

Times

GOLDEN JUBILEE

OF OMAN



51

YEARS OF LEGACY

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APPOINTING MEMBERS

Royal Decree reorganises Oman Human Rights Commission

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Tuesday issued Royal Decree No. 47/2026 on reorganising Oman Human Rights Commission, reading as follows:

Article (1) replaces the by-law of Oman Human Rights Commission attached to Royal decree No. 57/2022 on reorganising Oman Human Rights Commission with the bylaw attached to this decree.

Article (2) stipulates that the membership of the members of Oman Human Rights Commission as per Royal Decree No.76/2023 on appointing members of Oman Human Rights Commission shall remain in effect until such time as the Commission is reconstituted in accordance with the bylaw attached to this decree.

Article (3) cancels all that contradicts the bylaw attached to this decree or contravenes its provisions.

Article(4)says that this Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from the day following its date of publishing. – **ONA**

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HM DISCUSSES REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS WITH QATAR EMIR AND JAPAN’S PREMIER

During the telephone calls, His Majesty discussed the evolving situation and concerted bid to ensure the security and stability of the region and the world

cussed the evolving situation in the region and its security and economic ramifications for nations and their peoples.

The two leaders underscored the imperative of consolidating international efforts to safeguard the security of maritime navigation and to resolve the ongoing conflict through diplomatic channels, grounded in the principles of international law, in a concerted bid to ensure the security and stability of the region and the world.

The telephone conversation with Japanese Prime Minister reviewed the latest regional developments and their repercussions on the security of countries and the safety of their peoples.

Japan’s Prime Minister commended the Sultanate of Oman’s efforts in easing regional tensions, reaffirming her country’s commitment to resolving the conflict through diplomatic channels and reaching a final agreement. – **ONA**

US, Iran may resume peace negotiations soon

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A fresh round of in-person talks between the United States and Iran could take place as early as this week, raising cautious hopes for progress toward ending the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

The development follows high-level negotiations in Islamabad over the weekend, led by JD Vance, which failed to produce an immediate peace agreement.

Despite the setback, both Vance and Donald Trump signalled optimism on Monday about the prospects for renewed dialogue.

Their remarks came even as US forces imposed a blockade preventing ships from entering or leaving Iranian ports, underscoring the continuing tensions.

According to Oman News Agency, Pakistan is actively working to bring Washington and Tehran back to the negotiating table while also pushing for an extension of the ceasefire to allow space for diplomatic efforts.

The weekend talks in Islamabad marked rare direct engagement between the US and Iran but ended without a breakthrough. Pakistani sources indicated that a second round of discussions could be held soon, although the timing and venue remain undecided.

Iranian Foreign Minister

Abbas Araghchi attributed the failure to reach an agreement in the recent talks between Iran and the US to Washington’s excessive demands and flip-flop, according to Tasnim news agency.

In a telephone conversation, Araghchi briefed his French counterpart Jean-Noël Barrot on the intensive Iran-US negotiations held on the weekend in Islamabad.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran, despite having absolute distrust of the American side, entered the negotiations with a responsible approach and good faith. Although progress was made in the negotiation process on many issues, the American side’s excessive demands and constant changes in their requirements prevented reaching an agreement,” the Iranian foreign minister explained.

For his part, the top French diplomat stressed his country’s position in support of a diplomatic approach to end the war, expressing hope that continued dialogue would lead to a final agreement.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Equestrian season nears thrilling finale

1 The Oman Equestrian and Racing Federation is approaching the conclusion of its 2025/2026 season, with 23 races completed and two remaining. The penultimate race is scheduled for Friday, followed by the 25th and final race on Saturday, bringing down the curtain on a season defined by fierce competition among elite horses and jockeys. **>A4**

WORLD US President, Indian PM discuss West Asia

2 Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi received a call from US President Trump during which the two leaders discussed the security situation in West Asia and stressed the importance of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open and secure. **>A6**

MARKET Botswana President visits Sohar Port

3 President Duma Gideon Boko of Botswana, along with his accompanying delegation, visited SOHAR Port and Freezone as part of a visit to Oman. The President also received a detailed overview of operational efficiency. **>B1**

WORLD JUNIOR TAEKWONDO CHAMPIONSHIPS

Oman’s Al Yusufi stuns world stage with silver medal in Tashkent

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman’s rising taekwondo talent Dawood Fahad Al Yusufi delivered a career-defining performance on the world stage, capturing a silver medal at the World Junior Taekwondo Championships in Tashkent on Monday after an outstanding run in the fiercely competitive men’s 48kg category.

In a high-intensity final, Al Yusufi put up a strong fight but lost to Uzbekistan’s Yosinbek Odilov, who claimed the host nation’s first gold medal of the championship.

The final, played in front of an electrified home crowd at the Martial Arts Sports Complex in Olympic City, ended 5-1 and 11-9 across the two rounds in favour of the Uzbek fighter.

Despite the defeat, Al Yusufi’s path to the final underlined his emergence as one of Oman’s brightest sporting prospects, as he outclassed opponents from some of the sport’s strongest nations.

Giant-killing run to the final Competing in a stacked draw of 57 athletes in his category, Al Yusufi powered through a series of tough international clashes. He overcame a stiff challenge

from Egypt’s Yehia Hazem Shaker in the opening round winning in three rounds (6-7, 4-0, 2-0) before defeating Russia’s Idar Mashukov in the round of 16 (7-1, 13-0).

Al Yusufi then beat Chinese Taipei’s Hao-En Luo in the quarter-finals.

The talented Omani then got the better of Kazakhstan’s Yerassyl Yerzatz in the semi-finals (5-3, 8-3) to set up a clash with the local hero.

The worlds feature a record total of 986 athletes from 115 countries across all categories.

Against Odilov in the gold medal clash, Al Yusufi showed strong tactical awareness and resilience.

The Uzbek star edged ahead with a precise head kick in the opening round before closing it 5-1. **>A3**



Purpose, People, Progress

What guides your leadership philosophy at MHD ITICS, and how has your vision influenced the Group's trajectory in innovation and infrastructure development?

My leadership philosophy is rooted in purpose, people, and progress. I believe that innovation must begin with a clear purpose, one that addresses real challenges, anticipates future needs, and creates meaningful value for society.

At MHD - ITICS, this mindset has guided our shift toward future-ready infrastructure and technology-driven solutions. By empowering teams, fostering a culture of curiosity, and encouraging calculated risk-taking, we have expanded our innovation footprint and accelerated digital transformation across various sectors.

My vision has always been to position the Group not only as a market leader, but as a catalyst that contributes to Oman's broader economic and technological advancement.

MHD ITICS operates at the intersection of technology, industry, and consumer solutions. How do you harmonize these diverse sectors under a unified strategy?

The key lies in recognizing that these sectors, while diverse, share a common objective: enhancing quality of life through smarter, more efficient solutions.

We unify our strategy by focusing on three pillars:

- Integration: Ensuring our businesses operate with cross-sector collaboration
- Innovation: Leveraging emerging technologies to elevate both industrial and consumer offerings.
- Impact: Aligning each venture with national priorities,



global trends, and long-term value creation.

This cohesive approach allows us to remain agile, competitive, and purpose-driven across all verticals.

What have been some defining moments in your leadership journey within MHD and Oman's private sector?

Several key milestones have shaped my leadership journey at MHD and within Oman's private sector, moments that reflect both our nation's evolving priorities and my commitment to aligning MHD-ITICS with Oman's long-term vision.

One defining chapter has been steering the Infrastructure and Building Systems Division toward sustainability. Guided by Oman's energy diversification agenda, we focused on delivering green, future-ready solutions for major national development projects. Ensuring our company

TOP WOMEN LEADERS IN OMAN

evolve from traditional offerings to sustainable technologies was not only a professional achievement, but also a personal commitment to supporting Oman's environmental goals.

Another pivotal moment was the creation of our Healthcare Division.

As Oman Vision 2040 emphasizes accessible, technology-driven healthcare for all, we recognized the rising demand for advanced medical equipment and solutions. Establishing this division confirmed our ability to anticipate national needs and position MHD-ITICS as a

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LINCOLN

HE Lujaina Mohsin Haider Darwish
Chairperson, MHD - ITICS

HE Lujaina Mohsin Haider Darwish has played a defining role in shaping Oman's economic, social, and civic landscape through decades of principled leadership and public service. Her work bridges enterprise, policy, and community impact, while her steadfast advocacy for women's empowerment has inspired generations of Omani leaders. Grounded in integrity and national vision, her influence reflects a lifelong commitment to inclusive progress and sustainable development.

AL DHAHIRAH

Twelve agreements signed

YANQUL: Twelve agreements were signed on Tuesday for the implementation of social investment projects in Al Dhahirah Governorate.

The projects, which cost about OMR1.5 million, are part of initiatives undertaken by Minerals Development Oman in the wilayats of Ibri and Yanqul.

Boost community partnerships

The agreements aim to boost community partnerships and support sustainable development in the concession areas. They deal with the implementation of projects in the fields of education, innovation, socio-economic prosperity, environment protection and health.

The agreements signing ceremony was held under the auspices of Tahir bin Mabkhout Al Junaibi, Governor of Al Dhahirah.

The agreements also include the establishment of a walkway, the implementation of initiatives for the empowerment of household businesses, paving internal roads, boosting street lighting infrastructure and implementing programmes to raise the awareness of school students about earth sciences and mining.

The agreements embody the integration of roles between the public and private sectors with the prime aim of supporting local development and improving the quality of life. -**ONA**

Development projects in Al Buraimi reviewed

The briefing reviewed key performance indicators, noting that the governorate achieved a 100 percent completion rate in several Oman Vision 2040 targets during 2025



In the digital transformation sector, 2,805 digital transactions were completed, 25 services were digitized, and specialized services were provided for investors and employees. The "Tajawub" platform recorded 882 transactions with a completion rate of 98.8 percent.

In the investment sector, 23 investment contracts were signed with an investment volume of approximately OMR12 million.

These covered various economic sectors, led by the commercial sector at 38 percent, followed by the service sector at 24 percent, and the industrial and mining sector at 21 percent.

In line with efforts to empower national cadres, the total number of Omani employees participating in the implementation of projects and contracts in the governorate during 2025 and 2026 reached approximately 166, an indicator reflecting growing employment opportunities and the enhanced presence of national talent.

Regarding tourism, the governorate organised 13 events in 2025, attracting more than 375,400 visitors. These events stimulated economic activity, enhanced tourism attraction, and supported small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

The briefing included an interactive discussion session during which media and social media representatives raised questions regarding services and developmental projects in the governorate.

Sayyid Dr. Hamad Ahmed Al Busaidi, Governor of Al Buraimi, emphasized the role of the media as an active partner in highlighting developmental achievements.

He stated that the government is proceeding with its projects and plans based on a vision focused on improving service quality and performance efficiency.

Al Busaidi noted that the governorate is witnessing growing economic momentum reflected in higher market value and purchasing power indicators, enhancing its attractiveness as a stimulating environment for investment. -**ONA**

He also lauded the positive role of the community, particularly the youth, in supporting the development process and contributing to the march of work and production. -**ONA**

stitutional excellence assessment reached 90 percent.

The total number of projects in the governorate reached 112, with a total estimated value of OMR29.5 million.

These were distributed between 88 service projects and 24 infrastructure projects, with an overall completion rate of 88 percent. Furthermore, the value of development projects awarded in the infrastructure sector exceeded OMR12 million.

In the telecommunications and postal sector, the governorate witnessed significant development in coverage and digital infrastructure indicators. The fibre optic coverage rate for residential units reached 79 percent, compared to 71 percent, while 5G network coverage rose to 93 percent from 86 percent.

Fixed broadband coverage for schools reached a completion rate of 100 percent. The number of 5G stations increased to 152, telecommunications stations to 358, and fiber optic connections reached 30,000.

Additionally, the number of postal branches and access points increased to 18 locations, reflecting the accelerated pace of digital transformation and improved service quality.

The briefing addressed several strategic projects, most notably the Economic Zone in Al Rawdah and the "Hafeet Rail" railway network project, alongside urban landscape development projects such as the Al Buraimi Oasis (City Center), the Crystal Lake project, and internal road development projects.

General maintenance works

Oman Flour Mills SAOG (OFM) invites specialized and experienced contractors to participate for the General maintenance works - AMC (including Civil , MEP , Carpentry & miscellaneous jobs) -for our production Plant at Oman Flour Mills based at Muttrah & Bio Products Oman based at Barka in accordance with the defined scope of work and technical specifications.

Tender Documents:

Interested bidders are requested to send an email to tender-civil@gomanflourmills.com to obtain the tender documents. Tender documents will be shared upon receipt of the mail

Tender Fee Details:

Tender fee shall be deposited directly to the following bank account:

Account Name: Oman Flour Mills Company SAOG

Bank: Sohar International

Account Number: 001020032407

Swift Code: BSHROMRXXX

Tender Ref no	OFM/TD-013/2026
Tender subject	General maintenance works - AMC
Tender fee	RO. 100/- (non-refundable)
Bid Bond	1660 OMR
Start date for tender collection	15/04/2026
Last date for tender collection	20/04/2026
Last date for receiving the technical queries	23/04/2026
Closing date of the tender	06/05/2026
Mode of payment of tender fee	By Bank Transfer
Email address for clarifications and communication	tender-civil@gomanflourmills.com
Mode of submission	All bidders are required to submit their proposals through email: bid-ofm@gomanflourmills.com

Vendor selection will be based on "best and final offer". OFM is not bound to select the lowest bidder.

Notwithstanding the specific terms in the Tender Documents, Tender fee is not refundable

Bids submittal shall consist of 2 separate PDF files (Technical) & (Commercial), with bidder name on each and tender reference number OFM/TD-013/2026.



Medical labs play a vital role in medicare of individuals, society

The Central Public Health Laboratory provides an advanced platform for scientific research and innovation and supports epidemiological studies that contribute in formulating health policies



It also promotes recognition for the specialty of medical laboratory as a major contributor to the health of individuals and society. Dr. Hanan Salim Al Kindi, Director of the Department of the Central Public Health Laboratory (Ministry of Health), told the Oman News Agency (ONA) that the Central Public Health Laboratory, opened in January 2026, represents a strategic achievement that reflects the Sultanate of Oman's commitment to enhancing the health security system and improving the quality of health services.

The laboratory, she added, constitutes a cornerstone in supporting epidemiological surveillance and early warning systems by providing advanced capabilities for the rapid and accurate detection of infectious diseases and emerging health threats, including epidemics of global dimension. Dr. Hanan added that the Central Public Health Laboratory is a national and regional reference that boasts the latest laboratory technologies and international standards. She pointed out that the Central Public Health Laboratory contrib-

utes to standardising procedures and enhancing integration among relevant health institutions in the Sultanate of Oman. She added that the Central Public Health Laboratory provides an advanced platform for scientific research and innovation and supports epidemiological studies that contribute to formulating evidence-based health policies. The Central Public Health Laboratory focuses on grooming national cadres through continuous training of health personnel and by boosting partnerships with similar international centres and the



Dr. Hanan Salim Al Kindi, Director of the Department of the Central Public Health Laboratory. - ONA

medical laboratories serve as the cornerstone of healthcare, being the department that provides accurate data for the early diagnosis and monitoring the biometric health environment. "Medical laboratories are considered the eye through which a doctor sees what cannot be observed clinically. Physicians rely heavily on laboratory results. The majority of medical decisions are based on lab analyses, notably in the diagnosis of chronic diseases, infectious diseases and blood diseases," said Dalal Al Yahya'ee. **Deep impact** She pointed out that global COVID-19 pandemic (coronavirus pandemic) left a deep impact on laboratory workers, urging them to stay alert on a constant basis and consolidating their sense of responsibility and commitment towards the homeland. She also underscored the role of rapid technological transformations, including artificial intelligence (AI). She noted that these transformations have had a positive impact on the work of medical laboratories, making their process faster and more accurate, minimising human errors and helping analyse a large number of samples in record time. - ONA

AL KAMIL W'AL WAFI

Ghaf trees help in stabilisation of soil, and combat desertification

AL KAMIL W'AL WAFI: A three-day environmental symposium to discuss the management plan for the "Ghaf Trees Reserve" commenced on Tuesday in the Wilayat of Al Kamil W'al Wafi, South Al Sharqiyah Governorate. The event is organised by the Environment Department in the governorate in cooperation with the Directorate General of Biodiversity and Natural Reserves at the Environment Authority and the Environmental Center in Al Kamil W'al Wafi. The opening of the symposium was held under the auspices of Dr. Yahya Badr Al Maawali, Governor of South Al Sharqiyah, in the presence of Dr. Abdullah Ali Al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority. The Ghaf Trees Reserve is regarded as a significant environmental model requiring conscious and sustainable management to ensure the preservation of its natural resources for future generations while simultaneously enhancing their utilisation. Eng. Zahran Ahmed Al Abdulsalam, Director General of Biodiversity and Natural Reserves at the Environment Authority, delivered a speech in which he explained



that Ghaf trees are authentic components of the natural environment due to their pivotal role in maintaining ecological balance. **Cultural and heritage value** He noted that these trees contribute to soil stabilisation, combat desertification, and provide natural habitats for numerous organisms, in addition to their deep cultural and heritage value which has been linked to human life in arid environments throughout history.

He added that the symposium aims to gather expertise and unify efforts to produce a comprehensive scientific management plan based on a precise analysis of the current situation. This plan will identify protection priorities and establish appropriate frameworks for managing natural resources, while emphasising the importance of involving the local community as a primary partner in protection and sustainability efforts.

The symposium's proceedings included an introductory session on the Ghaf Trees Reserve, its environmental importance, and a general overview of its geographical location and strategic objectives. The session also addressed the plant and animal biodiversity within the reserve, the general framework of the management plan for the natural reserve, and the mechanism for its implementation. - ONA

SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD

OCCI discusses bylaws to boost performance

MUSCAT: Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) on Tuesday organised a workshop to discuss the Chamber's new regulatory bylaws to develop the internal work system and enhance the efficiency of institutional performance. The regulatory bylaws are in line with the requirements of the current economic stage and to boost the OCCI's role in representing the private sector. Faisal Abdullah Al Rawas, Chairman of OCCI Board of Directors, said that the new regulatory bylaws constitute a significant step forward in enhancing the OCCI's role in serving the private sector and enabling it to keep pace with global economic developments. The new regulatory bylaws contribute to raising the efficiency of institutional action and developing the services provided to the private sector in accordance with standard practices, said Al Rawas. For his part, Zakaria bin Abdullah Al Saadi, CEO of the Chamber, said in a statement that the new regulatory bylaws represent a milestone in causing change in mechanisms of executive management. "These regulatory bylaws were



designed in accordance with the highest institutional standards and in line with the requirements of digital transition and the automation of procedures," Al Saadi added. He pointed out that these regulations will help enhance the efficiency of internal operations, accelerate decision-making and streamline the work environment, in addition to raising the quality of services rendered to members. Al Saadi stressed that the Chamber is committed to developing integrated digital work systems that support institutional integration and achieve operational sustainability. - ONA

TAEKWONDO CHAMPIONSHIPS

Al Yusufi's spirited fightback in final match goes in vain

< FROM A1 The second round saw the Omani fighter mount a spirited fightback, staying in contention for long spells before a decisive late body kick swung momentum Odilov's way, sealing an 11-9 win. Bronze medals in the category went to Jordan's Abdullah Shaheen and Kazakhstan's Yerassyl Yerzat. **Opening ceremony** The championship opened with a spectacular ceremony that reflected both Uzbek culture and the growing global stature of taekwondo. The event marked the 30th anniversary of the World Junior Taekwondo Championships. World Taekwondo President Dr. Chungwon Choue welcomed athletes and praised Uzbekistan's strong sporting infrastructure and partnership with the global federation. He highlighted the country's track record of producing elite

champions and hosting major international events. The ceremony featured a vibrant showcase of Uzbek history and culture, followed by the Parade of Nations and the raising of the World Taekwondo flag. Athletes, coaches, and referees took their official oaths, underscoring the spirit of fair play and global unity. Dignitaries in attendance included senior International Olympic Committee members and World Taekwondo officials, along with Uzbekistan's top sports leadership. The event concluded with a high-energy performance by the World Taekwondo demonstration team, setting an inspirational tone for the six-day championship. Al Yusufi's silver medal stands as one of Oman's most significant results in junior international taekwondo, reflecting the growing impact of structured development programmes supported by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth.

APSR

Campaign 'Green' aims to raise awareness on labour market needs

MUSCAT: A campaign code-named 'Green', launched by the Ministry of Education in partnership with the Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR), is gaining momentum as a public awareness drive across the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. **Targeting Grade 11 students** Undertaken by the Ministry's Career Guidance and Student Counselling Centre, the campaign is implementing specialised awareness workshops targeting Grade 11 students with the aim of enhancing their knowledge about national trends in green economy and employment opportunities related to future labour market needs. The campaign 'Green', which seeks to build a generation aware of the requirements of the national labour market, elaborates on transition towards sustainability through three main themes: The first deals with raising the awareness of career guidance specialists (teachers) about the concepts of the green



economy. The second theme of the campaign focuses on raising the awareness of students about future employment opportunities related to the sectors of renewable energy and environmental sustainability. **Carbon neutrality** The third theme of the campaign supports national trends towards achieving carbon neutrality in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, which aims to build a diversified economy based on knowledge and innovation. Ongoing cooperation with the Oman Energy Association (OPAL) and Sohar Port and Free Zone serves as a model of ideal partnership between educational institutions and the private sector. **2,200 participants** The campaign, which targets 2,200 participants from Oman's 11 governorates, is being implemented in two stages during the current school year's 2 semesters. - ONA

Oman equestrian season nears thrilling finale as title contenders prepare for last two races

The season has featured 25 races comprising more than 200 heats across multiple categories

BARKA: The Oman Equestrian and Racing Federation is approaching the conclusion of its 2025/2026 season, with 23 races completed and two remaining. The penultimate race is scheduled for Friday, followed by the 25th and final race on Saturday, bringing down the curtain on a season defined by fierce competition among elite horses and jockeys.

The season has featured 25 races comprising more than 200 heats across multiple categories. Over 120 heats were allocated to purebred Arabian horses, including more than 45 heats for locally bred purebred Arabians in support of domestic breeders, alongside more than 40 heats for thoroughbreds.

Races were held at two venues: Al Rahba Racecourse in the Wilayat of Barka, which hosted 20 races, and Al Wataniya Racecourse in the Wilayat of Muttrah, which hosted three, reflecting efforts to diversify locations and broaden the sport's reach across governorates.

Highlights included the fifth race, the National Day Cup, held at Al Rahba racecourse. The event featured eight heats, with the mare “Labwah Al Shihaniyah” winning the first heat – the Beit Al Baranda Museum Race over 1,200 metres – for owner Al Mashaykhi Stables.

The season also saw the Royal Cavalry claim the Oman Derby



Cup after “Al Areeq” won the seventh heat of the ninth race at Al Rahba racecourse, which included five heats for purebred Arabians, two for thoroughbreds, and one for locally bred purebred Arabians.

At the behest of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said graced the annual Royal Cavalry Horse Race at Al Rahba racecourse, organised by the Royal Court Affairs (RCA). The horse “Falah”, owned by HH Sayyid Shihab bin Harib Al Said, captured the His Majesty the Sultan’s Cup after winning the fifth heat (Wilayat of Barka Heat) for purebred Arabians over 2,000 metres. “Saad” of the Royal Cavalry finished second, while “Sunny de Loup”, also of the Royal Cavalry, took third.

The 15th race at Al Wataniya Racecourse in the Wilayat of Muttrah included seven heats, with “Al Shali SB” winning the seventh heat – the Royal Oman Police Cup – for owner Saad bin Suhail Al Mukhaini.

The two remaining races, particularly the season finale on Saturday, are expected to deliver high-stakes competition, building on a season of organisational success and broad participation that underscores the growth of equestrian sport in the Sultanate of Oman.



VENICE

Oman participates in La Biennale di Venezia 2026 art exhibition

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman continues to consolidate its international cultural presence through its participation in the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, taking place from 9 May to 22 November 2026 in Venice.

Oman will be represented by a national pavilion commissioned by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, located at the Arsenale—one of the Biennale’s principal exhibition venues.

This marks Oman’s third participation in the Venice Biennale, reflecting an evolving trajectory that underscores its commitment to strengthening its position within the global cultural landscape. The participation affirms culture as a vital platform for international engagement and as a meaningful channel for fostering dialogue and exchange across cultures.

Widely recognized as one of the most prestigious platforms for contemporary art, La Biennale di Venezia brings together official national participations from around the world, creating a dynamic space for artistic exchange and critical discourse within an ever-evolving global context.

The 61st edition is held under the title “In Minor Keys,” a curatorial framework that foregrounds subtle, human-centered expressions and layered cultural narratives. This approach resonates with Oman’s perspective, which seeks to articulate a cultural presence grounded in balance, attentiveness, and a nuanced understanding of the relationship between individuals and their environments.

Within this context, Oman’s participation draws on a set of values embedded in its cultural experience—where notions of care, balance, and respect for diversity are not merely stated, but enacted as living practices within contemporary cultural expression.



Sayyid Saud Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth said in a statement, “Oman’s participation in the 2026 Venice Biennale reflects a firm national commitment to strengthening its cultural presence on the international stage, and to positioning culture as a key pillar of soft power and a vital avenue for fostering dialogue and mutual understanding among nations.

He added, “We believe Omani culture holds the power to contribute meaningfully to the global

cultural discourse, offering a civilizational model that speaks to the profound depth of the Omani experience. By drawing on rooted values of moderation, balance, and openness, we seek to cultivate an international presence that is both resonant and enduring.”

On his turn, Haitham Mohammed Al Busafi, Curator and Artist of the National Pavilion of the Sultanate of Oman for the 61st International Art Exhibition said, “Representing Oman in this global forum is an unmatched opportunity to bring forth the nuances of our deep culture through “In Minor Keys”, the theme of this Biennale, which calls for art that manifests in ‘quiet tones and lower frequencies’. A culture that adorns its horses is a culture that refuses to treat any companion as a mere instrument, but as an extension of the self. In our Omani culture, the al-zaanah teaches us that adornment is not about possession or display but is an act of recognition.”

EXPOSURE TO WORKPLACE



SEZAD, SQU launch summer internship programme

Times News Service

DUQM: The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) and Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) will run a summer internship initiative in Duqm from 7 to 18 June, placing students with seven companies operating across the zone’s industrial and services base.

Participating businesses include OQ8, ASYAD Drydock, Oman Tank Terminal Company, SIMAK, Port of Duqm, ASYAD Container Terminal and Crowne Plaza Duqm.

Designed to bring academic realities closer to the operating realities of Duqm, the initiative will see students work on defined assignments inside host organisations, supported by company mentors and SQU supervisors.

Final presentations will be held at the close of the internship.

Representatives from SEZAD, SQU and the participating companies met at the SEZAD Head Office on Sunday to review the

structure of the pilot ahead of the June launch.

Internships like this serve a broader purpose. Closer links between universities and industry extend well beyond recruitment.

They help students see how academic learning translates into working life and give employers an earlier view of emerging talent.

OECD research links such partnerships to stronger innovation activity, including growth in jointly filed patent applications and positive effects on local innovation.

European evidence also suggests practical work experience improves employment outcomes.

According to Cedefop, the EU agency for vocational training, graduates who complete an internship have an average employment rate 6% higher than those without work experience.

The attraction for companies in Duqm is immediate.

The initiative gives SEZAD tenants additional support on

live projects and an early look at emerging talent.

Students, meanwhile, gain first-hand exposure to workplace practices, day-to-day operations and the pace of work inside large organizations.

More broadly, the arrangement helps bring higher education and industry into closer alignment.

Eng. Ahmed Akaak, CEO, SEZAD, said: “Duqm’s long-term success depends as much on the strength of its human capital as on the quality of its infrastructure.

Internships help students understand the realities of professional life while giving our tenants a practical role in preparing the next generation of talent for Duqm’s future needs.”

Commenting on the initiative, Professor Salim Al Harthy, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs & Community Service, SQU, said: “This partnership reflects the university’s emphasis on training, student enhancement and employment.

Chairman of Shura Council leads Oman’s delegation at IPU meeting

The Shura delegation is scheduled to take part in coordination meetings of the Arab Parliamentary Group, the Asian Parliamentary Assembly among others

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Khalid Hilal Al Maawali, Chairman of the Shura Council, is leading the Sultanate of Oman's



delegation at the 152nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey, from April 14 to 19. The participation comes in response to an official invitation extended by the President of the IPU.

The agenda includes a number of items and parallel meetings, in addition to the general debate under the theme: "Harnessing hope, advancing peace, and delivering justice for future generations." The Shura Council delegation is

scheduled to take part in coordination meetings of the Arab Parliamentary Group, the Asian Parliamentary Assembly, and the Union of Councils of the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. It will also participate in joint meetings with the heads of geopolitical groups, standing committees, and other specialised IPU bodies, as well as meetings of the Parliamentary Group in Support of Palestine and the Parliamentary Network of the Non-Aligned Movement. These coordination meetings aim to enhance cooperation and align unified Gulf and Arab parliamentary positions, particularly regarding the emergency item included on the IPU Assembly's agenda, reflecting a shared commitment to supporting issues of common interest to Gulf, Arab, and Islamic legislative councils. The delegation will further participate in the 217th session of

the IPU Governing Council, the Assembly sessions, the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, and other accompanying meetings. Meanwhile, Ahmed Mohammed Al Nadabi, Secretary-General of the Shura Council, will take part in the meetings of the Association of Secretaries General of National Parliaments. Members of the delegation will also attend meetings of the IPU's standing committees, namely the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, and the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs. Discussions will cover several topics, including "Building a fair and sustainable global economy: the role of parliaments in combating protectionism, reducing tariffs, and preventing corporate tax evasion," and "The role of parliaments in establishing effective mechanisms for post-conflict governance and restoring just and lasting peace."

The delegation includes Ahmed Mohammed Al Nadabi, Secretary-General of the Shura Council, along with Their Excellencies Dr. Ahmed Ali Al Saadi, Ahmed Bakhit Al Juhfali, Hamdan Ali Al Manai, and Mohammed Ali Al Balushi, members of the Shura Council. It is worth noting that the Inter-Parliamentary Union comprises more than 179 parliaments, in addition to 65 associate members representing international institutions and civil society organisations. The IPU works to promote peace, democracy, human rights, gender equality, youth empowerment, and sustainable development through political dialogue, cooperation, and parliamentary action, as well as enhancing women's participation in parliament and strengthening their role in policymaking.

SHAPING DEVELOPMENT

Youth drive local development under decentralisation push



Times News Service

MUSCAT: In line with the national direction to administrative and financial decentralisation, Omani youth across the Sultanate are emerging as active partners in local decision-making, playing a growing role in shaping development aligned with Oman Vision 2040. Governorates are witnessing increasing youth engagement through community initiatives, municipal councils, and local committees. This shift reflects rising awareness among young people of their responsibilities and their ability to transform ideas into impactful projects within a more flexible, decentralised system. Younis bin Nasser Al-Abri, a participant in the Youth Ambassadors Program – Youth Model United Nations, said decentralization has significantly expanded opportunities for youth participation, particularly by strengthening their presence in municipal councils and enabling direct communication with decision-makers. He noted that youth involvement has evolved beyond symbolic representation to meaningful engagement in dialogue, monitoring, and initiative-building. Al-Abri highlighted initiatives such as the North Al Batinah Youth Platform, which provides a space for dialogue and links youth proposals with development priorities. He added that youth-led efforts in volunteering, entrepreneurship, and community projects demonstrate growing partnerships between young people and government institutions. In Dhofar Governorate, Mohammed bin Abdullah Batamira described decentralisation as a qualitative shift that has enabled youth to actively contribute to development planning. He pointed to initiatives like the "Value" competition, which attracted 337 ideas from across the governorate, with winning projects focused on enhancing local added value and supporting economic growth. Batamira also highlighted the



"Al-Gharf Project," an integrated tourism initiative formed through the merger of four SMEs. The project transforms agricultural land into a tourism destination, combining sectors such as hospitality, agriculture, and recreational activities, showcasing youth-led innovation with sustainable economic impact. From Musandam Governorate, Adel bin Saif Al-Kamzari emphasised that youth are now key drivers of development through community initiatives, entrepreneurship, and digital innovation. Events like the Musandam Winter Season and entrepreneurship programmes have helped stimulate tourism, create jobs, and strengthen social cohesion. He also underscored the role of digital media in amplifying these efforts, with youth-led content and campaigns enhancing the governorate's visibility locally and internationally. Addressing future challenges, Omaima bint Omar Al-Salman called for the establishment of sustainable institutional platforms to sup-

port youth engagement. She stressed the need to move beyond seasonal initiatives toward long-term empowerment, including involving youth in planning, implementation, and evaluation of development projects. She further emphasised strengthening partnerships between government entities, the private sector, and civil society to provide funding and technical support for youth initiatives. Sarah bint Saeed Al-Maamari highlighted the broader societal impact of youth participation, noting that increased engagement has strengthened both national and local belonging. She pointed to the role of youth in events such as the Sohar Entertainment Festival and their contributions through media and communication platforms. Al-Maamari concluded that empowering youth—particularly through employment aligned with their qualifications and stronger institutional support—remains essential for sustaining their role as genuine partners in shaping the future of local development.

SOUTH AL BATINAH

Car blaze extinguished in Barka

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Firefighting teams from the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority in the South Al Batinah Governorate managed to extinguish a car fire in the Wilayat of Barka. No injuries were recorded in the incident. Five expats arrested The South Al Batinah Governorate Police Command apprehended five individuals of Asian nationality for stealing electrical cables from a warehouse belonging to one of the institutions in Barka Governorate. Legal procedures against them are being finalised.



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ANNOUNCEMENT

TENDER ADVERTISEMENT NO. 09/2026

Competitive Tenders are invited from suitably qualified vendors for the following.

Tender No.	Tender Description	Tender Fee (RO)	Tender documents available from	Last date of Tender Collection	Last date of Tender Submission
ISAS/Tend/074/2026	CANTEEN SERVICE (STUDENTS & STAFF)	10/-	16-04-2026	26-04-2026	30-04-2026

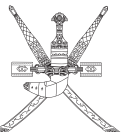
Mode of Tender fee payments and collection of Tender documents

- Direct remittance of the tender fee at the School's Office or Bank Transfer to Indian School Al Seeb – Bank A/C No. 0307-00139946-0011 with Bank Muscat (A copy of transaction's receipt MUST be sent to the e-mail: om@indianschoolseeb.com with the Company Name and Tender Number). The tender document will be provided via e-mail.
- For any queries regarding the tenders, please write to om@indianschoolseeb.com
- Tender Enquiries are permitted between 8 AM to 1.00 PM on all working days.

The tenders are to be addressed to **The Head, Purchase Sub Committee, Indian School Al Seeb**, and submitted in a plain sealed envelope, indicating the tender reference without showing any identity of the company and must be dropped only in the School Tender Box.



وزارة التنمية الاجتماعية
Ministry of Social Development



Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of Ministry of Social Development hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)	
					Small and Medium companies	Local companies
148/2026	Providing supplies and tools for depositors at the Juvenile Affairs House	Companies specialized in the field of food and food services and registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Monday 04-05-2026 02:00 PM	Sunday 24-05-2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
149/2026	Purchase and renewal of licenses for palao-to-pa-440 firewal devices	Companies specialized in the field of designing, installing and maintaining information programs and systems / equipping information data centers / installing the alarm, security and safety system and registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Monday 04-05-2026 02:00 PM	Sunday 24-05-2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
156/2026	Supply and installation of hearing aids for people with hearing disabilities in (North Al Sharqiya Governorate – South Al Sharqiya Governorate – Al Dakhiliyah Governorate)	Companies specialized in the field of supplying medical supplies and registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Monday 04-05-2026 02:00 PM	Sunday 24-05-2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
158/2026	Supply and installation of hearing aids for people with hearing disabilities in (North Al Batinah Governorate-, South Al Batinah Governorate - Musandam Governorate)	Companies specialized in the field of supplying medical supplies and registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Monday 04-05-2026 02:00 PM	Sunday 24-05-2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
159/2026	Supply and installation of hearing aids for people with hearing disabilities in (Dhofar Governorate – Al Wusta Governorate)	Companies specialized in the field of supplying medical supplies and registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Monday 04-05-2026 02:00 PM	Sunday 24-05-2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
162/2026	Supply and installation of hearing aids for people with hearing disabilities in (Al Buraimi Governorate – Al Dhahirah Governorate)	Companies specialized in the field of supplying medical supplies and registered with the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Monday 04-05-2026 02:00 PM	Sunday 24-05-2026 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O

- Specialized Companies, registered with the Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) , On wednesday 15 /04/2026
- For Inquiry , please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) Tel. (24402200)

“The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry”

www.mosd.gov.om

Indian PM, President Trump discuss West Asia security situation

The two countries are committed to further strengthening their Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership in all areas

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday received a call from US President Trump during which the two leaders discussed the security situation in West Asia and stressed the importance of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open and secure.

PM Modi said in a post on X that they reviewed progress achieved in our bilateral cooperation in various sectors.

He said the two countries are committed to further strengthen-



ing their Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership in all areas.

“Received a call from my friend President Donald Trump. We reviewed the substantial progress achieved in our bilateral cooperation in various sectors. We are committed to further strengthen-

ing our Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership in all areas,” he said.

“We also discussed the situation in West Asia and stressed the importance of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open and secure,” he added.

US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor termed the conversation between the two leaders as “very positive and productive.”

“A very positive and productive call! Stay tuned...”, he said in a post on X in response to PM Modi’s post of the conversation with President Trump.

PM Modi and President Trump had earlier spoken on March 24 and had a useful exchange of views on the evolving situation in West Asia. The Prime Minister reiterated that India supports de-escalation and the restoration of peace at the earliest in the conflict between Israel-US and Iran.

PM Modi had underlined the importance of ensuring that the Strait of Hormuz remains open, secure and accessible, noting that it is vital for global peace, stability and economic well-being.

US Vice President JD Vance had said on Sunday that no agreement had been reached in talks with Iran, despite hours of negotiations in Pakistan, and that the discussions had reached a stalemate.

He added that while the US delegation would return to the United States, the outcome of the talks was “bad news for Iran” more than for the United States. — ANI



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CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

Spanish PM’s wife charged with corruption

Madrid: Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez’ wife, Begoña Gomez, has been formally charged with corruption, following a years-long criminal investigation into charges she and her husband deny.

Judge Juan Carlos Peinado, who has been investigating the case since April 2024, said his probe has found sufficient indications of criminal conduct by Gomez, according to a ruling made public late on Monday.

Gomez is accused of corruption related to the creation and management of a chair at Madrid’s Complutense University, which she co-directed. She is also accused of using public resources and personal connections to advance private interests.

Sanchez’ wife has consequently been formally charged with embezzlement, influence peddling, corruption in business dealings and misappropriation of funds, according to the Monday court ruling.

“The chair served as a means of private professional development for the person under investigation,” the judge wrote.

Whether Gomez ends up facing trial is up to the courts.

Spain’s prime minister has denied the accusations against his wife, brushing them off as a right wing attempt to undermine his government. The case was first sparked by a complaint filed by an anti-corruption group with far-right ties.

— DW

KEY BY-ELECTIONS WINS

Canada’s PM Carney secures majority after special election



TORONTO: Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney secured a parliamentary majority late on Monday after his Liberal Party won two key by-elections in Toronto.

In Toronto, Liberal candidate Danielle Martin won the election for the district of University-Rosedale and Liberal Doly Begum won the district of Scarborough Southwest.

The victories give the Liberals 173 seats in the 343-member House of Commons, enough to pass legislation without opposition support.

Carney posted a statement on

X, saying, “Tonight, voters have placed their trust in our new government’s plan. We accept that support with humility, determination and a clear understanding of what this moment demands.”

Results from a third race in Quebec were still pending.

‘Carney showed he can handle Trump’

Carney, a political outsider, took office last year, replacing Justin Trudeau as prime minister.

He was, earlier, the former head of the Bank of England as well as Canada’s central bank.

His election was overseen by

public anger over US President Donald Trump’s tariffs and threats to annex Canada as its 51st state.

His vowed to reduce Canada’s reliance on the US has since consolidated his political position with five opposition legislators defecting to the Liberals in five months.

His attempt to band middle-power nations together also drew praise.

“Carney has done a fairly good job showing Canadians he can handle Trump,” said Andrew McDougall, assistant professor in Canadian politics at the University of Toronto.

After Monday’s results, Carney’s Liberal Party could stay in power until 2029 national elections.

Analysts say the election victories put Carney in strong position.

“He will be able to pass legislation without having to go to the opposition to secure enough votes,” said McDougall.

Recent Nanos polling, cited by Reuters news agency, shows more than half of Canadians prefer Mark Carney as prime minister, compared with 23% for Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre.

This is a stark reversal from last year, when Poilievre was projected to win by a wide margin. — DW

ITALIAN PRIME MINISTER

Meloni rebukes Trump over comments on Pope; stands in solidarity with Vatican

ROME: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has doubled down on her criticism of US President Donald Trump, labelling his recent remarks regarding Pope Leo as “unacceptable” and reaffirming the necessity of religious independence from political interference.

In a candid exchange with reporters, Meloni expressed firm solidarity with Pope Leo, signalling a rare public rift between the Italian leadership and the Trump administration.

The friction follows a series of controversial statements from the US President directed at the pontiff, which have sparked diplomatic ripples across Europe.

Addressing questions by journalists, she said, “Well, I think what I said is what I think. That the statements, in particular about the pontiff, were unacceptable. I expressed, and I express, my solidarity with Pope Francis. I’ll tell you more - frankly, I wouldn’t feel comfortable in a society where religious leaders do what political leaders say, let’s say, not in this part of the world. That’s why I disagreed, and I told you so.”

Meloni’s critique centred on the fundamental separation of church and state, arguing that political leaders should not expect religious figures to act as extensions of their administration.

The Prime Minister emphasised that her disagreement with Trump was not merely personal but a matter of principle regarding the dignity of the papacy.

Her remarks came in response to growing criticism surrounding



Trump’s recent social media activity, which included an AI-generated image portraying him in a religious depiction resembling Jesus Christ.

The post sparked widespread debate and drew backlash from various sections of the public, including some of his own supporters, eventually leading to its deletion.

Alongside the controversial image, Trump also made statements targeting Pope Leo, criticising him for his reported comments on international geopolitical tensions, including the US-Israel stance and developments related to Iran.

Pope Leo XIV, the Chicago-born leader of the Catholic Church, has been vocal about the escalating conflict between the US, Israel, and Iran.

He condemned the “delusion of

omnipotence” driving aggressive military actions and criticised US officials, like US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, for using Christian rhetoric to justify violence. The Pope emphasised that “God does not bless any conflict” and Jesus “rejects war.”

He’s also spoken out against President Trump’s threat to wipe out Iranian civilisation, calling it “truly unacceptable.” Despite Trump’s personal attacks, Pope Leo remains fearless, urging citizens to demand peace from their leaders.

Additionally, the Pope is involved in the Ukraine crisis, calling for an end to the “madness” of war and discussing humanitarian aid with President Zelensky. He’s also urged Russia to make a “goodwill gesture” to support a resolution.

— ANI

MOUNT SEMERU ERUPTS IN INDONESIA’S JAVA REGION, SENDING ASH 1,500 METRES HIGH

Mount Semeru in Indonesia’s Java region erupted on Tuesday, unleashing scorching pyroclastic flows stretching up to three kilometres, according to the volcano’s monitoring post. Sigit Rian Alfian, an official at the Mount Semeru monitoring post, said the eruption occurred in the morning, with an ash column rising approximately 1,500 metres above the summit — or 5,176 metres above sea level. A dense plume of grey ash drifted westward. The eruption was recorded on seismic equipment with a maximum amplitude of 20 millimetres and lasted three minutes and 23 seconds. — ONA



US considers another round of in-person talks with Iran

The officials are reviewing potential dates and locations, contingent on the progress of ongoing talks with Iran and regional mediators in the coming days



WASHINGTON: US officials are deliberating the possibility of convening another in-person meeting with Iranian officials before the ceasefire between Washington and Tehran expires, although a final decision has not yet been taken, according to media report.

The officials are reviewing potential dates and locations, contingent on the progress of ongoing talks with Iran and regional mediators in the coming days.

A source described the discus-

sions as preliminary. “We need to be prepared to stand something up quickly should things head in that direction,” the source said, quoted by CNN.

Marathon meeting in Islamabad on April 11 marked the culmination of weeks of negotiations involving senior US officials and intermediaries from Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Oman and others.

A regional source told CNN that another round of negotiations remains possible, with Turkey re-

portedly working to bridge differences between both sides.

Before Islamabad was finalised for the talks, several locations, including Geneva, Vienna and Istanbul, were under consideration.

Geneva and Islamabad are again being discussed as potential venues for another round of negotiations, a source said, as reported by CNN.

People familiar with the negotiations indicated that the US administration remains cautious-

ly optimistic that a diplomatic breakthrough is still achievable. Depending on progress, both sides could consider extending the ceasefire deadline to allow additional time for negotiations. Meanwhile, a US official confirmed that discussions between Washington and Tehran are ongoing.

There is continued engagement between the US and Iran and forward motion on trying to get an agreement,” the official said, quoted by CNN.

Separately, US President Donald Trump stated that Iran had reached out to the administration earlier on Monday, claiming that Tehran “would like to make a deal very badly.”

Pakistan working on second round of peace talks: Reports

News agencies are reporting that Pakistan is making efforts toward bringing Iran and the US to the negotiation table again after a first set of talks in Islamabad on the weeked failed to bring a peace agreement.

A Pakistani official cited by the AFP news agency, who spoke under condition of anonymity, said, “Efforts are underway to bring both parties back to the table. Of course we want them back in Islamabad, but the venue is not final yet.”

“The meeting could take place soon though dates have yet to be confirmed,” the official said, adding: “We are also working to get the ceasefire extended beyond the current deadline to allow for additional time.”

Although the first round of talks appeared to have been without a concrete outcome, US Vice President JD Vance, who led Wash-

ington’s delegation, said they “did make some progress.”

Iran, US urged to return to negotiations

French President Emmanuel Macron urged both Iran and the US to resume negotiations suspended after a Pakistan-hosted round concluded with no resolution.

In a post on X, Macron said he spoke to both Iranian President Massoud Pezeshkian and US President Donald Trump, urging for “the clearing up of misunderstandings, and the avoidance of any further escalation.”

Macron stressed the importance of respecting the current ceasefire, including in Lebanon, as well as reopening the strategic Strait of Hormuz “unconditionally, without restrictions or tolls, as soon as possible.”

“Under these conditions, negotiations should be able to resume quickly, with the support of the key parties concerned,” he wrote.

Macron also alluded to the conference Paris is hosting alongside the UK on Friday to form “a multilateral and purely defensive mission aimed at restoring freedom of navigation in the strait when security conditions allow.” – Agencies

12TH FLIGHT MISSION

China launches 8 satellites aboard Lijian-1 rocket

JIUQUAN: China on Tuesday launched the Lijian-1 Y12 carrier rocket to send eight satellites into space.

The rocket blasted off at 12:03 p.m. (Beijing Time) from the Dongfeng commercial space innovation pilot zone in north-west China. It successfully sent the satellites into their planned orbits.

This launch marked the 12th flight mission of the Lijian-1 carrier rocket series.

The Lijian-1 carrier rocket series was developed by CAS Space, a commercial spaceflight company founded by the Institute of Mechanics under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The Lijian-1 rocket was developed to serve the microsatellite launch market, providing diversified launch services for varying numbers of satellites,



according to Lijian-1 chief designer Shi Xiaoning.

To date, the rocket series has successfully sent more than 90 satellites into space, with a total orbital payload mass exceeding 12 tonnes.

By now, Lijian-1’s annual production capacity exceeds 10 rockets, and the assembly and testing cycle has been shortened to 1 month. Its launch frequency will continue to increase, and its first sea-based launch is also being planned, according to the developer. – Xinhua

RESTORING FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION

UK, France to bring together over 40 countries at Strait of Hormuz talks

PARIS: France and the United Kingdom are set to host a joint conference aimed at bringing together over 40 countries to ensure freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

In a post on X, French President Emmanuel Macron confirmed that the video conference will take place in Paris on Friday, later this week, which would see peaceful players come together and contribute towards a ‘multilateral and defensive mission’, aimed at restoring the freedom of navigation in the world’s critical energy chokepoint.

He said, “France and the United Kingdom will also host this Friday, in Paris, a conference that will bring together by videoconference non-belligerent countries ready to contribute alongside us to a multilateral and purely defensive mission, aimed at restoring freedom of navigation in the strait when security conditions permit.”

Earlier on Monday, UK PM Keir



Starmer said that over 40 nations had been convened to advance work on a coordinated plan for ensuring safe shipping via the Strait of Hormuz when the conflict ends.

He said on X, “The ongoing closure of the Strait of Hormuz is deeply damaging. Getting global shipping moving is vital to ease cost of living pressures. The UK

has convened more than 40 nations who share our aim to restore freedom of navigation. This week the UK and France will co-host a summit to advance work on a coordinated, independent, multinational plan to safeguard international shipping when the conflict ends.”

The French president further

said on Tuesday that he spoke to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and US President Donald Trump, where he called the warring parties to resume the negotiations, clarifying misunderstandings, and avoiding new phases of escalation.

Macron underlined the need for all parties to respect the ceasefire and that it includes Lebanon.

It is equally important that the Strait of Hormuz be reopened unconditionally, without controls or tolls, as soon as possible. Under these conditions, negotiations should be able to resume quickly, with the support of the main stakeholders”, he added.

His remarks come after peace negotiations faltered in Pakistan despite a marathon 21-hour negotiation between Washington and Tehran.

It remains to be seen how the Franco-British proposal will help in breaking the Islamabad impasse. – ANI

AFTER PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

Orban’s defeat in Hungary reverberates across Central Europe

BUDAPEST: At the heart of Peter Magyar’s victory in the Hungarian parliamentary election on April 12 was more than just anger at high-level corruption and economic hardship.

His win was also a repudiation of Viktor Orban’s “illiberal democracy,” a rejection of his drift away from the European mainstream and a warning not to stray too close to Moscow’s orbit.

Two of his closest allies — prime ministers Robert Fico of Slovakia and Andrej Babis of Czechia — moved relatively swiftly to congratulate Magyar. But the congratulations were carefully worded and hardly gushing with praise.

“Facing such a strong opponent as Viktor Orban was never easy, yet he earned the trust of the majority of Hungarians and carries great hopes and expectations,” Babis wrote on X. “He must not disappoint.”

His Slovak counterpart, Fico, is known for releasing lengthy video messages and long press statements. This time, however, journalists received a terse email with three bullet points.

“I fully respect the decision of Hungarian voters,” Fico said, adding he was ready for “intensive cooperation” with the new government in Budapest.



Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia), protecting shared energy interests and restoring Russian oil supplies to Slovakia and Hungary via the Druzhba pipeline.

Those supplies have been halted since January, after what Kyiv said were Russian drone and missile attacks on a section of the pipeline in Ukraine.

They might now be restored: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said recently that repairs could begin in the next few weeks.

Uncertainty facing Central Europe

The carefully calibrated responses from Bratislava and Prague reflect both the scale of the political shift in Budapest and the uncertainty now facing Central Europe, where Orban had long been the central figure in a loose alliance of nationalist and populist leaders.

Orban, after all, co-founded the euroskeptic Patriots for Europe group alongside Babis in 2024.

For the Czech and Slovak leaders, the outcome of the election is not only symbolic, but potentially significant for their own political positioning.

What Orban’s defeat means for Fico

“The biggest threat to Russia is a free, independent and democratic Ukraine,” said Martin Poliacik, a former Slovak MP affiliated with the opposition Progressive Slovakia party.

“By extension, the biggest threat to Fico is a pro-European Hungary, because Slovaks would see that this is possible,” Poliacik told DW.

Orban’s defeat also deprives Fico of a key partner on the European stage. The Hungarian leader was seen as an interlocutor with both Moscow and Washington.

Some now believe Russia, at least, will turn its full attention to Slovakia.

Poliacik, however, expressed doubts that Fico could step into Orban’s shoes as Putin’s man in Europe.

“He’s tired,” he said, adding that Fico also lacked a strong team of capable and combative enforcers, unlike Orban.

The Slovak leader had threatened to block the EU’s €90-billion loan for Kyiv if Orban was defeated, but some doubt he is really ready to defy the rest of the EU on his own.

Will Magyar’s election bring stability?

But even with Orban out of power, analysts caution that the shift in Hungary may not lead to long-term stability.

“I think it’s really hard to stay in power in Europe right now,” said



Poliacik. “Every status quo is hard to keep. It’s like a swinging pendulum.”

That volatility is well understood in Prague.

Andrej Babis returned to power in late 2025 at the head of a coalition including his ANO movement, the conservative Motorists for Themselves party and the far-right, anti-immigrant SPD.

Critics argue that the government is already seeking to reshape key elements of Czechia’s liberal democratic system, including public media and the role of civil society, taking a leaf right out of the Orban playbook.

Supporters — as well as Babis himself — have rejected that characterisation.

Limits on what Babis can do in Czechia

Analysts, meanwhile, point out that there are structural limits

to what Babis can achieve in the Czech setting.

“Babis realised during his first term as prime minister that he can’t control the country the way Orban can,” said Czech political commentator Jindrich Sidlo.

Different electoral results

“Orban governed much longer, had very different electoral results, there’s no Senate [Czech upper house of parliament] in Hungary, and he was able to shape the electoral system to his advantage,” he told DW.

“That’s something Babis might have envied, but I think he now understands it’s not realistic in the Czech Republic. Even changing the electoral law requires agreement between the Chamber and the Senate — you can’t force it through,” he said. “So, Babis is, in that sense, a much weaker version of Orban.” – DW

SPORTS

Hinge’s stunning debut halts RR’s four-match winning run



SRH posted 216 on the back of Kishan’s 91, before Hinge and fellow debutant Sakib shared eight wickets to rout Royals by 57 runs

HYDERABAD: Praful Hinge, 24, etched his name into the IPL record books on debut on Monday, striking three times in his very first over - the only instance of a bowler achieving this in the league’s 18-year history - as Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) stunned table-toppers Rajasthan Royals (RR) at home to snap a two-match losing streak, winning by 57 runs.

SRH had piled up 216 on the back of Ishan Kishan’s 91, an effort that would’ve headlined most

nights if not for Hinge’s sensational opening over, which included the wicket of Vaibhav Sooryavanshi for a golden duck.

But Hinge wasn’t the only one to mark his arrival onto the big stage with a grandstand beginning. Another debutant, Bihar’s Sakib Hussain, struck at the other end as well, causing RR to crash to 5 for 4, and then 9 for 5.

The game was effectively sealed right there. The two debutants finished with combined figures of 8 for 58.

Hinge’s magical start

In some ways, it felt destined. Hinge was set to debut in SRH’s previous game, against Punjab Kings, after being named at the toss, only for the team management to have a late change of heart and sub in Jaydev Unadkat instead. A game later, Hinge had a moment he would cherish forever.

Jasprit Bumrah and Josh Hazlewood weren’t spared, but Hinge didn’t carry any baggage.

A hard-length delivery into the pitch had Vaibhav Sooryavanshi top-edge a pull to wicketkeeper Salil Arora for a golden duck. One ball later, Hinge had the in-form Dhruv Jurel chop on, and then capped off the first over by having Lhuan-dre Pretorius, who replaced Shimron Hetmyer, flick one straight to long leg.

At the other end was Sakib, who also celebrated a special moment when he sent Yashasvi Jaiswal

back by having him ramp a short ball straight to deep third, leaving the score at an eye-popping 2 for 4. That soon became 9 for 5 when Hinge had Riyan Parag caught at slip after he had been whipped through midwicket for four. Sakib added three more wickets to his kitty, all off slower variations, to finish with 4 for 24.

That included strikes off consecutive deliveries to dismiss Jofra Archer and Ravi Bishnoi late in the innings.

Just before Sakib capped off a dream night, RR’s sixth-wicket pair brought up their fifty-run partnership off 35 deliveries, ensuring they didn’t lose any further wickets until the half-way mark. There was a visible shift in their approach from that point on, with the next four overs going for 50 runs.

Even so, the ask was a steep one, with RR needing 97 off the last six

overs. That pressure finally told, as both Donovan Ferreira and Ravindra Jadeja fell in consecutive overs before SRH sealed victory.

Ferreira was severe on both Shivang Kumar and Harsh Dubey as he raised a maiden IPL fifty off 31 balls. But his dismissal, followed by Jadeja’s, opened the floodgates for Sakib.

Long before the wreckage, RR had a first-ball wicket of their own when Abhishek Sharma charged at Archer to get a thick edge to deep third. If Archer’s first over was a ripper, his second brought him back to earth as Kishan nonchalantly picked him for two boundaries.

Travis Head was streaky, with left-arm seamer Nandre Burger nearly having him twice in the fourth over. But his luck didn’t last as Head was beaten in flight to hole out to long-on off Parag in the seventh over. By then, he had put on 55

with Kishan to set a platform.

The Kishan blitz

Kishan brought up his half-century when he hit a monstrous fifth six, a slog sweep off Bishnoi, getting there off 30 balls. Along the way, Kishan and Heinrich Klaasen also raised the half-century stand quickly - off just 26 deliveries - as Kishan attacked Tushar Deshpande.

Even as Klaasen fell for 40, Kishan kept charging at breakneck.

In trying to sustain the surge, Kishan fell for 91, but SRH had Nitish Kumar Reddy and Salil Arora to thank for cameos lower down the order that powered them to 216, before two debutants combined to leave everyone spellbound.

Brief scores: Sunrisers Hyderabad 216.6 (Kishan 91, Klaasen 40, Archer 2-37) beat Rajasthan Royals 159 (Ferreira 69, Jadeja 45, Sakib 4-24, Hinge 4-34). - Agencies

SRI LANKAN SEAMER



SRH pick Madushanka as injury replacement for Carse

HYDERABAD: Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) have picked Sri Lanka’s left-arm seamer Dilshan Madushanka as an injury replacement for Brydon Carse for the remainder of IPL 2026. Madushanka will join SRH for INR 75 lakh.

Carse, who was retained by SRH ahead of the 2026 auction, hurt his right hand while batting in the nets before the tournament opener against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB).

SRH head coach Daniel Vettori had hoped for a quick recovery at that time but that did not happen.

Madushanka has played one Test, 28 ODIs and 19 T20Is for Sri Lanka and has 70 wickets in inter-

national cricket. He is uncapped in the IPL even though he was part of the Mumbai Indians (MI) squad for the 2024 season, when a hamstring injury ruled him out of the season.

With Pat Cummins recovering from an injury and Harshal Patel and Jaydev Unadkat being ineffective, SRH’s bowling unit came under the scanner.

It resulted in them handing debuts to Praful Hinge and Sakib Hussain against Rajasthan Royals (RR) on Monday.

Currently, Sunrisers Hyderabad are fourth on the points table with two wins and three losses from five games. - Agencies

ZIMBABWEAN PACER

PSL imposes 2-year ban on Muzarabani

LAHORE: The Pakistan Super League (PSL) has imposed a two-year ban on Zimbabwe fast bowler Blessing Muzarabani, which means he won’t be able to participate in the league until 2029.

The sanction was imposed after Muzarabani, once signed by PSL franchise Islamabad United, pulled out after securing a deal with IPL side Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR).

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) accused the bowler of “a fundamental failure to honour agreed-upon commitments” and of undermining the “professional framework of the league”.

Muzarabani was signed by the PSL in the week following the auction as a replacement for West Indies fast bowler Shamar Joseph.

Joseph and United agreed to mutually terminate his contract, with Muzarabani signed on equivalent terms, in line to earn PKR 11 million (approx. US\$ 40,000).

However, while terms were agreed, the final contract had not yet been signed, which enabled Muzarabani to walk away from the agreement when KKR came calling, while looking for a replacement for Bangladesh seamer



Mustafizur Rahman.

Muzarabani stood to earn four times the value of his PSL deal at the IPL, about \$160,000.

“The sanction serves as a necessary measure to safeguard the professional environment of the

PSL,” a PSL statement said.

“The PSL remains dedicated to ensuring that the league remains a platform where contractual certainty is respected and where the actions of all players and agents reflect the prestige of the tourna-

ment. The two-year ban reflects the gravity of the breach.”

The ban handed out to Muzarabani is double the length of the only other similar sanction handed out to a player who walked away from the PSL for the IPL.

In 2025, Corbin Bosch was given a one-year ban from the PSL after he quit his deal with Peshawar Zalmi when Mumbai Indians signed him as an injury replacement. He remains at MI this season.

Muzarabani, however, is not the only player to have agreed terms at the PSL before opting to join the IPL. Sri Lanka T20 captain Dasun Shanaka and Lahore Qalandars also signed a deal, but Rajasthan Royals (RR) at the IPL swooped in looking for an injury replacement for Sam Curran.

The day before the start of the PSL, Shanaka announced he would be leaving, with RR formally announcing the signing of the all-rounder.

Muzarabani has played two matches for KKR this season and picked a four-for against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH), but hasn’t got a game since April 2.

Kolkata Knight Riders are currently bottom of the table, and the only side yet to win a game this IPL season. - Agencies

12-TEAM COMPETITION

ICC increases total prize pool for Women’s T20 World Cup by 10 percent

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced a record prize pot of US\$8.76 million for the upcoming Women’s T20 World Cup, to be played in England in June-July.

That represents a 10% increase from \$7.95 million for the 2024 edition and stems largely from the expansion from a 10 to 12-team competition, and an increase in group-stage matches from 20 to 30, a rise of 50%.

The winners of the competition will be awarded a prize of \$2.34 million - the same as the previous edition - while the runners-up will again receive \$1.17 million.

The losing semi-finalists will be awarded \$675,000, while each win

in the group stage is worth \$31,154 - the same as in 2024.

However, some mid-ranking teams could be in line to earn less prize money than in the 2024 edition, due to the removal of positional prizes for those who fail to reach the knockout stages.

On paper, the minimum prize for participation that each team is guaranteed to take home has increased from \$112,500 in the last edition to \$247,500, but the lowest-finishing teams at this edition will effectively receive the same prize money as in 2024.

Due to the increase in the minimum prize money from \$112,500 to \$247,500, the teams that stand to benefit the most are those



who reach the knockout stages.

A losing semi-finalist will take home a minimum of \$922,500

least \$1,417,500 - an increase from \$1,282,500.

The champions, meanwhile, stand to be awarded at least \$2,587,500, up from \$2,452,500 in 2024.

The 2024 edition, that New Zealand won in the UAE, had seen a huge increase in prize money from the previous edition in South Africa, with the total prize pool rocketing to \$7.95 million from \$2.45 million in 2023 - a 224% increase.

The increase in prize money came after a 2023 decision by the ICC to award equal prize money for their equivalent men’s and women’s events.

The winners of the 2026 Men’s

T20 World Cup - India - were awarded a prize of \$2.45 million - the same amount they won for their triumph at the 2024 edition.

The difference between that amount and what the women champions will take home is down to the different number of matches played by teams during the two events.

Harmanpreet Kaur’s India side, who won the Women’s ODI World Cup on home soil last year, took home a jackpot of \$6.58 million.

The 2026 Women’s T20 World Cup begins on June 12, when hosts England will take on Sri Lanka on the opening night at Edgbaston, with the final to be hosted on July 5 at Lord’s. - Agencies

OMAN OIL PRICE FALLS
The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by June 2026 reaching \$102.92. The price of Oman oil fell by \$2.91 from the price of Monday, which was \$105.83.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER
The MSX index closed at 8,244.35 points, up by 0.39% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.24% at 665.08 points. Financial Corporation, up 9.09%, was the top gainer while, Raysut Cement, down 5.45%, was the top loser.

High-level visit highlights Sohar Port's role as global trade gateway

During the visit, President Duma Gideon Boko of the Republic of Botswana and his delegation were briefed on the integrated ecosystem of the port and freezone, which serves as a strategic gateway connecting business activities to regional and global markets

MUSCAT: President Duma Gideon Boko of the Republic of Botswana, along with his accompanying delegation, visited Sohar Port and Freezone yesterday as part of a working visit to Oman. During the visit, the guest and his delegation were briefed on the integrated ecosystem of the port and freezone, which serves as a strategic gateway connecting business activities to regional and global markets. This is achieved by leveraging

the site's strategic location, advanced infrastructure, and state-of-the-art logistics services. The president also received a detailed overview of operational efficiency and competitive advantages that reinforce Sohar Port and Freezone's position as a reliable and sustainable industrial and logistics platform. The visit programme included a tour of several flagship investment projects, most notably the United Solar Polysilicon Manufacturing Facility and the Orion Solar Project, which specialises in the production of solar cells and photovoltaic panels. The President of Botswana was accompanied during the visit by Abdulsalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, Mohammed bin Sulaiman Al Kindi, Governor of North Al Batinah and several other officials. -ONA



STATISTICAL DATA

Total revenue of 3-5 star hotels in Oman rises by 18.5%



MUSCAT: Statistical data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) in the Sultanate of Oman through the end of February 2026 recorded a slight decline in the number of guests in hotels classified as 3 to 5 stars. The total number of guests reached 439,287, compared to 455,733 during the same period in 2025, representing a decrease of 3.6 percent. Despite this decline, hotel revenues rose by 18.5 percent to reach OMR 69,208,000, compared to

OMR 58,379,000 in the same period last year. Additionally, hotel occupancy rates improved from 67.6 percent in February 2025 to 68.4 percent in February 2026, a growth of 1.2 percent. The data indicated a 5.3 percent decrease in the number of Omani guests, reaching 129,797, while guests from GCC countries declined by 18.4 percent to 22,396. The number of guests from other Arab countries also dropped by 11.6 percent, recording 14,485. The number of hotel guests from

the Asian continent recorded positive growth of 4.5 percent, reaching 61,581. Similarly, guests from the Americas grew by 5.4 percent to reach 16,911. Conversely, the number of guests from the African continent decreased by 12.4 percent to 2,798. Oceania witnessed a sharp decline of 46.9 percent, with the number of its guests reaching only 5,165, while the European continent recorded a slight decrease of 0.5 percent with a total of 172,072 guests. -ONA

MAKING EVERYDAY BANKING SIMPLER FOR SMES

Sohar Islamic launches SME Debit Card with no annual fees

MUSCAT: Reinforcing its role in enabling sustainable economic participation, Sohar Islamic, the Islamic banking window of Sohar International, has announced the launch of its SME Debit Card, marking a strategic expansion of its Shariah-compliant offering for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The new card is designed to support the day-to-day transactional needs of businesses, strengthening Sohar Islamic's value proposition through practical, cost-efficient banking solutions. The launch represents a targeted enhancement to Sohar Islamic's SME ecosystem, aligning its products closely with the operational realities of business owners while broadening access to comprehensive Islamic banking solutions across the Sultanate. The Sohar Islamic SME Debit Card enables corporate clients to withdraw, deposit, and manage funds directly from their business accounts, facilitating smoother cash flow management and routine transactions. Offered with no annual fee, the card provides convenient and economical access to essential banking services, sup-



porting greater efficiency and control in managing business finances. SMEs can obtain the card by visiting any Sohar Islamic branch, while existing SME account holders may request it through their

dedicated relationship managers. Commenting on the initiative, Fahad Al Zadjali, Head of Sohar Islamic at Sohar International, stated, "SMEs are central to Oman's economic diversification

agenda, contributing meaningfully to employment creation, innovation, and long-term resilience. As this segment continues to mature, we are also witnessing a clear shift among businesses toward financial partners that offer principled, Sharia-compliant solutions without compromising on efficiency or relevance. Sohar Islamic's approach is anchored in responding to this evolution—by making Islamic banking more practical, more adaptable, and easier to integrate into everyday business operations. The SME Debit Card reflects this direction, supporting enterprises that are increasingly choosing Islamic finance as a strategic and values-driven alternative." The Sohar Islamic SME Debit Card further enhances operational convenience by enabling government payments, facilitating compliance and administrative efficiency for businesses. With acceptance across more than 29 million point-of-sale terminals and Visa ATMs globally, the solution supports both domestic and international business activity. Customers also benefit from instant chip-enabled card issuance

at Sohar Islamic branches, ensuring rapid onboarding and immediate access to services. To accommodate higher transaction volumes typical of SMEs, the SME Debit Card provides cash withdrawal capacity of up to OMR 4,000 per day, alongside a point-of-sale usage limit of up to OMR 25,000 per day, thereby enabling businesses to manage supplier payments, operational expenditure, and day-to-day cash requirements with greater flexibility. These capabilities position the SME Debit Card as a practical extension of Sohar Islamic's broader suite of Sharia-compliant corporate banking solutions, designed to support the scale, pace, and transactional complexity of SME activity. Sohar Islamic continues to advance Islamic financial innovation by strengthening its portfolio of purpose-driven solutions that support SME ambition and resilience. Through initiatives such as the SME Debit Card, the bank reinforces its focus on delivering Sharia-compliant banking that aligns sound financial principles with the evolving needs of today's business landscape.

CURRENCY

Dollar holds steady as investors weigh Iran blockade risks against US-Tehran dialogue prospects



TOKYO: The dollar was largely unchanged yesterday as market participants balanced supply risks from a US naval blockade on Iranian shipping in the Strait of Hormuz against the possibility of continued Washington-Tehran talks yielding a diplomatic breakthrough. The dollar index, which tracks the greenback against a basket of major currencies including the yen and the euro, edged up 0.04 percent to 98.38. The euro gained 0.03 percent to \$1.1761. The yen strengthened 0.08 percent against the dollar to 159.3 per dollar, while sterling rose 0.03 percent to \$1.3508. The Australian dollar weakened 0.04 percent to \$0.7091, and New Zealand's kiwi advanced 0.03 percent to \$0.5868. -ONA

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Financial Corporation, up 9.09%, was the top gainer while, Raysut Cement, down 5.45%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 8,244.35 points, up by 0.39% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.24% at 665.08 points. Financial Corporation, up 9.09%, was the top gainer while, Raysut Cement, down 5.45%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover. A total number of 5698 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 91.62 million, with more than 300.97 million shares changing hands. Out of 76 traded securities, 34 advanced, 25 declined, and 17 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net sellers for RO 1303K while foreign investors were net buyers for RO 1198K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for RO 105K worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 13,054.24 points, up 0.96%. Prices of Financial Corporation, Financial Services, Takaful Oman, Bank Dhofar, Al Madina Investments were up by 0.90%, 7.14%,

3.95%, 2.93%, 2.63% respectively. Prices of Al Batinah Development Company, Al Sharqia Investment, Oman Qatar Insurance were down by 2.08%, 0.86%, 0.54% respectively. Industrial Index closed at 10,179.85 points, down -0.19%. Prices of Construction Materials, Oman Fisheries, Gulf International Chemicals, Al Maha Ceramics, Muscat Thread Mill were up by 8.70%, 6.90%, 3.70%, 3.45%, 2.94% respectively. Prices of Raysut Cement, Oman Flour Mills, Al Anwar Ceramics, Voltamp Energy, Galfar Engineering were down by 5.45%, 4.41%, 1.90%, 1.06%, 1.05% respectively. Services Index was down by -0.46% before closing at 3,229.21 points. Prices of Muscat Desalination, National Gas, Sembcorp Salalah, SMN Power Holding, OQ Gas Networks were up by 0.95%, 0.95%, 0.90%, 0.89%, 0.74% respectively. Prices of Al Suwadi Power, Phoenix Power, Al Batinah Power, Sharqiyah Desalination, Ooredoo were down by 2.93%, 2.42%, 1.94%, 1.20%, 0.82% respectively. – **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES						
Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	8,249.21	8,202.63	8,244.35	8,212.04	32.31	0.39
FINANCIAL INDEX	13,054.24	12,913.76	13,054.24	12,929.72	124.52	0.96
Industry Index	10,247.06	10,166.84	10,179.85	10,199.06	-19.21	-0.19
Services Index	3,244.56	3,217.62	3,229.21	3,244.18	-14.96	-0.46
MSX Shariah Index	666.10	661.72	665.08	663.52	1.56	0.24
MSX TR INDEX	12,737.24	12,665.31	12,729.73	12,679.84	49.89	0.39
FINANCIAL TRIDX	16,017.35	15,844.99	16,017.35	15,864.57	152.78	0.96
INDUSTRIAL TRIDX	13,123.88	13,021.14	13,037.80	13,062.41	-24.61	-0.19
SERVICES TR IDX	4,335.57	4,299.58	4,315.07	4,335.06	-20.00	-0.46
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,209.68	1,209.68	1,209.68	1,209.68	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary									
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded		
300,973,360	91,622,550	5,698	38,176,948,389	34	25	17	76		

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 14

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST HD	LAST OFFER	PUR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM000000398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	143,637,545	32,325,044	1,021	0.223	0.228	0.223	0.228	0.223	0.005	2.242	0.228	0.228	0.228	0.100	1,508,732,150
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	1,369,886	433,100	55	0.313	0.320	0.313	0.319	0.313	0.005	1.592	0.319	0.315	0.319	0.100	63,800,000
OM0000004788	MADINA TAKAFUL	624,658	79,816	24	0.129	0.129	0.128	0.128	0.126	0.002	1.587	0.128	0.127	0.129	0.100	22,400,000
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	870,915	76,719	58	0.088	0.089	0.087	0.089	0.088	0.001	1.136	0.089	0.087	0.089	0.100	31,695,330
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	44,760,152	21,192,979	435	0.480	0.485	0.471	0.479	0.474	0.005	1.055	0.479	0.474	0.479	0.100	3,595,564,193
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	18,505	53,265	3	2.850	2.880	2.850	2.880	2.850	0.030	1.053	2.880	2.565	2.885	0.100	258,236,000
OM0000001535	OMINVEST	331,892	128,469	50	0.382	0.388	0.379	0.385	0.382	0.003	0.785	0.385	0.381	0.390	0.100	432,286,757
OM0000008072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	7,186,641	1,971,305	573	0.273	0.275	0.272	0.274	0.272	0.002	0.735	0.274	0.274	0.274	0.100	1,186,590,954
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	932,558	384,041	71	0.410	0.413	0.410	0.413	0.410	0.003	0.732	0.413	0.411	0.413	0.100	97,637,230
OM0000001453	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	445,000	173,950	127	0.390	0.392	0.387	0.392	0.390	0.002	0.513	0.392	0.390	0.392	0.100	657,270,971
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	930,364	329,404	30	0.355	0.356	0.353	0.356	0.355	0.001	0.282	0.356	0.355	0.356	0.100	37,380,000
OM00000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	183	150	1	0.820	0.820	0.820	0.820	0.818	0.002	0.244	0.820	0.800	0.818	0.100	102,416,327
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	693,842	104,867	39	0.152	0.152	0.151	0.151	0.151	0.000	0.000	0.151	0.152	0.151	0.100	337,779,908
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	3,469,451	5,332,435	171	1.537	1.538	1.535	1.537	1.538	-0.001	-0.065	1.537	1.691	1.537	0.100	1,152,750,000
OM0000008934	ABRA ENERGY SERVICES	828,253	387,518	180	0.468	0.470	0.465	0.466	0.467	-0.001	-0.214	0.466	0.466	0.473	0.100	358,913,200
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	80,588	21,154	12	0.262	0.264	0.261	0.263	0.264	-0.001	-0.379	0.264	0.256	0.264	0.100	11,267,707
OM0000002804	ASAFIA FOODS	3,791	3,125	12	0.835	0.835	0.800	0.835	0.841	-0.006	-0.713	0.835	0.800	0.835	0.100	100,200,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	81,550	29,743	15	0.369	0.369	0.364	0.365	0.368	-0.003	-0.815	0.365	0.361	0.365	0.100	237,594,644
OM0000000440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	109,106	12,545	23	0.115	0.115	0.114	0.115	0.116	-0.001	-0.612	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.100	10,350,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	6,081	15,175	19	1.890	1.900	1.870	1.870	1.890	-0.020	-1.058	1.870	1.870	1.870	0.100	187,000,000
OM00000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	380,945	79,247	46	0.212	0.212	0.206	0.207	0.211	-0.004	-1.896	0.207	0.206	0.210	0.100	45,540,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	735,849	147,322	76	0.204	0.204	0.198	0.202	0.206	-0.004	-1.942	0.202	0.200	0.202	0.100	136,327,261
OM00000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	726,120	144,210	96	0.200	0.202	0.196	0.199	0.205	-0.006	-2.927	0.200	0.198	0.200	0.100	142,166,862
Total	23	208,237,875	63,423,610	3,197												
Parallel Market																
OM00000002911	FINANCIAL CORPORATION	21,600	1,286	6	0.059	0.060	0.059	0.060	0.055	0.005	9.091	0.060	0.059	0.060	0.100	4,201,798
OM00000000488	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	10,400	759	6	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.069	0.006	8.696	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.100	4,687,500
OM00000004788	FINANCIAL SERVICES	19,920	4,120	8	0.211	0.225	0.211	0.225	0.210	0.015	7.143	0.225	0.218	0.225	0.100	4,500,000
OM00000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	342,757	26,852	33	0.077	0.079	0.076	0.079	0.076	0.003	3.947	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.100	19,750,000
OM00000003028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	173,277	147,702	170	0.082	0.086	0.082	0.084	0.081	0.003	3.704	0.084	0.084	0.086	0.100	1,764,000
OM00000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	193,917	57,879	35	0.290	0.301	0.290	0.300	0.290	0.010	3.448	0.300	0.300	0.299	0.100	16,500,000
OM00000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	83,104	17,208	23	0.204	0.210	0.204	0.210	0.204	0.006	2.941	0.210	0.208	0.210	0.100	3,886,018
OM00000002549	BANK DHOFAR	1,623,309	338,983	69	0.206	0.211	0.205	0.211	0.205	0.006	2.927	0.211	0.209	0.210	0.100	641,397,490
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	264,431	9,901	30	0.037	0.039	0.037	0.039	0.038	0.001	2.632	0.039	0.035	0.039	0.100	31,305,000
OM00000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	347,940	54,196	40	0.158	0.159	0.154	0.158	0.155	0.003	1.935	0.158	0.158	0.158	0.100	19,256,250
OM00000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	100	350	1	3.500	3.530	3.500	3.500	3.450	0.050	1.449	3.500	3.250	3.400	1.000	12,705,000
OM00000008868	THE PEARL REEF	2,000	358	1	0.179	0.179	0.179	0.179	0.177	0.002	1.130	0.179	0.177	0.194	0.100	105,867,202
OM00000001160	NATIONAL GAS	133,067	13,938	24	0.106	0.106	0.104	0.106	0.105	0.001	0.852	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.100	901,000,000
OM00000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	10,590	1,123	3	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.105	0.001	0.852	0.106	0.102	0.107	0.100	16,488,342
OM00000004735	SEMBPCOR SALALAH	51,684,941	11,449,364	252	0.224	0.227	0.220	0.224	0.222	0.002	0.901	0.224	0.223	0.230	0.100	213,824,117
OM00000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	62,900	14,049	16	0.224	0.226	0.220	0.226	0.224	0.002	0.893	0.226	0.222	0.239	0.100	45,117,646
OM00000009908	OQBASE INDUSTRIES (SFZ)	60,734,728	18,799,755	527	0.308	0.311	0.308	0.310	0.308	0.002	0.649	0.310	0.310	0.309	0.040	1,072,425,164
OM00000001509	DHOFAR INTL DEVNT & INVESTMENT	1,274,467	446,538	111	0.349	0.353	0.345	0.346	0.345	0.001	0.290	0.346	0.346	0.347	0.100	171,635,425
OM00000001178	MUSCAT GASES	12,270	1,850	4	0.150	0.151	0.150	0.151	0.151	0.000	0.000	0.151	0.136	0.151	0.100	4,530,000
OM00000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	1,041	1,364	1	1.310	1.310	1.310	1.310	1.310	0.000	0.000	1.310	1.310	1.310	0.100	65,500,000
OM00000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	128,603	9,837	16	0.075	0.077	0.075	0.077	0.077	0.000	0.000	0.077	0.078	0.077	0.100	23,650,267
OM00000001608	OMAN PACKAGING	200	34	1	0.169	0.169	0.169	0.169	0.169	0.000	0.000	0.169	0.159	0.169	0.100	5,481,660
OM00000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	79,210	15,062	16	0.186	0.186	0.186	0.191	0.191	0.000	0.000	0.191	0.191	0.195	0.100	57,023,610
OM00000001806	MUSCAT INSURANCE	21,220	12,310	5	0.580	0.580	0.580	0.580	0.580	0.000	0.000	0.580	0.579	0.580	1.000	4,394,927
OM00000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	4,000	520	1	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.000	0.000	0.130	0.127	0.138	0.100	12,870,000
OM00000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	26,258	10,727	11	0.408	0.409	0.407	0.408	0.407	0.001	0.246	0.408	0.405	0.410	0.100	26,250,000
OM00000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	1,000	1,166	3	1.060	1.060	1.060	1.060	1.060	0.000	0.000	1.060	1.050	1.060	0.100	64,951,500
OM00000003411	BARKA WATER AND POWER	11,570	2,036	1	0.176	0.176	0.176	0.176	0.176	0.000	0.000	0.176	0.176	0.179	0.100	28,160,000
OM00000007047	DHOFAR GENERATING	3,493	314	2	0.090	0.090	0.089	0.090	0.090	0.000	0.000	0.089	0.089	0.090	0.100	200,010,000
OM00000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	200,284	21,030	25	0.105	0.105	0.104	0.105	0.105	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.103	0.105	0.100	68,485,639
OM00000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	12,210,649	5,805,726	497	0.477	0.478	0.474	0.477	0.477	0.000	0.000	0.477	0.476	0.477	0.010	3,816,000,000
OM00000001823	OMAN GATEWAY FUND	100	114	1	1.135	1.135	1.135	1.135	1.135	0.000	0.000	1.135	1.135	1.138	0.000	31,036,858
OM00000006899	OMAN QATAR INSURANCE	1,435	267	1	0.186	0.186	0.186	0.186	0.187	-0.001	-0.535	0.186	0.181	0.186	0.100	29,986,654
OM00000001749	OMAN CEMENT	9,467	1,877	6	0.543	0.543	0.540	0.541	0.544	-0.003	-0.551	0.541	0.541	0.542	0.100	179,000,000
OM00000001861	DHOFAR FOAM AND INVESTMENT	8	59	2	0.107	0.170	0.098	0.109	0.170	-0.001	-0.588	0.169	0.090	0.169	0.100	33,407,468
OM00000001152	OMAN NAT'L ENG'G & INVESTMENT	3,000	3,278	1	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.117	-0.001	-0.586	0.116	0.116	0.119	0.100	23,940,000
OM00000010120	ASVAD SHIPPING	2,895,932	894,381	309	0.311	0.311	0.307	0.307	0.309	-0.002	-0.447	0.307	0.307	0.307	0.000	159,094,944
OM00000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	200	150	2	0.751	0.751	0.750	0.750	0.755	0.005	0.662	0.750	0.750	0.765	0.100	712,500,000
OM00000009569	JABAL REIF	75,476	7,784	4	0.104	0.104	0.103	0.103	0.104	-0.001	-0.962	0.103	0.103	0.104	0.100	17,922,000
OM00000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	24,646	4,090	6	0.166	0.169	0.165	0.165	0.167	-0.002	-1.198	0.165	0.165	0.168	0.100	16,137,356
OM00000005963	PHENIX POWER	498,560	100,398	48	0.206	0.206	0.198	0.202	0.207	-0.005	-2.415	0.202	0.203	0.202	0.100	295,445,498
OM00000000000	AL MAHA PETROLEUM PROD MARKTG	976	1,181	1	1.240	1.240	1.190	1.240	1.240	-0.050	-4.032	1.190	1.140	1.200	0.100	82,110,000
OM00000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	913	456													



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Senior accountant with BSc in accounting & MBA (OACPA Certified) 9 years Oman experience, Capable of Handling all accounting-related works, with Oman D/L. Contact: 7959 6642

Senior accountant/ property manager, Indian male, MBA Finance 10 years' Oman experience, own visa & driving license. Looking for a suitable position. Contact: 97119783 | ishaquesiddibapa@gmail.com

Indian male M.Com with finance 26+ yrs experience in Oman as a senior accountant having valid Oman D/L. Looking for senior position in Finance/Accounts. Contact: 99733304

ACCOUNTS/FINANCE

Indian male, Bcom, MBA finance, 15 yrs of Oman and Indian experience, seeking suitable jobs in accounts. Have valid Oman D/L. Mob: 97436925

Male, 46 yrs, manager (handling accounts & operations) 22 yrs of exp. (20 yrs in Oman) seeks suitable placement. Contact: 91410602

Indian, male, B.Com, 2 yrs' experience seeking Accountant position. Can join immediately. GSM: 76425989

ADMINISTRATION

Indian male, 16 yrs experience in Oman seeks job for admin, secretary or any suitable post. Holding Oman D/L Mobile: 77304055.

Indian (M) 29 yrs, MBA graduate with 4 yrs experience in operations, stores management, office administration, yard management, accounts, finance and graphic designing. Looking for suitable job. Contact: 78439875

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Indian male MBA (International Business) graduate seeking opportunity in import, export, logistics executive roles. Knowledge in documentation, logistics & shipment coordination. Available for Immediate joining. Contact: +968 91627207, Mail:hamimumz@gmail.com

Office manager to MD, CEO or COO's office/ executive secretary available, experience 20 yrs Oman based, availability 1 month notice period, valid until July. Contact: 92080631

Indian male, 4 yrs Oman experience in oil & gas (sales & logistics). Valid Oman D/L. Contact: 78992297

IT

Experienced IT Support professional with 8+ years of expertise in ITSM. Immediate joiner. Contact: +968 76461900 (+91) 9952190495, WhatsApp

IT

MCA graduate seeking a suitable job opportunity in Oman. Available in Muscat. Contact: 91488059

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Senior electrical project engineer, 15+ yrs experience with Nama electricity projects, looking for suitable openings. Mob: +968 9470 5758

Sales & service engineer (Indian), 3+ yrs technical sales & operations Oil & Gas. Valid D/L. Mob.: 98211984

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Project manager Civil seasoned professional with strong consultancy and construction expertise. Open for suitable opportunities. Contact: 93455363 | WA +966 56 373 2589 (WhatsApp)

MEP construction manager, Gulf experience 28 years, own visa, Oman DL. Mob. No: 79809590

Accounting manager, Indian (M), 43 yrs, 18+ yrs in Oman, D/L & NOC. Contact: 76432203

PURCHASE/PROCUREMENT

Indian male procurement executive with 11 yrs of experience in Oman, holding Oman D/L available in Muscat for immediate joining. Contact: 92345877

PURCHASE/PROCUREMENT

Procurement engineer 19 yrs experience construction and trading. Whatsapp: +96895839964

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Indian, MBA, 20yrs of experience in Sales (FMCG / retail) with D/L seeks suitable placement. Contact : 95548480

Indian male, 08 yrs experience having Oman D/L looking for suitable placement in sales and marketing. Contact: 94566786

Sales & logistics coordinator (Oil & Gas, 4 yrs Oman exp.); total 11 yrs GCC exp. Indian male, holding Oman D/L. Contact: 78992297

Indian male, BBA, 20 yrs experience in sales & marketing in Oman. Holding valid Oman driving license seeks suitable placement. Contact No : 93011232 Email: jitinjoshua920@gmail.com

Indian male with a BCA degree and one year of experience in sales and marketing. GSM: 95387638

DRIVER

Looking driver job have car also. Contact: 98586920

DRUG PROCEEDS

South Korea sentences 90-year-old woman for money laundering

SEOUL: A South Korean court has sentenced a 90-year-old woman to one year in jail for helping her jailed son launder drug proceeds, the *Korea Herald* reported.

The son is a trafficking ringleader currently in Cambodian jail.

The Incheon District Court ordered the defendant to forfeit the 386 million won (roughly \$260,000, €220,000) she had laundered on behalf of her son.

Narcotic crimes

The court said the defendant knowingly received and transferred funds linked to narcotic crimes. Prosecutors say she received the 386 million won from unidentified individuals on nine occasions between April 2020 and February 2022, before transferring the funds to bank accounts designated to her son.

The 60-something year-old son was arrested in Cambodia in July 2020 on charges including methamphetamine possession, the *Korea Herald* reported. He remains imprisoned there, and investigators believe his drug trafficking operations continued during his incarceration.

“The defendant accepted illegal proceeds while being aware of circumstances indicating their connection to drug-related offenses,” the judge said of the mother, noting the severe social harm caused by narcotics crimes and the need for strict punishment. — **DW**

China reveals details of four points to peace in Middle East

Spokesperson of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China said that the proposal was based on the principle of peaceful co-existence, sovereignty, among others

BEIJING: Spokesperson of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, Mao Ning on Tuesday listed out the four-point proposal given by Chinese President Xi Jinping for lasting peace in the Middle East.

Mao said that the proposal was based on the principle of peaceful co-existence, sovereignty, among others.

In a post on X, she said, “President Xi Jinping made four propositions on safeguarding and promoting peace and stability in the Middle East.”

“Stay committed to the principle of peaceful co-existence. The Gulf states in the Middle East are close neighbours that cannot move away. It’s important to support the Gulf states in improving their ties, work to build a common, comprehensive, cooperative and



sustainable security architecture of the Middle East and the Gulf region, and consolidate the foundation for peaceful co-existence,” the pointer said.

Xi Jinping’s second point asked the warring nations to respect each others’ territorial integrity.

“Stay committed to the principle of national sovereignty. Sovereignty serves as a foundation for all countries, especially developing countries, to survive and thrive, and it must not be violated. The sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the Gulf states should be earnestly respected, and

the safety of their personnel, facilities and institutions vigorously safeguarded.”

Xi Jinping requested all nations to abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

“Stay committed to the principle of international rule of law. It is important to firmly uphold the international system with the U.N. at its core, the international order based on international law, and basic norms governing international relations underpinned by the purposes and principles of the U.N. Charter,” the pointer read.

Xi Jinping requested the coun-

tries to have balanced approach to development and security.

“Stay committed to a balanced approach to development and security. Security is a prerequisite for development, and development serves as a safeguard of security. All sides should work to create a sound environment for and bring positive energy to the development of the Gulf states. China stands ready to share with the Gulf countries the opportunities through Chinese modernization, and work with them to nurture a fertile ground for regional development and security,” the pointer read.

Xi talked about the proposal in a meeting with Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, in Beijing.

China on Tuesday sharply criticised the United States over its recent military actions, warning that they could further destabilise an already fragile ceasefire in the West Asian region, as reported by Al Jazeera.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said the US move to blockade vessels at the Strait of Hormuz would “exacerbate tensions” rather than ease them.

According to Al Jazeera, he said, the US “increased military operations and took a targeted blockade action, which will only exacerbate tensions and undermine the already fragile ceasefire agreement.”

Earlier, a Malawi-flagged, Chinese-owned vessel reportedly passed through the Strait of Hormuz despite an ongoing US block-

ade targeting Iranian-linked shipping, according to MarineTraffic data cited by CNN.

The vessel, identified as Rich Starry, is owned by Full Star Shipping Ltd, linked to Shanghai Xu-anrun Shipping Co Ltd, and has been under US sanctions since 2023 over alleged ties to Iran. The ship previously sailed under the Hong Kong flag until April 2023, as reported by CNN, citing MarineTraffic data.

According to MarineTraffic, the tanker initially attempted to transit the Strait around noon UTC on Monday but briefly turned back near Iran’s Qeshm Island before making a second attempt in the evening. By early Tuesday UTC, it appeared to have successfully passed through the waterway.

CNN had reported that the United States Navy is maintaining a presence of at least 15 ships in the West Asian region, including the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and 11 destroyers, which could potentially take part in a maritime blockade of Iran’s ports, according to a US official, following orders from President Donald Trump.

However, it remains unclear which specific vessels are positioned or designated for participation in the blockade, as earlier assessments indicate that the naval assets are widely dispersed across the US Central Command’s area of operations.

The US president imposed a naval blockade on Iranian ports, following marathon talks in Pakistan over the weekend that failed to yield any agreement. — **ANI**

AIRCRAFT CARRIER AND DESTROYERS

US Navy maintains 15-ship presence in Middle East

WASHINGTON: The United States Navy currently maintains a presence of at least 15 ships in the Middle East region, including the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and 11 destroyers, which could potentially take part in a maritime blockade of Iran’s ports, according to a US official, following orders from President Donald Trump, according to media report.

However, it remains unclear which specific vessels are positioned or designated for participation in the blockade, as earlier assessments indicate that the naval assets are widely dispersed across the US Central Command’s area of operations.

The deployed fleet includes the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln along with 11 destroyers,



including the USS Bainbridge, USS Thomas Hudner, USS Frank E. Petersen Jr., USS Delbert D. Black, USS John Finn, USS Michael Murphy, USS Mitscher, USS Pinckney, USS Rafael Peralta, USS Spruance and USS Milius. In

addition, the Tripoli Amphibious Ready Group, comprising USS Tripoli, USS New Orleans, and USS Rushmore, is also deployed in the region.

The naval formation is accompanied by multiple support and

escort vessels; however, it would need to transit either through the Suez Canal or exit the Mediterranean Sea and sail around Africa before reaching a position suitable to support any blockade operations.

Meanwhile, the US president imposed a naval blockade on Iranian ports, following marathon talks in Pakistan over the weekend that failed to yield any agreement.

The heightened military pressure follows the collapse of high-level diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the regional crisis. The US President maintained that

the primary sticking point in the negotiations remains Tehran’s nuclear ambitions, asserting that “Iran will not have a nuclear

weapon.” Reflecting on the failed weekend dialogue, Trump noted,

“We agreed to a lot of things, but they didn’t agree to that, and I think they will agree to it. I’m almost sure of it. In fact, I am sure of it.” Trump issued a stark ultimatum regarding the ongoing diplomatic efforts, stating,

“If they don’t agree, there’s no deal. There will never be a deal.”

Beyond the nuclear freeze, the US has prioritised the retrieval of enriched uranium currently held within Iran.

“We’re going to get the dust back. We’ll get it back. Either we’ll get it back from them or we’ll take it,” the President added. The urgency of the situation is underscored by a two-week ceasefire Trump announced last week. — **ANI**

US STATE

Earthquake hits Nevada

LOS ANGELES: A magnitude 5.7 earthquake struck northern Nevada on Monday evening, the US Geological Survey (USGS) reported.

The quake occurred at around 6:29 p.m. local time (0129 GMT Tuesday), approximately 20 km southeast of Silver Springs in Lyon County, triggering a ShakeAlert notification across the region. Tremors were felt by residents in parts of northern Nevada as well as nearby areas of California.

No significant damage or injuries have been reported so far, Lyon County authorities said in a statement on the county’s website and added that no major damage has been reported to critical infrastructure. — **Xinhua**

DIGITAL DEVICES

Social media age limits: Well intentioned but ineffective?

BRUSSELS: At the moment, governments in more than a dozen countries are trying to limit minors’ access to social media.

These include France, New Zealand, Norway, Malaysia, Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom. Germany is also considering taking action. Australia became the first country in the world to introduce social media bans for users under the age of 16 in late 2025. Indonesia also introduced age limits in late March.

The aim of such legislation is to protect young people, which seems logical because children’s screen time, which is often high, can trigger conflict in many families.

According to a 2025 study by the 38-member Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, half of all 15-year-olds in OECD countries spent at least 30 hours a week on digital devices.

Despite this, the question remains: Are age limits really the best way to address the negative impacts of social media?

‘It’s easy to draw attention with calls for age limits’

Psychologist and neuroscientist Christian Montag thinks the debate misses the point. “When new technologies show up, moral panic quickly follows,” said the professor of cognitive and brain sciences at China’s University of Macau.

“And not to suggest that there aren’t real concerns among politicians, but it is also pretty easy to quickly elevate your visibility without really having to do much

other than call for a social media ban.”

Educational researcher Nina Kolleck also views the debate with skepticism. Australia has shown that it’s just not that easy to push through age limits, said Kolleck, professor of educational and socialization theory at Potsdam University, Germany. But “we still haven’t resolved the truly fundamental problems with social media, we’ve just raised the minimum age for admission a bit.”

The problems start with potentially addictive personalized algorithms and gimmicks, such as push notifications and endless scrolling, which are designed to keep users locked on a given platform for as long as possible.

Beyond that, once on a platform, users can be confronted with violent content, said Kolleck.

Although digital media give children and young people the ability to inform themselves, to play and to meet, the OECD study suggests excessive use can have negative consequences. Among these are physical problems such as sleeplessness and lack of movement to problems such as cyberbullying, social isolation and depression.

Montag says it is often difficult to isolate the exact effects of social media because other factors, like environment and genetics, also play a role.

The connection between excessive or addictive smartphone use and poor academic performance, however, is relatively well documented. The same goes for feelings



of body dysmorphia among social media users.

Adults have trouble regulating their own screen time

Montag says children and teens are particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of social media.

“The human brain needs a relatively long time to develop,” he said. “We estimate that the prefrontal cortex isn’t fully developed until a person turns 20 or maybe even their mid-20s.”

“That means it is tougher for minors to regulate themselves, and they have a harder time putting down their phones than adults.”

But adults aren’t much better. Many people older than 20 also struggle with the issues surrounding social media.

This raises the question of whether social media bans for children under 14 or under 16 actually make a big difference?

Experts say the debate needs to be expanded. Many see age restrictions as just one of several necessary measures. Kolleck, for instance, describes it as a “pseudo-debate that distracts from truly effective instruments.”

Lots of good intentions in the Digital Services Act

Kolleck says numerous effective measures are anchored in the European Union’s Digital Services Act (DSA), the EU’s legal framework for digital services, which obliges large online platforms and search engines to offer more protections for users — forcing TikTok, Instagram and others to systematically rank and lower risks, as well as demanding transparency regarding their algorithms.

The DSA also requires companies to provide independent researchers access to their data,

allowing the outside monitors to examine how certain features or elements influence users. That has been the biggest problem to date, says Montag: “For years, we had to fight with both hands tied behind our back. And access is still completely insufficient, despite the introduction of the DSA.”

The DSA has failed to prove itself effective or has not been fully implemented in other areas, too. US President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly attempted to defend US tech companies against massive EU fines with the threat of punitive tariffs, poses yet another problem. Of course, in the end, the DSA only applies to EU countries.

A problematic business model

Toning down and modifying certain design features for underage users could be another way to fight the negative effects of social me-

dia. According to Montag, Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, offers an under-14 version of the app that only allows scrolling for 40 minutes. After that, it displays no new content.

TikTok already has time limits, though they are easy to turn off. Children under 13 theoretically need to have a legal guardian enter a code into their device if they want to be on longer.

From 13 on, kids have to set their own code if they want to keep scrolling. That only works if they haven’t already said they were older than they are. That, however, is likely often the case because you can give any birthday you like when setting up an account.

Montag says, in the end, the platforms should be set up in a fundamentally different way, especially for kids, but also for adults.

“Is the data business model that spies on users and greatly maximizes online time unhealthy as such? Yes. I don’t really need to wait for scientific studies on the psychological problems.”

Beyond discussions about age limits and other measures aimed at fostering general media competence in society, pressure has to be put above all on the platforms and they have to be strictly regulated:

“Other social media models would have to be financed differently — if no longer data-based, then maybe by subscription,” he suggests. “And if platforms aren’t built to keep people glued to their screens anymore, they will also be a lot more boring.” — **DW**



The device employs advanced techniques including spectroscopy and plasmonics, to detect these biomarkers with high precision, even at extremely low concentrations

Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) have developed a novel experimental sensor capable of diagnosing lung diseases—including pneumonia—by analysing a patient’s breath, offering a potential alternative to X-rays and conventional laboratory tests.

The technology relies on an ultra-small, chip-sized sensor that captures synthetic compounds known as biomarkers. These biomarkers are initially attached to inhalable nanoparticles and function as “smart tags,” detaching only in the presence of a specific biochemical trigger—such as disease-related enzymes in the lungs. When the sensor detects the released biomarkers, it signals the presence of illness.

The device employs advanced techniques including spectroscopy and plasmonics, enabling the detection of extremely low concentrations of these biomarkers with high precision.

A large image featuring a woman with long dark hair and her eyes closed, with a semi-transparent chest X-ray overlaying her torso. The headline text is superimposed on this image.

MIT ENGINEERS DEVELOP BREATH SENSOR THAT DIAGNOSES LUNG DISEASE IN MINUTES

In laboratory trials, the sensor demonstrated significant efficacy, identifying chemical signals even at minute concentrations. It enabled diagnosis within minutes rather than hours or days, without the need for blood draws or other invasive sampling—a breakthrough that could facilitate early detection of lung disease and improve treatment outcomes.

Laboratory results also showed high accuracy in detecting biomarkers associated with pulmonary conditions. Researchers expect the sensor’s use may extend beyond pneumonia to other respiratory diseases, as well as to detecting airborne chemical pollutants and a range of illnesses traceable through the “breathprint.” - ONA

SPORTS

PORTUGUESE REPLACES ADDO

Ghana name former Oman coach Queiroz as coach

ACCRA: World Cup-bound Ghana appointed former Oman manager Carlos Queiroz as the new men's national coach on Monday, less than two months out from the tournament.

Queiroz parted ways with Oman Football Association (OFA) last month having led the Red Warriors in 11 games and spent less than a year with the team.

"Coach Queiroz begins work immediately," the Ghana Football Association said in a statement on Tuesday.

Ghana open their World Cup campaign in Group L against Panama on June 17 in Toronto, then face England outside Boston and Croatia in Philadelphia. The Black Stars also have warm-ups against Mexico on May 22 and Wales on June 2.

"This is not just another job — it is a mission," Queiroz said in a statement on the GFA website.

"And I am ready to give everything of my experience and knowledge once again, in service of the game and the happiness of People."

"I accept this mission with the

same passion and commitment that have guided me throughout my career," Queiroz added.

"Ghana is a nation of talent, pride, and footballing soul. I arrive with respect for its history and belief in its future."

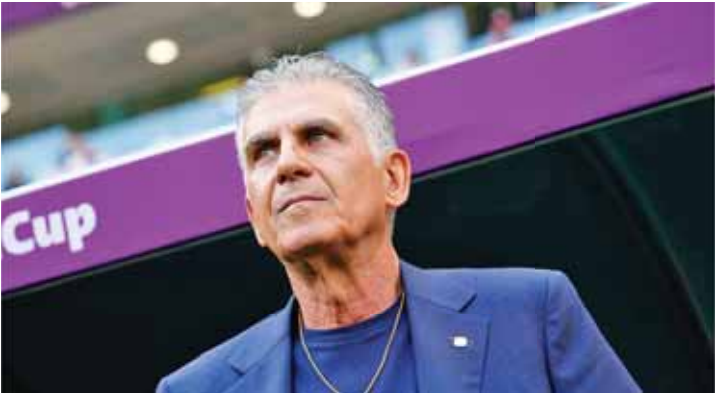
Queiroz was chosen from more than 600 local and foreign applications because of his extensive World Cup experience.

Mozambique-born Queiroz qualified South Africa for the 2002 World Cup, guided his native Portugal to the knockout phase in

2010, and coached Iran at the 2014 and 2018 tournaments.

The 73-year-old Portuguese replaced Otto Addo, who was sacked on 31 March after friendly defeats by Germany and Austria.

Queiroz, a former Manchester United assistant manager, had two spells as Sir Alex Ferguson's assistant at Old Trafford, first from 2002-2003 and then from 2004-2008, either side of a stint as Real Madrid head coach. Queiroz has also held coaching positions with Egypt, Japan, and Colombia. - Agencies



Okafor double powers Leeds past Man United in a thriller



The victory pushed them six points clear of English Premier League relegation zone

MANCHESTER: Noah Okafor scored twice in the first half hour as Leeds United beat Manchester United 2-1 at Old Trafford to climb six points clear of the English Premier League relegation zone on Monday.

It was the first time Leeds have won a league match at Old Trafford since 1981 and the Yorkshire club

moved up to 16th place in the 20-team table.

"I feel tired and relieved but also proud of the boys," Leeds coach Daniel Farke said.

"It was a fantastic performance. We are into the crunch time of the season and you have to keep your nerve and stick to your plan."

Manchester remained in third

but missed a chance to move clear of Aston Villa, with whom they are tied on points.

Leeds started on the front foot and almost scored in the second minute but Senne Lammers made an excellent point-blank save from Dominic Calvert-Lewin.

However, the pressure paid off two minutes later when Okafor side-footed home with style after everyone missed Jayden Bogle's deep cross from the right.

Leeds were all over United during the opening half hour and a second arrived in the 29th. A ball was half cleared to Okafor, whose first-time shot from outside the box took a slight deflection as it

flew past Lammers and into the far corner. United interim coach Michael Carrick had never lost a game at home since replacing Rubem Amorim in mid-January and his task got even harder 10 minutes into the second period when Lisandro Martinez was sent off for pulling Calvert-Lewin's hair.

However, the 10 men kept plugging away in what was a pulsating end-to-end encounter and got a goal back after 68 minutes when Casemiro bulleted a header past Karl Darlow from a Ruben Fernandes cross.

Both sides had more chances in a thrilling last 20 minutes. United had two shots knocked off the

goal-line and Leeds failed to make the most of their frequent counterattacks but neither could find the net again.

Farke was ecstatic at taking all three points from one of Leeds' fiercest rivals at such a crucial juncture in a testing campaign.

"A win is always good for the mood and the confidence. It is also good for the table," he said.

"A few more points are needed but tonight we edge three points closer. Nothing is achieved yet. We have to stay humbled, grounded and hungry to make sure we get as many points as possible."

"I think the first half was fantastic, we should have been higher

than 2-0, we missed many, many chances.

"We were a bit sleepy at one set-piece. United are a side packed with top-class players, who can bring quality from the bench later in the game.

"It's difficult to bring it over the line as a newly-promoted side. Big compliment to the whole group."

In their first season back in the Premier League after promotion from the Championship, Leeds are on course to preserve their top-flight status.

They also have their first FA Cup semi-final appearance since 1987 to look forward to against Chelsea at Wembley on April 26. - Agencies

SPANISH LA LIGA

Espi nets winner for Levante

VALENCIA: Carlos Espi scored his seventh goal in six games as Levante beat Getafe 1-0 and moved off the bottom of the Spanish La Liga on Monday.

The 20-year-old Espi had an early let off after eight minutes when the referee downgraded a red card to a yellow and he was decisive with eight minutes left when he stooped to head home the only goal.

Levante should have wrapped up the points more easily but Getafe goalkeeper David Soria saved two penalties, one from Adrián Dela after an hour and then again from Ivan Romero in stoppage time.

To make matters worse for Getafe, Zaid Romero was sent off in the dying seconds.

The result lifted Levante off the bottom of the table and continued a recent revival that has seen Levante take 11 points from a pos-



sible last 18. They are two points ahead of Oviedo. Elche were

third to last. The bottom three go down. - Agencies

ITALIAN SERIE A

Gosens' goal helps Fiorentina edge Lazio



FLORENCE: Fiorentina defeated Lazio 1-0 and moved eight points clear of the Italian Serie A relegation zone on Monday.

Fiorentina's season-best five-game unbeaten run lifted Paolo Vanoli's men above Cagliari into 15th place. Robin Gosens got the only goal in the 28th minute when he headed home a cross from Jack Harrison, the winger on loan from Leeds United. Lazio lost for the first time since March 1. Lazio dominated the match, particularly in the first half. They remained in ninth place. - Agencies

UNITED INTERIM MANAGER

Martinez's red card 'worst decision' ever, says Carrick

LONDON: Manchester United interim manager Michael Carrick blasted referee Paul Tierney for sending off Lisandro Martinez in Monday's 1-2 defeat against Leeds in the Premier League.

Martinez was dismissed in the second-half at Old Trafford after the United defender pulled the hair of Leeds striker Dominic Calvert-Lewin.

Tierney showed the Argentine a red card after VAR officials told him to consult the pitch-side monitor.

"I thought the boys, the way they went about it, they stayed positive and fought to get something out of it after another shocking decision to send off Lisandro," Carrick said.

"Two games in a row, we've had decisions like that go against us but this one was one of the worst I've seen."

"We didn't start the game particularly well," Carrick said. "We didn't quite have the rhythm or click."

"I'm pleased with the way we went about the second half but it was more difficult when you are a man down."

Claiming Calvert-Lewin's initial contact with Martinez had played a role in the centre-back's reaction, Carrick said: "You can throw your arm in Martinez's face and then as he's off balance because of that, he's half grappling, he half touches the back of his hair which pulls the bobble to come out."

"I don't even know what it looks like. It's not a pull, it's not a tug, and it's not aggressive. He touches it and he gets sent off."



fender Leny Yoro in the build-up to Okafor's opener.

"We obviously conceded when Leny Yoro gets a forearm smash in the back of the head and they score the first goal," he said. "They didn't decide to overturn that decision. That was a big moment in the game." With one win in their last four games, United travel to Chelsea on Saturday for a crucial clash in a battle for Champions League places.

"This is one game. We'll certainly look at it and look to improve. We've got another big game, an important game next week and a big end to the season," Carrick said.

"We're in a really good position. Tonight's disappointing, we didn't want to lose and we didn't want the referee's decisions to be so bad against us but we move on."

"We've got a big end to the season and there's a lot to be positive about." - Agencies

OOC supports six athletes under Continental Grants Programme



Oman Olympic Committee Chairman
HH Sayyid Azzan bin Qais Al Said presided
over the signing agreement ceremony

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) has stepped up its high-performance drive by signing support agreements with six athletes under its Continental Grants Programme, reinforcing efforts to elevate Oman's presence on the regional and international sporting stage.

The targeted initiative focuses on sharpening technical standards, expanding competitive exposure and ensuring athletes are

primed for major events.

The agreements were formalised at a ceremony held under the patronage of the OOC Chairman Sayyid Azzan bin Qais Al Said, in the presence of Abdullah Bamakhalef, OOC secretary general, other OOC board members, and sports associations' representatives—highlighting the leadership's commitment to structured athlete development.

The six selected athletes represent a cross-section of individual sports: Hamza Al Jabri (athletics);



Umaima Al Hinai and Nibras Al Tawqi (taekwondo); Mohammed Al Ghailani (triathlon); Al Harith Al Harthi (fencing); and Amer Al Khanajiri (weightlifting).

Each will receive tailored support within a four-year framework that includes training camps, competition participation and ongoing

technical monitoring. Funded through Olympic Solidarity, the continental grants programme is designed to help National Olympic Committees (NOCs) prepare athletes for regional, continental and global competitions, including qualification pathways for multi-sport Games.

Selection was carried out in coordination with national federations, applying rigorous technical criteria to identify athletes with the highest potential.

Delivering the keynote, Ali bin Salim Al Busafi, Acting Executive Director and Director of Olympic Solidarity, described the programme as a cornerstone of Oman's sporting strategy.

He said the OOC is working to "create an enabling environment for athlete preparation in accordance with best technical and administrative practices," adding that the initiative aligns with a long-term vision to build a generation capable of achieving "distinguished results across various arenas."

Al Busafi emphasised that the Continental Grants Programme plays a vital role in exposing athletes to diverse competitive environments, helping raise their

technical and physical levels while boosting confidence ahead of major championships.

He stressed the importance of discipline and adherence to training plans to maximise benefits, noting that "success is achieved only through organised work and continuity in development and evaluation."

He also underlined the need for closer integration with federations and the value of Olympic Solidarity in transferring global expertise into local systems.

The OOC views the agreements as a significant milestone in its athlete development pathway, combining investment in emerging talent with structured preparation. With intensified coordination across stakeholders, the committee expects the initiative to translate into stronger continental performances and sustained international success for Oman.

MUNICH OPEN

Shelton defeats Nava to advance

MUNICH: American second seed Ben Shelton fought past his lucky loser compatriot Emilio Nava 7-6 (7/4), 3-6, 6-3 in the first round of the Munich Open on Monday.

After rallying from a break down in the deciding set, the world No.6 will next meet the winner of Alexander Blockx's meeting with Yannick Hanfmann.

"It's tough. Not just (playing against) another American, but probably my best friend out on tour, or one of a few," Shelton said.

"His trajectory has been steep lately, so I'm happy to see the way

he has been climbing (the rankings)," Shelton added of the 112th-ranked Nava.

"I know he wasn't feeling 100 percent today, so I feel bad about that. I hope he gets back to 100 percent quickly, because he's playing great on the clay."

The win improves Shelton's perfect record to six wins from six outings in 500-level events this year as the 23-year-old tries to go one better than last year on the Bavarian red dirt in pursuit of a career-first clay-court title.

Shelton lost the 2025 title-de-

cider to Alexander Zverev, and the German is once again the top seed in this edition of the tournament. He will meet Miomir Kecmanovic in his opening match.

The winner of that encounter will face Gabriel Diallo in the round of 16 after the Canadian beat Ukrainian qualifier Vitaliy Sachko 6-1, 6-2. Elsewhere, Argentinian fifth seed Francisco Cerundolo won 6-2, 6-2 against Sumit Nagal of India, while French seventh seed Arthur Rinderknech eased past the US' Alex Michelsen in straight sets. - Agencies



BARCELONA OPEN



'Beautiful' battle with Sinner extra motivation: Alcaraz

BARCELONA: Spanish tennis star Carlos Alcaraz said on Monday that his battle with new world No.1 Jannik Sinner was giving him extra inspiration ahead of the Barcelona Open.

Sinner defeated Alcaraz in the final at the Monte Carlo Masters on Sunday to usurp him at the top of the world rankings. Alcaraz can claim back the spot with victory in Barcelona this week, where he finished runner-up last year.

"I think the battle for number one that Jannik and I are having is a very beautiful one, and I think it's probably an extra motivation," Alcaraz told reporters.

"The truth is that Jannik and I have a very good relationship. Obviously it's not super personal, we don't go out to dinner, we don't go eat together, but I think the relationship we have off court is very good."

Alcaraz said the Italian was driving him on to be a better player, although he would "not miss him" this week in Barcelona.

"(He's someone who) makes me better, who makes me aware of my weaknesses, who makes me realise what I really have to focus on in every practice and every match," said the 22-year-old seven-time Grand Slam winner.

"I try to push myself every day, and that's why it's really nice to have him as a reference point and to see him achieving everything he's achieving," Alcaraz said he was happy to see Sinner taking "giant steps forward" on clay and that they were very even on every surface.

"When we face each other, between him and me there isn't really a favourite, it doesn't matter if we play on grass, on hard court or on clay," he added.

The Spaniard has won the Barcelona Open twice, in 2022 and 2023, and takes on Finnish player Otto Virtanen on Tuesday in the round of 32. - Agencies

ASHES TENSIONS

England skipper Stokes shuts down talk of a rift with McCullum

LONDON: England captain Ben Stokes said suggestions of a rift with Brendon McCullum have been overstated, but acknowledged he must work with the head coach in a "slightly different way".

The messages from Stokes and McCullum appeared to diverge during England's 4-1 Ashes defeat in Australia.

Stokes asked his players to dig in, and did so himself with his own batting tempo. In contrast, McCullum believed England moved away from the aggression that had previously brought them success.

At the end of the series, Stokes said opponents had worked out how to play against England.

Last month, director of cricket Rob Key said there had been no "bust-up" between the two. Stokes, McCullum and Key are all to remain in their jobs following a review of the Ashes conducted

by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

Stokes told the ECB: "I'm very confident in mine and Brendon's ability to be able to work together, because we've done it for such a long period of time now."

"But work together in a slightly different way. The main point of me and Brendon is our alignment towards winning things and making this team as good as they can be."

Stokes and McCullum joined forces in charge of the Test team in 2022 and had instant success, winning 10 of their first 11 Tests.

Since then, England have had more losses than wins - 17 to 16. The defeat in Australia followed a 2-2 home draw against India.

Stokes and McCullum publicly backed each other at the end of the Ashes, but by that time had given differing messages to the media, fuelling suggestions of a rift. McC-



Cullum was also noticeably effusive about the leadership of white-ball captain Harry Brook during the T20 World Cup which followed the Ashes.

But all-rounder Stokes said any

notion he is not "aligned" with the New Zealander is a "massive overstatement".

"We agree 95% of the time on things, but those 5% things that we might have different views on, we

talk about it between each other and then we end up getting to the place where we want to get to," said Stokes.

"Agreeing on every single thing, that's just impossible."

The ECB has released a near-three-minute clip of the interview with Stokes, with the full conversation set to be published on Wednesday.

McCullum will return to the UK in May, before the Test series against New Zealand in June. As part of the Ashes review, it is understood the ECB would like the coach to speak to the media more often - he usually only conducts interviews after England have lost.

Both Stokes and McCullum are contracted to England until 2027. Stokes, 34, has a deal that expires at the end of the next Ashes, while McCullum's contract runs to the end of the World Cup that follows.

"With what me and Brendon were able to achieve with the group over a four-year period, I just couldn't imagine doing what we were trying to do with anyone else," said Stokes.

"We're both very proud men in what we do. We put a lot of our heart and soul into this job. Brendon certainly has for the four years he's done it so far, and hopefully we'll still be together at the end of 2027, winning what we want to win."

Stokes is recovering from a broken cheekbone, suffered when he was hit by a ball while coaching Durham's academy players in early February.

The injury has so far prevented him from playing for Durham in this season's County Championship, with a potential return coming away to Worcestershire on May 8. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat invites students to explore employment and training opportunities at SQU Career Fair

The Career Fair aims to provide a wide range of training and employment opportunities for students and graduates, contributing to the development of their skills and enhancing their readiness to enter the job market



MUSCAT: As part of its ongoing commitment to enhancing training and employment opportunities for university and college students and graduates, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, is participating in the Career Fair organised by Sultan Qaboos University from 13 to 15 April 2026. The event brings together a distinguished group of organisations representing various sectors. The Bank invites students interested in exploring available career and

training opportunities to visit its booth at the exhibition, held at the Grand Hall of the University Cultural Centre, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm throughout the three days. The Career Fair aims to provide a wide range of training and employment opportunities for students and graduates, contributing to the development of their skills and enhancing their readiness to enter the job market. It also serves as an important platform for students who are in the process of

selecting their academic specialisations, enabling them to gain insights into in-demand fields and the nature of related work environments. The event offers participating institutions a valuable opportunity to accelerate Omanisation plans through direct engagement with graduates from diverse academic backgrounds. Bank Muscat is keen to participate annually in the Career Fair organised by the Career Guid-

ance Centre at Sultan Qaboos University, recognising it as an interactive platform to connect with students and introduce them to available career opportunities. The Bank also showcases its recruitment and training policies, along with application procedures. This participation underscores Bank Muscat's position as one of the Sultanate's leading financial institutions committed to developing national human capital through specialised strategies



and programmes, while strengthening partnerships with academic institutions to support sustainable human development goals. In this context, Bank Muscat places significant emphasis on training and development programmes for its employees, implementing comprehensive annual training plans across all job levels. From the outset of their careers, employees are provided with continuous opportunities for professional growth, enabling them to perform their roles efficiently. These initiatives contribute to fostering a professional work environment based on equal opportunities, access to advanced technologies, and alignment with international best banking practices, thereby enhancing overall institutional performance. The Bank also takes pride in its talented Omani workforce occupying diverse roles across the organisation. During 2025, Jadarah Academy organized over 1,000 training programmes where over 34,000 train-

ing seats were utilized, translating to 38,000 training man-days. More than 143 employees are currently enrolled in educational assistance programmes for undergraduate and postgraduate studies at local colleges and universities. Additionally, 7 employees graduated from international scholarship programmes in 2025, while 8 others are currently pursuing their studies abroad. In terms of professional certifications, 79 employees successfully obtained certifications across various disciplines, while 49 others are continuing their pursuit of additional qualifications. The Bank follows a clear and structured approach to selecting talents who contribute to its continued success. It offers induction and development programmes for graduates, including a two-year development programme designed for high-potential individuals, preparing them to assume future leadership roles across various areas of banking.

SEAMLESS SHOPPING EXPERIENCE



Centrepoint presents 'Everyday Your Way': A spring collection defined by thoughtful design, effortless style and accessible value

MUSCAT: As a new season begins, Centrepoint's Spring collection arrives with a fresh perspective — designed to bring ease, style and versatility into every moment of your day — all at prices that feel just right. This season, Centrepoint brings together Splash, Babyshop, Lifestyle and Shoemart in one vibrant destination, creating a seamless shopping experience where style, comfort and variety come together effortlessly. From trend-led silhouettes and seasonal prints to footwear, accessories, beauty, home and childrenswear, the collection is

designed to move with you — from work to weekends and everything in between. This season, the collection balances quality and value, offering well-crafted pieces at accessible prices. With a growing focus on sustainability, eco-conscious options are available across brands, making it easier to make mindful choices without compromising on style. The season also introduces exciting new drops: Babyshop unveils a playful Disney collection inspired by beloved characters, while Shoemart's Cushion Step range delivers lightweight,

easy-to-wear footwear designed for all-day comfort for kids, men and women. Beauty lovers can explore the latest in K-beauty, featuring viral Korean skincare and makeup essentials, alongside Lifestyle's curated selection of home and fashion accessories. With "Everyday Your Way", Centrepoint reaffirms its promise — combining quality, accessibility, sustainability and convenience to suit every style, every mood and every moment. Now you can explore and shop the collection at Centrepoint stores, on the app and website.

LEXUS LX 600

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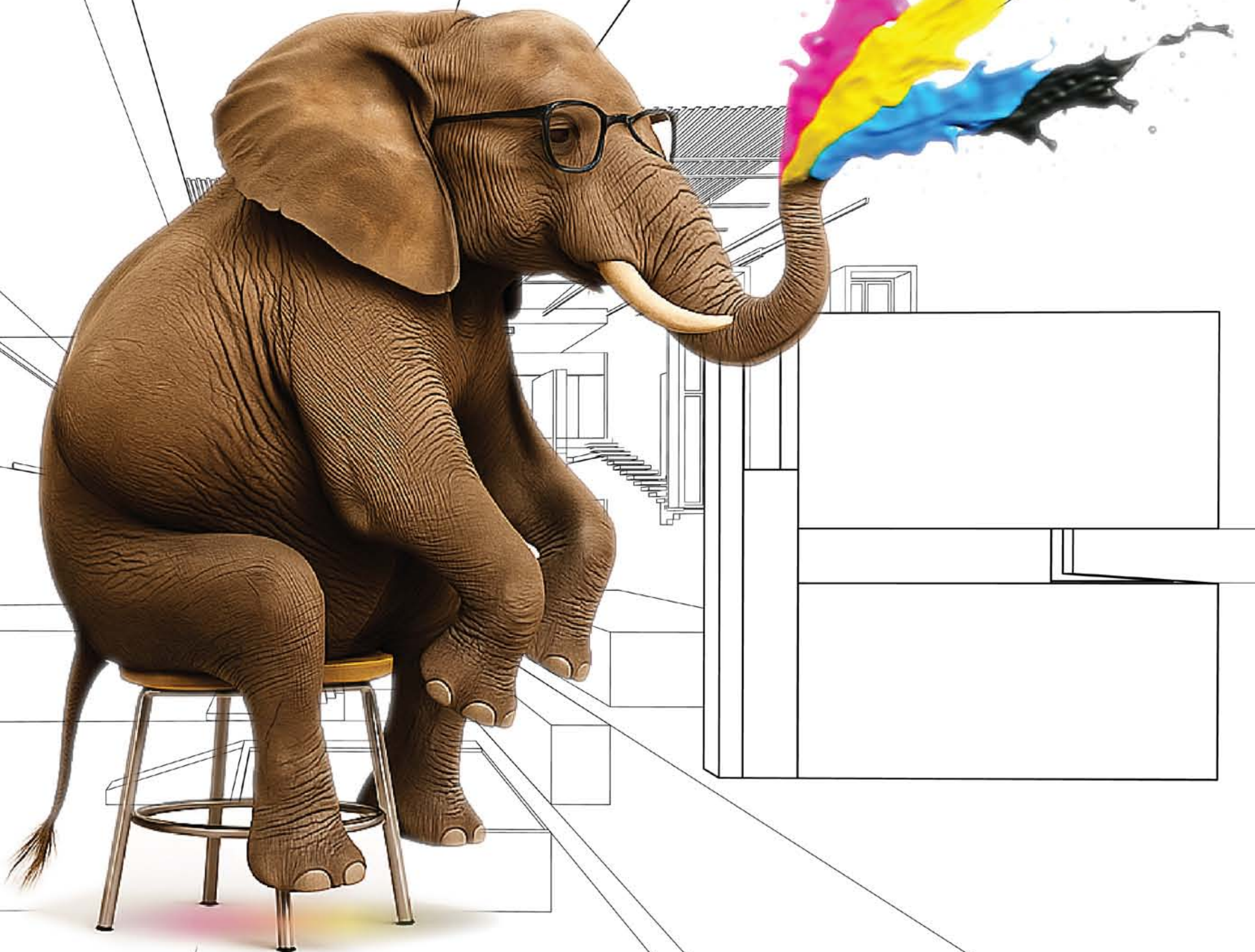
MUSCAT: Lexus Oman is proud to showcase the iconic LX 600, a flagship SUV defined by its commanding presence and masterclass in craftsmanship. As the ultimate expression of the Lexus brand, the LX 600 offers an unparalleled blend of power, sophistication and a refined driving experience, allowing automotive enthusiasts to step into the very pinnacle of luxury. The LX 600 is engineered to deliver a seamless ownership experience, focusing on long-term value and peace of mind. Every element of the vehicle is designed to ensure it remains in peak condition, providing a stable and prestigious journey for those who demand the highest standards of automotive excellence. The Lexus LX 600 is powered by a formidable 3.5L Twin-Turbocharged V6 engine, delivering a muscular 409 HP and 650 Nm of torque. This powerhouse is paired with a sophisticated 10-speed automatic transmission, ensuring smooth yet responsive acceleration across any terrain. For those who demand versatility, the

LX 600 features advanced performance tech including Active Height Control, Adaptive Variable Suspension, and a Multi-Terrain mode with four integrated cameras, providing a balanced and stable drive whether navigating city streets or rugged landscapes. Step inside the LX 600 to find a cabin that redefines the standard for automotive indulgence. The interior is a blend of premium leather and wood finish, highlighted by a driver-focused Head-Up Display (HUD) and an immersive 25-speaker Mark Levinson sound system. For the comfort of all passengers, the SUV is equipped with heated and ventilated seats, a four-zone climate concierge, and a Dual Rear Seat Entertainment system featuring 11.6-inch screens. Practicality is also prioritized with the hands-free "Kick Sensor" for easy access to the cargo area. Safety is expertly integrated into every detail of the LX 600 through the Lexus Safety Sense suite. Drivers are supported by a Pre-Collision System, Lane Departure

Alert with steering assist, and a Blind Spot Monitor to ensure total awareness on the road. The vehicle is also equipped with a comprehensive 10-airbag system, including knee airbags for both the driver and front passenger. This robust protective shell ensures that every family journey is as safe as it is luxurious. Lexus Oman invites you to experience the bold spirit of the LX 600 firsthand. Visit any Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom to take a test drive and discover how this flagship SUV can elevate your lifestyle. Our professional team is ready to guide you through the features of this exceptional vehicle and help you choose a model that truly surpasses expectations. For more information, please visit www.lexusoman.com, subscribe to the YouTube channel "Lexus Oman," like Lexus Oman on Facebook, or follow [oman.lexus](https://www.instagram.com/oman.lexus) on Instagram. For further details and to ascertain the availability of stocks, please visit your nearest Saud Bahwan Automotive Showroom or call 99450244.



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