while cutting thermodynamic losses and capital

requirements compared with conventional small-scale LNG systems.

The configuration demonstrated a balanced performance across energy efficiency, economic feasibility and decarbonisation potential, positioning it as a commercially attractive option for modular and

offshore LNG developments.

The research, published in the international peer-reviewed journal Energy by Elsevier, underscores the growing role of academic-led innovation in supporting industrial optimisation and emissions reduction.

The research team included Dr Muhammad Abdul Qyyum, Dr Ahmad Naquash, Eng Noman Raza Sial and Prof Moonyong Lee from Yeungnam University, South Korea. Dr Abdul Qyyum said the award reflects Oman's commitment to advancing high-quality research aligned with national priorities in sustainability and industrial innovation.

He added that optimising refrigerant selection, pressure ratios and thermodynamic integration at the early design stage can enable more cost-competitive and future-ready LNG facilities, particularly in offshore and distributed applications, contributing to the Sultanate of Oman's long-term energy transition objectives.

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



'Ramadhan at the Palace' invites guests to embrace moments of reflection and connection.

RAMADHAN
EVENINGS OF
ELEGANCE AT AL
BUSTAN PALACE

MUSCAT: Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz Carlton Hotel welcomes the holy month of Ramadhan with an exquisite collection of experiences that reflect the spirit of togetherness, serenity and Omani hospitality.

'Ramadhan at the Palace' invites guests to embrace moments of reflection and connection, with thoughtfully curated offerings that honour tradition in a setting of refined luxury.

Throughout the month, guests will discover meaningful gatherings, serene evenings under the stars, cultural celebrations and heartfelt community initiatives that embody the essence of Ramadhan.

This Ramadhan, guests are invited to gather for The Palace iftar at the iconic Al Khiran Kitchen, where timeless Ritz Carlton hospitality meets the flavours of the holy month. The evening features a lavish buffet, complete with live cooking stations, regional specialties and a curated selection of Ramadhan favourites.

Set against a serene seaside backdrop, The Palace iftar offers locals and residents an elegant and welcoming setting to celebrate meaningful Ramadhan moments with family and friends, at a regular price of RO 24 net per person.

As night gently settles over the Palace, Layali Ramadhan presents an elegant suhoor experience set in a tranquil outdoor venue. Guests are welcomed to unwind in a serene atmosphere enriched with live oriental music, curated culinary selections and the gentle breeze of the surrounding landscape. Designed to inspire calm reflection and cherished moments with family and friends, Layali Ramadhan captures the true spirit of Ramadhan — peaceful, refined and beautifully atmospheric.

For corporate groups, families and private celebrations, Al Bustan Palace offers a selection of exclusive venues tailored to elevate iftar gatherings. Featuring expertly curated buffet menus and the hotel's signature hospitality, Group and Corporate iftars promise a seamless and unforgettable experience.

This year, guests may also enjoy an elegant outdoor tent by the sea, offering a refreshing open-air ambience where traditional flavours and modern luxury come together.

Reflecting the values of compassion and community, Al Bustan Palace continues its annual Ramadhan Gifting and Charity Initiatives.

Throughout the holy month, the hotel prepares and distributes Ramadhan gift packages and extends charitable contributions to community members in need.

These initiatives highlight the hotel's commitment to kindness, social responsibility and sharing blessings — reinforcing that Ramadhan at the Palace goes beyond hospitality.

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MUSCAT: Committed to delivering innovative Sharia-compliant solutions that provide real value, ahli islamic credit cardholders enjoyed instant savings when shopping on the Lulu Online app and website.

As part of this limited-period promotion, cardholders received an immediate RO 5 discount on grocery purchases of RO 20, making Ramadhan shopping simpler and more rewarding. The offer will be available again on March 7, 2026.



This initiative reflects ahli islamic's ongoing dedication to offering banking solutions that align with

customer values while providing tangible, meaningful benefits.

The promotion applied to a wide range of items, including fresh produce, pantry staples, dairy and chilled products, frozen goods, non-food grocery essentials, as well as health and beauty items.

By providing instant savings, ahli islamic supported families in managing seasonal expenses and enjoying seamless, stress-free shopping experiences during the Holy Month.

Big Ramadhan wins
with Kia Seltos in Oman

THE Kia Seltos, an SUV that has become a symbol of modern style and urban energy, is celebrated this Ramadhan in Oman with a range of exceptional rewards that perfectly capture the spirit of giving. As a centrepiece of Kia's festive celebrations across the Sultanate of Oman, the Seltos offers drivers an unmatched blend of sophistication and value.

This year, the excitement is amplified by a landmark opportunity for fans and families to witness sporting history firsthand.

Every customer driving home a Seltos will be entered into an Assured Scratch and Win promotion, offering a chance to win one of 100 match tickets to the FIFA World Cup 2026, ensuring this Ramadhan is filled with truly winning moments.

Beyond the thrill of the world's greatest sporting event, the Ramadhan offers are designed to deliver significant savings and total peace of mind.

Customers can enjoy big savings of up to RO 625, along with a VAT on Us initiative where the VAT amount is adjusted against the down payment to make the journey to ownership even smoother.

The package is further enriched by one year of comprehensive insurance & registration, also get Assured Scratch and Win promotion, which also includes guaranteed service of either 50,000 km or 100,000 km.

Current Kia owners can enjoy even



The Seltos offers drivers an unmatched blend of sophistication and value.

more benefits, including an extra reward consisting of a special trade-in bonus and premium 3M window tints to keep their new ride cool and stylish.

The Kia Seltos is widely recognised as an investment in a premium lifestyle, particularly for young executives and drivers who value a modern, elevated ride.

Its high SUV seating position provides a commanding view of the road, making it remarkably easy to navigate through winding city streets or secure a spot in crowded mall parking lots. Under the hood, the Seltos is powered by a refined 1.4L Turbo engine producing 138 hp at 6000 rpm, paired

with a smooth 7 DCT transmission.

This combination ensures a spirited driving experience while delivering an impressive fuel efficiency of 17 km/litre, making it as light on the pocket as it is fun to drive.

The exterior design of the Seltos reflects a bold philosophy, featuring sharp muscular creases and a 2630mm wheelbase that provides a firm, stable grip on the road. Its signature look is defined by 17-inch alloy wheels and the new diamond-pattern radiator grille garnish, which is perfectly complemented by striking daytime running headlights.

BANKDHOFAR INVESTS IN OMAN'S FUTURE THROUGH INNOVATION

MUSCAT: In an era defined by rapid digital transformation, BankDhofar continues to demonstrate that its commitment to young Omanis is not just rhetorical — it is operational, sustained and increasingly impactful.

As one of the Sultanate of Oman's leading financial institutions, BankDhofar is prioritising digital solutions and financial education as dual engines for youth empowerment, aligning closely with Oman Vision 2040



The initiative equips young learners with practical money management skills.

emphasis on a knowledge-based economy, financial inclusion and technological adoption.

A clear example of this long-standing commitment is the bank's new "Khutwa" programme, launched in late 2025.

Designed specifically for Grade 11 and 12 students, Khutwa is a digital financial literacy curriculum offering interactive modules on core financial topics — from personal budgeting and online payments to loans, insurance products,

investing basics and even emerging domains like digital assets.

Created in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and several government entities, this initiative equips young learners with practical money management skills long before they enter the workforce or higher education.

It shows how BankDhofar is leveraging digital learning tools to empower youth with knowledge that builds financial confidence and resilience.

Al Wathbah Ramadhan Souq: A resounding success in empowering SMEs

MUSCAT: The Al Wathbah Ramadhan souq, organised by Bank Muscat in collaboration with the SMEs Development Authority, witnessed strong visitor turnout during its recent three-day run at the Bank's Head Office in Airport Heights, Muscat.

The souq was held in a distinctive Ramadhan atmosphere, bringing together a group of entrepreneurs and home-based business owners. This year's edition underscores Bank Muscat's leading role in community service and its ongoing commitment to fostering entrepreneurship.

The souq provided participating entrepreneurs with a spacious platform to showcase a diverse range of innovative, high-quality products, strengthening their brand visibility.



The souq provided participating entrepreneurs with a spacious platform to showcase a diverse range of innovative, high-quality products.

Visitors explored a wide range of locally-produced goods, including fashion and apparel, health and beauty products, accessories, food items, perfumes, as well as a variety of essentials for Eid Al Fitr. This diversity attracted large numbers of visitors eager to shop for their needs in preparation for Eid Al Fitr. For the first time, this year's edition also featured dedicated entertainment activities and programmes for kids and families, allowing all to enjoy a well-rounded experience that combined shopping and leisure.

On this occasion, Ibrahim bin Khamis al Balushi, Senior Assistant General Manager of SME at Bank Muscat, noted that the continued annual organisation of the Al Wathbah Ramadhan Souq reflects

the Bank's approach to supporting entrepreneurs and home-based businesses, saying: "The success of this year's edition, in terms of participation and visitor turnout, demonstrates the importance of such initiatives in empowering entrepreneurs and expanding their opportunities.

The souq goes beyond being a commercial platform, serving as a space for strengthening community ties and promoting a culture of supporting Omani entrepreneurs. We would like to express our appreciation to the participating entrepreneurs, the SMEs Development Authority and valued customers for their trust, support and contribution to the event's success".

SHORTTAKES



Sharakah said the agreement aligns with its mandate to empower small and medium enterprises operating in specialised, high-demand sectors.

SHARAKAH BACKS COFFEE TRADER EXPANSION

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, MARCH 1

Sharakah has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Abw Alkhalyl Alrhby Lla'mal SPC to provide Sharia-compliant financing aimed at strengthening the company's working capital and supporting its expansion in Oman's growing coffee market.

The Muscat-based enterprise, established in 2017, specialises in the import and wholesale distribution of green coffee beans, serving roasters, wholesale traders and Arabic coffee producers across the Sultanate of Oman, while also re-exporting to overseas markets.

The new financing facility will enhance procurement capacity, improve inventory management and ensure supply continuity amidst rising demand within the domestic coffee segment.

Sharakah said the agreement aligns with its mandate to empower small and medium enterprises operating in specialised, high-demand sectors. The company has previously benefited from SME development initiatives supported by Sharakah, including the SME Growth Programme under National Finance's CSR arm "Imtidad" and the "Tanmo" programme.

Ali Ahmed Muqibal, Chief Executive Officer of Sharakah, said the facility will strengthen the company's operational capacity and contribute to the development of the local coffee value chain. Ibrahim bin Mohammed al Rahbi, Owner of Abw Alkhalyl Alrhby Lla'mal SPC, said the financing enhances the firm's ability to scale operations and respond effectively to increasing market demand.

The partnership underscores Sharakah's continued focus on deploying Sharia-compliant funding solutions to boost SME sustainability and advance economic diversification objectives in the Sultanate of Oman.

Bukaka delivers first full BPU refurbishment

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, MARCH 1

OMAN-based Bukaka International LLC has completed what is described as Oman's first full-set beam pumping unit (BPU) refurbishment carried out entirely by a locally established manufacturer, marking a notable advance in the Sultanate of Oman's oilfield services capability .

The project involved C912 and C1280 BPU types from multiple international brands, underscoring the growing technical depth available within Oman to support mature upstream assets.

Traditionally, comprehensive refurbishment of such units has been conducted abroad. The successful in-country execution signals a shift towards greater operational self-reliance.

Beam pumping units remain essential to onshore oil production, particularly in mature fields where artificial lift systems are critical to sustaining output.

By localising full-scope refurbishment – from inspection and disassembly to reconditioning, testing and recommissioning – Oman strengthens its ability to extend equipment life cycles while



Before and after: Beam pumping units remain essential to onshore oil production, particularly in mature fields where artificial lift systems are critical to sustaining output.

optimising operational costs.

Industry analysts point out that refurbishment offers tangible financial and environmental benefits.

Compared to outright replacement, it can reduce capital expenditure, shorten turnaround time and lower carbon footprint by extending asset life cycle.

Importantly, the development aligns with Oman's In-Country Value (ICV) objectives, which aim to deepen domestic industrial participation and technical expertise in the energy sector. By executing full-set refurbishment locally, operators can reduce logistics exposure, improve response times and strengthen local technical competencies.

According to Bukaka, the refurbishment followed a structured engineering-led process. It began with

surveillance and inspection to assess structural integrity and mechanical performance. This was followed by systematic disassembly, component evaluation and cost assessment prior to client-approved repair execution.

Core components – including frame base assemblies, samson posts, walking beams, crank systems, gear reducers and bearing assemblies – underwent machining, welding, precision reconditioning and, where necessary, part replacement. Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) ensured compliance with API and ISO standards, while Factory Acceptance Testing (FAT) validated performance prior to installation and commissioning.

The structured methodology is designed to ensure that refurbished units meet operational specifications while

adhering to international safety and reliability benchmarks.

Bukaka's Oman-based refurbishment capability is supported by over three decades of international experience. Globally, the company has completed more than 1,500 BPU refurbishments and handled over 6,000 units across manufacturing, installation, maintenance and lifecycle services.

The transfer of this expertise to its local facility allows operators in Oman to access comprehensive services without reliance on overseas workshops.

As Oman continues to enhance upstream resilience and operational efficiency, the availability of standards-compliant, full-scope refurbishment services within Oman represents a strategic milestone in the evolution of its industrial ecosystem.

US OIL PRODUCTION DROPS, DEMAND CLIMBS

WASHINGTON: US crude oil production declined for a second consecutive month in December, falling to its lowest level since mid-2025, even as domestic demand strengthened, according to data released by the US Energy Information Administration (EIA).

Average crude output stood at 13.66 million barrels per day (bpd) in December, down by around 133,000 bpd from November.

The decrease marked the largest monthly drop since January 2025, when severe weather disruptions forced temporary shutdowns at key production facilities. The latest figures indicate a moderation in supply following sustained high production levels earlier in the year.

In contrast, total US petroleum demand rose sharply. Overall consumption increased by 624,000 bpd to reach 20.85 million bpd in December 2025 – the highest level recorded since August.

The rebound points to resilient end-user demand despite market volatility and shifting price dynamics. — Reuters

Oil and gas majors and traders suspend shipments via Hormuz

LONDON: Several tanker owners, oil majors and trading houses have suspended crude oil, fuel and liquefied natural gas shipments via the Strait of Hormuz after the US and Israel attacked Iran and Tehran said it had closed navigation, trading sources said on Saturday.

“Our ships will stay put for several days”, one top executive at a major trading desk said. Satellite images from tanker trackers showed vessels backed up next to big ports, such as Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates and not moving through Hormuz.

Multiple vessels in the area have received VHF transmission from Iran's Revolutionary Guards that “no ship is allowed to pass the Strait of Hormuz”, an official with the EU naval mission Aspides said.

The British Navy said Iran's orders



Tankers are seen at the Khor Fakkan Container Terminal, along the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway through which one-fifth of global oil output passes. — AFP

were not legally binding and advised vessels to transit with caution.

Vessel traffic through the Strait of Hormuz has not completely stopped

but disruptions are building rapidly, shipbroker Poten & Partners said in a note to clients.

The tanker association

INTERTANKO said the US Navy had warned against navigation in the area – the whole of the Gulf, Sea of Oman, North Arabian Sea and the Strait of Hormuz – saying it could not guarantee the safety of shipping.

Greece's shipping ministry advised vessels on Saturday to avoid the Arabian Gulf, the Sea of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz, according to an advisory.

Some 20% of global oil, including from producers Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Kuwait and Iran, passes through Hormuz along with large volumes of LNG from Qatar.

Fourteen LNG tankers have shown signs of slowing down, U-turning or stopping in or around the Strait, said Laura Page from consultancy Kpler,

adding that the number would likely rise, posing risks to Qatari LNG exports.

German container-shipping group Hapag-Lloyd said it is suspending all vessel transit through the Strait of Hormuz until further notice. Services calling on ports in the Gulf may experience delays, rerouting or schedule adjustments, the company said.

“With oil prices near a six-month high, the energy sector has outperformed in 2026, but can it accelerate further?

Denmark's Maersk said in an undated update on its website that it was coordinating with security partners on all operations in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden but cargo acceptance in the Middle East remained open. — Reuters

TRADE MOMENTUM

Korea exports extend nine-month rise



South Korea's exports rose for a ninth straight month in February, supported by robust semiconductor shipments despite mounting uncertainty over potential US tariffs.

Outbound shipments climbed 29% to \$67.45 billion.Semiconductor exports surged 160.9%, exceeding \$20 billion for a third month. Imports gained 7.5%, with a preliminary trade surplus of \$15.51 billion. — Reuters

CREDIT TURMOIL

UK lender collapse jolts Wall Street



Wall Street lenders were shaken by the collapse of UK mortgage provider Market Financial Solutions Ltd, triggering fears of wider credit losses in private markets.

Shares of Barclays and Jefferies fell sharply, deepening a broader selloff in financial and alternative asset firms. The turmoil renewed concerns over lending standards, following earlier bankruptcies. — Reuters

LARGEST IPO

SpaceX IPO valuation over \$1.75 trillion



Elon Musk's SpaceX is aiming to file confidentially for an initial public offering that could value the rocket and satellite company at more than \$1.75 trillion, Bloomberg News reported on Friday.

The filing could come as soon as March, Bloomberg said, in what would rank among the largest IPOs in history. Plans could still change and SpaceX could delay its listing. — Reuters

OPINION

Why smart leaders still make predictable mistakes



KAMLA AL RAHBI

The writer is a leadership and business strategist focused on decision-making, organisational clarity, and cognitive frameworks in complex environments.

THE most dangerous leadership mistakes are not made by inexperienced leaders. They are made by highly intelligent, highly successful ones. Not because they lack knowledge, but because success quietly changes how they think. In complex organisations, experience becomes a powerful decision-making tool. It allows leaders to move faster, filter information quickly and act with confidence. Over time, this efficiency is interpreted as competence. Fast decisions signal strength. Familiar patterns feel safe. Repeated approaches appear reliable. Yet this is precisely where predictability begins. What once enabled good judgment gradually turns into a fixed mental model. Leaders start to interpret new challenges through old successes. The context may have changed — markets may be more volatile, technology may have reshaped operations, organisational structures may have become more complex but the internal decision framework remains the same. The result is not a random mistake, but a repeated one. Past success is one of the most powerful sources of strategic blindness. It creates a reference point that is rarely questioned. When a decision has previously produced growth, stability or recognition, it gains psychological authority. Challenging it feels unnecessary. Replacing it feels risky. Over

time, the organisation continues to move, but not necessarily in the right direction. This is why many intelligent leaders confuse speed with clarity. The ability to decide quickly is often celebrated at senior levels. It reflects confidence and control. But speed can also mean that the decision process itself is no longer examined. Assumptions are no longer tested. Alternative interpretations are not explored. Reflection becomes a luxury rather than a discipline. The decision becomes efficient but not necessarily effective. Hierarchy reinforces this pattern. As leaders move upward, the quality of challenge around them changes. Conversations become more aligned. Disagreement becomes more cautious. Information arrives filtered through layers that are designed to protect stability. In such environments, even the most capable leaders operate within a narrowing field of perspective. The issue is not intelligence. It is insulation. Data, often seen as the solution, can deepen the problem. Metrics are selected to support the direction that already feels right. Dashboards provide confirmation, not confrontation. When the underlying question is not challenged, more data simply increases confidence in a familiar conclusion. This is why predictable mistakes appear in otherwise high-performing organisations.

In complex organisations, experience becomes a powerful decision-making tool. It allows leaders to move faster, filter information quickly and act with confidence. Over time, this efficiency is interpreted as competence.

Performance indicators remain strong. Processes look stable. Decisions are made quickly. Yet strategically, the organisation begins to drift. At the core of this pattern is a misunderstanding of what leadership effectiveness actually means. It is not the ability to make the right decision every time. It is the ability to continuously redesign how decisions are made. This requires a shift in focus from decision outcomes to decision architecture. Leaders who avoid predictable mistakes do not rely solely on their experience. They create systems that test it. They institutionalise constructive challenge. They separate speed from automatic thinking. They ask not only “What should we do?” but also “How are we thinking?” Most importantly, they recognise that intelligence does not remove blind spots. In fact, the more successful the leader, the more sophisticated those blind spots become. In today’s environment, where organisations operate under constant economic, technological and strategic pressure, the real competitive advantage is no longer information or experience. It is the quality of judgment. Smart leaders do not fail because they are incapable. They fail when their thinking becomes predictable. And in a world defined by continuous change, predictability — not uncertainty — is the real risk.

TRUMP’S NEW IRAN ATTACK OPENS UP BIG GLOBAL RISKS

GEORGE HAY

Donald Trump has finally revealed his hand on Iran: a closed fist. After weeks of threats and escalating rhetoric, the US president and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Saturday morning authorised major air strikes targeting the country’s leaders. For both the Gulf region and the global economy the latest attacks — and Tehran’s response — create a worryingly unstable and open-ended new reality. Trump’s recent warnings had linked the possibility of an attack to ongoing negotiations aimed at restricting Iran’s nuclear capabilities. However, early on Saturday morning he laid out a wider justification for conflict based on the Islamic Republic’s 47 years of hostility towards the United States, as well as preventing it from possessing an atomic weapon. Most notably, the president called on the Iranian people to take over the government after American bombs have cleared the way. “The hour of your freedom is at hand”, he declared. Both sides could yet step back from a prolonged conflict, as they have in the past. However, the costs of Trump’s decision are clearer than the benefits. Iran has responded by firing missiles at Israel as well as US allies in the Gulf like Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Those countries’

Morgan Stanley reckons that if a large-scale US attack is followed by significant Iranian counter-strikes, tanker disruptions in the Arabian Gulf could cut global supplies by up to 3 million barrels a day for several weeks. economic plans to pivot away from fossil fuels hinge on attracting foreign direct investment and tourism. Both are bound to suffer when missile attacks force financial hubs like Abu Dhabi and Dubai to close their airspace. The economic shocks could reverberate further if the conflict disrupts supplies of oil. Morgan Stanley reckons that if a large-scale US attack is followed by significant Iranian counter-strikes, tanker disruptions in the Arabian Gulf could cut global supplies by up to 3 million barrels a day for several weeks. That would be sufficient to send crude prices soaring way above their already elevated level of \$72 a barrel. How much of this feeds through to wider global inflation, forcing central banks to keep interest rates higher for longer, depends on whether Saudi Arabia can deploy some of its 2 million daily barrels of spare oil capacity. It also hinges on how long the conflict drags on, given the risk of other disruptions like renewed attacks on Red Sea shipping by Iran-aligned Ansar Allah forces. Whatever the outcome, Trump’s latest attacks have opened up big new risks. — Reuters

Future skills: Intersection of human and AI

HUMAN skills are highly relevant, but they remain invisible in most labour markets; according to the 2025 World Economic Forum (WEF) report on New Economy Skills, only 72% of US job postings explicitly mentioned at least one human-centric skill. The paradox is that though employers project human skills like empathy, critical thinking and resilience are critical for innovation, these skills are underrepresented in hiring criteria. Current debates focus on the value of the humanities and social sciences; and on whether analytical skills will compete with AI capabilities. It is plausible that as AI and robotics increasingly intersect with various fields, an exclusive reliance on manual skills will leave individuals less adaptable, even in traditional manual professions such as surgery and medicine. Instead of resisting AI training and development, the younger population must be able to interpret and integrate AI, as it is today a major skill in the job market. We know that most students use AI for homework, but institutions also need to develop students’ cognitive capacity so they can work independently without relying on AI. AI should be used as leverage, not as compensation for a lack of competencies. Higher Education must develop concrete measures, such as incorporating more written, oral exams and project-based assessments in which students perform without any external support or contributions. Connecting these two approaches will enable and empower students to use AI on their own terms, rather than being passive users. The traditional categorisation of soft and hard skills is changing. Students must not be limited to one silo of skills; rather, they should focus on ability and creativity, which can be called intellectual ambition, centred on critical thinking and the capacity for intellectual effort. AI must be used as a starting



DR MYTHILI KOLLURU

The writer is an assistant professor, marketing and management department

It is plausible that as AI and robotics increasingly intersect with various fields, an exclusive reliance on manual skills will leave individuals less adaptable, even in traditional manual professions such as surgery and medicine.



The younger population must be able to interpret and integrate AI, as it is today a major skill in the job market.

point, not a destination, for students. Methodology and rigour in thinking are very important. Also, moving forward, the ability to detect AI hallucinations, problems and biases will be a critical skill. Emerging meta skills are more methodological and cognitive in nature. To remain relevant, students must interact with AI-generated information and data insights from AI agents and creatively connect information. Achieving depth of understanding, not just surface-level knowledge, is essential and challenging. Systems thinking, understanding how systems operate, will be critical, such as when tackling climate change. The ability to navigate technical skills and different layers of reasoning is particularly pertinent in this context. Pedagogy can evolve through complex case studies to develop logical optimisation and systems thinking. These shifts are not unprecedented. This is not the first revolution the world has experienced; we have had other transformations and societies have organised themselves around them and developed to their fullest potential. Looking ahead, new transformations will be complex and will produce winners and losers in the reorganisation of society. Therefore, the full risks and the

opportunities for transformation must be understood. Furthermore, the sciences will also undergo a drastic change. Usually, data is organised into quantitative and qualitative categories, but AI has the potential to blur the line between these categories and open a new field of research. Problem-solving skills and corporate diplomacy are among the most demanded skill sets amidst evolving global geopolitical developments. Corporate diplomacy refers to how to tackle problems in uncertain and tough times. It is important to focus on developing emotional quotient, cultural intelligence and empathy. Social and ethical skills, curiosity and perspectives are critical for problem-solving. AI complements human skills and humans still need training on human-based skills like resilience and adaptability. Educational institutions can prepare students for their first job and equip them with long-term agility and diverse interdisciplinary knowledge, enabling them not only to be experts but also to connect across knowledge sets to solve problems in the context of the social, economic and geopolitical landscape. Moving forward, individuals must be primed to integrate human and AI capabilities for sustainable living.

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LOGISTICS Documentation Executive. Indian male, 25 years, BBA, PG Diploma in Logistics & SCM and have 2 years of experience in this field. Seeking a position in Logistics field Mob: +968 7506 9882 Mail: shafazhussain18@gmail.com

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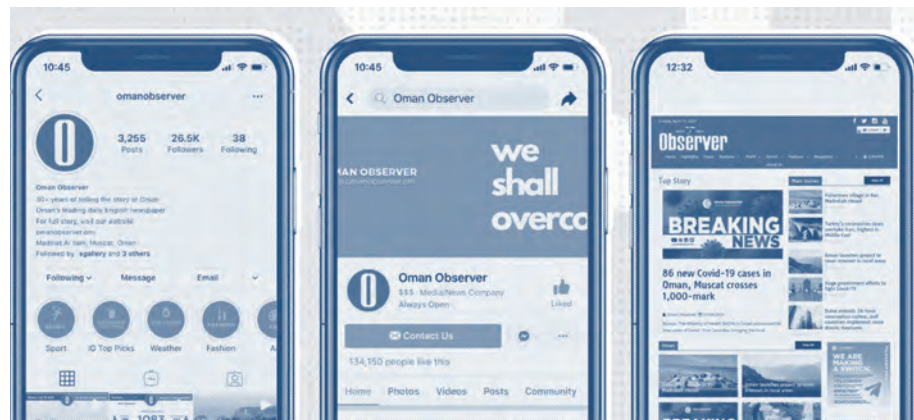
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NAME CHANGE

We **Henil Jasvantray Sheth** (name of father as per passport, holder of Indian Passport No. S3078652) and **Jalpa Mukesh Valani** (name of mother as per the passport holder of Indian Passport No. T2426706) having permanent address in Amijal, 137-Gokuldham, Krisha Naagar, Rajkot (complete postal address in India) and presently residing at the following address in Al Wadi Al Kabir, P.B. No. 3017, P.C. No. 112, Sultanate of Oman, hereby solemnly affirm and declare to change the name of our child Miss **Ditya Henil Jasvantray Chhotalal Manji** (name as per passport) holder of Indian Passport No. V4000632 date of issue 7/3/2022 issued at Muscat. The name of our child will be henceforth known as **Ditya Henil** (new name) for all purpose.

Any objection towards change of name of our minor child may please be communicated to Embassy of India, Muscat, Diplomatic Quarters, Al Khuwair, P. Box No. 1727, Postal Code 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman.



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SUHAR HOSPITAL MARKS 10 YEARS OF RAMADHAN DIABETES PROGRAMME



BUTHAINA AL RIYAMI

RAMADHAN is the sacred month for Muslims, deeply intertwined with devotion and worship. Muslims surround themselves with an aura of spiritual purity and self-discipline through fasting, which involves not only abstaining from food and drink but also refraining from sinful deeds. The longing to welcome this blessed month begins with the sighting of the crescent moon, signalling the start of Ramadhan. With that declaration, for people living with diabetes, it is both a deeply spiritual moment and a source of medical uncertainty.

Ramadhan rituals and fasting cause changes in daily routines, eating patterns and medication schedules, which can place individuals with diabetes at real risk.

Yet in Suhar Hospital, for more than a decade, a quiet but impactful healthcare initiative has been redefining what safe fasting looks like for people living with diabetes.

Since 2015, Suhar Hospital has been running a structured Ramadhan Diabetes Programme,

bringing medical science and cultural and religious sensitivity together. Such initiatives stand as a nationally relevant model of best practice in Muslim-majority settings.

The programme is well-structured and starts early — six to eight weeks in advance, unlike traditional advice that is often given only days before Ramadhan.

Before the beginning of each Ramadhan, patients with diabetes attending the hospital are assessed using the International Diabetes Federation — Diabetes and Ramadhan (IDF-DAR) risk stratification tool.

The programme does not issue blanket instructions prohibiting fasting but instead assesses and categorises patients into low-, moderate-, or high-risk groups and works with each individual accordingly, providing them with personalised Ramadhan care plans. Individuals deemed suitable to fast receive tailored education sessions that transform fasting from a risky personal decision into a medically guided process.

These sessions include medication and insulin dose adjustments, meal planning and hydration strategies, self-monitoring



of blood glucose and clear guidance on when and why the fast must be broken.

What makes Suhar Hospital's programme stand apart from other similar programmes is how care continues after Ramadhan begins, handled through telemedicine — particularly WhatsApp.

High-risk patients receive daily follow-ups, while low- and moderate-risk individuals are

monitored weekly. Patients can also ask urgent questions and receive advice directly from the diabetes care team. Each year, the team responds to approximately 100–150 WhatsApp messages and inquiries.

Dr Ali al Reesi, a senior consultant endocrinologist and programme leader, clarified that the initiative extends to include community awareness programmes. In addition, the care team provides structured

broadcast messages, shares daily WhatsApp status updates, motivational messages and practical health advice related to diabetes management during Ramadhan fasting.

“At times, we also host lectures on diabetes and fasting in local mosques”, Al Reesi explained, highlighting the programme's extensive reach beyond clinic hours.

This programme embraces cultural competence. The care team recognises that most patients do not view fasting during Ramadhan solely as a medical issue but as a deeply personal act of faith. The programme has succeeded in building trust rather than resistance by aligning medical recommendations with religious understanding.

After a decade, Suhar Hospital's Ramadhan Diabetes Programme stands as more than a medical programme.

It extends into an applicable, culturally attuned model for healthcare systems seeking to balance safety with spiritual commitment.

Such programmes make fasting a journey of confidence, guided by science rather than fear.

FATWA

QUESTION & ANSWER



Shaikh
Dr Kahlan
Al Kharousi

Assistant Grand
Mufti of the
Sultanate
of Oman

QUESTION

Does the external use of ointment break the fast?

ANSWER

Indeed, the external use does not affect fasting. Just like bathing during days of Ramadhan is acceptable, in the same context, using external ointments is permissible.

QURAN

VERSE OF THE DAY

﴿وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيثَةٍ اجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ﴾

“A bad word may be compared to a bad tree: it will be uprooted from the face of the earth; it has no foothold.”

[Surat Ibrahim] — Verse 26

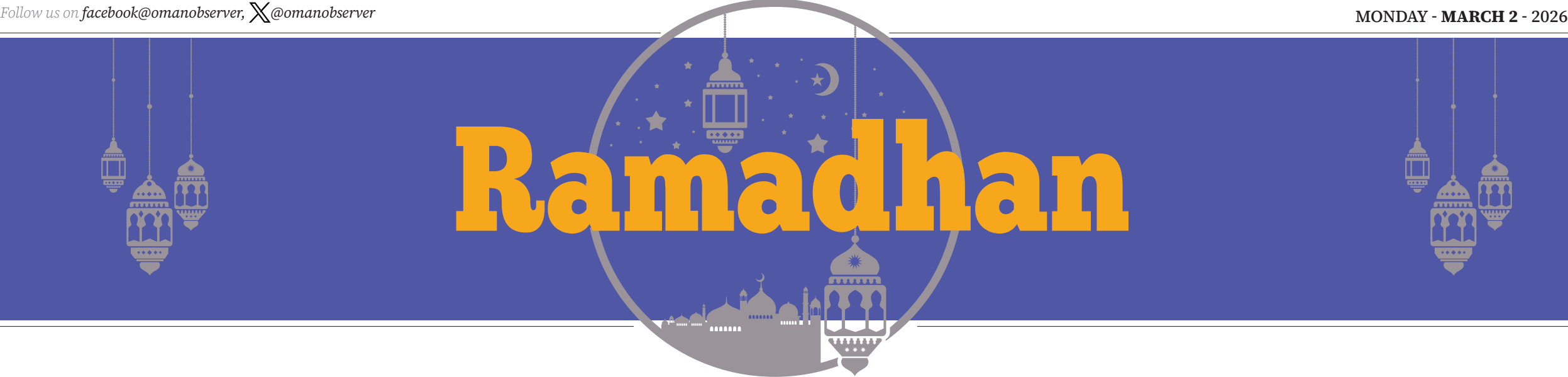
HADITH

A GUIDE FOR THE FAITHFUL

Narrated Abu Huraira:
The Prophet (PBUH) said:

“If somebody eats or drinks forgetfully then he should complete his fast, for what he has eaten or drunk, has been given to him by Allah”.

[Sahih Al Bukhari]



Let spirit of Ramadhan rise above passing trends

BALQEES AL ORAIMI

RAMADHAN in Oman has long been defined by continuity, inherited rituals, shared values and social practices passed down through generations. From the simplicity of traditional iftar meals to the collective stillness that envelops neighbourhoods at sunset, the holy month has always been rooted in communal rhythm rather than individual display. Yet in recent years, a new layer has emerged, reshaping how Ramadhan is experienced: digital trends.

Across social media, Ramadhan has become a seasonal phenomenon marked by hashtags, daily challenges, curated iftar tables and short videos documenting acts of worship and charity. While these trends often stem from positive intentions, inspiration, awareness, creativity — they raise a cultural question: how are digital trends redefining long-held traditions in Omani society? Cultural observers note that traditions are not static; they evolve alongside society. However, the speed at which digital content spreads has accelerated change. Practices once shaped within families and local communities are now influenced by global online cultures. In Oman, this shift is particularly visible among younger generations engaging with Ramadhan through both spiritual and digital lenses.

Salim Rashid, a cultural expert, explains that trends have altered the symbolism of Ramadhan without necessarily diminishing its value. “What we are witnessing is not a loss of tradition, but a reinterpretation of it”, he says. “Sharing Ramadhan moments online has become, for some, a modern extension of communal participation”.

Yet concerns remain about balance. Traditional Ramadhan practices emphasised modesty, discretion and inward reflection. The rise of trend-driven content



For Omanis abroad, social media serves as a bridge to Ramadhan at home. — Picture for illustration



Many trends highlight surface elements — food, décor, fashion — while overlooking deeper values such as patience, humility and quiet generosity. Traditions survive when values are transmitted, not just visuals.

AISHA AL BALUSHI
History teacher

— from elaborate iftar aesthetics to viral routines — risks shifting focus from essence to appearance. Aisha al Balushi, a history teacher, notes that selective preservation is a concern: “Many trends highlight surface elements — food, décor, fashion — while overlooking deeper values such as patience, humility and quiet generosity. Traditions survive when values are transmitted, not just visuals”.

Family dynamics have also been affected. In some households, gatherings are adapted for content creation, altering spontaneity. While documentation itself is not new, the intent has shifted: memory-keeping is increasingly shaped by audience engagement.

At the same time, digital trends can have positive cultural impact. Campaigns promoting kindness, Quran challenges and online charity drives expand participation, especially for those unable to engage physically. For Omanis abroad, social media serves as a bridge to Ramadhan at home. Social

worker Khalid al Rashdi highlights the dual effect: “Digital trends can amplify cultural values when guided responsibly. The challenge is ensuring trends support tradition rather than replace it. Ramadhan should not feel like content to be consumed, but a space to be lived”.

Younger Omanis navigate identity in a globalised, digital environment, blending tradition with contemporary expression. Mosques, homes and neighbourhoods remain anchors, even as social media reshapes peripheral practices. Preserving Ramadhan traditions depends on intentional transmission — through storytelling, family engagement and conscious participation beyond the screen.

As trends evolve, Ramadhan offers reflection not only on faith, but on cultural direction. The true challenge is ensuring the spirit of the month remains deeper than the trend — rooted in meaning, community and continuity.

RAMADHAN TWEETS



فيل
@ix_ele

Translated from Arabic by Grok

"My Lord, make this city secure" 🇲🇴🇲🇵🇲🇸
#سلطنة_عُمان

Rate this translation:  



Splendid view of Muscat during Ramadhan



عواش
@aish00na

Translated from Arabic by Grok

The beauty of the breakfast scene among the flowers in #SultanateOfOman 🌸🌺

#RamadanBringsUsTogether
#GoodEvening

Rate this translation:  



A stunning shot captures iftar at Wakan Village



PROMINENT OMANI FIGURES



Who is he?
Ali bin Nasser al Hajri

An Omani figure who took part in Palestine war in 1948. He was later invited by Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan to help plan the UAE's founding. He returned to Oman under the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos and became one of his trusted early leaders.



RAMADHAN TRADITION





Lebanon has its own Ramadhan traditions that were adopted and developed and are now famous for among other countries. One of these traditions is Midfa Al Iftar or Iftar Cannon which is used till today. Midfa Al Iftar is well-known in the Middle East, but Lebanon made particular canons for iftar to announce the end of the fasting period daily.



HEALTH TIPS





LIMIT SCREEN TIME BEFORE GOING TO BED

With late-night prayers and early suhoor, sleep patterns change significantly during Ramadhan. Lack of rest can make you feel tired and unfocused throughout the day. To improve sleep:

- Aim for at least 7-8 hours of sleep by managing naps and bedtime effectively.
- Maintain a sleep schedule to help your body adjust to the new routine.
- Limit screen time before bed to improve sleep quality.

FEATURES

Omani winter cuisine during Ramadhan



RUQAYA AL KINDI

WHEN winter coincides with Ramadan, it is not only the temperature that changes, but the rhythm of Omani homes as well. Kitchens grow warmer; and mothers and grandmothers return to recipes never written down yet carefully preserved in memory. These dishes are simple in ingredients but profound in meaning, gently cooked and served hot, carrying the spirit of the season.

Sara al Abri, a content creator specialising in traditional Omani cuisine, highlights “Al Jawla and Honey” as one of the most prominent winter recipes. Made from flour, water and a pinch of salt, the batter is baked on a griddle, then drizzled with date syrup and Omani ghee; and sprinkled with cardamom and black pepper. The defining moment, she says, comes when it is crumbled with a wooden stick to blend the flavours. Served hot with coffee, it becomes more than a dish, it is a winter ritual and an unspoken sign that the night is long and calls for warmth.

On her Instagram account (@hodhod.om23), Sara also shares the recipe for sweet potatoes, locally known as “Al Fandal”, a winter dish common across several Omani regions. Some boil it with dates, while others cook it plainly and serve it with syrup or honey. “The similarity is in the essence and the difference is in the additions”, she explains, reflecting a broader characteristic of Omani cuisine.

Another favourite is “dates with ghee”, prepared from date paste, ghee, cardamom and black pepper, gently stirred over low heat until fragrant. The sweetness combined with pepper reflects a long-standing understanding of balancing flavour with climate. It is typically served hot with Omani coffee.

Some dishes are even simpler. Omani peas, “Gurgur” and broad beans, “Baqil” are seasonal winter crops boiled with salt and served hot, often eaten by hand.

Though not considered main dishes, they signal the season’s presence on the table and affirm that simplicity can be deeply satisfying. Pumpkin, locally called “Bobar”, is boiled until soft, then mixed with milk and spices and served with Omani bread, reflecting the direct link between land and table. Garden cress seed soup, prepared savory or sweet, offers light warmth against



the chill.

Beyond sustenance, these dishes carry social meaning. Sociological researcher Watfa bint Masaaod al Farsi, Assistant Researcher at the Omani Studies Centre at Sultan Qaboos University, notes that food in Oman has never been a routine act.

It remains tied to rituals of preparation and serving.

Dining culture is built on sharing, from cooking together to eating from one plate, embodying connection and cooperation.

This spirit deepens during Ramadhan. Though fasting is an individual act of worship, iftar is collective. Families, neighbours, colleagues and villages gather frequently, balancing spiritual devotion with social bonds.

Al Farsi recalls childhood memories of delivering Ramadhan dishes to neighbours and returning with others, an exchange rooted less in food than in care and belonging.

In many villages, men and women also gather separately after Taraweeh prayers for nightly meals that preserve solidarity and offer comfort.

Winter dishes in Ramadhan, therefore, are more than seasonal meals. They are rituals of warmth and gathering, collective rewards after a day of fasting and enduring symbols of the Omani table in a fast-paced world.

GOTHICREVIVAL

NEW ‘WUTHERING HEIGHTS’ FILM UNLEASHES FRESH WAVE OF BRONTE-MANIA



An exterior view of St Michael and All Angels’ Church is pictured in the village centre of Haworth, northern England. Situated on the edge of the Pennine moors, Haworth is internationally famous for its connection with the Bronte sisters who wrote their famous literary works while living at the Haworth Parsonage. “Wuthering Heights,” a steamy film adaptation by British filmmaker Emerald Fennell of the classic Emily Bronte novel, starring Margot Robbie and Jacob Elordi as the doomed lovers Cathy and Heathcliff, topped box offices upon its release in mid-February. — AFP

Perched on the edge of the rugged Yorkshire moors that inspired Emily Bronte to write her masterpiece “Wuthering Heights”, the quaint village of Haworth has long been a place of literary pilgrimage.

Now the latest big-screen adaptation of her classic 1847 novel — starring Margot Robbie and Jacob Elordi and with a Charli XCX soundtrack — is drawing a fresh influx of visitors.

It was here that Emily and her sisters, Charlotte and Anne, lived and wrote.

More than 150 years after the sisters’ deaths, “the world is still fascinated with their stories”, said Canadian retiree Nancy Marto, adding that being able to visit Haworth was “a dream come true”.

“I think the fact that there is a new version of ‘Wuthering Heights’... speaks to the power of these authors, to Emily, but also to her sisters”, she said.

Two weeks after the release of the film, picturesque Haworth in northwest England with its narrow, cobbled streets and small stone houses, is packed.

The film, loosely based on the book, was one of the most anticipated of the year.

At the heart of the plot is the passionate relationship between Heathcliff, a boy of mysterious origins taken in by the wealthy Mr Earnshaw and his daughter Catherine.

The moors, battered by the elements, play a central role in the novel, as well as in Emerald Fennell’s film.

‘Completely besotted’

Johnnie Brigg, a local tour guide, has been inundated with requests in recent weeks.

“They want to come here and experience the Brontes, the moor and find their own interpretation of Emily”, he said.

The film would attract a “whole new generation of people” who had not yet read the book but were “completely besotted” after seeing the film, he added.

The parsonage between the village and the moors where the Brontes lived with their clergyman father and brother, Branwell, is now a museum dedicated to their memory.

Emily’s sister Charlotte also wrote “Jane Eyre” here, another classic of English literature.

The museum’s Mia Ferullo, who has been giving talks on “Bronte-mania” for the past fortnight, said “so many people” were “picking up the book for the first time” as a result of the film.

Museum director Rebecca Yorke said 500 people of all ages and backgrounds visited on one Saturday.

Numbers like that were usually only seen in peak season such as during the August summer holidays, Yorke said.

“Everyone is talking about Emily Bronte and ‘Wuthering Heights’... It’s just extraordinary”, she added. — AFP