



IN BRIEF

GLOBAL SWF HAILS OIA REFORM MODEL



Global SWF has highlighted the strong performance of the Oman Investment Authority (OIA), noting its success in improving the profitability of state-owned enterprises, recycling state investment assets, and attracting foreign capital and expertise into sectors aligned with Oman Vision 2040.

According to Global SWF, OIA's 2025 performance reflects the effectiveness of Oman's sovereign governance framework introduced in 2020, under which government-owned companies were consolidated under the authority's portfolio. The structure enables OIA to manage these assets on behalf of the state while enhancing their operational and financial performance.

The report added that although OIA is not among the world's largest sovereign wealth funds in scale, it has developed a distinctive model that integrates state-owned enterprise reform, reinvestment strategies, foreign partnerships, selective divestments, domestic investment promotion, job creation, and supplier development. **DETAILS P13**

WEST BANK FIRE ATTACK



Men attempt to extinguish a fire in a field in the Palestinian town of Huwara in the occupied West Bank, after a reported arson attack by Israeli settlers, according to local officials. Shielded by what Palestinians and rights group describe as complete impunity from the law, some Israeli settlers have harassed rural Palestinian communities, vandalising property, committing arson, sometimes killing. Excluding East Jerusalem, more than 500,000 Israelis live in the occupied West Bank in settlements that are illegal under international law, among some three million Palestinians. — **AFP**

His Majesty sends message to Angolan President

LUANDA: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a written message to President João Manuel Lourenço of the Republic of Angola, pertaining to bilateral relations between the two friendly countries.

The message was delivered by Ambassador Ali bin Said bin Omar al Kathiri, Head of the Sultanate of Oman's Mission to the Republic of South Africa, when he was received by the President of Angola at the Presidential Palace in Luanda, on Friday.

The ambassador conveyed the greetings and best wishes of His

Majesty to the President of Angola along with his wishes to him of continued health and happiness and further progress and prosperity for the friendly people of the Republic of Angola.

President Joao Manuel Lourenço, of the Republic of Angola, asked the ambassador to convey his greetings and appreciation to His Majesty along with his good wishes for His Majesty and the Omani people for continued progress and prosperity, praising the constructive role played by the Sultanate of Oman in supporting dialogue and world peace. — **ONA**



Ambassador Ali bin Said bin Omar al Kathiri delivers the message to the President of Angola.

IRAN CALLS US STRIKES CEASEFIRE BREACH

IRAN condemned on Saturday a nighttime US attack on coastal radar installations in the Gulf, calling it a "flagrant" violation of the ceasefire in place since April.

The foreign ministry said it was an attack "on the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Islamic republic", denouncing Washington's "hostile and provocative behaviour".

The US military believes the four Iranian drones were targeting regional maritime traffic, a US official said. US Central Command said on X that the US then struck Iran's surveillance sites in Goruk and Qeshm Island, which are both on the Strait of Hormuz.

Meanwhile, Iran launched fresh aerial attacks on Bahrain and Kuwait early on Saturday, after the United States said it had struck the Islamic republic.

Bahrain, home to the headquarters of the US Fifth Fleet, denounced the attacks against its territory and neighbouring Kuwait.

Manama said the two Gulf countries intercepted seven missiles fired by Iran and described the attacks, the second against both



People walk past a billboard depicting the late leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and the late Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in Tehran. — **Reuters**

Iran condemns US strikes as a ceasefire violation and breach of sovereignty

nations since Wednesday, as "blatant aggression" and "a flagrant violation of the sovereignty of both countries".

Kuwait also condemned the attacks, saying they were a "direct threat" to the "lives of citizens and residents" and represented a

"dangerous escalation... at a time when the international community is making unremitting efforts to stop combat operations".

Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar also condemned the attacks on Kuwait and Bahrain.

In Bahrain's capital Manama, a journalist reported hearing three explosions and the interior ministry announced air raid sirens had sounded across the country.

Later, Bahrain's military said in a statement it had been "able to intercept and destroy three missiles and a number of drones".

In Kuwait, a journalist reported hearing repeated blasts near the country's international airport, which had been struck on Wednesday in an attack blamed on Iran that killed one person.

"We woke up to a huge explosion. The explosions were very loud," Reem, an Egyptian mother of two, said, referring to the Saturday attacks. "My children were terrified, and I couldn't calm them down," she added.

Kuwait's military said it had "engaged seven hostile ballistic missiles this morning within Kuwaiti airspace". — **AFP**

SEE ALSO P6&7

Fuel shock hits airlines, fares under pressure at Rio summit

RIO DE JANEIRO: Global airline chiefs opened their annual summit in Rio de Janeiro on Saturday facing a sharper test of the industry's post-pandemic recovery, as the Iran war drives up fuel costs and disrupts airspace while carriers try to cushion the blow with higher fares and tighter capacity.

The June 6-8 annual meeting of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) comes as that fuel shock collides with another problem airlines cannot quickly fix: a shortage of new aircraft.

Boeing and Airbus delivery delays have forced many carriers to keep older, less fuel-efficient jets in service for longer, raising maintenance and fuel bills just as oil prices have climbed. IATA, which represents more than 370 airlines accounting for about 85% of global air traffic, had forecast a record \$41 billion in net profit this year for the industry before the war. Industry executives and analysts expect that outlook to be lowered at the meeting.

A Deloitte survey of 21 global



Aircrafts are parked on the tarmac at Rome's Fiumicino airport, as European airlines monitor higher jet fuel costs and supply concerns linked to tensions in the Middle East, in Fiumicino, Italy. — **Reuters**

airline CEOs published this week found that fuel price volatility and inflation sit at the top of the industry's risk agenda, pushing carriers to focus more heavily on cost control and financial health.

"Together, they've turned what was supposed to be a record year into a fight for margin," the survey said. Brazilian airline Azul is planning to trim more flights to meet demand due to higher jet fuel prices, CEO John Rodgers said. Nikhil Ravishankar, CEO of Air New Zealand, said airlines can only raise

ticket prices so much to offset higher fuel costs. "The market will respond and demand will soften and then you fly less," he said in an interview. Airlines have two primary costs: fuel and labour. Sudden increases in fuel are hard to absorb because many tickets are sold weeks or months before travel. Longer routes also burn more fuel and make aircraft and crews less efficient.

The challenge is how much of the latest fuel hit can be passed on to travellers before higher fares start to weaken demand. — **Reuters**

OMAN

SHORTTAKES



MoE HONOURS WINNERS AT SCHOOL CREATIVITY AWARDS

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education celebrated the conclusion of the second edition of the School Creativity Award in Muscat, honouring winning schools under the auspices of Sayyid Said bin Sultan al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture.

The award, organised in cooperation with OMIFCO, saw participation from 163 schools across all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, with 33 schools qualifying for the final rounds. Three schools from each governorate competed across three categories: grades 1–4, boys’ schools for grades 5–12, and girls’ schools for grades 5–12.

In the first-cycle category (grades 1–4), Dibba School from Musandam came in first place, followed by Zamzam School from Al Batinah North in second place, and Al Jouba School from Al Wusta in third.

In the boys’ schools category (grades 5–12), Bal’arab Bin Sultan School from Al Dakhiliyah secured first place, Azzan Bin Qais School from Al Buraimi took second, while Shaikh Saif Bin Hamad Al Aghbari School from Al Sharqiyah North placed third.

In the girls’ schools category (grades 5–12), Ibra School from Al Dhahirah won first place, Al Amal School from Al Batinah South came second, and Al Aflaj School from Al Sharqiyah North secured third place.

Speaking on behalf of the ministry, Saif bin Mubarak al Jalandani, Director-General of the Directorate-General for School Performance Development, said the award represents an educational experience that goes beyond competition and recognition, contributing to improved school performance and a stronger culture of creativity and excellence.

He said the initiative has helped encourage schools to develop sustainable educational projects, strengthen institutional work, and enhance student engagement, while linking school plans to measurable learning outcomes and improved learning environments.

Qasim bin Mohammed al Balushi, Strategic Director of Social Investment at OMIFCO, said the award reflects values of dedication and excellence while supporting sustainability in education and highlighting schools that foster innovation and creativity.

The award, which focuses on administrative organisation, strategic planning, community partnership and quality of performance, aims to strengthen school leadership, improve institutional efficiency and enhance academic outcomes in line with Oman Vision 2040 education objectives.

The ceremony also featured a visual presentation showcasing the stages of the award and initiatives implemented by participating schools, along with a poetry segment highlighting the spirit and impact of the programme across Oman’s education sector. — ONA

LABOUR MINISTRY ANNOUNCES 600 PRIVATE SECTOR JOBS

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Labour announced the availability of 600 job vacancies in private sector institutions in the Muscat Governorate, on Saturday.

This is part of the ministry’s ongoing efforts to boost employment, increase job rates, and enable job-seekers to access the labour market and contribute to supporting economic development.

The Ministry of Labour said that the available job opportunities span several economic sectors and diverse professional fields, providing job-seekers with broader opportunities to compete for available positions based on their academic qualifications and practical experience. The jobs available encompass various



The step enables job-seekers to contribute to supporting economic development.

educational qualifications, from Bachelor’s degree holders and diploma holders to those with post-diploma qualifications, including general diploma holders and below. This reflects the ministry’s commitment to accommodating diverse categories of job-seekers and providing them with suitable opportunities. The ministry noted

that the announcement was made in coordination with private sector institutions, within the framework of programmes and initiatives aimed at enhancing the partnership between the public and private sectors in the field of employment, increasing Omanisation rates in various economic activities, and meeting institutions’ need for qualified national workforce capable of contributing to the development of work environments and achieving growth and productivity targets. The ministry indicated that these efforts fall within its plans aimed at creating sustainable job opportunities for citizens and enhancing the alignment of education and training outputs

with the actual requirements of the labour market, thus contributing to preparing and qualifying national talent and enabling its integration into various professional and specialised sectors.

The Ministry of Labour called on job seekers to review the details of the announced positions through official channels, familiarise themselves with the job requirements and qualifications needed for each opportunity, and complete the registration procedures within the specified deadlines. It stressed the importance of submitting the required data and documents accurately to ensure eligibility.

— ONA

ILO ties strengthened as labour ranking retained

STAFF REPORTER
GENEVA, JUNE 6

DR MAHAD bin Said Baowain, Minister of Labour, met with Gilbert Hounbo, Director-General of the ILO, in Geneva on the sidelines of the 114th Session of the International Labour Conference. Both sides reviewed areas of cooperation and explored opportunities to further strengthen technical collaboration in labour, employment, social protection and human resources development.

During the meeting, the Director-General of the International Labour Organization commended the successful launch of Oman’s Social Protection System, which was inaugurated during the conference.

He praised Oman’s efforts in strengthening its social protection framework, enhancing sustainability and expanding inclusiveness, while also acknowledging progress in social dialogue and positive developments in the Omani labour market.

Dr Mahad bin Said Baowain reaffirmed Oman’s commitment to further strengthening its partnership with ILO and benefiting from its expertise and technical programmes to support labour market policy development and national priorities.

In a related development, Oman maintained its position in Tier 3 of the 2026 Global Rights Index for the second consecutive year, reflecting continued stability in the labour environment and ongoing national efforts to enhance trade union rights, strengthen social dialogue



Dr Mahad bin Said Baowain along with ILO chief unveiled the report during the ILO Geneva meeting.

Oman’s maintaining its position in Global Rights Index reflects stability in the labour environment and ongoing national efforts to enhance trade union rights

and improve labour relations.

The ranking highlights continued labour market reforms, including updates to labour legislation, improved mechanisms for social dialogue and strengthened labour dispute settlement systems. These reforms are aligned with international labour standards and aim to support a balanced and stable working environment that promotes economic growth while safeguarding the rights of workers and employers.

The Global Rights Index is published annually by the International Trade Union Confederation and is released in conjunction with the International Labour Conference held in Geneva.

Meanwhile, Oman, in cooperation with the ILO, also launched an international report in Geneva documenting its pioneering

experience in redesigning its social protection system, highlighting the country’s integrated approach to welfare, financial sustainability and economic development.

The report, titled ‘Redesigning the Social Protection System in the Sultanate of Oman,’ was unveiled during an official ceremony held under the auspices of Dr Baowain in the presence of Gilbert Hounbo, Director-General of the ILO.

Oman’s experience is being recognised as one of the leading models in the region, having redesigned its social protection system through an integrated national framework that combines social welfare, social insurance, fiscal sustainability and economic growth. The reform journey began in 2020 with a clear vision aimed at creating a fairer, more sustainable and future-ready system.

Oman powers up electric mobility through key investments

MOHAMED AL BATTASHI
MUSCAT, JUNE 6

Oman is accelerating its electric mobility ambitions through expanding charging infrastructure, rising electric vehicle (EV) adoption and strategic investments in battery-related industries, reinforcing Oman’s broader goals of sustainability and economic diversification.

In a move aimed at supporting EV users and sustainable tourism, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism announced via its official social media platform the implementation of a proposal submitted through the Tajawob public

engagement platform to install EV charging stations at three- four- and five-star hotels across Oman.

The ministry said the initiative seeks to strengthen service readiness for EV users, enhance visitor experiences and align tourism infrastructure with evolving transportation trends and sustainability goals.

Efforts to expand charging facilities are also extending to key tourism destinations. A tourism-focused social media platform, @Oman_Tourism, highlighted the availability of EV charging stations at two prominent hotels in Jabal Akhdhar — Anantara Al



ENG MOHSIN AL JABRI

Authorities aim to raise the number of electric vehicles in Oman to 8,000 by the end of the year, up from the current 5,800, reflecting Oman’s accelerating push towards sustainable mobility



Jabal Al Akhdhar Resort and Alila Jabal Akhdar. The platform also pointed to growing calls from EV owners for additional charging points in and around the mountain destination to improve travel convenience and encourage

wider EV adoption.

Reflecting the sector’s growing momentum, Eng Mohsin Al Jabri, Director General of the Oman Net Zero Centre at the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, said during the ‘Indicators’ programme that the number of electric vehicles in Oman has reached around 5,800.

He added that authorities aim to increase the figure to 8,000 by the end of this year.

Beyond vehicle adoption, Oman is also strengthening its position in the EV supply chain.

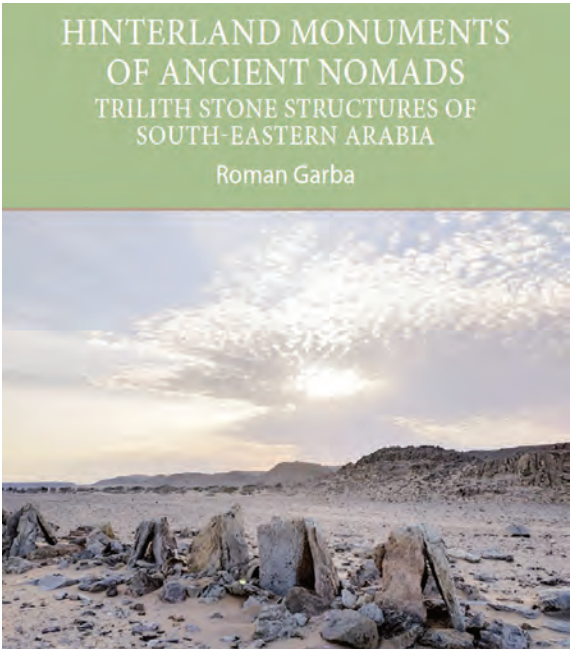
Construction recently commenced on a major anode material production facility in Sohar Freezone,

a key component used in lithium-ion batteries.

Developed by Zhongke Electric through its subsidiary Zhongke Xingcheng (Hong Kong), the project represents an investment of approximately \$1 billion and is expected to achieve an annual production capacity of 200,000 tonnes.

Underscoring the sector’s evolving landscape, social media content creator Mariam al Balushi noted that Oman has entered the regional electric vehicle manufacturing space through major investments and international partnerships focused on EV and battery production.

SHORT TAKES



Landmark study on three-stone archaeological monuments published

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has published a new scientific study titled ‘Antiquities of the Ancient Nomadic Bedouin in Remote Areas: Three Stone Evidences in Southeast Arabia,’ offering the first comprehensive academic examination of the three-stone monuments found across the Arabian Peninsula.

Authored by Roman Garba, the publication is the 15th volume in the Omani Archaeological Heritage series and has been released in cooperation with the international publisher Archaeopress Oxford. Issued in English, the study presents new archaeological, spatial and chronological insights into one of the region’s least studied ancient stone structures.

The research focuses on distinctive triangular arrangements of small stones believed to have served multiple functions, including platforms, hearths, navigation markers and possible cultural or ritual sites. Based on extensive field surveys, excavations and advanced techniques such as remote sensing and radiocarbon dating, the study challenges earlier assumptions and highlights the complexity of their use.

Covering sites across Oman and Yemen, the publication documents 921 locations containing 3,880 three-stone monuments, revealing a far wider and more structured distribution than previously recorded. It also confirms that these formations cannot be interpreted as burial sites alone, as their frequent association with hearths, routes, water sources and settlement areas points to broader cultural and functional significance.

A key highlight of the study is a refined chronological framework based on radiocarbon dating, which places the use of these monuments between 400 BC and 150 AD. The findings also indicate regional variations over time, offering new perspectives on ancient mobility patterns, tribal landscapes and cultural interaction in the Arabian Peninsula.

The publication further notes the transfer of a row of three-stone monuments from the Nafun area in Al Duqm, Al Wusta Governorate, to the National Museum in Muscat, where they are now preserved as part of Oman’s archaeological heritage display.

Officials said the study not only advances academic understanding but also strengthens efforts to preserve and showcase Oman’s cultural legacy through museums and research institutions, making it a key reference for future archaeological studies in the region. — ONA

OCCI to conduct seminar on freelancing on June 9

MUSCAT: The Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) will conduct a seminar on freelancing on June 9, Tuesday.

The seminar aims to highlight the regulatory and legislative environment for freelancing and review the programmes, initiatives, and incentives offered to independent workers. Several government agencies, supporting institutions, and freelancers will take part in the seminar.

The seminar will discuss challenges and opportunities associated with freelancing, which is experiencing rapid growth both locally and globally, in light of



FAISAL AL RAWAS

digital transformation and the rapid development of the digital economy.

The seminar will discuss the role of digital platforms in supporting and developing freelancing, the skills required for success in this



field, and will also showcase Omani success stories and experiences, as well as the future opportunities offered by digital transformation and the knowledge-based economy.

An interactive workshop will be

held on the sidelines of the seminar, bringing participants together in working groups to discuss challenges and practical proposals for developing freelancing.

Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that organising a seminar on freelancing stems from the OCCI’s commitment to supporting national initiatives aimed at enhancing labour market flexibility and empowering Omani talents to capitalise on the opportunities offered by the digital economy and modern work models.

— ONA

Oman boosts climate action framework drive

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, JUNE 6

AS climate challenges intensify globally, Oman is accelerating efforts to balance economic development with environmental sustainability through an integrated climate agenda aligned with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Eng Khalid bin Mohammed al Balushi, Acting Director-General of Climate Affairs at the Environment Authority (EA), said Oman is steadily translating climate commitments into practical programmes and projects, positioning sustainability at the centre of national development.

Speaking to Observer, Al Balushi said the Environment Authority is spearheading national climate action through planning, coordination and oversight of climate policies in cooperation with government institutions and stakeholders.

“The Authority acts as the national coordinator, linking different sectors and government entities to ensure climate priorities are integrated into development plans and national programmes,” he said.

He noted that the Authority is leading the implementation of the National Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy, adopted in 2019, which outlines sector-specific adaptation priorities and climate response measures.

Balancing development with environmental protection remains central to Oman’s approach. Al Balushi explained that major industrial and economic projects are required to conduct Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) studies before permits are granted, in accordance with the Environmental Protection and Pollution Control Law.



The National Project to ‘Plant 10 Million Trees’ as one of the country’s most ambitious environmental initiatives

system covering sectors such as energy, transport, industry and waste management, based on internationally recognised methodologies adopted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Nature-based solutions continue to play a significant role in Oman’s climate strategy. Al Balushi highlighted the National Project to ‘Plant 10 Million Trees’ as one of the country’s most ambitious environmental initiatives aimed at expanding green cover, combating desertification and increasing carbon absorption through native species.

He also underscored the success of mangrove restoration efforts, with millions of seedlings planted across lagoons and coastal areas to enhance carbon storage through blue carbon ecosystems. Climate action, he added, is progressing alongside biodiversity conservation through initiatives such as the Arabian Oryx Sanctuary and the Daymaniyat Islands Nature Reserve, which contribute to ecosystem resilience and the protection of endangered species.

Beyond environmental protection, Oman is also focusing on awareness and education. In partnership with the Ministry of Education, sustainability and climate concepts are being integrated into school curricula, alongside support for youth-led environmental innovation and green school initiatives.

Looking ahead, Al Balushi said Oman Climate Week 2026 will serve as a major platform for regional and international dialogue on climate priorities, bringing together local and global stakeholders to strengthen cooperation, attract investment in clean energy and promote technology transfer.



ENG KHALID AL BALUSHI

EA is leading the implementation of the National Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Strategy, which outlines sector-specific adaptation priorities and climate response measures

“This helps direct investments towards cleaner technologies and low-carbon economic growth without compromising development objectives,” he said.

Oman has also advanced environmental governance through stronger legislation, digital monitoring tools and improved climate data systems. Among recent initiatives is the launch of the ‘Manakh’ digital platform, designed to support the preparation of climate-related international reports, while providing policymakers with accurate indicators and data-driven insights.

Al Balushi said the Environment Authority has strengthened regulatory frameworks, including the Climate Affairs Management Regulation, which requires industrial facilities to submit emissions reports and integrate carbon reduction measures into environmental licensing requirements.

The Authority also relies on a national emissions monitoring

Oman advances sustainability drive on World Environment Day

NAJAH AL RIYAMI
MUSCAT, JUNE 6

As the world marked World Environment Day on June 5, Oman’s growing focus on environmental sustainability is increasingly shaping the nation’s long-term development agenda, placing conservation, climate resilience and green innovation at the heart of future growth.

Observed globally since its establishment by the United Nations in 1972, World Environment Day has evolved into the world’s largest platform for environmental awareness,

encouraging governments, businesses and communities to take meaningful action to safeguard ecosystems and natural resources.

For Oman, the occasion represents more than a global campaign. It reflects a broader national commitment to balancing economic development with environmental protection, as Oman seeks to preserve its rich natural heritage while building a more sustainable future.

Oman is home to ecosystems of significant ecological and cultural value. Its extensive coastlines support rich marine



The day reflects a broader national commitment to balancing economic development with environmental protection.

biodiversity, while deserts, wadis and mountain habitats sustain species uniquely adapted to some of the region’s most demanding environmental conditions.

Community participation continues to play a growing role in this transition. Volunteers, environmental groups, educational institutions and businesses

across Oman are increasingly involved in beach clean-ups, conservation programmes, tree-planting campaigns and environmental awareness initiatives, reinforcing the idea that sustainability requires collective action.

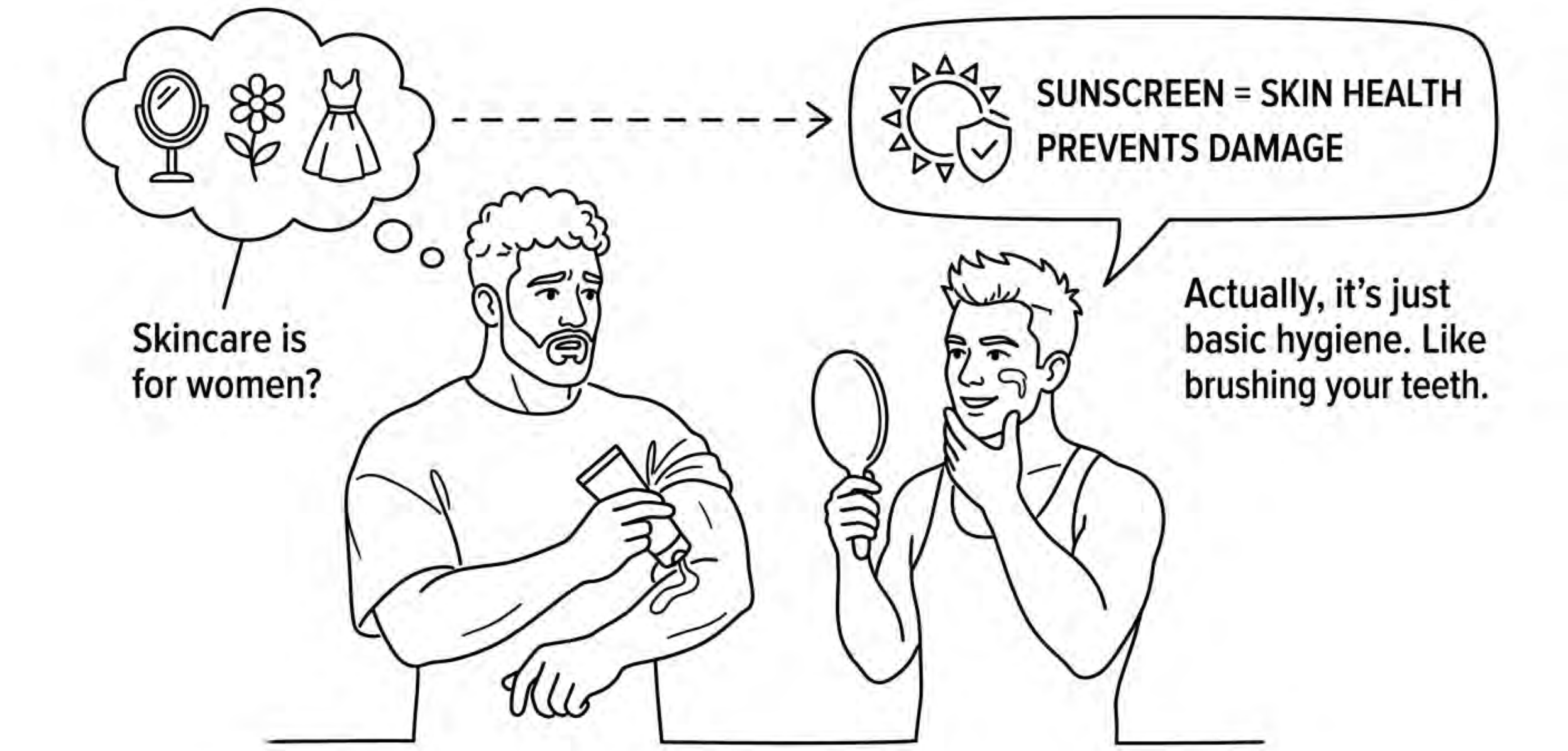
This year’s World Environment Day message, which focuses on strengthening environmental action and resilience, closely aligns with Oman’s evolving sustainability priorities. Researchers and innovators are also exploring new approaches to water management, biodiversity monitoring, renewable energy and ecosystem

restoration, with nature-based solutions emerging as an important tool in environmental challenges.

Despite progress, challenges remain. Rising temperatures, water scarcity and increasing climate pressures continue to present complex realities that require long-term planning and sustained collaboration.

The Day serves as a reminder that environmental progress is not defined by a single campaign, but by everyday decisions, strategic investments and a shared commitment to protecting natural resources for generations to come.

SPOTLIGHT



Sunscreen use among men in Oman is still influenced by cultural perceptions linking skincare to femininity

THE MALE SUNSCREEN DIVIDE

SIHAM AL SAIDI

AS Oman enters another long and intensely hot summer, health experts continue to stress the importance of protecting skin from harmful UV radiation. Yet despite growing awareness around wellness and preventive care, many men still hesitate to use sunscreen regularly. For some, sunscreen is simply a practical health necessity. For others, it remains associated with beauty routines and is still perceived as a product meant primarily for women. This raises an interesting question: is sunscreen a matter of protection, or is its use still shaped by social perceptions of masculinity in the Gulf?

“I never thought much about sunscreen when I was younger,” said 35-year-old engineer Ali al Saidi. “But after experiencing severe sunburn during outdoor work in the desert, I realised it is no different from wearing sunglasses or a hat. It is simply protection.”

Ali is among a growing number of men who have begun incorporating sunscreen into their daily routines, particularly those who spend long hours outdoors. However, many remain unconvinced.

University student Waleed Khalid believes sunscreen is often misunderstood. “Some of my friends think it is unnecessary or only for people concerned about appearance,” he said. “There is still a perception that skincare is not something men should care about.”

That perception, however, may be slowly changing. Social media, fitness culture and rising health awareness are encouraging more young men to pay attention to overall well-being, including skin health.

Dermatologist Dr Fatma al Alawi stresses that the issue should be viewed purely through a medical lens. “The sun affects everyone regardless of gender,” she explained. “Long-term exposure can lead to premature aging, pigmentation and other skin conditions. Sunscreen is a preventive health measure, not a beauty statement.”

For men whose jobs require prolonged outdoor exposure, the concern is even more significant. Khalid Salim, who works in construction, admits he rarely used sunscreen in the past. “We usually relied on hats and shade,

“Long-term exposure can lead to premature aging, pigmentation and other skin conditions. Sunscreen is a preventive health measure, not a beauty statement

DR FATMA AL ALAWI
Dermatologist

when possible,” he said. “Now I understand that sunscreen provides additional protection, especially during peak sunlight hours.”

Others remain unconvinced. Retired fisherman Mohammed al Qutaiti laughed when asked about sunscreen. “I spent decades under the sun without it,” he said. “For my generation, it was never something we thought about, and I don’t think men should use creams like these.”

A 32-year-old teacher, Ahmed al Hosni, expressed similar hesitation. “It is impossible for me to use such creams. In fact, it is seen as a shame for men, especially in this hot weather. We and our fathers and grandfathers have always coped with these harsh rays without such products.”

His view reflects a mindset still present among older generations, where endurance and resilience are often valued over preventive health habits.

As temperatures continue to rise and awareness campaigns expand, attitudes towards sunscreen appear to be gradually evolving. What was once dismissed as a cosmetic product is increasingly being recognised as a basic health essential.

The debate ultimately goes beyond skincare. It reflects shifting perceptions of masculinity itself: is taking care of one’s health a sign of weakness, or simply a mark of responsibility?

Jala Spa & Wellness - An Oasis of Vitality on the Green Mountain



PERCHED 2,000 metres above sea level on Oman's iconic Green Mountain, Jala Spa & Wellness at Hotel Indigo Jabal Akhdar Resort & Spa offering a truly unique sanctuary for rejuvenation inspired by ancient Omani traditions and contemporary techniques.

Jala Spa & Wellness is committed to providing a luxurious and sustainable experience. All products and services are bespoke, vegan, organic, and free from harmful chemicals. Indulge in the revitalising benefits of brands like Ila (offering detoxifying and revitalizing organic oils), Mauli Ritual (integrating Ayurvedic principles for holistic wellness), Margaret Dabbs London (blending medical science and beauty for effective foot, hand, and leg care, Camellia's Tea House (offering handmade tea blends from sustainable gardens), and VitaJuwel (incorporating crystal healing into holistic practices).

Nestled amidst the breathtaking peaks and canyons, Jala Spa & Wellness is a place where time slows down and the stresses of everyday life melt away. The spa's design draws inspiration from the natural beauty of the surroundings, creating a tranquil and inviting atmosphere where guests can reconnect with themselves under the expert guidance of Spa & Wellness Director, Ary Kusumaningrum and a team of internationally acclaimed therapists.

The spa features ten treatment rooms, including two luxurious couples' suites, Vichy Shower Rooms offering a unique hydrotherapy experience with multiple showerheads and warm water, a Royal Hammam, and a salon.

Find tranquillity and balance with sound healing and meditation sessions in the Wellness Studio. The spa also features an indoor vitality pool, sauna, jacuzzi, cold plunge pool, steam room, and an Aquamoon experience shower, a multi-sensory shower system that combines water, light, and fragrance to create a truly immersive and therapeutic experience.

As part of **Hotel Indigo Jabal Akhdar Resort & Spa**, Jala Spa & Wellness contributes to a landmark achievement for **IHG Hotels & Resorts**, marking the debut of the region's first **Hotel Indigo resort**.

Offering a transformative journey of relaxation, healing, and renewal, Jala Spa & Wellness invites guests to discover an oasis of vitality amid Oman's spectacular Green Mountain. For reservations: reservations.indigojabalakhdar@ihg.com

SHORT TAKES



The meeting focused on smart metres, water sector projects, food security projects.

APSR MEETING REVIEWS
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
IN AL SHARQIYAH NORTH

IBRA: The Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR) held a meeting in the Wilayat of Ibra to discuss prominent plans and projects in the sectors of energy, water and sanitation in Al Sharqiyah North Governorate.

The meeting focused on the project of smart metres, water sector projects, food security projects, the system of water transmission, and projects to interconnect water transmission systems across the governorate's wilayats and similar connectivity between the governorate and other governorates in the Sultanate of Oman.

Nama Electricity Supply Company outlined its key services in Al Sharqiyah North Governorate. It pointed out that the number of registered accounts in the governorate stood at 96,420. The company also discussed electricity tariffs, including residential, non-residential, agricultural and the National Support Project tariff.

The company presented electricity bill data and quoted readings that illustrate electricity consumption across all accounts. It also showcased its mobile-phone-linked services and other digital applications that give customers access to all services via Nama Electricity Supply Company's system. — ONA

Oman ranks 4th globally in Quality-of-Life Index

LIJU CHERIAN
MUSCAT, JUNE 6

OMAN HAS been ranked fourth globally in the 2026 Quality of Life Index, marking a significant recognition of its living standards, safety, healthcare systems and overall social stability, and placing it ahead of several advanced European economies.

According to data compiled by Numbeo and visualised by Visual Capitalist, Oman achieved a Quality-of-Life Index score of 207.6, ranking just behind the Netherlands (213.6), Denmark, and Luxembourg. Switzerland follows in fifth place, while Finland, Austria, Germany, Iceland and Norway complete the top ten.

The rankings position Oman ahead of a number of highly developed countries, including Spain, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Belgium, Portugal, Ireland, Japan and others in the top 30. The index evaluates countries based on key parameters such as purchasing power, cost of living, safety, healthcare quality, pollution levels, housing affordability,



Oman's ranking reflects its policy focus on sustainable growth and citizen wellbeing.

Oman has secured the 4th position in the 2026 Quality of Life Index, ahead of several major European economies, reflecting strong performance in safety, healthcare, income stability, and living standards under Oman Vision 2040

traffic commute time, and climate conditions.

Analysts note that Oman's strong performance reflects sustained improvements in public safety, healthcare access, infrastructure development, and economic diversification policies under Oman Vision 2040.

The country's stability, relatively low crime rates, and expanding healthcare and transport networks have contributed to its high placement in global livability rankings.

Across OECD countries, quality of life indicators has generally improved over the past decade, supported by higher disposable

incomes, stronger employment rates, and expanded social security systems.

However, Oman's inclusion in the global top five is notable as it places Oman alongside some of the world's most established welfare economies in Europe.

In 2025, Oman maintained steady progress in livability benchmarks, driven by continued investment in infrastructure, tourism, logistics, renewable energy, and social development initiatives. Improvements in healthcare services, digital governance, and urban planning also contributed to enhanced living conditions across the country.

The Numbeo index, which relies on user-reported data, aggregates eight core factors—purchasing power, pollution, housing affordability, cost of living, safety, healthcare quality, commute times, and climate comfort – to produce an overall quality-of-life score, with higher values indicating better conditions.

The 2026 rankings reaffirm the country's positioning as one of the most livable destinations globally, with performance comparable to leading European nations and ahead of several larger developed economies.



CAMEL RACING FESTIVAL ENDS IN SINAW

SINAW: Al Abyad 14th Annual Camel Racing Festival concluded in the Wilayat of Sinaw, Al Sharqiyah North Governorate. The event saw a large turnout of camel owners from different parts of the Sultanate of Oman. The closing ceremony was held under the auspices of Tahir bin Mabkhout al Junaibi, Governor of Al Dhahirah, who felicitated the top winners and presented them with prizes. — **ONA**



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Tender Number	Description of Tender	Last Date to Collect the Tender	Tender Return Date
PRE/25/162	Maintenance of Road Gantry Sign in Muscat Governorate (Re-Call 1)	11/06/2026	21/06/2026
PRE/26/083	Structural Investigation Services of Sarooj Pedestrian Bridge (Re-Call 1)	11/06/2026	21/06/2026
PRE/26/084	Maintenance of Arches Fountain at Qurum	11/06/2026	21/06/2026
PRE/26/085	Structural Investigation Services of Residential Buildings at Qurayat	23/06/2026	14/07/2026
PRE/26/086	Maintenance Works of Toilets at A' Seeb Beach	23/06/2026	14/07/2026
PRE/26/087	Energy Storage Unit Maintenance Services	23/06/2026	14/07/2026
PRE/26/088	Annual Maintenance Services of MM Hardware & Software Network	23/06/2026	14/07/2026
PRE/26/089	Consultancy Services for the Implementation of the National Data Governance Framework	23/06/2026	14/07/2026
PRE/26/090	Consultancy Services to Evaluate Rental Prices For Various Types of Units & Uses	23/06/2026	14/07/2026
PRE/26/091	Removal, Supply & Laying of Road Marking at Muscat Governorate - Unit Rate	23/06/2026	14/07/2026
PRS/26/023	Supply of Waste Collection Bags	23/06/2026	14/07/2026
PRS/26/024	Supply of Ready Mix Concrete for MM - Unit Rate	23/06/2026	14/07/2026
PRS/26/025	Supply of Interlock & Kerbstone for MM - Unit Rate	23/06/2026	14/07/2026
PRS/26/026	Supply of Road Traffic Signboards - Unit Rate	23/06/2026	14/07/2026
PRS/26/027	Supply of Steel Reinforcement Bars for MM - Unit Rate	23/06/2026	14/07/2026

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For any enquires:
Tel: +968 24822222
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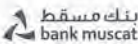
Opens: Thursday, June 04th, 2026
Closes: Wednesday, June 10th, 2026
Issue date: Monday, June 15th, 2026

**The Minimum
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For further details, contact the issue managers:



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صحر
Sohar



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US STRIKES SITES AFTER IRAN LAUNCHES DRONES

IRAN ATTACKS TARGET BAHRAIN, KUWAIT <i>Iran launched fresh aerial attacks on Bahrain and Kuwait early on Saturday, after the United States said it had struck the Iranian republic.</i>	IRAN CONDEMNS ‘FLAGRANT CEASEFIRE VIOLATION’ <i>Iran condemned a night-time US attack on coastal radar installations in the Gulf, calling it a “flagrant” violation of the ceasefire in place since April.</i>	IRAN HAS ‘22 PER CENT’ OF MISSILES LEFT <i>Iran still has “21, 22 per cent” of its missiles left, US President Donald Trump said, after Tehran fired dozens during a week marked by repeated violations.</i>	ISRAELI STRIKE KILLS THREE LEBANESE SOLDIERS <i>An Israeli strike on a vehicle in south Lebanon killed three soldiers, Beirut’s military said on Saturday, days after the two countries announced a conditional truce.</i>	FROZEN FUNDS KEY TO PROGRESS IN US TALKS <i>The release of frozen Iranian funds has become a key issue in negotiations between Tehran and Washington aimed at ending their war, a senior Iranian official said.</i>
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Iranians stand next to a symbol of a Kheibar missile as they take part during a rally in support of the country's supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei, in Tehran. — AFP

US FORCES struck Iranian coastal radar sites on Saturday after shooting down drones launched by Iran toward the Strait of Hormuz, the US military said, in the latest escalation complicating efforts to end the war between the two countries. The US military believes the four Iranian drones were targeting regional maritime traffic, a US official said. US Central Command said on X that the US then struck Iran's surveillance sites in Goruk and Qeshm Island, which are both on the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran's foreign ministry said the US action broke an April 8 ceasefire, adding that repeated such violations showed Washington had no intention of reducing tensions. It warned that the United States would bear responsibility for the consequences of its “illegal actions” and any further escalation. Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps said it had attacked US bases in Kuwait and Bahrain in retaliation for US strikes and fired at four tankers trying to cross the strait without its permission.

Kuwait's army said on Saturday it engaged seven ballistic missiles that entered the country's airspace early in the morning and passed over several residential areas, resulting in the fall of some debris. The army added that the

The US military believes the four Iranian drones were targeting regional maritime traffic. The US then struck Iran's surveillance sites in Goruk and Qeshm Island, which are both on the Strait of Hormuz. Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps said it had attacked US bases in Kuwait and Bahrain in retaliation for US strikes and fired at four tankers trying to cross the strait without its permission.

Iranian attack caused material damage but no casualties. In Bahrain sirens sounded and residents were urged to seek shelter. Kuwait and Bahrain condemned the strikes. Kuwait's foreign ministry described the Iranian attacks, including the latest one on Saturday, as “blatant” aggression that threatened citizens, residents, and regional security, a ministry statement said.

Iran later said it had hit US bases in both countries with ballistic missiles but the US military said six missiles were intercepted and a seventh did not reach its target. The US and Iran have been engaged in largely indirect negotiations to secure an interim deal to halt the three-month-old war that would leave issues including Iran's nuclear programme to further negotiations. But amid periodic skirmishes a deal has remained elusive.

Tehran wants access to billions of dollars in oil revenue, waivers on sanctions on crude exports, the lifting of a US blockade on its ports and leverage over the strait. Iran has effectively blocked the waterway, where about a fifth of the world's oil transited before the war. Iranian state media reported that Mohsin Naqvi, the interior minister of Pakistan, which has been mediating an end to the conflict, was on his way to Tehran on Saturday. A Pakistani source said Naqvi

would carry a message from Pakistan to the Iranian Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei.

US President Donald Trump is facing mounting domestic political pressure due to rising gas prices to bring the unpopular war to an end. He told NBC that while most of Iran's drone and missile manufacturing facilities had been destroyed, the Iranians still have access to about a fifth of their missiles. “They have some missiles, they have some drones. I would say percentage wise, maybe 21%-22% of their missiles. It's a lot of missiles, but it's not what it was when we first attacked,” Trump told NBC News' “Meet the Press” programme, according to excerpts released by the network on Friday. When asked why Iran's leaders were not more inclined to strike a deal, if they are as desperate as he has portrayed them, Trump said: “Because they are strong. They're proud. There are things they're going to have to do, they've got no choice, and it takes a little while.”

After the US and Israel launched the war against Iran on February 28, Tehran attacked Gulf states hosting US bases and largely stopped shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. The conflict has driven up oil prices and disrupted supply chains for other products. The UN World

Food Programme said on Friday that it was pushing millions of people closer to hunger due to rising fuel and transport costs. Mohsen Rezaei, an adviser to Iran's supreme leader, told CNN on Friday that a peace deal hinged on the Trump administration unfreezing \$24 billion in Iranian assets, and warned that the US would “enter into a dark corridor” if it resumed attacks.

In a parallel conflict in Lebanon, two Lebanese army officers and a soldier were killed in an Israeli strike on a military vehicle in south Lebanon, the Lebanese army said, while the Israeli military said it was investigating the incident.

The Israeli military said it struck the vehicle after identifying what it described as a threat to its forces and receiving indications that Hezbollah was preparing to fire on Israeli troops from the area. Hezbollah called the incident part of Israel's continued aggression against Lebanon.

Iran has made a ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah a condition for any peace deal with Washington. Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem this week rejected a US-brokered pact between Israel and the Lebanese government to halt the fighting in Lebanon. The deal did not provide for an Israeli withdrawal and Hezbollah had not been party to the negotiations. — Reuters

PEACECALL



Pope leaves in his popemobile after a welcome ceremony at the Royal Palace in Madrid. — AFP

POPE URGES GLOBAL LEADERS TO TEMPER DIVISIONS

MADRID: Pope Leo urged global leaders to avoid dividing their electorates with “sterile simplifications” to gain popularity and called on them to listen to the world's cries for peace, in a forceful speech opening a week-long tour of Spain. Leo, who has angered US President Donald Trump by criticising his anti-immigration policies and the Iran war, will meet homeless people in Madrid and migrants in the Canary Islands during a visit he has said he hopes will set an example to the world about respecting “every human being.”

“Today, the temptation to gain popularity by fanning the flames of polarisation seems to have grown rather than diminished, and human dignity continues to be violated,” Leo said in a speech before King Felipe VI at the Royal Palace in Madrid. “I invite everyone to set aside the divisive and polarising narratives of your societal reality and history, so as to overcome sterile simplifications through the fruitful appreciation of complexity,” he added.

Technology was partly to blame for creating an environment which magnifies prejudices and weakens critical thinking, Leo said. The world was crying “from its depths for peace,” he said. He drew on Spain's history as an example of peaceful co-habitation between religions and cultures, making reference to how Christians, Muslims and Jews cooperated during medieval times to enhance human knowledge by translating Arabic texts into Latin, Spanish and Hebrew at the School of Translators in Toledo.

“Your own history suggests that a culture of encounter, not confrontation, is what fosters stability and prosperity. In reality, the message of peace, which at present unfortunately strikes some as naïve and others as confrontational, is welcomed by those who do not shut themselves off in preconceived ideologies, but are rather open to the truth,” he said.

Thousands lined the streets of central Madrid, some waving Vatican and Spanish flags under clear spring skies, as Leo toured in an open-air popemobile. Huge gatherings are expected in the coming days for the first visit to Spain by a pope since 2011.

Leo, who has adopted a more assertive tone against the direction of global leadership in recent months, is scheduled to give more than 20 speeches during his first trip to a European Union country outside Italy and will be the first pope to address the Spanish parliament.

Leo spent decades as a missionary and bishop in Peru before becoming pope last May, and will speak Spanish throughout most of the trip. But when he meets migrants in Tenerife, part of the Spanish Canary Islands archipelago off the west coast of Africa, he expects to speak French, as many have come from Francophone Africa.

In sharp contrast to many leading Western powers, not least Trump's United States, Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's government has opened a mass amnesty programme, allowing an estimated 500,000 immigrants to apply for legal status. — Reuters

Iran denounces ‘political pressure’ from nuclear watchdog

Iran on Saturday denounced as a “tool of political pressure” a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) expressing concern over its lack of access to Iranian nuclear sites. Tehran was engaged in discussions with Washington about its nuclear programme when the United States and Israel attacked it on February 28, sparking war in the region. Israel had previously struck Iran in June 2025, also while Washington

and Tehran were engaged in nuclear negotiations, with Washington joining with later strikes before a ceasefire was declared. During both conflicts, Iranian nuclear sites were bombed repeatedly.

“If the agency wants to be part of a diplomatic solution, it must refrain from turning a technical report into a tool of political pressure,” Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi wrote on X. In a confidential report on

Thursday, the IAEA stated that the lack of access to nuclear sites in Iran constitutes a “proliferation concern”.

“While the agency acknowledged that the military attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities and sites have created an unprecedented situation, it is critical for the agency to conduct verification activities in Iran without delay,” the IAEA said in the report.

The IAEA has never condemned

the Israeli-American strikes on Iranian nuclear sites.

Gharibabadi on Saturday said the Israeli-American strikes are “not only a violation of Iran's sovereignty”, but also “a direct blow to nuclear safety”.

“One cannot bomb safeguarded facilities, destroy the access and safety necessary for inspections, and then use the consequences of that very attack as a grievance against Iran,” he argued. — AFP

Israel launches more south Lebanon strikes

BEIRUT: An Israeli strike on a vehicle in southern Lebanon killed three soldiers, Beirut's military said on Saturday, days after the countries agreed a conditional truce during talks in the United States. Israel has launched an operation into Lebanon to root out Hezbollah, which dragged Lebanon into the wider Middle East war by launching missiles on behalf of its sponsor. Lebanon has vowed that it will disarm Hezbollah over time, but has also denounced Israel's invasion, accusing it of employing scorched earth tactics to drive civilians out of southern towns and villages.

In the latest incident, the Lebanese army said, two officers and a soldier were killed in a strike on a military vehicle on the road between Khardali and Nabatieh. The Israeli military said the vehicle targeted was “moving suspiciously” in “an active combat zone” in an area it had ordered evacuated ahead of operations. But it insisted it “operates against the Hezbollah organisation, not against the Lebanese army” and added that it was “reviewing the incident”. Hezbollah dubbed the attack a “heinous crime” and accused the Lebanese government of exposing its own country to bloodshed through its “complete surrender to the enemy's demands in Washington”.

A ceasefire that was supposed to end the fighting between Israel and Hezbollah took effect on April 17, but has never been fully respected.

Hezbollah and Israel have frequently exchanged accusations of truce violations, with each side justifying its own attacks by citing the alleged violations committed by the other side. A further conditional

The Lebanese army said, two officers and a soldier were killed in a strike on a military vehicle on the road between Khardali and Nabatieh. The Israeli military said the vehicle targeted was “moving suspiciously” in “an active combat zone” in an area it had ordered evacuated ahead of operations.



People inspect damage following Israeli bombardment on a building in the village of Saksakiyeh in southern Lebanon. — AFP

truce was announced by Lebanese and Israeli envoys this week in Washington.

It would require Hezbollah to stop firing, withdraw from near the Israeli border and would see Lebanon's army deploy to new “pilot zones” in the area, where it will exercise exclusive control. But Hezbollah has rejected the agreement, demanding a full Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory.

The Lebanese army said on Saturday that “the continuation of the deliberate and repeated brutal Israeli aggression... is aimed at thwarting all efforts to reach a solution”. Lebanese President Joseph Aoun also denounced the latest attack, calling it a “flagrant violation of Lebanese sovereignty... despite Lebanon's efforts in the Washington negotiations to put an end to the

continued Israeli aggression that goes unchecked”.

On Saturday, Israel renewed evacuation orders for five villages in Lebanon's south and east, telling residents to move north of the Zaharani River.

Its military conducted several strikes across south Lebanon, according to Lebanese state media. Hezbollah meanwhile said it had targeted Israeli troops. Lebanon was drawn into the wider Middle East war when Hezbollah attacked Israel on March 2 to avenge the February 28 US-Israeli killing of Iran's supreme leader.

Israel launched an extensive campaign of air strikes and a ground invasion that have killed more than 3,500 people. Iran insists Lebanon be included in any agreement with the US to end their wider war. — AFP



PALESTINIAN INFANT KILLED BY ISRAELI FIRE IN WEST BANK

RAMALLAH: The Palestinian health ministry said Israeli gunfire killed an infant and wounded his parents in the occupied West Bank. Sam Fahd Abou Haikal, aged seven months, died and his parents were lightly injured “after the occupation forces opened fire on them on Friday evening” in the south of the city of Hebron, the ministry said.

Dr Tareq Barbarawi, the director of a Hebron hospital, had earlier said the child had been taken into care

with “serious” injuries. According to Palestinian news agency Wafa, the Israeli army fired towards the family's car.

Israeli soldiers or settlers have killed at least 1,080 Palestinians since then, including both militants and civilians, according to a tally based on Palestinian health ministry data. Official Israeli figures show that at least 46 Israelis, both civilians and soldiers, have been killed in Palestinian attacks. — AFP

FOSTERING DIALOGUE

Pakistani minister travelling to Iran for talks



Pakistan's interior minister is travelling to Tehran as part of Islamabad's ongoing diplomatic efforts to foster dialogue between Iran and the United States amid fresh attacks, officials said. “Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi is travelling to Tehran today for a series of high-level meetings with Iranian officials,” security and diplomatic sources said. The interior minister has been shuttling between Tehran and Islamabad since the first round of direct talks between Iran and the US. — dpa

DENIED ENTRANCE

Iran slams US over some visa refusals



Iran slammed the US over what it called “discriminatory treatment” in not granting visas for some members of the Iranian delegation. “Why do you not say that visas were denied to a large portion of the managerial and executive staff, technical advisers and others who are an integral part of any national football team?” the Iranian embassy in Türkiye said, referring to an earlier announcement by US envoy Tom Barrack that visas had been granted. — AFP

INTENDED VIOLENCE

2 convicted over stabbing of Iranian reporter



Two Romanians were convicted over the stabbing of an Iranian journalist outside his home in London in a 2024 attack. Nandito Badea, 21, and George Stana, 25, were found guilty of wounding with intent over the stabbing of Pouria Zeraati, a news presenter for Persian-language outlet Iran International. The attack was “designed to silence a journalist through intimidation and violence”, the British prosecution service's anti-terrorism chief Frank Ferguson said. — AFP

OPINION

The ‘White Bear’ effect: Why trying not to think fails



DR HAMED
AL SINAWI

The writer is a senior consultant psychiatrist at SQU Hospital

WHILE PREPARING for a workshop on how to deal with negative thoughts, I came across a very interesting psychological experiment conducted by an American researcher Daniel Wenger. In this experiment, participants were instructed not to think about a white bear and to ring a bell whenever the thought appeared. The result was striking; despite their best efforts, the bell kept ringing. The more they tried to suppress the thought, the more frequently it returned.

Many of us have experienced this phenomenon in everyday life. A student tells himself not to think about failing an exam, only to become increasingly preoccupied with the possibility. Someone struggling with insomnia lies awake repeating, “I must fall asleep,” only to become more alert.

A person trying to overcome anxiety may constantly remind themselves not to worry, inadvertently keeping their worries alive.

Why does this happen?

According to Wenger’s theory, when we attempt to suppress a thought, part of the mind works to push it away while another part continuously monitors whether the thought is still present. Ironically, this

monitoring process keeps the unwanted thought active. The mind becomes trapped in a paradox: in order to avoid thinking about something, it must keep checking whether it is thinking about it.

This insight has important implications for mental health. For many years, techniques such as ‘thought stopping’ were commonly taught to individuals struggling with anxiety or intrusive thoughts. The advice was straightforward: when a disturbing thought arises, mentally shout ‘Stop!’ and force it out of consciousness.

While this approach may provide temporary relief for some people, research suggests that it can backfire, especially when dealing with persistent worries, obsessions, or distressing memories. The harder we fight certain thoughts, the stronger they may become. Modern psychological therapies have increasingly moved away from battling thoughts and towards changing our relationship with them.

Approaches such as mindfulness, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and cognitive behavioural therapy encourage individuals to observe thoughts rather than suppress them.

So, instead of saying “I must not think

Modern psychological therapies have increasingly moved away from battling thoughts and towards changing our relationship with them

about this,” one learns to say, “I notice that I am having this thought.”

This may sound like a subtle distinction, but it can make a profound difference. A thought is no longer treated as an enemy that must be defeated. It becomes an event in the mind — something that can be acknowledged without being obeyed.

The white bear experiment tells us that mental health is not about controlling every thought that enters our minds. Human beings generate thousands of thoughts every day; many of them are irrational, repetitive, or unwanted.

The goal is not to eliminate them but to prevent them from dominating our lives.

A useful metaphor is that of a beach ball floating in the sea. If you try to push it underwater, it requires constant effort, and eventually it bursts back to the surface with surprising force. Thoughts often behave in the same way.

So, when an unwanted thought appears, resist the temptation to wrestle with it. Instead, acknowledge it, let it be, and gently return your attention to what matters.

After all, the surest way to think about a white bear may be to spend all your energy trying not to.

AI REGULATION
‘INADEQUATE,’
SAYS CANTERBURY
ARCHBISHOP

ABBIE LLEWELYN AND
RHIANNON JAMES

Current regulation for artificial intelligence is ‘wholly inadequate’ to prevent harm, the archbishop of Canterbury told the British Parliament. Sarah Mullally warned that chatbots are allowing role plays of child abuse, which she said risks normalising and legitimising it. Speaking at the start of an AI debate in the upper chamber, the House of Lords, the topic of which was chosen by the archbishop herself, Mullally called for a ‘pro-human framework’ for AI.

She acknowledged the benefits of AI, such as advances in science, medicine and nursing. As a former nurse, the archbishop said these are areas where ‘the value for human dignity is visible in some of the most tangible, practical ways’.

However, she added, “There are sadly other uses of AI today which, rather than enhancing human dignity, are providing new ways of degrading it or violating it.

“A recent report from Durham University presented evidence that chatbots are now facilitating violence against women and girls.

“These harms are not simply the result of user misuse - AI platforms’ design choices, policies and governance failures are encouraging and enabling them, and existing regulation is wholly inadequate to prevent them.” She said, “We need to ensure that AI is being designed, built, regulated and used to serve our glorious humanity and not to diminish it.”

The debate comes after Pope Leo XIV used his first encyclical letter, Magnifica Humanitas, to talk about the topic of AI. Both Christian leaders emphasised the need for AI to serve humanity and the public good. Mullally said: “We must put people ahead of our profit, convenience or technology progress at all costs, to ensure that we harness AI to serve humanity, to be an extraordinary tool in creation of a more just, abundant and hope-filled world.”

Long-time online safety campaigner Baroness Kidron reiterated the need to regulate AI, and asked why the Government has “repeatedly rejected measures designed to secure democratic oversight, accountability and sovereignty”.

The independent cross-bench peer said: “Every technology reflects decisions about who benefits, who bears the risks, and who gets to decide.

“And every other industry, from nuclear power to the sewer system, is regulated to ensure that private gain is balanced against the public good.

— dpa

The growing harm of
social media on youth

AS A FATHER, I have watched social media hurt my own daughters. I have seen the upset, the fear and the sleepless nights that can follow a cruel post or message.

Cyberbullying does not stay online. It enters the home, sits at the table and disrupts a family’s peace. That is why this issue must not be brushed aside as harmless teenage behaviour.

For many adolescents, social media is part of daily life. For some, it seems impossible to imagine life without it. Yet the risks are real.

Young people face privacy problems, online abuse, pressure to compare themselves with others, harm to schoolwork and damage to mental health.

Studies have linked heavy smartphone and social media use among teenagers with distress, self-harm and suicidal thoughts, while late-night screen use can also damage sleep, thinking, learning and mood.

Social media can be useful. It can help people stay in touch, offer support and share advice and health information. It can also give shy or isolated teenagers a voice. But the same tool that can help a young person can also destroy them if it is used badly or without limits.

The hard truth is that many children are growing up with phones glued to their hands and pressure in their heads. They are expected to be always available, always responsive and always cheerful.

That is a heavy burden for someone whose identity is still forming. Teenagers are especially vulnerable to social comparison, rumours, exclusion and public humiliation. Cyberbullying can be more relentless than face-to-face bullying because it follows them home and does not stop when the school day ends.

Many young people stay up too late scrolling, messaging and



KARIM
EASTERBROOK

The writer is a Former Cambridge School Principal and Author



checking notifications. The result is less sleep, poorer concentration, lower school performance and weaker emotional control.

A tired child is easier to upset, harder to teach and less able to cope with daily pressure. The damage is emotional, practical, social and academic.

Parents cannot pretend this is happening somewhere else. I learned that the hard way. A child being bullied online may not speak up at once. Shame, fear and the wish to avoid more trouble often keep them quiet.

That is why parents, teachers and health workers need to ask direct questions and listen without judgement. A teenager will not open up if the first reaction is anger, dismissal, or punishment. The right approach is open, calm and practical. Families need to talk about what is being posted, who is sending messages, what time phones are being used and what kind of content is being watched.

Parents should know the signs of distress: withdrawal, anger, tears,

poor sleep, loss of interest and sudden fear of checking a device.

Schools, doctors and community leaders must stop treating online harm as less serious than harm in the playground. Cyberbullying may be hidden, but it is often more harmful. Online hate and harmful content can deepen anxiety and depression and, in some cases, push vulnerable teenagers towards self-harm.

What I want for my daughters, and for every child, is not a life cut off from technology. I want a life where technology serves the child, not the other way round. That means boundaries, honest conversation and adults who pay attention.

If we act with care and firmness, we can protect children from unnecessary harm while still letting them benefit from the good that technology can offer.

This is not just about phones. It is about the well-being of our children and the kind of society we want to build. One clear response is to ban any irresponsible social media platform that allows cyberbullying in any form.

When every day on top of the ground is good



RAY PETERSEN

The writer is a media consultant

I OFTEN wish I could be more like many others, like those who can put aside loss more easily than I. Or maybe it just looks that way, and they do indeed feel the loss, but manage not to show it.

The American Psychological Association says that the resilience many display around loss or bereavement is multifaceted, based on their state of mind. Are they under pressure through finances, relationships, or work? Do they have compassionate support systems? Or do they consciously manage stress?

I’m fairly certain that I would approach those positively, yet I do still have that little time of reflection that always turns somewhat maudlin, and I finish up red-eyed, if not weepy, and like the Mike Rutherford song, ‘The Living Years,’ says, “I wasn’t there that morning, when my father passed away. I didn’t get to tell him all the things I had to say.”

I don’t know if I would, or could, have said much, but I see it as a lost opportunity.

In fact, I was en route back home to see Dad, when he called me... and the only part of the conversation I can remember is him saying... “I love you Ray.”

Because although I know he did... he had

never said so. It was then, no surprise, when, still travelling, I got ‘the call’ from my sister Sue, who didn’t even need to tell me the bad news.

Today, June 7, is the anniversary of losing my father, seven years ago now. My oh my... how the time has flown. He was a giant of a man physically, 6’ 2” in his prime, strong and athletic, he had excelled during his youth at tennis, basketball, rugby and darts. His later-life sporting passion, though, was horse racing, and he was a modestly successful horse owner and trainer.

Dad was a long way from perfect, and I often thought ill of him as a kid, especially when he gave me a slap around the ear.

However, I was to learn that he was preparing us for what was still a pretty harsh world, where little was given, where to take was unforgivable, and you had to know the do’s and don’ts of community and society, who to respect, who to ignore, and the danger of making bad decisions.

As the song goes, “Every generation blames the one before, and all of their frustrations come beating at your door. I know that I’m a prisoner to all my father held so dear. I know

My father taught me the do’s and don’ts of community and society, who to respect and who to ignore, and the consequences of making poor decisions

that I’m a hostage, to all his hopes and fears. I just wish I could have told him in the living years.”

I wish I had been able to say that it has helped me, being a prisoner to the things he valued, and a hostage to what worried him, I just wish I could have told him... but men rarely do feelings... and even more rarely... do we share them.

Our minds are “filled with imperfect thoughts, stilted conversations, we talk different languages,” we didn’t dislike or lack tolerance for each other, we just saw life differently. Not a lot differently, I might add, as we had a lot in common, and my big takeaway from that is that if we couldn’t bridge that gap to share feelings, hopes and fears, how on earth are today’s youth ever going to?

Dad, as much as he would have liked to have had more, lived life on his own terms, with the irony of homespun philosophies that, ironically, live on in me, such as... “Every day on top of the ground is a good one,” and while I miss him dearly, I’ll take comfort in knowing he had 89 years of ‘good ones.’

STRANDED INDIAN CREW CRY ‘NO HOPE’ OFF TÜRKIYE

FULYA OZERKAN

Four Indian sailors have been stranded for months on an abandoned container ship off Istanbul, unable to leave under maritime rules requiring the vessel to remain manned, inspectors said.

In a message sent, the stranded crew members said they were losing hope after 10 months trapped on board the Mongolia-flagged AZRA C that has been moored in the Sea of Marmara since August 2025.

The ship’s purported owners were arrested in January in connection with a massive international drugs bust, leaving its fate and those on board in limbo.

“Every day we are losing hope and facing increasing mental pressure and health problems,” one Indian crew member said through an intermediary, asking not to be named.

“We are searching for new ways to overcome this situation... We have no words to describe (it),” he said.

The case highlights a growing problem of vessel abandonments, which the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) says has become a systemic problem in the maritime industry.

The ITF’s Türkiye representative, Selahattin Polat, has demanded the crew be disembarked “as soon as possible”, on safety grounds.

“The ship is on the navigation route of other vessels and poses a serious risk in terms of maritime and vessel safety,” Polat said.

The Istanbul-based ITF inspector, who has been handling this case and helping the crew, said they were in a very difficult position.

“The ship’s owner is under arrest and there’s nobody to talk with,” said Polat, who also represents the Marine Employees’ Solidarity Association (DAD-DER).

The local shipping agents, who provide essential services to a vessel, had stopped providing supplies as they had not been paid. “Currently, no one is taking care of the ship. It’s completely abandoned,” Polat said.

Under international maritime law, a ship must have sufficient crew members on board at all times to handle any emergencies - whether the vessel is in port or at anchor. This means the four sailors, who haven’t been paid for months, cannot leave until a new crew arrives.

“There is a shortage of fuel and provisions on board,” Polat said, adding: “Legal procedures have been initiated to enable them to leave.”

When the vessel arrived in August, it needed repairs and its purported owners, Ahmed al Masri and Semra al Masri, were handling matters with the local shipping agent, an industry source said.

But then they disappeared. “We later learned they had been arrested,” the source explained.

In mid-January, Istanbul prosecutors named the pair as being among 12 people arrested by Turkish police for alleged “drug trafficking” and “money laundering”, Anadolu state news agency reported.

Prosecutors said the raids were directly linked to Spain’s seizure of 10 tonnes of cocaine from a ship called the “United S” off the Canary Islands a week earlier.

Key among the detainees was a suspect called Cetin Goren, whom Turkish media reports also linked to the AZRA C. — **AFP**

Busy with Iran, US has little energy for Kyiv

US SECRETARY OF STATE Marco Rubio faced four different congressional panels this week to discuss Washington’s role in various global conflicts, but the war in Ukraine barely came up.

With the Trump administration consumed by the crisis in Iran, Ukraine has largely dropped off the radar, despite increasingly deadly attacks from Russia.

Speaking in Kyiv a day after 23 people were killed across Ukraine in the latest massive Russian aerial assault, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Wednesday lamented dwindling US attention.

“Today we are not in focus,” Zelensky said alongside visiting Nato chief Mark Rutte. “Iran is the number one issue for the United States of America, and then comes the issue of Ukraine. Unfortunately, we are in the queue of these wars.”

Russian President Vladimir Putin offered the same observation, telling foreign journalists in Saint Petersburg: “We can all see and understand that the US administration is being forced to shift its attention and deal with this issue above all others.”

Trump ran for president on a promise to quickly end the war in Ukraine and invested months in shuttle diplomacy, putting pressure on Kyiv to make concessions and hosting Putin to try to nudge him towards a peace deal.

But the effort has produced only several short-lived ceasefires and prisoner exchanges, with Moscow and Kyiv remaining far apart on the issues of territory, security guarantees and sanctions relief.

When pressed to address the Ukraine conflict during about 10 hours of congressional testimony, Rubio conceded US-led negotiations between Moscow and Kyiv had reached a stalemate.

“Unfortunately... neither side has been willing to make concessions, particularly on the Russian side, necessary in order to bring peace about,” Rubio told the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

“We think the war in Ukraine, devastating war, has no military solution. It can only be solved through a diplomatic route -- and it’s been unfruitful.”

With Russia’s advance on the battlefield largely stalled, Moscow has intensified missile and drone



A cargo vessel identified as Natra, damaged by a Ukrainian drone in an undefined location in Azov sea, is seen in this still image taken from a video. — **AFP**



MARIA DANILOVA

The writer is an editor with AFP

With Russia’s advance on the battlefield largely stalled, Moscow has intensified missile and drone attacks on Ukrainian cities, targeting civilians

attacks on Ukrainian cities, targeting civilians.

In an interview last week, Zelensky said Kyiv badly needs US air defence systems to protect against Russian missiles as well as a tougher stance on Putin.

“We need more sanctions. I think we need more pressure,” Zelensky told CBS.

Meanwhile, Kyiv has been ramping up attacks on military and energy infrastructure sites deep inside Russia.

Most recently, Ukrainian drones hit oil and military facilities in Russia’s second-largest city of Saint Petersburg as it was hosting a major economic forum -- a move sure to have stung in the Kremlin.

Rubio said Ukraine’s success in recent months in striking deep inside Russia was likely to be met with more aggression.

“The risk of escalation is real, more real than it was two years ago,” Rubio told the Senate Appropriations Committee.

In his interview with CBS, Zelensky lamented that Trump’s roving envoys Steve Witkoff and son-in-law Jared Kushner have never been to Kyiv, despite making several trips to Moscow.

“I think that we need to see (the)

American negotiation group in Ukraine,” Zelensky said. First “they have to come to Kyiv, and then go to Moscow.”

In a sign of diplomatic deadlock, Zelensky sent an open letter to Putin on Thursday, asking for a face-to-face meeting with Putin to end the war.

In response, the Kremlin said Zelensky was welcome to come to Moscow, Russian state media reported -- an offer the Ukrainian leader has repeatedly declined in the past. Elina Becketova, a fellow at the Washington-based Center for European Policy Analysis, said the Kremlin had little genuine interest in negotiations.

“The recent strikes on Ukraine indicate that Russia is not ready to de-escalate,” Becketova said.

“A window for negotiations may open only if the battlefield situation shifts -- if Ukraine strengthens its position as a resilient ‘fortress state’ and Russia becomes significantly exhausted both militarily and economically.”

Increasingly, Zelensky has called on Europe to play a greater role, including through diplomacy with Moscow, something European leaders have largely avoided, focusing instead on isolating Russia with sanctions. — **AFP**

SPORTS

ACC PREMIER CUP



Oman captain Priyanka Mendonca took five wickets for 8 runs to earn the player of the match award.

PRIYANKA SHINES AS OMAN CRUSH SAUDI BY 10 WICKETS

BANGI, Malaysia: Captain Priyanka Mendonca produced a superb bowling performance (5/8) before Jayadhanyha Gunasekar blasted an unbeaten 31 as Oman registered a commanding 10-wicket victory over Saudi Arabia in the ACC Women's T20I Premier Cup at the YSD-UKM Cricket Oval, in Bangi, Malaysia, on Saturday. The win was Oman's second triumph in the group, following their opening victory against China. Oman had suffered a nine-wicket defeat to the UAE on Thursday but bounced back on Saturday against the Saudis to significantly strengthen their chances of progressing from Group B as one of the top two teams. After winning the toss and electing to field, Oman's bowlers dominated from the outset. Saudi Arabia never recovered from the early loss of captain Mashael Waqas and were bundled out for just 38 in 13.4 overs. Left-arm medium pacer Priyanka led the charge with a career-best spell of five wickets for runs from four overs, removing five of the top six batters. Jayadhanyha provided excellent support with 2 for 6, while Fiza Javed claimed 2 for 2 as no Saudi Arabia batter could register a double digit score. Najwa Akram was the top scorer for Saudi Arabia with eight runs. Chasing a modest target of 39, Oman needed only 3.2 overs to complete the task. Jayadhanyha dominated the chase with an unbeaten 31 off 14 deliveries, striking two fours and two sixes. Nitya Joshi remained unbeaten on six as Oman raced to 39 without loss, sealing victory with 100 balls to spare. Priyanka was later adjudged the player of the match. The comprehensive win also provided a major boost to Oman's net run rate ahead of their final Group B match against the Philippines at the same venue on Sunday. A win will confirm Oman's progression into the last eight knockout round. **BRIEF SCORES:** Saudi Arabia Women 38 all out in 13.4 overs (Najwa Akram 8; Priyanka Mendonca 5/8, Jayadhanyha Gunasekar 2/6, Fiza Javed 2/2) lost to Oman Women 39/0 in 3.2 overs (Jayadhanyha Gunasekar 31* off 14, Nitya Joshi 6*) by 10 wickets.

Oman set up Nepal semis despite loss to Hong Kong



Oman players during the match against Hong Kong in the Men's T20I Asian Games Qualifier in Singapore

OMAN'S YOUNG, all-home-grown side suffered a harsh reality check at the Singapore National Cricket Ground on Friday, going down by 154 runs to a rampant Hong Kong in their final Group B fixture of the Men's T20I Asian Games Qualifier. However, the defeat did little to diminish Oman's achievement of securing a historic Asian Games berth. Having already booked their place in the semifinals with consecutive wins over Singapore and Bahrain, the inexperienced squad will now turn its attention to a high-stakes last-four clash against tournament favourites Nepal on June 7. Captain Sufyan Mehmood's decision to bowl first after winning the toss proved costly as Hong Kong produced one of the most destructive batting displays of the tournament, piling up a staggering 287 for 1 in their 20 overs. O opener Anshuman Rath led the assault with a sensational unbeaten 140 off just 56 deliveries, striking 13 fours and 10 sixes at

a remarkable strike rate of 250. He shared a dominant 192-run opening stand with skipper Nizakat Khan, who blasted 76 from 45 balls, including six fours and four sixes. Oman finally made a breakthrough in the 15th over when Naveed al Balushi dismissed Nizakat, but the respite was brief. Babar Hayat then launched a breathtaking late onslaught, hammering an unbeaten 63 from only 19 balls, with seven fours and five sixes, to propel Hong Kong to their imposing total. Faced with a daunting target of 288, Oman never managed to gain a foothold in the chase. The batting line-up struggled to keep pace with the required rate and was dismantled by Hong Kong's disciplined attack. Off-spinner Ehsan Khan was the chief destroyer, claiming 4 for 12 from his four overs to rip through the middle order. There were, nevertheless, some encouraging contributions from Oman's batters. Zubair al Balushi top-scored with a brisk 40 off 23 balls, including five fours and two sixes, while wicketkeeper Muzaffar Shiralkar struck 36 from 26

deliveries, hitting six fours and a six. Oman eventually closed on 133 for 8 from their 20 overs. The match also marked the T20I debuts of Munthir al Balushi and Faris al Balushi. Oman finished with four points to trail group toppers Hong Kong, who next face Malaysia in the semifinals. Attention now shifts to the knockout stage, where Oman will face a formidable Nepal side that topped Group A with an unbeaten record. Coach Ajay Lalcheta, who took charge shortly before the tournament after regular coach Sultan Ahmed couldn't travel due to logistics issues, will hope his young squad quickly puts Friday's setback behind them and approaches the semifinal with the fearless cricket that has already earned them a place at the Asian Games. **BRIEF SCORES:** Hong Kong 287/1 in 20 overs (Anshuman Rath 140*, Nizakat Khan 76, Babar Hayat 63*; Naveed al Balushi 1/49) beat Oman 133/8 in 20 overs (Zubair al Balushi 40, Muzaffar Shiralkar 36; Ehsan Khan 4/12, Nasrulla Rana 2/20) by 154 runs.

Oman Cricket named Asia winner in ICC Digital Fan Engagement

MUSCAT: Oman Cricket (OC) has been named Asia's winner in the ICC Digital Fan Engagement of the Year category, earning a place among the global nominees for the prestigious ICC Development Awards 2025 and further cementing the Sultanate of Oman's growing reputation as one of cricket's most innovative emerging nations. The honour, announced by the International Cricket Council (ICC) as part of its ICC Development Awards 2025 on Friday, places Oman among a select group of regional winners who will now compete for global honours to be announced in July. The award recognises the innovative use of digital platforms, campaigns and technology to drive fan engagement, with Oman emerging as Asia's standout performer in the category ahead of several other Associate cricketing nations. The other continental winners who will vie along with Oman for the Global Award are Cricket Namibia (Africa), Cricket Canada (Americas), Japan Cricket Association (East Asia-Pacific), and Cricket Scotland (Europe). Alkesh Joshi, senior OC board member and treasurer, described the recognition as a landmark achievement for the organisation and a validation of its long-



term strategy to grow the game through meaningful audience engagement. "This recognition by the ICC is a proud milestone for Oman Cricket and a powerful validation of our long-term vision to transform how the game engages with audiences," Joshi said. "Our focus on organic growth and platform-native storytelling reflects a



ALKESH JOSHI

Senior Oman Cricket board member and treasurer.

broader ambition—not just to grow numbers, but to build meaningful, lasting connections with cricket communities in Oman and across the world." **GROWING REPUTATION** Joshi noted that the latest achievement builds on Oman Cricket's growing international reputation, following its global recognition in 2023 for the ICC's Best Women's Cricket Development Programme. "Building on our 2023 global award for the best Women's Cricket Development Programme, this achievement signals the emergence of Oman Cricket as a progressive force shaping the future of the sport in associate nations," he said. "As we move to the global stage, we remain committed to innovation, inclusivity, and expanding cricket's reach

in ways that inspire the next generation of players and fans in Oman." He added that Oman Cricket is also looking to broaden its engagement with Arabic-speaking audiences. "To expand our outreach, we have also added capabilities in Arabic media and going forward we would like to expand cricket's outreach to the Arabic audience as well," Joshi said. The ICC Development Awards, established in 2002, recognise and celebrate outstanding work undertaken by ICC Associate Members to grow cricket around the world. The awards honour achievements across development initiatives, women's cricket, team performances, digital engagement and social impact programmes. Among other major regional winners, the Emirates Cricket Board secured four nominations across different categories, while Indonesia also claimed four honours in the East Asia-Pacific region as the ICC announced 30 ICC Development Awards 2025 regional winners across six categories. Brazil and Japan were also repeat winners and will each contest three Global Awards. The regional winners came from 20 ICC members, who now advance to Global Award contention.

SECOND EDITION



Omani archers sharpen their focus ahead of the second Oman Open Archery at Al Amal Club.

OMAN OPEN
ARCHERY
CHAMPIONSHIP
SET FOR JUNE 21

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, JUNE 6

Preparations are in full swing for the second edition of the Oman Open Archery Championship, which will be held from June 21 to 27, 2026, at the Al Amal Club. The event is organised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth in cooperation with the Oman archery community.

The championship is expected to present a more advanced and diverse edition compared to its inaugural version, with wider participation and the introduction of new categories. This year’s competition will include Olympic bow, traditional bow, compound bow and para archery, reflecting the organisers’ commitment to promoting inclusiveness and providing opportunities for athletes of different abilities to compete in an organised sporting environment.

The second edition will also mark an important development as the competitions move to an outdoor field, with longer shooting distances and a larger number of male and female participants from various categories. The move is aimed at raising the technical level of the sport in Oman, expanding the base of practitioners and increasing the level of competition among archers.

Preparations currently include intensive training sessions at archery clubs, with players working to improve their technical and physical readiness ahead of the championship. Training programmes are focusing on shooting accuracy, stability, bow control and the ability to adapt to outdoor conditions, where wind, distance and field environment play a key role in performance.

One of the notable additions to this year’s championship is the introduction of traditional archery, also known as ground archery, in cooperation with horse stables in several governorates. This step aims to connect the modern sporting format with Oman’s cultural and heritage dimensions, highlighting archery as a sport with deep historical roots and renewed presence.

The championship will also feature an accompanying arbitration course designed to introduce participants to the basics of judging in archery. The course will combine theoretical and practical aspects under the supervision of specialists in the field. It forms part of efforts to prepare national cadres capable of managing competitions according to clear technical and organisational standards. The course will be open to those interested in experiencing sports arbitration, particularly in archery, and will help build a wider base of judges and organisers alongside the athletes. The course sessions are scheduled to take place from 8 am to 1 pm, followed by practical application during the championship competitions.

PARA ARCHERY
Rashid al Abrawi, Chairman of the Technical and Administrative Committee of the championship, said the second edition represents an important stage in the development of archery in Oman.

“The first championship was a successful and important experience. It witnessed the participation of 62 male and female players from different categories and reflected the growing interest in this sport,” Al Abrawi said.

Al Abrawi added: “In the second edition, we aim to present a more developed championship in terms of categories, organisation and the nature of competition. This includes introducing para archery, traditional archery and compound bow, in addition to holding the event on an outdoor field and over longer distances.”

The event seeks to expand the base of practitioners, discover new talents and provide players with greater opportunities. “The arbitration course will also contribute to preparing national cadres who can support the sport in the future, whether in managing competitions or developing the technical and organisational aspects of the game,” Al Abrawi said.

FIFA WORLD CUP CAN PROVIDE MAJOR
BOOST TO NATIONAL BUSINESSES AND SMEs



ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, JUNE 6

THE Fifa World Cup is not only the biggest football tournament in the world but also a significant economic opportunity for businesses, small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Business owners and industry specialists in Oman highlighted that the potential benefits that the 2026 Fifa World Cup could bring to various sectors, including restaurants, cafés, sports apparel stores, printing companies, event organisers and technology service providers.

The participants agreed that the Fifa World Cup event creates a unique commercial environment that encourages spending, increases customer engagement and generates new business opportunities. They noted that organising public viewing events, football-themed festivals and fan zones could help stimulate economic activity and support local enterprises throughout the tournament period.

FOOTBALL GATHERING
Eng Azzan al Kindi, Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Rihal, said that football fans often prefer gathering in restaurants, cafés and dedicated fan zones to watch matches together, creating a vibrant social atmosphere similar to that experienced in host countries. “The World Cup offers an opportunity to create large public viewing areas equipped with giant screens and entertainment activities. During previous editions, similar events attracted large crowds and featured restaurants, football competitions, interactive games and family entertainment activities. Many football fans may not be able to travel to the host country, but they still want to experience the excitement and atmosphere of the tournament,” he said.



AHMED
AL ASMI



ENG AZZAN
AL KINDI



IBRAHIM AL
BALUSHI

Al Kindi ended that technology companies can also benefit from the event by providing digital solutions, cloud computing services, data management systems and customer engagement platforms that support businesses operating during the World Cup period.

UNIQUE EXPERIENCES
Ahmed bin Rashid al Asmi, former restaurant owner and owner of Falcon Taekwondo Club, believes that businesses can capitalise on the tournament’s popularity by offering unique experiences that go beyond their traditional services. “The World Cup presents an exceptional opportunity for businesses to increase customer engagement and boost sales through fan events, special promotions and marketing campaigns linked to participating teams and matches,” he explained.

He added that restaurants and cafés can attract supporters by creating dedicated viewing areas, introducing special menus, organising prediction competitions and offering discounts linked to match results. “Major sporting events usually generate a noticeable increase in visitor numbers and customer spending, particularly during high-profile matches,” he said.

SPORTS MARKETING
From the retail sector, Ibrahim al Balushi, owner of Al Qaiser National for Sports Clothes, stressed that football and sports marketing are closely connected. He explained that sportswear retailers often experience increased demand during major football tournaments as fans seek jerseys, accessories and football-themed products.

“Special promotions, discount campaigns and prize draws can significantly increase customer interest. Football remains highly popular among young people, and many products today are linked to

football clubs, national teams and international stars,” he noted.

VALUABLE OPPORTUNITIES
Meanwhile, Ali al Sabahi, owner of Al Abdaa Land Printing Company, said that global sporting events create valuable opportunities for printing and advertising businesses. “There is always strong demand for promotional materials, banners, decorations and branding solutions during major sporting tournaments. Restaurants, cafés and event organisers require football-themed designs and advertising materials to attract customers,” he said.

Al Sabahi also encouraged the organisation of large-scale public fan festivals and viewing events, noting that such initiatives would benefit numerous local businesses, including printing companies, event management firms, food vendors and entertainment providers. “In the previous edition of the Fifa World Cup, there was a festival for the fans at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) where everyone came and spend sometime there. The festival had helped everyone as business owners for the commercial opportunities and the public to enjoy watching the matches of the Fifa World Cup,” he ended.

The owners and experts of the business believe that with proper planning and collaboration between government institutions and the private sector, the Fifa World Cup can serve as a powerful platform to stimulate local economic activity, create temporary employment opportunities and support the growth of SMEs across multiple sectors. By transforming the tournament into a nationwide celebration, businesses can benefit from increased visibility, higher customer traffic and stronger commercial returns while football fans enjoy a memorable World Cup experience at home.

SPORTS

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Andreeva comes of age with Paris glory



Russia's Mirra Andreeva celebrates with the trophy after beating Poland's Maja Chwalinska in final. — Reuters

Andreeva, 19, claims maiden Grand Slam, becomes youngest winner since 1992

MIRRA ANDREEVA became the youngest French Open champion in over three decades on Saturday as she swept aside surprise finalist Maja Chwalinska 6-3, 6-2 on a blustery Court Philippe Chatrier, where the Pole seemed frozen by the magnitude of the occasion.

The 19-year-old Russian, the youngest Roland Garros women's singles winner since Monica Seles won her third straight title in 1992 aged 18, overcame a jittery start to claim her maiden Grand Slam crown, growing in authority as the match wore on while Chwalinska struggled to settle on the big stage.

The world number 114, who will rise to 21st

Chwalinska's nine-match run ends as nerves and errors hamper her performance

in the world rankings on Monday, had captivated Roland Garros with her tactical intelligence and fearless variety in a nine-match winning run that began in qualifying but the magic deserted her in the final despite the support of hundreds of Polish fans.

On a court that suddenly seemed vast and unforgiving, Chwalinska looked a shadow of the player who had outmanoeuvred opponent after opponent to reach the championship match.

"You're a very tricky opponent. Wouldn't want to play you one more time. No, it's ok. I hope we play many more finals in the future," Andreeva said during the trophy ceremony. "It was a big dream of mine to win this tournament. I can't believe

Polish qualifier Chwalinska to jump up to world number 21 after fiery tale run

that I'm holding this trophy."

As eighth seed Andreeva's groundstrokes found their range and her confidence swelled, Chwalinska's touch deserted her.

The Pole's trademark drop shots and changes of pace yielded diminishing returns, and the Russian teenager seized control to complete a breakthrough triumph that confirmed her arrival among the game's elite. The opening set was a nervous affair, with both players struggling to settle under the pressure of a Grand Slam final.

Chwalinska was only the second female player — since tennis turned professional in 1968 — to make it to the final of a major coming through qualifying, after Britain's Emma Raducanu won the 2021 US Open. — Reuters

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BUSINESS

SHORT TAKES



The Hafeet Rail project has now transitioned from excavation and civil construction to the rail infrastructure construction phase.

TRACK INSTALLATION COMMENCES ON HAFEET RAIL PROJECT

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, JUNE 6

Reflecting the accelerated implementation of one of the region's most important infrastructure projects, track laying and installation work has commenced on the Hafeet Rail project, linking the Sultanate of Oman to the United Arab Emirates.

This marks the transition from excavation and civil construction to the railway infrastructure phase, key officials revealed over the weekend.

The project, undertaken by Oman and Etihad Rail, which will design, develop and operate a railway network connecting SOHAR Port and Freezone to the UAE's national rail network, will directly enhance the efficiency of supply chains and facilitate regional trade, in addition to its future role in developing passenger transport services.

According to the latest data released by Hafeet Rail, the project was approximately 40% complete as of April 2026, with work continuing along a 238-kilometre track connecting Oman and the UAE via the Al Ain, Al Buraimi, Wadi Al Jizzi and Suhar regions.

The project has seen the execution of significant excavation and backfilling works, totalling approximately 27 million cubic metres, in addition to over 100,000 cubic metres of concrete work. Progress has also been made in the construction of tunnels, bridges and associated engineering structures.

The project has achieved over 10 million safe work hours without any serious injuries, reflecting a commitment to safety and quality standards.

The project includes the construction of 60 bridges, some reaching heights of up to 34 metres, along with tunnels totalling approximately 2.5 kilometres in length, all within an infrastructure designed for the efficient transport of heavy goods.

From an economic perspective, SOHAR Port and Freezone is expected to be among the project's primary beneficiaries. The rail link will reduce the time required to transport goods to Gulf markets, enhancing the port's attractiveness as a regional logistics hub.

OIA enhances Oman's SOE profitability: Global SWF

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JUNE 6

GLOBAL

Authority (OIA) in enhancing the profitability of state-owned enterprises, recycling state investment assets and attracting foreign capital and expertise into sectors aligned with Oman Vision 2040.

According to Global SWF, OIA's 2025 performance results demonstrate the effectiveness of the sovereign governance structure adopted by the Sultanate of Oman following 2020, under which government-owned companies were transferred to OIA's portfolio.

Through this framework, OIA manages these entities on behalf of the State while actively improving their financial performance.

Global SWF noted that although OIA may not match the size of some of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds, it has developed a distinctive model.

OIA increasingly serves as the institution through which Oman links state-owned enterprise reform, reinvestment, selected foreign partnerships, strategic divestments, domestic investment promotion, job creation and supplier development.

Global SWF illustrated that since 2020, OIA has overseen government-owned companies on behalf of the state, enhanced their profitability and executed selective divestments.

Through public offerings, direct sales and strategic partnerships, OIA has attracted foreign investment, strengthened operational discipline within state assets and redirected proceeds towards higher-value strategic sectors and opportunities with stronger expected returns.

Global SWF highlighted several examples of OIA's success in

SWF has confirmed the success of the Oman Investment



OIA has become an integral component of Oman's sustainable economic and political stability.



Through public offerings, direct sales and strategic partnerships, OIA has attracted foreign investment, strengthened operational discipline within state assets and redirected proceeds towards higher-value strategic sectors and opportunities with stronger expected returns.

GLOBAL SWF

transforming the performance of its portfolio companies to profitability.

OQ Group for instance had previously faced operational challenges and financial pressures associated with major capital projects and rising debt levels, creating the need for a comprehensive restructuring programme.

Following its transfer under OIA in 2020, a strategic transformation programme was implemented focusing on corporate strategy modernisation, enhanced integration across business units, organisational and capital restructuring and debt reduction.

Capital recycling through divestments and public offerings on the Muscat Stock Exchange these efforts reduced total debt by 48%, from RO 5 billion to RO 2.7 billion, released RO 2.2 billion in government guarantees and improved the net debt to profit ratio from 8.6x to 0.6x by 2025. The Group also secured investment-grade credit ratings from Fitch and Standard & Poor's.

After more than two decades of operational challenges that includes operational efficiency issues, performance volatility and the effects of global fluctuations in refining and petrochemical markets, in addition to a high level of financial liabilities, OQ

Refineries and Petrochemicals (OQRPI) recorded its first-ever profits.

Since joining OIA's portfolio, the company has pursued a transformation strategy through 2030 focused on operational efficiency, asset reliability, cost reduction and financial restructuring. Between 2021 and 2025, OQRPI generated cumulative profits of RO 474 million and increased crude processing capacity from 80 million barrels to 93 million barrels annually. The company has also begun preparations to repay RO 2.7 billion in outstanding debt during the next phase.

Another notable example is Asyad Drydock, which faced significant challenges from its inception due to intense competition in the ship repair and maritime services market, coupled with its substantial dependence on the oil and gas tanker sector.

These challenges were further intensified by the global disruption to maritime activity caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. In response, efforts were undertaken to establish a more sustainable and competitive business model, OIA helped transform Asyad Drydock by improving operational efficiency, upgrading infrastructure, adopting advanced technologies and diversifying revenue streams.

Oman advances sustainable aviation agenda

MUSCAT: Oman is intensifying efforts to build a more sustainable aviation sector through a comprehensive programme of regulatory reforms, emissions reduction initiatives and investments in cleaner technologies, as the Sultanate of Oman works towards its national climate and economic diversification objectives.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) said environmental sustainability has become a central pillar of the aviation sector's development strategy, with initiatives designed to balance industry growth with environmental stewardship while strengthening Oman's competitiveness in regional and global aviation markets.

Khalid bin Hilal al Toubi, Director of the Civil Aviation Environmental Protection Department, said the National Aviation Strategy 2040 places sustainability at the core of sector development by strengthening



Environmental sustainability has become a central pillar of the aviation sector's strategy.

regulations covering safety, security, environmental protection and aviation economics. The strategy also promotes environmental compliance among airlines and encourages the adoption of innovative solutions aligned with international standards.

The Authority continues to enhance the aviation

environmental protection framework through updated legislation, regular inspections and monitoring programmes covering airlines and airports.

These efforts include tracking carbon emissions, verifying environmental reports and overseeing compliance with international emissions reduction and offsetting requirements.

As part of its broader sustainability agenda, the CAA is implementing projects aimed at reducing aviation-related emissions, improving air quality, managing aircraft noise and strengthening the sector's resilience to climate change.

The Authority is also developing regulations that support the transition towards cleaner and more sustainable aviation operations.

Oman submitted its National Action Plan for Reducing Carbon Dioxide Emissions from International Aviation to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) in 2023.

The plan outlines projected aviation growth and emissions through to 2050 and identifies mitigation measures based on ICAO recommendations, including technological improvements, operational efficiencies and the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA).

The Sultanate of Oman's sustainability roadmap is built around four key pillars: technological advancement, operational efficiency, sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) adoption and compliance with international environmental mechanisms.

National airlines are continuing to modernise their fleets through the introduction of newer, more fuel-efficient aircraft equipped with advanced engines and lightweight materials.

At the same time, operational measures such as optimised take-off and landing procedures, improved ground operations and more efficient fuel management practices are helping to reduce emissions without significant capital expenditure. Air traffic management systems are also being upgraded through advanced communication, navigation and surveillance technologies, enabling smoother traffic flow, reduced fuel consumption and lower emissions.

ADVERTORIALS

SHORTTAKES



Younger users can access their wallet through their own device.

Ompay introduces Jeel to bring digital wallet experience to the youth

MUSCAT: Ompay, Omantel’s digital wallet and fintech platform, has introduced Jeel, a youth-focused extension that enables parents to manage younger users’ everyday spending through a secure and controlled digital experience.

Integrated within the Ompay app, Jeel allows parents to onboard children aged 7 to 17 in minutes, offering a more secure alternative to cash for allowances, school expenses, travel and daily transactions. Parents can instantly transfer funds, monitor activity in real time and maintain full visibility over how money is used.

Named after the Arabic word for “generation”, Jeel reflects Ompay’s focus on supporting modern family needs by providing a structured way to manage spending while reducing the risks associated with cash, such as loss and untracked usage.

Younger users can access their wallet through their own device, allowing them to make seamless digital payments or tokenise their card for mobile transactions. The experience is supported by the Ompay Visa prepaid card, enabling safe and secure payments both locally and internationally, making it convenient for travel and day-to-day use.

For added flexibility, parents can request a physical card, which is delivered directly to their home. All Ompay Jeel wallets operate within clearly defined limits, including a maximum balance of RO 200, ensuring spending remains appropriate for everyday use while maintaining a controlled environment.

Sami Elloumi, CEO at Ompay, said: “With Jeel, we are extending the Ompay wallet to address a key everyday need for families — managing allowances and expenses in a more secure and structured way. By reducing reliance on cash and introducing controlled digital access, Jeel offers a practical solution that supports both oversight and ease of use”.

By introducing younger users to digital payments within a supervised framework, Jeel also provides early and practical exposure to responsible financial behaviour, aligned with how transactions are increasingly carried out today.

As part of Omantel’s fintech ecosystem, Ompay continues to develop solutions that reflect evolving customer needs, delivering accessible and secure financial services that integrate seamlessly into everyday life.

Jeel is now available within the Ompay app, allowing parents to onboard younger users quickly and begin managing their spending with greater visibility and control.

OAB employee honoured with woman leader in customer experience engagement award

MUSCAT: Reflecting her commitment to innovation and excellence in customer engagement, Sumaiya al Riyami, Head of Customer Experience at Oman Arab Bank, was honoured with the “Woman Leader in Customer Experience Engagement Award” during the 15th Annual Al Mara’a Summit & Awards 2026.

The recognition reflects Sumaiya al Riyami’s leadership in advancing customer-centric strategies and enhancing service excellence across the Bank’s operations and banking



channels. Through her role, she continues to drive initiatives focused on strengthening customer

engagement, improving customer journeys and transforming customer insights into impactful strategic initiatives.

As Head of Customer Experience, Sumaiya al Riyami plays a key role in embedding a culture that places customers at the centre of the Bank’s strategic priorities. She has contributed significantly to the development of customer experience governance frameworks and cross-functional collaboration efforts that support the delivery of seamless and innovative banking experiences.

Lincoln Oman unveils summer campaign

EMBODYING the spirit of refined luxury, Lincoln Oman has introduced its latest summer initiative, “Lincoln Signature Rewards”. Valid from May 14 to July 12, 2026, this campaign invites luxury enthusiasts to experience the pride of Lincoln ownership through a collection of specially curated rewards.

The season of distinction continues with a focus on total peace of mind, offering 5-year comprehensive service and warranty packages, 3M Golden protection and a unique opportunity to win a new iPhone 17 through seasonal raffle draws.

The “Lincoln Signature Rewards” campaign is designed to ensure a seamless and worry-free ownership experience from the very first Lincoln drive. Owners of the Corsair, Nautilus, Aviator and Navigator will benefit from a 5-year or 100,000 km service plan along with a 5-year manufacturer’s warranty.

To keep every vehicle in pristine condition, the offer includes the 3M Golden 7 Pack, which provides high-quality ceramic protection and window tinting.

Furthermore, the campaign adds immediate value with complimentary one-



The campaign is designed to ensure a seamless and worry-free ownership experience.

year registration and exclusive accessories, ensuring that each Lincoln sanctuary is perfectly prepared for the road.

Adding to the excitement of the summer, visitors who take a test drive will enter a raffle to win an iPhone 17, while those who purchase a new model will be entered into a grand raffle for a chance to win one of two iPhone 17 units.

The current Lincoln SUV lineup provides a “Quiet Flight” experience, blending effortless power with a calm, spa-like interior. The flagship Navigator leads the range with its 413-horsepower engine and

the multi-sensory Lincoln Rejuvenate system, featuring a class-leading 48-inch panoramic display and a 28-speaker Revel Ultima 3D audio system, while commanding the road with its new signature front light bar and illuminated Lincoln Star.

The Nautilus offers refined serenity through acoustic glass and 22-way ultra-comfort seats with lumbar massage. The Aviator combines performance with elegance, offering a spacious three-row layout and advanced Adaptive Suspension to provide a smooth and sophisticated ride for all passengers.

NBO offers 20% cashback for credit card customers

MUSCAT: The National Bank of Oman (NBO) has launched an exclusive campaign for its Credit Cardholders, offering 20% cashback in the form of Reward Points on eligible payments made at Oman Oil service stations across the Sultanate of Oman.

Running until June 30, 2026, the campaign allows customers to earn cashback on their first POS transaction at Oman Oil service stations, up to RO 3 per customer, credited as equivalent Reward Points.

Commenting on the offer, Maha bint Saud al Raisi,



Assistant General Manager and Head of Retail Products at NBO, said: “At NBO, we are always looking for different ways to provide added value and rewards to our customers. We are delighted to partner with Oman Oil for this exclusive campaign.

The promotion is part of NBO’s wider range of card benefits, which includes seasonal offers, cashback incentives and exclusive partner rewards across travel, dining, lifestyle and everyday spending. Together, these benefits give customers more ways to enjoy

value through their NBO cards”. With fuel representing a regular part of customers’ everyday spending, the campaign transforms a routine purchase into an opportunity to earn additional value through their Credit Cards. By rewarding eligible transactions, it offers a simple and practical benefit that enhances customers’ everyday spending experience.

In addition to cashback rewards, NBO credit cardholders can benefit from a wide range of premium privileges that add value across travel, lifestyle and everyday spending.

Mitsubishi Motors Oman claims top honours, yet again

MUSCAT: General Automotive Company (A part of the Zubair Corporation), the authorised distributor for Mitsubishi Motors in Oman, recently claimed top honours in both the Sales and Marketing Business Excellence Programme (SMBEP) and the After-Sales Business Excellence Programme (ASBEP) at the recently held Business Excellence Programme 2025 awards ceremony.

Mitsubishi Oman achieved significant recognition in the ASBEP, becoming the first distributor in the entire Middle East and Africa region to earn the Leadership Award by maintaining Platinum status for five consecutive years.

This accomplishment showcases



This accomplishment showcases the company’s commitment to customer experience and consistent performance.

the company’s commitment to customer experience and consistent performance.

In addition, Mitsubishi Oman has proudly achieved the prestigious Diamond Award in the ASBEP, a recognition reserved for organisations that maintain Platinum status for three consecutive years. This remarkable accomplishment highlights Mitsubishi Oman’s unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional after-sales support and operational excellence to its customers.

In addition to the Diamond Award, Mitsubishi Oman also earned the Platinum Award in the ASBEP, a testament to the outstanding quality of

its technicians, the efficient management of its workshops, the ready availability of genuine parts and its robust customer follow-up process.

Beyond its achievements in after-sales, Mitsubishi Oman also received the Best in Product Award, along with a Gold Award through the SMBEP. These accolades showcase Mitsubishi Oman’s effective marketing strategies and the strength of its customer relationships.

By prioritising both product quality and customer engagement, Mitsubishi Oman demonstrates its steadfast commitment to excellence across every facet of its operations, solidifying its position as a leader in Oman’s automotive industry.

SHORTTAKES



Prices for food products, beverages and textiles also increased by 1.8 per cent.

PPI FALLS 3.9 PER CENT AS OIL PRICES WEIGH ON INDEX

MUSCAT: Oman’s Producer Price Index (PPI) declined by 3.9 per cent in the first quarter of 2026 compared with the corresponding period of last year, reflecting weaker prices in the hydrocarbons sector despite continued gains in manufacturing and mineral-related activities.

According to data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information, the decline was primarily driven by an 11.3 per cent fall in prices within the mining and quarrying sector.

The drop was largely attributed to a sharp 11.6 per cent decrease in crude oil and natural gas prices, underscoring the sector’s continued influence on overall producer price trends.

In contrast, mineral-related activities recorded positive growth during the quarter. Prices of mineral raw materials rose by 17.8 per cent, while stone and sand products registered a modest increase of 0.5 per cent, reflecting steady demand across construction and industrial segments.

The manufacturing sector emerged as a key source of resilience, posting an 8.3 per cent increase in producer prices.

The growth was led by an 11.3 per cent rise in prices of other transportable goods, while metal products, machinery and equipment advanced by 6.2 per cent. Prices for food products, beverages and textiles also increased by 1.8 per cent.

Water production prices declined by 4.3 per cent during the period, whereas electricity production remained largely stable, recording only marginal changes. The figures highlight the contrasting performance of Oman’s productive sectors, with lower energy prices exerting downward pressure on the overall index even as manufacturing and mineral industries continued to strengthen.

— ONA

SPIEF 2026 ends with \$84 billion agreements

KABEER YOUSUF
ST PETERSBURG, JUNE 6

THE St Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) 2026 concluded with 1,084 agreements worth 6.64 trillion rubles (approximately \$84 billion), reinforcing Russia’s continued efforts to attract investment amid a volatile global economic environment.

The four-day forum, regarded as one of the largest editions in recent years, brought together more than 24,500 participants from over 100 countries, facilitating a wide range of cross-border economic partnerships across sectors.

This year’s central theme, ‘The Global Economy Between Confrontation and Cooperation,’ focused on the fragmentation of the global economic order, the emergence of alternative centres of growth, and the mounting pressures on existing international institutions.

Speaking on the sidelines of the forum, Anton Kobayakov, Adviser to the President of the Russian Federation and Executive Secretary of the SPIEF Organising Committee, said the event demonstrated sustained global interest in Russia despite ongoing geopolitical tensions.

“We are also seeing cautious optimism among some Western investors regarding a potential return to the Russian market,” Kobayakov noted.

He added that the participation of an official United States delegation at SPIEF for the first time in a decade reflected a broader shift in global economic engagement patterns.

“The global economy is irreversibly moving toward



Russian President Vladimir Putin delivers a speech during the plenary session of the St Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) in Saint Petersburg. — AFP

SPIEF 2026 highlighted shifting global economic alignments, with emerging markets playing a stronger role in investment flows and trade partnerships

the global majority,” he said, highlighting the growing influence of emerging markets in shaping trade, investment, and growth trajectories.

According to him, the strong turnout and high volume of agreements signed underscore Moscow’s deepening engagement with countries across the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, even as tensions with Western economies persist.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, addressing the plenary session, reaffirmed Russia’s readiness to engage in mutually beneficial international cooperation on an equal footing, including in addressing global challenges such as energy and logistics.

He also noted that parts of the world were contributing to instability even as global economic structures undergo transformation. The plenary session was

attended by Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan, and Chinese Vice President Han Zheng, underscoring the forum’s broad geopolitical participation.

Putin said the existing “hierarchical model” of global trade and cooperation was undergoing fundamental change, driven by the rise of new economic centres.

“The world is becoming more equitable as growth expands to new centres,” he said, adding that BRICS economies now account for nearly half of global growth, compared to less than 20 per cent for the G7.

He noted that BRICS countries now represent nearly 25 per cent of global exports, with trade volumes exceeding \$1 trillion annually, and continuing to expand steadily.

Highlighting long-term structural shifts, Putin pointed to new trade corridors, including the North–South Transport Corridor and Arctic maritime routes, as evidence of a rebalancing global trade architecture less centred on the West.

He added that Russia’s debt-to-GDP ratio stands at 15–16 per cent, significantly lower than many advanced economies, where it often exceeds 100 per cent. He also noted that the ruble’s share in export settlements has risen to around 65 per cent.

Putin further said that high-tech sectors — including artificial intelligence, information technology, and nuclear technologies— now account for more than one-third of BRICS exports, led by China, India and Russia.

He emphasised that digital platforms and AI-driven systems will play a key role in improving productivity and shaping future economic growth.

Gasunie backs Oman and Europe hydrogen corridor

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, JUNE 6

Gasunie, the Dutch state-owned gas infrastructure operator, has underscored its support for the Sultanate of Oman in the development of a hydrogen trade corridor linking Oman with Northwest Europe.

Headquartered in Groningen, Gasunie is among the signatories to a landmark Joint Development Agreement signed in April 2025 to establish the world’s first liquid hydrogen import corridor connecting the Port of Duqm in Oman with the ports of Amsterdam in the Netherlands and Duisburg in Germany.

The Dutch firm has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with OQ Gas Networks (OQGN) — the sole operator of Oman’s gas transmission network — to support the development of the Sultanate of Oman’s hydrogen



Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, meeting with top executives of European clean energy companies on the margins of the World Hydrogen Summit in Rotterdam (Credit: Gasunie)

transport network.

The agreement also seeks to establish a foundation for the exchange of expertise in carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) technologies, supporting both countries’ climate and sustainability objectives.

In a post over the weekend, Gasunie CEO Willemien Terpstra highlighted Oman’s growing prominence in the global green hydrogen sector.

“Oman is one of the global frontrunners in green hydrogen projects”, she said. “The Omani

government has set clear targets for the production and export of hydrogen generated from solar and wind energy. Its vast desert areas, strategic location and favourable conditions for wind and solar power provide significant potential”.

Her remarks followed the visit of Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Oman’s Minister of Energy and Minerals, to the Netherlands to participate in the World Hydrogen Summit & Exhibition 2026, held in Rotterdam last month.

On the sidelines of the event, Al Aufi held discussions with Dutch government officials and senior executives of companies involved in the Liquid Hydrogen Corridor initiative.

Terpstra also highlighted the progress being made by Oman and the Netherlands in developing an integrated value chain for the production, transport and export of green hydrogen.

“In April 2025, Gasunie, together

with ten other parties, signed a cooperation agreement for the development of the first import corridor for liquid hydrogen”, she said.

“In Oman, transmission system operator OQGN is making significant progress in the timely development of affordable and reliable hydrogen infrastructure, similar to the role Gasunie plays in the Netherlands and northern Germany”.

At the European end of the proposed corridor, Gasunie recently marked the commissioning of the first 32 kilometres of the Dutch hydrogen backbone, a key milestone in the development of international hydrogen infrastructure.

“This infrastructure is essential for the distribution of imported hydrogen.

The knowledge we gain through its design and implementation is shared with Oman to support the development of its hydrogen network”, Terpstra noted.

AVIATION INDUSTRY

Airlines face fuel pressures



Global airline executives gathering at the International Air Transport Association summit are facing mounting challenges from rising fuel costs linked to the Iran conflict and continuing aircraft delivery delays.

Industry leaders and experts are expected to reassess profit forecasts as carriers contend with higher operating expenses, constrained capacity and ageing fleets. — Reuters

TECH MARKETS

Chip stocks suffer sell-off



US-listed semiconductor companies lost around \$1.3 trillion in market value on Friday as investors reassessed expectations for artificial intelligence-related growth.

The PHLX Semiconductor Index fell 10.3 per cent, marking its steepest one-day decline since March 2020. Major chipmakers, including NVIDIA, came under pressure following disappointing industry signals. — Reuters

LABOUR MARKET

US jobs growth stays strong



The US economy recorded a third consecutive month of solid job growth in May, reinforcing signs of labour market resilience. Revised figures showed stronger hiring in March and April, while the unemployment rate remained unchanged at 4.3 per cent.

The data is likely to support the US Fed’s decision to keep interest rates steady, although markets continue to monitor inflation risks. — Reuters

OPINION

Current status of local content in Oman



DR HILAL
AL SAWAI

The writer is local content, sustainability and innovation expert

LOCAL content is essential to not just job creation and diversification of the economy, but to the growth of domestic industries in Oman and is integral to the country’s economic development strategy.

As part of Oman Vision 2040, the government is rolling out programmes which have the local workforce, businesses and suppliers at the forefront.

Oman has introduced a new National Local Content Policy, which broadens beyond the sector-specific, In-Country Value (ICV) programmes that were previously in use.

This new policy states that government agencies, state-owned enterprises and the private sector are encouraged to use local goods, services and labour, in order to retain value within the Sultanate of Oman. This policy provides a framework for a sustainable economy by decreasing the reliance on imports.

In 2025, the government underwent a substantial institutional change and developed the Projects, Tenders and Local Content Authority. The new authority was established to oversee the government’s procurement, local content in tenders and to optimise the efficiency of government spending.

It aims to design metrics to gauge

performance, harmonise initiatives for local content and provide added economic value to public projects in Oman.

A major accomplishment was developing a national framework for assessing local content performance. Companies are assessed on their use of local goods and services, employment of Omani nationals, efforts to build local suppliers, investment in Oman, innovative and research support, among others.

Having a consistent framework allows for clear transparency and enables policymakers to analyse the effectiveness of local content measures in various sectors.

The leading sector for local content development continues to be the energy and minerals sector.

The Ministry of Energy and Minerals has rolled out programmes to enhance supply chains and provide Omani businesses with better opportunities.

Recent measures have prompted all businesses in the sector to implement local content plans and improve their dealings with local suppliers and contractors.

Local content programmes are said to have provided Omani SMEs with great contract opportunities and are having a positive impact on the economy and job creation.

The establishment of the Local Content Certification is a further achievement.

This new policy states that government agencies, state-owned enterprises and the private sector are encouraged to use local goods, services and labour, in order to retain value within the Sultanate of Oman. This policy provides a framework for a sustainable economy by decreasing the reliance on imports.

The certification, which is currently in the energy sector, assesses the extent to which a company supports the local economy. Firms with excellent local content performance may benefit from preference in government contracts and sourcing activities.

The programme is anticipated to progressively move to other sectors, providing more competition and compelling companies to better their investments in local capacity and local partnerships.

Local content objectives have digital platforms designed to help them.

For instance, the Rabt platform helps businesses find local sourcing options and build supply chains by connecting local manufacturers, suppliers and service providers.

It hosts thousands of industrial goods and helps Omani businesses network and cooperate. While impressive strides have been made, there is still a long way to go. Omani businesses must work to improve their productivity and innovation in order to be more responsive to the expanding market.

Manufacturing, workforce and technology sustainment challenges must also be met to achieve success over the long term. Public and private stakeholders work in tandem to address these challenges through diverse training, investment and regulatory incentives.

ENERGY STORAGE BOOM FUELS OMAN’S RENEWABLE FUTURE

NAJAH AL RIYAMI

As the global renewable energy sector continues to evolve, one trend is emerging as a defining feature of the next phase of the energy transition: energy storage. Recent developments across multiple markets indicate that batteries are rapidly becoming a critical component of modern power systems.

From Brazil’s plans for its first large-scale battery auction to new grid-scale storage projects in Europe, Africa and Asia, investment is increasingly shifting towards technologies capable of storing renewable energy and supplying it when needed.

This growing focus reflects a challenge faced by renewable energy systems worldwide. While solar and wind power continue to become more affordable and widespread, their intermittent nature requires solutions that can balance supply and demand throughout the day. Battery storage is increasingly seen as the answer.

In one of the clearest indications of this shift, Chinese battery giant CATL recently stated that energy storage could account for half of its global sales by 2030, compared with around a quarter today.

The company points to growing demand from renewable energy developers and utilities seeking to strengthen grid reliability as renewable generation expands.

At the same time, investors are committing significant resources to battery infrastructure. Brazil is preparing for a major auction expected to procure at least 2 GW of storage capacity, while new solar-plus-storage projects are being developed in emerging markets to improve energy security and maximise renewable generation.

Industry analysts also note a growing trend towards integrated renewable energy developments that combine solar, wind, battery storage and green hydrogen production within a single project.

This approach allows renewable electricity to be stored, transported or converted into alternative energy carriers, creating greater flexibility and commercial value.

For Oman, these developments are particularly relevant. Oman has already established itself as one of the region’s most ambitious renewable energy and green hydrogen markets.

Large-scale solar projects, wind developments and hydrogen initiatives in areas such as Al Duqm and Al Wusta are positioning Oman as a future exporter of clean energy products.

However, as renewable energy capacity continues to grow, energy storage is likely to become an increasingly important part of the country’s energy landscape.

Battery systems can help manage fluctuations in solar and wind generation, support grid stability and improve the efficiency of renewable energy projects. The global trend towards combining renewable energy generation with storage and hydrogen production also aligns closely with Oman’s long-term vision.

Oman’s safety net faces the test of impact

OMAN has built a wider social safety net. The harder task now is to prove that it can reduce vulnerability, not merely record it. That should be the next measure of the country’s social protection reforms.

The debate is no longer only about how many people the system reaches, but about what that reach changes in household stability, child welfare, labour participation, dignity in old age and the ability of low-income families to move gradually towards greater independence.

According to the Social Protection Fund’s indicators up to April 2026, more than 1.55 million people receive social protection benefits.

They include more than 1.25 million children, 172,844 elderly beneficiaries, 52,416 persons with disabilities, 10,095 orphans and widows; and 58,728 cases under family income support and continuing social security payments.

In a country of about 5.38 million people, these are significant figures. Direct beneficiaries represent nearly 29 per cent of the population and a larger share when measured against Omani nationals. But coverage alone is not the full story.

A child benefit is not the same as family income support. Support for an elderly person is different from support for a person with a disability. Each benefit responds to a different social risk and should be measured against a different outcome.

The child benefit, the largest component by recipients, can be more than a monthly transfer. If linked to education, healthcare, nutrition and family stability, it can become a long-term investment in human capital.

Without clear impact measurement, however, it risks remaining a recurring payment whose development value is difficult to prove. Family income support is the sharper economic test. More than 58,000 cases show that some households still need direct help to manage income pressure.

That support is necessary, but it



Up to April 2026, more than 1.55 million people receive social protection benefits.



QASIM
AL MAASHANI

The author is the head of the Business and Politics department at Oman Observer

In a country of about 5.38 million people, these are significant figures. Direct beneficiaries represent nearly 29 per cent of the population and a larger share when measured against Omani nationals. But coverage alone is not the full story.

should also be connected, wherever possible, to work, training, skills and higher income. The aim should not be only to ease hardship, but to create a path out of it.

The insurance side is equally important. The Fund’s indicators show more than 621,000 insured Omani workers and more than 1.06 million insured non-Omani workers, alongside more than 144,000 pension beneficiaries.

The Fund is therefore managing a large part of the relationship between work, contributions, retirement and long-term financial sustainability.

No social protection system can survive on good intentions. It needs a labour market that creates stable jobs, wages that allow workers to contribute and private sector growth that expands the pool of contributors rather than only increasing the number requiring support.

Under the 2026 state budget, around RO 614 million was allocated for social protection benefits, in addition to RO 338 million for social insurance programmes. These allocations reflect a clear policy choice: Oman is maintaining a wider safety net after years of fiscal consolidation.

The issue is not whether the state should spend on social protection. It must. A modern economy cannot ask households to absorb reform, inflation, labour market change and demographic transition without credible protection. The issue is

whether this spending is producing measurable resilience.

Are families becoming less vulnerable? Are children benefitting in ways that improve household stability? Are persons with disabilities receiving support that improves inclusion? Are elderly beneficiaries more secure? Are some families moving from assistance to work?

These are responsible questions. The institutional reform is important, but it is not the final measure of success. Consolidating fragmented pension arrangements and expanding protection across life stages are major steps. But outcomes, not architecture, will determine whether the system becomes a development tool.

The next stage should turn protection into mobility. That means linking benefits more closely with education, training, employment services, healthcare, housing policy and small enterprise development. It also means publishing impact indicators, not only coverage figures.

The ambition should not be to say that more than 1.55 million people receive benefits. It should be to say, over time, that fewer families need income support because wages have improved, jobs are more stable and the economy is creating wider opportunity.

Oman has widened the safety net. The harder task now is to prove that it can become a bridge to resilience, productivity and shared prosperity.

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

SENIOR Accountant: Indian male 20 years experience in Oman, shipping & logistics, Trading & contracting upto finalisation, cont: 95915852

ACCOUNTS/ SALES Indian male (b com) having 2+ years of experience in India accounts sales looking for suitable placement, join immediately. Contact: 76324360

15+ experience in building material, project sales & Trade market, deal with corporate project customers, looking for a suitable job. Contact 78384283

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OPERATIONS Support / Tendering / Contract Management / Procurement professional with 18+ years' Oil & Gas experience. NOC & driving license available. 96227272, jijilmathew@gmail.com

INDIAN electrical engineer more than 20 years experience in "MEP" construction field in Oman seeks suitable job. Contact: 92919281

ACCOUNTS/ Finance: Indian male (MBA Fin) having more than 19 years of experience in Oman accounts & finance looking for suitable placement, NOC available and can join immediately. Contact: 92076716

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I, MANDAR LALIT (holder of Indian Passport No. R4795623) son of GAJANAN KRISHNAJI LALIT, having permanent residence in C-204, SAMRAT TROPICANO, NASHIKMAHARASTRA-India. Presently residing in Oman, Azaiba Garden -C-723; P.O.BOX -2671, PC -130, intend to change my name from MANDAR LALIT (old name) to MANDAR GAJANAN LALIT (new name) for all practical purpose. Any objection towards my name change may please be communicated to Embassy of India, Muscat, Diplomatic Quarters, Al Khuwair, PO Box No. 1727, Postal Code 112, Ruwi, and Sultanate of Oman.

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ART/LIFE



H Y D R A T I O N O N T H E P L A T E



TRADITIONAL OMANI FOODS THAT BEAT THE HEAT > 20

MUSICUPDATE

CHARLI XCX ANNOUNCES SEVENTH STUDIO ALBUM



The upcoming 11-track record will be released on July 24

British singer Charli xcx has announced she will release her seventh studio album, “Music, Fashion, Film”, this summer.

The chart topper, known for songs including “Boom Clap”, “I Love It” and her “Brat” album, which sparked a cultural phenomenon, said that the upcoming 11-track record will be released on July 24.

Charli xcx, whose real name is Charlotte Aitchison, posted a black-and-white photo believed to be the cover of the new record, featuring musician John Cale, fashion designer Marc Jacobs and filmmaker Martin Scorsese.

The image features the unexpected trio gathered in a room, with Jacobs in the background leaning against a wall while Velvet Underground founder Cale and Oscar-winner Scorsese sit at a shabby table with an ashtray on it.

Beneath the post, the 33-year-old singer told her 9.1 million fans: “My new album Music, Fashion, Film is out July 24th. 11 songs, 30 minutes, 5 seconds. Available to pre-order now, love you xx”.

The comments were flooded with excitement from fans and fellow stars such as US designer Jacobs, who wrote: “Thank you Charli. So grateful to be included”.

The star followed the announcement with a post on her @b.sides Instagram account, appearing to tease new music from the upcoming album. The video featured the singer alongside the album title.

The post quickly circulated online, drawing further attention from fans who have been closely following her recent releases and creative direction, with discussions spreading across social media platforms and music forums.

Along with a string of new releases, Charli also recently hosted an impromptu In Conversation fan event and DJ set on Friday with her husband, The 1975 drummer George Daniel, where she previewed new material to attendees, adding to anticipation around the project.

Her latest project comes after she released a “Wuthering Heights” companion album to Emerald Fennell’s film of the same name earlier this year, as well as the “Brat” album, which went on to become a defining pop release and sparked a widespread cultural moment across social media.

The “Brat summer” trend triggered a wave of online engagement, influencing fashion choices and digital aesthetics, with its neon green and black visual identity becoming widely recognisable.

Earlier this year, the singer also starred in “The Moment”, a semi-fictional film exploring the release of Brat and the world tour that followed and appeared in other film projects including Pete Ohs’ “Erupcja” and Julia Jackman’s “100 Nights Of Hero”.

Charli has had two UK number one singles and three number one albums, cementing her status as one of Britain’s most influential pop artists. — dpa

Q U I C K F E A T U R E S



HOLLYWOOD
Seasoned US actress Kathy Bates attends “Matlock” FYC red carpet event at the Linwood Dunn Theatre in Hollywood, California. — AFP



FESTIVAL
Mitsukiyo Monma leaving his house for a parade during the Soma Noma festival in Minamisoma, Fukushima prefecture. — AFP



FASHION
A seamstress works on an upcycled fashion piece designed by Spanish designer, creative director and stylist, Maria Bernad at her atelier in Paris. — AFP

INSTA PICKS



Masjid Al Zawawi stands as a prominent landmark in Muscat



Eastern Imperial Eagle

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DAVID BECKHAM TO GET STAR ON HOLLYWOOD WALK OF FAME



Footballer David Beckham will receive his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on June 12. — AFP

Football superstar David Beckham is to be honoured with a star on Hollywood’s Walk of Fame, organisers announced on Tuesday, as the United States readies to host the World Cup.

Movie legend Tom Cruise and the player’s pop star-turned-fashion designer wife Victoria Beckham will be at the ceremony on June 12 to unveil the plaque immortalising the British midfielder on Hollywood’s most famous thoroughfare.

The ceremony for the 51-year-old former England captain will take place hours before the first game on US soil in this year’s World Cup, which is being jointly hosted by Mexico, Canada and the United States.

“David Beckham’s recognition with a Hollywood Walk of Fame star in the Sports Entertainment category comes at a fitting moment as the United States prepares to host the Fifa World Cup”, said Ana

Martinez of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce.

“Beckham’s role in elevating soccer’s profile in America and his lasting influence on sports, entertainment and global culture make this honour especially meaningful”, she said.

During his club playing career, Beckham spent time at Manchester United, Real Madrid, AC Milan, the American side LA Galaxy and Paris Saint-Germain, where he hung up his boots in 2013.

More recently, he became a co-owner of the American team Inter Miami CF, which signed Argentine superstar Lionel Messi and won the Major League Soccer Cup Championship last year.

Beckham, who was knighted by Britain’s King Charles III last year, also ventured into the entertainment industry, co-founding the content production company Studio 99 in 2019.

— AFP

INDIAN STARS PUSH TO END ELEPHANTS IN BOLLYWOOD



Animal rights groups are promoting the use of robotic elephants instead of real animals in religious festivals in Hindu temples as well as in Bollywood. — AFP

BOLLYWOOD STARS are campaigning to end the use of elephants in Indian films, saying that life-size robot replicas and AI-generated images do the job without cruelty. Top directors, producers and actors have backed the campaign by animal rights group PETA India, which this month highlighted how the rise of slick AI images provides even less reason to use real animals.

“Elephants shouldn’t suffer for our entertainment”, said A-list actor and producer John Abraham, describing why he and more than two dozen stars were supporting the campaign. “With today’s technology, we can bring elephants to life beautifully through CGI (computer-generated imagery) and mechanical artistry, without confinement or cruelty”.

There are fewer than 50,000 Asian elephants in the wild, according to the World Wildlife Fund, the majority in India, with others in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. There are more than 2,600 captive elephants in India, according to environment ministry estimates. They are used for tourism, entertainment and in temples.

PETA said that captive elephants are “separated from their families, kept near-constantly chained and are controlled with weapons”.

India’s Animal Welfare Board must give permission for elephants to be used in films. The numbers of real elephants being used have dropped dramatically since its 2021 order that it was “advisable” that special effects or animatronics be prioritised “to prevent unnecessary pain and suffering to animals”.



Bollywood actor Dia Mirza has helped promote the use of robotic elephants as seen here at an event with schoolchildren in Mumbai. — AFP

There are fewer than 50,000 Asian elephants in the wild, according to the World Wildlife Fund, the majority in India, with others in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. There are more than 2,600 captive elephants in India, according to environment ministry estimates. They are used for tourism, entertainment and in temples.

Now PETA campaigners are highlighting how AI-generated images, showcased in a social media campaign this month, provide increasingly lifelike images. “Elephants are highly intelligent, emotional animals who require living free in lush jungle homes for their mental and physical wellbeing”, it said. “In contrast, elephants used in films, shows and advertisements face extreme loneliness and severe cruelties”.

Campaigners point to CGI imagery by Richie Mehta in the 2024 series “Poacher”, a Malayalam-language crime drama about ivory smuggling and a robotic elephant with flapping ears used in a dance routine for an advertisement by clothing company Ramraj Cotton.

Other high-profile hits

that used CGI for elephants include 2020 historical action movie “Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior” and the 2006 superhero film “Krrish”. That compares to times past when movies, such as 1971 hit “Haathi Mere Saathi” used multiple real elephants — alongside tigers and lions — in dance scenes. Last month, the Malayalam-language film “Kattalan” — about ivory-smuggling gangsters — featured real elephants, producers said.

PETA has long campaigned for the end of elephants in Hindu temple ceremonies. It has donated more than 25 life-size robot elephants — made of fibreglass and rubber — to temples across India. The models are motorised, so that they flap their ears, move tails and even spray water from rubber trunks.

— AFP

FEATURES

FRESH SEASONAL FRUITS: High water content helps maintain hydration and body balance



H Y D R A T I O N O N T H E P L A T E

TRADITIONAL OMANI FOODS THAT BEAT THE HEAT

IDRIS AL BALUSHI

WHEN summer temperatures soar across Oman, staying cool becomes about more than seeking shade or air-conditioned spaces. For generations, Omanis have adapted to the intensity of the heat through food, relying on traditional ingredients and seasonal dishes that naturally support hydration, energy and overall wellbeing during the hottest months of the year.

At the heart of this summer food culture are meals designed to nourish without weighing the body down. One of the most enduring staples is harees, a comforting dish made from slow-cooked wheat and meat. Its soft texture and steady nutritional profile provide slow-releasing energy, helping sustain the body through long, hot days without feeling overly heavy or rich.

Alongside it, lighter meals are widely favoured during the hotter months. Simple rice dishes, often prepared with minimal spices, remain a common household choice. Fresh fish, especially in coastal communities, is another essential part of the summer diet. Naturally light and nutrient-rich, it offers a more refreshing alternative to heavier meats, while yoghurt-based accompaniments help cool and balance meals.

Hydration is equally central to traditional eating habits in Oman's summer. Refreshing drinks infused with rose water, lemon, or saffron are often served to revive the senses and provide relief from the heat. These beverages are not only culturally rooted but also practical, offering light hydration and a cooling effect. Laban, a yoghurt-based drink, remains especially popular for its ability to replenish fluids, support digestion and cool the body.



ALADHRHAA AL HABSI
Promising young Omani female chef



SHARIFA AL AUFI
Omani tour guide specialist and adventurer



ZAHWA AL RAHBI
Pastry chef at Kempinski Hotel Muscat



LABAN: Probiotic-rich drink that restores fluids and cools the digestive system



ROSE WATER DRINKS: Hydrating beverages that refresh and cool the body naturally

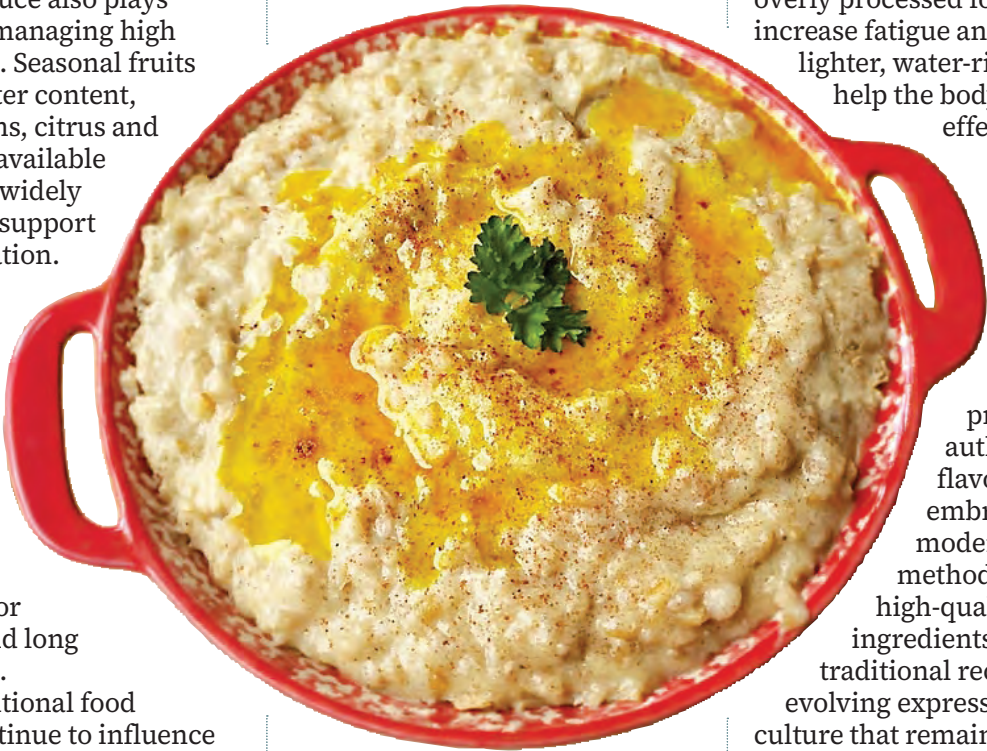


FRESH FISH: Lean protein that keeps meals light and supports summer nutrition

Fresh produce also plays a key role in managing high temperatures. Seasonal fruits with high water content, such as melons, citrus and other locally available varieties, are widely consumed to support natural hydration. Their gentle sugars provide quick energy, while their refreshing qualities make them ideal for hot outdoor conditions and long summer days.

These traditional food practices continue to influence modern Omani cuisine. According to chef Zahwa al Rahbi of Kempinski Hotel Muscat, ingredients such as dates, cardamom, saffron and rose water remain central to her culinary work. She highlights how these elements carry cultural significance while allowing chefs to reinterpret heritage through contemporary techniques.

Tour guide specialist and adventurer Sharifa al Aufi



HAREES: Easy-to-digest meals that prevent heaviness in hot weather

emphasises the importance of mindful eating during summer. She notes that food choices directly affect energy, hydration and comfort in extreme heat. In her experience, heavy or

overly processed foods can increase fatigue and thirst, while lighter, water-rich options help the body adapt more effectively.

For Omani chef Aladhrhaa al Habsi, balance is key. Her approach focuses on preserving authentic flavours while embracing modern culinary methods and high-quality local ingredients. She sees traditional recipes as evolving expressions of culture that remain rooted in memory and identity.

Whether it is a bowl of harees, freshly caught fish, cooling laban, seasonal fruits, or dishes infused with rose water and aromatic spices, Oman's culinary heritage offers a natural response to the challenges of summer. As temperatures rise each year, these time-tested foods continue to demonstrate how tradition and wellbeing remain closely connected in everyday life.